

Ensure an objective analysis and avoid over-estimating scores

For an objective analysis, the importance of justifications

- It is important to lead an objective analysis, and to give scores that are accompanied by clear, concrete, and informed justifications in the "comments" column (make reference to interviews, chapters of documents, SIG data, etc.).

For a useful analysis, the identification of improvement tracks

- An objective work allows the identification of improvement tracks and the definition of action plans linked to technical resources. This identification is useful to strengthen the practices in social and environmental performance management.
- The SPI can be an « entry point » to discuss technical assistance projects with technical and/or financial partners.

For a fair analysis, the importance of benchmarks

- The scores can be lower for younger and/or small organizations which have not formalized their procedures yet. They can then compare their scores to their peers with SPI benchmarks (but they should not inflate artificially the results to « encourage », « not penalize informal procedures » etc.).
- A global SPI score of 60 is in the average of the SPI database.
- A global SPI score of 80-90 is a very high notation and translates excellent practices.

For a reliable analysis, the identification of "gaps"

- If the results of SPI audits are overestimated, it may be misleading for the organization which could go on and engages in a Client Protection certification, a social rating, or apply for funding with an investor. There is, therefore, a risk that these results will be lower than expected, which will then penalize the organization. It is clearly better to identify "gaps", to work upstream of a rating/certification, or to share with full transparency with an investor who could then support a targeted improvement.

For a credible analysis, results without bias

- Overestimated results can challenge the credibility of the auditor, with both the organization and the initiatives working on Universal Standards (Cerise+SPTF, CP Pathway, rating agencies, investors, regulators, etc.). This can lead to a conflict of interest, while the objective is at first to support the organization in the appropriation of the Universal Standards.

For a responsible analysis, an extensive knowledge of the approaches

- The SPI tool leans on international initiatives and a solid network of practitioners, who shared their approaches and their tools to collaborate, speak the same language, and give the same priority to customers. It implies a strong responsibility in the professional use of these tools, stemming from these exchanges and joint works for more than 20 years now.

For an independent analysis, in-depth work with every partner

- An auditor who would over-estimate SPI assessments would be experiencing a vicious circle where each organization would be expecting a higher score comparing itself to other conducted audits.
- For a professional analysis, a process of qualification exists to master the SPI tool. SPI audits are preferably led by SPI Qualified Auditors, who have followed a process of theoretical and practical training, accompanied by Cerise, on the contents, features, and SPI results. This process enables auditors to master the tool and the process of audit effectively. It is recommended that organizations wishing to self-assess first attend the free virtual training offered by Cerise.

For more information, download the [SPI Audit guide](#).