RCA GUIDELINES AND OPERATING RULES FOR DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATIVE PROJECTS

The proposal submitted by RCA PAC to the 42nd NRM on developing separate guidelines on development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of RCA projects was approved in principal, with the understanding a detailed proposal will be submitted to the 49th RCA GCM. The objective was to prepare a user-friendly document to enable LCCs, NPCs and members of National Project Teams to easily understand the relevant procedures and their roles and responsibilities in implementing the RCA Programme.

The Guidelines prepared by PAC on project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are herewith submitted for the approval of the GCM.

These Guidelines contain the relevant provisions of the current RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules with necessary revisions and additions. They also contain a revised procedure for project development which is submitted separately for the approval of the GCM. There is a new section on Human Resources Development, which is based on the recommendations of the RCA Working Group on Human Resources Development. A new section on participation in RCA Projects is also added.

Once approved, these Guidelines will supersede the relevant guidelines in the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules, which may have to be revised later. .

These procedures should be reviewed after two years and revised if necessary. This may apply to all new measures introduced to the RCA Programme.

Proposed Action

Approval of the Guidelines on RCA Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation with necessary revisions, by the 49th RCA GCM

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Adopted at the 49th RCA GCM

September 2020

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RCA GUIDELINES AND OPERATING RULES ON DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATIVE PROJECTS

1.0 Introduction

The Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training (RCA) is an intergovernmental agreement established under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1972. It is open to the participation of Member States (MSs) of the IAEA in the areas of South Asia, East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific. Currently RCA has a membership of 22 Government Parties (Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Peoples' Republic of China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam).

The RCA Government Parties (GPs), in collaboration with each other and with the IAEA, contribute to the socio-economic development of their countries by application of well-developed nuclear technologies to areas of their national priorities, through implementation of Technical Cooperative Projects. The RCA Government Parties also engage in cooperative research in applications of nuclear technology in areas of regional priorities.

Technical Cooperative projects are expected to provide socio-economic benefits to the participating RCA Government Parties (GPs) in the long term, and should be in areas of development priorities of the GPs that can benefit from these projects. The identification of the projects to be implemented and the implementation of the projects should be carried out in a manner that would maximize the benefits to the RCA GPs. .

The Purpose of this Document

This document is meant to be used as a reference document by RCA Stakeholders (National RCA Representatives, Lead Country Coordinators, National Project Coordinators and members of National Project Teams) to understand the procedures to be followed in the Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of RCA Technical Cooperation Projects and their roles and responsibilities in implementing these procedures. It is recommended that a copy of this document is provided to all relevant stakeholders. It can also be downloaded from the RCA web-site hosted by RCARO. (http://rcaro.org/)

These Guidelines supersede the relevant guidelines in the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules of 2018.

2.0 Nature of Technical Cooperative Projects

RCA Technical Cooperation Projects implemented under the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA should,
(a) Contribute to socio-economic development of the RCA GPs

(b) Benefit from regional cooperation

(c) Have a strong and an important nuclear component (IAEA TC Quality criterion)

(d) Be linked to national programmes of participating GPs

(e) Have a clear linkage to a regional framework, priority or plan (IAEA TC Quality criterion)

(f) Contribute to achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

(g) Address specific gaps and needs of the participating GPs

(h) Be built on the achievements of the past cooperative projects in the same project area

(i) Be developed and implemented with the participation of the relevant stakeholders including end-users

(j) Maximize the use of opportunities for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)

(k) Attract Extra Budgetary funds

(l) Attract external partners

The ownership of the RCA Technical Cooperation Programme lies with the RCA GPs, who decide on the projects to be implemented.

The IAEA provides technical inputs to the projects, which are in the form of Regional Training Courses, Planning and Technical Meetings, Expert Missions, provision of minor equipment and procurement of laboratory services. The IAEA spends approximately 1.7 million Euros per year for the provision of these technical inputs for RCA Projects, but their value could be several times more.

The IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme has a two year cycle, i.e. new projects can be proposed every two years, but the duration of a Technical Cooperative project need not be limited to two years. The maximum duration is normally five years.

The RCA GPs provide human, infrastructural and financial resources for implementation of the projects, utilizing the technical inputs provided by the IAEA.

3.0 Participation in RCA Projects

RCA Technical Cooperation Projects like all IAEA TC projects are implemented by the RCA GPs in cooperation with the IAEA. Successful implementation of RCA projects require, human, physical and financial resources from the GPs participating in RCA projects as technology recipients (target GPs), in addition to the technical inputs provided by the IAEA and the support of the RCA GPs participating as resource GPs.   Therefore, target RCA GPs are encouraged to participate in projects in areas that are important enough (national priority areas) for their countries to allocate the required national resources for their implementation.

The expected socio-economic impact of TC projects can be usually seen when they are linked to a larger national programme (examples: Linking projects on radiotherapy to the national cancer control programme and linking projects in isotope hydrology to the national water resources management

programme). RCA GPs are also encouraged to participate in projects that can be linked to their ongoing national programmes.

Being selective in project participation will provide optimum benefits to RCA GPs

PART 1 – PROCEDURES

1.0 Procedure for Development of RCA Technical Cooperative Projects
(Subject to approval of the 49th GCM)

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME
NRs decide on 10-15 project areas at the NRM of year N*-3, based on the priority areas identified in the Regional Programme Framework (RPF). Due consideration should be given to projects of the previous cycle and the possible project areas for the next cycle. LCs will be appointed for the decided project areas.**	Q2 Year N-3
LCCs of selected Pre-Concepts prepare Pre-Concepts and through their NRs, submit to PAC for its review.	Q3 Year N-3
PAC reviews the Pre-Concepts and provides its feedback to NRs. NRs select Pre-Concepts for further development at the GCM of year N-3 taking into consideration the number of new projects that can be supported.	Q3 Year N-3
LCCs of selected Pre-Concepts prepare Project Concepts and through their NRs, submit to PAC for its review.	Q4 Year N-3
PAC reviews the Project Concepts and provides its feedback to NRs	Q1 Year N-2
NRs provide their prioritizations of the Project Concepts to PAC	Q1 Year N-2
PAC Prepares the overall prioritization and submits its recommendation to the NRM of year N-2.	Q1 Year N-2
NRs at the NRM of year N-2 decides on the Project Concepts to be further developed as project designs taking into consideration the number of new projects that can be supported	Q2 Year N-2
RCA Chair uploads to PCMF a Regional Programme Note outlining the Draft Project proposals for support under the Agency Technical Cooperation Programme.	Q2/Q3 Year N-2
LCCs complete 1st Draft Project Designs and submit to RCA PAC for review.	Q2 Year N-2
RCA PAC provides feedback to LCs and LCCs on review of 1st Draft Project Designs and also provides this feedback to NRs at GCM of year N-2.	Q3 Year N-2
RCA Chair uploads Draft Project Designs to PCMF for Agency review.	Q3 Year N-2

Project Design Meeting (PDM) undertaken with 1st Draft Project Designs upgraded by LCCs, TOs and regional experts.	Q3 Year N-2
Following PDM, 1st Draft Project Designs further upgraded by LCCs to 2nd Draft Project Designs and submitted to RCA PAC for review.	Q4 Year N-2
RCA PAC provides feedback to LCs and LCCs on review of 2nd Draft Project Designs.	Q1 Year N-1
RCA PAC provides feedback to NRs on the review of the 2nd Draft Project Designs made at the PDM and the subsequent following design upgrades by the LCCs.	Q1 Year N-1
NRM finalises selection of 2nd Draft Project Designs to be proposed for TC funding support.	Q2 Year N-1
RCA Chair uploads finalised Project Designs to PCMF for Agency review and consideration.	Q2 Year N-1
Agency review of project designs, preparation of budgets, decision on the projects / project activities that could be supported by TCF.	Q2-3 Year N-1
Submission of the projects selected for implementation to the Board of Governors for approval by the TC Department.	Q4 Year N-1
Information on projects approved by the Board of Governors conveyed to the RCA Government Parties.	Q4 Year N-1
NRs inform the RCA Secretariat of the project they wish to participate in, along with the resources available for project implementation and the contact details of the appointed NPCs.	End of Q4 Year N-1

* N = First year of the TC cycle

**The PAC will provide a summary of the RPF to facilitate identification of priority areas. . (RPF = Regional Programme Framework prepared for a period of 6 years (3 TC cycles), which identifies regional priorities for this period, based on needs expressed by RCA GPs and on the outcomes and achievements of past RCA projects.

2.0 Procedure for Implementation and Monitoring of RCA Projects

a) The RCA Secretariat shall inform the NRs of the projects approved for implementation under the Agency Technical Cooperation Programme, together with the descriptions of the projects, as soon as the Technical Programme for the following programming cycle is finalized.

b) Each RCA GP participating in an RCA Project should appoint a National Project Coordinator (NPC) and a National Project Team (NPT). End-users of the project should be represented in the National Project Teams.

c) The NRs shall complete a Project Participation Form for each project they plan to participate in and submit it to the Agency by the end of December of the year prior to the first year of implementation of the project.

d) A team comprising the RCA Focal Person of the IAEA (Project Management Officer – PMO), the assigned Technical Officer (TO), the Lead Country Coordinator of the Project (LCC) and a member of the Programme Advisory Committee shall manage and coordinate the implementation of RCA projects.

e) The regional activities will be initiated by the RCA Focal Person in consultation with the Technical Officer of the project and the Lead Country Coordinator.

f) The regional activities of the approved RCA Technical Cooperation projects should be implemented according to the Work Plans of the projects developed through the Logical Framework approach. Any revision to the Work Plan during project implementation should be made at a Meeting of the National Project Coordinators with a clear justification and should have the approval of the RCA Focal Person, the Technical Officer of the Project, the Lead Country Coordinator and the designated member of PAC.

g) National RCA Representatives who nominate participants to regional events of RCA Projects should ensure the nominees are members of the National Project Teams and have been recommended by the NPC of the project.

h) Each GP also should develop a National Work Plan based on the national activities to be implemented.

i) The first regional activity of a RCA Technical Cooperation project should be a meeting of the National Project Coordinators (NPCs). The NPCs of participating GPs should present their National Work Plans which should be discussed and finalized. The Meeting also should also identify possible venues (host countries) for regional activities, main topics to be covered in training courses to be conducted, the scope of the expert missions and other details required for implementation of the regional activities.

j) The NPCs should submit a six monthly progress report containing details of participation in the regional events of the project and the progress made in implementing the National Work Plans. The format is given in Annex 2.

k) The LCC of each project should compile the reports from the NPCs and submit a Project Progress Assessment Report (PPAR) to the Agency by 15 January of each year via TC Report platform (https://tcreports.iaea.org) with a copy to the respective NR.

l) The LCCs should annually prepare a summary report highlighting the progress of implementing the project, project achievements and constraints, and planned activities over the ensuing 12 months, based on the reports submitted by the NPCs. These reports should be submitted to the NRMs by the respective NRs. The LCC of each project (or the NR of the LC on behalf of the LCC) should also make a presentation at the annual Regional Meeting of the National RCA Representatives (NRM). Guidance for preparation of the report and the presentation are given in Annex 3. The LCCs may seek the advice and guidance of the PAC in preparing their reports.

3.0 Project Closure and Evaluation

a) The RCA Technical Cooperation Projects implemented under the TC Programme of the Agency are closed by the IAEA following the implementation of the planned regional activities. There is generally a need for the projects to be active for some additional time to facilitate fully achieving the desired outcomes and objectives set out in the project design. Therefore, RCA projects should be considered to be active for a further two-year period in order that the full impact of the projects can be assessed. This period can be further extended if necessary.

b) The progress of RCA projects should continue to be monitored during this two-year period, through NPC reports to LCCs and the LCC reports to the NRM.

c) At the end of the above two year period, the LCC should prepare an Evaluation Report highlighting the socio-economic impact of the project, the achievement of project outcomes and outputs against the indicators in the project document, constraints faced, and suggestions for further activities in the project area.

d) The Evaluation Report should be submitted to RCA FP and the PAC for comments and the revised report should be submitted to an RCA NRM.

e) The report approved by the NRM should be placed on the RCA Web-site hosted by RCARO, and should be used in preparing RCA Success Stories.

4.0 Human Resources Development (HRD)[1]

Development of Human Resources is one of key activities of RCA Technical Cooperative Projects. This is achieved through the Regional Training Courses (RTCs) and the National Training Courses (NTCs) conducted under the RCA Projects. The RTCs are arranged by the IAEA for trainees from the RCA GPs participating in the relevant project, and are a part of the regional work plan of the project. The NTCs are organized by GPs for national participants using training material provided at the RTCs and should be a part of the National Work Plans. The services of IAEA Experts may be obtained to function as resource persons at the NTCs. Both RTCs and NTCs should be aimed at developing human resources required for the achievement of project objectives.

Key aspects of HRD in RCA projects are:

a) The main areas to be covered in the RTCs should be identified during the design stage of the project.

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[1] These guidelines are based on the recommendations of the RCA Working Group on Human Resources Development. (Report presented to the 39th NRM)

b) The syllabuses of the RTCs and the resource persons should be decided at the first meeting of the NPCs

c) The duration of the RTCs should be one or two weeks depending on the time needed to provide the required training. They should have a practical training component where relevant.

d) Copies of training material used should be provided to participants to be used in National Training Courses.

e) Copies of training material should be provided to the RCARO to be kept in a repository for future use of GPs.

f) The knowledge of the participants should be assessed at the beginning of the RTC and at the end of the RTC to gauge the knowledge gained by the participants.

g) The results of the final assessment should be provided to individual participants confidentially.

h) RCA NRs should ensure the nominees to RTCs have the required background knowledge to benefit from the RTCs. They should be selected in consultation with the NPCs.

PART 2 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1.0 National RCA Representatives

a) Provide information on national priorities and needs for the preparation of the Regional Programme Framework

b) Appoint National Thematic Sector Coordinators (NTSCs) for all the Sectors relevant to his/her country to provide advice and support to him/her on national participation, priorities and sustainability

c) Submit proposals for Cooperative Projects on behalf of his/her GP, ensuring that other on-going and planned projects are taken into consideration in proposing new projects

d) Appoint support staff required for the NRs to carry out their duties effectively.

e) Appoint suitable qualified persons as Lead Country Coordinators (LCCs) for the Projects of which the relevant GP is the Lead Country.

f) Appoint National Project Coordinators (NPCs) and National Project Teams (NPTs) for the projects the relevant GP is participating in.

g) Maintain oversight of the project development process, from pre-concept to final design, on behalf of his/her GP.

h) Ensure nominees to regional events are those recommended by the NPCs, are members of the NPTs and have the necessary knowledge and experience for effective participation

i) Ensure the reports and presentations to the NRM by LCCs are complete and of high quality

j) Ensure the LCCs submit the PPARs and annual reports on time and are complete and of high quality

k) Ensure the NPCs submit their progress reports to the LCCs on time and reports are complete and of high quality

l) Monitor the progress of the implementation of the projects through regular consultations with the LCCs and NPCs.

m) Provide Extra Budgetary and in-kind contributions to the RCA Pprogramme.

2.0 Lead Country Coordinators and Alternate Lead Country Coordinators

Appointment

The NR of the Lead Country of each project will appoint a suitably qualified person as the LCC. (and Alternate LCC, if deemed required) The tenure of LCCs shall be the duration of the project for which they are appointed.

Qualifications

The NR of the LC shall select and appoint the LCC and Alternate LCC on the basis of their sound technical knowledge of the project and the ability to provide leadership on the project implementation. Abilities in project design, management, monitoring and evaluation and a willingness to develop such skills would be an advantage. The successful completion of the IAEA e-learning course on "Designing High Quality IAEA Technical Cooperation Projects" on IAEA NUCLEUS (https://elearning.iaea.org) is mandatory qualification for a LCC and Alternate LCC.

LCCs and Alternate LCCs (and Assistant LCCs and Alternate Assistant LCCs) should have access to suitable communication and other facilities needed to carry out the assigned duties.

Roles and Responsibilities

(a) Provide leadership for the efficient and effective planning, designing, preparation and implementation of the project to achieve its stated aims and objectives;

(b) Draft Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts for the projects approved and designated by the NRMs

(c) Develop detailed design of the project using the Logical Framework Approach, based on the Project Concepts approved for further development by the NRs, in consultation with the other relevant RCA stakeholders, the relevant technical staff of the Agency and the RCA Secretariat;

(d) Provide a copy of the Project Document, the Logical Framework Matrix and the Work Plan of the project to all NPCs.

(e) Monitor the implementation of the project and progress of RCA GPs through reports of and correspondence with the NPCs;

(f) Submit PPAR annually to his/her NR and to the RCA Secretariat by 15 January summarizing the status of implementation of the project in all the RCA GPs;

(g) Prepare annual project progress reports and presentations to the RCA NRMs;

(h) Provide relevant project documents, including training course materials, to RCARO for uploading on the RCARO website, so far as is consistent with intellectual property rights;

(i) Participate in project meetings as required and provide leadership for the successful conduct of the meeting;

(j) Submit a final project achievement report to the RCA Secretariat, through his/her NR, within six months after the RCA Project Closure; and,

(k) Assist the RCARO and RCA FP in preparation of RCA Success Stories.

3.0 National Project Coordinators
Appointment

For each project in which they are participating, RCA GPs shall appoint NPCs and, in addition, appoint a project team member to be an Alternate NPC, who will have the same role and responsibilities as the NPC at times when the NPC is unable to fulfil his/ her duties. The duration of the appointment of NPCs and Alternate NPCs shall be for the duration of the project.

Qualifications

RCA GPs shall select the NPCs on the basis of their sound technical knowledge of the project and the ability to provide leadership on the project implementation. Abilities in project design, management, monitoring and evaluation and a willingness to develop such skills would be an advantage. NPCs also need to have access to suitable communication and other facilities needed to carry out the assigned duties.

Roles and Responsibilities

(a) Provide leadership for implementation of the projects at the national level

(b) Recommend a NPT member to be Alternate NPC

(c) Establish a National Project Team (NPT), with the approval of the NR, and assign responsibilities for each member

(d) Develop a National Work Plan aimed at achieving project outcomes and objectives, in consultation with the National Project Team, and monitor the progress of its implementation

(e) Recommend to his/her NR the members of the NPTs who could be nominated for RCA events for submission of their nominations

(f) Provide guidance to the participants in regional events in the preparation of country presentations.

(g) Submit a progress report of project activities using the designated form (Annex 3) to the LCC, the Project Technical Officer and the RCA FP through his/her NR every six months (before 30th June and 31st December).

(h) Attend and report on the progress of the projects and future project requirements at the project managements meetings

(i) Establish and maintain links with relevant national institutes, partners and potential end-users;

(j) Provide information on the progress of the projects to the NR of his/her country on a regular basis and

(k) Provide NRs with on-going information concerning the national status of projects, past and present, so that they can have an overview and analysis of their national status and requirements across the various sectors

4.0 National Project Teams

Appointment

NPTs will be appointed by the NPCs, with the approval of the respective NR, for each Technical Cooperation Project in which the GP is participating. Appointment will be for the duration of the project.

Qualifications

The NPT should include representatives from all major participant groups in the project activities at the national level.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the guidance of the NPC, NPTs will be responsible for implementation of the agreed Work Plan at the national level and the provision of feedback and advice to the NPC on matters relevant to project implementation and achievement of project objectives at both the national and regional levels.

Areas to be covered in Pre-Concepts and Project Concepts

Pre-Concepts

Areas to be covered

a) Thematic Sector
b) Overall objective
c) A brief description (maximum 200 words)
d) Alignment of the Pre-Concept to RCA Regional Programme Framework
e) The role of Nuclear Technology in the Project
f) Linkage to past RCA Projects in the same project area

Evaluation will be based on the above items.

Format of Project Concepts

– Title

– Overall objective (one sentence) - Needed for the IAEA Regional Programme Note

– A short description (max. 300 words)

– Should describe links to previous projects, show there is no duplication with past and current projects in the same area, and justify the need for further projects in the project area.

– Project Outcome (one statement) - Needed for the IAEA Regional Programme Note

– Expected socio-economic impact

– Specific Regional Programme Framework (RPF) priority (from Pre-Concept)

– Justification as a regional project (common problem, transboundary issues, adoption of common standards)

– Nuclear technology to be used (from Pre-Concept)

– Requirements for participation

– Roles of main stakeholders in project development and implementation

– Potential for TCDC activities\

– Potential for EB funds

Criteria for evaluation of the Concepts

– Degree of alignment with RPF priorities

- The specific gap / need to be addressed, in relation to past and current projects in the same project area
- Linkage to past RCA projects
- Expected socio economic impact
- Justification as a regional project
- Role of nuclear technology
- Suitability of requirements for participation
- Stakeholder involvement
- Potential for TCDC activities
- Availability of EB funds.

REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT (RCA)

HALF YEARLY PROGRESS REPORT OF NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATORS
(period)

1. Administrative information

1.1 Member State:

1.2 Project Title and Number:

1.3 National Project Coordinator:

2. Regional Activities

    a) Are there any constraints faced in nominating members of the National Project Team for participation in regional events?

    b) Have the participants of the Regional Training Courses shared the knowledge gained with other member of the project team?

    c) Is the training received relevant to the project activities?

    d) Any other comments on regional events.

3. Status of Implementing the National Work Plan

Please attach a copy of the National Work Plan for implementing this project, and indicate the status of implementation of the Work plan. A simple format for the Work Plan is given below. (Additional years may be added if required)

	Activity (Briefly describe each activity)	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Status
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	

4. Main achievements

    Please list the main achievements of the project\

5. Constraints for successful implementation of the project

6. Any additional information that could be relevant

Guidance for preparation of LCC reports and the presentations to the RCA NRMs

LCC Reports and presentations should contain the following,

    a)   Project Title and number

    b)   GPs participating

    c)   Name and affiliation of the LCC

    d)   Objective

    e)   Expected Outcomes

    f)   Project Outputs and targets

    g)   Regional Activities implemented during the year

    h)   Progress made towards achieving the project outputs

    i)   Main achievements of the project

    j)   Activities planned for the following year

    k)   Constraints faced

    l)   Recommendations to the NRM