



GEO Certified[®]

GEO Certified[®] Report Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre

Prepared by independent verifier, David Bily

Certified by GEO Foundation: August 2022
Valid until: August 2025

GEO Certified[®]

The logo features a green circular icon with a white golf ball inside, followed by the text 'GEO Foundation' in bold green, and 'Sustainability in and through golf' in a smaller green font below it.

**GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“As the venue of the Omega European Masters, the Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre has an obligation to provide a world-class layout for tournament play, as well as open their doors for both members and guests within a short playing season. The club is doing a very good job to meet this challenge with minimal inputs and best-practice cultural maintenance by the experienced greenkeeper. Together with a sustainable events specialist and a biologist, the club is committed to improving habitats and biodiversity on the course, as well as improving energy and resource efficiency for the club and the tournament event. Although the club has just begun this journey, they have already developed numerous interesting projects and with the eyes of the golfing world focused on this club every year they will be able to show how a great venue can also be a sustainable club that leads by example.”

David Bily

(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that **Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre** 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.

Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre 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, **Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre** should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, **Golf Club Crans-sur-Sierre** 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	Course management is aware of the importance of this mountain landscape and the club has a plan of the different vegetation types and habitats on the site.

			Recent biodiversity surveys have been undertaken by an external consultant (Antoine Sierro, Naturarks) noting the presence of the varied flora and fauna throughout the site. Antoine Sierro is very knowledgeable about the local flora and fauna of Valais and is committed to helping the golf club to manage and improve the quality of the various landscape types and habitats over the coming years.
	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 known legal designations on the site. There are no protected species found on the site, however a couple of rare species including a species of crayfish found in one of the ponds on the 9-hole Nicklaus course.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	There are a number of small chalets throughout the course which are not protected but which have some historical interest. The clubhouse has a long history connected with the Omega European Masters.
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	The club is investigating the possibility to reduce the area of managed turfgrass wherever possible. There is a large prairie area in the middle of the Nicklaus course which has a very interesting biodiversity, however it is presently not on the golf course property.
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	Due to a relatively small area (60ha), the club is limited to where they can increase eco areas, especially between holes, as it would make the course unplayable. However, Naturarks has begun a 3 year management plan to improve habitat and biodiversity through numerous projects throughout the golf course. Together with Naturarks the club is looking for opportunities to replace managed rough areas with wildflower meadows with the goal of reducing time and resources in maintenance and increasing biodiversity for insects, birds and small mammals. Wet and dry prairie areas are both being investigated. <i>CIP</i> <i>The dry prairie slopes surrounding the 13th green are very successful with a nice diversity of flora interesting for many insect species. This could be expanded into other areas of the site.</i> Native species are used for any new planting on the course. The existing trees throughout the course were planted over the last 100 years or so and consist of native species such as Larch, Fir, Spruce, Pine, Birch and Willow. <i>CIP</i>

			<p><i>There is a plan to gradually increase native vegetation around the numerous ponds on the course in order to improve the biodiversity value of these presently artificial water features.</i></p> <p><i>The streams connecting some of the ponds can also be improved providing some deeper pools or side pools more interesting for insects laying eggs. This is a project in process by Naturarks.</i></p> <p><i>Ornamental annual planting can be found around the clubhouse and also next to many tee boxes. Some of these annual flowerbeds could be replaced with more drought-resistant, even indigenous plantings which would reduce time and inputs as well as shift the image of the golf course to a more natural landscape.</i></p>
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		<p>Together with Naturarks the club is looking at numerous projects to improve habitat areas for various species of birds, crayfish, dragonflies and other insects.</p> <p>The club has begun to create a number of microhabitats including brush piles, stone heaps, bird boxes and bee/insect hotels.</p> <p>Together with Naturarks and Swiss Golf, these projects will be the focus of a sustainability tour during the Omega European Masters.</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>The turfgrass varieties vary somewhat throughout the course. The greens are slowly being rebuilt and are still present a mix of a few different construction profiles. They are in process of trying to increase the percentage of bent grass on all greens but still maintain a strong percentage of poa annua which is intended and manageable for the greenkeeper. Course management regularly overseeds with bent grass to slowly but surely increase this variety in the turf.</p> <p>As a mountain course with a short growing season it is a challenge to maintain these greens, especially with the pressure of having to prepare for one of the DP World Tour's main events.</p> <p>Fairways and tees are generally a mix of poa pratensis and rye grass, which naturally do well in this climate.</p>
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		<p>Course management maintains the turf surfaces with a largely cultural practice regime. Regular decompaction and weekly addition of sand help to maintain a healthy soil structure and help to limit any chemical treatments.</p> <p>Newly turfed areas are done with very thin turf to minimise initial thatch. 'Compost teas' and other biostimulants are used to strengthen soil microbial activity.</p>

	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	The surfaces are given minimal fertilizer throughout the short growing season. Only one main addition of nutrients is given a few weeks before the European Masters. Otherwise small liquid feeds are added through the season.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Non-chemical pest management is practiced as much as possible. Blades are sharpened regularly with the in-house grinders. Hand-weeding is occasionally done on fairways and tees as through the season. Regular sanding helps to maintain well-drained surfaces with less pressure from disease. Some trees are being cut, especially around greens or tees to bring in more light and air and keep turf healthier and more resistant.
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	Chemical application is done only as necessary, mostly against yearly disease outbreaks. The greenkeeper regularly scouts the course for signs of pests or disease in order to quickly react in case of an outbreak.
	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 only uses legally registered products. Staff are qualified to use pesticides. An emergency spill response is in place. Sprayers have shrouds to avoid wind drift.
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.	A procedure for emergency spills is in place. <i>CIP</i> <i>In some areas turfgrass is maintained very close to water features without a significant buffer zone. This issue should be studied to see what can be done to create/maintain acceptable buffer zones around all water and potentially ecologically sensitive areas. Canton de Valais informs that the protected "Espace réservé aux eaux" areas are not within the course perimeter so there are currently no requirements to meet. However, this should be monitored and kept up-to-date.</i>

			<p><i>At the moment these water features are quite artificial in nature and do not have high biodiversity value. The water features are a closed loop within the golf course property.</i></p> <p><i>Water testing should be done at least once a year for any water which is occasionally leaving the site and which could potentially influence the quality of adjacent water bodies.</i></p>
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	<p>Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored;</p> <p>Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge</p>	<p>There are essentially no hazardous materials in the clubhouse area. The clubhouse is owned by a third party and the club only has a couple of small offices in this building.</p> <p>Wastewater is discharged to the local network.</p>
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	<p>Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces;</p> <p>Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface;</p> <p>Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators</p>	<p>The wash area is on impermeable, leak-free surfaces.</p> <p>The mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilizers is also over an impermeable surface.</p> <p>The maintenance area is actually off-site and shared together with the municipal maintenance department.</p>
N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	<p>Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff;</p> <p>Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building;</p> <p>Sufficient storage capacity;</p> <p>Impermeable flooring;</p> <p>Spill containment kits present;</p> <p>Emergency wash area;</p> <p>Fire extinguisher in the immediate area;</p> <p>Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured;</p> <p>Regular inspection of storage tanks</p>	<p>Hazardous materials area stored in a secure and ventilated building. Door is kept locked.</p> <p>Pesticide products are stored separately from fertilizers.</p> <p>Spill containment kits are present. Fire extinguishers and emergency kits are present.</p> <p>The fuel tanks are shared with the fire department and municipal maintenance department. They are regularly inspected and conform to local standards.</p>
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences	<p>Wastewater discharge licence;</p> <p>Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)</p>	<p>The wash pad is equipped with a clipping separator and an oil/grease separator. These are regularly cleaned out and disposed of appropriately.</p>

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	<p>Irrigation of greens, tees and fairways. Some rough areas are also irrigated.</p> <p><i>CIP</i> These rough areas could be reduced and the irrigated surfaces controlled to see if some reduction in irrigation on playing surfaces would be possible.</p>
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	<p>Conduct regular irrigation performance checks;</p> <p>Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices;</p> <p>Ensure effective application of water to target areas;</p> <p>Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis</p>	<p>The irrigation system is gradually being updated. Soil moisture sensors are used. Course management uses a local weather website to help with scheduling and the local measurement station for this weather site is actually on the golf course. A new on-site weather station is nevertheless to be installed soon. The club is working together with The Shift, a sustainable event consultant. Together they have created a number of commitments for improving sustainable management of the Omega European Masters as well as the golf course. A 3-year action plan has been agreed upon and is being put into place. Resource efficiency is one of the priorities.</p>
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	<p>Audit water use regularly;</p> <p>Review bills frequently and look for irregularities;</p> <p>Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors;</p> <p>Categorise and track water consumption</p>	<p>A water audit is conducted for the buildings, however, the clubhouse and maintenance buildings are only rented by the golf club and restaurant is also renting the building and is not connected to the golf club.</p> <p><i>CIP</i> Water-saving practices and appliances/fixtures could be encouraged by the club. This will slowly be brought on board in regularly communications.</p> <p>Continue to explore partnership / collaborative work with the local businesses sharing the infrastructure to extend the sustainability message into different organisations.</p>
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	<p>Water for the course and the clubhouse and maintenance shed is coming straight from the mountains.</p> <p>The clubhouse and maintenance area pay for water which is passed through a municipal water treatment / purifying system.</p>

			The irrigation water comes directly from the mountain source, without passing through the purifying system. It is therefore free.
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 is looking to reduce the surface of managed turf in order to reduce mowing and inputs. This is being done in conjunction with the habitat / biodiversity improvements from Naturarks. Some machines are hybrid. Electric vehicles are being investigated for mowing.
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	At the moment the buildings are owned by private third-parties. The club has nevertheless replaced the windows in the offices of the clubhouse to improve insulation and they are slowly replacing lighting with LED bulbs. The club is looking to replacing or renovating this old building in the future which will bring in many opportunities to maximising energy efficiency. The irrigation system is entirely gravity-fed and there is no pumping station. This saves considerable amounts of energy. <i>CIP</i> <i>However, the closed-loop water system on the course uses pumps to pump the water from the bottom lake back to the top one. There is an opportunity to install solar panels to aliment these pumps in the future.</i> The restaurant manager reminds employees to turn off lights. Some motion sensors are used in the buildings. The greenkeeping does all the blade sharpening with their own grinders, even sharpening machinery for the municipal landscapers.
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	<i>CIP</i> <i>Solar energy could be incorporated into a new building to provide electricity for the building as well as for the electric golf carts.</i>
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	A waste management plan is now in place as organised by The Shift, the external sustainability advisor. This has been done in conjunction with the Omega European Masters as they are also making the tournament more sustainable yearly.

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	A sustainable purchasing policy has recently been drawn up and signed by the main stakeholders at the club. The independent restaurateur has agreed to work together with the club towards more sustainable purchasing. A charter has been signed together with the club, under the encouragement of The Shift. He is committed to serving healthy, local products with vegan options and starting to investigate fair trade and organic alternatives. Providers have been contacted to find out the source of the food and are encouraged to deliver equitable products. Eliminating plastic and no longer serving anything in PET bottles. This is also in conjunction with the Omega European Masters. They sort and separate paper, aluminium, bread, grease/oil, glass, etc. They have already begun to offer half portions with the goal of eliminating food waste.
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 recycling in the restaurant area, on the course and in the maintenance area. The greenkeeping team recycle most all materials and organise a combined pick-up together with the municipal maintenance department. Signs are put on most garbage containers on the course to indicate not to throw away plastic bottles, metal or glass and to dispose of them in the eco-points near the clubhouse. The club puts used golf equipment on their website with the goal of reusing equipment in the community.
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 complies with local waste management regulations, especially so with regard to waste coming from the maintenance area. <i>CIP</i> <i>No composting is done on-site from green waste but this could be a possibility for the future. Research in-vessel composting.</i>

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		With a short playing season the golf club is closed half of the year and in the winter the course is used for sledding, skiing and generally walking. Even during the playing season it is possible to walk through many areas of the course and enjoy the spectacular views to the local mountains and valley below. The clubhouse, owned by a private third-party, has a restaurant which is open to anyone, even though the golf club is the biggest client.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		The club organises a number of charity events through the year. The members volunteer to do a spring clean up of the course, after the skiing season.
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 created a sustainability committee which is composed of internal members only. The club posted an opening for a volunteer position on the committee and has already received at least 4 postulations from seriously interested and professionally experienced members. The club has recently organised a collaboration with a local school, together with The Shift, for children to help in establishing bug hotels on the property. The idea of the sustainability committee is to start with some sustainability projects on the golf course which would help lead to implementing similar projects within the community, in private gardens etc. In this way the club is trying to act as a leader in the community by showing a good example increasing habitats and biodiversity.
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 golf club encourages walking. The junior programme is well established. Young people have a very interesting deal to become members of the club to continue to grow the game.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	The course is open to anyone. They have over 1600 members but are also a 100% public golf course. This is impressive considering it's a DP World Tour event. There are many women and children playing over the two courses.
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	An emergency spill response plan is in place. The club is a good employer offering CPD to employees and apprenticeships positions. The employees have access to the golf course as well as the swimming pool and restaurant.

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 golf club is in process of increasing awareness of sustainability and advertising the commitments of the club. They already have sustainability information on their website and are more and more active in social media. Every week the club issues a newsletter on events happening within the club, including sustainability progress.
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	New signs are being prepared to inform golfers and the public about the various environmental projects taking place throughout the club and on the course. The club will be doing a walking tour of the different areas during the Omega European Masters, in collaboration with Swiss Golf. The club wishes to become a leader in the community with regards to sustainability.

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