The public’s views on climate
2018
A quantitative survey of the Swedish public’s views on climate solutions
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Introduction

This survey has been carried out on behalf of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose of the survey is to gauge the public's knowledge and attitudes regarding different paths to a climate neutral society and opinions about different solutions to the climate issue over time.

The results of the 2018 survey are presented together with surveys carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency between 2002 and 2015, where the Swedish public’s knowledge of and attitude to climate change was investigated. This makes it possible to track the public's attitudes to and knowledge of climate issues over time.

Method

The survey was carried out by PFM Research as an online questionnaire in two weeks of May 2018, aimed at a nationally representative sample of respondents with regards to geographical origin, gender and age. The questionnaire was answered by a total of 1,000 persons.

The 2015 survey was also done using online questionnaires, but previous years’ surveys were instead done via telephone interviews. Differences in methodology can cause differences in results which do not reflect real changes. Comparisons between results from surveys prior to 2015 and surveys from 2015 onward should therefore be made very cautiously. For this reason, we will mainly focus on differences between the 2015 and 2018 surveys, as they are directly comparable.

All results in the form of changes and differences presented in this report have a statistical reliability of 95 per cent (which is the standard level in social science research). No statistically unreliable differences or changes are presented.

In addition to the EPA’s questions, the respondents were given six questions which were used to analyse the preferences and behaviours of certain groups. Respondents are broken down by gender, age, size of home town/city, occupation, highest completed education level, and whether or not they regularly drive, into the following groups:

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<th>Drives regularly</th>
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Summary of results

There is great commitment to solving the climate issue. Swedes are keen to contribute and very positive about societal climate initiatives and corporate climate work. The general positive attitude to climate solutions remains very high.

Knowledge on climate change

The proportion of people who think that Sweden will be affected by climate change in the future is high, 95 per cent, which is an increase compared to 2015.

The proportion of people who think that it is important to keep abreast of societal climate change efforts remains high, 86 per cent.

Initiatives to slow down climate change

The general opinion regarding Sweden’s ability to slow down climate change remains high, 81 per cent. This represents a small increase since 2015, when 78 per cent believed that we in Sweden can reduce our climate impact.

78 per cent believe that they can personally do something to slow down climate change, which is an increase since 2015.

Generally, the proportion of positive answers is high for all initiatives that one can personally imagine taking to reduce climate-impacting emissions. Respondents are most positive about buying energy-efficient household appliances, 93 per cent, driving more energy efficiently, 85 per cent, lowering energy consumption at home, 83 per cent, and taking the train instead of flying, 78 per cent.

Approximately 6 in 10 respondents are also to some degree positive about eating less meat, using more public transport, ride-sharing more, lowering the indoor temperature, driving slower, vacationing close to home rather than fly, choosing green funds, and leaving the car at home in favour of a bike or electrical bike.

Government instruments

Attitudes to government instruments that limit climate impact remain positive, but there are indications of declining support for extra taxes and fees.

89 per cent feel that information to households is a good or fairly good initiative to reduce climate impact, which is a small increase compared to 2015.

75 per cent feel that grants or lowered taxes are good or very good, which is a slight decrease compared to 2015.

The proportion of respondents who consider extra taxes or fees to be good or fairly good is roughly the same as the proportion that does not consider it to be good. 47 per cent believe that extra taxes and fees is good or fairly good. The proportion that considers it a bad idea has increased from 38 per cent in 2015 to 46 per cent in 2018.
Corporate climate work

Swedes are generally positive about consuming goods and services from companies who work on limiting climate change.

8 out of 10 respondents are willing to pay more for goods and services from companies that work to limit climate change, which is a change compared to 2015.

90 per cent think that it will become more important for companies to commit to reducing climate-impacting emissions, which is in line with the 2015 results.

In the 2018 survey, fewer (40 per cent) feel that companies should have to pay more for their greenhouse gas emissions compared to the 2015 survey (51 per cent).

Attitudes and consumer behaviour

84 per cent describe themselves as climate conscious, which is an increase compared to 2015.

18 per cent state that they never feel bad about their climate impact. This is an increase compared to 2015, when the corresponding number was 13 per cent.

Generally, many Swedes state that they have started sorting their rubbish better, reduced their energy consumption in the home, and are reusing things in order to reduce their climate impact. 19 per cent state that they have definitely changed how they select vacation travel, which is an increase of 4 percentage points compared to 2015.

Regarding the obstacles that exist to living climate-consciously, 34 per cent state that they lack information about how to reduce their climate impact, which is a drop by 10 percentage points compared to 2015. 70 per cent state that their own habits are an obstacle. 65 per cent state that there are too few green alternatives and 79 per cent feel that these alternatives often are more expensive.

When the Swedes, in an open question, are asked what they can do in their homes to reduce their climate impact and energy consumption, most of the answers concern transport, meat consumption and other dietary habits, and sorting and reusing waste.

Around half of the respondents, 49 per cent, feel bad when doing things which they think have a negative impact on the climate.

Group comparisons

Women, young persons, city dwellers, students, and non-drivers are the groups that are generally most positive about slowing down climate change, and most prone to changing their own behaviour. At the same time, women and young people do not consider themselves to be more climate-aware than older people and men.

More women than men believe that climate change will affect us in Sweden. Women also feel that it is more important for society to take action to reduce climate change and are also more positive about the chances of reducing climate change.

Younger people are also more prone than older people to consuming less meat and changing their daily transport habits. Meanwhile, older people state that they have started sorting their waste more and have changed their energy consumption at home.
Knowledge on climate change

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

"Do you think that the climate change is something which, now or in the future, will affect us who live in Sweden?"

95 per cent of respondents stated that we absolutely or possibly will be affected by future climate change, which is an increase of 5 percentage points compared to 2015. The proportion that believes that we will absolutely be affected has increased from 66 per cent to 75 per cent since 2015. However, in previous years this number has been between 73 and 84 per cent. The proportion that doubts or is sure that Sweden will be affected has been stable and low.

More women than men believe that climate change will affect us in Sweden. People who do not drive and people with a higher education are also groups where a higher proportion believe that Sweden will be affected.
CLIMATE INITIATIVES COMPARED TO OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

“Indicate how important you consider it to be that we in Sweden take action in a few different areas of society. How important is it that we try to do something about…”

The proportion of respondents who believe it to be very important or “Fairly important” that Sweden takes action against climate change is the same as in 2015, 86 per cent. However, there is a slight shift of respondents moving from fairly important to very important. In previous years when the answers were collected via telephone surveys, these levels were higher, which may be due to a tendency to give the answer that you think the survey collector wants to hear. 56 per cent feel that the climate issue is very important, which can be compared to 87 per cent who feel that the issue of “poor health and social care services” is very important. The majority of respondents feel that other social issues that are mentioned (health and social care, crime, ill health and sick-listing, and integration) are more important than the climate issue, by proportion of respondents who consider the issue to be very important.

The proportion of respondents who consider it to be important that we take social action to reduce climate change is higher among women and persons who define their gender as “other” compared to men. 68 per cent of women state that it is very important to take action to reduce climate change, while only 44 per cent of men considered it to be very important.

“Indicate how important you consider it to be that we in Sweden take action in a few different areas of society. How important is it that we try to do something about…”

“…climate change?”

![Graph showing the percentage of respondents who consider climate change to be very important from 2002 to 2018. The percentages range from 63 to 52, with a slight decrease over the years.](Image)
“Indicate how important you consider it to be that we, in Sweden, take action in a few different areas of society. How important is it that we try to do something about…”

“…poor healthcare?”

“…crime?”

“…ill health and long sick leave?”

“…integration problems?”

Legend: Very important, Somewhat important, Don’t know, Somewhat unimportant, Not important at all.

Data showing trends from 2002 to 2018.
8 out of 10 respondents (81 per cent) think that Sweden can do something to reduce climate change, which is a slight increase compared to 78 per cent in 2015. This year there are also more who have answered “Yes, absolutely” than “Yes, possibly”. The proportion that has answered “No, not at all” has dropped from 6 per cent in 2015 to 3 per cent in 2018.

It is also noted that the 18-29 age bracket to a far greater degree believes that we absolutely can do something to reduce climate change in Sweden. Women are more prone than men to think that we can do something to reduce climate change. Only 9 per cent of women replied “No, not at all” or “No, hardly”, compared to 25 per cent of men. The highly educated, students, and city dwellers are other groups that are more positive about Sweden being able to contribute.
The individual’s ability to reduce climate change

78 per cent of respondents believe that they can personally do something for the climate, which is an increase compared to 2015, when the number was 72 per cent. The proportion responding “Yes, absolutely” has increased from 33 per cent to 46 per cent and the proportion responding “Yes, possibly” has dropped by 7 percentage points compared to 2015. The proportion responding “No, not at all” and “No, hardly” has also dropped.

The 18-29 age group is most positive about absolutely being able to personally do something to reduce climate change, 54 per cent, while this group has a lower proportion of “Yes, possibly” answers. The 61-74 and 75+ groups are less inclined to believe that they can make a difference.

Women are more prone than men to thinking that they can do something to reduce climate change. 52 per cent compared to 41 per cent believe that they absolutely can do something to reduce climate change. Only 12 per cent of women respond “No, not at all” or “No, hardly” when asked if they can do something to reduce climate change, compared to 27 per cent of men. City dwellers and public sector employees also have more faith than other groups in their own ability to impact climate change.
MEASURES ONE IS READY TO TAKE PERSONALLY

A large proportion of the respondents are positive about many measures that they can personally take to reduce their climate emissions. The results are largely in line with the 2015 results.

Respondents are most positive about buying energy-efficient household appliances, 93 per cent, driving more energy efficiently, 85 percent, lowering energy consumption at home, 83 per cent, and taking the train instead of flying, 78 per cent.

Approximately 6 in 10 respondents are also to some degree positive about eating less meat, using more public transport, ride-sharing more, lowering the indoor temperature, driving slower, vacationing close to home rather than fly, choosing green funds, and leaving the car at home in favour of a bike or electrical bike.

The measure that the smallest proportion is positive about is choosing an electric car next time they buy or need to use a car, 56 per cent.

Women are more open to implementing all the proposed measures, except choosing a bike or electric bike over the car when it comes to short trips, where there is no difference between the genders.

Generally, young people, the highly educated, city dwellers and students are more prone to making changes for the climate’s sake than the other groups.

Below is a breakdown of each question.

“Consider what you would personally be ready to do to reduce climate-impacting emissions. I could consider…”

“Choosing energy-efficient household appliances next time”

In 2018 more respondents, 68 per cent, are absolutely prepared to buy more energy-efficient household appliances compared to the latest survey in 2015, where the number was 58 per cent.

Men, persons over 75 and those who only completed compulsory education are less prone to making this change compared to other groups.
There is also a larger proportion of respondents that are absolutely prepared to drive in a more energy-efficient way than in previous years. A total of 85 per cent are to some degree prepared to drive more energy-efficiently, which is an increase of 12 percentage points compared to 2015.

Men, people over 75, pensioners and those who only completed compulsory education are less prone to making this change compared to other groups.

78 per cent of respondents are open to taking the train rather than flying if possible, which is in line with the 2015 results.

Women are more open than men to taking the train rather than flying where possible.
The proportion of respondents who to some degree were prepared to ride-share more was 64 per cent, which is an increase from 59 per cent in 2015.

Women, persons between 18 and 45, and those who do not regularly drive are more open to ride sharing than the other groups.

The proportion of respondents who could imagine lowering their energy consumption in the home is 83 per cent, which is in line with the 2015 results.

Respondents in the 30-45 age bracket and women were more prepared than other groups to lower the energy consumption in their homes.
56 per cent of respondents state that they are to some degree open to choosing an electric car next time they buy or need to use a car.

The 18-29 age bracket, private sector employees and city dwellers are more open to choosing an electric car than other groups.

In past years, the one alternative “Choose a more climate-friendly car next time” was not included. Instead it had the alternative “Choose an electric car next time I buy or need to use a car”. This year’s result is thus not directly comparable to previous years. However, it can be noted that the proportion that is open to an electric car is lower than the proportion that is open to a car that is only “more climate friendly”.

"Choosing an electric car the next time I buy or need to use a car” (2018)

"Choosing a more climate-friendly car next time” (2015 and earlier)
In 2018 fewer respondents, 31 per cent, state that they absolutely will not use more public transport. This is a drop of 6 percentage points compared to 2015. However, there is a slight increase in persons who are open to using more public transport.

Women are generally more positive about public transport, 38 per cent, compared to men, 24 per cent. Young people, the highly educated, city dwellers, students and persons who do not drive regularly are groups that are more open than other groups to increasing their public transport use.

66 per cent of respondents are willing to, to some degree, switch to more climate-friendly heating at home, which is in line with the 2015 results.

City dwellers and persons in the 30-45 age bracket are more prone to make this change compared to other groups.
59 per cent of respondents are open to eating less meat, which is in line with the 2015 results. Women are far more open to eating less meat than men, 41 per cent to 20 per cent. Also persons 18-29, the highly educated, city dwellers and students are more open than other groups to reducing their meat consumption.

The proportion of respondents who in 2018 to some degree are prepared to drive slower is 59 per cent, which is a decrease from 63 per cent in 2015. There is also a drop in the number of respondents who can absolutely imagine driving slower, 25 per cent in 2018 compared to 31 per cent in 2015. In previous years, the proportion who were open to the idea of driving slower was significantly higher. This difference is probably due to the older surveys being done by phone, where the respondents are more prone to giving answers that they think the interviewer wants to hear. Women and older people are more open to this change than other groups.
61 per cent of respondents are open to lowering their indoor temperature, which is in line with the 2015 results. Women are more open to this change than other groups.

69 per cent of respondents are open to leaving the car at home and instead using a bike or electrical bike. This question was introduced in this year’s survey. Younger people (18-45) are more open than older people to leaving the car at home in favour of a bike or electric bike. Students and public sector employees are also more positive about taking the bike, compared to other groups. This is one of few areas where there is no statistically reliable difference between the genders.
Almost 2 in 3 respondents, 65 per cent, can to some degree imagine vacationing domestically rather than flying abroad. This question was introduced in this year’s survey.

Women, jobseekers and small town dwellers are more positive than other groups in this area.

61 per cent of respondents are to some degree open to choosing climate-friendly funds or companies when saving or investing money. This question was also introduced in this year’s survey.

Women and city dwellers are more positive than other groups.
MEASURES FOR REDUCED CLIMATE IMPACT AND ENERGY USE

Replying to the open-ended question: “Name a few things that you can do in your home to reduce your climate impact and energy use”, respondents have in their own words described what they can personally do to reduce their climate impact.

The size of the words corresponds to the number of times they were mentioned. The bigger the word, the more frequently it was mentioned.

A large proportion of the open-ended answers concern transports (travel less by car, cycle more, fly less). But almost as many answers concern meat consumption and dietary habits. Another common category is the sorting of waste and re-using rather than buying new things.
Instruments of control

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTS FOR LIMITING CLIMATE CHANGE

“Consider how you view the proposals below, whose purpose is to reduce climate change.”

Extra taxes and fees

“What do you think about the state adding new taxes and fees to goods and services such as petrol, oil, and flights that have major climate impact?”

An increasing number of respondents consider this to be a bad proposal, 46 per cent compared to 38 per cent in 2015. The proportion that feel that it is a good proposal is unchanged, while the proportion that answered fairly good has dropped by 6 percentage points. Men, older people and persons who drive cars are more negative than other groups.

Information

“What do you think about sending more information to households about climate change, in order to make them choose goods and services which reduce climate-effecting emissions?”

...
89 per cent of respondents think that information to households is a good measure to reduce climate impact. This is a small increase of 3 percentage points since 2015. Women are more positive than men.

Grants/lowered taxes

"What do you think about the state using tax funds to provide grants or lower taxes when purchasing goods and services which reduce climate-effecting emissions?"

The attitude to grants and lowered taxes on goods and services that reduce climate-impacting emissions is not as positive in 2018 as it was in 2015. 75 per cent of respondents feel that grants and lowered taxes is good or very good, compared to 79 per cent in 2015. The proportion that are negative towards grants/lowered taxes has increased from 10 per cent in 2015 to 19 per cent in 2018. Young people, women and public sector employees are more positive than other groups.
Corporate climate work

INCLINATION TO CHOOSE COMPANIES THAT WORK TO REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE

"When buying goods or services, do you prefer to buy them from companies that you know work to reduce climate change?"

7 out of 10 respondents, 71 per cent, state that they prefer buying goods/services from companies that they know work to reduce climate change. This is in line with the 2015 results.

Women are more prone than men to buying goods and services from companies which work to reduce climate change. There are no statistically reliable differences between age groups.

INCLINATION TO PAY MORE WHEN CHOOSING COMPANIES THAT WORK TO REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE

"Could you imagine paying more, say around 5 per cent, for goods or services if you know that the company that provides it works to reduce climate change?"
22 per cent of respondents could absolutely imagine paying more for goods or services from a company that they know works to reduce climate change. This is a small decrease since 2015, when 26 per cent gave this answer. In 2018, 48 per cent could to some degree imagine paying more for goods or services, which is in line with the 2015 results.

City dwellers and the highly educated are more inclined to pay more for goods or services from a company which works to reduce climate change.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPANIES WORKING TO REDUCE EMISSIONS

"How important do you think it will be for companies to commit to reducing their climate-effecting emissions?"

9 in 10 respondents, 90 per cent, think that it will become more and more important for companies to commit to reducing climate-impactting emissions, which is in line with the 2015 results. Women, the highly educated and city dwellers are more convinced than other groups that corporate commitment will become increasingly important.
Regarding companies' costs for causing climate-impacting emissions, 4 out of 10 respondents, 40 per cent, believe that these should increase. 26 per cent believe that the costs should remain unchanged. In 2015 a small majority of respondents, 51 per cent, felt that the costs should increase. 13 per cent feel that the costs should decrease, which is a small increase compared to 2015.
Attitudes and consumer behaviour

CLIMATE AWARENESS

"Do you consider yourself to be a climate-conscious person?"

84 per cent of respondents consider themselves as climate conscious persons to some degree, which is a small increase since 2015 when the corresponding number was 79 per cent. The proportion that do not consider themselves to be climate conscious at all is 1 per cent, which is a drop from 4 per cent in 2015.

Highly educated people and city dwellers view themselves as more climate aware than other groups. There are no statistically reliably differences between genders in the various age groups, which is noteworthy as there are recurring differences between genders and age groups when it comes to readiness to change one’s own behaviour to reduce climate impact.
49 per cent of respondents state that they often or sometimes feel bad when doing things which have a negative climate impact. This proportion is in line with previous surveys. 18 per cent of respondents state that they never feel bad, which is an increase of 5 percentage points compared to 2015.

Women and young people are more prone to feeling bad than other groups.
CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR TO REDUCE CLIMATE IMPACT

“Have you done something in your everyday life to reduce your climate impact in the last two years, for example...”
“... sorting your waste more?”
“... reducing your energy use in the home?”
“... reusing things?”
“... changing your choice of daily transport?”
“... eating less meat?”
“... changing your choice of holiday destination?”

A large proportion of respondents, 90 per cent, state that they sort their waste, 84 per cent reuse things, and 75 per cent have reduced their energy use in the home. 60 per cent have changed their daily transports. Roughly half of the respondents state that they have reduced their meat consumption (55 per cent), and changed their vacation habits (47 per cent).

The biggest changes since 2015 is that more stated that they have absolutely changed their choice of vacation destination, from 15 per cent to 19 per cent, and fewer state that they have not changed them at all, from 27 per cent to 19 per cent. The proportion who have changed their meat consumption has continued to increase. The proportion of respondents who sort their waste and reuse things has also increased.

Women are more inclined than men to change their meat consumption, sort their waste, reuse things and change their vacation habits. When it comes to day-to-day transport and energy use in the home, there is no significant difference between the genders.

Younger people are also more prone than older people to consuming less meat and changing their daily transport habits. Meanwhile, older people state that they have started sorting their waste more and have changed their energy consumption at home.
“…to reuse things?”

“…your choice of day-to-day transport?”

“…your meat consumption?”

“…your choice of vacation destinations?”

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OBSTACLES

"Consider what obstacles there are to you living a climate-conscious life."

Just over 1 in 3 respondents, 34 per cent, state that they lack information about how to reduce their climate impact, which is a decrease of 10 percentage points compared to 2015. The proportion that has answered “No, no obstacles at all” has increased from 44 per cent in 2015 to 58 per cent in 2018. The proportion that stated that their habits are an obstacle to living a climate-conscious life is 70 per cent, which is an increase of 8 percentage points compared to 2015. 65 per cent also state that there are too few green alternatives and 79 per cent feel that these alternatives often are more expensive.

Lack of information is seen as a bigger obstacle among older people and small town dwellers. Habits are seen as a bigger obstacle among younger people than older people.

"I lack information about how to reduce my impact"

"My habits"

"There are not enough green and climate-conscious alternatives"

"Environment and climate-friendly alternatives are often more expensive"
Other obstacles

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked if there is anything else that prevents them from living a climate-conscious life.

A large proportion of the answers concerned how the respondents were living and what alternatives there are.

“Alternatives like public transport do not exist in rural areas.”

“Not living in a big town where all the services are”

“The public transport has been closed down where I live.”

“The lack of good alternatives”

“I live in a rural area where services etc. are far away and there is no public transport.”

“Dismantled public transport in rural areas.”

Many replies concern money and economic conditions:

"Lack of money"

"It is more expensive"

“ That my life is soon over and climate-friendly investments are hard to do with low”

“Pension”

“Economy”

"Price and availability of electric cars"

Laziness/indolence, age, and one’s job requiring travel are also recurring answers:

“Indolence”

“Laziness”
“My work involves a lot of driving every day”

“Age and ill health”

“Am old, can no longer cycle, cannot spend more money, have made some changes already, I never fly.”

INFORMATION SOURCES

"If/when I want to know more about measures to reduce climate impact, I prefer to receive/find information via..."

43 per cent of respondents prefer looking up information regarding reduced climate change via the media, while 25 per cent prefer Swedish government agencies. This is a change compared to 2015, when these two groups were roughly equal in size.

12 per cent prefer to get information from interest groups, associations or political parties, which is an increase since the previous survey when the corresponding number was 8 per cent.

12 per cent are not interested in such information, which is in line with 2015. 5 per cent prefer some other source, which is also in line with the last survey. This category mainly consists of “internet” and “Google”.

Young people are less likely to seek information from the media and more likely to seek it from school/the education system, compared to other groups. There are no significant differences between men and women.
4 out of 10 respondents, 40 per cent, seek information about climate change in Sweden and in the world from the media, which is an increase since 2015 when the corresponding number was 30 per cent. The proportion that turn to Swedish government agencies has dropped from 37 to 26 per cent.

12 per cent state that they are not interested in such information, and 13 per cent turn to organisations, associations and political parties. 6 per cent give another answer, with “internet” and “Google” being the most common answers.

Young people are less likely to seek information from the media and more likely to seek it from school/the education system and interest groups compared to other groups. There are no significant differences between genders.
Other thoughts and ideas

“Do you have any other thought, comments, or ideas regarding climate change that you want to share?”

A large proportion of the open answers concern three areas: 1) that other countries should take responsibility, 2) that the state should take more responsibility in Sweden and not put the responsibility on individuals, and 3) that everyone must do what they can.

Other countries should take responsibility

“That all countries take responsibility, including those obsessed with money.”

“Stop the emissions in Poland, Germany etc.”

“I think Sweden plays a pretty small part here.”

“That it may be more important to influence the rest of the world. That may make a bigger difference.”

“Start in China and the USA.”

The state should take more responsibility

“I think financial control instruments are the key to leading the people in the right direction.”

“The state must punish and subsidise more, because the man in the street is busy thinking of money and how to survive. Major taxation on trips to Thailand.”

“Things which are good for the environment need to be cheaper than things that are bad.”

“Currently vegetarian food is a lot more expensive than meat. The state should tax meat and subsidise vegetarian options.”

Everyone must do what they can

“Everyone needs to do their part.”

“Limit your own purchases/consumption.”

“No one can do everything but everyone can do something.”

“Everyone needs to help out!”