



Construction A-Z: BREEAM in Construction Projects

BREEAM is generally recognised as the world's first and foremost environmental assessment method and rating system for the built environment. Launched in 1990, there are now globally over 600,000 buildings with certified assessment ratings and more than two million registered for [assessment](#).

What is BREEAM?

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Assessment Method) is a **sustainability assessment method** that measures the **environmental performance of a building** at every stage (design, construction, use, and refurbishment) and across various categories, including:

- Management
- Water
- Energy
- Transport
- Health and wellbeing
- Resources
- Resilience
- Land use and ecology
- Pollution
- Materials
- Waste

- Innovation

How it works?

During the assessment, **credits are awarded** in the categories listed above, which will then determine a final overall performance rating depending on the score achieved:

Final score	BREEAM Rating
<30	Unclassified
≥30	Pass
≥45	Good
≥55	Very Good
≥70	Excellent
≥85	Outstanding

Typically, a developer, end user or design team will **aim to achieve a particular score**. The assessor gathers evidence at different stages (design and post-construction, with an optional post-occupancy stage) and compiles all the information into a report to send to BRE (Building Research Establishment), who will then provide the final certification.

BREEAM pre-approval

BREEAM pre-approval allows a client that uses **a standard design and specification across multiple projects or assets** (i.e. supermarket stores) to have evidence applied on multiple schemes where such evidence for the relevant BREEAM criteria have been assessed and audited once. This is a way to save time and money since pre-approval lasts for three years and can be used for up to 100 BREEAM assessments.

The different BREEAM standards

- **BREEAM New Construction:** used to assess the design, construction, intended use and future-proofing of new building developments whilst creating a positive environmental and social impact.
- **BREEAM Communities:** integration and assessment of sustainable design in the masterplanning of new communities and regeneration projects.
- **BREEAM In-Use:** enables owners, managers, investors and occupiers to drive sustainable improvements in the operational performance of their assets.
- **BREEAM Refurbishment and fit-out:** used to assess refurbishment of the external envelope, structure, core services, local services and interior design of existing buildings.
- **BREEAM Infrastructure:** specialist certification scheme for civil engineering, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm projects.

BREEAM in construction contracts

To achieve a specific BREEAM level, the different parties will need to work together and cooperate. It is, therefore, essential that construction documents (i.e. building contract, professional appointments, the appointment of the BREEAM assessor, technical documents) clarify who has what responsibility in case anything goes wrong or additional expense is necessarily incurred in meeting BREEAM requirements.

Tip – Why use BREEAM?

Delivering a certified green building may have numerous advantages. Indeed, beyond the environmental aspect of BREEAM certification, developers, owners, or end users often see a business opportunity based on a cost/benefit basis. For instance, a green building is likely to:

- Generate a higher rent/capital valuation;
- Be cheaper to run in terms of energy costs;
- Meet current and future regulatory requirements or guidance on the environmental performance of

buildings and, therefore, avoid the need for (recurrent) refurbishments to comply with new requirements/guidance;

- Fulfil businesses' environmental or broader corporate social responsibility policies;
- Create a more pleasant environment to work in and increase productivity in the case of working environments/offices

Please get in touch with our [construction](#) team if you would like more information on BREEAM or assistance with incorporating clauses relating to achieving BREEAM certification in your construction contract. Email amy.lewis@la-law.com or call [023 8082 7502](tel:02380827502).