

**Surveys initiated by the RTHK Board of Advisors
The way forward**

Purpose

This paper sets out the public opinion surveys which measure the effectiveness of performances conducted by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Trust, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and RTHK for Members' deliberation on the way forward for the Board to conduct surveys on RTHK as a public service broadcaster (PSB).

Background

2. At the meeting of the Board in February 2011, RTHK made a detailed presentation on the surveys conducted by it over the years. Subsequently, the Board further discussed the matter at the last meeting on 26.8.2011. During the discussion, there was suggestion that the Board could consider initiating surveys from different angles and perspectives with reference made to surveys conducted by other PSBs such as the BBC. It was decided that the Chairman would further discuss the matter with RTHK after the meeting and advise the Board of the outcome at the next meeting

Public opinion surveys conducted by BBC Trust, CBC and RTHK

A. Tracking survey by BBC Trust

3. BBC Trust conducts a tracking survey yearly.

Objectives

4. The aims of the survey are to get feedback from licence fee payers on how the BBC has performed in the delivery of its Public Purposes. It is also important to understand performance ratings in the context of how important people feel the various BBC priorities are. Specific objectives of the survey are to:

- a) Gauge licence fee payers' views on the BBC's priorities within each purpose and what is important for them;
- b) Measure how well the BBC currently performs;
- c) Understand "performance gaps" in order to identify areas that the BBC should focus on improving; and
- d) Understand how perceptions vary within different audience groups. Highlight any changes compared to previous years of the research.

Methodology

5. The survey house uses mixed-methodology approach. Half of the interviews are conducted face-to-face in people's home and half are conducted on-line amongst members of the survey house's on-line panel in the UK. This has the advantage of being cost-effective and also offered people, who may not have had time to take part at a fixed time with an interviewer, the opportunity to participate in their own time through an online route. The key section where respondents are asked to rate the purpose priorities is self-completion. This is to maximize the comparability of two survey methodology.

The Study in 2009-10

6. 2,251 UK adults aged 15 or over (out of the total population of 60.6 millions) were interviewed (half on-line and half face-to-face in home) between 8th September and 2nd October 2009 (1,139) and between 8th February and 8th March 2010 (1,112). It is important to note that the fieldwork was conducted before the BBC's coverage of the 2010 General Election began. Fieldwork was split into **two waves across the year** to lessen the risk of results being disproportionately influenced by specific events at a single point in the year.

7. Respondents were asked to respond to a detailed questionnaire¹ (c.45 minutes) covering demographics for profiling, media consumption, weight of BBC usage, use of new technologies, opinions on the BBC and the key section on the rating of the BBC's priorities in terms of performance and importance. Results were weighted by demographics, ethnicity and internet use to ensure they were

¹ The questionnaire is available in this link. Pages 79 -120 are relevant.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/review_report_research/ara2009_10/purpose_remit_its_uk.pdf

representative of the UK population as a whole. Quotas were set within each UK nation to ensure comparability between nations.

Explanation of Public Purposes and performance gaps

8. Under the terms of the Royal Charter and Agreement, the BBC's main activities should be the promotion of six Public Purposes through output consisting of information, education and entertainment. These Public Purposes are ;

- (a) CITIZENSHIP - sustaining citizenship and civil society;
- (b) CREATIVITY - stimulating creativity and cultural excellence;
- (c) EDUCATION - promoting education and learning;
- (d) NATIONS, REGIONS & COMMUNITIES - representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities;
- (e) GLOBAL - bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK; and
- (f) DIGITAL - in promoting its other purposes, helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services and, in addition, taking a leading role in the switchover to digital television.

9. The BBC Trust has set 'Purpose Remits' for each of the purposes and these enable the BBC Trust to set objective, transparent, published criteria against which they will judge the BBC's performance. Broadly, the remits explain how the BBC should fulfil its six Public Purposes. More specifically, the remits set a number of priorities for the BBC, within each purpose, and show how the BBC Trust will judge performance against those priorities using measures based on audience perceptions.

10. The BBC Trust developed a statement to measure the BBC's performance against each priority, in consultation with licence fee payers, for the Purpose Remit Study. During the survey, respondents were first asked to rate the BBC's performance on each of the priorities within a purpose. The performance score is the percentage of users that agree with a performance statement for a particular priority (giving a score of 5-7 out of 7)

11. In order to put the performance score in context, respondents were then

asked how important it was, to them personally, for the BBC to fulfil each priority. The importance score is the percentage of users that feel a statement is important to some extent (giving a score of 5-7 out of 7).

12. Through this process, a summary measure, known as the **'performance gap'**, is derived. The performance gap is the difference between the performance and importance scores for each statement. For example, the statement 'the BBC has lots of fresh and new ideas' received a performance score of 53% and an importance score of 75%. Subtracting the importance score from the performance score gives a negative performance gap of -22. A negative number means that the performance score given was lower than the importance score whilst a positive number means that the performance score given was higher than the importance score.

13. The surveys term respondents giving high scores to BBC as high approvers, and those giving low scores as low approvers.

B. 2010 Opinion Leader Survey by CBC/RADIO-CANADA

14. A survey house was commissioned by the CBC/ Radio-Canada to conduct the 2010 Opinion Leader Survey.

Objective

15. The objective of the survey was to track opinion leaders' perceptions of the CBC/Radio-Canada in key areas to determine the changes over time.

Methodology

16. An on-line survey was conducted with individuals drawn from a range of public and private organizations, including government, media, national/provincial associations, think tanks, public affairs organizations, arts, sports and cultural organizations, Canadian businesses, and post-secondary institutions. In total, 527 opinion leaders completed the survey, representing a response rate of 30%. Based on a sample of this size, the overall results can be considered accurate to within $\pm 4\%$, 19 times out of 20. The survey was available on-line from March 15 to April 9, 2010 after completion.

17. Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with the following statements about CBC/Radio-Canada as a whole (using a 7-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree):

- (a) CBC is an important part of Canadian culture and identity;
- (b) CBC is innovative and creative, always looking for new program ideas and ways to deliver services;
- (c) CBC pays attention to what the public thinks about its programs and services;
- (d) CBC has a clear vision of how to steer the Corporation into the future;
- (e) CBC brings Canadians together as a country;
- (f) CBC provides value for money to Canadian taxpayers; and
- (g) CBC creates programming that is relevant to me.

18. The general perceptions of CBC/Radio-Canada tended to be positive. A majority of opinion leaders agreed with all of these statements except for “vision for the future”. Respondents were most likely to agree that CBC/Radio-Canada was an important part of Canadian culture and identity. In total, 85% felt this way, with 68% agreeing strongly that this is the case. Relatively few (10%) respondents expressed disagreement with this statement. 6% of the respondents were neutral.

C. Public Views on RTHK 2009

19. Public Views on RTHK 2009 was a one-off survey commissioned to the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme by RTHK.

Objective

20. The objective of the survey was to gauge public views on RTHK’s performance as a whole and the level of their satisfaction of our services as a PSB.

Methodology

21. The survey house successfully interviewed 1001 people living in Hong Kong chosen by means of random sampling and returned with a statistically viable result representing the spectrum of Hong Kong general public aged over 18. They

were asked the following questions²:

- (a) The general impression of RTHK, with descriptions provided;
- (b) The using and satisfactory level of RTHK TV, radio and new media service, with a 10 point grading scale;
- (c) The satisfactory level of our TV and radio programmes by categories and genres (current and public affairs, educational, art and cultural, drama etc); and
- (d) The expectancy level of the various TV and radio programmes to be provided by categories and genres listed by the Consultation paper of the PSB Review released 2009.

22. A summary of the survey results summary is as follows:

	<i>Mean Score</i>	<i>Sampling Error*</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>
1. Television service	7.2	+/-0.11	955
2. Radio service	6.7	+/-0.13	808
3. RTHK web service	6.3	+/-0.18	388

Advice sought

23. Members are requested to note the surveys conducted by the three PSBs detailed above and advise the way forward for the Board to conduct surveys on RTHK such as the scope and perspectives, approach, methodology, level of details and frequency of the survey to be conducted.

Radio Television Hong Kong November 2011

² The questionnaire is available in this link:
<http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/report/rthkimage09/content/resources/questionnaire.pdf>