Enabling international research collaboration:

New Zealand’s experience with the Global Research Alliance (GRA)
Outline of presentation

• Background on the GRA
• What’s worked well and why?
• Challenges
• Current priorities / next steps
GRA Background

- Launched in December 2009, first Council meeting in 2011
- Brings countries together to find ways to grow more food without growing greenhouse gas emissions (i.e. emissions intensity goal):
  - Improve understanding, measurement & estimation of agricultural emissions
  - Find ways to reduce emissions intensity of agricultural production systems and increase potential for soil carbon sequestration, while increasing productivity and enhancing food security
  - Improve farmer access to agricultural mitigation technologies & best practices
- Membership is voluntary with no funding obligations
- Enable activities that would not have happened without the GRA
- 46 member countries and growing – more relevant now than ever
46 Member Countries

- Argentina
- Australia
- Belgium
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Denmark
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Honduras
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Ireland
- Japan
- Korea
- Lithuania
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Poland
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Uruguay
- Vietnam
Still some gaps to fill
GRA Structure

- Governed by the GRA Council
  - Chaired by different countries on a rotating basis
- Work is undertaken by:
  - Three Research Groups
  - One Cross-cutting Group
- Guided by a Charter
- Supported by a Secretariat
  - Hosted by New Zealand
  - Very “light touch”
Cooperation rather than obligation

- No joining fee or membership fee
- No mandatory reporting requirements
- No mandatory funding requirements (but many members have)
- Level of participation is up to each member and based on those areas of direct relevance to the member
- Only countries can join the GRA but individuals can sign up to the technical networks
- BUT – Alliance requires active engagement by members
- Greater engagement = greater benefits
GRA Partner organisations
Collaborative Partnerships

• Coordination of activities and research to benefit international partner organizations and the GRA

• GRA provides scientific knowledge, and connection to experts in related fields across member countries

• Transfer of GRA knowledge and new technologies through partner connections and relationships
Success factors

- Inherent logic based on need for global solutions to a global problem
- Strong initial agreement on what needed to be done and strong Research Group leadership leading to early wins
- Voluntary commitments based around national priorities
- Makes use of existing research and in-kind contributions while looking for new ways of enabling and funding international research collaboration
- Provides opportunities at all levels of knowledge
  - Capacity building workshops, research fellowships
- Member led Research Groups and work-plans
- Connects government and scientists and farmers
Lessons along the way

- Strong conceptual framework is essential from outset – the GRA Charter
- Link between policy and research at national level critical – mainstreaming the GRA within domestic programmes
- What members put in largely dictates what they get out – can’t be passive
- Importance of communicating the right message to get buy-in
- Managing political issues takes time and slows things down but don’t ignore
Challenges

• Resourcing issues:
  – Funding and capacity to take projects to scale
  – Funding for participation of developing countries
  – Dedicated resourcing by members

• Reaching the end user i.e. farmers – requires strong partnerships

• Easy to launch – it’s staying afloat that is the hard part

• Communication – GRA at risk of being “a well kept secret”

• Navigating politics of climate change (but this is looking easier post COP21)
Current GRA priorities

- Enhancing the role of the Secretariat
- Communicating the productivity story
- International Research Consortium idea based on European models
- Strengthening partnerships and building linkages with other international initiatives
- Continuing international capacity building – improving basic measurement and productivity
How has the GRA benefitted New Zealand?

- Enhanced NZ science capacity through international collaboration
- Stronger internal linkages between policy, science and end-users
- Trigger for wider regional and bilateral cooperation
- Part of NZ’s international contribution to addressing climate change
- Strengthened multilateral influence
THANK-YOU

Global Research Alliance

http://www.globalresearchalliance.org/