

DGBC Operations Manual for BREEAM-NL assessments

BREEAM-NL

Operations Manual for DGBC Licensed Organisations, Registered Assessors under the DGBC Schemes

Introduction

The Dutch Green Building Council has been licensed by BRE Global to operate under its UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) accredited scheme. This construction will continue until DGBC has achieved its own accreditation through RvA (Raad voor Accreditatie) in The Netherlands. 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.

The BREEAM-NL Operations Manual is subject to approval by BRE Global.

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 programme. This manual may also serve BREEAM-NL Experts in assisting both clients and assessors to complete assessment reports, but BREEAM-NL Experts do not have a formal role in the assessment process.

This version of the BREEAM-NL Operations Manual, although directed at the Dutch market, is kept in the English language mainly to allow BRE to approve of its content. The Assessment or Technical Manual (Dutch: Beoordelingsrichtlijn) which is the manual the assessor uses to actually perform the assessment, is in Dutch.

Quality Aims

The overall aim of this document is to help BREEAM-NL assessors to serve their clients by producing BREEAM-NL assessments that are right first time.

It is the aim of this manual to document and formalise the operating procedures between the Dutch Green Building Council (hereafter referred to as '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.

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Issues or Concerns

If there are any issues with BREEAM-NL services provided by DGBC or by a registered assessor, then please contact the DGBC Office by e-mail through helpdesk@dgbc.nl so that we may address your issues or concerns as effectively as possible.

NB: Please note: technical and procedural enquiries should also be sent by e-mail to helpdesk@dgbc.nl.

There is a formal complaints procedure in place, so if any issues remain unresolved, or are of serious concern, then you may contact the DGBC office via the same e-mail address, clearly indicating that you wish to elevate the issue to the status of a formal complaint. You will then be informed to confirm that the formal procedure has been initiated. We will then aim to resolve the issue within the timescale laid out in the framework with which DGBC addresses formal complaints. A lodging fee will apply per complaint, to be refunded if the complaint was found to be justified, independent of the outcome.

If, even after the formal complaints procedure was completed and the issue is still unresolved, the complainant may address the BRE directly: BRE Quality Manager, BRE Global Ltd, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford WD25 9XX, United Kingdom.

Changes

All changes to this Operations Manual from version to version are published on www.breeam.nl.

Version	Date of issue
1.0	1 October 2009
1.1	15 January 2010
1.2	December 2011

Glossary of Terms

In order to avoid possible misunderstandings in the translation process, the Dutch translations and / or equivalents of this Glossary are also provided where relevant.

Assessment

The process by which a Registered Assessor determines 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.

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 (BBG) and Areas) 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 Post-Construction (single-loop) and continuous assessments.

Assessmenttool – Web-based information / communication tool available at www.assessmenttool.nl. This tool serves as the primary communications channel between assessor and expert, and between assessor and DGBC during the assessment process. Through 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.

ISO/IEC 17024 – An internationally recognised standard containing general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

Licensed Organisation – Organisation (including sole traders) licensed by DGBC under a BREEAM-NL scheme to carry out assessments under a BREEAM-NL assessment scheme. The Licensed Organisation must have at least one Qualified and Registered Assessor under the scheme in order to undertake assessments.

Dutch: Licentiehoudende Organisatie (LO)

QA – DGBC's Quality Assurance procedures to ensure that assessment reports meet quality standards

Dutch: QA / kwaliteitscontrole

Registered Assessor (Assessor) – Individual registered by DGBC under a BREEAM-NL scheme as having been trained and qualified to undertake assessments under a BREEAM-NL Scheme.

NB: An assessor is required to be completely independent of the object under assessment, including the design / construction team. Only registered assessors may submit final assessment reports.

Dutch: Geregistreerd Assessor

Registered Expert – Individual registered by DGBC under a BREEAM-NL-scheme as having been trained and qualified to assist both clients and assessors during the assessment process. An expert may be related to the design / construction team, 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. NOTE that this is not a formal role that is required in the certification process. DGBC has introduced this role as an addition to the UK system, but it is not a requirement to have such a role present for certification. 'The Expert' in this document may be read as the person representing the client in a certification process.

Dutch: Geregistreerd Expert

Technical Manual - the manual the assessor uses to actually perform the assessment. It contains all details on all credits and the supporting evidence to be provided.

Dutch: Beoordelingsrichtlijn - BRL

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)

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.

NB: 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

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1 Overview of the BREEAM Schemes

1.1 Competent person / Registered Assessor Scheme

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.

There are four main steps to achieving and maintaining registration under the BREEAM-NL scheme as a BREEAM-NL assessor:

- Completing a BREEAM or BREEAM-NL Assessor training course
- Passing a BREEAM or BREEAM-NL Assessor exam, classroom exam and test assessment / homework assignment
 - In the case of a UK BREEAM training course: attend a Top-Up training day in order to learn the differences between BREEAM UK and BREEAM-NL and become BREEAM-NL assessor
 - This may also apply vice versa (BREEAM-NL training course plus UK Top-Up day) but BRE Global needs to be contacted first.
- Attending a refresher training ('Terugkomdag') once every 12 months in order to stay up-to-date
- Completing real assessments under BREEAM-NL to a satisfactory standard as determined through BREEAM-NL QA procedures (see Section 3.6). A registered assessor must have completed at least one assessment every five years in order to maintain the status 'registered'.

1.2 Licensing and Registration of Assessors

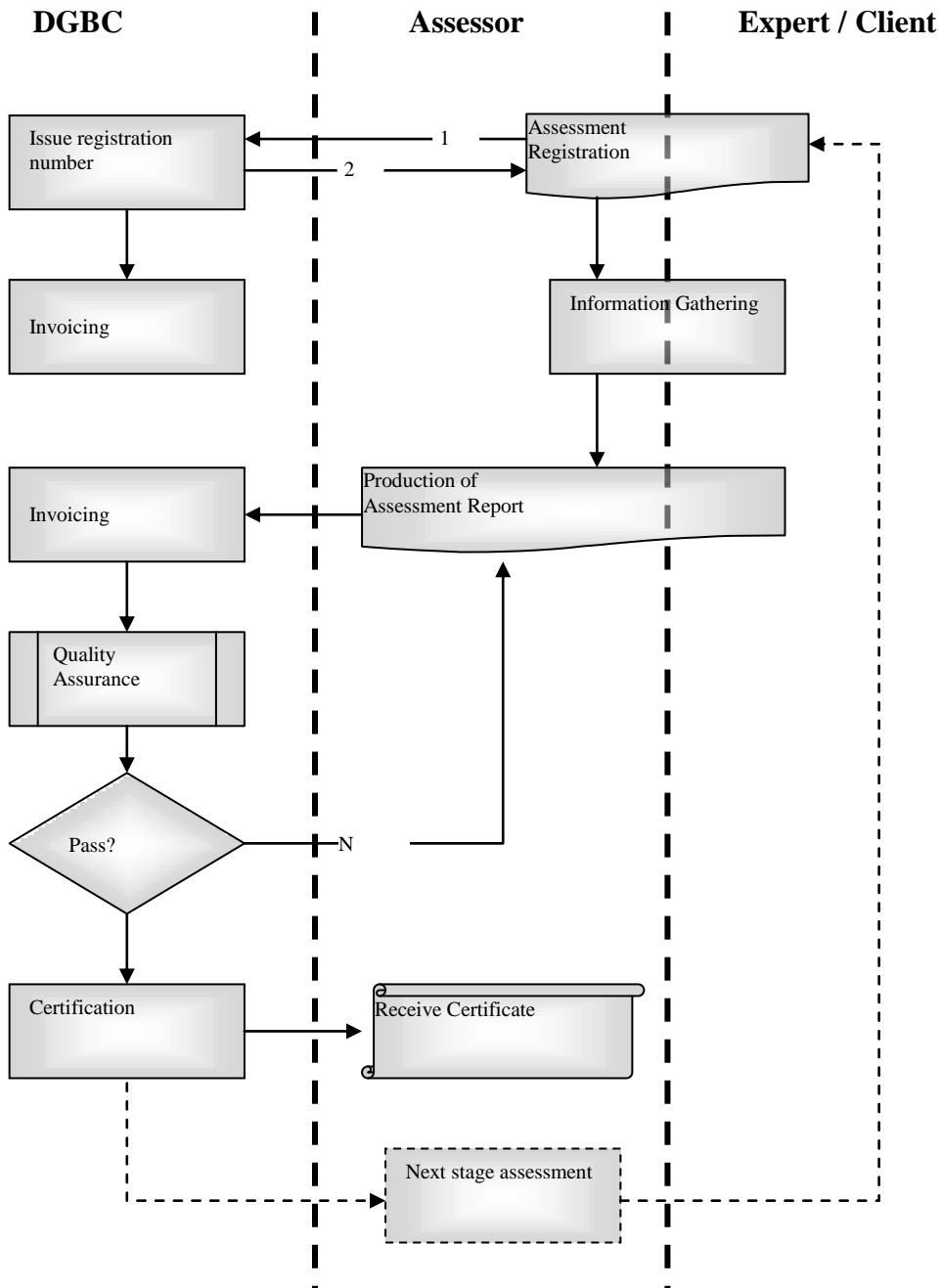
To undertake and submit BREEAM-NL assessments for Certification, BREEAM-NL Assessors must be working for a licensed organisation (Section 2), (which can be their own company if a sole trader).

1.3 The Assessment

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

- A project is formally registered against a Scheme in the DGBC assessment tool. A registration fee is 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
- 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 diagram.



1.4 Roles of Participants in the assessment process

1.4.1 DGBC

The role of DGBC includes:

- Developing and updating the 'BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn' and all associated Scheme documentation
- Providing training courses and exams for individuals to become Experts and / or Assessors
- Maintaining a database of registered assessors, licensed organisations and registered and completed assessments
- Licensing of Assessors
- Publishing a list of BREEAM-NL Licensed Organisations
- Responding to Experts & Assessors enquiries
- Quality Assurance checking of the assessment process
- Issuing of Certificates

1.4.2 The Licensed Organisation and Registered Assessor

The Licensed Organisation, through its qualified and Registered Assessors, serves clients (e.g. regulators, developers/owners, project and design teams) wishing to have an assessment against the BREEAM-NL standard. Normally, it will be the client, perhaps through their appointed representatives or project team, who initiates the assessment.

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

- Registering assessments with DGBC (if not already registered by the project)
- Advising clients on the requirements of BREEAM-NL
- Assessing projects against the criteria and requirements specified in the 'BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn'
- Producing high quality assessment reports

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.

1.4.3 The Client

Within the context of an assessment it is the role of the Client 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.

1.4.4 The Expert

The client may wish to appoint a member of the design- and / or construction team to assist the project in constituting an assessment report. The advantage being that such an expert, when trained on the Technical Manual / BRL, can advise the design- and / or construction 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.

2 Becoming a Registered and Licensed BREEAM-NL Assessor or Registered Expert

2.1 Pre-requisites

Assessors

To be able to register and submit assessments for certification, an Assessor must be both Registered and Licensed under the relevant BREEAM-NL scheme(s).

The pre-requisites for becoming a Registered Assessor are:

- Attending a BREEAM or BREEAM-NL training course
- Passing the BREEAM or BREEAM-NL exam and test assessment / homework assignment
- Taking out, or working for an organisation which has, a Licence Agreement

Assessors that completed the BREEAM-NL training may submit the UK homework assignment with BRE in the UK, after having attended a top-up day in the UK. Likewise, assessors that completed the BREEAM international training may submit the Dutch homework assignment with DGBC, after having attended a top-up day in The Netherlands. Purpose of the top-up day is to explain the differences between BREEAM international and BREEAM-NL.

Experts

To be able to assist both clients and assessors during the certification process, it is advised that an Expert is Registered under the relevant BREEAM-NL scheme(s). An Expert does not have to be Licensed nor work for a Licensed Organisation.

The pre-requisites for becoming a Registered Expert are:

- Attending a BREEAM-NL training course
- Passing the BREEAM-NL homework assignment

2.2 Steps to becoming registered and licensed as an Assessor

2.2.1 Getting Registered as an Assessor

Upon completing the appropriate training and after passing the exam assessors are recognised as being 'Qualified'.

Full Registration is achieved upon successful completion of the Test Assessment and payment of the appropriate fees.

Working for a Licensed Organisation is a pre-requisite for an assessor to perform an assessment of a registered project and to submit the assessment report.

2.2.2 Holding a Licence

1. Where no current licence is held

Where a new Assessor is the first to become licensed from their organisation they will automatically become the main point of contact and will be sent 2 copies of the licence agreement to sign and return.

Once signed and returned (and the appropriate fee paid) the assessor will become 'licensed', i.e. able to 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.

If appropriate, an invoice will be raised to add the new assessor to the organisation's schedule. Note: this may be a part year invoice to take the new assessor to the company licence renewal anniversary.

Once signed and returned (and the appropriate fee paid) the assessor will become licensed, i.e. able to submit assessments for certification.

The Licensed Organisation details will be published on the BREEAM-NL website www.breeam.nl.

2.3 Steps to becoming registered as an Expert

2.3.1 Getting Registered as an Expert

- Upon completing the appropriate training and after passing the homework assignment Experts are recognised as being 'Qualified', and are automatically provisionally Registered as such by DGBC.
- Full Registration is achieved upon payment of the appropriate fees (training fees).

Maintaining registration requires attending a refresher-course ('Terugkomdag') once every 12 months.

2.4 Licence Fees

Details of the current Licence fees are available in the Fee sheet on www.breeam.nl.

3 The Assessment Process

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
- These documents are available for download at www.breeam.nl.

Any additional documents and procedures (e.g. complaint procedure) that may be required, can also be read / downloaded from the www.breeam.nl website.

3.1 Client Enquiry – Pre Assessment Engagement

3.1.1 'Typical' source of enquiries

- Client enquiries (to Licensed Organisations) are typically from:
- Developers
- Project or design teams
- Local Authorities
- Private individuals etc.

3.1.2 Assessor services

Registered assessors are required to provide the following service under the BREEAM-NL licence:

- Assessing projects and producing BREEAM-NL assessment reports

This assumes that the client, normally assisted by an Expert, provides all supporting information and evidence required to assess the development

3.1.3 Expert services

Typically a client would use an Experts' services, whether employed by the client or as an external consultant, to assist in the assessment process. An Expert knows the BREEAM-NL content and has been trained in collecting the proper supporting evidence.

3.2 Assessment Registration

Unless otherwise indicated the following applies at each stage of the Assessment

3.2.1 Registrations

Assessments are registered using the Assessment tool available on the BREEAM-NL website at www.assessmenttool.nl. Anyone may register an assessment, but on behalf of a company only. For the registration a fee will be invoiced.

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.

3.2.2 Registration at Organisational Level

Any assessor named on the licence for the same Scheme can complete all (or part) of an assessment registered on behalf of the licensed organisation.

If a person that has been dealing with assessments leaves the Licensed Organisation on behalf of which the assessment was performed then all associated documentation and information stays with the Licensed Organisation and not with the person.

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 other times 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 assessment registration determines the version number (year number + revision) against which the assessment will be executed. The assessment tool will link the registration with the complete version number, e.g. New Built 2010 v1.1.

NB: in case of inconsistencies between the for a project valid Technical Manual (e.g. BREEAM-NL version 2010 v1.1) and other BREEAM-documents such as BREEAM-Europe or BREEAM-International, the Dutch BRL supersedes

3.2.4 Multiple Stage Assessments

Some BREEAM-NL Schemes distinguish multiple stages in an assessment process for which multiple certificates can be achieved. New Built e.g. has a Design Stage (DS) and a Post Construction Stage (PCS) assessments. Both stages require separate registrations. This may be considered a practical service provided for in the Scheme. The goal of the process is to assess the as-built report, but an intermediate assessment may provide valuable information on the possible end-result.

The purposes of the Design Stage registration in the New Built Scheme are to:

- Provide to DGBC essential basic details of the building to be assessed (e.g. location, type of building, number of buildings, etc).
- Inform DGBC to expect a DS report
- Register a building against a scheme version so that the assessment criteria are consistent throughout the assessment process (see 5 year rule below and 'Timing of Registration' above)
- To fix DGBC certification fees subject to the limitations outlined in Section 5.

The PCS assessment may be registered at any time, however if following a DS assessment this would normally follow upon completion of the DS report.

The purposes of the Post Construction Stage registration in the New Built Scheme are to:

- Confirm/update the essential basic details of the building to be assessed (e.g. location, number of buildings, the DS reference number (if following a DS assessment) etc.)
- Inform DGBC to expect a PCS report
- Register a building against a scheme version so that the assessment criteria are consistent throughout the assessment process (see 5 year rule below and 'Timing of Registration' above)
- To fix DGBC certification fees subject to the limitations outlined in Section 5.

PCS registrations can be made against either the scheme version used for the DS assessment, or the current version of the scheme. In addition a PCS assessment may also be made against the version at the moment of the actual assessment. If e.g. the version at PCS registration was 2010 v1.1 and at the time of commissioning 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.

3.2.6 Validity Period of Registrations

The validity period of registrations differs for the various Schemes.

BREEAM-NL New Build & Area Development

When revisions to BREEAM-NL are made, each revision will be given a new version number. Existing registrations will remain valid for a period of 5 years from the expiry date of an existing Technical Manual. The expiry date is defined as the release date of the next version. This date is used rather than the actual registration date in order to:

- set a fixed date that everyone knows in advance and is the same for every assessment
- ensure there is no advantage to registering late

New Build & Area Development: Letter of compliance issued after 5 years have elapsed

For assessments completed after the five year registration has expired, a letter of compliance will be provided to demonstrate the performance achieved against the relevant scheme, but no certificate will be produced. This letter can then be used to demonstrate compliance with any contractual agreements. To avoid the application of the 5 year rule, a client may re-register.

BREEAM-NL In-Use Buildings (Dutch: BBG)

In-Use Buildings differentiates between registration for benchmarking only, for self-assessments and for certification. Upon registration the latest Technical Manual-version is set for a maximum of one year, and the client commits to a yearly update for a minimum of three consecutive years. At each update, the latest version must be used.

3.3 Information gathering and completing the Assessment

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.

Typically, but not necessarily, Experts will do most of the information / evidence gathering, because Experts will often be employed by the client and /or form part of the design / building team. They will therefore have easy access to information and evidence while being in the position to advice on optimising the credit score.

Even when 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. Guidance on the required documentation is found in the BREEAM-NL Technical Manual available at www.breeam.nl.

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

Assessors, Experts and Developers are encouraged to work iteratively to address any shortfalls in desired score prior to submitting the assessment. It is more cost effective to deal with shortfalls at Design Stage than later in the construction process.

3.3.1 Assessor site visits and record keeping

It is the responsibility of the licensed organisation, through the Assessor for any assessment of a completed project, to be fully satisfied that the 'as built' project meets either of the following:

1. where no prior design or plan assessment has been carried out, that the project:
 - is fully assessed in accordance with the requirements in the BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn
2. where a design or plan assessment has been carried out that the project:
 - is in accordance with the evidence detailed in the design or plan Assessment, or
 - that variations from this are appropriately documented and reassessed.

In case of In-Use Buildings: it is the responsibility of the licensed organisation, through the Assessor, to verify the mandatory yearly update by the client or its representative.

Licensed organisations are required to set-up robust and auditable completed-project assessment procedures. To achieve this DGBC recommends:

- each development site be visited at least once at or towards the end of completion as near to handover as possible
- each issue be reviewed, or assessed where there was no design or plan assessment, and documentary evidence recorded to confirm that it complies with the requirements for the 'as built' Assessment given in the 'BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn' (for the version of the scheme applying to the assessment).

3.3.2 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.

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 The Assessment Report

Unless otherwise stated the following applies at each stage of the assessment and for all BREEAM-NL Schemes.

3.4.1 Responsibility for the assessment and assessment report

It is the licensed organisation that has responsibility for the assessment and the registered assessor that has responsibility for the content of the report.

3.4.2 Sending Reports to DGBC

Assessments will only be accepted using the BREEAM-NL Assessment tool.

Before finalising reports in the Assessment tool, the Assessor shall make all reasonable endeavours to ensure their reports are 'accurate and right first time'. DGBC recommends that this is achieved by implementing quality controls that are in accordance with the report production guidelines and audit procedures described later in this document.

BREEAM-NL reports, including all supporting evidence, will be entirely composed in the Assessment tool and open to DGBC QA-checks from that tool. The assessor, before submitting the final report to DGBC, will be required to accept a disclaimer stating his/her responsibilities and independence before actually sending the report. In order to be able to submit a report, the assessor will need to log in using the unique username and password received when he / she became Registered Assessor.

The supporting evidence may be uploaded through the tool in any of the following formats:
.doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .ppt, .pptx, .pdf, .gif, .jpg, .png.

NB: all documents need to be read-only (so either by the format (e.g. pdf) or write-protected).

For different formats the assessor is requested to contact DGBC at helpdesk@dgbc.nl

3.4.3 Different Licensed Organisations performing different staged assessments

It is possible for different licensed organisations to undertake the different stages of a multiple-stage assessment for a particular project, so the 'as built' Licensed Organisation does not have to be the same as the design or plan Licensed Organisation. Please advise the DGBC Office if this is the case.

In-Use Building assessments run for three consecutive years and may only be transferred to a different Licensed Organisation after consultation with DGBC office. In the event a Licensed Organisation ceases to be licensed while performing In-Use Building assessments, and that LO can not or does not transfer the assessments, DGBC will facilitate the transfer to a new LO. The new LO, through the assessor, is then required to perform an on-site check at no expense to either the client or DGBC. The re-certification period of three years remain in tact unless the new on-site check leads to re-certification.

3.5 Invoicing

An invoice for registration and certification will be sent to the appropriate organisation at the appropriate times. Fee scales can be found on www.breeam.nl.

3.6 BREEAM-NL Quality Assurance (QA) and Auditing procedures

The QA process is in place to help protect both the credibility of the schemes and the Assessor.

The Assessor is at all times responsible for the content of the Assessment report and the BREEAM-NL rating given. The purpose of the BREEAM-NL QA process is, through a process of random checking, to provide reasonable confidence that Assessment reports are correct, and hence a certificate can be issued. In order to do this the following methods of quality assurance are used:

- ADMIN checks
- CREDIT checks
- AUDIT checks

- SITE AUDITS

3.6.1 ADMIN checks

Purpose: To confirm essential details required for the certificate.

- Information in all reports will be sampled to ensure the correct information necessary for production of the certificate has been included.

NB Where errors are identified in the Admin check, these will be notified and will need to be corrected by the Assessor (i.e. re-submitting the report), before a Certificate can be issued.

3.6.2 CREDIT checks

Purpose: To confirm that referencing and credit validation meet the requirements of the 'BREEAM-NL Beoordelingsrichtlijn'.

- A proportion of reports will be randomly selected for Credit Check. Not all issues will be checked
- Assessment Reports selected for Credit Check at the 'as built' Stage will not necessarily be for the same developments as those selected at the design or plan Stage in the case of multiple stage assessments
- The issues examined at the as built Stage may not be the same as those selected for the design or plan Stage report
- For continuous assessments, the issues examined in one assessment may not be same as the issues examined in the next assessment of the same project.

3.6.3 AUDIT checks

To confirm that calculations have been completed correctly, the evidence requirements are properly understood and credits correctly awarded.

- A proportion of reports will be randomly selected for Audit Check
- The selection process for Audit check is essentially the same as that for Credit Check, however the level of checking will be more detailed
- An Audit Check will be carried out on the first two reports for all new assessors
- After successful completion of initial Audit Checks, the normal sampling rates will apply to subsequent reports
- All documentary evidence referenced in the report must be supplied with the report. This will not be used to fully rework the assessment. It will be used to review a randomly sampled selection of the credits to check calculations and the correct awarding of credits against the evidence provided.

3.6.4 'As Built' SITE AUDITS

The aim of the SITE AUDIT is to ensure that post construction and continuous assessments correctly reflect the as-built project.

- DGBC will only visit sites in the presence of the Assessor completing the post construction continuous assessment
- DGBC will contact Licensed Organisations in the following circumstances:
 - where a particular site has been identified for a SITE AUDIT inspection
 - to understand which sites will soon be going through the as built or continuous process and to select a random sample of SITE AUDIT visits

3.7 QA Feedback to Assessors

Feedback will be provided to the assessor, detailing any action required before certification can proceed, as well as any advisory comments.

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 the re-submission of reports where no, or only Advisory marks are shown.
- A 'Red' mark means that the credit has been awarded incorrectly either technically and/or evidentially. Feedback on the reason for the Red mark will be provided. Refer to the next paragraph for details.
- No mark means that the credit has either been determined as being assessed correctly, or has not been selected for checking on this occasion.

3.7.1 What happens if a report has 'red' marks.

Receiving a 'Red' mark will require that:

EITHER

- the issue is re-assessed (in order for the assessor to retain the number of credits awarded - and the score and possibly rating).

OR

- the assessor may choose not to seek the credit

Note: in either of these cases the assessor accepts that the score will change and a reduced rating may result.

Assessment reports receiving Red marks will need to be re-submitted, so that the relevant sections can be reviewed by DGBC. Only those issues marked as red in the original report submission will be re-checked.

If in a Credit Check or Audit Check, an Assessor's report receives red marks for more than 10% of all issues represented within the scheme, their next submitted report will be subject to an Audit Check.

Important

If three successive assessments (at any point of an Assessor's licensed term) each receive more than 10% red marks, the assessor's licence may be suspended and the assessor required to undertake further training (at their expense), or alternatively the assessor may choose to withdraw from the scheme.

3.8 Issuing of Certificates

Certificates will be issued for each BREEAM-NL assessed project that 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. A validity period is not relevant if the finalised report does not change, e.g. New Built. The report is then simply a 'snapshot' based on all evidence made available before final submission. In cases where the project is subject to continuous change (e.g. In Use buildings and Area Developments) there will be a validity period marked on the certificate.

No warranty is implied or given in regard to the actual composition of any BREEAM-NL assessed project. Certificates will be issued to the assessor by e-mail, in PDF format.

3.9 Innovation credits and Exemplary Performance

Both Innovations and Exemplary Performance can be awarded in some BREEAM-NL Schemes. Innovations apply to –in short- new sustainable topics to a project that are not yet covered in the Technical Manual whereas Exemplary performance apply to topics that are already in the Technical Manual and where projects exceed the highest possible score. Both add-up under the term ‘innovation credits’. A **maximum of 10 innovation credits (addition of innovations and exemplary performance) per project** may be awarded.

NB: awarding of innovation credits is pending, awaiting a final procedure. This means that innovation credits may be filed, but at the release of this version, no guarantee could be given that the innovation credit can be processed and awarded. DGBC publications on this topic (newsletters, websites) will complement this section.

Innovation credits

Since 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 maximised to 67% when 10 innovation credits were submitted and all were accepted by DGBC.

In order not to be tempted to file innovation credits too lightly, a **lodging fee** is charged per innovation credit which will be refunded when the innovation credit was awarded.

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.

In order to submit an innovation credit the assessor must file one ‘Innovation credit Form’ per credit. This form can be downloaded from the website. A separate innovation credit procedure is available.

NB: dealing with innovation credits is new for all parties concerned: assessors and their clients, DGBC and BRE. Definitions of the term innovation vary, measuring their contribution to sustainability is complex in the best of cases and the same goes for the other variables. Assessors –and their clients- applying for innovation credits are therefore kindly requested to take the complexity of the process into consideration, both when applying and when awaiting DGBC’s response.

Exemplary Performance

The requirements for achieving exemplary performance percentages are detailed in the relevant Technical Manuals.

4 Assessors & Experts Queries

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.

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.

4.1 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.
3. Email enquiry to helpdesk@dgbc.nl
4. For urgent matters **ONLY**, telephone the DGBC Office (+31-(0)10-2065933). 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.

Note: 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.

4.2 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 or an operational policy review, resolution could take longer. The applicant will be kept informed of the progress.

5 Assessment fees and Pricing

DGBC does not determine the price that a Licensed Organisation may charge their client for an assessment (other than the amount payable to DGBC for Certification). It is up to the Licensed Organisations and their clients to set a mutually agreeable fee for the assessment and any additional consultancy work. DGBC does however stipulate a minimum amount of hours an assessor should count, based on the size and complexity of the project. 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 (see 5.1.1 below).

5.1.1 Certification Fees

The schedule of DGBC's current Certification fees can be found on 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.

5.1.2 Additional fees

Additional fees pertain to the following:

- lodging fees for complaints; refundable when the complaint was acknowledged
- lodging fees for innovation credits; refundable when the innovation credit was awarded

The actual fees may be found on www.breeam.nl.

5.2 Marketing & details on the BREEAM-NL website

5.2.1 Expert & 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 business.

Note: The use of the BRE, BREEAM, BREEAM-NL and DGBC logos are subject to terms and conditions (see DGBC Licence Agreement).

5.2.2 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 available through www.breeam.nl. This list is maintained by DGBC. Any changes required should be emailed to the DGBC Office (helpdesk@dgbc.nl).