

**For discussion on
9 December 2013**

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

**Proposed Extension of a
Supernumerary Post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
in Radio Television Hong Kong**

PURPOSE

This paper invites Members' views on the proposal to extend a supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB) (D3) in Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) for five years from 27 May 2014 to 26 May 2019. The objective is to maintain strong governance at senior directorate level of RTHK to ensure effective planning and implementation of new projects and services that will enable RTHK to fulfill its mission as the public service broadcaster (PSB) in Hong Kong.

BACKGROUND

2. Following the Government's decision in September 2009 for RTHK to expand its scope of services to fulfill its mission as the PSB of Hong Kong, RTHK has then been embarking on various new services and projects, including the launch of digital audio broadcasting (DAB) and digital terrestrial television (DTT) broadcasting services, facilitating community involvement in broadcasting, establishing a digital media asset management (MAM) system and planning for the construction of the new Broadcasting House (New BH) in Tseung Kwan O.

3. In view of the immense workload expected to be handled by RTHK arising from these new services and projects, the

Finance Committee approved on 27 May 2011 the creation of one supernumerary AOSGB post, designated as Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments) (DD of B (Developments)), for three years up to 26 May 2014 and one permanent post of Controller (Broadcasting Services) (D1), designated as Controller (Radio) (C(R)), in RTHK to strengthen its directorate support in order to ensure success of the new projects and services.

JUSTIFICATIONS

4. The supernumerary post of DD of B (Developments) will lapse on 27 May 2014. The Administration has conducted a review on the operational needs of the post and considered it necessary to extend the post for five years. The coming five years are critical for the development of RTHK as all the major new services and projects will be rolled out or completed. While there are technical and professional staff in RTHK and works departments to provide technical support on these new services and projects, RTHK needs to maintain strong governance at senior directorate level to tackle tasks arising from the planning and implementation of these new services and projects from the macro perspective, coordinate the efforts across different sections within RTHK, work with bureaux and departments within Government as well as make use of strong negotiation skills to work with stakeholders such as the free TV operators. These tasks are unprecedented in the public service broadcasting arena, including but not limited to the construction of the New BH, the relocation and provision of various new services to be all completed in the next five years. During this period, strong and dedicated efforts at the senior directorate level of RTHK are therefore imperative. Details are elaborated below.

Development of the New BH

5. The New BH will be located at a site in Area 85, Tseung Kwan O. In October 2012, four contractors were prequalified to bid for the design and build contract for the New BH. We invited tenders from the prequalified contractors in February 2013 and

completed the tender assessment in September 2013. Subsequently, we consulted Members on the construction of the New BH at the meeting on 11 November 2013. With Members' support, we are proceeding to submit the proposal for the Public Works Subcommittee's recommendation and the Finance Committee's approval. Subject to the approval of the Finance Committee, the construction of the new BH will start in the first quarter of 2014 with a view to commissioning in 2018.

6. The New BH will have highly technical, sophisticated and modern broadcasting, production and telecommunications facilities. According to the project programme, it will be completed and handed over to RTHK by phases, tentatively from late 2016 to end 2017. RTHK will then need to arrange for intensive installation, testing and commissioning of broadcasting, production and telecommunications equipment, which will take 12 to 20 months to complete. This highly complex mega-project involves complicated coordination of a large number of activities which require monitoring at senior directorate level. Interruption to any part can have serious knock-on effect on the whole project.

7. The intricacies of the project can be seen from the following examples. To ensure timely commencement of installation of broadcasting and other technical equipment upon the completion of construction works in each phase, RTHK will need to have careful planning and close monitoring to ensure the timely procurement and delivery of the required equipment. It also has to coordinate closely with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), the contractor of the New BH and RTHK's own contractors of broadcasting facilities to have access to the building when it is still under construction in different phases in order to establish in advance the necessary broadcasting and information technology infrastructure. These include uninterrupted power supply system, lighting suspension system at the TV studios, sound broadcasting equipment at the radio continuity studios, fibre back-bone of the production and telecommunications network.

8. Installation of the above critical facilities, if not

planned or implemented properly to ensure correct and timely interfacing of construction, cabling and equipment installation works, will not only delay the installation of equipment and subsequent construction works, but also affect the commissioning date of the New BH. It may also incur additional expenditure for the project, lead to potential claims from the contractors, and adversely affect the future operation and workflow of RTHK. It is therefore vital to have meticulous planning and effective coordination among all parties concerned to ensure effective implementation of all the critical activities in the course of the project.

9. Subject to the timely completion of the construction works and equipment installation, testing and commissioning, RTHK will move from the existing premises at Broadcast Drive to the New BH by phases starting from late 2017 and up to the end of 2018. During this transition period, RTHK needs to maintain its broadcast and cannot afford any interruptions to its services. In addition, there would be a large volume of sophisticated and valuable systems moving from the existing RTHK premises to the New BH. Hence, RTHK has to draw up a highly complex and properly coordinated migration and commissioning plan having regard to its unique operations to facilitate a seamless relocation by stages.

10. To accomplish the tasks mentioned above, RTHK needs strong governance at senior directorate level to oversee the progress of the project, to steer the coordination among RTHK, the ArchSD, the main contractor and sub-contractors, to supervise the planning work, and to monitor the implementation of various work plans and migration plan.

DTT

11. As part of the PSB service package, RTHK will be providing DTT service with three television (TV) channels. Since 1 July 2012, RTHK has been conducting signal tests for the TV channels and will start the DTT channel trial run from January 2014.

Subject to the completion of the necessary technical infrastructure and the result of the DTT channel trial run, RTHK plans to fully launch its DTT service by 2018 after the commissioning of the New BH.

12. By end of 2013, the coverage of RTHK's DTT service will reach about 75% of Hong Kong's population. In the coming years, RTHK will continue its work to establish the necessary DTT transmission network. These include a proposal to establish 22 DTT fill-in stations at an estimated cost of \$64.2 million. This will extend RTHK's DTT network coverage to around 99% of the population. Details of the proposal are set out in another paper for this meeting entitled "Establishment of Fill-in Stations for the Digital Terrestrial Television Service of Radio Television Hong Kong". To implement the proposal, RTHK will need to negotiate with the two commercial domestic free TV operators the rental of suitable transmission sites for establishment of the fill-in stations, acquire the required essential transmitters and equipment, and conduct technical trials. Given the complexity of the issues and the significant amount of resources involved, the project should be led by an officer at senior directorate level to formulate the negotiation strategies, monitor the budget, and oversee the development progress.

Other Projects

MAM

13. Funding has been allocated to RTHK to embark on an MAM project starting from 2011-12 to restore archive materials at risk, digitize the most valuable portion (about 25%) of RTHK archives, and provide specialized storage for the archive materials to facilitate easy access and retrieval. RTHK has already completed the digitization of its photo archive contents and is conducting digitization of audio and video archive contents. RTHK has been working to achieve the target by the end of 2015-16. Following that, RTHK will conduct a comprehensive review on the whole project and the relevant archive policy and decide on the way

forward. Given the importance of the review, which would have far-reaching implications on RTHK's content management, it has to be handled by an officer at senior directorate level.

DAB

14. RTHK's five DAB channels were formally launched on 17 September 2012. The geographical coverage of DAB service stands at around 70% at present. RTHK will continue to enhance the DAB transmission network, which would involve negotiations with the relevant commercial operators as well as procurement and setting up of transmission equipment. In view of the complexity of the issues, a strong steer from an officer at senior directorate level will be required.

Extension of the DD of B (Developments) Post in RTHK

15. Having considered the complexity of tasks to be tackled by RTHK in the coming five years and the immense workload involved, we propose to extend the DD of B (Developments) post for five years, i.e. from 27 May 2014 to 26 May 2019. With the extension of the post, RTHK will have dedicated support at senior directorate level to oversee and follow through the completion of the New BH, and to lead and coordinate the migration of RTHK from its existing premises to the new building. In addition, the DD of B (Developments) will provide the necessary steer to the developments / further developments of DTT, DAB, MAM and other RTHK's new services. The organization chart of RTHK and the proposed job description of DD of B (Developments) are at Annex A and Annex B respectively.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

16. We have critically examined the possibility of redeployment within RTHK to absorb the duties of the post. However, this is considered not feasible because the existing DD of B (Programmes) has already been fully stretched in his schedule of

work, particularly the heavy involvement in editorial management and planning for programming on the DAB, DTT and new media platforms. As regards the other directorate officers, namely two Assistant Directors of Broadcasting (D2), three Controllers (Broadcasting Services) (D1) and one Principal Executive Officer (D1), they are heavily engaged in programme-related and operational functions which have increased drastically because of the launch of new services. They are also not of the appropriate ranking to take up the high level strategy formulation and strong governance for steering the large scale and complex projects required of the DD of B (Developments) post.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

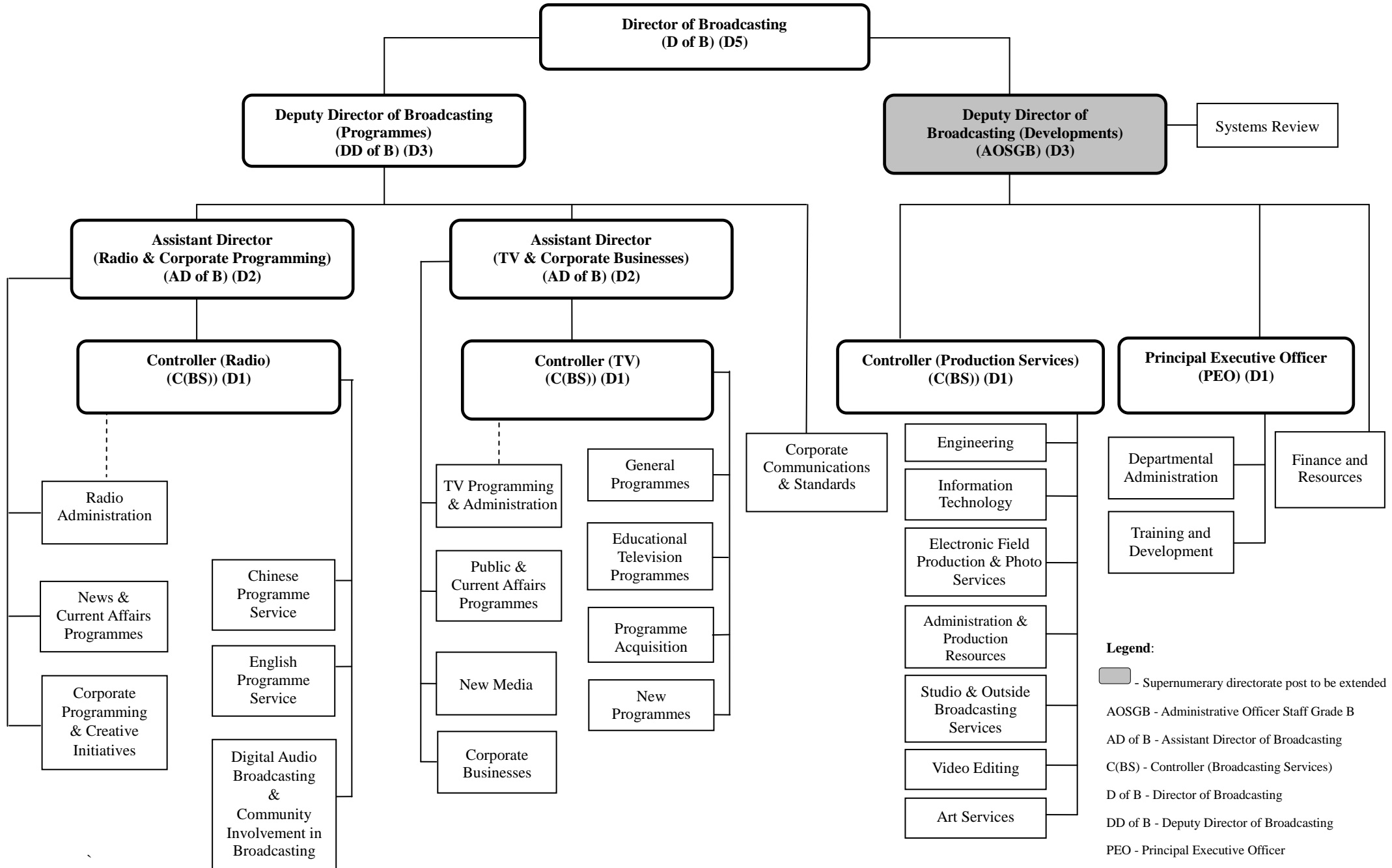
17. The proposed extension of the supernumerary directorate post will require an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$2,019,000. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,925,000.

ADVICE SOUGHT


18. Subject to Members' views, we intend to seek the approval of the Establishment Subcommittee and the Finance Committee for the extension of the supernumerary AOSGB post around the first quarter of 2014.

**Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Radio Television Hong Kong
December 2013**

Organization Chart of Radio Television Hong Kong



Legend:

-  - Supernumerary directorate post to be extended
- AOSGB - Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
- AD of B - Assistant Director of Broadcasting
- C(BS) - Controller (Broadcasting Services)
- D of B - Director of Broadcasting
- DD of B - Deputy Director of Broadcasting
- PEO - Principal Executive Officer

Job Description
Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments)

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3)

Responsible to : Director of Broadcasting

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

- (1) To lead and coordinate the development of the new Broadcasting House, to steer the project through the construction, equipment installation, migration and commissioning stages, and oversee any related legal and administrative matters;
- (2) To lead and coordinate the developments pertinent to the launch of the new digital audio broadcasting (DAB) and digital terrestrial television (DTT) services, including formulating strategies for and leading the commercial negotiations on the construction of DAB and DTT networks and their enhancement with a view to ensuring amicable agreement with the relevant commercial operators and site users; drawing up and implementing strategies and operational plans to tie in with the development of the new Broadcasting House and new market developments;
- (3) To steer the implementation of the Media Asset Management (MAM) project which entails the development of a comprehensive archival policy, the establishment of a metadata structure, the restoration of artifacts at risk, digitisation of archives, provision of manpower and specialist storage facilities for keeping archives in the interim and eventually at the new Broadcasting House, integration of the MAM with the production system, and devising and implementing a policy to facilitate public and industry access to the archives;
- (4) To oversee departmental administration and resources management for ensuring the optimal, efficient and effective use and deployment of the financial, human and production resources of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK); and
- (5) To support the Director in any other areas appropriate for achieving RTHK's public purposes and mission and ensuring compliance with the Charter of RTHK.