



GEO Certified® Report Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb - Hylinge

Prepared by independent verifier: Marten Wallberg

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2023
Recertification due: 2026



“The club has conducted structured sustainability work for just over one year. With that in mind it is remarkable to study the club’s thorough and serious work in this area together with the necessary dedication. I am seriously impressed! The club shows a healthy balance in dedication; for nature as taking care of forests and having grazing sheep; for environment as climate like embracing green energy; and for community relations as invitations to schools, elderly people and youngsters from underprivileged areas each year to try to play golf. It will be exciting to follow the sustainability work and development of this club.”

Marten Wallberg
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb – Hylinge 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.

Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb – Hylinge 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) and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) reviewed at recertification, Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb – Hylinge should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb – Hylinge 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

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	Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	In 2022, the club made a basic audit of the areas with nature values on the Hylinge course. This was done by a professional consult. About 17 rare species of flora and fauna were found. The areas with oak forest have nature values strong enough to be a

			part of a nature reserve with the objective of preserving biodiversity. Adjacent to the forests many valuable edge environments (bushes etc) act as habitats and a refuge to many species. Adjacent to the north part of the course is an old canal, Göta kanal, which is of national interest for its nature. Four solitary old oaks with high values are situated on the course. These oaks tell us that these areas used to be grazed. They are also part of a larger network of old oaks in the surroundings of the course. The most interesting species on the course are birds, wood living insects and amphibians.
	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	The course has no designations for protected areas, habitats, and species.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	There is an ancient monument called Göta Virke on the course. This is an old defensive wall and also an old road dated back to the 11th century. Adjacent to the north part of the course is an old canal, Göta kanal, which is of national interest for its culture.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	Some areas have high grass which could maybe become hayfields.
N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	On the course are two meadows (out of bounds, although located in the middle of the course) with grazing sheep from early spring until late summer. They keep the areas open and enhance the biodiversity. The sheep and their lambs are very popular amongst the golfers. In the eastern part of the course, the club have left old trees on the ground to form fauna stocks. Eight dams are situated on the course. All of them are of good quality with some of inhabited by the common newt. Not all sides of the shores are mowed.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		CIP: Please produce a management plan for the nature-based areas identified in the 2022 audit. CIP: Please consider creating a hayfield.

			CIP: Please conduct a specific audit for birds, wood living insects and amphibians.
N2 Turfgrass			
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	<p>Across the 27 holes, species on the greens consist of about 50% creeping bent and 50% poa annua. There is a mix of Meadow grass, perennial rye grass, poa annua and centepidegrass on tees. There is a mix of poa annua, meadow grass and red fescue on fairways.</p> <p>If you consider the new 9 holes separately, there is 90% creeping bent on the greens. On the old course, the mix is 80% poa annua and 20% creeping bent on the greens.</p> <p>The old course's holes greens are more difficult to manage and are more vulnerable. However, these greens are overseeded with creeping bent, adding more of this species each year.</p>
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Soil samples are conducted once a year. The greenkeeper has base values to compare with. The samples show if the soil has the right capacity to, for example, keep nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen. If the samples, for example, show that too much phosphorous is in the soil the amount of phosphorous when fertilizing is reduced. If the samples show that the amount of organic material is too low, the greenkeeper will lessen the number of holes piped with sand.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Fertilising is done in small doses but often.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Seagrass and algae are used as biostimulants to strengthen the grass.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when	Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases;	Mechanical treatment is done in the first place. Dollar spots has arrived on the course over the last years. Wetting agents are

	necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	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	used. Also, Sinum, a chemical pesticide, is used. Chemical pesticides are used as seldom as they can and never proactively. The staff are continuously informed about where the diseases have emerged historically and how to detect them. The greenkeeper has a map showing areas that have histories of disease. The club has problems with wild boars and, in order to keep them out of the course, an electric fence has been put up. The club gets help from the Swedish Golf Federation and other golf clubs with detecting pests and fauna that are bad for the course.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	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 .	The club uses all chemicals according to Swedish law. All staff applying chemicals have full training and competence.
N3 Pollution Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations	Document procedures for emergency spill responses; 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.	The club never sprays when the weather is bad for it. All cutting units on the new mowers are driven by electricity which takes away the risk of spilling. All the sprayers have driftage reducing applicators. These are also inspected by the authorities each year. A management plan for spilling accidents is available at the course. There is also a sheet with security rules.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required	The club use municipal water and effluent.

		minimised from clubhouse operations	standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	
		N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	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	The club has an oil separator. A contractor is taking care of the hazardous materials.
	N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	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	The handling of hazardous materials is done in a proper way. The regulations for this in Sweden are quite rigorous, so the club are doing it very well to adhere to the law.
	N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	The club use municipal water and effluent.

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	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	The irrigation water comes from a nearby lake which is a part of Göta Kanal. The water leads to a reservoir pond. The club has water-rights for 50,000 m3 for from that. It uses about 40,000-45,000 m3 each year. Water samples are conducted in the reservoir pond continuously to ensure that the irrigation water is ok to use.

R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	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	The pump house has recently been updated. A satellite system for irrigation is situated on the course. Adjustments of the nozzles are conducted continuously.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	There is continuous work on revising the use of irrigation water. CIP: Please consider installing water-saving nozzles in the toilets and showers in the machine hall and clubhouse.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	See R1.1.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	The club turn the heat down during winter because few people are in the buildings that time of year.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	The club has internal record keeping of the energy consumed. Plans have been created for continuous improvement.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	Solar and wind powered dry toilet are placed around the course. The club has had green energy for many years. CIP: Please consider a thorough energy mapping by professionals.

			CIP: Please consider putting energy meters in the different parts of the buildings.
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	Undertake a review of materials consumed	The club use local contractors when possible. Clippings and the rest of the hole piping are spread on parts of the course that need some fertilising.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy	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	The club purchase food from local producers when possible, as well as some organic food for the restaurant. CIP: Please create a sustainable purchasing policy. CIP: Please consider selling only MSC-certified fish and shellfish in the restaurant.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	The club has a contractor to take care of the waste, including food rests. There is also separated waste baskets on the course. These work well. CIP: Please consider launching an annual day where members can swap golf equipment.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	The club has compliance with all local and regional waste regulations.

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		The club prepares tracks for cross-country skiing.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		A large charity tournament for children is arranged annually where money is raised. Another charity tournament for Heart- and Lung foundation is arranged annually.
C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	Create a 'sustainability working group'	The local nature conservation society (Norrköpings Naturskyddsförening) is represented in the sustainability group through a club member. During February and March 2024, Norrköpings Naturskyddsförening will conduct an audit of the nesting boxes.

C2 Golfers & Employees

C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		Since 2022, the sustainability-working group has had the status of committee. This includes, amongst others, the club director, and the greenkeepers.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Some schools are invited each year to try to play golf. This is also the case with elderly people and youngsters from underprivileged areas.
C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	The club is part of a collective labor agreement and follows all laws concerning employees.

C3 Communications

C3.1 Engage golfers and members	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	<p>The club has information boards in the clubhouse to inform members about sustainability work. There is also thorough information on the club's webpage. Information is given about sustainability at all large members meetings.</p> <p>CIP: Please consider a map at the clubhouse showing nature on course.</p> <p>CIP: Please consider signs on the course showing nature and culture.</p>
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	<p>CIP: Please consider a press release when becoming GEO-certified.</p> <p>CIP: Please consider adding signs that welcome the wider community when visiting the course for promenades etc.</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