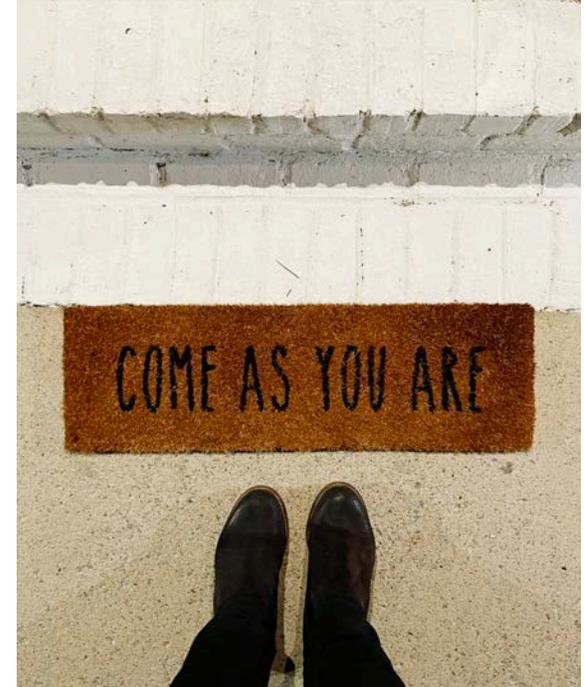




ERGA CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The European Reference Genome Atlas' (ERGA) Code of Conduct outlines our mission and our values. The code is a practical tool to be used by all ERGA members to ensure we measure ourselves in accordance with the highest possible standards of ethical genomics research. ERGA is dedicated to fostering an equitable, inclusive and harassment free research environment for all of its members regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, citizenship, nationality, ethnic or social origin, pregnancy, familial status, veteran status, genetic information, religion or belief (or lack thereof), membership of a national minority, property, age, education, socio-economic status, technical choices, and experience level or any other protected category. Respect for all members is foundational to our success and by upholding high standards we build a research community that attracts the best talent and delivers the most impactful research. We encourage all of our members to read the ERGA Code of Conduct, to take it seriously and to uphold a personal responsibility to incorporate ERGA's values into all ERGA related work.



Who does this apply to?



Our members drive the ERGA mission, which is why we are dedicated to treating all of our members with dignity and respect.

ERGA VALUES

Community

ERGA values the input, skillset and diversity of opinions of each of its members.

Our mission is to build an inclusive pan-European genomics community that ensures our members feel comfortable in both providing and receiving feedback as we seek to achieve the highest quality reference genome assemblies to facilitate the conservation of European biodiversity.

Excellence

ERGA acts with integrity to enable scientific excellence of all its projects. Research is conducted by a pan-European community of scientific experts using the latest sample processing, sequencing technologies, and genome assembly tools to achieve the assembly gold standards developed and accepted by the broader genomics research community.

Collaboration

ERGA values diversity of thought and encourages extensive internal and external collaboration in its pursuit of achieving the most inclusive and impactful genomic research. ERGA strives for open data, where appropriate, so that the outcomes of this project can be accessed by all, for all. ERGA is also committed to providing equitable infrastructure and training opportunities to encourage the use and interpretation of the data by members.

Societal needs & Governance

ERGA value ensuring that all projects are conducted both ethically and following the appropriate legislation. To this end, only projects that have passed ERGA project feasibility checks are considered.

The mission of ERGA is to promote the establishment of high quality reference genomes for the entire European eukaryote biodiversity

EXPECTATIONS OF ERGA MEMBERS

Be an Ambassador

Each ERGA member is an active ambassador for the core values, culture and vision of ERGA. As ERGA ambassadors, members are expected to uphold the reputation of ERGA when conducting ERGA associated activities. Members are expected to be respectful of the diverse cultures within ERGA and facilitate in the creation of a safe environment where all members can work and collaborate effectively to achieve the mission of ERGA.

Be Honest

ERGA members should not improperly use their ERGA membership for commercial or personal gain nor should members improperly claim a title or position in which they are not entitled. Members shall not enter into any contract or pledge the credit of an ERGA associated project or represent or hold out that s/he has the power to do so without specific written instructions from the ERGA Chair.

Be a Team Player

Members should not improperly disclose any prejudicial information pertaining to a ERGA associated organization/ institution, ERGA, or any fellow ERGA member. Members shall withhold financial propriety in all their ERGA associated dealings with employers, organisations and institutions.

ERGA council members are key players to the success of the mission of ERGA - they present the voice on behalf of their country's ERGA members at the ERGA pan-European level.

EXPECTATIONS OF ERGA COUNCIL MEMBERS

Be Active

ERGA council members are expected to act as a point of contact for their representative country during all ERGA associated events and activities. Council members are responsible for voicing concerns on behalf of all ERGA members within their country. To this end, council members are accountable for being an active member within their national ERGA community but also an active participant in all ERGA council meetings. Council members have the opportunity to provide a voice for their country's ERGA members at council meetings and so active ERGA members who are committed are encouraged to step into an ERGA council member role as well as become more active on a committee level.

Be Responsible

Due to the level of responsibility and power held by ERGA council members, it is important that this is not misused for any act of intentional malice including; providing misleading or biased information during council meetings or to the ERGA Chair; using position of power inappropriately to belittle other ERGA members; unethical conduct; misconduct of any form including bullying, harassment or discrimination; to promote or dismiss ERGA members; to discourage participation of any potential or current ERGA members; to maliciously remove ERGA members from meetings, emails or any other ERGA associated events.

Be Representative

As national focal points, ERGA council representatives are expected to ensure that the voices of all ERGA members in their corresponding country are heard, equally, and that all input is valued. Council members are expected to voice the opinions of the consensus of all member inputs during council meetings and to not misstate, omit or provide misleading information. Moreover, all personal opinions should be avoided unless specifically requested by the ERGA Chair. Council members should also become aware of any element of unconscious bias during ERGA council meeting discussions.

ERGA values are at the core of our expectations for our members, leadership, council members and collaborators. Each value encourages a sense of belonging and fosters a harassment and discrimination free ERGA community .

ERGA BEHAVIOUR

Be Accountable

ERGA members are accountable for their own behavior, actions, and results. All ERGA related research is to be conducted in a clear, honest and transparent manner and should align with adopted ERGA protocols and policies. Members are accountable for creating a safe environment that is inclusive for all other members.

Be an Upstander

ERGA members are encouraged to politely, respectfully and professionally vocalise research related feedback, insights or suggestions to other members as well as to be accepting of suggestions from others. However, members should be aware of the difference between intent and impact. Members are also encouraged to speak up if they believe the law, the ERGA code or ERGA policies are being/about to be violated – be an upstander not a bystander!

Be Inclusive

Each member is expected to actively promote an inclusive and welcoming environment for other members regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disabilities, neurodiversity, physical appearance, ethnicity, nationality, race, age, religion, career stage or any other protected category. This includes both blatant and microaggressions.

Be Collaborative

ERGA members are expected to work in a collaborative fashion, appreciating the diversity of skill sets for the generation of outputs that follow the ERGA mission and values.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Harassment & Discrimination

Every member has the right to participate in all ERGA associated activities free from harassment, discrimination. Harassment in relation to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, citizenship, nationality, ethnic or social origin, pregnancy, familial status, veteran status, genetic information, religion or belief (or lack thereof), membership of a national minority, property, age, education, socio-economic status, technical choices, and experience level or any other protected category is not tolerated by ERGA. Harassing behaviors include, but are not limited to, inappropriate or offensive verbal language, inappropriate or offensive physical contact, sexual imagery or language, stalking, deliberate intimidation, unwanted sexual attention, and sustained disruption of talks or presentations. Both blatant and microaggressions should be avoided.

Condescending Actions

Belittling, derogatory, or condescending actions or treating other members as incompetent does not align with ERGA's values or mission and will not be tolerated.

Bullying

Bullying is not accepted within the ERGA community, this includes but is not limited to threatening, frightening, humiliating, or intimidating other members with abusive words or actions, both in person or online.

To uphold the reputation of ERGA it is important that all ERGA data and research outcomes are communicated both ethically and respectfully and stored in accordance to data protection regulations.

COMMUNICATION

Presentations

Due to the international nature of ERGA, virtual meetings are both expected and encouraged. However, members are expected to acquire permission from all meeting participants prior to recording. ERGA project PIs, in agreement with the ERGA executive board leadership, have the right to first presentation of the data and their analysis, including journal publications, pre-prints, public conference talks, and press releases. Exceptions can be made in agreement with the PIs and the ERGA executive board leadership.

Digital Sequence Data

All ERGA data is to be made open access upon generation, where feasible and appropriate (See data sharing policy). All ERGA sequencing data will be embargoed for publication by anyone without prior consent for up to but not exceeding five years from the date of final genome assembly release. ERGA data can be used for single gene analysis or comparison and/or mitochondrial genome by all members. However, the usage of larger datasets must be agreed with the PI and ERGA executive board.

Citizen Science & Personal Data

Members should ensure that all ERGA data/information related to ERGA work activities and members is stored in compliance with the data protection principles and notification requirements set out in the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) 2018, or equivalent legislation for the country or jurisdiction in which each member is undertaking ERGA duties. For more information see ERGA Data sharing and Publication policy.



If you have any questions - or feel like any of your fellow ERGA members are falling short of our standards and their commitment to upholding them, we want to hear from you. For the safety of all ERGA members, we need to hear from you. This code is taken seriously by our consortium and if breached we will respond accordingly.

Our member can raise concerns at multiple levels. If your concern is legal in nature you can raise your concern through a local government agency. If a concern pertains to a fellow member within the same institution, please contact your institution's Legal Department. Intra-country concerns can be raised to member's National ERGA Representatives. If a member has an inter-country concern, feels uncomfortable raising an intra-country concern, or indeed fails to get a response, ERGA members can contact ergaELSI@erga-biodiversity.eu. All concerns will be handled confidentially by an external, independent and diverse panel. ERGA prohibits any retaliation against members who have submitted a concern. If any member thinks that you have been retaliated against please contact our ELSI Team on ergaELSI@erga-biodiversity.eu.

This “Code of Conduct” defines in a clear and transparent manner the expectations ERGA has of its members, council representatives and leadership regarding harassment and discrimination. This code was adopted by ERGA to provide clarity to all members that harassment of any kind is not acceptable, will not be tolerated, and will be acted upon. This code refers to all ERGA associate activities, whether they be in person or online.