

Public Consultation Paper on

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# **The New Radio Television Hong Kong:** Fulfilling its Mission as a Public Service Broadcaster



Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

October 2009

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Introduction**

1.1 The subject of public service broadcasting (PSB) and the future of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) have been debated in the community for over 20 years. In January 2006, the Chief Executive (CE) appointed an independent Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting (the Review Committee) to examine the subject of PSB. The Review Committee submitted its report to the Government in March 2007. On 22 September 2009, having regard to the Review Committee's report and all relevant considerations, the Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) decided on the way forward on the development of PSB in Hong Kong. RTHK is to be tasked to take up the mission to serve as the public service broadcaster for Hong Kong, with safeguards and appropriate resources provided to allow it to do so effectively. This momentous decision marks the beginning of a new RTHK, with a new mission and objectives.

1.2 This consultation paper sets out our proposals on how to enhance the role and functions of the new RTHK as a public service broadcaster and seeks views from the public on the implementation measures. The proposals have taken full regard to the Review Committee's report and feedback received on this since it was published.

#### **The Decisions of CE in C**

1.3 The CE in C has decided that:

- (a) RTHK should remain as a Government department with key recommendations in the Review Committee's report

implemented to allow it to fulfill its role as a public service broadcaster serving with specific public purposes, strengthened corporate governance and greater accountability to the community;

- (b) the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) should consult the public on how the new RTHK should operate in future to achieve its mission as a public service broadcaster, the programming direction it should take, the ways and means to evaluate its performance and enhance its accountability to the community;
- (c) subject to the outcome of the public consultation exercise and the established mechanism governing the allocation of new resources, RTHK should be allocated resources and frequency spectrum to enhance its operations and expand the scope of its services, including the provision of dedicated digital television and radio channels to be used as platforms for more original local productions, overseas co-operation, community participation and national broadcasts;
- (d) subject to necessary approval, RTHK should establish and manage a dedicated fund to support and encourage community and ethnic minority involvement in broadcasting, to meet the rising public expectations in the community; and
- (e) planning for the re-provisioning of the Broadcasting House to Tseung Kwan O should proceed as a priority.

1.4 All interested parties are invited to send us their views in respect of the issues covered by this public consultation exercise to the following address or website by **4 December 2009** –

Address : Commerce and Economic Development Bureau  
2/F, Murray Building  
Garden Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Fax : (852) 2511 1458  
E-mail : [psb@cedb.gov.hk](mailto:psb@cedb.gov.hk)  
Website : [www.cedb.gov.hk/ctb/psb](http://www.cedb.gov.hk/ctb/psb)

1.5 We look forward to receiving views in respect of the issues raised in this consultation paper.

1.6 All submissions received in response to this consultation exercise will be published in whole or in part in any form without seeking the permission of or providing acknowledgement to the party making the submission. No submission should be made in confidence.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **PUBLIC PURPOSES**

#### **Introduction**

2.1 Broadcasting is one of the most powerful and influential means of communication and PSB plays an important role in conjunction with commercial broadcasting to develop our community through broadening horizons and enriching the quality of life. It also provides an outlet for views and interests that may otherwise not be adequately covered by commercial broadcasters.

2.2 The broadcasting sector worldwide has generally accepted that PSB plays a role which complements and cannot be replaced by commercial broadcasting. In Hong Kong, PSB has for many years been provided both directly by RTHK as a Government department and indirectly by commercial broadcasters in accordance with their licence requirements.

2.3 On 22 September 2009, the CE in C announced, among other things, its decision that RTHK will be tasked to take up the mission as the public service broadcaster in Hong Kong with a significant expansion in the scope of its services.

2.4 It is common for overseas public service broadcasters to have clearly defined missions or public purposes. These mission statements charge a public service broadcaster with an explicit public service mandate, and are often used to evaluate their performance and the adequacy of services provided to the community.

## **Proposed public purposes**

2.5 Having regard to the circumstances in Hong Kong, which is a modern and affluent society with deep-rooted respect for the freedom of expression, the free flow of information and pluralism, the Review Committee proposed four specific purposes for PSB in Hong Kong. They are -

- (a) *Sustaining citizenship and civil society.* This should be achieved by –
  - (i) promoting understanding of our community, our nation and the world through accurate and impartial news, information, perspectives and analyses;
  - (ii) promoting understanding of the concept of “One Country, Two Systems” and its implementation; and
  - (iii) providing an open platform for the free exchange of views;
- (b) *Fostering social harmony and promoting pluralism.* This should be achieved through the diversity of programme coverage, universality of reach and sensitivity to the pluralistic nature of Hong Kong and the world. The objective is to enhance public understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity both in the local community and beyond;
- (c) *Establishing education value and promoting lifelong learning.* This should be achieved through establishing education value and promoting lifelong learning by stimulating interest in a full range of subjects, and providing information and resources to facilitate learning at all levels and for all ages; and
- (d) *Stimulating creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people.* This should be



achieved by stimulating creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of the people of Hong Kong through the production, commission and acquisition of distinctive and original content for public broadcast. There should be active promotion of public interest, engagement and participation in cultural activities, and its programming and other corporate policies and practices should foster creativity and nurture talent.

2.6 We agree with the Review Committee's analysis of the demands of the Hong Kong community as well as its recommendations in respect of the public purposes for a public service broadcaster in Hong Kong. In designing and producing its programmes, we **propose** that RTHK should pursue these public purposes. To entrench these in the corporate culture, we intend to include them as part of the new Charter which will govern RTHK's relationship with the Government (see Chapter 4).

### **Views sought**

2.7 We welcome views on the following public purposes for RTHK -

- (a) **Sustaining citizenship and civil society;**
- (b) **Fostering social harmony and promoting pluralism;**
- (c) **Establishing education value and promoting lifelong learning; and**
- (d) **Stimulating creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people.**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

3.1 RTHK first came into existence in 1928, originally as a small unit within the Post Office known as GOW. Since then, RTHK has been providing publicly-funded broadcasting to Hong Kong through a range of programming services which seek to inform, educate and entertain the community.

3.2 In terms of organisation structure, RTHK is now a Government department under the policy purview and housekeeping oversight of the CEDB. Its operation is funded by the Government from the General Revenue. RTHK is editorially independent. It has appointed a panel of advisors from various sectors of the community which meets regularly to advise the department on its programming plan.

3.3 To ensure that RTHK is fully capable of achieving its public mission objectives and enhance its corporate governance, the Government has decided to introduce a broad-based Board of Advisors to be appointed by the CE of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to advise the department.

#### **The Board of Advisors**

3.4 The Board of Advisors (the Board) will be a high-level advisory body with the mandate to advise the Director of Broadcasting (D of B) on a wide range of activities of RTHK, including editorial policy<sup>1</sup>, programme standards, public standards reviews, etc. The appointment of the members will be made by the

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the objectives proposed by the Review Committee, RTHK should be (a) accurate and authoritative in the information it disseminates; (b) balanced in the views it reflects, and even-handed with all who seek to express their views via the PSB platform; (c) immune from commercial, political and/or other influences; and (d) uphold the highest professional standards of journalism.

CE to underlie the importance of the Board, in line with the established practice for appointment to high-level advisory bodies in Hong Kong.

### **Responsibilities of the Board of Advisors**

3.5 As a high-level advisory body, we **propose** that the Board should take on the following responsibilities –

- (a) to advise D of B on all matters pertaining to editorial policy, programme standards and the quality of RTHK programmes;
- (b) to conduct regular public standards reviews to track how well RTHK programming meets up to audience expectations;
- (c) to receive reports on the performance evaluation of RTHK (see Chapter 5) and advise D of B on ways to improve service delivery;
- (d) to advise D of B on matters relating to community participation in broadcasting on radio and TV channels, including advising on the rules for the distribution of the new Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund proposed (see Chapter 7); and
- (e) to commission studies and research on issues pertaining to the achievement of the public mission of RTHK.

3.6 The Board should maintain regular communication with the RTHK management, but it should not be involved in the day-to-day operational and editorial decisions of RTHK, which are matters to be dealt with by D of B and his team. The Board is advisory in nature. It has no executive power. The ultimate editorial responsibility of RTHK must rest with D of B.

## **Size of the Board of Advisors**

3.7 Taking account of the view of the Review Committee, we **propose** that the size of the Board should not be more than 15. This will enable the Board to draw in a sufficiently wide range of expertise while not compromising efficiency and ease of operation.

## **Composition of the Board of Advisors**

3.8 Having regard to the view of the Review Committee, the composition of the Board of Advisors should comprise the right mix of persons with different expertise, appointed in their personal capacity, for ensuring effective governance.

3.9 In particular, the following categories of members should be included in the Board –

- (a) *Member(s) with industry/professional experience.* These include persons with experience in various sectors such as media, journalism, education, arts and culture, technology, legal, accounting and/or finance, persons with senior management experience and expertise, as well as persons with experience in serving the interests of minorities and/or the underprivileged;
- (b) *Ex-officio member(s).* Their presence can enhance communication and foster a constructive partnership with RTHK's management and staff; and
- (c) *Lay member(s).* Their presence will contribute positively to good governance as each and every sector of the community has a legitimate claim on the subject of public service broadcasting.

3.10 We **propose** that the composition of the Board should take reference from the recommendations of the Review Committee above.

3.11 We also **propose** that the Chairman of the Board should be a non-official.

3.12 For paragraph 3.9(b) above, we **propose** that D of B, as the Head of RTHK, should be appointed as the only ex-officio member of the Board. No other Government officials should be represented on the Board in order to ensure the independence of the advice to be tendered by the Board and to emphasise the point that the Board will only have an advisory role in respect of editorial issues.

3.13 To ensure the political neutrality of RTHK, we consider and **propose** that certain categories of persons should not be appointed to the Board (e.g. serving Members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council, public and judicial officers, etc).

### **Tenure of Appointment to the Board of Advisors**

3.14 In line with other Government advisory bodies, we **propose** that members of the Board should not normally serve longer than six consecutive years. The appointment should normally be a fixed term ranging from one to three years.

### **Responsibilities of D of B in relation to the Board of Advisors**

3.15 The D of B, as Head of RTHK and the ex-officio member of the Board, will be the key person serving as a bridge to facilitate communication between the Board and RTHK. We **propose** that D of B should –

- (a) seek advice of the Board on matters pertaining to editorial policy, programme standards, the quality of RTHK programmes and community participation in broadcasting;
- (b) submit performance evaluation reports to the Board and seek its advice on related matters;

- (c) give due weight and consideration to all advice provided by the Board; and
- (d) provide secretarial and other necessary support to the Board in carrying out its responsibilities set out in paragraph 3.5 above.

### **Views sought**

**3.16 We welcome views on the operation of the Board of Advisors to enhance the corporate governance of RTHK and its accountability to the public.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE CHARTER**

4.1 With over 80 years of service to the community, RTHK has established itself as a trusted source of information for the community. Recent survey<sup>2</sup> shows clearly that RTHK has consistently been rated as the most credible electronic media in Hong Kong. So much so that RTHK is now perceived locally and internationally as a bellwether for the health of freedom of speech in Hong Kong. We should entrench this culture in RTHK as it moves to fulfill its new mission as a public service broadcaster.

4.2 In 1993, CEDB (the then Recreation and Culture Branch) and RTHK entered into the first Framework Agreement which specifies the respective responsibilities of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) and D of B in relation to each other and clearly states that RTHK is editorial independent. Subject to renewal every two years, the Framework Agreement sets out the working relationship between SCED and D of B, including the standard arrangements on resource allocation and performance evaluation. Crucial to this relationship is the issue of editorial independence.

4.3 Having regard to the greatly expanded role of the new RTHK and to further enhance its editorial independence, the Government has decided to elevate the existing Framework Agreement between CEDB and RTHK to be in the form of a Charter to be issued by the Government.

4.4 The Charter will take the form of a formal document that sets out the relationship between the Government and RTHK. It will give substance to the relationship and clarify issues such as

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Survey on Public Evaluation on Media Credibility undertaken by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, RTHK has been rated as the most credible electronic media in the surveys conducted in 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2009.

transparency in RTHK's operation, the accountability and editorial independence of RTHK, and the role of the Broadcasting Authority (BA) in providing oversight over the programme standards of RTHK.

## **Contents of the Charter**

4.5 Taking reference from the existing Framework Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>3</sup> signed among CEDB (the then Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau), RTHK and the BA, we **propose** that the Charter should cover the following –

- (a) the institutional relationship between CEDB and RTHK under the Government structure;
- (b) the public purposes of RTHK;
- (c) the guarantees regarding the editorial independence of RTHK;
- (d) the role and composition of the Advisory Board and other related matters thereto, and the relationship between the Board and RTHK;
- (e) the relationship between the BA and RTHK and the related regulatory control issues (e.g. the manner in which programme contents are regulated under the framework of the BA and the handling of public complaints, etc);
- (f) the accountability and performance evaluation to allow better public scrutiny of RTHK's programme productions;
- (g) the modes of service delivery of RTHK;
- (h) the programming directions of RTHK;

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<sup>3</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding states that RTHK complies with the generic codes of practice issued by the BA, which are applicable to all commercial broadcasters.



- (i) the transparency in RTHK's operation; and
- (j) any other matters relevant to the operation of RTHK.

### **Signing of the Charter**

4.6 To signify the importance of the Charter, we intend that the Charter should be signed by the Chief Secretary for Administration. It will be made available for public information and be accessible via the Government's website.

### **Renewal**

4.7 To ensure that the Charter will be a living document, able to keep pace with the future development of RTHK, we **propose** that the Charter should be reviewed every five years. Depending on the extent and substance of amendments made, any revisions to the Charter may be made after an appropriate public engagement exercise.

### **Views sought**

4.8 **We welcome views on the issue of a Charter to set out the relationship between the Government and RTHK and the various matters to be covered by the Charter.**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

#### **The need for performance evaluation**

5.1 Performance evaluation is essential to the on-going management of any responsible organisation. To evaluate performance, an organisation must set clear targets, develop measurable performance indicators and conduct regular assessments. These activities generate critical management information that reveals risks and problems, as well as highlights opportunities for improvement.

5.2. A public service broadcaster's performance evaluation is not only a requisite management process. It is both a foundation for accountability and a means to gain the public's trust and support for a public service broadcaster. The evaluation outcome provides a basis for public scrutiny of the extent to which a public service broadcaster delivers its public service mission, and returns value for the public money it expends.

#### **Objectives and performance indicators**

5.3 We generally agree with the Review Committee's view on the broad areas of a public service broadcaster's performance that should be subject to evaluation, and the objectives that should be achieved in each of these areas. We **propose** that RTHK's performance should be evaluated against these identified broad areas and objectives.

### ***Scope and quality of services***

5.4 Within this performance area, RTHK should seek to achieve four objectives:

*Objective-1 Provide a comprehensive mix of programme genres to cater for the entire population, addressing both majority and minority needs and interests.*

#### Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Range of programme genres: overall and by transmission media.
- (b) Broadcast hours and percentage of different programme genres.

*Objective-2 Cater for the diverse needs of different groups in the community, and promote public understanding and tolerance of such diversity.*

#### Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Availability of programmes in different languages and/or dialects.
- (b) Availability of multi-cultural programmes.
- (c) Availability of programmes that cover different religions.
- (d) Availability of programmes that cater for the special needs of audience with disabilities.
- (e) Availability of special measures to facilitate the enjoyment of programmes by people with special needs.

*Objective-3 Stimulate creativity and originality, and nurture talent.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Broadcast hours and percentage of:
  - (i) Locally first-run programmes.
  - (ii) Programmes produced in-house.
  - (iii) Commissioned programmes (produced by independent producers and/or production houses).
  - (iv) Programmes acquired from outside sources.
- (b) Resources (amount and percentage of total budget) spent on each of the categories listed in (a).

*Objective-4 Provide quality programmes.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Rate of approval by external assessors to determine compliance with internal programme standards.
- (b) Audience feedback.
- (c) Number of local, regional and/or international awards received.

***Audience reach and market share***

5.5 The objective of RTHK under this performance area should be to:

*Objective-5 Maximise the social impact by reaching as large a*

*population as possible with services delivered across various platforms, including radio, TV, online and other new media as they become available.*

Possible key performance indicators

Total audience size (number of persons who have at any point during the relevant period received the services), and changes in this area (growth/decline).

***Quality of governance and management***

5.6 Good governance, effective management and cost-effectiveness are key attributes that must be achieved by RTHK. In this performance area, it should pursue the following objectives:

*Objective-6 Ensure credibility and accountability through quality governance.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Compliance with statutory and other applicable requirements.
- (b) Adequate and timely reporting, review, disclosure and response to the public.
- (c) Adoption of appropriate transparency measures.

*Objective-7 Ensure efficiency and sustainability through effective internal management.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Delineative and unambiguous table of organisation with clear chains of command.

- (b) Proper delegation of authority in day-to-day operation.
- (c) Regular communication between management and staff, and between the management and the Board.
- (d) Fair, effective and transparent staff appraisal mechanism, with regular evaluation and corresponding management actions of reward/punishment.
- (e) Adequate support for staff training and development.

*Objective-8 Ensure cost-effectiveness and optimal utilisation of assets through sound resource management which may involve the reduction of administrative layers, sharing of resources across divisions, etc.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Cost per broadcast hour overall.
- (b) Cost per broadcast hour by programme genres.
- (c) Utilisation rate of facilities and equipment (e.g. studios, outside broadcast vans, etc).
- (d) Percentage of administrative and programme production expenditures as part of the total expenditure.

***Development of new media services***

5.7 RTHK should pursue the following objectives:

*Objective-9 Explore and develop new media services to reach out to as large an audience as possible.*

Possible key performance indicators

New broadcasting content, information (including archives) and interactive services available through new media.

*Objective-10 Enhance the accessibility and quality of new media services, and promote their use by the public.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) New media service users: number and growth/decline.
- (b) User retention (e.g. browsing duration).
- (c) Signal quality assessment.
- (d) Connection speed and reliability.

***Public participation***

5.8 To cater for the changing needs of the community, and respond to public expectations in a timely and constructive manner, RTHK should:

*Objective-11 Provide adequate and effective opportunities for obtaining public views and feedback, and use these inputs in the decision making process.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Forums to facilitate on-going public consultation on all aspects of the services and operation: availability, frequency of meeting, and timeliness of reporting to the Board.
- (b) Public hearings and survey of public satisfaction level: regularity and timeliness of reporting to the Board.

*Objective-12 Maintain a credible, accessible and efficient complaints handling system. Handle complaints in a positive, timely and fair manner, and take follow-up actions as necessary.*

Possible key performance indicators

- (a) Publicity on complaints channels.
- (b) Number of complaints received.
- (c) Number of complaints substantiated.
- (d) Number of complaints resolved and/or addressed.
- (e) Improvement measures identified/implemented.
- (f) Disclosure of overall complaint handling statistics and follow-up action taken in annual report published for public scrutiny.

**Value of performance evaluation**

5.9 Performance evaluation not only serves as a management tool, but also enhances public accountability. To generate useful management information:

- (a) evaluation should be conducted regularly to enable comparison of performance over time;
- (b) follow-up actions should be identified and implemented promptly; and
- (c) evaluation outcomes should be shared with staff to build a common understanding of corporate objectives and actions needed to achieve them, and reported in a timely manner to



the Board to enable effective oversight and facilitate adjustment in organisational strategies and directions.

5.10 The key evaluation outcomes and follow-up actions adopted should also be disclosed to the public in the annual report of RTHK or through other appropriate forms of publicity. Such information will facilitate informed public scrutiny and enhance the accountability of RTHK.

### **Views sought**

5.11 **We welcome views on the performance evaluation of RTHK and the performance objectives/indicators to be adopted.**

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **EXTENDED MODE OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

6.1 The broadcasting landscape keeps changing and technological advancements have been providing new impetus for the growth and development of the industry. The success in the digitisation of terrestrial television in Hong Kong over the last two years (with about 40% digital take-up) and the new interest of the industry in the introduction of digital audio broadcasting provide an opportunity to allocate additional spectrum and financial resources to RTHK so that it may develop as an all-round public service broadcaster to serve the community. The service package should include the following:

- (a) Analogue AM and FM services that RTHK is currently providing, i.e., 4 AM channels and 3 FM channels;
- (b) New DAB services through the use of a Band III multiplex; and
- (c) One digital terrestrial television multiplex in the UHF Band, capable of providing both high-definition and standard-definition television services.

6.2 With the above enhancements, RTHK will be better able to provide public broadcasting services that serve as an important complement to commercial broadcasting services, e.g. providing programme services for ethnic minorities or the elderly, educational TV, etc.

#### **Views sought**

6.3 **We welcome views on the extended mode of service delivery for RTHK in future.**

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### NEW PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

#### **New Programming Opportunities**

7.1 With the additional spectrum and resources for digital broadcasting (see Chapter 6), RTHK will be much better equipped to provide a significantly enhanced service to complement the commercial broadcasters. Through offering more programme choice to the community, the new RTHK will be able to enrich our cultural life and elevate the provision of public service broadcasting to a new platform in Hong Kong.

7.2 The Review Committee recommended that public service broadcasting should be committed to innovation, quality and universality of service through the provision of a wide diversity of programmes to the community. Such programming should avoid duplication with commercial broadcasting services. It should seek to provide what is lacking in commercial broadcasting and cater for specific needs and interests of different groups in the community. We agree with the views of the Review Committee.

7.3 Specifically, on top of what RTHK is currently offering, we **propose** that the new RTHK should further develop in the following programming areas as set out below :

#### ***(a) Local original content production***

7.4 The demand for local original content production, particularly that of television content, has been growing. We are also determined to provide necessary support to the development of our local creative industries. Currently, RTHK has only limited television airtime for public interest programmes while commissioned programmes only account for 6% of RTHK's prime-time output. We **propose** that the new RTHK should run at

least one high-definition television channel on its own, with a balanced mix of self/co-production and commissioned programmes. This will stimulate the growth of a local content production industry. It will also give RTHK a clear identity for its television programmes which are now shown through the commercial broadcasters and are sometimes mistaken as programmes produced by the commercial broadcasters.

***(b) Partnership with national and international broadcasters and content producers***

7.5 Broadcasting is an effective means to enrich our cultural life and enhance our understanding of the nation and developments in the international arena. With the additional resources and especially the new high-definition television channel, RTHK will be in a much stronger position to undertake more collaboration with national broadcasters (e.g. China Central Television and China National Radio) to relay their television and radio broadcasts so as to enhance our understanding of developments in the Mainland, and with international broadcasters and content providers (e.g. NHK of Japan, National Geographical Channel of the USA) to broaden our international horizons. We **propose** that RTHK should work with our national as well as international broadcasters to enhance such collaboration.

***(c) Community participation in broadcasting***

7.6 There are strong calls from some sectors of the community for opening up the airwaves for community and public access broadcasting to allow for more participation by community and ethnic minority groups, senior citizens or students, etc. However, not only do we lack sufficient frequency spectrum to support low-cost reception (mainly referring to FM radio services), standalone community or public access broadcasting services also require substantial resources in terms of capital and recurrent expenditure as well as human resources. This poses difficulties to smaller community groups. In addition, broadcasting needs to comply with basic internationally recognised principles, e.g.

protection of minors, impartiality and fairness in news programmes, respect of public decency and privacy, etc.

7.7 There is little doubt that technological advancement could lead to more broadcasting and other communications opportunities. We need to respond to the community expectation arising from such development. Thus, in line with the Government's general mission to foster freedom of expression and encourage a plurality of voices in the community, we **propose** that the new RTHK should be tasked to devote part of its airtime and resources within the development of its digital services to provide a platform for community participation in broadcasting. This should include dedicating more airtime for programmes that allow individuals and community groups to express and exchange their views, with RTHK's programme hosts moderating the programmes; allowing community groups to produce their own programmes for broadcast on RTHK's channels, with different levels of support to be provided by RTHK; and commissioning projects from community groups to produce their own programmes on specific themes or topics. RTHK should re-arrange its programming schedule among the existing analogue and the new digital radio channels, as well as dedicating airtime of its television channel for this purpose.

7.8 We see the need to provide financial support for community groups (e.g., ethnic minority groups, non-governmental organisations, etc) to actively participate in broadcasting and content productions. We consider this to be in line with the rising community expectation for more direct participation and have made overseas references: for example, the Office of Communications in the UK administers a fund for organisations to bid for running community radio channels. As a pilot, RTHK would administer a Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund to encourage community organisations to bid for resources for producing television and radio programmes, and would arrange to broadcast these contents on RTHK's channels.

## **Views sought**

**7.9 We welcome views on the future programme opportunities of RTHK, including the opportunities to –**

- (a) promote and facilitate local original content production;**
- (b) foster partnership with national and international broadcasters and content producers; and**
- (c) encourage community participation in broadcasting, including the establishment of a Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund.**

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

8.1 In the consultation period, we will carry out the following activities to engage the public in the discussion of the subject:

- (a) consult the Legislative Council;
- (b) consult the 18 District Councils;
- (c) hold focus group discussion to collect direct public feedback;
- (d) participate in public meetings and media discussions;
- (e) conduct a public opinion survey; and
- (f) set up a special web site to collect public views online.

8.2 We will also carry out consultation with RTHK staff.

8.3 We will consolidate and examine all the views received in the two-month consultation exercise to decide on how to shape the operations of a new RTHK in future.

8.4 We encourage the community to join in the discussion and make their views known.

**Communications and Technology Branch**  
**Commerce and Economic Development Bureau**  
**October 2009**