



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Amsterdam Old Course

Prepared by independent verifier Adrie van der Werf

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2028

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“The Amsterdam Old Course, established in 1936, showed passion and knowledge to further improve the playing quality and nature value of the course. They also are concerned by the fact that the Amsterdam Municipality has the intention to build several thousand of houses on the location where the course is now situated. I look forward to the actions and final results of these actions, especially as this golfclub is situated in one the most densely populated areas in the Netherlands, and despite this location still has a relatively high nature value a far as I could judge.”

*Adrie van der Werf
(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Amsterdam Old Course has successfully achieved GEO Certified® status for its outstanding work to foster nature, conserve resources and support the community.

GEO Certified® is the most respected certification for golf, based on a credibly and transparently developed modern sustainability Standard of best practice.

Amsterdam Old Course has:

1. Met the required certification criteria for sustainable golf operations
2. Successfully completed the official third-party verification process
3. Successfully passed the final evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd. (autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation)

GEO agreed with the conclusions of the official verification report, that, having achieved all mandatory criteria; and with specific Continual Improvement Points (CIP) set for the future and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, Amsterdam Old Course should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Amsterdam Old Course can therefore claim a position as a leader in advancing sustainability in golf – making important contributions in protecting nature, conserving resources and strengthening communities.

The GEO Certified® Report that follows comments on the actions undertaken against the criteria, as observed by the independent verifier during the assurance process.

Certification is nearly always the result of a dedicated team effort resulting in many practical and valuable social and environmental results around the golf course, maintenance facility and clubhouse. These dedication and leadership qualities are an important part of ensuring the resilience of the golf facility and the golf industry into the future and also as part of society's wider effort to pull together for people and planet.

We congratulate all involved.

Jonathan Smith
Founder and Executive Director, GEO Foundation
GEO Certification Ltd. Board Member

Kelli Jerome
Executive Director, GEO Foundation

Carole Kerrey
Director, Certification and Credibility,
GEO Certification Ltd.



Verification and Certification

Verification

The official third-party audit was carried out by an independent verifier, accredited by GEO to undertake verifications of golf facilities applying for certification.

Verification involves reviewing practices and data, using the International Voluntary Standard for Sustainable Golf Operations as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance. A detailed verification report is submitted for evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd, a subsidiary of GEO Foundation.

Certification

GEO Certification Ltd, an autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation [both not-for-profit entities], undertook a full review of all content submitted through the OnCourse® online platform and the report submitted by the verifier, ensuring:

- Comprehensiveness – activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Standard
- Consistency – that the verification approach was balanced, well weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across each theme
- Accuracy - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the golf facility to ensure statements and claims were accurate

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit founded to advocate, support and reward sustainability in and through golf. Over more than ten years, the group has worked collaboratively with dozens of golf industry associations and government and non-government organisations around the world, to help golf become a sustainability leader, striving for a net positive social and environmental impact. In addition to managing and assuring GEO Certified®, GEO Foundation also provides a suite of credible, practical programmes for golf facility management, new golf developments and golf tournaments called OnCourse®, often delivered in partnership with national golf bodies. Find out more at www.sustainable.golf

Credibility

GEO Certified® is part of the ISEAL Alliance, a group of the world's foremost credible certification systems including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council and many others. GEO Foundation earned and retains full membership of the ISEAL Alliance global association following a rigorous evaluation against the ISEAL Codes of Credibility in Sustainability Standards and Certification. The ISEAL Codes cover standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Find out more at www.isealalliance.org



Verifier's Report

The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	• Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	• Water • Energy • Materials
Community	• Partnerships & Outreach • Golfing & Employment • Advocacy & Communications

Included below are the observations made by the Independent Verifier against each item in the Standard.

NATURE

N1 Habitats and Biodiversity

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site	General knowledge of the wildlife and habitats on the site	Based on the discussions with members of several AOC (Amsterdam Old Course) committees and the greenkeepers, the AOC clearly demonstrated a thorough understanding of the nature value of the course, i.e. general species knowledge and awareness of more rare species. Species composition and habitats have been thoroughly described in several documents over the past two decades. The last official external report dates from 2019. CIP: Please try to make a new biodiversity inventory in 2026. In addition to formal inventories, countless observations have been published over the years on the Dutch publicly available website "waarnemingen.nl".
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Identify rare, protected or endangered species found on the golf course; Understand legal responsibilities for landscape protection and special area designations, if applicable	Despite the limited surface area of this 9-hole course, the AOC tries to protect rare species as much as possible. As was discussed, a closer cooperation between the OAC committees and the greenkeeper team could even further increase the nature value of the course. I was really surprised to see such a variety of plant and animal species in such a densely populated area.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	Several historical features are present on the course and are well described in one of their documents. I noticed that the AOC-cie is proud on the many old features present (e.g. old clubhouse built in 1935, presence of old farm relicts etc.). These features are not legally protected.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the golf course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Monitor patterns of play to identify underutilised areas of turfgrass	During our course visit it was discussed that a further naturalisation would be welcome despite the limited available surface area. The club introduced many "nature projects" over the years, some of them successful some not. In the unmaintained areas, nature development is stimulated as much as possible, e.g. nest boxes have been installed and

			in several unmaintained areas a range of plant species have been introduced to attract insects.
N1.3 Actively create and manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to create and manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Prioritise native species of varying size and structure when planting Prioritise native trees and shrubs when planting Prioritise native aquatic species of varying size and structure when planting Establish mowing buffer zones next to water bodies and wetlands	Over the past two decades, various renovation projects have been carried out, both for playing quality as for nature development. Pools were constructed, and e.g. small islands created in such a way that biodiversity should further improve/increase. This was nicely demonstrated during our field visit, and the greenkeeper mentioned he spotted the birded reedling now several times.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species	Follow local best practice to protect or attract endangered, protected or rare species found on site	See points described above.
N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turfgrass and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	Select appropriate grass species for the climate	Turf grass species (varieties) used are suitable for the Dutch environmental conditions.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition	No specific international requirement, however, identify course management and agronomic activities and look for continual improvements	Standard practises like e.g. hollow tinning/scarifying are used by the greenkeeper team; also seaweed extracts to e.g. improve resistance against fungi are used. Despite all actions taken, sudden invasions of fungi occurs now and then. It was mentioned that fungicides are not being used anymore for several years.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Test and monitor soil pH; Follow legal requirements when timing fertiliser applications Ensure staff are fully qualified to use fertilisers Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment Regularly calibrate and test applicators	Staff are qualified to safely use fertilizers, and we discussed the annual rates given on greens, fairways and tees. CIP: Based on our discussion, please further evaluate maintenance subjects, like fertilization and irrigation rates, to further improve the playing quality of the course in balance with environmental aspects. It should also be mentioned that the present rates given, are not extremely high, and certainly suitable for the species present, but any reduction in in rates of fertilization may not only improve the playing quality but also contribute to lower nutrient concentrations in soil and

			surface waters and so to even a more biodiverse area than it is now already.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Change hole locations frequently	As discussed with the greenkeeper team, standard practises (e.g. sharpening of mowing blades, surface moisture removal) are in use on the AOC. See above also.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Identify and track pest and disease hotspots, including sensitive areas Scout the course daily for early signs and symptoms Accurately diagnose to determine the cause of weeds, pests and diseases	Herbicide use is restricted to the minimum, and according to legislation. Pesticides and fungicides are not used. See above also.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use legally registered and approved products; Prefer products for the specific weed, pest or disease; Follow legal requirements; Ensure staff are fully qualified to use pesticides; Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	The use of chemicals and their disposal is according to legislation. Staff are qualified. As mentioned above (N2.1.3).
N3 Pollution Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are	Document procedures for emergency spill responses ;	As discussed with AOC-cie members and the greenkeeper team, buffer zones near water bodies are in action, i.e. no chemicals used within 5-8 meters from the water areas

	minimised from golf course operations	Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer areas next to water bodies and wetlands; Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer zones in and around ecologically sensitive areas	
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Storage of chemicals according to legislation. Green waste / clippings are stored in a special container which is emptied legally several times a year by a certified company.
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Wash machinery over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Mix and load pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	After use of the (mowing) machines, grass clippings are firstly being removed before washing of the machines. Washing is on a regularly checked impermeable floor. However, during my visit the bunds were not according to standards, and as discussed will be checked by an authorised organization and replaced as soon as possible. Shortly after my visit, an authorised organization checked it, and repaired the impermeable floor and its bunds.
	N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	List of hazardous substances, made available to authorised staff; Product and material data safety sheets; Well ventilated concrete or metal building; Impermeable, leak-free flooring; Sufficient storage capacity; Spill containment kits; Secondary containment e.g., bunds or drip trays; Emergency wash area, as per local requirements (body shower and / or eye wash station); Hazardous substances safely collected by a registered company or body ; Follow any additional legal requirements
			Dripping trays were present where legally necessary All actions and activities are well documented by the greenkeepers organisation.

	N3.2.2 Legal compliance in the storage and handling of fuels and gases	Tank secured to a horizontal, flat, non-combustible surface; Secondary containment of fuel in the event of spills e.g. bunds and drip trays; Inspection of storage tank(s) at least quarterly, if required; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area	Storage and handling and the description of it are okay.
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage, treatment and discharge	Impermeable, leak-free surface; Treatment as per local requirements (oil, grease and / or clipping separation; Formal discharge agreement, if applicable	All according to legislation.

RESOURCES

R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
R1.1 Minimise water demand	R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water	Select appropriate grass species for the climate e.g., drought and disease tolerance; Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces; Prioritise native, drought tolerant species for landscaping and planting	Grass species are appropriate for the environmental situation at AOC. Irrigation rates are regularly checked and seem relatively low, i.e. ~4800 m3 for approx. 3.3 ha in total. We had a good discussion on the irrigation rates on greens with respect to diseases and fertilization via irrigation water. They could not give exact data. CIP: Please make an estimation of the annual irrigation amounts on greens, tees and fairways. This will provide more information on possible annual irrigation rates of greens (in mm per annum) and how this relates to fungal disease problems. CIP: Please try to estimate nutrient addition via irrigation water, including analysis of nutrient concentration of macro- and micro-nutrients. Please note that this would require several analyses during the irrigation period.

R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	Schedule irrigation based on informed assessment of soil moisture and weather forecasts; Evaluate new irrigation technologies e.g., central control, precision sprinklers etc.; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Adjust sprinklers to playing surfaces only	At the moment new irrigation systems are out of the question, as the AOC is not the owner of the area. Now, yearly decisions are being made if the AOC can stay on this site or not. This makes decisions on investments in new expensive products extremely difficult.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record water consumption (bills, flow meter etc.); Encourage water conservation practices amongst players and staff	Shower heads were replaced several years ago, and toilets were equipped with dual flush buttons. This item was not further discussed in terms of % reduction.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Water abstraction permit, if required; Report water consumption to environment agency, if required	Irrigation water is retrieved from the nearby surface waters, and this was discussed with the Waterboard several years ago. Permission was given by the Waterboard.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in golf course maintenance	Naturalise non-playing areas to reduce mowing and other energy intensive inputs	Mowing areas have been reduced over the years, resulting in a lower energy use. As discussed, further naturalisation in terms of surface area is out of the question as the playing surface area is now at its minimum.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record energy consumption (bills, meters etc.)	Many measures have been taken to reduce energy use and are well described. E.g. many old refrigerators were replaced, led-light installed, automatic light turn-off when not in use for a certain period. It was mentioned during the discussion on this subject that over the last years, energy use was reduced by approx. 35%. It was also discussed that any further reduction would be possible, but that it should also be related to costs, especially for the clubhouse that was built in the 1930s.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Understand the energy mix of your electricity supplier; Explore possible greener energy providers	The golf club has a contract with an energy producer that supplies 100% green electricity.

R3 Materials			
R3.1 Reduce materials demand	R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives	No specific international requirement, however, identify activities to reduce the demand for materials and look for continual improvements	Over the past years more attention has been given to waste management, especially in the clubhouse and its surroundings; now special bins for plastics bottles are installed, and not only for environmental reasons, but also because a deposit refund is now in action for plastic bottles.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	It was mentioned that this part of their strategy, and more attention will be given to it.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Put in place a recycling separation system, according to local rules and availability; Clear, simple and visible bin signage; Monitor and record weight of waste for each stream e.g. invoices, bills etc.	Data are available and waste is separated according to local rules.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Authorised waste collector for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste, if required	Business as usual, all actions/activities with respect to waste are according to the local rules.

COMMUNITY			
<u>C1 Health & Wellbeing</u>			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C1.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities	Plans in place to respond to incidents and emergencies	A short presentation by one the AOC-cie members was given on this topic. All actions needed in case of emergencies are well described and directly available for members/visitors when entering the clubhouse.

C1.2 Be open and inclusive	C1.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Membership policies free from discrimination across age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnic background	This was not really discussed, the AOC cie indicated that everybody is welcome at the AOC, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, age, sexual orientation
C1.3 Employ fairly, safely and provide career opportunities	C1.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for hiring and employment; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety	Management of the clubhouse is responsible for further training of the employees. Recently, a new management team was appointed by the AOC board.
<u>C2 Outreach & Inclusion</u>			
C2.1 Diversify access and provide multifunctionality	C2.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility	No specific international requirement, however, identify multifunctional activities and look for continual improvements	Recently, OAC contributed to the National Monuments Day. Neighbours were invited and got information on the clubhouse, which is one of the oldest in The Netherlands. Furthermore, the AOC communicates its special location (one of the very few green spots in the middle of densely populated Amsterdam), amongst others via publicly available documentaries.
C2.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C2.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes	No specific international requirement, however, identify activities to support volunteering and charity and look for continual improvements	Not much activity on this subject. Several years ago a charity tournament was organised for the Emma Children's hospital in Amsterdam.
C2.3 Establish active community partnerships	C2.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	No specific international requirement, however, identify partnerships and community activities and look for continual improvements	Teaching Pro's give lessons to children of local schools at reduced prices. Now ideas are being developed to directly communicate with local neighbours on the nature value of the course, and its effect on health of the neighbours. This also in relation with the fact that municipality of Amsterdam has the intention to build several thousand houses on the location where the golf course is situated.
<u>C3 Communications & Advocacy</u>			
C3.1 Engage staff and golfers	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and	Involve staff and committees in sustainability efforts;	See e.g. C.3.2.1 below

	understanding amongst members and visitors	Involve golfers in sustainability efforts; Post sustainability information in the clubhouse and / or on the golf course	
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Share at least 3 Highlights on sustainable.golf	The club is active on this subject, and highlights are already on “sustainable.golf”. I suggested to add 3 more interesting items: 2 documentaries on the history and feature of AOC, and a nice paper on the National Monuments Day and the role of OAC in it. Furthermore, as discussed, the club will actively communicate their efforts and results with respect to biodiversity on their golf course, especially with the local community.
C3.3 Follow a journey of continuous improvement	C3.3.1 Measures to help track, review and improve sustainability and climate action	Put measures in place to ensure that OnCourse can be updated annually	This was discussed all along the meeting, and elements of it are described in the above texts

Golf and Sustainability

Among all sports, golf has a particularly close relationship with the environment and communities, golf facilities can bring many benefits to people and nature - from the protection of greenspace and conservation of biodiversity; healthy recreation for all ages; local supply chains; and jobs, tourism and other forms of economic value.

Adopting a more sustainable approach is also good for golf. It's about presenting a high-quality golf course and providing a memorable experience in natural surroundings. It's about being as efficient as possible. And it's about supporting the community in a range of ways that bring increased recognition, respect and contact.

At a broader level, it's important that golf credibly demonstrates its commitment, and its social and environmental value – strengthening the sport's image and reputation for the long term.

Golf facilities that participate in OnCourse®, an international sustainability initiative assured by the non-profit GEO Foundation, are taking a comprehensive approach and striving to be leaders in the community.

Find out more at www.sustainable.golf