

Future Plans for Coordinating the RCA Projects by Thematic Areas.

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Background

Thematic Programme Approach in the RCA

Viewing the RCA Programme from a thematic perspective is not new.

In the 1996 RCA Annual Report the distribution of resources for the 26 projects in the 1997/1998 programme was:

- Industry & the Environment 56%,
- Health 22%,
- Radiation Protection 13%,
- Energy 4%,
- Agriculture 1%,
- Others - Project Formulation 2%, TCDC 2%.

Thematic Programme Approach in the RCA (continued)

In the 1999 the NRM agreed to consider the RCA Programme on a Thematic Sector basis – in the 1999/2000 programme there were 32 projects. It moved to a thematic structure with each of the 7 Thematic Sectors headed by a Lead Country and Coordinator.

Clustered within each Thematic Sector were the related projects each of which had a Lead Country and a Lead Country Coordinator.

Thematic Programme Approach in the RCA (continued)

In 2006 a Working Group was established to make recommendations on the Implementation of the RCA Medium Term Strategy 2006-2011. In particular it was tasked to:

- draft a work plan for the RCA Medium Term Strategy, in conjunction with the Thematic Sector Lead Country Coordinators mid-year meeting;
- consider a process to appoint TSLCCs, if more than one nomination were made; and,
- present its report to the 35th RCA GCM.

Thematic Programme Approach in the RCA (continued)

In its Report the Working Group noted that:

- the terms of the MTS, adopted by the NRs at the 28th NRM, proposed that there would be no more than 10 projects overall in the RCA programme from 2011;
- as a consequence of such a low number of projects, many of the Thematic Sector Coordinator positions would no longer be viable as there was no need for additional coordination;
- while the TSs concept has provided opportunities for MSs to show leadership roles for the benefit of the programme through their TSLCCs, it has also provided significant and potentially intractable problems as far as agreement on criteria for the rotation of these positions.

Thematic Programme Approach in the RCA (continued)

The GCM endorsed the Working Group's recommendations that:

- the functions previously undertaken by the TSLCCs could be absorbed into new tasks proposed for the PLCCs and the NRs;
- the TSLCC position be discontinued; and
- thematic oversight at the national level provided value and the introduction of the position of National Thematic Sector Coordinator (NTSC), who would provide advice and support to the NR on national participation, priorities and sustainability.

Why revisit this approach?

Necessity

Paragraphs 14 & 15 of the guidelines for the new TC 2014-15 programme stated that:

- *the regional programme would have 1 category B project and around 10 to 15 category A regional projects.*

Thus in the Asia Pacific region, with its three distinct constituencies for regional projects - two Agreements and one non-Agreement - it would be prudent to programme for 2014/2015 on the basis that each component might have only three and probably no more than five projects.

Necessity

It should be noted that the RCA already had 15 projects scheduled to be carried over into 2014 and 7 into 2015 from the 2012/2013 TC approvals. The submission by the RCA to the Agency of any new project proposals for the 2014/2015 TC Programme would obviously potentially increase the number of projects.

A strategy is needed to be formulated to enable the planned RCA programme to continue without being adversely affected if the TC Guidelines for 2014/2015 is implemented exactly as foreshadowed.

**A Solution – Change the
focus from Technology
Related Projects to
Thematic Projects**

Advantages

- The transition should not be difficult since the approved RCA Strategic Priorities for 2012/2017 were set out in a thematic context and this would facilitate any realignment of the current RCA programme into a suitable form for consideration in the 2014/2015 TC cycle or any future TC cycle.
- It would provide an integrated approach to the solution of regional problems through the application of a range of technologies and facilitate projects addressing a “needs pull” of technology rather than a “technology push”.
- It would enable the elusive MTS goal of moving to larger projects with bigger impact to be achieved.
- It would streamline the projects, reduce duplication in project activities, rationalise the use of Project Review and Planning Meetings and optimise the use of financial and human resources.

Disadvantages

- A revised management structure would have to be formulated and agreed for the RCA thematic projects; and,
- Any revised management structure might disrupt the successful project management arrangements presently used in the RCA programme.

Expected Effectiveness

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- The RCA projects would be able to demonstrate the utilisation of a suite of nuclear technologies to address regional problems rather than the present much narrower current project approach.
- This would illustrate the much higher impact of the thematic approach and enable a much wider spectrum of problems to be addressed.
- The successes that could be achieved through the thematic approach would open up and provide greater potential for the RCA to establish cooperative activities with regional and international organisations.
- A thematic model was used very successfully for the RCA Industrial Project.

Conclusion

If the Agency imposes significant restrictions on the size and the number of projects that it will support through the TC programme, the RCA will need to adjust and adapt to these new circumstances. The move to a thematic project based structure for the RCA Programme has the following advantages:

- The RCA strategic priorities 2012/2017 are already based on thematic considerations and provide the necessary background to achieve the changes.
- It offers greater prospects for addressing regional problems as well as greater opportunities for illustrating the power of nuclear science and technology.
- It would result in greater efficiencies and make optimum use of financial and human resources.
- It would produce greater project impact, which would enhance prospects for cooperative arrangements with regional and interregional organisations.

Thank you!