



**Journal of Equity in Sciences and Sustainable Development  
(JESSD)**

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**Reviewer Guideline**

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Editorial Office  
Madda Walabu University**

## **Preamble**

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The Journal of Equity in Sciences and Sustainable Development (JESSD), published by Madda Walabu University, is dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary research that advances equity, justice, and sustainability across diverse fields. As a peer-reviewed, open-access journal, JESSD upholds rigorous academic standards through a double-blind review process, ensuring impartiality and quality. Reviewers play a critical role in maintaining the journal's commitment to originality, scientific rigor, and ethical integrity by providing constructive, evidence-based feedback. This guideline outlines the expectations and responsibilities of reviewers to support authors in enhancing their work and to assist editors in making informed publication decisions, ultimately contributing to impactful scholarship that addresses global development challenges.

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## **1. General Information**

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The Journal of Equity in Sciences and Sustainable Development (JESSD), eISSN: 2523-1901, is an international, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary knowledge at the intersection of science, equity, and sustainable development. The journal provides a platform for critical debates, innovative research, and policy dialogue that promote fairness, inclusivity, and resilience in addressing local, regional, and global development challenges.

JESSD is owned and published by Madda Walabu University. The journal publishes original papers that have not been previously published including original research articles, theoretical and conceptual papers, review articles, case studies, short policy briefing, and research notes that critically engage with the theories, practices, and policy implications of sustainable development across multiple sectors. The journal particularly values contributions that bridge the gap between scientific evidence and policy/practice, with a focus on equity, justice, and inclusive innovation.

JESSD is an open access, does not charge any fees to authors for publication or to readers for accessing content, ensuring equitable dissemination of knowledge. Contributions are submitted in English and the journal welcomes submissions from researchers worldwide, regardless of gender, career stage, or ethnic and religious affiliation. The journal is issued biannually, in January and June, and is indexed in Google Scholar, AJOL, EBSCO, EJOL, and Copernicus, providing broad visibility and academic reach. Digital copies of all articles are permanently archived in the Madda Walabu University Institutional Repository and OJS open-access repository. In addition, JESSD participates in LOCKSS and CLOCKSS digital preservation systems, and each article is assigned a DOI, ensuring long-term accessibility, discoverability, and citation integrity.

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## **2. Peer Review Process**

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JESSD follows a double-blind peer review policy, ensuring that the identities of both authors and reviewers remain concealed to maintain fairness and impartiality. The process involves the following steps:

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**Desk Review:** Each submitted manuscript is first reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor (section editors) to confirm its alignment with JESSD's scope, formatting standards, and originality requirements.

**Reviewer Selection and Assignment:** Once a submission passes the desk review, it is considered for external peer review. The Associate Editor assigns each manuscript to at least two independent reviewers with expertise in the relevant subject area. Reviewers must not be affiliated with the authors' institutions or have recent joint publications with them. First, an anonymized abstract is first shared with potential reviewers to confirm their expertise and willingness to review.

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## 2.1 Reviewer's checklists

Before reviewers accept or decline an invitation to review, the following several questions to be considered:

- **Are you qualified?** Or does the manuscript really match your area of expertise? Only accept if you feel that you can provide a high-quality review report.
  - **Is there any potential conflict of interest?** If there is, please disclose this to the editor when you respond. Potential conflicts of interest may include if you have a strong relationship (both positive and negative feelings) about one of the authors or if you have published papers or co-authored with one of the co-authors, and other relationships.
  - **Do you have time to review?** Before you accept the review, first make sure you can meet the deadline. Sending in a review long after the deadline will delay the publication process and frustrate the editor and authors.
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**Initial Assessment:** After agreeing to review, the reviewers receive the full anonymized manuscript with all author details removed, together with a review form outlining the evaluation criteria. The review form and reviewer guideline can be accessible in JESSD website/[www.jessdmwu.edu.et](http://www.jessdmwu.edu.et) or, when necessary, directly by the Editorial Office/[JESSDeditorial@mwu.edu.et](mailto:JESSDeditorial@mwu.edu.et)

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## 2.2 Evaluation Criteria:

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Reviewers assess manuscripts submitted to JESSD based on their alignment with the journal's scope and guidelines (<http://jessdmwu.edu.et>) and the following criteria:

- ✓ **Originality and Significance:** The manuscript should pose a clear and novel research question, offering new insights or perspectives that contribute to equity, science, and sustainable development. It must demonstrate the potential to extend or advance existing literature.
- ✓ **Scientific Rigor:** The research approach, methods, or models must be academically sound, reproducible, and appropriate, with data and analysis supporting the conclusions and possible implications.
- ✓ **Evidence and Conclusions:** Findings must be supported with appropriate evidence or provide reasonable extensions to justify the conclusions drawn.
- ✓ **Relevance to JESSD's Scope:** The study must align with issues of equity, justice, inclusivity, or sustainability and demonstrate policy or practical implications across multidisciplinary fields such as engineering and technology, innovation, health and medicine, agriculture and natural resource management, tourism and biodiversity, and law, social sciences, and humanities.
- ✓ **Clarity and Structure:** The manuscript should be intelligible, well-organized, and presented in Standard English, while also adhering to JESSD's formatting guidelines.
- ✓ **Ethical Compliance:** Submissions must adhere to the highest ethical standards, including free from plagiarism, proper acknowledgment and citation of sources, and, where applicable, documented ethical approvals for research involving human participants, animals, or sensitive data. Authors are also required to ensure full transparency in declaring funding sources and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest.

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### 3. Review Report

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Once a reviewer accepts an invitation, they should understand that their review report is critical in assisting the editors to evaluate the manuscript's suitability for publication in JESSD. The report must directly address the journal's review criteria, enabling editors to make an informed decision on whether the manuscript should be accepted, revised, or rejected. Beyond guiding editorial decisions, the review also supports authors in strengthening their work by offering constructive, clear, and evidence-based feedback. Reviewer comments should always be professional,

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courteous, specific, and constructive, with the goal of helping authors improve their manuscript to meet publication standards. Personal remarks, ad hominem statements, or disclosure of the reviewer's identity are not permitted, unless explicitly invited by the journal.

### **3.1 Elements that a reviewer's report should include:**

The review report should consider the following aspects of the manuscript:

#### **3.1.1 Key arguments or results**

Giving your overall opinion and general observations of the article is essential, especially providing evidence of any deficiencies of the manuscript is important. Reviewer can provide an overview of the key messages of the paper by highlighting what finds interesting or notable from the manuscript. You are encouraging to provide detail explanation and support your arguments so that your review is sound to both editors and authors that are able to fully understand the intellectual behind your comments. It is also critically important to indicate whether your comments are your own intuition or are reflection based on the manuscripts' data and evidence.

#### **3.1.2 Validity**

The reviewer's evaluation of the soundness and robustness of the research question and conclusions. It needs to examine what research questions do the authors address in the manuscript, e.g., are clearly stated? Especially, if there are errors (whether logical, analytical, ethical or other) that prohibit the manuscript's publication, the reviewers can describe in detail.

#### **3.1.3 Data and/or methodology**

The methods that authors have employed to address the research question are one of the most important elements used to judge the overall scientific quality/soundness of the research paper. The assessment of the validity of the approach, the quality of the data, and the quality of presentation is part of the review report. Especially, it is important to clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the method described in the manuscript. Reviewers are asked to assess all the data including in the analysis and provided as a supplementary information. It is satisfied that the methodology is sufficiently robust, further it also needs to examine any data in the form of figures, tables, or images. It is noted that reviewers need to look for potential sources of bias in the methods that the study was designed and carried out.

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Authors may ask to attach supplementary data and information along with their submission to enable research audiences to intermingle and engross more thoroughly with their research after publication. Therefore, please be aware that links to data might therefore be present along with the main submission files. These items therefore should also receive the attention of reviewers during the peer-review process. Manuscripts may also contain database identifiers or accession numbers, e.g., DOI; however, if any aspect of the data is outside the scope of the reviewer's expertise, it should be genuinely noted in the review report or in the comments to the editor.

#### **3.1.4 Analytical approach**

The assessment of the strength of the analytical approach, e.g., the validity and robustness of any statistical tests, appropriate statistical tools employed, or logical coherence of any arguments developed is critical element in the peer-review process. Therefore, it is important that peer-reviewers have a solid understanding of statistics, and to carefully examine the statistical tools and how statistical results are reporting in the manuscript text. However, if any aspect of the analytical approach is outside the scope of reviewers' expertise, it should be carefully noted in the review report or in the comments to the editor.

#### **3.1.5 Contribution of the Manuscript**

Please state whether the manuscript contributes to the body of knowledge/literature. One of the most important criteria that JESSD requires is that a manuscript should report something new, specific, and not simply recurrence what is already known in the literature. Especially if the manuscript simply brings what is already known, please provide evidence. Therefore, the reviewer should carefully assess the originality (or contribution, addition of knowledge to scientific literature or in the field of the manuscript). If the submission is review, it is also important to evaluate the importance of the topic/scope of the review, originality of the review, timeliness, the breadth and accuracy of the discussion, indicates the best avenues for future research, and comment whether the author presents the most relevant recent advances in the field and it is critical to see the references are pertinent to the topic and cover both theoretical literature and more recent empirical evidences along with presentation of results, discussion, and possible implications/lessons inferred from the review article.

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### 3.1.6 Suggested improvement

Encouraging suggestions for the improvement of the manuscript, e.g., including experiments, data, additional discussion, and standards of English usage that could help strengthen the manuscript and make it suitable for publication in the journal. However, comments should be limited to the scope of the manuscript; that is, they should only include what can be reasonably addressed in a revision and evade giving suggestions that would significantly change the scope of the manuscript. The Editors will assess all the suggestions given by the reviewers and provide additional guidance to the authors. The reviewers provide an opportunity to provide comments to author and confidential comments to the editor.

## 4. Ethical Guidelines

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Reviewers for JESSD must treat all manuscripts and review reports as strictly confidential. They should not share, discuss, or use any part of the manuscript outside the review process, even after publication, without explicit permission from the Editor. Any concerns about plagiarism, data fabrication, academic misconduct, or ethical issues must be reported directly to the Editorial Office with supporting evidence. Recommendations to cite a reviewer's own work should only be made when scientifically relevant and necessary, never to increase personal citation counts or visibility.

In addition, reviewers are also expected to act with integrity, fairness, and impartiality. They must not use unpublished data, methods, or ideas from a manuscript for personal or institutional advantage. Reviews should be based solely on the academic quality of the submission, without bias related to the authors' nationality, gender, institution, or background. Moreover, reviewers should respect the views of fellow reviewers and contribute to maintaining a constructive and professional peer review process.

## 5. Overall review evaluation format

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Check in the boxes which, in your opinion, best describe the manuscript.

<b>Review criteria</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Marginal (2)</b>	<b>Acceptable (3)</b>	<b>Good (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
Formulation of the problem / Clarity of objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of literature review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Robustness of research methodology (sampling, data quality, and tools employed)	<input type="radio"/>				
Data analysis (scientific procedures and appropriate statistical tools employed)	<input type="radio"/>				
Significance of findings or discussion	<input type="radio"/>				
Clarity of recommendations or implications	<input type="radio"/>				
Conclusion (extension of results)	<input type="radio"/>				
Contribution to knowledge, literature and/or practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Standard use of language, e.g., grammar, spelling, readability, clarity...)	<input type="radio"/>				
Appropriate referencing and citation	<input type="radio"/>				

## 6. Reviewers' recommendation

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At the end of the review process, reviewers for JESSD are required to make a clear recommendation regarding the manuscript's suitability for publication. This recommendation guides the editors in their final decision and must be supported with detailed comments in the review report.

**Reject:** The manuscript is not suitable for publication in JESSD due to serious flaws in originality, methodology, ethical standards, or relevance to the journal's scope. The reviewer must explain the reasoning clearly, so that both the editors and authors understand the basis of the decision.

**Revise:** The manuscript shows potential but requires improvements:

- a) **Major Revision:** Substantial changes needed (e.g., additional analysis, restructured arguments, stronger evidence, expanded discussion). The paper will be re-evaluated after revision.
- b) **Minor Revision:** Limited changes needed (e.g., language clarity, formatting, minor methodological details). The revised paper may be accepted after editorial review.

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**Accept:** The manuscript meets JESSD's standards in terms of originality, rigor, clarity, and ethical compliance and can be published without the need for further revisions.

## **7. Reviewers' Recognition**

As a token of appreciation, we would like to provide you a review recognition certificate from the Editorial Office.

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## Appendix: Reviewer Form

### I. Reviewer's Information (for record only)

Full Name:	
Academic qualification:	
Field of specialization:	
Academic rank:	
Affiliation:	
E-Mail:	
Country:	

### II. Manuscript Information

Manuscript Number:	
Manuscript Title:	

### III. Manuscript Evaluation Report

Manuscript section	Detail comments given for authors
Abstract	
Introduction	
Relevant and updated literature	
Methodology	
Results and Discussion	
Conclusions and recommendations	
References	
Additional comments	

### IV. Comments to Editor:

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### V. Overall Manuscript Evaluation Form

Review criteria	Poor (1)	Marginal (2)	Acceptable (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)

Formulation of the problem / Clarity of objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of literature review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Robustness of research methodology (sampling, data quality, and tools employed)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data analysis (scientific procedures and appropriate statistical tools employed)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Significance of findings or discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity of recommendations or implications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conclusion (extension of results)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribution to knowledge, literature and/or practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard use of language, e.g., grammar, spelling, readability, clarity...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appropriate referencing and citation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**VI. Reviewer recommendation about the manuscript (put an X mark)**

<b>Reject</b> (explain your reasoning in the report)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<b>Revise</b> (either major or minor <i>revision</i> )	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Accept</b> ( <i>manuscript can be accepted without revision</i> )	<input type="radio"/>