



REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



REPORT OF
THE 43rd MEETING OF THE NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES

28-29 April 2021

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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 43rd RCA Meeting of National Representatives was held online on 28-29 April 2021, via video conferencing.

The Meeting was attended by 20 RCA Government Parties: Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), China (CPR), Cambodia (KAM), India (IND), Indonesia (INS), Japan (JPN), Korea (ROK), Laos (LAO), Malaysia (MAL), Mongolia (MON), Myanmar (MYA), Nepal (NEP), New Zealand (NZE), Pakistan (PAK), Philippines (PHI), Singapore (SIN), Sri Lanka (SRL), Thailand (THA) and Vietnam (VIE). Representatives from the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) and FNCA also joined the Meeting.

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

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

Opening

a. Opening of the 43rd RCA NRM by the RCA Chair (Malaysia)

Mr Abdul Rahim Harun, the Deputy Director General of Malaysian Nuclear Agency, the RCA Chair and NR of MAL, officially opened the Meeting. His speech is provided in **Annex 2**.

b. Statement of the Representative of the Incoming Chairmanship Country of the RCA (Thailand)

Mr Permsuk Sutchaphiwat, the Secretary-General of Office of Atoms for Peace, delivered his statement. His speech is provided in **Annex 3**.

c. Statement of the Representative of the IAEA

Mr Hua Liu, Deputy Director General and Head of Department of Technical Cooperation, IAEA, delivered his statement. His speech is provided in **Annex 4**.

d. Remarks of the Outgoing RCA Chair

Mr Abdul Rahim Harun, the NR of MAL, delivered his remarks as the outgoing RCA Chair. His speech is provided in **Annex 5**.

e. Designation of the New RCA Chair and Rapporteurs

Mr Abdul Rahim Harun, the NR of MAL, officially announced that the RCA chairmanship has transferred to Thailand.

Ms Suchin Udomsomporn, the NR of THA, was unanimously elected as the new RCA Chair.

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

f. Remarks of the New RCA Chair

Ms Suchin Udomsomporn, the NR of THA, thanked the participants of the Meeting and announced her commitment in fulfilling her role as the incoming RCA Chair. Her speech is provided in Annex 6.

1. Adoption of the Agenda – RCANRM(43)/1

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda with no amendment (Annex 7).

The Meeting adopted the agenda with no amendment.

2. Review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020 by RCA FP – RCANRM(43)/2

The RCA-FP presented on the review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020 (Annex 8).

The Meeting took note of the report on the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020 and thanked the Secretariat, National RCA Representatives, Lead Country Coordinators, and National Project Coordinators for the effective implementation of the RCA Programme in 2020. The Meeting noted that despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCA projects in 2020 were well implemented with a high implementation rate of 96.5%.

The Meeting requested the RCA-FP to provide a full list of procurement for review at the 50th RCA GCM.

3. Overview of the draft RCA Annual Report for 2020 by RCA FP – RCANRM(43)/3

The RCA-FP provided an overview of the draft RCA Annual Report for 2020 (Annex 9).

The Meeting took note of the draft RCA Annual Report 2020. The Meeting agreed that any comments and recommendations on the draft should be provided by the NRs to the RCA Chair, RCARO and the RCA-FP using track changes by 20 May 2021.

JPN noted the importance of recording the financial report of other cooperative activities by RCARO.

The Meeting took note of the submission of the national in-kind contributions by the eight (8) GPs and encouraged the remaining GPs to submit the report on

national in-kind contributions to the RCARO by 20 May to be consolidated into the RCA Annual Report.

The draft will be revised and finalized by the RCA Chair, RCARO and the RCA-FP and circulated to the NRs by 10 June 2021.

4. Proposed suggestions to enhance the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2021 in the unpredictable and complicated situation/development of the COVID-19 pandemic by RCA FP – RCANRM(43)/4

The RCA-FP provided a presentation on the proposed suggestions to enhance the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2021 in the unpredictable and complicated situation/development of the COVID-19 pandemic (**Annex 10**).

In regards to the extension of the current on-going projects, while the virtual means are highly encouraged to be used for the implementation of activities to avoid project extensions, the Meeting agreed that consideration should be given to grandfathering of fundamental project activities that require physical arrangements to achieve the project goals.

The Meeting took note of the suggestions on the implementation of the RCA Programme proposed by the RCA-FP. Considering the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is foreseen that virtual events will continue to replace physical ones in 2021 and 2022. In such circumstances, the Meeting endorsed the below recommendations:

For on-going projects:

- **GPs are requested to establish adequate IT platforms and deliver project activities both at national and regional level virtually in place of face-to face as much as possible.**
- **LCCs, TOs and RCA FP are requested to review and adjust project workplan in such a way that almost all project activities (HR-related activities) can be implemented virtually, and project can achieve the set objective and finish on time. Project extension needs to be avoided but with exceptions to those projects with activities that require physical activities.**
- **The TCFs saved from the implementation of virtual events are requested for procurement of equipment, tools, spare parts, etc. necessary for the implementation of the project. LCCs, TOs and RCA FP are requested to consider and agree on items of procurement to ensure procurements are in line with the objective of project.**

For new project designs for 2022-2023 TC Cycle, LCCs are requested to identify:

- **which regional events (HR-related) can be implemented virtually and which ones should be implemented face-to-face, then allocate funds for each activity properly;**
- **pieces of equipment, tools and spare parts needed for implementation of project, then estimate funds for procurement; and**

- on-line training materials that need to be developed under projects and allocate funds accordingly.

In regards to the production of training materials, the Meeting agreed that regional experts who are involved in the process should fully be appreciated and the copyright of the training materials should be duly respected and protected.

5. Update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA by RCA FP – RCANRM(43)/5

The RCA-FP provided an update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA ([Annex 11](#)).

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

The Meeting endorsed the follow-on plan on developing the socio-economic impact assessment for Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) and Radiotherapy (RT) as attached in [Annex 11](#). The Meeting recommended the NRs to designate most appropriate experts to answer the questionnaire and work closely with the designated experts to ensure that the questionnaire is completed in the best possible manner by 5 Jun. 2021.

6. Review of the progress of the RCA projects by LCCs – RCANRM(43)/6

Progress reports on the implementation of each RCA project were provided by the Lead Countries responsible ([Annexes 12 to 27](#)).

Project Number	LCC	Annex
RAS5084	<u>AUL</u>	12
RAS6087	<u>AUL</u>	13
RAS7031	<u>AUL</u>	14
RAS7037	<u>AUL</u>	15
RAS5077	<u>CPR</u>	16
RAS7035	<u>CPR</u>	17
RAS7028	<u>INS</u>	18
RAS6086	<u>JPN</u>	19
RAS6093	<u>ROK</u>	20
RAS6097	<u>ROK</u>	21
RAS9092	<u>ROK</u>	22
RAS1022	<u>MAL</u>	23
RAS5081	<u>NZE</u>	24
RAS6096	<u>NZE</u>	25
RAS5087	<u>VIE</u>	26
RCARP01	<u>INS</u>	27

The Meeting took note of the reports of RCA Project activities undertaken in 2020 and appreciated the LCCs of respective country for active collaborations.

7. Report of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee by PAC Chair – RCANRM(43)/7

The Chair of RCA Programme Advisory Committee provided the report of the RCA PAC, including the items as follows;

- a. Report on the activities of the RCA PAC – RCANRM(43)/7.1 (Annex 28)**
- b. Report on the preparation of the RCA Programme for 2022-2023 – RCANRM(43)/7.2 (Annex 29)**

The Meeting took note that the RCA project designs for 2022/23 have received excellent reviews in the quality reviews carried out by the TC Programme Support and Coordination Division of the IAEA.

The Meeting took note of the report of RCA PAC and appreciated the contribution made by the RCA PAC. The Meeting approved the following recommendations by the RCA PAC:

- The roles and responsibilities of the NPCs should be conveyed to them through the relevant extract of the GOR at the beginning of each project cycle, and it should be an item on the Agenda of the kick-off meeting of each project.**
- The NRs consider revising the procedure for project development for future TC cycles taking into consideration the need for long term planning, the specific needs of new GPs, and ensuring a balanced programme.**
- The needs of the new GPs are assessed through consultations with new GPs and through expert missions conducted under RAS0086 (Enhancing the Management and Implementation of Activities under the Framework). It is also recommended to establish a mentoring scheme between new GPs and RCA GPs with expertise in areas of their needs, to promote TCDC.**
- Sufficient time should be allowed for finalizing the reports of the meetings of RCA NRs and decisions agreed at the meetings should not be subsequently changed as stipulated in the GOR. The PAC also recommends that the duration of NRMs should be long enough to allow for sufficient time for discussion of all Agenda items, and LCC reports should continue to be an Agenda Item, even if the Meetings are held as virtual meetings.**

The Meeting endorsed the planned meetings of RCA PAC and workplan on the preparations for RCA TC Programme for 2024/25 given in Annex 28 to 29.

For RCA TC Programme for 2022/2023, the Meeting agreed to submit the below list of seven (7) projects to the IAEA for further process, with six (6) projects to commence in 2022 and one (1) project in 2023.

Concept Code	Project Title	LCC
RAS202010	Improving the Safety and Quality of Radiotherapy in Asia Pacific Region through Auditing and Medical Physicist Training	CPR
RAS202011	Improving the Quality Management Practices in Radiation Processing Facilities for Better Performances and Applications	MAL
RAS202012	Standardization of Radiotherapy in Palliative Care in the RCA Region	JPN
RAS202013	Strengthening Clinical Application of Hypofractionated Radiotherapy in the RCA Region	ROK
RAS202014	Assessing and Mitigating Agro Contaminants to Improve Water Quality and Soil Productivity in Catchments Using Integrated Isotopic Approaches	AUL
RAS202015	Enhancing the Regional Collaboration in Water and Environmental Isotope Analysis for Improvement of Water Management Practices, an Effort to Alleviate Climate Change Impacts in Asia Pacific Region	VIE
RAS202016	Enhancing Regional Capabilities in Advanced Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) Techniques and Applications for Improved Safety and Inspection Performance in Industries	MAL

8. Report of the RCA Regional Programme Framework for 2024-2029 by PAC Chair – RCANRM(43)/8

The RCA PAC Chair presented the report of the RCA Regional Programme Framework (RPF) for 2024-2029 (**Annex 30**), specifically on the summary of the procedures adopted for development of the RPF, the contents of the RPF and the recommendations made for the consideration of the NRM.

The meeting noted the importance of the project areas in the RPF being aligned with the fields of interest of the potential international/regional partners such as WB, ADB, JICA, KOICA, ChinaAid, USAID, DFAT Aid etc.

The Meeting took note of the report of RCA PAC on the RCA Regional Programme Framework (RPF) for 2024-2029. The Meeting endorsed the RPF to be used in the development of the RCA Programmes for the TC cycles of 2024/25, 2026/27 and 2028/29.

The Meeting agreed to include “radioisotope production” as part of the future directions under Nuclear Medicine of thematic sector “Human Health”.

The Meeting agreed on the need of bringing in additional financial resources to the RCA Programme and asked GPs to take proactive action on establishing partnerships with regional and international stakeholders.

9. Revision of the Terms of Reference of the RCA PAC by PAC Chair – RCANRM(43)/9

The RCA PAC Chair presented the revised Terms of Reference of the RCA PAC (**Annex 31**). **JPN** proposed to revise the number of years of experience required for new PAC members from 6 years to a sufficient period of time, which is to be determined by the NR nominating the new member.

The Meeting endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the RCA PAC subject to the revision proposed by JPN.

10. Report on the activities of the RCARO – RCANRM(43)/10

The Director of the RCARO provided the report activities of the RCARO (**Annex 32**). **JPN** requested to further discuss how to better make use of the e-learning as well as the partnerships during the Meeting of WG MTSC and Meeting took note of it.

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCARO and acknowledged the strong support provided by RCARO to the RCA Programme.

11. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO – RCANRM(43)/11

The Chair of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) presented the report of the 32nd Meeting of the RCARO SAC (**Annex 33**).

The Meeting took note of the report of the 32nd Meeting of RCARO SAC presented by the RCARO SAC Chair and endorsed its recommendations as attached in Annex 33.

12. Report of the WG on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination by Chair of the WG – RCANRM(43)/12

The Chair of the WG on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination gave a presentation on the report of the WG (**Annex 34**).

The Meeting took note of the report presented by the Chair of the WG MTSC.

The Meeting officially endorsed Yoshiko Okamoto (JPN) and Alumande Dela Rosa (PHI) as Chair and Deputy Chair of the MTSC WG. The Meeting also agreed to approve the following recommendations by the WG:

- **MTSC WG to develop a new mechanism to address the needs of new GPs, such as establishing a special project targeting their needs**
- **Noting the importance of monitoring the RCA project outputs after each project cycle, the MTSC WG in cooperation with the IAEA Secretariat, to**

identify the most reasonable way to analyse the RCA project outputs after each project cycle

The Meeting also endorsed the draft letter from the RCA Chair to the Permanent Missions of all GPs (Annex 35) which follows up on the 2018 Declaration and highlights that the 50th anniversary of the RCA would be an opportune time for EB contributions. The Meeting requested the NRs to provide comments to the RCA Chair within two weeks of conclusion of the Meeting and the RCA Chair to finalize and distribute to the Permanent Missions of RCA GPs within one month of the conclusion of the Meeting.

The Meeting recommended the NRs to review the draft updates to the GOR (Annex 36) and give feedback to the MTSC WG with a view to finalizing the new RRU concept and guidelines at the 50th GCM.

In regards to the copyright of e-learning modules resulted from RCA projects, the Meeting noted the WG will further discuss on the issue.

The Meeting endorsed the MTSC WG Annual Work Plan 2021 as attached in Annex 37.

13. Report of the WG to draft RCA 2024-2029 MTS by Chair of the WG – RCANRM(43)/13

The Chair of the WG to draft RCA 2024-2029 MTS gave a presentation on the report of the WG (Annex 38).

The Meeting took note of the report presented by the Chair of the WG to draft RCA 2024-2029 MTS. The Meeting agreed to endorse the Terms of Reference for the Drafting WG as attached in Annex 39.

The Meeting noted the framework analysis conducted by the 2018-2023 MTS and recommended the NRs to provide comments to the Drafting WG Chair within one week after the NRM.

The Meeting endorsed the Drafting WG Annual Work Plan as attached in Annex 40.

Noting the current Chair (AUL) has to step down as Chair, the Meeting requested the GPs, who volunteer to take over the role, inform the RCA Chair within one week of the NRM. The Meeting appreciated the NR of AUL for his efforts and contribution to the WG.

14. Report of the Special Task Force on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA by the RCA Chair – RCANRM(43)/14

The RCA Chair delivered a presentation on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA, on the specified items as follows (**Annex 41**);

- a. **Update on the action plan for the 50th Anniversary of the RCA**
- b. **Discussion on the preparation of the Ministerial Conference**

The Meeting took note of the report of the Special Task Force on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA. The Meeting recommended any GP interested to make Extra Budgetary (EBT) contributions should inform the STF Chair of their possible intention for the EBT contributions within three weeks of the conclusion of the 43rd NRM, in order that the STF can start the actual preparation for the 50th Anniversary.

The Meeting welcomed and appreciated **ROK**'s intention to contribute extra-budgetary funds for supporting the celebration of the 50th Anniversary.

The 43rd NRM reviewed the first draft of the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference (**Annex 42**). The Meeting recommended the NRs to give preliminary comments to the STF Chair within three weeks of the conclusion of the NRM.

The Meeting took note of the official letter by **VIE** in regards to the hosting of the RCA Ministerial Meeting (**Annex 43**). Taking into consideration that the COVID-19 pandemic would continue until the first half of the year 2022, the Meeting agreed that the RCA Ministerial Meeting be held in Vienna, Austria, on the occasion of 51st RCA GCM and 66th IAEA General Conference in September 2022.

The Meeting endorsed **THA** to take the role as the new Chair of the STF.

The Meeting approved the STF to have a meeting prior to the 50th RCA GCM.

15. Presentation on the FNCA's activities by FNCA Advisor – RCANRM(43)/15

The FNCA Representative provided a report on the FNCA's activities (**Annex 44**)

The Meeting took note of the report on the FNCA's activities provided by the representative of the FNCA. The Meeting noted the importance of strengthening the cooperation between the RCA and FNCA through exchange of knowledge and information. In this regards, cooperation on radiation oncology will be considered as a good example.

16. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA – RCANRM(43)/16

The RCA-FP provided an update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA Agreement (Annex 45).

KAM informed that the Instrument of Acceptance for the 2017 RCA Agreement will be approved by the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The Meeting welcomed the advice that twenty (20) 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 two (2) GPs (FIJ and LAO) depositing their instrument of acceptance as soon as possible.

17. Arrangements for the 50th RCA GCM, the 44th and 45th RCA NRMs

VIE confirmed that the 44th NRM will take place in Vietnam in 2022.

AUL confirmed that the 45th NRM will take place in Australia in 2023.

The Meeting noted that the 50th GCM will be held in September 2021.

VIE confirmed that the 44th NRM will be held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in April, 2022, with the form of the Meeting to be confirmed in due course taking into consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

AUL confirmed that the 45th NRM will be held in Australia in late March or early April, 2023.

18. Any Other Business

- a. **Proposal for setting up RCA Scholarship Programme (Annex 46)**
- b. **Proposal for partnership with ADB on energy planning (Annex 47)**
- c. **Request of Viet Nam for consideration of organizing RCA Ministerial Meeting on the occasion of the 51st RCA GCM in Sept 2022 in Vienna, Austria**

With regard to the proposal on setting up the RCA Scholarship Programme, JPN commented that its Government Scholarship selection criteria and its procedures are already well-established one, and realizing such a quota for the RCA seems difficult. AUL expressed similar concerns and requested that the proposal, along with how it would be funded be significantly developed before further consideration by the NRs.

The Meeting took note of the proposal on setting up RCA Scholarship Programme delivered by RCA-FP. The Meeting agreed on the strong need for further description of the proposed programme. In this regard, the Meeting requested the IAEA to provide details of the programme for consideration of the 50th RCA GCM.

The Meeting noted the difficulties in having a virtual meeting and suggested that for future virtual meetings sufficient time should be given for detailed discussions and deliberations for each item.

The Meeting took note of the progress made under the partnership between the RCA and Asia Development Bank (ADB), and approved the RCARO to follow up the progress to establish a partnership project with the ADB.

19. Closure

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