



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Lucerne Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier Hector Forcen

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024
Recertification due: 2027

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Golf Club Luzern consistently tests its commitment to the environment through efforts for sustainability, showcasing a clear example of golfing tradition professionally managed using the latest technological advances available. They are aware of the need to do things a little better every day. Proof of this is that the facility has been transformed over the past number of years to improve their course playing conditions and environmental credentials. Wildflower meadows, naturalized roughs and maintained turf are professionally managed, along with creating awareness of local habitat and biodiversity.

All of the above are creating awareness and education within the community, staff and membership. I look forward to seeing the results of the efforts that will be made to improve the club in the coming years, I am sure will bring numerous advances in sustainability and energy efficiency.

I, Hector Forcen, Golf Environment Organization independent accredited verifier, recommend that Golf Club Luzern, to be awarded the GEO Certified® ecolabel.”

*Hector Forcen
(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Lucerne Golf Club 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.

Lucerne Golf Club 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, Lucerne Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Lucerne Golf Club 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
Director, Certification and Credibility,
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	• 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	Golf Club Luzern is the oldest club in Switzerland. It has 450 members who can play the course without reservation whenever they want. Visitors are welcome during the week. Located on one of the hills just 5 minutes from the city, it has always maintained a great relationship with the inhabitants of Lucerne, and proof of this is that its plot has always been a place of enjoyment for the citizens of the region. The property also consists of different forests around the golf course with great ecological enjoyment for neighbours and visitors. https://www.golfclubluzern.ch/en/history/ CIP: Please prepare and upload a map with habitats found on the course to the OnCourse Documents Library. This should include what we saw in the office on the day of my visit.
	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	Being located within a forest, they work closely with local authorities and follow a series of protocols for action and environmental conservation. The club cooperates closely with local environmental associations (Luzern city authorities). The club is seriously working on environmental issues and cooperates closely with local authorities and associations, especially with the Department of Environment of the City of Lucerne. On the property there are numerous trees of great value which are maintained by the maintenance team and the help of external professionals. CCIP: Please undertake a survey of different flora and fauna species and monitor these annually. CCIP: Please create a habitat management plan.

	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	No archaeological, historical, or cultural designation are present (or known) on the course. The club has different ancient buildings (250 years) with a certain cultural value. https://www.golfclubluzern.ch/en/history/
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	There are several naturalized areas along the course. Visiting the course with the HG, we were able to appreciate the number of areas of rough that have been naturalized. These have become a refuge space for numerous animal species. CCIP: Please track the movements of players to identify further potential areas for naturalization. CIP: Please study the possibility of increasing the naturalized areas that are not in play as we discussed on the day of the visit.
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	The club has been working, for several years, with local environmental groups and authorities. As a symbol of good cooperation and to confirm future goals in the field of sustainability the club is replacing singular trees for the game and visual of the property if affected by damage from storms or disease.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		Meadows and rough areas are not fertilized to maintain the natural flora. Overgrown and low edges/banks in ponds are kept to protect species that live in small waters. Nesting boxes are placed in some trees. CIP: Please continue to install nesting boxes in the tree areas.
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 Head Greenkeeper has extensive experience and perfectly knows the specific conditions of the course. The sward is 85 % Agrostis and 15% Poa annua. Poa and Lolium are predominantly species across fairways and tees. Greens are overseeded a couple times every year with new bentgrass varieties. A reseeding of fairways with fescue was planned for the day after my visit. HG encourages the development of Agrostis through a careful program of

			cultural practices, irrigation management and low nitrogen fertilization during the season, greatly stressing the Poa and favouring the establishment of Agrostis stolonifera.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Good cultural practices are undertaken to reduce thatch, reduce compaction and to encourage deeper rooting. Light topdressing programme on greens and approaches being implemented with excellent results. During the playing season, the cultural work is minimal to avoid inconvenience to relatively demanding members and visitors. The tees are aerated (vertidrain) and topdressed a couple of times a year.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Soil tests are carried out every year (3 greens) at the beginning of the season to know physical properties and need of nutrients. In terms of fertilization the applications are made from granular and liquids, applying small amounts during the growing season. Low nitrogen is applied to the greens during the season. Organic fertilizers are used on the Fairways. CIP: Synthetic products, especially fertilisers, could be progressively reduced.
	N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding Mowers cylinders and blades are sharpened by an external company as much as needed to have good cutting quality during the season. Machines are washed every time after they have been used. Dew moisture is removed to keep the turf as dry as possible. Standard good practises (daily inspections, local weeding etc) are used to reduce chemical use to the minimum. The phytosanitary treatments are limited to the greens, being occasional and very punctual in other areas of the course. Howard has managed to drastically reduce the number of pesticide applications across the entire course, highlighting the fact that he used more than 10 fungicide applications on greens a few years ago, down to just one in recent seasons.

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 Head Greenkeeper experience helps to minimize the need and use of pesticides. Weather conditions and past events are monitored and discussed along with the extensive site knowledge contained within the department to determine risks. The maintenance crew review and report any signs of stress or indications of pests and diseases. Snow mold & dollar spot are the main problems on the greens. CIP. Please consider creating a map of diseases on the course, defining the most sensitive areas or areas where they appear.
	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 .	Only legislated chemicals are used. They are stored in a separate, locked, and secure storage. The applications are made by trained and qualified greenkeepers using the necessary security measures. Ecological conditions and weather are considered before the application is carried out. Untreated turf areas are used for disposal of diluted leftovers. The club received a phytosanitary inspection from the cantonal government with a positive result, proving that everything was in accordance with the legal requirements.
	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.	Golf Club Luzern is perfectly respecting the Swiss law in terms of Pollution prevention and emergency spill responses. The security perimeters established are respected. There are no treatments in the rough areas, wet areas and near lakes. Emergency spill responses plan uploaded to the OnCourse Documents Library.

	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	Contracts for disposal of hazardous waste from the facility are established with external local companies that are specialists in waste management. Wastewater is led to the municipal wastewater treatment plant.
	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	Pesticides and fertilizers are mixed and loaded in the maintenance area with a concrete floor and drain connected to a collecting tank. In the workshop all drums with oils for machinery maintenance have their corresponding anti-spill containment system. Hazardous waste is stored on bunded platforms prior to collection by a licenced waste contractor. The club has had its maintenance facility inspected, and during my visit, I was able to verify the start of work on two points that had to be adapted according to the city's current laws.
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	All personnel that handle pesticides have an education and valid authorizations (licenses). Personal protection equipment is used, and the treatment machine is modern and well calibrated. Howard records products and treatments in the computer using a management program. Chemicals are maintained in a suitable room for the storage of phytosanitary products. Fire extinguishers are placed in locations with fire risks. They are inspected annually by a certified company. All fuel tanks are installed according to legislation and have approved inspections and controls.
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)	Wastewater from the clubhouse is collected and sent to the public water treatment service. The wash bay outside the machine hall has an impermeable surface and is emptied by external companies, taking the content to the recycling points stipulated by the regulations of the canton.

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	Irrigation only when necessary based on the Head Greenkeepers experience in combination with local weather data. The Club has a moisture meter which is used to determine the percentage of humidity in the greens and manage irrigation more efficiently. The club has an irrigation system with a central computer and sprinklers that open individually along the entire course. Irrigation on the fairways is provided by a single line of sprinklers, and the minimum watering possible is used. Last year, fairways were only watered twice. Hose pipes are ready to go when needed. Wetting agents are regularly used.
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 club have a moisture sensor and irrigation software that allows them to use water efficiently. The irrigation system is frequently monitored and is checked completely at the beginning and end of each year before hibernation. The club has a pumping system that is maintained and checked as needed. CIP: Please consider a water & irrigation audit.
	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	Bill and volumes reviewed regularly. The clubhouse has upgraded to the latest and most efficient bathroom and shower fittings with flow restrictors and controls. CCIP: Please encourage water saving practices with use of signs.
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	The club has legal access to water.

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	Howard has done a great job of naturalizing areas on the course during the last few years. Natural areas that are not cut or only cut once a year. Some areas are harvested with the help of local farmers. He is helped by a computer program when planning work, treatments, and other information, being a highly valued tool and in a certain way helping to be more efficient in the daily maintenance of the club.
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	An energy audit was carried out by the city of Luzern to identify measures to improve the energy consumption of buildings. The property complies with the Swiss directives in terms of energy. The clubhouse is a well-maintained building. Efficient and new materials that are more sustainable and respectful of energy consumption are used in renovations. The light bulbs in the buildings have been replaced with LEDs. The club has some electric buggies for rental, but only for members that truly need it. They promote walking golf. CIP: Please consider making an improvements plan for maintenance buildings.
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	HG has been acquiring hybrid machinery for course maintenance for several years now. CIP: Please study the possibility of installing solar panels.
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 works with a local waste management plant for recycling. All waste is stored according to legislation. They are composting some vegetal material. This is collected and used by neighbouring farmers.

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	Mainly local distributors are used. In the restaurant the use of local products is preferred and desired by members. CCIP: Please develop a more structured and formal sustainable purchasing policy.
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 keeps internal bills and invoices of annual quantities of waste and recycled materials. Almost all waste is recycled or reused, including PET, aluminium, metals, glass, paper, cardboard, light bulbs, oils and food scraps from the restaurant. They have a booth at the club entrance to collect recyclable products before they are collected by an external recycling company. Materials from the kitchen and maintenance area such as detergents, oils, lubricants, pesticides, and batteries are also collected and disposed by a specialized company. CIP: Wood from removed trees could be used for creating brush piles and habitat areas.
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	Authorized waste and recycling contractors are used for both housekeeping waste, industrial and hazardous waste. Waste is collected by the municipal contractor and the specialized recycling company. Regarding the golf course and its maintenance, all regulations are complied with.

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 is involved in different projects. Whether for a professional meeting or a private event, the Golf Club offers an authentic setting to make it an exceptional moment. It is used by different local companies to organize meetings and events in two seminar rooms located in a building near the clubhouse.

			https://www.golfclubluzern.ch/ihr-anlass/ The clubhouse restaurant offers seasonal cuisine with local products. https://www.golfclubluzern.ch/en/gastronomy/ Inside the clubs land there are various paths that cross the property that are enjoyed by neighbours and visitors. Great importance is attached to the next generation of golfers. The junior training, led with great commitment by the pros, is very popular. Every year, Greenkeepers Day is celebrated. This is a fun tournament organized by the greens staff and much appreciated by members.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		The club provide staff with time and opportunities to volunteer, encouraging members to volunteer on tournaments, committees, and projects.
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 communicates using social media, newsletter as well as daily through its website and the information panel of the clubhouse. They have the help of external companies to carry out different environmental and analytical studies. CCIP: Please create a sustainability working group or committee.
C2 Golfers & Employees			
C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		Seniors, ladies, and juniors enjoy the facilities weekly. The club has an important group of 80 juniors.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Golf Club Luzern is a private golf course open to members and green fees. It provides a traditional golf course and excellent restaurant.
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	Compliant with the extensive Swiss health and safety legislation for safe, ethical, equal, and legal working conditions.

			The club promote education and membership of the professional's associations. Continuous training and giving maximum stability to employees. Personal protection equipment and working clothing are provided. The 23 employees can enjoy the facilities and many of them play golf. The club takes care of its employees and makes available non-alcoholic beverages, coffee, sunscreen, uniforms and all the necessary safety equipment for the correct and safe performance of daily tasks. The club has an employee living room where food is served every day for the staff at lunch time. Defibrillators are installed at the clubhouse and staff are informed every year. Apple trees, pear trees and other fruit trees are found on the course which produce delicious fruits and apple juices made by the greenkeepers.
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	The club communicates monthly with a newsletter as well as daily through its website and the information panel of the clubhouse. Members are quite proactive, and the club encourage them to promote the facility in the community. The HG organizes tours of the golf course with members to explain the various projects being carried out on the course as well as the numerous initiatives related to the environment and sustainability. The club truly promotes awareness within the employee community with respect to energy and safety aspects.
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	Golf Club Luzern is a private club of members who are properly informed of all activities and actions carried out in the club. CCIP: Please introduce measures to communicate sustainability and other environmental activities to the members. The Communications resources accessed via the OnCourse platform provide some helpful guidance on effective outreach.

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