



**BREEAM<sup>®</sup> NL**

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## **BREEAM-NL HL001**

# DGBC Operations Manual for BREEAM-NL assessments

Versie 3.1

November 2016

# Operations Manual

## For BREEAM-NL Assessments

### Version 3.1

## BREEAM-NL

### Introduction

BRE Global has licensed the Dutch Green Building Council for the operation of a Competent Persons scheme in the Netherlands for BREEAM Schemes in the Netherlands. BRE is accredited by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) under ISO 17024 and EN-54011. DGBC is authorized by BRE Global to certify and publish BREEAM-NL assessors as registered assessors.

A BREEAM-NL 'Scheme' consists of all documentation required to perform an assessment: this Operations Manual, a Technical Manual (Dutch: Beoordelingsrichtlijn) plus the applicable interpretation documents, relevant processes, procedures and work instructions and relevant fees.

### Intended audience

This DGBC Operations Manual provides a step-by-step guide to completing BREEAM-NL assessments. It is intended for assessors, so assumes that the reader has undertaken, or is currently undertaking, a DGBC assessment training program. This manual may also serve BREEAM-NL Experts in assisting both clients and assessors to complete assessment reports. But please note that BREEAM-NL Experts do not have a formal role in the assessment process; they are important, but it's not a formal requirement.

### Quality Aims

The overall aim of this document is to help BREEAM assessors to serve their clients by producing BREEAM assessment reports efficiently, so they can be accepted by the DGBC.

Purpose of DGBC is to provide legitimate certificates, certificates that give an accurate representation of the actual sustainability performance of the evaluated project.

This handbook documents and formalises the operating procedures between the DGBC and licensed organisations and their registered assessors, to help provide accurate and consistent assessment reports.

### Scope

This Operations Manual covers all BREEAM-NL Schemes as operated by DGBC for which DGBC has been deemed 'National Scheme Operator' by BRE Global. A 'BREEAM-NL assessor' in this document can therefore be an assessor for any of the approved Schemes.

### UKAS Competent Persons Scheme

BRE is accredited by UKAS under ISO 17024 and EN-54011 for the operation of a Competent Persons scheme for BREEAM assessors with the purpose of ensuring that they are technically competent, accurate and professional when offering BREEAM assessment services to their clients. Through a rigorous audit scheme, BRE has licensed DGBC to train, register and assess BREEAM-NL assessors, and to perform its own QA-checks on assessment reports. Once a report has passed all checks and audits, DGBC may issue BREEAM-NL certificates against the high BRE quality standards.

### Changes

All changes to this Operations Manual from version to version are published on [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

Version	Date of issue
1.0	1st of October 2009

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1.1	15th of January 2010
1.2	December 2011
1.31	July 2012, Dutch version
2.0	April 2013 – Fully revised and updated
3.0	September 2015 - Fully revised and updated
3.1	November 2016

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## Glossary of Terms

### Assessment

The process by which a Registered Assessor rates the sustainability performance of a project based on the relevant Scheme documents. An assessment process starts at the moment of registration of the project in the Assessment tool and ends with DGBC's approval of the assessor's assessment report through sample check.

Some BREEAM-NL Schemes are single-loop and others continuous-loop assessments. Single-loop assessments (e.g. New Build\*) are issued one certificate with no validity period\*\*, whereas continuous-loop assessments (e.g. In-Use Buildings) may be issued multiple consecutive certificates over a longer period of time, and with a defined validity period. In this Operations Manual you will therefore find both the terms single (single-loop) and continuous assessments.

*\* also new build can have two certificates, but one of them will be temporary*

*\*\* a post-construction certificate is a snapshot, therefore no validity period is specified*

**Assessmenttool** – Web-based information / communication tool available at [www.assessmenttool.nl](http://www.assessmenttool.nl). During the assessment process this tool serves as the primary communications channel between assessor and expert, and between assessor and DGBC. Via this tool registrations are formalised, final assessment reports submitted and feedback on reports returned to assessors. Registered Assessors and other people working on projects during the certification process are identified through their uniquely assigned username & password combination.

**Technical Manual (Beoordelingsrichtlijn, BRL)** - the manual the assessor uses to actually perform the assessment. It contains all details on all credits, scope and the supporting evidence to be provided. Note: In the event of any inconsistency between a project applicable technical manual and other documents such as BREEAM Europe or BREEAM International, the Dutch technical manual is leading.

**Registered BREEAM-NL Assessor (also: 'assessor')** – Individual registered by DGBC under a BREEAM-NL scheme as having been trained and qualified to undertake assessments under a BREEAM-NL Scheme. Registration is temporary valid and needs to be continued on fixed times according to the requirements. A Registered assessor is employed at a licensed organisation. Only registered assessors may submit final assessment reports. An assessor is required to be independent of the project under assessment.

**BREEAM-NL Expert (also: 'expert')** – A by DGBC trained individual for a BREEAM-NL-scheme, who is qualified to assist both clients and assessors during the assessment process and able to build a correct and complete BREEAM-NL project record. A BREEAM-NL Expert has no formal role required for the certification process.

An expert may be related to the client, e.g. as a permanent or temporary employee, advising the team to optimise the credit score and collecting the supporting evidence. An expert may register an assessment, but not submit an assessment report to DGBC.

**Qualification** - The determined valuation of a project by a qualified assessor. The valuation is expressed as both a percentage and number of stars.

**Licensed organisation** – Organisation (including sole traders) licensed by DGBC under a BREEAM-NL scheme to carry out assessments under a BREEAM-NL assessment scheme. To be allowed to carry out

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assessments the licensed organisation must have at least one registered assessor for the relevant scheme. The license contains the formal relationship between DGBC and the licensee.

**Project** – In the context of this manual; the (part of) object, the group of objects, or in any other way well defined unit that is the subject of assessment and certification. This may involve a single building plus lot, but also a whole area, part of a building, an infrastructure or a complex object plus process.

**QA (Quality Assurance)** – DGBC's Quality Assurance procedures by taking samples to ensure that assessment reports meet quality standards

**UKAS Competent Persons Scheme** – United Kingdom Accreditation Service scheme to evaluate the competence of assessors. Dutch equivalent: Raad voor Accreditatie – RvA – Persoonscertificatie (ISO/IEC 17024). The scheme is an internationally recognised standard containing general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.

**Validation** – The demonstrable basis for awarding points, written by the assessor.

**Justification** – Substantiation by the project team, why it considers earning points.

**Version** – Any BREEAM-NL Technical Manual or Beoordelingsrichtlijn (BRL) of any Scheme is updated regularly to ensure it continues to lead the drive to increase the sustainability of the built environment, reflect changes to legislation and best practice and the introduction of new technologies. A version number is provided at each update of the BRL and is linked to the year of its publication.

This Operations Manual has, similar to all other documents related to the DGBC certification system, its own version numbering and is not related to a BRL-version. The applicable Operations Manual is always the current version at any given moment, which can be found at: [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

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## 1. Certification

### 1.1 Introduction

Clients for certification may include:

- Developers, builders and consultants
- Property owners, managers or users
- Project teams or consortia
- Local authorities
- Individuals, etc.

At some point in the process (preferably as early as possible), they request a BREEAM assessor to provide services in connection with the certification. This is particularly true for services under the BREEAM licensed under an assessment:

- For command acceptance check any already started the project certification process on issues such as: registration, scope, demarcation, selected functions / typologies / phase rings, assessment etc.;
- Assessing Projects and produce BREEAM assessment reports;
- Their reviews justify traceable.

This assumes that the client or his representative provides all supporting information and evidence required to assess the project.

In order to properly carry out an assessment, the following minimum package of documents required:

- This manual, AND
- The correct version of the technical manual - BRL, ie the version at the time of registration, AND
- All valid Interpretation Documents or equivalent, as published on the download page of the relevant scheme

These documents can be downloaded from [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

Any additional documents and procedures that may be required (eg. Complaint and innovation procedure), can also be read on / downloaded from the website [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

### 1.2 The assessment process

A complete BREEAM-NL assessment generally follows this process. Scheme specifics are detailed in the relevant Technical Manual.

- A project will be created in the DGBC assessment tool
- A project is formally registered against a Scheme in the DGBC assessment tool. A registration fee can be charged by DGBC.
- The project is linked to a specific and uniquely identified version number of the Technical Manual
- The project prepares the assessment report

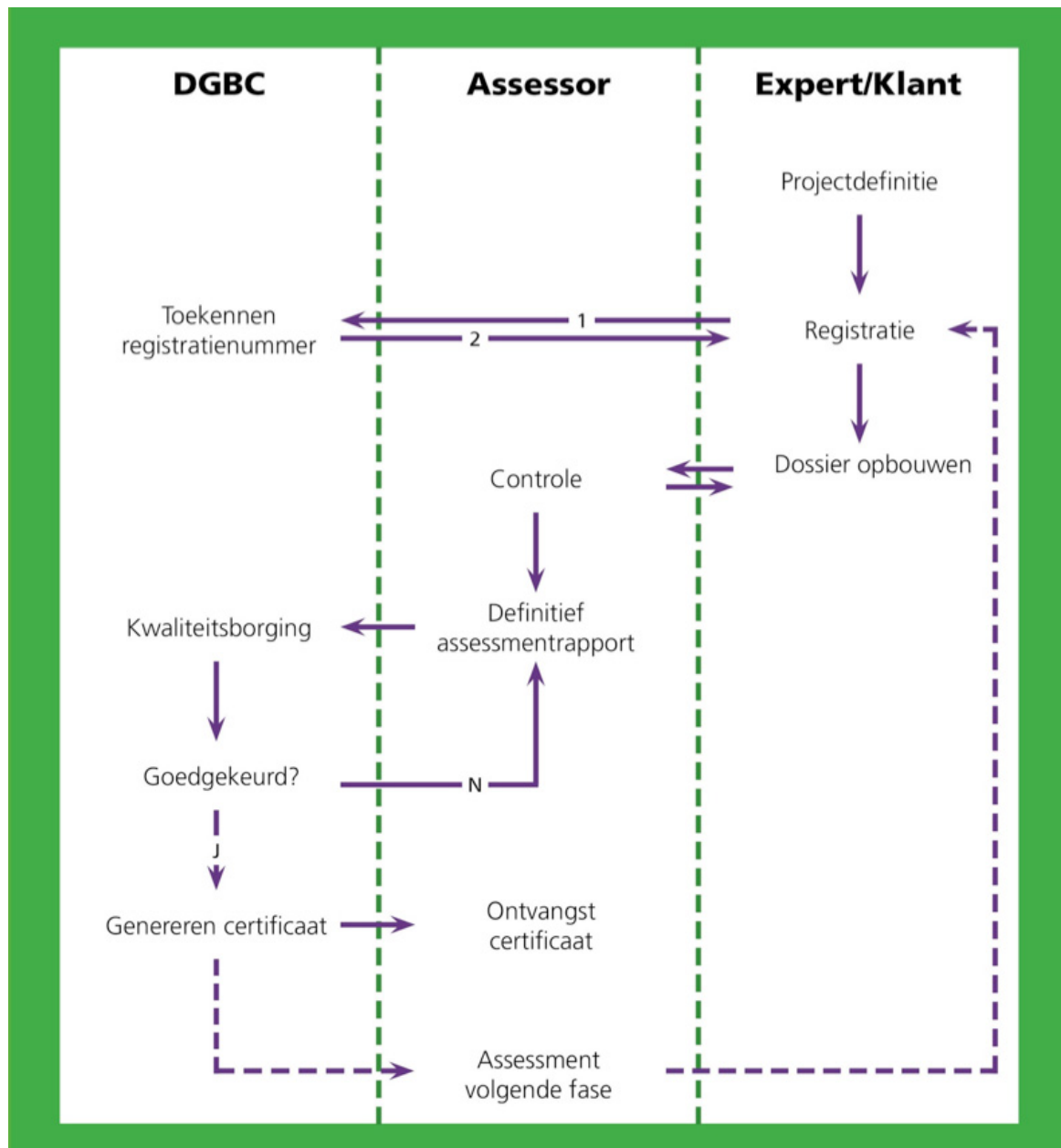
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- A registered assessor performs quality control and determines the score
- DGBC performs sample checks in order to verify the quality of the assessor's work
- Upon satisfactory completion a certificate is issued.

The process may vary per Scheme, but essentially follows the stages as illustrated in the following flow chart.





### 1.3 Roles in the assessment process

Four primary roles are in the assessment and certification process.

#### 1.3.1 DGBC

The role of DGBC includes:

- Develop and update the BREEAM Assessment and all other documentation scheme
- Provide training and exams which individuals Expert and / or Assessor may be
- The certification of assessors
- A database tracking of registered assessors licensee organizations and registered and completed assessments and publish them on the website
- Answering questions of Experts and Assessors
- Quality as final by assessors designated assessment reports
- Generating obtained certificates

#### Legitimately issuing certificates

Regarding BREEAM certification, DGBC is committed to always provide effective and legitimate certificates at reasonable cost. The assessor is crucial in the aspect of *legitimate*. DGBC checks (on which more below), but the assessor determines.

DGBC moreover reserves the right, if there is a reason for according Management DGBC, once issued certificate also to withdraw again: fully withdraw, or to change the final score.

#### 1.3.2 The licensed Organisation and Registered Assessor

The Licensed Organisation, through its qualified and Registered Assessors, serves clients (e.g. regulators, developers/owners, project teams) wishing to have an assessment against the BREEAM-NL standard.

The role of the Licensed Organisation (through their Registered Assessors) includes:

- Ensure correct registration and submission of assessments at DGBC
- Advising clients on the requirements of BREEAM-NL
- Assessing projects against the criteria and requirements specified in the 'BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn' plus additional documentation
- Producing high-quality assessment reports. The term 'high-quality' means complete, accurate and of high quality as expressed in this manual and in covered in the assessor training and harmonization meetings.

NB: an assessor must at all times remain independent from the project. 'Advising' must therefore exclude all project-specific content pertaining to the assessment. It must be avoided that the assessor approves content that he or she provided or advised on.

NB: the assessor determines the project rating. DGBC only performs Quality Assurance on this rating.

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#### **1.3.3 The Client**

Within the context of an assessment it is the role of the Client (The party who gives order to certify) to support the assessor by providing, either directly or through its agents, suitable and accurate evidence in a timely manner as stipulated in the 'BREEAM- NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn'. Generally but not necessarily, this will be delegated by the client to a BREEAM-NL Expert. In a justification the project underpins why it believes certain issues comply.

#### **1.3.4 The Expert**

The client may wish to appoint a member of the project team to assist the project in constituting an assessment report. The advantage being that such an BREEAM-NL expert, when trained on the Technical Manual / BRL, can advise the project team on how to optimise the sustainability of the building with the credit demands in mind. The expert may register assessments, but he / she may not submit final assessment reports.

Note: The BREEAM Expert is not a formal role that is required in the certification process. DGBC has introduced this role as an addition to the UK system to additionally assure the independence of the assessor. 'The Expert' in this document may be read as the person representing the client in a certification process.

## **2 Assessor licenses**

### **2.1 Competent person scheme – ISO 17024**

All UK BREEAM schemes are operated under a Competent Persons Scheme, which is UKAS accredited as meeting the requirements of ISO 17024 and EN-54011.

Through BRE-audits performed on the DGBC certification system, DGBC has been licensed by BRE to license organisations, train and register assessors, and issue certificates against the formally approved BREEAM-NL schemes.

**NB:** BREEAM Schemes are only operated by BRE Global Ltd.

BREEAM-NL Schemes are only operated by DGBC. DGBC is formally acknowledged by BRE Global as National Scheme Operator (NSO) in The Netherlands. Contractually DGBC is the exclusive representative of the BRE Global and its products in the Netherlands.

### **2.2 Licensing**

To undertake and submit BREEAM-NL assessments for Certification, BREEAM-NL Assessors must be working for a licensed organisation (which can be their own company if a sole trader).

1. Where no current licence is held

Where a new Assessor is the first to become licensed from their organisation they will automatically

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become the main point of contact. Once the license agreement is signed and returned (and the appropriate fee paid) the assessor will become 'licensed', i.e. able to execute and complete assessments.

2. Where a current licence is already held.

If the new Assessor is part of an organisation that is already licensed, the amended licence schedule will be sent to the main point of contact within the organisation to sign and return. All assessors with their licensed BREEAM schemes are on the [brebam.nl](http://brebam.nl) License List.

If appropriate, an invoice will be raised to add the new assessor to the organisation's scheme. Note: this may be an invoice for part of year so the new assessor can be added to the company licence renewal cycle.

## 2.3 Registration of assessors

There are several main steps to achieving and maintaining registration under one or more BREEAM-NL schemes as a BREEAM-NL assessor:

### To obtain:

- Completed a full BREEAM assessor training successfully, including the compulsory examinations and (homework) assignments
- Having requested and entered a BREEAM license between the organization where the assessor is employed and DGBC
- All relevant costs are met

### To maintain registration:

- Attend a BREEAM-NL harmonisation each calendar year, to fully keep abreast of new developments and to exchange knowledge and experience between assessors.
- Perform actual assessments under BREEAM: at least one assessment every five years.

## 2.4 Competencies of the assessors

A BREEAM assessor must:

- have a general knowledge of the DGBC organization (structure, process, activities, training schedules, personal certification) and its formal relationship with the BRE;
- have overall BREEAM knowledge (history, methodology, scheme selection);
- BREEAM detailed knowledge of the chosen scheme, both substantive and procedural, such that the assessor can perform a quality assessment of a project, it can underpin adequately and can reach a correct BREEAM rating.
  - The content shall include: detailed knowledge of the categories and credits, score calculation, weightings, special credits as filtering and mandatory credits Exemplary Performance, innovation credits etc.
  - Procedural concerns include: the use of appropriate documentation such as assessment, interpretation, document, user and innovation credit procedure; costs etc.

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- perform the role of BREEAM assessor in a professional manner. The assessor needs to understand the formal relationships between project and assessor and assessor and DGBC, and handle it professionally;
- read and assess justifications;
- read carefully and understand credit texts;
- write clear, concise and relevant validations (as in training).

#### **2.5 BREEAM International**

Possibilities for BREEAM International assessors to become a BREEAM-NL assessor and vice versa do exist. Establishing the requirements is attributed to the National Scheme Operator (DGBC or BRE). The international assessor needs to be qualified on the same level like national assessors. It is recommended to contact DGBC in advance.

## 3 The Assessment

### 3.1 Creating an assessment

Creating a project is done through [www.assessmenttool.nl](http://www.assessmenttool.nl), where first an account needs to be created and one must agree to the terms of use of the Assessment Tool. With an account projects and assessments may be created. There are no charges. In order to be certified, it is necessary to register the assessment in the assessment tool.

The manuals for Assessmenttool(s) are available on [www.assessmenttool.nl](http://www.assessmenttool.nl).

### 3.2 Assessment Registration

#### 3.2.1 Registrations

By registering an assessment, an assessment in the assessment tool is linked to a unique registration number and the relevant version of the technical manual. Registration is the formal and mandatory first step towards certification, you hereby agree to the Terms and Conditions for BREEAM project registrations ([www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl)).

The purpose of registration is:

- To register a building register based on a schema version, so that the assessment criteria are fixed for the entire assessment process;
- Set the certification fees in accordance with the chapter Fees;
- Provide DGBC with the essential basic building information (eg, location, type of building, number of buildings etc.);
- Inform DGBC of the expected assessment report.

Anyone may register an assessment, but only on behalf of a company. To register a rate will be charged.

A registration is considered an administrative act only and does not imply any content check. DGBC will issue a unique registration number, but will undertake no further actions until the actual assessment report is received. The registration fee serves the purposes of maintaining the assessment tool and of discouraging erroneous registrations. The registration fee will be deducted from the fee invoice upon reception of the final assessment report. Hence it can be seen as a payment for remittance of certification.

#### 3.2.2 Registration at Licensed Organisational Level

Any assessor with the same scheme on the licence may carry out and submit a registered assessment on behalf of the licensed organisation.

If a person carried out assessments on behalf of the licensed organisation and leaves this organization, all related documentation and information would remain with the licensed organisation and not the person in question.

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#### **3.2.3 Timing of Registration**

It is strongly recommended that all BREEAM-NL assessments are registered with DGBC as soon as the client seriously considers formal assessment and certification. Registrations can be accepted at different stages, but the expert, the assessor and their client run the risk of changes to criteria, fees and processes where this is done at a later stage.

The timing of the registration of an assessment determines the technical manual version number, and is the basis of which the assessment is carried out. The assessment tool links the record to the full version number, eg. BREEAM-NL New Build and Renovation 2014 v1.01.

#### **3.2.4 An assessment with multiple stages**

In some BREEAM-NL schemes the assessment process consists of more phases, which can be granted more certificates. New construction for example, has a Design Stage (DS) and a Post Construction Stage (PCS) assessment. Both stages require separate registrations. This may be considered a practical service provided for in the Scheme. This can be useful for internal or external obligations. The purpose of the certification process is ultimately to evaluate the final situation, but an interim assessment can provide valuable information on the possible end result.

One may do registrations for schemes with multiple phases on the basis of the scheme version that is used in the registration of the first phase. For example, the version at which the new design has been registered. It is also possible to register at the then current version of the assessment, this is the latest version of this same scheme. If e.g. the version at DS registration was 2010 v1.1 and at the time of PCS the version is 2011 v1.0, the client may also choose to assess against version 2011 v1.0. Risks in terms of more strict credits, possibly a lower score, and increase in fees are the clients' responsibility. The clients' advantage may lie in receiving a certificate against a more recent label version.

#### **3.2.5 Valid Period of Registrations**

Registrations for schemes with single certification (e.g. BREEAM New Construction & Renovation, BREEAM-NL Area Development and BREEAM-NL Demolition) are valid over a period of five years. After the Design Stage certificate, one may continue working with the same version for the Post Construction certificate. Example: if a New Construction project registers for design certificate in April 2013 at the then current version (v1.0 BRL 2011), they have until April 2018 to submit the assessment report based on BRL 2011 v1.0 for QA. When the Design Stage certificate is achieved, one can continue to work with the BRL 2011 v1.0 for the Post Construction certificate. If the registration has expired and no certificate is obtained (from April 2018), one should re-register at the current version.

For continuous certifications (e.g. BREEAM In-Use) other terms are valid, which are stated in the relevant Technical Manuals.

If the validity of the registration has expired, a certificate cannot be issued on the basis of that registration. Such assessments may be issued a "letter of compliance" to demonstrate the achieved performance on the basis of the relevant scheme. The "letter of compliance" can be used to demonstrate compliance with contractual agreements. It is always free to re-register to the current technical manual.

### **3.3 Approach and tasks Assessor**

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A BREEAM assessor is responsible for the qualification of a BREEAM project. DGBC does do checks, but it is the assessor who determines whether if, and so, with what scoring, the project receives a certificate. DGBC issues the certificate formally to the assessor, who hands it to the project. In practice, DGBC sometimes hands out a certificate for publicity reasons or other.

In order to be able to properly conduct an assessment, the following set of documents is required as a minimum:

- This **Operations Manual**, AND
- The correct version of the **Technical Manual** / Beoordelingsrichtlijn – BRL, which is the version at the moment of registration, AND
- Any valid **Interpretation Documents** or equivalent, published on the download page of the relevant Scheme
- Any additional procedures like the innovation credit procedure, or calculation tools, as made available on the download page (breeam.nl), where applicable.

Ad 1. In the operations manual is mentioned –amongst other things- what the process should be and what the different roles are of the parties involved.

Ad 2. The technical manual contains the content (performance) requirements which the project must meet: the credit requirements. But equally important is the information in the introduction of the manual: e.g. scheme selection, compulsory and filter credits, weighting etc.

Ad 3. The interpretation document contains interpretations, mostly on credit-level texts in BRL. Suppose there 'and / or' in a text credit state which subsequently proved that this should be read as "or". Instead of waiting for the updated version of the manual, the release of a interpretation document is the fastest way to handle this type of small amendments. Please note that an interpretation document is applicable immediately, once it has been published on [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). DGBC informs the Experts and Assessors them through mailings.

For a final verdict the totality of documents and relevant procedures is always required.

### **3.3.1 The assessor as auditor – independent checker**

The assessor is explicitly independent of the project. Independent in a sense that the assessor views the project 'from a distance' and does checks based on the abovementioned documents.

Independence has a direct relationship with the legality. If the assessor would be involved in the project, for example by providing substantive advice, it would check its own work. The assessor would become involved and thus others shall question the legality of the certificate.

An assessor may be expected some "healthy suspicion": additional research when in doubt, ask more questions, check specifications against other sources etc. The assessor is a specialist, in this role he/she

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can always ask for additional support or reject any substantiation. It can happen that a client interprets the BRL literally and the assessor takes the purpose of a credit or directive into consideration. In such grey area, an assessor may request additional evidence or disapprove the credit.

How the assessor organizes the scrutiny (check all, or samples check, much or little presence on site, much or little consultation, whether or not to use external experts, etc.) is up to the assessor himself.

Bottom-line is that he / she fully supports the final score, which has been established demonstrably and laid down in a well-documented and complete file. By making the assessment report final an assessor explicitly supports (ratified by a statement in the report) the sustainable classification of the entire project.

#### **3.3.2 Information gathering**

An essential part of the assessment process is the gathering of the information/evidence required to support the awarding of credits, and hence the rating given. The project needs to justify to the assessor why credits should be awarded.

Even when BREEAM-NL Experts or other third parties execute the information gathering and collation process, the Assessor at all times remains responsible for the correctness and completeness of all information included in the assessment report.

All the evidence presented in the assessment report shall be verifiable.

Assessors, Experts and clients are encouraged to work iteratively to address any shortfalls in desired score prior to submitting the assessment. It is more cost effective to address shortfalls early in the process than later.

#### **3.3.3 Assessment of the entire project - interdependence**

One of the aspects in which the skill of the assessor is reflected in the assessment of the various calculations, desk researches and reports in BREEAM-NL. Due to the large variety of clients, there is also a big difference in quality of the submitted evidence. An assessor must give an opinion on the submitted evidence to proceed to a possible approval of the credit. The assessor does not have to redo the whole computation, research or report, but should be able to estimate this value on it. For assessing the reports an assessor judges them for:

- being in line with the whole credit and ultimate goal;
- leading to concrete results, no additional research or consultation;
- being executed in due time;
- being comprehensible and readable even for non-specialists;
- being traceable, in support of the assumptions;
- being project specific;
- being consistent with other evidence;



- having sufficient quality and value, or having 'soul'.

The assessor is responsible for the qualification (score) of a project. It is important to realize that this is the *entire* project as defined by the client of the project. For a new building this means the entire building including plot. In case of an existing building, it may be a number of retail units including passage. In case of an area development, the scope will include a certain defined area. See the technical manual of the specific scheme for a detailed description of the possibilities for demarcation.

An integrated approach means that an assessor cannot be limited to the review of separate credits. Suppose the substantive assessments are all compliant on a project, but GFA of the building is incorrect, or the demarcation is inaccurate. Then no certificate may be issued because the certificate must correspond with the reality. Therefore, control of the general project data also belongs to the assessor's role.

A second important aspect of this notion of the whole project is that credits should be assessed with interdependence. For example, if x credit has evidence with a different content than the 'same' evidence of credit y, then the assessor must act. Same as if, for example, an EPC calculation's installation specification is different from the technical specification of the same installation in a different credit.

Thirdly, it is not possible to use a different demarcation for a credit other than the project demarcation defined in the beginning. All credits apply to the entire project under assessment unless stated differently within a credit.

#### **3.3.4 Site visits**

It is the responsibility of the licensed organisation, via the Assessor, to be fully convinced that the project assessment meets the requirements of the BREEAM-NL Technical Manual in full.

This means, among other things, that the assessor at least does one project visit. If there are credits that assess a process, one should visit the project multiple times to be able to assess the process. For example, the construction or demolition process.

In general terms, a project the assessor must visit as often as deemed necessary, in order to endorse the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the project with sufficient certainty.

Reporting the results of the site visit is done through an inspection report including photos. The inspection report and validation both support if the requirements are met. Please see section 'Validation'.

#### **3.3.5 Record Keeping**

Licensed Organisations are required to keep full supporting documentation of all assessments carried out. Assessors are required to retain this information for a period of 10 years from submission of the report to DGBC for certification. When an assessor leaves a Licensed Organisation for which assessments have been carried out, all documents and information relating to the assessments are required to stay with the company and not remain in the possession of an individual assessor.

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Each licensed organisation is required to establish and maintain internal quality management procedures relating to record keeping. There are further details on the record keeping required in the QA and Audit section of this document.

### **3.4 Validate**

#### **3.4.1 Demonstrate compliance**

What does 'demonstrability' mean and what is the relationship with validations?

As usual with audits, the assessor must demonstrably achieve a project qualification. For example, in the extreme case that an assessor has extensively studied the project, all the details and outlines have been checked, and everything conforms to full satisfaction. And this assessor only sends DGBC the message "this project scored 57.3% and thus deserves 3 stars". Then in this case DGBC cannot proceed to provide a certificate. Not because the project would not deserve the rating, but because the qualification is not demonstrable. A BRE auditor or the Accreditation Council who would review this project, will not be able to determine whether the certificate was issued lawfully. There is, in other words, no 'audit trail'.

Demonstrability or audit trail simply tracks why points were awarded. The mere statement 'I agree' is therefore insufficient. The assessor agrees with reason. Demonstrably actually articulates this reason, in the BREEAM system this is called validation, "I agree because ..." For example, "because I've checked these aspects, in this way, and I came to the conclusion that it meets the requirements. " Further guidelines for validation statements are given underneath.

#### **3.4.2 Validations - a direction**

A validation in the BREEAM system is the way in which the aforementioned demonstrability or audit trail is secured. It is collected added value by the assessor.

Validations are leading in quality assurance by DGBC. In quality assurance one checks the validation statement first, and second, if necessary, the justification of the expert or client. Thus validations have another function, namely to help DGBC carrying out the QA. Same as justifications help the assessor. Put in the time, the project "helps" the assessor to award credits by clear justification statements, and the assessor 'helps' the QA to agree by clear using validations.

DGBC is sometimes asked for sample validations. That's possible, and that will probably help, but DGBC will not provide standard validations for all credits. This is not desirable because: a) projects themselves are different both in terms of project content and file structure, b) not to all assessors proceed in exactly the same way; c) not all credits can be assessed in a similar way, and d) we do not want to create a checklist where assessors only fill the empty fields. The subject matter is too complex, the reality varied and the assessors too much professional.

If the assessor has mastered the essence of his role and responsibility and understand what is required for a correct filing, the validations must 'automatically' go well. Experience on multiple projects, exchange with

other assessors, harmonization meetings and feedback from DGBC QA should help.

In the light of the above, so this is a direction, not the rule; the following example sentences indicate the core of a good validation:

- I have found that [the daylight calculation] correctly is calculated by a sample on ... through .... This satisfies [Requirement 1].
- I agree with the selection of projects for [representative space] because ...
- In Exhibit x i p y found that ... This, coupled with ... leads to the conclusion that [Requirement 2] have been met.
- I have to [1 representative space] calculation checked by counting after this whole; for [the other room] I have samples taken. [Requirement 3] compliant.
- Notwithstanding [Requirement 4] sets the project ... There I agree with you because ...
- I have in my tour of the construction site on date ... noted that the implementation is fully in line with the draft; see above picture of my x completion report
- I've seen all the required supporting documents are attached

It can be concluded with phrases like:

- I find that all the requirements of the assessment directive have been met
- I therefore conclude that this project for this part ... earn points.

Note that one may deviate substantiated in a validation. In principle one should meet the requirements, but it is possible that there is room for deviation -in details-. The assessor should address this in a validation at all times. An unsubstantiated deviation of the Technical Manual will by definition lead to a RED (a rejected credit).

### **3.4.3 Validations - wrong**

With the above explanation the following is clear:

- The repetition of the work of the BREEAM Expert or the project does not make sense; it adds no value \*
- "It complies" does not comply.
- "There are sufficient ..." is insufficient for a validation statement; a calculation or other form of analyses is required.

\* For example, the justification from the expert for MAN 1 - Commissioning (New Construction) states: "the commissioning concerns: the heating system, the water, the lighting system and ventilation." Then the following validation makes no sense: "the commissioning includes the heating system, the water, the lighting system and ventilation." Namely it adds nothing; The DGBC quality assurance is still left with the question whether this it complies. What adds value is the observation "I have found that the building services listed in the justification are correct and sufficient. The cooling and control systems are not listed because they are not present."

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#### **3.4.4 Justifications**

The client or BREEAM-NL Expert underpins in the justification why it believes the project should receive credits. Since the assessor makes a statement about the entire file, he is "co-responsible" for the quality of the justifications. The assessor should help the project if deemed necessary.

A 'perfect' justification:

- Follows the requirements of the Technical Manual point by point
- Ensures that all required documents are present
- Mention only the relevant matters, staccato
- Exact references: with annex name & location
- Has labelled attachments (author, date, building / project component)
- Marks the relevant section in the appendix, especially in non-searchable documents and complex drawings
- Copies limited texts from Technical Manual
- Repeats limited texts from the attachments, but refers
- Add no attachments if not referred to.
- Provides logical names to attachments preferably
- Is clearly written without typos and wrong spelling preferably

#### **3.4.5 Relationship justification - validation**

In a "perfect" justification (as defined above), the validation can be summarized:

- Requirement 1: I've recalculated the justification [details] for the three representative areas A, B and C. Meets the requirements.
- Requirement 2: properly underpinned in the justification [details] and supported with evidence x, and self-identified during the inspection; see photo 15 from attached inspection report. Complies.
- Requirement 3: done sample check of the justification's calculation [details], ground floor: [details of the sample] compliant. Therefore I agree for the entire building.
- Conclusion: Compliant for 2 points.

In the QA looks primarily to the validation, only then -if necessary- to the justification.

### **3.5 The Assessment Report**

#### **3.5.1 Quality requirements**

Assessment Reports consist of general information, justifications and validations, and should be of high quality:

- Complete. Filled in all the required fields.

- Correct. Imported data is truthful.
- Project-specific. Imported data is specific to the project.
- Clear justifications
- Clear validations
- Audit trail in validations

### **3.5.2 Responsibility for the assessment and the assessment report**

Licensed organization is responsible for the assessment and registered assessor is responsible for the content of the report.

### **3.5.3 Reports to send DGBC**

Assessment Reports are only accepted if produced in a format and with the content as generated by the BREEAM Assessment Tool.

Before concluding reports in the assessment tool the Assessor must commit in full to ensure that the report is of high quality and complete. DGBC recommends applying this quality that correspond to the production guidelines for reports and audit procedures, as described in this document.

BREEAM reports, including all supporting evidence, are compiled fully in the Assessment Tool and are available for quality assurance by DGBC. Before the final report is submitted to the DGBC, the assessor must accept a disclaimer in which he/she pronounces his/her responsibilities and independence.

To submit a report, the assessor must log in with the unique combination of username and password.

The supporting evidence can be uploaded via the tool in one of the following formats:

.doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .ppt, .pptx, .pdf, .gif, .jpg, .png.

**Note:** All documents must be 'read-only' (by the format (eg PDF) or are write-protected.).

For different file types the assessor is requested to contact DGBC on [helpdesk@dgbc.nl](mailto:helpdesk@dgbc.nl)

At the time of writing there are other external tools under development that are recognized by DGBC, with a so-called BREEAM Badge of Recognition (BOR). These BOR-tools are controlled by DGBC and may exchange information under strict conditions with the DGBC database. Therefore, the tools may take over some functions of the BREEAM-NL assessmenttool. Please see the BREEAM-NL website for more information.

### **3.5.4 Different Licensed Organisations at different stages**

In the case of a project assessment that consists of multiple phases, it is possible that the various phases are executed by different Licensed Organisations. The Licensed Organization (LO) for the 'as built'

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assessment phase does not have to be the same as the LO in, for example, the design or planning stage. Please inform DGBC if this is the case.

In the event that a LO loses his license while performing assessments and the LO's assessments does not transfer or cannot transfer; DGBC makes the transfer to a new LO possible. The new LO's assessor should then carry out spot checks, at no cost to the client or the DGBC.

## **3.6 Quality Assurance (QA)**

### **3.6.1 Why quality assurance?**

First of all, it is the responsibility of the DGBC to train BREEAM-NL assessors in such a way that they are able to carry out the assessments described for this purpose and manner required. For some certifications programs this is sufficient. Compared to a broker: who is trained and then does its job; the role of training institute is no longer relevant after issuing the diploma.

BREEAM is however, as they say, a 3-party certification: the project, the assessor and DGBC. 1) The project builds on a file and underpins why it earns some points; 2) the assessor determines whether this is true; 3) DGBC does sample checks whether the assessor has done both the process and the content correct and checks whether the file is complete.

The assessor is trained to establish a professional and expert qualification. By the 3rd-party assurance adds to extra confidence in the market for the BREEAM label. And that's what we all want. That if 'the market' states a project has a BREEAM qualification; it really must be a sustainable project. All parties benefit: DGBC as certificate-disclosing party; the assessor with his/her reputation, and not at least, the client's certificate that represents a certain value.

### **3.6.2 Why does DGBC sample check?**

This has several reasons. A practical reason is that it would not be cost effective to repeat all the work the assessor has done. Moreover DGBC is never as aware of the project as the assessor. In many cases DGBC will even not have been present on the project site. A more fundamental reason is that the responsibility with a 100% check would shift from the assessor to the DGBC. The very fact that the assessor establishes the qualification means by definition that DGBC *would not have to check* 100% of his work.

### **3.6.3 QA, Managing Deviations and Improving**

DGBC starts the QA procedure when the assessor has agreed with the work of the BREEAM Expert, the report and the documentation and submitted this to DGBC.

In the QA procedure the manner in which DGBC checks is recorded, wherein QA represents Quality

Assurance. The QA procedure is linked with the procedure Managing Deviations and the Improving Procedure. If no deviations are found during the QA check and all requirements are met, this will lead to a certificate. In the event that there are deviations found, the managing deviations procedure will need to be followed to still result in a legitimate qualification. It may be that DGBC detects some structural deviations, for example, many assessors don't read a particular credit correctly, then the Improving Procedure will be started. This can lead in this case to an interpretation document, an adjustment in the training or for example an explanation on the help page.

These three procedures (QA, Managing Deviations and Improving) can be found on the website [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). Below is a brief explanation of these procedures.

#### **3.6.4 Quality Assurance (QA)**

The aim of the procedure is to ensure a proper, legitimate qualification and thus certification of one project, including the processing of any deviations.

The QA process starts after the DGBC has received a final assessment report. DGBC will first invoice associated costs. The certification fees can be found on the website [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

Note: The organisation that is listed, as client in the project is responsible for the timely payment of invoices. Any disagreement between the involved parties may not influence the payment to DGBC. Failure to pay the required amounts can lead to not issuing or revoking the certificate.

After the invoice, DGBC makes the file to and collects all DGBC known information about this project; for example helpdesk discussions or earlier statements. The actual quality checks start once the file is complete. DGBC has three quality check methods available:

##### ADMIN-check

The purpose of this check is to confirm the essential details (project data, license, completeness report) that are required for the certificate. If errors are detected during the Admin check, this should be amended (ie report resubmission), before DGBC can start with the other required checks. Such errors can be issued up to one general RED. After the ADMIN check is carried out, DGBC will determine the sample size of the AUDIT-check and the need for a SITE-check. This is mainly based on the experience with the scheme itself, as well as the experience and performance of the assessor himself.

Note: It is possible that the ADMIN check passes at first, but during the inspections mistakes surface nevertheless, for example, in demarcation, function/typology, choice scheme, etc. This may still lead to a full stop of the QA procedure and to returning the report for amendments.

##### AUDIT-check

The purpose of this check is to confirm that all requirements are met, justifications and validations meet the quality requirements, the appropriate certificate has been added, calculations are performed correctly and points are awarded accordingly.

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DGBC reserves the right to increase the sample size following the results of the AUDIT-check. Also, as results of this check, DGBC is able to feedback to the assessors that the assessment report is not accepted because of too many REDs. Too many REDs in a sample is for DGBC an indication that too many non-conformities are made in the entire report. In that case, DGBC will demand that the assessor will re-check and re-evaluate the entire report.

#### SITE checks

This check is optional for DGBC. The purpose of this audit is to ensure on-site that the assessment correctly reflects the project in reality. DGBC visit sites only in the presence of the Assessor involved. Therefore DGBC contacts the assessor concerned if a specific location is identified for an audit inspection on-site.

The results of these checks are within the QA procedure via the Feedback Form QA to the assessor feedback. Within three weeks of receipt of the assessment report by DGBC is the feedback form QA sent to the assessor.

#### QA Feedback Form

In the feedback form either DGBC agrees with the assessment and thus the issuing of the certificate, or DGBC disagrees, while providing a description of the to be carried out acts before it can continue towards certification. Additionally, the QA feedback form is used for observations that serve as advice, for example for future assessments.

To help Assessors quickly find the issues in a report that may require attention each issue will be marked in one of the following ways:

- An 'Advisory' or 'Amber' mark will be used to identify issues where the credit awarded is technically correct, but some attention to detail is needed (comment will be provided), and which should be addressed in future reports. DGBC will not request re-submission if only Amber marks are shown. An Amber can be given on the following reasons, for example:
  - Agreed, but demonstrability can improve
  - Agreed, but a concern for next time
  - Agreed for DS, but requires extra attention at PCS
- A 'Red' mark means that the credit has been awarded incorrectly either technically and/or evidentially, important data is missing, or there are quality issues with (parts of) the report. Feedback will be provided; the reasoning behind the Red mark. A Red can be given on the following reasons, for example:
  - Insufficiently demonstrated that the Technical Manual requirements are met
  - Insufficient evidence
  - Incorrect/absent references
  - Not substantiated deviated from Technical Manual
  - A misinterpretation
  - Exceeding stated limits
  - A RED from a previous check is not (entirely) addressed



- Incomplete/unclear validation
- No mark means that the credit has either been determined as being assessed correctly, or has not been selected for checking on this occasion.

DGBC can only agree with an assessment report if it does not contain RED's. In that case DGBC accepts the stated qualifications and DGBC hands over a certificate for the project to the assessor. If RED's are detected, the Manage Deviations Procedure starts.

### **3.6.5 Managing deviations**

The purpose of the Managing Deviations procedure is to settle the observed deviations to result in a legitimate qualification for the issuance of a certificate. The procedure also provides in understanding structural deviations.

If an assessment contains one or more 'RED's', via the Feedback Form QA, it is required that:

- Either the subject is reviewed (so the assessor the number of points awarded - and the score and possibly qualifying - may persist).
- Either the assessor -in consultation with the project- chooses to drop the issue. In addition, the assessor agrees that the score and qualifying as a result can be reduced.

In any case the assessment reports will have to be adjusted and resubmitted. The QA procedure will be followed again (ie if necessary: invoicing, ADMIN-check, determine sample size, AUDIT-check, etc.). A maximum of two reports (which is the original plus one re-submission) may be submitted at no additional cost to DGBC. For each additional report submitted by the assessor, a non-refundable fee will be charged, as indicated on the price list. This aims to stimulate both the project and the assessor to submit any reports correctly from the beginning, and thereby to reduce the processing time of assessment checks DGBC.

Internally DGBC monitors per assessor how many REDs per project (one or multiple submissions) are given per issue and also the severity of the REDs. In a periodic internal assessment of this monitoring, DGBC can choose to start an Improving Procedure.

### **3.6.6 Improvement Procedure**

Following a regular internal assessment of the recorded performance of the assessors can be chosen to start an improvement process. It is a procedure aimed at improving or DGBC or the assessor. It is up to the DGBC, depending on the nature of the problem, to designate a solver. This solver is investigating the issue and determine the measures to be taken.

Measures to DGBC could include:

- Adjust rating assessment report
- Adjust BREEAM scheme (through interpretation document)
- Adapt training or harmonization meeting
- Adaptation to a help page

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Measures for the assessor may include:

- Consult with DGBC the assessments
- attend training at their own expense

DGBC monitors the progress of the implementation of measures and their effectiveness. If this is not going according to plan, retention DGBC the right to issue a formal warning about the performance of the assessor. In extreme cases this can lead to the suspension of the license of the assessor or the licensee organization.

### **3.7 The Certificate**

A Certificate can be issued if a BREEAM-NL assessed project successfully completes the complete QA-procedure. A certificate permits the holder to use the BREEAM-NL label for the object indicated on the certificate. Certificates are representative of the finalised assessment report, this is a 'snapshot' based on all evidence and underpinnings made available before final submission.

The certificate always has a release date. The validity of a license varies per scheme, as for example the PCS certificate of BREEAM-NL NC is valid indefinitely, but the BREEAM-NL In-Use certificate has an end date. For more information about the validity of a specific scheme, see the Technical Manual of the specific scheme on [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

Certificates are public and are standard published on the [breeam.nl/projecten](http://breeam.nl/projecten) webpage two weeks after the release date. DGBC may use the data verified by the assessor for publicity, marketing, technical development or other activities that may reasonably be expected of DGBC. No evidence, justification or validation is given to third parties without the consent of the client or assessor. DGBC should be contacted if a project has an increased safety regulation or is for any other reason unable to provide certain evidence.

Certificates are issued to the assessor by email in .pdf format, to hand over to the project's client.

## 4. Fees and Marketing

### 4.1 Fees

Licensed Organizations are free to charge the client their own rates and pricing for assessments. It is up to the licensed organizations and their clients to in consultation establish a tariff for the assessment. However, the amount to be paid to the DGBC certification is fixed.

Assessors should break down quotations and invoices to clearly distinguish between:

- the assessment(s)
- the BREEAM-NL Certification fees
- any additional 'optional' services that are provided (subject to agreement with the client).

It should be made clear to clients that Certification fees are reviewed annually and may be subject to change.

#### 4.1.1 Certification Fees

The schedule of DGBC's current Certification fees can be found on [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). These may be subject to change with notice (normally 3 months). Registered assessments submitted for certification during the notice period of a revision will be charged at the 'pre-existing' rate.

#### 4.1.2 Additional Fees

Additional fees pertain to the following:

- Submission rates for innovation credits
- Resubmits assessment report (from 3rd report submit)
- License fees

The actual fees may be found on [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

## 4.2 Marketing

### 4.2.1 Experts & Assessor Marketing

Assessors are permitted (and encouraged) to produce their own marketing materials to attract clients and to develop relationships with their clients to promote repeat assignments.

**NB:** The use of the BREEAM-NL and DGBC logos are subject to terms and conditions. See the DGBC Licence Agreement on [www.dgbc.nl](http://www.dgbc.nl) or contact DGBC - Communication department.

### 4.2.2 Expert & Assessor Details on the BREEAM-NL website

DGBC also helps put potential clients in contact with experts and assessors by maintaining a list of licensed organisations, registered Experts and registered Assessors on the BREEAM-NL website. This list is available through [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). Any changes required should be emailed to the DGBC Office ([trainingen@dgbc.nl](mailto:trainingen@dgbc.nl)).

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## 5. Assessors and Experts Queries - DGBC helpdesk

DGBC aims to give priority to enquiries regarding registered projects. To assist us in this process and in allocating priority fairly to all enquirers it is essential that the processes outlined below are followed.

### 5.1 Enquiry Hierarchy

For enquiries about BREEAM-NL technical content, operational aspects or licensing matters, please follow the enquiries hierarchy below:

1. Check the following documents to see if the answer is provided:
  - a. BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn including any related interpretation documents
  - b. This BREEAM-NL Operations Manual,
  - c. Licence agreement
2. Check the online Frequently Asked Questions log (FAQ) on the BREEAM-NL website at [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).
3. Email enquiry to [helpdesk@dgbc.nl](mailto:helpdesk@dgbc.nl)
4. For urgent matters **ONLY**, telephone the DGBC Office. Urgency may follow from e.g. an instance where a builders' meeting takes place the next day and for which essential information regarding the certification process is required.

NB: Do not email or telephone individual members of DGBC staff to seek guidance. This will delay the response as such queries will be referred to the above points of contact before being dealt with. This is to ensure that we are able to log and monitor queries and their response times in addition to providing consistent and considered response to all enquiries.

### 5.2 The Enquiry Process

The DGBC team aim to provide a resolution to general enquires within three working days or one week for the more complex issues. If the enquiry leads to a technical precedent, an operational policy review, or other additional research, the resolution could take longer. The applicant will be kept informed of the progress.

**DISCLAIMER:** Consultancy, interpretations or opinions provided by DGBC in relation to ongoing projects, whether registered or not, oral or in writing, have no formal status of any kind in the final approval of a project. No rights can be claimed based on the consultancy, interpretations or opinions in any way. DGBC only publishes final judgements on final reports, after having completed the QA-process. A final assessment of a report always represents the professional judgement by the appointed assessor.

## 6. Additional procedures

In addition to the procedures that are implemented for the assessment process itself, there are also further

procedures within the certification system, such as the innovation credit procedure, the complaints and appeals procedure. Assessors, experts or their clients who initiate an additional procedure are therefore kindly requested to take longer processing times into account. The procedures often mention guidelines for processing times, but these are emphatically guidelines. With increasing complexity the processing time will also increase, please check with DGBC.

## 6.1 Innovation credit procedure

Not within all BREEAM schemes or versions it is possible to earn innovation points, therefore always check the possibility in the applied scheme. In Technical Manuals BREEAM-NL New Construction & Renovation and BREEAM-NL Area Development up to 10% extra innovation points can be earned on top of the normal score. This can be done by means of:

- Exemplary Performance points: An exceptional performance within a given credit. This is specified in which case the specific credit.
- Innovation credits: A new innovation is assessed in addition to the existing credits.

There is a separate procedure available for Innovation Credits, see [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

The Innovation Credit procedure has been developed because innovations in the area of sustainable projects come at a high rate, a current version of the BRL can never contain all innovations on the market at that moment. In order to recognise a builder's / designers' efforts in advancing sustainability, innovation credits may be submitted for approval by DGBC.

For each accepted innovation credit 1% will be added to the total score. So if e.g. a project's score is 57% without innovation credits, the score could be added 1% per accepted innovation credit, with a maximum of 10% for the combined total of exemplary performance points and innovation credits.

In order not to be tempted to file innovation credits too lightly, a submission fee is charged per innovation credit, which will be refunded when the innovation credit was awarded. See fee sheet at [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl)

Innovation credits are not accepted lightly. It must –amongst other things - solve an as yet unsolved problem, increase the projects' sustainability, be replicable to other projects and must result in quantifiable benefits. More details in the innovation credit procedure.

In order to submit an innovation credit the assessor must submit a 'Innovation credit Form' as stated in the procedure. This form can be downloaded from [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl).

## 6.2 Complaints

In the case of dissatisfaction (services of) DGBC one can use the complaints procedure, which can be downloaded from the website is [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). The purpose of this procedure is for the customer to handle complaints quickly and professionally and for the DGBC to understand structural problems (learning effect).

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So if there is a complaint (eg. About an assessment), one can report this to the DGBC's helpdesk. The report must be clear so that the issue can be given the status of a complaint. The customer will then receive a confirmation within 3 business days that the complaint is received and the complaints procedure has started. DGBC tries then, in consultation with the customer, to resolve the issue within the timeframe agreed with the customer. It's good to know that DGBC itself will handle the complaint and, after consultation with the client, DGBC also assessed whether the complaint was handled.

Note: For the purpose of improving the own organization, products and services, DGBC itself can still choose to start an Improving Procedure.

### **6.3 Appeal Procedure**

If the customer after settlement of the complaint is still dissatisfied, there is a possibility of appeal. It is a procedure available through this website [www.breeam.nl](http://www.breeam.nl). The customer receives within 3 working days after DGBC has received the written appeal; a confirmation that the appeal was received and the appeal process has started. In consultation with the client, the time frame will be agreed, and an independent third party will be appointed to review the appeal. The decision of the third party is binding. Unlike a complaint, there may be financial consequences to an appeal procedure.