

Personal reflection – Reforming
research assessment

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#ReformingRA

A little bit about me...



[nature](#) > [correspondence](#) > [article](#)

[Published: 31 July 2013](#)

Research evaluation

Flanders overrates impact factors

[Karen Stroobants](#) , [Simon Godecharle](#) & [Sofie Brouwers](#)

[Nature](#) **500**, 29 (2013) | [Cite this article](#)

5922 Accesses | **3** Citations | **12** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

A renewed decree on research funding last year by the government of Flanders in northern Belgium advised that 40% of research evaluation should be based on bibliometric data. This involves a complex calculation that includes the number of publications and citations, and the impact factors for the journals of publication (see go.nature.com/mt9srg; in Dutch). We question the merits of this strategy, given the debatable value of impact factors in gauging research quality (see, for example, [B. Alberts *Science* **340**, 787; 2013](#)).



CIETY
STRY



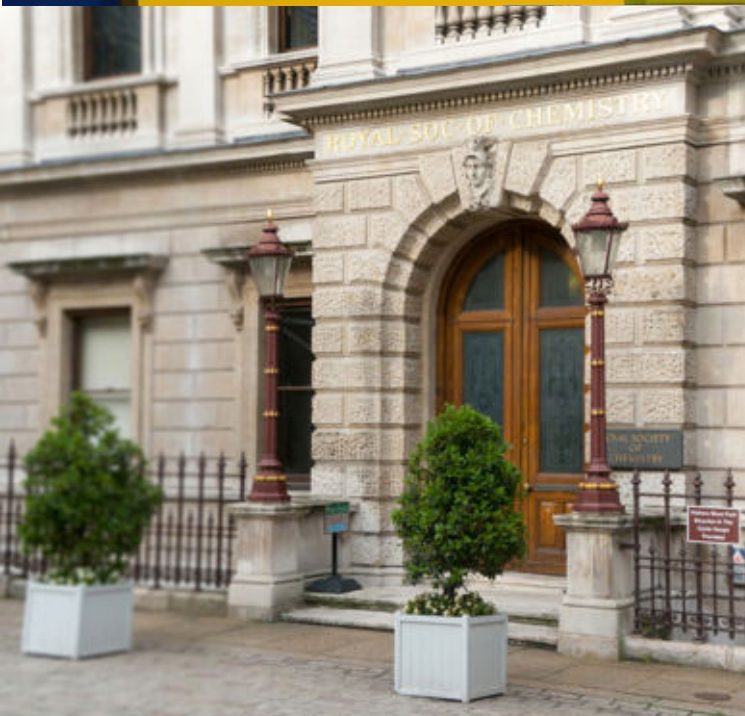
ROYAL SOCIETY
OF CHEMISTRY



EUROPE



ROYAL SOCIETY
OF CHEMISTRY



Research culture



'Research culture encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of our research communities. It influences researchers' career paths and determines the way that research is conducted and communicated.'

Broadening definitions of success in academia is a central lever for improving research quality and research culture

Improving research quality & culture

Why? To counter negative consequences of poor research culture [e.g., over-reliance on metrics; compromises on rigour and integrity; undervaluing of negative results and of replication studies; lack of transparency around hiring and promotions; barriers to diversity and inclusion] and improve research quality

How? Highly competitive environment combined with the very narrow definitions of success have emerged as root causes of poor research culture → **Broadening definitions of success** and reducing competition as central levers to improving research culture and quality

Reforming research assessment provides opportunities to broaden definitions of success and improve research quality

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

Our vision is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

Various reasons for organisations to commit to research assessment reform

To further support the quality of research and the attractiveness of research environments, due to a variety of reasons, including:

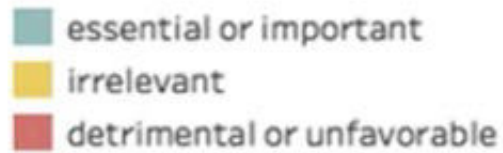
- i) to ensure assessment practices stay relevant as research processes and the expectations of research evolve
- ii) to allow research assessment to support positive research cultures; and
- iii) to live up to the increasing demands placed on research by the many societal, environmental, democratic, and economic challenges humanity faces

Assessment practices as a barrier to progressing open science as a contributor to increased momentum

*Opportunities to ensure research
assessment supports the transition
to open science*

Align science success with career success

b. Research assessments shape what makes us satisfied

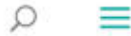


Credit:
Noémie
Aubert-Bonn
OASPA
Webinar: PhD
students take
on openness
and academic
culture

Publishing open access is...

Sharing your full data and
detailed methods is...

Recognising open science in practice



Open Research Programme

A five-year programme supported by Research England, UKRN institutional members and project partners

Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4)

Our initial steps are to (i) conduct a landscape and stakeholder review and (ii) convene an advisory group including the key players such as DORA, Leiden, the LIS-Bibliometrics community, the EC, Global Research Council and UNESCO. This work is well underway. We will then build from existing work to develop a guide/checklist, maturity framework and self-assessment tool. Finally, we will develop training modules for professionals and others in institutions, and embed these in the programme's training workstream 1.



> Stimulating open science
We encourage academics to share their research outcomes with society.



The screenshot shows the PLOS Blogs website header. It features the PLOS logo, a search icon, and a menu icon. Below the header, the text reads "PLOS BLOGS" and "The Official PLOS Blog". A navigation bar contains links for "About This Blog", "Contact", and "Browse all PLOS Blogs". The main content area features a large headline: "Explore the first Open Science Indicators dataset —and share your thoughts". At the bottom, there is a date and location: "December 12, 2022 / PLOS / Open Code Open Data Open Science".

Challenges to recognising open science



THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Résumé for Researchers

Below is the suggested structure for the Résumé for Researchers tool.

Module 3 – How have you contributed to the wider research community?

This module can include various activities you have engaged in to progress the research community. It can be used to mention commitments including editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee work and your contributions to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. It can be used to mention the organisation of events that have benefited your research community. It can highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, reward and recognition of researchers' various activities). It can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership and corporate roles within your department, institution or organisation, and recognition by invitation within your sector.

"I convinced my supervisor to publish our results open access and as a result we started an exciting collaboration. Our collaborator would not have picked up on our research if it would have been behind a paywall."

AUGUST 21, 2018

Measuring openness: should we be careful what we wish for?

Is the best way of incentivising open scholarship to measure it? Lizzie Gadd is not so sure.

*Opportunities to ensure research
assessment supports equality, diversity and
inclusion*

Lifting barriers to inclusion & diversity



Academic funding structures: current short-term funding and contracting structures, combined with current definitions of scientific excellence and success, are creating uncertainty and unnecessary amounts of pressure.

Academic culture: inconsistencies in the quality and accountability of management, poor sponsorship and recognition opportunities for women, lack of transparency in recruitment and promotion processes, unequal allocation of workloads, overloading female chemists with academic citizenship activities, and reported cases of bullying and harassment are driving talented people elsewhere.

Balancing responsibilities: practical barriers that have impacts at different stages in chemists' careers, a lack of opportunity for part-time and flexible working, plus a lack of understanding and respect for caring responsibilities are forcing individuals to choose between a career and other demands on their time.

These challenges are not specific to one gender. However, it is clear that they disproportionately affect women.



Research funding is unequal

FUNDING AWARD RATE FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

- 25% for minoritised ethnicity PIs
- 32% for White PIs
- White PIs who are successful receive **10% more funding**



Lifting barriers in practice

UC Berkeley



Office for Faculty Equity & Welfare

Home » Academic Recruitment » Contributions to DEIB

» Rubric for Assessing Candidate Contributions to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Rubric for Assessing Candidate Contributions to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Science

CAREERS EDITORIAL

Can anonymous faculty searches boost diversity?

The chair of a department experimenting with this approach shares their experience

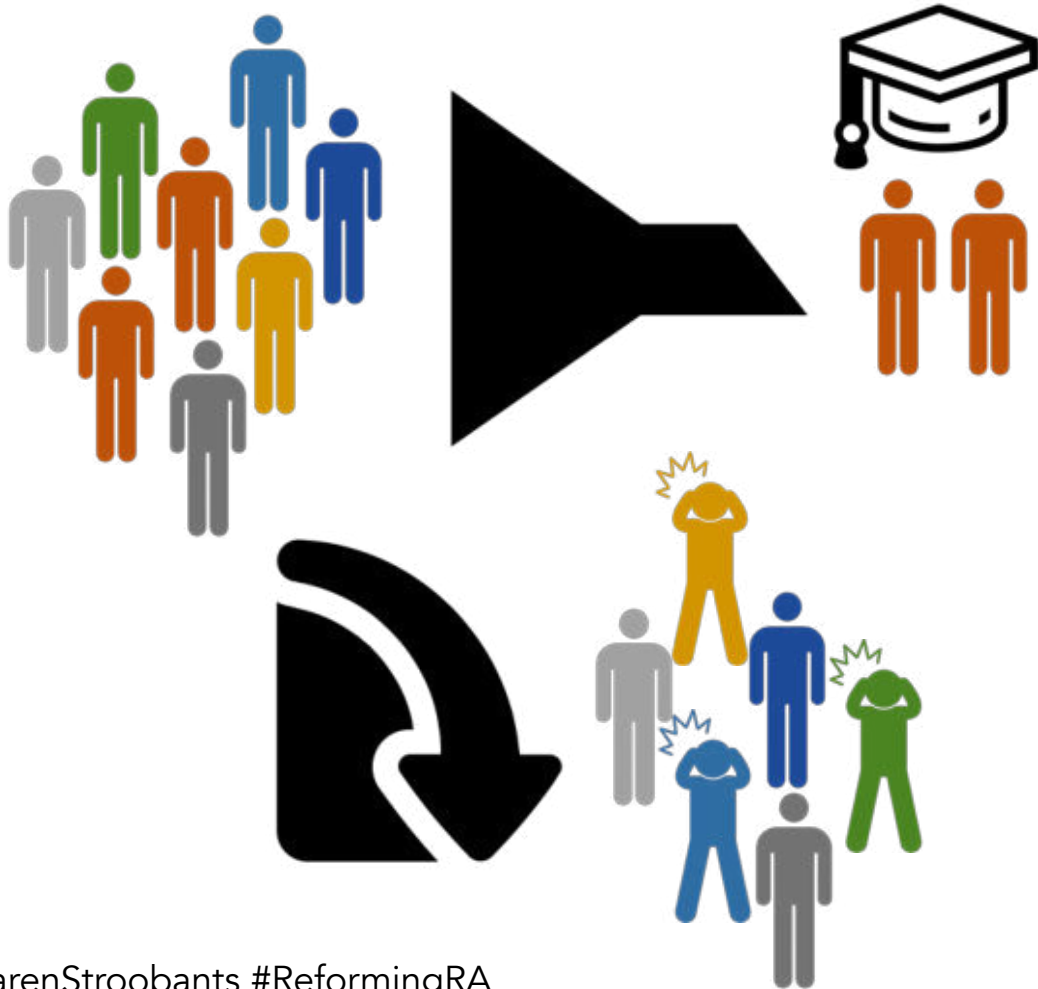
3 AUG 2021 · 3:00 PM · BY [KATIE LANGIN](#)



The IRC introduced a process to ‘blind’ applications and the assessment process to gender in 2014. IRC staff and stakeholders believe that this has made a considerable contribution to an increase in the award rate for women since that date. Future work to ensure that gender is not indirectly revealed during the assessment process (through, for example, additional requested materials such as CVs, gendered pronouns in references) is to be encouraged.

*Opportunities to ensure research
assessment supports sustainable careers for
researchers*

Ensure research assessment underpins sustainable researcher careers



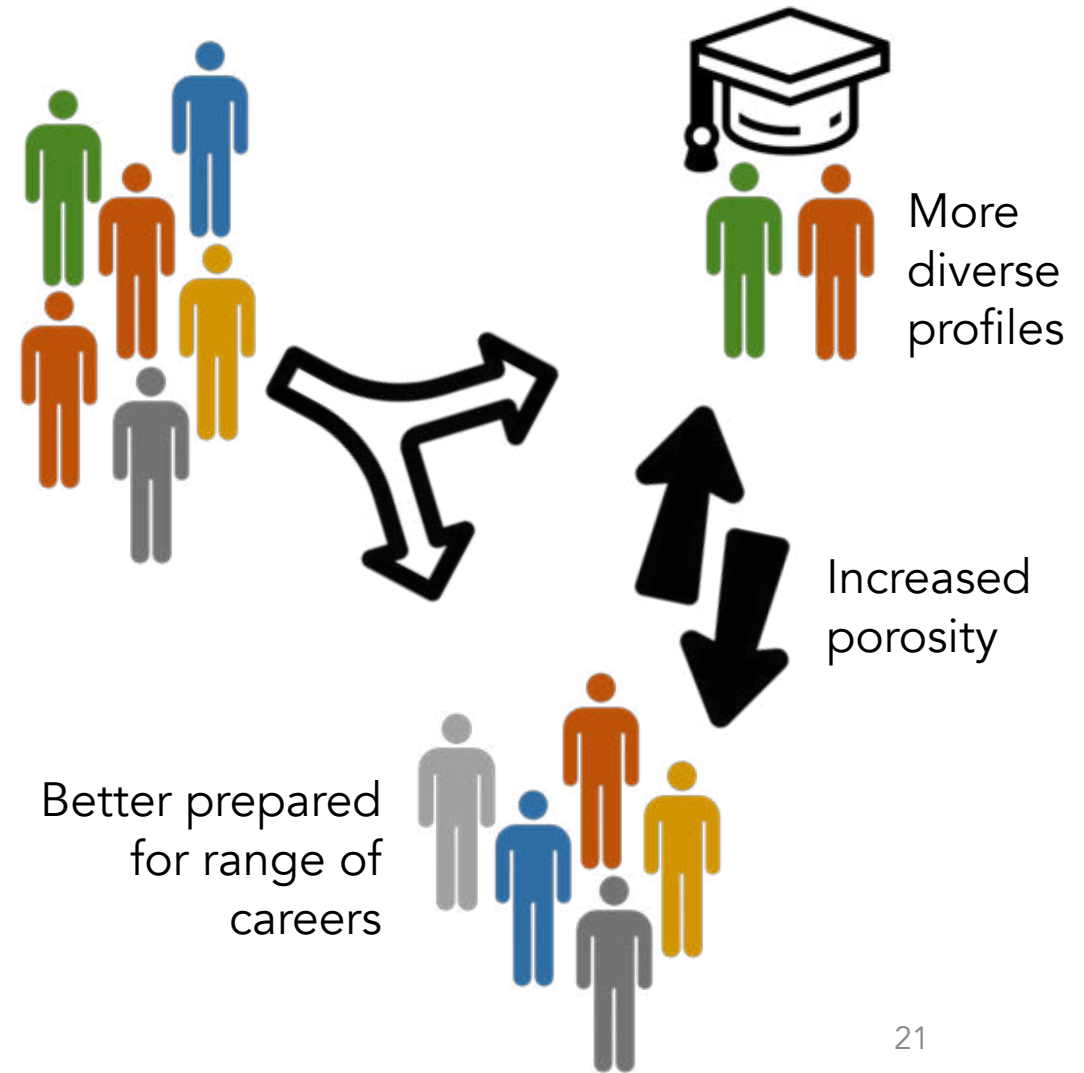
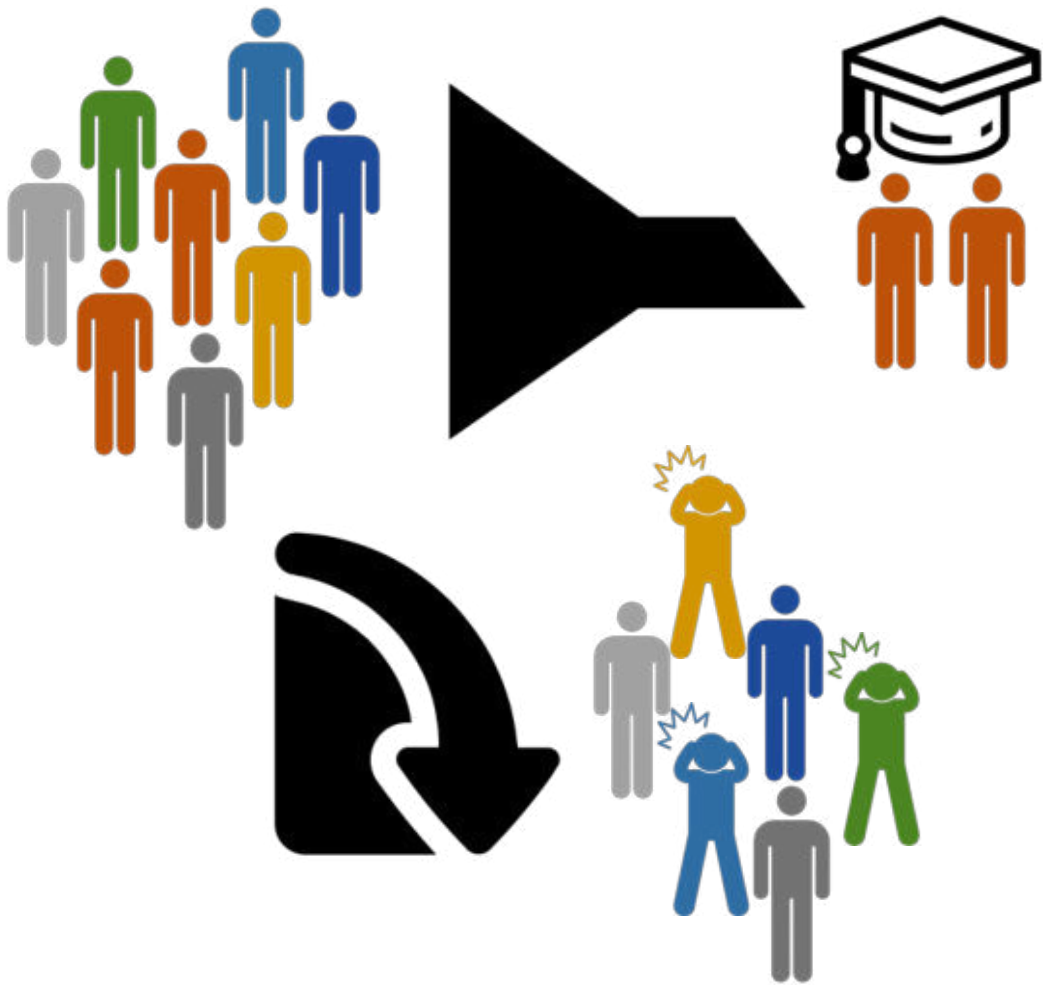
Policy Brief Towards Responsible Research Career Assessment



3 December 2019

This document was approved for release on 3 December 2019.
This document is released under a CC BY 4.0 license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.3560479](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3560479)

Opportunities for researcher careers

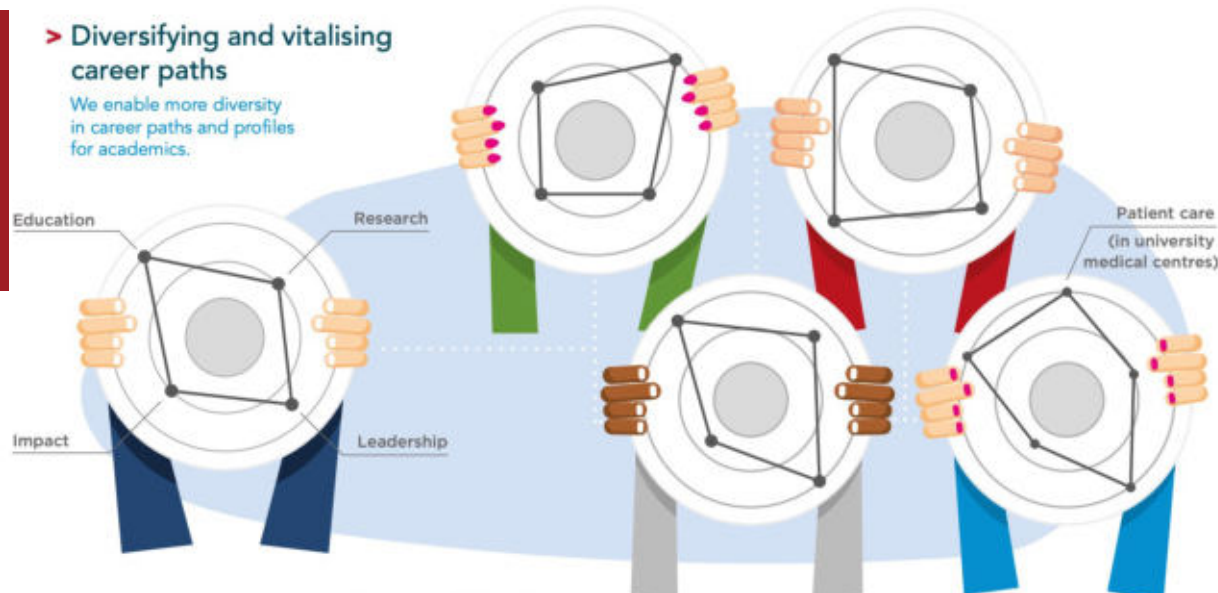


Career diversification in practice



> Diversifying and vitalising career paths

We enable more diversity in career paths and profiles for academics.



More diverse profiles



Increased porosity

Context

Context description of the job vacancy

+

Competencies

Relevant competencies marked as desirable or essential

=

Requirements

Sufficiently differentiated description of requirements

Better prepared for range of careers



Other changes will be needed alongside assessment reform

Reform of assessment practices alone will not in itself sufficiently reduce the precarity of academic research careers

It will be important to evaluate changes and ensure they do not cause unintended consequences; the Agreement envisions evolutive assessment




Opportunities can only materialise if stakeholders across the research landscape collaborate and move in a shared direction

The role of funders

“Funders and academic institutions do much to set the social and cultural context in which research occurs, and academia’s reward and promotion systems shape the choices of scientists at all stages of their career.” Malcolm R. Macleod et al.


“Funders are the one stakeholder not ensnared in the metrics and rankings that have trapped researchers, universities and journals.”



RoRI Working Paper No.3
The changing role of funders in responsible research assessment: progress, obstacles and the way ahead

Stephen Curry, Sarah de Rijcke, Anna Hatch, Dorsamy (Gansen) Pillay, Inge van der Weijden and James Wilsdon
November 2020

Produced in partnership with:



The role of institutions

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment

For institutions

4. Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.

5. For the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



Collaboration between stakeholders (national and international) is essential

- Progress across research organisations and countries has been uneven, and ongoing efforts are fragmented. Collaboration on research assessment reform will allow to **move forward on the basis of common goals and principles**. This will also **diminish the perceived 'first-mover-disadvantage'** involved in changing a culture of research.
- Exchange of information and mutual learning, and access to tools, networks and best practice examples will avoid duplication of efforts and for **organisations that have not yet engaged in reform to learn from successful ideas and practices and build capability swiftly**.
- Collaboration will **avoid contradictions** across assessment systems, types and purposes. It will enable the **development of a coherent assessment ecosystem that supports mobility of researchers**.

The CoARA



- Signatories of the Agreement for reforming research assessment join the Coalition on Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) to enable systemic reform of research assessment based on **shared commitments** and with an agreed timeframe
- The work of the CoARA is envisioned via working groups, operating as 'communities of practice', offering **space for collaboration and mutual learning**
- The CoARA will **seek complementarities and synergies** and to **avoid fragmentation and contradictions (international scope)**
- The CoARA was **launched on 1st December 2022** and will soon announce the process for the set-up of working groups

Thank you

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