



REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



REPORT OF THE
45th
NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING (NRM)
OF THE
REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH,
DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING RELATED TO NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (RCA)

9-11 May 2023

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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 45th RCA Meeting of National Representatives was held at Rydges World Square in Sydney, Australia on 9-11- May 2023.

The Meeting was attended by 21 RCA Government Parties: Australia (AUL), Bangladesh (BGD), Cambodia (KAM), China (CPR), Fiji (FIJ) 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).

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.

Representatives from the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) and FNCA, Chairs of RCA Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), Working Group on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination and Working Group on drafting RCA 2024-2029 MTS also joined the Meeting.

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

Opening

Dr Tran Chi Thanh, RCA Chair and NR of VIE, delivered his welcome remarks to all the participants. His Remarks are at **Annex 2**.

Mr Shaun Jenkinson, CEO ANSTO, delivered his welcome remarks to participants as representative of the host country (AUL). His remarks are at **Annex 3**.

Mr Hua Liu, DDG-TC, delivered his remarks as representative of the IAEA. His remarks are at **Annex 4**.

Designation of New RCA Chair and Rapporteurs

The NR of VIE delivered his remarks as the outgoing RCA Chair (**Annex 5**) and recommended the NR of AUL as the new RCA Chair.

The Meeting unanimously endorsed the NR of AUL to be the new RCA Chair.

The new RCA Chair, the NR of AUL, delivered her remarks (**Annex 6**).

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda with no amendment (**RCANRM(45)/1**) (**Annex 7**) and appointed AUL, FIJ and RCARO to be the rapporteurs.

Ms Natascha Spark, the NR of AUL, was unanimously elected as the new RCA Chair.

The Meeting adopted the agenda with no amendment.

AUL, FIJ and RCARO were appointed as rapporteurs for the Meeting.

2. Report on the follow-up actions of the 51st GCM by the RCA-FP

The RCA-FP provided a report on the follow-up actions of the 51st GCM (**Annex 8**).

The Meeting took note of the report on the follow-up actions of the 51st GCM presented by the RCA-FP.

The Meeting noted the significance of outcome reporting (rather than only output reporting) to conduct the assessment of RCA TC Project effectiveness. The meeting noted it was desirable to conduct social and economic impact assessments of RCA TC projects. The meeting recommended developing mechanisms for regular follow-up reporting by GPs, where appropriate.

Given that social and economic impact assessments require an analysis of complete data sets for RCA TC Projects, the Meeting also recommended the NRs work closely with the LCCs and NPCs to collect and archive appropriate data and information to closely monitor and report the outcomes as well as outputs of each project.

The meeting noted the intention of the IAEA to host a Ministerial level meeting in November 2024 on nuclear application and technical cooperation and requested that Government parties capture achievements under the RCA framework from the last 20 years, particularly since the establishment of RCARO.

3. Report on the implementation of the RCA programme in 2022 by the RCA FP - RCANRM(45)/3

The RCA-FP provided a presentation on the implementation of the RCA program in 2022 (**Annex 9**). He noted the creativity and agility of the RCA in implementing projects despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also provided the draft of the RCA Annual Report for 2022 (**Annex 10**) and the list of planned regional events for 2023 (**Annex 11**).

The Meeting took note of the report on the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2022 and thanked the IAEA, NRs, Lead Country Coordinators, and National Project Coordinators for the effective implementation of the RCA Programme in 2022.

The Meeting took note of the draft RCA Annual Report 2022. The Meeting agreed that further inputs and comments on the draft RCA Annual Report 2022 (Annex 10) should be provided by NRs to the RCA-FP, RCA Chair and RCARO by 10 June, 2023, with the final version of the report to be circulated to the NRs by 30 June, 2023.

In regards to the planned arrangements of regional events in 2023, the Meeting requested that hosting Government Parties contact the RCA FP to confirm their willingness and ability to host events.

4. Report of the RCA PAC on the progress and quality of RCA project designs for 2024- 2025 and relevant issues by the RCA PAC Chair - RCANRM(45)/4

The Chair of RCA Programme Advisory Committee provided the report of the RCA PAC (Annex 12).

The Meeting took note of the report of RCA PAC and appreciated the strong support and contribution provided by RCA PAC. The meeting noted the progress made in:

- monitoring the implementation of the RCA Programme for 2022/23**
- developing the RCA Programme for 2024/25; and**
- the PAC's Activities as the RCA Research Review Committee.**

The Meeting approved the following recommendations by the RCA PAC in regards to improving the RCA programme development:

- 1. Ensure greater involvement of the RCA NRs in identifying projects of high regional priorities by allowing sufficient time for consultations at the NRMs for**
 - a) improving the balance among thematic Sectors**
 - b) enabling long term planning**
 - c) identification of new needs.**
- 2. NRs reduce the excessive number of Pre-Concepts through better screening.**
- 3. Provision of support and guidance for LCCs by the National Thematic Sector Coordinators be made (GOR 1.1 (h)).**
- 4. Ensure Nomination of contact persons by all participating GPs, to assist the LCCs in identifying specific needs of the GPs.**
- 5. Involvement of the end-users in project design be improved.**
- 6. The RCA GOR be available as a more effective tool for informing RCA stakeholders of their responsibilities in project development.**
- 7. Expansion of RCA financial resources be considered for future project development.**

The Meeting endorsed the following recommendations by RCA PAC related to the implementation and monitoring of the progress of RCA projects:

- 1. The past practice of making presentations on progress of RCA TC projects at NRMs be recommenced.**
- 2. A platform on the RCA website be established for submission and evaluation of progress reports and for storing all project related information.**
- 3. Nominees for regional events be members of national project teams.**
- 4. NRs inform the IAEA and the LCCs on changes in NPCs.**
- 5. A database containing details of regional experts and facilities that can provide RRU services be established.**
- 6. Consultations between the NR and the LCCs and the NPCs (GOR 1.1 (r)) be improved.**
- 7. The LCCs and NPC have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities (GOR 1.2.1 and 1.2.2).**
- 8. Periodic submission of Progress Reports by NPCs (GOR 1.1 (q)) be ensured.**
- 9. Availability of national resources and facilities for project implementation (GOR 1.1 (n)) be ensured, if possible.**
- 10. Persons nominated for regional events are members of national project teams (GOR 1.1 (s)) be ensured, if possible, noting it is sometimes appropriate to invite other experts to attend.**
- 11. The number of GPs to projects be limited to those GPs with a strong Government commitment, i.e projects that are aligned with national needs (GOR 1.1.4 (a)).**

The Meeting also agreed and endorsed the proposed timeframe for development of the RCA Programme for 2026/27 as below;

Time Frame	Activity
May – July 2023	Submission of Pre-Concepts for the projects to be implemented under the RCA Programme for 2026/27 by NRs
1st August 2023	Deadline for submission of Pre-Concepts for 2026/27 programme
2nd August – 10th September 2023	Review of the Pre-Concepts by PAC
10 – 17 September 2023	Consolidation of the reviews of the Pre-Concepts by PAC Chair
22nd September 2023	Presentation of the outcomes of the reviews to the 52nd RCA General Conference Meeting
22nd September – 31st December 2023	Preparation and submission of Project Concepts by NRs

January – February 2024	Review of Project Concepts by PAC
March-May (TBC) 2024	Submission of the recommendations of PAC to the 46th NRM
The meeting noted the recommendations of PAC to the Working Group on Development of the RCA MTS for 2024/29 given at (Annex 12).	

5. Report of the WG on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination by the Chair of the WG - RCANRM(45)/5

The Chair of the WG on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination gave a presentation on the activities of the WG ([Annex 13](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report of the WG on the RCA 2018-2023 MTS Coordination and the 2023 work plan of the WG.

The meeting noted the Limited Final Review of the MTS and GPs agreed to give feedback by 12 June 2023 to the Chair of the working group, Chair of the RCA, IAEA RCA-FP and RCARO and the WG will share revised a draft incorporating any feedback.

The Meeting requested that NRs provide any feedback on the proposed TORs for the Committee on Comprehensive Nuclear Human Resource Development and a proposed Committee on Resource Mobilization and Partnership Building to the WG Chair, RCA Chair and RCARO via email by 12 June 2023. The revised TORs will be circulated to the NRs electronically for consideration prior to the 52nd GCM.

The Meeting endorsed a face-to-face WG meeting in July 2023 in Vienna, Austria, subject to the budget availability.

6. Report on the activities of the RCARO by Director of the RCARO - RCANRM(45)/6

The Director of RCARO provided a report on the activities of RCARO ([Annex 14](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report on the activities of RCARO and approved its work plan for 2023. The Meeting appreciated the RCARO for its continuous contributions to the RCA and the Government of Korea for its generous support to the RCARO in the last twenty years.

The Meeting recommended the RCARO consider holding an introductory workshop and developing a comprehensive booklet for the RCA NRs to familiarize with their roles and responsibilities.

7. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO by the RCA Chair - RCANRM(45)/7

The Chair of the RCA presented the report of the 36th Meeting of the RCARO SAC (**Annex 15**).

The Meeting took note of the report of the 36th Meeting of RCARO SAC presented by the RCA Chair and endorsed its recommendations as attached in Annex 15.

8. Report of the WG on drafting RCA 2024-2029 MTS by the Chair of the WG – MTSD RCANRM(45)/8

The Chair of the WG on drafting RCA 2024-2029 MTS gave a presentation on the report of the WG (**Annex 16**).

The Meeting took note of the report of the WG on drafting RCA 2024-2029 MTS delivered by the Chair of the WG and approved their updated work plan as below;

Time Frame	Activity
July 2023	The MTS first draft for NRs' review and comments
November 2023	The MTS 2nd draft for NRs' review and comments
April 2024 (46th NRM)	The MTS final draft for NRs' review and comments

The Meeting endorsed a face-to-face WG meeting either in August or September 2023, in Vienna, Austria, subject to the budget availability.

9. Report of the Committee of the RCA Scholarship Programme by the Chair of the Committee - RCANRM(45)/9

The Chair of the Committee on the RCA Scholarship Programme gave a presentation on the report (**Annex 17**).

Consensus was not reached on the proposed scholarship programme and its pilot. Delegations thanked the committee for their commitment and significant work on the important issue of human resource development.

The meeting encouraged GPs to continue to explore domestic and bilateral/multi-lateral scholarship programmes, including through relevant TC programmes of the IAEA, and acknowledged the several existing scholarship programmes currently underway in RCA countries.

The meeting recognised that consideration of Human Resource Development may be continued under a future RCA committee.

10. Report from virtual meeting of National Representatives held on 18 April 2023 on proposed action plans for deployment and execution of the RCA Declaration Vienna 2022 and invitation to all NRs to speak to share their ideas on implementing the Ministerial Declaration - RCANRM(45)/10

The meeting reviewed a concept paper prepared by RCARO to establish and operate a Network of National Nuclear Research Institutes (NNRIs) of the RCA Government Parties (**Annex 19**) and a draft concept paper from VIE to organize a forum on Technology Transfer/Diffusion of Proven Nuclear Technologies under the RCA (**Annex 20**).

The Meeting took note of the concept papers to

- establish and operate a Network of National Nuclear Research Institutes (NNRIs) of the RCA Government Parties prepared by the RCARO; and
- organize a forum on Technology Transfer/Diffusion of Proven Nuclear Technologies under the RCA prepared by VIE.

Government Parties may provide comments on the concept papers to RCARO, VIE and the RCA Chair by 12 June 2023.

11. Presentation on FNCA's activities by the FNCA Coordinator - RCANRM(45)/11

The FNCA Advisor provided a report on the FNCA's activities (**Annex 21**).

The Meeting noted the report on the FNCA's activities provided by the representative of the FNCA.

12. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA - RCANRM(45)/12

The Meeting noted the advice that twenty (20) of the twenty-two (22) GPs have submitted their instrument of acceptance of the 2017 RCA to the IAEA. The Meeting looked forward to the remaining two (2) GPs (FIJ and LAO) depositing their instrument of acceptance soon.

13. Arrangements for the 52nd RCA GCM, the 46th and the 47th RCA NRMs

CPR confirmed that the 46th NRM will take place in China in 2024.

FIJ will confirm on the hosting of the 47th NRM in 2025 in due course.

The Meeting noted that the 52nd GCM will be held on 22nd September 2023.

CPR confirmed that the 46th NRM will be held in China in 2024, with the specific dates and venue to be confirmed in due course.

The 47th NRM may be held in FIJ in 2025, subject to the confirmation of the Government of FIJ.

14. Any other business

The Meeting noted the possible duplication in the functions of existing working groups and proposed committees and strategic documents, and recommended that the RCA Committee of Chairs conduct a rapid review of:

- **the functions of all current and proposed Working Groups (WGs)/committees**
- **the role of the RCA Medium Term Strategy in relation to other RCA documents (RCA Agreement, RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules, and RCA Regional Programme Framework).**

The meeting requested that the Committee of Chairs present their findings to NRs at the upcoming 52nd RCA GCM for further deliberations.

The meeting noted the need for a systematic approach to budgeting for the RCA and agreed to put this on the agenda of the 46th NRM.

15. Closure

Mr Hua Liu, DDG-TC, delivered his closing remarks, as representative of the IAEA (**Annex 22**).

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