

HOW RURAL GRAPHICS ARE REVIEWED AT AGER

Public information for authors

Rural Graphics are original research contributions whose principal finding is communicated through a map, chart, diagram or another visual representation. They are not graphical abstracts of previously published research. The visual representation should function as a result, an argument and the primary means of communication.

1. COMMON PRINCIPLES

Rural Graphics undergo anonymous external peer review and are assigned a DOI. The same safeguards concerning reviewer expertise, confidentiality, competing interests, research integrity, ethics and the responsible use of AI apply as for research articles.

2. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION AND SUITABILITY OF THE FORMAT

- Fit with research on depopulation, rural development or territorial development.
- Originality of the research question, data, analytical treatment or interpretation.
- Distinctiveness in relation to previous publications and absence of undeclared reuse of figures.
- Suitability of the visual format: the finding should be communicated more effectively as a Rural Graphic than as a conventional research article.

3. STAND-ALONE CLARITY AND COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

- The visual representation allows the principal finding to be identified independently.
- The title, legend, symbols, scales and categories are clear.
- The information density and visual hierarchy support rapid comprehension.
- The text complements and discusses the figure without replacing its communicative function.

4. DATA, METHOD AND FIDELITY OF THE REPRESENTATION

- Clearly identified sources and data appropriate to the research question.
- Explanation of data processing, aggregation, classification, normalisation and design.
- Justification of categories, class intervals, indicators and thresholds.
- Faithful correspondence between the data and the figure.
- Capacity to verify or reproduce the result and appropriate acknowledgement of limitations.

5. SPECIFIC VISUAL QUALITY CRITERIA

- Charts and diagrams
- Appropriate choice of chart type, axes, units, scales and time periods.
- Absence of visual distortion; consistent use of colour and size.
- Representation of uncertainty where required.
- Maps
- Appropriate geographical scale, projection, resolution and spatial unit.
- Adequate legend, orientation, scale bar, place names and boundaries.
- Identification of cartographic sources and the map-production procedure.
- Accessibility and technical quality
- Adequate contrast, legible type size and categories that can be understood without relying on colour alone.
- Legibility on screen, in PDF, in print and in greyscale.
- Sufficient resolution and availability of original or editable files for production.

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIGURE AND THE TEXT

- The text sets out the research problem, objective and method.
- The discussion interprets the finding and relates it to relevant literature.
- There are no contradictions or unnecessary repetition.
- The conclusions are proportionate to what can be inferred from the representation.
- The contribution combines concision and rigour without removing necessary nuance.

7. OPEN SCIENCE, ETHICS, GENDER AND AI

- Availability or identification of data, cartographic files, code or spreadsheets.
- Consideration of sex and gender where relevant.
- Consent, ethical approval, anonymisation and data protection, where applicable.
- Disclosure of any use of AI to generate, modify or enhance the visual representation. The use of GIS, statistical software or conventional design tools does not in itself constitute the use of generative AI.

8. STRUCTURE OF THE REVIEW REPORT

- Overall assessment and strengths.
- Major concerns affecting validity, contribution or scope.
- Minor comments on presentation, citations, figures or writing.

- Essential missing references, only where they are directly relevant to the research.
- Confidential comments and recommendation to the Editorial Board.

9. POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Publishable without substantive changes.
- Publishable after minor revision.
- Major changes to the content or visual representation and further review required.
- Not suitable for publication.
- The research may be of interest but should be developed as a conventional research article.

10. OPEN PEER REVIEW AND RECOGNITION

Only after the review process has concluded, and only if the Rural Graphic is published, may reviewers voluntarily authorise the anonymous or signed publication of their report. AGER checks all reports, issues review certificates and, with reviewers' consent, publishes an annual list of reviewers.

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