

## Media and Communications

*Hong Kong's lively media and world-class telecommunications provide ready access to a wealth of information and entertainment, including the publication of more than 500 daily newspapers and periodicals locally. More than 96 per cent of households are broadband service subscribers and the mobile subscriber penetration rate is about 323 per cent.*

Hong Kong has one of the most vibrant telecommunications markets in the world. Fully liberalised and keenly competitive, the market provides a wide range of innovative and advanced telecommunications services to consumers and business users. The city also has a vibrant broadcasting industry, offering a multitude of television and radio channels with diverse programming.

### Mass Media

Hong Kong's mass media at the end of 2021 included 91 daily newspapers (including electronic newspapers), 445 periodicals, three domestic free-TV programme service licensees, two domestic pay-TV programme service licensees, nine non-domestic TV programme service licensees, two sound broadcasting licensees and one public service broadcaster.

The availability of the latest telecommunications technology and keen interest in Hong Kong's affairs have attracted many international news agencies, newspapers with international readership and international broadcasters to establish regional headquarters or representative offices here. The production of regional publications in Hong Kong underlines its importance as a financial, industrial, trading and communications centre.

Registered Hong Kong-based press at the year-end included 60 Chinese-language dailies, 13 English-language dailies, 15 bilingual dailies and three in Japanese. One of the English dailies publishes a daily Braille edition in conjunction with the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. Of the Chinese-language dailies, 51 cover mainly local and international news, while the others focus on particular subjects such as finance. The larger newspapers include overseas Chinese communities in their distribution networks and some have editions printed outside Hong Kong, such as in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

International media including *The Economist*, *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Nikkei*, *The Wall Street Journal*, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, Bloomberg and Thomson Reuters have a presence in Hong Kong. International broadcasters with operations in Hong Kong include BBC, CNBC, CNN International, CNA and NHK.

Several organisations represent people working in Hong Kong's news media. The Newspaper Society of Hong Kong represents Chinese and English newspaper proprietors. It is empowered to act in matters that affect the interests of its members.

The Hong Kong Journalists Association is one of the most prominent industry-wide unions of journalists in Hong Kong. Formed in 1968, it pays special attention to press freedom and ethics concerns, professional training and the well-being of journalists.

Other media organisations include the Hong Kong Federation of Journalists, Hong Kong News Executives' Association, Hong Kong Press Photographers Association and Foreign Correspondents' Club.

The Vocational Training Council's Media and Communications Training Board works with trade bodies such as the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Advertisers Association, Hong Kong News Executives' Association, Journalism Education Foundation and Newspaper Society of Hong Kong to run training programmes for media, advertising and public relations professionals to improve their skills.

## **Dissemination of Government Information**

The Secretary for Home Affairs oversees the policy on dissemination of government information, while the Director of Information Services advises the government on the presentation of its policies and on public relations matters generally, in Hong Kong and overseas. The main aims are to ensure an open exchange of information in the community, to keep the media fully informed of government plans, policies and activities, and to promote Hong Kong's image abroad.

## **Information Services Department**

The Information Services Department (ISD) is the government's news and communications agency. It has four divisions: Local Public Relations, Publicity and Promotions, Public Relations Outside Hong Kong, and Administration.

### **Local Public Relations Division**

The division oversees Information Officers working as Press Secretaries to Principal Officials or in information and public relations units in bureaux and departments. They help formulate and implement public relations and publicity strategies, advise their bureau or department heads on public relations matters, answer media enquiries, prepare press releases, and organise press conferences, interviews and promotional activities.

The News Sub-division operates a 24-hour media enquiry service. During typhoons and other emergencies, the ISD's Combined Information Centre coordinates responses to media enquiries and disseminates information and public announcements.

The Government News and Media Information System gives journalists online access to press releases, photographs and video clips through a single interface. Press releases are available on the internet, while major government press conferences and events, including the Chief Executive's Policy Address and the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech, are webcast live.

The news.gov.hk website publishes government news and information daily in a dynamic multimedia fashion. Over 7,800 news and feature stories and some 1,600 video highlights were posted in 2021. More than 610 million page views were recorded in the year. News items and messages are also disseminated through mobile devices and social media.

The Media Research Sub-division informs the government of public opinion expressed in the mass media and on social media. It produces daily analyses of public views and editorial comments in the Chinese and English newspapers as well as special reports on subjects of interest to the government.

#### **Publicity and Promotions Division**

The division helps bureaus and departments mount publicity campaigns and promotion drives and is responsible for advertising, creative design, photography, videography and the production of a range of government publications. Among the major local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2021 were Fight the Virus, COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, Improve Electoral System Ensure Patriots Administering Hong Kong, Consumption Voucher Scheme, voter registration, 2021 Legislative Council General Election and 2021 Policy Address.

The division also helps organise major promotional activities such as exhibitions, cultural performances, film festivals and media partnerships overseas and on the Mainland.

The division handles over 1,600 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including this yearbook and its internet version. Each year, the division distributes a large number of free publications, including pamphlets and posters. Photographs from the ISD's substantial archive, both historical and topical, are sold at its photo library and via an online photo sales system. Through its sales outlet and online bookstore, over 45,000 government books and miscellaneous printed items were sold in 2021.

#### **Public Relations Outside Hong Kong Division**

The division helps develop and implement the government's public relations strategy outside Hong Kong, working closely with the government's offices overseas and on the Mainland. Its Overseas Public Relations Sub-division promotes and monitors Hong Kong's image overseas and liaises with about 70 foreign media organisations based in Hong Kong, handling press enquiries, disseminating news and arranging briefings and interviews. It also runs a programme for visiting journalists and produces summaries of overseas reports on Hong Kong. To tie in with the outbound visits of senior officials, it coordinates and implements overseas publicity projects.

To enhance Hong Kong's global exposure, the sub-division supports events hosted by the international media in the city, and engages outside media organisations to produce multimedia publicity materials promoting Hong Kong's strengths.

The Brand Hong Kong Management Unit handles the Brand Hong Kong communications programmes, globally promoting Hong Kong as Asia's world city. The unit develops advertising campaigns and publicity materials to support the government's Economic and Trade Offices' events, senior officials' visits and major promotional activities outside Hong Kong. The unit also seeks opportunities and collaborates with organisers of major international conferences, tournaments and festivals in Hong Kong. It runs a number of social media platforms and digital campaigns to promote Hong Kong's advantages.

The Visits Sub-division runs the ISD's Sponsored Visitors Programme for government and political leaders, academics and think-tank members, as well as leading figures in the business and financial sectors, to visit Hong Kong to enhance their understanding of the city. The sub-division also helps line up meetings for influential visitors on trips to Hong Kong. In addition, it provides assistance for outbound visits of senior government officials.

### **Promoting Hong Kong Worldwide**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's offices overseas and in the Mainland, as well as the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office in Taiwan<sup>1</sup>, are important in promoting Hong Kong globally. Hong Kong's image is promoted through regular meetings with counterparts and contacts in territories covered by the offices, visits by senior Hong Kong officials, and cultural and sporting events such as film festivals and dragon boat racing.

#### **Europe**

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) in Brussels and Berlin and five European business chambers jointly organised a webinar in February, where the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, joined by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau Tang-wah; the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing; and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, highlighted Hong Kong's unique advantages for overseas firms establishing in the city. Over 700 entrepreneurs and executives participated in the dialogue.

The two ETOs also co-organised a webinar for the Secretary for the Environment to outline Hong Kong's plans on carbon neutrality and popularisation of electric vehicles, offering opportunities for European companies.

The Brussels ETO organised and participated in physical and virtual business events in Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Turkey to promote Hong Kong's opportunities, its role in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay

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<sup>1</sup> The Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) has temporarily suspended its operation since 18 May.

Area (GBA), and as an ideal place in Asia for start-ups to grow and for talents to develop their careers.

The office also supported events promoting Hong Kong's culture, including a lion dance exhibition in Belgium; performances by Hong Kong musicians at virtual Lunar New Year events in Belgium and the Netherlands; and film festivals in Belgium, Italy, Ireland, France and Spain.

The Berlin ETO arranged webinars for the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in June and October respectively, as well as other online events to promote opportunities in Hong Kong. It also participated at film festivals in Zurich and Warsaw.

The London ETO arranged webinars for the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Andrew Cheung Kui-nung; the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development; and the Secretary for the Environment. Business organisations in the Nordic countries were briefed by the Director-General of the London ETO on the latest economic developments in Hong Kong. The office supported a variety of cultural events including the 'Opium, Silk and the Missionaries in China' exhibition in London and the Liverpool Biennial 2021 as well as film festivals in London and Sweden, London Craft Week 2021, and a Cantonese opera concert and the Spark Festival in London.

### **North America**

The Washington ETO co-presented online with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art the 26th annual Made in Hong Kong Film Festival, featuring retrospective masterpieces of filmmakers Wong Kar-wai and Ann Hui. The office organised webinars for the Financial Secretary, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, and the Greater Bay Area Development Office to speak about the latest opportunities in Hong Kong.

The New York ETO organised or sponsored a variety of business, cultural and sports activities to promote Hong Kong and new opportunities in different sectors, including legal and arbitration, biotechnology, finance, and innovation and technology. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Eddie Yue, spoke about Hong Kong's advantages as an international financial centre.

The office also organised a virtual Lunar New Year celebration, featuring performances by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Dance Company and the Refiner Drums. It participated in Asian film festivals in Chicago and New York, and sponsored the virtual Boston Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival and the 2020-21 Professional Squash Association World Championship in Chicago.

The San Francisco ETO co-presented an online discussion on synergies between the San Francisco Bay Area and the GBA and a live-streamed conversation with Texas business leaders on investment opportunities in Hong Kong. The office hosted webinars featuring the Secretary for the Environment on Hong Kong's path to carbon neutrality, and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury on the latest developments in financial services, fintech and the GBA.

There were also webinars featuring award-winning Hong Kong photographer Kelvin Yuen and Hong Kong-based designers at the forefront of sustainable design. The office also co-presented a special conversation about the cinematic legacy of director Wong Kar-wai at CAAMFest 2021 and a live-streamed discussion with filmmaker Stanley Kwan at the Hawaii International Film Festival.

The Toronto ETO organised the Hong Kong Week across Canada, featuring exhibitions of cheongsams, a dragon boat exhibition and a business seminar, and supported the launch of a women's international network to showcase Hong Kong's business advantages and cultural scene. It also sponsored the screening of nine Hong Kong movies at Canada's international film festivals.

The office arranged two virtual seminars for the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, and participated in business events across Canada to promote Hong Kong's competitive edge as an international financial centre.

### **Northeast Asia**

The Tokyo ETO promotes closer economic and trade ties, as well as cultural exchanges, with Japan and Korea.

The office organised and supported webinars in Japan and Korea to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages and business opportunities. The Chief Executive spoke about the opportunities presented by the GBA; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit Wing-hang, on Hong Kong's innovation and technology developments and start-up ecosystem; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury on Hong Kong as the regional green finance hub; and the Secretary for the Environment on strategies to achieve carbon neutrality.

The office also supported a special feature on Hong Kong movies at the Osaka Asian Film Festival and an exhibition on Hong Kong comics in Seoul.

### **Southeast Asia**

The Singapore ETO fosters bilateral relations with three Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, Laos, Singapore and Vietnam, and also with India in South Asia. It organised and co-organised three webinars featuring the Chief Executive and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to update business communities in Singapore and India on the latest developments and policy initiatives in Hong Kong.

The office maintained close contact with local business associations and spoke at events organised by the Hong Kong Singapore Business Association and the Hong Kong Business Association Vietnam to brief participants on the opportunities in Hong Kong and the GBA.

It sponsored an online concert featuring six renowned musicians from Hong Kong and Singapore and the Hong Kong Film Festival – Project HK, and supported the Hong Kong Film Gala Presentation 2021 in Singapore, which showed a total of 17 Hong Kong movies.

The Jakarta ETO represents Hong Kong in dealing with ASEAN as a whole, and also focuses on promoting bilateral relations with the individual ASEAN countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury joined government ministers and business leaders from Indonesia and the Philippines in two webinars to strengthen bilateral relations and explore opportunities for closer partnerships. The office organised visits and hosted webinars on topics ranging from innovation and technology to logistics and supply chains.

The Bangkok ETO promotes bilateral relations with Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand. In 2021, the office supported conferences at government level with Thailand and Cambodia on the strategic benefits Hong Kong could bring under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement, and the city's unique advantages for overseas business communities. Other events were also hosted or supported to promote Hong Kong's role in the GBA, the Belt and Road Initiative and the ASEAN market.

The office assisted the Chinese Embassy in Thailand to arrange for Hong Kong residents in Bangkok to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. It also launched a social media initiative to feature businesses in Thailand with connections to Hong Kong and movie nights were held in Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai. Sponsorships were given to Hong Kong Nostalgic Night and to an international trail running event hosted by the Sports Authority of Thailand.

### **Australia and New Zealand**

The Sydney ETO promotes closer economic, trade and cultural ties with Australia and New Zealand.

In 2021, it organised a webinar for the Chief Executive to address the New Zealand business community highlighting Hong Kong as an ideal gateway for businesses and investment between the Mainland and New Zealand. The office also supported webinars in Australia and New Zealand on the opportunities under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the GBA, Hong Kong's advantages as an international financial centre and innovation and technology.

To promote Hong Kong's arts and culture, the office organised and supported an online workshop on Chinese traditional arts and a Hong Kong movie night.

### **Middle East**

The Dubai ETO opened on 28 October. As the first ETO in the Middle East region, its opening strengthens Hong Kong's economic and trade relations with trading partners in the region, in particular the six member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In November, the office co-organised with the UAE Consulate General in Hong Kong and Invest Hong Kong its first webinar, in which panellists shared their insight and experience on the business and investment opportunities in Hong Kong, particularly those arising from the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the GBA.

## **Mainland**

In the Mainland, the Beijing Office and the four ETOs in Chengdu, Guangdong, Shanghai and Wuhan maintained close contact with Mainland ministries and commissions during the pandemic to keep up with the latest prevention and control measures in various places, disseminated the relevant information to Hong Kong people there and gave appropriate support to requests for assistance. The Mainland offices also provided support to Hong Kong citizens living in their respective service areas by publishing practical guides online.

While travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland had not fully resumed, the Mainland offices continued using the internet, social media, newsletters and the radio to publicise Hong Kong's strengths, and organised trade seminars, arts and cultural activities and youth exchanges. The offices' investment promotion divisions highlighted Hong Kong's business advantages and liaised with Mainland enterprises, helping them set up businesses in the city.

The Beijing Office organised roving exhibitions titled 'Bonded by the Same Roots – A Hong Kong Culture Roadshow' in Harbin, Lanzhou, Shijiazhuang, Changchun, Hohhot, Shenyang and Tianjin. It also collaborated with the Hong Kong Federation of Design and Creative Industries to present the 'HKIPower – An Exhibition of Hong Kong's IP Brands' at the 2021 Beijing Design Week and Design Expo, displaying works by over 50 artists and designers and 11 brands from Hong Kong.

The Shanghai ETO organised miniature exhibitions in Jinan and Nanjing, co-organised with *National Geographic* a photo exhibition in Wenzhou, and sponsored the production of videos by the Hong Kong Harmonica Association, pianist Choi Sown-le and other groups to promote Hong Kong's arts and culture online. The office also worked with influencers to promote Hong Kong on the Mainland's social media platforms.

The Guangdong ETO staged Hong Kong Week 2021@Guangzhou from April to June to promote cultural exchanges through online and offline activities including dance, drama, musical performances and exhibitions. The 'Hong Kong – We Connect' exhibition was held in Fuzhou and the 'Taste of Hong Kong' photo exhibitions were held in Guangzhou and Zhuhai. A roving exhibition about Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage was staged in a double-decker bus in Shenzhen. Between October and December, the office teamed up with the Hong Kong Tourism Board to promote Hong Kong as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange and launch a tourism promotion campaign 'West Kowloon: Creating Modern Traditions' in three metro stations in Guangzhou.

The office created official accounts on Weibo, Douyin, Bilibili, Xiaohongshu and Kuaishou to step up publicity through short videos. It also formed media partnerships with China News Service and Nanfang Daily Newspaper Group, covering the stories of Hong Kong young people in the Mainland as well as the scientific achievements of Hong Kong tertiary institutions and their contribution to the country.

The Wuhan ETO organised a number of large exhibitions, including photo exhibitions in Zhengzhou and Sanmenxia and the 'Hong Kong Connect' exhibitions in Xianning, Jingzhou and Shiyuan. Miniature exhibitions were held in Changsha, Hunan and Zhengzhou, showing

Hong Kong's traditional customs and historic places and as a city where East meets West. The office collaborated with Hubei Television to disseminate Hong Kong-related news and information and to produce feature stories promoting Hong Kong. It also produced a series of short videos for new media platforms, including Douyin, Kuaishou, Jinri Toutiao, Bilibili and Wechat, to introduce Hong Kong's economy, living style and culture.

The Chengdu ETO organised a stereoscopic trick art exhibition 'The Hong Kong 3D Fantasy Journey' in Chengdu and Chongqing and invited the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra to join the online 2021 Chengdu International Sister Cities Youth Music Festival. The office used its WeChat channel, WeChat Moments, Weibo, TikTok, Xiaohongshu, Kuaishou and Bilibili to promote Hong Kong's strengths and held an exhibition in Xi'an to showcase Hong Kong as Asia's world city.

### **Code on Access to Government Information**

As an open and accountable government, all bureaus and departments make information available to the public according to the Code on Access to Information. The code stipulates that bureaus and departments should work on the basis that information requested will be released, and sets out the grounds on which disclosure may be refused. The public may complain to the Ombudsman if any bureau or department does not comply with the provisions of the code.

### **Communications Authority**

The Communications Authority (CA), an independent statutory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance, regulates Hong Kong's broadcasting and telecommunications industries according to the Broadcasting Ordinance, Telecommunications Ordinance, Communications Authority Ordinance, Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, Trade Descriptions Ordinance and Competition Ordinance. It also enforces the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance.

The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), the CA's executive arm and secretariat, helps the CA administer and enforce these ordinances.

### **Telecommunications**

The government aims to facilitate the development of the telecommunications industry and enhance Hong Kong's position as the telecommunications hub of the region. Hong Kong's telecommunications services market is fully open to competition and the pro-market approach has encouraged an abundant supply of competitively priced state-of-the-art services for consumers and businesses.

#### **Mobile Communications**

Commercial fifth generation (5G) mobile services were launched in April 2020. As at December 2021, there were 24.82 million subscriptions to four mobile network operators and 24 mobile virtual network operators, representing a population penetration rate of 323 per cent, one of

the world's highest. Monthly mobile data usage reached 114,864 terabytes in December 2021, a 31 per cent rise year-on-year. On average, each resident used 15,466 megabytes per month.

### **Fixed Communications**

As at December, local fixed telecommunications services were offered by 27 licensed carriers, with two or more networks available to 91 per cent of households and three or more available to 80 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the world's most advanced fixed broadband network infrastructures and a fixed broadband penetration rate of 96 per cent of households. The International Institute for Management Development's *World Competitiveness Yearbook 2021* ranked Hong Kong second in the average internet bandwidth speed out of 64 economies.

Charges for fixed broadband are competitive, starting from \$73 per month for services at speeds of up to 1Gbps. The city is also at the forefront of providing public Wi-Fi, with more than 79,000 Wi-Fi hot spots.

### **External Telecommunications**

Forty-two operators are licensed to provide facility-based external telecommunications services. Hong Kong is connected with the Mainland through 21 overland cables and with the rest of the world through 12 regional and transcontinental submarine cable systems set up at eight submarine cable landing stations. The total equipped capacity of the external telecommunications facilities in December exceeded 149,136 Gbps.

Two Hong Kong companies are licensed to operate and provide satellite communications services, operating nine satellites in total.

### **Unsolicited Electronic Messages**

The Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance regulates the sending of commercial electronic messages, including faxes, pre-recorded telephone messages, short messages and emails. As at year end, more than 2.69 million numbers were registered in 'Do-not-call' registers established under the ordinance for faxes, short messages and pre-recorded telephone messages.

In 2021, the CA received 524 reports of suspected contraventions and issued 19 warning letters to senders.

### **Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards**

The government enacted the Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation under the Telecommunications Ordinance to implement the Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards with effect from 1 September. The regulation requires all new SIM cards to be registered before activation from 1 March 2022 and all existing pre-paid SIM cards to be registered on or before 23 February 2023. There will be caps on the number of pre-paid SIM cards individual and corporate users can register. The programme protects Hong Kong's telecommunications system and genuine users of mobile telecommunications services. It also supports law enforcement agencies working against

serious crime involving the use of SIM cards, enabling the government to better safeguard law and order.

### ***Review of Telecommunications Regulatory Framework***

The Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed in October to take forward measures proposed under the review of the telecommunications regulatory framework, including specifying the powers of the CA on regulating the telecommunications functions of smart products, enhancing protection for underground telecommunications infrastructure, simplifying the licensing framework to facilitate the introduction of innovative services by the industry and improving the appeal mechanism under the Telecommunications Ordinance. These measures will be implemented pending commencement of the amendment ordinance upon gazettal.

## **Broadcasting**

### ***Commercial Broadcasting***

Hong Kong's broadcasting policy objectives are to widen programme choice and diversity through competition, to facilitate the introduction of innovative broadcasting services and to enhance the city's position as a regional broadcasting hub. It adopts a facilitating and pro-competition approach to promote the use of innovative technologies and provides a facilitating regulatory environment that moves with the times.

The Broadcasting Ordinance regulates the four categories of TV programme services – domestic free, domestic pay, non-domestic (mainly satellite TV services targeting the Asia-Pacific region) and other licensable TV programme services (mainly TV services for hotel rooms) – according to their characteristics and pervasiveness. Sound broadcasting services are regulated under the Telecommunications Ordinance and Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance.

At the end of 2021, Hong Kong had over 800 satellite and pay-TV channels available in digital format. Nine licensed satellite TV broadcasters provided more than 200 channels mainly targeting the Asia-Pacific region. Three domestic free-TV licensees operated nine digital TV channels.

As to radio, two sound broadcasting licensees provided six radio channels as at the year end.

### ***Public Service Broadcasting***

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) is a government department that serves as the city's public service broadcaster. It provides editorially independent, professional and quality radio, TV and new media services. The Charter of RTHK enshrines RTHK's editorial independence and sets out its public purposes, mission and relationship with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the CA and the RTHK Board of Advisors.

RTHK operates three FM and four AM radio channels, offering radio programmes in Cantonese, English, Putonghua and other languages, including 22 hours of radio programmes every week under the Community Involvement Broadcasting Service.

RTHK operates three digital TV channels. Programmes are mainly in Cantonese, with some in English or Putonghua, while some include Indonesian and Urdu subtitles. To cater for the visually or hearing impaired, some programmes incorporate audio descriptions or sign language.

RTHK harnesses the multimedia potential of new media platforms, providing a number of mobile applications. In 2021, the RTHK website averaged around 600,000 visits per day.

### **Digital Television**

Hong Kong migrated all digital terrestrial television frequency channels to the 500 MHz band on 1 December to vacate spectrum in the 600/700 MHz bands for high value-added mobile telecommunications services, including 5G.

### **Review of Broadcasting Regulatory Framework**

The Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislation (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 came into effect in February to implement the proposed measures of the review of television and sound broadcasting regulatory framework, including relaxation of the cross-media ownership restrictions and foreign control restrictions, as well as removal of the requirement of a licensee being a non-subsidiary company.

### **Postal Services**

Hongkong Post provides reliable postal and related services at affordable prices. In 2021, it handled 0.95 billion postal items, 80.3 per cent of which was local mail.

To keep pace with the growth of e-commerce and provide convenient mail posting and collection services, Hongkong Post continued to expand its network of self-service iPostal Kiosks and iPostal Stations and launched various user-friendly electronic services.

Funding of \$4.6 billion was secured in 2021 to redevelop the Air Mail Centre, enhancing its capacity to meet the demand for cross-border e-commerce postal services and contribute to the growth of the GBA.

### **Resilience in the face of COVID-19**

Hongkong Post continued its efforts to maintain normal postal services despite the disruption caused by the pandemic. It also utilised its extensive network to support the government's anti-epidemic measures, including the distribution of specimen bottles for COVID-19 testing and the provision of online booking services for vaccinations.

### **Stamps and Philately**

Fifteen issues of special stamps were released during the year, with the highlights being the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China and the achievements of the Hong Kong, China delegation at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

### **Postal Cooperation**

Hongkong Post participated in the Kahala Posts Group CEO meeting, the Executive Council's Plenary Meeting of the Asia Pacific Postal Union and, as part of the People's Republic of China delegation, the 27th Universal Postal Union Congress meetings.

### **Film Classification**

To allow adults wide access to films while protecting the interest of young people and children, Hong Kong adopts a three-tier film classification system with four categories: Category I, suitable for all ages; Category IIA, not suitable for children; Category IIB, not suitable for young persons and children; and Category III, for persons aged 18 or above only. Categories IIA and IIB are advisory, while the age restriction for Category III films is mandatory. The classification standards are kept in line with society's expectations through public surveys and consultation with a statutory advisory panel of about 300 members drawn from different backgrounds. The Board of Review (Film Censorship) is responsible for reviewing film classification decisions upon request.

In October, the Film Censorship (Amendment) Bill 2021 was passed by the Legislative Council with the aim to enhance the film censorship regulatory framework and ensure more effective implementation of the duty to safeguard national security. The Film Censorship Guidelines for Censors was also updated to provide clear guidance to censors performing their duties.

During the year, 2,259 films were classified, of which 793, 773, 567 and 126 films were classified as Category I, Category IIA, Category IIB and Category III respectively.

### **Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles**

The policy objective in regulating obscene and indecent articles is to preserve public morals and protect young people from the harmful effects of obscene and indecent materials while preserving the free flow of information and safeguarding freedom of expression. The publication and public display of obscene and indecent articles is regulated under the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance.

The relevant enforcement agencies are the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration, the police and the Customs and Excise Department.

Under the ordinance, an article may be classified as Class I (neither obscene nor indecent), Class II (indecent) or Class III (obscene). The ordinance prohibits the publication of Class III articles. Publishers, authors, printers, manufacturers, importers, distributors and copyright owners may submit articles voluntarily to the Obscene Articles Tribunal for classification before publication if in doubt.

### Websites

Brand Hong Kong: [www.brandhk.gov.hk](http://www.brandhk.gov.hk)

Code on Access to Information: [www.access.gov.hk](http://www.access.gov.hk)

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau: [www.cedb.gov.hk](http://www.cedb.gov.hk)

Communications Authority: [www.coms-auth.hk](http://www.coms-auth.hk)

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: [www.cmab.gov.hk](http://www.cmab.gov.hk)

Government's online news platform: [www.news.gov.hk](http://www.news.gov.hk)

Home Affairs Bureau: [www.hab.gov.hk](http://www.hab.gov.hk)

Hongkong Post: [www.hongkongpost.hk](http://www.hongkongpost.hk)

Information Services Department: [www.isd.gov.hk](http://www.isd.gov.hk)

Office of the Communications Authority: [www.ofca.gov.hk](http://www.ofca.gov.hk)

Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration: [www.ofnaa.gov.hk](http://www.ofnaa.gov.hk)

Radio Television Hong Kong: [www.rthk.hk](http://www.rthk.hk)