

Overarching aim

Cochrane Africa aims to increase the use of Cochrane evidence to inform healthcare decision-making on the African continent.

The goals of Cochrane Africa align with the goals outlined in Cochrane’s new organisational Strategy as follows:

Goal 1	Producing timely, relevant evidence for and with those who need it most
Objective 1.1	Deliver timely, high-quality responses to priority questions relevant to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which the users of our evidence help define
Objective 1.2	Build and sustain the capacity of authors in SSA to conduct Cochrane Reviews
Goal 2	Save and improve lives by ensuring everyone can contribute to and benefit from trusted evidence
Objective 2.1	Work with partners at all levels to embed evidence-informed approaches
Objective 2.2	Advocate for evidence-informed decision-making by building capacity for using evidence to inform decisions
Objective 2.3	Make Cochrane and Cochrane Africa evidence products accessible and usable
Goal 3	Secure the long-term sustainability of the Network
Objective 3.1	Maintain and expand the Cochrane Africa network
Objective 3.2	Identify and support Cochrane mentors
Objective 3.3	Grow and diversify our income

Guiding principles

1. Each country is unique
2. Prioritise to ensure relevance
3. Collaboration
4. Avoid unnecessary duplication
5. One step at a time
6. Build sustainability
7. Equity-focused in everything we do
8. Encourage diversity

Goal 1. Producing timely, relevant evidence for and with those who need it most

Objectives	Planned activities
1.1 Deliver timely, high-quality responses to priority questions relevant to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which the users of our evidence help define	1.1.1 Priority setting: Conduct or contribute to priority setting to identify relevant priority topics for Cochrane Reviews
	1.1.2 Convene author teams: Lead author (from Hub or Cochrane Africa team member) identifies author teams
	1.1.3 Capacity development for author teams: Provide tailored mentorship and support (including for different types of Cochrane Reviews, e.g. QES, DTA reviews, and others)
1.2 Build and sustain capacity of authors in SSA to conduct Cochrane Reviews [Portfolio of work 1]	1.2.1 Identify author teams needing support [by engaging with Cochrane]
	1.2.2 Offer tailored capacity-development opportunities to author teams (e.g. writing retreats, fellowships, access to training opportunities, mentoring, etc.)
	1.2.3 Track progress of Cochrane Reviews being supported
Key considerations	• Devise clear pathways for novice authors to be involved in reviews and review activities • Encourage diverse author teams • Consider equity in the Cochrane Reviews we support and conduct • Work collaboratively with other hubs in capacity development activities • To ensure timely delivery of reviews we will link with Cochrane Review groups from the point of priority setting. Given changes in how reviews are produced in Cochrane, i.e. through Evidence Synthesis units rather than Review Groups, we will continue to monitor any necessary changes in our engagement. • Align with Cochrane’s scientific strategy in terms of priority setting areas, where feasible, and with subregional/national priorities and relevant policy windows

Goal 2. Save and improve lives by ensuring everyone can contribute to and benefit from trusted evidence

Objectives	Planned activities
2.1 Work with partners at all levels to embed evidence-informed approaches	2.1.1 Identify/map strategic stakeholders, including evidence users, producers and intermediaries, to engage/partner with for specific activities or projects, including developing stakeholder-specific engagement strategy and materials. [Consider relevant partnerships for your entity/work]
	2.1.2 Establish at least one new partnership over strategic period (Cochrane Africa as a whole or in-country) with clearly defined goals and formal MoUs if feasible/applicable
2.2 Advocate for evidence-informed decision-making through building capacity to use evidence to inform decisions-	2.2.1 Host biannual leadership event (Cochrane Africa Indaba), with hubs rotating hosting and supported by Coordinating hub
	2.2.2 Build capacity and skills of strategic stakeholders in evidence informed decision-making (awareness raising, PRIMER, bursaries to attend training), or through sharing opportunities for training
	2.2.3 Engage the community of Cochrane members by disseminating news, training opportunities and relevant information about Cochrane using various media, including newsletters and social media.
2.3 Make Cochrane and Cochrane Africa evidence products accessible and usable	2.3.1 Develop and disseminate user-friendly products that summarise evidence from priority Cochrane Africa reviews (e.g. plain language summaries (PLS), policy/evidence briefs, infographics, translated summaries, podcasts, etc.) to priority target audiences
	2.3.2 Develop and disseminate user-friendly products that summarise evidence from Cochrane Reviews conducted in or relevant for the region (e.g. PLS, policy/evidence briefs, infographics, translated summaries, etc.) to relevant target audiences
	2.3.3 Disseminate Cochrane evidence and KT products (newsletter, social media, website) received from Cochrane Central
2.4 Evaluate the engagement and dissemination activities	2.4.1 Evaluate the impact of engagement and dissemination activities and products, including feedback from target audiences
	2.4.2 Develop an approach to measure impact across all projects.

Objectives	Planned activities
Key considerations	• Ensure historically disadvantaged institutions, media groups and newer members are targeted • Combat misinformation through working collaboratively with existing relevant organisations or National and sub-national agencies • Each hub should consider identifying a key topic for advocacy during the three-year strategy • Consider Cochrane dissemination checklist when developing knowledge translation (KT) products - https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/knowledge-translation/how-share-cochrane-evidence/dissemination-essentials-checklist • Consider KT evaluation resources: https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/knowledge-translation/finding-out-whether-cochrane-making-difference • Partnerships should have specific purpose(s), aligned with the objectives and activities planned by each hub and help deliver on these; consider formal MOUs if feasible/applicable. • Strive for co-production of dissemination products with patients and the public (PPI) • Identify the key audiences for each dissemination activity, including patients and the public, practitioners, policymakers, etc, as appropriate.

Goal 3: Secure the long-term sustainability of the Network

Objectives	Planned activities
3.1 Maintaining and expanding the Cochrane Africa network [Portfolio of work 2]	3.1.1 Hubs and affiliates supported to deliver the strategy through monthly Coordinator meetings and regular Steering Group meetings [coordination hub activity]
	3.1.2 Identify and support new affiliates and champions in countries not yet reached to join Cochrane and Cochrane Africa (e.g. respond to requests for information, have calls with interested groups) with clear ways through they can participate/collaborate and incentives for joining
	3.1.3 Maintain an updated network strategy in line with Cochrane's broader strategy
	3.1.4 Maintain institutional buy-in through annual letter to institution or meeting (depending on organisational requirements)
	3.1.5 Host a biannual face-to-face or virtual meeting (linked to Cochrane Africa Indaba)
	3.1.6 Develop and update annual work plans for each hub, with annual reports summarising key activities (include a reflection on what went well and what did not, which will be collated and discussed at SG meetings)
	3.1.7 Implement outreach and engagement strategies to attract young health professionals and students to Cochrane activities, establishing clear pathways for involvement and progression within the organization.
3.2 Identify and support Cochrane Africa mentors* [Portfolio of work 1/2]	3.2.1 Identify and invite Cochrane Africa mentors and champions to support the work of the network in terms of conducting reviews, providing training and mentorship on reviews methods and knowledge translation, and raising awareness about Cochrane and Cochrane Africa in line with a Cochrane Africa mentoring programme
	3.2.2 Support methods advancement of Cochrane Africa mentors/members through providing capacity-building opportunities on methods for conducting reviews, knowledge translation, encouraging senior authors to be part of methods groups, facilitating attendance at Cochrane Africa Indabas or Cochrane colloquia, new Cochrane editorial approaches (i.e. Editorial Manager system), and leadership skills
	3.2.3 Identify/share Cochrane training opportunities with Cochrane Africa authors/mentors

Objectives	Planned activities
	3.2.4 Support facilitation skills of mentors, including on delivering training in virtual settings. Hub members can be part of the Cochrane trainers' network
3.3 Cochrane Africa hubs identifying multiplier funding	3.3.1 Each hub identifies partners and funders in countries, region or internationally for whom Cochrane Africa members can provide capacity building or other services, with remuneration
	3.3.2 Develop/share pre-prepared funding proposal content
	3.3.3 Hubs or network to develop funding proposals for multiplier funding, in partnership with other organisations/institutions if applicable, in line with activities outlined in the network's strategy
Key considerations	• Mentors could be from countries beyond the geographic remit of Cochrane Africa • It is desirable that mentors also represent various fields of expertise (E.g. climate and health) to align with different questions where health intersects with other sectors. • Mentors need to meet specific criteria outlined in the Cochrane Africa governance document CAN Governance update 6 Oct 2023.docx (e.g. needs to have conducted at least four Cochrane reviews and led one review) • When inviting mentors, clearly define the relationships and types of collaborations we are seeking (e.g. capacity building, collaboration, among others) • Share/standardise approaches for costing training, infrastructure support • Aim to collaborate on funding applications, avoid competing • Consider capacity building on knowledge translation; policy briefs; issue briefs; multimedia; social media • If there is no specific funding for projects, Hub workplans should consider what is the minimum set of activities that can be done with available resources. • Consider building a 'buffer' in funding proposals for Hub coordination work • Consider linking with Lusophone countries in the planned expansion of the network

Portfolios of work: 2026-2027

These two portfolios of work represent activities that were identified as the key priorities of the network for the 2025-2030 period.

Portfolio of work 1 - Build and sustain capacity of authors in SSA to conduct Cochrane Reviews

- Objective 1.2 and 3.2 of strategy
- Mentorship programme: identifying and supporting mentnors
- Create leadership development opportunities

Portfolio of work 2 - Maintaining and expanding the Cochrane Africa network

- Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 of strategy
- Potential approach for expansion: Hubs to identify country representatives / institutions (CHAMPIONS) within their region, in countries not yet reached, to form a core committee as a baseline, to support planned expansion/ reach to other countries by involving them in hub work
- Consider linking with Lusophone countries
- Partnerships (funders, evidence intermediaries, others), with clearly defined purposes (MoUs)
- Increase visibility of the network - improve networking links to Cochrane Africa website e.g. LinkedIn
- Links to mentorship program of portfolio of work 1

Governance

Composition: The two groups will include one member per hub, ensuring representation across the hubs.

Role of members: portfolio members will drive the planning and implementation of prioritized activities across the hubs. They will decide what activities to implement to advance that portfolio of work, in collaboration with the SG and all hubs. This allows for dedicate time and effort on activities considered as strategic priorities for the network in order to advance the work.

Expected time commitment: monthly meetings and time to coordinate/plan and implement activities; 5-10% FTE (depends on activities planned)

Scope of work: see the draft scope outlined above, based on activities and objectives already in the strategic plan, and and discussed during the face-to-face SG meeting in Nairobi. The specific activities to be implemented can be further defined, with a workplan over next few years, depending on what is feasible.

Duration of the term: Duration of the strategic period - 2025-2030

Reporting: no formal reporting requirements. Portfolio members to report on activities during steering group meetings.