

REPORT

The 2nd Working Group Meeting

on

the RCARO’s Future Role

20-22 January 2015

Ramada Plaza Hotel, Jeju, Korea

**1. Introduction**

As a follow up, the 2nd Meeting of the Working Group was held at the Ramada Plaza hotel in Jeju, Korea on 20-22 January 2015. The Meeting was attended by 20 participants: Working Group Members from AUL (Dr. John Easey, Chair), CPR, JPN, NZE, PAK, PHI, ROK, Dir-RCARO; Director General of the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning (MSIP); a representative of the IAEA, experts from Korean institutes including KAERI, KIRAMS and KONICOF; and RCARO staff. A List of Meeting Participants is given in Annex 1. (Note: all annexes referred to hereafter are posted on the RCA website [www.rcaro.org](http://www.rcaro.org)).

**2. Opening Session**

**2.1 Opening Remarks by Mr. Kun-mo Choi, Director, RCARO**

Mr. Choi opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Working Group and observers. He thanked participants for their participation and wished active discussion and fruitful meeting.

**2.2 Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Hae-joo Moon, Director General, MSIP**

Mr. Hae-joo Moon, Director General, Space and Nuclear Policy Bureau, MSIP, gave welcoming remarks. He noted that the RCA has contributed greatly to its Government Parties (GPs) through successfully implementing projects using nuclear science and technology in various areas.

He noted that as its host country, Korea fully supports the RCARO for taking on more initiatives and expanding its role in the RCA activities. He wished the Workshop a great success.

**2.3 Remarks by Mr. Oscar Acuna, Section Head, Division of Asia and the Pacific, IAEA**

Mr. Oscar Acuña, Section Head of Division of Asia and the Pacific, IAEA, congratulated the 2nd Working Group Meeting (WGM) on the RCARO’s Future Role and emphasized the uniqueness of the RCA having the Regional Office amongst the 3 regional cooperative agreements in the IAEA; the AFRA, ARCAL, and RCA and the cooperative agreement ARASIA. He noted the effective work of the RCARO and wished an active and fruitful discussion of the meeting.

**2.4 Designation of Rapporteur**

The meeting designated the RCARO as rapporteur.

**2.5 Adoption of Agenda**

The meeting adopted the agenda as set out with a small change on Session V to discuss on comprehensive and holistic approach to the RCARO’s future roles reflecting suggestion of Mr. Oscar Acuña. Meeting Prospectus and Programme are given in the Annex 2 and Annex 3.

**2.6 Review of the conclusions/recommendations of the first Working Group Meeting**

Prior to the review of the conclusions/recommendations of the 1st WGM, Dr. Easey delivered a presentation on background of the meeting to facilitate effective further discussions: overall discussion direction; background financial information on the RCA programme by the IAEA; potential involvement of the RCARO to address current needs of the RCA GPs (Annex 4).

He also presented a review of the conclusions/recommendations of the 1st WGM on the major discussion points listed in the meeting report: implementation of the Supplementary Projects (SPs), support of Research Projects (RPs), supporting Training/Education Programmes (TPs), coordination of the WGs and ad hoc committees and recruitment of a senior staff member (Annex 5).

**2.7 Report of the result of the 43rd GCM**

Dr. Dela Rosa made a presentation on decisions of the 43rd GCM on the report of the 1st WGM (Annex 6).

**2.8 Presentation by the IAEA (by Mr. Oscar Acuña, Section Head, Division of Asia and the Pacific, IAEA)**

Mr. Oscar Acuña delivered a presentation on the background and operational structures of the RCA, ARASIA, AFRA and ARCAL and suggestions for future of the RCARO. He explained that the TC Programme was only able to provide limited financial and administrative support to support the RCA and emphasized the importance of strategic and innovative approach which involves the RCARO playing a role in addressing those limitations: partnership building and resource mobilization; providing secretarial support to the RCA programme; establishment of a RCA Fund (Annex 7).

**3. Discussion on the RCARO’s Future Roles**

**3.0 General Discussion**

Participants noted several key points from the initial presentations, specifically that –

* Funding for the support of RCA projects available through the Technical Cooperation Fund of the IAEA had decreased in real terms in recent years
* The Technical Cooperation Department remains under severe resource constraints that had led to an unsustainable work overload on its staff with consequences for its ability to provide support for RCA activities
* RCA GPs and IAEA-TC have previously agreed that increasing ownership by RCA of its programmes and management was desirable
* There was a need to extend the capability of the RCA programme to respond to urgent new problems, meet the needs of some newer and prospective GPs and to ensure better follow up of completed projects with end users
* Meeting this need was inhibited within projects funded through the TCF because of its dependence on its 2-year planning cycle and the trend towards larger, fewer projects
* Meeting this need has been addressed at recent NRMs, GCMs and the Working Group on the RCA Medium Term Strategy and GPs have supported in principle the use of Supplementary Projects (SPs), Research Projects (RPs) and *ad hoc* training activities.

The meeting agreed that SPs, RPs and *ad hoc* Training Projects would be an effective means of improving the delivery of benefits to GPs. However, in the present financial environment there is little prospect of being able to fund these extra activities through traditional sources of RCA funding, and they are, in fact, partly a response to problems that have arisen with TCF funding.

Several participants spoke in support of exploring the possibility of developing projects involving SPs, RPs and *ad hoc* Training Projects that were funded independently of funding coming from, or channeled through, the IAEA and which were developed and managed by the RCA. Under this model, the IAEA would have no formal role in these projects. It was expected that the IAEA would be kept fully informed of the projects and that, if it wished to offer advice, it could do so using mechanisms such as SAC or in its contributions to NRMs and GCMs.

Working Group Members of CPR and JPN stated that RCA Programme should be planned and conducted under the RCA Agreement and argued that taking into account the international legal status of this Agreement, strict enforcement should be required. Since the new project modalities being introduced on Supplementary Projects, Research Projects and ad hoc Training Projects will be funded and managed outside the IAEA framework, CPR and JPN argued that the presence of the IAEA should be a basic condition whenever RCA projects are implemented in accordance with the RCA Agreement and both parties expressed their reservation to any process which lacks the participation of the IAEA. Furthermore, for future discussion, CPR and JPN proposed that both parties will come up with their interpretation in the next NRM. IAEA, as a depository entity and the organization whose presence is stipulated to be the basis of the Agreement itself, is also required to present its legal view in the next NRM. Based on these understandings and the fact that the definition and scope of the fast track mechanism is not fully stipulated in the GOR, regarding the application of the fast track mechanism, CPR and JPN pointed out that whether fast track mechanism can be applied needs more deliberate consideration and definition.

The Working Group was unable to form a final view on an appropriate mechanism for funding and managing SPs, RPs and *ad hoc* Training Projects as it involved matters relating to the legal interpretation of the RCA Agreement, which may differ between GPs.

Despite this, the Working Group considered that it would be valuable to fulfill its assigned task to develop guidelines and criteria for SPs, RPs and *ad hoc* Training Projects in order to allow the NRs at the 37th NRM to consider the issues involved.

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  It was noted that clarification of the RCA Agreement was required in relation to whether projects could proceed as part of RCA Programme, if they did not involve the formal participation of the IAEA.  The Working Group endorsed the concept of introducing Supplementary Projects, Research Projects and *ad hoc* Training Projects into the RCA Programme. It was noted that any new project would be subject to the availability of funds.  **Recommendations**  It was recommended;  That the report of this Working Group be provided to the Working Group on the Revision of the RCA Agreement prior to their next meeting for consideration, with a request that they provide a preliminary comment at the 37th NRM.  That the IAEA be requested to clarify the Secretariat role of the IAEA in relation to the RCA Agreement and whether the involvement of the IAEA in RCA projects not funded by/through the IAEA is a requirement.  That the IAEA response be considered at the 37th NRM in conjunction with the report of this Working Group. |

**3.1 Session I: Implementation of Supplementary Projects**

The Chair thanked Dr Peter Roberts and Mr Lui Hansi for their efforts in preparing a background paper on the implementation of Supplementary Projects, which was included in the meeting's information papers. He invited Dr Roberts to make a presentation outlining their proposals regarding the specific criteria for the application and operation of Supplementary Projects as part of the future role of the RCARO.

Dr Roberts said that as Supplementary Projects would be expansions of approved projects, the LCs and LCCs for those projects should be able to provide considerable guidance about the Supplementary Project proposals. A requirement for a demonstrable links to existing projects would ensure that potential participating countries have appropriate activities within their National Country Programme and would also ensure that the projects complied with the RCA MTS and Strategic Priorities.

Because of funding and timing constraints, it would seem that the most efficient, cost effective and flexible approach would be for the RCARO to take the main responsibility for the implementation of Supplementary Projects.

Following the presentation there was extensive discussion of the mechanism by which Supplementary Projects would be developed and evaluated. Mr Choi pointed out that under the existing RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules a ‘fast-track’ mechanism was available for the development of projects initiated through the RCARO. This mechanism had been proved to be effective for the three RCA/UNDP projects implemented by the RCARO.

The Working Group then proceeded to revise the background paper and agreed Criteria and Guidelines for Supplementary Projects (Annex 8, 8-1 and 8-2).

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  It was agreed that the nature of Supplementary Projects required a speedy processing mechanism to be in place to ensure that they received the necessary prompt attention and response.  It was noted that a "Fast-Track" mechanism had already been approved by the NRs for use for projects initiated by the RCARO and was detailed in the current Guidelines and Operating Rules. It was agreed that this mechanism could be one option considered for Supplementary Projects.  If the fast-track option were used, the inclusion of the RCARO SAC in the approval mechanism was seen to be an important and essential element, especially as the IAEA and the RCA Chair are also SAC Members. If the "Fast-Track" mechanism were used, it would automatically ensure the involvement of SAC in the approval process.  It was agreed that evaluation of proposals for Supplementary Projects should be conducted by RCA PAC.  It was agreed that the revised Criteria and Guidelines on Supplementary Projects be included as Annex 8, 8-1 and 8-2 of the Working Group report respectively.  **Recommendations**  It was recommended;  That the Guidelines and Criteria on Supplementary Projects be appended to the WGM report which will be submitted to the 37th RCA NRM for consideration by the NRs. |

**3.2 Session II: Implementation of Research Projects**

Dr. Easey presented criteria and mechanisms governing the proposal, development, approval and operation of the Research Projects. The suggested mechanisms were similar to the one of the current Cooperative Research Project (CRP) of the IAEA.

The meeting noted merits of the RCARO’s initiative to implement RPs that could accommodate specific needs of the RCA GPs that cannot be covered under the RCA or IAEA’s CRP.

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  The reintroduction of Research Projects into the RCA Programme was strongly supported and was seen as an important initiative.  The use of the IAEA CRP procedures and processes as a viable model on which to base the RCA CRP approach was agreed to be desirable.  The RCA PAC would take on the role as the Research Review Committee (RRC) and would refer the technical aspects of the CRP proposals to experts in the research fields relevant to a CRP proposal, or already a part of an active CRP.  The proposed procedures and processes for the RCA CRPs would not require the use of the RCARO "Fast-Track" mechanism.  Proposals for RCA Research Projects should not duplicate cooperative research projects that have been carried out previously or are currently being implemented or planned to be implemented.  It was agreed that the revised Criteria and Guidelines on Research Projects be included as Annex 9 of the Working Group report.  **Recommendations**  It is recommended;  That the Guidelines and Criteria on Research Projects be appended to the WGM report which will be submitted to the 37th RCA NRM for consideration by the NRs. |

**3.3 Session III: Implementation of ad hoc Training Programmes**

Mr. Choi presented criteria, procedure and participation, roles and responsibilities and budget and size of the ad hoc Training Programme. He noted that the original idea was to consider an ad hoc Training and Education Programme but, on examination, support for the education component was considered to require too great a proportion of the initial resources. Therefore had not been included at this stage.

During the discussions it was agreed that an additional point related to the newcomer GPs should be added to the criteria and should relate to "Potential of the training to bridge the knowledge gap with the more advanced GPs".

Mr. Choi also noted that the RCARO would be undertaking a regional survey to assist in consolidating the information about the training needs.

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  The introduction of the ad hoc Training Programme was agreed to be an important initiative.  It was noted that the original intention of also incorporating Education support, as outlined in the first WGM report, is not feasible at this initial stage because of the significant resources required but could be considered in the future.  The ad hoc Training programme would be especially beneficial to the newcomer GPs.  It was agreed that the revised Criteria and Guidelines on ad hoc Training Projects be included as Annex 10 of the Working Group Meeting report.  **Recommendations**  It is recommended;  That the Guidelines and Criteria on ad hoc Training Projects be appended to the WGM report which will be submitted to the 37th RCA NRM for consideration by the NRs. |

**4. Session IV: Funding Model and Resources**

The meeting noted Funding Model and Resources presented by Mr. Choi. There were discussions on possible options to secure necessary fund to implement SP, RP and TP.

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  The RCA GPs should continue to take more responsibility for the management and implementation of the RCA Programme and part of this would require continued expansion of their contribution to support the financial and resource requirements.  It was agreed that additional modalities should be explored for increasing the extrabudgetary funding in support for the RCA projects across the RCA Programme generally and specifically whether it would be advantageous to have a dedicated fund specifically for general use across the RCA Programme such as “RCA Fund”.  The use of "cost free" experts had been a valuable contribution to the support of the RCA Programme in the past but this support had not been forthcoming recently. GPs should examine their potential to provide "cost free" experts in support of the RCA Programme. A strategic approach was required to the issue of expansion of GPs' contributions to support the financial and resource requirements of the RCA Programme. However this issue was outside of the mandate of this WG and needed to be addressed at the NR level.  It was agreed that the revised option paper on estimated budget on RCARO future projects and funding plan be included as Annex 11 of the Working Group report.  The WG recognized valuable contribution by the RCARO to the RCA Programme and noted the strong support of the ROK government to its operation.  The WG also noted the key role of the RCARO in the implementation of the additional project modalities. These have been previously supported by the 36th NRM and 43rd GCM.  Therefore, all GPs are encouraged to explore the possibility of providing additional funding.  **Recommendations**  It is recommended;  That the paper describing various options to support the estimated budget on RCARO future projects and funding plan be appended to the WGM report which will be submitted to the 37th RCA NRM for consideration by the NRs. |

**5. Session V: Revision of the RCARO Mandate and Other Matters**

Current Roles and Responsibilities of the RCARO in the GOR were presented to the meeting. There were discussions on revision of the current GOR to define the expanded roles of the RCARO. Issues related to the provision of additional managerial support for implementation of the RCA Programme were also discussed. There was also discussion on whether the RCARO could provide assistance to the RCA Chair in support of the administration of the RCA Programme in areas such as the preparation of the RCA Annual Report, background papers and agenda for the NRM and GCM, etc.

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| **Conclusions and Recommendations**  **Conclusions:**  The Roles and Responsibilities of the RCARO as set out in section 4.5 of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules should be amended to include an additional point (g) - " manage/implement RCA projects as approved by the GPs" so that there was no ambiguity about whether the RCARO might be able to take on expanded roles such as managing outsourced RCA projects. It was agreed to revise RCARO’s mandate in the GOR and to include as Annex 12 of the Working Group report.  The role of the RCARO in support of the RCA Chair should be followed up with discussions between the two parties and the IAEA as required to explore what might be required specifically and what might be practical.  The meeting agreed that the key role of the RCARO in mobilizing new funding resources for the RCA Programme and its contribution to enhance profile of the RCA Programme within the region remains relevant.  Strong support for the RCARO from the RCA GPs is needed to ensure that key potential regional partners are fully aware of the enormous opportunities of the RCA Programme in nuclear science and technology to address a wide range of challenges and needs that exist in the Asia-Pacific Region.  **Recommendations**  It is recommended;  That the revised mandate detailing the current Roles and Responsibilities of the RCARO in the GOR be appended to the WGM report, which will be submitted to the 37th RCA NRM for consideration by the NRs.  That the NRs are encouraged to explore further means to support the RCARO in its efforts in mobilizing new funding resources for the RCA Programme and enhancing the profile of the RCA Programme within the region. |

**6. Session VI: Action Plans and Future Activities of the WG**

**6.1 Action Plan**

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| Schedule | Action |
| 29 January 2015 | 1st draft of the Meeting Report be circulated to the Members of the WG |
| 4 February 2015 | Responses by WG members to the Chair on suggested revisions and changes |
| 11 February 2015 | Finalised Meeting Report to be sent to the Members of the WG and RCA FP |
| 12-13 February 2015 | Meeting Report to be conveyed to the 2nd WGM on the revision of the RCA Agreement |
| 15 February 2015 | A response from the IAEA to clarify its Secretariat role in relation to the RCA Agreement and whether the involvement of the IAEA in RCA projects not funded by/through the IAEA is a requirement. |
| 37th NRM  (16-19 March 2015) | Report of the result of the 2nd WGM by the WG Chair |
| 1 April 2015 | WG Chair provide advice to the Members of the WG concerning the responses of the 37th NRM |
| April 2015 | Discussions on the possible follow up actions between RCARO and members of the WG upon the result of the 37th NRM |

**6.2 Future Activities of the WG**

The WG discussed the potential actions that might be required to be implemented following the possible recommendations from the 37th RCA NRM and the part that might be played by the WG.

**7. Closing**

Mr. Choi thanked the WG for its strong participation and its contribution to the advancement of the development of the future roles of the RCARO. He wished all participants safe journey home.

**ANNEXES**

Annex 1 – List of Meeting Participants

Annex 2 – Meeting Prospectus

Annex 3 – Meeting Programme

Annex 4 – Presentation by Dr. Easey ‘Background Presentation’

Annex 5 – Presentation by Dr. Easey ‘Review of the Conclusions and Recommendations at the 1st WGM’

Annex 6 – Presentation by Dr. Dela Rosa ‘Actions of the 43rd GCM on WG Report’

Annex 7 – Presentation by Mr. Oscar Acuña ‘Background and Operational Structures of the RCA, ARASIA, ARCAL, AFRA and Suggestions for Future RCARO’

Annex 8 – Revised Criteria and Guidelines on Supplementary Projects

Annex 8-1 - Flow Chart SP (category 1)

Annex 8-2 - Flow Chart SP (category 2)

Annex 9 – Revised Criteria and Guidelines on Research Projects

Annex 9-1 - Flow Chart Research Projects

Annex 9-2 - Presentation by Dr. John Easey 'The Introduction and Support of Research Projects as Part of the Future Role of The RCARO**'**

Annex 10 – Revised Criteria and Guidelines on Ad hoc Training Projects

Annex 11 – Revised Option Paper on Estimated Budget on RCARO Future Projects and Funding Plan

Annex 12 – Revised RCARO’s Mandate in the GOR