

Terms of Reference for IUCN Editorial Board members

Introduction

IUCN has served as a science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services since its establishment in 1948. As such a boundary organisation, the Union generates and publishes much information annually; including authoritative books, monographs, and other publications assigned ISBNs. The effective uptake of this information to guide policy makers and practitioners depends, among other things, on quality assurance: users of IUCN's information need to be confident of its credibility and reliability. The mechanism used throughout the world's scientific communities for such quality assurance is called peer review. IUCN has established an Editorial Board to support peer review of the Union's publications.

IUCN Editorial Board function and composition

The IUCN Editorial Board serves a) to support where requested the identification of potential peer reviewers for manuscripts produced for publication by the Union and b) as an independent, final guarantor of the scientific quality of publications to be allocated an ISBN by IUCN. It is small and operates through electronic communication and meetings, so as not to create any unnecessary bottleneck or expense. Its membership should be as balanced as possible across disciplinary expertise, geography, and gender, and include competence across IUCN's official languages.

The IUCN Editorial Board comprises:

- One representative of each of IUCN's expert Commissions. These are currently:
 - Commission on Ecosystem Management
 - Commission on Education and Communication
 - Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy
 - Species Survival Commission
 - World Commission on Environmental Law
 - World Commission on Protected Areas
- Chief of Staff, IUCN Secretariat
- Head, Communications, IUCN Secretariat
- Publications Officer, IUCN Secretariat (Editorial Board Coordinator)
- Chief Economist, IUCN Secretariat (Editorial Board Co-Chair)
- Chief Scientist, IUCN Secretariat (Editorial Board Co-Chair)

IUCN Editorial Board member roles

The roles of IUCN Editorial Board members are:

a) *Supporting the identification of potential peer reviewers*

Peer reviewers may be associated with IUCN or wholly outside of the Union, as long as they are experts on the subject and are not professionally (e.g. through reporting lines) or personally (e.g. family members) associated with the publication or its authors or editors. A minimum of two peer reviewers is required for IUCN publications; for edited volumes a minimum of two peer reviews per chapter is recommended.

On occasion, IUCN Units and Commissions may find it challenging to identify suitable, independent peer reviewers. In such cases, they may request support from the IUCN

Editorial Board. IUCN Units and Commissions seeking such support should convey the request to the Editorial Board Coordinator, along with the full manuscript in question. The Editorial Board Coordinator in turn will share the manuscript with the full Editorial Board. Editorial Board members are asked to provide suggestions of names and email addresses of suitable independent peer reviewers within one week. These suggestions will be compiled by the Editorial Board Coordinator, and conveyed back to the IUCN Unit or Commission in question.

Once recommendations of peer reviewers have been conveyed back to the IUCN Unit or Commission in question, the coordination of the peer review process itself (solicitation of peer reviewers, receipt of comments, authors' revision, re-review if necessary) should be handled by the Unit or Commission in question.

b) Serving as a light IUCN-wide clearance authority

Once the authors of a given IUCN manuscript have addressed peer reviewer comments point-by-point, and revised the manuscript accordingly (**Step 1**), the initial sign-off rests with the Global or Regional Director/Commission Chair concerned (**Step 2**). Annex I provides an example of the tracking table for documentation of peer reviewer comments, point-by-point explanation by authors of how these have been addressed, and initial sign off by Global or Regional Director/Commission Chair concerned.

The relevant project lead in the Unit/Commission concerned should then convey the signed tracking table and the final, peer reviewed, manuscript to the Editorial Board Coordinator (**Step 3**), who will circulate both documents in turn to the full Editorial Board.

Each Editorial Board member is expected to read the peer review comments and responses to these from the authors in the tracking table within one week (**Step 4**).

If they consider the peer review comments and author responses to these sufficiently robust to allow publication, they should send a short email to the Editorial Board Coordinator to confirm in well-phrased wording their sign-off (**Step 5**).

These confirmations are strongly encouraged from *all* Editorial Board members; at a minimum a quorum of eight is required. On receipt of such confirmation from the quorum of Editorial Board members, the Editorial Board Co-Chairs will sign off on the tracking table on behalf of the Editorial Board (**Step 6**). The Editorial Board Coordinator will inform the Editorial Board in a message with the subject 'Quorum reached' that a quorum has been met, and send the signed tracking table back to the Project Lead and cc- all editors and authors of the manuscript.

As soon as the rest of the steps laid out in the Publishing Guidelines have been completed, the Editorial Board Coordinator will proceed to allocate an ISBN (**Step 7**), and convey final approval for publication back to the Project Lead (**Step 8**).

Alternatively, an Editorial Board member may raise concern that peer review comments have not been addressed in a sufficiently robust way to allow publication. If this is the case, they explain their rationale for this concern in an email to the rest of the Editorial Board (**Step 9**). If the Editorial Board members concur that peer review comments have not been sufficiently addressed, the Editorial Board Co-Chairs will provide this rationale back to the relevant project lead and the Global or Regional Director/Commission Chair concerned (**Step 10**) to decide whether the manuscript should be re-revised or whether it should be rejected (**Step 11**).

If the Editorial Board members do not concur by email, a conference call will be scheduled to discuss accordingly. Annex II illustrates these steps in the process graphically.

Additional considerations

While the full manuscript is always circulated to the IUCN Editorial Board along with the tracking table, the Editorial Board process is *not* designed for commenting on the manuscript itself, but to review the associated peer review tracking table.

IUCN Editorial Board members should not transfer a manuscript in any form to third parties at any point in the process. All manuscripts, tracking tables, and correspondence among IUCN Editorial Board members should be treated as confidential.

IUCN Editorial Board members are expected to recuse themselves from consideration of manuscripts if there is a conflict of interest, i.e. if it concerns manuscripts of projects in which they have been involved, or if they are associated with the authors (e.g., through reporting lines, family members).

IUCN Editorial Board members should endeavour to respect the deadline for response on tracking tables established by the Editorial Board Coordinator. If the deadline passes without the quorum being met, the Editorial Board Coordinator will send a message to all members with the subject line 'Reminder'.

The fully signed tracking table will be archived in the publication record in the Library database, accessible by the Editorial Board Coordinator, once the publication has been finalised and published.

IUCN publications not assigned IUCN ISBNs (including those instead assigned ISSNs, i.e., periodicals, published by external publishers, etc.) are outside of the Terms of Reference of the Editorial Board.

Annex I. IUCN peer review tracking table template

Publication title		
Key words		
Relevant IUCN Resolutions, etc.		
Name + email address of each author* (* All authors will receive a notification once the Editorial Board has officially signed off this peer review tracking table)		
<p>Please note: Peer reviewers are encouraged to provide <u>substantive</u> (rather than editorial) and <u>detailed</u> comments.</p> <p>All publications that will be assigned an ISBN must be peer reviewed by a <i>minimum</i> of two <i>external</i> experts.</p> <p>Important: For edited volumes, one or both of the following approaches to peer review are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A minimum of two peer reviews per chapter (these should be in addition to comments from editor(s), but can include peer reviews by authors of other chapters in the edited volume), and/or ○ A minimum of two peer reviews of the overall volume (these should be by experts who are not involved in the publication in any other way) <p>Before peer reviewing (and submission to the Editorial Board), please make sure that the final manuscript includes: [for project lead to complete]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foreword by DG (draft) (if applicable): YES/NO ■ Executive summary/Abstract (mandatory): YES/NO ■ Key messages (if applicable): YES/NO ■ Acknowledgements (mandatory): YES/NO ■ Table of contents (mandatory): YES/NO ■ Line numbers (for ease of reference for the peer reviewers): YES/NO 		
<p><u>Sign off that all peer reviewer comments have been appropriately addressed by the authors:</u></p>		
Global or Regional Director / Commission Chair* concerned	[Signature]	[Date]
Co-Chairs on behalf of IUCN Editorial Board	[Signature]	[Date]
<p>When signed by the Global or Regional Director / Commission Chair, please return this form to the IUCN Editorial Board Coordinator (sarina.vanderploeg@iucn.org). Please make sure all authors have agreed with all revisions made!</p> <p>* Approval by the Commission Chair authorises the use of the Commission logo in the publication.</p>		
<p><u>Peer reviewer #1</u> Name: Affiliation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> By ticking this box, I give permission to IUCN to retain all data (incl. my name and affiliation) in this peer review tracking table to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation. (IUCN retains completed peer review tracking tables as a permanent record associated with final publications (with access to this record restricted to the IUCN Publications staff))</p>		

Questions for peer reviewer:				<i>(Kindly explain your answers in detail)</i>		Author response:	
1. Does the publication help to expand knowledge or add value?							
2. Are the inferences, opinions and recommendations drawn in the manuscript clearly documented as being such?							
3. Are the inferences, opinions and recommendations drawn in the manuscript reasonable?							
4. Is the analysis organised coherently?							
5. Is any key information missing from the manuscript? Please provide citations if so.							
6. Do you have any other general comments, suggestions or concerns about the manuscript?							
Specific comments:	From			To		Peer reviewer comment	Author response and notes
	Chapter #	Page #	Line #	Page #	Line #		
Comment 1							
Comment 2							
Etc.							

Annex II. IUCN Editorial Board clearance process (steps)

