

Study Group on the Number of NHK Satellite Broadcasting Channels—4th Meeting

Meeting Summary

1. Date and Time

Friday, November 16, 2007; 16:00–18:00

2. Location

Special Meeting Room 1, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
(Central Government Building No. 2, 8F)

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted)

(1) Study Group Members

Sugaya (Chair), Yamauchi (Vice Chair), Ishioka, Ito, Kishi, Kenjo, Takahashi, Torii, Hida, Yamamoto
(10 members)

(2) MIC Representatives

Suzuki (Vice-Minister, Policy Coordination), Ogasawara (Director-General, Information and Communications Policy Bureau), Kawauchi (Deputy Director-General, Minister's Secretariat), Imabayashi (Director-General, General Affairs Division), Yoshida (Director-General, Broadcasting Policy Division), Oku (Director-General, Broadcasting Technology Division), Yoshida (Director-General, Terrestrial Broadcasting Division), Takeda (Director-General, Satellite and International Broadcasting Division), Nagashio (Senior Planning Officer, Broadcasting Policy Division), Ibata (Deputy Director-General, Broadcasting Policy Division)

(3) NHK Representatives

Harada (Executive Director), Nakagawa (Director), Okuda (Chief, Editing Bureau), Yahashi (Chief, Technical Bureau)

4. Agenda

(1) Opening

(2) Topics

*Viewpoints of review on number of NHK Satellite Broadcasting Channels

(3) Close

5. Outline of the Agenda

(Symbols in text have the following meanings.)

○ Comment by member ● Comment by MIC △ Comment by NHK

(1) The secretariat gave explanations according to Handouts 1 and 2. The main comments by members during the Q&A and exchange of opinions were as follows.

○ The number of public broadcasting channels differs by country due to various reasons, and it is hardly possible to compare each country by only the number of channels. The greater the number of channels, the more choice a viewers has, so the role of satellite broadcasting cannot be simply passed off as something that compensates for terrestrial broadcasting when making comparisons between different countries.

○ In Europe, etc., satellite broadcasting serves as a substitute for terrestrial broadcasting instead of supplementing terrestrial broadcasting. This may also be due to the influence of the difference in the number of commercial TV channels.

● In reviewing the number of NHK channels, evaluation will not be based only on the fact that there are only a few terrestrial channels. However, the fact that NHK broadcasts their own programs by satellite, unlike other countries, should also be considered.

○ Although the size of the video delivery market on the Internet is not large, the fact that the relation between satellite broadcasting and other media is taken to be a relation with the Internet in all aspects feels wrong.

From the viewpoint of transmitting images only, uncongested broadcastings are cost-effective, and nothing in the future is expected to surpass them. On the other hand, IP type networks are effective for VOD, etc., for individually transmitting what is required at the required time.

△ The transmission through the Internet of content produced in satellite broadcasting may be possible in the future, but there is a need to discuss what sort of tools to use to broadcast content and the financial resources for producing this content. At this point, we do not think that program transmission through the Internet is possible as an alternative to satellite broadcasting.

○ In reviewing the number of channels, there should be a need to increase content without sacrificing quality. Content quality cannot be maintained if there are too many channels, but then again, there will be fewer chances for content production if the number of channels decreases, which will lead to a drop in skill level, thereby threatening the TV culture.

○ The reduction of the number of channels and lower reception fees come as a set, and measures must be taken to reduce reception fees. Idling of content is one major task that NHK and commercial TV stations must resolve. NHK should produce content that takes multi-use into consideration in order to return the reception fees to those who paid them.

- Being a public broadcaster who can broadcast without being tied to any sponsor, NHK has the responsibility to lead the satellite broadcasting among commercial broadcasters in terms of broadcasting quality.

- △ NHK also considers it important to provide content in various forms. We hope to launch an on-demand archive services and so on after legal changes have been made. We also think NHK plays a large role in the area of multi-use of content.

- One of the predominant features of satellite broadcasting is that the same information can be provided broadly. In reviewing the number of NHK satellite broadcasting channels, it should also be necessary to consider how to allocate local broadcasting to channels.