
2021 Virtual Governance Meetings

Frequently asked questions and key themes

When will the new organizational strategy be published?

The *Strategy for Change* was approved by the Governing Board on 23 June and published in mid-July. It is based on the draft strategic framework written last year, which had extensive input from members and supporters, but has a shorter-term focus on the changes Cochrane needs to make **in the next two years** to remain sustainable.

The *Strategy for Change*'s focus on improved efficiency, sustainability, increased awareness and impact, and enhanced accountability, will guide the organization's work over the coming months. The Objectives for Change to produce timely, high-quality reviews, streamline review production, advocate for evidence-informed decision-making, achieve Open Access, and improve the user experience of our evidence, are the building blocks for planning and priorities. Read the *Strategy for Change* in English or Spanish on the [Cochrane Community website](#).

The Governing Board recently renewed its commitment to make all Cochrane Reviews Open Access immediately upon publication by 2025, but how will this be achieved?

The Cochrane Charity generates income through sales of subscriptions to the Cochrane Library, which funds many of the organization's core functions and is also directed back to Cochrane Groups through various initiatives. The expectation is that by making Cochrane Reviews Open Access, income from subscriptions will be reduced, which will affect organizational financial sustainability. The current challenge is to find a business model that allows Cochrane to go Open Access but maintains enough income to at least cover production and publication costs. The Central Executive Team is currently leading a research and consultation project to identify a sustainable route to full Open Access for Cochrane Reviews. Read more about the plans in the presentation slides from the [Governance Meeting session on Open Access](#). At the same time, there will be more investment in fundraising for the Charity and Cochrane Groups from donors, and through funding initiatives, that align with Cochrane's principles. Further, Judith Brodie, Interim CEO, is leading a Review & Reorganization of the Central Executive Team - which is funded by the Charity's income - with the aim of reducing expenditure and increasing efficiencies.

Why is it so urgent to change our review production model?

Producing Cochrane Reviews to a high standard has always been challenging. Differences in how Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs) are funded, and how they are able to prioritize their workload, has the potential to create imbalances in Cochrane Review output, quality, and timeliness. In addition, CRGs have historically had dual roles: supporting authors and making editorial decisions. The longstanding author support role that CRGs have fulfilled can blur the lines between authorship and editorial review and sometimes makes it difficult to guarantee editorial independence. The significant investment of staff time and effort in developing a review is often not formally recognized and may also make rejection decisions more difficult. These are long-standing issues that are now urgent to fix because:

- 1) The renewed commitment to make Cochrane Reviews Open Access by 2025 whilst continuing to generate income in a highly competitive environment means that we also need to be ready to produce different types of evidence syntheses that meet end-users' needs.

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- 2) The main funder of Cochrane Review Groups, the UK NIHR, has indicated it will change the way it funds Cochrane Review production within the next couple of years and has reiterated the importance of addressing issues of quality and independence in order to continue its support, albeit in a new way.
 - 3) To continue to attract authors of Cochrane Reviews, we need to fix our sometimes cumbersome tools and processes for review production.

Read more about the Editorial Efficiency & Integrity Project, which is addressing these issues, in the presentation slides from the [Governance Meeting session](#).

What's the plan for fundraising?

The Cochrane Charity generates the majority of its income through sales of subscriptions to the Cochrane Library, but with the move to Open Access, it needs to diversify its income sources in order to remain financially sustainable. The Governing Board has therefore decided to increase focus on fundraising for the Charity – and Cochrane Groups. The following three steps are currently planned:

1. Establish a Governing Board-led task force to oversee the fundraising work in the coming months, including supporting and strengthening key existing relations and developing new connections with potential funders when opportunities arise;
2. Develop a Case for Support for funding, taking into account the experience of how the organization responded to the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. Strengthen Cochrane's global profile and demonstrate its impact. Read more about the plans for improving how we demonstrate impact in the presentation slides from the [Governance Meeting session](#).