

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)

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Topic: New models of research assessment

Type of initiative: Declaration / manifesto

Implementation scale: International

Responsible agents: Universities (governing bodies), Research managers

Location: Worldwide

Keywords: research assessment, governance, open knowledge, metrics

Start and end date: 2022 -

Sustainability: Active with documented continuity

Summary

International coalition of organizations committed to reforming research assessment methods and processes, structured around the *Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment* ([CoARA, 2022](#)), which establishes ten common commitments and a collaborative framework for their coordinated implementation.

Promoting organizations

The founding agreement was developed by the European Commission, Science Europe, and the European University Association (EUA). The coalition's secretariat is hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF), which coordinates its operations and manages the CoARA Boost project, funded by Horizon Europe.

Objectives

Prevailing research assessment systems have relied excessively on quantitative metrics linked to publication venues, such as the journal impact factor or citation counts, to evaluate the quality of scientific work and researchers' career trajectories. This approach has generated misaligned incentives, reduced the diversity of recognized activities, and hindered the assessment of the real impact of research beyond bibliometric output ([CoARA, 2022](#)).

CoARA seeks to promote a systemic reform of research assessment through the adoption of qualitative approaches supported by peer review, the responsible use of quantitative indicators, and the recognition of the diversity of research contributions, practices, and career paths ([CoARA, n.d.-a](#)). Among its core objectives are reducing the inappropriate use of journal-based metrics, integrating open science practices as valued elements in assessment, and incorporating collaboration, academic leadership, and knowledge transfer as relevant dimensions of research careers.

The coalition's main instrument is the *Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment*, published in July 2022, which establishes ten common commitments and a five-year implementation timeline ([CoARA, 2022](#)). Each signatory organization commits to developing an institutional action plan within one year of signing the agreement. Implementation is organized through thematic working groups and national chapters, which function as communities of practice for knowledge exchange and the development of shared resources and recommendations ([CoARA, n.d.-c](#)). The coalition is governed by a General Assembly and a Steering Board, with operational support provided by the secretariat hosted by the European Science Foundation ([CoARA, n.d.-b](#)).

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Researchers, particularly those at the early stages of their academic careers, are the primary beneficiaries of the reform. Indirect beneficiaries include universities, research institutions, funding agencies, national evaluation and accreditation authorities, and science policymakers.

Results

- More than 800 organizations have signed the agreement, including universities, funding bodies, evaluation authorities, scientific societies, and associations ([CoARA, n.d.-a](#)).
- The establishment of 14 thematic working groups as of May 2026 that develop resources and recommendations to support research assessment reform in specific areas ([CoARA, n.d.-c](#)).
- The creation of 19 national chapters as of December 2025 that coordinate the implementation of the agreement in local contexts and facilitate knowledge exchange among institutions within the same country ([CoARA Secretariat, 2026](#)).
- The launch of the [CoARA Boost](#) project, funded by Horizon Europe, to strengthen the coalition's operational capacity and implement a cascade funding programme aimed at supporting research assessment reform projects ([European Commission, 2023](#); [CoARA, n.d.-a](#)).

- The launch of the [CoARA Collection](#), a repository of resources produced by working groups and other stakeholders to support the practical implementation of research assessment reform.

Challenges

The agreement itself acknowledges that it is not legally binding, placing the reform in the realm of voluntary commitment ([CoARA, 2022](#)). This creates the risk of formal endorsement without effective implementation and makes it difficult to monitor real progress. Furthermore, the diversity of organizational, cultural, and regulatory contexts among signatory institutions poses a coordination challenge. Balancing reform ambition with each organization's practical capacity is a particular difficulty for institutions with limited resources or well-established assessment systems.

Interest and transferability

CoARA offers a model of collective action based on voluntary adherence to common principles, adaptable to diverse institutional contexts. Its main transferable element is the coalition structure, which enables organizations from different countries and profiles to join a shared framework and learn from the experiences of other members through working groups and national chapters ([CoARA, n.d.-c](#)).

The mechanism of institutional action plans provides a concrete roadmap for each organization to translate the agreement's commitments into measures adapted to its own reality. Action plans from universities, associations, and funding agencies in various countries have been documented, demonstrating the model's adaptability ([CoARA, n.d.-d](#)). However, effective transfer depends on institutional commitment, available resources, and the degree of consolidation of pre-existing assessment systems in each context.

Bibliography

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