

RMGC Policies & Procedures

Policy #19: Environment Policy

A. General.

The Royal Malta Golf Club is committed to:

- Provide a safe and pleasant working environment for all our staff
- Enhance the natural environment of the golf course for golfers and wildlife
- Conserve energy and water and reduce waste in the clubhouse, maintenance facility and golf course
- Prevent pollution from all our activities
- Promote wider environmental change by careful choice of products and services

B. Objectives.

- Protection and sustainable use of soil
- Use of pesticides and fertilisers
- Water resources, use reduction and separation
- Biodiversity
- Landscape and cultural heritage
- Pollution / waste management
- Energy consumption
- Additional areas of relevance

This Environment Policy aims to provide a written record of the club's environmental goals and shows how members and staff can help bring about environmental improvements and legal compliance. We use Geo On-Course methodology as a road map to achieve our objectives. We achieve these aims by focusing on the following areas:

Protection and sustainable use of soil

- I. We identify any areas on the golf course and its immediate surroundings where erosion is a problem and recommend or implement curative measures.
- II. We continue to improve soil structure with aeration during the growing season to improve water and nutrient retention and prevent runoff.
- III. We continue the use of stabilised nitrogen on fairways to prevent lateral movement of nutrients to off-course, environmentally sensitive areas.
- IV. We implement the use of more organic fertilisers to help improve soil structure and improve water retention during the summer months.
- V. We continue to recycle cores from aeration of greens and tees as they are collected.

Use of Chemicals (Pesticides and Fertilisers)

Chemical controls are an important tool in golf course maintenance. However, chemicals must be used with care and must be stored and disposed of according to law. We abide by the Code of Conduct for Good Agricultural Practice in Malta.

Safe storage and disposal of chemicals

- I. We research the required standards for the use, storage and disposal of oils, fertilisers and pesticides.
- II. We ensure that our storage facilities meet all legal requirements.
- III. We ensure chemicals are only applied by qualified personnel and only under appropriate weather conditions.
- IV. We dispose of hazardous waste through an appropriate waste contractor.

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Chemical use on the golf course

- I. We research Integrated Pest Management.
- II. We monitor playing surfaces to identify pest and diseases quickly and accurately.
- III. We analyse and alter the environmental conditions relating to each tee and green on the golf course to minimise the occurrence of pests and diseases, e.g. nutrient status, thatch levels, shading of the turf and air movement.
- IV. We agree 'damage thresholds' (e.g. percentage cover of a tee or green) below which level pests or diseases will be tolerated.

Water resources, reduction and separation

Water is a shared resource and must be fairly balanced between the needs of the golf club, local services, homeowners and local wildlife. We must ensure we do not use more water than our local water environment can sustain and we do not pollute our local environment.

Recording water use and increasing water efficiency

- I. We record annual water usage on the golf course and in the clubhouse and maintenance facility and know the financial cost of our water use.
- II. We undertake water audits to identify the main areas of water use and to prioritise areas for water efficiency measures.
- III. We undertake simple, cost effective measures to improve water efficiency and research possible initiatives using relevant sources, for example we have introduced reverse osmosis water sources to reduce the need for golfers' purchase of plastic bottled water.

Irrigation water

- I. We investigate alternative sources of irrigation water.
- II. We irrigate based on weather, observed ground conditions and turf condition.
- III. We research methods of reducing water losses.

Treatment for washdown water

- I. We research the importance of safely treating washdown water.
- II. We assess our current washdown facilities and ensure they are legally compliant.
- III. If we discharge treated washdown water to the local water environment we obtain an environmental permit to discharge our treated washdown water.

Biodiversity

The golf course has the potential to be of significant value to Malta because of the overall scarcity of year-round green areas. The right balance must be struck between the needs of a functioning golf course and local wildlife needs.

As part of RMGC efforts under our commitment to the environment, Nature Trust (Malta) prepared a Biodiversity Report in December 2012 including documenting all flora and fauna species on the course and its environs. This report is attached as an Appendix.

Protected species on the golf course

- I. We identify and prepare a list of protected species.
- II. We identify the widespread species likely to be present on our golf course, and adapt management techniques and the timing of management operations to avoid impacting upon these species. One example is not trimming or cutting trees in bird breeding seasons.

Designated areas

- I. We research statutory and non-statutory environmental designations – currently identified as the Chapel, the Maid's Bedroom and the Bridge on the 17th hole; and determine whether any additional areas of our golf course should be designated. We will obtain copies of the official citation documents to understand the importance of these sites and will make sure we are aware of any management restrictions.

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Invasive species

- I. We research invasive species and ensure that these species are not purchased or otherwise actively introduced onto the golf course.
- II. We investigate the source of all soils introduced to site to ensure that invasive species are not inadvertently introduced to the golf course.
- III. We survey our golf course for invasive species and make efforts to ensure that invasive plants do not spread outside the boundary of the golf course.

Landscape & Cultural heritage

The landscape is one of the nation's primary natural resources and reflects the interaction of man and nature over many centuries, contributing to the distinctive character of the country and the locality. Malta's unique history provides a challenge to preserve, conserve and protect buildings, objects or other artefacts of historical significance.

We follow national guidelines for the conservation and enhancement of landscaped areas and features of historical, archaeological and cultural value.

In particular, we ensure that any course development work does not impact on the Ceppuna Chapel and the "Maid's Bedroom" structures.

- I. We ensure all topographic changes are consistent with the protection and enhancement of the landscape character of the site.
- II. We consider the use of native species and drought-tolerant varieties in all landscaping designs.
- III. We ensure we do not add further irrigation burden by selecting thirsty exotics.

Reducing and re-using waste

We undertake simple, cost effective measures to reduce and reuse waste.

Recycling and waste disposal

- I. We investigate how best to implement recycling at our club.
- II. We aim to recycle one or two waste streams in the next five years
- III. We investigate the viability of composting organic waste from the golf course and clubhouse and research methods of composting.
- IV. We communicate relevant waste legislation to our staff.
- V. We store our waste safely and securely.
- VI. We keep records of all waste transfers for the period required by law.
- VII. We ensure that all waste is collected by authorised contractors.
- VIII. We ensure that our waste is disposed of at an approved waste management site.

Pollution / Waste Management

Waste is created in all areas of the golf club and reducing waste has significant environmental and financial benefits. Plastic pollution mainly from discarded food and drink items is controlled and a sufficient supply of waste collection points are installed on the golf course and in the clubhouse and other structures. Air pollution occurs from industrial factories in the vicinity of the golf course and we are in contact with these factories to minimise their air pollution outputs.

Recording waste

- I. We conduct annual waste audits to record how much and what types of waste we produce.
- II. We use these audits to prioritise waste streams for action based on waste hierarchy and as a baseline to measure future changes in waste production and regularly to re-evaluate our cost of waste.

Energy Consumption

Saving energy has positive environmental and financial benefits.

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Recording energy and carbon

- I. We record annual energy usage on the golf course and in the clubhouse and maintenance facility and know the financial cost of our energy use.
- II. We undertake energy audits to identify the main areas of energy use and to prioritise areas for energy efficiency measures.
- III. We undertake simple, cost effective measures to improve energy efficiency and research possible initiatives.

Membership and staff transport

- I. We encourage staff and/or members to travel together to save energy.

Carbon emissions

- II. We research the benefits of carbon auditing.
- III. We calculate the golf club's carbon footprint saving through bulk/shared purchasing.

Training and Education

Informed and motivated members and staff can save energy and reduce future costs.

Staff education and training

- I. The club provides a forum for staff to generate ideas from club staff on how they can contribute to saving resources and other initiatives.
- II. The club appoints a named environmental champion to liaise with the general manager to report any such initiatives.
- III. The club investigates education and training options to help achieve environmental efficiencies and improvements.

Additional areas of relevance

The golf club can have an impact outside our own organisation by careful choice of products and services.

Golf Club procurement policy

- I. We try to minimise packaging where possible and look for packaging which is recycled or can easily be recycled.
- II. We research which foods are in season at different times of year and incorporate seasonal produce in our food menus.
- III. We research energy efficient products and consider energy efficiency when purchasing equipment.
- IV. We compare different equipment based on initial cost differences and calculated payback time.
- V. We implement a purchasing policy for chemicals and other essential items to reduce costs and our carbon footprint
- VI. Membership education and training. The club informs potential energy saving measures to the membership at the AGM.
- VII. The club posts signage in locker rooms to remind members of the energy savings that can be made through simple behavioural changes such as switching off lights and taking shorter showers.

This Environment Policy Document was generated by the RMGC Environment Committee on 24th June 2018 with the help of the English Golf Union's Greener Golf Website and other sources, and with contributions from golf club staff and members.

Last reviewed and approved by BOM: 20th April 2021