



REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



REPORT OF
THE 49th RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING

18 September 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNEXES	2
ACRONYMS	3
Introduction	4
Opening	4
a. Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair	
b. Introductory remarks by DDG-TC, IAEA	
1. Adoption of the Agenda – RCAGCM(49)/1 and Designation of the Rapporteurs	4
2. Review of the implementation of the follow-up actions of the 42 nd NRM – RCAGCM(49)/2	4
3. Review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020, tentative arrangements of regional events for 2021 and discussion on related programmatic issues – RCAGCM(49)/3	5
4. Report on the activities of the RCA PAC – RCAGCM(49)/4	6
5. Report on the establishment of the WG on drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029 – RCAGCM(49)/5	6
6. Report of the Special Task Force on the work plan for the 50th anniversary of the RCA in 2022– RCAGCM(49)/6	7
7. Report on the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) – RCAGCM(49)/7	7
8. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO – RCAGCM(49)/8	8
9. Update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA – RCAGCM(49)/9	8
10. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA – RCAGCM(49)/10	8
11. Update on the holding of the 43rd Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Thailand, 2021; and the 44th Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Viet Nam, 2022	8
12. Any other business	9
13. Closure	9

List of Annexes

Annex No.	Title
1	List of Participants
2	Opening Remarks by RCA Chair
3	Welcoming Remarks by DDG-TC, IAEA
4	Meeting Agenda
5	Report on the Follow-up Actions of the 42nd NRM
6	Implementation of the RCA Programme in 2019
7	Report on the Activities of the RCA PAC
8	Report on the Establishment of the WG on Drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029
9	Roles and Responsibilities of WG on Drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029
10	Report of the STF for the 50 th Anniversary of the RCA
11	Action Plan for the 50 th Anniversary of the RCA
12	Report on the RCA Regional Office
13	Report of the RCARO SAC
14	Update on the Social and Economic Impact Assessment of RCA Projects
15	Follow-up Plan for the Social and Economic Impact Assessment
16	Update on the Acceptance of the 2017 RCA

ACRONYMS

ANPC	Alternate National Project Coordinator
CRP	Cooperative Research Project
DDG-TC	Deputy Director General, Technical Cooperation Department
DIR-TCAP	Director for Asia and the Pacific Division
DIR-RCARO	Director of RCA Regional Office
EBT	Extra Budgetary
FNCA	Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia
GCM	General Conference Meeting of the National RCA Representatives
GP	Government Party to the RCA Agreement
IAEA BOG	IAEA Board of Governors
LCC	Lead Country Coordinator
MTSC	Mid-Term Strategy Coordination
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPT	National Project Team
NR	National RCA Representative(s)
NRM	National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting
PCMF	TC Programme Cycle Management Framework
PPAR	Project Progress Assessment Report
QF	Quadripartite Forum
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCA GOR	RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules
RCA PAC	RCA Programme Advisory Committee
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RCARO SAC	RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
RCA-FP	RCA Focal Person
RRC	Research Review Committee
TACC	Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee
TC	Technical Cooperation Programme
TCPC	Division of Programme Support and Coordination
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
WG	Working Group

Introduction

The 49th RCA General Conference Meeting was held online on 18 September, 2020, via video conferencing.

The Meeting was attended by 21 RCA Government Parties: Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), China (CPR), Fiji (FIJ), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Korea (ROK), Laos (LAO), Malaysia (MAL), Mongolia (MON), Myanmar (MYA), Nepal (NEP), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), Palau (PLW), Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA) and Vietnam (VIE). Representatives from the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) and the Chair of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee also joined the Meeting.

Mr. Dazhu Yang (DDG-TC), Ms Jane Gerardo-Abaya (DIR-TCAP), Mr Gashaw Gebeyehu Wolde (SH-TCAP1), Ms Marina Mishar (SH-TCAP2) and Mr Sinh Van Hoang (RCA-FP) represented the IAEA.

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

Opening

a. Opening of the Meeting by the RCA Chair

Mr Abdul Muin Abdul Rahman, the RCA Chair and NR of MAL, officially opened the 49th RCA GCM. His statement is given in **Annex 2**.

b. Introductory remarks by DDG-TC, IAEA

Mr Dazhu Yang, Deputy Director General of the Department of Technical Cooperation, IAEA, delivered the statement, given in **Annex 3**.

1. Adoption of the Agenda – RCAGCM (49)/1 and Designation of the Rapporteurs

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda, revised for one-day virtual meeting, with one Any Other Business (AOB) item (**Annex 4**).

The Meeting adopted the agenda with the following item to be discussed under Any Other Business:

- **Request of Iran for membership of the RCA**

MAL, THA and RCARO were appointed as Rapporteurs for the Meeting.

2. Review of the implementation of the follow-up actions of the 42nd NRM – RCAGCM(49)/2

The RCA-FP provided a summary of the follow-up actions arising from the 42nd RCA NRM (**Annex 5**).

The Meeting took note of the report submitted by the RCA-FP in implementing the follow-up actions from the 42nd RCA NRM.

3. Review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020, tentative arrangements of regional events for 2021 and discussion on related programmatic issues – RCAGCM(49)/3

The RCA-FP provided an overview of the RCA Programme implementation in 2020 and tentative arrangements of regional events for 2021 (**Annex 6**).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCA-FP. The Meeting noted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the regional activities planned in 2020 have been adjusted, most of them to be carried out using videoconferencing, resulting in a saving of 1.2 million EUR for 2020 with a similar amount anticipated in 2021 well.

The Meeting agreed in principle with the recommendations of the RCA-FP on the use of the unspent funds in 2020 as follows;

- **Procuring equipment needed by RCA GPs for implementing the on-going projects including the Regional Resource Units (RCA RRUs);**
- **Procuring spare parts for maintaining equipment used by RCA GPs for implementing RCA projects; and**
- **Recruiting experts to develop training materials for planned RTCs**

The Meeting requested the NRs to submit to the IAEA Secretariat their requests for the procurement by 15 October 2020 using the Request Template to be sent to the NRs shortly. The RCA FP, LCCs and TOs will carefully review and prioritize the submitted requests, ensuring that the procurement contributes to the achievement of project objectives and can be implemented in a cost-effective and efficient manner. The RCA FP will report to the GPs on the results of these efforts, including the amount of budget used for those new purposes, and any impact on project outcomes at the next NRM.

For the new project designs for 2022-2023 and beyond, the Meeting agreed that it is necessary to;

- **Specify regional events (meetings/workshops and training courses) that can be implemented virtually, and that need be done face-to-face for allocating funds appropriately;**
- **Define and include equipment procurement needed by RRUs to provide services to other GPs and procurement of spare parts for maintaining equipment used by GPs for implementing projects; and**
- **Develop online training materials.**

4. Report on the activities of the RCA PAC – RCAGCM(49)/4

- Preparation of the RCA programme for 2022-2023
- Mid-term review of the MTS 2018-2023
- Proposal for the revision of the RCA programme development procedure
- Proposal for the revision of the ToR for PAC and the GOR

The Chair of RCA PAC delivered a presentation on the activities of the RCA PAC ([Annex 7](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report by the Chair of the RCA PAC and expressed appreciation for the strong support provided by the RCA PAC.

The Meeting took note of the progress made under the following items;

- Preparation of the RCA programme for 2022-2023
- Report on Mid-term review of the MTS 2018-2023

The Meeting noted that the MTSC WG should continue its work to assess the findings of the Mid-Term Review and recommend what steps can be taken to improve performance of the Agreement ahead of the Final Review to be undertaken in 2023. The impacts of COVID-19 should be considered in this assessment.

The Meeting noted the importance of the Regional Programme Framework (RPF) and requested the RCA PAC to undertake the task in consultation with the experts as well as the WG on drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029 to be presented at the 43rd RCA NRM.

The Meeting agreed that further review and discussion was required for consideration of a need for revisions to RCA programme development procedures (including the GOR) for project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, along with revised ToR of the PAC. PAC was asked to work with the WG on Drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029 (see Item 5 below) to present any recommended changes to the 43rd RCA NRM.

5. Report on the establishment of the WG on drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029 – RCAGCM(49)/5

The RCA Chair presented on the establishment of the WG on drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029 ([Annex 8](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCA Chair on the establishment of the WG on drafting the RCA MTS 2024-2029. The Meeting approved:

- seven (7) nominations from AUL, IND, JPN, MAL, PHI, ROK and THA as the members of the MTS 2024-2029 WG;
- the membership of one additional member to the WG (SIN); and
- the drafted Roles and Responsibilities of the WG with item 4 and 5 removed (final version is given in [Annex 9](#)).

The Meeting agreed that the work of the WG on drafting the new MTS should commence within two weeks of the GCM considering the limited time available. The Meeting further requested:

- **three (3) GPs (BGD, SIN, and PLW) to send in their nominations within the two weeks after the 49th RCA GCM; and**
- **The RCA Chair to establish the WG and for the WG MTS 2024-2029 to nominate the Chair.**

The Meeting requested the RCA Chair, RCA-FP, RCA PAC Chair, and the Chair of the MTSC WG to review the nominations of BGD, SIN and PLW together with the nomination from CPR.

6. Report of the Special Task Force on the work plan for the 50th anniversary of the RCA in 2022– RCAGCM(49)/6

The RCA Chair presented on the report of the Special Task Force on the work plan for the 50th anniversary of the RCA in 2022 ([Annex 10](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by RCA Chair on the report of the Special Task Force on the work plan for the 50th anniversary of the RCA.

The Meeting approved in general the activities and estimated budget proposed in the action plan by the STF ([Annex 11](#)). The Meeting agreed that it is the responsibility of the GPs to provide support and budget, and in this regard, noted the significance of GPs' EB contributions towards the event. It was noted that this does not place any additional obligations to the GPs to make the EB contributions. The Meeting agreed that the RAS0086 could be used as a channel for consolidating EB contributions from the GPs for the 50th anniversary of the RCA, as long as the contributions for the anniversary can be managed separately from the remaining project funds subject to the approval of the resource country.

The Meeting endorsed Viet Nam to host the Ministerial Conference for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA in conjunction with the 44th NRM in 2022.

The Meeting approved the meeting of STF to be held in January 2021 to refine the action plan for the 50th anniversary of the RCA, including the planning of the Ministerial Conference. including the plan on hosting the Ministerial Conference.

7. Report on the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) – RCAGCM(49)/7

The RCARO Director provided the report on the progress of the work plan for 2020 ([Annex 12](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCARO and appreciated the contribution provided by the RCARO to the RCA Programme.

8. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO – RCAGCM(49)/8

The Chair of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) presented the report of the 31st Meeting of the RCARO SAC ([Annex 13](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCARO SAC and endorsed its recommendations.

9. Update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA – RCAGCM(49)/9

The RCA-FP presented on the progress of the social and economic impact assessment of the RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA ([Annex 14](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report on the update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA provided by the RCA-FP and appreciated the comprehensive work done.

The Meeting endorsed the follow-up plan given in [Annex 15](#).

10. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA – RCAGCM(49)/10

The RCA-FP provided an update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA Agreement ([Annex 16](#)).

The Meeting welcomed the advice that eighteen (18) of the twenty-two (22) GPs have submitted their instrument of acceptance of the 2017 RCA to the Agency.

The Meeting looked forward to the remaining four (4) GPs (CPR, FIJ, LAO, and PHI) for depositing their instruments of acceptance as soon as possible.

11. Update on the holding of the 43rd Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Thailand, 2021; and the 44th Meeting of National RCA Representatives in Viet Nam, 2022

[THA](#) confirmed that the 43rd NRM will take place in Phuket, Thailand, in the last week of April, 2021, if the COVID-19 pandemic situation is resolved.

[VIE](#) confirmed that the 44th NRM will take place in Vietnam in 2022.

[THA](#) confirmed that the 43rd NRM will take place in Phuket, Thailand, in the last week of April, 2021, if the COVID-19 pandemic situation is resolved.

[VIE](#) confirmed that the 44th NRM will be held in Vietnam in 2022.

12. Any Other Business

The RCA Chair informed the Meeting of a request from Iran to join the RCA. The RCA Chair noted that new membership was an important issue, requiring consensus of existing GPs. The Meeting agreed to discuss the issue when a physical meeting of the National RCA Representatives is feasible to give as many GPs the opportunity to full participate in the discussion. The RCA Chair will send a letter in response to Iran's request.

The Meeting took note of the notice given by the RCA-FP that the extension of Practical Arrangements (PA) between the RCARO and IAEA has been approved.

13. Closure

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