eight versa

Performance, Purpose, Progress

The Transition to BREEAM Version 7

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Navigating the Transition from V6 to V7

BREEAM Version 7 (V7) introduces updates to the sustainability landscape, signalling a shift in how environmental performance is assessed and delivered in the built environment.

Developers, architects, and designers will find themselves having to enact the enhanced standards not only to maintain compliance with required ratings but also in an attempt to innovate and lead in a competitive market where most Class A buildings boast some form of certification.

This section unpacks the scope and opportunities behind BREEAM's latest iteration.

BREEAM V7 has responded to the evolving sustainability landscape by focussing on three key themes:

Decarbonisation: With a stronger focus on energy efficiency and operational energy, V7 aligns with global frameworks such as the EU Taxonomy and Net Zero commitments, as well as NABERS

More Emphasis on Real-World Impact: Addressing the persistent performance gap, V7 places more focus on operational outcomes, requiring design strategies that focus on more sophisticated approaches the wellbeing and real improvements during a building's use phase

Minimum expectations: The minimum requirements to achieve an Excellent or Outstanding rating, have increased, ensuring these best practice buildings meet operational energy and embodied carbon requirements as a minimum.

Scope of Changes: From Compliance to Performance

BREEAM V7 has somewhat moved further away from the mindset of compliance-driven assessments to rewarding more performance-oriented design and construction:

- Puts more pressure on project teams to think across the full lifecycle of a building, from conceptual design to as built and operational use.
- Encourages early-stage integration of predictive tools, like energy modelling and lifecycle analysis, as standard practice.
- Aligns better with international policies such as EU regulations and provides interoperability with competing standards such as WELL Building Standard, NABERS and Net Zero Buildings.

Opportunities for Professionals in the Built Environment

While the updates in V7 present challenges for business as usual, they also unlock opportunities for developers, architects, and designers:

- **Developers:** The alignment with global sustainability frameworks positions V7 certified projects as high-value investments, appealing to both ESG-focused financiers and tenants.
- **Architects:** Enhanced standards for natural light, materials, and flexibility promote creative solutions that elevate both functionality and sustainability.
- **Engineers and Designers:** The integration of advanced energy and water modelling drives innovation, encouraging teams to create systems that push efficiency but also provide better predictive abilities of future performance.

Framework for Understanding This Analysis

This white paper will dissect BREEAM V7's updates and evaluate their implications across key sustainability metrics. Each section will explore:

1. **What's New:** Highlighting significant updates in V7 compared to V6.
2. **Practical Impacts:** Discussing the implicit opportunities and challenges for project teams.
3. **Integrated Insights:** Offering actionable guidance and thought leadership for those navigating these changes.

Our aim is not only to understand the technical updates but to translate them into practical strategies that empower teams to meet and exceed these standards.

eight versa

PART 1

The Evolution of Sustainable Building Assessment

The release of BREEAM Version 7 (V7) introduces substantial updates, reflecting the latest evolution of sustainability assessment. By expanding the scope and updating its methodology, BREEAM V7 reinforces its focus on decarbonisation, operational performance, and lifecycle thinking.

This evolution reflects a shift in how building sustainability is conceived and measured. Increasingly it has become understood that achieving performance improvements in practice is one of the largest challenges for the built environment. Previous versions of BREEAM focused primarily on design-stage and construction stage compliance, V7 has started to build a better connection between design intent and operational outcomes.

1. Decarbonisation as a Central Pillar

Decarbonisation is at the forefront of BREEAM V7. The scheme introduces enhanced metrics for operational energy, aligning with global frameworks such as the EU Taxonomy. Significant updates include the integration of predictive energy modelling (Ene 02), stricter requirements for fossil fuel elimination (Ene 02), and refrigerant reduction (Pol 01), and additional credits for exceeding zero net regulated carbon performance (Ene 01). These adjustments signify a shift from immediate demand reduction to lifecycle considerations, emphasising real-world operational outcomes over theoretical compliance.

The update in predictive modelling (Ene 02) represents an increase in efforts to bridge the design-performance gap, with an added focus on measurable outcomes post-occupancy. While these changes streamline alignment with long-term climate targets, they also introduce complexities in implementation, particularly for smaller-scale developments or speculative builds where the client is unknown.

This evolution from theoretical compliance to operational outcomes reflects the industry's growing sophistication in addressing carbon reduction. The integration with NABERS and emphasis on measurable results demonstrates BREEAM's evolution from a certification system to a more strategic tool for carbon management. It acknowledges that sustainability cannot be achieved through design-stage considerations alone but requires ongoing commitment into operational excellence.

2. Refining the Role of Lighting Systems

Lighting, a critical component of sustainability and occupant wellbeing, sees substantial revisions in V7. The updated Hea 01 credit emphasises improved natural lighting, introducing thresholds for lux levels, horizontal sightlines, and advanced daylighting simulations. Complementing this, artificial lighting criteria under Hea 02 focuses on zoning, occupant control, and adaptive colour tuning to enhance visual comfort and energy efficiency. The introduction of credits for non-visual effects of light (Hea 03) aligns lighting design with the concept of circadian health which has gained wider proliferation as a result of the WELL Building Standard.

These updates integrate occupant wellbeing into the sustainability framework while simultaneously driving energy efficiency. The requirements for greater precision in lighting design necessitate early-stage simulation and advanced system planning, posing challenges in urban contexts where natural lighting access may be constrained.

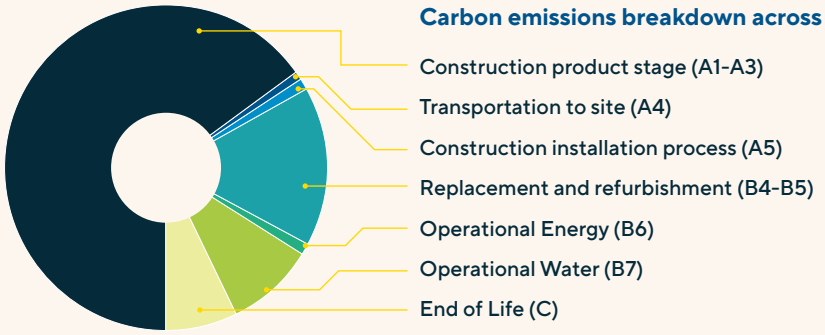
This approach to lighting reflects a deeper understanding of the interconnection between sustainability and occupant wellbeing. The move toward more nuanced metrics and adaptive systems shows how V7 is thankfully pushing the industry beyond simple efficiency measures toward holistic building performance. It recognises that sustainable buildings cannot focus solely on minimising environmental impact but also must actively contribute to occupant health and productivity.

3. Lifecycle Assessments (LCA) and Material Efficiency

BREEAM V7 redefines its approach to lifecycle assessments (Mat 01) with a credit structure that independently evaluates concept, technical, and as-built stages. This phased approach incentivises early adoption of lifecycle thinking, rewarding projects that integrate sustainability principles from initial design stages.

By embedding these requirements into the evaluation framework, BREEAM aligns with industry trends prioritising transparency and data-driven decision-making. However, the demand for comprehensive data across all phases may present logistical and financial challenges, particularly for smaller firms or those navigating fragmented supply chains.

This evolution in materials assessment methodology represents a significant step toward true circularity in construction. The staged approach recognises that material decisions have cascading impacts throughout a building's lifecycle and encourages teams to consider these implications from the earliest project phases.



4. Biodiversity and Ecological Metrics

The integration of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metrics into V7 enhances the framework's ecological focus. Early engagement in ecological assessments, combined with long-term management plans, is now critical to achieving higher ratings. This alignment simplifies compliance with regulatory standards while fostering ecological stewardship at the project level. An additional improvement from previous versions of BREEAM is that offsite ecological enhancement will be suitably rewarded under V7, where there were restrictions of awarding enhancement credits within the zone of influence, this has been adjusted to align with BNG guidance for off-site enhancement.

Despite its merits, the ecological updates introduce additional layers of complexity, requiring developers to balance initial costs with long-term benefits. Projects in dense urban settings, where biodiversity opportunities are limited, may face constraints in achieving exemplary credits.
This shift from preservation to enhancement represents a more ambitious approach to ecological sustainability. It acknowledges that the built environment must do more than minimise harm and aims to turn the focus onto actively contributing to ecological regeneration and biodiversity improvement.

5. Water and Energy Performance

The introduction of a predictive operational water consumption credit (Wat 05) reflects BREEAM's broader shift toward performance verification. The inclusion of unregulated energy considerations (Ene 06), such as lifts, further emphasises the importance of comprehensive energy modelling.

These refinements enhance the move in increasing accuracy and better operational transparency. However, they necessitate advanced predictive tools and more collaborative design processes, potentially increasing upfront costs for less resource-intensive projects. This updated approach to resources recognises that better attention to all aspects of building operation are required, and advances performance beyond what is required by building regulations.

This step also signals the start of an improved alignment between BREEAM New Construction and BREEAM In Use requirements – with exemplary performance credits awarded for committing to ongoing monitoring of this water and energy performance in-use.

Balancing Progress and Challenges

The updates in BREEAM V7 signal a clear trajectory toward aligning the built environment with global sustainability goals. By elevating standards across decarbonisation, occupant wellbeing, and ecological resilience, the framework sets new benchmarks. However, this progress is accompanied by challenges in implementation, particularly in balancing the technical and financial demands of compliance with the aspiration to achieve higher ratings.

In the context of these updates, the role of interdisciplinary collaboration becomes increasingly critical. By integrating advanced tools, lifecycle thinking, and data-driven methodologies, project teams should be able navigate all of these challenges effectively, but this does require using BREEAM V7 not merely as a compliance tool but as a project practise guide.

Moreover, the philosophy of the assessment is moving further away from individual more isolated credits to a more integrated understanding of building performance which places more emphasis on joined up thinking across themes. This approach will challenge the industry to think more holistically about sustainability and sets higher expectations to meaningful improvements in building performance.

eight versa

PART 2

Achieving BREEAM V7 – Comprehensive Strategies for Excellence

BREEAM Version 7 establishes a bolder vision for sustainable development than Version 6, requiring project teams to integrate advanced strategies that align with lifecycle sustainability, operational performance, and environmental resilience. This section outlines detailed, actionable steps to achieve compliance with BREEAM V7 credits while embedding technical innovation and holistic design principles into every project phase.

Decarbonisation: Integrated Approaches for Energy and Carbon Reduction 1

Ene 01 & Ene 02 – Operational Energy Performance and Prediction

Optimised Design Integration:

- Conduct dynamic thermal simulations during the concept stage to test façade configurations, glazing ratios, and shading strategies. Use tools like IES VE or EnergyPlus to refine building orientation and passive design features.
- Integrate high-performance insulation specifications to minimise heat loss and unwanted gains achieving the best possible energy balance, this will be rewarded in the credit methodology for Ene 01.

Hybrid Energy Systems:

- Combine rooftop PV systems with thermal energy storage to balance renewable energy generation and consumption. If the use class permits facilitate demand-response HVAC systems that can adjust loads based on real-time occupancy data.
- Use heat recovery systems in all mechanical ventilation to capture waste energy and reduce heating and cooling demands.

Verification and Alignment:

- Align predictive energy models with NABERS UK Design for Performance standard as normal operating procedure. Validate operational energy targets through post-occupancy evaluations using smart energy meters, which need to be integrated into the control strategy from early design stage.

Pol 01 – Elimination of Fossil Fuels

- Design out any gas boilers with air- or ground-source heat pumps featuring refrigerants compliant with zero ozone depletion potential (ODP) and GWP < 10.
- Incorporate electric heating solutions (of all types) in lieu of gas as the carbon factor of gas will result in lower credits. Where possible power heating by on-site renewables to eliminate fossil fuel dependency.
- Explore modular microgrid systems that support distributed energy storage and generation for mixed-use developments.

Lifecycle Thinking and Material Efficiency: Circularity in Practice 2

Mat 01 – Whole-Building Lifecycle Assessments

Comprehensive LCAs:

- Conduct phased LCAs during the concept, technical, and as-built stages. Focus on high-impact materials like concrete, steel, and cladding systems to achieve meaningful reductions in embodied carbon, ensure the structural engineer participates in the process and has a good grasp of material efficiency.
- Use parametric analysis tools to compare material options and optimise for embodied carbon and lifecycle cost.

Low-Carbon and Recyclable Materials:

- Specify materials with Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and certified to standards such as BES 6001 for responsible sourcing.
- Prioritise bio-based materials such as cross-laminated timber (CLT) or hempcrete for structural elements where feasible.
- Implement modular design principles and reversible connections to enable future reuse or recycling.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

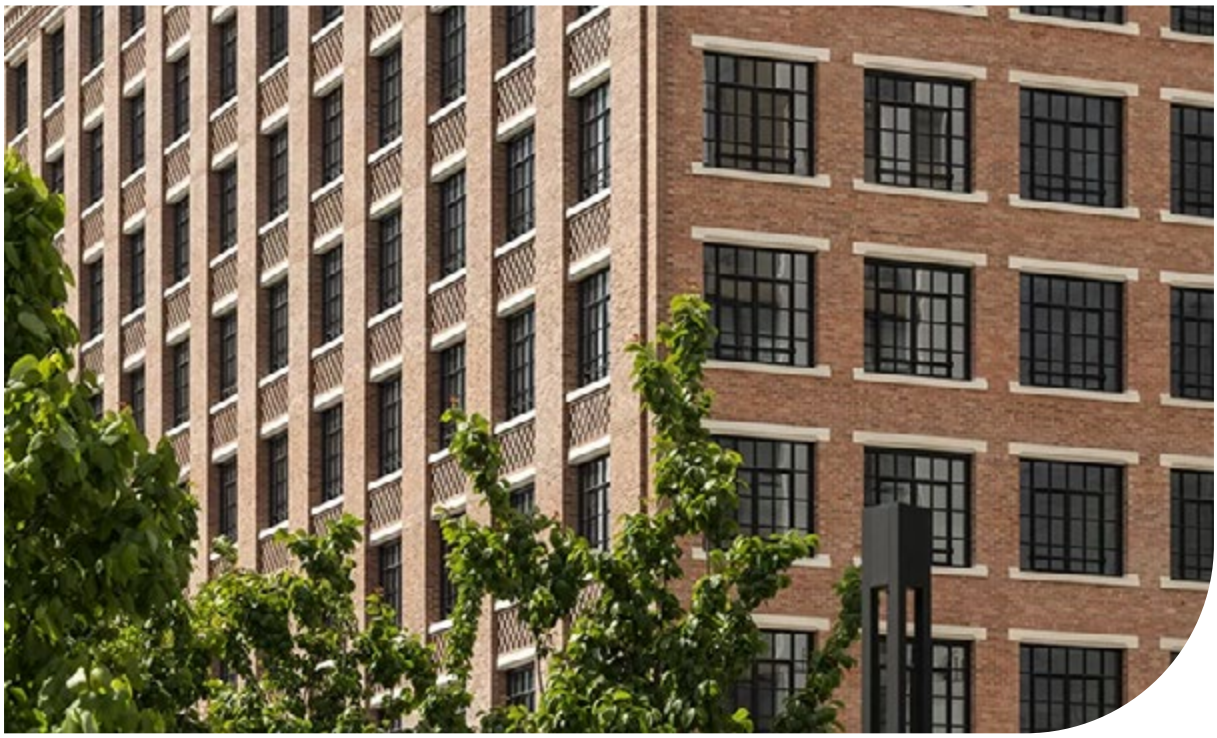
- Set embodied carbon reduction targets aligned with exemplary benchmarks (<300 $kgCO_2e/m^2$ for specific building typologies). Demonstrate performance using comparative analysis against industry standards, refer to the latest UK Net Zero Building Standard for benchmarks.

Waste Reduction and Circular Economy Principles

- Include on-site crushing and reuse of concrete and masonry waste for subbase materials wherever possible.
- Design for disassembly by specifying bolted connections, modular elements, and prefabricated systems that simplify future refurbishment or repurposing.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

- Secure exemplary credits by achieving a 95% diversion rate of construction waste from landfill through on-site material reuse and advanced waste sorting techniques.



Operational Transparency: Closing the Performance Gap 3

Ene 02 & Wat 05 – Predictive and In-Use Performance

Real-Time Monitoring Systems:

- Equip buildings with IoT-enabled meters to track energy and water use in real-time. Link these systems to a centralised BMS for dynamic adjustments and predictive maintenance. Ensure that these systems feature as a dedicated part of the commissioning process.
- Use AI-driven analytics to detect inefficiencies, such as HVAC underperformance or water leaks, ensuring alignment with predictive benchmarks.

Occupant Engagement:

- Provide app-based dashboards for tenants, enabling them to monitor their consumption patterns and take corrective actions. Include incentives, such as gamified achievements, for reducing energy and water use.

Post-Occupancy Verification:

- Conduct performance evaluations at 12 and 24 months post-handover. Use collected data to recalibrate predictive models and refine operational practices.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

- Achieve exemplary credits by implementing continuous monitoring systems that demonstrate a 10% improvement in operational energy efficiency over predictive benchmarks.

Biodiversity and Site Stewardship: Beyond Compliance 4

LUE 01 & LUE 04 – Site Selection and Enhancing Site Ecology

GIS-Based Planning:

- Use geospatial analysis tools to identify high-value biodiversity opportunities and align interventions with statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.
- Overlay ecological data with climate risk models to prioritise resilient interventions, such as planting drought-resistant species in urban heat islands.

Integrated Green Infrastructure:

- Design multifunctional landscapes that provide ecological value alongside social amenities, such as bioswales doubling as green walkways or wetlands integrated with recreational areas.

Advanced Monitoring:

- Deploy automated wildlife cameras, sound sensors, or drone surveys to track biodiversity gains post-construction. Align monitoring outputs with long-term ecological management plans.

Ongoing monitoring of biodiversity opportunities

- Ensure ecologist appointment enables continual engagement throughout the project to monitor and record considerations with key stakeholders throughout planning, design and construction stages.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

- Achieve exemplary credits by demonstrating a 20% increase in site biodiversity value compared to baseline conditions, validated through post-occupancy monitoring and third-party audits.

Water Efficiency and Resilience 5

Wat 01 & Wat 05 – Water Consumption and Predictive Modelling

Integrated Water Systems:

- Combine greywater recycling with rainwater harvesting to offset potable water demand. Design dual-feed plumbing systems to seamlessly integrate these supplies.
- Include automated controls for irrigation systems that respond to soil moisture levels, minimising overuse.

Advanced Leak Detection:

- Install smart sensors capable of detecting micro-leaks and providing real-time alerts. Integrate these systems with the BMS to automate shutoff in case of significant leaks.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

- Achieve exemplary credits by demonstrating a 40% reduction in water use compared to benchmarks. Use ultra-low-flow fixtures and pre-calibrated plumbing systems to ensure compliance.

Health, Wellbeing, and Lighting Excellence 6

Hea 01, Hea 03 & Hea 06 – Natural Light, Circadian Lighting, and Acoustic Comfort

Daylight and Visual Comfort:

- Use parametric tools like Radiance or Grasshopper to model daylight penetration and ensure compliance with lux level thresholds. Incorporate prismatic glazing or automated blinds to balance daylight and glare control.
- Align room layouts and window placements to optimise natural light for priority spaces, such as workstations and communal areas.

Circadian-Optimised Lighting:

- Specify LED lighting systems with tuneable colour temperatures (2,700K to 6,500K) that mimic natural light cycles, supporting occupant circadian health.
- Integrate daylight sensors that adjust artificial lighting based on external conditions, reducing energy use while maintaining comfort.

Acoustic Excellence:

- Design partitions with double-layered gypsum boards and insulation to improve sound insulation (Rw > 50 dB). Use vibration-damping mounts for building services to minimise noise transmission.

Exemplary Credit Insight:

- Secure exemplary credits by achieving compliance with WELL Building Standard metrics for daylight autonomy, circadian rhythm support, and sound insulation levels exceeding minimum thresholds.

Leadership Through BREEAM V7

This integrated approach provides project teams with a roadmap to achieving and exceeding BREEAM V7 compliance. At the heart of our approach is the philosophy that technical excellence and sustainability are not endpoints but continuous, iterative processes. By combining predictive analytics, lifecycle integration, and occupant-centric design, we redefine what is possible within the built environment.

Our philosophy emphasises collaboration, adaptability, and innovation as key drivers of success. We encourage project teams to embrace a mindset where every project phase – from concept to operation – is an opportunity to align environmental performance with societal value. Through this lens, BREEAM V7 compliance becomes more than a requirement; it evolves into a framework for creating resilient, impactful, and future-ready spaces.

By adopting this philosophy, all project team disciplines can play a role in elevating the built environment to new levels of performance and purpose.

eight versa

PART 3

Case Studies: Navigating the Transition from BREEAM V6 to V7

The case studies on the following pages illustrate the process of uplifting projects from BREEAM Version 6 to Version 7, highlighting the challenges and opportunities inherent in this transition. By focusing on specific technical adjustments and strategic approaches, they provide a blueprint for navigating the enhanced requirements of V7.

The purpose is to demonstrate how thoughtful application of the updated framework can address increased sustainability demands while adding measurable value to projects. These examples offer actionable insights for teams seeking to embrace V7's upgrades without overextending resources or compromising project budgets.

CASE STUDY 1

Mixed-Use Urban Development

Project Scope:
A high-density mixed-use development in a metropolitan area, combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces.

Key Challenges:
- Limited access to natural light in densely populated areas.
- Balancing high energy demands with stringent decarbonisation targets.
- Mitigating ecological impacts on a constrained urban site.

Performance under BREEAM V6:
- Lighting: Achieved daylighting credits under Hea 01 through standard façade designs and light-transmitting materials. Artificial lighting systems complied with basic zoning and energy-efficiency standards.
- Energy and Decarbonisation: The project incorporated passive design strategies and a limited renewable energy system, achieving Ene 01 compliance. Fossil fuel systems were permitted without penalty.
- Ecology: Minimal integration of biodiversity features. Compliance with ecological credits was achieved primarily through basic landscaping measures and biodiversity action plans.

Outcome: The project achieved a BREEAM "Excellent" rating, reflecting a balanced approach to sustainability that met the framework's thresholds.

Performance under BREEAM V7:
Under the revised V7 standards, the project faced new challenges to maintain its "Excellent" rating due to stricter requirements in energy, lighting, and biodiversity.

1. Lighting Optimisation:
- Revised Hea 01 criteria necessitated advanced daylighting simulations to comply with stricter horizontal sightline and lux thresholds. Adjustments to façade designs, including the integration of light shelves and optimised window-to-wall ratios, improved natural light penetration while minimising glare.
- Adaptive artificial lighting systems with zoning, manual dimming, and colour tuning capabilities were required to meet Hea 02 and Hea 03, adding complexity to the design phase.

2. Decarbonisation:
- Predictive energy modelling tools were employed to meet the new Ene 02 operational energy benchmarks.
- A rooftop photovoltaic (PV) system was expanded to eliminate reliance on fossil fuels, aligning with Pol 01's fossil fuel-free mandate. Additional investment was required to integrate a more robust renewable energy infrastructure.

3. Biodiversity Enhancements:
- Green roofs and vertical gardens were implemented to address revised ecological standards. These features provided habitats for urban wildlife and mitigated the heat island effect.
- Early-stage ecological assessments guided the selection of native plant species to align with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

Outcome: Under V7, the project's initial configuration would have dropped to a "Very Good" rating due to gaps in energy performance and biodiversity features. To maintain its "Excellent" rating, substantial enhancements were required, including advanced lighting systems, expanded renewable energy integration, and improved biodiversity strategies. These measures increased upfront costs but ensured compliance with the revised framework and enhanced the project's market appeal.

CASE STUDY 2

Industrial Warehouse & Distribution centre

Project Scope:
An industrial logistics facility designed to prioritise operational efficiency and meet BREEAM certification requirements under both V6 and V7.

Performance under BREEAM V6:
- Energy: Achieved credits under Ene 01 by optimising building envelope performance and installing a limited array of rooftop photovoltaic (PV) systems. The focus was on energy demand reduction without predictive modelling.
- Materials: Compliance with Mat 01 achieved through basic lifecycle assessments (LCA) covering the concept phase. Benchmark comparisons were not mandatory.
- Biodiversity and Ecology: The project had a high biodiversity baseline, and despite substantial planting, including hundreds of trees, and committing to off-site enhancement contributions, the scheme achieved minimal BREEAM biodiversity enhancements, sufficient to meet maximum V6 ecological credit thresholds.
- Water and Waste: Standard water efficiency measures and recycling facilities ensured compliance under Wat 01 and Wst 01.

Outcome: The project achieved an "Outstanding" rating with a score of 94.4%, reflecting its performance under V6's comparatively lenient benchmarks

Performance under BREEAM V7:
Transitioning to V7 required significant adjustments to maintain an "Outstanding" rating due to the introduction of stricter benchmarks for energy performance, lifecycle assessments, and ecological standards.

1. Energy and Decarbonisation:
- Predictive energy modelling (Ene 02) was introduced to align operational energy performance with NABERS standards. Additional resources were required to conduct risk assessments and third-party validations.
- The rooftop PV system was expanded to meet Pol 01's zero fossil fuel requirements and Ene 01's exemplary performance benchmarks for renewable energy generation.
- Flexible demand response and HVAC control systems were implemented to address new Ene 07 and Ene 08 credits.

2. Materials and Lifecycle Thinking:
- Mat 01 required full lifecycle assessments across all project phases (concept, technical design, and as-built). Benchmark comparisons were conducted to achieve exemplary credits, adding complexity to the materials selection process.

3. Biodiversity Enhancements:
- The ecological strategy was fully aligned with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. Native planting schemes, off-site enhancement commitments and long-term ecological management plans were implemented to secure exemplary credits.

4. Water Use:
- The project adopted operational water use prediction tools (Wat 05) to achieve exemplary credits for in-use water performance targets and monitoring systems.

Outcome: Under V7, the project's score initially dropped to 86.4%, jeopardising its "Outstanding" rating. To regain compliance, significant investments were made in predictive modelling, renewable energy systems, and ecological strategies. These measures enabled the project to meet the revised benchmarks, preserving its "Outstanding" status while demonstrating resilience and alignment with contemporary sustainability expectations.

Key Insights from Prologis' Transition:
- The shift from V6 to V7 highlights the importance of integrating advanced tools like predictive energy and water modelling early in the design process.
- Aligning with stricter decarbonisation and biodiversity metrics requires not only technological upgrades but also cross-disciplinary collaboration among design, engineering, and ecological teams.
- While the additional requirements increase upfront costs, they also future-proof the project against regulatory changes and enhance its appeal to sustainability-focused stakeholders.

CASE STUDY 3

Educational Campus with High Occupant Wellbeing Standards

Project Scope:
A new build student residential scheme with adjacent teaching facility to include laboratories, lecture theatre and teaching spaces. The scheme was designed to maximise on WLC and circular economy principles whilst meeting high levels of occupant well-being.

Performance under BREEAM V6:
- Energy & Carbon: The scheme has maximised on energy performance, circularity and whole life carbon principles to achieve full credits across the energy and materials sections of the project.
- Wellbeing: wellbeing is at the heart of this scheme, with the design implementing lightwells and glazed partitions to maximise views out and natural daylight across a deep floor plate. The scheme goes beyond BREEAM wellbeing requirements to align with the WELL Standard.
- Landscape and connectivity: as the scheme is part of wider campus regeneration, the development maximises BNG targets with the soft landscaping design and includes various sustainable transport measures.

Outcome: The design at planning is on target to achieve an "Outstanding" rating with a score of 95%, reflecting its performance under V6's comparatively lenient benchmarks

Performance under BREEAM V7:
- Energy and Decarbonisation: with ambitious targets set for both energy performance and carbon reductions in the initial scheme for planning, and across the University's campuses – the scheme continues to perform well against the BREEAM energy and materials criteria. A Zero Carbon Transition Plan will also be developed to meet exemplary level performance.
- Wellbeing enhancements: considerations have already been made to improve the natural and artificial lighting quality in the building to align with The WELL Standard, enabling credits to be maximised within the health & wellbeing section of V7.
- Operational performance: to close the 8-10% difference between the target score under V6 and V7, the team will work closely with the university and PBSA operator to implement smart systems and controls that enable management and monitoring of energy and water and agree commitments for ongoing monitoring after project completion to maximise operational performance.

Outcome: Due to the ambitious targets of the scheme, the project is just able to maintain its "Outstanding" rating. With the inclusion of energy demand systems, measuring operational performance and agreeing commitments with the University & PBSA operator on disclosing operational performance levels, the scheme can achieve almost the same rating under V7 as targeted under V6.

Key Insights: the scheme was delivering a great performance baseline under V6, and was continuing to perform well under V7. The key to close the gap on the comparative score was to focus on how to maximise opportunities for operational performance – working with the end users to implement infrastructure and commitments for ongoing reporting.

eight versa

PART 4

Conclusion – Redefining Sustainability with BREEAM V7

BREEAM Version 7 is not so much a revolution but an important evolution—an upgrade designed to reflect the growing complexity of sustainability challenges. Its value lies not in the framework itself but in how it is applied. Success under V7 depends on a nuanced, informed approach that goes beyond compliance to leverage its tools for measurable, long-term impact.

The Value Proposition for Stakeholders:

The strategic implications of BREEAM V7 extend beyond certification. For developers, architects, and designers, the framework offers a pathway to:

Market Differentiation: Projects achieving BREEAM V7 certification stand out in a crowded market, appealing to investors, tenants, and end-users prioritising sustainability.

Long-Term Resilience: Enhanced focus on lifecycle thinking, operational transparency, and ecological stewardship ensures buildings remain adaptable and relevant over time.

Innovation and Leadership: By meeting V7's requirements, stakeholders demonstrate a commitment to excellence, positioning themselves as leaders in the sustainable development sector.

Our approach focuses on integrating technical insights with practical, achievable strategies that align with each project's goals. By embedding sustainability into every stage of the project lifecycle, from design to operation, we are able to turn the incremental improvements of V7 into tangible results that benefit clients and occupants.

For those ready to use BREEAM V7 as a catalyst, the opportunity is clear: to not just meet standards, but to lead by example, delivering buildings that balance performance, resilience, and value.

Get in Touch

If you'd like to know more about how your organisation can decarbonise in a real and credible way, get in touch at **020 7043 0418** or email us at **info@eightversa.com** and our friendly experts can support you no matter what stage you are at.

About Eight Versa

Eight Versa is a multi-disciplinary sustainability consultancy with the expertise to deliver strategy, planning, implementation, and compliance. Eight Versa's multidisciplinary team of consultants, architects, engineers, and ecologists rely upon cross-industry experience and in-depth knowledge to find bespoke solutions for both the corporate and built environment.

eight versa