# **An Integrated Approach to the Future Role of the RCARO in Support of the RCA Programme**

# Background

At the 36th National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting (RCA NRM) held on 1 to 4 April, Wellington, New Zealand, it was agreed that a Working Group be formed to consider the future role of the RCARO, including the issues raised in the Strategic Paper presented by the Director, RCARO. The 1st Working Group Meeting was held on 10-12 June 2014 in Jeju, Republic of Korea and its report was presented to the 43rd National RCA Representatives General Conference Meeting (RCA GCM) held 19 September 2014 in Vienna. That Meeting endorsed continuation of the Working Group (WG) and gave approval to the scheduling of a second meeting to progress the activities outlined the WG report. The 2nd WG Meeting was held on 20-22 January 2016 in Jeju, Republic of Korea and, as requested by the RCA GCM, the WG delivered a report on its progress at the 37th NRM, which was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, 16-19 March 2015. The Meeting agreed that another WG meeting should be convened for further discussion of this issue prior to any further discussions by a meeting of National Representatives (NRs). The 3rd WG Meeting was held 19-21 January 2016 in Jeju, Republic of Korea to discuss and further develop the proposals for the RCARO’s future role.

# Key Considerations

## Compliance with the RCA Agreement

It was recognised that any future support and funding provided by the RCARO that was intended to directly contribute to the RCA Programme needed to be in compliance with the RCA Agreement. To assist in clarification of matters directly related to this, the IAEA Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) was requested by the Department of Technical Cooperation to provide advice on:

(a) the “Secretariat role of the IAEA in relation to the RCA Agreement”; and,

(b) “whether the involvement of the IAEA in RCA projects not funded through the IAEA is a requirement”.

OLA provided a legal response (Annex 8 of the 3rd WGM report) which was discussed at the 37th RCA NRM. An important conclusion in that response was that, under the 1987 Agreement, although the involvement of the Agency was required in all projects, such involvement did not always have a financial involvement and might simply amount to consultations between the Government Parties and the Agency, as set out in particular for projects under Article X.

There is currently a Working Group on proposed amendments of the RCA Agreement and the present draft text would facilitate the future RCARO role being recognised as directly contributing to the RCA Programme.

A solution demonstrating that consultations are taking place between the GPs and the Agency can be achieved by integrating the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) into all the RCARO supported project formulation and evaluation processes, since the RCA Focal Person (RCA FP) is a member of SAC.

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## Compliance with the RCA Medium Term Strategy and Strategic Priorities 2018-2023

The Working Group report on the draft RCA Medium Term Strategy and Strategic Priorities (MTS & SP) for 2018-2023 considered and established the RCA’s strategic context, strategic directions, critical processes and procedures, critical implementation enablers and performance indicators. It was presented to the 44th RCA GCM by the Working Group Chair, Dr Dela Rosa. The GCM accepted in principle the recommendations in the report, which included the enhanced role that will be played by RCA Working Groups and Committees and the RCARO in the Programme. The WG report noted that the RCA programme should:

Be needs-driven;

* Pay special attention to human capacity building, as well as the efficient management, preservation of nuclear knowledge and networking;
* Promote adaptive R& D as a component of the RCA programme;
* Evaluate and benchmark the outcomes and achievements of the long-running RCA projects and post-closure projects;
* Emphasize the use of available regional expertise and existing facilities in the planning, implementation and evaluation/auditing of the RCA programme;
* Emphasize the implementation of TCDC modalities, including the use of regional expertise and facilities in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and,
* Have GPs consolidating national capacities and assuming full ownership of the programme’s outcomes as a key element of sustainability.

The WG on the draft RCA MTS & SP for 2018-2023 was requested by the 44th RCA GCM to report to the 38th RCA NRM on the skills requirements for each Working Group listed in its report. The RCARO SAC was one of the groups listed in that report.

# Integration of the procedural and operational details related to the RCARO Supported Programme into those of the RCA Programme

The RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules (GOR) provide procedural or operational details for the operation of the RCA Programme and therefore integration of the procedural or operational details for the RCARO supported programme of assistance should be clearly set out in this document to emphasise that there is a “one house” approach. It would also be desirable to emphasise the complementary nature of the RCARO’s contribution to the RCA Programme by making the minimum changes to the current structure and format of the GOR.

The most appropriate part of the GOR is Section 4.5, “Appointment, Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of the RCA Regional Office”, with a suitable summary provided under “Roles and Responsibilities”. Details regarding specific details such as procedures, project formulation criteria, guidelines and timing requirements could be set out in a revised GOR Annex 3 “Procedure for Development of Projects by the Director RCARO”. This annex could also be instrumental in demonstrating the involvement of the RCARO SAC across key aspects of the project assessment procedures and hence the involvement of the IAEA in this consultation process through the RCA FP’s membership of SAC. A draft version of the revised GOR Annex 3 “Procedure for Development of Projects by the Director RCARO” is given in Annex 12 of the 3rd WGM report.

# Conclusions and Recommendations.

It is concluded that the planned expanded RCARO support for the RCA Programme activities should be full recognised and documented. It should also be demonstrated by ensuring that the processes and procedures used are incompliance with all RCA requirements and criteria.

The RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules is the handbook that sets out and references all such matters relevant to the RCA Programme. It is the key reference on all RCA policies and procedures for all NRs and others seeking information on the RCA Programme.

It is recommended that:

* the RCA GOR should be amended to include the additional areas of future support being proposed by the RCARO;
* this can be achieved with minimal revision of the main text of Section 4.5;
* the main text of Section 4.5 should also be amended to include the revision proposed by the 2nd Working Group Meeting[[1]](#footnote-1); and,
* GOR Annex 3 is revised as set out in the attached “Procedure for Development of Projects by the Director RCARO”.

1. Annex 12, Report. The 2nd Working Group Meeting on the RCARO’s Future Role [↑](#footnote-ref-1)