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\$37m bill forecast for RTHK hive-off

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About \$37 million will be needed to pay off Radio Television Hongkong staff if the proposal to turn the Government-owned station into an independent organisation is accepted.

The full 555-page Broadcasting Review Board report, released last night, said the cost estimates involved in hiving off RTHK's television and radio divisions are "based upon current Government practice and follow the formula used in the recent disestablishment of the KCR (Kowloon-Canton Railway)."

The exercise, the board said, is concerned solely with staff of the television and radio divisions, including production services staff, who are on permanent and pensionable terms of service in grades specific to RTHK.

All officers on agreement or other contract terms have been excluded "since their contracts may be terminated in accordance with the conditions of their contracts" and no financial implications would arise, it said.

The board estimates it would cost about \$22 million and \$15 million for the television and radio divisions respectively to make RTHK independent.

The implications of terminating the existing technical services agreement in respect of RTHK and of redeployment of general grades staff have been excluded from the exercise, it said.