

**Draft minutes of the 2nd meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 2:30 pm, 18 February 2011
at Board Room, Broadcasting House, RTHK**

Present :

Mr Lester G. HUANG, JP (Chairman)
Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung
Ms FUNG May-gay
Mr Ringo LAM Wing-kwan
Mr C.K. LAU
Mr Maurice LEE Wai-man, JP
Ms Marisa YIU
Mr Gordon LEUNG, Acting Director of Broadcasting

Absent with apologies :

Miss Lisa Marie DJENG Kar-yee
Mr Raj Sital MOTWANI, BBS, JP
Ms Jolly WONG Ka-chi

In attendance from RTHK

Mr TAI Keen-man, Acting Deputy Director of Broadcasting
Mr CHEUNG Man-sun, Assistant Director of Broadcasting (TV) (Agenda item 1)
Mr Henry DOO, Head/New Media Unit (Agenda item 1)
Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Head/Corporate Communications Unit (Agenda item 1)
Miss Jace AU, Leader of RTHK's Working Group on Community Broadcasting
(Agenda item 2(a))
Mr CHAN Yiu-wah, Head/New Project Unit (Agenda item 2 (b))
Ms Amy KWONG (Board Secretariat)

Secretary :

Mr David CHOW (Board Secretariat)

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1. The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting. He informed Members that Mr Franklin WONG, the former Director of Broadcasting, had left RTHK upon the expiry of appointment contract on 8.2.2011. Mr Gordon LEUNG served as the Acting Director and Mr TAI Keen-man served as Acting Deputy Director with effect from the same day.

2. The Chairman said that subject officers of RTHK had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the respective agenda items.

**Agenda Item 1 : Major audience surveys conducted or joined by RTHK
(BOA Paper 1/2011)**

3. The Chairman said that BOA Paper 1/2011 set out in detail various surveys conducted by RTHK, and information on surveys conducted by other local organizations and overseas public service broadcasters (PSB) for the Board's reference. RTHK officers would brief Members of the details of the surveys and Members could then offer their views on the subject.

Radio Audience Survey

4. Mr TAI Keen-man briefly introduced the commonly adopted methodologies for conducting radio audience surveys, including quantitative surveys and qualitative surveys. He added that, at present, the regular audience surveys conducted by RTHK were mainly quantitative ones. In the past, RTHK also conducted qualitative surveys for channels with a relatively small audience size such as Radio 5 on an ad hoc basis. The experience of such surveys revealed that the audienceship of minority programmes such as Cantonese operas was quite stable. RTHK had, therefore, not conducted such surveys in recent years.
5. Mr TAI Keen-man then briefed Members on the Radio Audience Survey.
6. A Member enquired about the adequacy of the existing survey methodology because there was an increasing use of mobile telephones whereas the audience surveys in general were conducted through fixed-line telephones during day-time. Under this survey method, those respondents who could be reached might be confined to certain groups of audience such as domestic helpers, elderly or children. Another Member however considered that respondents might be in general more reluctant to respond to mobile telephone surveys because of the interruption caused to their work.
7. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah responded that survey houses still considered that fixed-line telephone surveys were more reliable because as revealed in the homepage of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority, each local person subscribed to 1.8 mobile phones on average. To address the issue of possible unbalanced

respondent groups, survey houses would put age groups under random selection. Only those respondents falling under the selected age groups would be surveyed.

TV Appreciation Index (TVAI) and TV Ratings Surveys

8. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun said that RTHK conducted TVAI and TV Ratings Surveys regularly. In addition to these regular surveys, RTHK would also conduct surveys on selected focus groups on an ad-hoc basis, mainly for collecting feedback and information to facilitate programme planning but not for ratings comparison.
9. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun added that apart from audience surveys, RTHK also attached great importance to public responses on RTHK's programmes expressed through various channels such as the internet, letters to RTHK and so forth. Besides, RTHK also encouraged producers to participate in various international award competitions so that feedback on production quality and standard could be obtained. Over the years, RTHK productions had been winning major awards from international competitions.
10. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun then introduced TVAI. He added that the survey started some 20 years ago. Because of this historical reason, it covered only RTHK, TVB (until 2009), ATV and Cable TV. According to the advice of the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme (HKUPOP) which was the survey institute engaged through tendering exercises, the methodology for the survey would need to be revamped if more TV channels were included in the survey and there would be cost implications too, since thus far, TVAI surveys were fully funded by RTHK only.
11. In response to a Member's enquiry as to why TVB withdrew from the Survey Advisory Panel of TVAI in 2009, Mr CHEUNG Man-sun said that TVB requested for the inclusion of its TVB PAY Vision in the survey. However, other members of the Advisory Panel considered that other pay-TV channels should also be allowed to join, if TVB's request was entertained. As explained in paragraph 10 above, RTHK was unable to absorb the additional costs.
12. A Member opined that the sequence of the programmes on the list to be rated by respondents might have impact on the outcome of the survey results. Mr TAI keen-man said that the sequence of the programmes which was grouped by TV stations was assigned to the respondents on a rotation basis.

TV Ratings Survey

13. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun briefed Members of the TV Ratings Survey. He said that RTHK produced some 1,600 TV programmes totaling some 570 hours each year which were transmitted through the two free-to-air broadcasters and RTHK.hk. Selected programmes were repeated on pay-TV channels, enhancing the total ratings for the programmes concerned.
14. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun said that the existence of the High Definition (HD) channels had also posed changes to the ratings of TV programmes because the HD channels were taking up an increasing share of the total ratings for the programmes simulcast on standard definition channels.
15. In response to a Member's enquiry on whether the free-to-air broadcasters could be asked to open up their HD channels for RTHK's programmes, Mr CHEUNG Man-sun said that there was currently no requirement on the commercial stations to allocate its airtime on HD channels to RTHK. However, RTHK would continue to explore with the broadcasters for allocating more airtime on HD channels for RTHK programmes.
16. A Member asked whether there was any assessment of the effectiveness of repeating TV programmes on pay-TV channels. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK did not subscribe to the rating results of those pay-TV channels and hence did not have such figures. The Member suggested that consideration could be given to making it a condition in the licensing agreement that the pay-TV operator should provide the concerned rating figures to RTHK.

RTHK WebTrends

17. Mr Henry DOO briefed members of the web survey on RTHK.hk. He said that the tool currently adopted for surveying all web activities of RTHK.hk was called WebTrends. This was a server-based survey rather than a direct survey on web visitors. At present, the website had an average hit rate of some 36 million per day with some 40% of them being from non-local sources including mainland China.
18. In response to a Member's enquiry on the accessibility to RTHK.hk in mainland China, Mr Henry DOO said that access to the website was not stable.

19. A Member opined that RTHK should make comparison of the hit rates of RTHK.hk with those of the websites of other electronic media to show the popularity of RTHK.hk. Mr Henry DOO said that the survey results of other media might not be available and there was no uniform basis for internet usage surveys. He would, however, try to explore if it was technically practical to make comparisons with other websites.
20. Another Member suggested that RTHK could consider conducting online web surveys as RTHK.hk had a strong support of visitors. Besides, RTHK could also consider collaborating with other overseas broadcasters in conducting research and surveys.

RTHK Image Survey

21. Ms CHAN Man-kuen briefed Members of the survey on the image of RTHK, the 'Public Views on RTHK 2009'. She added that RTHK conducted the survey after the release of the Report on the Review of the Public Service Broadcasting in Hong Kong in which RTHK was formally tasked to assume the role of a PSB in Hong Kong. RTHK therefore commissioned the survey to gauge the public perceptions and expectations of RTHK as a PSB.

RTHK Public Meeting

22. Ms CHAN Man-kuen went on to introduce the RTHK Public Meeting and the RTHK Programme Advisory Panel. She said that RTHK Public Meeting was first introduced in 2005. It was usually held on a Saturday morning at different venues with some 100 participants each time. RTHK would explore if it could be held during the evenings of weekdays so as to make it more convenient for the public to attend after school or work. The proceeding of the Public Meeting and the notes of meeting were posted on RTHK.hk.
23. In response to a Member's enquiry, Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that the Public Meeting was publicized through the RTHK.hk, radio trailers, TV promotions and advertisements in newspapers. Participants were requested to make a telephone registration to facilitate logistical arrangements. According to past experience, the turn-up rate of the registered participants was as high as some 90%. According to the survey on how participants got to know the Public Meeting, the most effective means of publicity were newspapers advertisement and radio trailers.

RTHK Programme Advisory Panel

24. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that the Advisory Panel was introduced in 1994 which covered only TV programmes until 2006 when radio programmes were also included. The proceeding and the summary of the discussion were posted on RTHK.hk. For the 2010 Meeting of the Advisory Panel, the selected topic of discussion was “The way ahead for youth and children programming” as RTHK would like to know the needs and preferences of the youth groups to facilitate programme planning to suit these audience groups. In this regard, RTHK was also conducting an audience survey on youth programmes, scheduled for completion by April 2011.

Channel Head’s Hotline

25. Mr TAI Keen-man said that Channel Heads had all along been receiving telephone calls from the audience who put forth their views and suggestions on RTHK services. RTHK decided several years ago to put this on air in the form of a phone-in programme to provide a platform for the exchanges between the audience and Channel Heads direct. Such programmes turned out to be very well-received by the audience. At present, Channel Heads of Radios 1, 2 and 5 presented such a programme once or twice a year.

Awards

26. Mr TAI Keen-man said that RTHK received a number of awards in various international competitions each year as detailed in Appendix H of the paper. These awards were an indication of the quality of RTHK productions as well.
27. In response to a Member’s enquiry, Mr TAI Keen-man said that the awards were won from renowned industry institutes, through a rigorous and competitive judging process, e.g., the New York Festivals, Intercom Competition Chicago and DigiCon6 Animation & Movie Awards of the TBS of Japan. For radio programmes, the Putonghua Channel had received awards in the competitions of mainland China.

Radio 4 Survey

28. Mr TAI Keen-man said that RTHK would also conduct ad hoc surveys in focus

groups on a need basis. Recently, Radio 4 was conducting a survey to collect information on audience's preferences and behaviours on Radio 4's programmes.

Surveys conducted by external organizations

29. Mr TAI Keen-man briefed Members of the audience surveys conducted by other local organizations and overseas PSBs.
30. A Member opined that The "Editorial Guideline Research" conducted by BBC mentioned in Appendix G of the paper was very comprehensive and informative covering a wide range of specific topics. RTHK might consider conducting surveys from such angles.
31. Other views expressed by individual Members were summarized below-
 - (a) decrease in the popularity of radio services was inevitable due to the changing lifestyle of Hong Kong people who could spare little time on listening to the radio. Besides, RTHK was not operated on a commercial basis. Therefore, ratings should serve as a reference but not the most dominant performance indicator. Apart from the ratings figures, RTHK should look into more in-depth matters;
 - (b) focus should be put on programme quality and content rather than ratings figures. In fact, RTHK productions were in general very professional. RTHK could consider ensuring balanced views in public and current affairs programmes and producing more cultural programmes to help promote the cultural development in Hong Kong;
 - (c) RTHK might need to consider how to weigh the opinions expressed by the RTHK Advisory Panel, audience surveys and the Board of Advisors;
 - (d) more resources should be allocated to cope with the rapid development of new media. As regards the criteria for resource allocation for this purpose, a simple yardstick was the provision of sufficient bandwidth to cope with the visiting traffic. In this regard, Key Performance Indicators such as target response time, download speed and so forth could be adopted;
 - (e) according to the experience of BBC, the introduction of iPlayer had lowered the average age group of radio audience from thirties to twenties. This was

possibly because young people preferred to access digital platform to download programmes. RTHK might consider exploring the development in this regard to attract young people.

Agenda Item 2(a) : Community Broadcasting (CB)

BOA Paper 2/2011))

32. Miss Jace AU briefed Members on the work of the RTHK's Working Group on Community Broadcasting. She said that the discussion of the Working Group thus far was only of a conceptual nature as details of CB in Hong Kong were not yet available.
33. Miss Jace AU went on to brief Members of the following issues of concern identified by the Working Group in taking forward CB in Hong Kong –
 - (a) in most western countries, the key characteristics of CB were that the community broadcasters were individually licensed with editorial autonomy, and they were subject to full legal liability for their productions. The case of Hong Kong would be rather different. The community broadcasters were not individual licensees. Being the carrier of CB, RTHK would be held legally liable for the CB productions;
 - (b) a fundamental issue would be the definition of CB in the context of Hong Kong. In this regard, it should be explored as to whether and how the general public should be involved in the process as it would be difficult to take forward CB if consensus in the community could not be reached;
 - (c) the relationship between RTHK and community broadcasters should be worked out. One scenario would be RTHK assuming only the role as a carrier with a community broadcaster making its programme on its own so long as they comply with relevant guidelines issued by the Broadcasting Authority (BA). Another scenario was that the community broadcaster would require full assistance of RTHK in the production work. It might be necessary to draw up certain standard templates to define the relationship between a community broadcaster and RTHK, and RTHK had to consider the impact on the manpower and operation of RTHK, and legal implications.
 - (d) at the early stage of the launching of Community Broadcast Involvement Fund (CBIF), some target groups might need to be identified as their

productions might arouse the interest of those who had no previous knowledge of broadcasting to participate in CB;

- (e) defining eligibility for funding application under CBIF and prioritization of resource allocation were other issues that needed to be further studied. According to overseas practice, whether a proposal would bring about social gain was one of the major selection criteria; and
 - (f) there were lots of operational issues that had to be resolved, e.g., whether CB programmes should include live broadcast, and whether specific production guidelines should be compiled for CB producers, etc.
34. Mr TAI Keen-man said that the implementation of CB was a rather complicated matter. Further papers would be submitted to the Board for advice in subsequent meetings. There were a large number of issues that had to be resolved such as the relationship between RTHK and the community broadcasters, copyright, quality of programme and complaint handling mechanism, etc. It was envisaged that the public would need to be consulted in due course.
35. In response to a Member's enquiry, Mr TAI Keen-man said that CB was still in a conceptual stage and LegCo had not yet been consulted. Mr Gordon LEUNG added that the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau disclosed in late 2010 that a funding of \$45 million had been earmarked for CBIF for a 3-year pilot which would be launched in 2012/13 tentatively. RTHK was tasked with drawing up the implementation proposals. The Interim Report of the Working Group provided a very useful basis for further discussions.
36. Members generally considered that public consultation was very essential in drawing up the implementation framework for CB. In this regard, core topics and issues should be provided to facilitate the public to express their opinions on CB which was a new matter to them.
37. Some Members raised their concern about the quality of CB programmes and whether RTHK was able to evaluate them, since public funds were involved.
38. Mr TAI Keen-man responded that the initial thinking was that the community broadcasters should at least be required to comply with relevant legislations and guidelines issued by the BA.

39. Mr Gordon LEUNG added that one might also argue that the evaluation criteria should not be ratings-oriented because one of the purposes of CB was to encourage pluralities of views and hence minority groups would likely be attracting a low audienceship. As regards programme quality, RTHK could provide advice to the producers as necessary, though whether the producers would follow suit might be beyond the control of RTHK. Miss Jace AU added that the screening process of the funding applications could help select competent producers.
40. A Member opined that the essence of CB was to provide platforms for producers interested in CB to have the opportunity to engage in discussion, exchange and sharing with the listeners of their productions. Therefore, social gain might not necessarily be a factor of consideration in vetting funding applications.
41. Miss Jace AU explained that it was a common practice overseas to adopt social gain as a criterion for selecting community broadcasters. This was even specified in the legislation of the CB of some countries such as United Kingdom. In addition, Create Smart Initiative HK and Community Investment and Inclusion Fund also adopted similar criteria.
42. A Member expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness of promoting CB given the rapid development of multi-media such as YouTube, web forum and so forth. However, another Member opined that government-funded CB channels could provide a more well-established platform for those interested in CB.
43. The Chairman thanked the RTHK Working Group for introducing the issues that need to be further considered and resolved in drawing up implementation proposal for CB. The Board would continue to work with RTHK on this subject.

Agenda Item 2(b) : Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB)
(BOA Paper 3/2011)

44. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah presented the paper. He elaborated that the tentative target was to launch DAB in October 2011. RTHK was actively engaged in the preparation work including programme planning and establishing the DAB transmission network.
45. A Member raised the concern about the cost-effectiveness of DAB to RTHK as it

was a general trend nowadays that the use of mobile reception device was increasing and the popularity of radio broadcast was decreasing.

46. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that according to the experience of Europe which first launched DAB some 10 years ago, the multi-channel environment brought by DAB was a significant social gain. Besides, in recent years, following the drop in the price of DAB receivers, there was an increasing trend of development of DAB overseas.
47. Mr TAI Keen-man said that, for RTHK, the initial additional costs were rather limited because in the initial stage of RTHK's DAB services, 80% of DAB channels' airtime would be used for simulcasting the existing AM channels.
48. Mr Gordon LEUNG added that the ultimate advantage of DAB was the improvement to reception quality which was a chronic problem for RTHK's existing AM channels, and the gradual enhancement of programme content including the introduction of CB. The cost implication for DAB to RTHK was relatively limited as explained by Mr TAI. Whether additional resources would need to be put into DAB during its further development would be reviewed.
49. A Member asked whether the development of DAB would be hindered by the market availability and the price of receivers.
50. Mr TAI Keen-man said that it was a world-wide trend that the price and size of DAB receivers were decreasing. However, for car receivers, it was still yet to be developed and it might take quite some time for them to become popular.

Agenda Item 2(c) : Media Asset Management System
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 657/10-11(04))

51. Mr TAI Keen-man presented the paper.
52. In response to a Member's enquiry as to why only 25% of the archives would be restored/digitized and what types of records would be covered in the project, Mr TAI Keen-man said that RTHK commissioned a consultancy study in 2009 to estimate the resources required for digitizing RTHK's archives and to propose recommendations on the way forward. Having regard to the costs and benefits of restoration/digitization for the materials concerned, RTHK estimated that the most valuable materials constituted about 25% of the total pool of materials

(which contained not only the final product, but also raw footages and working versions). These included television and radio dramas, Cantonese and Mandarin songs, Chinese operas and photos since 1970s, recorded music on 78 rpm and recorded music before 1970s. It was intended that the digitized archives would be open to public access and the detailed arrangements for it would be worked out in due course.

53. Members expressed concern as to whether playing machines for old records could still be found as this was an essential element in the digitizing project.
54. Mr TAI Keen-man said that this was indeed a challenge for RTHK. Playing machines for 18-in metal discs and open reel audio tapes had become obsolete in the market. Effort was being put into sourcing such machines overseas.
55. Members generally opined that programme archives were invaluable assets of Hong Kong and they fully supported establishing the MAM system.

Agenda Item 2(d) : Quarterly Updates
(BOA Paper 4 & 5/2011)

56. Mr TAI Keen-man briefed Members of the papers.

Updates on Programmes

57. On TV programmes, Mr TAI Keen-man drew Members' attention to the programme "The Railroad" (文化長河 – 鐵道行) which was sponsored by Home Affairs Bureau and included an episode about Tibet.

[Post-meeting note: RTHK consulted Members on the draft RTHK Annual Plan 2011-12 by means of circulation of the paper.]

Updates on Complaints

58. A Member said that individual radio programmes which had received a number of complaints ranked high in audience surveys. This reflected that audience surveys had limitations in programme evaluation.

Agenda Item 3 : Any Other Business

Funeral of the late Mr Szeto Wah

59. A Member said that the decision of the RTHK management not to live webcast the funeral of the late Mr SZETO Wah had caused staff queries as to whether RTHK's editorial independence had been compromised. While it was recognized that there would be critics no matter whether the decision was to live webcast or not, the crux of the matter was the decision making process. It was undesirable if the RTHK management was seen to be fluctuating in the decision making process and suspicions were raised as to whether the eventual decision was made under the influence of external factors. Besides, adequate communication between RTHK management and staff during the decision making process was very important. Some Members shared this view.
60. Mr Gordon LEUNG said that RTHK attached great importance to the coverage of the death of the late Mr SZETO Wah and the matter was treated as a major news item. RTHK reacted very quickly and a special episode of "Hong Kong Connection" (鏗鏘集) "別矣、華叔" was broadcast the day immediately following the death of the late Mr SZETO Wah. On the issue of the live broadcast of the funeral, the organizer of the funeral took up the production work on its own and coordinated all electronic media including RTHK to work out the transmission arrangements. The organizer requested RTHK to assist in feeding the pool signal to the other electronic media organisations. RTHK accepted the request, following a well-established practice of collaboration among electronic media organisations. Mr LEUNG clarified that RTHK had made no decision on live webcast all along. The possibility of a live webcast had been floated at the early stage when no details of the funeral ceremonies were available. By 25.1.2011, the funeral organizer announced that it would live webcast on its homepage. Considering that the viewers of RTHK.hk could also access the live webcast of the funeral through a hyperlink on RTHK.hk to the organizer's homepage and that normally RTHK only live webcast its own productions or activities in which RTHK participated in their production, it was therefore decided not to live webcast the funeral on RTHK.hk. During the funeral ceremonies, the news page on RTHK.hk provided frequent and live updates with audio, video and picture news items.
61. Mr Gordon LEUNG added that the RTHK management noticed from this incident that there was indeed some ambiguity in the editorial decision making

process concerning RTHK.hk, and would look into the issue separately.

Agenda Item 3 : Date of the next meeting

62. The Chairman informed Members that the next meeting was scheduled for 20 May 2011(Friday) at 2:30pm in the Board Room of Broadcasting House.
63. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:40 pm.