

INDAGO: Investigating Nature and Humanity in Africa

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Editorial Policy & Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

General

Indago, previously known as *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum*, is published by the National Museum (Bloemfontein, South Africa) and is a DHET-accredited, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed and Open Access journal that seeks to promote knowledge of Southern African natural and cultural heritage by publishing high-quality scientific research. *Indago* is published primarily electronically and accepts original research articles, as well as review papers and smaller contributions, on topics including but not limited to botany, zoology, palaeontology, archaeology, anthropology, history and fine arts. All contributions are published in English (British or American standard). It is understood that manuscripts submitted to *Indago* have not been offered to any other journal for prior or simultaneous publication. Publication in *Indago* is currently free of charge.

Organisational structure

Chief Editor

Editorial Board

Associate/Guest Editor(s)

Production team: Copy-editor(s), graphics editor(s), DTP specialist(s), proof-reader(s)

Responsibilities

Chief Editor, appointed on a competitive basis by the Directorate of the National Museum (Bloemfontein, South Africa), should be an internationally recognized expert in one of the fields covered by the journal and should have a proven record of service in a similar position. Chief Editor leads the Editorial Board, oversees the aims and scope of the journal, supervises all stages of the journal production and ensures a high academic standard of its content.

Associate/Guest Editors consider submitted manuscripts, decide if they are suitable for publication in the journal and coordinate the peer-review process. Only papers falling within the scope of the journal will be sent out for review.

The Editorial Board members are nominated by Chief Editor and approved by the Associate Editors and the National Museum CEO to represent the diversity of fields covered by the journal. The Editorial Board members can be approached to nominate appropriate reviewers or to act as reviewers themselves. The Editorial Board meets or communicates electronically on a regular basis, to discuss the progress of the journal. The Editorial Board members are expected to comment on the quality of the journal content and production shortly after issues are printed, to ensure that there is no drop in standard.

Chief Editor and the Editorial Board ensure that a high standard is maintained in terms of the content of the journal, the procedures for acceptance of material for publication, and print quality of the final product.

Peer-review process

An objective, unbiased and timely peer-review is seen as a way to ensure a high academic standard of published papers.

All manuscripts are scrutinized by at least two external experts, i.e. reviewers who are neither members of the Editorial Board nor employees of authors' host institutions; this does not preclude members of the Editorial Board from reviewing manuscripts. The choice of reviewers is the responsibility of Chief Editor and Associate/Guest Editor(s), who may seek assistance from the Editorial Board. Reviewers' identity remains anonymous unless they expressly give their consent to state otherwise.

The decision to consider, accept or reject a manuscript once the review process has been followed is the responsibility of Chief Editor and Associate/Guest Editor(s). No papers may be accepted without going under the above procedure. In case of negative reviews, authors are given an opportunity to respond before a final decision is drawn.

Publication ethics

Cases of professional misconduct (e.g., redundant submissions, copyright violation, data fabrication, falsification, inappropriate image manipulation, plagiarism, breach of confidentiality, inappropriate language *etc.*) may result in immediate rejection of the manuscript. However, authors have a right to respond to such allegations and for investigations to be carried out with appropriate speed and due diligence. Chief Editor has a responsibility to alert appropriate bodies (e.g., employers, funders, or regulatory authorities) and encourage them to investigate such allegations.

The list of authors should meet the ICMJE/Vancouver authorship criteria (ICMJE, 2021) that state 'authorship credit should be based on (1) substantial contributions to conception and design, *or* acquisition of data, *or* analysis and interpretation of data; (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; (3) final approval of the version to be published; and (4) agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.' Authors should meet all four conditions. Contributors who meet fewer than all four of the above criteria for authorship should not be listed as authors, but they should be acknowledged. Acquisition of funding, general supervision of a research group or general administrative support, writing assistance, technical editing, language editing and proofreading do not qualify a contributor for authorship.

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The Editorial Board will not consider papers in which the study caused unnecessary pain, discomfort or disturbance to normal health of living animals. Reports of experiments on vertebrates must state that the *Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals*, *The UFAW Handbook on the care and management of laboratory and other research animals*, or similar guidelines have been followed, as well as specific national laws where applicable.

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