CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

1. Project information

- ✓ Name of the project:
- ✓ Authors of the project:
- ✓ Type of the project (original/review):
- ✓ Top three keywords:

Authors: ____

Supervisor: ______________________ Date (yyyy/mm/dd): ____________________

2. English revision (optional but highly recommended)

No	Describe	Check	Note
1	Choose an editing service		Use an expert editing service (e.g., Textcheck, Editage, Scribendi) to ensure the manuscript writing quality.
2	Prepare the file		• Delete author information and affiliations. • Delete the table. • Delete author contributions, funding. • Copy all figures and table legends, including supplementary files to the manuscript. • Delete method description (e.g., standardized or repeatedly used methods) if it is too lengthy to reduce cost. Box references (and space) are still counted as words, remember to remove it.
3	Double-check with a co-author		
4	Submit the manuscript for English editing		
5	Reflect on the English editing to make the final document		Check the revision from the English editing service carefully and manually to avoid inappropriate edits (e.g., changing the meaning of the sentences, unsuitable scientific terms, and so on). (Optional) Use the “Compare” function in MS Word to compare and ensure that all necessary points will be revised.

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3. Plagiarism check using a professional tool (mandatory)

No	Describe	Check	Note
1	Prepare the file		• Delete author information and affiliations. • Delete the tables and figures. • Delete references. • Delete author contributions, funding. • Copy the legend of supplementary figures and tables to the manuscript.
2	Check with iThenticate		
3	Check with other tools, such as Turnitin, Copykiller (if applicable)		
4	Critically examine the results		The sentences with a high similarity percentage should be revised carefully, especially those with coincident verbs. Note that plagiarism is not only about text similarity but also about idea plagiarism. Ensure to cite the missing reference if it is crucial to do so.

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4. Prepare the package for submission

No	Describe	Check	Note
1	Choose the suitable journal		Some suggestive evidence of a suitable journal: • Some funding bodies may only consider journals indexed in SCI(E) with a journal impact factor (JIF). Since 2023, an ESCI journal also has an IF. An ESCI journal still does not meet the requirements of the funding agency. We can use the Clarivate Journal Citation Report to get information of journals' metrics. • The manuscript’s objective falls within the scope(s) of the journal. Check for recently published articles in the journal to know its current interest. • Aim for the most reputable journals in the field for the first submission. Even if it is rejected, we can gain valuable insights from the reviewers’ comments (or from a desk rejection). • The journals whose publications were cited most frequently in the manuscript. • The journals’ formatting is friendly to the manuscript, e.g., not requiring too many additional materials (e.g., the signature of all authors). If the journal does not require the manuscript to be formatted in the first

			submission, step 3 may be skipped to avoid wasting time. • **Note:** In addition to the article processing charge (APC), the additional fee, e.g., voluntary page charge or exceeding page charge, should also be checked.
2	Create an account on the submission page early, select "submit a new manuscript", and check for the "unusual" but mandatory files the target journal may ask		• E.g., study summary, impact, highlights, blinded title page, cover figure, COI signed by every author. • Should inspect all of the steps, e.g., some journal requires a list of suggested editors.
3	Reformat the manuscript (if the journal requires it)		Following the guidance of the journal, and check carefully the requirements: • Refer to the required structure and word limits for the abstract and the main text; table/figure limit, references limit. • (Optional) Check and accept all track-changes and comments in manuscripts and other MS Word files. • Check if a graphical abstract is mandatory for the selected journal. • Figure legends, table titles, and where to place them (e.g., at the end of the manuscript or at the position in the manuscript where they are cited).

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			• Check for appropriate stypes in referencing Figures and Tables in the text (such as Supplementary Figure 1/ Fig. S1/S1 Fig., among others). • Check journal instructions about citing each panel of supplementary figures (for instance, for some journals, we could not cite each panel, e.g., “Supplementary Fig. S3A”, only “Supplementary Fig. S3” is allowed). • Correct the label figure panels depending on the journal [e.g., A), B), C) or a), b), c)]. • **Check for consistency of the reported numbers in tables, figures, and the main text.** • **Cross-check references between written content and cited articles. Using a .pdf file with the Google Scholar PDF Reader tool may be helpful for this step.** • Check the reference style and the missing information of every cited reference. • Declare the use of AI as the writing assistance (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, and so on), if necessary. • Declare if there are any conflicts of interest. • Check carefully the name and affiliation of all authors. If the journal using double anonymized

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			review procedure, the authors' information should be carefully removed in the manuscript even in the seft-cited reference. • Acknowledgments: Check if we need to acknowledge any people and tools used. For instance, if we used Biorender, remember to write, "Figure X was created using Biorender.com". • Funding: Describe the funding agency that supported the work. It could be described in "Acknowledgments" depending on the journal. Check it **again and again** to ensure there is no error, especially the funding code number. (Optional) Follow the funders' instructions for mentioning grant information rather than the suggestion of the target journal. Besides the submission guideline, please check and consider the recent publications from the selected journal when reformatting the manuscript.
4	Prepare supplementary file		• (Optional) If supplementary is prepared using MS Word, check if the default resolution for the images (in the Options) of the file is set to "High fidelity" and if the "Do not compress images in the file" box is ticked. These should be done before adding the figures to the .docx file.

			• Check the supplementary figures, tables, and corresponding legends. • Check for consistency of the reported numbers in tables, figures, and the main text (corresponding to the supplementary data).
5	Prepare the package of figures		• If figures are prepared using MS PowerPoint, check if the default resolution for the images (in the Options) of the file is set to "High fidelity" and if the "Do not compress images in the file" box is ticked. These should be done before adding the figures to the .pptx file. • The figures should be exported as 300 dpi or higher. • For each figure, prepare .png, .tiff, and .pdf files. Remember to keep the source files (e.g., PowerPoint or Illustrator). • Check the reported number and data in figures (main and supplementary figures), and re-run the analysis if necessary. • Provide the figure license (if required).
6	Prepare the shared data		• Check the integrity of the data that will be shared carefully. (Optional) Consider sharing your generated data by adding it to the supplementary file or submitting it to a reliable server (e.g., Zenodo).

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			• If the computational scripts need to be shared, distribute them as a project on the laboratory's GitHub page. Cite this GitHub link in the manuscript.
7	Prepare cover letter		**The cover letter is not a recapitulated version of the abstract or introduction; it is a tool to sell the ideas and main contributions of the work.** • Check if there are templates and specific requirements for the cover letter. Some publishers have that information, e.g., Taylor & Francis. • The typical length is within an A4 page. • Convincingly introduce the study, i.e., why they should consider our manuscript, and what its most exciting findings are. • Make sure to confirm with the editor that we have checked the language of the manuscript. • Check the submission guidelines for the exact name of the type of article that we will submit.
8	Prepare a list of potential reviewers		• Usually, the senior authors of the cited papers are suitable to review our manuscript. • Also, check for senior authors of the recently published articles in our targeted journal(s). • Current world-renowned scientists in the respective scientific area.

			• Never suggest a scientist with a potential conflict of interests, e.g., the scientists affiliated in the same institution/country with the corresponding author, one of the co-authors in recently published papers (< 3-5 years), or scientists we have active collaboration with. • Provide sufficient information about the reviewer. Information should be from the reviewer's current affiliation. Example: **ABC, M.D, Ph.D.** Department of X, University of Y, Z city, T country Reason: He is an experienced scientist who utilizes omics technologies to study the toxic effects of various compounds.
9	Prepare author contribution (if the journal requires a separate file)		• Copy from the approved content in the manuscript. • Use these words to describe the role of each author. E.g., for Elsevier publisher, they usually use “Conceptualization”, “Data curation”, “Software”, “Methodology”, “Investigation”, “Formal analysis”, “Writing – original drafts”, “Writing – review & editing”, “Supervision”, “Validation“, “Visualization“, “Resource”, “Funding Acquisition”. Other publishers could utilize the other words.

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			• Usually, “Conceptualization” and “Supervision” are given to the advisor/project PI/supervisor. • **Note:** The above system follows the CRediT author statement. Check the original document in case clarity about each role is required. • How the author's contribution could be arranged could differ for different publishers. Check the submission guidelines to avoid inappropriate arrangements.
10	Prepare author email and affiliation file		It should be the institutional email address. If not possible, then use the active email address of the author.
11	Complete the "conflict of interest" form provided by the journal if required		
12	Fill the checklist file provided by the journal (optional)		
13	Attach the publication license of the figure made from paid service (if applicable)		
14	Check the built .pdf file before submission		It is better if all actively contributing authors read and confirm the submission content.

Authors: ____

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5. After submission

No	Describe	Check	Note
1	For revision, please refer to the following part. For rejection, please refer to part 2 of this section.		
1.1	Prepare the response file and other required materials		• Answer the concerns that reviewers and editors raise. • **Re-check and re-run data analysis (mandatory).** • Conduct further analysis, if needed. Remember, this may be the last opportunity to do so. • Revise the manuscript **(in the track-change/highlighted form)** and supplementary file **(in the track-change or final form)** and match the revised content with the response file. • Cross-check the references between written content and cited articles in the response file (if applicable). • Prepare a short cover letter emphasizing that the manuscript has been significantly improved following the comments of the editor(s) and reviewers. **The deadline for revision is usually two (minor revision) to six (major revision) weeks.**
1.2	Submit the revised materials		

2	If the manuscript is rejected: Follow section 4 for another journal		

Authors: ____

Supervisor: ____________________ Date (yyyy/mm/dd): ______________

6. Proof-reading process

No	Describe	Check	Note
1	Pay the APC		
2	Carefully check and revise the entire manuscript and other materials		• Only one person should have access to revise the content in the browser directly. • The lead author(s) should assign specific sections to be checked by the contributing co-author with an appropriate timeline. Specific instructions help avoid ambiguities and lack of comprehensive checking. **The deadline for proof-reading is usually 48 hours.**

Other notes and troubleshooting

- Always apply the “trust but check” approach to minimize potential errors, especially for a project that involves multiple laboratories or partners.
- The raw materials of imaging-type data, e.g., PCR and Western Blottings, should be kept. Also, check for potential **image duplication, errors in the scale bar,** or **data manipulation** of the blots in every figure.
- When in doubt, get confirmation and advice from the corresponding author of the project.
- Proceed with extra care when working on a project involving different laboratories with multiple corresponding authors.

Lead authors: ______________________ **Signature** ________

______________________ **Signature** ________

______________________ **Signature** ________

Read and understood by: ______________________ **Signature** ________

Date (yyyy/mm/dd): ______________________