

General guidelines for reviewers of Forum papers

GAIA's Mission

GAIA is a peer-reviewed academic journal that provides a platform for presenting and promoting theoretical and empirical insights associated with sustainability transformations. Articles focus on analyzing, interpreting, reflecting on, and discussing the diversity and dynamics of human-nature relationships informed by ecological knowledge and directed towards sustainability.

GAIA particularly encourages submissions that transgress disciplinary boundaries, transcend established knowledge domains, or explore novel methodologies, such as participatory and transdisciplinary research processes.

With a clear commitment to Open Access, GAIA addresses science and practice alike, and aims to foster society's competence for sustainability-oriented action.

GAIA speaks to a heterogeneous and critical audience. Articles are chosen for their scientific quality, thematic significance, and accessibility to readers from different backgrounds and disciplines.

GAIA also offers formats that promote international networking within the community and support early-career researchers.

GAIA is published by oekom, an independent publisher committed to high ethical and sustainability standards. oekom publishes a variety of scholarly books and journals that address issues relevant to a sustainable future.

The Forum section

In the Forum section, original papers are published including essays, discussion papers, and opinion pieces. Forum contributions can also relate to articles that have appeared in recent *GAIA* issues in the sections Forum or Research, in that they directly react or shed light on additional ramifications of the discussed topic.

As such, the Forum aims to challenge current understanding by providing a "forum" to articulate substantiated opinions, to debate controversial issues, and to identify emerging problems. Forum articles must be based on good science. The ideal forum contribution has a provocative message and explains its argument in a way that is easy to follow. It presents clear and concise opinions, questions, or conclusions, which should be well justified, coherent, and fair to counter arguments, while meeting academic requirements (as opposed to newspaper or blog style).

Review process

All Forum articles are subjected to a **double-blind peer review**. Responsibilities of reviewers are outlined in *GAIA's Code of Conduct*.

The Editors encourage reviewers to provide detailed comments. In particular, when recommending acceptance for publication, specific suggestions are valuable to help authors refine their papers. Referee reports are shared with the authors, regardless of whether the manuscript is accepted or rejected. For submissions receiving generally positive feedback, the Editors invite authors to carefully address the reviewers' comments and submit a revised 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.

Review form for Forum papers

1. **Scholarly quality:** All factual statements, propositions, and causal relations that are mentioned in the manuscript need to be based on scientific insights, evidence or well-documented experience. However, the ideas, concepts, and relationships proposed may be unusual and innovative.

Please evaluate the article's scholarly quality.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

2. **Topicality:** Articles need to be up to date and relate to current problems: The authors should refer to relevant previous research and sources. The article should either add to an ongoing debate or present new concepts, ideas, and/or theses in order to spark a new discussion.

Please rate the topicality of the manuscript.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

3. **Sound argumentation:** The argumentation must be consistent and sound. For value statements, underlying assumptions should be made explicit and explained in their respective epistemological and socio-cultural context.

Please evaluate the article's quality of argumentation.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

4. **Relevance.** Authors should critically engage with the relevance of their own contribution for a transformation towards sustainability, taking into account the scale and temporal dimension of the challenge, and drawing explicit and substantial conclusions for science, practice, or policy.

Please rate the manuscript's relevance.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

5. **Clear statements with a provocative or inquisitive character:** The Forum aims to encourage deeper reflection on a subject, to spark debate, and to motivate readers to react and respond. Frequently, we try to find Forum articles that give pros and cons.

Please assess whether the article is able to stimulate discussion.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

6. **Reflexivity:** Authors should reflect their contribution with an awareness of the particular challenges facing environmental or sustainability issues, often including high ambiguity, controversy, and value-laden problem framings.

Please rate the level of reflexivity.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

7. **Accessibility:** Articles need to be written in a way that is appropriate for a dialogue with the intended audience (e.g., science-policy interface, discourse within academia, ...). The writing style should be clear and concise, avoiding specialist jargon.

Please evaluate the article's accessibility.

- High
- Rather high
- Rather low
- Low

8. **Detailed commentary:** Please note: It is essential that you detail your recommendations. The text box can be expanded to a suitable size. Please refer to the respective passage of the manuscript (line); do not write comments directly into the manuscript.