
REVIEWER GUIDELINES

Purpose of Peer Reviews

Peer Review is a critical element of scholarly publication, and one of the major cornerstones of the scientific process. Peer Review serves two key functions:

- Acts as a filter: ensures the research is properly verified before being published;
- Improves the quality of the research: rigorous review by other experts helps to hone key points and correct inadvertent errors.

Before you accept the editor's invitation for a review, consider the following questions.

- Does the manuscript you are being asked to review truly match your expertise?*
- Do you have time to review the manuscript?*
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest?*

For more information please read **Duties of Reviewers** (*SEEFOR Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement*).

Peer Review Process

All submitted manuscripts are going through a **double-blind peer review process**, where authors and reviewers are unknown to each other.

Reviewing needs to be conducted confidentially, the manuscript you have been asked to review should not be disclosed to a third party. Most editors welcome additional comments, but whoever else is involved will likewise need to keep the review process confidential. You should not attempt to contact the author.

Be aware when you submit your review that any recommendations you make will contribute to the final decision made by the editor. The report should contain the key elements of your review, addressing the points outlined in the preceding section. Commentaries should be courteous and constructive, and should not include any personal remarks or personal details including your name.

Providing insight into any deficiencies is important. You should explain and support your judgment so that both editors and authors are better able to understand the basis of the comments. You should indicate whether your comments are your own opinion or reflected by data.

The whole reviewing process is usually carried out by using the *Open Journal System* and appropriate on-line forms (**On-line Review**). Reviews sent to the Editorial Board as e-mail attachment are accepted exceptionally (**Review by e-mail**). Upon an agreement with the editors, Reviewers may also send their comments as attachments to an e-mail message to the seefor@sumins.hr. In that case, the Reviewer is encouraged to submit his comments by using the appropriate form (.docx) available at the: SEEFOR Review Form.

Reviewers accepting to review a paper are kindly requested to send their comments **within three weeks**. If it seems you might miss your deadline, inform the editor.

Conducting the On-line Review

The Reviewer is invited by e-mail to review a submission, which includes its title and abstract, as well as the journal's URL, the username and password for the Reviewer to use to enter the journal. Additionally, an e-mail invitation may contain a special URL that takes the invited Reviewer directly to the Review page for the submission, without the need to create an account or login. Reviewers enter the journal web site (Review Home Page) to agree to do a review, download submissions, submit their comments and select a recommendation by using the on-line SEEFOR Reviewer Form. To facilitate the review process, you may also like to use the **Help to Reviewers**.

Review Home Page consists of the following sections: (a) Submission to be Reviewed, (b) Review Schedule, and (c) Review Steps.

Submission to be Reviewed

In this section, summary of the submission details is shown, including the title, abstract, editor, and metadata.

Review Schedule

In this section, all of the important dates associated with the submission are specified. In particular, pay attention to the Review Due Date. If you cannot realistically complete the review before this date, you should decline. Meeting the due date is critically important for the editor and the journal.

Review Steps

This section consists of the 5 review steps.

Step 1 - Notify the Section Editor whether You Will Undertake the Review.

The decision should be made after reviewing the submission's Abstract. If you are able to do the review, click on *Will do the review*, which leads to a standard email to the Section Editor, and which will indicate to Section Editor and Author that the review is underway. If you are unable to do the review, click on *Unable to do the review* which leads to a standard email to the Section Editor.

Step 2 - Download the Submission File.

The Author has uploaded the submission as a file, which you can download from the journal's web site to your computer by clicking on the file name. The Supplementary Files refer to materials the Author may have uploaded in addition to the submission, such as data sets, research instruments, or source texts.

Step 3 - Open and Fill in the Review Form.

Click on icon to fill in the Review form. The on-line Review form requires that a set of questions on the scientific relevance and methodological soundness of the manuscript be answered by using radio buttons or the drop-down box. Required fields are marked (*). Additional comments that are optional, as well as confidential, for the editors, may also be provided by using the designated text-box fields.

You may enter or paste partial reviews into these boxes and click the Save button at the bottom of the form to return and make changes later. You may return to make such changes until a recommendation on the main Review pages is chosen (Step 5), at which time the Review process is complete.

Please, evaluate the manuscript according to the following:

Scope of the Journal

Is the content of the manuscript within the scope of the Journal?

Originality

Is the manuscript sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant publication? Does it add to the canon of knowledge? Does the article adhere to the journal's standards?

Structure

Are all the key elements present: Abstract, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions? Consider each element in turn:

Title: Is it suitable? Does it clearly describe the manuscript?

Abstract: Does it reflect the content of the manuscript? Are the keywords provided?

Introduction: Are the purpose and aims of the research clearly described? It should summarize the relevant research to provide context, and explain what findings of others, if any, are being challenged or extended.

Material and Methods: Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected? Is the design suitable for answering the question posed? Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research? If the methods are new, are they explained in detail? Have the equipment and materials been adequately described?

Results: This is where the author/s should explain in words what he/she discovered in the research. Is it clearly laid out and in a logical sequence? Consider if the appropriate analysis has been done. Are the statistics correct? Interpretation should not be included in this section.

Discussion: Are the results and their meaning clearly interpreted? Have the authors indicated how the results relate to the expectations and earlier research?

Conclusions: Do the conclusions follow from the data? Do the conclusions explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?

References: Are the references adequate, up-to-date, and relevant? Are they properly written?

Figures and Tables: Are the figures and tables informative, are they an important part of the story? Are all the figures and tables necessary? Do the figures describe the data accurately? Are they consistent, e.g. bars in charts are of the same width, the scales on the axis are logical.

Note: Exceptionally, Results and Discussion or Discussion and Conclusions may be combined in a single section. Also, Review papers may have a different structure, e.g. Material and Methods, and the Results sections may be omitted.

Language

Is the level of English satisfactory? If an article is poorly written due to grammatical errors, while it may make it more difficult to understand the science, you do not need to correct the English. You may wish to bring it to the attention of the editor, however.

Overall Evaluation

Please evaluate the overall scientific relevance and methodological soundness of the manuscript by choosing one of the listed rates (*Excellent; Very good; Average; Below average; Low*).

Reviewing a Revised Manuscript

For the sake of editorial consistency and fairness to the authors, we request that reviewers who agree to review one version of a given manuscript also commit to reviewing future revisions if necessary, i.e. in the case that another round of peer review is required.

Please indicate to the editor whether or not you would review the revised manuscript.

Confidential Comments for the Editors (optional)

In this section, which is optional, reviewers may share any comments with the Editor that they do not wish to share with the author. All general concerns that impact the reviewer's overall recommendation should be indicated clearly in the comments to the author as well, not just in the comments to the editor.

Step 4 - Upload Additional Documents.

Along with the Review form, feel free to add a separate document with additional comments and suggestions if you consider it appropriate. The best approach is to add your comments in a separate document and to link them with the line number of the manuscript. Also, you may add your comments directly to the manuscript by using the 'Insert comment' or 'Track changes' options in the Word program.

Step 5 - Select a Recommendation.

When making the Recommendation on a manuscript, please choose one of the following options:

- ✓ **Accept submission** - this is rarely used, but indicates that the submission should be accepted with no or just minor changes (e.g. fixing typos, small changes in wording, clarification of crucial examples).
- ✓ **Revisions Required** ("conditional accept") - this is commonly used, and indicates that the author needs to make some small changes before publication. The changes will be reviewed by the editor and no further peer review will be required.
- ✓ **Resubmit for Review** ("revise and resubmit") - this indicates that major changes are required, but the submission does show promise. The author will need to make the requested changes and go through another round of peer review, possibly with you or with a new reviewer.
- ✓ **Resubmit Elsewhere** - the submission looks good, but is not suitable for South-east European forestry journal. Typically it falls outside the scope of the journal.
- ✓ **Decline Submission** - this indicates that the submission is too far below the standards of the journal and is beyond revision.

Finish your review by clicking *Submit Review to Editor* which leads to a prepared email to the Section Editor, and makes your recommendation, saved Review (which is now locked) and any uploaded files available to the Editor.

Help

If you have any questions about the review process, please contact Dr. Ivan Balenović (Managing Editor) at ivanb@sumins.hr.

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