

The European Climate Research Alliance (ECRA): Collaboration from bottom-up

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The European Climate Research Alliance (ECRA) is an association of leading European research institutions in the field of climate research (www.ecra-climate.eu). ECRA is a bottom-up initiative and helps to facilitate the development of climate change research, combining the capacities of national research institutions, and sharing existing national research initiatives, projects and infrastructures. ECRA works as an open platform to bring together climate researchers, providing excellent scientific expertise for policy and societal relevance.

Organized into four Collaborative Programmes (CPs), climate scientists share their knowledge, experience and expertise to extract the most important research requirements for the future, thus developing a foresight approach. The CPs cover the topics: (1) Arctic variability and change, (2) Sea level changes and coastal impacts, (3) Changes in the hydrological cycle and (4) High impact events. The CP activities are planned in workshops and participation is open to all interested scientists from the relevant research fields. In particular, young researchers should be engaged to join the network. Each Collaborative Programme presents a strategy to set joint research priorities for European research in the future. The four CPs also interact with each other, because scientific themes are interconnected, through the organization of common workshops or joint applications.

The different formats of ECRA meetings range from scientific workshops to briefing events and side events at conferences to involve different groups of interests. This facilitates the interaction of scientists, various stakeholder groups and politicians. A biannual open ECRA General Assembly that is organised in Brussels, represents an umbrella event and acts as a platform for discussion. This event is an excellent opportunity to jointly discuss about research priorities which are of high societal relevance.