

Molecular Interaction Ecology Co-authorship Charter

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Updated June 2020 – corresponding authorship

In our research field, writing a paper and conducting research is seldom a job performed by a single individual. With the increasing importance of impact factors, and the position in the ranks of the (many!) authors over a paper, the chances of conflict over authorship have increased. As members of the research group Molecular Interaction Ecology we acknowledge that defining the roles and responsibilities of authors on scientific publications is important. On the one hand, this will ensure the quality of our scientific research, on the other hand it will ensure the quality of interactions in the research group and with collaborators.

By open communication on our expectations on the roles of each author, transparency on our mutual expectations, trust in our common wish to perform high quality biodiversity research and with respect for each person's role, we agree that:

The **first author** is the one that has been deeply involved in the development of the scientific concepts of the project, has designed and carried out most of the experiments, and is taking the lead in data analysis and the writing of the manuscript. She or he is responsible for the correctness of the data and analyses, and together with the last author for the writing process, including communication to all co-authors. If these tasks and responsibilities are equally shared between the first and second author, this can lead to a **co-first/equal shared first authorship**.

Middle authors are those who contributed a part of the data presented in the manuscript or were intellectually involved in the statistical analyses of data. They are responsible for the correctness of their methods, their contributions to the manuscript, and clear communication with the first author during the writing process.

The **last author** is the one that has been involved in the development of the scientific concepts of the project, is overseeing the entire project and is supervising the writing process. She or he has the responsibility for the quality of the science, the communication and writing process, and advises the first author on the journal for submission. She or he will mediate in case of conflict with regards to authorships, including equal first authorships and rank order of the two 'first' authors, taking into account the needs and interests of all authors that have contributed.

The **corresponding author** has the task to address questions of readers and others, e.g. colleagues interested in the raw data, after publication. For this reason, corresponding authorship for data papers usually goes to a permanent staff member, commonly the last author, whom can be reached on the same e-mail address for longer. Considering that corresponding authorship gains in importance for science careers, we agree that this responsibility can be taken by authors with non-permanent positions. However, in those cases it should be secured that the data are publicly shared and the doi / location is communicated to the group leader *before* final acceptance of the manuscript. The corresponding author also ensures that her or his contact data will be updated, e.g. via ORCID, Research Gate or via the MIE alumni website, after leaving iDiv. The first and last author together decide on corresponding authorship; if appropriate, corresponding authorship can be shared, e.g. for sharing data and conceptual questions.

The **authors' roles and responsibilities** should be openly discussed, preferably at the beginning of a communal research project or at the latest at the start of the writing process. If needed, they should be documented in writing.

The **final decision on the ranking of the authorships** will be made by the time the writing process starts. By that time it will be clear what and how much each author has contributed to the project.