

# EARLY CONSIDERATION NEEDED TO EFFECTIVELY ACHIEVE BREEAM RATINGS



*“A BREEAM rating is fast becoming a must for both developers and occupiers looking to gain competitive advantage. Early consideration is vital to ensure a top BREEAM rating is effectively achieved in the most cost efficient manner.”* Matt Fulford - Head of Sustainability

Increasingly, developers are recognising the commercial benefits of securing a BREEAM rating (Very Good or higher). To achieve the desired rating, a clear strategy must be conceived and implemented in the early stages of a project (Work Stage A-C) to ensure the whole process is aligned with BREEAM criteria.

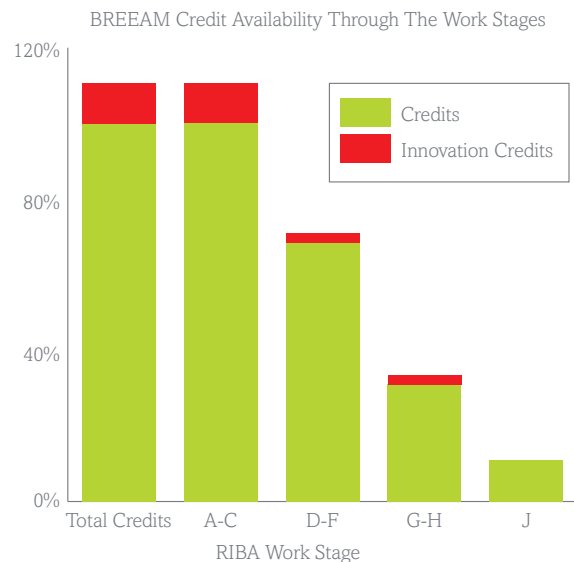
Failure to consider the impact of achieving the desired BREEAM rating in the early design stages can lead to key credits (the components of BREEAM ratings) becoming unobtainable, which can have a negative impact upon design, programme and costs.

Very few buildings will target all credits and therefore it is important to consider which credits are achievable, timely and cost effective. Essentially it is about understanding when credits are available and the stages at which ‘easy win’ credits become unobtainable.

## Availability of credits

The number of credits available diminishes significantly as the project passes through approval gateways. After outline design has been fixed the credits available reduce by up to 30%. As planning approval is typically sought within this period, re-design to meet the requirements will cause substantial programme delays, additional costs and the requirement to re-gain approvals.

Even choice of site location has an impact on securing credits, with factors including: proximity to local amenities, provision of public transport, risk of flooding and reuse of building components determined at this stage.



*“Sustainability must be considered at the start of the project, by outline design 30% of potential credits have been won or lost and these are the easiest credits to achieve.”*

During the detailed design stages of D-F a further 40% of credits are won or lost on the scheme. Proactive monitoring of the credits secured and sought should therefore be conducted as part of the regular development process. Collation of evidence must also happen to ensure the achievement of credits can be demonstrated for final certification.

By the time the contractor commences, the amount of available credits will typically reduce to around just 11%. Should a design not achieve its originally targeted credits there will be limited scope for targeting new credits, due to cost and programme implications. Late changes may also need permission from the planning authority as well as tenant approval.

### Innovation credits

The introduction of innovation credits in the latest version of BREEAM provides a potential 10% additional credits which are key to the successful and cost effective achievement of the higher BREEAM ratings of Excellent and Outstanding.

An innovation credit can be achieved in one of two ways, either by meeting exemplary performance requirements for an existing BREEAM issue or by the BREEAM Assessor making an application to BRE Global to recognise a particular building feature, system or process as ‘innovative’. The ‘exemplary performance requirements’ mean that projects need not achieve something completely new to obtain an innovation credit.

An additional 1% score for each innovation credit is available. Out of a possible 10, there are 9 BREEAM issues which contain exemplary level requirements:

- **Man 2** - Considerate Constructors
- **Hea 1** - Daylighting
- **Ene 1** - Reduction of CO2 emissions
- **Ene 5** - Low or Zero Carbon Technologies
- **Wat 2** - Water Meter
- **Mat 1** - Materials Specification
- **Mat 5** - Responsible Sourcing of Materials
- **Wst 1** - Construction Site Waste Management.

The exemplary performance option allows for a number of these ‘bonus’ credits listed above to be achieved with less of an impact than other more traditional credits.

### ‘Outstanding’ does not stop at completion

Any ‘BREEAM Outstanding’ building is required to obtain a BREEAM In Use Certificate of Performance within the first three years of the building’s operation and use (with regular reviews in accordance with that scheme) in order to maintain the rating.

Where the building is not certified against BREEAM In Use during this period, the ‘Outstanding’ rating will be downgraded to an Excellent rating upon expiry of the three years dating from the issue of the final BREEAM 2008 (Post Construction) Certificate.

Given that the BREEAM In-Use has parts which measure how the tenant is performing there will need to be requirements upon them to ensure that rating is not downgraded by their actions.

With the requirement for a BREEAM rating on projects becoming more common, sustainability should be considered throughout the whole lifecycle of a building to maximise the commercial and environmental value created.

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