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Editorial

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Mountain Research and Development (MRD)
An international, peer-reviewed open access journal
published by the International Mountain Society (IMS)
www.mrd-journal.org

Dear Readers,

Challenges trigger innovation. Mountain Research and Development has been experiencing this concept in a major way since the beginning of 2008. When the journal was launched in 1981, the publishing context was very different from what it is today; now, all over the world, including in developing countries, readers', authors', reviewers', and publishers' expectations and habits are influenced by computer and networking technology. For MRD, the challenge has been to adapt to changing conditions while taking advantage of new opportunities without neglecting the journal's main focus, strengths, and roots. MRD's transition to an innovative, online, and open-access form is now nearly completed. We are delighted to present to you the first issue of MRD in the journal's new format and would like to briefly inform you about the major changes and new opportunities this transition has enabled.

Reaching out to an audience beyond the mountain community: open access

Open access is an ideal means of reaching the global audience beyond those people who subscribed to the journal until now. In 2002, the international Budapest Open Access Initiative was launched, with a view to democratizing information and eliminating barriers to peer-review research. Many academic and research policy institutions worldwide, including the University of Bern, where MRD's editorial office is located, are supporting this initiative and trying to find ways of implementing it. Allocating the financial means for meeting the commitment to open access is an unresolved and debated issue. MRD is also currently involved in seeking additional funds to maintain its special editorial services for authors in developing countries in order to supplement the contributions from the International Mountain Society's institutional members.

Enhancing the value of evidence-based development experiences: peer-reviewed MountainDevelopment papers

Science-based experiences gained by the development community contribute to a joint learning process involving scientists, policy-makers, and development practitioners. The purpose of papers published in the enhanced MountainDevelopment section is to focus mainly on "transformation knowledge," while papers that appear in the MountainResearch section continue to focus more on "systems knowledge."

This distinction between different types of knowledge is useful in research for sustainable development. ***Systems knowledge*** *describes how current systems—that is, society, the economy, the environment, etc—work, or how they can be understood. In order to shape sustainable development, all actors concerned need to be involved in defining a vision and negotiating what are the "right" things to do; that is, they need to develop* ***target knowledge*** *together. They develop this knowledge on the basis of systems knowledge, which helps to find missing links and to enhance understanding of complex wholes.* ***Transformation knowledge*** *is needed to shape the transition from the current to the envisaged situation, to decide how to do the "right" things and put the vision of sustainable development into practice, and to define what corrective action is needed.*

MountainDevelopment papers thus present practice-oriented research aimed at coping with development challenges in mountain regions or well-researched and validated development and policy experiences, exploring the transferability of these experiences across mountain and other contexts. They address a multidisciplinary community of development-oriented researchers, policy-makers, decision-makers, project planners, and people in educational institutions.

As already announced in the previous issue of MRD, the articles in the MountainDevelopment section are now being submitted to external peer review. This process enhances their quality and recognition; it continues to guarantee and even to increase the relevance of papers in this section to, and their readability for, a broader, multidisciplinary community of development-oriented researchers, policy-makers, decision-makers, project planners, and people in educational institutions. The review procedure is specially designed to take into consideration both the specific objectives and target public of papers in the MountainDevelopment section.

The new model of the peer-reviewed MountainDevelopment paper still needs to be made better known among potential authors. First papers of this type are currently under review but are not yet ready for publication. Thus, this first online and open-access issue of MRD does not yet feature papers in the MountainDevelopment section. Authors interested in submitting a paper of this kind to MRD can consult the new guidelines on the new MRD website, http://www.mrd-journal.org.

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Increasing publication efficiency: online submission and peer review

The editorial office has been working diligently with its longtime publishing partner, the renowned journal publisher Allen Press, to develop a lean and efficient online submission and peer-review system, accessible via MRD's website. We look forward to inviting authors and reviewers to benefit from this new facility. Launch of the new submission and peer-review system is foreseen for April 2009.

Maintaining MRD's high quality and its multithematic and interdisciplinary orientation

MRD will remain indexed in key academic and other databases, including ISI Web of Knowledge℠ and the Journal Citation Reports®; it will also remain part of the BioOne collection of scientific journals, simply moving to BioOne's freshly started open-access collection. All articles published in MRD since 2000 are now available free of charge via the MRD website or at http://www.bioone.org/loi/mred, true to the mission of the journal to make available papers of highest quality to a global audience, including in developing countries.

With a focus on 10 main areas of interest, MRD shows that it will remain interested in papers from many different disciplines and on a variety of development- and policy-relevant themes. MRD's key mountain research and development fields are:

- *Society and culture;*
- *Policy, politics, and institutions;*
- *Economy;*
- *The bio- and geophysical environment;*
- *Ecosystems and cycles;*
- *Environmental risks;*
- *Resource and land use;*
- *Energy, infrastructure, and services;*
- *Methods and theories;*
- *Regions in the world.*

In the future, MRD will usually feature 1–2 theme-oriented issues per year; authors are invited to send papers, if possible, 9 months ahead of the announced month of publication of a theme-oriented issue to ensure that the review process can be completed in time. Papers on themes other than those announced are welcome at any time and will appear as miscellanea. In addition, MRD will continue to publish special issues occasionally, in collaboration with various partners, who will be given the option to make their special issues available in print.

Show your commitment to mountains

We invite you to communicate the new features of MRD to your colleagues and to people you know who are interested in mountains and sustainable development. Submit your research findings and your evidence-based development insights to MRD for peer review. We also welcome feedback on and questions about the new format, as they will help us to improve the journal's new online features and content. MRD is seeking financial or in-kind support for its special editorial services to the South. Readers can become Friends of MRD at: www.mrd-journal.org/subscribe.asp. Institutions can join the IMS at the same link.

Please contact us to tell us what you think of this first online and open-access issue of MRD.

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