



# 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):	Meerpohl
First name(s):	Joerg
Today's date:	18.10.2024
Are you a current member of the Governing Board standing for re-election?	No
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 had the **privilege to serve on several boards** during my career, which has provided me with **valuable governance and leadership skills**. From 2014 to 2018, I served on **Cochrane's Governing Board**, where I contributed to strategic decision-making and helped guide the organization through a period of growth and transformation. I also served on the **GRADE Guidance Group (GGG)** from 2014 to 2018, and was reappointed in 2020 to this group, focusing on advancing the use of evidence in guideline development.

In addition, I was a board member of the **German Network for Evidence-Based Medicine (EbM)** from 2013 to 2017, where I supported the promotion of evidence-based approaches in healthcare in Germany. Since 2018, I have been a member of the **Board of Directors of the Clinical Trial Unit** at the University Medical Center Freiburg, where I help oversee clinical research operations. More recently, I became **Deputy Chair of the Department of Data-driven Medicine** at the same institution in 2024. I also serve on the **German Guideline Commission AWMF**, where, since 2015, I have contributed to shaping national clinical guidelines.

These diverse roles have honed my skills in governance, collaboration, and evidence-informed decision-making.

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

(maximum 200 words)

I have been deeply committed to Cochrane's mission, vision, and founding principles throughout my **long tenure with the organization, which began in 2007**. Cochrane's dedication to producing trusted evidence, promoting informed decision-making, and improving global health has been central to my work, both as a **contributor to >25 Cochrane Reviews** and as an active member of various **Cochrane Methods Groups, Fields, and various advisory boards**.

As the **Deputy, Co- and since 2018 as Director of Cochrane Germany**, I have been committed to advancing Cochrane's mission by fostering partnerships, promoting evidence-based healthcare, and advocating for open access to reliable information. I have consistently worked to ensure that our activities align with Cochrane's vision of a world where high-quality, evidence-informed healthcare is accessible to all.

My recent involvement in **Cochrane's Scientific Strategy Advisory Group** reflects my dedication to Cochrane's principles of transparency, collaboration, and methodological rigor. All these roles have allowed me to actively contribute to Cochrane's strategy of making evidence more accessible, ensuring that our work reaches policy-makers, clinicians, and the public.

Overall, my work with Cochrane is driven by a **commitment to its core values of integrity, independence, and collaboration** in the pursuit of better healthcare outcomes globally.

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

(maximum 200 words)

Since joining the Cochrane Collaboration in **2007 as a part-time researcher for the German Cochrane Center**, I have had the privilege of contributing to Cochrane in a wide range of roles. As an **author or co-author** of 25 Cochrane Reviews, I have been actively involved in producing high-quality evidence to inform healthcare decisions. Additionally, my role as **editor of a Cochrane Review Group** has allowed me to support the work of others in creating rigorous and impactful reviews.

My involvement extends beyond reviews, as I have been an active member of several **Cochrane Methods Groups** and participated in various **Cochrane fields** and, more recently, the **Nutrition and Physical Activity thematic group**. Furthermore, I have contributed to Cochrane's governance through service on the **Cochrane Governing Board, and the GeoGroup Executive**.

Since 2018, I have had the honor of **leading Cochrane Germany as its director**, following my earlier roles as Deputy and Co-Director. In this capacity, I have worked to promote Cochrane's mission both nationally and internationally, drawing on a comprehensive understanding of Cochrane's past and present structures and processes. These experiences have given me a broad perspective on Cochrane's evolution and its strategic priorities, and I am committed to continuing to contribute to its success.

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).

As a potential member of the Governing Board, I am deeply committed to fulfilling the trustee obligation to **act solely in the best interests of Cochrane**. Throughout my career, I have consistently adopted a **collaborative and inclusive approach to decision-making**, recognizing the importance of balancing diverse perspectives for the greater good of the organization.

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One example of this is my **past experience on the Cochrane Governing Board** from 2014-2018, a period during which Cochrane was undergoing strategic developments and adaptations. In this role, I worked with colleagues from different regions and backgrounds, all with unique perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing Cochrane at the time. In every case, I prioritized Cochrane's mission and strategic objectives above personal or group affiliations. I consistently work to ensure that decisions are made collectively and are based on evidence, transparent discussions, and a shared commitment to Cochrane's principles. I take great care to set aside personal opinions and any affiliations I might have, ensuring that the outcomes benefit Cochrane as a whole, while also being sensitive to the diverse needs of the communities we serve. Ultimately, I understand the responsibility that comes with being a trustee: to serve the charity's best interests and work collaboratively for its success. I am confident that my experience in consensus-building, governance, and advocacy within Cochrane has equipped me well to fulfill this obligation.

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 believe I would make a valuable addition to the Governing Board due to my extensive experience and deep understanding of the organization. Over the years, I have held several leadership roles within Cochrane, including as a member of the Governing Board, and serving on various advisory. This has allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of Cochrane's strategy, vision, and culture, while also developing a strong commitment to the principles that guide its work.

In addition to my experience within Cochrane, I have developed a broad set of **skills in governance, organizational strategy, and financial oversight**, which are directly relevant to Cochrane's needs and aligned with the requirements of UK Charity trustees. I have had the privilege of working in evidence synthesis and evidence-informed decision-making across culturally, and geographically diverse contexts. This **diversity of experience** has strengthened my ability to understand different stakeholder needs, advocate for the use of evidence in policy and practice, and build partnerships that amplify Cochrane's impact.

Furthermore, I am deeply committed to Cochrane's principles and mission and would bring both my expertise and a **high level of personal integrity** to the Board. My broad experience within Cochrane, combined with my dedication to advancing evidence-based decision-making and my willingness to commit the necessary time and energy, make me confident that I would be an effective and engaged Board member.

## 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:
<b>Experience of serving on a Governing Board, Board of Trustees or similar</b>	Contribute actively to the Governing Board's role in giving firm strategic direction to the organization and evaluating performance against agreed targets.	Yes	Cochrane Governing Board 2014 – 2018 GRADE Guidance Group 2014-2018, and 2020 – ongoing German Network EbM 2013-2017 Board of Directors, Clinical Trial Unit, University Medical Center Freiburg since 2018 Deputy Chair, Department of Data-driven Medicine, University Medical Center Freiburg since 2024 German Guideline Commission AWMF since 2015
<b>Experience of serving on a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee or equivalent</b>	Understand budgets, accounts and financial statements.	Yes	Experience as former member of Cochrane Governing Board Chair of Institute of Medicine, University Medical Center Freiburg Director Cochrane Germany
<b>Fundraising</b>	Share your knowledge and experience in developing opportunities for income generation, building organizational relationships and accessing donor and partner networks.	Yes	I have secured over 10 Mio Euros in research project funding over the last few years for my research group (WHO, EU, national public funding, etc.) + funding for Cochrane Germany (approx. 1 Mio Euro per year).
<b>Publishing and Open Access.</b>	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities that Cochrane's ambitions around achieving Open Access present.	Yes	I have acted as Co-Editor in Chief for BMC Research Integrity & Peer Review 2017-2021 (prior to that as Associate Editor for a few years). Further, I held roles as associate editor with Health and Quality of Life Outcome, Journal of Negative Results in Biomedicine, Cochrane Haematology, and worked as

			Section Editor of The Journal of Evidence and Quality in Healthcare. Currently, Editorial Board Member of Cochrane Evidence Synthesis and Methods Journal
<b>Member engagement and communication</b>	Understand communications and member engagement strategies and processes.	Yes	As Cochrane Germany, we run a very successful, large suite of activities in the field of knowledge translation and community engagement.
<b>Digital and Artificial Intelligence</b>	Bring to the Board an understanding of user-centred design and the development and delivery of new digital products.	Yes	My team and I have conducted research on use of AI for Risk of Bias assessment with Claude, and contributed to research on use of ChatGPT for supporting screening processes. I am also involved in an initiative to set up a Cochrane AI Methods Group and am a member of the GRADE AI methods group. We hosted in 2024 the Cochrane Germany Methods Forum with > 100 international and national participants.

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

As a member of the Governing Board, my priority would be to contribute to strengthening Cochrane further alongside the existing Board members. I am committed to ensuring that Cochrane remains a global leader in evidence-based healthcare by focusing on key areas for improvement.

First, I would prioritize reducing the time from submission to publication of Cochrane Reviews. Streamlining this process is essential to ensure that high-quality evidence reaches decision-makers more quickly, keeping pace with the evolving healthcare landscape.

Second, I would work to enhance strategic partnerships with organizations and initiatives such as GRADE, GIN, and ALIVE. These collaborations are crucial for expanding Cochrane's influence and integrating diverse approaches to evidence synthesis and guideline development.

Third, I would support ongoing efforts to restructure Cochrane to be more agile and fit for purpose. Ensuring that the organization is adaptable and responsive to future challenges is vital to sustaining its impact in an ever-changing world.

Finally, I am deeply committed to maintaining Cochrane's collaborative spirit and ethos. Nurturing a culture of cooperation and shared purpose is fundamental to Cochrane's success, and I would work hard to ensure that this remains central to all we do.

## 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 <a href="#">Terms and Conditions of Cochrane Membership</a> and have been a Cochrane Member for at least 30 days prior to the close of voting in this election	JM
2. Have read the following guidance from the Charity Commission <a href="#">The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do</a>	JM
3. Accept the <a href="#">Governing Board Charter</a>	JM
4. Accept and will adhere to the <a href="#">Code of Conduct for Trustees</a>	JM
5. Have completed the Cochrane 'Declaration of Interest' Statement (Annex 1 of this document)	JM
6. Have completed the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' required by the <a href="#">UK Charity Commission for all Trustees</a> (Annex 2 of this document)	JM
<b>NAME: Joerg Meerpohl</b>	
<b>DATE: 18.10.2024</b>	

## 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	YES/NO (If YES, please provide details)
<p><b>In the last three years, have you:</b></p> <p>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?</p>	<p>Yes, I have received institutional funding for research projects on evidence synthesis, or guideline development by the following organizations (amongst others):</p> <p>Federal Ministry of Health, Germany</p> <p>Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany</p> <p>Innovationsfonds, G-BA, Germany</p> <p>European Commission</p> <p>European and German Professional Associations</p> <p>However, no funding received by any for-profit organizations.</p>
<p>b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organization?</p>	<p>WHO (as GRADE methodologist)</p>
<p>c) Received honoraria: one-time payments (in cash or kind) from a related organization?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>d) Served as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or held a position of management with a related organization?</p>	<p>Director, Freiburg GRADE Center,</p> <p>Member of the GRADE Guidance Group</p>
<p>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)?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>f) Received personal gifts from a related organization?</p>	<p>No</p>

g) Had an outstanding loan with a related organization?	No
h) Received royalty payments from a related organization?	No
<b>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?</b>	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	JM
Understand Cochrane's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its <a href="#">Articles of Association</a>	JM
Am not prevented from acting as a trustee because I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences <a href="#">listed here</a></li> <li>• Have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order</li> <li>• Have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)</li> <li>• Have been removed from being in the management or control of any organization in Scotland (under relevant legislation)</li> <li>• Have been disqualified by the Charity Commission</li> <li>• Am a disqualified company director</li> <li>• Am a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation</li> <li>• Am on the sex offenders register or equivalent in any country</li> <li>• Have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement</li> <li>• Have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission</li> </ul>	JM
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	JM
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	JM
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the <a href="#">Charity Commission guidance 'The essential trustee (CC3)'</a>	JM