# Complex Systems Society manifesto
# About the publishing and evaluation systems

The scientific community is increasingly aware of the profound challenges associated with research evaluation, particularly the reliance on quantitative journal metrics such as the impact factor as proxies for scientific quality. These practices have entrenched a system where researchers are compelled to publish in high-cost, high-impact journals to advance their careers, often at the expense of broader scientific contributions. Despite the growing adoption of initiatives like DORA (https://sfdora.org), Plan S (https://www.coalition-s.org), CoARA (https://coara.eu), or PEER Community (https://peercommunityin.org), which aim to reform research assessment and promote open science, progress has been slow, and deeply-ingrained evaluation schemes still dominate. Thus, initiatives that support dissemination of knowledge (outreach, extension), data curation and sharing, research in non-academic contexts (which is more “messy”, difficult to conduct) and in response to real-world needs and with impact is not sufficiently valued. These issues are compounded by the dominance of commercial publishers, whose exorbitant article processing charges (APCs) and profit-driven models exploit the academic community creating inequalities, fostering an unsustainable and unfair publishing system that threatens the very preservation and dissemination of scholarly knowledge.

Moreover, the proliferation of journals and the increasing volume of submissions have overwhelmed the peer-review system, making it harder to secure reviewers and exacerbating delays in the publication process. There is also a lack of accountability of the review processes that needs to be counteracted, resorting to more open and transparent review processes. This systemic strain highlights a publishing ecosystem on the brink of dysfunction, further worsened by the refusal of some publishers to lower APCs, prompting entire editorial boards to resign in protest. The result is a publishing landscape where early career researchers are particularly disadvantaged, innovation is stifled, and the long-term integrity of scholarly archives is at risk. This situation is even worse in the global south, where researchers are generally unable to publish due to the high costs involved, and thus completely renounce their opportunity to produce knowledge, which brings with it even more inequality. Also, there are fundamental issues with the evaluation of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary works which are particularly relevant to complex systems. Urgent reform is needed to ensure that research evaluation aligns with principles of fairness, sustainability, inclusiveness, transparency, rigor and the broader interests of the scientific community.

We, the Complex Systems Society (CSS), will take steps in earnest towards a profound change in the publishing systems and in the evaluation procedures in academia in general, beginning with our field of knowledge, namely Complex

Systems Science. The CSS will actively participate in the process of reforming research evaluation and reject problematic practices. The Society strives to implement that, in all of the CSS-related activities, the research will be evaluated entirely based on its quality and its scholarly contributions instead of other factors, such as impact factors of publication venues. This principle will apply to the Society's award selection and other peer review processes. In addition, the CSS will aim at supporting open-access, inclusive and accessible (free of charge) journals, advocating and promoting systems of transparent and accountable reviews, promoting initiatives on interdisciplinary evaluations, or supporting dissemination, outreach and extension activities. The CSS will actively seek collaborations and alliances with other organisations promoting similar principles. As was mentioned above, the CSS is not alone in taking these steps, but it has the opportunity to lead this process pushing for an institutional change in the way we do, communicate, and support science.