

Porto, 23 February 2024

PRESS RELEASE

## Building a Stronger Network: CoARA National Chapters Convene for a First Exchange Forum

**Representatives of CoARA's 15 National Chapters gathered in Porto on 22–23 February for the coalition's first Exchange Forum on best practices and challenges related to the reform of research assessment in national contexts. The event was attended by member organisations involved in a National Chapter or interested in forming or joining one.**

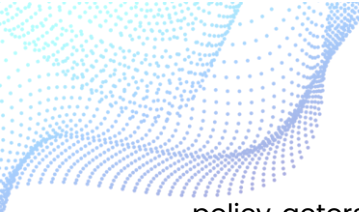
CoARA member organisations follow a shared direction to reform research assessment, as outlined in a common Agreement, and have committed to implementing its core principles within their organisations. For the successful implementation of CoARA's commitments, translating these principles into the diverse geographical, regional, institutional, and disciplinary contexts in which member organisations are situated is key. National Chapters are country-level facilitators: they form hubs for bringing together all actor groups relevant for the successful reform of research assessment and for coordinating actions and for mutual learning across them while respecting member organisations' autonomy.

### **CoARA's first Exchange Forum**

The CoARA National Chapters Exchange Forum was set up to cultivate a dynamic exchange of insights and experiences among existing and prospective CoARA National Chapters and inspire CoARA members to initiate new National Chapters. This very first edition was hosted at the Alfândega Congress Centre in Porto by INSEC TEC, FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology, and the University of Minho, and co-organised by Science Europe.

### **Conversations towards a diverse but coherent CoARA**

During the two-day conference, participants discussed the opportunities and challenges presented by local contexts of research assessment systems, as well as the ways National Chapters could respond to them, drawing from the experiences of more established chapters. Participants also delved into topics such as streamlining participation in CoARA Working Groups, supporting member organisations in preparing their action plans, being grounded in researcher communities, and also efficiently working together with national and European



policy actors. They also addressed the expansion of CoARA's outreach in national contexts, sharing good practices to foster a multilingual CoARA and to assess the impact of National Chapters.

*"The event provided us with a truly special opportunity to meet face-to-face with some of the key contributors to CoARA for the first time. These conversations are vital for our collective effort of moving CoARA forward from Agreement to action. We are building upon this to develop further opportunities for exchange among other key enablers of the reform."*

Prof. Rianne Letschert, Maastricht University, CoARA Steering Board Chair

*"The focus of these two days went beyond exploring synergies among the National Chapters; it also celebrated the diverse geographical contexts, the different starting points and approaches they bring to the table. Continuous dialogues among National Chapters and other CoARA actor groups are crucial in fostering diversity and mutual inspiration, which are key values for CoARA. Besides, these dialogues serve to promote coherence within CoARA, mitigating potential contradictions across assessment systems, types, and purposes."*

Dr. Lidia Borrell-Damián, Science Europe, CoARA Steering Board Member

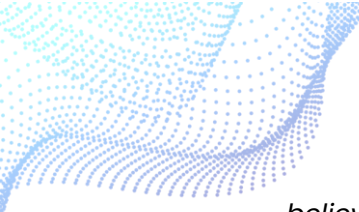
*"The countries whose National Chapters participated in this event have already undertaken substantial efforts to integrate responsible research assessment in their research cultures. It is exciting to see how CoARA boosts these country-level efforts and how, in turn, work around National Chapters feed into the shared vision and joint implementation of CoARA. National Chapters play a key role in facilitating these two-way dynamics. In a way, they serve as homes of CoARA in a given country."*

Dr. Erzsébet Toth Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

### **Portugal, Sweden and UK chapters bring total count to 15**

Out of the 46 countries represented in CoARA by member organisations, 12 National Chapters had previously been established in Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine. National Chapters' applications in Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom have recently been validated and presented at the Exchange Forum. Gathering respectively 18, 25 and 17 member organisations, they bring the overall number of chapters to 15.

*"We are very pleased to know that the Portuguese National Chapter has been approved, and excited to now continue working together in its implementation. We*



*believe that the work plan set up for the two coming years will be an important step forward towards research assessment reform in Portugal and to boost the quality of research and the recognition of its multifaceted contributions to the various sectors of society.”*

Dr. Bruno Béu FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia

Outputs of the conference will be available on the CoARA communication channels soon. As a next step, in order to sustain the dialogue across National Chapters and streamline the key discussion points into actions, key take-aways of the conference will be turned into a joint report with input and agreed action items from the National Chapter coordinators.

### **CoARA calls on members to create further National Chapters**

The call for CoARA members to form National Chapters was launched on an ongoing basis, and invites further members to take part, under the conditions outlined in the [call document](#).

CoARA members apply to establish National Chapters on a voluntary basis, inviting at least half of the CoARA members from the respective country to participate. With a two-year mandate, they take on the responsibility of creating specific outputs to support their members in implementing the Agreement in their national contexts.

### **Further information**

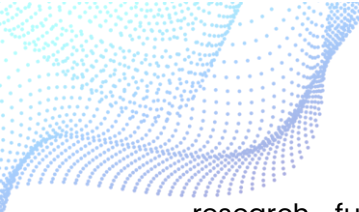
- Find conference news [here](#).
- More information on CoARA’s member organisations are available [here](#).
- Operational National Chapters are listed [here](#).
- Ongoing call for CoARA National Chapters can be found [here](#).

### **Press contact**

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### **Background information**

There is a broad agreement on the need to reform research assessment systems and recognise all the diverse sets of outputs, practices activities, and actors that contribute to excellence in present-day research realities. Established in December 2022, CoARA, the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment, is driven by the collective efforts of over 600



research funding organisations, research performing organisations, national/regional assessment authorities and agencies, associations, and learned societies. These member organisations have signed an agreement to work together to enable systemic reform on the basis of shared principles within an agreed timeframe, and to facilitate exchanges of information and mutual learning between all those willing to improve research assessment practices.