



GOLF CLUBS

as frontrunners for sustainable
development in local landscapes

A step-by-step workbook

- How to map values, functions and activities and engage key partners in multifunctional projects

Sterf

YES, GOLF CLUBS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

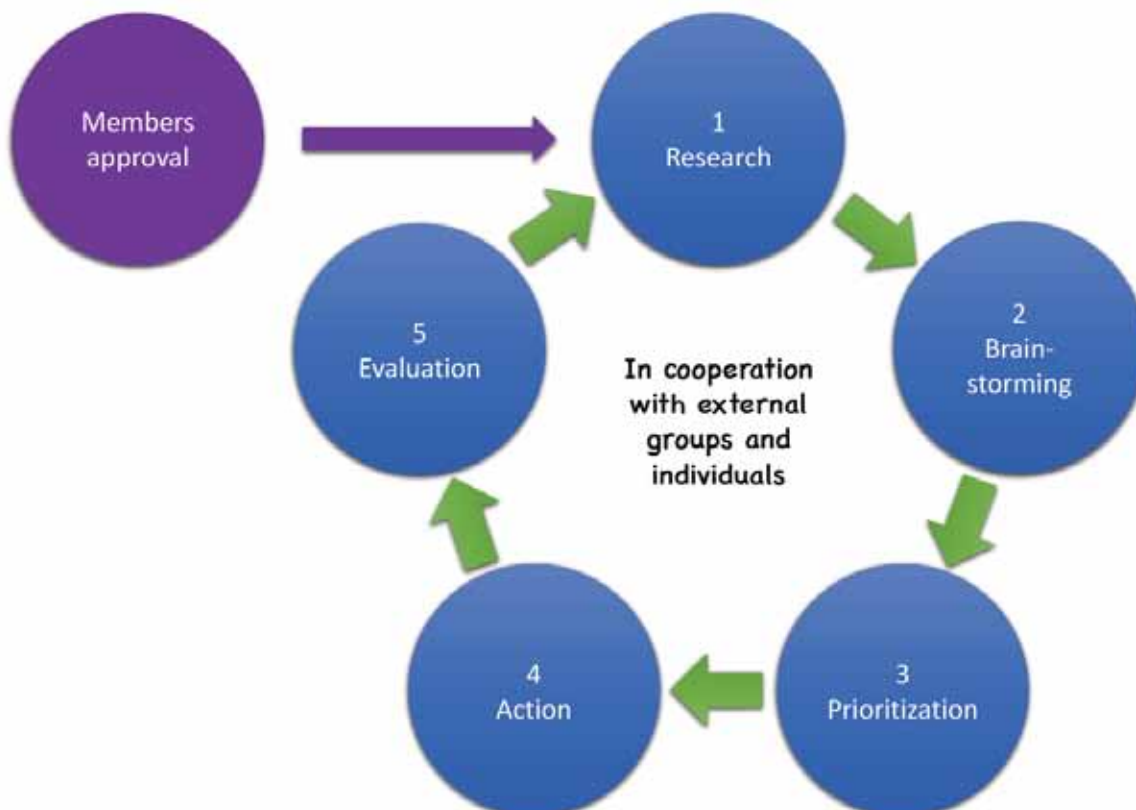
Although we are living in times of wealth and prosperity in the global north, there is a growing concern that our modern lifestyle is unsustainable. In an effort to deal with this dilemma, the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015. Now, models and methods for implementing the Agenda locally and regionally are called for.

The golf sector has had an image problem with a history as a sport for an exclusive elite, and some people still view golf courses as isolated islands, inaccessible for non-players and biological "deserts". Many Nordic golf clubs have also experienced profitability problems due to increasing costs, shrinking member stocks, fewer green fee-guests, and little support from local authorities.

Of course, the game of golf is and should be the foremost priority for all golf clubs. But Nordic golf clubs also have a fantastic opportunity to make substantial contributions to the 2030 Agenda by developing the concept of multifunctional golf facilities and establishing partnership with other groups and individuals operating in the local landscape.

Potentially, this will rise the legitimacy for the game of golf and golf facilities. Developing other values and functions beside golf can also create favourable conditions for attracting a broader target group, new members, alternative income and shared costs.

This is a step-by-step workbook, tailor-made for golf clubs, for mapping values, functions and activities on and beyond golf facilities, and also finding key partners and engaging them in multifunctional projects that contribute to sustainable development (the 2030 Agenda). The five general steps plus a preparatory phase, described in this workbook and illustrated in the flowchart (see below), are developed from initial applications at three Scandinavian golf clubs. The workbook is intended as a guide, in reality it is not always a linear process but rather dynamic and iterative.



MULTIFUNCTIONAL GOLF FACILITIES

There are three types of multifunctionality on a golf facility:

- Different functions on different land units, e.g. trails for horseback riding on golf course safely separated from golf playing areas.
- Different functions on the same land unit but at different times, e.g. cross-country skiing on golf course during winter.
- Different functions on the same land unit at the same time, e.g. biodiversity preservation on golf course.



Workshop at Linköping Golf Club, Sweden. Photo: Jacob Coleman Nielsen

Preparatory phase: MEMBERS APPROVAL

- Gather board, personnel and perhaps also other key individuals in the golf club to discuss the possibility of starting up a process of multifunctional activities on and beyond the golf facility in collaboration with external groups and individuals. Don't be hasty, take your time, discuss and reflect. Before moving into this process, it is important that board, personnel and key individuals feel confident that this is the right way to move ahead.
 - If more ambitious:**
 - Invite all members to a dialogue meeting about the issue.
 - Send out a user survey to members which can provide valuable data and knowledge about how club members feel about the concept of multifunctionality and different multifunctional ideas.
- If the discussion reveals positive attitudes and enthusiasm for this kind of work: formulate a goal and make a board decision to proceed.
- Find key-persons and enthusiasts within the golf club and appoint a working committee responsible for the process. More people can of course be included later on.
- Inform golf club members of your intentions and what you will do next in the process.



Evening golf at Sigtuna Golf Club, Sweden. Photo: Anders Esselin

I. RESEARCH

Internal research

- Map previous and current values, functions and activities on the golf facility. Make a note if there is or has been a collaboration with external groups or individuals (see Table 1, page 5).
- Compile information about how the golf facility is currently managed – the use of water, fertilizers, pesticides, the species of the grass, etc – and if there are opportunities for shifting practices towards more environmental-friendly ones.

External research

- Make a list of potential external collaboration partners such as local, regional and national authorities, associations and businesses, NGOs and key individuals such as land owners. Use a chart to organize a list of who should be contacted (see Table 2, page 5).
- Set up a questionnaire for formal interviews, based on

your objective and the information you have gathered and need (see Table 3, page 6). Try your best to choose questions that focus on information that is not already documented. This will build trust between you and the informants, and it will save time for everyone involved.

If more ambitious: Prepare a formal introduction to the interviews, including who you are and who you represent, information about the project/process, and purpose of interview.

- Make a decision on how many persons you intend to interview and prioritize which individuals and groups should be contacted first.
- Conduct interviews and note answers in questionnaire – one per interviewed person.

Compile research results, reflect and complete

- If the interviews have given you additional information about values, functions, activities and collaborations on the golf facility – add this information to Table 1.
- Ask yourself if the golf facility is situated in an urban, peri-urban or rural setting, and what have emerged as the main sustainability challenges in the area.

If more ambitious: Review regional and local strategies and policies to find out more about fundamental sustainability challenges in the area.

- Ask yourself how different values, functions and activities on the golf facility are depending on, and contribute to, processes in the surrounding landscape – and vice versa.

If more ambitious:

- Ask yourself: What information is still lacking (key individuals, organizations, issues) and enrich the picture by doing additional research and/or interviews.

- Take a look at the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Ask yourself which of the goals and targets the golf club and its facility contribute to today? This can be very useful when communicating the project internally and externally. It can also be very useful deciding how to move on from here.

- Ask yourself how the golf club can make a difference, i.e. how the golf club can contribute to managing the identified sustainability challenges in the local landscape.
- Inform golf club members and interviewed external actors about the results of your total research and what you will do next in the process.

BIOSPHERE	SOCIETY	ECONOMY
<i>Ecological sustainability</i>	<i>Social sustainability</i>	<i>Economic sustainability</i>
Examples	Examples	Examples
An inventory of biotopes and biodiversity on Svingby golf facility was conducted in 2014. The inventory concluded that the facility serves as an important link in the municipality's green infrastructure, e.g. old-growth pine trees, broad-leaved deciduous trees and open grasslands. Numerous nesting boxes for birds have been mounted in the trees on and around the golf facility. Collaboration golf club and Svingby ornithological association.	Golf since 1946 and today 1.000 members guests. Approximately 45.000 rounds of golf are played every year at the course, and 4.400 of these are played by green fee-guests. Local schools visit once a year as a part of the PE-education. The golf club offers students to continue with golf by participating in junior practice for free. Collaboration golf club and local schools.	Local businesses want to be attractive employers, and in this respect Svingby golf facility (as a green oasis for golfers and non-golfers) and the surrounding area is very important. Co-marketing of golf, hotel and spa. Collaboration golf club and two hotels in Svingby

Table 1 Previous and current values, functions, activities and collaborations.

GROUP	INDIVIDUAL	REFERRED TO
<i>(contact information)</i>	<i>(contact information)</i>	<i>(other groups or individuals)</i>
Examples	Examples	Examples
Svingby cultural association Webpage: www.svinbyculture.com , email: info@svingbyculture.se	Sture Kultur email: sture.kultur@svingbyculture.se , phone: 0703 154 356 389)	Hilde Tavla from Artisfun webpage: www.artisfun.com , email: hilde.tavla , phone: 0703 154 357 654

Table 2 A chart to organize a list of who should be contacted.

Interviewee: _____

Interviewed by: _____

Date of interview: _____

1. Please, tell me about yourself and the organization you represent?
2. What motivates you/your organization to engage in this area/landscape?
3. What is your/your organization's vision and goals?
4. Is there anything you think is particularly interesting and/or special about this area – nature, culture, people etc?
5. In your opinion, what are the main local and regional challenges and possibilities?
6. Are you familiar with the golf club?
7. What is your attitude to the golf facility and the golf club?
8. Do you/your organization have any on-going collaboration with the golf club or have you had any previous collaboration?
 - If yes: About what?
 - If no: Why not? Would you like to engage in collaboration with the golf club?
9. Do you have anyone or any organization in mind that you think I should contact in this matter?

Table 3 Example of questionnaire for formal interviews – to be modified according to purpose of process and local conditions.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- A sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfil their needs. There are three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and ecological.
- The United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015. The Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets tackles a broad spectrum of development issues crucial to human prosperity. Although the challenges are global, the solutions are mainly local.



Workshop at Asserbo Golf Club, Denmark.. Photo: Anders Esselin

2. BRAINSTORMING

- Decide on date, time and locality (preferably the golf club) for a workshop.
 - Appoint a facilitator for the workshop (preferably a person from the working committee). Main tasks for this facilitator is to keep the time and make possible for all participants to contribute with their knowledge and ideas.
 - Send workshop invitation to key individuals in the club as well as to identified possible external collaboration partners (organizations and/or individuals).
 - Send confirmation and more detailed information to persons who accept the invitation. Note that more than 20 people can be difficult to manage.
 - Start workshop with an introduction that includes a welcome, description of process, golf club's ambition, results this far and program for the workshop.
- If more ambitious:** Do a walk-and-talk around the golf facility and make possible for everyone to express their views on values on the golf facility and in the surrounding landscape.
- Brainstorm potential future multifunctional activities, projects and collaborations. Arrange for three stations – one for projects that add value to ecological sustainability, one that add value to social sustainability, and one that add value to economic sustainability.
 - If the workshop gathers more than 10 persons including golf club representatives, divide into three groups. Let the groups start brainstorming at different stations. After approximately 15–20 minutes, rotate. After another 15–20 minutes, rotate again. In this way, all participants will brainstorm activities, projects and collaborations on all dimensions of sustainable development.

- If the workshop gathers less than 10 persons, keep the group together and visit the stations one after another for approximately 15–20 minutes/station.
- At each station, record on post-its or flipcharts potential future multifunctional projects and also which groups and individuals that can be interested in collaboration with the golf club in those projects.
- End the workshop by thanking everyone for participating and telling how the process will continue/what is going to happen from now and on.
- Organize the results from the workshop in a table for potential future multifunctional projects and collaborations (see Table 4).
- Inform golf club members and interviewed external actors about the workshop, the result of it, and what you will do next in the process.



Walk and talk on Linköping golf course, Sweden.
Photo: Anders Esselin

BIOSPHERE	SOCIETY	ECONOMY
<i>Ecological sustainability</i>	<i>Social sustainability</i>	<i>Economic sustainability</i>
Examples	Examples	Examples
<p>Projects for the enhancements of biodiversity, such as larger buffer/edge zones around ponds. <i>Collaboration golf club and Svingby association for nature conservation?</i></p> <p>The rough could be sown with wild flowering herbs, bushes and trees securing food for both wild and domesticated bees. <i>Collaboration golf club, Svingby municipality, Svingby enthomological association and Svingby bee breeding association?</i></p> <p>Information signs about nature and nature values on the course and in the surroundings – at tees and by walking track. <i>Collaboration golf club and local schools?</i></p>	<p>Activities to contribute to integration of refugees and immigrants. <i>Collaboration golf club, local schools, Svingby municipality?</i></p> <p>There is a potential to arrange more concerts and events on the driving range. <i>Cooperation golf club, Visit Svingby and Svingby rockmusic?</i></p> <p>Further archeological investigations and archeology guiding. <i>Collaboration golf club and Svingby historical museum?</i></p> <p>There is a bike lane that goes outside of and around the golf facility. This lane could be connected to a trail on the facility. A public trail on the facility could be used for walking, running, mountain biking or horseback riding. <i>Collaboration golf club, Svingby university, Science park Svingby, Svingby municipality?</i></p>	<p>A mutual sponsor event, where sponsors of the golf club and sponsors of the culture house can meet. <i>Cooperation golf club and Svingby Culture House?</i></p> <p>Add-on activities before and after the event Svingby marathon. <i>Collaboration golf club, Svingby track and field, Svingby municipality, Svingby business association?</i></p>

Table 4 Potential future multifunctional projects and collaborations.

3. PRIORITIZATION

- Prioritize among the potential future multifunctional projects by making estimates how much they potentially will contribute to sustainable development in the local landscape and how much they are likely to cost in terms of money, time and effort (see Table 5).

The most interesting projects are probably those that can be categorized as low hanging fruits, that is projects that has the potential to bring big rewards and doesn't cost much (e.g. leave dead wood on the facility; put up signs with information about natural and cultural heritage; invite local schools to try out golf; and co-market the golf club with local businesses such as hotels).

Those that can give high benefit in terms of sustainable development in the local landscape and cost much (e.g. adjusting dams for preservation of biodiversity; and building of multisport facility on the golf course) can also be interesting if you think it is possible to find funding. Those projects that give low benefit are most likely not worth considering.

- Inform golf club members and external actors about which projects you intend to implement, and what you will do next in the process.



Big benefit	?	Interesting!
Low benefit	X	Probably not
	High cost	Low cost

Table 5 A simple tool to prioritize among potential future multifunctional projects and collaborations.

4. ACTION

- Gather a group for each chosen project. This could be an already existing committee or working group at the golf club plus a number of external actors, or a new formed internal group at the golf club plus a number of external actors.
- Before moving into action, gather more specific knowledge about the issue (for example dams, pollinating insects, breeding birds, local schools and businesses, as well as best practices).
- Decide on goal for the project.
- Set up a project plan, including goal, end time, funding, what you need to do to reach goal (applications for funding, practical doings, communication, etc.), when this should be done and who should be responsible.
- Move into action, do the things you have planned to do.
- When the project is underway and producing results, it is very important to continually provide information to golf club members, external collaborating partners, the media and all those who might be interested.



Bat houses at Asserbo GC, Denmark. Photo:A.Esselin



Horseback riding on tracks safely separated from the golf players, at Asserbo GC, Denmark. Photo: Jacob Coleman Nielsen



Sledding at Sigtuna GC, Sweden. Photo:A. Esselin



A German bunker from the Second World War at Larvik GC, Norway. Photo:A. Esselin



A picture frame to highlight a spectacular view at Asserbo GC, Denmark.
Photo: Anders Esselin

GOLF CLUBS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2030 AGENDA IN LOCAL LANDSCAPES

- If a golf club is managed responsibly and correctly, it will contribute to the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda in the local landscape. With a multifunctional ambition, this golf club will contribute even more to the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda, on site as well as in the local landscape. With a multifunctional ambition and well-developed collaborations with other local actors, the golf club contributions to the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda have the potential to be of great importance.
- Even if multifunctional activities and projects are undertaken on the golf facilities, the contribution to a sustainable development (i.e. the 2030 Agenda) in local landscapes can be profound as there is a constant flow of people with their knowledge and ideas, as well as animals, insects, plants and water from the golf facilities to the surrounding areas and vice versa.
- Multifunctional activities and projects in collaboration with other local actors have the potential to create favourable conditions for attracting a broader target group, new members, alternative income and shared costs for golf clubs.

5. EVALUATION

- In the end, evaluate the output (i.e. what you have done) and the outcome (i.e. the effects of the performed activities) of the project.

If more ambitious: Take a look at the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Ask yourself which of the goals and targets the project has contributed to? This can be very useful when communicating the project internally and externally. It can also be very useful deciding how to move on from here.

- Based on the evaluation, decide on eventual continuation – and then you are back at step 1 again!

MORE TO READ

Skarin, O., Schmidt, K., and Strandberg, M. (2014). Societal Benefits of Golf. Inspiration and Ideas for Local Partnership. STERF (Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation)
<http://www.sterf.org/Media/Get/1931/societal-benefits-of-golf>

Strandberg et al. (2011). Multifunctional golf courses – an underutilised resource.
<http://www.sterf.org/Media/Get/1788/multifunctional-golf-courses-an-underutilised-resource>

UN Sustainable Development Goals, website “17 Goals to Transform Our World”
<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

FINAL NOTES

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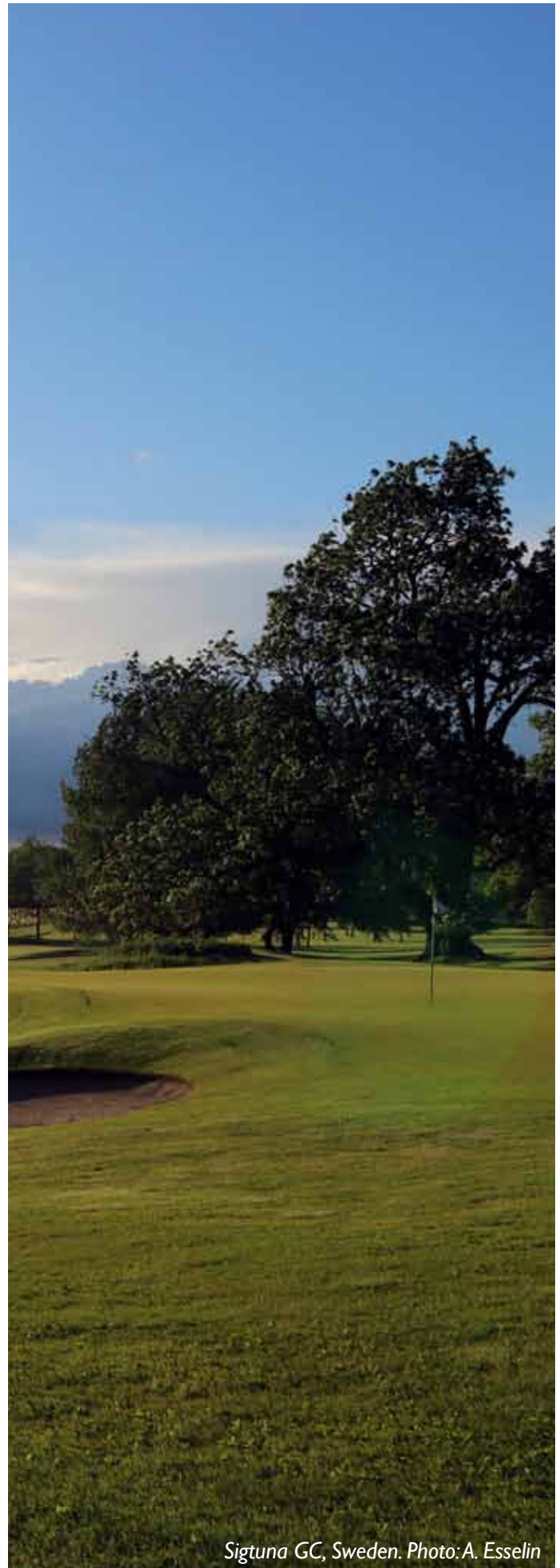
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Developed from

The STERF report: “*Golf clubs as landscape players – Establishment of collaboration networks in the landscape for enhanced contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”
(Esselin, 2018)

Inspired by

The workbook: “*Applying a Social-Ecological Inventory: A workbook for finding key actors and engaging them*”
(Schultz, L., Plummer, R. & Purdy, S., 2011)



Sigtuna GC, Sweden. Photo: A. Esselin

APPENDIX:



Examples of multifunctional projects and activities that contribute to the 2030 Agenda in local landscapes

- Walking- and horseback riding trails on the golf facility that connect to trails outside of the golf facility.
- Sprint orienteering and disc-golf on the golf course.
- Handigolf for disabled persons.
- Welcome signs around the golf facility where there are natural entries.
- Nesting boxes for birds, bats, butterflies and insects.
- Dams suited to function as habitat hosts for native red-listed frogs, salamanders, birds and aquatic plants.
- Concerts and art exhibitions on golf facility.
- Using golf courses and the land that surrounds them as outdoor classrooms could become particularly important at a time when most of the world's population lives in urban landscapes and local areas suitable for outdoor activities are becoming scarce.
- Engagement in local trade associations and co-marketing of golf together with other local businesses such as hotels.
- Internships for people outside of the job market.
- More examples of multifunctionality on golf courses can be found at the Swedish Golf Federations website, <https://golf.se/goda-exempel/>

Walk and talk at Asserbo golf facility, Denmark. Photo: A. Esselin

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Sterf

STERF (Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation) is the Nordic golf federations' joint research body. STERF supplies new knowledge that is essential for modern golf course management, knowledge that is of practical benefit and ready for use, for example directly on golf courses or in dialogue with the authorities and the public and in a credible environmental protection work. STERF is currently regarded as one of Europe's most important centres for research on the construction and upkeep of golf courses. STERF has decided to prioritise R&D within the following thematic platforms: Integrated pest management, Multifunctional golf facilities, Sustainable water management and Winter stress management. More information about STERF can be found at www.sterf.org