

PROPOSAL FOR REVISING THE PROCEDURE FOR RCA PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

A proposal submitted by PAC to the 42nd RCA NRM on revising the current procedure for development of RCA Projects and for preparation of a Regional Programme Framework to identify future priorities was approved by the NRM in principle with the understanding a detailed proposal will be submitted to the 49th RCA GCM.

A detailed revised procedure for development of RCA Projects is herewith submitted for the approval of the RCA GCM.

The following are the main revisions which are aimed at improving, streamlining and simplifying the current procedure. .

- a) Procedure for identification of project areas had been revised to delegate the responsibility to the RCA NRs. PAC will provide guidance to NRs based on the RCA Regional Programme Framework. (this procedure had been used for the development of the RCA Programme for 2012-2013 at the 32nd NRM held in 2010)
- b) The need for two rounds of Project Concepts had been eliminated
- c) Involvement of Contact Persons from other GPs at both Concept and Design stages had been introduced.

The proposed procedure has the following advantages

- a) The involvement of NRs at a very early stage of the process in accordance with the current RCA GOR (Part 4 - Section 1.1.1)
- b) Enables long term planning,
- c) Helps identification of specific needs of special groups such as new GPs,
- d) Information to be provided in Project Concepts can be directly used in preparing the Project Documents to be submitted to the IAEA and
- e) Reduces the number of proposals to be drafted and evaluated

Proposed Action

Approval of the 49th GCM for the revised procedure subject to any revisions

PROPOSAL FOR REVISING THE PROCEDURE FOR RCA PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1.0 Background

The meeting of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee held in February recognized the need to revise the procedure for development of RCA projects in order to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The proposal submitted by PAC to the 42nd NRM to seek approval in principle for revising the procedure for project development was approved, with the understanding a detailed proposal will be submitted to the 49th GCM. This proposal for revision of the RCA Procedure for development of the Technical Cooperation Projects is submitted to the 49th GCM in pursuant of this decision. The proposed revisions are based on the experience of the RCA PAC in developing the RCA Programme for 2022/23 and on the past RCA practices.

2.0 Nature of RCA Technical Cooperation Projects

According to Section 1.1.3 of the GOR, an RCA project should:

- (a) Address a significant multi-country issue;
- (b) Address an issue identified as a regional priority;
- (c) Be accepted as a part of national programmes with strong Government support;
- (d) Have strong support and continuous involvement from end users;
- (e) Have an appropriate and significant number of identified potential beneficiaries and partnerships;
- (f) Be of sufficient size and duration to enable the identified significant outcomes to be achieved;
- (g) Be implemented by a team that has high expertise and commitment; and
- (h) Be well-managed.

In addition, the RCA Projects to be implemented under the IAEA TC Programme should conform to the TC Strategy and TC Quality Criteria and should

- (a) Contribute to socio-economic development
- (b) Have a strong and an important nuclear component (IAEA TC Quality criterion)
- (c) Have a clear linkage to a regional framework, priority or plan (IAEA TC Quality criterion)
- (d) Contribute to achievement of Sustainable Development Goals
- (e) Be built on the achievements of the past projects in the same project area
- (f) Be developed and implemented with the participation of the relevant stakeholders including end-users

The revisions proposed are aimed at meeting the above requirements.

3.0 Proposed revisions to the current procedure

The main steps of the current procedure and the proposed procedure are given in Table 1. The main revisions are given in *red italics*.

Table 1 – Comparison of Current and Proposed Procedures

Timeframe	Current Procedure	Proposed Procedure
Year N* - 3	Invitation of Pre-Concepts from GPs in year N*-3	<i>NRs will decide on 10-15 project areas at the NRM of year N-3, based on the priority areas identified in the Regional Programme Framework (RPF).** Due consideration should be given to projects of the previous cycle and the possible project areas for the next cycle. LCs will be appointed for the decided project areas.</i>
		<i>Drafting of Pre-Concepts in identified areas by the LCCs</i>
	Review of Pre-Concepts by PAC and recommendation of Pre- Concepts to be further developed and merger of Concepts in similar areas.	Review of Pre-Concepts by PAC and recommendation of Pre-Concepts to be further developed and merger of Concepts in similar areas.
	Decision on the Pre- Concepts to be further developed at the GCM of year N-3.	Decision on the Pre- Concepts to be further developed at the GCM of year N-3, <i>taking into consideration the number of new projects that can be supported.</i>
Years N-3 and N-2		<i>Appointment of Contact Persons by GPs for each project they plan to participate in</i>
	Preparation of First Draft of Concepts by LCCs	Preparation of First Draft of Concepts by LCCs <i>in consultation with Contact Persons</i>
	Review and feedback by PAC	Review and feedback by PAC
	Submission of Second Draft of Concepts by LCCs	Submission of Second Draft of Concepts by LCCs
	Review of Second Draft of Concepts by LCCs	Review of Second Draft of Concepts by LCCs
	Review and recommendations of RCA PAC	Review and recommendations of RCA PAC
Year N-2	Individual Prioritizations by GPs	Individual Prioritizations by GPs
	Determination of overall prioritizations by PAC and recommendation to NRM of year N-2	Determination of overall prioritizations by PAC and recommendation to NRM of year N-2
	Decision on the Concepts to be further developed at the NRM of year N-2	Decision on the Concepts to be further developed as project designs at the NRM of year N-2,
	Submission of the Regional Programme Note by RCA Chair	Submission of the Regional Programme Note by RCA Chair
	Designing of the Projects by the LCCs and submission to the IAEA through the PCMF platform	Designing of the Projects by the LCCs <i>in consultation with Contact Persons</i> and submission to the IAEA through the PCMF platform

* N = First year of the TC cycle ** The PAC will provide a summary of the RPF to facilitate identification of priority areas.

The revised procedure to be placed in the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules is given in Annex 1.

4.0 Main Revisions and their benefits

a) Procedure for identification of priority areas

The proposed procedure envisages development of a Regional Programme Framework for a period of 6 years to be used in identifying priority areas for the RCA Programme. It will be developed based on the priorities expressed by RCA GPs and achievements of past RCA Projects.¹ The procedure for development of the Regional Programme Framework is given in Annex 2. The priority areas for the next TC cycle will be decided at the NRM to be held in the year N-3 based on the strategic priorities identified in the Regional Programme Framework. (N is the first year of the TC cycle)

The proposed procedure conforms to Section 1.1.1 of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules “All Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) shall be in areas identified by the NRs as priority areas for the region at the corresponding Regional Meeting of the NRs (NRM), taking into consideration the RCA Strategic Priorities “

This will a) enable the National RCA Representatives to be involved in deciding on the priorities at the very beginning of the process, b) enable long term planning, c) help identification of specific needs of special groups such as new GPs, and d) reduce the number of Pre-Concepts to be drafted and evaluated (from about 50 to 10-15).

The current practice of inviting Pre-Concepts from RCA GPs, which are prepared by various RCA stakeholders, who may or may not have a good understanding of RCA and TC requirements, the needs of the other GPs and of past achievements of RCA Projects, constraints the possibility to develop projects that meet the requirements given above in Section 2.0 and does not make long term planning possible.

b) Appointment of Contact Persons.

The revised procedure requires appointment of Contact Persons by participating GPs to collaborate with the LCCs in drafting Project Concepts and in designing the projects.

Contact Persons were appointed for the design stage of the RCA Projects for 2022/23 TC cycle. The revised procedure extends this to the Concept Stage to enable LCCs to take into consideration the needs of all participating GPs in drafting Project Concepts as well.

¹ Such a document titled “RCA Strategic Priorities for 2012-2017” was prepared and adopted in 2010 and had been used in the development of the RCA Programme

c) Elimination of the Second Round of Project Concepts

The current practice requires submission of a second draft of Project Concepts, which is a revised version of the first draft, containing revisions proposed by PAC. A value addition of this step was not observed by PAC in developing the RCA Programme for 2022/23, in comparison to the additional work load for LCCs and PAC.

d) Reduction of the number of Pre-Concepts and Concepts

The revised procedure reduces the number of Pre-Concepts and the number of Concepts. This will reduce the unnecessary work load for LCCs and PAC in drafting and evaluating a large number of Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts.

e) Simplification of formats for Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts (not indicated in Table 1)

In addition to the above revisions, PAC also intends to introduce simplified formats for Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts, requesting only the information required for their evaluation. The proposed areas to be covered and the evaluation criteria are given in Annex 3.

**PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RCA COOPERATIVE PROJECTS SUPPORTED
BY THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME OF THE IAEA**

(For the RCA GOR)

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME
NRs decide on 10-15 project areas at the NRM of year N*-3, based on the priority areas identified in the Regional Programme Framework (RPF). Due consideration should be given to projects of the previous cycle and the possible project areas for the next cycle. LCs will be appointed for the decided project areas.**	Q2 Year N-3
LCCs of selected Pre-Concepts prepare Pre-Concepts and through their NRs, submit to PAC for its review.	Q3 Year N-3
PAC reviews the Pre-Concepts and provides its feedback to NRs. NRs select Pre-Concepts for further development at the GCM of year N-3 taking into consideration the number of new projects that can be supported.	Q3 Year N-3
LCCs of selected Pre-Concepts prepare Project Concepts and through their NRs, submit to PAC for its review.	Q4 Year N-3
PAC reviews the Project Concepts and provides its feedback to NRs	Q1 Year N-2
NRs provide their prioritizations of the Project Concepts to PAC	Q1 Year N-2
PAC Prepares the overall prioritization and submits its recommendation to the NRM of year N-2.	Q1 Year N-2
NRs at the NRM of year N-2 decides on the Project Concepts to be further developed as project designs taking into consideration the number of new projects that can be supported	Q2 Year N-2
RCA Chair uploads to PCMF a Regional Programme Note outlining the Draft Project proposals for support under the Agency Technical Cooperation Programme.	Q2/Q3 Year N-2
LCCs complete 1st Draft Project Designs and submit to RCA PAC for review.	Q2 Year N-2
RCA PAC provides feedback to LCs and LCCs on review of 1st Draft Project Designs and also provides this feedback to NRs at GCM of year N-2.	Q3 Year N-2
RCA Chair uploads Draft Project Designs to PCMF for Agency review.	Q3 Year N-2
Project Design Meeting (PDM) undertaken with 1st Draft Project Designs upgraded by LCCs, TOs and regional experts.	Q3 Year N-2
Following PDM, 1st Draft Project Designs further upgraded by LCCs to 2nd Draft Project Designs and submitted to RCA PAC for review.	Q4 Year N-2
RCA PAC provides feedback to LCs and LCCs on review of 2nd Draft Project Designs.	Q1 Year N-1

RCA PAC provides feedback to NRs on the review of the 2nd Draft Project Designs made at the PDM and the subsequent following design upgrades by the LCCs.	Q1 Year N-1
NRM finalises selection of 2nd Draft Project Designs to be proposed for TC funding support.	Q2 Year N-1
RCA Chair uploads finalised Project Designs to PCMF for Agency review and consideration.	Q2 Year N-1
Agency review of project designs, preparation of budgets, decision on the projects / project activities that could be supported by TCF.	Q2-3 Year N-1
Submission of the projects selected for implementation to the Board of Governors for approval by the TC Department.	Q4 Year N-1
Information on projects approved by the Board of Governors conveyed to the RCA Government Parties.	Q4 Year N-1
NRs inform the RCA Secretariat of the project they wish to participate in, along with the resources available for project implementation and the contact details of the appointed NPCs.	End of Q4 Year N-1

* N = First year of the TC cycle

**The PAC will provide a summary of the RPF to facilitate identification of priority areas.

Procedure for Development of a Regional Programme Framework (Once in 6 years)

1. Conducting of a survey by RCA PAC to identify
 - a. Project areas that are of national importance to each GPs (areas in which there are national programmes or plans to establish national programmes)
 - b. New project areas that are relevant to GPs
 - c. Current status of application of technologies transferred through projects GPs have participated in the past. (status of human resources development, infrastructure developed, outcomes achieved and impacts if any)
 - d. Specific future needs in each project area (human resources development, infrastructure, standards / protocols, end-user involvement, other technical support)
 - e. Constraints faced in achieving sustainability and producing socio-economic benefits
2. Compilation of outcomes and achievements of past RCA Projects in each project area over the past 5-6 TC cycles (already done by PAC)
3. Form expert groups in each Thematic Area to review outcomes and achievements of past RCA Projects and to analyze the information provided by the GPs through the survey in order to identify RCA priority areas for the next 6 years (2024-2029), which shall include technological priorities and specific requirements in each project area. (eg. Project area – Radiotherapy: technological priorities- . IMRT, 3-D conformal radiotherapy etc. Specific requirements - Human resources, protocols, standards, laboratory analysis. The expert groups will also be requested to identify opportunities for TCDC and new project areas that could be relevant to RCA GPs.
4. Development the Regional Programme Framework (RPF) by RCA PA based on the inputs provided by the expert groups. The RPF also should contain an implementation plan, taking into consideration the need for long term planning for sustainable development of certain project areas.
The RPF should be approved at a Meeting of the National RCA Representatives

Sample Regional Profile Survey Form

(The Survey Form used in development of the RPF for 2012-2017)

Section 1 addresses issues of the effectiveness of the RCA project in addressing national priorities and proposals for future RCA projects. Section 2 considers the benefits of participation in RCA projects and the sustainability of the technology.

Section 1: General information

Government Party:

Name of National Representative:

Number of RCA projects participated in since 2007: (to be revised to suit the new period of the RFP)

The attached table lists the major thematic areas and associated project areas in the RCA.

1. Which of these address national priorities in your country?
2. In the table, please rate the importance of each project area to your country on a scale of 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).
3. Are there new project areas or technologies that address national priorities in your country that you believe should be included in the RCA programme?
4. Please add any information or suggestions that you feel should be considered in developing future projects in the RCA.

Section 2a: Benefits to Member States

For each of the project areas that your country has participated in, please consult with the National Project Coordinator to complete the following.

Relevant Project Area:

1. Are there any national programme in this project area: ☐ Yes / ☐ No
2. If not, will a national programme be established and when?
3. Availability of trained human resources: ☐ Available / ☐ Needs further development / ☐ Not available
4. Availability of physical infrastructure supporting the technology used in the project: ☐ Available / ☐ Under development / ☐ Not available
5. Availability of Protocols / Guidelines / Standards: ☐ Yes / ☐ No / ☐ Not relevant
6. Existence of national society / professional body (or equivalent) relevant to this project area: ☐ Yes / ☐ No
7. Have end users been identified: ☐ Yes / ☐ No, Involved ☐ Yes / ☐ No
8. Has participation in this project area been of benefit to your country?
9. If yes, please list the outcomes of relevant to your country.

Section 2b: Sustainability

1. What additional needs exist for your country to gain further benefits in this project area?
 - a. Human resources development ☐ Yes / ☐ No
If yes, please describe
 - b. Infrastructure ☐ Yes / ☐ No
If yes, please describe
 - c. Protocols and standards ☐ Yes / ☐ No
If yes, please describe
 - d. Technical assistance ☐ Yes / ☐ No
If yes, please describe
 - e. Other needs ☐ Yes / ☐ No
If yes, please describe
2. What constraints does your country face in achieving sustainability? Please give details.
3. What actions are currently being taken in your country to address these constraints?

Other comments (optional):

Major Thematic Areas and Associated Project Areas in the RCA

Thematic Area – Agriculture

Project Area	Area of National Priority? (Y / N)	Importance of the Project Area (Scale of 1-6)*
Land use – Soil Erosion		
Land use – Fertilizer uptake		
Animal Health and Nutrition		
Animal Reproduction		
Mutation Plant Breeding		
Food Irradiation		

* 1 = most important

6 = least important

Thematic Area – Environment

Project Area	Area of National Priority? (Y / N)	Importance of the Project Area (Scale of 1-6)*
Marine and coastal environment		
Development of water resources		
Air-Pollution		

Thematic Area – Human Health

Project Area	Area of National Priority? (Y / N)	Importance of the Project Area (Scale of 1-6)*
Nuclear Medicine		
Radiation Oncology		
Medical Physics		
Radioimmunoassay		
Radiation Sterilization of Tissue Grafts		

Thematic Area – Industry

Project Area	Area of National Priority? (Y / N)	Importance of the Project Area (Scale of 1-6)*
Industrial applications of nuclear tracers and sealed sources		
Radiation Processing		
Nuclear Gauges and Nucleonic Control Systems		
Non-destructive Testing		

Other areas

Project Area	Area of National Priority? (Y / N)	Importance of the Project Area (Scale of 1-6)*
Energy Planning		
Research Reactor Utilization		

Format of the Regional Programme Framework

1. Introduction
 - a. History of the RCA
 - b. Rationale for the programme framework
 - c. Development of the framework, work methodology
2. For past and current RCA projects (based on the survey)
 - a. Summary of achievements in each project area
 - b. Gaps identified
3. Future priorities
 - a. *Project area 1 (e.g. Radiotherapy)*
 - i. Rationale, discussion of the need and beneficiaries
 - ii. Technological priorities (e.g. IMRT, 3-D conformal radiotherapy etc.)
 - iii. Specific requirements (e.g. Human resources, protocols, standards, laboratory analysis)
 - b. *Project area 2*
 - i. Rationale, discussion of the need and beneficiaries
 - ii. Technological priorities
 - iii. Specific requirements
 - ..
4. Conclusions

Areas to be covered in Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts

1.0 Pre-Concepts

Areas to be covered

- a) Thematic Sector
- b) Overall objective
- c) A brief description (maximum 200 words)
- d) Alignment of the Pre-Concept to RCA Regional Programme Framework
- e) The role of Nuclear Technology in the Project
- f) Linkage to past RCA Projects in the same project area

Evaluation will be based on the above items.

2.0 Project Concepts

- Title
- Overall objective (one sentence) - Needed for the IAEA Regional Programme Note
- A short description (maximum 300 words)
 - Should describe links to previous projects, show there is no duplication with past and current projects in the same area, and justify the need for further projects in the project area.
- Project Outcome (one statement) - Needed for the IAEA Regional Programme Note
- Expected socio-economic impact
- Specific RFP priority (from Pre-Concept)
- Justification as a regional project (common problem, transboundary issues, adoption of common standards)
- Nuclear technology to be used (from Pre-Concept)
- Requirements for participation
- Roles of main stakeholders in project development and implementation
- Potential for TCDC activities
- Potential for EB funds

(A number of items in the proposed Project Concept format can be used in preparing the Project Document to be submitted to the IAEA)

Criteria for evaluation of the Concepts

Objective : To identify whether the Project Concept has the key features that would make it possible to be developed to an IAEA Technical Cooperation projects that meets needs of the RCA GPs and conforms to IAEA criteria.

- Degree of alignment with RFP priorities
- The specific gap / need to be addressed, in relation to past and current projects in the same project area
- Linkage to past RCA projects
- Expected socio economic impact
- Justification as a regional project
- Role of nuclear technology
- Suitability of requirements for participation
- Stakeholder involvement
- Potential for TCDC activities
- Availability of EB funds.

Present evaluation criteria (given in the first page of the current format for 2nd draft of Concept Papers

- Alignment with MTS
- Specific Gaps / Needs to be addressed
- Links to previous projects
- Duplication of current or previous projects
- Justification for the need of further projects in this area
- Justification as a regional project
- Role of Nuclear Technology
- Suitability of requirements for participation
- Stakeholder involvement
- Potential for TCDC
- Potential for EB funds