

BREEAM UK New Construction 2018 Ecology Assessment - Route 1 Methodology

Applicability of this Guidance Note

This guidance note is applicable to BREEAM UK New Construction 2018.

The relevance of this document to a project undergoing an assessment under this scheme is dependent on the version of the scheme being used. Reference should be made to the scheme Technical Manual to determine this. Where there is no reference to this document, the method set out here is not relevant and cannot be used to demonstrate compliance with the assessment criteria in those versions of those schemes.

Where the term Assessor is used in this document this refers to the BREEAM Assessor.

This Guidance Note is only applicable to projects undergoing assessment of Ecology issues under Route 1 (See below for further details)

Purpose and Scope of this Guidance Note

This guidance note provides guidance on the methodology to be adopted by Route 1 assessments for each of the core assessment issues relating to ecology. It forms a part of the technical manual, which means the methodology and process described are an integral part of these scheme requirements.

There are four core assessment issues within the UK New Construction scheme which relate to ecology:

LE 02 Identifying and understanding the risk and opportunities for the project

LE 03 Managing negative impacts on ecology

LE 04 Change and enhancement of ecological value

LE 05 Long term ecology management and maintenance

There are two assessment routes that can be used to achieve credits in these core ecology issues across relevant schemes:

Route 1: For sites where ecological opportunities and risks are limited in nature

This route is only appropriate where the level of ecological risk associated with the site can be understood and addressed by a project team member using general observation, non-specialist knowledge and publicly available resources and information. This is determined by completing the Ecological Risk Evaluation Checklist (GN34).

Applicability of Route 2 Methodology for Route 1 Projects

Route 2 is the more comprehensive route of assessment and is only available through the use of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist as it requires specialist input. More detailed information is provided in GN36. In many cases this route is likely to be unnecessarily onerous for Route 1 assessment projects, but in instances where a simpler project is willing and able to achieve additional ecological enhancement, Route 2 remains an option worth considering. GN36 sets out the detailed methodology for Route 2. Where Route 1 is pursued initially and it is subsequently decided that Route 2 should be followed, the Suitably Qualified Ecologist appointed should review all evidence available for the issues already assessed to confirm the actions taken were appropriate.

How this guidance note relates to the assessment issues

The information in this guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant scheme manual. The sections in this document constitute the methodology sections in the assessment issues (where these exist).

LE 02 Identifying and understanding the risk and opportunities for the project

Survey and evaluation

Completion of the BREEAM Ecological Risk Evaluation Checklist acts as the survey and evaluation for this route. Where this indicates that Route 1 can be used, no further survey and evaluation work is required.

Determining the ecological outcome for the site – Project team liaison and collaboration with relevant stakeholders

To get an effective outcome which promotes ecology on the site, it is important to liaise with the relevant people, throughout key stages of the project including those who have the knowledge to help determine how the project can contribute to local ecology.

Project team members should liaise with each other and other stakeholders at appropriate times to determine appropriate options for the site in question. This process should take place throughout the project, particularly when key decisions that could impact ecology are being made. Stakeholders would include but are not limited to:

- a. The client, owner, occupier
- b. Design, project, facilities team, specialist consultants (where appropriate)
- c. Relevant local stakeholders should be consulted to determine appropriate options for the site in question including but not limited to:
 - i. Local government and other statutory relevant organisations
 - ii. Local community groups / organisations / charities - examples could include:
 1. The Wildlife Trusts
 2. Local, regional and / or national fauna focused groups (e.g. Bug life, RSPB, Bat Conservation Trust etc.)

Determining the ecological outcome for the site - Considerations during liaison discussions

The following should be part of the liaison discussions to identify appropriate solutions and measures that optimise each of the following considerations:

- a. Ecological benefit offered (pre, during and post asset maintenance / project completion)
- b. Contribution of the site to local biodiversity goals taking into consideration quality, connectivity and fragmentation of local habitats
- c. Opportunities to enhance the value of existing habitats and biodiversity in the vicinity, or to restore or add new features of ecological value to local biodiversity
- d. Wider community and end user involvement benefits

Determining the ecological outcomes for the site – Identification and selection of solutions and measures

Various aspects need to be considered when identifying the appropriate solutions and measures, to ensure they have long term feasibility and successful implementation.

- a. To identify, appraise and agree appropriate actions for achieving optimal ecological outcomes with appropriate stakeholders (identified in section 1.1), the following need to be considered, appropriate to the scope and scale of the project: Ecological value and biodiversity, accounting for:
 - i. Local priorities
 - ii. Long term viability of the outcome/option
 - iii. Alignment with the sites function, amenity and value.
- b. Practicality, including consideration of:
 - i. Timing and duration of implementing and realising the outcome
 - ii. Long term management and maintenance implications, and outline costs
 - iii. Opportunities and barriers arising from management structures and procurement processes.
 - iv. Availability of appropriate skills, budgets and other resources at all stages.

LE 03 - Managing negative impacts on ecology

Hierarchy for managing negative impacts on site

The following hierarchy must be followed when managing negative impacts of the site preparation and construction works:

- a. Avoidance of negative impacts on habitats and features of ecological value on the site.
- b. If it is not possible for avoidance of negative impacts, protect habitats and features of ecological value from damage in accordance with best practice guidelines during development works.

Planning, liaison, implementation and roles and responsibilities

It is important to be clear who is doing what and when, to ensure that it happens and has value during the operation of the asset/development.

Roles and responsibilities are established, as appropriate to the scale of the project, to ensure delivery of actions for managing impacts on ecology. Defined roles and responsibilities must cover the following:

- a. Relationships and management required for implementation, including clear ownership of tasks.
- b. When the roles and responsibilities apply
- c. Resources required, including financial, time, technical and skills and when these apply.
- d. Procedures for monitoring and feedback of the actions being implemented, for continual improvement, including external monitoring by key stakeholders where appropriate.
- e. Handover and collaborative activities where responsibility is transferred or shared, including transition to long term management and maintenance.

Timescales

To get the best result, planting and other solutions or actions should be implemented at the right time of year.

Timescales should take into consideration the following:

- a. Ecological seasonality requirements (such as tree, shrub planting seasons, breeding, nesting and hibernation periods) as set out by stakeholders and/or best practice guidance from relevant national bodies and
- b. Any other time limitations that may impact on successful implementation

Note: 'Local expertise' can advise where this is unclear.

LE 04 Change and enhancement of ecological value

Appropriate solutions and measures

Appropriate solutions and measures would vary from one site to another but may include:

- a. Implementing relevant recommendations from Biodiversity actions plans
- b. Planting of ecologically appropriate species or those with a known attraction or benefit to local wildlife
- c. Adopting horticultural good practice (e.g. no or low use of residual pesticides)
- d. Installing features to encourage existing local wildlife (such as nesting, roosting insect boxes) at appropriate locations on the site
- e. Increasing the porosity and texture of surfaces on site to encourage wildlife
- f. Introducing water into the environment to encourage birds and other wildlife
- g. Only ecologically appropriate floral species or those with a known attraction or benefit to local wildlife for the purpose of enhancing the ecological value of the site, except where explicitly recommended by an ecologist (justification must be provided).

This list is not exhaustive and is provided for illustration purposes only.

Recommendations made should be locally relevant to the site and its zone of influence

LE 05 Long term ecology management and maintenance

Tenant/ occupier/ building manager

- a. This information pack should include the following content, as appropriate:
- b. Details of the ecological value within the property boundary (e.g. public and private gardens, green roofs), common areas (e.g. communal garden), and the surrounding area (e.g. public recreational space)
- c. The benefits of the ecological value to the occupants and the broader community
- d. Guidance on how the occupants can make the most of the local ecology and contribute to its management, e.g. planting ecologically appropriate species in their property, as well as things that should be avoided doing (e.g. disrupting wildlife corridors);
- e. Highlight relevant actions that can be taken to enhance value within the property that is owned or occupied to help ensure its ongoing management and maintenance.
- f. Contact details for those responsible for the management and maintenance of the local ecology and sources of local information on biodiversity and ecological management including management companies and local wildlife trusts.

The approach taken and considerations made should be appropriate to the scope and scale of the project. This is likely to necessitate the interpretation and therefore assessment of points in a simpler way relevant for the project. This may also result in some points not being applicable. Depending on the option selected, specialist input may be required to adequately consider certain points.