

European Green Belt Scientific Committee – Code of Conduct –

1. Purpose

The European Green Belt Scientific Committee (Scientific Committee) safeguards research integrity, supports networking and joint research across the European Green Belt, and provides independent scientific consultations for European Green Belt initiatives. It works in service of European Green Belt Association's mission and priorities.

2. Scope and applicability

This Code applies to all Scientific Committee members and contributors (including European Green Belt Association Members, affiliates, contractors, students, and funding recipients) whenever they:

- design, conduct, analyse, publish, archive, or communicate European Green Belt-related research,
- represent or reference European Green Belt Association or/and European Green Belt in scholarly outputs,
- use European Green Belt Association resources (e.g., research mini-grants, webpage, mailing list).

3. Core principles

All members of the Scientific Committee are expected to follow these guiding principles, which define the professional and ethical standards for their work and collaboration:

- **Scientific integrity** means conducting all research with accuracy, rigor, and reproducibility, while avoiding any form of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.
- **Independence and impartiality** require that members openly declare any interests, actively manage conflicts of interest, and step aside from decisions or activities when impartiality cannot be maintained.
- **Transparency** involves clearly disclosing research methods, limitations of data, sources of funding, and the European Green Belt affiliation in all scientific outputs concerning research on or within the European Green Belt area.
- **Inclusivity and collaboration** call for making full use of the European Green Belt network's collective expertise and fostering equitable partnerships across countries, cultures, genders and scientific disciplines.
- **Open science and stewardship** mean sharing research data, code, and results whenever it is lawful and ethical to do so and using the approved European Green Belt repositories for long-term access.
- **Legal and ethical compliance** requires following all relevant laws, obtaining necessary permits and licenses, and meeting recognised standards for institutional review and animal welfare.

- **Safety and respect** mean giving research priority to nature conservation and conducting all scientific activities in a way that safeguards the European Green Belt’s natural values, respects its habitats and species, and ensures a safe, inclusive, and harassment-free environment for all collaborators.

4. Membership and composition

4.1. Members of the Scientific Committee are primarily scientists from within the European Green Belt network. External experts may be invited as needed.

4.2. Appointment of Members:

- Members are nominated by European Green Belt Association Members, affiliates, or the Board, and appointed by the European Green Belt Association Board.
- Membership is open-ended (no fixed term) and continues until resignation or removal.
- The Board ensures diversity of expertise, geography, and gender balance when appointing members.

4.3. Removal of Members:

- A member may be removed at any time by the Board in cases of: repeated non-participation, breach of this Code, conflict of interest violations, or other serious misconduct.
- A member may be removed at any time by the Board, at the request of the Scientific Committee Chairperson (Chairperson), in cases of repeated non-participation, breach of this Code, conflict of interest violations, or other serious misconduct.
- Resignation must be submitted in writing to the Chairperson, who forwards it to the European Green Belt Association Board.

4.4. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:

- Both are elected by Scientific Committee Members from among themselves for a 5-year term.
- The Chairperson is responsible for coordinating the work of the Scientific Committee, representing it externally, and liaising with the European Green Belt Association Board.
- The Vice-Chairperson supports the Chairperson, acts as Chairperson in their absence, and co-leads strategic planning.
- Together, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson serve as the Secretariat of the Scientific Committee, ensuring meeting agendas, minutes, and documentation are prepared, maintained, and shared appropriately.
- In case of resignation or removal of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, the Scientific Committee elects a replacement within 30 days.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Scientific Committee:

- provides scientific advice to European Green Belt Association initiatives and projects, curates internal expertise, and supports networking (mailing list, joint initiatives),
- helps scope research priorities and integrates internal efforts with larger European Green Belt projects,

- promotes and stimulates scientific activities within the European Green Belt network and focused specifically on European Green Belt-related topics,
- oversees the quality and ethics of outputs linked to European Green Belt Association and European Green Belt branding,
- manages the on-line repository of scientific publications dedicated to the EGB or carried out within its area.

6. Meetings and decision-making

- 6.1. Meetings of the Scientific Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson whenever necessary to fulfil the Scientific Committee’s duties, and may be held virtually, in person, or in a hybrid format.
- 6.2. Extraordinary meetings may be convened at the request of at least one-third of the Members.
- 6.3. A meeting is considered valid if at least 50% of the members are present.
- 6.4. Decisions should be reached by consensus whenever possible. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of those present. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall hold a casting vote.
- 6.5. Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared, recorded, and archived in the Scientific Committee workspace.
- 6.6. A public summary of each meeting may be published on the European Green Belt research subpage.

7. Affiliation and acknowledgements

To ensure consistent visibility and recognition across the European Green Belt network, all its Members conducting scientific research dedicated to, or covering the area of, the European Green Belt should follow the following rules when publishing their research results:

- use the official European Green Belt affiliation line and the standard wording provided by the Scientific Committee,
- include an *Acknowledgements* section when relevant (e.g., when the work benefited from European Green Belt networking, data, or advice),
- include a *Funding Statement* when the work has received financial support from the European Green Belt (e.g., through a research mini-grant),
- inform the Scientific Committee at the start of the research project or at the scientific manuscript drafting stage if the European Green Belt affiliation, branding, or repository listing will be used.

8. Communications and representation

- 8.1. Members may discuss their own research but must not speak on behalf of European Green Belt Association unless expressly authorized the association’s Board.
- 8.2. The Scientific Committee curates a mailing list and web subpage of the European Green Belt Association webpage to share opportunities, ongoing research, and outputs.



9. Amendments

This Code of Conduct has been adopted by resolution of the European Green Belt Association Board, and any amendments require a decision of the European Green Belt Association Board.