

Draft minutes of the Cochrane Governing Board meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 7.30pm – 9pm GMT via Zoom

Governing Board Members present:

Tracey Howe	Co-Chair
Catherine Marshall	Co-Chair
Yuan Chi	Trustee
Juan Franco	Trustee
Sally Green	Trustee
Tamara Kredo	Trustee
Gillian Leng	Trustee
Wendy Levinson	Trustee
Jordi Pardo Pardo	Trustee
Emma Persad	Trustee
Vanessa Piechotta	Trustee

Others in attendance:

From the Council:

Bob Dellavalle	Council Co-Chair
Stefano Negrini	Council Co-Chair

From the Executive Leadership Team:

Catherine Spencer	Chief Executive Officer
Karla Soares-Weiser	Editor in Chief
Gavin Adams	Director of Development
Laura Ingle	Director of Publishing and Technology
Casey Early	Director of Finance & Corporate Services

From the Central Executive Team:

Lucy Johnson-Brown	Head of Governance (minutes)
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Apologies :

Karen Kelly	Treasurer
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Conflicts of interest:

Trustees declare conflicts of interest related to their role on the Board, which are published on the [Cochrane Community website](#) and are updated annually or when circumstances change. All meeting participants are also required to declare any possible material interests that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item under discussion at the start of each meeting. All interests so disclosed are recorded in the minutes. Conflicted participants may be required to absent themselves from all or part of the Board's discussion of the matter at the discretion of the Chair.

Restrictions:

Board Minutes are open access unless content is restricted when the Board considers it confidential and/or commercially sensitive. **Restricted access content is highlighted in yellow** and is made available to the Trustees, Executive Leadership Team, Council Co-Chairs and Head of Governance only. Minutes of the closed sessions of the Board, which are attended only by Trustees, are recorded on behalf of the Co-Chairs, and are only made available to the Trustees.

Resolutions approved at the meeting:

The Cochrane Collaboration ('Cochrane'). Registered in England as a company limited by guarantee No. 03044323 Charity Number 1045921. VAT registration number GB 718 2127 49. Registered office: 11-13 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0AN, United Kingdom.

Minute:

GB-2023-03 The Governing Board **APPROVED** the following resolutions:

- To set up a strategy working group
- To work with Tracey Barr as strategy consultant
- To hold a session with external experts as part of the strategy process
- To review revisions and work on the strategy at the May 2023 Board Meeting
- To communicate with the Cochrane Community between May and June 2023
- To prepare the strategy in time for the Cochrane Colloquium in September 2023

GB-2023-05 The Terms of Reference for the Fundraising Committee were **APPROVED**

Actions Arising:

Minute:

GBMIN-2023-04 **ACTION:** Once agreed, the Case for Support for Cochrane fundraising will be shared with the Governing Board.

GB-2023-0 **Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest & Purpose of the Meeting**

Tracey Howe was in the chair and welcomed members and attendees to the meeting. Apologies for absence from Karen Kelly were noted. No conflicts of interests relating to items on the agenda or any new ongoing conflict of interest were declared. Trustees were reminded of their duties as set out in the Board Code of Conduct and Board Charter.

GB-2023-02 Approval of the Agenda.

The Agenda was approved. The meeting was the first of two Governing Board meetings held in March 2023. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 and a consent agenda were included on the agenda for the meeting to be held on 21 March 2023.

GB-2023-03 Cochrane Strategy Proposal

Catherine Spencer presented paper **GB-2022-01** which summarized the draft strategy proposal for 2024-2027. The paper and accompanying slides supported a video that was shared with members of the Governing Board ahead of the meeting.

Catherine Spencer reported that the draft strategy had evolved from discussions the Governing Board had in Barcelona in October 2022. She said that it was an agile strategy and reflected that Cochrane has several large transformation projects to deliver including:

- The Future of Evidence Synthesis, ten separate projects which will completely revolutionize the production of evidence production
- Development of a scientific content strategy
- Achieving Open Access, while simultaneously preserving some income from digital products.
- Establishing a robust income generation operation.

The first two years of the draft strategy will be focused on delivering these transformation projects.

Longer term ambitions were set out under four goals:

- Accelerate production of trusted evidence and innovation
- Increase inclusivity and diversity
- Empower and grow our global Collaboration
- Enable the success of our strategic goals through excellent core services.

A new ecosystem will be developed to support Cochrane's global community with evidence production, training and knowledge transfer. It was envisaged that the ecosystem will be owned by the Cochrane Community rather than imposed upon it.

Trustees made the following points:

- An implementation plan which prioritizes activities and matches them to resources should be developed.
- Views from the wider Cochrane Community and from end users should be sought.
- The enabling goal could be integrated into each of the other three goals rather than being a separate goal.
- The new streamlined strategy will provide the discipline to focus on a small number of high-level goals in order to maximize impact and make best use of resources

In response to questions, Catherine Spencer and Gavin Adams confirmed that an engagement plan will be developed to run alongside the strategy. Engaging with the Cochrane Community will form a core part of the engagement plan once the Board has approved the overall strategic direction.

The draft strategy will form the basis for further discussion with a consultant ahead of the next iteration being presented to the Governing Board in May 2023.

In summarizing the discussion, Tracey Howe said that she had heard positive comments and broad support for the direction set out in the draft strategy.

The chair called for a vote and the following resolutions were approved:

To set up a strategy working group

To work with Tracey Barr as strategy consultant

To hold a session with external experts as part of the strategy process

To review revisions and work on the strategy at the May 2023 Board Meeting

To communicate with the Cochrane Community between May and June 2023

To prepare the strategy in time for the Cochrane Colloquium in September 2023

Yes: 11. Abstain: 0 No: 0

GB-2023-04 Development Directorate Update

Gavin Adams presented an update from the Development Directorate (**paper GB-2023-02**). He said that plans for the Colloquium in September 2023 continue at pace with 803 abstract submissions received so far (which was more than were received at the same point when compared to the last Colloquium held in Edinburgh in 2018). 721 registrations had been received so far which was comparable to previous years and the number was expected to increase dramatically.

A different approach to sponsorship was being taken this year and an external company had been appointed to lead it. Sponsors will need to comply with Cochrane's sponsorship and other relevant policies.

The newly formed Fundraising Committee is developing a Case for Support document which will be used to attract funding for Cochrane as we move towards Open Access and need to increase revenue from other sources.

ACTION: Once agreed by the Fundraising Committee, the Case for Support will be shared with the Governing Board.

GB-2023-05 Terms of Reference for the Fundraising Committee

Gavin Adams presented the Terms of Reference for the newly formed Fundraising Committee.

The Fundraising Committee will provide support and oversight of the fundraising work of the organization. It will scrutinize fundraising strategies, plans and significant funding bids on behalf of the Governing Board.

Trustees felt that they would benefit from understanding more about the fundraising business model. The Committee is currently in an establishment phase and will share a fundraising strategy with the Governing Board, once it has been developed.

In response to a question about why a Committee had been established rather than a working group (as discussed at the meeting in Barcelona in October 2022) the Co-Chair said that one of the expected outcomes of the planned governance review was clarity around the role of Committees and working groups and how best to balance Trustee oversight with specific expertise.

The chair called for a vote and the following resolution was approved:

The Terms of Reference for the Fundraising Committee were approved

Yes: 11. Abstain: 0 No: 0

GB-2023-06 Oral update from the Editor in Chief

Karla Soares-Weiser gave an oral update. She reported that progress was being made with expanding the Central Editorial Service to handle the editorial processing for all submissions to the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

A public statement had been made in response to the Cochrane Review of "Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses" which had led to media attention.

The mechanisms for managing editorial processes alongside corporate risk will be reviewed by a group comprising members of the Executive Team, the Governing Board and the Editorial Board. Casey Early reported that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is considering the use of a dynamic issued log to complement the risk register and relevant policies (including the spokesperson policy) would be reviewed.

The Governing Board expressed their support for the Editor in Chief and her team.

GB-2023-07 Date of next meeting:

21 March 2023 at 7pm 9pm (GMT)

---MEETING END---