

SOCIETY OF GARDEN + LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS

THE SOCIETY OF GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS POLICY STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY

INTRODUCTION

In response to the escalating climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, the SGLD affirms its commitment to guiding members in understanding the critical role our profession plays in this context—and in supporting them to make a meaningful, appropriate and positive contribution.

No design solution is without environmental impact. However, by adopting a green design tool, such as [Elemental](#), the SGLD will support designers in taking a considered, evidence-based approach. This enables members to compare the environmental implications of different design responses for a specific site, helping to create regenerative landscapes that not only meet ecological goals but also serve the needs of the people who will use and inhabit the space.

Since 1st January 2020, the SGLD has taken a leading role in promoting only environmentally responsible practices, materials, and methods in the creation and management of outdoor spaces. As part of this commitment, products and practices known to have a clearly negative environmental impact are not permitted to be promoted through any of the Society's platforms—including advertising, affiliate partnerships, and sponsorship opportunities. Conversely, the SGLD actively encourages and promotes products and services that can demonstrate a genuinely positive contribution to environmental sustainability.

PRINCIPLES

As a professional body, the SGLD is committed to upholding and advancing the following core principles:

- To design in whole-systems-thinking both locally and globally considering the 6 pillars of environmental design of material management & waste, soils, embodied carbon of materials and products, water & air, biodiversity & ecologies, and societies & communities. Ultimately, every design solution needs to aim to enrich the environment and create positive, regenerative space that does not have an excessive carbon footprint. The selection and use of products in the creation and maintenance of spaces must therefore be guided by greater discernment, care, and environmental responsibility.
- Consider materials/products that do not:
 - Degrade the environment at their source, and are ethical and socially positive for the communities that produce them
 - Cause pollution or use excessive precious resources during the extraction and production of the material/ product (eg, water) or during the build
 - Have an inappropriate short lifespan
 - Have disposal problems from offcuts created during the build or at the end of life
 - Have an excessive carbon (and other greenhouse gases) footprint
 - Have a negative impact on wildlife

AFFILIATES, ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIP AND CPD

In alignment with these principles, the SGLD will no longer accept advertising, sponsorship, or affiliate partnerships from companies whose business involves the manufacture, supply or retail of the following products or principal components of products, directly or indirectly.

- Artificial turf and plants
- Exterior electric or gas-fired patio heaters
- Newly harvested tropical timber
- Irrigation systems from mains supply for lawns, borders & trees (rainwater harvesting and irrigation, and irrigation for tree establishment is exempt)
- Composite plastic products including decks, cladding, fencing, GRP containers/pots (Note: 100% recycled post-consumer plastic that is not combined with any other material and can relatively easily be recycled into further plastic products is exempt)

FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The SGLD's position is not solely one of exclusion. It is a forward-thinking, values-led policy that champions thoughtful and responsive garden and landscape design, creating beautiful spaces that help mitigate and adapt to the effects of a changing climate. The Society hopes that suppliers will recognise the positive intent behind this approach and view alignment with the SGLD's sustainability policy as both a responsible choice and a valuable business opportunity.

The SGLD reserves the right to amend this policy at any time. Given the rapid evolution of sustainable practices, materials, and technologies in response to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, the policy will be reviewed at least annually. Revisions will be made as new information emerges and as innovative products, materials, and methods are developed. These updates may broaden opportunities to promote solutions that are essential to the creation of vibrant, resilient, and climate-positive landscapes.

References

- SGLD sustainable design guidance notes: GN 001: Artificial turf, plants and walls GN 022: Tropical timbers
- GN 024: Patio heaters & fire pits GN 025: Outdoor kitchens & BBQs GN 027: Garden irrigation
- SGLD's manifesto for sustainable landscapes & gardens

WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS A GREENER FUTURE

The SGLD is committed to building strong, forward-thinking partnerships with companies that share our vision for a more sustainable future. We welcome collaboration with organisations that are actively working to reduce their environmental impact and who wish to align with the principles set out in our Sustainability Policy.

If your company is interested in working with the SGLD and contributing to the creation of more climate-resilient and environmentally responsible gardens and landscapes, we encourage you to get in touch. We are happy to discuss the policy in more detail and explore how we can move forward together in shaping a greener, more regenerative future for the profession.

SGLD SPONSORSHIP ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

Please confirm that your company meets the following criteria to be eligible for advertising or sponsorship with the SGLD:

1. Our company demonstrates a clear commitment to environmentally responsible practices, products, and materials.
2. Our products do not include materials or practices known to cause significant negative impacts on climate, biodiversity, or ecosystems.
3. Our products or services show a genuine positive environmental impact or contribute meaningfully to sustainability.
4. We do not manufacture, supply, or retail any of the following (directly or indirectly):
 - Artificial turf and plants
 - Exterior electric or gas-fired patio heaters
 - Newly harvested tropical timber
 - Irrigation systems from mains supply for lawns, borders, and trees (excluding rainwater harvesting or tree establishment irrigation)
 - Composite plastic products (except 100% recycled post-consumer plastics that are recyclable)
5. Our company is open to transparent dialogue about sustainability practices and able to provide evidence supporting environmental claims.
6. We are willing to align with SGLD's evolving sustainability policy and engage in periodic reviews or updates as needed.
7. Our company values partnership with the SGLD to promote sustainable, regenerative garden and landscape design.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: Why does the SGLD exclude certain products from advertising and sponsorship?

A: The SGLD is committed to promoting sustainable and regenerative garden and landscape design. Products known to have significant negative environmental impacts undermine this mission. Therefore, we do not allow promotion of these products through our advertising or sponsorship channels.

Q2: What types of products are excluded?

A: Products such as artificial turf and plants, exterior patio heaters powered by gas or electricity, newly harvested tropical timber, mains-supplied irrigation systems for lawns and borders (with some exemptions), and composite plastics (unless 100% recycled and recyclable) are excluded.

Q3: Can a company that sells some excluded products still advertise with the SGLD?

A: No, because the company does not align with our sustainability policy.

Q4: How often is the sustainability policy reviewed?

A: The SGLD reviews its sustainability policy at least annually to reflect new knowledge, technologies, and innovations that arise in response to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.

Q5: Can the policy change after I become a sponsor?

A: Yes, the SGLD reserves the right to amend the policy at any time. Sponsors are encouraged to stay informed of policy updates to ensure ongoing compliance.

Q6: How can a company align with the SGLD's sustainability policy?

A: Companies can align by adopting environmentally responsible materials and methods, supporting innovation in sustainable products, and openly collaborating with the SGLD to promote regenerative landscapes.

Q7: Who can I contact to discuss sponsorship opportunities or clarify policy questions?

A: Please contact the SGLD directly via info@SGLD.org.uk to discuss your interest, ask questions, or explore collaboration opportunities.