



The Breeam In-Use standard is one way to give a clear benchmark of performance as mounting environmental pressures and CSR remain high on the business agenda

# Standard response

**Most people** associated with the construction and management of buildings will be familiar with the Breeam, Leed and possibly the Energy Star rating systems. These primarily look at the environmental impacts of the building through the design and construction phase. The growth in the use of these systems over recent years has been significant, although their impact, certainly in the UK, has been restricted to the available market. That is because design and construction accounts for only 2 per cent to 4 per cent of our current building stock. It is also estimated that by 2050 60 per cent of today's buildings will remain, therefore with increasing environmental pressures, legislation, and the need for verifiable corporate responsibility information, Breeam In-Use could be a welcome addition.

## What is Breeam In-Use?

The scheme itself was introduced by BRE at Ecobuild in March 2009 and has been designed to help those responsible for managing buildings improve their environmental performance and reduce running costs. Unlike the other standards, as the name suggests, Breeam In-Use looks at the operational performance of existing buildings, rather than their design and construction. It also differs from its older relatives in a number of other areas. For Breeam a trained assessor would undertake the work, which in turn would be certified by BRE. Breeam In-Use is, however, a self-assessment scheme for anyone to undertake, and the results are certified by a BRE trained, Breeam In-Use auditor. The Breeam rating (good, excellent etc.) also provides a benchmark on performance against specific criteria and often customers can aim to achieve a specific rating for their development. Breeam In-Use though considers many individual aspects of building performance and highlights areas where improvements can be made.

## How does the scheme work?

The Breeam In-Use standard is divided into three parts, covering:

- Asset performance – the inherent

performance characteristics of the building based on its form, construction and services.

- Building management performance – the management policies, procedures and practices related to the operation of the building. This includes the consumption of resources such as energy, waste and other consumables and environmental impacts such as carbon and waste.
- Organisational effectiveness – the understanding and implementation of the management policies, procedures and practices, as well as looking at areas such as staff engagement and delivery of key outputs.

You can be rated for a single part of the standard, a combination of elements, or all three criteria. All performance ratings use the same categories as the existing Breeam scheme:

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

The weightings of the categories differ for each element of the standard being assessed.

## Breeam In-Use

- Reduce/better manage operational costs
- Provide greater engagement with staff
- Provide a clearly identifiable standard against your corporate social responsibility/sustainability objectives
- Improve the value of your assets
- Gives you a benchmark of performance against other premises in your sector / marketplace
- Recognises where resource and commitment have been made to environmental/sustainable issues

## Collecting the data

The assessment tool has been designed to allow data input from a variety of sources, as well as the ability to be assessed on a three-tier response level. Within this, tier 1 information is relatively basic and should be easily available, and this builds through to tier 3, which is a fully detailed assessment of the activities being undertaken. These responses then dictate the overall rating your building achieves. Time needs to be taken with the assessment tool to familiarise yourselves with the requirements of each category and gather the data most appropriate for the aspects of the standard you are seeking accreditation for.

## How it works

1. Assessor registers online with Breeam and then pays for and registers each asset (building).
2. Assessor downloads and completes the Breeam In-Use questionnaire tool, completing the relevant areas (asset, building management and organisation) of the standard they are looking to achieve
3. At this point the customer/assessor can either contact a licensed Breeam In-Use auditor directly to verify the data and provide certification, or can submit the completed questionnaire to BRE Global for an unverified score. This can be undertaken twice free of charge, thereafter submissions carry a cost
4. The auditor will submit the verified data to BRE Global for review and certification

## Reasons for considering Breeam In-Use

The standard clearly fills the gap for a broad operational rating of a building's environmental performance. Being voluntary it also supports the corporate responsible agenda at a time when many other areas, for example energy, are becoming legal compliance issues and therefore mandatory. It can provide a mechanism for determining environmental opportunities as well as the opportunity to engage with staff. **FM**

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