



**REGIONAL COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY**



REPORT

**36th MEETING OF THE NATIONAL RCA
REPRESENTATIVES**

1–4 April 2014

Wellington, New Zealand

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Acronyms

BoG	Board of Governors
DIR-TCAP	Director for Asia and the Pacific Division
DIR-RCARO	Director of RCA Regional Office
FNCA	Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia
GCM	General Conference Meeting of the National RCA Representatives
GOR	Guidelines and Operating Rules
GP	Government Party to the RCA Agreement
NR(s)	National RCA Representative(s)
NRM	National RCA Representatives Regional Meeting
LC	Lead Country
LCC	Lead Country Coordinator
PCMF	TC Programme Cycle Management Framework
PMO(s)	Programme Management Officer
PPAR	Project Progress Assessment Report
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCAPAC	RCA Programme Advisory Committee
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RCARO SAC	RCARO Standing Advisory Committee
RCA-FP	RCA Focal Person
TC	Technical Cooperation Programme
TCAP	Division for Asia and the Pacific
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TO(s)	Technical Officers

Introduction

The 36th National RCA Representatives Meeting (NRM) was held at the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa, Wellington, New Zealand, from 1 to 4 April 2014. The Meeting was attended by twenty five (25) participants from thirteen (13) RCA Government Parties; Australia (AUL), China (CPR), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Republic of Korea (ROK), Malaysia (MAL), Mongolia (MON), Myanmar (MYA), New Zealand (NZE), the Philippines (PHI), Thailand (THA) and Vietnam (VIE). Four representatives of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) as well as the Chair and one other member of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee (RCAPAC) attended the Meeting.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was represented by Dr Ali Boussaha, Director, Division for Asia and the Pacific (DIR-TCAP), and Mr Sinh Van Hoang, RCA Focal Person (RCA-FP).

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

Opening Ceremony

Dr Khin Maung Latt (MYA), the RCA Chair, opened the ceremony by thanking New Zealand for hosting and the IAEA for their assistance in coordination and organization of the Meeting. Dr Latt expressed satisfaction with the numerous achievements of the RCA over the past 42 years and expected further tangible results in the region in future.

Highlights of his time as Chair included Palau and Cambodia joining the RCA, the work of RCAPAC and the establishment of three Working Groups. A proposed amendment of the RCA Agreement was to be discussed at the 36th Meeting and over 20 projects would be reviewed. He officially opened the Meeting and invited the host Institute to address the Meeting.

Statement by the Representative of the Host Country

Participants were greeted with a Mihi (a short welcome on behalf of the local indigenous Māori people of Wellington) delivered by Mr Rawiri Faulkner, General Manager of Maori Strategy, GNS Science. Then the Chief Executive of GNS Science, Prof. Mike McWilliams, welcomed all participants to the Meeting and to New Zealand.

Prof. McWilliams said GNS Science was delighted to host the 36th NRM of the RCA. RCA was an exemplar of international cooperation and he noted its contribution to sustainable development in the region through providing solutions to regional challenges. He said that New Zealand was pleased to be involved in several RCA projects and he hoped that participants would take the opportunity to find out more about these during the GNS Science site visit later in the Meeting. He hoped they would also be able to discover more of Wellington and New Zealand. He wished the Meeting every success and the participants a pleasant stay.

Prof. McWilliams' full address is provided in **Annex 2**.

Statement by the Representative of the IAEA

The Chair then invited Dr Ali Boussaha (DIR-TCAP) to address the participants.

Dr Boussaha delivered the opening statement on behalf of the IAEA and thanked New Zealand and GNS Science for hosting the Meeting. He also offered the warm greeting of Mr Kwaku Aning, Deputy Director General and Head of Technical Cooperation to the Meeting and its participants. Dr Boussaha noted the success of RCA in enhancing development and cooperation in the region through projects with measureable impact.

He was gratified to observe efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of RCA projects. He mentioned the establishment and initial meeting in February 2014 of three Working Groups on Updating Guidelines and Operating Rules, Medium Term Strategy and Priorities, and a Review of Upcoming Projects. The work of the RCAPAC was also valuable in improving project quality.

Dr Boussaha mentioned especially the Fukushima Marine Benchmark Study and thanked the Republic of Korea for its financial support towards the project. He extended special thanks to Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and the USA for their additional funding through the Peaceful Use Initiative (PUI). The RCARO continues to fulfil its mandate and Dr Boussaha expressed interest in suggestions to increase its role. He noted the Agency's position on encouraging 'fewer but better' projects. Dr Boussaha looked forward to a fruitful Meeting.

Dr Boussaha's full address is given in full in **Annex 3**.

1. Welcome Remarks of the Current RCA Chair

Mr Khin Maung Latt, Deputy Director General, Department of Atomic Energy, delivered welcoming remarks as the outgoing Chair of the RCA. He thanked the RCA-FP and the RCARO for their support and the FNCA for their continuing collaboration. He wished the new Chair every success.

Designation of the new RCA Chairperson/Rapporteurs

The RCA Chair called for nominations for the new Chair of the RCA. ROK nominated the NR of the host country, Dr Chris Daughney, Director, National Isotope Centre, GNS Science, to be the new Chair of the RCA. CPR seconded the proposal. All delegates agreed with the nomination and Dr Daughney was unanimously elected.

The Chair called for nominations for rapporteurs of the Meeting. NZE indicated willingness to fulfil this role, and AUL said they would be happy to support NZE. Participants indicated support for the proposal and Mr Peter Roberts (NZE) and Ms Catherine Kelleher (AUL) agreed to be rapporteurs for the meeting.

Dr Chris Daughney, NR of NZE, was unanimously elected RCA Chair.

Mr Peter Roberts (NZE) and Ms Catherine Kelleher (AUL) were appointed rapporteurs for the Meeting.

Remarks of the New RCA Chairperson

Dr Daughney thanked participants for the honour associated with the chairmanship of RCA. He welcomed everyone to Wellington, especially those participating in a NRM for the first time. He was pleased to see the presence of FNCA, RCARO and RCAPAC, which have great importance and value to RCA. Dr Daughney noted the ambitious agenda and encouraged everyone to participate fully.

The chairman thanked Dr Latt for his contribution to RCA over the previous year. He acknowledged the help provided by GNS Science and Te Papa staff in organising the Meeting. With the support of all participants, he looked forward to a successful Meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair informed the Meeting that some changes were proposed to the timing and length of a few items on the agenda that was circulated prior to the Meeting. MAL supported the changes and there were no objections.

The adopted Agenda is provided in Annex 4.

MYA made a suggestion to discuss in-kind contributions and the issue of late submission of project proposals under Any Other Business.

The Meeting adopted the agenda as modified.

The Meeting noted that discussions of in-kind contributions and of the late submission of project proposals would be included under Any Other Business.

3. Reports on follow up actions of the 42nd GCM (RCANRM(36)/2)

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a summary of the most important follow-up actions arising from the above meeting report (Annex 5). AUL commented that amendments to the RCA Agreement had been tabled by AUL at the 42nd GCM but these were not reflected in the report of follow up actions. It was agreed that this would be further discussed under the relevant agenda item. IND requested that the final report should refer to the agenda items as amended.

The Meeting took note of the Report on the Follow-Up Actions of the 42nd GCM and requested the RCA-FP to ensure that the Report RCANRM(36)/2 is updated to refer to agenda items as amended.

4. RCA Annual Report for 2013 (RCANRM(36)/3)

The Chair invited the RCA-FP to provide a brief summary of the Draft RCA Annual Report 2013 which had been circulated to NRs (Annex 6). After his summary, participants thanked the RCA-FP for the draft report. The FNCA Coordinator inquired about the RCA budget and for a comparison with the budget of other regional agreements. He also asked whether PUI (Peaceful Uses Initiative) funding was included within the listed extra-budgetary contributions. AUL sought clarification about a comparison of implementation rates.

In response, the RCA-FP and DIR-TCAP said that RCA funding had been maintained close to recent levels. Information on the budgets of other agreements was not available at the Meeting but could be made available. It was confirmed that the average RCA Implementation Rate (87%) was higher than that of the other Agreements. With respect to PUI funding, each country specifies whether its funding is to be classified as PUI or extra-budgetary. PUI funding had been received from the USA, JPN, AUL, ROK and NZE. Annex 7 of the Annual Report was extra-budgetary funding only.

PHI suggested that the Annual Report should contain a summary of only the key policy decisions of both the NRM and GCM meetings in order to reduce the total number and focus on the most important issues. PHI also noted that much project information was publicly available on the RCARO website. PHI suggested that the Annual Report should refer to such publicly available information. AUL supported this suggestion.

AUL noted that as a non-recipient of TC it was still not able to nominate meeting participants via the InTouch platform, and asked that this be rectified.

IND said that RCA countries provide significant training to personnel from IAEA Member States in other regions and that details of this could be included in the Annual Report. The RCA-FP said that the Agency did not officially have information on inter-regional training but that this could be recorded if GPs¹ forwarded the relevant information. DIR-TCAP noted that there was no formal mechanism or framework in place to capture such information, and the Meeting decided to consider inter-regional training activities under Any Other Business.

A few countries requested further clarifications or modifications of the draft report, and the Chair noted the availability of the Tracked Change system for making comments and modifications.

The Meeting took note of the draft RCA Annual Report 2013.

The Meeting agreed that NRs would supply any comments and/or suggested modifications to RCANRM(36)/3 to the RCA-FP in a Tracked Change document within 1 week of the completion of the NRM.

The Meeting requested the IAEA to consider including in the Annual Report only the key policy decisions made at the NRM and GCM.

The Meeting took note of the suggestion by AUL that the InTouch Platform be modified

¹ The term Government Party (GP) replaces the older term Member State to denote signatories to the Regional Cooperative Agreement.

to allow its use by TC non-recipient GPs.

The Meeting noted that the Annual Report should make reference to other publicly available information on RCA project activities including that found on the RCARO website.

The Meeting decided to address under Any Other Business the issue of compiling information on the training provided by RCA GPs to personnel from IAEA Member States from other regions.

5. Implementation of the RCA Programme

a. Review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2013 (RCANRM(36)/4)

At the invitation of the Chair, the RCA-FP provided a review of key issues regarding implementation of the RCA programme in 2013. A paper had been circulated to participants (Annex 7). He noted that further implementation or closure of some projects required further extra-budgetary funding from GPs. These projects were RAS0060, RAS5055, RAS6066 and RAS7023. AUL stated that RAS6066, carried out under a procurement order rather than as a project *per se*, was thought to be complete, having utilised all available funding and achieved the primary objective of converting all ASOC modules to CMS (Content Management System), cross-checking and implementing QA. The RCA-FP replied that some activities remained to be completed, but taking these forward would depend on further extra-budgetary funding becoming available.

PHI noted that the IAEA had made changes to project management via changes to their distribution to responsible IAEA staff. PHI recommended that these changes should be subject to an assessment. The DIR-TCAP provided an overview of the reasons for the practical changes and agreed that an assessment should be considered. PHI also said that the review focused on regional events but that the many activities conducted within individual GPs should also be mentioned as a contribution to the projects.

MAL, JPN and PHI also noted some possible inconsistencies in the review, some of which may be due to the relative timing of the receipt of the PPARs and the completion date for the draft review prior to the NRM. Dr Easey (RCAPAC) pointed out that Annex 3 of the review should refer to RCA Progress Reports for January to December 2013, not for the second half-year. Dr Bruhn (RCAPAC) also pointed out that guidance for NPCs on filling out the PPAR form was needed and this was a responsibility of the LCC.

The Meeting noted the review and requested that Annex 3 of RCANRM(36)/4 be updated by the RCA-FP to refer to the whole 2013 year and to reflect the most up-to-date information possible.

NRs were requested to provide any information, comments and/or modifications on the Review (RCANRM(36)/4) to the RCA-FP within 1 week of the conclusion of the NRM in a Tracked Change document.

The Meeting agreed to discuss appropriate mechanisms to assess the effect of recent changes to the management of RCA projects under Any Other Business.

b. Arrangements towards implementing the 2014 component of the projects approved under the 2012–2013 RCA Programme (RCANRM(36)/5)

The Chair requested the RCA-FP to present the arrangements for management of the RCA projects as well as a tentative plan toward implementation of the RCA events in 2014. The RCA-FP provided the forward work programme via tables of the scheduled projects and regional events (see [Annex 8](#)). He requested NRs to confirm their agreement to host those events for which they were listed.

Dr Easey asked why two events (one for RAS1012 and one for RAS7023) were being held outside the region, in Morocco and Italy respectively. [AUL](#) noted that synchrotron technology was available in the region and also queried why an event should be held outside the region (RAS7023). The DIR-TCAP responded that information would be sought overnight and provided as soon as possible. Subsequently, the Meeting was advised that the Meeting in Morocco under RAS1012 was being held there in order to take advantage of a major International Conference being held in Morocco. The event in Italy under RAS7023 was being held at a synchrotron in Italy in order to access its unique facilities for the measurement of Air Particulate Matter.

[AUL](#) confirmed that it was ready to host a scheduled event under RAS6061 and noted that the final meeting for RAS6064 had been postponed until 7–9 April 2014.

[AUL](#) and [FNCA](#) commented that it appeared that some experts from outside the region were to be used for a few projects when experts within the region were available. In response to a question from Dr Easey, [MAL](#) agreed to check the details of an event within RAS7021 (11–12 August 2014) that appears to be scheduled for only two days. A few small inconsistencies between information shown in the Annual Report and the Table provided in the report were pointed out.

The Meeting noted the forward work programme and requested NRs to advise the RCA-FP of their confirmation to host the events to which they have been assigned or to advise any changes within 1 week of the completion of the NRM.

6. Review of the Progress of the RCA Projects in 2013 – RCANRM(36)/6

The RCA Chair noted that a Background Document had been circulated ([Annex 9](#)). Progress on the implementation of each RCA project was presented by the Lead Country responsible. The presentations are [Annexes 10 to 24](#). The specific projects presented and discussed were:

Project Number	LCC	Annex
RAS6038	AUL	10
RAS6064	AUL	10
RAS6066	AUL	10
RAS7021	AUL	10
RAS5055	AUL	11
RAS5056	CPR	12
RAS5057	CPR	13
RAS1013	IND	14
RAS6061	IND	15

Project Number	LCC	Annex
RAS6053	JPN	16
RAS6062	JPN	17
RAS1014	MAL	18
RAS7023	NZE	19
RAS1012	PAK	20
RAS7022	PAK	21
RAS6063	PHI	22
RAS7024	PHI	23
RAS6065	ROK	24

Projects RAS1012 and RAS7022 (Lead Country PAK) were presented by the RCA Chair in the absence of the NR of PAK.

After each presentation, there was a discussion of project outcomes and any implementation issues. Discussion of Project RAS7021 required some follow-up actions. AUL noted that project activities to date had – appropriately – focused on developing capabilities and capacity in the GPs to measure radioactivity in seawater and in marine biota. However, the project description included “evaluating the extent and the possible impact of the releases of radioactivity from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the marine environment and making scientific assessments of the data”. AUL suggested that NRs speak to their respective NPCs to remind them that the activities to be undertaken before the end of the project should include such evaluation and assessments. AUL noted that this would allow NPCs to discuss these matters at the Mid-Term Review meeting planned for June 2014. This suggestion was endorsed by NZE.

JPN further suggested that consultation with other IAEA departments (e.g. for nuclear safety) and the IAEA Environment laboratories in Monaco that have an interest in the effects of the Fukushima incident would benefit Project RAS7021.

In summarizing the discussions, the RCA Chair noted the good progress made in the RCA projects and encouraged LCCs and NPCs to continue their efforts for successful implementation.

The Meeting encouraged the on-going efforts within RCA projects to engage with end users and strengthen partnerships and collaborations.

The Meeting requested NRs to liaise with their respective NPCs to ensure that reporting obligations are implemented in full and on time.

The Meeting requested that NRs work with LCCs to ensure that project presentations provide the essential information for the NRM, but without requiring a standard presentation template.

With respect to the Fukushima Marine Benchmark Project RAS7021, the meeting recommended that NRs speak to their respective NPCs and determine their desired direction for the project (capacity building as well as, for example, interpretation of data and modelling) ahead of the Mid-Term Review Meeting planned for July 2014.

The Meeting requested the LCC and TO for RAS7021 to consult with other IAEA departments with similar interests to the Fukushima Marine Benchmark Project, including the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco.

This agenda item was considered as the final item on Day 1 and as the first item on Day 2.

At the end of Day 1, there was a preliminary discussion of the conclusions and recommendations related to the agenda items covered during Day 1.

At the start of Day 2, a Meeting photograph was taken.

7. Implementation of the 2014–2015 RCA Programme (RCANRM(36)/7)

The RCA Chair requested the RCA-FP to update participants on the 2014–2015 programme. The RCA-FP said that, as indicated in the Background Document (**Annex 25**), the programme had already been approved by the IAEA BoG. Together with 17 on-going projects, the RCA programme for 2014–15 would comprise 25 projects; eight were new, nine were ending in 2014 and eight ending in 2015. A list of the projects, assigned PMOs and contacts was provided, together with an indicative plan for regional events in 2014.

The Secretariat had circulated information about the approved projects to GPs after the BoG decision. The RCA-FP requested NRs to ensure that the RCA-FP Office be informed of the projects their country intends to participate in and to send in their nominations for NPCs and Alternate NPCs. Several NRs sought some clarification regarding the duration of projects and the contribution of core and footnote/a funding to project budgets.

Dr Easey noted the growth in the number of GPs to the RCA, and asked what the effect of increased membership would be on project funding. DIR-TCAP responded that some increase in costs was inevitable and that the IAEA would favourably consider allocating more funding to successful projects if there were any savings accruing from existing projects. He encouraged further extra-budgetary contributions from GPs to increase the level of project activities that could be supported.

The Meeting noted the project information provided for the 2014–2015 RCA Programme and the arrangements made for events during 2014.

The Meeting requested the respective NRs to advise the RCA-FP as soon as possible of their intention to participate in projects and their nominations for NPCs and Alternate NPCs. NRs should also advise the RCA-FP of the projects in which they did not intend to participate.

The Meeting requested the IAEA to update the project information provided in the background document regarding dates and duration as necessary, and to specify both core and footnote/a funding within the budgets.

The Meeting requested the respective NRs to confirm their willingness to host RCA events, or any changes, to the RCA-FP within 1 week of the conclusion of the NRM.

8. Preparation of the RCA Programme for 2016–2017

The RCA Chair thanked the RCA-FP and RCAPAC for their work in preparing the background documents for this agenda item. At the suggestion of the IAEA the first two items under this agenda item were combined. The relevant documents had been circulated before the Meeting (**Annexes 26 and 27**).

a. Proposed project concepts/ideas for the RCA Programme 2016/2017 (RCANRM(36)/8)

b. Report on the review of the proposed RCA project concepts for the RCA Programme 2016–2017 – RCANRM(36)/9

The RCA Chair invited the Chair of the RCAPAC to summarize its evaluation and review of the project concepts. Dr Bruhn said he would be reporting on the work done over the past six months. He reiterated that the role and function of RCAPAC was to provide advice to NRs on operation and strategy of the RCA. Project concepts had been evaluated in two stages, first a draft project concept and then a full project concept. After a meeting in February 2014, RCAPAC provided NRs with overall comments on project concepts, along with specific feedback intended for the authors of the individual project concepts.

RCAPAC received 27 initial concept proposals which are summarized in Annex 2 of the Background Report RCANRM(36)/9. Many proposals were received after the deadline and some could not be considered by the RCAPAC. Overall, 19 proposals were considered. Dr Bruhn then outlined:

- The criteria used to evaluate proposals
- General observations on issues and trends
- Key issues, proposed solutions and proposed actions based on their evaluation process.

Dr Bruhn said that many project concepts did not address the key requirements for 2016–2017 project development. In response to a question from CPR, Dr Bruhn outlined the process for communication of feedback from the RCAPAC to NRs. There was considerable discussion to clarify which proposals had not been evaluated and which had been evaluated at only the first stage of the evaluation process. Some projects submitted had subsequently been withdrawn and others adjusted to take into account possible overlaps. These issues were taken up again later in the Meeting when decisions were made on which projects to approve for forwarding to the IAEA for further consideration.

The RCAPAC Chair drew the attention of NRs to three major issues and their proposed solutions contained within RCANRM(36)/9. These were:

- Timing for the Review Process
- Information Transfer during the Process
- Template Documents

A suggested Operational Framework for RCAPAC Procedures was also presented. Dr Bruhn finished by thanking the Secretariat for their logistic support for the meeting of RCAPAC and two other Working Groups in February. The RCA Chair thanked RCAPAC for their valuable work.

The Director, RCARO, offered the assistance of RCARO particularly in the area of information transfer through its website. Some clarification of the suggested solutions to the issues identified were requested by several NRs. These were supplied later in the Meeting and supported by AUL and IND.

NZE, AUL and IND offered their support for the suggested Operational Framework.

The Meeting endorsed the proposed solutions in the RCAPAC report, as amended, with regard to the evaluation of project proposals and documents by the RCAPAC.

The Meeting endorsed the proposed operating framework for the RCAPAC.

c. Guidelines for the Planning and Design of the IAEA 2016–2017 Technical Cooperation Programme – RCANRM(36)/10

The RCA-FP was invited by the Chair to present a summary of the guidelines. The RCA-FP said that there was not a great deal of change from guidelines for the previous project cycles. The document had been circulated (Annex 28). A continuing issue was the matter of ensuring that communication deadlines were met, and he appealed to NRs to ensure that deadlines for submissions and communication were met. He also outlined the timeline for further development of the 2016–2017 RCA Programme.

The RCA Chair thanked the RCA-FP for his presentation and said that it was time for the Meeting to make decisions on which projects would be forwarded to the IAEA. He noted that one constraint was the funding that would be available. From information provided by the RCA-FP it was clear that only limited funds would be available. Assuming that TC funding for 2016–2017 would be similar to the previous programme cycle, then approximately 3.2 to 3.5 Million Euros might be available over the two years (approximately 1.6 to 1.75 Million Euros per year). However, for 2016 approximately 1 Million Euros was already allocated to on-going projects, making only 0.6 Million Euros available for new projects. In 2017 approximately 0.7 Million Euros might be available. This was only enough to support perhaps 4 or 5 new projects.

At this point there was a short discussion among the NRs of countries that had submitted project proposals. These NRs then tabled their re-evaluated suggestions for project proposals that should be submitted for consideration to the IAEA. These proposals totalled 11 projects as shown in the Table below, with the project number assigned within Annex 2 of Background Document RCANRM(36)/9.

Projects Selected to be Finalized for Submission to the IAEA

Thematic Area and Project No.	Short Title	Lead Proposing Country
Agriculture		
8	Mutation Breeding	CPR
Environment		
16	Groundwater Resources	PAK
3 [#]	Radioactive Releases from NPPs	AUL

Thematic Area and Project No.	Short Title	Lead Proposing Country
11	Carbon Sinks in Wetlands	CPR
6	Air Particulate Matter	NZE
2 ^{##}	Climate Change in Marine Ecosystems	PHI
Industry		
17	Radiotracers and Sealed-Source Techniques	PAK
14	Electron Accelerators	CPR
1 ^{##}	Advanced Grafted Materials	PHI
Health		
25	Image-guided and Adaptive RT	IND
26	Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy	ROK

AUL indicated that the final project proposal would be modified to highlight activities relevant to the Fukushima releases in order to build on the achievements of RAS7012 and increase its extra-budgetary funding potential.

PHI noted that this proposal had not been fully evaluated by the RCA-PAC.

In discussion the participants agreed that, based on previous experience, all 11 projects should be retained at this time and forwarded to the IAEA for their consideration. Further adjustments to the projects to be supported could be made after receiving the IAEA feedback.

The RCA Chair also indicated that the balance of projects among the four RCA Thematic Areas should be considered. Seven projects would be carried over into 2016 as on-going projects. None were in the area of environment. Four were health-related, one was industry-related and two were food and agriculture related. PHI pointed out that if the 11 projects selected were combined with on-going projects, then the RCA Programme would have a reasonable balance between Thematic Areas in 2016.

Further discussion considered the timelines for ensuring that fully formulated project proposals for 2016–2017 could be forwarded to the IAEA by 31 May 2014. The RCA Chair also requested suggestions for how the projects might be ranked in priority order.

The Meeting resolved to submit to the IAEA for evaluation all 11 proposals listed in the Table above.

The Meeting also agreed that the project documents would be finalized by the countries involved in formulating the project concepts.

The Meeting agreed that if countries have any comments on any of these proposals during the finalisation process, those comments should be provided to the NR of the prospective Lead Country by 30 April 2014.

The Meeting requested NRs of countries responsible for finalizing project documents to liaise with the prospective LCCs to ensure that deadlines for the submission process were met.

The Meeting agreed that the deadlines for the submission process would be:

- **NRs should provide final project documents to the RCA Chair by 15 May 2014**
- **RCA Chair to send out all project documents and a form for ranking of projects to all NRs by 16 May 2014**
- **Each NR to rank all 11 projects based on country needs and the feedback provided by RCA-PAC at the 36th NRM and to submit their ranking of projects to the RCA Chair by 27 May 2014.**

The Meeting authorized the RCA Chair to supply all final project documents by 31 May 2014 to the IAEA for consideration, together with the amalgamated project ranking.

The DIR-TCAP noted the decision taken by the NRs. He said that he hoped initial feedback on the proposals would be available during July–August with final submission of the project design by 15 December 2014. He noted that the IAEA would respect the priority accorded the proposals by the RCA NRs.

Later in the Meeting, the DIR-TCAP referred to project RAS0068 (Enhancing the Management of the RCA Agreement and its Programme) which is a 2014–15 project funded by TCF and a footnote/a contribution from ROK. The title reflects its purpose and it can be used to support activities including regional events and home-based assignments. It had already been used to support the three Working Groups that met in February 2014 and a home-based assignment for an expert to prepare a report for one of the Groups.

DIR-TCAP said the IAEA considered the project to be a useful mechanism to have available for assisting management of the RCA. The Meeting then discussed whether it would be valuable for RAS0068 to be extended into the 2016–2017 TCF cycle. AUL supported extension and suggested that a progress report for RAS0068 be included at GCM and NRM meetings. IND supported the concept of project extension with the caveat that it did not affect other aspects of the RCA budget. DIR-TCAP indicated that if an extended project was approved its funding would be additional to that for the rest of the RCA programme. It would probably again be mixed funding.

ROK supported an extension and said that ROK was likely to continue financial support. MAL supported extension following the provision of more details, as did CPR and NZE. The RCA Chair said that if NRs wished to extend RAS0068 then a decision was needed on which country would prepare the project proposal and act as the LC. It was noted that ROK provides the extra-budgetary funds for RAS0068. AUL suggested that the LC for project development should be ROK and that the RCARO could play a role and become the LCC if the project was approved. The FNCA Coordinator noted that RCARO was not a Party to the Agreement and that a LC was required. The DIR-TCAP noted that the project documentation for RAS0068 was available to assist in the preparation of a project proposal to extend the project. Dr Bruhn pointed out that this documentation was available in the PCMF.

The RCA Chair asked whether the Meeting supported the involvement of the RCARO developing a proposal to extend the project. AUS, PHI, MYA and NZE expressed support for RCARO involvement.

The Meeting decided that in addition to the 11 project concepts to be forwarded to the IAEA for consideration under agenda item 8, an additional (12th) project concept should be submitted to extend the existing project RAS0068 into the 2016–17 programme cycle.

The Meeting decided that ROK would be the LC for preparing a project document to be forwarded to the RCA Chair by 15 May 2014. The Meeting also encouraged the NR of ROK to consider the role that could be played by the RCARO in the development of the project proposal and its future management if the project is funded.

The meeting noted that the Agency would send documentation for RAS0068 to ROK within one week of the conclusion of the NRM. In line with the agreed process, NRs should provide any comments on the concept to the NR of ROK by 30 April and the meeting agreed that ROK would provide the project concept to the RCA Chair by 15 May 2014.

9. Review of the Settings of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee (RCAPAC)

a. Review of the nominations for the RCAPAC (RCANRM(36)/11)

Seven nominations had been received that included CVs of the nominees (Annex 29). The nominees present at the meeting absented themselves during the discussion. The RCA Chair thanked NRs for providing the nominations. Discussion centred on achieving a good balance in country representation and experience.

b. Decision on the composition of the RCAPAC

The Meeting decided by consensus that the RCAPAC should comprise six (6) members: Dr Frank Bruhn (NZE), Dr John Easey (AUL), Mr Joon-Keuk Chung (ROK), Dr Tomoaki Tamaki (JPN), Dr Pookot Raghava Unni (IND) and Dr Soledad Castaneda (PHI).

10. Report on the Review and Update of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules (GORs)

a. Review and adoption of the revision to the RCA GORs (RCANRM(36)/12)

As Chair of the Working Group responsible for the report (Annex 30), the NR of NZE summarized the main types of modifications to the GORs and Operational GORs that were being recommended. He noted that NRs were aware that the review had been under discussion for some time. The six types of modification were those:

- a) based on discussions at GCM and NRM meetings since 2010.
- b) to increase consistency with the RCA Agreement.
- c) to specify the roles and responsibilities of the RCAPAC.
- d) to specify the roles and responsibilities of the IAEA, RCA-FP and RCA-RO.
- e) to update procedures for the development of project proposals supported by TCF.
- f) to update formatting and style.

There was a short discussion and AUL, CPR and IND supported adoption of the updated GORs and Operational GORs.

The Meeting adopted the updated Guidelines and Operating Rules (GORs) and the Operational GORs.

The Meeting requested NRs to provide any additional comments or suggestions to the RCA Chair within one month of completion of the NRM. The RCA Chair will then finalise the GORs and the Operational GORs.

11. Update on the Status of the Proposal for RCA Engagement with Pacific Island Countries

At the invitation of the RCA Chair and on behalf of a Working Group, AUL tabled a draft letter from the RCA Chair to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Its purpose was to open channels of communication between the Forum and RCA. The eventual outcome was intended to be an opportunity for the Forum to represent small Pacific Island states in engaging with the RCA, thus increasing the opportunities for such states to take advantage of the benefits of nuclear science and technology.

The DIR-TCAP, MYA and JPN suggested some amendments to the wording of the letter which AUL indicated would be acceptable. MYA and IND expressed support for the intent of the letter.

The Meeting endorsed the letter prepared by the Working Group subject to minor modifications suggested by JPN, MYA and the IAEA and agreed that the RCA Chair should send the letter to the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

At this point, the end of Day 2, a preliminary discussion was held of the conclusions and recommendations related to agenda items discussed during the day.

12. Review of the Preparation of the RCA Strategic Priorities 2018–2023

a. Report on the Process for the Preparation of the RCA Medium Term Strategy and Strategic Priorities 2018–2023 – RCANRM(36)/13

The RCA Chair recalled that the 42nd GCM established a Working Group (WG) to prepare a conceptual paper on the development of an RCA Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Strategic Priorities (SP). He requested the Chair of the Working Group, the NR of PHI, to present a review of the work of the WG (Annex 31). In response the WG Chair outlined the process and work programme of the WG. This included the preparation by a consultant, Dr John Easey, of a report on the RCA Technical Profile and a concept paper for the MTS and SP for 2018–2023.

b. Review of the concept paper presented by the WG

The Chair of the WG then outlined the content of the concept paper and the RCA Chair invited comments from the NRs.

CPR, IND, MAL and AUL congratulated the WG and expressed their support for the concept paper. CPR noted that it was willing to continue to assist in preparation of the document. AUL noted that the suggestion to re-introduce a research component into RCA projects was consistent with the discussion on RAS7021 (agenda item 6). This was a great way to build capacity. AUL also enquired whether the report on the RCA Technical Profile could be made available to all NRs. The IAEA representatives replied that as the report was funded from RCA resources, the report could be circulated.

The Meeting noted the report provided by the Chair of the Working Group and thanked the Group for their efforts.

The Meeting endorsed the concept paper proposed by the Working Group. The meeting noted that the Working Group will provide updates on its work as appropriate to all NRs and a full report on progress at the 43rd GCM.

The Meeting requested the IAEA Secretariat to provide the updated report on the RCA Technical Profile and the associated PowerPoint presentation to the RCA Chair who in turn will provide it to all NRs.

13. Proposed Amendment to the RCA Agreement

The RCA Chair reviewed recent deliberations of the NRs with respect to amending the RCA Agreement. At the 35th NRM, NRs were invited to table proposed amendments. At the 42nd GCM, AUL and ROK tabled proposed amendments and it was decided that NRs should be given a further six months to provide more time for consultation within their own countries. The 42nd GCM also agreed that a working group should be formed at the 36th NRM to consider possible amendments to the RCA Agreement.

The Chair called for any further proposals for amendment of the Agreement but none were tabled. He then called for and received nominations to the Working Group. The RCA Chair noted that the Working Group would have to establish Terms of Reference, schedules, milestones and other operational procedures.

In discussion, PHI requested that GPs that were not represented on the Working Group be kept informed of its progress and be able to provide input. MAL suggested that any input should be channelled through the Working Group Chair and that the Working Group recommend operational modalities at the 42nd GCM. IND endorsed this suggestion. AUL offered to provide the channel for communication until a more formal mechanism had been finalized.

The Meeting noted that no additional proposed amendments were tabled at the Meeting.

The Meeting approved the establishment of a Working Group on proposed amendments of the RCA Agreement with the NR of AUL as chair, the NRs of IND, JPN, ROK, NZE and MYA as members together with a member from CPR to be notified in due course.

The Meeting requested the Working Group to report to the 43rd GCM on proposed Terms of Reference, schedules, milestones and other pertinent matters together with a summary of progress made. The Meeting noted that the NR of AUL offered to receive

any communications relating to any proposed amendments between now and the GCM, including the mechanism for obtaining any necessary legal advice.

14. Report of the Director of the RCARO (RCANRM(36)/14)

The RCA Chair invited the Director of the RCARO to deliver his report, which had already been circulated (**Annex 32**). He reported on the RCARO work performance in 2013 and on its work plan for 2014. A draft RCA brochure was also tabled for consideration.

MYA said that communication using personal email can sometimes be difficult with Working Group members or other NRs, and asked whether there might be an email account from RCARO or an electronic platform with space on which to load documents. The DIR-TCAP replied that this could be looked into. PHI asked whether fellows attached to RCARO could participate in projects as well as the management of the RCARO office, and the Director replied that both types of activity were possible. On the brochure, PHI requested that the RCARO ensure that projects selected for inclusion be as recent as possible.

With respect to RCARO attendance at major conferences, AUL noted a conference on South Pacific environmental radioactivity. ANSTO was organising the conference and could represent RCARO if that would be helpful.

The Meeting noted the report by the Director of the RCARO.

The Meeting requested NRs to supply any comments on the draft brochure to the Regional Office within two weeks of the conclusion of the NRM.

Following the agenda item, the Director of the RCARO provided a Strategic Paper on the Potential for Increasing the Role of the RCARO. This discussed several initiatives and the Director sought the advice of NRs on:

- a proposal to form a Working Group to consider the suggestions set out in the Strategic Paper.
- the recruitment of a senior staff member.
- initiation of a ‘pilot’ project programme to be fully funded by extra-budgetary funds from ROK.

The RCA Chair thanked the Director for his thoughtful presentation and suggestions. He requested participants to first consider the formation of a Working Group to consider the Strategic Paper and the future role of the RCARO. FNCA and AUL noted that the Strategic Paper and Working Group would make a valuable contribution to strengthening the RCA. They noted that the future role of the RCARO should be linked to its legal status and the RCA Agreement. AUL noted that first the role of the RCARO should be defined and then its appropriate legal status could be considered. IND supported a Working Group in principle but wished to know how many Working Groups would then be operating, including the Working Groups formed at and prior to the 36th NRM. ROK supported the formation of a Working Group.

In response to a discussion about how the IAEA should be involved in the deliberations of the Working Group, the DIR-TCAP said that the Agency's role precluded it from taking an active part in the Working Group. However, they would provide support and consider its recommendations with great interest.

The Meeting agreed that a Working Group be formed to consider the future role of the RCARO, including the issues raised in the Strategic Paper presented by the Director RCARO.

The Meeting noted the importance of ongoing communication between the Working Group and the IAEA Secretariat.

The Meeting agreed that the members of the Working Group would be Mr John Easey (Chair), the Director RCARO, Mr Peter Roberts (NZE) and members to be notified by NRs from ROK, JPN, PHI, PAK and CPR. The Meeting requested the Working Group provide a progress report at the 43rd GCM.

There was a short discussion on the proposal to recruit a senior staff member to the RCARO. The Chair noted that the recommendation from RCARO SAC was for the Working Group to consider the recruitment proposal. JPN, MYA, IND and ROK supported the suggestion for the Working Group to consider the issue.

The Meeting agreed that any need for the creation of a new senior staff post at RCARO would first be considered by the Working Group, and postponed any recommendation until the Working Group reported back.

The Director RCARO tabled a proposal for the Initiation of a Pilot Project, as mentioned in the Strategic Paper. This project would be a proposal in addition to the 12 project proposals already agreed by NRs for submission to the IAEA. After considerable discussion, it was clarified the proposal had the following features:

- the project would have ROK as the Lead Country and be fully funded by an extra-budgetary contribution from ROK.
- if approved, the project would be led by the Director of the RCARO as its LCC.
- two options for consideration by RCA NRs would be prepared as project concept options and submitted to the RCA Chair by 15 May 2014; one is in the field of nuclear medicine, the other in radiation processing.
- following submission to the RCA Chair, one option would be selected by the standard selection procedures for all project concepts and proposals for submission to the IAEA by 31 May 2014.
- The project was referred to as a 'pilot' project since it would be the first time that the mechanism of using the RCARO as an LCC had been tried, and the project would trial this modality.

Several NRs asked for and received further clarification on the relative roles of ROK as the LC and the RCARO as the LCC. Dr Bruhn noted that if the mechanism was to be on-going, a management framework would be required. The Meeting also discussed the brief time available for project development and submission and IND asked whether the project concepts

would be considered by RCAPAC. The RCA Chair pointed out that NRs had resolved to submit two project proposals from PHI that had not been evaluated by RCAPAC and time constraints appeared to preclude consideration by RCAPAC. AUL said that the proposal was a good way forward and noted that AUL was not listed as a potential participant in the nuclear medicine project, though it was likely to be involved.

With respect to the Strategic Paper of the DIR RCARO, the Meeting noted the proposal for a pilot project to be fully funded as an extra-budgetary contribution from ROK and in which the RCARO would take the role of LCC.

It was agreed that two project concept options for this project would be further developed and forwarded to the RCA Chair by 15 May 2014. The options would then be subject to the same schedule and procedures as the other project proposals already selected, but without evaluation by RCAPAC due to time constraints.

The Meeting agreed that NRs would rank these two options as a single category, separate from the project proposals being forwarded for TC funding, and that these rankings would be used for the prioritisation given to the Agency.

15. Report of the Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee

The Chair of the RCARO SAC (the NR of NZE) presented the report of the meeting of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee held on 31 March 2014 (**Annex 33**). The participants were the NRs of MYA, NZE, ROK, and PAK (electronically for the first part of the meeting). DIR-TCAP and RCA-FP attended as observers.

The SAC took note of the 2013 work performance and reconfirmed the 2014 Work Plan of the RCARO. SAC also made recommendations on participation in regional and international conferences and was briefed on the status of the on-going RCA expert support programme. The SAC agreed with the proposal from the Director of RCARO to form a Working Group to consider the future role of the RCARO. The SAC also noted the time constraints of the SAC meeting and requested the RCA Chair and the Director of the RCARO to discuss options to improve the situation and allow for more time for discussions at future meetings.

The Chair requested NRs to take any opportunities to promote the RCA at any conferences they attended.

The Meeting noted the Report of the Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee.

16. Presentation on FNCA (RCANRM(36)/15)

At the request of the Chair, the FCNA Coordinator, Dr Suelo Machi, presented his report on FNCA activities relevant to the RCA during 2013. His presentation is given in **Annex 34**.

INS commended the project on mutation breeding and hoped that there was synergy with an RCA project on the same topic. Dr Machi agreed that there were opportunities for synergy.

The meeting noted the report provided by the FNCA Coordinator.

17. Reports on collaboration between RCA and FNCA in 2013 – RCANRM(36)/16)

The RCA Chair invited the NRs of MAL, CPR and JPN to provide the reports of the LCCs for projects RAS1014, RAS5056 and RAS6053 respectively. The reports are provided in Annex 35.

The meeting noted the reports from MAL, CPR and JPN on collaboration between the RCA and the FNCA and noted the mutual benefits of these collaborations.

18. Update on Status of Acceptance of the 5th Agreement to extend the 1987 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCANRM(36)/17))

The RCA Chair thanked the RCA-FP for preparing the background document (Annex 36). The RCA-FP stated that 15 countries are now parties to the 5th Extension Agreement; Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The Meeting called on the NRs of those Member States who have not yet ratified the 5th Extension Agreement to discuss it with the relevant authorities and ensure the agreement can be ratified as soon as possible.

19. Arrangements for the 43rd RCA GCM and the 37th and 38th RCA NRMs

The representatives of the IAEA and the NR of MON provided information on the status of arrangements for upcoming GCM and NRM meetings, respectively. PAK contributed electronically via the RCA Chair.

The Meeting noted that the 43rd GCM will be held in Vienna on Friday 19 September 2014.

The RCA Chairs meeting will be held in Vienna on the morning of Thursday 18 September 2014 and the RCARO SAC meeting on the afternoon of Thursday 18 September 2014.

The RCA Chair advised that the NR of PAK had indicated his country's willingness to host the 37th NRM to be confirmed by June 2014, subject to certain security arrangements.

MON confirmed its willingness to host the 38th NRM at a date and venue to be notified. MON also indicated a willingness to host the 37th NRM if necessary, if so requested by way of a letter from the RCA Chair to be delivered by June 2014.

20. Any Other Business

PHI noted that the IAEA has changed its internal process for managing RCA projects and suggested it would be appropriate to review the changes for any effects it may have had on the implementation of the projects. The DIR-TCAP said he welcomed the opportunity to explain the practical reasons for the changes, which were driven by reasons such as the need to divide project management among its staff so that no one person, such as the RCA-FP, was overloaded. The IAEA was also raising the level of interaction for some policy matters to Director level. However, he noted that the changes had only been in place for two years.

AUL commented that the explanation was very useful. It was too soon to make an assessment of the impact of the change and supported a recommendation from the RCA Chair to defer decisions for some time. IND also agreed with the Chair's recommendation

The Meeting noted the IAEA's explanation of the requirement for the new project management settings in respect to project implementation. The Meeting recommended that any need for a review of the IAEA's new project management settings should be reconsidered in a few years' time.

IND expressed interest in whether the RCA Annual Report could include information on events in which RCA provided training for personnel from IAEA Member States outside the region. The agency noted that there is currently no formal mechanism to allow for such reporting. IND recalled that in the past the chairs of the Regional Agreements met at the time of the GCM, and asked what had happened to this concept. The DIR-TCAP replied that such meetings had indeed taken place but that they had lapsed in recent years. As always, it was a matter for the Parties to the Agreements whether they wanted to renew such meetings.

The RCA Chair suggested that the meeting could request that the Chair investigate interest in, and mechanism for, exploring inter-agreement collaboration. There was general support for this suggestion.

The Meeting requested the RCA Chair to explore the interest in, and mechanisms for, the exchange of information between the Regional Agreements.

MYA asked about in-kind contributions and the methods for reporting. Dr Bruhn (RCAPAC Chair) and the RCA Chair noted that there was a template available for calculating and reporting in-kind contributions. MYA asked whether it was appropriate for the time of NRs to be regarded as an in-kind contribution. The DIR-TCAP expressed his opinion that it was not. PHI asked whether in-kind contributions were in fact reported in the Annual Report.

The RCA Chair and Dr Bruhn raised the matter of the timing of submission of information on in-kind contributions if they were to be reported in the RCA Annual Report. It was decided that 15 January was the deadline for this information if it was to be in time for placement in the draft Annual Report. MYA asked whether there was any mechanism to validate or assess the in-kind contribution submitted by the NRs. The consensus was that it was the responsibility of NRs to submit accurate in-kind contributions, and that the template would assist accuracy.

The Meeting agreed that NRs would provide information on in-kind contributions of GPs to the RCA for 2013 to the RCA FP within one week of the conclusion of the NRM. The meeting agreed that, in future, information should be sent by the NRs to the RCA FP by 15 January to allow inclusion in the relevant Annual Report.

The Meeting agreed that the activities of NRs should not be included when calculating in-kind contributions of GPs to the RCA.

The Meeting agreed that it is the sole responsibility of the NRs to submit accurate information on in-kind contributions of GPs to the RCA

MYA noted that in his experience as the previous RCA Chair there had been many issues caused by the late submission of documents such as those related to project formulation and other matters. In a previous agenda item, the report of RCAPAC indicated that many submissions had missed deadlines for RCAPAC evaluation and that several were not evaluated for that reason. AUL and other NRs noted that some deadlines were really critical, even absolute, while some others were slightly more flexible.

In response, the RCA Chair said the meeting had already agreed to adhere strictly to deadlines for document submission or communications. It would be hard to recommend a single type of response suitable for all missed deadlines. However, any late submissions would be acted upon at the discretion of the receiving party and the submitter would have to take the risk of whatever action was decided upon by the receiving party.

The Meeting agreed that deadlines for all processes should be adhered to as strictly as possible and any late submissions will be acted upon at the discretion of the receiving party.

21. Adoption of the Meeting Report of the 36th Regional Meeting of the National RCA Representatives

The Meeting reviewed, revised and agreed the recorded conclusions, findings and decisions made during the Meeting. The RCA-FP was requested to circulate the draft report without annexes to the delegates within one month after the Meeting. The NRs shall submit their comments within two weeks of receipt of the draft report. The RCA-FP will circulate the final report within two weeks after receipt of comments.

The Meeting adopted the report of the 36th NRM, Wellington, New Zealand.

22. Closing

The RCA Chair thanked the Rapporteurs for their work and all participants for their engagement in the Meeting. He reviewed what had been discussed and achieved and said he believed the Meeting had been very successful.

The DIR-TCAP congratulated all involved for the great success, not only of this Meeting but also the success of the RCA generally. The IAEA was proud to be associated with the RCA. He reiterated the commitment and engagement of the IAEA to the RCA. He expressed appreciation to the government of New Zealand and to the RCA Chair.

On behalf of all the visiting participants, IND thanked the RCA Chair and his support team. The RCA Chair declared the Meeting closed at 5.45pm.