



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Golfbaan het Woold

Prepared by independent verifier Ewout Sala

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2030

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“The newly developed natural environment is clearly developing in terms of growth and management. The efforts of the course, volunteers and the close cooperation with the IVN are visibly paying off. Now it is important to get a picture of the different types of nature with the associated target species in order to be able to adjust future management accordingly in a nature management plan.

In addition to a thorough use of good knowledge of course maintenance by the greenkeeping team, sustainable steps are being taken through the use of the robot lawnmowers. And finally, it is a good example that the golf course works with several schools and would like to take future steps in this to offer opportunities for lessons on the entire site.

The collection machine for plastic bottles and cans is also sustainable eye-catcher in the facility. Waste separation is done where possible, but is certainly still a point where profit can be made since the catering industry is run under its own management.”

Ewout Sala
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Golfbaan het Woold 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.

Golfbaan het Woold 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, Golfbaan het Woold should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Golfbaan het Woold 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.isealliance.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	Golf course Het Woold originated from an existing par 3 course and has since grown to more than 85 hectares where you can play golf on 18 holes in the newly created nature. Before this, the area around the par 3 course consisted of agricultural areas with mainly fields. The creation and construction of the different types of nature is in close consultation/support of the nature working group IVN - Het Woold (members of the golf course in collaboration with IVN Asten/Someren). From 2011 onwards, IVN have made an inventory of all species groups throughout the year, of which an annual report will be made. Report 2025 was seen in hardcopy during audit. HIGHLIGHT: The inventory of species is very thorough and complete. We discussed how all interventions in the natural environment are done in consultation with the above IVN volunteers, only how, what and where is not described. Nature management plan with the habitat types of the golf course is not available. CCIP: Please develop a nature management plan with nature types, target species and future management measures.
	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	See CCIP in N 1.1.1 above.

	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	Present on the golf course is a former Wehrmacht cottage. This has been preserved in its current state and set up as a small museum where the history of the house is explained.
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 the tour we saw that there are many naturally designed areas from dry to wet. Management and maintenance is carried out with great passion. There is still room to optimize roughs. CIP: Please review room to expand roughs in the management plan.
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	All these points are covered by the management plan to be developed. Seen during the tour planting native tree and shrub species in the pine forest to bring more variety. Seen the use of starling boxes which is a natural control of leatherjackets in the turf (without excessive damage).
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	All these points are covered by the management plan to be developed. But be sure to use the extensive inventory document of the IVN as a basis.
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	The following types of grass are used on the greens: Red fescue Struisgras Meadow meadow And adapted varieties of perennial ryegrass The first varieties are authentic and therefore well climate-resistant.

		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	
N3 Pollution Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations	Document procedures for emergency spill responses ; 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	The basis for preventing pollution incidents is that proper maintenance is carried out on the machines.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Wastewater agreement seen from company that empties the grease pit. Wastewater separation is done according to legal standards and is not discussed further.
	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	Not discussed.
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;	Didn't see a list of the hazardous substances. CCIP: Please create a list of the most dangerous substances, fuels and plant protection products held at the site as soon as possible.

		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	
	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	Diesel fuel tank inspection has been discussed and carried out. No direct report of it. CCIP: Please upload the Inspection Report for the Diesel Tank to the Oncourse Documents Library as soon as possible.
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	Wastewater agreement seen.

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	Discussed with head greenkeeper. Irrigation is used as minimally as possible. Less is used rather than too much. Of the 76 hectares, only 15 hectares are ultimately irrigated, so very targeted. Used grasses have been applied to climate, see N2 Turfgrass.
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	Water for irrigation is controlled via computer program that carefully monitors the current conditions on the course and weather conditions. HIGHLIGHT: Good use of knowledge, programs and daily conditions on when using irrigation.
	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	Water use of the facility is monitored.
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	There is a permit to extract water for irrigation, but in the end the use does not exceed 20 cubic meters on the track. Also, all the rainwater from the buildings is not drained through the sewer but collected in the water features on the golf course.
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	The entire machinery is made more sustainable where possible. New is the use of robot mowers on the greens. They are now looking further into expanding this. Furthermore, hybrid mowers are used, which also reduces diesel consumption.

			Many hand tools are also electric. HIGHLIGHT: Use of robotic lawnmowers on the greens.
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.)	The entire facility is relatively new and built with the sustainability rules applicable at the time. Kitchen equipment has recently been replaced, with attention paid to more economical appliances.
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	Green energy is purchased through Scholt Energie.
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	The catering industry is under their own management, so they look closely at the purchase and, where possible, as little packaging material as possible comes in. CIP: Please ensure that the procurement process is transparent for the future in order to be able to take sustainable steps together.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	They also try to buy local products.
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.	Waste streams are separated as much as possible. Present is a machine for handing in cans and bottles. HIGHLIGHT: A collection point for plastic bottles and cans that efficiently starts waste separation.

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	Documents from waste processors seen in Oncourse.
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COMMUNITY

C1 Health & Wellbeing

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	Seen and discussed extensive risk and safety report. Employees are trained annually on emergency response. It is clearly explained who is responsible for what. Emergency number on scorecard.
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	Open club, there is no waiting list and balloting committee.
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	Not discussed.

C2 Outreach & Inclusion

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	The course now has several projects running with various schools in the region through a collaboration with the Joost Luiten Foundation to introduce the children of these schools to the sport of golf.
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			Now in development, as a result of the above cooperation, the idea is to continue using the course as a teaching tool. Think of nature (biology) maintenance and the like. HIGHLIGHT: Successful cooperation with the various schools by developing into teaching opportunities is a wonderful example of a community activity.
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	From the golf course, more than 70 volunteers are involved in many parts around the golf course.
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	Especially the closely involved cooperation with the volunteers of the IVN is of great importance for nature on the golf course. And on the golf course is a plot that is now used as a memorial forest 'Gedenkbos Asten'. Here people can have a tree planted as a memorial of, for example, a loved one or other reason.
C3 Communications & Advocacy			
C3.1 Engage staff and golfers	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	Involve staff and committees in sustainability efforts; Involve golfers in sustainability efforts; Post sustainability information in the clubhouse and / or on the golf course	Especially on the website, under the nature chapter, a lot of information can be found about the efforts for this. Social media is used to share sustainability activities. As well as a newsletter in which, for example, the new mowers are introduced.
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	Confirmed.
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	Discussed, current audit has been used to bring everything up to date now. Make sure this is done annually, especially with changes in the sustainability aspect. CIP: Please ensure that Oncourse is updated annually and that old irrelevant documents are deleted.

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