

## Review Pipeline for Manuscript Evaluation

(1) A paper is accepted as is, without revisions, if both referees check the choices associated with the red line trajectory in the ‘pipeline’ of Figure 1.

(2) If a referee selects A, B, or C in the ‘pipeline’ (Fig. 1) (based on core criteria 1 – 3; see main text), then a subject editor from the Advisory Editorial Board is normally consulted to evaluate the referee’s criticism. The paper is rejected if at least one referee provides well-reasoned support, as judged by the editors, for selecting points A, B, or C in the ‘pipeline’, and the referees’ comments (with their identities revealed) are forwarded to the author. In this case, authors are not permitted to submit a revised paper under the same submission number (although they may pursue an entirely new submission with a cover letter that explains how they have addressed referee concerns from their earlier submission).

(3) If a referee selects A, B, or C in the ‘pipeline’, but in the judgment of the editors has NOT provided a well-reasoned supporting argument, then the referee’s input in this case does not affect the editor’s decision to accept or reject. If, after this, the editors have no sound argument for selecting points A, B or C, then the author is given the benefit of the doubt, and the paper is processed as indicated in (4). *Importantly, if the referee’s criticisms involving A, B or C are judged as debatable, the manuscript is likely to be accepted for publication and the editor will encourage the referee to publish his/her objections/concerns as a companion article (see below).*

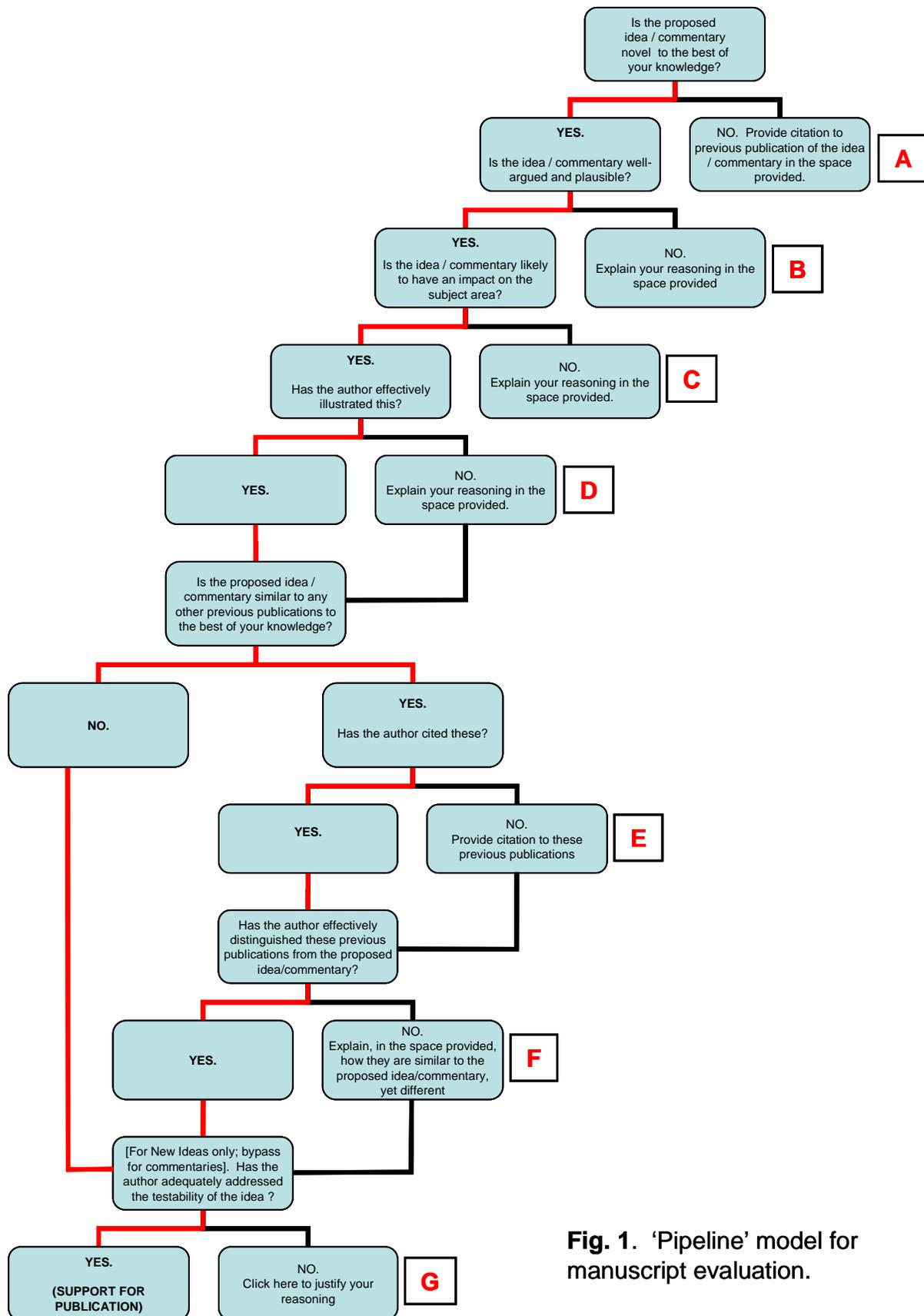
(4) After (3), or if neither referee selects A, B, or C in the ‘pipeline’, then the paper is accepted for publication provided that core criteria 4 and 5 (see main text), concerning points D, E, F, and G in the ‘pipeline’ (Fig. 1) can be met – as judged by the editor – either through published reviews from referees, or in a revised manuscript from the author. A member of the Advisory Editorial Board is normally consulted to facilitate this decision. If the paper is accepted, the referees must indicate at this point whether they wish to have their comments published as companion articles together with the accepted manuscript. The referee’s review/response, if it is to be published, may be critical or supportive of the idea, *but must – as judged by the editors – be based on substantive comments involving refutation (if debate regarding A, B or C is involved), further clarification, extension, modification, or revision of the author’s original idea or commentary, and in particular must effectively address the reasoning*

*provided in association with the selection of points D, E, F, or G in the ‘pipeline’ of Figure 1, if applicable. Referee commentary based on identification of routine errors (e.g. in grammar) or minor oversights (e.g. failure to provide citation to a reference mentioned in the text) will not be published.*

(5) At this stage, the decision to publish rests with the author, who may elect to withdraw the paper if he would prefer not to publish his original paper together with the published reviews from the referee(s).

(6) If both the author and at least one referee indicate their wish to publish in (4) and (5), then the author may elect to invite the referee(s) to co-author the paper, and this will be particularly encouraged by the editor if the referee has provided important further development or clarification of the author’s original argument. Alternatively, the author (or the referee) may elect not to collaborate, but in this case the author must provide a review of the referee’s responding article (limited to 1500 words and one illustration); this author’s review (which may be supportive or may take the form of a rebuttal) must be incorporated as a concluding section under separate subtitle (‘Response to referees’) added to the end of the originally submitted manuscript. In this case, no revisions of content, to address the referee’s responding comments, are permitted in the author’s originally submitted text of the manuscript (*except for referee corrections arising from routine errors or minor oversights – as judged by the editors*). This arrangement is designed to maximize quality control because authors should be inclined under this arrangement to take great care in developing their original manuscript before it is submitted. In addition, with this arrangement, referees should be particularly inclined to provide high quality reviews because their reviews are in turn subjected to published peer-review by the submitting author, as well as peer review by the editors.

(7) In the event that one or both referees choose not to publish their reviews, the author of an accepted manuscript may revise the original manuscript in any ways that may be necessary to adequately address any comments from this/these referee(s). Some revisions, as determined by the editor, may be mandatory before final acceptance. Papers are published on-line within five working days of final acceptance, payment of the processing fee and receipt of the signed publication agreement.



**Fig. 1.** 'Pipeline' model for manuscript evaluation.