



**GEO Certified®**

# **GEO Certified® Report Dolder Golfclub Zürich**

Prepared by independent verifier Felix Rusterholz

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025  
Recertification due: 2030

*"The GC Dolder is located in a unique and prominent location on the outskirts of the city of Zurich. Aware of this privilege, both management and the greenkeeping team assume their responsibility to preserve the landscape, promote biodiversity and represent golf in a good light. The business is not managed, but rather developed in a sustainable and holistically sustainable way.*

*In recent years, modernized infrastructure has minimized risks, improved work processes and complied with environmental standards. Thanks to increased attention to occupational health and safety, employment conditions have continued to improve. And thanks to the great willingness to cooperate between the club and the administration, the proportion of ecologically valuable areas can be continuously increased and at the same time the quality of stay can be increased without any significant restrictions on play.*

*As a GEO verifier, I congratulate the club and its players on the successfully completed recertification. On the one hand, it is a testimony to the successful sustainability efforts, and on the other hand, it is a perspective for all the untapped potential that needs to be tapped in the near future."*

**Felix Rusterholz**  
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



# Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Dolder Golfclub Zürich 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.

Dolder Golfclub Zürich 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 and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, Dolder Golfclub Zürich should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Dolder Golfclub Zürich 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  
Director, Certification and Credibility,  
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.isealliance.org](http://www.isealliance.org)



## Verifier's Report

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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	<p>The golf course is located in a landscape worthy of protection on urban land in Zurich. There are various GIS maps of the area, some on geological, faunistic, floristic or hydrological topics.</p> <p>In addition, the course was recorded in the web-GIS Golf-View.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please apply for all relevant data from the Nature Conservation Department of Grün Stadt Zürich (GSZ) and import it into Golfview. The visualisation of natural values will serve to increase awareness, recognise conservation values at an early stage and exploit funding potential.</b></p>
	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	Management and head greenkeepers are in close contact with authorities and administration. Compliance with the law is continuously checked.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	No cultural assets known.
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	<p>Although the course is very limited in terms of space, additional roughs were determined in discussions with the manager and head greenkeeper, which are to be made biodiverse by means of suitable upgrading measures. Areas along holes 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 are affected.</p> <p>Planned measures are site-appropriate flower meadow seeds, combined with stone structures, branch/reed clippings, open ground areas as breeding grounds for ground-nesting insects, planting of wild shrubs, etc.</p> <p>Another funding goal is to develop the edge of the forest in stages. Where possible, the transitions between forest/rough or rough/semi-rough should be moved parallel to the edge of the forest. A shrub layer is to be established along the edge of the forest. In sunny places, cairns can be</p>

			<p>created in isolated places, and organic structural elements can be created in semi-shady places.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please contact with GSZ for the development and coordination of the upgrading measures. Check whether financing and implementation should and can be provided by GSZ.</b></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>	<p>Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping</p>	<p>See N1.1.1.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please replace exotic plants such as hedge of the Portuguese laurel (<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>) or amber tree and cake tree with native woody plants.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Wherever possible, supplement structures, as these create additional habitats, close cycles, reduce transport and landfill costs without incurring significant construction costs.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: In order to promote understanding among members, discreet signs could help to educate people about measures. GSZ has means of communication.</b></p>
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		<p>Maintenance of the green space is carried out under close supervision by GSZ. Rare species must be located and reported periodically.</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	<p>To ensure resilient turf communities, new agrosits varieties in particular are being tested.</p> <p>The vitality of the lawn grasses is analysed every year with specialists from UFA and SwissGreen. As a result of the reduced availability of plant treatment agents, sustainable soil care and plant strengthening are becoming increasingly important.</p>
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		<p>Above all, measures to prevent dollar spots are becoming increasingly important.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please follow Swiss Golf's research and recommendations.</b></p>
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	<p>Annual soil analyses provide the basis for needs-based fertilisation.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please upload the current analysis protocols to the OnCourse Documents Library.</b></p>

	<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	Measures are being examined to achieve lawn care that is as pesticide-free as possible. Dollar spot poses a particular challenge here. In the case of the members, it must be examined how their understanding and tolerance limit for the damage can be increased.  <b>CIP: In addition to continuous training of the greenkeepers, the club must communicate openly and transparently about the cause of the disease, limited options and measures taken.</b>
	<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	Thanks to the newly used syringe, it should be possible to apply spray liquids as required and as precisely as possible. Nevertheless, it is important to check whether and in what dosage treatments should be carried out.  Unfortunately, the sprayer was not equipped with GPS. This would make it possible to map the controlled areas and to better analyse the measures taken and their effects.  <b>CIP: Please mark and analyze hotspots in GolfView. If possible, take preventive measures.</b>
		<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 .	All fertiliser and plant protection measures are recorded in Punctus. The handling of the hazardous substances is carried out professionally, which has also been confirmed by the cantonal office.
	<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.	Supported by external bodies, it was documented how to deal with hazardous substances in an emergency.  <b>CIP: Please practice different emergency scenarios every year.</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	Compliant.
	<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	Compliant.  The company is regularly inspected by the office (AWEL) and the labour inspectorate.  <b>CCIP: When refuelling machines and vehicles, the dirty water overflow in the washing area should be closed manually. Please identify a process optimization to prevent this action from being forgotten. In the event of an accident, this could prevent water pollution.</b>
<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	Compliant.  Confirmed and documented on OnCourse.  <b>CIP: Please practice different emergency scenarios every year.</b>
<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)	Renovation and operation of the infrastructure such as washing area, refuelling or filling of the plant protection sprayer has been checked and approved by the office (AWEL).

## RESOURCES

### R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
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<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>Water demand has already been reduced by increasing selective irrigation instead of area-wide irrigation.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please consider GPS acquisition, which would enable analysis.</b></p> <p><b>CIP: Great attention must be paid to needs-based irrigation. On the one hand, excessive irrigation causes unnecessary costs, especially since it uses drinking water, and on the other hand, it can lead to plant stress and fungal diseases.</b></p>
<b>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</b>	<b>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</b>	<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>No sensors are used. A sensor network could be used for analysis. However, there is no discernible great need.</p>
	<b>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</b>	<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>The consumption of resources is recorded by filing the documents. Monitoring of water and electricity consumption is not analyzed.</p> <p><b>CIP: Annual controlling is expected with accompanying analysis and statement on optimization goals and measures. The consideration includes the entire operation, including the club building.</b></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	Confirmed.
<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	<p>The consumption of resources is recorded by filing the documents. Monitoring of water and electricity consumption is not analyzed.</p> <p>Robotic lawnmowers have been in use since autumn 2025.</p> <p>The elimination of play areas has the consequence that the energy required for cultivation is reduced.</p> <p><b>CIP: Annual controlling is expected with accompanying analysis and statement on optimization goals. The consideration includes the entire operation, including the club building.</b></p>

<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	<b>CIP: Annual controlling is expected with accompanying analysis and statement on optimization goals. The consideration includes the entire operation, including the club building.</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	The location and architecture of the buildings do not allow the installation of PV elements for energy generation.  <b>CIP: Please examine alternative energy use, for example heating network.</b>
<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	Management has done valuable work to optimize material flows. For example, disposable cups are dispensed with after the purchase of reusable cups. The waste is consistently disposed of separately.  <b>CIP: Effective measures to avoid food waste must be examined and, if possible, introduced.</b>
<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	The farm pays attention to the use of regional products, especially in the kitchen. However, there are no guidelines.  <b>CCIP: Please develop sustainable procurement guidelines that are binding for the entire company. These are intended to secure the standards in the long term and make them less dependent on individuals.</b>
<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	The bills for water and electricity use are stored on OnCourse, but are not analyzed further.  <b>CIP: Annual controlling is expected with accompanying analysis and statement on optimization goals. The consideration includes the entire operation, including the club building.</b>
<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	The periodic inspections by the office (AWEL) monitor compliance with waste management regulations.

# COMMUNITY

## C1 Outreach

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
<b>C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality</b>	<b>C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility</b>		<p>GC Dolder is primarily available to its members. This exclusivity contradicts the understanding of certain population groups, especially in connection with the densification of the settlement area and the promotion of biodiversity.</p> <p>The proximity to the administration must continue to be maintained.</p> <p><b>CIP: Members as well as the population could be better informed about efforts that the club makes on its own initiative or at the request of outside. This promotes understanding, trust and acceptance towards the club and golf.</b></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>Once a year, a charity tournament takes place.</p> <p><b>CIP: Please examine whether and which other activities could be effectively implemented for a good cause.</b></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>To clarify potential neighbourhood conflicts, a neighbourhood meeting will be held at the end of October.</p> <p>Management and greenkeeping support the cooperation with the Nature Conservation Office of Grün Stadt Zürich (GSZ) and other interested institutions, for example for the collection of fauna data.</p> <p>It is conceivable that a regional section of BirdLife could install and maintain bird nesting aids. This would result in a further opening of the club, combined with biodiversity promotion measures.</p>

## C2 Golfers & Employees

<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 management has already made great efforts to improve employment conditions in general. The manager receives technical support from an external labour inspector. The focus is on occupational safety and health protection, for which personnel regulations have been drawn up.</p>
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<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	There are no known specific efforts to increase inclusivity.
<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	The personnel regulations regulate the working conditions.  Further training for employees is supported.
<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	The information of the members is mainly provided by meetings, by means of notices in the clubhouse and digital newsletters. This sometimes includes news or greenkeeping.  <b>CIP: Please explore the potential of adding Information boards. These raise awareness about biodiversity promotion measures, increase the acceptance of members and, in the best case, have a motivating effect on measures.</b>
<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 are no known activities.  <b>CIP: Please establish sustainability more strongly and provide information about it consciously.</b>  <b>CIP: An information event with representatives of GSZ, SWILD, Swiss Golf or other institutions that take on related projects could have a supportive effect.</b>

## 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)