

Ensuring a diverse CoARA governance: adding the geographical dimension to the Steering Board election criteria

History of proposed amendments to the “CoARA Rules of Procedure Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board” Core Document (hereinafter RoP).

Date	Version of the RoP	Change requested by	Change
20.10. 2022	1.0		Original draft published and approved by the CoARA General Assembly in December 2022.
25.04. 2024	2.0	CoARA Steering Board based on input received at the CoARA General Assembly	<p>Suggestion to include the geographical balancing criteria to the Steering Board election process.</p> <p>The current document “Ensuring a diverse CoARA governance: adding the geographical dimension to the Steering Board election criteria” (hereinafter “supporting document”) serves as a background paper, providing a more detailed context for the amendments proposed.</p>
24.05.2024	2.1	European Commission	<p>Removal of the reference to the “Phase 2” in the RoP core document and keeping it only as a further contextual information in the current supporting document. The voting from CoARA members is therefore requested only for Phase 1.</p> <p>Clarification on the prioritization between the 3 balancing criteria.</p> <p>A clarification was made between the supporting document and the RoP, emphasizing that the vote will only concern the revised RoP document.</p>

24.05.2024	2.1	DFG, German Research Foundation	<p>Removal of the reference to the “Phase 2” in the RoP core document and keeping it only as a further contextual information in the current supporting document. The voting from CoARA members is therefore requested only for Phase 1.</p> <p>Clarification on the prioritization between the 3 balancing criteria.</p> <p>Deletion of the text limiting the number of SB seats to a given country to one.</p>
24.05.2024	2.1	Steering Board (in response to the amendments received from the DFG)	<p>Extending the country limit from one to two Steering Board members per country.</p>

Changes made in the text based on these amendment requests are highlighted in yellow.

Objectives

Fostering diversity and inclusiveness of stakeholders in research processes and addressing long-standing structural inequalities is a key value in the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA).¹ Promoting broad, balanced and inclusive representation of its membership and stakeholder communities is not only a core precondition of a truly systemic reform but it must also be reflected in CoARA’s governance.

To ensure that the composition of the Steering Board accurately reflects the diversity of actors involved in the reform of research assessment, as well as to prevent power imbalance due to gender bias, or bias related to the type of institution, CoARA has a set of balancing criteria in place when selecting members of the Steering Board. These are specified in the [‘Rules of Procedure for Steering Board members’](#) document and are also copied below under the section ‘Balancing criteria implemented at the Constitutive Assembly’ below.

These balancing criteria aim to ensure accurate representation of CoARA members and

¹ As specified in the Governing Principles: “Inclusiveness. The CoARA is global in scope and seeks to promote broad, balanced and inclusive representation of its membership and stakeholder communities. The Coalition brings together research organisations at different levels of progress in reforms of research assessment and seeks to advance according to best practices. Inclusiveness is also expected within the CoARA bodies with respect to gender, ethnicity, age, disciplinary background, etc.” CoARA Governance document, p. 3.

facilitate participation in the governance for underrepresented groups. As such, they evolve with the coalition.

Following the first two elections, in 2024, the Steering Board and the CoARA Secretariat agreed that **adding a geographical criterion to the balancing is necessary** to ensure all regions within the coalition are represented and feel welcome, to limit overrepresentation of certain geographical areas, as well as to accelerate the reform on a global level and in partnership with leaders outside of Europe.

The new mechanism is suggested to be **implemented in two steps**: the first, in-between step (subject to voting, June 2024) introduces geographical balancing criteria for the upcoming Steering Board elections due in late 2024, based on the current composition of the coalition. The second step (not yet subject to voting) represents the ideal geographical composition of the coalition and thus the Steering Board, representing our long-term vision. Both steps are outlined below. Upon the approval of the CoARA General Assembly, these amendments (as indicated in Phase 1) will be added as amendments to the **CoARA Rules of Procedure Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board** core document.

Definition of geographical coverage

Geographical balance of the Steering Board is determined based on the country in which Steering Board members are located. This may not always correspond to the location of their nominating institutions.

For optimal representation of their countries, ideal candidates will have worked for at least 3 years at their location.

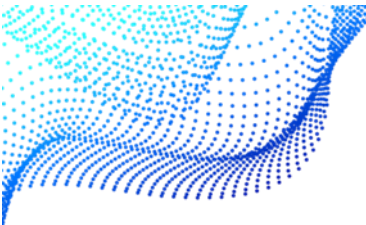
Phase I: Geographical balancing criteria for the CoARA Steering Board elections (subject to voting at the General Assembly, June 2024)

In Phase One, **minimum two Steering Board members should be located in each of the following geographical regions²**, provided candidacies have been presented for each of these regions:

Region A: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

Region B: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Ukraine

² Regions A, B and C have been defined by following the European Commission's classification provided in the Horizon Europe Regulation. Along these lines, Region A corresponds to EU [WIDENING countries](#), region B corresponds to other European countries while all other countries belong to region C.



Region C: All other countries.

The number of Steering Board members affiliated in one country cannot exceed two. Thus, candidates located in a country with two existing members on the Steering Board can only be put forward for election in the year that at least one member is stepping down.

These mechanisms will be implemented alongside the already [existing balancing criteria](#). However, the geographical balancing criteria are prioritized over the criteria based on organisation type, and gender, in that order.

Phase 2: Geographical balancing criteria for the CoARA Steering Board elections – implemented gradually from 2025 onwards (to be elaborated, not yet subject to voting at the General Assembly, June 2024)

To accelerate the reform on a global level and in partnership with leaders outside of Europe, outreach to non-European organisations will be increased to stimulate membership to CoARA, and consequently the representation of non-European countries in the CoARA Steering Board will be progressively increased. This will be achieved by **ongoing efforts to proactively strengthen the presence of CoARA in under-represented regions** as part of CoARA's Membership Strategy.

The overall, long-term vision for CoARA is that its members originate from countries of all regions of the world and its governance includes balanced representation from each region.

Balancing criteria implemented at the Constitutive Assembly (December 2022) and for the last Steering Board election (December 2023):

Balancing mechanism

Balancing criteria

When voting for the Steering Board (SB), CoARA member organisations should strive for ensuring balance in types of organisations, gender, geographical coverage, and diversity of disciplines and expertise. A diverse Steering Board indeed makes better decisions for a diverse community.

As indicated in the Rules of Procedure, the following balancing criteria must be respected in the selection of SB members:

- Type of organisation: at least one, and not more than four SB members should be originating from each of the following types of organisations, provided candidacies have been presented for each of these categories:

1. Universities, and their associations.
 2. Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations.
 3. Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers.
 4. Public or private research funding organisations and their associations.
 5. National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations.
 6. Other relevant not-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations.
- Gender: the following gender balance will be applied: 25:25:50 (25% men; 25% women; 50% open). For a SB formed by 11 members, this implies that there must be at least 3 female and 3 male members in it.

In case that any of the “type of organisation” and “gender” criteria could not be met (e.g because no candidates from one or more of the six types or organisations have been proposed or because the candidate list includes less than 3 candidates from either gender), the balancing criteria will be applied so as to maximise the diversity in gender and type of organisation, insofar as possible.

The geographic coverage and the diversity of disciplines and expertise will not be used as balancing criteria but could be used in case of ties. Members are still encouraged to take also these criteria into consideration when casting their votes.

For a candidate to be elected as SB member, they must receive at least one vote.