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From aspiration to action: evolving the mission of *Green Chemistry*

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As *Green Chemistry* moves from aspiration to action, this Editorial outlines how the journal is evolving to support a growing, global community. We highlight new tools such as the Green Foundation Box and the Methods, Models and Metrics collection, reinforce our commitment to both fundamental and applied research, and share efforts to foster collaboration, strengthen our editorial and advisory boards, and build capacity across academia and industry. Our goal is to lead not only in science, but in shaping a more inclusive, transparent and sustainability-driven research culture.

Aspiration to action

For more than 25 years, *Green Chemistry* has served as a home for research that helps chemistry and chemists in the broadest sense do better by the planet and its people. We were the first journal dedicated to this mission, and over time we have grown into a global platform for publishing, promoting, and shaping research that puts sustainability at its core.

Today, that mission is more urgent than ever. And with urgency comes responsibility, to do more than reflect the field, but to provide guidance, foster dialogue, and support researchers in navigating a fast-changing scientific and societal landscape. As the global green chemistry community matures, so too must the journal. In this editorial, we share how *Green Chemistry* is evolving to support this blazing and growing community to go from aspiration to action – by embedding sustainability goals earlier, communicating impact more

clearly, and creating a culture of shared progress.

From vision to implementation

The twelve principles of green chemistry have long served as a north star: a guiding framework for making chemical research safer, cleaner, and more sustainable. But the scale and complexity of today's global challenges demand more than inspiration, they require practical tools, cultural change, and institutional support.

At *Green Chemistry*, we are committed to helping researchers move from good intentions to measurable progress. This means:

- Publishing innovative work that advances sustainability through both scientific rigour and relevance;
- Supporting authors in using appropriate metrics and assessment tools to communicate impact and systems thinking;
- Providing a platform for community learning, critical discussion, and shared direction-setting.

We also want to be clear: *Green Chemistry* welcomes innovation in all its forms. A lot of the most groundbreaking research cannot easily be benchmarked or assessed using metrics. A lot of the

solutions that we will need tomorrow, need a place to shine today. We understand there are concerns in the community that new assessment tools might hinder research and deter submissions to the journal. Our aim is to support, not exclude. To clarify expectations and raise standards without raising unnecessary barriers. We are listening, and we remain committed to inclusive, thoughtful evaluation, especially when it comes to early-stage or fundamental work that lays the foundation for future impact.

Tools for change: laying the groundwork

Two recent initiatives reflect our commitment to supporting authors as the field evolves:

The Green Foundation Box, introduced in December 2024, asks authors to briefly explain how their work advances green chemistry by identifying which principles apply, highlighting sustainability relevance, and openly acknowledging limitations. This short statement helps reviewers, editors and readers assess the work's context and clarity and encourages early reflection on sustainability goals. As we embed this into the peer review process, we will continue to provide representative examples and guidance (Fig. 1).

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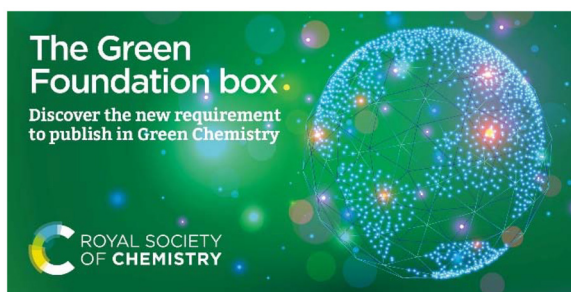


Fig. 1 More information on the Green Foundation Box can be found in our [Editorial](#).

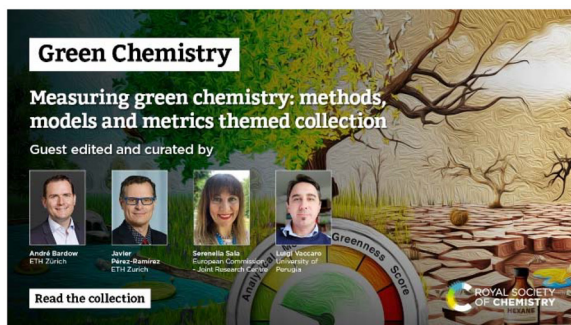


Fig. 2 Our curated Methods, Models and Metrics articles can be found in our [themed collection](#).

The Methods, Models and Metrics collection is a living resource of best-in-class tools for sustainability assessment. From life cycle analysis to techno-economic assessment, this cross-journal collaboration helps authors and reviewers identify appropriate methods and provides examples to learn from. It reinforces a key message: sustainability should be designed in from the start and considered throughout, rather than at the end (Fig. 2).

Together, these efforts support a wider shift in research culture, one that values transparency, contextual awareness, and honest engagement with complexity.

Rigor, relevance, and a broad scope

As submissions to *Green Chemistry* continue to grow (from just over 5k in 2023 to over 6.5k in 2024) so too does our responsibility to uphold high scientific standards. Selectivity matters. In fields like catalysis, synthesis, materials science, or systems analyses, our expectations must match those of leading

specialist journals. Performing research with green chemistry principles is not a shortcut, it is an added dimension of excellence.

We are equally committed to reflecting the breadth of the field. Not all areas of chemistry lend themselves to detailed sustainability metrics and not all transformative work can be easily benchmarked. Fundamental research remains vital, especially when it leads to new methods, tools, or mechanisms that underpin more sustainable practices in the future.

Systems thinking and cross-sector collaboration

One of the clearest messages from our recent Editorial Board discussions is the importance of integration – across disciplines, across sectors, and across scales.

We are working to:

- **Bridge academia and industry** through joint publications, practical case studies, and a new Industrial Panel to inform the journal's direction;

- **Support systems thinking** by encouraging lifecycle and techno-economic assessment, and fostering submissions that engage with policy, scale-up, and real-world constraints;

- **Clarify expectations by research maturity**, recognising that different types of work require different levels of assessment, depending on Technology Readiness Level and stage of development.

Education is central to this mission. We see *Green Chemistry* as a tool to build capacity at all levels – from student readers and early-career authors to experienced reviewers and decision-makers. We also want to help close the education gap between academia and industry, making it easier for researchers to carry sustainability thinking with them as they move across sectors.

A global platform with a shared mission

We are committed to building and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and engaged Editorial Board – one that reflects the diversity, energy, and collaborative spirit of our community (Fig. 3). Since early 2025, we have welcomed 5 new members to the Editorial Board, including 4 Associate Editors, strengthening our topical coverage and regional and career-stage representation. We continue to seek Board members who combine scientific excellence with a systems mindset and a strong commitment to community building.

As we look to the future, we have also taken steps to refocus our Advisory Board to ensure it remains dynamic and well positioned to represent and guide the journal. To achieve this, we have increased gender diversity from 26 to 38%, broadened representation across career stages by including more emerging investigators and mid-career researchers, and streamlined the board for more focused engagement, deeper discussions, and stronger connections. We plan to regularly revisit the composition of our Advisory Board to ensure it remains aligned with the journal's evol-

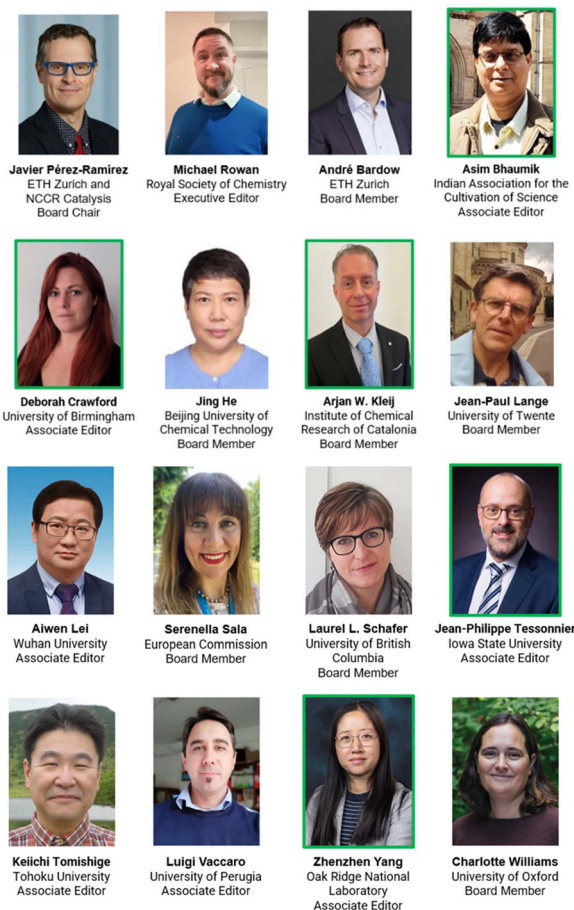


Fig. 3 The Editorial Board of *Green Chemistry*. Our new members are highlighted with a green frame.

ving needs. At this time, we are actively seeking new members who reflect the diversity of our community, demonstrate excellence in science, and are eager to help drive our mission to move from aspiration to action.

Strengthening culture and communication

To support this evolution, we are working to:

- Provide clearer guidance for authors and reviewers, especially around expectations by topic and research maturity;
- Highlight exemplary work across all areas of chemistry through curated collections to showcase benchmarks and inspire progress;
- Develop a more responsive editorial voice – including regular contributions from our Editorial Board on emerging issues, gaps, and opportunities.

But more than anything, we want to listen, reflect, and take action. Change can bring uncertainty, and we know that not everyone will interpret our direction the same way. If you are excited, concerned, confused, or curious – we want to hear from you. Whether it's about the Green Foundation Box, metrics, or journal direction, please get in touch.

 green-rsc@rsc.org – your feedback is always welcome.

Looking ahead

Our aspiration is simple, but not easy: to ensure that *Green Chemistry* continues to lead – not just as a place to publish excellent science, but as a force for cultural change in how chemistry is conceived, practiced, and shared.

By embedding practical tools, refining editorial practices, and supporting a more connected community, we aim to help operationalize the values behind green chemistry – from early goal-setting and transparent metrics to systems thinking, inclusivity, and cross-sector collaboration.

We thank our authors, reviewers, readers, and Board members for their trust and commitment. Together, we look forward to building the next chapter, one where aspiration becomes action, and action delivers lasting impact.

Javier Pérez-Ramírez, Editorial Board Chair

Michael Rowan, Executive Editor
*On behalf of the Green Chemistry
Editorial and Advisory Boards*
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