



**GEO Certified**<sup>®</sup>

# GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Report Motala Golfklubb

Prepared by independent verifier, Kerstin Antonsson

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

**GEO Certified**<sup>®</sup>



 **GEO  
Foundation**  
Sustainability in and through golf

*'Motala Golfklubb has a great commitment from the board, club management, the sustainability working group, and members. The club takes climate impact seriously through double materiality analysis by investigating the possibilities of reducing high amounts of water on the course as well as reducing fossil fuels, producing renewable solar energy, and becoming more energy efficient. In recent years the club has undertaken several inventories and measures to increase biodiversity. I look forward to following the reduction of climate impact and the development of a habitat management plan for the natural values identified.'*

**Kerstin Antonsson**

*(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that **Motala Golfklubb** 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.

**Motala Golfklubb** 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, **Motala Golfklubb** should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, **Motala Golfklubb** 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

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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
<b>Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</li> <li>• Turfgrass management</li> <li>• Pollution prevention</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Materials</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<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	The club performed a nature and habitat survey together with the County Administrative Board in 2022.

			Observed, discussed and confirmed habitats and survey information and maps of the site.
	<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	The confirmed inventory indicates the natural values and protected species of the site.  The club has established contact with authorities (provincial government) and continuous dialogues with the municipality's ecologist.  Confirmed species lists of flora and fauna.
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	Not applicable.
<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	Observed identified managed turf areas that shall be restored into natural wild grass areas.
<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	Habitat management and maintenance plans were discussed and must be developed to preserve natural values aligned with the species and habitats identified. <b>(CIP)</b>  Observed nesting boxes, high stumps, cut trees, insect hotels, fauna deposits, and new expanding wildflower areas.
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		Confirmed inventory and species analysis of occurrences in nesting boxes.  Confirmed nature value inventory and identification of prioritized species.
<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	Heavy rainfall limits play on several holes. Overgrown ditches create difficulties in diverting the amount of water from the course. Analysis and project proposals were discussed and will be developed and communicated with the board. <b>(CIP)</b>  Confirmed Agrostis, Festuca, Poa in turf.

			<p>The advantage of traceability to add the percentage of each turf species in OnCourse was discussed. <b>(CIP)</b></p> <p>Agrostis has been identified as the preferred species to provide greater drought resilience.</p>
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		Normally occurring activities include aeration, coring, topdressing, and clippings return.
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	The confirmed Quality Master Plan contains soil tests of percolation, organic matter, porosity, water holding, texture, and nutrition.
<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	<p>Cutting equipment is sharpened on site.</p> <p>Surface moisture is removed.</p>
<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>	<p>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</p>	<p>Five indicator sites for early disease control are plotted on the course's overview map. Daily visual inspections of pests and diseases are carried out for early signs. If signs, a routine is followed to manage the health issue.</p> <p>Discussions were held as to whether pesticides help or not or can be excluded. Documented effects when used were studied.</p> <p>Chemical applications are recorded, confirmed excellent templates and documentation.</p>
	<b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</b>	<p>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</p>	<p>Observed turf areas for the disposal of leftovers are plotted on the course overview map.</p> <p>The applicator is new. Legal calibration control is not needed yet.</p> <p>An external licensed provider handles the application of chemicals on the course.</p> <p>Personal protective equipment must be available in the chemical storage area. <b>(CIP)</b></p> <p>Safety data sheets are confirmed and available.</p>

<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; 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 confirmed emergency spill response plan is available for pesticides. It gives instructions on how to act with small and large spills of chemicals, personal accidents, and when the club is obligated to contact authorities.  Confirmed. Buffer zones (6 meters) are plotted on the course overview map.
	<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	Contracts are signed with the licensed company, Stena Recycling, for collecting hazardous waste.  Wastewater is taken care of and purified in municipal sewage treatment plants.
	<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	The observed wash area for machines and equipment has an impermeable and leak-free surface. It has a waste area for grass spills before the washing water is led to an oil / grease separator.  Mixing of pesticides and fertilizers is made in the field. Empty containers are rinsed three times.
<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	Hazardous materials and chemicals are registered and provided with printed safety data sheets.  Chemicals are held to a minimum. They are handled and stored orderly and in appropriate cabinets and on leakage trays.  Observed fire extinguishers are placed on machines and in locations with fire risks.  The fuel tanks have secondary containment. Confirmed fuel tank inspection reports for diesel and petrol.  Decontamination agents and protective equipment (first aid and personal protection) were observed.
<b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b>	<b>N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences</b>	Wastewater discharge licence;	The observed wash area for machines and equipment has an impermeable and leak-free surface. It has a waste area for grass spills before the washing water is led to an oil / grease separator.



		Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	Sanitary wastewater led to and treated at the municipality wastewater treatment plant.
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<b>RESOURCES</b>			
<b>R1 Water</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Mandatory Practices</b>	<b>Verifier Notes</b>
<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	<p>Irrigation is only made in essential playing areas and is based on weather forecasts and wind conditions.</p> <p>Irrigation on the Heath course has been reduced in 2022.</p> <p>Stormwater is led to the ponds at holes 9 and 18 and is used for irrigation.</p>
<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	<p>Confirmed soil moisture sensor, but it is not used regularly.</p> <p>The irrigation steering system (Toro) is old and computer-managed. Individual sectorized sprinklers are used on greens.</p> <p>The business plan for 2023 was discussed. It describes the replacement of pumps and control systems as priority measures, followed by the development of a long-term plan for the replacement of decoders and sprinklers.</p>
	<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	<p>Water bills and water meters are reviewed.</p> <p>Low flush toilets and showerheads and water-saving washing-machine are installed.</p>

<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	Not applicable.
<b>R2 Energy</b>			
<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	In 2022, three robotic mowers with electricity as power were evaluated on two holes with good results. For 2023, 55% of all fairways and 25% of semi-roughs shall be managed with robotic mowers.  Observed identified managed turf areas that shall be restored into natural wild grass areas in 2023.
<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	Geothermal heating and air heat pumps are used at the facility. The facility uses renewable grid electricity, and the energy consumption is recorded monthly. Four differentiated electricity meters are available.  Confirmed report of the energy audit implemented in 2020. The report includes many suggestions for improvement; some are implemented (see below), and some are prioritized in the business plan for coming years.
<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	Observed convectors have been installed to improve the indoor climate and use of geothermal energy and air-source heat pumps in buildings. The improvement has led to a saving of 3000 kWh per year instead of having direct electricity heating radiators.  A photovoltaic system has been ordered and will be installed before summer 2023. Solar panels will be placed on the entire machine hall and half of the locker room building. Production is expected to be 62,000 kWh per year.  A solar and wind-powered toilet that doesn't require water has been installed.
<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 data are listed and reported. The amount of recycled waste is increasing.  Confirmed waste handling routine with procedures.  Confirmed that chemicals in use are held to a minimum.

			Old equipment, machinery, and machine parts are put up for sale before being scrapped as waste.
<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	Confirmed purchasing policy. Seventeen out of twenty suppliers are local. The number of purchased products of fertilizers and wetting agents have been halved. Plans for 2023 are to reduce the storage of chemicals on-site to a minimum by provider collaboration to provide requested needs in direct call-off.
<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	Observed marked waste containers and bins for different fractions at the facility. Zero landfill in the last three years, and the total weight of recycled waste have increased.
<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	Authorized waste and recycling contractors are used for housekeeping and industrial and hazardous waste. The municipal contractor and the professional entrepreneur of hazardous waste, Stena, collect waste.

<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 club offers ski trails and boule. Discussions have been held with the local ski club about building an artificial snow facility for biathlon in the area.

			<p>Five schools have visited the club and Motala GC also participates in a municipality activity called 'Sports Library' where kids can borrow sports equipment.</p> <p>During the last week of the summer holidays, a 'try-on week' was organized for school students. The activity was coordinated with SISU, the Swedish sports movement's study association.</p> <p>Motala GC arranged six kick-offs for schools and companies during 2022.</p>
<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>		<p>The club arranges competitions in favor of the Childhood Cancer Foundation.</p> <p>The club arranged a golf competition in October to benefit the 'Christmas Angels'. The fundraiser is to help and support everyone in Motala who is struggling financially for Christmas and make Christmas a highlight – for everyone.</p>
<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'	<p>Confirmed meeting notes from the 'sustainability working group'. Discussed the highly committed and knowledgeable composition of the group.</p> <p>Motala GC has good relations and communication with neighbors, the local community, and the municipality.</p>
<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>		<p>The club collaborates with local municipality rehabilitation for stroke, where the goal is to give stroke patients training and social interaction at the club.</p> <p>As on most Swedish golf courses, players walk rather than go by cart. This behavior befits excellent health.</p> <p>New ventilation will be installed in the machine hall.</p>
<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	<p>Four different distances from tees offer more players opportunities to play.</p> <p>Everyone is welcome to be a member or visit the club.</p>

<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	Four steep grass slopes will be equipped with robotic mowers to eliminate occupational health and safety tipping risks with driver-controlled mowers.
<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	<p>The club has produced information signs and placed them on the course to draw the attention of the players to the biodiversity and the work done to increase it.</p> <p>Consider becoming better at communicating all good sustainability initiatives to members and stakeholders through information on the website, social media, and in the clubhouse <b>(CIP)</b></p>
<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	<p>Discussed and confirmed external communication with the municipal ecologist and provincial government to improve the awareness of nature and biodiversity.</p> <p>The County Administrative Board works to drive the 'Green infrastructure' project and collaborate with golf courses. This summer a consultant conducted an inventory of animal and plant life.</p>

## 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)