

The procedure for peer-reviewing and publishing of manuscripts in the “Geosystems of Transition Zones” Journal

Upon receipt of the manuscript, the editor-in-chief (deputy editor-in-chief) or the executive secretary determines the correspondence of the article to the profile of the journal, the requirements for formatting and sends it for review.

The editors of the Journal do not consider the manuscripts, that have been already published somewhere in the form of an article or part of another work. If this fact is founded, the editors will be forced to retract such publications.

The editors have the right to reasonably refuse author publication before peer-reviewing, based on primary screening: if the material does not fit the scope of the Journal, does not contain the subject of scientific research, does not meet ethical requirements, duplicates published materials, is not logically structured, is presented in indigestible language, etc.

In order to comply with copyright and publication standards, all manuscripts submitted to the editors of the Journal are screened for uniqueness using the Antiplagiarism system. If the editors have grounds for a more detailed screening, additional tools are used to search for borrowing.

Before submitting an article to the editorial office, authors can independently check their work on one of the following services: <http://www.text.ru> ; <http://www.antiplagiat.ru> ; <https://advego.ru> .

Inappropriate borrowing, from the editorial point of view, is the use (citation):

- any material in any volume without indicating the source;
- images, figures, tables, graphs, diagrams and any other forms of graphical presentation of information without indicating the source;
- any material without written permission, the authors or copyright holders of which prohibit the use of their materials without special consent.

Plagiarism in all forms (from presenting the results of someone else's research as your own to copying or paraphrasing essential parts of someone else's work without attribution to), as well as self-plagiarism (duplicating essential parts of your published works without appropriate links) are unethical and unacceptable. The author receives a reasoned refusal to publish indicating the sources of borrowing.

All scientific materials submitted for publication in the Journal are subjected to obligatory review by at least two peer-reviewers. Publication in the form of conference reports does not exclude their reviewing in the established order.

Peer-reviewers are members of the Editorial Board, as well as invited well-known experts in this field, who have publications on the topic of the reviewed article. Editor-in-chief, deputy editor-in-chief, and executive secretary select a particular peer-reviewer to examine an article. Review period is 2–3 months.

The choice of a reviewer is the prerogative of the Editorial Board, but authors can indicate in the cover letter 4–6 potential reviewers of their work (at least from two different regions or different countries; experts in this field; lack of cooperation, including co-authorship over the past three years; non-members of the Editorial Board of the Journal). The authors also have the right to indicate in the cover letter the names of those specialists who, in their opinion, should not send the manuscript for review due to a potential conflict of interest. This information is strictly confidential and is taken into account by the editors when organizing the review, except the cases when the editor has more reasonable grounds than the author.

The Journal adheres to **the policy of double-blind peer-review**, which means the identities of the authors are concealed from the reviewers, and vice versa. A review indicating its author is submitted to the Higher Attestation Commission or to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation upon a relevant request.

The editors send to the peer-reviewer a file with the article and a special questionnaire form. The text of review is placed in the form or/and in a separate sheet attached to the review form.

The main parameters for the expert assessment of the manuscript are as follows:

1. *What is the general nature of this material - experimental, theoretical, review work, the result of original scientific research, short report, etc.?*
2. *Does the content of the article match its title? Are the goal and objective (s) of the study clearly formulated? Are they reasoned by a literature review?*
3. *Is the construction of the text logical? Does the manuscript contain the structural components necessary for a scientific article: theoretical background: an overview of the current problem; problem statement with an emphasis on novelty; methods and techniques; description of the problem solution, experiment (simulation);*

discussion of results and conclusions; directions for future research and/or assessment of the contribution of this research to science.

4. *Are the requirements for the abstract (summary) are met: it is structured, it describes the objectives, methods, results and significance of the study. Is it possible to understand the essence of the study by abstract? Does it correlate with conclusions?*
5. *Are the methods and techniques used by this author in this study correct?*
6. *Do author's conclusions follow from the material presented and do they relate to the title of the article and the objectives of the study?*
7. *Is there any novelty in the scientific results and author's conclusions as compared to those existing in the literature? Whether it is clearly expressed in the article.*
8. *Does the bibliography match the content of the article. Does it contain modern (for the last 5–10 years) publications on the topic of the work?*
9. *Does mathematical and chemical formulas and symbols organically relate to the text? How necessary are they to understand the meaning of the scientific result?*
10. *Does the technical design of the figures match the purpose of the results visual presentation?*
11. *Language and style of presentation (accessible, clear, terminology is correct).*
12. *Other comments and recommendations that allow authors to improve the quality of the submitted work.*

The reviewer is notified that the articles submitted for review are the intellectual property of the authors and the information contained in them is confidential prior to its publication in the Journal, as well as the need to declare a conflict of interest, if any.

Peer-reviewers perform an assessment of articles for the Journal on a voluntary basis. Expert assessment must be objective and clear, with concrete reasoning, even if the manuscript, in their opinion, cannot be published.

Peer-reviewer, agreeing to review the materials, should:

- decline to review the manuscript if he is not sure that his qualifications correspond to the level of research presented in the manuscript, as well as if it is not possible to assess the article within the deadline set by the editors;

- decline to review if there is an obvious conflict of interest affecting the perception and interpretation of the manuscript materials;

- Review the materials within the deadline set by the editors; give an objective and reasoned assessment of the manuscript submitted for review without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, ethnic or geographical origin of the authors. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate;

- protect the confidentiality of any materials under review. He does not demonstrate it to other persons and does not discuss the manuscript with the colleagues. He is aware that the manuscripts are the private property of the authors and contain information that is not subject to disclosure. Copies of articles are not allowed;

- notify the editors of the discovered substantial similarity or coincidence between the manuscript and any other published work in the area of scientific competence of the reviewer; draw the author attention to significant published works that correspond to the scope of the article and are not included in the bibliography of the manuscript.

Following the results of review, the article may be:

- accepted for publication without any further changes;
- accepted for publication with some editorial and author's revisions, but it is not sent back to the peer-reviewer;
- accepted for publication once the authors have made major revisions. Under these circumstances, revised articles are sent back to the peer-reviewer for second opinion;
- found inappropriate for publication.

The decision on publication is made by the Editorial Board on the basis of at least two positive reviews within three months from the date of receipt of materials. Publication period is from 3 to 10 months. Reviews remain deposited in the Editorial Office for five years.

The article with copies of reviews and editorial notes is sent to the author. Returning a manuscript for revision does not mean its acceptance for publication. In the editorial file, the author finalizes the material and sends it along with a response letter. A response letter must be written in the file with a review or editorial report. In this letter the author should:

- point-by-point respond to the peer-reviewer's comments;
- indicate exactly what revisions were made in the article;

- write a convincing, polite objection if, in the opinion of the author, the reviewer is wrong;
- thank the reviewer for helpful comments and constructive criticism.

Revised article in the form accepted in the Journal and reflected in the Guide for Authors must be submitted to the editors no later than two weeks – one month after the recommendations receipt (depending on the degree of necessary revision). Revised article is usually sent back to the peer-reviewers for second opinion. The Editorial Board, based on the reviews and the author's response, determines the fate of the manuscript.

The editor reads the article accepted for publication again and agrees on the revisions related to the content with the author. The file ready for layout should be carefully read, since only minor edits are allowed.

If the authors refuse to revise the materials, they must notify the editors in writing or orally about their refusal. If the authors do not submit the revised version after two months from the date of sending the text of the review / letter with comments, the editors remove the article from the register.

In case of dissent with the reviewer opinion, the author can contact the Editorial Office with a reasonable appeal to send his article to another reviewer. In this case, the Editorial Board of the Journal either sends the article for additional reviewing, or presents the author with a reasonable refusal of publication. The decision on refusal to publish the manuscript is made in accordance with the recommendations of peer-reviewers.

Positive review is not a sufficient reason for the publication of a manuscript.

The final decision on the publication of an article and its timing is made by the Editorial Board, and in conflict situations - by the Editor-in-Chief (or his Deputy), who has the right to reject the article on serious grounds (conflict of interest, insufficient level of research novelty, etc.) or publish the article as a basis for discussion.

A manuscript not recommended by the Editorial Board and the Editor-in-Chief for publication will not be accepted for reconsideration.

The decision to accept the article for editing or a reasoned refusal is sent to the author in electronic form no later than three months after the manuscript submission to the Editorial Office.

After the Editorial Board makes a decision on admitting the article to print, the editors inform the author about this and indicate the publication term.

The final version of the article is agreed with all its authors.

Rejected manuscripts are not deposited and not return to the authors.

Author's originals of published articles, reviews and editorial opinions remain deposited in the Editorial Office for 5 years.