

GRESB Building Certification Evaluation

PDF copy of survey

Change log

This document is an offline, PDF version of the survey certification bodies are requested to complete. The current version of the survey of and the latest updates on GRESB's building certification evaluation process are available on this [webpage](#).

| Version | Description of updates |
|---------------------|---|
| 1.0 19 June 2025 | Original publication. |
| 1.1 2 February 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Updated timeline to reflect alignment of building certification evaluation process with the planned evolution of the Real Estate Standard, targeted in 2028.Updates to reflect improvements to survey functionality, written responses and file uploads can now be completed on the same page. <p>No changes to evaluation criteria.</p> |

Introduction

This survey is the first step for certification bodies to demonstrate alignment with GRESB's Building Certification Evaluation Criteria. It includes an initial eligibility check and a series of questions on brand-related information to be submitted to GRESB for review.

The survey has two main sections:

- **Section 1: Eligibility (6 questions)** – for a certification body to check whether underlying certification schemes are eligible to be recognized in the GRESB Real Estate Standard.
- **Section 2: Brand Criteria (9 questions)** – for a certification body to demonstrate brand-level alignment with the GRESB criteria.

Once completed successfully, a certification body can proceed to submitting scheme-level information in a separate survey, the details of which will become available later in 2026. GRESB aims to run the evaluation process across 2025-27 with an updated list of recognized certification schemes scheduled to be implemented in the 2028 Standard.

For any questions, comments, or feedback on GRESB's building certification evaluation process, please email info@gresb.com.

Definitions

- A **brand** refers to the body responsible for overseeing and administering various certification schemes (e.g. USGBC - LEED, BRE - BREEAM, GBCA - Green Star).
- A **scheme** refers to a structured set of criteria and requirements designated to evaluate and certify the achievements of a building (e.g. LEED BD+C, BREEAM In-Use, Green Star Performance).

Instructions

GRESB's [Building Certification Evaluation Criteria](#) provide an industry-accepted, globally applicable framework to evaluate the quality of building certifications. The criteria, published in December 2024, were developed through industry engagement to reflect current investor expectations for building certifications. This survey is based on the criteria and enables certification bodies to submit information to GRESB in response to it.

Evidence requirements

Certification bodies are requested to provide short statements (less than 250 words) and supporting evidence in response to each question. Examples of supporting evidence have been provided to streamline the process. Evidence should be readily available and is not expected to be produced for the purpose of this evaluation.

Nonetheless, it is recommended that certification bodies dedicate sufficient time and expertise to prepare a quality submission for GRESB review. An offline version of this survey is available in PDF on this [webpage](#) to help certification bodies prepare their submission [i.e. this document].

Once completed, the submitted information will be reviewed by GRESB and an outcome will be communicated to the certification body within four to six weeks.

Evaluation outcome

A certification body is required to demonstrate alignment for all questions. If alignment is not achieved for any question, the evaluation outcome will be deemed unsuccessful.

- If **unsuccessful**, GRESB will advise the certification body of specific criteria where alignment has not been fully demonstrated. The certification body will have the opportunity to respond and resubmit information for a second round of evaluation from GRESB.

If the evaluation outcome remains unsuccessful, the brand and its underlying schemes will not be recognized by GRESB. A new submission can be made one year after the initial unsuccessful attempt.

- If **successful**, the certification body will have passed the brand-level evaluation and will be requested to proceed to submitting information relating to the scope and stringency of affiliated scheme(s). Details of the scheme-level evaluation will be provided at the point of communicating the successful brand outcome.

Please note that certification bodies are not allowed to promote completion of the brand-level evaluation as equivalent to GRESB-recognition. This is on the basis that GRESB recognizes certification schemes in the GRESB Standard, so a brand must have completed the scheme-level evaluation to make any valid claims of GRESB-recognition.

Public disclosure

To ensure transparency of the evaluation process, GRESB will publish all written responses submitted by certification bodies that successfully demonstrate alignment with the criteria – supporting evidence will not be published. This information will provide a central repository for consistent data points, helping to improve industry's understanding and comparison of building certifications globally.

Review timeline

| | |
|---------------|---|
| June 2025 | Brand-level survey launched for certification bodies to complete. |
| Late 2026 | Details of the scheme-level review expected to become available. |
| December 2027 | Updated list of recognized certification schemes finalised for implementation in the 2028 Standard onwards. |

Transition plan

- **2026 and 2027 Standards** – the current list of recognized certification schemes (found in [Appendix 7](#) of the 2025 GRESB Reference Guide) will continue to be valid for the 2026 and 2027 GRESB Real Estate Standards. This list of recognized schemes is effectively frozen and no further changes are anticipated.
- **2028 Standard onwards** – an updated list of recognized certification schemes will be implemented in the 2028 GRESB Real Estate Standard. All certification bodies are required to demonstrate alignment with the updated criteria by December 2027 to be included in this list.

Please note, as of December 2025, the implementation timeline has been extended by one year to align with the planned evolution of the Real Estate Standard targeted in 2028. This alignment serves to further smoothen the transition to an updated list of recognized certification schemes by providing an additional year where the current list remains unchanged.

However, all certification bodies are encouraged to complete the evaluation process as early as possible to provide the industry with confirmation of their GRESB recognition status moving forward. A running tracker on the status of certifications is available on this [webpage](#) and will be updated throughout the evaluation process.

Contact

For any questions, comments, or feedback on GRESB's building certification evaluation process, please email info@gresb.com.

Company Information

Description: This section is for informational purposes only and will not form part of the evaluation process.

The information collected on the brand will be made publicly available to help improve industry's understanding and comparison of building certifications globally.

| | |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Primary contact name: [short answer] |
| 2. | Primary contact position title: [short answer] |
| 3. | Primary contact email: [short answer] |
| 4. | Brand name: [short answer] |
| 5. | Year in which the brand was established: [date] |
| 6. | Country in which the brand is headquartered: [short answer] |
| 7. | Regions in which the brand operates: [multiple choice: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Oceania] |
| 8. | Please include a short overview of the brand (100 words max): [short answer] |
| 9. | Please indicate the number of affiliated certification schemes that are expected to be submitted to GRESB as part of the scheme-level review. For any schemes where a certification body is unsure of its relevance to the GRESB Real Estate Standard, please check <i>Section 1: Eligibility</i> of this survey. [multiple choice: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more] |
| 10. | Please indicate the total number of real estate assets certified in 2024 by the schemes indicated in the previous question: [short answer] |

Section 1: Eligibility

Description: This section is for a certification body to check whether underlying certification schemes are eligible to be recognized in the GRESB Real Estate Standard.

Certification bodies are required to review and confirm that any schemes to be submitted to GRESB meet all of the following criteria (supporting evidence is not required for this section). It is understood that certification bodies may have multiple underlying schemes, some of which may not be submitted to GRESB – these do not need to be considered as part of this section.

The eligibility of schemes is required to be confirmed prior to proceeding with this survey.

1.1 Certification

To be recognized by GRESB, a building certification must have an assessment process in place that verifies compliance with established sustainability criteria using an independent third-party for verification.

It therefore excludes:

- Self-assessments or self-declared labels.
- Checklists without established criteria for compliance.
- Initiatives without measurable pass/fail criteria.
- Assessments without third-party verification.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No]

1.2 Sustainability scope

To be recognized by GRESB, a building certification must be based on sustainability criteria and evaluate at least one high-materiality topic as specified in Table 5 of GRESB's [Building Certification Evaluation Criteria](#).

It therefore excludes:

- Other building certifications that do not prioritize sustainability.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No]

1.3 Real estate specific

To be recognized by GRESB, a building certification must be developed for the real estate sector.

It therefore excludes:

- Certifications related to other sectors e.g., infrastructure.
- Certifications related to corporate or organizational practices e.g., B Corp.
- Certifications related to processes e.g., ISO14001.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No]

1.4 Certification at the asset level

To be recognized by GRESB, a building certification must be applied at the asset level.

It therefore excludes:

- Certifications of portfolios where buildings are not individually certified or building-level data is aggregated.
- Community, neighborhood, or other district-level certifications where buildings are not individually certified.
- Product-level certifications.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No]

1.5 Independently developed

To be recognized by GRESB, a building certification must have independently developed sustainability criteria.

It therefore excludes:

- In-house ratings based on internally developed criteria.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No]

1.6 Building life phases

To be recognized by GRESB, a **design & construction** building certification (new build, refurbishment, and interiors) must cover both the design and construction phases of projects.

It therefore excludes:

- Certifications covering design stage only.
- Certifications achieved prior to practical completion.

Note, this is not applicable to operational certifications which assess buildings in-use.

Please confirm that the above criteria shall be met for all building certification schemes to be submitted to GRESB. [Yes/No/N/A – operational certifications only]

Please provide commentary for any special circumstances where any of the six eligibility criteria may not be considered fully met (250 words max). Note the eligibility criteria will be reviewed in detail for each individual scheme at the scheme-level evaluation. [text box]

Section 2: Brand Criteria

Description: This section is for a certification body to demonstrate brand-level alignment with the GRESB criteria.

There are nine questions in this section. Certification bodies are required to provide a short statement (250 words or less) and supporting evidence in response to each question. Users can save their responses as they complete each question.

2.1 Technical development supervision

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized brand must have an advisory board or steering committee accredited to oversee the technical development of the underlying scheme(s).

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure that the technical development of building certification schemes is overseen by a group of experts.

Example supporting evidence: Excerpt(s) from website, governance framework. Note that sensitive information (e.g., names) may be redacted from the documents.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.2 Conflict of interest

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized brand must have a conflict of interest management process or policy to uphold impartiality and integrity in decision-making processes.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure that the certification body can effectively manage conflicts of interest as they arise, preventing undue influence from specific stakeholders on general decision-making.

Example supporting evidence: Excerpt(s) from website, policy document.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.3 Development and continuous improvement

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized brand must develop, maintain, and review schemes periodically to incorporate best practices, new technologies and based on the latest scientific research.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure that building certifications remain responsive to the latest industry developments and continue to reflect best practices.

Certification bodies can demonstrate alignment by evidencing the periodic updates made to a representative scheme(s) historically.

Example supporting evidence: Excerpt(s) from website for representative scheme(s), excerpt(s) from technical manual for representative scheme(s).

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.4 Validation process

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized building certification must be evidence-based, through technical documentation review and/or on-site inspection, and not self-declared.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure a robust assessment is undertaken, based on submission of evidence to a third-party for review.

Certification bodies can demonstrate alignment by referring to the documentation or evidence requirements from a representative scheme(s) that a project applicant must adhere to.

Example supporting evidence: Excerpt(s) from website for representative scheme, excerpt(s) from technical manual for representative scheme.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.5 Independent professional review

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized building certification must have an assessment process conducted by an independent qualified professional, third-party reviewer (auditor), and cannot be self-assessed.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to safeguard the legitimacy of the certification by ensuring it remains objective and free from vested interests.

The entity undertaking the assessment process must be independent from both the project applicant and the entity responsible for developing the sustainability criteria.

The entity responsible for developing sustainability criteria and the project applicant submitting claims against these criteria are considered to have an interest in the assessment outcome i.e. a vested interest in the project being successful. There should be a sufficient level of independence for the entity undertaking the assessment process to avoid this vested interest.

The project's claims should be assessed in an unbiased and objective manner against the sustainability criteria, where there is potential for project claims to be assessed as unsuccessful. The assessor must have no financial or other interest in the assessment outcome. This ensures the assessment process is legitimate and equitable for all project applicants.

Additionally, the assessor must be sufficiently trained or qualified to understand and make an objective assessment of project claims made against the sustainability criteria.

Certification bodies globally can adopt varying approaches to ensure independence. Some examples of acceptable approaches include:

- **Accredited body** – the certification body responsible for developing sustainability criteria has accredited a separate entity to undertake assessment.
- **Accredited assessors** – a certification body has an accreditation process for external assessors to undertake assessment.

In all instances, the certification body is required to demonstrate how independence is maintained.

Example supporting evidence: Excerpt(s) from website, excerpt(s) from technical manual, governance framework.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.6 Public access

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized certification brand must make the following information related to its affiliated schemes publicly available:

- **Scope** – the full list of topics, evaluation criteria, and their corresponding credits/weights.
- **Requirements** – the list of minimum requirements and/or prerequisites.
- **Assessment process** – the complete assessment process, including required evidence and identification of the performance period if applicable.
- **Levels** – the list of levels and their corresponding thresholds.
- **Validity duration / recertification process** – the validity duration and the recertification process.

Additional guidance: The purpose of this criteria is to enhance the overall transparency and accessibility of scheme information, including enabling investors to fully understand schemes.

A certification body should, by default, make this level of information publicly available, as it supports informed decision-making when selecting building certifications.

For information to be considered publicly available, it should be easy to access via a website. It is acceptable for some level of information to be available upon payment or submission of a contact form, however this should not act as a prohibitive barrier to the public. General information about schemes should always be made freely available.

Example supporting evidence: Web links to a representative scheme's information.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Show that this information is publicly available by providing individual web links to where each of the above five items can be found for a representative scheme: [text box]

2.7 List of certified buildings

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized certification brand must maintain a publicly accessible, up-to-date list of buildings certified under its affiliated schemes.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to enhance industry transparency, including enabling investors to verify the claims of certified buildings.

The certification body must provide a web link to a listing of certified buildings. Where project applicants opt to not have their project disclosed (e.g. for confidentiality reasons), this is acceptable, provided the opportunity for listing has been made available.

Example supporting evidence: Web link to listing of certified buildings.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Show that this information is publicly available by providing a web link to the public listing: [text box]

2.8 Scheme development and maintenance process

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized brand is required to make available to project applicants, upon request, the scheme development and maintenance process for affiliated schemes, including policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure project applicants can access key information, in addition to what is publicly available, to fully understand the development and maintenance process for schemes.

Certification bodies can demonstrate alignment by outlining how this information would be made available in a concise and accessible manner when requested or providing an informational document for a representative scheme.

Example supporting evidence: Informational document for representative scheme, excerpt(s) from website, excerpt(s) from technical manual, excerpt(s) from governance framework.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

2.9 Achievements of the certified buildings

Criteria: A GRESB-recognized brand is required to make available to project applicants, upon request, the achievements of certified buildings, including scheme version, relevant time period, key metrics achieved and their corresponding values/scores.

Additional guidance: The intent of this criteria is to ensure project applicants can access key project attributes at the point of certification.

Certification bodies can demonstrate alignment by attaching a certificate and any related results information issued upon certification for a representative scheme, including the key information listed above.

Example supporting evidence: Sample certificate for a representative scheme, sample supporting results information.

Please confirm that the certification brand is aligned with this criteria: [Yes/No]

Please demonstrate how the brand meets this criteria (250 words max): [text box]

Please upload evidence to support the claims being made. [file upload]

Completion

Description: Congratulations! You have now completed the survey.

We encourage you to check all responses and supporting evidence uploads prior to submitting.

Once submitted, GRESB will undertake a review of all information and notify the primary contact of the evaluation outcome. Please note, it is expected to take four to six weeks for GRESB to undertake the review and communicate an outcome.

For any questions on the review process, please email info@gresb.com.