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## Recognizing the work of journal editors and reviewers

Wolfgang Cramer & James Ford

Regional Environmental Change now enters its 17<sup>th</sup> volume, having published 1161 papers in 75 issues through its existence, 209 of them in 2016 alone. As editors, we are quite proud about this. We also know just how much work this represents, first of all by the authors presenting their work to us, and then through the huge time investment and intellectual contribution made by subject editors, guest editors and reviewers. Much of this work is carried out in anonymity, and so authors have little opportunity to thank for the invaluable support of their work they are receiving through this process. But we know this work is appreciated!

For the papers submitted during the period of Nov 1, 2015 to Oct 31, 2016, in total 387 reviewers provided advice, often in the form of detailed and constructive statements including specific remarks for parts of the manuscript. On behalf of the authors, we as editors wish to thank these colleagues, and also all other reviewers, for their hugely important contribution. From next year onwards we plan to give this work some recognition by listing the full list of reviewers in the last issue of any year.

We are pleased to be able to work with a strong group of handling editors – also they contribute large amounts of their time to the common objective of producing publications of high academic quality and interdisciplinary standards. Three of them deserve to be mentioned specifically, since they are now stepping down from work for our journal, after many years of unfaltering support: **Elena Bennett, Helmut Geist, and Will Steffen** have each been handling many papers, engaged in discussions with reviewers, authors and chief editors, and generally sorted out numerous small and large problems before papers were published. We want to use this space to point out just how grateful we are for their support!

Now, with the first issue of 2017, we have decided to re-organize the journal's crucial support structure, its Editorial Board. In the past, the board consisted of a large group of colleagues (64 at the time of writing) who had all supported us by a great number of reviews and other activities. From now on, we plan to make their contributions visible by listing all reviewers at the end of a given annual volume. The Editorial Board, from now, on, will be composed of only the active handling editors, a group that is growing in number and also in diversity across disciplines and countries of residence. It currently includes **Robbert Biesbroek, Virginia Burkett, Erika Coppola, Nicolas Dendoncker, Xiangzheng Deng, Sarah Gergel, Helmut Haberl, Juan Ignacio Lopez Moreno, Shuaib Lwasa, Ülo Mander, Marc J. Metzger, Jamie Pittock, Christopher Reyer, Diana Sietz, and Erica Smithwick** – but several more colleagues will join us in the near future. So we thank the old Editorial Board for its reviewing activities (which we hope will continue), and we welcome our new Editorial Board with whom we plan to engage also in terms of discussing more generic issues of journal development.



Finally, the end of 2016 also has marked the end of the involvement of the journal's most important person for daily management and continuity. Our Managing Editor **Ms. Gabriele Götz** has been the key person for virtually all communications between authors, editors and reviewers, and she has set up and managed our extensive archiving system. But most of all, Gabriele Götz has developed the "art of reminding people". We are writing this with no ironic undertones: it is clear that, these days, most academics work under high pressure in a complex multi-tasking environment. Reminding them of earlier commitments or invitations, such as to review a paper, or for an editor, to invite more reviewers, is not just a technical issue, it is also a human interaction that can be managed with a smile and a personalised way of considering every person's specific situation. Gabriele Götz has carried this task over fifteen years, interacting with thousands of individuals, and her share in the success of *Regional Environmental Change* can simply not be overestimated. Gabi, all editors will miss the exchanges with you, and we hope many authors and reviewers have also understood how helpful your work has been for them. At this point, the editors also wish to thank the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research to have hosted the Editorial Office, and provided the staff time for Gabriele Götz over this entire period.

Concluding, we want to state briefly our objectives for 2017 and the forthcoming years. First, we will carry on with our Editorial Board and our Guest Editors in producing what we hope are excellent scientific contributions to the inter- and transdisciplinary theme of regional environmental change. We will do this by expanding the journal's Editorial Board and by continuing to consider strong proposals for Special Issues edited by Guest Editors. While we see a continuing role of 12 page full articles as before, we also want to encourage "rapid communications" in order to inject particular ideas or findings into the scientific literature. On a technical level, we hope to return to smooth operations by establishing a new editorial office with a new managing editor in the near future – the journal's website and front matter will report progress about this as soon as this has been achieved.

It is an inevitable aspect of success for a journal that many submitting authors may not see their papers eventually be published, this general situation will not change. During the years 2013-2015, the rejection rate of the journal has fluctuated between 60 and 70%. We wish to point out, however, that more than half of the papers which are not published in *Regional Environmental Change* are invited for transfer elsewhere, often accompanied by constructive reviews. Many rejections could have been avoided by careful study of our journal's goal statement. We continue to strive to fair handling of all submissions, independent of their origin or the experience of the submitting authors.