

Making the GRA work - a perspective from New Zealand as host of the GRA Secretariat

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Agriculture is essential for many economies and is a key contributor to growth and development. Increasing food production is central to food security. At the same time agriculture contributes 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions and this is projected to increase as global demand for food grows.

In many cases there is a direct correlation between increases in agricultural productivity, efficiency and resilience – all of which contribute to food security – and reducing emissions. Many countries are already investing in agricultural production and climate change research. The Global Research Alliance (GRA) seeks to leverage these efforts to make the best use of our collective resources, opening up a wide field for research and enabling better connections with policy-makers.

The GRA is focused on cooperation rather than obligations. The level of participation is up to each member and based on those areas of direct relevance to the member. But the GRA requires active engagement by members in order to be successful – the greater the level of engagement the greater the benefits. Collaborative partnerships are the other key to the success of the GRA. The GRA provides scientific knowledge and connection to experts in related fields across member countries, while transfer of GRA knowledge and new technologies is often enabled through partner connections and relationships.

The agricultural sector is a key component of the New Zealand economy and accounts for 50% of NZ's greenhouse gas emissions. As a country dependent on agriculture, increasing productivity sustainably is essential for New Zealand. The GRA has benefitted New Zealand by: enhancing NZ science capacity through international collaboration; creating stronger internal linkages between policy, science and end-users; and triggering wider bilateral cooperation.

As well as being an active member of the GRA, New Zealand hosts and funds the GRA Secretariat. In addition to providing administrative support to the many meetings of the GRA's Research Groups and Council, the Secretariat manages communications among members and externally to promote the GRA's achievements and profile. Current priorities of the GRA include development of a GRA Strategic Plan, enhancing the role of the Secretariat to allow for more proactive engagement, and strengthening partnerships and collaboration with other relevant international initiatives and organisations.
