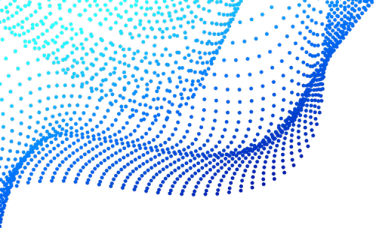


Minutes of the CoARA General Assembly 09 December 2024 11:00-14:00 CET

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MEETING REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND WELCOME

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

CoARA Chair, Professor Rianne Letschert, welcomed CoARA members and presented the agenda for the CoARA Steering Board meeting ([presentation slides 1-2](#)).

2. ACTIVITY REPORT & COARA BOOST PROJECT UPDATES

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Head of Programme

- Key Highlights

Meeting minutes of the preceding General Assembly have been approved.

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra provided updates on the coalition's progress and implementation activities over the past 5 months. ([presentation slides 3-18](#)).

- The Coalition: Membership doubled by second anniversary, surpassing 700 members in November, with representation from over 25% of world countries including new members from Kenya, Mexico, and Tanzania
- Action Plans Progress: Slower than expected progress; Finland, Spain, and Italy leading submissions, dominantly by universities
- Working Groups & National Chapters: 16 National Chapters now active; successful hybrid Working Groups co-chairs forum held in Helsinki in September, with second National Chapters Exchange Forum scheduled for Bonn in mid-March
- Cascade Funding: First round completed with 25 projects selected from 72 applications; second call opening early 2025.
- Policy Impact: CoARA referenced in various international policy documents.
- CoARA in scholarly discourse: Steering Board members are actively contributing to metaresearch discourses, especially along ARRA Commitment 2.
- Upcoming Activities: New Steering Board elections, financial support framework launch, new call for Cascade Funding, additional webinars, and new National Chapters Forum mid-March CoARA Outputs Endorsement Framework to be finalised.

3. COARA CHAIR & STEERING BOARD MEMBERS ELECTIONS (INCL. VICE CHAIR)

Presentations from the candidates for a Chair Position

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

The candidates who wished to run for Chair, vice-Chair and members of CoARA's Steering Board went through CoARA's elections ([presentation slides 19-28](#)).

As part of the General Assembly held on the 9th of December and for which voting window opens on the 25th of November, the following topics are subject of voting: 1. Election of the CoARA Chair 2. Election of 7 new members of the CoARA Steering Board (SB). Voting had been carried out online before and during the General Assembly meeting. The voting window opened on 25 November 2024 and closed on 9 December 2024, around 12:40 CET during the GA meeting. Parameters of the voting are described in the [Voting Guidelines](#).

- Electing a new CoARA Chair

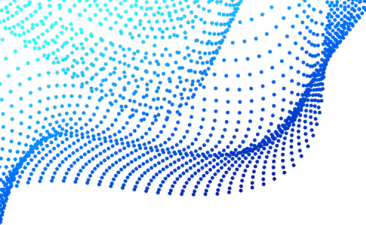
Candidates:

Prof. Henk Kummeling (elected Chair)

Prof. Henk Kummeling, Rector of Utrecht University in the Netherlands, applied for the position of Chair of the CoARA Steering Board. In his introduction, he championed the global transition to open science across knowledge institutions, believing it would enhance universities' societal impact at local, regional, and global levels. He particularly emphasised that open science would enable more equitable international partnerships and collaboration worldwide.

Henk Kummeling acknowledged CoARA's impressive rapid growth and organisational development, commending the establishment of Working Groups and National Chapters. He recognised that the coalition had evolved into its next crucial phase, identifying the development of guidelines and reform instruments for research evaluation as the strategic priority moving forward. He added that successful reform centred on supporting and motivating academic staff, which he viewed as key drivers of change.

Drawing on his experience in research and administration at both national and international levels, Henk Kummeling positioned himself as ready to contribute to CoARA's continued development and strategic advancement.



Prof. Sonia Quiroga

Prof. Sonia Quiroga, Vice-Dean of Research at Complutense University Madrid, presented her candidacy drawing on 25 years of research experience in climate change economics and coordinating European projects. Having personally experienced the limitations of traditional evaluation systems; her view aligns with CoARA's agreements. However, she expressed two key concerns for CoARA's future: ensuring a careful transition that doesn't destabilise academic careers, as researchers need time to adapt to changing objectives, and improving awareness, noting that many colleagues remain unaware of CoARA despite institutional support. She emphasised the need for genuine bottom-up engagement rather than top-down implementation.

Dr. Špela Stres

Dr. Špela Stres, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, outlined her vision of open science as a complex process encompassing open data, open publishing, intellectual property protection, transparent use of scholarly infrastructure, and emerging research security concerns. She emphasised that researchers must remain central to open science, as they generate and disseminate knowledge. Drawing on Slovenia's experience as a testing ground for new policies, she highlighted her agency's adoption of qualitative assessment systems that recognise diverse research contributions and career mobility. She stressed that the reform of research assessment can only succeed through collaboration between institutions and researchers, advocating for global communication of open science principles rather than European isolation.

- Electing a new CoARA Vice-Chair and 7 Steering Board Members

— Candidate overview

Vice Chair candidates	Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
	Prof. Manuel Célio Conceição	European Language Council	Prof. Manfred Bayer	TU Dortmund University
	Dr. Karl Dittrich	Saxion University of Applied Sciences	Prof. Katri Johanna Björkroth	University of Helsinki
	Prof. Perihan Elif Ekmekçi	Tobb ETU	Prof. Fabien Borget	Aix-Marseille Université
	Dr. Alba Jiménez	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Prof. Emanuele Conte	Associazione Italiana per la promozione della Scienza Aperta (AISA)
	Dr. Špela Stres	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency	Dr. Špela Stres	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency
	Dr. Karen Stroobants	Marie Curie Alumni Association	M. Hans de Jonge	Dutch Research Council NWO
	Dr. Erwin Krauskopf	Universidad de Las Américas	Prof. Diana Dias	Universidade Lusófona
	Dr. Gabi Lombardo	European Alliance for SSH	Dr. Marie-Noelle Giraud	University of Fribourg
	Prof. Stanisław Kistryn	Jagiellonian University in Kraków and Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP)	Prof. Maarten J. Uzerman	Erasmus University Rotterdam
	Dr. Alex Rushforth	Leiden University	Prof. Eric Leroy de Cardonnoy	Université de Caen Normandie
	Dr. Jolanta Šinkūnienė	Research Council of Lithuania	Dr. Jorge López-Puente	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
	Prof. Jozsef Tozser	University of Debrecen	Prof. Dariusz Mikieliewicz	Gdańsk University of Technology
	Prof. Maurits van Tulder	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Prof. Stefania Mondello	Università degli Studi di Messina
	Prof. Wolfram Weckwerth	Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE)	Prof. Cameron Neylon	Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI)
	Dr. Sibylle Wentker	Austrian Academy of Sciences	Prof. Coco Norén	Coimbra Group
			Prof. Marcin Palys	European University Association (EUA)
			Dr. Irene Ramos-Vielba	The Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA)

4. ENDORSEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR COARA OUTPUTS

Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice Chair

Dr. Karen Stroobants presented the second version of the CoARA Outputs Endorsement Framework, which establishes optional procedures for reviewing and endorsing external and internal CoARA/ Working Group outputs, implementation options and tools that support CoARA commitments ([presentation slides 29-42](#)). The framework categorises outputs into three types: Type A for general endorsement requiring General Assembly votes, Type B for stakeholder-specific approval via consensus meetings, and Type C for supporting evidence requiring only expert quality checks. The process involves categorisation, verification, 30-day community consultation, revision periods, and Steering Board review before final approval. The final version is scheduled for a vote at the Summer 2025 General Assembly.

5. BREAKOUT DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING GROUPS OUTPUTS ENDORSEMENT FRAMEWORK

Guiding questions for the breakout groups

- Does the scope of the endorsement framework make sense to you?
- Does the proposed classification of outputs / implementation options make sense to you?
- Would you agree with the cap on the number of 'Type A- General endorsement' outputs per WG?
- Do you find the proposed review framework appropriate and useful? Do you see the value in it?
- Do you have any ideas for refinement regarding the adoption of WG outputs?
- How do you foresee your organisation engaging with CoARA outputs?



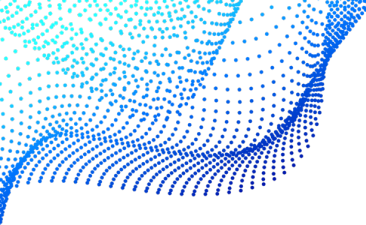
6. REPORTING BACK FROM BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS

• Group 1

Prof. Rianne Letschert reported that Group 1 had an excellent discussion with several remarks. They emphasised the need for periodic review of any endorsement framework that's implemented, noting some unclear aspects in the current document, particularly around "eligible nominators" which is phrased ambiguously, and questioning whether each output of Working Groups must go through the endorsement process. They stressed the importance of preventing the endorsement process from being seen as mere certification that could halt the desired cultural transformation. Finally, Group 1 highlighted implementation concerns, questioning how endorsed policies would be implemented within institutions and monitored for real change, noting that genuine transformation requires more than policies and discussion – it needs better communication, awareness-raising, and training to achieve actual institutional change rather than just more talk.

• Group 2

Dr. Elizabeth Gadd reported that Group 2 expressed general agreement and understanding of the framework's necessity, finding it helpful overall. However,



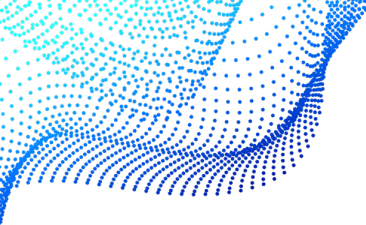
participants felt the process might be somewhat complex, whilst recognising the importance of formal approval procedures. Key concerns raised included: the need for clear external communication of endorsement status, possibly through a distinctive "kite mark" to differentiate CoARA-endorsed outputs from those simply bearing the CoARA logo; questions about whether the Steering Board should handle output classification; and discussion about the cap on Type A outputs per Working Group, particularly for groups with extended periods or broad domains like academic career assessment, with suggestions that some working groups might submit additional outputs with Steering Board agreement.

- **Group 3**

Group 3 identified complexity as a significant concern, Dr Karen Stroobants reported that various questions raised during discussion highlighted areas requiring better clarification. Most importantly, Group 3 emphasised the need to make it much clearer that the endorsement framework shouldn't apply to every output produced by CoARA, allowing for selective application instead. Like Group 2, they questioned the respective roles of the General Assembly and Steering Board, suggesting the latter's role might need expanding in line with Dr. Elizabeth Gadd's earlier comments, whilst carefully considering the practical implications of involving the General Assembly in the process. The Group also raised operational concerns about which organisational stakeholders need involvement, whether there's sufficient time to engage them properly, and crucially, whether achieving quorum would be feasible for outputs in the Type A category. Overall, whilst seeing merit in the framework, Group 3 believes it requires refinement regarding its complexity, scope, and practical implementation.

- **Group 4**

Dr. Eva Méndez's feedback from Group 4 included a productive discussion about procedure but highlighted significant challenges around the categorisation of different output types, particularly regarding Type A outputs. She provided an example of how something like a new indicator that requires adoption across all Working Groups could have transversal implications. She also mentioned the difficulty for the community to grasp what's happening in Working Groups they're not directly involved with. Group 4 emphasised that communication mechanisms need strengthening, noting an important distinction between outputs and



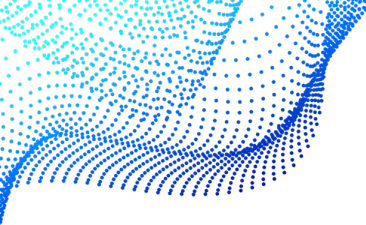
outcomes – as it can be impossible to foresee an output's significance without understanding its long-term outcome or impact. Group 4's key recommendations centred on three areas: improving communication about ongoing activities, better defining significant impacts or outcomes, and enhancing communication mechanisms both within and outside the community to ensure everyone understands the broader implications of Working Group activities.

- **Group 5**

Rapporteur Dr. Toma Susi reported Group 5 had a productive discussion focusing on two main areas of clarification and enhancement. Firstly, they discussed endorsing outputs from specific stakeholder groups, confirming that the process is designed for stakeholder members of the coalition – universities who have signed with CoARA – rather than outside stakeholders endorsing core recommendations. However, they suggested this could present a valuable opportunity to reach beyond the coalition, potentially gathering feedback and buy-in from external organisations for better dissemination of outputs, even if this wouldn't form part of the formal endorsement framework. Secondly, the Group emphasised the importance of transparency in the endorsement process, questioning who endorsed outputs, which organisations provided feedback, what that feedback contained, and what revisions were subsequently made. In keeping with the spirit of open science and transparency, they recommended making this information visible, acknowledging that whilst it would add complexity to the process and presentation, finding ways to highlight endorsers and feedback would significantly enhance the effectiveness of these outputs.

- **Group 6**

Dr. James Morris noted that Group 6 raised several similar points to other groups, with complexity being a primary concern – they felt the current proposal might be overly complex and risk getting bogged down in technical details about outputs rather than focusing on the actual content being produced by Working Groups and National Chapters, though they acknowledged the sensitive balance between bottom-up and top-down processes across CoARA. The Group strongly emphasised that the General Assembly and its associated processes mustn't create bottlenecks for CoARA's outputs and communications. They also suggested a shift in perspective, proposing that Working Groups and National Chapters



shouldn't only be viewed as producers or generators of outputs, but could also serve as facilitators of outputs and the consensus-building process itself. Finally, Group 6 called for improved communication about how Working Groups and National Chapters operate, what they're currently working on, and their processes, suggesting this enhanced communication should be a prerequisite step before implementing more formal endorsement procedures.

- **Group 7**

Raquel Vega reported that Group 7 found the scope sensible and complete with no obvious gaps but echoed previous colleagues' comments about giving the General Assembly a greater role, potentially including Type B outputs in their remit. They suggested that whilst Type C outputs might not need GA endorsement, all pilot outputs should be reported back to the General Assembly to give them official status. The Group emphasised the importance of the CoARA Secretariat checking output types before community consultation to avoid possible overlaps between Type A and Type B outputs, noting that outputs relevant to funders may also be relevant to others. Group 7 made two broader comments: firstly, that if consensus isn't reached regarding an output, it's crucial to properly document all the reasons behind this decision; and secondly, the Group understood this was naturally the first step towards creating an endorsement process, but it would be beneficial to have a revision mechanism for the endorsement process, allowing space to review and refine the different outputs.

- **Group 8**

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra reported that Group 8 had quite an extensive discussion, with some participants for instance, representatives of DFG, offering to provide written comments as well. There was strong consensus within the Group that radical simplification of the current framework is necessary to prevent CoARA from becoming overly bureaucratic and to avoid putting voting at the forefront of General Assembly engagement. Group 8 agreed that involving the coalition at large is essential, with members needing opportunities to engage and build ownership over outputs, but they stressed that alternative mechanisms to voting are required. Their unanimous suggestion was to place greater emphasis on community review, properly engaging all General Assembly members during a consultation period so they can contribute to final outputs, whilst moving final

approval authority to the Steering Board. Additionally, the Group suggested eliminating all categorisation entirely, which would considerably simplify the system, though they acknowledged that the streamlining principle remains an essentially important component of any framework – emphasising once again that radical simplification is necessary.

Following the discussions, Dr. Erzsebet Toth-Czifra re-iterated next steps: first, the Secretariat opened a consultation window for written feedback on the framework until end of February 2025. Following that the Steering Board integrated this input received at the General Assembly and per emails to the next version of the framework. Finally, the improved framework will be shared to the General Assembly in April 2025 and will be open for approval in June 2025.

7. GUEST PRESENTATIONS OF TWO COARA WORKING GROUPS

- **Working Group Reforming Academic Career Assessment**

Rita Morais presented the Working Group on Reforming Academic Career Assessment ([presentation slides 49-61](#)), comprising 41 members from 22 countries, which aims to broaden research assessment beyond traditional metrics to include teaching, innovation, leadership, and service. This Working Group has completed a mapping exercise with case studies and a survey of institutions across 41 countries, with results to be published on Zenodo. Despite challenges with resource constraints and varying participation levels, they've successfully delivered outcomes through a committed core group and are now developing an adaptable assessment toolbox in their second phase.

- **Working Group Recognising and Rewarding Peer-Review**

Johan Rooryck, presented the Working Group on Recognising and Rewarding Peer Review ([presentation slides 43-48](#)), which addresses the fundamental problem that peer review is essential for validating research but remains undervalued and unrewarded in current assessment systems. This Working Group argues that researchers focus too heavily on publishing whilst neglecting review responsibilities, creating an unsustainable imbalance where many "graze off the commons without giving back." The Working Group has developed draft

recommendations across three areas – journal reviews, book reviews, and research application reviews – covering five key aspects: openness, credit and recognition, infrastructure for accessible reviews, fairness and sustainability, and integration into assessment processes. The recommendations are currently open for consultation, and the Working Group is moving into a second phase involving institutional pilots to create a community of practice that addresses the alignment challenges between universities (emphasising publications), research funders (moving towards preprint review systems), and the need for accessible, evaluable peer review contributions.

8. FUNDRAISING STRATEGY FOR COARA

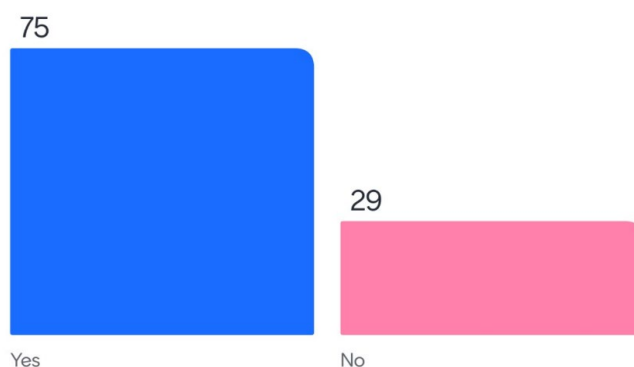
Nicolas Walter, ESF

The European Science Foundation (ESF) serves as the Secretariat for CoARA ([presentation slides 62–72](#)). Nicolas Walter reminded CoARA had been established in December 2022 and has now more than 700 member organisations (growing by 3 weekly). Currently funded solely through the CoARA Boost Project (€5 million, 3 years) ending October 2026, members are asked to contribute to a new voluntary CoARA Central Budget for sustainability beyond 2026. The proposed framework has three pillars: **Consolidate** (strengthen current foundation and demonstrate collective commitment), **Complement** (enhance impact through expanded Working Group support, global conferences, and new initiatives like online seminars), and **Anticipate** (prepare for post-2026 by ensuring financial sustainability). Key principles include **entirely voluntary participation** with no additional rights for contributors, members-only eligibility, and transparent ESF management with Steering Board oversight. Implementation involves live consultation now, detailed member survey in early 2025, and framework launch in February–March 2025.

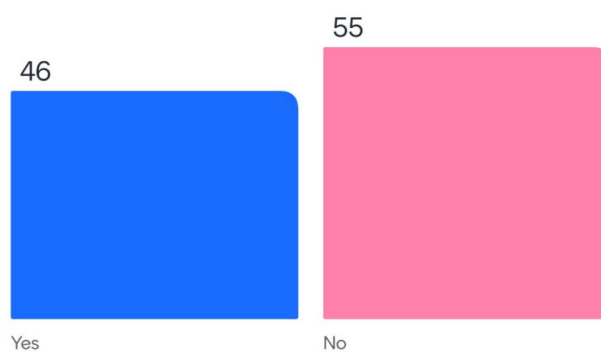
- Live Consultation Results

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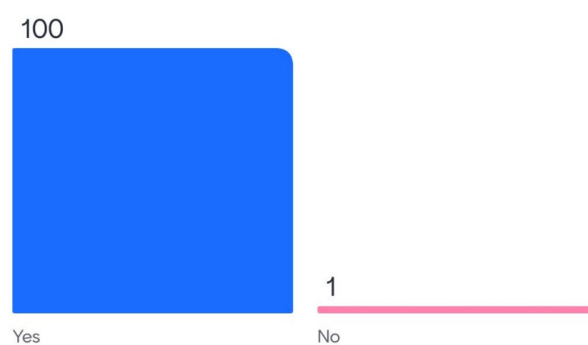
Question 1: Do you support launching voluntary annual financial support for CoARA's long-term sustainability?



Question 2: Should the campaign only be open to CoARA members?



Question 3: Do you agree that contributors should not receive additional rights?



Open Comments: Suggestions and recommendations
Comments or suggestions ([pages 4 to 8](#)).

As a next step, the CoARA Secretariat opens a follow-up survey for consultation, until end of February 2025 based on which they define fundraising targets and finalise, and eventually launch, the framework on Q2 2025.

9. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

Guest presentation of Dr. Shawn McGuirk (NSERC)

Shawn McGuirk from Canada's NSERC presented the Global Research Council's work on responsible research assessment ([presentation slides 73-81](#)). The Global Research Council represents funding organisations worldwide and has developed dimensions of responsible research assessment covering areas like open science, equity, and research integrity. They're currently running a global survey, collecting case studies from funders, and will publish results at their May 2025 meeting in Riyadh. The Council aims to help funding organisations globally adopt better research assessment practices and is developing a self-assessment tool for funders.

10. COARA CHAIR & STEERING BOARD MEMBERS VOTING RESULTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Election results!



CoARA Steering Board							
Title	Full Name	Affiliation	Country	Vice-Chair	Region	Type of Organisation	Gender
Dr.	Karen Stroobants	Marie Curie Alumni Association	United Kingdom	YES	B	Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers	Female
Prof.	Marcin Palys	European University Association (EUA)	Poland	NO	A	Universities and their associations	Male
Dr.	Irene Ramos-Vielba	The Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA)	Spain	NO	B	National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations	Female
Dr.	Gabi Lombardo	European Alliance for SSH	Italy	YES	B	Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations	Female
Prof.	Cameron Neylon	Curtin University	Australia	NO	C	Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations	Male
M.	Hans de Jonge	Dutch Research Council NWO	The Netherlands	NO	B	Public or private research funding organisations and their associations	Male
Prof.	Stanislaw Kistryn	Jagiellonian University in Kraków	Poland	YES	A	Universities and their associations	Male
CoARA Chair							
Prof	Henk Kummeling	Utrecht University	The Netherlands		B	Universities and their associations	Male

11. WRAP-UP AND CONCLUSIONS

Huge congratulations to Professor Henk Kummeling and the new Steering Board members!

Prof. Rianne Letschert warmly thanked all CoARA members, particularly the Steering Board team and the CoARA Secretariat as she will no longer be the Chair of CoARA's Steering Board. Drs. Elizabeth Gadd and Karen Stroobants both emphasised the pleasure they had working with Prof. Rianne Letschert.

12. NEXT MEETING

- Date, time and location

The next General Assembly will be held online on Monday the 23rd of June from 09:30 to 13:00 CEST.

13. ANNEX

- Agenda

11:00 Opening of the Meeting and Welcome

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

11:05 Activity Report & CoARA Boost Project Updates

Dr. Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, CoARA Head of Programme

11:20 CoARA Chair & Steering Board Members Elections (incl. Vice Chair)

Presentations from the candidates for a Chair Position

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

Brief introduction of Chair Candidates

Prof. Henk Kummeling, University of Utrecht

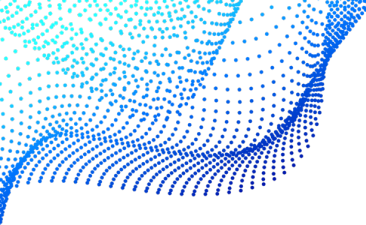
Prof. Sonia Quiroga, Complutense University of Madrid

Dr. Špela Stres, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency

11:45 Endorsement Framework for CoARA Outputs

Dr. Karen Stroobants, CoARA Vice Chair

12:00 Breakout discussion on the Working Groups outputs endorsement framework



12:20 Reporting back from breakout discussions

12:40 Voting window closes, Coffee Break (15 mins)

12:55 Guest presentations of two CoARA Working Groups

Dr. Rita Morais, EUA, Coordinator of the Academic Research Assessment Working Group

Dr. Johan Rooryck, CoAlition S, Co-Chair of the Rewarding Peer Review Practices Working Group

13:05 Fundraising strategy for CoARA

Nicolas Walter, ESF

13:30 Global perspectives on Research Assessment

Guest presentation of Dr. Shawn McGuirk – Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

13:40 CoARA Chair & Steering Board Members Voting Results Announcement

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

13:50 Wrap-up and conclusions

Prof. Rianne Letschert, CoARA Chair

- Documents shared and extra information

Presentation slides: [GA09122024.pptx](#)

Highlights from the Chat: [Highlights from the GA chat 09122024.docx](#)