

**For discussion on
25 May 2021**

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

**The Governance and Management of
Radio Television Hong Kong Review Report**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of implementing the Governance and Management of Radio Television Hong Kong Review Report (the Review Report) by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK).

Background

2. In recent years, the management and programme contents of RTHK have been a cause of public concern¹. In response, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) announced in May last year the establishment of a dedicated team to review the governance and management of RTHK and to provide recommendations on improving its overall management systems, processes and practices, with a view to ensuring full compliance with the Charter of RTHK (the Charter), the codes of practices issued by the Communications Authority (CA) and all applicable government rules and regulations. CEDB released the Review Report on 19 February this year².

3. CEDB and RTHK briefed the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on the Review

¹ In 2019-20 and 2020-21, the CA found a total of eight substantiated complaint cases concerning RTHK's programmes, for which one serious warning, three warnings, two strong advices, one advice were issued respectively and one case with no sanction imposed.

² The Review Report has been uploaded onto the website of the CEDB:
<https://www.cedb.gov.hk/ccib/en/consultations-and-publications/reports/rthkreview.pdf>

Report on 15 March this year. RTHK fully accepted the recommendations of the Review Report, and has commenced follow-up actions progressively.

Follow-up Actions already Commenced

4. RTHK has accorded first priority to improving mechanisms for editorial management and complaints handling.

Editorial Management

5. In order to strengthen editorial management, RTHK has introduced a new mechanism in March this year. An editorial committee comprising the Director of Broadcasting and senior management of RTHK has taken up the editorial responsibility to review contentious programmes before their production or broadcast. In addition, RTHK has also introduced a clearer referral mechanism for production staff to submit programme plans to the editorial meetings for review at the early stage of planning, such that the editorial meetings could more proactively participate in and guide the production, thereby ensuring that the programmes comply with the Charter and the Producers' Guidelines.

6. RTHK has commenced a detailed review of the existing editorial process and management. Making reference to other public service broadcasters (PSBs), RTHK will formulate a comprehensive set of editorial policies and practical guidelines, incorporating requirements of the Charter and the Producers' Guidelines, with a view to putting in place a clearer editorial process for compliance by all RTHK staff.

Complaints Handling

7. On the handling of complaints, RTHK has requested its staff to keep proper record of complaint investigations and follow-up actions, and to enhance reporting of programme-related complaint cases at the RTHK management meetings, so that the management could relay the relevant information to production staff at each level for follow-up, and for lessons to be learnt from these cases. RTHK has also stepped up compilation of programme-related complaint statistics,

and has been reporting relevant complaint statistics, classification and summaries of complaint contents to the RTHK Board of Advisors (Board of Advisors) and the CEDB.

8. RTHK is reviewing its existing complaints handling mechanism thoroughly and will draw up detailed guidelines to implement the improved complaints handling mechanism and enhance transparency, so that complaints are handled properly and impartially.

Performance Indicators

9. Regarding the setting of more meaningful performance indicators as recommended by the Review Report, RTHK has set out in the 2021-22 Controlling Officer's Report for Head 160 - Radio Television Hong Kong³ the transmission hours of various radio and television (TV) programmes⁴ according to RTHK's mission as stipulated in the Charter, to better reflect RTHK's role as a PSB. In addition, RTHK has also added in the Report appreciation indexes of all radio channels and RTHK TV 31 and TV 32 to reflect the satisfaction level among the audience who have listened to/watched the corresponding channels in the past seven days, as well as average daily viewing minutes to better reflect viewers' daily consumption in terms of time spent on programmes produced for RTHK TV 31 and TV 32.

Achievement of Public Purposes and Mission under the Charter

10. RTHK will clearly target the public purposes and mission under the Charter, which include promoting the understanding of "One Country, Two Systems" and its implementation in Hong Kong; engendering a sense of citizenship and national identity; and encouraging social inclusion and pluralism. RTHK will produce/broadcast more programmes in this regard, including a special programme "The Century-Long March", which elucidates the modern history of China over the past 100 years and is being broadcast through radio, TV, webpages and social media platforms. Meanwhile, RTHK will collaborate with the Education Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau to organise "The Century-Long March' Quiz Competition" and

³ The Controlling Officer's Report can be found at <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2021/eng/pdf/head160.pdf>

⁴ Only first-run TV programmes are counted. Relay programmes are excluded.

“‘The Century-Long March’ Quiz Competition for Youth Uniformed Groups in Hong Kong” to enhance the understanding of our nation among young people through quiz competitions. A TV programme “Get to Know the Election Committee Subsectors” produced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) was broadcast on RTHK from end-April to mid-May, in which the Chief Executive (CE) had face-to-face talks with guests from different sectors to explore how Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law recently amended by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress had improved the electoral system of the HKSAR. In addition, RTHK will also launch a new programme “Planning and Election” on radio and TV at the same time to introduce to the public details of “The 14th Five-Year Plan” and “Improving Electoral System” through interviews with government officials, while the radio programme “Bay Area Guide” shares the experience of development in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) across trades and industries to enhance public understanding of the living cultures of various cities in the GBA.

11. RTHK will continue to produce programmes which encourage social inclusion and pluralism, and this includes launching the “RTHK Audio Description” mobile phone application in April this year to enable the visually impaired to enjoy various TV dramas with their normal-hearing family members and friends. The radio programme “Audio Art” produces audio description programmes from films, stage dramas and TV programmes to serve the visually impaired. RTHK has also launched the TV programme “Sign Language: Study Tour”, in which elements of sign language are added to games to promote interaction between the hearing impaired and normal-hearing people. Selected TV programmes are also provided with subtitles in Nepali, Indonesian, Urdu, etc. to cater for the needs of ethnic minorities.

12. On promotion of civic education, in light of the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019, RTHK has produced a number of programmes and segments to enhance public awareness of pandemic prevention. For example, a segment “Healthpedia Vaccination Special” was added to RTHK’s popular health information programme “Healthpedia” in May this year in co-operation with the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority, in which medical specialists respond on air to public’s questions about vaccination to enhance public understanding and knowledge of vaccination.

Follow-up Actions

13. After completing the review of the existing arrangements, RTHK will implement a more comprehensive set of editorial policies and practical guidelines, and will further strengthen editorial training for its staff to deepen their interpretation and application in practice of the Charter, the Producers' Guidelines, the CA's relevant codes of practice and the above editorial policies and practical guidelines, and to remind them of adhering to all relevant codes of practice. RTHK will also implement the enhanced complaints handling mechanism and enhance its transparency so as to respond to complaints in a timely manner, follow up them seriously and convert complaint information into a management tool for improving service delivery.

14. RTHK will follow up the recommendations on performance measurement and evaluation as recommended in the Review Report, including the preparation of a more detailed annual plan and annual report, and setting more meaningful performance targets/indicators.

15. As for programme production, RTHK will introduce a new programme planning strategy to further deliver its public mission specified in the Charter and increase the production/broadcast of programmes promoting the understanding of "One Country, Two Systems" as well as our community and nation, including acquiring relevant TV programmes produced by the Mainland. To encourage inclusion, RTHK will launch more diversified programmes including elderly programmes, youth programmes, arts and culture programmes and sports programmes. A game show for the elderly "MagaSenior Radio On TV" is being broadcast on RTHK, in which gerontechnology is integrated into the games of the programme to provide important elderly and health information using a more interesting approach. On youth programmes, RTHK will launch a positive radio programme "Dreams Set Sail", in which young guests from different sectors are invited to share their experiences of pursuing and realising their dreams.

16. On 11 May, the HKSAR Government announced that it has purchased the TV broadcasting rights to the Tokyo Olympic Games, which would be broadcast by Hong Kong's five licensed TV broadcasters, allowing Hong Kong citizens to watch the Games for free and cheering for the athletes of our nation and Hong Kong. As the

five licensed TV broadcasters have decided to join the broadcasting arrangements, there is no need to use public money for RTHK to do the same task so as to avoid duplication of resources. The five licensed TV broadcasters will share highlights of the Games with RTHK. RTHK will discuss with relevant TV broadcasters and announce the arrangements in due time. In addition, to complement the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games, RTHK will produce a programme “Countdown to Tokyo Olympics” to closely follow local athletes who are qualified for the Games. As for other sports programmes, apart from live or recorded local sports events and the weekly live sports magazine programme “Sports Unlimited”, RTHK has joined hands with the Hong Kong Football Association to produce a radio programme “Hong Kong Football Hall of Fame”, in which members of the Hong Kong Football History Society are invited to look back on major events in local football history, and local football veterans are interviewed to share their stories and encourage young people to face challenges bravely.

17. RTHK will also continue to produce a series of TV programmes to facilitate the development of arts and culture. They include “Arts On Air” and “Artspiration” which promote performing arts; “Ancient Chinese Painting” which is co-produced by the Hong Kong Museum of Arts and aims to appreciate art works; “830 Magazine” which features a segment “Bang Bang Sing” every Friday to provide local bands with a performance platform to showcase their talents. Regarding radio programmes, “Youth in Harmony” will broadcast recordings of concerts featuring young performing groups to share their joy of participating in performances and the fruits of practice.

18. Moreover, RTHK TV will continue to broadcast important government press conferences, clarification messages and “One-minute Video” messages provided by the Information Services Department, relay LegCo meetings and broadcast local, national and international news. Besides, RTHK will continue to provide TV relays and pool signals for local TV stations, such as live coverage of the flag-raising ceremonies and receptions in celebration of the anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR and the National Day, the forums of the CE’s Policy Address and the Financial Secretary’s Budget Speech. RTHK also provides technical support for events held by the Government, such as the Honours and Awards Presentation Ceremony and the ceremony to commemorate victory day of Chinese people’s war

of resistance against Japanese aggression.

19. Regarding the management of workforce, RTHK will commence the formulation of a holistic departmental manpower strategy to review and rationalise the role and core functions, the skillset requirements as well as the streaming arrangement of the Programme Officer grade. RTHK will also review and improve the administration and arrangement of its non-civil service contract staff and Category II service providers to ensure administrative efficiency and cost-effectiveness; formulate a code of conduct applicable to RTHK members in or out of the course of their work in order to properly manage conflicts of interest and compliance risk and safeguard RTHK's reputation and credibility. After completion of the review, RTHK will implement the holistic departmental manpower strategy and improve the administration of its non-civil service contract staff and Category II service providers.

20. RTHK will also follow up other recommendations of the Review Report by progressively implementing the improvement measures for financial management, stores and procurement, and information technology management.

Resource and Personnel Arrangement

21. RTHK has created a short-term part-time contract post "Advisor to Director of Broadcasting" who assists the Director of Broadcasting in implementing the recommendations pertaining to mechanisms for editorial management and complaints handling.

22. In addition, RTHK has created a number of supporting posts, including Administrative Officer, Executive Officer and Entertainment Standards Control Officer positions. RTHK also plans to increase the number of Executive Officers to assist in implementing the recommendations pertaining to personnel, finance, etc. under the Review Report.

Collaboration with the Board of Advisors

23. During the implementation process of the Review Report,

RTHK will fully consult and regularly report the progress to the Board of Advisors. At the meeting of the Board of Advisors in March, RTHK briefed Board Members on the Review Report and follow-up actions. The Board of Advisors was pleased to note that RTHK had fully accepted and would seriously implement the recommendations of the Review Report. It would give its full support to the development of RTHK and expect RTHK to continue to provide quality service to the community. RTHK will establish a proactive and collaborative partnership with the Board of Advisors.

CEDB's Oversight

24. As a government department, RTHK's policy and housekeeping matters (e.g. policies and resource management) are monitored by CEDB. RTHK also has to comply with all applicable government rules and regulations, including those on financial control, human resources management⁵ and procurement matters. CEDB has requested RTHK to regularly submit progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations in the Review Report in relation to personnel management (civil servants, contract staff and Category II service providers), human resources management, procurement and financial control matters, etc. It will also regularly hold meetings with RTHK management to oversee the implementation progress of the Review Report.

Advice Sought

25. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and give their views.

**Communications and Creative Industries Branch
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Radio Television Hong Kong
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⁵ Human resources management includes appointments, termination of service, conduct and discipline, training, development, as well as matters related to conditions of service.