

Join the Conversation: Editorial plans for 2021

Attendees at the February 2021 'Join the Conversation' webinar, held February 4 and discussing Cochrane's Editorial plans for 2021, raised many excellent questions. The questions related to the Editorial Integrity and Efficiency Project, and brief answers to each, are detailed in this document. Questions are grouped according to which presentation they were referring to; recordings of these presentations are available here.

Pilot project aiming to assess the feasibility of creating independent development and editorial processes, presented by Karla Soares-Weiser

Q. Are you looking for more groups to volunteer [for this pilot project]?

A. Definitely yes, any group wanting to participate is welcome to [contact the Editorial & Methods Department](#).

Q. Are you able to say which groups are involved in the initial pilot and how they were selected?

A. At this stage we are not able to confirm the groups who have expressed an interest in participating in the pilot, but we will share this publicly in a future communication in the coming months.

Q. Could you say a bit more about the pilot with the first 6 groups. You mentioned taking over the whole editorial process, but then I think said that the central team would take over from when the full review is submitted?

A. We aim to add six CRGs in the first cohort. These CRGs have agreed to participate and the editorial process will be transferred to the Cochrane Editorial Service for all reviews. The Cochrane Editorial Service will be responsible for the editorial process (external peer-review and sign off from editors with topic expertise), and the CRGs will be responsible for working with the authors to get the review ready for external peer-review.

Q. Regarding Pilot CRGs – will these have all reviews done centrally, or just some of each CRG (the first 6)?

A. All reviews for the first six CRGs, but we want to test other options after the first cohort, using the learning and evaluation of this first cohort.

Q. Please can you define what will be included in the centralised editorial process? For example, will the central team check that authors adequately respond to peer review feedback and liaise with teams as part of this process or will that go back to CRGs to deal with?

A. The editorial process will be conducted by the Cochrane Editorial Service, including checking that authors adequately respond to peer review feedback; however, the Cochrane Editorial Service

won't take responsibility for authors addressing the feedback. CRGs could choose to support authors to address peer review feedback.

Q. Will you invite any CRG members to join the project group?

A. As part of the implementation plan, we will have a Working Group with members of the Community. Membership of the Working Group will be finalised in April.

Q. Sounds as though MEs and AMEs are moving to become co-authors on reviews, with CEU taking over editing?

A. Managing Editors will still be able to edit reviews. It also means that extensive editing could be provided (if the CRG/Managing Editor is available and willing to provide it), without concerns about independence for editorial decisions given the level of investment made.

Q. Will CRG managing editors be redeployed or their roles reconfigured to add capacity to CEU and to respond to the reduced editorial demands on CRGs?

A. We do not expect MEs to have "reduced work," as one of the problems currently is that many MEs are overloaded with work. The pilot will be limited up to 20 CRGs and only the first six CRGs will have all their reviews added to the pilot. We welcome discussion and participation of the community and will also make sure to discuss roles and expectations with the community during the pilot.

Q. Regarding Workstream 1 and moving the whole editorial process to the CEU from peer review onwards, does that refer to the peer review of the protocol, and the entire review thereafter is managed centrally? Or would the CRG still support after the publication of the protocol?

A. Peer review of protocols and peer review of completed reviews will happen after submission and internal CRG checks. The CRG will still support authors after publication of the protocol and perform the submission and internal checks for reviews. We are finalising the implementation plan, and this will provide more details in March. The plans will be made available to all.

Q. At internal review stage are we still able to edit the review or must all requested edits be made by authors?

A. The idea is to allow CRGs to deal with the internal review stage as usual, including editing the reviews. The pilot will also allow CRG staff to become authors of reviews, if and when relevant.

Q. Did a Cochrane information specialist design and run the searches for all of the COVID reviews?

A. EMD's Information Specialist, Robin Featherstone worked with a number of Information Specialists across Cochrane Groups to either design or at a minimum, peer review the search strategies for reviews at both protocol and review submission stages.