

CoARA Financial Support Framework and Principles

CoARA Financial Support Framework: ensuring sustainability and community ownership

CoARA is at a pivotal moment in its journey. With over 700 member organisations globally, our Coalition is at the forefront of systemic change in research assessment. Supported initially by a distributed secretariat (December 2022 – October 2023) and accelerated through the CoARA Boost project funded by the European Commission (October 2023 – October 2026, Grant 101131826), we are achieving remarkable milestones. However, as the CoARA Boost project concludes in October 2026, securing financial sustainability is paramount to continuing the advancement of research assessment reform.

We are calling on members to take a decisive step in shaping the future by contributing to the CoARA's central budget, paving the way for increased impact in the short term and sustainability beyond October 2026.

To enable member contributions, we are developing a **voluntary** financial support campaign that we propose to run annually and that aligns with three pillars – *Consolidate, Complement, and Anticipate*. This campaign aims to build on our collective achievements, enhance our impact, and ensure long-term sustainability. It also responds to some inquiries from members about a financial support framework to strengthen community ownership.

This document provides a summary of cornerstone aspects of the proposed framework. The voluntary financial support framework was first presented at the CoARA General Assembly on the 9th of December. Following the initial feedback provided during the General Assembly, coalition members are now invited to participate in an online consultation for the CoARA community to collectively refine and shape the campaign. To provide input on the evolution of the campaign, please participate in the survey by the 6th of March 2025: [Financial Support Campaign – CoARA](#). For further details, please reach out to secretariat@coara.eu.

Consolidate: Strengthening What We're Building

The COARA community has grown significantly, with membership expanding from 420 members in March 2023 to over 700 in November 2024—an average rate of three new members per week. This momentum reflects the enthusiasm and relevance of our mission to reform research assessment,

which has become recognised across the global research landscape, thanks to CoARA members' efforts.

To maintain and enhance this momentum, we should:

- **Reinforce community ownership:** Our strength also lies in our global, community-driven approach. Members' financial support will demonstrate collective commitment, further solidifying CoARA as a truly community-owned initiative.
- **Support a growing membership:** The increased scale of our community demands enhanced support from the Secretariat to maintain and expand CoARA activities.
- **Amplify in-kind efforts:** CoARA members are already mobilising internal resources and in-kind contributions to enable the Coalition's objectives, but additional financial resources will ensure these efforts achieve their maximum potential.

Through financial support, members will contribute to the early efforts to establish the Coalition since 2022, consolidate our foundation, preserve and strengthen the achievements we've collectively built.

Complement: Enhancing Our Impact

CoARA's activities are being facilitated and amplified by the EC-funded CoARA Boost project, but as the Coalition grows, so does the need to complement and diversify our streams of activities and keep our responsiveness to evolving needs of truly systemic change. Members' financial support will allow us to reinforce the momentum-gaining effort and to:

- **Expand ongoing activities:**
 - Sustain the number of Working Groups and increase the support provided to them.
 - Organise a global CoARA conference to bring members together and amplify impact.
 - Enhance our capacity to disseminate information, contribute to debates and participate in international events.
 - Enhance our capacity to engage with underrepresented countries and regions globally.
 - Strengthen the Secretariat's ability to landscape the evolving and internally complex field of research assessment, scan policy developments, synthesise insights, and support governance. This will ensure that CoARA's efforts are streamlined with ongoing efforts happening elsewhere.
- **Launch new initiatives:**
 - Develop a series of (online) seminars for deeper member engagement and stronger community of practice.

- In addition, co-host hybrid events in collaboration with groups of CoARA member organisations.
- Initiate targeted activities to facilitate the development and implementation of members' action plans.
- Independently and swiftly react to and engage with new opportunities.
- Proactively pursue new funding opportunities, including participating in competitive calls for projects.

Members' financial support will complement our existing efforts, enabling CoARA to respond dynamically to new opportunities and challenges, while maintaining high quality support for the Coalition.

Anticipate: Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability

As less than two years remain before the end of the CoARA Boost project, it is essential to lay the groundwork for financial sustainability beyond October 2026.

Contributions from members will facilitate:

- **Monitoring the impact of CoARA:** Commission an independent study to assess the impact of CoARA.
- **Bolstering support of strategic planning:** Initiating the implementation of post-2026 strategic plans will require resources beyond the current funding scope and timeline.
- **Maintaining the momentum:** The CoARA Boost project is strengthening the Coalition and building momentum, while knowledge will be gathered and new objectives will certainly be set, additional financial support us to build upon initial investments and advance reform.
- **Sustaining members' Action Plan framework:** Action Plans being developed and implemented in member organisations are spanning for a period of five years, beyond the current funding horizon.
- **Leveraging results:** Additional resources will enable the coalition to leverage the benefits of outputs generated by the Working Groups and projects supported by the CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Programme.
- **Refining the funding framework:** A ramp-up phase during 2025-2026 will allow us to gain momentum on a long-term funding model, ensuring sustainability.

Additional financial support will anticipate future challenges, ensuring CoARA remains a powerful driver of research assessment reform for the years to come.

Shaping and Enabling CoARA's Future

An annual campaign is not solely about financial contributions — it is an invitation for members to actively support our shared mission, consolidate achievements, complement initiatives, and anticipate challenges ahead.

At the same time, the diversity among members and their varying capacities to contribute beyond the resources they are already dedicating to their own reform is fully acknowledged. As such, participation in the campaign is **entirely voluntary, and contributions to the CoARA budget will not confer any additional rights.**

In order to both maintain and reinforce community-ownership of CoARA, only CoARA members will be eligible to contribute.

All funds raised will be managed transparently by ESF, overseen by the Steering Board, and reported to the General Assembly.