GEO Certified® Report
Kristianstads Golfklubb & Destination

Prepared by independent verifier: Kerstin Antonsson

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024
Recertification due: 2027

"In recent years, Kristianstad Golf Club & Destination has undergone a very lavish and positive development in the club's buildings and the two golf courses. The club is also an exemplary driving force in golf's sustainable development through its external collaboration on technology and innovation, but also to inspire and educate students from all over the world to become the course staff of the future. I am especially looking forward to following the:

- *Development and follow-up of the environmental policy for adhering to UNESCO guidelines to enhance Kristianstad Biosphere Reserve, and preserve and enhance biodiversity;*
- *Upcoming sustainability measures in technology and innovation to reduce the consumption of groundwater, the use of pesticides and non-renewable fuels;*
- *Improved and updated sustainability communication to members and other stakeholders regarding the club's ongoing and future sustainability activities."*

Kerstin Antonsson
(GEO accredited independent verifier)

Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Kristianstads Golfklubb & Destination 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.

Kristianstads Golfklubb & Destination 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, Kristianstads Golfklubb & Destination should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Kristianstads Golfklubb & Destination 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**

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

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	• Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	• Water • Energy • Materials
Community	• 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	According to the club's environmental policy, it works to protect and create natural habitats to preserve and enhance biodiversity and ecology, reduce fertilizers and pesticides, and substitute them with eco-friendly products when feasible to prevent ecosystem disruption. Confirmed. A general map and maintenance plan for areas outside the playing areas have been developed. Habitats and vegetation types were observed. **CCIP: Please update the maintenance text descriptions from 2007 and 2014 (Miljööversikt and Skötselplan) on habitats, biotopes, species worthy of protection, and management programs. The map and masterplans should be consistent and, in more detail, identify where biotopes and biological values are geographically located.** **CCIP: Please try to add to the newly laid flower meadow, focussing on improving the number of species that this already supports.**
	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	Kristianstad GC is located in a UNESCO biosphere reserve and shall adhere to UNESCO guidelines according to the club's environmental policy. Confirmed species lists of flora, birds, and fauna. The list also includes a notice of the species' protection value according to the IUCN. To date, 245 species have been identified. 101 of these are protected species in the IUCN categories of critical endangered, endangered, vulnerable, and near threatened. In 2010, a very extensive inventory and proposals for targeted management measures for solitary bees and other insects were carried out on Kristianstad Golf Club's golf courses in Åhus.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	Confirmed. In 2003, in connection with the expansion of the golf club, an extensive cultural landscape inventory was carried out, and a cultural-historical analysis was carried out in 2009. Seven findings have been

			identified, but there is no management plan for how these should be managed. In an archaeological survey from 2003, 4 major areas of archaeological interest were identified. **CCIP: Please establish a management plan if any of the findings from the cultural and historical surveys have conservation value.**
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	Confirmed. Kristianstad GC has built a meadow-like environment at the 13th hole on the East course. The purpose is to strengthen biological diversity and complement the natural habitats that exist on and around the course, attracting various pollinators, insects, and butterflies, and enhancing the presence of rare flower species. The out-of-bounds line at hole 13 has been moved to reduce the turf area.
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	Confirmed. The environmental policy contains an overall and extensive commitment to prevent ecosystem disruptions and promote environmental awareness. However, the environmental policy does not have a date for issuance or signature by top management. **CCIP: Please obtain approval for the environmental policy by senior management, with a regular review of compliance and commitments to highlight and share ongoing progress across the golf facility.** Birdhouses were built in various sizes, enabling adaption for multiple bird species that can live together. Installation of wren birdhouses, specifically designed for the bird, *Jynx torquilla*. Northeast Skåne Bird Club, Spoven helped with location and setting up. See also the meadow activity in N1.2.
N1.4 Conserve key species	**N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species**		See above N1.1.2. In the winter of 2023, the organization initiated a project to promote pollinators. Reused old and damaged birdhouses were converted into bee-friendly hotels, specifically designed for native solitary bees, a group with many threatened species in the region.
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	The main grass types on the greens are Poa annua and Festuca rubra. On the tees it is Festuca rubra and Lolium perenne. The fairways are dominated by Festuca rubra and Poa annua. The golf season is not long, but spring is later, and autumn is warmer. Diseases like Dollar Spot show earlier. Poa annua will be transitioned to creeping bent to resist diseases. Sowing with the creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera) is done on the greens twice a year to create a hardier turf.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Organic matter is added to fertilizer and topdressing. The pH of the soil is measured.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Confirmed soil tests and nutrient analysis every second or third year. Essentially, liquid fertilizers are used, which are sprayed on the greens every 14 days.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	**N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management**	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Normally occurring activities include adjustment of cutting heights and patterns, aeration, dressing, clippings return, sharpening knives etc. Rolling is used as mechanical processing against Dollar Spot. The club is carrying out a collaboration and experimental project with SGL on disease control with ultraviolet light instead of pesticides. In autumn and winter, tests with a UV robot are underway against fusarium. Hand weeding when possible.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	**N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues**	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	The Greenkeeper and his crew are knowledgeable about diseases and their origins. The first signs of possible diseases appear on the 15th hole of the Eastern Course. Dollar Spot occurs earlier in the season due to climate change. Rolling is used as mechanical processing against Dollar Spot. Confirmed IPM management documentation with application journals. Work is underway to phase out pesticides and to find alternative control methods. See above N2.2.

	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 .	Confirmed. The spray equipment used for fungicides is tested and calibrated annually. Confirmed applicator licenses for all three qualified personnel and the environmental permit to handle pesticides. Leftover products are disposed of in the “old exercises area”. Personal protective equipment is available.
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.	Emergency procedures for spills and accidents with chemical products are posted on the noticeboard in the lunchroom. **CCIP: Please also add emergency procedures to the areas where chemicals are stored and handled.** Buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas are considered. Spray vehicles are used with wind-drift-reducing skirts and drift-reducing nozzles with drip protection. Maps were not confirmed at the time of the audit.
	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	Confirmed storage of hazardous maintenance chemicals. Confirmed. Three authorized receivers (Stena Recycling, Pre Zero, and Norva Miljöhantering), collect hazardous waste and wastewater fractions.
	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	Mixing and loading pesticides and fertilizers, and washing is done on an impermeable indoor surface. Pesticide containers and applicators are rinsed five times after use.
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;	Confirmed. Fuel tank approved protocols and inspections. Observed. Fire extinguishers are placed on machines and in locations with fire risks. Confirmed. Chemicals are kept to a minimum, handled, and stored in appropriate cabinets and on leakage trays. The spaces have concrete floors.

		Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks	Confirmed. Chemical product inventory and safety data sheets.
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)	Sanitary wastewater is treated and purified in municipal sewage treatment plants. Hazardous wastewater is handled by three authorized receivers (see N3.1.2). An investment project will be carried out in 2024, in which machine wash water will be recycled with an ESD Waste2water plant. The plant is expected to save about 20,000 cubic meters of water annually.

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	Trials of capillary irrigation test area according to the Capillary Flow principle (irrigation under the grass surface) are ongoing. The club has been discussing building ponds to store surface water for irrigation and reduce the amount of groundwater extracted.
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	A new sprinkler system (valved head) for irrigation was installed at the East course in 2016 and the West course in 2021. Confirmed. Rainbird's digital irrigation system is used, which allows mobile control and easier control of the irrigation system. A POGO soil moisture sensor is used, which can provide direct and digital information and statistics. Regular moisture measurement has saved 2000 cubic meters of water per season. The water management plan also includes drones to photograph ongoing irrigation while measuring moisture content. This is to identify that the sprinkles are correctly placed/set and do not irrigate unnecessary areas. Confirmed. Monthly irrigation amounts for each golf course are documented.

			CIP: Please consider documenting consumption trends with text descriptions explaining the causes in variations.
	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	Water bills with consumed volumes are reviewed annually and documented. Consumption has decreased over the past three years. Water-saving investment is planned for the machine hall in 2024. See N3.3 above. Low-flush sinks, toilets, dishes, and washing appliances are installed.
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	Confirmed. The Club has an environmental permit for groundwater abstraction valid until 2047.
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	Non-renewable energy is the dominant fuel in course maintenance. To reduce consumption, they reduce mowing, irrigation, and other energy-intensive efforts in natural areas that are not in play. Electric golf carts and rechargeable hybrid mowers are available, but diesel and petrol-driven machines are dominant. Tests are underway with electric robotic mowers.
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 is conducting ongoing efforts to increase understanding of its energy usage and reduce it. They have installed electricity meters in various departments and take readings every month. The Club evaluated the facility's energy usage with an external party and subsequently changed lighting controls and lamp types. During constructing the padel hall, lodges, etc., efficient, and energy-saving heating technologies were also installed (heat pumps, heat recovery, and new ventilation with control). The lodges have LED lighting and low-flush toilets and showers. Four charging stations for vehicles are available in the parking area.
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	The club has a renewable electricity contract for mixed tariffs with solar and wind energy. There are plans to calculate the installation of solar panels on the machine hall (1,200 square meters).

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	Confirmed waste auditing procedures. According to the club's environmental policy, it prevents ecosystem disruption by reducing fertilizers and pesticides and substituting them with eco-friendly products when feasible and taking all reasonable steps to protect human health and the environment when such materials must be used, stored, and disposed of.
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	Confirmed purchasing policy that includes all areas at the facility: • Golf course maintenance equipment and supplies. • Food and beverages for the clubhouse and events. • Merchandise sold at the pro shop • Office supplies and operational materials. • Services and contractors engaged by the club. Fertilizer purchases are made in bulk to minimize unnecessary transport. Topdressing is purchased locally.
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 waste is separated into labelled bins and recycled in different fractions. Confirmed internal and external waste data by weight and/or volume in different fractions. The club recycles balls from the driving range together with a Spanish company. The club hires a company that dives in ponds and collects and takes care of used balls. Green waste from the courses is taken care of by the municipality and composted into soil.
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	Confirmed compliance with regulations. Four authorized receivers (Stena Recycling, Pre Zero, Norva Miljöhantering, and Kristianstad Renhållning) collect all waste fractions.

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 has three indoor padel courts open to the public. The facility also has birdwatching and hiking trails that connect to external hiking trails. Signs on the courses tell you where it is safe to enter and cross. Flower walks as guided tours have been carried out on the course. Hotel rooms (lodges), restaurant, and conference room are available for non-golfers.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		In recent years, the club has arranged charity competitions for cancer. Volunteer senior members contribute with working hours for maintenance and inventories at the facility, which is also very valuable from a social sustainability perspective.
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 club has a Sustainability & Environmental officer who handles the sustainability work with the head greenkeeper. The club has a very good and regular collaboration with local bird and nature representatives from organizations and authorities. Birdhouses were built and painted with children from Sånnaschool with material from the local hardware store, Optimera. Assistance with location and setting up from the Northeast Skåne Bird Club, Spoven.
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 courses have differentiated tees.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	There is no diversity in memberships.

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 follows relevant national legislation for employment, health & safety. Confirmed. There is a very good competence matrix for employees in training and skill needs for each machine. The club conducts exemplary documented information and risk analysis training for all machines that maintain the course. The employees sign that they have received and understood the information. The staff receive digital training in golf course management via Elmwood Golf. All employees on the courses wear comm radios for safety reasons. A digital work plan is created for each employed course worker daily and can be followed by all employees. The work plan also shows the type of personal protective equipment that must be considered and used in the specific tasks. The Club uses the Reddibo software to control legislation, chemical products and its safety data sheets.
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	Sustainability information is shared with interested parties and members via the club's website. However, the page needs to be updated as some documents and information are outdated, and some are missing (e.g. the environmental policy). **CCIP: Please communicate your sustainability innovations, activities, and actions as much as possible. They are fantastic and deserve to be shared.** The Club presents its “environmental journey” on each hole to inform members and guests about what has been done and what will be done in the future. By the meadow, there is an information board with a QR code for more information. In 2023, Kristianstad GC received the award: World Golf Awards—Best Golf Course in Sweden.
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	The club collaborates with companies and NGOs to drive the sustainable development of new methods and applications for turf management. Kristianstad’s Golf Club, in association with FEGGA, has put together a well-structured lecture program to give the students practical experience

				and bridge the gap between education and greenkeeping management. This will benefit the students long-term after the six-month program. The club collaborates with companies manufacturing robots and electric mowers, alternative disease treatments, and cooling irrigation for green areas. Many municipalities and organizations have been on study visits. The club's owner is very committed to the overall municipality's development.

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