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Comment on gc-2021-20

Laurel Haak (Referee)

Referee comment on "Clear, transparent, and timely communication for fair authorship decisions: a practical guide" by Shahzad Gani et al., Geosci. Commun. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/gc-2021-20-RC1>, 2021

This paper describes a process - and the context in which it was carried out - to define a form to support transparency in authorship decisions. The nuance of the host and center dynamics is particularly well-articulated, showing the importance of a trusted body (in this case, the EWWG) in hosting difficult conversations. Also of general interest is the commentary on the impact of virtual workspaces on mediating open discussions and iterating toward a solution, particularly on enabling interactions among people located throughout power structures.

The workflow diagram clearly illustrates the iterative, reflective process and the interactions between the EWWG and the center-wide group. The authorship form is clear, as are the consistent and intentional use of terms: main authors and potential co-authors.

I would have liked to see a pilot of the form at the center, to demonstrate its utility in application. I'd like to learn how it is being adopted: are center researchers using the form because it works? Has the center decided to require or strongly encourage use of the form? The authors mention the broad research topics carried out in the center - how does this impact use of the form?

I would also have liked to see more guidance on contribution guidance. While it is important to be flexible to accommodate the broad research purview of the center, it would be helpful for adoption purposes to imbue more substance in the definitions of main and potential authors. The authors mention the CRediT taxonomy, but why not integrate this more deeply into the authorship definition process? Did the iterative process find opportunities to improve the taxonomy?

Overall, the paper is clearly written, describes a well-carried out research project, and shares a product that has the potential to advance and improve how the research community manages authorship. I can't wait to see how the authorship form is used.