

COARA Action Plan 2024 – 2028

Conference of Deans of French Schools of Engineering (CDEFI)

Introduction

The Conference of Deans of French Schools of Engineering (CDEFI) is a non-profit association of deans of French public and private Schools of Engineering and universities of technology authorised by the CTI (a French accreditation agency) to deliver the French Engineering degree. CDEFI is the local, national and international political and public voice of around 200 French Engineering Schools and Universities of Technology.

CDEFI supports higher education and research by providing Engineering Schools with a variety of services such as advocacy, policy recommendations, and project management. CDEFI actively promotes initiatives helping Engineering Schools to successfully achieve their mission of education, research and innovation and positively interact with the socio-economic world.

CDEFI is aware that research assessment is a key aspect of conducting research activities and building academic teams that bring value to students and society. CDEFI joined the COARA coalition with the objectives to contribute to the work of the coalition, to promote the COARA objectives among its members and to support its members in implementing the research assessment principles of COARA.

Not being a research operator on its own, CDEFI plans to focus on a limited number of COARA commitments that fall within the missions of CDEFI.

CDEFI'S activities supporting the reform of research assessment

The table resumes the actions envisaged by CDEFI to contribute to the identified list of COARA commitments. The action plan will be monitored by the CDEFI Board of Directors ("Commission Permanente"). Progress in the implementation will be reported to COARA.

The primary focus of CDEFI will be on three points:

- Raising awareness of the necessity to reform research evaluation and the existing initiatives and best practices in the field;
- Support CDEFI Members in the implementation of new practices regarding research evaluation tailored to the specific situation and needs of members;
- Monitor evolution of research evaluation practices in the French Engineering Schools.

The following table outlines the way CDEFI plans to contribute to appropriate COARA Commitments.

COARA Commitments	Actions envisaged by CDEFI
<p>1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research</p>	<p>CDEFI is not directly engaged in any research activity, research funding or research evaluation. However, promoting the COARA commitments among CDEFI members, research stakeholders and policy makers as well as to the greater public is within the scope of CDEFI actions.</p>
<p>2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	
<p>4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment.</p>	
<p>5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organizational changes committed to.</p>	<p><i>Not within CDEFI scope</i></p>
<p>6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools, and processes.</p>	<p><i>Not within CDEFI scope</i></p>
<p>7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use.</p>	<p>CDEFI plans to promote the COARA principles and the outcome of COARA working groups through the various means at hand for CDEFI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly CDEFI thematic commission meetings, namely “Training, Research & Innovation Commission” and “Resources and Staff Guidance Commission”; - Topical Meetings open to all members (“Réunions d’information thématiques”); - Internal temporary working groups on specific topics open to interested members; - Production of public reports and recommendations based on CDEFI working group outcomes;
<p>8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution to events promoting engineering research and advocating reform of research assessment; - Promote reforming research assessment through CDEFI publications.
<p>9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the principles and implementation of the Commitments.</p>	<p>CDEFI operates a yearly survey of relevant indicators regarding the activity and results of the French Engineering Schools. CDEFI publishes a yearly “Panorama des écoles d’ingénieurs françaises” based on this data. CDEFI will work on integrating appropriate indicators regarding research assessment practice into the survey.</p>
<p>10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and state-of-the-art in research on research and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research.</p>	<p><i>Not within CDEFI scope</i></p>



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X: [x.com/Cdefi](https://www.x.com/Cdefi)

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/5323901