



GEO Certified[®]

GEO Certified[®] Report Costa Rica Country Club

Prepared by independent verifier, Delfina Achinelly

Certified by GEO Foundation: June 2022

Valid until: June 2025

GEO Certified[®]

The logo features a green circular icon with a white stylized 'G' shape inside. To the right of the icon, the text 'GEO Foundation' is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Below this, the tagline 'Sustainability in and through golf' is written in a smaller, lighter green font.

**GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“El Costa Rica Country Club es una entidad amplia con muchas actividades y diferentes funcionalidades dentro de sus instalaciones. Ha demostrado un alto compromiso con la gestión ambiental tanto del campo de golf como del resto de las actividades y edificaciones. Posee diferentes proyectos que actualmente funcionan y otros que están en vías de comenzar a funcionar para proporcionar una mayor integración del sector ambiental y social. El club posee un gran potencial para desarrollar en dos temas puntuales:

- Actividades de educación ambiental que involucren a los socios y habitantes de la zona. Estas acciones podrían estar referidas al valor del campo de golf y el entorno del club como un ecosistema rico en fauna y flora. Por ejemplo a través de la organización de avistaje de aves, o caminatas de reconocimiento de flora nativa.*
- Comunicación externa de sus proyectos y certificaciones alcanzadas. El club cuenta con la certificación nacional Bandera Azul y GEO Certified. Por su parte GEO proporciona una amplia variedad de material para ser utilizado por el área de marketing. Mi sugerencia en este aspecto es que se utilicen más recursos con el fin de destacar el desempeño ambiental alcanzado con tanto trabajo y esfuerzo por todas las personas que integran el club tanto empleados como socios.*

Para la próxima verificación seguramente habrán avances en proyectos como el compostaje de restos verdes y el reemplazo de vegetación exótica por nativa.”

Delfina Achinelly

(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that **Costa Rica Country 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.

Costa Rica Country 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, **Costa Rica Country Club** should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, **Costa Rica Country 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

Richard Allison
Manager, GEO Certified Facilities



Verification and Certification

Verification

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

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

Certification

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

- Comprehensiveness – that activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Standard
- Consistency – that the verification approach was balanced, well weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across each theme
- Accuracy - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the golf facility to ensure statements and claims were accurate

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit founded to advocate, support and reward sustainability in and through golf. Over more than ten years, the group has worked collaboratively with dozens of golf industry associations and government and non-government organisations around the world, to help golf become a sustainability leader, striving for a net positive social and environmental impact. In addition to managing and assuring GEO Certified®, GEO Foundation also provides a suite of credible, practical programmes for golf facility management, new golf developments and golf tournaments called OnCourse®, often delivered in partnership with national golf bodies. Find out more at www.sustainable.golf

Credibility

GEO Certified® is part of the ISEAL Alliance, a group of the world's foremost credible certification systems including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council and many others. GEO Foundation earned and retains full membership of the ISEAL Alliance global association following a rigorous evaluation against the ISEAL Codes of Credibility in Sustainability Standards and Certification. The ISEAL Codes cover standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Find out more at www.isealalliance.org



Verifier's Report

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

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

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

NATURE			
N1 Habitats and Biodiversity			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site	Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	The last fauna and flora survey was held in 2021. It takes place every 4 years and is carried out with outsourced professionals. Trees that were removed and those that were planted are recorded in a specific document.

	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	There are no protected areas, habitats or species. However, the country has a strong policy regarding nature conservation. CRCC is aware of that and is continuously updating legal applicable requirements in case there are changes that could affect their facilities and activities.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	There are no archaeological areas in CRCC. However, the club has a procedure in case archaeological remains are discovered.
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	CRCC has a policy to try to minimise the use of agrochemicals as much as possible, throughout the golf course and surroundings. All staff involved in maintenance tasks are trained regarding this topic.
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	By 2030, CRCC aims to have replaced all exotic plant species with native plants. There is a daily record of this initiative, complete with data such as date, coordinates, species that were removed and species that were planted.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		If an injured animal is found inside the CRCC, a local association that protects and rehabilitates animals is immediately contacted. Once the animals are recovered, they are returned to their natural habitat.
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 grass species selected remain the best adapted for tropical climate. There are no significant changes regarding this topic.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		There is a project that will be carried out in the mid-term and consists of composting the remains of tree pruning. The result of this composting will be used to fertilise the soil. This project is led by a golfer together with the course maintenance team.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Soil tests are carried out every 6 months. Based on the results a fertilization strategy is planned. CRCC policy is to use synthetic fertilizers as little as possible.

	the year to avoid over-fertilisation		
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Manual work is prioritized whenever 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 golf course is monitored daily. If there are any signs of a pest/disease in the turfgrass the greenkeeper analyses causes and available treatments. If agrochemicals are required they are applied trying to use as few as possible.
	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	CRCC has updated applicator licences and provides all employees with the regulatory protective equipment. Every time they deliver protective equipment, employees must sign a register. Employees are given protective equipment. CRCC provides staff training in correct agrochemical use, application and final disposal.
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.	CRCC has specific procedures to respond if a spill occurs. CRCC provides staff training on how to respond if a spill occurs.
	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	Hazardous wastes are temporarily stored until an authorised transport collects them and delivers them to final appropriate treatment. CRCC receives a certificate / receipt with data on the hazardous waste that was removed.

	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 hazardous waste storage area was recently upgraded. To mix and load pesticides and fertilisers there are surfaces according to the legal and health & safety requirements.
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	There is no storage of large amounts of fuel. In fact they are stored in 20 ltr drums and there are no more than 1000 ltr in total. The emergency procedures are designed and approved for all the facilities of CRCC. A procedure for fuel spills was prepared and is expected to be approved soon. After its approval there will be staff training. There are over 130 fire extinguishers around the facilities.
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)	CRCC has an updated wastewater discharge licence.

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	Since the climate is tropical, the amount of rainfall is considered in order to avoid the overuse of artificial irrigation.

			The areas that are left without irrigation are the roughs (areas under and between the trees, known as "zacate dulce").
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	Environmental education workshops about "the importance of efficient use of natural resources" are held to raise awareness among the staff. Maintenance tasks are constantly carried out to avoid water leaks or breaks in the irrigation system. During the summer the golf course is irrigated from ground and surface water every day at night (fairways, greens and tees). During the rainy season, it is only watered if 2-3 days pass without rain.
	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	The water supply is correctly registered. When consumption is analysed, CRCC refers that the payment is low. This is mainly due to the subsidised price of the resource. It should not be taken as a critical indicator of water consumption. Consumption regarding quantity is also recorded and analysed. Environmental education workshops are held to promote the efficient use of natural resources. These training sessions are for staff only. CIP Consider hosting walk / talk events for club members, or people in the community to spread this message.
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	Groundwater is used to irrigate the golf course. CRCC has updated authorization permits for this practice. They pay a monthly fee to use the natural resource. CRCC has an artificial lake into their facilities, however they cannot use the water because of quality issues that so far they couldn't sort out. CIP Establish the type and source of water quality issues, then consider mitigation strategies.
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	To minimize fuel consumption, the lawn is cut every 15 days. CIP Consider whether non-playing turf can be naturalised or converted.

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	All invoices related to energy and fuel consumption are recorded. Periodic maintenance is carried out both at the facilities and machinery area to ensure that there are no leaks or damages. Incidents are recorded and a solution is provided as soon as possible. The supplier “Compañía Nacional de Fuerza y Luz CNFL”, provides staff training in order to encourage responsible energy consumption both at work and at home.
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	A few years ago, solar panels were installed to heat the pool. To light the tennis area, led lights were installed last year. CRCC has been carrying out an environmental initiative, since 2013, to replace all the traditional lighting with LEDs. It's not 100% completed yet, but is ongoing . To supply energy, CRCC uses “Compañía Nacional de Fuerza y Luz CNFL” as a supplier, which provides electricity from hydroelectric plants and wind farms. Starting in 2021, this company delivers a certificate to CRCC detailing how much energy it consumes from each type of source.
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	CRCC does not use disposable cutlery in any of its restaurants. Their purchase policy promotes packaging reduction and purchasing of small amounts of goods in order to maintain a low stock.
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	CRCC has since many years ago a purchasing policy that considers local suppliers, distance from their facilities and packaging use. The policy is still ongoing and the suppliers accept the conditions that CRCC ask for (less or no packaging; the supplier must take away the packaging, if any; etc).
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	CRCC has identified all waste materials that are generated into their facilities. For each type they have a temporary storage place and a planned logistics to final disposal or appropriate recycling process. All information is recorded and there are waste management indicators to evaluate the environmental performance.

			<p>There are labelled bins all around CRCC facilities.</p> <p>There is an updated operational procedure to waste management.</p> <p>In 2021 there were two staff training events regarding the waste management system. These trainings were for staff only.</p> <p>CIP Consider hosting walk / talk events for club members, or people in the community to spread this message.</p>
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	<p>Each supplier that uses CRCC is authorised and delivers a certificate based on the amount and type of material they remove from the club. All certificates and documents are registered.</p> <p>CRCC has achieved the national certification “Bandera Azul”. Each year Bandera Azul provides CRCC with a complete and updated list of legal applicable requirements.</p>

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		<p>CRCC has many other sports options like tennis, swimming and gym. During summertime there is a “Summer action camp” for kids and teenagers.</p> <p>Other social and recreational activities are related with gastronomic experiences and physical wellbeing, like stretching, yoga or tai chi.</p> <p>There is one particular gastronomic experience where people are invited to taste coffee that was grown in a small piece of ground inside CRCC.</p> <p>Every Friday is held the “Movie night”.</p>

<p>C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity</p>	<p>C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes</p>		<p>Along the year there are volunteering days for employees. They are invited to plant trees and to repair a playground close to CRCC. Once a year there is an interdisciplinary sport tournament, named "FUNARIS" which aims to fundraise money to repair employees' houses. The motto of this initiative is "Let's collaborate with those who collaborate with us". At least 200 members collaborate with the cause and since 2012, 12 households have been restored.</p>
<p>C1.3 Establish active community partnerships</p>	<p>C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups</p>	<p>Create a 'sustainability working group'</p>	<p>There is a "sustainability committee" made up of 14 members who work informally and together with the Social Responsibility manager. The projects are fundraised by CRCC partners. Approximately they fundraise US \$6000 per month.</p>
<p>C2 Golfers & Employees</p>			
<p>C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing</p>	<p>C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities</p>		<p>The Social Responsible Business area from CRCC has many projects to promote health and wellbeing among members and employees. For members see "C.1.1".</p> <p>For employees there are many initiatives like training in financial administration, cooking training, accountability training, business administration training. Also, employees have access to medical assistance into the CRCC facilities 3 times a week. They also have access to a mental health program and psychological assistance.</p> <p>At the beginning of the year every employee receives a scholar kit for each son.</p> <p>Every initiative has procedures, documents and is well recorded.</p>

<p>C2.2 Be open and inclusive</p>	<p>C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies</p>	<p>Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors</p>	<p>CRCC complies with the legal requirements of the national Law N 7600 about inclusivity. CRCC has ramps for disabled persons, elevators, accessible bathrooms etc and recently they've included braille menus at all restaurants.</p> <p>CRCC is a private members facility. Each member can invite an external person as a guest. However, each guest can only enter the club once a month.</p> <p>Regarding the requirements to being a member, it will depend on each specific case. Any person who wishes to be a member must be the owner of an action, fill out a form and comply with all requirements. After a review process, there is an established schedule (according to statutes and the Board of Directors) according to this, the form must be exhibited on the blackboard for 15 days. After that, and if there is no complaint, an interview with the Admissions Committee is carried out. The final stage is a voting session. All of the above steps take a prior review process of documents and approval.</p>
<p>C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities</p>	<p>C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development</p>	<p>Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc</p>	<p>At CRCC there is a Human Resources manager. Since the first interview a candidate is instructed about the CRCC service culture. When an employee is hired there's an induction and a specific training regarding health and safety, sustainability, and other topics.</p>
<p>C3 Communications</p>			
<p>C3.1 Engage golfers and members</p>	<p>C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors</p>	<p>Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements</p>	<p>There is a digital magazine that comes out every 2 months and it contains specific sections for sustainability and social responsibility business.</p> <p>For employees the communication channels are WhatsApp groups and mailing. There are also informative boards with updated information regarding health and safety, sustainability and social initiatives.</p> <p>Members have the opportunity to communicate with the CRCC through the client assistance office and also by claims and comment books available at restaurants or selling points into the facilities.</p> <p>CRCC communicates their projects to the community through the "Escazú SRB network"</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	CRCC has lots of projects related to sustainability and SRB. They are mentioned above in this report.
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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