



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Yyteri Golf Links

Prepared by independent verifier Sanni Pisto

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2026
Recertification due: 2029

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Yyteri Golf Links is located in one of Finland’s most unique and environmentally significant regions. The golf course has demonstrated a deep understanding of its role as an active contributor to the restoration and protection of the natural habitats of the Yyteri area. Through the ongoing restoration of the dunes and the implementation of sustainable course maintenance practices, Yyteri Golf Links enhances the playing experience while carefully preserving the surrounding nature. The dedicated staff at Yyteri Golf work continuously toward a shared vision: ensuring that the course thrives both as an exceptional golfing destination and as a valuable natural environment.”

Sanni Pisto
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Yyteri Golf Links 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.

Yyteri Golf Links 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, Yyteri Golf Links should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Yyteri Golf Links 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	Yyteri Golf, located near the famous Yyteri Beach in Pori, Finland, is renowned for its stunning natural surroundings and the endless sand dunes. The golf course consists of a combination of coastal sand dunes, pine forests, birch forests, and several water hazards, which creates rich habitats. Coastal peninsula habitats are also typical to Yyteri Golf landscape. The birdlife is especially rich and variable. There is an ongoing process to restore parts of the course back to dunes and links, which they have originally been.
	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	The course is situated near the Yyteri Dunes, which are protected under the Natura 2000 network. Yyteri Dunes are endangered. Parts of Yyteri Golf Course itself fall within this protected area. Tree cutting is prohibited except for the selective removal of shrubs and bushes that might encroach on the course. An endangered plant Carex Arenaria is found on the course.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	The land is rented from the city of Pori. Therefore, City of Pori acts as a landlord and responsibilities are given in the lease agreement. There are no archaeological or historical designations on the course.
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 course is monitored for wear patterns. There are footpaths and roads where the wearing is the greatest. Given its narrow layout in many areas, reducing the playable space is challenging, but the club is working to restore the roughs to their original state recreating the natural dunes and links terrain.

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	There are plenty of trees on the course. Therefore, no trees are planted on the course. Apart from that, local vegetation is favoured when planting. To support local biodiversity, a pike has been introduced into the course's ponds, based on expert advice from the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC). The course design also includes natural buffer zones between the maintained turf and water bodies.
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	Sandy dunes are typical to Yyteri. There is a process to restore the dunes to their original state. Also, coastal peninsula habitats are typical in some parts of Yyteri Golf. Typical trees are pine and birch. Many of them are protected under Natura 2000. Birdlife is rich in Yyteri. Typical birds include wading birds, ducks, gulls, terns, and migrating Arctic birds that stop to rest and feed. Notable species include the Osprey, Black Woodpecker, Eurasian Golden Plover, Common Crane, Whooper Swan, Velvet Scoter, Black Scoter, and Common Eider. Flocks of barnacle geese can appear on the course. Each flock can have thousands of birds. To manage this, the course has obtained a special permit allowing the use of dogs and drones to humanely scare the geese away, ensuring both the protection of the course and the well-being of the birds.
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	Cool and cold climate varieties are favoured when selecting turf species. The golf course does not have a single green keeper but a managing group of specialists that makes decisions in the team. The team uses their professionalism to decide which species are the best. Currently the most prevalent and also favored turf type is creeping bent (argostis stolonifera). Other favourable turf is meadow fescue (festuca pretensis).

			Hybrid turf is used in the spots that are most worn. Poa annua is the problematic type of turf that is susceptible to many diseases and therefore is not favoured.
	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	Yteri Golf's landscape is built on prehistoric seabed. The soil is sandy and naturally low in nutrients. The levels of Na are high. However, the state of Na is water insoluble. In recent years, the course has gone through a significant change in its turf management practices, shifting to the exclusive use of organic fertilizers and biostimulants. The goal is to increase the content of organic carbon in the soil. This sustainable approach has led to remarkable improvements in the quality and resilience of the turf. Soil tests are run weekly on at least two spots on the course.
	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	pH is monitored daily at least on two locations on the course. Calibration of sprayers is done twice a year and always before spraying of pesticides which is done 1-2 times a year. The employees have obtained the permits to spray. The protective equipment is available if needed.
	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 • Mowing blades are sharpened weekly to ensure clean cuts • The use of moisture-absorbing substances helps maintain optimal turf conditions • Hole locations are moved frequently • Manual weeding • Pesticides are applied only when absolutely necessary A single pre-winter application of fungicide is used to fight snow mold, a common issue in the region.

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 most common disease is the snow mould. It is prevented by accurate turf maintenance and by spraying fungicide once before the snowfall. Aeration soon after the snow melts is one of the measures. Other typical disease is take-all. Course is scouted on a regular basis and hotspots are known. Diagnosis is done in the group of specialists that make the decisions on the course's maintenance.
	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	Only legally registered and approved products are used. Decision of the pesticide use is done by the group of specialists. Applicators are calibrated twice a year and always before pesticide use. Minimal amount of pesticide is used.
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	In case of spills the absorbent material is used. If machinery is leaking, it is immediately turned off and towed. In case of leakages, the soil is removed and treated. Sprayed areas are far away from the water bodies.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	The wastewater from the whole course is connected to municipal wastewater system.

	pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations		The wells have sand and soil separation. Hazardous materials are stored in a locked cabinet, which was empty at the time of audit. Fuels are stored in a double hulled container surrounded by a fence and a locked gate. Waste oil is stored in a container that has a pool for leakages.
	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	Machinery is washed on a washing bay that has a concrete flooring and a well. Pesticides and fertilizers are mixed and loaded on an impermeable leak free floor. Containers and applicators are rinsed.
	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	• The safety data sheets of hazardous materials are available to the staff that use them. • Hazardous materials are stored in locked metallic cabinet in ventilated storage. • There is plenty of storage space. • Spil containment kits are available. • Secondary containment trays are confirmed. • Hazardous waste is collected by a contractor. • Showers and first aid kits are available. The staff take a first aid course on a regular basis.
	N3.2.2 Legal compliance in the storage and	Tank secured to a horizontal, flat, non-combustible surface;	Fuel tank is double hulled and locked on horizontal flat non-combustible floor and is inspected when needed.

	handling of fuels and gases	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	The secondary containment for fuels and waste oil is present. Fire extinguishers are present and inspected.
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 municipally treated in a municipal wastewater treatment plant. Wash bay is up to date, concrete floored and has a well for sand separation.

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 turf choices are discussed above. They are also based on the need of irrigation. Irrigation and availability of water is not the limiting factor on the course. The water used for irrigation comes from the ponds that are located on the course. The water that is not taken up by the plants or evaporated runs back to the ponds and is therefore recycled on site. The water does not exit the course.
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.;	Irrigation takes place nighttime only at adjusted spots. Irrigation system is old, but it is updated and centrally controlled. The software (rainbird) is rather modern. Weather and soil moisture is followed. Weather on the course can also be followed from the live footage sent from the course. Manual irrigation is used if needed e.g. on the higher spots of the course.

		Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Adjust sprinklers to playing surfaces only	
	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 consumption in the buildings is monitored from the flow meters and the bulls. Methods to decrease water consumption: • New kitchen appliances are water saving • Taps are water saving • Maintenance is done on a regular basis New pressure washer used to the wash Machinery saves lots of water.
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	The water is surface water abstracted from the ponds. It is recycled naturally since the flow of the water from the course is back to the ponds.
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	There is an ongoing process to restore roughs back to dunes which is their original state. This process started a year ago and is going on.
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.)	Consumption of energy is followed mostly from the utility bills. Joining OnCourse has increased the need for internal records. The buildings are lit by led lamps and some have motion sensors. The clubhouse is kept cold during the winter. The air conditioning channels are hooded during the winter to keep the warm air inside.
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	There are solar panels installed on the roof of the maintenance hall, and they produce plenty of energy. There is a plan to evaluate electrically powered robotic lawn mowers. CIP: Please determine which charging system is more advantageous: an individual solar-powered charging solution for

			each robotic mower, or an alternative centralized charging approach from grid 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	Furniture that is used in the clubhouse is all reused. This summer, divers will collect the lost golf balls in the ponds. Devices are maintained and fixed to ensure their longevity. The use of pesticides and fertilizers has decreased.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	The most important change that has occurred is the switch to organic fertilization as discussed above. Turf management has led to a decrease of use of pesticides as well. In the restaurant, local and organic foodstuffs are used.
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.	In the waste collection points there are containers for: • Paper • Metal • Glass • Plastic • Cardboard All are clearly signed. Waste streams are followed by the waste contractor. On the course, there are bins that have options for different waste streams such as bottles and energy.
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	Only authorized collectors are used for different waste streams.

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	Risk assessment is done to the golfers and staff. Yyteri Golf is considered a very safe course. Moving around the course has very low risks due to it's layout and short passages. Fire safety assessment is done based on the requirements of legislation. There is a rescue plan in place in case of storms and thunders. Staff are educated for the first aid on a regular basis.
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	Everyone can join the club. Under 16-year-olds can attend the green card course for free. Students and elderly get discounts. There is no discrimination based on person's age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic background.
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	Yyteri Golf has 6 permanent employees. Staff are trained and professional. Seasonal workers are trained for their tasks. Legislation and collective bargaining of PAM and Palta ry are followed. They set the minimum wage of golf employees in Finland. Protective equipment is up to date, staff are trained for health and safety, as well as for first aid.

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	Yyteri Golf is a popular spot for bird spotters. The birdlife is extremely rich. Ski tracks are made during the winter if there is enough snow cover.
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			Clubhouse can be used for many purposes. People can use saunas in the golf club for 5 €.
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	There are many charitable events taking place at Yyteri Golf. One of the biggest is the End Polio Now event. Other one to mention is LC Sofia good will game. Under 16-year-olds can get the green card for free.
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 most important partner of Yyteri Golf is City of Pori since the land is rented from the city. In addition, Yyteri Golf co-operates with local tourism agencies, as Yyteri is an important tourism region in Finland. Yyteri Golf organizes events with local schools. There are special days when students can come to try golf for free.
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	Yyteri Golf is managed by a group of specialists, that are top of their expertise. Yyteri Golf is active on social media and their webpage. Members use eBridie application to book sessions and to get information about the course. Yyteri Golf will make a publication about GEO when they achieve it.
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	Most important highlights are • switch from mineral based fertilizers to organic ones which has brought out great results. • Restoration of roughs back to dunes • Solarpanels • Recycled pond water A Restoration project is ongoing, as well as the installment of robotic mowers.

	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 Yyteri Golf follows the guidelines of Finnish Golf association and GEO to ensure that OnCourse is updated accurately. The important information is collected in the meetings of the team leaders.

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