

# BREEAM Bespoke Process

## Introduction

This document contains information and guidance for BREEAM Assessors who are seeking to assess a bespoke project. This includes projects that meet one of the following options:

- A building that does not fit the scope of the BREEAM New Construction and Refurbishment and Fit-Out schemes (UK and International).
- A BREEAM Communities project outside of Europe.

This document contains information and guidance for BREEAM Assessors on the operational and technical aspects of the BREEAM Bespoke Process. It should be used alongside the BREEAM Operations Manual (SD5070) and the relevant technical manual.

## Scope

### **BREEAM Buildings (New Construction and Refurbishment and Fit-Out)**

The bespoke process for BREEAM buildings allows those that are not considered to be standard to be assessed and certified against BREEAM. The scope section of each of the BREEAM technical manuals defines the standard building types covered by that scheme. For any other building types the bespoke process will be required.

### **BREEAM Communities**

The bespoke process for BREEAM Communities allows projects outside Europe to be assessed and certified against BREEAM. It is used on a per development basis, usually for a specific client. The BREEAM Communities technical manual (SD202) outlines the size and type of developments that are appropriate for assessment using BREEAM Communities.

## Principles of bespoke assessments

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 developments, 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.

The bespoke method adheres to some basic fundamentals:

- Assessment criteria from the related BREEAM scheme 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.
- Internationally, local codes and standards will be incorporated (refer to section 9 below).

Please note the purpose of criteria development is not:

- To remove those assessment criteria that may be difficult to achieve for the project; or
- To develop extensive new criteria or guidance for existing criteria, unless this is determined to be beneficial to the sustainability of the development. This should be discussed with BRE when applying for bespoke criteria if thought to be relevant.

## The bespoke process

This section should be reviewed together with the relevant scheme process diagram in Appendix A.

### 1. Enquiry and application form

Enquiries regarding the development of BREEAM Bespoke criteria should be directed to [breeam@bregroup.com](mailto:breeam@bregroup.com). The first step in the bespoke process is the completion of an application form for the relevant scheme. This should be downloaded from the BREEAM Projects website ([www.breeam.com/projects](http://www.breeam.com/projects)) or requested directly from BREEAM. The application form should be completed and returned to [breeam@bregroup.com](mailto:breeam@bregroup.com) with a current set of project plans if possible. The application form contains further guidance on how it should be completed.

### 2. Proposal issue and acceptance

On receiving the completed application form and project plans BRE will issue a proposal within 5 UK working days outlining the costs, timescales and terms and conditions for developing BREEAM Bespoke criteria. All proposals should be accepted by the client using the proposal acceptance form at the end of the proposal letter.

**Fees:** The fees for bespoke criteria development are quoted at a rate that is commensurate with the complexity of the project. The quoted fee will include staff costs and where required, any travel expenses to be accrued by BRE for a project development meeting (refer to section 6 below). Payment must be made to BRE upon acceptance of the proposal.

**Ownership of the criteria:** BRE prefers the end client (in many cases this is the developer) to provide instruction to proceed with criteria development. However, instruction to proceed is also accepted from assessor organisations. Where a licensed BREEAM assessor organisation accepts the proposal (on behalf of the client who has commissioned their BREEAM assessment services), they do so agreeing that the right to use the developed criteria rests with their client, and that their client or BRE can re-issue the criteria to an alternative licensed BREEAM assessor organisation appointed by their client for the purpose of assessing the project named in the proposal.

The only situation where instruction to proceed with criteria development is not acceptable from assessor organisations is where criteria are being developed for repeat use on a number of projects. In such situations, we require the client to instruct us to proceed (refer to section 4 below).

### 3. Registration of assessments

The project should be registered as soon as possible using the online registration forms at [www.breeam.com/projects](http://www.breeam.com/projects). For further information, please refer to the BREEAM Operations Manual (SD5070).

## 4. Bespoke criteria development options

### BREEAM Buildings

There are three options for bespoke criteria development for buildings:

1. **Single/multiple building criteria:** Bespoke assessment criteria are developed for individual buildings according to their function, facilities and location. Multiple building criteria is an extension to the single building criteria model where there are multiple buildings (not necessarily similar) built on the same site. A set of criteria is created for each building separately, but the criteria development fees are reduced due to the association of the buildings.
2. **Repeat criteria:** Repeat criteria refers to cases where a single set of BREEAM bespoke criteria (scoring and reporting tool and criteria appendix documents) is developed, which can be repeated on a number of similar buildings for the same client. In such instances, the number and preferably the names of the buildings should be specified at the application stage. The repeat criteria option is typically used by clients who have several similar buildings to assess across multiple sites and/or at different times. BRE will discuss the most appropriate option with clients on a case-by-case basis. As the criteria must be reviewed for relevance against each repeat building, a completed application form and fully labelled building plans are required each time the criteria will be used.
3. **Tailored criteria:** In some situations, tailored criteria development may be more appropriate. Tailored criteria are usually developed for a specific client and allow for more significant changes to the BREEAM methodology. This approach also enables specific assessment criteria to be developed to reflect the sustainability impacts of unique projects. For more information on tailored criteria please email [breeam@bregroup.com](mailto:breeam@bregroup.com).

### BREEAM Communities

For BREEAM Communities, bespoke criteria are developed for all projects outside Europe to take account of the following local factors:

- the location and current use of the development site,
- local climatic conditions (microclimate and climate change),
- local/national development and planning standards (potentially relating to timescales and phasing),
- the process for bringing forward related infrastructure,
- cultural, economic, social and environmental differences that are relevant to developing sustainable communities,
- land use pressures across the country and in the local area.

Where a client has multiple projects of a similar nature and in a similar location, it may be possible to develop one set of repeat criteria to cover multiple projects. In such instances, the number and preferably the names of the projects should be specified at the application stage.

## 5. First criteria issue

On receipt of the completed proposal acceptance and payment, BRE will develop the first output of the bespoke process, as detailed below, for each of the applicable BREEAM schemes. The assessor should review these documents alongside the relevant BREEAM technical manual, including all generic compliance notes and evidence requirements with relevant members of the project team and local experts, where appropriate. For more information on the role of the local expert and when they are required to undertake this role refer to Appendix B.

### BREEAM Buildings

For BREEAM Buildings, the output will be a criteria appendix and scoring and reporting tool detailing the issues and appropriate criteria to be included within the assessment. This documentation will be issued within three weeks of receiving the completed proposal acceptance and payment.

If the assessor and project team are satisfied with the criteria, the project can proceed with the formal assessment in the same way as for any standard BREEAM building type (see SD5070). If they believe that the criteria are not appropriate to their project the assessor and design team can submit amendment requests. For further details, refer to section 7 below.

**BREEAM Communities**

For BREEAM Communities the output will be a draft criteria appendix detailing the issues and appropriate initial criteria proposals to be included within the assessment. This documentation will be issued within three weeks of receiving the completed proposal acceptance and payment.

The assessor should collate the project team's responses on the draft criteria for discussion at the project development meeting (refer to section 6). The assessor should send these initial responses to BRE prior to the project development meeting.

**6. Project development meeting (where applicable; previously known as the Kick-off meeting)**

A project development meeting is carried out for technically complex projects particularly where criteria have not been previously developed for the project type. BRE will hold the meeting with the client, assessor and key members of the project team to discuss the project and to inform the development of the bespoke criteria.

The client will need to determine where the meeting will occur and communicate their decision through the relevant application form. Associated travel and expenses incurred by BRE will be included in the project proposal where an onsite meeting is selected. It is possible to request an on-site meeting after the project proposal is issued and where this is the case a separate proposal will be issued.

For more information on the meeting refer to Appendix C.

**BREEAM Buildings**

For BREEAM Buildings, the client or assessor should request a project development meeting in their application form and BRE will confirm whether this is necessary for the project. In other situations BRE may request a project development meeting due to the complexity of the project.

In all instances, the meeting will occur before the first criteria issue (refer to section 5 above) to inform this process. Therefore, the criteria development will commence after the meeting has taken place.

**BREEAM Communities**

For all BREEAM Communities projects outside of Europe, a project development meeting is mandatory. The client or assessor must determine where the meeting will occur and request this in their application form.

In all instances, the project development meeting will occur after the first criteria issue (refer to section 5 above) so that the project team's responses on the draft criteria (for BREEAM Communities) can be discussed.

**7. Criteria review**

Following the assessor and project team review of the first criteria issue and the project development meeting (where applicable) the assessor or project team may wish to request amendments to the criteria where it is believed these are not appropriate. Amendment requests should be justified and collated by the assessor and returned to BRE.

**BREEAM Buildings**

For BREEAM Buildings, amendment requests to the bespoke criteria appendix can be made by the assessor through the Amendment to Criteria Request Form (available to download from [www.breeam.com/projects](http://www.breeam.com/projects)). This form should only be submitted once during the 12-week review period.

If the Amendment to Criteria Request Form is not received within 12 weeks of the criteria issue, BRE will assume the design team have no comments and the criteria are being used to assess the project. Should you have any difficulties in meeting this deadline, contact BRE to discuss a possible extension of the review period.

## BREEAM Communities

For BREEAM Communities, suggestions for changes to the draft bespoke criteria appendix can be made by the assessor through the draft bespoke criteria excel document issued to the assessor within 12 weeks of the project development meeting and submitted to [breeam@bregroup.com](mailto:breeam@bregroup.com) with the subject BREEAM Communities bespoke criteria.

The draft bespoke criteria excel document can be submitted to BRE for approval more than once, where the project team have identified and justified additional changes.

## 8. Amended/final criteria

Once the amendment requests have been returned to BRE they will be reviewed. Where further clarification is required this will be requested by BRE within 15 UK working days. Otherwise, the amended/final assessment criteria will be issued to the assessor and client (also within 15 UK working days).

Please note, once the amended/final criteria have been agreed and issued, the contractual agreement between BRE and the client is complete. If the client requests amendments to the final criteria this will incur an additional cost and should be communicated with BRE via [breeam@bregroup.com](mailto:breeam@bregroup.com).

## 9. Approved Standards (and Weightings) List

The Approved Standards List (BREEAM Communities) or the Approved Standards and Weightings list (BREEAM International Buildings) is used for international projects to establish the suitability of the local codes and standards. The BREEAM Assessor should use the relevant scheme document (available at [www.breeam.com/projects](http://www.breeam.com/projects)) to suggest alternatives to standards to those referenced in the technical manual. Please refer to the BREEAM Operations Manual (SD5070) available at [www.breeam.com/projects](http://www.breeam.com/projects).

If the completed Approved Standards (and Weightings) List is submitted by the assessor at the same time as the suggested amendments, this will also be reviewed and approved but may be issued separately. Once the final documentation has been issued the assessor should proceed with the formal assessment in the same way as for any other BREEAM assessment.

## Bespoke criteria documents

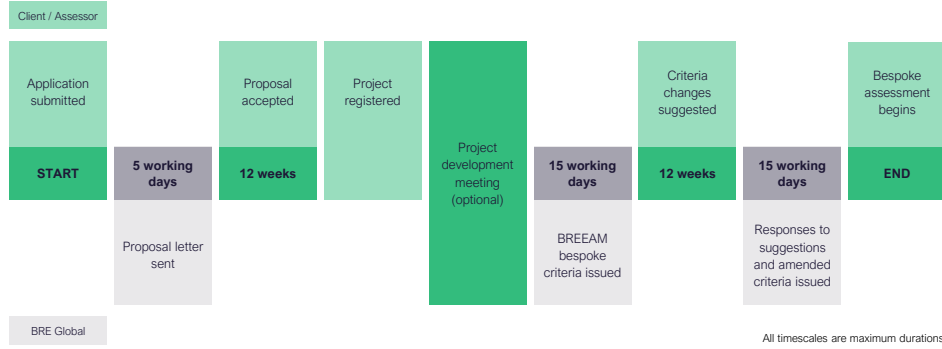
The final outputs from the bespoke process are a bespoke project criteria appendix and a scoring and reporting tool bespoke (if applicable) to the project. The criteria appendix details the applicable assessment criteria for the project and any additional guidance and amendments. The appendix should be used alongside the relevant BREEAM technical manual.

## Quality assurance and certification

The Quality Assurance process for bespoke assessments is the same as that for the standard schemes. For further information on Quality Assurance and Certification, please refer to the BREEAM Operations Manual (SD5070). For international projects this also includes information on translation requirements.

## Appendix A: Bespoke process diagrams

### BREEAM Buildings



### BREEAM Communities



## Appendix B: Local expert (for projects outside of the UK)

The BREEAM criteria will be adapted so that the assessment criteria are compatible to local conditions and legislation. This should be in collaboration with the licensed BREEAM Assessor and a local expert. However, the assessor can also be the local expert where the assessment will take place in a country that is familiar to the assessor.

The role of the local expert is anticipated to be as follows:

- Review the technical manual and source documentation (as alternatives to the UK or generic requirements). The requirements for alternative documentation are identified by BRE in the Approved Standards (and Weightings) List.
- To work with the BREEAM Assessor to establish the equivalence of the local documentation they have sourced. This may involve summarising and translating the salient points covered within the documentation to be sent to BRE for approval.

The skills that the local expert (or their organisation) should possess are as follows:

- An understanding of the type of project being assessed, i.e. the building type (for BREEAM Buildings), large-scale developments (for BREEAM Communities).
- An understanding of planning, design and construction (as applied locally) and the associated codes and standards that similar projects in the country of assessment are expected to meet.
- An understanding of the issues associated with the project type such as timescales, phasing, and project management of these.
- An awareness of the sustainability impacts of the project type, such as energy efficiency, carbon reductions, transportation, design quality, health issues, ecology, sustainable drainage, pollution etc.

## Appendix C: Project development meeting (previously known as Kick-off meeting)

There are two key outcomes of the meeting:

1. **Technical development:** The bespoke development process for BREEAM bespoke projects involves collaboration between the BREEAM technical team and the project team. During the bespoke criteria development process, the BREEAM Assessor works with the local expert (where relevant) and client to review and suggest changes in the bespoke criteria. At the meeting participants will go through the issues in the technical manual and discuss adaptation for the project, i.e. for its function and location. This is an efficient and cost-effective way (for all parties) to progress the bespoke criteria development. The BREEAM team will also present how the scoring and weighting (where applicable) can be altered for individual projects.
2. **Stakeholder understanding:** This is an opportunity for BRE to meet with the project team and key stakeholders to build understanding of the BREEAM process and how everybody will be involved. The BREEAM team can present an overview of the scheme, the process and the benefits. This helps all parties understand the importance of their role and buy-in to use BREEAM.

### How long does it take?

The project development meeting can take up to a day depending on the complexity of the project. An example agenda showing the issues BREEAM would expect to cover can be found in Appendix D. BRE staff costs are included in the bespoke project proposal (see below).

### Where does it take place?

The client decides where the meeting will take place, i.e. near to the project's location, at BRE's offices in Watford, or through web conferencing facilities. The advantage of having a meeting near the project site is that more people can be involved and a site visit can be organised. However, it is recognised that this is not always feasible.

### How much does it cost?

The costs are included in the bespoke proposal. If the meeting will be held at BRE Watford, the proposal will include any catering costs and staff fees. Meetings via web-conferencing will only include staff fees.

The cost of a meeting held in the country where the project is located would be as follows:

- Two round trip flights (booked through BRE's corporate travel agency);
- Two hotel rooms (usually only one night);
- Estimated expenses including subsistence and local transport; and
- Staff fees for two BREEAM technical consultants attending the meeting.

Following acceptance of the bespoke proposal, if any additional time is requested for stakeholder meetings or other events, fees will be invoiced after the meeting.

### Who should attend?

Attendees at the project development meeting will, to a certain extent, be dependent on the type of the project and the stage to which it has progressed. The information below should act as a guide as to who should attend the meeting to provide the necessary information to the BREEAM consultant.

BREEAM Buildings	BREEAM Communities
<b>Must attend:</b>	
BREEAM Assessor	
Client or their representative	
Local expert (for projects outside of the UK)	
Architect	
<b>Useful to attend:</b>	
Project manager	
Principal engineer	Local authority representative
Cost consultant	
<b>Optional:</b>	
Other consultants (if not shown above) including engineers, specialists (acoustician, ecologists), etc	

## Appendix D: Project development meeting – example agenda

The sessions in the example agenda can be moved around to suit the needs of those involved. Breaks/lunch should also be included where appropriate. The stakeholder and technical meetings can be run separately. Timings will be confirmed as part of the bespoke process.

Participants	Task
All (stakeholders and technical)	Client presentation about the project (include the following information as relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the project, background and key stakeholders;</li> <li>— the vision, concept and draft plans for the project;</li> <li>— where relevant; local authority involvement and applicable policies;</li> <li>— context of the project</li> <li>— information about local/regional/national planning or legislative requirements.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	BRE present overview of the bespoke process and how different stakeholders are involved.
Technical	Review generic BREEAM issues and draft bespoke criteria/proposals and comments (as applicable to the project type).  This is an opportunity for the assessor and client to ask questions about the types of changes that can be made and for BRE to understand the assessor/clients requirements fully.
All	Discuss joint publicity for the project (as applicable to the project type).
All	Discuss any outstanding questions and next steps.

Note: A site visit may also be applicable and will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

## Schedule of changes

Version	Release date	Description of change
0.2	Jul 2025	Update scope for BREEAM Communities (projects outside Europe). Update timescales. Update links and contact details.