



GEO Certified® Report Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb - Klinga

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 forests and hayfields, for the environment as climate action like green energy and for community relations as tournaments for charity and a short-hole course containing 6 holes which is free of charge. 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 – Klinga 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 – Klinga 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 – Klinga should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Norrköping Söderköping Golfklubb – Klinga 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.isealliance.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 Klinga course using a professional consult. About 40 rare species of flora and fauna were found. Some cairns (stone piles) were found, and these are very important for many species.

			The areas with broad-leaved deciduous forest have nature values strong enough to be a part of a nature reserve with the objective of preserving biodiversity. South of one of these areas a sun exposed sandy slope is a very important habitat for many bees and hymenopterans. Adjacent to the forests many valuable edge environments (bushes etc) act as habitats and are a refuge to many species.
	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	An ancient hill fort is situated in one of the broad-leaved deciduous forest on the southern part of the course.
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	One area on hole 18 now has high grass. This will become hayfield, as with a similar area on hole 1.
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	<p>In some areas, the club has left old trees on the ground in order to form fauna stocks.</p> <p>Five dams are situated on the course. All of them are of good quality are inhabited by the common newt. An area just west of the clubhouse is rich in rare flowers. The area could be a good spot to manage as a hayfield.</p> <p>The club is removing invasive species, especially hogweed. They have also put up nesting boxes.</p>
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		<p>CIP: Please produce a habitat management plan for the nature areas based on the audit in 2022.</p> <p>CIP: Please create a hayfield in the areas west of the clubhouse.</p> <p>CIP: Please consider specific audits for birds, wood living insects, and amphibians.</p>
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>Grass species on greens are Poa annua 85%, Agrostis s 10%, and Agrostis tenuis 5%.</p> <p>Tees are mostly Poa annua but also red fescue and Poa pratensis.</p> <p>Fairways are mostly Poa annua together with a mix of red fescue and Poa pratensis.</p> <p>The poa annua on the course is perenne and can handle the cold winters better than the annual ones. It is also more fine-leaved which makes it smoother and more playable.</p>
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		<p>Soil samples are conducted once a year.</p> <p>The greenkeeper has baseline values to compares 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 too low an amount of organic material, the greenkeeper lessens the number of holes piped with sand.</p>
	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	<p>Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding</p> <p>Seagrass and algae are used as biostimulants to strengthen the grass.</p>
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	<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>The staff are continuously informed about where diseases come historically and how to detect them.</p> <p>The club has problems with wild boars and, in order to keep them out of the course, an electrical fence has been put up.</p> <p>The club gets help from the Swedish Golf Federation and other golf clubs with detecting pests and fauna that are bad for the course.</p>

	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. The staff using 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 spills. All the sprayers have driftage reducing applicators and 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 minimised from clubhouse operations	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	The club use municipal water and effluent.
	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 course will install a new oil separator soon. 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;	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.

		Fire extinguisher in the immediate area; Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks	
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 water comes from a drilled well. The club now has a plan to dig a reservoir pond in the southeast part of the course. This will allow them to use some rainwater for irrigation. A master plan for this is on its way.
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	Some of the irrigation system (not the pipes) was changed in 2016. The club is now looking at changing the whole irrigation system. CIP: Please continue to optimise the irrigation system.
	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 to revise the use of irrigation water. CIP: Please continue to explore and implement measures for the use of rainwater for irrigation. CIP: Please consider installing water-saving nozzles in toilets and showers in the machinery 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 so few people are in the buildings at 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. However, there are plans to continue to improve.
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	<p>Solar and wind powered dry toilets are placed around the course. The club has had green energy for many years.</p> <p>CIP: a thorough energy mapping could be carried out by professionals.</p> <p>CIP: Please consider installing energy meters in different parts of the buildings.</p>
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	<p>The club use local contractors whenever possible.</p> <p>Clippings and the rests of hole piping are spread on parts of the course that need some fertilising.</p>
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	<p>The club encourage the restaurant contractor to purchase food from local producers when possible and some organic food for the restaurant.</p> <p>CIP: Please create a sustainable purchasing policy.</p> <p>CIP: Please encourage the restaurant contractor to buy only MSC-certified fish and shellfish.</p>

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 taking care of waste, including food rests. There is also separated waste baskets on the course. These work well. CIP: Please consider launching an annual day when 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		The club organizes company tournaments for charity each year. In 2023 it was for a Christian charity shop and for the Foundation for Child Cancer. In other years it can be other Charity foundations. Also, each year the club organizes a charity tournament for Heart- and Lung Foundation.
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 in the form of a club member. Norrköpings Naturskyddsförening

			will conduct an audit of the nesting boxes during February and March 2024.
C2 Golfers & Employees			
C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		The sustainability-working group has, since 2022, the status of s committee and 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. The club has prepared a short-hole course containing 6 holes which is free of charge. Anyone who wants can just borrow clubs for free and walk out and play. Youngsters are especially eager to try to golf this way.
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 the 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, which inform members about the sustainability work. There is also thorough information on the club's webpage. At all large member meetings information is given about sustainability.</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