



*For Immediate Publication*

## **INTERNATIONAL TURFGRASS RESEARCH INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO ADVANCE WORLDWIDE SUSTAINABILITY IN GOLF**

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, ST. ANDREWS, Scotland and LIBERTY CORNER, N.J., USA (May 20, 2024) – The Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF), The R&A, the United States Golf Association (USGA) have launched the International Turfgrass Research Initiative to further the advancement of sustainable approaches to golf course and turfgrass management.

The International Turfgrass Research Initiative is a legacy of the 14<sup>th</sup> International Turfgrass Research Conference (ITRC) hosted by STERF in collaboration with the International Turfgrass Society (ITS) in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2022. Development and sustainability were the themes of the conference, and STERF and ITS agreed that investing in international turfgrass research would be the most appropriate legacy from ITRC2022.

Beginning later this year, multi-year research projects will be funded to develop practical solutions which can be adopted by those managing golf facilities and turfgrass areas, in response to the most pressing challenges facing the management of turfgrass and golf courses worldwide, including pest control, water conservation, preserving biodiversity and landscapes, and understanding the climate impact on turfgrass and golf landscapes.

A call for research proposals will be issued in May and submissions reviewed by a group of researchers, practitioners and experts working in the field of golf course and turfgrass management. The successful applicants will be announced at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Turfgrass Research Conference [being held in Japan next year](#).

The International Turfgrass Research Initiative compliments existing support already provided by each organisation in using scientific research to inform practical solutions, such as Golf Course 2030, the [Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management](#) and STERF Research Programmes.

Maria Strandberg – STERF Director and Past President of International Turfgrass Society said: “For golf and other turf sports that use land and nature as their sports arena, the challenges are many and diverse, and will strongly affect future operations. New research, competence and modification of standard approaches in the golf and turf sports sector are needed to conquer these challenges.



“We are convinced that the only viable strategy to meet current challenges and to create a sustainable future is international collaboration. Therefore, we look forward to, in close partnership with our colleagues at The USGA and The R&A, realizing this important initiative. We want to support and inspire scientists all over the world to collaborate and create and supply new knowledge and tools that are essential for modern and sustainable golf course and turfgrass management - knowledge that is of practical benefit and ready for use, for example directly in golf course and turfgrass management or in dialogue with the authorities and the public, and in a credible environmental protection work.

Daniel Lightfoot, Director – Sustainable Golf at The R&A, said, “The International Turfgrass Research Initiative is an important step towards developing practical solutions that can be used by golf facilities worldwide to address the challenges being experienced in golf course and turfgrass management.

“We are aiming to positively influence standards and practice in sustainable agronomy through providing guidance and support to golf facilities so that they are better equipped to manage the impact that climate change and change in legislation can have on the maintenance of courses.

“We look forward to working closely with our colleagues at the USGA and Scandinavian Turfgrass Research and Environment Foundation to deliver this research initiative on a global scale.”

Cole Thompson, Ph.D., Director, Green Section Research at the USGA, said, “The future of our game is dependent on the steps we take today. Alongside our colleagues at The R&A and STERF, we encourage an international cooperation among scientists to align on important turfgrass management research topics. ”

“As stewards of the environment, we have a responsibility to develop innovative solutions that promote future sustainability, while also tackling the current critical challenges the industry faces. We’re excited to continue pushing the boundaries, not just domestically via our extensive USGA Green Section initiatives, but now with The R&A and STERF, aiming to create lasting impacts for generations of golfers to come.”

More information can be found at [greensectionresearch.smapply.org](https://greensectionresearch.smapply.org). Select the International Turfgrass Research Initiative programme at the bottom of the page.



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