# Cochrane Training: progress update

Prepared by Steve McDonald (TWG Convenor) on behalf of the Training Working Group

12 September 2012

**Purpose**

To update the Steering Group on the progress towards achieving the project deliverables as outlined in the workplan for the first phase of Cochrane Training; to highlight any major concerns and future proposals, including resource implications.

**Urgency**

Low

**Access**

Open

**Background**

The work plan and funding request for the first phase of Cochrane Training (to March 2012) was approved by the Steering Group in Keystone in October 2010. The work plan contained projects grouped into four main areas: 1) authoring reviews, 2) editing reviews, 3) managing and supporting reviews, and 4) training co-ordination. This paper summarises progress in these areas since Paris and highlights major concerns, current issues and any resource implications. We took the decision in the lead-up to the mid-year meeting in Paris not to submit a funding proposal for the second phase of Cochrane Training, mainly because of delays in completing several projects and uncertainty surrounding some organisational issues. The focus since Paris has been on fulfilling the original commitments, especially around the core projects aimed at author training, and dealing with practical issues arising from changes to the Training team. The main points we wish to highlight follow below and a more detailed summary can be found in the Appendix.

**Proposals and discussion**

1. PhilWiffen stood down as co-convenor of the TWG in July following his departure from the UK Cochrane Centre earlier in the year. We wish to acknowledge Phil’s contribution over the last 3-4 years; his experience in developing and delivering different types of training, combined with his expertise in authoring and editorial processes, meant he participated in many practical and strategic ways and his contribution will be missed. We plan to recruit a new co-convenor from among the CoEds or MEs, ideally someone with an education/training background.
2. August 2012 marked one year since the position of Training Co-ordinator was established, and also when MirandaCumpston went on maternity leave. Miranda has done an amazing job, not only in leading several of the core training activities (e.g. standard author training materials, webinars, training website and Trainers’ Network) but also piecing together the vast patchwork of training-related initiatives, networking with countless execs and working groups, and spending evenings on Skype. This is all captured in the ‘very large handover document’ that is referred to daily.
3. Following expressions of interest to cover Miranda’s position for 12 months, we appointed CarolineStruthers and MarialenaTrivella to share the role; both have complementary strengths and skills that will enable the activities already underway to continue, plus the planned priority initiatives (e.g. editor training) to get going. Marialena and Caroline met with Steve McDonald and David Tovey for a day in Oxford in August, and both Marialena and Caroline are stopping over in Melbourne en route to Auckland.
4. The team delivering the Online Learning Modules (OLMs) has been working hard to finalise the new suite of modules and update the original ones by the September 2012 deadline set earlier in the year. Personnel changes at the UK Cochrane Centre, particularly the departure of Phil Wiffen and Amy Drahota, have added to the challenge. Despite starting a new full-time position with the University of Portsmouth, Amy has continued her day-to-day involvement with the OLMs and is committed to seeing through the delivery of the modules to the Collaboration.
5. The UK Cochrane Centre’s involvement with the development of the modules has been winding down and will cease completely at the end of September. The Collaboration (through the Cochrane Editorial Unit and Training Working Group), in partnership with Portsmouth, is now responsible for completing the OLMs and deciding optimal arrangements for their maintenance and enhancement. We have a proposal from the Portsmouth team for different levels of updating (from light touch to substantive). The continued involvement of Marialena Trivella through her role as Training Co-ordinator will be important to provide some level of continuity.
6. Over the last six months, the standard author training materialshave been updated to comply with the MECIR Conduct standards. The Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre is currently organising translation of all the standard materials into Spanish. New resources to complement the slides, such as exercises and quizzes, have been developed by the Australasian Cochrane Centre and piloted in workshops since April. Audio and video recordings of small group work and some presentations are being edited ready for posting to the Training website.
7. Training Co-ordinator and Web Team have put a lot of thought and effort into consolidating how training information and resources are provided on cochrane.org. As well as the training website and the development of portals for various entities, events information is being streamlined, getting involved pathways developed, and a taxonomy implemented that will help with user searching and allow the creation of ‘dynamic’ pages.
8. As highlighted in the paper for Paris, editing and addressing the needs of editors remains a critical gap in the training and support that is currently offered. We have started to map out a plan to create specific resources for editors and have consulted with a range of editors to get feedback and suggestions. This is an area that will require working collaboratively with the Methods Groups, MECIR project team and ME Support Manager.
9. Meetings of the TWG convenors, Training Co-ordinator and Editor in Chief take place monthly and are useful for sharing what’s happening at a broader level in relation to learning and development, and the practical impact on training issues and achieving key deliverables. We are also in the process of integrating some of the training projects into the CEU’s Cochrane Content work plan. Over the next six months we plan to work through the more strategic issues to do with training and how these relate to other aspects of the learning and development strategy.

**Resource implications**

There are no new resource implications arising from this paper.

The budget for Cochrane Training for April 2012 to March 2013 (£91,000) was approved in Paris and covers the salaries of the Training Co-ordinators, maintenance of the OLMs, Methods Groups’ annual training event and annual workshop for DTA reviews. Reimbursements for two of the projects funded in the first phase of Cochrane Training (the induction programmes for TSCs and Fields) will be completed before the end of the year.

For the mid-year meeting in Oxford we anticipate submitting a new funding proposal as part of a longer term strategy that will include the ongoing commitments (Training Co-ordinator, Methods event, etc.) plus new projects that address identified training and support needs.

**Impact statement**

Investment in training, in particular the position of Cochrane Training Co-ordinator, will continue to bring major benefits to the Collaboration, both in terms of the quality of training materials produced and the efficiencies that come from having a single person (or persons) dealing with similar training and support issues across groups within the Collaboration. There is major potential to build and then capitalise on the Collaboration’s profile in this area, linking with the CEU and Cochrane Innovations.

**Decision required**

None, but feedback welcome on any of the issues highlighted above.

**Membership of the Training Working Group (September 2012)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Convenor | Steve McDonald |
| Training Co-ordinators | Caroline Struthers and Marialena Trivella |
|  | Miranda Cumpston (on maternity leave) |
| Managing Editors’ Executive | Sally Bell-Syer |
| Co-ordinating Editors’ Executive and MARS Working Group | Rachel Churchill |
| CCSG Author representative | Donna Gillies and Mona Nasser |
| Cochrane Handbook, MARS Working Group and Methods Exec | Julian Higgins |
| Methods Co-ordinator | Jackie Chandler |
| Fields’ Executive | Susan Wieland |
| TSCs’ Executive | Lynn Hampson |
| Consumer Co-ordinator | Catherine McIlwain |
| Cochrane IMS | Olga Ahtirschi (on maternity leave) |
| Representing authors from LMICs | Malinee Laopaiboon |
| Cochrane Web Team | Chris Mavergames |
| Copy Edit Support | Nancy Owens |
| Representing LOTE authors | Marta Roqué |
| Cochrane Editorial Unit | Rachel Marshall (on maternity leave) |
| Editor representative | Andrea Nelson |
| DTA Working Group | Rob Scholten |

**APPENDIX Cochrane Training Phase 1: progress summary since April 2012**

**AUTHORING REVIEWS**

1. **Online Learning Modules (OLMs)**

* five of the six new modules and three of the six original modules have either been signed off or should be completed by the Colloquium (see table below); these will be made available as soon as possible after the Colloquium via the Cochrane Training website with the assistance of the Web Team; a further three modules will be delivered in October
* the original module on searching for studies is no longer in the current work plan to be updated because of limited time; however it will continue to be available in its original form
* relevant Methods Groups have been involved in content development and have reviewed the storyboards and final drafts; the Training Working Group and CEU will provide the assurance that the materials have been developed in accordance with current guidance
* the Web Team’s request in Paris to provide support for the Cochrane Training site was accepted; this included hosting the modules in Moodle and integrating with Drupal; we are mindful that additional development of Moodle software is not part of the Web Team’s currently funded responsibilities
* Project Board (involving representatives from Portsmouth and Cochrane Collaboration) meets regularly; David Tovey is the Collaboration’s representative
* following the completion and uploading of all modules, we plan to look at:
  + evaluation
  + potential marketing opportunities (in discussion with the University of Portsmouth)
  + possibility of creating an accredited course
  + compilation of more detailed statistics on access and usage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Module (N = new; O = original)** | **Piloting** | **Sign-off** |
| Risk of bias (N) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Abstracts & PLS (N) | ✓ | End September |
| Analysing & presenting data (N) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Health economics (N) | September | End September |
| Types of data (N) | September | End September |
| Interpreting results & conclusions (N) | October | End October |
| Introduction to meta-analysis (O) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Introduction to heterogeneity (O) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Introduction to systematic reviews (O) | September | End October |
| Writing a protocol (O) | September | End October |
| Collecting data (O) | ✓ | End September |
| Searching for studies (O) | Not being updated | Not being updated |

1. **Standard Author Training Materials (SATMs)**

* updated the 14 presentations to comply with the MECIR Conduct standards and documented the changes in the accompanying content map files; presentations with substantive changes will be forwarded to the relevant Methods Group for re-approval before being posted to the website; same process will be repeated to ensure the presentations comply with the MECIR Reporting standards
* Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre is translating all the standard materials into Spanish; Korean versions of several presentations are now available online with others to follow in the coming months; there is interest in having versions of the materials in Farsi and Italian
* several new resources (study selection exercise, GRADE exercise and quizzes) developed by the training team at the Australasian Cochrane Centre and piloted in workshops since April; these resources, plus trainers’ notes, will be disseminated to members of the Trainers’ Network
* feedback received on a new presentation on Interpreting results and drawing conclusions; heterogeneity presentation updated in response to feedback and almost ready for final approval by Methods Board
* video and audio recordings, featuring the interactive components of the standard Cochrane workshops run in Australia, are being edited; the purpose is to illustrate to trainers how they might run some of the small groups sessions
* recordings of several presentations of the standard materials taken at Australian workshops this year are ready to add as voiceovers; still plan to invite a range of experts to record voiceovers, especially for the more methods topics

1. **‘Cochrane Live’ webinars**

* Collaboration’s licence for one ‘virtual classroom’ in Blackboard Collaborate renewed in August 2012
* created draft PowerPoint templates, email text for participants, etc. to share with possible new presenters; Canadian Cochrane Centre has two recorded webinars on how to moderate webinars; relevant resources made available to all trainers online
* two webinars held since April (*Writing a great abstract* and *Creating a `Summary of Findings' table with GRADEprofiler*); recordings available via the Cochrane Training website
* webinars run by the Canadian Cochrane Centre (covering broad EBM topics as well as specific SR methods) now appear in the Collaboration’s events calendar and the recordings are linked from the Cochrane Training website
* Cochrane Register of Studies team has been making extensive use of webinars for the roll out and implementation of CRS among TSCs and Centres
* an experienced Cochrane author, originally from Iran and Malaysia, but now based in Canada holds regular webinar classes for Iranian authors
* plan to engage with the Author Forum, entity Execs and the new ME Support Manager to ensure specific training needs are addressed; discussions underway with CEU in relation to MECIR implementation and several Methods Groups about converting their workshops into webinars

1. **RevMan videos**

* Training Co-ordinator and Australasian Cochrane Centre responsible for developing ‘how to’ screen capture demos; had hoped to record the first of these by now but is a priority for next six months; South Asian Cochrane Centre keen to be involved

1. **Training for DTA Reviews**

* UK Support Unit providing four one-day training modules in Birmingham (Sep-Nov 2012); awaiting likely model for training outside of the UK; once this happens the DTA Strategy Group in partnership with Cochrane Training can consider the options for implementing DTA training across the Collaboration
* Cochrane Training supports the annual workshop on developing a DTA review which will take place in Amsterdam in December 2012, hosted by the Dutch Cochrane Centre

**EDITING REVIEWS**

1. **Training for editors** *(note: unchanged since previous report)*

* Training Co-ordinator and the Australasian Cochrane Centre are developing a more detailed understanding of the training needs of editors, including MEs, CoEds, content and contact editors, statistical editors, peer referees and copy editors
* an informal meeting was held in Melbourne in December 2011 with a group of Australian editors to explore practical training proposals; this meeting identified:
  + emphasis on short, modular, online training options addressing practical issues commonly encountered by editors, often overlapping with issues for authors
  + availability of good practice and poor practice examples to demonstrate issues
  + importance of the ME mentoring and support scheme
* following some further consultation, we will draw up a detailed outline of the required training resources and plan to start this after the Paris meetings

1. **Copy Edit Support (CES)**

* as CES currently falls within the responsibility of Wiley Blackwell, no further activities to support CES are planned by the TWG

**CONSUMERS**

Cochrane Consumer Co-ordinator, Catherine McIlwain, is currently leading the development of discrete proposals to address the training needs of consumers and those involved in writing plain language summaries. These projects will be included in the next round of funding proposals to be submitted for the mid-year meeting in Oxford.

1. **Consumer referees**

* proposal for a formal training programme for consumer referees through a five-tier suite of materials that will progressively enable consumers: to understand evidence-based health care and systematic reviews (tier 1); to comment on plain language summaries (tier 2); to comment on protocols and reviews (tier 3); to create a ‘buddy system’ for consumer referees by training experienced consumer referees to mentor new consumer referees (tier 4); and to train experienced consumer referees to manage panels of consumer referees
* the training tools could be developed using Articulate and contain video excerpts, visual demonstrations and interactive questions

1. **Plain language summaries**

* proposal for a training programme for authors and consumers to improve the quality of plain language summaries through better recognition of and use of plain language techniques
* existing materials will be converted into interactive formats for online access and enhanced by additional worked examples and practical exercises based on hypothetical and exemplar materials; training will incorporate the MECIR standards and recommendations of the PLEACS group (plain language expectations of authors)

**MENTORING & SUPPORT SCHEMES**

1. **Managing Editors, TSCs and Fields**

* ME Support Manager and regional ME Support Person posts come into effect from beginning of October 2012 (replacing IMS Support); this initiative will provide both induction training to new MEs as well as ongoing training and support to existing MEs in all aspects of their role within a CRG; there is a need to ensure good communication between the Training Co-ordinator(s) and ME Support team to avoid duplication
* TSCs’ Induction and Mentoring Working Group has completed all the documentation associated with setting up the induction and mentoring programme (e.g. welcome pack, induction checklist, training guide, evaluation forms); TSC mentors selected to cover three regions (UK, Australasia and Americas, Continental Europe); piloting is underway with first successfully completed in May 2012 (Nursing Field) and three to be scheduled (Epilepsy, MS and STD groups); TSCs will evaluate pilot and make recommendations about their future training requirements and the model for this in time for the mid-year meeting in Oxford
* Fields’ Exec has developed a range of training materials to support new and proposed Fields; this follows a revision of the core functions of Fields and generic position descriptions of Field Director and Field Co-ordinator; due to the small number of Fields and their geographic spread, the Fields’ Exec is putting in place measure to promote a sense of community among Fields and improve the connections between Fields and the rest of the Collaboration; up-coming meetings are being used to provide in-person mentoring to current Fields, e.g. members of Fields Exec have organised training for the Primary Care Field following Auckland Colloquium, the Health Care of Older People Field following the mid-year meetings in Oxford, and the Justice Health Field to coincide with a meeting in Washington next May
* the end of IMS Support has implications for training and support of staff from non-CRG entities; the IMS team are aware of this and alternative arrangements will be announced in the next few months

1. **Author mentoring**

* Mentoring Working Group, led by Mona Nasser, is a joint initiative of the Author Forum and Cochrane Training; its principal aim is to develop practical strategies to promote and support author mentoring as a component of the Collaboration’s learning and development initiative
* the working group held a Skype call in June to agree its terms of reference, to discuss its plan to conduct a survey of Collaboration members and entities to identify the range of formal and informal author mentoring schemes currently in existence, and to agree timelines

1. **Annual training event for methodologists**

* Risk of bias training event held in Loughborough in March 2012 has been reported previously
* 2013 event, to take place alongside the mid-year meetings in Oxford in March, will focus on comparing multiple interventions; the three-day course will provide training in doing indirect comparisons and network meta-analysis in Cochrane reviews that aim to compare multiple interventions; one day will be for a general audience, focusing on issues around conceptualizing, initiating, managing and coordinating such reviews; two days will be for a statistical audience; the workshop will provide support to editors as well as those wanting to apply these methods in reviews

1. **Engaging new contributors**

* an identified priority of the Keystone proposal was to facilitate the productive engagement of newcomers to the collaboration; a working group led by the Cochrane Web Team and involving the Training Co-ordinator, Lorne Becker and others is currently is improving the information and engagement pathways available to interested newcomers

**TRAINING CO-ORDINATION**

1. **Trainers’ Network**

* the Network was launched in September 2011 and has over 150 members; its purpose is to facilitate communication and peer support, promote the use of standard training materials, build capacity among trainers, and improve materials
* a Trainers’ Network Bulletin was sent out in June; a meeting of the Network has been scheduled for the Colloquium in Auckland

1. **Cochrane Training website and portals**

* Training website is continually being updated with approved resources; particular effort is being made to streamline information about events on cochrane.org
* following a meeting with the Web Team in Freiburg before the Paris meetings, a draft taxonomy has been created on the test site; the aim is to tag resources to make them more searchable; further testing and implementation of the taxonomy is planned for the next six months
* led by the Cochrane Web Team, various constituency groups are currently working to develop online resource portals to be accessible through cochrane.org and the training website; for TSCs, a dedicated page of training resources has been drafted and reviewed by the TSCs Exec and will be published when the TSC Portal on cochrane.org is ready
* the consumers’ training portal is at <http://training.cochrane.org/consumers>; an author portal is being developed by Mona Nasser with input from Web Team and Training Co-ordinator

1. **Translation**

* a working group led by Lorne Becker is considering the Cochrane Collaboration’s approach to translations, focusing on *The Cochrane Library* but also considering translation of other resources such as websites, the Cochrane Handbook and other training materials.