

Research Assessment Reform and Open Science in Ireland

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Introduction - Research Assessment Reform

What do we want research to be?

- High quality - robust and rigorous
- Open and collaborative
- Engaged and impactful (as appropriate)
- Reliable and trustworthy
- And sometimes produced speedily....

But what do we reward and incentivise?

- *Almost none of these things!*
- The article in a 'prestige' journal is still the 'ideal' research output
- If everyone's career depends on producing lots of these, the outcomes can include:
 - 'Closed' research
 - Inadequate focus on impact and engagement
 - Poor research culture (poor leadership, questionable practices)
 - Rushed and therefore potentially less reliable results
 - Unaffordable publication system

WELLCOME TRUST RESEARCH CULTURE SURVEY

Figure 1:
Words that researchers would use to describe research culture

Survey, n = 2839 – research community, UK and international.



Investigating different perspectives on research culture
What Researchers Think About the Culture They Work In | 7



1 in 4 PhDs in survey 'report feelings of suicide or self-harm'

Researchers say study adds to 'growing body of evidence' on poor mental well-being for doctoral students

January 12, 2022

[Simon Baker](#)

Twitter: [@HigherBaker](#)

Almost a quarter of postgraduate researchers who took part in a well-being survey said that they had experienced thoughts of suicide or self-harm in the previous fortnight.

Almost 500 postgraduate researchers took part in the survey, for a study led by researchers at the [University of Glasgow](#), which asked respondents to report on their well-being and any symptoms of mental illness they were experiencing.



Source: iStock

timeshighereducation.com/news/four-10-uk-phd-students-high-risk-suicide-says-study



Four in 10 UK PhD students 'at high risk of suicide', says study

Loneliness and intellectual insecurity highlighted as prime reasons for elevated suicide risk among doctoral researchers

October 14, 2021

[Jack Grove](#)

Twitter: [@jgro_the](#)

As many as four in 10 UK PhD students may be at "high risk" of suicide, according to a study that underlines the chronic levels of stress among doctoral candidates.

The first ever study to ask British doctoral students directly about suicidality, which quizzed some 1,263 respondents on whether they had ever considered taking



Source: Getty



Science

SILICON VALLEY · YOUTUBE ·

ETHICS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH >

Scientists paid large publishers over \$1 billion in four years to have their studies published with open access

A study reveals that academic megajournals 'Scientific Reports' and 'Nature Communications' have cornered the market

Impediments to reform

- Structural
 - Formal policy architecture (institutional and national)
 - Practices and processes (recruitment, promotion etc)
- Cultural
 - Hierarchies of prestige and power
 - Practices/language/discourse

Whole-of-system approach is needed to tackle these impediments



There is a worldwide movement for research assessment reform

May 2013



<https://sfedora.org>

Nov 2013



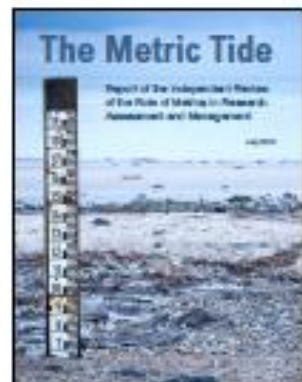
Science in Transition

Mar 2015



Leiden Manifesto

Jul 2015



Metric Tide Report

Sept 2018



Plan S

Nov 2019



Netherlands initiative

Nov 2019



FOLEC

Jul 2020



Hong Kong Principles

Nov 2020



Report for GRC meeting

Nov 2021



UNESCO Recommendations

Nov 2021



EC Scoping Report

Dec 2022



CoARA

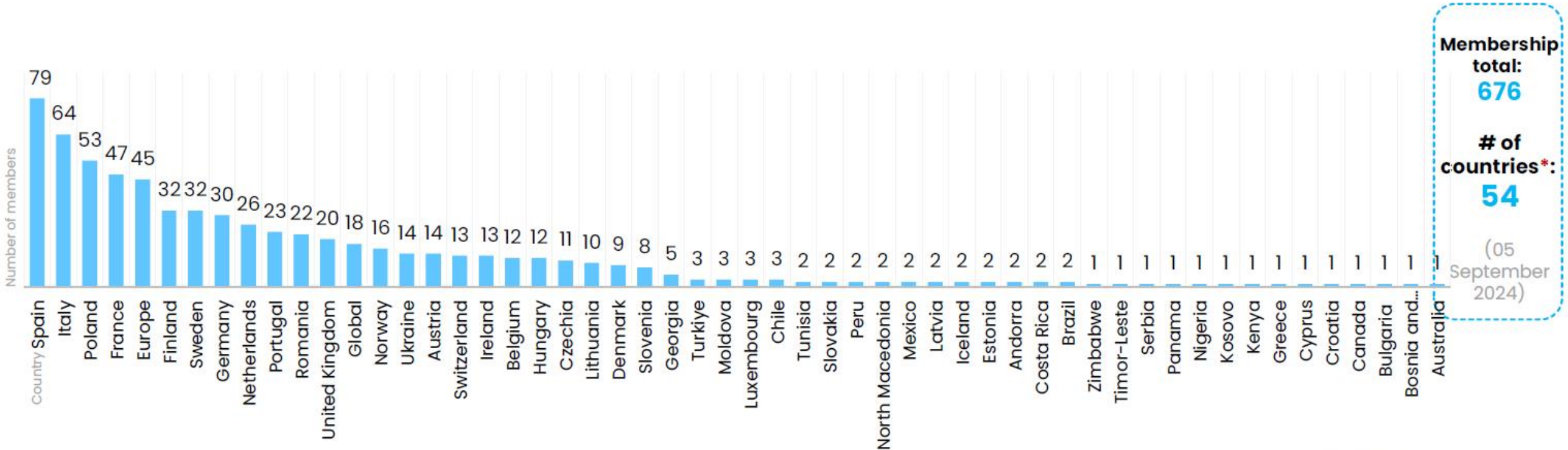
CoARA - 4 core Principles

1. Recognise the **diversity of contributions** to, and careers in, research, in accordance with the needs and the nature of the research
2. Base RA primarily **on qualitative evaluation** for which **peer-review is central**, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
3. Abandon the **inappropriate uses of journal- and publication-based metrics** in RA, in particular: journal impact factor (JIF) and h-index
4. Avoid **the use of rankings of research organisations** in RA

CoARA - 6 supporting Principles

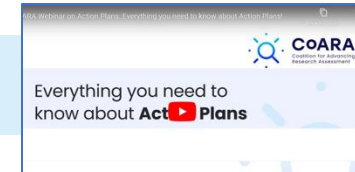
5. **Commit resources** to reforming RA as needed to achieve organisational changes
6. **Review and develop** RA criteria, tools and processes
7. **Raise awareness** of RA reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable **mutual learning** within and beyond the Coalition
9. **Communicate progress** made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments
10. **Evaluate** practices, criteria and tools **based on solid evidence** & state-of-the-art in research on research and **make data openly available**.

CoARA Membership by Country



Busy CoARA Implementation Communities

Action Plans and Their Implementation



13 active Working Groups



16 National Chapters



Cascade Funding



International outreach

CoARA - Irish National Chapter



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



RRA in the Irish research sector

Strengths and opportunities

- Significant engagement with National Chapter
- Progressive research funders
- National agreement to implement ERA Action #3 Reforming the research assessment system
- All parts of the sector are quite porous — influence and discussion can happen fairly fluidly.

RRA in the Irish research sector – challenges

- ‘Herd signing’
 - Potential problem of institutions signing DORA, CoARA, etc in an unconsidered way - because ‘everyone’s doing it’.
 - Limited follow-through or implementation
- Sectoral research metrics
- Importance of international rankings

CoARA Next Steps

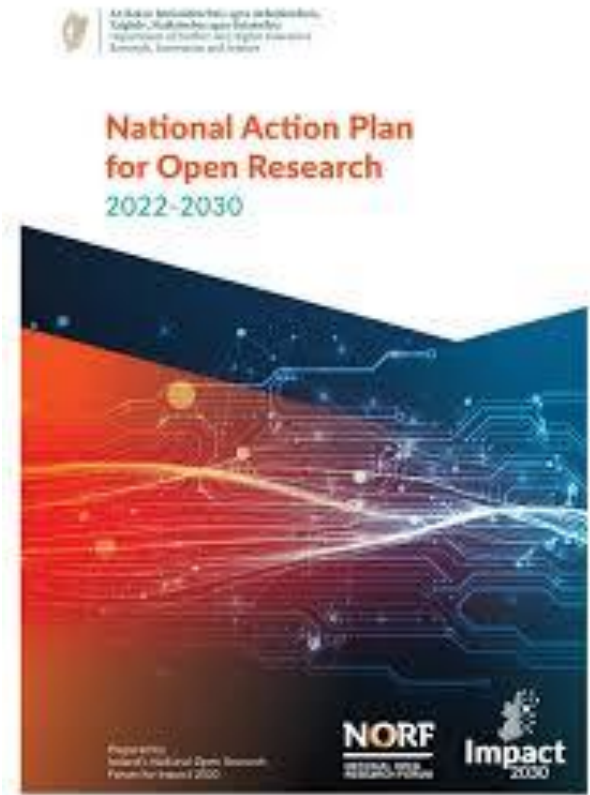
- Action Planning
- 2023/24 - 2028
- Ensure leadership buy-in
- Write Institutional Action Plans:
- Action owners, outcomes, timelines
- Regular and senior oversight of deliverables



ABOARD – Embedding Open Research Practices

National Action Plan for Open Research 5 strategic areas

- Open Access to publication,
- FAIR data,
- infrastructure,
- skills & competencies
- incentives & rewards



ABOARD: System-level Incentivisation

Alignment between: Government department, RPOs, Funders, Researchers

Re-thinking Research Assessment practices

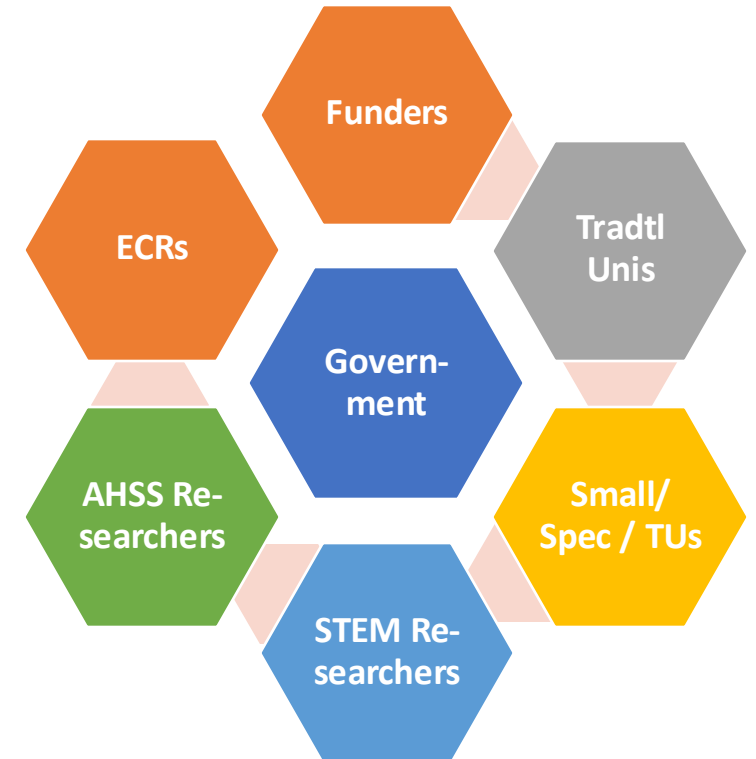
Open Research Incentivisation, Recognition & Rewards

Dialogue and consultation with Researchers

ABOARD
RoAdmap to
EmBedding Open
ReSeArch Practices
in IReland

ABOARD: Work Packages and Timelines

Work Packages and Deliverables		Timeline	Completion
1	Project Management & Partner Recruitment	Month 3	Jul-24
2	Background paper: Best Practice & International Exemplars	Month 6	Oct-24
3	Self-Assessment (min 50 respondents)	Month 3 - 12	Apr-25
4	Collective intelligence workshops (at least 5)	Month 3 - 16	Aug-25
5	Position paper and recommendations	Month 12 - 21	Dec-25
6	Capstone Event	Month 13 - 24	Apr-26
7	Communication & Dissemination	Month 1 - 24	Apr-26





[ABOARD Project and CoARA National Chapter for Ireland:](#)

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