

Criteria Overview for the DSF Criteria: Biodiversity

Strategic Intent: Direct and indirect biodiversity risks and opportunities are understood, and strategies to maintain or enhance it are established.

DSF Indicator Metric: Development and implementation of a Biodiversity Plan

About this Criteria: Each farm is a unique eco-system that requires a balance between soil, plants, animals and their habitat to effectively function. It is the diversity of these interacting parts that creates an effective ecosystem. Agriculture can potentially challenge the balance and as such should always strive to minimize negative impacts and even enhance the existing eco-system.

This criteria starts with the generation of understanding of the existing and unique eco-system of the general area and of course the individual farm. It is only from this point that strategies to preserve, restore and improve biodiversity on-farm and across the supply chain can be established. Biodiversity encompasses encouraging the presence of more diverse, and desirable plants, insects and animals on the farm.

Aspects to consider, include:

- Identification of local/regional biodiversity priorities, issues and opportunities
- Understanding especially if farming is operational in an area that supports rare or endangered species of any type.
- Understanding the impacts and benefits, including co-benefits (e.g. soil health) of introducing other species of flora and fauna to individual farms
- Understanding the impact on biodiversity of different management practices and land use – taking a holistic view on production practices
- Understanding the impact on biodiversity of purchased inputs to the farming operation.
- How to measure and quantify biodiversity – How will you know if your plan is working?
- Establishing a 'biodiversity baseline' for the farm/business

Interlinkages: This Criteria also links closely to **GHG Emissions, Soil Nutrients, Soil Quality and Retention, Water, Animal Care, Waste, Rural Economies and Market Development.**