

THE BIGGER PICTURE

01 BREEAM COMMUNITIES

Sustainable development means understanding how buildings, infrastructure, environment and communities work together.

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Sustainability as a Key Consideration from the Earliest Project Stage

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Sustainability plays a crucial role not only during the design and implementation phases, but already at the project preparation stage. Realiscon's experience with **BREEAM Communities certification on a district-scale development** provides a practical example of how sustainability can be integrated into the earliest stages of a project. The scheme evaluates sustainability in a **comprehensive, structured and measurable way**, covering aspects such as environmental impacts, transport and infrastructure connections, community functions, as well as social and economic sustainability.

The Role of Sustainability Decisions in the Early Stages of Development

In Hungary, there are still relatively few district-scale developments or revitalization projects where sustainability goals are defined in a structured way using a measurable framework. Yet, at this stage, **key decisions can already be made regarding how the development will be integrated into the existing urban fabric** – its transport systems, green infrastructure, or the energy strategy guiding the design process even before specific buildings are planned.

In practice, developments may begin without sufficient preparation, relying on conventional solutions, methods and assumptions. However, in projects of this scale, beyond the mandatory preparatory studies and assessments, valuable additional information can be gathered to support even the initial site planning decisions.





Such analyses may include, for example, **flood risk** assessments specific to the site (considering both natural and built environmental factors), examination of opportunities for reuse and recycling of buildings, structures, or materials in line with **circular economy** principles, **acoustic** measurements alongside projections of expected noise impacts, and the development of plans aimed not only at protecting existing ecological values but also at enhancing **biodiversity**.

It is also essential that the planned functions consider not only financial return but also the needs of the local community – for example, by identifying gaps in **education, housing, services, or recreational opportunities**.

BREEAM Communities as a Guiding Framework for Sustainable Urban Development

If a development places additional pressure on existing transport systems, affects adjacent public spaces used by the community, includes residential construction, or necessitates new services, it becomes essential to apply a **well-structured, design-supportive criteria system that considers environmental aspects at a high level alongside community interests**.

The British BREEAM Communities framework provides a structured, measurable “green” set of requirements to support the preparation of such large-scale developments. **It promotes solutions that enhance sustainability at district level** by defining both mandatory and optional criteria – many of which should already be considered standard practice today.

only 3

developments in Hungary completed or underway using the BREEAM Communities certification framework

as of August 2026



In the case of the development of the former brick factory site in Törökbálint, the mandatory studies required for BREEAM Communities certification were completed in April 2026. These studies support decisions such as selecting the **optimal energy strategy that balances carbon reduction with return on investment**. In addition, sustainable transport solutions have been developed to address and alleviate pressure on the existing transport network.

An ecologist assessed the site's existing ecological values and defined guiding principles for enhancing them through future landscape and urban design. Economic and demographic analyses were also conducted to map the needs and opportunities of the local economy, taking into account local demands and expectations related to the development. **A core element of the BREEAM Communities process is continuous communication and consultation with stakeholders**, supporting the creation of a sustainable, socially responsible and economically successful development that responds to both present and future needs.

Commitment to **BREEAM certification helps ensure that the development minimizes its negative environmental impacts, remains adaptable to climate change and socio-economic shifts over the long term**, and becomes more attractive and acceptable to the stakeholders involved.