

# DFF CoARA ACTION PLAN 2024-2027



DANMARKS FRIE  
FORSKNINGSFOND  
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH  
FUND DENMARK



## INTRODUCTION

Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF) signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA) and joined the Coalition on Reforming Research Assessment (CoARA) to ensure that our evaluation practices reflect the diverse contributions of researchers, thereby fostering a more inclusive and impactful research environment. By joining this global coalition, we are dedicated to advancing assessment practices that improve qualitative assessment practices and promote the responsible use of metrics, enhancing the integrity and quality of Danish research.

The agreement sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers and research performing organisations, with the overarching goal to maximise the quality and impact of research. The Agreement includes principles and four 'Core commitments' as well as six 'Supporting commitments' for reforms.

The DFF CoARA Action Plan 2024-2027 consists of seven work packages and three overarching initiatives designed to ensure the alignment of DFF with the CoARA commitments.

The plan outlines initiatives that will be developed into concrete deliverables over the course of the project period. The action plan will ensure that DFF takes concrete steps to contribute to ensuring that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research.

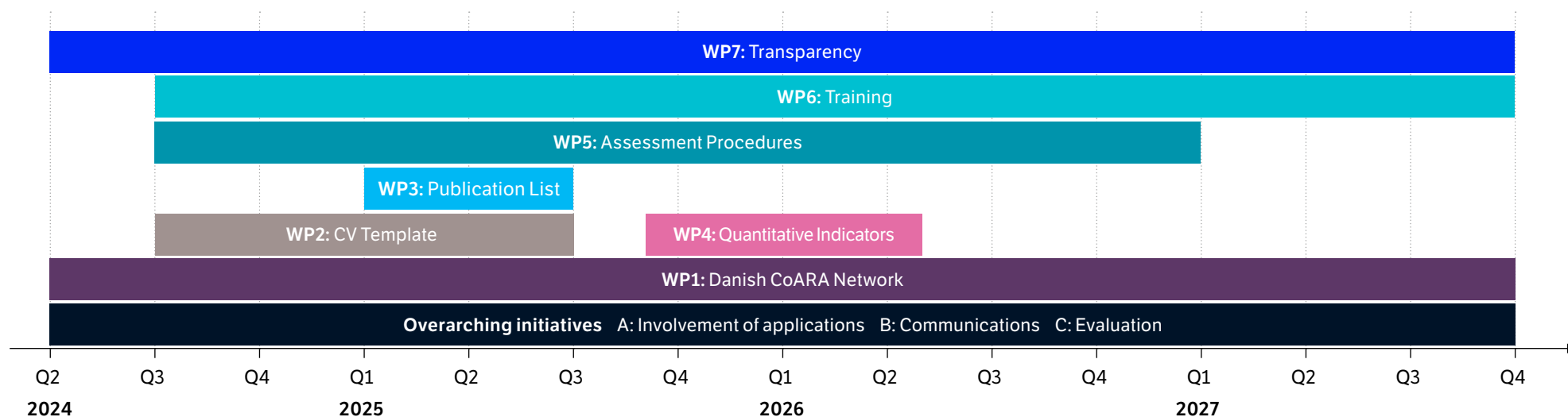
Would you like to follow our implementation process? We will provide updates on our initiatives along the way through the general DFF newsletter (in Danish) and on our website.

Page 2 contains a visual, tentative timeline of the DFF initiatives. Deliveries will be specified gradually, considering dependencies and best practices from other organisations. Page 3-5 gives an overview of the work packages' and overarching initiatives' general objectives and tentative deliverables.

## CoARA ACTION PLAN INITIATIVES

WORK PACKAGE	OBJECTIVE	COMMITMENT
<b>WP1: Danish CoARA Network</b>	A Danish CoARA network for knowledge sharing	Supporting Commitment 8
<b>WP2: CV Template</b>	New CV format	Core Commitment 1
<b>WP3: Publication List</b>	New publication list format	Core Commitment 1,2
<b>WP4: Quantitative Indicators</b>	Analysis and definition of appropriate use of quantitative indicators	Core Commitment 2,3
<b>WP5: Assessment Procedures</b>	Adjusting the fund's evaluation processes	Core Commitment 1, 2, 3, 4 Supporting Commitment 6
<b>WP6: Training</b>	Training the fund's assessors and administration	Supporting Commitment 5, 7
<b>WP7: Transparency</b>	Ensuring transparency in the assessment process	Supporting Commitment 7, 10
<b>Overarching Initiative A</b>	Involvement of researchers/applicants	Supporting commitment 6
<b>Overarching Initiative B</b>	Communication	Supporting Commitment 8, 9
<b>Overarching Initiative C</b>	Evaluation	Supporting commitment 10

## TIMELINE



**Core Commitment 1**

Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.

**Core Commitment 2**

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

**Core 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.

**Core Commitment 4**

Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment.

**Supporting Commitment 5**

Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to.

**Supporting Commitment 6**

Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes.

**Supporting 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.

**Supporting Commitment 8**

Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.

**Supporting Commitment 9**

Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments.

**Supporting 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.

## **WORK PACKAGE 1:** DANISH CoARA NETWORK

### Objective(s)

DFF wants to contribute to establishing a Danish CoARA network for knowledge sharing among Danish institutions that have signed the agreement, if possible a National Chapter. The network can facilitate the exchange of best practises, and, possibly, some degree of alignment to the benefit of the research community.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

Establishment of a network in cooperation with other Danish signees, and arrangements for keeping it running for as long as relevant.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting commitment 8: *Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.*

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## **WORK PACKAGE 2:** CV TEMPLATE

### Objective(s)

The work package will result in a template for a new CV format designed to recognise a broader range of research activities and outputs. A new CV format aims to facilitate the recognition of the diverse roles and careers in research and research projects.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

(New) CV template. If possible, fully or partially aligned with other funds' templates.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Core Commitment 1: *Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.*

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## **WORK PACKAGE 3:** PUBLICATION LIST

### Objective(s)

A new format for publication lists aims to ensure that it's not quantity but quality and relevance that matters when an applicant's profile is assessed. It should also provide researchers, including younger ones, with a better opportunity to showcase their research profile, describe its impact, and highlight research relevant to the project.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

A new format for publication lists. If possible, fully or partially aligned with other funds' templates.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Core Commitment 1: *Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research* & Core 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.*

## **WORK PACKAGE 4:** QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

### Objective(s)

One of the key elements of the agreement is that the use of quantitative indicators as a direct measure of quality and impact should be restricted. DFF has already banned the use of Journal Impact Factor. The work package will analyse the fund's use of quantitative indicators, particularly the H-index, and arrive a definition of how DFF understands 'inappropriate' and 'appropriate' uses. This will be integrated into the fund's assessment procedures.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

DFF guidelines or policy for appropriate and inappropriate uses of quantitative indicators, particularly the H-index.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Core Commitment 2: *Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators* & Core 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.*

## **WORK PACKAGE 5: ADJUSTMENT OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND TOOLS**

### Objective(s)

A central element of the agreement is that the signatories reassess and improve peer review practices regularly. The purpose of the work package is to evaluate and develop the fund's evaluation processes in alignment with the agreement.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

Revised evaluation criteria; revised requirements for project descriptions, and revised reviewer forms and processes.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Core Commitment 1: *Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research* & Core Commitment 2: *Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators* & Core 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* & Core Commitment 4: *Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment* & Supporting Commitment 6: *Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes.*

## **WORK PACKAGE 6: TRAINING OF ASSESSORS AND ADMINISTRATION**

### Objective(s)

The work package will ensure both general capacity building in terms of quality assurance of assessment practices, with a special focus on diversity in research, and the use of qualitative indicators. In addition, the work package supports the implementation of the plan's deliverables by offering training sessions on an ongoing basis.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

Training programs for fund members, external reviewers and administrative personnel.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting Commitment 5: *Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to* & Supporting 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.*

## **WORK PACKAGE 7: TRANSPARENCY**

### Objective(s)

DFF plays a significant role in the Danish research funding landscape as one of the primary sources of funding for ideas originating from researchers' own initiatives. As a public fund, part of the public administration, DFF has a particular obligation to be transparent and open regarding its activities and internal decision-making processes.

### Tentative deliverable(s)

DFF transparency policy and a plan for release of i.e. internal process guidelines and tools.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting 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* & Supporting 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.*



## OVERARCHING INITIATIVE A: INVOLVEMENT OF RESEARCHERS/APPLICANTS

### Objective(s)

This initiative aims to ensure that the fund engages applicants (and possibly other stakeholders) in the implementation of the agreement, and generally speaking. The initiative will identify various tools and initiatives for applicant involvement where relevant, in coordination with the work packages.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting commitment 6.2: *With the direct involvement of researchers at all career stages, review and develop criteria, tools and processes for the assessment of research projects, research teams and researchers that are adapted to their context of application* & Supporting Commitment 8: *Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.*

## OVERARCHING INITIATIVE B: COMMUNICATION

### Objective(s)

The agreement obliges the fund to continuously communicate about the work on ARRA. There will be ongoing coordination of communication efforts, both at the overall level and tied to the individual work packages.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting Commitment 8: *Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition* & Supporting Commitment 9: *Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments.*

## OVERARCHING INITIATIVE C: EVALUATION

### Objective(s)

As part of the agreement, DFF has committed to monitoring whether the initiatives launched achieve their goals. Therefore, DFF will collect qualitative and quantitative data so that the effects of the initiated initiatives can be monitored and evaluated.

### Relevant CoARA commitment(s)

Supporting 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.*