



**REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY**



REPORT OF
THE 42nd RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING

**Meeting Room M-5
IAEA Headquarters
Vienna, Austria**

**13 September 2013
09.00 – 19.30h**

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ACRONYMS

DDG-TC	Deputy Director General, Technical Cooperation Department
DDG-NA	Deputy Director General, Nuclear Sciences and Applications Department
DIR-TCAP	Director for Asia and the Pacific Division
DIR-TCPC	Director of Programme Support and Coordination
DIR-RCARO	Director of RCA Regional Office
GCM	General Conference Meeting of the National RCA Representatives
NR(s)	National RCA Representative(s)
NRM	National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting
LCC	Lead Country Coordinator
PMO(s)	Programme Management Officer
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RCARO SAC	RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
RCA-FP	RCA Focal Person
SH-TCAP1	Head of Section 1 of Asia and the Pacific Division
TC	Technical Cooperation Programme
TO(s)	Technical Officers
TCAP	Division for Asia and the Pacific

Introduction

The 42nd RCA General Conference Meeting (GCM) was held at the IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, on 13 September 2013. Thirty six participants from 17 RCA Government Parties; Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), China (CPR), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Republic of Korea (ROK), Malaysia (MAL), Myanmar (MYA), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), Republic of Palau (PAL), the Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA), Vietnam (VIE), representatives of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO), and the Chair of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development attended the Meeting. A representative from Laos also attended as an observer.

Mr. Ali Boussaha (DIR-TCAP), Mr. Oscar Acuña (SH-TCAP1) and Mr. Kesrat Sukasam (RCA-FP) represented the IAEA. Agency's Technical Officers, Programme Management Officers of TCAP1 and support staff also attended selected sessions of the Meeting.

The list of participants is given in **Annex 1**.

Opening

a. Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair

The opening session of the meeting was attended by Mr. Kwaku Aning, (DDG-TC) and Mr. Daud Mohamad (DDG-NA). Dr. Khin Maung Latt, the RCA Chair welcomed the participants and invitees. He also announced and welcomed the Republic of Palau (PAL) as a new member of RCA. He stated that the objectives of the meeting were to discuss the development issues of RCA since the 35th RCA National Representatives Meeting in Myanmar in March 2013. The Chair extended his gratitude to the IAEA for attaching high importance to the RCA, and acknowledged especially the support for effective implementation of the RCA projects and management of the RCA. He thanked the DDG-TC and DDG-NA, RCA stakeholders and IAEA colleagues for their attendance at the meeting. At the closing, the Chair encouraged active participation by all the delegates and declared the meeting open.

b. Introductory remarks by DDG-TC and DDG-NA

The Chair invited Mr. Kwaku Aning (DDG-TC) to deliver his message.

Mr. Kwaku Aning welcomed all the participants to Vienna and congratulated PLW for submitting an Instrument of Acceptance of the 5th Extension Agreement of the RCA.

The DDG-TC referred to the collaborative efforts between the RCA Government Parties and the IAEA Secretariat in the preparations and finalization of the RCA programme for the 2014-15 TC cycle. The proposed RCA programme would be tabled for the IAEA Board's approval in November for implementation from January 2014.

He emphasized the limited budgets for new projects and the necessity to mobilize additional funding outside the TCF. The DDG-TC thanked the RCA Government Parties for the good efforts and urged to continue exploring all possible avenues for securing extra-budgetary funding to support the proposed RCA programme.

Mr Aning praised the initiative taken by the RCA to review and update the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules (GOR), with the primary objective of guiding rational overall programme management and implementation. He assured the readiness of the IAEA Secretariat for pursuing dialogue and consultations, and looked forward to learning the outcome.

The DDG-TC commended the efforts to further improve the management of the RCA programme, the establishment of the Monitoring Committee for the RCA Programme Development. Further review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and setting would lead to institutionalization of the Committee, which would be useful for its effective function and contributions. He also commended on the forward looking strategy of the RCA to start discussing and developing the new priorities for 2018-2023 as well as the initiative for possible engagement with Pacific Island Countries, especially through the Pacific Island Forum.

The DDG-TC specifically referred to the on-going Fukushima marine benchmark study project (RAS7021), and the second annual project review meeting in Palau in August. He cited the meeting conclusion of significant contributions to enhance national capacities in radioactive monitoring in marine environment and in strengthening regional cooperation in this important field. He thanked the Member States for financial support to the project, and extended special thanks to JPN for additional financial contribution through the Peaceful Use Initiative (PUI).

The DDG-TC concluded by thanking the DDG-NA and colleagues in the Technical Department for their excellent cooperation and for the timely and effective provision of support to the Member States. He also assured of the IAEA's full support and of the strong commitment of the Department of Technical Cooperation to continue fulfilling its obligations under the RCA Agreement.

The DDG-TC's message is reproduced in [Annex 2](#).

The Chair invited Mr. Daud Mohamad (DDG-NA) to deliver his message.

The DDG-NA greeted the participants and highlighted the activities for capacity building and R&D in nuclear science and technology, which remained high on the RCA's agenda. He mentioned a few examples in the areas of food and agriculture, health, industry, water resources and the environment, emphasizing the on-going activities and the key outcomes.

Mr. Muhammad discussed the assistance of the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco, especially in the area of Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) management. He mentioned that the Philippines Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) is the IAEA

Collaborating Centre on HABs in the region. The DDG-NA referred to the issues related to coastal and marine environment, which would be the topics of the Scientific Forum, entitled “The Blue Planet – Nuclear Applications for Sustainable Marine Environment”. He invited the participants to attend.

The DDG-NA discussed the Director General’s plan to renovate the Nuclear Sciences and Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf in response to the Member States’ growing demands for increasing technological development. He underlined the need for Member States’ support for extra-budgetary contributions for the renovation.

The DDG-NA’s message is reproduced in Annex 3.

c. Group Photo

A group photo of all meeting participants was taken.

d. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair requested comments and suggestions on the draft provisional agenda, which had been circulated to the NRs.

ROK proposed to add a new agenda to discuss the amendment of the RCA agreement. AUL agreed with the proposal, citing that the 35th NRM agreed for NRs to table any proposals for revision of the RCA Agreement at the 42nd GCM. However, given the limited time,

MAL suggested to discuss only mechanisms for possible revision of the RCA Agreement including possible formation of a working group to work on this issue. INS, IND, PHI and SIN supported the proposal of AUL and MAL. IND suggested discussing the subject under the agenda item 14 “Any Other Business”, supported by MAL and subsequently was agreed by the Meeting on consensus.

The adopted Agenda is provided in **Annex 4**.

The Meeting adopted the agenda with amendments by adding the request of ROK to discuss possible revision of RCA under the Agenda Item “Any Other Business”.

e. Appointment of Rapporteurs

The Chair called for nominations for rapporteurs of the meeting. BGD and INS were nominated and endorsed. Both agreed to carry out this task.

BGD and INS were appointed as rapporteurs of the Meeting.

I. Reports on the Follow-Up Actions of the 35th NRM – RCAGCM (42)/1

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a summary of the most important follow-up actions derived from the 35th NRM. He emphasized that most required actions had been completed, and that the outstanding ones would be discussed under the respective agenda items at this meeting.

ROK enquired on the point 6 of the follow up action as to a number of proposals that had been submitted to the RCA Chair. The Chair informed that only one proposal had been received.

The Meeting took note of the Report on the Follow-Up Action of the 35th NRM.

II. Roundtable discussions with the TOs and PMOs on on-going RCA projects

The Chair invited the PMOs and TOs for discussions regarding implementation of the RCA projects. There was no issue raised.

The Meeting took note that there was no issue raised for the Roundtable discussion.

III. Arrangements towards implementing the 2014 component of the RCA Programme in 2014 – 2015 – RCAGCM(42)/2

At the request of the RCA Chair, the RCA-FP presented an indicative plan and arrangements for RCA project events in the first half of 2014. The plan was compiled based on initial agreements during the project coordination meetings, which needed to be confirmed by the proposed host countries. He requested to have the confirmation from the respective NRs within two weeks for further arrangements and timely implementation.

The Meeting requested the NRs of the proposed host countries to confirm their agreement to the RCA-FP by 30th September 2013.

IV. Proposed RCA Programme for 2014-2015 TC Programme – RCAGCM(42)/3

In response to the request of the RCA Chair, the RCA-FP presented the chronology of the RCA programme development for the 2014-2015. He informed that following the decision of 35th NRM, 7 new projects and 1 category B project for RCA programme management had been submitted to the IAEA Secretariat. Two projects and the category B project would be commenced from 2014 and the remaining 5 projects would be started in 2015. He also informed that 13 on-going projects from the 2012-13 cycle would continue to 2014. The RCA-FP drew attention to the footnote a/ component of the proposed RCA programme and referred to the DDG-TC's statement in urging the NRs to raise extra-budgetary funding to support the footnote/a component of the programme.

The PowerPoint presentation of the RCA-FP is given in **Annex 5**.

In the presence of the DIR-TCPC, Ms Ana Raffo-Caiado, the RCA Chair invited the DIR-TCPC to discuss the IAEA perspective regarding quality assurance activities and partnership initiatives. She discussed the activities undertaken by TCPC regarding quality assurance in the planning and development of the TC programme for the 2014-15 cycle. She also emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration and partnership with the UN and other agencies.

Her presentation is given in **Annex 6**.

The Meeting took note of the information and the presentations delivered.

V. Report of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development - RCAGCM(42)/4

The Chair requested Mr. Frank Bruhn, the Chair of Monitoring Committee, to present the report on RCA programme development. He reviewed the activities undertaken by the Committee, the key outcomes and lessons learnt regarding development of the RCA programme for the 2014-2015 cycle. He proposed a plan for the preparation of the RCA programme for the 2016-2017 cycle, including the continuing involvement of the Committee, and the proposed timetable and responsibilities of each party from the GCM date until the next NRM. His presentation is given in **Annex 7**.

The Chair thanked the Monitoring Committee for their good work. Referring to the RCA decision to have a maximum of 15 projects per TC cycle, the Chair stated that there would be a limitation to the number of the new projects for the next cycle.

The Meeting discussed the timetable proposed by the MC. SIN commented that the NRs should have the opportunity to review the proposed concepts before submitting to the Committee. INS shared the same view and supported the proposed timetable. AUL suggested adopting the proposed timetable, stating the need of coordination between the NRs, LCCs and NPCs at the country level.

DIR-TCAP expressed his appreciation for the preparation of a useful timetable, which provided the direction on how to proceed. He emphasized the importance of the regional cooperation aspects that needed to be assessed and reinforced. SH-TCAP1 mentioned the need for consultations among the potential LCCs and NPCs. The RCA-FP suggested learning from the experiences and lessons learnt from the previous cycle and considering ways for improvements.

AUL expressed concern whether the proposed timetable would fit the TC Department's time lines for developing TC projects. INS proposed to provide enough time to allow all member countries to look into the project concept and giving feedback, if necessary.

The Meeting discussed the thematic priorities for the new RCA programme. AUL suggested strict balancing of the number of projects for each thematic area, proposing to focus the new projects in the areas which were currently underrepresented. INS supported

the suggestion. The RCA-FP presented the RCA projects corresponding to the four thematic priority areas, stating that the Environment thematic area was currently underrepresented. PLW expressed the important to include projects related to water and environment.

PHI enquired on regional projects under non-agreement and the timing for preparation. The DIR-TCAP responded that the list of non-agreement projects to be continued to the 2016-2017 cycle would be provided. Non-agreement projects would focus mainly on radiation safety, human resource development for nuclear technology and support and pre-project assistance. Therefore, there would be limited projects for the thematic areas.

The Meeting endorsed the revised Timetable, which is given in **Annex 8**.

The Meeting also agreed that the new project concepts be submitted to the RCA Chair for subsequent forwarding to the Monitoring Committee by 1 November 2013. AUL suggested for each country to limit their project submission to 2-3 concepts. The DIR-TCAP emphasized the need of a process to ensure at all stages of project formulation and design the quality of the proposed projects and to achieve as well at an early stage the desired number of proposed projects. He also suggested referring to the IAEA's Guidelines for the 2014-15 Cycle that are relevant to RCA.

The meeting took note and agreed on the MC Report on RCA Programme Development and endorsed the revised Timetable proposed for the development of RCA Programme for 2016 – 2017. The quality of the proposed projects should also be maintained.

VI. Report on review and update of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules (GOR) - RCAGCM(42)/5a and RCAGCM(42)/5b

The NR of NZE presented a report on review and update of the RCA GOR. He discussed the results of the initial review, preliminarily proposed update of the GOR and recommendations on the way forward. He noted that update of the GOR, which had relevance to the new role of RCARO and the Monitoring Committee could not be done yet as the decision on these matters would have to be first made by the NRs. He proposed a mechanism to progress the review and finalization the update of the GOR, including the establishment of a Working Group (WG) and the timeframe. The suggested WG would be composed of five NRs, Director RCARO and Chair of the Monitoring Committee.

The RCA Chair extended his appreciation to the good work undertaken by the NRs of NZE and INS and invited comments of the Meeting.

PHI enquired whether the review also addressed the items that were included in the GOR but not covered in the RCA agreement. The NR of NZE clarified that as the GOR contains more detailed items than the RCA Agreement, the review included several items in the GOR that were not covered in the Agreement.

AUL agreed on the recommendation and on the establishment of the WG. CPR also agreed to create a WG and proposed Dr. Dongxin Feng as member of the Working Group. IND and BGD expressed the same interests and nominated Dr. Unni and Dr. Afroz Shahanna to be members of the WG.

AUL stated that NRs of NZE and INS should also be members of WG as they had been already assigned at the 35th NRM. SIN suggested including a representative from IAEA. The DIR-TCAP responded that the IAEA would be involved as appropriate and in fact the DIR-TCAP and the RCA-FP were already included in the proposed timeframe.

The Meeting agreed to form the Working Group to continue revising the GOR. Members of WG are NR of NZE (as the lead), NR of INS, Dr. Unni (IND), Dr. Dongxin Fang (CPR), Dr. Afroz Shahana (BGD), DIR-RCARO, and the Chair of RCAPAC.

The Meeting also endorsed the proposed timeframe, as in Annex 9.

VII. Review of the Terms of Reference and settings of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development – RCAGCM (42)/6

At the invitation of the RCA Chair, Mr. Frank Bruhn, Chair of the Monitoring Committee discussed the review and update of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and settings of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development. The main updates and recommendations, among others, included:

- a proposal to change the name of the Monitoring Committee to the RCA Programme Advisory Committee (RCAPAC)
- qualifications of the members of the RCAPAC
- membership of RCAPAC
- function of RCAPAC, meeting and reporting mechanisms

The presentation is given in Annex 10.

The discussions were followed with the focus on the proposed timelines, composition and mechanisms to select members of the RCAPAC.

ROK enquired on the status of the Committee members, and Mr. Bruhn suggested that the membership would be on personal capacity and should therefore be based on application and not nomination by a NRs. The DIR-TCAP suggested submitting CVs of the potential candidates to the RCA Chair through NRs for consolidation and discussions at the next NRM.

AUL suggested extending the current function of Monitoring Committee until the next NRM in order to properly handle the tasks. INS, NZE and PHI supported. With regard to the selection process, AUL suggested to consider it upon receipt of the nominations.

The Meeting adopted the proposed ToR of the MC and decided to establish the

RCA Programme Advisory Committee (RCAPAC). The composition of the Committee would be decided at the next NRM.

The Chair of the Monitoring Committee (MC) would circulate a Nomination Form to the NRs by 13th October.

The NRs could submit nominations of potential candidates to the RCA Chair until 1st February 2014, which would be circulated as a background document for the next NRM.

For the period until the next NRM, the existing MC would continue its work.

VIII. Proposal for RCA engagement with Pacific Island Countries – RCAGCM (42)/7

AUL gave a brief on the idea for possible engagement with the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) through the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), making a reference to the workshop conducted by the IAEA Secretariat in April 2013. AUL suggested the RCA to explore ways to effectively engage with the countries in the region, emphasizing that a number of PICs had become members of the IAEA in recent years, and more might potentially do so in the future. Collaboration with the PIF would be a useful mechanism for the RCA to engage on a regional basis. He also noted that a number of RCA Member States are either members or dialogue partners of PIF.

PLW, as a member of PIF, would host the next PEF Meeting and could assess the feasibility for engagement with PIF. The SH-TCAP1 thanked AUL for the initiative, sharing the experiences of the Cooperative Agreement in Latin America (ARCAL) that requested the Chair to approach CARICOM for cooperation. This could be a good example for RCA to try to enhance understanding and awareness of the PIF for possible cooperation.

AUL, together with NZE and PLW as members of PIF, proposed to continue to further explore the possibility for cooperation, citing the opportunity to possibly attend the PIF meeting next year. PHI supported the proposal and suggested possible participation of the RCA Chair at the PIF meeting. AUL suggested to further discuss at the next NRM as the PIF meeting would be held after the NRM.

The Meeting agreed on the proposal made by AUL and agreed to form a group represented by AUL (Lead), NZE, PLW and the RCA Chair to continue pursuing RCA engagement with PIF and report to the next NRM.

IX. Discussion on the process for preparation of RCA Strategic Priorities 2018-2023

The RCA Chair invited inputs from NRs as to how the Strategic Priorities should be pursued. The RCA-FP requested the NRs, who had been involved in the previous

exercise, to share their experiences. Mr. Frank Bruhn, Chair of the MC and the former NR of NZE shared his experience as the member of WG developing RCA Strategic Priorities 2012 – 2017. The processes which included technical meetings, expert assistance and involvement of the Technical Officers, were discussed.

INS reminded the importance to develop the RCA Regional Profile before going into preparing the Strategic Priorities. NZE supported to prepare the Regional Profile to review and assess the needs of the region, which might be different from the previous time. The DIR-TCAP shared a similar view on the Regional Profile, suggesting that the RCA should take stock of the achievements for self-assessment of the needs. The Profile should lead to assessing the needs for regional cooperation, which were different from the national needs and programmes.

SIN proposed to create a WG on this and volunteered to be a member. PHI, MAL, BGD and CPR expressed their readiness to be members of WG. IND and NZE supported the idea.

The DIR-TCAP suggested preparing a conceptual paper for consideration at the next NRM. INS also mentioned the importance to work on the RCA Medium Term Strategy, which could be handled by the same Working Group.

The Meeting agreed to form a Working Group on development of Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Strategic Priorities (SP), with members composed of NRs (or nominees) of PHI (Chair), BDG, CPR, MAL and SIN.

Conceptual paper of WG would be submitted by PHI (Chair) for consideration at the next NRM in New Zealand.

The Meeting also agreed to organize a meeting of the WG on MTS and SP in February 2014 in Vienna, concurrence with the meetings of RCAPAC and the WG on GOR.

X. Guidelines for recording in-kind contributions of RCA Government Parties – RCAGCM (42)/8

Mr. Frank Bruhn, the Chair of the Monitoring Committee presented the draft guidelines for recording in-kind contributions of RCA Government Parties, the background and the objective for recording purposes. He referred to the measurement of “in-kind” contributions used in the previous UNDP supported RCA Industrial Project, which could be a good example. He also recommended a formula and recording template to record the in-kind contributions.

His presentation is given in **Annex 11**.

PHI expressed appreciation on the good work of the MC, and enquired if the cost of project implementation at the country level could be also recorded. Mr. Bruhn responded that it was difficult to differentiate the costs of the project and the cost of regional events.

The RCA-FP indicated that the main interest of RCA was to record the in-kind contributions, which were provided by the Governments in support of the regional RCA events, and not for the local operating costs for project implementation at the country level.

PHI and MAL agreed with the Guidelines in its present form and emphasized the importance of recording in-kind contributions, especially to developing countries and suggested to deal with other additional aspects, if any, in the future. AUL supported. At the conclusion, the Meeting agreed to use the reporting template of “in-kind” contributions.

The Meeting agreed to the draft Guidelines for recording in-kind contributions of the RCA Government parties and endorsed to use the reporting template proposed by the MC for reporting the information.

The NRs were requested to submit the information regarding their countries’ in-kind contributions, using the reporting template, to the RCA-FP by the end of each year for incorporation in the RCA Annual Reports.

XI. Reports by the Director of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) and the Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee - RCAGCM(42)/9

At the request of the RCA Chair, the DIR-RCARO presented a report, highlighting the RCARO activities and the main outcomes achieved and the future plan. He also reported the outcomes of the RCARO Workshop on Strengthening the RCA/RCARO Activities and Its Efficiency, which was held in Seoul on 7-9 August 2013. His presentation is appended as **Annex 12**.

Report by Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Chairman of the SAC read the report of the meeting of the 17th RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC), which was held on 12 September 2012. The meeting was attended by CPR, NZE, MYA ROK, DIR-TCAP, SH-TCAP1 and RCA-FP. The DIR-RCARO and staff also attended. The SAC report is given in **Annex 13**.

The Meeting took note of the reports provided by Director of the RCARO and the Chairman of the SAC.

The Meeting commended the RCARO on its successes in promoting the RCA.

The NRs were requested to give comments on the draft of RCA Brochure by the end of September 2013.

The Meeting requested RCARO to prepare a strategic paper on potential increasing role of RCARO for discussions at the next NRM and to conduct a

questionnaire survey to obtain the views of the RCA MS.

XII. Holding of the 36th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in New Zealand in 2014

NZE confirmed that the 36th NRM would be held in Wellington from 1- 4 April 2014.

The Meeting noted that the 36th NRM would be held in Wellington, New Zealand on 1 – 4 April 2014.

XIII. Hosting of the 37th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in 2015

PAK informed their readiness to host the 37th NRM in 2015.

The Meeting noted that the 37th NRM would be held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2015 at a venue and date to be confirmed.

Any Other Business

ROK discussed their proposal for amendment of the RCA Agreement and the proposed draft amendment, which had been circulated to the NRs. He also proposed to establish a working group to attend to this subject.

AUL agreed to create a WG and to start the discussion at the 36th NRM, which was supported by INS, MAL and PHI. NZE suggested extending for 6 more months to receive additional proposals for consideration. AUL supported the idea, citing that the WG would be established at the next NRM. JPN stated that at the next NRM, it should only provide the time to discuss the amendment and not to make a decision.

ROK requested to include the subject in the agenda item of the next NRM. AUL proposed a specific agenda item as “proposed amendment to the RCA Agreement”, which were agreed by the Meeting.

The Meeting took note of the proposals, which were tabled by ROK.

The Meeting invited the NRs to table any other proposals by submitting to the RCA Chair by 1st March 2014.

The Meeting agreed to form a WG to consider proposals for amendments of the RCA Agreement after the 36th NRM.

The Meeting also agreed to include an item entitled “proposed amendment” to the RCA Agreement” in the agenda item of the 36th NRM.

Closing

The DIR-TCAP made an announcement on the departure of Mr. Kesrat Sukasam, RCA-FP, from the IAEA in mid November 2013 and introduced Mr. Sinh Van Hoang as the new RCA-FP. He thanked the RCA-FP for his dedicated works to the RCA. The RCA-FP expressed his appreciation for the very good cooperation and support extended by the RCA Member States, the DIR-TCAP and SH-TCAP1, and requested the similar support be extended to the new RCA-FP.

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

The meeting ended at 19.30h.