
About HUN-REN Headquarters

The HUN-REN (Hungarian Research Network) Headquarters (HUN-REN HQ) is an independent public budgetary institution. It was established by the Hungarian Parliament effective August 1, 2019 with the aim to manage and operate the publicly funded research network of Hungary.

HUN-REN currently comprises 12 research centres, 7 stand-alone research institutes and 116 additional supported research groups operating at universities and other public institutions, conducting research in the most varied disciplines of mathematics and natural sciences, life sciences, social sciences and the humanities.

HUN-REN is an integral part of the national research and innovation ecosystem and works in close cooperation with stakeholders such as government agencies, universities and private research organisations (e.g., pharmaceutical or IT companies).

Since its inception, the HUN-REN HQ actively searched to gain involvement in international endeavours aimed to upgrade science policy, particularly through membership in international organisations and work developed within them. As such HUN-REN had been following the evolution of activities related to the reform of research assessment and of the coalition before its establishment. The HUN-REN HQ was amongst the first signatories of the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment and joined the CoARA among the founder organisations on 1st of December 2022.

Starting Point

Strategy and change of the approach

HUN-REN is committed to the change in research assessment through openness and application of new approaches to scientific evaluation. This includes peer review whenever possible through the responsible use of quantitative methods as well.

Introducing a transparent research assessment framework is an essential part of the process. As a first step an international assessment panel was set up, which will continue to make evaluation on a regular basis.

Involving the institutional community in the change process

The HUN-REN HQ organises regular workshops to engage researchers in discussions on the process. Also, a network on dedicated topics like data stewards and AI ambassadors was set up to help in the communication between the HUN-REN HQ and its institutes.

This network forms the basis of HUN-REN knowledge sharing activities.

Identifying key challenges to address

One of the most important issues is the wide variety of research disciplines within the network of HUN-REN. A method needs to be developed to make evaluation uniform but at the same time to take into account the different characteristics of the disciplines.

Early involvement of the researcher community, and understanding the relevant international processes is a key aspect. Also, being present in the relevant international networks to adapt the new approaches early is an absolute necessity.

Operational action plan for a 5-year time frame***Recognition of the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research***

HUN-REN is proud to have the first commitment of CoARA included in its motto: **research, innovation, impact**. The only expectation is that one should strive for excellence on either of these fields. HUN-REN elaborates support for this effort through open access policies and the introduction of new research evaluation methods.

Basing research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators

At HUN-REN personal hearings are to be incorporated both for the researcher grant applications and for the milestones of the projects. HUN-REN institute managers are encouraged to introduce a research assessment framework to which guidelines will be provided.

Abandonment of inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index

The HUN-REN HQ continues to be engaged in the efforts of the related CoARA working group to adapt the new approaches in this matter. The need for a strong consensus in Europe on how to solve this issue and apply in practice is essential for the implementation of this commitment.

Avoidance of the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment

HUN-REN, being a funder at institutional level intends to shift the focus to the researchers' performance at the institutes and allocate the funding accordingly. This process has already begun.

Commitment of resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to

The HUN-REN HQ dedicated a department to elaborate and provide solutions for the challenges met related to the changes in research assessment. A HUN-REN forum is to be set up for establishing the new framework of evaluation.

As a consortium partner in CoARA Boost Project HUN-REN HQ contributes to the implementation of the reform on research assessment on an international level, including expert advice and contribution in the fulfilment of the aims of the project, particularly for the realisation of Task 6.1 Reinforcing CoARA in less represented European regions/countries.

Review and development of research assessment criteria, tools and processes

HUN-REN commits to observe the results of CoARA Working Groups, both by contribution to the extent possible to realistically shape their work, as well as by disseminating their achievements within the Hungarian National Chapter and the HUN-REN network. The results of the international professional community on research assessment are to be implemented as soon as their successful application seems feasible in the Hungarian scientific ecosystem.

Raising awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use

The HUN-REN HQ has been informing its network on the latest developments of CoARA through the HUN-REN Working Group of International Coordination since 2022. Raising the awareness of the

researcher community of the research assessment reform has become a regular point in the agenda of these meetings organised twice a year.

HUN-REN established a network of data stewards; based on the activities of these colleagues and further improvement of awareness is scheduled.

Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition

HUN-REN HQ initiated the establishment of the National Chapter Hungary (NCH) during the summer of 2023. As the coordinator and co-chair of the group HUN-REN is dedicated to support the discussion on research assessment on a national level enhancing the alignment of the implementation through regular meetings. HUN-REN also contributes to the dissemination of the work of the Hungarian CoARA community e.g. representing it at the CoARA National Chapter's Exchange Forum and used this opportunity to interact with the other participating National Chapters from around Europe. HUN-REN is also partner in international initiatives like EOSC and Science Europe.

Communication of progress made on adherence to the principles and implementation of the Commitments

The HUN-REN HQ continues to regularly communicate its progress made both through the National Chapter Hungary and the HUN-REN Working Group of International Coordination.

HUN-REN established and will operate a network and launch a series of workshops.

Evaluation of 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

The international assessment of HUN-REN is planned to take place every three years. Based on the experiences of the first round of assessment, its methodology will be further developed and improved in the future. HUN-REN's 5-year goal is to establish a new framework, the details of which will be influenced heavily by the activities of the international community: practices proved feasible elsewhere will be considered for implementation.