

**Minutes of the 7th meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 2:30 pm, 11 May 2012
in the Board Room, Broadcasting House,
30 Broadcasting Drive, Kowloon Tong**

Present :

Mr Lester G. HUANG, JP (Chairman)
Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, JP
Mr C.K. LAU, JP
Mr Maurice LEE Wai-man, BBS, JP
Ms Marisa YIU
Mr Ringo LAM Wing-kwan
Ms FUNG May-gay
Miss Lisa Marie DJENG Kar-yee
Mr Roy TANG, Director of Broadcasting

In attendance from RTHK

Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments)
Mr TAI Keen-man, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes)
Mr CHAN Yiu-wah, Head/Digital Audio Broadcasting (Agenda item 3)
Miss Jace AU, Leader of RTHK's Working Group on Community Broadcasting
(Agenda item 3)
Ms Amen NG, Head/Corporate Communications & Standards
(Agenda item 4)
Ms Amy KWONG (Board Secretariat)

Absent with apologies

Mr Raj Sital MOTWANI, BBS, JP

Secretary :

Mr David CHOW (Board Secretariat)

Agenda Item 1 : Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting

1. The Chairman welcomed Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments), who attended the meeting for the first time.

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 24.2.2012 for Members' comments on 13.4.2012. The Secretariat informed Members on 30.4.2012 that Mr C K LAU had proposed amendments to the draft minutes of meeting. Since Members had made no further comments on the proposed amendments, the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed with the amendments proposed by Mr C K LAU.

Agenda Item 2 : Matters arising

3. Members raised no item for discussion. The Chairman informed Members that RTHK had uploaded its 2012-13 Annual Plan and Performance Pledge to its website.

Agenda Item 3 : Progress of Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS) Pilot Project

4. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that at the last meeting, RTHK undertook to update Members of the public consultation at this meeting. The 3-month consultation period already ended on 29.3.2012. Taking into account the public opinions obtained in the consultation, and views and suggestions of the Board, RTHK had worked out concrete proposals on implementation of the CIBS Pilot Project and establishment of the CIB Fund (CIBF). RTHK proposed to set up the CIBF in the fourth quarter of this year. To this end, RTHK would need to first consult the Information Technology and Broadcasting (ITB) Panel of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 14.5.2012 on the proposals, and then seek Finance Committee (FC)'s funding approval of \$45M for the 3-year Pilot Project in May 2012 for setting up the CIBF before the LegCo's summer recess. Given such time-line for the LegCo process, RTHK was unable to consult the Board at this meeting before issuing the paper to the ITB Panel for its meeting on 14.5.2012.

[Post-meeting note : FC's approval was obtained on 25.5.2012.]

5. Miss Jace AU then introduced the paper.
6. Mr Roy TANG added that though the ITB paper had already been issued to the LegCo, Members could feel free to offer their comments on it. RTHK would consolidate the comments of the LegCo and the Board when finalizing the proposals on CIBS and CIBF.

Broadcasting Platform of CIBS

7. In response to a Member's enquiries, Mr CHAN Yiu-wah replied that -
 - (a) In addition to DAB channel, CIBS programmes would also be webcast and archived on RTHK website; and
 - (b) Though there was growing popularity for receiving radio programmes through mobile device, radio transmission was still more reliable in terms of instant accessibility by the public than webcast as the latter would depend on the server capacity of the service providers.
8. Another Member suggested that popular CIBS programmes should also be broadcast on FM channel.

CIBS Selection Committee and Selection Criteria

9. A Member made the following suggestions –
 - (a) Some CIBS producers possessing the potential for creative work might be weak at preparing applications in writing. Therefore, RTHK should provide briefing on the application procedures and requirements for the CIBS producers. Besides, RTHK could consider providing advice on the initial ideas proposed by them so that they could modify their proposals to suit the requirements. This was to ensure a level playing field for CIBS producers;
 - (b) Flexibility should be allowed for CIBS producers to change the programme content if they encountered difficulties in programme production; and
 - (c) Appeal mechanism should be put in place.
10. Miss Jace AU said that-
 - (a) RTHK would provide briefing for CIBS producers when invitation for applications was called each time. It would be in the form of a conceptual briefing on how CIBS programmes could achieve the objectives of CIBS.

RTHK would explore the suggestion of providing technical advice on the creative ideas proposed by CIBS producers;

- (b) Under the existing practice for commissioning of radio programmes, it was stated in the commissioning contract to the effect that programme content could be changed with the prior consent of RTHK. The rationale behind this arrangement was that it was not uncommon that producers encountered production difficulties which they could not foresee when they took up the job. Due to editorial independence, RTHK would not initiate changes unless there was an indication of breach of broadcasting regulations and codes of practices. Since even professional producers would encounter such difficulties, it was therefore considered that similar arrangements should also be allowed for CIBS producers; and
 - (c) On the appeal mechanism, since unsuccessful applicants could apply again in the next round of applications and there was no limitation on the number of attempts made by the same applicant, an appeal mechanism was considered not essential. Instead, it was initially thought that a counselling approach would be adopted under which unsuccessful applicants would be informed of the Selection Committee's comments on their proposals so that they could improve their applications next time.
11. Mr TAI Keen-man added that RTHK would set up thematic website for CIBS on RTHK website. The initial idea was that a resource centre would be set up on the thematic website which provided basic information on programme production such as relevant rules and codes of practices, technique in programme production, samples and common yardsticks for good programmes, etc. This could also facilitate CIBS producers in making applications.
12. Other Members generally considered that the chance of unsuccessful applicants resorting to legal action against the decision of the Selection Committee would not be high because they could apply again in the next round. There would be sufficient transparency in the processing of applications as all the applications and the selection outcome were open for public reference on the thematic website. Moreover, since the scores of public voting could hardly be subject to review, it was unlikely that unsuccessful applicants would take any legal action against the outcome of their applications.

13. In response to a Member's enquiry about the complaint procedure, Mr Roy TANG said that since he was the Controller of CIBF, complaint against Selection Committee's decision could be lodged to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development or the Ombudsman.
14. Miss Leonia TAI said that normally, the court or the Ombudsman would review an appeal or complaint mainly on the basis of whether the rules and procedures for processing applications were fair and open, and whether the Selection Committee had appropriately followed such rules and procedures in processing the applications. The court or the Ombudsman seldom interfered with the assessment of the Selection Committee in the selection of applications.
15. In response to a Member's enquiry, Miss Jace AU said that the Selection Committee would compile detailed selection report as a record of their selection work.
16. A Member said that selection of ethnic minority projects should be handled with care as it might be vulnerable to criticism of unfair treatment or hidden political motive. The selection criteria should therefore be made known to the applicants.
17. Mr Roy TANG said that details of the applications and the final results would be put on the thematic website of CIBS. Such a fully transparent mechanism for processing applications could safeguard the Selection Committee against criticism of unfair treatment.
18. A Member enquired about the decision-making role of the Director of Broadcasting (DB) and the Selection Committee in the selection of applications. This Member was also concerned that some CIBS producers possessing creative talent did not have the required skill in programme production and they therefore would need assistance.
19. Mr Roy TANG said that as the Controller of the CIBF, DB was the final decision-maker in the selection of CIBS applications. However, under the proposed CIBS selection mechanism, applications would be vetted by a Selection Committee comprising expert Members from different sectors under a fully open and fair mechanism. Therefore, as the Controller, he could see no reason to over-rule the decision of the Selection Committee.

20. Mr Roy TANG added that CIBS producers with creative talent could consider forming a team with those who were strong in production skills so that they could complement their strengths. RTHK producers could only play a facilitating role and would not be involved in programme production of the CIBS producers.

Application process

21. A Member asked whether producers of CIBS programmes which had proven popularity would need to apply afresh in the next round of applications.
22. Mr Roy TANG replied that CIBS programmes should not be allocated a slot in the next quarter automatically because different quarters had different programme themes. More importantly, CIBS should allow a wider participation of CIBS producers.

Chinese and Non-Chinese Language Services

23. Some Members said that though non-Chinese Language producers would be required to provide a transcript in either Chinese or English, it would still be difficult for RTHK producers to monitor the programme content if the language or dialect was unknown to them.
24. Miss Jace AU responded that Radio 3 had the experience of broadcasting programmes hosted by ethnic groups in a language not known to RTHK producers. This relied on the mutual trust between RTHK and the ethnic group concerned.

Programme Themes

25. A Member opined that the proposed programme themes covered only individual specific areas. However, a hybrid among the themes could allow greater flexibility for creative work.
26. Mr Roy TANG said that there were already 11 proposed themes which were comprehensive enough for radio programmes. It was essential for the themes to be simple so as to facilitate different sectors of the community to comprehend its meaning.

Control and review mechanism

27. A Member asked about the parameters to be adopted for the review of the Pilot Project after 3 years of implementation.

28. Mr Roy TANG said that RTHK intended to report the progress and evaluation of the CIBS to the Board one year after implementation. As mentioned in the LegCo Panel Paper, the success or otherwise of CIBS programmes should not be judged on the basis of audience ratings. Instead, mechanisms would be put in place to seek feedback from focus groups, and from the public through the thematic website.
29. Mr TAI Keen-man said that while the detailed review mechanism would be worked out after the implementation of the Pilot Project when we could have hands-on experience, it was initially thought that the success of the Pilot Project could be measured in terms of how well it had achieved the CIBS objectives.
30. A Member opined that the review mechanism should be worked out after the implementation of the Pilot Project. However, since the objectives of the Pilot Project might be changed over time, it seemed more advisable if objective criteria for review could be devised beforehand.
31. Mr CHAN Yiu-wah said that the video archive on the two public consultation meetings held on 31.1.2012 and 13.2.2012 had been posted on the RTHK website.

Agenda Item 4 : Surveys Initiated by the Board of Advisors

32. Ms Amen NG said that at the last meeting, Members suggested RTHK to consult survey experts to refine the methodology for the proposed survey detailed in BOA Paper 1/2012. RTHK had subsequently consulted the academics of Hong Kong University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. They advised that numeric scaling measurement was a widely-used methodology for a uniform standard to compare various results over time. This survey methodology was suitable for the purpose and nature of the proposed survey.
33. Ms NG added that in the light of the advice of the survey experts, RTHK suggested adopting the methodology proposed in the said BOA paper. As regards survey by focus groups, this could be considered in the next round of the survey as time was not sufficient for such survey to be included if the outcome of the survey was to be published in coming August.

34. Members generally agreed. A Member suggested that respondents could be asked to give sample programmes against the marking they gave to the questions so that more solid information against the rather abstract markings could be generalized.

Agenda Item 5(a) : Quarterly updates on programmes (BQA Paper 5/2012)

35. Mr TAI Keen-man introduced the paper. He added that -
- (a) On Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), after the completion of the last hilltop transmission station around June 2012, it would take some one year to set up the gap-fillers. By then, the whole transmission network would become more established. Another round of road show to publicize DAB would be launched in June 2012;
 - (b) On Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), signal transmission testing of Temple Hill Station would commence in July 2012; and
 - (c) RTHK would jointly organize with Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups a mega event in celebration of the 15th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR, “Our 15 Years Youth Musical Performance” (我們的十五年), on 2 July 2012 in Hong Kong Coliseum. Board Members would be invited to join the event.
36. Some Members suggested that public affairs programmes could be held on the street and Principal Officials of the new HKSAR Government should be invited to join. Besides, Principal Officials could be invited to host programmes on the work of their respective bureau.
37. Mr TAI Keen-man said that RTHK would introduce radio programmes on the street. Government officials and popular social figures from different sectors would be invited to join the programmes.
38. A Member enquired about the audience rating for the radio programmes (千禧年代) and (自由 Phone 自由風) after the change of the programme hosts and format.
39. Mr TAI Keen-man said that the audience feedback showed a slight drop at the early stage but had recently become stable at the similar level of ratings as before.

Agenda Item 5(b) : Quarterly updates on complaints (BOA Paper 6/2012)

40. Mr TAI Keen-man introduced the paper.
41. A Member said that the paper contained only complaint cases but RTHK programmes were well received by the public. It was worthwhile if RTHK could provide audience ratings for the Board's information.
42. Mr Roy TANG undertook to provide the audience ratings to the Board at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 6 : Any other business

(a) RTHK's new media development

43. A Member enquired about the new media development plan of RTHK as there was rapid growth in the use of mobile devices for receiving programmes in recent years and there was a need for RTHK to enhance its competitiveness in this aspect.
44. Mr Roy TANG said that RTHK's new media development had been given priority treatment in resource allocation and RTHK had actively discussed the matter recently. He would ask Mr Henry Doo, Head/ New Media Unit to brief Members of the development proposal at the next meeting of the Board.

(b) New RTHK project

45. A Member enquired about the progress of the new RTHK project.
46. Mr Roy TANG replied that invitation of tender for pre-qualification of "Design and Build" of the project would be gazetted around the end of May this year. Finance Committee's funding approval for the project would be sought at around the end of 2013 / early 2014. Construction work for the project was expected to be completed in mid 2017. Broadcasting equipment installation and testing would then be carried out. It was expected that the new Broadcasting House would commence operation in 2018, which would mark the 90th Anniversary of RTHK.

47. Another Member said that the proposal to set up a museum at the new Broadcasting House to showcase the valuable broadcasting history of RTHK was worthy of support. The museum should be of a multi-functional design with the provision of a coffee shop, bookstore etc in addition to display of items so that visitors such as students would find the visit more fruitful and enjoyable.

Date of next meeting

48. The Chairman informed the meeting that the next meeting would be held on 31.8.2012 and the venue was to be fixed.

49. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Secretariat
RTHK Board of Advisors