



**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**

# **GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Report Suur-Helsingin Golf Lakisto**

Prepared by independent verifier Pentti Viluksela

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2023  
Recertification due: 2026



*“A very well-managed and active golf facility with excellent resource-efficiency and operational focus. There is a strong sense of community, demonstrated by the active participation of the members and the cooperation with neighbours and other stakeholders. I look forward to seeing the next steps of the sustainability journey, including a carbon footprint calculation, landscape and nature survey, habitat management plan and risk assessment.”*

*Pentti Viluksela*

*(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Suur-Helsingin Golf Lakisto 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.

Suur-Helsingin Golf Lakisto has:

1. Met the required certification criteria for sustainable golf operations
2. Successfully completed the official third-party verification process
3. Successfully passed the final evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd. (autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation)

GEO agreed with the conclusions of the official verification report, that, having achieved all mandatory criteria; and with specific Continual Improvement Points (CIP) and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, Suur-Helsingin Golf Lakisto should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Suur-Helsingin Golf Lakisto 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

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## 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](http://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](http://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"> <li>• Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</li> <li>• Turfgrass management</li> <li>• Pollution prevention</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Materials</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships &amp; Outreach</li> <li>• Golfing &amp; Employment</li> <li>• Advocacy &amp; Communications</li> </ul>

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	Lakisto course is situated in a hilly and diverse landscape on old agricultural land, with a river flowing through it.

			<p>A landscape survey of the area surrounding the course was done in 2009.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please update the landscape and nature survey.</b></p>
	<b>N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species</b>	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	<p>No known protected landscapes or species.</p> <p>Azure damselfly (<i>Coenagrion puella</i>) has been seen around a pond on 10<sup>th</sup> hole. This used to be an endangered species, but nowadays is common.</p>
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	No designations on site.
<b>N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course</b>	<b>N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass</b>	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	Land area of the course is only 44 hectares, and the area is well utilised. There are many natural areas (meadows, forests, wetlands) on site.
<b>N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife</b>	<b>N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf</b>	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	<p>The old environmental management system included a habitat management plan</p> <p><b>CIP: Please update the habitat management plan.</b></p>
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		<p>Some of the wetlands are in a natural state. There are bird nesting boxes.</p> <p>Beehives were recently introduced near a flower meadow.</p>
<b>N2 Turfgrass</b>			
<b>N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health</b>	<b>N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors</b>	Select appropriate grass species for climate	Poa annua is the dominant species. There are also other species typical for the climate zone ( <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> , <i>Festuca rubra</i> etc.).
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		<p>The course is built on clayish soil.</p> <p>Aerification and lime and sand application are used.</p>

	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Soil tests are carried out regularly, with a spreadsheet-based monitoring. P levels are specifically followed up.
<b>N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance</b>	<b>N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management</b>	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Sharpening mowing blades is a routine.  Surface moisture is removed with brooms in the autumn. Some weeds are removed by hand from greens. Fallen leaves are removed using a blower.
<b>N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly</b>	<b>N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues</b>	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	Action is often taken immediately when a pest or a disease is spotted, although this varies case by case – sometimes mechanical maintenance is sufficient. Following weather forecasts is useful for anticipating and deciding on action.  Scouting of pests and diseases is carried out daily by greenkeepers and golfers.  Identification is based on own experience, a guide of FGU, and outside expertise, when needed.  The 15th green is under special observation.
	<b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</b>	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 .	Chemicals log and applicator licenses checked.  Spraying equipment is up-to-date and well maintained.  Leftover chemicals are diluted and applied to suitable course areas.  Applicator is calibrated annually, and more often if needed.
<b>N3 Pollution Prevention</b>			
<b>N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site</b>	<b>N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations</b>	Document procedures for emergency spill responses; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas;	A comprehensive rescue plan was done in 2015.  <b>CIP: Please update the rescue plan.</b>

		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.	Approx. 10 metre buffer zones are in place (but not marked on a map). There is no fertilisation or pesticide application in these areas. Mowing depends on the buffer zone location.  <b>CIP: Please map buffer zones to inform management practices.</b>
	<b>N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations</b>	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	Hazardous materials are stored in lockable metal cabinets.  Hazardous waste amounts are minimal and are disposed by an authorised service provider.  Wastewater handling: see N3.3.1. below.
	<b>N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations</b>	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	Washing and mixing done on tarmac surface.
<b>N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances</b>	<b>N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances</b>	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	Storage tanks have built-in secondary containment.  First aid and emergency response procedures are included in the Rescue plan, see N3.1.1.  Chemical safety data sheets, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, defibrillators, and emergency exit signs in place.  Health and safety inspection by AVI (Regional State Administrative Agency) in 2022.
<b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b>	<b>N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences</b>	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	Wastewater treatment plant is located on site and is part of the water and sewage service provided by the city of Espoo.  Workshop area has concrete floor with drainage & oil separation filters.



## RESOURCES

### R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
<b>R1.1 Minimise water demand</b>	<b>R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water</b>	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	Irrigation is targeted on essential playing surfaces.
<b>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</b>	<b>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</b>	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	Manual moisture sensors in use.  Rainbird irrigation software in use.  Major hardware maintenance in the beginning and end of every season.  Performance of pumps is continuously observed. Sprinklers are adjusted when needed. Staff and golfers observe potential problems, e.g. leaks.  The software stops irrigation programme if it starts raining.
	<b>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</b>	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 consumption is followed up regularly from water meter and bills.  Water-saving and energy efficient appliances are preferred when replacing or upgrading, e.g. waterless urinals are in use.
<b>R1.3 Source water responsibly</b>	<b>R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water</b>	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	Irrigation water has been taken from the Lakisto river since the establishment in 1990. There is no written permit nor reporting obligations.

### R2 Energy

<b>R2.1 Reduce energy demand</b>	<b>R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance</b>	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	Course has an effective layout with limited possibilities to increase natural areas. However, adjustments are made to incorporate e.g. a flower meadow.
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<b>R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency</b>	<b>R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings</b>	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	Energy consumption is tracked on basis of invoices. A system called Optiwatti is used to optimise energy efficiency.  Air-source heat pumps are used in the clubhouse and maintenance facility.  <b>CIP: Calculate and analyse the carbon footprint of the golf course.</b>
<b>R2.3 Source energy responsibly</b>	<b>R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy</b>	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	There are 56 solar panels on the clubhouse roof.  Purchased electricity is from renewable sources.
<b>R3 Materials</b>			
<b>R3.1 Reduce materials demand</b>	<b>R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives</b>	Undertake a review of materials consumed	Waste sorting and handling guidelines checked.  Complimentary sauna/shower towels have been replaced by rental towels (with a small fee), leading to financial and environmental savings.
<b>R3.2 Purchase responsibly</b>	<b>R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy</b>	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	All materials are sourced locally or regionally.
<b>R3.3 Reuse and recycle</b>	<b>R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity</b>	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	Waste management is contracted to a major service provider, who also provides statistics and reports.  Labelled bins are placed in suitable locations indoors and outdoors.  There are recycling/sorting waste bins every few holes, replacing the mixed waste bins on every tee.

<b>R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance</b>	<b>R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations</b>	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	Waste management provider is a major national company.
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<b>COMMUNITY</b>			
<b>C1 Outreach</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Mandatory Practices</b>	<b>Verifier Notes</b>
<b>C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality</b>	<b>C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility</b>		The Lakisto course is adjacent to a recreational area with frisbee golf, walking and hiking trails, accessible tracks, etc. The Nuuksio national park is a few kilometres away.
<b>C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity</b>	<b>C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes</b>		The club has donated safety vests to the pupils of the nearby school, and also support Save the Children.
<b>C1.3 Establish active community partnerships</b>	<b>C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups</b>	Create a 'sustainability working group'	"Responsibility group" has been established, and it meets frequently. The group cooperates closely with the board and different committees of the golf club.
<b>C2 Golfers &amp; Employees</b>			
<b>C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing</b>	<b>C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities</b>		There is a warmup/recuperation room with some equipment for pre- and post-round exercises and relaxation.
<b>C2.2 Be open and inclusive</b>	<b>C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies</b>	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Visiting golfers are welcomed. The restaurant is frequented by many non-golfers.

			Junior golfers are supported in several ways.
<b>C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities</b>	<b>C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development</b>	Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	<b>CIP: Please carry out risk assessment process, including health &amp; safety aspects, seasonal employee induction, etc.</b>  The staff have healthcare and other services e.g., massage.
<b>C3 Communications</b>			
<b>C3.1 Engage golfers and members</b>	<b>C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors</b>	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	A sustainability/environmental section is included in the club website.  Members are actively participating in many undertakings, like the golf course spring clean-up.
<b>C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability</b>	<b>C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community</b>	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	There is diverse cooperation with the neighbouring Rinnekoti, a centre providing health and social services for people in need of special support.  Pupils of a nearby school visit the range and enjoy free range balls and guidance from a pro.

## 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](http://www.sustainable.golf)