

Auroville Green Belt Services (GBS)

Official Work Report: **January – April 2025**

Date of Report: **May 2025**

1. Introduction

The Auroville Green Belt Services (GBS) has been established to support and implement the ecological vision of the Auroville Master Plan. Its core mandate includes ecological restoration, environmental protection, and the promotion of sustainable land-use practices within the Green Belt area.

This report presents the key activities carried out by GBS between January and April 2025, alongside organizational developments and the challenges faced during this period.

2. Official Recognition and Organizational Structure

On 25 January 2025, GBS was formally recognized as a unit under the Auroville administrative framework. This milestone has strengthened our capacity to coordinate and implement ecological programs.

- To ensure efficiency and decentralization, the following steps were taken:
- Appointment of three administrators and three field coordinators.
- Division of the Green Belt into four ecological zones.
- Assignment of one field coordinator to each zone for close monitoring, reporting, and coordination with other Auroville working groups.
- This structure enables stronger accountability and systematic field operations across the Green Belt.

3. Activities Undertaken

3.1 Invasive Species Removal

In February 2025, GBS initiated a focused campaign to remove invasive species, particularly *Prosopis juliflora*, *Lantana camara*, and *Chromolaena odorata*. Eight trained ecological workers were deployed in priority restoration zones in the northern and eastern Green Belt. Removal was carried out through manual uprooting and

controlled clearing, with ecological monitoring in place to assess recovery. This effort is a critical step toward restoring native biodiversity and preparing land for future reforestation.

3.2 Enforcement of Tree-Cutting Ban

GBS has continued to uphold the ban on tree cutting and commercial sale of timber and firewood in the Green Belt. Regular inspections, along with coordination with local stewards, have helped ensure compliance and protect ecological assets from exploitation.

3.3 Tree Survey in Coordination with ATDC

At the request of the Auroville Town Development Council (ATDC), GBS carried out a tree survey along the Crown Road development corridor. The work included botanical identification, geo-tagging, and ecological value assessment, leading to recommendations for preservation. This collaboration has ensured that urban development integrates ecological considerations.

3.4 Log Management at Woodstock Yard

Under Foundation directives, GBS assisted with comprehensive log sorting and management at Woodstock Yard, in coordination with the Land Service (Warehouse) team. Logs were sorted by species, quality, and dimensions, with inventories recorded for responsible community use. This process has improved transparency and reduced risks of misuse.

3.5 Restoration of David's Nursery

Following a period of limited activity after the passing of its long-time steward, David's Nursery is being restored under the guidance of the Green Circle team. Infrastructure and irrigation systems are being repaired, and propagation of indigenous plant species has resumed. The nursery is expected to become a vital resource for reforestation and rehabilitation efforts.

3.6 Indigenous Seed Collection and Propagation

Despite water shortages, GBS has accelerated seed collection and storage of indigenous species. This work supports biodiversity conservation, enhances resilience of future restoration programs, and provides a foundation for reforestation efforts across the Green Belt.

4. Challenges Encountered

During the reporting period, GBS faced several challenges:

Water Scarcity: Limited irrigation capacity delayed nursery expansion and plantation activities.

Labour Shortage: Recruiting and retaining skilled ecological workers for physically demanding tasks proved difficult.

Coordination Complexity: Inter-departmental collaboration with ATDC, Land Board, and the Green beltters highlighted the need for clearer communication protocols and defined jurisdictions.

5. Future Plans

Looking ahead, GBS has identified the following priorities:

- Expansion of invasive species removal to additional zones by July 2025.
- Strengthening of park management activities, including pathways, sitting areas, and visitor spaces.
- Initiation of phased reforestation programs using plants from the restored nursery.
- Launch of a GIS-based ecological
- Monitoring system for more precise data collection and analysis.
- Organization of workshops and training sessions on sustainable land stewardship for stewards and residents.

6. Conclusion

The Green Belt Services remains dedicated to safeguarding the ecological integrity of Auroville's peripheral zone. With an enhanced organizational framework, active field-level coordination, and close collaboration with the community, GBS is steadily advancing toward the ecological vision set forth in the Auroville Master Plan.

The progress achieved in this reporting period provides a strong foundation for the months ahead, while continued support from Auroville's working groups and residents will be essential to sustaining these ecological efforts.



Work at Greenbelt removing thrones



Removal of Invasive species



Nursery Work



Coordinating planting Palmyra at Radial Road



Seed Collection



Wood Segregation



Cleaning at Visitor's path to Matrimandir



Cleaning Greenbelt Cycles food path