

Draft Minutes of the CoARA General Assembly

12 June 2024 14:00–15:00 CEST

MEETING REPORT:

OPENING OF THE MEETING AND WELCOME

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

Prof. Rianne Letschert, Chair of CoARA, welcomed colleagues from around the world to the online CoARA General Assembly and presented the meeting agenda. Updates on recent activities by the CoARA Steering Board, Secretariat, National Chapters, and Working Groups were to be provided. She also mentioned that voting on amendment to the [CoARA Rules of Procedure for Chair, Vice-Chair\(s\) and Steering Board](#) document was still open, with results to be shared after the election closed.

ACTIVITY REPORT

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

Dr Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra presented the Activity Report, including updates from the CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Call. [The presentation is summarised on slides 3-24 of the slide deck attached.](#)

Ratification of the previous General Assembly minutes:

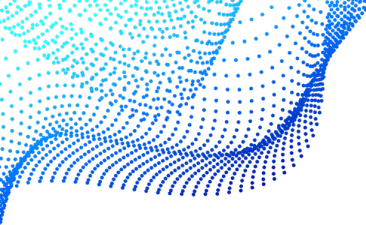
Dr. Tóth-Czifra informed the assembly that, since no comments were received, the minutes from the previous General Assembly are deemed approved.

Implementation of CoARA:

The Activity Report highlighted the current status of CoARA's implementation process. Last year's focus was on establishing the Coalition's operational basics, including the formation of key actor groups such as National Chapters and Working Groups. This foundational work now allows for greater emphasis on facilitating exchanges within the Coalition, primarily through various events aimed at moving from agreement to action. The next challenge is to streamline diverse work schemes from these groups and action plans to maintain a consolidated overview. Future priorities include defining success metrics, monitoring CoARA's impact, and ensuring long-term sustainability through fundraising efforts.

Coalition Growth:

The Coalition has shown significant growth, with membership exceeding 600 by January 2024 and over 700 signatories by March 2024. This indicates that the reform efforts are still largely driven by those directly affected. CoARA now has members from over 50 countries,



representing more than 25% of all countries globally. In 2024, new members joined from various regions, including Greece, Serbia, Panama and Nigeria.

Outreach and Events:

CoARA is expanding its global membership and representation, welcoming CLACSO as an observer member of the Steering Board. CLACSO contributes significant expertise from Latin American communities and meta-research activities. The global outreach strategy, led by WP6 in collaboration with the Steering Board, has identified priority countries for outreach, including Greece, Germany, the UK, Austria, Denmark, the US, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, Australia, and Türkiye. In the first half of the year, outreach focused on the US, involving collaborations with key open science players like NASEM and the Centre for Open Science. These efforts aim to establish a joint CoARA community in the US, gather insights, and foster dialogue among interested parties.

Action Plans:

CoARA's focus extends beyond expanding its coalition to actively supporting organisations in implementing the reform. At the start of 2024, momentum around Action Plans increased, with a webinar in April 2024 featuring experts discussing emerging good practices. This webinar is available for replay on the [CoARA YouTube channel](#). With the one-and-a-half-year anniversary of many early signatories approaching, a significant rise in Action Plan submissions is expected. CoARA will continue to offer support through a series of webinars tailored to different types of institutions.

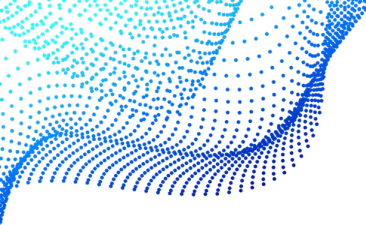
National chapters are playing a growing role in assisting with Action Plans, adapting to various policy languages and cultural contexts, as exemplified by the Finnish National Chapter's webinar.

Regarding Action Plan submissions, CoARA's WP3 team, led by CNRS, has conducted a keyword cluster analysis revealing key topics such as recruitment and young researchers. These findings align with discussions from National Chapter Chairs and Action Plan webinars. The detailed results of this analysis will be shared soon.

CoARA National Chapters highlights:

This year, CoARA welcomed five new National Chapters: Andorra, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK. A major highlight was the Coalition's first National Chapters Exchange Forum held in Portugal in February 2024, hosted by INESC TEC and co-organised by Science Europe and the CoARA Secretariat. A follow-up report detailing the event's takeaways will be shared soon. These events are crucial for fostering a diverse yet cohesive CoARA, and at least one such event for Working Groups and another for National Chapters will be organised annually. The next event called "National activities supporting research assessment reform", organised by the European Commission, is scheduled for October 17 2024 and will facilitate interactions among National Chapter coordinators and key national players.

CoARA Working Groups highlights:



The first wave of CoARA's Working Groups is approaching their anniversary, and enhancing connectivity between them has become a key priority. This involves fostering collaboration among the Working Groups, linking their activities with National Chapters, and connecting these efforts to the General Assembly. A framework for endorsing Working Group outputs will be developed over the rest of the year.

In September 2024, the Working Groups will hold their first hybrid event with Co-Chairs, and more details about upcoming events will be provided later. Mechanisms have been established for Working Groups and National Chapters to share their progress through a dedicated website, the CoARA newsletter, and social media. Engagement opportunities include joining Working Groups, participating in surveys, or attending meetings, depending on individual capacities.

Early Impact on European and National Policies:

As CoARA approaches its second anniversary, its impact is becoming evident. Notably, CoARA has been explicitly mentioned in the UK REF Research Excellence Framework's initial guidance and has influenced changes in the ERC's evaluation criteria, reflecting a shift towards recognising diverse career paths and moving away from prestige-based indicators.

Policy impact is also visible through mentions in the [Overton](#) database, spanning over 100 countries and 15 governmental organisations, including Japan and Uruguay. Additionally, CoARA is generating a rich, decentralised, and multilingual scholarly discourse, which includes critical reflections. These discussions help address key issues, such as the balance between quantitative and qualitative indicators and their reflection in the commitment to the agreement.

CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Call:

CoARA Boost's Cascade Funding currently has an open call for institutional change projects, with the deadline on 26 June 2024. This funding constitutes over half of the CoARA Boost Horizon project's budget and supports institutions in designing and implementing substantial changes.

The call supports three types of projects reflecting various stages of the reform journey. The first set of funded projects will be announced in October 2024, and a second call for proposals will open in December 2024. Stay tuned for more updates.

Outlook for the Future:

For the rest of the year, key priorities include streamlining diverse activities within CoARA and maintaining community engagement. Additionally, efforts will focus on ensuring the long-term sustainability of CoARA and expanding its global presence. These initiatives will support the Coalition's growth and effectiveness as it continues to develop.

OPENING CALLS FOR HOSTING EVENTS

Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice-Chair

Dr. Karen Stroobants provided an overview of the upcoming events and the new call for hosting CoARA events. She highlighted:

- **ESOF Conference in Katowice:** CoARA will be featured in a session on June 14 about excellence debates.
- **CoARA Working Group Co-Chair Forum:** Scheduled for September 11, this hybrid event will take place in Helsinki and online, facilitating connections between Working Groups, the Steering Board, and the Secretariat.
- **National Chapter Coordinators Event:** Organised by the European Commission, this hybrid event will be held on October 17 in Brussels.
- **CoARA General Assembly:** Set for December 9, this online event will gather members for CoARA Steering Board members' election, updates and discussions.

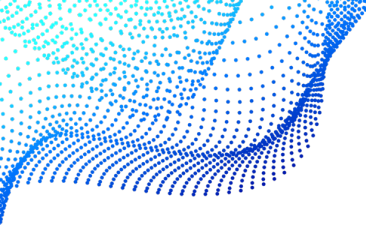
Additionally, she informed the Assembly that CoARA is launching a formal call for members to host events, such as National Chapter Co-Chair meetings, Working Group Co-Chair meetings, and thematic events. These events should be organised in a hybrid format. The call will run from July to October, with an [application form](#) available in July. The hosting institution will need to cover venue costs, technical equipment, and local organisation, while CoARA will assist with registration and communication. The Steering Board will handle the selection process. Members interested in hosting are encouraged to prepare for the call or consider future opportunities.

COARA CORE DOCUMENT AMENDMENTS

Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, CoARA Vice Chair

Dr. Elizabeth Gadd presented proposals to amend [CoARA Rules of Procedure for Chair, Vice-Chair\(s\) and Steering Board document](#) to enhance [geographical balance](#) in CoARA's governance. These proposals were developed in response to feedback from the General Assembly and circulated on April 26, with voting opening on May 27 and closing 12 June 2024. The aim is to ensure the Steering Board reflects the geographical diversity of the membership.

Geographical balance is defined by the country of residence of the Steering Board members, not their nominating institution. Candidates should have lived or worked in the region for at least three years. For the December 2024 elections, at least two Steering Board members will be selected from each of three regions: Region A (EU widening countries), Region B (other European countries as defined by the United Nations country classification), and Region C (all other countries). If a country already has two members on the board, no additional members from that country can be added until one steps down. Geographical balance will take precedence over other criteria like organisational type and gender.






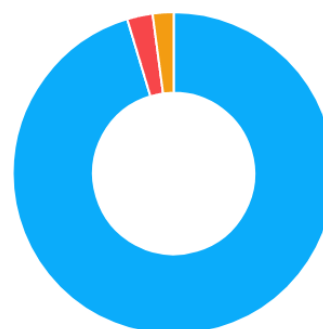
The primary goal is representation, and feedback on country classifications is welcome. Voting on these amendments will close shortly. There has been feedback on the need for better debate opportunities before voting on governance changes, which will be considered for future improvements. Questions and comments are welcome in the chat, and the Steering Board will respond accordingly.

Voting Results

Prof. Rianne Letschert announced that the proposed amendments to [CoARA Rules of Procedure for Chair, Vice-Chair\(s\) and Steering Board document](#) were approved by a large majority. Out of the votes cast, 409 were in favour, 11 abstained, and 9 opposed. As a result, the new procedures will be implemented for the December 2024 Steering Board election. Prof. Letschert noted that further amendments might be proposed in the future and welcomed any thoughts and ideas from members.

Do you approve the changes suggested to the CoARA Core Document “CoARA Rules of Procedure Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Steering Board”

Option	Votes	
 Yes	95%	409
 Abstain	3%	11
 No	2%	9

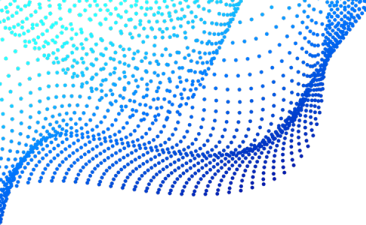


Additionally, Prof. Letschert announced that new Steering Board members are needed for December and encouraged members to identify potential candidates. She emphasised the dedication and collaborative spirit of the current board and the support from the CoARA Secretariat. She noted that board members need to be prepared for substantial commitment, including online work and annual physical meetings. She highlighted the importance of these meetings for strategic planning. She encouraged interested members to reach out for more information and mentioned that her own position would also be open, inviting discussions about its responsibilities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CoARA Steering Board and Secretariat addressed several key questions and comments from the Zoom chat:

1. **Geographical Balancing Priority:** Geographical representation was prioritised first due to feedback highlighting its weakness. The decision was based on concerns about the lack of geographical diversity and the need for more balanced



representation on the Steering Board. Modelling showed that this criterion would not negatively impact other balancing factors like gender or organisational type.

2. **Global vs. European Initiative:** There was discussion about CoARA being perceived as a European initiative. Dr. Gadd clarified that CoARA is a global initiative, though it started in Europe. The goal is to have global representation on the Steering Board as CoARA's membership grows. The proposal initially included a phase two, but it was removed due to feedback. However, there will be future phases to address representation more comprehensively.
3. **CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Timeline:** The CoARA Boost Cascade Funding will have two calls, one currently open and another in December 2024. These calls will cover the end phases of managing the grants within the CoARA Boost project.
4. **Eligibility for Cascade Funding:** The current call is limited to Horizon Europe member and associated countries due to the constraints of the Horizon Europe project. However, efforts will be made to complement this funding in the future and reduce geographical limitations.

CoARA Steering Board encouraged members to send suggestions for future phases of representation and thanked everyone for their valuable comments and participation.

WRAP-UP AND CONCLUSIONS

Prof. Letschert concluded the General Assembly by inviting members to participate in upcoming events in the fall, which aim to foster in-depth dialogue beyond what is possible in the General Assembly. She wished everyone a pleasant academic break and expressed eagerness to engage with the community after the break. She thanked everyone for their participation.

ANNEX

Agenda of the CoARA General Assembly 12 June 2024

- 14.00** **Opening of the Meeting and Welcome**
Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair
- 14.10** **Activity Report**
(including approval of the minutes from the previous GA meeting on 15.12.2023)
Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Programme Manager

Presentation for Information

Document 01: [Draft Minutes - CoARA General Assembly December 2023.docx](#)
- 14.30** **Looking Forward: in-person events in 2024, launch of the “Call for hosting future CoARA events”**
Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice Chair
Presentation for Information
- 14.40** **Ensuring a diverse CoARA governance: adding the geographical dimension to the Steering Board election criteria**
Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, CoARA Vice Chair

For discussion and approval (end of voting)
Document 02: [SB election criteria, balancing mechanisms 2024.docx](#)
Document 03: [CoARA RoPs Chair Vice-Chair SB v2.0.docx](#)
- 14.55** **Voting results announcement, wrap-up and conclusions**
Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair
- 15.00** **End of meeting**