



Bundesministerium  
für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung  
und Bauwesen



# Manual

## QNG Sustainable Building Certification

QNG certification specifications for the certification marks

QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS and

QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM

## **Important information on the relevant valid version**

Please note: These certification specifications are regularly reviewed and, for certification purposes, always apply only in the version valid at the time a request or an application for certification is submitted to a certification body or at the time an application for government funding is granted. The regulations and requirements of previous or subsequent versions are not relevant to applicants and consequently do not have any bearing on their application's success.

The date on which the relevant versions take effect and their version numbers are listed in the following table:

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Date it takes effect</b>
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The version presented here is always the current version. To avoid confusion, the preceding versions are always deleted. For this reason, we recommend that applicants, system providers and certification bodies save the version of this manual that is relevant for their respective QNG certification.



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## List of abbreviations

BEG	Federal Subsidy for Efficient Buildings
QNG	QNG Sustainable Building Certification
QNG-PLUS	QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS
QNG-PREMIUM	QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM
DAkKS	Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle GmbH (Federal Accreditation Body)
GS-QNG	Department for QNG

## Introduction

The QNG Sustainable Building Certification (referred to as “QNG Certification” in the following) is a state certification scheme for buildings. The prerequisites for QNG Certification is the provision of evidence verifying compliance with all of the associated general and special environmental, socio-cultural and economic quality requirements for buildings. QNG Certification subsequently verifies that buildings awarded with the same make a special contribution to sustainable development. QNG Certification comprises two distinct certification types and requirement levels, i.e. “PLUS “ (hereinafter referred to as “QNG-PLUS”) and “PREMIUM” (hereinafter referred to as “QNG-PREMIUM”).

The associated certification marks, “QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS” and “QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM” make clear the distinctions between the two certification types and requirement levels. Hence, each of the requirement levels are instant indicators of whether a building fulfils above-average (QNG-PLUS) or significantly above-average (QNG-PREMIUM) requirements concerning features and properties relevant to sustainability. QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certification is awarded on fulfilment of all of the associated requirements following the completion of the design plans or of the relevant building itself. The QNG Certification can be publicly displayed inside a building in the form of a certificate document or on the outside of a building as a plaque or as a certification mark on documents (e.g. reports/brochures) that clearly relate to the relevant certified building.

The criteria and conditions for QNG Certification are defined by the relevant Federal Ministry responsible for building (Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (FMHUB)) on behalf of the Federal Government. It is awarded by a number of independent bodies on behalf of the FMHUB. As the owner of the QNG Certification scheme, the FMHUB is not involved in the delivery of any of the services associated with the certification process and award.

For the award, applicants are required to provide an independent certification body with evidence of meeting the relevant QNG Certification requirements on completion of the design plans or of the relevant building by means of the completed planning and construction processes (verification of the design plan) and by providing evidence of the achievement of specified quality standards. The first step of the certification process comprises confirming that the design plan qualities and properties (verified on the basis of the planning and construction processes) match the certification requirements, and the second step is that the finished building matches the design plan. Once QNG Certification has been awarded, a building’s properties will not be monitored any further. The certification bodies’ competency and independence has to be verified by a national accreditation body in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008, which will also monitor their certification processes and process validity on an ongoing basis.

QNG Certification is a state-monitored certification scheme that is based on corresponding international, harmonised European and national standards. The QNG Certification requirements are regularly reviewed and updated, refined and/or amended as required.

## 1. Scope

This manual, its annexes and the other referenced documents together form the certification specifications for the certification mark rules for the QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS and QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM. The certification specifications are binding and set out the procedure and requirements for the registration of the assessment systems for the verification procedures for the award of the Certification, the special requirements in the public interest in buildings' contribution to sustainable development, the requirements for certification bodies and the procedure for the award of the Certification.

## 2. Normative references

The normative references listed in ISO 17065 and in this manual, which have to be applied by all certification bodies, and the documents listed in the following, form the basis of the auditing and certification process for the award of the QNG Sustainable Building Certification in the version valid at the time the certification body is commissioned:

- Certification mark rules for QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS
- Certification mark rules for QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM
- QNG Manual
  - Annex 1: CERTIFICATION TYPES (hereinafter "Annex 1")
  - Annex 2: QNG CRITERIA LIST (hereinafter "Annex 2")
  - Annex 3: BUILDING REQUIREMENTS (hereinafter "Annex 3")
  - Annex 4: CERTIFICATION NOTIFICATION (hereinafter "Annex 4")
  - Annex 5: QNG LOGO MANUAL (hereinafter "Annex 5")
  - Annex 6: QNG USER LICENSE AGREEMENT (hereinafter "Annex 6")

## 3. QNG Certification structure, requirements and organisational structure

### 3.1. Certification types

3.1.1. The two different certification types define specific requirements for specific applications based on the type of building, type of use and type of building measure (e.g. new build non-residential building).

3.1.2. The QNG Certification can only be awarded for use cases covered by the two types of certification. The QNG certification types available are listed in Annex 1.

3.1.3. Each certification type comes with a code that contains information on its application and certification type version. This code has to be included every time the Certification is used following its award.

### 3.2. Certification award requirements

3.2.1. A building is awarded QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certification for a specific certification type if the certification body has been provided with evidence that the building fulfils the following requirements

- a. General requirements for the contribution to sustainable development in accordance with section 5 and
- b. The special requirements concerning the public interest's in the contribution to sustainable development in accordance with section 6 and
- c. Verification of the fulfilment of all of the requirements in accordance with section 7.1 and
- d. The applicant has given notice of the Certification in accordance with the section 8.6.

### 3.3. Organisational structure

3.3.1. The **owner and issuer of the Certification** with final decision-making authority for all questions concerning QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB). The BMWSB grants certification bodies licences for awarding the QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certifications to applicants subject to the conditions of these certification specifications upon presentation of an accreditation certificate in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 for the scope of QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM.

3.3.2. **System providers** are organisations that design, operate and own the rights to sustainable building assessment systems as programme owners within the meaning of ISO/IEC 17030.

3.3.3. The **certification bodies** are the inspection and awarding bodies for the QNG Certification. They are responsible for all of the technical and operational aspects of verifying the fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Certification. The respective awarding body of the certification bodies will issue QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certification on the basis of a positive certification decision on behalf of the Certification issuer.

3.3.4. As the German **national accreditation body**, the DAkkS monitors in particular the competence and independence of the certification bodies with respect to their activities as inspection and awarding bodies. The DAkkS also provides support to the certification bodies during the scheme's introductory phase.

3.3.5. The **Department for QNG** (GS-QNG), managed on a provisional basis by PD - Berater der öffentlichen Hand GmbH and commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), is the central point of contact for system providers interested in participating in the certification award process. The GS-QNG maintains a publicly accessible list of registered assessment systems. It also supports the Certification owner and the DAkkS with their activities.

3.3.6. **Sustainability consultants**, if involved in the process, provide applicants with advice during the preparatory phase and the performance of the certification procedure for the award of the QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certifications. Sustainability consultants are not affiliated with the certification bodies and act on the applicant's behalf.

Sustainability consultants should be able to demonstrate skills and abilities in the area of sustainable planning and building and of sustainability assessments in general, as well as knowledge of the relevant assessment system to be applied in the specific case. In principle, it is also possible for suitably qualified planners and engineers as well as property developer employees, prefabricated house companies, planning and engineering firms and federal, state and municipal building authorities to perform the supported consulting and planning services for QNG Certification. The certification bodies can organise the provision of these services independently. System providers and professional bodies (chambers) can also provide publicly accessible lists of suitable consultants. In this respect, it has to be ensured that there is no discrimination concerning consultants' inclusion on such lists, provided they meet the above qualifications.

## 4. Requirements for certification bodies

### 4.1. General requirements for certification bodies

4.1.1. In order to qualify as a QNG Certification award body, certification bodies have to submit evidence of accreditation in accordance with Regulation (EC) 765/2008 and of maintaining the same as a means of verifying that they meet the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065, and demonstrate that the assessment methods they use lead to reproducible and comparable results. Exceptions to the above are only permitted during the QNG Certification's introductory phase in accordance with the regulations set out in section 10.

4.1.2. As part of the accreditation procedure, each certification body must demonstrate that it has assessment competencies for conformity assessments in accordance with EN ISO/IEC 17029.

- 4.1.3. In addition to legal entities, organisations with legal capacity can also act as certification bodies, provided they are able to sue and be sued. Natural persons do not qualify as organisations in this sense.
- 4.1.4. Every certification body has to operate an electronic database for electronically archiving and providing application documents, certification decisions and associated assessment results.
- 4.1.5. Each certification body has to operate a complaints office and have a process for handling and making decisions about appeals from applicants as defined in para. 7.13 ISO/IEC 17065.
- 4.1.6. Subject to compliance with all of the requirements of the certification mark rules and the associated certification specifications for certification bodies, in particular regarding their independence, the certification bodies' tasks can also be carried out by system providers.
- 4.1.7. Certification bodies are commissioned by applicants and remunerated based on contractual agreements. To this end, applicants enter into a contract ("certification contract") with the certification body. Certification bodies must use this contract to ensure their right to withdraw the QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certifications following their award in the event that the requirements of the certification rules or the Certification specifications are breached or if significant structural changes to a building are made or, in the case of a provisional authorisation of use, significant deviations from the design plan were to result in a cessation of the right to use the QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certifications.
- 4.1.8. The certification body or its awarding body must report each QNG Certification (certification notification) to enable the Certification issuer to monitor the Certification's use and to evaluate and further develop the QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certifications. The certification award reports are also used to provide the GS-QNG in anonymised form with the basic details of the Certification and the certified building in accordance with Annex 4. The certification body must notify applicants in advance in the certification contract that
- a. They have to report every Certification prior to the award of the QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certifications
  - b. On submitting the certification notification, the basic details of the Certification and the certified building will be transmitted to the Certification issuer, and that
  - c. The Certification issuer will only process this information to evaluate and further develop the QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certifications, and that
  - d. The Certification issuer will not pass on this information for processing by third parties.
- 4.1.9. The certification body must use the QNG user licence agreement provided by the Certification issuer as Annex 5 to grant applicants permission to use the Certification following a positive certification decision concerning QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certification and to obtain permission for the transfer, storage and processing of data to/by the GS-QNG. The signed QNG user licence agreement has to be archived and stored by the certification body until the agreement's termination and must be handed over to the Certification issuer on request.
- 4.1.10. Any internal and external certification body personnel that has provided consultancy services to applicants may not be involved in certification decisions for applicants for a minimum of 2 years.
- 4.1.11. The certification body must make its services available to all applicants, provided that they are in principle eligible to apply.
- 4.1.12. The certification body must maintain and, upon request, provide the following information (through publications, electronic media or other means):
- a. Information about the certification scheme, incl. by providing the address of the website on which this manual can be found;
  - b. Information on the procedure for complaints and appeal handling.
- 4.1.13. As part of the QNG Certification, the certification body must implement the requirements of the certification mark rules and the Certification specifications, including the definitions and glossary contained therein.



4.1.14. If a certification body requires more information about the application of these documents, it has to request an official interpretation from the GS-QNG.

## 4.2. Accreditation of certification bodies

4.2.1. Certification bodies can obtain information about the principles and requirements for accreditation from the DAkkS. Certification bodies' competence and independence will be monitored by the state in accordance with Art. 5 (3) Regulation (EC) 765/2008 in conjunction with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17011.

4.2.2. Certification bodies have to submit an application to the DAkkS for accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 for the award of the Certification on the basis of a registered assessment system and submit evidence of their permission to use the same. The DAkkS will perform the accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011.

4.2.3. Once a certification body has been successfully accredited, the DAkkS will notify the GS-QNG about the accreditation and its validity.

4.2.4. The Department for QNG will then add the accredited certification body to a publicly accessible list. This listing will be valid until

- The accreditation expires and
- The expiry of the registration of all of the assessment systems for which the certification body can provide evidence of its permission to use the same, and
- The expiry of all permissions to use registered assessment systems.

## 5. General requirements for the contribution to sustainable development

### 5.1. Assessment systems for sustainable construction as the basis for the QNG Sustainable Building Certification (QNG)

5.1.1. The QNG Certification system is based on a number of existing assessment systems for sustainable construction. In order to fulfil the general requirements for the contribution to sustainable development, the building and the processes involved in its planning, construction and handover/commissioning must be certified through an assessment system registered by the awarding body.

### 5.2. Registering assessment systems for sustainable construction

5.2.1. Assessment systems can only be registered as a basis for verifying evidence for the award of a specific Certification type if

- a. They meet all of the requirements set out in section 9 and
- b. The contents and requirement levels of a specific version of an assessment system tailored to a specific type of building, type of use and type of building measure fully cover the use case of a current Certification type as defined in Annex 1, and
- c. The system rules exclude the award of a certification in the event that the building to be assessed violates public law regulations.

Exceptions to the above only apply for recognised assessment systems for residential and non-residential buildings in accordance with the regulations set out in section 10 during the introductory phase of QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM.

5.2.2. System providers or their licence holders can apply to the DAkkS to register assessment systems.

5.2.3. The costs of the overall assessment, including those for the expert reviews, are charged in accordance with the applicable Accreditation Body Fee Ordinance (AkkStelleGebV) last amended on 8 December 2017 (BGBl. I S. 3877), and are borne by the system provider.

5.2.4. If necessary, the applicant system provider will be given the opportunity to revise and adapt the system.

5.2.5. If all of the requirements and prerequisites are fulfilled, the DAkkS will issue the applicant scheme provider with a decision on the suitability of the assessment system as a basis for one or more QNG Certification types and inform the Department for QNG of the assessment's result. The Department will register the system on the basis of the decision issued for the same.

5.2.6. Registrations are valid for a maximum of 5 years. Every revision of the system has to be newly assessed. The registration also ends:

- a. On the discontinuation of the Certification type for which the assessment system was registered and
- b. If the Certification issuer becomes aware of a breach of the requirements of the "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS" and "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM" certification mark rules or European and national standards and legislation.
- c. Discontinuations are made by the Certification issuer and must be announced to the system providers and certification bodies 6 months in advance. The Department for QNG will add registered assessment systems to a publicly accessible list. If a registration expires, the relevant assessment system will be removed from the list.

## 6. **Special requirements in the public interest in the contribution to sustainable development**

6.1.1. The building and its planning, construction and handover/commissioning processes must fulfil all of the special requirements defined in Annex 3 in the public interest of QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM.

6.1.2. The assessment of the fulfilment of the building requirements requires taking into account the individual requirements for the Certification type

- a. whose use case covers the type of building, type of use and type of building measure of the building to be assessed and
- b. are part of the certification programme to be assessed by a certification body and
- c. which are published by the Department for QNG as interpretation notes for the building requirements (FAQ) and
- d. as the answers to frequently asked questions on the BEG (FAQ) published by the Federal Ministry for Economics and Climate Action, provided that the relevant issue has not already been regulated by one of the aforementioned requirements and interpretations of points a. to c.

6.1.3. The building requirements are fulfilled if the fulfilment of all individual requirements of the QNG requirements list for a specific requirement level of a Certification type has been recorded, documented and verifiably proven.

6.1.4. QNG-PLUS Certification has been achieved when all of the individual requirements of QNG-PLUS have been fulfilled. QNG-PREMIUM Certification has been achieved when all of the individual requirements of QNG-PREMIUM have been fulfilled.

6.1.5. The building requirements have been defined by the Certification issuer in Annex 3 and the other referenced documents.

## 7. QNG Certifications

### 7.1. Certification programme

7.1.1. The certification programme for QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM comprises an assessment system registered for the Certification type (cf. section 5) and the building requirements for a Certification type (cf. section 6).

7.1.2. The certification programme must include a registered assessment system whose application covers the type of building, type of use and type of building measure of the building to be assessed, and its planning, construction and handover/commissioning processes.

7.1.3. As a registered assessment system for the assessment of mixed-use buildings (mixed-use), the certification programme can also comprise a combination of several registered assessment systems that are based on a general rule of the system provider (mixed-use rule).

7.1.4. The certification programme must always comprise the building requirements of a Certification type whose application (use case) corresponds to the type of building, type of use and type of building measure of the building to be assessed, and its planning, construction and handover/commissioning processes.

### 7.2. Certification of the plan

7.2.1. Getting their planning certified with a QNG-PLUS planning certificate or QNG-PREMIUM planning certificate enables applicants to provide proof of the planned qualities before completion of the building, e.g. in the context of public law procedures.

7.2.2. The earliest possible date for getting a plan certified for the award of a QNG-PLUS planning certificate or QNG-PREMIUM planning certificate is the date on which a building permit is issued or, in the case of construction measures that do not require a building permit, the date on which the execution plan has been completed.

7.2.3. If a plan has been certified with a QNG-PLUS planning certificate or QNG-PREMIUM planning certificate, the verification procedure will be based on the building design plan. The design plan is the current planning status, which has to comply with the approved building permit or, in the case of construction measures that do not require a building permit, with public law regulations. Any missing information has to be compensated for with legally binding declarations of intent from the developer, whose prospects of success must be confirmed by sustainability consultants.

### 7.3. Certification of the building

7.3.1. The earliest possible date for certifying the building in accordance with QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM is the date on which it is possible to verify the fulfilment of the certification programme requirements based on documents verifying the qualities that have actually been realised on completion of a fully usable building.

7.3.2. When certifying a building, the verification process will be based on the documents that correspond to the qualities that have actually been realised following the completion of the construction of a building that is fully ready for use for its intended purpose.

## 8. Certification procedure for buildings and design plans

### 8.1. Submission of application

8.1.1. Depending on the specific use case based on the type of building, type of use and type of building measure (e.g. new building), applicants need to commission a certification body accredited for the relevant Certification type in accordance with Regulation (EC) 765/2008 in conjunction with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 to verify compliance with the requirements of a specific Certification type by means of a certification programme.

## 8.2. Quality assurance agreement

8.2.1. If applicants intend to apply for the approval of a state grant based on a funding programme (e.g. federal funding for efficient buildings) for which QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certification is a prerequisite, the certification body has to confirm that the application has been correctly submitted and sustainability consultants have to support applicants with drawing up a quality assurance agreement for achieving QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM Certification under a Certification type and assess their certification application's prospects of success in writing for the approval authority of the respective funding programme.

## 8.3. Assessment of the general requirements for the contribution to sustainable development

8.3.1. The certification body has to perform a sustainability assessment in accordance with the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 in conjunction with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17067 based on a certification programme.

8.3.2. A building should always be assessed using a certification programme that is current at the time of certification, i.e. the Certification type has been approved and not yet been withdrawn by the Certification issuer and the assessment system must be registered for the Certification type. The only permissible exception to the above is if applicants are using a certification programme that was current at the time of commissioning the certification body or of applying for certification or of the confirmation of an application for state funding.

8.3.3. The building must meet all of the requirements specified within the respective assessment system for the building and for the processes involved in its planning, construction and handover/commissioning.

8.3.4. The certification body has to draw up an assessment report – Part 1 – that assesses the manner and level to which the certification programme requirements have been met.

## 8.4. Assessment of the special requirements for the contribution to sustainable development

8.4.1. The certification body has to verify the fulfilment of the special building requirements for the Certification type of the QNG Certification in accordance with the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065.

8.4.2. This has to be done using procedures suitable for the relevant criteria in accordance with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 in conjunction with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17029. This could include an inspection of the construction site and taking measurements on the building structure. The relevant commissioned certification body has to determine the necessity and appropriateness of the inspection measures on a case-by-case basis depending on relevant risks, technical considerations and the relevant certification programme.

8.4.3. The certification body has to draw up an assessment report – Part 2 – that assesses the manner and level to which the special requirements in the public interest have been met.

## 8.5. Certification decision

8.5.1. Part 1 and Part 2 of the assessment report drawn up by the certification body set out the results of the assessment of the fulfilment of all of the requirements.

8.5.2. The certification body has to evaluate the assessment reports and make a certification decision in accordance with the rules of ISO/IEC 17065. The certification body also has to make a decision as to whether a building meets the requirements of QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM based on the assessment reports and in accordance with the regulations of the Certification specifications.

## 8.6. Certification notification, registration and Certification award

8.6.1. The certification body has to notify the Department for QNG of the certification decision by means of an electronic Certification notification. This has to be done by transmitting the basic details of the Certification and the

certified building in accordance with Annex 4 to the Department for QNG in anonymised form for the purpose of monitoring the Certification's use and the evaluation and further development of the QNG-PLUS and QNG-PREMIUM Certifications.

8.6.2. The certification body will then receive a confirmation of the notification with a registration number from the Department for QNG. The certification body and applicants may only use the Certification for specific buildings subject to quoting the Certification's registration number.

8.6.3. By awarding a building QNG Certification, the certification body confirms that the building in question meets the requirements of the Certification specifications and conforms to the requirements of QNG-PLUS or QNG-PREMIUM.

8.6.4. The related assessments will be performed both on the basis of the planning documents and of the building at the time of handover. All of the documents have to correspond to the actual condition of the building.

## 9. Requirements for registering assessment systems

### 9.1. Assessment system use cases

9.1.1. Assessment system providers have to define use cases (applications) for their assessment systems. The use case definition has to

- a. Specify the specific types of building and types of use as well as specific types of building measures for which the assessment system is designed and
- b. Define the possibilities for applying assessment systems and a combination of different assessment systems for mixed-use buildings, ensembles of buildings and extensions to existing buildings (extensions).

9.1.2. Assessment system case definitions have to be sufficiently specific to ensure that, if the assessment system is applied to a specific building, the following factors are unable to significantly influence individual or multiple assessment results:

- a. Type of use, single use or mixed use,
- b. Type of building measure in accordance with 9.1.4,
- c. the building and its technical equipment's level of independence, e.g. in the case of extensions to existing buildings (e.g. multi or single storey).

9.1.3. For this purpose, the use case definition may additionally also allow certification bodies to make case-by-case decisions if the assessment system provider has taken measures to ensure that all certification bodies commissioned by it or that are authorised to use the relevant assessment system will make the same decisions concerning all future and comparable buildings.

9.1.4. The use case definitions must be specifically designed for one or several of the following types of building measures:

- a. Planning and construction of new buildings (new building);
- b. Use and operation of buildings (use and operation);
- c. Planning and realisation of complete refurbishments (complete refurbishments);
- d. Planning and realisation of partial refurbishments (partial refurbishments);

9.1.5. Complete refurbishments are extensive building measures performed on existing buildings that involve the entirety of an independent building and comprise a combination of the building measure types of repairs, modernisations and conversions. Their aim is to provide an existing building as a whole with the features and characteristics typical of those of a new building to the largest extent possible.

9.1.6. Partial refurbishments are all of the building measures performed on existing buildings that do not constitute complete refurbishments and are not exclusively intended to restore a property to a condition suitable for its intended use (repairs).

## 9.2. The object of the assessment

9.2.1. The object to be assessed with the aid of an assessment system has to comprise the following components:

- Individual building with outdoor facilities;
- All of the structural and technical elements that are spatially and/or functionally related to the individual building;
- The planning, construction, commissioning, operation and utilisation processes of the building measure type of the use case.

9.2.2. As a minimum, assessment systems have to take into account the key aspects of sustainable design and construction. To do this, the criteria and indicators set out in the QNG CRITERIA LIST have to be taken into account and converted into system-specific criteria and indicators, including evaluation rules and standards, and assessed.

## 9.3. Assessment system structure and organisation requirements

9.3.1. The assessment system has to be divided into different subject areas. This division has to take the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of the three-pillar model of sustainable development into account.

9.3.2. The assessment system's subject areas have to be assigned specific assessment criteria.

9.3.3. The objectives of all of the criteria for the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of the building must be relevant to one or more of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or one or more of the conservation goals of sustainable building. The conservation goals of sustainable building across its three dimensions are:

### **Ecological:**

- Protecting the environment
- Protecting natural resources

### **Economic:**

- Reducing life cycle costs
- Improving economic efficiency
- Preserving capital

### **Socio-cultural:**

- Preserving health, safety and comfort
- Participation in all areas of life
- Ensuring functionality
- Safeguarding the quality of urban design and development

9.3.4. If an assessment system has rules for aggregating the criteria assessment results into a single overall score (full aggregation), it has to comply with the following requirements:

- a. The ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions must be included and make up at least 60.0 % (minimum assessment percentage) of the overall assessment result. The minimum assessment percentage must be evenly made up of ecological, economic and socio-cultural criteria assessments.
- b. The above minimum assessment percentage must not include any assessments of the quality of the project preparation, planning, construction, handover and commissioning processes for the building and its outdoor facilities (process qualities).

- c. The above minimum assessment percentage can include assessments of features and characteristics that cannot be significantly influenced by the completed building or its planning, construction and management processes with a maximum total share of 5.0 %.

9.3.5. If the assessment system does not have any rules for aggregating the criteria assessment results into a single overall score (full aggregation), at least 60.0 % of all of the criteria have to relate to the building project's ecological, economic or socio-cultural dimensions in accordance with 9.3.4.

## 9.4. Assessment criteria requirements

9.4.1. All of the assessment system's assessment criteria must in principal be designed for the purpose of assessing the object of the assessment. It is only permitted to deviate from this rule when assessing characteristics and properties that have a spatial connection to and are capable of influencing or that can be influenced by the object of the assessment.

9.4.2. Criteria can be divided into sub-criteria with indicators and sub-indicators.

9.4.3. A description of the criteria, including the indicators and sub-indicators as well as the measurement rules and evaluation criteria, must be publicly accessible and free of charge. A description has to comprise the following information as a minimum:

- a. Name;
- b. Relevance, objective and brief description;
- c. Measurement rules;
- d. Evaluation criteria;
- e. Verification method;
- f. Rules for aggregating the assessment results of indicators and/or sub-indicators.

9.4.4. The measurement rules and evaluation criteria have to be specified and applied in such a way as to make it possible to identify and assess their methodological basis and achieve reproducible assessment results.

9.4.5. The evaluation criteria must include at least one quality level to describe a minimum quality level (required limit value) and one quality level to describe a target quality level (required target value).

9.4.6. All of the qualities covered by the quality levels must comply with public law regulations. The required limit value must set out a quality level that, as a minimum, corresponds to the generally recognised rules of technology, where available. The required target value must set out a quality level that represents a clear improvement in relation to the industry average and significantly increases the level to which the objective of the evaluation criterion is being met.

## 9.5. Principle of completeness

9.5.1. In principle, all of the criteria, sub-criteria, indicators and sub-indicators of an assessment system have to be processed and verified in full and without omissions (principle of completeness).

9.5.2. Exceptions to this rule are only permitted if the exceptions

- a. are defined in freely and publicly accessible system rules in a clear, criteria-specific and well-founded manner, and
- b. do not relate to the criteria of the QNG CRITERIA LIST.

## 9.6. General system requirements

9.6.1. The earliest possible point at which a building project can be certified always has to be the point in time at which the principle of completeness can be complied with, i.e. at which all of the criteria have been assessed based on the actual quality levels that have been realised. This is generally only possible once the construction work for

the assessment system's respective use case has been completed and the building has been commissioned and handed over to the user. Exceptions are only permitted for certifications that justify issuing temporary certificates in accordance with 7.1 and the verification procedure for which is based on the design plan.

9.6.2. All of the assessment methods must always be based on laws or recognised technical standards and technical regulations within the meaning of Regulation 1025/2012 and Directive 1353/2015, i.e. in particular EN, DIN and ISO/IEC standards. Exceptions to this rule are only permitted if there are no European and national standards on which the assessment methods can be based and the selected technical specifications have been notified as a technical regulation or recognised as a common specification.

9.6.3. Assessment systems must always define the first 50 years of a building's life cycle as the study period for building life cycle assessments and life cycle cost calculations.

9.6.4. In order to register an assessment system with a different study period, the system provider must demonstrate that the study period corresponds to the average service life or useful life of a representative sample of buildings assigned to the relevant use case by means of recognised scientific methods.

9.6.5. The assessment system has to define building life cycle assessment requirements that ensure their consistent and uniform performance. This includes, as a minimum:

- a. The specification of the following requirements for the reliability of datasets:
  - If using generic datasets, it is only permitted to use datasets from a specified version of ÖKOBAUDAT.
  - When using product-specific datasets, it is only permitted to use environmental product declarations in accordance with DIN EN ISO 14025 and DIN EN 15804 for the products actually installed if these datasets fulfil the “Principles for the inclusion of life cycle assessment data in the online database ÖKOBAUDAT”.
- b. Specification of the inclusion of at least the following life cycle phases and life cycle modules in accordance with DIN EN 15978:
  - Product stage with modules A1 to A3;
  - Use stage with modules B4 and B6;
  - End of life stage with modules C3 and C4;

The result value for the reuse, energy recovery and recycling potential of module D must be recognised separately from the above modules as an individual value in conformance with the standard, irrespective of how it is included in the assessment.
- c. Specification for determining component service life and replacement cycles:
  - Definition of default values for component service lives or replacement cycles, e.g. through reference to the BBSR table “Service lives of building components for life cycle analyses according to the Assessment System for Sustainable Building (BNB)”, for use as a basis for calculating the replacement cycles of building components within the study period.

## 9.7. Verification, documentation and presentation of the assessment result

9.7.1. The assessment system must specify a standardised and systematic verification method. This must include, as a minimum:

- a. Specification of a systematic procedure for compiling the results and the required verification documents;
- b. Specification of the calculation and input methods to be used;
- c. Specification of the databases to be used;
- d. Evidence of full processing of all assessment criteria;
- e. Evidence of complete coverage of the building and its components and/or proof of permissible simplifications;



- f. Evidence of full consideration of the defined life cycle model.

9.7.2. The evaluation system must specify requirements for verification documents. This must include, as a minimum:

- a. Specification of the principle of using verification documents that refer to the completed building and/or only marginally deviate from the same;
- b. Specification of the exclusive use of verification documents that were created during the planning, construction, commissioning, operation and utilisation processes of the building measure type of the use case;
- c. Specification of the transparent documentation of all of the characteristics and properties of the building and processes to be assessed on the basis of suitable documents.

9.7.3. The assessment system must specify a standardised documentation and presentation method for the assessment results. This must include, as a minimum:

- a. Specification of the form and content of a document (certificate) to present the overall result;
- b. Specification of the separate compilation of relevant characteristics and properties of the building as well as selected assessment results, including
  - Type of building and type of use,
  - Information on areas and cubic capacity,
  - characteristic values of the energy demand during the use phase in accordance with the German Buildings Energy Act (GEG),
  - greenhouse gas emissions over the building's life cycle (GWP 100),
  - level of accessibility,
  - building costs KG 300 and KG 400;
- c. Specification of the compilation of all assessment results for individual criteria, indicators and sub-indicators (assessment list);
- d. Specification of the documentation of the assessment bases through reference to freely and publicly accessible information;
- e. Specification of the description of property and site characteristics.

## 9.8. List of criteria for the QNG Sustainable Building Certification

9.8.1. Assessment systems must always take into account, describe and assess all of the criteria listed in Annex 2 for the respective Certification type in compliance with the supplementary explanations.

9.8.2. The names of the criteria and indicators of the assessment system may differ from the names of the criteria and indicators in Annex 2.

9.8.3. The criteria in Annex 2 must be assigned to the subject areas of an assessment system in accordance with their relevance and objectives.

9.8.4. The criteria in Annex 2 can be supplemented with extra indicators in the assessment systems in addition to the indicators specified in the QNG criteria list. The criteria in Annex 2 can be subdivided into sub-criteria and the indicators in Annex 2 can be subdivided into sub-indicators.

9.8.5. Evidence of fulfilment of the special requirements in the public interest in Annex 3 (building requirements) does not have to be part of the assessment system and its verification methods. System providers can integrate the methods, requirement levels and verifications of all or of individual building requirements of Annex 3 into their assessment systems.

## 10. Introductory phase

10.1.1. During the introductory phase, the following deviating transitional regulations apply, which ensure that compliance with the requirements for using the certification mark will be appropriately reviewed in advance of the



statutory registration of an assessment system and accreditation of a certification body. The introductory phase ends on 31.05.2024.

**10.1.2. Transitional regulations for recognised assessment systems for residential and non-residential buildings:**

The assessment systems for residential and non-residential buildings recognised in accordance with the announcement on the use and recognition of assessment systems for sustainable building dated 15.04.2010 (Federal Gazette No. 70 from 07.05.2010, page 1642 ff.) in the version dated 23.06.2015 are deemed a suitable basis for providing evidence for the award of a specific Certification type in accordance with Annex 1 for the introductory phase of the QNG Certification if

- a. the system providers undertake to ensure that the other requirements of the certification mark rules for "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS" and "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM" including the associated Certification specifications, are met on a permanent basis and
- b. in the case of Certification types for residential buildings, the relevant system provider submitted an application for registration of the assessment systems developed and/or used by it in accordance with the above announcement by 01.07.2021 at the latest, and
- c. in the case of Certification types for non-residential buildings, the relevant system provider submitted an application for registration of the assessment systems developed and/or used by it in accordance with the above announcement by 01.02.2022 at the latest.

The registration of the assessment system expires at the end of the introductory phase, on 31.05.2024 at the latest, or if the requirements of the certification mark rules have been breached. The same applies if the system provider breaches the requirements of the above announcement.

For future recognition of an assessment system, system providers have to register the same in accordance with No. 10.1.2 at the latest on expiry of the previous registration in accordance with No. 5.2 and consequently, in particular, provide evidence of its suitability as a certification programme.

**10.1.3. Transitional arrangements for recognised inspection bodies for assessment systems for sustainable building:**

If a body has been recognised by the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building as an inspection body for assessment systems for sustainable building by 15.04.2021 in accordance with the announcement on the use and recognition of assessment systems for sustainable building dated 15.04.2010 (Federal Gazette No. 70 from 07.05.2010, page 1642 ff.) in the version dated 23.06.2015, it can act as a certification body within the meaning of the certification mark rules during the ongoing accreditation procedure, provided that

- a. this body submitted an application for accreditation to the German Accreditation Body in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 with validation capacity in accordance with ISO/IEC 17029 by 01.07.2021 at the latest,
- b. evidence of its authorisation to use an approved assessment system has been provided and
- c. it undertakes to comply with the "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PLUS" and "QNG Sustainable Building Certification PREMIUM" Certification mark rules, including the associated Certification specifications, for current certifications.

The authorisation to operate as a certification body within the meaning of the certification mark rules ceases to apply when a negative accreditation decision by the DAkkS becomes final.

## 11. Changes made to the previous version

Date	Page	Change
19.07.2024	All	Addition and update of the QNG logo

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## **Editorial department**

Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban/Affairs and  
Spatial Development (BBSR) of the  
Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR)  
Department WB 5 – Sustainable building  
Email: [qng@bbr.bund.de](mailto:qng@bbr.bund.de)  
Website: [www.bbsr.bund.de](http://www.bbsr.bund.de)

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