EUA WORKSHOP SERIES: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

National perspectives on reforming research assessment

Stephane Berghmans, Rita Morais, Vinciane Gaillard

Organised by the Italian Rectors´ Conference (CRUI) and EUA
14 November 2022

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Outline

Introduction

The Agreement and CoARA

What is in it for universities and research institutes?

Closing remarks

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International context

DORA

About Meetings Community Engagement Grants Contact

The Declaration Signers Project TARA News and Resources Sign DORA

22,081 individuals and organizations in 159 countries have signed DORA to date.

LEIDEN MANIFESTO FOR RESEARCH METRICS

Home Video version Translations Blog

10 principles to guide research evaluation with 25 translations, a video and a blog

PLOS BIOLOGY

OPEN ACCESS

ESSAY

The Hong Kong Principles for assessing researchers: Fostering research integrity

David Moher, Lex Bouter, Sabine Kleinert, Paul Glasziou, Mai Har Sham, Virginia Barbour, Anne-Marie Coriat, Nicole Foeger, Ulrich Dirnagl

Published: July 16, 2020 • https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000737

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Abstract

Introduction

Principles

Abstract

For knowledge to benefit research and society, it must be trustworthy. Trustworthy research is robust, rigorous, and transparent at all stages of design, execution, and reporting. Assessment

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ELSEVIER

Research Policy

Volume 46, Issue 4, May 2017, Pages 868-879

Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students

Katia Levecque [a, b], Frederik Anseel [a, b, c], Alain De Beuckelaer [d, e, a], Johan Van der Heyden [f, g], Lydia Gisle [f]

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceived publication pressure in Amsterdam: Survey of all disciplinary fields and academic ranks

Tamarinde L. Haven[1]*, Lex M. Bouter[1,2], Yvo M. Smulders[3], Joeri K. Tijdink[1,4]

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Abstract

Publications determine to a large extent the possibility to stay in academia ("publish or perish"). While some pressure to publish may incentivise high quality research, too much publication pressure is likely to have detrimental effects on both the scientific enterprise and on

International context

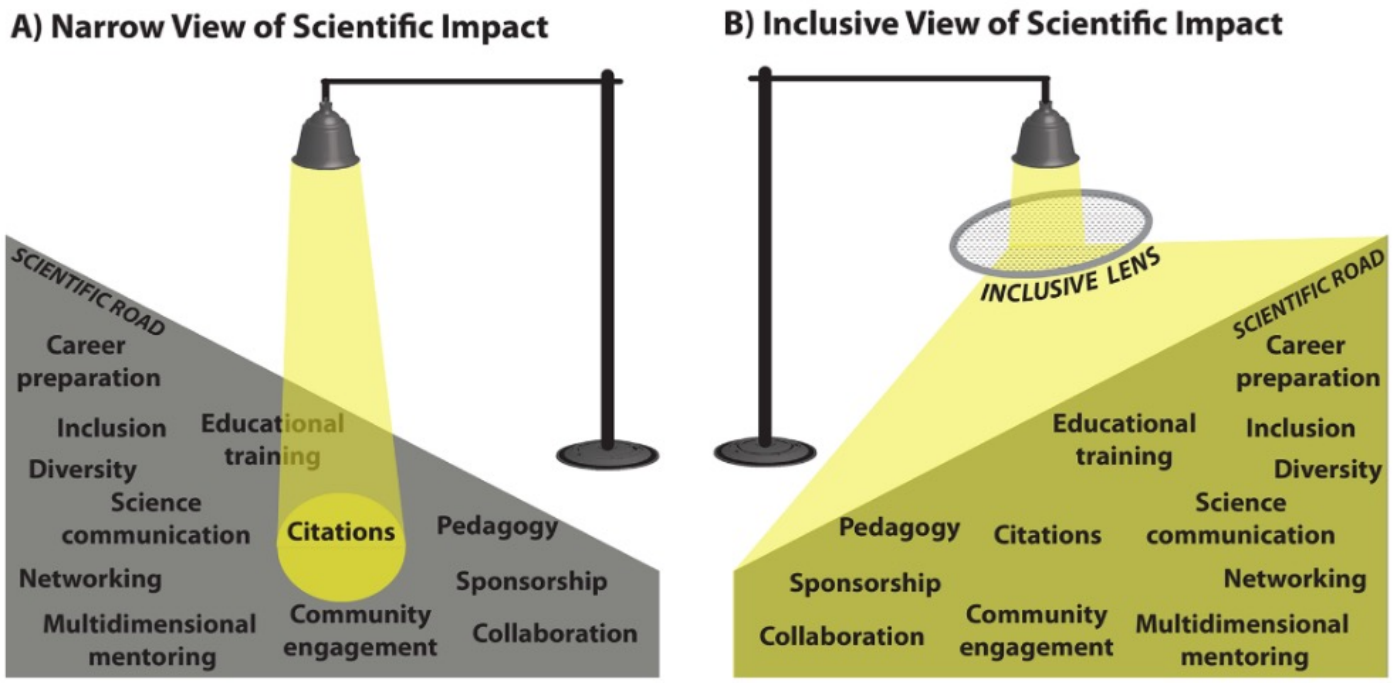
PLOS BIOLOGY

Promoting inclusive metrics of success and impact to dismantle a discriminatory reward system in science

Fig 1

Science is suffering from observational bias in our value system.

This bias is analogous to the streetlight effect where (A) citations are valued because that is where we look, despite the fact that they perpetuate gender and racial biases as metrics of success. We advocate for (B), an expanded view of success and impact that is multifaceted and includes critical areas of mentorship, inclusion, and diversity.



doi: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001282.g001

ESSAY

Promoting inclusive metrics of success and impact to dismantle a discriminatory reward system in science

Sarah W. Davies[1☯*], Hollie M. Putnam[2☯*], Tracy Ainsworth[3], Julia K. Baum[4], Colleen B. Bove[1], Sarah C. Crosby[5], Isabelle M. Côté[6], Anne Duplouy[7], Robinson W. Fulweiler[8], Alyssa J. Griffin[9], Torrance C. Hanley[10], Tessa Hill[11], Adriana Humanes[12], Sangeeta Mangubhai[13], Anna Metaxas[14], Laura M. Parker[3], Hanny E. Rivera[1], Nyssa J. Silbiger[15], Nicola S. Smith[16], Ana K. Spalding[17,18], Nikki Traylor-Knowles[19], Brooke L. Weigel[20], Rachel M. Wright[21], Amanda E. Bates[22*]

1 Department of Biology, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, **2** Department of Biological Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island, United States of America, **3** School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, **4** Department of Biology, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, **5** Harbor Watch, Earthplace, Inc., Westport, Connecticut, United States of America, **6** Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, **7** The University of Helsinki, Organismal and Evolutionary Biology Research Program, Helsinki, Finland, **8** Department of Earth and Environment & Department of Biology, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, **9** Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences & Bodega Marine Laboratory, University of California, Davis, California, United States of America, **10** Marine Science Center, Northeastern University, Nahant, Massachusetts, United States of America, **11** Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences & Bodega Marine Laboratory, University of California, Davis, California, United States of America, **12** School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, **13** Wildlife Conservation Society, Fiji Country Program, Suva, Fiji, **14** Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, **15** Department of Biology, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, California, United States of America, **16** Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, **17** School of Public Policy, College of Liberal Arts, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, United States of America, **18** Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama City, Panama, **19** University of Miami, Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Miami, Florida, United States of America, **20** Committee on Evolutionary Biology, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States of America, **21** Department of Biological Sciences, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, United States of America, **22** Department of Ocean Sciences, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, New Foundland, Canada

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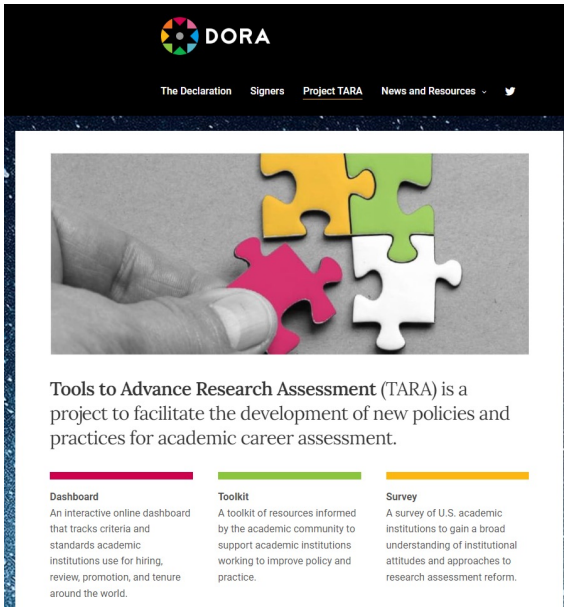
Abstract

Success and impact metrics in science are based on a system that perpetuates sexist and racist "rewards" by prioritizing citations and impact factors. These metrics are flawed and biased against already marginalized groups and fail to accurately capture the breadth of individuals' meaningful scientific impacts. We advocate shifting this outdated value system to advance science through principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We outline pathways for a paradigm shift in scientific values based on multidimensional mentorship and promoting mentee well-being. These actions will require collective efforts supported by academic leaders and administrators to drive essential systemic change.

Change is happening



[Link Report]

[Link Repository]

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EU policy context

December 2020

Council Conclusions on the new ERA (Dec 2020) and on research careers (May 2021)

Invited MS, RFOs, RPOs and the EC to work together towards a revised system for research assessment and strengthen European coordination.

February 2022

Paris Call on Research Assessment

Calls for the creation of a coalition if RFOs, RPOs and assessment authorities

June 2022

Council Conclusions on research assessment and implementation of Open Science

Highlights the need to advance in a concerted effort towards reforming the various research assessment systems and practices for research, researchers, research teams and institutions to improve their quality, openness, performance and impact.

November 2021

Council Conclusions on "Future governance of the European Research Area (ERA)" incl. ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024

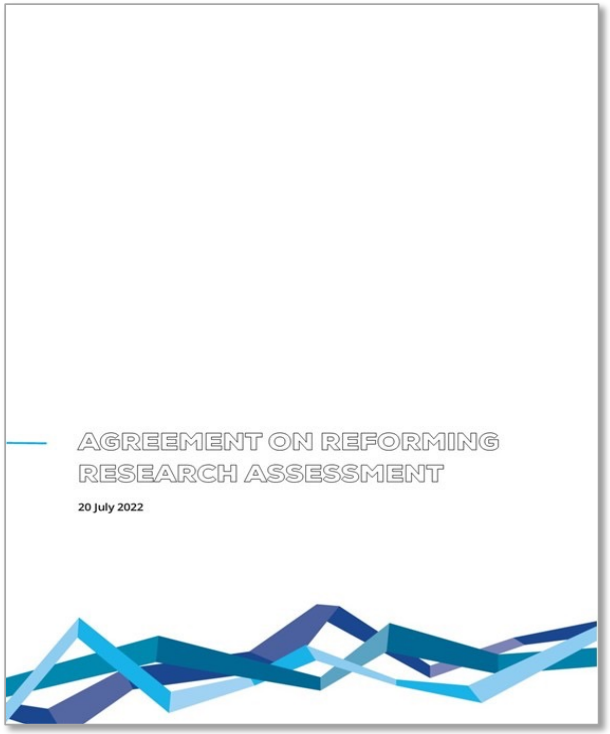
Include an action to advance towards the reform of the assessment system for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact.

2022

ERA Forum for Transition

Broad commitment from MS to include ERA Action 3 "Advance towards the reform of the Assessment System for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact" in the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024.

PUBLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON 20 JULY



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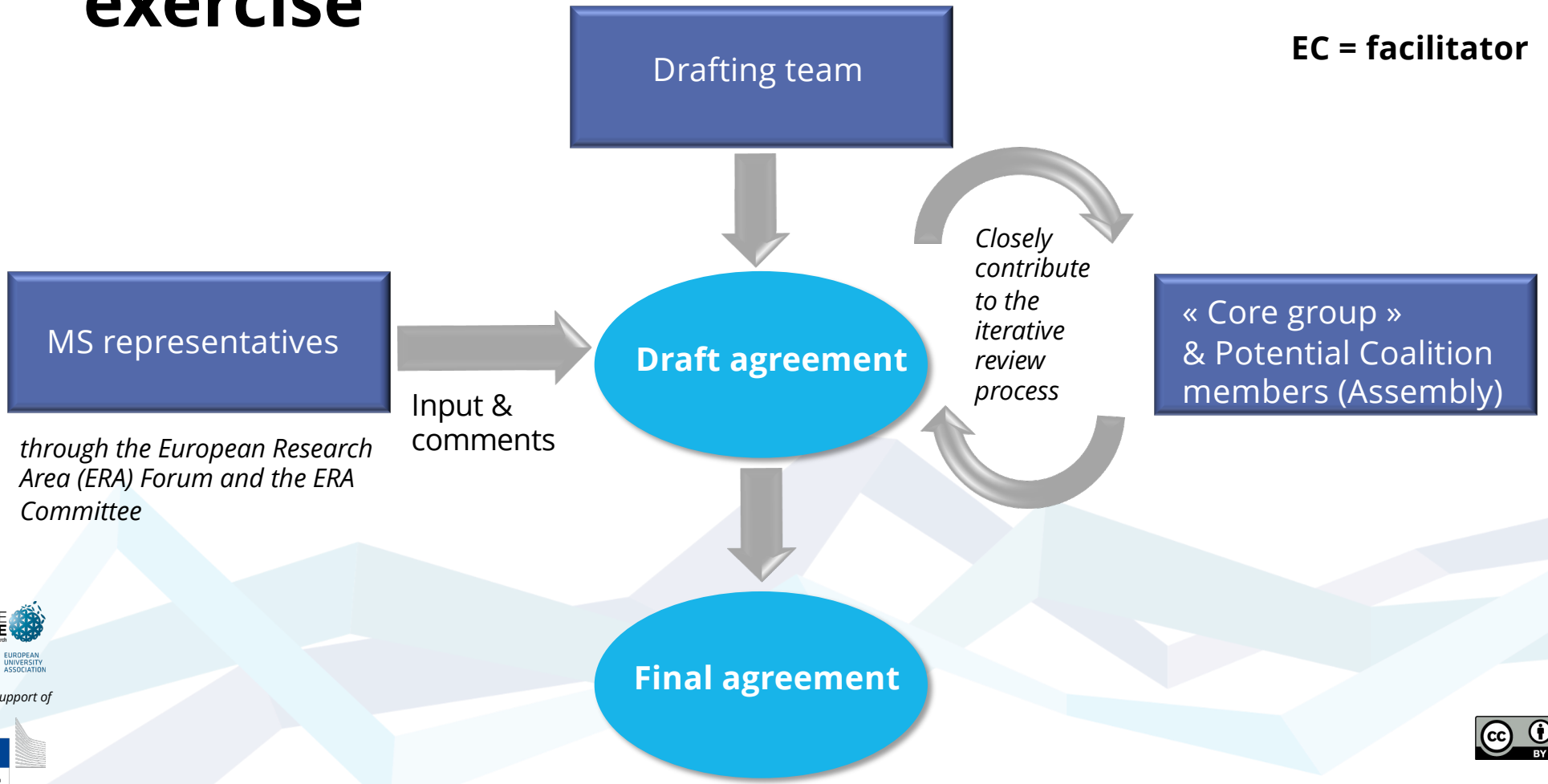
Drafting an Agreement, a co-creation exercise

EC = facilitator



through the European Research Area (ERA) Forum and the ERA Committee

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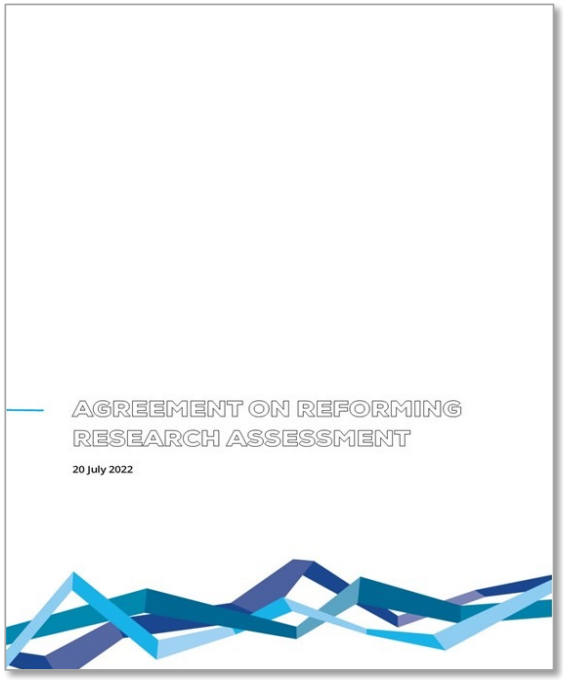
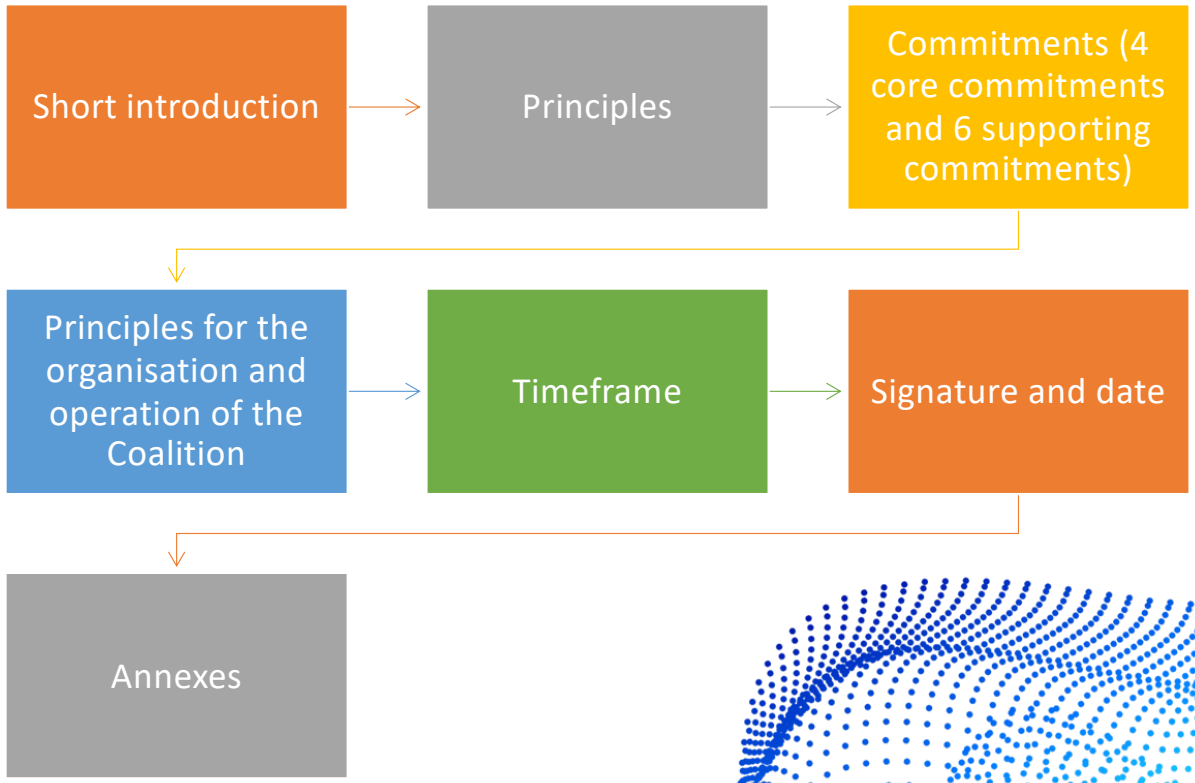


https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/



CoARA

Introduction

As signatories of this Agreement, we agree on the need for reform of research assessment practices.

Vision: The assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. […]

Scope: RPOs and research units, research projects, individual researchers and research teams. […]

This Agreement establishes a **common direction** for research assessment reform practices, while respecting organisations' **autonomy**.

We commit to realise reform through a **coalition** of RFOs, RPOs, national/regional assessment authorities and agencies, as well as associations of the above organisations, learned societies and other relevant organisations, that is **global in scope**.

We will **work together** to enable **systemic reform** on the basis of **common principles** within an **agreed timeframe**, and to facilitate **exchanges of information and mutual learning** between all those willing to improve research assessment practices.

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Core commitments

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment

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Supporting commitments (1)

5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes

6.1 Criteria for units and institutions

With the direct involvement of research organisations and researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria for assessing research units and research performing organisations, while promoting interoperability

6.2 Criteria for projects and researchers

With the direct involvement of researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria, tools and processes for the assessment of research projects, research teams and researchers that are adapted to their context of application

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Supporting commitments (2)

7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition
9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments
10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research

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Timeframe

Year 0 (2022)

Signature

Year 1 (2023)

Start the process of reviewing or developing criteria, tools and processes

Year 5 (2027)

At least one cycle of review and development of own assessment criteria, tools and processes

NB: Organisations can sign the Agreement at any point in time beyond 2022. The timeline for organisations signing after 2022 will be adjusted accordingly.

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Annexes

- Do not form an integral part of the Agreement.
- Annex 1 outlines the need for reform.
- Annex 2 clarifies the terminology used.
- Annex 3 suggests a reform journey.
- Annex 4 provides an initial toolbox.

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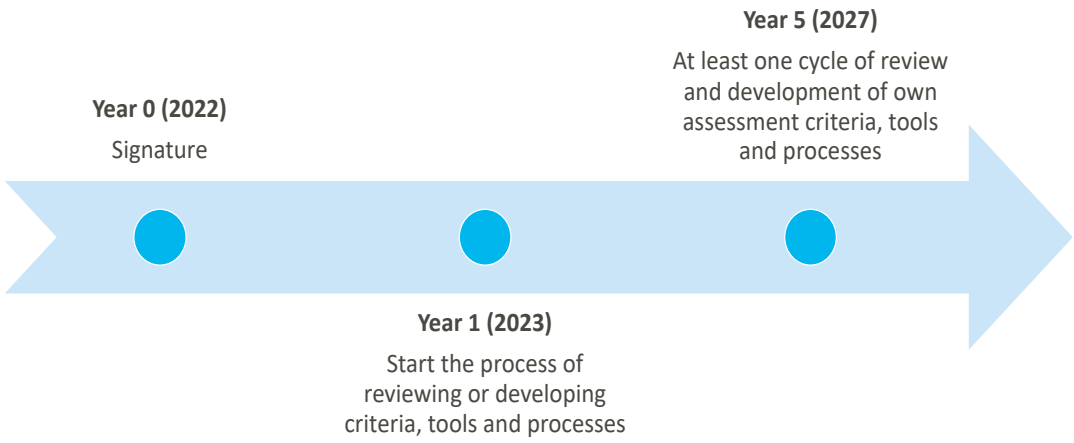
Signing the agreement

What does it mean for my institution? (1)



- Concrete steps and activities to be developed in Year 1 and up to Year 5 will be decided by each institution.
- Each institution will develop its own path in the implementation of the Agreement.
- No benchmarking with other institutions.

Participants will keep full control on the steps they make to implement the Agreement and the speed of their reform journey, which can vary from one organisation to another depending on many factors (…)

Organisations commit to share information on the progress made and lessons learnt in their reform journey, according to the timeframe included in the agreement. Sharing of information shall be done on the basis of ***self-assessment*** *and* ***by no means the progress of individual organisations will be validated by the Coalition.***

(cf. FAQ)

Signing the agreement
What does it mean for my institution? (2)

POSSIBILITY TO BECOME MEMBER OF COARA

RESOURCE ALLOCATION:

Commitment 5: Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to

Purpose: "This commitment will ensure that organisations allocate the necessary resources, whether in the form of budget or staff capacity, to improve research assessment practices within their agreed timeframe."

"Resources should be allocated as is needed for each organisation to achieve the changes that will enable adherence to the Principles and to implement the Commitments."

Each institution will be autonomous in deciding the type and amount of resources they will commit to implement the Agreement. There is no minimum requirement.

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Is this Agreement legally binding?

- Not legally binding, but…
- It is an Agreement, with clear commitments.
- Signing the Agreement is a precondition for joining the Coalition.
- Participation on a voluntary basis.
- Full autonomy of organisations, full control on the steps towards the implementation of the Agreement and the speed of the reform journey.
- More of a morally binding signature, towards peer organisations and own community.
- Organisations and their staff can leave the Coalition at any time.

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Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
Our vision is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.
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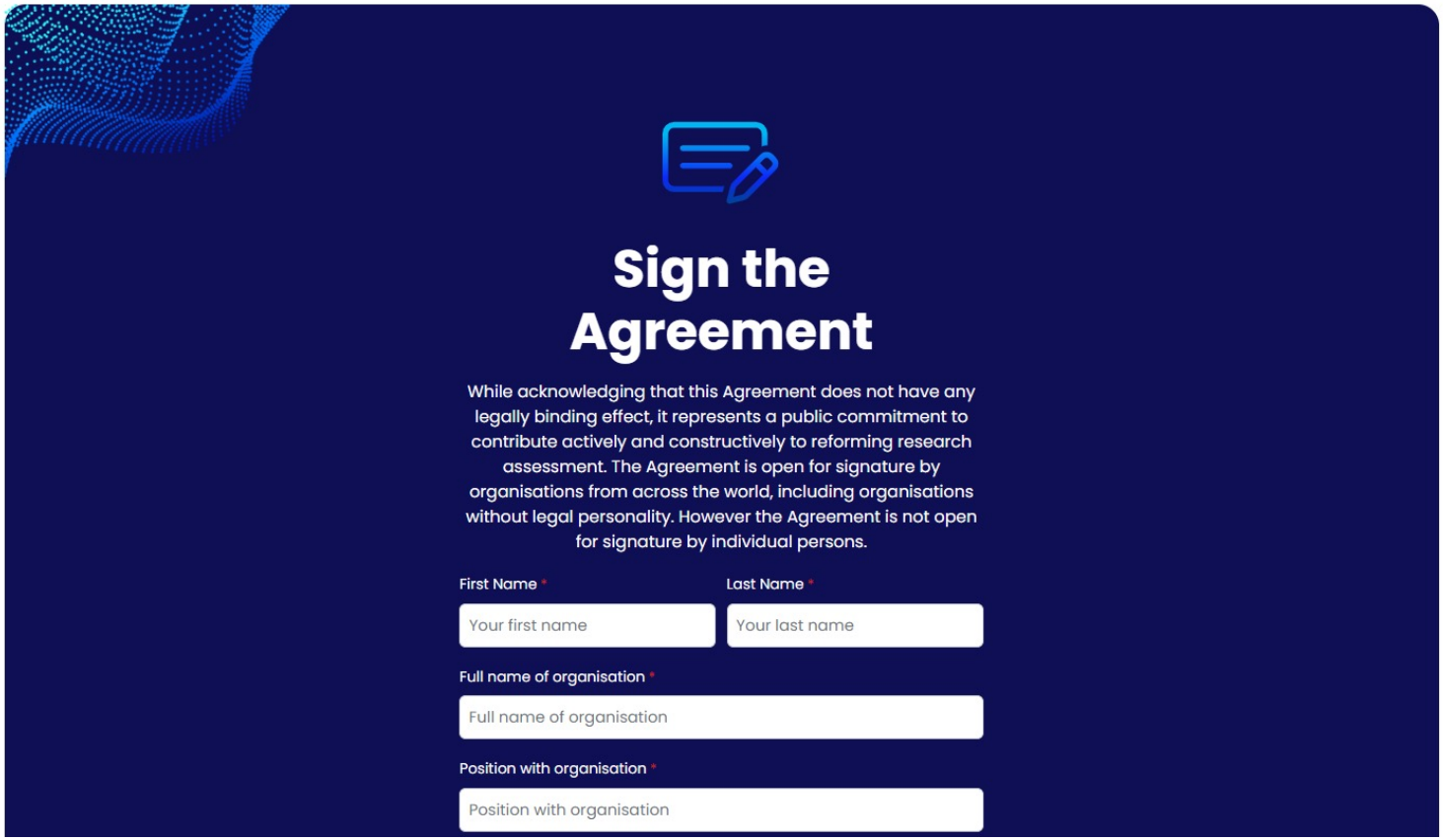

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CoARA

Universities needed to bring about change

It is crucial that universities are actively involved in the reform of research assessment

Universities should make an informed decision on this process

Universities should be properly represented in the future coalition and its governing bodies

Only a substantial number of universities joining the coalition will guarantee that the interests of the sector are taken into account in the reform process

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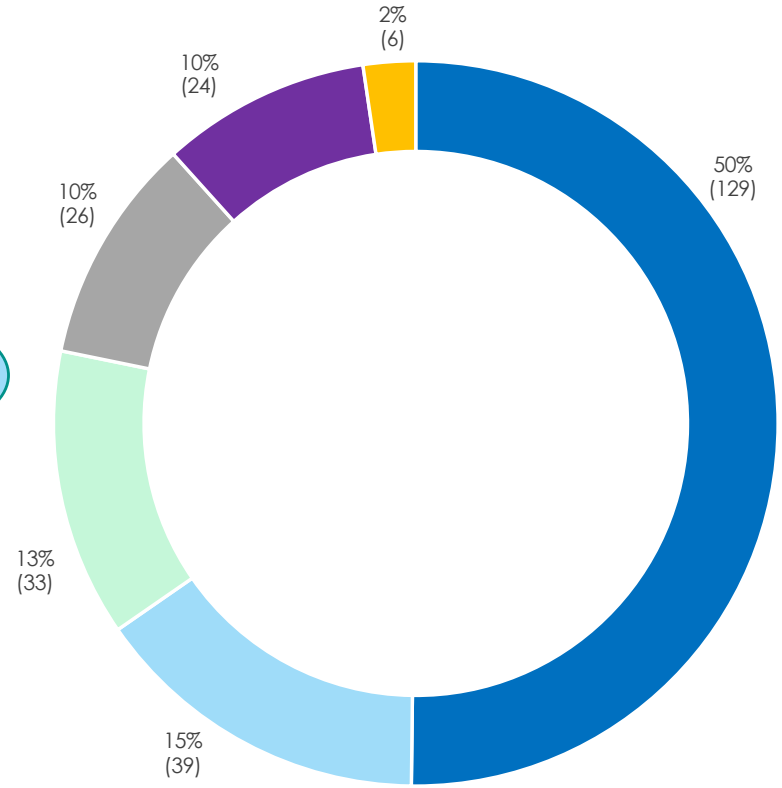
SIGNATORIES UPDATE

257 signatories



- Universities and their associations
- Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations
- Public or private research funding organisations and their associations
- Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers
- Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations
- National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations

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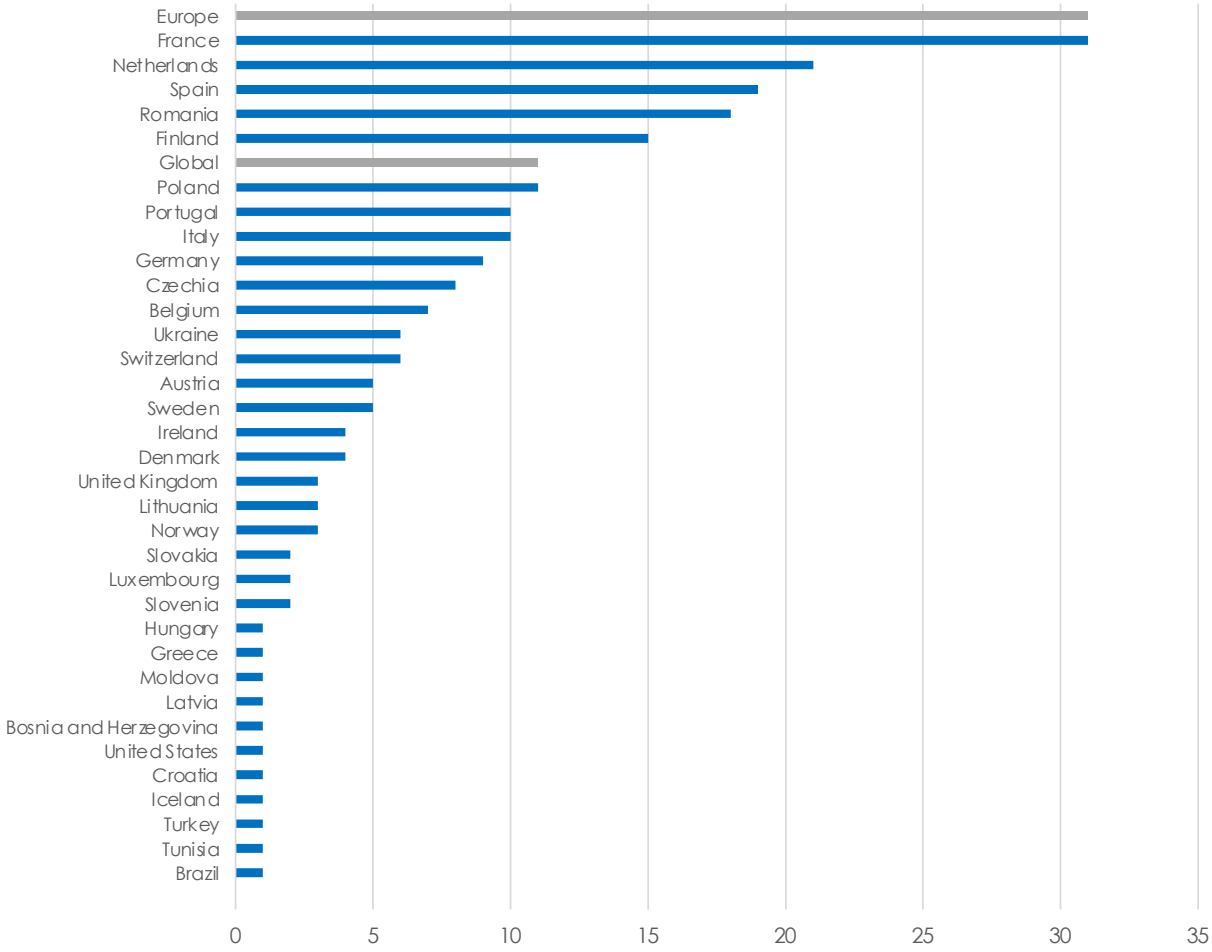
SIGNATORIES – COUNTRY DISTRIBUTION



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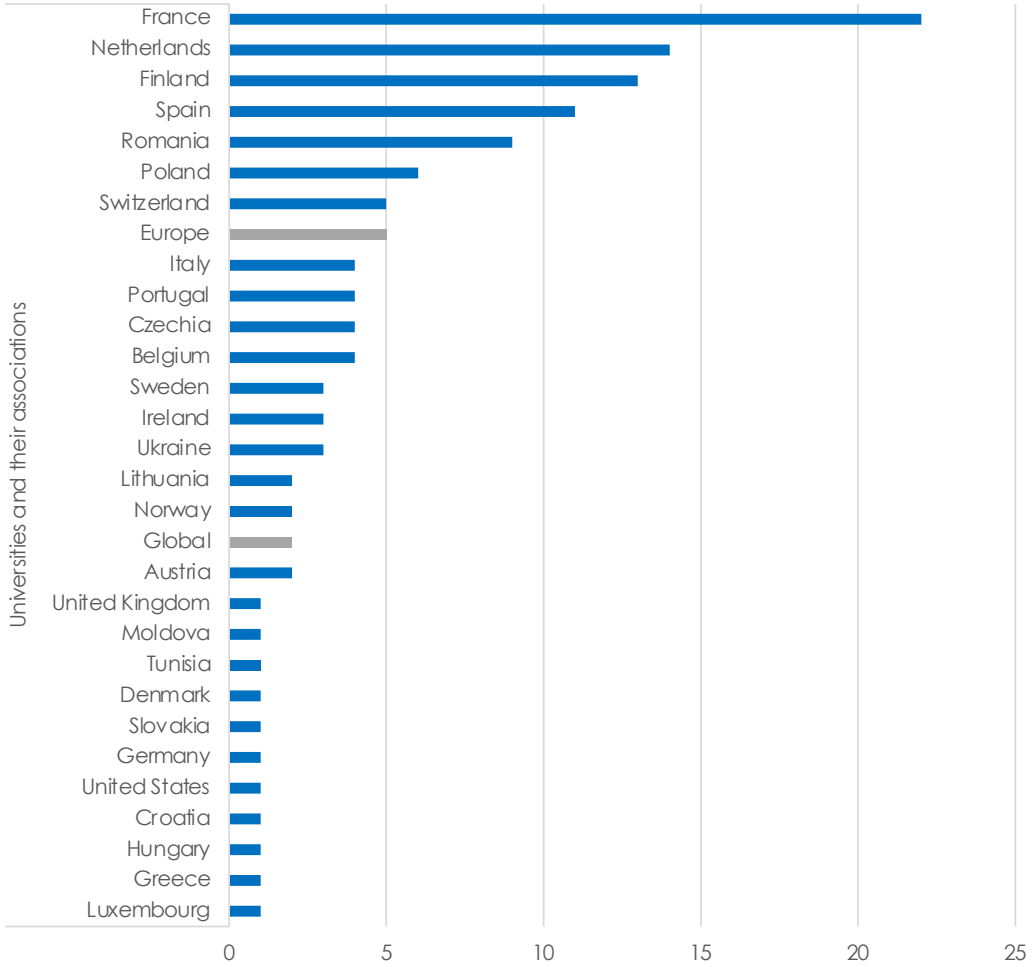
SIGNATORIES – UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

116 universities
6 NRCs
7 other univ networks
(129 in total)



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THE COALITION GOVERNANCE AND NEXT STEPS

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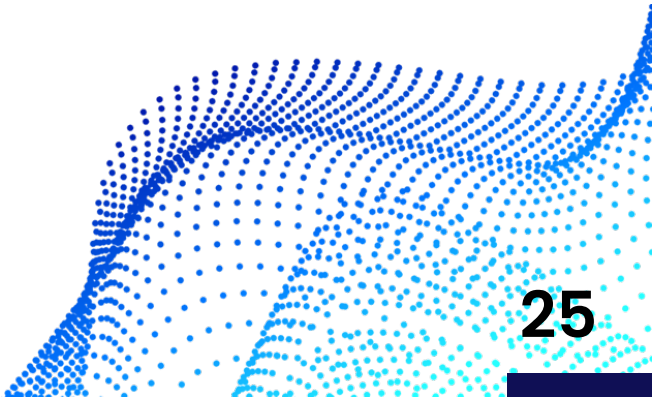

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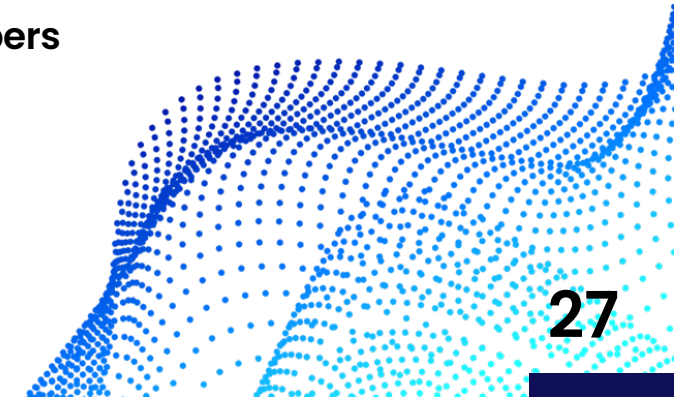
PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE CONDUCT AND EVOLUTION OF THE COALITION

- **Openness** – to signatories of agreement; globally; accessible outputs
- **Responsibility** – general assembly responsible for rules and procedures of operation
- **Collaboration and mutual support** – supportive environment; mutual learning and collaboration; also with other initiatives
- **Inspiration** – inspire organisations inside and outside the Coalition
- **Commitment and autonomy** – supports implementation of commitments; respect autonomy
- **Voluntary and community-driven** – volunteer members; driving force
- **Dialogue** - in research and academic communities and beyond; representation
- **Inclusiveness** – global; different levels of progress
- **Trust** – self-assessment shared publicly
- **Funding** – voluntary in-kind; potential cash contributions from members
- **Non-profit** – no commercial activities; open and re-usable outputs



DOCUMENTS ON GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION OF THE COALITION

- Governance Document - Describes the guiding principles of the Coalition, its structures, their powers, authority and responsibilities, and their relationship
- Rules of Procedure for Working Groups – Describes the conditions and procedures for the creation and management of Working Groups (WGs) within the Coalition
- Rules of Procedure for the Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board - Describes the processes governing the establishment and renewal of the Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board members of the Coalition
- Code of Conduct

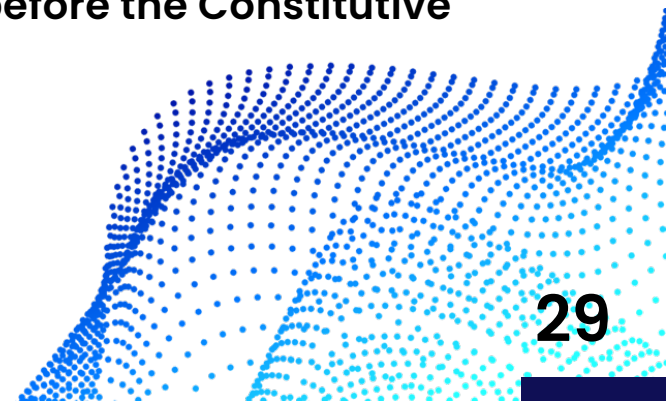
All documents available at coara.eu/resources/

Call for candidacies for SB, Chair and Vice-Chair(s) available

CoARA

MEMBERSHIP

- Organisations that have signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, and that are:
  - Universities, and their associations;
  - Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations;
  - Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers;
  - Public or private research funding organisations and their associations;
  - National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations; and
  - Other relevant not-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations.
- Membership approved by the Steering Board (Interim Chairs before the Constitutive Assembly)
- Members may leave the Coalition at any time



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COALITION BODIES

- **General Assembly of Members** - All Members. The organ representing all the members of the Coalition. The highest-level decision-making body, that meets at least once a year (at least three times during the first year)
- **Working Groups** – Voluntary participation. To exchange knowledge, learn mutually, discuss and investigate any topic to advance research assessment and help with the implementation of the Members commitments
- **Steering Board** – Elected. A collegial body, responsible for the overall oversight, strategy, business plan and sustainability of the Coalition. Taking decisions by mutual agreement
- **Coalition Secretariat** - Supports the administrative, managerial, logistical, communication, engagement, networking, outreach, leadership and other activities of the Coalition

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

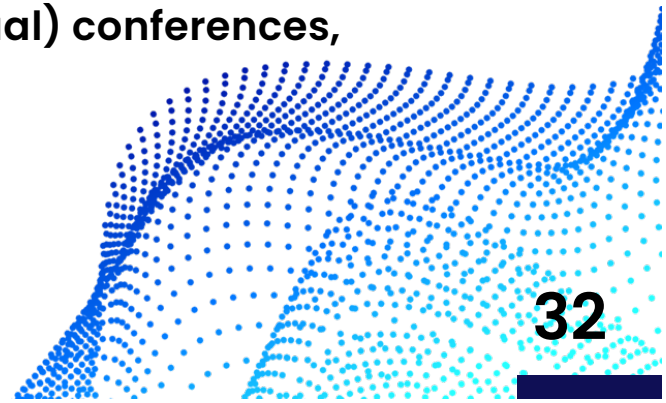
- As the highest-level decision-making body, the General Assembly will:
  - Approve the Governance and Rules of Procedure of the CoARA
  - Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair(s), and Steering Board members
  - Approve the annual work-plan and budget of the CoARA
  - Appoint the organisation(s) that host the Coalition Secretariat by simple majority vote
  - Approve the strategy guiding the operations and activities of the Coalition as a whole
  - Approve the strategy for the outreach (including at global level)
  - Approve the procedures and criteria for the establishment of the Working Groups, for their follow up and coordination, and for the endorsement and publication of their outputs

Signing the Agreement by 17 November 2022, will allow institutions to be invited to the Constitutive Assembly in early December.

CoARA

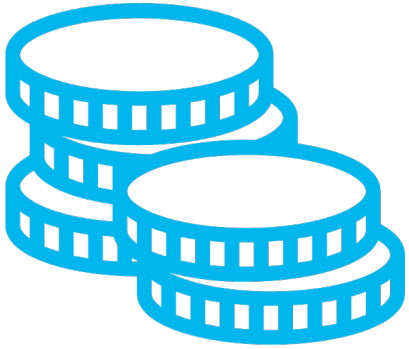
WORK OF THE COALITION

- **Working Groups operating as 'communities of practice' and offering space for mutual learning and collaboration. Examples:**
  - **"Interest communities", on ad-hoc horizontal topics**
  - **"Discipline communities", on approaches to tailor criteria and processes by discipline, inter-disciplinary field, thematic area**
  - **"Institution communities", on topics specific to a given type of organisation**
  - **"National communities", on issues specific to different types of organisations of a given country or group of countries**
- **Other complementary means like workshops, webinars, (annual) conferences, seminars, trainings, etc.**



A word on coalition funding

- *Support to the operation of the Coalition will consist primarily of* voluntary in-kind contributions *from its members, as well as* funding obtained from research funding organisations and/or cash contributions from members *(cf. FAQ).*
- Options for more detailed funding models are currently being prepared .
- Initial discussion on funding model for the coalition took place during the 4th Stakeholder Assembly.
- Specific options for funding models will be submitted for approval during the Constitutive Assembly.



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TIMELINE

- 20 July - Publication of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment
- 20 October - Publication on the CoARA website of finalised Governance Document, Rules of Procedure and Code of Conduct
- 20 October – Publication on the CoARA website of call for candidacies for Chair, Vice-Chairs and Steering Board members
- 17 November – Deadline for signature of the Agreement in order to be invited to participate in the Constitutive Assembly
- 17 November – Deadline for candidacies for Chair, Vice-Chairs and Steering Board members
- 24 November – Sharing of information on candidates, by the Interim Secretariat
- 1 December – Constitutive Assembly meeting (online), chaired by the Interim Chairs until the Chair is elected

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Thank you for your attention

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