



Ocean Knowledge: Code of Conduct for Co-authorship on Scientific Publications

Purpose

This Code of Conduct establishes the criteria for determining co-authorship on scientific publications to which researchers within the Ocean Knowledge division of the Voice of the Ocean foundation have contributed. The goal is to ensure that all contributors receive appropriate recognition for their intellectual and practical contributions. Voice of the Ocean foundation is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of research ethics. Authorship is not expected as default, but VOTO employees may be included as co-authors of a study if they meet the criteria described in the following section.

Co-authorship Criteria

To warrant co-authorship on a scientific publication, an individual must have made a **substantial intellectual and practical contribution** to the publication by meeting all the following criteria:

- **Data analysis and Interpretation:** Contributing substantially to the analysis or interpretation of data, including the development of analytical tools, models, or methods that significantly influence the outcomes of the research.
- **Conceptualization or Data Acquisition:** Contributing to the conceptualization of the study, e.g., the study design, development of the research question/study hypothesis; **OR** the **data acquisition** e.g., the collection, management, or generation of data, including the development or deployment of technologies.
- **Drafting or Revising the Manuscript:** Actively participating in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content. This includes contributing to the writing process, providing substantial input on the content, structure, and key messages of the publication.
- **Approval of the Final Version:** Providing final approval of the version to be published, ensuring that the manuscript meets scientific standards and accurately represents the research findings and contributions of all authors.

- **Agreement to Be Accountable:** Agreeing to be accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Acknowledgments vs. Co-authorship

Individuals who contribute to the study but do not meet the criteria for co-authorship detailed above should be acknowledged appropriately in the publication. This may include those who provide technical support, administrative assistance, or general guidance without contributing directly to the intellectual content or data collection and analysis.

VOTO acknowledgement statement template

Insert names, fill out descriptions and delete sentences as appropriate:

Voice of the Ocean Foundation grant number XXXX covered <field operations description>. <individuals> contributed to <fieldwork description>. < individuals) > performed <description of marine operations>. <individuals > processed the data using <referenced methods>. < individuals > wrote/contributed to section Y.

Dispute Resolution

Any disputes regarding co-authorship should be addressed openly and collegially, with the aim of reaching a consensus among all parties. If a resolution cannot be achieved through discussion, the matter should be referred to an impartial review committee within the foundation for a final decision.

Ethical Considerations

All authors must adhere to ethical guidelines for research and publication, ensuring that all contributions are fairly represented, and that credit is given where it is due. Plagiarism, data fabrication, and other forms of misconduct are prohibited and may result in retracted co-authorship or other disciplinary actions.

Ongoing Review

This Authorship Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current and reflective of best practices in scientific research and publication. Any changes will be communicated to all researchers and collaborators within the foundation.

Existing work on authorship

These co-authorship principles are based on the four criteria for authorship from the ICMJE recommendations (2024) [1]. These principles are endorsed by over 5000 journals [2] and institutions including the Lund University Ethics Council [3]. These recommendations also align with The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity from ALLEA (All European Academies) which states that “authorship itself is based on: (1) a significant contribution to the design of the research, relevant data collection, its analysis, and/or interpretation; (2) drafting and/or critical reviewing the publication; (3) approval of the final publication; and (4) agreeing to be responsible for the content of the publication, unless specified otherwise in the publication.” (2.7) [4]

References

[1] Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly, ICMJE, 2024 Work in Medical Journals <https://icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>

[2] Journals stating that they follow the ICMJE Recommendations, ICMJE, 2024
<https://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations/>

[3] Ethical aspects relating to co-authorship, Lund University Ethics Council, 2019
https://etikradet.blogg.lu.se/files/2020/02/Etikradet-nr-2-English_webb.pdf

[4] The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, ALLEA, 2023,
<https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>