

Ska Rating

Good Practice Measures for Offices

Initiated by RICS, Ska Rating is an environmental assessment tool for sustainable fit-outs.

Project teams interested in fitting out spaces in an environmentally sustainable way can use the SKA Rating method to:

1. Carry out an informal self- assessment of the environmental performance of their fit-out
2. Commission a quality-assured assessment and certificate from an RICS-accredited SKA assessor
3. Obtain clear guidance on good practice in fit-out and how to implement it
4. Benchmark the performance of fit-outs against each other and the rest of the industry

Recently featured in the UK Government's Low Carbon Action Plan, Ska rating is an environmental assessment method, benchmark and standard for non-domestic fit-outs, led and owned by RICS.

Ska rating helps landlords and tenants assess fit-out projects against a set of sustainability good practice criteria.

It is estimated that 11% of UK construction spending is on fit-outs and that buildings may have 30-40 fit-outs during their lifecycle.

Why a fit-out only system?

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

How does it work?

The offices scheme consists of more than a hundred 'good practice' measures covering energy and CO₂ emissions, waste, water, materials, pollution, wellbeing and transport.

This guidance is freely available along with an online assessment tool, which can be used informally or for formal certification using an RICS Ska Rating accredited assessor.

Assessments can be carried out at three stages:

- design,
- handover and
- occupancy.

Benefits of Ska Rating

Ska Rating helps organisations to make informed decisions about fit-out projects in the context of the growing importance of sustainability on the corporate agenda, and a burgeoning statute book.

Ska Rating is designed to be of particular use for occupiers but has benefits for other property stakeholders, including landlords, developers, consultants, fit-out contractors, and members of the supply chain.

For occupiers and tenants

Measure sustainability impact accurately	First system, which measures 100% of the sustainability of your fit-out and decides what is most important. The rating is influenced entirely by what you choose to do, not by what has been done in the past.
Manage the bottom line	A decision-making tool which ranks the different aspects of a fit-out based on what will have the biggest impact on sustainability. It can be used to help the design team achieve maximum sustainability for a given budget.
Follow good practice	Help achieve a measure of sustainability for fit-outs.
Legal/statutory compliance	Help to ensure company directors, in line with Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006, to promote the success of the company and have a “regard to the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment”.
Helps with the decision-making process	Rates what is actually important and makes the biggest impact in terms of sustainability, adding another dimension beyond cost and quality to assess fit-out projects.
Are you ISO 14001 accredited?	A Ska Rating certificate helps you ensure that a fit-out project is rated accurately and can be used to support your environmental management system.
Customer, investor and stakeholder perception	A Ska Rating certificate demonstrates that your company takes sustainability seriously and has achieved a standard with your property. This can feature in annual reports, environmental policy or tender documentation, or be displayed in a building.
Staff engagement	Many employees increasingly place a value on a company's green credentials, and wish to work in high-quality spaces. A Ska Rating can be used to reinforce staff morale and complements other CSR activity.

For developers and landlords

- Use Ska Rating to set targets, use the formal assessment process to assure yourself that target performance standards are met, and finally use the certificate to report performance to stakeholders
- Benchmark the sustainability of fit-outs across a portfolio of buildings
- Include the use of the RICS Ska Rating in 'Green Lease' provisions to help drive up the sustainability of properties or protect a building already certified under a whole building assessment method
- Sustainability increasingly makes good business sense. Research demonstrates an expected increase in the asset value of labelled low-carbon buildings compared with standard speculative buildings
- (see RICS research into US commercial offices Doing Well by Doing Good)

For consultants

- Embed Ska Rating in your standard processes to demonstrate that you follow a sustainable specification and procurement process for fit-outs
- Use the Ska Rating tool and datasheets to support the delivery of professional advice to clients on good practice in sustainable fit-outs, and to assess their designs and projects
- Offer Ska Rating certificated assessments to clients who wish to demonstrate they have achieved a more sustainable fit-out through the Ska Rating accredited assessors scheme

For contractors

- Use the assessment process and related guidance to make your design, specification, procurement and construction practices more environmentally sustainable
- Demonstrate your sustainability credentials to clients and consultants by making the targeting of standards under Ska Rating part of your standard tender process

How it works

Whatever your starting point, a Ska Rating will enable you to measure 100% of the environmental performance of an office fit-out. Since Ska Rating does not consider the base build, it measures only what you do to add value to your property.

Key aspects of the Ska 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, plus a percentage score
- A formal, quality assured scheme for those who require a certificate
- Applicable to offices (retail version currently under development)

Ska Rating comprises more than a hundred 'good practice' measures covering energy and CO₂ emissions, waste, water, materials, pollution, wellbeing and transport. An example of a good practice measure is that when wooden flooring is stripped out, it should be sent for re-use to a salvage yard instead of to landfill.

Full lists of good practice measures can be found on our Ska Rating for [offices](#) and [retail](#).

Measures in Scope

Each good practice measure is explained in a datasheet explaining the criteria that need to be achieved, 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.

What are 'Gateway Measures'?

Some measures are more important from a sustainability perspective, so the measures are ranked from one to 99, (one is the highest and 99 the lowest). 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.

Assessment process

As with any fit-out project, the Ska Rating assessment process is broken into three stages:

- 1. Design/Planning.** At this stage we identify the measures and issues in scope.
Once the Measures in Scope are identified, the client has the opportunity to prioritise which measures they want to achieve and make a decision against design, cost, programme and benefit, and add them into the scope of works for the project.
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. Delivery / Construction.** 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.

Accreditation and certification

We operate an accreditation scheme to enable qualified professionals to undertake quality assured Ska Rating certification on behalf of organisations.

Registers of accredited Ska Office and Retail assessors can be downloaded below.

- [Register of accredited Ska Office assessors](#) 06 Feb 2014 PDF 500kb
- [Register of accredited Ska Retail assessors](#) 06 Feb 2014 PDF 152kb

For further information

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