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9 April 2019

Mr Daniel SIN
Clerk, Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Sin,

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

**Reply to Motion Passed under Agenda Item IV
“Proposed Creation of One Permanent Post of Administrative Officer
Staff Grade B in Radio Television Hong Kong”
and Questions Raised by Members
at the Meeting on 11 March 2019**

At the meeting of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on 11 March 2019, Members passed a motion to “urge the Government to undertake that, following the creation of a permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB) in Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), designated as Deputy Director of Broadcasting, it has to adopt effective measures to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the operation of RTHK, including reviewing whether it is worth maintaining

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the education television service, and ensuring that RTHK would make the best use of the most up-to-date information technologies to widen the coverage and broadcasting of local sports activities, so as to strengthen support to the local sports development.”

In addition, Members also raised questions on the key performance indicators of the post proposed for creation as well as the progress of the New Broadcasting House (New BH) project, and requested information on the utilisation, production cost and the future development of the Education Television (ETV) service. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has consulted the Education Bureau (EDB) and RTHK, and the consolidated reply is as follows.

Reviewing the Education Television Service

Regarding the utilisation, production cost, the future development of the ETV service and the recommendations set out in the Audit Report on RTHK’s production of ETV programmes for EDB, EDB’s response is at **Annex**. Meanwhile, RTHK has rationalised the division of work and the arrangement of staff deployment in order to enhance the productivity of production staff. RTHK expects that the number of ETV programmes produced per programme staff will rise from 8.9 in 2018-19 to 10.3 in 2019-20, representing an increase of 16%.

Making the Best Use of the Most Up-to-date Information Technologies

RTHK has all along been making use of information technologies to meet the media industry’s diverse and fast-changing operational needs. While the work relating to the digitalisation of RTHK’s archives was finished in late 2015, the establishment of the media asset management system was completed in 2018. At present, RTHK’s archives are stored in digital format. As for programme production, RTHK programmes are moving towards tapeless production. A File-based Production System was set up in 2016 to enhance the quality and efficiency of production. In 2017, RTHK also introduced a virtual set studio, reducing the set-up time and storage space for scenic material and thereby enhancing efficiency. The consequent savings in production cost is about \$2 million per year.

Further, RTHK has extended its TV and radio programmes from traditional media to new media platforms. More local and overseas audiences can enjoy RTHK programmes through its website and seven mobile applications¹. RTHK will continue to strengthen its development in cross-media convergence of TV, radio and new media, and improve the quality and function of all platforms to facilitate browsing.

To ensure that RTHK's information technology developments are aligned with its business objectives, RTHK has recently engaged a consultancy service to formulate a Departmental Information Technology Plan for the next five years, with a view to enhancing the department's operations with technology in the long run.

Widening the Coverage and Broadcasting of Local Sports Activities, so as to Strengthen Support to the Local Sports Development

According to the Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong, RTHK should provide TV services in areas not adequately provided by commercial broadcasters. To arouse public interest in local sports events, RTHK has commenced live and relay broadcast of local sports matches in 2017-18. In 2018-19, RTHK live and relay broadcast over 50 local sports matches, including inter-school badminton, basketball and table tennis competitions, the Hong Kong Annual Badminton Championships, the Jockey Club Youth Football Academy Summit, the Hong Kong Marathon Volleyball Tournament, the World DanceSport Federation GrandSlam Hong Kong and the Chinese New Year Cup, etc.

In 2019-20, RTHK will continue to live and relay broadcast different types of sports matches, such as the 7th Hong Kong Games Final, and produce TV magazine programmes in order to provide audiences with local sports news and information. Besides, RTHK will continue to actively liaise with relevant local sports organisations on the possibility of broadcasting various types of sports matches.

Key Performance Indicators of the Post Proposed for Creation

In 2011, RTHK created a supernumerary post, designated as Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments), the main duties of

¹ Including "RTHK On the Go", "RTHK Screen", "RTHK Mine", "RTHK News", "RTHK Vox", "RTHK Memory" and "Chinese History"

which are to supervise the Production Services Division, the Departmental Administration Unit, the Finance and Resources Unit and the Systems Review Unit (SRU).

In terms of production services, with the launch of RTHK's digital terrestrial TV channels in 2014 and the continuous increase in output and broadcast hours of its TV programmes (the output hours increased from 764.4 hours in 2013-14 to an estimated 1 810 hours in 2020-21, representing an increase of 137%), the post proposed for creation needs to provide suitable production support services to match the increase in broadcast hours. The post also needs to develop continuous plans for the maintenance, replenishment and upgrading of facilities at 29 TV and 15 radio transmission stations. At the same time, the post needs to plan for the next five-year Broadcasting Services Contract (contract valued at \$497 million in total) which provides the appropriate technical operation support services and maintenance for RTHK's transmission networks, broadcasting facilities, studio production and post-production so as to cope with the operation and development of RTHK programmes.

As for human resources management, RTHK conducts about 10 recruitment and 30 promotion exercises each year to fill vacancies and posts of higher ranks. RTHK expects to hold about 30 promotion boards and 8 open recruitments each year in the future. These exercises must be conducted in accordance with government rules and regulations.

With respect to financial resources, RTHK must ensure that relevant projects comply with government rules and regulations, hence proper use of public money. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that resources are allocated to meet the operational requirements of respective divisions. In the past five years (2013-14 to 2017-18), the actual expenditure of RTHK reached 99.4% to 100% of the revised estimate for the same year, demonstrating that the use and management of financial resources was consistent with the operational requirements of the department. The post proposed for creation will continue to be responsible for supervising the management of financial resources.

Further, in the past five years, RTHK carried out 246 maintenance works, involving a total expenditure of \$31.97 million. In 2019-20, RTHK plans to use \$9.6 million for 15 maintenance works.

On the monitoring side, the SRU carries out regular system and compliance checks to provide objective advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. In the last five years, the SRU completed 17 such reviews. In 2019-20, SRU will continue its review work and continue to monitor the department's follow-up actions in response to the recommendations in the Audit Report to ensure that such measures are carried out on a sustained basis.

Progress of the New Broadcasting House Project

As reported at the Panel meeting on 11 March, RTHK had discussed with the Government Laboratory on the feasibility of a joint-user building in August 2016. However, both parties ultimately could not reach consensus on a number of major technical issues. During the past year, with the assistance of the Government Property Agency, several departments have indicated interest in sharing the use of a joint-user building with RTHK. RTHK is currently in discussion with these departments on user requirements, project design and planning. RTHK hopes that a development plan can be finalised in the coming months, and will take forward the New BH project in accordance with the established mechanism.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could please relay this letter to the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Alvin WONG)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

c.c.

Secretary for Education (Attn.: Mr Joe NG)

Director of Broadcasting (Attn.: Mr Philip LAM)

Utilisation, Production Cost and Future Development of Educational Television

Educational television (ETV) programmes are produced primarily based on the school curriculum and learning needs of kindergarten, primary and secondary students. Schools are encouraged to use them flexibly according to the needs of learning and teaching and of students. Information related to the utilisation, production cost and the future development of ETV service are provided below:

- According to the information provided by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the ratings of ETV programmes aired on a commercial channel and RTHK channels ranged from 0 to 0.5 in the past three years. However, owing to the changes in how video resources are used in the education sector, the viewing of ETV programmes by teachers and students in the classroom through broadcast has become less frequent, while use of the Internet has become habitual. In the light of the changes, the Education Bureau (EDB) has edited the programmes into chapters and short clips with a length of a few minutes. The short clips are uploaded to the Hong Kong Education City ETV website (<https://etv.hkedcity.net>), and over three million hits are recorded every year. Moreover, since the launch of the “ETV mobile application”, the number of downloads has been rising steadily, i.e. exceeding 80 000 in mid-March. Hence, the ratings of ETV programmes cannot adequately reflect the actual utilisation of ETV service.
- At the same time, in light of the developments in the media and the mode of learning and teaching in schools, the work of the ETV Unit of the EDB is no longer confined to the production of ETV programmes but includes the development of other multimedia resources. Examples include theme-based short videos, multi-ending micro movies, photos and sound tracks and a learning and teaching resource package for kindergartens which contains picture books, numbered musical notations and music videos of nursery rhymes, videos, animations, muppets, etc. The EDB has been commissioning outside production houses to handle the technical aspects of the production work.
- As for the production of ETV programmes by RTHK, according to Audit

Report, the cost per programme in 2017-18 was \$0.43 million. As stated in RTHK's Controlling Officer's Report, the revised estimate for 2018-19 was \$27.5 million and the number of programmes produced was 62, while the estimate for 2019-20 is \$28 million and the number of programmes to produce is 62.

- EDB is reviewing the need for ETV's production as one of the various types of e-learning resources and its positioning in order to determine the way forward of ETV programmes. The relevant committees under Curriculum Development Council will be consulted. EDB will also pay attention to cost-effectiveness in developing learning resources (including visual learning resources) in the future.

Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau

April 2019
