



SIGNED BY
Secretary General
Ignacio Segado Segado
28/10/2025

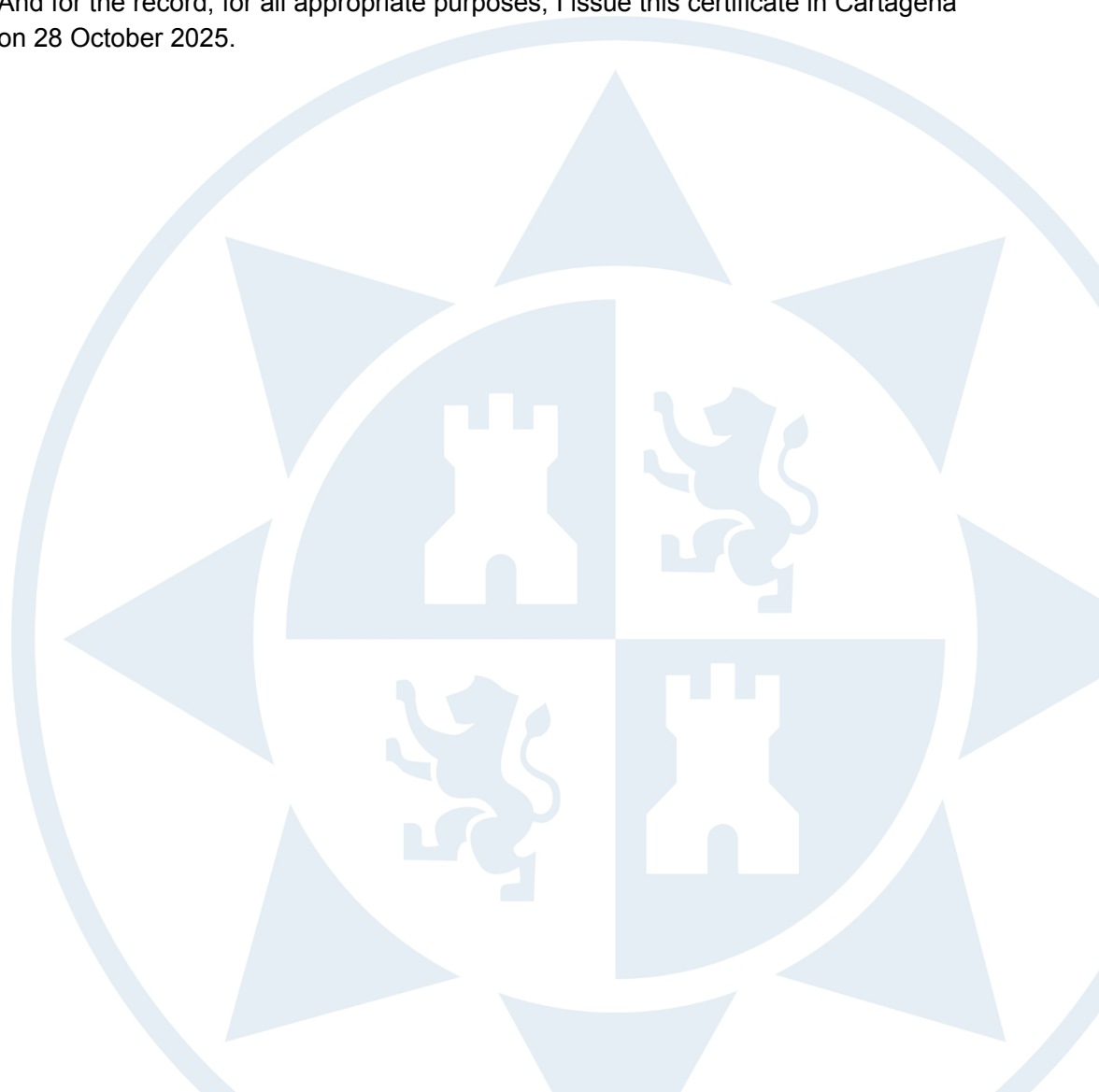
**IGNACIO SEGADO SEGADO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY OF CARTAGENA, BY MEANS OF THIS LETTER**

I CERTIFY:

That the Governing Council approved, at its ordinary meeting on 28 October 2025, the CoARA Action Plan, the documentation for which is attached.

It should be noted that, in accordance with Article 19.5 of Law 40/2015, of 1 October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector, the Minutes of the aforementioned Governing Council are pending approval.

And for the record, for all appropriate purposes, I issue this certificate in Cartagena on 28 October 2025.





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AGREEMENT APPROVING THE CoARA PLAN 2025-2028

(Approved by the Governing Council on 28 October 2025)

Agreement:

Approval of the CoARA Plan 2025-2028.

Annexes:

- CoARA Plan 2025-28

In accordance with the provisions of Article 38.4 of Organic Law 2/2023, of 22 March, on the University System, this Agreement puts an end to the administrative process and, under Article 123.1 of Law 39/2015, of 1 October, on the Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations, an optional appeal for reversal may be lodged against it before the same body that issued the act, within one month from the day following the publication of this Agreement, or, where appropriate, a contentious-administrative appeal may be lodged before the Contentious-Administrative Court within two months from the day following the publication of this Agreement.





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CoARA PLAN 2025-2028



Vice-Chancellor's Office for Research
2025

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POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF CARTAGENA

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1. Introduction

The [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#) initiative is an agreement on research assessment reform backed by most academic institutions in the European Union, as well as several non-EU institutions. This initiative is based on a global vision that points to the need to reform research assessment, and it originates from the researchers themselves (a bottom-up movement from the scientific community). The reform aims to coordinate systemic change in research assessment processes.

This document, the CoARA UPCT action plan, forms part of our university's commitment to adapting to the academic and research philosophy developed within the European Union, as demonstrated, among other things, by the creation, together with other European universities, of the [European University of Technology \(EUT+\)](#) and the commitment to implement the [Human Resources Strategy for Researchers \(HRS4R\)](#). The CoARA-UPCT plan therefore seeks a new milestone in European integration: adaptation to the movement to reform research assessment that began with the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment \(ARRA\)](#). In this way, the UPCT is aligning itself with the [National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation \(ANECA\)](#) and the [State Research Agency \(AEI\)](#), which already contemplate evaluations aligned with CoARA.

The implementation of this plan at the UPCT will ensure that the efforts already being made by researchers to develop high-quality research recognised by national and supranational bodies will also be valid under the evaluation criteria implemented by the CoARA plan at our institution.





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2. International context

The research evaluation reform movement promotes the use of criteria focused on quality, impact, diversity, transparency, inclusion and collaboration in evaluation; and is interrelated with the advancement of open science, concern for research integrity and an approach based on equality.

The first international initiatives of the research assessment reform movement are the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA, 2012) and the [Leiden Manifesto on Research Metrics](#) (Leiden 2015).

The reform movement was incorporated into the policy of the [European Commission](#) (EC) and the New European Research Area through the European Research Agenda 2022-2024 (action 3: moving towards reform of the system for evaluating research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact).

With the support of the EC and the collaboration of more than 350 organisations from 40 countries (funders, evaluation agencies, researchers, scientific societies, etc.), the ARRA agreement was presented in 2022. the ARRA agreement was presented, establishing a [common direction for the transformation](#) of research evaluation practices, with the overall objective of maximising the quality and impact of research. This was formalised with the creation of a coalition of organisations willing to collaborate in the implementation of the changes, CoARA, which brings together funding organisations, research bodies, authorities and research evaluation agencies, among others.

Within CoARA, [National Chapters](#) have been formed that bring together institutions from the same country, with the same regulatory contexts and objectives, in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, mutual learning and debate on issues relevant to CoARA.

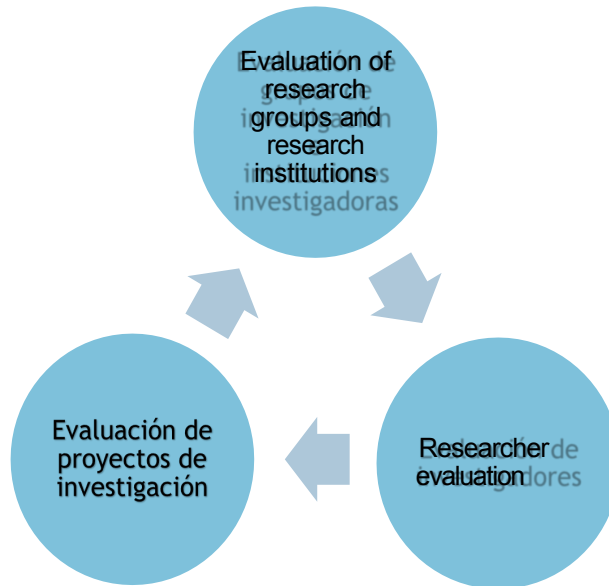
It is important to note that, in the ARRA-CoARA context, research evaluation not only covers researchers and their teams, but also extends to research organisations and units, as well as the evaluation of the development of research projects and activities.

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At all three levels, evaluation is always considered to be the act of assessing research for the allocation of funds, promotion of recruitment and hiring, review of professional development, and decisions on research awards.





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3. National context

At the national level, the impetus for reform has come from **legislative and regulatory texts**:

1. The Science Act (Act 17/2022, of 5 September, amending Act 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation).
2. The LOSU (Organic Law 2/2023, of 22 March, on the University System).
3. The Accreditation and Competitions Decree (Royal Decree 678/2023, of 18 July 2023) incorporates the guidelines of the international movement to reform research evaluation.

In practice, the key impetus for reform has been **led** by at least **three national bodies** that have incorporated the new criteria imposed by legislation and the international movement into their evaluation processes:

1. National Agency for **Quality Assessment and Accreditation** (ANECA). This agency has modified the evaluation criteria for six-year periods and accreditations in line with the legislative texts and the reform. ANECA has adopted the principles of DORA and CoARA and leads the Spanish National Chapter.
2. **State Research Agency** (AEI). It joined DORA in 2021 and has adapted its evaluation criteria in line with DORA and the reform in the evaluation and awarding of public grants for research projects and in other human resources evaluations.
3. **Carlos III Health Institute** (ISCIII).

Given the dependence of universities on these funding and evaluation bodies for the evaluation of research, the changes made by these bodies, aligning their evaluation criteria with the commitments of the reform, are critical and their extension to our university's own research evaluation procedures are therefore essential.





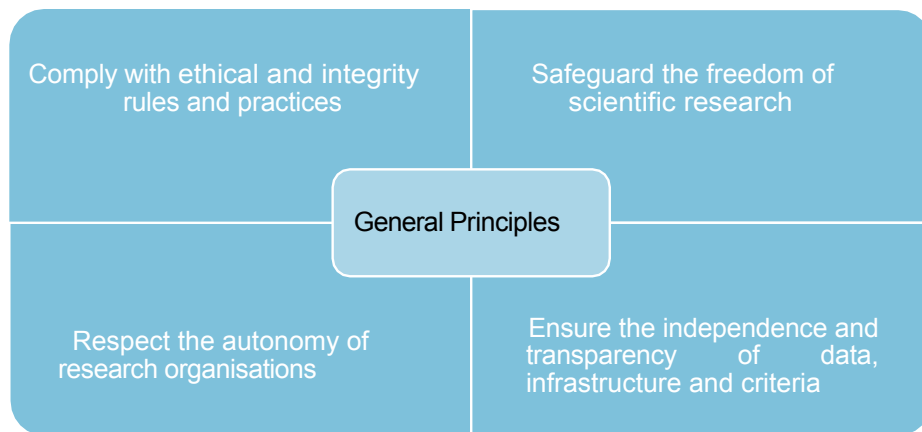
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4. General principles of the ARRA-CoARA reform

The **general principles** underlying the actions proposed in ARRA are:

- Comply with the rules and practices of ethics and integrity.
- Safeguard freedom of scientific research.
- Respect the autonomy of research organisations.
- Ensure the independence and transparency of the data, infrastructure and criteria necessary for the evaluation of research.



From these general precepts, we can extract the **principles** that must be met by the criteria and evaluation processes, which can be grouped into two types:

Principles of **quality and impact**:

- Focus research evaluation criteria on quality.
- Recognise contributions that advance knowledge and the impact of research outcomes.

Principles of **diversity, inclusion and collaboration**:

- Recognise the diversity of research activities, practices and outcomes, and reward early sharing and open collaboration.
- Use evaluation criteria and processes that respect the variety of scientific disciplines, types of research (basic and frontier research versus applied research), as well as the stages of a research career (early-career researchers versus senior researchers), and that recognise multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary, as well as intersectoral approaches to research.





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- Recognise and value the diversity of research roles and careers, including roles outside academia.
- Ensure gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusion.



To comply with these principles, ARRA-CoARA has set out 10 commitments, four of which are fundamental:



1. Recognise the diversity of contributions and careers in research according to the needs and nature of the research.

This commitment will broaden the recognition of diverse practices, activities, and careers in research, considering the specific nature of research disciplines and other research efforts such as leadership and supervision.





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

This commitment bases the evaluation of scientific output on panels of experts. The panel of experts would only consider quantitative indicators as a supporting tool, but not as the main criterion.

3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research evaluation of metrics based on journals and publications, in particular inappropriate uses of the journal impact factor (JIF) and the H-index.

This commitment calls for eliminating the use of quantitative metrics based on journals or publications and therefore means moving away from the use of metrics such as journal impact factor or H-index.

4. Avoid the use of research organisation rankings in research evaluation.

This commitment will help prevent metrics used by international rankings, which are inappropriate for evaluating researchers, from filtering into research and researcher evaluation.

The other [six commitments](#), referred to as support, will enable organisations to properly implement the principles reflected in ARRA-CoARA.



5. Commit resources to reform research evaluation as necessary to achieve the organisational changes committed to.

This commitment will ensure that organisations allocate the necessary resources, whether in the form of budget or staff capacity, to improve research assessment practices.

6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools, and processes.





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With the direct involvement of researchers at all stages of their careers, the commitment is to review and develop criteria, tools and processes for the evaluation of research units and organisations, as well as research projects, teams and researchers.

7. Raise awareness of research evaluation reform and provide transparent communication, guidance and training on evaluation criteria and processes, as well as their use.

Encourage research organisations to raise awareness, communicate and provide training on the reform to all stakeholders in the process.

8. Exchange practices and experiences that enable mutual learning within and outside the Coalition.

This commitment will enable organisations to exchange and use information for mutual learning. It will help to avoid fragmentation and contribute to [consistency](#) in [assessment practices](#) between organisations, enabling researcher mobility. It will also enable the sharing of approaches and lessons learned.

9. Communicate progress made in adhering to the Principles and implementing the Commitments.

This commitment will ensure that organisations keep each other updated on progress made.

10. Evaluate practices, criteria, and tools based on robust evidence and state-of-the-art research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research.

This commitment will enable decisions about the evaluation approach to be based on evidence and help organisations reflect on their own processes.

All these commitments are undertaken by the organisations that have signed the ARRA and, therefore, involve initiating a process of implementing the reform in accordance with an [action plan](#), with defined and specific milestones that must be approved by the governing bodies of the UPCT.





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1. Reform at the UPCT: CoARA Action Plan UPCT (2025-2028)

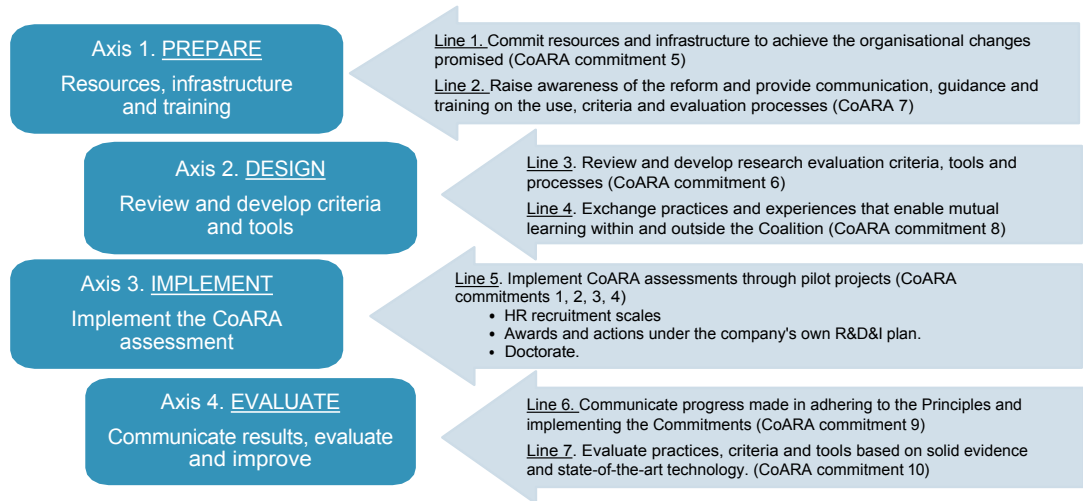
As a signatory to the ARRA and a member of CoARA since 2023, the UPCT is committed to the principles and commitments of CoARA and, in order to implement them, has drawn up this CoARA UPCT Action Plan 2025-2028.

This plan seeks the sustainable, prudent, gradual, constant, participatory and collaborative transformation of the assessment systems at the UPCT towards CoARA.

It is important to note that this action plan is dynamic and will be modified as the results of the national (National Chapter) and international working groups progress, as well as the progress of national evaluation and funding agencies. In addition, the plan includes all CoARA actions, both ongoing and future, and is fully aligned with the HRS4R strategy and its actions, for which the UPCT received the Seal of Excellence in 2022.

In keeping with the collaborative spirit of CoARA and especially as a member of the EUT+ alliance, the UPCT has also taken into account CoARA initiatives within the EUT+ working groups in the development of this plan.

The action plan to achieve the objectives set out in the principles has been structured around four coordinated areas:





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Axis 1. PREPARE. Resources, infrastructure and training

The main objective of this axis is to provide the UPCT with the organisational resources and tools necessary to prepare and train the university in the reform of research assessment. To this end, several lines of action have been specified:

Line 1. Commit resources and infrastructure. CoARA 5

The UPCT must provide the necessary resources and infrastructure to enable the successful implementation of actions, such as human, economic, technological and infrastructure resources. The following actions are proposed:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|--|---|---|
| 1.1 | <u>Creation of the UPCT CoARA Commission:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Rector for Research • Vice-Rector for Faculty • Research Coordinator • Research Commission • CRAI-CA Representative • 3 representatives from the centre and department | CoARA Committee | Regular meetings Decision reports |
| 1.2 | Creation of a Technical Office with dedicated staff to oversee the management and administration of the plan, its monitoring, and the coordination of the training and advice from the scientist. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical office established • List of functions • Technical documentation | Verification of functions performed Reports and documentation produced |
| 1.3 | Preparation and monitoring of the CoARA-UPCT action plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoARA UPCT action plan • Follow-up plan | Presentation of the CoARA action plan to the Governing Council |
| 1.4 | <u>Allocation of financial resources for:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training activities for researchers • Training activities for the Commission and members of the technical office • Attendance at CoARA meetings • Organisation of events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the Project • Alignment with HRS4R strategy • Forecast of budget presented • Budget allocation | Expenditure budget report |
| 1.5 | <u>Maintenance and improvement of open science infrastructures:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication repository • Research data repository • Preprint repository with open peer review module • Electronic laboratory notebooks • Open/non-proprietary unique identifiers | Infrastructures and services created | Services evaluated and refined |
| 1.6 | <u>Modification, acquisition or design of systems and applications for CoARA evaluation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management system for the diversification of CoARA merits and outputs • Acquisition/design of application for narrative curriculum • Connection between research management systems, repository and research portal | Modified, acquired and/or designed applications and systems | Adaptation of systems to requirements |





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Line 2. Raise awareness of the reform. Communicate, guide and train on the use, criteria and evaluation processes.
 CoARA 7

The UPCT will raise awareness of the reform among its researchers by providing constant and transparent information, as well as personalised guidance and training on the reform and on the evaluation criteria and processes. The specific actions to be carried out in this line are:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 2.1 | <u>Development of a communication plan that includes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness-raising actions • Communication channels: Website, mailing list, Governing Council report • Regular informal meetings | Awareness and communication plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications carried out (various media and channels) • Website and updates • Meetings held |
| 2.2 | <u>Development of a training plan:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed at different types of users: researchers, researchers-selection committees, technical staff involved in the reform, doctoral and master's students • Including both internal and external training activities for areas of difficulty • Development of specialised learning materials • Development of infographics and guides | Training plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training actions carried out • Number of training committees formed • Number of training pills produced • Number of infographics and guides used |





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Axis 2. DESIGN. Review and develop criteria and tools.

Line 3. Review and develop criteria, tools and processes for evaluating research. CoARA 6

The stated objective of this line of action is to conduct a comprehensive review of the criteria that have been used and need to be adapted, developing the necessary criteria and processes while taking into account those standards and processes that are already being implemented in other institutions. Similarly, these criteria and processes will be shared for mutual learning, not only with universities, agencies and the National Chapter, but also within the EU+. The specific actions are as follows:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | <p>Review and compilation of CoARA criteria and tools in use at other institutions (<u>benchmarking</u>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of criteria and best practices • Definition of indicators • Definition of responsible metrics | Document or summary report of the action | Mappings carried out and updated |
| 3.2 | Review and analysis of the criteria and tools aligned with CoARA implemented at national level by ANECA and AEI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of criteria • Definition of ANECA - AEI indicators • Definition of responsible metrics | Mappings carried out and updated |
| 3.3 | Preparation and maintenance of a catalogue of criteria and tools aligned with CoARA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of UPCT indicators and metrics • Relationship with researcher profiles (R1,2,3,4)¹ • Relationship with areas of knowledge | Updated catalogue. Criteria implemented |
| 3.4 | <p>Compilation of internal UPCT calls for proposals and their scales (criteria, indicators and metrics used)</p> <p>Review, analysis and update to incorporate criteria aligned with CoARA</p> | Calls and scales reviewed and updated | <p>Number of calls for proposals and reviews</p> <p>Number of CoARA criteria, indicators and metrics introduced</p> |

¹Specific actions have been grouped according to the different stages of researchers (R1, R2, R3, R4) and the type of group or individual evaluation.

| Evaluation dimension | R1 Novel researcher | R2 Established Researcher | R3 Established Researcher | R4 Lead Researcher |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Scientific output and scientific quality | Participation in research projects and scientific publications | Frequent publications, some in high-impact journals; Beginning of scientific independence | Leadership in high-impact scientific publications; Solid track record in research | Internationally recognised leadership; influential publications in the field |
| Mobility Scientific collaborations and networks | Limited experience in mobility. Short stays or initial collaborations are valued | International mobility, collaborations with research networks | Significant experience in international mobility and leadership in collaborations | High-level international collaborations, scientific networks and consortia |
| Social Impact and Knowledge Transfer | Little or no experience, although initial dissemination efforts are appreciated | Start of knowledge transfer or impact in applied areas | Tangible contributions to technology transfer or social impact | Contributions to public policy, technology or large-scale social impact |
| Mentoring and Supervision | No applicable or limited experience in student training | Beginning to supervise undergraduate or doctoral students | Regular supervision of doctoral and postdoctoral students | Mentoring of established researchers and leadership in training |
| Leadership | No experience in project management | Participation in the management of minor projects | Leadership in competitively funded projects | Strategic leadership in large projects and institutions |
| Gender and diversity dimension | Participation in equality activities in the academic sphere | Growing commitment to the implementation of equality policies | Demonstrated commitment to gender equality and diversity in research | Active leadership in promoting institutional equality |





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Line 4. Exchange practices and experiences that enable mutual learning within and outside the Coalition. CoARA 8

To fulfil this commitment, the UPCT will exchange information and good practices with the CoARA National Chapter, as well as with other CoARA signatory members, specifically within the international consortium EUT+ and UP4. The specific actions to be carried out are as follows:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|--|--|--|
| 4.1 | Participate in the Working Groups (WGs) of the CoARA National Chapter and in the CoARA WGs Mutual learning in the Working Groups of the National Chapter | List of WGs in which participation has taken place | Number of meetings (percentage of total) |
| 4.2 | Participate in CoARA meetings and the CoARA Spain National Chapter | Participation | Number of meetings (percentage of total) |
| 4.3 | Participate and exchange criteria and common practices with the various EUT+ consortium partners that are signatories to CoARA | Catalogue of common EUT+ practices | Number of practices exchanged |





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Axis 3. IMPLEMENT. Launch the CoARA evaluation

The objective of this axis is to apply the criteria and processes designed in the previous lines in calls for proposals, scales and processes of the UPCT where research evaluation is relevant to the assessment.

**Line 5. Implement CoARA evaluations through pilot projects.
 CoARA 1, 2, 3, 4.**

The UPCT will implement CoARA evaluations in the different types of calls described in action 3.4 in the form of pilot projects which, although not exclusively, would initially be designed to test the effectiveness of the action plan's implementation, without prejudice to these actions being extended in the future to other types of research evaluation that may arise. The specific actions to be carried out are as follows:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | Development of HR recruitment standards for research aligned with CoARA and coordinated with HRS4R | Table of items for recruitment criteria with research evaluation | Application in teaching scales and research contracts |
| 5.2 | Development of criteria for awarding UPCT research prizes (Doctorate) | Items for the PE Doctorate evaluation scale | Application in doctoral regulations |
| 5.3 | Development of a catalogue of scientific quality indicators for the deposit of doctoral theses | Catalogue of deposit indicators | Application in doctoral regulations |
| 5.4 | Development of scales for the allocation of pre-doctoral and post-doctoral contracts within the PARDI plan ² | Table of items for PARDI recruitment scale | Application in pre-doctoral and post-doctoral contract scales |
| 5.5 | Development of merit-based scales for the allocation of grants from the UPCT's own R&D&I plan | Table of merits to be assessed for the allocation of grants according to the institution's own R&D&I plan | Application in the various annual calls for proposals |

² PARDI Plan. Plan to Support Teaching and Research Renewal. Plan developed by the Vice-Rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transfer at the UPCT to promote and encourage scientific activity among human resources at all stages of their early research careers, including undergraduate, R1 and R2.





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Axis 4. EVALUATE. Communicate results, assess and improve

For the successful implementation of the CoARA-UPCT plan, it will be necessary to carry out a comprehensive governance and evaluation strategy. This monitoring will be carried out by the Commission and by the CoARA Technical Office mentioned in Axis 1.

Line 6. Communicate progress made in adhering to the Principles and implementing the Commitments. CoARA 9

The UPCT will communicate progress made in complying with the CoARA principles and implementing the commitments.

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|--|---|--|
| 6.1 | Show the UPCT university community and other organisations the progress made in implementing commitments and complying with principles | Half-yearly/annual report presented at the General Council, on the reform website and in communications via distribution lists and news items | Published reports. Communications issued |

Line 7. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and state-of-the-art research, open availability of data for evidence gathering and research. CoARA 10

The UPCT will evaluate the practices, criteria and tools used to assess more qualitative research based on solid and rigorous evidence. In order to achieve this evaluation objective, it is essential to contribute to strengthening the empirical basis for research evaluation by providing data that can be used in research studies, participating in such studies or funding research in this area. Therefore, the data will be made openly available on the reform website, publishing it in the data repository so that it can be used for research on the adequacy of the evaluation reform. The specific actions are:

| Action | Objectives | Deliverable | Evaluation |
|--------|---|------------------------------|---|
| 7.1 | Annual evaluation of practices, criteria and tools, and analysis of results | Results report | Completion of report |
| 7.2 | Analyse results of practices, criteria and tools and propose improvements and new measures | Improvement document | Improvements implemented |
| 7.3 | Hold an annual seminar on the results of CoARA practices and possible improvements | Summary of seminar proposals | Completion of summary |
| 7.4 | Publication of data in a repository to share data on the reforms implemented, making it freely available for research on research and for common reflection | OPADA dataset | Data set in data repository and on reform website |

