

COVID-19 Impacts on Green Star & GBCSA Ratings – April 2020

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Version 2

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Revisions of this document

Date Issued Description

8 May 2020	Version 1 issued
18 June 2020	Clarifying ‘project 3 month extension’

Purpose of this document

This document outlines guidance for how to manage the impacts of COVID-19 on project submissions. It responds to potential delays to certification, and provides technical guidance for rating tools.

This document will be continually reviewed and updated as the situation unfolds. The changelog outlines all the changes over time.

Applicability of this document

Green Star – New Build & Green Star Interiors Rating Tools

This document applies to all versions of Green Star – New Build (across all typologies and including Custom and African projects) and Green Star – Interiors.

Green Star – Existing Building Performance Rating Tool

This document certainly applies to the version 1 of the EBP Tool.

Green Star – Sustainable Precincts

This document doesn't apply to Green Star – Sustainable Precincts. Guidance for this Tool is under development.

Project teams are encouraged to contact the Technical Coordinator/Case Manager assigned to your project, or in the case of new projects, please contact Georgina Smit, Head of Market Transformation

(georgina.smit@gbcsa.org.za), subject line COVID-19.

GBCSA Net Zero

This document applies to all versions, levels and categories of modelled and measured GBCSA Net Zero ratings.

IFC EDGE

IFC have issued guidance to project teams for Remote Audit Policy in response to COVID-19, detailed below. Further guidance requests can be directed to edge@ifc.org, copying in your assigned project GBCSA Case Manager.

Documentation adaptations for Green Star & GBCSA Projects

Green Star – New Build, Green Star Interiors Rating Tools & GBCSA Net Zero Modelled

The GBCSA acknowledges that supply chains and the ability for project teams to collect information may be affected by the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19. Where suppliers, contractors or sub-contractors cease to exist or are not able to provide their service to the building for a number of credits and the submission may be impacted.

Project teams are required to submit a Zendesk Request, and demonstrate the specific cause of the inability to secure documentation. The GBCSA will review and provide a ruling per project and per credit, for project teams to use at time of submission.

For example, for the Daylight credit, confirmation from a supplier that a type of glazing was supplied and installed at the As Built phase of the project is unable to be sourced, as the supplier has ceased to exist. In

lieu of supplier confirmation, the Head Contractor may provide confirmation that the glazing was installed as per As Built drawings, and correlating the type of glazing installed against the As Built Drawings and Material Data Sheets from the manufacturer.

Green Star – Existing Building Performance & GBCSA Net Zero Modelled

Buildings are still able to achieve ratings during periods of lower occupancy or building shut down.

Projects currently registered for *Green Star – EBP* will be affected by both short and long term impacts of COVID-19, namely due to lower occupancy rates as well as partial or complete shutdown. As *Green Star – EBP* rates the operational performance of the building during a performance period; the project has potential for an artificial improvement due to lower greenhouse gas emissions, potable water consumption and waste measurement.

These potential 'improvements' in ratings may have compound affects when looking at Portfolio ratings, projects entering Recertification phases and for projects targeting Net Zero.

The following guidance aims to ensure that shutdowns do not artificially influence the rating, however, this cannot be guaranteed.

Policy & Plan Type Credits for Green Star – EBP

The lower occupancy rates, or the shutdown of a building due to COVID-19 should have no measureable impact on the project's ability to target Policy & Plan Type credits at Initial or Re-certification periods, as they relate to the processes and policies that apply to the building.

The Technical Manual already provide provisions for the implementation of these any time during or within the performance period.

Survey Type Credits for Green Star – EBP

Some Survey Type credits such as Transport Surveys or Occupant Satisfaction surveys may be unable to be conducted due to their reliance on building occupants and for public health safety reasons.

For these type of credits, surveys or audits conducted out of the performance period may be accepted on the following condition:

That they are conducted within three (3) months following the end of the performance period. The EBP AP is to outline the Survey Type credits that have been affected for the submission by COVID -19 via a summarized Zendesk Request, with the proposed and approved alternative response, noting timeframes.

Measurement & Audit Type Credits for Green Star – EBP

These Measurement & Audit Type credits aren't limited to the Indoor Environment Quality (IEQ) category as there are also credits like *MAN-3 – Maintenance Management & Tuning Testing*, *MAN-4 – Cleaning Audits* & *MAN-7: Learning Resources – Awareness Programmes* that require measurement & audits. However, the majority are in the IEQ category and rely on measurements of internal environment conditions throughout the performance period, under normal occupancy conditions. The Technical Manual already provide provisions for Certifications, allowing for the measurement of these conditions during or within the performance period.

The guidance for buildings affected by lower occupancy or shut down is as follows:

Some Measurement & Audit Type credits may be unable to be conducted due to their reliance on building occupants and for public health safety reasons. For these type of credits, measurements/audits conducted out of the performance period may be accepted on the condition they are conducted within three (3) months following the end of the performance period. The EBP AP is to outline the Measurement & Audit Type credits that have been affected for the submission by COVID -19 via a summarized Zendesk Request, with the proposed and approved alternative response, noting timeframes.

Data Type Credits for Green Star – EBP

Data Type credits will be affected by a building having lower occupancy rates or being shut down due to COVID-19 implications. The impact for Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Potable Water and Operational Waste credits, and their outcomes will be affected by the occupancy of the building and the reliance on benchmarks. Further, these three credits account for 43% in the rating tool.

Due to potential lower occupancy rates or building shut down, it may be expected that the energy and water consumption and waste production will be lower than typical months, and result in the building having lower greenhouse gas emissions during the performance period.

The general rule of thumb is as follows:

Where alternative Compliance Paths exist (ENE & WAT), the following applies to all Compliance Paths: Where occupancy is affected for periods not exceeding three (3) months, these months can be normalised (e.g. by removing and replacing with data from the previous year).

Where occupancy is affected for periods exceeding 3 months, the project will need to wait until sufficient data is available to include a minimum of nine (9) months of normal operating conditions. This includes a minimum 70% occupation rate with normal operating hours. For months where the occupancy criteria are not met, then the Project will be required to remove the 'unusual month/s' and add on another consecutive month/s to their data.

The EBP AP is to outline which Data Type credits have been affected for the submission by COVID -19 via a summarized Zendesk Request, with the proposed and approved alternative response, noting timeframes.

Building Type Credits for Green Star – EBP

Building Type credits at Initial or Re-certification periods rely on the physical attributes of the building and as such, the lower occupancy rates, or the shutdown of a building due to COVID-19 should have no measureable impact on the project's ability to target this credit type.

EDGE

Final EDGE certification audits can now be conducted remotely, according to new guidance that has been agreed upon by EDGE certifiers. The temporary policy, which was developed in response to COVID-19, is effective until further notice.

The new guidance is available in English (EDGE Remote Audit Policy During COVID-19)

(<https://ifc.us10.listmanage.com/track/click?u=3aab79e0093b30121513cec0c&id=6e47a0b932&e=557923fd0a>).

It covers the following:

- Applicability of projects that can be audited remotely.
- Roles and responsibilities for auditors, on-site inspectors, certifiers and clients.
- How to conduct an offline audit or live-stream audit.
- Required elements for on-site evidence collection.

Scenarios for Rating delays

Each Tool within the relevant **Technical Manuals** currently contains Timing Criteria that apply and these must be adhered to within the timeframes for the individual Rating to be achieved. They are as follows:

- Green Star – New Build (Design and As Built) certification must be achieved within 24 months on practical completion.
- Green Star – Interiors certification must be achieved within 12 months of practical completion.
- Green Star – Existing Building Performance:
 - Must be operational for min 12 months after final completion.

- The building's 'performance period' (period under which the building's performance is measured) is to be 12 consecutive months.
- Energy & Water performance periods must end within 90 days of each other.
- The project must submit for certification within 90 days of the end of the building's 12-month performance period.
- Time allowance between Round 1 & 2 is 90 days.
- Re-certification can take place at any time within the 3-year period, but the project's rating will lapse if not re-certified within 3 years.
- Annual submission during the 3-year period will be required for ENE & WAT consumption data.
- For GBCSA Net Zero:
 - For both Level 1 & 2 modelled certifications can only be awarded using Design or As Built documentation within 2 years from the practical completion of the project, where the certification must be awarded to the project within 2 years of practical completion, in line with Green Star New Build requirements.
 - The end of the performance period data-set should not be older than 3 months at the time of submission.
Note: the Energy and Water Data need not be from the exact same period, provided the point above applies.

Each Green Star Tool also has defined periods on the **Certification Engine** once they fully register. They are as follows:

- Green Star – New Build (Design and As Built): 24 months
- Green Star – Interiors: 12 months
- Green Star – Existing Building Performance: 12 months

Each project might find themselves at a different point in the rating or submission process, yet the impact of COVID-19 might be felt. Where projects find that they will be unable to adjust to the

1. **Technical Manual Timing Criteria** or
2. the **Certification Engine timelines**,

then the project can send in a Zendesk Request and motivate for the project to be extended for a 3-month period. This is done on a case-by-case basis.

There are strict conditions for allowing **Projects to be extended due to COVID-19 reasons. If these are approved the project will be given an extension on the Certification Engine for a period of 3 months.**

The explanations for a Projects delay need to be understood before anything is granted:

1. The building project had stopped as the developer had pulled out.
2. The building owner/client had run into funding difficulty.
3. Delays of construction/fit-out due to COVID-19 circumstances;
4. Delays in obtaining service provider/consultant information owing to company closures due to COVID-19 circumstances;
5. Project Applicants or contractors cease to exist due to liquidation or bankruptcy;
6. Delay in obtaining measurement/survey building data due to COVID-19 circumstances.

The Request for an extension of a project requires a letter from the client or principal agent addressing the points above which explaining the reason for delay and how they relate to COVID-19, as well as how it is out of the Project Team's control. If required, the GBCSA may request that the project provides evidence that the project offices were closed (not operational at all) during the lockdown period and that the project office were not able to acquire submission details over email or online over this time to complete the submission.

To ensure there are no delays for the Project, please submitting this letter 3 weeks before the 3-month extension period is required.

Projects that motivate sufficiently for an extension due to COVID-19 reasons will be indorsed to go on the extension for a duration of 3 months maximum. These 3 months is free of charge with the correct motivation.

At this stage if any addition period on this free 3-month extension period is required there is to be expected to be fees payable by the project team. This will be evaluated as the COVID-19 situation develops. The Project is required to re-submit a letter from the client via the same format & with motivation for the above 3 weeks before the free 3-month extension period is complete.

Contacting the GBCSA

The GBCSA are continually considering the impact of COVID-19 on our products and services. We will update this document accordingly as the South African lockdown conditions evolve.

If you have any queries in relation to COVID-19 and require clarity around alternative methods, criteria etc. please submit a Zendesk Request (<https://gbcса.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>), subject line: COVID-19, tool type noted.

If at any time you believe you are being negatively impacted by the current situation or the direction given in this document, and you would like to speak to someone, please contact either:

Jenni Lombard, Technical Manager, or

Georgina Smit, Head of Market Transformation & Sector Development

