



ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Social and environmental performance management
for purpose-driven organizations.

Translating intentions into impact



Credit: Cécile Lapenu

EDITORIAL

Like many of you, the global context this year prompted us to reflect on our values, priorities, methods and partnerships.

We've noted, with great delight, growing momentum for decision-making based on outcomes client data, in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international reference to contribute to a better world. The increasing interest by investors and actors in the field for measuring outcomes is both reassuring and reaffirming. It means that for some actors, Social Performance Management (SPM) has been so thoroughly integrated into operations, that they are ready to take the next step towards outcomes measurement. It also brings us back to our beginnings, 20 years ago: CERISE was built on the idea that SPM precludes impact. After years of focusing on the former, we are thrilled to turn our attention to the actual changes for clients, staff, environment.

The mainstreaming of ESG issues, also, as evidenced by new regulatory frameworks to report on sustainability like the EU's SFDR and increasing media attention to ESG in places like the Moral Money forum of the Financial Times, has prompted interest in our work by new actors. CERISE has always promoted a much broader and more demanding approach to social and environmental performance than the typical ESG approach, and we don't plan to change these values, but we welcome the opportunity to share with a new audience the relevance of SPM.

Once again in 2021, our methods evolved, as we continued to work remotely. Despite the distance, we've stayed close to our partners. The LabODD members and their partners in the field, thanks to virtual meetings united people from more than 30 countries, shared their experiences and reflected on outcome data collection, analysis, and use. We've also stayed connected with our investor and impact partners, by combining virtual and face-to-face meetings, and providing tailor-made, regular, step-by-step support.

Finally, our partnership with long-standing partner SPTF reached a new level of formalization in 2021, a natural culmination of two decades of coordination. By launching the new Client Protection Pathway together, we have taken over the resources and activities previously managed by the Smart Campaign, to continue to support client protection. We strengthen the growing SPM Professionals Network, which benefits from the combined support of CERISE and SPTF teams. In 2022, a common strategic plan will be finalized for CERISE+SPTF.

We thank our partners for their continued support, motivation, inspiration and enthusiasm. We look forward to pursuing our shared vision of a more just world in 2022!

Cécile Lapenu for the CERISE team



[CERISE AT A GLANCE](#)

[GOVERNANCE & TEAM](#)

[PARTNERS](#)

[CERISE+SPTF JOINT INITIATIVE](#)

[CLIENT PROTECTION PATHWAY](#)

[NETWORK OF EXPERTS](#)

[SPI ONLINE](#)

[IMPACT INVESTING](#)

[OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT](#)

[E-CERISIER NEWSLETTERS](#)

[CONTACT](#)

CERISE AT A GLANCE

VISION

Contribute to building a transparent, responsible, inclusive and high social-impact financial sector that contributes to the reduction of inequality.

MISSION

Support impact investors, inclusive finance and social enterprises to achieve their social mission.

VALUES

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Solidarity
- Respect

STRATEGY

Inclusive Finance

Support retail financial service providers improve social performance management

Impact Investing

Help impact investors define and implement their social strategy.

Outcomes and the SDGs

Measure the creation of social and environmental value of mission-driven organizations using the Sustainable Development Goals framework.



GOVERNANCE

CERISE was founded in 1998 by five of the leading French organizations supporting microfinance around the world: CIDR, GRET, IRAM, IRC/SupAgro, and CIRAD.

CERISE started as peer-learning platform, to promote knowledge sharing among the founding members.

In 2012, CERISE registered as a not-for-profit association dedicated to ethical finance.

Today, the Board is comprised of four of the founding members, represented by their organizations (CIDR, GRET, IRAM) or as individuals.

Monique Cohen is the President of CERISE since March 2017. International expert on microfinance, Monique Cohen worked on impact issues for USAID before founding in 2002 Microfinance Opportunities, organization dedicated to financial education for low-income populations.

BUSINESS MODEL

Social innovator

CERISE works with mission-driven organizations to co-develop social standards and create self-assessment tools that are public goods.

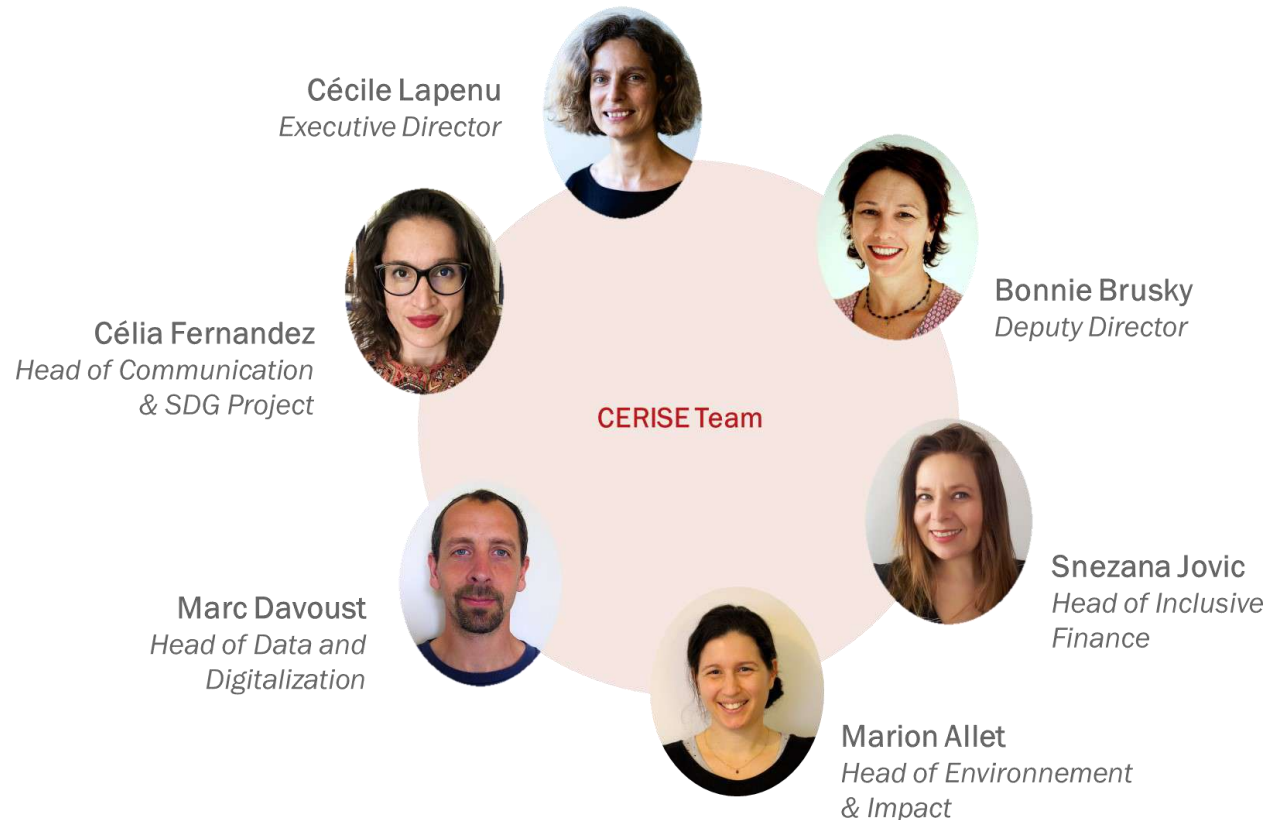
Around 40% of CERISE's budget comes from subsidies, which allows us to innovate as well as uphold our open-access approach.

Service provider

The remaining 60% of CERISE's budget is self-financed through a service mix designed to support actors in inclusive finance and social business worldwide achieve their social mission.



OPERATIONAL TEAM



2021 MAIN PARTNERS



Our founding members



AN EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP



After two decades of partnership, CERISE and SPTF have come together to capitalize on the current changes and opportunities in the market. An ideal and critical time to formalize an ambitious joint strategy.

Indeed, in late 2020, the Smart Campaign concluded its work and handed the stewardship of the client protection standards to CERISE and SPTF. The opportunity to build on that work, to streamline communications, and encourage stronger and broader uptake of client protection standards and practices already embedded in the Universal Standards.

Our current global context has renewed a call for shared value among all stakeholders. The effects of COVID-19 on all economic sectors, including the financial sector, have heightened the importance of a customer-centered focus, strong governance, and fair treatment of workers.

These market changes, along with our years of close coordination, provide a unique opportunity to consolidate our work into a streamlined, one-stop shop community to embed social and environmental performance into strategies and concrete practices of a large range of stakeholders.

On the agenda of CERISE + SPTF: manage the **Client Protection Pathway**, build the **SPM Professionals Network**, moderate the **Social Investor Working Group**, discuss with regulators, update the **Universal Standards** in line with new environmental and social requirements, and create a standardized outcomes reporting and management strategy aligned with the **SDGs**. A motivating and ambitious plan of action!



CERISE+SPTF team united by Zoom in December 2021!



The [Social Performance Task Force](#) (SPTF) is a non-profit global membership organization with more than 4,400 members from all over the world.

SPTF was founded in 2005 in collaboration with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), microfinance networks, impact investors and core donors. SPTF members come from every stakeholder group in inclusive finance.

SPTF engages with these stakeholders to develop and promote standards and good practices for social performance management, to make financial services safer, more beneficial for customers and contribute to healthier financial and market systems.



Client Protection Pathway

cerise + SPTF



In October 2021, CERISE+SPTF have launched the [Client Protection Pathway](#), a new initiative to support financial service providers to implement client protection. The CP Pathway gives providers a roadmap for implementing the [Client Protection Standards](#), one step at a time, and helps them stay on track, while getting [public exposure](#).

By joining the CP Pathway, FSPs can demonstrate their big achievements—such a certification and awards—and also their *simple, steady progress* along the way. Because CERISE+SPTF believes that *all* progress is good and should be recognized.

Whether you, as an FSP, are just getting familiar with client protection, or have been committed to client protection for years, the CP Pathway will be a valuable resource for your next steps!

By joining the CP Pathway, you will be able to access dozens of [resources and case studies](#), attend trainings and webinars, be part of a community of like-minded [organizations](#) and [experts](#), and keep up-to-date with industry trends.

For more information, email us at cppathway@sptfnetwork.org

Financial Service Providers Don't Have to Do It Alone

Many social investors and funders have signed a Joint Statement calling on FSPs to join the Client Protection Pathway. A way for these companies to **identify** FSPs who are committed to client protection and to **support** them to implement the Client Protection Standards.

- ⇒ [Read the Joint Statement](#)
- ⇒ [Financial Service Providers Committed to Client Protection](#)
- ⇒ [Learn more on FinDev Gateway Blog](#)

Resources for Every Step of the CP Pathway

We have organized client protection into three steps and are providing guidance and resources for each step. These resources include **training webinars, connections to client protection professionals, written guidance**, and more.

Click on each step below to find out more!

- ⇒ [Step 1: Commit to implement client protection](#)
- ⇒ [Step 2: Assess and improve practices](#)
- ⇒ [Step 3: Demonstrate progress and achievements](#)

A New Methodology for the Client Protection Certification

CERISE+SPTF worked with rating agencies and sector experts to develop a framework.

Certification is now awarded on three levels: gold, silver, and bronze, and is valid for a period of **three years**. Certified FSPs can be **publicly listed** with their level of achievement.

- ⇒ [Read more about the new Client Protection Certification Framework](#)
- ⇒ [Discover the Client Protection Certified Institutions](#)



SPM Professionals Network

cerise + SPTF

For years, CERISE and SPTF have been working with local experts to support social performance management in the field. These experts are trained in and working with the Universal Standards for SPM, the Client Protection Standards, and the SPI.

In 2020, we renamed this network of experts. Now known as the [SPM Professionals Network](#), the network structures the work with these important ambassadors. The main objectives are to **cross-train consultants** across different SPM issues; to facilitate **peer learning**, gather best practices and **disseminate resources** for trainers, auditors and assessors; and to provide a **one-stop shop for stakeholders** to find consultants across SPM issues and tools.

As of December 2021, **215 experts** have joined the SPM Pros Network. Financial services providers, impact investors and all players in the industry can draw from this network of qualified and experienced consultants to meet their needs on topics related to social performance, client protection and outcomes measurement.

136 SPI Qualified Auditors

13 new auditors got qualified in 2021, mostly independent consultants

66 Smart Assessors and Trainers

45 SPM TA providers

Out of which 33 are also SPI Qualified Auditors

Tailored Training

CERISE and SPTF provides training sessions specifically for the SPM Pros. In 2021, 90 experts from 40 countries were trained on how to calculate the average annual percentage rate of a loan portfolio with the [SPI4 APR Estimation Tool](#), and use the data to assess responsible pricing.

The SPM Pros also received a training on the [Client Protection Pathway](#), as they are a crucial part of helping FSPs move along the CP Pathway.

SPM Pros Newsletter

The Network receives regular updates from CERISE and SPTF through a dedicated newsletter. This media helps disseminate key messages and official statements, updated tools and resources, and upcoming trainings and events that may interest the SPM Pros. They also can follow the news (blog articles, publications) and share it with an extended network.

Official List Online

On CERISE's website, you can access contact information of all SPM Professionals around the world. The dedicated web pages also show the profiles of our SPI qualified auditors, and make it easy to find an external auditor or identify FSP organizations who have qualified internal auditors.

⇒ [SPM Pros Official List](#)





SPM Professionals Network

cerise + SPTF

Remote SPI Evaluation

In 2021, CERISE published a blog series to capitalize various experiences and lessons learned while doing remote evaluations. In all cases, working remotely involves making changes and increasing effort, to make up for the absence of direct observation.

“When working remotely, pay particular attention to those aspects that are hurt the most by the lack of presence on the field: interactions with employees and clients.”

Enrique Blanco, Advisor at Invest In Visions.

⇒ [The rise of remote assessments](#)

⇒ [The experience of Invest in Visions](#)



Joseph Boah (left side) meets clients of LAPO Sierra Leone

An SPI Qualified Auditor Shares His Experience

[Joseph Boah](#) is SPI qualified auditor with 4 years working experience ranging from project monitoring to educational training. In 2021, he conducted an SPI audit for [LAPO Sierra Leone](#) (picture below). He delivers his experience in a blog article on CERISE website.

⇒ [Read the blog article](#)

Join
[SPM Professionals
Network](#)

“Thank you for continuing the important work despite the challenges of these past years.”

“Continue with the learning sessions. They help in integrating development-related thematic areas such as gender and development and poverty reduction as a whole.”

“Keep up the good work!”

Feedback from experts on the ground and lessons learned in implementing SPM are invaluable. In December 2021, CERISE and SPTF surveyed the SPM Pros to follow their activities in the field and better understand the needs and satisfaction of actors from the sector.

Answers have been crucial for CERISE and SPTF to prepare 2022 strategy for the Network, making sure the trainings, tools and support are tailored to the demand. SPM Pros were highly satisfied of the work so far!

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT



The digital version of

SPI4 **Alinus**

SPI Online hits a thousand audits!

SPI is the most widely used social audit tool in inclusive finance. Designed to manage and measure financial services providers' (FSPs) social performance, the SPI is a management, monitoring and reporting tool. For 20 years, CERISE has developed and refined the SPI thanks to user feedback. Our goal? Help FSPs monitor social performance, take informed decisions and improve practices to better serve their clients!

As of beginning of 2022, the SPI online platform counts more than **1000 SPI audits for 600 FSPs**, mainly from **Sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean**.

The number of audits increased significantly in 2021 – almost 3 times more than the previous year – reflecting **uptake of the SPI digital version** launched in May 2020.

25% of the audits are supported by the SPM Professionals Network, with [SPI qualified auditors](#). CERISE is proud to grow and manage this network of local experts who are there to support FSPs in the audit process. Working with skilled auditors helps ensure reliable and accurate results, which in turn guide evidence-driven **strategic decision-making** and **better practices**.

**Get the most out of SPIflat!
Use it for periodic update and local data backup.**

⇒ [Read blog article](#)

Compare your results to a database of hundreds of high quality audits worldwide!

⇒ [Download automatic benchmark table](#)

⇒ [Request a personalized benchmark report](#)

Benchmarks Analysis

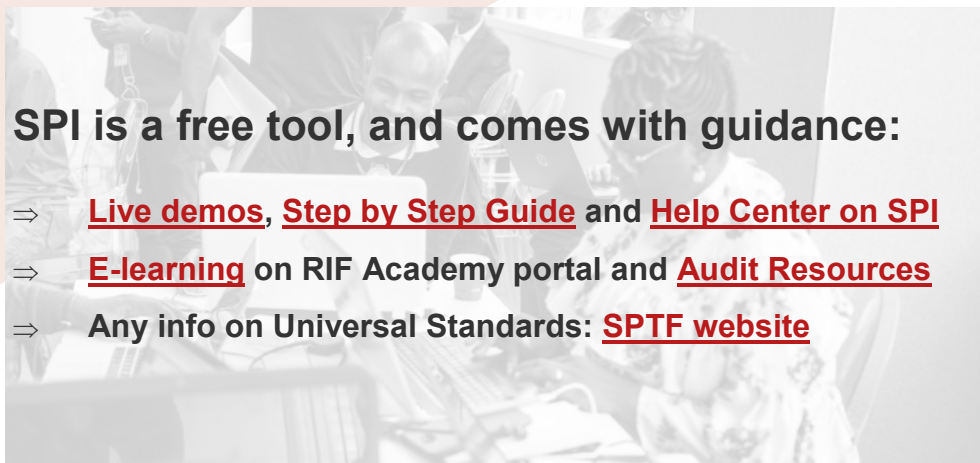
With the high quality audits, CERISE builds **benchmarks and studies for the sector**. Benchmarks help investors, networks and FSPs analyze results against peers, **build data-driven strategies and communicate on social and environmental performance**.

With SPI online, FSPs get **all their SPI audits in one place**, i.e. on their SPI account, and for each completed audit, they visualize their results compared to a benchmark of their peers (status, region). SPI users can also access more advanced [benchmarks](#) for free, available on the CERISE website, to analyze and compare their results in more detail.

Upon demand, CERISE offers **customized benchmark reports**. These analyzes are useful, in particular for investors, to **drive their social strategy**. For example, CERISE worked with the Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation to guide the selection of investees; with Kiva, Invest in Visions, Opportunity International and BRAC to define and monitor technical assistance on SPM and client protection; and with the Microfinance Enhancement Facility (MEF) to build reporting and communicate on results.

SPI is a free tool, and comes with guidance:

- ⇒ [Live demos](#), [Step by Step Guide](#) and [Help Center on SPI](#)
- ⇒ [E-learning](#) on RIF Academy portal and [Audit Resources](#)
- ⇒ **Any info on Universal Standards:** [SPTF website](#)



ADVISORY SERVICES FOR INVESTORS

Helping Invest in Visions define its choice of due diligence tools



Invest in Visions was looking for a scoring tool that would enable social assessment during **due diligence**, that was applicable to **microfinance and SME finance**, that was compliant with the regulatory requirements set by the EU ([SFDR](#)), and that would help them **boost impact measurement and**

monitoring. Based on the pilot test conducted with CERISE, and extensive discussions with the members of SPTF Social Investor Working Group, IIV decided to work with ALINUS, creating some specific modules on impact, and an add-on for SME analysis.

Driving BRS' impact strategy with social data



CERISE has been working with the Belgian investor BRS to ensure optimal use of the social performance data it collects from partners. In 2021, CERISE provided mapping and benchmarking services, and helped

BRS design a technical assistance program to **support partners in client data collection and social results management**. In 2022 CERISE will train BRS staff on using SPI4.

Building SPM capacities for Gojo and partner companies

Gojo & Company, Inc.

Japanese investor Gojo & Company, Inc. wanted to streamline its social **data collection** and bolster its support to **investees on SPM**. CERISE trained Gojo's staff and staff of its

partner companies on the Universal Standards and how to use the SPI4. SPM leads from Gojo and 2 of its partner companies have become **SPI4 qualified auditors**.



MEF's Impact Report 2020 powered by ALINUS



Once again in 2021, CERISE worked with the Microfinance Enhancement Facility and its four investment advisors [Blue Orchard](#), [Incofin](#), [ResponsAbility](#) and [Symbiotics](#), to oversee **social data collection**. ALINUS data was collected,

benchmarked and analyzed from the 139 FSPs funded by the Facility. CERISE's analysis helped MEF generate an insightful and informative impact report.

⇒ [2020 MEF Impact Report](#)

A deep dive into GCAF's 6 technical assistance programs



In 2013, the [Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation](#) (GCAF) made the strategic choice to position itself as a technical assistance coordinator. This activity is now a strategic line of business for the Foundation.

worked and what to improve. The findings of this analysis are distilled in a White Paper that shares the Foundation's eight years' experience. A transparent and honest deep dive into the **successes, complexities and challenges of providing TA**.

In 2021, the Foundation worked with CERISE to take stock of its 6 TA programmes, to reflect on what has

⇒ [GCAF White Paper](#)

OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT



120 impact-driven organizations brought together

The SDG Project, called LabODD (ODD is the French acronym for SDG) is a CERISE-led working group to implement and monitor the project “[Make the SDGs a roadmap for impact!](#)”, co-financed by the [AFD’s CSO Initiatives Mechanism](#).

The project aims to **give tools and support** to impact-driven organizations in **measuring outcomes on their clients, in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals**. [Members](#) are international NGOs, social investors and their partners in the field, mainly in Africa and South Asia: microfinance institutions and social enterprises in agriculture and energy access sectors.

Launched in October 2020, LabODD has brought together more than **120 impact-driven organizations** who want to improve their outcomes management, have better impact on their beneficiaries and concretely measure their positive contribution to the SDGs.

Despite the challenge of working remotely, LabODD members managed over the last year to support projects with microfinance institutions, social enterprises and investors. Through the various working groups, CERISE and its partners continued to reflect on outcomes measurement, ways to **assess beneficiaries' perception of change**, and how to **evaluate progress towards the SDGs**. The context-related constraints have created opportunities to bring together more participants, which has enriched peer learning. CERISE has noticed **growing interest in outcomes measurement, data-driven decision-making and how to improve trust and quality of data**.

A huge thanks to all LabODD members! And let's keep up the momentum in 2022!

⇒ [Download Project Summary](#)

⇒ [Follow LabODD News](#)

Strategic partners



Inclusive Finance

CERISE worked with [Crystal](#) in Georgia ([Incofin](#)) and [Satin Creditcare](#) in India ([NMI](#), [Kadence](#) and [Ankuram](#)) to support the collection **of new client data**. CERISE also worked with [Save India](#) to guide the analysis **of existing client data**.

Objective for 2023: Build an online **data entry tool** to digitize reporting on results, linked to the SDGs. From the list of standard indicators in [MetODD-SDG](#).

Energy Access

CERISE facilitated a dedicated working group met up to dive into the outcome measurement practices of organizations in the energy access sector. The group explored how to **harmonize outcome measurement indicators** for the sector, what methods to use, and how to guarantee good quality data.

In 2022, members will test different formats for outcome data collection, analysis and use, and share experiences through workshops.

Agriculture

CERISE and partners developed an **assessment tool to support responsible investment in agriculture** (RAI), aligned with the [RAI principles](#) defined by the [FAQ](#), and with the SDG framework and reporting standards as [CSAF ESG principles](#) and indicators from GIIN/IRIS+. In partnership with the International Institute for Sustainable Development ([IISD](#)).

By 2023, the RAI Agri Scoring Tool will be tested and shared in final version.

COLLABORATE & SHARE



Energy Group CoDev Workshops

As part of the LabODD Energy Group, members can organize collaborative project planning sessions, to draw on the collective intelligence of the group to advance a particular project.

On October 7, a dozen participants helped ADA and ENDA Tunisia improve their satisfaction questionnaire regarding a solar irrigation project. ADA and ENDA will keep LabODD members informed of the analyses they ultimately carry out with the beneficiaries.



⇒ [Contact LabODD Energy Group](#)

Mobilizing expertise in data management

CERISE has collaborated with Quantilia, a French expert in data collection and management in the investment banking industry. Quantilia helped in processing and cleaning a very large volume of data for a microfinance institution in Georgia.

This work aimed to help the MFI better understand its clients' profile and to define its social strategy for the next five years.

"These analyzes shared with our partners can inspire them to make better use of their data and guide them in making operational decisions in favor of clients."



⇒ [Blog by Quantilia \(in French\)](#)

A great experience sharing at African & European Microfinance Weeks 2021

CERISE conducted various training sessions at the [African Microfinance Week \(SAM\)](#) this October, in Kigali. One focused on clients' outcomes measurement, and attracted more than 80 experts! They explored the case study of [Crystal](#) in Georgia, to discover **how clients' outcomes can be linked to SDGs** and how to use this data for strategic decision-taking to **improve an FSP's overall performance**.

At the virtual edition of the [European Microfinance Week \(EMW\)](#) in November, CERISE moderated two sessions: a joint meeting of the [e-MFP Investors Action Group](#), [CERISE LabODD \(SDG Lab\)](#) and [SPTF Social Investors Working Group](#), and a panel

session on Impact and Outcomes Measurement – Investors' Perspective.

During these sessions, it was nice to see the momentum for outcomes management, and discuss the issue of **trust in data**, role of FSP/external service providers to collect the data, **core standard indicator/** additional customized, value of standards, benchmarks for outcomes, etc. Participants also reflected on how to **change the culture** towards more **data-driven approach of decision making**, to improve trust and **quality of data**

⇒ [Blog by CERISE and MicroCapital Reports](#)



PUBLICATIONS



LabODD Energy Group First Lessons Learned

Is it possible to align with a common framework for measuring outcomes in a sector as diverse as energy access? Between May and July 2021, the LabODD Energy Group conducted four workshops around this question. See the main conclusions in the publication by Marion Allet. *September 2021*



OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT FOR FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

A proposed standard framework aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals

Prepared by CERISE in collaboration with SPTF Outcomes Working Group and e-MFP Investors Action Group

Guidance Note for Financial Service Providers by CERISE, e-MFP and SPTF

A collaborative project involving the e-MFP Investors Action Group and SPTF's Outcomes Working Group to explore innovative approaches for investors on measuring and reporting outcomes using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. *March 2022*



We continue in 2022!



The year in review

LabODD's main achievements in 2020 and 2021 regarding outcomes management in inclusive finance, access to energy and agriculture sectors. *January 2022*



Key Resources related to the SDGs

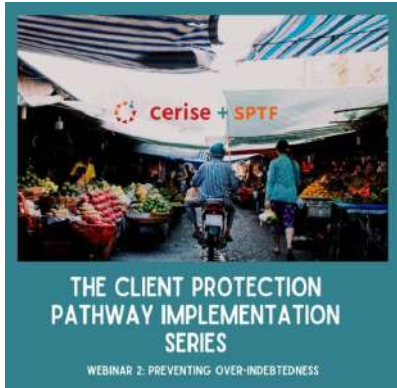
A living document with selected tools and technical resources related to the SDGs. For impact organizations who want to make more transparent and concrete the reporting on their contribution to the SDGs. *Updated January 2022*

NEWSLETTERS



March 2021

Our activities in 2020, upcoming discussions on outcomes, impact reports.



June 2021

Times are changing, and so are we! The expanded partnership with SPTF, news from our current projects in impact investing and inclusive finance, SPI Online Tips and SDGs Key Resources.

October 2021

The SPM Pros Network to support stakeholders in inclusive finance, the new Client Protection Pathway and the new publication by LabODD Energy Group.

December 2021

Client Protection Pathway Implementation Series, Universal Standards 3.0 for Social and Environmental Performance Management, the momentum for Outcomes Management.

Supporting the empowerment of women through entrepreneurship and financial inclusion

The promotion of women's leadership and women's participation in economic activity is at the heart of the Foundation's strategy. It finances and supports microfinance institutions and social enterprises that promote financial inclusion and the empowerment of women through entrepreneurship.

85%

women beneficiaries of microcredit

34%

women employees in the institutions supported

Strengthening the resilience of rural economies in the face of climate change

Faced with the critical environmental situation in the countries of intervention, the Foundation promotes sustainable solutions to adapt to climate change. It also promotes the development of products that finance ecological practices such as renewable energies, waste management, and access to clean water.

9%

of the institutions raise awareness about climate risks among their clients

42%

of the institutions supported offer green products

5

technical assistance missions on climate finance



Let's keep in touch!



71 cours Anatole France, 33000 Bordeaux, France

cerise@cerise-spm.org

