

Proposal for CoARA's Italian National Chapter

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Country

Italy

Contact details of the main National Chapter proposer

Alberto Credi (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

List member organisations proposing the National Chapter

Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (Unibo)

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)

Short description of the mission and objectives of the group, and of how it fits with the overall CoARA vision

The main aims of the Italian National Chapter are to (i) enable mutual learning, share best practices, and raise awareness of best responsible assessment practices and indicators in the national community on the ongoing research assessment reform (CoARA commitments 7-8), and (ii) foster the discussion about the reviewing and development of assessment criteria, tools and processes for assessing research institutions, individual researchers and projects (CoARA commitment 6). This outreach effort will support the implementation of the reform at the national level and will contribute to attract more institutions and stakeholders to sign the agreement.

The main activities will be focused on:

1. creating an active network among Italian institutions, promoting the alignment of the Institutional Roadmaps requested by CoARA, and engaging with the relevant political decision-making national body(ies);
2. establishing stable and bidirectional connections with the Working Groups, to explore the impact of their results on national practices and provide a feedback based on the experiences of the Italian communities on more specific topics;
3. interacting and collaborating with the other NCs (direct contacts with the organisations proposing the Spanish, French and Polish NCs already exist).

Expected impact notably expected adoption and implementation scenarios

The Italian presence in the Coalition is prominent and diverse, including 53 institutions and stakeholders, among which 44 “Universities and their associations”, 5 “Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations”, 2 “Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers”, 1 “National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations” (i.e., ANVUR, the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Italian Universities and Research Institutes), and 1 “Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations”. The expected impact of the National Chapter on the Italian research community is therefore wide and aims at reaching also those actors that are still not CoARA members (see point 10), allowing them both to contribute and benefit from the activities of the National Chapter.

As participation is broad, we intend to organise the activities in Work Packages that are related to the main objectives of the National Chapter. Some Work Packages will address specific relevant topics (e.g., multidisciplinary), whereas others will be devoted to establish a stable and bidirectional connection with the Working Groups and the other National Chapters.

The main activities of the National Chapter will consist in connecting a fragmented landscape via a communication and engagement strategy (meetings, thematic webinars, a final event presenting the NC results to the community and representatives of national decision making bodies, reports, guidelines, and position papers).

Added value of the National Chapter over and above what is currently being done within the country

In Italy there is an active ongoing debate about the methods used for research assessment, promoted by single institutions and associations (some of which are CoARA members).

However, with regard to some of the aspects promoted by CoARA (e.g., among others, valuing the diversity of research outputs and activities of researchers, recognizing multidisciplinary, or implementing Open Science practices), the Italian research community would greatly benefit from the constitution of the National Chapter, which would put the Agreement principles at the centre of the debate, with a view to finding a feasible way to integrate them into our national context.

Currently, at international level, Italy is involved in the G7 working group on “Open Science and Research Assessment and Incentives”; at national level, in 2022 Italy published the National Plan for Open Science (in which a chapter is dedicated to the evaluation of research) and the Italian Ministry of Research has recently set up a Committee which has the task of implementing it.

Added value

The NC will become a coordinating body, moving forward the current state of the national debate and developing a practical implementation proposal.

It will bring together different communities involved in research assessment and scholarly communication (learned societies, funders, researchers associations, etc.).

In this context, the National Chapter focuses on the urgency of a concrete reform action.

Work plan and outputs / deliverables, that can be accomplished within two years:

The proposed Work plan is divided into 3 main Work Packages, and over a period of 2 years, starting September 2023:

WP1: Coordination, engagement and expansion of the National Chapter (M1-24)

Task 1.1. Coordination and management

This task aims at both internal and external coordination. Internally, activities include: identification of the task leaders; definition and implementation of processes, flows and work tools. Externally, the activities are: communication and information exchange with other national and international actors (working groups, associations, projects, etc.); attraction of new organisations outside CoARA.

Task 1.2. Institutional Roadmaps: alignment

This activity is dedicated to aligning the work of Italian CoARA members in the definition and updating of their institutional Roadmaps. A subtask is dedicated to the translation of the Agreement into Italian, which is an important step for the creation and sharing of a common shared culture.

Task 1.3. Communication and engagement

This task includes activities like webinars and face-to-face seminars also for currently under-represented stakeholders (for example, scientific communities, early stage researchers, PhD students, funders, practice partners, learned societies, researchers associations, etc.). Training activities will also be promoted with other active initiatives (such as the Competence centre of ICDI).

DELIVERABLES:

D 1.1. Italian translation of the Agreement on reforming research assessment (M6)

D 1.2. Report on challenges, opportunities and lessons learned in the definition and implementation of Institutional Roadmaps (M6 draft; update M22)

WP2: Coordination with the CoARA Working Groups and the other National Chapters (M5-M24)

Task 2.1. Coordination and alignment with selected CoARA Working Groups (vertical)

This task aims at gathering input from and returning feedback to the 10 WGs that will be approved within CoARA by the end of 2023. Since we still don't know the topics of the WGs, we cannot provide further details (cf. also WP3).

Task 2.2. Coordination and alignment with other CoARA National Chapters (horizontal)

This task aims at gathering input from and returning feedback to the other NCs that will be accepted within CoARA. As already mentioned, direct contacts with the organisations proposing the Spanish, French and Polish NCs already exist.

Task 2.3. Awareness and training

This task aims at organising 1 or 2 training seminars a year on the results and activities conducted within the CoARA WGs and NCs. All materials will be openly available and released with a CC licence as OERs on the CoARA website.

DELIVERABLES

D 2.1: Reports on Task 2.3 events (M12-M24)

D 2.2: Reports on the feedback gathered on the results and outputs of CoARA WGs and NCs (M24)

D2.3: National final event

WP3: Thematic National Working Groups on relevant, cross-cutting topics for the Italian community (M6-M24)

The precise definition of WP3 will depend on the topics of the 10 Working Groups that will be approved within CoARA by the end of 2023, in order to avoid overlapping. After the selection of the 10 WGs, we will identify a maximum of 3 thematic National Working Groups (NWG) that will work on cross-cutting topics deemed particularly relevant for the Italian national community (e.g., multidisciplinary). The first NWG will be identified in the first 6 months (duration: 1 year); a maximum of 2 other NWGs will start at the beginning of year 2 and will last until the end of the project. Each NWG will organise a workshop.

Task 3.1 - Thematic NWG 1 (M6-18)

Output: 1 workshop

Task 3.2 - Thematic NWG 2 (M12-24)

Output: 1 workshop

Task 3.3 - Thematic NWG 3 (M12-24)

Output: 1 workshop

DELIVERABLE

D 3.1: Report on lessons learned and recommendations (M24).

List of at least half of the CoARA member organisations from the country concerned that are interested in joining the group

1. Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
2. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)
3. TOUR4EU - Tuscan Organisation of Universities and Research for Europe
4. Università di Milano-Bicocca
5. Ca' Foscari University of Venice
6. Università degli Studi di Pavia
7. Università Campus Biomedico di Roma
8. Università degli Studi di Firenze

9. Università del Piemonte Orientale
10. Università di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale
11. Università di Palermo
12. Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia
13. Università di Cagliari
14. Italian Reproducibility Network (ITRN)
15. Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli
16. Università di Torino
17. Università degli Studi di Milano
18. IULM UNIVERSITY
19. Università per Stranieri di Siena
20. Università di Pisa
21. Politecnico di Torino
22. ANVUR
23. Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia
24. Università di Brescia
25. Università degli Studi Roma Tre
26. Università di Macerata
27. Università dell'Insubria
28. Università Politecnica delle Marche
29. Associazione Italiana per la promozione della scienza aperta (AISA)
30. Università di Padova
31. Università di Trento
32. Politecnico di Bari
33. Università degli Studi di Bergamo
34. Scuola IMT Lucca
35. Università di Camerino
36. Università di Trieste
37. Università degli studi di Verona
38. Scuola Normale Superiore
39. INGV
40. Università di Ferrara
41. Università degli Studi della Toscana
42. Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele
43. Università degli studi dell'Aquila
44. Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo
45. University of Messina

The CoARA member organisations that expressed interest in joining the National Chapter amount to 45, more than half of the 53 CoARA member organisations from Italy, as of May 31st 2023 h 14.30.

Envisaged co-chairs leading the National Chapter

Francesca Di Donato (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche)

Francesca Masini (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

Mechanisms to ensure that a broader range of organisations, including from outside CoARA, contribute to and benefit from the National Chapter

The activities planned in WP1 (Coordination, engagement and expansion of the National Chapter) will ensure that a larger scientific community will be reached, beyond current CoARA's borders.

A specific task (Task 1.3) is dedicated to include and create a fruitful connection with currently under-represented stakeholders, like scientific communities, early stage researchers, PhD students, funders at the national and international level, practice partners, learned societies, researchers associations, etc.

In addition, the alignment of the work the Italian CoARA members are doing to define their Institutional Roadmap, and its dissemination through the deliverables of Tasks 1.1 and 1.2, will encourage organisations outside CoARA to see the potential of the Coalition and to consider signing the Agreement.

In addition, the external coordination to be attained through Task 1.1 will involve a synergic communication and information exchange with other entities that are active on research assessment themes at the national and also international level.

Envisaged support needed from the Secretariat

1. Help with coordination activities that involve the CoARA Working Groups and National Chapters (WP2, Tasks 2.1, 2.2);
2. support for social communication;
3. support for on-line meetings;
4. help with setting up an open working environment, including a sharing document system;
5. support for the publication of materials on the CoARA website (Task 2.3);
6. organisation of a final event for National Chapters in order to support and contribute global implementation of reforming research assessment.