



Presentation to Legco ITB Panel

13 June 2006



RTHK serving Hong Kong as a public broadcaster

- The role of RTHK has always been that of a public service broadcaster serving the community. Its duties are to “**inform, educate and entertain**” the public. Its primary obligation is to serve all audiences - including special interest groups - by providing **diversified** radio, television and internet services that are **distinctive** and of **high quality**, in news and current affairs, arts, culture and education. RTHK is **editorially independent** and its productions are guided by professional standards set out in the RTHK Producers’ Guidelines.



RTHK Vision and Values

- **Vision**

To be a leading public broadcaster in the new media environment

- **Values**

Editorial Independence

Serving the Public

Quality Production

Impartiality

Competitiveness

Development of Talent



RTHK Mission

Mission

- To inform, educate and entertain our audiences through multi-media programming ;
- To provide timely, impartial coverage of local and global events and issues ;
- To deliver programming which contributes to the openness and cultural diversity of Hong Kong ;
- To provide a platform for free and unfettered expression of views ;
- To serve a broad spectrum of audiences and cater to the needs of minority interest groups



RTHK Milestones

- **1928** First broadcast under the call-sign GOW
- **1934** First broadcast of news bulletin and set up a Chinese Channel (ZEK)
- **1954** Separated from the GIS and became an independent department
- **1960** FM broadcast
- **1970** Public Affairs Television Unit was established
- **1971** ETV school programmes started
- **1973** RHK set up its own newsroom
- **1976** Renamed "Radio Television Hong Kong"(RTHK)
- **1994** RTHK website was established on Internet



RADIO TELEVISION
HONG KONG
香港電台

The image shows a stylized illustration of the RTHK building facade with a series of vertical columns. To the left, the RTHK logo is displayed, consisting of the English text 'RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG' and the Chinese text '香港電台'.

Well established mechanism of overall governance

- **Three sets of governing documents**
 - **Framework Agreement**
(since 1993)
 - **Codes of Practice, Broadcasting Authority**
(since 1995)
 - **Producers' Guidelines**
(codified since 1998)



Accountability to the Administration

- **Framework Agreement**

The Department is editorially independent.

The Director as the Chief Editor is responsible for ensuring that a system of editorial control in accordance with RTHK's Producers' Guidelines exists to provide fair, balanced and objective news, public affairs and general programming that informs, educates and entertains the public.

The Secretary will provide the Director with policy guidance and support ...



Accountability to the Broadcasting Authority

- **Codes of Practice**

A Memorandum of Understanding setting out RTHK's voluntary compliance with the Codes of Practice on programme standards issued by the **Broadcasting Authority**, including **impartiality and fairness, use of language, sex and nudity, violence** etc.



RADIO TELEVISION
HONG KONG
香港電台

Management - Accountability

- TV Advisory Panel
- Radio Listeners Panel
- Public Consultation
- Public Polls
- Channel Heads' Hotlines
- Radio Audience Survey
- TV Appreciation Index Survey
- Service Hotline



Management - Corporate Governance

- **Strengthening the divisional Central Administration Units (CAU)**
- **Regular review by System Review Unit (Internal Audit Team)**
- **External scrutiny by various government bodies**
- **Training & induction courses for staff**



How could RTHK serve the public?

- **Future aspirations**
- **Sustainability**
- **Optimal model for better service**



Future Aspirations

Feedbacks from public consultation

- An independent TV channel
- New radio channels to cater for specific needs of the community
- Need to embark on digital development
- Provide prominent service in the digital environment
- Archive service
- Need to have further improvements



Guiding Principles

1. **Universality** – enhancing the availability of transmission channels and public accessibility
2. Responding to the development of **civil society** – promoting public values eg. freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity, democratic and civic participation, and caring community etc.
3. Promoting **accountability** – strengthening channels to collate public views
4. Enhancing **professional** development – providing distinctive quality programming
5. Promoting **innovation** and talent



RTHK Future Aspirations

1. Developing **digital radio broadcasting** and enhanced usage of radio frequencies
2. Developing **digital TV broadcasting** and better usage of the government TV airtime
3. Reinforcing **multimedia services** in connecting Chinese communities
4. **Reprovisioning** to a new modern headquarter
5. **New TV Channel**
6. Digitization of RTHK programme **archives** and streamlined programme content policy



Digital Development

- To enhance the quality and development potential of public service broadcasting
- To promote long-term development in IT and innovation in Hong Kong
- *RTHK lacks additional and stable funding to plan for digital development*

(Cost of migrating existing RTHK services to digital broadcasting, including TV and Radio: roughly **\$200M**)



New TV Channel

- Cost estimate for setting up a TV channel. Annual cost: slightly more than **\$600M** for 6 hours of SD production daily (excluding operating cost of TV newsroom).
- RTHK's existing premise could not accommodate the operation of a new TV channel. The new TV channel has to be operated in a new site. It will incur additional cost in re-provisioning.
- Rough estimate for setting up a TV Channel is **\$1.3 billion** including the re-provisioning of RTHK premises and cost of digital equipment (excluding cost of transmission network).



RTHK Reprovisioning

- Will not increase financial burden of government
- RTHK can achieve efficiency savings by consolidating the current scattered operation under one roof in the new purpose built complex
- Capital expenditure: **\$1.3 billion**
- Note: Value of the existing three sites in Broadcast Drive



Sustainability

Feedback from public consultation

- **Funding:** Financed by public. To identify (a) stable and long-term source(s) of income that will protect RTHK's institutional and editorial independence for its long-term future development and guarantee high quality public service programming.
- **Structure:** PSB is for the public. Editorial independence and other core values should be guaranteed by legislation.



Sustainability – RTHK's view

- To clearly anchor the role of RTHK through legislation, and to define its editorial independence, accountability and governance;
- To establish a stable funding mechanism for the continued operation and sustainable development of RTHK;
- To design a flexible and more efficient mode of operation to enable formulation of long-term strategies to cope with fast-changing media environment.



Source of funding

- Public generally agree that the major source of funding should be from public funding
- Suggested options :
 - Government **annual allocation**, preferably on a longer period cycle to allow forward planning
 - To set up a **Trust Fund** with subsequent funding run by interest generated
 - Certain percentage from government **rates**
 - Donations and non-commercial **sponsorships**



Optimal model for better service

- **Hive off from government by way of restructuring RTHK into a statutory organisation**
- **To be governed by an independent board / management committee with a wide basis of support and representation**



Staff concerns

- **Staff are the major asset of RTHK. To ensure a smooth transition to the new corporation, staff participation and cooperation is essential.**
- **Staff concerns: transition arrangement (options for staff, employment prospect), remuneration package of the new corporation.**





Thank You