

European Green Belt Association

Programme of Work 2025-2026

October 2024



Bridging boundaries to protect Europe's longest green network

During the Cold War the border along the former Iron Curtain created a unique continuity of natural habitats which span the length of the European continent. Now, it is our shared task as a European community to secure peace and to protect Europe's longest green network – so that nature and humankind can grow together.

The European Green Belt Initiative is committed to this mission. As a network of partnerships, we bridge ecological, cultural and geographical borders along the former Iron Curtain to ensure a safe and sustainable future for the European Green Belt (EGB). The European Green Belt Initiative works as a transboundary collaborative project which includes nearly 150 governmental and non-governmental organizations, enterprises and scientific institutions. All share the common goal to conserve biodiversity, improve connectivity, and support sustainable development along the former Iron Curtain. We envision a bright, unified future where all people can explore the unique history, culture and natural wonder of the European Green Belt.

Since 2014, the European Green Belt Association e.V. (EGBA) is a governance structure for the European Green Belt Initiative. Today, 35 member organisations (GOs and NGOs) are part of the EGBA. The EGBA focuses on the pan-European level with coordinating activities, promoting the EGB and facilitating knowledge exchange and communication.

The **mission** of the European Green Belt Association e.V. is to ensure that the European Green Belt is efficiently protected and that its sustainable development is promoted by facilitating an on-going, co-ordinated transboundary co-operation at all levels and across all sectors of society.

The **vision** of the European Green Belt Association e.V. may be described as follows:

The European Green Belt, our shared natural heritage along the line of the former Iron Curtain, is to be conserved and restored to function as an ecological network connecting high-value natural and cultural landscapes, whilst respecting the economic, social and cultural needs of local communities.

This is the fifth Programme of Work (POW) of the EGBA. It covers the period of 2025 to 2026 and comprises the four fields of actions:

- A. Capacity building and knowledge exchange**
- B. Lobbying on European and national level**
- C. Communication and awareness raising**
- D. Cooperation**

Field of action A: CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

OBJECTIVE 1: Knowledge exchange between members of the European Green Belt Initiative continues and is further promoted.

- 1.1 Implement Pan-European Green Belt Conference as face-to-face conference
- 1.2 Implement one Regional Conference in the Fennoscandian region
- 1.3 Implement one Regional Conference in the Baltic region
- 1.4 Implement one Regional Conference in the Central European region
- 1.5 Implement one Regional Conference in the Balkan region

OBJECTIVE 2: The need for research on the EGB is sufficiently elaborated and a cooperation with scientific experts/research institutions has been initiated

- 2.1 Maximize the internal scientific potential within the EGBA network
- 2.2 Promote research and publications among EGBA members and affiliates
- 2.3 Integrate internal research with international projects on EGB (e.g., ReCo Project)
- 2.4 Launch a research Mini-grant Program
- 2.5 Develop a system for archiving and promoting research outputs
- 2.6 Cooperation with EGB Scientific Committee

Field of action B: LOBBYING ON EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVEL

OBJECTIVE 3: The EGB and its outstanding values are actively promoted on European level by addressing relevant stakeholders.

- 3.1 Implement one half-day event in Brussels to mainstream the EGB and BESTbelt results

OBJECTIVE 4: The EGB and its outstanding values are actively promoted on national level by addressing relevant stakeholders.

- 4.1 Increase in number of members per country
- 4.2 Nominate one NFP (GO) for each country
- 4.3 Explore opportunities for a Joint Declaration of Intent or a similar approach

Field of action C: COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

OBJECTIVE 5: The members of the European Green Belt Initiative participate in awareness raising activities and share information on achievements and events.

- 5.1 Technical maintenance of the EGB website
- 5.2 Regular update of content on the EGB website
- 5.3 Publish a newsletter

OBJECTIVE 6: The awareness of the European Green Belt is strengthened among the interested public and potential supporters (e.g. municipalities, donors, cooperation partners).

- 6.1 Actively and regularly use the EGB logo in communication activities and PR material wherever possible
- 6.2 Implement joint communication activities together with journalist/photographer
- 6.3 Form a task force to promote joint communication activities
- 6.4 Collect data on achievements by partners on the ground
- 6.5 Award Model municipalities of the EGB
- 6.6 Support implementation EGB Days events in EGB regions
- 6.7 Develop options to visualise the European Green Belt in the field

Field of Action D: COOPERATION

OBJECTIVE 7: Joint projects on pan-European level are stimulated

- 7.1 Stimulate project initiatives on ecological connectivity on pan-European level
- 7.2 Promote the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the EGB
- 7.3 Explore options for securing and further developing approaches of BESTbelt
- 7.4 Develop a concept for the Fennoscandian Green Belt
- 7.5 Explore opportunities for the development of a European Green Belt Hiking Trail



OBJECTIVE 8: The network of the European Green Belt is expanded

8.1. Actively address municipalities and protected area administrations long the EGB

8.2 Strengthen cooperation with other (European) organisations from different sectors