



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):	Piechotta
First name(s):	Vanessa
Today's date:	18.10.2024
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 have been a Cochrane board member since 2021, helping guide our collaboration through a time of transition and towards new opportunities. Over the past 3 years, I expanded my knowledge on Cochrane and the role of a Trustee. To better grasp the organisation as a whole, to familiarise myself with the individual perspectives of our community, and to link those to one another, I joined several sub-committees and working groups; including the finance audit and risk committee, membership & awards committee (committee-chair since 2023), open access working group, future of evidence synthesis oversight committee, future engagement mechanism working group, volunteering strategy steering group, and evidence synthesis units' panel.

In addition to my board contributions, I bring **extensive committee experience** from my role in the scientific secretariat of the immunisation committee in Germany (since 2021), which equipped me in supporting difficult decisions in times of crisis, managing public attention, and responding to the diversity of political and public health interests.

I further have **management and leadership experience in NGOs and academia**, including serving as deputy project lead at a university, supporting pandemic preparedness in Germany (2020-2021), managing editor of Cochrane Haematology (2019-2021), or as team leading fundraiser for a major environmental organisation (2012-2016).

2. Can you demonstrate your commitment to Cochrane’s mission, vision and founding principles? (link- [About us | Cochrane](#)) (maximum 200 words)

I believe all research should be conducted **with purpose** and **for action**. It must involve **those who need it most**, ensuring the findings are accessible and useful to all. Diversity in perspectives, experiences, and skills are key to strengthening health and care decisions and their impact.

Soon after graduation, during my first fieldwork in Sub-Saharan Africa, I learned the importance of collecting and synthesizing all relevant evidence for informed decision-making. I started looking for opportunities to improve global health through evidence-based practice and found my way to Cochrane, and stayed involved ever since. I joined our organisation because its principles of **global collaboration, inclusivity and diversity** to produce timely, accurate, accessible and relevant evidence are what I care to pursue and advocate for in my professional and personal life.

As a person, and as a board member, I am committed to fostering respectful, collaborative decision-making through **relevant and actionable evidence**. My focus lies on creating a sustainable, forward-looking organisation that drives **meaningful change** to achieve healthy lives and promote well-being for all people at all ages.

3. How have you contributed to Cochrane’s work? (maximum 200 words)

In 2018, I started a researcher position in the Editorial Base of Cochrane Haematology, primarily as an **author** (meanwhile authoring >15 Cochrane reviews), but soon also became the **Managing Editor** (until end of 2021) of the group to manage our portfolio and organise networking activities.

Ever since, my contribution focused on the **Cochrane ecosystem** as a whole. This means that I engage with my colleagues and affiliates as a researcher and Cochrane author to form a vivid evidence-cycle from **research prioritisation, production and knowledge translation**; in particular through active collaboration with political actors and guideline groups. My activities and contributions focus on identifying and including the right audience and involving key stakeholders in every step of the cycle. I established a **global network** with whom I am working on the preservation of high review quality, method development, capacity building, and translating evidence into action. Thus, I engage to form new pathways of Cochrane, its response to global health challenges, and the younger generation of Cochrane members who will help achieve its visions.

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).

If re-elected, I will continue to **stand up for the ideas and concerns of the Cochrane community**. I recognise the manifold of personal interests and agendas of people involved in Cochrane. As a board member, I proactively listen to the ideas and interests of our community. One of the key strengths of our board certainly is, that at least half of the members are elected through the community, allowing high-level discussions through **different perspectives**.

My **strong connections** to different geographic centres, review groups, fields, method groups, ESUs, thematic groups, and author teams support me in exploring constructive, inclusive, diverse, respectful, and **viable solutions** at the board level that work for a broad range of individuals and **Cochrane as a whole**.

As with every guideline project and policy brief, I am involved in, I follow **a structured and systematic process for decision-making**, balancing all relevant factors for myself, and with my fellow board members. I would continue to do so if re-elected and focus on our collaboration's ideals to overcome biased decisions through personal opinions or relationships. My work in health policy has strengthened my ability to bring together diverse perspectives, balance competing priorities, and **drive consensus around critical decisions**.

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)

Enthusiasm: as young researcher on the governing board, I bring fresh perspectives and support the integration of new ideas. I seek hands-on experience to understand strategies, diversify my expertise in SR methodologies, and to translate findings into actionable recommendations. I embrace challenges and turn uncertainties into opportunities.

Peer-to-peer approach: My open ear and mindset let me become an approachable person for concerns and ideas. Key of my agenda is to make the visions of my fellows heard, embracing strong relationships and low hierarchies. Representing this attitude let me grow an open network, eager to share and explore their ideas, independent from age, origin or experience.

Stakeholder view: In my current role, I am strongly involved in high-level evidence-based work, engaging with senior political figures, including the Minister of Health, and public health leaders to shape global health and care. This requires not only a deep understanding of the complexities of health policy and clinical evidence, but also the ability to navigate the challenging dynamics of political, scientific, and clinical stakeholder management. Connecting key actors and facilitating early development of strategies supports me with ensuring that Cochrane fulfils its mission and delivers long-term value in the global evidence synthesis community.

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	Member of Cochrane Governing Board since 2021
Experience of serving on a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee or equivalent	Understand budgets, accounts and financial statements.	YES	Member of Cochrane's FARC committee since 2021
Fundraising	Share your knowledge and experience in developing opportunities for income generation, building organizational relationships and accessing donor and partner networks.	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of organisational relationships and funding structures with important stakeholders, e.g. WHO, European Commission/DG Sante - Project grant applications for national and international funding schemes - Fundraising for paid memberships of environmental NGO
Publishing and Open Access.	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities that Cochrane's ambitions around achieving Open Access present.	YES	Member of Open Access Working group since 2022
Member engagement and communication	Understand communications and member engagement strategies and processes.	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within Cochrane: As member and chair of the Membership & Awards Committee, member of the Future Engagement Working Mechanism group, and member of the Volunteering Strategy steering

			<p>group, I work with my colleagues towards a global understanding and facilitation of our members needs and interests to enable everyone to find their right place within our collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And beyond: As teamleading fundraiser for Germany's largest environmental organisation, I engaged as intermediary between individual members, local hubs and the regional offices
Digital and Artificial Intelligence	Bring to the Board an understanding of user-centred design and the development and delivery of new digital products.	YES	Beyond my personal experience as a researcher using AI tools to enhance my work processes, I am involved in a third-party funded project which aims to develop an AI-supported registry of systematic reviews, incl. methodological quality assessments for a target audience (i.e. immunisation committees)

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

My key personal strength is to find the opportunity in the challenge. The past 3 years of being a board member, in a time of transition and change, have certainly been a challenge, but an exciting one. That's why I am keen to continue working with the governing board and our community to create a sustainable future for Cochrane. I am confident that, together, we can identify new openings that will let us grow even stronger with our collaboration and the global evidence synthesis community through enabling and promoting a diverse crowd of talented members.

As a trustee, I advocate that key to our community is fostering close interaction and partnership, connecting multidisciplinary actors, and promoting and retaining our global collaboration to thrive for health and care excellence. Our members are the heart and engine of Cochrane, and we are only able to reach our goals, when recognising each individual's contribution.

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	VP
2. Have read the following guidance from the Charity Commission The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do	VP
3. Accept the Governing Board Charter	VP
4. Accept and will adhere to the Code of Conduct for Trustees	VP
5. Have completed the Cochrane 'Declaration of Interest' Statement (Annex 1 of this document)	VP
6. Have completed the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' required by the UK Charity Commission for all Trustees (Annex 2 of this document)	VP
NAME: Vanessa Piechotta	
DATE: 18.10.2024	

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 (namely involved in several successful grant applications from governmental funders, but not as principal investigator)
b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	NO
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	VP
Understand Cochrane’s purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Articles of Association	VP
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 	VP
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	VP
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	VP
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the Charity Commission guidance ‘The essential trustee (CC3)’	VP