



## Editorial Pre-Screening Form

Every new submission is assessed by the editors against the criteria below before it is sent for peer review. The screening is carried out and the decision is taken by the editors themselves.

**Outcome.** A submission may be (A) sent for double-anonymised peer review, (B) returned to the authors for technical corrections, or (C) rejected without external review (desk rejection) if it is outside the scope, is not an original research article or does not meet the standards of the journal. Authors receive a reasoned decision. **Confidentiality.** Submitted manuscripts are confidential. They are screened by the editors and are not uploaded, in whole or in part, to any external or generative AI system at any stage of the editorial process.

### 1 MANUSCRIPT

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Manuscript ID    | [EJSS-YYYY-XXXX] |
| Manuscript title | [Title]          |
| Date received    | [DD Month YYYY]  |
| Screening editor | [Name and role]  |

### 2 TECHNICAL CHECK

| Submission files                                                                                                          | Yes                      | No                       | N/A                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Title Page, Cover Letter and anonymised manuscript are all provided.                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The manuscript follows the EJSS Manuscript Template (structure, line numbering, tables and figure captions).              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Figures are supplied as separate files of adequate resolution.                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Anonymisation                                                                                                             | Yes                      | No                       | N/A                      |
| The manuscript and file properties contain no author names, affiliations, acknowledgements or funding details.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Integrity, declarations and presentation                                                                                  | Yes                      | No                       | N/A                      |
| The similarity report is acceptable: overall score ____ % (below 15%, excluding references).                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Author contributions, funding, data availability, competing interests and ethics approval are declared in the Title Page. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The AI declaration is completed, and there is no sign of AI-generated data, results, figures or images.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Author names, affiliations and ORCID iDs are consistent between the Title Page and the Cover Letter.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The English language is of sufficient quality for peer review.                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Citations and the reference list follow the EJSS style and correspond to each other.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



## 3 ARTICLE TYPE

- ☐ Original research article reporting new experimental, field, laboratory or modelling data.
- ☐ Review, synthesis or compilation of existing literature without original data — not accepted by EJSS (desk rejection).

## 4 SCOPE

Main subject area (tick one or more):

- |                                                                   |                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil physics and hydrology               | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil management, health and quality        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil chemistry and mineralogy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil erosion, degradation and conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil biology and biochemistry            | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil pollution and remediation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil fertility and plant nutrition       | <input type="checkbox"/> GIS and geostatistics in soil science      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil genesis, classification and mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil mechanics                             |

### Scope assessment

- ☐ Within the scope: soil or soil–plant focus is central
- ☐ Borderline: the soil component is secondary
- ☐ Outside the scope (e.g., general agronomy, plant protection, environmental engineering or agricultural economics without a soil focus)

## 5 SCIENTIFIC MERIT

| Criterion                                                                                                                                | Strong                   | Adequate                 | Insufficient             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Novelty: new knowledge, approach, mechanism or method rather than a repetition of established findings                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| International relevance: results, models or mechanisms that can be generalised beyond the study site, rather than a routine local survey | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Experimental design: replication, controls, sampling depth and soil characterisation                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Statistical analysis: appropriate methods, clearly reported                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interpretation: conclusions supported by the data and placed in the context of the international literature                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



## 6 EDITORIAL DECISION

- ☐ **A. Send for peer review.**
- ☐ **B. Return to authors for technical corrections** (files, template, anonymisation, declarations or language), then re-screen.
- ☐ **C. Desk rejection — not sent for peer review.** Reason(s):
- ☐ not an original research article (review or compilation)
  - ☐ outside the aims and scope of the journal
  - ☐ insufficient novelty or contribution to the international literature
  - ☐ routine local or regional study without generalisable findings
  - ☐ serious methodological or statistical weaknesses
  - ☐ research-integrity concern (similarity, data, images or ethics)

### If A — key points for the reviewers

*[Main strengths of the manuscript and two to three critical points the reviewers should examine.]*

### If B or C — comments to the authors

*[Reasoned explanation for the authors: journal policy or scope; novelty and international contribution; methodological weaknesses; and, for B, the corrections required.]*

|             |                                                            |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Decision by | <i>[Editor-in-Chief or handling editor: name and role]</i> |
| Date        | <i>[DD Month YYYY]</i>                                     |