Advancing responsible research assessment for funders in the European digital space
A dialogue on ethics, integrity, and open infrastructure

organized by the
Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)
European Commission
European Network for Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)
in cooperation with
OpenAIRE, ALLEA, The Barcelona Declaration, CODATA, Research Data Alliance (RDA),
Ethical Data Initiative (EDI), Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP), FAIRsharing, TOBB
University, Eurodoc

Hybrid: In-person and on Zoom
Palais des Academies, Royal Stables, Salle Ilya Prigogine
Hertogenstraat 1 Rue Ducale, 1000 Brussels

Monday 2 June 2025, 9:00 to 16:30 CEST (Brussels time)

Register here
for in-person or online participation

Research assessment has paramount significance in the realm of academia, research and innovation, and is instrumental in steering knowledge creation and identifying and acknowledging contributions thus fostering a culture of excellence. This topic is of shared concern, as it engages both researchers and researchers' employers and funders collectively.
Marc Tachelet, Director, European Research Executive Agency
European Commission, Report on Research Assessment, March 2024

Description

This conference convenes European stakeholders involved in research assessment, spanning the European Commission, research funders, infrastructure providers, policy experts, and representatives from CoARA, ENRIO, and affiliated initiatives. The event is structured around the European Commission's Call for Evidence 'A European strategy for AI in science - paving the way for a European AI research council' (call for evidence due 5 June) within its overall AI Continent Action Plan, encompassing a suite of strategies and guidance documents that promote responsible integration of artificial intelligence into science and research funding mechanisms.

The conference examines the design and implementation of robust, transparent, and scientifically grounded approaches to research assessment, particularly for proposals involving AI, data-intensive methods, and digital research infrastructure. With increasing demand for accountability, reproducibility, and ethical oversight in the digital research ecosystem, the programme will emphasise the importance of legal compliance, data governance, epistemic integrity, and methodological soundness in research evaluation practices.

Building on the European Commission's Report on Research Assessment (2024), this conference addresses the evolving responsibilities of research funders in shaping credible assessment frameworks that support the development of high-quality scientific work. This includes developing policies and infrastructures that accommodate algorithmic research outputs, machine-assisted discovery, and complex digital methods, in line with recommendations from CoARA, Science Europe, SAPEA, and the ERA Forum.

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Agenda

Time	Session
8:00	**Registration and coffee**
9:00	**Welcome and opening remarks** *Research funding & research assessment in a new era* Gabi Lombardo CoARA Steering Board European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities Representative European Commission (tbc) Mara de Sousa-Freitas Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP Universidade Católica Portuguesa Iryna Kuchma Co-chair, CoARA-OI4RRA Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL)
9:30	**Keynote: Ethics in action** **From principles to practice** *operationalising ethics for AI-ready research assessment* Mihalis Kritikos Secretary, European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) Ethics and Integrity Sector, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG-RTD), European Commission
	Session 1 **Responsible research assessment in the age of AI** *integrating ethics and building trust in AI-enabled science*
9:50	**Identifying the research objects and methods** **for research assessment in the digital space** Perihan Elif Ekmekçi Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP Head, History of Medicine and Ethics Department & Deputy Dean, TOBB ETÜ Medical Faculty, the Head of the International Chair in Bioethics/WMA Cooperation Center
10:05	**Panel discussion** **Moderated by** Angeliki Tzouganatou Co-chair CoARA-OI4RRA & OpenAIRE **Panelists** Mihalis Kritikos, EGE, European Commission Perihan Elif Ekmekçi, Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP & TOBB ETÜ Bert Seghers, European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)

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Time	Session
	Giovanna Lima, San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) Susanne van den Hooff, CoARA-ERIP, University of Humanistic Studies Pil Maria Saugmann, Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP, European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) (tbc) Bianca Kramer, Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information
10:45	**Interactive discussion** 1. What practical steps can funders and research institutions take today to align with CoARA's 'Principles for Responsible Assessment' and the European AI Continent Action Plan? 2. Considering the European Commission's 'Report on Research Assessment' emphasis on integrating reliable science, ethics, and integrity into research assessment frameworks, how can funding organizations ensure that these principles are effectively operationalized in the evaluation of AI-driven research proposals? 3. Considering the European Commission's initiative to establish a European AI Research Council aimed at fostering foundational AI research and promoting its integration into scientific practices, how can research funders design assessment frameworks that effectively evaluate the interdisciplinary nature and long-term impact of AI-driven scientific proposals?
11:15	**Coffee break**
	Session 2 **Responsible by design** *open infrastructure and research assessment in the Age of AI*
11:30	**Open infrastructures as frameworks for 'responsible by design'** *avenues towards rigorous standards of validity, reliability, and public trust* Natalia Manola Co-chair, CoARA-OI4RRA & OpenAIRE
11:45	**Panel discussion** **Moderated by** Iryna Kuchma CoARA WG OI4RRA & EIFL **Panelists** Ludo Waltman, Leiden University Ignasi Labastida, University of Barcelona Javier López Albacete, Open Science and Research Infrastructures Unit Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), European Commission Natalia Manola, Co-chair, CoARA WG OI4RRA & OpenAIRE
12:20	**Audience interaction**

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Time	Session
	1. **The expanding role of AI in research assessment** How can automation and large-scale analytics reshape proposal evaluation, peer review, and monitoring? What risks do proprietary AI tools pose for accountability and equity? 2. **Open infrastructures (OIs) as enablers of trust and reproducibility** What constitutes full-stack infrastructure for assessment (PIDs, metadata, aggregators, indicators)? How can we ensure legal compliance, auditability, and data sovereignty through open ecosystems? 3. **Sustainable investment and shared responsibility** Why should funders invest beyond local tools into global, interoperable layers? What co-financing and co-governance models are needed (e.g., coalitions, public procurement alignment)? 4. **From policy to practice: embedding OIs in funding processes** How can funders align funding calls, application requirements, and evaluation frameworks with OI-based assessment? How can funders enable narrative CVs, diverse indicators, and recognition of broad contributions?
13:00	**Networking lunch**
	Session 3 **Aligning research assessment with Europe's AI strategy** *the role of funders in shaping a trustworthy research ecosystem*
14:00	**From innovation to evaluation** *aligning research assessment with emerging tech governance* *in Europe's AI Agenda* Philip Pfaller TUM Think Tank Munich School of Politics and Public Policy, Technical University of Munich
14:10	**Panel discussion** Representative, Science Europe (invited) Kris Dierickx, Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP & KU Leuven (tbc) Jonathan Starr, CoARA-ERIP & Scientific Coordination Infrastructure and Operating Systems (SciOS) Elena Gaura, Coventry University
14:40	**Audience interaction** 1. How can research funders effectively support the establishment and operation of the proposed European AI Research Council (RAISE – Resource for AI Science in Europe) to ensure it complements existing national and EU research assessment frameworks?

Time	Session
	2. What strategies can funders employ to harmonize research assessment criteria across national and European levels, particularly in evaluating interdisciplinary AI research projects? 3. In the context of the AI Continent Action Plan's emphasis on large-scale AI infrastructure projects, how should research assessment frameworks evolve to adequately evaluate the long-term impact and foundational nature of such initiatives?
15:10	**Symposium** **Navigating the digital age** *global perspectives on research assessment* **Moderated by** Kathryn Bailey & Suchith Anand Ethical Data Initiative (EDI) Chiedozie Ike, Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP, Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Nigeria Gitanjali Yadav, Co-chair, CoARA-ERIP Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), India Adriana Baravalle, Universidad Austral, Argentina (tbc)
15:50	**Critical reflections** **The evolving role of funders in reforming research assessment** **to meet the demands of science, education, and society** Representative, European Commission (tbc)
16:05	**Looking ahead** **High-Level Conference on Reforming Research Assessment** *Re-thinking Research Assessment and Excellence* **3 to 4 December 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark** under the auspices of **Denmark's Presidency of the Council of the European Union** **together with Aalborg University and international partners** David Budtz Pedersen Chair of the Programme Committee Aalborg University, Denmark
16:15	**Outcomes and next steps** CoARA Steering Board Member (tbc) Viviane Stavrou, International Science Council (ISC) (tbc) Hilary Hanahoe, Research Data Alliance (RDA) (tbc) Representative, European Commission (tbc) Natalia Manola, Co-chair, CoARA-OI4RRA Francis P. Crawley, Co-chair & Coordinator, CoARA-ERIP & CODATA IDPC
16:30	**Close of the conference**

Conference objectives

The primary objective of this conference is to contribute to the development of a coherent and accountable European framework for responsible research assessment with a focus on research funding organisations (RFOs). This framework will support scientific quality, legal compliance, and methodological transparency in the context of artificial intelligence, data-intensive research, and open science infrastructures.

The conference will pursue the following five specific objectives:

1. **Clarify the evolving role of research assessment** considering AI technologies, large-scale data, and advanced computational methods, with particular attention to their impact on research funding models, proposal evaluation, and monitoring frameworks.

2. **Support the integration of ethics, legal standards, and research integrity** into the assessment of AI-driven and data-centric scientific proposals, with emphasis on transparency, reproducibility, and sound scientific methodology.

3. **Advance alignment with the European AI Continent Action Plan**, including the *European Strategy for AI in Science* and the *Apply AI Strategy*, ensuring that research assessment policies reflect current and emerging European strategic priorities.

4. **Promote the design and implementation of open and reliable infrastructures** to support transparent and technically robust research assessment, including platforms for data sharing, documentation, and evaluation across funding bodies.

5. **Facilitate coordination between European and national funding systems** by identifying shared principles, technical requirements, and governance mechanisms that ensure consistency and accountability in research assessment across institutional and policy contexts.

These objectives are designed to advance a European framework for responsible research assessment that upholds scientific rigour, legal compliance, and methodological transparency in the context of AI, data-intensive science, and open research infrastructure. It will explore coordinated approaches to policy alignment, ethical oversight, and infrastructure development to support robust and accountable evaluation practices.

Conference format

The conference is structured to support focused dialogue, expert-led discussion, and practical engagement with the challenges of research assessment in the context of artificial intelligence, data-driven methods, and open infrastructure. The format includes keynote presentations, thematic panels, targeted workshops, and moderated roundtable sessions designed to facilitate critical analysis, knowledge exchange, and policy coordination.

Participants will engage with current European data and AI strategies and frameworks as well as innovation in European and international research assessment guidance and practices through collaborative sessions aimed at refining assessment practices, addressing ethical and legal considerations, and identifying actionable steps to strengthen transparency, methodological integrity, and alignment across funding systems.

Participants

The audience for this conference includes representatives from the European Commission, along with European and national research funding agencies as well as other research-funding organisations (RFOs), research-performing organisations (RPOs), and those with an interest in the advancement of science and higher education. Also participating are members of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), academic leaders, infrastructure providers, and experts in digital ethics, research governance, and policy development.

The conference also welcomes members of science academies, experts from universities and scientific institutions, and other research bodies engaged in the development and implementation of responsible, transparent, and methodologically sound research assessment practices across the European digital research ecosystem.

CoARA-ERIP addresses the needs of those working in fields related to data and artificial intelligence, including academic researchers, universities, research sponsors, policy institutions, technical associations, and industry actors involved in maintaining scientific quality and ethical standards in digital and AI-driven research environments.

Background documents

1. European Research Executive Agency (REA). 'Report on Research Assessment.' March 2024. Report on research assessment-March 2024.pdf

2. European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. Call for Evidence (due Thursday 5 June 2025). 'A European strategy for AI in science – paving the way for a European AI research council.' 10 April 2025. A European Strategy for AI in science – paving the way for a European AI research council

3. European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology. 'Apply AI Strategy.' 9 April 2025. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/apply-ai

4. European Commission, ERA Forum. 'Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research.' April 2025. https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/AIinScience

5. SAPEA. 'Successful and timely uptake of artificial intelligence in science in the EU: Evidence review report.' April 2024. https://scientificadvice.eu/advice/artificial-intelligence-in-science/

6. European Data Protection Supervisor. 'EDPS Orientations on Generative AI and Data Protection.' 3 June 2024. https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/edps-orientations-generative-ai_en

7. Science Europe. 'Position Statement and Recommendations on Research Assessment Processes.' July 2020. https://www.scienceeurope.org/media/hh4nkvkf/se-position-statement-research-assessment-processes.pdf

8. Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/790 of 25 April 2018 on access to and preservation of scientific information C/2018/2375. EUR-Lex - 32018H0790 - EN - EUR-Lex

9. European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. *Towards a reform of the research assessment system – Scoping report*. Publications Office, November 2021, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/707440

10. European Council's Conclusions on the Assessment of Research and the Implementation of Open Science of 10 June 2022. st10126-en22.pdf

11. Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). 20 July 2022. *Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment*. 2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

12. AI Office, European Commission. 2025. Draft of the General-Purpose AI Code of Practice. [Third Draft of the General-Purpose AI Code of Practice published, written by independent experts | Shaping Europe's digital future](#)

13. European Commission. European Charter for Researchers. Annex II of Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe. ST/15135/2023/ADD/1. [EUR-Lex - 32023H01640 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

14. UNESCO 2021. Recommendation on Open Science.

15. ERA Forum's living guidelines on GenAI use in research https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2b6cf7e5-36ac-41cb-aab5-0d32050143dc_en?filename=ec_rtd_ai-guidelines.pdf

16. UNESCO guidance on GenAI use in education and research https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidance-generative-ai-education-and-research

17. European Commission. (2018). *Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/790 on access to and preservation of scientific information*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2018/790/oj/eng/pdf