

A New RTHK : LC Paper No. CB(1)2700/08-09
**Fulfilling its Mission as a
Public Service Broadcaster
Public Consultation Paper**



LegCo Panel on Information
Technology and Broadcasting
Meeting on 5 October 2009

Introduction

- ❑ In 2006, the Chief Executive (CE) appointed an independent Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting (the Review Committee) . The Review Committee submitted its report to the Government in 2007
- ❑ After having considered the Committee's report and taking all relevant factors into account, the CE in Council made a decision on 22 September 2009 with regard to the way forward of PSB development in Hong Kong and the future of RTHK. RTHK will remain as a Government department and will be tasked with the mission to serve as a public service broadcaster, and it will be allocated appropriate resources to better serve the public

The decision of the CE in Council

- ❑ The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) will consult the public on the operation of the new RTHK
- ❑ RTHK will provide dedicated digital television and radio channels as platforms for more original local productions, national and international TV/radio programmes, and community participation in broadcasting
- ❑ A Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund will be set up to encourage community participation in broadcasting
- ❑ The reprovisioning of the old Broadcasting House to Tseung Kwan O will be proceeded as a priority

Proposed public purposes that RTHK should serve

- ❑ To sustain citizenship and civil society
- ❑ To foster social harmony and promote pluralism
- ❑ To establish education value and promote lifelong learning
- ❑ To stimulate creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people

Proposed establishment of a Board of Advisors to enhance corporate governance and accountability

- ❑ The CE will appoint a Board of Advisors with not more than 15 members
- ❑ With reference to the views of the Review Committee, the Board should comprise three categories of members as follows:
 - Member(s) with industry/professional experience
 - Ex-officio member(s)
 - Lay member(s) from the community
- ❑ To ensure that RTHK will be free from undue outside influence, certain categories of persons should not be appointed to the Board (e.g. serving Members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council, public and judicial officers, etc)

Proposed responsibilities of the Board of Advisors

1. To advise the Director of Broadcasting (D of B) on all matters pertaining to editorial policy, programme standards and the quality of RTHK programmes
2. To conduct regular public standards reviews to track how well RTHK programming meets up to audience expectations
3. To receive reports on the performance evaluation of RTHK and advise D of B on ways to improve service delivery
4. To advise D of B on matters relating to community broadcasting on radio and TV channels
5. To commission studies and research on issues pertaining to the achievement of the public mission of RTHK

Proposed Board of Advisors

- ❑ Advisory role only. No executive power.
- ❑ Will not interfere with the daily operation and editorial decision of RTHK which will be the task of the D of B and his team
- ❑ D of B remains ultimately responsible for the editorial decision of RTHK

Proposed Charter to be signed by the Chief Secretary for Administration

- ❑ The Government has decided that the framework agreement signed between CEDB and RTHK should be elevated to be in the form of a Charter to be issued by the Government
- ❑ The Charter will set out that RTHK is editorially independent.
- ❑ The Charter will set out the relationship between the Government and RTHK. It will also clarify the role of the Broadcasting Authority (BA) in providing oversight over the operation of the department
- ❑ The Charter, being a public document, will be signed by the Chief Secretary for Administration to signify its importance.

Proposed contents of the Charter

1. The institutional relationship between CEDB and RTHK under the Government structure
2. The public purposes of RTHK
3. The editorial independence of RTHK to be guaranteed
4. The role and composition of the Board and other related matters thereto, and the relationship between the Board and RTHK
5. The relationship between the BA and RTHK and the related regulatory control issues
6. The accountability and performance evaluation to allow better public scrutiny of RTHK's programme productions
7. The modes of service delivery of RTHK
8. The programming directions of RTHK
9. The transparency in RTHK's operation
10. Any other matters relevant to the operation of RTHK

Proposed performance evaluation

- Performance evaluation is a requisite management process of a public organisation. It is also a foundation for accountability
- The Government agrees with the Review Committee's view on the areas of a public service broadcaster's performance that should be subject to evaluation, and the objectives that should be achieved in such areas

Proposed performance evaluation areas and objectives

1. Provide a comprehensive mix of programme genres
2. Cater for the diverse needs of different groups in the community
3. Stimulate creativity and originality, and nurture talent
4. Provide quality programmes
5. Deliver services across various platforms
6. Ensure credibility and accountability through quality governance
7. Ensure efficiency and sustainability through effective internal management
8. Ensure cost-effectiveness and optimal utilisation of assets through sound resource management
9. Explore and develop new media services
10. Enhance the accessibility of new media services
11. Provide adequate and effective opportunities for obtaining public views and feedback
12. Maintain a credible, accessible and efficient complaints handling system

Proposed extended modes of service delivery

- 4 AM channels and 3 FM channels
- new DAB services through the use of a Band III multiplex
- high-definition (HDTV) and standard-definition television (SDTV) services through the use of one digital terrestrial television multiplex in the UHF Band

Proposed new programming opportunities

- ❑ To promote and facilitate local original content production
- ❑ To facilitate partnership with national and international broadcasters and content producers, and provide a greater variety of national and international TV/radio programmes so as to enhance our understanding and awareness of the developments of the Mainland as well as widen our international horizons
- ❑ To encourage community participation in broadcasting, including the establishment of a Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund

Public consultation

- ❑ Consultation period: 5 October – 4 December, 2009
- ❑ Welcome public views
- ❑ Will consult the LegCo and the 18 District Boards
- ❑ Will arrange focus group discussions and other public engagement activities
- ❑ Will conduct a public opinion survey
- ❑ Will launch a dedicated website to collect public feedback

Thank you

