

# International Turfgrass Research Initiative

A Cooperative Effort by STERF, The R&A, and USGA



## 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Project period 2026-2028

*Sterf*

R&A

USGA®

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The challenges for the future of the golf and the larger turfgrass industry are many and diverse. Climate change is transforming abiotic stress patterns, pest life cycles, and basic turfgrass selection and management. Strong restrictions on the use of chemicals and fertilizers, and increasing pressure on natural resources (notably water, energy and land) are expected. Development is accelerating the loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity. All this calls for more research and innovation for a sustainable future.

Development and sustainability were the themes of the 14th International Turfgrass Research Conference (ITRC 2022) hosted by STERF in Copenhagen, Denmark, in July 2022. Global challenges and challenges within the turfgrass industry related to the United Nations sustainable development goals set out in Agenda 2030 were the focus of many presentations and discussions amongst delegates. STERF feels that investing in turfgrass research would be the most appropriate legacy from ITRC 2022, and STERF board have decided to reserve future funds to support global turfgrass research. Therefore, STERF, together with The R&A, and USGA have created the *International Turfgrass Research Initiative* to develop research projects with global significance.

## Research Priorities

Sustainable agronomy is the most prevalent area of interest. In light of increasing pesticide regulations, warmer weather patterns, and more frequent droughts and irrigation restrictions in many parts of the world, all parties agreed that integrated pest management (IPM) and water conservation are important foci of the initiative. Another important focus is biodiversity research in turfgrass management, which is essential to foster ecological balance by understanding and preserving diverse ecosystems within turfgrass and golf course landscapes. A better understanding of the carbon balance in turfgrass management globally is crucial for understanding the impact of turfgrass on greenhouse gas emissions and net carbon sequestration. The following specific topics are prioritized:

- Integrated pest/turfgrass management
- Water conservation
- Biodiversity and landscape perspective
- Climate (carbon balance)

More information can be found in the “ITRI Framework Paper” at <https://greensectionresearch.smapply.org/> Select the International Turfgrass Research Initiative programme at the bottom of the page.

## Guidelines for Pre Proposals and Full Proposals

STERF, The R&A and USGA have together reserved approximately € 250,000 per year for three years for research projects with global significance. Collaboration and joint projects between international research organizations is an important aim of the initiative and a requirement for project funding. We also recognize that industrial engagement and support is a critical component of research. Applicants are therefore encouraged to secure either additional funding and/or in-kind support for their proposed research to deliver additional impact and outreach. Instructions for those wishing to apply for funding can be found in the “2024 Request for Proposals” at <https://greensectionresearch.smapply.org/> Select the International Turfgrass Research Initiative programme at the bottom of the page.

## Deadline and Decisions

**Pre proposals are due August 15, 2024.**

Full proposals will be invited by October 31, 2024 and

**Full proposals are due February 26, 2025.**

Final decisions will be made by June 30, 2025.

Agreements for approved projects will be written for one to three years; however, continuation of a project will be determined annually based project progress and reporting.

Proposals shall be uploaded at <https://greensectionresearch.smapply.org/> The website is hosted by the USGA and an account will need to be created at the website before uploading a proposal.

If more information or clarification is required, please contact:

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