



# How to get an outstanding environmental rating for your build

Whether designing a building or a refurbishment, you need to consider the environment. A BREEAM rating proves you have.

**There's a lot to consider if you're thinking about building or renovating. But topping the list should be the impact you will have on the environment.**

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Methodology) is the foremost environmental assessment method and rating system for master-planning projects, infrastructure and buildings. But what does it take to achieve an excellent BREEAM rating? Here are ten tips that can help.

## **1. Check the planning requirements**

Make sure you've considered all areas where energy can be saved, and confirmed that your building systems will consume energy efficiently and use low-carbon, low-energy sources.

## **2. Start at the beginning of your design and procurement process**

A pre-assessment allows you to identify key areas of environmental impact and confirm the minimum standards that need to be included in your design brief to achieve an 'outstanding' rating.

## **3. Choose the right BREEAM scheme**

BREEAM provides comparisons with other BREEAM rated buildings. The scheme has ten environmental performance sections, where credits are awarded for each based on evidence of best practice performance levels.

## **4. Calculate your score**

A qualified BREEAM assessor will audit your building in accordance with the assessment criteria for the ten performance sections and their categories.

## **5. Check the minimum standards for an 'outstanding' rating**

Even if your score is greater than 85%, you must still achieve all of the minimum standards.

## **6. Work on the main categories**

Your local authority may have specific requirements, so you'll need to check. But important categories include:

- Energy
- Water
- Pollution materials
- Benefits of innovation

However, all other aspects of BREEAM need to be covered and are also valuable.

## **7. Focus on energy**

Energy accounts for the largest amount of section credits (31) and has the joint-highest section weighting at 15%. Compliance with the Building Regulations Part L is required for an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), so designing for an EPC 'A' rating is a good starting point.

## **8. Consider ENER-G Combined Heat and Power (CHP)**

BREEAM category Ene 01 has up to 12 credits for a building's energy performance ratio, and CHP units are proven to be one of the best ways to minimise primary energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in this category.

## **9. Review innovation in your design**

An additional 1% is added to your BREEAM score for each 'innovation' credit (up to maximum 10%).

## **10. Complete your post-construction assessment**

It's important that any construction phase works are completed in line with the design brief. This ensures evidence is available for the post-construction BREEAM assessment.

### **Central Bank of Ireland achieves 'outstanding' BREEAM**

The Central Bank of Ireland's headquarters is an example of a building that achieved a BREEAM 'outstanding' rating at design stage.

It received scores of 91.3% for energy and 88.89% for pollution by specifying a high-efficiency CHP system and an advanced ventilation system for the building. The building also achieved an 88.89% rating for its transport design.