

Rating and Valuation Department **Environmental Report 2012-13**

The Department is primarily responsible for the assessment of properties to rates and Government rent, maintaining accounts and issuing demand notes for their collection. We provide property valuation advice to Government bureaux and departments and compile property market statistics. We also provide advisory and mediatory services on landlord and tenant matters.

(A) Environmental Policy and Objectives

2. The Department is committed to ensuring that our operations are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner and meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter. The Department has formulated its environmental policy and objectives as follows –

- Policy : The Rating and Valuation Department will exercise the principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in the consumption of resources.
- Objectives : Resources saving and waste reduction

3. The Department has integrated an environmentally responsible culture in all aspects of its operations and has accorded a high priority in implementing various green housekeeping measures in its operations. To this end, our Departmental Secretary is appointed as Green Manager to oversee and review the Department's green measures.

(B) Promotion of Staff Awareness

4. To promote environmental awareness and participation among staff in the continuous improvement of environmental protection and enhancing energy conservation and efficiency on green issues, and to sustain staff support, the Department has –

- circulated regularly through the intranet system various departmental green housekeeping measures and up-to-date green initiatives;
- disseminated saving tips to promote economy in the use of resources;
- encouraged staff to put forward green suggestions such as through Staff Suggestions Scheme and in Departmental Consultative Committee meetings;
- set up a cyber discussion forum to facilitate staff's discussion on departmental improvement measures; and
- extended the green concepts from office to daily life through activities organized by the Recreation Club, e.g. exchange goods among colleagues by posting

e-advertisements on “Exchange Corner” in the Department’s electronic bulletin board.

(C) Energy Conservation

5. The Department has implemented various daily energy saving measures, including –

Office

- lower the venetian blinds when direct sunlight is penetrating a window;
- switch on air-conditioning units only immediately before users entering the venues such as conference rooms;
- switch off lightings during lunch hours and when offices are not in use;
- use energy-saving T5 fluorescent tubes to reduce energy consumption;
- conduct regular inspection by energy wardens to ensure lights, office equipment and air-conditioners in offices and conference rooms are switched off during lunch break and after office hours;
- set office equipment to energy saving mode during office hours;
- avoid unnecessary lightings and reduce the illumination level of areas where colleagues do not normally have to read written materials by removing excessive fluorescent tubes;
- adjust upwards the air-conditioning temperature of the computer equipment rooms by 1°C to 2°C; and
- dress light, casual and smart, and maintain the indoor office temperature at 25.5°C.

Vehicles

- encourage sharing of pool cars to reduce fuel consumption;
- plan routes to minimize the journey distance and time, and to avoid congested areas;
- plan travel or carpool to avoid single-passenger car trips;
- switch off vehicle engines while waiting to save energy and reduce vehicle emissions;
- closely monitor vehicle maintenance to ensure low emissions; and
- closely monitor vehicle fuel consumption.

(D) Saving of Paper and Envelopes

6. The Department has adopted the following measures to economize the use of

paper and envelopes –

- use both sides of the paper and print multiple pages on one sheet;
- use obsolete forms with one clean side as drafting paper;
- use recycled paper instead of virgin paper;
- set up green trays in photocopiers to facilitate printing with papers used on one side;
- use transit envelopes for unclassified documents;
- reuse envelopes and loose minutes jackets;
- avoid sending original documents after they have been sent by fax;
- stop the use of fax cover page where appropriate;
- keep documents distribution list to minimal level;
- reduce the number of hardcopy manuals and regulations, and maximize the use of the intranet system and Divisional Information Centre; and
- release the Department's paper publications, staff newsletter etc. by uploading the e-copy on the Department's Knowledge Management System, electronic bulletin board and homepage.

(E) Management of Wastes

7. To uphold the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle, the Department has adopted the following –

- collect waste paper/newspaper for recycling;
- return used laser printer toner and ink-jet cartridges for recycling; and
- participate in the recycling programme coordinated by the Building Management Office by placing recycling bins in the Department premises.

(F) Procurement of Green Products

8. The Department is committed to green procurement. In conducting procurement, we took into account environmental factors as far as applicable –

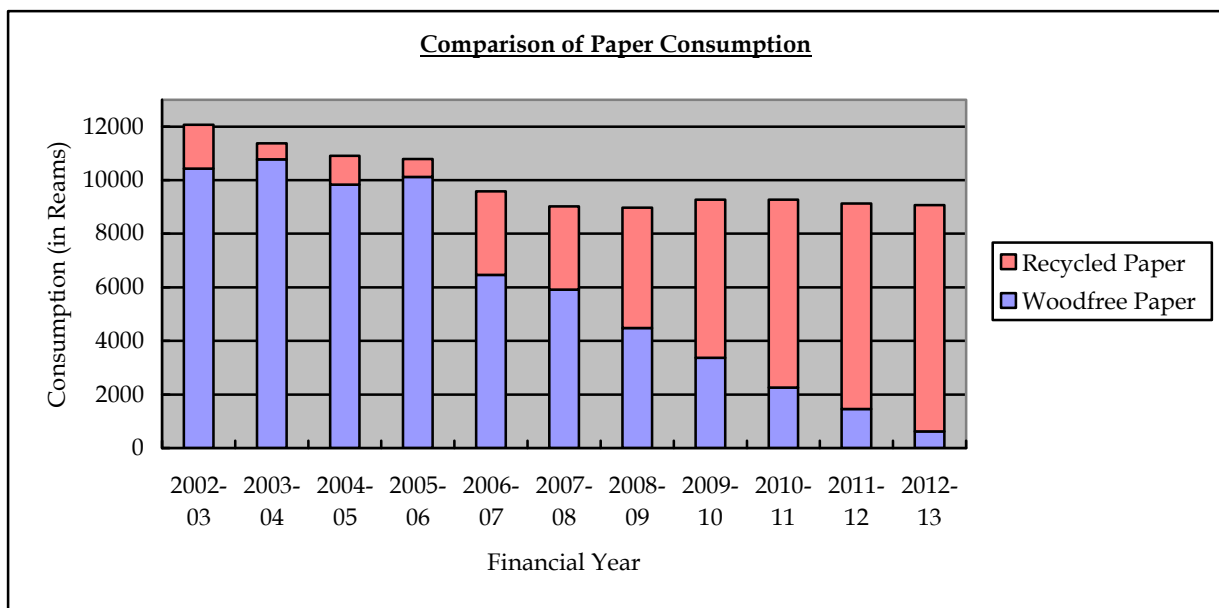
- procure energy efficient office equipment with automatic energy saving function;
- procure green products such as recycled paper, refillable ball pens, recyclable toner/inkjet cartridges and environmental-friendly/rechargeable batteries;
- procure photocopiers and printers with double-sided copying/printing function; and
- procure plain paper fax machines instead of thermal paper ones.

(G) Green Performance

Reduced consumption of paper

9. With concerted staff efforts, the consumption of A3 and A4 paper in 2012-13 was 9,074 reams, indicating a decrease of 0.58% against 9,127 reams in 2011-12 and 24.82% against 12,070 reams in 2002-03. Besides, about 93% of the paper requirement for 2012-13 was met by recycled paper.

10. In the coming year, the Department shall keep on promoting environmental awareness among colleagues and endeavor to economize consumption with a view to reducing consumption.



11. The consumption of paper and envelopes has been reducing since the launching of the Consolidated Billing and Payment Service in January 2004, which allows payers with multiple properties the option of receiving a consolidated demand.

12. As at the end of 2012-13, about 150,000 individual accounts have been replaced by around 1,870 consolidated accounts. The Department will continue to invite multi-property ratepayers to use this customer-focus and environmental friendly service.

Reduce and Recycle of Wastes

13. The Department has continued its efforts to reduce and recycle wastes. In 2012-13, 44,420 kilograms of waste paper were collected for recycling; and 1,266 numbers of empty toner/inkjet cartridges were collected for sale by public auctions arranged by the Government Logistics Department.

(H) Clean Air Charter

14. In line with the commitments of the Clean Air Charter, the Department has maintained and reminded staff to observe environmental standards/practices in improving air quality –

- comply with all the applicable ordinance and regulations related to vehicle operation;
- arrange annual maintenance to ensure proper function of the Department's vehicle;
- conduct indoor air-quality monitoring regularly. In February 2012, the Environmental Protection Department awarded a "Good Class" Indoor Air Quality Certificate to the office building; and
- adopt a number of energy saving measures in the office and for vehicle operation.

(I) The Way forward

15. To support the Government's drive to economize the use of energy and paper, the Department will sustain its effort in saving paper and electricity with best endeavour. All divisions will continue to critically review and closely monitor their paper and energy consumption patterns with a view to achieving a greener office.

Electronic Information Management System (EIMS)

16. We have joined the Electronic Information Management (EIM) Working Group led by OGCI in July 2009 to provide inputs in formulating the EIM Strategy covering domains such as Document Management, Records Management, and Knowledge Management, with the finalized report endorsed by the Working Group in October 2010. Following the EIM Study, the Department has developed and implemented a new IT platform - Knowledge Management System (KMS) in February 2013 under which the Department's written knowledge as well as colleagues' working experiences and knowledge can be built up and shared among staff effectively through electronic means. Separately, pursuant to the Government's drive for electronic records management, the Department is developing a department-wide Document Management System to manage both electronic and non-electronic records in an integrated and consistent manner. Implementation of the EIM strategy will help reduce our need for storage area and is a step towards a paperless office.

E-billing

17. To provide a convenient, efficient service and to conserve paper consumption, the Department launched the e-billing service in December 2010. This allows the public to receive the quarterly demands for rates and/or Government rent via the Internet in advance of the paper bills. Dispensing with paper bills is our ultimate environmental-friendly objective.

18. As at March 2013, over 14,650 subscribers have registered for the service, linking up over 21,240 payer accounts. It is encouraging to see that about 67% of the subscribers have opted to drop their paper bills readily at the initial account set-up. This has demonstrated the confidence of our payers in using the service and their high commitment to conserving the environment. The Department will continue its effort to join hands with the public in reducing paper consumption and in promoting a greener environment.

Clean Air Charter

19. The Department will continue to adopt energy-efficient measures in all its practices in an effort to improve Hong Kong's air quality in compliance with the commitments of the Clean Air Charter.

Rating and Valuation Department
June 2013