



**GEO Certified®**

# **GEO Certified® Report Yas Acres Golf & Country Club**

Prepared by independent verifier Alexandra Almeida

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024  
Recertification due: 2027

*“Yas Acres Golf & Country Club demonstrates an exceptional commitment to sustainability through efficient use of resources, and meaningful engagement with the local community. Initiatives such as the inclusive Get into Golf Program and annual Pink Run events highlight the club's leadership in integrating sustainability with community well-being.*

*Notable environmental best practices implemented include the use of treated sewage effluent (TSE) for irrigation, strategic turfgrass reduction to minimize resource consumption, and robust measures to ensure responsible chemical usage and pollution prevention.*

*The team's forward-thinking approach consistently delivers impactful environmental and social outcomes.”*

*Alexandra Almeida  
(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Yas Acres 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.

Yas Acres 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, Yas Acres Golf & Country Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Yas Acres 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

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## 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 – that 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](http://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.isealalliance.org](http://www.isealalliance.org)



## Verifier's Report

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The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

| THEMES    | ACTION AREAS                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nature    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</li><li>• Turfgrass management</li><li>• Pollution prevention</li></ul>              |
| Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water</li><li>• Energy</li><li>• Materials</li></ul>                                                             |
| Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnerships &amp; Outreach</li><li>• Golfing &amp; Employment</li><li>• Advocacy &amp; Communications</li></ul> |

Included below are the observations made by the Independent Verifier against each item in the Standard.

| NATURE                                    |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| 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         | Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site;<br>Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys                                                | <p>Yas Acres Golf &amp; Country Club, located within the Yas Acres residential community on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, features a 9-hole, par-36 floodlit golf course with a modern driving range. Opened in 2021, the golf course spans a total of approximately 52 hectares, with 22.4 hectares dedicated to maintained turf areas planted with salt-tolerant Paspalum vaginatum grass, irrigated using treated sewage effluent (TSE) from the island, and 22.5 hectares feature a network of water bodies, including a dedicated irrigation lake and a unique saltwater stream system.</p> <p>A defining element of the course is the man-made stream system, which not only shapes play but also supports desert-adapted vegetation. The stream system flows along this ridge, creating a natural corridor that promotes the growth of native desert plants, particularly along the slopes and base. Water features are present on four of the nine holes, adding both visual appeal and ecological function.</p> <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Mapping of the site, surveys and course maintenance plan.</p> <p>Documents and data relating to course maintenance and biodiversity diversity issues were reviewed while on-site.</p> |
|                                           | N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species | Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species;<br>Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The superintendent and greenkeeping staff have a good knowledge of the local flora and fauna.</p> <p>Bird Report – August 2024 - This report provides a summary of bird observations recorded up to August 2024. All data — including species identification, counts, and observation dates — have been submitted to the UAE Bird Database, which is integrated with the global bird-monitoring platform eBird.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                                                    |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                   | <p>To date, a total of 94 bird species have been documented. Notably, 7 of these species are classified as being of global conservation concern. Among them, 6 species are currently listed as Near Threatened, while 1 species — the Common Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) — is classified as Vulnerable under the IUCN Red List.</p> <p>These findings underscore the ecological significance of the area and highlight the importance of continued monitoring and conservation efforts.</p> <p><b>CCIP: To strengthen awareness and reinforce conservation commitment, a regularly updated list of notable and protected flora and fauna species observed on site should be compiled and made publicly available. This measure will support education, engagement, and informed decision-making regarding biodiversity stewardship.</b></p>                               |
|                                                    | <b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>                                | Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site                                       | Not applicable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course</b> | <b>N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass</b> | Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play                                                                       | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>As part of ongoing resource efficiency initiatives, irrigated areas have been reduced through the removal of high-maintenance landscape designs that required daily upkeep. These changes were implemented in the Back-of-House (BoH) landscape gardens, where soil was covered with stones at the maintenance facility and with mulch at the Clubhouse, as well as in selected areas of the golf course—specifically holes 3, 4, and 7—through the reduction of turfgrass coverage. The reduction in irrigated area was measured and documented by the Yas Acres team, as detailed in the Golf Club Landscape Report (02.02.2023).</p> <p>This initiative contributes to significant water savings, lower maintenance demands, and enhanced sustainability performance in line with environmental best practices.</p> |
| <b>N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife</b>  | <b>N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf</b>              | Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan;<br>Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The streams and lakes at Yas Acres contribute significantly to the site's ecological value and landscape quality. These water bodies provide important habitat diversity for local wildlife, particularly bird species, and support a visually appealing and tranquil environment for residents and visitors. Their integration into the overall design reflects a strong commitment to sustainable water management and biodiversity enhancement.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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|                           |                                                             |  | <p>Efforts to safeguard the wetlands and water bodies at Yas Acres include the implementation of a 5-meter buffer zone and the adoption of sustainable golf course management practices. These buffer zones serve as critical protective barriers, helping to prevent pollution runoff and preserve natural habitats. In parallel, course management strategies focus on minimizing chemical use, reducing the risk of water contamination and supporting overall ecosystem health.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk of wayward golf shots impacting nearby villas, a targeted planting initiative was implemented at Hole 4. These palms, trees and shrubs serve as natural safety barriers, effectively redirecting play and enhancing resident safety. Beyond protection, the planting boosts local biodiversity, supports carbon sequestration, and provides valuable habitat for birds and small mammals. The trees also improve microclimatic conditions, offering shade, cooling, and increased visual quality, thereby contributing to a more resilient and liveable landscape.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please give due consideration to the feasibility of implementing a biodiversity management plan and establishing wildlife sanctuaries in non-playing areas.</b></p> |
| N1.4 Conserve key species | N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species |  | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Other conservation measures discussed included the installation of nesting boxes and bug hotels.</p> <p>Yas Island has been identified as a site of particular interest for the study of ornithology. The area is home to a variety of species, including waders, the Western Marsh Harrier, the Caspian and Gull-billed Terns, and the Western Reef Heron. During the appropriate season, a limited number of migrants, such as wheatears and wagtails, can also be observed.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please consider replicating the successful model implemented at Yas Links, which effectively combined environmental education, community outreach, and practical conservation actions. At Yas Links, the installation of bird boxes for Barn Owls and Kestrels—built by local schoolchildren—served as both a wildlife enhancement initiative and an opportunity to engage the next generation in sustainability efforts. By adopting a similar approach, Yas Acres can further strengthen its biodiversity program, promote ecological awareness, and build community partnerships, all while reinforcing the integration of sustainability within golf course management.</b></p>                               |
| N2 Turfgrass              |                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health | N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors         | Select appropriate grass species for climate                       | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Yas Acres features Paspalum vaginatum across all turfgrass areas. This warm-season grass is specifically engineered for sustainability, offering exceptional salt tolerance and thriving in saline environments. Its resilience makes it ideal for irrigation with treated sewage effluent, supporting the course's commitment to water conservation and environmental stewardship.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                            | N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition                                        |                                                                    | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>The greenkeeping team actively implements sustainable practices to maintain healthy soil structure and condition. Key strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing foot traffic and equipment use to prevent compaction,</li> <li>• Applying organic fertilisers on greens and tees,</li> <li>• Using targeted chemical applications only when necessary,</li> <li>• Maintaining balanced fertilisation while avoiding over-application,</li> <li>• Irrigating efficiently and at optimal times, and</li> <li>• Conducting regular soil testing to detect nutrient deficiencies and guide precise interventions.</li> </ul> These integrated practices contribute to long-term soil health, turf resilience, and reduced environmental impact. |
|                                            | N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation | Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis                         | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Fertiliser applications are strategically planned based on comprehensive soil test data and prevailing environmental conditions. Regular soil and ISTRC testing provide essential data to guide decisions on fertiliser requirements, topdressing schedules, aeration needs, and other key turf management practices. This data-driven approach ensures optimal turf health, efficient resource use, and minimised environmental impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance     | N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management                                                 | Sharpen mowing blades;<br>Remove surface moisture;<br>Hand weeding | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>The quality of the playing surface is directly linked to the implementation of effective watering practices, in conjunction with balanced mechanical or cultural methods, chemical controls and pest monitoring.<br><br><b>CIP: To support ongoing efforts in maintaining high-quality playing surfaces while advancing environmental sustainability, please integrate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles into the turf management program. While effective irrigation, mechanical,</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                                              |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><b>cultural, and chemical practices are already in place, increased emphasis on IPM—particularly through systematic pest monitoring, the use of biological controls, and threshold-based decision-making — can significantly reduce reliance on chemical inputs.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly</b></p> | <p><b>N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues</b></p> | <p>Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases;<br/>Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease;<br/>Accurate pest and disease identification;<br/>Map and track pest and disease hotspots;<br/>Establish pest and disease thresholds</p>                     | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Yas Acres' pest management strategy is focused on sustainability and environmental responsibility. This strategy integrates various approaches, including cultural practices and the targeted use of pesticides. The superintendent is aware of the principles of IPM and the public health and environmental advantages of judicious pesticide use. As part of an overall pest management strategy, both the risks and the efficacy of chemical and non-chemical control methods of pest suppression are given full consideration.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                              | <p><b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</b></p>                                                   | <p>Use only legally registered and approved products;<br/>Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides;<br/>Regularly calibrate and test applicators;<br/>Use appropriate protective equipment;<br/>Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf .</p> | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCAE) in the UAE is responsible for maintaining a list of registered pesticides. Yas Acres uses products that are approved for use in the UAE.</p> <p>Applicator licenses are not required under current UAE regulations.</p> <p>Pesticides are applied in accordance with label instructions, under appropriate environmental conditions and by qualified persons with proven methods and appropriate material.</p> <p>All personnel involved in the handling of pesticides, including their preparation and application, receive comprehensive training and are required to always wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The PPE is stored in a location that is dry, clean and easily accessible.</p> <p>Sprayers/equipment are tested for accurate and safe application.</p> <p>The greenkeeper meticulously follows the product's instructions for use. Any surplus from the triple-rinse pesticide containers is utilised in accordance with the product label guidelines. Furthermore, it is customary to apply the rinse water to the treated area.</p> |
| <p><b>N3 Pollution Prevention</b></p>        |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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| N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site | N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations          | <p>Document procedures for emergency spill responses;</p> <p>Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas;</p> <p>Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas;</p> <p>Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.</p> | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Viya Golf has implemented a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) program for golf course maintenance activities, which includes Club HSE objectives, safety procedures and risk assessment, PPE, training, first aid, crisis management plan, emergency preparedness, contacts and reporting protocol.</p> <p>Yas Acres has implemented an emergency management system, including a defined procedure for responding to sudden or unexpected incidents, such as accidental chemical spills. This ensures timely and effective action to minimize environmental impact and maintain safety on site.</p> <p>Mowing and spraying buffer zones were observed and discussed during the site visit.</p> <p>The stipulated buffer width of 5 metres having been designated for the implementation of spraying and spreading activities.</p> <p><b>CCIP: Please develop a comprehensive map clearly delineating all buffer zones, as well as designated no-spray and no-spread areas. This visual tool will enhance operational clarity, support compliance with environmental best practices, and facilitate consistent implementation by all relevant personnel.</b></p> |
|                                               | N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations            | <p>Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored;</p> <p>Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>All waste produced at the clubhouse is segregated and stored in accordance with the relevant regulations. The process involves the segregation of different types of waste (used cooking oils, kitchen waste, mixed dry recyclables – including plastic, glass, and metals, paper and cardboard, etc.), the utilisation of appropriate containers/skips and a storage area that is both safe and well-maintained, and easily accessible.</p> <p>Wastewater is directly discharged into the local sewerage system, which is equipped with a wastewater treatment plant.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                               | N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations | <p>Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces;</p> <p>Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface;</p> <p>Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators</p>                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The Yas Acres maintenance facility is a newly constructed building featuring a covered structure and impervious flooring. It includes designated areas for equipment repairs, routine maintenance, staff operations, storage, and breakout rooms, supporting efficient and environmentally responsible course management.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|  |  |  | <p>Outside the building, bulk materials are stored in properly constructed, paved bins, ensuring orderly storage and reducing material loss. Used oils are stored in 1,000-litre plastic IBC containers, which are placed within secondary containment units to prevent leaks and environmental contamination.</p> <p>Hydraulic oil and petrol oil are stored inside the maintenance facility's workshop area in 200-litre bins, each placed within secondary containment units. Spill kits are readily available nearby, ensuring a quick and effective response in the event of accidental spills. This setup ensures that any potential spills are contained, thereby preventing leaks and minimizing the risk of environmental contamination.</p> <p>Pesticides are securely stored within a designated warehouse that features an impermeable floor surface and efficient ventilation to ensure proper air circulation. The facility is also equipped with an emergency eye wash pad, spill kits for chemicals and a safety-compliant fire extinguisher, in accordance with the latest fire and chemical safety regulations, ensuring both safe storage and rapid emergency response capability.</p> <p>Products are stored correctly, in their original containers with the labels attached.</p> <p>The greenkeeping team is responsible for maintaining an organised log of hazardous materials used in golf course maintenance. The objective of this register is to serve as a comprehensive inventory of all pesticides and chemicals currently in use.</p> <p>Pesticide containers are returned for recycling after being thoroughly emptied and rinsed (triple rinse). Empty pesticide containers are appropriately disposed of as hazardous waste, in accordance with UAE regulations.</p> <p>The configuration of the mixing and loading area has been designed to mitigate the risk of accidental release. The location has been selected based on adequate ventilation and illumination and is situated at a considerable distance from water sources. The pavement is characterised by its impermeable and leak-free nature.</p> <p>The wash pad is equipped with a pre-treatment system - a filtration system that ensures that wastewater from equipment cleaning is properly filtered before being discharged. This system helps to remove contaminants such as clippings, dirt and other solid particles from the wastewater, preventing pollution and protecting local water resources.</p> <p>All wastewater generated on-site is responsibly discharged into the municipal sewage system in accordance with local regulations. In Abu</p> |
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|                                                |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Dhabi, wastewater from residential and commercial sources is collected and treated by SWS Holding (Sustainable Water Solutions Holding Company).</p> <p><b>CCIP: Please place drip trays under any hazardous materials to contain any leaks or spills.</b></p> <p><b>CCIP: Used buggy batteries should not be stored outdoors, as exposure to moisture and extreme temperatures can cause degradation and leakage. Please store batteries indoors in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area on a non-reactive, impermeable surface, away from flammable or conductive materials to prevent acid corrosion and environmental contamination.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances</b> | <b>N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances</b> | <p>Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff;<br/> Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building;<br/> Sufficient storage capacity;<br/> Impermeable flooring;<br/> Spill containment kits present;<br/> Emergency wash area;<br/> Fire extinguisher in the immediate area;<br/> Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured;<br/> Regular inspection of storage tanks</p> | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The greenkeeping team maintains a comprehensive register of hazardous substances, including all pesticides used on site. Access to pesticides is restricted to authorized personnel only, ensuring controlled and safe handling.</p> <p>Spill containment kits, emergency eyewash stations, and fire extinguishers are appropriately located throughout the facility, supporting quick response in case of incidents.</p> <p>The fuel storage tank is an above-ground, double-walled unit with integrated pump bays and built-in containment features. This design ensures that any potential leakage from the inner tank is fully contained within the outer shell, effectively preventing environmental contamination and supporting safe fuel handling practices.</p> <p>In the vicinity of the petrol and diesel pump, spill kits and two fire extinguishers are strategically positioned to ensure a prompt response to any spills or fire-related incidents. These measures are in place to enhance site safety, reduce environmental risk, and comply with fire and chemical handling regulations.</p> <p>The fuel storage tank is subject to regular inspections to verify its structural integrity and ensure continued environmental protection.</p> <p><b>CCIP: Please introduce spill containment measures for leaks or drips from the refuelling hoses as soon as possible. This will minimize the risk of contamination of the paved surface at the site.</b></p> |

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| <b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b> | <b>N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences</b> | Wastewater discharge licence;<br>Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation) | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The wash pad is equipped with a pre-treatment system - a filtration system that ensures that wastewater from equipment cleaning is properly filtered before being discharged. This system helps to remove contaminants such as clippings, dirt and other solid particles from the wastewater, preventing pollution and protecting local water resources.</p> <p>All wastewater generated on-site is responsibly discharged into the municipal sewage system in accordance with local regulations. In Abu Dhabi, wastewater from residential and commercial sources is collected and treated by SWS Holding (Sustainable Water Solutions Holding Company).</p> <p><b>CCIP: Please explore the feasibility of upgrading the wash pad drainage system to include a golf course-specific oil separator. This system is designed to effectively remove oils and other hydrocarbon contaminants commonly present in wash water from maintenance equipment. Integrated components, such as turf clippings separators and oil/water separators, would ensure that water discharged meets higher environmental standards and minimizes the risk of pollution.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: To reduce freshwater consumption and further prevent runoff contamination, please consider installing a closed-loop wash-water recycling system. Such a system captures, filters, and recycles the water used for equipment cleaning, significantly decreasing the environmental footprint of maintenance operations while contributing to sustainable resource management.</b></p> |
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## RESOURCES

| R1 Water                       |                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Objectives                     | Requirements                                                               | Mandatory Practices                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Verifier Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| R1.1 Minimise water demand     | R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water                        | Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Yas Acres has also initiated a turf reduction programme to minimise high maintenance areas by strategically converting some turfed areas to natural landscapes, including the use of drought tolerant species and optimised irrigation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| R1.2 Maximise water efficiency | R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course | Conduct regular irrigation performance checks;<br>Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices;<br>Ensure effective application of water to target areas;<br>Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>A water management plan has been implemented with the aim of improving the efficiency of the irrigation system on the golf course.</p> <p>A state-of-the-art computerised irrigation system allows the superintendent to monitor, record and adjust water levels across the course, providing real-time irrigation control and optimising schedules based on weather forecasts.</p> <p>The greenkeeping team has received consistent training in the adjustment of sprinkler nozzles.</p> <p>The greenkeeping team carries out regular and preventative inspections of the irrigation and drainage systems, resulting in the timely identification and repair of leaks and blocked sprayers.</p>                                                                                                          |
|                                | R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings       | Audit water use regularly;<br>Review bills frequently and look for irregularities;<br>Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors;<br>Categorise and track water consumption                                                                     | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The maintenance team is responsible for the routine upkeep of plumbing, irrigation and cooling systems. This is to prevent leaks and ensure that the systems are running efficiently.</p> <p>Yas Acres conducts water audits to assess current water usage and identify potential areas for optimisation. In addition, the company has replaced older toilets, faucets and showerheads with low-flow alternatives, thereby reducing water consumption.</p> <p>Water use is recorded and monitored for both irrigation and potable consumption.</p> <p>Low-flow devices have been installed on showers at the Clubhouse as part of ongoing efforts to reduce water consumption and enhance resource efficiency. This measure supports the site's commitment to sustainable water management practices.</p> |

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| <b>R1.3 Source water responsibly</b>   | <b>R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water</b>           | Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required                                      | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Abu Dhabi uses Treated Sewage Effluent (TSE) for irrigation, including landscaping, public gardens, and golf courses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>R2 Energy</b>                       |                                                                                      |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>R2.1 Reduce energy demand</b>       | <b>R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance</b> | Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs                                | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>In designated areas, the turfgrass was replaced with native species. This has had the effect of reducing water usage, pesticide and fertiliser application, and ongoing maintenance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency</b> | <b>R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings</b>         | Audit energy use regularly;<br>Regularly review bills;<br>Categorise and track energy consumption           | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Energy bills are reviewed monthly and energy consumption at the clubhouse and maintenance facility is monitored monthly.<br><br>Building Management System (BMS): Automates HVAC, lighting, and electrical systems based on operational hours to optimize energy use and reduce waste.<br><br>All interior and exterior lighting, including the driving range and the 9-hole golf course, utilizes energy-efficient LED technology, replacing traditional incandescent and fluorescent fixtures. This significantly improves energy performance and reduces maintenance needs.<br><br>The golf facility is equipped with 52 electric carts powered by rechargeable batteries, eliminating the need for petrol and reducing fuel and maintenance costs. |
| <b>R2.3 Source energy responsibly</b>  | <b>R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy</b>              | Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>On-site solar panels help generate clean energy and reduce dependency on the grid. Notably, all parking area lighting is solar-powered, contributing to overall energy efficiency. This measure will reduce the clubhouse's reliance on fossil fuels, leading to potential savings on energy costs and a reduction in carbon emissions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>R3 Materials</b>                    |                                                                                      |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| <b>R3.1 Reduce materials demand</b>      | <b>R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives</b> | Undertake a review of materials consumed                                                                                                                                        | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Waste management procedures are subject to regular monitoring to ensure compliance with local environmental regulations and to identify areas for improvement in reducing waste and increasing recycling efforts. Where possible, priority is given to sourcing products and materials from local sources – local plant nurseries, honey, fish, vegetables (30% of F&B suppliers are local)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>R3.2 Purchase responsibly</b>         | <b>R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy</b>                                                                      | Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Priority is actively given to sourcing products and materials locally whenever possible. This includes purchasing from local plant nurseries, and sourcing honey, fish, and vegetables from regional producers. Currently, 30% of food and beverage suppliers are local, supporting the local economy and reducing the environmental footprint of procurement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>R3.3 Reuse and recycle</b>            | <b>R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity</b>                                                               | Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling;<br>Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled                                                            | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Yas Acres has implemented an effective waste separation and recycling programme. Labelled bins are available throughout the facility and the bins are easily identifiable.<br><br><b>CCIP: Please use clear, color-coded labels with both text and images to reduce confusion and encourage correct waste sorting. Visual cues make the system more accessible to all users and help reduce contamination, thereby improving recycling outcomes.</b><br><br><b>CIP: Please place clear instructions and reminders near waste stations to reinforce proper sorting habits among staff, members, and visitors. Consistent messaging supports behavioral change and increases participation in the recycling program.</b><br><br><b>CCIP: Please begin tracking recycling rates and waste diversion metrics to assess the effectiveness of the program over time. This data can help identify areas for improvement and guide future waste reduction strategies, further demonstrating Yas Acres commitment to environmental sustainability.</b> |
| <b>R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance</b> | <b>R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations</b>                                                                | Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste                                                                                | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Yas Acres works in partnership with approved waste management contractors to collect, sort, recycle and dispose of waste in a responsible manner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## COMMUNITY

### C1 Outreach

| Objectives                                            | Requirements                                                                             | Mandatory Practices | Verifier Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality | C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility                                |                     | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Yas Acres Golf Course is open to the public and welcomes golfers of all abilities, promoting inclusivity and broader community engagement.</p> <p>Facilities overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9-Hole Floodlit Golf Course: A 3,700-yard, par-36 course suitable for all skill levels.</li><li>• Practice Facilities: Floodlit driving range and a short-game area with multiple greens for chipping, pitching, and putting.</li><li>• Pro Shop: Offers the latest apparel, equipment, custom fittings, demo events, and repair services.</li><li>• Clubhouse Amenities: Includes a large swimming pool, modern fitness center, and four padel courts.</li><li>• Dining: Three distinct outlets, offering scenic views and a relaxed, community-focused atmosphere.</li></ul> <p>Golf Development Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get into Golf: A five-week program launched in January 2024 to introduce newcomers to golf through structured sessions and monthly competitions at Yas Links.</li><li>• Yas Acres Academy: Provides private lessons and group clinics tailored to all skill levels, focusing on skill development and progression.</li><li>• Ladies Group Program: A dedicated, 8-week initiative within the Academy offering a supportive, social, and professional environment for women to learn or improve their golf skills.</li></ul> |
| C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity             | C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes |                     | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                                                     |                                                                                                          |                                         | <p>Yas Acres Golf &amp; Country Club has consistently supported breast cancer awareness through annual events, notably the "Pink Run."</p> <p>2022: Provis Communities Pink Run<br/>On October 9, 2022, Yas Acres hosted the Provis Communities Pink Run, offering 2.5 km, 5 km, and 10 km race options. The event raised funds for "Brest Friends" in collaboration with the Al Jalila Foundation.</p> <p>2023: Aldar Communities Pink Run<br/>The second annual Pink Run occurred on October 7, 2023, at Yas Acres Golf &amp; Country Club. Organized by Aldar Communities, the event continued to promote breast cancer awareness.</p> <p>2024: Pink Run<br/>On October 12, 2024, over 700 participants joined the Pink Run at Yas Acres Golf &amp; Country Club, demonstrating strong community support for breast cancer awareness.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>C1.3 Establish active community partnerships</b> | <b>C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups</b> | Create a 'sustainability working group' | <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>Yas Acres Golf &amp; Country Club has demonstrated a strong commitment to positive and constructive engagement with its neighbours, the local community, and various groups through a range of inclusive events and initiatives.</p> <p>The Club proactively engages in multiple community initiatives beyond its annual Pink Run for breast cancer awareness—most notably through the successful launch of its inclusive Get into Golf Program (2024) and the hosting of a week-long Community Week (2022), designed specifically to strengthen local bonds during Ramadan.</p> <p><b>CIP: To further enhance community engagement and promote environmental awareness, please establish a Sustainability Working Group that includes junior golfers, club members, and staff. This group would provide a platform for active participation in sustainability initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders. It could also serve as a valuable forum for education, idea-sharing, and the development of volunteer-driven projects that align with the club's long-term environmental and social responsibility goals.</b></p> |
| <b>C2 Golfers &amp; Employees</b>                   |                                                                                                          |                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| <b>C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing</b>                               | <b>C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities</b>                |                                                                                                | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>There is awareness of golf's positive impact on both mental and physical health.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>C2.2 Be open and inclusive</b>                                      | <b>C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies</b>                                  | Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors                                        | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>Yas Acres does encourage the participation of female players, particularly in golf.<br><br>Yas Acres Golf & Country Club offers a dynamic and inclusive Ladies Golf Programme designed to welcome women of all skill levels into the sport.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities</b> | <b>C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development</b>                 | Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc | <b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b><br><br>The Yas Acres golf course is a key part of Aldar's operations, and Aldar's commitment to the welfare of its employees, including safety, is a core value, with an emphasis on compliance with UAE law and international best practice. Aldar's health and safety standards include OSH/EHS performance monitoring, training, contractor management and incident reporting. A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is a method used to identify and control hazards, with benefits to safety, production and employee involvement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>C3 Communications</b>                                               |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>C3.1 Engage golfers and members</b>                                 | <b>C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors</b> | Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements     | To further promote transparency, education, and community engagement around Yas Acres sustainability efforts, the following initiatives are recommended:<br><br><b>CIP: Please try to create a clearly visible, regularly updated sustainability section on the official Yas Acres website. This page should highlight ongoing environmental initiatives, certifications, milestones, and educational resources. Providing accessible, transparent information will demonstrate leadership in sustainable golf course management and reinforce the club's environmental credibility.</b><br><br><b>CIP: Please try to introduce a periodic digital newsletter targeting club members and the wider community. The newsletter could feature updates on sustainability projects, seasonal environmental tips, success stories, and opportunities for volunteer participation. This platform would help build awareness and foster a culture of environmental responsibility among stakeholders.</b> |

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|                                                  |                                                                                        |                                                                      | <p><b>CIP: Please try to promote awareness of local biodiversity by featuring a “Bird of the Month” across the club’s digital platforms, on-course displays, and newsletters. This initiative would engage visitors and members in learning about native and migratory bird species, encouraging deeper appreciation for the surrounding ecosystem.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please try to place educational signage around key locations such as tee markers, walking paths, and the clubhouse to highlight native plants, animals, and sustainability efforts. This would provide on-site learning opportunities for golfers and guests of all ages, reinforcing the connection between sport and environmental stewardship.</b></p> <p>Together, these initiatives would significantly enhance Yas Acres visibility as a sustainability leader and deepen its engagement with the community.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability</b> | <b>C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community</b> | Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement | <p>To further integrate Yas Acres into the local community and foster a culture of environmental awareness that extends beyond the course, the following community engagement initiatives are recommended:</p> <p><b>CIP: Please try to host open days where local residents, school groups, and community organizations are invited to tour the course. These guided walks could focus on key sustainability themes such as biodiversity, water conservation, and sustainable landscaping, offering a hands-on learning experience and showcasing the environmental value of the course.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please try to engage junior golfers in meaningful sustainability projects like tree planting, bird monitoring, or waste audits. Participants can be formally recognized as Environmental Ambassadors, promoting youth leadership in environmental stewardship and connecting young players with the values of sustainability.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please try to partner with local schools to deliver presentations, on-site field trips, or interactive workshops focused on topics such as turfgrass science, local biodiversity, and efficient water use. These educational initiatives can deepen student understanding and spark interest in environmental careers or studies.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please try to establish a community garden or native plant nursery on-site, encouraging participation from members, children, and visitors. This space can serve as a living classroom to educate about indigenous species, pollinator-friendly plants, and the importance of habitat restoration.</b></p> |

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|  |  |  | <p><b>CIP: Please try to organize community art or photography contests that invite submissions themed around wildlife, landscapes, or sustainable practices at Yas Acres. Winning entries could be featured in the club's newsletter, on social media, or displayed in the clubhouse, reinforcing the link between creativity and conservation.</b></p> <p>These initiatives would enhance Yas Acres role as a community hub for environmental education and advocacy while reinforcing its reputation as a leader in sustainable golf course management.</p> |
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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](http://www.sustainable.golf)