

# BREEAM: Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method



Skills management software  
for frontline workers

[www.ag5.com](http://www.ag5.com) | [info@ag5.com](mailto:info@ag5.com) | +31 20 463 0942

# What is a BREEAM certification?

The BREEAM methodology was created by the UK-based Building Research Establishment (BRE). It evaluates a building's or infrastructure's sustainability based on factors such as:

- Energy use
- Water use
- Health and well-being
- Land use and ecology
- Pollution
- Materials
- Waste
- Innovation
- Transport

There are five categories of BREEAM certification, each of which is applicable to a specific project type.

- **BREEAM Communities.** For projects that are in the planning stages
- **BREEAM New Construction.** For projects that are currently being designed or constructed
- **BREEAM In-Use.** For buildings that are currently operational or being used.
- **BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit-Out.** For buildings, you aim to improve, remodel, or refurbish
- **BREEAM Infrastructure.** For projects related to infrastructure and civil engineering

# Who needs a BREEAM certification?

A BREEAM certification is typically sought by organizations or individuals for construction and development projects. These might include:

- Building owners
- Developers
- Architects
- Engineers
- Construction firms
- Contractors
- Investors

A BREEAM certification can objectively demonstrate the sustainability and environmental performance of buildings or other construction projects. Depending on the project, this can help enhance marketability, or potentially help an organization meet regulatory standards.

# How to earn a BREEAM certification

Earning a BREEAM certification is a five-step process. It is outlined below.

1. Find an accredited BREEAM assessor
2. Register your project
3. Have your project assessed
4. Assessment receives quality assurance check
5. Certification

Assessments are scored on a 0-5 star rating scale. To pass, a building must earn at least one star. However, a higher certification level demonstrates that a building or asset is higher-performing, and thus more capable of hitting specific sustainability-related targets or goals.

## **Renewal requirements for BREEAM certification**

BREEAM certifications for new buildings are valid for the building's lifetime. However, certifications for buildings that are already in use are valid for three years, after which they must be renewed through another BRE-approved assessment.

## **The benefits of BREEAM certification**

A BREEAM certification offers several benefits to organizations' assets. Some key advantages include the following.



## **Marketability**

BREEAM-certified buildings often have higher market value and appeal. They also tend to perform better than assets that are not certified, as well as enjoy a reputational boost.



## **Environmental impact**

A BREEAM certification reduces a building's or asset's environmental impact through sustainable design and construction practices. This can greatly help an organization's efforts to achieve specific targets, such as net-zero carbon emissions.



## **Operational cost savings**

Energy and water-efficient buildings – which are a focus of BREEAM certifications – can result in long-term operational cost savings for organizations.

## **Challenges in earning a BREEAM certification**

Earning a BREEAM may pose several challenges to organizations. They include the following.



## **Complexity of assessment criteria**

The BREEAM framework evaluates various aspects of a building's sustainability. These include energy efficiency, water conservation, materials selection, and environmental impact. Developing a full understanding of these criteria, then taking steps to meet them, requires expertise and effort, for which you will need skilled employees or team members.



## **Cost implications**

A BREEAM certification can be an expensive endeavor. You'll need to implement sustainable features and technologies, such as energy-efficient HVAC systems, renewable energy sources, and eco-friendly materials.



## **Coordination and stakeholder engagement**

To earn a BREEAM certification, you will need a strategy to coordinate and engage with stakeholders across your organization – and throughout the project's lifecycle. These stakeholders might include building owners, developers, architects, engineers, contractors, or other employees that are skilled in sustainability.

# Tips and strategies for preparing for BREEAM certification

Here are a few tips for preparing for BREEAM certification.

- Enroll in a [BREEAM training course](#) to ensure you have the knowledge you need for a successful assessment
- Involve your BREEAM assessor early in the project to maximize opportunities for achieving a high score
- [Subscribe to BRE's newsletter](#) to stay abreast of the latest BREEAM-related news
- Download BRE's ["Guide to BREEAM Professionals"](#)

## Resources for BREEAM certification

For more information and guidance on BREEAM certification, you can refer to the following resources.

- **Building Research Establishment (BRE).** The [BRE designed the BREEAM methodology](#). Its website offers great deal of resources, including guides, training courses, certification timelines, and more – and should therefore be the first stop for those interested in earning the certifications.
- **GreenBookLive.** [GreenBookLive is an online database](#) on which those interested in seeking BREEAM certification can easily find and get in touch with a BREEAM assessor. It also provides information on other BREEAM-related products and software.
- **Industry skills matrices.** AG5 offers [free, industry-specific skills matrices](#) dedicated to construction, engineering, real estate, environmental impact assessments, and many other areas. You can use them to identify, track, and manage skills related to BREEAM certifications in your organization.

## Skills management for BREEAM certifications

AG5 stores all certifications in the cloud, providing all authorized personnel with access to the right version of approved certifications. This helps you easily keep track of all data and documentation related to a BREEAM certification across your organization.

Using [AG5's skills management software](#), you can monitor the status of any type of certification that is relevant to your workforce, leveraging intuitive dashboards that provide you with a clear understanding of exactly what is needed to keep your employees skilled and safe.

## Frequently asked questions about BREEAM certification

### **What is the scope of a BREEAM certification?**

A BREEAM certification covers a building's or asset's sustainability throughout its entire lifecycle.

### **Is BREEAM certification mandatory?**

BREEAM certification is not mandatory, but is internationally recognized and may prove extremely valuable.

## **How long does it take to obtain a BREEAM certification?**

The BREEAM certification process usually takes between six months to a year months, from project initiation to final certification. This timeline can vary based on factors such as project complexity, size, team efficiency, and compliance with BREEAM requirements.

## **What are the cost considerations for BREEAM certification?**

Cost considerations for BREEAM certification include assessments, consultancy, documentation, and implementation of new technologies.

## **What is the validity period of a BREEAM certification?**

BREEAM certifications are valid for the lifetime of newly constructed buildings, and for three years for buildings that are already in-use.

## **Can BREEAM certifications be integrated with any management systems?**

Yes, BREEAM certifications can be integrated with management systems such as ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) and ISO 50001 (Energy Management). Such integrations can help streamline sustainability efforts, align organizational goals, and improve environmental performance.

## **How can you learn more about BREEAM certification?**

Visit the [BRE's website](#).

## Sources

- [Building Research Establishment \(BRE\)](#)
- [GreenBookLive](#)

## Author



### [Rick van Echtelt](#)

Rick van Echtelt is the Co-Founder and CEO of AG5, where he leverages over two decades of experience in entrepreneurship and developing skills management software.

[Read author profile](#)

## Revisions

Original version | April 8, 2024

Written by: [Rick van Echtelt](#)

[Please read our editorial process for more information](#)

