

How to Increase the Implementation Rate in RCA Programme¹

1. Background

1.1 During the Briefing of Mission Representatives from RCA MS held on 23 August 2000 the DIR-TCPA challenged the Representatives to increase the delivery of the RCA programme² so that the Agency would be encouraged to give more support to the programme.

1.2 The increase in the delivery of the RCA programme had earlier been the subject of a meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Study the Structure of the RCA held 25-27 February 1999 in Singapore. One of the recommendations of the meeting report, subsequently endorsed at the 21st RCA Meeting of National Representatives, also held in Singapore on 1-5 March 1999 was that the implementation within the region could be increased through three operational mechanisms, namely to “encourage the use of RRUs, cost-free experts and outsourcing to make an immediate impact on implementation rates xxx”

1.3 This paper will explore the 3 mechanisms identified-- the use of RRUs, cost-free experts and outsourcing -- and attempt to determine the contribution of each mechanism towards increasing the implementation rate.

2.RRUs

2.1 RRUs are considered “pools of expertise”³ residing within MS. There are several RRUs identified or volunteered for the RCA, notably in connection with the implementation of the joint UNDP/RCA/IAEA project “Better Management of the Environment, Natural Resources and Industrial Growth through Isotope and Radiation Technology.”(RAS 97/030). They have been adopted as a useful mechanism to enhance regional ownership and TCDC. For new projects in the cycle 2001/2002, it is expected that additional RRUs will be identified in agriculture, health, industry, energy, etc. These RRUs had been utilized in various ways such as the following:

- analysing samples from MS that do not have the capability to do so.
- accepting fellows for training
- supplying experts when needed
- providing standards or reagent kits to others countries
- hosting training/meeting events
- developing manuals/handbooks

2.2 It has not been possible at the time of writing to **quantify the contribution** made by the RRUs in the implementation of the projects, but the experience is that they are found effective in helping implementing different aspects of the programme.

¹ Prepared by the RCA Coordinator, 27 August 2000 and revised 15 September 2000.

² At this meeting he also expressed satisfaction at the improved quality of the project proposals received from the MS.

³ Reference: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Structure of the RCA, 25-27 February 1999(p.4).

2.3 RRUs have been either volunteered or designated. As early as 1996 the RCA MS adopted a set of criteria for selecting RRUs. At the 22nd RCA Meeting of National representatives held in Mumbai, India in Feb 28- 3 March 2000 the MS have accepted those RRUs that were already designated earlier. They further adopted a questionnaire to be filled up by institutes or units within institutes who in their own assessment, qualify as RRUs⁴. The MS agreed that the project committee/lead country will gauge the performance of the RRUs and that establishing another body to evaluate their performance was not necessary⁵. The Meeting also felt that self-assessment by the countries or organizations would lead to a natural limitation or restriction in the number of volunteered RRUs.

2.4 The MS are encouraged to seek more assistance from RRUs and the Agency should utilize more the identified RRUs within the region. The RRUs so identified should provide such services needed in the spirit of TCDC and not for commercial reasons.

3. Cost-Free Experts

3.1 The Ad hoc Meeting found the assignment of a cost free expert an effective way of providing help to the RCA office. At present a cost-free expert from Korea is assigned to the RCA office since December 1998. The cost-free expert is responsible for ensuring that all regional events—i.e. meetings and training events---are implemented according to schedule. His task, among other things, include the preparation of schedule for all regional events for a particular year, preparation of host agreement letters, preparation and sending of nomination letters, sending reminders to MS regarding nominations, sitting in selection committee, liaising with TOs in the preparation of information sheet, prospectus, lecturers and other aspects. In 1998 prior to the assignment of the cost free expert (as well as a JPO) to the RCA office, the RCA programme implemented about 47 regional events; in 1999 this number increased to 61 (nearly 30% increase) and for 2000 the number of regional events is expected to be approximately 71 (slightly over 50% increase over 1998 levels and 16% over 1999 level). The assistance provided by the cost free expert has contributed to this increase ; additionally this has helped relieved the RCA Coordinator from these tasks and enabled him to focus on programming and other management-related issues. However, **MS aptly recognize that the use of cost free expert is only an interim measure for solving the structural and management issues⁶. This is never truer in the light of the present situation since the term of the current cost-free expert assigned to the RCA office will end in March 2001. His departure will affect the programme implementation unless a replacement is found soon or other suitable alternative measures applied.⁷**

During a meeting at IAEA headquarters on 14-17 August 2000 involving the present and future Chairpersons in RCA , it was suggested that cost-free national consultants could perhaps be also provided by the MS. These consultants will be for shorter period assignments, which could be done at their home country or if necessary at the Agency headquarters, either at their full expense or cost shared with the Agency. This is also a possibility to be explored within RCA, to increase programme ownership.

⁴ Refer to Annex 14 of the report on the 22nd RCA Meeting of National Representatives, 28 Feb-3 March 2000.on the RRUs.

⁵ At the Briefing of Mission Representatives on 23 Aug 2000 one of the representatives suggested that perhaps there should be another body that will evaluate the RRUs

⁶ See reference cited in footnote 3.

⁷ The establishment of a permanent post is not bright in view of the zero real growth budget policy.

3.2 Member States are requested to study the possibility and making serious effort of assigning cost-free experts(CFE) to the RCA. The Agency has recognized 3 categories of CFEs: Type A, B, or C, depending on the funding . A description and terms of reference for each type are indicated in Annex 1.

3.3 While cost free experts are normally assigned for 6 months or longer periods(e.g. 2 to 2-1/2 years) the MS could consider providing short term, cost-free national consultants who, depending on the nature of the assignment, would be either doing this in their country, or at the Agency headquarters; in the latter case the MS may bear the full cost of the assignment, or on a cost sharing basis with the Agency. A suggested modus operandi of such cost free national consultant is in Annex 1a.

4. Outsourcing

4.1 The Agency has informed MS about its initiative to outsource implementation of TC activities to specific institutes, groups or individuals. Outsourcing is defined as “Contracting the whole or part of a TC project or event to a competent organization within the relevant TC region and particularly to the Regional Resource Centers⁸ for implementation on the agency’s behalf.

4.2 The nature and breadth of implementation activities under the TC programme have been described in an earlier paper⁹.

4.3 A few examples of outsourcing already being implemented within the RCA programme are the following:

- a contract to an institute in a MS to develop distance learning materials¹⁰;
- an MOU for an organization to hold a regional training event and the agency merely sends selected Agency trainees to the training event and pays a training fee—the MOU spells out the role of the host organization and that of the Agency¹¹;
- and issuing a contract(or service order) to an identified RRU to analyze water samples under a project¹², or prepare and distribute standards and samples for laboratory intercomparison exercises¹³.

⁸ Regional Resource Centers as mentioned in the resolution GC(43)RES/14. These Centers would include the RRUs in the case of RCA.

⁹ See paper on “Implementing Activities” September 1999, by RCA Coordinator.

¹⁰ Subcontracts have been issued to ANSTO and WESTMEAD HOSPITAL to prepare distance learning materials respectively in radiation protection and for nuclear medical technologists.

¹¹ A 1-week regional training course was organized by ESTRO in Singapore in August 2000; the agency selected participants and sent them to this course. ESTRO took care of selecting lecturers and distributing course materials. The contract spells out the obligations of the organization and the agency. A similar mechanism has been negotiated with an institute in AUL for a 2-week training course in December 2000.

¹² Pakistan has been contracted to analyze water samples submitted by a few countries participating in the subproject on Access to Clean Drinking Water(RAS 8/084); these countries do not have capability to measure the selected elements.

¹³ The regulatory authority, ARPANSA, in AUL has been contracted to prepare standards and unknown samples for the interlab comparison on measurements of environmental radioactivity under the project on radiation protection RAS 9/024..

4.4 Other possibilities for outsourcing could be considered for the cases described below. All these outsourcing would be expected to release part of the workload of the implementation clerk(s) to the MS, thus increasing ownership by MS in project implementation:

-an RRU could be outsourced to provide experts for missions to other MS to undertake specific tasks over a period of time. The expert(s) could make their own arrangement for visits to the countries concerned within the agreed time frame and implement the visit and prepare the report within an agreement. This outsourcing could obviate the present practice of issuing individual service agreement for each mission.

-an RRU or host country could be outsourced to accept group fellowships in a particular institute, over a period of time. This could facilitate the implementation of group fellowships for certain fields. This outsourcing could reduce placement time for fellowships and ensure that the facilities being used are of top calibre.

-MS might be outsourced to implement several regional events scheduled for hosting in said MS. This has the advantage that a regional event could be implemented as per the project schedule and not be subjected to considerations such as “evening out” the workload per month which may lead to postponing some events to a later date to spread out the events over the year. The MS would be expected to organize the travel of selected participants and other arrangements for hosting the event, under an MOU.

There could be other forms of outsourcing such as a whole project being outsourced to an MS for implementation and such similar ones.

4.5 It may be mentioned however, that the Agency is in the process of developing a policy and implementation strategy for outsourcing within the TC programme.

4.6 Based on the known RCA Programme, MS should identify which project activity (ies) or project it could volunteer to undertake for the next project cycle (2001/2002) under the concept of outsourcing. Similarly, the Agency should also help identify which project activity (ies) it is willing to outsource to MS under whatever policy the Agency may eventually adopt.

Recommendations:

- 1. RRUs. The MS should be encouraged to seek more assistance from RRUs and the Agency should utilize more the identified RRUs within the region.**

1.1 In the spirit of TCDC, the RRUs should be encouraged not to make commercial benefit from this assistance.

1.2 A study to quantify the contribution of RRUs to the implementation of the programme should be undertaken

- 2. Cost-free experts. Member States are requested to make serious effort to assigning cost-free experts to the RCA(long term, for 6 months or more).**

2.1 Member States should also study the possibility of assigning short term, cost-free national consultants, either to do an assignment within their home country, or at the Agency headquarters, either at the country’s full expense, or with partial support from the Agency (cost sharing basis).

3. **Outsourcing.** Based on the known RCA Programme, each MS should identify which project and/or or project activity (ies) it could volunteer to undertake for the next project cycle (2001/2002) under the concept of outsourcing. Similarly, the Agency should also help identify which project activity (ies) it is willing to outsource to MS under whatever policy the Agency may eventually adopt

3.1 Although there is no Agency policy guidelines on the subject yet, outsourcing is already being encouraged by the Agency and is already being done on a case to case basis; however, the Agency is expected to issue clear policy guidelines¹⁴ as soon as possible to harmonize the understanding and the implementation of this mechanism.

¹⁴ There exists already an Agency policy on outsourcing of translation, publishing, and printing work.(Reference: <http://intranet.iaea.org/oasis/secnots/sec 1829.htm>)

Annex 1

Categories of Cost Free Experts(CFEs)

Type A: the donor reimburses the Agency fully for all costs incurred and the CFE is engaged by the Agency under a special fixed-term contract and paid the salary, benefits and entitlements of a regular staff member.

Status: considered as “Officials “ in accordance with Article XV of the Headquarters Agreement and Article VI of the Agreement and Privileges and Immunities of the Agency, as determined by the Agency. Officials are appointed as staff members with fixed term contract the duration of which shall not exceed the period for which funds have been committed by the donor.

Type B: there are no financial obligations for the Agency vis-a-vis the CFE or the donor, with the exception of travel costs that may arise for travel on official business on behalf of the Agency; the CFE is engaged by the Agency under a special service agreement and receives his/her salary, benefits and entitlements from the donor

Status: May be granted the status of an “Expert”- in accordance with Article XVI of the Headquarters Agreement and Article VII of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Agency.

Type C: modification of type B arrangement, whereby the cost of CFE is shared between the Agency and the donor. Agency’s obligations is usually limited to DSA, and the donor provides to the CFE the salary and any other benefits and entitlements to which she/he may be entitled by virtue of his/her national employment contract.

Status : May be granted the status of an “Expert”- in accordance with Article XVI of the Headquarters Agreement and Article VII of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Agency.

Notes: Current CFEs Type B and C who have been given the status of an “official” will retain the status until they leave the agency.

Annex 1a

Cost Free National Consultants (proposed by BGD)

In addition to cost free expert services, cost free national consultants may be made available by the MS for different RCA programmes. The modusoperandi for such cost free national consultants may be as follows:

- a) When a consultant is made available to the RCA office at the Agency for working on certain programmes of the RCA or to a MS as per request of the Agency, all costs involved in such consultancy (travel and DSA etc.) will be borne by the MS providing the consultant.

- b) When a national consultant works in the respective MS on a programme set by the RCA on certain projects of the RCA with defined Terms of Reference for a fixed period, the concerned MS will bear the cost of consultancy and provide ancillary facilities. In this case, all components of the cost will be calculated as per IAEA's relevant rules, procedures, regulation and rate. This cost will be shown as contribution in kind by the respective MS.

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