WORKSHOP

CoARA
Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

Reforming Academic Career Assessment

Current insights and future directions

25 June | 15.00 CEST

coordinated by eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

Outline

- Welcome and housekeeping rules

- The Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
- Overview of the CoARA Working Group on Reforming Academic Career Assessment
- Case studies
  - Q&A
- Survey results
  - Q&A
- Discussion in break-out groups
- Final statements

CoARA

Housekeeping rules

- Use the chat to introduce yourself, communicate with other participants and ask questions;
- The session will be recorded, including Q&A. Discussion in break-out groups will not be recorded;
- Recording and slides will be shared with participants;
- You can ask questions via the chat, or during the Q&A sessions.

CoARA

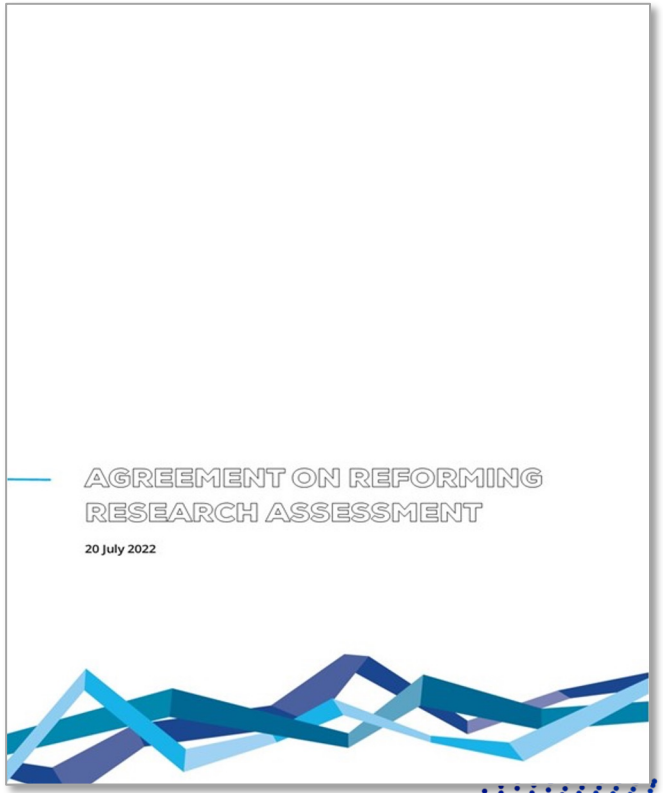
Coaliton for Advancing Research Assessment – CoARA

- Building on progress made so far (DORA, Leiden Manifesto, Hong Kong Principles), the Agreement establishes a **common direction for research assessment reform**, while respecting organisations' autonomy. It is based on **shared principles, 10 commitments, and a timeframe** (1 & 5 years) for reforms.

- Overarching goal to **maximise the quality and impact of research**, basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

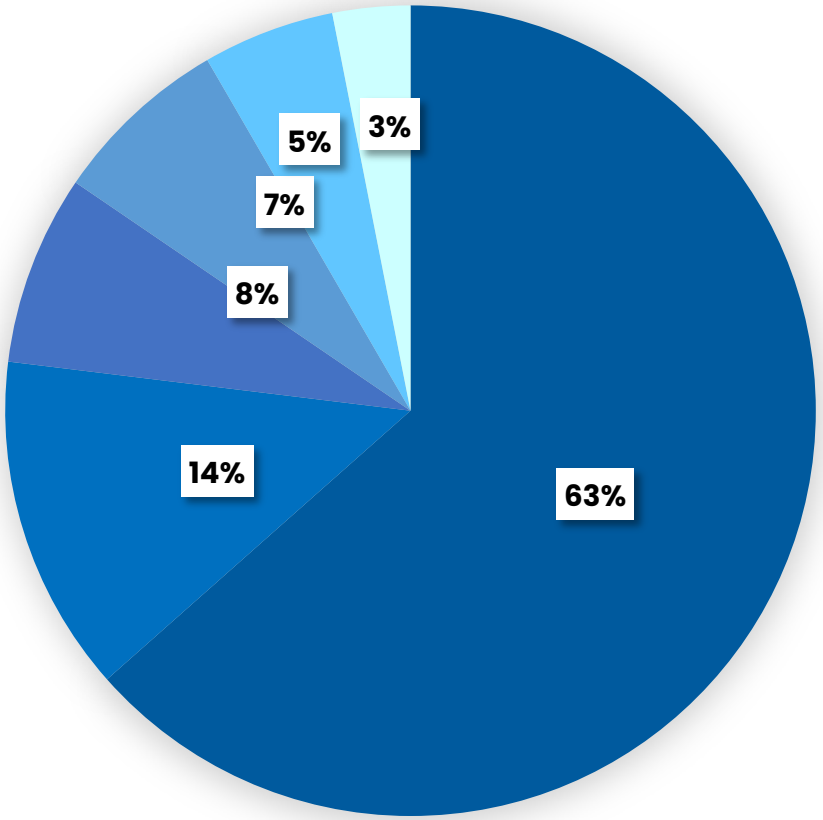
- The Agreement was **published on 20 July 2022**

- The Agreement full text - CoARA



CoARA

CoARA Membership by type of organisation



In descending order of total share:

- Universities and their associations
- Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations
- Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers
- Public or private research funding organisations and their associations
- Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations
- National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations

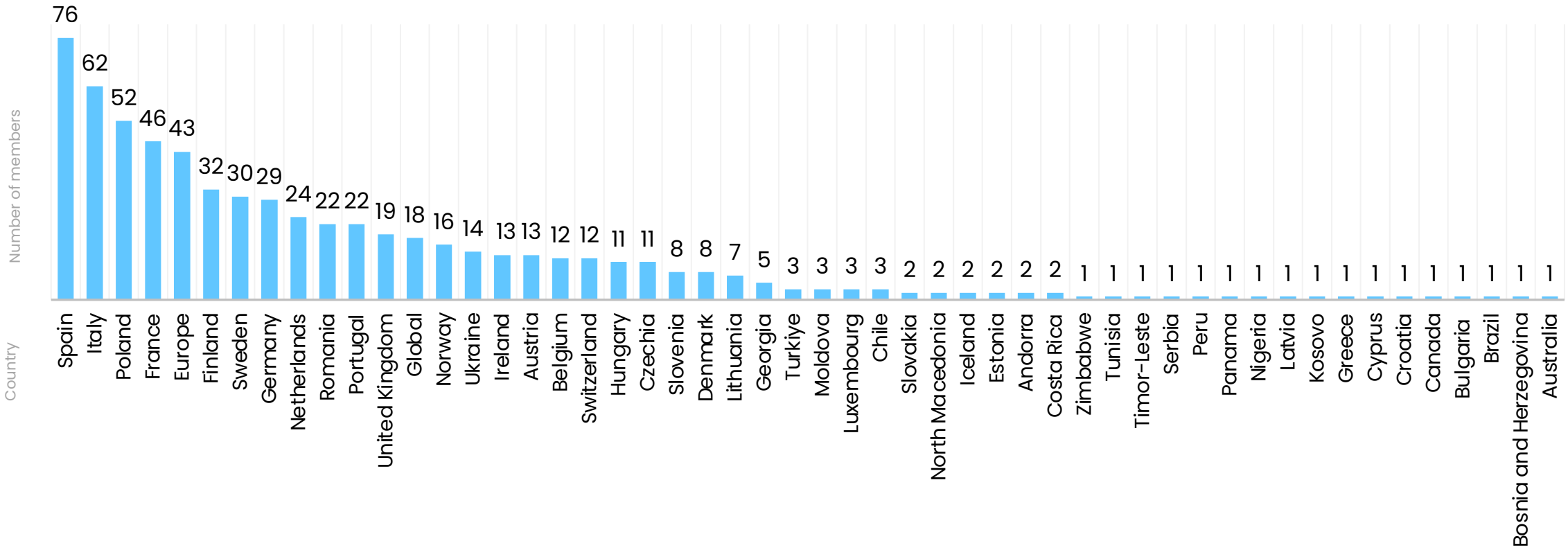
646 member organisations

735 signatories

[21 May2024]

CoARA

CoARA MEMBERSHIP BY COUNTRY



Membership total:
646

# of countries*:
50

(21 May 2024)

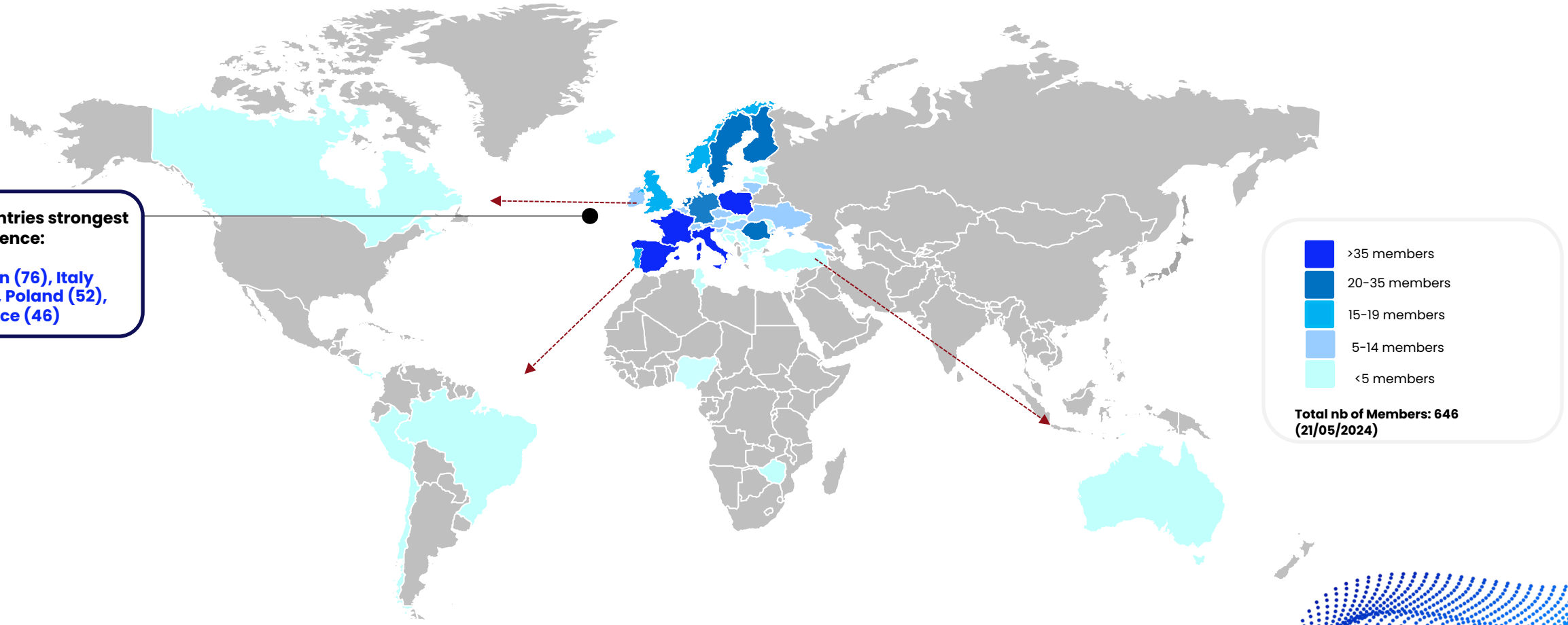
CoARA

*excl. pan-European and global organisations

CoARA membership 21st May 2024

Countries strongest presence:

Spain (76), Italy (62), Poland (52), France (46)



CoARA

CoARA Activities – WG

- 13 Working Groups

Towards Open Infrastructures for Responsible Research Assessment

TIER – Towards an Inclusive Evaluation of Research

Multilingualism and language biases in research assessment

Reforming Academic Career Assessment

Experiments in Assessment – Idea generation, co-creation, and piloting

Global framework for research evaluation in the social sciences and the humanities (SSH)

Ethics and Research Integrity Policy in Responsible Research Assessment for Data and Artificial Intelligence (ERIP)

Early-and-mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) – Assessment and Research Culture

Responsible metrics and indicators

Recognizing and Rewarding Peer Review

Supporting the alignment of research assessment systems with CoARA in biomedical disciplines through administrative reforms and governance

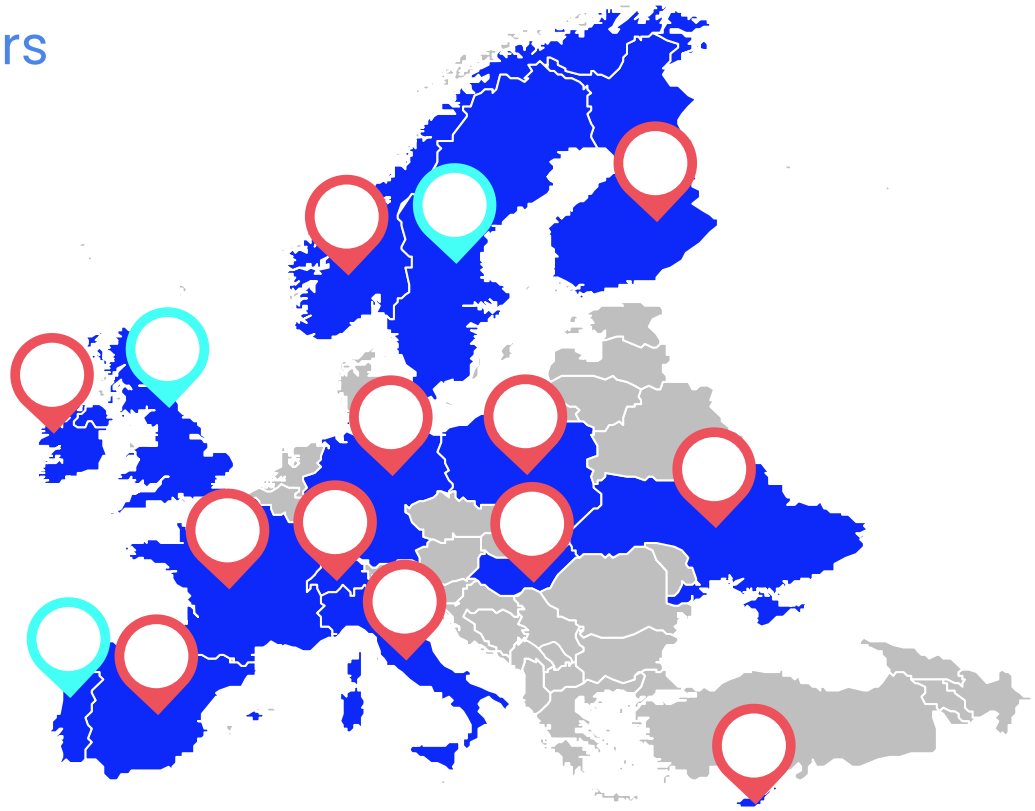
Towards Transformations: Transdisciplinarity, Applied/Practice-Based Research, and Impacts

Improving practices in the assessment of research proposals

CoARA

CoARA Activities – National Chapters

- 15 National Chapters



- Cyprus
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom

CoARA

Working Group on Reforming Academic Career Assessment

- The **academic community** should **drive reforms** in evaluating the quality and impact of academic activities and careers.
- **ACA systems** should adequately **reflect** the different **tasks, functions and roles** academics fulfil over the course of their career.
- Aim is to **broaden the reflection** on research assessment to ACA, supporting models that take into account the full range of work conducted by academics in research, teaching and learning, innovation, management/leadership and service to society.

Members of the Working Group

University associations/networks

- Alliance of Rhine-Main Universities
- Berlin University Alliance
- Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF)
- Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP)
- Crue Spanish Universities
- EUA-CDE
- EUA
- France Universités
- Hungarian Rectors' Conference
- Lithuanian Universities Rectors' Conference
- Romanian Council of Rectors
- Swissuniversities
- Universities Norway
- Universities of the Netherlands
- Flemish Interuniversities Council (VLIR)
- Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN)

39 members (21 countries + Europe, Global)

Research centres

- EU-LIFE

Other org. involved in RA

- CRAC-Vitae
- UK Reproducibility Network

Learned societies and associations of researchers

- All European Academies (ALLEA)
- Eurodoc
- Global Young Academy
- Federation of Finnish Learned Societies
- Young Academy of Europe

National authorities

- Italian National Agency for the evaluation of universities and research institutes (ANVUR)

Individual universities

- Masaryk University (CZ)
- Nicolaus Copernicus University (PL)
- NOVA University Lisbon (PT)
- South East Technological University (IE)
- Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (MK)
- Technische Universität Braunschweig (DE)
- Université Clermont Auvergne (FR)
- University Medical Center Groningen (NL)
- University of Ferrara (IT)
- University of Graz (AT)
- University of Rijeka (HR)
- University of Strathclyde (UK)
- University of Padua (IT)
- University of Messina (IT)

General Objectives

- Defining the **principles of reforming ACA**, from the perspectives of institutions and academic staff being assessed.
  - Identification of the requirements, potential benefits and challenges
  - The lessons learned from institutions that have initiated reforms will be considered.

- Developing an **adaptable toolbox for ACA**, considering all university missions and the broad scope of activities, skills and competences of academic staff at different stages of their career.
  - The toolbox will be flexible, sustainable and cater for different institutional profiles and national contexts. It will also provide room for a diversity of career focuses and trajectories.

Main activities

Phase 1

- Development of a targeted mapping of initiatives at institutional and national levels, considering their outcomes, benefits and challenges, and identifying elements that can be used in different contexts and upscaled to the supra-national level.

- Main outputs: synthesis of lessons learned (incl. potential upscaling elements of existing initiatives), repository of case studies, survey database.

Phase 2

- Development of the toolbox (several iterations). Feasibility studies will be conducted and implementation scenarios for the toolbox will be developed.

- Main outputs: toolbox on ACA, including enabling conditions and application context, as well as implementation guidelines.

Case studies

Case-studies

- While the survey focuses on institutional/organizational level initiatives, the case-studies describe well-established international and national level initiatives for reforming research assessment.
- Initiatives to be included in the case studies collection must have
  - implementation plan targeted to all organisations conducting academic career assessments (recruitment, performance evaluation and/or career progression) within a country (national level) or irrespective of country (international)
  - public documentation of the initiatives, which can be in any language, however in the case-study they need to be described in English
- A case-study template was used for describing the initiatives in a structured and comparable way
- 11 case-study drafts (7 selected by the team and 4 suggested by WG partners)

INITIATIVES

Initiative	Name	Year	Geographical Scope	Author(s)
ANECA	Reforming research and academic careers assessment in Spain	2023	Spain	Pilar Paneque
CLACSO-FOLEC	Declaration of principles: a new research assessment towards a socially relevant science in Latin America and the Caribbean	2022	Latin America & Caribbean	Laura Rovelli
CoARA	Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)	2022	Global	Rita Morais & Vinciane Gaillard
DORA	The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)	2013	Global	Haley Hazlett
Eu Charter	The European Charter for Researchers	2005	Europe	Sanja Terlević
Finland	Good practice in researcher evaluation	2020	Finland	Janne Pölönen & Mira Söderman
Netherlands	Recognition & Rewards Programme	2020	The Netherlands	Kim Huijpen
Norway	NOR-CAM – A toolbox for recognition and rewards in academic careers	2021	Norway	Ragnar Lie
OR4	Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4)	2021	United Kingdom	Grace Murkett & Robert Darby
UKRI	UKRI People and Teams Action Plan	2023	United Kingdom	Grace Murkett & Sharon Coen
YUFE4Postdocs	YUFE4Postdocs evaluation & selection procedure	2023	Europe	Anne Adams

TEMPLATE

Country	Country/Region/International	**Relevance**	The key elements that are relevant for reforming career assessment
Name	Official name of the initiative	**Qualitative**	Recommendations regarding qualitative assessment
Institution	Name of the institution(s) responsible for the initiative	**Quantitative**	Recommendations regarding quantitative assessment
Stakeholders	Names of other organisations/ communities involved	**Diversity**	How initiative recognizes and supports consideration of diversity contributions, outputs and impacts
Year	When the initiative was launched	**Intersectoral**	How initiative recognizes and supports consideration of intersectorality
Documentation	Link to the main document describing the initiative	**Career-stage**	How initiative recognizes and supports consideration of career-stage
Website	Link to the website of the initiative	**Career-path**	How initiative recognizes and supports consideration of career-paths
Summary	Brief description of the initiative	**Toolbox**	Related practical guides and toolkits
Target audience	The main target audience of the initiative	**Implementation**	Implementation process
Geographical Scope	The primary geographical scope of application	**Uptake**	Implementation uptake
International potential	The international potential for adaptation	**Challenges**	Identified implementation challenges/obstacles.
Goal	The intended change	**Benefits**	Identified implementation benefits.

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

Country	International	**Relevance**	Specifically targeted to improving career assessment
Name	The European Charter for Researchers	**Qualitative**	Prioritize qualitative and unbiased peer and expert assessment
Institution	European Union	**Quantitative**	Qualitative assessment can be supported with responsible use of quantitative indicators
Stakeholders	Employers and funders of researchers	**Diversity**	Consider overall potential, creativity, output, activities, research behaviour and mobility
Year	2005, updated 2023	**Intersectoral**	Value geographical, intersectoral, transdisciplinary and virtual mobility
Documentation	https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/am509774cee_en_e4.pdf	**Career-stage**	Recognising PhD researchers as professionals, implementation of specific measures in support of early-career researchers
Website	https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter	**Career-path**	Support a diversity of researcher profiles and career paths
Summary	Ensure the same policy standards for research careers across Europe	**Toolbox**	Brochures, HRS4R guidelines, ResearchComp
Target audience	Researchers, employers and funders in public and private sectors	**Implementation**	Human Resources (HR) Strategy for Researchers, and the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' (HRS4R)
Geographical Scope	Europe	**Uptake**	1500+ organisations have endorsed the Charter and Code principles
International potential	Potential to be applied in other geographical contexts	**Challenges**	Broad and vague nature, absence of benchmarks or standards, administrative burdens lacked implementation strategies, fragmentation of responsibilities
Goal	Same policy standards across Europe, tackling the fragmentation at local, regional and sectoral level	**Benefits**	Successfully incentivised improvements, fostered a more inclusive and cohesive research community and peer learning, foundation for improving research careers across Europe

TOOLKITS

ANECA	Criteria table; FAQ; Narrative CV template; Participation platform; Code of ethics
CLACSO-FOLEC	Report
CoARA	Toolbox with practical tools to support the implementation of the 10 commitments
DORA	Databases of policies and case-studies; Guides on narrative CV, impact, debiasing and assessment design and implementation
EU Charter	Brochures; HRS4R guidelines; ResearchComp
Finland	Structured CV template; Policies, self-evaluation tools and monitoring for institutions; Research information system
Netherlands	Dialogue tool kit; Interview and best practices on career-paths
Norway	NOR-CAM (career-assessment matrix)
OR4	Maturity framework and self-assessment tool; Searchable knowledgebase, OR4 survey
YUFE4Postdocs	Structured CV template

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CASE STUDIES 1/3

Prioritize qualitative and unbiased peer and expert assessment	• Qualitative information • Researcher's self-evaluation • Assessment portfolios • Structured CV • Short narratives • Narrative CV
Qualitative assessment can be supported with responsible use of quantitative indicators	• Narrative bibliometrics • Relevant and inclusive indicators • Indicators and metrics for open research • List of accepted indicators • Recommendations for responsible use of metrics • Abandon journal/publication-based metrics

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CASE STUDIES 2/3

- **Intersectorality** (how initiative recognizes and supports the consideration of intersectorality)
  - e.g. from academia to industry, private sector, public institutions and vice versa

- Practically all initiatives recognized the value of intersectorality
  - identified benefits included e.g. knowledge transfer, valorization, recognition of the often-unacknowledged roles and contributions, influence on policy and practice, diversification of career paths

- Ways to support intersectoral mobility:
  - collaborative research projects
  - secondment in other sectors
  - stakeholder engagement trainings
  - initiatives to promote better recognition of the often-unacknowledged roles and contributions in research

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CASE STUDIES 3/3

- **Challenges**:
  - Culture change related to academic assessment (both senior and early-career researchers have to adapt to the new system)
  - Variation in implementation policies
  - Lack of established models and standards
  - Documentation and resources (time, costs, availability of reviewers)

- **Benefits:**
  - Initiatives form the groundwork for RA reform
  - Wider recognition of contributions and roles
  - Movement between disciplines and sectors
  - The improvement of academic culture (inclusiveness, diversity, transparency) and the quality of research

Comments and Q&A

Survey results

Background information

- Survey **draft** developed between November 2023 -January 2024
- **Pilot phase** in January 2024 – incl. 13 organisations (11 HEIs, 2 research organisations; 10 countries)
- **Final survey**: data collection between February - April 2024

Aim of the survey: gather institutional/organisational level initiatives that aim to broaden the criteria and methods for evaluating the outputs and impacts of academic activities for the purposes of recruitment, performance evaluation and career progression of academic staff.

Target group: Higher education institutions and research organisations worldwide

Scope: organisations that are **planning, initiating or implementing** a reform process on academic career assessment - either at departmental/unit level or organisational level.

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Structure and topics

Structure

- General information about the organisation
- Academic career assessment at organisational level
- General reflections on the reform process
- Final considerations

Examples of topics covered

- Strengths of current academic career assessment system in the organisation
- Challenges of current academic career assessment system in the organisation
- Motivations for the organisation to engage in the reform process
- Drivers of the reform process
- Role of academic staff in the reform process
- Role of organisational leadership in the reform process
- Importance of different academic activities in academic career assessment in the organisation
- Internal communication on the reform process

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Survey respondents

- **236** valid responses, from **41 countries**

Countries (number of respondents):

- Spain (29)
- France (23)
- Georgia (23)
- Germany (20)
- Serbia (16)
- Netherlands (14)
- Slovakia (8)
- Finland (8)
- Italy(8)
- Sweden(8)
- Poland (7)
- Belgium (6)
- Portugal (6)
- Norway (6)
- Austria (5)
- Switzerland (4)
- Ukraine (4)
- Romania (4)
- Czechia (4)
- United Kingdom (3)
- Croatia (3)
- Turkey (3)
- Ireland (2)
- North Macedonia (2)
- Slovenia (2)
- Lithuania (2)
- Other (2)
- Iceland (1)
- Republic of Moldova (1)
- Andorra (1)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (1)
- Cyprus (1)
- Uzbekistan (1)
- Tunisia (1)
- Albania (1)
- Denmark (1)
- Costa Rica (1)
- Azerbaijan (1)
- China (1)
- Malaysia (1)
- Malta (1)

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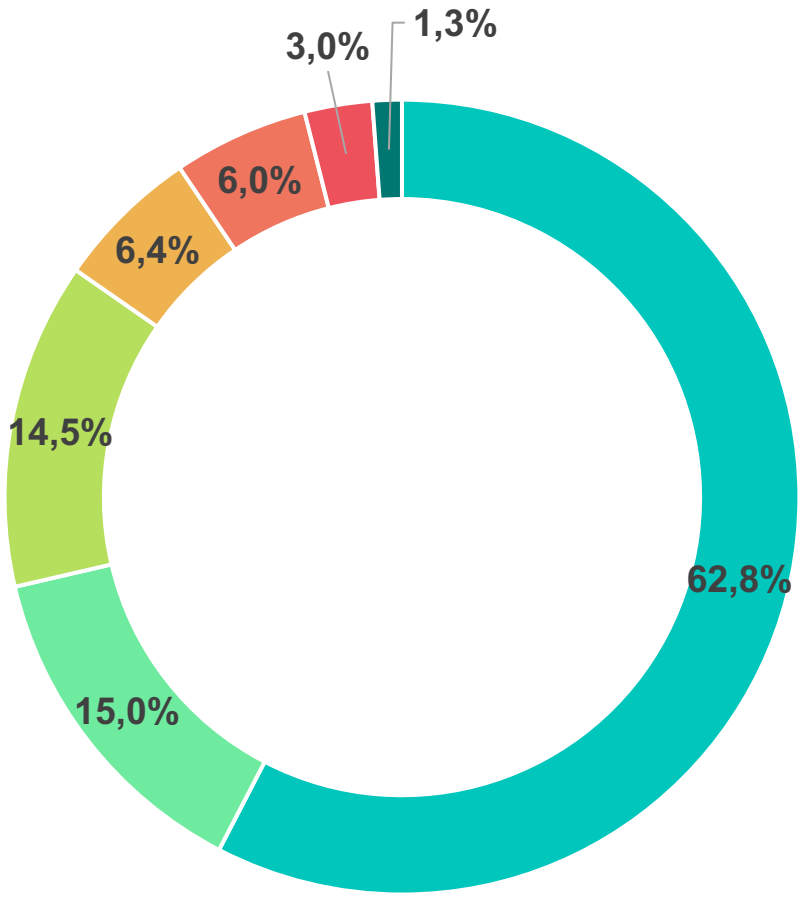
Respondent organisations



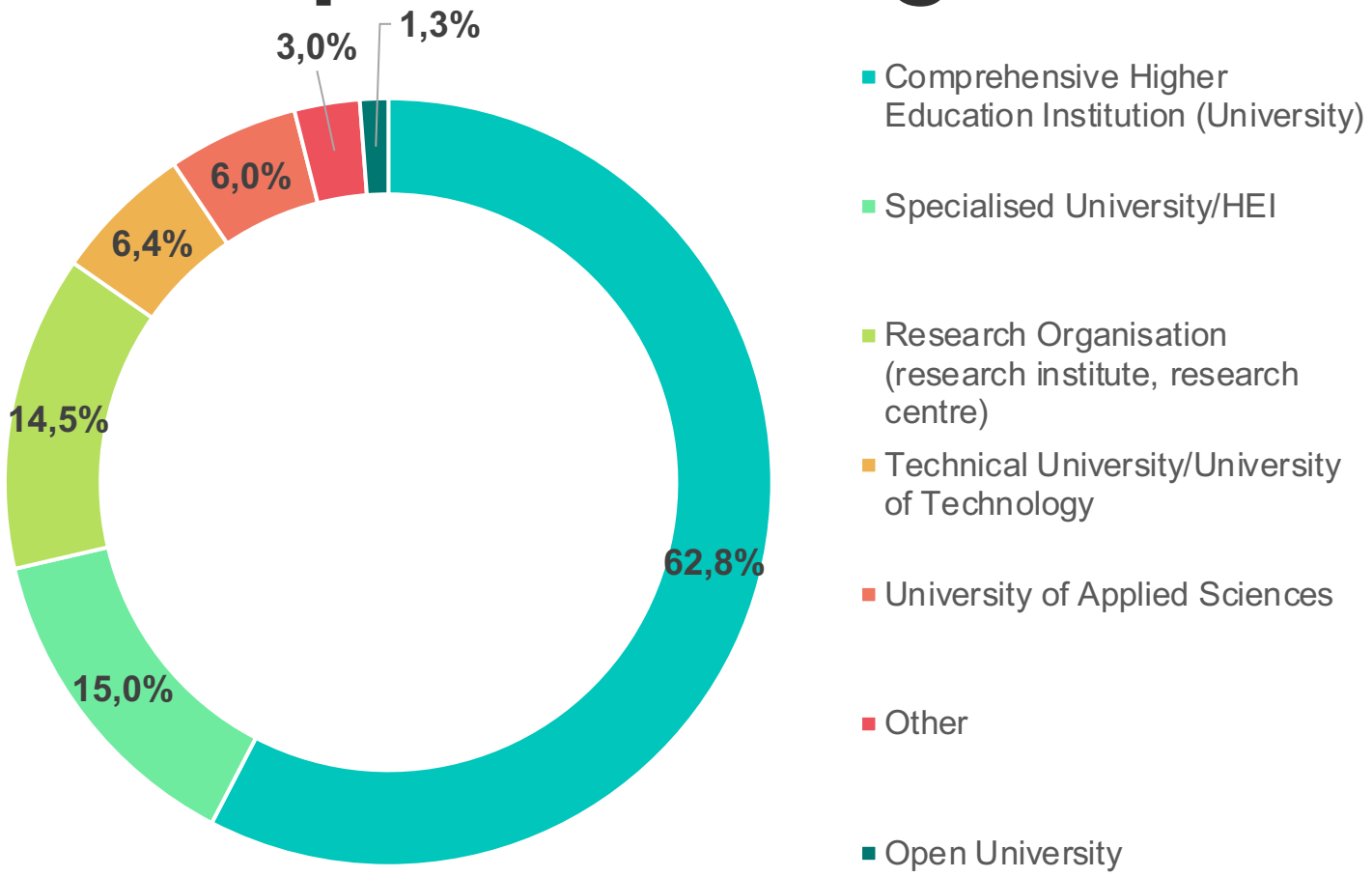
80% public organisations (16% private)

76% both research and teaching-focused (11% mostly research-focused)

43% had ≥ 1000 research staff (FTE)

Number of respondents: 236/236

Respondent organisations



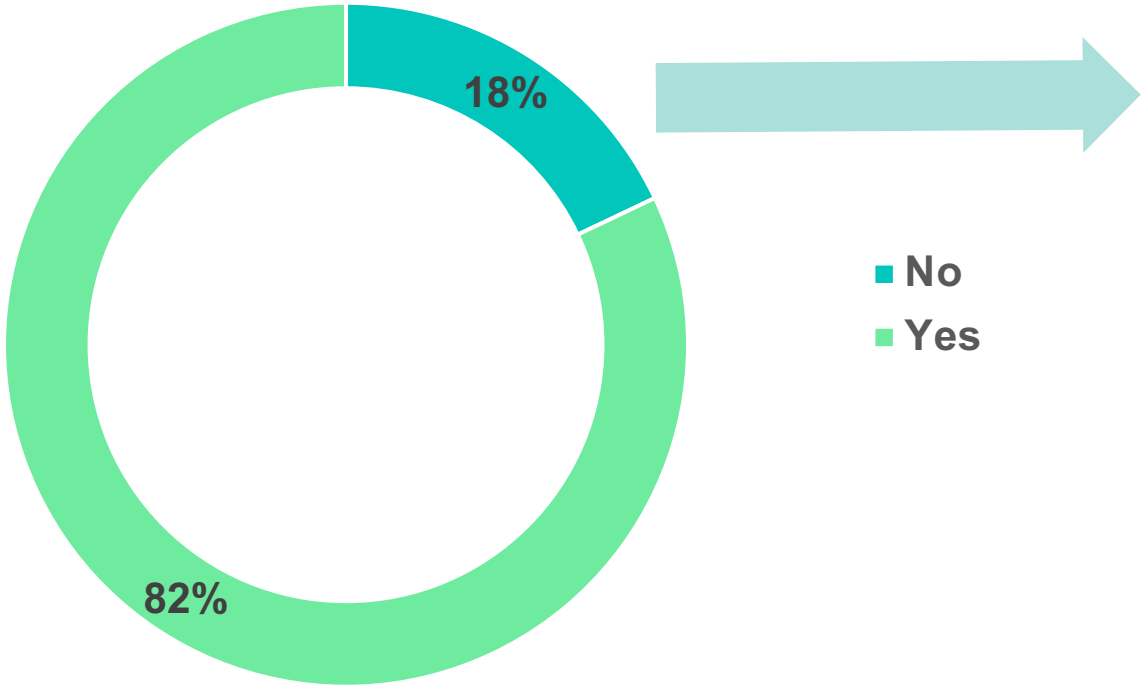
62% of organisations are CoARA members

28% of organisations have signed DORA

CoARA Number of respondents: 236/236

Involvement in reforms

Has your organisation planned, initiated or implemented a reform process on academic career assessment?



Number of respondents: 233/236

Reasons for not engaging in reform processes:

- **National regulations** (institutions have limited autonomy in the definition of ACA reforms)
- **Unclear why the organisation does not engage** (respondent not aware of the reasons accounting for the lack of organisational engagement in ACA reforms)
- **Resource and capacity constraints** (e.g. limited time, staff, and resources and organisational capacity to implement reforms)
- **Recent reforms implemented** (organisations prefer to evaluate the current system's effectiveness before considering further reforms)
- **Current system is satisfactory**
- **Resistance to change**
- Other (e.g. merger processes ongoing, following rules of parent organisation)

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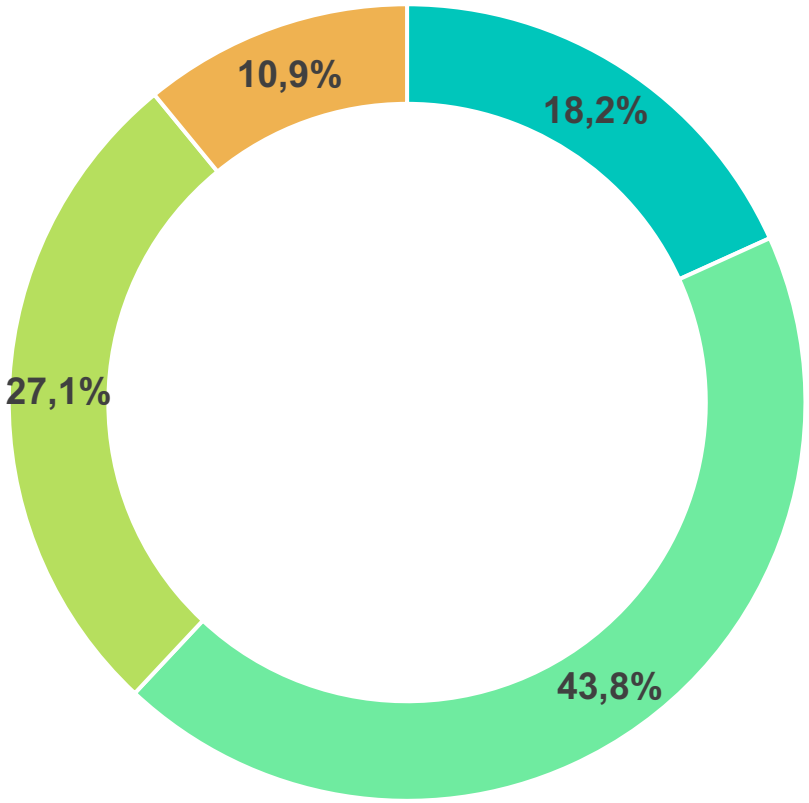
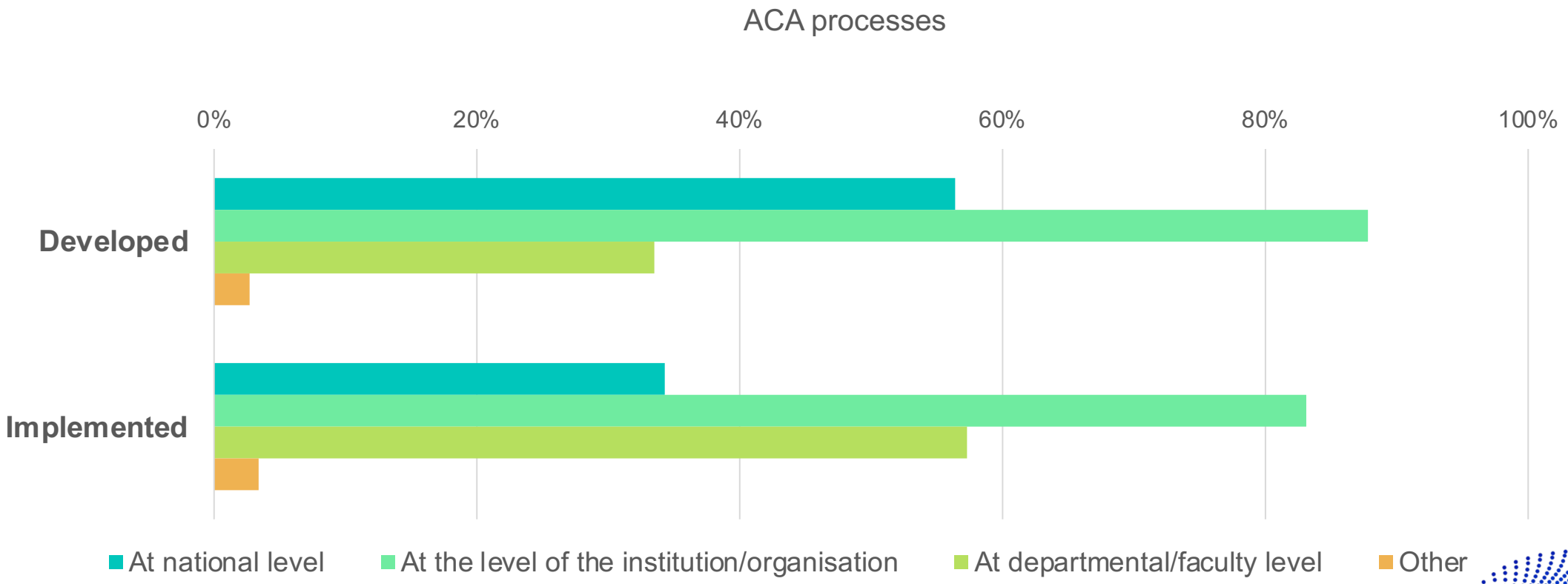
Stage in ACA reform processes



Number of respondents: 192/192

At which level are the processes for ACA developed / performed ?



Number of respondents: 178-188/192. Multiple-choice question.

Challenges in current ACA systems

1. Assessment scope

- Incomplete evaluation scope
- Over-reliance on quantitative assessment/metrics
- Teaching vs Research Recognition

"culture leaning on old school metrics"

"highly quantitative-based system"

"There is a need for better ways to assess soft skills like pedagogy, good leadership and the ability to contribute to a good work environment."

2. Complexity of the assessment process

- Transition to new assessment systems
- Evaluation complexity
- Balancing qualitative and quantitative assessment
- Teaching evaluation
- Unclear definitions of impact, excellence and quality
- Discipline-specific indicators
- Peer-review challenges
- Interdisciplinary challenges
- Transparency concerns

"knowing what you have, unsure what you will get in a new system"

"difficulty in having common rules to deal with different individual paths and disciplines"

"to get quality of performance back in the process without creating a too heavy burden on the assessors"

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Challenges in current ACA systems

3. Resource and regulatory constraints

- Centralised systems and other regulatory constraints
- Accreditation process
- Resource and funding constraints
- Technical constraints

"Qualitative assessment of outputs is challenging, both in terms of time commitment and expertise"

"less flexibility in assessment due to regulatory restrictions"

"we lack digital platform for self-evaluation reports"

4. Alignment of assessment procedures

- Alignment of criteria and procedures in the organisation and at national level

"Alignment of assessment methods with others (funders, RPO…)"

5. Career paths, recruitment and progression

- Recruitment and career progression challenges
- Diversification of career-paths and recognition of career-stages
- Internationalisation hurdles
- Mobility constraints

"attract and retain international talent"

"not enough career advance paths available"

"how to improve assessment of mixed profiles eg clinician/researcher; policy/research…"

"how to keep our scientists' mobility to other countries".

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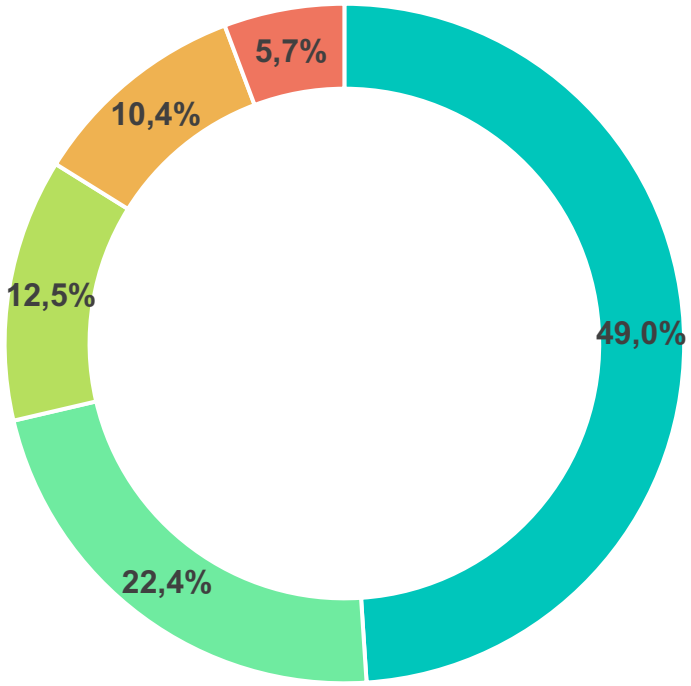
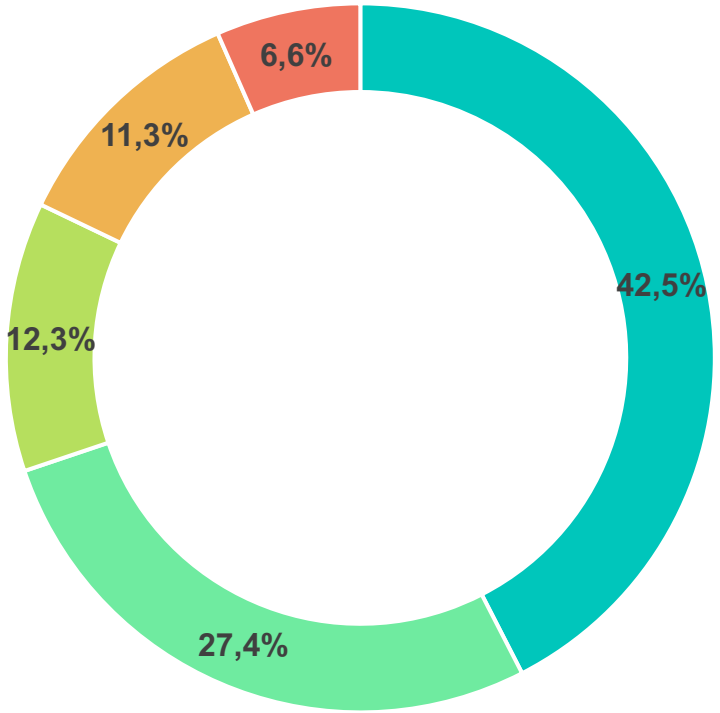
Reform drivers

All organisations



Number of respondents: 192/192

Reform drivers in organisations in which ACA processes are developed at the national level



- The reform was initiated within the organisation
- The reform was driven by regulatory reforms at regional or national level
- The reform was inspired by best practices in other organisations or countries
- The reform was initiated together with other organisations (e.g. with similar profile, geographical proximity)
- Other

Number of respondents: 106/192

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Motivations for engaging in ACA reform

1. Offering a more diversified, fair set of evaluation criteria, encompassing multifaceted academic work
- Assessment
- Evaluation

2. Establishing transparent practices of assessment and career progression
- Career

3. Guaranteeing high research quality
- Quality

4. Embedding open science principles
- Open Science

5. Considering staff wellbeing
- Well-being/development
- Diversity

6. Making the organisation an attractive employer
- Recruitment

7. Alignment with National/International regulations
- National/International standards, regulations, norms, rules, agreement

"Considering a wider range of scientific contributions and activity types when evaluating the performance of academic staff (…) Encouraging more diversity amongst scientists to create a more inclusive and equitable environment."

"Recruitment procedures must be more transparent to avoid mistrust"

"Different academic disciplines as well as different levels of career stages require a more customized career assessment procedure"

"be an attractive employer offering modern career opportunities".

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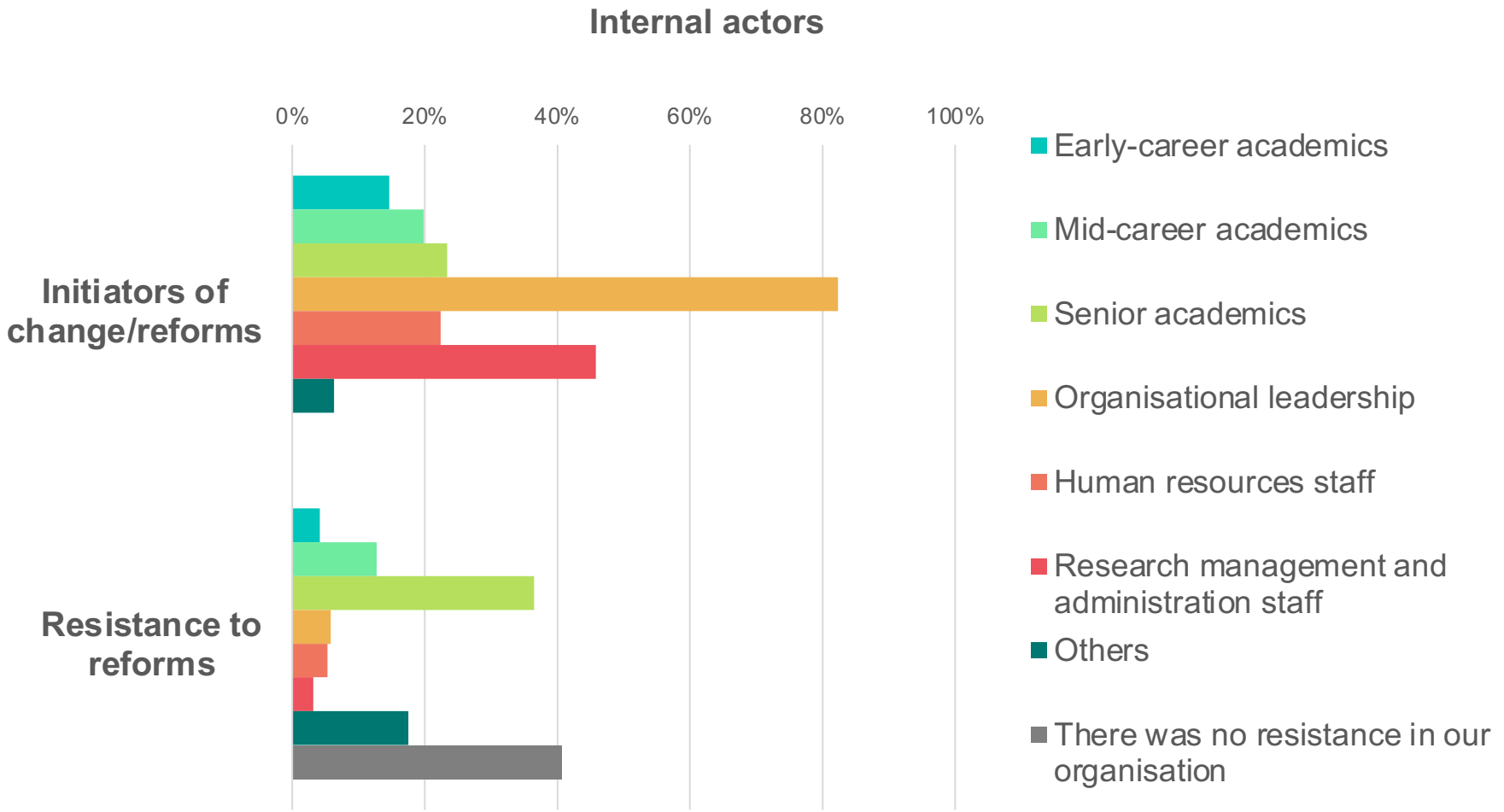
Development of the reform process



Number of respondents189-192/192. Multiple-choice question.
”Others” in initiators of reform refer to library and quality assurance.
“Others” in resistance to reform refer to more lack of interest than resistance itself. Also refers to academics depending on disciplinary area.

Resistance to reforms

Senior academics

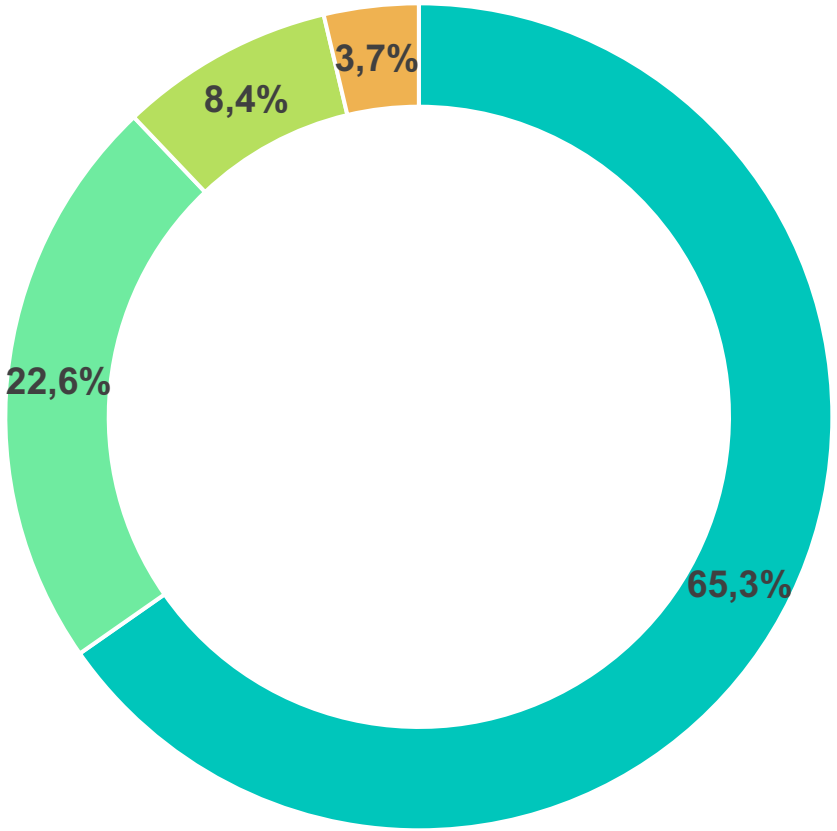
- **Resistance to change and fear of the unknown**
- **Uncertainty about qualitative methods**
- **'Metrics tradition' and preference for quantitative measures**
- **Lack of understanding of change**
- **Increased workload concerns**

"General resistance to change. Keeping bad habits is easier than changing to new ways of working you don't know the benefits of."

"Feeling that subjective assessment took over the objective assessment and that research assessment would no longer be based on quality but on whoever is more proficient in telling a good story."

"Belief that there are no problems with the current system. Researchers (especially those coming from fields where it is easy to publish many papers, publish in high impact factor journals or getting a lot of citations purely because of the field) are not always aware of how the system works against researchers coming from smaller fields or different type of research with fewer papers, which are no less impactfull. There is a sort of willful tunnel vision."

Role of academic staff in the reform process

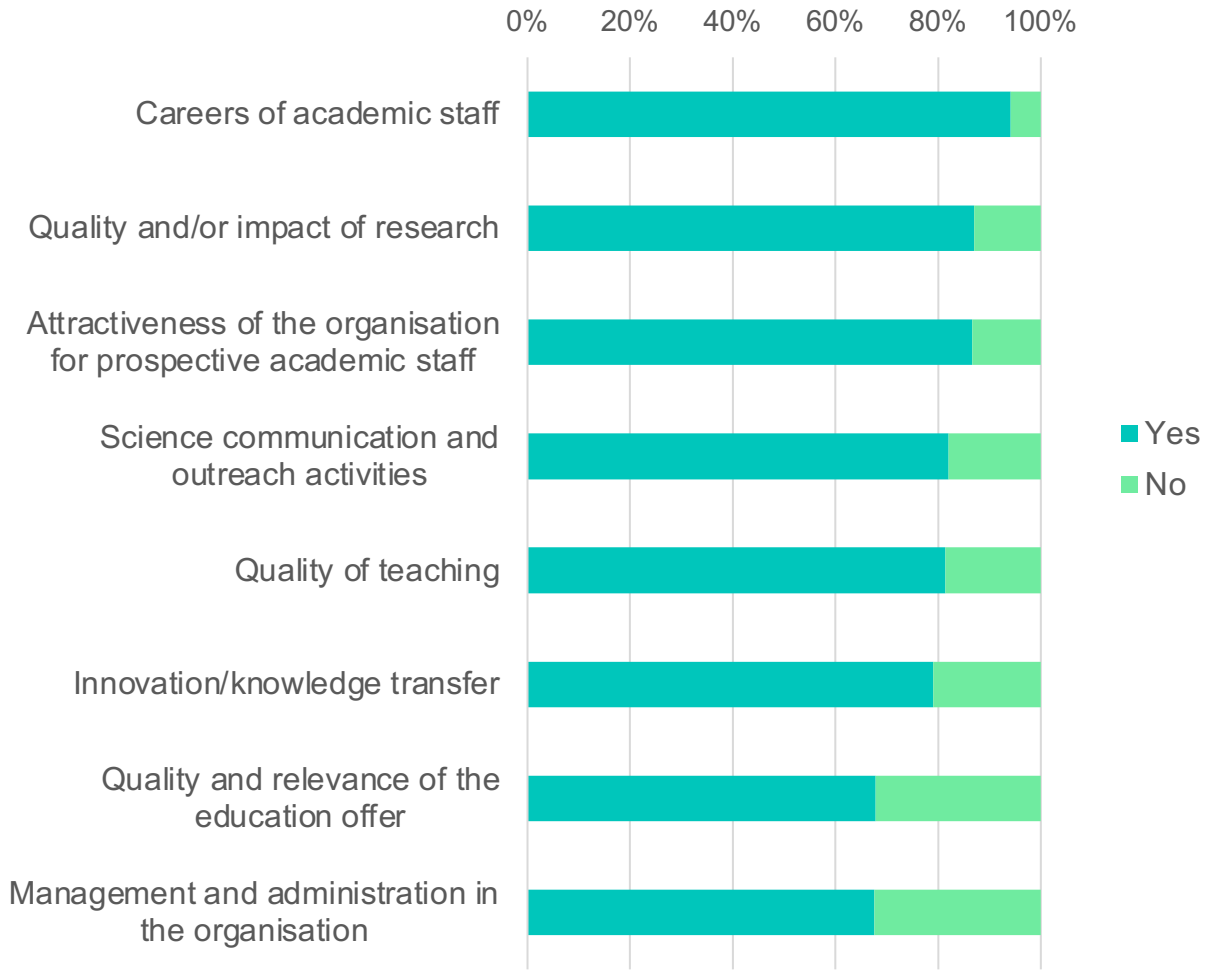


- Academic staff (or their representatives) are actively participating in discussions on reform and in developing new processes for academic career assessment
- Academic staff (or their representatives) are consulted on the reform principles and/or steps, but are not actively involved in developing new processes for academic career assessment
- Academic staff (or their representatives) are kept informed of the reform process, but do not have an active role in the reform discussions processes or in the development of new processes for academic career assessment
- Other

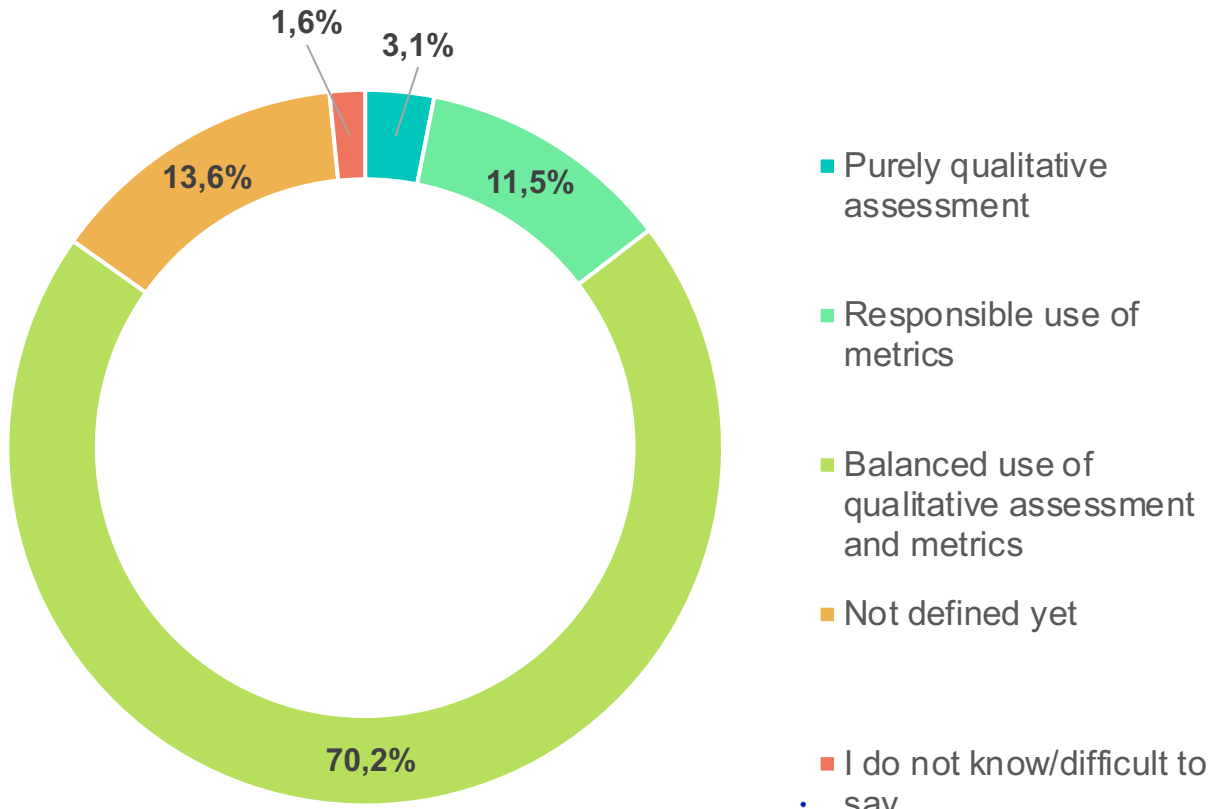
Number of respondents190/192

Reform expectations

Expected positive results after reform

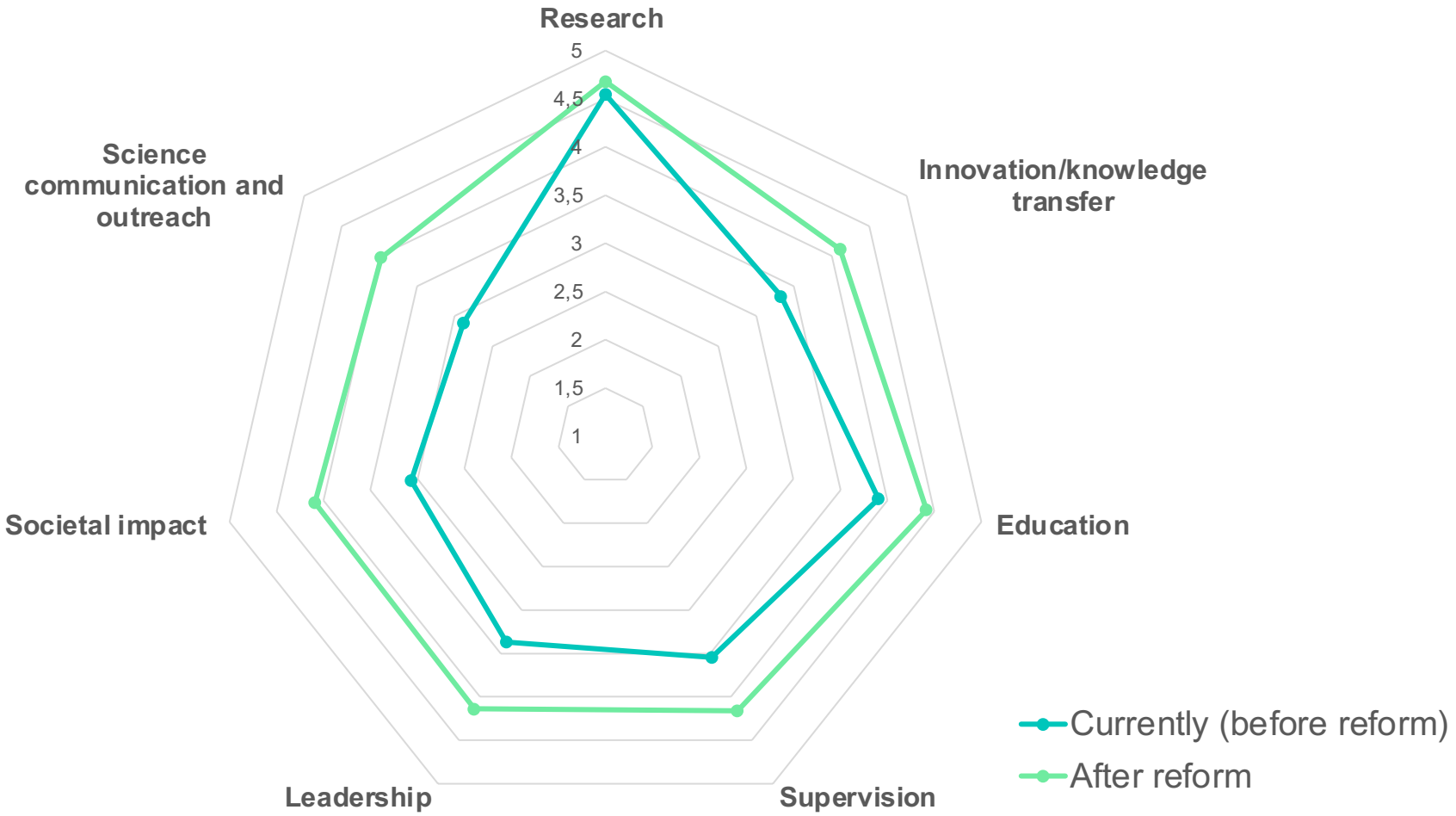


Focus of ACA after the reform



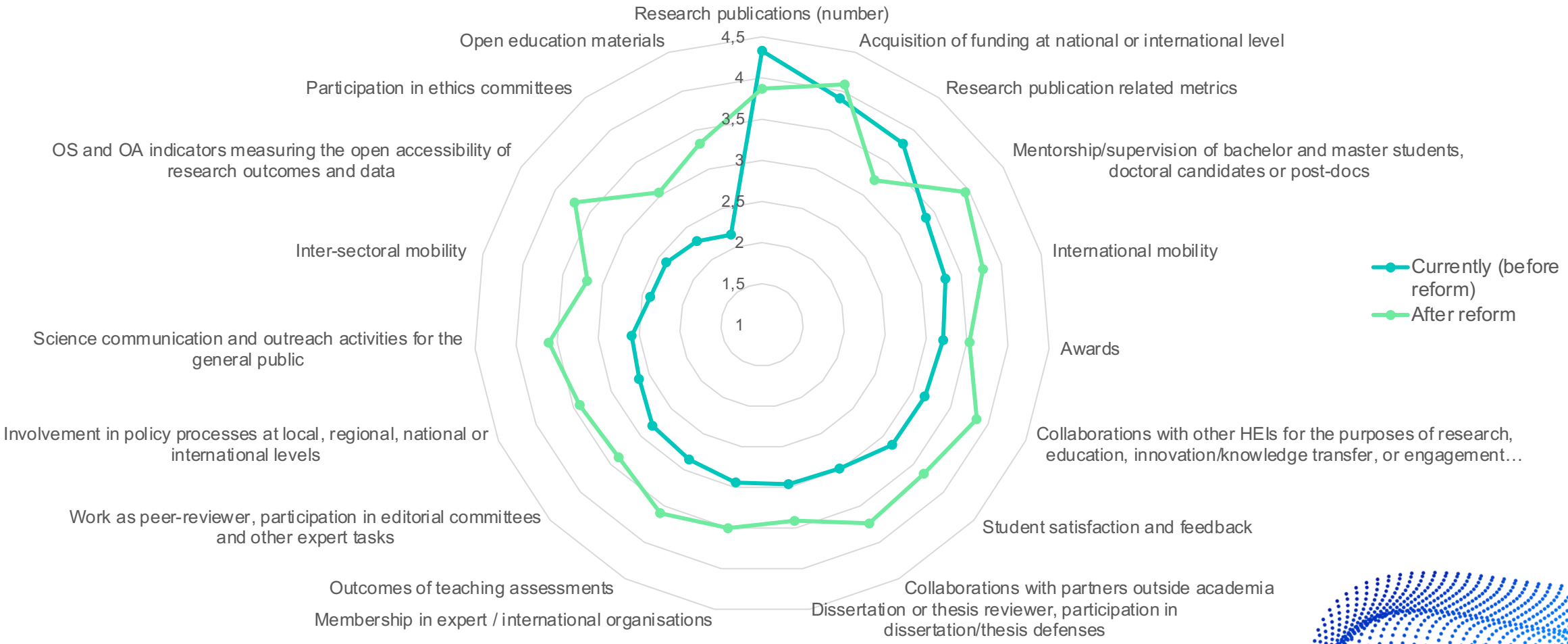
Number of respondents179-184/192

Activities considered in ACA



Number of respondents174-185/192. Average importance (1= very low importance; 5= very high importance)

Indicators for assessing academic careers

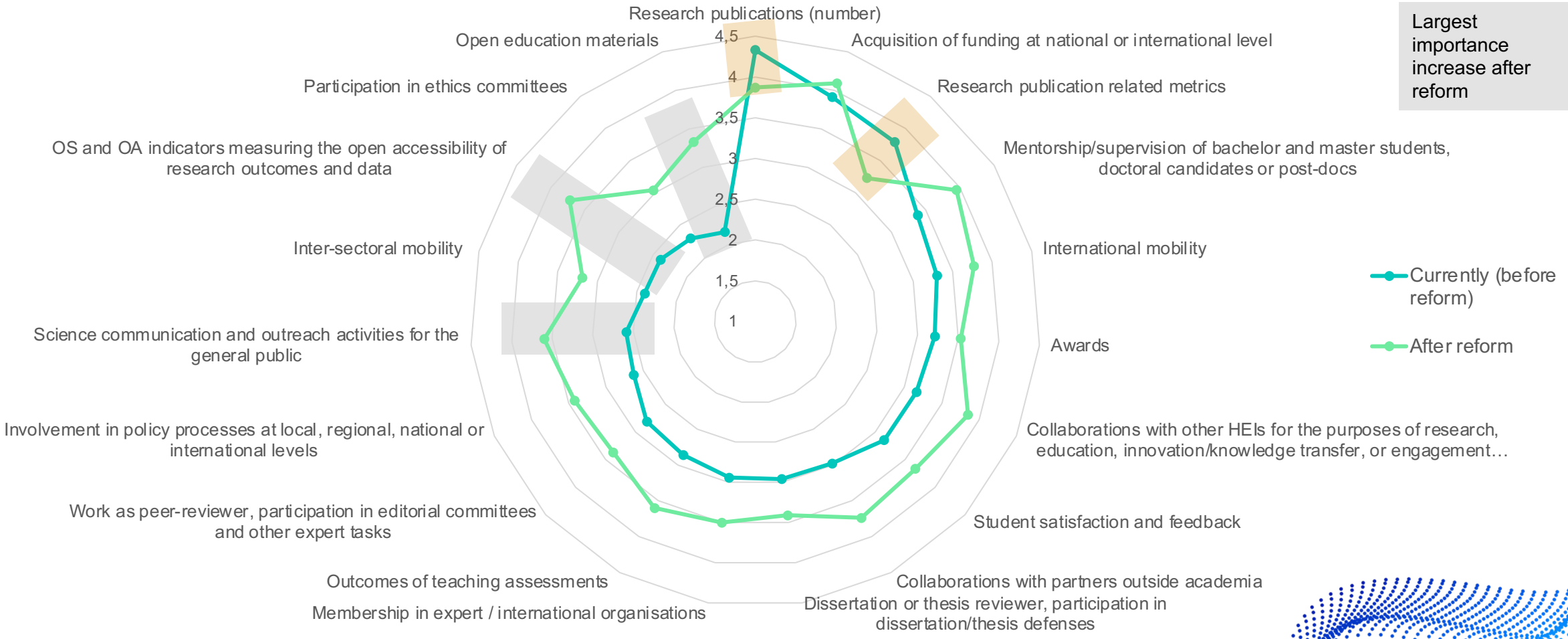


CoARA

Indicators for assessing academic careers

Importance decrease after reform

Largest importance increase after reform



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Main achievements

1. Awareness and initial engagement in reform
- Early-stage planning and discussion
- Stakeholder involvement and consensus-building
- Awareness-raising and mindset shift

2. Alignment with reform initiatives
- Alignment with reform initiatives at national and international level

3. Transparency and clarity
- Transparency and fairness in criteria
- Clear assessment guidelines

4. Career support and recognition of diverse career paths
- Enhanced career support and career development initiatives
- Recognition of diverse academic careers and contributions

"The initiation of discussions and the spreading of awareness on the subject within our institution have been significant achievements. This early stage of engagement has laid a valuable foundation for implementation of reforms."

5. Improving assessment practices
- Development of discipline-specific assessment criteria
- Shift towards more qualitative assessment
- Open Science adoption
- Standardization of processes
- Implementation of innovative assessment schemes and career models

6. Organisational advancement
- Reflection on change process
- Improvement in academic activities (e.g. research, education, attracting staff)

"Introducing a pilot scheme for peer-review based research assessment at unit level, in form of a learning agreement with critical friends. Introducing a new and more comprehensive career model for academic staff, better combining education, R&I and practical field/experiences."

"Proceedings have been professionalized with visible improvement in the qualifications of incomings, in particular postdocs."

Comments and Q&A

DISCUSSION – BREAK-OUT GROUPS

- Aim: to gather your views on survey results and case studies, and reflect on lessons learned
- Guiding questions for the discussion:

    1. Do the survey results reflect your experiences and context?

    2. What lessons have you learned from the survey results? Which findings do you find most interesting or surprising?

    3. In your opinion, which enabling factors are needed for a successful reform?

    4. Which tools could facilitate moving forward with the next reform steps?

- Each group has a pre-assigned moderator.
- You will be automatically assigned to a break-out group and re-assigned to the plenary at the end of discussions.

Final statements

Next steps

- Further comments can be shared in writing to coara.wg.aca@gmail.com
- Lessons learned, case studies and survey outcomes to be published after summer (Zenodo).
- Stay tuned for updates!

Relevant information

CoARA

Links:
CoARA website
https://coara.org

The Agreement full text
Sign the Agreement
CoARA News
FAQ

@CoARAssessment

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

EUA

- Visit www.eua.eu
- Register to our newsletters http://bit.ly/SubscribeEUANewsletters
- Interact with us online (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube)
- Attend our events (conferences, workshops and focus groups)

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THANK YOU!