

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

Evaluation guidelines for Working Group proposals

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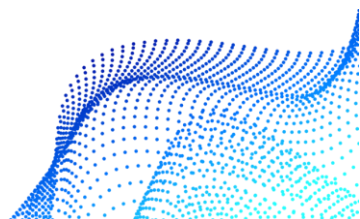
1. Evaluators

The CoARA Steering Board is responsible for evaluating the Working Group Proposals. Each submission will be pre-assessed by two reviewers from the Steering Board members, then discussed collegially by the entire Steering Board.

Members of the Steering Board are elected by the CoARA General Assembly. The group has been elected and exhibits diversity in terms of geographical and disciplinary background as well as career stages.

1.1. Potential Conflicts of Interest

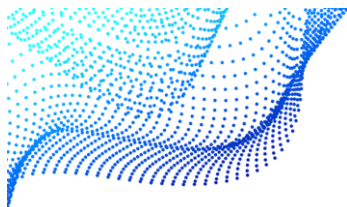
Steering Board members are allowed to participate in Working Group submission. **In cases where Steering Board members are directly involved in an application, either in their**



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individual or institutional capacities, the Steering Board member in question will abstain from the evaluation of the affected proposals.

In addition to flagging Steering Board members' individual or institutional involvement as cases of Conflict of Interest, each reviewer is encouraged to thoroughly and conscientiously reflect upon their own biases regarding a submission and, when in doubt, decline to review.

2. Evaluation and selection process

The evaluation procedure consists of two main stages: **scoring** and **selection via the evaluation of a Review Panel**. After the CoARA Secretariat checked the eligibility of all proposals received through the submission portal, the eligible proposals will be forwarded to the Steering Board for scoring. Assignment of proposals to reviewers is done by the Secretariat based on ruling out Conflicts of Interest, random assignment or in accordance with areas of member expertise, topical relevance, random allocation and most importantly, on ruling out Conflicts of Interest. Each submission will be **reviewed by one Lead Reviewer and one Non-Lead Reviewers**, in total three reviewers per submission. During the scoring phase, Steering Board members fill in their scoring sheets and send them back to the CoARA Secretariat who compiles the scoring results. These results will form the base of the deliberation discussion among the Steering Board by which the Steering Board will select the CoARA Working Group portfolio. Decision will be made in the light of the evaluation criteria (see below). In the course of the selection, the Steering Board ensures that the CoARA Working Group portfolio is fully aligned with the core mission of the Coalition. **The final outcome of the selection process will reflect a collective judgement of the Steering Board.** One Steering Board member will not participate in the evaluation process to act as **an independent observer** to ensure maximum transparency and integrity of the process.

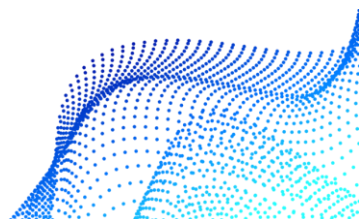
Selection

The CoARA Steering Board will select Working Groups, basing its decision on the outcome of the assessment and on WG portfolio management considerations (e.g. balance in topics, geographical balance, institutional balance).

3. Evaluation criteria

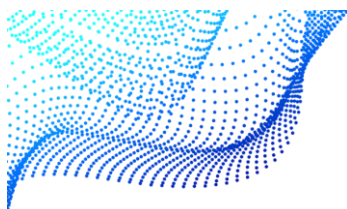
Evaluation of both new Working Groups and extension requests

In line with the Rules of Procedure, the CoARA Steering Board will evaluate the proposals considering nine criteria. Criteria will bear an equal weight in the assessment and each



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criterion will be qualitatively assessed following the scales provided in the table below.

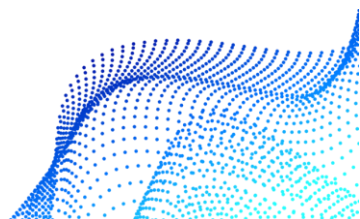
Criterion	Assessment scale
For new WGs: Addresses at least one of the proposal topics specified	• Fully addresses • Partly addresses • Does not address
For extension requests: Justification of extension based on past achievements and rationale for continuation	• Strong justification¹ • Partial justification • Weak justification
Added value of the proposed Working Group over and above what is currently being done within the community	• High • Moderate • Low
Diverse types and sizes of organisations, and wide range of experience level represented	• Highly diverse representation • Diverse representation • Low diversity
Broad and balanced geographical participation from the CoARA member organisations	• High geographical balance • Moderate geographical balance • Low geographical balance
Direct involvement of researchers at all career stages (including early career researchers)	• Highly diverse representation • Diverse representation • Low diversity
Feasibility of the proposed work plan and outcomes/deliverables within the indicated timeframe	• Highly feasible • Feasible • Not feasible

¹

Strong justification: Well-articulated rationale for extension clearly linked to deliverables; difficulties are honestly acknowledged; concrete, realistic, and well-planned measures proposed to address challenges and complete the work.

Partial justification: Rationale for extension is provided but could be more compelling; some recognition of difficulties; remediation measures are outlined but may lack full detail or realism.

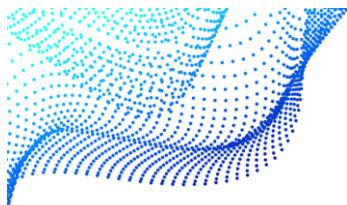
Weak justification: Weak or unclear rationale for extension; difficulties are vaguely described or overlooked; little or no convincing plan to remediate challenges and ensure progress.



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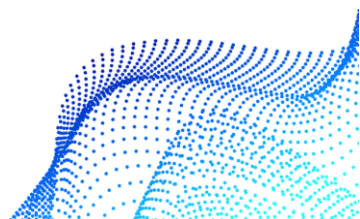
Concrete research assessment solutions proposed: The proposed outputs will provide actionable resources to signatories of the ARRA in implementing commitment 4 or other thematic areas defined in the call	• The proposed outputs are strongly aligned with the expectations defined in the call • The proposed outputs are partially aligned with the expectations defined in the call • The proposed outputs are not aligned with expectations defined in the call
Expected impact, notably expected adoption and implementation scenarios	• High expected impact • Medium expected impact • Low expected impact
Robust plan to engage with other CoARA member organisations interested in the work of the Working Group, and with other organisations including outside Europe	• Plan will allow to engage with all relevant and interested organisations • Plan will allow to engage with some relevant and interested organisations • Plan will not allow to coherently engage with relevant and interested organisation

4. Scoring sheet and guide

To prepare the panel discussion of the Steering Board, a scoring sheet will be made available based on the evaluation criteria and grids specified above. The sheet guides reviewers to assess the quality of each Working Group proposal **against the evaluation criteria** specified above and express their evaluation in terms of **scores (1-3) as well as in short written comments**. Reviewers are encouraged to use the large spectrum of ranking scale (1-3) in order to make a clear distinction of high quality, average and low-quality proposals. Reviewers are also encouraged to **suggest possible mergers** across Working Groups.

The role of reviewers is vital in keeping the standards of the selection high. It includes:

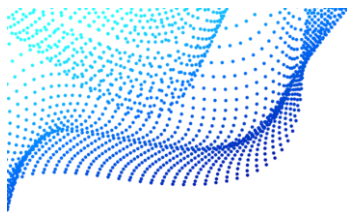
1. Assessing the proposals based on their soundness, integrity, feasibility, possible impact **and relevance to CoARA's mission** of facilitating **a systemic change** in research assessment practices across Europe and beyond.
2. Contributing to the development of the proposals by sharing their remarks and maintaining a constructive tone.



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Keeping an awareness of one's possible cultural, disciplinary, etc. biases, implicit or explicit, can help avoid having them negatively affect reviewers' judgements.

5. Guidelines for the Review Panel evaluation and selection phase

These guidelines apply specifically to the **Review Panel evaluation and selection phase of the Working Groups**. The Review Panel will be composed by the Steering Board and it will be chaired by members from the Executive Committee. The Secretariat will assist the Review Panel and will be responsible for the smooth operation and progress of the review process, and for the management of the Conflict of Interest during the entire evaluation at the Review Panel meeting. One Executive Committee member will act as **independent Observer** and as such will abstain from the scoring and selection discussion. They will observe and monitor the Review Panel evaluation and selection phase and to ensure a consistent, fair and impartial panel evaluation process.

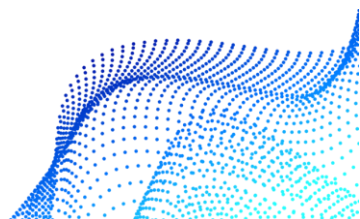
5.1. Management of Conflicts of Interest

Declared Conflicts of Interest of Steering Board members will be carefully addressed with the assistance of the Secretariat. Members will be invited to leave the discussion room before a Working Group proposal with which they are in conflict of interest is subject to discussion and until the end of this discussion. They will under no circumstances take part at the discussion and in the decision regarding proposals for which they are in Conflict of Interest.

5.2. Review process of the Review Panel evaluation

The discussion will be based on the scoring sheets filled in by Lead and Non-Lead Reviewer. All scoring sheets' content will be available to the Review Panel before the Review Panel meeting. Scores of each proposal will be compiled and summed up and each proposal.

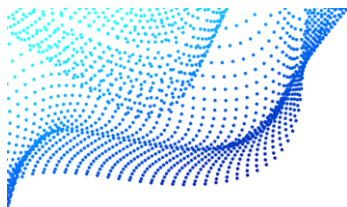
Review Panel discussion will be focused and always related to the evaluation criteria and to the quality of proposals. The Lead Reviewer will present the proposal and their evaluation and the Non-Lead reviewer will be asked to complete with their comments; discussion will then open to the entire Review Panel. Based on discussion, scores from the lead and non-Lead Reviewer will either move up or move down to express that the proposal is fully aligned (3), partially aligned (2), not aligned (1) with the vision of CoARA. Comments made along this line during the Review Panel will be recorded by the Lead Reviewers for the feedback to applicants in line with the final score given. Scores are an internal tool to facilitate the Review Panel discussion and will not be disclosed to applicants.



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In the end of panel discussion, the Steering Board identifies the high/medium/low scoring proposals, have the presentation of each proposal, and then collectively discuss the identification of a minimum of 5, maximum of 7 proposals with the **aim of producing a balanced WG portfolio** based on existing assessment criteria (e.g. balance in topics, geographical balance, institutional balance). The selection will be carried out based on how the portfolio of groups support achieving CoARA's mission and make the biggest possible impact towards a systemic reform of research assessment from the resources available.

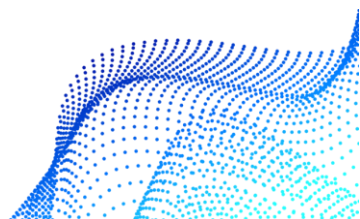
5.3. The selection of Working Groups

The **final discussion** for selection of the Working Groups will be based on the group of highest quality proposals determined by the Review Panel. This highest quality Working Group proposals will be discussed and ranked according to criteria of evaluation and portfolio management considerations (e.g. balance in topics, geographical balance, institutional balance).

Following this final discussion for selection, the Review Panel determines the minimum of 5 selected Working Groups based on discussion and ranking. Decision will be enacted by an unanimity vote of the Review Panel/Steering Board.

6. Feedback to applicants

Comments made on the **evaluation sheets** will be disclosed to the applicants alongside the results of the selection process. In addition to the evaluation results, applicants will also receive a one-page document presenting how the evaluation was carried out – based on elements from the finalised Evaluation Guide.



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