



**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**

# GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Report Golfpark Waldkirch

Prepared by independent verifier, Felix Rusterholz

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

**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**



 **GEO  
Foundation**  
Sustainability in and through golf

*“Golfpark Waldkirch is located in a unique landscape that is maintained in a respectful, professional and economic manner. Efforts to increase sustainability and promote biodiversity are apparent in our discussions and are visible in the operational buildings (solar-PV) and on the golf course (large areas of ecological grassland).*

*There are opportunities to reduce irrigation and associated costs, by assessing need and adjusting sprinkler coverage, and also increasing differentiation of flora to further improve the natural value of the site.*

*The clubhouse, access road and car park surrounds also offer a high-visibility chance to inform golfers of a key sustainability decision: near-natural, species- and structure-rich landscaping which would better highlight the guiding principles of a sustainable Migros.”*

Felix Rusterholz

*(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that **Golfpark Waldkirch** 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.

**Golfpark Waldkirch** 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, **Golfpark Waldkirch** should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, **Golfpark Waldkirch** 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	There are no data bases regarding area quality, vegetation types or species monitoring. However, those responsible have a holistic understanding of their facility and its landscape surroundings.

			<p><b>CIP</b> An extensive digital mapping would support management and simplify the long-term controlling, regarding for example ecological quality, area use or condition and development.</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	The responsible persons are in regular exchange with external parties. Focused monitoring is carried out.
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	Topography, the water bodies as well as the orchard landscape in particular are typical for the region and are preserved.
<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	<p>Nor mapping or anything similar is carried out. The use of modern methods such as drone flight or tracking should be discussed. Flight images in particular can be evaluated in many ways, both for maintenance and for optimization of use.</p> <p><b>CIP</b> See N1.1.1</p>
<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>In order to maximize ecologically valuable areas, management ought to be as differentiated as possible. This includes staggered mowing, leaving hems and old grass stands standing, professional maintenance of wild shrubs and structural elements, and leaving dead wood standing. Specific measures for species promotion should be discussed.</p> <p>As an addition to the structurally rich landscape areas, the immediate environment around the clubhouse could also be designed and maintained in a more nature-friendly manner. An attractive, nature-oriented garden design would raise awareness to the otherwise respectful operation approach.</p>
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		The diverse and open landscape lends itself to large-scale projects concerning species, habitat and connectivity. For an optimal use of resources, we recommend to implement monitoring and enhancement projects locally, but to design them in a regional context. Corresponding stakeholders in surrounding communities, agriculture and forestry as well as nature conservation such as BirdLife, Pro Natura, KARCH, ARE Kt. TG etc. are to be involved at an early stage.
<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	Seeds characteristic to the site and function are used, taking into account the importance of the local, humid climatic conditions.
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		To maintain soil fertility and structure, proven tillage measures are taken.
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	To ensure that fertilization is carried out as required and in an ecologically responsible manner, regular soil analyses ought to be carried out.  A new GPS-controlled sprayer with a spray bar was purchased for the application of liquid plant treatment agents. An exact logging as well as a reliable effect control are required.
<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	A well-cultivated soil and an intact ecosystem build the basis for a resilient, disease- and pest-resistant turf. A well-balanced ecosystem is achieved in particular by striving for species-rich, interconnected vegetation outside the specific playing areas, the former being achieved through edges, species-rich meadows, hedges, a diverse tree population and great structural diversity.
<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	The amount and timing of the sprays used are documented. Sprays are applied in reasonable quantities. The context as to why plant damage has occurred and what preventive measures could have been taken are critically scrutinized at all times.
	<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	Only approved products are used and applied by trained personnel using the latest technology.  Spray residues are avoided under all circumstances. If they occur nevertheless, they are disposed of properly by returning them to a specialized company.
<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.	Distances to watercourses are kept. Exact area elevations and corresponding designations in the field are recommended.
	<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 a special room within the workshop building. Fertilizers are stored in a separate barn, inaccessible to unauthorized persons.
	<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 Waldkirch golf course has a new machine and vehicle washing area that meets today's requirements. Users of fertilizers and plant treatment agents are required to exercise utmost care when handling substances that are hazardous to health and the environment.
<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	The required registers are kept.  Hazardous materials are stored in a special room within the workshop building. Fertilizers are stored in a separate barn, inaccessible to unauthorized persons.  Emergency facilities (fire prevention, first aid, emergency numbers, etc.) are checked regularly to ensure that they are in working order and up to date.
<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)	The new washing area has been officially approved and accepted.



## 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	<b>CIP</b> Look at ways to remove maintained rough areas from irrigation requirement.
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	Irrigation from groundwater. In regard of the constantly dwindling water resources, irrigation of green areas is to be carried out sparingly. As a precautionary measure, drought- and stress-tolerant vegetation is to be aimed for. The mowing regime should be adapted to growth capacity and evapotranspiration capacity.  If irrigation is nevertheless needed, it is to be carried out according to need. Monitoring data on timing, amount of water and effect are to be collected and analyzed.
	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	Confirmed.
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	Confirmed.

### 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	Differentiated maintenance of the green areas prevents unnecessary measures such as mowing, fertilizing, etc. There seems to be potential in the designation of additional borders, among other measures. Furthermore, certain copses might be maintained more extensively.
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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	Records on the consumption of each energy source are kept.
<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	A solar photovoltaic system has been commissioned for the production of electrical power. Further potential, for which external areas could serve, should be checked.
<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	Confirmed.
<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 procured sustainably and used responsibly. Regionality, reusability as well as fair and ecological production are considered in the procurement. Material cycles are to be closed locally as much as possible; wood and roots can be left on site if they are not used for energy production.
<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 is stored and disposed of properly.
<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	Confirmed.

# 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		According to publicised objectives, Migros makes golf accessible to a broad social group. By means of suitable communication measures, the positive impact and benefits of the golf park could be made more widely known (local recreation area, networking element, valuable habitat for flora and fauna, etc.).
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		
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 golf park keeps in touch with other regional stakeholders.  Due to the high amount of land use, special attention should be paid to the promotion of biodiversity, for which neighboring landowners and farmers as well as surrounding communities should be more decidedly involved. Synergies can be better used, be it in the form of extended monitoring or ecological enhancement and connectivity projects.

## C2 Golfers & Employees

C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	Confirmed.
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	Confirmed.

## C3 Communications

<p><b>C3.1 Engage golfers and members</b></p>	<p><b>C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors</b></p>	<p>Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements</p>	<p>The sport of golf takes up a lot of landscape space, a fact that bothers many people unaware that the majority of the landscape area is structurally richly designed, as well as worked and maintained in an ecologically responsible manner. Involving members and the population will facilitate communication about these circumstances and will enable the company to sensitize and to gain appreciation for the efforts in favor of the operation and the sport.</p>
<p><b>C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability</b></p>	<p><b>C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community</b></p>	<p>Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement</p>	<p>Celebrate activities such as ecological enhancement, technological introductions for resource conservation (e.g. solar photovoltaics), green space redesigns, etc. and combine these celebrations with public relations. It seems to be important that these measures be communicated holistically and to show the complexity of sustainability in golf and ecology, so that all stakeholders feel addressed at and responsible for positive change.</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)