



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Noord Nederlandse Golf & Country Club

Prepared by independent verifier Ewout Sala

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2026
Recertification due: 2031

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“The golf course is doing an excellent job in many ways of putting sustainability into practice. On this beautiful estate, historical cultural heritage is combined with native nature on and around the course. Nature on the course is given the opportunity to develop naturally, although in the future target species can be determined for the many existing and newly created water bodies. During the renovation of the main building, strong emphasis was placed on sustainability to ultimately reduce energy consumption. A good future step would be to work together with the catering operator to consider how incoming waste streams can be minimized as much as possible. Finally, the introduction of a new robotic ball collector and accompanying golf-ball cleaning machine for the driving range is another excellent sustainable initiative.”

Ewout Sala
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Noord Nederlandse Golf & Country 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.

Noord Nederlandse Golf & Country 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, Noord Nederlandse Golf & Country Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Noord Nederlandse Golf & Country 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	A nature management plan with the habitat types of the golf course is in place. It was noted that this plan was created for a six-year period. It was discussed that the GEO team wants to retain the plan but have it updated. CIP: Please update the current management plan. An inventory of flora and fauna is currently not being carried out. There are plans for this, but they are not yet targeted. It was discussed that targeted inventories could be conducted for amphibians and possibly reptiles because many water features are present. Major interventions have recently been carried out near several water bodies. An inventory will be initiated once recovery from these interventions becomes visible. CIP: Please conduct a species inventory related to water habitats.
	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	Discussed; staff are well aware of applicable laws and regulations. For example, work is underway on a new Visual Tree Assessment report for many of the trees included in the nature plan.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	The Pingo ruin (an Ice Age relic) was discussed. It will certainly be preserved and maintained when necessary, such as through interventions where water has become visible again after dredging.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the golf course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the	Monitor patterns of play to identify underutilised areas of turfgrass	Observed during the site tour and discussed. New nature development areas have been created alongside the courses where natural vegetation is developing.

	required area of managed turfgrass		
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	Recently developed water features and landscape design after restructuring of the water management system were observed. It was discussed that they first want to see how natural development progresses, since previous developments produced surprising results with native flora. Many nest boxes are present on the golf course, and volunteers conduct regular nest-box inspections. There are also nest boxes for starlings, intended to encourage starlings to catch and eat grubs. HIGHLIGHT: Installation of starling nest boxes as a natural method of controlling harmful grubs.
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	The management plan was reviewed, but there is no clear understanding of the target species in the various natural areas. CIP: Please determine target species. Work to understand what management is required for these species.
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	Discussed with the head greenkeeper; the interview demonstrated very solid knowledge and experience regarding course maintenance and preservation. For example, the use of different grasses such as red fescue, bentgrass, and perennial ryegrass, including varieties specialized for drought tolerance.
	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	Use of the "Top Changer" machine with the "fill and drill" principle. Very good and desirable results are being achieved with this method.
	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	Monitoring and soil testing are discussed and carried out annually. Together with the EMS management program and consulting firm NL Adviseurs, fertilizers are used consciously and responsibly. Mainly liquid fertilizers are used; spraying equipment was observed.

		Ensure staff are fully qualified to use fertilisers Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment Regularly calibrate and test applicators	
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	With the help of an enthusiastic volunteer group, many unwanted weeds are manually removed from the course. As a result, pesticide use is very low.
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	Chemicals are only used when absolutely necessary, usually in the case of dollar spot disease.
	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 spraying license of an employee was reviewed in OnCourse. Chemicals were observed stored in an appropriate locked storage area.
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 document "Protocol for Handling Hazardous Substances" was reviewed and discussed. The document and procedure are known by staff and introduced to every new employee. New employees are paired with experienced colleagues who include the protocol in the training process.
		N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Wastewater from the wash area is collected in designated pits; two were observed during the site tour.
		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	During the site tour, the watertight and leak-free wash area was also observed. Inspection reports for the flooring around the machinery area were reviewed in OnCourse.
	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 ;	A list of hazardous substances is available. Substances such as crop protection products were observed and properly stored.

		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	An inspection report for the diesel tank was reviewed in OnCourse; approved with re-inspection scheduled for 2027.
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	Discussed. Wastewater from the wash area is collected in two pits. Wastewater from the kitchen facility is processed through a grease trap. Both are emptied by waste contractor Van Happen Containers. The agreement with Van Happen Containers and reports of completed work were reviewed.

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 grasses mentioned in N.2 are well adapted to the prevailing climate. Water demand is measured weekly on the courses to determine irrigation levels.

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	Use of the RainBird system.
	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	More sprinklers are used across the course instead of fewer sprinklers. Fewer sprinklers previously covered areas that did not require irrigation. By using more sprinklers, less water is ultimately consumed because irrigation is more targeted and localized. HIGHLIGHT: Efficient use of the irrigation system on the course.
	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 Water is extracted from groundwater, but in such low quantities that no permit is required. Water usage is monitored.
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	On the greens, efforts are being made to reduce mechanical maintenance. Bio-diesel use is discussed and implemented with contractors.
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.)	Through renovation of the main facility, a high degree of energy-saving measures has been implemented wherever possible. Good insulation has been installed. A heat recovery system has been implemented. LED lighting has been installed. The kitchen has been fitted with new equipment, and efforts are underway to significantly reduce gas consumption.

			The facility is currently developing a future vision focused on additional solar panel use and possible implementation of a heat pump. HIGHLIGHT: The entire facility is highly conscious and responsible regarding the use of energy and resources.
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	Energy is supplied by NieuweStroom under a dynamic contract using both green and grey 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	The largest material purchases come from the kitchen, which is managed by a contractor. Awareness discussions are held with the contractor. CIP: Please encourage the kitchen operator to reduce material use. Try to measure progress for the next audit.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	The kitchen contractor attempts to use regional products whenever possible.
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 and commercial waste are separated. Glass is separately collected by the kitchen contractor.
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	Not discussed.

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	The emergency response plan was reviewed. The plan is discussed with the necessary committees and implemented accordingly. Additional emergency measures were discussed and are handled consciously. A new idea is to divide the course into color-coded zones so emergency services can be directed quickly and clearly; this is still in the early stages. A "health and aging" program is available in which a trainer helps older adults remain physically able to continue golfing.
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	Discussed; the club is open and welcoming. New members are welcomed by a committee and receive an information package.
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	A neighbourhood day is organized once a year where local residents are invited.
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		multifunctional activities and look for continual improvements	
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	More than 120 volunteers are active on the course in many areas such as nature, competitions, and committees. The club also participates in many charity projects such as: -Parkinson to Beat -Old Grand Dad's organization for disabled golf carts
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	Neighbourhood/open day activities. Through the Joost Luiten Foundation, schools are invited to participate. NGF's "Welcome to the Club" initiative for youth.
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	Sustainability efforts are shared through a newsletter. An annual overview book is also produced featuring sustainability themes.
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	Successes achieved in recent years: - Creation of new dry and wet nature areas - Renovation and sustainability improvements to the building for insulation and energy efficiency - Starlings catching leatherjackets - Improved irrigation system - Lockers for golf bags so visitors can come by bicycle - Use of a robotic ball collector and dispensing system for the driving range
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	Efforts are made to ensure documents in OnCourse remain up to date where necessary.

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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