



COLLABORATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

POLICY ON PEER REVIEW

Objectivity, reliability, transparency and repeatability of systematic reviews are at the heart of the operation and quality assurance processes of the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE). Consequently we are committed to high standards of scientific rigour in the systematic review process. To this end the CEE seeks to operate an independent peer review process that is at least the equal of high-quality scientific journals.

The CEE peer review process is intended to be supportive and hence begins at the initiation of the review process. It is not desirable that significant numbers of completed reviews are rejected (unlike the situation with many papers submitted to peer-review journals) and thus we seek to give guidance and feedback at key stages in the review process, decreasing the probability of final rejection by identifying problems early on. Guidelines for undertaking a systematic review can be obtained from the Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation: www.cebc.bangor.ac.uk/guidelines.php

Authors considering undertaking a systematic review are encouraged to contact CEE at an early stage at info@environmentalevidence.org

The Peer Review Process

Review Protocols. A key step in the process of undertaking a systematic review is the production of a review protocol. This sets out the details and scope of the review and how it will be conducted. It is important that protocols are not created in isolation and that a consensus is built concerning the appropriateness of the review question, the type and quality of data sought and the scope of the search. Draft protocols received by the CEE are sent out to at least two independent reviewers for comment and are posted on the CEE website for at least one month to enable open review and stakeholder engagement. Comments are passed back to the authors and only when appropriate revisions are made will the protocol be posted on the website as 'finalised'. Once this is achieved, the review work begins, following the process detailed in the protocol.

Systematic Reviews. Draft reviews received by CEE are sent out to at least two independent reviewers (these may or may not be the same individuals who reviewed the protocol) for comment and posted on the CEE website for at least one month to enable open review. Comments are passed back to the authors and only when appropriate revisions are made will the systematic review be posted on the website as 'finalised'. In cases where major revisions are required several rounds of peer review may be needed.

Final decisions on posting protocols and systematic reviews on the CEE website rest with the CEE.