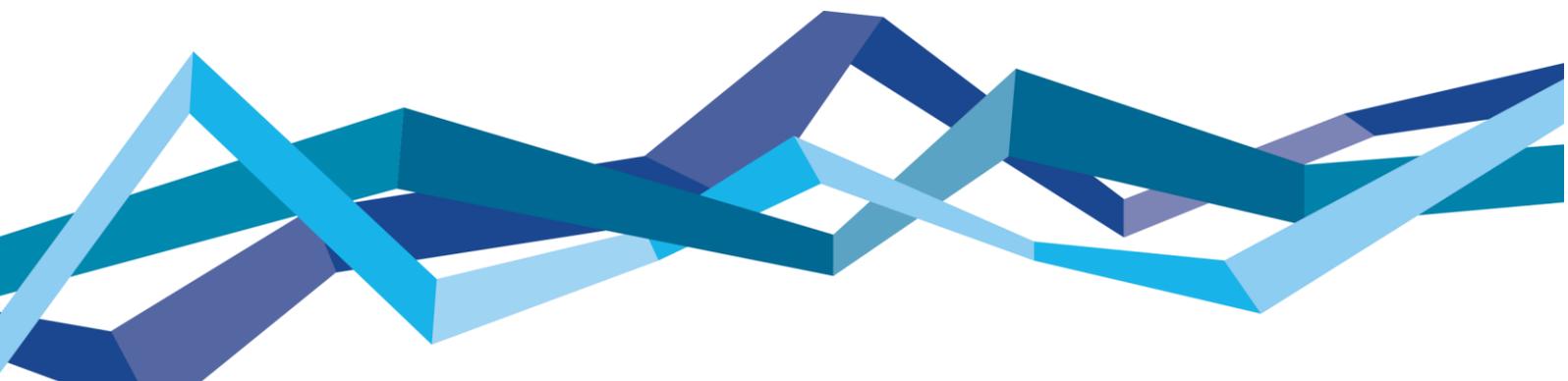




FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE
AGREEMENT AND COALITION FOR
REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

20 July 2022



Frequently Asked Questions

on the Agreement and Coalition for Reforming Research Assessment

Q Why sign the Agreement?

Signing the Agreement is an opportunity to signal publicly the willingness of your organisation to reform research assessment along the agreed Principles, and to implement the agreed Commitments according to the agreed timeframe. Signing the Agreement is also a precondition for joining the Coalition.

Q Why join the Coalition?

1. Joining the Coalition will bring support to the reform of research assessment. It will offer members the possibility to exchange knowledge, work together, test and pilot, and be supported by peers, for advancing in the process of research assessment reform. Collaboration will allow identifying, exchanging, or delivering, for example:

- Information on changes piloted and implemented by the members within the Coalition, and also beyond;
- Good practices, established or emerging from changes piloted, but also challenging experiences encountered and lessons learned;
- Recommendations and guidelines that can be considered by all or part of the Coalition members and beyond;
- Joint experimentations and initiatives;
- Information on the impacts – benefits and costs – of the changes implemented for further evidence-informed changes.

Coalition members will have the possibility to initiate and benefit from communities of practice on subjects of their choice. Examples of potential topics are:

- Peer review and qualitative evaluation;
- Narrative CVs;
- Responsible use of metrics;
- Use of metrics in the assessment of institutions by national evaluation agencies;
- Assessment of research projects by research funders;
- Tailoring criteria and processes by discipline, inter-disciplinary field or thematic area;
- The balance between research and other academic activities;
- Conflicts of interest and biases.

2. The Coalition will help members that are less advanced in the reform of research assessment, or that are at an early stage in this process, to identify and learn from successful ideas and practices from organisations that are further advanced in their reforms. At the same time, members that are more advanced assessment practices in relation to the goals set out in the Agreement will find a platform to share their expertise, support the development of a coherent assessment ecosystem and keep evolving their evaluation methods.

3. The Coalition will offer a space for the organisations from a given country responsible for reforming policies and regulations, to work together and advance on the topic. At the same time, it will offer access to experiences from other countries in Europe and beyond.
4. The Coalition will allow building a critical mass of stakeholders to interact also with national and regional authorities, including with the ERA Forum, to tackle any legal or administrative barriers that limit the implementation of changes to research assessment by research organisations.
5. The work of the Coalition will seek to avoid potential contradictions between different research assessment practices and frameworks, for the benefit of the broader research and academic community, especially young researchers.

Q Who can sign the Agreement and join the Coalition?

At the moment, signatories of the Agreement and members of the Coalition are expected to be not-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, typically: public or private research funding organisations; research performing organisations including universities, research centres, research infrastructures; national/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment; associations of research funders; associations of research performers; learned societies and associations of researchers; and other relevant organisations. Organisations without legal personality will also be able to sign the Agreement and join the Coalition.

Interested not-for-profit organisations from across the world can sign the Agreement and participate in the Coalition.

The Agreement and the Coalition are not open for individual persons. However, mechanisms for the involvement of individuals and especially of researchers will be planned by the Coalition.

Q Are the Agreement and the Coalition open only to European organisations?

No. Interested not-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, from across the world, can sign the Agreement and join the Coalition.

Q How to sign the Agreement?

The collection of signatures to the Agreement will be launched towards the end of September 2022.

Nevertheless, early indications of signature of the Agreement are welcome and can be sent by mail to Lidia Borrell-Damián, Secretary General of Science Europe (researchassessment@scienceeurope.org) and Stephane Berghmans, Director of Research & Innovation at the European University Association (researchassessment@eua.eu).

Q How to join the Coalition?

In accordance with the current draft Governance document of the Coalition, all organisations that have signed the Agreement through an authorised representative, are not-for-profit, and are involved with research assessment, will be entitled to join the Coalition.

All organisations fulfilling these three criteria will be invited to participate in the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Coalition (the “Constitutive Assembly”), and/or subsequent General Assembly meetings depending on when the Agreement will have been signed.

Q What are the criteria for joining the Coalition and who will check them?

To join the Coalition, organisations must have signed the Agreement through an authorised representative, be not-for-profit, and be involved with research assessment.

Until the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Coalition (the “Constitutive Assembly”), compliance with these criteria will be checked by the interim secretariat (formed by Science Europe, the European University Association and the European Commission) and approved by the interim Chairs (Science Europe and the European University Association).

As from the Constitutive Assembly, this will be checked by the Coalition Secretariat and approved by the elected Steering Board of the Coalition.

Q By when should my organisation sign the Agreement and join the Coalition?

Organisations can sign the Agreement at any time and consequently join the Coalition. However, the earlier organisations sign the Agreement and join the Coalition, the stronger their role in the decision-making process on the organisation and operation of the Coalition.

Indeed, the first organisations to sign the Agreement will be invited to the first meeting of the General Assembly of members of the Coalition (the “Constitutive Assembly”), during which the main governance documents will be adopted, the Steering Board will be elected, and the organisation(s) due to host the Coalition Secretariat will be selected.

Q What is the Constitutive Assembly and when will it be organised?

The “Constitutive Assembly” is the first meeting of the General Assembly of members of the Coalition.

The following objectives are expected to be achieved during this first meeting: Adoption of the general Governance document; Adoption of the procedure to elect the Steering Board members; Election of the Steering Board members; Election of the President of the Coalition; Decision on the organisation(s) that will host the Coalition Secretariat; Discussion and potential adoption of the Rules of Procedure for Working Groups; and adoption of the first budget of the Coalition.

This “Constitutive Assembly” is expected to take place towards the end of 2022.

Q Who is responsible for the organisation and operation of the Coalition and decides on its governance and funding model?

The General Assembly decides on the Governance of the Coalition, elects the President and the Steering Board of the Coalition, and decides on the organisation(s) that host the Coalition Secretariat. It also approves the strategy (proposed by the Steering Board) guiding the operations and activities of the Coalition as a whole, its annual work-plan and budget (prepared by the Secretariat), and the procedures and criteria for the operation of the Working Groups (proposed by the Steering Board).

Q What will be the funding model of the Coalition?

Support to the operation of the Coalition will consist primarily of voluntary in-kind contributions from its members, as well as funding obtained from research funding organisations and/or cash contributions from members.

Options for more detailed funding models are currently being prepared and will be discussed in the following months with the organisations having already expressed interest in the initiative. Specific options for funding models will be submitted for approval during the first General Assembly of the Coalition (i.e. "Constitutive Assembly").

Q Can my organisation leave the Coalition?

Yes, organisations can leave the Coalition at any time by informing the Coalition Secretariat.

Q What will be the role of the European Commission and of national and regional ministries in the Coalition?

Those national or regional authorities that effectively implement research assessment can sign the Agreement and join the Coalition. However, the Coalition does not foresee any special, dedicated role to national/regional authorities in its governance. The Coalition shall be community-driven and all members will have equal voting and participation rights.

Together with Science Europe and the European University Association, the European Commission has acted as facilitator of the process for preparing the Agreement, and is now facilitating work and discussions on how the Coalition will be organised and operate. After the Constitutive Assembly, the European Commission will join the Coalition in its quality of funder of research and innovation and will participate in the operations of the Coalition in equal terms as other Coalition members.

Q Will organisations joining the Coalition be monitored on the progress they make individually towards implementing the Agreement?

Participation of organisations in the Coalition will be on a voluntary basis, and participants will keep full control on the steps they make to implement the Agreement and the speed of their reform journey, which can vary from one organisation to another depending on many factors, e.g. their starting point, the national or institutional administrative and legal framework conditions, their specific missions, the disciplines concerned or the assessment level. By joining the Coalition, organisations commit to share information on the progress made and lessons learnt in their reform journey, according to the timeframe included in the agreement. Sharing of information shall be done on the basis of self-assessment and by no means the progress of individual organisations will be validated by the Coalition.