

Term

Environmental Performance Index

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Definition

The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) compares countries based on the extent to which they preserve their environment.¹

Relevancy

The goal of the "Top 15 Vision" is to see Israel achieve a significant socioeconomic advancement that would put Israel among the 15 leading countries in terms of quality of life within fifteen years.²

Quality of Life is a subjective term determined by various components. Numerous indices attempt to measure the Quality of Life of individuals in different countries. The most prominent indices among them are the Economist's Quality of Life Index, the UN Human Development Index, and the Quality of Life chapter in the OECD Factbook. These indices utilize a range of methodologies and examine diverse components of Quality of Life.

In order to pursue the Top 15 Vision, the Government of Israel should first define the key components relevant to Quality of Life in Israel.³ Thus the Reut Institute identified four main areas that affect Quality of Life in Israel directly and enable a basis for comparison to other countries:

- **Economic Security** is a person's ability to financially support himself and his family. It is determined by his material wellbeing (income level) and human capital development, as well as the presence of environment supporting growth.⁴
- **Social Wellbeing** is a person's desire and ability to identify with society and to be an active member of it. It is determined by the amount of trust in the government's ability to design, plan and execute policies, the scope of an individual's rights and liberties, and the sense of belongingness to one's community and nation.⁵
- **Personal & Physical Security** refers to an individual's safety from harm to his life and property. It is determined by the health services, the quality of the environment, and the protection from criminal violence, war & terrorism that the state provides.⁶
- **The Jewish Added Value** refers to the amount of satisfaction an Israeli Jew draws from being part of the fulfillment of the Zionist vision.

The EPI is a comprehensive source that can be used to evaluate the environmental aspect of personal & physical security in Israel. By doing so the index examines waste management, pollution levels, and natural resource preservation.

¹ The index was designed as a tool for policy makers regarding environmental issues. See the [EPI](#) website.

² See: Reut Institute paper: [Top 15 Vision](#).

³ See: Reut Institute paper: [Quality of Life](#).

⁴ See Reut concept: Economic Security

⁵ See Reut concept: Social Wellbeing

⁶ See Reut concept: Personal & Physical Security

The Reut Institute has concluded that the EPI is the most appropriate index to estimate the environmental health aspect of Quality of Life.⁷

Israel in Comparison to the Top 15

According to the 2006 EPI report, Israel's rank is 45th out of 133 countries. The countries that lead in environmental performance are (in descending order): New-Zealand, Sweden and Finland.

Publisher

The Index was developed by the Center for Environmental Law & Policy at Yale University and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.

Structure and Limitations

The EPI is organized according to two sub-indices (broad objectives). They are measured by 19 variables that are grouped into six pillars (policy categories):⁸

- **Environmental Health** – This sub-index focuses on reducing the environmental stress on human health and covers one of the six pillars. The variables that make up this pillar are air pollution, child mortality, adequate sanitation and drinking water availability.
- **Ecosystem Vitality** – This sub-index focuses on preserving the ecological system and covers five pillars: air quality, water resources, biodiversity and habitat, productive natural resources and sustainable energy.

The EPI ranks countries according to their environmental performance score and presents a brief description of their performance on each pillar. Data on previous years is not available due to the index's recent publication.⁹

Data Sources

The data in the EPI is collected from sources such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and the World Trade Organization.¹⁰

Usage

The EPI was designed as a tool for policy makers regarding environmental issues. The variables and their categorization were chosen according to environmental issues that are addressable through policy.

⁷ In order for international indices to affect the design and implementation of policy they must help identify groups, geographical areas, institutions, or sectors of the economy that need to be addressed. Indices should also help evaluate the success of past policy. Finally, indices have a role in affecting the national discourse and guiding public opinion. See: Reut Institute Policy Positions: [Competitiveness Indices - Tools for Policy Design](#) and Seven Indices for Measuring Quality of Life.

⁸ For the list of broad objectives, variables, and policy categories, see: [The 2006 EPI report](#), pages 20, 24.

⁹ The EPI was introduced to the World Economic Forum in 2006.

¹⁰ For the full list of resources, see [Appendix H: Raw data and Metadata](#) in the 2006 EPI report.