

**Public Consultation on
Renewal of Domestic Free Television
Programme Service Licences
(August - September 2025)**

Information Document

HK Television Entertainment Company Limited

i-CABLE HOY Limited

Television Broadcasts Limited



www.coms-auth.hk

Preamble

The Communications Authority (CA)¹ will launch a two-month public consultation on the licence renewal applications of the domestic free television programme service of HK Television Entertainment Company Limited (HKTVE), i-CABLE HOY Limited (i-CABLE HOY) and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) on 1 August 2025. This information document contains key information on the three licensees' services, investment plans and past compliance records to assist the public in better understanding their services and expressing views.

The two-month public consultation will be conducted from 1 August to 30 September 2025. Members of the public are welcome to submit their views **by 30 September 2025** through any of the following means -

Post Office of the Communications Authority
(Attn: Broadcasting Section 33)
20/F, Wu Chung House,
213 Queen's Road East,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Fax 2507 2219

Email consultation-tv-2025@ofca.gov.hk

CA will also conduct a televised online public hearing (TOPH) on 20 September 2025 (Saturday) for members of the public to express their views, as well as an opinion survey and focus group discussions. For details and registration of TOPH, please visit CA's website at www.coms-auth.hk. For enquiries, please contact us by phone at 2961 6641 or 2961 6649.

¹ CA is an independent statutory body established in 2012 under the Communications Authority Ordinance (Cap. 616) as a unified regulator for the telecommunications and broadcasting industries in Hong Kong.

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BACKGROUND

Domestic free television programme service (free TV) in Hong Kong is regulated and licensed under the Broadcasting Ordinance (Cap. 562) (BO). The Communications Authority (CA), an independent statutory regulatory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance (Cap. 616), has the statutory function under the BO of recommending to the Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) on, amongst others, applications for and renewal of free TV licences. CA is also obliged under the law to carry out consultation in relation to, amongst others, applications for renewal of free TV licences.

2. The 12-year licences of the current three free TV licensees, viz. HK Television Entertainment Company Limited (HKTVE) (i.e. from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2027), i-CABLE HOY Limited (i-CABLE HOY) (i.e. from 31 May 2016 to 30 May 2028) and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) (i.e. from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2027), are due to expire in 2027 and 2028 respectively. As specified in section 11(2) of the BO, a free TV licensee shall submit to CA an application for the renewal of its licence not less than 24 months (or such shorter period as CA may specify in a particular case) before the date on which the period of validity of the licence expires.

3. Applications for renewal from the three free TV licensees have been received by CA. Having regard to the proximity of expiry dates of the three free TV licences, CA will carry out a detailed assessment of the licensees' past performance and renewal proposals in one consolidated review exercise in accordance with the BO.

PURPOSE

4. In order to obtain comments and opinions from members of the public on the performance of the three licensees in formulating CA's recommendations on the free TV licence renewal applications to the CE in C in the first quarter of 2026, CA will conduct a two-month public consultation from 1 August 2025 to 30 September 2025. In line with established practice, the public consultation covers a territory-wide opinion survey, a televised online public hearing, focus group discussions as well as invitation for written submissions.

5. To facilitate members of the public to express comments and opinions, key information on the three free TV licensees including their services and compliance records is set out in Part 1.

6. Apart from making recommendations to the CE in C on applications for and renewal of free TV licences, CA is responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance of the licensees with requirements of the prevailing legislation, licence conditions and codes of practice issued by CA on programme, advertising and technical standards. It deals with complaints about broadcast materials as provided under the law and impose sanctions on the broadcasting licensees, if necessary. Major existing regulatory requirements are set out in Part 2.

PART 1 - THE LICENSED SERVICES OF DOMESTIC FREE TELEVISION PROGRAMME SERVICE LICENSEES

1.1 Programme Channels

The three free TV licensees, viz. HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB currently provide a total of ten digital programme channels, bringing about 1 630 broadcast hours per week. A full list of these channels, in order of channel numbers, is set out below –

| Channel No. | Name of Channel | Channel Description |
|--------------------|--|---|
| i-CABLE HOY | | |
| 76 | HOY International Business Channel | [<i>integrated English channel</i>] A 24-hour English channel offering local and overseas productions with focus on business and financial programmes |
| 77 | HOY TV | [<i>integrated Chinese channel</i>] A 24-hour Cantonese channel offering local and overseas productions |
| 78 | HOY Infotainment Channel ² | [<i>thematic channel</i>] A 24-hour channel offering news, financial information, sports and infotainment programmes |
| TVB | | |
| 81 | Jade | [<i>integrated Chinese channel</i>] A 24-hour Cantonese channel offering local and overseas productions |
| 82 | TVB Plus ³ | [<i>thematic channel</i>] A 24-hour integrated entertainment and information channel with interactive linkage to TVB's digital platform |
| 83 | TVB News Channel | [<i>thematic channel</i>] A 24-hour news channel |
| 84 | Pearl | [<i>integrated English channel</i>] A 24-hour English channel offering local and overseas productions |
| 85 | Phoenix Hong Kong Channel ³ | [<i>thematic channel</i>] A 24-hour integrated channel with content supplied by Phoenix Satellite Television Company Limited covering news, entertainment, documentaries and commentary programmes in Putonghua and Cantonese |
| HKTVE | | |
| 96 | ViuTVsix | [<i>integrated English channel</i>] A 17-hour English channel offering local and overseas productions |
| 99 | ViuTV | [<i>integrated Chinese channel</i>] A 24-hour Cantonese channel offering local and overseas productions |

² Channel 78 HOY Infotainment Channel was launched on 21 November 2022.

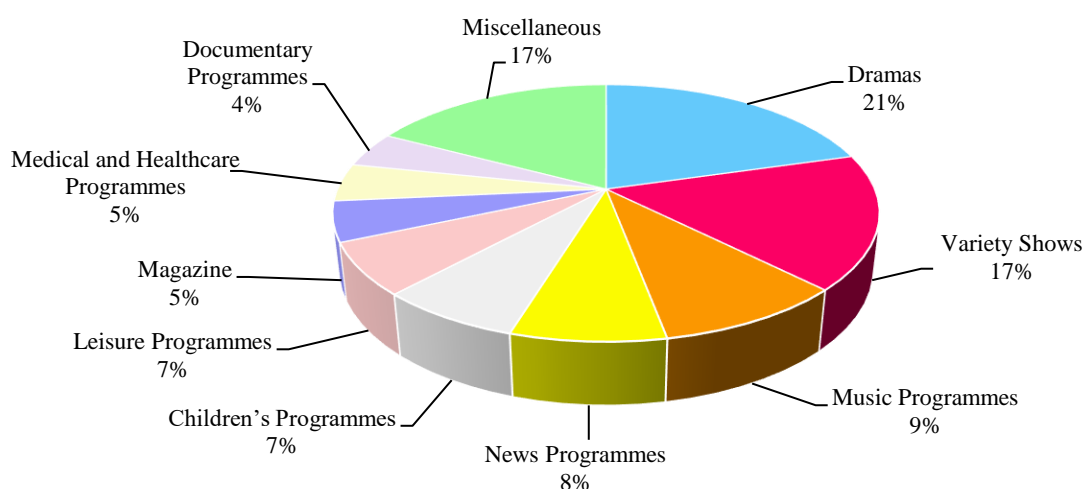
³ With effect from 22 April 2024, “J2” and “TVB Finance, Sports & Information Channel” were replaced by “TVB Plus” under Channel 82, and “Phoenix Hong Kong Channel” under Channel 85 was launched, after TVB obtained CA’s approval for changes to its line-up of programme channels.

1.2 Programme Types Broadcast on Respective Channels

1.2.1 Integrated Chinese Channels

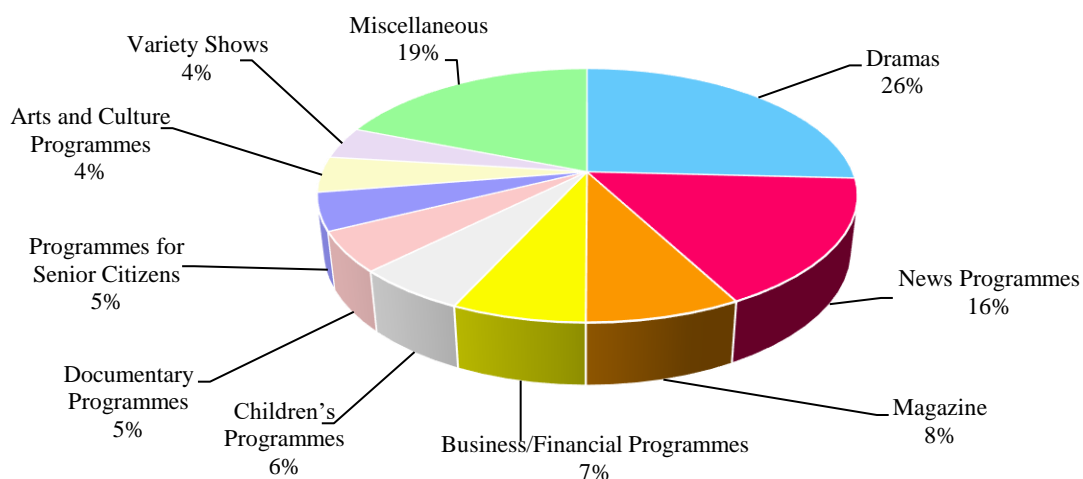
Pursuant to licence requirements, a free TV licensee is required to provide one integrated Chinese channel in Cantonese as part of its service. The different genres of programmes provided by the integrated Chinese channels of i-CABLE HOY (Channel 77 HOY TV), TVB (Channel 81 Jade) and HKTVE (Channel 99 ViuTV) in June 2025⁴ are shown in the following charts –

Programme Types on Channel 77 HOY TV



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 77 includes travelogues, programmes for senior citizens and programmes for young persons, etc.

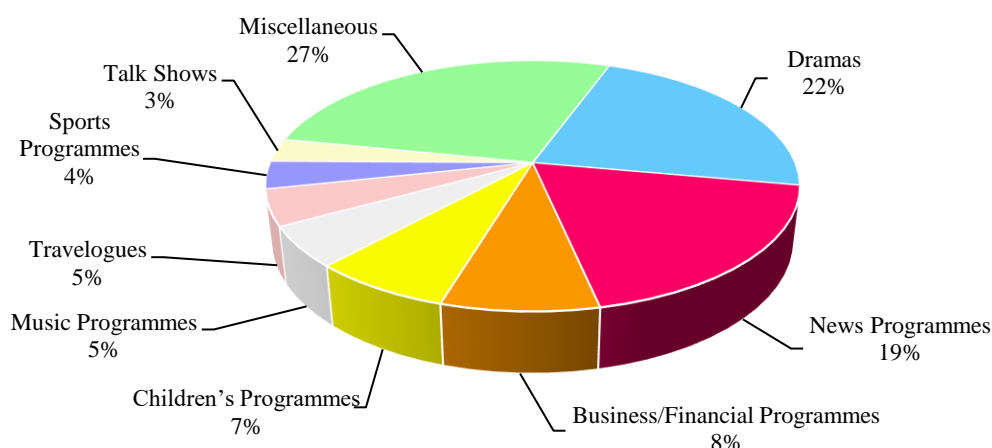
Programme Types on Channel 81 Jade



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 81 includes cooking programmes, music programmes, civic education programmes, sports programmes, programmes for young persons and current affairs programmes, etc.

⁴ Data is drawn from the same one-week period in June 2025. The percentage is calculated on the basis of the aggregate programme hours of the different genres of programmes broadcast on the respective integrated Chinese channels of i-CABLE HOY, TVB and HKTVE against a weekly total of 168 hours, 167 hours and 168 hours respectively.

Programme Types on Channel 99 ViuTV

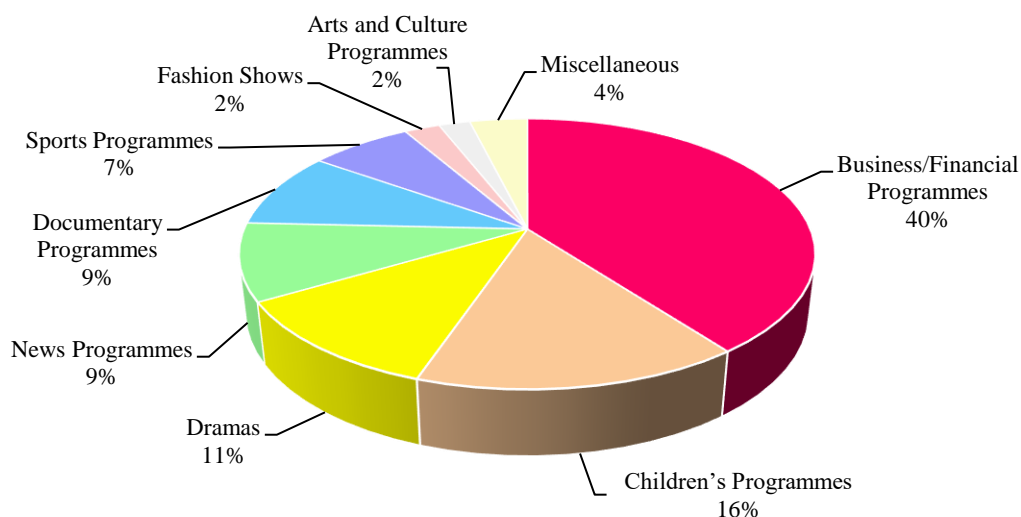


"Miscellaneous" on Channel 99 includes medical and healthcare programmes, cooking programmes, arts and culture programmes, programmes for young persons and feature films, etc.

1.2.2 Integrated English Channels

Pursuant to licence requirements, a free TV licensee is required to provide one integrated English channel as part of its service. The different genres of programmes provided by the integrated English channels of i-CABLE HOY (Channel 76 HOY International Business Channel), TVB (Channel 84 Pearl) and HKTVE (Channel 96 ViuTVsix) in June 2025⁵ are shown in the following charts –

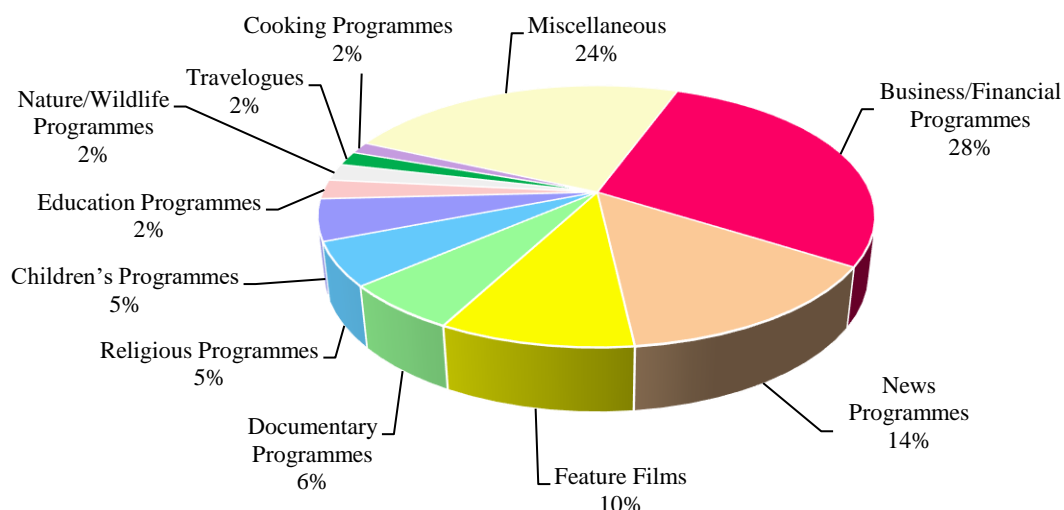
Programme Types on Channel 76 HOY International Business Channel



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 76 includes feature films and medical and healthcare programmes, etc.

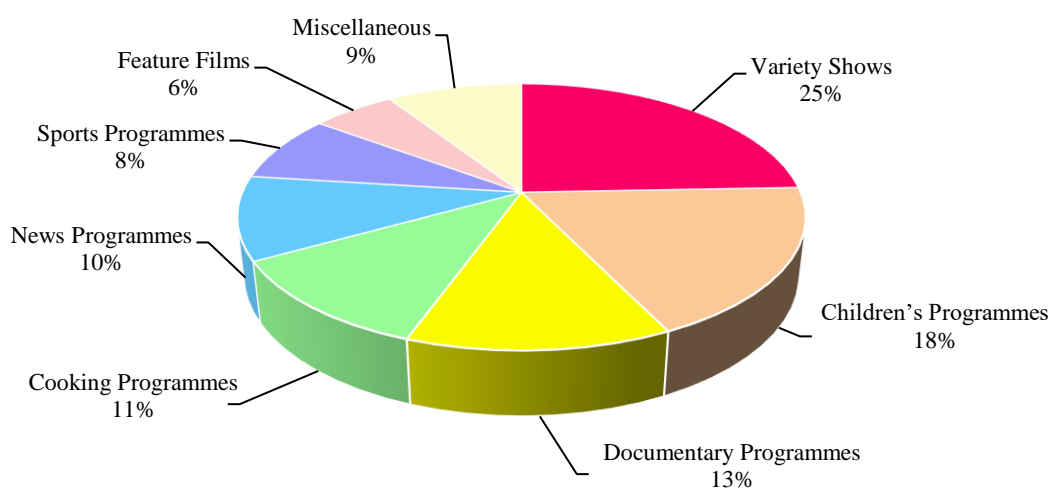
⁵ Data is drawn from the same one-week period in June 2025. The percentage is calculated on the basis of the aggregate programme hours of the different genres of programmes broadcast on the respective integrated English channels of i-CABLE HOY, TVB and HKTVE against a weekly total of 168 hours, 167 hours and 123 hours respectively.

Programme Types on Channel 84 Pearl



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 84 includes variety shows, current affairs programmes and horse racing programmes, etc.

Programme Types on Channel 96 ViuTVsix



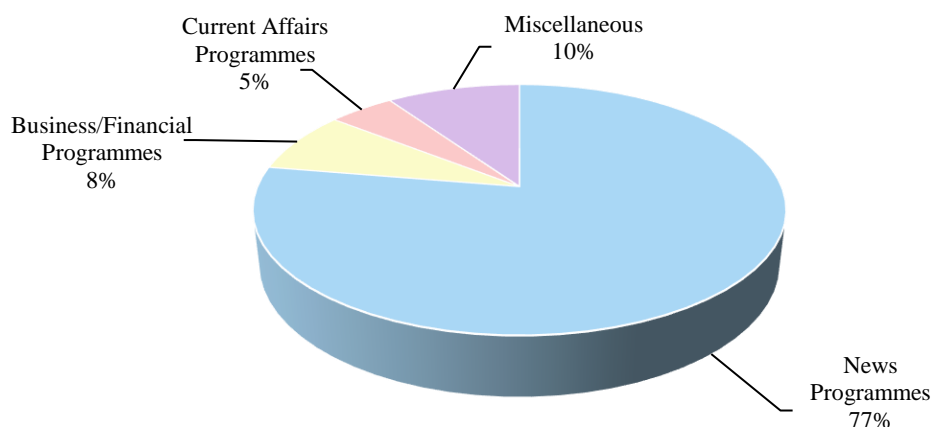
"Miscellaneous" on Channel 96 includes current affairs programmes, travelogues and dramas, etc.

1.2.3 Thematic Channels

Apart from the integrated Chinese and English channels, i-CABLE HOY and TVB also provide one and three thematic channels respectively as part of their services. The different genres of programmes provided by the thematic channels of i-CABLE HOY (Channel 78 HOY Infotainment Channel) and TVB (Channel 82 TVB Plus, Channel 83 TVB News Channel and Channel 85 Phoenix Hong Kong Channel) in June 2025⁶ are shown in the following charts –

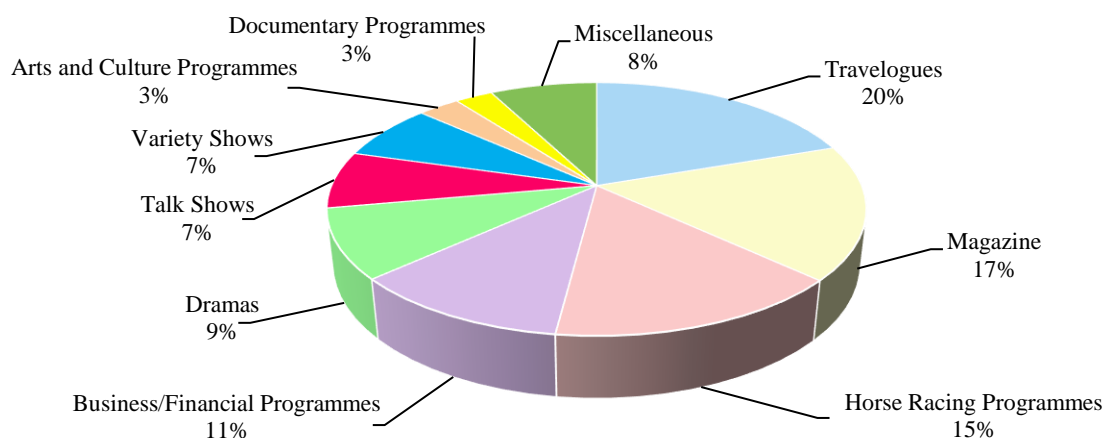
⁶ Data is drawn from the same one-week period in June 2025. The percentage is calculated on the basis of the aggregate programme hours of the different genres of programmes broadcast on the respective thematic channels of i-CABLE HOY (Channel 78) against a weekly total of 168 hours and TVB (Channels 82, 83 and 85) against a weekly total of 167 hours, 168 hours and 168 hours respectively.

Programme Types on Channel 78 HOY Infotainment Channel



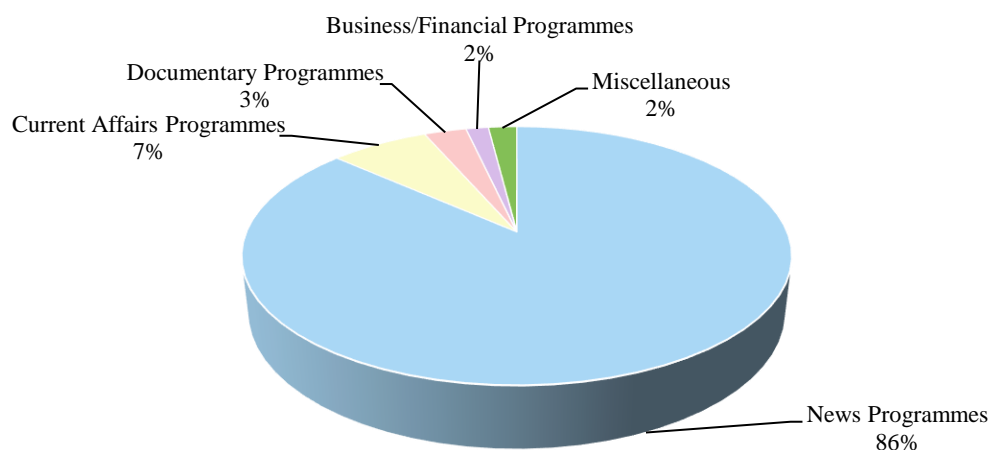
"Miscellaneous" on Channel 78 includes documentary programmes, lifestyle programmes and infotainment programmes, etc.

Programme Types on Channel 82 TVB Plus



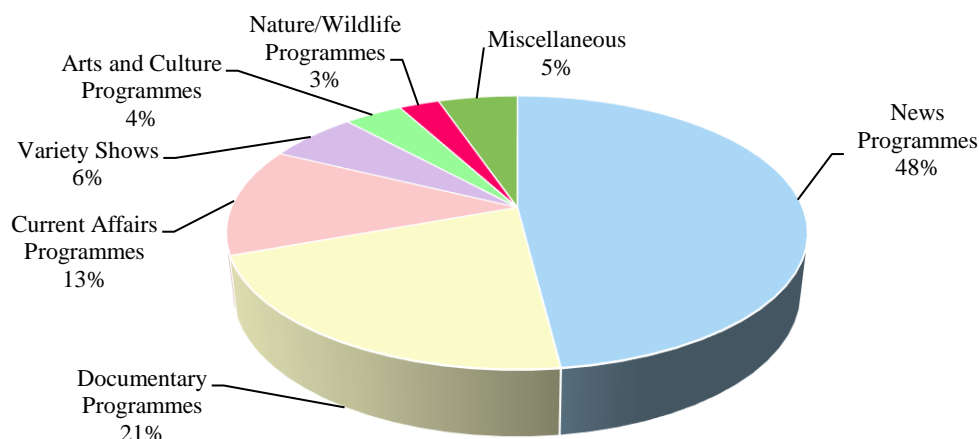
"Miscellaneous" on Channel 82 includes programmes for young persons, music programmes, medical and healthcare programmes, ethnic minority programmes and current affairs programmes, etc.

Programme Types on Channel 83 TVB News Channel



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 83 includes weather programmes, civic education programmes, arts and culture programmes, etc.

Programme Types on Channel 85 Phoenix Hong Kong Channel



"Miscellaneous" on Channel 85 includes talk shows, weather programmes and business/financial programmes.

1.3 Positive Programme Requirements

A free TV licensee is required to provide a mix of programme types in the form of "positive programme" in five categories, viz. news, current affairs (including programmes to positively promote national education, national identity and a correct understanding of the National Security Law), children, young persons and others⁷. This is to ensure that free TV services can cater for the diverse needs of the public in Hong Kong.

1.3.1 Broadcast Hours of Positive Programmes

Pursuant to licence requirements, HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB have been respectively directed to broadcast at least 41.5, 41.5 and 45.5 hours of positive programmes per week on any of their programme channels. They have all met the requirements so far for the current licence term. The weekly average broadcast hours of each category of positive programmes is set out in the following table –

| | News Programmes | Current Affairs Programmes ⁸ | Children's Programmes | Programmes for Young Persons | Others | Total |
|--------------------|---|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | Weekly Average Broadcast Hours (Licence Requirement) | | | | | |
| HKTVE | 10.5 (7) | 3.0 (2.5) | 15.0 (14) | 1.0 (1) | 17.8 (17) | 47.3 (41.5) |
| i-CABLE HOY | 11.5 (7) | 2.8 (2.5) | 15.0 (14) | 1.0 (1) | 43.8 (17) | 74.1 (41.5) |
| TVB | 13.2 (7) | 4.1 (3.5) | 14.7 (14) | 3.2 (3) | 20.7 (18) | 55.9 (45.5) |

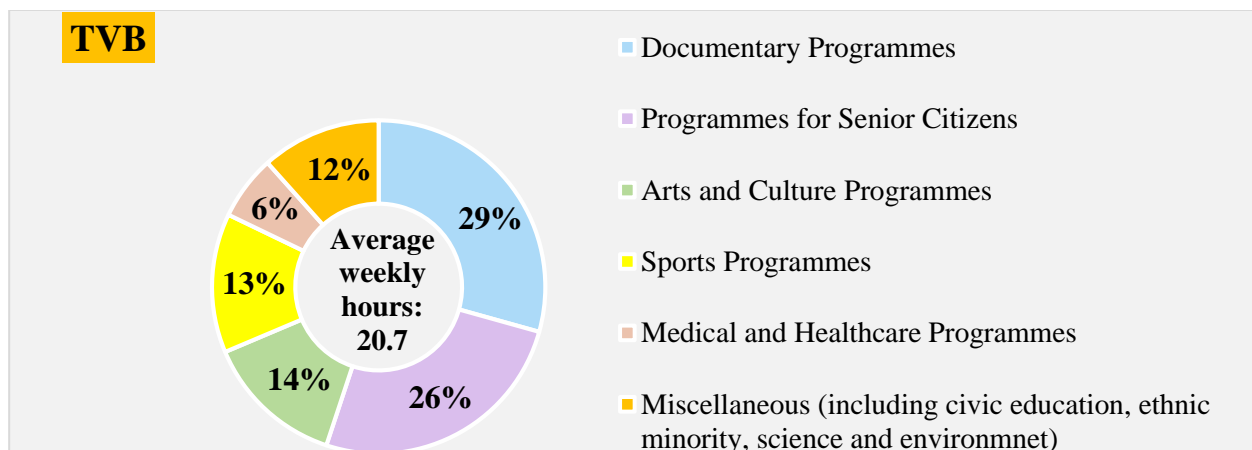
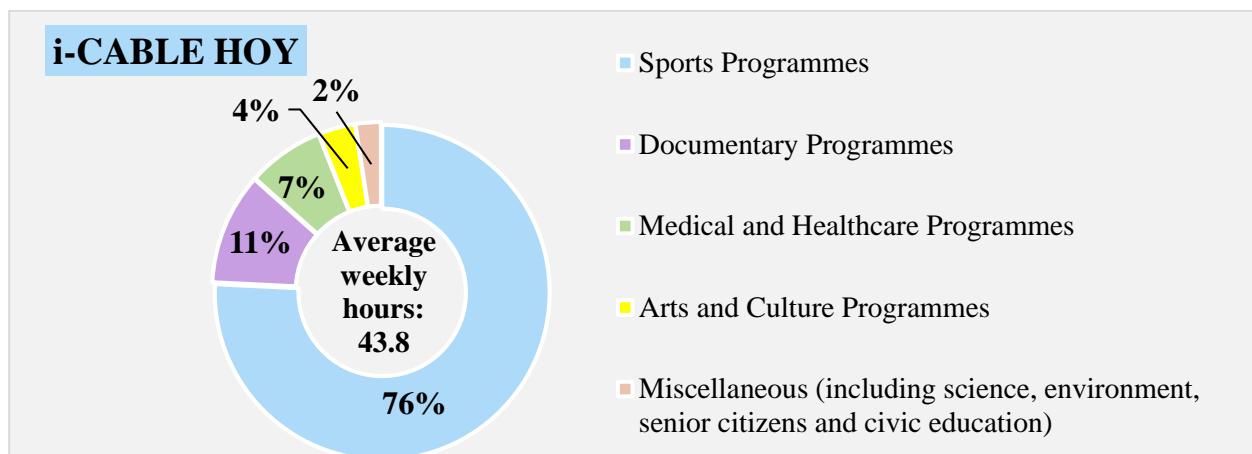
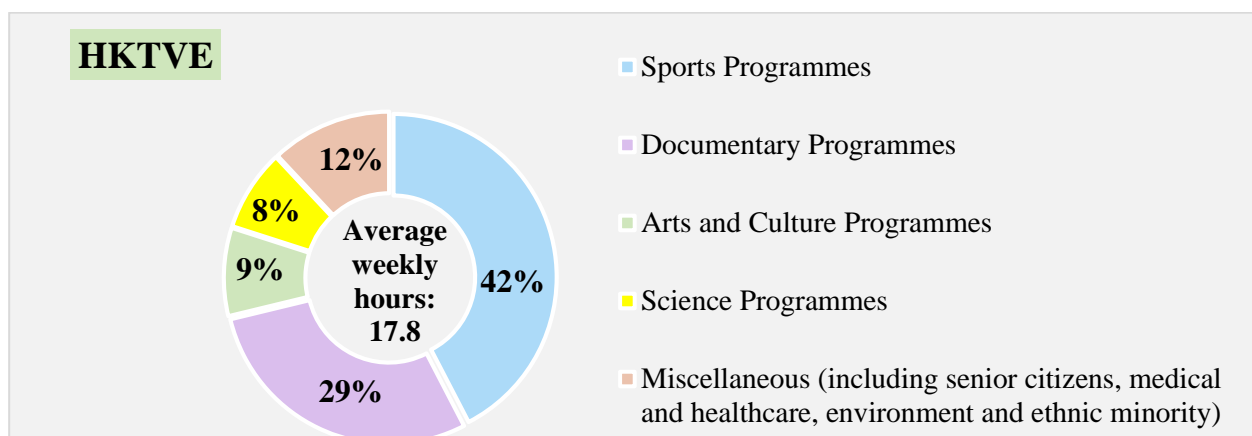
⁷ Following the mid-term review of the free TV licences of HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB completed in 2023, the original seven categories of positive programmes were consolidated into five categories.

⁸ Including no less than 30 minutes of programmes to positively promote national education, national identity and a correct understanding of the National Security Law.

Examples of positive programmes broadcast by each licensee for the fulfilment of the positive programme requirements in the fourth quarter of 2024, based on their annual compliance reports and other submissions to CA, are set out at **Annex**.

1.3.2 *Broadcast Hours of Positive Programmes under the “Others” Category*

Licensees are given the flexibility to provide a variety of programmes under the “others” category (introduced in February 2023 after the mid-term review) which may include, for example, programmes for senior citizens, arts and culture, ethnic minorities, sports and civic education, taking into account their individual programming strategies. The different types of programmes broadcast under the “others” category by the licensees and broadcast hours are set out in the charts below –



1.4 Local Production

HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB have committed to providing certain amount of local productions⁹ on their free TV services¹⁰. The weekly average broadcast hours of local productions (on all the programme channels combined) by the licensees in 2024 have all exceeded their commitments and are set out in the following table –

| Licensee | Weekly Average Broadcast Hours |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| HKTVE | 110 |
| i-CABLE HOY | 216 |
| TVB | 378 |
| Total | 704 |

1.5 Complaints on Broadcast Materials

Broadcast materials are not subject to any previewing by CA. The editorial responsibility lies with the licensees themselves. They shall monitor and ensure strict compliance with the codes of practice (governing programme standards, advertising standards and technical standards) issued by CA from time to time, the licence conditions and the relevant legislation. Major regulatory requirements are set out in Part 2 of this information document. As the statutory regulator on licensed television programme services under the BO, CA deals with complaints about broadcast materials in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 391) (B(MP)O). Director-General of Communications (DG) has the delegated powers from CA to deal with complaints which are trivial or frivolous; which do not involve any breach of legislation, licence conditions or codes of practice; or falling outside section 11 of the B(MP)O. If there is prima facie evidence of a breach, the complaint may be referred to the Broadcast Complaints Committee¹¹ for consideration and recommendation to CA. CA may, if necessary, impose sanctions on broadcasting licensees, including advice, strong advice, warning, serious warning and financial penalty. As an administrative procedure, CA accepts requests for review from any complainant who is dissatisfied with the decision of DG under CA's delegated authority on his/her complaint.

⁹ “Local production” refers to programmes produced locally and appealing to local viewers, irrespective of whether they are partly or wholly station-produced, commissioned, collaborated, or joint-ventured programmes but shall not include Government programmes.

¹⁰ Following the mid-term review of the free TV licences of HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB completed in 2023, their commitment to hours of local productions are as follows –

| Licensee | Weekly Average Broadcast Hours |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| HKTVE | 60 |
| i-CABLE HOY | 130 |
| TVB | 254 |

¹¹ The Broadcast Complaints Committee is responsible for considering complaints about broadcast referred to it by CA and for making recommendations to the CA regarding such complaints pursuant to section 11 of the B(MP)O.

During the period from 1 December 2015 to 30 June 2025 (the Relevant Period)¹², CA processed a total of 10 164 cases (involving 81 144 complaints¹³) relating to the materials broadcast by the licensees. A breakdown of these complaint cases by licensee is set out in the following table –

| Licensee | No. of Complaint Cases | No. of Complaints Involved |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| HKTVE | 851 | 1 768 |
| i-CABLE HOY | 502 | 624 |
| TVB | 8 811 | 78 752 |
| Total | 10 164 | 81 144 |

1.5.1 *Complaints about Programme Materials*

Complaints about programme materials¹⁴ processed (and those substantiated with sanctions imposed) during the Relevant Period by licensee are tabulated below –

| Licensee | No. of Complaint Cases (substantiated with sanctions) | No. of Complaints Involved (substantiated with sanctions) |
|--------------------|--|--|
| HKTVE | 778 (8) | 1 621 (95) |
| i-CABLE HOY | 446 (4) | 533 (5) |
| TVB | 8 077 (23) | 76 344 (729) |
| Total | 9 301¹⁵ (35) | 78 498 (829) |

The more common types of complaint nature about programme materials include “inaccurate and misleading factual materials”, “partiality / unfairness” and “disturbing or annoying materials / horror”. A breakdown of processed complaint cases on programme

¹² The Relevant Period starts from 1 December 2015, which aligns with the commencement date of the current licence of TVB and also covers the actual launch dates of the integrated Chinese channels of HKTVE (i.e. 31 March 2016) and i-CABLE HOY (i.e. 14 May 2017). Unless otherwise specified, all complaints referred to in parts 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 are those processed during the Relevant Period.

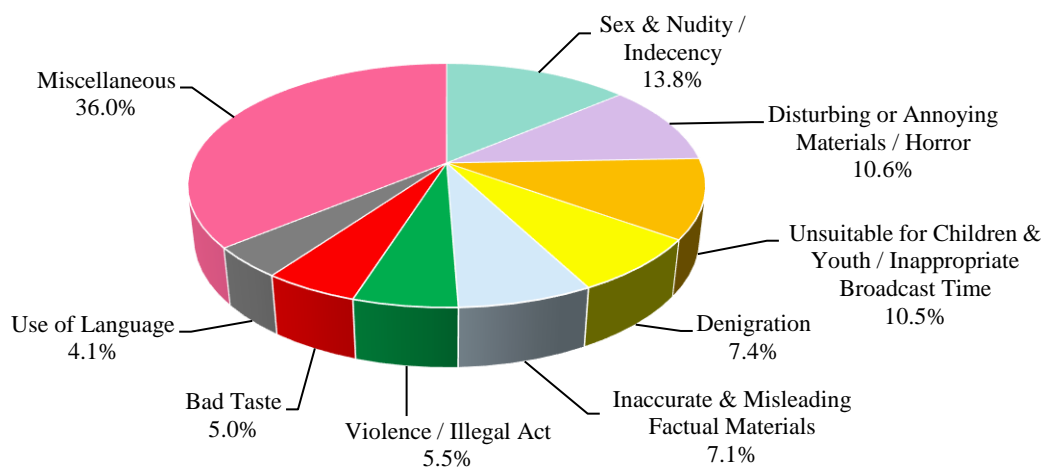
¹³ To ensure operational efficiency, complaints with similar allegations relating to the same issue or broadcast material are grouped together for processing and counted as a single case.

¹⁴ Prior to 15 December 2023, the regulation of indirect advertising and product/service sponsorship are stipulated in both the then Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Standards and Generic Code of Practice on Television Advertising Standards. In order to ensure continuity in reviewing the licensees’ performance over the Relevant Period as a whole, complaints on indirect advertising and product/service sponsorship were counted towards complaints about programme materials instead of advertising materials to avoid double-counting.

¹⁵ The cases attracted most complaints during the Relevant Period are:- (a) eight cases (over 22 000 complaints) against TVB in 2019 and 2020 relating to reports on the social unrest; (b) one case (over 13 000 complaints) against TVB in 2016 relating to the provision of simplified Chinese subtitles only and/or the use of Putonghua in some news programmes; (c) one case (over 8 200 complaints) in 2016 against the news reports of TVB on a Legislative Councillor’s remarks that five missing booksellers were allegedly arrested in the Mainland for soliciting prostitutes; and (d) one case (over 4 600 complaints) in 2022 against TVB’s programme “Scoop” (東張西望) and related promos about an accident occurred during a concert of a local boy group. All of these complaints were classified by CA as unsubstantiated.

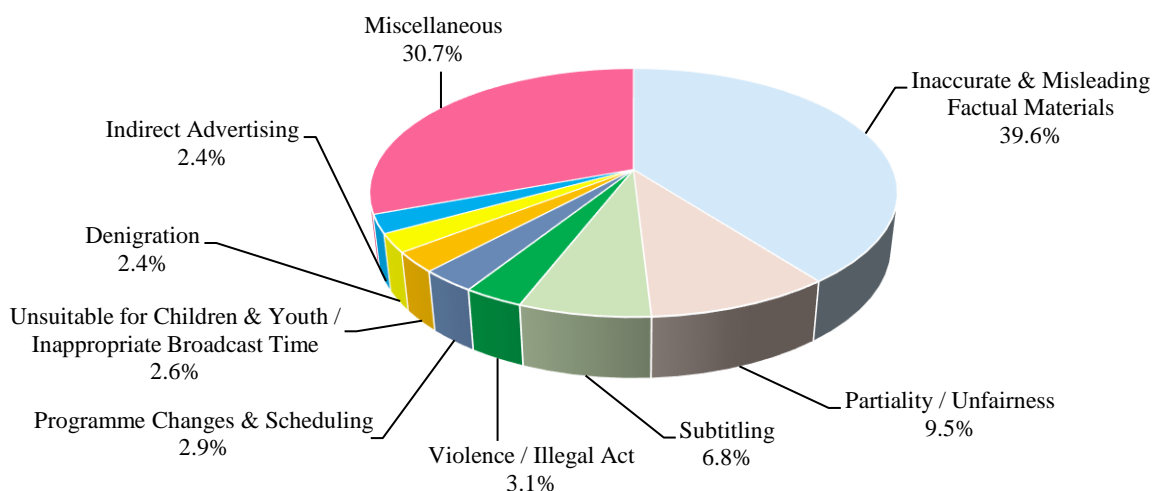
materials by nature and by licensee during the Relevant Period is shown in the following charts –

Nature of Complaint Cases about Programme Materials on HKTVE



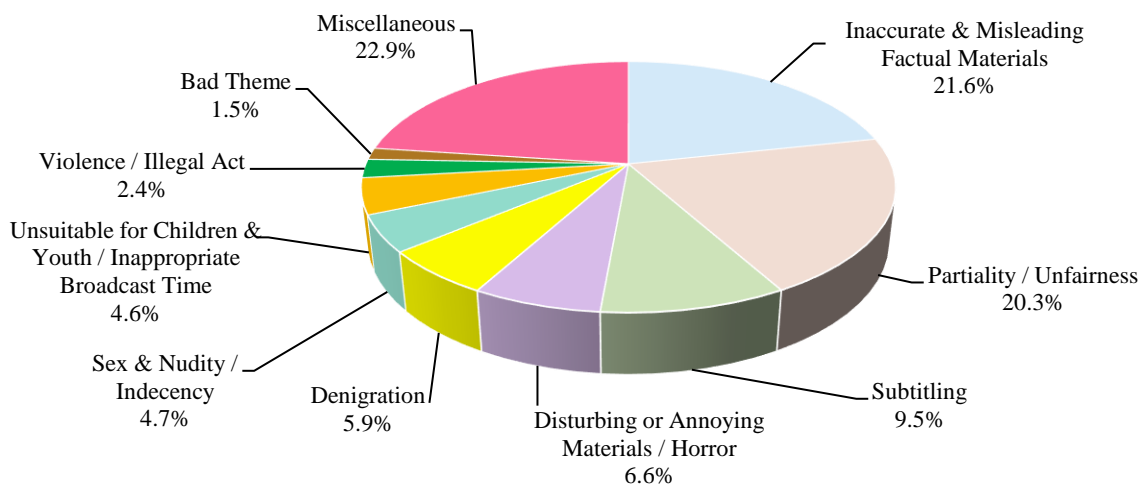
“Miscellaneous” includes subtitling, indirect advertising and bad theme, etc.

Nature of Complaint Cases about Programme Materials on i-CABLE HOY



“Miscellaneous” includes disturbing or annoying materials/horror, sex & nudity/indecency, etc.

Nature of Complaint Cases about Programme Materials on TVB



“Miscellaneous” includes use of language, indirect advertising and bad taste, etc.

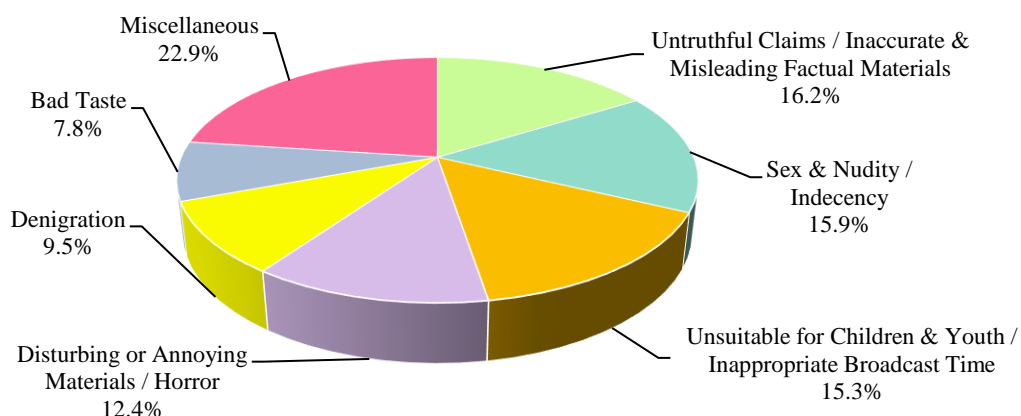
1.5.2 Complaints about Advertising Materials

Complaints about advertising materials processed (and those substantiated with sanctions imposed) during the Relevant Period by licensee are tabulated below –

| Licensee | No. of Complaint Cases (substantiated with sanctions) | No. of Complaints Involved (substantiated with sanctions) |
|--------------------|--|--|
| HKTVE | 73 (0) | 147 (0) |
| i-CABLE HOY | 56 (3) | 91 (3) |
| TVB | 734 (4) | 2 408 (9) |
| Total | 863 (7) | 2 646 (12) |

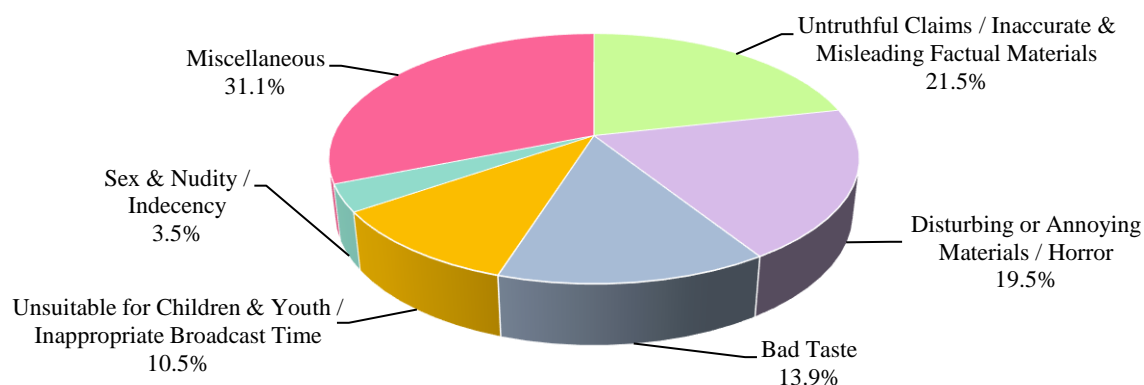
The more common types of complaint nature about advertising materials include “untruthful claims / inaccurate and misleading factual materials”, “disturbing or annoying materials / horror” and “unsuitable for children and youth / inappropriate broadcast time”. A breakdown of processed complaint cases on advertising materials by nature and by licensee during the Relevant Period is shown in the following charts –

Nature of Complaint Cases about Advertising Materials on HKTVE



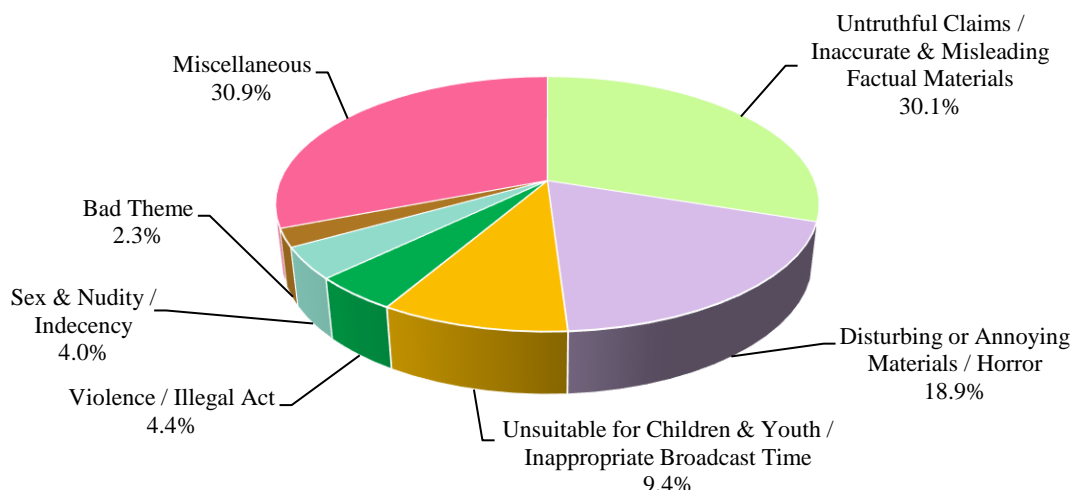
“Miscellaneous” includes bad theme, superstition, illegal act and dangerous act, etc.

Nature of Complaint Cases about Advertising Materials on i-CABLE HOY



“Miscellaneous” includes bad theme, dangerous act, denigration and violence, etc.

Nature of Complaint Cases about Advertising Materials on TVB



“Miscellaneous” includes denigration, bad taste, use of language and dangerous act, etc.

1.6 Breaches of Programming and Advertising Regulatory Requirements

1.6.1 Sanctions Imposed on Complaints about Programme Materials

Of the 9 301 cases about programme materials processed during the Relevant Period, CA found 35 cases substantiated and imposed 36 sanctions¹⁶. A breakdown of the sanctions imposed on the licensees is set out in the following table –

| Licensee \ Sanction | Financial Penalty | Serious Warning | Warning | Strong Advice | Advice | Total |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|---------------|--------|-----------|
| HKTVE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| i-CABLE HOY | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| TVB | 3 ¹⁷ | 3 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 24 |

1.6.2 Sanctions Imposed on Complaints about Advertising Materials

Of the 863 cases about advertising materials processed during the Relevant Period, CA found seven cases substantiated and imposed seven sanctions. A breakdown of the sanctions imposed on the licensees is set out in the following table –

¹⁶ In 2017, CA found two contraventions by TVB in a complaint case which involved the reference to and/or exposure of a mobile app service (i.e. Big Big Channel) in five programmes broadcast by TVB. As a result, two sanctions were imposed for the breaches by TVB in a single case.

¹⁷ The three financial penalties of \$150,000, \$200,000 and \$300,000 imposed on TVB in May 2016, November 2016 and June 2018 respectively involved breaches of the provisions that governed indirect advertising and product/service sponsorship. The first case involved the prominent exposure of the brand logo and products of a sponsor with complimentary remarks, which constituted blatant advertising materials for the sponsor. The second and third cases involved the gratuitous and editorially unjustified in-programme promotions of the over-the-top and mobile app services (i.e. myTV SUPER and Big Big Channel) operated by the subsidiaries of TVB.

| Sanction Licensee | Financial Penalty | Serious Warning | Warning | Strong Advice | Advice | Total |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------|------------------|--------|----------|
| HKTVE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| i-CABLE HOY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| TVB | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |

1.7 Compliance with Technical Requirements

Free TV licensees are required to comply with the technical regulatory requirements, including signal transmission, service reliability, loudness control, standby equipment and service coverage, etc., as stipulated in the BO, licence conditions and Generic Code of Practice on Television Technical Standards promulgated by CA. The Office of the Communications Authority, executive arm of CA, monitors the licensees' technical performance through their regular returns and carries out investigations as necessary.

CA also deals with complaints about technical matters in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the B(MP)O. During the Relevant Period, CA processed a number of complaints about technical matters, most of which were related to loudness control. After investigation, none of the cases was substantiated with sanctions imposed.

1.8 Six-year Investment Plans

HKTVE, i-CABLE HOY and TVB have respectively made two six-year investment commitments under the current 12-year licence term and proposed new six-year investment plans for the renewed licence term (if granted)¹⁸ as follows –

| HKTVE | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| | 2015-2021 | 2021-2027 | 2027-2033 |
| | Investment commitments approved by the CE in C under current licence term | | Investment proposed by HKTVE under renewed licence term |
| | (\$ million) | | |
| Programming investment | 687 | 952 | 1,050 |
| Other operating expenditure | 721 | 1,165 | 1,242 |
| Capital investment | 124 | 54 | 6 |
| Total | 1,532 | 2,171 | 2,298 |

HKTVE has advised that the proposed programming investment for 2027 to 2033 will focus on the production of self-produced factual entertainment¹⁹ and variety programmes. The investment aims to support the continued diversification of programme genres in line

¹⁸ All the three licensees applied to renew their licences for 12 years. In line with established practice, applicants are required to submit, as part of the renewal application, an investment plan for the first six years of the renewed licence term. As the 12-year licence is subject to a mid-term review, the licensees will be required to submit the investment plan for the next six years during the mid-term review.

¹⁹ "Factual entertainment" generally refers to a genre of non-fiction television programmes that documents actual events and persons prioritising on entertainment value.

with HKTVE's programming objectives. As with operating expenditure (comprising staff costs, rental and marketing expenses), HKTVE will continue to explore ways to enhance resource efficiency while improving programme productivity, diversity, and quality. With the completion of studio relocation to Shaw Studios in Tseung Kwan O, no further expansion or relocation of office and studio facilities is anticipated for 2027 to 2033. As such, capital expenditure is expected to remain minimal for the same period.

| i-CABLE HOY | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| | 2016-2022 | 2022-2028 | 2028-2034 |
| | Investment commitments approved by the CE in C under current licence term | | Investment proposed by i-CABLE HOY under renewed licence term |
| | (\$ million) | | |
| Programming investment | 965 | 970 | 604 |
| Other operating expenditure | 285 | 350 | 334 |
| Capital investment | 59 | 10 | 12 |
| Total | 1,310²⁰ | 1,330 | 950 |

i-CABLE HOY is devising plans to deploy latest software solutions and artificial intelligence-powered tools with the objective of undertaking cost control and reduction measures on the programming and capital expenditures. Under its proposed investment plan, i-CABLE HOY will continue to improve broadcast and content performances in a more cost effective way for 2028 to 2034. The smarter production processes and integration with artificial intelligence solutions would place the company at a more sophisticated and effective level of operations.

| TVB | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| | 2016-2021 | 2022-2027 | 2028-2033 |
| | Investment commitments approved by the CE in C under current licence term | | Investment proposed by TVB under renewed licence term |
| | (\$ million) | | |
| Programming investment | 6,192 | 6,450 | 6,050 |
| Capital investment | 144 | 150 | 180 |
| Total | 6,336 | 6,600 | 6,230 |

TVB has advised that advancements in technology, automation, and the integration of artificial intelligence are anticipated to significantly reduce future programming costs. As a result, TVB has projected a decrease in programming investments in 2028 to 2033 when compared to the previous six years. After years of capital investment, TVB has accumulated sufficient capital assets to effectively meet its operational needs for 2028 to 2033. This enables TVB to mainly focus on general maintenance and replacement of equipment.

²⁰ The original investment commitment of i-CABLE HOY for the same period was \$1,176 million. In February 2022, CA approved an application by i-CABLE HOY for using spectrum, on top of fixed network, as an additional means of transmission for the delivery of its licensed free TV service. i-CABLE HOY was required to comply with the updated investment commitment of \$1,310 million for the period from 31 May 2016 to 30 May 2022 after the new transmission arrangement came into effect. Figures in the table do not add up to the total due to rounding.

PART 2 - MAJOR EXISTING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

In evaluating the licence renewal applications of free TV licensees, CA will assess the past performance of the licensees against the regulatory requirements under the BO and its subsidiary legislation, licence conditions and requirements under the codes of practice promulgated by CA on programme, advertising and technical standards. CA processes all complaints against broadcasting licensees and if the complaints are substantiated, may consider imposing sanctions on broadcasting licensees for contravening the relevant regulatory requirements. Major regulatory requirements applicable to free TV service are summarised below.

2.1 Programme Requirements

2.1.1 *Language of Broadcast/Designated Language*

- The licensees shall provide one language service in the Cantonese dialect (viz. an integrated Chinese channel) and one language service in the English language (viz. an integrated English channel).
- The licensees may broadcast on the integrated English channel up to 45% of their programme materials in other languages (except in Cantonese) outside the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. (prime time)²¹. They may also broadcast Putonghua programmes with Chinese subtitles on the integrated Chinese channel up to 10% of the total broadcasting time.

2.1.2 *Broadcast of Specified Types of Programmes*

The licensees shall broadcast –

- (a) two comprehensive news bulletins daily, each of not less than 15 minutes duration, between 6:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight, on each of the integrated Chinese and English channels; and
- (b) specified hours of current affairs programmes (including 30 minutes of programmes to positively promote national education, national identity and a correct understanding of the National Security Law), children's programmes, programmes for young persons and other programmes intended and suitable for the fulfilment of the needs of the general public in Hong Kong (other positive programmes)²² per week between specified time frames.

²¹ To give some flexibility to the licensees, CA allows the licensees to broadcast 2.5 hours of programmes in non-designated languages (except in Cantonese) per week on the integrated English channel during prime time.

²² Other positive programmes include documentary programmes, programmes for senior citizens, arts and culture programmes, ethnic minority programmes, medical and healthcare programmes, environment programmes, science programmes, sports programmes and civic education programmes.

2.1.3 *Subtitling*

- The licensees shall provide subtitling for all news programmes, current affairs programmes, weather programmes and emergency announcements, as well as all programmes broadcast between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. on their services²³. On the integrated Chinese channels, Chinese subtitling must be provided for dramas.

2.1.4 *Sign Language*

- The licensees shall provide sign language interpretation and traditional Chinese subtitles for a comprehensive news programme in Cantonese of not less than 25 minutes each day²⁴.

2.2 Programme Standards

2.2.1 *General Programme Standards*

- The licensees should ensure that their programmes are handled in a responsible manner and that they should avoid needlessly offending audience by what they broadcast. The licensees should not include in their programmes any material which is indecent, obscene, of bad taste, denigrating or in contravention of the law.

2.2.2 *National Security Related Requirements*

- The licensees shall not broadcast any programmes that have the effect or likely effect of inciting, promoting, glorifying, encouraging, endorsing or sympathising with any act or activity endangering national security or otherwise contain any contents which are contrary to the interests of national security. In this connection, the licensees shall ensure that the contents of their programmes would not have the effect or likely effect of promoting, encouraging or inciting others to use violence, advocating law breaking, provoking or deepening hatred, discrimination or hostility against the Central Authorities or the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, different classes, occupations, groups, races and members of the public, arousing others' antipathy or causing offence.

²³ The subtitling requirement is not applicable to Channel 78 HOY Infotainment Channel but i-CABLE HOY should provide Chinese subtitles whenever feasible, for news and documentary programmes broadcast in languages other than Cantonese.

²⁴ The channels specified for the provision of signed news programmes are Channel 78 HOY Infotainment Channel, Channel 84 Pearl and Channel 99 ViuTV.

2.2.3 *Family Viewing Hours and Information for Viewers*

- Nothing unsuitable for children shall be broadcast between 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. The restriction on the provision of material unsuitable for children should only be relaxed on a gradual and progressive basis after 8:30 p.m.
- Programmes which are not generally suitable for viewing by children must be classified into Parental Guidance Recommended (“PG” [家長指引]) and Mature (“M” [成年觀眾]) categories.
- Programmes classified “PG” may contain adult themes or concepts but must remain suitable for children to watch under the guidance of a parent or guardian.
- Programmes classified “M” are recommended for viewing by grown-up members of the family only and should only be shown between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- Aural and visual advice on the classification of the programme should be given before the start of the programme. A classification symbol signifying the classified category of the programme should also be superimposed on the screen.
- An aural and visual statement must be given at the start of the programme describing the principal elements which have contributed to the classification and indicating their intensity and/or frequency.

2.2.4 *Protection of Children*

- The licensees should be vigilant on the likely effects of all materials shown on television on children, and ensure that scenes likely to frighten, unnerve or cause pain to children should not be permitted in programmes targeting children.

2.2.5 *Accuracy and Impartiality*

- News should be presented with accuracy and due impartiality. Correction of factual error should be made as soon as practicable after the original error, or at the end of the current programme or the beginning of a subsequent programme.
- The licensees must ensure that due impartiality is preserved as respects news programmes and any factual programmes or segments thereof dealing with matters of public policy or controversial issues of public importance in Hong

Kong (except personal view programmes and programmes relating to national education, national identity and the National Security Law).

2.2.6 *Fairness*

- The licensees have a responsibility to avoid unfairness to individuals or organisations featured in factual programmes, in particular through the use of inaccurate information or distortion.

2.2.7 *Personal View Programmes*

- “Personal view programmes” are programmes in which the licensees (including persons exercising control of the licensees) and/or the programme hosts and/or, sometimes, individual contributors put forward their own views. The nature of a personal view programme must be identified clearly at the start of the programme. Facts must be respected and the opinion expressed, however partial, should not rest upon false evidence. A suitable opportunity for response to the programme should be provided. Licensees should be mindful of the need for a sufficiently broad range of views to be expressed in any series of personal view programmes.

2.2.8 *Gambling*

- No programme should be presented in a manner which encourages or offers instructions in gambling.

2.2.9 *Crime*

- Criminal activities, when depicted, must be consistent with and reasonably related to plot and character development. Crime should not be portrayed in a favourable light. The presentation of criminal techniques in such a way as to be instructional or to invite imitation should also be avoided. Depictions containing detailed instructions for, or illustrations of, the use of illegal drugs, harmful devices or weapons are not permitted. Depictions of triad ceremonies, rituals, hand signs, etc., and triad expressions not generally accepted in daily language should be avoided. Glorification of criminals, the power of triads and membership in a triad society should be avoided.

2.2.10 *Use of Language*

- Downright offensive expressions and obscene or profane language are prohibited. Bad language should not be used in programmes likely to be watched by a large number of children and young viewers.

2.2.11 *Sex and Violence*

- The portrayal of sex and nudity needs to be defensible in context and presented with tact and discretion. Explicit or gratuitous depiction of sexual violence is prohibited. All depictions of violence should be relevant and necessary to the development of character, or to the advancement of theme or plot. No violence for its own sake or purely for dramatic attraction is allowed.

2.3 Advertising Requirements

2.3.1 *Advertising Time*

- The aggregate advertising time shall not exceed 10 minutes per clock hour between 5:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. each day. At other times, the aggregate advertising time shall not exceed 18% of the total time the service is provided in that period.

2.3.2 *Broadcast of Announcements in the Public Interest and CA Publicity Material*

- The licensees shall broadcast announcements in the public interest on each channel up to two minutes per every two clock hours, and publicity material for CA on each channel²⁵ up to five minutes per week.

2.3.3 *Designated Language*

- On the integrated Chinese channel, advertisements broadcast in non-designated language must carry Chinese subtitles and no more than four advertisements may be broadcast in non-designated languages in any clock hour.
- No specific requirement is applicable to advertisements broadcast in non-designated languages on the integrated English channel.

2.3.4 *Certain advertisements prohibited*

- No advertisement of a political or religious nature shall be broadcast.

²⁵ On each of the three thematic channels of TVB, it shall broadcast publicity material for CA up to two minutes per week.

2.4 Advertising Standards

2.4.1 *General Advertising Standards*

- Advertising should be legal, clean, honest and truthful. Advertisements must be clearly distinguishable as such and advertisements must comply with the laws of Hong Kong.
- Advertising matter should be presented with courtesy and good taste. Disturbing material should be avoided.

2.4.2 *Factual and Best-selling Claims*

- All factual claims and best-selling claims should be capable of substantiation.

2.4.3 *Programme Sponsorship*

- A sponsored programme must be clearly identified as such.
- The licensees may accept title sponsorship and product/service sponsorship (commonly known as “product placement”) subject to the basic principle that the sponsor identifications and/or exposure of the product(s)/service(s) within a programme are not obtrusive to viewing pleasure. Licensees may include product placement within a programme provided that its exposure or use is presented in a natural and unobtrusive manner having regard to the programme context and genre, and there is no direct encouragement of purchase or use of product or service.
- News programmes, programmes, publicity material or announcements provided by the Government or CA, and religious services or other devotional programmes must not be sponsored. Sponsorship of children’s programmes and educational programmes requires special caution.

2.4.4 *Unacceptable Products or Services*

- Advertisements for the following products or services (including but without limitation to) are not acceptable:
 - smoking products;
 - firearms and associated equipment;
 - fortune tellers and the like;
 - unlicensed employment services, registries or bureaux;
 - night clubs, dance halls, massage parlours, sauna houses, bath houses or similar establishments in which hosts/hostesses are employed for the

primary purpose of attracting or entertaining customers or in which floor shows or other live performance or activities involving sexual behaviour are presented;

- escort and dating services targeting young persons under 18;
 - pay per call information services which offer adult material of a sexual nature;
 - organisations/companies/persons which advertise for the purpose of giving betting tips;
 - betting (including betting pools) except advertisements for lotteries, football and horse race betting which are authorised by or under the Betting Duty Ordinance (Cap. 108) and related publications and pre-recorded information services;
 - medical preparations listed in Part 1 of Schedule 10 to the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations (Cap. 138A) or Schedule 1 to the Antibiotics Regulations (Cap. 137A);
 - smoking cessation (excluding nicotine replacement therapy products);
 - prevention or treatment for any disease of hair or scalp (excluding prevention or treatment of dandruff by means of external applications);
 - pregnancy testing services;
 - clinical laboratory testing services;
 - relief or cure of alcoholism and drug addiction;
 - cosmetic surgery and slimming or weight reducing measures involving the use of medical preparations; and
 - procurement of miscarriage or abortion.
- Liquor advertising should not be broadcast between 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Such advertisements should not be shown in proximity to children's programmes or programmes targeting young persons under the age of 18.
- Advertisement for a medical preparation or treatment should not contain any reference to a prize competition or promotional scheme involving gifts, premium offers and samples.
- Products of a personal nature, such as female sanitary products and condoms, etc., should be presented with care and sensitivity. No advertisement for condoms should be shown between 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

2.5 Technical Requirements

2.5.1 *Application of Up-to-date Technology*

- The licensees shall apply up-to-date technology to perfect the sounds and images that they broadcast.

2.5.2 *Interference with Other Services*

- The licensees shall not use or operate any apparatus or equipment which causes interference with any authorised broadcasting or telecommunications services.

2.5.3 *Standby Equipment and Spare Parts*

- The licensees shall provide and maintain adequate equipment and staff to ensure that any interruption to the services is avoided or minimised, and that necessary repairs or replacements are made or provided promptly.

2.5.4 *Coverage*

- The licensees are required to provide their services in such manner as to enable their services to be received throughout Hong Kong to the satisfaction of CA.

2.6 Technical Standards

2.6.1 *Digital Terrestrial Television System*

- The Digital Terrestrial Television Systems used in Hong Kong should be based on the National Standard.

2.6.2 *Technical Quality Standards and Reliability*

- The licensees are required to make their own assessment of the technical quality of their services and to adopt procedures for ensuring high standards of technical quality.
- Timing differences between the sound and vision of the transmitted programmes should not be annoying to the viewer.

- Standards of reliability, measured in terms of service availability to viewers, must be maintained to levels that are as high as reasonably practicable.

2.6.3 *Loudness Control*

- The subjective volume should be consistent with the programme material whilst at the same time preventing excessive loudness.

Communications Authority
1 August 2025

**Examples of Programmes Broadcast by Free TV Licensees
for Fulfilment of Positive Programme Requirements in Q4 2024¹**

| Categories of Positive Programmes | Programmes | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | <u>HKTVE</u> | <u>i-CABLE HOY</u> | <u>TVB</u> |
| News programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News Cast at 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main News | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News at 6:30 |
| Current affairs programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now Forum Weekly Re-Viu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics in Focus Let's Talk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News Magazine Finance Magazine |
| - Current affairs programmes to positively promote national education, national identity and the National Security Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeland Explorer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Home Our Country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China Today |
| Children's programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yo-Kai Watch Ultraman Arc | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pokémon PAW Patrol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands Up New Doraemon |
| Programmes for young persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative Teen Let's Talk about Future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Dream of Our Youth Next Station, Qianhai – A Documentary of Hong Kong Residents Starting a Business in Mainland China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChatSAT 2024 Kiratto Pri-Chan |
| Others | | | |
| - Documentary programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> now Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pride of Macao 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunday Report |
| - Programmes for senior citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desiring a Good Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Dream Hotel Series 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big City Shop |
| - Arts and culture programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound and Vision S7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infinity and Beyond 2024 |
| - Ethnic minority programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minority not Minoritized | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soredame! |
| - Medical and healthcare programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicine Online | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Concern Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital Lifeline |
| - Environment programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Carbon Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-Eye: Sustainable Solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Green Trip |
| - Science programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM by You | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made in Germany | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation Effect |
| - Sports programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All for One | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSF Men's & Women's World Squash Team Championships 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J Sport |
| - Civic education programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Guide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the Record |

¹ This is **not** an exhaustive list of positive programmes broadcast by the free TV licensees. Examples are drawn based on information from compliance reports and other documents submitted by the licensees.