

how to... ...use the Ska Rating system



IN THE LAST ISSUE OF INSIGHT WE LOOKED AT THE BENEFITS OF SKA AND THE NEW SKA RATING SYSTEM FOR RETAIL. IN THE SECOND IN OUR SKA SERIES WE INVESTIGATE HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS.

Ska Rating is a RICS-led and owned environmental assessment method, benchmark and standard for non-domestic fit outs. It helps landlords and tenants assess fit out projects against a set of sustainability good practice criteria, known as good practice measures (GPM).

Previously, although there were established tools for assessing the environmental impact of whole buildings (eg BREEAM in the UK, LEED in the US), industry feedback that the certification of fit out, especially on existing buildings, indicated that attempts to use whole building systems were unsatisfactory both in terms of high costs and low relevance.

Ska Rating has been developed with designers, contractors, corporate occupiers, managing agents and consultants. It differs from other labelling systems in that it is:

- Project driven: labels fit out projects irrespective of base building
- A free online tool to help organisations achieve more sustainable fit outs (businesses only pay if they want formal certification)
- Flexible scoping: the tool measures only what is within the specific project's scope.

Measures in scope

Ska comprises over 100 good practice measures across energy and CO₂, waste, water, pollution, transport, materials and wellbeing. Each good practice measure is outlined in a datasheet explaining the criteria that need to be achieved, including the rationale behind the measure and guidance on how to achieve it.

Because each fit out project is unique in terms of employers' requirements, the building or site, and scope of works, Ska Rating scores the project only on the basis of those measures that are relevant to the project. These are called 'measures in scope'. Typically, between 30 and 60 measures are likely to apply to most projects. The score is ranked in three thresholds: Bronze, Silver and Gold. These thresholds are reached by achieving 75%, 50% or 25%, respectively, of the measures in scope, which must include GPM's from a pool of gateway measures.

What are 'gateway measures'?

Some measures are more important from a sustainability perspective, so the measures are ranked from 1 to 104, (1 is the highest and 104 the lowest). This is to ensure that teams do not just target the easiest measures, the project has to achieve a number of the highest ranked measures in scope in order to score. These are known as gateway measures.

How do you get an assessment undertaken?

Anyone can use the free online Ska Rating tool to informally evaluate a project. Professional certification can be achieved by engaging a Ska assessor to rate and certify the project. RICS operates an accreditation scheme to enable qualified professionals to undertake Ska Rating assessments on behalf of organisations and a list of assessors by location can be found at www.rics.org/ska

How much does it cost the client to get a Ska rating?

RICS charges £60 for each certification the assessors carry out. The assessor typically charges £2,000-£3,000 per certification, depending on the nature and complexity of the project.

How is an assessment carried out?

As with any fit out project, the Ska assessment process is broken into three stages - design, handover and post occupancy. The project can be assessed throughout the three stages, and a certificate issued at completion of the project.

- 1 Design/planning: At this stage the measures and issues in scope are identified. Once the measures in scope are identified, the client has the opportunity to prioritise which measures it wants to achieve and make a decision against design, cost, programme and benefit. This will also set the environmental performance standards for how the project is delivered, in terms of waste and energy in use, etc. Then, if the specification demonstrates that these measures are likely to be achieved, they will be reflected in an indicative rating.
- 2 Handover: This involves the gathering of evidence from O&M manuals and other sources to prove that what has been specified has actually been delivered, and that the performance and waste benchmarks have been achieved.
- 3 Occupancy stage assessment: Finally, there is the option to review how well a fit out has performed in use against its original brief from a year after completion.

How long does certification take?

Certification is a quick process as once the handover stage has been assessed by an accredited assessor and the supporting information has been added to the online tool, the certificate is automatically produced so it can be issued to the client (at the same time the certificate is automatically lodged with the RICS). www.rics.org/ska



KEY ASPECTS OF THE RATING SYSTEM

- Flexible scoping: match the rating to the scope of the fit out
- Easy-to-use online tool
- A label that is clear and easy to understand: bronze, silver and gold
- Formal quality assured scheme for those who require a certificate
- Applicable to offices and retail fit outs
- Access to lease funding for the project

Good practice measure example:

GPM M08 partitions

Rank position 50 in Ska Office

All partitions meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Are reused
- If new, are manufactured with at least 90% recycled content
- Have an A or A+ rating in BRE's The Green Guide to Specification
- Have an A or A+ rating in BRE's Green Book Live database; or
- Are supplied with an environmental product declaration, written in accordance with ISO 14025 standards; or
- If timber or containing timber elements, the timber meets the criteria of good practice measure D20 Timber.