



## Editorial

### ADAPTING MEANS CHANGES: SOME MODIFICATIONS TO EDITORIAL PROCESSES IN TSAES

The digital era has brought an ever-changing environment for scholarly publishing. There are changes directed towards several aspects of editorial processes for example; usability, discoverability, user friendly interface and speed of response amongst many other. At Tropical and Subtropical Agroecosystems we are aiming to adopt those standards which will help to improve the journal quality. Thus, we are describing some changes that will be taking place from 2020 onwards.

One of the most important standards adopted by the scholarly publishing community is the journal article tag suite, also known as JATS, which is a XML tagging system. Its adoption is aimed to increase interoperability and preservation of the scholarly record. Tagging a manuscript to fully comply with JATS standards is a professional work and thus we will be outsourcing it to maintain the cost as low as possible. As a result of JATS XML tagging we will also be introducing some changes in TSAES paper formatting and layout starting with the first issue in 2020. We have also initiated the institutional procedures to obtain the DOI incorporated into the papers. This process is carried out through our University institutional channels and we hope to have DOI ready to assign sometime during 2020. In order to implement both aspects we will be increasing the article processing charge (APC) to \$150.00 USD as both, JATS XML tagging and DOI have additional cost per paper which will be paid to external services (DOI also requires an annual membership). We are making our best effort to keep the APC as low as possibly as we are a public university and a non-profit organization.

Additional changes to align TSAES papers to scholarly publishing standards will noted. For example, adoption of the Harvard-Anglia reference system which was selected due to the availability of resources (Style guides) with a CC-BY license. Moreover, it is incorporated into Word© reference manager tool as well as most reference manager software. The summary/resumen requirements will be adjusted to follow recommendation from the Mexican Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) for scientific journals. Thus, we are adopting a *structured* standard which surely will improve the quality and clarity of summary. Accordingly, the author guidelines will be adjusted and a transition period on content and formatting of papers is unavoidable.

Regarding the speed of review and publication. We want to improve turnaround time for papers. However, authors must be aware that the publication of quality papers relies on the help of peers performing reviews. Currently, there is an increased pressure on researchers to perform a higher number of peer reviews which cause a lower acceptance rate to invitation from journals to perform this activity. In order to improve response time and help authors, editors and the journal performance, we will be adopting the following policy. After 3 months of receiving a paper if editors are not able to obtain peers accepting to perform the reviews, we will be archiving the submission and returning the manuscript to authors which then will be free to submit their paper to any other journal. If peers have accepted to perform review, the author will be given the option to wait for three more months. Our goal will be to handle papers within the journal systems for a period not longer than 6 months. We believe authors will appreciate a faster turnaround time whichever the result. In the meantime, as a transition period, we will continue to handle papers which already have submission time longer than 6 months giving the opportunity to authors to decide. We expect that these changes will help to improve the journal performance.

Frequent readers might have noticed an increase in the number of papers including an appendix after the reference section. The increased requirements of funding bodies, societal needs and researcher self interest are driving the need to publish supporting data for published papers, which must also be freely available. There are several options available to achieve this goal. For a short time, we have used the appendix as a tool for this

purpose but very soon became clear that it was not the most adequate option to host the diverse spectrum of data. Thus, we will be establishing a new journal section *Supporting database papers* which will be hosting papers presenting the full database of papers published in TSAES. The guidelines for this new section will be available soon.

Finally, on a different note, the present issue (Vol 22, No. 3) includes a selection of 6 papers from the 1<sup>st</sup> International congress on Sustainable Agriculture held at Universidad Técnica de Ambato (UTA), Ecuador (2017). A selection of the offered/submitted and invited plenary lecture papers were sent for peer review following the standard journal procedures. The outcome; 25 papers from a total of 80 were approved for publication (after the reviewing rounds). Plenary lectures were presented as Invited reviews and the remaining manuscripts were classified as research papers, short notes and forum. The first papers were published in Vol. 21, No. 1 (2018).

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