

**Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of  
RTHK Board of Advisors  
held at 2:30 pm, 26 August 2011  
in the Conference Room of the Innovation and Technology Commission,  
Wu Chung House, Wanchai**

**Present :**

Mr Lester G. HUANG, JP (Chairman)  
Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, JP  
Ms FUNG May-gay  
Mr Ringo LAM Wing-kwan  
Mr C.K. LAU, JP  
Ms Marisa YIU  
Miss Lisa Marie DJENG Kar-yee  
Mr Raj Sital MOTWANI, BBS, JP  
Mr Gordon LEUNG, Acting Director of Broadcasting

**In attendance from RTHK**

Mr TAI Keen-man, Acting Deputy Director of Broadcasting  
Mr CHAN Yiu-wah, Head/Digital Audio Broadcasting  
Miss Jace AU, Leader of RTHK's Working Group on Community Broadcasting  
Ms Amy KWONG (Board Secretariat)

**Absent with apologies**

Mr Maurice LEE Wai-man, BBS, JP

**Secretary :**

Mr David CHOW (Board Secretariat)

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1. The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting. He said that Ms Jolly WONG had resigned from the Board because of other commitments. He would send a letter of thanks to her for her contributions to the Board. Government would consider replacement in due course.
  2. The Chairman further said that in response to a suggestion by some members at the last meeting as to whether Board meetings could be held on Hong Kong Island in addition to Broadcasting House, the Secretariat had consulted Members

of their preferences. On the basis of feedback collected, and provided that a conference room of another department on Hong Kong Island could be secured and the agenda of the meeting concerned did not require excessive logistical arrangements, the Secretariat would in future try to arrange Board meetings on both sides of the harbour. The meeting this time was held in the Conference Room of the Information Technology Commission. He requested the Secretariat to convey the Board's gratitude to the Commission.

[Post-meeting note: A note of thanks was sent to the Commission on 2.9.2011 with a copy to the Chairman.]

### **Agenda Item 1 : Matters arising**

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#### Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB)

3. The Chairman said that RTHK had announced on 19.8.2011 that DAB service would be launched in November this year. He invited Mr TAI Keen-man to inform the meeting of the details of the matter.
4. Mr TAI Keen-man said that -
  - (a) DAB in Hong Kong would be transmitted by means of a single frequency network in DAB+ format via Channel 11C to deliver 18 digital channels;
  - (b) RTHK was allocated 5 digital channels. The remaining 13 channels were allocated to 3 commercial broadcasters, namely, Digital Broadcasting Corporation Hong Kong Limited (7 channels), Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited (3 channels) and Phoenix U Radio Limited (3 channels);
  - (c) there would be 7 DAB transmission stations located at Mount Gough, Kowloon Peak, Beacon Hill, Golden Hill, Castle Peak, Cloudy Hill and Lamma Island. The construction and maintenance costs would be shared by RTHK and the 3 commercial broadcasters in accordance with the number of channels for each broadcaster; RTHK would be the party responsible for repair and maintenance of the DAB transmission network on behalf of all DAB operators, as for the case for FM radio broadcast;
  - (d) by the time RTHK's DAB service was launched in November 2011, the Mount Gough and Beacon Hill transmission stations would be ready for use,

covering mainly north Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, Shatin and Ma On Shan areas. It was expected that the construction of the remaining 5 transmission stations would be completed between December 2011 and January 2012;

- (e) the 5 digital channels of RTHK would include the 4 existing AM channels for which new features would be added incrementally on the digital platform, and a new China National Radio (CNR) channel. The number of the channels would be -
- DAB 31 Putonghua Channel
  - DAB 32 CNR Voice of Hong Kong
  - DAB 33 Radio 3
  - DAB 34 BBC World Service
  - DAB 35 Radio 5
- (f) when compared with analogue radio service, DAB had the following advantages -
- (i) sound quality would be better;
  - (ii) a new service of data transmission including text-based information and still images could be provided alongside with audio broadcast. Since the technology was new to RTHK, we would first develop text transmission including instant news headlines, weather and key traffic news. Still image transmission would be explored when RTHK was technically ready to do so;
  - (iii) community broadcasting involvement (CBI) services would be provided on DAB channels;
  - (iv) more channels could be provided in the same frequency spectrum under DAB as compared with analogue transmissions;
  - (v) the RTHK programmes on the DAB platform would include Cantonese, Putonghua and English channels, complementing the Government's policy to promote " bi-literacy and tri-lingualism "; and
  - (vi) RTHK would carry out promotion in the districts to introduce this new broadcasting technology to the public and explain to them matters relating to receiving DAB services.

5. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah added that the launch of DAB in November was only a trial run. The official launch date would be fixed when the signal coverage could reach some 80% to 90% of the territory.
6. In response to Members' enquiries, Mr TAI Keen-man replied that –
  - (a) it was expected that webcast of DAB on RTHK's website (rthk.hk) would be available by February 2012;
  - (b) there was no available statistics on the number of people who possessed a DAB receiver. However, the number was expected to be small for the time being as DAB had just been introduced to Hong Kong. RTHK operated an exhibition booth in the Hong Kong Computer Festival 2011 held in August to promote DAB services. According to the observation of our staff, those who purchased DAB receivers were mainly in their forties to fifties. This might reflect that loyal radio fans were mostly in these age groups. Younger listeners were believed to be more prone to listen to radio through mobile devices;
  - (c) on sound quality, the bit rate for DAB was 48 kbps, whereas it was 128 kbps for webcast in HQ format. Technically, the sound quality of DAB and webcast in HQ format was audibly similar. For FM radio service, the sound quality when it was received by means of HiFi set was similar to 128 kbps and should therefore be no worse than DAB. This was also why Radio 4 would remain on FM service;
  - (d) data transmission alongside with webcast had yet to be developed;
  - (e) for car DAB receivers, this was still being developed by the industry;
  - (f) RTHK would prepare promotional leaflets on DAB; and
  - (g) the existing programme service on analogue channels would not be affected by the launch of DAB service.

**Agenda Item 2(a) : Pilot Project for Community Broadcasting  
Involvement Services (BOA Paper 9/2011)**

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7. Miss Jace AU presented the paper.

Consultation with RTHK Programme Advisory Panel (Annex of the paper)

8. Some Members raised their concern about a comment of the Programme Advisors (PA) recorded in paragraph 11 of the Annex to the paper which read “Inclusion and empowerment of the under-privileged communities should be the focus...”. They opined that the wording “should be the focus” seemed to be rather strong and would therefore like to know the request of the under-privileged communities.
9. Mr TAI Keen-man replied that the PAs realized that under-privileged communities might have difficulty in drafting proposals for funding applications and this would render it difficult for them to compete with other applicants. They therefore hoped that they would not be set back and assistance could be provided for them in this regard.
10. Mr Gordon LEUNG said that to his understanding, the comment was about a concern that the under-privileged communities might need extra assistance when participating in the CBI services because of their education background, social status etc;
11. A Member suggested RTHK to explore introducing some creative ways of submitting proposals to facilitate the under-privileged in this regard.
12. Members generally supported the suggestion of the PAs in paragraph 33 of the Annex which read “May select quality productions for broadcasting on main radio channels as encouragement.”

Objectives of CBI services

13. A Member opined that the objective of “community involvement” in paragraph 5(d) of the paper should be more specific. Another Member said that there was elaboration on this term in the original version of the objectives in footnote 1 against the above-mentioned paragraph, which read “e.g. in providing tangible services to and interactions with specific community groups.”

14. Members generally agreed to the revised objectives.

#### Chinese term of community broadcasting

15. Members generally agreed to use “社區廣播” as the Chinese term of community broadcasting because of its general acceptance in Chinese societies.

#### CBI participants

16. A Member requested the meeting to consider whether registered companies could be accepted, as they were normally profit-making and pursuing commercial interests.

17. Another Member said that some public funding schemes accepted applications from limited companies. Though they were profit making by nature, actually, it was not uncommon that arts and culture organizations registered as a limited company were only pursuing their interest in arts and culture and could not make any profit. Therefore, we should assess an application on the basis of the merits of the proposal. An applicant should not be rejected simply because of its form as an organization.

18. Some Members were concerned that CBI services would be used for commercial promotion and requested RTHK to explore ways to plug possible loop-holes.

19. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that applications should not be denied simply because of the form of registration of an organization. Moreover, CBI programmes should comply with the Codes of Practices issued by the Broadcasting Authority. Besides, RTHK producers were experienced in judging whether the programme content was a commercial promotion.

#### Broadcasting platform

20. A Member said it was understood that the copyright issue of live simulcast and replay of CBI programmes on rthk.hk would need to be clarified. However, since there was quite strong demand for webcast, RTHK could consider introducing the simulcast and replay of CBI programmes on rthk.hk for those CBI programmes that should have no copyright issue such as non-music programmes.

### Programme formats

21. Members had no particular comments on the programme format proposed in the paper.

### Topics for CBI programmes

22. Some Members considered that as a matter of principle, the topic categories for CBI programmes should not repeat those commonly found on the analogue channels. One Member suggested including children and parenting, sports and history on the list and removing from it the topics of economy and finance.
23. Some Members said that there were already over 10 topic categories identified so far and the number of programmes that could be arranged in a quarter would be limited. It was therefore necessary to put focus on certain topics as the theme for each quarter. Other topics would also be considered but would be accorded a lower priority.
24. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that since CBI services was a new service, the preference of the audience was not known. They might prefer a greater diversity of programme topics rather than those selected by RTHK for a certain quarter. Moreover, it was intended to invite applications only once or twice each year. Therefore, at the time when we invited applications, it would be difficult to foresee the preference of the audience and determine the topics well in advance of a quarter which might be some one year ahead.
25. Some Members asked whether the background of the applicants should be taken into consideration when processing a CBI Fund application.
26. Mr Gordon LEUNG suggested that applications should be considered on the basis of the merits of the programme output in achieving the CBI objectives instead of the background of the applicants.

### Non-Chinese service

27. Some Members were concerned about how RTHK could monitor the content of a programme delivered in a language which RTHK colleagues were not familiar with.

28. Mr TAI Keen-man said that at present, RTHK delivered some programmes in the language of ethnic minorities such as Nepalese and Indonesian and we would rely on the feedback of the ethnic communities concerned. For CBI services, it might be necessary to include representatives from the ethnic minority communities in the CBI Fund Vetting Committee.
29. A Member said that ethnic communities would voice their opinions if they found something wrong with the content of a programme as they would all treasure the opportunities of participating in CBI services.
30. Some Members considered that it might not be appropriate to categorize English language community as an ethnic minority given the fact that English was an official language and use of English was common in Hong Kong.
31. Mr Gordon LEUNG said that RTHK would look further into the wording after the meeting.
32. Members generally agreed to the proposal to conduct a separate consultation with the ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong.

### Training

33. Considering that the resource implication for providing training to all successful candidates would be quite significant, a Member asked whether those who had proven experience in broadcasting could be exempted from the training requirement.
34. Mr TAI Keen-man said that it was essential to require all successful applicants to undergo the induction training provided by RTHK because the codes of practices issued by the BA, public service broadcasting values, programme standards and practices were all subject to change over time. As regards training on production techniques, RTHK had started discussions with some tertiary institutions to explore the possibilities to invite them to provide training on production techniques.

### Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund (CBIF)

35. In response to a Member's enquiry, Miss Jace AU said that if popular CBI programmes were to be automatically allocated time slots in the next quarter



without undergoing a fresh application exercise, this would give rise to accusations of RTHK giving preferential treatment to such programmes.

36. Mr TAI Keen-man added that as it was anticipated that the demand for CBI services would be very high, it was practically difficult to exempt any programmes from the application requirement.
37. A Member said that sub-contracting of the approved time slots should not be allowed and this should be stated explicitly in the contract with the successful applicants.
38. A Member opined that the proposed ceiling rate of \$15,000 per hour for funding support was not a small amount because each programme could be allocated a maximum of \$60,000 per month. This could enable the successful applicants to engage dedicated staff to undertake programme production.
39. Miss Jace AU explained that the funding amount would cover both manpower and technical costs. Since technical input was an essential part of programme production, it would be odd if a programme budget contained no technical costs at all. RTHK would also give further consideration as to whether there should be a minimum share of technical cost out of the total production cost.
40. Mr TAI Keen-man added that as CBI services was not a commercial procurement, it was intended to standardize payment for manpower input in the tune of a few hundred dollars to cover some basic expenses such as travelling incurred for participation in programme production.
41. In response to a Member's enquiry on technical costs, Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that due to the limited technical facilities available in RTHK which were already stretched to cope with RTHK's own productions, RTHK would not be able to provide technical facilities for pre-recording CBI productions except for live broadcast of the programmes.
42. A Member opined that remuneration for manpower input was an incentive for the successful applicants to produce quality programmes. Hence, a relatively higher amount of remuneration for manpower input could be acceptable if the programme quality could justify it.
43. Some Member asked whether RTHK would require the successful applicants to

pay for the use of RTHK's resources in the production such as manpower for monitoring the programmes, use of studio for live broadcast etc. or whether part of the allocation for CBI services could be set aside for the purpose.

44. Mr Gordon LEUNG said that it was inevitable that there would be resources input on the part of RTHK in providing CBI services such as technical facilities, and staff resources for handling applications and monitoring of the CBI programme production. RTHK was still considering the financial model in implementing the CBI services such as whether we should recover the costs for the use of RTHK resources from the successful applicants.
45. A Member considered that if the composition of the CBIF Vetting Committee was made known to the applicants in advance of the vetting exercise, this might give rise to the possibility of subjecting the vetting committee members to undue lobbying pressure. This Member also asked whether a Vetting Committee member should refrain from the vetting process in case he/ she had connection with the applicant.
46. Other Members generally opined that for the sake of transparency, the composition of the Vetting Committee should be made known to the public.
47. Mr Gordon LEUNG said that the proposed set-up of the Vetting Committee was that it would comprise a pool of experts from different fields and lay members so that vetting panels with relevant expertise could be formed to deal with applications concerning different fields. The composition of the Vetting Committee should be made known to the public for transparency sake. However, it was a common practice not to disclose the composition of specific vetting panels formed for individual vetting exercises before the completion of the vetting exercise.
48. Mr Gordon LEUNG further said that as a common practice in other public funding schemes, if a Vetting Committee member had connection with a particular application/applicant, he/ she should declare an interest in this aspect. He/she might be required to refrain from the vetting process depending on the circumstances of individual cases.

#### Time-frame

49. Mr TAI Keen-man informed Members of the latest tentative time-frame for

taking forward the CBI services as follows -

Time	Events
September 2011	Consultation with ethnic community groups
October 2011	Two brainstorming sessions with relevant NGOs
End October 2011	Consultation with the RTHK Programme Advisors Panel at its annual meeting
Early November 2011	Finalization of the public consultation document
15 November 2011	The Board to discuss the public consultation document
December 2011	Consultation with LegCo Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2012	Public consultation
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2012	Finalization of the concrete plan for the CBI services
Mid 2012	Invitation of applications
End 2012/ early 2013	Launch of CBI services

**Agenda Item 2(b) : Studies and research to be initiated by the Board of Advisors**

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50. A Member said that the WebTrends survey covered only hit rates and page views but visitors profile could not be captured. It was therefore useful to conduct benchmark surveys so that the performance of rthk.hk could be compared with similar surveys conducted by other electronic media.
51. Mr TAI Keen-man said that in response to the Board's suggestion made at the meeting held in February 2011, RTHK had invited two survey houses to present

their proposals on conducting benchmark surveys.

52. Mr Gordon LEUNG added that the methodology adopted by the two survey houses was different. RTHK was still studying the matter and would report the outcome to the Board at the next meeting.
53. A Member opined that the existing surveys conducted by RTHK covered mainly popularity and appreciation index. The Board could consider conducting surveys from other angles.
54. Another Member responded that the Board could make reference to the perspectives of the surveys conducted by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Trust which covered a much wider scope than quantitative survey on popularity. These BBC Trust surveys covered, e.g., tastes and perceptions of the audience; perceptions on innovation and distinctiveness.
55. The Chairman said that taking into account Members' views on the matter, he would discuss with RTHK after the meeting with a view to coming up with concrete suggestions for the Board's consideration.

**Agenda Item 3 (a) : Quarterly updates on programmes  
(BOA Paper 10/2011)**

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56. Mr TAI Keen-man presented the paper and added that RTHK provided TV coverage of a few events relating to the visit of the Vice Premier, Li Keqiang in Hong Kong in August.

**Agenda Item 3 (b) : Quarterly updates on complaints  
(BOA Paper 11/2011)**

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57. Mr TAI Keen-man presented the paper and Members noted the content.

**Agenda Item 4 : Any other business**

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Award of Honours

58. The Chairman conveyed on behalf of the Board congratulations to the following Board Member and RTHK colleagues who had received CE's awards of honours

or who had been appointed as Justice of the Peace on 1.7.2011 -

Bronze Bauhinia Star

Mr Maurice Lee

Mr Mak Yun-sau

The Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/ Public Service

Mr Philip Chow

Miss Peggy Ching

Justice of the Peace

Dr Eugene Chan

**Agenda Item 5 : Date of next meeting**

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59. The Chairman said that the next meeting would be held on 15.11.2011. The venue of the meeting would be notified in due course.

**Secretariat**

**RTHK Board of Advisors**