

## [COUNCIL PAPER 011221-5]

# Consultation on the future of evidence synthesis in Cochrane

## Key Messages from the Cochrane Council 15 November 2021

The Council met by videoconference on 15 November 2021 (GMT) to discuss and develop a summary of feedback on the [future of evidence synthesis in Cochrane](#).

The Council recognizes that individuals and constituencies have already had the opportunity to provide feedback as part of the consultation process, and that different Council constituencies naturally have different perspectives based on their differing kinds of involvement in evidence synthesis production and dissemination. This individual feedback exists separately to this document and has either been submitted directly to the Central Executive Team as part of the consultation, or is available on the Council's webpages on [Cochrane Community](#).

At this stage of the process, the Council's key messages are as follows:

Thematic area	Key messages
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is deeply appreciative of the extensive and truly democratic <b>involvement of the Community</b> in the process to date.</li> <li>It recognizes that no decisions have yet been taken on the preferred model(s) for the future of evidence synthesis production, and that <b>the consultation process is authentic</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity of the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council represents the <b>diversity and richness of our Community</b>, which shows up differently in the constituencies (with variations also within the constituencies). Feedback from the Council representatives suggests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some people are deeply worried for the future, lack of funding and total change of their role (mainly in UK Review Groups)</li> <li>Some people are deeply worried for total change of their role even if their funding is unaffected at this point (mainly in other Review Groups)</li> <li>Some people are worried about not feeling involved in the consultation until now (mainly in Method Groups)</li> <li>Some people are willing to participate and enhance their roles, or those of their Group-types (mainly Fields, Consumers, Geo Groups and Authors)</li> <li>Authors are concerned that new barriers may difficult title registration and protocols and reviews publication.</li> </ul> </li> <li>In general, the <b>Community</b> is also worried about Cochrane losing its unique character with <b>shared values and substantial intrinsic motivation</b> of members.</li> <li>Whatever solutions are chosen for the future of evidence synthesis, they need <b>to work for – and make optimal use of the skills and resources of – the whole organization</b>, as far as is possible.</li> </ul>

<b>Communication to authors and editors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council requests that <b>guidance for Cochrane Review Groups</b> on how to communicate the forthcoming changes to authors and editors is provided as soon as possible.</li></ul>
<b>Evidence for change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An evidence-based organization should be <b>based on a culture of change</b>, with changes introduced as soon as internal knowledge and external context allow. We suggest mechanisms are introduced to regularly review choices for the future.</li><li>• We should review the <b>lessons learned from the experience made with the CRG Networks</b> to inform future decision-making.</li><li>• In making changes, <b>we should not get rid of activities and processes that have worked</b> in Cochrane to-date and are an important part of its unique culture. Moreover, it should be carefully analysed if, which and when changes should be made globally for entities with secure funding outside the UK.</li><li>• Changes should be made only if they're likely to be <b>sustainable in the long-term</b>.</li><li>• Cochrane's leadership should be careful <b>not to imply</b> that funding to Cochrane Review Groups – and other Group types – globally is in crisis unless they are able to be <b>transparent about specific instances</b> where this is true.</li></ul>
<b>Involvement of the Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council requests that it is given the opportunity to <b>advise</b> on the options for the future of evidence synthesis that will be presented to the Board by the Editor in Chief.</li><li>• To face the uncertainties in the Community due to the restructuring of the evidence synthesis production, the Council proposes to run a <b>project</b> under the leadership of the Board: the aim would be to counsel the Board on the <b>organizational structure of the Community</b> as a whole. The proposed <b>methodology</b> would be as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Collection of all the input received by Editor-in-Chief and concerning the Community</li><li>○ Convening a working group including volunteers from the Council, the appropriate Central Executive Team members and one/two Board trustees (possibly one/both Co-Chairs)</li><li>○ Survey among all the constituencies to collect all needed information</li><li>○ Report of the working group to the Council with general discussion and eventual votes</li><li>○ Submission of the final document to the Board for any eventual decision</li></ul></li></ul>

Stefano Negrini and Bob Dellavalle  
Council Co-Chairs  
15 November 2021