

Report of the 7th RCA Programme Advisory Committee

1. Background.

Under its Terms of Reference, the RCA Programme Advisory Committee (RCA PAC) is to report on matters relating to the RCA Programme to both the RCA National Representatives' Regional and General Conference Meetings.

At the 47th RCA GCM in September 2018, the Meeting approved the action plan for the development of the projects for the 2020/2021 TC Cycle. The major tasks included:

- Implementation of the RCA Project Design Meeting to be held 12 – 23 November 2018 in Vienna;
- Implementation of the 7th RCA PAC Meeting to be held 21 - 25 January 2019 in Vienna; and,
- Implementation of the RCA PAC Meeting to be held 6 – 10 May 2019 to analyse the results of the RCA PAC survey of GPs' "in-kind" contributions to the RCA Programme for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

2. RCA Project Design Meeting 12 – 23 November 2018.

The objectives of the Project Design Meeting were to:

- Review, analyse and assess the draft project documents (including LFM and Work Plan) which have been approved for development under the RCA Programme for the 2020-2021 TC cycle;
- Enhance the quality of the draft project documents;
- Discuss and agree on the follow-up actions/measures to ensure RCA project documents are well prepared, meet the TC requirements and are submitted to the Agency in a timely fashion.

Participation in the Project Design Meeting (PDM) was by:

- Lead Country Coordinators for the 8 draft project designs;
- Nominated Technical Experts from the region;
- 5 RCA PAC Members;
- Agency staff, including the relevant Technical Officers;
- 2 Experts on TC and RCA matters: and,
- RCA Focal Person.

The report of the Project Design Meeting is given in Attachment 1.

3. 7th RCA PAC Meeting 21 - 25 January 2019.

The major tasks for the 7th RCA PAC Meeting were:

- Review, analyse and assess the latest draft project design documents, approved for development under the RCA Programme for the 2020/2021 TC cycle
- Review, analyse and assess the processes, procedures and documentation related to the development of the RCA projects for the 2020/2021 TC Cycle and, where required, draft improved processes, procedures and documentation to recommend for application in the development of the RCA Programme for the 2022-2023 TC cycle;
- Review the passages in the draft 2018 Guidelines and Operating Rules related to the development of the RCA Programme and, where appropriate, draft alternative or additional text;
- Review the current status of the preparations for May 2019 RCA PAC Meeting to analyses the survey of GPs' "in-kind" contributions to the RCA Programme for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018;
- Finalise the Report of the RCA Project Design Meeting in November 2018 and,
- Prepare the RCA PAC Report to the 41st RCA NRM.

The report of the 7th RCA PAC Meeting is given in Attachment 2.

4. Proposed Actions

The NRM may review and take note of the two reports and associated conclusions and recommendations.

In particular, the National Representatives may also discuss and consider appropriate measures and actions to address the following conclusions and recommendations of RCA PAC in the two reports:

a) Enhanced Responsibilities to support Project Design Development.

It was agreed that the PDM had been very useful in refining the project designs and achieving higher quality documents. However, there were still some areas for improvement related to the preparation and development of the project designs. In particular, it was agreed that an increased role by the NRs were crucial to introducing some improvements.

In this context it was also noted that there had been a requirement in the 2010 RCA GOR for the NRs to assist LCCs with information on National Contacts but this had not been included in subsequent revisions of the GOR. In addition, it was observed that some of the LCCs, especially those who had had no previous experience with the design and development of RCA projects, had reported difficulties in dealing with some aspects of the preparation of the project concepts and project designs, including the uploading into PCMF.

Recommendation 1:

It is recommended that:

- **LC NRs should use their expertise and experience to assist LCCs in the preparation of the project designs, particularly with regards to issues related to TC and RCA processes and procedures, and especially with the uploading of documents into PCMF; and,**
- **Text should be added to the draft 2018 GOR to set out that the NRs have a responsibility to provide advice on appropriate Contact Points in their country to LCCs that are relevant to the needs of their project designs. (The proposed draft text for inclusion in the 2018 GOR is set out in Annex 4a RCANRM(41)-7-Attachment 2.)**

b) Knowledge and Skills Levels in the Preparation of Project Designs in Accordance with TC and RCA Requirements.

There was a general feeling amongst the RCA PAC Members that the knowledge and abilities in the Logical Framework Approach exhibited by some of the LCCs at the PDM was not as strong as required for the preparation of high-quality project designs and they had not taken advantage of upgrading their skills by undertaking the IAEA e-learning course on LFA. This had led weaknesses in their ability in effective on-going upgrading of their project design documentation.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that:

- **At the stage where project concepts are recommended for further development as project designs and the Lead Countries and Lead Country Coordinators are assigned, all potential LCCs should either demonstrate that they have either undertaken the e-learning course on LFA or intend to undertake the e-learning course as a prequalification to being assigned this role. (The proposed draft text for inclusion in the 2018 GOR is set out in Annex 4b RCANRM(41)-7-Attachment 2.).**

It was also observed that some of the regional experts recommended by the LCCs to assist them at the PDM did not have strong abilities in LFA and had not taken advantage of upgrading their skills by undertaking the IAEA e-learning course on LFA. The role of regional experts is not covered in the GOR and so this requirement should be applied as a condition of their recruitment to participate in the PDM.

• Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that:

- **Regional experts nominated to assist the LCCs at the PDM should also be required to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about the LFA and have completed the e-learning course as a prerequisite to being nominated to attend the PDM.**

c) Overview of the RCA Project Design Meeting.

The Project Design Meeting and its current format is facilitating the LCCs ability:

- to improve the quality of their project designs;
- to build the basis for a sound understanding the needs and requirements of the TOs and the TC Secretariat; and,
- to establish productive working relationships, when the projects are approved and implemented.

The knowledge and experience gained by the LCCs during the PDM also provides a potential investment for the support of future LCCs and, more generally, a wider understanding of the RCA project development processes and procedures amongst the GPs, if it can be specifically targeted as an RCA priority.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that:

- **the present processes and procedures used at the Project Design Meeting should be substantially retained for the future PDMs and that strong consideration be given to establishing processes, procedures and other mechanisms to enable the LCCs, who have benefitted from participation in the PDMs, to pass on the knowledge and experience they have gained during the project development process to future LCCs and LCs.**

d) Procedures and Documentation for the Development of the RCA Projects for the 2022/2023 TC Cycle.

The 41st RCA NRM will be requested to approve the documentation for the 1st stage of the development of the RCA Programme for the 2022/2023 TC Cycle, which will need to commence immediately following the 41st RCA NRM, as set out in the current processes and procedures. The first stage in this process is the preparation by the NRs of Pre-Concept Proposals.

Recommendation 5:**It is recommended that:**

- the Pre-Concept Proposal document, as set out in Annex 9 RCANRM(41)-7-Attachment 2, be approved for use; and,
- the development of the RCA programme for 2022/2023 proceed as set out in the Timetable given in Annex 10 RCANRM(41)-7-Attachment 2.

e) Design of Post RCA PDM RCA PAC Meeting.

The format of this RCA PAC Meeting includes the involvement of the Agency TOs in further analysis and discussion on the draft project designs. It has proved to be very effective in the further development and refinement of the project designs.

In addition, the Meeting has also been valuable in the review of the integrated effect of the procedures and documentation that have been used in the development of the RCA Programme for a particular TC Cycle. This information has then been effective in the refinement and upgrading of the RCA PAC processes and procedures to address the preparation of the RCA Programme for the next TC Cycle.

Recommendation 6:**It is recommended that:**

- this format should be used to review the development of the RCA Programme for 2022/2023 TC Cycle.