

Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on Radio and Television Network Improvement Project (III)

Kusumo A. Martoredjo
Chairman, Indonesia-Japan Economic Committee

Sustainability :

The TVRI and RRI have had a long history as the mouthpiece for the government of Indonesia. Aside of intended to disseminate information, socializing the development program, educational materials and such, TVRI and RRI are said tend to be more political oriented than business oriented. However with the emergence of private radio and television networks, TVRI and RRI are confronted with severe competition in capturing the interest of the people of Indonesia.

With the fast changing technology and the needs to be continuously innovative and creative, TVRI and RRI that mostly depend financially on the Government budget, have hard time to survive not so much in terms of maintenance of the hardware but more in designing TV and Radio programs that can compete with the private broadcasting networks in capturing the imagination of their viewers or listeners, due to the limited budget.

Nonetheless, TVRI and especially RRI have a much broader area of coverage especially in the remote areas and places not reached by the private TV and Radio networks. The RRI is putting all efforts to enhance their quality of broadcasting and at present they are in the process of reorganization and restructuring as to make RRI more effective and efficient. The board of Directors is active in seeking cooperation with various countries, not only to sustain its operation but also how to broaden its coverage, particularly now that Indonesia is in the process of democratization and the more people beginning to be aware of their rights as citizens and the so many problems yet to be solved by the newly elected top leaders of Indonesia.. In this age of Information Technology where Indonesia lags behind other countries Radio Broadcast is at the time being still the cheapest source of information for the majority of the population.

TVRI has been transformed into a joint stock company, and is now allowed to broadcast advertisement that supposedly can be one of the sources of funds. And yet as newcomer it is not easy to vie for advertisement amid the other private television stations that have had years of relation with the advertisers. TVRI even though is improving in their quality of broadcast and its regional stations offered better programs, has not been out of the doldrums of accumulated debt. Nonetheless TVRI is doing its utmost to become one of the television stations that can attract the various tastes of individuals that belongs to so many ethnic s communities.

No doubt, the loan provided by JBIC to RRI and TVRI for improvement of the broadcasting services (III), is a great help to make them stand better in facing the competition with private television stations, especially at the time when Indonesia is in a turmoil of social and political environment changes, in the midst of multidimensional crises, at the time people are in the dire need for information at any moment of the time. .

It is understandable that the continuous changes of information technology, the TVRI and the RRI can not sit back and care only for their sustainability but they have to keep on working to expand their coverage as well as improving the quality and attractiveness of their programs to capture the imagination of their listeners or viewers. TVRI and RRI should actively disseminate information that might not of interest to the private radio and television stations, yet important for the nation to be aware of them, particularly pertaining to the efforts to achieve social, and political stability, security and order, as well as economic development and growth.

^All in all the JBIC loan though not covered financing the period after the completion, we are to admit that it did help a great deal the effort to improve broadcasting services of TVRI and RRI.