Public awareness of and attitudes to Climate Change in Sweden 2007

The general public’s knowledge of and attitude to climate change, with the focus on people’s own actions and the responsibilities of companies.
The questions relating to the general public’s knowledge of and attitude to climate change, including acceptance of measures, were put to 1 000 people between 10 and 27 September 2007. Equivalent questions have been asked every year since 2002. In view of the use of terminology in the media and the rest of society, we have replaced the term “greenhouse effect” with “climate change” in the 2007 survey. According to the survey company ARS Research this does not affect the results in the parts presented in this summary, with the possible exception of the question on awareness of climate change.

The questions about people’s own energy use, how they wish to receive information and about efforts of companies to deal with climate change were put to 1 000 people between 1 and 4 October 2007, while the questions about ecodriving were asked between 8 and 11 October 2007. The questions were asked as part of an omnibus (multi-purpose) survey.

Data were collected for all the questions by telephone interview.

The survey company ARS Research AB carried out the various opinion surveys presented in this report on behalf of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

This summary and the reports and tables on which it is based can be downloaded from www.naturvardsverket.se/klimat.

This report is also available in Swedish: ISBN 978-91-690-5760-2 and ISSN 0282-7298.
Foreword

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has studied the Swedish population’s knowledge of and attitude to climate change since 2000. The results of the 2007 survey, which are presented in this report, can be summarised as follows:

- There has been a sharp increase in the willingness of Swedes to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions, but there is also a desire for more information on how emissions can be reduced.
- Swedes are prepared to support those companies that take the lead in dealing with climate change, but they regard companies as poor at marketing their climate efforts and express a wish for climate-friendly products and services to be labelled.
- Swedes consider it “very important” that we in Sweden take action to tackle climate change.

The general conclusion from the survey is that a clear increase in the general public’s commitment to and interest in climate change has occurred in 2007.

Jessica Cederberg Wodmar, project leader for climate communication at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, was responsible for this assignment.

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Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
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In brief, did you know that…

… **100 per cent** spontaneously acknowledge having “heard mention of” climate change, up from 96 per cent in 2002 (when the question related to “the greenhouse effect”).

… **97 per cent** believe that Sweden has already been or will be affected by climate change, up from 92 per cent in 2002.

… **51 per cent** of the above think that we have already been affected, up from 48 per cent in 2002.

… **76 per cent** consider it very important that we in Sweden take measures to do something about climate change, up from 69 per cent in 2006 and 63 per cent in 2002.

… **88 per cent** think that we in Sweden can do something to curb climate change, an unchanged proportion in comparison with 2006 and up from 82 per cent in 2002.

… **81 per cent** feel that they themselves can do something to curb climate change, up from 73 per cent in 2006 and 68 per cent in 2002.

… **at least 60 per cent** can “definitely” imagine taking measures to reduce emissions in nine out of 13 listed areas.

… **84 per cent** can ”definitely” imagine buying energy-efficient domestic appliances (compared with 79 per cent in 2006) and 71 per cent taking a train instead of flying (compared with 59 per cent in 2006).

… **14 per cent** have been on an eco-driving course, and 81 per cent of these state that it has reduced their fuel consumption, while only 48 per cent of those who have not been on an eco-driving course think that such a course would reduce their fuel consumption.

… **89 per cent** can indicate at least one measure they can take in the home to reduce their energy use, up from 81 per cent in 2006.

… **48 per cent** often think about reducing their energy use and using energy more efficiently, up from 40 per cent in 2006.

… **72 per cent** also feel that more information to households on climate change would be useful in persuading them to choose goods and services that reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

… **73 per cent** would like to receive information on how they can reduce their climate impact through news in the media, while there is demand for other information channels from between 27 and 39 per cent.

… **64 per cent** consider that extra taxes and duties, for example on petrol, oil and aviation would be good or quite good, up from 52 per cent in 2006.

… **69 per cent** “definitely” or “probably” prefer to buy goods from companies they know to make efforts to limit climate change, up from 66 per cent in 2006.

… **82 per cent** can “definitely” or “probably” imagine paying more for an article or service if they know that the company that produces it makes efforts to limit climate change, up from 80 per cent in 2006.

… **88 per cent** think that it will become “more important” for companies to make a commitment to reduced emissions, up from 86 per cent in 2006.

… **57 per cent** think that the costs to companies of emitting greenhouse gases will increase, down from 58 per cent in 2006.

… **78 per cent** think that companies are poor at reporting what they do to limit greenhouse gas emissions, up from 73 per cent in 2006.

… **92 per cent** think that it would be useful to have ecolabelling of goods and services with low greenhouse gas emissions, down from 93 per cent in 2006.
Knowledge of climate change
Awareness of climate change

“Have you heard mention of climate change?”

The proportion who are spontaneously aware of climate change is 94 per cent in 2007, up from 89 per cent in 2002 (when the question related to “the greenhouse effect”).

If those who state they have “heard mention of” climate change are included, the proportion rises to 100 per cent, up from 96 per cent in 2002.

Will we in Sweden be affected, and if so when?

"Do you think that climate change now affects, or in the future will affect, those of us who live in Sweden?"

The proportion who “definitely” think that we in Sweden have been affected or will be affected is 83 per cent in 2007, roughly the same proportion as in the previous three years and substantially higher than in 2002. If those who answered ”yes, maybe” are included, the proportion in 2007 is 97 per cent.

Those who answered the above question with “yes” were also asked when they thought we would be affected. 51 per cent answered “already affected now”, 10 percent “in a few years”, 19 per cent in 10–20 years and 11 per cent in 30–50 years.
Action on the climate issue and on other social issues

“How important do you consider it to be that we in Sweden take measures in various social areas? How important is it that we try to do something about...”

The proportion who think that it is “very important” that we in Sweden taken action to do something about climate change has steadily increased every year, the only area in which this has happened.

Between 2002 and 2006 the proportion increased from 63 to 69 per cent, and in 2007 there was a substantial rise to 76 per cent.

In 2007, 84 per cent of women and 67 per cent of men thought that measures to do something about climate change were “very important”.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Climate change</th>
<th>Deficiencies in healthcare</th>
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Very important | Don’t know | Not at all important

Quite important | Not particularly important
What is possible and what targets and instruments are required?
Can we in Sweden do anything?

“Do you think that we in Sweden can do anything to curb climate change?”

The proportion who “definitely” think that we in Sweden can do something to curb climate change is 59 per cent in 2007, which is unchanged in comparison with the previous year.

The overall proportion who answer “definitely” or “yes, maybe” is 88 per cent.

The proportion was 93 per cent among women and 82 per cent among men.

Can you do anything yourself?

“Do you feel that you yourself can do anything to curb climate change and changes to the Swedish climate?”

The proportion who “definitely” feel that they themselves can do something to curb climate change and changes to the Swedish climate in 2007 is 55 per cent, up from 44 per cent in the previous year.

The overall proportion who answer “definitely” or “yes, maybe” is 81 per cent.

The proportion was 87 per cent among women and 73 per cent among men.
Acceptance of measures people can imagine for themselves

"Climate change arises principally as a result of emissions of carbon dioxide, from households and elsewhere. Which of the following could you imagine doing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and curb climate change?"

- Buying energy-efficient domestic appliances the next time I replace them
- Driving in a more fuel-efficient way, ecodriving
- Taking a train instead of flying if possible
- Car-sharing more on the way to work/school or for leisure
- Reducing electricity consumption in the home
- Choosing a more environmentally friendly product even if it is more expensive
- Choosing a more environmentally friendly car next time
- Travelling more by public transport
The combined proportion who answer the various questions with “definitely” is substantially higher in 2007 than in previous years.

At least 60 per cent of respondents can “definitely” imagine taking measures in 9 of the 13 enumerated areas. The most popular option would be to buy energy-efficient domestic appliances (84 per cent) and drive in a more fuel-efficient way, known as ecodriving (79 per cent), while the least popular choices are travelling more by public transport (45 per cent) and driving less (53 per cent).

The measures for which acceptance has increased most over the past year are taking a train instead of flying (from 59 per cent to 71 per cent) and driving in a more fuel-efficient way (from 68 to 79 per cent).

The measures where acceptance has increased most throughout the six-year period are lowering the temperature indoors (from 36 to 58 per cent), driving more slowly (from 41 to 62 per cent) and driving less (from 33 to 53 per cent). The only areas in which acceptance has increased only marginally are travelling more by public transport (from 43 to 45 per cent) and car-sharing more (from 53 to 54 per cent).

Women generally take a more positive view of measures to reduce their own emissions.
One of the measures: Ecodriving

"Car drivers can reduce their fuel consumption if they receive training in ecodriving", that is to say if they learn how to drive in an economical way. Have you been on an ecodriving course?"*

85 per cent answered no, 14 per cent yes and 1 per cent answered that they did not know.

Those who answered the above question in the affirmative were asked the follow-up question:

"Has this led to a reduction in your fuel consumption?"

Eight out of ten (81 per cent) answered the question with yes, indicating that the course in ecodriving they had been on had led to a reduction in their fuel consumption.

Those who answered the first question with no, indicating that they had not been on any ecodriving course, were asked the following question:

"Do you think that such a course would lead to a reduction in your fuel consumption?"

48 per cent answered yes and an equally large proportion, 45 per cent, answered the question with no.

*This question was only put to the 75 per cent of respondents who drive. (This question had not been asked in previous surveys)
What can be done to reduce energy use in the home?

“Can you name anything you can do in the home to reduce your energy use?”

Nine out of ten, 89 per cent, in 2007 can name at least one measure they can take, which is an increase on the previous year, when the proportion was 81 per cent. There was an average of two replies per person.

Most replies relate to lighting, where a substantial change has occurred during the year. At the same time as the proportion who reply “turn off lights” has decreased (from 40 to 32 per cent), the proportion who reply “use low-energy lamps” has risen sharply (from 10 to 25 per cent).
How often do people think about energy use in the home?

"I shall read out three attitudes people have towards energy use in the home, for example for heating, lighting or electrical appliances. Which attitude comes closest to your own?"

Nearly half, 48 per cent, answered that they “often” think about reducing their energy use and using energy more efficiently. This is a substantial increase in comparison with 2006, when 40 per cent gave this answer.
Government instruments aimed at limiting carbon dioxide emissions

“How could we curb climate change?” Here are three suggestions.

a. Would it be useful or not useful to give households more information on climate change and persuade them to choose goods and services that reduce carbon dioxide emissions? Would it be useful, quite useful or not useful?

b. Would it be useful or not useful if the government used tax money to provide grants or lowered taxes for the purchase of goods and services that reduce carbon dioxide emissions? Would it be useful, quite useful or not useful?

c. Would it be useful or not useful if the government charged extra taxes and duties on goods and services that are not as environmentally friendly, for example on petrol, oil and flights that produce large carbon dioxide emissions? Would it be useful, quite useful or not useful?

The proportion who consider that it would be useful to provide more information to households about climate change and to persuade them to choose goods and services that reduce carbon dioxide emissions in 2007 is 72 per cent, while the proportion who consider it useful to have grants/lowered taxes is 64 per cent and the proportion who want extra taxes and duties is 35 per cent.

Replies relating to the three areas have been relatively stable throughout the survey period, but it can be noted that the proportion who consider that it would be useful or quite useful to have extra taxes and duties increased from 52 per cent in 2006 to 64 per cent in 2007.
Do people want to receive information about reduced climate impact?

"Increased knowledge can contribute to the general public reducing their climate impact, for example by reducing their energy use. How would you like to receive information from authorities about how to reduce your impact on the climate?"

As many as 73 per cent would like to receive information about how they can reduce their climate impact through “news in the media”. This represents a substantial increase from 64 per cent in 2006. There was demand for other information channels from between 27 and 39 per cent.
The climate efforts of companies
Willingness to buy from companies that make efforts to limit climate change

“When you buy goods or services, do you prefer to buy them from a company you know to make efforts to limit climate change?”

A combined total of 69 per cent of respondents state that they “definitely” or “probably” prefer to buy goods from companies they know to make efforts to limit climate change, while 25 per cent state they do not prefer to do so.

More women answer “definitely” (30 per cent) than men (19 per cent).

Willingness to pay more when buying from companies that make efforts to limit climate change

“Could you imagine paying slightly more, let’s say 5 per cent more, for an article or service if you know that the company that produces it makes efforts to limit climate change?”

A combined total of 82 per cent state that they “definitely” (44 per cent) or “probably” (38 per cent) can imagine paying more for an article or service if they know that the company that produces it makes efforts to limit climate change.

The most substantial difference is that the proportion who can “definitely” imagine paying more has increased to 44 per cent in 2007, from 32 per cent in both 2006 and 2005.

Women and men are almost equally willing to pay extra for an article or service. Most willing to do so are women in the 50-64 age group (54 per cent answer “definitely”).
Importance of companies making a commitment to reduced emissions

“Do you think that, over the next 5–10 years, it will be more important, less important or just as important as today for companies to make a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions?”

The proportion who think that it will be more important for companies to make a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions is 88 per cent, while 8 per cent reply “just as important” and only 2 per cent “less important”.

Responses have been relatively stable over the last three years.

Costs to companies of emitting greenhouse gases

"Do you think that the costs to companies of emitting greenhouse gases should be increased, reduced or unchanged in comparison with today?"

The proportion who think that the costs to companies of emitting greenhouse gases should be increased was 57 per cent, while 25 per cent think that the costs should be unchanged and 8 per cent that they should be reduced.

Responses have been relatively stable over the last three years.
**Are companies good at marketing their climate efforts?**

“Do you think that companies are good or poor at reporting what they do to limit greenhouse gas emissions in their marketing of their goods and services?”

Less than one in five people consider companies to be very good (2 per cent) or quite good (15 per cent) at reporting what they do to limit greenhouse gas emissions, while more than three in four consider companies to be very poor (30 per cent) or quite poor (48 per cent) at this.

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**Ecolabelling for low greenhouse gas emissions**

“Would it be useful or not useful for there to be ecolabelling so that you can tell which goods and services are produced with low greenhouse emissions?”

As many as 92 per cent think that it would be useful to have ecolabelling of goods and services with low greenhouse gas emissions. 68 per cent reply “very useful” and 24 per cent “quite useful”.

Three in four women, 75 per cent, consider that it would be very useful, while the equivalent proportion for men is 62 per cent.
Public awareness of and attitudes to Climate Change in Sweden 2007

The general public’s knowledge of and attitude to climate change, with the focus on people’s own actions and the responsibilities of companies

- There has been a sharp increase in the willingness of Swedes to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions, but there is also a desire for more information on how emissions can be reduced.

- Swedes are prepared to support those companies that take the lead in dealing with climate change, but they regard companies as poor at marketing their climate efforts and express a wish for climate-friendly products and services to be labelled.

- Swedes consider it “very important” that we in Sweden take action to do something about climate change.

The general conclusion from the survey is that a clear increase in the general public’s commitment to and interest in climate change has occurred in 2007.