

# Net Zero Carbon: Level 2 – Occupant Emissions (Measured)

## Using Performance Benchmarks to demonstrate building performance

*Note - The intention of introducing performance benchmarks into the current Net Zero tool is to enable project teams to demonstrate ongoing performance against recognised EUI benchmarks. This enables clear performance targets to be set and performance to be demonstrated over time. This approach also enables a clear performance trajectory to be established in alignment with Net Zero 2050 goals to guide project teams towards achieving these goals ensuring that building efficiency is prioritised.*

Change Log		
Revision Date	Revision No.	Description of Changes
05/11/2025	1	Inclusion of the link to the Zero Carbon Action Plan

### The Green Building Council of South Africa

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Association Incorporated in terms of Section 21 Reg NO. 2007/029477/08 Reg No. 062-541-NPO

**Directors:** André Theys (Chair), Phillip Barttram (Deputy Chair), Brian Unsted (Immediate Past Chair), Anelisa Keke, Engelbert Binedell, Ilse Swanepoel, Joanne Solomon, Kevin James, Manfred Braune, Steve Brookes, Shameela Soobramoney, Lisa Reynolds (CEO & Executive Director), Levinia Palmer (Executive Director), Georgina Smit (Executive Director)

## Introduction

It is possible for projects to demonstrate building performance through the use of performance benchmarks when considering Pathway 3 and 4. The on-site energy checklist is still available for project teams wanting to use this method for demonstrating building efficiency.

The benchmarks can be applied to certified projects to simplify the demonstration of building performance. It is also possible to use the EWP tool to demonstrate building performance for projects that have not previously been certified. These two options are detailed in this guidance document.

## The Performance Benchmarks

### Certified Projects

It is possible to use previously certified Energy and Water Performance (EWP) or Existing Building Performance (EBP) projects to demonstrate building performance.

The **performance requirements** are detailed below –

#### ***For Net Zero Carbon: Level 2 Occupant Emissions (Measured)***

*In order to access Pathway 3 or 4, buildings are required to demonstrate either 20% improvement upon the baseline without renewables, or 40% improvement upon the baseline with the benefit of on-site renewables included.*

The **documentation requirements**, over and above those currently part of the Net Zero Technical Manual, are as follows –

#### ***Measured Net Zero Carbon: Level 2 – Occupant Emissions (Measured)***

- Proof of the project's previous EBP / EWP certification.
- Approved EWP tool with supporting submission documentation.
- Offset Retirement details
- Additional to the Net Zero Short Report (Short Report additional section(s) is no longer required)
  - Summary of compliance to the performance requirements.
  - Confirmation that the scope of the Net Zero project aligns to the EBP/EWP certified project being used to demonstrate performance.
  - Confirmation that the EBP/EWP certification is still valid.

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- Description of off-site renewables or offsets used, including a calculation of how much carbon emissions were required to be offset by these off-site mechanisms.
- For pathway 4
  - Confirm the carbon offset scheme that has been used and that it is from the list of GBCSA approved schemes.
  - Provide a summary of the carbon offset percentage used in achieving Net Zero as per the following guidance - [CARBON-C-NET-7362](#)
  - Provide a link to the registry
    - The following retirement details are to be used and reflected on the registry –  
*Retired on behalf of XXX, Project Name(s), GBCSA Net Zero, Performance period [TBC].*

Project Teams are to refer to the public TC/CIR database, [here](#), for Net Zero to ensure they are following the latest guidance and updates.

## Non-Certified Projects

If a project has not been previously certified or the previous certification has lapsed, it is now possible to use the EWP tool to demonstrate performance.

The **performance requirement** in this situation is detailed below –

### ***Measured Net Zero Carbon: Level 2 – Occupant Emissions (Measured)***

*In order to access Pathway 3 or 4, buildings are required to demonstrate either 20% improvement upon the baseline without renewables, or 40% improvement upon the baseline with the benefit of on-site renewables included.*

The **documentation requirements**, over and above those currently part of the Net Zero Technical Manual, are as follows –

### ***Measured Net Zero***

- EWP tool to be submitted in accordance with [EWP Energy Technical Manual and Tool Guidelines](#).
- Additional to the Net Zero Short Report (Short Report additional section(s) is no longer required)
  - Summary of compliance with the performance requirements.
  - Description of off-site renewables or offsets used, including a calculation of how much carbon emissions were required to be offset by these off-site mechanisms.

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- For pathway 4
  - Confirm the carbon offset scheme that has been used and that it is from the list of GBCSA approved schemes.
  - Provide a summary of the carbon offset percentage used in achieving Net Zero as per the following guidance - [CARBON-C-NET-7362](#)
  - Provide a link to the registry
    - The following retirement details are to be used and reflected on the registry –  
*Retired on behalf of XXX, Project Name(s), GBCSA Net Zero, Performance period [TBC].*

## Net Zero Performance Benchmark Trajectory

The performance requirements outlined in this guidance document will progressively tighten to drive the market toward higher efficiency and lower carbon outcomes.

All project teams should develop a Net Zero Action Plan that defines a clear and sustainable decarbonisation pathway. This plan should follow the recognised hierarchy of actions: building efficiency, on-site renewables, off-site renewables, and finally carbon offsets. This sequence ensures that the most effective and enduring measures are prioritised in achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions. (Refer to the Net Zero Carbon Action Plan Guidance for further detail - [Zero Carbon Action Plan – GBCSA](#))

While practical constraints may affect how fully this hierarchy can be applied—such as limited renewable energy availability or phased efficiency upgrades—projects should demonstrate that efficiency measures have been prioritised and that a credible, long-term decarbonisation strategy is in place.

The GBCSA is developing a Net Zero Trajectory Guidance Document to provide further clarity for the market. In the interim, projects undergoing Net Zero re-certification are expected to demonstrate progress by reducing reliance on carbon offsets compared to their initial certification.

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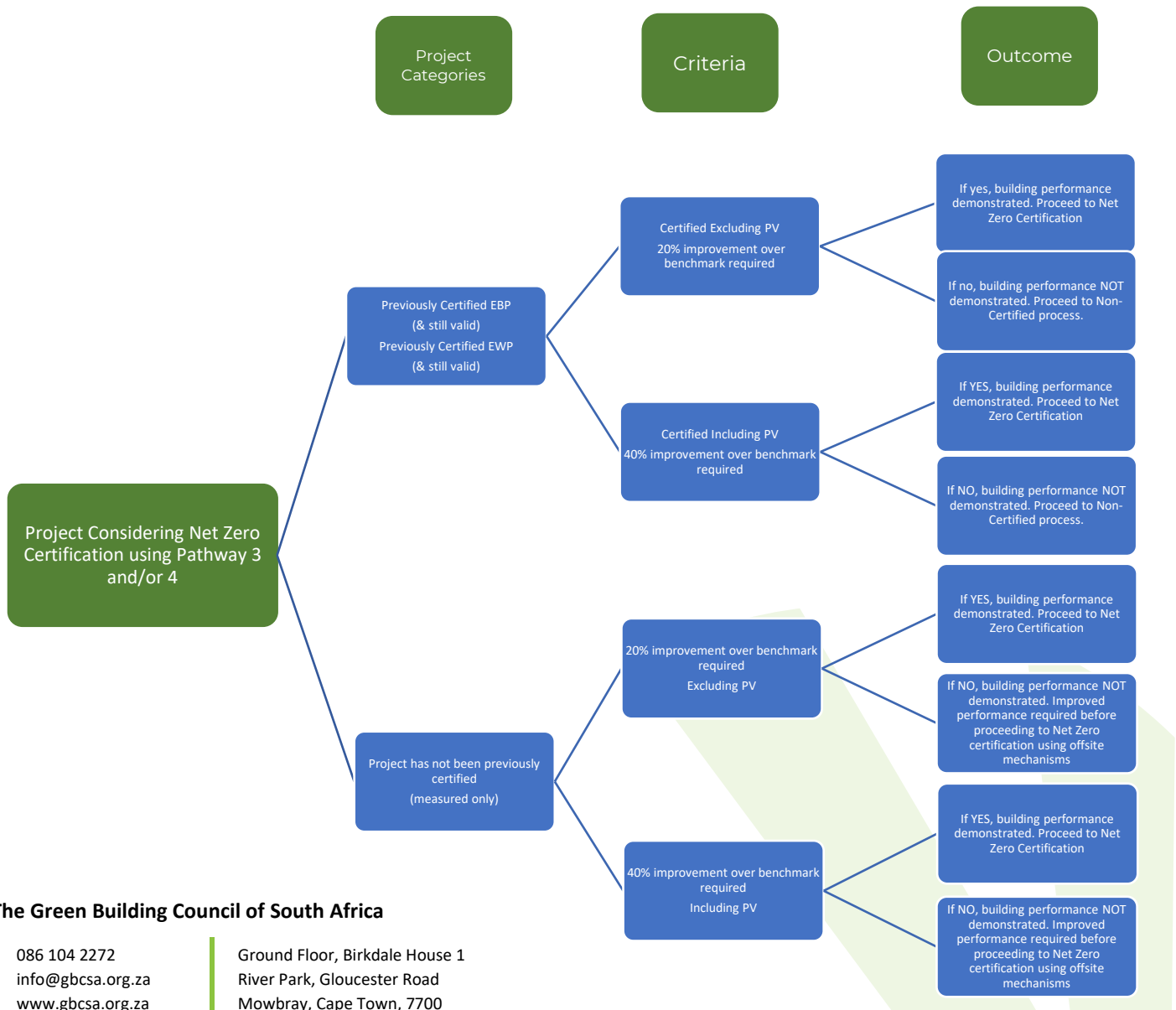
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Examples of projects eligible for pathway 3 or 4:

- Certified EWP (standalone or within EBP rating) with minimum Energy improvement of **20% excluding** on-site renewables.
- Certified EWP (standalone or within EBP rating) with minimum Energy improvement of **40% including** on-site renewables.
- Certified EBP (Compliance Paths 2,3 or 4) with minimum Energy improvement of **20% excluding** on-site renewables.
- Certified EBP (Compliance Paths 2,3 or 4) with minimum Energy improvement of **40% including** on-site renewables.



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