

Navigating EcoVadis

Fundamentals and tips
for excellence

October 2024

Introduction

EcoVadis is one of the leading ESG assessment platforms, connecting over **1,200 buyers** with **130,000 suppliers** globally. It offers a range of solutions, from various evaluation tools to supply chain risk mapping.

What will you find in this guide?

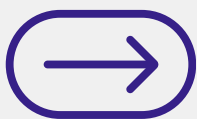
This guide highlights the flagship tool of EcoVadis - **Sustainability Assessment** - providing insights into the rating process, ways to maximise its benefits, and tips for optimising the reporting process. Whether you're new to EcoVadis or an experienced reporter, you'll discover valuable information here.

This guide is divided into two parts:



Part 1: Fundamentals

An overview of the Sustainability Assessment for newcomers and those needing a quick refresh.



Part 2: Mastering the assessment

Practical tips to improve and simplify your assessment experience.

Who is this guide for?

Sustainability professionals, procurement and supply chain managers, investors, businesses aiming to enhance their sustainability practices, and individuals looking to improve their understanding of the EcoVadis Sustainability Assessment.

Part 1

Fundamentals

Overview and criteria (1/2)

The **EcoVadis Sustainability Assessment** is a paid service that evaluates a company's sustainability impacts through verified documentation. Companies can participate by invitation or initiate the assessment independently. Participants complete a questionnaire within a set timeframe, reviewed by EcoVadis experts.

The assessment is tailored to the company's industry, location, and size. Its methodology is based on internationally recognised standards, including GRI, UN GC, and ISO 26000.

EcoVadis reviews a company's sustainability management system using **21 criteria across four areas: Environment, Labour & Human Rights, Ethics, and Sustainable Procurement**. Environmental criteria examine the full lifecycle of products, while procurement questions focus on both direct and lower-tier suppliers in the supply chain. The criteria are customised based on the company's characteristics, leading to varying questionnaire lengths and content.

21 Sustainability criteria		
Environment	Labour & Human rights	Ethics
<p>Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption and GHGs • Water • Biodiversity • Air pollution • Materials, chemicals and waste <p>Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product use • Product end-of-life • Customer health and safety • Environmental services and advocacy 	<p>Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee health and safety • Working conditions • Social dialogue • Career management and training <p>Human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking • Diversity, equity and inclusion • External stakeholder human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption • Anticompetitive practices • Responsible information management
		<p>Sustainable procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplier environmental practices • Supplier social practices

Source: [Ratings Methodology Overview and Principles, page 7](#)

Overview and criteria (2/2)

To further customise the assessment, sustainability management system is evaluated among the relevant topic-specific themes using key management indicators, categorised into **three groups**.

	Indicators	Weight	
Policies	Policies <i>(statements, policies, targets, governance)</i>	20%	25%
	Endorsements <i>(endorsement of external initiatives)</i>	5%	
Actions	Measures <i>(measures and actions implemented)</i>	24%	40%
	Certifications <i>(Certificates, labels, third-party audits)</i>	16%	
	Coverage <i>(Coverage of measures and actions)</i>	X (Multiplying factor)	
Results	Reporting <i>(Reporting on Key Performance Indicators)</i>	14%	35%
	360° Watch Findings <i>(Condemnations, Controversies, Awards)</i>	21%	

Adapted from [Ratings Methodology Overview and Principles, page 6](#)

The management indicators utilise the **PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) approach**, a framework for continuous improvement in global management standards. They assign weight to assessment criteria within specific themes, prioritising actions such as formal policy implementation and tangible initiatives like modern equipment installation or training programs over mere participation.

Assessment process

1 Onboarding and setup

A buyer requests an EcoVadis assessment for a trading partner, or a company initiates it. After registering, the company submits data (location, size, industry) to generate a custom questionnaire and receives a subscription offer.

2 Questionnaire completion (by an assessee)

The assessee completes a questionnaire divided into topic-specific sections with management indicators. Each response requires supporting documentation, otherwise, it may be rejected.

3 Data collection (by EcoVadis)

EcoVadis uses the [360° Watch Findings](#) tool to assess external stakeholder perspectives on the company. It combines AI and human analysis of sustainability practices over the past five years, based on public information, which can affect the assessment score positively, negatively, or neutrally.

4 Data analysis and scoring

Each of the seven management indicators is scored from 0 (insufficient) to 100 (outstanding), calculating theme-specific scores. The overall score is a weighted average based on company characteristics, aiding performance assessment and peer comparison.

5 Receiving the results

Assesseees receive results 6-8 weeks after submission, shown as a scorecard detailing scores and improvement areas for each theme. Results are available to both the requesting organisation and the assessed company, with optional additional verification.



For more details, check these articles:

[What is the EcoVadis assessment process?](#)

[EcoVadis Ratings Methodology Overview and Principles](#)

Awards

Companies demonstrating exceptional performance may receive an **EcoVadis medal or badge**.

TOP 35% of assessed companies receive **medals** based on their percentile ranking at scorecard publication: platinum for the 99th percentile or higher, gold for the 95th, silver for the 85th, and bronze for the 65th. Companies scoring below 30 in any theme are ineligible for a medal.

Badges serve as an alternative to medals, with companies that earn a medal not eligible for a badge. Badges are based on overall scores, with two types awarded:



Committed: Awarded for a minimum score of 45.

Fast Mover: For scores of 34-44 with a 6-point improvement over the previous assessment within 18 months.



Certain industries, such as tobacco, weapons, and coal, cannot receive medals or badges. Additionally, eligibility is also influenced by the 360° Watch indicator score.



Medal and badge criteria are updated periodically. For questionnaires submitted on or after October 15, 2024, scorecards may be published in 2025, showing the award date.

How the results can be used?



Showcase your commitment to stakeholders:

Participating in EcoVadis and sharing your results demonstrates your commitment to responsible business practices, which is the core value of the Sustainability Assessment.



Identify gaps and track progress:

The EcoVadis assessment offers a comprehensive review of your sustainability practices, highlighting areas for improvement. Regular assessments help you track and evaluate progress over time.



Benchmark against peers:

EcoVadis enables you to compare your results with industry peers, providing peer data in the scorecard after assessment completion.



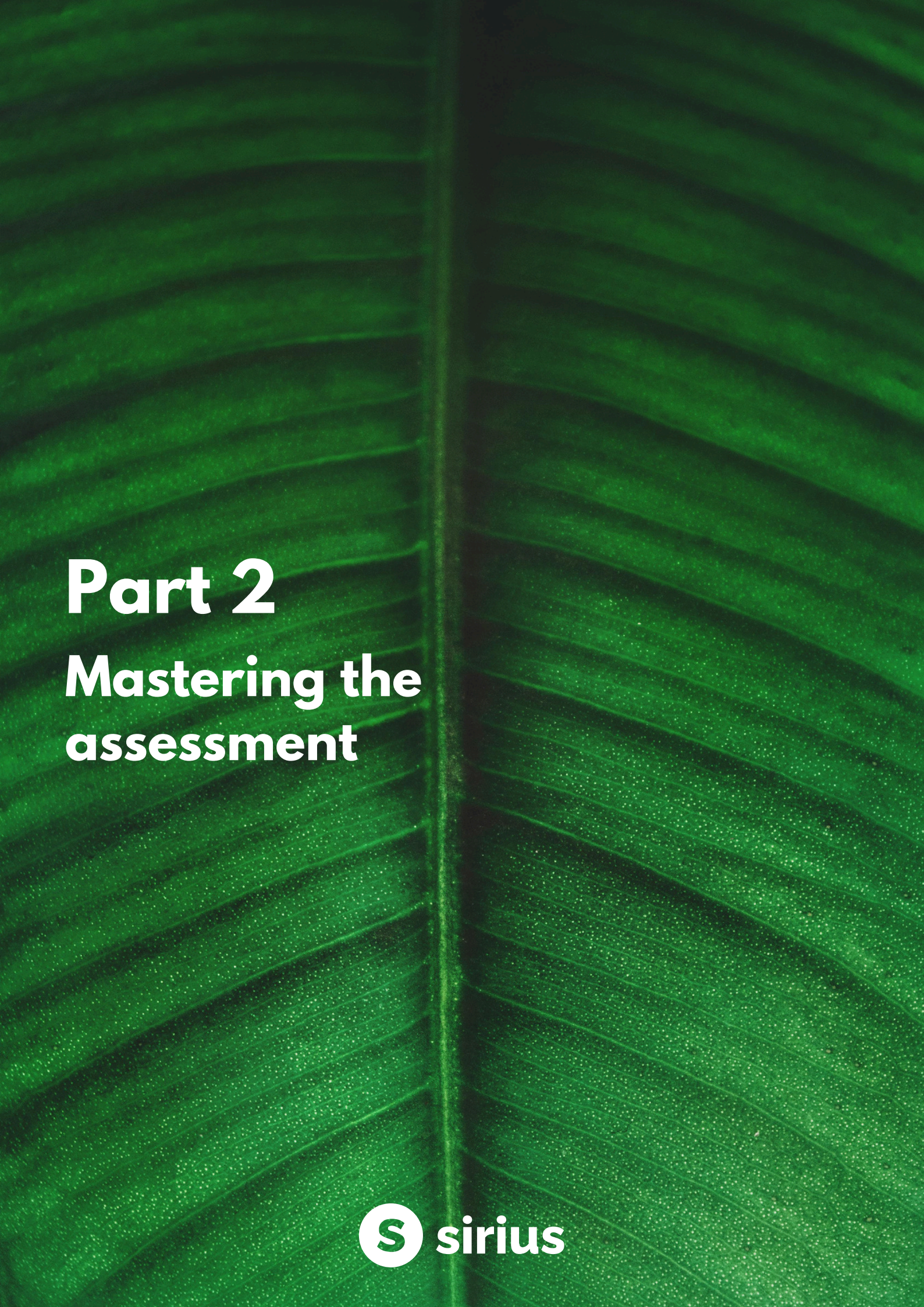
Leverage results for other frameworks:

A high EcoVadis score can enhance your standing in other frameworks. For instance, chromium producers with top scores may qualify for the responsible chromium company title from ICDA.



Secure ESG-linked financing:

Banks and financial institutions consider EcoVadis scores in their eligibility criteria, linking ESG performance to financial products.



Part 2

Mastering the assessment

Preparation

Whether it's your first EcoVadis assessment or not, start preparing at least **1-2 months** before the reporting window opens. Include the following actions in your to-do list:

- **Familiarise yourself with EcoVadis**
Review the assessment basics and any year-over-year changes in methodologies and criteria. EcoVadis regularly publishes high-level updates and detailed information for platform users.
- **Check the key sustainability issues**
Identify industry-specific issues relevant to your company by reviewing the platform, using professional judgment, or checking EcoVadis assessment reports published by peers.
- **Check the management indicators**
Understand how management indicators impact the assessment and ensure you have the necessary data to answer questions.
- **Prepare for public controversies**
If your company has controversies flagged by the [360° Watch Finding tool](#), EcoVadis allows you to comment before publication, potentially boosting your score. Coordinate with your PR team to prepare a response and avoid delays.
- **Collect the documents**
[Valid documents](#) are crucial for the EcoVadis questionnaire. Missing them can cause delays, so prioritise gathering everything needed and follow the tips on the next page.

TIP: Sirius uses AI to simplify EcoVadis assessment preparation by **reusing previously collected data** across requests and questionnaires. This saves time and ensures consistency in responses, making the process more efficient and reliable.



Document preparation tips

- **Ensure documents meet the specific criteria outlined in the [methodology document](#).** As a minimum, it should contain the company's logo or name, include an issue date and be issued more than one month before the questionnaire submission date.
- **Collect documents separately** - the combined document (multiple documents merged into one file) are not accepted. Exceptions: certificates for multiple sites or consolidated KPI reports.
- **Do not create documents solely for the EcoVadis questionnaire** - these will be [rejected](#).
- **Ensure all documents are authentic.** All documents are subject to [credibility checks](#), and if documents are plagiarised, forged, or fabricated, they will be rejected (a note will be added to the scorecard). In some cases, all documents may be disregarded.
- **When collecting documents, remember that your limit is [55 files](#).** However, documents submitted in previous assessments can be reused for the current year and do not count toward the limit.

Questionnaire answering

Once you're ready to start the questionnaire, you'll have around **one month** to complete it, with the option to extend by up to 60 additional days if needed. Use this time effectively with the following tips:

- **Review all the questions in the questionnaire**
If you're missing data, request it from colleagues with clear instructions on format and deadline. Some questions are optional and won't affect your score, so they can be reprioritised.
- **Carefully read the instructions on the supporting documents**
In some cases, EcoVadis allows credible "short-cuts," such as submitting a third-party-assured sustainability report in place of site-specific documents like ISO certificates.
- **Be cautious when deleting documents**
Before deleting a document, especially if you've reached the upload limit, ensure it isn't linked to any answers you've already submitted.
- **Add more metrics if needed**
Add relevant [metrics](#) through the questionnaire or directly on the platform. They'll be structured by applicable frameworks and can be shared with partners as needed.
- **Provide comments when unsure**
If certain questions don't apply to your company or you approach the topic differently, provide a comment in the dedicated field, and the analysts will consider it.
- **EcoVadis resources**
Check a [collection of valuable resources](#) from EcoVadis to help you.

TIP: Sirius makes EcoVadis questionnaire completion easier by using our AI to **automatically extract and populate responses** directly from your reports and policies. With precise sourcing, page references, and clarifying comments, Sirius ensures **accuracy** and **consistency**, reducing manual effort and saving valuable time.




Analysis and improvements

After submitting the questionnaire, it may take **6-8 weeks** for EcoVadis to review it. When you receive your results, don't just file them away for next year.

Here are some effective ways to utilise them:

- **Analyse your assessment report:**
If you don't understand certain results, reach out to the analysts through the platform. If necessary, you can request a reassessment.
- **Make a list of areas for improvement:**
The EcoVadis assessment report highlights your weak spots. Consider addressing these issues and think about how to incorporate them into your planning. Engage your colleagues if needed.
- **Showcase your commitment:**
After receiving the scorecard, share it via the platform or email with relevant partners to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability.

Remember, EcoVadis results can serve as a communication tool and help attract financing and enhance your standings in other initiatives. More use cases [here](#).



Once you get your results, use Sirius to spot reporting gaps and prioritise critical improvement areas. You can also send targeted questions to your team or stakeholders with one click - their responses and documents upload directly, keeping everything organised and reducing emails.

Reporting with Sirius



EcoVadis reporting with Sirius

With Sirius, you can simplify your EcoVadis reporting process and focus on what truly matters:



Data filling

Sirius's AI automatically fills in EcoVadis questions by extracting data from your reports, policies, and documents, ensuring responses meet the required format. It provides precise data sources, including page numbers, and offers clarifying comments when needed.



Document management

Sirius allows users to store and organise all documents in one place. While answering EcoVadis questions, it verifies document validity and alerts users to potential rejection risks, ensuring compliance with submission limits.



Collaboration mode

Missing data? With one click, send specific questions to colleagues or external stakeholders. Their responses and documents are uploaded directly to the platform, maintaining a history of changes and minimising email management.



Gap assessment

Sirius identifies reporting gaps, highlighting questions that need more information. It provides a prioritised list of improvement areas, allowing you to focus on critical issues first without manual aggregation.



Smart data reuse

Sirius reuses previously collected data across various requests and questionnaires, including EcoVadis, saving you time and effort by eliminating repetitive answers.

Find out how Sirius makes compliance straightforward

SCHEDULE A CALL



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