

EDITORIAL POLICIES

Pollution and Diseases — International Scientific Journal

<https://pollution-diseases.org>

The following Editorial Policies govern the operation of *Pollution and Diseases*. These policies ensure integrity, transparency, and consistency in the editorial and peer-review process and guide authors, reviewers, and editors in accordance with international best practices.

1. Editorial Independence

1.1. Decision-Making Autonomy

Editorial decisions are made solely by the Editor-in-Chief or designated Associate Editors, based on scientific quality, methodological soundness, and relevance to the journal's scope.

Decisions are not influenced by:

- commercial interests,
- institutional affiliations,
- political, personal, or financial considerations.

1.2. Independence from Publisher

The publisher does not interfere with editorial decisions and supports the editorial team's autonomy in all aspects of manuscript handling.

2. Editorial Structure and Responsibilities

2.1. Editor-in-Chief

The Editor-in-Chief oversees:

- journal strategy,
- appointment of editors and reviewers,
- final decisions on manuscripts,
- adherence to ethical and editorial standards.

2.2. Associate Editors

Associate Editors manage peer review and make recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief.

They ensure manuscripts are handled fairly, transparently, and without conflicts of interest.

2.3. Editorial Board

Editorial board members provide expertise in specific scientific areas, contribute to policy development, and may serve as reviewers.

Membership is based on academic merit, not institutional prestige or geographic location.

3. Peer Review Process

The journal uses **double-blind peer review**.

3.1. Initial Assessment

Editors screen submissions for:

- relevance to journal scope,
- scientific quality,
- ethical compliance,
- clarity of presentation.

Submissions may be returned to authors for improvement before peer review (desk revision) or declined if unsuitable.

3.2. Reviewer Selection

Reviewers are selected based on:

- expertise,
- absence of conflicts of interest,
- availability and reliability.

At least two reviewers evaluate each manuscript.

3.3. Confidentiality

Reviewers remain anonymous unless they choose to reveal their identities.

Manuscripts and reviews are confidential.

3.4. Decisions

Possible outcomes:

- Accept
- Minor revision
- Major revision
- Reject

The final decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief.

3.5. Review Integrity

Any suspicion of reviewer manipulation, fake reviews, or compromised anonymity is investigated according to COPE guidelines.

4. Conflict of Interest Policy

4.1. Authors

Authors must disclose:

- financial relationships,
- institutional affiliations,
- personal connections that could influence the work.

This includes conflicts related to funding, consultancy, or political interests.

4.2. Editors

Editors must decline handling manuscripts where conflicts exist due to:

- collaborations within the past 3 years,
- institutional affiliation,
- personal relationships.

4.3. Reviewers

Reviewers must declare conflicts and decline review invitations if necessary.

5. Ethical Standards for Research

5.1. Human and Animal Research

Manuscripts must comply with:

- institutional ethics committees,
- national regulations,
- internationally accepted guidelines (e.g., Declaration of Helsinki).

Informed consent is required for human participants.

5.2. Field Studies

Fieldwork must comply with:

- local laws,
- conservation guidelines,
- required permits.

Sensitive geospatial data must be handled responsibly.

5.3. Historical and Archival Materials

Authors must ensure proper attribution, permissions when needed, and transparent contextualization.

6. Publication Ethics and Misconduct

The journal follows **COPE Core Practices**.

6.1. Unacceptable Practices

Include:

- plagiarism and self-plagiarism,
- data fabrication or falsification,
- duplicate submissions,
- unethical experimentation,
- inappropriate authorship practices,

- citation manipulation.

6.2. Investigations

Suspected misconduct triggers investigation based on COPE flowcharts.

Actions may include:

- rejection,
- retraction,
- corrections,
- notifying institutions,
- banning authors or reviewers.

7. Retraction, Correction, and Withdrawal Policy

7.1. Retractions

A retraction is issued when:

- findings are unreliable,
- data are fabricated,
- ethical violations occur.

Retracted articles remain accessible with a clear notice.

7.2. Corrections

Honest errors that do not invalidate the findings result in:

- correction notices,
- errata.

7.3. Expressions of Concern

Used for unresolved investigations.

7.4. Author-Initiated Withdrawal

Allowed only before acceptance and requires editorial approval.

8. Data and Materials Availability

8.1. Data Sharing

Authors are encouraged to deposit data in recognized repositories.

A **Data Availability Statement** is required.

8.2. Transparency

Authors must provide sufficient methodological detail to ensure reproducibility.

8.3. Sensitive Data

Sensitive geospatial or ecological information should be shared responsibly to avoid harm to species or communities.

9. Open Access Policy

9.1. Licensing

All articles are published under **CC BY 4.0**.

9.2. Author Rights

Authors retain copyright.

Self-archiving is permitted without embargo.

9.3. Reader Access

The journal provides immediate, free access to all content.

10. Article Processing Charges (APC)

10.1. Transparency

APC information is publicly available on the journal website.

10.2. Waivers and Reductions

The journal may waive APCs for authors working in:

- low-resource settings,
- conflict zones,
- regions with limited scientific infrastructure.

Requests should include a brief justification.

11. Editorial Transparency

11.1. Annual Reports

The journal may publish annual reports summarizing:

- publication statistics,
- acceptance rates,
- reviewer recognition,
- editorial improvements.

11.2. Updates to Policies

Editorial Policies may be updated periodically to align with evolving best practices.

12. Archiving and Preservation

12.1. Digital Preservation

Articles are archived through:

- DOI registration via CrossRef,
- long-term preservation systems (LOCKSS/CLOCKSS or equivalents),
- institutional repositories.

12.2. Sustainability

The publisher ensures permanent accessibility to all published content.

13. Editorial Communication and Appeals

13.1. Appeals

Authors may appeal decisions by providing a detailed justification.

Appeals are reviewed by independent editors.

13.2. Complaints

Complaints about editorial conduct or peer review are addressed confidentially and according to COPE procedures.

14. Inclusivity and Global Representation

The journal promotes diverse participation from:

- multiple regions,
- underrepresented communities,
- researchers working in difficult conditions.

Selection of editors, reviewers, and authors is based solely on scientific merit.

Conclusion

These Editorial Policies ensure that *Pollution and Diseases* operates according to international standards of scientific integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. By following these principles, the journal supports high-quality research and contributes to the global understanding of pollution and disease.