

**For discussion on
14 March 2011**

**Legislative Council Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Manpower Arrangements of
Radio Television Hong Kong**

Purpose

In response to requests made by Members at the Panel Meeting held on 14 February 2011, this paper briefs Members on the manpower arrangements of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), in particular the recruitment and promotion exercises for the Programme Officer (PO) grade and the consultation and discussion between RTHK management and its staff union.

The overall position of RTHK PO grade

2. As at 1 January 2011, RTHK had 523 civil service posts¹, of which 368 were posts in the PO grade. Of all the civil service posts, there were some 90 vacancies, including some 80 in the PO grade.

3. Separately, RTHK had some 350 non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff positions as at 1 January 2011, of which some 270 (with a strength of 259) were pegged to the PO grade. As a media organisation, RTHK has an operational need to engage a certain number of contract staff to meet changing community needs and audience tastes, and maintain certain degree of turnover of talents engaging in creative work. Since the 1970s, contract staff had constituted some 20-30% of RTHK's total staff complement.

4. The PO grade has six non-directorate ranks² and four directorate ranks, with Programme Assistant (PA) as the basic rank and the Assistant

¹ Time-limited posts that would expire on 31 March 2011 are excluded.

² They are Chief Programme Officer (CPO), Principal Programme Officer (PPO), Senior Programme Officer (SPO), Programme Officer, Assistant Programme Officer (APO) and Programme Assistant (PA).

Programme Officer (APO) as the second rank, etc. Of the some 80 civil service vacancies in the PO grade, some 40 are at the rank of the APO while the remainder at the ranks of PO (the third rank) and above.

5. The PO grade members are recruited for different work types, most of which are distinct from each other. For example, video editing, electronic field processing, radio programmes, TV programmes, Chinese news, English news, etc, are different work types requiring distinct expertise and experience.

Promotion and recruitment exercises for PO grade

6. Being a civil service grade, the PO grade is subject to the prevailing civil service appointment policies and regulations. Since the announcement of RTHK's resumption of promotion and recruitment exercises in December 2010, RTHK management has been preparing for these exercises for the PO grade. The latest plan is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Promotion exercises

7. According to civil service regulations, vacancies at the promotion ranks of a civil service grade are normally filled by promoting suitable officers from the immediate lower rank of the same grade.

8. In the present case of the PO grade, promotion exercises will be conducted to fill the some 40 existing vacancies in the PO rank or above, most of which are being filled by civil servants one rank lower in the grade on an acting or sharing basis.

9. Where no suitable civil servants from the immediate lower rank can be identified for promotion, the appointment authority may consider open recruitment for the vacancies in the promotion rank. In the light of this basic principle, RTHK management cannot pre-empt the deliberations of the promotion boards but is ready to consider open recruitment to promotion ranks in the event that no suitable officers can be identified from internal promotion.

10. The APO rank is also a promotion rank and PAs of the concerned

streams are eligible for promotion. However, since there are only 25 civil service PA posts as compared to the some 40 existing vacancies in the APO rank, RTHK will conduct open recruitment to the APO rank concurrently with the PA promotion exercise.

11. The tentative timeframe for the promotion exercises is as follows –

PO ranks for which promotion exercises will be conducted	Tentative timing
APO, PO and SPO	Q1 - Q2, 2011
PPO, CPO and Controller	Q2 - Q3, 2011

Recruitment exercises

12. Open recruitment exercises will be conducted for the work types where there are existing vacancies. RTHK will arrange job applicants to attend relevant trade tests (e.g. written test, voice test) according to the job requirements of the different work types, as well as selection interviews.

13. RTHK will ensure that the recruitment exercises are conducted in a fair and impartial manner. While RTHK management is unable to undertake that all the civil service vacancies will be filled by NCSC staff currently working in RTHK, these NCSC staff, with RTHK experiences and proven track records, will have a natural competitive edge in the recruitment exercises because relevant experience and job knowledge as well as good performance records are important aspects for assessment in the recruitment exercises.

Present position

14. Since the last open recruitment exercise for APOs (radio and TV) was conducted in 2002, there are certain appointment matters in respect of the PO grade requiring updating e.g. entry requirements, recruitment and posting among work types, etc. We expect that these administrative

steps will be completed shortly, so that RTHK can launch the recruitment and promotion exercises by batches from March 2011.

15. The tentative timeframe for the recruitment exercises of various work types is as follows –

Work types of PO grade for which recruitment exercises will be conducted	Tentative timing
Video Editing, Set Design, Animation & Graphic Design, and Electronic Field Production & Photography	Q1 - Q2, 2011
Chinese News, Chinese Radio Programmes, TV Programmes, Media Management	Q2, 2011
Others where there are APO vacancies, or consequential vacancies, or other vacancies	Q2 - Q3, 2011

Incremental Credit for Experience

16. We note that there have been calls for the granting of Incremental Credit for Experience (ICE) for experienced candidates who are found suitable in the recruitment exercises.

17. RTHK has to follow the established civil service policy and procedures in offering ICE. The starting salary point of the APO rank is Master Pay Scale Point 14 (\$19,945). Of the 259 existing NCSC staff pegged to PO ranks, some 60% are drawing a salary below this level. Therefore, if these NCSC staff apply for the APO vacancies and are eventually recruited, they would draw a higher salary at Master Pay Scale Point 14. Moreover, having carefully considered the circumstances, notably the anticipated keen market competition in the coming years for candidates with rich experience in the electronic broadcasting industry, the RTHK management sees a need to offer ICE in those work types that

have a comparatively higher proportion of civil service vacancies and NCSC staff already with salaries higher than the normal entry pay of APO. More details will be published in the recruitment advertisements, and RTHK will administer the arrangements in compliance with established mechanisms.

New Manpower

18. As stated in the 2011-12 Estimates for RTHK, apart from two new directorate posts (i.e. one permanent post of Controller (Broadcasting Services) (D1) and one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3)), we also propose to create 17 new civil service non-directorate posts, of which ten are in the PO grade. These posts will also be filled through internal promotion or open recruitment.

19. In addition, RTHK management will continue to closely monitor the manpower requirement in the coming years and draw up appropriate human resource plan to meet its development needs.

Staff Development

20. Apart from promotion and recruitment exercise and new staff resources as mentioned above, RTHK also spares no effort in providing development opportunities for the PO grade staff. In the past year, the RTHK management rationalised the streaming arrangements of the PO grade with a view to crafting the development path for its staff for professional pursuits in their own stream and for succession planning encouraging cross-stream experiences. Staff members generally welcome the refined arrangements, which will form the basis for the recruitment and promotion exercises when approved. We also attach importance to providing training to staff. For instance, attachments to other government departments have been arranged for staff to widen their experience and exposure; and there are also opportunities for staff to attend training and seminars / conferences of different nature, local or overseas (e.g. skill-specific courses, management programmes, international / regional broadcasting conferences such as the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, etc). We have arranged and will explore further opportunities for professional visits and attachments to other media organisations (e.g. TV and radio stations in UK, Australia and the

Mainland). We are committed to providing staff with various training opportunities to equip them with the skills, knowledge and mindset necessary for supporting the development of RTHK.

Communication with Staff

21. The RTHK management has been closely communicating with the Programme Officer Staff Union and all staff. Frequent meetings have been held particularly in the past few months to brief staff members on the details of the promotion and recruitment exercises. RTHK management last met with the Staff Union in end February and two sessions had just been arranged for all RTHK staff in early March to brief them on the latest manpower arrangements of the department. A comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions has also been issued to staff to address their concerns. RTHK will continue its dialogue with the Staff Union and staff.

Way forward

22. Members are invited to note the manpower arrangements of RTHK in meeting the challenges ahead and fulfilling its mission as the public service broadcaster of Hong Kong as set out in this paper.

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau/
Radio Television Hong Kong
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