

SFMI SPOTLIGHT

JANUARY 2026

A WORD FROM US

Happy New Year! As we start the year, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on 2025 and share some of the progress we've made, alongside what's coming next. Last year, we refined our approach to the SFMI (and we'll continue that work throughout 2026), guided by feedback from Partners on the value you get from the SFMI and how we can create even more.

Firstly, we strengthened the SFMI framework itself. We refined our [22 Criteria Report](#), providing greater clarity on what Facilities Management companies need to demonstrate to achieve higher scores. This includes more defined subtopics, clearer examples of the documentation required, and practical case studies that highlight exemplary actions. We also saw this translate into our audits, with Partners reporting greater confidence and clarity about what was expected. Last year, 6 Partners achieved Platinum - an excellent achievement!

Secondly, we continued building SFMI as a knowledge leader and a platform for collaboration. We hosted two Leaders' Forums last year, focusing on Climate Risk and Social Value, with a future session on Wellbeing coming up in February. A clear message from these conversations was that Partners want more opportunities to discuss the issues that matter most and to learn from each other. In response, in 2026 we're launching the Leaders' Working Group, a regular forum for our FM Partners to share challenges and successes across key sustainability topics, and to help shape the future direction of the SFMI.

Thirdly, we've been progressing our Online Assessment. Our goal is to make the SFMI more accessible, not only for FM companies of all sizes, but also for their supply chains, by offering an FM-focused benchmark to help organisations understand and improve their sustainability performance. Many Partners have shared that they want to engage their supply chains more effectively, and this tool will provide a practical starting point. It will also help us reach new markets, particularly smaller FM providers or those earlier in their sustainability journey. The tool will launch in the next few months, and we're excited to share more soon.

Finally, the regulatory landscape continues to evolve. Developments such as the EU's Omnibus proposals (reducing the bite of CSRD for some organisations) and incoming UK SRS-related requirements are increasing scrutiny on the sustainability information companies report. We're also expecting key changes to EPC assessment methodology in 2026, which may affect how energy efficiency is measured. As we move into 2026, we will continue to grow and adapt, and greatly look forward to bringing you all along with us!



Kristen Mierzejewski
Senior Sustainability Consultant

UNDER THE LENS

Biodiversity in FM: from 'nice-to-have' to resilience and wellbeing

Biodiversity has historically been considered as something that happens outside of buildings, but for the FM industry it is increasingly becoming a core part of creating healthy, resilient places to work. It connects directly to climate adaptation, wellbeing, and to the evolving expectations on the built environment around habitat and nature-positive outcomes. Biodiversity shouldn't be viewed as a separate initiative, but instead as a cross-cutting lever of improving performance, experience, and long-term asset value.

For many organisations, the biodiversity conversation starts with biodiversity net gain (BNG), green infrastructure and sustainable drainage (SuDS) associated with existing, external ground related activities. FM teams are uniquely placed to make biodiversity stick by translating intent into day-to-day standards, contractor requirements and seasonal routines for these activities.

Biodiversity is increasingly moving into the building related sphere encompassing green roofs and walls, garden or habitats on external floors together with structured internal planting aligned with biophilic strategies. Recognition of benefits to wellbeing and productivity are well understood through:

- **Enhanced Air Quality:** Plants naturally filter pollutants and improve indoor air quality.
- **Mental Health Boost:** The presence of nature reduces stress and enhances mental wellbeing.
- **Aesthetic Appeal:** Plants add a visual connection to nature, creating more inviting and beautiful spaces.
- **Sustainability:** Green installations contribute to a building's sustainability credentials by promoting biodiversity

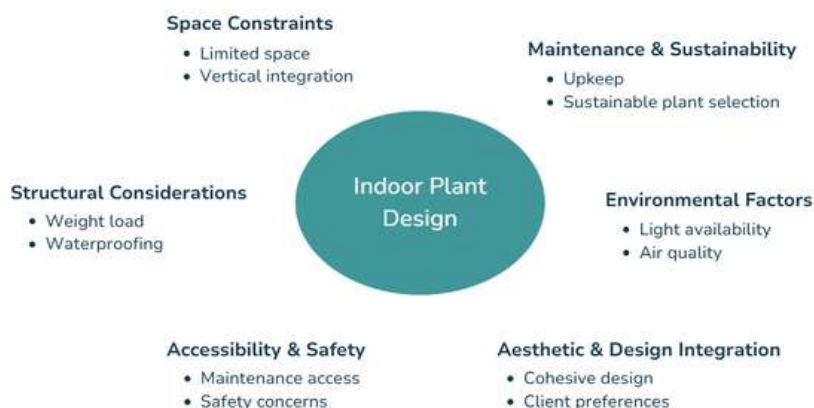
Where there is the opportunity, using nature-based solutions (NBS) can be a way to enhance both the biodiversity and the resilience of buildings to physical climate risks, typically bringing multiple benefits at once. For example, planting trees allows for natural shading and can reduce cooling demands of a building, while also improving air quality and helping manage surface water during heavy rainfall. can support temperature regulation, better air and water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity hotspots, and improved health and wellbeing for building users and local communities (see Figure 1).



Figure 1- from UKGBC: <https://ukgbc.org/resources/the-value-of-urban-nature-based-solutions/>

Biodiversity in FM: from ‘nice-to-have’ to resilience and wellbeing

Implementing internal planting regimes comes with a number of factors to be considered, aligned with standards such as WELL, Fitwell, LEED and BREEAM, to integrate into the operation of the building and its occupancy profiles.



To move from ambition to measurable progress, it helps to treat biodiversity like any other managed outcome. Start with a simple baseline (what habitats and features exist today, sickness levels and higher instances of IEQ challenges), set a small number of clear objectives, and create a Biodiversity Action Plan that links actions to responsibilities, budgets and timelines. Then build it into your operating model: contractor KPIs, routine inspections, seasonal plans, and a small set of metrics you can actually maintain. Evidence is important too, so it's key to track the KPIs and report progress so that the benefits are visible, repeatable, and scalable.

Resources such as the [UKGBC's](#) nature-positive guidance (and related built-environment nature-based solutions resources) provide a strong baseline for what good can look like and how to translate that into action. For more targeted internal interventions, use of frameworks such as [WELL Standard](#) and [FITWEL](#) provide both measures together with the underlying information and guidance. For broader UK context and a clear “why it matters” narrative, the [Dasgupta Review](#) and [JNCC biodiversity indicators](#) are useful reference points. For organisations looking to connect site actions to emerging disclosure expectations, frameworks such as [TNFD \(LEAP\)](#), and screening tools like ENCORE or the WWF Biodiversity Risk Filter can help identify dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities.

Why Data Management Is the Next Big Sustainability Hurdle

The regulatory landscape has long been moving towards both more and higher quality sustainability data. In the UK, the government is developing UK Sustainability Reporting Standards (UK SRS), derived from the ISSB's IFRS S1 and S2, with the clear direction of travel being that sustainability information should be produced with governance and discipline that investors can rely on. In the EU, while the Omnibus proposals have sought to reduce parts of the CSRD burden (including weakening the pathway towards reasonable assurance), reporting will still be subject to assurance expectations, with the European Commission required to adopt limited assurance standards by 1 October 2026. At the same time, global assurance standards are converging: [ISSA 5000](#) is effective for periods beginning on or after 15 December 2026, with early adoption encouraged, signalling that sustainability information will need to stand up to stronger scrutiny. This means that sustainability data will need stronger ownership and controls, with a clear audit trail.

Why Data Management Is the Next Big Sustainability Hurdle

However, the case for better sustainability data goes well beyond compliance. High-quality data builds trust and credibility with stakeholders, but it also drives better decisions.

“Decision-useful” data is information that is reliable enough to act on, consistent enough to compare, and timely enough to influence choices. When sustainability data is decision-useful, it becomes more than just a compliance exercise and moves into a management tool. It can help organisations better understand what is happening across their operations, where performance is improving or declining, and where investment could have the greatest impact.

When FM sustainability data isn’t decision-useful, organisations can end up making the wrong calls or failing to act quickly enough. Poor granularity or inconsistent baselines can mask where energy is being wasted, leading to generic action plans rather than targeted changes that reduce cost and emissions. The challenge isn’t only collecting more data but ensuring the data is consistent, traceable and decision-useful across sites, contracts and supply chains, with clear boundaries for who owns what. For FM, the purpose of decision-useful data is very tangible, it supports better prioritisation of activities, stronger business cases for improvements, and clearer conversations about performance.

Supply chain data is often where confidence breaks down, particularly as more organisations want better coverage of indirect impacts. Expectations for better Scope 3 information are rising, and many organisations are grappling with inconsistent methodologies, varying supplier maturity, and the complexity of estimating impacts where primary data is not available. The [GHG Protocol’s Scope 3 guidance](#) and supplier engagement guidance provide a sensible foundation for building a supplier data approach that improves over time. The SFMI also has a [Scope 3 Framework](#) which provides a standardised approach for measuring Scope 3 emissions, designed specifically for the FM industry. For FMs, a good first step is standardising what you ask for during onboarding and renewals and embedding expectations into contracts and performance reviews.

The best approach is usually to aim for a minimum viable dataset first. Agree the handful of metrics that matter most, stabilise definitions and evidence requirements, and then iterate. Once the basics are in place, data becomes an operational advantage, leading to clearer performance conversations with clients, faster identification of issues, and stronger business cases for improvements.

Ultimately, decision-useful sustainability data is about being able to answer three simple questions with confidence:

- What is happening?
- Why is it happening?
- What should we do next?

As assurance expectations strengthen and sustainability reporting matures, the organisations that get ahead will be the ones producing data that is credible, comparable and genuinely useful for managing performance across the built environment.

Capacity building in FM: the hidden lever for real sustainability outcomes

A common challenge we hear through SFMI is the capability gap at senior levels. Across many organisations, decision-makers don't always have a solid foundation in ESG basics or a clear view of how sustainability issues translate into business risk, opportunity, and value. Without a basic level of sustainability literacy in leadership, sustainability teams can struggle to communicate effectively, secure internal buy-in for sustainability work, and embed sustainability into strategy and risk management.

This gap is increasingly recognised by both disclosure frameworks and regulations. CDP, for example, awards points for board-level competency on the environmental issue and for mechanisms to maintain board competence, including regular training for directors. IFRS/ISSB similarly pushes companies to explain governance capability: IFRS S1 asks organisations to disclose how the governance body determines whether appropriate skills and competencies are available (or will be developed) to oversee responses to sustainability-related risks and opportunities, and how these matters are considered in overseeing strategy and major decisions. In the EU, ESRS 2 (under CSRD) explicitly points to describing the level of expertise or access to expertise of governance bodies, including access to training and other educational initiatives.

On the supply chain side, the challenge can be more complex, particularly where suppliers are smaller or at an earlier stage of maturity. This is where a structured supplier engagement strategy can really provide an important baseline for improving the competency level of suppliers. FMs need to understand where their suppliers are today and then set realistic and proportionate expectations, as well as creating mechanisms and pathways for improvement over time.

Clearly, the regulatory landscape is pointing to the importance of having a leadership that is equipped not only to understand sustainability challenges, but also how to respond to them. Being aware of the sustainability risks and opportunities facing your business is only the first step, leadership must be able to apply this knowledge to their strategies and risk management processes in order to protect value. For FM, this matters because sustainability outcomes rely on long-term thinking, trade-offs and cross-functional decisions. Leadership competency is the foundation that enables FM businesses to interpret what's coming, whether through regulation, client expectations, or assurance, and to prioritise the right actions while protecting value.

However, the challenge doesn't stop there. FMs must not only be able to communicate about sustainability internally, but also to their clients and suppliers. On the client side, it is imperative that FMs can translate risks and opportunities into outcomes clients care about, such as operational performance, cost, compliance, occupant experience, reputational protection, and delivery against net zero or wider ESG commitments. When FM teams can articulate this clearly, sustainability is no longer an extra but becomes part of the service proposition and the client relationship.

Ultimately, capacity building is what turns sustainability from ambition into confident delivery. As expectations increase around reporting, assurance and client scrutiny, investing in competence is becoming a core enabler of outcomes, credibility and long-term value. Capacity building is also one of the areas where collaboration creates real momentum. Sharing what works helps everyone move faster and avoid repeating the same challenges in isolation. In 2026, we'll continue to create more space for these conversations through SFMI forums and peer learning, so that capability becomes a shared asset across the industry.

Latest from the SFMI

UPCOMING EVENTS

27th Jan: SFMI Leaders Working Group Kick-off meeting

The aim with our monthly Working Group is to create a trusted, senior peer forum for SFMI Partners for candid discussion and knowledge exchange on strategic sustainability topics.

26th Feb, 5pm-6:30pm: Wellbeing Leaders Forum

An in-person event for SFMI Partners, held by Dr Nigel Oseman in The Shard. Dr Oseman will open with a short talk and then we will move into a collaborative discussion. With hybrid working and changes in workplace expectations, many organisations are implementing improvements to their facilities. This session will look at the underlying evidence base associated with wellbeing factors, examples of how organisations are implementing changes and the role that FM companies can take.

Please email Jemima at jemima.walker@acclaro-advisory.com to join the Working Group or register for the wellbeing event.

REPORTS

2025: FM Leaders Zero in on What Really Matters in Sustainability

[Download Report](#)

ARTICLES

Q&A: BAM FM's Journey with the SFMI

[Read article](#)

Why carbon targets still matter: even when regulations are under scrutiny

[Read article](#)

Engaging Churchill Group's suppliers to drive Scope 3 emissions reduction

[Read case study](#)

Climate Adaptation in i-FM's annual Trends & Opportunities Report

[Read article](#)

GUIDES

Climate Risk in the Built Environment - as featured in IWFM's Sustainability Survey Report for 2025.

[Download](#)

Sustainability Strategy Blueprint

[Download](#)

Don't forget the Partner Portal, where you can access reports, webinar recordings, previous newsletters and more resources. [Access here!](#) The password is **SFMI2025**.