

Procedure for development of Research Project by Director of RCARO

1. Introduction

The promotion and coordination of cooperative research in nuclear science and technology is one of the specific objectives in the framework of the RCA programme and covers subjects in the fields of isotope and radiation applications in agriculture, human health, industry, hydrology, and terrestrial and marine environments. In particular RCA Research Projects (RPs) should comply with the following criteria:

- be relevant to the RCA Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities;
- have research directions and imperatives that support the medium to long term needs of the RCA Programme, those of the individual RCA GPs (identified through consultations with relevant stakeholders) and the expected contribution of such research to national and regional outcomes;
- have national level commitment so as to maximise the extent and depth of the research collaboration;
- demonstrate the benefits and advantages of the application of nuclear techniques;
- have the potential for development into an RCA technical cooperation project; and,
- have the potential for improving the utilisation of established national research organisations/institutes, increasing regional research networks and resources and adding value to future inputs to that particular area of research.

2. Formulation of a RP

- Proposed RPs should be focussed on a well-defined regional theme, problem or need that is relevant to, or can be resolved through, nuclear science and technology, with consideration given to the RCA Strategic Priorities as well as complying with the priorities and criteria listed in 2.1; and,
- All proposals for the establishment of a RCA RP should be prepared using the RP Template (draft template Attachment 1) available on the RCARO website by a NR or a group of NRs and tabled at a RCA NRM and, if recommended at the NRM for review as a potential RP, the proposals should be forwarded for evaluation process to the DIR-RCARO.

3. Research Project Proposal Evaluation

- The RCA PAC would take on the role as the Research Review Committee (RRC) for the evaluation of the proposed research project and would refer the technical aspects of the RP proposals to experts in the research fields relevant to a RP proposal, or already a part of an active RP.
- The major tasks for the RRC would be:
 - ✓ to review proposals for the establishment of RPs;
 - ✓ to advise the DIR-RCARO on the suitability of research proposals as contracts or agreements as part of an approved RP;
 - ✓ to review the annual reports of the RP members and advise the DIR-RCARO on the progress being made;
 - ✓ to review the reports of the Research Coordination Meetings (RCMs) and advise the DIR-RCARO on any related matters; and,
 - ✓ to carry out such advisory tasks as required by the DIR-RCARO to support the RCA Research Agreements (RAs) Programme.
- The RCA PAC evaluation of the RP proposal, supplemented with advice from the DIR-RCARO on the availability of funds, will be considered by SAC.
- RPs receiving positive assessments for support from SAC or conditional positive assessments requiring specified modifications to be made to the proposals, should be finalised by the submitting GP in time for consideration by the next available NRM or GCM (whichever is the earlier); and,

- The finalised RP proposal submitted to the NRM or GCM should include draft details of the Contract Holders and Agreement Holders.

4. Research Project Implementation

- At RCA NRM or GCM held following the initial RP proposal to the DIR-RCARO, the NRs would take account of advice from:
 - ✓ the Research Review Committee (RRC) concerning the expected contribution of the proposed RP to the achievement of insight and understanding related to the stated regional theme, problem or need, as well as its potential to support the overall research focus of the RCA RAs; and,
 - ✓ from the SAC concerning support for the proposed RP.
- If the NRM or GCM decided to proceed with the implementation of the RP as a component of the RCA RAs, the NRs would be requested to consider whether they wished to confirm participation in the RP and to prepare a proposal outlining their proposed research contribution to the RP using an agreed template.
- The duration of a RP would normally be expected to be between 3 and 5 years.

4.1 Research Project Participation

NRs could seek advice from their respective National Thematic Sector Coordinators and Technical Advisors concerning:

- the identified regional theme, problem or need expressed in the proposed RP;
- the national research benefits from such participation;
- the specific area of research that could be proposed as the national contribution to the RP;
- any overlap or duplication with existing national research projects in that selected area; and,
- identification of suitable national research organisations/institutes able to accommodate such research cooperation within their existing human and physical resources.

GPs wishing to participate in the RP would prepare a proposal outlining their proposed research contribution to the RP using one of the agreed RP templates and the NR would submit this to the DIR-RCARO for review by the Research Review Committee (RRC). and make the decision to award either a research contract or a research agreement as appropriate. After careful consideration of the technical merits of the proposals, the compatibility of the research project proposals with the RCA's agreed criteria, the availability of appropriate facilities and personnel in the nominated institutions and any previous research work that had been carried out related to the projects, the RRC would select which specific proposals for research could be supported. The DIR-RCARO would advise the NRs of the Committee's findings and confirm the proposed RP start date.

No more than one national research proposal from a GP would be accepted as a component of each RP and the total number of GPs participating in a RP would normally be expected to be between 8 and 12. There would be two modes of participation; as a **Contract Holder** or as an **Agreement Holder**. GPs would be encouraged to consider participating as Agreement Holders to maximise the financial support that could be provided to the whole RCA RAs programme. Research Contracts would be initially for one year and could be renewed each year for the duration of the project, based on the RRC's advice concerning satisfactory completion of yearly reporting and progress with the research component. Research Agreements would be for the duration of the RP.

4.2 Contract Holder

If a request for the RCARO's financial support of a proposed research contribution were successful, such support would be normally in the form of a lump-sum cost-sharing contract¹ between the nominated research institute and the RCARO. The institute would be expected to bear the major part of the cost of the project and including operating costs, overheads and other expenses. Owing to limited financial resources, it would be expected that the financial support that could be offered, would probably average no more than 6,000 Euro per annum per contract. In addition, the Chief Scientific Investigator (CSI) nominated in the contract would be invited to attend the periodic Research Coordination Meetings (RCMs)² at the RCARO's expense.

4.3 Agreement Holder

If no request were made for financial support from the RCARO and this proposal were accepted, participation would be as an Agreement Holder. Under such Agreements, no financial award would be made to the Agreement Holder, other than the Chief Scientific Investigator (CSI) nominated in the Agreement, who would be invited to attend the periodic RCMs at the RCARO's expense³.

4.4 Reporting and Monitoring

6 monthly reports should be submitted by the RP member to the DIR-RCARO for review by SAC, with assistance from the Research Review Committee as required. These reports will be presented to the NRs through the DIR-RCARO's report to the NRM and GCM and reflected in the RCA Annual Report.

Timeline

Schedule	Action
December 2016	Notification of survey result and call for RP proposals
December 2016 – February 2017	Submission of RP proposals by NRs to the RCARO
39 th NRM (2-6 April 2017)	NRs' review of the proposals and selection of candidate proposals
May 2017	Review of candidate proposals by RRC (RCA PAC)
June 2017	Review of candidate proposals by RCARO SAC
July – August 2017	Refinement and finalisation of the proposals by GP(s)
46 th GCM (September 2017)	Review of RP proposals and final selection and approval of a RP for implementation
October 2017	Call for GPs proposal for participation in selected RP

¹Subject to the financial rules and regulations governing the use of the RP funds being administered by the RCARO.

²RCMs would generally be held at 18 month intervals subject to satisfactory progress of the Contractor's portion of the RP and the availability of funding.

³Subject to the availability of funding and satisfactory progress of that portion of the RP.