

CONCEPT

Setting up RCA Scholarship Programme in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (RCA SPS)

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Table of Contents

I. Background for the presentation

II. Rationale for the RCA SPS

III. Objective of the RCA SPS

IV. How the RCA SPS works

V. Next Steps



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I. Background for the presentation

At the 43rd RCA NRM, 28-29 April 2021, TCAP presented a concept note on setting up an RCA Scholarship Programme in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (RCA SPS)

The Meeting took note of the concept and requested TCAP to provide details of the programme for consideration of the 50th RCA GCM, 16-17 Sep. 2021.



I. Background for the presentation

At the request of the RCA, TCAP have reviewed and enhanced the concept and would like to present the updated version for RCA NRs' consideration and decision at the 50th RCA GCM.



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II. Rationale for the RCA SPS

1. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

education is critical to sustainable development in the 21st century

because through STEM education, students develop the key skills:

critical analysis, independent thinking, initiative, creativity, problem solving, teamwork, communication, and digital literacy.



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2. STEM education is a prerequisite for developing a workforce skilled in nuclear science and technology, which brings nuclear technology into full play in support of sustainable social and economic development.



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3. The building of nuclear workforce under the RCA has been carried out for many years (over the last 10 years, more than 130 RTCs were organized and attended by more than 2570 participants). These RTCs were short (only one or two weeks).



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Such training courses are very useful to serve specific purposes of each individual project. However, unless complemented with a education towards a higher degree and specialization, the contribution of such efforts is limited in deepening and expanding the development of the required human resources for safe, secure and peaceful utilization of nuclear technology for sustainable development in the RCA State Parties.



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*4. Furthermore, the RCA 2018-2023 Medium Term Strategy (MTS), **Strategic Direction 5** also states that the RCA will “continue building human capacity, including education and training and nuclear knowledge management.*



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5. Considering these, there is an urgent need for the RCA to establish a long-term STEM education program which acts as a solid platform and the backbone for the sustainable applications of nuclear and isotopic technologies in RCA State Parties, especially for LDCs and SIDSs.



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III. Objective of the RCA SPS?

1. Objective:

To support sustainable socio-economic development in RCA State Parties through the RCA SPS for the advancement of highly qualified human resources at the level of postgraduate degree (Master's and PhD degree).



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2. Expected Target:

The expected target will be considered and set out by the RCA SPS Committee to ensure the target is practical and achievable (for example: the programme targets about X (number) RCA Scholarships awarded by 2032 when the RCA turns 60).

Scholarship award is dependent on academic qualifications and acceptance by the partner universities in the RCA State Parties.

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III. How the RCA SPS works

1. Establishment of a Committee (or a Working Group) on RCA SPS

A Committee (or a Working Group) on RCA SPS will be established by RCA State Parties in Sep. - Oct. 2021 (called RCA SPS Committee).



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2. The main duties of the RCA SPS Committee:

- *Develop the TOR (functions, duties, powers, requirements for membership, membership term, etc.) of the Committee and submits to NRs for approval.*



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- *On behalf of the RCA, the Committee will discuss and explore opportunities to partner with **national postgraduate education programmes**, academic institutions, scholarship funding bodies, and facilitate practical arrangements with these institutions.*



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- *Develop qualification requirements and eligibility criteria for candidates,*
- *Identify and recommend academic institutions and solicit scholarship facilities and pledges,*
- *Assist in establishing the network of a consortium of universities and academic institutions,*



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- *Assist in developing practical arrangements between the RCA, the IAEA, and academic institutions,*
- *Develop a scheme for joint postgraduate programme (e.g., student attending two universities in two different countries. And degrees awarded jointly).*
- *Recommend and advise on the scholarship agreements (for example: graduates committing at least three years of service at their national institution or another development country in the region), etc.*



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3. The composition of the RCA SPS Committee:

RCA SPS Committee is composed of the following:

- *A senior academician nominated by RCA GPs, (Chairperson),*
- *Four RCA Nominated Members from RCA GPs, (Members),*
- *IAEA Director TCAP (Member),*
- *RCA Focal Person, (Member), and*
- *Relevant IAEA Technical Officers may be invited as reviewers.*



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4. Funding the RCA SPS for the first three years:

- In order to ensure smooth start and sustainability of the RCA SPS, it is suggested the RCA consider to establish a dedicated human resources development project (for example: Supporting Nuclear Human Resource Development (RCA)) to fund scholarships with TCF and Government Cost-Sharing from RCA GPs. This will gradually be apportioned in time with greater allocation from the RCA GPs.*



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5. Activities to secure funding and resources to sustain the RCA SPS

The following options will be explored:

- *Partnering with national scholarships programmes*
- *Establishing RCA Scholarship Fund and mobilizing financial contribution from RCA State Parties,*
- *In-kind contribution from partner universities/ institutions/ countries,*



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- *Cost-sharing between national institutions, host universities and the IAEA,*
- *Private sector donors (Industry sponsorship),*
- *Peaceful Uses Initiative funds (PUI), etc.*



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6. Promotion activities for the RCA SPS

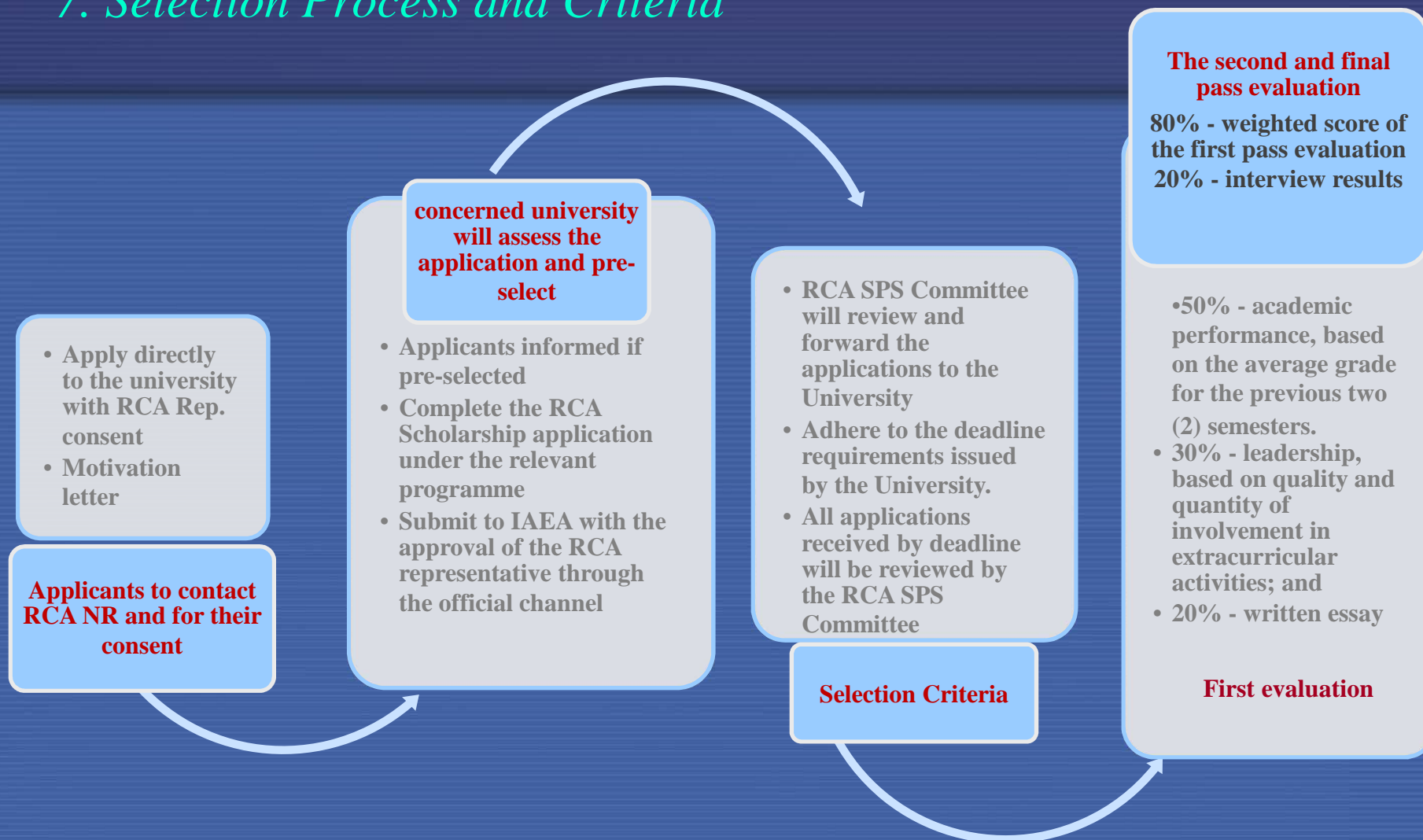
- *Dedicated Website*
- *Social Media*
- *Global Forums (IAEA GC, Educational fairs, RCA events)*
- *RCA Newsletter*



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7. Selection Process and Criteria



8. Applicants Eligibility and Benefits

Eligibility for Applicants	Benefit for scholars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Must be a citizen of an eligible country<input type="checkbox"/> Meet relevant post-graduate work experience requirements.<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate a clear vision of how the knowledge gained through the scholarship will be used to improve policy practice or reform in your home country.<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory English proficiency<input type="checkbox"/> When applying for the scholarship, there are fields that are given priority in each country;<input type="checkbox"/> It is advisable to choose a course from the listed fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A monthly living and transportation allowance of xxx per month.<input type="checkbox"/> A one-off payment per semester of xxx to cover the cost of prescribed books, school supplies, internet subscription, and if opportunity arises, attendance at seminars.<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition fees to be waived by the university under the RCA SPS agreement with university or covered under the RCA SPS.<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly living and other allowances

9. Plan to launch the RCA SPS

- The RCA SPS is planned to be launched at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA foundation (Sep. 2022),*
- The first set of scholars shall be selected and awarded starting the academic year 2023.*
- Award is granted through an application and merit selection process to academically deserving candidates who are accepted in an academic programme in partner universities listed by the RCA.*



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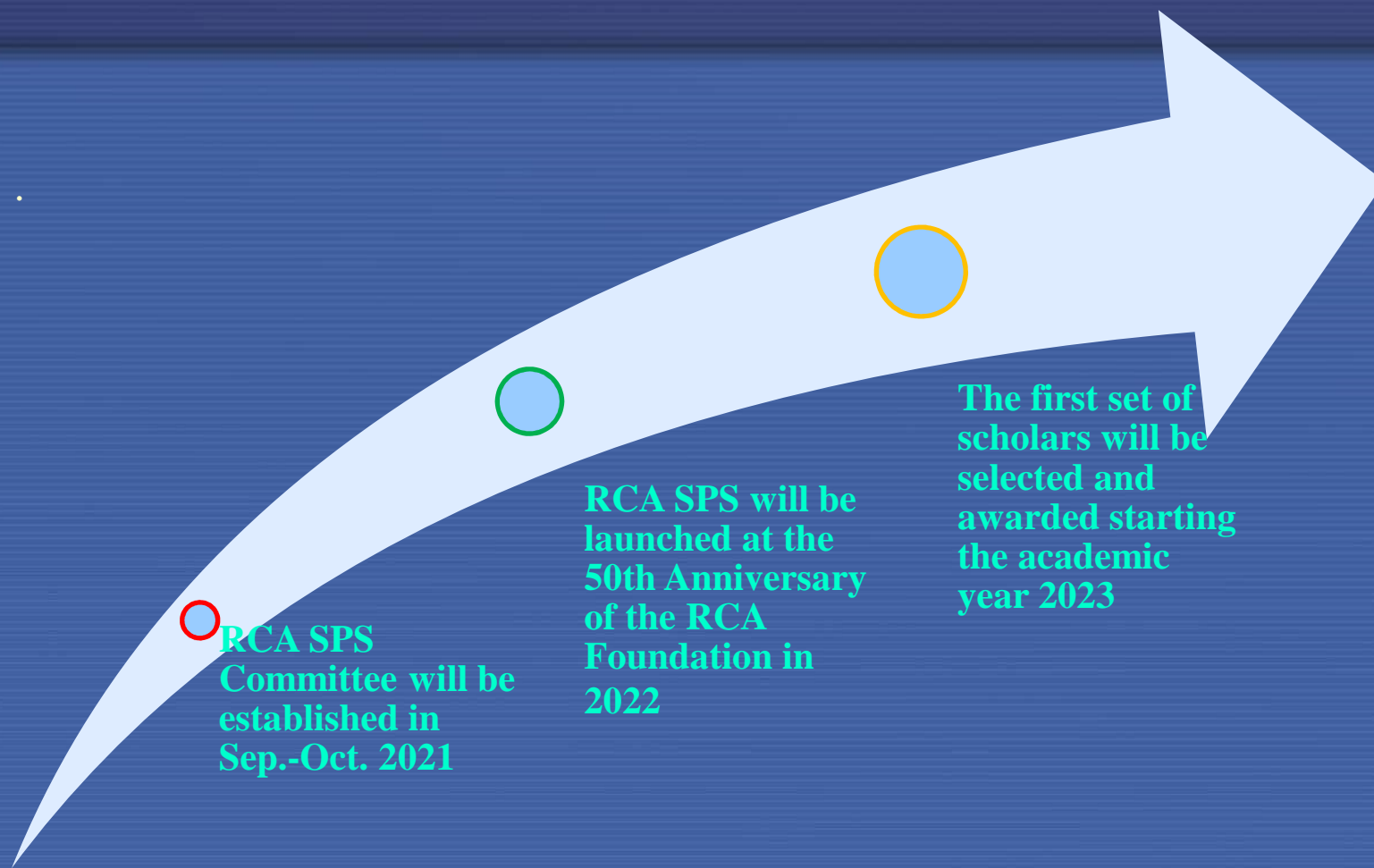
- *The RCA SPS is to be piloted for an initial period of three (3) academic years with its continuity subject to the results of a review on delivery of its objectives after the pilot period.*



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10. Timeline



V. Next Steps

RCA NRs are kindly requested to:

- *Consider and endorse the concept,*
- *Agree to establish a Committee to operationalize the RCA SPS, and*
- *Agree to launch the RCA SPS at the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA foundation (Sep. 2022).*



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