

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: CSIRO

DEST Question No. E583_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Can you please provide an update on CSIRO's involvement with the Global Research Alliance?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Global Research Alliance – CSIRO's involvement

The Global Research Alliance (GRA) was established in April 2002 and consists of nine CSIRO 'sister' organisations across the world: -

- Battelle, USA
- CSIR, India
- CSIR South Africa (current hosts of GRA Nerve Centre)
- DTI, Danish Technological Institute, Denmark
- Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Germany
- SIRIM Berhad, Malaysia
- TNO, Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, Netherlands
- VTT, Technical Research Centre of Finland, Finland

The Guiding Principles of the GRA, in the context of the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals, were defined as follows:

- Undertaking large-impact projects for the benefit of society
- Creating synergy by pooling the energies, skills and facilities of participants
- Promoting projects with high innovative content
- Developing global knowledge networks for industry and industrial sectors to enhance their competitiveness

The five focal areas for GRA are water, energy, health, digital futures, and transportation. CSIRO is involved in all focal areas except transportation.

CSIRO's membership of the GRA forms part of our Global Development strategy, being aligned with our 03/07 Strategic Plan objective to "partner with other agencies to advance Australia's global development contributions." This strategy focuses on creating high impact solutions aimed at the most pressing global problems, through the formation of partnerships and highlighting the contribution of Australian science. It is CSIRO's objective when working through the GRA, to take on projects, which have a benefit to Australia by:

- o sharing and development of knowledge relevant to Australia's environment
- o enhancing Australia's capacity to meet large and complex problems by developing partnerships with institutions having synergistic capability
- o enhancing regional security through promotion of international well being; helping to meet Australia's humanitarian obligations

- aim is zero net cost recognising that to set up the infrastructure and reputation to achieve these goals through the GRA will require a timeframe of between 3 to 5 years.

To date CSIRO's involvement in the GRA has included:-

1. Participation in annual Principals' meetings (Chief Executive and/or Dr Vijoleta Braach-Maksvytis, Director CSIRO Global Development)
2. CSIRO Chaired the GRA Water Action Council, formed after the GRA experts' Technology Fusion Workshop hosted by CSIRO in Sydney March 2003. The Hon Peter McGauran, the then Minister for Science, opened the workshop. Dr Rob Vertessy (Chief, CSIRO Land and Water) is the present Chairman.
3. One CSIRO person elected as Theme leader within each of the focal areas of water, energy, health, and digital futures, respectively: - Dr Colin Chartres (CSIRO Land and Water); Dr Glen Currie (CSIRO Energy Technology); Dr Graeme Woodrow (Chief CSIRO Health Sciences and Nutrition), and Dr Dean Hargreaves (CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems).
4. Key contributor in 2004 to the GRA "Strategic Context and Operational Guidelines", which provides the operational framework for collaboration between members.
5. Leading the GRA's first successful bid in 2003, namely the project on "ASEAN Water Strategic Plan of Action" with four Asian countries, involving CSIRO and CSIR S.Africa.
6. Leading the scientific component of GRA's second successful bid in 2004, an Assessment for the World Bank/GEF of its Solar Thermal Market Development Strategy in four countries.
7. Indigenous Knowledge Workshop, a collaboration between the GRA and the World Bank held in S Africa 2005, saw 3 CSIRO contributors who worked with leaders of the local aboriginal community to establish networks through this group
8. CSIRO acting as host for the 4th GRA Principals' Meeting in Melbourne at the end of February 2005. The meeting was attended by all 9 member institutions, and opened by the Victorian Treasurer John Brumby, and Chair, House of Representatives Science and Innovation Committee, Mr Petro Georgiou MP.
9. Dr Geoff Garrett (CSIRO Chief Executive) has been elected in February 2005 on to the four-person Executive Committee of the GRA.