



**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**

# **GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Report Palheiro Golf**

Prepared by independent verifier Alexandra Almeida

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024  
Recertification due: 2027

**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**

 **GEO  
Foundation**  
Sustainability in and through golf

***“During the on-site verification, Palheiro Golf demonstrated a clear commitment in key areas of sustainability, including nature enhancement, resource efficiency, and community engagement. Based on the evidence provided during the verification process and the documentation reviewed, I confirm that the course operates in alignment with the principles of sustainable golf course management as set out by the GEO Certified® program. Palheiro Golf is also committed to continuous improvement, as evidenced by its plans to further integrate sustainable practices in the coming years. I look forward to seeing the progress over the next three years.”***

***Alexandra Almeida  
(GEO accredited independent verifier)***



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Palheiro Golf 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.

Palheiro Golf 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, Palheiro Golf should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Palheiro Golf 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  
Manager, Data and Reporting, 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
<b>Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</li><li>• Turfgrass management</li><li>• Pollution prevention</li></ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water</li><li>• Energy</li><li>• Materials</li></ul>
<b>Community</b>	<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

### 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; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	<p>The Palheiro golf course is located within the 200-year-old Palheiro Nature Estate, a property with 140 hectares, which is famous for its pine forests, centennial trees, flowering shrubs, botanical woodland and sub-tropical vegetation.</p> <p>In 2012, a significant fire broke out at the Palheiro Estate. The blaze caused extensive damage to the estate's gardens and surrounding areas, posing a threat to the unique flora and fauna of the region. Subsequently, with the help of government funding, the Palheiro Estate begun a reforestation programme planting indigenous Madeira species, as well as removing invasive species.</p> <p>This programme is still being actively implemented today.</p> <p>A review of biodiversity documents and data was carried out on site.</p> <p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site mapping.</li> <li>- Documented information on the habitats and species present on the site.</li> <li>- Efforts to revegetate disturbed areas and irradiate invasive species.</li> </ul> <p><b>CIP: Please consider engaging a specialist ecologist to carry out a baseline survey of the flora and fauna on the site. For instance, if the golf course is home to endangered species, the ecologist can help identify critical habitats and recommend conservation strategies.</b></p>
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Palheiro is home to over 20 species, including two endemic nesting on the estate: the Macaronesian Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter</i></li> </ul>

			<p><i>nisus granti</i>) and the Trocaz Pigeon. This information can be found on the website and in each of the rooms of the Hotel Casa Velha do Palheiro.</p> <p>The Golf Director and Superintendent have a good knowledge of the local landscape, and the measures required to comply with environmental legislation in Madeira.</p>
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	The Palheiro Estate was built in the early 19th century. Inside the property there are some historic buildings of particular interest. Like Casa Velha do Palheiro which was built in the early 19th century as a hunting lodge for the Count of Carvalhal, and later purchased by John Burden Blandy, in 1885. Today, Casa Velha do Palheiro is part of the Palheiro Nature Estate. The Palheiro Gardens, also known as the 'Blandy Gardens' as they were acquired by this family in 1885. The original owner, the Conde de Carvalhal, planted many trees on the estate and laid the foundation to the Camellia collection; some of his early plantings can still be seen today.
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total irrigated area – approx..18 ha.</li> <li>- Reduction in the number of bunkers from 103 to 82, currently occupying a total area of 0.3 hectares.</li> <li>- 11 sheep help with the mowing of the roughs.</li> </ul>
<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; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeding stations, owl and bat shelters and bird nesting boxes have been installed around the estate.</li> <li>- Reforestation program to plant indigenous Madeira species and remove invasive trees and shrubs, such as <i>Acacia podalyriifolia</i>, common gorse (<i>Ulex europaeus subsp. latebracteatus</i>), Scotch broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius subsp. scoparius</i>) and Eucalyptus.</li> </ul>
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		<b>CIP: Given that two endemic species nest at Palheiro Nature Estate (the <i>Macronesian Sparrowhawk</i> and the <i>Trocaz Pigeon</i>), it would be beneficial to establish wildlife sanctuaries in the out-of-play areas with the help of an ecologist. They can also help to develop a targeted management plan dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of these areas.</b>

			<b>CIP: Please consider the possibility of setting up a native plant nursery in the vicinity of the golf course.</b>
<b>N2 Turfgrass</b>			
<b>N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health</b>	<b>N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors</b>	Select appropriate grass species for climate	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The playing areas are predominantly cool-season grasses.</li> <li>- Madeira has a subtropical climate, with temperatures ranging from 18°C to 24°C (Transition Zone).</li> </ul> <p><b>CIP: Please assess the impacts of climate change on the Madeira region, focusing on water availability and the management of supply and demand extremes. Prioritize the selection of drought-resistant species to ensure long-term sustainability.</b></p>
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <p>The soil management program incorporates physical maintenance techniques, including topdressing, scarifying, hollow coring, and verticutting. These practices are essential for alleviating soil compaction and enhancing the turf's overall resilience to stressors such as foot traffic and mowing.</p>
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Soil testing is carried out annually to assess the need for inputs and other necessary interventions.</li> <li>- The superintendent prioritises the use of organic biostimulants and bioprotection products on greens.</li> </ul> <p>Fertiliser applications are strategically planned based on environmental conditions and monitoring results to optimise nutrient uptake and minimise environmental impact.</p>
<b>N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance</b>	<b>N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management</b>	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The superintendent's commitment to environmentally friendly practices, such as daily course scouting, allows for early detection of potential issues like pests or diseases. This proactive approach enables the implementation of preventative measures that are less invasive and often more successful. Furthermore, the superintendent combines cultural operations</li> </ul>



			<p>with chemical methods to create a balanced approach to golf course maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An agronomist advises on pesticide selection and application methods and all treatments are pre-approved. biological products are under observation and tested on greens.</li> <li>- Conventional pesticides and biopesticides are used on greens (dollar spot).</li> <li>- Conventional pesticides are use on fairways; great importance is given to the prevention.</li> </ul>
<b>N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly</b>	<b>N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues</b>	<p>Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases; Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease; Accurate pest and disease identification; Map and track pest and disease hotspots; Establish pest and disease thresholds</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Superintendent is aware of the restrictions on the use of chemicals on golf courses. Pesticides are only used when additional control measures are required.</li> <li>- Appropriate pesticide selection and application methods using IPM are discussed with an agronomist.</li> </ul>
	<b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</b>	<p>Use only legally registered and approved products; Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf .</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Greenkeeper maintains detailed pesticide use records, which are retained for a minimum of three years.</li> <li>- Pesticides are applied in accordance with label instructions, under appropriate environmental conditions, by qualified personnel using good practice and appropriate equipment.</li> <li>- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used, and procedures are followed.</li> </ul>
<b>N3 Pollution Prevention</b>			
<b>N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site</b>	<b>N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations</b>	<p>Document procedures for emergency spill responses; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas;</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documented Spill Prevention, Clean Up and Reporting procedure.</li> </ul> <p><b>CCIP: Please conduct at least one safety drill per year and record the results.</b></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>CCIP: Please establish a procedure for regularly inspecting and replacing emergency kits for spills.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please consider producing maps of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.</b></p>
	<p><b>N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations</b></p>	<p>Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored;          Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Maintenance Facility is an old farm building. The entire facility is roofed, has a concrete flooring, features designated areas for repairs, routine maintenance, staff operations, storage and is equipped with fire extinguishers.</li> <li>- A new building is planned for 2025, designed and built with sustainability and user-friendliness in mind, including state-of-the-art equipment storage and washing facilities, up-to-date chemical storage, handling and cleaning capacity, and a dedicated, ventilated room for mower sharpening.</li> <li>- Hazardous wastes, including pesticide containers, are properly disposed of using certified waste treatment operators, ensuring compliance with local regulations.</li> <li>- The sewer network is connected to the local WWTP.</li> </ul> <p><b>CIP: Please consider protecting the workplace floor with a resistant concrete floor sealer, such as an epoxy-based floor coating.</b></p>
	<p><b>N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations</b></p>	<p>Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces;          Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface;          Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mixing and loading area is located close to the maintenance facility. The pad has a concrete surface designed to prevent spills from seeping into the ground. It is located outside, in a well-ventilated area, safely distanced from individuals, animals, food, and water systems. It was constructed with durability in mind—featuring concrete and three surrounding walls, with the area sloped away from the entrance.</li> <li>- Containers are sent to recycling, after triple-rising. Diluted rinse material is sprayed onto an untreated part of the turf area or other green area.</li> <li>- Flushing instructions on the pesticide container label are followed.</li> <li>- All pesticide safety data sheets are available.</li> </ul>

			<p><b>CIP:</b> Although the new building project will include plans for a state-of-the-art mixing and loading pad (with floor drains, a sump, and a waste tank), please consider installing (1) a new impermeable or waterproof surface; (2) a roof to minimize exposure to rain and weathering; and (3) a curb around the floor to prevent the spread of chemicals. This will help to mitigate risks in the meantime.</p> <p><b>CIP:</b> Please also consider installing a completely self-contained system that captures run-off from the mixing and loading area. Floor drains should include a sump and a pump to move the wash water or rinsate to a waste tank. The material can be reclaimed, diluted to label concentrations, and applied to turf areas or collected for disposal using certified haulers.</p> <p><b>CIP:</b> Please consider installing a wash bay for equipment that can collect, filter and recycle wash water.</p> <p><b>CIP:</b> Please consider adding an adjacent blow-off area, where compressed air will be used to blow most of the dry clippings off the equipment before it is washed.</p>
<p><b>N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances</b></p>	<p><b>N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances</b></p>	<p>Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff;  Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building;  Sufficient storage capacity;  Impermeable flooring;  Spill containment kits present;  Emergency wash area;  Fire extinguisher in the immediate area;  Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured;  Regular inspection of storage tanks</p>	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oil and fuel containers are stored in a covered, well-ventilated, and dry area with a concrete floor, while pesticides are securely stored in a dedicated separate room.</li> <li>- A list of all hazardous materials stored on the premises is kept up to date and is available to authorised personnel.</li> <li>- An eye wash shower was purchased in November and will be installed as soon as it arrives on site.</li> </ul> <p><b>CCIP:</b> Please install prominent wall or floor signs to clearly indicate the location of spill kits, ensuring quick and easy access during emergencies.</p> <p><b>CCIP:</b> Please implement regular inspections of secondary containment systems in all areas where hazardous substances are stored. Proactively replacing any damaged systems will help manage any potential leaks or spills more effectively.</p> <p><b>CIP:</b> Please consider keeping an up-to-date list of all pesticides and chemicals using a digital platform to track this information. The use of a digital platform can facilitate quick updates and improve</p>

			<b>compliance with safety regulations, ensuring that staff are always informed about the materials they're working with.</b>
<b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b>	<b>N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences</b>	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b>  Wastewater is collected and sent to a local wastewater treatment plant for treatment.

## RESOURCES

### R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
<b>R1.1 Minimise water demand</b>	<b>R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water</b>	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Turf reduction programme to minimise areas requiring high maintenance.</li> <li>- Converting to part circle sprinklers where possible.</li> <li>- Use of wetting agents.</li> </ul>
<b>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</b>	<b>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</b>	Conduct regular irrigation performance checks; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Ensure effective application of water to target areas; Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Irrigation targets only essential areas (greens) as the amount of water required to ensure the normal operation of the golf course is not available.</li> <li>- The club has implemented the Trigger systems automation system to improve the efficiency of golf course irrigation, a platform that allows remote control of multiple systems such as irrigation, pumps, lakes and more. Using exclusive weather forecasting models, it can make intelligent decisions that can achieve water savings of more than 40%.</li> <li>- The club is also planning to install a new irrigation system, the current system is from Toro and is over 30 years old.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restoration of the water reservoir/irrigation lake to address water loss - planned for 2025 with the support of the national Recovery and Resilience Plan.</li> <li>- Staff receives consistent training on adjusting sprinkler nozzles and optimizing irrigation schedules based on weather forecasts.</li> <li>- The greenkeeper conducts regular and preventive inspections of the irrigation and drainage systems, leading to the timely identification and repair of leaks and clogged sprayers.</li> <li>- Water use is recorded and monitored.</li> </ul>
	<b>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</b>	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water use is recorded and monitored.</li> <li>- The management team regularly reviews bills for irregularities.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The golf course is irrigated with water from a levada. The <i>Levadas</i> (from the Portuguese verb “levar” – to carry) are a system of channels or aqueducts of many kilometres in length, mostly bordering mountains but also going through them, with several stretches over rugged rocks, to bring water from different sources to its intermediate or final uses.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The club has embarked on a turf reduction programme to minimise areas requiring high maintenance.</li> </ul>
<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; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The energy performance of the clubhouse building was assessed as part of the Energy and Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme.</li> <li>- Electricity provided by the local grid.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Energy bills are reviewed monthly and energy consumption in the golf facility is monitored and recorded.</li> </ul>
<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	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although renewable energies have achieved considerable integration in Madeira's Energy mix, it is still predominantly dominated by conventional thermal power plants. In 2021, 71.5% of energy production in the region came from thermal (non-renewable) sources, followed by energy generated from wind power, with a weight of 15.3%.</li> <li>- The management team is in the process of analysing government financial support for the implementation of solar energy solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>R3 Materials</b>			
<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	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The club is actively working to reduce single-use plastics and plastic water bottles by planning the installation of water refill stations to encourage the use of reusable bottles.</li> <li>- Biodegradable golf tees are available for purchase from the Pro Shop.</li> <li>- Scorecard is printed on 100% recycled paper</li> <li>- Recycling bins are in place.</li> </ul> <p>The club plans to install a composting machine or bins to manage organic waste (green waste and food waste) by 2025.</p>
<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	<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The management team prioritizes purchasing from local suppliers to support the regional economy and reduce transportation emissions.</li> <li>- The clubhouse restaurant has a small vegetable garden.</li> <li>- Topdressing sand is sourced locally.</li> </ul>

			<b>CIP: Please consider enhancing the sustainable procurement policy by sourcing ethical products.</b>
<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; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grass clippings from regular tee and fairway mowing are often left on the turf to be recycled as a top-dressing compost.</li> <li>- Recycling program for paper, plastics, and glass.</li> <li>- Labelled bins at the clubhouse and maintenance facility.</li> <li>- The Club monitors its waste management activities to ensure full compliance with the local laws.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Waste such as paper and cardboard, glass, metal and plastic packaging, used cooking oils, waste oils, batteries and pesticides containers are collected by authorized waste transport and disposal companies and sent for recycling and recovery.</li> </ul>

<b>COMMUNITY</b>			
<b>C1 Outreach</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Mandatory Practices</b>	<b>Verifier Notes</b>
<b>C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality</b>	<b>C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility</b>		<b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisation of the "Palheiro Gardens Golf Classic", attended every year by local, regional and national players.</li> <li>- Clube Palheiro Golfe is a non-profit sports association, provides an informal and pleasant environment for its members, present both in tournaments, which are played regularly, and in fun social events that are held periodically.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Around 40 tournaments are organized annually.</li> <li>- Junior Academy for young people between 4 and 21 years old. This academy is intended to promote golf to the younger generation.</li> </ul>
<b>C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity</b>	<b>C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes</b>		<p><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Casa de Saúde São João de Deus/</b> Health House of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God Solidarity Golf Tournament, the proceeds of which are donated to the Casa de Saúde São João de Deus, a Psychiatric, Mental Health and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Healthcare Centre, located on the Island of Madeira, on the outskirts of the City of Funchal.</li> <li>- The St John of God Golf Team is an initiative of the St John of God Foundation (FSJD) that aims to integrate people with mental illness into the regular practice of golf, from the first formative steps to obtaining and making full use of the official accreditation of the Portuguese Golf Federation.</li> <li>- This golf team is made up of various people interested in this issue of fighting stigma, but especially people with non-disabling mental illnesses living in the Health Houses of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, and volunteer golfers who have embraced this project. This initiative currently has three teams in the cities of Lisbon, Funchal and Braga.</li> <li>- The training of the teams is made possible thanks to the support of the Portuguese Golf Federation (Jamor CNF Golf Course), Palheiro Golf Club (Funchal) and Braga Golf Club.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The club is working with the Portuguese Golf Federation to implement the Golf Academy Certification Programme.</li> <li>- Introductory golf lessons are held on the golf course and driving range with the support of the club's coach and the school's PE teacher.</li> </ul> <p><b>CIP: Please consider setting up a 'Sustainability Working Group' to discuss, plan and implement sustainable practices.</b></p>



			<b>CIP: Please try to encourage golfers and visitors, especially youth, to participate in outdoor activities such as birdwatching and stargazing sessions.</b>
<b>C2 Golfers &amp; Employees</b>			
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of the benefits of golf for both mental and physical health.</li> <li>- Organises free golf sessions for people with disabilities in conjunction with local disability charities.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendly, family-oriented facility that welcomes golfers and non-golfers alike to enjoy a variety of golf and leisure activities.</li> </ul>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed H&amp;S procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant national legislation.</li> <li>- Records are kept of each training session.</li> </ul>
<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	<b>CIP: Please revise the noticeboard to include interesting facts about local wildlife and the history of the site. For example, one section could highlight how the course has developed over the years, alongside photos and stories of native species found in the area.</b> <p><b>CIP: Please launch a monthly campaign featuring a particular resident or migratory bird. Provide information about its habits, habitat and interesting facts. This could include a photo spot for members and visitors to share their own birding experiences, encouraging community involvement and education.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Please install signs at tee markers that identify local flora and fauna. For example, a sign next to the first tee could explain the significance of a nearby native tree or bird species. This would not</b></p>

			<b>only educate golfers of all ages, but also increase their appreciation of the environment while they play.</b>
<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><b>Practices implemented and confirmed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The 2024 edition of the " Palheiro Gardens Golf Classic" supported the SPEA (Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds), an organisation dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats. By taking part, players contributed to a noble cause that helps protect wildlife and preserve the natural beauty of Madeira Island.</li> </ul> <p><b>CIP: Please update Palheiro Nature State website with a dedicated sustainability section that highlights eco-friendly practices, such as water conservation, waste management and habitat preservation, and partnerships with local environmental organizations.</b></p>

## 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)