



The New RTHK: Fulfilling its Mission as a Public Service Broadcaster

Results of Public Consultation & The New RTHK Charter

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

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Introduction

- In September 2009, the Government announced the decision to retain RTHK as a Government department and to task it to take up the role of public service broadcaster of Hong Kong
- We issued a consultation paper in October 2009 to seek public views on the proposals concerning the future operation of RTHK
- Based on the views received, we have compiled a consultation report
- The report has been uploaded on our website (<http://www.cedb.gov.hk/ctb/eng/psb/index.htm>)



Results of Public Consultation

- Overall, comments received were supportive of the proposals set out in the consultation paper
- These include the proposed public purposes for RTHK, the enhancement of its corporate governance, the proposed Charter, the new services to be delivered by RTHK as well as the proposal for RTHK to facilitate community participation in broadcasting
- The Government attaches great importance to the editorial independence of RTHK and is fully committed to supporting RTHK in fulfilling its new mission



Charter

- From the consultation results, there is clear public support , including support from RTHK staff, for the issue of the Charter
- The Charter will be the primary document which will govern the operation of RTHK and establish the relationship between RTHK, Government and the Broadcasting Authority.
- It is based on the existing Framework Agreement between CEDB and RTHK, and the Memorandum of Understanding between CEDB, RTHK and the Broadcasting Authority (BA) and has regard to similar documents in use elsewhere
- The Charter will safeguard the long cherished editorial independence of RTHK
- It also sets out the public purposes, mission and role of RTHK, and RTHK's relationship with relevant parties including CEDB, the Board of Advisors, and the BA



Contents of Charter (1)

- **Scope (Section 1)**
 - To set out the scope of the Charter, respective obligations of the signing parties and definitions of terms used in the Charter



Contents of Charter (2)

■ Public purposes (Section 2.1)

RTHK is to fulfill the following public purposes –

- sustain citizenship and civil society
- provide an open platform for the free exchange of views without fear or favour
- promote social inclusion and pluralism
- promote education and learning
- stimulate creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people



Contents of Charter (3)

- **Mission of RTHK (Section 2.2)**
 - inform, educate and entertain audiences through multi-media programming
 - provide timely, impartial coverage of local, national and global events and issues
 - deliver programming which contributes to the openness and cultural diversity of Hong Kong
 - provide a platform for the Government and the community to discuss public policies and express views thereon without fear or favour
 - serve a broad spectrum of audiences and cater to the needs of minority interest groups



Contents of Charter (4)

- **Editorial independence (Section 3)**

To clearly set out -

- the editorial independence of RTHK
- the editorial principles to be adopted by the department, which include providing accurate, impartial, balanced and objective news, public affairs and general programming and upholding the highest professional standards of journalism
- As the Editor-in-chief, the Director of Broadcasting (D of B) is accountable for editorial decisions taken by RTHK



Contents of Charter (5)

- **RTHK's relationship with relevant parties (Section 4)**
 - To set out the relationship between RTHK and CEDB/SCED, the Broadcasting Authority and the Board of Advisors



Contents of Charter (6)

- **Board of Advisors and its relationship with RTHK (Section 5)**
 - The Board of Advisors is only advisory in nature. It will provide advice to RTHK to improve its service delivery, governance and accountability
 - It will not have executive power and will not be involved in the day-to-day operation or staffing matters of RTHK. The ultimate editorial responsibility rests with the D of B



Contents of Charter (7)

- **Responsibilities of Board of Advisors**
 - advising the Director on all matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming
 - receiving reports on complaints against editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming
 - receiving reports of public opinion surveys regularly conducted by RTHK to track how well RTHK programming meets up to audience expectations



Contents of Charter (8)

- **Responsibilities of Board of Advisors (Continued)**
 - receiving reports on the performance evaluation of RTHK and advising the Director on ways to improve service delivery
 - advising the Director on matters relating to community participation in broadcasting on radio and television channels, including advising on the rules for disbursement of the Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund
 - initiating studies and research on issues pertaining to the achievement of the public purposes and mission of RTHK



Contents of Charter (9)

- **Programme areas (Section 6)**
 - To set out that radio, television and new media (Internet) services are the three programme areas of RTHK and their respective objectives

- **Modes of service delivery (Section 7)**
 - To set out the different modes through which RTHK delivers its services, including analogue, digital and new media broadcasting



Contents of Charter (10)

- **Programming directions (Section 8)**
 - To set out broadly the programme directions of RTHK, including local original content production, partnership with national and international broadcasters, and community participation in broadcasting

- **Programming content regulation (Section 9)**
 - To state clearly that RTHK's production contents are subject to regulation by the BA and the relevant complaint handling procedures



Contents of Charter (11)

- **Performance evaluation (Section 10)**
 - To state clearly the accountability of RTHK to the public through various means, including a complaint handling system, performance pledges and evaluation reports, performance evaluation indicators, etc.

- **Transparency in operation (Section 11)**
 - To require RTHK to produce an annual report for public inspection

- **Financial planning and control (Section 12)**
 - To set out the Government's financial planning and control requirements that are applicable to RTHK

- **Renewal (Section 13)**
 - To set out that the Charter is subject to review and renewal every five years or when necessary



Way Forward

- We have briefed RTHK staff on the contents of the draft Charter and invited comments by RTHK management and staff
- We will take into account comments received to finalise the Charter and then arrange for it to be signed by the Chief Secretary for Administration, D of B and the Chairman of BA



Thank you!
