

10. RCA Management

The paper titled “Transitions in the RCA programme ownership and management” prepared by the RCA Co-ordinator, Messrs. A.K. Anand (India) and Dr. N. Choudhury (Bangladesh) was noted (Annexure-9). This paper gave an overview of the various aspects including the situation before 1995, RCA ownership, Thematic Programme Areas and Lead Countries, RCA Regional Manager, Structure for the RCA, and the Proposal for a Regional Office.

(i) Role of Lead Country

The paper on this topic was circulated earlier to MSs. Part 2 of the paper refers to proposed timing in terms of steps to be taken in submitting project proposals to the Agency for funding for a given project cycle.

Mr. Peter Airey (IAEA consultant) presented the paper as circulated and mentioned that there are no deviations from the already approved documents on the subject (Annexure-10). A time schedule for RCA Programme formulation was worked out as a maximum of 36 weeks. Indonesia emphasized that it was very important to actively involve the Technical Officers to shape and formulate the projects along with the Project Committee. The Technical Officer (TO) should be present during Project Formulation Meetings (PFM). The Chairman felt that the Lead Countries should interact with the RCA Office to schedule such meetings suitably.

Designation of Lead Countries for new projects: The participants decided that details of RRUs and names of the project co-ordinators for the new projects should be provided by MSs, if not already done, to the RCA Co-ordinator immediately. The project committee can consider and decide about the Lead Country/RRU as decided earlier. It was noted that the questionnaire circulated earlier could be used for a self-assessment of the RRUs. Pakistan offered the following two organizations as RRUs to be considered by the appropriate project committees, and would submit the completed questionnaire for RRUs:

1. INMOL: Distance Learning in Nuclear Medicine Technologies
2. PINSTECH: Dam Safety & Sustainability

(ii) Local Operating Costs

The paper on this topic was prepared to address the concern related to Agency support for local operating costs of implementing project activities.

The RCA Co-ordinator presented the paper he had prepared on the subject and indicated the estimated amounts of in-kind contributions from MSs. (Annexure-11).

The paper called attention to the RCA operating rules and guidelines regarding the obligations of MSs to provide to the extent feasible support of local operating costs for events they are hosting.

Australia remarked that the amount of in-kind contribution is an indication of the involvement of MSs. In view of the variation of dollar values, it could only represent a guide.

The Chairman invited the attention of the participants to the conclusions given in the paper. Australia noted that in past UNDP projects, notional amounts had been allocated for in-kind costs of implemented activities. The participants decided that local operating costs should be taken as an in-kind contribution from a MS.

(iii) Outsourcing and Designation of Cost-free Experts, National Consultants

The meeting conducted detailed discussion on the above two topics with reference to the paper circulated by the RCA Co-ordinator (Annexure12). It was noted that the recent seminar “Sustainability of Nuclear Institutes” by Malaysia was an example of outsourcing. Australia noted that outsourcing had been examined by the Agency’s Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation (SAGTAC). There were a number of issues to be considered including the process being fully transparent. Philippines and Pakistan felt that rules needed to be developed for decision making about outsourcing especially if two or more MSs come forward to implement the same task. The Chairman noted that the issue should be implemented carefully. Outsourcing was another way of increasing the participation of MSs and for the time being the procedures and guidelines adopted by the Agency could be the starting point for future refinement.

The RCA Co-ordinator emphasized that cost-free experts were needed for taking care of the enhanced workload in the RCA office. The Republic of Korea assured the others that it would further support RCA activities with cost-free experts. It was noted that with a zero growth budget it was difficult for the RCA office to implement the increased activities and options such as cost-free experts and national consultants would provide a positive contribution .

(iv) Korean Proposal for Establishment of a Regional RCA Office

The RCA Co-ordinator advised that the Korean proposal for establishing a regional RCA office had already been circulated and comments received (Annexure-13). The Republic of Korea presented the sequence of events on this subject leading to Korea’s offer to establish a Regional RCA Office in the Republic of Korea. New Zealand thanked Korea and appreciated their generous offer while noting that the comments received needed serious consideration. Indonesia supported the proposal in principle and noted that although the issue had been discussed on earlier occasions, there had been no definite proposal. This time Korea had made an offer with strong financial and

functional commitments. Australia said that it had proposed the idea some years ago primarily to strengthen the profile of the RCA in the region and to promote co-operation with other regional and funding bodies.

Australia considered that there was no need to amend the RCA Agreement since the concept of a Regional office was only an administrative arrangement to implement the essential elements of the RCA objectives. India, Malaysia, and Pakistan remarked that the functions of the Regional office and RCA office in Vienna would need to be clearly defined.

The RCA Co-ordinator gave a summary of the responses received from MSs on this proposal. It was noted that the following questions and points needed to be fully considered and clarified:

- What is the role of the Chairperson of RCA?
- What are the relative duties and responsibilities of the Regional office and the RCA Co-ordinator in Vienna?
- The issue of the salary for the Director of the Regional office being met by his/her own MS.

After detailed discussions in which many members participated, it was decided as proposed by the Chairman and Australia that the various issues as mentioned above be considered by a committee consisting of Australia, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and the RCA Co-ordinator and submitted for further consideration at the 23rd RCA National Representatives' Meeting in Bangladesh.

(v) Review of Strategies to Implement the RCA Vision

Dr. Peter Airey (IAEA consultant) presented the highlights of his working paper which gave an overview of the Technical Co-operation Programme (Annexure-14).

Pakistan remarked that the TC Strategy and RCA Vision had different emphases and hence the TC Strategy criteria were not the same as for RCA projects. While appreciating the work done, Pakistan felt that it would have been better to focus on the RCA programme.

The Director, TCPA, remarked that though the RCA Vision and TC Strategy might not be identified with TC criteria, there were elements and parts of intersection. It was a very useful document and would help to identify the areas related to the RCA programme.

New Zealand noted that it would be very useful to discover the funding and priorities of other bodies.

Philippines informed the participants that they used the same benchmarking for participating in the RCA as well as TC Programme and was also associated in the ADB programmes.

Australia concurred that the document was very useful while discussing priorities and added that the decisions of the Malaysia meeting should be interlinked.

Sri Lanka felt that the project co-ordinators should be trained in these aspects.

Mr. Razley, Head, East Asia & Pacific Section, IAEA, thanked Mr. Peter Airey for the useful work and felt that the paper could be further discussed in the Bangladesh meeting.

11. Tripartite Meeting – Transfer of Technology

The RCA Co-ordinator invited attention to the proposed agenda of the Tripartite meeting which was already circulated. The participants agreed to the agenda and to the designation of Australia, China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore as participants in the Tripartite meeting.

The Chairman presented the overview of the two success stories on UMMB and Gamma Scanning (Annexure-15).

Indonesia felt that the socio-economic impact of the UMMB project should be emphasized. A set of proposed criteria for technology transfer prepared by Philippines and Malaysia was presented (Annexure-16). It was suggested that both the countries should further elaborate items 10 and 11 of the proposed criteria.

12. Other topics

(i) Update on Safe Transport Survey

The RCA Co-ordinator advised that more information was expected in the next few weeks from the Transport Safety Unit of the IAEA.

(ii) Role of Research in RCA Programme

Japan advised that the paper had been circulated and it could be discussed in the next RCA Working Group Meeting. Indonesia added that the paper had only been recently circulated and needed to be considered in detail. Indonesia emphasized the following points:

- There is a range of countries from developing to well developed in the region.
- The new technologies have to be promoted to end-users.

- In many cases, while implementing the project or transferring these state-of-the-art technologies, a certain amount of capacity building becomes essential.
- RCA programmes should include components of R&D and capacity building.

Japan said that a revised paper would be prepared for presentation at the next meeting of National Representatives.

(iii) Report on Meeting of the Forum for Nuclear Co-operation in Asia (FNCA) attended by the RCA Co-ordinator

The RCA Co-ordinator briefed the participants about the FNCA meeting which he attended in Japan, March 7-8, 2000. He informed the participants that the RCA activities in Japan were handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) while those of FNCA were handled by the Science & Technology Agency (STA). The Chairman requested Japan and other RCA MSs who are also members of FNCA to ensure that the programmes were not duplicated. Japan assured the participants that there was no duplication and the RCA Co-ordinator was invited for synergistic reasons.

Australia, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea also informed the participants that there were no duplications and the programmes should be supportive to each other and should be harmonized. The Republic of Korea said that a high-level delegation had been invited from the Agency¹⁸ to the Thailand meeting proposed in November. As requested by the Chairman, the Director of TCPA agreed to look into the matter and convey the views of the RCA meeting. MSs were also requested to convey their views, if any.

(iv) Extension of RCA Agreement

As proposed by New Zealand, it was decided that the RCA Secretariat would issue a letter to MSs in this regard.

(v) 23rd RCA Meeting of National Representatives

The RCA Co-ordinator informed the participants that Bangladesh had confirmed its agreement to host the 23rd RCA National Representatives Meeting at Dhaka during March 18-20, 2001.

(vi) Consultative Meeting of International and Regional Organizations

¹⁸ The Agency has designated the DDG-TC as its representative to the Meeting

The RCA Co-ordinator informed the participants that this meeting will take place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from March 21-22, 2001, after the 23rd RCA National Representatives Meeting.

(vii) RCA and Non-RCA Projects

The paper giving the details of RCA and non-RCA projects was presented by the RCA Co-ordinator (Annexure-17). The participants felt that the need for two types of projects in the RCA region needed to be considered and discussed in detail.

(viii) Briefing of Missions on 23 August 2000

A report of the briefing of Missions already circulated was noted.

13. Closing

The Director, TCPA, congratulated the meeting participants for successfully concluding a long agenda and for fruitful discussions. The Chairman thanked all members for their co-operation. He specially thanked the RCA office staff members for their strong support.