

**Minutes of the 50th Meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 9:15 am, 27 September 2019
at Conference Room, G/F, Broadcasting House
30 Broadcast Drive, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon**

Present

Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, BBS, JP (Chairman)

Ms Dilys CHAU Suet-fung

Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min

Mr Mohan DATWANI

Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him

Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen

Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese, BBS, MH, JP

Ms Eva WONG Ching-hung

Mr Augustine WONG Ho-ming, JP

Ms Elaine WU Siu-ling

Mr LEUNG Ka-wing, Director of Broadcasting

In Attendance from RTHK

Mr Eugene FUNG, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Special Duties)

Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes)

Mr Albert CHEUNG, Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming)

Ms Jace AU, Assistant Director (TV & Corporate Businesses)

Ms Natalie CHAN, Controller (Television)

Ms Dawn TSANG, Acting Controller (Radio)

Ms Amen NG, Head/Corporate Communications & Standards

Ms Doris WONG, Head/Public and Current Affairs (Agenda Item 3)

Ms Angel CHENG, Acting Head/Public Affairs and Library Management (Agenda Item 3)

Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)

Ms Sara FONG (Board Secretariat)

Absent with Apologies

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP

Dr TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP

Professor WONG Kam-fai, MH

Secretary

Ms Yvonne WU (Board Secretariat)

Agenda Item 1 : Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. The Chairman informed Members that Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes) and Mr Albert CHEUNG, Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming), attended the meeting in their new capacities.
2. The Chairman welcomed Ms Jace AU, Assistant Director (TV & Corporate Businesses), Ms Natalie CHAN, Controller (Television) and Ms Sara FONG, member of the Secretariat, to the meeting, and thanked Mr Vincent LEE and Ms Vicky CHAN for their past contributions.
3. Mr Walter CHAN, Dr TIK Chi-yuen and Professor WONG Kam-fai sent their apologies for not being able to join this meeting.
4. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 16 August 2019 to Members for perusal and no comments were received. The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2 : Matters Arising

5. Members had not raised any item for discussion.

Agenda Item 3 : News, Public and Current Affairs Programmes

6. The Chairman expressed his appreciation to RTHK's journalists for their efforts in reporting the ongoing social events. He invited Members' views regarding the news reporting of RTHK. Members appreciated the live broadcast of the recent protests on RTHK TV32. They considered that, without the presence of commentators during TV live coverage, the audience could make their own judgement on what were presented to them. This was conducive to projecting an objective and impartial image of RTHK.
7. A Member stated that the Board fully supported RTHK in upholding the editorial independence as stated in the Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong ("the Charter") and asked how RTHK upheld the highest professional standards of journalism in news reporting. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing assured the Board that RTHK news adhered to the principles of telling the truth with due impartiality and accuracy. He said that he had reminded the journalistic staff and reporters to keep their professionalism at all times. A Member suggested RTHK to draw up guidelines on impartiality for the journalists on live reporting.

8. The Chairman informed the Board that he had received a complaint letter from a former Board Member, Mr Robert CHUA, expressing his dissatisfaction with the performance of the RTHK journalists in covering the recent social events. The letter was tabled to Members for reference. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that RTHK had endeavoured to cover the news events from a highly objective perspective. In response to the allegations against RTHK on its biased angles in taking live videos, he emphasised that all the live coverage footages were factual representation of the protests. He further explained that as compared to other local TV counterparts, RTHK lacked sufficient manpower to film at multiple locations and could only arrange one or two production crews to cover the protests at limited locations. Yet, RTHK had all along strived to spare the best efforts to accomplish the task. Ms CHAN Man-kuen supplemented that despite the resource constraints, RTHK news team had filmed a number of exclusive footages occasionally that other media organisations and the Police Public Relations Branch (“PPRB”) of Hong Kong Police Force had asked for share use of the material in their broadcasts and press conferences respectively.

[Post-meeting note: The Chairman informed the Board on 29 November 2019 that consent was obtained from the complainant to the disclosure of his name on the meeting minutes.]

9. The Chairman said that the RTHK news team had made great efforts in covering the protests notwithstanding resource constraints. He said that the safety of RTHK frontline journalists was always of paramount importance. He stressed that RTHK should consider public perception and proactively remind all frontline reporters to be objective and impartial all the times. A Member was impressed by the coverage on TV32 and suggested that RTHK should consider redeployment of resources in response to the prevailing media ecology. Some Members suggested RTHK to produce promotional trailers to showcase its efforts in covering the recent social events so as to allay any biased negative public perception on RTHK. A Member opined that due credits should be given to RTHK when PPRB used RTHK footages in their press conferences. Some Members emphasised that RTHK journalists should strictly adhere to the RTHK Producers’ Guidelines in order to uphold the credibility and reputation of RTHK.
10. Members were concerned and enquired how RTHK handled repeated complaints against the professionalism of some RTHK reporters in recent incidents. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that all complaint cases would be promptly handled in accordance with the prevailing mechanism of complaint handling in RTHK and government regulations, and the procedures took time. Ms CHAN Man-kuen supplemented that in general, the section heads would carry out investigations and pursue with proper record. Counselling and coaching to the staff concerned

would also be conducted, and disciplinary actions would be taken as appropriate.

11. Ms Angel CHENG introduced the public and current affairs programmes produced by the Radio Division. With regard to the phone-in programmes, she explained that RTHK would not filter the callers by their political stances as they would not ask callers what precisely they were about to say on a specific topic before connecting them to the hosts. Some Members commended that in general the radio programmes on public and current affairs were presented in a fair and balanced manner. A Member considered that there was improvement in the presentation of a phone-in programme that morning and the programme hosts of RTHK phone-in programmes in general should continue to exercise their impartiality and objectivity. A Member considered RTHK programmes were good in story-telling and in-depth analysis of issues and suggested more could be done to forge a way forward along with the society.
12. Ms Doris WONG introduced the public and current affairs programmes produced by the Television Division. The Chairman suggested that, to strengthen the impartial image of RTHK, interviewees from different background should be invited to the programmes to strike a balance of views. He said it was important for RTHK programmes to be fair and unbiased. Another Member commented that RTHK's public and current affairs programmes had a history of good reputation and high quality, and extra care and diligence must therefore be exercised in the production and the content of those programmes to ensure that the well-established image would not be tarnished by the negative public comments on those programmes.
13. Some Members were concerned about the recent criticisms against certain episodes of the programme "Hong Kong Connection" on its coverage of the current social events, and opined that different views should be presented to facilitate the audience to make their own judgement. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that RTHK endeavoured to provide an objective coverage on the issues and the production team had strived to present the programme by providing the public with comprehensive and impartial information under a tight filming schedule. A Member pointed out that the programme coverage of another episode of "Hong Kong Connection" on the case of recent class boycott in schools was not comprehensive and had negative impact to the education sector as it only focused on the views of boycotted students and neglected other views from the schools or teachers. The Member suggested that, to give a full picture of the issue, opinions from different perspectives should be embraced in another episode as a follow-up.

14. The Chairman and Members expressed their concern about the presentation style of the programme “Headliner” and that some negative public comments on the programme might affect the impartial image of RTHK. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that “Headliner” was one of the most popular television programmes of RTHK with 30 years of history which presented the public and current affairs in a satirical way. The programme had demonstrated the openness of Hong Kong society. A Member advised that RTHK did not necessarily have to be concerned as to ratings and that there was a public mission which assumed significance in assessing the value of a programme. Efforts should be made to ensure that the content of the programme was in conformity with the provisions of the Charter and balanced with multiple angles. Ms Doris WONG added that “Headliner” aimed at monitoring the Government and the influentials regardless of their political stances. Some Members commented that they understood the fact that the programme was satirical by nature, hence the unique tone and manner of presentation. But they opined that even within the scope of being a satire, one should still aspire to achieve high editorial standard and quality. A member noted that in line with the principle of impartiality, the programme should take on targets across the political spectrum using the same set of standards, and avoid being perceived as selectively picking on any single political camp.
15. The Chairman concluded that RTHK should strictly adhere to the Charter in providing its services and stressed the importance of media impact especially during critical and sensitive times. RTHK should also consider public perception as it might affect RTHK’s image. He said it was stated in the Charter that RTHK was expected to promote, among other things, understanding of the concept of “One Country, Two Systems” and provide a platform for the Government and the community to discuss public policies. He proposed RTHK to promote Government policies proactively. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing reaffirmed that RTHK had all along fulfilled the supporting role of relaying Government messages to the public. For instance, the press conferences or messages delivered by the principal officials were relayed without interruption or editing and arrangements were made to rerun the recordings. He said that there were frequent communications between RTHK and the Government, and RTHK would provide backup support to the Government if necessary.
16. The Chairman said that the Board supported RTHK in upholding its credibility. The Board would continue to discharge its functions of advising RTHK on matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programmes.

Agenda Item 4: Updates on RTHK's Response to Audit Commission's Report

17. Ms CHAN Man-kuen informed Members of RTHK's progress on the implementation of the recommendations in the Report of the Audit Commission (the Audit). Details were set out at **Appendix**. Members had no comments on the progress report.

Agenda Item 5(a): Updates on Programmes (BOA Paper 9/2019)

18. Ms CHAN Man-kuen briefed Members on the updates on programmes. Members had no comment on the paper.

Agenda Item 5(b): Updates on Complaints (BOA Paper 10/2019)

19. Ms CHAN Man-kuen introduced the paper. Ms Amen NG introduced a summary of direct feedback from the public. Members had no comment on both documents.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

20. Members did not bring up any other matter for discussion.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

21. The next meeting was scheduled for 29 November 2019.

22. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.

Secretariat

RTHK Board of Advisors

Radio Television Hong Kong: Provision of Programmes
Progress in Implementing the Audit's and Public Accounts Committee's Recommendations
(as at 27.9.2019)

Para. No.	Audit's Recommendations	Progress
Part 2: Production of Programmes		
2.10	<p><u>Planning and Budgetary Control</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the Director of Broadcasting (DB) should –</p> <p>take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes, in order to facilitate the making of more meaningful planning decision for the programmes.</p>	<p>A high level working group was set up in the Radio and Corporate Programming Division and the Television and Corporate Businesses Division respectively in March 2019. Chaired by Assistant Director of Broadcasting (Radio and Corporate Programming) and Assistant Director of Broadcasting (Television and Corporate Businesses) respectively, the working groups sought to examine the full palette of information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes in a structured manner with a view to drawing up meaningful parameters and reviewing mechanism for programme planning decisions. The two working groups had submitted the reports to senior management in July 2019.</p>
2.54	<p><u>Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS)</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should –</p>	
	<p>(a) ensure that the Selection Committee (SC) gives views and assessment on each CIBS applicant in respect of each of the five selection criteria and records such views and assessment;</p>	<p>The selection process had been revised to ensure that the SC would record their views and assessment on each applicant in respect of each of the five selection criteria. The revised selection process was implemented in March 2019.</p> <p>As the recommendation has been implemented and will be carried out on an on-going basis, we recommend that this part be deleted from the next report.</p>

	<p>(b) take measures to ensure the timely submission of the programme recordings, self-evaluation reports and Limited Assurance Engagement Reports (LAER) by the CIBS participants, and terminate the agreements with the participants with long delay in their submission;</p>	<p>The submission mechanism for programme recordings, self-evaluation reports and Limited Assurance Engagement Reports had been reviewed and revised. Enhanced measures had been implemented in July 2019. Details were set out as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) programme recordings: setting of an agreed deadline with the successful applicants according to programme schedule; (ii) self-evaluation reports and LAER: sending reminders to the CIBS participants before deadline of submission and arrangement of facilitation talks for the successful applicants emphasising the requirements for timely submission; and (iii) delayed submission of programme recordings, self-evaluation reports and LAER would be recorded for future reference in assessing their applications, if any, to CIBS. <p>As the recommendation has been implemented and will be carried out on an on-going basis, we recommend that this part be deleted from the next report.</p>
	<p>(c) regularly conduct focus group studies to assess the cost-effectiveness of the projects funded by the Community Involvement Broadcasting Fund (CIBF);</p>	<p>RTHK would organise focus group study on an annual basis. The first focus group study would be conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 taking into account the lead time to define the mechanism for conducting the study, selecting focus group participants (proposed categories of focus group participants included successful applicants, unsuccessful applicants and listeners), procuring service to conduct the study and the time necessary for the service provider to conduct the study.</p>

(d)	post questionnaires on the CIBS website to collect audience views on CIBS projects;	The questionnaire to collect views of the audience was uploaded onto the CIBS website in March 2019. Promulgation of the arrangement was announced on both radio and online platforms, including the CIBS website and Facebook, in March 2019. Regular reports would be made to the Board of Advisors (BoA) thereafter.
(e)	require the CIBS applicants to set expected deliverables that are measurable and evaluate the achievements of the expected deliverables; and	<p>The application form had been revised to facilitate applicants to set measurable and practical expected deliverables. The revised application form had been in use starting from March 2019.</p> <p>As the recommendation has been implemented and will be carried out on an on-going basis, we recommend that this part be deleted from the next report.</p>
(f)	step up promotion on the CIBS to the community and ethnic minority organisations and individuals to enhance its reach to the service targets and listenership.	<p>A new promotional strategy had been implemented from April 2019 onwards which included –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) placing advertisements on public transport such as minibuses and MTR trains; (ii) placing advertisements on newspapers and magazines, including publications of ethnic minority groups, Chinese and English publications; (iii) producing trailers to be transmitted on radio channels, TV, internet and social media platforms; (iv) launching outdoor activities for outreaching potential applicants; (v) providing outreach consultation services for potential applicants; (vi) displaying banners in different districts; and (vii) arranging featured interviews with the applicants by different media, etc. <p>As an on-going arrangement, RTHK would review the effectiveness of the promotion in the light of feedback gathered from the website and the</p>

			<p>applicants; and views of the focus group to be organised in the fourth quarter of 2019.</p> <p>As the recommendation has been implemented and will be carried out on an on-going basis, we recommend that this part be deleted from the next report.</p>
Part 3: Broadcasting of Programmes and New Media Services			
3.6	<p><u>Management of TV Broadcasting Hours</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should endeavour to enrich the TV programmes, including –</p>		
	<p>explore ways to enrich the miscellaneous contents of TV 31 and TV 32 with a view to enhancing the channels' attractiveness.</p>		<p>For TV 31, programmes were scheduled round-the-clock (i.e. 24-hour a day) according to programming strategy from 1 April 2019. Miscellaneous content was no longer broadcast on TV 31.</p> <p>For TV 32, the working group as mentioned in para. 2.10 was in the process of reviewing its programming strategy. Consideration would be given to producing more programme varieties, such as live coverage of local sports events, live relay of important Mainland and overseas events and short interview videos on various topics. The working group had submitted the report to senior management in July 2019.</p>
Part 4: Evaluation of Programmes and Other Administrative Issues			
4.33	<p><u>Evaluation of TV Programmes</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should –</p>		
	(a)	<p>ascertain the reasons for low ratings of RTHK's programmes and take measures to enhance the popularity of its TV programmes, especially for those which are intended to be popular programmes; and</p>	<p>A working group on audience surveys for TV and radio programmes had been set up in March 2019. Chaired by the Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes), the working group would address, amongst others, the issues of low ratings of RTHK programmes. The working group would conduct a survey in the fourth quarter of 2019 to gather</p>

	(b)	take measures to address the issue of lower TV ratings of RTHK TV programmes broadcast on RTHK channels than the ratings of the same programmes broadcast on a commercial channel.	information and statistics on the penetration/take-up pattern of the DTT channels, viewing habits and preference of the audience to ascertain the reasons for low ratings as well as the performance of RTHK's TV programmes on cross-media platforms. Based on the survey's findings, RTHK would be in a better position to work out measures to address the issues of low TV ratings and to enhance the popularity of its TV programmes. Results of the survey were expected to be available in the first quarter of 2020.
4.44	<u>Evaluation of Radio Programmes</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –		
	(a)	keep in view the number of listeners for each of the seven radio channels and take appropriate action to boost the number of listeners for radio channels with decreasing number of listeners; and	To keep in view the number of listeners for each of the seven radio channels, RTHK conducted annual Audience Surveys and kept track of online performance of radio channels. It also monitored feedback from "Channel Heads' Hotline". Based on the foregoing, RTHK reviewed and revised its programming and promotional strategies on a regular basis. In April 2019, RTHK fine-tuned the programme and promotion strategies by reshuffling programmes to strengthen the channel identity of Radio 1 and 2. Correspondingly, an extensive social media campaign, covering Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, had been conducted from March 2019. With a view to building up an evaluation mechanism in a holistic manner, the working group as mentioned in para. 4.33 (a) was now reviewing the strategy of the Audience Survey, including programmes to be included, frequency, methodology, etc as well as identifying any other appropriate channels to keep in view the listenership. The working group was also mapping out measures to boost the number of listeners for radio channels with decreasing number of listeners and improve the appreciation index and awareness level of RTHK's radio programmes. The working group had submitted the report to senior management in June 2019.
	(b)	take measures to improve the appreciation index and awareness level of RTHK's radio channels.	

4.73	<p><u>Matters Relating to the Charter of RTHK</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should –</p>	
	<p>submit the reports on performance evaluation of RTHK and RTHK’s compliance with performance evaluation indicators to the Board of Advisors on a regular basis as required by the Charter of RTHK to facilitate the Board of Advisors to advise on its actual performance against the performance targets and ways to improve service delivery.</p>	<p>RTHK would submit the report on performance evaluation of RTHK and RTHK’s compliance with performance evaluation indicators to the BoA annually. The 2018-19 report on the subject had been presented to the BoA at its meeting on 14 June 2019.</p>