

BREEAM® | USA

MAKING THE US AND CANADA MORE SUSTAINABLE

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out Commercial Version 7

WWW.BREEAM.COM/USA



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Introduction to BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out Commercial Version 7

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 provides a comprehensive framework for assessing and improving the sustainability of refurbishment and fit out projects across a wide range of commercial asset types, including office, retail, industrial, education and hospitality.

By following BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7, delivery teams, building owners and occupiers can implement more sustainable upgrades that secure long-term value by reducing operational costs, enhancing occupant comfort and wellbeing, reducing the risk of obsolescence and aligning with sustainability goals. The standard also provides measurable, certified outcomes, enabling owners and occupiers to better understand and verify the predicted environmental and operational performance of their spaces.

In some countries, BREEAM standards have been adapted to local conditions, translated into the local language, and aligned with the country's building regulations. The Refurbishment and Fit Out standards can be used anywhere in the world, except **Austria, Germany, the Netherlands¹, Spain and Sweden**, where our partners, BREEAM National Scheme Operators (NSOs), operate locally adapted standards.

Assets being refurbished in **Norway** can either use the BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out standard or use the NSO's bespoke standard.

[Find out more about the NSOs.](#)

¹Fit Out only projects use BREEAM Fit Out V7



Scope of work

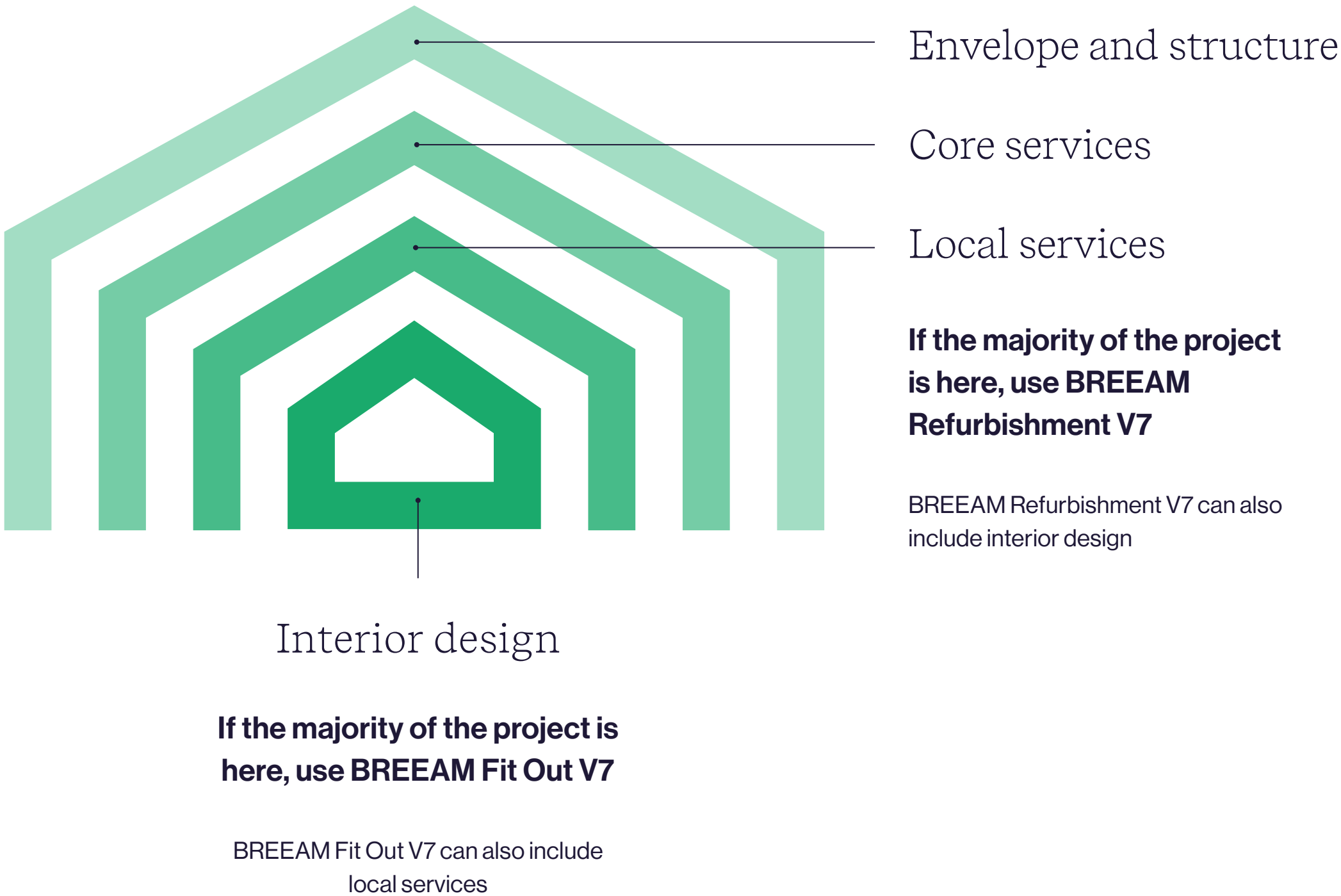
BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 can be applied in any number of ways to the following scopes:

- **Envelope and structure** (the building fabric/envelope including the façade, roofs, and glazing)
- **Core services** (central building systems like cooling, heating, and building management systems)
- **Local services** (e.g. zone controls for ventilation, heating, and cooling)
- **Interior design** (e.g. furniture, fixtures, wallpaper, flooring)

There are two standards within BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7, providing tailored pathways which reflect the differing responsibilities of owners and occupiers:

BREEAM Refurbishment V7 covers building upgrades that may include changes to the envelope, structure, core building systems and operational performance of an existing asset. It is typically used where work extends beyond individual spaces to improve the overall building’s performance and longevity.

BREEAM Fit Out V7 is designed for tenant-led or interior-focused projects where the wider building structure and core systems are not being significantly altered. It concentrates on interior spaces within a building, including layouts, finishes, furnishings and localized services.



Certification offered

Certificates can be issued at the design stage (noted as interim BREEAM rating based on the design) and post-construction phase, confirming the final BREEAM rating for the project’s as-built performance of the building after refurbishment is complete.

Note that while post-construction stage certification is possible without a prior design stage certification, projects are encouraged to do both to optimize costs and improve outcomes, as well as streamlining the certification process.



Design stage certification

The design stage (DS) assessment is optional and results in an **interim** BREEAM rating. It demonstrates the proposed building’s performance at the design stage of the lifecycle. Early integration of sustainability principles in the design process often leads to better, and more cost effective, outcomes.

This assessment enables key performance factors — such as building efficiency, materials selection, health and well-being, and decarbonization — to be embedded into the refurbishment plan from the start. It drives decisions that not only support long-term operational benefits but provide transparency and create lasting value, encouraging the full integration of sustainability principles into the asset refurbishment.



Post-construction stage certification

The post-construction stage (PCS) assessment and BREEAM rating is a mandatory certification stage that demonstrates the final ‘as-built’ performance of the building refurbishment. A final PCS assessment is completed and certified after practical completion of the building works.

This assessment verifies the extent to which the building refurbishment was designed and delivered to perform sustainably during its operations. The result reflects the actual performance of the asset, offering a clear view of its performance outcomes.

Ratings

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 offers five ratings:

Rating	Star Rating	Overall Score
Outstanding	★★★★★	≥ 85%
Excellent	★★★★☆	≥ 70%
Very Good	★★★☆☆	≥ 55%
Good	★★☆☆☆	≥ 40%
Pass	★☆☆☆☆	≥ 25%

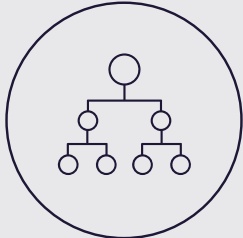
Each BREEAM rating broadly represents performance equivalent to:

- **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)



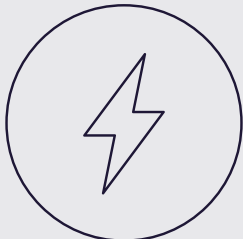
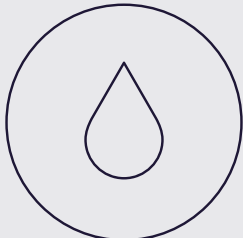
Minimum standards

BREEAM sets minimum standards of performance in key areas to ensure that performance against fundamental sustainability issues is not overlooked in pursuit of a particular rating. The minimum overall percentage score must be achieved, as well as the minimum standards, to achieve a particular BREEAM rating.

	Pass ★	Good ★ ★	Very Good ★ ★ ★	Excellent ★ ★ ★ ★	Outstanding ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
 Management	- National health and safety legislation is met (Man 03)**		- Commissioning of building systems (Man 04)** - Technical and non-technical building user guide written and handed over (Man 04)**	- Basic responsible construction practices (Man 03) - Commitment to 12 month in-use commissioning (Man 05)**	- Advanced responsible construction practices (Man 03)
 Health & Wellbeing	- No asbestos used (Hea 04)**		- Indoor air quality plan in place (Hea 04)** - Smoking ban (Hea 04) (RF only)**		

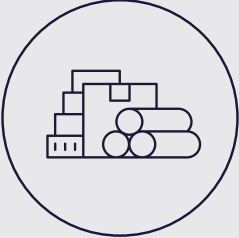
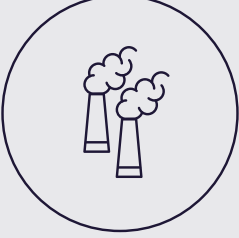
** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.
RF only: minimum standard applies to BREEAM Refurbishment V7 only and not to BREEAM Fit Out V7

Minimum standards (continued)

	Pass ★	Good ★★	Very Good ★★★	Excellent ★★★★	Outstanding ★★★★★
 Energy			- Monitoring for 90% energy consumption by end use (Ene 03) (RF only)**	- Calculated energy performance improvement 42% of available credits (Ene 01) OR Three credits Predicted operational energy performance score (Ene 02) (RF only)	- Calculated energy performance improvement 67% of available credits (Ene 01) OR Five credits Predicted operational energy performance score (Ene 02) (RF only) AND - Prediction of operational energy consumption (Ene 02) (RF only) - No fossil fuels combusted on site (Ene 02)
 Water		- 15% improvement over baseline water usage (Wat 01)** - Water meter is installed (Part 2 only) (Wat 02) (RF only)**			- 30% improvement over baseline (Wat 01)

** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.
RF only: minimum standard applies to BREEAM Refurbishment V7 only and not to BREEAM Fit Out V7

Minimum standards (continued)

	Pass ★	Good ★★	Very Good ★★★	Excellent ★★★★	Outstanding ★★★★★
 Materials	- Legally harvested and traded timber (Mat 03)**			- Any project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting (Mat 01)	- All project stage LCA and embodied carbon reporting (Mat 01)
 Waste				- Recycling facilities provided (Wst 03) (RF only)**	- Pre refurbishment audit/Pre fit out resource audit OR Resource management plan (Wst 01)
 Pollution					- No refrigerant use OR Refrigerants have an emissions rate <1000 kgCO2e per KW (Pol 01)

** Requirement is applicable to this rating and above.
RF only: minimum standard applies to BREEAM Refurbishment V7 only and not to BREEAM Fit Out V7

Category weightings

BREEAM categories are weighted to reflect their varying importance in a project's overall sustainability, ensuring that critical sustainability issues like energy efficiency and occupant well-being have a greater influence on the final rating.

The weightings are assigned to reflect the current priorities and the relative significance of different sustainability issues, such as energy, carbon, materials, and health. Different weightings can be applied depending on the specific scope of the assessment. BREEAM also has country/region specific weightings that are tailored to climatic, regulatory and market requirements.

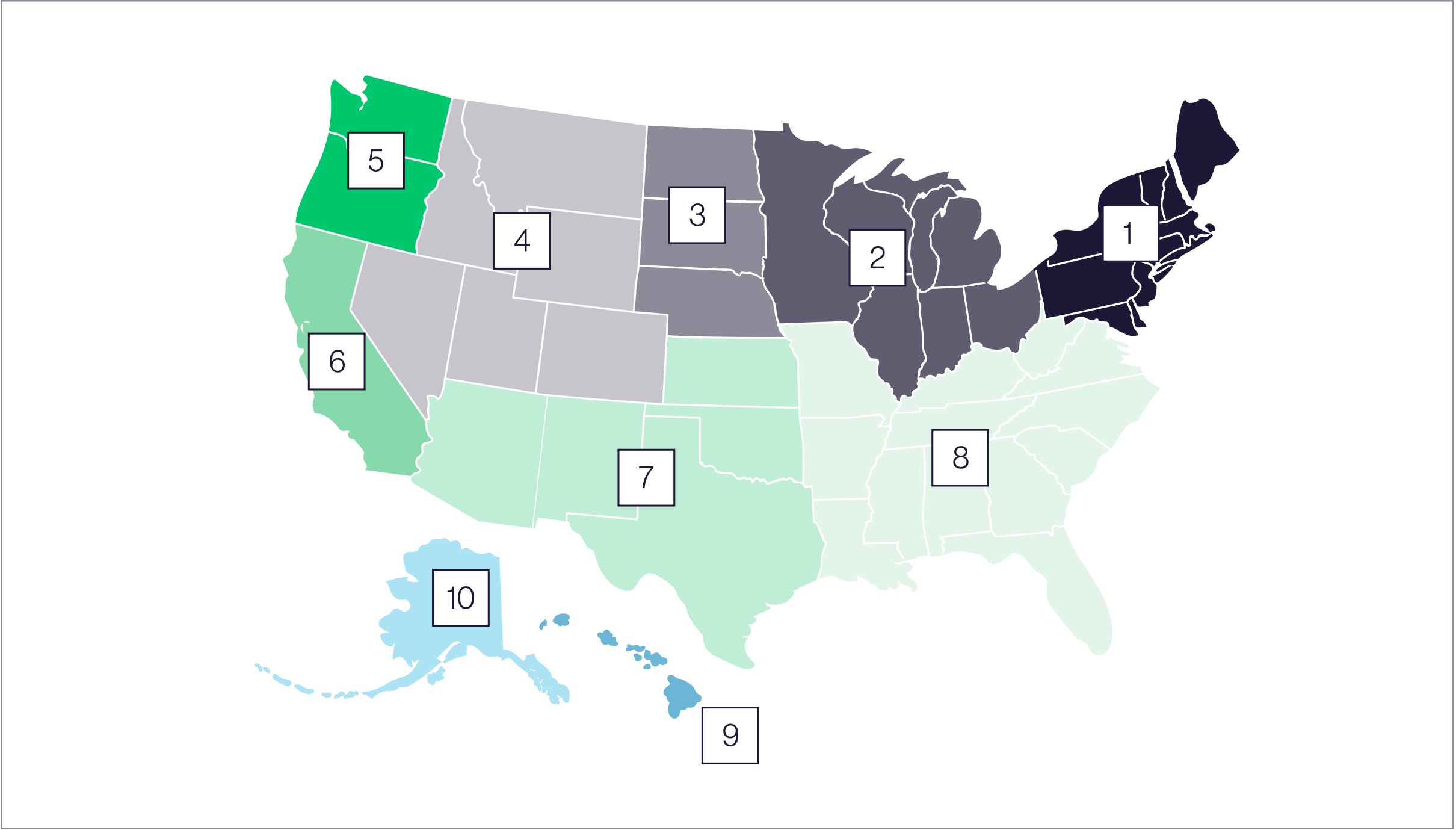
By giving greater importance to key categories, the weighted scores encourage focus on high-priority areas to achieve a better BREEAM rating and ultimately, a more sustainable asset.



Adaptations for US projects

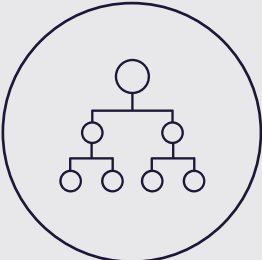
The US has been divided into 10 regions. The regions have been set after considering climate, energy use, transport availability, population density, ecology and other factors.

Each of these regions have their own environmental category weightings and approved standards which will account for the variations in standards adopted (such as the multiple versions of ASHRAE 90.1) and the regulatory baseline in place. Adopting this regional approach ensures that any BREEAM certified project exceeds regulations while still meeting international best practice.



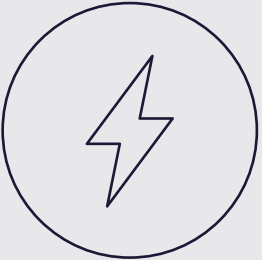
¹Fit Out only projects use BREEAM Fit Out V7

Categories and their topics

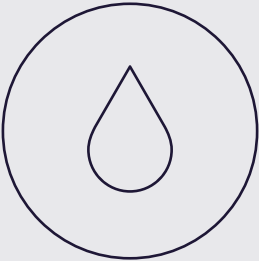
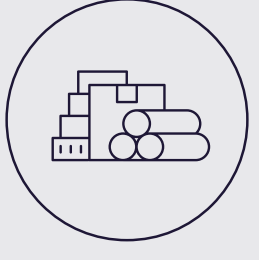
	Topic
 Management	- Integrated design and refurbishment process, including robust stakeholder engagement, that optimizes building performance - Life cycle costing and service life planning to deliver economic sustainability - Considerate, responsible and accountable construction site management practices - Commissioning and handover of building systems - Post-handover aftercare including post-occupancy evaluation and zero carbon transition planning
 Health & Wellbeing	- Natural light to support visual performance, comfort and well-being - Appropriate design and controls of artificial light - Non-visual effects of light and circadian rhythm - Indoor air quality - Thermal comfort - Acoustic performance - Safe and accessible design, providing safe access to the asset and outdoor space

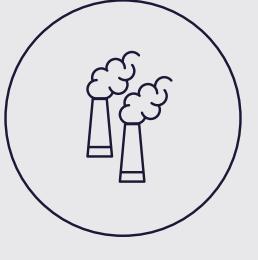
For full assessment criteria, refer to the BREEAM Refurbishment Commercial V7 and BREEAM Fit Out Commercial V7 Technical Manuals.

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 evaluates sustainability performance across ten categories. Each category addresses a distinct set of sustainability topics relevant to refurbishment and fit out projects, although not all of these issues will apply to fit out.

	Topic
 Energy	- Energy and carbon performance of building fabric, services and fittings (regulated energy uses) - Predicted operational energy and carbon performance - Energy use monitoring of systems and occupiers - Low carbon design measures including on-site or near-site low and zero carbon energy generation technologies - Energy efficient equipment selection and procurement - Energy efficient system selection and procurement - Flexible demand response - Installation of controls for HVAC systems
 Transport	- Transport assessment and travel plan - Sustainable transport measures such as EV charging infrastructure and active travel support for cyclists, informed by the travel plan

Categories and their topics

	Topic
 Water	- Water efficiency of water-consuming fixtures and expected use of recycled water from approved blackwater, greywater and rainwater systems - Water use monitoring of systems and occupiers - Water leak detection and prevention - Water efficient equipment and systems to ensure resilience to water stress - Predicted operational water consumption to ensure resilience to water stress
 Materials	- Building life cycle assessment with embodied carbon reporting requirements - Environmental product declarations for critical building components - Responsible sourcing of construction products - Material efficiency
 Waste	- Construction waste management - Recycled aggregates - Operational waste planning - Speculative finishes - Disassembly and adaptability

	Topic
 Land Use & Ecology	- Ecological risks and opportunities assessment - Managing impacts on ecology during and after works - Ecological change and enhancement, specifically supporting Biodiversity Net Gain and wider site sustainability including heat island effect reduction - Long term ecological management
 Resilience	- High level climate and natural hazard exposure screening - Climate-responsive natural hazard resilience strategy - Implementing resilience and adaptation measures - Protection against human error and malicious damage - Surface water run-off management - Increasing local resilience through the asset
 Pollution	- Impact of refrigerants - Local air quality - Minimizing watercourse pollution and flood and surface water management - Reduction of nighttime light pollution - Reduction of noise pollution

For full assessment criteria, refer to the BREEAM Refurbishment Commercial V7 and BREEAM Fit Out Commercial V7 Technical Manuals.

How it works

Follow these five steps to get your project certified:

1. Create an account in the BREEAM Platform

The owner or developer creates a user account on the BREEAM Platform by visiting <https://platform.breeam.com>.

2. Complete the pre-assessment to receive an unverified score

The pre-assessment provides a preliminary evaluation of the project's design and construction plans to estimate its potential environmental performance and forecast the BREEAM rating that could potentially be achieved.

3. Find a licensed Assessor to register the project and verify the performance

The Assessor, trained and licensed by BRE, will guide you through the entire assessment process. They should be engaged as early as possible to maximize the potential for achieving the desired score and rating. (Note that if Assessors are engaged early enough, they can undertake the pre-assessment, which can increase its accuracy and its value to the project.) Project teams will gather evidence and document how the project meets the BREEAM criteria, submitted directly to the Assessor. The Assessor will verify compliance and award the credits, score and rating. Licensed Assessors can be found on Green Book Live <https://www.greenbooklive.com/>

4. Submit the assessment for quality assurance

The Assessor submits their assessment report and supporting documentation to BRE for quality assurance. Only once it passes this process is the certificate issued. Certification is dependent on the quality of the Assessor's submission.

5. Receive certification

Once the assessment has passed the quality assurance process, the certificate is issued and added to the publicly available global database of certifications.

Advisory Professionals (APs) can support client teams in decision-making and evidence preparation, unlocking the value of certification for current and future asset owners and users. While not required for certification, APs can facilitate performance optimization, maximising value and cost-effective outcomes through BREEAM.

Standard asset types

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 is applicable to a broad range of commercial assets, including (but not limited to):

Commercial laboratory	- Laboratory (CL 2 or 3)	Government services	- Fire station - Holding center - Law court - Police station - Prison (UK only) - Town hall	Office	- Office - Financial office - Veterinary office
Community	- Coast guard station or mountain rescue station - Community hub, community center, day center - Crematorium - Library - Mortuary - Place of worship - Visitor center	Healthcare	- Primary healthcare surgery - Health center or clinic - Hospital - Ambulance station - Ambulatory surgical center	Residential institution (Long term stay)	- Co-living - Key worker accommodation - Military barracks - Residential care home - Sheltered housing - Student accommodation (halls of residence)
Culture and entertainment	- Cinema or movie theatre - Exhibition or conference hall - Museum or art gallery - Performing arts theatre or music hall or concert hall	Hospitality	- Hotel - Serviced apartment - Hostel - Guest house	Residential institution (Short term stay)	- Residential training center - Short stay housing units
Education	- Preschool - School - Further education institution - Higher education institution	Industrial	- Manufacturing - Logistics - Self-storage facility - Vehicle servicing unit - Film or TV studios		

Standard asset types (continued)

Retail	- Bar, pub, drinking establishment - Café - Convenience store - Fast food restaurant or takeaway - Restaurant - Retail park or warehouse - Retail services - Retail store - Shopping center - Showroom - Supermarket
Sports and leisure	- Fitness center or gym - Indoor arena - Leisure center or recreation center - Stadium (closed) - Swimming pool
Transport hub	- Rail station (above ground) - Airport terminal - Coach or bus station - Maritime passenger terminal - Tram station

Mixed-use developments and building types

BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out V7 defines different criteria and benchmarks for some assessment issues according to building type, function and use. A single building that includes different functions areas, e.g. office and retail, can be assessed under a single BREEAM assessment. Each area will need to comply with the relevant criteria for the building type. BREEAM credits that are awarded based on performance scales will be calculated on an area weighted basis.

BREEAM Bespoke

The Bespoke process for BREEAM buildings allows those that are not considered to be standard to be assessed and certified against BREEAM.

In the Bespoke process, BREEAM criteria are selected and amended for that specific project. Amendments and additions to the standard criteria reflect the unique use and sustainability opportunities of the project and the location. Although the Bespoke process involves amending criteria for individual projects, it still adheres to a set of standards in terms of BREEAM structure, credit method and content which ensures the credibility of BREEAM is maintained.

Fundamentals of the Bespoke method:

- Assessment criteria from the related BREEAM programme will form part of the criteria set.
- Assessment criteria applicable to the development's function and location will form part of the criteria set.
- Where necessary, these criteria will be tailored to the development's function and location.
- Local codes and standards will be incorporated.



Getting started

Talk to one of our experts to discover how BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out can help you leverage sustainability to unlock real estate value for your project or development pipeline.

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