GEO Certified®
Re-certification Criteria

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GEO Certified® Re-certification Criteria will be revised at least every 5 years

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[In case of inconsistency between translated versions, reference shall default to the official language version]
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Introduction

This document presents the criteria for Re-certification of the GEO Certified® ecolabel in a format that supports:

• Applicants for continued eligibility to use the GEO Certified® ecolabel as they seek to drive ongoing performance.

• Accredited Verifiers from the GEOSA Network as they evaluate the performance of already GEO Certified® clubs.

• Other groups and individuals seeking to understand the minimum requirements for the subsequent award of the GEO Certified® sustainability assurance.

• The ‘must’ requirements are mandatory, and applicants are expected to demonstrate credible activity across ‘should’ criteria.

• Across all management areas, legal compliance with applicable national or international regulations is mandatory.

• A fundamental requirement to achieve the GEO Certified® ecolabel is positive, proactive participation.

• Criteria are weighted and applied to individual circumstances as golf facility performance is evaluated.

• GEO expects long-term continual improvement from all GEO Certified® golf clubs, meeting performance indicator re-certification criteria every three years.

• It is also expected that existing certification continual improvement points will be delivered to a satisfactory outcome.

• GEO is a stakeholder-funded organization, dedicated to helping the global golf community establish leadership in environmental enhancement and corporate responsibility.
GEO Certified® facilities should contribute to ecosystem protection and enhancement, and the maintenance of healthy living landscapes through ongoing, planned ecological and habitat management projects – continuing to naturalize the golf course and undertaking species conservation to maximize biodiversity.

**Must**

Continue to expand its ecological, ecosystem and aesthetic (landscape) understanding of the site.

Continue to be aware of any potential new conservation designations for protected sites, habitats, species or landscapes and explain how these influence the management of the golf course.

Be able to demonstrate ways in which they have actively progressed in their maintenance of healthy swards of the most appropriate grass species and how they are minimizing the use of energy, water, fertilizer, pesticide and other inputs.

Demonstrate evidence of how they are communicating in order to manage the playing expectations of member and visitors.

Demonstrate practical activities that have enhanced the landscape character of the site, in a way that is harmonious with surroundings.

Demonstrate ways in which habitat patches have been created, enlarged and connected.

Demonstrate appropriate, practical habitat management activities that further enhance the ecological value of the site.

Demonstrate practical species conservation measures that are further protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

**Should**

Be able to demonstrate that targeted and expert advice relating to ecosystems, biodiversity and landscape has been received and actively considered in decision-making.
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Continue to demonstrate measures taken to identify and minimize (as far as possible) the required area of managed turfgrass.

**WATER**

GEO Certified® clubs should be able to demonstrate gradual downward trends in water consumption, diversification of water supplies and clear evidence of water awareness across members and visitors.

**Must**

Continue to provide baseline figures for total annual water consumption, split into different management areas (clubhouse, golf course, maintenance facility etc.)

Continue to state sources of water used.

Have a water resource management plan outlining opportunities for alternative sources and efficiency.

Continue to ensure irrigation water recycled from treated effluent/sewage/grey-water sources, if applicable, meets necessary legal requirements of chemical and biological quality.

Continue to demonstrate measures taken to identify and reduce irrigated areas.

Continue to demonstrate regular irrigation system maintenance, servicing and upgrading, if applicable.

Demonstrate other practical actions undertaken to minimize the amount of water used in irrigation.

Demonstrate practical measures towards minimizing water consumption in clubhouses, maintenance facilities and other golf operations buildings.
Should

Continue to demonstrate efforts to diversify water sources, and move away from the use of high-quality and potable sources: e.g. migration to treated waste water, harvested rainwater, etc.
GEO Certified® facilities are expected to be using energy and other resources efficiently, integrating clean and renewable sources into their supplies.

**Must**

Continue to state total energy and fuel consumption per annum, broken down by renewables and non-renewables.

Undertake an energy audit (formal or informal), detailing practical opportunities for energy efficiency, diversification and clear forward targets for reductions in energy consumption.

Demonstrate practical action towards increasing the proportion of energy and fuel supply from renewable sources.

State total number of vehicles under ownership or control.

**Should**

Undertake practical actions to reduce energy consumption across the golf course and clubhouse.

Be able to report energy and resource use as ecological and/or carbon footprint.

Demonstrate practical efforts to transition to more fuel-efficient, low-carbon vehicles.

Demonstrate practical activities to reduce vehicle use among staff and customers.
GEO Certified® facilities place ethical and environmental issues at the forefront of purchasing decisions, thereby contributing to the support of other green businesses and generating wider sustainability multipliers across their supply chain.

**Must**

- Continue to adopt and clearly promote an ethical and environmental purchasing policy.
- Be able to provide an overview of all local to international suppliers and materials supplied.
- Continue to record baseline data for fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Demonstrate evidence that their integrated approach to turf management is promoting plant health and minimizing pesticide use.
- Continue to identify all current waste streams and waste management operations.
- Undertake a waste management audit (formal or informal) detailing opportunities for reductions in consumption of materials, reuse and recycling and future target setting.
- Demonstrate measures undertaken to avoid waste and to continue the lifecycle of materials through reuse and recycling.
- Demonstrate legal compliance in waste management.

**Should**

- Demonstrate evidence of purchasing policy in action and show examples of sustainability in the supply chain.
- Demonstrate the integration of new and innovative ecological and biological methods for turfgrass management.
- Show evidence of reductions made in the overall amounts of waste produced and quantities disposed to landfill or incineration.
GEO Certified® golf facilities are actively involved in improving the quality of air, water and soils - demonstrating attention to detail in the management of waste water, hazardous materials and pollution prevention, as critical elements in safeguarding and enhancing environmental quality.

**Must**

Identify where all waste water and runoff goes after leaving the property and demonstrate appropriate treatment in accordance with legal requirements.

Be able to demonstrate that water quality is not adversely affected by golf facility operations and ideally is improved.

Undertake visual, biological and/or chemical sampling of water quality at regular intervals.

Continue to maintain a register of all hazardous materials.

Continue to be legally compliant in the storage, handling and safe disposal of all hazardous substances.

Continue to demonstrate measures undertaken to prevent pollution from the maintenance facility, clubhouse and golf course.
GEO Certified® golf facilities are playing a valuable role in bringing together people and businesses within local communities - as well as providing a connection between people and their local environment. GEO Certified® facilities are actively working to deliver valuable socio-economic and environmental benefits, acting as advocates for sustainability.

**Must**

Continue to maintain a register of full and part time employees, including all staff roles and responsibilities.

Have an active and integrated environmental working group comprising key staff, volunteers and external advisors.

Demonstrate internal communications actions relating to environmental, community and sustainability issues.

Demonstrate external communications and advocacy actions within the community or at national to international level.

Demonstrate the provision of formal and informal environmental/sustainability education for employees.

Demonstrate measures to engage positively and constructively with neighbours, local community and environmental organizations.

Maintain a register of any historical, cultural or archaeological designations that apply to the site.

Continue to be free from any legal disputes affecting the site, and openly declare any controversy or community conflict pertaining to the facility and other related business activities.

**Should**

Continue to demonstrate measures undertaken to provide appropriate levels and forms of diversified land use, access and other recreational opportunities for members of the local community.
Have generated information on historical, cultural or archaeological context and features.

Continue to maintain constructive dialogue with agencies related to historical, cultural and archaeological context and features.

Be able to demonstrate measures undertaken to conserve and/or interpret the cultural, historical and archaeological interest of the site.