

GRA Strategy 2026-2030 – Report of the Review Group

1. Introduction and background

The GRA Council has agreed to refresh the GRA Strategic Plan (SP) for the 2026-2030 period, including a review of Key Strategies and Objectives from the [previous Strategic Plan \(2021-2025\)](#) which has four focus areas: research collaboration, outreach exchange, partnerships, and Finance and resource.

To advance this work, the GRA Council established a working group, comprising of Council representatives to develop the new Strategic Plan.

The GRA Strategic Plan review had the following aims:

1. To undertake a review of actions supporting the 2021-2025 GRA Strategic Plan to measure the progress and impact of the GRA
2. To assess current capabilities and understand the gaps and future capability needs of the GRA members and partners.
3. Use the outcomes of (1) and (2) to inform the development of an updated GRA Strategic plan that will develop successful research collaborations and networks, improve coordination of activities across GRA members and partners and increase research investment through the GRA members and partners.

| Activities of the WG | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Working Group Meetings | 16 October 2024 13 November 2024 11 December 2024 15 January 2025 12 February 2025 |
| GRA Survey (open to all) | 11 November -17 January |
| Letter to Partners | Sent 14 February 2025 |
| Stocktake of relevant organisations | Completed by the WG, 10 February |
| Regional consultations with members | Asia/Pacific, 18 February LAC, 23 February Africa, 6 March |

2. Recommendations

| |
|---|
| <p>1. The GRA SP should focus on its USP and its core activities, namely around bringing together researchers at a global level to facilitate collaboration, knowledge and data sharing, and capacity and capability building.</p> |
| <p>2. The SP should continue with the four key areas of focus that are in the existing SP.</p> |
| <p>3. The SP should be expanded to include metrics or expressions of what success looks like at the end of the SP period. These should be set at an operational (activity) level and an outcome level, be done for the GRA overall, and not be linked with targets. Where feasible (e.g. where data is available), the Council could monitor progress on these metrics of success at its annual meeting.</p> |
| <p>4. There should be standing items on the agenda of the annual Council meeting around research priorities and the priorities for partnerships.</p> |
| <p>5. Consideration should be given as to whether the GRA needs to develop a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA). Given the voluntary nature of the GRA, this would likely have to be drafted at a relatively high level and may need to be a living document so that the Research Groups can use it to their benefit.</p> |
| <p>6. To improve translation of science to policy, the Council needs to become more active in this space. The work of the Research Groups, Networks and flagships should embed the preparation of policy briefs as standard practice (in addition to the regular outputs). As part of the GRA Communication Notes process, Advisory Groups (composed of the GRA members, partners and researchers) will be set up for each topic on which the Council decides to produce a communication note.</p> |
| <p>7. The Charter should be updated to bring it up to date with the functions and activities of the GRA as it exists today and into the next SP period (also noting the recommendations in the report of the review of the GRA structures pertaining to the Charter). A small working group, chaired by the GRA Council Chair, could be tasked with this exercise, with a view to bringing forward proposed amendments for approval at a Council meeting.</p> |
| <p>8. Consideration should be given to organising a meeting of Ministers of the GRA members. This could potentially be held on the margins of a future meeting of Agricultural Ministers at the FAO (where the GRA originated from and where the Charter was first signed), and sign off on an updated Charter, the new SP, an SRA, and possibly seek expressions of interest for participation in a funding mechanism. It would also bring an injection and renewal of political and governmental support for the GRA.</p> |

3. Main conclusions

1. The focus of the GRA should remain on research collaboration, knowledge sharing and information exchange, and capability and capacity building. This is its USP – no other initiative is set up to bring together the leading researchers globally in scientific areas under the heading of agricultural greenhouse gases.
2. The focus of the GRA should remain on mitigation of agricultural GHG emissions. While there were some that suggested more work on adaptation, this risk expanding the scope of the GRA to an extent that is not realistic given it is a voluntary alliance with no funding. Notwithstanding this, mitigation research that offers co-benefits for adaptation can be prioritised and the co-benefits highlighted
3. The GRA needs to improve its translation of science to better meet the needs of policy makers.
4. The four focus areas on the current SP continue to be relevant. However, metrics of success are needed.
5. While a plethora of initiatives and organisations have emerged since the GRA was established that work to a greater or lesser extent on agricultural greenhouse gases, none are carrying out the functions of the GRA. It is necessary for the GRA to monitor on an ongoing basis these other initiatives and decide which ones it should partner with. In taking a more focused approach, Council should consider which partnerships should be prioritised, considering factors such as alignment to the GRA Charter and Strategic Plan, regional collaboration, enabling science to policy dialogue, and leveraging funding to progress scientific activities of the GRA. This should be a standing item on the Council meeting agenda.
6. There is a need for the Council to give more direction to the Research Groups on areas of work, especially research priorities. This should be a standing item on the annual Council meeting agenda.
7. The GRA needs to consider whether it should develop a SRA. Other global research initiatives / partnerships have this at their core (e.g. [the Global Methane Hub's Enteric Methane Accelerator Research Agenda](#)), but the GRA has never developed one so how do we know what the researchers in the GRA are meant to be pursuing in a coordinated, strategic fashion. The preparation of such SRA would need to be cognisant of the type of activities the Research Groups and Networks could pursue which could be externally resourced.
8. Amendments to the Charter are required to bring it up to date with the functions and activities of the GRA as it exists today and into the next SP period.

Annex 1 - Feedback from consultations, survey, stocktake

Below are the key elements of feedback received from the consultations that took place.

- SP needs to consider the GRA Role, Relevance, Unique Selling Point, areas to focus on, Impact
- For Africa, target sub-regional research organisations.
- Global south - Asia, South America need to be brought in more.
- Focus on fewer more important areas with less key deliverables.
- Not having a funding mechanism can be a strength and a weakness – by not having to contribute funding, this makes the GRA more accessible, and this is an example of how it can be a strength. However, to achieve progress in certain scientific areas, funding is needed
- Need to be clear on what the end / success looks like and how to get there.
- Is the agreement that GRA continues or should it sunset?
- Need more focus on developing consortia from the RG's such as networks / flagships which can develop international proposals and apply for funding.
- Need GRA to generate important reviews, policy briefs, contribute to large global datasets.
- Active members
 1. Members who were active and are now less so
 2. Inactive members
 - Lot is down to individuals involved
- Strength of GRA: Connection with Research community
- Weakness of GRA: Lack of connection with government policy.
- These two groups have different expectations of GRA
- Core of the SP should be the high-level direction and future actions
- Go back to basics, back to the charter – is the Charter still relevant? Does it need editing? World very different place, much bigger focus on ag ghgs, new funding landscape – review charter on action in these?
- The strategy guides implementation of the charter
- Need metrics to measure achievement of each of the items in point 7 of the charter
- Should the chair be for a longer period than a year? – Would ensure more continuity and time to get things done.
- Engagement with other international initiatives needed to avoid duplication of effort.
- Strengthen capacity building at national level (cliffgrads?)
- Need to clearly explain rationale for changes to SP.
- Check if changes align with charter.
- Idea of a two-way dialogue between ministries and scientists. The former would express priorities, the latter would give science advice for policy.
- Create policy briefs to improve the integration of research into policy
- Ask Members what the ag ghg policy and science priorities are – might then lead the way to funders coming together under GRA
- GRA not well known in Central/ South America – Need universities more involved.

Survey

- Respondents identified strategic communication, sustainable financing, and clearly defined goals and expectations as critical for a successful council, research group, or network
- In addition to communication and funding, respondents highlighted the importance of leadership and engaging governments at the appropriate level to secure sustainable funding.
- Beyond these foundational elements, several highlighted the role of measurable indicators and regular evaluation of activities, with one respondent stating that “KPIs are needed” to track progress effectively
- GRA Members and Partners agree that the GRA has made significant progress in achieving its objectives. When reflecting on the GRA's accomplishments, respondents expressed strong agreement on several key areas including building global expertise, supporting the development of early-career scientists, encouraging openly accessible research results, and developing collaborations to enhance the capability of Members.
- However, respondents were less confident about the GRA's influence on policy development and practices. Additionally, there were concerns about the GRA's financial resources
- The GRA is widely recognized as a valuable platform for global collaboration and networking, yet challenges in engagement and participation reveal an uneven distribution of benefits. While its global reach is a strength, financial constraints limit full participation and impact, particularly for developing countries
- Members and partners indicated a strong emphasis on research collaboration, followed by knowledge sharing and information exchange and capability and capacity building. Other key areas include facilitating partnerships with other initiatives and organisations and access to expertise, while leveraging finances ranked the lowest

FAO

- Address residual agri GHG emissions within long term strategies for 2050
- Address mitigation and adaptation
- Align research activities with global initiatives such as Global Methane Pledge, FAO Action on Reducing Methane
- Would welcome GRA input into the FAO Nationally Determined Contribution Expert Tool, Adaptation, Biodiversity and Carbon Mapping Tool, FAST Partnership, etc

Stocktake

- 16 initiatives/organisations were examined¹. Some are partners of the GRA, while others have links to GRA through specific projects. General observations drawn are that there are a range of regional or global initiatives working in the science to policy

¹ Climate and Clean Air Coalition, Global Methane Hub, FAO FAST, AIM4C, CGIAR. FAO, Global Agenda on Sustainable Livestock, IPCC, FACCE-JPI, Global Dairy Platform, Greener Cattle Initiative, FONTAGRO, SEARCA, Forum for Ag Research Africa, Asian Development Bank, World Bank

space around agricultural GHGs, there are others who are working on funding, and while there may be some overlap with GRA, it is not considered significant. However, if the GRA were to substantially expand its activities into these spaces, then the potential for overlap would increase. There doesn't appear to be another organisation that does what the GRA currently does.