

Report of the WG on the RCA MTS 2018/2023 Coordination

Background

The 10th Meeting of the Working Group on MTS Coordination (WG MTSC) was held on 02-04 March 2022 via videoconferencing. The Meeting had five (5) participants comprising representatives from BGD, MAL, NZE, PHI, and ROK, and the RCA PAC Chair, RCA FP, and the RCARO as observers.

In consideration of the RCAGCM actions on the recommendations of the WG MTSC presented at the 50th RCAGCM, the WG meeting had in-depth discussions on the final review of the MTS, utilization of Regional Resource Units (RRUs) to be embedded in the project development process with the new procedure on identification of RRUs incorporated in the GOR, addressing the special needs of new GPs, and the update/review of the GOR. The meeting also discussed its tasks on resource mobilization and expanding partnerships, human resource development, and its engagement with the Working Group drafting the MTS 2024-2029. The outputs of the discussions were translated into conclusions/ recommendations and actions as reflected in the Meeting Report and in the Work Plan for 2022.

The report of the 10th meeting of the WG MTSC is in Attachment 1. The report contains recommendations related to:

- Appointment of new Chair, Deputy Chair, and new members of the WG MTSC, and recruitment of one member specifically for resource mobilization
- Development of advice/recommendations based on the MTR and re-assessments of particular PIs, in cooperation with RCA PAC, for endorsement to the WG drafting the MTS 2024-2029
- Utilization of RRUs
- Proposal for the establishment of a new Committee on RCA Comprehensive Nuclear HRD Programme
- Conduct of a thorough study on the establishment of a new Committee with the sole task of resource mobilization and expanding partnerships
- Proposal for the establishment of a new Working Group in 2024 to conduct a strategic review of the GOR
- WG's annual Work Plan for 2022

Proposed Action

The Meeting may take note of the report and approve relevant actions to support the activities of the WG MTSC.

Attachment 1

Report of the 10th Meeting of the Working Group on RCA Medium-Term Strategy Coordination 02-04 March 2022 (Virtual Meeting)

1. Introduction

The Opening Session and the succeeding two sessions were chaired by the Interim Chair from the PHI.

Upon approval of the 50th RCA General Conference (GCM) held online on 29 September 2021, the Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on the RCA Medium Term Strategy Coordination (WG MTSC) was held from 02 to 04 March 2022 via video conferencing. The adopted Agenda of the Meeting is in **Annex 1**.

The Meeting of the WG MTSC consisted of 9 participants and observers comprising representatives from BGD, MAL, NZE, PHI, ROK, RCA FP and RCARO. The Chair of the RCA PAC also participated. The representative from the PHI was the WG Interim Chair. The List of Participants is in **Annex 2**.

The Meeting aimed to:

- Review, evaluate progress of, and update the MTSC WG work plan for 2021; and
- Review and update, if necessary, the Performance Indicators for the Final MTS Review.

It was expected that the Meeting would produce the following documents for consideration by the 44th RCA National Representatives Meeting (NRM):

- Proposed updates to RCA documents including the GOR, if required;
- Updated MTSC WG Work Plan;
- Working Group Meeting Report.

The Chair, Yoshiko Okamoto (JPN), advised the meeting that due to her new assignment in the Japanese Government, she would be unable to discharge her duties as WG Chair, and as member of the WG. The meeting endorsed the Deputy Chair, Alumanda Dela Rosa (PHI), as the Interim Chair for the meeting. The PHI nominated Syed Mohammad Hossain (BGD) as the Deputy Chair, which was also endorsed by the meeting. Seoyeong Jeong (ROK) will be taking up a new assignment at the OECD/NEA, thus would not be able to continue as WG member. ROK was represented in this meeting by Mr. Cheonkyeong Park. Mark Alexander (AUL) stepped down as WG member due to his new assignment in the Australian Government.

Due to the loss of the above-listed individuals, the WG MTSC needs three new members with demonstrable experience in the planning, managing and coordinating of projects, preferably related to nuclear science and technology; full knowledge and understanding of the strategy and operation of the RCA Programme; and sound understanding of national/regional frameworks related to nuclear science and technology. New members with experience and expertise in financial resource mobilization and partnerships are sought in particular.

Recommendation 1

The meeting recommends that the 44th NRM officially endorse Alumanda Dela Rosa (PHL) and Syed Mohammad Hossain (BGD) as Chair and Deputy Chair, respectively, of the WG MTSC. The meeting also recommends that the NRM endorse the nomination of Akiko Hayashida to replace Yoshiko Okamoto (JPN) and Cheonkyeong Park to replace Seoyeong Jeong (ROK) as new members of the WG MTSC, and open the nomination for one more member of the WG preferably with skills and experience in resource mobilization and partnerships.

The Interim Chair gave a brief update on recent developments since the 9th WG Meeting, as well as the 50th GCM actions on the recommendations of the 9th Meeting. The presentation is included as **Annex 3**.

2. Feedback from the RCA PAC

The PAC Chair gave a presentation on functions and activities of PAC, issues and some suggestions for the Final Review of the Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2023, and the complementarity of the functions of the PAC and the WG MTSC. The presentation is included as **Annex 4**.

The functions of the PAC have been expanded to include: i) advising the NRs on the development and implementation of RCA cooperative projects, and ii) evaluating and recording the achievements of completed projects. The PAC Chair shared the completed projects and the planned activities of the PAC for 2022.

The PAC Chair raised several issues on the PAC conducting the final review of the MTS namely: i) independence of the PAC since the indicators on programme soundness are related to the functions of PAC, and ii) additional responsibilities delegated to the PAC increasing the workload of PAC members. He would like the following concerns resolved before conducting the Final Review if it is to be done by PAC: i) how the results of MTS Midterm Review is being used and how the Final Review will be used to identify shortcomings and take remedial actions, ii) status of implementation of the work plan for the execution of the MTS (E.6), and iii) the possibility of obtaining assistance to extract data required for the Final Review.

From the PAC Chair's presentation on the terms of reference of the PAC and the WG MTSC, the functions of the PAC and the WG MTSC complemented each other towards attaining the common goal of working for the RCA vision and mission. NZE elucidated an important basic difference between the functions of PAC and the WG MTSC: the main focus of PAC is on each individual project, ensuring that it is designed according to the TC criteria and be the best that it could be, i.e. the PAC ensures that the programme has sound projects; on the other hand, the WG MTSC focuses on coordinating the MTS as a whole with the four performance criteria that would indicate the success of the programme. Nevertheless, the responsibility remains with the NRs to actually implement the MTS towards achieving the RCA vision and mission. Under the present situation where the functions of the PAC are evolving, NZE posed the query on whether or not there is merit to merging the two groups. The PAC Chair and the Interim Chair were of the opinion that, in the meantime, the two groups work separately within their TORs while having close collaboration and coordination in doing their tasks.

ROK opined that the two groups could exercise close coordination and collaboration to effect a better synergy to benefit the programme.

The Interim Chair brought out the request of Ms. Yoshiko Okamoto for inputs to the WG drafting the MTS 2024-2029, specifically on performance indicators. The Meeting decided that the WG MTSC can only give the required inputs once it is provided with information on the draft MTS 2024-2029.

3. Final Review of the MTS 2018-2023

The following options on who will conduct the Final Review were discussed:

- a) RCA PAC
- b) WG MTSC
- c) the RCA PAC and the WG MTSC together, and
- d) a new Working Group to be established by the NRs.

A lengthy discussion on the various options ensued. The WG MTSC addressed the concerns of the PAC related to the midterm and final reviews. The issue on independence for both the PAC and the WG MTSC may not be a major concern as the activity is within the RCA and no other external parties are involved. Proper delineation of responsibilities between the PAC and the WG MTSC should be made if these were to conduct the review together. The option of a new Working Group is not tenable due to time constraints.

The timetable for conducting the Final Review was tackled. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was completed by the RCA PAC in September 2020, based on guidance developed by the WG MTSC. There is no previously agreed timing for the Final Review, but it was expected to take place after 2023, once the term of the MTS 2018-23 has been completed.

In deciding on the timetable for the final review, the Meeting took into consideration the requirement to give inputs and recommendations to the Working Group for Drafting the MTS 2024-2029 (WG MTSD). This is in view of the fact that the primary purpose of the mid-term and final reviews of the MTS 2018-23 is to provide input into the development of the MTS 2024-29, given that the MTS is a key document for improving the ability of the RCA to achieve its overall vision and mission.

NZE presented the schedule of activities of the WG MTSD and the critical timing of engagement between the WG MTSC and the WG MTSD.

According to its timetable, the WG MTSD is to present its second draft at the 51st GCM (2022) for comments by the National Representatives (NRs), and its final version at the 45th NRM (2023) for NR endorsement.

Therefore, the critical timing for engagement between the WG MTSC and the WG MTSD is at least 1 month prior to the 51st GCM so that the advice from the WG MTSC can feed into the development of the next MTS.

The Meeting considered that it will not be possible or useful to undertake the full final review of the MTS 2018-23 prior to the 51st GCM because the levels of most performance indicators are likely to change slowly from the time of the Mid Term Review in 2020. The covid-19 pandemic is expected to have an impact on the implementation of projects.

In view of these considerations, the Meeting recommended that:

1. As soon as possible, the Chair of the WG MTSC should make contact with the Chair of the WG MTSD to obtain any draft material that may be currently available on the development of the MTS 2024-29.
2. By no later than June 2022, the WG MTSC and RCA PAC should jointly re-assess only those performance indicators (PIs) that were assessed as adequate, inadequate or having insufficient data in the MTR (**Annex 5**). The reason to focus on only these PIs is to determine if there has been any improvement or any additional insight that can be used in Step 3 below.
3. By no later than July 2022, the WG MTSC and RCA PAC should jointly develop advice and recommendations, and provide these to the WG MTSD. This advice is expected to be based on the experience of the members of the RCA PAC and the WG MTSC, and on the results of the MTR and any PIs re-assessed in Step 2 above.
4. By no later than Aug 2022, selected representatives from the WG MTSC, RCA PAC, WG MTSD, RCARO and RCA-FP should meet to discuss and develop the 2nd draft of the MTS 2024-29. The RCA FP offered to organize the meeting.

Once the above steps have been completed, the Meeting recommends the following:

1. In time for the 45th NRM (2023), the WG MTSC should make recommendations to NRs about whether undertaking a final review of the MTS 2018-23 will add value to the RCA, and if so, then make recommendations about the timing and scope of this review.
2. Also in time for the 45th NRM, the WG MTSC, with assistance from RCA PAC, RCARO and RCA-FP, should develop options for shifting the timing and/or duration of future MTSS and Regional Programme Framework to achieve better alignment with each other and the project development cycle.

Recommendation 2

The meeting recommends that the 44th NRM endorse that:

- a) **By no later than June 2022, the WG MTSC and RCA PAC jointly re-assess only those performance indicators (PIs) that were assessed as adequate, inadequate or having insufficient data in the MTR;**
- b) **By no later than July 2022, the WG MTSC and RCA PAC jointly develop advice and recommendations based on the results of the MTR and re-assessments of PIs indicated above, and provide these to the WG MTSD; and**
- c) **By no later than Aug 2022, selected representatives from the WG MTSC, RCA PAC, WG MTSD, RCARO and RCA-FP meet to discuss and develop the 2nd draft of the MTS 2024-29.**

Recommendation 3

Based on the outcome of Recommendation 2, the meeting recommends that the 44th NRM endorse that:

- a) In time for the 45th NRM (2023), the WG MTSC should make recommendations to NRs about whether undertaking a final review of the MTS 2018-23 will add value to the RCA, and if so, then make recommendations about the timing and scope of this review.**
- b) Also in time for the 45th NRM, the WG MTSC, with assistance from RCA PAC, RCARO and RCA-FP, should develop options for shifting the timing and/or duration of future MTSs and Regional Programme Framework to achieve better alignment with each other and the project development cycle.**

4. Financial Matters and TC Funding

Session III was chaired by NZE.

4.1.Resource mobilization

RCARO presented a background paper which outlined the activities of the WG on Financial Gap Analysis and Resource Mobilization (WG FAP & RM) before it merged with the WG MTSC (**Annex 6**).

The status of the activities on resource mobilization and expanding partnerships were discussed. The experience of the IAEA in establishing its partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was shared by the RCA FP and collaborated by the PAC Chair and the RCARO. The partnership was established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IAEA and the ADB. The initial activity to be undertaken under this partnership is the conduct of a training course on energy planning. The activity does not entail any transfer of funds, but rather the sharing of knowledge and expertise on the subject matter. The WG will be provided with a copy of said MOU. The RCA FP cited one difficulty of the RCA in forging partnerships with organizations is its lack of status as a legal identity.

PHI suggested that a possible partnership with the ASEAN could be explored. While the ASEAN comprises 10 Member States, 9 of which are GPs of the RCA, the ASEAN has partnerships with other countries many of which are also members of the RCA. The ASEAN + 6 Partners include Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India, China, South Korea which are all RCA GPs. The IAEA and the ASEAN have an existing Physical Agreement. Further, the ASEAN has taken under its wings the ASEANTOM which consists of the nuclear regulators in the RCA GPs. As the ASEAN has a Committee on Science and Technology (COST), it may be advantageous for the RCA to be involved with the ASEAN COST since the latter does not have any nuclear S & T component in its programme.

Partnerships with the project end-user/next end-users and with professional organizations should be established or nurtured if already existing. A beneficial partnership does not necessarily involve the transfer of funds; it could involve knowledge sharing and technology transfer.

The WG MTSC will continue its efforts to forge partnerships with regional organizations. The Meeting would be requesting the NRs to allow the WG MTSC to invite speakers from potential partners to present to the NRs, for example at a future NR meeting. The LCCs and

NPCs should be urged to establish partnerships with their respective end-users and professional organizations.

Resource mobilization involving fund transfer is a more difficult undertaking, as experienced by the WG MTSC. NZE opined that it involves a fulltime job and entails specific expertise and experience. The establishment of another working group or a Committee on resource mobilization needs a thorough study. This will be discussed further in the next WG meeting. Meanwhile, the WG will continue to shepherd the Declaration soliciting extrabudgetary contributions from the RCA GPs.

Recommendation 4

The Meeting recommends that:

- a) the NRs endorse the WG MTSC to invite speakers from potential partner organisations to present to NRs, for example at future NR meetings;**
- b) the NRs enjoin the LCCs and NPCs to establish partnerships with their respective end-users and professional organizations, and**
- c) the NRs endorse the proposal for the WG MTSC to undertake a thorough study on the establishment of a Working Group or Committee on Resource Mobilization.**

4.2. IAEA TCF allocation

During the 9th WG Meeting in July 2021, the WG MTSC decided that a new target criterion to measure PI 3.1, “Financial resources available for the implementation of RCA projects”, was required since this PI should not be focused on EB alone. Rather, a more holistic approach to include the TCF allocation to RCA should be considered. To further tackle the funding issue, it is necessary to get information from the Secretariat on how the TCF is being allocated, and how much of the TCF is allocated to non-Agreement projects, or to national projects in the Asia Pacific region. In this connection, the Meeting did not find the response of the Secretariat, through Mr. Gashaw Gebeyehu Wolde, Section Head, TCAP, to have given the necessary information sought by the WG. The meeting tasked the Interim Chair to seek further clarification and straightforward answers on these matters from Mr. Wolde.

4.3. Non-traditional partnerships

Akiko Hayashida, alternate to Yoshihiko Okamoto (JPN), was to present a paper on non-traditional partnerships. Unfortunately, she was not able to attend this meeting due to some conflict in her schedule. The Meeting decided to request Ms. Hayashida to present the paper in the next WG Meeting.

5. Sustainability Programme

MAL was the Chair of Session IV.

5.1. Human Resource Development

BGD presented a concept note on a Comprehensive Nuclear Human Resource Development (NHRD) Programme citing the importance of HRD on the sustainability of the RCA (**Annex 7**). The Meeting noted that the previous WG on HRD submitted excellent recommendations

on sustaining nuclear-trained human resources in RCA in 2018. The recommendation on accelerated development RTCs was approved in the 40th NRM, and incorporated in the project designs for the 2020/2021 TC cycle. The aforementioned reports on HRD could serve as the core for an expanded RCA Comprehensive NHRD Programme.

In the discussion that ensued, it was noted that the core programme involves the education and training within individual RCA projects. The RCA-FP suggested that the programme should be broader and beyond the RCA project-based programme. It should cover the undergraduate and post graduate programme to sustain the long term human resource in the Asia and Pacific Region considering the declining number of nuclear professionals in National Nuclear Institutions (NNIs) with special education and training in nuclear science and technology due to aging and attrition. In relation to this, the RCA FP described the RCA Scholarship Programme on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (RCA SPS) to be launched during the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA at the 51st GCM, and to commence in September 2023. The RCA FP recommended the creation of a working group to flesh out the proposed Comprehensive NHRD Programme. BGD was requested to draft the Terms of Reference (TOR) to include the functions of the Working Group or Committee and the skills requirements of prospective members.

Recommendation 5

The Meeting recommends that the NRs endorse the establishment of a Committee on Comprehensive Nuclear Human Resource Development to plan long term strategies and actions for sustainable nuclear HRD in the RCA.

5.2.Regional Resource Units (RRUs) and the efficiency of their utilization

As a background, the 9th WG Meeting recommended the amended concept of RRUs and the new procedure for identification, qualification, approval, and operation of RRUs. The Meeting further recommended the use of the RRU qualification summary template from the 2022-2023 TC Project Cycle onwards. These recommendations were endorsed by the 50th GCM.

NZE presented the topic on improving the efficiency of the utilization of RRUs which the 50th GCM tasked the WG to undertake. NZE suggested, and the Meeting agreed, that the first step is to embed the new concept about RRUs into standard RCA practices which can be accomplished through the following:

1. Incorporate the new concept of RRUs and the latest version of the PPF into the GOR by the RCARO on behalf of the RCA Chair;
2. Incorporate the new concept about RRU planning into the project development process, and
3. Incorporate the new concept of RRU planning into the National Project Report template for Project Coordination Meetings by the WG MTSC

Once the above are accomplished, it is expected that a baseline could be established to serve as basis for assessment on the efficiency of utilization of RRUs. The establishment of a database that lists up all RRUs classified into fields can also be considered.

Since the new concept of RRUs and the latest version of the PPF have been approved by the NRs, these documents can be uploaded to the GOR already by the RCARO. The RCA PAC is requested to incorporate the new concept of RRU planning in the project development process. Lastly, the WG MTSC, in collaboration with the RCA PAC, should review the National Project Report template, to ensure that the new concept of RRU planning is appropriately incorporated in said report.

Recommendation 6

The Meeting recommends that the NRs endorse that the new concept of RRUs be embedded into standard RCA practices as a prerequisite to assessing the efficiency of utilization of RRUs.

6. GOR

Session V was chaired by ROK.

The Meeting reviewed the following sections of the GOR related to the WG MTSC and its work, and ensured that the latest version of every document would be incorporated in the GOR (**Annex 8**) :

- a) Part 1, Section 1,8: MTS
- b) Part 3, Section 7 : WG MTSC
- c) Annex 1, Section 3: RRUs
- d) Annex 6: TOR of WG MTSC
- e) Annex 10: Summary of recommended HRD
- f) Annex 11: PPF
- g) Annex 12, 13,14: National Report Template for First Coordination, Midterm, and Final Review Meeting, respectively
- h) Annex 16: Outcome Monitoring

A lengthy but productive discussion on RRUs ensued. It was noted that the RRU qualification summary template is neither in the PPF nor in the National Project Report (NPR) Form for the First Project Coordination Meeting. Three options were raised: i) amend the NPR Form to include the RRU qualification summary template; ii) put the RRU qualification summary template back in the PPF, and iii) include it in the Project Design Stage of the project development process. As endorsed by the 50th GCM, it is important that the RRU identification and the RRU qualification summary template be incorporated in the 2022/2023 TC cycle. The PAC Chair stated that the design phase is past for the said cycle, but these could be incorporated in the implementation stage. For the 2024/2025 TC cycle, it would be possible to incorporate these in the design phase, but NR approval is needed because the current procedure requires it at the implementation stage. While the Meeting expressed that the RRU concept and the RRU qualification summary template be introduced at the design phase, the Meeting requested the RCA PAC to devise the most workable route to embed the new RRU concept and the RRU qualification summary template in the project development process.

The PAC Chair raised some concerns on the content of Annex 16 on Outcome Monitoring. He suggested to use the definitions of the IAEA so as not to cause confusion among the GOR users. After some discussion, NZE agreed that Annex 16 be amended, and requested the PAC Chair to make the necessary revisions on Annex 16 and annexes to the national project reports related to outcome monitoring.

On the task of conducting a strategic review of the GOR, the Interim Chair opined that with the limited time left and with important tasks still to be undertaken, the WG MTSC would not be able to do the strategic review. The Interim Chair suggested, and the Meeting agreed, that a separate working group with the sole task of undertaking the strategic review of the GOR be established. The RCARO shared the information that the latest strategic review of the GOR was conducted in 2018. Since there is much activity presently in the preparation for the RCA 50th Anniversary, the Meeting recommends that the creation of the proposed Working Group be done in 2024.

At the end of the Session, ROK suggested that the GOR should have a section indicating the history of revisions on the GOR, including the date of a particular revision and the rationale for such revision, in table form. This is similar to what is being done by ISO managers with their documents.

Recommendation 7

The Meeting recommends that NRs endorse the creation of a new working group in 2024 with the sole task of conducting a strategic review of the GOR.

7. Any Other Business

Session VI was chaired by the RCARO.

7.1. Addressing the needs of the new GPs

The RCARO made a presentation on addressing the special needs of the new RCA GPs as in **Annex 9**. The meeting noted the importance of assisting the countries in need of technological development, namely new RCA GPs, LDCs, and SIDSs, for effective implementation of the RCA projects.

The PAC Chair pointed out that it is difficult to fully address the needs of the new GPs with the current procedure for developing the RCA projects and suggested possible options for reflecting these needs in the RCA Programme: i) maintain the current procedure and mechanism of ranking the GPs' priorities; ii) limit to the new GPs for ranking the projects that address their special needs; and iii) allocate certain percentage for the special projects for reasonable distribution of the RCA projects. He also added that LDCs could benefit from cooperation with advanced countries through the projects. The Interim Chair agreed that the cooperation of GPs from diverse development levels is the spirit of TCDC. As a means to lower the barriers and encourage engagement of the LDCs with the RCA Programme, the RCARO suggested conducting activities targeting the participating LDCs under individual projects.

Recommendation 8

The Meeting recommends that the GPs acknowledge the importance of addressing the special needs of the new GPs, LDCs and SIDSs and take them into consideration when developing the RCA projects based on the agreed mechanism.

7.2. Platform for the RCA online training materials

At the 9th Meeting of the WG MTSC, it was agreed that the RCARO e-learning campus could serve as the common platform and repository for RCA online training materials and for paper-based materials. Inasmuch as the OLA opinion on copyrights does not include IP rights on e-learning materials, the Meeting advised the RCARO to consult the IAEA on the matter. The RCARO reported that it has coordinated the query with the RCA FP. The response of OLA is being awaited.

8. Annual Work Plan

The WG MTSC reviewed and updated the Annual Work Plan 2021 with new actions for the Annual Work Plan 2022, based on the discussion at the 10th Meeting.

The Annual Work Plan 2022 is included as **Annex 10**.

Recommendation 8

The Meeting recommends that the NRs endorse the WG MTSC Work Plan for 2022.

8. Closing

It was agreed that the next meeting of the MTSC WG would be held either online or physically, possibly in the second half of June 2022, in consideration of the timetable for submitting advice and recommendations to the WG MTSD, subject to possible alignment with PAC meeting schedule.

The Interim Chair thanked the WG members, RCA-FP, PAC Chair, and the RCARO for their active participation and contributions at the Meeting.

