



REGIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENT
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY



GUIDELINES AND OPERATING RULES* **FOR THE RCA PROGRAMME**

September 1998

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1. THE RCA AGREEMENT

1.1. NATURE OF THE AGREEMENT

The Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training (RCA) is an intergovernmental agreement established under the auspices of the IAEA. It is open to the participation of any Member State of the Agency in the area of South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific or the Far East. A Member State from one of these regions may become a party to this Agreement by notifying its acceptance thereof to the Director General of the Agency. The text of the Agreement provides the fundamental framework and guidance for regional co-operation. It is the source document for any guidelines, operating rules and procedures needed to govern regional co-operation.

1.2. MISSION

THE GOVERNMENTS PARTIES TO THE RCA AGREEMENT UNDERTAKE, IN CO-OPERATION WITH EACH OTHER AND THE AGENCY, TO PROMOTE AND CO-ORDINATE CO-OPERATIVE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THROUGH THEIR APPROPRIATE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

1.3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the RCA Agreement shall be governed by the following principles:

- (a) The formulation of the RCA programme is to be done by its Member States with the assistance of the Agency, if required, through a process of discussion and consensus;
- (b) Member States have full responsibility and autonomy to agree on their priorities and the projects to be included in the programme;
- (c) Project proposals to be included in the RCA programme must be justifiable in terms of their scientific and technical merits as well as from their economic, social and end-user aspects. They must be specifically targeted to meet particular regional needs and priorities which must address specific regional problems, and use appropriate nuclear technologies to provide solutions;
- (d) Each Member State shall use the assistance provided to it under the RCA Agreement solely for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the Statute of the Agency;
- (e) In accordance with its applicable laws and regulations, each Member State shall ensure that the Agency's safety standards and measures relevant to a co-operative project are applied to its implementation;

- (f) Co-operation activities undertaken. in the framework of the RCA Agreement shall promote Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC) in the RCA region;
- (g) The formulation, design and implementation of the RCA co-operation programme and projects shall maximize use of available regional expertise and existing institutions and facilities.

1.4. RCA PROGRAMME

The co-operation programme in the framework of the RCA Agreement is the promotion and co-ordination of co-operative research, development and training projects in nuclear science and technology and may cover subjects in the fields of nuclear energy, nuclear safety, waste management, and isotope and radiation applications in agriculture, human health, industry, hydrology and terrestrial and marine environments.

The programme contains co-operative research, development and training projects divided into two categories:

- Co-operative projects, designed to meet the needs of development and practical applications of, and of research on, atomic energy for peaceful purposes. These co-operative projects may include one or several of the following components:
 - services of experts, consultants and scientists;
 - fellowships, scientific visits, training courses, study tours;
 - equipment and supplies;
- Co-ordinated Research Projects (CRPs). They are essentially networks of national research institutions which work within an operational framework for research with a similar and well defined regional theme or problem focus that is relevant to, or can be resolved through, nuclear technology.

2. ROLE OF RCA MEMBER STATES

Member States parties to this Agreement have equal rights in the decision-making process of the RCA programme.

2.1. ROLE AND OBLIGATIONS OF RCA MEMBER STATES

Member States have the following roles and responsibilities under the RCA Agreement:

- (a) Make available to the RCA programme, and in particular to each joint project in which it participates, such physical infrastructure and personnel as it may have initially proposed and as is necessary to achieve the stated objectives;

- (b) Take the necessary measures to ensure that personnel from other participating States and from other Agency Member States are able to participate effectively in the activities carried out on its territory, and also to ensure that its own nationals are able to take part in activities that are to be carried out in other States;
- (c) Contribute financially or otherwise to the effective implementation of the RCA programme and the various co-operative projects, in particular those in which it participates and shall notify the Agency annually of any such contribution;
- (d) Submit to the Agency, in accordance with an agreed format (Section 3.2), an annual report on all aspects of the activities it has carried out in the framework of the RCA programme, particularly the technical and financial aspects;
- (e) Decide upon the internal organization that will best enable it to execute its part of the co-operative projects and, to this end, it shall designate:
 - A National RCA Representative, who shall act on behalf of his/her Government on all issues relating to RCA activities;
 - A National RCA Project Co-ordinator for each co-operative project in which it participates and who will act as the Member State representative in the corresponding project committee;
- (f) Take measures it deems necessary to ensure the participation in the RCA co-operative projects of representatives of interested national institutions and other relevant sectors.

2.2. NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES

The National RCA Representative - appointed by the government participating in the RCA Agreement and empowered to make commitments on behalf of his/her Government and take decisions in connection with the implementation of the Agreement - is the principal point of contact for RCA activities in his/her Member State. He/she has the following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Attend all meetings of RCA Representatives, convey the views of his/her government on all issues relating to RCA activities put forward for discussion and take part in the decision-making process;
- (b) Submit proposals for co-operative projects on behalf of his/her government;
- (c) Notify the Agency of his/her government's decision to participate in a co-operative project;
- (d) Ensure a timely submission to the Agency of his/her country's annual report and all information on activities carried out within the framework of the RCA programme. In this respect, he/she shall ensure also that the report contains reliable and verifiable data on these activities and that it includes an assessment of the impact of these activities on the country;

- (e) Ensure that all measures necessary for the successful implementation of RCA activities are taken in co-ordination with National Project Co-ordinators and other relevant government or national bodies;
- (f) Take appropriate steps to secure the necessary financial support for RCA activities, in consultation and close co-ordination with the other National RCA Representatives, his/her national authorities and the Agency;
- (g) Ensure the availability of the necessary resources, scientific and technical facilities and the personnel for the implementation of the co-operative projects;
- (h) Ensure that only suitably qualified National Project Co-ordinators are appointed and that they are provided in a timely manner with the necessary information for their activities;
- (i) Ensure participation of his/her country nominees in RCA activities and that adequate resources are made available to the project.

2.3. NATIONAL RCA PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

A National RCA Project Co-ordinator is appointed for each co-operative project in which the RCA Member State participates and has the following duties and responsibilities on behalf of his/her government:

- (a) Represent the Member State and participate in the project committee meetings, in particular project formulation meetings, project review meetings and terminal meetings;
- (b) Ensure the timely nomination of national participants to the different project activities such as training courses, workshops, seminars or symposia;
- (c) Co-ordinate and oversee all national activities relating to the assigned project and establish and maintain links with persons in national institutions, professional societies and interest groups concerned with the projects;
- (d) Ensure the smooth and efficient implementation of all activities relating to the project within his/her country;
- (e) Report to the National RCA Representative on progress, implementation and achievements of the project.

2.4. NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES MEETINGS

- (a) Pursuant to Article II of the RCA Agreement, the National RCA Representatives shall hold at least two meetings a year:

- A regular meeting - the National RCA Representatives Regular Meeting - usually in March/April, at venues in the region, as agreed upon by the Parties;
 - A General Conference meeting - the National RCA Representatives General Conference Meeting - at the time of the IAEA General Conference, usually in September.
- (b) At the Regular Meeting, National RCA Representatives shall:
- Consider the annual report prepared by the Agency's RCA Programme Co-ordinator (Section 3.1c);
 - Review the overall implementation of the RCA programme and make appropriate recommendations for improving its effectiveness and efficiency;
 - Examine and approve new project proposals;
 - Approve the programme of activities and establish priorities;
 - Examine and propose follow-up actions on conclusions and recommendations of Project Committee Meetings;
 - Consider policy issues, overall management and planning including development and co-ordination of funding strategies;
- (c) At the General Conference Meeting the National RCA Representatives shall:
- Approve the RCA annual report as modified by the Regular Meeting;
 - Take decisions on issues outstanding from the Regular Meeting or referred to it by the Regular Meeting;
 - Consider any other matters related to the implementation of the RCA Agreement.
- (d) Both meetings of the National RCA Representatives are usually chaired by the National RCA Representative of the Member State hosting the Regular Meeting;
- (e) The Agency's RCA Programme Co-ordinator is the Secretary of both meetings of National RCA Representatives. He/she will prepare the Agenda for the meetings in consultation with Member States and distribute it along with any relevant documentation to Member States at least one month in advance of the meeting.

3. ROLE OF THE AGENCY IN THE RCA AGREEMENT

The IAEA is not a party to the Agreement and the Director General of the Agency is the depository of the Instruments of acceptance of this Agreement by Member States.

3.1. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY

The Agency has the following role and responsibilities:

- (a) Perform secretariat duties under the RCA Agreement;
- (b) Endeavour to support, subject to available resources, co-operative RCA projects by means of technical assistance and its other programmes. Any such assistance shall be provided, *mutatis mutandis*, in accordance with the principles, rules and procedures governing the provision of technical assistance by the Agency;
- (c) Take initiatives, with the prior approval of participating Member States, to invite any Member State of the Agency other than the Participating Governments, or appropriate international organizations, to contribute financially or otherwise to, or participate in, a co-operative project. The Agency shall inform the Participating Governments of any such contributions or participation;
- (d) Administer the contributions made to the RCA programme in accordance with its financial regulations and other appropriate rules where applicable. The Agency shall keep separate records and accounts for each such contribution;
- (e) With respect to RCA co-operative projects:
 - Participate in the establishment of annual schedule of work and modalities for the implementation of the co-operative projects;
 - Allocate funds for the implementation of the co-operative projects;
 - Assist Participating Governments in the exchange of information and in compiling, publishing and distributing reports on the cooperative projects as appropriate;
 - Consider the annual reports submitted by Participating Governments on the implementation of co-operative projects (Section 2.2.d);
 - Provide scientific and administrative support for the meetings of the project committees;
 - Provide an IAEA representative to the Project Committee established for each cooperative project in the RCA programme;
 - Perform the tasks of Secretary for the Project Committee and Research Co-ordination Meetings.
- (f) Prepare annually an overall report on the activities carried out under the RCA Agreement, on the basis of the annual reports submitted by the Project Technical Officer and the Participating Governments and in consultation with them, with

particular reference to the implementation of the established co-operative projects, and submit it to the National RCA Representatives Regular Meeting;

- (g) Appoint, in accordance with its staff rules and regulations, a staff member to be the RCA Programme Co-ordinator;
- (h) Appoint as appropriate staff members from its technical divisions to assist the different project committees.

3.2. THE AGENCY'S RCA PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR

The Agency's RCA Programme Co-ordinator has the following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Co-ordinate all activities undertaken in the framework of the RCA Agreement;
- (b) Ensure the provision of assistance, upon request from Participating Governments, in the preparation of proposals for co-operative projects and in details for their implementation and review.
- (c) Prepare an annual report on the activities carried out under the RCA Agreement (Section 2.1d), with particular reference to the implementation of the established co-operative projects and submit the report to the National RCA Representatives at least one month before their Regular Meeting. The report shall have the following format:
 - Part 1: A summary of the overall RCA Programme, including the financial, managerial and administrative aspects;
 - Part 2: A report from each National Project Co-ordinators Meeting on the overall technical aspects and impact of the past year's work in accordance with an agreed format; and
 - Part 3: A report from each Member State on each of the projects in which they have participated, in accordance with an agreed format.
- (d) Seek, in consultation with the RCA Member States, Agency senior management, governments and international organizations, financial support for the approved RCA projects as permitted by the RCA Agreement;
- (e) Undertake all the necessary actions to ensure that project resources are used in an efficient and effective manner and that the programme is implemented in accordance with the Articles of the Agreement and in accordance with the IAEA's financial regulations and other appropriate rules where applicable and to report to Member States on all contributions received, financial and in-kind;
- (f) Monitor the performance of all projects and promptly inform Member States of any observed problems and difficulties and initiate appropriate actions to deal with such problems and difficulties;

- (g) Assist the Participating Governments in the exchange of information and in compiling, publishing and distributing reports on the co-operative projects;
- (h) Ensure close co-ordination between the RCA programme and other programmes, in particular the Agency's technical co-operation programme in the East Asia and Pacific regions, and the Regional Agreement programmes for Africa and Latin America (AFRA and ARCAL);
- (i) Perform the tasks of Secretary to both meetings of the National RCA Representatives.

4. DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL, IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND REPORTING OF RCA CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS

Proposals for the establishment of a new RCA co-operative project may only be made by either a single Member State or a group of Member States party to the Agreement. The Agency may assist in the preparation of a proposal at the request of a Government Party **but the major responsibility for the preparation will rest with the nominated Lead Country. Details of the agreed Lead Country concept are given in Annex 1.**

4.1. DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF NEW CO-OPERATIVE PROJECT PROPOSALS

- (a) A new Co-operative Project Proposal must be accompanied by a project proposal document in an agreed format which should contain at least the following elements:
 - Description of the regional dimension of the project in addressing significant common needs and priorities of potential participating countries;
 - Justification from the scientific and technical, points of view, particularly the relative merit of using nuclear technology;
 - Description of attainable and measurable objectives and expected impact;
 - Description of the inputs and outputs along with the different components of the project;
 - Estimation of the budget;
 - Estimation of the duration.
- (b) **The project proposal document is submitted to the National Co-ordinators Meeting for the particular technology sector involved. This National Co-ordinators Meeting will ensure that the proposal is in line with the RCA sector programme objectives;**

- (c) **The** new project proposal **is then** submitted to National RCA Representatives at least two months prior to their Regular **or General Conference** Meeting to allow sufficient time for their study and evaluation by Member States in advance for their possible participation and support;
- (d) The National RCA Representatives Regular **or General Conference** Meeting shall give its approval to all new project proposals before any further action is taken and shall specify and agree to:
- The nature and objectives of the specific co-operative project;
 - The activities to be undertaken in the framework of the project;
 - The means of implementing the specific co-operative project and verifying the achievement of project objectives; and
 - Other relevant details as deemed appropriate.
- (e) The implementation of each co-operative project proposal approved by the National RCA Representatives Meeting as described above may start only when at least three RCA Member States have notified the Agency of their intention to participate in the co-operative project.

4.2. PROJECT COMMITTEE (Project formulation, implementation and review)

- (a) A Project Committee shall be established for each co-operative project. This Committee shall consist of one representative from each Participating Government in the project (the National RCA Project Coordinator) and whenever appropriate one representative from the Agency. They may be accompanied by advisers and experts at meetings of the Project Committee. All Project Committees in the same **sector** area shall meet at the same time and location.
- (b) The Project Committee shall meet no later than 6 months after the proposal has been approved by the National RCA Representatives for the formulation of the project. During the Project Formulation Meeting the Committee shall:
- **Select a Lead Country for the Project and, where appropriate, Assistant Lead Countries for specific tasks;**
 - Determine all the technical details for the implementation of the co-operative project in accordance with its objectives;
 - Establish and amend, as necessary, the portion of the cooperative project to be assigned to each Participating Government, subject to the consent of that Government;
 - Establish a detailed workplan for the implementation of the project (chronology of activities and respective annual disbursements);

- Determine a schedule of inputs and outputs;
 - Determine the details of the budget and a timetable for expenditures;
 - Make any relevant recommendations, particularly with respect to possible sources of funding and the use of regional institutions and expertise, to Participating Governments and to the Agency.
- (c) The Project Formulation Meeting shall ensure that co-operative projects, are presented in accordance with Standard Project Requests developed by funding institutions and executing agencies, particularly those of the IAEA, and contain all the necessary elements and justifications.
- (d) After the implementation of the co-operative project has started, the Project Committee shall meet at 12 month intervals to review progress in the execution of each component of the project and recommend to the National RCA Representatives Meeting any necessary adjustments or changes in order to achieve the proposed objectives of the project.
- (e) Upon completion of the project, the Project Committee shall conduct an evaluation and present a report to the National RCA Representatives Meeting. Under certain circumstances, independent evaluations may be requested.
- (f) A standard format should be used for reporting the results of Project Committee Meetings, Project Formulation Meetings, Project Review Meetings, and Project Evaluation Meetings. The National RCA Project Co-ordinators attending the Project Committee Meetings shall make every effort to ensure that all relevant information relating to the project is available at the time of the meeting and presented in the required format for the Meeting Report.
- (g) Project Committee Meetings shall normally be chaired by the Representative of the RCA Member State hosting the meeting.
- (h) The Representative of the Agency will perform the tasks of Secretary to these meetings. If no Agency representative will be present, the task of providing the Meeting Secretary will normally be assigned to the Host Government.

5. DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL, IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND REPORTING OF CO-ORDINATED RESEARCH PROJECTS (CRPs)

- (a) Proposals for a new RCA Co-ordinated Research Project may only be submitted by either a single RCA Member State or a group of RCA Member States. The Agency may assist in the preparation of a CRP proposal at the request of a Government Party.
- (b) Each CRP is essentially a network of national research institutes possibly encompassing all Member States in the region, but in any case not less than five RCA Member States, mandated to conduct a research programme in a well-defined topic, each being represented by a Chief Scientific Investigator (CSI). The Chief Scientific

Investigator shall keep the relevant National RCA Project Coordinator informed on all matters related to the CRP.

- (c) Within the framework of a CRP, institutes in Member States are offered three types of contractual arrangements:

- **Research Contracts**

Research contracts are awarded for the financial support of research activities. They are awarded for one year, subject to renewal. Contract funds provided must be used to cover expenses related to the research described in the contract. Research contracts are awarded mainly to institutions in developing countries;

- **Technical Contracts**

Technical contracts are awarded for the provision of technical services and support needed to implement research activities of a given CRP;

- **Research Agreements**

Research Agreements, which do not provide direct financial support for research, are awarded to institutes, mainly in developed countries, which can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of a CRP. Research Agreement holders participation costs in Research Co-ordination Meetings are, covered by the CRP funds.

- (d) Usually, no more than one contract or agreement is awarded per Member State under a given CRP. Care must be exercised to select the best scientific institution in the Member State to participate in a CRP.

5.1. DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF NEW CRPs

- (a) The procedure for development of CRP proposals and their approval are the same as those for the RCA co-operative project set forth in paragraph 4. For the CRPs supported by the Agency, its Research Contract Programme policies and procedures shall apply.
- (b) CRP proposals submitted for the approval of the National RCA Representatives Meeting should meet the following criteria:
- The research should be problem-driven and contribute to the objective of the relevant RCA programme;
 - The research should be oriented toward achievement of one clear and specific objective; and

- Indicators of progress of research should be definable and the anticipated result should be achievable within a 3-5 year time frame.

5.2. CRP FORMULATION AND RESEARCH CO-ORDINATION MEETINGS (RCMs)

- (a) A Project Committee shall be established for each CRP. This Committee shall consist of the Chief Scientific Investigator from each Participating Government designated institutions in the CRP and whenever appropriate one representative from the Agency (Technical or Project Officer).
- (b) The Project Committee shall hold a Project Formulation Meeting no later than 6 months after the proposal has been approved by the National RCA Representatives for the detailed formulation of the project.
- (c) Each CRP should be formulated by describing comprehensively the following components:

- **Problem definition**

A description of the problem and/or need for research;

- **Background Situation Analysis**

An analysis of the present situation from a scientific/technical perspective, with a description of other research under-taken in this and related topics under the auspices of the Agency and by non-Agency entities;

- **Specific research objective (purpose)**

Description of the specific objective expected to be achieved from the CRP;

- **Expected research outputs (results)**

Description of the products expected to emerge from the CRP;

- **Action Plan (activities)**

Give the number of contracts and agreements to be awarded, the number of RCMs anticipated, and time frames for the conduct and completion of the work;

- **Inputs**

Financial and human resources required from the Agency and duration, including participation of the Agency's Laboratories and attendance of its staff at RCMs;

- **Assumptions**

Any factors outside the immediate control of Participating Member States and the Agency which are needed for success;

- **Logical Framework**

Description of the CRP (in matrix form) which shows concisely its most important features.

- (d) CRPs should be fully operational within 12 months of their approval. It is essential to the RCA programme that high scientific standard are maintained with respect to each contract/agreement in the framework of a CRP. The selection of the institute should be absolutely dependent upon the ability of its staff to perform competent scientific research and the availability of adequate research facilities. Approval and renewal of contracts and agreements for a given CRP follow the Agency's established procedures.
- (e) The Project Committee shall hold Research Co-ordination Meetings (RCMs) every 12 to 18 months to review progress, to outline investigations or to prepare a final report on the results achieved during the course of the CRP. Chief Scientific Investigators are therefore required to provide, following a standard format, a report which covers activities conducted and results achieved during the period covered by the RCM, as well as a description of future activities.
- (f) Upon completion of the CRP, an evaluation of the results and achievements is made during an ultimate Research Co-ordination Meeting and the findings reported to the National RCA Representatives Meeting.
- (g) Research Co-ordination Meetings are normally chaired by the Chief Scientific Investigator representing the RCA Member State hosting the meeting.
- (h) The Representative of the Agency (Technical or Project Officer) or Host Government as mutually agreed shall perform the task of Scientific Secretary to all Research Co-ordination Meetings. If no Agency representative will be present, the task of providing the Meeting Secretary will normally be assigned to the Host Government.

6. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

- (a) RCA Member States are expected to contribute in-cash or in-kind resources to the RCA Programme to the maximum extent feasible and, wherever possible, make contributions to TCDC. Their TCDC contribution may be in the form of providing cost-free experts for RCA projects, making equipment available, bearing the costs of subsistence of participants in events hosted by the country or any other form of contribution. A country which hosts a training event is expected to make its best efforts to cover all local costs and provide the required logistical support.

- (b) Subject to the availability *of* funds, the Agency may cover the costs of attendance of representatives from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in National RCA Representatives Meetings. The host country of the Working Group Meeting is encouraged to bear the costs of accommodation of the National RCA Representatives, particularly those of LDCs.
- (c) The costs of attendance at meetings of the National Project Co-ordinators shall normally be covered by project funds. Funds allocated to RCA projects from the Agency's Technical Co-operation Fund shall, however, not be used to cover the costs of attendance of National Project Co-ordinators from countries not actively participating in the project. Costs covered by a Member State for the participation of its own representative at National Project Co-ordinators Meetings shall be shown as in-kind contributions of the Member State to the project budget in the RCA Annual Report.
- (d) The Agency shall endeavour to support RCA projects by means of technical assistance, research contracts and other programmes and only those projects which meet its standards for quality and relevant to its programme objectives will be considered for funding. The guiding principles and general operating rules that are applicable to the Agency's technical assistance and research contracts shall apply to RCA projects funded or executed by the Agency.
- (e) Efforts shall be made by both the Agency and Member States to seek extrabudgetary resources from other countries and other funding organizations. The Agency will report to the National RCA Representatives the contributions made by RCA Member States, by the Agency and by other donors.
- (f) RCA Members shall consider ways and means for seeking support and resources. They may, for example, invite representatives of agreed donor organizations to their meetings, involve representatives of donor organizations in pre-project and programming missions and provide donor organizations with detailed information about RCA Programmes.
- (g) It is essential to make, at the initial stage of a project proposal, a realistic assessment of the resources likely to be made available for project implementation. It should be borne in mind that a small number of solution-oriented projects in priority areas have a much greater chance of being fully funded and achieving ultimate success.
- (h) It is also of critical importance to the success of the RCA programme to monitor continuously the funding priorities and adapt to new orientations adopted by the donor community and international organizations (including the IAEA) to attract funding for RCA projects. With emphasis, being placed by the donor community on Sustainable Human Development (SHD), seen as central to the sustainability of development initiatives on the whole, the following gives an overview of issues which are relevant both to the donor community and to the RCA programme:
 - (i) Greater emphasis is being put on the central role of participating countries in the planning and design of technical co-operation and the elaboration of their own long-term solutions to development problems;

- (ii) Increased emphasis on the improved planning in the context of co-ordinated support for **sector** approaches and policies and, in particular, use of a programme rather than an ad hoc project-by-project approach;
- (iii) Encourage "ownership" and effective utilization of the end-users through their more active participation; this should be at both the design and implementation stage of a project;
- (iv) More emphasis on the key importance for sustainable development with due attention to areas of policy analysis and development management; project objectives should be in line with regional as well as national development priorities;
- (v) More recognition is given to private sector needs;
- (vi) Greater use of local expertise and existing infrastructure and greater attention to costs and cost-effectiveness.

THE ROLE OF LEAD COUNTRIES WITHIN THE RCA*

REVISED

PART 1: *THE LEAD COUNTRY CONCEPT WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT OF RCA PROJECTS* IS COPIED FROM OFFICIAL RCA DOCUMENTATION. IT SETS OUT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD COUNTRIES IN DETAIL.

PART 2: *THE ROLE OF THE LEAD COUNTRY IN THE APPROVAL OF AN RCA PROJECT PROPOSAL*

PART 3: *REGIONAL RESOURCE UNITS*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: APART FROM PART 2, THE INFORMATION HAS BEEN COPIED FROM SELECTED RCA DOCUMENTATION. THE ULTIMATE AIM IS TO PRODUCE A HANDBOOK ON THE ROLE OF LEAD COUNTRIES WITHIN RCA.

* The Lead Country Concept with the Management of the RCA Projects was agreed in the 26th RCA General Conference in September 1997 and further refined in 1998 and 1999. This document was adopted at the 28th RCA GC Meeting in September 1999 and is an integral part (as Annex 1) of the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules for the RCA Programme. -RCA Coordinator, 7 March 2001

PART 1

THE LEAD COUNTRY CONCEPT WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT OF RCA PROJECTS

1. The Lead Country Concept

The Lead Country concept within the RCA Programme is a logical extension of the initiative by Member States to accept more management responsibility for Programme Activities¹. The Lead Country concept enhances regional ownership and the accountability of Member States from the formation of a project concept through to its final evaluation.

The implementation of the Lead Country concept will assist regional manpower development and allow key personnel from Member States to gain experience in the design, management and implementation of technical projects at a regional level. This is consistent with Recommendation 9 from the Working Paper on “A Review of the Management Structure of the RCA Programme and Proposals for the Future”. This recommended that the RCA, with the assistance of the Agency, develop a strategy to enhance skills within the region for R&D management.

The Lead Country concept described in this paper is based on the following principles:

- ❑ It would operate within the Articles of the RCA Agreement and accepted RCA practice and in conformity with the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules;
- ❑ Each project (sub-project in the case of large projects) would have one Lead Country responsible from the initiation to the implementation stage of the project;
- ❑ The IAEA would be responsible for the implementation of project activities and for all financial aspects of the project expenditure;
- ❑ The Project Committees would maintain their roles in reviewing and evaluating projects, with the Lead Countries taking a facilitating role; and
- ❑ Lead Countries could be assisted by other Participating Countries, which would volunteer to carry out defined tasks;

2. The Role of a Lead Country

The role of a Lead Country is to :

- ❑ Provide the initiatives and managing all aspects of the project cycle;
- ❑ Take action on behalf of the Participating Member States to achieve a completed design, formulation and programming of an RCA project/sub-project or Sector Programme and oversee its implementation, technical progress and evaluation by the IAEA.

¹ An attempt to illustrate the role of the Lead Country within the IAEA is illustrated in Annex 1A.

A Lead Country is not obligated to carry out all of the above actions itself. Where appropriate, the Lead Country should encourage other Participating Countries to assist with specific tasks. This assignment of an “assistant” role to Member States will help to develop a valuable management resource within the region by preparing other Member States to be future Lead Countries, especially but not restricted to Least Developed Countries.

The Lead Country concept cannot be effective unless Member States provide and support suitably qualified individuals as Lead Country Coordinators who have the demonstrated ability to provide the leadership, organisational and managerial skills for the particular project. In accepting the role of Lead Country, a Member State makes a commitment to the other Participating Member States to ensure that the project momentum is maintained and that the project aims, objectives and outputs are achieved on time and within the allotted budget.

It is recognised that accepting the role of a Lead Country will carry a resource commitment in supporting the Lead Country Co-ordinator. It is therefore recommended that the Lead Country role is spread around the various Member States who can meet the selection criteria.

3. Nomination of Lead Countries

The initial development of a project involves the preparation of a concept project proposal by one or more Member States. As set out in the RCA Agreement and in Section 4.1 of the Guidelines and Operating Rules, a Project Committee is established following agreement to the concept proposal by a Meeting of National Representatives, with at least three Member States signifying their intention to participate.

A Lead Country is nominated once a Project Committee is formed.

4. Selection Criteria for Lead Countries

Any participating Member State of the Project Committee may volunteer to be a Lead Country. A Lead Country must however meet the following minimum criteria:

- Nomination of a suitably qualified and experienced person to be responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to a Lead Country; this person will be designated as the Lead Country Coordinator;
- Guaranteed support from its own resources for the Lead Country Coordinator to carry out their duties;
- Ready access for the Lead Country Coordinator to good communication links for rapid contact with National Project Coordinators and the RCA Coordinator.

It is desirable that the Lead Country has demonstrated expertise in several significant technical aspects of the Project or Sector Programme, or a major National Development Programme related to the Project or Sector Programme. However designation as a Lead Country does not imply that a country has the highest technical capability in the region within the particular project field.

It also has to be emphasised that no additional funds will be forthcoming for Lead Countries. This was agreed similarly for the RRU concept.

5. Appointment of a Lead Country

The Project Committee is responsible for reviewing all offers from Participating Countries to act as the Lead Country.

The Lead Country recommended by the Project Committee must then confirm in writing to the RCA Coordinator its agreement to accept the responsibilities set out for the role. The RCA Coordinator will forward the recommendation on the Lead Country, together with the written confirmation, to a meeting of National Representatives. Under the RCA Agreement only the National Representatives have the authority to make such decisions on behalf of the Member States. The Lead Country concept is seen to be consistent with the Articles of the Agreement and reinforces the requirement for Member States to be responsible for their own programme (Articles I, III(1) and V(1)) as well as building on the project committee structures described in Article VI.

6. The Duties of a Lead Country / Lead Country Coordinator

The Lead Country acts on behalf and with the authority of the Project Committee and also reports to it at appropriate times.

A Lead Country will guide a project after acceptance of the original concept, through the project formulation process, and up to the implementation stage. The full project document is prepared by the Lead Country Coordinator and will have time schedules for all the implementation arrangements, draft terms of reference for meetings, expert missions and draft prospecti for training courses.

6.1 Prior to a Project Formulation Meeting

The Lead Country must consult with other Participating Countries and draft :

- a definition of the problem to be solved, suggesting possible aims, objectives and outputs to be the basis of the Project;
- a list of the available expertise in the region and outside the region;
- a list of likely end-users in each of the Participating Countries;
- likely inputs in cash or in-kind;
- possible outside sources of funding.

The Lead Country must also consult with the RCA Office for the Agency to :

- assign a Technical Officer and seek his / her input;
- seek approval to host a Project Formulation Meeting (PFM) in either the proposed Lead Country or another suitable venue;

- ❑ solicit nomination of participants, who should include representatives of end users, where feasible, and the Agency's assigned Technical Adviser.

6.2 At the Project Formulation Meeting

At the PFM, the Lead Country Coordinator must ensure that participants :

- ❑ identify and agree on the regional problem(s) to be solved;
- ❑ agree on the overall plan (aims, objectives and outputs) to solve each aspect of the problem;
- ❑ agree on the appropriate technical solutions to achieve the objectives;
- ❑ define and agree on the resources available from each Participating Country;
- ❑ determine and agree on the training needs;
- ❑ establish and agree on a detailed workplan of activities and outputs, including schedules and budgets;
- ❑ agree on responsibilities for each activity;
- ❑ in consultation with the Host Country, prepare a brief Meeting Report;
- ❑ identify committed and potential funding sources; and
- ❑ ensure that the project document meets the requirements of the IAEA or other funding bodies for both presentation and time scheduling into the applicable budgetary cycles.

6.3 Following the Project Formulation Meeting

Following the PFM, the Lead Country Coordinator must ensure that participants :

- ❑ finalise a proposal, including a detailed prospectus for each training event;
- ❑ obtain written confirmation from each of the Participating Countries to carry out their agreed roles;
- ❑ submit the proposal to the RCA Office to meet TC and other any other funding Agency deadlines;
- ❑ in consultation with the Project Committee and funding agencies, refine the proposal for final approval by the Meeting of National Representatives and by funding agencies.

6.4 Implementation of the Project

The final project document submitted to the IAEA by the Lead Country will contain all the detailed implementing information to enable the project to be undertaken. The IAEA has the management responsibility for implementing the project to the agreed project plan. This will utilise the necessary benefits from Agency infrastructure, "privileges and immunities provisions", links to UNDP Country Offices, etc. (The Agency may however use agreed mechanisms such as subcontracting to enable Member States to

benefit from the experience of undertaking the implementation and gain increased self-reliance for the operation of the programme.)

These implementation activities are undertaken by the RCA Coordinator who is responsible for the use of Agency funds. The RCA Coordinator has a responsibility to each Lead Country to ensure that all activities are initiated in good time and that the necessary Agency administrative requirements are met. In addition the RCA Coordinator should provide an overview and ensure that the implementation procedures are occurring on schedule. The RCA Coordinator must inform a Lead Country Coordinator of any matters likely to cause problems in implementation.

The Lead Country Coordinator has the responsibility to ensure that meaningful reports are received from the RCA Coordinator for all implemented activities and that these are distributed to the Project Committee. The feed back on the implementation will form the basis of the yearly project evaluation by the Project Committee.

The Lead Country Coordinator must be in regular contact with the RCA Coordinator and the RCA Office to monitor the activities being implemented. In addition there should be consultation with the Technical Officer to monitor the technical progress of the project.

THE LEAD COUNTRY COORDINATOR MUST REPORT TO THE PROJECT COMMITTEE ON ALL ASPECTS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

In the event of problems within a project, the Lead Country should raise these issues in the first place with the Member State(s) concerned or the Agency, as appropriate. Then, if there are matters of substance arising, these should be communicated to the Project Committee.

6.5 Evaluation of the Project

The Lead Country Coordinator must arrange for the project to be formally reviewed by the Project Committee at agreed intervals (normally annually as required under the Agreement); and, similarly, must facilitate a final evaluation and report from the Project Committee at the end of the Project.

Any Agency project evaluation process should be conducted outside of this internal RCA process.

7. Relationship between the Lead Country and a Regional Resource Unit (RRU)

There is no automatic linkage between a Lead Country and an RRU, since the selection criteria for the Lead Country are not based on that country necessarily being at the highest level of technical standing for that topic.

The assignment of RRUs will be on the basis of agreed transparent guidelines and criteria. Like the assignment of Lead Country status, RRUs will not receive any financial or other benefit from being given such a designation. On the contrary such a position would normally result in the RRU donating resources to the project and thereby enhancing the TCDC contribution from that country.

In parallel with the need for Lead Countries to have written government guarantees of full support from their own resources for their duties, it would be appropriate for designated RRUs to be treated in the same way.

8. Tenure of a Lead Country

Normally the term for the appointment of a Lead Country is the agreed life of the Project or Sector Programme and/or the period for which funding has been guaranteed. However, for on-going parts of the RCA Programme, such as the Thematic Programmes, it may be appropriate for the project Committee to review the status of a Lead Country every two years.

Should a Lead Country wish to relinquish its responsibilities, at least 6 months notice in writing would be expected to be given by the National Representative to the other RCA National Representatives and to the RCA Coordinator.

9. Evaluation of the Performance of Lead Countries

The decision making organ for RCA is the Meeting of National Representatives. The Lead Country concept is an exercise in self-regulation and the long history of the RCA has shown that the RCA Member States have always been able to reach consensus agreement on issues. The Lead Country will be required to present a summary of actions taken by them in discharging their responsibilities.

PART 2:

The Role of Lead Countries in the Approval of RCA Projects²

A step by step process for the introduction of RCA proposals into the IAEA TC Program is set out in Annex 1B. The process is consistent with the RCA Guidelines and the Document *Lead Country Concept within the Management of RCA Projects* copied as Part 1 of this submission.

A thirty-six week (maximum) schedule between the initial presentation of the proposal to the RCA and its submission to TC as a formal RCA proposal for appraisal.

PART 3: REGIONAL RESOURCE UNITS³

The concept of a Regional Resource Units (RRU) was developed to recognise that in RCA Member States, the national and international investments to establish and improve nuclear science and technology have often developed across the region in pockets of high level scientific and technical expertise, based around their investments in manpower and equipment. These resources have generally not being acknowledged for their achievements and more importantly have not being utilised to any significant degree for the benefit of the RCA Programme. The introduction of RRUs into the RCA programme was seen to have the potential to make a significant increase in TCDC; to increase the sustainability of nuclear science and technology at a regional level for Member States; to increase the "ownership" of projects by Member States; and as a cost effective mechanism to deliver project activities.

The definition of an RRU was agreed at the RCA WGM held in Beijing in May 1996 and endorsed at the RCA GCM in September 1996 and remains a well-established expert group within a national organization, normally a National Nuclear Research Institute

² This presentation arose out of discussions between Dr Nahrul A K M Rashid, MINT, National RCA Representative for Malaysia and Dr Peter Airey, ANSTO, Lead Country Coordinator, Marine Project RAS/8/083.

³ Copied from Annex 14 of the 22nd Meeting of RCA National Representatives Mumbai Feb-Mar 2000.

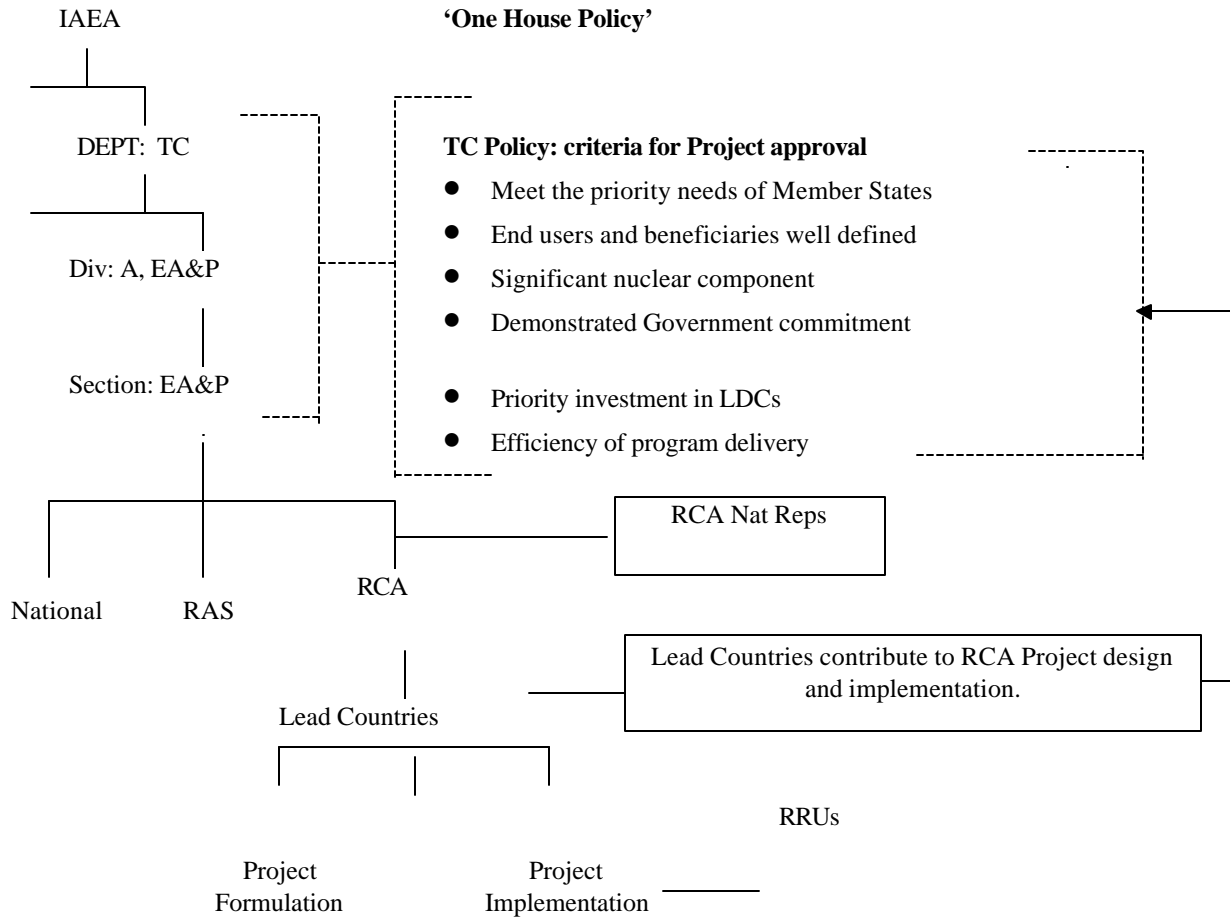
- being in either a developed or developing Member State;
- being able to exercise a leadership role in projects/part projects through having high quality capabilities (eg analysis, tracer services, etc) which are available for use within the region;
- attuned to the needs of technology end-users, such as local companies, government organisations, etc; and
- able to carry out IAEA contracts, provide “hands on” training for other Member States (TCDC), assess project proposals, etc.

The criteria for RRUs should include:

- willingness to share in regional activities;
- scientific excellence in a technique (publication record, modern equipment, standards of measurements, etc);
- a suitable number of trained staff;
- sufficient ongoing projects to ensure that skills are regularly used and updated;
- part of a well-supported national programme; and
- administratively well-supported within their NNRI.

ANNEX 1: THE LEAD COUNTRY CONCEPT

(A) The role of Lead Countries within the IAEA



Lead Countries – Policy Documents

- RCA Operating Rules and Guidelines
- Lead Countries within the Management of RCA Projects
- Working Paper on the Lead Country Concept for the 1999 RCA/GC Meeting

(B) Incorporation of an RCA Proposal into the TC Programme

Milestone	Time (week)	Comment
1. New proposal	0	A new proposal ⁽¹⁾ may be presented by an RCA Member State through the RCA National Representative
1.1 Initial review	2	The project document is submitted to the National Coordinators ⁽²⁾ for the particular technology sector involved.
1.2 Circulation of the revised proposal	10	The proposal will be revised by the proponent on the basis of comments received. The document will be circulated by the RCA Coordinator to the RCA National Representatives at least 8 weeks before their next Meeting ⁽³⁾ .
2. Meeting of RCA National Representatives	18	This procedure complies with Section 4 of the RCA Guidelines. The Project Committee will be established if 3 or more RCA member States have expressed interest.
2.1 Appointment of a Project Committee and an interim Project Committee chair. The Committee should include an IAEA Representative.		
2.2 Appointment of a Lead Country		
3. Meeting of the Project Committee ⁽⁴⁾ for the preparation of the detailed project proposal	32	The Lead Country will be responsible to the Project Committee for the preparation of a full project proposal in accordance with TC requirements.
3.1 Circulation of a detailed Project Proposal to RCA representatives	34	
4. Submission of the proposal to TC by the RCA Coordinator for full appraisal and approval	36	The RCA project will undergo appraisal in accordance with normal TC Procedures.

NOTES

(1) The project proposal should be in the form of Project Document which should to the extent possible contain the following elements:

- Description of the regional dimension of the project with particular reference to how the project will respond to the particular needs of the country;
- Justification from the scientific and technical points of view with special reference to the use of nuclear technology;
- Description of the attainable and measurable objectives and the expected impact on the end users and project beneficiaries;
- Description of the inputs and outputs of the various components of the project;
- Estimate of the project duration and budget.

(2) The National Coordinators will ensure that the proposal is in line with RCA sector programme objectives.

(3) A period of 8 weeks is required to allow the RCA representatives time to decide whether their country wishes to be involved.

(4) The Project Committee will either act as a Project Formulation Meeting (PFM) or meet concurrently with the PFM.