



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Golfclub De Hoge Kleij

Prepared by independent verifier Adrie van der Werf

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2028

“Over the years, Golfclub de Hoge Kleij has shown that “sustainability” is a strong pillar of their strategy. The course has been further naturalized, e.g. 1 hectare of new heathland has been created that blends in perfectly well with the existing natural landscape and the golf course. Also, they invest(ed) in a transition from fossil fuel use to a very sustainable driven clubhouse use to a very sustainable solar energy to a very efficient renewable energy generation. Their way of thinking and handling should be an example for any other golf course.”

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



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Golfclub De Hoge Kleij 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.

Golfclub De Hoge Kleij 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, Golfclub De Hoge Kleij should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Golfclub De Hoge Kleij 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	The soils of Hoge Kleij consist of a combination of sand and clay-rich layers, and therefore a variety of vegetation types is present on the course: e.g. heathland, pine forests and deciduous woodlands. Not surprisingly, over the years a wide variety of protected and rare species have been observed on golf course De Hoge Kleij, and a total of 1000 species (plants, mosses, mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, bats) have been reported. Habitats are well described in their recently published "Environmental Working Protocol".
	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	A code of conduct with respect to golf course management and biodiversity/protected species is well described in their Environmental Working Protocol and was shortly discussed in our meeting. The head greenkeeper is well aware of actions to be taken in case of the presence of protected and rare species.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	The Hoge Kleij Golf Course is situated next to the former Camp Amersfoort (1940-1945). On their course several graves have been found and are visibly marked for golfers and non-golfers. Maps of historical features around the course are available.
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	From 2021 onwards, many activities have been taken to further naturalize the golf course, e.g. 1 ha of heather has been successfully established, and blends in perfectly with the natural surroundings and the golf course. Further naturalisation of the course and the garden and removal of non-native trees is part of their sustainability strategy in the coming years.
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	See points mentioned above.

		Prioritise native aquatic species of varying size and structure when planting Establish mowing buffer zones next to water bodies and wetlands	
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	New bird nests will be installed, and actions with respect to biodiversity/rare species have well been described in a range of documents. During our field visit it became clear that the golfclub very actively supports nature conservation and improvement.
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	As discussed, standard practises with low environmental impact are in action to maintain good quality greens, fairways and tees. Grass species/varieties are suitable for the environmental conditions at Hoge Kleij.
	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 and soil moisture removal are in action to keep the soil in good condition. Wetting agents are used to minimize irrigation rates especially on the sandy soil areas.
	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	All according to legislation, and based on soil tests and the knowledge and experience of the head greenkeeper. The fertilization rates reported over the last five years are appropriate for soil the conditions and species/varieties used.
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	Standard practises, mentioned in the third column were confirmed by the head greenkeeper. Hand-weeding of Poa annua is being practised on the greens.

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	Minimal amounts of pesticides are used, and regular checks of pests and diseases are common practise.
	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	As was mentioned by the head greenkeeper, all actions and products used are according to legislation, and staff is qualified. Hardly any pesticides are now being used and stored safely. Empty trays containing e.g. pesticides are triple rinsed and finally sprayed there were necessary. The rinsed trays are transported by a certified company.
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	Actions to be taken in case of any pollution on site are well described; Regular check of maintenance machinery on oil and petrol spills. When new maintenance machinery is necessary, electric/hybrid vehicles are preferred.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	All according to legislation

	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	All according to legislation, e.g. the impermeable washing-floor is checked regularly. Actions to be taken with respect to reduced environmental risks have been described in a document and is agreed upon by both the club and the course maintenance contractor.
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	A list of hazardous substances waste licenses is available; impermeable floor present and checked regularly.
	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	Fuel tanks are fixed properly and placed on drip trays/bunds; fire extinguisher in the immediate area.

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	Waste water discharge, both in clubhouse and maintenance area, is according to legislation, e.g. after oil/grease separation wastewater is discharged to the main sewer.
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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	Irrigation rates for approx. 18 ha of playing area varied roughly between 20.000-25.000 m3 per year over the past five years and is highly acceptable. Installation of new software in the coming years may reduce irrigation rates and give more accurate information on the irrigation rates of greens, tees and fairways separately. To conserve rainwater, special natural constructions on and around the course have been created to retain water both in case of drought and extreme rainfall. These constructions may also help to prevent sewer overload and flooding in the car park. It is estimated that roughly 200.000 m3 of rainwater is retained in a more natural way.
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	As mentioned by the head greenkeeper, total water consumption is fairly low i.r.t. the irrigated surface area. Soil moisture content is measured, and an upgrade of the software system will probably further reduce water consumption.

	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	The clubhouse has been renovated/rebuilt completely in 2024-2025. All kinds of measures have been taken to reduce water consumption. The changing rooms are now fitted with water-saving shower heads and taps. Furthermore, a lower water consumption means direct energy savings on heating the tap water in the boiler.
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	A water abstraction permit is available.
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	During our field visit, automatic electric self-riding mowing machines were tested on the fairways. It is their intention to replace almost all fuel machinery by electric/hybrid ones.
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.)	In the years 2024-2025 a full renovation of the clubhouse took place in order to reduce the environmental impact. E.g. low temperature floor heating, solar cells, thermal energy storage (TES), a large battery (approx.. 140 kWh) to store solar cell produced energy, roof and wall insulation. Except for the kitchen, the clubhouse is now gas-free. A full description of actions undertaken in the past few years is given in their sustainability report.
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	It was mentioned that the present energy provider produces partly green energy.
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	Reduction of material demand is part of their strategy and is also discussed with their (local) providers. Just-in-Time (JIT) inventory management is in action.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	During our discussion on this subject, it was mentioned that local products are favoured (meat and bread), and that this will be mentioned on their menu card by 2026-2027.

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.	Paper, glass and residual waste are collected separately and amounts are registered. CIP: Please analyse possibilities to adjust the frequency of emptying waste to the actual level of fill. CIP: Please explore a further reduction in residual waste through the separate collection of organic material.
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	According to legislation.

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	Health and safety procedures are well described and will be hung on the wall near the entrance of the clubhouse. Safety and health plan for the maintenance crew is available.
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 discussed with the club manager and the GEO representative, and membership is free from points mentioned in the third column.
C1.3 Employ fairly, safely and provide career opportunities	C1.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and	Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy;	Protective equipment is available and safe working conditions are in action.

	professional development	Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for hiring and employment; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety	
<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	The golf course is open to non-members for walking. School pupils are welcome to come and try their hand at golf.
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	Each year, several charity projects are supported. E.g. last month, the club donated a generous sum to the Foundation Leergeld in Amersfoort. This foundation helps and supports children from families facing financial difficulties.
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	The golf course is open to non-members for walking. School pupils are welcome to get acquainted with golf.
<u>C3 Communications & Advocacy</u>			
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	As part of their social engagement, they have a good relation with e.g. Camp Amersfoort. A commemorative plaque of the second world war is now hanging in the hall of the clubhouse. Large posters with animals and plants present on the course were made and will be hung near the entrance of the 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	This was discussed (see points above). Clearly, the renovation of the clubhouse (insulation), with a large shift from fossil fuels to solar energy, a further naturalization of the course (e.g. 1 ha of new heather area) are just a few. Activities undertaken with respect to sustainability are communicated via local press and internally via their monthly newsletter.

	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	Actions for coming years are described in their sustainability program, e.g. no plastic bottles during large tournaments, analyse possibilities to adjust the frequency of emptying waste can be adjusted to the actual level of fill, a further reduction in residual waste through the separate collection of organic material
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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