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THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

ENGAGING IN THE BIODIVERSITY GUIDELINES

What are the EGA Golf Course Committee Biodiversity 10 Step Guidelines?

The EGA GCC and its members firmly believe that golf can contribute significantly to protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity through the implementation of best practices in the development and management of golf courses. For this reason, the EGA GCC proposes the attached 10-step guideline, which is designed to provide an overarching framework complementing and facilitating access to existing guidance on best practice. The EGA GCC encourages its national members to incorporate these guidelines into their work and to seek endorsement by local third parties in order to support the implementation of sustainable practices in golf course management.

Why should your golf organisation care about this?

2010 was the UN 'Year of Biodiversity'. The EU has a programme to halt the loss of biodiversity. In order for the golfing industry to make an impact in Europe, all Member States must contribute to building and managing their golf courses sustainably. The EGA GCC encourages you to promote the guidelines in order to make this possible. All golf courses must work together to halt biodiversity and implement such practices that will enhance it. Golf courses could be perceived by environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as not protecting the environment and its natural resources. In order to avoid such misperceptions, the EGA GCC encourages all golf courses to implement the biodiversity guidelines and seek endorsement to open dialogue with local politicians and NGOs.

How can your golf organisation get involved?

The EGA GCC recommends that you:

- Adopt the guidelines and promote their implementation
- Engage with local environmental NGOs to help understand what concerns there are in the region regarding biodiversity loss and find the tools to address these issues
- Seek endorsement of the guidelines from local NGOs and politicians
- Communicate the success of the implementation of these guidelines for local organisations to see that you are taking stewardship of the local natural environment seriously and that golf can actually enhance it.

EGA GCC strongly believes that if these guidelines are implemented, they will help golf courses develop in a sustainable way.

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10-STEP GUIDELINE TOWARDS PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND RESTORING BIODIVERSITY ON GOLF COURSES

The European Golf Association Golf Course Committee (EGA GCC) brings together a wide range of actors representing the golfing industry. The EGA GCC and its members firmly believe that golf can contribute significantly to protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity through implementation of best practices in the development and management of golf courses. In this context, the EGA GCC proposes the following 10-step guideline, which is designed to provide an overarching framework complementing and facilitating access to existing guidance on best practice.

1. At concept, appreciate the need to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity in course development and management.
2. Engage with environmental non-governmental organisations, regulatory authorities and local conservation groups to optimise biodiversity.
3. At planning, undertake habitat and wildlife audits to determine a benchmark.
4. Ensure that policies are in place to protect existing biodiversity and make every effort to restore desirable habitat and enhance what is already there.
5. Minimise habitat fragmentation and maximise connectivity, utilising corridors for wildlife movement across sites where appropriate.
6. Be aware of environmental protected designations and your responsibility towards their preservation and management.
7. During construction, monitor the impact of development on biodiversity.
8. Post-construction, implement management practices that will build on biodiversity.
9. Carry out further habitat and wildlife audits at regular intervals and consider participation in an environmental certification programme to determine your success in promoting biodiversity.
10. Communicate your policy for biodiversity to local interest groups and other agencies, e.g. environmental non-governmental organisations and regulatory bodies.

As is evident in the guideline, the EGA GCC encourages dialogue and cooperation between non-governmental organisations, regulatory authorities and local conservation groups so as to optimise biodiversity. As such, the EGA GCC would welcome comments on this guideline from stakeholders.

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Useful references, programmes and resources

English Golf Union (EGU)

The EGU, supported by Natural England, The R&A and STRI, provided some 220 golf clubs with ecological and environmental advice, backed by certification for achieving set targets for environmental improvement.

www.englishgolfunion.org

French Golf Federation (ffg) and French Greenkeepers Association (AGREF)

The ffg and AGREF work closely on golf and environmental matters. They promote biodiversity and are working with the French National Natural History Museum to thoroughly audit the wildlife at the Golf National near Paris.

www.ffgolf.org and www.agref.org

German Golf Association (DGV)

The “Golf und Natur” programme provides golf facilities with guidance so they can implement policies to demonstrate that golf and nature can co-exist, with certification as an incentive to participants.

www.golf.de/dgv/umweltprogramm.cfm

Golf Environmental Organization (GEO)

GEO is an international non-profit NGO working to enhance the economic, social and environmental benefits of golf. GEO provides an independently verified certification scheme with enriching biodiversity as one of its criteria.

www.golfenvironment.org

Scottish Golf Union (SGU) and Scottish Golf Environment Group (SGEG)

SGEG is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Scottish Golf Union Limited, supported by Scottish Natural Heritage and The R&A. It offers advice to affiliated clubs on a wide range of environmental issues, both on and off the course, leading to Scottish Golf Environment Certificates.

www.sgeg.org.uk and www.scottishgolf.org

Swedish Golf Federation (SGF) and Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF)

The SGF provides advice on environmental stewardship for golf clubs based on a self-regulating programme for environmentally regulated activities. STERF is supported by all of the Nordic golf federations and undertakes research into the environmental improvement of golf facilities.

The R&A

Based in St Andrews, The R&A is golf's governing body and organiser of The Open Championship. It recognises golf's responsibility to the environment and offers guidelines on best practice to ensure that playing quality, economic performance and social responsibility are in balance with environmental stewardship.

www.bestcourseforgolf.org