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4 2 **the rhizosphere of actinorhizal plants**  
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43 20 *Key words:* Alder, chelators, mass spectrometry, ligandosphere, metallophore, metal  
44 21 management, siderophore, rhizosphere  
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3 **23 Abstract**  
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5 24 *Frankia* spp. are widespread nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria, which often live in symbiosis with a  
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7 25 broad spectrum of hosts. Metal homeostasis plays a crucial role in the success of the symbiosis  
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9 26 regarding the acquisition of essential trace metals and detoxification of potentially toxic elements.  
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11 27 We have hypothesised that *Frankia* releases many organic ligands with a broad spectrum of  
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13 28 affinity for essential and toxic metals. We coined the term ‘ligandosphere’ to describe the entirety  
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15 29 of excreted metal complexing agents. Using metal isotope-coded profiling (MICP);  
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17 30 metallophores of physiological important and toxic trace metals were identified by the addition of  
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19 31 stable metal isotope pairs such as  $^{54}\text{Fe}/^{58}\text{Fe}$ ,  $^{63}\text{Cu}/^{65}\text{Cu}$ ,  $^{64}\text{Zn}/^{66}\text{Zn}$  or  $^{95}\text{Mo}/^{98}\text{Mo}$ . Liquid  
20  
21 32 chromatography coupled to a mass spectrometer revealed strong variations of the metallophore  
22  
23 33 profile in between the 14 test-strains. In total, about 82 organic ligands were identified binding to  
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25 34 one of the tested metals. The predicted sum formula of the major Fe binding ligands and MS/MS  
26  
27 35 experiments suggested that several metallophore candidates have a similar molecular backbone.  
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29 36 Growth experiments with a hyper-producer of metallophores revealed a positive relationship  
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31 37 between metallophore production and the concentration of Cu in the growth medium. The present  
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33 38 study provides the first comprehensive overview of the complexity of *Frankia*’s ligandosphere. It  
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35 39 opens a path to deeper understanding of mechanisms that regulate metal homeostasis in frankiae.  
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37 40 Deciphering these mechanisms is important since the fitness of actinorhizal plants and their  
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39 41 potential in ecological restoration relies heavily on their symbiosis with frankiae.  
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3 43 **Significance to Metalloomics**

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5 44 Metal homeostasis plays a significant role in bacteria-plant interactions in the rhizosphere.  
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7 45 Bacteria can acquire trace metals through metallophores for metal-dependent processes like  
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9 46 nitrogen fixation and can contribute to alleviating metal stress. To understand how bacterial  
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11 47 metallophores contribute to metal management in a rhizosphere, it is necessary to determine the  
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13 48 entirety of metal complexing ligands. In this study, we have explored the metallophore  
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15 49 production by *Frankia* (Actinobacteria), a nitrogen-fixing soil bacterium, using metal isotope-  
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17 50 coded profiling. Our study has strong implications for the understanding of the role of bacteria  
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19 51 for the plant in trace metal acquisition and detoxification.

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## 53 Introduction

54 Metal ions are essential for many enzymes, but an excess of metals can be toxic and reduce  
55 growth and development of a broad range of organisms. In bacteria, metal limitation activates  
56 pathways that are involved in the import and mobilisation of metals via metallophores, whereas  
57 an excess of metals induces efflux and storage<sup>1</sup>. Microorganisms in the rhizosphere, a micro-  
58 ecological zone in direct proximity of plant roots, provide many benefices to plants, such as  
59 defence against pathogens<sup>2</sup>, increased macronutrient availability (e.g., N, P) as well as  
60 micronutrients (e.g., Fe, Cu, Zn, Mo) uptake<sup>3</sup>. For example, bacteria recruit directly iron for the  
61 metal-dependent enzymes, but they also assist in plant iron uptake<sup>4</sup>. Considering the bacteria  
62 mediated iron uptake in corn<sup>4</sup>, the hypothesis iron-for-carbon<sup>5</sup> could be a widespread bacteria-  
63 plant interaction. Such interactions would likely strongly rely on bacterial metallophore  
64 production, which might influence trace metal bioavailability in the rhizosphere. Nitrogen-fixers  
65 like the ubiquitous soil bacteria, *Frankia* spp. (Actinobacteria), are of particular interest, as they  
66 form complex symbiotic interactions with a broad range of higher plants such as alder or willow  
67 thorn, often along with ectomycorrhizal or arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi<sup>6, 7</sup>. After root infection,  
68 *Frankia* has access to a carbon source from the host and supplies nitrogen to the symbionts in  
69 return. Therefore, *Frankia* needs to acquire Mo and Fe for the nitrogenase reducing atmospheric  
70 N<sub>2</sub> to NH<sub>3</sub><sup>8-10,11</sup>. Nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria such as *Azotobacter vinelandii* utilise metallophores  
71 to increase the bioavailability of nitrogenase metal cofactors (i.e., Fe, Mo, V)<sup>12</sup>, which are often  
72 bound by dissolved organic matter in the rhizosphere<sup>13-15</sup> and reduce the toxicity of unwanted  
73 metals (i.e., W)<sup>16</sup>. As many bacterial organic ligands, for example, the catecholate-type organic  
74 ligand protochelin can complex various metal cations (e.g., Fe<sup>3+</sup>, Cu<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>) or oxo-anions (e.g.,  
75 molybdate, vanadate, tungstate), the use of metallophores for metal management could be a  
76 common strategy in bacteria<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, metallophores acquire many essential biometals by  
77 shaping the speciation of metals in the rhizosphere habitat to the benefice of their co-habiting  
78 bacteria and other organisms<sup>18, 19</sup>. Here, we use the term ‘ligandosphere’ to highlight the  
79 environment- and species-dependent bouquet of metallophores released by organisms of a  
80 specific habitat.

81 Although hundreds of siderophores were identified in the last decades<sup>20</sup>, little is known about  
82 metallophore-based recruitment strategies for other metals. In *Frankia*, as in many other model  
83 bacteria, studies of metal-binding ligands were often limited to siderophore detection under Fe  
84 limited growth conditions using colourimetric approaches or investigations on heavy metal

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3 85 tolerance, directly linked to their effect on bacterial physiology<sup>21, 22</sup>. More specific colourimetric  
4 86 procedures have shown evidence for catecholate, and hydroxamate siderophores in various  
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6 87 *Frankia* isolates<sup>23-25</sup>. Boyer et al. (1999) found two potential siderophores, Frankobactin (782  
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8 88 *m/z*) and Frankobactin A (800 *m/z*)<sup>26, 27</sup> isolated from *Frankia* sp. strain 52065. NMR could  
9  
10 89 identify only substructures, the phenyl-oxazoline ring, some amino acids and the hydroxamate  
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12 90 units of the siderophores<sup>28</sup>. Genome mining of three isolates, ACN14a, CcI3 and EAN1pec,  
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14 91 revealed non-ribosomal peptide synthases (NRPS) that govern complex reactions in *Frankia*  
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16 92 including the assembly of phenols/catechol, oxazoline/thiazolines and hydroxamates<sup>29</sup>. The  
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18 93 NRPS domain suggested the sequence of 2,3-dihydroxybenzoate or salicylate followed by serine  
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20 94 or cysteine and a varying number of other amino acids, such as ornithine and threonine. Also, all  
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22 95 three *Frankia* genomes contain homologous NRPS-independent biosynthetic loci typical for an  
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24 96 aerobactin-like metallophore<sup>29</sup>. These results highlighted the potential diversity of metallophores  
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26 97 produced by *Frankia* spp.

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28 98 We, therefore, raise the hypothesis that *Frankia* can release a strain-specific bouquet of organic  
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30 99 ligands, which facilitates the complexations of cations and oxo-anions for both recruitment and  
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32 100 detoxification of metals. Multiple metallophores might harbour similar structures, but their  
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34 101 affinities to, e.g. iron can vary. Such a 'ligandosphere' could evolve an advantage to recruit iron,  
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36 102 for example, in a changing environment from different resources. In this context, Hider and Kong  
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38 103 (2010) have already suggested distinguishing those ligands for solely iron complexation and  
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40 104 recruitment (primary siderophores) from those who are dedicated to non-classic function  
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42 105 (secondary siderophores) such as detoxification or just keeping metals in solution as a complex<sup>20</sup>.  
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44 106 Metallophore-mediated tolerance mechanisms for potentially toxic heavy metals are essential for  
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46 107 bioremediation of contaminated sites<sup>30-32</sup>. The toxicity of metals mainly depends on their  
47  
48 108 concentration, speciation and bioavailability<sup>33, 34</sup>. Zinc and copper, for example, are necessary for  
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50 109 the function of various enzymes such as polymerase or cytochrome oxidase<sup>35, 36</sup>, but also have a  
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52 110 strong toxic effect on microorganisms. Cu<sup>2+</sup> ions can replace other metal ions in complexes and  
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54 111 can generate reactive oxygen species (ROS) by autoxidation or Fenton-like reactions that cause  
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56 112 oxidative stress and subsequent cell damage<sup>37</sup>. To avoid cell damage thought critical metal  
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58 113 concentrations, *Frankia* might feature different resistance mechanisms; immobilisation on the  
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60 114 cell surface, efficient metal-specific efflux systems and complexation by metallophores<sup>22, 38</sup>. In  
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62 115 this context, several *Frankia* strains are resistant against high Zn concentrations<sup>39</sup>, but zinc

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3 116 ligands (zincophores) and the Zn management are unknown in the genus *Frankia*. Anyway, it is  
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5 117 well known, that *Frankia* utilise all of the essential trace elements (Ni, Co, Cu, Se, Mo, B, Zn, Fe,  
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7 118 and Mn) and have a comparatively high percentage of metalloproteins, particularly in the more  
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9 119 metal resistant strains. *Frankia* has achieved similar levels of metal and metalloid resistance as  
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11 120 bacteria from highly metal-contaminated sites. More importantly, from a bioremediation  
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13 121 perspective, Furnholm and Tisa (2014) have outlined the importance to understand mechanisms  
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15 122 allowing the endosymbiont to survive and infect actinorhizal plants in metal contaminated soils<sup>20</sup>.  
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17 123 For that reason the present study aims to determine the ‘ligandosphere’ in pure cultures of 14  
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19 124 *Frankia* strains for the complexation of selected metals such as Fe, Zn, Mo and Cu by using  
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21 125 metal isotope-coded profiling (MICP) supported by DeltaMS to identify the respective  
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23 126 isotopologues<sup>40, 41</sup> of unknown organic ligands in different growth media. *Frankia* serves thereby  
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25 127 as an ecologically important species for the rhizosphere microbiome and potential new model  
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27 128 system for interactions across the prokaryote-eukaryote boundary in soil similar to the well  
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29 129 investigated aquatic systems<sup>42</sup>. Overall, our elaborative screening sheds light on the dynamics of  
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31 130 the metallophore profile in the genus *Frankia* under standardised conditions and provides  
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33 131 information on how plants and associated fungi might involve microorganisms in their metal  
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35 132 homeostasis.

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## 38 39 134 **Experimental**

### 40 41 135 **Reagents and materials**

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43 136 All used ingredients of the bacterial growth media were purchased by Sigma Aldrich  
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45 137 (Taufkirchen, Germany) and VWR (Darmstadt, Germany). A Micro-Pure water purification  
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47 138 system (Thermo Scientific, Schwerte, Germany) provided the ultra-pure water (0.055 µS) for the  
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49 139 preparation of aqueous solutions. UHPLC-grade methanol, acetonitrile, water, ammonium acetate  
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51 140 and formic acid were purchased from VWR (Darmstadt, Germany). Cell tissue flasks and plastic  
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53 141 tubes were from Sarstedt (Nümbrecht, Germany).

### 54 55 142 **Bacteria strains, culture media, growth conditions and protein quantification**

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57 143 All *Frankia* strains were provided by the Centre d’Étude de la Forêt culture collection (CEF),  
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59 144 Université Laval (Québec, Canada) except isolate DSM 44251 which was obtained from the  
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145 DSMZ (German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures, Göttingen, Germany). Two

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3 146 growth media, BAP medium and the newly designed MI medium (metallophore inducing  
4 147 medium), were used. The BAP medium was prepared as described in Bélanger et al. (2011)<sup>43</sup>.  
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6 148 The MI medium was inspired by Murry et al. (1984)<sup>44</sup> and composed of (in g L<sup>-1</sup>) KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>,  
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8 149 0.953; K<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 0.592; NH<sub>4</sub>Cl, 0.268; sodium propionate, 0.480; MgSO<sub>4</sub>·7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.030;  
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10 150 CaCl<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.010; trace metals (in g L<sup>-1</sup>): H<sub>3</sub>BO<sub>3</sub>, 0.00286; MnCl<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.00181;  
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12 151 ZnSO<sub>4</sub>·7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.00022; CuSO<sub>4</sub>·5H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.00008; Biotin, 400 µg L<sup>-1</sup>. Both media were  
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14 152 supplemented with FeCl<sub>3</sub> 5.0 × 10<sup>-7</sup> mol L<sup>-1</sup>, EDTA 5.0 × 10<sup>-6</sup> mol L<sup>-1</sup> and Na<sub>2</sub>MoO<sub>4</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O 10<sup>-7</sup>  
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16 153 mol L<sup>-1</sup>. The final pH was adjusted to 6.8. Each culture was inoculated with a final protein  
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18 154 concentration of 10 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> and cultivated in 650 mL uncoated polycarbonate cell culture flask  
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20 155 containing 200 mL culture medium. Flasks were incubated in static conditions at 30°C. After 25  
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22 156 days, 100 mL medium of each culture has been taken for analysis. The protein content of all  
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24 157 cultures was determined by homogenization, cell disruption and subsequent Roti<sup>®</sup>-Quant Protein  
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26 158 Assay (based on the Coomassie Bradford assay)<sup>43</sup>.

### 26 159 **Analytical process**

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28 160 Cultures were centrifuged at 3440 ×g for 10 min at 4°C. The supernatants (100 mL, 1.5 mL min<sup>-1</sup>)  
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30 161 were loaded on standard HLB-cartridges (200 mg sorbents, Oasis<sup>™</sup> Waters, Milford, UK)  
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32 162 preconditioned with 6 mL MeOH and afterwards equilibrated with 8 mL water<sup>16</sup>. Upon loading,  
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34 163 the cartridges were eluted with 6 mL of 100% MeOH. An aliquot of each extract was used for the  
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36 164 universal Chrome Azurol S assay (CAS) to identify present Fe binding agents<sup>45</sup>. The remaining  
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38 165 extract was evaporated entirely under a nitrogen stream, and the sample residue was re-suspended  
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40 166 in 100 µL MeOH. For the subsequent Metallophore Isotope Coded Profiling (MICP) all extracts  
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42 167 were split into four equal aliquots. Each aliquot was spiked with 4 µL of a 10<sup>-2</sup> mol L<sup>-1</sup> stable  
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44 168 isotopes solution (ratio 1:1 of each pair: <sup>54</sup>Fe/<sup>58</sup>Fe, <sup>63</sup>Cu/<sup>65</sup>Cu, <sup>64</sup>Zn/<sup>66</sup>Zn or <sup>95</sup>Mo/<sup>98</sup>Mo) (Euriso-  
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46 169 top, Saint-Aubin Cedex, France) and measured by UHPLC-HRMS. The subsequent identification  
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48 170 of metal-binding complexes followed the workflow of MICP<sup>40</sup> coupled to a DeltaMS<sup>41</sup> automatic  
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50 171 peak detection tool. All listed total formulas were calculated using the inbuilt Thermo Xcalibur  
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52 172 Qual Browser software tool with a mass tolerance of less than 2 ppm considering the following  
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54 173 elements <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>12</sup>C, <sup>16</sup>O, <sup>14</sup>N, <sup>32</sup>S, <sup>13</sup>C, <sup>23</sup>Na, <sup>54</sup>Fe, <sup>56</sup>Fe, <sup>58</sup>Fe, <sup>63</sup>Cu, <sup>65</sup>Cu, <sup>64</sup>Zn, <sup>66</sup>Zn, <sup>95</sup>Mo, <sup>98</sup>Mo.  
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56 174 Confirmation and exclusion of formulas are exemplarily shown in Table S1 (using the example  
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58 175 *m/z* = 782.3679). Formulas with non-integer double binding equivalents (DBE) could be easily  
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60 176 excluded. Only components with -10 ≤ DBE - O ≤ +10 were considered reliable<sup>46</sup>. Formulas can

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3 177 be excluded if the O/N ratio was rather low, the number of DBE was low (cannot be a peptide),  
4 178 or the number of S was high about N and O. Naturally formulas with minimum mass error were  
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6 179 most plausible. As a limitation, some formulas could not be completely excluded (for example  
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8 180  $C_{41}H_{56}O_{10}N_3S_1$ ). However, fragmentation experiments helped to confirm or to reject calculated  
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10 181 formulas.

## 11 12 182 **UHPLC-ESI-HRMS measurements**

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14 183 Ultra-high-performance liquid chromatography (UHPLC) coupled with high-resolution mass  
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16 184 spectrometry (HRMS) was carried out using a Thermo (Bremen, Germany) UltiMate HPG-3400  
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18 185 RS binary pump, WPS-3000 autosampler which was set to 10°C and which was equipped with a  
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20 186 25  $\mu$ L injection syringe and a 100  $\mu$ L sample loop. The Kinetex<sup>®</sup> C-18 RP (50  $\times$  2.1 mm; 1.7  $\mu$ m)  
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22 187 column from Phenomenex (Aschaffenburg, Germany) was kept at 25°C using a TCC-3200  
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24 188 column compartment. Eluent A consisted of water, with 2% (v/v) acetonitrile and Eluent B was  
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26 189 90% acetonitrile (v/v). Both eluents were containing 1 mmol L<sup>-1</sup> ammonium acetate<sup>47</sup>. The  
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28 190 chromatography was performed with a linear gradient (Table S2) and a constant flow rate of 0.4  
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30 191 mL min<sup>-1</sup>.

31 192 Mass spectra were recorded with a Thermo QExactive plus Orbitrap mass spectrometer with  
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33 193 electrospray ionisation (ESI) source. Ionisation mode alternated between positive and negative  
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35 194 within 1 s and the mass window was set to 130-2000  $m/z$ . The appending full scan settings were  
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37 195 as follows: resolution: 70,000; AGC target:  $5.0 \times 10^6$ ; maximum IT: 200 ms. Following general  
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39 196 settings were used: sheath gas flow rate: 40; aux gas flow rate: 15; sweep gas flow rate: 0;  
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41 197 discharge current: 8.0 A; capillary temperature: 350°C; S-lens RF level: 33; vaporizer  
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43 198 temperature: 360°C; acquisition time frame: 0.2-9.5 min. All MS/MS measurements were  
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45 199 performed in a simultaneously mass detection arrangement with the following instrument  
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47 200 parameters: mass window 50-900  $m/z$ , resolution: 280,000; AGC target:  $3.0 \times 10^6$ ; maximum IT:  
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49 201 200 ms; collision energy: 25 eV. The general settings were adjusted like in full scan mode and the  
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51 202 scan period for each target mass was set two minutes around their belonging peak.

## 52 203 53 204 **Copper tolerance and time-lapse experiments with *Frankia* sp. CH37**

54 205 The Cu tolerance of *Frankia* strain CH37 was investigated in the presence of three different Cu  
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56 206 concentrations:  $3.2 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1.0 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup> (CuCl<sub>2</sub>). All treatments were inoculated  
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58 207 in cell flasks containing 200 mL MI medium with a final protein concentration of 10  $\mu$ g mL<sup>-1</sup>.

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3 208 The cultures were monitored over a period of 53 days. Aliquots of 10 mL were taken at each  
4 209 sampling point, centrifuged and the protein amounts were quantified. The remaining supernatant  
5 210 (9.5 mL) was extracted with small HLB-cartridges (30 mg sorbents, Oasis™ Waters, Milford,  
6 211 UK). All cartridges were preconditioned with 1 mL of MeOH and equilibrated with 1 mL water.  
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8 212 After loading the cartridge, the solid phase was washed with 1 mL of water. Compounds were  
9 213 then eluted with 1 mL MeOH. Afterwards, the extracts were dried under a nitrogen stream,  
10 214 resolved in 100 µL MeOH and measured with the UHPLC-HRMS-Orbitrap system.  
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## 18 216 **Results and discussion**

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20 217 The metallophore profiles of 14 *Frankia* strains isolated from various host plants were very  
21 218 variable (Table 1). Interestingly, culturing *Frankia* on propionate as a single carbon source (MI  
22 219 medium) and a reduced vitamin-mix triggered the metallophore production compared to the  
23 220 traditional applied growth medium (BAP medium). Elevated amounts of siderophores were  
24 221 determined in the growth medium of the strain CH37, whereas the extracts of the known  
25 222 siderophore producer strains, predicted based on genome analysis, ACN14a, Ea1-12, and CcI3<sup>29</sup>  
26 223 reacted only moderately with the CAS assay. Surprisingly, the CAS assay indicated that only half  
27 224 of the tested strains were able to release Fe binding organic ligands. As micronutrients such as  
28 225 Fe, Zn and Mo are essential for the nitrogen fixer, we applied the metal isotope-coded profiling  
29 226 (MCIP) to trace lower amounts of metallophores (Table 1) assuming false negative results by the  
30 227 CAS assay due to a lack of sensitivity.  
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### 40 228 **Metal isotope-coded profiling (MICP)**

41 229 Metallophore candidates were determined upon addition of the isotope pairs <sup>54</sup>Fe/<sup>58</sup>Fe, <sup>63</sup>Cu/<sup>65</sup>Cu,  
42 230 <sup>64</sup>Zn/<sup>66</sup>Zn or <sup>95</sup>Mo/<sup>98</sup>Mo (Fig. 1). In case of iron (<sup>54</sup>Fe/<sup>58</sup>Fe), regular features were considered as  
43 231 potential metallophores, if two isotopologues of the mass spectrum showed the correct distance  
44 232 of 3.9937 with an intensity ratio of 1:1 (deviation tolerance of 20%). Also, only those features  
45 233 were selected with a signal to noise ratio of 10:1. The survey revealed that all strains were  
46 234 releasing siderophores except two isolates (ACN10a and ACN12a). Non-detection of ligands in  
47 235 both strains might also be related to low complex stability or short residence time during growth  
48 236 or other recruitment strategies for Fe. These strains might also recruit iron by acquiring of not  
49 237 own metallophores as recently demonstrated for the genus *Pseudomonas*<sup>48</sup>. Importantly, the  
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3 238 bouquet of the siderophores was strain specific and changed with the growth medium slightly, but  
4 239 the ligands might be structurally related as many iron complexes eluted in a narrow window  
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6 240 between 2.2 - 3.0 min, which indicated a similar polarity of the separated molecules (Fig. 2A).  
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8 241 Overall, 35 potential siderophores were identified (Table S3), but 17 out of them have been  
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10 242 produced by a single strain initially isolated from *Hippophae rhamnoides* (sea buckthorn). Due to  
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12 243 its tolerance against strongly eroded, nutrient poor and sometimes salty soils, the plant is growing  
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14 244 on in coastal sand dunes<sup>49</sup> but also used for land reclamation.  
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16 246 Several criteria were defined for the reliable identification of new metallophores: first, Na- and  
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18 247 K-adducts of the metallophore, which shows the same isotopic signature as the initially identified  
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20 248 complex, point out the correct determination (Fig. 1B). Secondly, upon additional spiking of the  
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22 249 pair of isotopes, the ratio between the metal complex and the free ligands should have changed  
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24 250 significantly to the favour of the metal complex (Fig. S1). Finally, the HRMS measurements  
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26 251 reveal the sum formula with plausible DBEs (Table S1).

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28 252 Following the defined criteria, the masses of the free ligand of the respective complex were  
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30 253 calculated and identified in the extracted ion chromatograms of an untreated sample. For  
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32 254 example, the signal of the ligands disappeared after adding the respected metal such as Fe and  
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34 255 conversely signals of the complexes increased (Fig. S1). In addition to the 35 Fe-complexes,  
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36 256 almost all strains released ligands complexing Cu (in total 28) with a molecular mass ranging  
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38 257 from 359 to 949 amu (Table S4). All determined Cu-ligands seem to bind cupric ions  
39  
40 258 preferentially compared to Fe. Moreover, a small number of stable zinc complexes were detected  
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42 259 in 5 out of 16 *Frankia* strains. However, the signal intensity was mostly weak except 694.1636  
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44 260  $m/z$  and 841.3671  $m/z$  for the <sup>66</sup>Zn isotopologues (Fig. 2B, Table S5). Surprisingly, no Mo-  
45  
46 261 complex were found under the chosen laboratory conditions indicating that *Frankia* recruits  
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48 262 added molybdate through a low-affinity transport system or it facilitates other sources of  
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50 263 molybdophores. The latter case is more likely as it was shown that Mo is mainly bound to  
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52 264 organic matter<sup>14</sup>. Interestingly, all detected metallophores seem to be metal-specific as just the  
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54 265 ligand **13** (796.3834  $m/z$ ) bound two metals (Fe and Cu) under the applied conditions.

### 52 266 **Determination of the sum formula**

54 267 The high-resolution mass spectra were used to estimate the sum formula. Hereby, the main  
55  
56 268 metallophores were selected by their signal intensity (intensity  $\geq 1.24 \times 10^6$ ). The calculated mass

of the molecule ion deviated less than 2 ppm from the measured mass (Tables 2, 3). In a further step, the given sum formulas were verified by calculating the number of carbon atoms from the signal intensity of the  $^{13}\text{C}$  peak and by the composition of the DBE (double bond equivalent)<sup>46</sup>. No sulphur was identified in the identified metallophores.

The proposed sum formulas of siderophore candidates **1-8** showed a very similar composition (Table 2). All candidates have the same number of nitrogen atoms, and all other elements occur in a very narrow range. Hereby, the molecular masses and sum formula of **2** and **3** fit very well with the already published masses of Frankobactin and Frankobactin A, respectively. **2** and **3** vary precisely in the mass of water as previously described by Boyer et al.<sup>26</sup>. Overall **1** (817.2701  $m/z$ ), **2** (835.2785  $m/z$ ), and **3** (853.2891  $m/z$ ) differ just by 18.0105 amu in a consecutive series (Table 2). The same loss of water was observed between **4** (831.2848  $m/z$ ) and **5** (849.2961  $m/z$ ). Only **8** (915.3424  $m/z$ ) and **9** (958.3239  $m/z$ ) have a distinctively higher molecular mass and accordingly more carbon, oxygen and nitrogen atoms (Table 2).

**1** and **4**, as well as **5** and **6**, differ just by a potential  $\text{CH}_2$ -group whereas **2** and **4** differ by a potential CO group. In summary, we argue that those siderophores are derived from the same biosynthetic pathway, and most likely, they are derivatives from Frankobactin. It seems phonemically similar to the recently identified family of derivatives of protochelin - the key metallophore in *A. vinelandii*<sup>50</sup>. Interestingly, the most abundantly formed Cu-complexes, **10-15**, have different masses over a broader range of polarity suggesting unique structural features (Table 3, Fig. 2B).

### Ligand classification

We have identified two different isotopic signatures of iron isotopologues (Fig. 3). The most common iron isotopic signature has three significant isotopologues due to the complexation of  $^{54}\text{Fe}$ ,  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  (both after spiking) and  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ , which was recruited from Fe-EDTA in the growth medium. The differences were thus 1.9998  $m/z$  between each isotopologue. The second observed isotopic signature did not contain the isotopologue of  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ . Therefore, we argue that *Frankia* released at least two different types of organic ligands. Type I ligands possess a higher Fe affinity or were produced in higher amounts than the type II siderophores. Therefore, type I ligands are able to recruit  $^{56}\text{Fe}$  from Fe-EDTA as expected from primary siderophores (Hider and Kong 2010). In addition, they have rapidly bound  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  and  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  upon their administration (Fig. 3A, C)<sup>20</sup>. The isotopic signature of the molecule ion shows thus three isotopologues. However, no

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2  
3 301 ferric complexes of type II ligands were found in untreated extracts until  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  and  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  were  
4 302 added (Fig. 3B,D). It is conceivable that type II ligands belong to the class of secondary  
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6 303 siderophores which might chelate other trace metals, or be used by the microorganisms for other  
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8 304 functions<sup>20, 51, 52</sup>.

### 10 305 **Determination of Frankobactin**

11  
12 306 Frankobactin is the only named siderophore released in *Frankia* so far<sup>26</sup>. The proposed sum  
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14 307 formulas of the siderophore candidates **1-8** show a very similar elementary composition.  
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16 308 Interestingly, the molecular masses of compound **2** and **3** (782 and 800  $m/z$ , Tables 2, S1) fit very  
17  
18 309 well with the published masses of Frankobactin, and Frankobactin A produced by the *Frankia*  
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20 310 strains 52065 and CeSI5, respectively. Compounds, **2** and **3**, also differ by a loss of water as  
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22 311 previously observed for Frankobactin due to the ring opening of oxazoline<sup>26</sup>. In our study, a  
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24 312 Frankobactin-like siderophore was found in strain CH37 which is phylogenetically related to the  
25  
26 313 isolate CeSI5<sup>53</sup>. The data also support the previous genome mining-based approach<sup>29</sup>, which  
27  
28 314 suggested three NRPS-based biosyntheses of siderophores ranging from 610 to 900 amu  
29  
30 315 including unknown substructures. Our study paves the way for selecting the ideal strain for  
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32 316 purification of Frankobactin and related ligands for structure elucidation and eco-physiological  
33  
34 317 testing.

### 34 318 35 319 **MS/MS experiments for further structure elucidation**

36  
37 320 To gain insights into the molecular structure of the metallophores, MS/MS experiments of the  
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39 321 main candidates of Fe and Cu metallophores were performed. The spectra of **1-5** show a similar  
40  
41 322 fragmentation pattern, which is different to those of **6-9**. Starting from the C-terminal end, the  
42  
43 323 MS/MS data for **1-5** revealed a neutral loss of formyl-hydroxyl-ornithine (176.0785  $m/z$ )  
44  
45 324 followed by a neutral loss of ornithine (114.0793  $m/z$ ) and a acetyl-hydroxyl-ornithine (172.0846  
46  
47 325  $m/z$ ), as also found in many other metallophores (Table 4, Fig. 4A)<sup>20, 29, 54</sup>. The resulting  
48  
49 326 fragments for **1** were 177.0867  $m/z$ , 291.1657  $m/z$  and 435.2561  $m/z$  (including a potential loss of  
50  
51 327 CO). Also, a neutral loss of threonine (101.0475) directly linked to the acetyl-hydroxyl-ornithine  
52  
53 328 was identified (Fig. 4A). In **6**, the formyl-acetyl-ornithine seems to be replaced for hydroxyl-  
54  
55 329 acetyl-ornithine (190.0950  $m/z$ ).

56 330 The phenyl-oxazoline ring and its opening were confirmed by the characteristic salicylate  
57  
58 331 fragments and identified for **1-5** (Fig. 4B)<sup>55-57</sup>. It is noteworthy that fragments of the phenyl-

1  
2  
3 332 oxazoline group were not occurring if default settings for MS/MS experiments were used. The  
4 333 direct molecular link between the amino acid chain and the phenyl-oxazoline ring are still unclear  
5  
6 334 and might be the reason for the differences observed between **1**, **2** and **4**, aside from the mass  
7  
8 335 difference of water in **3** and **5**. In general, the MS/MS spectra have often shown neutral losses of  
9  
10 336 water, CO and NH<sub>3</sub>, which are characteristic for peptide fragmentation. Overall, the  
11  
12 337 fragmentation pattern supports the assumption that **1-5** share the same molecular backbone  
13 338 (Table 4).  
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15 339

#### 16 340 **Cu- and Fe-complexes formed during bacterial growth in the presence of high levels of Cu**

17  
18 341 MICP allowed us identifying complexes for a targeted analysis during a time-lapse experiment of  
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20 342 bacterial growth estimated by protein content. *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 was thus selected for its  
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22 343 relatively high metallophore production of <sup>56</sup>Fe-siderophores. At  $1.0 \times 10^{-6}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup> Cu, the  
23  
24 344 growth curve phenocopied growth under the standard Cu concentration ( $3.2 \times 10^{-7}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup>). After  
25  
26 345 a short lag phase, the bacterial population grew exponentially with an abruptly ceases around day  
27  
28 346 15, followed by a typical decline phase. Some studies observed a more extended lag period, but  
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30 347 the growth curve, in general, was similar to previously reported ones<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 5A). In the presence  
31  
32 348 of elevated amounts of Cu ( $1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup>), bacteria did not grow in all biological replicates  
33  
34 349 suggesting that the detoxification not work under this conditions. However, moderately high Cu  
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36 350 concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol L<sup>-1</sup> allowed bacterial growth. The amount of siderophore **4**  
37  
38 351 increased along the exponential bacterial growth until day 15 (Fig. 5B). The siderophore seemed  
39  
40 352 to be taken up or catabolised by the bacteria since its concentration decreased from day 15 and  
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42 353 was no longer produced (or at a lower rate than the uptake) during the decline phase. A similar  
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44 354 metallophore profile was observed in time-lapse experiments with *A. vinelandii* under nitrogen-  
45  
46 355 depleted conditions. Here, few cells produced a significant amount of protochelin during the lag  
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48 356 phase to increase the iron-bioavailability before exponential growth<sup>47</sup>.

46 357 In contrast to the ferric complex, the measured amount of the Cu-complex **13** did not follow the  
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48 358 time lapse of bacterial growth. For both tested Cu concentrations in the medium, the level of the  
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50 359 Cu-complex increased steadily until day 32 to an equilibrium concentration (Fig. 5C). Also, the  
51  
52 360 overall amount of Cu-complexes accelerated with the higher concentration of Cu in the growth  
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54 361 medium as also observed for Fe. The results correspond very well with earlier studies on *A.*  
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56 362 *vinelandii*, which releases a higher amount of organic ligands in the presence of elevated  
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58 363 concentrations of toxic metals like tungstate<sup>16</sup>. Due to this fact, the increase of copper binding

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2  
3 364 ligands in *Frankia* might be the reason why growth is not influenced in the presence of elevated  
4 365 amounts of Cu. In this context, studies have recently identified several siderophore-producing  
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6 366 microbial taxa in response to heavy metal contamination<sup>58</sup>.

7  
8 367 We thus suggest that Cu-complexation can contribute to the heavy metal resistance in *Frankia*  
9  
10 368 besides other detoxification mechanisms. The number of metals present might regulate  
11  
12 369 metallophore production as part of the homeostasis, and directly influence the metallophore  
13  
14 370 bouquet in the ligandosphere of these bacteria. Indeed, biosynthesis pathways of metallophores  
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16 371 are often induced in the presence of potentially toxic metals such as in *Pseudomonas*<sup>59</sup>. Large  
17  
18 372 amounts of metallophores provide bacteria with extracellular protection by complexing metals<sup>34</sup>,  
19 373 <sup>60</sup> which ultimately reduces metal uptake by preventing metal diffusion into bacteria via porins<sup>61</sup>.  
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21 374 Future short-term uptake experiments have to verify if the identified metallophores can control  
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23 375 the uptake of Fe, Cu and other metals such as Zn.

24  
25 376

## 26 27 377 **Conclusion**

28  
29 378 *Frankia* requires a constant supply of essential metals like iron to assemble the iron- and  
30  
31 379 molybdenum-dependent nitrogenase. The survey of a biodiverse panel of *Frankia* strains showed  
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33 380 plastic, strain-specific, and dynamic metallophore profiles determined by MICP and DeltaMS.  
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35 381 Overall, Frankiae is capable of producing a wide variety of chelators that could potentially  
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37 382 contribute to the natural ligand pool in the rhizosphere. Depending on the strain and growth  
38  
39 383 media, as many as to 17 metallophores were detected in the culture supernatant. While strain  
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41 384 CH37 was found to be a metallophore hyper-producer, other strains released only a few  
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43 385 metallophores or even no metallophore to the growth medium. The profiles we observed also  
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45 386 differed sharply in their composition depending on the growth medium (carbon source),  
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47 387 indicating that very dynamic changes occur in the *Frankia* 'ligandosphere'. Frankiae seems to  
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49 388 provide specific pools of metallophores that preferentially complex Fe, Zn, or Cu. Surprisingly,  
50  
51 389 no Mo-binding ligand was identified, although, like Fe, it is an essential element for the Mo-  
52  
53 390 dependent nitrogenase.

54 391 It is thus tempting to hypothesise that the mutualistic interactions between frankiae,  
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56 392 ectomycorrhizal fungi and alder within its rhizosphere are based on both a nitrogen-for-  
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58 393 molybdenum and iron-for-carbon dependencies under diazotrophic conditions. Frankiae will

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2  
3 394 deliver ammonium and recruits iron if the other organisms recruit Mo and deliver carbon. In any  
4 395 case, further experiments would need to be conducted under strict diazotrophic conditions and  
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6 396 more challenging molybdenum sources (Mo complexed to organic matter and Mo-oxides  
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8 397 complexes) to elucidate whether or not, and under which circumstances, frankiae or associated  
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10 398 fungi produce molybdophores

11 399 Recorded MS/MS data suggest the existence of a similar molecular scaffolding of the main  
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13 400 siderophore candidates, one that contains substructures such as ornithine and the already-known  
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15 401 open and closed forms of the phenyl-oxazoline ring. Our study also revealed that the production  
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17 402 of ligands for Fe and potentially toxic metals such as Cu are regulated quite differently. Based on  
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19 403 these results, we suggest a ligand-mediated Cu resistance mechanism (as previously shown for  
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21 404 other organism and metals) coexists with other resistance mechanisms such as efflux systems and  
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23 405 detoxification processes that occur at the cell surface.

24 406 Our results highlight that *Frankia* possesses a variety of metallophores that are produced  
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26 407 dynamically, and adaptively to manage metal stress, ultimately leading to the acquisition, and/or  
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28 408 detoxification. In the rhizosphere, where *Frankia* and its host plants are exposed to multiple  
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30 409 metal stresses, metallophore-based management of metals would likely contribute to the fitness  
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32 410 of both symbionts, as well as provide essential elements to maintain the performance of their  
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34 411 nitrogen-fixing symbiosis. Our survey paves the way for targeted investigations into  
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36 412 metallophore-mediated elemental acquisition and detoxification in *Frankia* and its host plants in  
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38 413 both natural, and anthropised environments.  
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3 415 **Conflicts of interest**

4  
5 416 There is nothing to declare.

6  
7 417

8  
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426 **Tables**

427 **Table 1:** CAS assay and MICP based determination of metallophore production in 14 *Frankia*  
 428 strains during stationary growth. The preliminary screening revealed the effect of the tested  
 429 growth media (using BAP or MIM) on the siderophore production. Using the CAS assay, the  
 430 relative amount of siderophores is indicated by (+++) strong, (++) moderate and (+) weak and  
 431 compared with Fe-isotope coded profiling (Fe-icp) as well as Cu-icp and Zn-icp. No  
 432 molybdophore was identified.

433

Strain	Host	CAS assay (BAP)	CAS assay (MIM)	Fe- icp (MIM)	Cu- icp (MIM)	Zn- icp (MIM)
<b>ACN10a</b>	<i>Alnus crispa</i>				1	
<b>ACN12a</b>	<i>Alnus crispa</i>				1	2
<b>ACN14a</b>	<i>Alnus crispa</i>		+	5	6	1
<b>CcI3</b> (Univ. Laval)	<i>Casuarina</i> <i>cunninghamiana</i>			1	4	
<b>CcI3</b> (Lab. Boyer)	<i>Casuarina</i> <i>cunninghamiana</i>	+	+	5	3	1
<b>CH37</b>	<i>Hippophae</i> <i>rhamnoides</i>	+	+++	19	28	1
<b>CPI1</b>	<i>Comptonia peregrina</i>				1	
<b>Cg70.4</b>	<i>Casuarina glauca</i>			1	2	
<b>Cg70.9</b>	<i>Casuarina glauca</i>			1	1	
<b>Cj1-82</b>	<i>Casuarina junghuniana</i>			4	1	
<b>Ea1-12</b>	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	+	++	5	1	
<b>DC12</b>	<i>Datisca cannabina</i>			2		
<b>BCU 110501</b>	<i>Discaria trinevis</i>		+++	8	1	1
<b>DSMZ 44251</b>	<i>Alnus rubra</i>			3	1	

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435

436 **Table 2:** Calculated total formulas of the  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -complexes and their ligands extracted from the  
 437 supernatant of *Frankia* strain CH37. High-resolution masses were determined after adding  $^{56}\text{Fe}$  to  
 438 the solid phase extracts.

Compound number	$^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ -Complex [m/z]*	Ligand [m/z]	Proposed total formula [M-2H + $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	Proposed total formula [M+H] <sup>+</sup>
1	817.2701	764.3572	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>47</sub> O <sub>12</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>50</sub> O <sub>12</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
2	835.2785	782.3679	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>49</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>52</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
3	853.2891	800.3783	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>51</sub> O <sub>14</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>54</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
4	831.2848	778.3729	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>49</sub> O <sub>12</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>52</sub> O <sub>12</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
5	849.2961	796.3835	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>51</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>54</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
6	863.3119	810.3997	[C <sub>35</sub> H <sub>53</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>35</sub> H <sub>56</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
7	803.2897	750.3784	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>49</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>52</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
8	915.3424	862.4301	[C <sub>39</sub> H <sub>57</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>39</sub> H <sub>60</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
9	958.3239	905.4109	[C <sub>38</sub> H <sub>54</sub> O <sub>14</sub> N <sub>12</sub> $^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>38</sub> H <sub>57</sub> O <sub>14</sub> N <sub>12</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>

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440

441 **Table 3:** Calculated total formulas of the  $^{63}\text{Cu}$  complexes and their ligands extracted from the  
 442 supernatant of *Frankia* strain CH37.

Compound number	$^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ -Complex [m/z]	Ligand [m/z]	Proposed total formula [M-H+ $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	Proposed total formula [M+H] <sup>+</sup>
10	619.1816	558.2680	[C <sub>26</sub> H <sub>34</sub> O <sub>7</sub> N <sub>7</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	Not found
11	681.2169	620.3033	[C <sub>28</sub> H <sub>40</sub> O <sub>9</sub> N <sub>7</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>28</sub> H <sub>42</sub> O <sub>9</sub> N <sub>7</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
12	605.1619	544.2483	[C <sub>24</sub> H <sub>36</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>3</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>24</sub> H <sub>38</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>3</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
13	857.2962	796.3834*	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>52</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>54</sub> O <sub>13</sub> N <sub>9</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
14	551.1046	489.1832	[C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>28</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>4</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>29</sub> O <sub>11</sub> N <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>
15	560.1687	499.2552	[C <sub>26</sub> H <sub>33</sub> O <sub>6</sub> N <sub>4</sub> $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ ] <sup>+</sup>	[C <sub>26</sub> H <sub>35</sub> O <sub>6</sub> N <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>

443 Note: \*This ligand formed stable complexes with both Fe and Cu in the growth medium under  
 444 the selected conditions.

445

446 **Table 4:** Fragmentation series for five siderophore candidates

Fragmentation series	Siderophore candidates				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Molecular ion</b>	<b>764.3566</b>	<b>782.3664</b>	<b>800.3543</b>	<b>778.3712</b>	<b>796.3808</b>
<b>1</b>	588.2780	606.2879	624.2745	602.2935	620.3019
<b>2</b>	474.1986	492.2086	510.1960	488.2144	506.2231
<b>3</b>	302.1137	320.1237	338.1147	316.1288	334.1388
<b>4</b>		219.0765			

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448

**Legends**

Fig. 1: **(A)** Workflow and analytical process of the screening for metallophores in the genus *Frankia*. **(B)** Representative mass spectrum of a siderophore obtained by ESI-Orbitrap-HRMS. Besides the molecular ions ( $m/z$  861 and  $m/z$  865), the doubly charged and sodium adduct of the Fe-complex are shown.

Fig. 2: Plot of  $m/z$  values of all detected metallophores over retention time. **(A)** Fe-complexes determined in *Frankia* spp. grown in BAP or MI medium. **(B)** Cu- and Zn complexes determined in *Frankia* spp. grown in MI medium.

Fig. 3: Characteristic isotopic signature of the ferric complexes for organic ligands of **(A, C)** type I and **(B, D)** type II. **(A)** Type I ligands recruit iron from Fe-EDTA. **(B)** Type II ligands do not complex iron under standard growth conditions in the presence of Fe-EDTA. Upon addition of  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  and  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  to the extracts, both **(C)** type I and **(D)** type II ligands form iron complexes showing the isotopologues in the ratio 1:1.

Fig. 4: The electrospray MS/MS mass spectrum (positive mode) for ligand **2** ( $782 m/z$ ). **(A)** A typical fragmentation series of the backbone is shown at the collision energy 25 eV. **(B)** The experiment at the collision energy 20 eV of  $m/z$  782 reveals the characteristic fragmentation of the phenyl-oxazoline-ring.

Fig. 5: Time lapse of the growth of *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 in MI medium. **(A)** Growth curves are based on total protein content and observed under standard conditions at low, high and toxic Cu concentrations. **(B)** The relative amounts of the Fe-complex **4** ( $831 m/z$ ) and **(C)** Cu-complex **13** ( $681 m/z$ ) are shown.

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**To the Editor of  
*Metallogenomics***

**Significance to Metallogenomics**

Jena, 29. November 2018

Dear Editor,

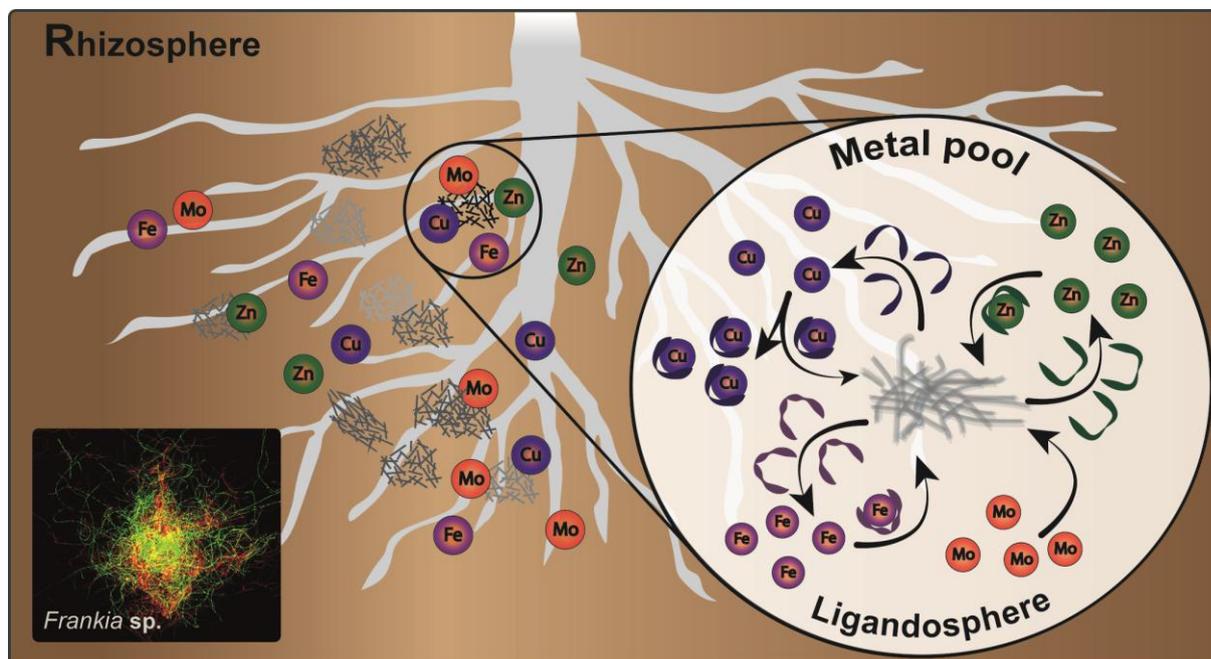
We trust that our manuscript fits very well to the scope of *Metallogenomics* and will meet the interest of the readership.

Metal homeostasis plays a significant role in bacteria-plant interactions in the rhizosphere. Bacteria can acquire trace metals through metallophores for metal-dependent processes like nitrogen fixation and can contribute to alleviating metal stress. To understand how bacterial metallophores contribute to metal management in a rhizosphere, it is necessary to determine the entirety of metal complexing ligands. In this study, we have explored the metallophore production by *Frankia* (Actinobacteria), a nitrogen-fixing soil bacterium, using metal isotope-coded profiling. Our study has strong implications for the understanding in the role of bacteria for the plant in trace metal acquisition and detoxification.

With best regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Wichard'.

## Table of Contents Entry



Metal isotope-coded profiling of organic ligands in *Frankia* revealed a high variability of metallophores for trace element acquisition and detoxification.



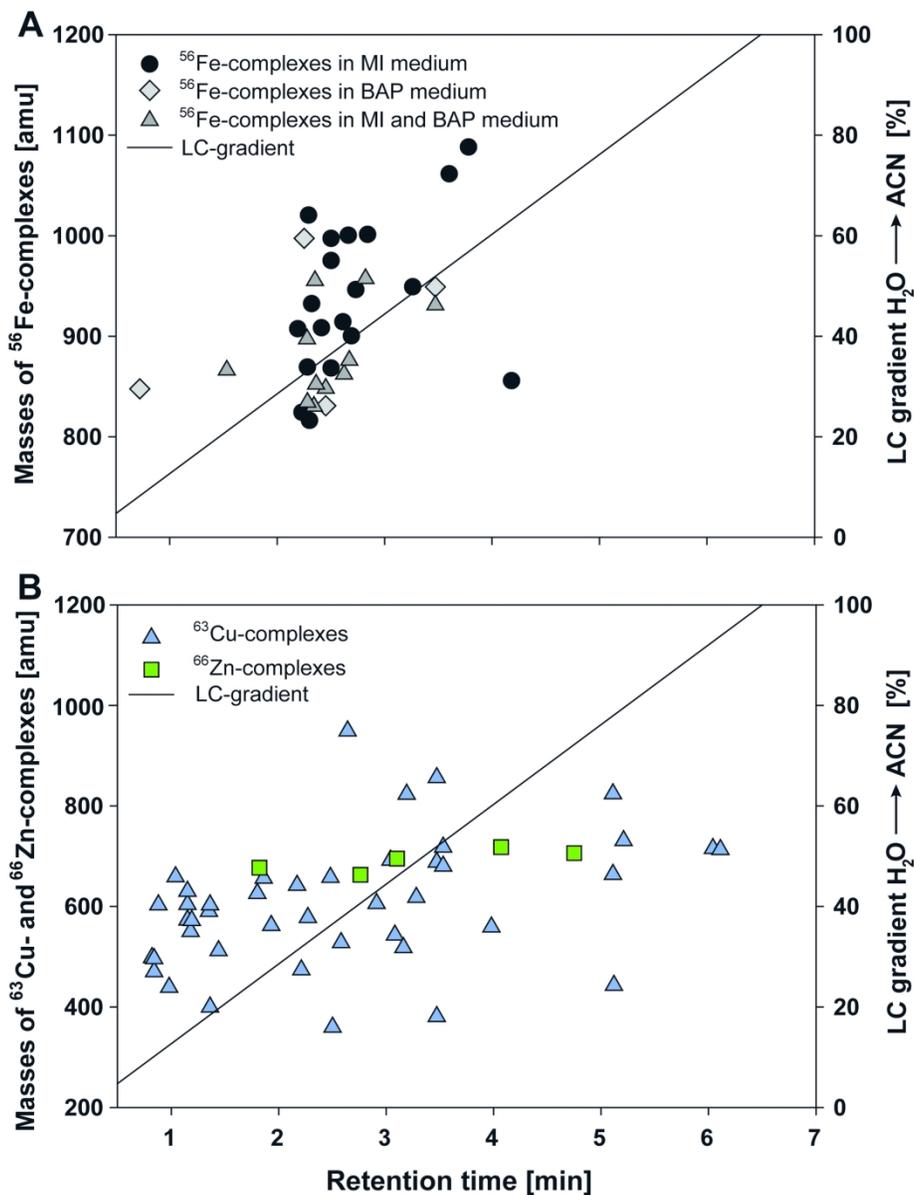


Fig. 2: Plot of  $m/z$  values of all detected metallophores over retention time. (A) Fe-complexes determined in *Frankia* spp. grown in BAP or MI medium. (B) Cu- and Zn complexes determined in *Frankia* spp. grown in MI medium.

163x213mm (300 x 300 DPI)

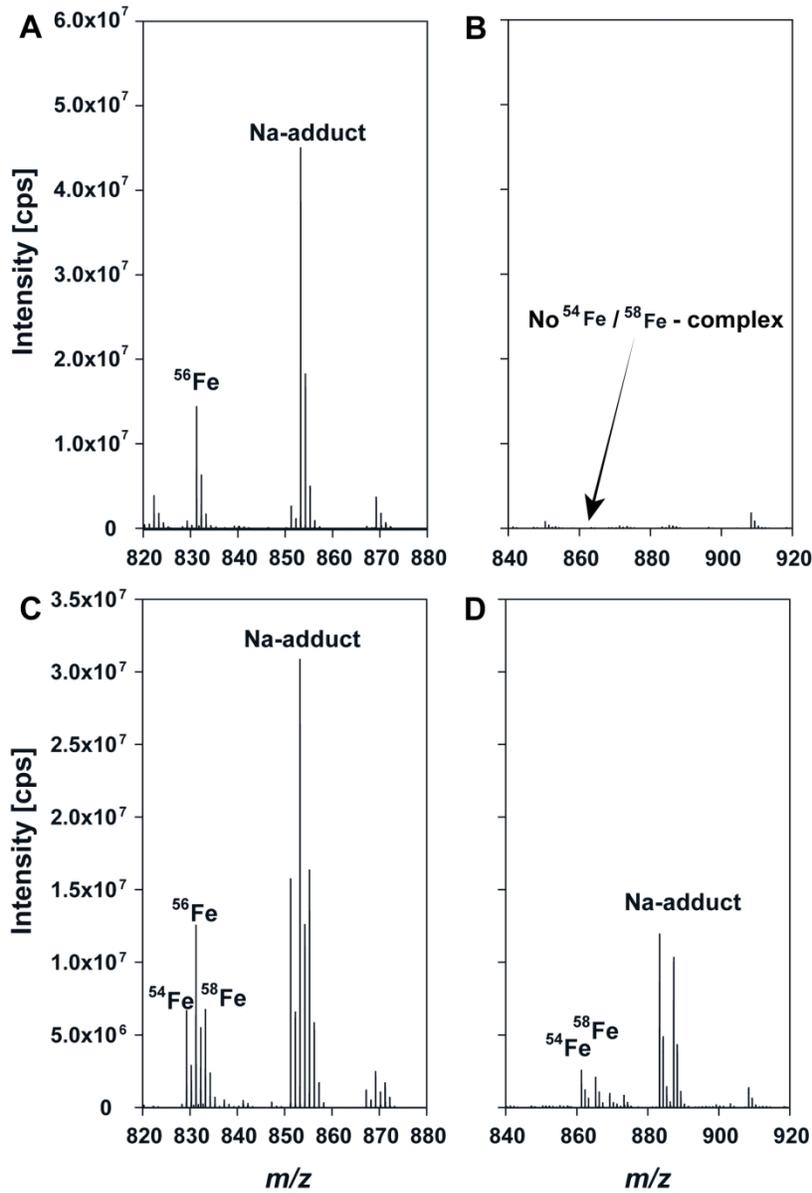


Fig. 3: Characteristic isotopic signature of the ferric complexes for organic ligands of (A, C) type I and (B,D) type II. (A) Type I ligands recruit iron from Fe-EDTA. (B) Type II ligands do not complex iron under standard growth conditions in the presence of Fe-EDTA. Upon addition of  $^{54}\text{Fe}$  and  $^{58}\text{Fe}$  to the extracts, both (C) type I and (D) type II ligands form iron complexes showing the isotopologues in the ratio 1:1.

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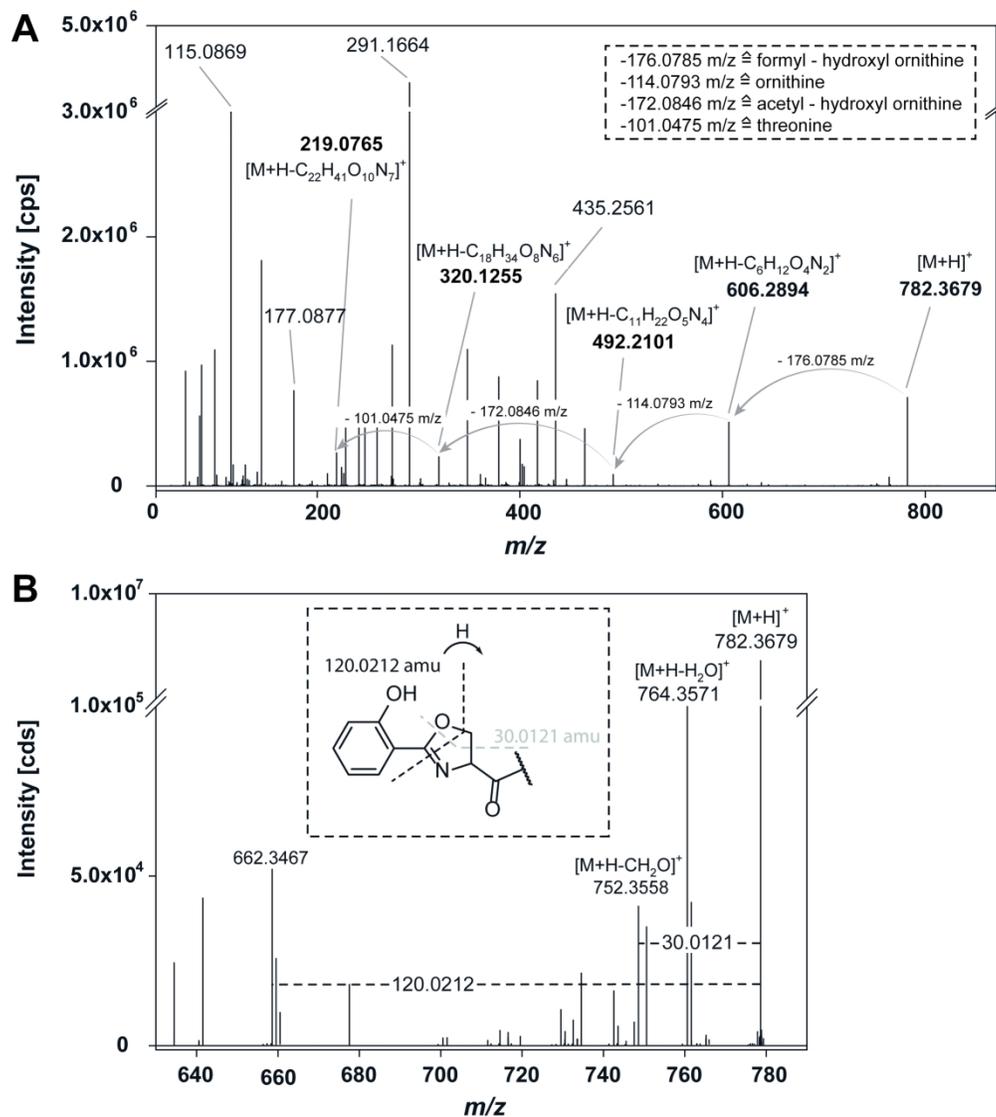


Fig. 4: The electrospray MS/MS mass spectrum (positive mode) for ligand 2 (782 m/z). (A) A typical fragmentation series of the backbone is shown at the collision energy 25 eV. (B) The experiment at the collision energy 20 eV of m/z 782 reveals the characteristic fragmentation of the phenyl-oxazoline-ring.

193x217mm (300 x 300 DPI)

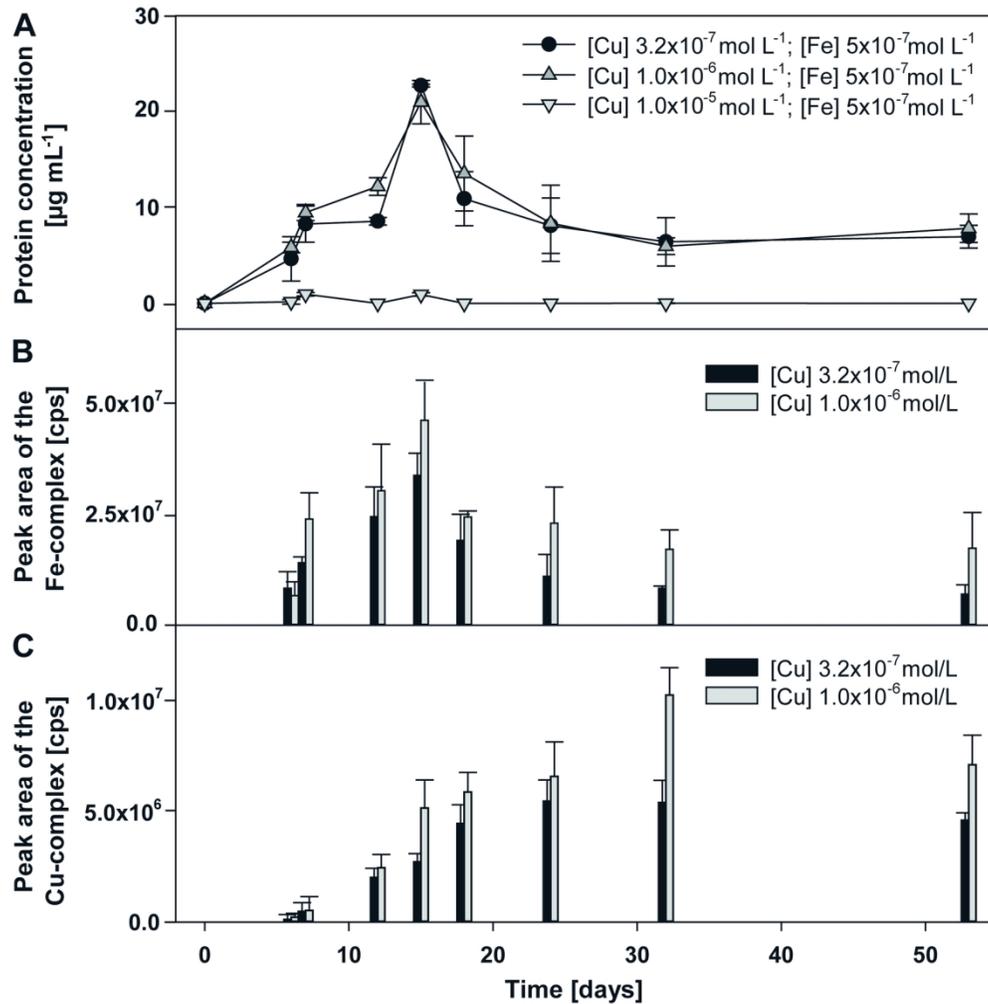


Fig. 5: Time lapse of the growth of *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 in MI medium. (A) Growth curves are based on total protein content and observed under standard conditions at low, high and toxic Cu concentrations. (B) The relative amounts of the Fe-complex 4 (831 m/z) and (C) Cu-complex 13 (681 m/z) are shown.

153x155mm (300 x 300 DPI)

## Supplementary Information for

### Metallophore profiling of the nitrogen-fixing genus *Frankia* spp. (Actinobacteria) towards the understanding of metal acquisition and detoxification in the rhizosphere

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#### Content

Figure S1: Change of the isotopic signature of metallophores upon addition of Fe, Cu or Zn.

Table S1: Exclusion criteria used for formula assignment.

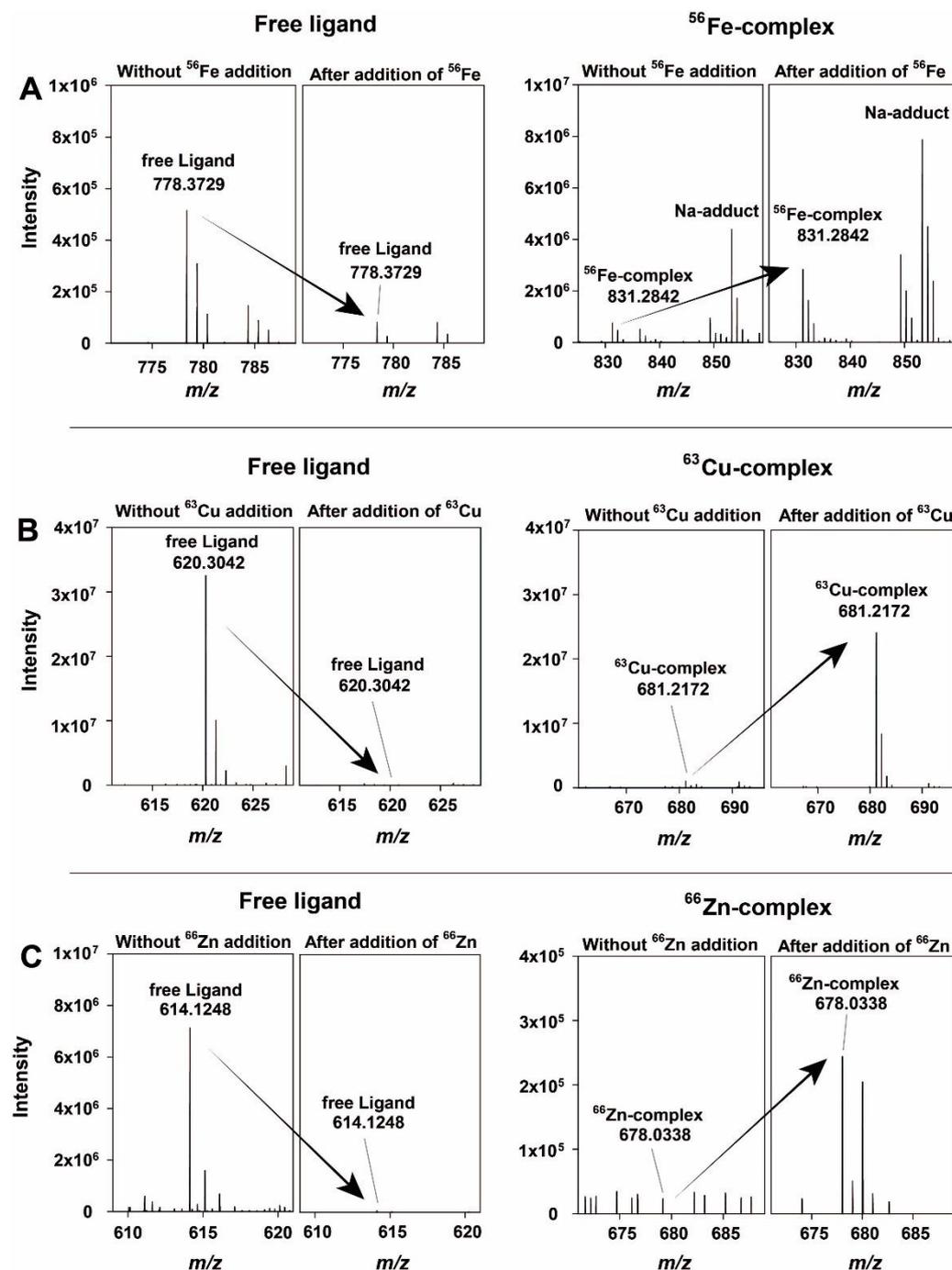
Table S2: Gradient for the metallophore separation using the UHPLC-HRMS system.

Table S3: Fe-complexes determined in the growth medium of *Frankia* strains.

Table S4: Cu-complexes determined in the growth medium of *Frankia* strains.

Table S5: Zn-complexes determined in the growth medium of *Frankia* strains.

**Figures S1:** Change of the isotopic signature of the metallophores upon addition of (A)  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ , (B)  $^{63}\text{Cu}$  or (C)  $^{66}\text{Zn}$ . The comparison of the mass spectra shows the decrease in the intensity of free ligand and an increase in the intensity of the respective complex upon addition of the metal. Arrows indicate the change in intensity of the molecular ion peak of the free ligand (down) and a metal complex (up) upon addition of the metal.



**Table S1:** Exclusion criteria used for formula assignment; example  $m/z = 782.3679$ 

[M+H] <sup>+</sup> ligand without metal; $m/z$ : 782.3679										
H	C	O	N	S	DBE	DBE - O	O/N	Calc. Mass	$\Delta m$ (ppm)	Comment
52	33	13	9	0	13	0	1.44	782.367912	0.0153	confirmed by fragmentation
62	48	1	0	4	18.5	17.5		782.3678	-0.1278	non-integer DBE
56	41	10	3	1	16	6	3.33	782.368094	0.248	possible
60	26	10	11	3	3	-7	0.91	782.368128	0.2914	low DBE number
62	25	4	14	5	2.5	-1.5	0.29	782.367652	-0.317	non-integer DBE
58	40	4	6	3	15.5	11.5	0.67	782.367618	-0.3604	non-integer DBE
58	33	2	12	4	11.5	9.5	0.17	782.368303	0.5151	non-integer DBE
64	34	7	5	4	6	-1	1.4	782.36831	0.524	too much S
60	33	12	5	2	7	-5	2.4	782.367443	-0.5841	possible
54	32	7	12	2	12.5	5.5	0.58	782.367436	-0.5931	non-integer DBE
56	25	15	11	1	4	-11	1.36	782.367261	-0.8168	DBE - O < -10
52	26	11	15	1	9	-2	0.73	782.368597	0.8909	possible
66	40	3	2	5	9.5	6.5	1.5	782.367149	-0.9599	non-integer DBE
56	34	8	9	2	12	4	0.89	782.368779	1.1235	possible
62	35	13	2	2	6.5	-6.5	6.5	782.368786	1.1325	non-integer DBE
68	33	11	1	4	1	-10	11	782.366974	-1.1836	low DBE number
62	32	6	8	4	6.5	0.5	0.75	782.366967	-1.1925	non-integer DBE
56	31	1	15	4	12	11	0.07	782.36696	-1.2015	DBE - O > +10
58	47	6	0	2	19.5	13.5		782.366933	-1.236	non-integer DBE
58	24	9	14	3	3.5	-5.5	0.64	782.366785	-1.4252	non-integer DBE
54	39	9	6	1	16.5	7.5	1.5	782.366751	-1.4686	non-integer DBE
50	31	12	12	0	13.5	1.5	1	782.366569	-1.7012	non-integer DBE
48	34	9	13	0	18	9	0.69	782.369248	1.723	possible
54	35	14	6	0	12.5	-1.5	2.33	782.369255	1.7319	non-integer DBE
60	46	0	3	4	19	19	0*	782.366457	-1.8444	DBE - O > +10
62	39	8	2	3	10.5	2.5	4	782.366282	-2.0681 <sup>#</sup>	non-integer DBE
56	38	3	9	3	16	13	0.33	782.366275	-2.077 <sup>#</sup>	DBE - O > +10
58	31	11	8	2	7.5	-3.5	1.38	782.3661	-2.3007 <sup>#</sup>	non-integer DBE
52	30	6	15	2	13	7	0.4*	782.366093	-2.3097 <sup>#</sup>	too low O/N
54	46	11	0	0	20.5	9.5		782.366066	-2.3442 <sup>#</sup>	non-integer DBE
54	23	14	14	1	4.5	-9.5	1	782.365918	-2.5333 <sup>#</sup>	non-integer DBE
64	38	2	5	5	10	8	0.4*	782.365806	-2.6765 <sup>#</sup>	too low O/N

\*O/N ratio was too low

$\Delta m$ , mass error (ppm) =  $[(m/z \text{ (experimental mass)} - \text{calc mass})/\text{calc mass}] \times 1,000,000$

<sup>#</sup>  $|\Delta m| > 2 \text{ ppm}$

**Table S2:** Gradient for the metallophore separation using the UHPLC-HRMS system. Eluent A: 1 mmol L<sup>-1</sup> ammonium acetate in water and 2% (v/v) acetonitrile, eluent B: 1 mmol L<sup>-1</sup> ammonium acetate in acetonitrile and 10% (v/v) water.

<b>Time [min]</b>	<b>Eluent A</b>	<b>Eluent B</b>
	<b>[%]</b>	<b>[%]</b>
<b>0</b>	100	0
<b>0.20</b>	100	0
<b>8.00</b>	0	100
<b>9.00</b>	0	100
<b>9.10</b>	100	0
<b>10.0</b>	100	0

**Table S3:** Fe-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM or BAP) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The masses of the uncharged  $^{56}\text{Fe}$ -complex are listed. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated (<sup>1</sup>: MS-adducts in positive mode; <sup>2</sup>: MS - adducts in the negative mode were also found).

Mass of $^{56}\text{Fe}$ complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - polarity mode	Medium
816.2621 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.3	+/-	MIM
802.2817 <sup>1</sup>	CH37, Ea1-12	2.23	+	MIM
830.2758 <sup>1,2</sup>	CH37, Cj1-82, BCU 110501, Arl3	2.34	+/-	MIM/BAP
830.8643 <sup>1</sup>	Ea1-12	2.45	+	BAP
834.2706 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.28	+/-	MIM
847.6644	CH37	0.72	-	BAP
848.2881 <sup>1,2</sup>	CH37, Ea1-12	2.49	+/-	MIM/BAP
852.2811 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.36	+/-	MIM/BAP
855.7049	Cj1-82	4.18	-	MIM
862.3039 <sup>1</sup>	CH37, Cj1-82, Ea1-12, DC12, BCU 110501	2.62	+/-	MIM/BAP
866.3005	CH37	1.53	-	MIM/BAP
868.2896 <sup>1</sup>	BCU 110501	2.5	+	MIM
869.2844	CH37	2.28	+	MIM
876.0527	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.67	+	MIM/BAP
889.3217	BCU 110510	2.17	+	MIM
897.3525 <sup>1</sup>	ACN14a, Cg70.4, Cg70.9, Cj1-82, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), BCU 110501, Arl3	2.276	+/-	MIM/BAP
900.3190 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.69	+	MIM
907.3339	BCU 110501	2.19	-	MIM
908.3227	CH37	2.41	+	MIM
914.3357 <sup>1,2</sup>	CH37	2.61	+/-	MIM
931.1315 <sup>1</sup>	BCU 110501	3.47	+	MIM/ BAP
932.3462 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.32	+/-	MIM
946.3645 <sup>1</sup>	CH37	2.73	+	MIM
949.1409 <sup>1</sup>	BCU 110501	3.47	+	BAP
949.1431 <sup>1</sup>	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	3.26	+	MIM
955.3100	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.35	+	MIM/BAP
957.3159 <sup>1,2</sup>	CH37, ACN14a, Ea1-12, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	2.82	+/-	MIM/BAP
975.3268	ACN14a	2.5	-	MIM
997.3093	ACN14a	2.5	-	MIM
997.3495 <sup>1</sup>	Arl3	2.25	+	BAP
1000.3334	CH37	2.66	-	MIM
1001.2795	ACN14a	2.84	+	MIM
1020.3536	CH37	2.29	-	MIM
1061.4418	CH37	3.6	+	MIM
1088.2085	BCU 110501	3.78	+	MIM

**Table S4:** Cu-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated.

Mass of $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ - complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - polarity mode
359.9941	CH37	2.5	+
381.0737	CH37	3.47	+
400.0545	CH37, ACN14a	1.36	+
439.0904	CH37	0.98	+
443.0677	CH37	5.12	+
470.1214	CH37	0.84	+
474.0236	ACN14a	2.21	+/-
496.1117	CH37	0.84	+
498.1278	CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	0.82	+
512.1459	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.44	+
518.0977	CH37	3.16	+
528.1746	CH37	2.58	+
543.0931	CH37	3.08	+
550.0962	ACN10a, ACN12a, ACN14a, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CH37, Cg70.4	1.18	+
559.1607	CH37	3.98	+/-
562.1913	CcI3 (Univ. Laval), CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.93	+/-
572.0781	DSMZ 44251	1.19	+
573.1224	CH37	1.15	+
578.0930	ACN14a	2.27	+/-
590.0657	CJ1-82, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.35	+
603.1154	CH37	1.36	+
603.1710	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	0.88	+
604.1539	CH37	1.15	+/-
606.1226	CH37	2.91	+
618.1736	CH37, DC12	3.28	+/-
626.1258	Cg70.9, CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	1.8	+
630.1442	CH37	1.15	+
642.0742	CH37	2.17	+/-
656.1363	Ea1-12	1.86	+
658.0673	CH37	2.48	+
659.0783	CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	1.04	+
663.9572	CH37	5.11	+/-
680.20891	CH37	3.53	+
688.1754	CH37	3.47	+/-
692.1723	ACN14a	3.04	+/-
713.1699	Cg70.4	6.11	+
715.1819	CcI3 (Univ. Laval), CH37, BCU 110501	6.04	+
718.1645	CH37	3.53	+
731.1791	CPI1	5.21	+/-
823.2669	CH37	3.19	+
824.2145	CH37	5.11	+/-
856.2882	CH37	3.47	+
949.3090	ACN14a	2.64	+/-

**Table S5:** Zn-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated.

Mass of $^{66}\text{Zn}^{2+}$ - complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - Polarity
<b>663.146</b>	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.76	+
<b>677.0263</b>	BCU 110501	1.82	+
<b>695.1709</b>	ACN14a	3.1	+/-
<b>706.3383</b>	ACN12a	4.75	+
<b>718.1749</b>	ACN12a, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CH37	4.07	+/-

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