

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX CRITICIZED



Environmental Performance Index from 2008 provides useful information to decision makers but critics claim it does not analyze data correctly.

[Environmental Performance Index](#) was developed by Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network and Yale University's Center for Environmental Law and Policy. The index is meant to provide information **about the cleanest countries in the world** and to give an opportunity for benchmarking to the others.

The two objectives the index should help to achieve are: first the reduction of environmental stresses on human health and second promotion of ecosystem vitality and sound natural resource management. The last index was published in 2008 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The EPI gives information about **149 countries**. The researchers, however, admit some of the analyzed **data may not be 100 % reliable**. It is especially true about data provided by local sources in developing countries. Fifty states are not included in the EPI at all because there were not enough data to analyze. The EPI ranking is based on 25 indicators tracked across six established policy categories: Environmental Health, Air Pollution, Water Resources, Biodiversity and Habitat, Productive Natural Resources, and Climate Change.

According to the EPI the ten environmentally best performing countries are:

- 1/ **Switzerland**
- 2/ **Sweden**
- 3/ **Norway**
- 4/ **Finland**
- 5/ **Costa Rica**
- 6/ **Austria**
- 7/ **New Zealand**
- 8/ **Latvia**
- 9/ **Colombia**
- 10/ **France**

The country with the lowest rating is Niger.

The EPI should help decision makers form their policies but not everyone sees the index as a good tool. Critics point out that some indicators are used incorrectly. There is for example the measuring of air pollution. Developing countries often do not possess the necessary technologies to conduct such measurements. The critics have also pointed out that countries should not be compared by their woodland. Canada naturally has more forests than Saudi Arabia. Also comparing agrarian countries with the industrial ones does not provide representative picture.

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