

BREEAM Communities 2012

An introduction for international use

BREEAM Communities is a standard that helps developers, urban planners and design teams achieve sustainable designs and plans for new communities.

The standard was developed to find sustainable ways of addressing 21st century challenges like urbanisation and climate change. It covers economic, social and environmental sustainability – assessing issues like housing provision, transport networks, community facilities, and economic impact. It makes sure that sustainability is considered at the very early stages of design where site-wide solutions can have a big impact.

Outside of the UK, BREEAM Communities can be used to:

- improve, measure and certify new developments
- guide sustainable growth by providing an overarching strategic framework
- ensure that new developments are planned and built to provide high quality communities that are vibrant, safe and environmentally friendly.



Image credit: Diligentia

What does the scheme do?

A sustainability standard at the masterplanning scale is useful for developers, local government and design teams. Those who have used the scheme describe it as a ‘framework’ and a ‘dialogue tool’ that facilitates discussion between the professions and organisations involved in planning new communities. It helps different stakeholders in the development process discuss and agree what can be achieved and how sustainability objectives will be met.

Rather than a simple checklist, BREEAM Communities provides a process that is aligned to the practice and timing of planning new communities. This process can be used to help the developer and local government planners test the sustainability of options for new development.

Why do developers use it?

- Cost savings are achieved by refocusing the design team to consider site-wide solutions and building sustainability into designs from the earliest possible stages.
- Planning applications move through the system more efficiently as developers work with the community, local authority and other stakeholders to agree what can be achieved on the site in a transparent and focussed process.
- Consultants save time by using the studies produced for other legislative requirements (e.g. environmental impact assessment) to satisfy evidence requirements in this scheme
- Buildings on the site are able to achieve a higher rating under building level assessments.

“BREEAM Communities provided us with an ideal opportunity to review how we develop sustainable communities in Sweden. For us, it’s the optimal tool for collaboration between authorities and the developer.”

Anders Nilsson, White Architects

Why do local authorities use it?

- Politicians and planners involved in making decisions on planning applications understand the development's sustainability credentials.
- Local and strategic needs of the area are addressed through surveys and assessments that reach beyond the development boundary.
- The needs of existing communities are built into development proposals through consultation and engagement activities.

"BREEAM Communities is about developers and planners working together to achieve the most sustainable outcomes for major sites. It's a solution to help move projects through the planning system and should be welcomed by everyone with an interest in securing sustainable communities." Sean Nicholson, Technical Director at WSP

BREEAM Communities International

The 2012 version of the manual is available for use anywhere in the world through a 'bespoke' assessment process. This process is used to tailor the scheme so that the key issues and challenges in the country / region are fully recognised, taking account of the following factors:

- the location and current use of the development site
- local climatic conditions (microclimate and climate change)
- the timescales and phasing of the development
- significant issues or constraints on the site
- local/national development and planning standards
- the process for bringing forward related infrastructure
- cultural, economic, social and environmental differences that are relevant to masterplanning
- land use pressures across the country and in the local area

BRE is currently looking for new projects to test how the BREEAM Communities 2012 scheme works internationally in a pilot programme. BRE's goal is to use the pilot projects to ensure that BREEAM Communities can be used anywhere in the world. This is a cost-effective option for countries that do not have a nationally recognised standard for sustainable communities or where international comparability is required.

The relationship to sustainable buildings

The BREEAM building standards require detailed information from the design team that shows how the building will perform against a variety of issues, like energy, pollution and health and wellbeing. The assessment criteria in BREEAM Communities are similar in scope, but they cover a wider range of social and economic sustainability issues. If a developer achieves credits in the BREEAM Communities scheme, they can also use those credits to support and simplify a building level assessment by ensuring early consideration, consultation and evidence collection.

Background

BREEAM Communities was originally launched in 2008 and has provided invaluable experience of addressing sustainability at the masterplan level. BREEAM Communities 2012 significantly streamlines this methodology focusing on the process of masterplanning to achieve sustainable outcomes. It does not prescribe design solutions as these should be context specific. BRE has updated the scheme based on pilot projects in the UK and Sweden and customer feedback.

More information

For more information please contact BREEAM at breeam@bre.co.uk or visit www.breeam.org/communities for:

Case studies and further information

General information, flyers and a series of case studies are available on the website.

Training

Training courses for new BREEAM Communities assessors are available throughout the year. The first day of our new assessor training course is open to developers, planners, and other interested parties. This is a stand-alone module that gives an overview of the timing, scope and content of BREEAM Communities. Bespoke training opportunities can also be arranged. Course dates and booking information are available on our training website:

www.breeam.org/events

Free-to-view video

There is a free-to-view introductory video describing the updated scheme.

Technical manual

The technical manual for the scheme is now live and available as a free download. This gives detail on the scope, timing and content of BREEAM Communities.

For further information, please contact:

BRE Global, Watford, Herts, WD25 9XX

T: +44(0)1923 664462

F: +44 (0)1923 664104

E: breeam@bre.co.uk

www.breeam.org

BREEAM is a registered trade mark owned by the BRE Group.