



**SFMI**  
The Sustainable FM Index

# THE 23 CRITERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE FM

## A SFMI guide to sustainability

This report is a guide for FM providers, FM Teams and Property teams to understand:

- The definition of each criteria and how it relates to sustainability in the built environment.
- How each criterion affects the role of the FM,
- What FM can do to manage each criterion.
- How each criteria interlink with other sustainability criteria
- What should sustainable FM leaders be achieving according to the SFMI scoring assessment.

The SFMI is a product of Acclaro Advisory



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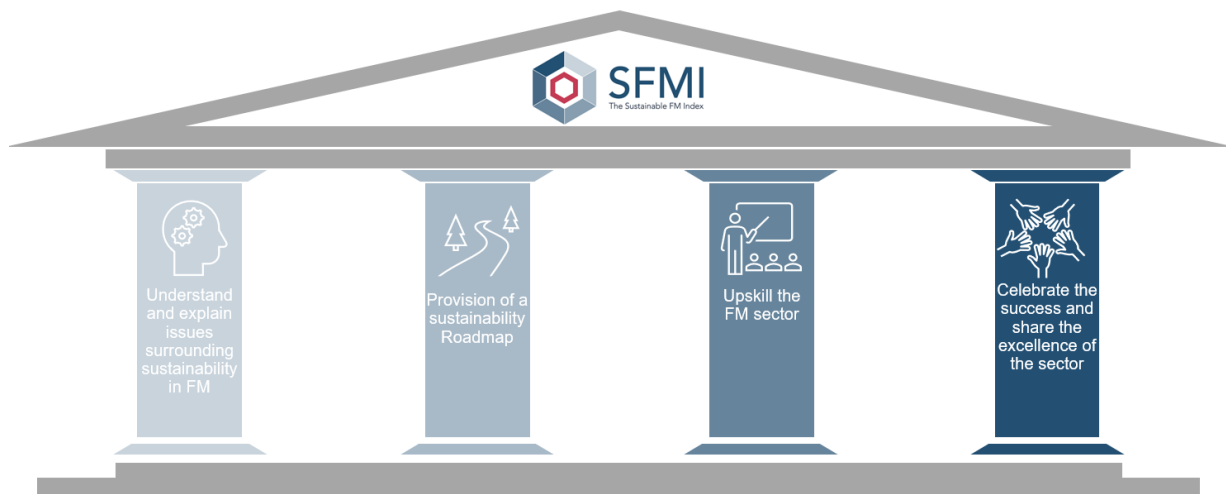
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## SFMI's guide to Sustainability in FM - 23 Criteria

The SFMI has been assessing FM Providers since 2012 on their ability manage and implement sustainability into their internal governance processes and into the services that they offer clients.

We have 4 pillars through which we strive *to embed sustainability into the management and operation of the FM sector*.



To improve anything, one must first understand it. We believe understanding where the FM sector stands regarding sustainability and being able to explain the issues surrounding it is the first step to improving the sector. We then work with FM providers and customers to provide a sustainability roadmap covering many different aspects of corporate operations. Upskilling the sector is crucial to improving sustainability and maintaining continuous improvements. Finally, it is just as important to recognise and celebrate success and share experiences and successes of the sector. Sharing best practice can help motivate other FMs to make changes to better their own sustainability efforts.

As part of our second pillar, we have developed an assessment framework that splits sustainability into 23 interlinking criteria that is applicable to FM and the built environment. Each criterion offers a pathway to improvement. Using this we provide a grading of 0 to 5 to judge the company performance in each area. Performance is based on provision of evidence by the FM Provider.

The 23 criteria are  
split into three  
sections:





Governance issues are managed by the corporate entity and filter down to the FM, and environmental and social issues are managed both within the company boundary and integrated into the services provided by the FM. It is this approach that separates the SFMI as a performance measure. FM is a service industry, and so FM Providers should be able to manage it internally, while also integrate it into the service.

Throughout this document, you will also notice how no topic stands alone, they interlink dynamically. Therefore, managing each topic in siloes is not recommended.

**SFMI partners sign up to be assessed against our framework. During an assessment, companies are scored twice:**

**1. In an assessment of public data.**

A public disclosure assessment is conducted because this helps us to set the context of the business and their sustainability culture. We also want to inform the company on whether they are overselling or underselling their sustainability credentials to customers. At this stage, an organisation will not score higher than a 3/5 within each criterion because it is not feasible to disclose the level of information that we require for the high scores. However, achieving the level 3 is a good indication that the company is acting in a best practice transparent manner.

**2. A 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment is then conducted by face to face interviews. (or video conference).**

This consists of a 1-day audit where the SFMI will interview people from across the business: Contract managers, sales team, HR, finance, Board members, bid writers and more. The aim is to determine how sustainability is embedded across the organisation. The SFMI auditor will direct questions that are applicable to different teams, and request evidence along side the question response. **Here we test the company and their ability to embed sustainability across the business.**

**3. Follow ups.**

These are conducted to clarify, amend, and provide further information.

We take this approach because a sustainable FM provider needs to embed sustainability across its organisation. It is not a siloed process. So, by taking part in the SFMI assessments, these teams are continuously exposed to how sustainability can integrate into their role.



This approach is repeated annually to help FM providers improve their ESG sustainability year-on-year and embed sustainability through their organisation.

The sustainability maturity pathway of an FM provider can be seen in the following diagram:



Many FM providers can be categorised with the Awareness and Compliance stage. They carry the following characteristics:

- Those offering tokenistic sustainability, which suggests playing general marketing “lip service” in their marketing collateral.
- Those who can manage basic sustainability issues but lack the technical expertise.

The SFMI identifies that there are a smaller set of businesses that understand sustainability and create value for the sector (stage 3).

- Those who can integrate with / create a sustainable service contract and manage it within the service of the client and their own business.

After this, there are an even smaller number of businesses that are trying to make the jump to become true global leaders. FM needs this leadership to improve the reputation of the industry, and the SFMI is driving and testing businesses so they can make that jump.

### Structure and use of this document

While the SFMI was developed as an assessment process for an FM Provider, sustainability still applies similarly for the FM team on the ground within organisations. The SFMI’s purpose is to embed sustainability across the FM sector. Therefore, we do not want to exclude in-house teams from learning about sustainability. This guidance to sustainability has been written with both audiences in mind.

We have broken sustainability into 23 criteria, which directly relate to the assessment criteria that we use. Each criteria provides the following information:

1. Definition and relationship to sustainability.
2. How the topic affects and interacts with the role of FM.



3. What an FM can do to manage the topic – we will start with basic entry level information, but this is not an exhaustive list.
4. Leadership attributes – What should a leading company be doing in each topic, which directly correlates with our assessment criteria.
5. Interlinking criteria – It can be rightly argued that some topics link in some respect to most criteria. But in this case we are providing the keys links. However, it may not be true for all companies. So bear this in mind.

Bear in mind this report is a pit stop tour, not an exhaustive companion. To keep it accessible we have kept each topic to one page. However, we can easily write a report for each criterion.

## **Section 1 Environment**

There are 7 criteria that fall within the Environmental protection category. These can be applied to both how the topic is implemented into a service, and how it can be managed from a corporate level.

## **Section 2 Social**

There are 7 criteria that fall within the social challenges that are faced. Again, these can be applied to both how the topic is implemented into a service, and how it can be managed from a corporate level.

## **Section 3 Governance**

Governance is applied toward the organisation and the way that they conduct themselves in relation to environmental and social, but also economical elements. This will likely be set at the corporate level or the equivalent. That said, the Facilities manager can still input into this approach, so we have tried to apply this at the different levels.

To use this document, please take the time to understand the levels of best practice that companies should be aiming. These directly correlate to the SFMI top level score (5) in each question. Please apply this to your role, whether you work for an FM Provider, as a Property professional managing real estate, or in an FM team understanding how you can embed sustainability into your role.



## Contact the SFMI

We are keen to hear from you if you are interested in working with the SFMI in many capacities

- FM Providers keen to improve their understanding of sustainability
- Organisations that manage property that want to compare their FM providers governance or want to improve their own FM team performance.
- Suppliers who feel they can contribute to our purpose
- Real estate and sustainability professionals who want to contribute to the purpose of the SFMI.



You can view the **SFMI webpage** for more information

<https://www.acclaro-advisory.com/sfmi/>



Or **email** us at [Support@SFMI.uk](mailto:Support@SFMI.uk)



# Environment

Environmental sustainability involves responsible interaction with the environment to avoid the depletion and degradation of natural resources. It strives for long-term environmental excellence. There is also the need for FM Providers to integrate environmental management into their service lines to drive further impact within their clients.

Within the SFMI framework, the Environmental criterion we assess are:

- Environmental Management Systems
- Ecology
- Energy
- Water
- Circular Economy
- Transport
- Projects





## Environmental Management Systems

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Management Systems (M/S) provide a framework to organise and manage multiple parts of a business to deliver continual improvement. They are applied within a defined scope of an organisation and, once written, need to be implemented and communicated to all people who are relevant to it.

M/S are audited to improve the success of the system and can also be certified externally to provide customers with assurance of your approach. Standardised Environmental Management Systems (EMS) cover a range of specific issues related to a company's impact on the environment. They integrate procedures, monitoring, training, reporting and communications of managing the environmental impacts of the company. Companies seeking to achieve external accreditation must follow a set of rules and processes to achieve a goal. For example, ISO 50001 helps a company manage and improve its energy consumption, or the ISO 14064 helps a business to report its greenhouse gas emissions to a good quality standard.

The organisation has an EMS (certified to ISO 14001 or other) and enabled within the strategy. Top management are accountable, data within the system is consistent and reported, with a communication strategy in place. Aspects registers for corporate and contracts consider risks and opportunities, as well as compliance obligations.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Achieving and maintaining an ISO 14001 certification is often a pre-tender requisite to bid for work. Whoever is involved in developing the management system, the FM team will be required to help achieve the standard. Failure to follow the system could jeopardise the external certification when it comes to being audited.

### What can FM do to manage it?

It will often be a requirement for the FM team to ensure that the procedures are followed in identifying environmental risks, training of the team, reporting required information and maintaining necessary records. Also important is to feedback potential improvements of environmental management that can improve the system.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- All Environmental Criteria - depending on the level of environmental impacts within the company
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Compliance, Contracts.



## Ecology

Ecological improvement delves into a company's impacts on their surrounding natural environment e.g. biodiversity, air quality, soil, etc. With the huge growth of the built-environment, management of ecology in urban areas is important in the outdoor grounds of any buildings on site, or in any indoor green spaces. Despite urbanisation, plants and animals still need to provide "ecosystems services" such as pollination of crops (Bees, butterflies) and being part of a food chain. Indoor and outdoor ecology benefits the workplace as well. It improves well-being by reducing stress, filtering poor air quality and can increase staff productivity.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Ecology affects both internal and external grounds. Therefore, grounds maintenance and workplace management can integrate ecology into their role. Ecological needs of each location will be very different. To be effective, activities must be understood and managed individually by FMs.

The FM sector manages the workspaces with an obligation to improve the well-being, productivity, and staff turnover rate of a workforce by understanding how to connect staff and the built environment with nature and improving ecology.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Assessing opportunities, measuring current ecology, and acting on the data provided are key elements. Using the Natural Capital Protocol provides a standard way of measuring ecological impact across the built environment, but can also use: species identification surveys; biodiversity action plans; staff surveys to spot opportunities; site walk and assessments; occupational evaluations that include ecology. Although relatively well understood for construction, improving ecology benefits are a new area of sustainability so many industries are still learning how to best approach it.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Projects
- Well-being, Sustainable communities,
- Sustainability Frameworks, Contracts, Collaborations

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The organisation understands natural capital and the value that protecting and enhancing ecology brings to contracts and workplaces.

Central guidance is available within appropriate contracts, and the company confidently reports on KPIs for ecology, monitors progress against targets, while communicating with facility users to create awareness and behaviour change. There is also a link to wellbeing.



## Energy Management

Energy is the power derived from the utilisation of natural and chemical resources to provide light, heating, cooling, fuel generators and to operate machinery within facilities. Sources of energy for this include fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas), renewable sources (wind, solar, tidal), and other (nuclear, incineration of waste). Energy allows us to power our lives: Electricity is often used for lighting and general building function, but heating can be either natural gas or electric.

Energy use directly impacts climate change if derived from fossil fuel sources. Burning fossil fuels releases captured greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which accumulate around the earth as an insulating blanket that traps heat and creates long-term climatic warming and changes local weather events. Animals, crops, and infrastructure are not adapted for the unprecedented changes that are taking place now, and quickly accelerating.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

The FM has an opportunity to save its employers or clients significant amounts of energy within the facility it manages, prevent dangerous climate change and save money. It is an interlinked role through the service offer and can be a service line in itself.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Identifying energy sources, collecting usage data patterns, then understanding behavioural changes in occupancy, low cost initiatives, and new technologies that reduce energy is a great start. New operating procedures can be introduced to manage behaviours in energy reduction for FM teams, regular maintenance schedules to ensure equipment runs optimally, and data is continuously assessed for improvements or declines in performance. Going further will require understanding of the link between converting energy to carbon emissions, and this applies to the company carbon reduction strategy.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Environmental management system, projects, Transport
- Supply chain management, Well-being
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Disclosure, Finance, Compliance, Contracts

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company recognises energy as a critical business issue and commits to become a zero-carbon business, and adapt to a client's zero-carbon needs. It can provide examples of projects (in progress or completed) that are integrating clean energy solutions and is able to show it can tackle the energy performance gap.

Procedures and audits stimulate behaviour changes and innovative solutions are integrated into all tender responses.



Access to water is critical for life, hygiene, and is fundamental for business to operate. As populations expand, there is more demand for water, and that means there is less to go around. Severe weather events that cause excess water are also detrimental to life and business.

Water management is about measuring the risks associated with drought and flooding in the localised area, taking action to conserve water to prevent shortages during long period of low rainfall, managing the responsible extraction of water to ensure water basins are not polluted, and to prepare business facilities against extreme precipitation scenarios. The UK climate is changing, we are seeing longer spells of high heat, followed by intense prolonged rainfall. In urban environments not designed for this change we are witnessing detrimental effects to property that is causing significant cost to business and people.

#### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The organisation integrates innovative solutions into all relevant tenders and can provide corporate and contract consumption data alongside progress against targets for water reduction. Supply chains are engaged with the need to manage water effectively, and long-term commitments have been made. Aspect/Risk registers capture the local water risks and opportunities (quality, access, scarcity, flooding, freezing, amenity).

#### How does it affect the role of FM?

The FM will be required to manage water related issues that affect the facility and business continuity. Localised flooding can shut down business operations, with staff being unable to access the building. Likewise, leaks in the infrastructure caused by extreme precipitation conditions can increase maintenance of roofs. Periods of little rainfall can lead to water shortages and limitations on the availability of water in the workplace. FM could be required to manage water consumption and disposal to ensure costs are reduced and the business is contributing to its water reduction targets and compliance requirements.

#### What can FM do to manage it?

Monitoring of water consumption using billing and meter data, identifying reduction opportunities from data, ensuring the system is maintained to prevent leaks, implementing behaviour change for users. Water risk planning on the site is also key. Understanding the risk of flooding and ensuring the correct business continuity plans are assessed and implemented.

#### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Environmental management system, projects,
- Supply chain management,
- Risk Management, Sustainability Frameworks, Compliance, Contracts



## Circular Economy

The circular economy (CE) refers to a loop or 'circular' system that is created in the use of resources to minimise or eradicate waste. Many resources are finite and are derived from natural resources – oil, timber, metals, gas, minerals. The continuous search for and extraction of them has a significant impact on our natural environments. Linear wasteful systems – produce – use – discontinue, are harmful. The CE is a system that promotes the reuse and secondary life of materials from a procurement led and waste collection approach. This breaks the need for continuous extraction of virgin materials.

After we have used materials, there are numerous journeys that our items take. Materials can be re-used directly onsite or through third parties. Items disposed go to export, landfill, incineration, or recycling centres. The key point is that input and waste of these resources is minimised or eliminated.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM has a role in the management of a workplace waste stream, its interaction with staff and their behaviours, the lifecycle projects, refit projects, procuring goods and potentially energy sourcing. All these roles can be managed with circular thinking.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Designing a circular system is not easy but starting small is a good start. Considering how the waste hierarchy can apply to your resources – 'reduce, reuse, recycle' is the first step. Engaging with employees to bring them on board will build wider participation, then involving the supply chain and understanding how products can be procured that can be reused such as furniture and carpets. Partnerships and collaborations with suppliers will spur new innovations that can renew and refurbish old materials into new.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Environmental management system, projects, Energy
- Supply chain management,
- Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Finance, Contracts, Collaborations

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

A company has developed its strategy for placing circularity at the heart of its business. Circularity is embedded in procurement approaches which promotes recycled, reclaimed quality goods with long term value.

The company integrates resource efficiency into the services and can provide examples of initiatives that have delivered significant reductions in waste, reuse, and closed loop recycling.



## Transport

Vehicle transportation includes business vehicle fleets used for day to day operations and staff habits towards commuting to the workplace. Both have an impact on global climate change and local air pollution and contribute 24% of UK carbon emissions with a larger cost to human health through toxic air pollution. Electric vehicles are increasing, but fossil fuelled vehicles remain dominant on the roads. Motor vehicles have generally become more efficient with fuel over time – largely due to EU regulation – leading to driver behaviours and maintenance being a significant opportunity to reduce impacts. However, increased efficiency does not eradicate the problems.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM can be a mobile workforce, for example, hard service FM providers rely on their fleet of vehicles and fast response to jobs. Catering requires food distribution. Vehicles can often be one of the largest impacts of an FM provider. The FM may also need to provide staff with transport options as part of soft services.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Initially, understanding what travel is necessary and what can be performed remotely through technology will help to ensure only critical travel takes place. Managing the transport options at a business facility using low carbon options will help to reduce transport impact, then being able to measure this reduction is also of value. A provider's own transport emissions can be managed by monitoring fuel consumption, using telemetric devices and through fleet management processes. A business can track and estimate its transport impact by measuring travel to work related projects - i.e. commuting, company fleet travel, wider business travel and supply chain travel. It can then advise or put in place policies on the types of vehicles that it purchases.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Env management system, Energy,
- Supply chain management, Well-being, Sustainable Communities.
- Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Disclosure, Finance

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company is committed to upgrade its fleet travel from fossil fuel vehicles with targets and a roadmap. It is engaged in new initiatives that promote the upgrading of client fleets.

It can provide examples of innovative initiatives to reduce vehicle dependency and the environmental impacts of vehicle travel. Transport emissions are well understood, reported annually, and verified. Flexible working is supported where feasible and improving air quality is shown to be an important issue for the business and integrated into its social value strategy.



## Projects Management

Projects are workloads undertaken by the FM that involve a capital outlay above a defined threshold and can provide a step-change in sustainability performance. These can include lighting refit projects, refurbishment projects, replacement of machinery or plantroom equipment. Lifecycle sustainability should be understood at the project level to reduce its impact – for example, materials used, energy consumed, sourcing of materials, (increasingly) social impacts of the projects, long term vs short term economic impacts. Life cycle assessments are one method of assessing the impacts of a project from start to finish (i.e. throughout the "life" of the project). Examples of good practice in projects are also key, these can be used as case studies for further learning within the company as well as for other companies to understand how your responsible business operates.

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Lifecycle reviews of projects are undertaken to embed sustainability practices, with a structured approach to involve FM in the design, address the performance gap, and commissioning and knowledge transfer exercise. Evidence of examples where this has been implemented.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM has an opportunity to show long term value in capital and operational expenditure, rather than considering the immediate cost savings of a project. Projects therefore affect the value that an FM can bring to a business.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Sustainable Projects require application of knowledge in sustainability to ensure that its impacts are monitored throughout the project, handover and knowledge transfer to those operating afterwards. Learning from previous projects is critical. KPIs for projects are used to measure its success, covering economic, operation and often social and environmental criteria.

Project level sustainability can increase efficiencies and reduce longer term costs, as well as reducing the overall negative impact of the projects on the local environment and community. Reviews of its sustainability can be undertaken throughout a project lifecycle.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Env management system, Circular Economy, Energy, Water
- Supply chain management
- Finance, Contracts, Finance, Collaborations





Social sustainability focuses on the impact of the business on people - the wellbeing of a company's employees and stakeholders as well as promoting healthy communities and workplaces.

Within the SFMI, the Social criterion we assess are:

- Health & Safety
- Employment
- Sustainable Communities
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Supply Chain Management
- Wellbeing
- Employee Development





## Health and Safety

Health and Safety (H&S) makes sure that the workplace is a safe and pleasant place for employees to be. The wellbeing of employees, visitors and clients must be preserved and is therefore managed according to the risks of the workplace. A safe workplace will manage business continuity, improve productivity, retain and attract the best staff. It will also benefit the well-being of staff. Prevention is a key to decreasing the likelihood of accidents but must be reasonably practicable.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

There are many laws surrounding health and safety in the UK. If the FM is responsible for this area it may be accountable. Therefore, the role requires attention to detail. Employees are the greatest asset within a company and so keeping them happy, healthy, and safe is of utmost importance. Typical examples of key H&S areas include fire, water system management for legionnaires, asbestos control. Failure to manage H&S can also be a barrier of entry for new business. The recent COVID19 pandemic has escalated the role of FM in the need to plan safe spaces, ensuring supplies of cleaning tools are stocked, and getting the business back to work.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Typical management requirements include identifying hazards, assessing risks, having adequate risk control measures such as benchmarking and putting systems in place to manage H&S, ensuring the SLA's create a safe work environment, incident reports.

H&S practices should be implemented throughout the organisation, extending not only for employees but everyone that engages with the business. Setting high level management systems and policies are common. The ISO450001 is a good indicator of how a company looks after their employees.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Well-being, Supply chain management, Employee Development
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Disclosure, Compliance

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The organisation's response to COVID19 for in-house and clients put health and safety first.

H&S policy is publicly available, systems in place are certified (ISO45001); reporting is consistent and covers performance against a core set of KPIs; and sets targets for improving performance which are reviewed at regular intervals. Best practice is communicated, and supply chains are engaged. Auditing occurs to maintain on-going compliance and includes supply chain operations.



## Employment

Sustainable Employment ensures equal access to jobs for all groups of people; from gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, personal background, and so many more. Every person has the right to be treated equally when applying for a job no matter their background.

It is important for companies to offer opportunities to those who may otherwise struggle to get a second chance. Employment policies can encourage diversity in the workplace and inclusion of people that may have a stigma against them. Groups of people do not have to be the obvious ones such as gender. A business may seek the skills of ex-military for a specific reason as part of its social value employment strategy. A company can provide social value to its local community by offering ex-offenders a chance to reintegrate back into society and the workplace. This can reduce crime rates in an area and improve the community for all.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

The FM industry employs a significant level of people from different skill levels and many at living wage. It has the opportunity to provide social value and mobilise under-represented communities. Sustainable employment will ensure that FMs have a diverse staff base and can bring new ways of operating which can increase efficiency.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Management and HR can tap into new skills and resource pools by targeting underrepresented populations. Policies and standards will create a company-wide structure that manages employment sustainably, which will filter through relevant teams, such as Human Resources, and individuals, such as hiring managers. FM teams can support the approach, bringing in apprenticeships and providing an inclusive environment.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Employee Development, Sustainable Communities, Stakeholder Engagement
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Contracts, Diversity

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The organisation understands its FM employment worker status and has processes in place to protect workers/human rights. Equal opportunities are in place, and there are several schemes for employment of targeted groups (which links to a clear company social value strategy). The gender pay gap is understood, and public reporting on these aspects is consistent and provides targets for improvement. The company can show that its Apprentice programme creates social mobility for disadvantage members of society.



## Sustainable Communities

The 'community' refers to the local region outside of the gates of the workplace. Every project or contract will impact a local community through – employment, supply chain, local partnerships, charitable partnerships and more. Each offers an opportunity to positively contribute to the people surrounding the workplace which brings about social value – a key tool for businesses to unlock public sector contracts. Providing social value allows local communities to thrive and improve their local environment and relationships. These relationships are built on the needs of the community inspiring growth of key areas and will differ from community to community.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

A sustainable FM may find it is working directly with the community - working with schools, housing developments, shopping centres and multiple business in one site. By forming connections with the community, it develops a sense of belonging, accountability, and fulfilment to people with direct impacts on the local economy. An FM with a clear social value approach helps build its community engagement and builds its reputation while improving its prospects in public tenders.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Community engagement strategies can be used to help understand the most efficient approaches to strengthen local initiatives and suit people's needs. Partnerships between businesses and their stakeholders can be forged. Employees can be engaged to take part in activities that benefit the community. The FM can also target local suppliers and employees to develop the economy of the local area and reduce transport emissions and cost. Local ecology programmes can benefit the communities and local environment at the same time.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Transport, Ecology
- Employment, Stakeholder Engagement, Wellbeing
- Sustainability Frameworks, Contracts, Collaborations

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company is dedicated to developing a relationship with their local communities/ authorities/ charities. It can provide examples where it has developed a long-term community engagement strategy based on the needs of the community and ability of the company. The organisation has a clear social value approach and reports regularly on progress of community initiatives and outcomes.



## Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement involves two-way communication with key organisations, individuals and partners. Stakeholders themselves can be found anywhere the company operates and in some cases be found beyond the immediate value chain of the company.

Unlike "shareholders", stakeholders are not limited to financial connection and are often connected more personally. This can stretch from a local resident who is affected by potential noise and air pollution of the business, teaching staff school in a building cleaned by a new FM company, or members of the supply chain, and the employees of the business.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Engaging with its stakeholders enables an FM to listen to and learn from a variety of perspectives; as a result, the company can improve its service, or identify risks and opportunities to the business. Stakeholders affect the role of the FM as well because frustrated stakeholders can reduce the productivity of the FM. Therefore, a good engagement strategy is vital. Stakeholders also play a key role in Social value – a growing component of an FM sustainability offering.

### What can FM do to manage it?

To improve a situation one must understand it, and the only way to understand it fully is to speak to those involved from every angle and actively engage them. Any methods of communication can work to engage stakeholders, though methods are usually more successful when they include opportunities to record conversations and respond to points, encouraging debate and discussion.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Environmental Management Systems
- Employment, Employee Development, Supply Chain, Sustainable Communities
- Board Commitment, Disclosure, Compliance, Collaborations

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company has identified its key stakeholders and can provide examples of detailed stakeholder dialogue as well as open, proactive relationships with NGOs and other organisations seeking to promote best practice in FM sustainability using innovative methods. Compliance obligations are understood and are reviewed / reported where appropriate.



## Supply Chain Management

Supply Chain Management is the flow of goods and services, aiming to give customer value and bring competitive advantage. It involves active communication with suppliers and the purchasing power can be used as a driver to raise the sustainability standards and drive performance. Constructive collaboration is highly important to keep the supply chain improving over time and reducing the overall negative impacts of the business. Traditionally supply chain management has been about squeezing suppliers to the lowest cost to pass on these savings to their customer. However, good supply chain management is about mutually beneficial relationships and improving sustainability throughout the chain.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

The FM is a procurer of products and services. Reflecting on its own sustainability strategy and understanding how these products can impact the environment or drive negative social consequences will drive the value chain to improve them. Strong communication between FM and suppliers will be rewarding. Sharing struggles is beneficial because leadership and sustainability are a journey, and overcoming difficulties makes the business more relatable.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Starting with the top tier suppliers; economic, environmental, and social risks can be Identified and mapped. These can include the impacts of the supplier or product, along with the reputational and performance. To create a dialogue with the supply chain your business strategy which includes its sustainability ambitions must be considered - using supplier engagement surveys or workshops will highlight your company ambitions while understanding the opportunities that suppliers can provide for you to achieve them. Upskilling the supply chain comes next on the journey along with compliance targets to ensure they share the same goals and meet the pre-determined standards.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Environmental management system, Circular Economy, Energy, Water, Projects
- Stakeholder engagement, Health and Safety
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Sustainability Frameworks, Disclosure, Compliance

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company has identified sustainability supply chain risks through its corporate risk management programme and takes action to engage with its supply chain in a proactive manner to encourage sustainability.

It can prove the effectiveness of engagement activities amongst its suppliers. The organisation is engaged with key sustainability issues such as the Modern Slavery Act, is measuring the impact of its supply chain on the climate and understands the risk profile of its supply chain - which assists in decision making.



Wellbeing is a balance of physical and mental health, a fulfilment of the professional and personal goals. Employees with improved physical and mental health increase productivity and engagement, and lower absenteeism. Good wellbeing can also have monetary benefits such as reduced recruitment costs. Companies are increasingly looking at wellbeing as a means for improving their performance. Wellbeing programmes should be a two-way street; they should reciprocate and ensure the employees are heard and feedback is used for improvement.

The involvement of senior management on wellbeing has proven to be successful as employees feel more valued. If senior management back well-being, then staff are more likely to have confidence in the programme.

#### How does it affect the role of FM?

The FM is increasingly playing a part in staff wellbeing. The setup of a workplace has a huge impact on wellbeing because comfort level and the enjoyment of working can come from the environment provided. This is especially true in the state of the COVID pandemic. The FM can also signpost staff towards internal initiatives to improve wellbeing.

#### What can FM do to manage it?

Introduction of two-way dialogue with staff is vital to understand how improvement can be made to optimise working conditions, productivity and make employees more satisfied in the workplace. Acting on feedback requires research, potential new technologies, and measuring the impact of the workplace changes to ensure it creates improvement. The FM should have an understanding of the internal and external environment and ensure that the changes it makes can have a positive effect on the people that use the site. Also consider the environmental impacts that changes on the workplace have to ensure there are not trade-offs.

#### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- Circular Economy, Energy, Water, Ecology, Projects
- Health and Safety, Stakeholder Engagement, Employee development
- Contracts, Collaborations

#### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Regular two-way dialogue with staff, including occupancy studies to optimise working conditions, productivity and wellbeing. The organisation understands its sickness and turnover rates and targets its improvement. Board members promote and participate in an initiative calendar, and recognised standards are utilised to frame improvements.

Company was able to show well-being engagement with staff during COVID lockdown to ensure well-being and take learnings to clients to enhance service offerings.





## Employee Development

Supporting employees will develop their capacity to improve performance, acquire new skills and unlock their true potential. Employees are the most valuable asset in a company that need to be continuously developed professionally and personally.

There is a partnership between the employer and employee - one trades knowledge, time, and resources whilst the other dedicates time and commitment. Both benefit further from a stronger relationship. Building skills internally may limit the amount of outsourced work the organisation may need which will become a cost-efficient strategy in the long-term. Sustainability management requires new skills

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Employee support is a long journey, it is a well thought strategy that incorporates the company values and the business strategy. Identifying the future needs of the industry and the workplace will help FMs to develop the skills that they need to continue to add value in the service they provide.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Policies are developed to target skills shortages in the business and ensure knowledge available is recognisable amongst the industry to be transferable to employees. Provision of training for all levels within the company can ensure productivity of staff and provide opportunity for employee progression.

A good idea is to use a skills map tool to better understand everyone.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

It is worth noting that training across the sustainability spectrum links this to most criteria.

- Employment, Stakeholder Engagement
- Diversity

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The organisation understands its core skills requirements, and employment risk the company faces. With skills shortages for the short-term and long term identified. Consideration given to the future of FM services. It creates schemes to target the minimisation of current skills shortages and aligns with the strategic direction of the business to fulfil the skills needed for the future.

Competencies on sustainability are reviewed and targeted for improvement where appropriate. Reporting takes place for training and other aspects where relevant. The company is integrating a responsible business culture as part of its employee development through values and promotion of responsible business practice.



# Governance

Sustainable Governance implements sustainability into the corporate strategy across the business, sets and manages goals, manages reporting, strengthens relationships with stakeholders and ensures overall accountability of the organisation.

Within the SFMI, the Governance criterion we assess are:

- Risk Management
- Board Commitment
- Sustainability Frameworks
- Disclosure
- Financial
- Compliance
- Contracts
- Diversity
- Collaboration





## Risk Management

Risk management is the implementation of structures to manage both financial and non-financial risks. Relating to sustainability, these include environmental and social factors which bring increased regulatory, reputational, and physical risk to the business from the enterprise level down to the contract level. Being able to identify, communicate and manage risks at all levels, as a two-way process, is critical for overall success of the business.

Risk management is a powerful tool to motivate businesses to managing sustainability issues. Once a risk has been identified as having a material impact on a company revenue, it will often get fast tracked and managed. Many sustainability risks are imminent but unknown in businesses, for example the growing importance of achieving minimal sustainability performance levels as a pre-requisite for new business. This knowledge will prepare a business for the immediate future.

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Fully implemented risk management structures which enable the clear and consistent communication and reporting of both financial and non-financial risks in contracts and corporate levels, and how each influence strategic decision making. Product, service, and business relationship lifecycles will be integrated into the approach taken.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM is operating on the site level and will therefore often be mainly affected by site level risks but can include enterprise level risk also. These will range from health and safety to environmental factors to non-compliance risk, to flood risk and management. Therefore, being able to identify and contribute towards management and mitigation strategies brings value to the role of FM.

### What can FM do to manage it?

The FM may be required to identify risk at a site or business level, provide data that contributes to complying with risk mitigation strategies. Risks can be managed through the implementation of risk registers and reporting of risks at all levels. Understanding environmental and social sustainability impacts will help to identify non-financial risks. It is also important to consider opportunities for the company as well. If risks are identified in advance, they can often be turned into an opportunity for the organisation. An FM service provider can also add value by understanding the risks of the client and contributing towards to management of those risks.

### Interlinking Criteria (E,S,G)

- All criteria of the environment
- All criteria of social
- All criteria of governance



## Board Commitment

Sustainability is becoming central to the corporate competitiveness agenda. It is also becoming more prevalent in enterprise risk and opportunity. This therefore elevates the topic to the Board. They are the drivers of a sustainable company culture that seeks to capitalise on the agenda. Leading from the front is vital if a business is integrating a sustainability culture that changes the behaviour of the staff.

Purpose driven businesses, or leaders in sustainability all have internal Board leaders that practice what is preached. The Board needs to fully engage in embedding sustainability into the every-day operations of the business. Regular reviews by the board for internal and FM activities are important for ensuring accountability for ethics and sustainability performance.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM should hold the ambition of having representation on the Board. This will allow a sustainable FM to flourish with the support from the top. FM should also drive through the culture of a Responsible Business within its own activities and management of the supply chain.

### What can FM do to manage it?

FM should seek to influence, and highlight the benefits that sustainability is bringing the organisation by managing data to continually improve the sustainability performance of those areas it operates. This will provide the Board with the business case that they need to invest more in sustainability FM. The FM should also seek to join the network of sustainability champions, committees and working groups that report to leadership teams, ensuring that they can provide value to the company culture.

### Interlinking Criteria

With the importance of the Board driving sustainable business culture, there is a clear linkage with all criteria of sustainability. Those we can deem as high priority to support/ drive through corporate culture are:

- Environmental Management Systems, Circular Economy, Energy
- Health & Safety, Employment
- Risk Management, Sustainability Frameworks, Finance, Diversity

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Leadership on sustainability and a responsible business culture is present and felt throughout the organisation.

Lines of communication to and from board level are open and regular. Board committees exist to integrate sustainability into decision making. The competency of the leadership is sufficient to meet ISO 14001:2015 standards. Board members have clear targets that drive both corporate success and sustainability.



## Sustainability Frameworks

A framework is an essential supporting structure of a business system. A Sustainability Framework is the strategic structure that a business follows to identify and manage the core elements of sustainability that will impact it, and vice versa. It includes approaches used to integrate sustainability into the business objectives, targets, reporting mechanisms, then shows how it filters actions across the business to achieve results. These are critical to achieve and maintain consistent sustainability performance across all departments and levels - from corporate and to the FM team.

Framework statements and policies can be implemented to clarify the company's commitment to continual improvement and sustainable achievements. These should cover corporate and contract level structures and should be regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The company has a board-approved comprehensive sustainability policy integrating environmental, social, and economic responsibilities, and identifies core areas of sustainability for the organisations and publishes it in its core and supplementary disclosure. Impacts of technological advances are considered and integrated into frameworks.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Frameworks are often designed at corporate level and disseminated to the rest of the business. FM will therefore play a role in the operation of the framework but could also be collecting data within the built environment that feeds into the framework. If FM is playing a strategic role then it can also input and develop the framework to ensure the necessary targets, goals and savings are achieved.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Understanding the sustainability objectives of the business and upskilling itself so that it can contribute to the framework at all levels. Changes can be made to FM contracts, service level agreements, PQQ's etc to ensure that the framework is followed.

### Interlinking Criteria

Sustainability Frameworks are the backbone of sustainability in a business, and therefore will link with all criteria of sustainability. It may vary based on different levels of materiality to the company. Key linkages are:

- Environmental Management Systems
- Employee Development, Stakeholder Engagement
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Disclosure, Financial, Compliance



## Disclosure

Transparency on sustainability is managed by all types of companies; large, small, publicly listed, privately owned. Each disclose information in different ways and to different audiences such as investors, customers, staff, rating agencies and pressure groups. Being able to disclose the relevant information according to your audience's needs is vital and is valuable to communicate with many groups and individuals. Disclosure is important to build trust with stakeholders through honesty and accountability. Reports highlighting achievements and progress of sustainable development are some ways in which a company can disclose information. These should cover corporate and FM activities. Progress against targets, risks and opportunities, and policies and statements – such as Gender Pay Gap, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Modern Slavery policies – are also very important.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Disclosure will often occur through the communications teams, but they rely on a flow of information; data and case studies that contribute to the disclosure. An FM should be mindful of the dissemination of information that they manage so the business can benefit from it as it engages with stakeholders

### What can FM do to manage it?

Being able to collect, verify and communicate data for disclosure is key. Understanding the disclosure requirements of the company will help in the data collection to ensure efficiency. It is also valuable for an FM to be well connected in the company so that they can manage data collection.

### Interlinking Criteria

Transparency will impact all areas of sustainability. The more transparent a business is about topics the higher accountability they have towards it. Key areas of disclosure in FM include:

- Energy, Transport, Circular Economy, Transport
- Well-being, Sustainable Communities, Employment, Health & Safety,
- Risk Management, Finance, Board Commitment, Diversity

## LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Supplementary disclosure has external assurance and contains coverage of core areas (ESG) with targets, performance data, risks and opportunities and priorities for the next year.

The disclosure of the gender pay gap is developing, as is the company inclusion and diversity data which will help the company expand its talent pool.

The organisation has established science-based targets (or similar approach to targets) and are aligned to SDGs. The company's communication strategy has been tested and helps ensure an on-going culture of sustainability.

Any cornerstone zero carbon targets that are widely communicated are backed up by a robust strategy that shows the public how they will achieve it.



## Financial

For a company to achieve its sustainability targets and ambitions, it must be able to finance projects at an operational spend level and a capex level. It is also important that the finance team can set the profit margin tone of service contracts to discourage the race to the bottom line which is economically unsustainable for a business in the long term.

Setting a specific sustainability budget which is appropriate and regularly reviewed is highly beneficial however often not allocated, thus comes from within departmental budgets. Sustainability budgets can help to drive innovation and target benefits, but the aim is for financial decisions to consider the triple bottom in all aspects (economic, environmental & social impact). Compulsory financial reporting can be used to track, monitor, and assess financial sustainability within a company and inform changes and improvements.

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Specific budgets are available for investment in FM sustainability and the business's decision making is informed by triple-bottom-line factors. The sales and business development teams are engaged to grow business sustainably. This capital spend is reviewed and its impact is understood centrally, in both financial and non-financial terms.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

While finance control is a corporate governance issue, the financing of projects will affect how effectively a sustainable FM can operate. If an FM is to achieve their operational sustainability targets, they need to ensure that they can create an informed business case into the long-term value of sustainable projects and initiatives. The long-term value should trump the immediate up-front cost but is not always the case. This creates a segway into the circular economy system and the management of projects. Remember - spending more in the short term can mean lower operational costs, and longer longevity in the long term - meaning greater value for money.

### What can FM do to manage it?

By engaging in discussion on long term value and identifying how expenditure can contribute towards sustainability, and FM will be able to direct the conversation and influence the Finance approach of the company

### Interlinking Criteria

Finance and investment will affect all elements of sustainability. Without financing, a company will likely not develop environmental or social performance to a high level. But key linkages are with other Governance criteria:

- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Contracts



## Compliance

In the corporate world, compliance is defined as the process of making sure your company and employees follow all laws, regulations, standards, and ethical practices that apply to your organization and industry.

Corporate compliance covers both internal policies and procedures, as well as Government laws. Enforcing compliance helps your company prevent and detect violations of rules, which protects your organization from fines and lawsuits.

Responsibility for compliance will always sit with the client organisation, with outsourced FM providers co-liable at most. Assurance on compliance is therefore important when managing this risk.

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

A structured approach to managing legal compliance is in place. Up-coming legislation is understood, and adaptive measures are being taken. Breaches or civil sanctions are documented, and records can show how these impact management. Compliance obligations must also be addressed in a systematic, authenticated, and verifiable way.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

Because compliance works on multiple levels, while FM is not dictating the laws and regulations the company is responsible for, it may be required to respond to them or collect data that will go towards them. Internal FM will also set the service compliance levels required from outsourced FM teams. It could therefore be required to enforce them as well.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Understanding the regulatory and other compliance requirements that the FM team need to comply with, and the necessary information, is the first step. The FM can ensure that the organisation is operating their management systems so to achieve compliance. This will include collection of data and signed paperwork, analysis, managing continual improvement, and reporting.

### Interlinking Criteria

Clients will set their compliance requirements criteria for tenders, and different companies will be exposed to differing levels of regulations. Therefore, compliance can influence all criteria of sustainability dependent on the occasion. Broad key compliance linkages are:

- Environmental Management Systems
- Health & Safety, employment, Sustainable communities
- Risk Management,



## Contracts

A sustainable FM should be looking at the topic of contracts in both an inward facing perspective, and an external facing view. The external facing view will be how it integrates sustainability into its contracts for economic, social, and environmental impact from the company. This is especially important now that customers are seeking sustainability as part of tenders and contracts; for example, the How can a contract deliver a service, and Social Value at an affordable price?

Internally, structures can be put in place which can be contractually obliged. For example, ensuring that sustainability is considered at every stage of a contract and informs behaviour change – PQQ, RFP, Tender, contract, mobilisation.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

An FM provider can seek to guide the conversation of sustainability in a contract through a bidding process. The concept of integrating sustainability into contracts at this time is often one of wishful thinking. Sustainability value can be removed by a procurement function that is seeking to save immediate upfront costs. Therefore, sustainability in FM can be removed as an extra cost of service without understanding wider savings or the longer-term value it can bring to the client.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Being able to guide the understanding of what added value their sustainability approach brings can be achieved through data collection of sustainability initiatives and practices and analysis of the information collected.

FMs should also be seeking to be flexible in their contractual arrangements. This approach will bring them closer with the clients and business and create long term value through partnerships.

### Interlinking Criteria

- All criteria of the environment
- Health & Safety, Well-being, Sustainable Communities, Stakeholder Engagement
- Risk Management, Finance, Compliance

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Demonstrate how sustainability is integrated in tender responses, and mobilisation phases.

The organisation provides guidance to internal teams and supply chains to integrate sustainability where possible.

The FM provider is flexible to change in contracts and has a core set of sustainability deliverables for every contract. Relevant legislation (Social Value Act) is applied with ease in appropriate contracts.





## Diversity

Corporate Diversity covers all aspects of diversity including (but not limited to) ethnicity, age, gender, prevalence of a disability, education, skills, and experience. Being corporately diverse can help grow a business, increase profits and improve wellbeing of employees. A more diverse workforce brings different opinions, thoughts, beliefs, norms, customs, values, trends, and traditions. Diversity should be promoted at all levels within corporate and FM operations.

Having representatives from a diverse background helps to encourage people of a similar background to join the organisation. Thereby increasing the potential pool of talent available to the company.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM is a people-centric industry, reportedly contributing up to 10% of the UK workforce. It employs people across many skill levels and a wide range of roles. It therefore can enact real social mobility within a country. Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between social strata in a society. It is a change in social status relative to one's current social location within a given society. This gives huge social value to regions and communities that the organisation serves.

### What can FM do to manage it?

FM should seek to promote employment opportunities in often unseen areas to help provide the opportunity for social mobility. This will encourage a wider pool of applicants to fill roles in an industry that has struggled with an image problem in recent years.

### Interlinking Criteria

- Employment, Sustainable Communities, Stakeholder Engagement, Supply Chain, Employee Development
- Risk Management, Board Commitment, Sustainability frameworks, Disclosure

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

Reporting includes a detailed description of approach towards diversity and skills within the organisation. The organisation is able to demonstrate its commitment to promoting diversity both within the organisation (employees and board) and the supply chain. It can show how it considers tackling potential unconscious bias in the organisation which will promote equal opportunities for all.





## Collaboration

Collaboration is the action of working with others to achieve a purpose or goal. In business collaboration is a method of reducing risk as partnerships are formed to share resources and work collaboratively towards a common goal. In this case the goal is sustainability, so companies form collaborative partnerships to gain competitive advantage over others without having to invest heavily to get there. Collaboration does require trust and aligned thinking so that a partnership does not break down or end in dispute.

Examples of collaborative partnership in sustainability would be when a technology provider partners with an FM provider to develop a product using existing technology with a share profit agreement. Collaborations do not have to be economic though. Companies can collaborate with educational institutions to contribute to research, or charities and businesses can collaborate to deliver social value in contracts.

### How does it affect the role of FM?

FM can form collaborations to help deliver to the needs of the client it works with. This can include shared interests in cleaning technologies, integrating social enterprises into workspaces that require added value, or white labelling CAFM systems and helping to improve the system for clients. Examples include engagement with local stakeholders for develop and pursue community benefits, with supply chains to resolve challenges and with technology providers to improve decision making.

### What can FM do to manage it?

Collaborations work best when there is shared mutual interests, shared value, and shared vision. FM can ensure that its collaborations meet the criteria it sets to be successful. It can also communicate gaps in the market by discussing with the workplace what requires improvement. Capturing this information and sharing it to those that will form collaborations.

### Interlinking Criteria

Collaborations can occur across and influence most criteria. Risk can be reduced when partnering with others to offer service lines or to deliver in-house FM. However, the key linkage is through:

- Risk Management

### LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The FM organisation understands both risks and opportunities from working collaboratively can illustrate how doing so has contributed to wider corporate level or contract level sustainability.

Formal procedural information may be in place (potentially aligned or accredited to BS11000) for how collaborations are considered, established, and measured to understand their on-going relevance.



## Contact the SFMI

We are keen to hear from you if you are interested in working with the SFMI in many capacities

- FM Providers keen to improve their understanding of sustainability
- Organisations that manage property that want to compare their FM providers governance or want to improve their own FM team performance.
- Suppliers who feel they can contribute to our purpose
- Real estate and sustainability professionals who want to contribute to the purpose of the SFMI.



You can view the **SFMI webpage** for more information

<https://www.acclaro-advisory.com/sfmi/>



Or **email** us at [Support@SFMI.uk](mailto:Support@SFMI.uk)





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