



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 24 November 2023**. It should be shared beforehand with your two nominators.

Family name (surname):	Franco
First name(s):	Juan Victor Ariel
Today's date:	06.11.2023
Are you a current member of the Governing Board standing for re-election?	Yes

Questions 1-4: General experience and motivation

1. What experience do you have of serving as a trustee, member of a governing board, board of directors, management group or similar? (maximum 200 words).

Since 2020 I've been a member of the Board. Together with our fellow Board Members, we navigated the intricacies of financial restructuring, devised the Strategy for Change (2021-2023), and laid the foundation for the Future of Evidence Synthesis.

Concurrently, as Editor in Chief of BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine since 2021, I lead a diverse team of 11 Associate Editors and 31 Editorial Board Members. This editorial leadership, supported by BMJ, has deepened my professional acumen in publishing, encompassing open access, addressing contemporary challenges in research integrity, monitoring impact, and delivering timely, high-quality editorial services for our authors.

In my preceding role as Associate Centre Director in Argentina (2017-2022), I spearheaded the local Cochrane group and contributed to the membership of the Geographic Group Directors' Executive (2019-2021). This experience

provided valuable insights into both the collective strengths of our international expert community and the specific challenges faced by members, particularly those from the Global South, in active collaboration. Simultaneously, my tenure as Centre Director included the Vice-Chair role in the Research Department of our university, where I gained expertise in academic management, supporting Research Centres with diverse methods and topics, fundraising initiatives, and facilitating comprehensive capacity building.

2. How have you contributed to Cochrane's work?
(maximum 200 words)

I have been a **Cochrane author** since 2015, when I initiated my first protocol as part of my master's thesis. Since then, I have published 14 reviews and 10 protocols in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews across 15 Cochrane Review Groups. Many of these reviews were conducted in collaboration with the Urology group, of which I have been a Contact Editor since 2018.

During the period of 2015-2022, I served as a **Geographic Group Director** and was a member of the Geographic Group Executive. In these roles, we actively promoted the expansion of Centres worldwide. We facilitated capacity building through initiatives such as a fellowship program, specialized courses and Knowledge Translation, and outreach efforts via our department and the media. I also gained an appreciation for the strength of our collaboration through our excellent relationship with the Cochrane Iberoamerican Network.

Subsequently, I assumed the role of **Managing Editor** of the Cochrane Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group. In this capacity, our responsibilities included delivering high-quality and timely editorial services and managing the transition to the Central Editorial Service. Concurrently, we expanded our activities related to review production as a group of Cochrane authors, collaborating with government entities and international organizations.

3. 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).

My fellow Board Members bring a rich diversity of backgrounds and expertise, enabling a comprehensive examination of the opportunities and risks inherent in the decisions we make. Throughout our intensive efforts in planning the Future of Evidence Synthesis, I had on multiple roles as an author, geographic centre director, and editor. Nonetheless, it was crucial for me to approach this process with the understanding that my contributions to the decision-making were primarily linked to the interests of our global collaboration.

I firmly believe that a significant strength of our Governance structure lies in the fact that more than half of our Board is elected. This awareness is rooted in our understanding of the profound impact our decisions can have on the Cochrane Community, which is fundamental to the organization's basic functioning. Cochrane thrives on the enthusiasm of our collaborators, and it's essential that everyone has the opportunity to be included in the decision-making process.

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

My foremost strength lies in my adeptness at listening and fostering consensus, guiding teams towards pragmatic solutions and ambitious goals. Through my leadership roles, I confronted challenges and issues that parallel those encountered in a large collaboration like Cochrane. These challenges encompassed securing funding streams and ensuring financial sustainability, maintaining the integrity and quality of a dynamic research content flow, and providing support to our staff and network of collaborators.

As a Board Member, I underwent additional training in Governance and Finances of charitable organizations. Serving as an editor for the BMJ has kept me abreast of developments in the publishing realm, particularly in topics related to open access/open science, research integrity, and the measurement of impact—going beyond the conventional impact factor.

Diversity and inclusion serve as a foundational lens through which I approach all decisions within the board. I also promoted and co-led Cochrane's EDI listening and learning program. In my capacity as a Centre Director, I actively worked

towards building capacity for Cochrane activities in low-resource settings. I have diversified my Editorial Board by considering gender balance, geographic and seniority diversity, and including members whose first language is not English. Lastly, my active participation in the Cochrane Mentoring program underscores my commitment to engaging the best minds from diverse settings globally.

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 an example:
Leadership of global and/or complex organizations	Develop and evaluate organizational strategy, lead multicultural teams and engage diverse groups of stakeholders	YES	Member of Cochrane's Governing Board (2020-2023) Associate Centre Director/Geographic Group Exec. Editor-in-Chief BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine
Making organizations more diverse and equitable	Guide equity, diversity and inclusion assessments and target-setting or provide lived experience of addressing issues of inequality	YES	Co-led Cochrane's EDI Programme Member of BMJ's EDI Advisory Group/Diversification of Editorial Board Cochrane Mentoring Programme
Organizational change management	Articulate and guide organizational change, and motivate people to support change	YES	Development of Cochrane's Strategy for Change and support of the Future of Evidence Synthesis
Fundraising and business development	Develop and implement opportunities for income generation, build organizational relationships and connections, access donor and partner networks	YES	Academic Partnership for Grants from Government (Argentina/Germany) and International Organisations (WHO)
Advocacy	Act as an ambassador for an organization, influence and strengthen the commitment of public leaders or decision-makers to a cause, secure community support	YES	Official representation in my homeland (Argentina) of Cochrane as a Centre Director with key partners and the media.
Public relations and communications	Build organizational brand and profile online and in person, lead crisis management, design effective external and internal communications processes	YES	Brand and social media management for BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine with the support of the BMJ.
Financial management and accounting	Oversee an organization's fiduciary, risk and audit duties, lead financial and investment planning	YES	Member of the Board's Finance, Audit and Risk and Remunerations Committees (Training provided by Cochrane)

Digital product development	Guide user-centred design, development and delivery of new digital products, understand informatics and structured data	YES	I provided testing for the user-centred development of digital products for Cochrane (RevMan Web, Porto, Cochrane New Review Format) and the BMJ
Publishing and Open Access	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities for organizations in achieving Open Access to content and data	YES	10 years' experience as an editor (University Press, Springer, BMJ, Wiley) Member of Cochrane's Open Access project group.
Evidence synthesis and evidence-based decision-making	Understand Cochrane's core business holistically	YES	15 years of academic experience (teaching and research) in Evidence-Based Medicine and Evidence Synthesis.

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

These three years as a Board Member have been very intense, involving the making of difficult decisions that had a mixed reception in the Cochrane Community. This period has been extremely challenging since I believe that we have been working to move Cochrane toward a future in which we are more agile and can achieve a greater impact. However, we cannot lose sight of the importance of the Cochrane Community. Without the contributions of each member, Cochrane will not be able to fulfil its charitable objectives, and we, as trustees, need to ensure that we remain inclusive to all those who want to contribute.

Moreover, we need to actively reduce barriers for those traditionally marginalized from academia due to factors such as gender, ethnicity, geography, or not speaking English as a first language, among others. Every Geographic Group, Thematic Group, Evidence Synthesis Unit, CRG and other Cochrane entities are key in supporting us in these efforts. As an elected Board Member, I will aim to support this transition so that we can retain and increase our pool of talented individuals whose goal is to improve evidence-informed healthcare.

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: Juan Victor Ariel Franco	
DATE: 06.11.2023	

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?	Yes. I received funding from the Robert Koch Institute for evidence synthesis projects related to Post Covid Conditions. I am also leading a series of reviews relates to diabetes, undernutrition and obesity funded by the World Health Organisation.
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?	Yes. I am the Editor-in-Chief of the journal BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine and also a freelance clinical editor for the BMJ. I am employed at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf as a Managing Editor for the Cochrane Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders Group.
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	JVAF
Understand Cochrane’s purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Articles of Association	JVAF
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 	JVAF
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	JVAF
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	JVAF
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the Charity Commission guidance ‘The essential trustee (CC3)’	JVAF