BREEAM®

Comparison of BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment 2012 with EcoHomes 2006

Executive summary

BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment (BDR) was launched on 11th June 2012 as a replacement for EcoHomes. BDR was specifically designed to assess domestic refurbishment and change of use projects, in response to the increased market direction of making do with what you’ve got. Its launch followed an extensive pilot scheme, consultation process and independent peer review by the BRE Global Governing Body’s Standing Panel.

EcoHomes was initially launched in 2000 to assess and improve the environmental performance of housing. It was designed predominantly for new build homes however it is also used to certify refurbishment projects.

Since the launch of the Code for Sustainable Homes in 2007 when EcoHomes was superseded for new build properties, the construction industry has come a long way to improve the sustainability of new build housing however this accounts for less than 1% of the homes that exist today. The new BDR scheme aims to address by providing a standard to guide improvements to existing dwellings in a cost effective way.

This paper compares the new BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment 2012 Scheme (SD5072 - 2012 -1.0.2) with EcoHomes 2006 (version 1.2). The aim is to provide Local Planning Authorities, Social Housing Providers, Architects, Designers, EcoHomes Assessors, BDR Assessors and others with guidance on the key differences between the two schemes. This will help with the transition to the new scheme and highlight some of the enhancements made to improve the application of BREEAM to refurbishments.

Reviewing the assessment methodologies of EcoHomes and BDR reveals some key differences, including:

- **Categories:** the assessment categories for BDR have been designed to be more relevant to refurbishment projects, for example by removing site specific categories such as Ecology and Transport.

- **Environmental Weightings:** The Management, Health & Wellbeing and Energy have significantly higher weightings under BDR compared to EcoHomes.

- **Category Issues:** the issues assessed in BDR are generally more relevant to refurbishment projects than those of EcoHomes. In addition, Primary Energy Demand (Ene 03) has five more credits in BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment than the EcoHomes comparative issue (Ene 02 – Building Fabric) because the consensus amongst professionals now gives greater precedence to improving the fabric efficiency of the dwelling.
– **Innovation Credits**: innovation credits have been incorporated into BDR to promote exemplar performance for chosen environmental issues. If the credits are achieved, this adds an additional one percent to the total environmental rating of the project, however only a total of ten credits can be awarded.

– **Ratings**: the environmental ratings of BDR are slightly different from those of EcoHomes. In addition, an “Outstanding” rating has been introduced to the BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment for ratings over 85%, to align with other BREEAM schemes.

– **Minimum standards**: EcoHomes did not have any minimum standards which have been introduced in BDR. This requires minimum standards to be achieved in the areas of Energy Efficiency, Water, Flooding, Ventilation and the legal sourcing of timber ensuring a minimum level of performance.

As part of the preparation of this paper, four case studies were assessed against both BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment and EcoHomes to provide a comparison. This showed that, on average, an EcoHomes “Very Good” is roughly comparable to a BDR “Very Good” rating.

As shown in the table below, projects achieving “Very Good” ratings under EcoHomes, are most likely to be awarded the same level however there are some cases where properties may score slightly higher under BDR, provided that all the minimum standards included in BDR have been met.

The paper concludes that the adjustments made to the EcoHomes categories and issues to create the BDR scheme and to facilitate the assessment of refurbishment projects, have allowed high ratings to be achieved despite the inherent restrictions with existing buildings. As shown in the four case studies, the paper demonstrates that BDR is the most effective scheme for assessing the environmental performance of refurbishment projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>EcoHomes</th>
<th>BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
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<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>64.22</strong></td>
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Table 1. Results of the pilot case studies for EcoHomes and BDR schemes and average results.

**Further information**

To read the whole report, please visit this web address...