

GN18: BREEAM Recognised Responsible Sourcing Certification Schemes and BREEAM Scheme Applicability

1. Introduction

BREEAM awards credits for responsibly sourcing construction products (typically under the Mat 03 issue) to encourage responsible product specification and procurement in construction. To achieve these credits, applicable specified products (as listed in the relevant technical manual) must be covered by an Environmental Management System (EMS) or a responsible sourcing certification scheme (RSCS) recognised by BREEAM.

Within BREEAM, recognised RSCS are evaluated by BRE Global and awarded RSCS summary score levels in accordance with the requirements and processes set out in the following documents:

- 'Responsible Sourcing Certification Schemes – Evaluation for use in BREEAM (Issue 2)'
- 'Criteria for the Evaluation of RSCS within BREEAM (v4.0)'

These summary score levels are used in conjunction with a BREEAM calculator tool (typically called the Mat 03 calculator tool) to determine how many BREEAM credits can be awarded for the asset undergoing a BREEAM assessment.

The above documents, background information on BREEAM RSCS evaluations, and information on how to have a RSCS evaluated by BRE Global can be found on the BREEAM website (www.breeam.com/responsible-sourcing-credits/).

This guidance note provides a list of currently recognised RSCS and EMS along with their associated summary score levels. It also offers guidance on how to apply the RSCS summary score levels to previous schemes.

2. Application to BREEAM versions

RSCS and EMS recognised by BREEAM, along with their associated summary score levels, as set out in this guidance note are applicable to all current BREEAM building and infrastructure schemes as set out in the respective technical documents. See Section 6 below regarding use of this document in connection with older versions of BREEAM. Where an assessment has been registered, a previous version of this document may be used if preferred (as stated in Section 3 below).

3. BREEAM recognised RSCS and EMS

Table 1 below provides a list of BREEAM recognised RSCS and their associated summary score levels on a scale of 1 to 10.

Independently certified EMS are also recognised to a limited degree as they partially comply with the BREEAM evaluation criteria. This is reviewed based on the extent to which they cover the supply chain process. Internationally recognised schemes such as ISO 14001 and EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme) and local and / or sector specific EMS fall into this category.

This guidance note will be reissued as necessary to include new RSCS schemes as these are evaluated or to take account of changes in current schemes. Project teams must, therefore, ensure they are using the latest version of this table when carrying out assessments. The version of the table that was current at the time of registration of a BREEAM assessment can be used for the duration of the assessment to avoid the risk of changes in summary scores arising during the design process.

Table 1: BREEAM recognised RSCS, EMS, and their associated summary scores levels

| RSCS/EMS (or other recognised source) | Label(s)/Version(s) of the scheme | Additional requirement to be specified ⁴ | RSCS summary score level |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) | 'ASI Certified Performance', with 'ASI Certified Chain of Custody' (Note: Provisional certification is not applicable) | The aluminium shall originate from a casthouse that is a certified ASI Member and/or a subsequent supplier of this aluminium that is a certified ASI Member (listed here: https://aluminiumstewardship.org/asi-certification/asicertified-members/) | 5 |
| BES 6001 Framework Standard for Responsible Sourcing | All (Issue 3) | n/a | 5 (Baseline score ³) |
| | All (Issue 4) | n/a | 6 |
| | All (Issue 4) | The following have been achieved/scored: 4.3.1.3 (two points for 4.3.1) Plus one or more of the following: 4.3.2.4 (three points for 4.3.2), 4.3.3.4 (three points for 4.3.3), 4.2.4.4, or 4.4.9.2 (at least one point for 4.4.9). | 7 |
| CARES Sustainable Constructional Steel Scheme | All | n/a | 5 |
| Concrete Sustainability Council (CSC) | Certified concrete (bronze level) | n/a | 4 |
| | Certified concrete (silver level) | n/a | 5 |
| | Certified concrete (gold level) | n/a | 6 |
| | Certified concrete (platinum level) | n/a | 7 |
| Eco Reinforcement Responsible Sourcing Standard, Steel Products for the Reinforcement of Concrete | All | n/a | 5 |
| FSC | 'FSC 100%' | n/a | 7 |
| | 'FSC Mix' | n/a | 5 |
| | 'FSC Recycled' | | |
| PEFC | 'PEFC Certified - 100% PEFC Origin' | n/a | 7 |
| | 'PEFC Certified' | n/a | 5 |
| | 'PEFC Recycled' | | |
| SFI | 'SFI Certified Chain of Custody, Promoting Sustainable Forestry' | Certified forest content = 100% of total | 6 |
| | 'SFI Certified Chain of Custody, Promoting Sustainable Forestry' | Recycled timber/fibre content = 0% of total | 5 |
| VinylPlus® Product Label | All | n/a | 4 |

| RSCS/EMS (or other recognised source) | Label(s)/Version(s) of the scheme | Additional requirement to be specified ⁴ | RSCS summary score level |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| Construction products/materials reused in-situ or within the same construction site, with only minor processing that does not alter the nature of the construction product/material (e.g. cleaning, cutting, fixing to other construction products). | n/a | n/a | 10 |
| Environmental Management Systems (EMS) (certified) | Key Process ¹ and supply chain ² extraction process. See Table 2 below. | n/a | 2 |
| | Key Process ¹ . See Table 2 below. | n/a | 1 |

Notes to Table 1

¹ Key Process: The final major aspects of processing that are carried out for the product / material in question. There may be a single process or multiple processes requiring assessment, depending on the end product. The scope of the process covered by the certified EMS for each applicable material category are detailed in Table 2.

² Supply Chain EMS: Supply chain EMS covers all the major aspects of processing and extraction involved in the supply chain for the end product. Note that recycled materials are not required to demonstrate a Supply Chain EMS. If the EMS certification is provided for the Key Processes for recycled materials, this is assumed by default. The scope of the key process and supply chain covered by the certified EMS for each of the assessed material category are detailed in Table 2.

³ The RSCS summary score level is the minimum that all products certified to this scheme are awarded. It may be possible for products certified to this scheme to achieve a higher RSCS summary score level – see the scheme’s website or contact the scheme operator or product manufacturer for more details.

⁴ The additional requirements are in addition to the label/version of the scheme. The BREEAM Assessor should check that design team have included the additional requirement(s) in the project documents (e.g. architectural specification and/or drawings) and obtain evidence that the installed products fulfil these before awarding the points.

Recycled content of construction products is taken into account in the above schemes where appropriate and is not separately recognised in this table.

4. Limitations on the use of the evaluation results

The RSCS evaluated by BREEAM cover a diverse range of construction product sectors. Different construction product sectors face differing challenges in terms of responsible sourcing and most of the schemes recognised by BREEAM include some objectives that are not applicable to their use within BREEAM assessments. As such, these evaluations and the resulting score levels are only intended for use in BREEAM assessments and they should not be used in any other context to reflect the rigor or benefits of the schemes.

Additional schemes may be included from time to time and will be reflected in new versions of this document.

All of the schemes evaluated are likely to undergo subsequent revision and as a result the score levels may change at a future point in time where updated schemes are re-evaluated.

5. EMS scope by material category

Table 2 below provides a list of the key process and supply chain (extraction) processes (by material category) that the scope of the EMS as specified in Table 2 must cover in order to achieve the summary score level.

Table 2: Compliant EMS scope by material category

| Material category | Key process | Key supply chain process |
|---|--|--|
| Timber / timber based | | |
| Virgin timber | Timber from certified sources | Timber from certified sources |
| Wood panel and wood based composite products such as Oriented Strand Board, plywood, HPL, chipboard/particle, glulam, LVL, etc. | Wood products, including those with recycled content, can only use the timber certification route | |
| Concrete / cementitious | | |
| In-situ concrete (including ready mix and cementitious mortars and renders) ¹ | Ready mixed concrete plant | Cement production, Aggregate extraction and production |
| Precast concrete and other concrete products (including blocks, cladding, precast flooring concrete or cementitious roof tiles) | Concrete product manufacture | Cement production, Aggregate extraction and production |
| Plasterboard/ plaster | Plasterboard or plaster manufacture | Gypsum extraction, Synthetic gypsum (from flue gas desulphurisation) by default (recycled content) |
| Cement bonded particle board | Due to significant cement content, in addition to requiring timber certification, the key supply chain process must also be considered to obtain the relevant summary score level. Timber from certified sources | Cement production Timber from certified sources |
| Metals | | |
| Metals (steel, aluminium etc.) | Metal product manufacture e.g. cladding production, steel section production | Metal production: Steel: Electric arc furnace or basic oxygen furnace process; Aluminium: ingot production; Copper: ingot or cathode production. |
| Stone | | |
| Dressed or building stone (including slate) | Stone product manufacture | Stone extraction |
| Clay based | | |
| Bricks (including clay tiles and other ceramics) | Product manufacture | Clay extraction |
| Glass | | |
| Glass | Glass production | Sand extraction, Soda ash production or extraction |

| Material category | Key process | Key supply chain process |
|---|--|--|
| Plastic, polymer, resin, paint, chemicals and bituminous | | |
| Plastics and rubbers (including polymeric renders, EPDM, TPO, PVC, and VET roofing membranes) | Plastic/rubber product manufacture | Main polymer production |
| Resin based composites and materials (including GRP and polymeric render but excluding timber-based composites) | Composite product manufacture | Glass fibre production (or other principal matrix material) Polymer production |
| Bituminous materials, such as roofing membranes and asphalt | Product manufacture | Bitumen production, Aggregate extraction and production |
| Insulation | | |
| Foam insulation | Insulation manufacture | Main polymer production, e.g. Polystyrene, MDI, Phenolic resin or equivalent |
| Stone wool, glass & cellular glass made using < 50% recycled input | Product manufacture | Any quarried or mined mineral over 20% of input |
| Wool | Product manufacture | Wool scouring |
| Products using > 50% recycled content except those using timber | Product manufacture | Recycled content by default |
| Timber-based insulation materials including those using recycled timber | Product manufacture | Recycled timber by default, all other timber from one of the recognised timber certification schemes in BREEAM issue Mat 03. |
| Other renewable-based insulation materials using agricultural by-products (e.g. straw) | Product manufacture | By-product manufacture by default |
| Other | | |
| Mineral based materials, including fibre cement and calcium silicate | Product manufacture | Cement production, Lime production, Other mineral extraction and production |
| Products with 100% recycled content | Product manufacture | Recycled input by default |
| Product with lower percentage of recycled content | Product manufacture | Supply chain process/processes for any virgin material in the relevant product type above. Recycled input by default |
| Any other product | Key processes are likely to be product manufacture | 1 or 2 main inputs with significant production or extraction impacts should be identified |

Notes to Table 2

¹ Where cement and aggregate, or dry mix concrete are mixed on site, (i.e. not concrete previously certified as pre-cast concrete products or wet ready mix concrete), certification must cover the manufacture of the cement and the primary process, and the extraction of the aggregate and limestone used to make cement as the supply chain process.

6. Use of the revised RSCS summary score levels in assessments under previous versions of BREEAM

Following the release of version 1.0 of this guidance note, work was undertaken to align other current and superseded BREEAM schemes to the new RSCS approach. This sought to give a choice to projects still undertaking assessment under earlier versions of BREEAM and increase the applicability of new and / or revised RSCS.

A thorough analysis was conducted to determine how projects would perform under the new scoring system and compare these to the performance under the previous tier table approach. Based on the results of the analysis, an alternative set of credit percentage thresholds have been developed so that in the majority of cases, the credits achieved under both scoring systems will remain the same.

Therefore, the new scoring is applicable to the following schemes:

- BREEAM International New Construction 2013
- BREEAM UK New Construction 2011

The new scoring approach should be applied using one of the following options; on-going assessments under these 2013 and 2011 BREEAM schemes can choose to:

1. Apply the new list of BREEAM recognised RSCS's and their associated summary score levels (as outlined in Table 1) and credit percentage thresholds (as outlined in Table 3).
- OR
2. Continue to use the RSCS tier levels and associated scores and percentage thresholds provided in the relevant BREEAM scheme manual.

Assessors cannot use a combination of both options.

When choosing option 1, please also note that:

- The assessment criteria, compliance notes, evidence requirements, calculation methodology, additional information and other information as stated under the issue in the relevant BREEAM scheme manual remain the same.
- Tier levels are no longer required to be reported; the calculator tool will only require the applicable RSCS scheme and associated information.

Table 3: Option 1 credit percentage threshold applicable to BREEAM International New Construction 2013 and BREEAM UK New Construction 2011

| BREEAM credits | Percentage of available points achieved |
|-----------------|---|
| Exemplary level | 100% |
| 3 | ≥ 77% |
| 2 | ≥ 46% |
| 1 | ≥ 18% |

Note: For all other assessment scheme versions, the assessor should continue to use the assessment and scoring method as set out in the relevant scheme manual.

7. Schedule of changes

| Version | Release date | Description of change |
|---------|--------------|---|
| 1.0 | 01/09/2014 | First version. Compliant with issue 2.0 of BREEAM UK New Construction 2014 (SD5076). |
| 1.1 | 31/10/2014 | Updated version to ensure compliance with issue 1.0 of BREEAM UK Domestic Refurbishment 2014 (SD5077). |
| 2.0 | 01/12/2014 | Updated version to ensure compliance with BREEAM UK New Construction 2011 (SD5073) and BREEAM International New Construction 2013 (SD5075). |
| 3.0 | 16/09/2016 | Updated following major update of the RSCS summary scores. |
| 3.1 | 24/01/2018 | CSC scheme added. |
| 3.2 | 01/10/2019 | CSC scheme RSCS summary scores changed following re-evaluation. |
| 3.3 | 23/04/2020 | ASI scheme added. |
| 3.4 | 16/07/2020 | CSC scheme RSCS summary score for 'Platinum level' added following re-evaluation. |
| 3.5 | 18/12/2020 | VinylPlus® scheme added. |
| 3.6 | 28/02/2022 | Added new RSCS summary score for 'PEFC Certified – 100% PEFC Origin' following re-evaluation. |
| 3.7 | 31/05/2023 | Added new RSCS summary scores for 'BES 6001 (Issue 4)' following re-evaluation. |

Find the latest version of this guidance note at: kb.breeam.com/knowledgebase/gn18