



CoARA Endorsement Framework

Draft for discussion

CoARA General Assembly

9 December 2024

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Version history

Date	Version of the CoARA Endorsement framework	Changes made by	Change
05.09. 2024	1.0	Dr. Erzsebet Toth-Czifra and Dr. Karen Stroobants	Original draft with comments from CoARA Boost Work Package 3, open for presentation and consultation at the CoARA Working Groups Co-Chairs Forum on 18. 09. 2024 and with the CoARA Steering Board on 19.09.2024.
15.11. 2024	2.0	Dr. Karen Stroobants, Dr. Elizabeth Gadd, Dr. Erzsebet Toth-Czifra, based on input received from the CoARA Working Groups Co-Chairs and Steering Board	<p>Incorporation of comments received from the Working Groups Co-Chairs and the Steering Board.</p> <p>Clarifications on the aims and scope of the document, including outputs that have been produced by National Chapters or third-party actors.</p> <p>Elaboration of categories of outputs, nomination processes and endorsement routes.</p> <p>Clarification on the role of Steering Board and Secretariat.</p> <p>The current version is open for consultation at the General Assembly</p>

Table of acronyms

WG	Working Group(s)
NC	National Chapter(s)
SB	Steering Board
GA	General Assembly

1. Purpose of the endorsement framework

While the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA) sets a direction of travel, supported by 10 commitments, it does not prescribe how these commitments should be implemented in practice. Members of the coalition will rely on a range of policies, processes, practices, tools, indicators and criteria in implementing the ARRA commitments, some that might predate the ARRA/CoARA and some that have been developed following the constitution of CoARA, including by CoARA Working Groups (WGs), National Chapters (NCs) and beneficiaries of the CoARA Cascade Funding.

The CoARA endorsement framework aims to establish a means by which the CoARA community can consider implementation options and build consensus around criteria, tools and processes that enable them to make good on their CoARA commitments. The goal of the endorsement framework is to **enable CoARA members to review, revise, and endorse such implementation options**. The endorsement process is expected to involve consultation of the Coalition members, review by the Steering Board and optionally, involvement of the broader research community.

This document puts forward procedures for such consensus-building mechanisms, including community consultation, revision and endorsement of implementation options by the CoARA General Assembly. This includes, but is not restricted to, the endorsement of WG outputs, thereby complementing the WGs' operational framework and Rules of Procedure.

2. Nomination process by proposed implementation type

Implementation options include, but are not restricted to, guidelines and recommendations, collections of good practices, reports from pilots, workshops and conferences, white papers, toolkits, evaluation approaches, frameworks, initiatives, games and interactive tools. In relation to the WGs, these are labelled as potential WG outputs. Where developed by the CoARA community, we refer to the [WGs DMP guidelines document](#) to ensure the digital sustainability of these outputs (citability, rich documentation, open access publication, etc.).

The first component of the endorsement framework enables the CoARA community to categorise implementation options to determine which

endorsement route is appropriate and to put them forward for review and/or endorsement. The categorisation is introduced to route implementation options and to keep the number for GA consideration manageable; it is **not intended to imply any difference in importance or impact of different implementation options**, nor to introduce any other form of hierarchy.

Categorisation of implementation options by type:

Implementation type	Examples of implementation options / WG outputs in this category	Review and/or endorsement route
<p>A – General endorsement.</p> <p>Proposed to require endorsement by the CoARA GA: the implementation option is generally applicable, or its adoption is expected to impact a significant proportion¹ of the CoARA and/or research community.</p> <p>Reflections on relevance of outcomes to a broader policy landscape and potential links to National Chapters are also welcome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frameworks • Guidelines • Policy and other recommendations • Initiatives • Declarations • White papers • Tools and toolkits 	<p>These implementation options will be subject to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CoARA community consultation*, 2) revision of draft outputs by CoARA group or nominator, 3) review by the Steering Board and 4) a vote for endorsement by the CoARA General Assembly. <p>*Optionally, a suggestion can be made to include wider consultation with the research community (beyond CoARA) in step 1.</p>

¹ E.g., one or more of CoARA's 6 membership categories.

<p>B – Stakeholder specific approval.</p> <p>Proposed to require review by a subset of CoARA stakeholder groups: the implementation option is relevant only to some stakeholder groups within the CoARA community and is expected to have limited impact beyond these groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frameworks • Guidelines • Policy and other recommendations • White papers • Tools and toolkits • Games and interactive tools 	<p>These implementation options will be subject to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CoARA community consultation – targeting a specific subset of CoARA stakeholders, 2) revision of draft outputs by CoARA group or nominator, 3) review by a Steering Board member, 4) consensus meeting towards stakeholder group approval. This route does not include GA endorsement.
<p>C – Evidence Review.</p> <p>Proposed to require review by relevant WGs and/or NCs or by invited reviewers: the output provides evidence or auxiliary information that supports the research assessment reform or can inform the development of further resources but cannot be directly implemented as such</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from pilots • Literature reviews and collections of good practice • Conference reports • Research results, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey findings ○ Workshop / focus group summaries 	<p>These implementation options will be subject to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) review by relevant WGs and/or NCs and/or invited (expert) reviewers, 2) revision by CoARA group or nominator. <p>These only include outputs developed by CoARA groups.</p>

(hence not described as implementation option in this category).		
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The proposed implementation type determines the characteristics of the required nomination process.

Nomination process by implementation type:

Implementation type	Nomination process	Timeframe
A – General endorsement. Proposed to require endorsement by the CoARA GA.	Publishing the draft output in the relevant Zenodo community* and emailing to the Secretariat with the subject line “WG output nomination.” This step will be replaced by a web tool from the 2 nd half of 2025. WGs / NCs are restricted to proposing up to two of their own outputs in this category.	Approval by the General Assembly will take place twice a year. It includes the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30-day community consultation. - 30-day revision period for CoARA group or nominator where appropriate. - 30-day review period for SB. - 14-30 day consideration period ahead of the GA.
B – Stakeholder specific approval. Proposed to require review by a subset of	The nominator (SB, WG, NC) takes the lead on organising the review/endorsement process. In case of	Nominations can happen any time. Steps:

CoARA stakeholder groups.	Working Groups, the Working Group Support Actors will assist in organising the process and help contacting relevant actors for the review. In the case of SB and NCs, the Secretariat will help organising the review/endorsement process. In all cases, publishing the draft output in the relevant Zenodo community* is the first step of the process. The nominator should specify the proposed voting mechanism for SB approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30-day community consultation. - 30-day revision period for CoARA group or nominator where appropriate. - 30-day review period for SB. - 14-30 day consideration period ahead of consensus meeting.
C – Evidence review. Proposed to require review within a WG or NC or by invited reviewers (CoARA output).	In this case, the WG or NC Co-chairs are in charge of organising the review process internally. In case of Working Groups, the Working Group Support Actors can assist in organising the process.	Nominations can happen any time. Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30-day review period for WGs / NCs / (expert) reviewers. - 30-day revision period for the CoARA group.

3. Review, revision and endorsement processes

3.1 Eligibility and categorisation check

Implementation options generated by CoARA WGs, NCs, or recipients of cascade funding should be nominated by the WG/NC Chair or CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Project Leads. Implementation options generated partly or wholly by non-CoARA members should either be proposed and seconded by two CoARA members or by the Steering Board. Once the nomination of an implementation option is received by the CoARA Secretariat (via email, later webtool), they will check the proposed categorisation and, with SB agreement, either open a general consultation for outputs seeking General Endorsement, a stakeholder specific consultation for outputs seeking Stakeholder Specific Approval, or give the green light for the nominator to proceed with Evidence Review for outputs providing auxiliary information. In cases where the Secretariat/SB disagrees with the categorisation proposed by the nominator, the Secretariat/SB will contact the nominator with a proposal for re-categorisation or other relevant feedback.

3.2 Community consultation

The nominator will be asked to submit the relevant documentation for community consultation to the Secretariat, including the link to the Zenodo deposit.

The Secretariat will publish nominated implementation options on their dedicated pages together with information on their status and possibilities to comment. CoARA members will receive periodic notifications of them via the CoARA newsletter. They will also be notified once an implementation option is open for community review. The secretariat will explore options to visibly acknowledge key contributors to each community consultation.

3.2.1 Consultation process by implementation type

For type-A implementation options requiring General Endorsement, the Secretariat will launch a 30-day community consultation period. Depending on the nominator preference, this can be targeted at CoARA members only or can potentially involve a broader audience, for example, including ARRA

signatories not part of the coalition. Note that while inputs from CoARA members will be received via commenting on the CoARA website, inputs from non-members will need to be received via email in the format of general comments and/or suggested amendments.

For type-B implementation options requiring Stakeholder Specific Approval, the Secretariat will host documentation for consultation on the CoARA website. However, in this case, the nominator is responsible for inviting relevant stakeholders to review the documentation. The Secretariat will be able to support reaching relevant stakeholder groups.

For type-C outputs requiring Evidence Review, the WG, NC or other CoARA group is expected to take ownership of the review process by offering a clear description of the chosen process, e.g. by sharing the documentation via a GoogleDoc, Sharepoint or similar, or by inviting written comments and/or amendments via email. The WG, NC or other CoARA group is also responsible for inviting relevant WG co-chairs or members, NC representatives or (expert) reviewers to review the documentation.

3.2.2 Types of consultation inputs

If the consultation or review concerns an implementation option developed solely by the CoARA community, for example a WG output, the types of inputs that will be most relevant include general comments, as well as proposed amendments to the documentation. In this case, suggestions are targeted towards the CoARA WG, NC or other group that has developed and nominated the respective implementation option and to the SB.

If the consultation or review concerns an implementation option developed partly or wholly by those beyond the CoARA community, for example a tool pre-dating the ARRA/CoARA, the types of inputs that will be most relevant include general comments, expressions of support and potential objections to endorsement. In this case, suggestions are targeted towards the nominator. This can be proposed and seconded by two CoARA members of the respective implementation option and to the SB.

3.3 Revision by CoARA WG, NC, other group or revision statement by nominator

As soon as the consultation or review period has ended, it is the responsibility of the CoARA WG, NC, other group or nominator to amend consultation inputs.

If the consultation or review concerns an implementation option developed by the CoARA community, the WG, NC or other CoARA group that developed the output is responsible for considering consultation inputs. While each input should be considered, the WG, NC or other CoARA group can reject suggestions. At the end of the revision period, the WG, NC or other CoARA group is expected to submit revised documentation and, optionally, a short revision statement justifying why certain inputs might have been rejected, to the Secretariat.

If the consultation or review concerns an implementation option developed partly or wholly by those beyond the CoARA community, the nominator of the implementation option is responsible for considering consultation inputs. This should include careful consideration of expressions of support, as well as possible objections. At the end of the revision period the nominator is expected to submit a short revision statement, including a possible rebuttal to objections, to the Secretariat.

In the case where the SB is the nominator of an implementation option, the SB is responsible for considering consultation inputs. This should include careful consideration of expressions of support, as well as possible objections. At the end of the revision period, the SB is expected to submit a short revision statement, including a possible rebuttal to objections, to the Secretariat that is to be shared with the GA ahead of a vote.

The revision by the respective WG, NC or other CoARA group of a type-C output, thereby makes it eligible for publication. This type of output is not further endorsed.

3.4 Steering Board review

The Secretariat will share type-A/B original or revised documentation and revision statements with the SB for their review. While type-A implementation options will be considered by the SB as a group, type-B options will undergo review by at least one member of the SB. The SB or SB member in their review will consider 1) whether consultation and review inputs have been addressed in a satisfactory way and 2) whether the implementation option is in line with the ARRA commitments and contributes to achieving CoARA's mission.

If both conditions are met, the SB will give the green light for final documents to be shared ahead of a GA (for type-A), or to be submitted for consideration in a consensus meeting (for type-B).

If the SB is dissatisfied with the consultation and/or revision process, they can request an additional round of consultation and/or revisions from the WG, NC or other group that nominated it.

If the SB decides the implementation option conflicts with CoARA's mission or that objections raised in the community consultation are significant and not sufficiently addressed by the optional rebuttal in the revision statement, they can prevent a nomination from being progressed to GA endorsement or a consensus meeting.

3.5 Endorsement by the CoARA General Assembly / Consensus meeting

Those implementation options that have been given a green light by the SB to be put forward for endorsement by the GA (type-A) will be shared with the GA at the stage where other GA Documents enter the final 14–30-day consideration period. They will not be subject to the usual commenting period as the community consultation mirrors this step in the usual process. Documents that need to be shared with the GA include the (revised) documentation, revision statement and a brief summary of the SB's reflections. These are then presented for a vote to the GA.

The voting process for endorsing implementation options will follow the same voting rules as procedural documents. This means the GA will need to be quorate, and endorsement will require a two-thirds majority. Where the SB has given a green light for an implementation option to progress to a consensus meeting (type-B), the nominator is responsible for sharing the documentation with the relevant stakeholder groups. Documents that need to be shared with the relevant stakeholder groups include the documentation, revision statement and a brief summary of the SB or SB member's reflections. It is up to the nominator to organise the consensus meeting, determine minimal attendance to the meeting, and define whether formal voting or another approach will be used to reach an approval decision.

4. What happens after endorsement or approval?

Once an implementation option receives general endorsement or is approved by specific stakeholders, it will be deposited on Zenodo with clear versioning information and metadata where it was developed by CoARA members. It will also be linked back to the CoARA website.

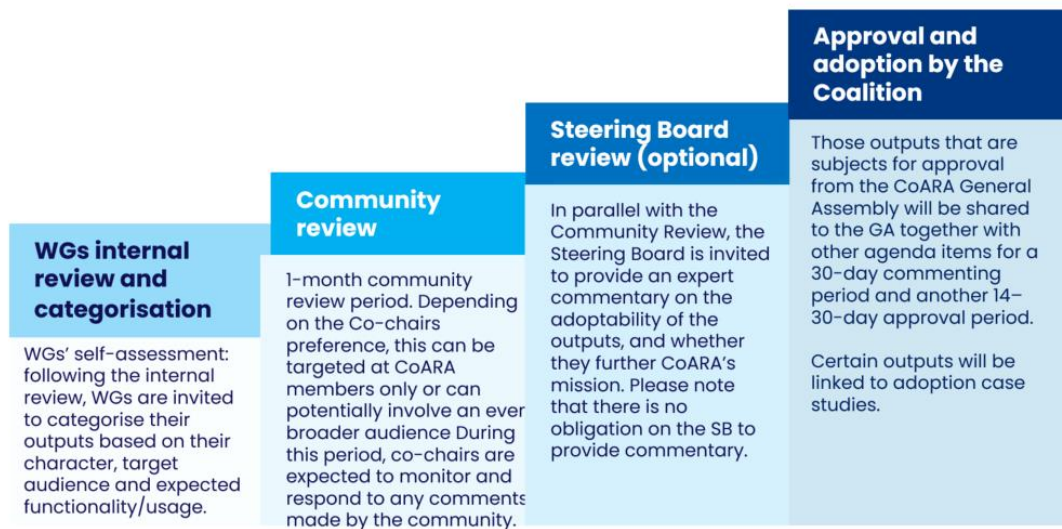
Endorsement or approval of an implementation option means that the CoARA community regards this as an output that contributes to CoARA's mission and encourages adoption by all stakeholders for whom it is relevant.

5. What happens if a nomination does not get endorsed?

If an implementation option developed by the CoARA community gets rejected, the WG, NC or other group that developed the output is allowed to renominate the option only once, subject to clear justification at the stage of renomination and after major revision based on feedback received across the consultation process.

If an implementation option not developed by the CoARA community gets rejected, the decision is final and the same option cannot be nominated again.

Overview of the process



Acknowledgement

The Research Data Alliance's output-related processes framework provided inspiration for the CoARAs endorsement framework.

Reference documents

- [RDA Recommendations & Supporting Outputs-related processes and submission guidelines \(rd-alliance.org\)](https://rd-alliance.org/recommendations)
- DMP for CoARA WGs, including open publication policy: [D4.1 - WGs Operational Framework report](#) (in Annex)
- RoP for WGs: (Zenodo deposit needed): [CoARA Word Template](#)
- Zenodo collection for WG outputs: https://zenodo.org/communities/coara_wgs/records?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=newest