Sustainability Strategic Plan 2025 to 2028

LEADERSHIP IN SPORT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION

June 2025



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FOREWORD

The European Golf Association is the representative governing body of the sport of golf in Europe, made up of, and led by, representatives of 49 national golf federations and associations, including all countries of the European Union.

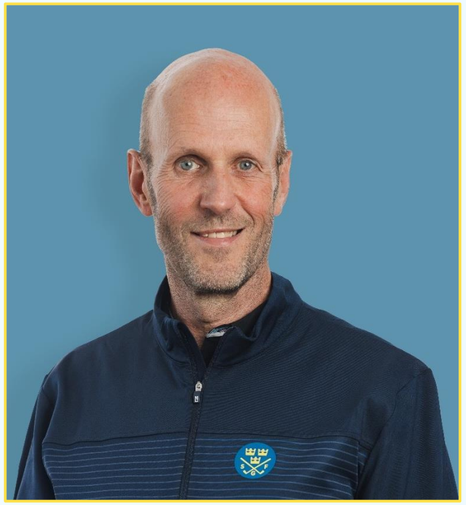
In light of rapidly increasing pressures, public concerns, and opportunities across sustainability and climate action, the Association is stepping forward with a strengthened Strategic Plan that embodies our collective commitment and action for the years ahead.

It demonstrates how the EGA will work with key partners to guide the next phase of golf's work across Europe; supporting and strengthening European Golf's position, performance and profile. By doing so, playing an important part in the sport's global efforts.

Sustainability is a critical societal issue, and vital to the future success of the sport across Europe and beyond. We are excited by what we can help golf achieve. Meeting and even exceeding the expectations of grass roots players, wider public and government agencies.

Thank you for your interest, support and for playing your part.





Caroline Huskes
EGA President

Gunnar Hakansson
EGA Executive – Sustainability

EGA

Introduction

Golf in Europe is a significant and growing sports sector, with an intimate relationship with nature and communities. Perfectly placed to become a strong and positive force for people and the environment.

LEADERSHIP IN SPORT, SUSTAINABILITY
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INTRODUCTION

With the support of its members, the European Golf Association is embarking on a renewed and strengthened drive in sustainability and climate action.

Recognising increasing risks and opportunities for facilities, associations and the sport across the region.

Challenges include increasing policy and regulation at European and national levels; availability and costs of natural resources such as water and land; as well as the rapid evolution of public opinion and expectations.

Conversely, new opportunities include co-regulation with government; efficiencies and innovations in resource use; delivering environmental and social value above expectations; and boosting the popularity of the sport by being known as a proactive leader.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Enhancing golf's contribution to priority societal issues

- Reducing golf's use of resources, associated emissions and environmental impacts, while advancing the positive role on nature, climate and communities

Improving golf's position and profile across Europe

- Helping to further strengthen and harmonise golf's commitments and actions, and helping represent the sport in the EU

Playing a leading role in the global sustainability efforts of golf and sport

- Enabling European golf to proudly step forward as a leader in global golf, and amongst sport

GOLF IN EUROPE

Golf is a significant contributor of social, economic and environmental value across Europe.

It is a mature sector and established sport in many countries, while still emerging in others.

Golf provides lifelong, health-enhancing recreation, and is played by an increasingly diverse cross-section of people, in local communities and as international golf tourists.

The golf industry provides tens of billions of euros of economic value in Europe and an estimated 400,000 jobs. This includes expansive sub sectors and supply chains of tourism, events, equipment, machinery, construction and merchandise.

Socially the sport provides lifelong health and recreation to hundreds of thousands of European citizens, strengthening communities through a wide range of direct and indirect benefits.

Environmentally, the sector utilizes around 400,000 ha of land, of which around 50% is natural vegetation and dedicated wildlife habitat.

EGA

EUROPEAN GOLF IN NUMBERS

Players
Over **4.7 million** active players within the EU

Courses
Over 8,978 golf courses

Events
Over **40** world leading professional sports events and thousands of amateur competitions

Employment
The industry supports close to 400,000 **jobs** and pays almost EUR 9.4 billion in **wages**

Tourism
Golf and estimated tourism for Spain and Portugal is estimated at **30.49 billion euro** annually

Supply chain
Machinery, equipment, apparel, catering, seed, turf and other horticultural materials

GOLF AND SUSTAINABILITY

Golf can play a meaningful, and in many ways, significant part in the movements towards sustainable communities, sustainable cities and sustainable lifestyles.

Building off the existing stable and responsible management of land, the sport is eager to press on to further foster nature, conserve key natural resources, strengthen communities and take climate action.

Leaning more strongly into environmental responsibility and social value is now recognised as essential to the future popularity and success of the sport itself.

By working with nature, golf can enhance its landscapes and experiences for players, as well as reducing resource consumption and associated costs of water, energy and materials.

By working more closely with communities on topics such as human health and wellbeing, multi-functional recreation and education, grass roots facilities can build new and valuable partnerships, investments and goodwill.

For tournaments, the major opportunities are to become high-profile hubs and catalysts for innovation in supply chains, green technology and fan engagement. High profile players can inspire the next generation.

Golf developments, if planned, designed and constructed in the right way, and in the right places, can bring significant net positive social and environmental benefits.

Of all sports, golf is most closely connected to nature, making its leadership in sustainability significant both through direct local impacts, and wider global reach.



PRIORITY ISSUES

The EGA approach to sustainability is comprehensive, taking into account a broad range of relevant and inter-connected issues.

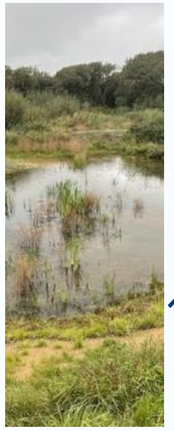
Primarily focused on environmental elements, but also including a range of key aspects of golf's social responsibility and value.

This 'Sustainable Golf Framework' has been developed over many years of ongoing materiality assessment.

It provides a comprehensive and yet highly practical approach to sustainability and golf.

Addressing the social and environmental issues that are most closely impacting on and impacted by the sport.

SUSTAINABLE GOLF FRAMEWORK









Fostering Nature

Landscape and Biodiversity
Responsible Turf Management
Pollution Prevention

Strengthening Communities

Health and Wellbeing
Outreach and Collaboration
Communication and Inspiration



Conserving Resources

Water Stewardship
Energy Efficiency
Circular Use of Materials

Taking Climate Action

Reducing Emissions
Increasing Sequestration
Mitigation and Adaptation







POLICY ALIGNMENT

By helping drive stronger action and outcomes across key sustainable golf priorities, we will ensure that golf contributes positively and proactively to some of the most relevant governmental, corporate and societal frameworks for sustainability.

Some of the most notable points of alignment include:

European Union Green Deal
Golf can make meaningful contributions to this flagship program, which integrates sustainability into a wide range of areas of European production and consumption, including land management, protection of environmental quality and human health, biodiversity, climate action, supply chains, green economy and resilient cities.

Paris Agreement and United Nations Sport for Climate Action
This leading accord on global climate reduction targets aims to limit green-house gases and associated temperature rises to 1.5°C on pre-industrial levels, and is embodied in the UN S4CA targets of 50% emissions reduction by 2030 and Net-zero by 2040.

UN Sustainable Development Goals
Separate research has highlighted that golf can contribute in some way and to some degree across all 17 UN SDGs, with 5 as Tier One Goals (most directly and significantly connected to sustainable golf).

IUCN Sport for Nature
The Convention on Biodiversity's Global Montreal-Kunming Agreement to conserve biodiversity is embodied in the IUCN S4N initiative. As a land manager golf is well positioned on the protection, restoration and promotion of nature.

ISEAL Alliance Principles and Codes
Golf's voluntary sustainability standards, assurance and impacts measurement system is the only one in sport to be accredited as Code Compliant by the ISEAL Alliance.



EUROPEAN GOLF - WORK TO DATE

European golf has been actively engaged in environmental and wider sustainability work for almost two decades.

Specific initiatives in research, education, communications, guidance, programs, pathways and tools have all led to increased awareness, understanding, engagement, action and measurable results.

With efforts directed towards real impacts and progress in fostering nature, conserving resources, strengthening communities and taking climate action, the sectors approach has been comprehensive.

EGA leadership	• Establishment of Golf Europe Group and sustainability plan • Ongoing EU engagement, consultation and collaboration • Sharing of knowledge and leadership examples across National members • Investment in establishment of industry wide standards, impacts monitoring system and other tools
National highlights	• 15 countries have established and resourced sustainable golf strategies which span: club engagement; research; data tracking; communications and reporting. • Leading examples including: Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Wales and Germany
Sectoral system, tools and solutions	• Golf sector has an externally accredited (ISEAL Code Compliant) system of voluntary sustainability standards, assurance and impacts monitoring; accompanied by; carbon calculators; Sustainable Golf Data Framework; knowledge and innovation centre; and transparent leaderboard
Collaborative golf association initiatives	• Other partners in golf in Europe are contributing in key areas, including: R&A GC2030 Research Funding; European Tour group and Ladies European Tour Tournament Leadership; alignment and collaboration with International Golf Federation including golf in the Olympics; STERF research platform

Approach

We are working collaboratively and prioritising carefully. Working to address the key issues in the most effective and efficient way. Striving to be proactive and impact-led.

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EGA MISSION AND GOALS

The EGA has an important role to promote sustainable golf initiatives across Eurpoe. The organisation works closely with and through its members and collaborative partners, helps bring cohesion and strength of direction and finds commonalities and economies of scale in different approaches.

Mission

Strengthen the future success and societal contribution of golf, ensuring it becomes recognised as a leading sport in sustainability in Europe.

Goals

Performance – golf will proactively adapt to changing environmental, climate and resource pressures, continuously finding new efficiencies and ways to enhance nature and strengthen communities.

Position – golf will be an engaged stakeholder and respected collaborator of European and national government consultation; environmental NGO's and other sustainability actors.

Profile – golf will be widely appreciated for the strengths of its commitments, actions and positive social and environmental impacts.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The EGA has scaled up capacity and collaborative working to support collective progress. At the heart of this are three specialist Working Groups and an over-arching Strategic Working Group. All now supported by a dedicated Sustainability Manager and expert partners in sustainable golf and government relations.

Expertise and solutions

Non-profit offering externally accredited standards, programs, tools, certification, and data stewardship for sustainable golf.

GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf

Public affairs

Specialist consulting and counselling in strategic government and public relations.

Burson

EGA Executive Committee

Oversight and leadership; strategic decision approvals

Strategic Working Group

Guidance on direction, priorities and strategic approvals

- Monitoring Working Group
- Technical Working Group
- Communication Working Group

EGA Sustainable Golf Forum

National Golf Federations

Knowledge development

Ongoing research on key topics to inform best practices, programs and educational content.

GOLF COURSE 2030 · GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf · Sterf · USGA · FEGGA

Collaborative platform

Coordination of wider sector inputs and alignment on key aspects of EU regulatory priorities and representation, including R&A; European Tour group; Ladies European Tour; Greenkeeper, Owners, Architect, and Club Manager Associations.

WIDER PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Beyond core partners, service providers and internal working groups, we place wider collaboration as fundamentally important. By working with other stakeholders across golf and beyond we help strengthen aligned and collective action, avoiding duplication and fragmentation in the process.

There are lessons to be learned from others in sport, and shared issues - such as turfgrass management - which can be focus areas for beneficial co-working.

Engagement with key government and non-government organisations are vital to help predict future policy, hear expectations, explore joint projects and scale resourcing.

Golf	Sports	External
• Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association • Golf Course Association of Europe • Club Managers Association of Europe • European Institute of Golf Course Architects • The R&A • European Tour group • Ladies European Tour • International Golf Federation	Including: • European Olympic Committee • International Olympic Committee • United Nations Sport for Climate Action • IUCN Sport for Nature • UEFA • World Rugby • International Equestrian Federation	Including: • European Union DG SANTE • United Nations Environment Program • Environmental NGOs

Action

A three-year horizon of strategic outcomes steers the general direction. Each year, detailed and carefully prioritised annual action plans are prepared and resourced.

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ACTION AREAS

Well targeted and coordinated activities lie at the heart of the EGA's role in advancing sustainability in golf across Europe.

Lead	Support		Represent
	Coordinate	Develop	
Adopt strengthened procurement policies and operational practices to reduce direct and indirect environmental impacts	Bring members and other stakeholders together to share, problem solve, align actions and efforts to help achieve the best collective impact	Facilitate the further development and promotion of sectoral knowledge, best practices, programs and tools	Compile and help promote information on golf's social, economic and environmental value and progress
Introduce policies and action plans for staging of championships with lower resource consumption and emissions, and with greater promotion of nature and communities	Convene working groups Stakeholder meetings, consultations and annual Forum Support sharing of knowledge and case studies	Build collective policy and position statements and roadmaps Help members develop national strategies Contribute to ongoing development of sectoral standards, data, certification and tools	Represent golf's value and interests in Brussels Monitor and evaluate EU regulatory changes Helping promote the sport's activities, value and needs

3-YEAR ROLLING SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Group	2025	2026	2027
Strategic	• Strategy approved and launched • Core EGA budget secured • Responsible Turfgrass Roadmap approved and released • Annual Forum held	• Water Stewardship Roadmap approved and released • Annual Forum held • Emergence of national federations mandating data provision from facilities	• Annual Forum held • Strengthening of national federations mandating data provision from facilities
Technical	• Establish European Research Inventory • Launch Sustainable Golf Knowledge Centre	• Next generation of research projects underway • New research results and other resources on Knowledge Centre • Water Stewardship Roadmap developed	• Well established and visited Knowledge Centre • Well coordinated and prioritised research projects
Data	• Define Sustainable Golf Data Framework • Define Data Harmonization Plan • Deliver key data Survey	• Commence pull of data sources into Sustainable Golf Data Lake • Deliver Water Stewardship Survey • Initiate sustainability report for European golf	• Well established and secure Data Lake with incoming indicators • Extend sustainability reporting for European golf
Communication	• Updated EGA website • Published strategy • Prepare Sustainable Golf Communications Hub • Engagement in Sustainable Golf Week	• Increased population of Communications Hub • Increased engagement in Sustainable Golf Week • Activation in Brussels with EU	• Communications Hub and Sustainable Golf Week established as central industry resources and activations
Operations and Championships	• Plan out approach to EGA operations, carbon emissions and procurement	• Calculate 2025 operational emissions • Develop procurement code • Develop and share championship guidance	• Calculate 2026 operational emissions; deliver further carbon reduction and procurement measures • Engage and collaborate with more championship delivery partners

2025 - SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Action area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Strategic	• Finalise EGA Sustainability Strategy and 2025 Action Plan • Enter in direct dialogue with DG SANTE • Continue stakeholder engagement	• Approve Turfgrass Roadmap • Support Roadmap implementation conversations with other key stakeholders	• Define 2026 EGA Sustainability Budget • Draft EGA 2024 report • Host EGA Sustainability Forum	• Provide update and 2026 action plan outline to AGM • Support request for budget
Technical	• Approve Turfgrass Roadmap • Engage in and support R&A / FFG Biodiversity Workshop • Discuss structure of Knowledge and Innovation Centre • Build out Research Inventory structure	• Support implementation of Turfgrass Roadmap • Populate and promote Knowledge and Innovation Centre	• Populate Knowledge and Innovation Centre • Create framework and scope of Golf and Water policy and position paper	• Begin draft Golf and Water Roadmap
Data	• Produce summary of data needs and framework • Launch key data survey (in collaboration with FEGGA)		• Summarise existing data sources and systems; create data harmonisation map • Analysis of key data	• Strengthen existing, and create new, connections across European data system • Internal report of key data
Communication	• Kick off Working Group • Story or update in EGA Newsletter (Strategy launch, Report from FEGGA Conference)	• Develop concept for sustainability page on EGA website (Sustainable Golf Highlights, etc.) • Explore development of core message decks (internal and external) • Story or update in EGA Newsletter	• Share National Federation Sustainability Communications Hub • Story or update in EGA Newsletter	• Coordinated engagement in Sustainable Golf Week 2025, • Potential political stakeholder activation • Story or update in EGA Newsletter
Operations and Championships			• Plan out approach to EGA operations, carbon emissions and procurement	



THANK YOU

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Find out more

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