



REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



REPORT OF THE
53rd
GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING (GCM)
OF THE
REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH,
DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING RELATED TO NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (RCA)

**Meeting Room CR7,
IAEA Headquarters Vienna,
Austria**

13 September 2024

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ACRONYMS

ANPC	Alternate National Project Coordinator
CRP	Cooperative Research Project
DDG-TC	Deputy Director General, Technical Cooperation Department
DIR-TCAP	Director for Asia and the Pacific Division
DIR-RCARO	Director of RCA Regional Office
EBT	Extra Budgetary
FNCA	Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia
GCM	General Conference Meeting of the National RCA Representatives
GP	Government Party to the RCA Agreement
IAEA BOG	IAEA Board of Governors
LCC	Lead Country Coordinator
MTSC	Mid-Term Strategy Coordination
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPT	National Project Team
NR	National RCA Representative(s)
NRM	National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting
PCMF	TC Programme Cycle Management Framework
PPAR	Project Progress Assessment Report
QF	Quadripartite Forum
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCA GOR	RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules
RCA PAC	RCA Programme Advisory Committee
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RCARO SAC	RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
RCA-FP	RCA Focal Person
RRC	Research Review Committee
TACC	Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee
TC	Technical Cooperation Programme
TCPC	Division of Programme Support and Coordination
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
WG	Working Group

Introduction

53rd RCA General Conference Meeting (GCM) was held on 13 September 2024, in the IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria.

The Meeting was attended by 21 RCA Government Parties: Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), Cambodia (KAM), China (CPR), Fiji (FIJ), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Korea (ROK), Laos (LAO), Malaysia (MAL), Mongolia (MON), Myanmar (MYA), Nepal (NEP), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA) and Vietnam (VIE).

Mr Hua Liu (DDG-TC), Ms Najat Mokhtar (DDG-NA), Mr Deng Ge (DIR-TCAP), Ms Feng Dongxin (DIR-IAEA FAO Joint Center), Mr Gashaw Gebeyehu Wolde (SH-TCAP1), and Ms Khemphone Phaokhamkeo (RCA-FP) represented the IAEA.

Representatives of the RCARO joined the Meeting.

Mr Prinath Dias, Chair of RCA Programme Advisory Committee (virtual), also attended the Meeting.

The list of participants is given in **Annex 00**.

Opening

Ms Lili Xiao, RCA Chair and NR of CPR, opened the meeting.

Mr Hua Liu, DDG-TC, delivered his remarks (**Annex 00**).

Ms Najat Mokhtar, DDG-NA, delivered her remarks (**Annex 00**).

1. Adoption of the Agenda - RCAGCM(53)/1

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda (**RCAGCM(53)/1**) (**Annex 00**) with one issue added under Any Other Business and appointed CPR, AUL and RCARO to be the rapporteurs.

The Meeting adopted the agenda with one issue added under Any Other Business:

- **Discussion on the Rapid Review of RCA Governance: Guiding Documents, Working Groups and Committees (endorsed at the 52nd RCA GCM)**

CPR, AUL and RCARO were appointed as rapporteurs for the Meeting.

2. Actions from the 46th NRM by the RCA Chair – RCAGCM (53)/2

Ms Lili Xiao, the RCA Chair, provided a report on the follow-up actions of the 46th RCA NRM (Annex 00).

The Meeting took note of the presentation delivered by the RCA Chair on the actions from the 46th RCA NRM and highly appreciated the Chair country, CPR, for the excellent coordination of the RCA activities. The Meeting also expressed its appreciation to the Chairs' Committee, the Secretariat and the RCA Regional Office for their support.

3. RCA programme by IAEA Secretariat RCA Focal Person – RCAGCM (53)/3

The RCA-FP provided a presentation on the implementation of the RCA programme (Annex 00). Specifically, her presentation delivered issues on;

- a) Update on implementation of current RCA programme, including financial management, planned events, opportunities for technical experts for training events (courses, workshops and expert missions)
- b) Update on RCA Programme Development for 2026-2027
- c) The HRD strategy of Annex 10 of GOR and how it is monitored
- d) Update on RCA Social and Economic Impact Assessment
- e) Recommendations for Regional Cooperative Agreements from the IAEA OIOS Evaluation of Regional and Interregional Projects of the Agency's TCP related to resource mobilisation and coordination between RCA regional projects and TC projects outside of the RCA

The Meeting agreed on the significance of recording the results of the completed projects and endorsed collecting the summary reports once the projects are completed.

The Meeting took note of the update made for the RCA social and economic impact assessment that four areas are under progress (air quality, food safety, nuclear medicine, and hydrology) with the reports on air quality and food safety to be presented in the Q4 of this year.

The Meeting took note of the report by the RCA FP on the RCA programme and thanked the RCA FP for its comprehensive analysis, including gender data.

The Meeting took note of the implementation status of the current cycle (a total of 16 projects) and the preparations for the development of the TC projects for the cycle 2026/2027. The Meeting agreed on the importance of results-based management of the on-going projects and the need for good quality proposals for the new projects.

The Meeting agreed that for the 2028-2029 TC Cycle, to proceed with the call for pre-concept papers in mid 2025 and requested the RCA FP to develop a timeline, to continue the integrated, thematic approach.

The Meeting noted the continued challenges the RCA is facing with resource mobilization and encouraged GPs to further discuss and develop sustainable long term solutions.

The Meeting noted that the PDM planned in November this year needs EBT contributions if it is to be held in person. GPs should consider providing EBT. If this cannot be obtained, the PDM would be held virtually. The inclusion of all relevant stakeholders is a crucial element for the success of PDMs and the range of meetings across project lifecycles. These should include TOs, LCCs, interested NRs, Secretariat, project design team members and the PAC members, as relevant. The Meeting agreed to continue to consider virtual meetings as they are inclusive, collaborative and a cost-effective mechanism to help address funding gaps.

The Meeting noted and highly appreciated the contributions from several GPs, especially the newly-announced contribution of EUR740,000 by AUL to support RCA TC Projects including for Footnote-A TC Project led by AUL and participation of LDCs and non-RCA Pacific Island Countries to the 47th RCA NRM.

4. Concept note on pathways for new membership to the RCA by AUL and NZE (follow on from 46th NRM) – RCAGCM (53)/4

AUL and NZE delivered their presentation, the ‘Pathways Concept Paper for Expanding Membership of the RCA to include additional Pacific Island Countries’ (Annex 00).

The Meeting noted the ‘Pathways Concept Paper for Expanding Membership of the RCA to include additional Pacific Island Countries’ by AUL and NZE. The Meeting emphasised that a systematic and comprehensive approach should be developed to consider expanded membership including financial aspects.

The Meeting agreed that the incoming RCA chair invite non-RCA Pacific Island Countries to the 47th RCA NRM as observers. The Meeting agreed to encourage the IAEA to present at the Pacific Agriculture and Forestry week in Tonga in the week of 26 May 2025, to share the benefits from nuclear science and technology.

5. Report from RCA Programme Advisory Committee Chair – RCAGCM (53)/5

Mr Prinath Dias, RCA PAC Chair, delivered his presentation on the report of RCA PAC (Annex 00)

The Meeting took note of the report by the RCA PAC Chair.

Taking note of the intention of Mr Prinath Dias to resign from the PAC Chair by April next year, the Meeting expressed appreciation of his efforts and dedication to the RCA Programme for the last five years as the Chair.

The Meeting agreed that with the expertise of the PAC members on the RCA, the role of PAC as an advisory committee to the RCA NRs should continue. However, the Terms of Reference should be refined to include specific criteria of the members, duration of the membership, procedures to select a Chair, etc. The selection of the next RCA PAC Chair would only be possible after the refinement is completed.

6. Report of RCARO - RCAGCM(53)/6

- a) Report on the activities of the RCARO by the Director of the RCARO, including update on side events and booths at 68th IAEA General Conference and Ministerial Level Conference in November 2024 (**Annex 00**)
- b) Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO by the RCA Chair (**Annex 00**)

The Meeting appreciated RCARO for the hard work done, especially hosting the RCA NR Workshop and the support provided for the RCA side-event at the 68th IAEA General Conference and the exhibition at the TCNA Ministerial Conference in November 2024.

The Meeting endorsed the recommendations of the 39th RCARO SAC Meeting (**Annex 00**), including the development of a concept note on outreach and future partnership activities.

7. 47th NRM in Fiji in 2025 and the 48th RCA NRM in 2026 - RCAGCM(53)/7

FIJ confirmed that the 47th RCA NRM will be held in 2025 in Nadi, Fiji.

The 48th NRM may be held in **IND** in 2026, subject to the confirmation of the Government of **IND**.

8. Any other business

Ms Natascha Spark, NR of **AUL**, the immediate past RCA Chair, briefed on the ‘Rapid Review of RCA Governance: Guiding Documents, Working Groups and Committees’ which was endorsed at the 52nd RCA GCM.

The Meeting agreed to form a working group to follow up on the ‘Rapid Review of RCA Governance: Guiding Documents, Working Groups and Committees’ to prepare for the recommendations to be presented to the 47th RCA NRM, including the revised ToR of RCA PAC. The membership of the working group is as follows;

- **AUL** (Chair), **PAK** (Co-Chair), **ROK**, **PHI**, **MON**, **SIN**, **JPN**, **INS**, **CPR**
- IAEA as an observer

The Meeting reminded GPs that, as per GOR, for future NR meetings, the background papers be circulated and uploaded on the website at least four weeks before the meetings to give enough time to the RCA NRs for deliberations.

9. Closure

Mr Hua Liu, DDG-TC, delivered his closing remarks, as representative of the IAEA (**Annex 00**).

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