General guidelines for reviewers

GAIA is a peer-reviewed inter- and transdisciplinary journal for scientists and other interested parties concerned with the causes and analyses of environmental and sustainability problems and their solutions.

Compared to disciplinary journals, *GAIA* attaches greater importance to the literary quality of its articles. *GAIA* appeals to a heterogeneous and critical audience. Articles published in *GAIA* are chosen for their scientific content as well as their ease of comprehension and significance to readers of various scientific disciplines.

In detail, *GAIA*'s transdisciplinary focus implies that:
- Papers (only original ones should be submitted) begin with an introduction suitable for non-specialists.
- The significance of the topic in the environmental context is emphasised.
- The style is discursive, short and precise.
- Papers end with practical conclusions.

The *Research* section of *GAIA* contains three categories of texts:
1. *original scientific articles* of environmental and sustainability research;
2. *review articles* that place environmental problems and development in a broader context; and
3. *design reports* which focus on the configuration of inter- and transdisciplinary research projects in terms of their research and communication design.

   Design reports are a *GAIA*-specific format. The possible contents and requirements are disclosed in specific guidelines for authors (these can be consulted here) and reviewers are requested to respond to some additional, specific questions. In short: Design reports are not merely reprints of the proposal or epistemological treatises but rather discuss the underlying reasoning for the project design and critically present the design principles. Design reports look at the decisions taken concerning the design of the research and communication, offering an explanation and critique of the project design and the processes shaping it, paying special attention to the question of how partners from scientific and non-scientific cultures communicate, what form of communication architectures they have, and how they handle the results. Design reports contribute to raising the level of experience in the setting-up and implementation of inter- and transdisciplinary projects with a focus on research and communication. They include recommendations or lessons learnt. Design reports can be published before a project terminates.

All articles are subjected to a double-blind peer review and cross-read by at least one person foreign to the subject. Expert opinions are based on
- the article's scientific quality (e.g., theory, methods, literature relevant to the subject),
- the quality of presentation (e.g., length, conciseness, style),
- the novelty of empirical data, methods, theoretical analyses, interpretation and approaches to problem-solving,
- the article's relevance for environmental sciences.

The non-expert reviewer will evaluate the transdisciplinarity of the synthesis, relevance in terms of action and comprehensibility of the manuscript.

Additionally, the Editors encourage the reviewers to provide detailed comments. Especially in case of recommended acceptance for publication concrete hints are useful to help the authors review their papers.

Referee reports can be submitted to the Editors by mail, fax or e-mail. The review process is double-blind. The referee reports are sent to the authors both in case of acceptance and rejection. In case of a generally positive feedback, the authors are invited by the Editors to carefully consider the referee reports and to re-submit a new version of their paper.

Referees are kindly requested to submit their reports **within three weeks**. If prompt attention to a manuscript is precluded, we ask to propose other referees.

GAIA
ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIETY
ÖKOLOGISCHE PERSPEKTIVEN FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND GESELLSCHAFT

Manuscript Reviewer Form

Please note: It is essential that you detail your recommendation on separate pages. Please refer to the respective passage (page, line); do not write comments directly into the manuscript. To be most helpful, your review should follow the guidelines for reviewers.

Title:_____

_____

Recommendation

☐ I recommend the publication of this article, usually following minor revisions.
☐ This article requires major changes; decision of acceptance or rejection after revision.
☐ I cannot recommend the publication of this article.
☐ Because of the topic, I recommend the publication of this article in the following periodical instead:

_____

Evaluation (see also guidelines for reviewers)

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
Contents				
1 Significance				
1.1 Is the topic significant?	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Is the article of special interest within its discipline?	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Is the article of interest for *GAIA*? (inter- or transdisciplinary; significance for environmental sciences)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Originality Does the article contain new data/methods/ interpretations/analyses/approaches to problem-solving?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 Scientific quality				
3.1 Is the topic handled critically?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2 Are all relevant aspects presented?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3 Are the references adequate and current?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4 Are precise conclusions available?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5 Are the conclusions justified sufficiently?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 *Design report* (questions 4.1 to 4.7 apply to design reports only)				
4.1 Is the project inter-/transdisciplinary?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Is the understanding of inter-/transdisciplinarity explained?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Is the research *design* presented/discussed? (development of the research questions/involvement of participants/explanation of the inter-/transdisciplinary approach)	☐	☐	☐	☐

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no

4.4 Is the communication *design* presented/discussed?
(the processes and structures/communication with the
public and stakeholders and among researchers/
illustration of method and content of communication/
demonstration of communication as exchange
process and, if applicable, an assessment of progress)

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
4.4	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.5 Are the decisions and design principles critically
presented and reflected?

4.6 Are the approach and experiences gained evaluated?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
4.5	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.6	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.7 Does the design report advance the knowledge of
setting-up and implementing inter-/transdisciplinary
projects?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
4.7	☐	☐	☐	☐

Exposition

5 Text

5.1 Is the text comprehensible for scientists in other
fields?

5.2 Is the text arranged clearly?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
5.1	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.3 Does the length of the article conform to the content?
If no, please specify possible abridgments/
deepenings in the detailed commentary.

5.4 Are style and literary standard adequate?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
5.3	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.4	☐	☐	☐	☐

6 Abstract
Does the abstract contain the main fields of the
article and the line of reasoning?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
6	☐	☐	☐	☐

7 Keywords
Is the selection of keywords suitable and complete?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
7	☐	☐	☐	☐

8 Tables and figures

8.1 Are the tables and figures scientifically correct?

8.2 Do the tables underline and complete the statements
of the text?

8.3 Do the figures illustrate the article?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
8.1	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.2	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.3	☐	☐	☐	☐

9 Title

9.1 Does the title attract attention?

9.2 Does the title suit the article content?

	yes	to some extent	rather not	no
9.1	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.2	☐	☐	☐	☐

Detailed commentary