Conflict of interest policy
(Adopted October 2013)

This document describes the Campbell Collaboration’s policy concerning the disclosure and resolution of any real or perceived conflicts of interest arising in the production of systematic reviews registered with Campbell Coordinating Groups. A template declaration form for authors is provided in Annex A. All authors are required to complete the declaration form before publication of their review protocol in the Campbell Library.

Disclosing a conflict of interest does not necessarily reduce the worth of a review and it does not imply dishonesty. However, conflicts of interest can influence judgments in subtle ways. Reviewers should include statements in the title registration, protocol, and review about potential conflicts even when they are confident that their judgments will not be influenced. Editors may decide that disclosure is not warranted in any of these documents, or they may decide that readers should have this information so they can judge its importance for themselves. Decisions about whether or not to publish such information should be made jointly by review authors and editors. The Editors in Chief should be consulted where there is doubt, or no agreement between the parties.

Organizations funding reviews

The Campbell Collaboration welcomes funding for systematic reviews as a contribution towards improving the evidence base for policy and practice. However, both public and private funding must accept the independence of the research team and of the Collaboration’s editorial process. In order to safeguard independence, a funding body is not permitted to delay or prevent publication of a review registered with the Collaboration. Nor may a funding body interfere with the independence of the authors of reviews in regard to the conduct of their reviews.

Campbell Systematic Reviews should be free of any real or perceived bias introduced by the receipt of any benefit in cash or kind, any hospitality, or any subsidy derived from any source that may have or be perceived to have an interest in the outcome of the review. There should be a clear barrier between the production of Campbell reviews and any funding from commercial sources with financial interests in the conclusions of Campbell reviews. Thus, sponsorship of a Campbell review by any commercial source or sources is not allowed. Regarding engagement with public sector and non-profit organizations, the Campbell Collaboration broadly distinguishes two different types of funders:
1. Implementing agencies defined as any governmental or non-governmental body funding or responsible for implementation of an intervention of the type under review. Reviews which are both directly funded and managed by a relevant implementing agency are not eligible for registration with the Campbell Collaboration. However, funding from such agencies is acceptable provided management of the review is the responsibility of an independent review team acceptable to the sponsoring Campbell Coordinating Group. Where an implementing agency is the funder of a review, a copy of the funding agreement should be attached as an annex to the Title Registration Form.

2. Research agencies that may or may not be involved in funding research on an intervention of the type under review, but are not involved in funding the intervention or its implementation. Reviews which are funded and/or managed by research agencies of this sort are eligible for registration with the Campbell Collaboration.

**Review authors**

Review authors should disclose any conflict of interest capable of influencing their judgments, including personal, political, academic, and other possible conflicts, as well as financial conflicts. Financial conflicts of interest cause the most concern. They can and should be avoided, but must be reported if there are any. Receipt of benefits from any source with financial interests in the conclusions of a Campbell Collaboration review must be acknowledged and disclosed in the Title Registration Form, protocol, and completed review.

If an author is involved in a study included in his/her review, this must be acknowledged in the review as this could be perceived as a potential conflict of interest. Any secondary interest (such as personal conflicts) that might unduly influence judgments made in a review (concerning, for example, the inclusion or exclusion of studies, assessments of the validity of included studies or the interpretation of results) should also be reported in the review.

**Editors**

The editorial team must disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest capable of influencing their editorial judgment, including (co-)authorship of the review, direct involvement in review funding, the existence of a publicly expressed or known opinion about the review subject matter, and/or authorship of any of the studies included in the review. For any single review, editors and managing editors who are members of the author team for the review cannot also serve as editors or managing editors for that review. In the particular case where a review is proposed by the coordinating group’s entire editorial staff, the CG must ensure that independent editorial support is provided, for example by arranging for the editorial process to be managed by the editorial team for another Campbell coordinating
group or co-registering with a Cochrane review group and with that group taking the editorial role.

All editorial and author conflicts of interest should be disclosed in a conflict of interest declaration form that must be completed for any review registered with a Campbell coordinating group, and its content should be accessible on request to an appropriate representative of the CG. If any conflicts of interest are declared, the co-chairs of the coordinating group will review and approve the conflict of interest declaration prior to title registration.

Coordinating group co-chairs, editors, and advisory board members are required to declare conflicts of interest on an annual basis, and this information will be freely available on the Campbell Collaboration website.

**Arbitration process**

Serious concerns relating to conflict of interest that may require arbitration include (a) a proposal for undertaking a review that raises a question about whether the conflict of interest will create unacceptable bias or the appearance of bias; and (b) a disagreement between authors and editors about conflict of interest by any editor such as editorial involvement in the review’s funding process or editorial authorship of one of the included studies.

Issues of this sort should be sent first to the co-chairs of the sponsoring coordinating group, assuming they have no conflict of interest in the dispute. Alternatively, a coordinating group can designate an independent committee to respond to such issues. The referral can be initiated by the authors, the editors or both parties of the proposed review. If the issue cannot be resolved through this process, or the conflict of interest concerns are broad enough to raise issues about the fairness of this procedure, the matter should be referred to the co-chairs of the Campbell Collaboration Steering Group.
Annex A: Conflict of interest disclosure form

Authors and editors should disclose any conflict of interest capable of influencing their judgments, including personal, political, academic, and other possible conflicts, as well as financial conflicts. Disclosing a conflict of interest does not necessarily reduce the worth of a review or imply dishonesty. However, conflicts of interest can influence judgments in subtle ways. Any conflicts arising from financial, academic or personal sources that might unduly influence judgments made in a review, or that might be perceived to have such influence, should be reported.

Name: 

Position: 

Review title: 

Involvement in review:_______  Author_______  Editor

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you employed by or affiliated with an organization that may have a vested interest (financial or otherwise) in the results or the conclusions of the review?  
   ______ YES ______ NO

   If YES, please specify:

2. Have you been involved in the design, conduct, publication, or funding of a study potentially eligible for the review?  
   ______ YES ______ NO

   If YES, please specify:

3. Do you have any competing financial or other (personal, political, academic, or other) interests in the review?  
   ______ YES ______ NO

   If YES, please specify:

   

   ________________________________
If you have answered 'YES' to any of the questions above, you may have a conflict of interest that should be declared. Please draft a statement to publish with your review in the space below.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

This will be reviewed by the lead author, coordinating group editor, and/or coordinating group co-chairs, as appropriate, for inclusion in the review. If you have answered 'NO' to all the above questions, please enter “None known” in this space.

________________________________________________________________

I confirm that any present or past affiliations or other involvement in any organization or entity with an interest in the review that might lead me to have a real or perceived conflict of interest is declared here.

**Signature:**

**Date:**