

# Terms of Reference

## Geographic Groups' Executive

December, 2023

### Context

Cochrane's strategic plans set out Cochrane's vision and mission, outline the global aspirations of Cochrane and give Centres, Associate Centres and Affiliates an important role in advancing and promoting the profile and impact of Cochrane. The Geographic Group Directors' Executive was formed in 2010 with the purpose of providing Centres, Associate Centres and Affiliates with a structure to carry out their functions in a more coordinated way, and to be more responsive to the needs of the organisation. The Cochrane Central Executive Team leads the coordination and management of the executive delivery of Cochrane's strategic plans and supports Cochrane's Geographic Groups in their work. Cochrane has also rapidly expanded its geographic presence in countries, with new Centres, Associate Centres, Affiliates and Networks established between 2015-2020. The Executive now helps prioritise and review new Geographic Group applications to ensure cohesion, success, and accountability of our groups.

### 1. Accountability and reporting

- The Geographic Groups' Executive is accountable to all Geographic Group Directors. An update of issues discussed at the Geographic Groups' Executive meetings will be given to Geographic Groups Directors and staff during virtual and face-to-face meetings. The Geographic Groups' Executive will produce reports for the Central Executive Team and other Cochrane groups and bodies as required.
- The Chief Executive Officer (and/or his/her representative) is an *ex-officio*, non-voting member of the Geographic Groups' Executive, and accountable to the Governing Board for the overall performance of Geographic Groups towards achieving Cochrane's strategic and operational objectives. The Chief Executive Officer (and/or his/her representative) will liaise with other parts of the Central Executive Team to ensure high-quality support to the work of the Geographic Groups' Executive and Geographic Groups more broadly.
- The current CEO *ex-officio* is Tiffany Duque, Senior Officer of Geographic Groups, Networks, and Fields

### 2. Meetings and communications

The Geographic Groups' Executive will meet monthly on a virtual platform, and face-to-face at the Cochrane Colloquium. Between meetings, the Geographic Groups' Executive will communicate regularly by email. Regular attendance and participation is expected.

### 3. Membership: eligibility and composition

Those eligible to serve on the Geographic Groups' Executive are people holding a leadership position in their Geographic Group (i.e., Directors, Associate Directors, Deputy Directors).

Membership of the Geographic Groups' Executive will comprise six to eight members, including the following:

- At least three Directors, Associate Directors or Deputy Directors from a Geographic Group in a low- or middle-income country;
- Chief Executive Officer and/or his/her representative (*ex officio*).

#### **4. Membership: application and nomination process**

The Geographic Groups' Executive will inform the Geographic Group Directors when the Executive is looking for additional members. Directors, Associate Directors, and Deputy Directors can be nominated by others (with the prospective member's permission) or nominate themselves to join the Geographic Groups' Executive. They will be asked to indicate in a short statement (350 words):

- Why they wish to run for a position on the Geographic Groups' Executive;
- What skills, experience, or qualities they will bring to the Geographic Groups' Executive; and
- Acknowledgement that they are aware of the commitment required to participate in the Geographic Groups' Executive, including meetings, emails, committees and/or other responsibilities.

The Geographic Group Directors will vote among nominations received. Voting will be done anonymously, online, as organised by the Cochrane Central Executive Team following Cochrane voting policy.

#### **5. Membership: duration**

Members of the Geographic Groups' Executive (except for the CEO and/or his/her representative) will be expected to serve for three years, with the option of serving a second three-year term. The Geographic Groups' Executive will verify the availability of a member to serve a second three-year term, consider their record of service and, if appropriate, recommend the member for re-appointment. The re-appointment must be ratified by the Geographic Group Directors.

#### **6. Responsibilities of Geographic Groups' Executive members**

- Work in partnership with the Geographic Groups, Chief Executive Officer and Central Executive Team to inform and implement strategies arising from Cochrane's strategic plans especially regarding funding sustainability, knowledge translation, capacity development, engagement with Cochrane members and supporters, partnerships, advocacy and external representation, profile and impact.
- Advise the Central Executive and the Cochrane Governing Board on key issues relating to the role and function of Geographic Groups, through the CEO ex-officio, letters, reports, etc.
- Review all applications for new groups, and advise the CEO on applications
- Contribute to the activities of the Geographic Groups' Executive and participate in discussions via email, teleconferences, and monthly meetings (attendance to at least 75% of meetings is expected).
- Consult with Geographic Groups on issues and concerns relating to their role and function within Cochrane.
- Communicate with Geographic Groups' staff about relevant decisions or discussions from the Governing Board and its various committees and working groups.
- Facilitate communication between Geographic Groups and other Cochrane groups.
- Organise, chair and approve the minutes of the Geographic Groups Directors' meetings.
- Ensure progress is made on activities and actions between Geographic Group Directors' meetings.
- Prepare reports or papers for the Central Executive, Governing Board, Council and other groups as required.
- Oversee the Geographic Groups' Executive budget. (If available)
- Raise and respond to issues of importance to Geographic Groups.
- Prepare papers and reports for Geographic Groups Directors' meetings, Governing Board and other forums as required.
- Oversee the allocation of stipends to Geographic Group Directors for attending Geographic Group Director face-to-face meetings (if applicable).

#### **7. Responsibilities of Convenors**

The Convenors of the Geographic Groups' Executive are the Geographic Group Co-Chairs and the Chief Executive Officer or ex-officio. As of January 2024, co-chairs will be voted in by the other members of the Executive Committee (formally co-chairs were Council representatives).

Co-chair responsibilities include:

- Ensure issues of relevance to Geographic Groups are considered and taken forward by the Geographic Groups' Executive and to determine how these should be managed (e.g., by email, teleconference).
- Chair the Geographic Groups' Executive meetings.
- Chair the Geographic Group Directors' meetings.
- Ensure consistent communication of information to Geographic Groups and to other groups within Cochrane on issues relating to Geographic Groups.

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