

**Report of the 2nd Meeting of the
Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme
18 March 2022**

Introduction

Following the 1st Meeting of the Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme which was held on 25 January 2022, the 2nd Meeting of the Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme was scheduled on 18 March 2022 via video conferencing. The Agenda of the Meeting is in **Annex 1**.

The Meeting included ten participants and observers comprising representatives from AUL, MAL, THA, PAK, SIN, VIE, and IAEA. The List of Participants is included in **Annex 2**.

The objective of the Meeting is to review and discuss all the documents related to the RCA Scholarship Programme, including Terms of Reference, Online survey, Guidelines, Online application forms, and Workplan.

Opening

NR RCA of Vietnam, the Chair of the Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme, Dr. Tran Chi Thanh opened the meeting and gave welcome remarks to the participants.

VIE, SIN and THA were appointed as the rapporteurs for the meeting.

1. Overview of the development of the RCA Scholarship Programme

On behalf of VIE, Dr. Duong Thanh Tung reviewed the overview of the development of the RCA Scholarship Programme (RCA SPS), included in **Annex 3**.

VIE implied two crucial proposals as follows:

- a) Developed countries would be recommended to support developing countries;
- b) The RCA SPS need more support in terms of fund and scholarship budget from IAEA. Specifically, IAEA would be requested to support 80% of the scholarship budget for the period of 3 years pilot from 2022.

In terms of the former proposal, the RCA Focal Person (RCA FP), Dr. Hoang agreed on the suggestion of SIN that the Committee should clarify the terms “developed countries” and “countries with developed postgraduate programmes in nuclear science and technology”. The RCA SPS Committee was requested to clarify these wordings in relevant documents of the RCA SPS.

The Meeting had a profound discussion about the areas of study that the RCA SPS covers. Both IAEA and Committee members suggested that the RCA SPS should concentrate on the areas of nuclear science and technology, a specific major of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Additionally, the Committee members also pointed out that it strongly depends on each country on selecting the appropriate universities/ academic institutions that can host these areas.

In terms of funds and resources, SIN supported in-principle VIE's proposal with regard to the first 3 years of funding support from IAEA. For the funding of the first year, RCA FP explained that the current RCA management project has been extended to 2023 to cover the support needed during the year. In the meantime, PAC is now preparing the concept of the new management project planned to start in 2024. In this regard, IAEA commented that additional resources could be funded via in-kind contributions from universities of different countries.

The Meeting agreed that the areas of the RCA SPS should centralize on nuclear science and technology and their applications, hereby fulfilling the RCA SPS's principal objective of promoting and building human capacity in nuclear science and technology.

The Meeting agreed that the budget proposal would be clarified later by the IAEA, and RCA GPs are invited to contribute to RCA SPS via extra budget and in-kind contributions.

2. Discussion on Relevant Matters

a. Overview of The Terms of Reference of the RCA Scholarship Programme

VIE presented the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) of the RCA SPS and expressed appreciation for the comments and contributions of SIN on developing the draft TOR, included in **Annex 4**.

VIE welcomed further reviews and comments from the Committee members on the draft TOR. The TOR will be updated and finalized according to the current comments.

b. Overview of The Online survey for the RCA Scholarship Programme

VIE proposed the draft Online survey for the RCA Scholarship Programme, included in **Annex 5**.

The Online survey is produced with the aim of collecting comprehensive data on appropriate academic institutes/ universities in the region to be selected as the training

institutes/universities for the Scholarship Programme.

RCA NRs will be asked to distribute the survey to their respective academic institutes/universities for data collection. The completed surveys will be later submitted to the Committee for data analysis and further discussion. In this regard, the members took note of the importance of identifying suitable universities or countries where the RCA SPS in the areas related to nuclear science and technology can be held.

The Meeting agreed that the finalization and completion of the questionnaire are among the first priority. The prompt process and time schedule for this task had also been agreed.

The survey should be finalized by early April and circulated to NRs' for their inputs by the end of April. The Committee will process the received data within May and the result from the survey will be discussed at the next RCA SPS Meeting in June 2022.

c. Overview of The Guidelines of the RCA Scholarship Programme

VIE presented the Guidelines of the RCA Scholarship Programme, included in **Annex 6**.

Upon the inquiries on the joint programme among countries, the RCA FP stated that the procedures for the joint programme are complicated within the limited budget, hereby further consideration should be taken. Sharing the same viewpoints, SIN noted that stepwise approaches are of great importance, considering the capacity to implement and operationalize.

The RCA FP and TCAP Director also highlighted that RCA SPS Committee could award RCA Scholarships to the students only after the universities considered and accepted the students. Besides, the number of scholars in each country varies depending on the quality of students and the capability of the host universities.

THA suggested that each RCA NR consult with the academic institutes/universities in their countries to check if the MOU is needed in order for the RCA SPS to be implemented. On this matter, IAEA expressed their readiness to support the initiation of the MOU signing between the universities and the IAEA.

The Meeting agreed that the RCA SPS should primarily focus on one objective, either domestic or oversea training.

The Meeting agreed on the strong cooperation between Government Parties and their universities in selecting potential candidates for the scholarship. The results of each country will be reviewed by the Committee before finalizing the decisions.

d. Review Online Application forms

VIE presented the draft Online Application forms, included in **Annex 7**.

The final Application forms and related documents will be uploaded to the RCARO website once the RCA SPS is initiated.

e. Review Work Plan and Timeline

VIE, the RCA Focal Person, and members of the Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme review the Work Plan and Timeline, included in **Annex 8**.

The Meeting agreed on the impressive progress of the RCA SPS, all the Committee members and IAEA appreciated the hard work of all the members in general, as well as VIE and SIN in particular, in carrying out such an explicit work plan.

f. Other Matters

In regard to the Human Resource Development Project, The RCA FP stated that the Chair of the RCA Committee is responsible for this project until 2024.

In terms of the appeal of the RCA Scholarship, VIE recommended that the IAEA will provide achievement certificates to the graduates so that they can have more opportunities of applying to higher education thanks to IAEA's reputation. Additionally, VIE also proposed internships for those talented students in relevant Institutes, for instance, VINATOM in Vietnam. This will definitely assist students with valuable experience and make the RCA SPS become more attractive.

IAEA would arrange meetings with the management of selected key universities of GPs known for postgraduate programme in the areas of nuclear applications to discuss the possibility of carving out some slots and allocating them to RCA SPS.

3. The Way Forward

The meeting noted of the need to further review and finalize the draft documents namely TOR, Online survey, Guidelines, and Application forms. All the documents will be submitted again to the NRs before being consulted in the next meeting in June 2022. With the aim of ensuring the progress of the work plan, all the documents will be officially posted on RCARO's website before July 2022. The Committees also took note of the need to remind all RCA NRs, at the 44th NRM, that the leadership and ownership of each RCA GPs are required for the success of the RCA Scholarship Programme.