New Methods Executive

Methods continue to rapidly evolve for research evidence synthesis to ensure the credibility of results and their use by decision makers to act on evidence produced.

Cochrane’s unique methods infra-structure brings together a wide range of enthusiastic researchers to support the development and implementation of methods in Cochrane. Following internal re-organisation including the CRG transformation programme we need a new Methods Executive Model to facilitate methodological expertise. This new Methods Executive will assist in the management of methods development and implementation that provides a more strategic function. The Executive will filter methods for implementation and escalate, when appropriate, to the Scientific Committee, assist and advise the Editorial Board on methods implementation, and provide support on the implementation of new and complex methods. Individual Methods Groups will be expected to maintain a watching brief on revisions to current mandated methods, as well as new developments, as part of ongoing surveillance. The new Executive provides co-ordination between the Scientific Committee, Editorial Board, Handbook Editors and Methods Groups convenors (including council members) and any other methods related activities. The constituency and remit of the Executive needs to reflect these changes. At some point the Executive may also consider poorly implemented Handbook methods and usage of obsolete methods.

**Objectives**

* **Provide Cochrane with the expertise and advise on the state of the evidence for methods for evidence synthesis.**
* **Engage with the strategic infra-structure supporting the Editor in Chief leading on Content developments.**
* **Ensure Cochrane has relevant intel on new and improved methods.**
* **Provide oversight aiding decisions on methods for use in Cochrane Reviews, methods for expert review and evaluation, and methods we should not use.**
* **Identify methods that fit with the priorities of decision makers, guideline developers and other stakeholders to aid decision making.**
* **Advise and support on any experimental approaches in collaboration with the Editor in Chief and the Editorial Board.**
* **Maintain methods infra-structure by overseeing the Methods Groups.**

Executive constituency

Below are constituents of the new Executive structure. Some roles are ‘deputising’ so that the Executive is not reliant on the availability of a single person. By sharing this commitment, we hope to maintain good attendance given the Executive’s more strategic role.

1 Scientific Committee representative (non-convenor) *deputising role*

1 Senior Methods Advisor (Editorial Board)

1 CDSR sub section editor

1 Handbook Editor representative *deputising role*

1 Council rep *deputising role*

Plus 6 elected convenors.

Ex Officio: Methods Co-ordinator, Head of Membership and learning Service.

Members of the Executive do not represent their own group or its interests. Members’ oversee, support and co-ordinate all activities within the methods community supported by the Central Executive team, Methods Co-ordinator and Methods support worker. Executive members are asked to commit, at a minimum, attendance at 90-minute meetings 6-8 weekly. Specific tasks maybe conducted by email and smaller groups of members. As a knowledge producing body, Methods Groups play an important role in ensuring Cochrane is aware of the methods it should employ in Cochrane Reviews, and spot developments for the near and longer-term horizons. Members will serve 3-year terms and automatically rotate off allowing for elections each year. If elections fail members could be asked to serve another year. No member should serve for more than 5 years.

Key functions

*Co-ordination*

The Executive will take responsibility for co-ordinating communications and internal decisions between the Scientific Committee, Editorial Board, Handbook Editors and Methods Groups convenors (including council members). This includes co-ordinating and communicating on methods related activities and providing a central point within Cochrane where knowledge on methodological development and activity is centralised. Individual Methods Groups will also maintain a watching brief on revisions to current mandated methods, as well as new developments, as part of ongoing surveillance. This Cochrane needs to maintain surveillance on methods developments for future inclusion within Cochrane Reviews.

*Methods governance*

For all methods related activity (e.g. symposia, workshops, methods funding panels) and oversee the recruitment and selection of new lead convenors for Methods Groups. Review submissions for new Methods Groups and the new Methods Research network.

*Methods* *filter*

Using an open call, members of the Cochrane community can submit methods of interest, alongside other direct inputs from Methods Groups. These are collected by the Methods Executive who reviews whether the methods are minor upgrades and uncontentious or whether there is uncertainty or debate therefore escalate to the Scientific Committee for their consideration.

*Assist and advise*

The Executive as an advisory body and will support the Editorial Board, senior editors and the CRG Networks on the implementation of new or complex methods, and experimental reviews. Following the development of Content Development Strategy that will prioritise developments for implementation based on pre-defined criteria, ensure that guidance and training are available before implementation. Also broker support and advice with relevant experts or convenors to support implementation of methods.

Key Organisational relationships

Editorial Board (Networks and Groups)

Scientific Committee

Central Executive – Informatics and Technology Services Department, Membership and Learning Services Department, Editorial & Methods Department.

Decision making

The Executive will make decisions on the following:

* internal community issues with a greater role in monitoring Lead convenorship of Groups, ongoing viability of Methods Groups and assist with individual Methods Group issues.
* decide in co-operation with others on methods strategy (Content Development Strategy).
* decide in co-operation with the Editorial Board on methods for implementation not needing Scientific Committee review.
* assist with implementation decisions with the CRG Network Senior Editors.