



Governing Board Elected Member Candidate Statement

The Candidate Statement, your photograph and names of your nominators will be published on the Cochrane websites during the elections process.

Please submit this Elected Member Candidate Statement in Word format by **Friday 18 October 2024**. It should be shared beforehand with your two nominators.

Family name (surname):	Persad
First name(s):	Emma
Today's date:	17.10.2024
Are you a current member of the Governing Board standing for re-election?	Yes
Are you a Cochrane member in a low-income or middle-income country (LMIC)?	No

Questions 1-4: Skills, experience and motivation

1. Please outline your experience of serving as a trustee, member of a governing board, board of directors, management group or similar? (maximum 200 words)

I was privileged enough to serve as a trustee of the Cochrane Governing Board from 2021-2024. During this time, I have done my best to represent the community whilst guiding Cochrane through considerable challenges. While we have many achievements to celebrate after navigating such uncertain terrain as an organization, we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Throughout my term, my passion for Cochrane has grown stronger through exposure to thought-provoking discussions regarding community engagement, strategic partnerships, Open Access, artificial intelligence, fundraising, increasing diversity, and more. I have firsthand experience into the dynamic of the Cochrane governing board and the importance of the relevant Cochrane structural entities that influence the running of the organization. I understand the importance of fostering and upholding key relationships and the crucial role that our community of researchers, groups, students, and consumers play in the success of the organization.

Cochrane is still at a turning point. We need to develop a clear, community-driven narrative of how our community fits within Cochrane, how Cochrane fits within the evidence world, and what we can deliver on to better position ourselves for the future. I would like to spearhead the development of this narrative for Cochrane.

2. Can you demonstrate your commitment to Cochrane's mission, vision and founding principles? (link- [About us](#) | [Cochrane](#))

(maximum 200 words)

Cochrane is a global kaleidoscope of individuals from diverse backgrounds striving for a similar goal: to ensure the best available evidence is accessible to those who need it most.

Ensuring our evidence truly addresses global priorities and reaches those most in need necessitated the development of a robust and dynamic scientific strategy. I have passionately invested my time and energy to ensuring Cochrane remains relevant in an evolving and demanding research environment and able to deliver on global priorities set by international bodies and funders. My commitment to Cochrane is demonstrated by the strategic adaptation that we are in the process of making as an organization to become a key player with a seat at the table to deliver on the 2030 Agenda with the support of our community.

I am excited to continue this work-in-progress and hope that my contribution will leave Cochrane strategically poised to rise and adapt to global health challenges for the next 30 years and beyond, so that we as a community still have a mission, vision, and founding principles to strive to uphold. Like most Cochrane members, I wear many hats, and I am always proud to wear and fight for my Cochrane hat.

3. How have you contributed to Cochrane's work?

(maximum 200 words)

I have had many roles within Cochrane. My journey began as an author at Cochrane Austria, which even led me to being named as one of Cochrane's Top 30 under 30. My experience within a Geographic Group and various Review Groups sparked my desire to contribute further to the strategic leadership of the organization, leading me to a trustee position from 2021-2024 and a founding member of the new Cochrane Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Thematic Group.

As a board member, I have overseen Cochrane's journey to 81% Open Access, reestablishment of community events, including the London Colloquium, GES, and upcoming Bhubaneswar Colloquium, and the establishment of Evidence Synthesis Units and Thematic Groups to support Cochrane's changing ecosystem. I have also supported and led aspects of the development of Cochrane's Scientific Strategy for 2025-2030. In an ever-changing research environment with limited resources, this strategy has given Cochrane something tangible to show for itself to the international health community and funders. I am personally invested in Cochrane's work, excited by the immense potential for Cochrane's development and growth and committed to ensuring that Cochrane is a strategic and relevant collaborator with a seat at the table on the international health stage.

4. Trustees are required to act only in the best interest of the charity and make decision collectively. Members of the Governing Board take a collaborative approach to decision-making and must set aside personal opinions and group affiliations. Please describe how you would fulfil this obligation, using examples.

(maximum 200 words).

I have spent most of my academic career within Cochrane and care deeply about the longevity and best interests of the organization. I have been exposed to the processes that the Cochrane Governing Board follows to ensure a collaborative approach is undertaken and understand the immense importance of these procedures when such practices are not upheld. As most trustees often wear many hats within the organization or in similar organizations, I believe it is incredibly important to take the time to listen to the voices around the table instead

of being solely reactive, both to gain new insight into directions the board could take, and also to regulate when trustees are having difficulty navigating the often-fine line between personal interests and Cochrane interests. Another requirement is understanding personal conflicts of interests and when they restrict participation in voting and advising on board issues, which may lead to abstaining from a vote or needing to leave the room for a vote. I believe that the board should always abide by the collaborative standards we expect of our community and pride ourselves so much in upholding.

**5. What skills, experience and personal qualities do you have to enable you to serve as an effective member of the Cochrane Governing Board?
(maximum 200 words)**

I offer a deep understanding of the issues relevant to the Board along with a vision of what Cochrane can strive for, driven by a personal belief in the potential of the organization. This experience and passion render me uniquely poised to guide Cochrane from 2024-2027.

Cochrane has needed the past few years to reinvent its strategic offer, but now it is time to focus on the community, the engagement and expertise of which is needed to deliver on the challenges we face. I was committed to this during the development of the Scientific Strategy, which was heavily shaped by the input of the wider community. We need to continue to be agile and innovative, demonstrate our ability to deliver, and showcase to funders why we are worth their investment. Our major selling point is our unique opportunity to call on our wider community, including young researchers and those from LMICs, to increase representation, reduce duplication, and expand the innovative impact of our work.

This past term has been incredibly humbling and filled with considerable personal growth. I have found my voice on the board, and I would like to use it to push Cochrane to realize its potential.

Specific Skills

These are the essential skills, knowledge and experience that the Board needs from its members collectively. We do not expect any single Governing Board member to have all the skills and experience listed below.

The Governing Board is committed to improving the organizations' approach to equity, diversity and inclusion. It recognises that having members with a broad mix of skills and knowledge as well as a range of perspectives and lived experiences will help the Board to be innovative, flexible, better able to adapt to a changing environment and address future challenges.

Desired skills and experience for this election:	Which means to you can:	Do you have skills and experience in this area? [YES/NO]	If YES, please provide examples:
Experience of serving on a Governing Board, Board of Trustees or similar	Contribute actively to the Governing Board's role in giving firm strategic direction to the organization and evaluating performance against agreed targets.	Yes	As a current trustee, I will be able to seamlessly slip back into conversations and decisions the board has been making over the past few years, ensuring that important topics and viewpoints are still voiced and that commitments made to us by the executive leadership team are upheld.
Experience of serving on a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee or equivalent	Understand budgets, accounts and financial statements.	Yes	I am not a certified accountant, but I have had three years of exposure to Cochrane's financial frameworks and system of reporting financial activity to the board. I have also learned about the financial challenges that Cochrane faces and the implications these major decisions can have on our financial situation. For the upcoming three years, I believe the biggest challenges are finding a way to go Open Access that is financially sustainable, finding a way to sustainably fund larger events that bring the community together but do not leave us at a deficit, and finding a substantial funding stream that is independent of the Cochrane Library. I would be able to support these conversations going forward.
Fundraising	Share your knowledge and experience in developing opportunities for income generation, building organizational relationships and accessing donor and partner networks.	Yes	I have no formal training in fundraising, but I have been exposed to Cochrane's journey within fundraising. I understand that we need to be able to tell our story and show impact in order to attract funders. This will require

			<p>us to leverage our community to come up with pragmatic ways to show and measure impact.</p> <p>I believe the largest challenge we face is finding sustainable, predictable funding and collaborations that will allow us to deliver on our priorities. I understand the importance of building trusted relationships and recognize Cochrane’s unique selling point, particularly with the Scientific Strategy. Further, I have personally developed the Case for Support for funding within Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and have attended key partnership meetings at the WHO and World Health Summit on Cochrane’s behalf. I recognize that finding funding is a long-term process and requires considerable investment from our team, and that it is also made more difficult by Cochrane’s policy on not receiving “conflicted” funding. Nevertheless, I believe we are positioning ourselves well to receive external funding and would be happy to continue this work.</p>
Publishing and Open Access.	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities that Cochrane’s ambitions around achieving Open Access present.	Yes	I have full understanding of the difficulties that Cochrane faces on the road to full Open Access as a charity organization. I also recognize the risks of going Open Access and understand the reasoning behind the Board’s decision to postpone going Open Access in 2025. I believe the biggest challenge in this area will be finding a pathway in which we can uphold our relationship with Wiley and still go Open Access in a sustainable way that can uphold our revenue stream. I am interested in continuing these conversations going forward to find a solution for 2027 and beyond.
Member engagement and communication	Understand communications and member engagement strategies and processes.	Yes	As a passionate Cochrane member at the core of my being, I understand the importance of engaging and communicating with the community. The changes that Cochrane has undergone has left members confused about their place within the organization. As someone who has been a part of different Cochrane groups and

			experienced the shortfalls in communication, I will work to ensure that the community is recognized as the heart of the organization, called on and given Cochrane’s mandate to carry out our work, and that the way that the community fits together in the new Cochrane ecosystem is clarified.
Digital and Artificial Intelligence	Bring to the Board an understanding of user-centred design and the development and delivery of new digital products.	Yes	As a Cochrane member and researcher, I understand the immense potential for AI and digital tools in supporting evidence synthesis and dissemination. I also understand the delicate balance between strategic usage and becoming too reliant on these tools. When developing the Scientific Strategy, it became clear that Cochrane as an organization was not well enough equipped to become an innovator within AI, but could be a convener to harness the potential of AI in our work and share that insight with the wider community. I see the biggest challenge as being able to implement AI into our work in a sustainable way before others beat us to it and render our work redundant. I have been exposed me to the potential path which Cochrane could follow to sustainably implement AI and digital tools, and the key partnerships that would be required to realize this, and hope to continue these conversations.

6. Any other information you would like to add to support your nomination (maximum 200 words)?

We were recently asked by the leadership team to consider what Cochrane’s core function was. Were we a charity? A journal? A community? Conveners? Evidence producers? Advocators? The answer is not that simple, because Cochrane is not that simple. In truth, we are all of those things, and more. Whilst uniquely advantageous, Cochrane’s multifaceted complexity can also be challenging for our development. I am up to tackle this challenge.

Cochrane owes its success to the dedication of our community. A community that has driven our work through a wealth of expertise, passion, and a vision of a better world where Cochrane evidence is at the heart of decision-making. A community that has supported Cochrane through times of uncertainty. A community that deserves representation and clarity on their role within the Cochrane ecosystem. Thank you for your patience thus far.

Cochrane has emerged as a key global health partner and international organizations and funders are beginning to offer us a seat at the table. But we have a lot of work to do to ensure Cochrane's sustainability and guide what our impact will be in the coming decades.

Nevertheless, Cochrane still has something left to offer.

Thank you for your consideration.

Declarations:

To be eligible to stand for election, candidates must confirm the following by putting a 'tick' (✓) or their initials in the boxes below:

I hereby confirm that I:

1. Have accepted the Terms and Conditions of Cochrane Membership and have been a Cochrane Member for at least 30 days prior to the close of voting in this election	✓
2. Have read the following guidance from the Charity Commission The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do	✓
3. Accept the Governing Board Charter	✓
4. Accept and will adhere to the Code of Conduct for Trustees	✓
5. Have completed the Cochrane 'Declaration of Interest' Statement (Annex 1 of this document)	✓
6. Have completed the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' required by the UK Charity Commission for all Trustees (Annex 2 of this document)	✓
NAME: Emma Persad	
DATE: 17 October 2024	

Annex 1: Cochrane Declaration of Interest Statement

Candidates must make a declaration of conflict of interest, including financial or non-financial relationships with other organizations, professional relationships to other members of the Board, and other Boards she/he may sit on. In writing this statement, candidates should refer to Cochrane’s [conflict of interest policy](#) (for Cochrane Groups) and the [declarations of existing members of the Board](#).

Please answer the following questions:

1. Financial interests In the last three years, have you:	YES/NO (If YES, please provide details)
a) Received funding: any grant, contract or gift, commissioned research, or fellowship from Cochrane or a related organization (i.e., any organization related to health care or medical research) to conduct research?	No
b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	Yes [Consultancy at the World Health Organization (2024-present), position at Donau Universität Krems/Cochrane Austria (2017-2024)]
c) Received honoraria: one-time payments (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	No
d) Served as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or held a position of management with a related organization?	No
e) Possessed shareholdings, stock, stock options, equity with a related organization (excludes mutual funds or similar arrangements where the individual has no control over the selection of the shares)?	No
f) Received personal gifts from a related organization?	No
g) Had an outstanding loan with a related organization?	No
h) Received royalty payments from a related organization?	No
2. Do you have any other competing interests that could pose a conflict of interest that would reasonably appear to be related to the primary interest?	No

Annex 2: Trustee Eligibility Declaration

As required by the [UK Charity Commission](#)

Please tick or initial in the boxes below to confirm the following:

I declare that I:

Am willing to act as a trustee of The Cochrane Collaboration	✓
Understand Cochrane’s purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Articles of Association	✓
Am not prevented from acting as a trustee because I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed here • Have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order • Have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) • Have been removed from being in the management or control of any organization in Scotland (under relevant legislation) • Have been disqualified by the Charity Commission • Am a disqualified company director • Am a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation • Am on the sex offenders register or equivalent in any country • Have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement • Have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission 	✓
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	✓
Understand that it’s an offence under section 60(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 (United Kingdom) to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information	✓
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the Charity Commission guidance ‘The essential trustee (CC3)’	✓