

Motivating Peer Reviewers

OJS–Reviewer Credits integration: SAJS use case

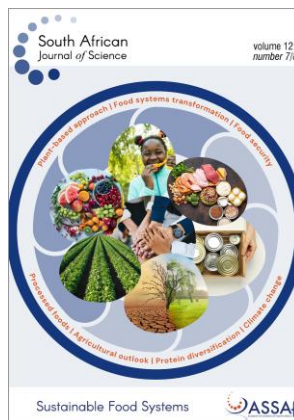
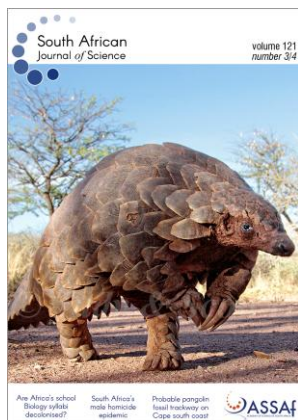
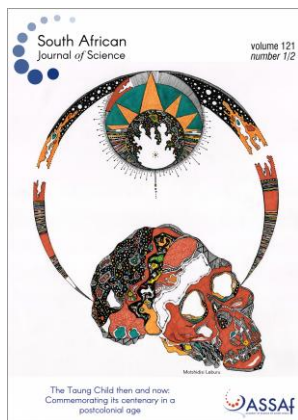
Linda Fick and Nadia Grobler

South African Journal of Science

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

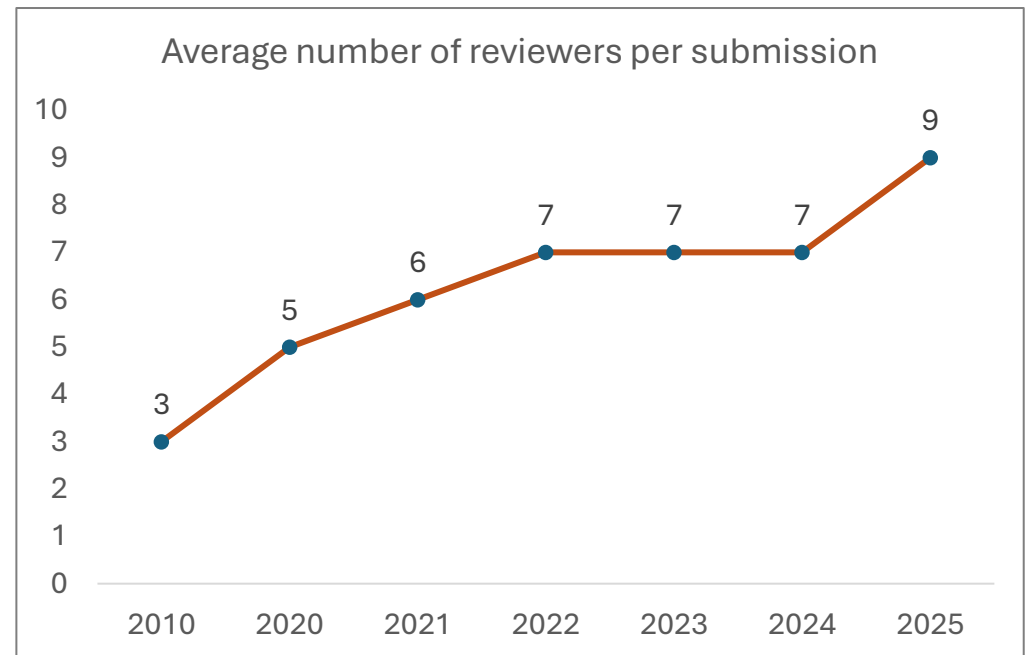
South African Journal of Science

- diamond open access, multidisciplinary journal
- published by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)
- 6 issues per year, ~145 articles pa, ~65 peer reviewed
- to promote the visibility and impact of South African and African research
- of interest to readers in any discipline and for the benefit of scholars, educators, the general public and policymakers
- provide a forum for discussion of news and developments in research and higher education
- Editor-in-Chief, EiC Mentee, 10 Associate Editors, AE Mentees, Managing Editor, Online Publishing Systems Administrator, Online Publishing Administrator



The challenge: securing reviewers

- Reviewer fatigue
- No responses and “no” responses
- Numerous reminders
- Increasing review times



Possible solutions?

- Incentivising reviewers
- Rewarding reviewers
- Recognising reviewers
- Expanding the reviewer pool
 - Mentoring emerging peer reviewers
 - Expanding the search pool



Recognising reviewers

In 2023, the *South African Journal of Science* adopted Reviewer Credits through the free OJS plugin to **recognise peer reviewers**. In 6 months, 57 peer reviews were verified on Reviewer Credits, allowing registered reviewers to receive a certificate and integrate their review activity with their ORCID profile.

**REVIEWER
CREDITS**

▼ **Peer review** (1 review for 1 publication/grant) ≡ Sort

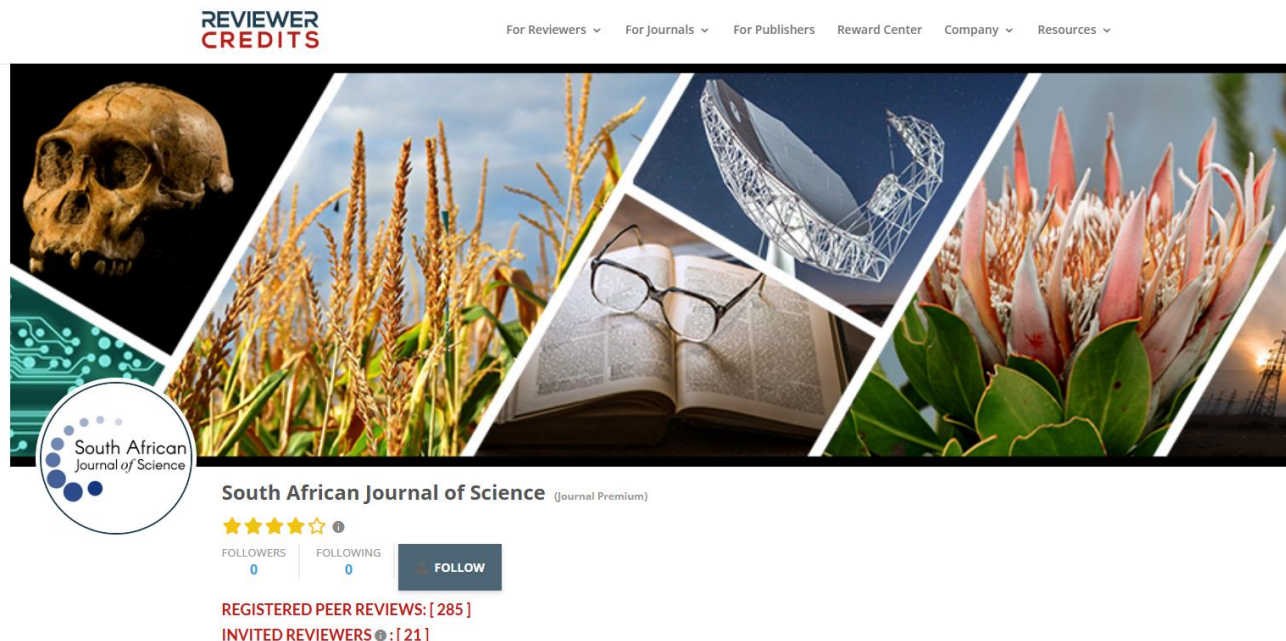
▼ Review activity for **South African journal of science.** (1)

journal
ISSN: [0038-2353](#)

Review date: 2024	Type: review	Role: reviewer	Show more detail	View
Source:  Reviewer Credits Reviewer Data Synchronization				

Expanding the reviewer pool

- With the aid of the funding received from EIFL and the Wellcome Trust, we subscribed to the premium version of Reviewer Credits for 12 months.
- The premium version includes an AI-based Reviewer Finder tool that matches submissions to willing reviewers within the OJS workflow.



Reviewer Credits plans for journals

www.reviewercredits.com/subscription-plans

	FREE Basic plan	Premium (incl. features from basic plan)
Included in the plan	• AI-powered Reviewer Finder with 10 free Reviewer Searches • Peer review integration via API or CSV • Public profile with visibility settings • Reviewer certification • Reviewers' ORCID iD, personal and academic email verification • Basic summary statistics on the user dashboard	• AI-powered Reviewer Finder with unlimited Reviewer Searches • Reward Center products at special discounts • Training course special discounts • Journal certification • Real-time dynamic badge to display on your website • Reviewers' personal ID and biometric verification • Credit Points to reward reviewers per review • Distribution of monetary rewards to peer reviewers • Extended performance statistics and metrics • Reviewer Dashboard to report on diversity, integrity, and quality

OJS plugin overview and installation

- OJS v3.3 and v3.4 plugin available (not yet available for v3.5)
- Install directly from the OJS Plugin Gallery **OR** download and install from the Reviewer Credits website (see www.reviewercredits.com/technical-integrations)
- Reviewer Credits provide a step-by-step guide and video tutorial at the above link.

	FREE Basic plan	Premium
Plugin features	• Reviewer recognition is embedded in OJS review forms. • Reviewers can <i>opt in</i> to send review data to Reviewer Credits (RC). • Verified reviews are exported automatically to RC platform.	• Includes all free features. • Reviewer Finder Tool embedded in OJS submission & review stages. • AI-supported reviewer suggestions based on article metadata. • Selected reviewers are invited and tracked through the default OJS workflow.
Main benefits	• Formal recognition of peer review activity.	• Gain access to RC reviewer database. • Selected reviewers automatically gets added to existing OJS journal database.

OJS FREE plugin workflow demonstration: Reviewer Credits embedded in review forms

Name	From	Last Reply	Replies	Closed
No Items				

Recommendation

Select a recommendation and submit the review to complete the process. You must enter a review or upload a file before selecting a recommendation.

Choose One 

Located at the bottom of the review form.

Register this Peer Review on ReviewerCredits.com

Peer Review data will be transferred to your [ReviewerCredits](#) account. Click here to [sign up](#) before submitting your peer review.

- ☒ I agree to transfer my review data (email, surname and name, institution, ORCID, manuscript ID and date of completion) to ReviewerCredits.
- ☒ Transfer additional data (acceptance date, recommendation, length of report) for Reviewer Contribution Index calculation ([What is this?](#))

Submit Review

Save for Later

Go Back

OJS SUBSCRIPTION plugin workflow demonstration: Reviewer Finder tool

18552 / Grobler et al. / Test submission Activity Log Library

Workflow **Publication**

Submission **Review** Copyediting Production Help

Round 1 **New Review Round**

Round 1 Status
New reviews have been submitted.

Review Files Search Upload/Select Files

113128	manuscript prepared for review.pdf	April 30, 2024	Main document [*required]
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Reviewers Add Reviewer

Test User	Review Submitted Recommendation: Revisions Required	Anonymous Reviewer/Anonymous Author	Read Review
SAJS Test Reviewer 1	Complete Recommendation: Resubmit for Review	Anonymous Reviewer/Anonymous Author	Thank Reviewer Revert Decision

Revisions Search Upload File

Participants Assign

Journal manager

- Nadia Grobler

Second Associate Editor

- Test Associate Editor Grobler

Find Reviewers From Reviewer Credits

Find Reviewer

'Find Reviewer' button will appear in both 'Submission' and 'Review' stages.

OJS SUBSCRIPTION plugin workflow demonstration: Reviewer Finder tool

Find Reviewers From
Reviewer Credits

Find Reviewer RC

Reviewers List by **REVIEWER CREDITS**

- **Reviewer Credits Free:** Once you click the 'Send Peer Review Request by RC' button below, the request will be sent to reviewers by Reviewer Credits, along with regular reminder notifications.
- **Reviewer Credits Free:** You will be notified via email when a reviewer accepts or declines the request.
- **Reviewer Credits Premium:** Once you click the 'Save as a Reviewer' button below, the candidate will be directly registered to your OJS system. To use this, your journal account must be a premium member of Reviewer Credits. For more information, please check our [subscription plans](#).
- The search results are sorted by relevance, from highest to lowest relevancy score.

This means the reviewer is already saved on our own reviewer database.

1	2	3	4																																
Michael J. Kennish  Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, United States <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>H-Index</th> <th>Articles</th> <th>Citations</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3.75698</td> <td>18</td> <td>161</td> <td>1991</td> </tr> </table> Save as a Reviewer  Send Peer Review Request by 	Score	H-Index	Articles	Citations	3.75698	18	161	1991	Michael Elliott  University of Hull, Hull, United Kingdom <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>H-Index</th> <th>Articles</th> <th>Citations</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3.67564</td> <td>55</td> <td>216</td> <td>10878</td> </tr> </table> Save as a Reviewer  Send Peer Review Request by 	Score	H-Index	Articles	Citations	3.67564	55	216	10878	Janine B. Adams  Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>H-Index</th> <th>Articles</th> <th>Citations</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3.45729</td> <td>31</td> <td>162</td> <td>2928</td> </tr> </table> Saved  Send Peer Review Request by 	Score	H-Index	Articles	Citations	3.45729	31	162	2928	Susan Taljaard  Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>H-Index</th> <th>Articles</th> <th>Citations</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3.34424</td> <td>18</td> <td>52</td> <td>1002</td> </tr> </table> Saved  Send Peer Review Request by 	Score	H-Index	Articles	Citations	3.34424	18	52	1002
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Daniel A. Lemley 	Alan K. Whitfield 	Ángel Borja 	Ivan Valiela 																																

Adds the reviewer to journal database and integrates with the OJS workflow directly for invitations and tracking.

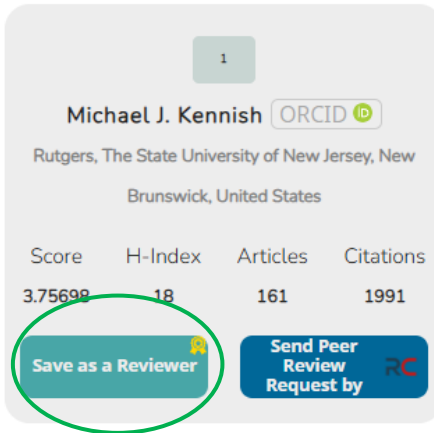
Review request and tracking happens through the RC dashboard, outside of the OJS workflow.

OJS SUBSCRIPTION plugin workflow demonstration: Reviewer Finder tool

1) If the reviewer is not yet on our database, click on 'Save as Reviewer'.

2) Go back to the submission, and click on 'Add Reviewer' as per normal OJS workflow.

3) Search, locate and select the reviewer you have just added.



1

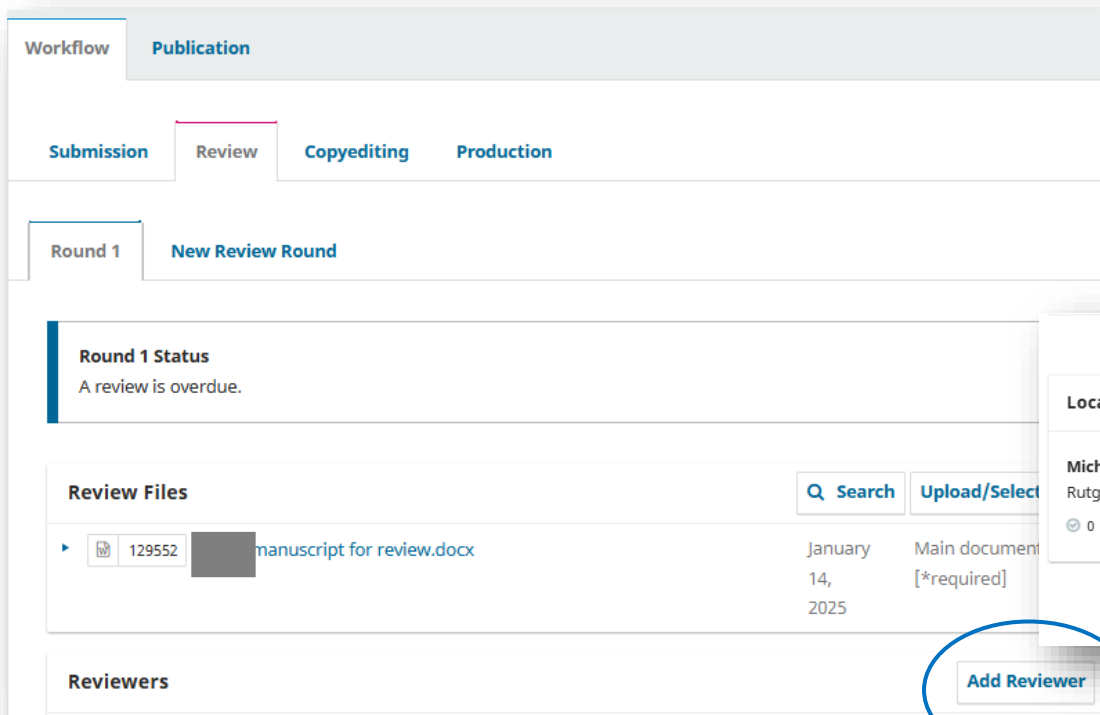
Michael J. Kennish 

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, United States

Score	H-Index	Articles	Citations
3.75698	18	161	1991

Save as a Reviewer 

Send Peer Review Request by 



Workflow **Publication**

Submission **Review** **Copyediting** **Production**

Round 1 **New Review Round**

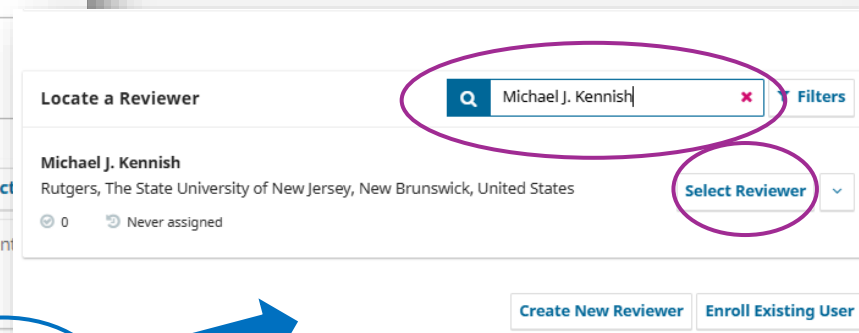
Round 1 Status
A review is overdue.

Review Files

Q	Search	Upload/Select
129552	manuscript for review.docx	January 14, 2025 Main document [*required]

Reviewers

Add Reviewer



Locate a Reviewer

  **Filters**

Michael J. Kennish
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, United States

 0  Never assigned

Select Reviewer 

Create New Reviewer **Enroll Existing User**

OJS SUBSCRIPTION plugin workflow demonstration: Reviewer Finder tool

Reviewer invitation,
tracking, reminders
etc. is done via OJS
as per the default
workflow.



Add Reviewer

Selected Reviewer
Michael J. Kennish [Change](#)

Choose a predefined message to use, or fill out the form below.
Review Request

Email to be sent to reviewer

Dear NAME :

I believe that you would serve as an excellent reviewer of the manuscript " " which has been submitted to the *South African Journal of Science*. The submission's abstract is inserted below, and I hope that you will consider undertaking this important task for us.

Please log into the journal website by RESPONSE DUE DATE to indicate whether you will undertake the review or not, as well as to access the submission and to record your review and recommendation. The website is <https://sajs.co.za/>

Follow this link to guidelines to reviewers: <https://www.sajs.co.za/guidelines-reviewers>
Before accepting the request please read our conflict of interest policy which is available here: <https://www.sajs.co.za/editorial-policies#conflicts>

The review itself is due REVIEW DUE DATE .

If you do not have your username and password for the journal's website, you can use this link to reset

☐ Do not send email to Reviewer.

Important Dates

2025-04-09	2025-04-30
Response Due Date	Review Due Date

+ Files To Be Reviewed

Review Type

☒ Anonymous Reviewer/Anonymous Author
☐ Anonymous Reviewer/Disclosed Author
☐ Open

Review Form

Research Articles

[Add Reviewer](#) [Cancel](#)

Highlights from the Associate Editor survey on the Reviewer Finder tool

***6 months after implementation**

In this period some editors had still not attempted to use the tool.

Among those who had used the tool, the predominant responses are presented below:

Adoption

86% used it half or less than half the time

When used

57% used it for submissions on topics they were less familiar with

Ease of use

86% found it easy or very easy to use

Reviewer discovery

86% found it to be helpful sometimes

Relevance of suggested reviewers

71% found that the suggested reviewers were very relevant

Time savings

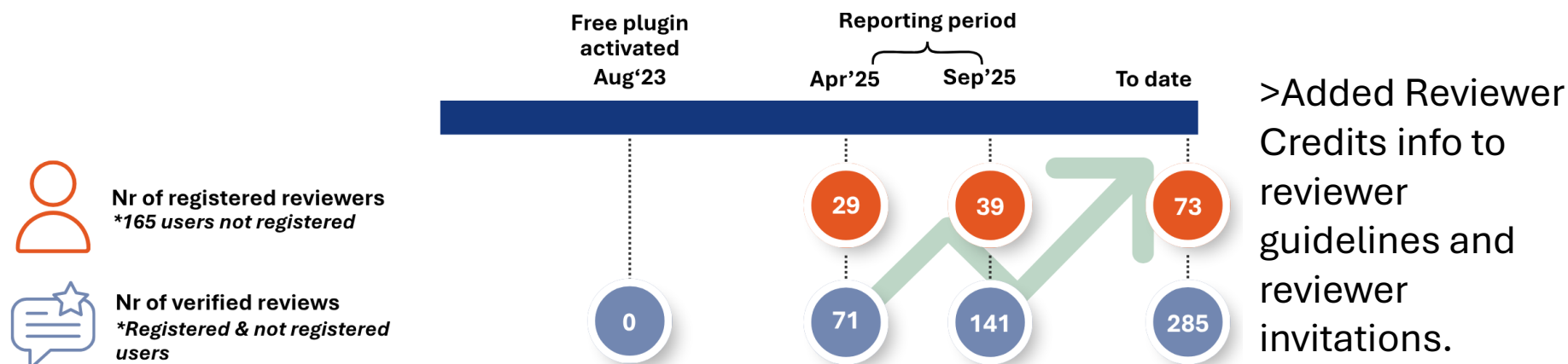
57% reported that using the tool decreased the time required to invite reviewers

Reviewer recruitment success

86% found it moderately to very successful in securing reviewers

Early results are encouraging, with opportunities to expand editor engagement.

Reviewer recognition:



	Funding period (Apr–Sep 2025)	Previous year (Apr–Sep 2024)
Average number of reviewers per manuscript	6	6
Average number of accepted invitations per manuscript	2	3
Average number of completed reviews per manuscript	2	2
Average review time per manuscript (excl. author revision times)	48 days	58 days

Reviewer Finder tool:

We cannot say whether this improvement reflects more efficient reviewer selection or quicker reviewer turnaround, but the improvement is encouraging, especially when viewed together with the editors' indications that using the tool decreased the time needed to invite reviewers.

Takeaways if you're considering Reviewer Credits integration with OJS...

- Take advantage of the free reviewer recognition functionality. It is an easy way to provide reviewers with the option to get verified recognition for their contributions.
- Experiment with the Reviewer Finder tool (10 free reviewer searches), and other features that come with the FREE plan. This could be particularly useful for submissions outside an editor's immediate area of expertise.
- Continue promoting new tools (to reviewers/editors) after implementation as adoption takes time.

Thank you



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& innovation

Department:
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