

# Workshop

**Writing manuscripts for Official Statistics journals: Guidelines for practitioners and researchers:  
8, 10 and 15 February 2022**

**ISI/ISR, IAOS/SJIAOS IASS/SS, StatisticsSweden/JOS, Statistics  
Canada/SMJ, Wiley, IOSPress**

## SESSION 3: FEBRUARY 15, 2022

3.3 Submission, review and revision, from the content perspective. Ingegerd Jansson, Statistics Sweden/Pieter Everaers, IAOS

### When are you ready to submit to the journal

A submission to a journal is a final step. Before that;

- Internal presentations and reports, presentations and proceedings at conferences, etc. To get general reactions from peers.
- Let more experienced colleagues read your manuscript before submission, also look into the language used
- Read other papers from the journal you have chosen to submit to
- Check the guidelines of the journal you want to submit to
- Use a checklist as for example based on the advice presented by Steve Raywood in the foregoing presentation

## SESSION 3: FEBRUARY 15, 2022

3.3 Submission, review and revision, from the content perspective. Ingegerd Jansson, Statistics Sweden/Pieter Everaers, IAOS

In this and the next presentation focus on the submission, review and revision procedure

- 1. Why such rigid procedures
- 2. What are the common steps in the procedures as in use
- 3. Review and revision according to the content
- 4. The technical aspects of the submission (next presentation)

## SESSION 3: FEBRUARY 15, 2022

The submission/review/revision procedure: an overview of the main steps



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3.3 Submission, review and revision, from the content perspective. Ingegerd Jansson, Statistics Sweden/Pieter Everaers, IAOS

The submission/review/revision procedure : what is the objective of this rather rigid and strict procedure?

### 1. Why such rigid procedures?

- The submission/review and revision procedure is developed to guarantee quality (content and form) of the manuscript via a regulated/controlled and independent/impartial procedure
- The submission/review and revision procedure follows certain agreed (academic) rules (ethical, scientific as well as technical) and takes care for the correct treatment of the stakes of the authors, the audience and the journal.

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3.3 Submission, review and revision, from the content perspective. Ingegerd Jansson, Statistics Sweden/Pieter Everaers, IAOS

The submission/review/revision procedure : what is the objective of this rather rigid and strict procedure?

Quality manuscripts as defined by:

- its content / the content of the message for a specific audience (validity, integrity, novelty, etc)
- its format / the structure / style etc as mostly defined by the characteristics/history of the journal

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The submission/review/revision procedure : what is the objective of this rather rigid and strict procedure?

This procedure aims to guarantee

- for the author to have the manuscript seriously assessed on its academic/expert level
- for the audience the manuscript fulfills the quality/content criteria as set for the specific (academic) journal
- for the journal (and the organization behind, like IAOS or SCB) that the manuscript supports its reputation and even follows and contributes to its strategy.

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Not fool-proof but the best procedure agreed. It depends on that everyone follows the agreement. It is vulnerable and can be misused.

We all share a common interest and responsibility that the procedure is fair.



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Journals use similar, but also partly different quality criteria

- Of course the topic/domain/focusing on a specific topic
- Innovativeness, novelty (level of)
- Targeted for a certain group of readers (maybe part of the strategy of the journal or publisher)
- Quality of style/language etc.

Submission/review/revision procedures follow a similar set of steps, but can be slightly different on details

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### 1. Submission of Paper

The corresponding or submitting author submits the paper to the journal. This is usually via an online system such as ScholarOne Manuscripts or Editorial Manager. Occasionally, journals may accept submissions by email.

### 2. Editorial Office Assessment

The journal checks the paper's composition and arrangement against the journal's Author Guidelines to make sure it includes the required sections and stylizations. The quality of the paper is not assessed at this point but submitted manuscripts may be screened for duplicated text and possible plagiarism.

### 3. Appraisal by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC)

The EIC checks that the paper is appropriate for the journal and is sufficiently original and interesting. If not, the paper may be rejected without being reviewed any further.

### 4. EIC Assigns an Associate/Emphasis Editor (AE)

Some journals have Associate Editors who handle the peer review. If they do, they would be assigned at this stage.

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### 5. Invitation to Reviewers

The handling editor sends invitations to individuals he or she believes would be appropriate reviewers. As responses are received, further invitations are issued, if necessary, until the required number of acceptances is obtained – commonly this is 2, but there is some variation between journals.

### 6. Response to Invitations

Potential reviewers consider the invitation against their own expertise, conflicts of interest and availability. They then accept or decline. If possible, when declining, they might also suggest alternative reviewers.

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### 7. Review is Conducted

The reviewer sets time aside to read the paper several times. The first read is used to form an initial impression of the work. If major problems are found at this stage, the reviewer may feel comfortable rejecting the paper without further work. Otherwise they will read the paper several more times, taking notes so as to build a detailed point-by-point review. The review is then submitted to the journal, with a recommendation to accept or reject it – or else with a request for revision (usually flagged as either major or minor) before it is reconsidered.

### 8. Journal Evaluates the Reviews

The handling editor considers all the returned reviews before making an overall decision. If the reviews differ widely, the editor may invite an additional reviewer so as to get an extra opinion before making a decision.

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### 9. The Decision is Communicated

The editor sends a decision email to the author including any relevant reviewer comments. Whether the comments are anonymous or not will depend on the type of peer review that the journal operates.

### 10. Next Steps

If accepted, the paper is sent to production. If the article is rejected or sent back for either major or minor revision, the handling editor should include constructive comments from the reviewers to help the author improve the article. At this point, reviewers should also be sent an email or letter letting them know the outcome of their review. If the paper was sent back for revision, the reviewers should expect to receive a new version, unless they have opted out of further participation. However, where only minor changes were requested this follow-up review might be done by the handling editor.

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### - 3. Review and revision according to the content.

The review and revision part of the procedure: what are the characteristics and roles of the stakeholders in each step of this process

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The roles of the main stakeholders

- The Editor in Chief: Operative responsibility for the content of the journal and the review process (thorough, fair and objective). Communicates with the author(s), emphasis/associate editors, and the publisher. Responsible for strategic issues (overall content) for the journal.
- The emphasis/associate editor: Balances the comments of the reviewers, adds own comments, and suggests a decision for the manuscript to the editor-in-chief.
- The reviewer: Is expected to carefully read the manuscript and do suggestions for concrete and detailed revisions and advise on a decision for the manuscript.
- The author(s): will be invited to revise according to experts suggestions/recommendations, and give justified responses to the suggestions.

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The choice by the EiC of the emphasis/associate editor responsible for the manuscript depends on

- Domain expert, large network of colleagues/peers
- Authority in his domain
- Experienced author/lecturer/statistician
- No connection to the author(s) or their institution



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The (choice by the emphasis/associate editor/EiC) of the experts to review depends on

- Their specific high level domain expertise,
- Authority in this specific domain and considered to have relevant knowledge and experience
- Experienced author/lecturer/statistician
- No connection to the author(s) or their institution

Often a combination of expertise for a manuscript to cover several aspects

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The options concerning the review outcome the emphasis /associate editor has to choose between

Reject: no option to resubmit the manuscript

Different degrees of revision: Offers an option to submit a revision

Accept: no further revision is needed

The emphasis editor summarizes the comments of the reviewers, and suggests a decisions based on the comments AND his/her own reading.

The decision is not a "democratic vote". The emphasis/associate editor should base the decision on his/her own judgement, aided by the reviews.

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The review and revision procedure is a cycle that can run a few times before the manuscript is finally accepted.

Turn-around times can be different and depend on complexity, uniqueness, etc of the manuscript, as well as on availability of (qualified) reviewers and emphasis editors.

How many times the cycle (submission review-revision-resubmission-review etc) will be gone through depends on the quality of review(er), its clearness and concreteness and the responsiveness of the author(s) (clear, flexible, adaptive, etc).

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### The example of JOS

"The intended readers are researchers and practitioners in academia, government, business- or research organisations with an interest in survey methodology and production of official statistics."

The JOS editorial board: currently two co-Editors-in-Chief and about 50 associate (expert) editors, representing a variety of domains.

A network (database) of around 7 000 peers. Authors, reviewers, editors.

An important strategic task for the EiC to keep the pool of reviewers updated, relevant and representative.

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### **JOS review and revision process**

First review by an EiC and if necessary an Associate Editor, possibly an immediate decision. Each remaining manuscript is assigned to an AE.

Referees are invited by the EiC (aided by the AE), aim at three referee reports but two might be enough. Reports should be clear, relevant and detailed. Doubled-blinded procedure.

AE writes a report summarizing the reviews and own remarks, suggests a decision based on own reading and referee reports, discussions with EiC, EiC approves.

Five decision categories: Reject, Reject and resubmit, Major revision, Minor revision, Accept

Resubmissions: Likely a second round with the same referees (R&R and MaR).

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### Some criteria for evaluation: Content

Relevance (for the scope of JOS and for official statistics production)

Novelty or development of methodology and/or application

Sound methodology and correct results.

Possibility to generalize results, usefulness

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### Some criteria for evaluation: Presentation

StyleGuide of journal  
Language

Disposition, length  
Sufficient detail and description - use appendices or supplemental material

Relevant references

Context - background, relevance of YOUR research question, relevant research and literature, intention/hypothesis, choices made, assumptions, etc.

Discussion of results and methodology - limitations, drawbacks, return to context, usefulness, recommendations, further research

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**The manuscript is returned with a decision and detailed comments.**

### **Resubmission:**

Have the comments been satisfactorily taken care of? Answer to all comments, usually in a written reply.

Conflicting comments? The AE/EiC did not do a good job. Ask again.  
Always be polite in your reply!

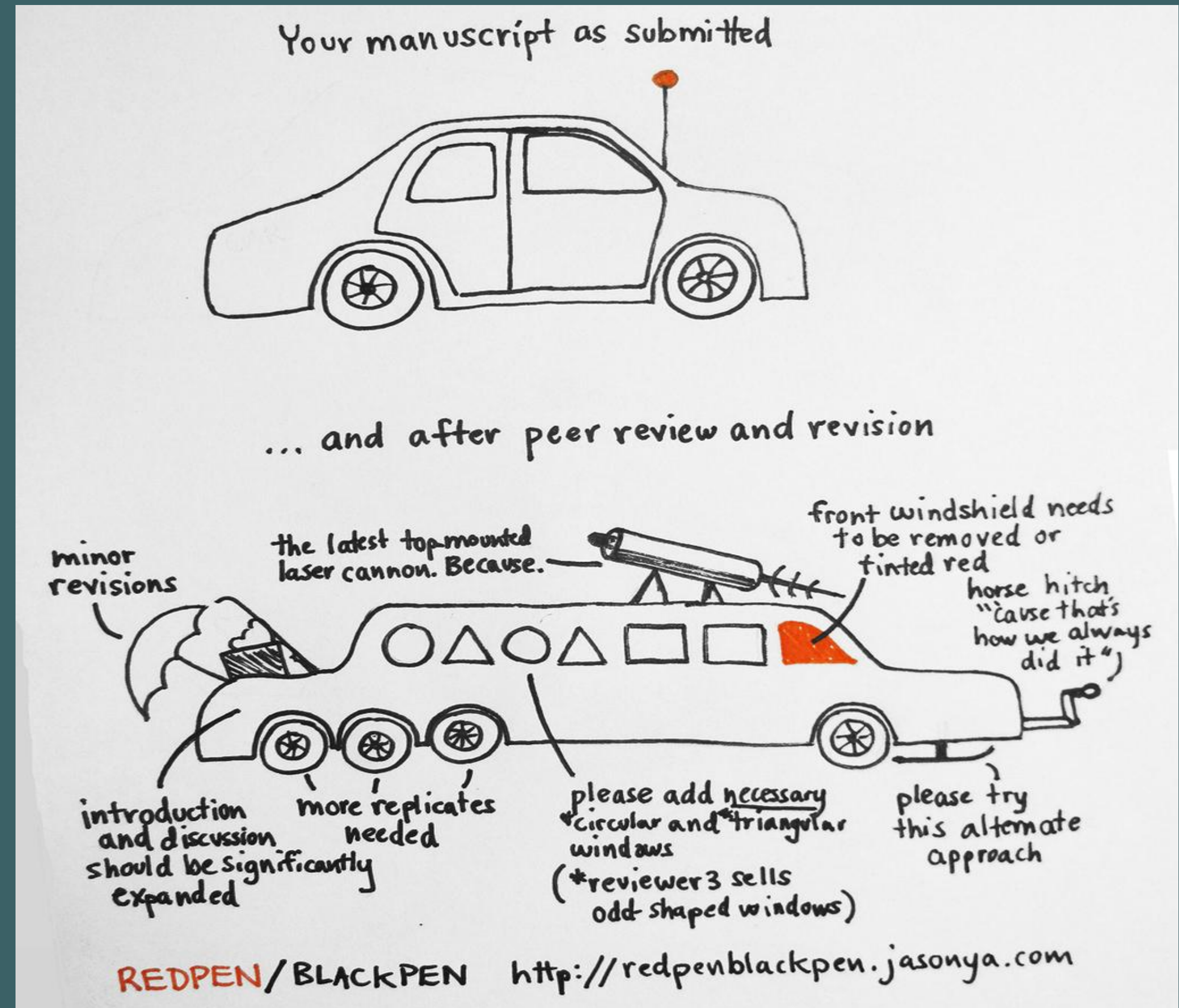
Don't make large changes that were not asked for.

A good way to learn how to write is to be a referee.



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**DON'T BE DISCOURAGED!**



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### The example of SJIAOS

Characteristics of the SJIAOS review and revision procedure are very much depending on the SJIAOS Strategy and its impact on the quality requirements

... IAOS strategy in general and the strategy for the journal with emphasis on inclusiveness (authors and audience) balancing with fostering capacity development and innovation.

Official statistics, in SJIAOS means that the manuscript should show an application in a domain of policy making/decision making where 'official statistics' are in use.

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### **The example of SJIAOS :**

Official Statistics according to IAOS concerns applied statistics for policy making in a wide variety of domains (governance, employment, income, etc).

This requires a very wide range of expertise represented in the profiles of the emphasis editors and reviewers.

A very large network of peer reviewers, representing all relevant (and emerging) domains and all official statistical branches as well as covering the global statistical community.

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### **The example of SJIAOS :**

Expectations and requirements for the emphasis editors:

- selecting and inviting reviewers (knowledge of domain and network)
- assessing the reviewers comments (be high level expert)
- formulating the decision and advising the Editor in Chief (tactical formulation)
- suggesting/recommending the revision (good communication skills)

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### The example of SJIAOS :

Expectations and requirements for the reviewers:

- high expertise in specific domain/application/research/region, etc
- 'author' experience
- no conflict of interest
- formulating their assessment and advising the Emphasis editor (honest assessment)
- suggesting/recommending revisions

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SJIAOS, my personal way of reviewing, what I also advise to reviewers that invite me to advise them on the review proces.

I will go through/browse/read the manuscript some 5 times. Each time from a different perspective.

A. General impressieon

B. Is the manuscript clear, consistent and 'round'

C. Is Theory well applied/refered to

D. Is the analysis properly done, justified and documented?

E. Overall according to ethical and style guidelines and requirements?

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- A. First time reading through whole document for a general impression of its relevance/timeliness, up to dateness etc, does it reach a minimum threshold to be not-rejected?

Does the manuscript add to knowledge/experiences/added value for official statistics in general, or for a specific group, region or domain

Does the manuscript fit in the SJIAOS strategy, meaning 'applied' and not only mathematics or theory. Is it sufficiently neutral and are the formulations not-discriminating and not of a political nature expressing the opinion of one person/country. Not controversial or harmful.

Does it fit for the type of manuscripts suited for SJIAOS

Is this a manuscript that deserves a certain priority (Covid, YSP, Africa, other less visible regions, very current theme)

What is the background for the manuscript (wider project/research, development, tendency). Is this context clear?

Is there an added value from the manuscript/analysis/result? What is new? Which audience will read this?

Does it deal with a clearly defined and relevant problem/issue, is the problem clearly described and 'is it really an issue'

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- B. Concentrate on objectives/hypothesis and the conclusions, is the manuscript clear, consistent and 'round'?
  - Do the title and abstract cover the content sufficiently?
  - Is the objective/hypothesis/research question formulated, is it clear and understandable
  - Is the structuren logica (IMRAD)
  - Are the conclusions (intermediate and at the end) formulated in line with the objectives/hypothesis? Can you read them without having to read the rest of the text.
  - In a situation with subquestions, are all the subquestions answered and dealt with properly?
  - Are the conclusions following the same logical sequence as the analysis?



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- C. Is theory well applied/refered to?
  - Are the most important and /or recent references used, does the author show to be up to date/on the top of the theory
  - References to international standards and methods, sufficiently worked out. Is there something missing? Is the correct standard used?
  - Is the theoretical part well structured? Is the reader able to follow, sufficiently taken by the hand or does the author expect a lot of pre-knowledge? If so can this be skipped eventually from reading?
  - Is there a conceptual model, self-developed or based on literature, well referenced, and structured?

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D. Is the analysis properly done, justified and documented?

Are the correct techniques, methodologies, sufficient and clear justifications/ references of techniques and methodologies used, alternatives available and discussed?

Correctness of the data and data sources, alternatives, sufficient justification of chosen data. Meta information about the data sources?

Are the operationalisations of the variables clear, are these valid.

Is the analysis reproducible?

When no empirical data used, is the argumentation transparent/each proof sufficiently argued, credible, references and logical, is there a reference to a log frame, or set of concepts ?

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E. Overall according to ethical and style guidelines and requirements?

1. Tables, maps, figures, do they contribute, add value and is all the meta data of these tables etc correct
2. References to metadata and meta information sufficiently
3. Not too many self citations, plagiarism? Long and unclear citations?
4. Use of the English language, more in general style sufficiently clear, academic but not too complex.
5. References and footnotes, numbering, consistency etc.

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THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION