

GFM 2.0 definitions

2025



**GLOBAL
FARM
METRIC**

General definitions

GLOBAL FARM METRIC (GFM): The initiative as a whole, representing a shared and collaborative approach to measuring and understanding farm-level sustainability.

GFM FRAMEWORK: The structured model of outcomes, categories, subcategories and indicators used to conceptualise key parts of the farm that are relevant to understanding and assessing its sustainability.

THE FRAMEWORK: A shorthand for “GFM framework” used only when already established in context and no other frameworks are being discussed.

OUTCOME: A shared, non-prescriptive goal within each category that defines what a truly sustainable farm system should achieve for nature, climate, and people.

CATEGORY: A key part of the farm system where social, environmental and economic sustainability impacts occur, each interconnected and interdependent.

SUBCATEGORY: A key area within a category that influences the delivery of its shared outcomes and helps focus measurement efforts.

INDICATOR: A measurable or observable condition on the farm that provides evidence of progress towards a sustainability outcome and/or change in status.

CONTEXT: External factors beyond the farmer's control that affect the ability to achieve sustainability outcomes, highlighting shared responsibility for change.

METRIC: A specific unit or standard of measurement used to quantify an indicator and measure progress towards a sustainability outcome. These are not defined by the GFM framework – they are to be adapted from the indicators according to local context.



Category and subcategory definitions

CONTEXT

This category captures the physical, ecological, and socio-economic setting in which a farm operates.

Geology and Topography: The physical features of the land, such as soil type, slope, and elevation.

Environment and Ecology: The natural systems and living organisms on and around the farm.

Climate and Weather: Patterns of rainfall, temperature, wind, and other meteorological conditions.

Agricultural Supplies: The tools, inputs, infrastructure, and services that support farming activities.

Society and Culture: The values, traditions, and social structures of those connected to the farm.

Regulation, Law and Policy: The legal and policy frameworks influencing farming.

Economics and Finance: The financial factors shaping farm costs and income, including market dynamics and resource availability.

GOVERNANCE

This category focuses on how decisions are made and priorities are set on the farm.

Decision Making: The formal and informal processes of evaluating alternatives and selecting actions based on information, risks, and stakeholder input.

Farm Priorities and Values: The underlying principles and influences that determine which tasks and objectives a farm gives most importance to.

Management Structure: The organisation of roles, responsibilities, communication, and leadership on the farm, including traditional and cooperative systems.

AIR AND CLIMATE

This category includes emissions and pollutants related to farm operations.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Emissions like carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide, directly or indirectly linked to farming activities.

Carbon Sequestration and Storage: Biological, geological, or technological processes that remove and store carbon.

Pollutants: Airborne substances (e.g. pesticide drift, odour, noise) that harms health or the environment.

SOIL

This category addresses the composition and quality of the farm's soil.

Structure: The arrangement of soil particles into aggregates, affecting water flow, aeration, and root growth.

Chemistry: The chemical makeup of the soil, including nutrients, pH, minerals, and organic matter.

Pollutants: Contaminants in the soil that exceed safe levels and pose risks to health and ecosystems.

WATER

This category covers farm water sources, usage, and pollution.

Water Source: The type and origin of water used, such as rainwater, reservoirs, or desalinated sources.

Usage: The amount, method, and efficiency of water extraction and application.

Pollutants: Harmful substances in water, including chemicals, microorganisms, and plastics.

BIODIVERSITY

This category captures the diversity and abundance of living organisms on the farm.

Wildlife: Non-cultivated terrestrial species and their habitats.

Aquatic Life: Flora and fauna living in or around water.

Soil Biodiversity: Species within the soil, including bacteria, fungi, and invertebrates.

Crops and Pasture: Diversity in cultivated plants and managed grasslands.

Livestock: Genetic and species diversity of domesticated animals.

LAND USE

This category considers how land is used and its condition.

Type and Size of Features: The kinds of natural and built elements on the farm, such as woodlands or barns.

Configuration of Features: The spatial layout and distribution of these features.

Condition of Features: The state of features and their ability to meet ecological or human needs.

CROPS AND PASTURE

This category tracks plant-based production.

Plant Health: A plant's ability to grow, reproduce, and resist stressors.

Yield: The amount of crops and pasture produced after losses.

Loss and Waste: Reductions in expected yield and unused products due to various factors.

Product Quality: The nutritional and physical condition of harvested crops and forage.

LIVESTOCK

This category focuses on animal production.

Health: The physical state of farm animals.

Wellbeing: The animals' welfare and environmental conditions.

Yield: Livestock output and related products after losses.

Loss and Waste: Reductions in livestock numbers or unusable animal products.

Product Quality: The nutritional and sensory quality of meat, milk, eggs, etc.

FARMERS AND WORKERS

This category reflects the people working or living on the farm.

Demographics: The composition of farm populations by socio-cultural attributes.

Health: Physical health of all individuals involved in farm work.

Wellbeing: Social and emotional welfare.

Work Environment: Job conditions including workload, pay, and security.

Knowledge and Skills: Experience, education, and practical abilities.

AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIES

This category assesses the farm's use of inputs and materials.

Type and Source: The nature and origin of inputs such as fertilisers and machinery.

Usage: How inputs are applied or managed.

End of Life: Disposal, recycling, or repurposing of materials once they are no longer useful.

COMMUNITY

This category considers the farm's interaction with wider communities.

Employment Opportunities: The jobs created by the farm.

Knowledge and Skills Exchange: Sharing of expertise through training and collaboration.

Resource Sharing: Joint use of assets and services, from tools to data.

Cultural Assets and Activities: Stewardship of local heritage, traditions, and communal spaces.

ECONOMICS

This category explores financial sustainability.

Finances: The farm's monetary and non-monetary financial systems.

Income Source: Revenue streams and other resources.

Investment: Use of surplus resources to generate long-term value.

Business, Markets and Services: Trade practices and relationships, both formal and