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1 Document details

1.1 Scope

This document sets out the procedures followed by Grønn Byggallianse in respect to impartiality when conducting BREEAM-NOR certification activities. These procedures have been brought together to ensure that there is clarity and consistency.

The BREEAM-NOR Quality Assurance (QA) team is responsible for auditing of BREEAM-NOR assessments, resulting in a certification recommendation and subsequent certification decision by the BREEAM-NOR Certification Manager (or delegated individual).

1.2 Audience

This document is intended for use by Grønn Byggallianse employees as a training and reference guide. The document may not be shared externally, unless approved by the Certification Manager.

1.3 Associated Documents

- Code of Conduct
- QA auditor training and competence monitoring
- QA auditor training record

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2 Introduction

Grønn Byggallianse carries out certification of the BREEAM-NOR assessment process undertaken by licensed BREEAM-NOR assessors, culminating in a BREEAM-NOR certificate being issued for the project assessed. To conduct this in line with Grønn Byggallianse values, as well as the relevant certification and accreditation standards to which we adhere, there are requirements in place for auditors, reviewers and certification decision makers to adhere to.

Grønn Byggallianse trains auditors to conduct evaluations of BREEAM-NOR assessments for QA purposes. This training is carried out in line with the QA auditor training procedures, at which point the importance of objectivity, impartiality, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and other related matters will be explained to the trainee auditor.

This document sets out specific requirements subject to those undertaking quality assurance and certification activities.

3 Principles

All BREEAM-NOR certification activities are subject to strict impartiality¹. Any individual involved in any stage of the BREEAM-NOR QA, review and certification decision process must maintain impartiality. All employees sign the Code of Conduct for Grønn Byggallianse.

3.1 BREEAM QA Auditor Impartiality

In the event that the auditor has been involved in technical support for a project, they will need to make the Certification Manager aware of this. Depending on the circumstances, the Certification Manager may then decide to assign the particular assessment's evaluation to an alternative auditor. Typically, auditors are not involved in the technical query process for any assessment for ease of establishing this separation.

QA Auditors will not be involved in the examination and qualification process for individual BREEAM-NOR assessors, nor the personnel certification (licensing) process, to ensure there is a distinction between those undertaking the different aspects of certification of individual assessors and BREEAM-NOR assessments.

Where the auditor has previously worked as a sustainability consultant or BREEAM-NOR assessor for projects undergoing BREEAM-NOR assessment, which may in future apply for certification, the auditor must identify such projects to the Certification Manager as soon as possible. The Certification Manager will then assign the assessments evaluation to an alternative auditor.

If there is no appropriate alternative auditor, Grønn Byggallianse will contact BRE Global for advice on how to proceed. Under such circumstances, BRE Global may be able to provide QA services on behalf of Grønn Byggallianse.

¹ Objectivity is ensured and conflicts of interest do not exist, or are resolved so as not to adversely influence the activities of the certification body.

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BREEAM-NOR CERTIFICATION IMPARTIALITY

3.2 BREEAM Lead QA Auditors and Certification Manager Impartiality

Lead QA Auditors carry out the same role as auditors as above and are therefore subject to the same rules of impartiality. In addition, they have delegated authority to undertake certification reviews and make certification decisions on behalf of the Certification Manager, where necessary and appropriate.

The certification decision, taken by either Lead QA Auditor or Certification Manager, can only be made on assessments for which they themselves have not carried out the evaluation. A Lead QA Auditor and Certification Manager should also avoid providing project specific advice and assistance to the auditor, for the assessment in question.

The individual making the certification decision must be free from internal and external influences including (but not limited to):

- Instruction, pressure or threats from any Grønn Byggallianse staff to certify an assessment which has not passed the QA process (e.g. for commercial reasons).
- Pressure from any external organisations, such as other National Scheme Operators, BREEAM assessors or other stakeholders to certify an assessment which has not passed the QA process.

In the event of either of the above occurring, the Certification Manager will then inform the CEO of Grønn Byggallianse.

3.3 Other BREEAM Staff Impartiality

Other employees of the Grønn Byggallianse BREEAM team will typically have a relationship with many BREEAM-NOR assessors, clients and other stakeholders from interactions not directly related to QA and certification activities. As such, there is an increased risk that some external stakeholders may use this relationship to try to influence evaluation, review and certification decisions. All BREEAM team staff need to be aware of this and ensure that they are not unwittingly (or wittingly) used to influence certification process. Where this is the case, the member of staff must inform the Certification Manager and the CEO of Grønn Byggallianse immediately.

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