



**REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT**



**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY**

**REPORT OF
THE 41st RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING**

**Meeting Room M-7
IAEA Headquarters
Vienna, Austria**

**14 September 2012
09.30 – 19.30h**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Annexes

List of Acronyms

Introduction

- I. Opening
 - I.1 Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair
 - I.2 Messages from the IAEA
 - I.3 Adoption of Agenda
 - I.4 Appointment of Rapporteurs
- II. Report on the Follow-Up Actions of the 34th NRM
- III. Report of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development
- IV. Update on Preparations of the Proposed RCA Programme for 2014-2015 TC Programme
- V. Roundtable discussions with Technical Officers (TOs) and Programme Management Officers (PMOs) on On-going RCA Projects
- VI. Update on Status of Acceptance of the 5th Agreement to Extend the 1987 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA)
- VII. Reports by the Director of RCARO and the Chairman of the RCARO SAC
- VIII. Policy and Management Issues Related to RCA
- IX. Arrangements for the RCA Panel Discussion and the RCA Exhibition in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of RCA
- X. Holding of the 35th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in Myanmar in 2013
- XI. Hosting of the 36th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in 2014
- XII. Any Other Business
 - XII.1 Best Practice Initiative
 - XII.2 Invitation for a meeting from the Chair of AFRA
- XIII. Closing

ANNEXES

- Annex 1 List of Participants
- Annex 2 Message of the DDG-TC
- Annex 3 Message of the DDG-NA
- Annex 4 Adopted Meeting Agenda
- Annex 5 Presentation on report of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development
- Annex 6 Presentation on preparations of the RCA programme
- Annex 7 Feedback note for Regional Project Concepts for 2014-2015 TC Programme
- Annex 8 List of RCA Regional project events in 2013
- Annex 9 Presentation of the Acting DIR- RCA RO
- Annex 10 Report of the 15th RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
- Annex 11 Programme of the RCA Panel Discussion
- Annex 12 Presentation on the Best Practice Initiative
- Annex 13 Invitation for a meeting from the Chair of AFRA
- Annex 14 Follow up Actions

ACRONYMS

BoG	Board of Governors
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-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 41st RCA General Conference Meeting (GCM) was held at the IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, on 14 September 2012. Thirty eight participants from 16 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), the Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA), Vietnam (VIE), and representatives of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) attended the Meeting.

Mr. Kwaku Aning, (DDG-TC), Mr. Daud Mohamad (DDG-NA), 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.

I. Opening

I.1 Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair

Dr. Dongxin Feng, the RCA Chair welcomed the participants and invitees. She said that the objectives of the meeting were to discuss the development issues of RCA and to exchange ideas and experiences among the National RCA Representatives and delegates. The Chair extended her gratitude to the IAEA for giving the high importance to the RCA during the past 40 years, especially the support for implementation of the RCA projects and management of the RCA. She thanked the two DDGs, RCA stakeholders and IAEA colleagues for their attendance at the meeting, which reflected the recognition of the RCA as one of the most important components of the IAEA. The Chair concluded by encouraging active participation by all the delegates and declared the meeting open.

I.2 Messages from the IAEA

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

Mr. Kwaku Aning welcomed all the participants to Vienna and noted that this GCM also marked the 40th anniversary of the RCA. He stated that initial celebrations were launched at the 34th National Representative Meeting in Beijing last April and would be continued during the IAEA General Conference with a Panel Discussion and Exhibition. He emphasized that this would be a great opportunity to share the successes and achievements of the RCA, and that the RCA mechanisms had been proposed for consideration by the IAEA as 'best practice' in the TC programme.

The DDG-TC referred to the preparations of the RCA programme for 2014-15 TC cycle, noting that the development had followed the milestones and requirements stipulated in the Guidelines for the Planning and Design of the IAEA 2014-2015 TC Programme, and

that the proposed projects represented the region's highest priorities. He also commended the RCA's efforts to review and improve its programme development process.

The DDG-TC specifically referred to the RCA project on the Marine Benchmark Study on the Possible Impact of the Fukushima Radioactive Release (RAS7021), which was approved by the Board of Governors in June 2011. He cited that the annual project review meeting held in August 2012 highlighted significant progress in the enhancement of technical capacities of the participating countries and the need of additional resources to respond to increasing demands for technical support. He appealed to other Member States and donors to provide financial support to this important project.

The DDG-TC noted that the 5th Extension Agreement of the RCA came into force on 12 June 2012, with 10 states having so far submitted Instruments of Acceptance to the IAEA Secretariat. He encouraged other states to follow suit and emphasized that being a Party to the Agreement was an official Government commitment to participation and effective cooperation under the RCA.

Mr. Aning commended the work of RCARO in enhancing the visibility of the RCA and strengthening partnerships with other stakeholders, and the efforts in reviewing strategies for effective contribution to the RCA programme.

The DDG-TC concluded by thanking the DDG-NA for his Department's cooperation and technical support and reiterated IAEA support to the RCA.

The DDG-TC's message is reproduced in Annex 2.

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

Mr. Mohamad greeted the participants. He noted the importance of the RCA annual meeting as a wonderful opportunity to review and acknowledge the contribution of the RCA to research and development, training and capacity building in nuclear science and technology in the region. The DDG-NA mentioned a few examples in the areas of food and agriculture, health, water and environment.

For food security, RCA projects had been able to improve quality and stress tolerance in a wide range of crops, using mutation techniques and biotechnology, as well as application of integrated mutation/soil and water management technology.

In the area of health, he emphasized the continuing efforts for capacity building in radiation medicine, introduction of the IAEA QUATRO methodology for auditing RT department, and clinical audits of nuclear medicine departments using the QUANUM methodology. The DDG-NA discussed the PACT initiative, citing that three of the IAEA's eight PACT Model Demonstration Sites are in Asia.

He commended the progress of work in the area of radiation processing, the training provided to the Member States, collaboration with UNIDO on cleaner production centre, and the eight IAEA Collaborating Centres operating in the region.

On the Fukushima project, the DDG-NA commended project progress in enhancing the technical capacities of the participating countries in marine monitoring and radioactivity measurements. He emphasized the important efforts on management of water resources, the studies undertaken within the region and the collaboration for data provision to the IAEA for integration in the global isotope databases.

Mr. Mohamad noted that this year marked 50 years of the nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf and that the DG planned to modernise this facility in coming years. He invited participants to the General Conference side event dedicated to the 50th anniversary.

The DDG-NA concluded by inviting participants to the joint exhibition by the Departments of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, Nuclear Energy and Technical Cooperation on ‘Making a Difference with Nuclear Technology’ and thanking everyone for their continued support of nuclear technology development.

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

I.3 Group Photo

A group photo of all meeting participants was taken.

I.4 Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair requested comments and suggestions on the draft provisional agenda, which had been circulated to the NRs. She suggested moving the item on ‘Policy and Management Issues Related to the RCA’ until after the item on the ‘Report of the RCARO’. This was accepted by consensus.

The Chair informed that under the Agenda Item ‘Any Other Business’, there would be two issues to discuss: an update on the ‘Best Practices Initiative’ and an ‘Invitation for a meeting from the Chair of AFRA’.

The adopted Agenda is provided in Annex 4.

The provisional agenda was adopted with amendments.

I.5 Appointment of Rapporteurs

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

AUL and IND were appointed as rapporteurs of the meeting

II. Report on the Follow-Up Actions of the 34th NRM – RCAGCM(41)/1

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a summary of the most important follow-up actions arising from the 34th 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.

AUL thanked the Secretariat, and especially the RCA-FP for the work done. Considering that many participants were attending the RCA meeting for the first time, the Chair invited the participants for self-introduction.

The Meeting took note of the report.

III. Report of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development – RCAGCM(41)/2

The Chair, on behalf of the Monitoring Committee, presented a summary of the report of the Monitoring Committee for RCA Programme Development. She provided a brief background of the RCA efforts to improve the programme development process and the RCA consideration that led to the decision for the establishment of the Monitoring Committee by the 34th NRM in Beijing. The Chair informed that in order for consultations with the concerned staff of the IAEA to be undertaken, the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee was organized on 13-17 August 2012 in Vienna. She thanked the IAEA for mobilizing the extra-budgetary contributions that made the initial meeting feasible. The meeting report that contained specific conclusions and 33 recommendations had been prepared and circulated to the NRs prior to the GCM.

The Chair gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining and discussing the conclusions and 33 recommendations to improve the quality of the RCA programme. The presentation is given in Annex 5.

AUL thanked the Monitoring Committee for their work and very thorough report, and asked how the GCM would address the recommendations in the time available. INS agreed that it was a thorough report and proposed the 41st GCM to address only the most urgent recommendations, recommendations 21, 31, 32, and 33.

AUL suggested to follow the proposal by INS and defer discussion on the remaining recommendations until the 35th NRM. PHI, IND and MAL supported this approach.

The meeting valued and welcomed the work of the Monitoring Committee and agreed to address the most urgent recommendations, recommendations 21, 31, 32 and 33.

The meeting also agreed to discuss the remaining recommendations at the 35th NRM.

Recommendations 21, 31, 32 and 33 were discussed at length in the meeting. While there was general agreement on recommendations 31, 32 and 33, the meeting discussed recommendation 21, which pertains to the total number of RCA projects that should be included in the 2014-2015 cycle. The SH-TCAP1 referred to the RCA's decision to have a maximum of 15 projects in each TC cycle, and that there were currently 14 projects in progress. The RCA-FP further clarified that there were currently 19 RCA on-going projects in the 2012-2013 cycle, 14 of which would be carried over to the 2014-2015 cycle. He further informed the Meeting that the IAEA Secretariat recommended seven new RCA project concepts to the design phase for the 2014-2015 cycle, and some of them could only start in 2015.

The RCA-FP suggested the GCM discuss and agree on the mechanism to implement the recommendations. AUL noted that the next Monitoring Committee meeting was proposed to be held in February 2013, one month before the 35th NRM. The RCA-FP indicated that in consideration of these recommendations, the preparations and submission of the RCA project documents would need to be done in full adherence to the timeframe stipulated in the TC Guidelines for the Planning and Design of the IAEA 2014-2015 TC Programme.

Significant discussion was held on the best timetable for submission of the project documents in accommodating the recommendations. It was ultimately agreed that the following timetable would enable appropriate time for submission and review.

Deadline	Activities
15 Nov 2012	LCCs submit drafts to the RCA Chair, through respective NRs, for forwarding to the Monitoring Committee (MC)
30 Nov 2012	MC send feedback to LCCs through RCA Chair
15 Dec 2012	LCCs submit final drafts to the RCA Chair, through respective NRs
15 Dec 2012	The RCA Chair submits the draft project documents, uploading to the PCMF IT platform
31 Jan 2013	IAEA feedback to the RCA Chair
15 Feb 2013	LCCs submit revised project documents to RCA Chair, through respective NRs, for forwarding to the MC
25 Feb 2013	MC feedback to LCCs through RCA Chair
8 March 2013	LCCs submit final project documents to the RCA Chair for subsequent circulation to NRs
19-22 March 2013	Discussion and approval at the 35 th NRM in Myanmar
28 March 2013	The RCA Chair submits final project documents, uploading to the PCMF IT platform

AUL pointed out that two of the four Monitoring Committee members (Dr. John Easey and Dr. Frank Bruhn, former NR of NZE, who moved to a post in AUL earlier in 2012) were from Australia and enquired whether a broader representation of the Committee

would be required. The Chair sought the opinion of the meeting and it was agreed to include the NR of IND as an additional member.

With regard to a mechanism for the Monitoring Committee to function properly and with less expense, the meeting recommended to use on-line correspondences instead of conducting physical meetings.

The meeting agreed on the involvement of the Monitoring Committee in the design stage for finalization of the programme and decided to include the NR of IND as an additional member to the Monitoring Committee.

The meeting endorsed the above timetable for preparation and submission of the RCA project documents.

IV. Update on Preparations of the Proposed RCA Programme for 2014-2015 TC Programme – RCAGCM(41)/3

At the request of the Chair, the RCA-FP gave an update on the preparations of the RCA programme. He presented a chronological order of the exercise, including the time table, the list of 11 RCA project concepts submitted to the IAEA and outcome of the IAEA assessment through provision of the 'Feedback Note for Regional Concepts for the 2014-2015 TC Cycle' ('the Feedback Note'). He indicated that the Feedback Note had been submitted to the Chair, who subsequently circulated to all NRs at end of August 2012. He also suggested the RCA to take into consideration the specific technical and managerial comments made by the IAEA Secretariat before and during the development of the project design.

The RCA-FP also informed the Meeting that of the 11 project concepts that had been proposed by the RCA, seven concepts were recommended by the Secretariat for moving forward to the design phase. In addition, one additional Category B project on 'Enhancing the Management of the RCA and its Programme' had been suggested by the Secretariat.

AUL enquired if the Category B project would be included in the 15 projects referred to by the SH-TCAP1, or would be in addition to this number. The RCA-FP clarified that it would be in addition.

The PowerPoint presentation of the RCA-FP and a copy of the Feedback Note are given in Annexes 6 and 7 respectively.

The meeting took note of the RCA programme preparations and the comments contained in the Feedback Note.

The meeting requested the NRs advise their respective LCCs to take the comments into consideration in the development of the project design.

V. Roundtable discussions with Technical Officers (TOs) and Programme Management Officers (PMOs) on On-going RCA Projects

The Chair noted that a number of TOs and PMOs were in attendance at the GCM, and invited them to the discussions focusing on their areas of responsibility. The TOs and PMOs discussed their involvement and experiences in handling the RCA projects and activities

In discussions with the TOs and PMOs, the importance of timely submission of the nominations for training courses, workshops and technical meetings was noted. The NRs were requested to ensure adherence to the nomination deadlines for effective implementation.

The RCA-FP presented the list of planned regional events for the RCA projects in 2013, which included tentative schedules and potential host countries based on the discussions during the project coordination and planning meetings. He requested confirmation of the respective countries for hosting of the events.

The list of RCA regional project events in 2013 is included as Annex 8.

NZE noted that the LCC for the project ‘Improving Soil Fertility, Land Productivity and Land Degradation Mitigation project (RAS5055)’ had moved to Australia and asked whether NZE should acquire a new LCC or transfer the LCC role to Australia. AUL indicated that it was willing to become the lead country for the project, and that the existing LCC could continue in his role. NZE agreed to this suggestion.

The meeting took note of the list of planned RCA regional events for 2013, and requested the NRs to confirm their agreement of hosting the events to the RCA-FP by 10 October 2012.

The Lead Country of the RAS5055 project would be transferred from NZE to AUL with the existing LCC continuing his role.

VI. Update on Status of Acceptance of the 5th Agreement to Extend the 1987 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA) – RCAGCM(41)/4

The Chair requested the RCA-FP to provide an update. The RCA-FP informed the Meeting that the 5th Extension Agreement came into force on 12 June 2012 and that ten Governments had submitted Instruments of Acceptance to the Secretariat as at the time of the GCM. He reiterated the importance of being Party to the Agreement and referred to the DDG-TC’s welcoming message that being a Party to the Agreement was an official Government commitment to participation and effective cooperation under the RCA.

AUL, CPR and PHI informed the Meeting that their respective acceptances were in progress and could be expected shortly.

The meeting encouraged Member States which had not done so to submit Instruments of Acceptance to the IAEA Secretariat as soon as possible. The meeting also requested respective NRs to co-ordinate the submission as necessary.

VII. Reports by the Director of RCARO and the Chairman of the RCARO SAC – RCAGCM(41)/5

Report by the Acting Director of RCARO

The Acting DIR-RCARO, Mr Jin Kyu Lim, presented a report on the activities of the RCARO, with specific reference to the 34th NRM decisions relevant to the RCARO 2012 Work Plan. He discussed the outcomes of the RCARO Strategic Workshop held on 10-12 July 2012, preparation of the RCA Success Stories, and arrangements for the RCA exhibition in celebration of the 40th RCA Anniversary.

His presentation is given in Annex 9.

JPN sought clarification regarding the legal status of the RCARO stipulated in the report of the RCARO Strategic Workshop. The Acting DIR-RCARO clarified that RCARO sought formal international legal status like the IAEA in order to carry out its mandate more effectively. JPN expressed concerns and difficulty in supporting such idea, explaining specific reasons.

With regard to the pre-mature departure of Dr. Mun-Ki Lee, former DIR-RCARO, the Acting DIR-RCARO a plan for recruitment of the new DIR-RCARO, making reference to the Guidelines on the Selection and Appointment of the DIR-RCARO approved by RCA in 2007. He informed the Meeting that the plan had been discussed at the SAC, and on the recommendation of the SAC, the following time table was proposed for consideration by the GCM.

- 1 October to 15 January – Advertise the vacancy notice
- October to November – Form a selection committee
- January to February – Shortlist candidates
- March – Report of RCARO SAC to NRM for endorsement

ROK stated that it was difficult for RCARO to fulfill its mandate without a permanent Director and recommended endorsing the proposed approach. PHI and AUL expressed their agreement. CPR enquired whether the GCM had the authority to approve a selection process. ROK indicated that the RCA could only appoint the DIR-RCARO at the GCM or the NRM, and thus this GCM needed to approve the proposed plan and process in order

to ensure that the DIR-RCARO could be appointed at the next NRM.

The DIR-TCAP referred to the Guidelines that specify the IAEA's involvement in the selection process, and clarified that the IAEA could not be involved in the process for selection of the DIR-RCARO.

The Chair proposed to continue discussing the relevant issues presented by the Acting DIR-RCARO after the report of the Chairman of the RCARO SAC. She also thanked the RCARO for the contributions for increasing the visibility of the RCA, expanding collaboration under the RCA, conserving nuclear knowledge and the work done for the 40th Anniversary of the RCA.

Report by Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee

The Chair presented the report of the meeting of the 15th RCARO Standing Advisory Committee, held on 13 September 2012, which was attended by CPR, INS, MYA, ROK and IAEA Representatives. The Acting DIR-RCARO and staff also attended.

The meeting report is given in Annex 10.

The SAC's recommendations that required GCM's endorsement included:

- Selection and Appointment of the next DIR-RCARO

The SAC recommended that RCARO submit the job description, vacancy notice, and selection process including the time frame to the GCM for consideration of the National RCA Representatives. Following the SAC recommendation, the RCARO proposed the plan as presented by the Acting DIR-RCARO.

- Workshop on Enhancing Strategic Goals of RCARO

The Workshop was held on 10-12 July 2012 in Jeju, ROK and was participated in by the SAC Members from CPR, INS and ROK. The NRs of BGD and MON, and experts from the Member States of RCA also attended. The discussions resulted in specific conclusions and recommendations. The SAC took note of the results of the workshop and suggested to present them to the GCM.

AUL thanked the RCARO for their support of the RCA and suggested discussing matters from the Acting DIR-RCARO's presentation, especially the recommendations of the RCARO Strategic Workshop, apart from the timetable for selection of the new DIR-RCARO, at the next NRM.

The meeting agreed to the proposed timetable for selection of the new DIR-RCARO.

The Meeting agreed to discuss the recommendations contained in the report of the RCARO Strategic Workshop at the next NRM.

VIII. Policy and Management Issues Related to RCA

The Chair noted that several policy and management issues had been already addressed while discussing relevant issues under previous agenda items. Considering that there was no specific issue that needed immediate discussion and due to the limited time available, she suggested to defer possible discussion of any other issues to the next NRM.

IX. Arrangements for the RCA Panel Discussion and the RCA Exhibition in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of RCA – RCAGCM(41)/6

At the request of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided information regarding the preparations and arrangements of the RCA panel discussion and exhibition, with the focus on four thematic sectors: human health; food and agriculture; water and environment; and industrial applications. The detailed arrangements and programme had been circulated to the NRs. He encouraged the RCA delegations attending the General Conference to participate in these events to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the RCA.

A programme of the RCA Panel Discussion is given in Annex 11.

The meeting noted the arrangements of the RCA events during the General Conference

X. Holding of the 35th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in Myanmar in 2013

MYA confirmed that the 35th NRM would be held in Nay Pyi Taw from 19-22 March 2013 and welcomed the participants to Myanmar.

The meeting noted that the 35th NRM would be held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, from 19-23 March 2013.

XI. Hosting of the 36th RCA Meeting of National Representatives in 2014

NZE confirmed that the 36th NRM would be held in New Zealand in 2014 at a venue and date to be confirmed.

The meeting noted that the 36th NRM would be held in New Zealand in 2014 at a venue and date to be confirmed.

XII. Any Other Business

XII.1 Best Practice in TC Initiative

The Chair invited Ms. Khadija Khan, Focal Point of the Best Practice Initiative, to present an update on the exercise. She provided a brief background, the procedure and timetable of the exercise. She also informed the Meeting that a meeting to discuss the results of this pilot exercise was to be held in November 2012, and that additional information could be obtained from the TC website at the link below:

http://www.iaea.org/technicalcooperation/Pub/Best_Prac_Sel_Com.html

Ms. Khan's presentation is given in Annex 12.

XII.2 Invitation for a Meeting from the Chair of AFRA

In response to the request of the RCA Chair, the RCA-FP read an invitation from the Chair of AFRA to the RCA Chair for a meeting among the Chairs of the Cooperative Agreements to discuss genesis, incorporation and experiences of agreements, information exchange, and organization meetings. The meeting was proposed to be held as a side meeting of the IAEA General Conference on 19 September 2012, similar to the previous meeting convened in 2010.

An invitation of the AFRA Chair is given in Annex 13.

XIII. Closing

The Chair thanked all participants for their active participation and declared the meeting closed. IND thanked the IAEA Secretariat for a successful meeting. AUL thanked the Chair for her efforts.

The meeting ended at 19.30.