



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Golfclub Capelle

Prepared by Independent Verifier, Paul van Kan

Certified by GEO Foundation: November 2019
Valid until: November 2022

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

Golfclub Capelle is a very open and friendly club with a growing reputation. Well organised and proactive in all areas of sustainability the club maintains numerous external relationships to keep its knowledge at the forefront and make regular small but highly effective improvements.

Paul van Kan

GEO accredited Independent Verifier



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Golfclub Capelle 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.

Golfclub Capelle 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 set for the future, Golfclub Capelle should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Golfclub Capelle 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

Richard Allison
Manager, GEO Certified Facilities



Verification and Certification

Verification

The official third-party audit was carried out by an independent verifier, accredited by GEO to undertake verifications of golf facilities applying for certification.

Verification involves reviewing practices and data, using the International Voluntary Standard for Sustainable Golf Operations as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance. A detailed verification report is submitted for evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd, a subsidiary of GEO Foundation.

Certification

GEO Certification Ltd, an autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation [both not-for-profit entities], undertook a full review of all content submitted through the OnCourse® online platform and the report submitted by the verifier, ensuring:

- Comprehensiveness – 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

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



Verifier's Report

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

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

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

NATURE			
N1 Habitats and Biodiversity			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site	(Course management) Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity	GCC is very aware of the advantages and disadvantages of peat soil (retains moisture, subsidence in case of dehydration, riding with vehicles is a bottleneck); greens and tees are constructed on inorganic material

		surveys	CIP: Include the monitoring programme in the integrated nature management plan in order to guarantee it (think also of the implementation of the monitoring results)
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	(Course management) Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	Professional ecological work protocol (protected species: orchids, buzzard's nest, spined loach); Ecological identity linked to water and banks CIP: Include a map of habitat types (targets) and vulnerable terrain in the nature management plan
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	(Course management) Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	Golf course fits in with the historical strips of land, bordered by the Prins Alexander Polder's ring dike and ring canal; historical elements are not present
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	(Course / club management) Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	The very limited space is well used, such as the carry covered with orchids and corners with flowery wildness ('don't enter'); where possible, perennial reed is left, which provides opportunities for vulnerable species
N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	(Course management) Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	Nature management plan in development (2020) alder seedlings requires at least 1x/year mowing; VTA on risk trees annually CIP: Avoid fragmentation of information by integrating it in the most workable way for the club, with the aim: guaranteeing CIP: Limit the deposition of leaf and clippings in forest areas to prevent excessive growth of unwanted herbs
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		Coastal nests buzzard have been placed in the context of compensation at development of neighboring school (this illustrates GCC's peculiar solidarity attitude) CIP: Work on small, visible species-specific facilities (amphibian pool, kingfisher wall, eco-wall between storage and hole 7, flowery

			ribbons, small bluegrass fields)
N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	(Course management) Select appropriate grass species for climate	Poa annua sp on greens is reduced to 10% by double-sided 'graden' and sowing with Agrostis stolonifera sp; this will make the greens more resistant to diseases and weather extremes
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		GCC has a thorough knowledge of soil in connection with water management and availability of nutrients; The promotion of soil life is one of the basic principles of the course management.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	(Course management) Soil tests and nutrient analysis	The external agronomist makes an annual fertilisation plan; increase in Agrostis stolonifera goes hand in hand with a reduction in nutrient uptake, with the aim of steadily reducing the amount of nitrate application; timing - especially of the first fertiliser application of the year - is of great importance
N2.2 Prioritise cultural management	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	(Course management) Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Management includes: less manure, resistant grasses, water management and sharp and clean tools
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	(Course management) 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	2018 two herbicides were used for the last time against e.g. daisies (stock has been used up); Also fungicide was used for the last time in 2018; Wetting agents on greens and occasionally on fairways; CIP Weed control will be the biggest challenge after ending pesticide use
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	(Course management) 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	EU authorised chemicals are either used up or removed safely; Two greenkeepers have a spraying licence; Application of crop protection products is recorded in a logbook
N3 Pollution			

Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations	(Course management) 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; Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.	Soil Protection Plan is available; a protection zone of 3m is maintained near water; Lubricants are biodegradable; environmentally friendly petrol is used; Brush cutters, hedge trimmers and leaf blowers are electric CIP: From 2020 water quality has to be measured 1x /3 years
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	(Club management) Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and waste water discharge	Cleaning is outsourced to a certified, sustainable and local company
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	(Course management) 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	Liquid-tight floor spray and tank site is inspected 1x / 6 years by a recognised company (inspection by Oranjewoud in 2013 and 2019); Re-inspection and immediate recovery October 2019, Declaration Liquid-tight Facility is valid until October 2025
N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	(Course management) 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	IMP protocol hazardous materials 3000 litres of double-hulled tank at an approved location, fitted with a lock (inspected in 2019, re-inspection in 2021 KIWA); The few chemicals are kept in enclosed space with ventilation; Fuels storage in legally permitted quantities; Waste oil is temporarily stored in a lockable room above a liquid-tight floor and is periodically safely removed by the contractor
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate waste water usage and discharge licences	(Course management) Waste water discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	Clubhouse and greenkeeping connected to public sewerage system CIP Investigate the sewer disconnection of rainwater from buildings and paved surfaces

RESOURCES

R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
R1.1 Minimise water demand	R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water	(Course management) Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	Surface water is kept 30cm lower than the surrounding area by own, careful water level management, which limits irrigation
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	(Course management) 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	Drought spots are known well and receive limited water by hand when drought occurs Water consumption is recorded via irrigation system software
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	(Club management) Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	Stable and low consumption (about 1000 m3 / year); Energy-saving shower heads in shower rooms and kitchen reduce the use of water
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	(Course / club management) Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	Not applicable (own water)

R2 Energy

R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy	(Course management) Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce	The two irrigation pumps require a lot of energy (no separate meters)
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	consumed in course maintenance	mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	CIP: Place separate (in-between) meters, register consumption; if consumption is high, investigate how this can be done more efficiently
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	(Club management) Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	Renovation plan will be implemented in the beginning of 2020, focusing on energy consumption, insulation and the layout of spaces; Recommendations from the energy scan (2018) have been set in motion immediately (by now 50% LED lighting, motion sensors in toilets)
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	(Club management) Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	Purchased renewable energy (gas and electricity); 45 solar panels placed on buggy shed CIP: Work towards energy-neutral by investigating own energy production (in particular the driving range shed is promising due to the large and well-exposed roof)
R3 Materials			
R3.1 Reduce materials demand	R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives	(Club management) Undertake a review of materials consumed	Steady decline in fertilisers and fuels
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy	(Club management) 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	Initial statement on purchasing; greenkeeping is outsourced to HGM (regional company, meets all quality requirements, has expertise, is certified, manages machinery); HGM's sustainability is stimulated in dialogue with the golf club CIP: Purchasing more local and central, in particular on retail (new restaurant operator and thus 1-1-2019)

R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	(Club management) Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	Glass, metal, paper and plastic is collected and disposed of separately; PET bottles on the course are collected separately; Clippings and leafs are deposited in forest areas (excess leaf is discharged) CIP: Start waste audit and waste reduction plans
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	(Club management) Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste;	Clubhouse/greenkeeping in the sewerage system; Paving via pump pit in the sewer system; Toilets on course on septic tanks CIP: New agreements and maximal recycling when renewing a waste treatment contract

COMMUNITY			
C1 Outreach			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality	C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility		Highly accessible club; Restaurant and meeting rooms open to all and to civil society organizations, sometimes free of charge; Yearly open day; Leisure cycle tracks around and through the course
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		Large commitment of volunteers (120), for example at 'Golf voor Gehandicaptten' many competitions in partnership, where funds are recruited for charities
C1.3 Establish active community	C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with	(Club management) Create a 'sustainability working	From existing committees and management, GEO is organized as a working team, supported by external advisors;

partnerships	neighbours, the local community and other groups	group'	<p>Manager pays a lot of attention to social aspects, both internally and externally; GCC is very proactive towards neighbours (mostly inhabitants) and nearby restaurant</p> <p>CIP: start a GEO committee</p>
C2 Golfers & Employees			
C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		<p>GCC participates in 'Golf voor Gehandicapten' and 'Een Leven Lang Golf'; Together with 'Sportief Capelle' school children learn about golf; A lot of attention for youth under the direction of the excellent golf pro</p>
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	(Club management) Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	<p>Since 2009 GCC has consciously developed from a closed membership course to an open, socially engaged course with a quality improvement on all fronts, as a result of which the course now has its own and recognisable position in the region (policy strategy)</p>
C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	(Club management) Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	<p>Excellent security plan with register of incidents, managed by caddymaster; Safe shelters; BHV's and AEDs available; greenkeeping work place spacious, safe and clean</p>
C3 Communications			
C3.1 Engage golfers and members	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	(Club management) Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	<p>Newsletters and members' meetings are the main means of Internal communication; Dutch Birding Day and nestbox management by working group on biodiversity to raise awareness</p> <p>CIP: Uses website to inform members and stakeholders about GEO and flora, fauna and management</p> <p>CIP: Involve members, neighbours and green local organizations through monitoring and nature experience</p>

			CIP: Integrate GEO in communication plan with targets, target groups and responsibilities
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	(Club management) Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	Highly accessible club; Nesting boxes project with community school; Good relations with neighbours and involved companies

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