

# PROTOCOLS

## Criteria

Protocols set out the plans for the conduct of systematic reviews or systematic maps. They are a requirement of CEE reviews and should be submitted in advance of conducting the review. Full details of protocols and guidelines for their development can be found at [www.environmentalevidence.org/Authors.htm](http://www.environmentalevidence.org/Authors.htm).

Authors should note that all protocols, systematic reviews and maps published in Environmental Evidence will have been conducted according to the [CEE process](#).

## Specificities per section

### Title page

This should list the title of the article. The title should include the review question, for example:

**What is the effectiveness of intervention A in producing change in subject B?**

**What is the impact of factor X on subject Y?**

The full names, institutional addresses, and email addresses for all authors must be included on the title page. The corresponding author should also be indicated.

### Keywords

Three to ten keywords representing the main content of the article should be given.

### Background

This section should be written in a way that is accessible to readers without specialist knowledge in that area and must clearly state - and, if helpful, illustrate - the background to the review and its aims. You should indicate why this study is necessary and what it aims to contribute to the field. The role of commissioners and other stakeholders in the formulation of the question should be described and explained. It should logically lead the reader to the primary question exposed in the next part.

### Objective of the Review

This section can report the discussions that have been organised with the stakeholders, possible refinements of the initial question. You should describe the primary question and secondary questions when applicable. The primary question is the main question of the review. The secondary questions are usually linked to possible subgroup analyses. This section may also present definitions of the primary question components (e.g. the subject, intervention and outcome measure) but see ‘study inclusion criteria’ below.

## **Methods**

### **Searches**

*Here the proposed searches are described in sufficient detail so as to be repeatable. The following subsections are a guide to the detail required on what will be searched and how the search will be conducted.*

- Search terms and languages
- Search strings and/or combinations of searches (*search strings refer to combinations of terms using Boolean characters, combinations are methods used to set-up and pool different searches run separately*).
- Estimating the comprehensiveness of the search
- Publication Databases searched (e.g. Web of Science)
- Internet searches conducted (e.g. Google Scholar)
- Specialist searches - Searches for grey literature: contacts, searches of organisational websites, use of specific search terms or strings, filtering or limitations.
- Supplementary searches such as Bibliographical searches and literature provided directly by stakeholders

### **Study inclusion criteria**

*Here provide explanation about the rationale you propose to include/exclude articles based on the following aspects, so that this stage is transparent and replicable by any external reader.*

- Relevant subject(s)
- Relevant intervention(s)
- Relevant comparator(s) (if appropriate)
- Relevant outcomes
- Relevant types of study design
- Kappa test(s) for consistency of decision regarding inclusion/exclusion, at title, abstract, full-text level, planning other tests (Egger...)

### **Potential effect modifiers and reasons for heterogeneity**

*Provide a list of those effect modifiers to be considered in the review and details of how the list was compiled (including consultation of external experts).*

### **Study quality assessment**

*Describe here the approach you propose to use to critically appraise and assess quality of included studies.*

#### **Data extraction strategy**

*Describe here how you will collect and record data from included studies.*

#### **Data synthesis and presentation**

*Describe here the methods you might use to synthesise the collected data and any subsequent manipulation of the data set, sub-group analysis, sensitivity analysis and tests for bias.*

### **Competing interests**

A competing interest exists when your interpretation of data or presentation of information may be influenced by your personal or financial relationship with other people or organizations. Authors must disclose any financial competing interests; they should also reveal any non-financial competing interests that may cause them embarrassment were they to become public after the publication of the manuscript.

Authors are required to complete a declaration of competing interests. All competing interests that are declared will be listed at the end of published articles. Where an author gives no competing interests, the listing will read 'The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests'.

When completing your declaration, please consider the following questions:

#### *Financial competing interests*

- In the past five years have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? Is such an organization financing this manuscript (including the article-processing charge)? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? If so, please specify.
- Do you have any other financial competing interests? If so, please specify.

#### *Non-financial competing interests*

Are there any non-financial competing interests (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial or any other) to declare in relation to this manuscript? If so, please specify.

If you are unsure as to whether you, or one your co-authors, has a competing interest please discuss it with the editorial office.

## References

read [instructions here](#)

### Quick Links

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- [Systematic Review](#)
- [Systematic Map](#)
- [Protocols](#)
- [Methodology article](#)
- [Commentary](#)
- [Letter to the Editor](#)

Shortcuts to

- [Main Instructions for Authors](#)
- [CEE Process](#)
- [CEE Guidelines](#)
- [CEE Peer-reviewer policy](#)
- [Publishing a scientific article](#)
- [Call for subject editors](#)

