Panel (15) meeting 3.10.2025

Place: Teams

Present: Johanna Björkroth (chair), Xavier Irz (from 13.20), Antti Lajunen, Kirsi Mikkonen, Pirjo Mäkelä, Miina Rautiainen, Eeva-Stiina Tuittila, Pekka Uimari, Anssi Vainikka, Anna Valros

Absent: Mari Pihlatie, Tarja Pääkkönen

Secretariat: Leena Wahlfors, Anna-Kaarina Linna

1. **Opening**

   The Chair opened the Meeting at 13.00.

   The panelists and new secretariat member Leena Wahlfors introduced themselves.

2. **Announcements**

   It was noted that the scientific disciplines for which the panelists are responsible, as well as the areas of expertise of the panel members are to be be listed in Appendix 1.

3. **Conflicts of interest**
   It was noted that the panelists must always disclose any potential conflicts of interest, especially when the panel is discussing a publication channel with which the panelist has had – or continues to have – close ties in the form of publication, editorial work, financial interest, or other influence. These ties include, at a minimum, the panelist having, within the last five years:

   - published in the channel in question more than once,
   - served as an editor or member of the editorial board of the channel,
   - owned shares in the publishing company or a comparable organization, or
   - held another position that could cause financial or interest conflicts.

   It was discussed that the point “panelist having, within the last five years published in the channel in question more than once”, is problematic because it is inevitable that panelists will publish in the same journals in their field that they also evaluate. It was however stressed that this does not disclosure participation in decision-making, but the panel must take the ties into account in the evaluation process.It is appropriate to list publications to increase transparency. (Handbook 2025 - 2028.)

4. **The Development of JUFO Classification**

The development of the Publication Forum classification is part of the Forum's long-term operational and development plan. As part of this work, the Publication Forum Steering Group decided at its meeting on 8 September 2025 that:

A. Structure of the Classification

- In the Publication Forum (JUFO) classification, the designation *"Level 0"* will be discontinued. Instead, the category *"other identified publication channels"* will be used for scholarly publication channels that are not classified at Levels 1, 2, or 3, and that are not designated as professional or popular publication channels.
- From the beginning of 2026, evaluation panels will no longer assign publication channels to Level 3. Information on Level 3 will be removed from the JUFO portal at the beginning of 2027, when the updated classification is published.

Implementation:

- Update the website and the Panel Member's Handbook by the end of 2025.
- Apply the necessary changes to the panel-specific Excel templates used in the evaluation update at the beginning of 2026.
- Apply the necessary changes to the publication channel database and JUFO portal by the end of 2026.

B. Classification Criteria

Changes to level 1 criteria:

- Criterion 2 (Transparency):
  Current wording: "The publication channel's website provides a transparent description of the editorial board and the peer review process. (A book publisher may meet Level 1 criteria even if the editorial board and peer review process are not described on the website.)" -> Revised wording: "The publication channel's website provides a transparent description of the editorial board and the peer review process. This applies also to book publishers."
- Criterion 7 (Relevance) will be divided into two separate criteria:
  - 7. Relevance: The publication channel is central from the perspective of its discipline's international or Finnish research community.
  - 8. Thoroughness: The primary objective of the publication channel is to promote and ensure scholarly quality, and its editorial and peer review practices are careful and reliable. A checklist of practices identified as problematic may be used as a support tool in the assessment.

Changes to Level 2 criteria:

- A new (fourth) criterion will be added: The publication channel enables immediate open access (either via the service itself or through self-archiving).

- From the specific criteria for Finnish- and Swedish-language publication channels, the criterion “Research questions are strongly contextualised within Finnish society or Finnish- and Swedish-language culture” will be removed.

  Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

C. Quotas and Calculation of Publication Volume

Quotas for publication series and book publishers will no longer take Level 3 into account. Consequently:

- The combined publication volume of series classified at Level 2 may amount to no more than 25% of the total publication volume of all series within the panel (Levels 1–2 combined).
- The list of book publishers is shared across all panels. Selections for Level 2 are made jointly by the panel chairs. Approximately 100 publishers across all fields may be classified at Level 2. Quotas are thus determined by the number of publishers, not by their publication output.

Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

D. Aspects to be Considered in Evaluation

In the Panel Member’s Handbook, Chapter 3.6 *Aspects to be considered in evaluation* will be updated as follows when there are equally influential and respected publication channels in the same field under consideration for level 2:

3.6.6 Publication channels of scholarly societies (formerly “Closed society publication channels”):

- The title will be changed to *“Publication channels of scholarly societies”*.
- If there are equally influential and respected publication channels under consideration for Level 2, preference will be given to those published by scholarly societies. Publication channels that require society membership in order to publish (closed society journals) cannot be accepted at Level 2.

Implementation: Update the website and the Panel Member’s Handbook by the end of 2025.

Discussion:

The panel agreed that changing Level 0 to “other identified channels” is a good modification.

The secretariat explained the ground for the Change of level 0: The new designation is more neutral way to communicate in different contexts about identified publication channels that have not been approved to level 1. Level 0

channels are generally associated with the perception that they are of poor quality in one way or another, or have characteristics of predatory journals. In fact, the group is heterogeneous. It includes channels that are properly peer-reviewed but local, new, or located at the interface between professional and popular publishing. Originally, JUFO classification did not have level 0 but this name was introduced by the Ministry in the Universities Act in 2014.

It was noted that there has long been a debate for and against maintaining level 3. The following reasons were given by the Steering Group for abandoning the Level 3:

- Originally, JUFO classification had only levels 1 and 2. Level 3 was introduced in 2011 because level quotas were based on number journal titles, wherefore in some fields it was felt that level 2 was too broad and further differentiation was needed in form of level 3. Since 2014, level quotas have been calculated based on publication volume, which made levels 2 and 3 more exclusive and difficult to balance with journal quality and size across various subfields. This means that in many panels level 3 involves unhappy compromises.
- From the perspective of panelists and stakeholders, the distinction between levels 2 and 3 is the least important and credible according to surveys of panelists and stakeholders.
- Level 3 treats main field more unequally than combined level 2 and 3.
- Level 3 plays an important role when JUFO classification is misused for assessing individuals, which is not appropriate. In that sense it has been well-founded to reduce the hierarchy of the structure to reduce anxiety related to producing level 3 publications.
- Abandoning level 3 will reduce the work of the panels in the four-yearly update assessment, so more effort can be put on assessment on levels 1 and 2.

It was discussed that criteria 7 “The publication channel is central from the perspective of its discipline’s international or Finnish research community” is a it is somewhat difficult to interpret.

It was also mentioned that the removal of level 3 will not effect the current universities’ funding model for 2025-2028. Funding for the year 2028 will be calculated in June 2027 based on the combined results of the previous three publication years (2024–2026).

It was clarified that In level 2, panel may not include so many series that their combined number of publications (publication volume) would exceed one quarter of the total number of publications of all level 1 and 2 series in the panel’s list. This level quota restriction ensures that level 2 represents only the

top of the field, and that not too large a share of publications can be placed on level 2 compared to other panels.

5. **Preparation for the Spring 2026 evaluation round**

   In the Spring evaluation round, the panels can classify leading publication channels in different fields into level 2. This level is reassessed every four years.

   The scientific community is invited to submit proposals for classification to support the evaluation work of the panels. Members of the scientific community can influence the evaluation of publication channels by submitting proposals for changes to the current levels of publication channels. Proposals should be submitted via the JUFO portal.

   The JUFO panelists evaluate the channels within their area of expertise and submit their key proposals for changes (downgrades and upgrades) to level 2 in the JUFO portal by the end of February.

   Proposals made by the end of February 2026 will be taken into account in the first phase of the evaluation. In April–May, the panels will prepare a new preliminary level classification proposal, which will be finalized during the fall.

   The required data materials for the panels are produced before the panel evaluations, including panel-specific Excel sheets that contain the channels to be evaluated, publication volume data, and statistics by scientific discipline classification.

   More information at latest after Panel Chair Meeting of 27.11.2025

   The matter was recorded for information.

6. **Evaluation of grey area publication channels in the Publication Forum**

   Within the Publication Forum, there has long been discussion about so-called grey zone journals, which are not outright predatory journals, but which seek to maximise publication output with the least possible investment in editorial work and quality assurance. This business model is designed to maximise financial returns from article processing charges (APCs).

   The Secretariat has continued work on clarifying assessment of grey zone chalnnels by developing the Checklist to support the documentation and coherent consideration of problematic practicies.

   In line with a decision of the Steering Group, **panels are asked to give their views on whether there is a need to establish an Ethics Expert Group of the Publication Forum to promote coherent identification and treatment**

of grey zone and predatory journals across panels. The group would be composed primarily of panel members, but external domestic and international experts could also be invited if needed.

The task of the Expert Group, in collaboration with the JUFO Secretariat and the panels, would be to:

- Develop the checklist of problematic publishing practices and the documentation of such practices,
- Clarify how problematic practices should be considered in the assessment of channels and in the justifications for decisions, and
- Compile and provide information on problematic practices in publication channels for the panels, the Steering Group, and the research community.

The Expert Group would not evaluate individual publication channels assigned to the panels, but the panels could, if necessary, consult the group on individual cases. The responsibility for classification decisions would remain with the panels.

The JUFO Secretariat would coordinate and facilitate the group's work by providing background information and by relaying observations and experiences received from the research community, for example through the address *saalistajat@julkaisufoorumi.fi*.

Discussion: The panel considered whether the establishment of a new group would generate added value in relation to the amount of work it would entail. The panel concluded that the group should be established, and if it does not generate added value, it can be dissolved.

The use of AI in scientific publishing (Note: this item is optional for panelists)

In its meeting on May 5, 2025, the Publication Forum Steering Group decided that the secretariat will prepare a study on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the scientific publication process. Based on this decision, a survey has been sent to panelists to assess the utilization of AI in scientific publishing, including related practices, experiences, and perspectives.

Panel members have the opportunity to pose questions and share comments on the topic. The study, which will be based on survey responses, panel discussions, and a literature review, is scheduled for completion in early 2026. All data used in the study, including the content of panel discussions, will be anonymized.

The discussion was held in accordance with Appendix 2. The secretariat thanks the panelists for their valuable observations and will make use of them in preparing the research report on the subject.

7. **Other**

   The final supplementary assessment for 2025 will be carried out in November: For the panel members 1. - 20.11.2025, and the panel chair should confirm the evaluations by 30.11.2025.

8. **Closing**
   The Chair closed the Meeting at 14.21.

Appendix 1

Panel's MinEdu fields

411 Agriculture, forestry and fisheries

- Agriculture and agronomy
- Forestry
- Fishery
- Soil science
- Horticulture
- Plant breeding and plant protection
- Food sciences

412 Animal and dairy science

- Animal and dairy science
- Husbandry, pets

413 Veterinary science

414 Agricultural biotechnology

- Agricultural biotechnology and food biotechnology
- GM technology
- Livestock cloning
- Marker assisted selection
- Diagnostics
- Biomass feedstock production technologies
- Biopharming
- Agricultural biotechnology related ethics

415 Other agricultural sciences

222 Other engineering and technologies

- Food and beverages

List of panel members' expertise

Johanna Björkroth: Food hygiene; FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY; MICROBIOLOGY; VETERINARY SCIENCES; Food hygiene, food safety

Xavier Irz: Applied economics; AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS & POLICY; ECONOMICS; AGRICULTURE, MULTIDISCIPLINARY; Food systems, sustainable diets, farm efficiency/productivity, commodity markets

Antti Lajunen: Agricultural Technology; AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING; Agricultural Technology

Kirsi Mikkonen: Food sciences; FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY; Food Technology, Food Chemistry, Food Materials Sciences

Pirjo Mäkelä: Agriculture and agronomy;

Mari Pihlatie: Environmental science; ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES; SOIL SCIENCE; AGRICULTURE, MULTIDISCIPLINARY; Soil and vegetation interactions, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, soil processes

Tarja Pääkkönen: Veterinary Neurology; VETERINARY SCIENCES; Biomarkers of Drug-Resistant Epilepsy, Extracellular Vesicles and MiRNAs as Biomarkers of Central Nervous System Diseases, Hereditary Neurological Diseases

Miina Rautiainen: Forest sciences; FORESTRY; REMOTE SENSING; forest assessment science, forest ecology, remote sensing

Eeva-Stiina Tuittila: Plant ecology; FORESTRY; ECOLOGY; ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Anssi Vainikka: Fish and fisheries biology; EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY; FISHERIES ECOLOGY; Fish and fisheries biology, human-induced selection, behavioral ecology

Anna Valros: Veterinary sciences; VETERINARY SCIENCES; AGRICULTURE, DAIRY & ANIMAL SCIENCE; Animal Welfare and Behavior

List of engagements

The panel members are asked to disclose their engagements with publication channels in which they have been an editor or a member of the editorial board in the past five years, or hold shares in the publisher or its managing company.

Panellist	**Publication channel**

Anssi Vainikka	Annales Zoologici Fennici
Miina Rautiainen	Remote Sensing of Environment
Anna Valros	Animal Open Space
Pirjo Mäkelä	PLoS ONE, Agriculture

Meeting minutes 20.3.2025

Place: House of Science and Letters, room 207 and Teams

Present: Johanna Björkroth (chair), Xavier Irz, Antti Lajunen, Mari Pihlatie, Tarja Pääkkönen, Miina Rautiainen, Eeva-Stiina Tuittila, Anssi Vainikka, Anna Valros

Absent: Kirsi Mikkonen

Secretariat: Elina Pylvänäinen and Anna-Kaarina Linna

1. **Opening**
   The panel chair opened the meeting at 13.02.

2. **Introductions**

3. **Panel**
   a. **Panel composition**
      The fields covered in this panel are listed in appendix 1. The panel went through the list and discussed if there is a need to supplement the panel composition.

      Discussion:
      - The panel could be complemented with experts from the following fields: field of plant and crop sciences, animal sciences, genetics and breeding (of plants and animals).

   b. **Selecting the vice-chair of the panel**

A vice-chair was selected for the panel. The vice-chair stands in for the panel chair when they are absent. The vice-chair also has a right to confirm evaluations in the JUFO portal on behalf of the panel chair.

Decision:

- Xavier Irz was selected as a vice-chair of the panel.

4. **Orientation to the panel work**
   The secretariat introduced the Publication Forum, its aims and purpose as well as the evaluation criteria.

5. **Level 1 and 0 evaluations in the JUFO portal**
   The deadline for the first set of level 1 and 0 evaluations is 26.3.2025 for the panel members and the panel chair needs to confirm evaluations at latest on 1.4.2025. More information will be sent by email.

6. **Conflicts of interest**
   The panel members were asked to disclose their engagements with publication channels in which they have been an editor or a member of the editorial board in the past five years.

7. **Other**
   The autumn meeting will be held in October or November as a remote meeting.

8. **Closing**
   The panel chair closed the meeting at 15.00.

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