

A Future Role of the RCARO?

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Review of the Current Situation

*“You have to know the past to understand
the present.”*

Dr Carl Sagan (1934 – 1996)

The IAEA's Support for the RCA Programme

Two key roles played by the IAEA are:

- Project funding and implementation through the Technical Cooperation Programme; and,
- Technical Support through the Technical Departments.

The IAEA funding of the RCA Programme

Article VII(2):

Subject to available resources, the Agency shall endeavour to support co-operative projects established in accordance with Article III 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.

Other Defined roles for the IAEA in the RCA Programme

While the IAEA is not a signatory to the RCA Agreement, some Articles do specify where the Agency will or might supply programme related support. The key aspects are:

- ✓ Article II: Convene Meetings of the Government parties at least once a year.
- ✓ Article III: Assist in the preparation of project proposals.
- ✓ Article VI: Participate in project committees.
- ✓ Article VII(1): Perform secretariat duties.
- ✓ Article VII(4): Prepare an annual report based on the reports submitted by each participating Member State (Article V(2)).

A Small Slice of History

- Although there was no specific formal managerial role for the Agency defined in either the 1972 or 1987 RCA Agreements, they did establish the staff position of RCA Coordinator from the start.
- The RCA Coordinator played a major role in the management and operation of RCA Programme.
- In 1996 the then DDG-TC called on the RCA Member States to take on more responsibilities for the management and operation of RCA Programme.

A Small Slice of History (continued)

- A Task Group Meeting to Review the Management Structure of the RCA Programme and develop proposals for the future was held in Vienna 11-13 September 1996 and its Report was presented to the RCA General Conference Meeting on 18 September 1996 and received a favourable response.
- The Agency reviewed the recommendations and the matter was discussed further at the 19th RCA NRM held in Myanmar in 1997.

A Small Slice of History (continued)

Through refinement of these recommendations, the RCA Member States adopted a number of innovative measures to increase their role in the management and operation of the RCA programme, which included such items as the establishment of:

- ✓ Lead Country Coordinator concept;
- ✓ Regional Resource Units; and,
- ✓ The Regional Office.

It should also be noted that when these measures were adopted by the Member States, the role of the RCA Coordinator was a specifically defined Agency staff position and it was assumed that the Agency support provided through this role would continue unchanged.

Changing Times

Until 2012 the RCA Coordinator/Focal Person was the sole Project Management Officer responsible for all RCA projects but now some of the RCA projects have been redistributed among three other PMOs and the RCA Focal Person now has responsibilities for 2 Country Programmes.

These changes in the duties of the RCA Focal Person make it unlikely that there can be a continuation of all the various management and administrative support previously provided and MSs should now reassess their needs and devise modalities to ensure that all key aspects can remain supported.

Time for Changes

The previous strong support from the RCA Focal Persons (RCA Coordinators) has meant that the RCA Member States have been insulated from many of the underlying management and administrative tasks that have needed to be undertaken to maintain the momentum of the Programme. As a consequence Member States contributions to the programme to date have tended to be reactive rather than proactive. Member States will now have to take on more initiatives.

Potential Weaknesses and Vulnerabilities for Member States in the RCA Structure

- Overreliance generally on the Agency to undertake tasks related to the RCA Programme.
- No assurance of retention of RCA Knowledge in the MSs.
- No single repository of RCA knowledge and source of advice on RCA outside of the Agency.
- Limited ability for MSs to gain high level of knowledge about the RCA as there is no formal process to provide it.
- Low or limited participation level by MSs in RCA administrative processes – Chair RCA the only common opportunity.
- Complex Nature of the RCA Processes and Procedures.
- High turnover of National RCA Representatives.

Analysis of the RCA FP Contribution

Factors providing the RCA Focal Person with key influence include:

- Day-to-day involvement with the RCA programme and its implementation.
- Day-to-day immersion in the TC Department and the Agency providing an intimate and current knowledge of matters that might be relevant to the RCA programme, its implementation and future issues.
- Significant acquired knowledge, experience and competence in RCA matters, processes and procedures.
- Being non-partisan/neutral player.

What Roles could be taken on by the Member States?

Action:

- Member States could initiate efforts to significantly upgrade their acquired knowledge, experience and competence in RCA matters, processes and procedures.

Limitation:

- This would only benefit an individual MS and not the whole RCA community.
- It would not address the important role of providing a non-partisan/neutral player to assist in moderating discussions or achieving consensus.
- Recently there has been a high turnover rate for NRs.

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- Limited ability to gain high level of knowledge as there is no formal process.
- Low or limited participation level by MSs in RCA administrative processes.
- High turnover of National RCA Representatives.
- Complex Nature of the RCA Processes and Procedures.
- Because of the consensus nature of the decision making in the RCA, the central role should not be the responsibility of a single or a small limited number of MSs.

A Strong RCA Management Structure needs:

- Strong leadership and strong participation by the National RCA Representatives in decision-making and management of the RCA Programme;
- Comprehensive knowledge of RCA procedures and practices;
- National RCA Representatives to be decision-makers within their home organisations with the ability to implement decisions of the NRMs; and,
- Strong core of Advisers who have a comprehensive knowledge of RCA procedures and practices.

**Is there an alternative to each
Member States having to take on
these responsibilities?**

**Is this a Role for the RCA Regional
Office?**

The Current Roles & Responsibilities of the RCARO

- Pro-actively seek out opportunities for the RCA to participate in projects being funded by major regional and international donors, including international agencies;
- Negotiate and secure funding for RCA projects;
- Promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology to assist in addressing regional and national needs;
- Provide enhanced visibility for the RCA at regional and national forums;

The Current Roles & Responsibilities of the RCARO (continued)

- Implement the directives of the RCA Member States as agreed upon at the Meetings of National RCA Representatives; and,
- Provide Member States with reference to the RCA archived records on the projects, meeting proceedings, guidelines and procedures for undertaking the RCA activities as a repository of knowledge on the RCA programme.

RCARO skills and related competencies include:

- **Being a stable environment for accumulating additional knowledge and capabilities related to RCA;**
- **All its efforts are dedicated to the RCA;**
- **Acquiring a strong knowledge of RCA projects, procedures and practices from its on-going mandated activities;**
- **Strong communications resources and abilities;**
- **Able to present a broad spectrum of opinion and draw on support from a strong core of Advisers in MSs who have a specialised knowledge on RCA procedures, practices and other matters.**

Is the RCARO qualified to play a part?

YES!

Examples of activities being undertaken by the RCA FP that might be taken over by the RCARO.

- Taking a lead role in the preparations for the RCA NRM & GCM – agenda, background papers, etc.
- Coordination of the finalisation of the Reports for the NRM & GCM.
- Providing ongoing update of the GOR.

Examples of activities that are not being undertaken by the RCA FP that could be taken on by the RCARO to assist Member States.

Archiving key project documents and ensuring that recommendations are visible, eg:

- Project meeting reports are not currently accessible to MSs from the internet.
- There is no standard mechanism to inform all MSs about the conclusions and recommendations from project meetings, workshops, etc. so that there is often a disconnect

Up to date Information on Project Personnel

- There is no readily available listing of the current NPCs for each RCA project and their contact information.

How could the RCARO undertake these tasks within the current budget and personnel?

- The RCARO would be taking on additional tasks on behalf of the RCA MSs as part of the process of devolving more of the responsibility for the management and responsibility for the RCA Programme from the Agency to the MSs.
- MSs can make a contribution to the overall efforts through the provision of Expert assistance and advice. The pooling of knowledge and experience from the region can accelerate the build up of the knowledge repository at the RCARO.

Positioning of the RCARO as a Knowledge Resource for RCA MSs



Mutual Support to Strengthen the RCA Programme.



Upgrading of an RCARO Initiative?

Since 2004 the RCARO has implemented an innovative Fellowship Programme under which it has invited staff from RCA MSs for periods of several months and provided them with meaningful and valuable experience through participation in the RCARO's activities.

This enables them to make more effective contribution to the RCA and builds valuable connections for the future.

This initiative could be enhanced through the addition of a component to include the participation of one or more RCA Experts who could provide mentoring and support in specific areas.

This could benefit both the RCARO Fellows and staff of the RCARO.

Conclusion

- Change is inevitable.
- RCA will need to adjust and adapt to new circumstances.
- The RCA Regional Office is best positioned to be the focus of response to these changes and challenges and could use this to build its position as a resource centre for the RCA MSs.
- MSs have to be an active part of the new arrangements and contribute accordingly.

Thank you!