



REPORT

RCARO Workshop on Strengthening the RCA/RCARO Activities and its Efficiency

7-9 August 2013
Grand Hilton Hotel, Seoul, Korea

RCA Regional Office

1. Introduction

As recommended at the 35th National RCA Representatives Meeting (NRM) held on 19-22 March 2013 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, the RCARO Workshop on “Strengthening the RCA/RCARO Activities and its Efficiency” was held on 7-9 August 2013 at Grand Hilton Hotel, Seoul, Republic of Korea. Participants included: the SAC members from CPR, MYA and ROK; NRs of Pakistan and Philippines; two (2) experts from RCA Member States (MSs); and 11 representatives from ROK, including representatives from the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning (MSIP), Korean Nuclear International Cooperation Foundation (KONICOF), Korea Institute of Radiological & Medical Sciences (KIRAMS), Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) and the RCARO. A list of the participants is given in Annex 1. (Note: All annexes referred to hereafter are posted on the RCA website www.rcaro.org).

2. Opening Session

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

Mr. Kun-mo Choi, Dir-RCARO, warmly welcomed all the participants and thanked them for attending the Workshop. He noted that over the past 10 years, RCARO had achieved a lot of progress in enhancing the visibility and viability of the RCA. As one of its mandated activities is to strengthen RCA/RCARO activities, the RCARO organized this Workshop to discuss some current issues in this area.

He said that the conclusions and recommendations from this Workshop would assist in further strengthening the operations of the RCA/RCARO and requested the participants to actively participate in the Workshop.

2.2. Congratulatory Remarks by Dr. Khin Maung Latt, RCA Chair

On behalf of the RCA MSs, Dr. Khin Maung Latt, current RCA Chair, welcomed all the participants attending the Workshop. Dr. Latt expressed his sincere congratulations at the opening of the Workshop and extended a warm welcome to all the participants. He also congratulated Mr. Choi on his appointment as a new Director, RCARO.

2.3. Congratulatory Remarks by Mr. Hai-joo Moon, Director General, Space & Nuclear Policy Bureau, MSIP of the Republic of Korea

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Hai-joo Moon, Director General of Space & Nuclear Policy Bureau, MSIP, gave congratulatory remarks and welcomed the participants. He noted that the RCA had greatly contributed to its Member States in many areas by successfully implementing projects that transferred nuclear science and technology in a wide range of beneficial applications and this had also played a pivotal role in enhancing nuclear technology cooperation in Asia-Pacific region.

He stressed that in 2012, the RCA had been awarded Certificates of Excellence in three areas as part of the Best Practices Initiative being implemented by the Agency. These were in the following areas:

- Building the future on strong foundations: evidence-based regional priorities for the RCA;
- Building the future on effective and sustainable technology transfer: an active and monitored TCDC and partnership programme for the RCA; and
- Enhanced prosperity of RCA: RCA promotional and information programme engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

He also commented that there was a great demand from the MSs for assistance with measures to retain and use nuclear science and technology in the region and the successful history of operation of the RCARO had demonstrated that it had the ability to take on more initiatives in the future to assist the RCA programme.

In conclusion, he thanked those who had been involved in the preparation of the Workshop and wished the Workshop great success.

2.4. Introduction to the Workshop

Mr. Kun-mo Choi, Dir-RCARO, briefed the Workshop Program and reviewed the agenda items.

The Workshop was informed that Session Chairs would be:

- Session 1 - Dr. Khin Maung Latt
- Session 2 - Dr. Waqar Ahmad
- Session 3 - Dr. Alumanda Dela Rosa
- Session 4 - Dr. Dongxin Feng

Ms. Hyunkyung Jeon and Ms. Soo Youn Hwang agreed to serve as rapporteurs.

The Workshop Prospectus and Programme are given in Annexes 2 and 3.

At the commencement of the Workshop, Ms. Hyunkyung Jeon, Deputy Head, Programme Division, RCARO, reviewed the recommendations from 2012 RCARO Workshop to clarify their current status.

After Ms. Jeon's presentation, there was some discussion on the recommendation related to RCARO's involvement in the thematic approach for future RCA programme but as it was related to the RCARO's future activities, the Workshop deferred detailed discussion to Session IV.

3. Session I – Improvement of information exchange and communication in RCA

Dr. Khin Maung Latt chaired this Session.

3.1. Current issues/problems on information exchange and communication in RCA

Dr. John Easey, former RCA Coordinator and ANSTO Honorary Fellow, gave a presentation entitled “Communications and Information Exchange” (Annex 4). This covered the following topics:

- Motivations for change
- Comments on communications
- Comments on RCA documents
- Case studies on identification of potential areas for improvements in communications and information exchange

The Workshop thanked him for his comprehensive presentation on the issue of communications and information exchange in the RCA.

Dr. Easey noted the importance of the communications and information exchange and emphasised necessity of improving and enlarging the level of information exchange in the RCA. He suggested establishing a centralised database, which could be accessible for all RCA stakeholders, and would contribute to improved decision making and programme performance in a variety of areas. He also pointed out some practical issues to be considered for more efficient presentation of future RCA documents and meeting reports.

The participants supported Dr. Easey’s suggestions. However, they noted that since many of his recommendations and suggestions required approval from the NRs in order to be implemented, it was agreed to make recommendations that these be the subject for discussion at an RCA policy level meeting.

3.2. Conclusions and Recommendations

The followings are the conclusions and recommendations of the Session I:

Conclusions:

- The Workshop concluded that the RCA needed to adopt modern communications and information exchange practices to strengthen RCA activities.
- An information database containing RCA financial and implementational performance indicators should be accessible for all Member States.
- The RCARO needs to expand their RCA document archives coverage of RCA reports and technical information with the assistance of the IAEA and Member States.

Recommendations to the NRs

- Potential problems resulting from the lack of continuity of Member States’ participation in the NRM and GCM should be reported to the 42nd GCM.
- A centralised database containing, initially, RCA financial and implementation performance indicators over the past 10-15 years should be established using the RCA website as a platform.

- In this connection, it is recommended the next NRM to have an agenda item on information exchange and communication in the RCA

4. Session II – Enhancement of RCA networking among the Member States

Dr. Waqar Ahmad, NR of Pakistan, chaired Session II.

4.1. Establishment of ICT infrastructure of Member States by providing ICT equipment

At the invitation of the Chair, Ms. Soo Youn Hwang, Project Officer, RCARO, gave a presentation entitled “Establishment of ICT infrastructure of Member States by providing ICT equipment” (Annex 5), which dealt with:

- Background
- Status of Member States
- Objectives and Process
- Discussion

The participants had an extensive discussion on the issue in terms of providing ICT equipment or educational software related to RCA projects and video conferencing. There were various views and opinions from the participants and most of the participants commented that providing ICT equipment was not a vital problem in Member States now and that making good use of their existing ICT infrastructure was more essential consideration. In this context, the Workshop deferred discussion to possible future occasions.

4.2. Conclusion

The Workshop made the following conclusion for this session:

Conclusions:

The Workshop valued the RCARO’s initiation of the project on the ICT infrastructure support.

The Workshop took note that there was no evidence of strong demand from the Member States for assistance with ICT equipment. However, it was agreed that there might be a future need for development of a programme which would contribute to improving information exchange and communication using ICT or to expanding the RCARO repository of archived materials to include, training materials, software and technical documents developed through RCA projects.

It was noted that the RCARO and/or Member States would be welcomed to develop proposals for such programmes in the future, if specific needs were identified.

5. Session III – Review of the RCA Agreement

Dr. Alumanda Dela Rosa, NR of Philippines, chaired Session III.

There was extensive discussion on the need for revision of the 1987 Agreement to make it more applicable and suitable for present and future needs.

5.1. Review of the RCA Agreement

Dr. Alumanda Dela Rosa delivered a presentation entitled “Review of the RCA Agreement” (Annex 6).

The Participants valued the presentation delivered by Dr. Dela Rosa and it covered the history of the RCA, history of the RCA Agreement from the initial 1972 Agreement to its amendment in 1987 and outlined current issues that could be of interest and a motivation for amending the 1987 RCA Agreement.

5.2. Review of the RCA Agreement

Mr. Dae-ki Kim, NR ROK, made a presentation entitled “Review of the RCA Agreement” (Annex 7), which dealt with:

- Background
- Rationale for Agreement Revision
- Article to be revised
- Draft Amendment

He explained the background and rationale of ROK’s proposal and presented a draft amendment of the Agreement. The participants agreed on the valuable contribution made by Mr. Kim in his presentation and shared the view that his comprehensive analysis provided a reasoned argument about the necessity and importance for a revision of the 1987 Agreement. For further evaluation and the preparation of a comprehensive approach to this issue, it was suggested that the next stage should be the formation of a Working Group from Member States to review the proposals from Member States and to assess the options for its comprehensive revision.

5.3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The following conclusion and recommendations were agreed by the Workshop:

Conclusion:

The Workshop noted the proposed draft revision of the present Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) and saw that it contained many beneficial revisions. This draft was seen to be a very helpful input to stimulate wider discussions by the NRs. It was suggested that it would be desirable to achieve the revision of the 1987 Agreement before the 5th extension of

the Agreement expires in 2017.

Recommendations to the NRs

- To recommend discussion of a revision of the 1987 Agreement as a separate agenda item at the coming 42nd GCM and recommended that the RCA Chair make the necessary arrangements.
- It was recommended that the RCA Chair request the Secretariat to include any proposals on revision of the 1987 Agreement from the Member States in the background papers of the 42nd GCM.
- To recommend the 42nd GCM to constitute a Working Group to review potential revision of the 1987 Agreement.

6. Session IV – The Past, Present and Future of RCARO

Dr. Dongxin Feng, former RCA Chair, chaired Session IV.

In her opening remarks, the Chair said that she valued the efforts of the RCARO and complimented it on its successful performance.

6.1. In-house evaluation & thoughts on RCARO Activities

At the invitation of the chair, Mr. Kun-mo Choi, Dir-RCARO, gave a presentation on “In-house evaluation & thoughts on RCARO activities”, which covered 10 years of RCARO on various aspects: changes in the past 10 years, major achievements, evaluation, issues and challenges ahead and future thoughts. (Annex 8)

The participants commented favourably on various aspects of the past and current RCARO’s role and activities. They also made suggestions on additional areas for the RCARO involvement, such as assisting in the design of RCA projects, and using their fellowship programme to create and prepare a RCA database on financial and implementational aspects. There were also comments on how the RCARO’s activities were limited because of the limited mandate given by the Member States. It was also noted that the host Government was facing a number of challenges and problems related to the conflicting pressures of limited funding and increasing expectations from Member States for RCARO support. It was suggested a high level decision makers meeting could be used to get top-down input to help in the solution of these problems.

6.2. Conclusion

The following conclusion was made during the session:

Conclusion :

The Workshop registered its appreciation of the work of the RCARO and the strong value it placed on the activities it had undertaken over the past 10 years. The RCARO was encouraged to take on more initiatives for the benefit of Member States.

The Dir-RCARO thanked the participants for the compliments on the work and achievements of the RCARO and stated that the comments and opinions from the Member States would be

reflected in the future RCARO activities to the best possible extent.

7. Closing

The Dir-RCARO thanked the participants for their contribution in achieving a very successful outcome from this Workshop, and he wished everyone a safe homeward journey and looked forward to continuing contact and cooperation.