

# GN13: Relating ecologist's report and BREEAM

This guidance note is to be used for registered BREEAM UK New Construction 2014 and International New Construction 2016<sup>1</sup> assessments, where an ecologist has been appointed by the client and has produced an ecology report for the proposed development. The purpose of this guidance note is to help the BREEAM Assessor relate the content of the ecologist's report to the BREEAM Land Use and Ecology section criteria (assessment issues LE 02, LE 03 (UK only), LE 04 and LE 05). The guidance within this document has been produced to support the assessment of the aforementioned BREEAM issues and should not be interpreted as criteria. If the BREEAM Assessor chooses to use the template provided within this guidance note as evidence in the assessment (use of this document is optional) the assessor or the appointed suitably qualified ecologist must complete all relevant sections.

If the assessor completes the template within this guidance note the ecologist must sign the final section and complete section B1 to confirm the contents are accurate. The completed document can then be used by the BREEAM Assessor along with all relevant project documentation to demonstrate compliance with the BREEAM criteria.

There are 6 sections (sections A-F) in this document.

1. Section A requires contact details for the ecologist and developer/client.
2. Section B1 determines whether the appointed ecologist is 'suitably qualified' (as defined by BREEAM); and if not, section B2 determines whether the report has been verified by an ecologist who is 'suitably qualified'.
3. Section C determines whether the findings of the report have been based on data collected from site surveys conducted at appropriate times of the year to determine whether different species are evident.
4. If 'no' is recorded for either Section B or C then the contents of the ecology report cannot be used to determine compliance with the BREEAM criteria.
5. Section D provides the BREEAM Assessor with a template for extracting the necessary information to complete the assessment of issues LE 02, LE 03 (UK only), LE 04 and LE 05.
6. Section E provides details of the project specific documentation to be provided as evidence of compliance.
7. Section F requires the signature of the appointed suitably qualified ecologist.

Please note: it is only the appointed qualified and licensed BREEAM Assessor who can confirm the award or otherwise of a credit for a BREEAM assessment.

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1 A copy of the BREEAM New Construction manual can be downloaded from [www.breeam.com](http://www.breeam.com)

## Guidance Note

### Section A: Contact details

#### Contact details

##### Ecologist's Details

Company name:

Company address:

Contact name:

Contact telephone number:

Ecology report reference:

##### Developer/Client Details

Company name:

Company address:

Contact name:

Contact telephone number:

##### Development Details

BRE project reference number (if known):

Development name:

Development address:

## Guidance Note

### Section B1: Ecologist's qualifications

1. Do you hold a degree (or equivalent qualification, e.g. N/SVQ level 5) in ecology or a related subject?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details:

Note: Depending on the ecological content (minimum 60%), the following degrees might be considered relevant: Ecology, Biological Sciences, Zoology, Botany, Countryside Management, Environmental Sciences, Marine and Freshwater Management, Earth Sciences, Agriculture, Forestry, Geography, Landscape Management.

2. Are you a practising ecologist with a minimum of 3 years relevant experience within the last 5 years?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details:

Note: Relevant experience must clearly demonstrate a practical understanding of factors affecting ecology in relation to construction and the built environment; including, acting in an advisory capacity to provide recommendations for ecological protection, enhancement and mitigation measures.

UK Only Examples of relevant experience are: ecological impact assessments; Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA); Phase 2 habitat and fauna surveys; and habitat creation.

3. Are you bound by a professional code of conduct and subject to peer review (UK only)?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details:

Note: A full member of one of the following organisations is considered to be bound by a professional code of conduct and subject to peer review: Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM); Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM); Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA); Landscape Institute (LI); Institute of Environmental Sciences (IES).

Note: Peer review is defined as the process employed by a professional body to demonstrate that potential or current full members maintain a standard of knowledge and experience required to ensure compliance with a code of conduct and professional ethics.

If 'no' has been answered for any question in Section B1 then the BREEAM definition of a 'suitably qualified ecologist' has not been met. In such instances therefore the ecology report cannot be used to assess compliance with the BREEAM ecology issues unless it has been verified by an ecologist who does meet the definition of 'suitably qualified' (see section B2).

## Guidance Note

### Section B2: Report verification

#### Details on verifying an ecology report for a BREEAM assessment:

1. The individual verifying the report must provide written confirmation that they comply with the definition of a 'suitably qualified ecologist' (as detailed in Section B1).
2. The verifier of the report must confirm in writing they have read and reviewed the report and found it to:
  - a. represent sound industry practice
  - b. report and recommend correctly, truthfully, and objectively
  - c. be appropriate given the local site conditions and scope of works proposed
  - d. avoid invalid, biased, and exaggerated statements.

Written confirmation from the verifier on all the points detailed under 1 and 2 above (for section B2) must be provided in addition to all other information requested in this guidance and referenced in section E.

If the appointed ecologist does not meet the definition of a 'suitably qualified ecologist' and the report has not been verified by an individual who does meet the definition, then the report cannot be used as evidence of compliance with the BREEAM Land Use and Ecology section issues.

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### Section C: Site survey

Have the findings of the ecology report been based on data collected from a site survey(s)?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details to justify this (e.g. date(s) and scope of site survey(s)):

Note: The site visit(s) and survey(s) must be conducted at appropriate times of the year when it is possible to determine the presence, or evidence of the presence, of different plant and animal species.

Note: The contents of the ecology report must be representative of the site's existing ecology prior to the commencement of initial site preparation works, i.e. before RIBA Stage 5 Construction or equivalent. In the case of LE 04, the ecologist's survey would need to take place prior to the end of Concept Design stage (RIBA Stage 2 or equivalent) in order to facilitate and maximise potential ecological enhancement.

If 'no' has been answered to the question in Section C then the ecology report CANNOT be used to determine compliance with the criteria of the relevant BREEAM ecology issues.

Guidance Note

**Section D: Information to support the assessment of issues LE 02, LE 03 (UK only), LE 04 and LE 05**

**LE 02 Ecological value of land and protection of ecological features**

1. Is the land within the 'construction zone' deemed by the ecologist to be of low ecological value?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief statement explaining how it has been deemed to be of low ecological value:

Note: The construction zone is defined as any land on the site which is being developed (and therefore disturbed) for buildings, hard standing, soft landscape, site access, plus a 3m wide zone measured outward from the boundary. It also includes any areas used for temporary site storage and buildings. If it is not known exactly where buildings, hard standing, site access and temporary storage will be located it must be assumed that the construction zone is the entire site.

2. Are there any features/areas of ecological value that fall within or surround the construction zone or site boundary area?

Yes  No

Note: If the ecologist deems this area to be of low ecological value then there will be no features of ecological value requiring protection for BREEAM compliance purposes. However, if there is a feature(s) or area(s) of low ecological value that the ecologist advises to retain and enhance, e.g. a species-poor hedgerow to a species-rich hedgerow, then full details of the protection and enhancement advice should be entered under LE 04 Enhancing site ecology.

If yes, please provide a brief statement outlining the advice / recommendations given for protecting all existing features and areas of ecological value (for the UK, in line with BS 42020: 2013):

3. Has (or will) the principal contractor constructed ecological protection measures in accordance with the ecologists recommendations prior to any preliminary site construction or preparation works (e.g. clearing of the site or erection of temporary site facilities)?

Yes  No

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**LE 03 Mitigating ecological impact (UK only)**

4. Is the ecologist able to provide the following information about the site for its pre-construction and post-construction state:
- Broad habitat type(s)
  - An estimate of the number of floral species present per broad habitat type (based on appropriate census techniques and confirmed planting regimes)?

Yes  No

- a. If yes, please give a brief description of the site's landscape(s) and broad habitat type(s):

- b. Please state the total site area (in m<sup>2</sup>). This will be the same before and after development:





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Table – 3: Calculation of the Ecological Value of the Site Before Development

Broad habitat type	Area of broad habitat type (m <sup>2</sup> )		Average total taxon richness (see BREEAM issue LE 03 for definition)		Average total taxon richness x Area of broad habitat type
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
(1) Total site area =			(2) Total =		
Average total taxon richness before development =					
Average total taxon richness x area of habitat type / Total site area = (2)/(1) =					

Guidance Note

Table – 4: Calculation of the Ecological Value of the Site After Development

Broad habitat type	Area of broad habitat type (m <sup>2</sup> )		Average total tax on richness (see BREEAM issue LE 03 for definition)		Average total taxon richness x Area of broad habitat type
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
(1) Total site area =			(2) Total =		
Average total taxon richness after development =					
Average total taxon richness x area of habitat type / Total site area = (2)/(1) =					

Guidance Note

**LE 04 Enhancing site ecology**

5. Has the client / developer required the ecologist to provide advice and make recommendations for enhancing site ecology, and was the ecologist appointed to give this advice before the completion of the Preparation and Brief Stage of the project (RIBA Stage 1 or equivalent)?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief statement outlining the advice / recommendations given on enhancing the ecological value of the site:

Note: Such advice is to include, and go beyond, compliance with all current EU, local and national legislation relating to protected species and habitats.

**LE 05 Long term impact on biodiversity**

6. Was the ecologist appointed prior to commencement of development work activities on site?

Yes  No  Don't know

7. Has the client / developer given the ecologist the responsibility to confirm whether all relevant current EU, local and national legislation relating to protection and enhancement of ecology has been (or will be) complied with during the design and construction process?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide details: on all relevant current EU, local and national legislation that relates to the site:

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8. Has the developer / client requested that the ecologist produce an appropriate landscape and habitat management plan covering at least the first 5 years after project completion (in accordance with BS 42020:2013 for the UK)?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief outline of the management plan:

9. Has the client / developer required that the ecologist provides recommendations and advice to minimise detrimental impacts on site biodiversity (see LE 05 Additional measure 1)?

Yes  No  N/A

If yes, or not applicable, please briefly describe the ecologist's recommendations/advice:

Note: In addition to the information provided above the BREEAM Assessor will need to seek confirmation from the principal contractor that a Biodiversity Champion has been (or will be) nominated to implement the ecologist's advice as per the wording in LE 05.

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10. Do the responsibilities of the ecologist to the client / developer include providing advice and recommendations for the protection of ecological features (see LE 05 Additional measure 2)?

Yes  No  N/A

If yes, or not applicable, please briefly describe the ecologist's recommendations/advice:

Note: In addition to the information provided above the BREEAM Assessor will need to seek confirmation from the principal contractor that the site workforce has been (or will be) trained on the protection of ecological features in line with the ecologist's recommendations.

11. Do the ecologist's responsibilities to the client / developer include providing advice on the creation of a new ecologically valuable habitat, which is appropriate to the local area and is either nationally, regionally, or locally important, or supports nationally, regionally, or locally important biodiversity (see LE 05 Additional measure 4)

Yes  No  N/A

If yes, or not applicable, please briefly describe the ecologist's recommendations/advice:

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12. Do the ecologist's responsibilities to the client / developer include providing advice and recommendations on when site works are to be avoided so as to minimise the disturbance to wildlife (see LE 05 Additional measure 5)?

**Yes**  **No**  **N/A**

If yes, or not applicable, please briefly describe the ecologist's recommendations/advice:

Note: In addition to the information provided above the BREEAM Assessor will need to seek confirmation that the contractor has programmed site works in line with the advice given by the ecologist.

13. Of the 'additional measures' required by BREEAM, are there any which are not applicable/appropriate for the proposed site?

**Yes**  **No**  **N/A**

If yes, please state which 'additional measures' are not applicable giving reasons for the decision:

## Guidance Note

### Section E: Evidence

Evidence is required to support the above statements and confirm compliance with the BREEAM 'Land use and ecology' criteria. Such evidence might include:

- 1. The Suitably Qualified Ecologist's (or ecologist's where being verified by an SQE) site/project specific report
- 2. Written confirmation from the verifier of the ecology report (if necessary)
- 3. Any supplementary documentation e.g. maps, plans, drawings, letters / emails of correspondence, etc.

Please record the project specific information relevant for assessing and demonstrating compliance with the BREEAM Land use and Ecology issues. Please include an appropriate reference, such as ID number or document title, for each document:

Document Description	Document Reference/Title

## Guidance Note

### Section F: Signature of Validation

I confirm the information provided in this document is truthful and accurate at the time of completion.

Name/signature of ecologist:

Date: