



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Hoiana Shores Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier Brad Revill

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2028

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Hoiana Shores is an absolutely stunning property located on the beaches in Vietnam. It is a pleasure to visit a site with such a high percentage of naturalised areas and with so many great sustainable initiatives in place. I look forward to seeing the continued development of this beautiful golf course and the new initiatives that the team come up with.”

Brad Revill
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Hoiana Shores Golf Club 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.

Hoiana Shores Golf Club 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, Hoiana Shores Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Hoiana Shores Golf Club 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	Very good knowledge of the wildlife and habitats on the site. The club is actively managing their surrounding landscape, but there is no formal management plan in place. There is also no aerial map highlighting the different habitat locations and types. CCIP: Please create a habitat map that highlights the locations and different types of habitats present on-site. CCIP: Please continue to update biodiversity records as you discover new species on-site.
	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	No formal legal requirements or special designations for the site. There is an understanding that the areas alongside the beach will be kept clean and free from chemical application. Highlight: The club has committed significant investment in shoreline protection by installing GEO bags all along the beach edge to protect from storms. They have also installed erosion protection inside all creeks and lakes on the property. The club also completes regular beach clean-ups with all staff involved.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	N/A
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	The vast majority of the golf course has been naturalised. Small tweaks and improvements to grass lines are being implemented regularly to align with sprinkler head arcs in order to conserve more water and prevent weed development in naturalised areas.
N1.3 Actively create and manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to create and manage habitats in	Prioritise native species of varying size and structure when planting	Inside the fact sheet uploaded to OnCourse, there is a list of native species and plant species, as well as some animal species found on the site.

	the best way for wildlife and golf	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	During the visit, we discussed that, although the native habitats are being regularly maintained, it would be beneficial to formalise these practices in a management plan so it can be more easily communicated. CIP: Please create a habitat management plan CIP: Please continue to update the “fact sheet” or create a biodiversity record with the latest plant and animal species identified and planted on site (as per N1.1.1 above). CCIP: As per N1.1.1 above – please create a map of buffer zones to formalise them and so they can be easily shared with the maintenance team for reference.
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	There are no maps of the site available. Nesting birds are actively protected across the site when nests are found and located. Sensitive areas are very well protected by rope and stake. Also, turfgrass wear and compaction is very well managed by the same rope and stake.
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 grass choices selected for this golf course are very suitable for this climate and location. They are some of the more sustainable choices that could have been made. There is Zeon zoysia on fairways and tees, and there is Tif Eagle Bermuda grass on the greens. There is also a lot of varying species of native grasses on the dunes around the golf course.
	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	The club has been promoting the use of Sustane organic granular fertiliser as well as other organic seaweed fertiliser products. Soil and water tests are being carried out on a regular basis. Regular aeration is being carried out to promote better water infiltration and to reduce compaction. The club is also moving away from imported liquid fertiliser products and sourcing local soluble products as an alternative.

	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	Soil pH is tested along with the soil and nutrient tests that are regularly carried out. The staff are trained on the proper application of chemicals and fertilisers by the superintendent and suppliers. The superintendent has gained a certificate in green keeping qualification issued by the Asian Golf Industry Federation, alongside the R&A and New Zealand Sports Turf Institute. Regular visits by consultants also help train staff on proper application of fertilisers and chemicals. All protective equipment is in place and being used by the team. All sprayers are regularly calibrated twice per year along with fertiliser application equipment, and all look in good condition.
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	All mowing blades are ground weekly to promote high quality of cut and reduce the chance of disease infection. Any dew is removed by turning the sprinkler heads on briefly in the morning before golf. Holes are changed three times per week to distribute wear evenly. Hand weeding is carried out in native areas in substitution for chemical application. Top dressing is carried out through the dry season but not in the wet season. This is to reduce damage to leaf blades, which would then also increase the likelihood of disease infection.
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	The main pests and diseases seen on the course are Mole Cricket and Fairy Ring. The golf course is scouted daily for signs of pests and diseases, but no scouting reports are created. This was discussed and is under consideration with the superintendent. The team rely on Google, industry colleagues, posters from suppliers, and also consultants to help correctly identify weeds, pests, and diseases.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use legally registered and approved products;	Products for the specific weed, pestle, and disease are being used, and all staff are wearing appropriate protective equipment during the application of those 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	All application equipment is regularly calibrated twice per year. Any leftover product is diluted and sprayed out onto the driving range. An SOP for chemical application, wash-down chemical mixing, and emergency spill response is in place.
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	Emergency Spill Response Plan is in place. No chemical or fertiliser application is applied to native areas surrounding the property or internally inside the property. CCIP: As per N1.3.1 above – please formalise buffer zones with aerial mapping.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	There is a wastewater treatment plant located on site which was built by the company. All wastewater from the site gets treated there. Hazardous substances are stored safely and securely.
	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	An SOP is in place for chemical application, wash down, and container disposal. Containers are disposed of by a third party. CIP: Mixing and loading of chemicals and fertilisers is performed over a concrete surface; however, there is a dedicated mixing area in place that is not being used and should be fixed and put back into commission, as there is an isolated drainage system surrounding this area.

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	MSDS confirmed. The chemical storage area is in good condition, with small but sufficient capacity, and storage shelves are made out of steel. Fire extinguisher is in place. Spill kits are available. Drip containment has been installed. No emergency shower and eye wash installed at the chemical storage or mixing area. There is a tap in the corner of the chemical storage area for washing. CCIP: Please install an emergency shower and eye wash at both the chemical storage area and the chemical mixing area.
	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	Underground fuel tanks. 6,000L for diesel and 3,000 for petrol. Fire extinguisher in place. Tanks are inspected every year. Spill kits have been installed.
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 is sent to the on-site treatment plant. Wash bay is concrete and grass clippings are collected weekly from the drain.

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	The zoysia grass selected for fairways, rough, and tees is moderately drought-tolerant but still suitable. The Bermuda grass selected for greens is quite drought-tolerant for the location. The naturalised areas are using native species which are very drought-tolerant and suitable to the area. Irrigation is targeted to essential playing surfaces, with ongoing efforts to further increase the accuracy of the system and adjust sprinkler arcs to prevent watering of naturalised areas. Watering plans are adjusted based on the daily weather and seasonal climate.
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	Regular training for arc adjustments and nozzle maintenance. Monthly consultant visits helping with training to improve irrigation uniformity, strategies and adjustments. Rainbird provides periodic training for pump station operation and maintenance. Cirrus Pro irrigation software also installed. Weather station in place. Pogo moisture probe used for greens. Hand watering greens during the week and deeper watering on weekends. Daily audits of sprinklers with written record for changes and issues.
	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	There is daily data being recorded but it is not reviewed or compared year on year or month by month. No internal notices about water conservation. CIP: Please review water consumption data at least monthly in order to identify any discrepancies or trends outside the norm.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Water abstraction permit, if required;	Water permit in place.

		Report water consumption to environment agency, if required	
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	All out-of-play areas are naturalised with native grasses from the beaches and surrounding areas.
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.)	Data is being recorded but similar to water, it is not being analysed. Highlight: Signage above back of house air con and lights, detailing set temperatures and asking to switch off lights when not in room, to help improve electrical efficiency. CIP: Please review electricity consumption data at least monthly in order to identify any discrepancies or trends outside the norm.
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	16,528m2 of solar panels installed on the property to help power all facilities, not just golf. They are unsure what source the local energy supply comes from.
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	No single use plastic. Some bathroom amenities are biodegradable and made from recycled materials. Monthly audits by accounting to control stock with reviews and investigations into products that have been in stock too long or that stock needs to be reduced.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	Bamboo, paper and stainless straws are in use throughout the site. Biodegradable loafer scrub pads used in showers. Take away packaging made from biodegradable materials. Paper bags used for purchases in Pro Shop.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum	Put in place a recycling separation system, according to local rules and availability;	No waste separation on site as it is collected by a 3 rd party and separated off-site.

	recycling and re-use opportunity	Clear, simple and visible bin signage; Monitor and record weight of waste for each stream e.g. invoices, bills etc.	CIP: Please review waste disposal and recycling data at least monthly in order to identify any discrepancies or trends outside the norm as well as areas for improvement or focus.
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	Confirmed.

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	Emergency spill response plan is in place. Emergency evacuation plans were also visible. A health and safety policy and risk assessments were discussed and are in place, but no documents were able to be provided as evidence. The general working environment in the back-of-house and front-of-house areas looked safe and free from obvious hazards. CCIP: Please upload the health and safety policy and an example of a risk assessment to the Oncourse Documents Library.
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	There are no members. It is a daily fee course, and anybody is welcome to play.

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	Staff onboarding program and orientation in place. Hoiana Academy Management Advancement Program every year with cross training also in place.
<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	Hoiana has hosted a running training program with local schools. CIP: Please look to re-engage with local schools and promote further engagement with local community groups.
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	Hoiana provided food and volunteers for the storm clean-up after the cyclones devastated the area. They have provided this multiple times, every time a major storm has impacted the area. They have a “Hoiana Cares” charity that has an annual fund for local healthcare charities focusing on paediatric care.
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	As per C2.1.1
<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	GEO logos are located on sustainable initiatives around the course and in the clubhouse.

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	Multiple highlights have been shared on their Oncourse course profile. New opportunities for further highlights were discussed during the visit.
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	Only the superintendent is involved and is pushing and promoting the program. CCIP: Please involve more stakeholders in the sustainability program and initiatives. This will ensure that efforts are continued if the current superintendent is no longer in place.

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