

# FORRT's General Collaboration & Writing guidelines

To all contributors, please read these guidelines before proceeding.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Why we wrote these:                          | 1 |
| Responsibilities of the lead writing team    | 1 |
| Contributions:                               | 2 |
| Authorship order and contributor statements: | 2 |
| What makes for the best contribution         | 3 |

In general, the typical FORRT project flow is as follows:

1. ideas are are proposed via [#team-ideas](#) & discussed among peers
2. a lead writing group is formed,
3. a channel at FORRT's Slack is created for communication,
4. (project-dependent) resources are created, collected, drafted, etc.,
5. a first draft is produced by the lead writing/admin team,
6. a first draft is shared with the FORRT community, which is invited to provide their perspectives, comments and suggestions (contributorship via CRediT/tenzing)
7. the lead writing team incorporates the suggestions and comments from the community
8. a paper is preprinted/submitted.

## Why we wrote these:

- To abide by integrity and transparency principles.
- To inform contributors of the (typical) process(es) and roles.
- To explicitly set standards and expectations about authorship, contributorship, credit, and code of conduct to be observed (i.e., <https://forrt.org/coc>).
- To balance giving fair credit with an honor system of claiming credit.

## Responsibilities of the lead writing team

- The project lead(s) manages the processes described above
- Project leads write a description and purpose of the project, contextualize it under the umbrella of FORRT (e.g., target journal, if there is one, including notes on word counts etc., as well as any relevant information about the aims and main arguments the work intends to meet).
- Project leads set up specific guidelines for contributorship (e.g., how people can contribute to the project and what is considered a contribution that warrants

authorship in the project) and place them at the top of working documents, as early into the process as possible to ensure clarity from the start and avoid potential issues.

- Project leads set up links to resources, useful links, to-do lists (when applicable), paper structure, contacting co-authors for initial contributions, setting roles, keeping track of contributions, and setting up CRediT/tenzing sheet.

### **Responsibilities of contributors**

- Each member (i.e., anyone partaking in a FORRT project) is responsible for familiarizing themselves with [FORRT's CoC](#) and observing its stipulations.

### **Contributions:**

Those wishing to make substantial contributions to the (main) text and being part of the writing team, are very much welcomed! However, to ensure fairness of the distributed responsibilities as fairly as possible, please consult with the lead team about possible contributions.

Typically FORRT is an author—and whenever possible (after sharing credit among project leaders) FORRT is the last author—to reflect community contributions. This is discussed with the project leads and community managers..

### **Authorship order and contributor statements**

**Lead team:** Generally the lead team will be acknowledged in an author note, sometimes with shared first authorship. As we use CRediT/tenzing, the initial writing will be covered by “Writing - original draft”, and community feedback with “Writing - review & editing”. Project leads will be assigned as such. The authors in the lead team are listed first in the authors’ list (order to be decided within the lead team). Project leads have the liberty to set varying degrees of what warrants authorship. These can allow ‘support authorship’, in which contributors become regular authors by supporting the contents of the article/piece, as well as be listed as part of the FORRT community author (e.g., via consortium authorships, which are becoming more and more common, if that does not devalue authors contributions). It is suggested that the lead team updates the contributors/authors regularly on the stage of the project and the kinds of contributions needed (preferably at the slack channel of the project).

**Crowdsourced contributions:** Authors that made crowdsourced contributions are listed after the lead team. Criteria (e.g., alphabetical, random order or other) is to be decided by the lead team.

We ask that everybody respects a basic honor system. We trust the community members to claim credit when they have made *sufficient* contributions and to not claim credit when they have not contributed sufficiently. A couple comments or minor editing are unlikely to warrant authorship, for example but it is important to not conflate quantity with quality. Similarly, we rely on the community’s best judgment to—if the existing text

is adequate—to not suggest minimal changes and instead contact the lead writing team and ask how they can best contribute.

### **What makes for the *best* contribution**

We share these notes to hopefully maximize the impact of contributions, as well as share lessons learnt from open contributor projects.

- Use tracked changes, only the lead writing team should have write access to documents.
- Do not accept/reject/approve comments —unless prompted or asked by lead(s).
- Project leads ultimately decide the direction of an output and therefore which feedback to implement. Whether feedback is approved, implemented, adapted, or not, is entirely due to fit with the project/output, not a commentary on the contributor. Whenever appropriate, justifications can be given.
- The quality of a project can be maximized with concrete, specific feedback.
  - Prioritize direct suggestions to the text over comments, which gives the writing team concrete suggestions for improvements, and oftentimes allows for understanding the issue, intentions, and goal of suggested changes.
  - In most cases, comments are really useful tools for generating discussion, general-interest information (& requests), and big-picture points.
    - Minor point: comments become less valuable the more vague they are, or using not widely shared language/concepts/issues. Please make efforts to convey the motivation behind the comment so it can be properly addressed by leads.
    - Negative comments (e.g.. “paragraph does not read well”, “citation needed”, etc.) are less useful. Whereas, suggesting changes to the text, moving sentences, rewording, etc., makes the feedback much more actionable and constructive.
- As projects come close to completion, particularly when we reach a stage of asking the community for general feedback, all of these points apply doubly. In addition, please prioritize checking whether the paper is adequate and achieve its main goals instead of suggesting minor changes.