



Second Consultation on Development of Mobile Television Services

Introduction

In response to the Government's second consultation on the development of Mobile TV services, Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) would like to present its views.

RTHK supports the launch of mobile TV services which is a natural service extension on the ubiquitous mobile phone. Being the serving public broadcaster in Hong Kong, RTHK is committed to providing non-commercial content for the public's benefit. RTHK produces quality programmes covering information, education, culture and the arts, news and current affairs, as well as specialized programmes for the minorities. Our services are free and constitute a public good. RTHK has been exploring opportunities with the ICT industry to introduce innovative multimedia services to the public and will continue to strive for further industry collaboration and exchanges.

RTHK's response to the specific topics relating to the second consultation is presented in this submission.

Spectrum Availability

RTHK generally agrees with the views proposed by the consultation paper. Due to the market size of Hong Kong, the public is perhaps best served by means of a unified Mobile TV system, although the deployment of multiple systems on both Band III and UHF could be decided by the market. For satellite Mobile TV reception, synergy with the Mainland is an important consideration.

Spectrum Allocation

RTHK agrees with the views on spectrum allocation as proposed. Whichever option is selected, RTHK should be given the priority to share channel capacity in order to better serve the public. In the quad-play environment, appropriate service bundling of video, audio, internet, interactive and auxiliary data services is an effective way of attracting subscribers whilst a pro-mobile TV approach is essential for introducing and promoting this new media. Hence it is advantageous to set a minimum level of 50% or more of transmission capacity for Mobile TV content for an initial period of 3 to 5 years, followed by a periodic review. To foster the introduction of digital audio broadcast services in Hong Kong, a minimal channel capacity could be allocated, where applicable, for launching an adequate level of digital audio broadcast services within the Mobile TV multiplexes.

Spectrum Assignment

RTHK generally agrees with the proposed spectrum assignment. Pre-qualification is a critical step in ensuring a fast rollout of services and full spectrum utilization. In addition, the spectrum assignment should facilitate RTHK's engagement with the Mobile TV operators in delivering public service broadcasting content to the public.

Licensing Arrangements

We agree with the approach outlined in the consultation paper under "Licensing Mobile TV under the Broadcasting Ordinance" and that outlined for Digital Audio Broadcasting.

Access to Hilltop Transmission Sites and Geographical Coverage for Broadcast-type Mobile TV

RTHK, being the site manager of various hilltop radio transmitting sites that might be implicated in future development, would like to emphasize that future Mobile TV development should not adversely affect the existing radio broadcast services in the interest of the public. Due to vast technical differences between conventional TV and Mobile TV especially in terms of indoor reception, the geographical coverage requirements need to be further addressed by the concerned parties.

Conclusion

In summary,

1. RTHK could contribute original and re-purposed contents on Mobile TV, similar to RTHK's existing provision of web-services; RTHK web-services could also be offered on Mobile TV.
2. RTHK could actively participate in the development, e.g. cooperating with the other broadcasters, Mobile TV operators and other parties on programming, similar to the development of DTT/ HDTV in Hong Kong.
3. Synergy exists between RTHK and Mobile TV operators, in offering a wealth of contents on radio, TV and new media services, to substantially enrich the Mobile TV services.
4. The spectrum assignment should enhance the provision of public service broadcasting content to the public.
5. In parallel with the Mobile TV development, the introduction of digital audio broadcast services in Hong Kong should be critically considered.