



GoGolf! – a Collaborative Project on Sport, Health & Participation achieves European Commission Erasmus+ award

Approximately 7.9 million¹ European citizens play golf in an industry that contributes over €15.1 billion² to the European economy. Golf Europe, a group of European golf's major stakeholders, will aim to progress golf's contribution to European society and the focus it receives within the community. The Europe 2020 strategy, which outlines the European Union's vision for the 21st century, included sustainability as a key driver for economic growth and resource efficiency. In this context, Golf Europe's activities of growing the sport of golf in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable way are in line and contribute to realising Europe's 2020 vision.

Under Erasmus+, the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020, the European Commission has awarded funding to the GoGolf! project, which be focused on sport, health and participation with transnational collaboration and two high-level aims:

1. Increasing the evidence base for the health benefits of golf for the European citizen
2. Driving increased participation in the sport at a pan-European level

The European Golf Association (EGA) General Secretary, Richard Heath, commented that:

"...the EGA is excited to be in a position to collate and develop the evidence-base of golf in an EU-sponsored project. We feel that a more formal realisation of the benefits will create a cascading effect to benefit the European population through increasing participation at a grass-roots level."

In the context of EU policy, the project aims to target the recently published Eurobarometer report on Sport and

Physical Activity³, which found that:

- ↳ 59% of EU citizens never or seldom exercise or play sport at least once a week
- ↳ Almost three-quarters of EU citizens (74%) say that they are not members of any sports club, a 67% increase since 2009.

With golf functioning as a major participation sport across Europe, the GoGolf! project will seek to identify how the European golf community can come together to address some of these impending health challenges for the European Community.

On behalf of The R&A, Steve Isaac, Director of Golf Course Management stated that:

"The Erasmus+ funding for GoGolf! provides a great opportunity for golf to demonstrate its value in providing health benefits to European citizens. Golf is an excellent way to address Europe's potential health crisis, being a sport providing gentle exercise and one that can be played by all ages."

A key aim of GoGolf! is to compose a multi-national, multi-stakeholder planning and delivery team which can bring a diverse set of skills, perspectives and resources to the work being undertaken. Partners include: The PGAs of Europe, Portuguese Golf Federation, Estonian Golf Association, Royal Dutch Golf Federation, Czech Golf Federation, French Golf Federation, and the University of St Andrews as a research partner. Coordinating the partners will be the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE). Financial partners include the EGA and the PGA European Tour (PGAET).

Fredrik Lindgren, Head of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability at the PGAET said:

“It is great news that European golf has been recognised as a positive contributor to the health enhancing physical activity aims of the European Commission. We look forward to working with our European partners to engage young people in golf across the five countries involved in this Erasmus+ project and to showcase the work at European Tour events and during the European Week of Sport.”

Czech Golf Federation (CGF) Vice-president, Miroslav Holub has stated:

“We believe that this research/project will have a huge impact on CGF’s future projects as well as on future projects implemented by other federations.”

An Expert Advisory Board comprising seven members will contribute strategic value to the initiative, namely:

- ✎ The dynamics, structure and organisation of the European golf sector
- ✎ Golf coaching and specific outreach to minority groups
- ✎ Gender equality



- ✎ Sports management and research
- ✎ The health and social benefits to be gained by all members of society through regular physical activity
- ✎ Youth engagement



✎ EU sport policy

In alignment with the EU Physical Activity Guidelines⁴, it is envisioned that the GoGolf! project will offer a valuable contribution towards the wider objective of increasing the physical activity levels of European citizens. Golf can function as an important vehicle for introducing children to sport, providing continuity into later life.

The planned deliverables for the project will include:

- ✎ A core participation-driving framework, which is flexible for integration according to the specific variables of each national environment
- ✎ A platform for pan-European knowledge sharing
- ✎ A published comprehensive overview of the health benefits of playing golf
- ✎ A validated European blueprint for increasing golf participation through targeted junior programmes in EU Member States
- ✎ An information booklet for children on healthy living and the sport of golf
- ✎ An awareness-raising website and promotional film.

The GoGolf! project aligns well with Golf Europe’s strategy to promote golf as a growing sport, valued as a force for good in European society. It is foreseen to be implemented over three years.

For more information, please contact the Golf Europe office: info@ega-golf.ch

¹ http://golfbenchmark.com/article/golf_participation_in_europe_2013

² <http://www.pga.info/media/47830/13smsinceconomicimpaceteuropefinal.pdf>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_412_en.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/policy_documents/eu-physical-activity-guidelines-2008_en.pdf