



BREEAM®

MAKING THE UK AND EUROPE MORE SUSTAINABLE

Release Review:
What's New
in BREEAM
New Construction
Version 7.0 and 7.1

WWW.BREEAM.COM

Contents

BREEAM’s evolution to Version 7	03	Scheme updates	05	Key issue changes	10
BREEAM New Construction Version 7.1 – Build to last	04	Mixed use building assessments permitted	05	Management	10
		Minimum standards strengthened for higher ratings	05	Energy and Carbon	10
		Weightings revised to reflect updated science	08	Resilience	10
		Scoring bands for BREEAM rating adjusted for consistency	08	Health and wellbeing	11
		Alignment with and streamlined reporting for the EU Taxonomy	09	Biodiversity	11
		Refined online platform to provide performance tracking, insights and comparable data	09	Water	12
				Transport	12
				Pollution	12
				Comparing scores across versions	13
				Getting started	14

BREEAM’s evolution to Version 7

BREEAM is the leading holistic framework for assessing sustainability within the global built environment. Launched in 1990, BREEAM was the world’s first building certification system and continues to be the only framework underpinned by scientific rigour, providing an authoritative third-party certification which is recognised across the globe. By using a holistic, science-driven and flexible approach, BREEAM delivers a tailored roadmap to drive asset values from a financial, environmental, performance, risk, health and social perspective. BREEAM doesn’t just help real estate meet standards and safeguard investments. BREEAM provides a platform that encourages excellence.

Building on more than a century of expertise and three decades of successful operation, BREEAM V7 integrates today’s most advanced sustainability and resilience practices, empowering developers, owners, operators, investors and other stakeholders across the global commercial real estate sector to enhance long-term asset value, improve efficiency and future-proof portfolios.

Defined by science and informed by the global real estate and construction industry, the updated standard leads market shifts by integrating data-driven strategies for resilience and climate adaptation, biodiversity, energy performance and embodied and whole life carbon assessment.

- **BREEAM measures what matters to enhance asset values and provides certification for performance transparency.**
BREEAM certification is available for asset owners and developers across every aspect of the built environment, including new builds, refurbishments and fit outs. It can be implemented at any stage of an asset lifecycle to provide a credible framework to inform decisions and disclosures.
- **BREEAM standards create a road to a sustainable future where we can design, build and operate sustainable buildings across the entire built environment.**
We rigorously review and raise our benchmarks to push buildings to deliver greater carbon reduction, financial value and positive social impact. This leading approach inspires industry to continuously reflect and adopt more ambitious, forward-thinking approaches to sustainable design, construction, and operations.

- **BREEAM certification enables projects of any size to manage risks and create or protect asset value through sustainability.**
BREEAM certification validates asset sustainability performance across every aspect of the built environment, providing transparency and accountability to stakeholders and enables investors, owners and asset managers to manage risks, lower the cost of capital through sustainable finance and reduce project or operational costs.

BREEAM New Construction

Version 7.1 – Build to last

BREEAM New Construction focuses on the sustainability performance of ground-up development projects from early planning through completion. Guided by BREEAM’s holistic approach, the framework evaluates every aspect of a project — from design and construction methods to intended use, long-term resilience, and value creation.

It also considers the project’s impact on the surrounding natural and built environment, promoting responsible development that advances sustainability, supports positive social outcomes and aligns with long-term financial goals.

In 2025, **BREEAM New Construction Version 7.0 (NC V7.0)** was released. This full version update incorporated the latest energy and carbon science in the built environment as well as feedback from our public consultation with stakeholders around the world. In addition, NC V7.0 continued to focus on other key factors to create a holistic approach to sustainability that addresses resilience, health and wellbeing, and the reduction of harm and restoration of the natural environment.

In August 2026, **BREEAM New Construction V7.1 (NC V7.1)** was released. This targeted update aims to improve building performance by strengthening a handful of technical requirements and making the standard easier to apply in practice, all while keeping the certification familiar for project teams. **BREEAM NC V7.1** brings:

- A stronger focus on performance, with the most meaningful changes centred on the Management category
- Moving beyond design intent to demonstrating real-world performance
- Simpler, clearer requirements through refined guidance, clarified assessment methodologies and updated terminology
- Increased importance of the qualifications and experience of technical professionals involved in delivery, particularly commissioning and indoor air quality

This update further aligns our standards across our lifecycle products, responds to feedback from our stakeholders and embeds continual learning in our standards.

- The standards that have been released:
- **International New Construction: Commercial and Residential V7.1**
In some countries, BREEAM standards have been adapted to local conditions, translated into the local language, and aligned with the country’s building regulations. International New Construction applies in all countries except where a local adaptation has been created.
Countries with New Construction adaptations: Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and UK. Find out more at www.breeam.com.
 - **UK New Construction: Commercial V7.1**
UK New Construction: Commercial is an adaptation specifically for commercial projects in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These adaptations ensure that the standard has been adapted to local conditions, translated into the local language, and aligned with the country’s building regulations. International New Construction will apply in all other countries except where a local adaptation has been created.

Residential developments in the UK will continue to use **UK New Construction: Residential V6.1**.

Scheme updates

Mixed use building assessments permitted

NC V7.0 introduced the option for standard assessments to include up to 5 asset types within a single assessment without triggering the need for a Bespoke assessment. For NC V7.1, this remains the same, with updated guidance on applying NC V7.1 to projects.

Assessment with more than 5 asset types will still be required to use the Bespoke process.

NC V7.1 includes refined guidance on new-build and renovation combinations, and the acceptable evidence types have been expanded to incorporate more options.

Minimum standards strengthened for higher ratings

Several new Minimum Standards were introduced in NC V7.0 specifically to ensure BREEAM Excellent and Outstanding rated buildings address the full scope of whole life carbon. These include:

- Building life cycle assessments (Mat 01) are required at any one or more of three project stages along with embodied carbon reporting to achieve an Excellent rating and at all three project stages along with embodied carbon reporting to achieve an Outstanding rating.
- Excellent or Outstanding can be achieved based either on the energy performance achieved in Ene 01 or the predicted operational energy performance in Ene 02
- No fossil fuel combustion on-site is permitted to achieve an Outstanding rating
- No refrigerants or refrigerants with an emission rate of <1000 kgCO2e per kW to achieve an Outstanding rating.

There are no further changes to Minimum Standards in NC V7.1.



Scheme updates (continued)

BREEAM Rating	Star Rating	New Construction Version 6 Minimum Standards	New Construction Version 7 Minimum Standards
Outstanding	★★★★★	- Advanced environmental site management (Man 03) - Enhanced energy performance (6 of 9 credits) AND predicted operational energy consumption - 4 of 4 credits (Ene 01) - Water efficient equipment - 2 of 5 credits (Wat 01) - Construction waste diversion - 1 of 3 credits (Wst 01) - Advanced good practice water efficiency over baseline performance (Wat 01) <i>Residential only</i> - Homes are inclusive, accessible and have outdoor space (Hea 06, Hea 08)	- Advanced responsible construction practices (Man 03) - Relevant areas achieve good daylight levels (Hea 01) - Best practice improvement over energy regulations - 6 credits achieved (Ene 01) AND Predictive energy modelling (Ene 02) OR operational energy performance score achieving 5 credits (Ene 02) - No fossil fuels combusted on-site (Ene 02) - 30% improvement over baseline (Wat 01) - All project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting - 5 credits (Mat 01) - Pre-demolition audit OR resource management plan (Wst 01) - No refrigerant use OR refrigerant have an emissions rate < 1000 kgCO₂e per KW (Pol 01) ** <i>INT Residential only</i> - Homes are inclusive, accessible and have outdoor space (Hea 07, Hea 09)
Excellent	★★★★☆	- Enhanced environmental site management (Man 03) - Building owners manual (Man 04)** - Post occupancy seasonal commissioning (Man 05)** - Enhanced energy performance OR predicted operational energy consumption - 4 of 9 credits (Ene 01) - Inclusion of dedicated space for recyclables (Wst 03)**	- Basic responsible construction practices (Man 03) - Commitment to 12 month in-use commissioning (Man 05)** - Significant improvement over energy regulations - 4 credits achieved (Ene 01) OR operational energy performance score achieving 3 credits (Ene 02) - Any project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting - Criteria 1 to 6 (Mat 01) - Recycling facilities provided (Wst 03a and 03b)**
Very Good	★★★☆☆	- Water efficient equipment - 1 of 5 credits (Wat 01)** <i>Commercial only</i> - Energy submetering (Ene 02a)**	- Commissioning of building systems - schedule and responsibilities (Man 04)** - Technical and non-technical building user guide written for handover (Man 04)** - Indoor air quality plan in place (Hea 04)** - Smoking ban (Hea 04)** - Monitoring for 90% energy consumption by end use (Ene 03)**

Scheme updates (continued)

BREEAM Rating	Star Rating	New Construction Version 6 Minimum Standards	New Construction Version 7 Minimum Standards
Good	★★☆☆☆	- Basic water efficiency over baseline performance (Wat 01)** - Building-level water metering (Wat 02)**	- Predicted water usage 15% improvement over baseline (Wat 01)** - Water meter is installed (Wat 02)**
Pass	★☆☆☆☆	- Health & Safety Management on-site (Man 03)** - No high frequency ballasts (Hea 01)** - No asbestos (Hea 02)** - Legionella management in place (Hea 09)** - Legally harvested timber (Mat 03)**	- National health and safety legislation is met (Man 03)** - No asbestos used (Hea 04)** - Legionella management in place (Hea 11)** - Legally harvested and traded timber (Mat 03)

**Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.

Shell only assessments

Shell only assessments cannot achieve BREEAM Outstanding. This is because Shell Only is capped at Excellent for Ene 01 Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy uses.

Shell Only can achieve Excellent for Ene 01 Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy uses via an alternative route by achieving two credits for fabric performance optimisation (Ene 04, criterion 8)

Scheme updates (continued)

Weightings revised to reflect updated science

The category weightings at country level were revised under NC V7.0 to ensure they remain relevant and reflective of local conditions and best practice, as well as taking into account the changes made to the criteria. The changes to the country weightings:

- Increase the importance of embodied carbon in BREEAM, especially for projects outside of the UK
- Maintain the importance of health and wellbeing
- Focus the weighting of energy and carbon on grid emissions factors, as BREEAM V7 incentivises all-electric buildings.

The weightings remain the same for NC V7.1

For countries like the United States, where a country has been broken up into multiple regions due to geographical size and complexity, those regional weightings were also revised to achieve those same goals.

Scoring bands for BREEAM rating adjusted for consistency

The score bands that translate to BREEAM ratings were adjusted in NC V7.0 to bring consistency to the intervals between the different ratings. As a result, the score to achieve Pass and Good have both dropped by 5%. This is the same in NC V7.1.

Rating	Star Rating	NC V6 score	NC V7 score
Outstanding	★★★★★	≥ 85%	≥ 85%
Excellent	★★★★☆	≥ 70%	≥ 70%
Very Good	★★★☆☆	≥ 55%	≥ 55%
Good	★★☆☆☆	≥ 45%	≥ 40%
Pass	★☆☆☆☆	≥ 30%	≥ 25%

Each BREEAM rating broadly represents performance equivalent to:

- **Outstanding:** Less than the top 1% of buildings (innovator)
- **Excellent:** Top 10% of buildings (best practice)
- **Very Good:** Top 25% of buildings (advanced good practice)
- **Good:** Top 50% of buildings (intermediate good practice)
- **Pass:** Top 75% of buildings (standard good practice)

Scheme updates (continued)

Continued alignment with and streamlined reporting for the EU Taxonomy, CRREM and sustainable finance

Though not directly binding outside of the European Union, the EU Taxonomy has influenced the investment decisions, asset valuation and access to European capital all over the world. Additionally, the EU Taxonomy has been highly influential around the world as different jurisdictions contemplate their own green taxonomy frameworks.

BREEAM New Construction V7 standards have been developed to increase alignment with the EU Taxonomy to streamline reporting against the technical screening criteria at the project level. NC V7.1 continues this alignment. BREEAM issues that demonstrate alignment with the EU Taxonomy are identified within the New Construction V7.1 standards and evidence requirements to comply with the EU Taxonomy are included in the Schedules of Evidence.

The predicted operational energy metrics also align with those utilised by the Carbon Risk Real Estate Monitor (CRREM) to inform the design and construction decision-making and streamline reporting during the operations of the building. The standard has also been optimised in Version 7.1 to improve clarity for lenders and finance teams, enabling access to sustainable finance and lower capital costs.

Refined online platform to provide performance tracking, insights and comparable data

Launched simultaneously with NC V7.0, the online software has been designed to capture asset level data to streamline certification as well as provide performance tracking, insights and comparable data for customers across all assets and portfolios. We want to make sustainability reporting and disclosure simpler for V7 assessments and beyond.

It provides:

- Increased visibility of BREEAM assessments
- Improved efficiency of data collation and management
- Improved integration and engagement of customers and project teams in the BREEAM process

Assessors using BREEAM V7 standards benefit from an improved user interface and new assessment features. Owners and developers can follow progress in real time, helping them understand exactly where their asset's performance stands as they optimise performance and pursue certification.



Key issue changes

Included here are some of the key changes made in Version 7 and the refinements made for Version 7.1. This list is not comprehensive; discussions should be held with a licensed Assessor or Advisory Professional (AP) for the complete list of changes made that may impact your project’s score and rating.

Management

The Management category in NC V7.0 was not significantly changed from the previous version.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Project planning aligns with Soft Landings principles, including requirements for a Project Delivery Workshop at Concept Design, intermediate evaluation workshops at key design stages and a structured final review at project completion to support performance tracking throughout the project lifecycle.
- Commissioning responsibilities strengthened throughout the project lifecycle, alongside updated competency requirements for the specialist commissioning manager.
- A more clearly defined methodology to support consistent application and assessment for envelope testing.

Energy and Carbon

- Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and Carbon Use Intensity (CUI) utilised as a dual metric for awarding credits while maintaining the same focus on building efficiency first and on-site renewable generation as critical decarbonisation strategies.
- Issues measure upfront and embodied carbon (A0 through B5) and operational carbon from energy and water (B6 and B7).
- Embodied and operational carbon benchmarks established for all project types around the world with credits provided for comparison reporting.
- Exemplary credit for Net Zero Transition Plans for projects not designed to be operational net zero carbon upon completion.
- Separate credits for energy strategy, predictive energy modelling and risk assessment and mitigation.
- Third-party verification of the energy model also incentivised.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Credit calculation methodology for predictive energy modelling refined, with stronger links between predictive modelling and exemplary credits.
- Sub-metering requirements.
- Enhanced low-carbon design prerequisites.
- Flexible Demand Response methodology.
- Battery storage scoring.

Resilience

- Alignment of the issue and criteria related to adapting the asset to climate change and disassembly and adaptability with the EU Taxonomy criteria.
- Alignment of the flood and surface water management criteria to BREEAM In-Use and more international references and terminology introduced.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Clarified terminology around flood risk assessments.
- Hazard assessment methodology updated, simplifying the requirements and refining how climate risks are assessed.

Key issue changes (continued)

Health and wellbeing

- New issue emphasising the importance of light on occupant circadian rhythms.
- Indoor air quality plans now required to achieve a Very Good rating or higher.
- In jurisdictions where smoking is not prohibited by law, a smoking ban in the building is imposed to achieve a Very Good rating or higher.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Daylight and lighting requirements refined, with Daylight exemplary performance thresholds and flicker-related requirements adjusted.
- Artificial Light issue renamed to Electric Light .
- Indoor air quality plans and testing now require qualified IAQ professionals.
- Testing timelines, VOC and formaldehyde emission requirements adjusted.
- Updated climate modelling standards and weather file requirements to address thermal comfort, along with additional flexibility for future climate assessments.
- Clarification for acoustic remedial works and applicability of criteria.
- Additional filtering for safe and accessible design credits.

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been incorporated and benchmarks set to encourage developments to have a measurable positive impact on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. This is particularly helpful for projects in England, where biodiversity net gain has become a legal requirement. It also encourages the integration of ecology to deliver wider sustainability benefits for health and wellbeing, resilience and community involvement.
- Alignment of site selection criteria, which encourages the use of previously occupied or contaminated land with the EU Taxonomy.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- European Biodiversity Metric introduced as an additional tool option (International) for quantifying ecological change.
- Ecology assesement refinements include new surveying technique guidance and definitions.
- Improved ecological enhancement guidance.



Key issue changes (continued)

Water

- Significant simplification of the water consumption methodology and calculator.
- Benchmarks based solely on installed water-using components, making assessments more straightforward and transparent.
- Recycled water explicitly recognised regardless of whether water-efficient fixtures are installed.
- Significant reconfiguration and simplification of requirements for water efficient equipment and systems, with credit allocation reflecting the proportion of water use served by efficient systems, providing a more performance-based approach.
- New issue introduced to encourage prediction and management of operational water use.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Significant expansion of calculation guidance for flow rates, timed fixtures, multiple-head showers, urinals, mixed fixture types.
- Clarified application of leak detection requirements across all water systems.
- Recognition of smart leak detection technologies.

Transport

- Greater emphasis on transport assessments and travel plans at an early design stage.
- Expanded focus on encouraging implementation of sustainable transport measures identified through the process, with options now grouped into public, active, private and alternative measures.
- Credit allocation is more closely linked to site accessibility and the transport measures delivered.
- Issues linked to Car Parking Capacity and Home Office have been removed.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Improved methodology for extensions and EV infrastructure allocation.
- Enhanced cycle storage calculations and public bicycle sharing guidance.
- Refined definitions for terms linked to travel planning.

Pollution

- Refrigerants requirements updated to reflect evolving industry practices and refrigerant standards.
- Expanded consideration on ecological impacts from artificial lighting.
- New emphasis on impacts to nocturnal wildlife and bird collision risks, recognizing wider ecological impact of lighting design.
- Refinements to noise pollution terminology and updated guidance to reflect current noise assessment methodologies and standards.

NC V7.1 refinements:

- Refrigerants list updated and stronger evidence required for compliance.
- Updated light guidance references and greater emphasis on impacts to wildlife and bird collision avoidance.

Comparing scores between Version 6 and Version 7.0/7.1

As part of the development and validation of the updated standard's performance thresholds, a benchmarking exercise was conducted to estimate how assets previously certified under Version 6 would score under Version 7.0 and 7.1. With the changes under both V7.0 and V7.1 expected to shift design responses and outcomes, the score changes are considered indicative or directional rather than precise. Projects in the UK saw score reductions of between 3% and 5% depending on the older version used and projects using International New Construction saw an average score reduction of 10%.





Getting started

Speak to one of our experts who can understand your organisation’s goals and help you find the right path to growth.

UK + Europe

-  +44 333 321 8811
-  sales@bregroup.com
-  Monday – Friday
-  9am – 5pm UK

Supporting our customers globally:

US + Canada

-  +1 (800) 408 9989
-  BREEAMUSA@bregroup.com
-  Monday – Friday
-  9am ET to 5pm PT

China

-  +86 1881 1827 3569
-  BREChina@bregroup.cn
-  Monday – Friday
-  8am to 6pm CST

Africa, Asia Pacific, Oceania

-  +44 333 321 8811
-  sales@bregroup.com
-  Monday – Friday
-  9am – 5pm UK