

ACTION PLAN SUPPORTING CoARA 2024

SCIENCE
EUROPE
Shaping the future of research

Colophon

April 2024

'Action Plan Supporting CoARA'

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10932705

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Preamble

Science Europe was amongst the first signatories of the [Agreement](#) for Reforming Research Assessment in September 2022. It played a key role in drafting the Agreement: as a member of the Drafting Team, through chairing the Core Group of Experts (Science Europe President 2017–2023, Marc Schiltz), and as a partner in the initial secretariat of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment ([CoARA](#)).

Science Europe remains committed to contributing to the Coalition and its objectives and will continue to support the global reform of research assessment processes through a variety of activities, as detailed in this Year 1 action plan.

About Science Europe

Science Europe is the association representing major national research funding and performing organisations in Europe. With 40 members from 29 countries, it is our mission to define long-term perspectives for European research and champion best-practice approaches, ensuring high quality research for the benefit of all. Collectively, our members contribute over 25 billion EUR to research each year and are key stakeholders in the European Research Area and our shared global research system. Contributing to the evolution of research culture is one of three strategic priorities for the association, where issues of research assessment practices and processes have been a longstanding focus.



📍 RESEARCH FUNDING ORGANISATION
📍 RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATION

Science Europe's Continued Commitment to CoARA

Strategy and change approach

Research assessment has been a continuous priority for Science Europe, being part of the core business of all its member organisations, both research funding organisations (through grant allocation) and research performing organisations (through career progression exercises). Numerous Science Europe activities fed into the work of co-drafting the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment and will continue to inform the association's activities within and towards the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment:

- **2023**
● [Recognising What We Value: Recommendations on Recognition Systems](#)
- **2022**
● [A Values Framework for the Organisation of Research](#)

- **2021**
● [Statement on Research Culture - Empowering Researchers with a Thriving Research System](#)
- **2020**
● [Position Statement and Recommendations on Research Assessment Processes](#)
- **2019**
● [Study on Research Assessment Practices](#)
● Science Europe/European University Association [Joint Statement on Research Assessment](#)

Importantly, 'Research Culture' is currently a strategic priority for the association, and Science Europe will work to ensure that its activities on research culture are fully aligned to the work conducted within CoARA, and vice versa.

Involvement of the research community in the change process

As part of Science Europe's [Statement on Research Culture: Empowering Researchers with a Thriving Research System](#) (2021), a commitment was made to "take a leadership role in convening relevant stakeholders that jointly commit to speed up actionable changes to the research

assessment system and will enable the voice of the research community in such changes." The association's involvement in the establishment of, and continued engagement in CoARA contributes towards our actions to address this commitment.

Key challenges to address

In work leading up to the establishment of the CoARA, most notably the Science Europe [study on Research Assessment Practices](#) (2019) and the Science Europe [Position Statement and Recommendations on Research Assessment Processes](#) (2020) a number of common challenges were raised and discussed within Science Europe. Firstly, with recognition of the important role of national public research funding and performing organisations in promoting and driving research assessment reform, a major challenge lies in

effective collaboration between all relevant stakeholder groups toward reforming research assessment, understanding that for reform to be truly successful it must involve and be supported by all research stakeholders.

A second major challenge identified is the cost and effort burden placed on all involved in assessment processes, including research organisation staff and administrators. The process of reforming research assessment may add to this burden in

the short term but should ultimately contribute to more effective and efficient assessment systems, for all, in the future.

A final challenge identified in Science Europe's prior work is a lack of a broad scientific evidence base on which to build policy and practice

changes. This requires investment in studies, pilots, and 'research on research', and the sharing of evidence once established. All three of these challenges are covered by the CoARA commitments, and Science Europe will work to ensure that progress is made and shared in these key areas over the next five years and beyond.

The following table details Science Europe's planned actions according to the commitments of the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment:

CoARA Commitment	Science Europe's planned actions
1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.	Through work with its Member Organisations to develop and promote policy and practice changes, Science Europe is committed to aligning its activities, outputs, and recommendations with the four core commitments of the Agreement, and continues to advocate these to its membership and beyond.
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.	Science Europe offers a variety of mechanisms for its Member Organisations to discuss and share knowledge relating to- and gathered within CoARA. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SE Working Group on Research Culture • The SE Working Group on Open Science • The SE CoARA Forum • The SE General Assembly
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.	Issues relating to research assessment reform and CoARA will continue to be discussed regularly in these groups, and outputs will remain aligned to the CoARA commitments, at least until the end of Science Europe's current Strategy Plan period, December 2026.
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment.	As an association, Science Europe does not conduct any form of research assessment processes itself.
5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to.	Science Europe was a founding member of the Coalition and was part of the initial Secretariat of CoARA leading up to the Constitutive Assembly (1 December 2022). Science Europe is a partner in the CoARA Boost Project and continues to dedicate resources to the reform of research assessment agenda. <p>Additionally, as part of Science Europe's support to its members, an internal CoARA Forum has been established to provide support to all Member Organisations (regardless of whether they are members of CoARA or not).</p>
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools, and processes.	Through Science Europe's own internal Working Groups, most notably the Working Groups on Research Culture and Open Science, periodic discussion and action items will be included in meetings and work plans to review and share knowledge on the progress being made by individual organisations in relation to commitment 6. <p>More specifically, Science Europe has established a joint Task Force on Research Assessment for Open Science that will run a survey to investigate the assessment criteria used to support Open Science. The results and analysis of this survey will be made available in Q3 2024 and will be shared with the Coalition.</p>

CoARA Commitment	Science Europe's planned actions
<p>7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use.</p>	<p>As a member of the Drafting Team of the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment, and part of the initial secretariat of the Coalition, Science Europe and its Member Organisations have continually communicated and raised awareness around the research assessment reform agenda. Our commitment to awareness raising activities will continue for the remainder of our current Strategy period, between 2023–2026, as a key part of our strategic priority to “contribute to the evolution of research culture.”</p>
<p>8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.</p>	<p>Science Europe participates in the CoARA Working Group on ‘Improving practices in the assessment of research proposals’, where it will share and exchange insights from its own activities, including from its Working Groups on Research Culture and Open Science.</p> <p>Science Europe participates in numerous related expert groups. Our various roles within the Global Research Council offer an example of Science Europe’s activities beyond the European Research Area, including our participation in the GRC Responsible Research Assessment Working Group, where opportunities to discuss the global context of research assessment reform have already been taken up and will continue to be explored.</p> <p>Science Europe also participates in the DORA Funders Discussion Group and collaborates with other international organisations such as the OECD-Global Science Forum, and UNESCO. In this regard, Science Europe is committed to exchanging experiences and good practices openly, and in an international context.</p> <p>Science Europe is a member of the CoARA Boost Project and acts as Work Package Leader (WP6) for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 6.1: Reinforcing CoARA in less represented European regions/ countries • Task 6.2: Expanding the CoARA membership globally • Task 6.3: Developing synergies with related projects & initiatives • Task 6.4: Engagement, communication & advocacy <p>Between 2023 and 2026, Science Europe is committed to numerous activities to promote mutual learning, communication and advocacy, and increasing engagement with the reform process beyond the coalition.</p>
<p>9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments.</p>	<p>Science Europe commits to publishing this Year 1 action plan publicly, once approved. The association will continue to regularly communicate its progress and the progress of its members and partners towards the implementation of the CoARA commitments through a variety of communication channels such as the periodic internal and public newsletters.</p> <p>Through the CoARA Boost project, Science Europe commits to developing and implementing communication and advocacy plans to support the growth and activities of the coalition.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Science Europe will ensure that advances made within CoARA and among CoARA members over the coming years are reflected in the policy activities that our organisation conducts, whenever relevant. Science Europe will use its platform to promote the state of the art in an open manner so that our research systems can advance together.</p>

In addition to our activities directly related to research assessment reform and CoARA, Science Europe works across and participates in a number of policy initiatives that have synergies with the objectives of the coalition. For these activities, listed below, Science Europe, together with its members, commits to exploring and promoting links, exchanges, and collaborations whenever beneficial:

- The [Action Plan for Diamond Open Access](#) and the [Global Summit on Diamond Open Access series](#), including the Diamond Open Access Conferences.
- [cOAlition S](#)
- The [EOSC Association](#)
- The [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#)
- The [Council for National Open Science Coordination](#) (CoNOSC)
- The [DIAMAS Project](#)
- The [ESFRI Stakeholder Forum](#)
- Activities to support Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) including co-chairing the [GRC Working Group on EDI](#) and the recent Science Europe [Practical Guide to supporting Diversity in Research Environments](#).



Science Europe AISBL

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Science Europe is the association of major research funding and research performing organisations in Europe.

Our vision is for the European Research Area to have the optimal conditions to support robust education and research & innovation systems.

We define long-term perspectives for European research and champion best-practice approaches that enable high-quality research for knowledge advancement and the needs of society.

We are uniquely placed to lead advancements to the European Research Area and inform global developments through participation in research initiatives where science is a strong and trusted component of sustainable economic, environmental, and societal development.

More information is available at www.scienceeurope.org

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