



RCA Medium Term Strategy 2006-2011

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A. Background

The Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training (RCA) is an intergovernmental agreement established under the auspices of the IAEA. It is open to participation of any Member State in the area of South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific or Far East. A Member State from one of these regions may become a party to this Agreement by notifying its acceptance thereof to the Director General of the Agency. The text of the Agreement provides the fundamental framework and guidance for regional cooperation.

The RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules set out the roles and responsibilities of the various function holders and describe the conduct of meeting and the initiative and approval of projects.

This Medium Term Strategy sets out a revised Vision, Mission and a set of strategic directions for the RCA over the period 2006-2011, a period covering 3 Technical Cooperation budget cycles.

B. RCA Strategic Plan Context

B.1. Vision

<p>The RCA shall be recognized as an effective partner in providing nuclear technologies that address socio-economic needs and contribute to sustainable development in the region.</p>

B.2. Mission

The existing mission talks only about the need to promote and coordinate cooperative research, development and training in nuclear science and technology through their appropriate national institutions. Since that time, the role of the RCA has expanded and become more focused on technology transfer. Hence the new mission is proposed to be:

- To identify and implement nuclear technologies for regional needs
- To encourage sustainability of nuclear technology capacities in RCA Member States
- To coordinate cooperative research in nuclear science and technology
- To promote the benefits of nuclear technologies and identify funding mechanisms
- To develop regional networks for exchange of technologies, training and equipment

B.3. RCA Core Values

The RCA members are committed to high standards of professionalism, safety and ethical behaviour in the use of nuclear technologies. These core values are fundamental in all our RCA activities and underpin the way in which we will deliver on our strategic directions.

1. **Safety, Security and Sustainability:** *ensuring safe, secure and environmentally aware utilisation of nuclear science and technology and contributing to sustainable development within the region*

2. **Honesty, Openness and Integrity:** *building trust and respect within the Member States and with all other stakeholders through effective communication*
3. **Collaboration and Responsiveness:** *understanding stakeholders' needs, fostering cooperation and teamwork, embracing new ideas and recognising new trends*
4. **Competence and Professionalism:** *striving to improve standards of expertise and delivery to our stakeholders*

B.4. RCA Governance

The RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules set out the general responsibilities of the National Representatives, Project Lead Country Coordinators and Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators. However the current arrangement is not conducive to effective management of the programme, particularly in the period between meetings of the National Representatives. There is no designated liaison with the IAEA and no designated person to represent the RCA in discussions with third parties. As a result the Medium Term Strategy provides for an enhanced role for the Chairs of the National Representative Meeting and the Lead Country Coordinators, as follows and in subsequent sections.

- The National RCA Representatives act on behalf of their Governments and are responsible to them for the operation of the RCA within the terms of the agreement.
- The Chair of the National Representative Meeting (the chair), in conjunction with the past and future chairs, shall provide advice and guidance on the conduct of the programme and shall take a proactive role in liaising with the RCA Coordinator and RCARO Director to ensure effective management of the programme. The chair may represent the RCA with external parties.
- The chair shall consult the National Representatives on all policy, financial and strategy issues.

B.5. Strategic Context.

All strategies are developed and implemented in a strategic context i.e. with reference to the context, requirements and constraints that affect the process. For this RCA strategy, the following context is considered relevant.

- The Millenium Development Goals
- The IAEA Medium Term and Technical Cooperation Strategies
- Regional priorities and policies agreed by the participating Member States under the Agreement; and new priorities that will emerge in coming years
- Perceptions of the RCA and more generally of nuclear science and technology
- Funding and costs, including the need to secure revenue and to attract partnerships
- Development and income generating opportunities
- International and national trends in nuclear science and technology
- Our region's regulatory environment
- The need to create, manage, share and exploit our knowledge more effectively

This strategic context is relevant in that it can guide or constrain the possible future directions.

B.6. Critical Success Factors

These are factors that affect the suitability of a project for inclusion in the RCA or affect the likelihood of success of the RCA agreement. These factors effectively establish criteria that should be used to assess the suitability of a project prior to submission for approval, as well as provide criteria for indicating whether existing projects are suitable for continuance. Fundamentally an RCA project should be based on clearly identified regional needs and benefit from regional cooperation. The success factors are:

- projects should be ‘needs driven’ and benefit from regional cooperation
- projects of sufficient size to achieve high impact and measurable outcomes
- high use of regional networks and resources
- designed to enhance sustainability of national nuclear technology capabilities
- built on adequate national resources, infrastructure and existing programmes
- avoids duplication with other mechanisms (national projects, non-RCA projects and other agreements)
- choosing projects where a nuclear technique is a high valuing adding approach and technology transfer is a major focus
- consistent with Technical Cooperation strategy and Millenium Development Goals
- ability to attract external funding.

C. Strategic Directions

For the period 2006 to 2011, the Working Group identified the following four strategic directions for the RCA. Specific actions by the different RCA management levels are required for successful implementation of these strategic directions.

C.1. Ensuring effective Management of the RCA

- Revisit the role of the National Representatives to emphasise need for continued involvement during the year in management of the RCA.
- The Member States should be encouraged to form an in-country RCA team to ensure effective implementation of agreed projects.
- The National Representatives should arrange consultation meetings of all Project Coordinators in their Member State prior to, and after, the National Representatives Meeting.
- The Chair should liaise with RCA Coordinator prior to, and following, each National Representatives Meeting to ensure time for review of project reports from Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators
- The RCA Coordinator to produce a quarterly status report for the National Representatives
- RCA Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators to ensure adequate documentation and recording of all projects, especially outcomes and successes.

C.2. Achieving greater impact for RCA projects

- Review and reduce the number of sectors to those that have a high focus on regional cooperation and are based on nuclear technology exchange and application. Aim for no more than 5 sectors.
- Focus on fewer projects with higher impact. Aim for no more than 2 projects per sector or 10 projects overall. Review need for Project Lead Country Coordinators, Assistant Project Lead Country Coordinators and Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators if fewer projects.
- Ensure at project development that all projects meet critical success factors and have measurable milestones and performance indicators.
- Ensure all the components of implementation mechanisms are directed towards the fulfilment of the project objectives.
- Require the Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinator through the Project Lead Country Coordinators to provide an annual report of project progress against milestones and PIs with recommendations for future directions.
- National Representatives to develop a review mechanism to ensure that projects not achieving the objectives are either redirected or terminated.

C.3. Developing nuclear technology capacities in RCA Member States that are sustainable and relevant to their socioeconomic needs

- Identify and transfer nuclear technologies, which are value adding and address ongoing needs
- Develop relevant technical expertise in nuclear institutions to increase self reliance
- Provide support for effective regulatory control and safe and secure use of radioactive materials
- Introduce mechanisms that provide for continuing exchanges and support to nuclear institutions following closure of specific projects.
- Enhance the ability of nuclear institutions to access funding from end users.

C.4. Enhancing the uptake of nuclear technologies and increasing the visibility of the RCA

- Increase the focus on developing collaborative arrangements with other technical programmes and other funding sources
- Make effective use of, and ensure effective liaison with, the RCARO in promoting RCA objectives.
- Produce quality publications for identified key stakeholders.
- Make better use of electronic networking and the RCA website to exchange information and raise awareness of capabilities.
- Work with the IAEA to develop more flexible mechanisms for working with donors
- Promote the successes of the RCA to targeted stakeholders.

- Actively promote RCA to potential funding agencies.
- Ensure regular and relevant reporting for all projects.

D. Performance Indicators

Performance indicators provide a mechanism to assess the success in implementing the RCA Medium Term Strategy. These key performance indicators are designed to be measurable, either through the reports on the performance of the RCA or through feedback from key stakeholders.

- More active involvement of all National Representatives and Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators in management of the RCA programme – positive feedback from the IAEA on improved efficiency.
- Achievement of reduced number, but higher impact, projects – aim for 10 projects per year across all sectors by 2011.
- Increased use of regional experts and resources in addressing regional needs – aim for 70 % by 2011.
- Increased exchange of information and technologies between RCA Member States – need for fewer formal training courses.
- Increased use of electronic networks and enhanced level of coordination within the RCA Member States – all Member States provide information via the RCA web site.
- Increased non-IAEA funding for RCA – aim to double by 2011.
- Establish partnerships between RCA and other organisations – at least 2 by 2011.
- Increased awareness of the capabilities of RCA in the region – as recognized by requests to participate in international conferences and donor meetings.

E. Conclusions

This Medium Term Strategy is put forward for adoption by the National Representatives. Following finalisation, it may be necessary to alter the Guidelines and Operating Guidance Rules of the RCA. More important, however, will be to consider the timetable and processes needed to implement the Medium Term Strategy. The Working Group recommends that, following adoption at the 28th NRM that a small group be set up to produce an implementation plan.