



Greening Household Behaviour: EPIC Surveys

Objectives

Environmental pressures from households are significant, and without continued policy efforts their impacts are likely to intensify over the coming years. Developing green growth strategy and analysing environmental policy from the demand side is receiving increasing attention. Recent OECD work cast light on how to best meet this challenge by helping governments to better understand households' behaviour towards the environment and how policies affect their decisions in the real world.



ENERGY

Main phases

This work involves a periodic survey on Environmental Policy and Individual Behaviour Change (EPIC) of more than 10 000 households across a number of countries and areas while existing studies generally limit their scope to one country and focus on a single environmental concern.

These surveys represent a breakthrough by providing a common framework to collect empirical evidence which can be used in order to design more effective and efficient policies while taking into account social aspects. Five areas where households exert particular environmental pressures are examined: residential **energy** and **water** use, **transport** choices, **food** consumption, and **waste** generation and recycling.



WASTE

The first survey was implemented in 2008 in ten countries and main results are presented in a 2011 OECD publication. A new round of the EPIC survey was carried out in 2011 in eleven countries: **Australia, Canada, Chile, France, Israel, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.**



TRANSPORT

The questionnaire used in the 2011 survey was developed by the OECD with inputs from an Advisory Committee. Both surveys were implemented using on-line household panels. Efforts have been made to ensure representativity of the sample across different age groups, sex, socio-economic status and location of residence.



ORGANIC FOOD

Analysis comparing the data across countries, policy conditions, and the attitudes of households reveals which measures are likely to be the most effective in changing behaviour. Comparison of responses from the previous round of the survey in 2008 will allow the tracking of behavioural changes over time and as well as to explore new emerging issues.

Timeline

- Implementation of the second OECD EPIC Survey on household behaviour and environmental policy in 11 countries, with a total sample of more than 11 000 respondents (2011).
- Analysis of the survey data by the Secretariat and research teams coordinated by the OECD. Presentation of key insights from an overview of the survey data and publication (2012/2013). Follow-up work using econometric techniques. Presentation of final survey results and publication of the main conclusions and policy implications (2013/2014).
- Third round of the EPIC Survey (early 2014)



WATER



**2011 EPIC Survey
implemented in
11 countries**



Team

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More information available at

<http://www.oecd.org/env/consumption-innovation/households.htm>

Associated Research Institutes and Experts

Several research institutes and experts coordinated by the OECD Environment Directorate are currently, or have already contributed, to the project including:

- Catholic University, Piacenza – Italy (*Stefano Boccaletti*)
- Charles University in Prague – Czech Republic (*Milan Ščasný, Jan Urban*)
- CNRS-University Panthéon-Sorbonne – France (*Katrin Millock*)
- INRA – France (*Céline Nauges*)
- Korean Environment Institute (KEI) – Korea (*Kwang-yim Kim*)
- SLU University – Sweden (*Bengt Kriström*)
- Statistics Norway – Norway (*Bente Halvorsen*),
- Swiss Federal Institute of Technology - Switzerland (*Kay Axhausen, Claude Weis*)
- The Australian National University – Australia (*Quentin Grafton*)
- Universidad Iberoamericana – Mexico (*Alejandro Guevara-Sangines, José Alberto Lara-Pulido*)
- University of Haifa – Israel (*Ofira Ayalon, Sharon Brody, Ruslana Rachel Palatnik and Mordechai Shechter*)
- York University – Canada (*Ida Ferrara*)

Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee composed of national experts, including government representatives from the participating countries, was set up to help inform this work and to ensure a high degree of policy relevance for the outcome of the analysis.

Contributors

- Environment Canada
- The Australian Department of the Environment and Water Resources
- The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- The Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland
- The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, the Netherlands
- The Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy (MEDDE), France
- The Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic
- The Ministry of the Environment, Japan
- The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico
- The Ministry of the Environment, Norway
- The Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea
- The Ministry of Environmental Protection, Israel
- The Region Emilia Romagna, Italy
- The Swedish Energy Agency (STEM)

Publications

- OECD (2011), *Greening Household Behaviour: the Role of Public Policy*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2013), *Greening Household Behaviour: Responses from the Second Round*, OECD, Paris, forthcoming.

Contact

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