

Role-Play Scenario – Construction vs Green Certification

This document is used as a **role-play exercise** in an advanced English-for-real-estate class.

Students are divided into two teams within the same **Project Management / AMO company**:

- the **Construction Team**
- the **Green Certification Team**

The client's objective is to achieve a **BREEAM Excellent** certification, while facing **strict budget constraints**.

Each team has different priorities, technical arguments and cost considerations.

The goal of the exercise is to **negotiate a realistic compromise**, balancing environmental performance, technical feasibility and financial constraints.

This role-play is designed to develop:

- professional negotiation skills
- sector-specific vocabulary (construction, sustainability, cost management)
- clear, structured oral communication in a real-life project context

Scenario

Your company is managing the construction of a new **office building in La Défense (30,000 m²)**. The project is **halfway through the construction phase**.

Both teams are meeting internally to review **the sustainability targets**, because costs are rising and some measures might need to be adjusted.

The client's requirement:

"The building must reach at least BREEAM Excellent and stay within the original €42M budget. Delivery expected: June next year."

Team A – Real Estate (Construction) PM

Your main goals:

- Deliver **on time** and **budget (€42M)**.
- Avoid any design or materials change that could delay the works.
- Minimize complexity for contractors.

Your concerns:

- Rising material costs (+8% steel and concrete).
- New requests from Green Insight (extra sensors, low-carbon concrete, extra insulation).
- Every modification adds risk and delay.

You can accept:

- Some sustainability improvements **if they don't affect schedule or exceed budget by more than +2%**.
- Changes that can be implemented **without redesign**.

Team B – Sustainability Consultants

Your main goals:

- Reach at least **BREEAM Excellent** and aim for **HQE Exceptional** if possible.
- Include measurable impact: energy efficiency, materials traceability, water saving.
- Strengthen company's reputation as a "green leader."

Your concerns:

- Some sustainable features have been dropped during cost-cutting.
- If the project doesn't meet the target, the company's image will suffer.
- Investors expect solid ESG results, not just marketing.

You can accept:

- A slightly reduced scope, **as long as key features remain visible and auditable** (e.g. solar panels, smart ventilation, low-carbon materials).
- A budget increase **up to +5%** if justified by ROI or long-term value.



1 Specs of the project – “Green Building Meeting”

Project Overview

- **Name:** *La Défense Horizon*
- **Type:** Office building (new construction)
- **Surface:** 30,000 sq m
- **Client:** International investment fund
- **Delivery target:** June next year
- **Budget:** €42m (fixed)
- **Certification target:** *BREEAM Excellent* (minimum)



Financial situation

- Material prices have increased:
 - Concrete: +8%
 - Steel: +12%
 - Insulation materials: +10%
 - Contractor has requested a **2-month extension** due to supply issues.
 - The investor refuses to increase the total budget but may accept **minor adjustments** if justified.
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Sustainability objectives

- **Energy performance:** at least 20% better than French RT 2012 standard.
- **Materials:** use of **low-carbon concrete** and **recycled steel**.
- **Water management:** rainwater collection system (estimated cost €150,000).
- **Renewable energy:** rooftop solar panels (estimated cost €500,000).
- **Indoor comfort:** smart ventilation system and natural lighting optimization.

Tensions identified

Issue	Real Estate view	Green Insight view
Budget	Must stay within €42M	Accept slight increase (+5%) if ROI proven
Timeline	June delivery non-negotiable	Some systems may delay works
Materials	Prefer standard concrete	Push for low-carbon concrete
Equipment	Limit extra systems	Install smart ventilation + solar panels
Image / certification	BREEAM "Excellent" is enough	Aim for HQE "Exceptional"

Negotiation goal

By the end of the meeting, both teams must **agree on a revised plan** that states:

1. Which sustainability measures will be kept, modified, or dropped.
2. How the project stays (or not) within budget and timeline.
3. How to justify their choice to the client.

 *Tip for participants:*

Be strategic — you don't need to win the argument, you need a **workable compromise**.

The vocab you will need:

Exercise – Fill in the blanks: Negotiating a green project

Complete each sentence with the missing words from the list below.
(Each blank corresponds to one word or short phrase.)

Word Bank

concern – tenants – over – ROI – impact – schedule – handover – payback – offset – investment
– compliance – ground – understand – point – too long – result

A. Expressing disagreement diplomatically

1. I ___ your point, but we also need to consider the client's expectations.
2. I'm afraid that might impact the ___.
3. I ___ your concern, however, we also have to think about the investor's priorities.
4. Let's find a ___ ground between sustainability and profitability.

B. Talking about costs & trade-offs

5. We're already ___ budget by 5%.
6. The payback period is too ___.
7. We could ___ the cost by reducing energy expenses.
8. What's the ___ on this option?
9. This could delay the ___ date.

C. Arguing for sustainability / long-term value

10. It's a long-term ___ in the building's value.
11. Green certifications attract premium ___.
12. It's not just ___ — it's reputation.
13. The client expects measurable ___, not greenwashing.

