



# Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday 4 April 2019, Krakow Governance Meetings 2019

Approved by the Co-Chairs on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## Council Members present:

<b>María Ximena Rojas Reyes</b>	Authors
<b>Agustin Ciapponi</b>	Authors
<b>Maria-Inti Metzendorf</b>	Information Specialists (CISs)
<b>Graziella Filippini</b>	Co-ordinating Editors (Co-Eds)
<b>Fergus Macbeth</b>	Co-ordinating Editors (Co-Eds) & <b>Co-Chair</b>
<b>Robert Dellavalle</b>	Co-ordinating Editors (Co-Eds)
<b>Craig Lockwood</b>	Fields
<b>Lotty Hooft</b>	Geographically-orientated Groups
<b>Erik von Elm</b>	Geographically-orientated Groups
<b>Gail Quinn</b>	Managing Editors (MEs)
<b>Liz Dooley</b>	Managing Editors (MEs)
<b>Miranda Langendam</b>	Methods & <b>Co-Chair</b>
<b>Rene Spijker</b>	Information Specialists (CISs)
<b>Yemisi Takwoingi</b>	Methods
<b>Sara Yaron</b>	Consumers

## Central Executive Team present:

<b>Lucie Binder</b>	Senior Advisor to the CEO (Governance & Management)
<b>Veronica Bonfigli</b>	Governance Officer
<b>Chris Champion</b>	Head of Membership, Learning & Support Services

**Apologies:** No apologies were received

### 1. Welcome. Apologies. Approval of agenda

Council Co-Chairs Miranda Langendam and Fergus Macbeth opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. All attendants introduced themselves. The Agenda for the meeting was approved.

### 2. Senior Management Team

Lucie Binder and Chris Champion gave members an overview of their roles and their responsibilities in supporting the work of the Council over the past year.

**Governance:** Lucie's work had mainly focused on the review of the execs' role in addition to the general administrative support provided to the Council's meetings.

**Membership and Learning:** Chris' work as head of support to the Community had mainly focused on the interaction between the Community and the Council, as the body to collect the feedback on issues flagged by the constituencies and fed into the Central Executive Team.

Lucie informed members of the plan for future meetings to have the Council and the Board meetings scheduled on different days to facilitate the participation of members of the Senior Management Team in the meetings of the Council.

Several issues were discussed in the SMT/Council section.

*Review of the Executives:*

This project was a continuance of the Governance restructure carried out in 2016 and its implementation had been delayed for a while.

The idea was to baseline the Execs' own terms of reference in light of the Council's establishment.

Members agreed that more interaction between the Council and the CET was needed to scope out the project and to clarify the functions of each Exec in order to bring them in line with the review of the Council's own terms of reference. This would not be a performance review and the idea was to prepare a recommendation to present at the Chile Colloquium.

*Feedback on the Strategic Session*

*Code of Conduct*

Members agreed that the session on the Code of Conduct had been a good, robust and very successful one.

*Authorship*

The fact that the topic of authorship and its many issues had been raised was very positive, but members concurred that an hour time to discuss it had not been enough.

Chris Champion suggested that the Council could play a bigger role in moving things forward in the area and he asked interested members to be proactive by bringing forward any recommendation considered useful.

Members agreed that there were fundamental decisions to be taken, especially by the new Editor-in-Chief and the Governing Board.

In terms of authors/training, the following additional topics were discussed:

- The US Grants for fellows with diverse background to be trained as authors in authors teams.
- The pilot mentorship programme for authors in Iberoamerica.
- Training authors in other languages.
- The feasibility of a global paid mentorship programme.
- An improved use of Cochrane' data on authors; these are mostly self-reported and not necessarily reflect the structure of the authors' population globally. It could easily be assessed who was an author in one's own country, but not globally. In addition to that, the way data was currently captured, did not allow a proper way to report on it. One suggestion made was to pull out what was considered 'relevant data' on a yearly basis.
- The use of forums: it was suggested to improve the way internal channels were used and to put in place a system to provide training on how to use them.
- Representation within the Council: members asked for a clarification on the type of authors they represented (were one-time Cochrane authors included?).
- A system to reach out to authors via the Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) is needed, but the mechanism is unclear and further follow up is required.

Lucie Binder added that the new format of the Governance Meeting had worked out well and invited members to provide feedback on it. The role played by the Council had been successful and the collective presence had been noticed, therefore the plan would be for the Council to lead on future Strategic sessions on a permanent basis.

### **3. Minutes from the 20th February teleconference**

The Minutes from the 20<sup>th</sup> February teleconference were approved unanimously.

### **4. Updates from the Groups, including the Execs meetings**

Those members of the Council representing Group Executives were invited to give a brief update of their work areas and on any current concerns. A number of cross-cutting issues were identified for possible discussion at future meetings of the Council. These actions items are marked with #.



*Fergus Macbeth, Graziella Filippini and Robert Dellavalle reporting for Co-ordinating Editors:*  
Fergus, Graziella and Robert reported some of the topics discussed at the Co-Eds meeting:

- There were on-going discussions around the tech development especially with regards to Risk of bias 2, considered a very complex tool with a very different terminology than the ones used in the past (mainly epidemiology-oriented). Support and training were needed, and it was suggested that the implementation of this software should take place through the review groups.
- Co-Eds updates.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.
- The co-registration with Campbell would not happen.
- The Editorial Charter (between the editorial groups and the authors)

*Maria Ximena Rojas Reyes and Agustin Ciapponi reporting for Authors*  
Maria Ximena and Augustin reported:

- There was a need to rethink the support to authors in terms of training and inclusion via a geographical mapping of the authors worldwide.
- The intention of collecting the authors' views on RevMan2 via the forums.
- There was a discussion around the difficulty in contacting the authors and the need to instruct authors on how to use the forums to raise issues.

*Erik von Elm and Lotty Hooft reporting for Geo-graphically oriented Groups*  
Erik and Lotty reported the topics discussed at the Centre Directors' meeting:

- The update of the Centre Directors' terms of reference and the planned elections in June to get more representatives within the Executive.
- Membership- its threshold and the privileges linked to it.
- The Centre Directors' awareness of the authors' frustration around training.
- The Centre Directors' virtual meetings (a set of two meetings) had recently been introduced.
- The use of Cochrane affiliation and the spokesperson policy. People had stopped using Cochrane's logo after the recent problems. This implied issues around: scientific publication, multiple affiliation and public speaking. Centre Directors had been asked to make suggestions to amend the spokesperson policy by completing a survey. The results of the survey would be brought to the Council for further consideration and input.
- *The Spokesperson policy – use of a disclaimer:* It was proposed that for all scientific publications, people should clearly state when a view was a personal one; this would avoid the use of a disclaimer. This topic was discussed at length.

## **5. Updates from the Groups, including the Execs meetings [continued]**

*Sara Yaron reporting for Consumers:*  
Sara reported the main issues affecting the Consumers:

- The number of participating Consumers' had increased, but the number was still very low. She voiced the need to approach more consumers to Cochrane's work.
- She raised the issue of the Plain Summary Readings (PLS); these were of very variable quality and very few were in sufficiently plain language to be understood by many consumers without technical knowledge especially consumers whose first language was not English.

Discussions took place around some of the ways PLS could be improved including using medical journalists and more graphic representation which would have a more strategic impact. The issue of translating these in other languages was also raised.

The Council agreed to request an update from David Tovey around the organisational efforts to improve the quality of the PLS.

It was noted that an important starting point would be to invest money in training the authors, whom, in addition to the language barrier, at the moment were not trained to write correctly. In addition to find the correct information, it was important to present it in the right way since the info contained in a systematic review was important.

It was suggested that consumers should receive feedback on their work from the review groups and that the Networks should be used as a pool of good practices shared via an improved communication channel.

**# ACTION: Fergus Macbeth to flag the issue of the quality of PLS to David Tovey and to inquiry on: what current mechanisms there were for quality assuring the PLS , why these seem not to be working well and what plans there were to improve them in the short and long term.**

*Gail Quinn and Liz Dooley reporting for Managing Editors*

Liz and Gail reported the main areas of work of the MEs:

- The compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- The planning and developing of RevMan Web. The MEs had started a pilot programme working with the RevMan team.
- The need for more support from Europe-based Mes.
- The identification of funding resources; the MEs had had a meeting with Karla Soares-Weiser.

There were discussions around funding and how review groups were funded, supported and how funds were secured in different European countries.

*Rene Spijker and Maria-Inti Metzendorf reporting for the Information Specialists (ISs):*

Rene and Maria-Inti reported the main topics discussed within the IS' constituency:

- The Iberoamerica mentoring programme for the ISs.
- The identification of resources for Cochrane Information Specialists.
- Discussion with Karla Soares- Weiser around how the CIS community was involved with priority settings.
- PICO annotation (a standing item).
- Discussions with Chris Mavergames and Ruth Foxlee on the search functionality of the Cochrane Library (especially with reference to the recent bug).
- The tech problems in the Library affecting Cochrane's reputation.
- The need to involve the ISs at protocol stage when writing a review.
- The need to increase the communications with the community especially when there was an on-going technical problem such as the bug in the Library (to make clear externally that the developers were aware and working to solve the issues).

*Craig Lockwood reporting for Fields*

Craig updated members on the work Fields were currently busy with:

- An election process scheduled in May to replace Celeste Naude who had recently left the Council.
- A focus on governance and policies issues affecting the fields (management especially).
- A project contribution to be presented at the Colloquium in Santiago.
- The engagement between the Fields and the Networks.
- A review of the MOUs with each field.
- The relationship with the WHO.

*Yemisi Takwoingi and Miranda Langendam reporting for Methods:*

Yemisi and Miranda reported:

- The new Methods Exec model which defined the relationships with different bodies (with the scientific committee, the methods Board etc..).
- Discussions around the methods core training at the Colloquium.
- The Revman web presentation at the Methods meeting; it was noted that it was not clear which were the core deliverables and the timeline. The Methods Exec proposed to set up a new tech implementation group (since the Revman working group had been disbanded) to facilitate the implementation of RevMan web.
- The need to improve the communication with the various methods groups was flagged as well as the importance to have CET members attending methods' meetings.

**ACTION: Veronica Bonfigli to re-circulate the Methodology Register paper.**

**# ACTION: The Geo-groups to work on the affiliation issue and report back to the Council on the decisions taken.**

## **6. Follow up from/feedback from the Strategic meeting [Topics for the Council's future consideration]**

Members discussed the outcome of the Code of conduct session. The draft had been well received as this was considered a long needed and important document. Lively and useful discussions had taken place and several good comments to improve the structure of the code had been collected.

Suggestions had been given around the need to change the register of the language (too punitive) and to clarify the area of application of the code. A few sentences also needed clarification such as the definition of the "acting in the best interest" phrase.

Council were happy with the role it played at the Strategic meeting as respectful and positive interactions had taken place.

It was suggested to populate the Council's web page with documents relating to the code of conduct and the next steps of its completion and implementation.

**# ACTION: Craig Lockwood to pull together the core concepts of the Code of Conduct sessions feedback via a frequency analysis of the groupwork sessions, share those with Miranda Langendam and pass them on to Board members working on the draft for them to consider what to integrate with the current draft of the Code.**

## **7. Council only time (& AOB) Who do we represent/how to work in the future/ key topics**

Members discussed the key issues to be addressed during the Board/Council joint meeting.

### *Authorship*

It was agreed that authorship should be the focus point of the work of the Council.

In particular the Council could:

- Advise the Board on training/mentoring new authors; it was noted that there is a mismatch of training level between Centres and CRGs.
- Work together with new groups to improve the quality of the reviews.

There were discussions around training of authors, where two key issues were raised:

- The training of authors.
- The prioritisation of reviews.

It was suggested that every geo-group could present a priority list on their web page and that the Council would keep an independent view on the matter.

The way it was suggested the Council could tackle the authorship' issue was a two-step process:

1. Scope out the strengths/weakness/opportunities/threats of the authorship experience and flag them to the Board, requesting advice on the next steps.
2. Plain language summaries: see action point under Agenda Item 5.

The Board would need to clarify what would be the most helpful contribution the Council could provide.

**# ACTION: Council to present the Board the issue of retaining and training authors as a future topic for the Council to work on. Part of this is a review of the recommendations provided by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on the authors paper and to set up a working group to analyse the paper and to take further action with the Board. René Spijker to take the lead in scoping out a document for the Board on issues that were discussed and raised.**

#### *Board/Council relationship*

Council had an in-depth discussion around the definition of its role in relation to the Board and whether the Council could be proactive in bringing new issues and topics for discussion to the Board, lobbying for the Community. This will be reflected in the revision of the Terms of Reference.

#### *Terms of Reference*

Three questions were raised when discussing the Council's terms of reference:

1. Was the Council representing the membership appropriately?
2. Was the membership of the Council appropriate and did it represent the community as a whole?
3. How to improve the communication with the constituencies?

It was suggested to include two more representatives of the authors' constituency from different countries. Discussions took place around the implication of having two further additions to the Council's membership.

**# ACTION: Miranda Langendam to prepare revision of the Council's terms of reference for the Council's consideration.**

#### *Governance*

Some members felt that Cochrane seemed to lack a clear governance plan. A plan to clarify the internal relationships with the Council was discussed. Particularly difficult was to establish the line management in relation to funding since there were many discrepancies in relation to the NIHR and other funders.

In this regard, discussions took place around the conflict between [what](#) Cochrane's expectations on your work and the funder's requirements.

**# ACTION: Council members to inquiry the Board whether there was a governance plan in place for a future implementation.**

**# ACTION: Maria-Inti Metzendorf to prepare a paper to address the mismatch of different sources of funding at Cochrane especially comparing it to other organisations in similar situations and to address the governance issue by analysing the governance plan of other organisations.**

#### *Revision of the conflict of interest policy*

In terms of the revision of the conflict of interest policy, it was suggested to review the policy (especially with regards to financial and non-financial academic conflicts of interest) by gathering ideas and comment on the paper that would be presented for the Council's consideration in two months' time (#).

Item 8, 9, 10 of the Agenda were discussed in Council only time therefore not minuted.

**Summary of Actions requested during the meeting**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Action</b>
5.	1	Fergus Macbeth to flag the issue of the quality of PLS to David Tovey and to inquiry on: what current mechanisms there were for quality assuring the PLS, why these seem not to be working well and what plans there were to improve them in the short and long term.
5.	2	Veronica Bonfigli to re-circulate the Methodology Register paper.
5.	3	The Geo-groups to work on the affiliation issue and report back to the Council on the decisions taken.
6.	4	Craig Lockwood to pull together the core concepts of the Code of Conduct sessions feedback via a frequency analysis of the groupwork sessions, share those with Miranda Langendam and pass them on to Board members working on the draft for them to consider what to integrate with the current draft of the Code.
7.	5	Council to present the Board the issue of retaining and training authors as a future topic for the Council to work on. Part of this is a review of the recommendations provided by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on the authors paper and to set up a working group to analyse the paper and to take further action with the Board. René Spijker to take the lead in scoping out a document for the Board on issues that were discussed and raised.
7.	6	Miranda Langendam to prepare revision of the Council's terms of reference for the Council's consideration.
7.	7	Co-chairs to inquiry the Board whether there was a governance plan in place for a future implementation.
7.	8	Maria-Inti Metzendorf to prepare a paper to address the mismatch of different sources of funding at Cochrane especially comparing it to other organisations in similar situations and to address the governance issue by analysing the governance plan of other organisations.