UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard

Pre-Launch Update 1
November 2025

BBP BETTER BUILDINGS PARTNERSHIP
bre
CARBON TRUST
CIBSE
The Institution of StructuralEngineers
LETI
RIBA Architecture.com
RICS
UK GBC

Hello!

We have been hard at work since the launch of the Pilot Version late last year and are now excited to be gearing up to launch Version 1 in early 2026. This is the first of our Pre-Launch Updates, which will provide key insights into what is coming in Version 1 of the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (the Standard).

It has been fantastic to see the industry response to the Pilot Version of the Standard, launched last year. Most notably, our Pilot Testing programme engaged with 205 different buildings and projects, across 134 owners, each of whom worked with us to provide feedback on their experience of applying the Standard. We are immensely grateful for the support and engagement of our Pilot Participants. Both within, and beyond the Pilot Projects, the Standard is already being used to inform briefs and specifications, starting many buildings on their journey to becoming Net Zero Carbon Aligned.

Version 1 will provide the remaining key part of the Standard's methodology: Verification. The introduction of Verification will catalyse change within the industry, providing the final step in the process of buildings being able to evidence that they are truly Net Zero Carbon Aligned.

The upcoming Version 1 and verification are the culmination of the hard work and collaboration of all our incredible volunteers and supporters across the industry. It will be a pivotal milestone not just for the Standard, but for everyone who supported us to get to this point.

Version 1's launch will be the start of the next chapter in the Standard's journey, as it begins to be used and adopted. However, you don't need to wait for the launch to start preparing. Now is the time to start measuring and reporting against our metrics, ready to get stuck in when verification launches.

We can't wait to share more details and information with you in our next updates. Until then, thank you for your continued support.

Katie Clemence-Jackson

CEO, Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard Ltd.

UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard

Contents

1. The Standard's Purpose

The full, verifiable Standard is soon to be issued.

But what was it created to do, and why?

Read this section if you need a reminder of how we got here.

UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard: How it Began

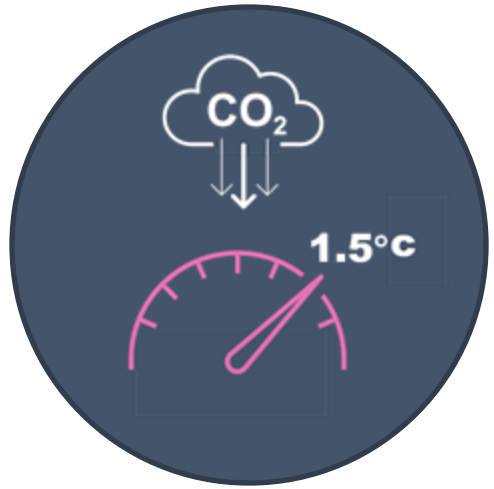
In May 2022 a cross-industry Steering Group, representing stakeholders across the built environment, joined together to develop a Standard to define the requirements for buildings in the UK to be Net Zero Carbon.

The UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard, or “the Standard”, will enable our industry to robustly determine whether our built assets are Net Zero Carbon Aligned, in line with the UK’s climate targets.

Rule book

Sectoral

Carbon & Energy



Science-led

Principles of the Standard

Overall Principles

- Clear, consistent definitions and trajectories for Net Zero Carbon buildings
- Collaboratively created by, and for, the built environment industry, and not owned by any one organisation or Institute
- Driving market transformation through industry engagement, uptake and support
- Robustness through third party verification
- Ensuring that the Standard is easy to understand and use, with achievable but stretching requirements
- Aligning asset-level requirements with the system-level changes needed for a Net Zero Carbon UK
- A Standard that is politically neutral

Technical Principles

- Informed by climate science (science-led)
- Including both operational and embodied carbon
- Prioritising energy efficiency and eliminating the performance gap by using measured performance data
- Prioritising the reuse of existing buildings and assets
- Adopting a whole life carbon approach
- Enhancing renewable energy generation
- Ensuring that buildings are responsive to electricity grid fluctuations
- Only setting limits where robust data is available to inform them

How was it developed?

The Standard has been supported by hundreds of individuals and organisations from across the UK built environment, co-ordinated using the high-level structure indicated below.

700+
Stakeholders engaged

9
Founding Organisations

Governance Board

Technical Steering Group

BBP Better Buildings Partnership · bre · Carbon Trust · CIBSE · The Institution of Structural Engineers · LETI · RIBA Architecture.com · RICS · UK GBC

140+
Task Group members

5 Task Groups

14 Sector Groups

190+
Sector Group members

205 Pilot projects

3 Working Groups

800
Projects embodied carbon data

3,200
Projects metered operational energy (large datasets)

Evidence Providers:
- In-use energy data providers
- Further energy modelers
- Embodied carbon data providers

200+
Projects metered operational energy (individual projects)

Scope of the Standard

New Build + Existing Buildings

&

Homes	Sport and Leisure	Hotels
Offices	Retail	Commercial Residential
Schools	Culture and Entertainment	Storage and Distribution
Healthcare	Science and Technology	Data Centres
	Higher Education	

The approach is applicable to both existing and new buildings.

It covers 13 sectors, within which real in-use performance data has been used to inform the setting of the Standard's limits.

How the targets & limits were developed

What is required?

Top-down statutory cap

UK national energy & carbon budgets

+

Bottom-up analysis

Operational energy performance levels

Embodied carbon performance levels

Built Evidence Data

+

What is possible?

UK NZCBS **Limits & Targets**

The Standard has used “Top Down” energy and carbon budgets for the UK built environment along with “Bottom Up” energy and carbon expenditure from the UK building stock to inform the limits.
Using a purpose-built tool, scenarios were modelled to balance the budgets against the expenditure, to inform the Standard’s limits. You can learn more about this process here.

Who is the Standard for?

It is for anyone who wants to fund, procure, design, specify or operate a Net Zero Carbon Aligned building;

Anyone wanting to demonstrate that their building is Net Zero Carbon Aligned, in accordance with an industry-agreed Standard; and;

Anyone trying to pave the way for more Net Zero Carbon Aligned Buildings to be funded, developed and operated.

Owners	Contractors and their Supply Chain	Occupiers
Managing Agents	Housebuilders	Investors
Developers	Insurers	Planners
Architects	Designers and Consultants	Lenders

2. Verification Updates

UK Net Zero Carbon
Buildings Standard

Introducing Bureau Veritas

We are delighted to announce Bureau Veritas as the preferred bidder for the role of the Standard's Verification Administrator.

Bureau Veritas have a deep understanding of operational energy and embodied carbon, and world-leading experience as a verification body.

We will work with them to deliver a verification framework that will bring much-needed robustness and credibility to our industry's Net Zero Carbon claims.

Upon appointment, Bureau Veritas will be the sole Verification Administrator for a **2-year exclusivity period**, after which other organisations will also be able to take on this role.

Why Verify?

Verification has always been a key part of the Standard's scope.

Our verification process will provide confidence that buildings are achieving what they say they are when they achieve Net Zero Carbon Aligned status.

This robustness and credibility will support the financing and development of Net Zero Carbon buildings. It will be a badge of honour for buildings to show they are playing their part in a Net Zero Carbon UK. The data we gather from this process will contribute to industry learning, and the future evolution of the Standard.

Benefits of Verification:

Market Credibility	Growth of Evidence Base	Proven Building Performance
• Prevents "greenwash" • Demonstrates leadership • Supports green financing • Enhances market value	• Informs future versions of the Standard • Sets a trajectory for UK climate goals • Drives market transformation	• Demonstrably low-energy, low carbon buildings • Shifts focus towards in-use performance • Promotes measurement and reporting

Verification Principles

Verification timeline

- Verification occurs after the “reporting period” in which operational energy and upfront embodied carbon data is collected

Third party

- A building’s verifier must not have been involved in the development or operation of that building

Verifier competencies

- Verifiers must meet competency requirements set by the Standard

Re-verification

- Buildings will be expected to measure and report data annually, and re-verify at agreed intervals to keep their NZCA status

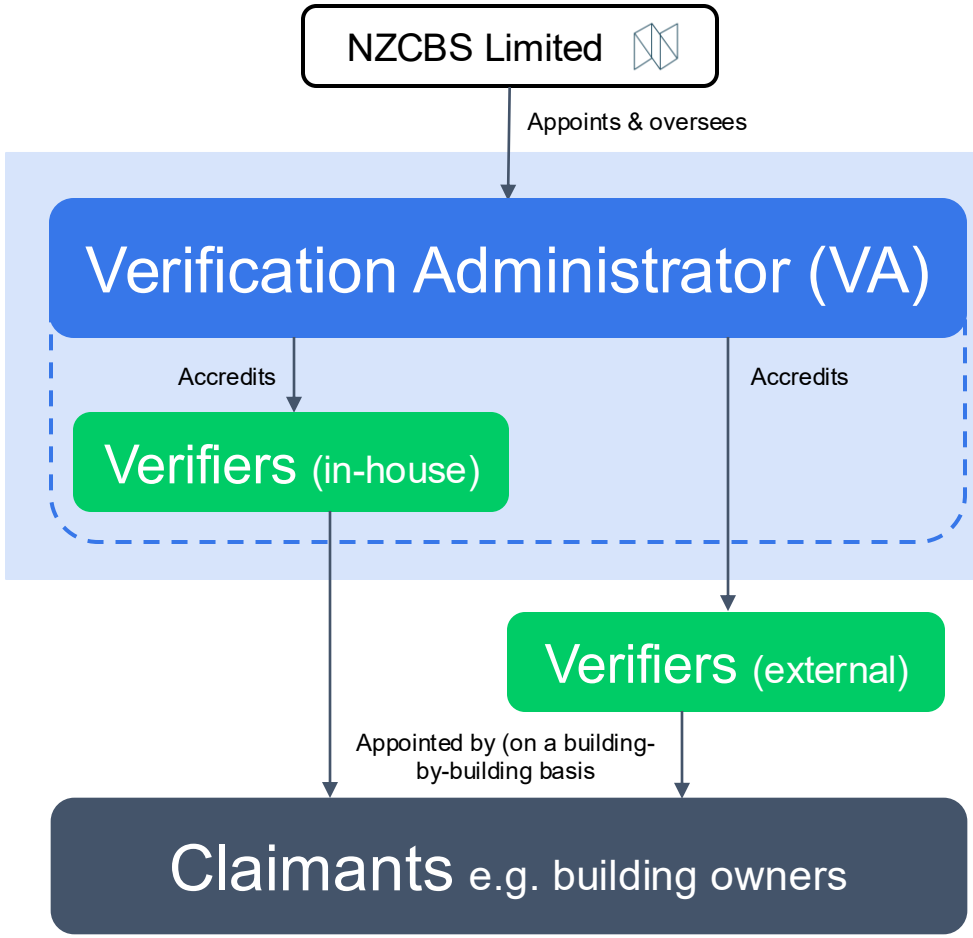
Communication rules

- There will be rules on how you communicate that you are targeting, or have achieved, conformity with the Standard

Public disclosure

- Certain aspects of a building’s claim will be made public via a certificate and our website

Verification Framework



Develops, operates and maintains the Standard, and oversees the work of the Verification Administrator (VA).

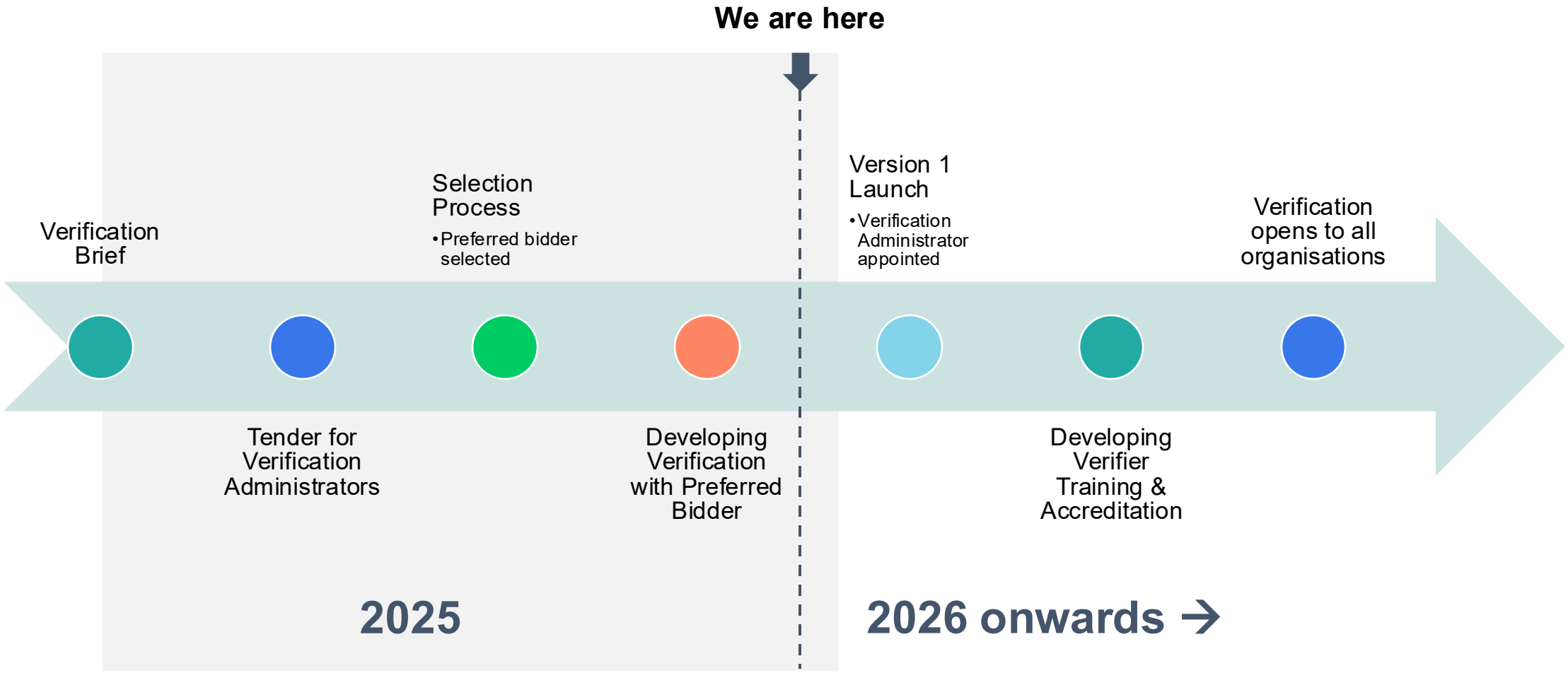
The VA runs the Standard's verification. This includes:

- Training and accrediting verifiers
- Quality assurance and auditing for verifications

Verifiers carry out verification, reviewing evidence and checking that it is robust. They will follow the Standard's methodology, which is currently being developed.
Initially, whilst verifier training is set up, verifiers will be in-house, employed by the VA. After that, anyone with the relevant skills can undertake training to become a verifier.

This is the individual or organisation that wants to get their building verified as Net Zero Carbon Aligned. It could be you!
Claimants may appoint others to collate and submit the building's data, carry out assessments, and/or co-ordinate the process of managing the claim.

Verification Timeline



How Will Verification Work?

Building life up until reporting period → Operational Reporting period (ORP) → Verification → Re-verification

	Registration	Build evidence base	Verifier appointment	Verification	Outcome	Next Reporting Period
Activity	Register the building with UK NZCBS	Develop the building's evidence base	Appoint an accredited verifier (initially Bureau Veritas)	Respond to verifier queries Feedback & clarification Verifier carries out verification	Verifier confirms the outcome UK NZCBS issues the certificate The Building is added to a public list of verified buildings	**Repeat the process from Build evidence base to Outcome**
Requirements	▪ Registration via the Standard's website ▪ Agreement to terms and conditions ▪ Registration payment	▪ Demonstrate that building meets the Standard's requirements ▪ Collection and provision of required evidence	▪ Submission of proforma and evidence base ▪ Verification payment ▪ Appoint/submit within agreed timescales	▪ Respond to verifier requests for clarification, and/or further evidence.	▪ Learn the outcome of the claim ▪ Receive comms materials and guidance on how these can be used	▪ Continue to report, monitor and re-verify the building ▪ Interval of re-verification under review

Verification – Indicative Pricing Model

Registration Fee

- *Paid to NZCBS Ltd upon registration*
- *Building can be registered at any point up to first verification*

Verification Fee

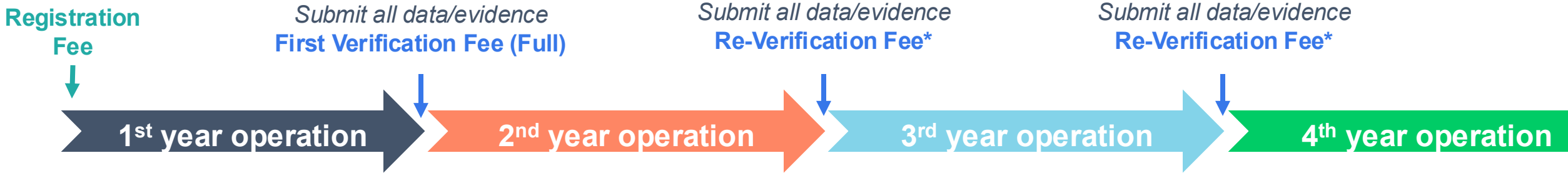
- *Paid to the verifier. This is made up of:*
  - *Administration fee (standardised based on building m²)*
  - *Verifier fee – market driven*
- *First verification will have a larger admin/verifier fee, with reductions for subsequent years*

This model indicatively sets out when fees would be paid, and the types of fees. We are working with the Verification Administrator to agree the model and prices.

A key shared goal is to allow extensive market uptake.

*We are currently reviewing the potential to extend the re-verification intervals to greater than one year in certain scenarios.

Indicative timeline:



3. An “On-Track” Check at Practical Completion

UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard

Feedback about Practical Completion

What we have heard

A strong desire to check buildings are on track at Practical Completion, through all our modes of engagement:

- Technical Consultation 2023
- Stakeholder engagement 2024
- Pilot Feedback 2025
- Other feedback channels

A check would:

- Support the funding and specification of Net Zero Carbon Aligned buildings
- Provide confidence that buildings are on track to meet the Standard
- Remove barriers to adoption

In response to this feedback, we are introducing a validity check at Practical Completion as part of Version 1.

An ‘On Track’ check at Practical Completion

The concept of a claim at Practical Completion has been developed to ensure it aligns with the Standard’s principles.

Aligning with the Standard’s Principles

The Standard is outcome-focussed

The Standard’s goal is to achieve rigour in Net Zero Carbon definitions

What would it mean to be “On Track”?

- An “On Track” building is not Net Zero Carbon Aligned
- Third party validation must take place as part of this check
- The building must provide evidence to show that it could feasibly achieve the Standard in use

An ‘On Track’ check at Practical Completion: Agreed Principles

The methodology is being developed through a dedicated Working Group, to create a new Annex as Part of Version 1. The agreed principles are as follows:

Prescribed Communication
There will be rules on how “On Track” Status can be communicated

Interim Proforma
Progress against the Standard’s mandatory targets and limits must be reported upon at this stage

Verification of Known Metrics at Practical Completion
This includes A1 – A5 embodied carbon, installed refrigerants, and installed PV

Plausibility Check on In-Use Performance
Validation of evidence that the building is on track to be able to meet the in-use requirements

4. General Updates

Pilot Testing Update

The Pilot Testing is now closed.

A huge thank you to all our Pilot Participants whose input into the development of Version 1 has been invaluable.

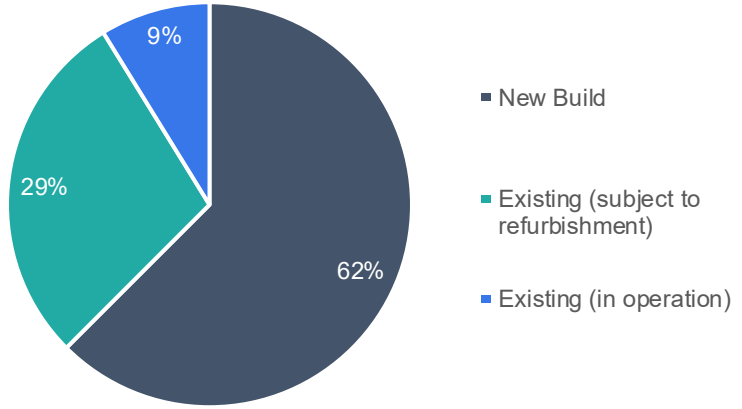
The feedback analysis is now complete, and the Pilot Team have produced a Findings Report. Our Technical Steering Group have been closely engaged with the Pilot throughout to hear industry feedback, identify amendments required, and test these with Pilot Participants. We are now finalising the proposed changes to be implemented in Version 1, alongside the development of new Annexes.

We will share the key findings from the Pilot Testing, and how we are responding to these, in our next Pre-Launch Update.

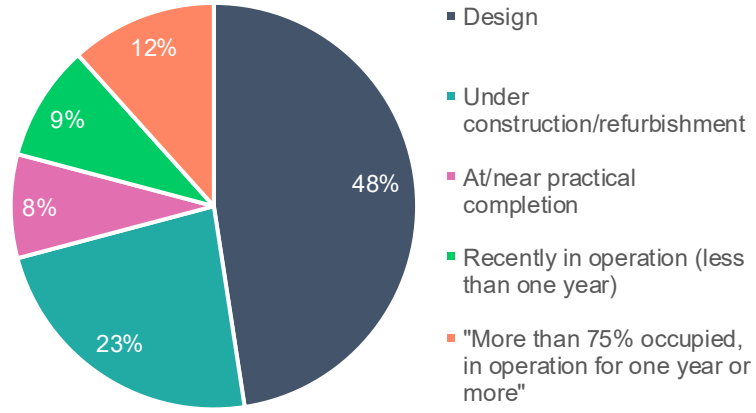
205 Projects

134 Owners

Participants by Building Classification



Participants by Project Stage



Pilot Testing: Headline Requests & Comments

Below, each of the headline requests and comments from the pilot have been listed out, categorised under the Pilot's four objectives.

We will share a summary of the findings from the Pilot Testing, and how we are responding to these, in our next Pre-Launch Update.

1 Usability: Headline Requests

- Clarity of writing & easy read guide (incl. worked examples, flowcharts)
- Online knowledge base and video tutorials
- Digital format
- Project limits and targets tool
- Clarification on existing buildings

2 Market Preparedness: Key Topics

- Achievability of limits
- Calculating pass/fail metrics
- Submission requirements
- Reporting metrics

3 Evaluating Clarity: Headline Requests

- Delineation
- Verification process and costs
- Information on how the limits were defined
- Equivalence with other schemes
- Validation at Practical Completion

4 Gathering Feedback: The Standard's Co-benefits

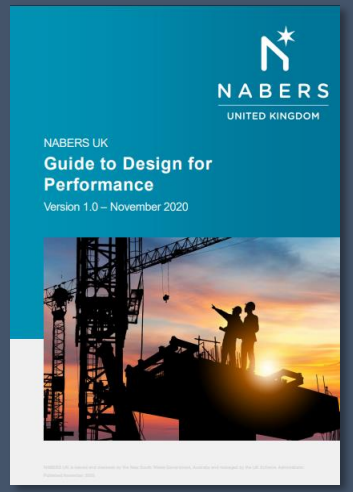
- Credibility and investor confidence
- Consistent science-based definition
- Improved asset performance
- Stronger collaboration

Update: Deeming to Satisfy

The term *“Deeming to Satisfy”* is now being used to describe where other recognised industry schemes are considered to satisfy certain requirements of the Standard.

We are already exploring “deeming to satisfy” relationships with several industry schemes, with the goal of providing flexibility and alignment across the industry.

An Annex listing schemes deemed to satisfy the Standard will be updated as each method is agreed.



To be available alongside the launch of Version 1

NABERS UK

Initial discussions being developed

Passivhaus

BREEAM

Discussions are under way to determine which versions and aspects of these schemes would be applicable to which aspects of the Standard

Next Steps

Late 2025 to Early 2026 →

Publication of First Pre-Launch Update

Today's update marks the first in a series to prepare industry for Version 1 launch.

Version 1 Development

We will continue technical development of Version 1 and its associated Annexes as we close out voting on key amendments.

Verification Development

Working closely with the preferred bidder to finalise the Verification Methodology.

Other Pre-Launch Updates

Publishing other key information to prepare industry for Version 1 launch.

Launch of Version 1

Launch of Version 1 with Verification.