



REGIONAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



REPORT OF
THE 42nd MEETING OF THE NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES

23 April 2020

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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 42nd RCA NRM, originally scheduled to be held during 24-27 March, 2020, at Putrajaya, Malaysia had to be postponed owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Subsequent to several email exchanges, and as agreed by most of the Government Parties, the 42nd Meeting of National RCA Representatives was held online on 23 April, 2020, via video conferencing. To facilitate efficient discussions during the Meeting, the participants were provided with General Guidelines for conducting the Meeting online (**Annex 1**) and summary of meeting platform (**Annex 2**) in advance.

The Meeting was attended by 19 RCA Government Parties: Australia (**AUL**), Bangladesh (**BGD**), China (**CPR**), Cambodia (**KAM**), India (**IND**), Japan (**JPN**), Korea (**ROK**), Laos (**LAO**), Malaysia (**MAL**), Mongolia (**MON**), Myanmar (**MYA**), Nepal (**NEP**), New Zealand (**NZE**), Palau (**PLW**), 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.

Ms Jane Gerardo-Abaya (DIR-TCAP), Mr Gashaw Gebeyehu Wolde (SH-TCAP1), Ms Marina Mishar (SH-TCAP2) and Mr Sinh Van Hoang (RCA-FP) represented the IAEA.

The list of participants is given in **Annex 3**.

Opening

a. Statement of the Representative of the Host Country

Dr Mohd Abd Wahab Yusof, the Director General of Malaysian Nuclear Agency, delivered his statement. His speech is provided in **Annex 4**.

b. Statement of the Representative of the IAEA

Ms Jane Gerardo-Abaya, Director of Division for Asia and the Pacific, IAEA TC, delivered her statement. Her speech is provided in **Annex 5**.

c. Designation of the New RCA Chair

Prior to the Meeting, the RCA NRs endorsed the transfer of the chairmanship from the past RCA Chair, Mr T. M. R. Tennakoon, the NR of **SRL**, to the new RCA Chair, Mr Abdul Muin Abdul Rahman, the NR of **MAL**, via email. The Meeting appreciated the NR of **SRL** for his excellent chairmanship.

Mr Abdul Muin Abdul Rahman, the RCA Chair, welcomed the participants to the Meeting and delivered his statement, provided in **Annex 6**.

d. Designation of Rapporteurs

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

1. Adoption of the Agenda – RCANRM(42)/1

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda, revised for the one-day virtual meeting, with no amendment ([Annex 7](#)).

The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda with no amendment.

2. Review of the implementation of the follow-up actions of the 48th RCA GCM – RCANRM(42)/2

The RCA-FP provided a summary of the follow-up actions arising from the 48th RCA GCM ([Annex 8](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report and thanked the Secretariat for the effective implementation of the follow-up actions from the 48th RCA GCM.

3. Review of the implementation of the RCA Programme in 2019 – RCANRM(42)/3

The RCA-FP provided an overview of the RCA Programme implementation in 2019 ([Annex 9](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCA-FP. The Meeting agreed with the recommendations of the RCA-FP that NRs are to:

- **abide by the RCA GOR, especially in the designation of appropriate persons as NPCs, A/NPCs and National Project Teams right from the start of project implementation;**
- **consult with NPCs in nominating qualified/appropriate candidates to participate in regional events;**
- **submit nominations on time and in full through the InTouch+ platform;**
- **coordinate and ensure that NPCs submit national reports to LCCs on time so that LCCs have sufficient inputs and time to consolidate and submit PPARs to the IAEA on schedule;**
- **share the RCA GOR with LCCs, NPCs and A/NPCs so that they know and undertake their roles and responsibilities properly; and**
- **maintain close and timely contact with RCA Chairs, LCCs, NPCs, RCA PAC, WG on MTSC, RCARO and RCA-FP to solve any issues that may arise.**

AUL commented that the In Touch + registration does not work properly, JPN raised issues related to the paper-based meeting registrations and requested the Secretariat to double-check them. The Secretariat took note of those comments.

4. Overview of the draft RCA Annual Report for 2019 – RCANRM(42)/4

The draft RCA Annual Report 2019 was circulated in advance to the Meeting for the comments and recommendations from the RCA NRs ([Annex 10](#)).

The Meeting took note of the draft RCA Annual Report 2019. 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 10 May 2020.

The draft will be revised and finalized by the RCA Chair, RCARO and the RCA-FP and circulated to the NRs by 30 May 2020.

5. Update on planned regional events in 2020 – RCANRM(42)/5

The RCA-FP provided a report on the update of planned regional events of the RCA projects for 2020 (**Annex 11**).

The Meeting noted the planned regional events for 2020.

The Meeting agreed that because of continuing travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the duration of current TC projects needs to be extended as required, with the budget to be maintained.

The Meeting encouraged the RCA-FP and other stakeholders of each project to review and identify which activities can be implemented via online tools, aiming to fulfil the objectives.

6. Review of the progress of the RCA projects – RCANRM(42)/6

Progress reports on the implementation of each RCA project were provided by the Lead Countries responsible (**Annexes 12 to 23**).

Project Number	LCC	Annex
RAS5084	<u>AUL</u>	12
RAS6087	<u>AUL</u>	13
RAS7031	<u>AUL</u>	14
RAS5077	<u>CPR</u>	15
RAS7028	<u>INS</u>	16
RAS6086	<u>JPN</u>	17
RAS6085	<u>ROK</u>	18
RAS6093	<u>ROK</u>	19
RAS1022	<u>MAL</u>	20
RAS5081	<u>NZE</u>	21
RAS7030	<u>PAK</u>	22
RCARP01	<u>INS</u>	23

The Meeting took note of the reports of RCA Project activities undertaken in 2019.

7. Report of the Working Group on the RCA MTS 2018-2023 Coordination

- a. Report on the activities of the Working Group on the RCA MTS 2018-2023 Coordination since the 48th RCA GCM – RCANRM(42)/7**
- b. Discussion on the main goals of the RCA by 2030 and proposed action plans to achieve these goals**

The Chair of the WG on the RCA MTS 2018-2023 Coordination presented on the report of the WG (**Annex 24**).

The Meeting took note of the report of the WG on the RCA MTS 2018-2023 Coordination and appreciated the contribution made by the WG. The Meeting approved the following recommendations by the WG:

- RCA PAC to conduct the mid-term review of the MTS**
- Secretariat to provide training on outcome monitoring to the relevant stakeholders (e.g. LCCs, NPCs, NRs etc.) through appropriate fora (e.g. Project Design Meetings, Coordination Meetings)**
- A strategic review and update of the RCA GOR to be conducted by the WG on the RCA MTS 2018-2023 Coordination**
- RCA Chair to send a letter to the Permanent Missions of all GPs following up on the 2018 Declaration, highlighting the lead up to the 50th anniversary of the RCA would be an opportune time for EB contributions**
- A systematic review of the RRU concept to be conducted**
- Update the RCA GOR with the suggested changes (RCARO to publish the new GOR on the website)**
- NRs to remind prospective LCCs of the importance of early and ongoing engagement with potential counterparts during the project design life cycle**
- MTSC WG considerations for the 2024-2029 MTS to be provided to the anticipated drafting WG**
- Amend the ToR of PAC by removing the provision of advice on “mechanisms to identify funding opportunities through donors outside the IAEA”**
- Endorse the MTSC WG Annual Work Plan for 2020**

In regards to the RCA Chair’s letters to the Permanent Missions as a follow-up of the 2018 Declaration, the Meeting agreed that the letter should not impose any additional obligations for contributions by the GPs and requested the RCA Chair circulate a draft in advance for NRs’ review and confirmation.

The Meeting endorsed the establishment of a new WG to draft the RCA MTS 2024-2029. Ten (10) GPs, AUL, BGD, CPR, IND, JPN, MAL, PHI, PLW, ROK and THA, expressed their interest in joining the WG and agreed to submit candidates’ names and their relevant expertise/experience to the RCA Chair by the 8 May 2020. The Meeting agreed that the membership of the WG should reflect the balance of the expertise required, bearing in mind the possibility of involving external experts if required. The criteria for WG members will be discussed with the PAC and WG MTSC by the RCA Chair.

8. Report of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee – RCANRM(42)/8

- a. Prioritization and selection of the 2nd round concept proposals for further development into project designs
- b. Proposal for revision of the procedure for development of the RCA programme
- c. Timeframe for project development for 2022-2023 cycle
- d. Mid-term review of the RCA MTS 2018-2023
- e. PAC Action Plan for 2020
- f. Revision of the TOR of the RCA PAC
- g. Filling of Vacancies in RCA PAC and appointment of RCA PAC Chair.

The interim Chair of RCA PAC presented on the report of the RCA PAC ([Annex 25](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the Chair of RCA PAC and appreciated the strong support provided by the RCA PAC.

The Meeting reviewed the result of the priority ranking of the 2nd round of project concepts and agreed that a total of eight (8) project concepts (top 7 project concepts to be funded by TC and 1 EB funded project) be forwarded for development of project designs for 2022-2023 TC cycle as follows:

No.	Project Title	Lead Country
1	Improving the Safety and Quality of Radiotherapy in Asia Pacific Region through Auditing and Medical Physicist Training	<u>CPR</u>
2	Improving the Quality Management Practices in Radiation Processing Facilities for Better Performances and Applications	<u>MAL</u>
3	Standardization of Radiotherapy in Palliative Care in the RCA Region	<u>JPN</u>
4	Strengthening Clinical Application of Hypofractionated Radiotherapy in the RCA Region	<u>ROK</u>
5	Assessing and Mitigating Agro-Contaminants to Improve Water Quality and Soil Productivity in Catchments Using Integrated Isotopic Approaches	<u>AUL</u>
6	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	<u>VIE</u>
7	Enhancing Regional Capabilities in Advanced Non-destructive testing (NDT) Techniques and Applications for Improved Safety and Inspection Performance in Industries.	<u>MAL</u>
8*	Increase of Crop Productivity under Drought Conditions by Using Isotope Techniques to Optimize Water Usage	<u>SRL</u>

*To be implemented with Extra Budgetary funds if they become available.

The Meeting took note of the flagship project proposed by IAEA Secretariat (TCAP) and the review conducted by RCA PAC ([Annex 26 and 27](#)).

The Meeting further endorsed the recommendation as follows:

- the revision of the procedure for programme development in principle (with details to be provided at the 49th GCM)
- the list of resource documents to be provided for the LCC and the timeframe for designing the projects for the TC cycle 2022-2023
- the action plan and the timeframe for the mid-term review of the RCA MTS for 2018-2023
- the action plan for RCA PAC for 2020
- the proposal for the revision of the ToR for PAC and the GOR (with details to be provided at the 49th GCM)

The Meeting endorsed the membership of the three additional members to the RCA PAC (AUL, INS and MAL) and the appointment of Dr Prinath Dias to the Chair of RCA PAC, noting that the increase in PAC members should not affect the current RCA budget and schedule.

9. Report on the activities of the RCARO – RCANRM(42)/9

The Director of the RCARO provided the report on the RCARO work performance of 2019 and work plan for 2020 (Annex 28).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCARO and appreciated the contribution provided by the RCARO to the RCA Programme.

The Meeting noted the explanation provided by the IAEA and RCARO on the role of the LCC for RAS9092. The Meeting also noted the importance of ensuring impartiality of the RCARO in project implementation.

10. Report of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) on the activities of the RCARO – RCANRM(42)/10

The Chair of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) presented the report of the 30th Meeting of the RCARO SAC (Annex 29).

The Meeting took note of the report delivered by the RCARO SAC and endorsed its recommendations.

In regards to the RCARO/ASEANTOM project, the Meeting took note that the RCARO has followed the RCA GOR and its procedures in accordance with the TC project development framework.

11. Report on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA – RCANRM(42)/11

- a. Membership of the Special Task Force
- b. Detailed work plan for the 50th Anniversary of the RCA in 2022
- c. Financial Resources
- d. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of the RCARO presented on the report on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA ([Annex 30](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report on the preparation of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA. The Meeting noted the significance of the event and requested all GPs' active involvement and commitment for the successful organization of the event.

The Meeting generally agreed on the basic concepts of the programme while requesting the STF to make more detailed work plans as well as concrete budgetary proposals to be reported to the upcoming GCM, before finalizing the 50th Anniversary celebration programme. The Meeting noted that the contribution to the 50th Anniversary programme should be made by any country which is willing to do so, recommended that the NRs identify ways/means to secure necessary funding for the preparation of the programme and took note that the RCA management project could be utilized as a funding source with the TC fund allocated to be used for this occasion.

12. Update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA – RCANRM(42)/12

The RCA-FP presented on the progress of the social and economic impact assessment of the RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA ([Annex 31](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report on the update on conducting social and economic impact assessment of RCA projects in support of the 50th Anniversary of the RCA provided by the RCA-FP.

The Meeting took note on the need for the commitment and dedication of the GPs to provide input for the social and economic impact assessment.

13. Presentation on the FNCA's activities – RCANRM(42)/13

The FNCA Representative provided a report on the FNCA's activities ([Annex 32](#))

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 the FNCA through exchange of knowledge and information in relevant events.

14. Report on the meeting of the Quadripartite Forum – RCANRM(42)/14

The former RCA Chair, NR of [SRL](#), provided a report on the meeting of the Quadripartite Forum ([Annex 33](#)).

The Meeting took note of the report on the meeting of the Quadripartite Forum provided by the former RCA Chair.

15. Update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA – RCANRM(42)/15

The RCA-FP provided an update on the acceptance of the 2017 RCA Agreement (Annex 34).

The Meeting welcomed the advice that eighteen (18) 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 four (4) GPs (CPR, FIJ, LAO and PHI) depositing their instrument of acceptance as soon as possible.

16. Arrangements for the 49th RCA GCM, the 43rd and 44th RCA NRMs

THA confirmed that the 43rd NRM will take place in Thailand in 2021.

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

The Meeting noted that the 49th GCM will be held in September 2020, with the means for the Meeting, whether virtual or physical, to be decided in due course.

THA confirmed that the 43rd NRM will be held in Thailand in the last week of April 2021 with the specific dates and venue to be confirmed at the 49th GCM subject to government policy.

VIE confirmed that the 44th NRM, in conjunction with the event celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the RCA, will be held in Vietnam in 2022 with the dates and venue to be confirmed in due course. For the Ministerial Conference, the venue, whether in VIE (in conjunction with the 44th NRM) or in IAEA (on the occasion of the 65th IAEA GC), should be decided soon to ensure smooth arrangement for internal procedures.

17. Any Other Business

- a. Report on the national contributions for inclusion in the Annual Report 2019 by the National Representatives
- b. Presentation on the development of the International Nuclear Science and Technology Academy (INSTA) by the Section Head, Asia and the Pacific Division, TC Department, IAEA (Annex 35)

The Meeting took note of the submission of the national in-kind contributions by the thirteen (13) GPs and requested the RCARO to consolidate the data into the RCA Annual Report 2019. The Meeting encouraged the remaining GPs to submit the report on national in-kind contribution to the RCARO by 10 May.

The Meeting took note of the initiative by the TCAP on the development of the International Nuclear Science and Technology Academy (INSTA).

The Meeting took note of the presentation by the RCA-FP on the future of RCA (Annex 36). Noting the observations the RCA-FP presented, the Meeting

encouraged the NRs to brainstorm ideas to innovate and invigorate the RCA for its further development and that the new MTS drafting WG could consider this in their work.

The Meeting took note of the suggestion by the RCA Chair for a regional project or activity, in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, to address the disparity between the GPs' accessibility to digital communication platform. The RCA Chair also suggested the possibility of using radiation techniques in the development of a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus.

The Meeting acknowledged and appreciated Dr John Easey for his dedication and invaluable contribution to the development of the RCA over many decades.

18. Closure

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