ASM

Microbes Make Our World

ASM Joint Open Call for Editors

About ASM

- Member-driven organization with **38,000+ members** worldwide
- We have several programs: meetings, advocacy, global public health, and DEIA.
- **Seventeen journals** that collectively publish ~6000 articles a year.
- Titles **span the breadth of microbiology,** from basic and clinical to applied, industrial, and environmental microbiology, along with review, data, and education journals.
- **Our Editorial Vision: ASM Journals will be the home for all research that advances the microbial sciences.**



Goal: Ensure Volunteer Representation Reflects ASM's Global Author Base

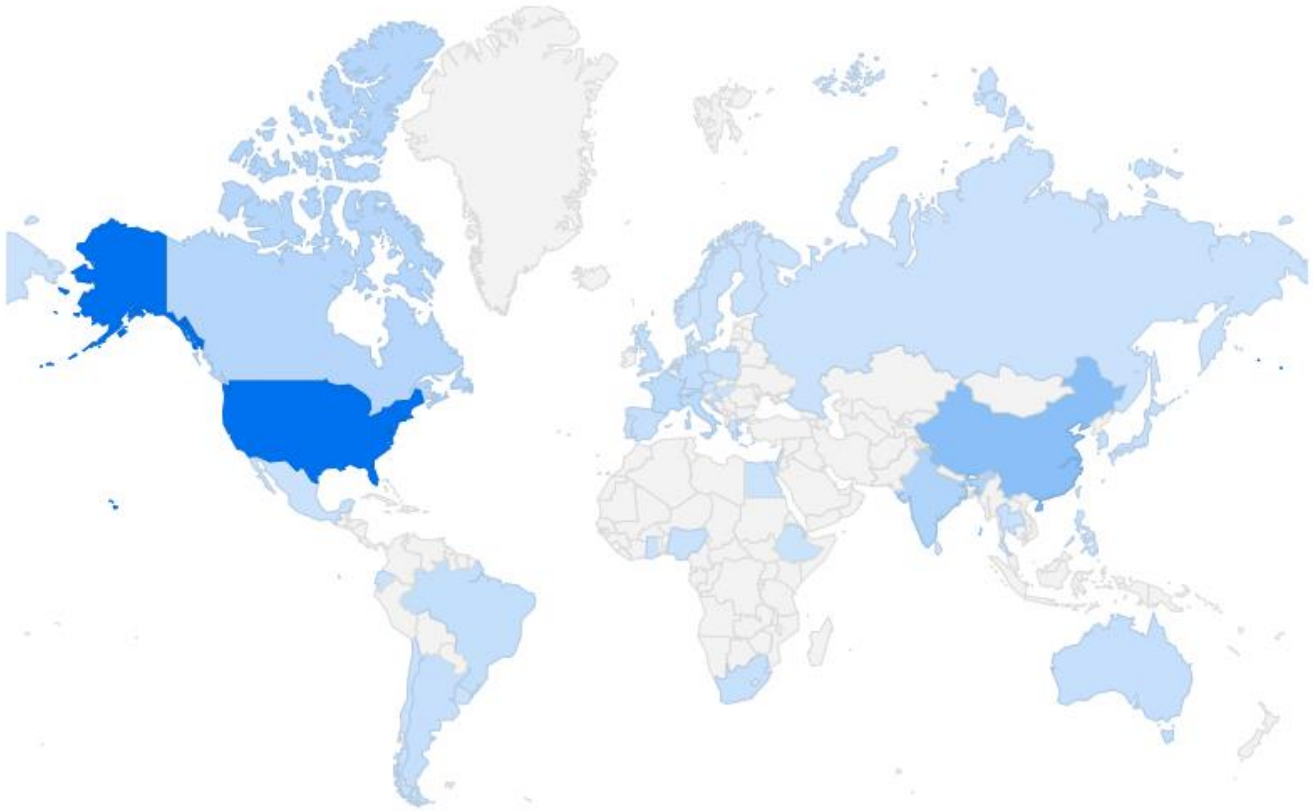
- Despite our growing and global authorship, most ASM Editors are based in the United States (~40-60%, depending on the journal)
- Lack of geographic diversity in editorial boards can lead to potential bias in peer review.*
  - Reviewers are more likely to provide positive reviews when they are from the same country as the author, thus disadvantaging authors from underrepresented countries.
  - Authors from low- and middle-income countries have lower acceptance rates across fields.

A more diverse board → **A more equitable review process** → **Better science**

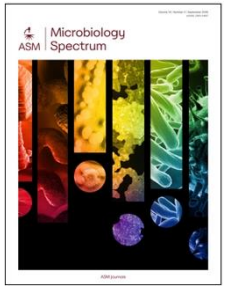
*Reference: Geographical diversity of peer reviewers shapes author success. *PNAS,* 2025; doi: 10.1073/pnas.2507394122

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Model: Open Board at *Microbiology Spectrum*



Spectrum is an open access, broad-scope journal running an Open Board model since its 2021 relaunch.



3,000+ applications received on a rolling basis from the open call

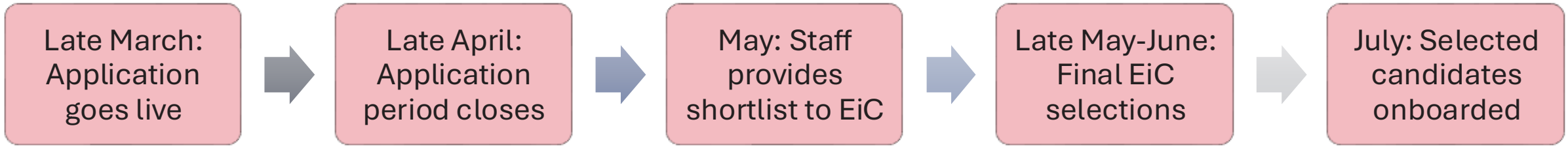
>50% of Associate Editors based outside the United States

47 unique countries represented on the board

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Approach: Annual, centralized open call for Associate Editors across multiple journals

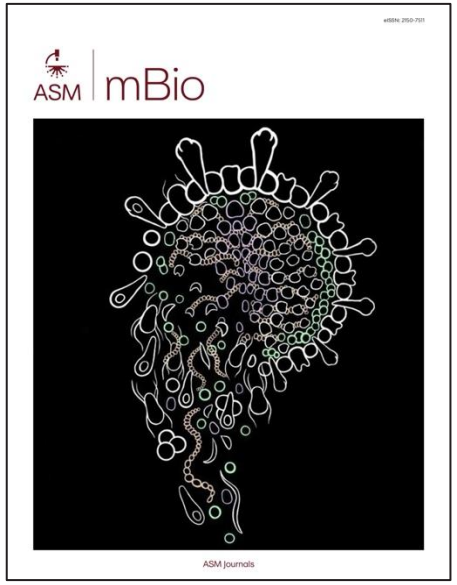
- Benefit: holistic approach for marketing, recruitment, and distribution of volunteers
- Process
  - Candidates self-nominate for 1-3 journals and answer a standard set of questions
  - Staff will pre-screen candidates to ensure they are appropriate
  - EICs retain final authority over all appointments & can apply journal-specific criteria for judging
  - Final candidates will be validated via the Dimensions Author Check tool



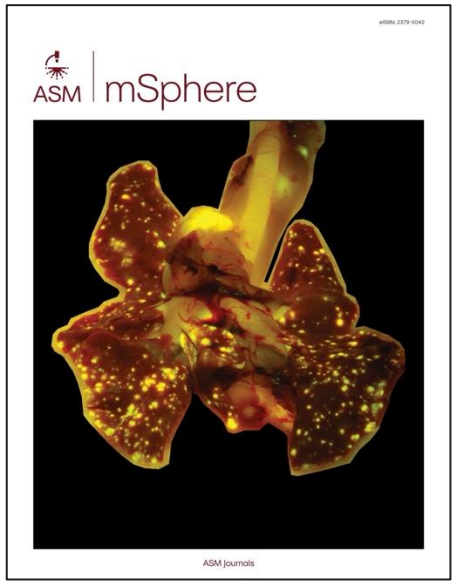
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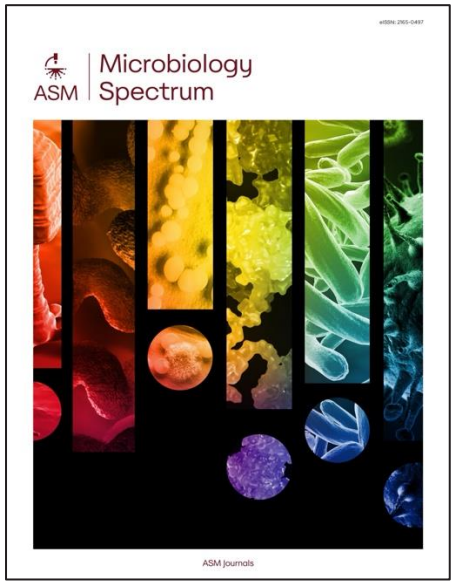
Pilot Journals

- Broad scope, open access journals with tiered editorial structures (Senior Editor -> Associate Editor)
- Associate Editor responsibilities:
  - Volunteer position with a 3-year term (option to renew twice)
  - Manage peer review of manuscripts assigned to them by the Senior Editor (ie, inviting reviewers, making both initial and final decisions)
  - Attend and actively engage in Board of Editors Meetings
  - Must be an independent, mid- to senior investigator, staff scientist, PI, or industry professional (students & postdocs not eligible for most journals)



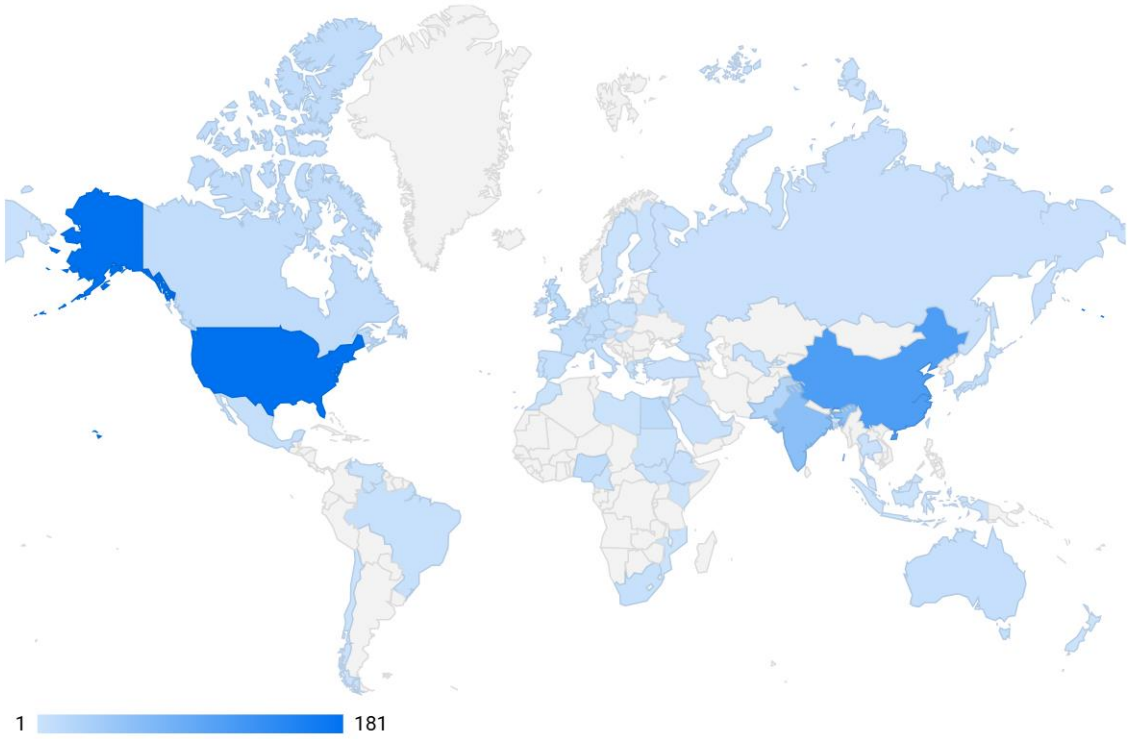


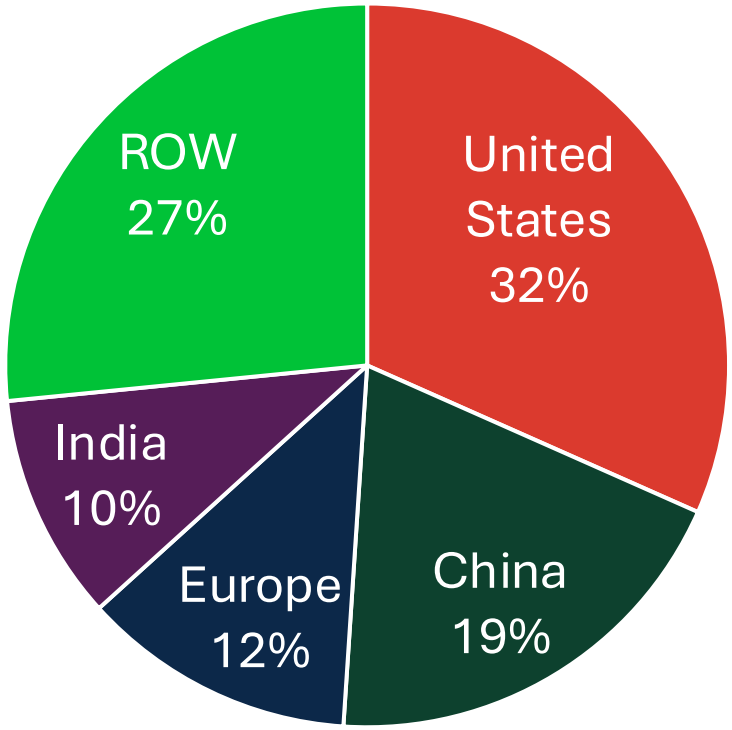




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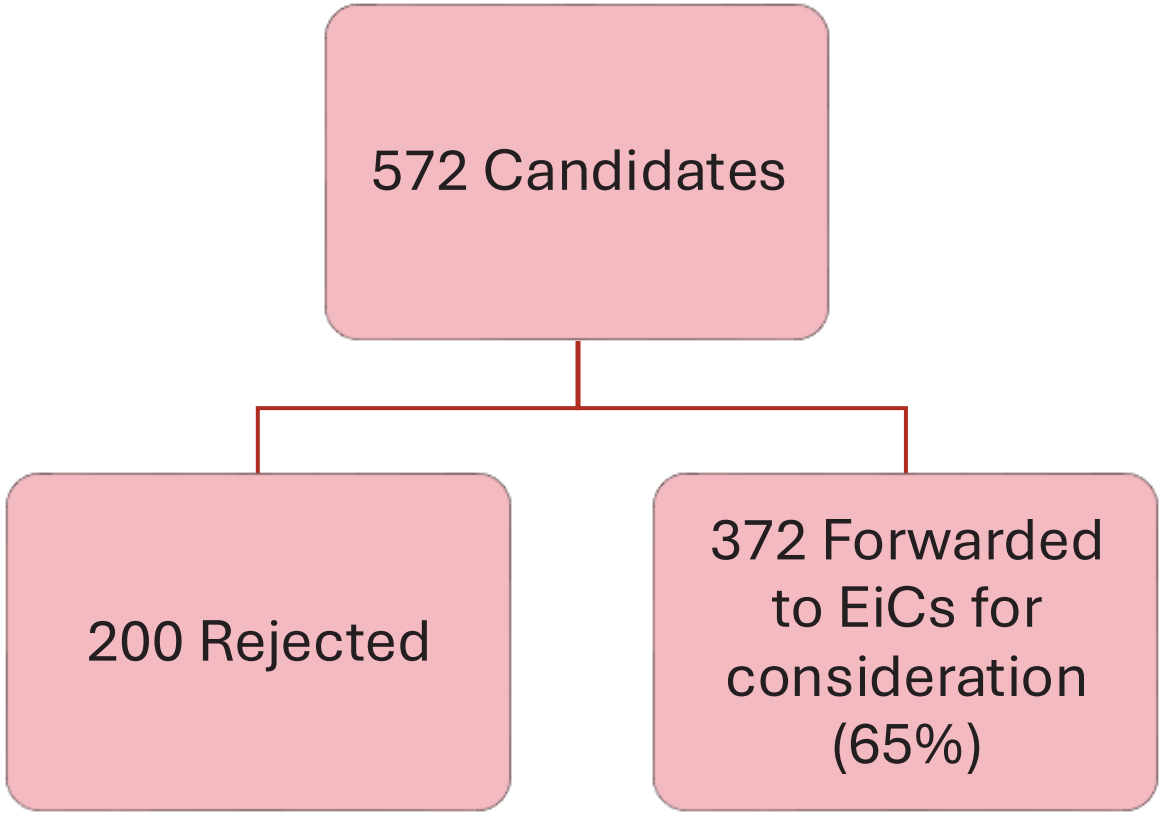
572 applicants applied from 60 countries





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Round 1: Staff Selection



REASONS FOR REJECTION

Career stage
Publication record
Research area misalignment

JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

For candidates that chose more than 1 journal, staff chose a journal based on the applicant's expertise and the journal's subject area needs

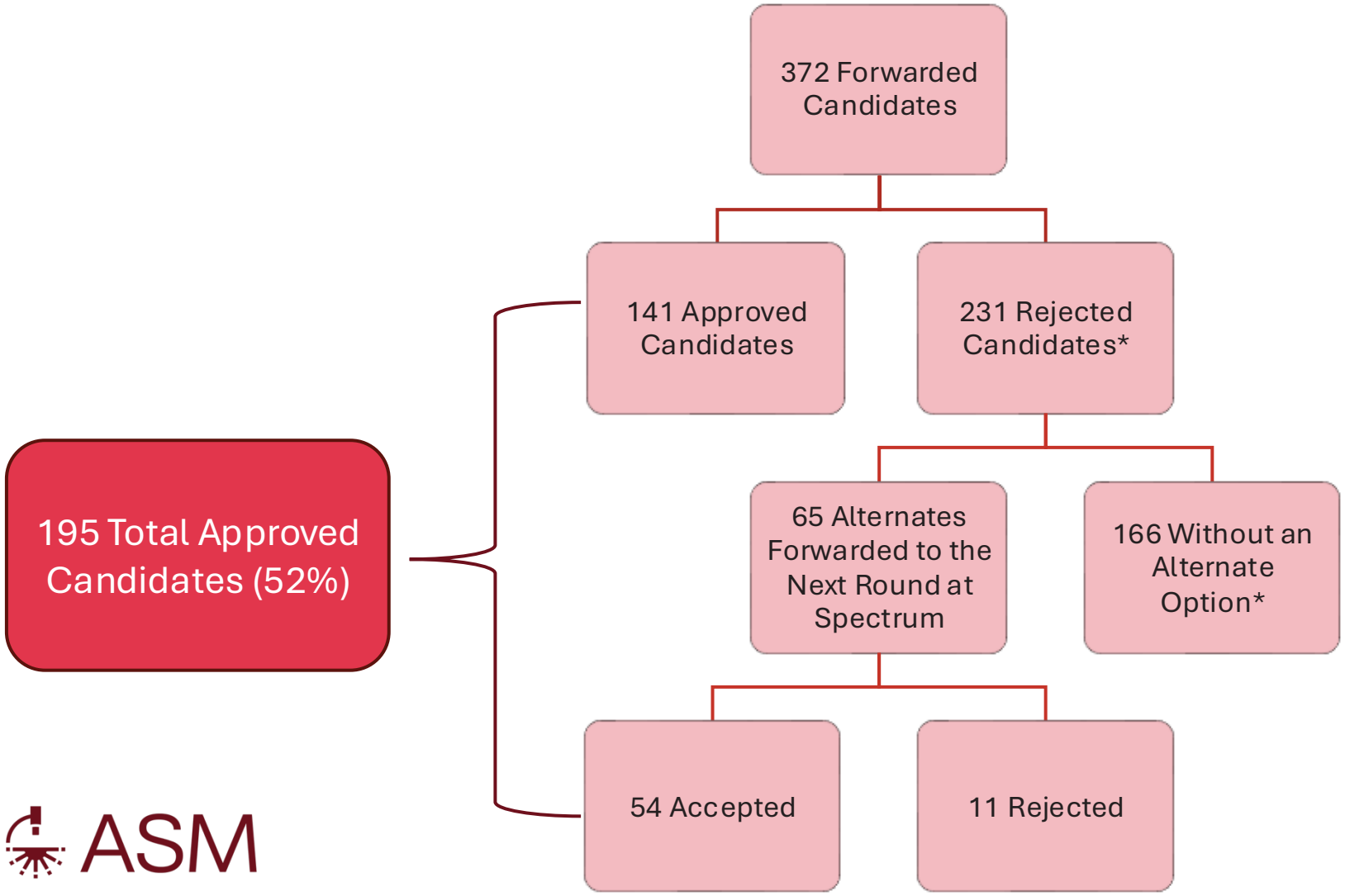
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Round 2: Judging Panel per Journal

mBio	mSystems	mSphere	Spectrum
EIC only	EIC only	EIC & Senior Editors	EIC & Senior Editors

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EIC Selections

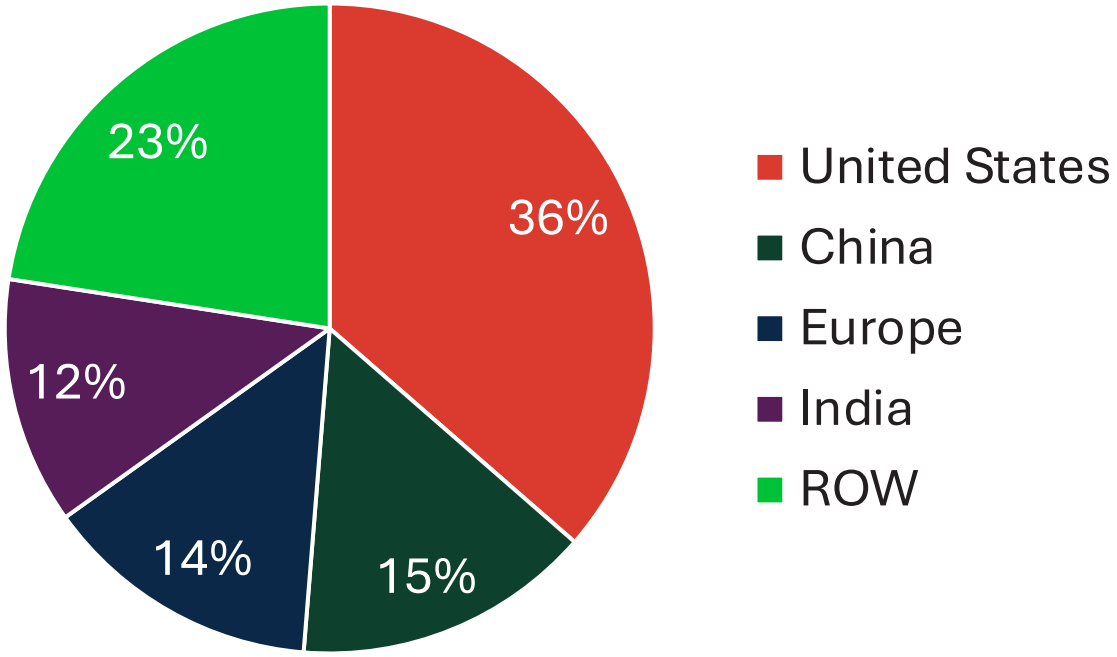


*No alternative option due to the candidate not being marked suitable for another journal, the candidate only choosing 1 journal, or the only alternative was mBio, mSphere, or mSystems (which were not considering a second round)

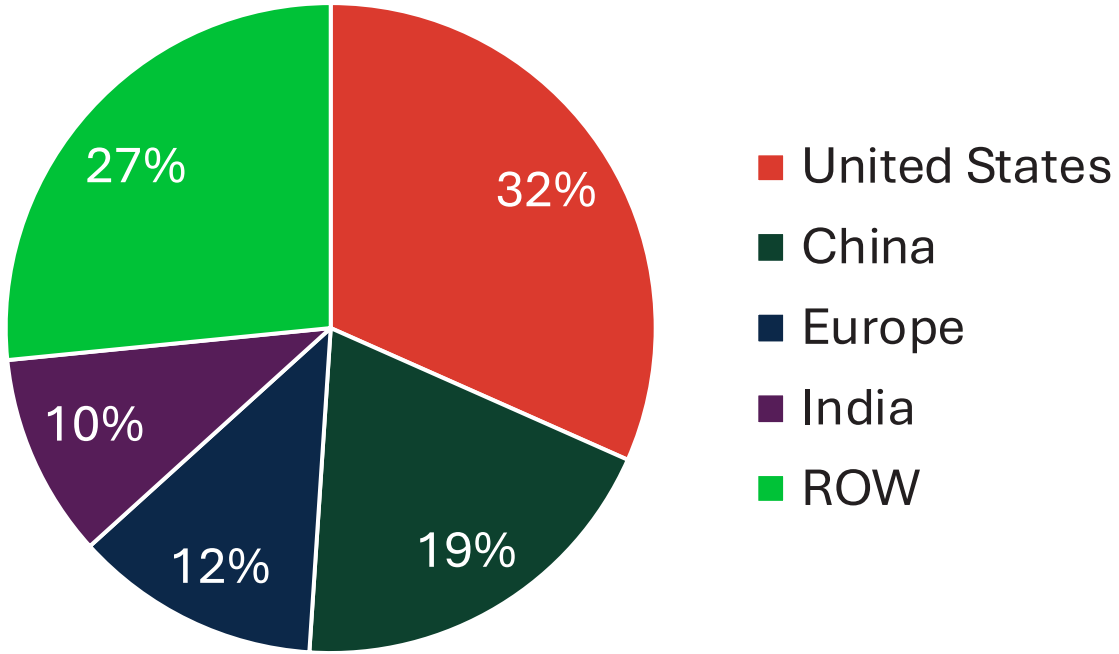
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Country Data for Accepted Candidates

Accepted Candidates

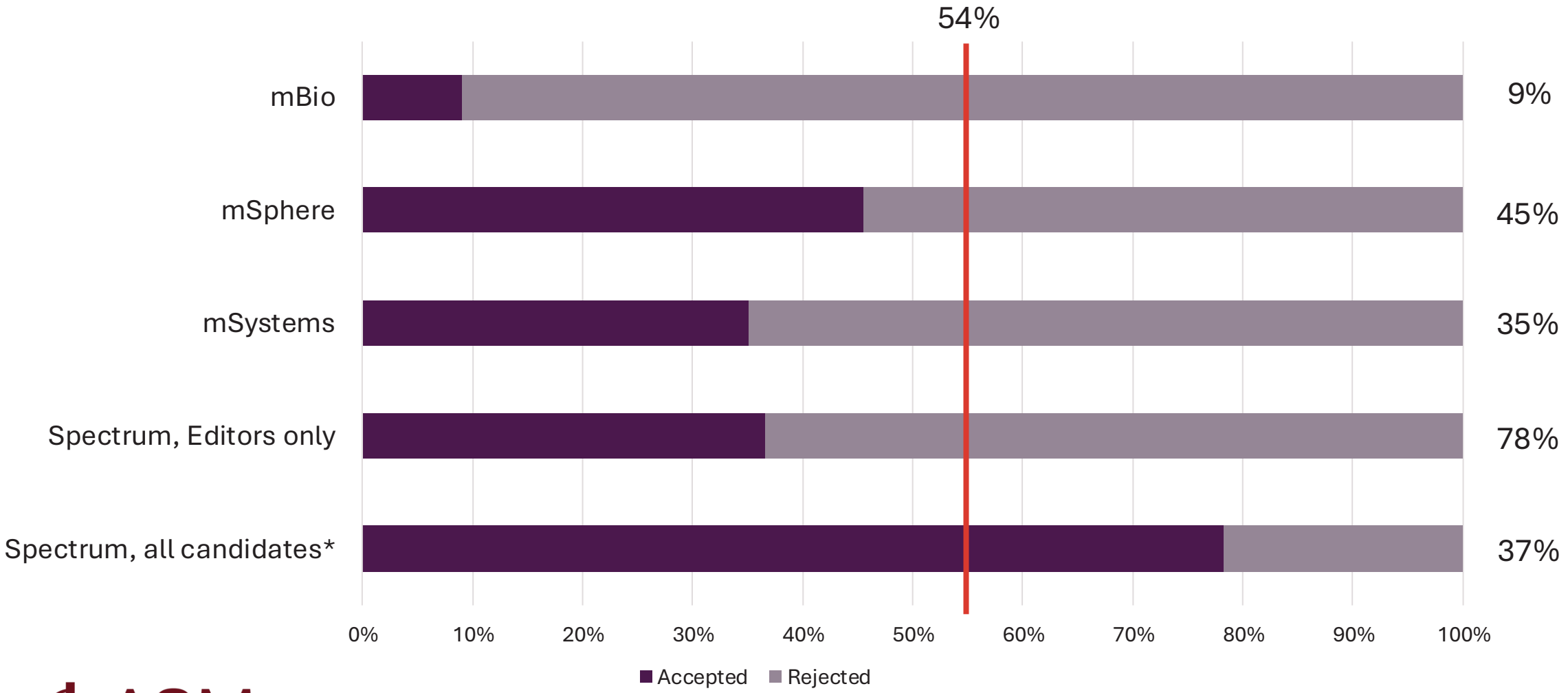


All Applicants



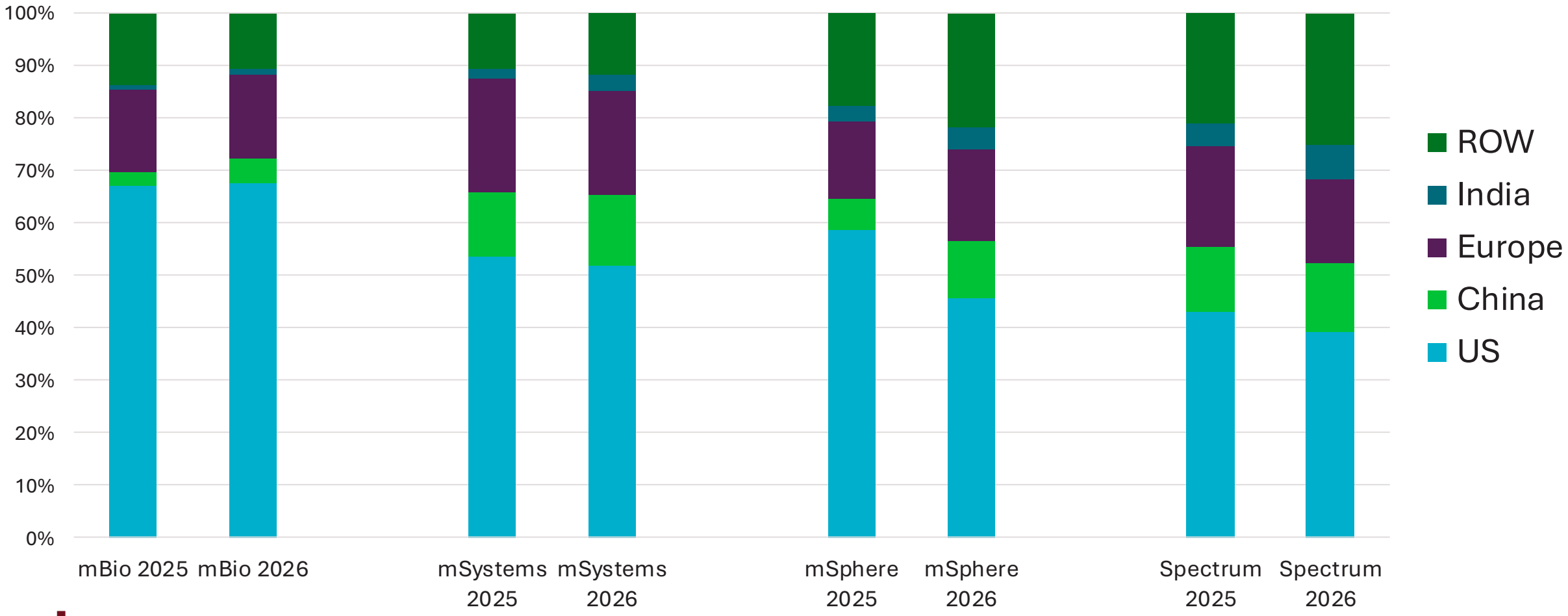
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Acceptance Rate per Journal



*Includes both Editor and Editorial Board Member positions

YOY Geographic Distribution of Associate Editors



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Limitations & Lessons Learned

LIMITATIONS

- Open calls bring new candidates, but not always the ones you need
  - Expertise gaps
  - Gender balance
  - Geographic distribution
- EiCs are hesitant to appoint someone outside their network
- Prestige journals have higher expectations

SOLUTIONS

- Start the call/process earlier
- Set goals and expectations up front for both candidates & EiCs
- Engage beyond the EiC, including the leadership team
- Find ways to keep nonselected applicants engaged
- Encourage internal pathways for promotion

Takeaway: Open calls are effective tools, but they should not be the only approach to build and diversify your boards.

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Questions?

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