Reform of Research Assessment
Coimbra Group STEM WG event

Reform of Research Assessment: The Point of View of a Research Funding Agency (**FNRS**)

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WHY COARA?

- Research assessment sometimes/in some countries dominated by **quantitative indicators** : # papers, impact factor, h-index, …

  $\Rightarrow$ **Distorsions**: publish or perish, bias towards certain disciplines, tendency to reward quantity over quality, little recognition of the diversity of contributions, ..

- **Open science**
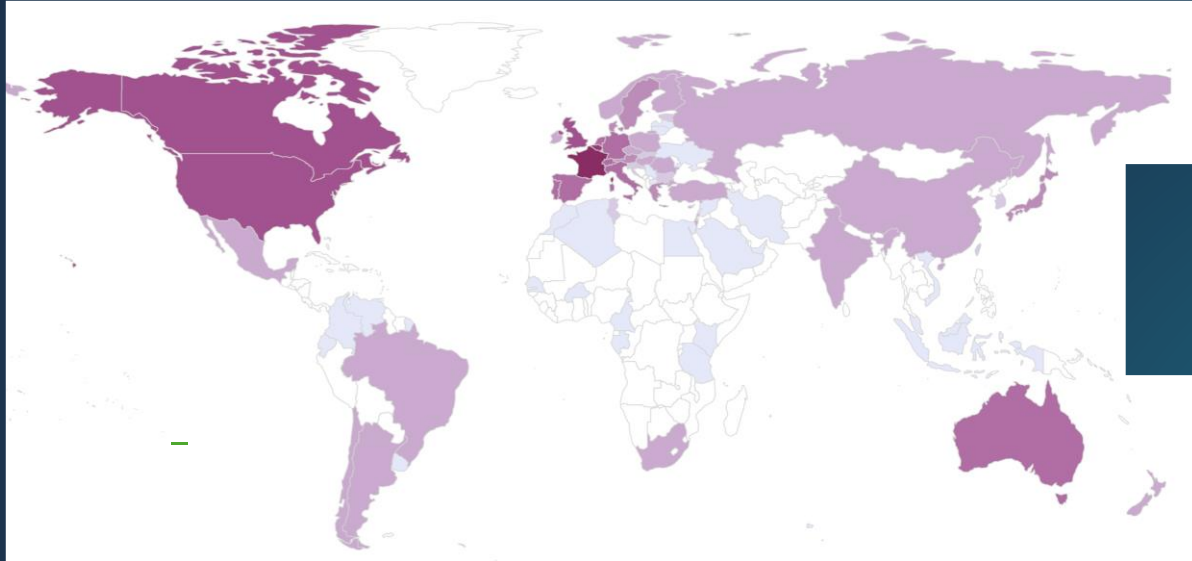
(1) ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY

ARRA Commitment 2: _Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which **peer-review is central**, supported by **responsible use of quantitative indicators**_

ARRA 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_

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(1) ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY

a) **Peer review** at the heart of the assessment process : international remote experts (step 1) and scientific commissions (step 2) (see ERC evaluation process)

>20.000 Experts worldwide
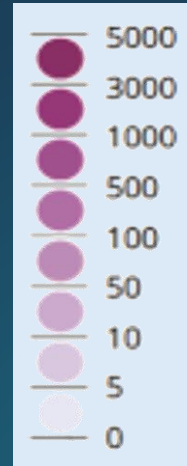
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d) **Cultural resistance:** sometimes to overcome (field dependent)

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f) Other optional narrative sections: previous work, OS practices, period of inactivity, mobility, interdisciplinarity **+ any other comments**

g) Content of the papers (*applicants for postdoc research fellowships or for permanent positions***):** full text of 5 chosen publications + their role

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h) Rebuttal step (*applicants for permanent positions***):** between step 1 and step 2 of the evaluation process

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2021 – 2023: 47 Permanent Researchers Recruited
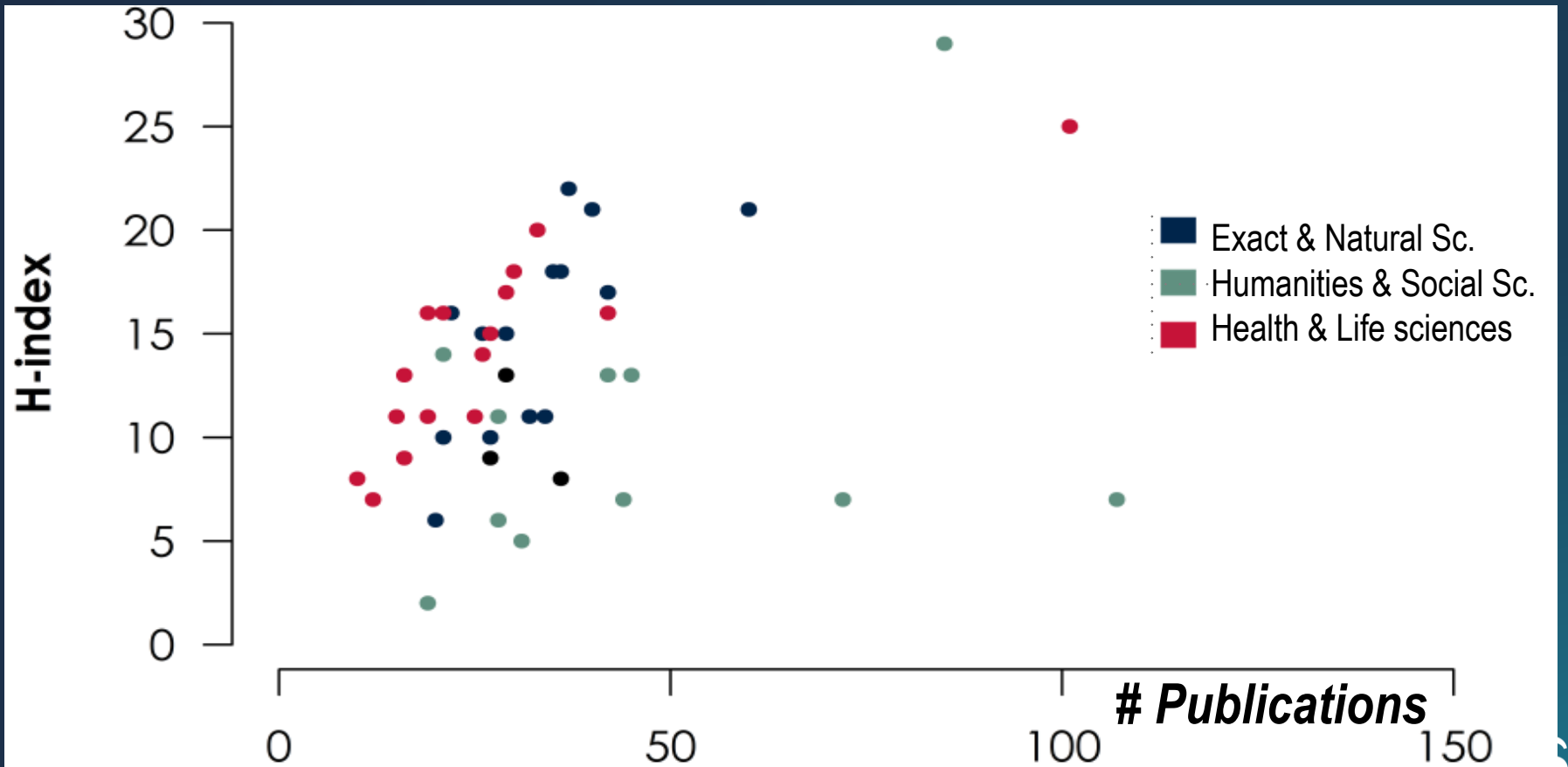
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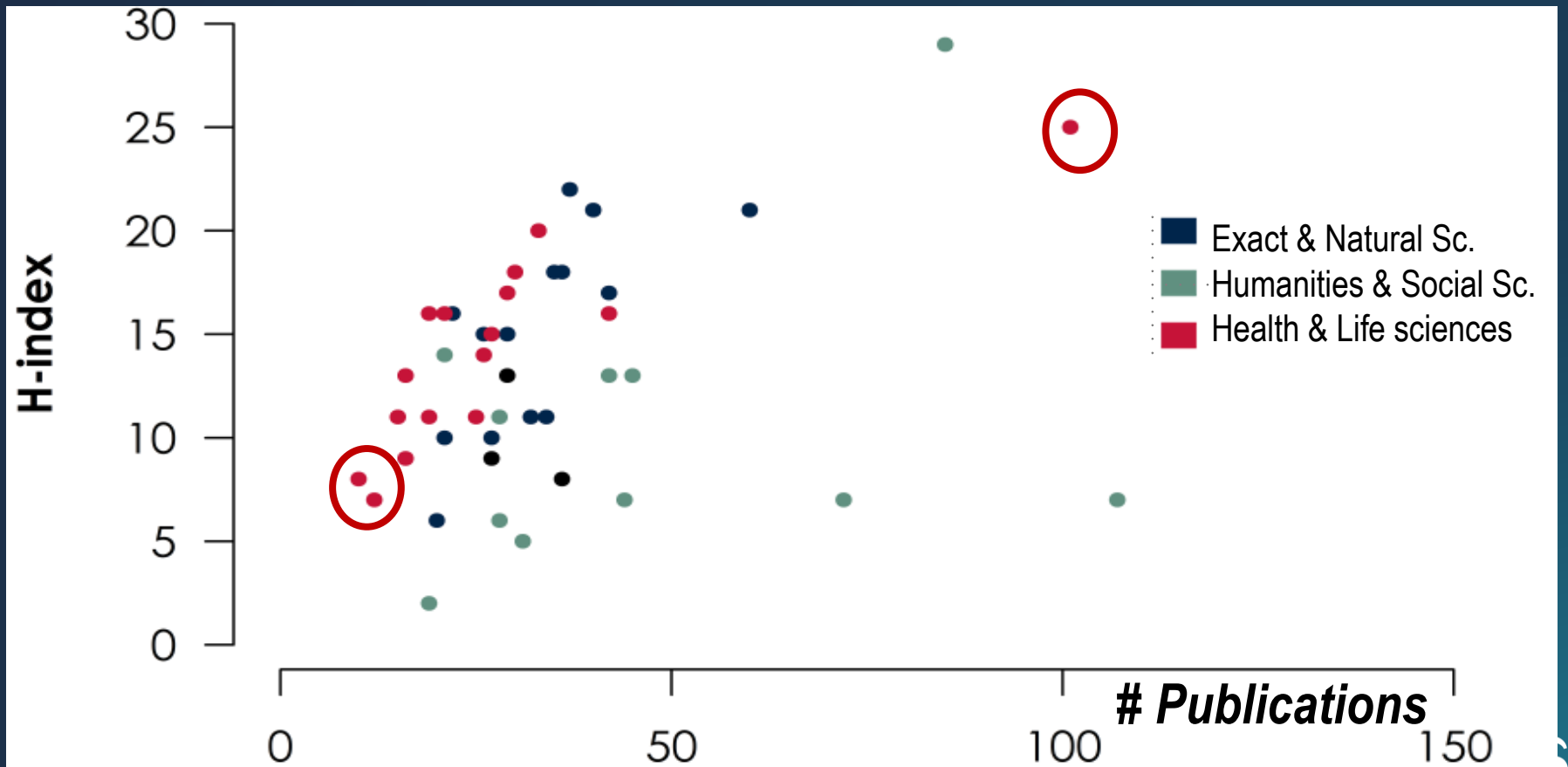
+ other good practices : transparency on evaluation criteria, management of CoI, clear guidelines, communication, observers, post-call analyses, surveys, feed back to applicants, … → <u>confidence, trust</u>

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EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR SCIENCE

- Encouraging **open science practices**
- Encouraging **interdisciplinary and/or risky** projects
- Strengthening **research integrity**
- …

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(2) RECOGNISE <u>THE DIVERSITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO, AND CAREERS IN, RESEARCH</u> (Arra commitment 1)

UNIVERSITIES: Careers assessment (Coara WG)

Who gets hired, promoted and rewarded?

$\Rightarrow$ Recognising the multiple missions of the academics (Teaching, Research, « Third Mission »)

$\Rightarrow$ Taking into account the wide array of academic contributions and the local context

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(2) RECOGNISE <u>THE DIVERSITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO, AND CAREERS IN, RESEARCH</u> *in accordance with the needs and the nature of the research* **(Arra com. 1)**

FUNDING AGENCIES: Diversity "limited "to its consistency with the needs and nature of the research (peers evalution)

- Ranking and selection of projects and researchers
- Interuniversity competition, no room for local context

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- Interuniversity competition, no room for local context
- **How can the diversity of scientific contributions be recognized without weakening the focus on excellence? (Not everything counts equally...)**

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A LOT OF EXPECTATIONS BUT ALSO CHALLENGES

- **Evaluation criteria**: must be adapted to the object being evaluated and to the purpose of the evaluation

- Right balance between diversity and excellence

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- **Peer review**: workload, cost, bias, AI

- Funding (and evaluation criteria) **influences research**

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