

VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC.
Form 20-F
May 30, 2013
Table of Contents

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 20-F

(Mark One)

REGISTRATION STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OR 12(g) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

OR

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ **to** _____

OR

SHELL COMPANY REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

Date of event requiring this shell company report

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Commission file number 001-33821

VisionChina Media Inc.
(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Cayman Islands
(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

1/F Block No.7 Champs Elysees

Nongyuan Road, Futian District

Shenzhen 518040

People's Republic of China
(Address of principal executive offices)

Limin Li, telephone: (86 755) 8293-2222; fax: (86 755) 8298-1111

At the address of the Company set forth above
(Name, Telephone, E-mail and/or Facsimile number and Address of Company Contact Person)

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Shares, par value US\$0.0001 per share	Nasdaq Global Market*
American Depositary Shares, each representing 20 Common Shares	Nasdaq Global Market

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: **None**

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Table of Contents

Securities for which there is a reporting obligation pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Act: **None**

Indicate the number of outstanding shares of each of the issuer's classes of capital or common stock as of the close of the period covered by the annual report.

101,366,544 Common Shares

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.

Yes No

If this report is an annual or transition report, indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant: (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files).

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, or a non-accelerated filer. See definition of accelerated filer and large accelerated filer in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Indicate by check mark which basis of accounting the registration has used to prepare the financial statements included in this filing:

U.S. GAAP

International Financial Reporting Standards as issued
by the International Accounting Standards Board

Other

If Other has been checked in response to the previous question, indicate by check mark which consolidated financial statement item the registrant has elected to follow.

Item 17 Item 18

If this is an annual report, indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934).

Yes No

(APPLICABLE ONLY TO ISSUERS INVOLVED IN BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has filed all documents and reports required to be filed by Sections 12, 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 subsequent to the distribution of securities under a plan confirmed by a court.

Yes No

* Not for trading, but only in connection with the listing on the Nasdaq Global Market of the American Depositary Shares

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

	Page
<u>PART I</u>	2
<u>ITEM 1. IDENTITY OF DIRECTORS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND ADVISERS</u>	2
<u>ITEM 2. ITEM 2. OFFER STATISTICS AND EXPECTED TIMETABLE</u>	2
<u>ITEM 3. ITEM 3. KEY INFORMATION</u>	2
<u>ITEM 4. INFORMATION ON THE COMPANY</u>	40
<u>ITEM 4A. UNRESOLVED STAFF COMMENTS</u>	61
<u>ITEM 5. OPERATING AND FINANCIAL REVIEW AND PROSPECTS</u>	61
<u>ITEM 6. DIRECTORS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES</u>	87
<u>ITEM 7. MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS AND RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS</u>	94
<u>ITEM 8. FINANCIAL INFORMATION</u>	99
<u>ITEM 9. THE OFFER AND LISTING</u>	102
<u>ITEM 10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>	103
<u>ITEM 11. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK</u>	109
<u>ITEM 12. DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES OTHER THAN EQUITY SECURITIES</u>	111
<u>PART II</u>	113
<u>ITEM 13. DEFAULTS, DIVIDEND ARREARAGES AND DELINQUENCIES</u>	113
<u>ITEM 14. MATERIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE RIGHTS OF SECURITY HOLDERS AND USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	113
<u>ITEM 15. CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES</u>	113
<u>ITEM 16A. AUDIT COMMITTEE FINANCIAL EXPERT</u>	114
<u>ITEM 16B. CODE OF ETHICS</u>	114
<u>ITEM 16C. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT FEES AND SERVICES</u>	115
<u>ITEM 16D. EXEMPTIONS FROM THE LISTING STANDARDS FOR AUDIT COMMITTEES</u>	115
<u>ITEM 16E. PURCHASES OF EQUITY SECURITIES BY THE ISSUER AND AFFILIATED PURCHASERS</u>	115
<u>ITEM 16F. CHANGE IN REGISTRANT'S CERTIFYING ACCOUNTANT</u>	116
<u>ITEM 16G. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE</u>	116

<u>ITEM 16H.</u>	<u>MINE SAFETY DISCLOSURE</u>	116
<u>PART III</u>		116
<u>ITEM 17.</u>	<u>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</u>	116
<u>ITEM 18.</u>	<u>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</u>	116
<u>ITEM 19.</u>	<u>Exhibits</u>	117

Table of Contents

CONVENTIONS THAT APPLY TO THIS ANNUAL REPORT ON FORM 20-F

Unless otherwise indicated, references in this annual report to:

- ADSs refers to our American depositary shares, each of which represents 20 common shares; and ADRs refers to the American depositary receipts that may evidence our ADSs;
- China or the PRC refers to the People's Republic of China, excluding, for the purpose of this annual report only, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau; and
- local operating partners refers to the local television stations with which we established our direct investment entities or from which we buy advertising time, or the local mobile digital television operating companies with which we entered into exclusive agency agreements or from which we buy advertising time.

As of December 31, 2012, the local television stations with which we established our direct investment entities included: Chengdu Television Station, Shenzhen Media Group, Jilin Television Station, Haerbin Television Station, Dalian Television Station, Henan Cable Television Network Group Co., Ltd., Hubei Broadcast and Television General Station, Wuxi Broadcast and Television Group, Suzhou Broadcast and Television General Station, Changzhou Television Station, and Ningbo Broadcast and Television Group.

As of December 31, 2012, the local mobile digital television operating companies with which we entered into exclusive agency agreements included: Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd, Beijing Beiguang Metro Media Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Pearl River Mobile Multimedia Television Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Metro Television Co., Ltd., Nanjing Guangdian Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd., Chengdu China Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Wuxi Guangtong Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Ningbo China Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd., Shanxi Dazhong Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Jilin Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Dalian Mobile Digital Television Co., Ltd., Hubei China Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Liaoning Beifang New Media Co., Ltd., Xiamen Radio and Television Digital Media Co., Ltd., Suzhou China Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Changzhou China Mobile Television Company Limited and Changsha Guangdian Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd.

In 2012, the local mobile digital television operating companies from which we buy advertising time included Henan Cable China Mobile Television Company Limited.

- RMB or Renminbi refers to the legal currency of China; \$, dollars , US\$ and U.S. dollars refer to the legal currency of the United States.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

- shares or common shares refers to our common shares; preferred shares refers to our Series A convertible redeemable preferred shares and Series B convertible preferred shares; and

- we , us , our company , our and VisionChina refer to VisionChina Media Inc., a Cayman Islands company, its predecessor entities and subsidiaries, and its consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries. Although VisionChina does not directly or indirectly own any equity interest in its consolidated affiliated entities, VisionChina effectively controls these entities through a series of contractual arrangements. We treat our consolidated affiliated entities as variable interest entities and have consolidated their financial results in our financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States, or U.S. GAAP.

This annual report includes our audited consolidated financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012 and as of December 31, 2011 and 2012.

ADSs are listed on the Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol VISN . On December 12, 2012, we effected a change of the ADS to common share ratio from one ADS representing one common share to one ADS representing twenty common shares.

Table of Contents**PART I****ITEM 1. IDENTITY OF DIRECTORS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND ADVISERS**

Not Applicable.

ITEM 2. ITEM 2.OFFER STATISTICS AND EXPECTED TIMETABLE

Not Applicable.

ITEM 3. ITEM 3.KEY INFORMATION**A. Selected Financial Data**

The following selected condensed consolidated statement of operations data for the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012 and the condensed consolidated balance sheet data as of December 31, 2011 and 2012 have been derived from our audited consolidated financial statements, which are included elsewhere in this annual report. The following selected condensed consolidated statement of operations data the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2009 and the condensed consolidated balance sheet data as of December 31, 2008, 2009 and 2010 have been derived from our audited consolidated financial statements, which are not included elsewhere in this annual report. You should read the selected condensed consolidated financial data in conjunction with the financial statements and the related notes included elsewhere in this annual report and Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects. Our consolidated financial statements are prepared and presented in accordance with U.S. GAAP. Our historical results do not necessarily indicate our results expected for any future periods.

	2008	2009	For the year ended December 31, 2010	2011	2012
	(US\$, except number of shares)				
Condensed Consolidated Statement of Operations Data:					
Revenues(1)					
Advertising service revenue	103,515,250	120,686,086	138,056,640	179,415,668	114,741,386
Advertising equipment revenue	565,392			1,778,682	926,464
Total revenues	104,080,642	120,686,086	138,056,640	181,194,350	115,667,850
Cost of revenues					
Advertising service cost	(40,602,022)	(61,104,381)	(121,000,454)	(127,057,954)	(121,374,431)
Advertising equipment cost	(475,432)			(1,494,027)	(345,291)

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Total cost of revenues	(41,077,454)	(61,104,381)	(121,000,454)	(128,551,981)	(121,719,722)
Gross profit/(loss)	63,003,188	59,581,705	17,056,186	52,642,369	(6,051,872)
Operating expenses (2)	(20,126,107)	(32,046,119)	(183,535,813)	(63,639,179)	(246,463,622)
Government grant		538,085			756,757
Share of (losses) profits from equity method investees	(484,969)	(998,606)	(109,989)	230,280	45,509
Dividend income				142,265	162,100
Income from partial disposal of interest of a subsidiary				175,903	
Operating profit (loss)	42,392,112	27,075,065	(166,589,616)	(10,448,362)	(251,551,128)
Interest income	3,480,212	1,860,017	2,082,605	1,711,117	696,292
Interest expense		(109,590)	(4,952,239)	(4,716,577)	(2,614,543)
Government grant	672,515				
Other (expenses) income	(38,491)	(1,278)		42,153	(605,958)
Net income (loss) before income taxes	46,506,348	28,824,214	(169,459,250)	(13,411,669)	(254,075,337)
Income tax benefit (expense)	212,325	(2,348,254)	18,202,289	793,415	7,547,421
Net income (loss)	46,718,673	26,475,960	(151,256,961)	(12,618,254)	(246,527,916)
Net loss (income) attributable to noncontrolling interest (3)	91,277	127,043	(81,261)	114,962	118,724
Net income (loss) attributable to VisionChina Media Inc. shareholders	46,809,950	26,603,003	(151,338,222)	(12,503,292)	(246,409,192)
Net income (loss) per common share:					
Basic	0.67	0.37	(1.83)	(0.12)	(2.43)
Diluted	0.65	0.37	(1.83)	(0.12)	(2.43)
Weighted average number of shares used in computation of net income (loss) per share:					
Basic	70,064,663	71,686,900	82,739,234	102,047,412	101,351,222
Diluted	72,404,916	72,676,438	82,739,234	102,047,412	101,351,222

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Table of Contents

	2008	2009	For the year ended December 31, 2010 (US\$, except number of shares)	2011	2012
Share-based compensation expenses during the related periods included in:					
Cost of revenues	39,847	63,477	100,711	58,836	52,824
Selling and marketing expenses	1,163,623	3,698,329	432,632	447,767	394,719
General and administrative expenses	263,587	570,305	414,162	311,070	221,111

(1) The PRC government implemented a value-added tax reform pilot program, which replaced the business tax with value-added tax on selected sectors including the advertising sector, in Shanghai effective January 1, 2012, in Beijing effective September 1, 2012 and in Shenzhen effective November 1, 2012. The value-added tax rate applicable to the subsidiaries and consolidated variable interest entities of our group in Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen is 6% as compared to the 5% business tax rate which was applicable prior to the reform.

(2) Included in operating expenses for the year ended December 31, 2010 and 2012 was a non-cash impairment loss of US\$145.7 million and US\$178.8 million made against the intangible assets and goodwill relating to our acquisitions of three out of the six advertising agency businesses in 2008 and our acquisition of Digital Media Group Company Limited (Digital Media Group) in 2010. More details of such impairment loss can be found on page 61 Item 5. Operating and financial review and prospects A Operating results Results of Operations Year Ended December 31, 2011 Compared to Year Ended December 31, 2010 .

(3) We adopted Financial Accounting Standards Board, or FASB, Accounting Standards Codification, or ASC, Topic 810-10-65, *Transition Related to FASB Statement No. 160, Noncontrolling Interests in Consolidated Financial Statements an amendment of ARB No. 51*, or ASC 810-10-65, on January 1, 2009 retrospectively.

	2008	2009	As of December 31, 2010 (US\$, except number of shares)	2011	2012
Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheet Data:					
Cash and cash equivalents	163,248,286	68,834,087	67,211,336	80,309,629	29,012,381
Total asset	293,639,567	388,915,736	442,959,951	415,140,682	149,795,319
Total current liabilities	42,304,706	102,935,518	185,514,939	120,961,630	108,805,722
Net assets	245,634,615	273,415,714	215,252,534	283,401,981	40,012,946
Common shares	7,182	7,214	8,490	10,131	10,137
Total VisionChina Media Inc. shareholders equity	245,073,214	272,981,356	214,785,004	283,184,369	39,914,058
Number of common shares issued and outstanding	71,819,442	72,140,684	84,894,888	101,313,015	101,366,544

Note: We adopted ASC 810-10-65 (formerly FASB Statement No. 160, *Noncontrolling Interests*) on January 1, 2009, retrospectively.

	2010	As of December 31, 2011	2012
Selected Operating Data:			

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Number of digital television displays in our mobile digital television advertising network:

Exclusive agency cities	121,588	111,856	87,473
Direct investment cities	1,784	1,573	1,571
Total	123,372	113,429	89,044
Number of digital displays in our supplemental subway advertising platform	14,023	23,994	19,523

	For the Year Ended December 31,		
	2010	2011	2012
Total hours of broadcasting(1)	195,366	175,598	162,917
Average revenue per hour(1)(2)(US\$)	677	1,002	667
Average advertising minutes sold per hour	6.75	8.78	6.53

(1) Includes all of the cities in our network and supplemental subway advertising platform.

(2) We calculate average revenue per hour by dividing our advertising service revenue derived from our network and supplemental subway advertising platform by the total hours of broadcasting in the cities of our network and supplemental subway advertising platform.

Exchange Rate Information

A number of RMB-denominated figures used in this annual report are accompanied with U.S. dollar translations. These translations are based on the noon buying rate in The City of New York for cable transfers of RMB as certified for customs purposes by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York on December 31, 2012, which was RMB6.2301 to US\$1.00. We make no representation that any RMB or U.S. dollar amounts could have been, or could be, converted into U.S. dollars or RMB, as the case may be, at any particular rate, the rates stated below, or at all. The PRC government imposes control over its foreign currency reserves in part through direct regulation of the conversion of RMB into foreign currencies and through restrictions on foreign trade.

Table of Contents

The following table sets forth information concerning exchange rates between the RMB and the U.S. dollar for the periods indicated. These rates are provided solely for your convenience and are not necessarily the exchange rates that we used in this annual report or will use in the preparation of our periodic reports or any other information to be provided to you. The exchange rate of RMB per US dollar as set forth in the H.10 statistical release of the Federal Reserve Board was RMB6.1311 to US\$1.00 as of May 24, 2013.

Period	Period End	Exchange Rate (Renminbi per US Dollar)(1)		
		Average(2)	Low	High
(RMB per US\$1.00)				
2008	6.8225	6.9193	7.2946	6.7800
2009	6.8259	6.8295	6.8470	6.8176
2010	6.6000	6.7603	6.8330	6.6000
2011	6.2939	6.4475	6.6364	6.2939
2012	6.2301	6.2990	6.3879	6.2221
November	6.2265	6.2338	6.2454	6.2221
December	6.2301	6.2328	6.2502	6.2251
2013				
January	6.2186	6.2215	6.2303	6.2134
February	6.2213	6.2323	6.2438	6.2213
March	6.2108	6.2154	6.2246	6.2105
April	6.1647	6.1861	6.1647	6.2078
May (through May 24)	6.1311	6.1446	6.1306	6.1665

(1) The source of the exchange rate is: (i) with respect to any period ending on or prior to December 31, 2008, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and (ii) with respect to any period ending on or after January 1, 2009, the H.10 statistical release of the Federal Reserve Board.

(2) Annual averages are calculated from month-end rates. Monthly averages are calculated using the average of the daily rates during the relevant period.

B. Capitalization and Indebtedness

Not Applicable.

C. Reasons for the Offer and Use of Proceeds

Not Applicable.

D. Risk Factors

You should consider carefully all of the information in this annual report, including the risks and uncertainties described below and our consolidated financial statements and related notes. Any of the following risks could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. In any such case, the market price of our ADSs could decline.

Risks Related to Our Company and Our Industry

We incurred recurring loss and experienced negative cash flow of operations; these conditions raise substantial doubt as to our ability to continue as a going concern.

The following factors raise substantial doubt about our ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

Table of Contents

- For the years ended December 31, 2012 and 2011, we incurred net loss of US\$246.5 million and US\$12.6 million, respectively.
- During the year ended December 31, 2012, we experienced negative cash flow of operations of US\$27.2 million.
- As of December 31, 2012, we had an overdue consideration payable of US\$64.0 million in relation to the acquisition of Digital Media Group which is currently the subject of litigation with the Former Digital Media Group shareholders. In August 2012 the Supreme Court of the State of New York (the New York Court) ordered us to transfer US\$60 million into New York State to be held in the custody of the New York City Sheriff's Office or into an escrow account controlled by the New York City Sheriff. US\$4.5 million that were held by us outside the China was transferred to the New York City Sheriff accordingly as of December 31, 2012. We were not able to transfer the remaining balance of US\$55.5 million as ordered by the New York Court as we had cash and cash equivalents of US\$29.0 million only as of December 31, 2012, most of which were held by our subsidiaries or consolidated variable interest entities in China and moreover we had not been able to obtain approval from the relevant authority in China to transfer assets or cash held by us in China to satisfy the transfer order of the New York Court.

This uncertainty may create additional concerns for our creditors, suppliers, customers and other counterparties, which may make it more difficult for us to conduct our business and meet our debt and other obligations. Moreover, our consolidated financial statements do not include any adjustments that might result from the outcome of that uncertainty; and the adjustments could be substantial.

Due to the current and on-going deteriorating advertising industry market conditions in China and overall global economic slowdown, we have scaled back certain of our businesses. The significant uncertainties regarding the final result of the litigation with the former shareholders of Digital Media Group and the sustainability of the China advertising industry in the current macroeconomic environment are likely to continue to adversely impact demand for our service. In order to mitigate the above factors, we have the following plans and actions:

- We have taken or are in the process of taking a number of initiatives to reduce costs and improve working capital management. We have been negotiating with a number of vendors, including vendors of concession right contracts, for them to provide us with lower prices or more favorable payment terms in order to achieve cost savings. We have decided to postpone a substantial portion of its planned capital expenditures for the next twelve months. In addition, we have implemented measures to more closely monitor the collection of receivable balances with an aim to improving liquidity.
- We have successfully negotiated with certain banks and will continue to negotiate with other banks to obtain revolving bank facilities to ensure our bank borrowings can be renewed on an on-going basis. From January 1, 2013 to May 29, 2013, we had obtained additional secured short-term bank borrowings of US\$24.2 million with interest rates of 160% of the People's Bank of China Benchmark rate (Benchmark Rate). We are currently seeking secured credit facilities from other PRC financial institutes of approximately US\$48.0 million which we can utilize for working capital purpose in the next twelve-month period.
- We have performed a review of its cash flow forecast for the twelve months ending December 31, 2013. We believe that its operating cash flow will improve in 2013. While management believes the forecast is based on reasonable assumptions, significant assumptions include revenue growth rate of 9%.

We have formulated a liquidity plan as summarized under Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects A. Operating Results Key Factors Affecting Our Results of Operations Ability to seek additional financing for our operations and to execute our liquidity plan. We cannot

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

assure you that we will be able to successfully execute such liquidity plan. The amount of liquidity that we may need may be greater than currently anticipated as a result of additional factors and events beyond our control, such as protracted global economic slowdown, continued downturn in the China advertising market, potential financial crises globally or in any region where we conduct a significant portion of our business, unfavorable result of the litigation with former shareholders of Digital Media Group. All of these and other factors and occurrences may increase our cash requirements and make us unable to satisfy our liquidity requirements, and we may, as a result, be unable to continue as a going concern.

Table of Contents

The prolonged global economic and financial market crisis has had and may continue to have a negative effect on the market price of our ADSs, and could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, results of operations and cash flow.

The prolonged global economic and financial market crisis has caused, among other things, a general tightening in the credit markets, lower levels of liquidity, increases in the rates of default and bankruptcy, lower consumer and business spending, and lower consumer net worth, in the United States, China and other parts of the world. The current European debt crisis and related financial restructuring efforts, including in Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland, are contributing to instability in global financial markets, which adversely affects consumer confidence, the cost of borrowing and economic activity. This global economic and financial market crisis has had, and may continue to have, a negative effect on the market price of our ADSs, the volatility of which has increased as a result of the disruptions in the financial markets. It may also impair our ability to borrow funds or enter into other financial arrangements if and when additional funds become necessary for our operations. We believe many of our advertisers have also been affected by the recent economic turmoil. Current or potential advertisers may no longer be in business, may be unable to fund advertising purchases or determine to reduce purchases, all of which would lead to reduced demand for our advertising services, reduced gross margins, and increased delays of payments of accounts receivable or defaults of payments. We are also limited in our ability to reduce costs to offset the results of a prolonged or severe economic downturn given our fixed media costs associated with our operations. Therefore, if the current economic downturn continues, our business, financial condition, results of operations and cash flow could be materially and adversely affected. In addition, the timing and nature of the continued recovery in the credit and financial markets remains uncertain, and there can be no assurance that market conditions will continue to improve in the near future or that our results will not continue to be materially and adversely affected.

We have a limited operating history, which may make it difficult for you to evaluate our business and prospects.

We began operations in April 2005. We entered into our first direct investment arrangement in Chengdu in May 2005, and we secured our principal exclusive mobile digital television advertising agency arrangements on buses in Beijing and Shenzhen in October and December 2006, respectively. We secured our principal exclusive mobile digital television advertising agency arrangements on subways in Shenzhen and Beijing in May and August 2007, respectively. Accordingly, we have a very limited operating history upon which you can evaluate the viability and sustainability of our business and its acceptance by advertisers and consumers. It is also difficult to evaluate the viability of our mobile digital television advertising network on mass transportation systems because we do not have sufficient experience to address the risks frequently encountered by early stage companies using new forms of advertising media and entering new and rapidly evolving markets. These circumstances may make it difficult for you to evaluate our business and prospects. In addition, due to our short operating history and recent additions to our management team, some of our senior management and employees have only worked together at our company for a relatively short period of time. As a result, it may be difficult for you to evaluate the effectiveness of our senior management and other key employees and their ability to address future challenges to our business.

We have incurred net losses in the past and may incur losses in the future.

For the period from April 8, 2005, the date we commenced operations, to December 31, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2011 and 2012, we incurred a net loss of US\$0.4 million, US\$4.1 million, US\$151.3 million, US\$12.6 million and US\$246.5 million, respectively. We pay media costs, the components of which are detailed in Item 5A Operating Results Cost of Revenues Advertising Service Cost Media Costs, to our local operating partners for operating our advertising business on buses and subways. These costs constitute a significant portion of our cost of revenues and accounted for approximately 70.8%, 56.9% and 83.9% of our total revenues in the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. As of December 31, 2012, in respect of the exclusive agency agreements for our bus platforms, eight were entered into with our direct investment entities and seven were entered into with independent local operating partners. In respect of the exclusive agency agreements for our subway platforms, one agreement was entered into with one of our direct investment entities and all other agreements were

entered into with independent local operating partners across eight cities in the PRC. Our exclusive agency agreements typically have terms ranging from three to ten years, and do not contain any renewal provisions. Upon expiration of the exclusive agency agreements, we will discuss renewal of the agreements with our local operating partners, and the detailed terms of the new exclusive agency agreements will be negotiated at that time. The exclusive agency agreements cannot be terminated before expiration of the term unless agreed by both parties, and the party who initiates the early termination is subject to penalty at an amount specified in the respective agreement. Our media costs each year from these agreements is fixed and is determined upfront at the time when the contracts were signed. We negotiate each of our exclusive agency agreements with our local operating partners on a case-by-case basis and determine the amount of the media cost for each year under the agreement through the process of negotiation. All of our exclusive agency agreements contain escalation clauses to increase the media cost at pre-determined fixed amounts each year under the agreements, except for (i) two exclusive agency agreements that in aggregate accounted for less than 5% of our media cost and (ii) one exclusive agency agreement that has a fixed media cost for the first six years with an annual increase in the media cost beginning in the seventh year. However, our revenues may fluctuate significantly from period to period as a result of, among others, seasonality, customer loyalty, competition and changes in regulations. If our revenues decrease in a given period, we may be unable to reduce our cost of revenues as a significant portion of our cost of revenues is fixed, which could materially and adversely affect our results of operations and result in a net loss in the period.

Table of Contents

We impaired our goodwill or other amortizable intangible assets in 2012 which adversely affected our financial condition and results of operations.

We are required under U.S. GAAP to review our amortizable intangible assets for impairment when events or changes in circumstances indicate the carrying value may not be recoverable. Goodwill is required to be tested for impairment annually or more frequently if facts and circumstances warrant a review. Factors that may be considered a change in circumstances indicating that the carrying value of goodwill and our amortizable intangible assets may not be recoverable, such as a decline of growth in our industry, may have an adverse impact on the operating result of the acquired businesses. We evaluate the amounts of the goodwill and amortizable intangible assets for impairment based on the forecasts of financial performances of the acquired businesses which in turn are based on various assumptions. As of December 31, 2012, we had already written down all of our goodwill and amortizable intangible assets acquired during the acquisition of six advertising agency businesses in 2008 and Digital Media Group in 2010. These impairment charges have had a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations. See Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects Operating Results Critical Accounting Policies Goodwill and Intangible Assets .

If PRC regulators order one or more of our local operating partners to stop their mobile digital television operations due to violations of applicable regulations, our operations would be harmed and our financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

On March 27, 2006, the PRC State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, or SARFT, promulgated the Notice Concerning Experimental Mobile Digital Television, or the March 2006 Notice. The March 2006 Notice regulates experimental mobile digital television operations and primarily contains the following provisions:

- no experimental mobile digital television operations shall be conducted without approval of SARFT;
- no formal operation of mobile digital television shall be conducted before the establishment and adoption of national standards for mobile digital television;
- after the adoption of the national digital mobile television standards, all mobile digital television operations must comply with such national standards; and
- existing mobile television network operations must apply for SARFT approval before April 30, 2006, and must stop operating as of June 15, 2006 if they fail to submit their applications by April 30, 2006 or their applications are disapproved by SARFT.

These regulations apply directly to our local mobile digital television operating partners because they operate mobile digital television networks, and SARFT and its local branches have the authority to order any mobile digital television operators who have violated the March 2006 Notice

or other applicable laws to stop operating their mobile digital television networks. In addition, SARFT issued a notice regarding strengthening the administration of public audio/visual media on public transportation vehicles and in public buildings on December 6, 2007.

Table of Contents

SARFT or its local branches may order any of our local operating partners to stop their operations. If any of our local operating partners are ordered to stop their mobile digital television operations, we may not be able to continue our advertising business in the affected city through other media or channels at acceptable costs, or at all. In that case, our business, financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

Our local operating partners may be ordered to stop their operation of mobile digital television operations for incomplete application for SARFT approval, which may materially and adversely affect our advertising business in the affected cities.

According to the notices issued by SARFT in March 2006 and December 2007, companies that broadcast programs on audio/visual media located on public transportation vehicles and in public buildings using television, internet or other broadcasting technology must apply for SARFT approval by the end of April 2006, and companies failing to complete the procedure may be ordered to cease network operation.

To date, our local mobile digital television operating partners in Shenzhen, Beijing, Zhengzhou, Guangzhou, Ningbo and Shenyang (i.e., Shenzhen Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Henan Cable China Mobile Television Company Limited, Guangzhou Pearl River Mobile Multimedia Television Co., Ltd., Ningbo China Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd. and Liaoning Beifang New Media Co., Ltd.) have obtained SARFT approvals for operating mobile digital television networks in these cities. Our local mobile digital television operating partners in Changzhou and Dalian (i.e., Changzhou Television Station and Dalian Television Station) submitted their applications to SARFT after April 30, 2006. Our local mobile digital television operating partners in cities other than those mentioned above submitted applications to SARFT before April 30, 2006 as required under the March 2006 Notice, and none of the applications has been rejected by SARFT as of April 30, 2013. In aggregate, approximately 59.8% of our advertising service revenue in 2012 was attributable to the cities where our local operating partners have not obtained the SARFT approvals.

Our PRC legal counsel has advised us that, since the mobile digital television industry is relatively new in China, there are significant uncertainties regarding the implementation and interpretation of the laws, rules and regulations applicable to mobile digital television operations, including the March 2006 and December 2007 Notices. Furthermore, our local mobile digital television operating partners in such cities (except in Changzhou and Dalian) submitted applications to SARFT before April 30, 2006 as required under the March 2006 Notice and none of the applications has been rejected by SARFT. Therefore, our PRC legal counsel has advised us that it believes that there is no substantial or material risk that the operations of local mobile digital television networks in these cities will be ordered to stop operations.

However, we cannot assure you that SARFT or its local branches will not order any of our local operating partners to stop their operations. If any of our local operating partners are ordered to stop their mobile digital television operations for incomplete application of the SARFT approval, we may not be able to continue our advertising business in the affected city through other media or channels at acceptable costs, or at all. In that case, our advertising business, financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

We may be subject to, and may expend significant resources in defending against, government actions and civil suits based on the content and services we provide through our mobile digital television advertising network.

PRC advertising laws and regulations require advertisers, advertising operators and advertising distributors, including businesses such as ours and our local operating partners, to ensure that the content of the advertisements they prepare or distribute is fair, accurate and in full compliance

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

with applicable laws, rules and regulations. Violation of these laws, rules or regulations may result in penalties, including fines, confiscation of advertising fees, orders to cease dissemination of the advertisements and orders to publish an advertisement correcting the misleading information. In circumstances involving serious violations, the PRC government may revoke a violator's license for its advertising business operations.

Table of Contents

As an operator of an advertising medium, we are obligated under PRC laws, rules and regulations to monitor the advertising content aired on our network or supplemental subway advertising platform for compliance with applicable laws. Although the advertisements shown on our network generally have previously been broadcast over public television networks and have been subjected to internal review and verification by these broadcasters, we are required to separately and independently review and verify these advertisements for content compliance before displaying these advertisements. In addition, for advertising content related to special types of products and services, such as alcohol, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and medical procedures, we are required to confirm that the advertisers have obtained requisite government approvals including the advertisers' operating qualifications, proof of quality inspection of the advertised products, government pre-approval of the contents of the advertisement and filing with the local authorities. We employ, and our local direct investment entities are required by the applicable PRC laws, rules and regulations to employ, qualified advertising inspectors who are trained to review advertising content for compliance with applicable PRC laws, rules and regulations. We endeavor to comply with such requirements, including by requesting relevant documents from the advertisers. Our reputation will be tarnished and our results of operations may be adversely affected if advertisements shown on our mobile digital television advertising network or supplemental subway advertising platform are provided to us by our advertising clients in violation of relevant PRC content laws and regulations, or if the supporting documentation and government approvals provided to us by our advertising clients in connection with such advertising content are not complete, or if the advertisements that our local operating partners have broadcast on our network have not received required approvals from the relevant local supervisory bodies, or if the advertisements are not content compliant.

All forms of outdoor advertisements must be registered before dissemination with the local branches of the State Administration of Industry and Commerce, or SAIC, which regulates advertising companies, and advertising distributors are required to submit a registration application form as well as the content of the advertisement to the local SAIC branch in order to receive an advertising registration certificate. The applicable PRC laws and regulations are not clear as to whether advertising on public transportation systems or other out-of-home locations would be considered outdoor advertising. In practice, local SAIC branches have discretion in determining whether such advertising constitutes outdoor advertising which would require registration with the relevant local SAIC branch. Local SAIC branches in different regions of the PRC may reach different conclusions with respect to this issue and such conclusions may also be subject to further revisions or amendments. All of our local operating partners are affiliates or subsidiaries of state-owned television stations operating under SARFT, and the senior management of the state-owned television stations consists of appointed government officials. The competent government authority grants state-owned television stations the authority to review and approve the broadcasting advertisements. These state-owned television stations have confirmed that advertisements can be broadcast on mobile digital television without being classified as outdoor advertising. We and each of our local operating partners do not believe that advertising activity on public transportation constitutes outdoor advertising and therefore do not believe that registration with the SAIC is necessary. None of our local operating partners or direct investment entities has renewed or completed the outdoor advertising registration, and as of December 31, 2012, none of our local operating partners or direct investment entities was required by the local SAIC to apply for such registration or was fined or penalized for failing to complete such registration. Furthermore, none of our local operating partners expect the SAIC to levy any fines or sanctions in the future. Our local operating partners have expressed to us their willingness to fully comply with all relevant rules and regulations, including registering with the SAIC, and we therefore believe our local operating partners will be able to apply for the appropriate registrations in the event that the SAIC or the competent government authority determines that such registrations are required. As a precaution to cope with such legal uncertainty, our direct investment entities in Haerbin and Zhengzhou had completed the required registrations, but these registrations have already expired in 2008. Currently, our local operating partners have advised us that they do not believe such registrations are necessary, and none of our local operating partners are planning to submit registration applications to the SAIC. If advertising on public transportation systems or other out-of-home locations is determined by a local SAIC branch to be outdoor advertising and a registration is not effected as required by the local SAIC branch, our local operating partner or direct investment entity in the jurisdiction city of the local SAIC branch would be subject to a fine and may be ordered to stop disseminating the advertisements and as a result, our business in that city would be materially and adversely affected, which may have a material and adverse effect in our overall business.

Moreover, civil claims may be filed against us for fraud, defamation, subversion, negligence, copyright or trademark infringement or other violations due to the nature and content of the information displayed on our advertising network. If viewers find the content displayed on our advertising network to be offensive, bus and subway companies that display our content on their buses and subway platforms may seek to hold us responsible for any claims by their passengers or they may terminate their relationships with us.

Table of Contents

We may encounter cyber attacks, which may result in material adverse effect on our business operation, financial condition and reputation.

If the security of the broadcasting network we use to send our signals is breached despite the efforts of our local operating partners to ensure the security of the content management system, and unauthorized images, text or audio sounds are displayed on our advertising network, viewers or the PRC government may find these images, text or audio sounds to be offensive, which may subject us to civil liability or government censure. Any such cyber attack incidents may disrupt our services and result in significant damages and material adverse effect on our operations. In addition, we may suffer negative consequences, such as litigation, monetary liabilities, increased cybersecurity protection costs, lost revenues and reputational damages. If our advertising viewers do not believe our content is reliable or secure, our business model may become less appealing to viewers in China and our advertising clients may be unwilling to place advertisements on our advertising network.

Our local operating partner's incomplete application, refusal to register and non-compliance with PRC registration may cause our operations, financial condition and results of operations be materially and adversely affected.

All forms of outdoor advertisements must be registered before dissemination with the local branches of the State Administration of Industry and Commerce, or SAIC, which regulates advertising companies, and advertising distributors are required to submit a registration application form as well as the content of the advertisement to the local SAIC branch in order to receive an advertising registration certificate. The applicable PRC laws and regulations are not clear as to whether advertising on public transportation systems or other out-of-home locations would be considered outdoor advertising. In practice, local SAIC branches have discretion in determining whether such advertising constitutes outdoor advertising which would require registration with the relevant local SAIC branch. Local SAIC branches in different regions of the PRC may reach different conclusions with respect to this issue and such conclusions may also be subject to further revisions or amendments. All of our local operating partners are affiliates or subsidiaries of state-owned television stations operating under SARFT, and the senior management of the state-owned television stations consists of appointed government officials. The competent government authority grants state-owned television stations the authority to review and approve the broadcasting advertisements. These state-owned television stations have confirmed that advertisements can be broadcast on mobile digital television without being classified as outdoor advertising. We and each of our local operating partners do not believe that advertising activity on public transportation constitutes outdoor advertising and therefore do not believe that registration with the SAIC is necessary. All of the existing SAIC registrations by our local operating partners have already expired in 2008. As a result, 100% of our revenues in 2010, 2011, and 2012 were derived from cities where our local operating partners do not have an advertising registration certificate from the SAIC. Therefore, all of our revenues would be impacted in case of a regulatory enforcement action by SAIC. None of our local operating partners or direct investment entities has renewed or completed the outdoor advertising registration, and as of December 31, 2012, none of our local operating partners or direct investment entities was required by the local SAIC to apply for such registration or was fined or penalized for failing to complete such registration. Furthermore, none of our local operating partners expect the SAIC to levy any fines or sanctions in the future. Our exclusive agency agreements with each of our local operating partners or our joint venture agreements with our local operating partners require them to comply with all relevant laws and regulations, which include obtaining any approvals necessary to legally provide advertising time to us. Our local operating partners have expressed to us their willingness to fully comply with all relevant PRC rules and regulations during our conversations with them. Although no written assurances have been provided, our local operating partners have orally expressed their willingness to register with the SAIC in the event that the SAIC or the competent government authority determines that such registrations are required. If advertising on public transportation systems or other out-of-home locations is determined by a local SAIC branch to be outdoor advertising, it will take SAIC as long as seven working days to review and approve an outdoor advertising registration after its acceptance of application filed by our local operating partner or direct investment entity. And if a registration is not effected as required by the local SAIC branch, our local operating partner or direct investment entity in the jurisdiction city of the local SAIC branch would be subject to a fine up to RMB 30,000, confiscation of advertising fees and may be ordered to stop disseminating the advertisements. As a result, our business in that city would be materially and adversely affected, which may have a material and adverse effect on our overall business.

Table of Contents

If SARFT determines that the regulations on radio and television advertising operation are applicable to advertising on mobile digital television or establishes similar regulations for mobile digital television, our business and prospects could be harmed.

SARFT promulgated Measures of Administration of Advertisement Broadcasting of Radio and Television in 2009 that became effective on January 1, 2010. This regulation is applicable to advertisement broadcasting on all radio and television stations and channels. This regulation contains a number of restrictions, including that the total advertising time of a radio or television station or channel shall not be greater than 12 minutes each hour. On average, we sold 6.75, 8.78 and 6.53 advertising minutes per broadcasting hour for the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. However, there is some uncertainty because as of December 31, 2012, there have been no SARFT actions, pronouncements of guidance or statements to the effect of determining that the regulation referenced above is applicable to the mobile digital televisions industry or promulgation of new rules that are similar to this regulation to regulate or restrict the advertising time digital television networks, nor have there been any plans for future action. In this sense, our future revenues could be significantly impacted by an enforcement action by SARFT for the above regulation on the mobile digital television industry. Our PRC counsel has advised us that the provisions of this regulation restricting advertising time are only applicable to traditional radio and television broadcasting and that as of May 29, 2013, SARFT has not indicated that this regulation shall apply to mobile digital television. In addition, all of our local operating partners are affiliates or subsidiaries of state-owned television stations operating under SARFT, and the senior management of the state-owned television stations consists of appointed government officials. The competent government authority grants state-owned television stations the authority to review and approve the broadcasting advertisements. These state-owned television stations have orally confirmed that the foregoing restrictions on the total advertising time of a radio or television station or channel advertisements are not applicable to advertising on mobile digital television when we entered into media contracts with them. As a result, we believe that this regulation is not applicable to the mobile digital television industry. However, SARFT may determine that this regulation is applicable to the mobile digital television industry or promulgate new rules that are similar to this regulation to regulate or restrict the advertising time of mobile digital television networks. Even though our PRC legal counsel has advised that under the relevant PRC laws and regulations, we are able to enforce these media contracts against our state-owned local operating partners and there is no limitation on the enforceability of these media contracts, if any of the foregoing regulatory enforcement actions occurs, the total advertising time on our network will be limited. As the annual increase of our media costs is already fixed under our media contracts and the contracts do not contain any provisions to decrease the media costs in the event that the total advertising time on the network of local operating partners is limited, a regulatory limitation on the number of advertising minutes would limit our potential revenues, while our media costs continue to increase. Our business, advertising service revenue and operating results could therefore be materially and adversely affected.

Our failure to maintain relationships with local television stations or local mobile digital television companies would harm our business and prospects.

Our ability to generate revenues from advertising sales depends largely upon our ability to air advertisements on large mobile digital television networks on mass transportation systems in cities. This, in turn, requires that we develop and maintain business relationships with local television stations, local mobile digital television companies, local governments, and mass transportation services through which we obtain programming, broadcasting and space for our mobile digital television advertising networks. As of December 31, 2012, we provided advertising services mainly through our network and supplemental subway advertising platform with approximately 108,567 digital displays in 19 cities in China, among which we have entered into exclusive advertising agency arrangements in 18 cities and direct investment arrangements in 11 cities in China. Also, as of March 31, 2013, our mobile digital television advertising network and supplemental subway advertising platform covered 19 cities in China. We cannot assure you that we can maintain these relationships on satisfactory terms, or at all. Our local operating partners may unilaterally terminate our agreements with them before the expiration of these agreements if there are events of force majeure or if we have breached the agreements. For example, our agreement with our local operating partner in Beijing requires us to install digital television displays in new buses pursuant to the terms of the agreement between our local operating partner in Beijing and the local bus company in Beijing. If we fail to perform our contractual obligations, we will be in breach of our agreement and our local operating partner may unilaterally terminate our agreement. If we fail to maintain relationships with our local operating partners, advertisers may find advertising on our network unattractive and may not purchase advertising time from us, which would cause our revenues to decline and our business and prospects to deteriorate.

Table of Contents

We do not completely control the operations of our direct investment entities; any dispute with the local television stations could harm our business.

We operate in 10 cities through direct investment entities formed with the local television stations. PRC law provides that the television stations or entities controlled by them must own no less than 51% of the equity interests in any mobile digital television operating company. We own a 49% equity interest in those direct investment entities, except the direct investment entity in Shenzhen in which we own a 25% equity interest and the direct investment entity in Wuxi in which we own a 14% equity interest. Seven out of ten of our direct investment agreements provide that we have the right to appoint the general manager of the direct investment entity, who will be in charge of the day-to-day operations of the direct investment entity. The right to appoint the general manager is subject to confirmation by the direct investment entity. Our local operating partners, the local television stations including Chengdu Television Station, Shenzhen Media Group, Jilin Television Station, Dalian Television Station, Henan Cable Television Network Group Co., Ltd., Hubei Broadcast and Television General Station, Wuxi Broadcast and Television Group, Suzhou Broadcast and Television General Station, Changzhou Television Station and Ningbo Broadcast and Television Group, control the broadcasting and are responsible for compliance matters. We cannot assure you that disputes will not arise between us and our local operating partners, and that any such disputes will be resolved in our favor. Further, our interests and the interests of our local operating partners may be different. In some cases, we may have to rely on court proceedings to resolve the disputes between us and our local operating partners. Any litigation will divert our resources and may result in a judgment against us. If any dispute between us and our local operating partners arises, our business operations could be harmed, and our financial condition and results of operations could be materially and adversely affected.

Our failure or our local operating partners' failure to maintain existing relationships or develop new relationships with local bus companies or subway companies would harm our business and prospects.

In most of the cities where we operate, our business relationships with local bus companies or other selected operations are secured and provided by our local operating partners or our direct investment entities. Furthermore, as of December 31, 2012, our operations on the supplemental subway advertising platform in Guangzhou, Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing, Nanjing and Shenzhen are secured by our agreements with the subway companies in these six cities, respectively. However, we cannot assure you that we and our local operating partners can maintain these relationships with the local bus companies or subway companies on satisfactory terms, or at all, or that the local bus companies or subway companies will not terminate these relationships before their expiration. If we or our local operating partners fail to maintain these relationships, advertisers may find advertising on our network unattractive and may not purchase advertising time from us, which would cause our revenues to decline and our business and prospects to deteriorate.

A significant portion of the mobile digital television networks of our direct investment entities and the digital television broadcasting infrastructure of our local operating partners currently do not meet the newly adopted PRC national standards for mobile digital television operations. We will be required to spend significant capital and other resources to convert the digital television broadcasting infrastructure of our local operating partners to these national standards, which could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Our local operating partners have adopted three different digital television technology standards in operating their networks. In addition, our direct investment entities have installed digital television receivers based on the technology standards our local operating partners have adopted. The National Standard of Frame Structure and Channel Code and Modulation of Digital Television Ground Broadcasting Transmission System, or the National Standard, was approved by the Standardization Administration of the PRC on August 18, 2006, and became effective on August 1, 2007. On March 27, 2006, SARFT promulgated the Notice Concerning Experimental Mobile Digital Television, or the March 2006 Notice, which required all of our local operating partners must adopt the National Standard for their mobile digital television operations. In addition, the SARFT has issued a notice to require some of our local operating partners and direct investment entities to complete the adoption of the National Standard by June 30, 2010. Our PRC counsel advises that while SARFT has promulgated the foregoing timeline for conversion

to the National Standard, as of December 31, 2012, SARFT has not assessed any fines or penalties related to non-compliance with the National Standard. As of April 30, 2013, the mobile digital television network of our direct investment entities and the digital television broadcasting infrastructure of our local operating partners in 11 cities (Chengdu China Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Wuxi Guangtong Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Ningbo China Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd., Dalian Mobile Digital Television Co., Ltd., Hubei China Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Liaoning Beifang New Media Co., Ltd., Xiamen Radio and Television Digital Media Co., Ltd., Suzhou China Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Shenzhen Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Pearl River Mobile Multimedia Television Co., Ltd., and Changzhou China Mobile Television Company Limited) have been converted to the National Standard, but those in another six cities (Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Beijing Beiguang Metro Media Co., Ltd., Nanjing Guangdian Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd., Changsha Guangdian Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Shanxi Dazhong Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Henan Cable China Mobile Television Company Limited and Jilin Mobile Television Co., Ltd. have not yet completed the conversion and do not meet the requirements of the National Standard. As of April 30, 2013, except for in Beijing, our local operating partners in the seven cities have not begun the conversion process, and we and our local operating partners estimate that the conversion process will take no more than two years to complete once the conversion process begins. The actual amount of time required for the conversion process in any given city depends on a number of factors, including the size of the mobile digital television network in that city, the equipment currently used, the resources available for the conversion and the schedule for replacing the equipment. Our direct investment entities, Henan Cable China Mobile Television Company Limited and Jilin Mobile Television Co., Ltd., and our local operating partners, Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Beijing Beiguang Metro Media Co., Ltd., Nanjing Guangdian Mobile Television Development Co., Ltd., Changsha Guangdian Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd. and Shanxi Dazhong Mobile Television Co., Ltd., will be required to spend significant capital and other resources, including purchasing new equipment, to convert their digital television broadcasting infrastructure to the National Standard. Three of our local operating partners, Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd., and Beijing Beiguang Metro Media Co., Ltd., told us the conversion process had been started as of April 9, 2012. Under our exclusive advertising agency agreements, we are responsible for a portion of such expenditures in five of the eight remaining cities. The total cost of converting the equipment to the National Standard in these four cities, namely Beijing, Nanjing, Changchun and Zhengzhou, is not expected to exceed RMB10.0 million. However, we and our local operating partners have not yet determined the allocation of the conversion expenses. Furthermore, the installation of new technology and equipment could cause disruptions to our programming, which in turn may adversely affect our reputation and business. If our local operating partners and direct investment entities do not complete the adoption of the National Standard in a timely manner or at all, or if such adoption requires substantial capital expenditures or other resources, our business, financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

Table of Contents

In certain cities, we may be required to obtain approvals in order to continue including non-advertising content in our programs that are transmitted through closed circuit networks. If we are unable to continue to include non-advertising content in our programs, our business and prospects could be adversely affected.

On December 6, 2007, the SARFT issued the *Circular regarding Strengthening the Management of Public Audio-Video in Automobiles, Buildings and Other Public Areas*, or the SARFT Circular. Under the SARFT Circular, the display of audio-video programs, such as television news, films and television shows, sports, technology and entertainment, through public audio-video systems located in outdoor public systems, including automobiles, airports and bus and train stations, must be approved by the SARFT. While the SARFT Circular is not applicable to audio-video transmitted through digital broadcast technology, it is applicable to audio-video transmitted through closed circuit networks. As a result, we may be required to obtain approvals for certain of our supplemental subway advertising operations. These supplemental subway advertising operations transmit programming through closed video networks rather than digital broadcast technology and include Beijing (Line 4 and Daxing Line), Tianjin, Shenzhen (Lines 2, 4 and 5, and Stations in Line 1), Nanjing (Line 2 and the southern extended line for Line 1) and Chongqing.

We intend to obtain the required approvals for our non-advertising content for the programming in these operations. However, the relevant government authority in China has not promulgated any implementation rules on the procedure for applying for the requisite approvals. We cannot assure you that we will obtain such approvals as required by the SARFT Circular in a timely manner or at all. If we do not obtain the requisite approvals, we may be required to eliminate part or all of the non-advertising content from programming transmitted through closed circuit networks on our supplemental subway platforms. As a result, we may not be able to capture the attention of our target audience due to the lack of non-advertising content, which could make our advertising network on these supplemental subway platforms less attractive, and consequently have an adverse effect on our business and prospects.

Table of Contents

We operate in the advertising industry, which is particularly sensitive to changes in economic conditions and advertising trends.

Demand for advertising time on our network and supplemental subway advertising platform, and the resulting advertising spending by our clients, are particularly sensitive to changes in general economic conditions. For example, advertising expenditures typically decrease during periods of economic downturn. Advertisers may reduce the money they spend to advertise on our network and supplemental subway advertising platform for a number of reasons, including:

- a general decline in economic conditions;
- a decline in economic conditions in the particular cities where we conduct business;
- a decision to shift advertising expenditures to other available advertising media; and
- a decline in advertising spending in general.

A decrease in demand for advertising media in general, and for our advertising services in particular, would materially and adversely affect our ability to generate revenues, and have a material and adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

If advertisers or the viewing public do not accept, or lose interest in, our mobile digital television advertising network, our revenues may be negatively affected and our business may not expand or be successful.

The mobile digital television advertising market in China is relatively new and its potential is uncertain. We compete for advertising revenues with many forms of more established advertising media. Our success depends on the acceptance of our mobile digital television advertising network by advertisers and their continuing interest in this medium as part of their advertising strategies. Our success also depends on the viewing public's continued receptiveness towards our mobile digital television advertising model. Advertisers may elect not to use our services if they believe that viewers are not receptive to our network or that our network does not provide sufficient value as an effective advertising medium. Likewise, if viewers find some element of our network, such as the audio feature of monitors, to be disruptive or intrusive, mass transportation companies may decide not to install our digital displays, and advertisers may view our network as a less attractive advertising medium compared to other alternatives. In these events, advertisers may reduce their spending on our network. If a substantial number of advertisers lose interest in advertising on our network for these or other reasons, we will be unable to generate sufficient revenues and cash flows to operate our business, and our financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

The process of developing a relationship with a local television station or its mobile digital television operating company, and then installing digital displays on the mass transportation systems can be time-consuming and requires us to commit a substantial amount of resources, from which we may be unable to recognize the anticipated benefits.

Our success depends largely on our ability to establish relationships with local television stations and mass transportation companies. Before expanding into a new city, we identify cities that have been or are planning to launch digital mobile television operations, collect data and analyze the development status indicators such as economic status, consumer patterns, potential market size for advertising, development of mass transportation systems (including bus and subway) and mobile digital television networks, population and the percentage of the population that takes public transportation in those cities. We also evaluate the commercial potential and our estimated revenue. In some cases, we actively pursue cooperation activities with television stations or mobile television operators based on the market research, while in other cases we are contacted by those operators who have an interest in cooperating with us. The process of establishing these relationships can be lengthy as mobile digital television is a relatively new form of media and we often need to convince counterparties of the benefits of establishing a mobile digital television network on mass transportation systems. We may be required to commit substantial resources, including but not limited to the time and effort spent by our senior management (such as our chief executive officer and chief development officer) and staff from our media development department, research work and feasibility analyses and other expenses incurred during this process, such as travelling. Despite our best efforts, counterparties may ultimately decide not to establish a mobile digital television network or may choose to not work together with us. If these counterparties do not accept a mobile digital television network as an effective medium on mass transportation vehicles, we may not be able to grow our business or our revenues.

Table of Contents

Once a mass transportation company agrees to install our mobile digital television displays on their buses or other vehicles, we must invest substantial time and resources to install digital television displays before we receive any revenues from such efforts. Such investments typically include the purchase and the installation of digital television displays, or expenses relating to the acquisition of interests in the local direct investment entities. We may experience increased distribution and operations costs during and/or after deployment. We may also experience delays in revenue generation, if any, due to deployment delays or difficulties in selling advertising time to new or current advertisers to be aired on these buses and other mass transportation vehicles. We may be unable to generate sufficient revenues from advertising packages on these buses and other mass transportation vehicles to offset the related costs.

Defects in the local mobile digital television networks, which we rely on to conduct our advertising operations, could result in a loss of advertisers and audience and unexpected expenses.

Our advertising operations rely on the combination of the broadcasting network infrastructure of the local television stations and digital television displays. This combined infrastructure is complex and must meet stringent quality and reliability requirements. Due to the complexity of this infrastructure and the impracticability of testing all possible operating scenarios prior to implementation, certain errors or defects may not be detectable. The existence of errors or defects in this combined infrastructure may result in loss of, or delay in, acceptance of our advertising services by advertisers and public viewers. In addition, mass transportation companies could cancel their arrangements with our direct investment entities or our local operating partners if their respective networks experience sustained downtime. Any errors or defects in the local mobile digital television networks which we use to conduct our advertising operations could damage our reputation, result in revenue loss, divert development resources and increase service and support costs and warranty claims.

When our local mobile digital television advertising networks reach saturation in the cities where we operate, we may be unable to grow our revenue base or satisfy all of our advertisers' needs, which could hamper our ability to generate higher levels of revenues over time.

Air time allocated to programming and advertising on our mobile digital television network is generally provided in the agreements with our local operating partners. In cities where demand for time by advertisers is high, such as Beijing, Shenzhen and Nanjing, our local mobile digital television networks may reach saturation, meaning we cannot sell additional advertising time without further increasing the proportion of advertisements to programs. If our local networks reach saturation in any particular city, we will be forced to request additional advertising time from our local operating partners or increase our advertising rates to increase our revenues. However, we cannot assure you that our local operating partners will grant our requests, and advertisers may be unwilling to accept rate increases or a decrease in the amount of programming, which in turn may decrease the attentiveness of the audience to their advertisements. If we are unable to increase the length of advertising time on our network or the rates for advertising time in saturated cities, we may be unable to generate higher levels of revenues over time.

If we fail to attract advertisers to our network, we would be unable to maintain or increase our advertising prices, which would negatively affect our ability to grow revenues.

The actual prices we can charge advertisers for time on our mobile digital television network and supplemental subway advertising platform depend on the size and quality of our networks and the demand by advertisers for advertising time. Advertisers choose to advertise on our advertising network in part based on the size of the network and the desirability of the cities where we operate. If we fail to maintain or increase the number of cities, diversify advertising channels in our network, or solidify our brand name and reputation as a quality provider of advertising services, advertisers may be unwilling to purchase time on our network or to pay the advertising fees we require to remain profitable. Any significant decrease in demand could cause us to lower the prices we charge for advertising time on our network and could negatively affect our ability to increase revenues in the future.

Table of Contents

We generally do not have exclusive or long-term agreements with our advertising clients and we may lose their engagement if they are not satisfied with our services or for other reasons.

As is customary in the advertising industry in China, we generally do not have exclusive or long-term agreements with our advertising clients. A majority of our agreements with our advertising clients have a term of less than a year. As a result, we must rely on high-quality services, industry reputation, our network size and coverage and favorable pricing to attract and retain advertising clients. There is no assurance, however, that we will be able to maintain our relationships with current and/or future clients. In particular, we derive a substantial percentage of our revenues from a small number of advertising clients. For example, our top ten advertising clients in the aggregate accounted for 32.9% of our total revenues for the year ended December 31, 2012. These and our other advertising clients may elect to terminate their relationships with us if they are not satisfied with our services. We have lost client accounts in the past and may lose client accounts in the future. If a substantial number of our advertising clients choose not to continue to purchase advertising time from us, we would be unable to generate sufficient revenues and cash flows to operate our business, and our results of operations and financial condition would be materially and adversely affected.

We face significant competition, and if we do not compete successfully against new and existing competitors, we may lose our market share, and our profitability may be adversely affected.

We compete with other mobile digital television advertising companies and other new media advertising companies in China. We compete for advertising clients primarily on the basis of network size and coverage, location, price, range of services and brand name. We also face competition from other mobile digital television advertising network operators for access to the most desirable cities and mass transportation systems in China. Our major competitors include other companies that operate out-of-home advertising media networks such as Focus Media Holding Limited, AirMedia Group Inc., Towona Mobile Digital Co., Ltd. and Bus Online Media Co., Ltd. We also compete for overall advertising spending with other advertising media, such as television, mass transportation posters, billboards, newspapers, radio, magazines and the Internet. Some of our competitors operate digital television advertising networks installed on mass transportation systems primarily playing prerecorded content saved on compact flash cards or DVDs.

Many smaller mobile digital television companies operate in cities outside of our network pursuant to exclusive agreements, and we expect to encounter barriers-to-entry as we attempt to expand our network into these cities. For example, in Shanghai, Shanghai Oriental Pearl Mobile Television Inc. operates the largest mobile digital television advertising network using broadcasting technology. As a result, we face barriers-to-entry to expand our network on the bus platform in Shanghai. In addition, we will face barriers-to-entry as we attempt to expand our out-of-home advertising network to different media platforms, such as in-building displays or large outdoor LED displays, because other companies have already signed exclusive placement agreements to secure the most desirable locations.

Further, we may also face competition from new entrants into the mobile digital television advertising sector. As is customary in the advertising industry, we generally do not have exclusive arrangements with our advertising clients and we do not have exclusive arrangements with the local operating partners in a number of cities in which we operate. Therefore, we cannot assure you that we will succeed in gaining a greater market share or maintain our market share. In addition, since December 10, 2005, wholly foreign-owned advertising companies have been allowed to operate in China, which may expose us to increased competition from international advertising media companies attracted to opportunities in China.

Increased competition could reduce our operating margins and profitability and result in a loss of market share. Some of our existing and potential competitors may have competitive advantages, such as significantly greater financial, marketing or other resources, and others may successfully mimic and adopt our business model. Moreover, increased competition will provide advertisers with a wider range of media and advertising service alternatives, which could lead to lower prices and decreased revenues, gross margins and profits. We cannot assure you that we will be able to successfully compete against new or existing competitors.

Table of Contents

Several major cities in China have accounted, and will continue to account, for a substantial majority of our revenues. Our business and financial conditions are particularly subject to general economic conditions and the relationships with our local operating partners in these cities.

A substantial majority of our revenues are currently generated from our operations in the four major cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Our revenues in Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in the aggregate accounted for 63.1% and 62.9% of our total advertising service revenue in 2008, and 2009, respectively. Following the completion of our acquisition of Digital Media Group, we expanded our network to the subway platform in Shanghai and additional subway lines in Beijing and Shenzhen, and these four major cities in the aggregate accounted for 65.8%, 72.4% and 67.0% of our total advertising service revenue in 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. We expect to generate a substantial portion of our revenues from these four cities in the future. If any of these cities experiences an event negatively affecting its mobile digital television advertising industry, such as a serious economic downturn, a decline in the use of mass transportation systems, changes in government policy, a natural disaster or changes in advertising preferences, our mobile digital television network, our supplemental subway advertising platform and our ability to generate adequate cash flow would be materially and adversely affected. In addition, if we fail to maintain our relationships with the local operating partners in these cities (i.e., Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd., Beijing Beiguang Metro Media Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Pearl River Mobile Multimedia Television Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Metro Television Co., Ltd. and Shenzhen Metro Co., Ltd.), our business, financial condition and results of operations would be materially and adversely affected.

Our quarterly operating results are difficult to predict and may fluctuate significantly from period to period in the future.

Our quarterly operating results are difficult to predict and may fluctuate significantly from period to period based on the seasonality of consumer spending and advertising trends in China or other factors. Factors that are likely to cause our operating results to fluctuate include:

- our ability to maintain and increase sales to existing advertising clients, attract new advertising clients and satisfy our clients' demands;
- the frequency of our clients' advertisements on our network;
- the price we charge for our advertising time or changes in our pricing strategies or the pricing strategies of our competitors;
- effects of strategic alliances, potential acquisitions and other business combinations, and our ability to successfully and timely integrate them into our business;
- technical difficulties, system downtime or interruptions;

- changes in government regulations in relation to the advertising industry; and
- economic and geopolitical conditions in China and elsewhere.

Many of the factors discussed above are beyond our control, making our quarterly results difficult to predict, which could cause the trading price of our ADSs to decline below investor expectations. You should not rely on our operating results for prior periods as an indication of our future results. If our revenues for a particular quarter are lower than expected, we may be unable to reduce our operating expenses for that quarter by a corresponding amount, which would harm our operating results for that quarter relative to our operating results from other quarters.

Table of Contents

Failure to manage our growth could strain our management, operational and other resources, which could materially and adversely affect our business and prospects.

We have been expanding our operations and plan to continue to expand rapidly in China. To meet the demand of advertisers for broader network coverage, we must continue to expand our network by installing more digital television displays on buses and other mass transportation systems and include additional media platforms, such as personal mobile devices and in-building displays. The continued growth of our business has resulted in, and will continue to result in, substantial demand on our management, operational and other resources. In particular, the management of our growth will require, among other things:

- our ability to attract more clients, increase advertising sales and improve our sales support activities;

- increased sales and sales support activities;

- our ability to develop and improve our existing administrative and operational systems;

- information technology system enhancement;

- stringent cost controls and sufficient working capital;

- strengthening of financial and management controls;

- our ability to maintain our existing relationships with our local operating partners and to develop new relationships with local television stations or local mobile digital television companies;

- our ability to secure a reliable supply of digital television displays for our network, which are manufactured by third-party suppliers according to our specifications; and

- hiring and training of new personnel.

As we continue this effort, we may incur substantial costs and expend substantial resources. We may not be able to manage our current or future operations effectively and efficiently or compete effectively in new markets we enter. If we are not able to manage our growth successfully, our business and prospects would be materially and adversely affected.

We depend substantially on the continuing efforts of our executive officers, and our business and prospects may be severely disrupted if we lose their services.

Our future success is dependent on the continued services of key members of our management team. In particular, our future success is dependent upon the continued service of Limin Li, our co-founder, chairman and chief executive officer and our largest shareholder. We rely on his experience in our business operations, and in particular, his business vision, management skills and working relationships with our employees, our other major shareholders, many of our clients and our local operating partners. We have granted share options and/or restricted shares to executive officers to align the interest of such officers with ours. However, we face competition for personnel from other mobile digital television advertising companies or general advertising companies and other organizations. Such competition for these individuals could cause us to offer higher compensation and other benefits in order to attract and retain them, which could materially and adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. Furthermore, as we continue to expand our operations and develop new products, we will need to continue to attract and retain experienced management. We may be unable to attract or retain the personnel required to achieve our business objectives and failure to do so could severely disrupt our business and prospects. The process of hiring qualified personnel is also often lengthy. If our recruitment and retention efforts are unsuccessful in the future, it may be more difficult for us to execute our business strategy.

Table of Contents

We do not maintain key-person insurance for members of our management team. If we lose the services of any senior management, we may not be able to locate suitable or qualified replacements, and may incur additional expenses to recruit and train new personnel, which could severely disrupt our business and prospects. In addition, if any of our executive officers joins a competitor or forms a competing company, our marketing and sales efforts could be adversely affected and we may lose some of our customers. Although each of our executive officers has entered into an employment agreement with us that contains confidentiality and non-competition provisions, disputes may arise between our executive officers and us and we cannot assure you, in light of uncertainties associated with the PRC legal system, that any of these provisions could be enforced in accordance with their terms.

We may not be able to recruit and retain necessary personnel, particularly sales and marketing personnel, which could have material and adverse effects on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Our success depends on our ability to attract and retain senior management, as well as sales, marketing, engineering and other key personnel. Because of intense competition for these employees, we may be unable to attract and retain personnel. If we are unable to retain our existing personnel, or attract, train, integrate or motivate additional qualified personnel, our growth may be restricted. The loss of any of these key employees could slow our programming, distribution and sales efforts or harm the perception of advertisers, venue providers and investors. Our senior executives may have to divert their attention to recruiting replacements for key personnel.

In particular, we depend on our sales and marketing team to sell advertising time. We market our advertising services directly to advertisers, as well as to advertising agencies. As of December 31, 2012, we had 434 dedicated sales and marketing personnel and 4 consultants to support our sales and marketing efforts. We depend on our sales staff to market our services to existing and potential clients and to cover a large number of clients in a wide variety of industries. We need to further increase the size of our sales and marketing staff as our business continues to grow. If we are unable to hire, retain, integrate or motivate our current or new marketing personnel, our sales and marketing efforts may be materially impaired and our business, financial condition and results of operations could be materially and adversely affected.

We may be subject to intellectual property infringement claims, which may force us to incur substantial legal expenses and could potentially result in judgments against us, which may materially disrupt our business.

We cannot be certain that our advertising content, entertainment content or other aspects of our business do not or will not infringe upon patents, copyrights or other intellectual property rights held by third parties. Although we are not aware of any such claims, we may become subject to legal proceedings and claims from time to time relating to the intellectual property of others in the ordinary course of our business. If we are found to have violated the intellectual property rights of others, we may be enjoined from using such intellectual property, and we may incur licensing fees or be forced to develop alternatives. In addition, we may incur substantial expenses in defending against these third party infringement claims, regardless of their merit. Successful infringement or licensing claims against us may result in substantial monetary liabilities, which may materially and adversely disrupt our business.

If we are unable to adapt to evolving advertising trends and preferences of advertisers and viewers, we will not be able to compete effectively.

The market for mobile digital television advertising requires us to continuously identify new advertising trends and the technology needs of advertisers and public viewers, which may require us to develop new features and enhancements for our network. The majority of our displays

use LCD screens. We currently air programs and advertisements on our network through the television broadcasting network of our local operating partners or their affiliated television stations. In the future, subject to relevant PRC laws and regulations, we may use other technologies available in the market. We may be required to incur development and acquisition costs in order to keep pace with new technology needs but we may not have the financial resources necessary to fund and implement future technological innovations or to replace obsolete technology. Furthermore, we may fail to respond to these changing technology needs in a timely fashion. If we cannot succeed in developing and introducing new features on a timely and cost-effective basis, advertisers' demand for our advertising time may decrease and we may not be able to compete effectively or attract advertising clients, which would have a material and adverse effect on our business and prospects.

Table of Contents

We may need additional capital and we may not be able to obtain it at acceptable terms, or at all, which could adversely affect our liquidity and financial position.

We may need additional cash resources due to changed business conditions, acquisitions or other future developments. If these sources are insufficient to satisfy our cash requirements, we may seek to sell additional equity or debt securities or obtain a credit facility. The sale of convertible debt securities or additional equity securities could result in dilution to our shareholders. The incurrence of indebtedness would result in increased debt service obligations and could result in operating and financing covenants that would restrict our operations and liquidity.

Our ability to obtain additional capital on acceptable terms is subject to a variety of uncertainties, including:

- investors' perception of, and demand for, securities of alternative advertising media companies;
- conditions of the U.S. and other capital markets in which we may seek to raise funds;
- our future results of operations, financial condition and cash flow;
- PRC governmental regulation of foreign investment in advertising service companies in China;
- PRC governmental regulation of the mobile digital television industry;
- economic, political and other conditions in China; and
- PRC governmental policies relating to foreign currency borrowings.

We cannot assure you that financing will be available in amounts or on terms acceptable to us, if at all. Any failure by us to raise additional funds on terms favorable to us could have a material adverse effect on our liquidity and financial condition. Without additional capital, we may not be able to:

- upgrade our mobile digital television advertising network;
- further develop or enhance our services;
- acquire necessary technologies or businesses;
- expand our operations, including the reach of our network;
- hire, train and retain employees;
- market our programs, services and products; or
- respond to competitive pressures or unanticipated capital requirements.

Acquisition of other companies or assets of other companies is a part of our growth strategy, and these acquisitions may expose us to significant business and financial risks, including exposure to contingent acquisition consideration, which may adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

One of our strategies is to pursue acquisition opportunities which are complementary to our business. However, we cannot assure you that we will be able to identify and secure suitable acquisition opportunities. Our ability to effectively consummate and integrate effectively any future acquisitions on terms that are favorable to us may be limited by a number of factors such as the number of attractive acquisition targets, internal demand on our resources and, to the extent necessary, our ability to obtain financing on satisfactory terms, if at all, for larger acquisitions.

Table of Contents

Moreover, if an acquisition candidate is identified, we may fail to enter into an acquisition or purchase agreement for such acquisition candidate on commercially reasonable terms, or at all. The negotiation and completion of potential acquisitions, whether or not ultimately consummated, could also require significant diversion of our time and resources and may potentially disrupt our existing business. Furthermore, we cannot assure you that we will be able to successfully integrate our acquisitions into our operations or that the expected synergies from future acquisitions will actually materialize. For example, in connection with the integration of our acquisition of Digital Media Group, we may desire to replace the current shareholders of Beijing Eastlong Advertising Co., Ltd., or Beijing Eastlong Advertising, the consolidated affiliated entity of Digital Media Group, with employees of ours. However, the replacement of the current shareholders of Beijing Eastlong Advertising will require us to obtain the consent of the counterparty to exclusive agency arrangement for the Shanghai subway, and there can be no assurance that we would be able to obtain such consent in a timely manner or at all. In addition, acquisitions could result in the incurrence of additional indebtedness, costs and contingent liabilities. For example, in connection with the acquisitions of the six advertising agency businesses completed by us in China in 2008, we are required to pay additional consideration if the acquired businesses meet specified performance targets in the years from 2008 through 2010. See Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects B. Liquidity and Capital Resources Investing Activities for more details regarding the consideration calculated based on performance targets. In addition, among the total consideration of US\$160.0 million for our acquisition of Digital Media Group, US\$60.0 million will be paid in cash or shares on the first and second anniversaries of the acquisition. See Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects B. Liquidity and Capital Resources Investing Activities for more details. Future acquisitions may also expose us to potential risks, including risks associated with:

- the integration of new operations, services and personnel;
- unforeseen or hidden liabilities;
- the diversion of financial or other resources from our existing businesses and technologies;
- our inability to generate sufficient revenues to recover costs and expenses of the acquisitions; and
- the potential loss of, or harm to, relationships with our employees or customers.

Any of the above risks could significantly disrupt our ability to manage our business and materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Our failure to protect our intellectual property rights could have a negative impact on our business.

We believe our brand and trademarks are critical to our success. The success of our business depends in part upon our continued ability to use our brand and trademarks to increase brand awareness and to further develop our brand. The unauthorized reproduction of our trademarks could diminish the value of our brand and its market acceptance, competitive advantages or goodwill.

Monitoring and preventing the unauthorized use of our intellectual property is difficult. The measures we take to protect our brand and trademarks may not be adequate to prevent their unauthorized use by third parties. Furthermore, application of laws governing intellectual property rights in China and abroad is uncertain and evolving, and could involve substantial risks to us. If we are unable to adequately protect our brand and trademarks, we may lose these rights and our business may suffer materially. Further, unauthorized use of our brand, trade names or trademarks could cause brand confusion among advertisers and harm our reputation. If our brand recognition decreases, we may lose advertisers and fail in our expansion strategies, and our business, results of operations, financial condition and prospects could be materially and adversely affected.

Table of Contents

We rely on computer software and hardware systems in managing our operations, the failure of which could adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations.

We are dependent upon our computer software and hardware systems in supporting our network and managing and monitoring programs on the network. In addition, we rely on our computer hardware for the storage, delivery and transmission of the data on our network. Any system failure which interrupts the input, retrieval and transmission of data or increases the service time could disrupt our normal operation. Any failure in our computer software or hardware systems could decrease our revenues and harm our relationships with advertisers and consumers, which in turn could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

We have limited insurance coverage for our operations in China.

The insurance industry in China is still at an early stage of development. Insurance companies in China offer limited insurance products. We have determined that the risks of disruption or liability from our business, the loss or damage to our fixed assets, including our equipment and office furniture, the cost of insuring for these risks, and the difficulties associated with acquiring such insurance on commercially reasonable terms make it impractical for us to have such insurance. As a result, we do not have any business liability, disruption, litigation or property insurance coverage for our operations in China except for insurance on some company owned vehicles. Any uninsured occurrence of loss or damage to fixed assets, or litigation or business disruption may result in the incurrence of substantial costs and the diversion of resources, which could have an adverse effect on our operating results.

We may become a passive foreign investment company, or PFIC, which could result in adverse U.S. tax consequences to U.S. investors.

Based on our financial statements, relevant market data and the composition of our income and valuation of our assets, including goodwill, we do not believe that we were a passive foreign investment company for 2012, although there can be no assurance in this regard. If, however, we become a passive foreign investment company, such characterization could result in adverse U.S. tax consequences to you if you are a U.S. investor. For example, if we become a PFIC, our U.S. investors will become subject to increased tax liabilities under U.S. tax laws and regulations and will become subject to burdensome reporting requirements.

If we are a PFIC for any taxable year during which a U.S. investor holds our ADSs or common shares, unless the U.S. investor made a mark-to-market election the U.S. investor would be subject to special tax rules with respect to any excess distribution received and any gain realized from a sale or other disposition, including a pledge, of ADSs or common shares. Distributions received in a taxable year that are greater than 125% of the average annual distributions received during the shorter of the three preceding taxable years or a U.S. investor's holding period for the ADSs or common shares will be treated as excess distributions. Under these special tax rules:

- the excess distribution or gain will be allocated ratably over the U.S. investor's holding period for the ADSs or common shares,

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

- the amount allocated to the current taxable year, and any taxable year prior to the first taxable year in which we were a PFIC, will be treated as ordinary income, and
- the amount allocated to each other year will be subject to tax at the highest tax rate in effect for that year and the interest charge generally applicable to underpayments of tax will be imposed on the resulting tax attributable to each such year.

In addition, non-corporate U.S. investors will not be eligible for reduced rates of taxation on any dividends received from us if we are a PFIC in the taxable year in which such dividends are paid or in the preceding taxable year.

Table of Contents

The determination of whether or not we are a PFIC is made on an annual basis and depends on the composition of our income and assets from time to time. Specifically, we will be classified as a PFIC for U.S. tax purposes if either: (i) 75% or more of our gross income in a taxable year is passive income, or (ii) the average percentage of our assets (which include cash) by value (determined on a quarterly average) in a taxable year which produce or are held for the production of passive income (which includes cash) is at least 50%. The calculation of the value of our assets will be based, in part, on the then prevailing market value of our ADSs, which is subject to change. We cannot assure you that we will not be a PFIC for 2013 or any future taxable year. See Item 10. Additional Information E. Taxation Material United States Federal Income Tax Consequences.

We may be, or may be joined as, a defendant in litigation brought against our clients or our local operating partners by third parties, governmental or regulatory authorities, consumers or competitors, which could result in judgments against us and materially disrupt our business.

From time to time, we may be, or may be joined as, a defendant in litigation brought against our clients or our local operating partners by third parties, governmental or regulatory authorities, consumers or competitors. These actions could involve claims alleging, among other things, that:

- advertising claims made with respect to our clients' products or services are false, deceptive or misleading;
- our clients' products are defective or injurious and may be harmful to others; marketing, communications or advertising materials created for our clients infringe on the proprietary rights of third parties; or
- our relationships with our local operating partners violate or interfere with the contractual relationships or rights of third parties.

We are currently involved in litigation against the selling shareholders of Digital Media Group, and in connection with this litigation, we recorded contingent loss of US\$9.4 million as of December 31, 2012 based on our management's current assessment of the possible outcome of this pending litigation. There can be no assurance that we will be successful in defending against any claims in the future. The damages, costs, expenses and attorneys' fees arising from any future claims against us could have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations, financial condition and prospects. In addition, our reputation may be negatively affected by these or any future allegations. Our litigation with the selling shareholders of Digital Media Group is detailed in Item 3. Key information D. Risk Factors Risks Related to Our Corporate Structure

Our ongoing litigation with the former shareholders of Digital Media Group may have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

Risks Related to Our Corporate Structure

If the PRC government determines that the agreements establishing the structure for operating our China business do not comply with applicable PRC laws, rules and regulations, we could be subject to severe penalties including being prohibited from continuing our operations in the PRC.

The PRC government requires any foreign entities that invest in the advertising services industry to have at least two years of direct operations in the advertising industry outside of China. We have not directly operated any advertising business outside of China and therefore, we currently do not qualify under PRC regulations to directly provide advertising services. In addition, the March 2006 Notice prohibits foreign investment in any mobile digital television operating company in China. We are a Cayman Islands corporation and a foreign legal person under Chinese laws. Accordingly, our subsidiary, China Digital Technology (Shenzhen) Co., Ltd., or CDTC, which is a wholly-owned foreign enterprise established by us on March 9, 2006, is currently ineligible to apply for the required licenses to directly provide advertising services in China. CDTC is an intermediate holding company that consolidates the operating results generated by our consolidated affiliated entities in a manner that complies with PRC rules and regulations. It is authorized to engage in businesses such as, but not limited to, technical development and technical consultancy services in connection with digital visual and audio equipment. Our advertising business is currently provided through our contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities in China, which hold the requisite licenses to provide advertising services in China. One of our consolidated affiliated entities, VisionChina Media Group Company Limited, or VisionChina Media Group, is currently owned by Limin Li and Yanqing Liang. We do not have any equity interest in VisionChina Media Group but we receive the economic benefits of it through various contractual arrangements. See Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions. In January 2010, we completed our acquisition of Digital Media Group, which operated and continues to operate, its advertising business through its consolidated affiliated entity in China, Beijing Eastlong Advertising. Beijing Eastlong Advertising is currently owned by Qijun Men and Haifeng Wang. Digital Media Group does not have any equity interest in Beijing Eastlong Advertising, but receives the economic benefits and bear economic risks of it through various contractual arrangements. Our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries directly operate our advertising network, enter into direct investment and exclusive and non-exclusive advertising agency agreements, and sell advertising time to our clients. We have been and expect to continue to be dependent on our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries to operate our advertising business.

Table of Contents

There are substantial uncertainties regarding the interpretation and application of current and future PRC laws, rules and regulations, including but not limited to the laws, rules and regulations governing the validity and enforcement of our contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities. Although we have been advised by our PRC counsel that the structure for operating our business in China (including our corporate structure and contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities and their shareholders) complies with all applicable PRC laws, rules and regulations, and does not violate, breach, contravene or otherwise conflict with any applicable PRC laws, rules or regulations, we cannot assure you that the PRC regulatory authorities will not take a view that is contrary to the above opinion of our PRC counsel, and determine that our corporate structure and contractual arrangements violate PRC laws, rules or regulations. We have been further advised by our PRC counsel that if the PRC government determines that the agreements that establish the structure for operating our PRC advertising businesses do not comply with applicable restrictions on foreign investment in the advertising industry or the mobile digital televisions industry, we may be subject to severe penalties including, among other things, being prohibited from continuing our operations in the PRC.

If we, our consolidated affiliated entities or any of their current or future subsidiaries, our direct investment entities, or our local operating partners are found to be in violation of any existing or future PRC laws or regulations, or fail to obtain or maintain any of the required permits or approvals, the relevant PRC regulatory authorities, including the SAIC and SARFT, would have broad discretion in dealing with such violations, including:

- revoking the business and operating licenses of such entities;
- discontinuing or restricting the conduct of any transactions among our consolidated affiliated entities, our PRC subsidiaries and affiliated entities;
- imposing fines, confiscating the income of our consolidated affiliated entities or our income, or imposing other requirements with which we, our consolidated affiliated entities, our PRC subsidiaries or affiliated entities may not be able to comply;
- shutting down the network of our consolidated affiliated entities;
- requiring us or our PRC subsidiary and affiliated entities to restructure our ownership structure or operations; or

The imposition of any of these penalties could result in a material and adverse effect on our ability to conduct our business and our financial condition and results of operations.

Table of Contents

We rely on contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities in China, and their equity holders, which may not be as effective in providing us with operational control or enabling us to derive economic benefits as through ownership of controlling equity interest.

We have in the past relied, and will continue in the future to rely, on contractual arrangements with VisionChina Media Group, one of our consolidated affiliated entities in China, and its shareholders to operate our advertising business. In January 2010, we completed our acquisition of Digital Media Group, which operated, and will continue to operate, its advertising business through contractual arrangements with Beijing Eastlong Advertising and its equity holders.

These contractual arrangements may not be as effective as ownership of controlling equity interest would be in providing us with control over, or enabling us to derive economic benefits from the operations of, our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries. If we had direct ownership of our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries, we would be able to exercise our rights as a shareholder to (i) effect changes in the board of directors of those entities, which in turn could effect changes, subject to any applicable fiduciary obligations, at the management level, and (ii) derive economic benefits from the operations of our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries by causing our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries to declare and pay dividends. However, under the current contractual arrangements, as a legal matter, if our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries or any of their respective equity holders fails to perform their, his or her respective obligations under these contractual arrangements, we may have to incur substantial costs and resources to enforce such arrangements, and rely on legal remedies under PRC law, including seeking specific performance or injunctive relief, and claiming damages, which we cannot assure you will be effective. For example, if equity holders of VisionChina Media Group were to refuse to transfer their equity interests in VisionChina Media Group to us or our designated persons when we exercise the purchase option pursuant to these contractual arrangements, we may have to take legal action to compel them to fulfill their contractual obligations.

We expect to continue to depend upon our contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities and their subsidiaries and their equity holders to operate our advertising business in China due to the PRC regulatory restrictions on foreign investments in our industry. If (i) the applicable PRC authorities invalidate these contractual arrangements for violation of PRC laws, rules and regulations, (ii) our consolidated affiliated entities or their subsidiaries terminate these contractual arrangements or (iii) our consolidated affiliated entities or their subsidiaries fail to perform their obligations under these contractual arrangements, we would not be able to continue our business operations in China or to derive economic benefits from operations of our consolidated affiliated entities or their subsidiaries, and the value of your ADSs would substantially decrease. Pursuant to the terms of each of (i) the technology and management services agreement entered into on February 15, 2007 between CDTC and VisionChina Media Group, (ii) the domain name license agreement entered into on February 15, 2007 between CDTC and VisionChina Media Group, (iii) the cooperation agreement entered into on February 22, 2005 between Beijing Eastlong Technology and Beijing Eastlong Advertising and (iv) each of the respective loan agreements, equity pledge agreement and option agreements to which CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology, respectively, is party, if CDTC or Beijing Eastlong Technology, as applicable, breaches its representations or warranties or any of the terms of the agreement, then the nondefaulting party, i.e., the relevant consolidated affiliated entity or the shareholders of the relevant consolidated affiliated entity, as applicable, would have the right to terminate the agreement. VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising, however, do not have any substantive kick-out rights available to them under any of the contractual arrangements. Further, if we fail to renew these contractual arrangements upon their expiration, we would not be able to continue our business operations unless the then current PRC law allows us to directly operate advertising businesses in China.

In addition, through an Equity Pledge Agreement, our consolidated entities encumber all or part of their assets with liens. See Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions Agreements that Provide Us Effective Control over VisionChina Media Group, Beijing Eastlong Advertising and Their Respective Subsidiaries. If our consolidated affiliated entities or all or part of their assets become subject to liens or rights of third-party creditors, we may be unable to continue some or all of our business activities, which could severely disrupt our business and cause grave damaging effects on our financial condition and results of operations. If one of our consolidated affiliated entities undergoes a voluntary or involuntary liquidation proceeding, its equity holders or unrelated third-party creditors may claim rights to some or all of the assets of that consolidated affiliated entity, thereby hindering our ability to operate our business or derive economic

benefits from that consolidated affiliated entity and its subsidiaries, which could materially and adversely affect our business, our ability to generate revenues and the market price of your ADSs.

Table of Contents

The contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities are governed by PRC law and provide for the resolution of disputes through either arbitration or litigation in the PRC. Accordingly, these contracts would be interpreted in accordance with PRC law and any disputes would be resolved in accordance with PRC legal procedures. The legal environment in the PRC is not as developed as in some other jurisdictions, such as the United States. As a result, uncertainties in the PRC legal system could limit our ability to enforce these contractual arrangements. In the event we are unable to enforce these contractual arrangements, we may not be able to exercise effective control over our operating entities, and we may be precluded from operating our business, which would have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

If VisionChina Media Group or Beijing Eastlong Advertising fails to honor its obligations under the contractual arrangements with us, our advertising business may be severely and adversely affected.

Chinese laws and regulations prohibit or restrict foreign ownership of media content and advertising business. To comply with these foreign ownership restrictions, we invest in ventures with local television stations and provide advertising services on our out-of-home digital television networks in the PRC through VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising, both PRC legal entities. VisionChina Media Group was established by our co-founders, and Beijing Eastlong Advertising was established by Haifeng Wang and Qiujun Men. The paid-in capital of VisionChina Media Group was funded by us or CDTC through a loan extended to the co-founders. CDTC has entered into certain exclusive agreements with VisionChina Media Group, which obligate us to absorb a majority of the risk of loss from VisionChina Media Group's activities and entitle us to receive a majority of its residual returns. In addition, we, through CDTC, has entered into certain agreements with the two individuals, including a loan agreement for the paid-in capital of VisionChina Media Group described above, an option agreement to acquire the shareholding in VisionChina Media Group when permitted by the PRC laws, and a share pledge agreement for the shares in VisionChina Media Group held by the co-founders. As provided by these agreements, all raised disputes are subject to PRC court proceedings. Similarly, the paid-in capital of Beijing Eastlong Advertising was funded by Beijing Eastlong Technology, which became our wholly owned subsidiary subsequent to our acquisition of Digital Media Group in 2010, through loans extended to its equity holders. Beijing Eastlong Technology Development Co., Ltd., or Beijing Eastlong Technology has entered into certain exclusive agreements with Beijing Eastlong Advertising, which obligate us to absorb a majority of the risk of loss from Beijing Eastlong Advertising's activities and entitle us to receive a majority of its residual returns. In addition, Beijing Eastlong Technology has entered into certain agreements with the two individual equity holders, including a loan agreement for the paid-in capital of Beijing Eastlong Advertising described above and an option agreement to acquire the equity interest in Beijing Eastlong Advertising when permitted by the PRC laws and a share pledge agreement for the shares in Beijing Eastlong Advertising held by Qijun Men and Haifeng Wang. As provided by these agreements, all raised disputes are subject to PRC court proceedings. The major difference between binding arbitration and court proceedings in the PRC is that PRC arbitration judgments are binding, enforceable and may not be appealed, whereas the PRC court judgments are subject to appeal to the People's Court of Appeal. According to the Civil Procedure Laws of the PRC, each party to a dispute in its first trial is entitled to appeal within the statutory time limit, and the court shall hear all appeals once the case is filed in the second instance. Before the appeal is heard, the people's court of the first trial shall serve copies of the appeal petition on the respondent within five days of receiving an appeal petition, and the respondent shall submit its defense in writing within 15 days of receiving such copies of the appeal petition. Failure by the respondent to submit a defense shall not prevent the case from being tried by the people's court. In trying an appealed case against a judgment, the people's court shall make a final judgment within three months of the case being filed in the second instance; in trying an appealed case against an order, the people's court shall make a final order within 30 days of the case being filed in the second instance. See Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions for a detailed description of these contractual arrangements.

Based on these contractual arrangements, we believe that VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising should be each considered as a variable interest entity, or VIE, under FASB ASC 810, *Consolidation*, because the equity investors in VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising do not have the characteristics of a controlling financial interest and we, through CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology, are the primary beneficiary of VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising. We and CDTC hold all the variable interests of VisionChina Media Group, and we and CDTC have been determined to be the most closely associated with VisionChina Media Group. We and Beijing Eastlong Technology hold all the variable interests of Beijing Eastlong Advertising, and we and Beijing Eastlong Technology have been determined to be the most closely associated with Beijing Eastlong Advertising. Therefore, we are the primary beneficiary of both VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising. Accordingly, we consolidate VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising.

Table of Contents

These contractual arrangements enable us to exercise effective control over VisionChina Media Group and its subsidiaries and receive substantially all of the economic benefits of VisionChina Media Group and its subsidiaries for a remaining period of 19 years. If VisionChina Media Group fails to comply with its obligation under the foregoing contractual arrangement, such non-performance may have adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Further, the contractual arrangements enable us to exercise effective control over Beijing Eastlong Advertising and its subsidiaries and receive substantially all of the economic benefits of Beijing Eastlong Advertising and its subsidiaries for a remaining period of 2.2 years. If Beijing Eastlong Advertising fails to comply with its obligation under the foregoing contractual arrangement, such non-performance may have adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

The shareholders of our consolidated affiliated entities may have potential conflicts of interest with us.

The beneficial owners of VisionChina Media Group are also the founders of our company and own a substantial portion of our common shares. Conflicts of interests between their dual roles as beneficial owners of both VisionChina Media Group and our company may arise. The shareholders of Beijing Eastlong Advertising were the founders of Digital Media Group. Their interests may diverge from those of our company, particularly after the completion of our acquisition of Digital Media Group in January 2010.

We cannot assure you that when conflicts of interest arise, any or all of these individuals will act in the best interests of our company or that any conflict of interest will be resolved in our favor. In addition, these individuals may breach or cause the applicable consolidated affiliated entity to breach or refuse to renew the existing contractual arrangements, which will have a material adverse effect on our ability to effectively control that consolidated entity and receive economic benefits from it. If we cannot resolve any conflicts of interest or disputes between us and the equity holders of our consolidated affiliated entities, we would have to rely on legal proceedings, the outcome of which is uncertain and which could be disruptive to our business.

Our ongoing litigation with the former shareholders of Digital Media Group may have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

Our Company and its wholly owned subsidiary, Vision Best Limited, filed a summons with notice in the New York Court on December 27, 2010 against the selling shareholders and former management of Digital Media Group. The summons with notice alleged that the selling shareholders of Digital Media Group (i) engaged in an unlawful scheme to induce us, through false, deceptive, and misleading statements concerning Digital Media Group's financial condition and performance, to pay a grossly inflated price to purchase Digital Media Group in 2010, and (ii) received, or are scheduled to receive, ill-gotten gains from this unlawful scheme. The summons with notice further alleged that we are owed indemnification from an escrow fund, established at the time of the purchase, as a result of breaches of representations and warranties contained in the merger agreement pursuant to which we acquired Digital Media Group (the Merger Agreement). The claims summarized in the summons with notice were set forth in a more detailed complaint we filed on February 2, 2011.

On February 25, 2011, Gobi Partners, Inc., Gobi Fund, Inc., Gobi Fund II, L.P., Oak Investment Partners XII, L.P., and Thomas Gai Tei Tsao (collectively, the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders) filed a countersuit in the New York Court against us. The complaint in that lawsuit alleges that we breached certain agreements related to the Digital Media Group acquisition by (i) declining to make certain installment payments that the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders claim they were entitled to receive and (ii) declining to take steps to facilitate the transfer of shares of our stock that the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders claim to be entitled to receive in connection with the acquisition of Digital Media Group. The Former Digital Media Group Shareholders also seek specific enforcement of the contracts at issue, compensatory damages in an amount to be determined at trial, and permanent and preliminary injunctive relief compelling us to comply with the parties' agreement. We denied the material allegations of the complaint by the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders and asserted a counterclaim for breach of

contract arising from the destruction of Digital Media Group's electronic data prior to delivery to us.

Table of Contents

Also on February 25, 2011 the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders filed motions against us for various relief. They sought to dismiss most of the claims in our complaint as well as our counterclaim based on destruction of Digital Media Group's electronic data. They also sought (i) an order of attachment against us in the amount of \$30 million plus interest, on account of a post-closing payment of that amount which the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders alleged to be due, and (ii) an order directing us to transfer assets into the United States to secure a prospective judgment. The Former Digital Media Group Shareholders also filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to compel us to remove the restrictive legend on the ordinary shares received by the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders in connection with the acquisition of Digital Media Group, and to provide consents or authorizations to convert those shares into freely tradable American Depository Shares.

On November 3, 2011 the New York Court decided the pending motions in the above lawsuits. It granted the motion to dismiss our fraud, unjust enrichment and declaratory judgment claims, as well as our breach of contract claim based on the destruction of Digital Media Group's electronic data. The New York Court denied the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders' motion to dismiss our indemnification claim for not less than US\$2,785,633 but granted their motion to attach our assets in the amount of US\$30.0 million plus interest, as security in the event the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders were successful in their monetary claims against us. The ruling also required the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders to file a US\$500,000 undertaking in the event that it is ultimately determined that they were not entitled to the attachment. Finally, the New York Court denied the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders' request to compel us to release the restrictions on the stock certificates they received, noting that any injury they may have suffered as a result of the alleged failure to release those restrictions would be compensable in monetary damages.

On November 11, 2011 we filed an appeal from the New York Court's orders.

On November 21, 2011 the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders filed a motion for partial summary judgment in the New York Court, seeking a judgment against us of US\$60.0 million plus interest for failure to make US\$60.0 million in post-closing payments claimed to be due for the acquisition of Digital Media Group. They also filed a motion to confirm the order of attachment previously entered in the amount of US\$30.0 million plus interest. No decision has been reached by the New York Court on these pending motions as of April 26, 2012.

On August 13, 2012, the New York State Supreme Court entered an order, or the August 13 Order, directing us and Vision Best Limited, on or before August 21, 2012 to (a) transfer US\$60.0 million in assets readily convertible into U.S. currency into New York State, to be held in the custody of the New York City Sheriff's Office, (b) deposit US\$60.0 million into an escrow account controlled by the Sheriff, or (c) make other arrangements satisfactory to the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders in the litigation for security with respect to the final judgment in that amount. We and Vision Best Limited took prompt steps to comply with the August 13 Order and have arranged for the delivery to the Sheriff of more than US\$3.2 million in cash denominated in or convertible to U.S. dollars that were held by or for us or our subsidiaries outside the PRC. With respect to funds held within the PRC in Renminbi, any transfer to the Sheriff in New York requires approval of the relevant authority of the PRC government, the SAFE. Accordingly, on August 20, 2012, the Company applied to the SAFE for such approval, for the transfer of the balance required under the August 13 Order (an amount equivalent to approximately US\$56.8 million). However, the SAFE denied the application on August 20, 2012.

At same time as taking steps to comply with the August 13 Order to the extent possible, we have also appealed the August 13 Order. We sought a stay of enforcement of the August 13 Order, but that request was denied, first by a single judge of the appellate court on August 17, 2012 and then by a full panel of that court on October 2, 2012. We have perfected the appeal from the August 13 Order.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

On October 21, 2012, Former Digital Media Group Shareholders filed a contempt motion in the New York Court against us and Vision Best for failure to transfer US\$60 million into New York State by August 21, 2012 as directed in the August 13 Order.

On January 7, 2013, the New York Court issued an order of civil contempt against us that we had failed to comply fully with an August 13, 2012 turnover order requiring us to post security in connection with prejudgment orders of attachment totaling US\$60 million. The turnover order required us to pay that amount to the New York City Sheriff or enter into an escrow of the funds in the People's Republic of China or alternative security arrangement acceptable to plaintiffs. Although we arranged to transfer to the Sheriff most of the assets of its subsidiaries located outside the PRC (almost US\$4.5 million), we had advised the judge that it was not able to transfer additional assets held by its PRC subsidiary because of restrictions of the PRC's State Administration of Foreign Exchange (the SAFE).

On February 19, 2013 the New York State Supreme Court entered a modified order (the February 19 Order), adding to the terms of the August 13 Order the alternative provision that we may deposit in escrow, with the Jun He Law Offices as escrow agent, an amount of Chinese currency equivalent to US\$60 million less the amount currently on deposit of approximately US\$4.5 million with the New York City Sheriff's Office, to be held in escrow until a final judgment in this action or a settlement between the parties resolving the action. However, the Jun He Law Offices have informed the New York Court that they were not willing to serve as escrow agent and the Company had been advised that any escrow of funds to be held in China pursuant to an agreement that contemplates the possibility of ultimate transfer of Chinese currency outside of China requires approval of SAFE. The contempt sanction was a fine of US\$250 plus payment of the plaintiffs' attorneys' fees incurred on the contempt application. The plaintiffs' attorneys' fee was estimated to be US\$282,000 and such amount is fully accrued as of December 31, 2012 and included in accrued expenses and other current liabilities (however, as explained below, the amount actually awarded was US\$185,892.31 in plaintiff's attorney's fee in addition to a US\$250 fine, a total of US\$186,142.31). We filed a notice of appeal from that Contempt Order on March 15, 2013.

On May 16, 2013, the New York Court ordered us to pay Former Digital Media Group Shareholders US\$250 fine plus plaintiffs' costs and reasonable attorneys' fees in the amount of US\$185,892.31 within fifteen days. We will also continue to vigorously pursue its appeal to revive its affirmative claims against Gobi Partners and Oak Investment Partners for fraud and other relief. However we are unable to predict the ultimate outcome of the matter. We note that our exposure includes the following possible outcomes:

Table of Contents

(a) the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders might obtain a judgment in the amount of US\$60.0 million plus interest;

(b) the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders might be successful in obtaining (i) an order requiring us to release the restrictive legend on the stock that the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders received in consideration for the acquisition of Digital Media Group or (ii) damages arising out of the failure to remove the restriction;

(c) we might not succeed in recovering on our claim with respect to the indemnity escrow (in which we seek US\$2,785,633), and the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders might succeed in compelling the escrow to be turned over to them; and

Although we continue to claim in the pending litigation in the New York Court, and expect to appeal, that no further consideration should be paid to the Former Digital Media Group Shareholders, the consideration provided for in the Merger Agreement has been fully provided for in the consolidated financial statements. In addition, accrued interest of US\$9,368,145 on the unpaid but challenged post-closing consideration of US\$60.0 million provided for in the Merger Agreement has been recorded and included in accrued expenses and other current liabilities. We have made these provisions because we consider that, unless we succeed on appeal, payment of such amounts is probable based on the November 3, 2011 order of the New York Court. We estimate that the further potential loss that could result from this litigation may be as much as US\$67 million as of date of this annual report, but we consider such potential loss merely possible but not probable due to uncertainty. The litigation is still in progress as of May 29, 2013.

The audit report included in this annual report are prepared by auditors that are not inspected by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board and, as such, our investors are deprived of the benefits of such inspection.

Our independent registered public accounting firm that issues the audit report included in our annual report filed with the SEC, as auditors of companies that are traded publicly in the United States and a firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, or the PCAOB, is required by the laws in the United States to undergo regular inspections by the PCAOB to assess its compliance with the laws in the United States and professional standards. However, because we have substantial operations within the PRC, the PCAOB is currently unable to conduct inspections of the work of our auditors as it relates to those operations without the approval of the Chinese authorities. As a result, our auditors are not currently inspected fully by the PCAOB.

Inspections of other firms that the PCAOB has conducted outside the PRC have identified deficiencies in those firms' audit procedures and quality control procedures, which may be addressed as part of the inspection process to improve future audit quality. This lack of PCAOB inspections in the PRC prevents the PCAOB from regularly evaluating our auditor's audits and its quality control procedures. As a result, investors may be deprived of the benefits of PCAOB inspections.

The inability of the PCAOB to conduct inspections of auditors in the PRC makes it more difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of our auditor's audit procedures or quality control procedures as compared to auditors outside of the PRC that are subject to PCAOB inspections. Investors may lose confidence in our reported financial information and procedures and the quality of our financial statements.

Table of Contents

Our contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities may be subject to scrutiny by the PRC tax authorities and may result in a finding that we owe additional taxes or are ineligible for tax exemption, or both, which could substantially increase our taxes owed and thereby reduce our net income.

Under applicable PRC laws, rules and regulations, arrangements and transactions among related parties may be subject to audits or challenges by the PRC tax authorities. Neither we nor our PRC counsel are able to determine whether any of these transactions will be regarded by the PRC tax authorities as arm's length transactions because, based on our knowledge, the PRC tax authorities have not issued a ruling or interpretation in respect of the type of transaction structure similar to ours. The relevant tax authorities may determine that our contractual relationships with our consolidated affiliate entities and their equity holders were not entered into on an arm's length basis. If any of the transactions between one of our wholly owned subsidiaries in China and a consolidated affiliated entity, and its equity holders, including our contractual relationships with that consolidated affiliated entity, are determined not to have been entered into on an arm's length basis, or are found to result in an impermissible reduction in taxes under PRC law, the PRC tax authorities may adjust the profits and losses of that consolidated affiliated entity and assess more taxes on it. In addition, the PRC tax authorities may impose late payment surcharges and other penalties to that consolidated affiliated entity for underpaid taxes. Our operating results may be materially and adversely affected if the tax liabilities of a consolidated affiliated entity increase or if it is found to be subject to late payment surcharges or other penalties.

We rely principally on dividends and other distributions on equity paid by our wholly-owned operating subsidiaries to fund any cash and financing requirements we may have, and any limitation on the ability of our operating subsidiary to pay dividends to us could have a material adverse effect on our ability to conduct our business.

We are a holding company, and we rely principally on dividends and other distributions on equity paid by our PRC operating subsidiaries for our cash requirements, including the funds necessary to service any debt we may incur. If one of our PRC operating subsidiaries incurs debt on its own behalf in the future, the instruments governing the debt may restrict its ability to pay dividends or make other distributions to us. In addition, the PRC tax authorities may require us to adjust our taxable income under the contractual arrangements our PRC operating subsidiaries currently have in place with our consolidated affiliated entities in a manner that would materially and adversely affect our PRC operating subsidiaries' ability to pay dividends and other distributions to us. Furthermore, relevant PRC laws, rules and regulations permit payments of dividends by our PRC operating subsidiaries only out of their retained earnings, if any, determined in accordance with PRC accounting standards and regulations. Under PRC laws, rules and regulations, our PRC operating subsidiaries are also required to set aside a portion of their net income each year to fund specific reserve funds. These reserves are not distributable as cash dividends.

In addition, the statutory general reserve fund requires annual appropriations of 10% of after-tax income to be set aside prior to payment of dividends until the cumulative fund reaches 50% of the registered capital. The statutory general reserve fund is used to make up for losses and not allowed to be distributed as cash dividends. To the extent it has not complied with these requirements, a company shall be ordered to the statutory reserve fund and may be fined a maximum to RMB 200,000 penalty and shareholders must return the distributed profits to company. As a result of these PRC laws, rules and regulations, our PRC operating subsidiaries are restricted in their ability to transfer a portion of their net assets to us whether in the form of dividends, loans or advances. Any limitation on the ability of our PRC operating subsidiaries to pay dividends to us could materially and adversely limit our ability to grow, make investments or acquisitions that could be beneficial to our businesses, pay dividends or otherwise fund and conduct our business.

Historically, our PRC wholly owned subsidiaries, CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology, did not pay dividends to us. Our management believes that it will be able to pay dividends to us from CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology, but our management does not have any present plan for receiving dividends from our PRC operating subsidiaries including CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology. Currently we plan to use all our retained profits in our PRC subsidiaries and consolidated affiliates, including CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Technology, to reinvest for our future business expansion.

Table of Contents

Risks Related to Doing Business in China

Adverse changes in political and economic policies of the PRC government could have a material adverse effect on the overall economic growth of China, which could reduce the demand for our products and materially and adversely affect our competitive position.

All of our business operations are conducted in China and all of our sales are made in China. Accordingly, our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects are affected significantly by economic, political and legal developments in China. The Chinese economy differs from the economies of most developed countries in many respects, including:

- the degree of government involvement;

- the level of development;

- the growth rate;

- the control of foreign exchange;

- access to financing; and

- the allocation of resources.

While the Chinese economy has grown significantly in the past 30 years, the growth has been uneven, both geographically and among various sectors of the economy. The PRC government has implemented various measures to encourage economic growth and guide the allocation of resources. Some of these measures benefit the overall Chinese economy, but may also have a negative effect on us. For example, our financial condition and results of operations may be materially and adversely affected by government control over capital investments or changes in tax regulations that are applicable to us.

The Chinese economy has been transitioning from a planned economy to a more market-oriented economy. Although the PRC government has in recent years implemented measures emphasizing the utilization of market forces for economic reform, the reduction of state ownership of productive assets and the establishment of sound corporate governance in business enterprises, a substantial portion of the productive assets in China is still owned by the PRC government. The continued control of these assets and other aspects of the national economy by the PRC

government could materially and adversely affect our business. The PRC government also exercises significant control over China's economic growth by allocating resources, controlling payment of foreign currency-denominated obligations, setting monetary policy and providing preferential treatment to particular industries or companies. These actions, as well as future actions and policies of the PRC government, could materially affect our liquidity and access to capital and our ability to operate our business. Substantially all of our assets are located in China and substantially all of our revenues are derived from our operations in China. Accordingly, our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects are subject, to a significant extent, to economic, political and legal developments in China.

Uncertainties with respect to the PRC legal system could limit the protections available to you and us.

The PRC legal system is a civil law system based on written statutes. Unlike in common law systems, prior court decisions may be cited for reference but have limited precedential value. Since 1979, PRC legislation and regulations have significantly enhanced the protections afforded to various forms of foreign investments in China. We conduct all of our business through our subsidiary and consolidated affiliated entities established in China. However, since the PRC legal system continues to rapidly evolve, the interpretations of many laws, regulations and rules are not always uniform and enforcement of these laws, regulations and rules involves uncertainties, which may limit legal protections available to us. For example, we may have to resort to administrative and court proceedings to enforce the legal protection that we enjoy either by law or contract. However, since PRC administrative and court authorities have significant discretion in interpreting and implementing statutory and contractual terms, it may be more difficult than in more developed legal systems to evaluate the outcome of administrative and court proceedings and the level of legal protection we enjoy. These uncertainties may impede our ability to enforce the contracts we have entered into with our business partners, customers and suppliers. In addition, such uncertainties, including the inability to enforce our contracts, could materially and adversely affect our business and operations. Furthermore, intellectual property rights and confidentiality protections in China may not be as effective as in the United States or other countries. Accordingly, we cannot predict the effect of future developments in the PRC legal system, including the promulgation of new laws, changes to existing laws or the interpretation or enforcement thereof, or the preemption of local regulations by national laws. These uncertainties could limit the legal protections available to us and other foreign investors, including you. In addition, any litigation in China may be protracted and result in substantial costs and diversion of our resources and management's attention.

Table of Contents

You may experience difficulties effecting service of legal process, enforcing foreign judgments or bringing original actions in China based on United States or other foreign laws, against us, our management or the experts named in this annual report.

We conduct substantially all of our operations in China and substantially all of our assets are located in China. In addition, all of our senior executive officers, such as our chief executive officer, Limin Li, our chief operating officer, Wei Liu, our chief development officer, Haijun Liu, and our chief financial officer, Yan Wang, reside within China. As a result, it may not be possible to effect service of process within the United States or elsewhere outside China upon us or our senior executive officers, including with respect to matters arising under U.S. federal securities laws or applicable state securities laws. Moreover, our PRC counsel has advised us that the PRC does not have treaties with the United States or many other countries providing for the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of legal judgments.

PRC regulation of loans and direct investment by offshore holding companies to PRC entities may delay or prevent us from making loans or additional capital contributions to our PRC operating subsidiary and affiliates.

As an offshore holding company of our PRC operating subsidiary and consolidated affiliated entities, we may make loans to our PRC subsidiaries and consolidated affiliated entities, or we may make additional capital contributions to our PRC subsidiaries. Any loans to our PRC subsidiaries or consolidated affiliated entities in China are subject to PRC regulations and approvals. For example:

- loans by us to foreign invested enterprises, such as our PRC subsidiaries cannot exceed statutory limits and must be registered with the SAFE, or its local counterparts; and
- loans by us to domestic PRC enterprises, such as our consolidated affiliated entities, must be approved by the relevant government authorities and must also be registered with SAFE or its local counterparts.

We may also decide to finance our PRC operating subsidiaries by means of capital contributions. These capital contributions must be approved by the PRC Ministry of Commerce, or the MOC, or its local counterpart. Because our PRC operating subsidiaries and their subsidiaries are domestic PRC enterprises, we are not likely to finance their activities by means of capital contributions due to regulatory issues relating to foreign investment in domestic PRC enterprises, as well as licensing and other regulatory issues. We cannot assure you that we can obtain these government registrations or approvals on a timely basis, if at all, with respect to future loans or capital contributions by us to our consolidated affiliated entities or any of their subsidiaries. If we fail to receive such registrations or approvals, our ability to capitalize our PRC operations would be negatively affected, which would adversely and materially affect our liquidity and our ability to expand our business.

Table of Contents

PRC regulations relating to offshore investment activities by PRC residents may increase our administrative burden and restrict our overseas and cross-border investment activity. If our shareholders who are PRC residents fail to make any required applications and filings under such regulations, we may be unable to distribute profits and may become subject to liability under PRC laws.

The SAFE issued a public notice in October 2005, or the SAFE notice, requiring PRC residents to register with the local SAFE branch before establishing or controlling any company outside of China for the purpose of capital financing with assets or equities of PRC companies, referred to in the notice as an offshore special purpose company. PRC residents who are shareholders of offshore special purpose companies established before November 1, 2005 were required to register with the local SAFE branch before March 31, 2006. The SAFE notice further requires amendment to the registration in the event of any significant changes with respect to the offshore special purpose company, including an initial public offering by such company. Limin Li and Yanqing Liang, our shareholders who are PRC citizens, have registered with the local SAFE branch as required by the SAFE notice and are required to amend their registration to reflect recent developments of our company and our PRC subsidiary. The failure of our beneficial owners who are PRC citizens to amend their SAFE registrations in a timely fashion pursuant to the SAFE notice or the failure of future beneficial owners of our company who are PRC residents to comply with the registration procedures set forth in the SAFE notice may subject such beneficial owners to fines and legal sanctions and may also limit our ability to contribute additional capital to our PRC subsidiary, limit the ability of our PRC subsidiary to distribute dividends to our company or otherwise materially and adversely affect our business.

On December 25, 2006, the People's Bank of China promulgated the Measure for the Administration of Individual Foreign Exchange, and on January 5, 2007, the SAFE promulgated the implementation rules on those measures. Pursuant to these regulations, PRC citizens who have been granted shares or share options by an overseas listed company according to its employee share option or share incentive plan are required, through a qualified PRC agent which may be the PRC subsidiary of such overseas listed company, to register with the SAFE and complete certain other procedures related to the share option or share incentive plan. Foreign exchange income received from the sale of shares or dividends distributed by the overseas listed company must be remitted into a foreign currency account of such PRC citizen or be exchanged into Renminbi. Our PRC citizen employees, who have been granted share options, or PRC optionees, are subject to these regulations. According to the Regulations on the Foreign Exchange System of the PRC, we or our PRC optionees may be assessed fines of up to RMB300,000 and legal or administrative sanctions for failure to comply with the provisions of the foreign exchange register administration. Our PRC counsel has advised that failure to comply with SAFE registration requirements by some of our PRC optionees would not have a material adverse effect on our business or results of operations.

If any of our PRC affiliates becomes the subject of a bankruptcy or liquidation proceeding, we may lose the ability to use and enjoy those assets, which could reduce the size of our advertising network and materially and adversely affect our business, ability to generate revenues and the market price of our ADSs.

To comply with PRC laws, rules and regulations relating to foreign ownership restrictions in the advertising business, we currently conduct our operations in China through contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities and their equity holders. As part of these arrangements, VisionChina Media Group, Beijing Eastlong Advertising and their subsidiaries hold some of the assets that are important to the operation of our business. If any of these entities becomes bankrupt and all or part of their assets become subject to liens or rights of third-party creditors, we may be unable to continue some or all of our business activities, which could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. If any of our consolidated affiliated entities or any of their subsidiaries undergoes a voluntary or involuntary liquidation proceeding, their shareholders or unrelated third-party creditors may claim rights to some or all of their assets, thereby hindering our ability to operate our business, which could materially and adversely affect our business, our ability to generate revenues and the market price of our ADSs.

Governmental control of currency conversion may affect the value of your investment.

The PRC government imposes controls on the convertibility of the Renminbi into foreign currencies and, in certain cases, the remittance of currency out of China. We receive all our revenues in Renminbi. Under our current corporate structure, our future cash requirements will be primarily satisfied by dividend payments from our PRC subsidiaries. Shortages in the availability of foreign currency may restrict the ability of our PRC subsidiaries to remit sufficient foreign currency to pay dividends or other payments to us, or otherwise satisfy their foreign currency-denominated obligations. Under existing PRC foreign exchange regulations, payments of current account items, including profit distributions and expenditures from trade related transactions, can be made in foreign currencies without prior approval from SAFE by complying with certain procedural requirements. In addition, foreign currencies received under current account items can be retained or sold to financial institutions engaged in the foreign exchange settlement or sales business by complying with relevant regulations. However, approval from SAFE or its local branch is required where Renminbi is to be converted into foreign currency and remitted out of China to pay capital expenses such as the repayment of loans denominated in foreign currencies. Similarly, approval from SAFE or its local branch is required if foreign currencies received in respect of capital account items is to be retained or sold to financial institutions engaged in the foreign exchange settlement or sales business. The PRC government may also, at its discretion, restrict access in the future to foreign currencies for current account transactions. If the foreign exchange control system prevents us from obtaining sufficient foreign currency to satisfy our currency demands, we may not be able to pay dividends in foreign currencies to our shareholders, including holders of our ADSs.

Table of Contents

Fluctuations in exchange rates of the Renminbi could materially affect our reported results of operations.

The exchange rates between the Renminbi and the U.S. dollar, Euro and other foreign currencies are affected by, among other things, changes in China's political and economic conditions. On July 21, 2005, the PRC government changed its decade-old policy of pegging the value of the Renminbi to the U.S. dollar. Under the new policy, the Renminbi is permitted to fluctuate within a narrow and managed band against a basket of foreign currencies. This change in policy has resulted in significant appreciation of the Renminbi against the U.S. dollar. There remains significant international pressure on the PRC government to adopt a more flexible currency policy, which could result in a further and more significant appreciation of the Renminbi against the U.S. dollar.

As we rely on dividends paid to us by our operating subsidiary, any significant revaluation of the Renminbi may have a material adverse effect on our cash flows, revenues, earnings and financial position, and the value of, and dividends payable on, our ADSs in foreign currency terms. To the extent that we need to convert U.S. dollars into Renminbi for our operations, appreciation of the Renminbi against the U.S. dollar would have an adverse effect on the Renminbi amount we would receive from the conversion. Conversely, if we decide to convert our Renminbi into U.S. dollars for the purpose of making payments for dividends on our common shares or ADSs or for other business purposes, appreciation of the U.S. dollar against the Renminbi would have a negative effect on the U.S. dollar amount available to us. In addition, appreciation or depreciation in the value of the Renminbi relative to the U.S. dollar would have a positive or negative effect on our financial results reported in U.S. dollar terms without giving effect to any underlying change in our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Very limited hedging options are available in China to reduce exposure to exchange rate fluctuations. To date, we have not entered into any hedging transactions to reduce our exposure to foreign currency exchange risk. While we may decide to enter into hedging transactions in the future, the availability and effectiveness of these hedges may be limited and we may not be able to successfully hedge our exposure at all. In addition, our currency exchange losses may be aggravated by PRC exchange control regulations that restrict our ability to convert Renminbi into foreign currency.

The discontinuation of any preferential tax treatment currently available to us and the increase in the PRC enterprise income tax could decrease our net income and materially and adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

Our operating subsidiary and consolidated affiliates are incorporated in the PRC and are governed by applicable PRC income tax laws and regulations. The PRC Enterprise Income Tax Law, or the EIT Law, became effective on January 1, 2008. The implementation regulations under the EIT Law issued by the PRC State Council became effective January 1, 2008. Under the EIT Law and the implementation regulations, the PRC has adopted a uniform tax rate of 25% for all enterprises (including foreign-invested enterprises) and revoked the previous tax exemption, reduction and preferential treatments applicable to foreign-invested enterprises. However, there is a transition period for enterprises, whether foreign-invested or domestic, that received preferential tax treatments granted by relevant tax authorities prior to January 1, 2008. Enterprises that were subject to an enterprise income tax rate lower than 25% prior to January 1, 2008 may continue to enjoy the lower rate and gradually transition to the new tax rate within five years after the effective date of the EIT Law.

Table of Contents

Before the EIT Law and its implementation regulations became effective on January 1, 2008, as an enterprise located in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zones in the PRC, CDTC and VisionChina Media Group were allowed to enjoy a preferential tax rate of 15%, and pursuant to the requirement of the EIT Law, continue to enjoy the lower rate and gradually transition to the new tax rate within five years from 2008 to 2012. VisionChina Media Group's sales branches located in various cities in the PRC are subject to enterprise income tax at standard rate of 25% under the EIT Law. Furthermore, in November 2008, VisionChina Media Group was recognized as a new and high technology enterprises strongly supported by the state and is entitled to a preferential tax rate of 15% for 2009 and 2010. In October 2011, VisionChina Media Group obtained the approval from the government authorities to be recognized as a state-encouraged high-new technology enterprise in 2011, 2012 and 2013, and is entitled to a preferential tax rate of 15% in these three years, subject to tax authority approval at the end of each year. In accordance with a circular issued in December 2010, Beijing Eastlong Technology has been recognized as a state-encouraged high-new technology enterprise starting from 2010, and the status is valid for a period of three years. As such the EIT rate for Beijing Eastlong Technology is 15% in each of the years of 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. Furthermore, one of our operating consolidated affiliated entities in Luzhou in Sichuan province was recognized as a local government encouraged company and is entitled to exemption from the enterprise income tax for 2008 and 2009 and reduced tax rate of 7.5%, 7.5% and 12.5% in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Notwithstanding the standard statutory tax rate of 25%, in 2011, under the direction of the relevant in-charge tax authority, one of our operating consolidated affiliated entities, Jiangxi Huashi Media Advertising Co., Ltd., or Jiangxi Huashi, applied a deemed-profit-rate method for its annual tax filings in 2011. Pursuant to the deemed-profit-rate method, taxable income for Jiangxi Huashi was deemed at 16% of revenues. An additional amount of US\$0.4 million would otherwise have been payable if deemed-profit-rate method is not allowed for the year ended December 31, 2012. However, we cannot assure you that our PRC operating subsidiary and consolidated affiliated entities will continue to receive preferential tax treatments in the future. Any further legislative changes to the tax laws and or regulations could in future years by applicable authorities and become subject our PRC operating subsidiary and consolidated affiliated entities to increased income tax rates. Any increase in the enterprise income tax rate applicable to our operating subsidiary and consolidated affiliated entities in the PRC would decrease our net income and materially and adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

Dividends we receive from our subsidiary located in the PRC may be subject to PRC withholding tax.

The EIT Law provides that a maximum income tax rate of 20% may be applicable to dividends payable to non-PRC investors that are non-resident enterprises, to the extent such dividends are derived from sources within the PRC, and the State Council of the PRC has reduced such rate to 10% through the implementation regulations. We are a Cayman Islands holding company and substantially all of our income may be derived from dividends we receive from our subsidiary located in the PRC. Thus, dividends paid to us by our subsidiary in China may be subject to the 10% income tax if we are considered as a non-resident enterprise under the EIT Law. If we are required under the EIT Law to pay income tax for any dividends we receive from our subsidiary in China, it will materially and adversely affect the amount of dividends, if any, we may pay to our shareholders and ADS holders.

In addition, we conduct advertising business through our contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities, which are currently owned by individuals. We must pay taxes at the individual income tax of 20% on behalf of our employees who hold interests in a consolidated affiliated entity when that consolidated affiliated entity distributes dividends in the future. Furthermore, there may be potential business taxes arising from the contractual arrangements with our consolidated affiliated entities. If we cannot retrieve the undistributed earnings in our consolidated affiliated entities in a tax free manner, we may need to pay additional taxes upon distribution of such undistributed earnings.

We may be deemed a PRC resident enterprise under the EIT Law and be subject to PRC taxation on our worldwide income.

The EIT Law provides that enterprises established outside of China whose de facto management bodies are located in China are considered resident enterprises and are generally subject to the uniform 25% enterprise income tax rate as to their worldwide income. Under the implementation regulations for the EIT Law issued by the PRC State Council, de facto management body is defined as a body that has material

and overall management and control over the manufacturing and business operations, personnel and human resources, finances and treasury, and acquisition and disposition of properties and other assets of an enterprise.

Table of Contents

Also, on April 22, 2009, the State Administration of Tax (SAT) issued a Tax Circular, *Guoshuifa [2009] No. 82, Notice on the Recognition of Overseas Incorporated Domestically Controlled Enterprises as PRC Resident Enterprises Based on the Place of Effective Management Criteria*, or Circular 82, with retrospective effect from 1 January 2008. According to Circular 82, any enterprise established under the law of a country or region other than the PRC but whose main investor is a PRC enterprise or Group shall be recognized as a resident enterprise for PRC tax purposes if all the following criteria are met: (i) the senior executives responsible for its daily production or business operations and the place where such responsibilities are carried out are mainly located in China; (ii) decisions about its finances (such as borrowing, lending, financing and managing financial risk) and human resources (such as staff recruitment, termination, and remuneration policies) are made or approved by organizations or individuals located in China; (iii) its major properties, accounting books and records, company seal, board minutes and resolutions, shareholders meeting minutes, etc. are kept in China; and (iv) 50% or more of its voting directors or its senior executives habitually reside in China. The principle of substance over form applies when determining the place of effective management. Although Circular 82 was issued to regulate the PRC tax resident judgment of companies established overseas and controlled by PRC companies, which is not applicable in our case, the criteria in Circular 82 should be used as a reference to the SAT's view on this issue.

Our board of directors holds regular meetings and makes most of the significant operational, investment, financing and human resources decisions outside of the PRC. In addition, our senior management regularly spends time outside of the PRC developing and managing investor relations. As such, we believe that the de facto management body of the Company is located outside of the PRC, and, accordingly, we believe the risk of being recognized as a PRC resident enterprise under the EIT Law is low. If we are treated as a resident enterprise for PRC tax purposes, we will be subject to PRC tax on our worldwide income at the 25% uniform tax rate, which could have an impact on our effective tax rate and an adverse effect on our results of operations.

For the year ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, our legal entities organized outside of the PRC incurred losses. Therefore, even if our legal entities organized outside of the PRC are treated as PRC residents for purpose of the new EIT law, our management believes there was no material impact on our results of operations.

Dividends payable by us to our foreign investors and gain on the sale of our ADSs or common shares may become subject to taxes under PRC tax laws.

Under the EIT Law and implementation regulations issued by the State Council, PRC income tax at the rate of 10% is applicable to dividends payable to investors that are non-resident enterprises which do not have an establishment or place of business in the PRC, or which have such establishment or place of business but the relevant income is not effectively connected with the establishment or place of business, to the extent that such dividends have their sources within the PRC. Similarly, any gain realized on the transfer of ADSs or shares by such investors is also subject to 10% PRC income tax if such gain is regarded as income derived from sources within the PRC. If we are considered a PRC resident enterprise, it is unclear whether dividends we pay with respect to our common shares or ADSs, or the gain you may realize from the transfer of our common shares or ADSs, would be treated as income derived from sources within the PRC and be subject to PRC tax. If we are required under the EIT Law to withhold PRC income tax on dividends payable to our non-PRC investors that are non-resident enterprises, or if you are required to pay PRC income tax on the transfer of our common shares or ADSs, the value of your investment in common shares or ADSs may be materially and adversely affected.

We face risks related to natural disasters, health epidemics, terrorist attacks or other events in China that may affect usage of public transportation, which could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Our business could be materially and adversely affected by natural disasters, the outbreak of health epidemics, terrorist attacks or other events in China. For example, in early 2008, parts of China suffered a wave of strong snow storms that severely impacted public transportation systems. In May 2008, Sichuan Province in China suffered a strong earthquake measuring approximately 8.0 on the Richter scale that caused widespread damage and casualties. In addition, in the last decade, the PRC has suffered health epidemics related to the outbreak of avian influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome. In July 2008, explosive devices were detonated on several buses in Kunming, Yunnan Province of China, which resulted in disruptions to public transportation systems in Kunming and casualties. Any future natural disasters, health epidemics, terrorist attacks or other events in the PRC could cause a reduction in usage of, or other severe disruptions to, public transportation systems and could have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

Table of Contents

The implementation of the PRC Labor Contract Law may significantly increase our operating expenses and adversely affect our business and results of operations.

On June 29, 2007, the PRC National People's Congress enacted the Labor Contract Law, which became effective on January 1, 2008. The Labor Contract Law formalizes workers' rights concerning overtime hours, pensions, layoffs, employment contracts and the role of trade unions and provides for specific standards and procedure for the termination of an employment contract. In addition, the Labor Contract Law requires the payment of a statutory severance pay upon the termination of an employment contract in most cases, including in cases of the expiration of a fixed-term employment contract. As there has been little guidance as to how the Labor Contract Law will be interpreted and enforced by the relevant PRC authorities, there remains substantial uncertainty as to its potential impact on our business and results of operations. The implementation of the Labor Contract Law may significantly increase our operating expenses, in particular our personnel expenses, as the continued success of our business depends significantly on our ability to attract and retain qualified personnel. In the event that we decide to terminate some of our employees or otherwise change our employment or labor practices, the Labor Contract Law may also limit our ability to effect these changes in a manner that we believe to be cost-effective or desirable, which could adversely affect our business and results of operations.

Risks Related to Our Common Shares and ADSs

The market price for our ADSs may be volatile which could result in a loss to you.

The market price for our ADSs is likely to be highly volatile and subject to wide fluctuations in response to a number of factors, including:

- actual or anticipated fluctuations in our quarterly operating results;
- regulatory developments in China affecting us, our industry, our corporate structure or our advertisers;
- announcements of competitive developments;
- announcements regarding litigation or administrative proceedings involving us;
- changes in financial estimates by securities research analysts;

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

- changes in the economic performance or market valuations of companies with comparable businesses;
- addition or departure of our executive officers;
- release or expiry of lock-up or other transfer restrictions on our outstanding common shares or ADSs; and
- sales or perceived sales of additional common shares or ADSs.

In addition, the securities market has from time to time experienced significant price and volume fluctuations that are not related to the operating performance of particular companies. These market fluctuations may also have a material adverse effect on the market price of our ADSs.

Table of Contents

Substantial future sales or perceived sales of our ADSs in the public market could cause the price of our ADSs to decline.

Sales of our ADSs or common shares in the public market, or the perception that these sales could occur, could cause the market price of our ADSs to decline. As of December 31, 2012, we had 101,366,544 common shares outstanding, including 63,790,365 common shares represented by 3,189,518 ADSs. Sales of our common shares or ADSs held by our significant shareholders or any other shareholder, or the availability of these securities for future sale, may have a negative effect on the market price of our ADSs.

In addition, certain of our shareholders or their transferees and assignees have the right to cause us to register the sale of their shares under the Securities Act upon the occurrence of certain circumstances. Registration of these shares under the Securities Act would result in these shares becoming freely tradable without restriction under the Securities Act immediately upon the effectiveness of the registration. Sales of these registered shares in the public market could cause the price of our ADSs to decline.

Anti-takeover provisions in our charter documents may discourage acquisition of our company by a third party, which could limit our shareholders' opportunity to sell their shares at a premium.

Our amended and restated memorandum and articles of association include provisions that could limit the ability of others to acquire control of our company, modify our structure or cause us to engage in change-of-control transactions. These provisions could have the effect of depriving our shareholders of an opportunity to sell their shares at a premium over prevailing market prices by discouraging third parties from seeking to obtain control of our company in a tender offer or similar transaction.

For example, our board of directors has the authority, without further action by our shareholders, to issue preferred shares in one or more series and to fix the powers and rights of these shares, including dividend rights, conversion rights, voting rights, terms of redemption and liquidation preferences, any or all of which may be greater than the rights associated with our common shares. Preferred shares could thus be issued quickly with terms calculated to delay or prevent a change in control or make removal of management more difficult. In addition, if our board of directors issues preferred shares, the market price of our common shares may fall and the voting and other rights of the holders of our common shares may be adversely affected.

We are a Cayman Islands company and, because judicial precedent regarding the rights of shareholders is more limited under Cayman Islands law than under U.S. law, you may have less protection of your shareholder rights than you would under U.S. law.

Our corporate affairs are governed by our amended and restated memorandum and articles of association, the Cayman Islands Companies Law (as amended) and the common law of the Cayman Islands. The rights of shareholders to take action against the directors, actions by minority shareholders and the fiduciary responsibilities of our directors to us under Cayman Islands law are to a large extent governed by the common law of the Cayman Islands. The common law of the Cayman Islands is derived in part from comparatively limited judicial precedent in the Cayman Islands as well as from English common law, which has persuasive, but not binding, authority on a court in the Cayman Islands. The rights of our shareholders and the fiduciary responsibilities of our directors under Cayman Islands law are not as clearly established as they would be under statutes or judicial precedent in some jurisdictions in the United States. In particular, the Cayman Islands has a less developed body of securities laws than the United States. In addition, some U.S. states, such as Delaware, have more fully developed and judicially interpreted bodies of corporate law than the Cayman Islands. Furthermore, Cayman Islands companies may not have standing to initiate a

shareholder derivative action in a federal court of the United States. As a result, public shareholders may have more difficulties in protecting their interests in the face of actions taken by management, members of the board of directors or controlling shareholders than they would as shareholders of a Delaware company.

Table of Contents

Judgments obtained against us by our shareholders may not be enforceable.

We are a Cayman Islands company and substantially all of our assets are located outside of the United States. All of our current operations are conducted in the PRC. In addition, most of our directors and officers are nationals and residents of countries other than the United States. A substantial portion of the assets of these persons are located outside the United States. As a result, it may be difficult for you to effect service of process within the United States upon these persons. It may also be difficult for you to enforce in U.S. courts judgments obtained in U.S. courts based on the civil liability provisions of the U.S. federal securities laws against us or our officers and directors, most of whom are not residents of the United States and a substantial portion of whose assets are located outside of the United States. Moreover, there is uncertainty as to whether the courts of the Cayman Islands or the PRC would recognize or enforce judgments of United States courts against us or our directors and officers predicated upon the civil liability provisions of the securities laws of the United States or any state in the United States. In addition, there is uncertainty as to whether Cayman Islands or PRC courts would be competent to hear original actions brought in the Cayman Islands or the PRC against us or such persons predicated upon the securities laws of the United States or any state in the United States.

Holders of ADSs have fewer rights than shareholders and must act through the depository to exercise their rights.

Holders of our ADSs do not have the same rights as our shareholders and may only exercise voting rights with respect to the underlying common shares in accordance with the provisions of the deposit agreement. Under our third amended and restated memorandum and articles of association, the minimum notice period required to convene a general meeting is seven days. When a general meeting is convened, you may not receive sufficient notice of a shareholders' meeting to permit you to withdraw your common shares and allow you to cast your vote with respect to any specific matter. In addition, the depository and its agents may not be able to send voting instructions to you or carry out your voting instructions in a timely manner. We will make all reasonable efforts to cause the depository to extend voting rights to you in a timely manner, but we cannot assure you that you will receive the voting materials in time to ensure that you can instruct the depository to vote your ADSs. Furthermore, the depository and its agents will not be responsible for any failure to carry out any instructions to vote, for the manner in which any vote is cast or for the effect of any such vote. As a result, you may not be able to exercise your right to vote and you may lack recourse if your ADSs are not voted as you requested. In addition, in your capacity as an ADS holder, you will not be able to call a shareholders' meeting.

The depository for our ADSs will give us a discretionary proxy to vote our common shares underlying your ADSs if you do not vote at shareholders' meetings, except in limited circumstances, which could adversely affect your interests.

Under the deposit agreement for the ADSs, the depository will give us a discretionary proxy to vote our common shares underlying your ADSs at shareholders' meetings if you do not vote, unless:

- we have failed to provide the depository with our notice of meeting and related voting materials in a timely fashion;
- we have instructed the depository that we do not wish a discretionary proxy to be given;

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

- we have informed the depositary that there is substantial opposition to a matter to be voted on at the meeting; or
- a matter to be voted on at the meeting would have a material adverse impact on shareholders.

The effect of this discretionary proxy is that you cannot prevent our common shares underlying your ADSs from being voted, absent the situations described above, and it may make it more difficult for shareholders to influence the management of our company. Holders of our common shares are not subject to this discretionary proxy.

Table of Contents

You may be subject to limitations on transfers of your ADSs.

Your ADSs are transferable on the books of the depository. However, the depository may close its transfer books at any time, or from time to time, when it deems appropriate in connection with the performance of its duties. In addition, the depository may refuse to deliver, transfer or register transfers of ADSs generally when our books or the books of the depository are closed, or at any time if we or the depository deems it advisable to do so because of any requirement of law or of any government or governmental body, or under any provision of the deposit agreement or for any other reason.

Your right to participate in any future rights offerings may be limited, which may cause dilution to your holdings and you may not receive cash dividends if it is impractical to make them available to you.

We may from time to time distribute rights to our shareholders, including rights to acquire our securities. However, we cannot make rights available to you in the United States unless we register the rights and the securities to which they relate under the Securities Act or an exemption from the registration requirements is available. Also, under the deposit agreement, the depository will not make rights available to you unless either the rights and any related securities are both registered under the Securities Act, or the distribution of them to ADS holders is exempted from registration under the Securities Act. We are under no obligation to file a registration statement with respect to any such rights or securities or to endeavor to cause such a registration statement to be declared effective. Moreover, we may not be able to establish an exemption from registration under the Securities Act. Accordingly, you may be unable to participate in our rights offerings and may experience dilution in your holdings.

In addition, the depository of our ADSs has agreed to pay to you the cash dividends or other distributions it or the custodian receives on our common shares or other deposited securities after deducting its fees and expenses. You will receive these distributions in proportion to the number of common shares your ADSs represent. However, the depository may, at its discretion, decide that it is impractical to make a distribution available to any holders of ADSs. For example, the depository may determine that it is not practicable to distribute certain property through the mail, or that the value of certain distributions may be less than the cost of mailing them. In these cases, the depository may decide not to distribute such property and you will not receive such distribution.

ITEM 4. INFORMATION ON THE COMPANY

A. History and Development of the Company

We commenced operations through China Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd., a limited liability company established in China on April 8, 2005. In September 2008, we changed the name of China Digital Mobile Television Co., Ltd. to VisionChina Media Group. VisionChina Media Group is currently 70% owned by Limin Li, our co-founder, chairman of our board of directors and our chief executive officer, and 30% owned by Yanqing Liang, our co-founder. Both Limin Li and Yanqing Liang are PRC citizens. VisionChina Media Group and its subsidiaries hold the licenses and permits necessary to operate our businesses and provide our advertising services in China.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Our company was incorporated as CDMTV Holding Company in the Cayman Islands on January 27, 2006 on behalf of our co-founders, Limin Li and Yanqing Liang. On August 13, 2007, we changed our company's name to VisionChina Media Inc. On March 9, 2006, we established our wholly owned subsidiary, CDTC, in Shenzhen.

On December 6, 2007, our ADSs were listed on the Nasdaq Global Market.

We purchased all of the outstanding equity interests of six British Virgin Islands companies from sellers of them pursuant to share subscription agreements entered into in April, May and August 2008 in connection with our acquisition of certain advertising agency businesses in China.

Table of Contents

In August 2008, we completed a follow-on public offering, in which we sold 1,150,000 newly issued common shares, in the form of ADSs, at a price of US\$16.00 per ADS and received gross proceeds of US\$17.6 million from this follow-on offering.

In October 2009, we entered into an agreement (which was amended and restated in November 2009) to acquire Digital Media Group, which was completed in January 2010. The total consideration of US\$160 million (or US\$167 million based on the fair value of the total consideration on the acquisition date in January 2010) is payable in three installments over two years in cash and shares. In November 2009, we deposited the initial installment of US\$40 million and 8,476,013 of our common shares, registered under Vision Best Limited, our consolidated subsidiary, into an escrow account, a portion of which was released at the completion of the acquisition and the remaining portion to be released in accordance with the terms of the agreement and plan relating to our acquisition of Digital Media Group. The second installment of US\$30 million should be paid on the first anniversaries of the acquisition, of which US\$20 million will be in the form of cash and US\$10 million in the form of cash or shares at the option of the eligible former shareholders of Digital Media Group. The number of our ordinary shares representing the share consideration of the second installment shall be equal to the quotient of US\$10 million divided by the higher of (A) 125% of US\$7.0788, or the Initial Conversion Price, and (B) 80% of the average of the closing sales prices for one ADS as reported on the Nasdaq Global Market for the twenty consecutive trading days ending (and including) two day prior to the payment date. The third installment of US\$30 million should be paid on the second anniversaries of the acquisition, of which US\$20 million will be in the form of cash and US\$10 million in cash or shares at the option of the eligible former shareholders of Digital Media Group. The number of our ordinary shares representing the share consideration of the third installment shall be equal to the quotient of US\$10 million divided by the higher of (A) 150% of the Initial Conversion Price and (B) 80% of the average of the closing sales prices for one ADS as reported on the Nasdaq Global Market for the twenty consecutive trading days ending (and including) one day prior to the payment date. The second and third installments totaling US\$60 million remain unpaid as of April 26, 2012 as a result of our lawsuit against the selling shareholders of Digital Media Group.

In July 2010, following a definitive agreement entered into between our company and our certain existing shareholders and employees dated June 25, 2010, we issued an aggregate of 4,006,474 common shares at a subscription price of US\$3.22 per share, equivalent to US\$3.22 per ADS, to these shareholders and employees. We received net proceeds of US\$12.9 million from this share issuance transaction.

On December 30, 2010, in order to offer integrated media solutions and greater media value to advertisers, we entered into a securities purchase agreement with Focus Media Holding Limited, or Focus Media, China's largest lifestyle community digital out-of-home media company; Front Lead Investments Limited, or Front Lead; and JJ Media Investment Holding Limited, or JJ Media. Pursuant to this agreement, Focus Media, Front Lead and JJ Media purchased 15,331,305, 1,022,087 and 1,022,087, respectively, of newly issued common shares of the Company at a price of US\$3.979 per share, equivalent to US\$3.979 per ADS. Upon the consummation of these transactions, Front Lead and Focus Media owned approximately 17.2% and 15%, respectively, of our outstanding common shares. In connection with these transactions, we also entered into a shareholders agreement and a registration rights agreement with Front Lead, Focus Media and JJ Media on January 13, 2011. We received net proceeds of US\$69.0 million from these transactions.

Pursuant to the securities purchase agreement, each of Focus Media, Front Lead and JJ Media agreed to a lock-up period of 365 days from the date they purchased our newly issued common shares with respect to all transactions other than those in which a majority of our Company is being acquired. Furthermore, Focus Media and JJ Media each agreed to a standstill period ranging from two to three years from the date they purchased our newly issued common shares, during which they will not acquire or offer to acquire any additional voting securities of our Company or assist or participate in efforts by any other party to do so. These restrictions do not apply to transactions made by Focus Media pursuant to its gross-up rights provided by the securities purchase agreement. Such gross-up rights are valid for five years from the date of the securities purchase agreement and give Focus Media the opportunity to acquire securities offered by us in any nonpublic offering or sale of any security that is convertible into equity in order to maintain its proportionate interest in our company.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

Under the registration rights agreement, we will file with the SEC a shelf registration statement within 18 months of the purchase of our securities by Focus Media, Front Lead and JJ Media. All expenses incurred in connection with a subsequent sale of registered shares which requires any further filings are to be borne by the holders of such shares. Under the shareholders agreement, Focus Media has the right to nominate one candidate for election to our Board so long as it owns at least 5% of our outstanding common shares. The shareholders agreement also establishes rights of first offer between Focus Media, Front Lead and JJ Media in which existing shareholders seeking to transfer their shares must first make an offer of such shares to other existing shareholders.

Table of Contents

Due to PRC regulatory restrictions on foreign investments in the advertising and mobile digital television industries, we operate our advertising business in China through VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising. While we do not have any equity interests in the operating entities in China, our relationships with VisionChina Media Group, Beijing Eastlong Advertising and their respective equity holders are governed by a series of contractual arrangements that allow us to effectively control and derive economic benefits from both VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising (for the contractual arrangements See Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions Agreements that Provide Us Effective Control over VisionChina Media Group, Beijing Eastlong Advertising and Their Respective Subsidiaries on pages 98 and 99). Accordingly, we treat VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising as variable interest entities and have consolidated their historical financial results in our financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP. All our revenues are derived from VisionChina Media Group for the year ended December 31, 2009. After we completed the acquisition of Digital Media Group in January 2010, Beijing Eastlong Advertising became our consolidated variable interest entity, and substantially all our revenues for the years ended December 31, 2010 and 2011 are derived from VisionChina Media Group and Beijing Eastlong Advertising. Our assets and those of our subsidiaries mainly include cash, accounts receivables, plant and equipment, intangible assets, investment in consolidated variable interest entities and investments under cost method. The revenues generated by us and our subsidiaries, apart from revenues earned in respect of the relevant contractual arrangements to which CDTC and Beijing Eastlong Advertising are parties, are primarily derived from (1) sales of Passenger Information and Direction Systems, which display information about the subway trains and advertising, to various subway companies in the PRC; (2) sales of equipment used for mobile digital television systems on mass transit systems; and (3) advertising revenue on advertising platforms located outside of the PRC. In the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, we and our subsidiaries (excluding operations that are subject to involvement with the consolidated affiliated entities) contributed in aggregate approximately 0.5%, 1.7% and 0.7%, respectively, of our total consolidated net revenues derived from third parties and non-consolidated affiliates. As of December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, we and our subsidiaries accounted for an aggregate of 34.3%, 19.8% and 20.4%, respectively, of our total assets (excluding for the purpose of this calculation assets that are subject to involvement with the consolidated affiliated entities).

Other than the above contractual arrangements, our company or CDTC does not have any business relationships with the equity holders of VisionChina Media Group, and our company or Beijing Eastlong Technology does not have any business relationships with the equity holders of Beijing Eastlong Advertising.

The nominee shareholders of our consolidated affiliated entities are Limin Li, Yangqing Yang, Qijun Men and Haifeng Wang. The business relationship between us and Limin Li and his affiliates is set forth in Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions Transactions with Affiliated Companies of Limin Li. Neither Yangqing Liang nor her affiliated companies have any business relationship with us. Qijun Men and Haifeng Wang are individual shareholders of Beijing Eastlong Advertising. Qijun Men and Haifeng Wang are not shareholders of VisionChina and do not have any business relationship or transactions with us.

Our principal executive offices are located at 1/F Block No. 7, Champs Elysees, Nongyuan Road, Futian District, Shenzhen 518040, People's Republic of China. Our telephone number at this address is (86 755) 8293-2222 and our fax number is (86 755) 8298-1111. Our registered office in the Cayman Islands is located at the offices of Maples Corporate Services Limited, P.O Box 309, Ugland House, South Church Street, George Town, Grand Cayman KY1-1104, Cayman Islands, British West Indies. Our principal website is www.visionchina.cn. The information contained on our website is not a part of this annual report.

Principal Capital Expenditures

We had capital expenditures of US\$3.6 million, US\$2.3 million and US\$1.8 million for the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively. Our capital expenditures were made primarily to acquire digital television displays and related equipment for our network and to upgrade our accounting software and systems. The digital television displays we acquired have an estimated useful life of five years. As of December 31, 2012, the estimated average remaining useful life of our digital television displays is approximately 1.8 years. We believe our

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

existing digital television displays, with cost value of US\$12.3 million as of December 31, 2012, will not become technologically obsolete before the end of their respective useful lives. Therefore we do not expect significant capital expenditure for replacement of digital television displays in 2013. Our capital expenditures are primarily funded by proceeds from issuance of our common shares and proceeds from bank loans for the years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012. We expect our capital expenditures in 2013 to primarily consist of purchases of digital television displays and related equipment as we continue to expand our mobile digital television advertising network and in preparation of replacing our digital television displays. We believe that we will be able to fund these upgrades and equipment purchases through our internal cash, and do not anticipate that these obligations will have a material impact on our liquidity needs.

Table of Contents

In connection with the required compliance with the National Standard, we may need to incur additional capital expenditures in order to upgrade the mobile digital television receivers, and we believe that these capital expenditures would not materially affect our liquidity.

B. Business Overview

Overview

We believe that we operate the largest out-of-home advertising network using real-time mobile digital television broadcasts to deliver content and advertising on mass transportation systems in China based on the number of displays. Due to PRC regulatory restrictions on foreign investments in the advertising and mobile digital television industries, we operate our advertising business in China through our consolidated affiliated entities. Our relationships with our consolidated affiliated entities and their shareholders are governed by a series of contractual arrangements that allow us to effectively control, and derive substantially all of the economic benefits from, our consolidated affiliated entities. Our mobile digital television advertising network, or our network, which delivers real-time content provided by the local television stations in addition to advertising, differentiates us from other out-of-home advertising networks in China, and we believe this facilitates our future expansion into different advertising media platforms. Our advertising network consists of digital television displays located on buses and in subway trains and subway platforms that receive mobile digital television broadcasts of real-time content and advertising. We also operate various closed-circuit advertising digital displays in certain subway platforms and subway trains in Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Tianjin. As of December 31, 2012, our network and supplemental subway advertising platform covered 19 cities in China and consisted of approximately 108,567 digital displays. In addition, we have expanded the geographic reach of our advertising operations by purchasing advertising time on existing mobile digital television networks in cities outside of our network to place advertisements pursuant to the demands of our clients. According to the public announcements released by subway companies and local governments, we expect there will be 69 new subway lines commencing operation in 24 cities throughout the PRC during 2010 to 2014.

We believe that our network delivers substantial value to our advertising clients by reaching the targeted mobile audience in an enclosed environment conducive to capturing their attention. We also believe that the combination of our advertising content along with real-time news and stock quotes, weather and traffic updates, sports highlights and other programs displayed on our network makes the audience more receptive to the advertisements on our network and ultimately helps make the advertisements more effective for our advertising clients. In addition, the real-time broadcasting capability of our network allows us to utilize our network to disseminate public-interest messages and programs that promote the general welfare of society and other urgent messages during emergency situations such as typhoons, earthquakes or other events that concern public safety.

We currently place our digital displays primarily on buses and subways. As many urban areas in China face increasing traffic congestion, many people endure a long average daily commute time. Therefore, we believe that our network offers our clients the advantages of both traditional television and out-of-home advertising media by capturing the attention of the audience in out-of-home locations with real-time broadcasts of programs.

Table of Contents

We principally derive revenues by selling advertising time during breaks in between the programs on our network and supplemental subway advertising platform. In addition, we have the ability to sell soft advertising time embedded in the programs. We charge our advertising clients by the broadcasting time of the advertisement in each city where they want to place their advertisement. We divide our cities into different price categories based on a variety of factors, including the number of installed displays, population, demand and consumer purchasing power. We also vary pricing based on the time of day when an advertisement is broadcasted, with higher prices typically during the morning and evening commute periods.

As of December 31, 2012, we use the following business models for our advertising operations in China:

- **Exclusive agency model** refers to our arrangements, with terms ranging up to 12 years, in 18 cities: Beijing, Changchun, Changsha, Changzhou, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Taiyuan, Tianjin, Wuhan, Wuxi and Xiamen. We have entered into an exclusive advertising agency agreement with the partner local mobile digital television company or local subway authority in 10 cities, namely Beijing, Changchun, Changsha, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Shenyang, Taiyuan and Wuhan, that typically give us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on our local partner's mobile digital television network located on buses or subways. Our exclusive agency arrangements in Changzhou, Dalian, Suzhou, Wuxi and Xiamen that give us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time do not include sales of advertising time to local advertisers within each respective city. For our supplemental subway advertising operations, we have also entered into exclusive advertising agency agreements with the partner subway authority or partner local mobile digital television company in subway trains and platforms in Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Tianjin.
- **Direct investment model** refers to our arrangements in 10 cities, among which we and a partner local television station, or its affiliate, have formed a jointly-owned mobile digital television operating company in which we hold a noncontrolling equity interest, as well as our arrangement in one city, among which we and a partner local subway authority, or its affiliate, have formed a joint-owned subway television operating company in which we hold a noncontrolling equity interest. We refer to these jointly-owned mobile digital television operating companies as direct investment entities in this annual report. This model gives us the opportunity to work in conjunction with the local television station to provide programs to meet the demands of our audience and advertising clients. In the majority of our direct investment cities, such as Changchun, Changzhou, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian, Ningbo, Suzhou, Wuhan and Wuxi, we have also entered into an exclusive agency agreement with our direct investment entities to secure the exclusive right to sell advertising time on that network. For the cities where we have not entered into an exclusive agency agreement, we purchase advertising time at commercial prices from our direct investment entities and resell them to our advertising clients.
- **Outreach agency model** refers to our operations in other cities where we purchase advertising time from an existing mobile digital television company or other advertising service providers outside of our network, either directly or through an agent at the request of our clients. This model works in conjunction with our network arrangements to extend the reach of our advertising operations to cover substantially all of the major advertising markets in China.

Through December 31, 2012, 1,152 advertisers had purchased advertising time on our mobile digital television advertising network or our supplemental subway advertising platform either directly or through an advertising agent. As a result, our network has attracted a large number of blue-chip companies to purchase advertising time either directly or through an agent. Our top three brand name advertisers, Yihai Kerry, Yum! and Unilever in aggregate accounted for approximately 14.4% of our advertising service revenue for the year ended December 31, 2012. We believe the appeal and effectiveness of our advertising network is largely evidenced by the number of advertisers who place repeated and multiple advertising campaigns on our network. We generated advertising service revenue of US\$114.7 million in 2012, US\$179.4 million in 2011 and US\$138.1 million in 2010, respectively. We incurred net loss attributable to our shareholders of US\$246.4 million in 2012, US\$12.5

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

million in 2011 and US\$151.3 million in 2010, respectively. The net loss attributable to our shareholders in 2012 and 2010 was primarily due to non-cash impairment charges totaling US\$178.8 million and US\$145.7 million we recorded in 2012 and 2010, respectively, as a result of the write-off of goodwill and intangible assets in connection with three out of six advertising agency businesses we acquired in 2008 and Digital Media Group we acquired in January 2010.

Table of Contents

Our Advertising Network

As of March 31, 2013, our network and supplemental subway advertising platform covered 19 cities in China. The following map and tables illustrate the geographic scope of our mobile digital television advertising network and supplemental subway advertising platform as of March 31, 2013:

Table of Contents

Our Mobile Digital Television Advertising Network Cities	Exclusive Agency	Direct Investment
Beijing Bus	√	
Beijing (four subway lines)(1)	√	
Changchun	√	√
Changsha(2)	√	
Changzhou(3)	√	√
Chengdu	√	√
Dalian(4)	√	√
Guangzhou	√	
Nanjing	√	
Nanjing (subway Line 1)(5)	√	
Ningbo	√	√
Shenyang	√	
Suzhou(6)	√	√
Taiyuan	√	
Wuhan	√	√
Wuxi(7)	√	√
Xiamen(8)	√	
Zhengzhou		√

(1) Our exclusive agency arrangements in the Beijing subway give us the exclusive right to sell all the advertising time on the mobile digital television network in seven lines of the Beijing subway (Line 1, Line 2, Line 13 and the Batong Line) from August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2015. We have terminated the exclusive agreement for Line 5, Line 10 and the Olympic Line of the Beijing Subway from April 1, 2012.

(2) Our exclusive agency agreements in Changsha gives us the exclusive rights to sell all the advertising time on Changsha s mobile digital television network from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2015.

(3) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Changzhou gives us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on Changzhou s mobile digital television network to advertisers excluding those from Changzhou from January 1, 2010 to March 18, 2017.

(4) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Dalian gives us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on Changzhou s mobile digital television network to advertisers excluding those from Dalian from November 1, 2012 to October 30, 2015.

(5) Our exclusive agency arrangement in the Nanjing subway Line 1, which was acquired through our acquisition of Digital Media Group, gives us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the mobile digital television network in Line 1 of the Nanjing subway from January 2, 2010 to August 31, 2013.

(6) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Suzhou gives us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on Suzhou s mobile digital television network, excluding sales of advertising time to advertisers from Suzhou.

(7) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Wuxi gives us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on Wuxi s mobile digital television network to advertisers, excluding sales of advertising time to advertisers from Wuxi.

(8) Our exclusive agency agreements in Xiamen gives us the exclusive rights to sell a portion of the advertising time on the mobile television network operated by Xiamen TV Digital Co., Ltd., from October 1, 2009 to December 31, 2015, to non-Xiamen based national advertisers.

Our exclusive agency arrangement in Shanghai Subway, which was acquired through our acquisition of Digital Media Group, gave us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the mobile digital television network in 13 Lines of the Shanghai subway from January 2, 2010 to December 31, 2013. We terminated the exclusive agency agreement in Shanghai for 13 lines from September 1, 2012.

Our Supplemental Subway Advertising Platform Cities	Exclusive Agency	Direct Investment
Beijing (subway Line 4)(1)	√	
Beijing (subway Daxing Line)(2)	√	
Chongqing(3)	√	√
Guangzhou(4)	√	
Shenzhen (subway Line 4)(5)	√	
Shenzhen (three subway lines)(6)	√	
Tianjin(7)	√	
Nanjing (Line 2 and southern extended line of Line 1)(8)	√	

(1) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Beijing Subway Line 4 gives us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in subway Lines 4 of the Beijing subway.

(2) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Beijing Subway Daxing Line gives us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in subway Daxing Line of the Beijing subway.

(3) Our arrangements in Chongqing, give our direct investment entity the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in Chongqing's Light Rail Lines 1, 2 and 3. Our direct investment entity also entered into an exclusive arrangement with us in April 2011 which gives us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in Chongqing's Light Rail Line 2.

Table of Contents

(4) Our exclusive agency arrangements give us the exclusive right with respect to the digital displays on the subway platforms and in the subway trains in Guangzhou and large digital displays located in the subway stations in Guangzhou. In April 2011, we renewed the exclusive agency arrangement in Guangzhou subway for a five-year term effective from May 1, 2011 and expanded our coverage to all of 8 subway lines in Guangzhou.

(5) Our exclusive agency arrangement in Shenzhen Line 4 gives us the exclusive right to sell all the advertising time on the television platform in Line 4 of the Shenzhen subway.

(6) In March 2011, we signed an exclusive agency arrangement with Shenzhen subway, which gives us the exclusive right to sell all the advertising time in subway platforms in Line 1, and in subway platforms and subway trains in Line 2 and Line 5 from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2016. We had the exclusive right to sell all the advertising time in subway platforms in Line 1 from June 1, 2007 up to June 30, 2011 from former exclusive agency arrangement.

(7) Our exclusive agency arrangements in Tianjin give us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in Line 1 and in Light Rail Jinbin Line of the Tianjin subway.

(8) Our exclusive agency arrangements in Nanjing give us the exclusive right to sell all of the advertising time on the television platform in Line 2 and in the southern extended line of Line 1 of the Nanjin subway for a period of ten years starting from May 28, 2010.

We terminated the exclusive agency agreement for the television platform in the Kowloon Through Train from August 2011. We did not choose to renew the exclusive agency arrangement for the Airport Express Line from July 1, 2011.

Our mobile digital television advertising network and supplemental subway advertising platform include digital displays installed in the mass transportation systems in 19 cities around China as of December 31, 2012. Those digital television displays in our mobile digital television advertising network receive real-time programs broadcast by the local television stations on the mobile digital television frequencies. The digital television screens in our supplemental subway advertising platform receive programming transmitted through closed circuit digital networks. As of December 31, 2012, our mobile digital television advertising network and supplemental subway advertising platform consisted of approximately 108,567 digital displays.

We believe that our network bridges the gap between traditional television advertising and other out-of-home advertising networks by combining the advantages of each medium. Our advertising network captures the attention of the audience with real-time broadcasts of programs and also reaches the audience in out-of-home locations such as the mass transportation system. Similar to traditional television broadcasts, our network delivers real-time news and stock quotes, sports and other entertainment programs for some of the total broadcast time and advertising content during short breaks between the programs. On the other hand, our network has similarities to other out-of-home advertising networks because it reaches the audience in public venues. We believe that our network delivers substantial value to our advertising clients by reaching the targeted audience while they remain in an enclosed environment.

Our Advertising Network and Supplemental Subway Platforms

We conduct our mobile digital television advertising operations under the following three contractual arrangements:

Our Exclusive Agency Cities

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

As of December 31, 2012, we operated our advertising network under the exclusive agency model in 15 cities: Beijing, Changchun, Changsha, Changzhou, Chengdu, Dalian, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Shenyang, Suzhou, Taiyuan, Wuhan, Wuxi and Xiamen.

We entered into exclusive agency agreements with Beijing Beiguang Media Mobile Television Co., Ltd. on October 13, 2006 for a term of ten years and seven months and with Guangzhou Zhujiang Mobile Multimedia Information Co., Ltd. on July 26, 2007 for a term of eight years.

Through our acquisition of Digital Media Group which was completed in January 2010, we obtained exclusive agency rights for the mobile digital television networks in the subway trains and subway platforms in Nanjing subway line 1 and Shanghai, and subway trains in Shenzhen s subway line 1. In addition, as part of the acquisition, we have obtained the exclusive agency rights for the digital display network in certain subway trains and platforms in Beijing (Line 4), Hong Kong, Tianjin, Chongqing and Nanjing (Line 2 and southern extended line of Line 1). In 2012, we terminated the exclusive agreements for (i) the subway trains and subway platforms in Shanghai, (ii) subway trains in Shenzhen s subway Line 1, and (iii) the Airport Express Line and Kowloon Through Train Line in Hong Kong.

Table of Contents

Under our exclusive agency model, we enter into an exclusive agreement with the local mobile digital television company or the partner subway authority to become the exclusive advertising agent for that network. Our exclusive agency arrangements in Changzhou, Dalian, Suzhou, Wuxi and Xiamen, which give us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on the mobile digital television network in that city, does not include sales of advertising time to local advertisers from Changzhou, Dalian, Suzhou, Wuxi and Xiamen, respectively.

For our supplemental subway advertising operations, as of December 31, 2012, we have also entered into exclusive agency agreements with the partner subway authority or partner local mobile digital television company in subway trains and platforms in Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Tianjin. Our advertising network and supplemental subway advertising platform operating under the exclusive agency model in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in aggregate accounted for approximately 67.0% of our advertising service revenue for the year ended December 31, 2012.

As of December 31, 2012, according to the typical terms of the exclusive agency agreements:

- We typically pay a pre-determined media cost each year to the mobile digital television company to receive the exclusive right to place advertisements on that network.
- We have the responsibility to invest in new digital television displays and install the displays in new buses in Beijing, Guangzhou and Nanjing. For our supplemental subway advertising operations acquired in connection with our acquisition of Digital Media Group, we have the responsibility to install displays in the subway trains and platforms in Beijing (Line 4), Chongqing, and Tianjin, as well as displays in the subway trains of Nanjing Line 2 and southern extended line of Line 1, and we have the responsibility to upgrade displays in Nanjing. Most of these displays were installed and upgraded prior to our acquisition of Digital Media Group.
- We either sign a contract directly with the local mass transportation companies or our local partner or our direct investment entity signs the contract with the local mass transportation companies and assigns the right to install displays to us.
- Our local partner or our direct investment entity makes the investment to construct the broadcasting infrastructure and arranges the necessary approvals from the regulatory agencies.
- Our local partner or our direct investment entity remains responsible for all of the broadcast programs besides advertising content, but we may provide suggestions for the purpose of maximizing the effectiveness of our advertising network.

In cities where the local television station has already created a mobile digital television company, we generally prefer to expand our cooperation by engaging in an exclusive agency agreement. These exclusive arrangements allow our local partner to focus on the programming and operation of the mobile digital television network without worrying about generating revenues from advertisement. Our pre-determined payment of the media cost each year guarantees our local partner a steady stream of income, and our ability to place advertisements from local, national

and international clients may enhance the prestige and public perception of the local mobile digital television network. In addition, we generally work closely with our local partner in the operation of the network and may provide suggestions regarding the programming on the network.

Our Direct Investment Cities

As of December 31, 2012, we operated our mobile digital television advertising network under the direct investment model in 10 cities: Changchun, Changzhou, Chengdu, Dalian, Ningbo, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Wuhan, Wuxi and Zhengzhou. In these 10 cities, in addition to the primary installations of digital television displays on buses, we also have displays installed in buildings that receive digital television broadcasts from our mobile digital television advertising network in Changchun, Dalian, Suzhou, Wuhan and Wuxi. Under our direct investment model, we form an operating company together with the local television station authorized to operate the digital television network in that city. Due to regulatory considerations, we typically own 49% of the direct investment entity and our partner owns the other 51%, but in Shenzhen and Wuxi we own 25% and 14%, respectively. Other than the arrangement in our direct investment entities in Shenzhen and Wuxi, the remaining nine direct investment agreements usually contain the following provisions:

Table of Contents

- We appoint the general managers, for appointment by the boards of directors, of most of the direct investment entities.
- We train the locally recruited sales force.
- We purchase the advertising time from our direct investment entity and place advertisements for broadcasting on the local network.
- We sell the assembled digital television displays to the direct investment entity.
- The local television station obtains the necessary approvals for operating the mobile digital television station.
- The local television station provides the transmission equipment to broadcast the advertising and program in that city.
- The direct investment entity enters into contracts with the local mass transportation companies to install our digital television displays in the buses and other suitable locations.
- The local television station provides the news, entertainment and other programs for broadcasting on the direct investment entity's network, and the local television station ensures that the programs conform to applicable PRC content laws and regulations.

In cities without mobile digital television operations, we typically attempt to form an operating company together with the local television station authorized to operate the mobile digital television network in that city. The direct investment model allows us to secure that particular city for a long period of time because our contractual arrangements with the local television stations to form the direct investment entities have durations ranging from 10 to 50 years. The direct investment model also allows us to be involved in the process of determining the mixture of entertainment programs and advertising content broadcast on that network. In addition, the direct investment model allows us to expand into new media platforms in the future using mobile digital television broadcasting technology.

We have entered into an exclusive agency agreements with our direct investment entities in Changchun, Chengdu, Ningbo and Wuhan to control all of the advertising time on the mobile digital television network operated by such entities in those cities. These exclusive agency agreements with our direct investment entities usually contain the same terms in all material respects as the exclusive agency agreements that we sign with independent local mobile digital television operating companies. However, our exclusive agency arrangements with our direct investment entities in Changzhou, Dalian, Suzhou, and Wuxi that give us the exclusive right to sell a portion of the advertising time on these cities' mobile digital television networks does not include sales of advertising time to advertisers from Changzhou, Dalian, Suzhou, and Wuxi, respectively. These exclusive agency agreements grant us the exclusive right to sell the advertising time on the direct investment network typically for a term

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

ranging from four years to eight years. Under these arrangements, we realize all of the advertising revenues and pay a pre- determined media cost to the direct investment entity. Under this type of contract, the direct investment entity effectively transfers the operational risk to us and enjoys a guaranteed stream of revenues. We believe that the terms of these exclusive agency agreements were negotiated on an arm's length basis. See Item 7. Major Shareholders and Related Party Transactions B. Related Party Transactions Exclusive Agency Agreements with our Direct Investment Entities .

In January 2010, we completed our acquisition of Digital Media Group and acquired a direct investment entity in Chongqing in partnership with the local subway authority to operate digital screen advertising on subway trains and subway platforms in that city.

Table of Contents***Our Outreach Agency Cities***

We extend our geographic reach outside of our network by purchasing advertising time on mobile digital television networks or other media either directly or through an agent in cities outside of our network at the request of our advertising clients.

Our outreach agency model allows our advertising operation to have a larger geographic presence and provide the local network with advertising from national or international clients, which may heighten the prestige and public perception of the local network. If our demand for advertising time at the local network grows to a sufficient threshold, we may attempt to engage them in an exclusive agency agreement to increase the scope of our cooperation.

Advertising Clients, Sales and Marketing***Our Advertising Clients***

The quality and broad geographic coverage of our mobile digital television advertising network has attracted a broad base of international and domestic advertisers. Since our inception, 3,472 advertisers have purchased advertising time on our mobile digital television advertising network or our supplemental subway advertising platform either directly or through an agent as of December 31, 2012. We regularly work together with some of the largest global advertising agencies, or 4A agencies, to place advertisements for their clients. We have the ability to place a client's advertisements in one or more cities, both within and beyond our network, according to their demands. As of December 31, 2012, we have placed advertisements in over 70 cities across China. As a result, our network has attracted a large number of blue-chip companies to purchase advertising time either directly or through an agent pursuant to contracts. Our top three brand name advertisers, Yihai Kerry, Yum! and Unilever in aggregate accounted for approximately 14.4% of our advertising service revenue for the year ended December 31, 2012. We believe the appeal and effectiveness of our advertising network is largely evidenced by the number of advertisers who place repeated and multiple advertising campaigns on our network.

The following table sets forth a breakdown of our advertisers by industry for the year ended December 31, 2012:

Industry	% of total advertising service revenues
Food, Beverage, Restaurants, Wines and Spirits	34.5%
Pharmaceutical and Nutritional Supplements	14.0%
Household Products	10.4%
IT and Internet	6.5%
Fashion and Accessories	6.0%
Electronics and Digital Products	5.0%
Tourism	3.7%
Others	19.9%

Sales and Marketing

As of December 31, 2012, we employed an experienced advertising sales force of 434 employees. We also engaged consultants to assist our marketing efforts. In addition to our direct sales force, we also sell our advertising time through third party advertising agencies such as the 4A agencies. We provide in-house education and training to our sales force to ensure that they provide our current and prospective clients with comprehensive information about our services, the advantages of using our mobile digital television advertising network as a marketing channel and relevant information regarding the advertising industry as a whole. We organize our sales force into teams to provide specialized coverage for geographic regions. We believe that our regional coverage teams provide quality service for our advertisers and allow our sales and marketing teams to focus on building close relationships and staying abreast of regional market trends. We also market our advertising services from time to time by placing advertisements on our own network.

Table of Contents

We believe our advertisers derive substantial value from our ability to provide advertising services targeted at specific segments of consumer markets. Since market research is an important part of evaluating the effectiveness and value of our business to advertisers, we routinely provide market research reports to our clients as part of our marketing efforts. We conduct market research, consumer surveys, demographic analysis and other advertising industry research for internal use to evaluate new and existing advertising channels. We also purchase or commission studies containing relevant market study data from reputable third-party market research firms, such as CTR Market Research. We typically consult such studies to assist us in evaluating the effectiveness of our network to our advertisers. A number of these studies contain research on the numbers and socio-economic and demographic profiles of the users of the mass transportation systems in the cities where we operate.

In May 2008, we agreed with CTR Market Research, the largest media and market research company in China, to jointly develop the first media evaluation standard for China's mobile digital televisions on public transportation systems. China has experienced rapid growth in the mobile digital television market in recent years, but the industry lacks a standardized and authoritative audience measurement index which advertisers and media owners may use to judge the efficacy and value of advertisements placed on mobile digital television networks on public transportation systems. The creation of third-party evaluation standards will help provide criteria to compare mobile digital television with traditional television, which is expected to help raise the status of the emergent mobile digital television industry.

Advertising Contracts

The standard advertising package includes advertising time on our network in a particular city on either the mobile digital television advertising network or our supplemental subway advertising platform, and our clients often combine standard advertising packages to purchase advertising time across multiple cities. Our sales are made pursuant to written contracts with commitments ranging from one week to one year. Similar to traditional television advertising, we primarily sell advertising time during breaks between programs and we also sell soft advertising embedded into programs. The majority of our customers purchase the advertising time during breaks between programs and we often provide flexible durations of time to meet the specific demands of our advertising clients. Our clients may choose to air these advertisements during specific times of the day or throughout the entire day. Our advertising rates vary depending on the time of day, the broadcast city and the receiving platform. We divide our cities into different categories and charge rates consistent with the advertising market in that city. We evaluate the listed price at the end of each quarter against the prevailing advertising rates for our competitors in each city and determine any adjustments based on prevailing market trends. The price we charge for the advertising time differs in each city as a function of the size of our network, the quality and mixture of the programming, socioeconomic conditions and other prevailing market considerations.

We generally require our clients to submit advertising content at least five days prior to the first broadcast date for compliance review. We also reserve the right to refuse to disseminate advertisements that are not in compliance with content requirements under PRC laws and regulations.

Programming

The mobile digital television network in each city determines its mixture of programming independently from the others. For our direct investment cities, the direct investment entity exercises direct control over the mixture of programming and advertising, and for our exclusive agency cities, we typically work closely with our partner network to enhance the effectiveness of the broadcasted advertisements. The mobile digital television network broadcasts real-time news and stock quotes, sports highlights and other entertainment programs for most of the time and we use short breaks between these programs to broadcast advertising in order to maximize the effectiveness of our advertising network.

Edgar Filing: VISIONCHINA MEDIA INC. - Form 20-F

We provide suggestions for some of the programs for broadcast in our direct investment cities, and the local television station produces the remaining programs by editing the material used for local television station broadcasts. Our ability to distribute programs produced by the local television station in one city to other cities in our network gives us the opportunity to syndicate entertaining programs across all of our local networks and to attract a greater audience to our network. Our real-time broadcast platform also allows the local television station to provide real-time news and stock quotes and entertainment programs.

Table of Contents

Relationships with Location Providers

Establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with the local mass transportation companies is critical to our business. We have entered into the following arrangements to secure the right to install or use the displays on the mass transportation systems in many cities in China.

Our Exclusive Agency Cities

In our exclusive agency cities, the local mobile digital television company typically negotiates directly with the bus companies or other local mass transportation service providers for a placement agreement to secure the right to install digital television displays and then exclusively assigns that right to us. In our exclusive agency cities that are also our direct investment cities, the direct investment entity usually negotiates directly with the bus companies or other location providers for a placement agreement to secure the right to install and operate the digital television displays. In Guangzhou, which is an exclusive agency city, our local affiliate has entered into agreements directly with bus companies to install and operate the mobile digital television displays. In Changzhou, which is also an exclusive agency city, we have entered into an agreement directly with the local bus company to install and operate the mobile digital television displays. For our supplemental subway advertising operations, we have entered into exclusive agency agreements with the local subway authorities or their related entities. As a result of our acquisition of Digital Media Group, we have acquired supplemental subway advertising operations in Nanjing (Line 1) which have exclusive agency agreements with the local mobile digital television company which, in turn, have agreements in place with the local subway authority.

Our Direct Investment Cities

With the exception of Changzhou, in our direct investment cities, the direct investment entity negotiates directly with the bus companies or other location providers for a placement agreement to secure the right to install the digital television displays.

Technology

Our digital television advertising network uses digital television technology. This technology provides a communication method for broadcasting and receiving moving pictures and sound by using digital signals, which provides better throughput compared to the analog signals used by analog televisions. The digital television broadcasts use digital modulation data, which uses an algorithm to digitally compress the data. The transmission equipment broadcasts the digital bit stream wirelessly over an analog bandpass channel to television receivers that decode the digital signal. Our digital television displays installed on buses contain a receiver and decoder component that performs this task and displays the broadcasted content. This technology enables the uninterrupted reception of audio visual signals while in motion, thereby allowing the display of real-time programs on moving buses. Our supplemental subway advertising platform also uses digital displays, and we transmit the advertisements and information from a broadcast center digitally, through a local area closed circuit network, to the displays.

Suppliers

The primary hardware required for the operation of our business consists of digital television displays, mobile digital television receivers, speakers and other related equipment that we use in our mobile digital television advertising network. Maintaining a steady supply of our digital television displays is important to our operations and the growth of our mobile digital television advertising network. We purchase our digital television displays and receivers from third party manufacturers who build these components according to our specifications. We select component suppliers based on price and quality. As there are several other qualified alternative suppliers for our equipment, our obligation to our current suppliers is not exclusive. We have never experienced any material delay or interruption in the supply of our digital television displays.

Table of Contents

Competition

We compete with other advertising companies in China including companies that operate out-of-home advertising media networks such as Focus Media Holding Limited, AirMedia Group Inc., Towona Mobile Digital Co., Ltd. and Bus Online Media Co., Ltd. We also compete with traditional television stations for advertising spending. We compete for advertising clients primarily on the basis of network size and coverage, location, price, the range of services that we offer and our brand name. We also compete for overall advertising spending with other alternative advertising media companies, such as the Internet, street furniture, billboard, frame and public transport advertising companies, and with traditional advertising media, such as newspapers, magazines and radio. Some of our competitors operate digital television advertising networks installed on mass transportation systems primarily playing prerecorded content saved on compact flash cards or DVDs.

In the future, we may also face competition from new entrants into the out-of-home television advertising network sector. In addition, starting on December 10, 2005, the establishment of wholly foreign owned advertising companies has been permitted. China's ongoing deregulation of its advertising market will likely expose us to greater competition with existing or new advertising companies in China, including PRC subsidiaries of large well-established multi-national companies that may have significantly more resources.

We face barriers-to-entry in the mobile digital television advertising industry as a result of competition. Many smaller mobile digital television companies operate in cities outside of our network pursuant to exclusive agreements, and we expect to encounter barriers-to-entry as we attempt to expand our network into these cities. For example, in Shanghai, Shanghai Oriental Pearl Mobile Television Inc. operates one of the largest mobile digital television advertising networks using broadcasting technology. As a result, we face barriers-to-entry to expand our network to the bus platform in Shanghai. In addition, we will face barriers-to-entry to the extent we expand our out-of-home advertising network to different media platforms, such as in-building displays or large outdoor LED displays, as other companies may have already signed exclusive placement agreements to secure the most desirable locations. These barriers-to-entry may limit our ability to rapidly expand our network in the cities where we already operate and into new cities.

Intellectual Property

Our intellectual property consists of our brand, trademarks and design patents related to some of the equipment. As of December 31, 2012, we held seven patents and copyrights issued in the PRC.

Insurance

We only maintain insurance coverage for our automobiles. We do not maintain any property insurance policies covering equipment and facilities for losses due to fire, earthquake, flood or any other disaster. Consistent with customary industry practice in China, we do not maintain business interruption insurance or key employee insurance for our executive officers. Uninsured damage to any of our equipment or buildings or a significant product liability claim could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

Regulation

This section sets forth a summary of the most significant regulations or requirements that affect our business activities in China or our shareholders' right to receive dividends and other distributions from us.

Table of Contents

Regulations on the Television Industry

Television content

According to the Regulations on the Administration of Radio and Television, promulgated by the State Counsel on August 11, 1997, and the Provisions on the Administration of Radio and Television Program Production promulgated by SARFT on July 19, 2004, entities engaging in the production of television programs, such as feature programs, general programs, drama series and animations, and the trading activities and agency services on the copyrights of such programs must first obtain preliminary approval from SARFT or its provincial branches. The entity must then register with SAIC, to obtain or update its business license. The television programs aired on the mobile digital television networks which we rely on in operating our advertising network are produced by our local operating partners. Our local operating partners are subject to the regulations with respect to television content. Since we rely on our business relationships with our local operating partners for operating our advertising network, our business may be indirectly affected by any changes to the regulations on television content.