

Summary of Public Views on the Renewal of the Domestic Pay Television Programme Service Licence of TVB Pay Vision Limited (TVBPV)

To gauge public views on TVBPV's performance in the provision of domestic pay television programme service, the former Broadcasting Authority (BA)¹ conducted a public hearing on 31 August 2011 and received a total of 37 written submissions during the consultation period from 23 August to 23 September 2011. The views collected are summarised as follows:

(I) Programme Diversity

- TVBPV should broadcast more sports programmes or provide a sports channel.
- TVBPV should increase programmes of different types, such as educational programmes, art and cultural programmes, current affairs programmes, RTHK programmes, and programmes catering for the needs and interests of senior citizens, teenagers, women, ethnic minorities and the local community.
- TVB Drama Channel should avoid broadcasting re-run programmes during weekdays.
- Movies and drama series broadcast on TVB Movies Channel, TVB Classic Channel and TVB Drama Channel were frequently repeated.
- TVBPV should provide more news, documentary and current affairs programmes produced by TVB.
- TVB Kids Channel should provide programmes suitable for teenagers and young adults aged 12 – 21.
- TVBPV should have dedicated channels providing drama

¹ The Communications Authority was set up on 1 April 2012 as a unified regulator for the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors by taking over the functions of the former Broadcasting Authority and Telecommunications Authority.

series produced in the Mainland, Taiwan, Korea and Japan.

- TVB PV should have a channel providing information about Taiwan.
- TVB PV had broadcast too many Korean drama series and should broadcast drama series from other countries.
- TVB PV should provide a channel featuring supernatural powers.
- TVB PV should have a dedicated channel for Japanese animations.
- TVB PV should provide a video-on-demand service.
- TVB Classic Channel should provide some non-drama classic programmes such as “Enjoy Yourself Tonight”, “TVB Anniversary Special” and the fund raising programmes of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals.
- TVB PV’s programmes should cater for the interest of the viewers who are concerned about environmental protection and healthy lifestyles.
- TVB PV should provide programmes which give members of the public opportunities to express their views on social issues.
- TVB PV should provide programmes which allow viewers to express their views on TVB PV’s performance.
- TVB PV should provide locally-produced high definition adult programmes and should engage local artistes in producing such programmes. Adequate training should be provided to these artistes to enhance their professionalism.
- On TVB Movies Channel, there were too many Chinese movies. There was a lack of movies from other countries.
- There were frequent repeats on TVB M Channel and TVB Food Channel.
- On TVB Drama Channel, TVB PV should schedule repeats of

drama not more than once in a week. There were also comments suggesting that dramas should not be allowed to repeat within one year.

- TVB Select Channel should broadcast classic foreign drama series (e.g. “Sex and the City”).
- TVB Lifestyle Channel featured too many situation comedies. There was a lack of game shows.
- TVB Kids Channel should provide programmes featuring children’s songs.
- On TVBM Channel, there was a lack of songs/music videos of classic local singers and interview footages of these singers.

(II) Programme Quality

- The programme quality of TVBS Channel, TVB Drama Channel, classic TVB dramas and Japanese dramas was satisfactory.
- TVBPV should broadcast programmes in 16:9 aspect ratio for the enhancement of viewing pleasure.
- The programming strategy for TVB Lifestyle Channel should be different from TVB Classic and TVB Drama Channels. For example, TVB Lifestyle Channel should not provide drama programmes, which are already provided on TVB Classic and TVB Drama Channels.
- As the programmes provided by TVBN Channel and SZTV Channel are the same as those on TVB’s iNews Channel and ATV’s SZTV Channel, TVBPV should not charge customers for these two channels.
- Programme hosts, artistes and news anchors often made pronunciation mistakes.
- There were frequent repeats of free television programmes on TVB Lifestyle, TVB Kids and TVB Drama channels. TVBPV should broadcast more first-run programmes on these

channels.

- Most viewers were not interested in watching the old movies broadcast on Celestial Classic Movies Channel.
- On TVB Entertainment News Channel, there were frequent broadcasts of the interview footages of TVB's artistes. There was a lack of coverage on other artistes.
- There were excessive and unnecessary excisions of sex and nudity scenes in movies broadcast on TVB Movies Channel, which adversely affected the viewing pleasure.
- The programme "My Private Kitchen" broadcast on TVB Food Channel was of good quality.
- The programme schedules published by TVBPV were inaccurate. On TVBN2 Channel, some programmes were not broadcast in accordance with the schedule published by TVBPV.
- There were dissatisfactions about performance of news anchors. Specifically, there were comments that news anchors generally lacked the experience of on-site reporting and simultaneous interpretation during live broadcasts.

(III) Subtitling / Sign Language / Bilingual Programmes

- Sign language service should be provided in news programmes to meet the needs of the hearing impaired.
- Bilingual soundtracks should be provided for acquired animations broadcast on TVB Kids Channel.
- Subtitling was occasionally omitted.
- Subtitles were only provided in non-Cantonese programmes on TVBN Channel, which caused inconvenience to the hearing impaired.
- Some channels which were mainly broadcast in Putonghua did not provide Chinese subtitles, which caused inconvenience to

the hearing impaired.

- Bilingual subtitles should be provided in programmes broadcast on TVB Movies Channel.
- Typos should be avoided in the subtitles.
- Chinese subtitles should be provided on all channels for the convenience of the audiences.
- On TVB Movies Channel, the appearance of subtitles and the pace of dialogues were not in sync.
- There were comments that presentation of subtitling on TVB Select, TVB Movie and TVBM channels should be improved.
- Bilingual soundtracks should be provided for live broadcasts of Legislative Council meetings on TVBN2 Channel. Cantonese soundtrack should be provided for programmes broadcast in Putonghua on TVB Lifestyle Channel.

(IV) High Definition Television (HDTV) Service

- TVBPV should upgrade its service to provide HDTV channels in future to match the service of its two competitors, namely Hong Kong Cable Television Limited and PCCW Media Limited.
- The quality of the set-top box recently provided by TVBPV, which claimed to be able to receive HD signal, was poor. The video and sound signals were not synchronised.
- TVBPV should provide the SBS-HD Channel from Korea.

(V) Investment Plan

- The projected programming investment of TVBPV for the period of 2013 – 2019 was less than that for 2007 – 2013. TVBPV should ensure that such reduction of investment would not adversely affect the quality and variety of its service.

- TVBPV should disclose the investment amount on HDTV services.

(VI) Sales Practices of TVBPV

- Quite a number of respondents expressed concerns over unauthorised sales activities and deceptive sales practices of TVBPV.
- Some respondents cited the incident in 2009 where a recipient of comprehensive social security assistance committed suicide allegedly because he was deceived by a salesman of TVBPV and suggested that TVBPV should enhance monitoring of its sales force. It was also suggested that the BA should not recommend to the Government to renew TVBPV's domestic pay television programme service licence.
- The attitude of TVBPV's technicians, salespersons, and customer service staff was poor. TVBPV should make improvement in this aspect.
- TVBPV's complaints hotline was often unmanned. Callers were re-directed to a pre-recorded message before their calls were answered. Complaints submitted to TVBPV via emails were often unanswered.
- TVBPV should enhance the publicity of its complaints hotline service.
- There were dissatisfactions over on-street promotional activities of TVBPV in areas such as subways and entrances of MTR stations and residential buildings, which caused nuisance to members of the public.

(VII) Firewall Provisions

- The "firewall provisions" governing ownership, programme supply and management in TVBPV's licence should be removed so as to give TVBPV a fairer and more reasonable business environment to compete with other pay television licensees.

- As the applicants for domestic free television programme service licences were closely associated with the existing pay television operators, the BA should consider imposing similar special conditions in the licences of successful applicants to ensure fair competition.
- There might be a conflict of interest for TVB to act as both a shareholder and a channel supplier of TVBPV.

(VIII) Broadcast Platform

- TVBPV's programme signal is mainly transmitted via satellite. As a result, the number of channels provided by TVBPV is less than that of other pay television programme service licensees. Also, the number of TVBPV's channels available via the now TV platform is less than that transmitted via satellite, which is unfair to the subscribers of TVBPV's packages on the now TV platform.
- Programmes carried on the free digital terrestrial television channels were of better quality than those on the TVBPV platform.
- Programme signal carried on the now TV platform was not stable.
- There was room for improvement on the picture quality of programmes transmitted via satellite.
- The numbers of TVBPV channels available on different platforms (i.e. satellite, now TV and Hutchison broadband networks) were different from each other, which caused confusion to subscribers.
- TVBPV should improve the audio and visual quality of its programmes.
- Some respondents were dissatisfied with frequent service failure.

(IX) Subscription / Installation Fee

- Some respondents were dissatisfied that subscribers had to pay additional fees for first-run drama programmes, which were provided only on TVB Select Channel.
- The subscription and installation fees of TVBPV were too high. TVBPV should reduce the price and provide more special offers to subscribers.
- The BA should impose restriction on subscription rates by TVBPV.

(X) Advertising

- It was undesirable for TVBPV to put advertisements on TVB's channels. Also, the advertisements did not highlight the channels of TVBPV as a pay TV service, which confused the audiences.
- TVBPV should not advertise its service on the acquired channels provided on its service.
- There were too many advertisements broadcast on TVBPV's channels. The duration of each commercial break should be limited to two minutes.
- Advertisements for money lending services should also remind viewers of possible legal liabilities and risks for money lending, apart from promoting such services.
- Advertisements for slimming service and fast food restaurant should provide advice on the importance of balanced diet.
- No advertisement should be allowed during the broadcast of news programmes.

(XI) Other Matters

- TVBPV should avoid giving short notices to viewers on programme changes.

- TVBPV should extend its transmission network to buildings such as tenement houses as such buildings do not have Communal Antenna Broadcast Distribution Systems.
- TVBPV should devise measures to prevent telesales of now TV from soliciting existing customers of TVBPV, who received the service via satellite, to subscribe TVBPV's package on the now TV platform.
- TVBPV should make its best efforts in negotiating with channel providers to maintain its diversified multi-channel service.
- Programmes were broadcast on TVB's domestic free television service shortly after they had been carried by the channels of TVBPV's domestic pay television service, which was unfair to TVBPV's subscribers.
- Major sports events such as the World Cup should not be broadcast on pay television channels only.
- TVBPV should not continue its pay television business. TVB should provide more free television channels to give members of the public more choices.
- The management of TVBPV should consider public views on its programme services in a serious manner.
- TVBPV should provide programme re-run service for free on the Internet.
- TVBPV's discretion to cancel channels unilaterally was unfair to its subscribers.
- TVBPV should keep the sound volume of its programmes and advertisements at the same level.
- Pay TV channels which were supplied by TVB for the inclusion in TVBPV's service should be labelled as such to avoid misunderstanding by members of the public.

- TVBPV should broadcast the programmes from other channels such as ATV Home, ATV World and TVB Pearl in addition to those broadcast on TVB Jade.
- On TVBN2 Channel, there were dissatisfactions over the live broadcast of the Legislative Council meetings in two small screens.
- Programme titles should be placed under the channel logo for viewers' information.
- It was a waste of resource for TVBPV to include a channel featuring only programme/channel guides.
- Public hearings should be organised in Kowloon and the New Territories in addition to Hong Kong Island.
- The BA should hold a public hearing at least once a year to give members of the public more opportunities to express their views.
- The BA's complaint-driven approach reflected lenient application of the regulatory requirements.
- Both TVBPV and the BA should take vigorous actions to combat illegal reception of TVBPV's service in the Mainland as this was a possible infringement of copyright and damaged the interests of TVBPV's subscribers.

Communications Authority
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