



**REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY**



REPORT OF
THE 46th RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING

**Meeting Room M6
IAEA Headquarters
Vienna, Austria**

**15 September 2017
09:00 – 18:15**

ACRONYMS

DDG-TC	Deputy Director General, Technical Cooperation Department
DDG-NA	Deputy Director General, Nuclear Sciences and Applications Department
DIR-TCAP	Director for Asia and the Pacific Division
GCM	General Conference Meeting of the National RCA Representatives
NR(s)	National RCA Representative(s)
NRM	National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting
LCC	Lead Country Coordinator
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RCARO SAC	RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
RCA-FP	RCA Focal Person
SH-TCAP1	Head of Section 1 of Asia and the Pacific Division
TC	Technical Cooperation Programme
TO(s)	Technical Officers
TCAP	Division for Asia and the Pacific

Introduction

The 46th RCA General Conference Meeting (GCM) was held at the IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, on 15 September 2017. There were 45 participants from 17 RCA Government Parties; Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), China (CPR), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Republic of Korea (ROK), Malaysia (MAL), Myanmar (MYA), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), Palau (PLW), the Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA) and Vietnam (VIE); and 4 representatives of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) attended the Meeting.

Ms. Najat Mokhtar (DIR-TCAP), Mr. Oscar Acuña (SH-TCAP1) and Mr. Sinh Van Hoang (RCA-FP) represented the IAEA. Other IAEA staff also attended selected sessions of the Meeting.

The list of participants is given in Annex 1.

Opening

a. Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair

The RCA Chair officially opened the 46th RCA GCM.

In opening the meeting, the Chair expressed his thanks to all RCA stakeholders for their ongoing contributions to the success of the RCA.

b. Introductory remarks by DDG-TC and DDG-NA

The Chair invited DDG-TC to deliver his message. The DDG-TC's message is reproduced in Annex 2.

The Chair invited DDG-NA to deliver his message. The DDG-NA's message is reproduced in Annex 3.

c. Group Photo

A group photo of all meeting participants was taken.

d. Adoption of the Agenda - RCAGCM (46)/1

The provisional agenda was adopted.

The adopted agenda is provided in Annex 4.

The meeting adopted the agenda, with addition of four items to be discussed under Other Business:

- **Signing of the Practical Arrangement between the IAEA and the RCARO**
- **Appointment of a new RCA PAC member**
- **Supporting the RCA Chair on RCA activities**
- **RCARO Managed Projects issue raised by Japan**

e. Appointment of Rapporteurs

The Chair called for nominations for rapporteurs of the meeting. Mr Jarrod Powell (AUL) and Dr Soledad Castaneda (PHI) were nominated, with support of the RCARO. All agreed to carry out this task.

Mr Jarrod Powell (AUL) and Dr Soledad Castaneda (PHI) were appointed as rapporteurs of the Meeting, assisted by RCARO.

I. Reports on the Follow-Up Actions of the 39th NRM – RCAGCM (46)/2

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a summary of the most important follow-up actions arising from the 39th NRM, including: the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2016/17; preparation of the RCA programme for 2018/19; preparation of the RCA programme for 2020/21; the strengthening of partnerships between RCA and other stakeholders; acceptance of the 2017 RCA; and signing of the Practical Arrangements between the IAEA and RCARO.

The RCA FP highlighted the great efforts of all participants in the implementation of all follow up activities, in particular the WG Chairs, NRs, LCCs, RCA PAC Chair, RCA Chair and RCA Secretariat.

The Meeting took note of the Report and thanked the Secretariat for the effective implementation of Follow-up Actions from the 39th NRM.

II. Implementation of regional events in 2017 and tentative arrangements of regional events for 2018 - RCAGCM(46)/3

The RCA-FP presented a summary of the implementation of regional events in 2017, as well as tentative arrangements for regional events in 2018 (Annex 5). He noted that the current RCA Programme consists of thirteen (13) projects, with seven (7) projects to continue in 2018. He noted that all projects are progressing well and in accordance with work plans.

The RCA FP advised that eleven (11) events were still to be carried out in 2017, all of which had been approved and were being processed for implementation as planned. It was expected that the implementation rate would reach 90% by the end of 2017, well

beyond the TCAP target of 80%. The list of planned regional events for 2018 (RCAGCM(46)/3) had been updated and was available on the RCA website.

The RCA FP requested that NRs remind NPCs to prepare and submit project implementation reports for 2017 to LCCs in a timely and complete manner so that LCCs could consolidate and submit PPARs by 10 January 2018.

The Meeting noted that the current RCA Programme consists of thirteen (13) projects, with seven (7) projects to continue in 2018, and that all projects are progressing well and in accordance with work plans.

The Meeting noted that eight (8) new projects are being submitted for the 2018/19 cycle, among which five (5) projects will commence in 2018, and three (3) projects will commence in 2019.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will review arrangements for planned regional events for 2018 and confirm with the RCA FP by 30 September 2017.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will remind NPCs to prepare and submit project implementation reports for 2017 to LCCs in a timely and complete manner so that LCCs can consolidate and submit PPARs by 10 January 2018.

III. Update on the RCA programme for 2018/19 by the RCA FP - RCAGCM(46)/4

At the invitation of the RCA Chair, the RCA FP provided an update on the RCA programme for 2018/19 (Annex 6).

Eight (8) RCA project designs continued to be refined, including adjustments to commencement years and the amount of TC funding expected to be required. The eight (8) designs will be submitted for 2018/2019 TC Cycle after fine tuning for approval by BoG in November 2017.

The Meeting noted the report provided by the RCA FP on the RCA programme for 2018/19.

IV. Report on the preparation of the RCA programme for 2020/21 by the RCA PAC Chair - RCAGCM(46)/5

At the invitation of the RCA Chair, the RCA PAC Chair reported on the preparation of the RCA programme for 2020/21 (Annex 7).

The RCA PAC Chair reported that project designs were yet to be merged as planned, due to deadlines not being met by NRs. Fifteen (15) pre-concept designs have been identified

as meeting requirements for advancement to the first round concept phase. The themes of the designs largely reflect new areas for RCA. The RCA PAC Chair estimated that there is only sufficient TC funding for three to four projects to go ahead in 2020/21, and urged that the pre-concept designs be reviewed with this in mind.

The meeting discussed the ongoing need to limit the number of projects proposed to be further developed as first round concepts. Within the context of this discussion, AUL and NZE agreed that one of their respective health project proposals would be withdrawn following a discussion between the project stakeholders.

NZE proposed the addition of two new project streams to the RCA programme 2020/21 – ground water and air pollution – despite these streams not having projects operating in the 2020/21 cycle. NZE explained that the addition of these streams would ensure that ground water and air pollution projects could be considered for future cycles.

The meeting discussed the need to decide on which pre-concepts will go forward in a timely fashion. There was some consideration that these decisions could be made at this meeting; however JPN requested that NRs be given more time to consider each pre-concept design and proposed to put flexibility into the number of pre-concepts to go forward in the case of failure to merge pre-concepts.

JPN also recalled that it had been previously agreed that GPs will only carry forward a maximum of two project proposals each.

CPR made a statement that the Chinese government annually makes extrabudgetary contributions to RCA in recent years and that China will continue to make such contribution.

The RCA PAC Chair reiterated the need for projects to comply with RCA requirements and the conditions set by the 38th and 39th NRMs and suggested that, as it is known that there will only be sufficient funding for three to four projects in 2020/21, pre-concepts going forward should not exceed 10, excluding any to be funded through extrabudgetary funding. The project concepts need to be refined so that they can be sent onto PAC in November.

The RCA PAC Chair presented a new proposed RCA Project Participation Form, which he explained would provide a consistent means of recording participant information.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will go forward with pre-concept project mergers on the basis of the PAC Chair's recommendations. Where mergers are unsuccessful, opportunity will be provided for up to two additional pre-concepts to progress, on the basis that the chosen pre-concepts were submitted in accordance with the process agreed by the 38th and 39th NRMs, and that no more than two pre-concepts are progressed by any one GP.

The Meeting agreed to comply with the project development timeline proposed by the PAC Chair, as illustrated in RCAGCM(46)/5.

The Meeting agreed to implement the PAC Chair's proposed RCA Project Participation Form, which must be lodged by NRs with the RCA FP prior to recruitment action being undertaken related to participation in any RCA project activities.

V. Report of the WG on the RCA MTS 2018/23 Coordination by the WG Chair - RCAGCM(46)/6

At the invitation of the Chair, NZE on behalf of the RCA MTS 2018/23 Coordination WG Chair, reported to the meeting on progress made by the WG (Annex 8).

On behalf of the WG, NZE recommended that the RCA programme should include at least some activity in each of the six thematic areas, while noting that RCA funding is constrained. Rather than running full RCA projects in all six themes, the WG found that RCA could conduct “lower level activities”, below what is required for a full RCA project.

The WG recommended that integrative projects, which would cover more than one thematic area, be encouraged, noting one example of a project, currently going through the final stages of approval, that addresses both agriculture and environment.

The WG recommended that up to five projects per cycle proceed to full design, allowing extrabudgetary funding to be sought for those that do not receive TC funding.

NZE reminded the meeting that the 40th NRM is to decide which and how many Project Concepts should be taken forward for development into Project Designs, and presented a new ranking form for approval. NZE explained that the new form allows NRs to provide a priority rating, which could be used to inform extra-budgetary funding applications. AUL agreed that the new ranking form was a good approach, but noted that “N/A” needs to be made available as an option under the country program heading.

The WG found that the Pre-Concept approach was useful, but suggested that it would benefit from further refinement, noting a particular need for greater effort to merge pre-concepts prior to RCA PAC assessment.

The MTS WG asked the meeting to consider the need for the other two WGs to continue beyond their current mandate, which the meeting discussed. It was agreed that the three WG Chairs should consult and come to an agreement on the merging and future structure of the WGs.

The Meeting noted the report delivered on behalf of the RCA MTS 2018/23 Coordination WG Chair.

The Meeting approved the implementation of the new Project Concept ranking form, as developed by the RCA MTS 2018/23 Coordination WG, with minor amendments.

The Meeting agreed that the three WG Chairs should consult and come to an agreement on the merging and future structure of the WGs.

VI. Report on the possible creation of an RCA Fund including specific modalities, terms and conditions by the Chair of the WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization - RCAGCM(46)/7

At the invitation of the Chair, the Chair of the WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization reported to the meeting on progress made by the WG.

The WG Chair reported that the WG has investigated the potential for an RCA fund modelled on the AFRA fund, and has subsequently developed a draft terms of reference that could be applied to a RCA fund, noting that the WG was not mandated to make a judgment as to whether or not a RCA fund should exist. The WG Chair reiterated that it would be up to the NRs to decide whether a RCA fund should be implemented.

The WG Chair noted that several countries already donate extra-budgetary funds on an ad hoc basis, and explained that if NRs were to approve a RCA fund, it would likely require a commitment from GPs to regular extra-budgetary funding. As such, the WG Chair anticipated that NRs would need to discuss this with their Governments, and likely required a better understanding of the appropriate amount of annual contribution from each GP.

NZE reported that its government is not unwilling, but put it to the meeting that contributions would need to be seen as voluntary, and that once made, the donor GP should have the right to dictate to which projects it contributes.

JPN expressed reservations, noting that it is currently the second largest contributor to the TC fund and that it also contributes to the PUI extra-budgetary fund. Based on this, JPN considered that there is little prospect its Government could commit to new extra-budgetary funding. JPN also noted that, already, some GPs are not fulfilling their commitment to contribute 100 per cent of their TC funding target.

The meeting agreed that it was difficult for the conversation to continue without a better understanding of the quantum of additional funding to which GPs would be required to commit, and decided that the new WG Chair on RCA MTS should discuss the issue with the RCA FP and report back to NRs.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will then seek advice from their Governments in preparation for further discussion at the 40th RCA NRM.

The Meeting took note of the report of the Chair of the WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization.

The Meeting agreed that the new WG Chair on RCA MTS should discuss with the

RCA FP the potential funding amount required for the proposed RCA fund, and the applicable quantum for each GP, and report back to NRs.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will then seek advice from their Governments on the potential for establishing and committing to voluntary contributions to a RCA fund, based on a model similar to that used by AFRA.

The Meeting noted concerns raised by Japan regarding the establishment of a new fund.

The Meeting agreed that the matter will be discussed further at the 40th RCA NRM.

VII. Report of the WG on Human Resource Development by the WG Chair – RCAGCM(46)/8

At the invitation of the Chair, the Human Resource Development WG Chair reported on progress made by the WG (Annex 9).

The meeting agreed that successful implementation of the WG's recommendations could deliver positive outcomes for human resource development, but noted that there were practical limitations to the extent to which they could be implemented, including significant funding constraints.

The Meeting took note of the report of the Human Resource Development WG Chair, and agreed in-principle that the WG's recommendations should be implemented in a strategic manner, taking into account practical limitations and constraints.

VIII. Report of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) by Director of the RCARO - RCAGCM(46)/9

The Director of the RCARO reported on RCARO's programme of work and actions carried out in 2017 (Annex 10). In particular, he reported on efforts underway to increase awareness of the RCA activities and expand support for the development of the RCA. Initiatives included participation in the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment, the implementation of RCARO Managed Projects and supporting the IAEA for the RCA administrative matters.

The RCARO Director also reported on continuing efforts aimed at enhancing and exploring partnerships with other regional and international organisations and on work being done to assist GPs in addressing regional and national needs, and provided several examples.

JPN noted that it has previously raised concerns about the legal status of RCARO-Managed Projects, and explained that it intended to continue discussion with ROK on the issue. The RCA Chair recalled that the legal status of RCARO Managed Projects was raised at the 39th NRM, but that it was not followed by discussion because JPN was not present. The RCA Chair moved that the issue be discussed under Other Business, which was agreed by the meeting.

The Meeting noted the report delivered by the Director of the RCARO and expressed appreciation for the work carried out by RCARO.

IX. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) by the RCARO SAC Chair - RCAGCM(46)/10

The Chair presented the Report of the RCARO SAC, which was welcomed by the meeting (Annex 11). The meeting approved the report and endorsed all included recommendations.

The Meeting approved the Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) (RCAGCM(46)/10), and endorsed all included recommendations.

X. Report on the updating of the 2014 RCA GOR by the RCA Chair - RCAGCM(46)/11

The RCA Chair presented the report on the updating of the 2014 RCA GOR, compiled by the WG established by the 39th NRM (Annex 12). The issue of potential conflict between the two concurrent GOR documents was raised, and it was agreed by the meeting that these should be consolidated into a single authoritative version. Short term decisions and arrangements that may have been recorded in the “operational” GOR, are also recorded in NRM and GCM Reports, which, the meeting agreed, should suffice for this purpose. It was noted that, where long term decisions and arrangements are required, the “full” GOR can be amended.

AUL mentioned that the updated membership approval process should be reflected in the new GOR in addition to few more amendments such as roles of the RCARO.

The RCA PAC Chair noted on the responsibility of keeping the GOR as a “living document.” He also added that an update on the TCDC be made on the new GOR as well.

The Meeting noted the draft revised RCA GOR and agreed that the “full” GOR and “operational” GOR should be consolidated into a single document.

The Meeting agreed that by 15 October 2017 the RCA Chair will distribute the

initial draft updated GOR and provide a deadline for feedback from NRs.

The Meeting agreed that all NRs will provide feedback in tracked changes. Following this, a second draft incorporating feedback will be distributed by the RCA Chair to NRs for final review.

XI. Report on the result of consultations with the FNCA Coordinator of Japan on future directions for the collaboration between the FNCA and the RCA by the RCA Chair - RCAGCM(46)/12

The RCA Chair reported on consultations with the FNCA Coordinator of Japan on future directions for the collaboration between the FNCA and the RCA, including a proposal made by the FNCA Coordinator for enhanced project-level collaboration.

The RCA PAC Chair noted that some FNCA members are not RCA members, and extra care needed to be taken to ensure that any financial arrangements, including at the project level, remain appropriate.

The RCARO Director reported that he had participated in the FNCA Coordinators Meeting in March 2017, and that it was the view of that meeting that greater cooperation between RCA and FNCA is necessary. The FNCA Coordinators Meeting had highlighted opportunities for increased knowledge sharing on mutation breeding, radiation oncology and electron beam applications.

The meeting endorsed the continuation of project-level knowledge sharing in the three areas identified.

The Meeting endorsed the continuation of project-level knowledge sharing between RCA and FNCA projects on mutation breeding, radiation oncology and electron beam applications.

XII. Proposed modalities of engaging the RCA in the Quadripartite Forum by the RCA Chair - RCAGCM(46)/13

The RCA Chair reported on proposed modalities of engaging the RCA in the Quadripartite Forum, and presented the draft agenda for the next Quadripartite Forum, to be held on 21 September 2017.

SH-TCAP1 explained that the Quadripartite Forum is an informal meeting aimed at the Chairs sharing their experience and best practices, and that no decisions or commitments are to be made within the meeting.

The Meeting noted the draft agenda for the next meeting of the Quadripartite

Forum, to be held 21 September 2017, and looked forward to the RCA Chair's report on the meeting at the 40th NRM.

XIII. Possibilities of collaboration with the Pacific Islands Development Forum and Pacific Community by the RCA Chair - RCAGCM(46)/14

The RCA Chair reported on potential collaboration with the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and Pacific Community (PC).

At the invitation of the Chair, the SH-TCAP1 reported on cooperation between the TC Secretariat and the Pacific Islands community.

NZE reported some difficulty engaging with PIDF and PC, and raised the possibility of Agency assistance in encouraging deeper engagement. AUL noted the agreement between the TC Secretariat and the PIDF/PC now provides a mechanism, and suggested that the next step is for the RCA to encourage Pacific Island States to join IAEA and RCA.

The Meeting welcomed the practical arrangement between IAEA and PC and looked forward to building on it in coming years.

XIV. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA by the RCA FP - RCAGCM(46)/15

The RCA FP provided an update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA, noting that 13 GPs had deposited instruments of acceptance.

Those GPs participating in the GCM that had not yet deposited an instrument provided reports on their domestic processes. All were optimistic that they would complete their processes before the end of 2017.

The Meeting welcomed advice that thirteen (13) GPs have deposited instruments of acceptance for the 2017 RCA.

The Meeting looked forward to the remaining GPs depositing their instruments of acceptance as soon as possible.

XV. Update on the holding of the 40th Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Korea, 2018; and the 41st Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Sri-Lanka, 2019

ROK reported that it is working to confirm dates and a location for the 40th NRM, which will be held in either Seoul or Busan by the end of year 2017.

SRL advised that arrangements for the 41st NRM will be announced at a later date.

The Meeting noted that the 40th NRM will take place in either Seoul or Busan, with the dates to be confirmed as soon as possible.

The Meeting noted that arrangements for the 41st RCA NRM, to be held in Sri Lanka, will be announced at a later date.

XVI. Other business

The RCA FP reported that the Practical Arrangement between IAEA and RCARO was signed on 14 September 2017. The Director of RCARO expressed his gratitude for the support of the RCA GPs and the IAEA in bringing this to fruition.

The RCA Chair reported China's nomination of Professor Luxiang Liu to the RCA PAC, replacing Dr Dongxin Feng, which was endorsed by the meeting. The Meeting also thanked Dr Feng for her valuable contribution to RCA.

The RCA Chair reported on the heavy workload required of the Chair, explaining that it was not sustainable to expect future Chairs to undertake the task without assistance. SH-TCAP1 proposed that RCARO provide secretariat support to the RCA Char. RCARO and the meeting agreed to this proposal, and agreed that the GOR should be amended accordingly.

Following the discussion under agenda item VIII, JPN requested that the Chair recirculate a paper it has previously prepared on RCARO Managed Projects, for consideration of the NRs. The meeting agreed that the issue would be discussed at the 40th NRM based on the consolidated comments of NRs.

The Meeting noted the signing of the Practical Arrangement between IAEA and RCARO.

The Meeting endorsed the appointment of Professor Luxiang Liu as a member of the RCA PAC, replacing Dr Dongxin Feng, and thanked Dr Feng for her valuable contribution to the RCA.

The Meeting endorsed the proposal that the RCARO provide secretariat support to the RCA Chair, and agreed that the GOR should be amended accordingly.

The Meeting agreed that the RCA Chair will re-circulate Japan's comments on RCARO Managed Projects, and invite comments from NRs, for discussion at the 40th RCA NRM.

XVII. Closing

The RCA Chair thanked all participants for their active participation and valuable contributions, and declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting ended at 18.15h.