

New Standard For Sustainable Golf Tournaments

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Golf has just added another significant resource to its suite of custom built sustainability tools – with the launch of a new open source international standard for sustainable golf tournaments, and an associated third-party certification and labelling system. This follows a two-year collaborative project comes to completion, coordinated by GEO Foundation and led by international sustainable sport and event experts.

Developed in accordance with the recognised codes of the international ISEAL Alliance, the Standard outlines recommended performance criteria spanning nature, resources and community, across all key aspects of tournament staging, communications and legacy. Available for public use under a Creative Commons license, the Standard is relevant and applicable to all types and locations of tournaments, from Majors to Tour events, and can also be scaled down for use at amateur tournaments.

Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of GEO said: “This work was driven by requests from tournament organisers and sponsors, as well as inspired by the wider movement in sustainable sports as led by groups such as the IOC, UNEP, Green Sports Alliance and other individual sports and events. We are extremely grateful to all those who provided time and input on the main working group, and the many more who provided feedback during the two rounds of public consultation. It’s very exciting to think of the global positive impact that can be achieved by integrating sustainability into and communicating through this large and highly visible sector of sport”.

Some of the leading organisations and tournaments that provided support and input into the standard and the certification component included The R&A and The Open; European Tour; Scottish Open; Waste Management Phoenix Open; RBC Heritage; IMG; Ladies European Tour; The Solheim Cup; **US Kids Golf; The Venice Open;** Waste and Resource Action Plan (WRAP); University of Cardiff; Council for Responsible Sport; EcoArenas; Performance 54; and Earth2Ocean.

Keith Pelley, Chief Executive of the European Tour, said: “We are proud to have supported this work over a number of years and to see it come to fruition is very rewarding for all parties involved. The European Tour, through The European Tour Green Drive, is an important avenue in which we can continue to innovate by promoting and roadtesting the standard – along with venue and tournament certification – across our events, and we are very excited to see what sustainable results we can achieve in the future.”

Philip Russell, Assistant Director of Sustainability at The R&A: “As a member of the expert working group it was great to see the new standard emerge, to learn from others and to be able to input our own experiences of progressing the sustainable development agenda. The Standard has certainly provided a key resource for The R&A in shaping GreenLinks, The Open’s sustainability programme. We would encourage other event organisers to apply the new standard in structuring their own efforts for hosting sustainable events.”

Shelley Villalobos, Managing Director of the Council for Responsible Sport: “It is great to see this sector specific standard come together, which complements our own standard and certification in other sports. Through our strategic partnership with GEO we are delighted to play a part in the verification of GEO Certified® Tournaments in North America, and hope that the provision of this programme will enable more golf tournaments to get involved in the sport’s sustainability efforts”.

The Sustainable Golf Tournament Standard can be obtained here. (http://www.golfenvironment.org/get_involved/tournaments/the_standard)

Golf Environment Organization www.golfenvironment.org (<http://www.golfenvironment.org>)



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