



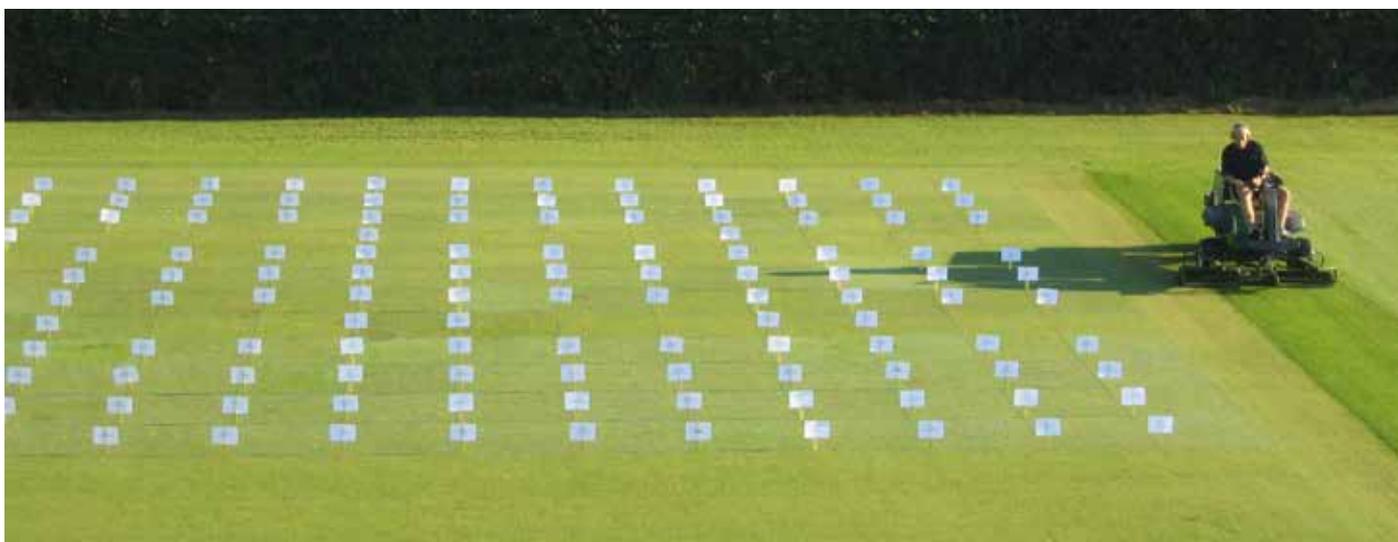
**GUIDE  
FOR  
APPLICANTS**

*Sterf*

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended for those wishing to apply for funding for research projects from the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF). It contains guidelines on the entire process from application to project completion. It also describes the nature of the contract between successful applicants and STERF and their responsibilities.





## I. WHAT IS STERF?

STERF is an independent research foundation that supports existing and future R&D efforts and delivers '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 and Iceland and the Nordic greenkeepers' associations.

STERF's vision is to be the leading international centre of expertise in sustainable golf course management.

The activities of STERF are intended to lead to improvements in the quality of golf course and managed turfgrass areas, as well as economic and environmental benefits. The strategic objectives for STERF-funded R&D activities are that:

- The design, construction, management and administration of golf courses and managed turfgrass areas provide optimal conditions for playing quality, degree of utilisation of the course and management inputs.
- The design, construction, management and administration of golf courses and managed turfgrass areas

are economically and environmentally sustainable, for example with respect to plant nutrient requirements, water and energy use, drainage and control of weeds and plant diseases.

- Golf courses and managed turfgrass areas contribute to the production of biological diversity, the conservation of natural and cultural environments and the retention and expansion of ecosystem services.
- The societal benefit of golf courses is increased by courses improving the conditions for good quality of life and better mental and physical health for more groups in society, e.g. through providing a broader active outdoor life, experiences of nature and better climate adaptation in the everyday landscape.

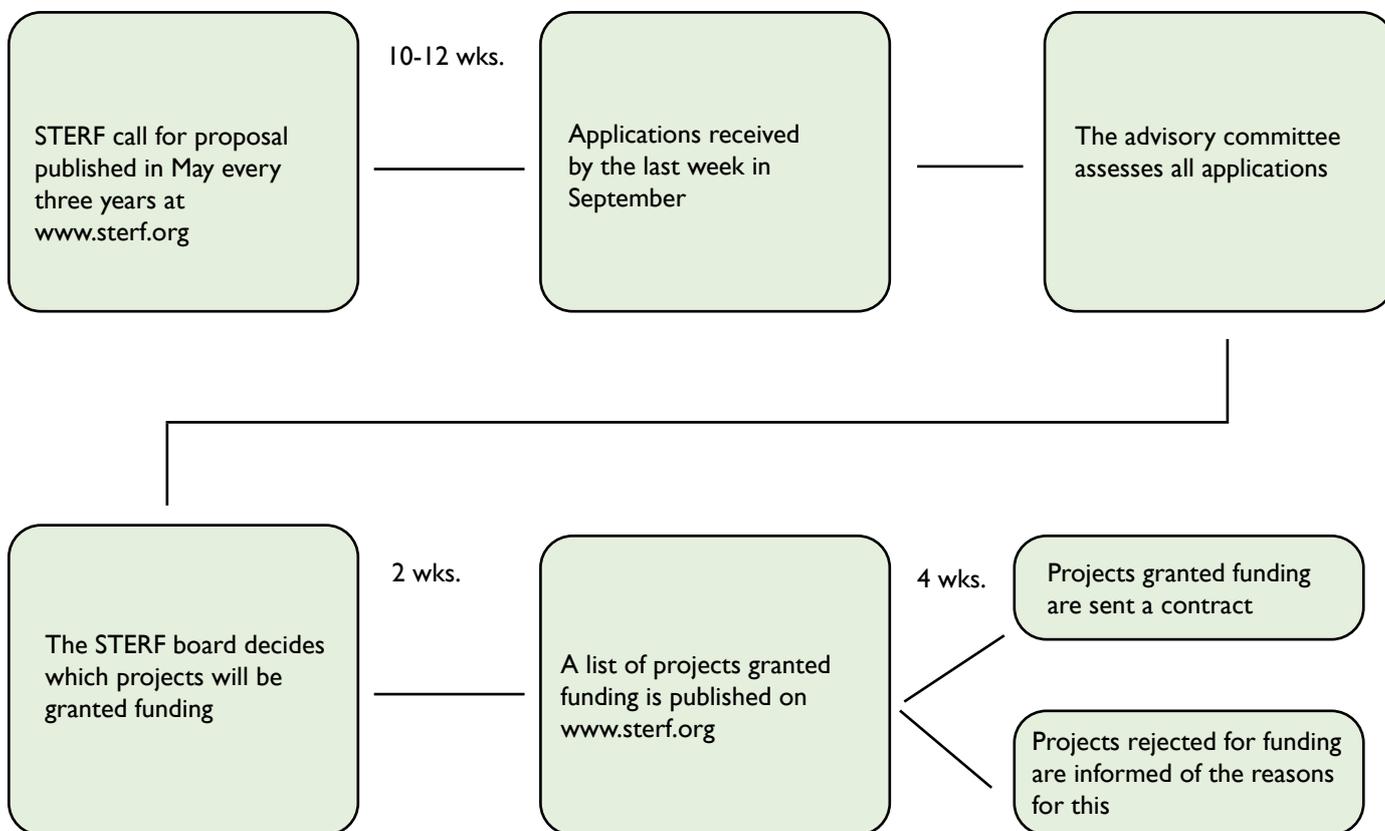
STERF supplies new knowledge that is essential for modern golf course and turfgrass management and is ready to use, for example directly on individual golf courses, in dialogue with the authorities and the public, and in credible environmental protection work. Details of STERF's R&D programme can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

## 2. APPLICATION PROCESS

STERF issues a call for applications for funding for new research projects once every three years.

The call is announced in good time on the STERF website. The applications are assessed by STERF's advisory committee, which consists of representatives of the Nordic green-keepers' associations, the golf federations' course consultants, golf course architects, researchers and other experts within the sector.

The advisory committee presents a proposal to the STERF board, which makes the final decision. Within around one month of the board's decision, successful applicants receive a contract and unsuccessful applicants are informed of the reasons for rejection.



# APPLICATIONS

For an application to be formally correct and suitable for assessment in an appropriate way, the following steps must be followed during preparation.

## 1. Choose research programme

STERF has decided to prioritise research and development within the following international thematic areas, according to the R&D programmes within each area:

- Integrated pest management
- Sustainable water management
- Turfgrass winter stress management
- Multifunctional use of golf facilities and ecosystem services.

Begin by reading through the research programmes. When submitting an application, it is important to relate it to the correct programme. When seeking funding for a cross-disciplinary project, list all programmes to which the project relates. Details of STERF's research programmes can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

## 2. STERF's specific criteria

Applicants are advised to pay special attention to the following aspects:

- Applied research projects where results can be quickly translated into practice are given the highest priority.
- STERF gives high priority to projects that are funded jointly by STERF and other sources, such as universities, institutes, research councils, companies and other foundations. STERF requires projects focusing on product testing to have matched funding of at least 80%.
- STERF encourages cooperation among Scandinavian researchers and with researchers outside the Nordic countries. STERF may allocate money for research outside the Nordic countries, but a requirement for this is that there is at least one Nordic scientist within the research consortium.
- Managers of STERF-funded projects should appoint, when applicable, a reference group of scientists, experienced practitioners and agronomists from at least two of the Nordic countries.
- Demonstration trials play a vital part in making research findings easily available to interested parties and should, when applicable, be included in proposals for ordinary research projects.

- The project description must include a comprehensive dissemination plan, including specification of the planned number of scientific papers, field days, popular articles, webinars etc. within the project budget.

## 3. Write the application

**Language** is English.

All project applications must contain the following components:

### **Project title and information about the applicant/s**

- The project title, which should be given in both English and a Scandinavian language, should be short and concise. It should consist at most of 200 characters with spaces
- The main applicant is the person who will be responsible for the project proceeding at the planned pace and for ensuring that status reports are submitted in time and that the final report on the project is submitted by the specified deadline. State the name, title, university/research institute, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the principal investigator.
- Give details of any co-applicant/s for the project.

### **Summary of the research project**

A summary of the project aims and subject area, written in English and a Scandinavian language, must be provided. This may comprise up to 1000 characters with spaces. Bear in mind that this text is automatically published on the STERF website [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org) if funding is granted.

### **Project description**

The project description may comprise max. 5 pages and must contain the following components.

#### **a. Description of the project**

The following parts must be included in the description of the project:

- Short description of the background and an introduction to the research problem
- Objectives of the project
- Relevance for the golf sector
- Materials and methods, including available research and field facilities.

- b. Plan for dissemination of results**  
State the plan for dissemination of research results and new knowledge, both scientific outcomes and popular outcomes. See template in appendix 3.
- c. CV/qualifications**  
A **brief** description of the principal investigator's and co-applicant/s' qualification must be included in the project description. *Note: Only include qualifications relevant for the project.*
- d. Project timetable**  
State the proposed dates (year and month) of the project start and end. The deadline for submission of the final report is automatically six months after the end date specified in the project plan. In addition, present a timetable with important milestones for the project.

## Budget

The project budget must contain the budget for STERF's part of the project and the budget in addition to STERF's part of the project. A budget for each project year must be presented.

List all costs for the project.

### *Personnel:*

- Research post title/degree must be stated for all budgeted personnel expected to participate in the project
- State full-year costs (in SEK) for the respective budget individual, calculated as total annual salary for each individual, including employer contribution (LKP)
- State time costs for all budgeted personnel, calculated as full-year costs for the respective budget individual divided by number of productive working hours, which for STERF applications is set to 1660 hours/year
- For all budgeted personnel, state the planned number of hours and the total cost.

### *Materials, travel and other costs:*

- Specify costs arising directly from the proposed project, for example establishment of trial plots specifically for the project, apparatus required for carrying out the project and travel costs necessary for conducting the project or for presentation of project results according to the plan
- Be clear when specifying each individual cost item
- Costs considered to be included in overheads and items such as 'Other material' or 'Various other costs' will be rejected.

### *Overheads (OH):*

- OH costs are based on total salary costs (salaries including LKP) for all budgeted personnel in the project and are intended to cover the costs of premises, ICT and administrative infrastructure, investments in apparatus and equipment, consumables etc.
- OH costs must be the applicants' actual OH costs and may comprise a maximum of 70% of the total salary costs of the project. The procedure for calculating OH costs is presented in Appendix 1.

The project period must be documented through up-to-date book-keeping and costs must be justifiable by excerpts from the accounts if so demanded by STERF. Calculation of the organisation's OH costs must also be demonstrable to STERF.

## Funding

Give an outline of how the project is intended to be funded. All values must be expressed in Swedish crowns. Funding must be specified for each project year.

If the project has been granted other funding or if funding has been sought from other funding bodies, this must be stated. This also applies to any in-house resources that will go to the project.

## 4. Submit the application

The proposals should be sent as a PDF-file to:

Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment  
Research Foundation  
Att: Maria Strandberg  
**maria.strandberg@golf.se**



## HOW APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT FUNDING ARE ASSESSED BY STERF

In preparation for the decisions, the STERF board appoints an advisory committee with the following members:

1. STERF director (chair).
2. Two independent international experts.
3. Coordinator for golf course consultants/agronomists employed by the Nordic golf federations and representatives of Scandinavian greenkeepers' associations, representatives of Scandinavian golf course architects.
4. Coordinator for researchers, representing universities and research institutes in the Nordic countries.

The advisory committee convenes before the STERF board meeting and draws up two lists of proposed projects ranked in order of recommendation to be presented to the board, the list is accompanied by a table summarising the scores awarded to project proposals according to the assessment criteria and a brief (5-line) statement of the major strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Members of the STERF board or advisory committee are not excluded from being principal investigators or part of a

research consortium in proposals to STERF. However, any member with such conflicting interests is not allowed to be present in the room when the final assessments or decisions are made concerning the proposal in which they are involved.

The rating scales and assessment criteria for the applications are described below.

## Assessment criteria

Research proposals are assessed according to the following criteria:

- A. Relevance to STERF's R&D programmes and 'Call for proposals'
- B. Research topic
- C. Scientific methods
- D. Researchers' qualifications and project management
- E. Budget
- F. Plan for dissemination of results

For each of these criteria, the advisory committee can give the project a score from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest value. Thus the maximum score obtainable by a project proposal is 30. When evaluating proposals according to the different criteria, the following questions are addressed:

### A) Relevance to STERF and the Nordic and international golf sector

- Is the topic covered by the project in good compliance with the aims prioritised in the programme/call?
- Are the effects for the golf sector clearly described, i.e. is there potential for clear improvements in the sector?
- Is the project sustainable and ethically proper?
- Will the project deliver information as "ready-to-use results"?
- Has the project novel value for the Nordic and international golf and turfgrass sector?
- Is there a suitable reference group associated with the project?

### B) Research topic/question

- Is the area to which the application refers well described?
- Is the existing literature thoroughly reviewed?
- Are the question, hypotheses and objectives clearly formulated?
- Have orienteering studies producing preliminary results been performed and have these been considered in formulation of the research question?

### C) Materials and methods

- Are the materials and methods appropriate with regard to the research question?
- Does the design permit appropriate statistical analysis and have the objectives been met?
- Is the project time frame realistic?
- Have end-users been sufficiently involved in planning the project?

### D) Researchers' qualifications and project management/competence

- Are the scientific qualifications of the principal investigator and co-applicant/s well-defined and described?
- Are the principal investigator and co-applicant/s sufficiently qualified to carry out the project?
- Have the principal investigator and co-applicant/s published work of good quality within the area of the proposed project or related areas?
- Is the research intended to be conducted in an environment where the research group can receive competent support from others?
- Is there good coordination with other groups within the same area?
- Is there a concrete plan for the work of the project reference group?

### E) Cost calculations and funding

- Are the costs clearly presented?
- Are the cost items of a reasonable magnitude relative to the proposed activities and execution of the project?
- Are the overheads correctly computed (max. 70% of personnel costs in the total amount sought)?
- Is matched funding from other sources clearly documented?

### F) Plan for dissemination of results

- Is there a clear schedule for dissemination of preliminary and final results to the target group? Are the costs for the specified number of popular and scientific articles, seminars, fact sheets etc. reasonable and clearly stated?
- Are the popular journals, report series, websites, seminars etc. appropriate for effective communication of results?
- Is there a plan for scientific publication?
- Does the project involve any demonstrations/small-scale trials on golf courses?

# DECISION

Around one month after the STERF board has made its decision, a letter of approval or rejection will be sent to all applicants, stating the reasons for the decision.

## Approved projects

Once a project is approved, the applicant will receive two copies of a contract where information on the system for managing the research funding must be provided on the rear. The organisation that will administer and manage the funding must be specified. If the principal investigator resigns or is unable to continue with the project for some other reason, their original department is responsible for ensuring that the project continues with a new principal investigator. Remember to enter a bank account or plus-giro details and a payment reference code. A spending plan for the entire project must also be specified in the funding contract. More details about projects running for several years can be found under interim reporting. The contract must also state the deadline for final reporting.

Send one copy of the signed contract to the STERF office and retain the other copy.

## Projects approved on certain conditions

In some cases complementary information may be needed for an approved project before a contract can be signed. This is clearly stated in the letter confirming approval of the project. It requires the principal investigator to provide the extra information demanded before a contract is drawn up.

## Rejected projects

An application is rejected if the project is not considered to be sufficiently strongly linked to the relevant STERF research programme, if it has not fulfilled other important criteria according to the STERF assessment procedure or if the assessment committee and the board prioritise other proposals. A letter clearly stating the reasons for rejection will be sent within one month of the decision being made.

# ANNUAL REPORT

STERF grants research funding for the entire project period. Annual payments for projects that will run for several years are conditional upon an annual report being submitted by the date stipulated in the contract.

## Writing an annual report

In December each year, an reminder and a form specifying the definitive date for submission of annual reports to STERF will be sent out. Parts of this annual report will be used in the preparation of STERF's annual report. The parts concerned will be stated on the form. Together with the annual report, two photos that can be used for STERF's annual report must also be submitted. The form for annual reporting of STERF-funded projects can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

The annual report will be scrutinised and approved by the STERF board. This ensures that STERF's research funds are used in the correct way and that the research is at a high level.

## Popular science annual reporting

For projects that will run for several years, short popular sciences articles showing preliminary results are required. Guidelines for popular science reporting can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

# FINAL REPORTING

All projects funded by STERF must submit a final report. These final reports are published on the STERF website and are used as a basis for dissemination of results. The final reporting must include a final report on the project, a popular science report and a project appraisal.

## Writing a final report

### Final report

The final report must be at most 15 pages long and 3 megabytes in file size. The document can be written in Times New Roman (font size 12) with single row spacing and have 2.5 cm upper, lower, left and right margins.

The following headings must be included in the final report:

- Project title
- Authors of the report
- Conclusions on benefits and advice for the golf and turfgrass sector
- Background
- Materials and methods
- Results
- Discussion

### Popular science report

The popular science report can take different forms, for example popular science articles, fact sheets, handbooks. They must be written in simple and direct language so that practitioners, journalists and advisors can access the project objectives and results. A popular science article should be max. 15 000 characters with spaces. Fact sheets should also be concise. A handbook can be more comprehensive. A popular science article can have the following headings:

- Aim of the study
- Conclusions on benefits and advice for the sector

## DEFERRAL

If the project cannot be completed according to the original timetable, an application for a deferral must be submitted to the STERF office in good time before the original deadline for submission of the final report. The application for a deferral must clearly state the reason for the delay and contain a new timetable.

Final reporting of all existing projects must be completed within the deadline before funding can be sought for new projects.

- Results
- Methods – very briefly! (only enough detail to allow results to be understood).

Photos and illustrations are important in popular science reporting.

### Project appraisal

STERF has a dedicated form for project appraisals. The project appraisal must be submitted by the deadline specified in the funding contract. The form for project appraisals can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

### The final report must be sent to:

Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment  
Research Foundation  
Att: Maria Strandberg  
[maria.strandberg@golf.se](mailto:maria.strandberg@golf.se)

## Publication

When the popular science and scientific final reports have been approved, they are published on the STERF website at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

The website also provides contact details for the project's principal investigator, who should be prepared to receive questions after publication.

Popular science articles are generally published in golf magazines and other trade journals.

When the project is referred to, the principal investigator's contact details and the fact that the project has received STERF funding must always be cited.

# APPENDIX I

## CALCULATING OVERHEAD COSTS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### Overheads (OH) calculation

Variable costs as in annual report, latest available (kSEK)

Project-specific costs <sup>1)</sup>	xxx
Other variable costs <sup>2)</sup>	xxx
Personnel costs <sup>3)</sup>	xxx
Depreciation <sup>4)</sup>	xxx
<b>Total variable costs</b>	<b>xxx</b>

1) Extracted from the balance sheet (B/S) as costs attributable to projects, contract arrangements etc.

2) External costs according to the annual report – project-specific costs

3) According to the annual report

4) According to the annual report

### A) Project-specific personnel costs (kSEK)

	Salary	Salary incl. LKP	% of full-time	Personnel costs
Project-specific personnel	xxx	xxx	xx %	XXX
PhD students	xxx	xxx	75 %	XXX
Other personnel	xxx	xxx	x%	XXX
Total as in annual report		xxx	xxx	

**A: Total Project-specific Personnel costs      AAA**

### B) Non-project-specific costs (kSEK)

Administrative and other personnel costs	xxx
Other external variable costs	xxx
Depreciation	xxx

**B: Total non-project-specific costs      BBB**

### Overhead (OH) charging rate, %

**B**      **Total non-project-specific costs**      **BBB**  
**A**      **Total Project-specific Personnel costs**      **AAA** = xx %

# APPENDIX 2

## GUIDELINES FOR POPULAR SCIENCE REPORTING

STERF research projects are primarily funded by the Nordic golf sector. It is of the utmost importance that research results reach Nordic golf clubs and the Nordic turfgrass sector in the form of information that is ready to use.

Research and development are fundamental for sustainable development of the golf and turfgrass sector. An easy-to-read, concise and accurate description of the study in the form of a popular science report can be a key factor in communication with the sector – directly via e.g. webpages and newsletters, indirectly via consultants and the media.

The popular science report should provide the reader, irrespective of their prior knowledge of the area, with an idea about what has been studied, how it has been studied and the results obtained. The more knowledgeable reader can then access further information on the research by reading the full report.

The aim with popular science reporting is to spread the new information obtained in the research project, so that it can be utilised by practitioners, advisors or other researchers and actors in society.

### Target group perspective

Practitioners and decision makers at golf courses and other turfgrass installations need to share the newly obtained information. By describing the results as simply as possible, defining the commercial value in the results where possible, suiting the language to the reader and briefly summarising the research question and methods, popular science reports can increase the benefits to practitioners, decision makers, advisors, the media and other actors in society.

The popular science report is not an academic document; it must be written from a clear target group perspective. The modified vocabulary used in popular science reporting does not necessarily mean a change in the language in other publications.

### Examples of benefits

- What business benefits can e.g. a greenkeeper, chairperson or director of a golf club derive from the results?
- Are there any direct economic advantages of the research results that can be highlighted?
- Can a change in golf course or turfgrass management lead to a lower environmental impact?
- Can a change in regime, major or minor, produce time and/or cost savings?
- Could the results enable occupational benefits for staff?
- Is there an angle to the results that could possibly be of interest to a wider public and decision makers in society?
- Does the research show that the currently held opinion on an issue is no longer valid?

### Language and images

The text for popular science articles and reports, e.g. fact sheets and handbooks, must be supplied in English and in one Scandinavian language. Include as many photos and illustrations as may be needed to illustrate the content and attract readers.

### Vocabulary and jargon

The target groups for popular science reporting are funding bodies, practitioners and decision makers in the golf and turfgrass sector, advisors and other actors in society. Another group of professional writers in society with the same target groups is the media. The optimal popular science article should be suitable as an article in Nordic greenkeeper and golf trade journals, environmental magazines, newspapers etc.

- Would a reader who is not a specialist in a certain area be able to understand the content?
- If trade jargon is used, is it explained at some point in the text?
- Can sentences be shortened or divided to make reading easier?

### Length

A popular science article should generally not be longer than 15 000 characters with spaces. This makes it viable to translate to other Nordic languages. Fact sheets should also be brief, while handbooks can be more comprehensive.

### Layout and publication

All popular science reports will be given the layout specified in STERF's model for popular science articles, handbooks or fact sheets and will be published on the STERF website. Examples of articles can be found at [www.sterf.org](http://www.sterf.org)

# APPENDIX 3

## PLAN FOR DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND NEW KNOWLEDGE – TEMPLATE

### Scientific outcomes

#### Scientific publications

Journal	Theme or tentative title of the article	Time for submitting manuscript	Comments
Scientific Report	Theme of the report – tentative title	Time for submitting report	Comments

#### Scientific conferences and seminars

Name of the intended conference/ seminar or of the association organising it	Theme or tentative title of presentation (oral or poster presentation)	Date for the planned conference/seminar	Comments

### Popular outcomes

#### Popular scientific articles, videos, social media activities etc.

Magazine, webpage, social media activities etc.	Theme or tentative title of the article, video, newsletter, media activities etc.	Languages in addition to English	Time for submitting

#### STERF fact sheets

Webpages and other media channels	Name of fact sheet that will be updated	Languages in addition to English	Time for submitting	Target group (greenkeepers, club managers, decision makers, general public etc.)
Webpages and other media channels	Name of new fact sheet	Languages in addition to English	Time for submitting	Target group (greenkeepers, club managers, decision makers, general public etc.)

# APPENDIX 3 cont.

## STERF handbooks

Webpages and other media channels	Name of the handbook that will be updated	Languages in addition to English	Time for submitting	Target group (greenkeepers, club managers, decision makers, general public etc.)
Webpages and other media channels	Name of the new handbook	Languages in addition to English	Time for submitting	Target group (greenkeepers, club managers, decision makers, general public etc.)

## Oral presentations at conferences/seminar/meetings/webinars

Name of the activity or of the associations organising it	Theme of or tentative title of presentation	International or Nordic activity	Time for the planned activity	Target group (greenkeepers, club managers, decision makers, general public etc.)

## Additional dissemination activities:
