

Project Appraisal

Ombria Resort

Loulé, Portugal

Preparation Stage
Milestone Document

Produced by: GEO Foundation

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FOREWORD

Done properly golf developments provide multiple positive benefits to local environments and wider communities. Those benefits are complex and often interconnected but provide the opportunity to enhance quality of life and enrich landscapes and ecosystems. All over the world, ethical and environmental issues are directly influencing consumer choices. Resources costs are rising and governments are gaining votes with policies that protect our environment. Golf development businesses that proactively engage with these issues are better placed for success and to embrace the challenge.

Sustainability was part of golf in the beginning and it must be part of golf in the future, creating golf courses that respect their surroundings and honor the natural environment

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Recommendation of GEO Foundation (GEO) further to the Project Appraisal process outlined by this report is that Ombria Resort Golf Course should be formally enrolled in the OnCourse® Developments Programme.

The primary reasons for this recommendation are:

- Creative and compact routing of the golf course resulting in extremely efficient use of the terrain for golf.
- Careful consideration of the sensitive habitats on site to achieve close integration between golf course and natural setting.
- Clear desire to create a genuine experience for the visitor or resident.

Taking into account the careful approach and efficient design and layout of the golf course I am confident that given the high standard of sustainable development that commitment to the OnCourse® Developments Programme demands, Quinta da Ombria Golf Course undoubtedly has the potential to deliver significant multiplier benefits in strengthening the environment, society, and economy of the Algarve district.

GEO Foundation
October 2016

2. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Project Appraisal Report is to provide a recommendation regarding formal enrolment in the OnCourse® Developments programme.

The recommendation is informed by a review of the fundamental sustainability opportunities and challenges the project is likely to generate, to ensure that it has the potential to deliver the very highest standards in sustainable development.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

It is regarded as fundamental to the aims of the OnCourse® Developments programme that the project has the potential to deliver a fully integrated sustainability concept, in which golf is embodied within a wider entity. In this instance it is proposed that the OnCourse® Developments programme should include development of the golf course facilities at Ombria Golf Course including:

- 18-hole golf course
- Clubhouse
- Maintenance facility

Moreover, the OnCourse® Developments programme philosophy requires that the sustainability potential of the project extends beyond the property boundary, to interface with, and embrace, the wider social, economic and environmental context of the Loulé municipality and Algarve region.

METHODOLOGY

Project Appraisal constitutes an initial review of the core aspects of the development project. Should the project be formally enrolled in the OnCourse® Developments programme, this process will be extended incrementally to explore the relevant sustainability issues at progressively more detailed levels, corresponding to the following stages of development:

- Design
- Construction
- Certification

The Project Appraisal therefore focuses on investigating the broad compatibility of the project with GEO values and aims, rather than detailed specifics. It includes the following key tasks:

- Review of the main components of the project as currently defined.

- Appraisal of key sustainability issues generated by the project, in order to identify and understand the main opportunities and challenges in relation to the 2nd Edition of the Sustainable Golf Developments Guidelines¹ and Voluntary Sustainability Standard².
- Advice and guidance on fulfilling the project's sustainability potential through the subsequent stages of the process.

These tasks have been informed by:

- Review of documents provided by the project team directly.
- A detailed review of general literature sources, site photographs and websites.
- Discussions/telephone conferences with the project team representatives.

¹ http://www.golfenvironment.org/get_involved/developments/sustainable_golf_development_guidelines

² <http://www.golfenvironment.org/vision/action/standards/developments>

3. CONTEXT

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a brief overview of the context of the project with respect to the main factors potentially influencing sustainability. It is presented in two parts, addressing first the wider context of Loulé and the Algarve, followed by a more detailed description of the project site. The site information is drawn primarily from the baseline study undertaken for the project.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT



Figure 1: Aerial Photo of Context (Source: Google Earth)

1. Socio Economic

- a) The region of Algarve covers an area of 5,412km², with a population of around 451,005 with a medium population density of 83/km²³. Faro is the largest city and the capital of the region with 64,560 inhabitants.
- b) Tourism is the main economic activity of the Algarve with €758 million contribution to the national economy from hotel rooms alone⁴. The population in the region approximately triples in the summer months with tourists.
- c) There are 35 golf courses in the Algarve region.

³ <https://www.ine.pt>

⁴ <http://portugalresident.com/%E2%80%9Cbest-year-ever%E2%80%9D-saw-2015-take-algarve-tourism-to-the-top>

2. Environment

- a) The predominant landscape of the Algarve is very diverse with pockets of built-up tourist development interspersed with some agricultural activity and a large portion of rural, hilly inland Mediterranean scrub landscape⁵.
- b) The landscape and land-use patterns are characterized by the 155km of coastline that forms the southern boundary of the region.
- c) The climate in the Algarve region is a Subtropical-Mediterranean climate. Very warm and sunny in the summer with average temperatures of 27-35 °C. The autumn and winter is generally mild with average temperatures of 8-17 °C. Average precipitation levels are 500mm falling mostly between November – February⁶.

PROJECT SITE



Figure 2: Aerial Photo of Site (Source: Google Earth)

1. General

- a) The site is 153 hectares in total located on a rural hilly site in the municipality of Loulé.
- b) The site set within the hilly valley has numerous framed views with commanding views found from the higher locations around the site.

2. Topography and Drainage

- a) The soil on the site is mostly free draining.
- b) The topography is steeply contoured in places with a small river running through the central portion of the site dictating the topographical twists.

⁵ [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Land_cover_and_land_use_\(LUCAS\)_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Land_cover_and_land_use_(LUCAS)_statistics)

⁶ <http://public.wmo.int/en>

3. Vegetation

- a) Existing vegetation is a diverse mix of habitat types indicative of rural landscape of the region.
- b) The site contains areas with dense woodland including oak tree species *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus suber*.
- c) There is also a small river that runs through the property with associated riparian habitat.

4. PROJECT

Quinta da Ombria Resort is proposed to blend exceptionally high quality lifestyle experiences with picturesque Algarve inland beauty. The overall concept for Quinta da Ombria is a destination that it is in touch with 'The Real Algarve'. It is a destination that embraces the landscape within which it is located and all that it offers. Quinta da Ombria is not a 'me too' version of many of the coastal resorts in the Algarve. Some of the core elements are indeed the same at their most basic level – hotel, golf, villas, residential, spa tec. – but the 'ambiance' of Quinta da Ombria is different. Quinta da Ombria is about connections with nature; with local communities; with family, friends and new people; and with oneself. It offers a different lifestyle combining both sophistication and authentic experiences. It is more about Iberia's 'Tuscany' than a coastal resort.

The project team includes:

- Owner: Ville Tallbacka, Director - Ombria Resorts
- Golf Course Architect: Jorge Santana da Silva
- Environmental Manager: Miguel Castelão, Managing Director – Ambientar
- Golf Contractor: ProGolf

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The Quinta da Ombria 18-hole golf course and practice facility is located on an approximately 153-hectare site. As summarised above, the core golf components include:

- 18-hole golf course
- Clubhouse
- Maintenance Facility

TIMESCALE

The golf construction work is due to start in late 2016 with a projected opening time of 2018 for the golf course.



5. APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

AREA	OPPORTUNITY	CHALLENGE
SITE SELECTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close proximity to a mass market of golfer in an established golf destination. 2. Good soils. 3. Good quality water source. 4. Numerous additional site of interest near to the site including Fonte Benémola and the historic market town of Loulé. 5. Easily accessible site with regard to transport infrastructure. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Busy and competitive golf market. 2. Heavily undulating terrain.
NATURE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposal to include native planting palette throughout. 2. A skillful and compact golf routing to minimize change to landscape and protect existing and unique character of the site. 3. The proposal presents a very close integration between the natural landscape and planting with the golf holes. 4. Using an existing site of built structure reduces the visual impact of new built structures on the landscape. 5. Comprehensive study into hydrology of the site has provided a full understanding of issues leading to a sensitive and responsible approach to water management. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The small river running through the site needs to be carefully considered in terms of planting treatment and pollution controls. 2. Protected flora and habitats exist on site.
RESOURCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intention to celebrate local food and produce. 2. Intention to use local materials for various 'external features' across the site. 3. Compact routing maintains a modest turfgrass footprint for an 18-hole golf course. 4. Minimal earthworks proposal and a balanced cut + fill exercise has the potential to keep fuel comparably low during construction. 5. Re-use of existing structure for elements of the clubhouse building 6. Intention to capture surface water into retention lake for the primary irrigation water source. 7. Careful assessment and selection process for the turfgrass species. 8. Geothermal energy supply being proposed for the buildings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given existing terrain all golfers are likely to use a buggy to play the course. 2. Availability of local sand source for bunkers, tee and green construction is not known as yet to GEO.

COMMUNITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project ethos is to consider the whole experience beyond golf. 2. Intention to create a 'truly Algarve' experience for the visitor and resident connecting them to local communities and their landscape. 3. Opportunity to position golf amongst many other activities available to a visitor or residents such as walking, biking, shooting, fishing and cultural tours. 4. Multiple teeing complexes creates a more accessible form of the game for all levels of golfer. 5. Local golf specialized golf contractor has been selected to execute the golf construction work. 6. Intention to create a sports centre on site for multiple sports use creates an open and inclusive ethos for a golf resort. 7. Public consultation and liaison with local stakeholders has been carried out over an extensive permitting process (+8 years). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The offering to a native Algarve golfer is not known as yet to GEO. 2. Public access non-golfer is not known as yet to GEO. 3. Creation of any environmental education or future research links are not know as yet to GEO.
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6. GUIDANCE AND ADVISORY

The key theme to be communicated with regard to ongoing advice and guidance on this project is simple and clear: continuing commitment to the highest standards of sustainable development.

The challenge and opportunity lies in follow delivery of early stage planning, with increasingly detailed design and construction stages with the support of the OnCourse® Developments programme. True success in this will be dependent on maintaining close attention to detail consistently across all sustainability themes, under the pressures associated with a very demanding timescale.

Specific design development issues where GEO will seek to provide continuing inputs in subsequent stages include (those already discussed above). In addition, points worthy of further close attention include:

- Soil survey
- Cut and Fill calculations
- Grass species selection
- Monitoring procedures both construction and long term
- Public accessibility to resort facilities

7. NEXT STEPS

- Agreement of formal enrolment of project in the GEO OnCourse® Developments programme
- Arrange site visit by independent verifier
- Preparation of project's Sustainability Blueprint V1 (SBPv1) with the optional support of GEO
- Evaluation of completed Sustainability Blueprint V1 by the independent verifier

LIMITATIONS

The content of the Project Appraisal is drawn from information contained within existing project documentation and surveys carried out by consultants hired by Quinta da Ombria, SA. It reflects information correct at the time of writing, it is possible that new information will become available after the completion of this report. This new information would be incorporated into future revisions of this report or in the subsequent stages of the certification reporting.



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