

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CEA LAUNCHES ONLINE CONSUMER GUIDE ON BUYING FOREIGN PROPERTIES

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) today published an online consumer guide "Consumer Tips for Buying Foreign Properties" on its website to help consumers make informed decisions when buying foreign properties. To guide estate agents in the marketing of foreign properties, CEA had also issued a set of Practice Guidelines "Practice Guidelines for Estate Agents and Salespersons Marketing Foreign Properties" on 14 Mar 2014. With an increasing number of foreign properties being marketed in Singapore, these serve to guide consumers and the industry to make informed and appropriate decisions in buying and marketing foreign properties.

2. All property transactions handled by estate agents in Singapore, including those involving foreign properties, are regulated by CEA under the Estate Agents Act. Foreign estate agents must be licensed with CEA before they can market foreign properties in Singapore. Foreign property developers may also appoint a local licensed estate agent to market their foreign properties in Singapore.

Consumer Guide on Buying Foreign Properties

3. The online Consumer Guide is the latest addition to CEA's range of educational resources to equip consumers with the necessary knowledge in property transactions. The Guide provides tips and advisories to consumers on things to look out for when buying foreign properties, including finding out rules

and/or restrictions on foreign property purchases and ownership, taxes payable, and dispute resolution avenues. As buying a foreign property can be complex and risky, consumers should understand their needs and not rush into such purchases. Before making any purchase decision, they are also advised to understand the total costs and financial commitments, and should ensure that the sales agent and representative conducting the transaction are registered with CEA. More information on the Consumer Guide is at the Annex.

Practice Guidelines on Marketing Foreign Properties

4. As marketing of foreign properties are different in many ways from marketing local properties, CEA, together with the estate agency industry, has developed a new set of Practice Guidelines to help ensure professional practices when estate agents market foreign properties. The “Practice Guidelines for Estate Agents and Salespersons Marketing Foreign Properties” was implemented on 14 March 2014, and provides details on the responsibilities of estate agents and the preparatory activities they are required to undertake when they market foreign properties. More information on the Practice Guidelines is at Annex.

5. The online Consumer Guide and Practice Guidelines for estate agents and salespersons are available on the CEA website.

Online Consumer Guide on Buying Foreign Properties:

<http://www.cea.gov.sg/cea/content/binary/pdf3Files/Consumer%20Guide%20Foreign%20Properties.pdf>

Practice Guidelines for estate agents and salespersons:

<http://www.cea.gov.sg/cea/content/binary/pdf3Files/PG%2001-14.pdf>

About Council for Estate Agencies

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) is a statutory board established under the Estate Agents Act to regulate and promote the development of a professional and trusted real estate agency industry. The key responsibilities of CEA are to license estate agents and register salespersons, promote the integrity and competence of estate agents and salespersons, and equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions in property transactions. For more information, please visit: www.cea.gov.sg.

Consumer Guide on Buying Foreign Properties

1 The Consumer Guide highlights that buying foreign properties can be complex and risky, as property purchases may be subject to currency fluctuations, and impacted by changes in foreign legal and regulatory frameworks due to domestic politics or other factors. Consumers should hence understand their needs, do due diligence and be aware of the total costs and financial commitments involved before making any purchase decision.

2 Since 2013, CEA has been providing consumer tips on buying foreign properties on various platforms. In April 2013, CEA and the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) jointly produced a “Consumer Guide on Sale, Purchase and Rental of Properties” which featured a section on purchase and sale of foreign properties. At the inaugural run of the quarterly “CEA-CASE *Get It Right!* Consumer Seminar Series” on 17 August 2013, consumers attended a talk on the topic “Buying An Overseas Property - What are your key considerations?”.

3 For more consumer education materials, visit CEA’s Consumer Resource Centre at: www.cea.gov.sg/consumerresources.

Practice Guidelines for Estate Agents and Salespersons Marketing Foreign Properties

4 The Practice Guidelines provides details on the preparatory activities required before the estate agents market foreign properties, such as the selection and training of salespersons. In addition, it also defines the responsibilities of estate agents, including the need for estate agents to conduct due diligence on the foreign developer and the foreign property before marketing it. Estate agents are also required to explain the necessary information to consumers before they purchase the foreign property.