APN Science Bulletin

Guide for reviewers

The APN Science Bulletin: Global Environmental Change is APN's flagship publication that started in 2011 as an annual collection of the results of APN-funded work, which is widely disseminated to the science, policy and practitioner communities. The Science Bulletin is published electronically as an open-access journal available full-text at www.apn-gcr.org/bulletin.

Papers submitted to the APN Science Bulletin are anonymously reviewed by independent experts (reviewers). Reviewers evaluate the importance of the topic, contribution to the literature, technical quality, and impact of the work. The managing editor then makes a publication decision based on reviewers' reports.

The reviewer must identify any fault in the paper and provide constructive feedback to the authors to improve their work before publication.

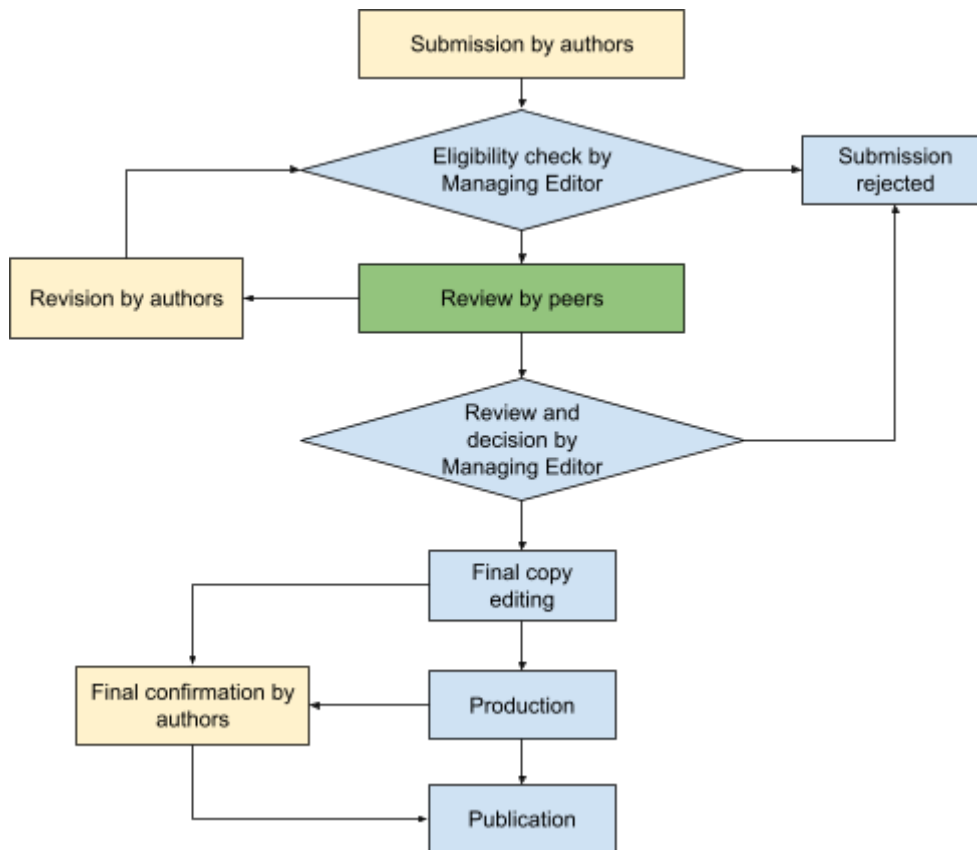## Before Accepting the Invitation to Review

Before accepting the invitation to review the article and become a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee. Please consider the following three things:

- Do you have time to do the review by the deadline?
- Does the topic of the article fall within your area of expertise?
- Do you have a potential conflict of interest?

Please respond to the invitation as soon as possible because a delay in your decision slows down the review process. If you decline the invitation, we would appreciate it if you could provide any suggestions for alternative reviewers.

Review Process

Articles are submitted by authors at the end of their APN project and will be sent to reviewers upon receipt. Once it is reviewed, revised and accepted by the Managing Editor, the article will be published online after a final copy editing process. The chart below shows the role of reviewers in the publication process.

Tone of Review

Be mindful that you are critiquing the article in question and not the author. Therefore, your comments should be specific and constructive, with the aim of helping the authors to publish in better quality.

Providing insight into any deficiencies is also essential. Please explain and support your judgement so that both editors and authors are better able to understand the basis of your comment.

Steps of Completing Your Review

1. Read through the article, take note of major important issues, and complete the Review Form. Write down any question or suggestion as appropriate. It may be helpful to consider these questions while reading the article:

- Is the article technically sound, understandable and free of obvious errors?
- Is the article an original contribution to existing literature and relevant to the objectives of the journal?

- Is the article appropriately organized?
    - Does the author provide a fair summary of literature or supporting background?
    - Are the methods appropriate, valid and clearly explained?
    - Do the discussion and conclusion properly respond to the problem stated and objectives of the paper?

In preparing your review, please keep in mind the following principles:

- Be **specific** in your criticisms or recommendations.
- Be **constructive** in your tone, to help authors improve the quality of their articles.
- Be **clear** about which suggestions are mandatory and which are optional.
- Be **objective** in judging the scientific and technical soundness of the article.

2. Write out any minor critiques of the article. Once you have laid out the pros and cons of the article, you are welcome to point out any other errors or mistakes in the text or any other aspects that can be improved. These may include numbering and captioning of graphs and tables, choice of words/abbreviations, missing information, inconsistencies etc. This can be done by indicating your edits/comments in the Word document with tracked changes turned on.

3. Review and submit your feedback. Go over your review and make sure that you are communicating your critiques and suggestions in a way as helpful as possible.

When everything is ready, return the completed reviewer form and the edited manuscript (if any) in Microsoft Word format back to the APN Secretariat.

Dealing with Grammatical Errors

Please keep in mind that you should avoid taking English language editing as a prioritized task. If an article has many grammatical errors, please bring the issue to the attention of the editorial team so we can follow up with editing or return the manuscript to the authors.