INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWERS

Pollution and Diseases — International Scientific Journal

https://pollution-diseases.org

Thank you for agreeing to review a manuscript for *Pollution and Diseases*.
Reviewers play a critical role in ensuring the quality, integrity, and scientific value of published research. The instructions below outline reviewer responsibilities, evaluation criteria, confidentiality standards, and ethical expectations.

1. The Purpose of Peer Review

Peer review aims to:

- evaluate the scientific quality and rigor of submitted manuscripts;
- provide constructive feedback to improve the work;
- ensure that published research is reliable, ethical, and relevant;
- support authors in refining their analyses and interpretations.

Reviews should be objective, fair, and based on evidence.

2. Reviewer Responsibilities

2.1. Confidentiality

- Manuscripts under review must be treated as confidential documents.
- Do not share or discuss the manuscript with others without permission from the editor.
- Do not use any unpublished information for personal research.

2.2. Objectivity

- Provide a balanced and constructive evaluation.
- Avoid personal criticism or subjective judgment unrelated to the research.

2.3. Timeliness

- Reviewers are expected to complete reviews within the timeframe provided (typically 10 working days).
- If unable to meet the deadline, please inform the editor immediately.

2.4. Conflict of Interest

Decline the review if you:

- collaborated with the authors in the past 3 years;
- are affiliated with the same institution;
- have financial, personal, or academic conflicts;
- cannot evaluate the manuscript objectively.

Disclose any potential conflicts when responding to the invitation.

2.5. Ethical Vigilance

Notify the editor if you suspect:

- plagiarism or text overlap,
- data manipulation or fabrication,
- unethical research practices,
- undisclosed conflicts of interest,
- duplicate publication.

3. How to Conduct the Review

3.1. Read the Entire Manuscript Carefully

Assess methods, results, clarity, and ethical compliance.

3.2. Assess Scientific Quality

Evaluate:

- originality and innovation,
- appropriateness of methods,
- quality and reproducibility of data,

- validity of conclusions,
- relevance to pollution–disease research.

3.3. Provide Constructive Feedback

Your comments should:

- identify strengths of the manuscript,
- explain weaknesses clearly,
- provide actionable suggestions for improvement,
- differentiate between essential revisions and optional improvements.

Avoid vague statements or unsupported criticism.

3.4. Write a Structured Review

Recommended structure:

- brief summary of the work,
- major comments (methodological or conceptual issues),
- minor comments (clarity, language, formatting),
- confidential comments to the editor (optional).

3.5. Recommendation Categories

Reviewers choose one of the following:

- Accept
- Minor revision
- Major revision
- Reject

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

4. Specific Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers should evaluate the manuscript using the following criteria:

4.1. Relevance to Journal Scope

Does the manuscript address pollution–disease interactions or a closely related field?

4.2. Originality

Does the study present new findings, ideas, or perspectives?

4.3. Methods and Data

- Are methods described clearly and appropriate for the study?
- Are analyses sound and reproducible?
- Are raw data available if necessary?

4.4. Interpretation and Conclusions

- Are conclusions supported by results?
- Are alternative interpretations considered?

4.5. Ethical Compliance

Check for:

- human/animal ethics approval,
- fieldwork permits,
- data transparency,
- responsible handling of sensitive locations or species.

4.6. Presentation

- Is the manuscript clearly written?
- Are figures and tables informative and properly labeled?
- Are references appropriate?

5. Confidential Comments to the Editor

Reviewers may include confidential comments about:

- concerns not appropriate to share with authors,
- suspicions of misconduct,
- conflict-of-interest issues,
- suggestions regarding suitability for publication.

Such comments remain strictly confidential.

6. Ethical Standards for Reviewers
Reviewers must:

- act with integrity,
- avoid bias,
- respect confidentiality,
- base evaluations on evidence only,
- avoid hostile or derogatory language,
- avoid demanding citations to their own work unless scientifically necessary.

The journal follows **COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers**.

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

- Reviewer identities are not revealed to authors.
- Reviewers must not attempt to identify authors or contact them directly.
- Reviewers may reveal their identity voluntarily after publication, but only through the editor.

8. Use of AI Tools in Peer Review
Reviewers may not upload manuscripts into AI systems that store or reuse content (e.g., ChatGPT without privacy mode).
AI tools may be used only for:

- grammar improvements in the review text,
- clarifying reviewer's own comments.

AI may not be used to analyze or rewrite manuscript content.

9. Recognition for Reviewers
Reviewers may:

- request certificates of reviewing,
- be listed annually in the journal's reviewer acknowledgments,
- record review activity in ORCID (if they wish),
- be invited to join the Editorial Board based on performance.

Reviewer anonymity is preserved unless voluntary disclosure is requested.

10. Declining a Review
Reviewers should decline invitations if:

- the manuscript is outside their expertise,
- they are unable to perform the review on time,
- they have conflicts of interest,
- they cannot remain objective.

Prompt responses help maintain the journal's rapid publication model.

11. Final Decision
The Editor-in-Chief makes the final decision, considering:

- reviewer recommendations,
- quality of revisions,
- scientific relevance.

Reviewers should not contact authors or attempt to influence decisions outside the review system.

Conclusion
The peer review process is essential to maintaining scientific integrity. Reviewers contribute significantly to the quality of work published in *Pollution and Diseases*. The journal appreciates the time, expertise, and care reviewers provide and is committed to supporting ethical, transparent, and rigorous evaluation practices.