

Rules of Procedure – Steering Board Observers

Introduction

The role of these Rules of Procedure (RoPs) is to describe the processes governing the appointment and contribution of Institutional and Individual Observers to the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment ([CoARA](https://coara.eu/)) Steering Board (SB) and General Assembly. This Rules of Procedure document is the responsibility of the CoARA General Assembly. It can be amended, based on suggestions from CoARA member organisations or the Steering Board itself, to be reviewed by the Steering Board, and approved by the General Assembly.

1. Steering Board Observers

CoARA SB *Institutional Observers* are not-for-profit organisations having an interest in research assessment. CoARA SB Institutional Observers may but do not need to be CoARA members.

CoARA SB *Individual Observers* are experts who may be brought in – on a case-by-case basis – for specific tasks, if and when needed and agreed by the SB.

The purpose of SB Observers is to bring additional insight and information as well as complementary perspectives valuable to the SB discussions and work.

The number of Observers shall be no more than half the size of the (up to) 11-members Steering Board.

CoARA SB Observers will be invited to participate to open sessions of the Steering Board and General Assembly meetings.

CoARA SB Observers are required to follow the CoARA [Code of Conduct](#).

2. Identification, invitation and appointment

Institutional Observers can be appointed following two processes:

- by invitation sent by the CoARA Secretariat following the decision of the Steering Board;
- following direct application sent by interested organisations to the CoARA Secretariat, and conditional to approval by the Steering Board.

Individual Observers can only join the meetings by invitation.

In all cases, the validation of the Observer status will require approval by a majority of at least 2/3 of the Steering Board members (rounded up to the upper whole number).

Institutional Observers will be required to provide a short description of their organisation and interest in research assessment.

Institutional Observers will be represented by one primary contact point, and a secondary contact point may be identified as an alternate. Primary or secondary contact points can only represent one Institutional Observer.

Individual observers are not taken to represent any organisation(s) they are affiliated with.

3. Duration and maintenance of a list of Observers

Except for individual experts whose participation will be decided on a case-by-case basis, Institutional Observers will be appointed for a period of one year renewable without limit.

The Steering Board will review the list of Institutional Observers annually (before the General Assembly) and can decide to modify it by adding or removing some. In case an Institutional Observer is appointed between two reviews, its status will be revalidated during the following review.

An Institutional or Individual Observer can end its/their Observer status at any time by informing the Secretariat.

The Steering Board can terminate the Observer status of an individual or an organisation at any time at the motivated request of one of its members addressed to the Chair of the Steering Board.

The secretariat will maintain a list of Institutional Observers, which will be publicly available on CoARA website.

4. Participation to Steering Board Meetings

The Secretariat will send meeting invitations and agenda to Observers sufficiently in advance of meetings. The meeting agenda will clearly differentiate the items and/or sessions that will be open to Observers from the ones that will be restricted to Steering Board members. However, at any time, the Chair of the meeting may declare (parts of) the meeting to be closed to Observers.

Only documents related to items and sessions open to Observers will be provided to Observers.

Observers will be represented in meetings by only one representative: the primary contact point or the secondary contact point.

Observers may participate in, and intervene during, meetings. They can however not participate in the decision-making process or in any vote.

5. Participation in General Assembly Meetings

The Secretariat will send meeting invitations and agenda to Observers sufficiently in advance of meetings. The meeting agenda will clearly differentiate the items and/or sessions that will be open to Observers from the ones that will be restricted to CoARA members (including CoARA members who are also observers to the Steering Board). However, at any time, the Chair of the meeting may declare (parts of) the meeting to be closed to Observers who are not CoARA members.

Only documents related to items and sessions open to Observers will be provided to Observers who are not CoARA members.

Observers who are not CoARA members will be represented in meetings by only one representative: the primary contact point or the secondary contact point.

Observers who are not CoARA members may participate in, and intervene during, meetings. They can however not participate in the decision-making process or in any vote.

Observers who are CoARA members keep all rights in particular voting rights at the General Assembly.