



African BioGenome Project
Genomics for the future of biological diversity across Africa

African BioGenome Project (AfricaBP) Publication and Authorship Policy

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1. Introduction

The African BioGenome Project (AfricaBP) is a transformative initiative aimed at leveraging Africa's biodiversity and agricultural potential. Its mission is to foster scientific collaborations and partnerships, build human and institutional capacities, and sequence the genomes of the continent's rich and diverse species. As a result of this innovative work, numerous publications will be produced, necessitating clear and comprehensive guidelines for authorship and manuscript preparation.

2. Definition of an AfricaBP Network Publication

For the purposes of this policy, an AfricaBP Network publication includes any paper that meets the following criteria:

- Outlines the vision, mission, goals and mandate of AfricaBP.
- Utilizes AfricaBP data generated within the project.
- Is authored or co-authored by AfricaBP members or collaborators.

3. Types of Publications

AfricaBP publishes various types of manuscripts to disseminate its research findings effectively. These are classified into three categories: 1) Consortium papers, 2) Committees / Subcommittees / Working Group / Monographs Papers, and 3) Primary Research Papers (PI initiated and/or led).

3.1. Consortium Papers

Consortium papers include papers that focus on the broad aspect of AfricaBP's activities as a project. Authorship for this paper is open to all AfricaBP members, affiliates or partners. Contributions to the development of the manuscripts are not expected to be tracked. Invitations for authorship for Consortium papers will be sent to all AfricaBP members, pilot committee and partners mailing list.

3.2. Committees / Subcommittees / Working Groups / Monograph Papers

Committee publication/report/paper could be articles or monographs produced by AfricaBP's Committees, Subcommittees, or Working Groups or member/s of these committees. These documents detail the development and implementation of policies, processes, frameworks, methods, as well as any research/data analysis findings directly resulting from the Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group activities such as surveys or analysis. For the purpose of this policy document, a Working Group Paper can also be a review article.

The current Committees include the Steering Committee, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, and Science and Technology Committee. The Subcommittees are:

- Sample Collections and Processing Subcommittee
- Sequencing and Assembly Subcommittee
- Annotation Subcommittee
- Data Analysis Subcommittee
- IT and Informatics Subcommittee
- Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues Subcommittee
- Communications and Public Affairs Subcommittee
- Partnerships and Fundraising and the Open Institute Subcommittee

Examples of Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group papers also include annual reports, workshop reports conducted each year, coordinated by the Partnerships and Fundraising and AfricaBP Open Institute Subcommittee.

Invitations to contribute to manuscript development will first be sent to persons who made significant contributions to activities resulting in the initiation of the relevant Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group/Monograph Paper and who are members of such Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group. Additional invitations to contribute will be open to persons who are not members of the Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group leading the development of the manuscript. However, these additional invitations will be at the discretion of the manuscript corresponding authors and Chairs of the Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group to assess the potential contributions and significance of Authors who are not members of the Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group leading the manuscript development (see Appendix 1 and 3 for guidance). This manuscript type should have a section that lists and clearly describes authors' contributions in the manuscript.

3.3. Primary Research Papers (PI initiated and/or led).

These are original research articles presenting new findings generated within projects conducted as part of the AfricaBP, either directly, independently or through fellowships or calls, resulting in the generation of data, such as data from sequencing African species genomes, surveys, or any form of biological and non-biological data. In most cases, these kinds of data generation or informational research is carried out in partnership or collaboration with the AfricaBP.

Invitations to contribute to manuscript development as well as the activities resulting in the development of Primary Research Papers, will be sent to all scientists/persons

involved in the research/work leading to the development of such a manuscript, whether they are AfricaBP members or not. These invitations will be at the discretion of the manuscript first and/or corresponding/last authors to assess the potential contributions and significance of additional authors involved in the manuscript development (see Appendix 2 and 3 for guidance). This manuscript type should have a section that lists and clearly describes authors' contributions in the manuscript.

4. Establishing Authorship

4.1. Criteria for Authorship

For committee/subcommittee/working group/monograph and primary research papers, authorship will be granted or approved for individuals based on contributions to the research or activities being reported in the manuscript, following established criteria for authorship as presented in Appendices 1 and 2. Contributions may include, but not limited to:

- Genome analysis, sequencing, and annotation.
- Ethical, legal, and social analysis related to ELSI issues.
- Sample collection, processing, and quality control.
- Organizing, coordinating and facilitating capacity-building workshops or Fellowships.
- Project / activity conception, initiation, intellectual contributions, review and validation of manuscripts.

Appendix 1 contains a comprehensive authorship affiliations and roles table. Co-authors are required to provide their details and specify their contributions as per Appendix 2, which encompass tasks such as, but not limited to, manuscript drafting, review, diagram production, correspondence handling, sampling, analysis, experimentations, submission management, survey development and analysis, literature review, course content development, securing grants for practical workshops/project, organization and coordination of regional workshops, hosting practical workshops, and serving as practical workshop instructors. Each manuscript must have **authors' contributions statement** drawn up from the current AfricaBP Publication and Policy document.

4.2. Responsibilities of Authors

Authors are expected to:

- **Contribute substantively:** Make significant intellectual contributions to the conception, design, execution, and/or interpretation of the research.

- **Review and approve:** Participate in reviewing and approving the final version of the manuscript before submission.

4.3. Authorship Order

The determination of authorship order should primarily be decided by the lead last author(s) or corresponding author(s). These authors should refer to the relevant journal guidelines for specific guidance on authorship order. For the purposes of this policy document, the following steps should be taken by the lead last and/or corresponding authors to assess contributions and decide the authorship order:

- **First Author Identification:** Identify the first author based on the assessment of contributions made or expected to be made. The first author is typically the individual who has made the most significant contribution to the research and manuscript preparation.
- **Joint Authorship:** If the work is shared equally among multiple authors who qualify as first or last authors, those authors should share joint first authorship or joint last authorship, respectively. Joint authorship should be clearly indicated in the manuscript.
- **Secondary Contributors:** Order the next set of left and right flanking authors based on a descending level of contributions to the manuscript or related activities. These authors should be recognized for their contributions and ordered in decreasing order of contributions.
- **Alphabetical Ordering:** All remaining authors, whose contributions are less significant compared to those in the previous categories above, should be ordered alphabetically by their first names or surnames and inserted in the middle of the authorship list between the left and right flanking authors above.
- **Corresponding Author:** Designate a corresponding author who will handle the manuscript submission process, correspondence during the review process, and any post-publication inquiries. This author is typically someone who has played a significant role in the research and can effectively communicate with the journal and readers.
- **Acknowledgement of non-authorship contributions:** Persons who made (or makes) minor contributions **only** should be added to the acknowledgement section of the manuscript and this need to be assessed by the first and/or corresponding/last authors. Prior to adding contributors to the acknowledgement section, the lead corresponding author/s is expected to discuss this action with the relevant contributor to ensure that the contributor understands their contribution is minor and could only be acknowledged in the acknowledgement section.

- What counts as minor contribution should ideally be assessed by the lead first, last and/or corresponding authors. However, for the purpose of this policy, activities such as commenting in manuscripts for general views or opinion, commenting without substantial editing or revision, correcting typos or basic formatting, et cetera, counts as minor contributions and the contributor should ideally be in the acknowledgement section and not grant authorship. There are specific instances where a contributor has already fulfilled an upstream criteria for authorship as defined in Appendix 2, but still made minor corrections. In this instance, the contributor/s have already built up criteria for authorship from their contribution/s in Appendix 2 and such contributions should be granted authorship.
- If a contributor delivers a service that is quoted and paid for, then authorship will not be granted. However, credit must be given in the manuscript by mentioning that such service or contribution was delivered by the contributor.

5. Manuscript contribution tracking

Contributions for Committee/Subcommittee/Working Group Papers, as well as Primary Research Papers, will be tracked using the AfricaBP manuscript tracking system (Appendix 1 and 2) as a requirement for authorship. Appendix 1 and 2 could be deployed jointly using trackable/change management platforms such as Google Sheet, Google Form, or Google Doc, or similar platforms. The precise deployment platform will need to be decided by the lead corresponding author, provided that the change management or document versions could easily be tracked.

The contents of Appendix 1 and 2 may intermittently be updated to reflect addition of new tracking fields that are relevant to the manuscript type under consideration. This system enables the corresponding author to monitor contributions, progress, and status of potential authors throughout the various stages of manuscript development and publication. Authors who have made contributions to a manuscript have a responsibility to add their details in the contribution tracking system, and it is the responsibility of the lead corresponding author/s to ensure that all relevant authors are contacted to input their details in the contribution tracking platform.

6. Additional strategies for authorship considerations

As the AfricaBP advances, it is essential to establish clear strategies for managing publications arising from collaborative projects or activities. This guideline aims to ensure transparency, fairness, and efficiency in handling situations where there may be differing views or conflicts regarding the publication of research findings. By establishing these strategies, AfricaBP aims to facilitate effective collaboration and ensure that all parties can achieve their publication goals in a fair and timely manner. The following steps outline the process for addressing such scenarios:

6.1. Reviewing the Collaboration Agreement

- **Existing Agreement:** When a collaboration agreement is in place, it should be the first point of reference. The agreement may contain clauses related to publication strategies, including timelines, authorship, and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- **Publication Strategy Clause:** Ensure that future collaboration agreements include a clear publication strategy clause to preemptively address potential conflicts.

6.2. Absence of a Collaboration Agreement

- **Initial Discussions:** In the absence of a pre-existing agreement, the involved parties should initiate discussions to find a mutually acceptable way to proceed. This may involve setting timelines for publication, agreeing on authorship, and determining the contribution of each party.
- **ELSI Committee Involvement:** The Ethics, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI) committee can facilitate these discussions and help draft a strategy that respects the interests of all parties. The ELSI committee can also provide mediation if necessary to resolve any disagreements.

6.3. Procedures for Resolving Authorship Conflicts

6.3.1. Initial Discussion Among Authors

- **Identify the Conflict:** The corresponding author should identify the specific nature of the authorship conflict, such as disputes over the order of authors, inclusion/exclusion of contributors, or recognition of contributions.
- **Facilitate Open Dialogue:** Encourage all involved authors to participate in an open and respectful discussion to voice their perspectives and concerns. The corresponding author or a neutral party may facilitate this discussion.

6.3.2. Refer to Authorship Guidelines

- **Review Criteria:** Refer to the established AfricaBP authorship criteria (Appendix 1 and 2) to assess the contributions of each author. This review should be based on documented evidence of contributions such as manuscript drafts, data analysis, and meeting notes.
- **Apply Criteria Fairly:** Apply the criteria objectively to determine the appropriate authorship and order based on the significance of each contribution.

6.3.3. Mediation by ELSI Committee

- **Request Mediation:** If the conflict remains unresolved, the corresponding author or any involved party can request mediation by the Ethics, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI) committee.
- **ELSI Committee Review:** The ELSI committee will review the documented contributions and facilitate a mediated discussion to reach a consensus. The committee may seek input from impartial experts if necessary.
- **Resolution Agreement:** The ELSI committee will help draft a resolution agreement that outlines the agreed-upon authorship and any additional acknowledgments.

6.3.4. Formal Appeal Process

- **Submit Appeal:** If an author is dissatisfied with the mediation outcome, they may submit a formal appeal to the AfricaBP Steering Committee.
- **Review by Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee will conduct an independent review of the case, considering the input from the ELSI committee and any additional evidence provided.
- **Final Decision:** The Steering Committee will issue a final decision on the authorship conflict, which will be binding on all parties.

6.4. Rights to Publish

- **Shared Rights with AfricaBP:** Publications arising from work within the AfricaBP ecosystem will share the right to publish with the AfricaBP consortium. This recognizes the role of the AfricaBP platform and network in facilitating the research or scientific activity.
- **Exclusive Rights of the Authors:** In cases where the work is solely generated by the collaborating team without substantial input or resources from AfricaBP, the right to publish may reside exclusively with the authors.
- **ELSI Committee can:**
 - provide guidance on determining the extent of AfricaBP's involvement, corresponding rights to publish, and mediate any disputes regarding the right to publish;
 - facilitate discussions and help draft resolution agreements that respect the interests of all parties.

6.5. Addressing Delays in Publication

- **Identifying the Cause of Delay:** When one team is ready to publish and another is causing delays, it is important to identify the reasons behind the delay. This could be due to ongoing data analysis, additional experiments, or strategic considerations.
- **Negotiating a Resolution:** Parties should negotiate to find a compromise, such as setting a revised timeline or publishing interim results. If necessary, the ELSI committee can mediate these negotiations to ensure a fair outcome.
- **Proceeding Independently:** If a resolution cannot be reached, teams may agree to proceed independently, with clear acknowledgment of each party's contributions in any resulting publications.

6.6. Publications from Subcommittees

- **Subcommittee Rights:** Subcommittees within AfricaBP that generate publications should clarify whether the right to publish is shared with AfricaBP as a whole or resides solely with the subcommittee members.

7. Recognition and Acknowledgment of AfricaBP

Regardless of the type of manuscript or paper being considered for publication, all publications should acknowledge the support and resources provided by AfricaBP. This ensures proper credit and visibility. Please include the following acknowledgment in the *acknowledgment section* of your publications:

"This work has benefited from the support and resources provided by the African BioGenome Project (AfricaBP)."

8. Brand Identity, Copyright, and Patents

To promote brand identity and increase public awareness of AfricaBP, it is strongly encouraged that each paper published by a Network member using Network cohort data includes the text "AfricaBP" in its title, abstract, or keywords.

9. Signatories

The AfricaBP Steering Committee, leadership, and Pilot Committee have reviewed and endorsed this publication and authorship policy.

Signatories:

- Chairs of the African BioGenome Project
- Steering Committee of the African BioGenome Project

- Chairs of the African BioGenome Project Pilot Committee
- Members of the African BioGenome Project Pilot Committee and Subcommittees

10. Policy Review Procedure

This policy will undergo periodic reviews and updates, as deemed necessary by the AfricaBP Steering Committee. The Committee will determine the timing and frequency of these reviews at its discretion.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Template to capture authors affiliations and roles during manuscript development processes

S/N	First name	Middle name	Last name	Job Position	Organisational affiliation	Town / City	Postcode	Country	Orcid	Preferred email address	Manuscript title	Authorship position	Type of recognition	Role	Additional role n th
1.												First author	Authorship		
2.												Last author	Acknowledgment		
3.												Corresponding author	Credit		

Appendix 2: Roles to enable authorships in manuscripts in AfricaBP

In reference to Appendix 1 above, roles in a committee/subcommittee/working group / monographs or primary research paper could be one or more of the below primary authorship criteria as it applies to the relevant manuscript and should be depicted in the **role** or **additional role nth** (where **nth** can be 1, 2, 3, to any maximum number) column in Appendix 1 above. Prior to submission of any manuscript the first author and/or corresponding author should assess the contribution/s of each person through contribution evidences before establishing Authorship, and where the assessment reveals an uncertain situation about an author's contribution this should be clarified through one-on-one discussions, group discussions, emails and/or other evidence types.

Authorship should be established and granted **only** when **four (4)** of the **mandatory** requirements below have been fulfilled by the contributor (see Appendix 3 as well) in the relevant manuscript under consideration:

- The contributor has approved the submission of the manuscript
- AND has agreed to be personally accountable for the manuscript
- AND has reviewed the manuscript
- AND has **substantially** contributed to **at least one** of the primary authorship requirements below:
 1. Manuscript drafting
 2. Revised manuscript
 3. Design and generation of manuscript diagrams
 4. Correspondence with journal
 5. Submission of manuscript
 6. Survey development and collection
 7. Survey analysis
 8. Literature review
 9. Desk research or investigation
 10. Developed course content (trainer)
 11. Delivered course content (trainer)

- 12.** Secured grant that executed practical workshop
- 13.** Organised and coordinated regional workshop
- 14.** Hosted a practical workshop
- 15.** Practical workshop instructor
- 16.** Sample collection and biobanking
- 17.** Sample collection and processing
- 18.** Facilitated ethical, legal and social issues (ELSI) guidance and documentation
- 19.** Conceived idea
- 20.** Wet lab: DNA extraction, sequencing
- 21.** Wet: RNA extraction, sequencing
- 22.** Library prep and sequencing
- 23.** Quality control and assembly
- 24.** Annotation and curation
- 25.** Curation only
- 26.** Fellowship coordination
- 27.** Fellowship reviews and assessments
- 28.** Conceptualization – Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims
- 29.** Methodology – Development or design of methodology; creation of models
- 30.** Data Acquisition – Provision of study materials, traditional indigenous knowledge, sample custodians, land stewards, and field work.
- 31.** Resources – Provision of reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools
- 32.** Software – Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components
- 33.** Validation – Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs

- 34.** Formal Analysis – Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data
- 35.** Investigation – Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection
- 36.** Data curation – Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse
- 37.** Writing Original Draft – Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)
- 38.** Writing, Review & Editing – Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stage
- 39.** Visualization – Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation
- 40.** Supervision – Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team
- 41.** Project Administration – Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution
- 42.** Funding Acquisition – Acquisition of financial support for the project

Appendix 3: Excerpts from the original AfricaBP Manuscript tracker: Framework uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT)

Our framework uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) described by Brand et al., (2015) in conjunction with the common standards for authorship as detailed in (McNutt et al., 2018). In order for individuals' contributions to be recognized and accredited, we ask each contributor to self-report their participation in any/all roles listed in the Contributor Roles Taxonomy above. Contributors are also encouraged to self-report what type of recognition they prefer (e.g., authorship, acknowledgement, credit). These self-reported contributions will be cross-referenced with the standards for authorship (Appendix 1 and 2) by the AfricaBP leadership, subcommittee chair, and co-chairs to determine the appropriate type of recognition.

Personal information you give (name, email address, affiliation) will only be used by the officers of AfricaBP for the purposes of managing and recording your statement of contribution to AfricaBP initiatives and projects and during submission to relevant journals. We will not share your personal data with third parties. We may contact you to clarify data, or other purposes associated with your authorship contributions to AfricaBP activities.

For any questions please contact us here: <https://africanbiogenome.org/contact-us/>

References

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McNutt, M. K., M. Bradford, J. M. Drazen, B. Hanson, B. Howard, K. H. Jamieson, V. Kiermer, et al. 2018. Transparency in authors' contributions and responsibilities to promote integrity in scientific publication. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115: 2557–2560.