Basic procedure for amending the Code

Anyone proposing changes in the Code should be familiar with the basic procedure:

1. After each new edition of the Code appears, proposals to amend it are published in Taxon (see below), where they are numbered serially.

2. Shortly prior to the next International Botanical Congress, a “Synopsis of proposals” assembles all published proposals, organized by Article and Recommendation, and republishes them with appropriate comments from the Rapporteur-général and Vice-rapporteur but without the justification accompanying the original publication.

3. A ballot for the Preliminary Mail Vote (an entirely advisory opinion from individuals) is sent at the same time as the Synopsis to those entitled to vote, and the ballots are tabulated so that the results are available at the Nomenclature Section of the Congress.

4. The Nomenclature Section, meeting ahead of the main sessions of the Congress, considers proposals, including any amendments offered, and acts upon them on the basis of a combination of individual and institutional votes.

5. Decisions of the Nomenclature Section are ratified by vote of a plenary session of the Congress.


Timetable and regulations for proposals

In our capacities as Rapporteur-général (NJT) and Vice-rapporteur designate (JHW), we have decided that the following timetable and regulations shall apply to proposals submitted to Taxon for consideration by the Nomenclature Section of the XIX International Botanical Congress in Shenzhen:

1. Taxon will open for proposals beginning now, for publication possibly starting in the February 2014 issue.

2. Taxon will close for proposals on 31 March 2016. Late submissions received by the end of June 2016 may be accepted at the editors’ discretion if no reviewing or major editing is necessary.

3. Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to the Rapporteur-général (n.turland@bgbm.org); but see notes 6 and 7 below.


5. The rationale for a set of proposals must be presented concisely. Any main proposal comprising more than 400 words of general explanation (rather less than half a page of Taxon in the font used for proposals) is liable to be rejected (or condensed) by the editors. Additional explanation of individual proposals, when essential, must be extremely brief: more than 125 additional words per proposal are likewise liable to be rejected or condensed by the editors. Alternatively, this text may be submitted to a regular review process in order to establish whether the topic that the proposals address is of such importance or complexity as to justify greater space.

6. If a proposal results from a more general context, authors should make that context the subject of a separate paper to be submitted to the Nomenclature column of Taxon (or some other journal), reviewed in the normal way, and considered for acceptance in competition with papers on other topics. Such manuscripts must be submitted via the Taxon online manuscript submission system (http://www...
Points to note in making proposals


2. Proposals should state explicitly what change is proposed, e.g.: “Insert a new Article after Art. 29.3”; “Change Art. 30.7 to read as follows”; “Delete the second sentence of Art. 41 Note 3”; “Reword the last line of Rec. 60D.1 as follows”; “Add the following example to Rec. 31B.”. In other words, proposals should not consist simply of new text or explanation but should indicate exactly what text is to be altered, deleted, or added in the Code. A clearly expressed, concise proposal is more likely to be read sympathetically than a long complex argument or a series of repetitive proposals.

3. Proposers are encouraged to provide, as part of the rationale for their proposal, some assessment of its impact to the stability of nomenclature. In general, proposals that contribute to nomenclatural stability are more likely to be successful.

4. Proposals that address nomenclatural situations that occur only rarely are unlikely to succeed if they also add to the complexity of the Code. Such situations may be better addressed through conservation, rejection, suppression of a work, a request for a binding decision, or a new Example in the Code. Note that new Examples do not necessarily require formal proposals and may be directly submitted, via the Rapporteurs, for consideration by the Editorial Committee.

5. If a general principle applies to several Articles and Recommendations, the matter can often be covered succinctly by a single proposal, in which details are given at the most relevant point in the Code. If, for example, there should be a proposal to eliminate the “×” sign for hybrids, or to make the rank of section equivalent to subgenus, it would not be necessary to make a separate formal proposal for amending every single passage where “×” or “section” is mentioned in the Code. Similarly, if acceptance of a proposal would require renumbering or rewording of the remainder of an Article or Recommendation, such changes would automatically be made by the Editorial Committee, and it is not necessary to make separate proposals for them. Separate proposals for derivative changes would only increase unnecessarily the text of the Synopsis and, especially, the number of mail votes to be cast and tabulated.

6. Proposers are, however, encouraged to provide a list of all the Articles, Notes, Recommendations and Examples believed to be affected by a given proposal. This is of help to the Editorial Committee, whose main job is to ensure that any amendments adopted for the new Code are fully integrated with the existing text and consistently implemented throughout. Details of Examples that could illustrate the effect of a proposal, even if not included in the formal proposal, are also welcomed by the Editorial Committee.

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