



46th RCA National Representatives Meeting, 14-17 May 2024, Beijing, China

RCA Committee of Chairs

Rapid Review

RCA Technical Cooperation Programme

*Procedure and Process of
Developing and Selecting the RCA
Technical Cooperation Programme*



Rapid Review Context



- The 52nd RCA General Conference Meeting requested a rapid review by the Committee of Chairs to assess the procedure and process of developing and selecting the RCA TC programme.
- Concerns were raised about the current lengthy and inefficient project selection process, prompting the need for a shorter and more efficient approach to project development.
- The review was requested to include an evaluation of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules to ensure alignment with the needs of Government Parties (GPs) in developing the RCA Technical Cooperation Programme.
- The rapid review addresses the pre-concept and concept stages of RCA projects supported by the IAEA.

Current Context for Developing Projects for the RCA TC Programme



- RCA's TC programme development process relies on key documents including the RCA Treaty level Agreement, RCA GORs, and the RCA Regional Programme Framework (RPF), setting out thematic priorities and procedural guidelines for project selection.
- The RCA GOR outlines a methodical two-step process, including pre-concept and concept stages, ensuring rigorous evaluation and alignment with IAEA guidelines and regional priorities.
- The RCA 2022 Ministerial Declaration reaffirms dedication to cooperation among Government Parties (GPs) and with the IAEA, emphasising inclusivity, accountability, and adaptability to emerging challenges.
- Projects under the RCA TC Programme must adhere to IAEA guidelines, ensuring alignment with regional needs, national plans, and gender equality policies, with robust support and appraisal mechanisms in place.
- NRs have adopted an informal ranking process to aid concept to design stage consensus decision-making.

Benefits of the Current Process

- **Strong GP ownership and consensus decision making** - GPs take the lead in consensus decisions for programme development, showcasing exemplary government participation and ownership, leading best practice, and this approach can be celebrated by NRs.
- **Inclusive process that allows all GPs the opportunity to propose projects** - All 22 GPs have equal opportunity to propose projects, fostering inclusivity, and this approach can be celebrated by NRs.
- **Mobilises resources from stakeholders** - NRs mobilise resources from stakeholders through national announcements, information sessions, proposals from technical experts and NR advocacy for financial contributions.
- **Expert input through review and evaluation by an Advisory Committee, the PAC** - Thorough evaluation against established criteria assists NRs in deciding project progression, ensuring informed decision-making and project quality.
- **Ranking system at the concept stage** - Though informal, the ranking system aids in gauging GP preferences, facilitating collective decision-making and indicating projects with strong regional support.

Challenges of the Current Process and Recommendations



- **Loss of stakeholder engagement due to long time delays between stages** - Current process is 3 years plus and complex. Results in disengagement by stakeholders, priorities can shift over these longer time frames, while also hindering addressing emerging challenges for NRs and potential LCCs.
- Recommendation 1 Review the entire timeline for the development of RCA projects with a view to shortening the process.
- **Out of step with the IAEA TC cycle** - IAEA TC cycle is shorter with two steps over two years, offering guidance for concept development. Simplifying RCA programme selection could align with this shorter IAEA process.
- Recommendation 2 Building on Recommendation 1, shorten the development and selection process to align to the IAEA TC cycle, including removing the pre-concept phase and building in feedback from IAEA staff (such as TOs) in the proposal development phase.
- **Limited IAEA guidance for preconcept and concept stages** - IAEA guidance focuses on project design, while RCA applies higher-level criteria to pre-concept and concept stages. This approach may misdirect efforts and overlook critical factors like communication and risk management capabilities.
- Recommendation 3 Introduce specific criteria relevant to the specific stage of project development being evaluated, rather than relying on design level criteria for all stages of project development.

Challenges and Recommendations

- **Limited education on the practical role of the Lead Country Coordinator** - The current development and selection process overlooks the vital role of LCCs, failing to highlight their multifaceted responsibilities. Early education on LCC roles could ensure better selection and project success.
- Recommendation 4 Introduce a briefing session in the project development process for NRs and potential LCCs targeted at practical information explaining the project development process, selection criteria, the day-to-day expected functions of an LCC and the financial arrangements
- **Limited consultation between and amongst GPs** - Current approach lacks deep GP consultation in project development, hindering alignment with priorities and early identification of viable proposals.
- Recommendation 5 Consider creating new ways of working between GPs that foster collaboration, consultation and engagement in the early development phase of project proposals, such as regular virtual NR/NLO/NLA discussions on project proposals, creating smaller group discussions focused on thematic priorities (for instance, to develop a short-list of project proposals on a specific thematic area prior to NRMs/GCMs).
- **Unclear process for seeking feedback on evaluation** - Current approach lacks feedback from IAEA at pre-concept or concept stage, deviating from broader TC cycle whereby IAEA engagement by NRs and potential LCCs is possible. Engaging IAEA early could enhance RCA project development.
- Recommendation 6 Introduce a step in the project development process whereby there is opportunity for exchange between the IAEA and NRs and potential LCCs.

Challenges and Recommendations

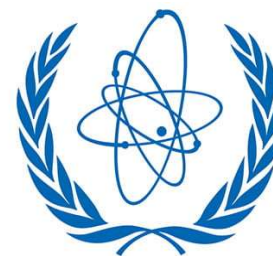


- **Lack of criteria for including needs of new GPs, LDCs and SIDS** - The criteria lack clarity on considering the needs of new GPs, LDCs, and SIDS in project development, hindering an inclusive regional portfolio.
- Recommendation 7 Introduce selection criteria on how the project proposal meets the needs of new GPs, LDCs and SIDS.
- **Lack of criteria for including gender equality** – The criteria lack guidance for NRs on gender equality in project development, such as collecting data on gender led proposals, gender equality strategies in project proposals, and involving gender equality experts in project proposal evaluations.
- Recommendation 8 Introduce selection criteria on how the project proposal meets gender equality goals.
- **Not comparable process to other development projects of similar value** - RCA TC projects, typically four years long with a total budget of around EUR 800,000, are considered smaller projects in international development. Simplification of the process, potentially eliminating the pre-concept phase, may be warranted.
- Recommendation 9 In line with Recommendations 1 and 2, considering removing the requirement of the pre-concept phase, in order to realistically reflect the financial value of the project.



46th RCA National Representatives Meeting, 14-17 May 2024, Beijing, China

Thank You!



IAEA



R C A