



Summary Information on ARASIA

1. Background

1.1 Establishment

The Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (ARASIA)¹ is an intergovernmental agreement established under the auspices of the IAEA in 2002.

1.2 Member States

ARASIA is open to the participation of any Arab Member States of the Agency in Asia by notifying its acceptance thereof to the Director General of the Agency.

Currently, ARASIA enjoys a membership of 8 Arab countries: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The State of Qatar, has recently submitted its instrument of acceptance to the Director General of the IAEA, and shall become a member soon.

1.3 Objectives

Article I of the ARASIA Agreement identified the objectives of the agreement as follows:

"The States Parties undertake, in co-operation with each other and the Agency, to promote and co-ordinate co-operative activities for training, research, development and applications of nuclear science and technology and to implement them through their competent national institutions."

2. Organizational Structure

2.1 Stakeholders

Article II of the ARASIA Agreement indicates that the Board of Representatives, designated by the State Part Government, is the highest decision-making body of the Agreement. The Representatives are given the authority by their Governments to make commitments on their behalf and take decisions in connection with the implementation of the Agreement. The Representatives are also the focal points of contact for ARASIA activities in their countries.

The Board is responsible for:

¹ The text of the Agreement is produced in Gov/INF/2002/10

- establishing the rules of procedures for implementing ARASIA;
- establishing the policies, guidelines and strategies of ARASIA;
- considering and approving co-operative projects proposed by the States Parties;
- reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the co-operative projects approved in accordance with this Agreement;
- determining the conditions upon which a state that is not a party to this Agreement or an appropriate regional or international organization may participate in a co-operative project;
- considering any other matters related to or connected with the promotion and coordination of co-operative projects for the purposes of this Agreement as set forth in Article I.

2.2 Meetings

Pursuant to Article II of the ARASIA Agreement, the Board of Representatives shall meet at least once a year (referred to as the Regional Meeting) usually during the first quarter of the calendar year. The meeting venue is decided after a State Party volunteers to host the meeting. The meeting is usually chaired by the hosting State Party. The hosting State, assisted by the ARASIA Secretariat, prepares all the necessary documentations for the meeting.

In addition, the Board of Representatives holds a second meeting at the margin of the IAEA General Conference. The General Conference meeting is ruled by the president-elect.

3. Summary of the Procedures

3.1 Project Development

In reaction to the IAEA call to start the preparation for the forthcoming Technical Cooperation (TC) Cycle, the ARASIA Secretariat launches the brainstorming process by inviting ARASIA States Party to propose project concepts, that are linked to the regional development priorities (i.e. should address certain common high priority needs and problems in the ARASIA region as identified in the existing regional strategy document (ARASIA Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013).

Project development involves very intensive upstream work by all stakeholders and the relevant staff at the IAEA. The ARASIA Secretariat receives concept papers from States Party within an identified timeframe. The Secretariat starts the process of editing and revision of all received concepts, before circulating them to all ARASIA States Party for their initial consideration. In addition, the proposed concepts are shared through the ARASIA web site with restriction access only to the ARASIA States Party. The proposed concepts are reviewed and pre-screened by the Board Members. During this meeting, revision, additions etc. are requested to be made by the ARASIA States Party and revert to the ARASIA Secretariat. Before formal submission to the IAEA, all the proposed concepts are discussed, thoroughly, with initiators of the concepts, the ARASIA focal person at the IAEA and the Technical Officers of concern. Remarks by the IAEA staff are, as appropriate, taken into consideration and the final version of the concepts are uploaded on the IAEA's PCMF platform by the ARASIA Secretariat. During the ARASIA

meeting at the margin of the IAEA GC, IAEA relevant staff including technical officers shares their views directly with the meeting participants. After the formal review of the IAEA, a feedback note is sent to the ARASIA Chair. The note is shared with the ARASIA States Party and requested to comment. The initiators of the concepts are expected to start the project formulation and a draft is submitted to ARASIA Secretariat. During the regional meeting a final prioritization to the projects is made. The ARASIA Secretariat uploads draft project designs into PCMF platform. During the year 2 regional meeting, ARASIA States Party are requested to assign National Coordinators (NC) for each TC project and among of which a Project Lead Coordinator (PLC) is selected who is tasked to coordinate activities among the national coordinators and acts as a resource person as well.

3.2 Implementation

Like all other regional projects, implementation of any approved ARASIA TC projects commences with outset of the first year of the concerned TC Cycle. Project coordination meeting is the main mechanism through which progress is reported and update to the workplan is exercised. The Lead Coordinator of every TC project plays a good role in the implementation of the project.

The ARASIA website has also a new role now to play through the interactive platform established for the counterparts under each TC project page to exchange views and information with regards to project implementation issues.

3.3 Progress Review and Monitoring

A progress review and monitoring of the project implementation is done against the workplan and the identified objectives of the project. This process is clearly apparent through reporting twice a year to the Board of Representative through routine agenda items:

- Implementation Review Report for the period January- September.
- The Annual Report.

Under each of these items complete details are submitted to the Board for its consideration and recommendation.

3.4 Success Stories

ARASIA is considered a new agreement in comparison with the other sister regional agreements under IAEA.

ARASIA has completed a number of TC projects that are expected to result produce tangible socio-economic impact in the participating States Party. For example, the TC project on Supporting Strategic Planning to Meet Future Energy Needs in ARASIA States Party that has been running for more than three TC cycles would highlight strategic national energy scenarios that will help the decision makers in the participating authorities for future energy planning at the national and regional levels.

RAS/6/054 on Upgrading Medical Physics Services in ARASIA State Parties Through Education and Training is another success story as an MSc programme in medical physics has been established at the University of Jordan for the region. In the same line, a document titled "*ARASIA Residency for Medical Physicists in Radiation Oncology*" which is an integrated part of a structured, supervised clinical training programme for medical physicists working in radiation oncology.

Better implementation rate of ARASIA TC programme has been noticed in the recent years, which is another indication of the success of the Agreement.

4. Regional Resource Centres

A number of regional resource centres are being used to conduct regional training courses. However, there is no as of yet formal designation for these facilities even though some were previously identified as RRC for IAEA within ASIA and Pacific in the fields of NORM, medical sciences, NDT and INIS.

On the other hand, the "Efficient use of regional experts and resources in addressing regional needs" is set in the ARASIA Medium Term Strategy 2008-2012 as Performance Indicators to assess the success in implementing the ARASIA Programme. In other words, the designation of Regional Resources Centres in ARASIA is a high potential and a noticeable infrastructures have been developed in the ARASIA region in various fields.

4.1 Criteria

Not Applicable

4.2 Usage

Not Applicable

5. Regional Profiles and Strategies

ARASIA Board of Representatives adopted two important documents:

- The ARASIA Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013 and
- The Guidelines and Operating Rules for ARASIA Programme.

The ARASIA Guidelines and Operating Rules set out the roles and responsibilities of the various function holders and describe the conduct of meeting and the initiative and approval of projects.

ARASIA Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013 (MTS)- approved in 2008- consists of 3 major sections that deal with ARASIA Strategic Plan Context, Strategic Directions and Performance Indicators. Each section includes sub sections that come through each title thoroughly.

The process of drafting "ARASIA PROGRAMME PROFILE FOR 2012-2017" has started in 2010. The first draft was considered at the 2010 ARASIA meeting at the margin of the General Conference. The final draft will be before the 2011 Regional Meeting of the Board for adoption.

6. Any Other Relevant Information

The Atomic Energy Commission (AECS) of Syria has been taking charge of the Agreement Secretariat since its inception, as an in kind contribution. The website is also administered and empowered by AECS also as in kind contribution. The Agency does not provide full secretariat support. However, an IAEA focal person has been designated.