



Governing Board Committee

1 Terms of Reference

Cochrane’s Articles of Association provide the Governing Board with the power to appoint Board Committees (Sub-Committees), and to delegate to these Committees authority to undertake its duties or functions as required. Non-members of the Governing Board may be invited to participate accordance with the role and remit of the relevant Committee.

Committee	Future of Evidence Synthesis Oversight Committee
Purpose	<p>The Future of Evidence Synthesis Oversight Committee is a time-limited committee, responsible, on behalf of the Governing Board, for providing oversight of the implementation programme¹ on the strategic redesign of Cochrane’s processes and structures for the production and publication of Cochrane Reviews and other evidence synthesis.</p> <p>This Committee is NOT operational, and therefore will play no part in assessing applications for or from thematic groups, evidence synthesis units or any other vehicle created as part of this programme.</p>
Membership	<p><i>Voting (Governing Board members):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sally Green (Chair) • Catherine Marshall (Governing Board Co-Chair) • Karen Kelly (Treasurer) • Jordi Pardo Pardo • Vanessa Piechotta <p><i>Non-voting with Council and other experts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marguerite Koster, Advisor • Vanessa Jordan, Author representative, Cochrane Council • Stefano Negrini, Co-Chair, Cochrane Council • Zarko Alfirevic, Co-ordinating Editor/Editorial Board member • Martin Burton, Co-ordinating Editor/Geographic Group Director
Remit	<p>The remit of the Future of Evidence Synthesis Oversight Committee covers three principal areas:</p> <p>1. Assurance & scrutiny [<i>Note: the Committee is not a decision-making body</i>]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the Governing Board is fully informed and able to exercise its responsibilities for stewardship, governance, and risk management by providing oversight and scrutiny of the implementation programme and reporting back to the Governing Board on its findings.

¹ See Annex 1, below

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide independent challenge of the Programme Board’s performance, with a specific focus on scrutinizing measures to address any performance indicators with a red or amber status. • If applicable, to assess the Future of Evidence Synthesis Programme Board’s requests for significant changes to the scope or budget of the implementation programme and/or additional funding from the strategic reserves and provide the Governing Board with fully risk-assessed recommendations. <p>2. Advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide advice to the Programme Board at the Programme Board’s request. Advice may be sought from the Committee on any issue, but examples include: how to foster support from Cochrane Group staff for change, how best to engage with current and potential funders, how to deal with variation from milestone targets, etc. • To act as the liaison with the Cochrane Council, via the Council representatives on the Committee, and thereby ensure the views members of Cochrane Groups and other members of the Cochrane community are engaged and involved in the implementation programme. <p>3. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members will act as ambassadors for the Future of Evidence Synthesis Programme, sharing agreed communications with both internal and external audiences.
Quorum	Quorum will be a minimum of three voting members.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee will typically meet every quarter (at least one month before a written report is due to the Governing Board) and may provide advice to the Programme Board by email more frequently upon request. • A representative of the Future of Evidence Synthesis Oversight Programme Board, normally Karla Soares-Weiser, Editor in Chief, will attend Committee meetings. The Committee may invite any other participant(s) from the Programme to inform their work. • Members will be expected to make a contribution to meetings in order to ensure the best advice is provided to the Board, and to allow the Committee to fulfil its role and responsibilities. • Members will be expected to provide pertinent and professional challenge where appropriate, albeit demonstrating clear respect for colleagues and their views. • Members will be expected to maintain confidentiality in respect of all discussed issues where this is so required. • All advice and recommendations will be voted on by a simple majority of those present. In the case of equality, the Chair will have a casting vote.
Membership, Reporting and Assurance Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the Committee are appointed by the Governing Board. • The Committee shall consist of not less than three Trustees appointed by the Governing Board in addition to the Chair. • The Committee may co-opt members who in the opinion of the Committee will bring additional relevant skills to the Committee, but Trustees shall always form the majority. • At each meeting, every member will make a declaration of any real or perceived competing interests and these will be recorded.

	<p>Reports from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee will provide short written reports to the Governing Board once a quarter (submitted for a formal meeting) covering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Significant successes and challenges in the preceding reporting period and a summary of plans for the period ahead. II. Changes to the Strategic Risk Register arising from the implementation Programme and a summary of how the Committee has scrutinised these changes and the performance of the Programme Board in implementing mitigating actions, etc. III. The Committee’s view on how well the implementation Programme is progressing, with a special focus on relations with the Cochrane community. IV. If applicable, requests for significant changes to the scope or budget of the implementation Programme and/or additional funds from strategic reserves. • The Committee will provide verbal reports to the Council via its representatives on the Committee. The Council will have access to the open access resources about the programme published on the Cochrane Community website and elsewhere. • The Chair will conduct an informal review of the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis with the support of the Committee’s Secretary. This will include a review of the membership and any proposed changes will be recommended to the Governing Board. • An action log will be maintained that will identify individuals and appropriate timelines for specific tasks, progress against which will be actively monitored at subsequent meetings (covered by the minutes).
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Executive Team will ensure that secretariat services are provided to the Committee, including the taking of minutes, record of attendance and distribution of papers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes reviewed by the Chair will be issued by the secretary, normally within 10 working days of the meeting and will list the topics discussed, actions agreed, and all individuals responsible for undertaking these actions. These minutes will be taken to the Committee for approval, and if requested, made available to the full Governing Board.
Review	<p>These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and a recommendation made to the Board to cover a) any changes b) whether the committee should be continued or disbanded, and c) successes or challenges in fulfilling the Terms.</p>
First prepared	<p>June 2022 revised August 2022/September 2022</p>
Last updated	
Governing Board approved	<p>June 2022 / September 2022.</p>

Annex 1: Scope and activities of the implementation Programme

Up-to-date as of May 2022

Key goals of the Programme are to:

1. Be more responsive to the evidence needs of our funders and beneficiaries (in terms of relevance, quality and numbers of reviews);
2. Separate Cochrane review production and editorial functions;
3. Simplify our organizational structure and clarify lines of accountability;
4. Simplify the methods and processes of review production for greater efficiency and improved author experience;
5. Increase pathways to publication in that Cochrane reviews can be submitted for consideration directly to the Central Editorial Service by authors and by a range of Cochrane organizational structures;
6. Modernize, simplify and diversify the format of Cochrane reviews for enhanced usability and greater impact;
7. Diversify our revenue to enable our open access commitment;
8. Maintain existing methodological and content expertise;
9. Sustain and grow Cochrane Community collaboration and engagement.

Approved implementation activities for this stage are:

1. **Evidence Synthesis Units:** Work with partners to set up a small number of externally funded Evidence Synthesis Units to produce evidence syntheses in priority areas, to be located in both high and low- or middle- income countries.
2. **Cochrane Thematic Groups:** Develop collaborative, flexible arrangements across the Cochrane Community to ensure we maintain valued skills and expertise. New Cochrane Thematic Groups will be shaped thematically to address global priorities and will work in collaboration with other Cochrane entities, accountable to the Central Editorial Service. They will focus on global priorities and provide support to the Central Editorial Service. They will also have a remit in prioritization, knowledge translation and stakeholder engagement. A small number of Thematic Groups in high priority areas will be established as a pilot.
3. **Expansion of the Central Editorial Service** to manage editorial processes for all evidence syntheses published on the Cochrane Library. This will include a Fast Track service.
4. **Undertake targeted projects** to simplify systems and processes.