

THE ROLE OF LEAD COUNTRIES WITHIN THE RCA

Revised

Part 1: *The Lead Country Concept within the Management of RCA Projects* is copied from official RCA documentation. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Countries in detail.

Part 2: *The Role of the Lead Country in the approval of an RCA Project Proposal*

Part 3: *Regional Resource Units*

Acknowledgement: Apart from Part 2, the information has been copied from selected RCA documentation. The ultimate aim is to produce a handbook on the role of Lead Countries within RCA.

PART 1

THE LEAD COUNTRY CONCEPT WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT OF RCA PROJECTS

1. The Lead Country Concept

The Lead Country concept within the RCA Programme is a logical extension of the initiative by Member States to accept more management responsibility for Programme Activities¹. The Lead Country concept enhances regional ownership and the accountability of Member States from the formation of a project concept through to its final evaluation.

The implementation of the Lead Country concept will assist regional manpower development and allow key personnel from Member States to gain experience in the design, management and implementation of technical projects at a regional level. This is consistent with Recommendation 9 from the Working Paper on “A Review of the Management Structure of the RCA Programme and Proposals for the Future”. This recommended that the RCA, with the assistance of the Agency, develop a strategy to enhance skills within the region for R&D management.

The Lead Country concept described in this paper is based on the following principles:

- ❑ it would operate within the Articles of the RCA Agreement and accepted RCA practice and in conformity with the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules;
- ❑ each project (sub-project in the case of large projects) would have one Lead Country responsible from the initiation to the implementation stage of the project;
- ❑ the IAEA would be responsible for the implementation of project activities and for all financial aspects of the project expenditure;
- ❑ the Project Committees would maintain their roles in reviewing and evaluating projects, with the Lead Countries taking a facilitating role; and
- ❑ Lead Countries could be assisted by other Participating Countries, which would volunteer to carry out defined tasks;

2. The Role of a Lead Country

The role of a Lead Country is to :

¹ An attempt to illustrate the role of the Lead Country within the IAEA is illustrated in Annex 1.

- ❑ Provide the initiatives and managing all aspects of the project cycle;
- ❑ Take action on behalf of the Participating Member States to achieve a completed design, formulation and programming of an RCA project/sub-project or **Sector** Programme and oversee its implementation, technical progress and evaluation by the IAEA.

A Lead Country is not obligated to carry out all of the above actions itself. Where appropriate, the Lead Country should encourage other Participating Countries to assist with specific tasks. This assignment of an “assistant” role to Member States will help to develop a valuable management resource within the region by preparing other Member States to be future Lead Countries, especially but not restricted to Least Developed Countries.

The Lead Country concept cannot be effective unless Member States provide and support suitably qualified individuals as Lead Country Coordinators who have the demonstrated ability to provide the leadership, organisational and managerial skills for the particular project. In accepting the role of Lead Country, a Member State makes a commitment to the other Participating Member States to ensure that the project momentum is maintained and that the project aims, objectives and outputs are achieved on time and within the allotted budget.

It is recognised that accepting the role of a Lead Country will carry a resource commitment in supporting the Lead Country Co-ordinator. It is therefore recommended that the Lead Country role is spread around the various Member States who can meet the selection criteria.

3. Nomination of Lead Countries

The initial development of a project involves the preparation of a concept project proposal by one or more Member States. As set out in the RCA Agreement and in Section 4.1 of the Guidelines and Operating Rules, a Project Committee is established following agreement to the concept proposal by a Meeting of National Representatives, with at least three Member States signifying their intention to participate.

A Lead Country is nominated once a Project Committee is formed.

4. Selection Criteria for Lead Countries

Any participating Member State of the Project Committee may volunteer to be a Lead Country. A Lead Country must however meet the following minimum criteria:

- ❑ Nomination of a suitably qualified and experienced person to be responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to a Lead Country; this person will be designated as the Lead Country Coordinator;

- ❑ Guaranteed support from its own resources for the Lead Country Coordinator to carry out their duties;
- ❑ Ready access for the Lead Country Coordinator to good communication links for rapid contact with National Project Coordinators and the RCA Coordinator.

It is desirable that the Lead Country has demonstrated expertise in several significant technical aspects of the Project or **Sector** Programme, or a major National Development Programme related to the Project or **Sector** Programme. However designation as a Lead Country does not imply that a country has the highest technical capability in the region within the particular project field.

It also has to be emphasised that no additional funds will be forthcoming for Lead Countries. This was agreed similarly for the RRU concept.

5. Appointment of a Lead Country

The Project Committee is responsible for reviewing all offers from Participating Countries to act as the Lead Country.

The Lead Country recommended by the Project Committee must then confirm in writing to the RCA Coordinator its agreement to accept the responsibilities set out for the role. The RCA Coordinator will forward the recommendation on the Lead Country, together with the written confirmation, to a meeting of National Representatives. Under the RCA Agreement only the National Representatives have the authority to make such decisions on behalf of the Member States. The Lead Country concept is seen to be consistent with the Articles of the Agreement and reinforces the requirement for Member States to be responsible for their own programme (Articles I, III(1) and V(1)) as well as building on the project committee structures described in Article VI.

6. The Duties of a Lead Country / Lead Country Coordinator

The Lead Country acts on behalf and with the authority of the Project Committee and also reports to it at appropriate times.

A Lead Country will guide a project after acceptance of the original concept, through the project formulation process, and up to the implementation stage. The full project document is prepared by the Lead Country Coordinator and will have time schedules for all the implementation arrangements, draft terms of reference for meetings, expert missions and draft prospecti for training courses.

6.1 Prior to a Project Formulation Meeting

The Lead Country must consult with other Participating Countries and draft :

- ❑ A definition of the problem to be solved, suggesting possible aims, objectives and outputs to be the basis of the Project;
- ❑ A list of the available expertise in the region and outside the region;
- ❑ A list of likely end-users in each of the Participating Countries;
- ❑ Likely inputs in cash or in-kind;
- ❑ Possible outside sources of funding.

The Lead Country must also consult with the RCA Office for the Agency to :

- ❑ Assign a Technical Officer and seek his / her input;
- ❑ Seek approval to host a Project Formulation Meeting (PFM) in either the proposed Lead Country or another suitable venue;
- ❑ Solicit nomination of participants, who should include representatives of end users, where feasible, and the Agency's assigned Technical Adviser.

6.2 At the Project Formulation Meeting

At the PFM, the Lead Country Coordinator must ensure that participants :

- ❑ Identify and agree on the regional problem(s) to be solved;
- ❑ Agree on the overall plan (aims, objectives and outputs) to solve each aspect of the problem;
- ❑ Agree on the appropriate technical solutions to achieve the objectives;
- ❑ Define and agree on the resources available from each Participating Country;
- ❑ Determine and agree on the training needs;
- ❑ Establish and agree on a detailed workplan of activities and outputs, including schedules and budgets;
- ❑ Agree on responsibilities for each activity;
- ❑ In consultation with the Host Country, prepare a brief Meeting Report;
- ❑ Identify committed and potential funding sources; and
- ❑ Ensure that the project document meets the requirements of the IAEA or other funding bodies for both presentation and time scheduling into the applicable budgetary cycles.

6.3 Following the Project Formulation Meeting

Following the PFM, the Lead Country Coordinator must ensure that participants :

- ❑ Finalise a proposal, including a detailed prospectus for each training event;
- ❑ Obtain written confirmation from each of the Participating Countries to carry out their agreed roles;
- ❑ Submit the proposal to the RCA Office to meet TC and other any other funding Agency deadlines;
- ❑ In consultation with the Project Committee and funding agencies, refine the proposal for final approval by the Meeting of National Representatives and by funding agencies.

6.4 Implementation of the Project

The final project document submitted to the IAEA by the Lead Country will contain all the detailed implementing information to enable the project to be undertaken. The IAEA has the management responsibility for implementing the project to the agreed project plan. This will utilise the necessary benefits from Agency infrastructure, “privileges and immunities provisions”, links to UNDP Country Offices, etc. (The Agency may however use agreed mechanisms such as subcontracting to enable Member States to benefit from the experience of undertaking the implementation and gain increased self-reliance for the operation of the programme.)

These implementation activities are undertaken by the RCA Coordinator who is responsible for the use of Agency funds. The RCA Coordinator has a responsibility to each Lead Country to ensure that all activities are initiated in good time and that the necessary Agency administrative requirements are met. In addition the RCA Coordinator should provide an overview and ensure that the implementation procedures are occurring on schedule. The RCA Coordinator must inform a Lead Country Coordinator of any matters likely to cause problems in implementation.

The Lead Country Coordinator has the responsibility to ensure that meaningful reports are received from the RCA Coordinator for all implemented activities and that these are distributed to the Project Committee. The feed back on the implementation will form the basis of the yearly project evaluation by the Project Committee.

The Lead Country Coordinator must be in regular contact with the RCA Coordinator and the RCA Office to monitor the activities being implemented. In addition there should be consultation with the Technical Adviser to monitor the technical progress of the project.

The Lead Country Coordinator must report to the Project Committee on all aspects of project implementation.

In the event of problems within a project, the Lead Country should raise these issues in the first place with the Member State(s) concerned or the Agency, as appropriate. Then, if there are matters of substance arising, these should be communicated to the Project Committee.

6.5 Evaluation of the Project

The Lead Country Coordinator must arrange for the project to be formally reviewed by the Project Committee at agreed intervals (normally annually as required under the Agreement); and, similarly, must facilitate a final evaluation and report from the Project Committee at the end of the Project.

Any Agency project evaluation process should be conducted outside of this internal RCA process.

7. Relationship between the Lead Country and a Regional Resource Unit (RRU)

There is no automatic linkage between a Lead Country and an RRU, since the selection criteria for the Lead Country are not based on that country necessarily being at the highest level of technical standing for that topic.

The assignment of RRUs will be on the basis of agreed transparent guidelines and criteria. Like the assignment of Lead Country status, RRUs will not receive any financial or other benefit from being given such a designation. On the contrary such a position would normally result in the RRU donating resources to the project and thereby enhancing the TCDC contribution from that country.

In parallel with the need for Lead Countries to have written government guarantees of full support from their own resources for their duties, it would be appropriate for designated RRUs to be treated in the same way.

8. Tenure of a Lead Country

Normally the term for the appointment of a Lead Country is the agreed life of the Project or **Sector** Programme and/or the period for which funding has been guaranteed. However, for on-going parts of the RCA Programme, such as the Thematic Programmes, it may be appropriate for the project Committee to review the status of a Lead Country every two years.

Should a Lead Country wish to relinquish its responsibilities, at least 6 months notice in writing would be expected to be given by the National Representative to the other RCA National Representatives and to the RCA Coordinator.

9. Evaluation of the Performance of Lead Countries

The decision making organ for RCA is the Meeting of National Representatives. The Lead Country concept is an exercise in self-regulation and the long history of the RCA has shown that the RCA Member States have always been able to reach consensus agreement on issues. The Lead Country will be required to present a summary of actions taken by them in discharging their responsibilities.

PART 2:

The Role of Lead Countries in the Approval of RCA Projects²

A step by step process for the introduction of RCA proposals into the IAEA TC Program is set out in **Annex 1**. The process is consistent with the RCA Guidelines and the Document *Lead Country Concept within the Management of RCA Projects* copied as Part 1 of this submission.

A thirty-six week (maximum) schedule between the initial presentation of the proposal to the RCA and its submission to TC as a formal RCA proposal for appraisal.

PART 3: REGIONAL RESOURCE UNITS³

The concept of a Regional Resource Units (RRU) was developed to recognise that in RCA Member States, the national and international investments to establish and improve nuclear science and technology have often developed across the region in pockets of high level scientific and technical expertise, based around their investments in manpower and equipment. These resources have generally not being acknowledged for their achievements and more importantly have not being utilised to any significant degree for the benefit of the RCA Programme. The introduction of RRUs into the RCA programme was seen to have the potential to make a significant increase in TCDC; to increase the sustainability of nuclear science and technology at a regional level for Member States; to increase the “ownership” of projects by Member States; and as a cost effective mechanism to deliver project activities.

The definition of an RRU was agreed at the RCA WGM held in Beijing in May 1996 and endorsed at the RCA GCM in September 1996 and remains a well-established expert group within a national organization, normally a National Nuclear Research Institute

- being in either a developed or developing Member State;
- being able to exercise a leadership role in projects/part projects through having high quality capabilities (eg analysis, tracer services, etc) which are available for use within the region;
- attuned to the needs of technology end-users, such as local companies, government organisations, etc; and

² This presentation arose out of discussions between Dr Nahrul A K M Rashid, MINT, National RCA Representative for Malaysia and Dr Peter Airey, ANSTO, Lead Country Coordinator, Marine Project RAS/8/083.

³ Copied from Annex 14 of the 22nd Meeting of RCA National Representatives Mumbai Feb-Mar 2000.

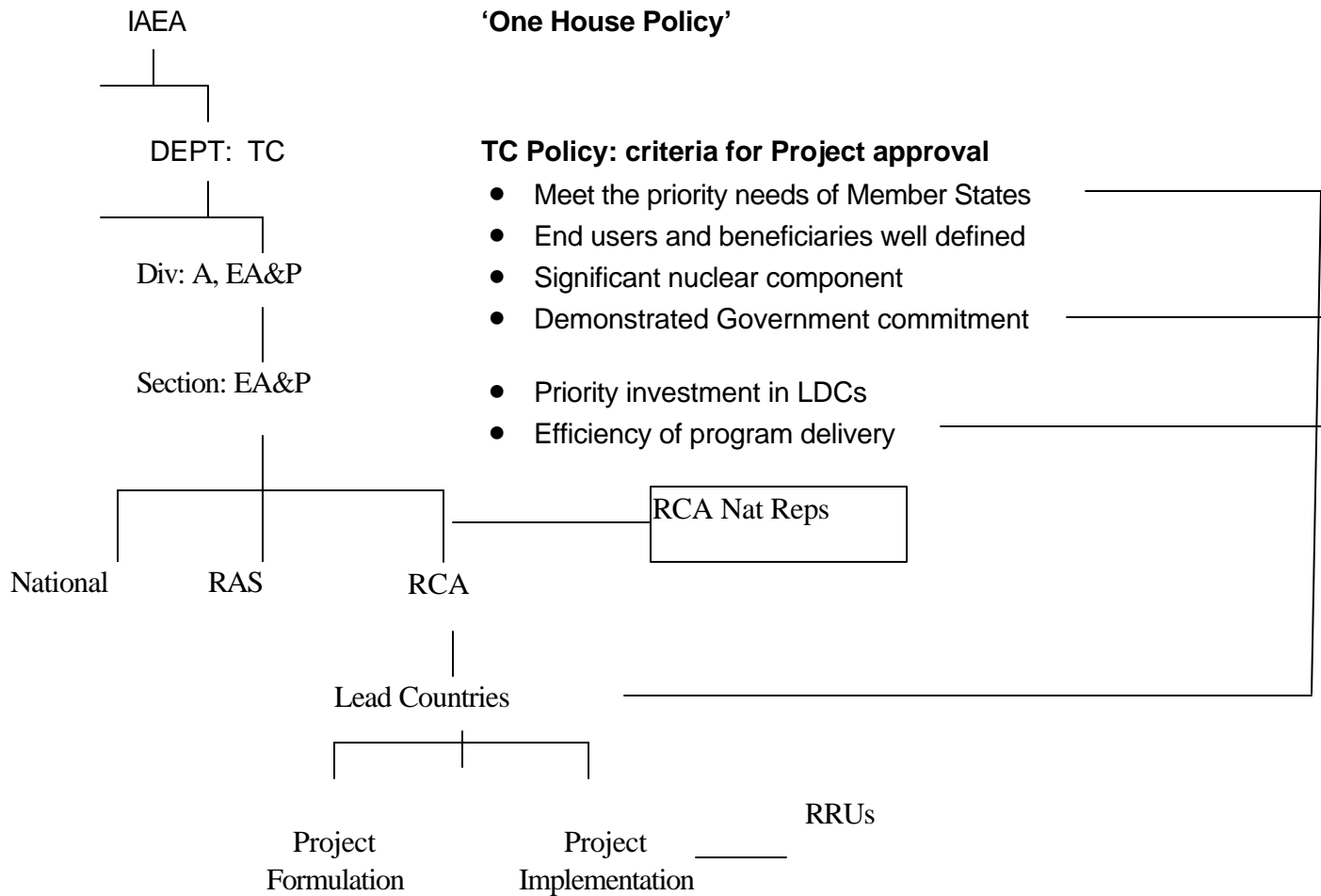
- able to carry out IAEA contracts, provide “hands on” training for other Member States (TCDC), assess project proposals, etc.

The criteria for RRUs should include:

- willingness to share in regional activities;
- scientific excellence in a technique (publication record, modern equipment, standards of measurements, etc);
- a suitable number of trained staff;
- sufficient ongoing projects to ensure that skills are regularly used and updated;
- part of a well-supported national programme; and
- administratively well-supported within their NNRI.

ANNEX 1: THE LEAD COUNTRY CONCEPT

The role of Lead Countries within the IAEA



Lead Countries – Policy Documents

- RCA Operating Rules and Guidelines
- Lead Countries within the Management of RCA Projects
- Working Paper on the Lead Country Concept for the 1999 RCA/GC Meeting

ANNEX 2: INCORPORATION OF AN RCA PROPOSAL INTO THE TC PROGRAMME

Milestone	Time (week)	Comment
1. New proposal	0	A new proposal ⁽¹⁾ may be presented by an RCA Member State through the RCA National Representative
1.1 Initial review	2	The project document is submitted to the National Coordinators ⁽²⁾ for the particular technology sector involved.
1.2 Circulation of the revised proposal	10	The proposal will be revised by the proponent on the basis of comments received. The document will be circulated by the RCA Coordinator to the RCA National Representatives at least 8 weeks before their next Meeting ⁽³⁾ .
2. Meeting of RCA National Representatives	18	This procedure complies with Section 4 of the RCA Guidelines. The Project Committee will be established if 3 or more RCA member States have expressed interest.
2.1 Appointment of a Project Committee and an interim Project Committee chair. The Committee should include an IAEA Representative.	18	
2.2 Nomination of a Lead Country	18	
3. Meeting of the Project Committee ⁽⁴⁾ for the preparation of the detailed project proposal Appointment of a Lead Country	32	The Lead Country will be responsible to the Project Committee for the preparation of a full project proposal in accordance with TC requirements.
3.1 Circulation of a detailed Project Proposal to RCA representatives	34	
4. Submission of the proposal to TC by the RCA Coordinator for full appraisal and approval	36	The RCA project will undergo appraisal in accordance with normal TC Procedures.

NOTES

(1) The project proposal should be in the form of Project Document which should to the extent possible contain the following elements:

- Description of the regional dimension of the project with particular reference to how the project will respond to the particular needs of the country;
- Justification from the scientific and technical points of view with special reference to the use of nuclear technology;

- Description of the attainable and measurable objectives and the expected impact on the end users and project beneficiaries;
- Description of the inputs and outputs of the various components of the project;
- Estimate of the project duration and budget.

(2) The National Coordinators will ensure that the proposal is in line with RCA sector programme objectives.

(3) A period of 8 weeks is required to allow the RCA representatives to decide whether their country wishes to be involved.

(4) The Project Committee will either act as a Project Formulation Meeting (PFM) or meet concurrently with the PFM.