

Sustainable Management Criteria Terminology: Super Quick Reference Guide

SGMA Term	Layperson Description
Sustainability Goal	A succinct big-picture statement of the GSA’s objectives and desired conditions and how they will be reached. To be finalized at the end of the GSP process.
Significant and Unreasonable Effects	A qualitative statement that our gut tells us we don’t want to happen. For example: It’s significant and unreasonable for groundwater levels to drop to the point that wells can no longer produce water.
Sustainability Indicators	The six conditions defined by the water code that we don’t want to experience Significant and Unreasonable Effects in the groundwater basin: (1) Chronic lowering of groundwater levels ; (2) reduction of groundwater storage (the difference between recharge and discharge, over time); (3) seawater intrusion ; (4) degraded water quality ; (5) land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses; and (6) depletions of interconnected surface water (e.g. water in streams or wetlands).
Representative Monitoring Sites	Monitoring sites that reliably provide high quality data that characterize representative groundwater conditions in the basin. Representative monitoring sites are a subset of a basin’s complete monitoring network, where minimum thresholds, measurable objectives, and interim milestones are set for each applicable Sustainability Indicator and monitored for compliance.
Measurable Objectives	Specific, quantifiable goals at each representative monitoring site to maintain or improve groundwater conditions in order to maintain or achieve the sustainability goal for the basin. Measurable Objectives reflect the GSA’s desired groundwater conditions in the basin and guide the GSA to achieve its sustainability goal within 20 years. Measurable Objectives should include flexibility to accommodate wet-to-dry year fluctuations, droughts, climate change, and groundwater management activities. <i>For example for groundwater levels (Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin): Measurable objectives are the 75th percentile of historical groundwater elevations for the period of record of each monitoring point, which is higher than median or average groundwater elevations.</i>
Minimum Thresholds	The numerical line in the sand that we don’t want to cross. For each sustainability indicator, the Minimum Thresholds are the <u>quantitative, measurable</u> values that reflect what is significant and unreasonable at every measuring site. The numeric value used to define minimum thresholds at a representative monitoring site in the basin (such as at a well) that if exceeded, may cause undesirable results. <i>For example, for groundwater levels (Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin): The minimum threshold is the numeric groundwater elevation (as measured at representative monitoring sites over a period of time) required to meet the typical overlying water demand in the shallowest well in the vicinity.</i>
Undesirable Results	This is the worst-case scenario, and is a quantitative combination of the minimum thresholds that define sustainability for each sustainability indicator. For example (from Salinas, for groundwater levels): <i>Over the course of any one year, no more than 15% of groundwater elevation minimum thresholds in any single aquifer and no one well shall exceed its minimum threshold for more than two consecutive years</i>
Interim milestones	Interim milestones are five-year check-ins to measure progress on the groundwater conditions that the GSA hopes to achieve during the 20-year implementation period. Measurements occur at representative monitoring sites.