# STERF JUBILEE CALL 2026

## Project period 2027 - 2029

**STERF (Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation) is an independent research foundation that supports existing and future R&D efforts and delivers applied 'ready-to-use' research results that benefit the golf and turfgrass sector. STERF was set up in 2006 by the golf federations in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland and the Nordic Greenkeepers' Associations. This year STERF celebrate its 20th anniversary by announcing a STERF jubilee call. This call focus on two for the Nordic countries important research areas:**

- **Multifunctional golf courses and ecosystem services**
- **Winter stress management**

**STERF's vision and strategic objectives can be found in 'Guide for applicants' at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)**

The world is changing rapidly and the environmental, social and economic reality we are now facing is very different to what we are used to. The cumulative effects of parallel crises need to be addressed by all sectors, actors and levels in society, including the golf community. All this calls for more research and innovation for a sustainable future.

The future challenges for golf and the larger turfgrass industry are many and diverse, in order to provide high quality golf courses and other sport fields. 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) and rising operating costs for turfgrass maintenance are expected. The situation today is that societal development is accelerating the loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity.

In this call for proposals, STERF has decided to prioritize research and development the areas of landscape resilience, accessibility and winter stress management.

## LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE - Supporting biodiversity, climate change adaptation and soil quality

In addition to offering a high quality arena for golf, golf facilities can contribute to the achievement of important international and national environmental quality objectives, and to improving people's health and quality of life. Golf courses, as part of the landscape green-blue infrastructure, hold an untapped potential to provide biodiversity support at this greater spatial scale.

The focus regarding biodiversity and golf courses has been on the golf course itself, with progressive golf clubs implementing various species supporting elements. From these local initiatives, this call focuses on how golf courses can be acknowledged and integrated as parts of the larger surrounding green-blue infrastructure. In order to assess the importance of golf courses as reservoirs of fertile soil, there is a need to better understand how the soil ecology of golf courses is influenced by different design and maintenance regimes.

## ACCESSIBILITY - Connecting to and learning from the nature and culture of the landscape nearby

The realization of benefits from green areas in landscapes is dependent on accessibility. For example, in order for a resident to gain the physical and mental health benefits from nature visits, they need to be able to access nature. Access is about overcoming barriers. Physical access to green areas is a relatively well-studied topic, with a focus on distance and physical barriers (such as fences and roads), or a lack of physical infrastructure for access. However, accessibility is also an issue of institutional and cognitive barriers. Nature interpretation can allow the general public to develop a personal relationship with nature and the cultural landscape.

This call focus on how planning, design and maintenance of golf courses can provide access to nature nearby, and on golf courses as pedagogical land use.

# WINTER STRESS MANAGEMENT

For the Nordic countries, one of the most important implications of climate change is that winters become more unstable in regions where a stable snow cover was previously common. Over recent decades, melt-water and recurring freeze-thaw cycles resulting in ice encasement have become a major issue on many golf courses, notably in the metropolitan areas of Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo. A survey conducted by the Norwegian Golf Federation of 18-hole golf courses in the greater Oslo area after the devastating winter of 2017-18 showed that the average delay in opening due to ice and water damage was 3.5 weeks and the average revenue loss was 420,000 NOK (≈ 35,000 €).

Sector specific and global challenges. This call focus on how to promote high quality and environment-friendly golf courses with high resistance against abiotic and biotic winter damage, including fast recovery whenever such damages occur.

Further details on the scope and intended outcomes from these R&D areas can be found in STERF´s R&D programmes on *Multifunctional golf courses and ecosystem services and Winter stress and integrated pest management*.
https://sterf.org/about-sterf/research-programme/

## Guidelines for applicants

STERF welcomes proposals from both turfgrass specialists and researchers in related disciplines, provided that the project demonstrates clear relevance for Nordic golf facilities and delivers applicable results for the sector

STERF has reserved about 1,5 million SEK (€142 000) per year for 2027, 2028 and 2029 for this jubilee call. We recognise that industrial engagement and financial support for projects is a critical component to deliver additional impact and outreach.

Projects that combine practical applicability with scientific excellence and international collaboration will be prioritized. We also welcome complementary financial support from for example research councils, research foundations, research-oriented companies.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to secure additional financial and/or in-kind support for their planned research projects. Collaboration and joint projects between Nordic research organizations is an important aim for STERF, but STERF also encourages collaboration with international research organizations outside the Nordic countries.

Instructions for those wishing to apply for funding for research projects from STERF can be found in the **"Guide for applicants"** at www.sterf.org .The "Guide for applicants" provides details on the template for proposal submissions and describes how applications for funding are assessed by STERF.

## Deadline

Deadline for application: **October 1st 2026.**

Agreement for approved projects will be written for one to three years; however, continuation of the project will be determined annually based on progress and status reports delivered to STERF. Decisions regarding funding should be made by December 2026.

**The proposal should be sent as a PDF-file to**:
Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation
Att: Maria Strandberg
maria.strandberg@golf.se

If more information or clarification is required, please contact:

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