



# Climate Change Increases in Importance to Citizens Around the World

## Most are more willing to take personal actions to cut down waste, but are sceptical of policy actions

**London, UK, April 26, 2019** — A new global study by Ipsos, carried out online among adults across 28 countries between February 22 and March 8, 2019, finds that while people worldwide have a myriad of concerns when it comes to environmental issues, climate change has climbed in importance since last year. Among the top findings are:

- Over a third of people around the world think that global warming/climate change (37%), air pollution, (35%), and dealing with the amount of waste we generate (34%) are among the top three environmental issues facing their country. Concern for these issues has widened since last year.
- Britons share these concerns but think dealing with the amount of waste we generate (47%) is the top concern, followed by global warming/climate change (42%) and over-packaging of consumer goods (30%).
- Britons are among the most supportive when it comes to policy actions to deal with non-recyclable product waste. Great Britain is the most supportive of the Government "naming and shaming" shops that use a lot of these products and taxing shops that use these products.
- Most would prefer making individual-level lifestyle changes such as re-using disposable products or buying recycled products, rather than either avoiding purchases of disposables altogether or paying extra taxes and recycling fees.

### MAIN FINDINGS

Britons are more likely than the rest of the world to see over-packaging, overpopulation and dealing with waste as key issues.

- British opinion differs from that of the rest of the world most significantly when it comes over-packaging, overpopulation, dealing with waste, deforestation and water pollution. Britons are *more* likely than the global average to select over-packaging (30% in GB vs. 15% globally), overpopulation (29% in GB vs. 15% globally) and dealing with waste (47% in GB vs. 34% globally) as top issues. Conversely, Britons are *less* likely to say either deforestation (8% in GB vs. 24% globally) or water pollution (6% in GB vs. 25% globally) are top issues.
- However, Great Britain falls in line with global averages in considering wildlife conservation, future food sources and supplies, emissions and flooding as top environmental concerns. The most agreement between Great Britain

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and other countries is over the issues of wildlife conservation (16% GB, 13% world), future food sources and supplies (13% GB, 12% world), emissions (12% GB, 14% world), and flooding (11% GB, 9% world).

- Last year, most people globally believed global warming/climate, air pollution, and dealing with waste were equally concerning environmental issues (30%). This year, concern for all three have widened, most drastically for global warming/climate change (37% in 2019).

The world agrees about its concern of disposable, non-recyclable products.

- Globally, four out of every five people (81%) are concerned about such products, compared to only 15% who are not concerned about them.
- Great Britain is slightly ahead of the world average in its level of concern, with 86% concerned and 10% unconcerned.

Of the six government policy proposals surveyed, none found a global majority believing in their effectiveness.

- The best-performing policies worldwide are forcing government spending to improve the range of recyclable items (46%), taxing shops that use non-recyclable products (33%), and taxing these products to increase their price (30%).
- Britons think the most effective policy would be to tax shops that use these products, although less than half of Britons (48%) think this will be effective. The next most popular policy options were forcing government spending to improve the range of recyclable items (46%), the Government "naming and shaming" shops that use a lot of these products (43%) and taxing these products to increase their price (38%).
- Great Britain thinks the least effective policies would be fining households that do not recycle enough (21%) and public information campaigning (20%), while the world also thinks the least effective policy would be fining households that do not recycle enough (24%).
- People around the world have not moved significantly in their beliefs regarding potential policy actions since last year.

People are willing to take some specific actions to reduce waste, but are not willing to take many changes to their shopping habits.

- Most people around the world are willing to re-use disposable items (56%) and buy products made from recycled materials (51%).
- However, fewer than three in twenty people are willing to pay more tax so recycling facilities can be improved (12%) or pay extra for goods without non-recyclable packaging (14%).
- Almost three in four Britons (72%) are willing to re-use disposable items and over half (54%) to buy products made from recycled materials. Much fewer Britons are willing to stop going to supermarkets and shops that use a lot of non-recyclable packaging (20%), pay extra for goods without non-recyclable packaging (13%) or pay more tax so recycling facilities can be improved (12%).

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- Globally, people are more willing this year than last to take some kind of personal action to reduce packaging waste – most drastically in their willingness to buy products made from recycled materials (51%, compared to 47% last year).

Most people believe someone or something has a responsibility for reducing unnecessary packaging, but are heavily divided over who or what that is.

- The entity that Britons believe should take the most responsibility is companies that produce packaged goods (27%), followed by companies that sell packaged goods (12%). Relatively few Britons think that consumers (11%) and the government (5%) should take responsibility.
- Great Britain (11%) is among the last of all countries surveyed in thinking that consumers should take responsibility for reducing unnecessary packaging, ahead of only Poland (10%), Canada (9%), Mexico (9%), Sweden (9%), France (7%) and the U.S. (6%).

Globally, people are more concerned about environmental issues, have more belief in the efficacy of government action, and are willing to take more personal actions to help solve the problems – but are much less willing to assign responsibility for finding a solution – than last year.

- The world is more concerned about what it perceives to be the top three environmental issues – global warming/climate change (37%, up from 30%), air pollution (35%, up from 30%), and dealing with the amount of waste we generate (34%, up from 30%) – than it was in 2018.
- Globally, more people think every policy surveyed would be more effective than thought so in 2018, with the biggest movers being a public information campaign (27%, up from 23%) and the government “naming and shaming” shops that use a lot of non-recyclable packaging (26%, up from 23%).
- People are more willing to take action to reduce problems caused by non-recyclable packaging, including re-using disposable items (56%, up from 53%). A majority now is willing to buy products from recycled materials (51%, up from 47%).

*“It’s encouraging to see environmentally conscious citizens around the world, including Brits, expressing their concern about a range of issues from climate change to air pollution to dealing with waste. The challenge facing policymakers will be to encourage a translation of this concern into willingness to take personal action – whilst we in Britain are supportive of naming and shaming policies and taxes targeted at wasteful businesses, there are lower levels of acceptance of the potential need to support the upgrading of recycling facilities through our taxes or to pay more for goods with non-recyclable packaging.”*

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### Technical Note

- These are the findings of Global Advisor, an Ipsos survey conducted between February 22 to March 8, 2019. The survey was conducted in 28 countries around the world, via the Ipsos Online Panel system in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Great Britain, and the USA.
- For the results of the survey presented herein, an international sample of 19,519 adults ages 19-74 in South Korea, 18-74 in the US, Canada, China, Malaysia, South Africa and Turkey, and ages 16-74 in all other countries, were interviewed. Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis via the Ipsos Online Panel, with the exception of Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Chile, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey, where each have a sample approximately 500+.
- 15 of the 28 countries surveyed online generate nationally representative samples in their countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and United States). Brazil, China, Colombia, Chile, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey produce a national sample that is more urban & educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. We refer to these respondents as “Upper Deck Consumer Citizens”. They are not nationally representative of their country.
- Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to the most recent country Census data, and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points for a sample of 1,000 and an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20 per country of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in that country had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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