

What is BREEAM?

BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is the leading and most widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and has become the de facto measure used to describe a building's environmental performance.

BREEAM provides clients, developers, designers and others with

- market recognition for low environmental impact buildings
- assurance that best environmental practice is incorporated into a building
- inspiration to find innovative solutions that minimise the environmental impact
- a benchmark that is higher than regulation
- a tool to help reduce running costs, improve working and living environments
- a standard that demonstrates progress towards corporate and organisational environmental objectives

BREEAM addresses wide-ranging environmental and sustainability issues and enables developers and designers to prove the environmental credentials of their buildings to planners and clients. It:

- uses a straightforward scoring system that is transparent, easy to understand and supported by evidence-based research
- has a positive influence on the design, construction and management of buildings
- sets and maintains a robust technical standard with rigorous quality assurance and certification

The scope of BREEAM

BREEAM covers a number of building types:

- offices
- retail
- education
- prisons
- courts
- healthcare
- industrial
- certain types of housing under Ecohomes(see below).

Breem can also tailor schemes for any building not included under one of the standard building types.

For the housing sector, there are a number of variants:

- **the UK Government's Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH)** replaced EcoHomes for the assessment of new housing in England in April 2007
- **BREEAM EcoHomes** for new homes outside England
- **BREEAM Multi-Residential** covering buildings housing many individuals and offering shared facilities

How BREEAM works

BREEAM rewards performance above regulation which delivers environmental, Higher comfort or health benefits. BREEAM awards points or 'credits' and groups the environmental impacts into the sections below:

- **Energy:** operational energy and carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- **Management:** management policy, commissioning, site management and procurement
- **Health and Wellbeing:** indoor and external issues (noise, light, air quality etc)
- **Transport:** transport-related CO₂ and location related factors
- **Water:** consumption and efficiency inside and out
- **Materials:** embodied impacts of building materials, including lifecycle impacts like embodied carbon dioxide
- **Waste:** construction resource efficiency and operational waste management and minimisation
- **Land Use:** type of site and building footprint
- **Pollution:** external air and water pollution
- **Ecology:** ecological value, conservation and enhancement of the site

The total number of points or credits gained in each section is multiplied by an environmental weighting factor which takes into account the relative importance of each section. Section scores are then added together to produce a single overall score.

Once the overall score for the building is known this is translated into a rating on a scale of:

Pass ★ Good ★★ Very Good ★★★ Excellent ★★★★ Outstanding ★★★★★