



**REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY**



REPORT OF
THE 45th RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING

**Meeting Room M-6
IAEA Headquarters
Vienna, Austria**

**23 September 2016
09.00 – 18:30**

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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
DIR-TCPC	Director of Programme Support and Coordination
DIR-RCARO	Director of RCA Regional Office
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
PMO(s)	Programme Management Officer
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 45th RCA General Conference Meeting (GCM) was held at the IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, on 23 September 2016. There were 38 participants from 18 RCA Government Parties; Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), China (CPR), Fiji (FIJ), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Republic of Korea (ROK), Malaysia (MAL), Mongolia (MON), Myanmar (MYA), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), 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. The Agency's Technical Officers, Programme Management Officers of TCAP1 and support 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 45th RCA GCM.

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 (44)/1

The provisional agenda was adopted without amendment.

The adopted agenda is provided in Annex 4.

The meeting adopted the agenda.

e. Appointment of Rapporteurs

The Chair called for nominations for rapporteurs of the meeting. Mr Jarrod Powell (AUL) and Ms Noriah Jamal (MAL) were nominated, with support of the RCARO. All agreed to carry out this task.

Mr Jarrod Powell (AUL) and Ms Noriah Jamal (MAL) were appointed as rapporteurs of the Meeting, assisted by RCARO.

I. Reports on the Follow-Up Actions of the 38th NRM – RCAGCM (45)/2

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a summary of the most important follow-up actions arising from the 38th NRM, including: the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2016; finalisation of the RCA Annual Report; the establishment of three working groups; the amendment of the RCA Agreement; reporting of in-kind contributions of RCA GPs; and preparations for the 2018/19 TC cycle.

The RCA FP requested that NRs who have not yet done so provide the names of NPCs and alternate NPCs as soon as possible.

The RCA FP highlighted the great efforts of all participants in the implementation of all follow up activities, in particular the success of the RCA Amendment Working Group. He also thanked all NRs and LCCs for their contributions.

The Meeting took note of the Report and complimented the Agency on the effective implementation of Follow-up Actions from the 38th NRM.

The Meeting took note of the RCA FP's request that NRs provide the names of NPCs and alternate NPCs as soon as possible.

II. Implementation of regional events in 2016 and tentative arrangements of regional events for 2017 – RCAGCM (45)/3

The RCA-FP presented a summary of the implementation of regional events in 2016, as well as tentative arrangements for regional events in 2017 (Annex 5). He noted that the current RCA Programme consists of fifteen (15) projects, with eight (8) projects to continue in 2017. He noted that all projects are progressing well and in accordance with work plans.

Five events are still to be carried out in 2016. All have been approved and are being processed for implementation as planned. It is expected that the implementation rate will reach 90% by the end of 2016, well beyond the TCAP target of 80%.

The RCA FP presented the list of planned regional events for 2017 (RCAGCM(45)/3), and requested that NRs review and confirm arrangements by 10 October 2016.

The RCA FP requested that NRs remind NPCs to prepare and submit project implementation reports for 2016 to LCCs in a timely and complete manner so that LCCs can consolidate and submit PPARs to PCMF in early January 2017.

The Meeting noted that the current RCA Programme consists of fifteen (15) projects, with eight (8) projects to continue in 2017, and that all projects are progressing well and in accordance with work plans.

The Meeting noted the list of planned regional events for 2017 (RCAGCM(45)/3), and agreed to review and confirm arrangements to the RCA FP by 10 October 2016.

The Meeting agreed that NRs will remind NPCs to prepare and submit project implementation reports for 2016 to LCCs in a timely and complete manner so that LCCs can consolidate and submit PPARs to PCMF in early January 2017.

III. Report on the preparation of RCA project designs for 2018-2019 by the RCA PAC Chair and the RCA FP - RCAGCM(45)/4

At the invitation of the RCA Chair, the RCA PAC Chair reported on the preparation of RCA project designs for 2018-2019. Each draft project design was reviewed and assessed by the RCA PAC using the agreed Project Assessment Sheet (PAS). PASs were then consolidated by the RCA PAC Chair, and distributed to LCCs.

The RCA PAC Chair reported that project designs were generally of a higher standard than previous cycles; however the RCA PAC Chair also identified a number of areas in which project designs and the submission and assessment processes could be improved further.

On funding of the RCA Programme 2018/21, the RCA PAC Chair reported that the planned budgets of the eight technical projects significantly exceed the available TC funds. He suggested that, in order to balance the budget, the number of projects would need to be reduced or extra-budgetary funding would need to be secured.

The RCA PAC Chair further reported that each of the eight projects has budgeted for three PMMs, constituting nearly 40% of the total budget. Limiting the budget for PMMs to 20-25 per cent of total project budgets would achieve savings of 1.2 million EUR and allow the six highest priority projects to go ahead from 2018/19. A 33% reduction on PMMs could be achieved by eliminating midterm review meetings, which could be substituted with electronic information sharing.

To assist in seeking extra-budgetary funding, the RCA PAC prepared and distributed a questionnaire to provide insights into the level of awareness amongst LCCs of potential sources of extra-budgetary funds.

The RCA PAC Chair presented the draft timetable for actions related to the development of RCA Projects for the 2018/19 TC Programme.

The RCA PAC Chair recommended that the NRs encourage LCCs to be fully acquainted with:

- the resource documentation provided by RCA PAC and especially those documents that could assist in improving project designs; and
- the relevant sections of the current RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules that relate to the RCA Projects and Programme, including the basic documentation on the enhancement of TCDC in the RCA Programme, and incorporate appropriate elements in their project designs.

The RCA PAC Chair recommended that the NRs should consider:

- where their sources of accumulated technical expertise and competence could be used effectively in the RCA projects under consideration for submission for the 2018/2019 TC Cycle; and
- volunteer to take on a role as a Regional Resource Unit as appropriate.

The RCA PAC Chair recommended that the RCA PAC workload be reviewed at some point in the future, reporting that the current burden is not sustainable.

Following the report of the RCA PAC Chair, there was significant discussion around budget constraints, the scope for further refinement of project designs, and potential extra-budgetary funding sources.

The Meeting considered a proposal made by the RCA PAC Chair that projects eliminate the mid-term PMM, thereby reducing costs sufficiently to allow six projects to be fully funded.

NZE acknowledged the efforts of the RCA PAC and improved quality of project designs, and suggested that the NRs pass the recommendations of RCA PAC to LCCs to improve the project designs further.

JPN and PHI noted the shortage of TC funds, but pointed to the importance of the PMMs and difficulties for reducing associated budget which would need consultation with LCCs. IND suggested using electronic communications in the project activities where possible to reduce expenses. RCA-FP suggested combining PMMs with other project meetings such as technical meetings.

After lengthy discussion, the Meeting reached consensus that, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach to reducing project costs, or cutting the number of proposed projects at this stage, NRs would encourage LCCs to review project designs based on the recommendations made by the RCA PAC, with the aim of improving project designs and identifying cost reductions prior to the RCA PDM, 31 October – 4 November 2016.

The Meeting decided that savings should be sought with the objective of fully funding six projects to commence in 2018/19. The Meeting suggested that savings could be made through reductions in the number of planning meetings, conducting meetings electronically, or combining planning meetings with technical meetings.

The Meeting recommended that after the RCA PDM, the RCA PAC work closely with the Working Group on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization to provide further input related to RCA Project funds.

The Meeting thanked the RCA PAC for its efforts assisting in the preparation and assessment of project designs for 2018/19.

The Meeting agreed that NRs would encourage LCCs to review project designs based on the recommendations made by the RCA PAC, with the aim of improving project designs and identifying cost reductions prior to the RCA PDM, 31 October – 4 November 2016. Savings should be sought with the objective of fully funding six projects to commence in 2018/19. The Meeting suggested that savings could be made through reductions in the number of planning meetings, conducting meetings electronically, or combining planning meetings with technical meetings.

The Meeting agreed that the RCA Secretariat will circulate the RCA PAC Chair's presentation to GPs in order to allow NRs and LCCs to be better informed in finding savings against the indicative budget figures for their project design proposals.

The Meeting agreed that project designs should be finalised by LCCs at the RCA PDM, 31 October – 4 November 2016, and provided to the RCA PAC prior to the RCA PAC Meeting, 6-10 February 2017.

IV. Review of nominations and decision on the composition of: Working Group on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization; Working Group on Human Resource Development; and Working Group on MTS 2018-2023 Coordination, by the RCA Chair - RCAGCM(45)/5

The RCA Chair reported on establishment of three Working Groups (WGs) and the nomination of representatives from GPs.

Upon discussion of the costs and logistical requirements, it was decided that the ideal number of participants for each WG was five to seven. As there were more than eight nominees for both the WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization, and the WG on MTS 2018-2023 Coordination, the RCA Chair asked for NRs to voluntarily limit nominations to a total of one per GP across all three WGs.

RCARO volunteered to participate in WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilisation on a cost-free basis.

AUL queried whether WGs would be coordinated by RCARO or the Secretariat. Upon suggestion of SH-TCAP1, RCARO agreed to take the role of secretariat for the established WGs.

The Meeting endorsed the creation of the three WGs, and the membership and Chairs of each (Annex 6).

The Meeting endorsed the creation of the:

- **Working Group on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization;**
- **Working Group on Human Resource Development; and**
- **Working Group on MTS 2018-2023 Coordination.**

The Meeting endorsed the membership and Chairs of each WG, as listed at Annex 6.

The Meeting asked the Chairs of each WG to develop work plans, in consultation with RCARO and the Secretariat.

V. Report of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) by Director of the RCARO - RCAGCM(45)/6

The Director of the RCARO reported on RCARO's programme of work and actions carried out in 2016. In particular, he reported on efforts underway to increase awareness of RCARO's activities, including participation in the IAEA 60th Anniversary celebrations at the General Conference, the implementation of RCARO-managed Projects and the provision of assistance to the IAEA's secretariat's role on RCA related matters

The RCARO Director also reported on continuing efforts aimed at enhancing and exploring partnerships with other regional and international organizations, and on work being done to assist GPs address regional and national needs, and provided several examples of this work. The RCARO Director presented a video prepared by RCARO illustrating RCA activities over recent years which would be played during the RCA Exhibition.

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

The Meeting expressed its appreciation for RCARO's efforts in preparing the RCA exhibition, on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the IAEA.

VI. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) by the Chair of the RCARO SAC - RCAGCM(45)/7

The Chair presented the report of the 23rd Meeting of the RCARO SAC, which took place on 22 September 2016 at the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna.

The Meeting took note of the report of the 23rd Meeting of the RCARO SAC.

VII. Review of proposed mechanisms to assist the IAEA in its RCA Secretariat functions by the Director of the RCARO - RCAGCM(45)/8

RCARO reported on proposed mechanisms to assist the IAEA in its RCA Secretariat duties. The WG on the future role of RCARO discussed this at its third meeting, in January 2016, and concluded that outsourcing some secretariat duties could be one option to reduce the workload regarding secretariat duties for the RCA carried out by the IAEA. Based on the recommendation from the WG, and the presentation by the IAEA at the 37th NRM, RCARO reported on which duties could be outsourced, and which are required to stay in house.

RCARO reported that the management of RCA projects must be kept in-house, duties related to policy meetings can be outsourced, and other activities can be conducted under mixed arrangements.

SH-TCAP1 emphasized the limited human resource and overloaded work of the IAEA to carry out RCA-related duties, and welcomed the initiative. Regarding the preparation of documentation for the policy meetings, he clarified all the responsibilities will still be on the IAEA.

JPN and AUL endorsed the initiative on the basis that RCA projects and the activities proposed to be conducted under mixed arrangements continue to be managed by the Secretariat, subject to further discussion.

PAK and SIN appreciated the RCARO for supporting the RCA and supported the proposal.

Following extensive discussion, the Meeting agreed that the IAEA be assisted by RCARO in preparations for policy meetings, and that the IAEA will continue to be responsible for the management of RCA projects. The tasks to be undertaken by RCARO in support of the IAEA for the preparation of policy meetings are described in Annex 7.

The Meeting also agreed that RCARO will coordinate administrative and logistical arrangements for the RCA WGs, in consultation with the Secretariat

The Meeting agreed that the IAEA be assisted by RCARO in preparations for policy meetings, and that the IAEA will continue to be responsible for the management of RCA projects. The tasks undertaken by RCARO in support of the IAEA for the preparation of policy meetings are described in Annex 7.

The Meeting agreed that RCARO will coordinate administrative and logistical arrangements for the RCA WGs, in consultation with the Secretariat.

VIII. Report on progress in ratification of the revised Agreement by the Chair of Working Group on the Proposed Amendment to the RCA Agreement - RCAGCM(45)/9

The RCA Chair reported that an original copy of the 2017 RCA Agreement was sent to the IAEA OLA in June 2016, and that the Secretariat circulated the agreement to GPs, inviting them to ratify, in August 2016.

AUL, IND, JPN, MON, ROK and SIN reported that their internal ratification processes have already been initiated.

The Meeting took note of progress made by GPs towards ratification of the 2017 RCA Agreement.

IX. Discussion on planned activities of the RCA at International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond - Contributing to Development, 30 May - 1 June 2017, Vienna, Austria; as well as other planned activities to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the establishment and development of the RCA in 2017

DIR TCAP reported on the proposed programme and aims of the *International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond - Contributing to Development*, to be held in Vienna, 30 May-1 June 2017.

She reported that the Secretariat expects ministerial-level participation from MSs, and asked NRs to encourage participation by well-briefed experts capable of contributing ideas for ways in which the TC programme can be improved and partners can be expanded.

The Meeting agreed that RCA will participate, both with a dedicated RCA booth to be prepared by RCARO, and through participation of interested GPs in the conference programme.

The Meeting agreed that RCA will participate in the *International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond - Contributing to Development*, both with a dedicated RCA booth to be prepared by RCARO, and through participation of interested GPs in the conference programme.

The Meeting encouraged NLOs and NRs to register by 1 November 2016, and participate in the conference that will take place 30 May-1 June 2017, in Vienna.

X. Holding of the 39th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in Bangladesh in 2017, and the 40th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in Korea in 2018.

BGD confirmed that it will host the 39th RCA NRM in Dhaka, 3-6 April 2017.

ROK confirmed that it will host the 40th RCA NRM, in 2018.

The Meeting confirmed that the 39th RCA NRM will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 3-6 April 2017.

The Meeting confirmed that the 40th RCA NRM will be held in Korea in 2018.

XI. Other business

Following questions raised by JPN regarding RCARO Managed Projects and advice received from the IAEA OLA, the Meeting discussed further on the legal status of RCARO Managed Projects.

JPN emphasized the importance of legal consistency of the RCARO Managed Projects with the RCA framework and noted the difference between the RCARO Managed Projects and IAEA funded TC Projects.

DIR-TCAP noted that the Secretariat is responsible for the management of RCA and that it would continue its support to the RCA activities.

ROK responded that the RCARO Managed Projects differ from TC RCA projects and could be considered as “other cooperative activities” under Article I of the 2017 RCA. He added that as the host country of the RCARO, it is important to acknowledge and implement the RCARO Managed Projects under the framework of the RCA in order to secure funds from the government.

The meeting reached general consensus that the RCARO Managed Projects should fall under the RCA framework for the benefit of RCA GPs and decided to further discuss the matter at the 39th RCA NRM. ROK undertook to write to the RCA Chair regarding the integration of RCARO Managed Projects into the RCA Framework, to be discussed at the next NRM.

The Meeting also discussed the current methodology for the calculation of in-kind contributions, and decided that the methodology should be reviewed following two to three years of implementation.

JPN raised some concerns regarding the current methodology for the calculation of in-kind contributions and undertook to submit those concerns to RCA Chair so that it would

serve as a reference document when the current methodology will be reviewed after two or three years.

In response to the IAEA OLA's comments on questions raised by Japan, the Meeting agreed that ROK should write to the RCA Chair regarding the integration of RCARO Managed Projects into the RCA Framework, and that this proposal would be discussed at the 39th RCA NRM.

The Meeting agreed that the current methodology for the calculation of in-kind contributions will be reviewed following two to three years of implementation.

XII. Closing

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

The meeting ended at 18.30h.