Minutes of the CoARA General Assembly
23 June 2025 09:30-12:30 CET
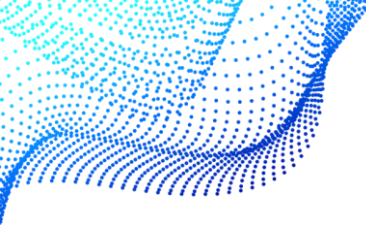
Table of Contents

MEETING REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND WELCOME

Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

CoARA Chair, Professor Henk Kummeling, welcomed CoARA members and presented the agenda for the CoARA Steering Board meeting *(presentation slides 1-3).*

As part of the General Assembly held on 23 June, with the voting window open from 6 June, the following topics are subject to voting:

1. Updates to the Steering Board Rules of Procedure.
2. The CoARA Outputs Endorsement Framework.

Details of the voting parameters are provided in the Voting Guidelines.

2. ACTIVITY REPORT & UPDATES ON THE COARA VOLUNTARY SPONSORSHIP CAMPAIGN

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

Meeting minutes of the preceding General Assembly (09/12/2024) have been approved.

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra provided updates on the Coalition's progress and implementation activities over the past 6 months (*presentation slides 4-25*).

- **Strategic priorities for 2025**

- **CoARA Boost – Outreach**: there has been a lot of CoARA related events, discussions and consultations in different national contexts in Europe and around the globe.

- **Action Plans**: they are the truest reflections of the systemic reform that is the mission of CoARA. However, their progress is slower than expected. The Coalition is strong and diverse, but the commitments of our members need to be implemented. Given the associated complexities, the Secretariat will provide enhanced support to members in developing and implementing their Action Plans.

From Agreement to Action: a bird eye's view
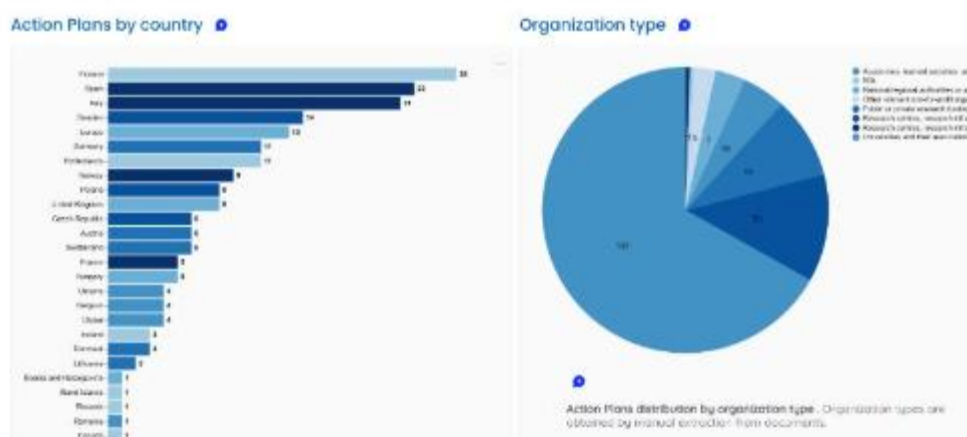
There have been no radical changes in the data since December 2024 in terms of the countries (Finland, Spain, Italy, Sweden) and the type of organisation (universities) that have submitted the most Action Plans.

Two platform have been created by the CNRS within the CoARA Boost Project. A lot of resources are available for Signatories and Members to rely on when building their Action Plan (guidelines, email help desk, webinars, support from National Chapters, etc.).

- **Working Groups:** their highlights can be found in the CoARA newsletter. A progress report published in March 2025 provides a consolidated overview of their work. A second call for Working Groups has been made in the spring of 2025, targeting 3 areas that haven't been extensively covered by the first generation of Working Groups, and are expected to start their operations in September 2025.

Pre-defined topics for new proposals:

Core Commitment 4: Avoiding the use of university rankings in research assessment

Guidance and concepts for **qualitative assessment** and for the assessment of the quality of research

Assessment of **team science**, interdisciplinarity, intersectoral, and multisectoral aspects of **work experience and roles outside academia**

The Working Groups born from the first call have been granted the possibility to extend their operation for another year. Their proposals for extension are currently under Steering Board review, and the results will be communicated mid-July.

- **National Chapters**: two have been received in 2025 (from the Netherlands and Slovenia), which makes it 18 active National Chapters. An overview of the CoARA National Chapters is available in a printable booklet. The second National Chapters Exchange Forum: "Defining Success," was held in Bonn, Germany on 13-14 March 2025. The next one will be happening in Spain in March 2026.

- **Second Cascade Funding Call:** the high volume of good quality proposals (more than 140). Thanks to a pool of expert reviewers, 28 projects have been selected and are expected to start in September 2025.

The second pool of applications came from a wider range of diversity: organisation types, and they addressed a wider scope of interests. Please find the results here: CF2 Selected Projects – CoARA.

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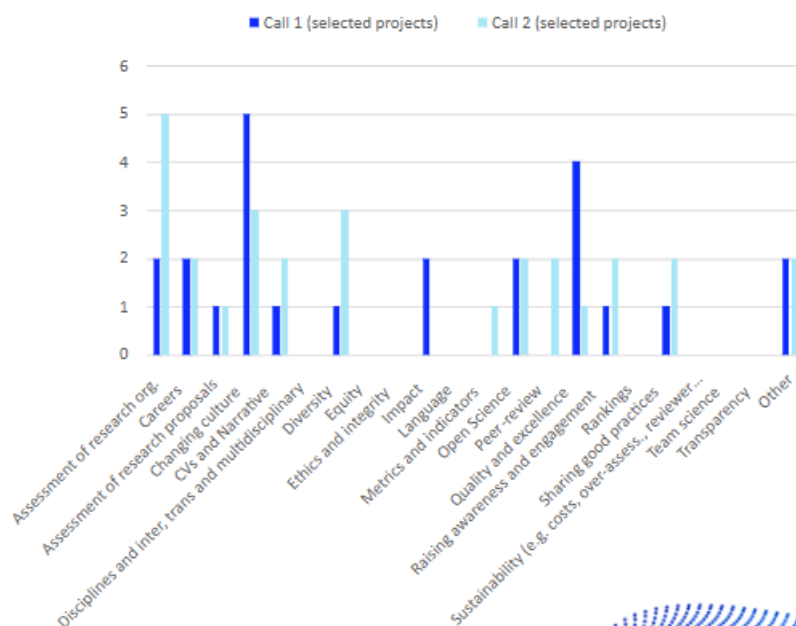
- **Voluntary sponsorship campaign** was introduced in December 2024. The idea behind it is to reinforce the community ownership of CoARA and to build the capacity to carry out activities that the Coalition deems important, even beyond October 2026. The survey consultation was very successful and helped fine tune the framework of this campaign.

Objectives:

- Reinforce community ownership
- Expand ongoing activities and impact
- Enhanced responsiveness to the Coalition's needs
- Increased impact in the short term
- Sustainability beyond October 2026

Key characteristics

- Voluntary sponsorship campaign with no additional rights, except highlighting sponsors
- No two-tiered CoARA
- Flexible support options
- Learn more here: **https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2025/06/CoARA-Volunteer-Fundraising-Framework.pdf**

Target activities:

- Additional secretariat support
- Grants to CoARA groups (such as National Chapters, Working Groups)
- Enhanced outreach, networking and dissemination activities
- Studies, evaluations, consulting

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- **Communication toolkit for Coalition members**

- Advocacy materials on the coara.eu website
  - CoARA support badge
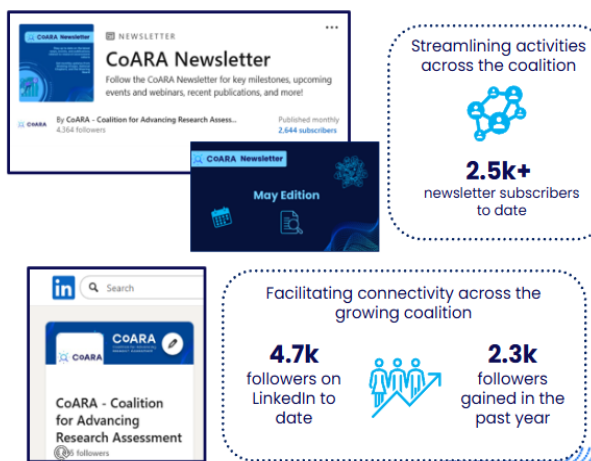 - Zoom backgrounds for webinars and CoARA online events
  - Generic presentations with CoARA branding
  - National Chapters printable booklet
- Dissemination channels to streamline activities and amplify your messages
  - CoARA Newsletter: bi-monthly distribution with 2.5k+ subscribers to date
  - CoARA LinkedIn: 4.3k+ followers to date to amplify your activities and keep you up to date on all coalition-related news
  - CoARA News blog: spotlight upcoming activities, publications, or events
  - CoARA Youtube channel: hosting webinars and helpful resources for coalition members
  - CoARA transitions to Bluesky → follow us!

Contact **communication@coara.org** for inquiries and dissemination requests

Key dissemination channels:

Streamlining activities across the coalition

2.5k+ newsletter subscribers to date

Facilitating connectivity across the growing coalition

4.7k followers on LinkedIn to date

2.3k followers gained in the past year

- **Outlook for 2025**

New website	Cascade Funding	Action Plan support and webinars	2nd Call for WGs concluded	CoARA impact evaluation	Upcoming Events:
ARRA toolbox	Knowledge Sharing Event		New WGs to start in Sept. 2025		WGs Exchange Forum in Graz · 13-14 Nov
					Research Assessment Conference in Copenhagen · 3-4 Dec

3. UPDATE OF THE COARA STEERING BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE

Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

Prof. Henk Kummeling suggested to instigate a "knowledge transfer period" between incoming and outgoing Steering Board members. ccordingly, the Steering Board suggested an amendment to the Rules of Procedure, which was submitted to a vote (*presentation slides 26-28*).

Proposed updates to the CoARA SB Rules of Procedure

1. Arranging a knowledge transfer period across the leaving and coming Chairs, as well as across leaving and coming Steering Board members.
2. The new Chair begins their term upon announcing the election results. During the first three months of their operations, the leaving Chair is requested to support the work of the new Chair and ensure smooth knowledge transfer.
3. New Steering Board members begin their term upon announcing the election results. During the first two months of their operations, leaving Steering Board members are requested to support their work and ensure smooth knowledge transfer.

4. ENDORSEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR COARA OUTPUTS AND PRESENTATION OF THE ARRA TOOLBOX

Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice Chair

Dr. Karen Stroobants presented the final version of the CoARA Outputs Endorsement Framework, which is a community-built mechanism aiming to establish a means to consider outputs, by the Coalition and external Third Parties, and build consensus around tools that support CoARA's commitments (*presentation slides 29-36*).

The final framework distinguishes between two types of outputs: Type A, comprising actionable policy resources, and Type B, encompassing evidence review documents. The endorsement process begins with a categorisation check and concludes with a community review for Type B outputs, or with both community and Steering Board review for Type A outputs. Once endorsed, the outputs will be deposited on Zenodo and included in the Toolbox.

Step 1 — Output Submission

Nominator Selects Output Type and submits to CoARA Secretariat:

Type A: Actionable policy resources

Type B: Evidence review documents

Step 2 — Categorisation Check

Review of output category by CoARA Secretariat with SB approval:

- CoARA Secretariat checks proposed categorisation (by email, later webtool).
- SB approves categorisation of nominated output.
- If not approved, feedback will be provided to the nominator.

Step 3 — Community & SB Review*

Nominator submits output to Secretariat & publishes output to relevant Zenodo community:

Type A: Community & SB Review
1. Community review of output organised by nominator for 30-day period
2. Revision of draft output
3. Review by the SB*

Type B: Community Review only
1. Community review of output organised by nominator for 30-day period
2. Revision of draft output

Step 4 — Endorsement

If revised outputs are approved*, the endorsed outputs will be published on Zenodo

Type A: Outputs endorsed by the SB will be included in ARRA toolbox

*The SB will consider if consultation inputs have been sufficiently addressed and whether the output contributes to CoARA's mission

Nominations and endorsement of 3rd party outputs

- Open for actionable policy resources

  Type A: Actionable Policy Resources

- Can be nominated for SB endorsement by WG, NC, or by the SB itself

1. Nomination of an implementation option is received by the CoARA Secretariat
2. CoARA Secretariat checks proposed categorisation and opens the SB endorsement process

What happens if an output does not get endorsed?

Outputs produced by CoARA Members

- The creators/nominators can **renominate** an output **one more time**
- Renomination is subject to clear **justification** and **revision** based on feedback received during consultation

Outputs produced by 3rd parties

- If an implementation option not developed by the CoARA community gets rejected, the **decision is final** and the same option **cannot be nominated again**

5. CONSULTATION ON ACTION PLANS AND THE COALITION'S SUPPORT NEEDS

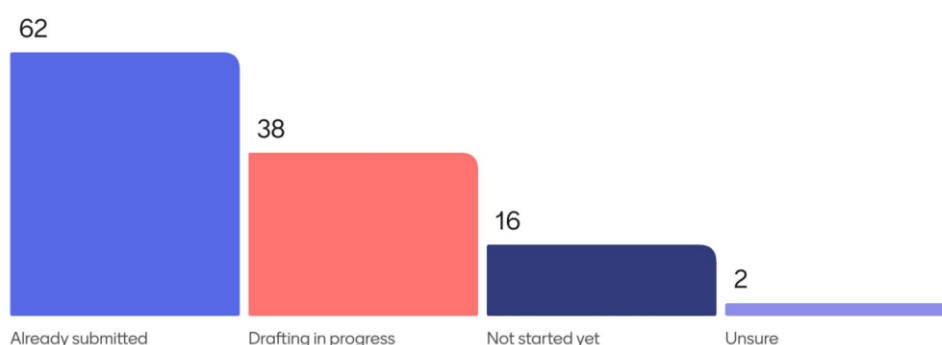*Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager*

Mentimeter link: here. The participants were asked to answer a few questions regarding their Action Plans and their support needs.

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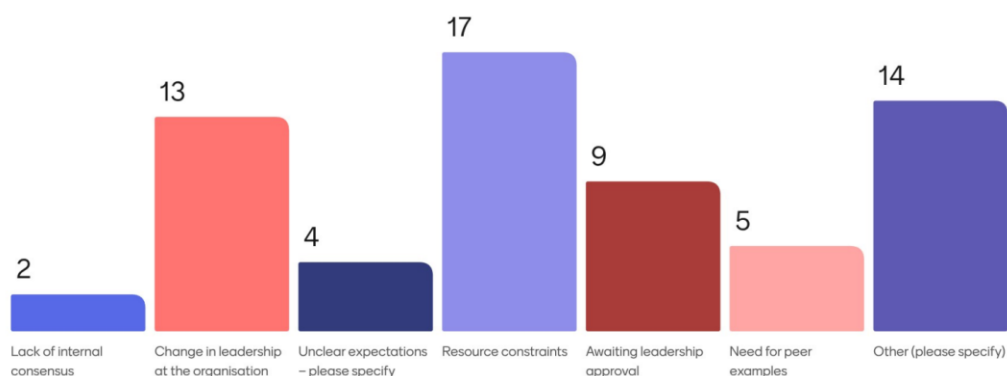**Question 1:** What one word comes to mind when you think of your Action Plan progress?

1: What one word comes to mind when you think of your Action Plan progress?

projects	Slow	delayed
on track	productive	on the way
Done	ACTION	in progress
Ongoing	delayed	just started
slow	reflection	Okay

Question 2: What is your institution's current status regarding their CoARA Action Plan?

- Already submitted: 62
- Drafting in progress: 38
- Not started yet: 16
- Unsure: 2

Question 3: If not yet submitted, what are the main reasons for the delay?

- Lack of internal consensus: 2
- Change in leadership at the organisation: 13
- Unclear expectations – please specify: 4
- Resource constraints: 17
- Awaiting leadership approval: 9
- Need for peer examples: 5
- Other (please specify): 14

Question 4: What kind of support would help you progress with your Action Plan?

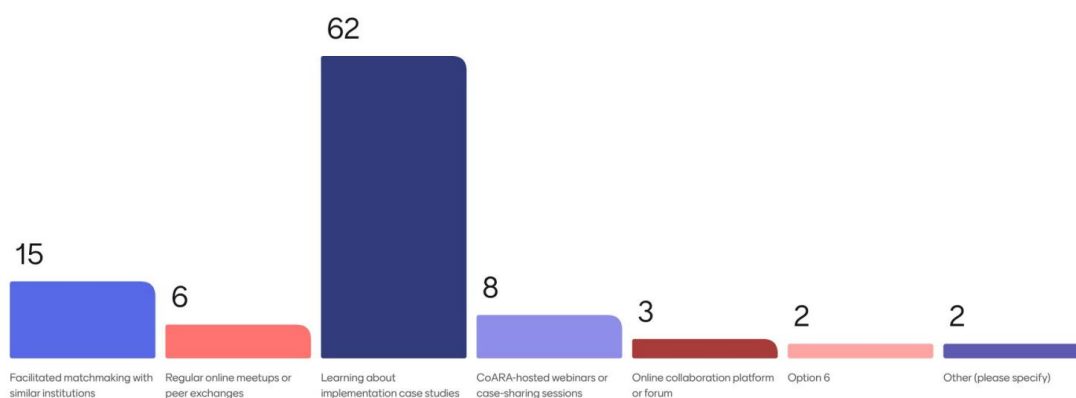|						
34	6	3	20	2	21	9
Examples from other members	More webinars per organisation type	Webinars per region	Support from National Chapters or other local communities	Action Plan Drop-ins	Community of practice or peer support groups	Other (please specify)
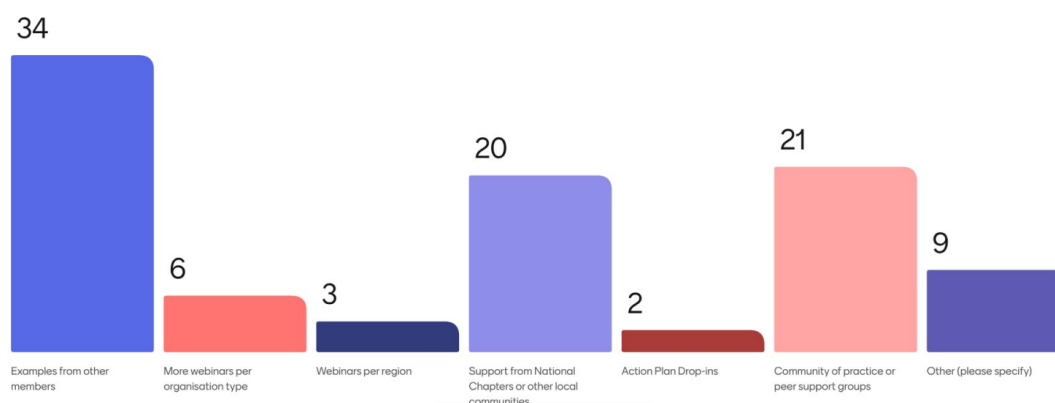
Question 5: Did you use other Action Plans to inform yours? Which ones?

5.Did you use other Action Plans to inform yours? Which ones?

Loughborough and Strathclyde in UK	Yes, we used selected ones for inspiration	Yes, we went through some ones
Yes, different ones to get an idea about planned actions by others	I read Action Plans from other universities in my country	Yes. But we use no special Action Plan, just read through.
We did not, as the action plans for Universities differ from those for funding agencies	Yes	Yes, Science Europe
yes, we used several other plans	Yes, we chose some from Zenodo	Yes, we did

Question 6: What types of collaboration support would you find most helpful going forward?

15	6	62	8	3	2	2
Facilitated matchmaking with similar institutions	Regular online meetups or peer exchanges	Learning about implementation case studies	CoARA-hosted webinars or case-sharing sessions	Online collaboration platform or forum	Option 6	Other (please specify)

The Steering Board acknowledged the need for stronger guidance to support a more level playing field in the community's implementation of the commitments. Several potential actions will be explored in upcoming Steering Board meetings, including ways to leverage the influence of National Chapters.

6. GUEST PRESENTATION: SHOWCASING WORKING GROUPS' OUTPUTS

Chaired by: Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, CoARA Vice Chair

Working Group "Towards Open Infrastructures for Responsible Research Assessment" (OI4RRA) - Presentation slides.

Presenter: *Natalia Manola, OpenAIRE, CoARA WG Co-Chair*

Natalia Manola reminded participants that OI4RRA's mission is to support institutions in transitioning from proprietary infrastructure and research information systems to open, interoperable alternatives. It also seeks to take into account the wide range of research outputs and open science practices, reflecting the diversity of the research community.
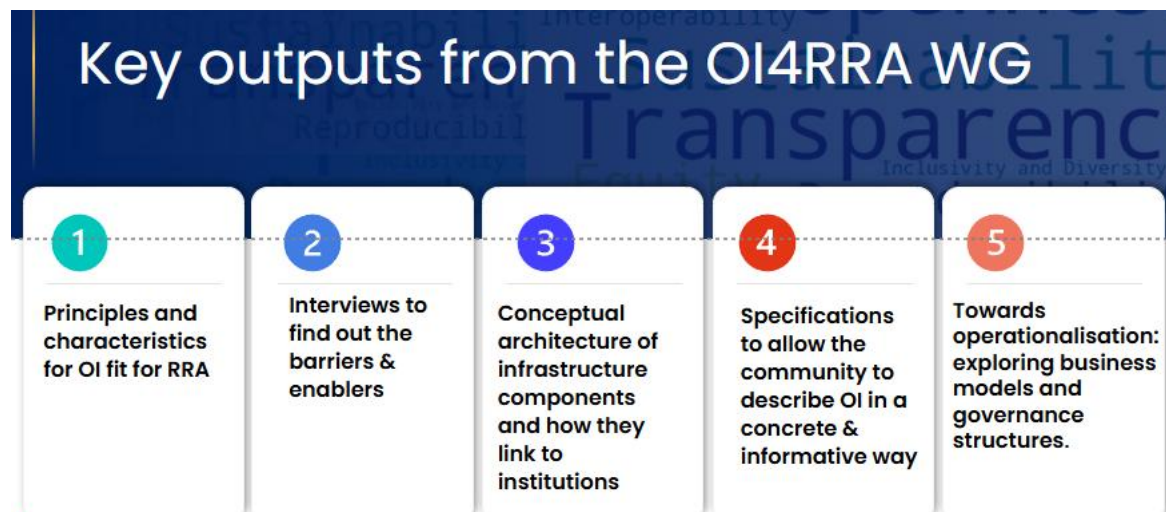
- **Working Group "Multilingualism and Language Biases in Research Assessment" –** **Presentation slides.**
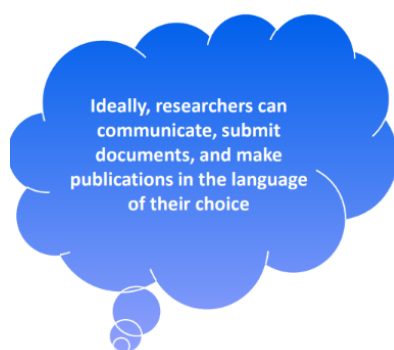
Presenter: *Janne Pölönen, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, CoARA SB member*

Janne Pölönen began by reminding participants that signatories of the CoARA Agreement are committed to recognising the broad diversity of research contributions, regardless of language, and to moving away from language-based metrics. The Multilingualism Working Group's mission is to support institutions in upholding linguistic equity, diversity, and non-discrimination in Europe and beyond.

The first objective is to raise awareness of the importance of multilingualism in the practice of science, in scientific publications, and in academic communication. The second objective is to provide practical guidance on recognising contributions regardless of language and on avoiding language bias in assessments.

The Working Group's landscape analysis has included the development of definitions and glossary literature, surveys of organisations and researchers, and the analysis of bibliometric databases. A report presenting this analysis will be published in 2025 and is expected to be included in the ARRA Toolbox

VISION & IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

Ideally, researchers can communicate, submit documents, and make publications in the language of their choice

D6 Implementation proposal for language-aware assessments will be aimed at higher education institutions, research and funding organisations to facilitate implementation of CoARA commitments

➢ Proposal 1: Make multilingualism a core value of research assessment

➢ Proposal 2: Assess and improve language diversity, competences and practices

➢ Proposal 3: Create expectations and criteria for multilingualism

➢ Proposal 4: Integrate multilingualism into assessment processes

• Discussed in Focus Group and opened for **CoARA community consultation September 2025**

7. GUEST PRESENTATIONS: COARA'S IMPACT IN NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

- **NyEval – Accompanying research on CoARA in the Norwegian research system**
  Prof. Liv Langfeldt, Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education

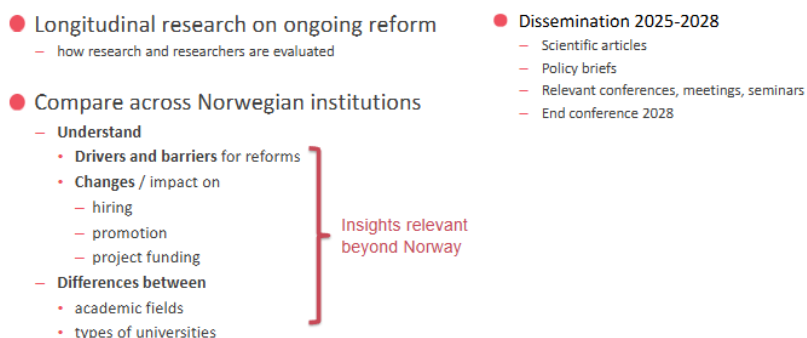## Research Questions

Aim
Understand drivers and barriers to research assessments reforms

1. What are the CoARA-motivated changes implemented in Norway?
2. What are the objectives of the changes?
3. What effects (if any) do *reviewers* experience from e.g. new CV requirements or new review guidelines? Do they change assessments practises?
4. What effects (if any) do different groups of *applicants (gender, field, age)* anticipate from e.g. new CV requirements or review guidelines? Do anticipated effects influence their research activities?
5. What is the potential of CoARA-motivated changes to impact the Norwegian research system? How?
6. What are the drivers and barriers for (such) changes, and how do drivers and barriers vary between research fields, and between organisations or levels in organisations?

Prof. Liv Langfeldt emphasised that there are various entry points for understanding the reform of research assessment: the processes through which notions of research quality develop and become institutionalised; the reward and incentive systems within science; the norms that research assessments are expected to uphold; perceptions of what is at stake in reform processes; and the role of quantitative indicators in peer review.

The project comprises two work packages: the first focuses on the employment and promotion of academic staff, while the second examines the assessment of research grant proposals at the Research Council of Norway and at Foundation Dam.
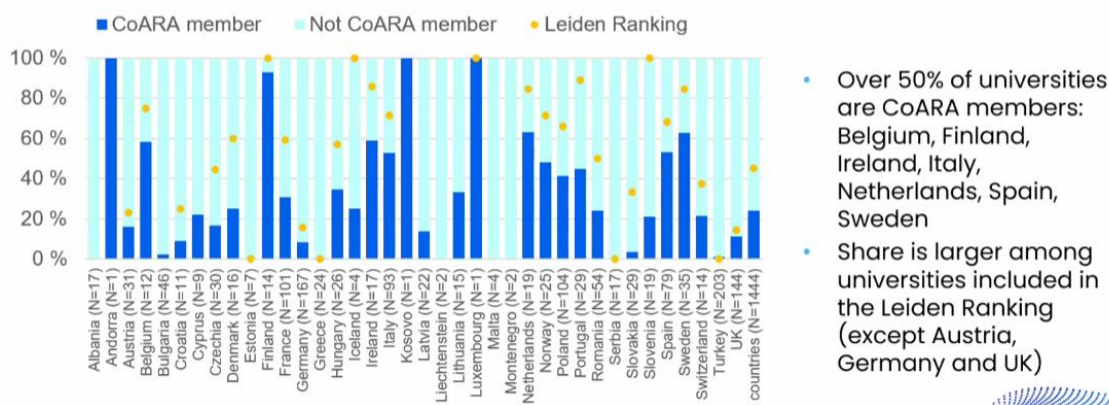
Expected relevance and outputs

- Longitudinal research on ongoing reform
  - how research and researchers are evaluated
- Compare across Norwegian institutions
  - **Understand**
    - **Drivers and barriers** for reforms
    - **Changes / impact on**
      - hiring
      - promotion
      - project funding
  - **Differences between**
    - academic fields
    - types of universities

  Insights relevant beyond Norway

- Dissemination 2025-2028
  - Scientific articles
  - Policy briefs
  - Relevant conferences, meetings, seminars
  - End conference 2028

- **Uptake of CoARA across the Higher Education Institutions in Europe**
  Janne Pölönen, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, CoARA SB member

Janne Pölönen began by reminding participants that there are significant differences in the number of CoARA member organisations across countries in

Europe and globally, as well as among different types of organisations. The aim of this work is to develop a deeper understanding of these discrepancies in CoARA uptake by focusing specifically on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Europe.

This work highlights several issues for consideration:

- HEI landscapes are highly diverse and difficult to compare.
- A relatively small proportion of HEIs (13%) are CoARA members, although the share is higher among PhD-awarding institutions (24%) and among universities included in the Leiden Ranking Open Edition (45%).
- Uptake increases with institutional size and is more common among public organisations.
- There are marked differences in engagement between CoARA and other research assessment initiatives, such as DORA and HR Excellence.
- To gain a fuller understanding of the complexities surrounding CoARA uptake, there is a need for more qualitative, contextualised, and in-depth studies of individual countries and institutions.

8. GUEST PRESENTATION: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT: CANADA

Prof. Rémi Quirion, Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA)

Prof. Rémi Quirion's presentation focused on the implementation of the Fonds de recherche du Québec's Reform for Research Assessment (the Fonds de recherche du Québec being Québec's main research funding agency).

He emphasised that the reform of research assessment seeks to align evaluation practices with evolving societal priorities, increasing interdisciplinarity and intersectorality, emerging research forms, societal impact, transparency, and accountability.
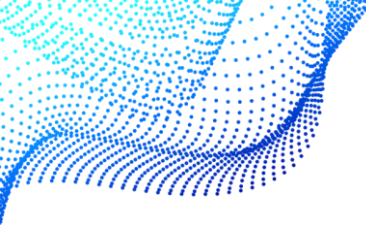
The FRQ's Action Plan centres on recognising diverse forms of contribution, strengthening qualitative assessment, training and supporting evaluators, and fostering continuous dialogue. The example set by the FRQ could encourage other organisations in North America to join CoARA.
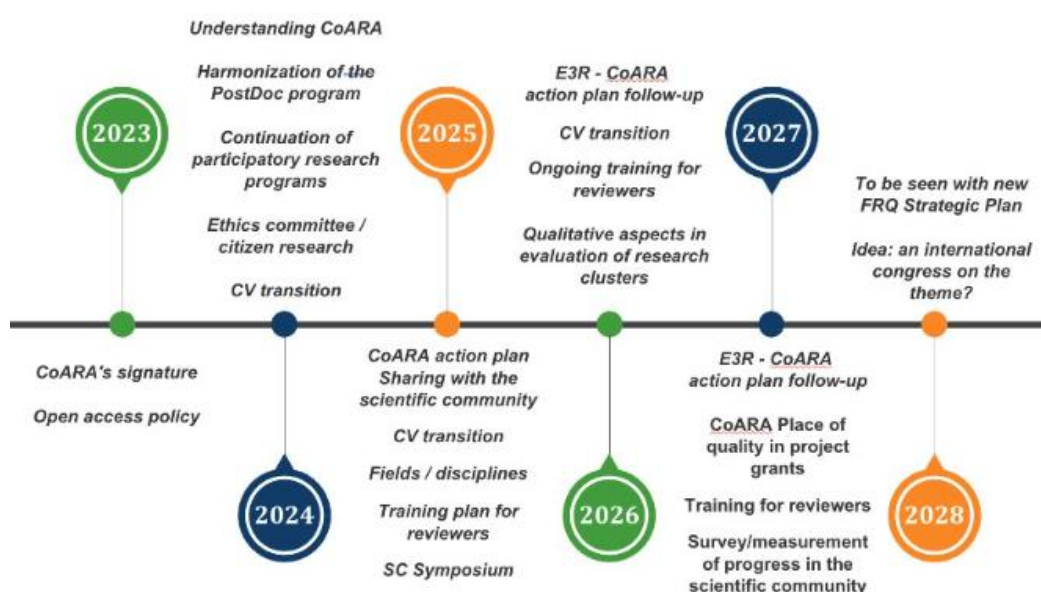
9. GUEST PRESENTATION: EVALUATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS: RECENT CHANGES AT THE ERC

Angela Wittelsberger, Ph.D.

Angela Wittelsberger's presentation (presentation slides 44–51) began by focusing on how the European Research Council has recently modernised its understanding of excellence in the evaluation of research proposals. She explained that ERC proposals continue to be judged on excellence—defined by creativity, originality, and potential for significant advances in knowledge—and that no structural or procedural changes have been introduced. However, some terminology has been

revised: for instance, "high-risk/high-gain" has been replaced by "ambitious", "creative", and "original".

She also noted that the development of novel methodologies has been removed from the evaluation questions, and that greater emphasis is now placed on the excellence of the project itself rather than on past achievements.

Modernisation of ERC's understanding of excellence – main principles for evaluating the applicant

- **No prescriptive Principal Investigator profiles in Work Programme**
- Simplification of CV and track record documentation
- Allowing researchers to provide narrative descriptions of their work
- Room for explaining career breaks or unconventional career paths
- Room for describing contributions that go beyond standard academic duties
- Extramural funding not an evaluation criterion
- Supervision of graduate student or post-docs not an evaluation criterion

10. WRAP-UP AND CONCLUSIONS

Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

Prof. Henk Kummeling concluded the General Assembly by expressing his pleasure at hearing about many interesting developments both within and beyond CoARA. He emphasised that outstanding work has been accomplished by numerous contributors, and he extended particular thanks to the guest presenters for their valuable contributions.

Finally, he announced that the quorum for the vote had been reached and that the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure and the Endorsement Framework had been adopted.

11. NEXT MEETING

- Date, time and location

The next General Assembly will be held online on Wednesday the 10th of December from 09:30 to 13:00 CET.

12. ANNEX

Agenda

9:30 - **Opening of the Meeting and Welcome**
Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

9:35 - **Activity Report & updates on the CoARA voluntary sponsorship campaign**
Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

10:00 - **Update of the CoARA Steering Board Rules of Procedure**
Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

10:15 - **Endorsement Framework for CoARA Outputs and presentation of the ARRA Toolbox**
Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice Chair

10:45 - **Consultation on Action Plans and the Coalition's support needs**
Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

11:05 - Break

11:20 - Showcasing Working Groups' outputs
Chaired by: Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, CoARA Vice Chair
Presenters: Natalia Manola (OpenAIRE, CoARA WG Co-Chair) and Janne Pölönen (Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, CoARA SB Member).

**11:50** - **CoARA's impact in national and European contexts**

Guest presentations from Prof. Liv Langfeldt (Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education) and Janne Pölönen (Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, CoARA SB Member).

12:20 - **Global perspectives on research assessment: Canada**
Prof. Rémi Quirion, Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA)

12:30 - Evaluation of research proposals: recent changes at the ERC
Angela Wittelsberger, Ph.D.
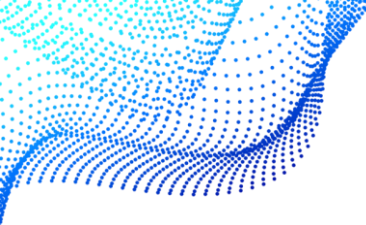
12:45 - **Wrap-up and conclusions**
Prof. Henk Kummeling, CoARA Chair

- Documents shared and extra information

Presentation slides: GA230625.pptx

Chat: GA chat 23062025.docx