

Implementing research assessment reform

Insights from ARRA action plans and interviews
with signatories

Independent Expert Report



Implementing research assessment reform - Insights from ARRA action plans and interviews with signatories

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Prepared by Karen Stroobants

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Executive summary

This study provides an evidence-informed baseline assessment of progress in reforming research assessment under the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA), as implemented by its signatories - many of whom are members of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). Drawing on quantitative analysis of submitted action plans, qualitative analysis of their content, and in-depth interviews with a sample of signatories, the report examines how ARRA commitments are being interpreted, prioritised and translated into practice across organisational and national contexts.

Importantly, this report is not an assessment of success or failure. Rather, it captures a moment of transition in the reform process: from early commitment and agenda-setting towards sustained implementation at scale. The findings therefore provide a foundation for policy learning, adjustment and coordination as reform efforts mature.

Widespread commitment, heterogeneous engagement

The analysis shows that engagement with ARRA and CoARA is broad and growing, but uneven in pace and form. Action plan submission patterns vary considerably across organisation types, countries and regions, reflecting differences in mandate, capacity, national coordination and regulatory context. Universities dominate among submitters, which strongly shapes the focus of reforms towards individual-level assessment.

Submission of an action plan, however, should not be interpreted as a proxy for implementation progress. In several contexts, substantial reform activity is underway without action plan submission, often due to strong national coordination or a deliberate focus on internal consensus-building. Patterns of participation are therefore best understood as indicators of engagement behaviour and timing, rather than reform maturity.

Strong alignment in principle, variability in operationalisation

Across the submitted action plans, there is strong alignment in principle with ARRA commitments, particularly those related to enabling reform (resources, review processes, training, communication and exchange). Coverage of commitments related directly to assessment practices is more variable, with progressively lower explicit coverage from recognising diverse contributions (Commitment 1) to avoiding rankings (Commitment 4).

This pattern reflects deliberate sequencing rather than lack of intent. Many organisations prioritise review, consultation and capacity-building before defining concrete changes to assessment practices. As a result, the current action plan corpus captures organisations at different stages of reform trajectories, with detailed operationalisation often deferred to later implementation phases.

Interpretations of the core commitments nonetheless vary widely. Under Commitment 1, some organisations adopt relatively narrow extensions focused on recognising additional output types, while others pursue more systemic approaches that integrate outcomes, practices, skills and diverse career paths. Likewise, many action plans articulate intentions to better balance qualitative and quantitative approaches under Commitments 2 and 3; however, concrete approaches to ensuring the appropriate use of metrics more broadly remain limited across the sample. This diversity of interpretation creates space for contextual adaptation but also poses challenges for coherence and shared understanding as reform scales.

Implementation is progressing, but shaped by interdependencies

Interviews with 15 signatories show that implementation is generally progressing as planned within organisations' spheres of control, even where timelines have been adjusted. Delays are typically attributed to the time required for consultation, coordination and learning, rather than loss of momentum.

A central insight is that implementation progress is less constrained by organisational commitment than by interdependencies. Many reforms depend on national legislation, funder criteria, ministerial decisions or parallel institutional processes (e.g. HR systems, performance frameworks). In response, some organisations redirect effort towards preparatory or enabling actions - such as piloting tools, strengthening infrastructures or building assessment literacy - while awaiting external alignment.

These dynamics highlight that implementation trajectories are non-linear and system-embedded. Progress needs to be understood in relation to organisational mandate, governance position and policy environment, rather than as a simple function of intent or planning quality.

Leadership, capacity and networks as drivers of implementation

Common enablers include pre-existing reform momentum, senior leadership buy-in, strong HR and professional support functions, and participation in national and international networks. Alignment with EU-level policy signals and external funding streams is frequently cited as reinforcing internal cases for change by reducing perceived risk.

Persistent barriers centre on capacity constraints, decentralised governance, leadership turnover and the challenge of bridging the gap between policy decisions and researcher-level practice. Capacity constraints are most often described not in financial terms, but as limits on protected staff time for coordination, engagement, interpretation and iterative implementation. Engagement fatigue - stemming from multiple, overlapping reform agendas - is a recurrent concern, particularly where reforms are perceived as layered rather than integrated.

Across contexts, the ability to translate principles into everyday assessment practice depends heavily on who is involved (e.g. HR, research managers, disciplinary leaders), how coordination is organised, and whether supporting infrastructures are available and trusted.

Research assessment reform as a systemic lever

Beyond its intrinsic goals, research assessment reform emerges as a key enabling mechanism for other ERA priorities. Where assessment criteria recognise open science, gender equality, knowledge valorisation, citizen engagement and diverse career paths, progress across these agendas accelerates. Conversely, where assessment practices remain misaligned, incentives for change are weakened.

At the same time, reform depends on advances in other structural areas - most notably sustainable, open research assessment infrastructures. Heavy reliance on commercial platforms is widely seen as a risk to transparency, resilience and scalability.

Despite strong interconnectedness across ERA policy domains, institutions often experience implementation as fragmented. Without more integrated policy delivery, this fragmentation risks slowing progress and undermining engagement, particularly as new challenges emerge around artificial intelligence, data infrastructures and research security.

Looking ahead: a baseline for the next phase of reform

Taken together, the findings indicate that research assessment reform has moved beyond agenda-setting and now faces a delivery and consolidation challenge. The next phase will require increased focus on capacity building, coordination and learning across governance levels.

The ERA - through its structural policies, targeted actions and legislative instruments - offers a critical framework for anchoring this shift system-wide. This report provides a baseline against which future progress can be monitored and from which policy responses can be refined, ensuring that early momentum translates into coherent, durable change in how research and researchers are assessed.

1. Purpose and methodology of the study

1.1. Purpose and scope

This report provides an evidence-informed assessment of progress towards reforming research assessment under the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA - Arentoft et al., 2022). Its purpose is to support future policy development by offering both empirical grounding and strategic insight into how ARRA commitments are being interpreted, prioritised, and implemented across the ARRA signatories.

Drawing on evidence from action plans submitted and from direct engagement with organisations, the study pursues three core aims. First, it provides an overview of distributions of actions plans and participation patterns. Second, it identifies key trends and gaps across action plans, including variations in the coverage of ARRA commitments and differences in how organisations approach reform. Third, it examines the extent to which planned reforms are translating into implementation, highlighting progress to date as well as persistent structural, organisational, and systemic challenges.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Quantitative data

The quantitative analysis draws on two primary data sources. First, signatory and membership data were provided by the CoARA secretariat on 19 January 2026 (with the files last updated on 23 December 2025), covering a total of 921 ARRA signatories, of which 800 are CoARA formal members. Second, a snapshot of submitted action plans was provided by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) on 8 January 2026. At that point, 265 action plans had been submitted. One plan was identified as a duplicate (National Research Foundation of Ukraine) and another as a corrected version of a previously submitted plan (Tampere University). After removing these cases, 263 action plans formed the basis for the quantitative analysis.

The analysis focuses on two main dimensions. The first examines the number of action plans submitted, disaggregated by organisation type and by country, considering only plans submitted before 8 January 2026. The second examines compliance with agreed timelines by identifying signatories that had joined CoARA at least one year earlier (before 1 January 2025) and were therefore expected to have submitted an action plan. For each organisation type, the analysis compares the number of signatories that have submitted an action plan with the number that had signed ARRA at least one year earlier but had not yet submitted a plan. This comparison is presented both in absolute terms and as proportional submission rates. An analogous approach is applied at country level for all countries with at least one action plan submitted by the snapshot date and at the level of European regions.

1.2.2. Qualitative data

The qualitative component of the study is based on two complementary data extraction processes conducted by CNRS and partner organisations.

The first dataset consists of AI-extracted information for 235 action plans. This extraction covers data related to each ARRA commitment, responsibility for implementation, and referenced resources. The extraction process involved the development and testing of a dedicated prompt by CNRS on a small subset of action plans, followed by large-scale processing in a secure data-centre environment using a Jupyter notebook. Although 237 plans were initially processed, two duplicates were removed, resulting in a final corpus of 235 action plans for analysis.

The second dataset consists of manually extracted information from 165 action plans, focusing on implementation methods and tools. This work was carried out through close reading of each action plan by Marco Malgarini and Licia Romano (ANVUR/CNRS), who identified and recorded references to resources and methods used to support implementation of ARRA commitments. Although 167 plans were initially processed, two duplicates were removed, resulting in a final corpus of 165 action plans for analysis.

Both datasets were subsequently mapped onto a thematic analysis framework to support a reflexive and interpretative analysis. Given the scope and timeline of the study, full-text analysis of action plans was not feasible. Observations and interpretations therefore rely exclusively on extracted data rather than comprehensive document review.

As a result, the findings of the qualitative analysis should be interpreted with caution. The AI-extracted data has significant limitations and supports only high-level interpretations of general trends and patterns. Any quantitative references used in this report (for example, “around half” or “about one in ten”) should be understood as indicative rather than precise and are intended to support qualitative insight into patterns of coverage and implementation rather than definitive measurement. Likewise, the treemap visualisations used throughout the report are intended to illustrate trends.

1.2.3. Interview programme

The interview programme comprises fifteen semi-structured interviews with organisations that have submitted ARRA action plans. The sample was designed to ensure representation across organisation types and geographical regions, with at least one organisation included from each major organisation type and European region, and additional cases selected proportionally to the overall action plan sample. An overview of the interviewees is available in Appendix A.

Interview questions focus on three core areas: progress made to date in implementing action plan commitments; planned next steps; and the organisational, cultural, and systemic challenges that continue to constrain implementation. Together, these interviews provide contextual depth and practical insight that complements the document-based analyses.

1.2.4. Data sharing

The following data sources are openly accessible: quantitative analysis data, interview protocols and brief interview digests. The extraction sheet of the qualitative analysis can be shared on request, subject to a conversation on the limitations of the analysis, to ensure any reuse is appropriate and respects the constraints of the data.

2. Landscape and participation patterns

This chapter provides an overview of the landscape of action plan submissions to date and examines participation patterns across organisation types, countries, assessment levels and assessment purposes. It offers a snapshot of where submissions are currently concentrated and highlights how organisational mandates, national contexts and network participation shape both levels of engagement and the content of action plans.

A key consideration when interpreting these patterns is that submission of an action plan should not be treated as a direct proxy for progress in implementing research assessment reform. In several contexts, substantial reform activity is already underway without being formally signalled through an action plan submission. For example, some institutions embedded in strong national coordination structures have prioritised internal alignment and consensus-building over submission engagement. Submission patterns should therefore be understood primarily as indicators of engagement behaviour and timing, rather than as measures of reform maturity.

More broadly, the observed coverage of assessment levels and purposes in submitted action plans reflects the composition of participating organisations and the levers available to them. Universities dominate among submitters, and consequently individual-level assessment features most prominently. At the same time, national regulatory frameworks, pre-existing reform initiatives and participation in European and international networks strongly influence how organisations frame their action plans, the resources they reference and the types of reform they prioritise.

2.1. Distribution of action plans

2.1.1. By organisation type

The distribution of action plans by organisation type was analysed by comparing, for each type, the number of signatories that have submitted an action plan with the number that signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment at least one year ago but have not yet submitted a plan. This comparison was carried out both in absolute terms and as proportional submission rates. Figure 1 presents these distributions, ordered from the organisation type with the highest to the lowest proportional submission rate, while Table 1 shows the proportional rates.

Funding organisations show the highest proportional submission rate, with 46% of eligible signatories having submitted an action plan. However, they represent a relatively small group in absolute terms. Universities, which form the largest group of signatories overall, show a submission rate of 35%. Authorities and agencies also show a submission rate of 35%, closely followed by research centres at 27%. The lowest submission rates are observed among academies, learned societies and associations of researchers, as well as other non-profit organisations (both at 17%). These differences likely reflect variation in organisational mandates and differing capacities or incentives to engage with the action plan process.

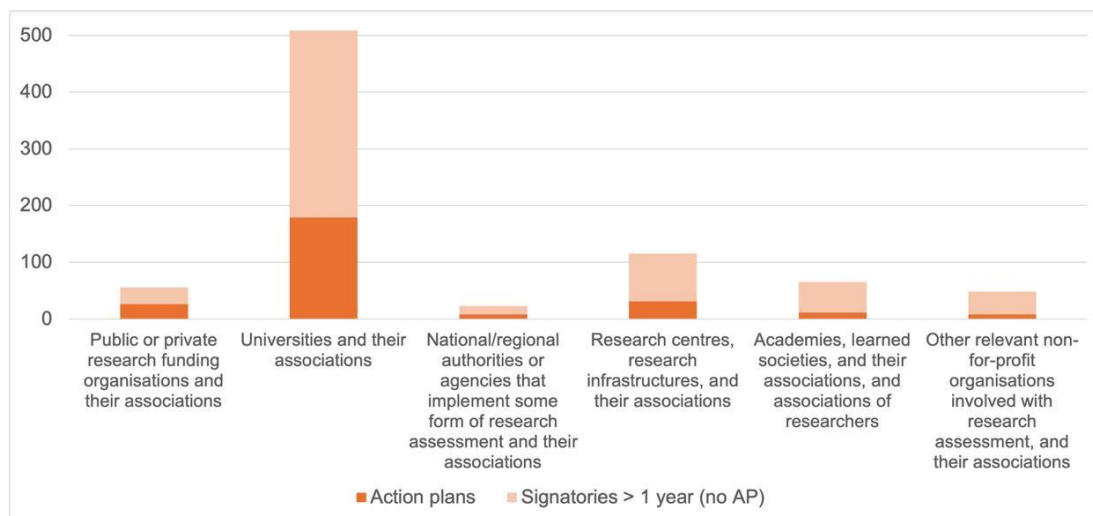


Figure 1. Distribution by organisation type. Number of signatories that have submitted an action plan (dark orange) and number that signed the ARRA at least one year ago but have not yet submitted a plan (light orange), presented per organisation type.

Table 1. Signatory, member and action plan submission data per organisation type. Signatory and member data were obtained from the CoARA secretariat (last updated on 23/12/2025); action plan submission data were obtained from CNRS (on 08/01/2026).

Organisation type	Signatories incl. members	Members	Number of signatories that signed the agreement before 1 January 2025	Number of APs submitted by signatories incl. members	% APs versus signatories that signed the agreement at least 1 year ago
Public or private research funding organisations and their associations	62	55	56	26	46
Universities and their associations	569	502	509	179	35
National/regional authorities or agencies that implement some form of research assessment and their associations	27	22	23	8	35
Research centres, research infrastructures, and their associations	135	113	115	31	27
Academies, learned societies, and their associations, and associations of researchers	73	60	65	11	17
Other relevant non-for-profit organisations involved with research assessment, and their associations	55	48	48	8	17

2.1.2. By country and European region

Submission patterns also vary notably by country. For each country with at least one signatory that has submitted an action plan, Figure 2 presents the number of signatories that have submitted an action plan alongside the number that signed at least one year ago but have not. Countries are ordered from highest to lowest proportional submission rates. Countries with a CoARA National Chapter are marked accordingly, and proportional rates are presented in the table in Appendix B.

A small number of countries achieve a submission rate of 100%, including Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada and Croatia; however, these cases involve only one or two eligible signatories. Among countries with larger numbers of signatories, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland stand out with submission rates of 76%, 58% and 50%, respectively. The majority of countries cluster between 50% and 25% rates, with a smaller group falling below this range, including Ukraine, Georgia, Poland, Slovenia, Portugal, France and Romania. Pan-European organisations display a submission rate of 25%, while global organisations stand at 20%.

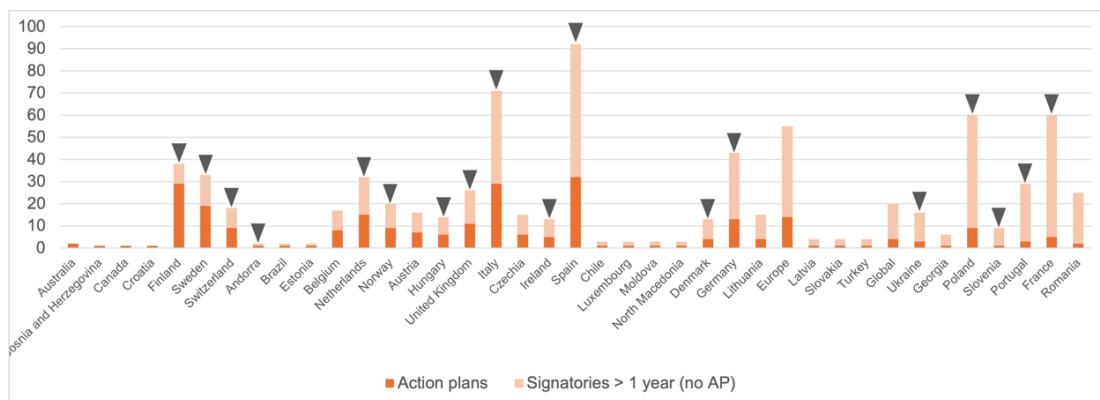


Figure 2. Distribution by country. Number of signatories that have submitted an action plan (dark orange) and number that signed the ARRA at least one year ago but have not yet submitted a plan (light orange), presented per country. Countries with a national Chapters are indicated with a triangle.

Cyprus is the only country with an established National Chapter where no action plans have yet been submitted, although this reflects a very small base of only three eligible signatories. Overall, countries with National Chapters are distributed across the full range of observed submission rates, suggesting that the presence of a National Chapter alone does not determine submission behaviour.

Figure 3 and Table 2 capture submission data per European region. As can be expected from the country data, Northern Europe sees the highest proportional submission rate at 50%, followed by Southern Europe, the region with the largest number of signatories, at 32% and Western Europe at 31 %. Eastern Europe trails somewhat behind at 20% submission rate.

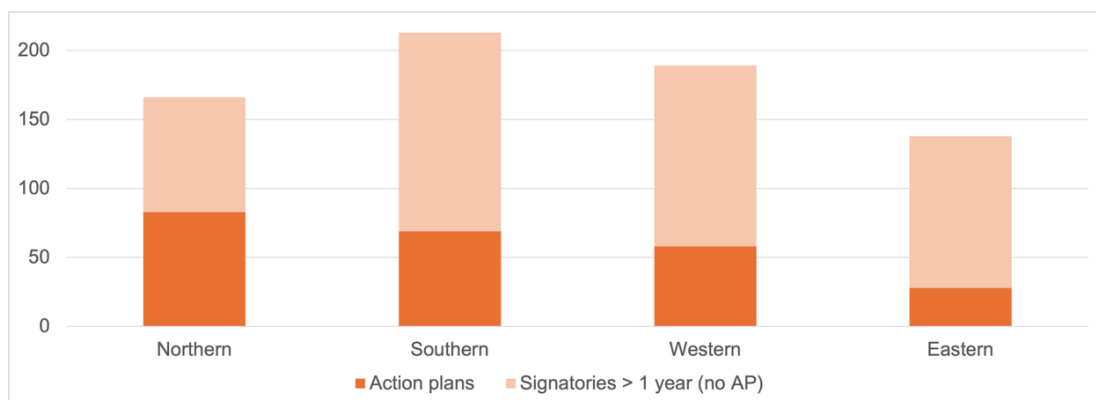


Figure 3. Distribution of European region. Number of signatories that have submitted an action plan (dark orange) and number that signed the ARRA at least one year ago but have not yet submitted a plan (light orange), presented per European region.

Table 2. Signatory, member and action plan submission data per European region. Signatory and member data were obtained from the CoARA secretariat (last updated on 23/12/2025); action plan submission data were obtained from CNRS (on 08/01/2026).

European region	Signatories incl. members	Members	Number of signatories that signed the agreement before 1 January 2025	Number of APs submitted by signatories incl. members	% APs versus signatories that signed the agreement at least 1 year ago
Northern	189	166	166	83	50
Southern	234	212	213	69	32
Western	208	169	189	58	31
Eastern	162	142	138	28	20

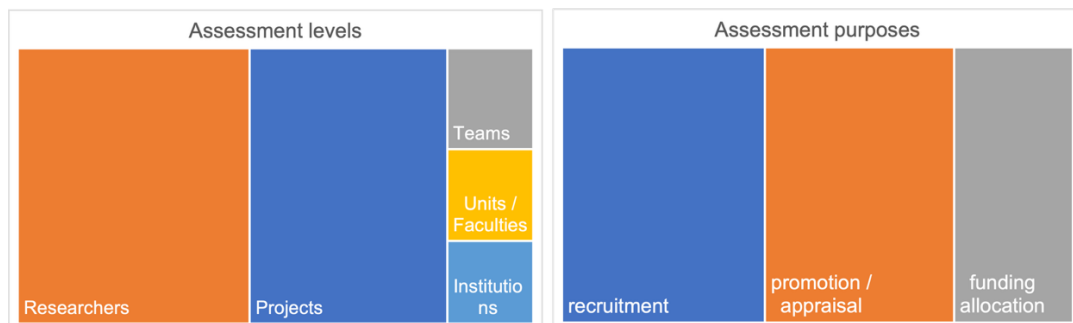
2.2. Coverage of assessment levels

Across the submitted action plans, the levels of assessment addressed - such as researchers, projects, teams, units or institutions - are closely aligned with the remits and responsibilities of the submitting organisations.

Assessment of individual researchers is the most prevalent focus, which is consistent with the dominance of universities in the sample. Research centres, funders, academies and some authorities also frequently address researcher assessment within their action plans. Many plans additionally refer to the assessment of research projects. For funders, this represents the primary assessment level, while universities and research centres often discuss project-level assessment in the context of internal funding allocation.

Approximately one in ten action plans explicitly refer to the assessment of research teams. Examples include funders in Ireland, Ukraine and Estonia, as well as universities in Finland, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. A similar proportion of action plans refer explicitly to the assessment of research units or faculties, mainly among universities and research centres. Notably, references to unit-level assessment among universities in Southern Europe are relatively rare, with only one such occurrence observed.

Around one in ten action plans refer to assessment at the institutional level. These include plans submitted by authorities, as well as several universities in Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In cases where universities address institutional assessment, they often frame this engagement in relation to national assessment exercises, such as the Italian VQR, the Dutch Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) or the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF). The treemaps below illustrate proportional coverage of the most common assessment levels and purposes.



2.3. Coverage of assessment purposes

Broader recognition is most often addressed in relation to recruitment. Around one third explicitly mention adapting recruitment criteria, tools or processes. Closely following this are references to adapting promotion or appraisal criteria, tools or processes. Adaptation of funding criteria, tools or processes is mentioned less frequently, although it appears both in action plans submitted by funders and in those of organisations that distribute internal research funding.

As with assessment levels, the distribution of assessment purposes is strongly shaped by organisation type. Funders predominantly focus on funding criteria, but they represent a smaller share of the overall sample. Universities, as the largest submitting group, concentrate primarily on recruitment, promotion and appraisal, reflecting both their institutional responsibilities and the levers available to them for implementing reform.

2.4. Influence of national contexts and existing networks

The content and framing of action plans are strongly influenced by national policy contexts and by participation in knowledge-exchange and reform networks, including CoARA working groups and national chapters. There is considerable variation across countries in the degree of autonomy organisations have to modify assessment criteria, tools or processes related to funding allocation, recruitment or promotion. In some contexts, national regulations constrain what can be changed at institutional level, resulting in action plans that prioritise preparatory or enabling measures rather than immediate changes to formal assessment criteria.

In several countries, research assessment reform initiatives at national or regional level pre-date CoARA and strongly shape institutional action plans. Examples include the Recognition & Rewards programme in the Netherlands and the NOR-CAM network in Norway. Participation in formal and informal networks focused on research assessment reform is frequently cited in action plans as a source of information, learning and inspiration. Universities most often reference engagement in European university alliances and networks such as EUA, YERUN and CESAER, while funders more commonly cite Science Europe. Less frequent but notable references include the Global Research Council (GRC), the DORA Funders Group and the G7 informal working group on research assessment.

Interviews further indicate that exchanges at regional, national and international levels are widely perceived as important enablers of reform. This important role played by meta-organisations was also emphasised in a recent study on research assessment reform uptake in European higher education (Pölönen et al., 2025).

2.5. Resources, templates and inspiration

Action plans draw on a wide range of resources, templates and reference materials. Most frequently mentioned are internal organisational resources and national frameworks, concordats and policy documents. Among external initiatives, DORA is referenced in almost half of all action plans, followed by the Leiden Manifesto (approximately one in five). The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and the European Charter for Researchers are also cited, in about one in five, and one in ten plans, respectively.

Several action plans reference concrete tools such as INORMs' SCOPE framework, and narrative CV or Career Assessment Matrix examples, including the Royal Society Resume for Researchers, OS-CAM and NOR-CAM. Open science principles and infrastructures - such as UNESCO recommendations, Plan S, EOSC and open research platforms - are also commonly referenced, alongside research on research literature. The treemap below illustrates proportional occurrence of the most common external resources referenced.



Patterns of reference vary by region and organisation type. The European Charter for Researchers is cited more often by organisations in Eastern and Southern Europe, while research on research literature is more frequently referenced by organisations in Northern and Western Europe. Templates for Career Assessment Matrices appear most often in action plans from Northern Europe, where these tools were first developed and trialled.

3. Coverage of commitments in ARRA action plans

This chapter examines the extent to which the ten ARRA commitments are addressed in the action plan corpus and analyses the approaches organisations propose for their implementation. It distinguishes between the four core commitments, which directly concern research assessment practices, and the six supporting commitments, which relate to implementation conditions, learning, monitoring and accountability.

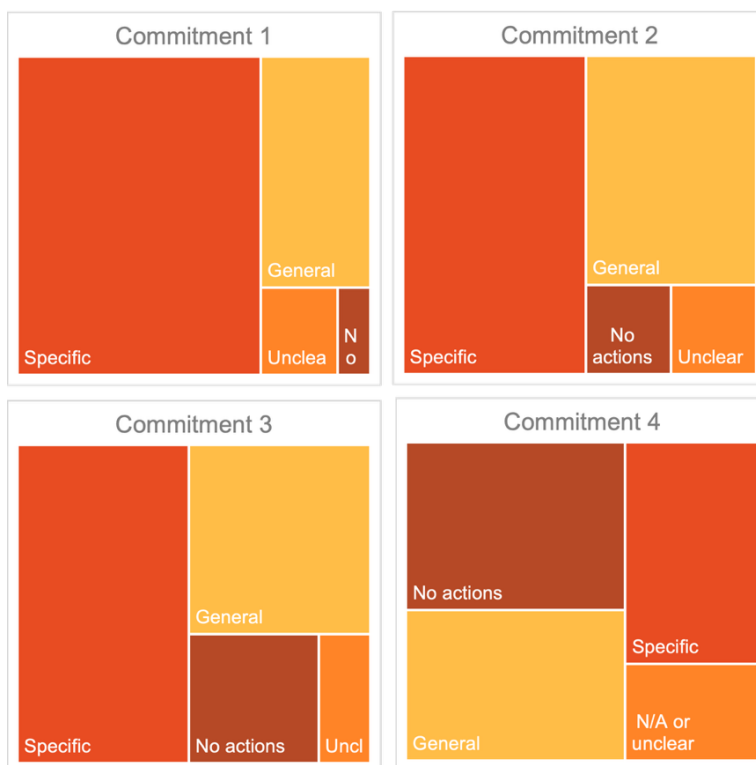
Across the 235 action plans analysed, a clear pattern emerges. Among the core commitments, levels of explicit coverage decrease progressively from Commitment 1 through to Commitment 4. By contrast, most supporting commitments - particularly Commitments 5, 6, 7 and 8 - are addressed consistently across submissions, while Commitments 9 and 10 are omitted more frequently.

This contrast reflects differences in how organisations sequence and conceptualise reform. Many action plans prioritise the establishment of enabling structures, review processes and internal capacities before specifying detailed changes to assessment practices. Lower explicit coverage of core commitments should therefore not be interpreted as a lack of intent, but rather as a deliberate positioning within an ongoing reform trajectory, in which detailed operationalisation is deferred until preparatory work has been completed.

3.1. Core commitments

Overall, the four core commitments show a clear gradient in explicit implementation, with Commitment 1 most frequently addressed and Commitment 4 least frequently addressed. Across the core commitments, approximately one in twenty action plans are assessed as having unclear or not applicable coverage, largely due to missing or insufficiently detailed information. For Commitment 4, this proportion rises to around one in ten, reflecting the fact that avoidance of rankings is not perceived as relevant for some organisation types, notably funders and certain authorities.

The treemaps below show how action plans address each core commitment. Coverage is categorised as specific, general, not applicable (N/A), unclear, or no actions identified. The distinction between *general* and *specific* coverage is defined separately for each commitment and explained below under the description of its coverage.



Descriptions of how organisations intend to implement the core commitments also reveal a wide range of interpretations of what it means to fulfil them. Two dimensions of variation are particularly apparent.

First, interpretations of Commitment 1 on recognising diverse contributions range from relatively narrow extensions - such as recognising additional output types - to far more expansive approaches that seek to integrate assessment of outcomes, processes and skills. Second, the commitment to primarily qualitative assessment and the abandonment of inappropriate metric use are interpreted with varying degrees of ambition, from limited application in a single process (such as internal promotion) to comprehensive adoption across all relevant assessment levels.

It is important to note that many action plans rely heavily on commitment 6 (review and development of criteria, tools and processes) to describe how alignment with commitments 1-4 will be assessed and improved over time. In these cases, the action plans deliberately defer specifying concrete changes to assessment practices until review processes have been completed. This sequencing partly explains the lower explicit prevalence of detailed implementation descriptions for the core commitments in the current action plan corpus.

3.1.1. Commitment 1 ‘Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research’

3.1.1.1. Coverage

Commitment 1 is addressed in the large majority of submitted action plans. Most organisations that reference this commitment provide some indication of which types of contributions will be recognised and in which assessment contexts. These cases are categorised as *specific*. Around one quarter of action plans refer to the commitment only in broad or aspirational terms, such as general statements about “recognising diverse contributions”, without specifying scope, mechanisms, or concrete changes. These cases are categorised as *general*.

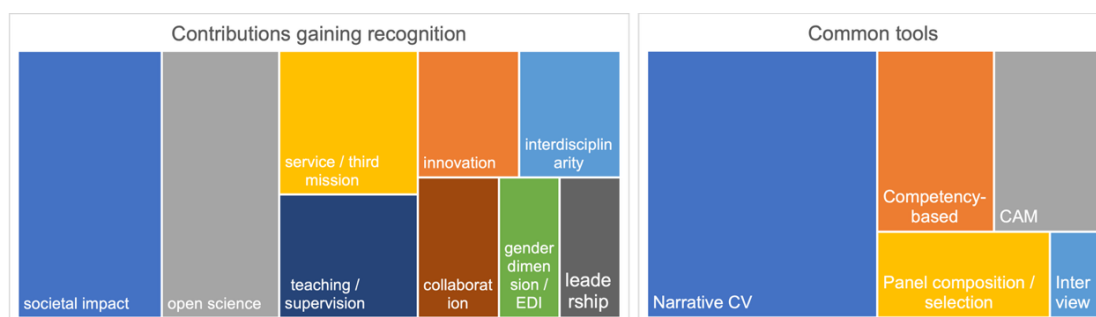
3.1.1.2. Implementation approaches

Broadening what gets recognised

Action plans describe a wide spectrum of contributions that will receive increased recognition. These include, in decreasing order of frequency:

- Research outputs beyond journal articles, such as datasets, software and other non-traditional outputs
- Societal impact (referenced in approximately one third of plans) and innovation outcomes (around one in ten)
- Research practices, including open science, service or third-mission activities, interdisciplinarity, and equality, diversity and inclusion or gender dimensions
- Skills such as teaching and supervision (around one in ten), collaboration and leadership.

This breadth of interpretation illustrates that Commitment 1 is understood very differently across organisations. While some treat it primarily as an expansion of recognised output types, others adopt a more holistic view encompassing outputs, outcomes, practices and skills. This diversity of approaches complicates efforts to define what constitutes “achievement” of Commitment 1 in practice, despite the relatively expansive intent articulated in the ARRA itself. The treemaps below illustrate the types of contributions that are gaining recognition and common tools mentioned to achieve this.



Broadening who gets recognised

Many action plans also address diversity in career pathways and roles. Approximately one third explicitly commit to broadening recognised career profiles, for example by developing career models that allow different weightings for research, teaching and service activities or by supporting career trajectories beyond academia. A similar proportion refers to broadening who is recognised within research systems, for example through addressing bias in assessment or by providing clearer progression routes for research-enabling, technical or administrative staff who contribute to the research endeavour.

Assessment tools

The most commonly cited tools for implementing Commitment 1 are narrative CVs or related narrative approaches, mentioned in around one third of action plans. Competency-focused approaches and Career Assessment Matrices (CAMs) appear less frequently, each referenced in approximately one in ten plans. Other commonly described interventions include changes to panel composition or selection and adjustments to interview formats, most often included by funders.

These tools also support Commitments 2 and 3, as they enable a stronger reliance on qualitative judgement and reduce dependence on publication-based metrics.

3.1.1.3. Trends and variation

Competency-based approaches and Career Assessment Matrices are most prevalent in Northern Europe, particularly in Scandinavia, with emerging uptake in parts of Eastern Europe. Narrative CVs appear more evenly distributed across regions, having diffused widely beyond their initial adoption contexts in the Netherlands and the UK.

3.1.2. Commitment 2 ‘Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators’

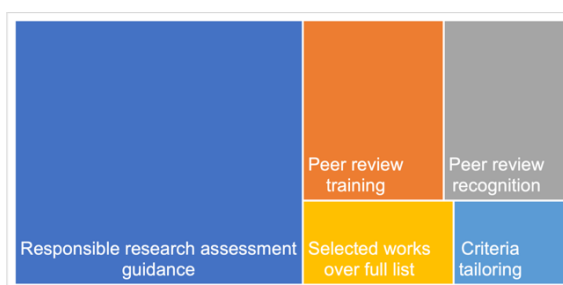
3.1.2.1. Coverage

Many action plans reference Commitment 2, but the level of specificity varies. In roughly one third of cases, coverage is limited to general endorsement of qualitative approaches. These cases are categorised as *general*. In approximately half, organisations outline concrete measures to strengthen qualitative evaluation. These cases are categorised as *specific*.

3.1.2.2. Implementation approaches

Common implementation approaches include the development or dissemination of responsible research assessment guidance, tools or training, mentioned in about one quarter of plans. Around one in ten action plans also describe training specifically focused on qualitative assessment or peer review, while a smaller number recognise peer-review activities within assessment processes themselves.

Several action plans describe measures to reduce bias, such as requesting selected works instead of full publication records or tailoring criteria and guidance to specific assessment contexts. A small number of plans also refer to training on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in assessment. The treemap below illustrates the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 2.



3.1.2.3. Trends and variation

Funders most frequently reference changes to panel composition and peer-review processes. Authorities and funders more often describe limiting publication lists or tailoring criteria to funding calls, reflecting their leverage over assessment design.

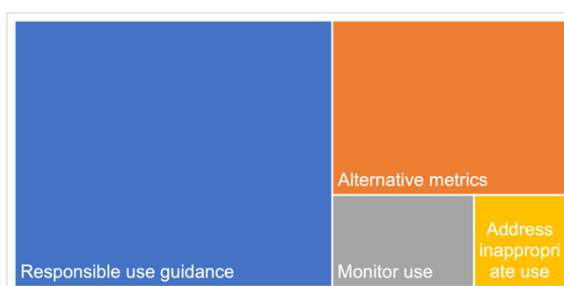
3.1.3. Commitment 3 ‘Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index’

3.1.3.1. Coverage

Commitment 3 follows a pattern similar to Commitment 2. Many action plans refer to abandoning inappropriate metric use, but in around one third of cases this remains at a general level, framed as better balancing quantitative and qualitative approaches. These cases are categorised as *general*. About half of action plans provide greater detail on concrete implementation measures. These cases are categorised as *specific*.

3.1.3.2. Implementation approaches

The most common implementation approaches include guidance, tools or training on responsible use of metrics, referenced in around two fifths of action plans. Approximately one fifth describe the development or use of alternative metrics or indicators, while a smaller number refer to active monitoring of adherence to responsible practices or mechanisms to address inappropriate use. The treemap below illustrates the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 3.



3.1.3.3. Trends and variation

Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are most often described by organisations in Northern Europe, particularly Scandinavia and the UK, suggesting greater institutionalisation of responsible metrics practices in these contexts.

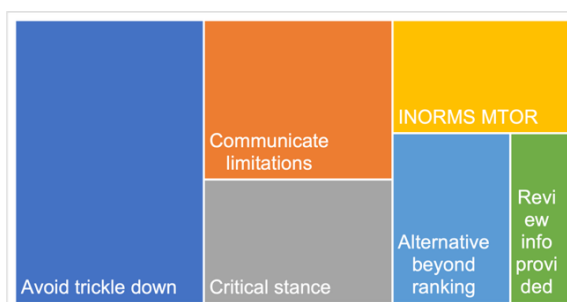
3.1.4. Commitment 4 ‘Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment’

3.1.4.1. Coverage

Commitment 4 is the least frequently addressed of the core commitments. Only just over half of the action plans refer explicitly to its implementation. Around one third provide only general statements - such as confirming that rankings are not used - without specifying how avoidance is ensured in practice. These cases are categorised as *general*, leaving only around one sixth of all action plans that engage with the commitment to articulate *specific* approaches to implementation.

3.1.4.2. Implementation approaches

Where implementation is detailed, approaches include active efforts to prevent “trickle-down” effects of rankings, for example by removing ranking references from background information used in assessment; communication activities highlighting the limitations of rankings; adopting a critical stance towards rankings; engaging with initiatives such as INORMS’ More than our rank; reviewing information provided to ranking organisations; or referencing alternative benchmarking approaches such as U-Multirank or the Leiden Ranking. The treemap below illustrates the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 4.



3.1.4.3. Trends and variation

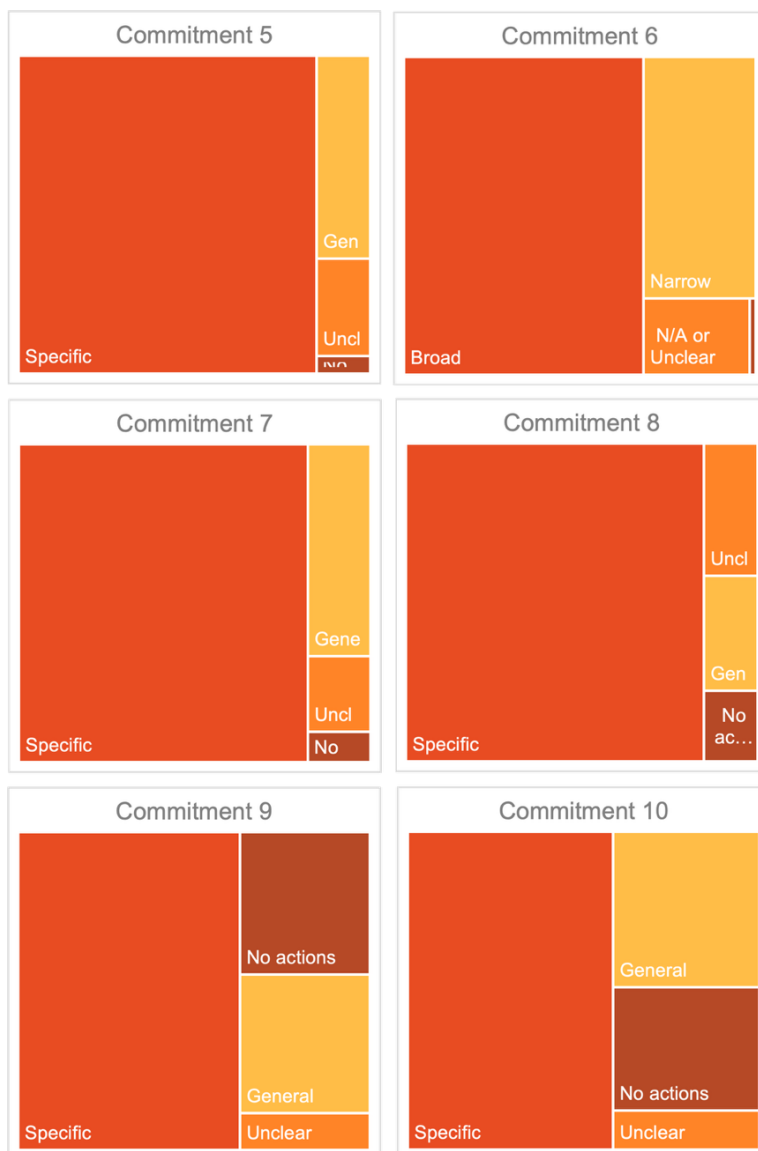
Of the organisations that describe explicit implementation approaches, the majority are universities, with notable concentrations in the Netherlands, the UK, Finland, Sweden and Spain. This distribution suggests strong influence from sector-level initiatives such as the Universities of the Netherlands report on rankings and INORMS’ More than our rank campaign but also is explained by funders and authorities often not perceiving this commitment relevant to their remit. Engagement with rankings initiatives, as well as critical review of data provision, is most frequently observed in Northern and Western Europe.

3.2. Supporting commitments

Overall, supporting commitments are addressed more consistently than the core commitments. This reflects, in particular, the central role of Commitment 6, which underpins and structures implementation of the core commitments. For this reason, Commitment 6 is captured first in this section, followed by Commitments 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Two broad patterns can be identified. Organisations at an earlier stage in their reform journey often provide detailed plans for review and development under Commitment 6, while giving limited detail on how core commitments will ultimately be implemented. In contrast, organisations that are more advanced tend to describe review processes more briefly, having already completed earlier review cycles, and instead provide more detailed accounts of concrete changes aligned with the core commitments.

Across the supporting commitments, Commitments 5, 7 and 8 are most extensively covered. Commitment 6 is also captured in most action plans, whereas Commitments 9 and 10 are omitted more frequently. As with the core commitments, unclear or not applicable judgments occur in around one in twenty action plans, mainly due to missing data. The treemaps below illustrate where coverage of the supporting commitments is specific (or broadly applied for Commitment 6), general (or narrowly applied for Commitment 6), not applicable (N/A) or unclear, or where no actions were identified against a commitment.



3.2.1. Commitment 6 ‘Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes’

3.2.1.1. Coverage

With very few exceptions, Commitment 6 is addressed in all action plans where it is relevant. Typically, this includes a review of existing criteria, tools and processes; the development or improvement of assessment instruments; and training to support implementation. The scope of these efforts varies. Around three in ten action plans limit review and development activities to a specific process or audience. These cases are categorised as *narrow*. Roughly seven in ten apply them more broadly across internal - and in some cases external - assessment procedures. These cases are categorised as *broad*.

3.2.1.2. Implementation approaches

Most action plans describe a review phase, often framed as a mapping exercise. Around one third specify that this review will be cyclical or iterative, while fewer describe gap analysis or values-led review using frameworks such as INORMS' SCOPE. More than half explicitly state that review processes will involve input from the research community, most commonly through consultation and, in some instances, co-creation.

Development activities most frequently involve improving existing criteria, tools or processes, mentioned in around seven in ten plans, or piloting new approaches, mentioned in about half. Implementation is most often supported through training, referenced in roughly seven in ten action plans. Other measures include investment in supporting infrastructures, actions to ensure alignment across or within organisations, and, in a smaller number of cases, explicit behavioural change management initiatives. The treemaps below illustrate the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 6. The key trend for implementation of this commitment is that earlier-stage organisations emphasise review and consultation, while more advanced organisations focus on implementation and scaling.



3.2.2. Commitment 5 'Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to'

3.2.2.1. Coverage

Commitment 5 is addressed in detail in most action plans. Only around one in ten plans provide very limited information, typically restricted to a general acknowledgment that resources will be allocated without further specification of scope, responsibilities or governance. These cases are categorised as *general*, with most action plans categorised as *specific*.

3.2.2.2. **Implementation approaches**

Resourcing of reform is most described through in-kind contributions, particularly staff time dedicated to coordination, consultation, development of tools, training, and participation in knowledge-exchange activities. A smaller number of action plans mention dedicated financial resources, for example to support training programmes, engage external expertise, or fund participation in meetings, workshops or hosting exchange events.

Where governance and responsibilities are described, action plans most frequently refer to:

- A newly established working group or task force dedicated to research assessment reform (around half of plans), or
- An existing coordination structure, such as a standing committee or working group (around one third of plans).

Direct involvement of senior leadership - such as rectors, board members or executive directors - is explicitly mentioned in roughly two thirds of action plans. A range of specific capacities contributing to resourcing are referenced across action plans. These include, in decreasing frequency: active researcher involvement; human resources units; open science or library services; quality assurance functions; and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) expertise.

Considering trends across the sample, human resources capacity is referenced most frequently in action plans from Northern Europe, accounting for over half of all mentions of HR involvement. EDI capacity is referenced least frequently overall, but appears more consistently in action plans from Italy, Switzerland, and the UK, indicating variation in how organisations integrate diversity-related expertise into research-assessment reform processes.

3.2.3. **Commitment 7 ‘Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use’**

3.2.3.1. **Coverage**

Commitment 7 is extensively covered across the action plans. Only around one in ten plans provide minimal information, typically limited to a general statement that communication or training will take place. These cases are categorised as *general*, with most action plans categorised as *specific*.

3.2.3.2. **Implementation approaches**

The most common approaches described involve internal communication, guidance and training targeted at internal communities. These activities aim to ensure that assessment criteria, tools and processes - and the principles underpinning them - are understood by those who design, apply or are subject to assessment.

Approximately one third of action plans also describe broader awareness-raising activities, extending beyond the immediate organisation. This approach is particularly common among pan-European organisations, which often take on a convening or disseminating role.

Target audiences are not always specified, but where they are, they most commonly include:

- Evaluators, reviewers, assessors and assessment panels
- Research-enabling and professional services staff
- Applicants for funding, recruitment or promotion
- Early-career researchers or newly recruited staff
- Supervisors, group leaders and line managers

3.2.4. Commitment 8 ‘Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition’

3.2.4.1. Coverage

Commitment 8 is also widely addressed. Fewer than one in ten action plans provide only minimal information or lack clarity regarding implementation. These cases are categorised as *general*, with most action plans categorised as *specific*.

3.2.4.2. Implementation approaches

Most action plans describe knowledge exchange both within and beyond CoARA. Around half explicitly mention engagement in a national CoARA Chapter, and a similar proportion refer to participation in one or more CoARA Working Groups. Mentions Working Group and National Chapter participation are influenced by the timing of their establishment, as some plans predate newer groups or chapters.

Strong network effects are also evident beyond the coalition. Universities commonly refer to knowledge exchange with peer organisations (bi- or multi-lateral) through European university alliances and sectoral networks such as EUA, YERUN and CESAER. Funders most often describe engagement through Science Europe, with additional references to the Global Research Council, the DORA Funders Group and the G7 informal working group on research assessment.

In countries where national initiatives pre-dated CoARA, such as the NOR-CAM network in Norway or the Recognition and Rewards programme in the Netherlands, these structures are described as central platforms for exchange. Several action plans also refer to regional collaboration, for example among universities in Wales, research institutes in Catalonia, or universities of applied sciences in Finland.

Some organisations additionally describe knowledge exchange through:

- Participation in Horizon Europe projects (for example OPUS, GraspOS, SECURE)
- Engagement in research management or professional networks (such as EARMA, INORMS and national equivalents)
- Involvement in quality assurance or indicator development networks

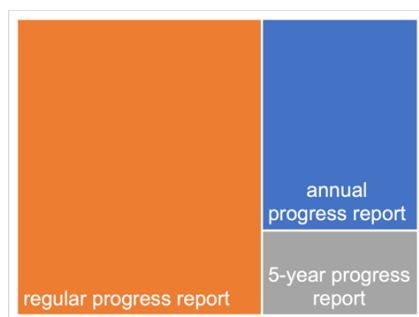
3.2.5. Commitment 9 ‘Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments’

3.2.5.1. Coverage

Commitment 9 is addressed substantively in approximately three fifths of action plans. These cases are categorised as *specific*. Among plans that do not cover it in detail, many still refer indirectly to related activities such as internal progress meetings or monitoring discussions. These cases are categorised as *general*.

3.2.5.2. Implementation approaches

Among the action plan corpus, roughly one third commit to annual progress updates, while two thirds refer to regular reporting without specifying frequency. Some organisations plan to share revised versions of their action plans over time, while a smaller proportion explicitly commit to producing a comprehensive progress report at the five-year milestone envisaged in the ARRA. The treemap below illustrates the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 9.



Insights from the interview programme suggest that progress reporting has not always occurred in practice, for several reasons. These include leadership changes prompting alignment with new strategic priorities; decentralised implementation, where reporting remains fragmented across work streams; and resource constraints, leading organisations to prioritise implementation over formal reporting. At the same time, some examples of structured reporting were shared during interviews, including the use of RAG (red amber green) ratings to track progress against planned actions, particularly in Scandinavia and the UK.

3.2.6. Commitment 10 ‘Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research’

3.2.6.1. Coverage

Commitment 10 is also addressed substantively in around three fifths of action plans. These cases are categorised as *specific*. Among those that do not address it directly, many still mention related activities such as engagement with research on research. These cases are categorised as *general*.

3.2.6.2. Implementation approaches

Approximately two thirds of action plans refer explicitly to monitoring and evaluation activities, with a small number indicating that evaluation will be conducted or supported by independent experts. In addition, several plans describe complementary practices, including:

- Engagement with research on research literature (around one third of plans)
- Commitments to making evaluation data openly available where feasible (around one quarter)
- Acting on feedback from research communities as part of iterative improvement (around one fifth)

The treemap below illustrates the most common approaches captured in action plans towards implementation of Commitment 10.



Together, these approaches point to an emerging but uneven integration of evidence-based evaluation into research assessment reform, with variation across organisational contexts and stages of maturity. In addition to variation across the action plan sample, there is also variation in evaluation efforts at national levels, with countries such as Norway (NIFU, ongoing) and Denmark (Pederson et al., 2025) undertaking country-wide evaluation work on responsible research assessment and/or CoARA in their national research systems.

3.3. Cross-links between commitments

The overall coverage profile reveals several interdependencies among commitments.

Commitments 2 and 3 are closely linked, reflecting the conceptual relationship between an emphasis on qualitative assessment and a reduced reliance on metrics. Similarly, in approximately three quarters of cases where organisations report explicit measures to avoid rankings (Commitment 4), they also address the inappropriate use of metrics (Commitment 3), suggesting that these commitments are typically operationalised together.

Across the supporting commitments, implementation patterns are especially interrelated for Commitments 9 and 10. Organisations that report progress on implementation frequently also describe evaluation activities, while those omitting one commitment often also omit the other. This pattern likely reflects the close relationship between activities focused on gathering evidence of progress and those concerned with reporting on it. The comparatively lower coverage of these commitments may indicate broader variation in the extent to which monitoring, evaluation, and learning are embedded in organisational practice.

Finally, there is a strong interplay between the coverage of Commitment 6 and the core commitments. Organisations earlier in their reform journey tend to outline detailed review plans but give limited detail on implementation, whereas more advanced organisations describe review processes briefly and focus instead on concrete changes linked to core commitments. This suggests that specific implementation of the core commitments tends to emerge only once a certain level of reform maturity has been reached, while Commitment 6 is often used earlier in the reform journey as a starting point for defining those specific interventions that will enable implementation of the core commitments.

4. Implementation of ARRA actions plans - a snapshot across 15 signatories

This chapter provides a qualitative snapshot of how 15 ARRA signatories are progressing with the implementation of their action plans. Drawing on in-depth interviews, it examines how planned commitments are being translated into practice, which actions are already underway, and how organisations navigate constraints and dependencies. The chapter identifies recurring implementation patterns across organisation types while also attending to the institutional, national, and disciplinary contexts that shape what implementation looks like in practice.

Overall, the findings suggest that most organisations perceive themselves to be broadly on track with the milestones set out in their action plans, even where timelines have shifted. Early plans were commonly described as optimistic, particularly for actions involving coordination across units, cultural change, or new infrastructure development. Rather than indicating stagnation, delays were generally framed as the result of consultation, learning, and iterative refinement. For several organisations, the action-plan process itself functioned as an initial implementation phase, enabling stock-taking, internal dialogue, and alignment across previously disconnected units.

A central insight from the analysis is that implementation progress is shaped less by lack of commitment than by interdependencies operating across organisational and system levels. Many actions depend on decisions taken at national, funder, or ministerial level, or on parallel reforms led by other institutional actors, limiting what can be delivered unilaterally. Successful progress is most consistently associated with alignment between organisational culture, leadership commitment, staff capacity, and external policy signals, while persistent barriers highlight the difficulty of translating formal commitments into routine practice. Taken together, the findings underscore that implementation unfolds at the intersection of governance, system-level alignment, and individual behaviour—pointing to the need for sustained capacity-building, targeted engagement, and coordinated support mechanisms to achieve durable change in research assessment.

4.1. Implementation progress and patterns

4.1.1. Implementation progress

Across the sample, organisations generally report being on track with the milestones set out in their action plans. Several interviewees stated explicitly that all actions within their direct control are progressing as planned. Even where timelines have slipped, progress is typically described as steady rather than stalled.

A recurring observation across organisations is that initial timelines were optimistic, particularly for actions that involve cultural change, coordination across multiple units, or the development of new infrastructures. Institutions such as the *Norwegian University of Science and Technology* and *Eindhoven University of Technology* noted that while some activities took longer than anticipated, these delays reflected the time required for consultation, iteration, and learning rather than a loss of momentum. In these cases, organisations emphasised that actions were still moving forward, albeit at a slower pace.

In a few cases, implementation progress was more difficult to assess. For some universities, including the *University of Zurich*, the process of developing the action plan itself constituted an important first implementation step, enabling internal stock-taking and cross-unit dialogue even where coordination arrangements for subsequent delivery were still being clarified. The lack of a clear coordination mandate was attributed to responsibility for different elements of the plan being distributed across several vice-rectors and units, limiting oversight and making progress reporting challenging. This example underlines that coordination capacity is itself a critical component of implementation.

Although several organisations committed in their plans to annual progress reporting, not all had yet been able to deliver such reports. Capacity constraints, competing institutional priorities, and dependencies on governance decisions were cited as reasons for this.

“[We are] implementing the CoARA principles as much as possible within the allowances of our framework. [...] We cannot change the criteria that are nationally imposed, but we do try to influence them, for example by advocating for additional, broader criteria.” – University of Rijeka

A common qualifier to otherwise positive progress reports was that some goals cannot be completed within institutional control. Several signatories highlighted structural or system-level dependencies. The *University of Rijeka*, for example, described a ‘wait-and-see’ approach while national criteria for assessment are under revision. Rather than introducing premature institutional changes, the university has focused on strengthening support infrastructures for open science and public engagement, anticipating that these activities are likely to be rewarded under new national criteria.

Similarly, ANVUR reported that while it has implemented innovations within national research assessment exercises under its remit, reforms to recruitment and habilitation procedures depend on decisions by the ministry. At *Loughborough University*, progress on recognising peer review and other contributions in assessment is contingent on the rollout of new staff-profile infrastructure and a redesigned performance and development review process, both owned by other institutional actors. These examples illustrate that delays often reflect interdependencies rather than lack of commitment, and that institutions frequently redirect effort to preparatory or enabling actions while awaiting decisions.

4.1.2. Implementation patterns

4.1.2.1. Funders and authorities

Funders and authorities in the sample have largely focused on revising and refining existing criteria, tools, and processes, embedding change through iterative cycles rather than wholesale redesign. Regular review of alignment with ARRA commitments and other policy priorities is common, often linked to existing quality-assurance or review mechanisms.

Organisations in this group have expanded or consolidated the use of narrative CVs and selected works, moving away from comprehensive publication lists. In parallel, bibliometric systems have been adapted to capture a broader set of contributions, such as supervision, peer review, and open science practices, as illustrated by the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences'* reform of its national bibliographic database.

*“The main issues at present moment [] is [to] switch from only expert evaluation to panel evaluation. After COVID, we switched to systems that each proposal was evaluated by two experts, one of them making a consolidated version [of feedback, that was the basis for decisions] regarding financing projects. This year, we hope to restore the panels.” –
Latvian Council of Science*

Changes to evaluation processes are also evident. These include the introduction of interviews for the selection of principal investigators, the reintroduction or strengthening of panel discussions alongside external peer review, and investment in reviewer infrastructures, such as expert databases and matching tools. The *Latvian Council of Science*, for example, has sought to restore expert panels in response to disciplinary concerns about one-dimensional scoring, highlighting how assessment reform can reopen earlier design debates within constrained legislative frameworks.

Training and guidance for reviewers and panel members form a central component of implementation. At the *Research Foundation Flanders*, this includes written instructions, webinars, pre-panel briefings, and active intervention where CoARA-aligned principles are not followed in practice. Such measures reflect a recognition that policy change alone is insufficient without sustained attention to assessment practice.

4.1.2.2. Universities and research centres

Universities and research centres place greater emphasis on internal engagement and co-creation, particularly in reviewing and redesigning assessment criteria and tools. Many institutions reported extensive consultation processes involving researchers across faculties and career stages, often framed as necessary to build legitimacy and reduce resistance.

Group discussions and consensus-building approaches were commonly used, for example at the *Barcelona Institute for Global Health*, where feedback loops were explicitly designed to show what input had been acted upon and why. Larger institutions, such as the *University of Gdańsk*, described cross-faculty task forces and workshops that facilitated mutual learning while allowing for disciplinary tailoring. At the *University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice*, this engagement phase revealed greater internal diversity in assessment practices than initially anticipated, with extensive mapping across faculties becoming a substantial implementation task in its own right.

“The biographical sketch proved to be a huge success. People were a bit hesitant at first, I think also because there was a large national discussion on narrative CVs. So that is why we deliberately chose to also have a more quantitative evidence part in the biographical sketch. And that worked very well. [...] for assessment committees, it's more helpful too; they get a better idea of what the vision of somebody is and how they look at themselves as an academic.” – Eindhoven University of Technology

Alongside engagement, many institutions have introduced or revised concrete assessment tools. Examples include the establishment of expert councils to support faculty-level qualitative assessments, changes to internal funding and budget-allocation systems to recognise broader contributions, and revisions to recruitment criteria. *Eindhoven University of Technology's* biographical sketch, the *Norwegian University of Science and Technology's* NOR-CAM-inspired assessment tools and changes to the research activity index at *Universitat Politècnica de València*, illustrate how institutions adapt tools to local contexts.

Several universities also emphasised the role of HR functions in implementation. Clear CoARA-aligned instructions, combined with HR staff empowered to monitor compliance and return assessments that do not follow guidance, were identified as important mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy and practice. However, the degree of HR engagement varied and remains uneven in some institutions.

4.1.2.3. Cross-system organisations

Cross-system organisations play a distinct role in enabling implementation. Both *OpenAIRE* and *Science for Life Lab Sweden* reported a marked increase in momentum around open science and research assessment reform.

“When I did my PhD, open science was essentially a concept. It wasn't something that people actually implemented. It was discussed, but that was about it. But [] as time has gone by, open science has become such an important and integral part of research these days. It's really moving research forward.” – Science for Life Lab Sweden

OpenAIRE described a shift from incremental, member-by-member engagement to more exponential uptake, including growing interest beyond Europe. Its infrastructures are often the initial entry point for organisations, providing tangible means through which CoARA principles can be operationalised. *Science for Life Lab Sweden* similarly reported that open science has moved from being a conceptual agenda to an integral part of researchers' everyday practice, with research assessment reform increasingly accepted as a necessary next step.

Both organisations rely on a combination of shared infrastructure, training, and community engagement. *Science for Life Lab Sweden* has an additional lever to its disposal through formal agreements with its fellows, where it is embedding open science - and prospectively CoARA-aligned principles, creating a stronger impetus for implementation.

4.2. Enablers and barriers to translating plans into action

4.2.1. Enablers

A number of enabling conditions recur across organisations. Many signatories reported that their organisational culture was already broadly aligned with CoARA principles before signing the ARRA, often supported by an existing appetite for change and by academic ambassadors or sounding boards who lent credibility to the agenda. Senior leadership buy-in, combined with clear routes to engage executive teams and strong internal HR networks, was repeatedly identified as critical.

Being positioned within, or influenced by, organisations with system-level leverage also supported progress. National funders and assessment exercises embedding reform were seen as powerful signals that reduced perceived risks for universities. Participation in exchanges - through Science Europe, university alliances, European research projects, national and regional networks, and CoARA Working Groups and National Chapters - helped influencing as well as learning efforts, and for organisations to distinguish between context-specific challenges and systemic ones. For early movers, seeing similar reforms implemented across Europe alleviated fears of first-mover disadvantage.

"I think many of the steps we have taken the past 10 years would not have been possible if there wasn't a European Research Council, if there weren't the framework programmes and the dedicated processes taken into account in these programmes." – Research Foundation Flanders

Alignment with EU-level policy signals, such as Horizon Europe, HR Excellence in Research, and the perceived direction of the European Research Council (ERC), further reinforced internal cases for change. For the *University of Gdańsk*, alignment between research assessment reform and the HR Excellence in Research process provided a strategic frame that helped position ARRA commitments as part of improving researchers' everyday working conditions rather than as a separate reform track. The *Research Foundation Flanders* indicated that progress made would not have been possible without the ERC leading by example.

In several countries, changes to national law or policy aligned with ARRA commitments created additional space for institutional reform. External funding, particularly CoARA Boost, Horizon projects, and national programmes, played an enabling role by providing staff capacity to coordinate and implement changes.

Organisation-specific enablers further illustrate how context matters. The *Hungarian Academy of Sciences* benefits from support from the local Young Academy, which acts as an ambassador network and imports international good practice. The *Barcelona Institute for Global Health* highlighted its small size and disciplinary focus, enabling deep community involvement. The *Norwegian University of Science and Technology* pointed to the innovation and dissemination orientation being typical of technical universities, with little resistance experienced across its communities. The *Eindhoven University of Technology* emphasised the enabling role of a skilled 'story writer' to support change management through narrative-building. *Science for Life Lab Sweden's* system-wide perspective on the life sciences ecosystem allows it to calibrate reforms to community readiness.

4.2.2. Barriers

Common barriers reflect both structural and cultural challenges within organisations. Leadership change, unclear allocation of responsibility, or highly decentralised decision-making frequently slow implementation. Dependence on the interest and engagement of deans, heads of department, or legally separate faculties introduces variability across units, while reliance on collaboration with other institutional services can create bottlenecks when priorities diverge. *Loughborough University*, for example, identified limited engagement of HR colleagues as a significant constraint on progress.

Resource constraints were also widely reported. These are exacerbated by the shift towards more qualitative forms of assessment, which require additional capacity in organisational contexts where assessment frequency remains the same or where new approaches must be implemented through systems originally designed for quantitative metrics. Budget cuts, dependencies on parallel infrastructure developments, and data gaps resulting from inconsistent reporting further affect both the pace and scope of change. *OpenAIRE* raised concerns about organisational sustainability linked to reliance on volunteer labour, while *ANVUR* highlighted persistent difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff with specialist expertise in research assessment.

Organisations described a persistent gap between decisions taken at executive or working-group level and implementation by researchers. Interviewees noted that guidance documents and standard communication mechanisms are insufficient on their own, and that cultural change requires time for shared understanding and maturity of thinking to develop. A central challenge in engaging researchers is translating policy agendas into tangible benefits at the level of individual researchers and faculties. *Eindhoven University of Technology* observed that strong academic autonomy, while often an asset, can at times undermine consistent implementation in practice.

Several related challenges connect directly to this policy-to-practice gap. Capacity constraints play a central role, as direct, dialogic engagement with researchers was widely regarded as the most effective way to achieve buy-in, yet is highly resource-intensive. Disciplinary differences further complicate implementation efforts, particularly where institutions aim for harmonisation across diverse academic cultures. Supporting researchers at critical career stages during the transition period inherent to systemic change was also raised as a concern.

“If you told them, please integrate all those open science aspects in your evaluation processes. And they were asked for that like a year before we would start with CoARA. We couldn't tell them, now let's do it again, but with CoARA aspects. As, then they would tell us, what will you come up with next year?” – University of Zurich

Engagement fatigue emerged as another recurrent barrier. Multiple, overlapping reform agendas place strain on both researchers and organisations. Although developments such as the gender dimension in science, open science, and research assessment reform are conceptually linked, they are often perceived by researchers as layered sequentially rather than implemented in an integrated way. This perception has a tangible impact on willingness and capacity to engage with further change.

Several barriers were also identified that extend beyond organisational boundaries. Training and guiding external reviewers remain a challenge, particularly where reviewers are involved on a one-off rather than recurring basis. While alignment between national, funder, and institutional policies can act as a strong enabler, misalignment across these levels constitutes a significant obstacle. This tension operates in multiple directions; for example, at the *Research Foundation Flanders*, tensions arising from metrics-driven institutional promotion systems illustrate how misalignment between assessment levels can dilute reform signals even where funder-level practices are CoARA-aligned.

Finally, several organisations pointed to challenges in keeping abreast of developments in responsible research assessment more generally, and CoARA outputs more specifically. The *University of Zurich* - an ARRA signatory but not a CoARA member - noted that lack of access to CoARA Working Groups risks duplication of effort and reinventing solutions. At the same time, CoARA members expressed concerns about their own capacity to track, interpret, and operationalise the growing volume of Working Group outputs.

4.3. Next steps in implementation plans and support needs

Support needs are closely interconnected with the enablers and barriers identified in previous sections and strongly shape organisations' planned next steps. At the organisational level, interviewees consistently emphasised the value of sustained exchange at regional, national, and international levels. Such exchanges were seen as essential for addressing shared internal and external challenges, learning from reforms in comparable contexts, and responding collectively to emerging issues - most notably the use of AI in assessment and geopolitical sensitivities around collaboration and review. *Science for Life Lab Sweden* highlighted the importance of structured, two-way exchange formats that allow national infrastructures and institutional practices to co-evolve, drawing on its ecosystem-wide perspective.

The comparability of context emerged as a prerequisite for meaningful exchange. The *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, for example, expressed a strong interest in learning from organisations operating in similar national and institutional environments that have deliberately stepped away from rankings, noting that highly ranked universities are often perceived as neither realistic nor relevant reference points. Eindhoven University of Technology called for more hands-on and collaborative formats, favouring challenge-led or ‘sand-pit’ workshops over one-way presentations.

“[Increased engagement] with the academic networks of STEM disciplines and of medicine [would be helpful]. Particularly, I think, medicine has a long way to go.” – Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Engagement with researchers - particularly through disciplinary and professional networks - was identified as a crucial support mechanism for closing the persistent policy-to-practice gap. This was seen as especially important in medicine and STEM fields, where resistance to change was reported to be more pronounced. Disciplinary-level engagement was viewed as a way to make reform agendas more tangible and relevant to everyday research practice.

Several organisations also reported difficulties keeping pace with developments in responsible research assessment and with the growing body of CoARA activity. There was strong demand for clearer, more accessible interpretation of CoARA Working Group outputs, tailored to different assessment contexts (such as proposals, recruitment, promotion, or unit-level evaluation), as well as for better coordination between the multiple exchange networks operating under the CoARA umbrella. Linked to this, interviewees called for clearer guidance on the next generation of action plans and self-assessments, supported by concrete examples to facilitate reflection and reporting.

Further enabling support identified included cascade funding, more visible engagement from the CoARA secretariat, and stronger alignment of EU funding criteria with CoARA principles - often compared to the signalling role played by HR Excellence in Research. The *University of Rijeka* noted that resources developed through its Boost-supported project could be valuable to the wider CoARA community, but that limited staff capacity constrained its ability to navigate endorsement and dissemination processes.

“We are using data that are provided by some private organisation for which you pay a lot of money, and you don't always have a precise idea and a full description of how they are producing those data, what are the rules behind them? This is paradoxical, and something that is very difficult, of course, but it's something that I would expect sooner or later at the European level would be dealt with somehow, in some way.” – ANVUR

At the system level, organisations called for shared, open research-assessment infrastructures at European or global scale. ANVUR, for instance, argued for the development of a certified research information infrastructure to support transparency, comparability, and the long-term sustainability of reform efforts. *OpenAIRE*'s experience illustrates that sustaining such infrastructures is itself a reform challenge, particularly where delivery relies on project-based funding or volunteer contributions.

Looking ahead, interviewees were clear that further implementation will hinge less on ambition than on enabling conditions. Continued iteration, embedding, and evaluation of reforms require protected staff time, accessible interpretation of CoARA frameworks, and curated opportunities for peer exchange in comparable institutional and national contexts.

Within this context, funders and authorities are focusing on further broadening recognition practices, including through expanded applicant profiles and improved information infrastructures. Continued, cyclical engagement with applicants and reviewers is seen as essential for refining processes over time, alongside targeted knowledge-exchange activities on emerging issues such as rankings and use of AI. Many also anticipate undertaking formal self-assessments towards the end of their current action-plan cycles.

Universities and research centres described next steps that emphasise iteration and embedding rather than wholesale redesign. These include reviewing recruitment and promotion practices, refining newly introduced expert councils or assessment tools in light of feedback, and further experimentation within internal funding schemes (for example, lotteries or involving early-career researchers as evaluators). Improving transparency of assessment procedures, expanding training and awareness-raising, and nurturing internal reform communities were all framed as central to achieving longer-term cultural change.

“We have got a development project from our Ministry of Education last year, [] the aim of which is to increase the quality of the research environment at the university and one of the key activities we put there is to reform this assessment following the current commitments [...] Part of the budget there is for visiting [other] universities across Europe to bring good practice back to Czechia.” – University of South Bohemia

Across both funders and research performing organisations, funding was repeatedly characterised less as a financial input and more as a source of staff capacity. EU projects, CoARA cascade funding, and national programmes were valued primarily because they enabled dedicated time for coordination, engagement, and tool development - activities that are otherwise difficult to sustain alongside core responsibilities.

Emerging focus on AI within implementation

Artificial intelligence is increasingly recognised as a cross-cutting implementation challenge, shaping especially funders' next steps. Interviewees anticipate that AI will affect both application volumes and the perceived value of qualitative information in assessment, with particular concern about the use of AI by reviewers to draft evaluation reports and the potential erosion of trust in peer judgement.

Some organisations have already begun to respond. The *Research Foundation Flanders*, for example, has issued explicit guidance limiting the use of AI by reviewers and has terminated collaborations where inappropriate use was identified. Others are monitoring growth in application numbers and considering limits to manage capacity. At universities, interviewees stressed the need for responsible and transparent approaches to AI, including awareness-raising for reviewers and assessors and closer alignment with wider discussions on research ethics and integrity.

5. Insights relevant to ERA structural policies and actions, the ERA act, and CoARA

This chapter situates the findings of the study within the broader policy framework of the European Research Area (ERA). It interprets insights from the analysis of ARRA action plans and implementation experiences in relation to ERA structural policies, ERA actions, and the ERA Act. The chapter highlights how research assessment reform both enables progress across other ERA policy domains and, in turn, depends on alignment with national, European and system-level reforms. It also considers how patterns of implementation across commitments may inform future monitoring of reform progress within the ERA.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that reforming research assessment is not a stand-alone policy endeavour. Instead, it operates as a lever for multiple ERA priorities. At the same time, the effectiveness of these interactions depends on coordinated implementation, sustained capacity, clear policy alignment across governance levels, and the ability to track progress as reform matures.

5.1. Key insights for the ERA policy framework

Three overarching insights emerge with direct relevance for the ERA framework. First, while the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment and CoARA have succeeded in mobilising commitment across a wide range of organisations, the translation of these commitments into everyday assessment practice remains uneven. Persistent gaps between policy intent and implementation underscore the need for targeted support that goes beyond formal alignment.

Second, the study highlights strong interdependencies between research assessment reform and other ERA structural policies, particularly those related to open science, gender equality, knowledge valorisation and research careers. Where assessment criteria actively recognise these dimensions, progress across the ERA agenda accelerates; where they do not, incentives remain misaligned.

Third, the findings point to the importance of system-level coordination and legislative alignment. Where national policies, funding frameworks and institutional mandates are misaligned, organisations face constraints that slow or distort implementation. The ERA Act therefore represents a critical opportunity to address these tensions structurally.

5.2. ERA structural policy on reforming research assessment

The ERA structural policy on reforming research assessment aims to accelerate and sustain a shift away from narrow, metrics-based evaluation towards approaches that are qualitative, transparent and responsible. It explicitly supports implementation of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, the work of CoARA, monitoring of reforms, and mutual learning across organisations and countries.

Drawing on the analysis of action plans and interviews, this study identifies five priorities for accelerating research assessment reform under this structural policy.

Bridging the policy-to-practice gap through disciplinary engagement

Across the study, a persistent gap is observed between strategic decisions taken at organisational or policy level and their translation into assessment practice experienced by researchers. While most organisations report formal alignment with CoARA principles, interviewees emphasised that guidance documents and revised criteria alone are insufficient to change behaviour.

Stronger engagement with disciplinary communities - particularly through discipline-specific dialogue, peer-led discussion and examples grounded in epistemic cultures - is critical to closing this gap. Interviewees noted that resistance is often highest in disciplines with strong metric traditions, where assessment norms are deeply embedded. Targeted disciplinary engagement therefore emerges as a key lever for sustained behavioural change and should form a central component of ERA-level support for reform.

Sustained facilitation of regional, national and international exchange

Mutual learning remains one of the strongest enablers of reform, underscoring the value of initiatives such as regularly convening ERA Forum contact points on responsible research assessment. The findings indicate that participation in networks reduces perceived risk, supports problem-solving, and accelerates adoption.

However, the study also reveals demand for more hands-on exchange formats. Organisations increasingly seek practical, challenge-led engagement rather than one-way presentations. Supporting such formats would enhance the impact of existing exchange mechanisms and support organisations at more advanced stages of implementation.

Support for navigating an increasingly complex reform ecosystem

As the volume of outputs related to responsible research assessment grows - including CoARA working group outputs, national chapter reports and cascade-funded project outcomes - organisations face difficulty staying abreast of developments and identifying what is most relevant to their context.

The study highlights a clear need for structured support in navigating, interpreting and prioritising this evolving knowledge base. Without such support, there is a risk of duplicated effort, uneven uptake and reform fatigue. Enhanced synthesis, signposting and practical interpretation of outputs would strengthen coherence and usability.

Alignment across policy levels and the role of multipliers

Alignment between national policies, funder practices and institutional reforms is repeatedly identified as a decisive factor shaping implementation. Funders, authorities and highly visible research organisations act as multipliers: when they embed CoARA-aligned principles, they lower perceived risk for others and create system-wide momentum.

Conversely, misalignment - such as metric-driven national promotion systems or rigid legislative frameworks - creates tension and limits institutional autonomy. Strengthening alignment across policy levels is therefore necessary for durable reform.

Ensuring sustained capacity through leadership commitment and funding

Finally, capacity emerges as a central constraint. While some financial resources are required, the study shows that the most critical need is dedicated staff time for coordination, engagement, training and iteration. Strong buy-in from senior leaders is essential to allocate internal budgets and legitimise this work.

External funding - through European and national programmes - plays a catalytic role primarily by enabling capacity rather than by covering direct costs. Ensuring sustained, predictable support for such capacity is therefore a priority for ERA-level policy design.

5.3. Other ERA structural policies

Beyond the dedicated structural policy on research assessment, the findings reveal extensive cross-linkages with other ERA policy areas.

Under Commitment 1, several organisations have begun to integrate recognition of open science practices (SP1), the gender dimension in research (SP3), knowledge valorisation (SP6), and citizen engagement (SP10) directly into assessment criteria and processes. Where implemented, this integration acts as a powerful incentive, translating policy priorities into everyday researcher behaviour. However, interpretation of Commitment 1 varies widely, leading to uneven implementation and missed opportunities for systemic coherence.

Commitment 1 also intersects with ERA priorities on research careers (SP4 and SP9). Some organisations have broadened recognition of the diverse roles that contribute to the research endeavour and strengthened education-, impact- and innovation-focused career paths. Yet these changes remain limited to a subset of institutions, reflecting both differing stages of reform and structural constraints in national career systems.

On the dependency side, the need for sustainable, accessible and resilient research assessment infrastructures (SP2) emerges as critical. Interviewees stressed the risk of reliance on commercial platforms and the importance of open, trusted infrastructures for contribution tracking and qualitative assessment. Without progress in this area, reform remains difficult to scale.

Despite the interconnectedness of ERA structural policies, organisations experience them as layered rather than integrated, contributing to implementation fatigue. This challenge is likely to intensify as new pressures emerge, notably the use of artificial intelligence in research and assessment. Addressing this requires explicit coordination across the ERA structural policies portfolio, rather than incremental additions.

5.4. ERA actions and ERA Act

5.4.1. ERA actions

The study also generates insights relevant to ERA actions addressing emerging and cross-cutting challenges. Under Commitment 1, a small number of organisations have begun to recognise researcher engagement with policy-making (A2) and efforts related to research integrity (A7). While these practices could strongly reinforce ERA actions, uneven interpretation of Commitment 1 again limits broader uptake.

Two emerging challenges featured prominently in interviews (though not so much in action plans): the responsible use of AI in research assessment (A3 and A7), and shifts in reviewer selection linked to geopolitical and research-security concerns (A4). Organisations expressed a strong desire for shared approaches and guidance, recognising that fragmented responses risk undermining trust in qualitative assessment.

Actions that support practical implementation are just as important. Ensuring equitable access to open infrastructures (A1) and empowering research managers (A8) surfaced as critical. Interviews illustrated stark contrasts in implementation capacity depending on which actors drive reform. The comparison between HR-led progress at the *Norwegian University of Science and Technology* and coordination challenges with HR colleagues at *Loughborough University* underscores how role allocation, coordination capacity and access to decision-making mechanisms shape reform trajectories.

5.4.2. ERA Act

The ERA Act introduces a crucial lever for addressing persistent misalignment between national and institutional research assessment frameworks. The study documents repeated tensions where institutional ambitions to implement CoARA-aligned reforms are constrained by national legislation, promotion standards or assessment exercises.

By requiring alignment with CoARA principles and commitments at national level, the ERA Act offers an opportunity to resolve these tensions structurally. This would provide institutions with the regulatory space needed to embed reform consistently and reduce reliance on ad hoc or compensatory measures.

5.5. Monitoring future progress

A final insight concerns the relationship between implementation of the core commitments and Commitment 6, which may offer a useful signal for tracking progress over time. While the relatively high uptake of the supporting commitments might be interpreted as reflecting their comparative ease of implementation, the findings suggest a more nuanced explanation. Supporting commitments can be implemented at varying levels of organisational maturity, whereas specific implementation of the core commitments typically requires organisations to have completed at least one cycle of reviewing existing criteria, tools, and processes to identify where change is needed.

Viewed in this light, the interplay between emphasis on review processes under Commitment 6 and the degree of specificity with which organisations address the core commitments emerges as the clearest indicator of reform maturity identified in this study. Commitment 6 often functions as an entry point in earlier stages of reform, enabling organisations to establish review mechanisms that subsequently support more concrete implementation of the core commitments.

Several organisations indicated plans to publish updated versions of their action plans, and interviewees suggested that future phases of reform will require not only self-assessment but also clearer guidance on next-stage action planning from CoARA. Examining how revised or subsequent action plans balance attention to Commitment 6 relative to the core commitments could therefore provide a powerful marker of research assessment reform progress across ARRA signatories over time.

5.6. Conclusions

Building on the chapter-level analyses, this concluding chapter identifies common patterns shaping participation, commitment coverage, implementation, and the key enablers and barriers to reform. Together, these findings suggest that while research assessment reform has achieved an unprecedented level of alignment in principle, its consolidation now depends on sustained coordination, capacity building, and policy coherence. At the same time, the insights emerging from this report point to several concrete pathways for addressing system-level barriers.

These include:

- **Strengthening learning and exchange regional, national and international level.** Continued facilitation of learning and exchange across levels - combined with a stronger emphasis on hands-on, practice-oriented formats - will be essential to support implementation.
- **Investing in shared infrastructures.** Supporting the development of shared research assessment infrastructures at European and global levels would reduce dependence on commercial platforms and enable more scalable and transparent reform.
- **Enhancing policy coherence across the ERA.** Promoting more integrated implementation across European Research Area (ERA) policies could help reduce reform fatigue and improve consistency for institutions and researchers.
- **Engaging research management communities.** Effective reform depends not only on researchers, but also on research managers, HR professionals, and quality assurance staff. Targeted engagement with these communities - alongside opportunities for cross-role dialogue - is critical for enabling sustained cultural change at institutional level.
- **Providing coordinated guidance on emerging issues.** There is an urgent need for shared frameworks and guidance on topics such as artificial intelligence and reviewer selection, aligned with broader research security policies, to ensure a coherent response to emerging risks.
- **Strengthening alignment across funding and policy frameworks.** Further alignment between EU funding criteria and CoARA principles, alongside closer alignment of national research assessment systems, will be key to reinforcing coherence across the system.

As the central community and coordination platform for reform, CoARA has a pivotal role to play in supporting coherence, interpretation, and uptake. To this end, several promising pathways emerge:

- **Clarifying the interpretation of commitments.** Further refinement of how ARRA commitments are understood - particularly the core commitments and the applicability of Commitment 4 across stakeholder groups - would support more consistent and ambitious implementation.

- **Deepening engagement with key multipliers.** Targeted engagement with disciplinary communities, funders, leading institutions, senior leaders, and research management communities can amplify reform efforts across systems.
- **Improving navigation of CoARA outputs.** Enhanced synthesis and clearer signposting of outputs from Working Groups, National Chapters, and cascade funding initiatives would improve accessibility and reduce duplication of effort.
- **Aligning exchange mechanisms.** Greater coordination across the various exchange networks operating under CoARA would strengthen coherence and mitigate fragmentation.
- **Supporting future planning and self-assessment.** Providing clearer guidance - supported by concrete examples - on the development of action plans and self-assessment processes would help organisations reflect meaningfully on progress and plan the next phase of reform.

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Unrealised research directions

As with any empirical study, this analysis generates new questions alongside its findings. Several promising avenues for further research would have offered valuable additional insight but fell beyond the scope and timeline of the present study. These unrealised directions are outlined below to serve as inspiration for future research on research.

First, a more fine-grained quantitative analysis examining action plan submission and implementation patterns in relation to organisational size would add important nuance to the current findings. Early evidence suggests that organisational capacity - closely linked to size - may shape both the timing of action plan submission and the depth of planned or implemented reforms. Building on recent work analysing variation in uptake of CoARA across European higher education by organisational size (Pölönen et al., 2025), it would have been interesting to understand submission profiles based on size differences.

Second, further thematic analysis of action plan content could deepen understanding of how different policy agendas intersect in practice. While in-depth analysis is available on the links between research assessment reform and the open science agenda (Rushforth et al., 2026), comparable work has not yet been undertaken for other ERA-relevant themes, such as gender equality, knowledge valorisation, research careers or citizen engagement. Systematic mapping of how these themes co-occur and are operationalised within action plans could serve as a proxy for the extent to which reforms are being approached holistically rather than in silos. Computational text-analysis tools, such as the Gargantext mapping tool developed by CNRS (Gargantext Open Data, ongoing), offer promising methodological support for this type of large-scale thematic analysis.

Third, while the interview programme focused on organisations that had submitted an action plan, engaging with those that had not would have provided valuable insight into patterns of engagement and timing. Such evidence could inform CoARA's approach to supporting signatories in relation to the second ARRA milestone, which centres on self-assessment against action plans five years after signing. For some organisations, it may be appropriate to bypass formal action plan submission and instead support self-assessment based on existing strategic or reform-related plans.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Overview of the interviews

Organisation	Organisation type	Region	Action plan in place since	Signatory / Member
ANVUR	National/regional authorities	Southern	November 2024	Member
OpenAIRE	Other relevant non-profit organisations	Pan-European	December 2024	Member
Hungarian Academy of Sciences	Academies etc.	Eastern	June 2024	Member

The Latvian Council of Science	Public or private funders etc.	Northern	April 2025	Member
Research Foundation Flanders	Public or private funders etc.	Western	September 2024	Member
Barcelona Institute for Global Health	Research centres etc.	Southern	April 2024	Member
Science for Life Lab Sweden	Research centres etc.	Northern	February 2025	Member
University of Gdańsk	Universities etc.	Eastern	June 2024	Member
University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice	Universities etc.	Eastern	September 2024	Signatory
Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Universities etc.	Northern	November 2022	Member
Eindhoven University of Technology	Universities etc.	Western	December 2024	Member
University of Zurich	Universities etc.	Western	June 2025	Signatory
University of Rijeka	Universities etc.	Southern	January 2024	Member
Universitat Politècnica de València	Universities etc.	Southern	July 2024	Member
Loughborough University	Universities etc.	Northern	November 2023	Member

Appendix B – Signatory, member and action plan submission data per country

Signatory, member and action plan submission data per country. Signatory and member data were obtained from the CoARA secretariat (last updated on 23/12/2025); action plan submission data were obtained from CNRS (on 08/01/2026).

European region	Signatories incl. members	Members	Number of signatories that signed the agreement before 1 January 2025	Number of APs submitted by signatories incl. members	% APs versus signatories that signed the agreement at least 1 year ago
Australia	2	2	2	2	100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	1	1	100
Canada	2	1	1	1	100
Croatia	1	1	1	1	100
Finland	38	33	38	29	76
Sweden	37	35	33	19	58
Switzerland	20	16	18	9	50
Andorra	2	2	2	1	50
Brazil	2	2	2	1	50
Estonia	3	2	2	1	50
Belgium	18	13	17	8	47
Netherlands	32	26	32	15	47
Norway	21	16	20	9	45
Austria	18	17	16	7	44
Hungary	15	15	14	6	43
United Kingdom	35	30	26	11	42

Italy	76	72	71	29	41
Czechia	15	12	15	6	40
Ireland	16	16	13	5	38
Spain	100	89	92	32	35
Chile	3	3	3	1	33
Luxembourg	4	3	3	1	33
Moldova	5	5	3	1	33
North Macedonia	3	2	3	1	33
Denmark	14	11	13	4	31
Germany	50	40	43	13	30
Lithuania	17	16	15	4	27
Europe	57	46	55	14	25
Latvia	6	5	4	1	25
Slovakia	7	3	4	1	25
Turkey	5	5	4	1	25
Global	23	22	20	4	20
Ukraine	17	15	16	3	19
Georgia	8	8	6	1	17
Poland	63	56	60	9	15
Slovenia	10	9	9	1	11
Portugal	33	30	29	3	10
France	65	54	60	5	8
Romania	37	34	25	2	8
Cyprus	3	2	3	0	NA
Costa Rica	2	2	2	0	NA
Iceland	2	2	2	0	NA
Mexico	2	2	2	0	NA
Peru	4	3	2	0	NA
Tunisia	2	2	2	0	NA
Albania	1	0	1	0	NA
Bulgaria	3	2	1	0	NA
Greece	3	3	1	0	NA
Kenya	1	1	1	0	NA
Kosovo	2	2	1	0	NA
Montenegro	1	0	1	0	NA
Nigeria	1	1	1	0	NA
Panama	1	1	1	0	NA
Serbia	1	1	1	0	NA
Tanzania	1	1	1	0	NA
Timor-Leste	1	1	1	0	NA
Zimbabwe	1	1	1	0	NA
Africa	1	0	0	0	NA
Ethiopia	2	2	0	0	NA
India	2	2	0	0	NA
Liechtenstein	1	0	0	0	NA
Uganda	1	1	0	0	NA
United States	1	0	0	0	NA

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This study provides an evidence-informed baseline assessment of progress in reforming research assessment under the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA), as implemented by its signatories - many of whom are members of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). Drawing on quantitative analysis of submitted action plans, qualitative analysis of their content, and in-depth interviews with a sample of signatories, the report examines how ARRA commitments are being interpreted, prioritised and translated into practice across organisational and national contexts.

Studies and reports