
Terms of Reference

Geographic Groups' Executive

Version revised by Centre Directors' Executive, February 2021

Context

Cochrane's strategic plans set out Cochrane's vision and mission, outline the global aspirations of Cochrane and give Centres, Associate Centres and Affiliates an important role in advancing and promoting the profile and impact of Cochrane. The Centre Directors' Executive was formed in 2010 with the purpose of providing Centres and Associate Centres (formerly 'Branches') with a structure to carry out their functions in a more coordinated way, and to be more responsive to the needs of the organisation. Since 2010 Cochrane has established a new Central Executive Team, which leads the coordination and management of the executive delivery of Cochrane's strategic plans; and supports Cochrane's Geographic Groups in their work. Cochrane has also rapidly expanded its geographic presence in countries, with new Centres, Associate Centres, Affiliates and Networks being established. To reflect this expansion, the Centre Directors Executive changed its name to the Geographic Groups' Executive, reflecting its role of representing and supporting all Cochrane Geographic Groups of all kinds.

1. Remit

- Work in partnership with the Geographic Groups, Chief Executive Officer and Central Executive Team to inform and implement strategies arising from Cochrane's strategic plans especially regarding funding sustainability, knowledge translation, capacity development, engagement with Cochrane members and supporters, partnerships, advocacy and external representation, profile and impact.
- Advise the Central Executive and the Cochrane Governing Board, through the Cochrane Council, on key issues relating to the role and function of Geographic Groups.
- Advise the CEO on applications received for establishing new Centres, Associate Centres and Affiliates.
- Consult with Geographic Groups on issues and concerns relating to their role and function within Cochrane.
- Communicate with Geographic Groups' staff about relevant decisions or discussions from the Governing Board and its various committees and working groups.
- Facilitate communication between Geographic Groups and other Cochrane groups.
- Organise, chair and approve the minutes of the Geographic Groups Directors' meetings.
- Ensure progress is made on activities and actions between Geographic Group Directors' meetings.
- Prepare reports or papers for the Central Executive, Governing Board, Council and other groups as required.
- Oversee the Geographic Groups' Executive budget.

2. Accountability and reporting

- The Geographic Groups' Executive is accountable to all Geographic Group Directors. An update of issues discussed at the Geographic Groups' Executive meetings will be given to Geographic Groups Directors and staff during virtual and face-to-face meetings. The Geographic Groups' Executive will produce reports for the Central Executive Team, Council and other Cochrane Groups and bodies as required.

- The Chief Executive Officer (and/or his/her representative) is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Geographic Groups' Executive, and accountable to the Governing Board for the overall performance of Geographic Groups towards achieving Cochrane's strategic and operational objectives. The Chief Executive Officer (and/or his/her representative) will liaise with other parts of the Central Executive Team to ensure high-quality support to the work of the Geographic Groups' Executive and Geographic Groups more broadly.

3. Meetings and communications

The Geographic Groups' Executive will meet face-to-face at the Governance meetings and the Cochrane Colloquium. Between meetings, the Geographic Groups' Executive will hold regular teleconferences and communicate by email.

4. Membership: eligibility and composition

Those eligible to serve on the Geographic Groups' Executive are people holding a leadership position in their Geographic Group (i.e., Directors, Associate Directors, Deputy Directors).

Membership of the Geographic Groups' Executive will comprise at least six members, including the following:

- Two members representing Geographic Groups on the Council;
- At least one Director, Associate Director or Deputy Director from a Geographic Group in a low- or middle-income country¹;
- Chief Executive Officer and/or his/her representative (*ex officio*).

5. Membership: nomination process

The Geographic Groups' Executive will inform the Geographic Group Directors when the Executive is looking for additional members. Directors, Associate Directors, Deputy Directors can be nominated by others (with the prospective member's permission) or nominate themselves to join the Geographic Groups' Executive. They will be asked to indicate in a short statement (250 words):

- Why they wish to run for a position on the Geographic Groups' Executive;
- What skills, experience, or qualities they would bring to the Geographic Groups' Executive; and
- Acknowledge that they are aware of the commitment required to participate in the Geographic Groups' Executive and its work.

The Geographic Group Directors will vote among the nominations received.

6. Membership: duration

Council representatives are expected to serve on the Geographic Groups' Executive for the duration of their term on the Council. The remaining members of the Geographic Groups' Executive (except for the CEO and/or his/her representative) will be expected to serve for three years, with the option of serving a further three-year term. The Geographic Groups' Executive will verify the availability of a member to serve a second two-year term, consider their record of service and, if appropriate, recommend the member for re-appointment. The re-appointment must be ratified by the Geographic Group Directors.

7. Responsibilities of Geographic Groups' Executive members

- To contribute to the activities of the Geographic Groups' Executive and participate in discussions via email teleconferences and meetings.
- To raise and respond to issues of importance to Geographic Groups.
- To prepare papers and reports for Geographic Groups Directors' meetings, Governing Board and Council meetings and other forums as required.

¹ if neither of the Council representatives are from Geographic Groups in LMICs

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- To oversee the allocation of stipends to Geographic Group Directors for attending Geographic Group Director face-to-face meetings.

8. Responsibilities of Convenors

The Convenors of the Geographic Groups' Executive are (in normal circumstances) the Geographic Group representatives on the Council and the Chief Executive Officer (and/or his/her representative). Their responsibilities are:

- To ensure issues of relevance to Geographic Groups are considered and taken forward by the Geographic Groups' Executive and to determine how these should be managed (e.g., by email, teleconference).
- To chair the Geographic Groups' Executive meetings.
- To chair the Geographic Group Directors' meetings.
- To ensure consistent communication of information to Geographic Groups and to other groups within Cochrane on issues relating to Geographic Groups.