



**SCOTTISH  
GOLF™**

**Environmental Action Plan  
Step-by-Step Guide**

Version: Dec 2016

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## Introduction

Golf facilities, like any other businesses need to be managed in a sustainable way to provide the best quality service to members and visitors for the best value for money. The ever increasing impacts of Climate Change, the rising costs of resources such as power and water, increasing amounts of legislation and high player expectations all need to be addressed and should motivate clubs to be proactive and improve their environmental performance.

The key asset of any club is the golf course itself so it is vital that this is of the highest possible quality to retain and attract members and visitors. In addition to sustainably managed quality playing surfaces, issues such as nature and landscape conservation and improvement, water resource management, energy efficiency, supply chain and waste management, pollution prevention and control, and community and cultural heritage issues all need to be addressed on the course and in the clubhouse and other built areas.

Addressing all these environmental issues will help with making your facility efficient, profitable and socially inclusive leading to a more sustainable and successful business.

## The benefits of developing an Environmental Action Plan

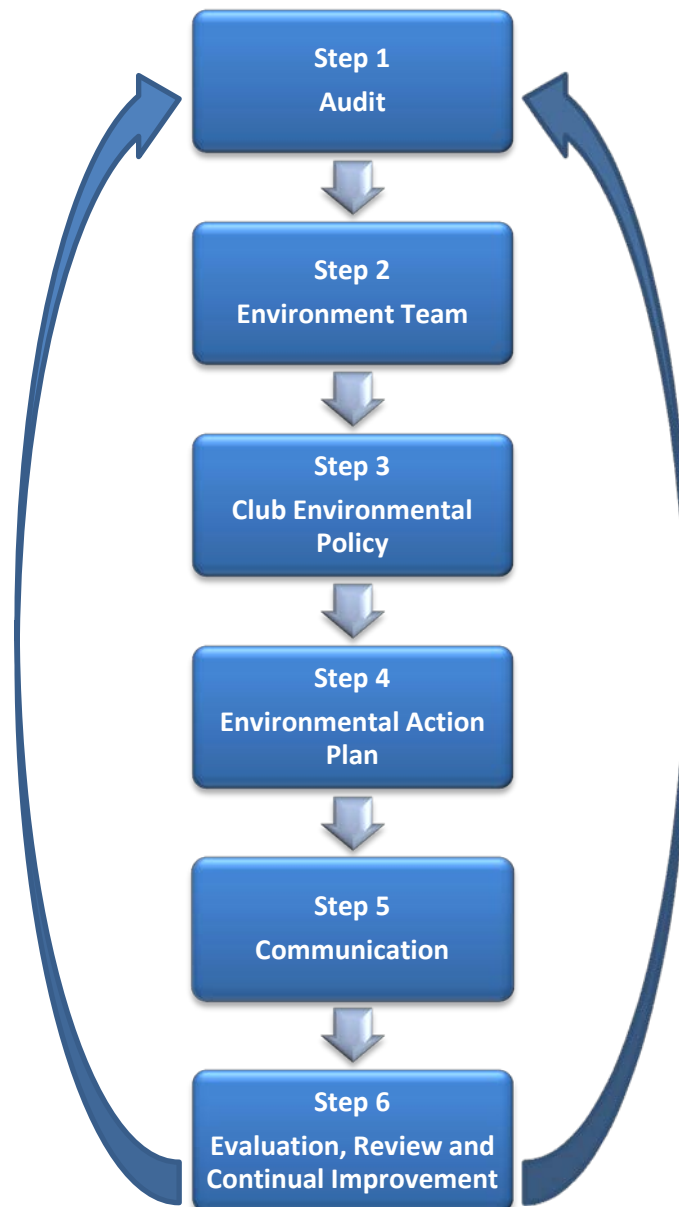
Adopting an environmental action plan at your golf facility will ensure that previous environmental achievements, current environmental practices and future planned projects are properly understood, documented and coordinated to ensure positive progress is achieved. In the long term, it will assist in resource and financial planning for activities and aid communication and continuity with staff and committee members.

An Environmental Action Plan with a range of environmental activity across the whole facility can:

- Help to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the facility.
- Avoid negative impacts on the environment and ensure full legal compliance.
- Ensure efficient use of resources and reduce wastage of materials leading to cost savings.
- Increase environmental knowledge and understanding amongst staff, members and visitors.
- Identify sources of advice, funding and other resources through appropriate external partnerships and community involvement.
- Drive performance, improve forward planning and could lead to gaining local and international respect and recognition through progression to the international Eco label GEO Certified [www.golfenvironment.org](http://www.golfenvironment.org).

## Step-by-Step Guide

Many industries follow the internationally recognized European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) methodology for producing environmental management plans. This guide takes the key principles of EMAS of **'Audit, Action and Evaluation'** simplified to apply effectively to your golf facility. Your environmental action plan should where possible be compatible and built in to your overall business plan and used in conjunction with your Course Management Policy. **An example Course Management Policy is available from Scottish Golf.**



## Step 1 Audit

Before developing future actions, it is important to have a good understanding of past activities and achievements and current practices. Scottish Golf use an **Environmental Audit Checklist** to help you document current practices and activities and achievements to date. This can highlight areas of strength and areas that can be improved. A **Self Evaluation Matrix (SEM)** is also available from Scottish Golf to do a simple check on where your club sits in relation to different categories.

To assist with this audit, there are many reports, surveys, and other paperwork that should be collated and stored for future reference. Below are a few examples (clubs are not expected to have all!)

### NATURE

- Nature or Landscape Designation documents (SSSI, SAC etc.)
- Habitat and species survey reports
- Landscape appraisal reports
- Habitat Management plans (e.g. Woodland Plan, Gorse management Plan etc.)
- SGEG reports
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan

### WATER

- SEPA Abstraction Licenses
- Scottish Water Business agreements
- Water Quality sampling results
- Rainfall data

### ENERGY

- Energy Audit reports
- Specialist equipment / efficiency/renewable energy reports
- Energy Usage Data

### SUPPLY CHAIN

- Green Purchasing policy
- Supplier lists
- Agronomy reports
- Course product data / fertilizer programme
- Waste Audits
- Waste Data

### POLLUTION CONTROL

- H&S Manual
- Emergency /Pollution Incident plan
- Water Quality testing data
- SEPA discharge consents
- Drainage records/plans

### COMMUNITY

- Newsletters / Articles
- Centenary Books
- Archaeological records
- Listed building documentation
- Cultural Heritage reports
- Historic Building surveys / renovation plans
- Old course layout plans / Hole name origins

You may wish to pull all this information together into a summary document to record examples of past achievements and current practices and procedures. This is a good way of communicating past environmental activity to staff and members. Scottish Golf recommend utilizing the **GEO OnCourse** online platform as a way of recording and monitoring your environmental activities.

## Step 2 Environmental Team

It is recommended that an environmental team with a variety of skills and responsibilities is set up to share ideas and actions. It is suggested that there is one team leader and team members from the green staff, the committees, clubhouse management, catering and additional support from keen and skilled members.

## Step 3 Club Environmental Policy

This is a one page high level commitment to the Club's environmental activities. It covers key aims for each environmental category and is adopted and signed off by the Environmental Team. It should be communicated to members and visitors so everyone understands the long term environmental aims of the Club. **An example template of a Club Environmental Policy is available from Scottish Golf.**

## Step 4 Environmental Action Plan Document

### Environmental Action Plan

This is a 'working' spreadsheet for use by the environment team documenting future actions, by whom, by when and what resources will be required. This the key programme of future environmental works alongside an existing course management plan or turf policy.

**An Environmental Action Plan template is available from Scottish Golf.**

### Course Maps/Plans

The background document and Environmental action plan are supported by course maps/plans which are useful in identifying areas/zones for actions either digital / GPS or paper/aerial photograph based. Photographic records are also valuable for recording and monitoring over time.

**Further expert advice**, technical audits, legislation updates, environmental training and surveys will assist your club gain further understanding and knowledge along with key recommendations to populate this action plan. Scottish Golf can help with further advice and there is a variety of free government funded advice along with many consultancies.

See [www.scottishgolf.org/environment](http://www.scottishgolf.org/environment) for further technical information and links to government assistance. For detailed legislation advice see [www.netregs.co.uk](http://www.netregs.co.uk).

## Step 5 Communication

Once documents have been completed it is important that they are communicated to staff and committees so they are fully endorsed and adopted.

- The Environmental Policy should be displayed for all to see.
- Those staff with responsibilities should then be fully aware of the actions they will be involved with and the contribution to the overall aims of the club.
- Key activities in the action plan can be communicated to members in advance to notify of any disruption and educate why the activity is taking place.
- The Environmental Policy and if desired the Environmental Action Plan could be communicated out-with the club also to local community and interested groups to demonstrate the commitment to environmental stewardship.

## Step 6 Evaluation, Review and Continual Improvement

The Environmental Action Plan should be a 'working document' that is used on a regular basis. The actions should be reviewed by the Environment Team more formally every 6 months with new actions added where appropriate. A full review can be prepared after 3-5 years.

**An Environmental Action Plan review form is available from Scottish Golf.**