

Plans for 2022 and the Future of Evidence Synthesis

APPENDIX – 2022 Priorities agreed by the Governing Board

1. The future of evidence synthesis (Strategy for Change GOAL 1)

This is a major strategic and multi-year change programme encompassing a number of key priorities. Key for delivery in 2022 will be:

- **Cochrane Review Group (CRG) transformation** to a small number of Evidence Synthesis Units (ESUs). Community engagement was critical to changing the initial proposed model and identifying ways that we can continue to collaborate and build on the expertise of our community. The Governing Board approved the approach in February 2022, and this will lead to the development of an implementation plan, a business case for funding, and a process for selecting and establishing sites for ESUs.
- There will be a project plan in 2022 to deliver a **New Review Format**. This is key to reducing costs of production; streamlining the authoring process, making reviews easier to write and Cochrane more attractive to publish with, peer review and editorial process easier to navigate. This should also mean copy editing costs fall. The project plan will include interviews with stakeholders and a survey of Cochrane Library (CLIB) users, and the production of guidance to accompany the launch of the New Review Format.
- **Central editorial service and the Editorial Integrity and Efficiency Pilot project:** With the cuts to funding for CRGs the review pipeline is threatened. Strengthening the Central Editorial Service (CES) will help to maintain our independence and reputation, and allow the community to seek funds to produce reviews. The CES will support: publication of reviews from CRGs in the pilot; publication of priority reviews outside the pilot eg COVID; editorial decisions made on speculative submissions. This should ensure capacity can keep up with demand and we achieve the scale needed. It should also give clarity over what is editorial process and what is development and ensure we continue to attract authors.
- **Maintaining the flow of reviews to ensure a vibrant Cochrane Library, and supporting the production and publication of high profile reviews** - essential to ensure there is no drop-off in content for the Cochrane Library, so that it continues to meet the needs of our stakeholders. With the reduction in funds to CRGs, we expect a reduction in outputs, and are looking at ways that we can encourage authors to submit directly to the Central Editorial Service. We are also seeking to maintain a centralised title registration and support the production/publication of high-priority reviews.
- **Simplification of processes and technology** - this includes a range of product and technology improvements to support the streamlining of review production and editorial processes. In response to community feedback, we plan to start with the new review format and work with the IT team to identify other solutions to simplify our complex processes and systems for our authors.

2. Advocacy post Cochrane Convenes (Strategy for Change GOAL 2)

Cochrane Convenes has provided new momentum behind our advocacy goal. The new Department of Advocacy, Communications and Partnerships will be shaping priorities for this early in 2022. We want to build on the key themes from Cochrane Convenes – specifically to address mis/disinformation and communicating uncertainty of evidence. We also plan to continue to focus on research integrity and research waste.

Advocacy, communications and showing our impact all play a key role in increasing our visibility and helping to make us the 'go to partner' for people/institutions/ funders interested in supporting high quality evidence to inform decision making. It is also essential for fundraising, so is particularly important in 2022 and beyond as we step up our fundraising. We look forward working with the Cochrane Community on this – increasing Group visibility as well as global visibility where needed, and strengthening the capacity of the Cochrane collaboration as a whole to attract resources to implement Cochrane work at national, regional and global levels.

3. Open Access (OA) Transition plan, including product development (Strategy for Change GOAL 3)

The priority in 2022 is to continue planning for full Open Access by 2025, by completing the stakeholder engagement and aiming for Governing Board approval of an Open Access transition plan by October 2022.

Product development for the Cochrane Library (CLIB) will generate revenue to reduce the impact on subscription income from Open Access. It will also drive usage and deliver improved accessibility and usability.

CLIB features will include the new review format (see above), PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcomes) search tool enhancements, up-to-date-ness, and cross-Review data-centric features. The aim will be to develop business cases for three new product opportunities including new third party databases, Learning and Training resource centre and Essential Evidence + (EE+). In addition, we hope to pursue business cases and product specification for three data driven product development opportunities. Watch this space...

4. Income generation and diversification (including fundraising strategy) (Strategy for Change Sustainability objective)

A Director of Development is being recruited, and their priority for 2022 (working with the Director of Publishing and Technology) will be to establish an income generation strategy (including fundraising) to deliver a balanced income portfolio across fundraising and enterprise income (sales). This will inform a new business model to be shaped in 2023 to ensure Cochrane is sustainable and resilient financially beyond full implementation of Open Access in 2025.

In particular, the Director of Development will need to assess the most fruitful areas of fundraising for Cochrane and ensure other activities – advocacy, communications, partnerships, community engagement – align and contribute to them. The fundraising team will be established to deliver the fundraising priorities.

Priorities for external funding will require concept notes for priority areas (eg in support of the new Evidence Synthesis Units; tools/methods/processes; science communication). To do this, we will need to work in partnership with all Cochrane Groups and joining forces where possible to submit funding applications in 2022 and beyond.

5. Central Executive Team (CET) culture and ways of working (Strategy for Change Accountability objective)

To ensure the new CET Structure works effectively with and for the community to deliver our collective goals. We will also be supporting the values initiative led by the Cochrane Consumer Network and Council.