**Proposal to strengthen the executive structure and functions of The Cochrane Collaboration**

**Submitted by:**

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**Purpose of the paper:**

To request that the CCSG supports the recommendations about the executive structure and functions of the Collaboration, based upon the Farenden report, but adapted for the CCSG meeting in Paris April 2012 outlined in the paper.

**Urgent:**

Urgent – elsewhere in the agenda there is a proposal to appoint a new CEO – and the remit of this position needs reasonable certainty before such a post can be advertised and filled. The CCSG and the Collaboration more broadly have considered the core executive requirements of the Collaboration over the past 9-12 months, and considered a draft Farenden report in October 2012. Decision- making is now required.

**Background:**

The Collaboration is a very large and complex organization. One of the key roles of the CCSG is to provide strategic leadership and ensure that the limited resources available for central activities are used efficiently and effectively. The previous CEO left the Collaboration in January 2012, and over the past 9-12 months the core infrastructural requirements of the Collaboration have become clarified, but the senior management and leadership models have been somewhat uncertain, as identified in the Strategic Review. The recent departure of the previous CEO has also enabled a reconsideration of the role of the CEO and the senior leadership.

Paul Farenden was commissioned by the CCSG to review the current executive structure and functions and his draft report was considered in Madrid in October 2011. In the past 6 months he has had the opportunity to consult more widely and his report largely forms the basis of this paper.

We will not reiterate the Farenden report, but highlight some of his key findings and seek to apply them at a time when we are about to embark upon a search for a new CEO, and provide some principles which should underpin our decisions.

1. Change in our executive management structure is needed. Effectively our structure has not changed in 20 years, with new elements ‘grafted’ on the old. This has led to substantial gaps in our portfolio such as an effective, equitable HR process, and a lack of a diversified funding base.
2. Prior to the departure of the CEO, the COU and CEU appeared to function in parallel, without clear demarcation of some roles and responsibilities and some overlap in functions.
3. Given the nature of opportunity cost, requests from the providers of all core infrastructure (IMS, CEU, COU, etc) are effectively competing, with the CCSG required to arbitrate based upon value for money, and strategic concerns.
4. The workload of the CCSG is, we believe, unsustainable, and must reduce with a much greater focus on strategic issues, leaving operational matters to centrally funded staff.
5. The core infrastructural elements which should be provided centrally have been previously agreed, with the Farenden report prioritizing partnerships, communication and marketing, and financial and operational management.
6. The Farenden report included an indicative budget for these three portfolios and suggested that additional individuals with these skill sets should be appointed. It is likely that a new CEO would want to make these decisions, informed by this report, the CCSG response, and an indicative budget we have allocated for these tasks.
7. An urgent review of our HR policies was recommended.
8. There is a clear and strong recommendation for a full-time CEO of The Cochrane Collaboration with four primary responsibilities: policy and strategy, partnerships, funding, operational management.
9. There was a clear message of support for the current structure and function of the CEU and the Editor in Chief.
10. Our previous decision to create an external advisory board was endorsed.
11. The respective roles and responsibilities of the CEO and CEU have been considered in detail in the Farenden report. The preferred model is that of a typical organization such that there is clarity of responsibility, but following the Vancouver model, given the occasional challenging relationship between publisher and editor, the Editor in Chief will have a direct reporting line for editorial matters to the CCSG.

**Recommendations:**

We recommend that:

1. The Farenden report be accepted in principle.
2. That the CCSG approve the remit of the CEO as outlined in his report, with primary responsibilities being:   
   1. Formulation and development of key policy and strategy options for the consideration of the Steering Group.
   2. The forging of new and maintenance of existing key strategic partnerships and relationships.
   3. Development of new and diversified funding sources.
   4. Enhancement of the Collaboration’s image and profile.
   5. The Overseeing of operational performance to ensure key performance targets are met and strategic goals achieved.
3. That the organizational model provided in Appendix 1 to the Farenden report be approved, ensuring a direct line of responsibility between the Editor in Chief and the CCSG for editorial responsibilities.
4. That appropriate HR policies be developed as a prioritized separate project.
5. That we form an external advisory board by October 2012.
6. That we provide in principle support for the functional structure as outlined, and an indicative budget of 150-200K, but consider a more detailed plan, as developed by the new CEO.

**Resource implications:**

An indicative budget of 150-200K GBP for enhancing our capacity in partnerships, communication and marketing, and financial and operational management. It is uncertain at this stage whether this will be ‘new’ funding for additional staff, or achieved by realigning existing staff, or both.