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Environmental Science – Advances: reflections and welcome to another year of the journal

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We launched *Environmental Science – Advances* 2 years ago now. At the time of writing, we have just published our 200th article. So, we think it is timely to reflect on our progress so far and our ambitions for the next stages in the evolution of the journal.

We were determined to align the journal's mission with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – as discussed in our previous Editorials (ref. 1 and 2). Indeed, the tag line of the journal is 'Uniting disciplines to solve environmental challenges. Original thinking for a sustainable future'. We therefore set out ambitious and societally relevant aims and scope for the journal, as follows:

'We seek to publish work which improves our understanding of the environment and offers solutions or improvements to building a cleaner, safer, healthier, more sustainable and equitable world. Fundamental environmental research is welcomed, alongside modelling, fieldwork, applied studies, policy work and studies at the environmental and social science interface. Studies that enhance holistic environmental understanding, for example by connecting different environmental compartments, linking to human health

and wellbeing, and joining up other disciplines, are particularly welcome. Truly interdisciplinary, the journal welcomes research from any field related to the environmental sciences, global environmental change, and sustainability science.'

As the journal enters its third year, we can begin to see some patterns and trends emerging:

- We are achieving our aim of appealing to authors across a range of topics. These include all areas of water science and management (~30% of articles so far); sources, distribution, impacts and management of contaminants of concern (~14%); air pollution, air quality, and climate change (~12%); agriculture, soil and plant science and food security issues (~11%).

- As expected for a Royal Society of Chemistry journal, we also have important contributions on topics such as sensors, detection and monitoring (~11%), catalysis (~9%) and radiochemistry, applied to environmental sustainability.

- Whilst predominantly rooted in the chemical, biological ('natural') sciences and engineering, we also have articles spanning to policy, governance and management of the environment, and drawing on the social sciences.

We are delighted to see contributions from all parts of the globe – every continent/region is represented in the

authorship of articles published to date (Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America) and in the studies conducted (including the Arctic and Antarctic).

It takes a little time for the key metrics of a new journal to settle down and for patterns to emerge. After 2 years, we can report the following data since the launch of the journal:

- Number of acceptances: 204.
- Acceptance rate: 31.5% (this reflects our focus on quality contributions that fit with the journal's aims and scope).
- Number of articles in issues (we have a ~1 month lag between accepting and publishing so this number is smaller): 181.
- Time to first decision: 46 days (this is a very competitive performance and we will work hard to maintain or improve this).
- Average review content: 22% (we are always happy to consider timely, authoritative critical reviews).

We are pleased to report that our journal has recently been accepted for indexing in Web of Science (WoS), meaning that it will be eligible for an Impact Factor at the next opportunity, in summer 2024. We are indexed in Scopus, and our content enjoys visibility on **ResearchGate**, providing broad exposure for the work of our authors. We also offer the option of double-anonymized peer review, ensuring both author and

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reviewer identities remain confidential if preferred.

We work closely with potential contributors, guest editors and authors to develop themed issues and collections on topical and timely issues. Past examples include:

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Environmental Science – <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=b6ffe35b-6122-4471-acc2-ff98a9f9ef9b>

Environmental Science: Advances – Editorial and Advisory Board Member Publications – <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=2eb9764e-17ee-498e-931b-5d8b2d14f819>

Environmental Science: Advances features in the Royal Society of Chemistry Quantum Dot Nobel Prize collection – <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=09893d42-46e0-473b-87fd-8fbf4585504a>

Environmental Science: Advances is featured in the RSC-wide circular economy collection – <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=1c963f49-176d-4624-8c5d-5be3d7015200>

Environmental Science: Advances is featured in the World Earth Day collection – <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/articlecollectionlanding?sercode=va&themeid=21980bc8-82d6-47f1-8e46-03bb62f3e0e3>.

At the moment, we have a number of themed issues in preparation. These cover the following topics:

- Opportunities and Challenges of Using CRISPR Technologies in the Agri-Food Sector (currently making the final call)
- Methods for Early Warning of Chemicals of Emerging Concern (currently making the final call)
- Environmental Catalysts for Photodegradation Research (launching soon)

- Soil Protection and Regeneration (launching soon)

We believe this shows the diversity of the journal and leadership in developing new areas of interest. We will be happy to receive ideas for other topics and to discuss these with you.

More generally, the Royal Society of Chemistry continues to support the environmental science community. As a not-for-profit professional society and scientific publisher, the Royal Society of Chemistry is committed to upholding its reputation for quality and rigorous peer review while supporting a smooth, fair and sustainable transition to open access publishing. Earlier this year, the Royal Society of Chemistry became the first chemistry publisher to commit to a 100% open access future and aims to make all Royal Society of Chemistry-owned journals fully open access within five years. As a gold open access journal, *Environmental Science: Advances* has been championing open access from its launch and our authors also benefit from all article processing charges (APCs) being waived until mid-2024.

Environmental Science: Advances complements the scopes of the Royal Society of Chemistry's other environmental science journals – *Environmental Science: Processes & Impacts (ESPI)*, *Environmental Science: Nano (ESN)*, *Environmental Science: Water Research & Technology (ESWRT)* and *Environmental Science: Atmospheres (ESA)* – to provide the research community with a home for their environmental science work across all disciplines. While *Environmental Science: Advances* has an all-encompassing scope for the environmental sciences, the others have more specific scopes. More details about our companion journals can be found here: <https://rsc.li/envsci>. The five environmental science journals also form part of the Royal

Society of Chemistry's wider strategic approach to sustainability.

We work very closely with both the Editorial Board and the Editorial Office. Submitted manuscripts are professionally handled by our dedicated Associate Editors Pernilla Bohlin-Nizzetto, Ru-Jin Huang, Ngai Yin Yip, David Weissbrodt and Liwu Zhang, supported by Editorial Board member Silvia Lacorte and our Advisory Board members. The journal's Executive Editor is Emma Eley who leads the strategic development of the journal. Emma works alongside Jon Ferrier, Deputy Editor, and Sarah Whitbread, Editorial Production Manager, who coordinate a team of Assistant Editors who promote the journal, invite authors to publish, and support authors and reviewers at every stage of the publication process. If you're interested in submitting to the journal, the team would love to hear from you (E-mail: ESAdvances-rsc@rsc.org).

Our main aim is to provide the scientific community and the wider public with timely, innovative and relevant research and knowledge that address the multifaceted problems of environmental science. When we celebrate the 200th publication, it is time to pay tribute to authors, reviewers and editors who have collectively contributed to the focus and quality of *Environmental Science: Advances*.

References

- 1 Z. Cai, K. C. Jones and C. Manaia, Editorial introducing *Environmental Science: Advances*, *Environ. Sci.: Adv.*, 2022, **1**, 7–8.
- 2 C. Manaia, Z. Cai and K. C. Jones, One year of *Environmental Science: Advances*, *Environ. Sci.: Adv.*, 2023, **2**, 8–10.

