

CoARA Outputs Endorsement Framework

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the endorsement framework.....	3
2. Two types of output and the endorsement required.....	3
3. Review, revision and endorsement processes.....	5
3.1 Eligibility and categorisation check.....	5
3.2 Community review.....	5
3.3 Revision by CoARA WG / NC / other group or revision statement by nominator.....	6
3.4 Steering Board review.....	6
3.5 Endorsement of implementation options produced by third parties.....	6
4. What happens after endorsement or approval?	6
5. What happens if a nomination does not get endorsed?.....	7
Overview of the process	7
Acknowledgement	8
Reference documents	8

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>
26.03.2025	3.0.	Reviewed by a subgroup of the Steering Board: Dr. Karen Stroobants, Hans de Jonge, Janne	Simplification of the types of outputs and routes of approval, clarification of endorsement paths for outputs developed by third parties.

		Pölönen, Dr. Erzsebet Toth-Czifra.	
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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 (see ARRA Annex 4 – Toolbox: practical tools and options to consider). Some implementation [options](#) might predate the ARRA/CoARA and some 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 Outputs Endorsement Framework provides a mechanism for community review and Steering Board review of outputs produced by CoARA WGs, NCs and cascade funded projects. Outputs endorsed by SB are included in the ARRA Toolbox, which offers CoARA members consolidated implementation options. The framework enables the Steering Board also to review and endorse implementation options produced by third parties.

2. Two types of output and the endorsement required

Outputs of CoARA WGs, NCs and Cascade funded projects can take many different forms. These 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. To allow the CoARA community to keep track of these outputs and signal the value of these outputs when implementing the CoARA commitments, this framework makes a distinction between two types of outputs with distinct review and endorsement routes:

- **Actionable policy resources**
- **Evidence review documents**

Actionable policy resources are tools, frameworks, and recommendations that can help the CoARA community to work on the implementation of the commitments of ARRA. These

outputs require both the community review and the SB review. If endorsed by the SB, actionable policy resources can be included in the ARRA Toolbox.

Evidence Reviews are reflective documents, including reviews, surveys, reports providing evidence or auxiliary information that support the research assessment reform but cannot be directly implemented. These outputs require community review but not SB review, nor can they be included in the ARRA Toolbox.

CoARA WG, NC or Cascade funded project initiates the review and endorsement process by 1) publishing the draft output (or document describing it) in the relevant Zenodo community; and 2) sending an email to the Secretariat and requesting characterisation of the output either as actionable policy resource or evidence review document (email will be replaced by submission using a web tool from the 2nd half of 2025).

WGs, NCs and Cascade funded projects are restricted to proposing up to two of their own outputs in category of actionable policy resource.

Implementation type	Examples of implementation options / WG outputs in this category	Review and/or endorsement route
<p>A – Actionable policy resources .</p> <p>These are tools, frameworks, recommendations that can help the CoARA community to work on the implementation of the commitments of ARRA.</p> <p>These outputs require the endorsement of the Steering Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frameworks • Guidelines • Tools and toolkits • Policy recommendations • Initiatives • Declarations • Games and interactive tools • 	<p>These implementation options will be subject to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CoARA community consultation organised by the WG responsible for the output, 2) revision of draft outputs by CoARA group or nominator, 3) review by the Steering Board and 4) Inclusion in ARRA Toolbox
<p>B – Evidence Review.</p> <p>These are reflective documents: reviews, surveys, reports providing evidence or auxiliary information that support the research assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from pilots • Literature reviews and collections of good practice • Conference reports • Research results, including 	<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.

reform but cannot be directly implemented. This category of outputs require review by relevant WGs and/or NCs or by invited reviewers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey findings ○ Workshop / focus group summaries 	
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The proposed implementation type determines the characteristics of the required nomination process.

3. Review, revision and endorsement processes

3.1 Eligibility and categorisation check

Outputs generated by CoARA WGs, NCs, or recipients of cascade funding should be nominated for review and endorsement by the WG/NC Chair or CoARA Boost Cascade Funding Project Leads. 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, open the appropriate review and endorsement process. Where the Secretariat/SB disagrees with the categorisation proposed by the nominator, they will contact the nominator with a proposal for re-categorisation or other relevant feedback.

3.2 Community review

The nominator will be asked to submit the relevant documentation for community review to the Secretariat, including the link to the Zenodo deposit. The nominator will also indicate if community review involves review by CoARA members and/or relevant WGs and NCs and/or invited experts.

The Secretariat will publish nominated outputs on their dedicated pages together with information on their status and possibilities to comment, with 30-day community review period. If community review is open to all CoARA members, they will be notified via the CoARA Newsletter when an output is open for community review. If community review involves WGs and NCs, they will be notified via relevant mailing lists. Individual experts can be invited via email by the secretariat and/or the nominator. The secretariat will explore options to visibly acknowledge key contributors to each community review.

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 or Cascade funded project to amend 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 Cascade funded project is expected to submit revised document and, optionally, a short revision statement justifying why certain inputs might have been rejected, to the Secretariat.

3.4 Steering Board review

In case of actionable policy resources, the Secretariat will share original or revised documentation and revision statements with the SB for their review. The SB 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 included in CoARA/ARRA Toolbox.

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 Cascade funded project that nominated the output.

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 the CoARA/ARRA Toolbox.

3.5 Endorsement of implementation options produced by third parties

Implementation option produced by third parties, which are characterized as actionable policy resources, can be nominated for SB endorsement by WG, NC or by the SB itself. Once the nomination of an implementation option is received by the CoARA Secretariat (via email, later webtool), they will check the proposed categorisation and open the SB endorsement process.

4. What happens after endorsement or approval?

Once an implementation option receives SB endorsement, it will be deposited on Zenodo with clear versioning information and metadata where it was developed by CoARA members. It will also be linked to the CoARA/ARRA Toolbox on the CoARA website.

SB endorsement of an implementation option means that the CoARA community regards this as an output that contributes towards achieving 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 Cascade funded project that developed the output is allowed to renominate the output one more time, 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, this decision is final, and the same option cannot be nominated again.

Overview of the process

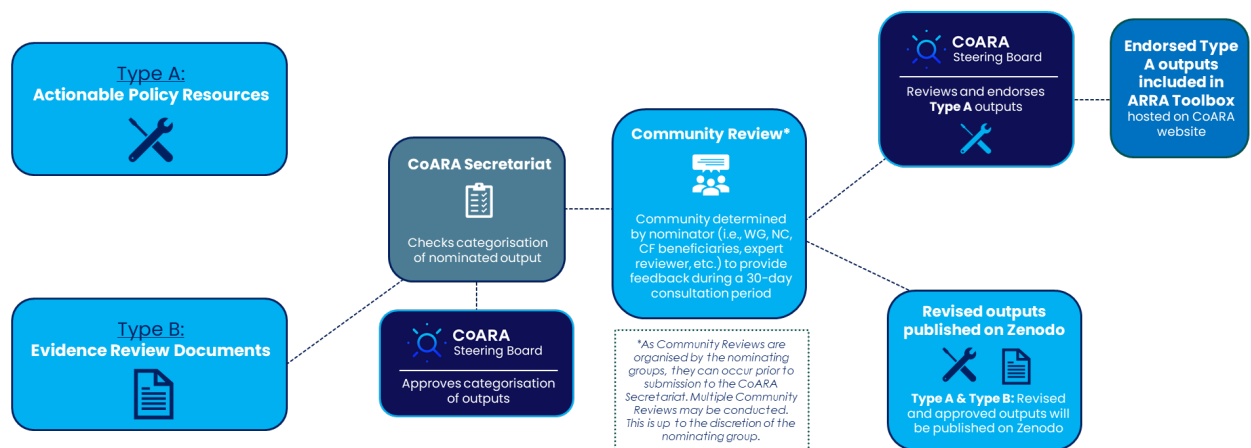


Figure 1: Endorsement routes infographic

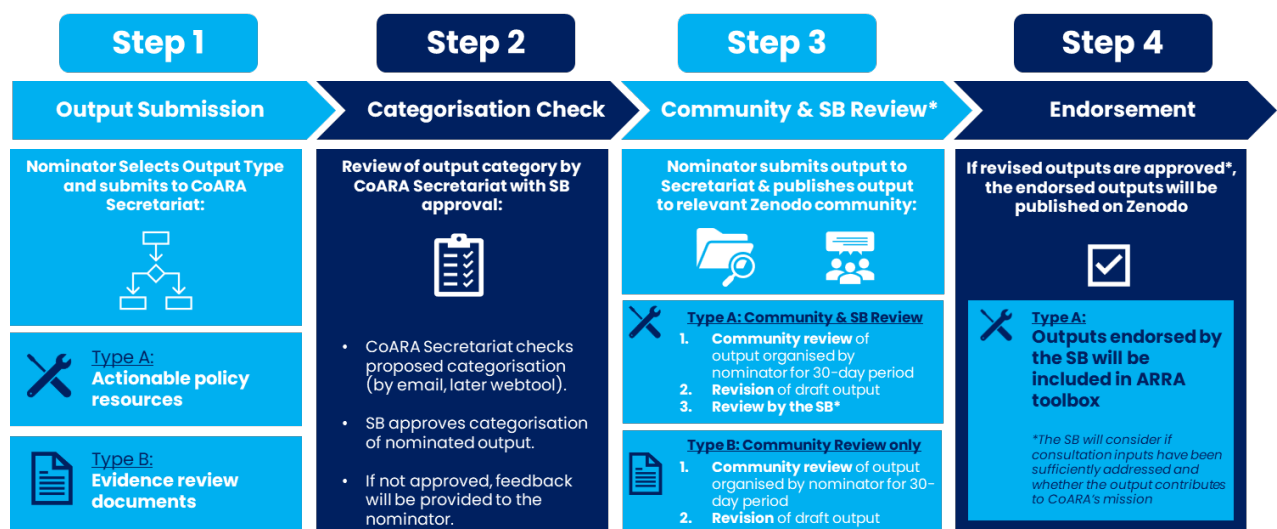


Figure 2: Process overview infographic

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/guidelines)
- 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