Funding Arbitration Panel convener/member

1. **General description**

1.1 The position of Funding Arbiter was established in 2004 following the release of the new policy on commercial sponsorship in April 2004 by The Cochrane Collaboration.

1.2 The Funding Arbiter gives guidance on difficult issues referred to him/her with respect to the policy on commercial sponsorship. If it is believed that an issue of funding contravenes the current policy, or if there is some doubt, these matters may be referred to the Funding Arbiter. Referrals may also be made by those seeking advice on interpretation of the current commercial sponsorship policy. The Funding Arbiter convenes a Funding Arbitration Panel to consider difficult issues and to report to the Cochrane Board.

2. **Responsibilities**

2.1 To convene the Funding Arbitration Panel. The Funding Arbitration Panel will be made up of up to 5 members excluding the Convenor/s. The Convenor (i.e. the Funding Arbiter) will be appointed by the Board. The other members of the Funding Arbitration Panel will be identified by the Funding Arbiter/s in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Board, and will be approved by the whole Board, based upon a statement from the prospective candidate summarising relevant expertise and experience in relation to the remit of the position.

2.2 To determine if referred questions are either:

2.2.1 An inquiry, which can be dealt with by the Funding Arbiter/s (for example, the Funding Arbiter(s) or panel member managing the case may determine that the referral is clearly not in breach of the current commercial sponsorship policy, and may give a ruling to this such an effect without referring to the full panel), or

2.2.2 A matter requiring a decision, which will be dealt with by the full Funding Arbitration Panel (for example, if the Funding Arbiter/s or panel member managing the case determines that the issue is equivocal, or if the issue will result in refusal of funding or the cancelling of a review or protocol, or is otherwise contentious, then the full Funding Arbitration Panel will consider the matter, first independently, and subsequently in committee).

2.3 To give advice to members of the Collaboration who make an inquiry (see 2.2.1 above).
2.4 To rule on matters requiring a decision (see 2.2.2 above) after consultation with the Funding Arbitration Panel. The decision of the Funding Arbiter must have the agreement of the majority of panel members.

2.5 To report to the Board—see 3.1 below.

3. Accountability

The Funding Arbiter is accountable to the Board and will report to it twice a year.

4. Qualifications

4.1 To warrant selection by the Board, the Funding Arbiter must be an experienced Cochrane contributor who can demonstrate credibility within the community, and can bring an independent and fair approach to the implementation of agreed policies.

4.2 No other specific qualifications are required.

4.3 The Funding Arbiter must have sufficient education, experience, and previous involvement with the Collaboration to warrant selection by the Board.

5. Recruitment process

The Funding Arbiter will work with the Board Co-Chairs and the Chief Executive Officer to identify a suitable replacement from within Cochrane.

6. Term of position

6.1 The term of the Funding Arbiter is three years, with the possibility of another three-year term, giving a maximum of six years.

6.2 The term for the other panel members is three years, with the possibility of another three-year term, giving a maximum of six years.

No two panel members should leave the position at the same time or within twelve months of each other, i.e. panel membership should be staggered to ensure continuity.