Most in Ireland are concerned about climate change, but sense of powerlessness grows

The Worldwide Independent Network of MR (WIN), the leading global association of independent market research and polling firms, has released new findings from its Worldviews Survey ahead of **World Environment Day.** Based on insights from over 45,000 people across 45 countries, the data highlights a clear global consensus: **climate change remains a widely recognised and urgent issue**. However, beneath this strong agreement**, attitudes are beginning to shift.** While concern remains high, key indicators show signs of **gradual softening, as economic pressures, local realities, and institutional trust reshape how people engage with sustainability.**

HEADLINES – IRELAND

- **Global warming is a significant issue, but not irreversible**
  78% of adults in Ireland feel global warming is a serious threat for mankind, a significant decline from 85% in 2022. Nevertheless, concerns with global warming remain especially high amongst 18-24s. Very few, however, believe it is already too late to curtail climate change (31% in 2026 vs 38% in 2022), while 75% also agree natural disasters have increased because of global warming. This indicates that though concerns are high and the impact of climate change is very visible, most in Ireland remain optimistic the negative effect can be minimised.

- **Irish consumers feel increasingly unable to positively impact the environment**
  In Ireland, 74% of consumers believe their personal actions can improve the environment, representing a decline of 4% since 2025 and 10% since 2020. Men and those aged 65+ are now particularly less likely to feel they can positively impact the environment since last year.

- **Financial pressure is preventing sustainable changes in consumer behaviours**
  There is a significant decline in the proportion of adults in Ireland willing to pay more for products that take care of the environment (50% in 2026 vs 64% in 2021). Declines are noted across most demographics, but particularly those aged 35+. We also see 56% who would like to do more to live sustainably but often find they don't make the necessary changes to their current behaviour. As consumers grapple with raising costs and less discretionary disposable income, sustainability falls lower in their list of priorities.

- **Governments and businesses are expected to be sustainable leaders**
  71% agree the real efforts on sustainability and environment need to be taken by businesses and governments, rather than individuals. This is particularly true amongst women and those aged 55-64. However, trust that governments are taking the necessary actions to take care of the environment has fallen significantly since 2025, now at 39%.

The findings highlight a population that feels increasingly powerless to personally curtail the significant issue of climate change, as consumers look instead to governments and businesses to take charge and start making real, tangible changes to take care of the environment.

HEADLINES WORLD

Strong global concern persists but shows early signs of regional softening

Across all markets, 81% of people agree that global warming is a serious threat to mankind, demonstrating near-universal recognition of the issue. Despite this strong consensus, the data reveals a slight decline in environmental concern compared to previous years.

Regional variation further illustrates this point, with higher levels of concern observed across many APAC countries, while parts of Europe show comparatively lower levels, highlighting how local context continues to shape global attitudes.

Agreement is highest in APAC countries such as Thailand (95%), Indonesia (94%) and South Korea (93%), and in American countries such as Venezuela (93%), Colombia (92%), Mexico and Peru (89%), where climate change is widely perceived as an immediate and visible threat.

By contrast, lower levels of agreement are seen in more developed markets such as in Latvia (62%), Poland (68%), Slovenia (70%), United States, Netherlands and Slovakia (72%), highlighting a geographic divide in perceived urgency.

These differences reflect the extent to which climate change is experienced directly, with some of the countries facing more visible environmental impacts reporting higher levels of concern. While climate change remains a priority, it is increasingly competing with more immediate concerns, such as economic uncertainty and cost of living pressures.

Urgency remains high, with most maintaining that it's not 'too late.'

Despite strong levels of concern, the global public is not dominated by pessimism. 42% feel that it is 'already too late; to curtail climate change, while a majority still believes that action can make a difference.

This balance between concern and optimism is a defining feature of this year's data. Fatalistic views tend to be more prevalent in certain regions, particularly fluctuating across parts of APAC. Agreement is highest in Philippines (82%) and Malaysia (77%), suggesting a stronger sense of urgency—or fatalism—in these markets.

In contrast, significantly lower levels are observed in China (17%) and Venezuela (23%), where populations are more likely to believe that meaningful action is still possible.

Overall, the findings suggest a global mindset characterised by urgency without inevitability, people recognise the scale of the problem but have not yet given up on solutions.

Belief in personal impact is strong but beginning to weaken

At an individual level, engagement remains relatively high, with 77% of people believing that their personal actions can improve the environment.

This belief holds across all countries and demographics, although it is slightly stronger amongst women. The data also shows a decline of 7% compared to previous years, pointing to a gradual erosion in overall confidence.

While belief in personal impact remains high globally, this confidence is not evenly distributed. It is strongest in countries such as Colombia (94%), Indonesia, Vietnam e India (91%), and Paraguay (90%), where individuals express a strong sense of agency in addressing environmental challenges. However, this drops significantly in markets such as Denmark and Japan (58%), Turkey (60%), and Latvia (61%), indicating a weaker perception of individual influence.

This shift may reflect growing frustration or fatigue, as individuals feel that their efforts are not matched by wider systemic change, or that individual behaviour alone is insufficient to address the scale of the challenge. It's safe to assume that empowerment and perceived relevance of personal action is highly dependent on local context and culture.

Responsibility is placed on governments and businesses, but confidence in action is declining

Across all regions, there is a consistent view that climate change is a systemic challenge requiring coordinated action from governments and businesses rather than individuals. This expectation remains strong over time, especially amongst younger groups and in emerging markets such as Vietnam and Morocco, where over 80% agree that institutions hold primary responsibility.

Only 46% now believe governments are taking the necessary action, a decline of 9% compared to previous years. Criticism tends to increase with age and education, suggesting more informed or experienced groups are becoming increasingly sceptical of institutional effectiveness.

Perceptions vary significantly by country and are highly influenced by recent environmental events, economic pressures, and broader levels of political trust: Confidence in government action remains relatively strong in markets such as, Vietnam (97%), China (96%) and Thailand (95%). In contrast, lower trust is seen in countries including Norway (13%), Finland (18%), Greece (21%) and other Europe countries.

Climate change is understood through real-world impacts

Perception of impact is particularly strong amongst younger people and women, and is highest in the Americas and across APAC markets.

For many people, climate change is no longer an abstract concept, but something experienced directly. 77% believe that natural disasters such as floods, wildfires, and extreme weather events have increased due to global warming, although this figure has declined slightly from 81% in 2021.

The agreement is especially pronounced in Thailand (95%), China and Venezuela (92%), India (91%) and Vietnam (90%).

Support for sustainability meets economic reality

Despite strong environmental awareness, behaviour is increasingly shaped by economic constraints. Around 65% of people say they are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products, although this level has softened slightly over time.

Willingness to pay is higher amongst younger people and women, and is strongest in APAC markets, while Europe tends to show lower levels.

These findings suggest that while support for sustainability remains broadly positive, financial pressures are limiting the extent to which people can translate values into behaviour.

The intention-action gap remains a defining challenge

A key insight from the study is the persistent gap between aspiration and behaviour: 62% say they would like to live more sustainably but struggle to make lasting changes.

This gap is particularly pronounced in countries such as South Korea (86%), Philippines and Thailand (79%), and Ecuador (78%) and Mexico (77%), while lower levels are seen in Netherlands (41%), Sweden (43%) and Vietnam (42%).

While awareness and intent are widespread, barriers such as cost, convenience, infrastructure, and habits continue to limit action. Ultimately, the challenge is no longer about raising awareness but enabling people to act in practical and accessible ways.

Richard Colwell, President of WIN International Association, said:

"The data shows that concern about climate change remains deeply embedded across societies worldwide, but we are entering a new phase in how people engage with the issue. Economic realities, trust in institutions, and confidence in individual impact are all shaping behaviour. People still believe change is possible but increasingly expect governments and businesses to lead the way. Bridging the gap between intention and action will be critical if we are to turn awareness into meaningful progress."

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Media enquiries:

IRELAND DATA
Ciara Reilly, Group Director, RED C Research
Sakshi Murarka, Associate Director, RED C Research
+35318186316
info@redcresearch.ie

WORLDWIDE DATA
Elena Crosilla, WIN Coordinator
+39 335.62.07.347
E-mail: coordinator@winmr.com

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Methodology:
The survey was conducted in 44 countries using CAWI / CATI / F2F/ TAPI /online survey methods.

Sample Size and Mode of Field Work:
A total of 44,000 people were interviewed. See below for sample details. The fieldwork was conducted between : 27th November 2025 to 13th February 2026. The margin of error for the survey is between 4.4 and 2.5 at 95% confidence level.

The global average has been computed according to the covered adult population of the surveyed countries.

About WIN:
The Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WIN) is a global network conducting market research and opinion polls in every continent.
Our assets

- Thought leadership: access to a group of the most prominent experts and business entrepreneurs in Market Research, Polling and Consultancy
- Flexibility: tailor-made global and local solutions to meet clients' needs
- Innovation: access to the latest strategic consultancy, tool development and branded solutions
- Local experts: access to a network of experts that truly understand the local culture, market and business needs.
- Trust: highest quality of talented members in all countries covered

In the years, WIN has demonstrated wide competences and ability to conduct multi-country surveys following the highest standards requested by the market. The accumulated expertise of the Association is formidable: among others, researched themes are gender equality and young people, communication and media research, and brand studies.

Methodology Sheet

	Country	Company Name	Methodology	Sample	Coverage	Fieldwork Dates
1	Argentina	Voices Research & Consultancy	CAWI	1007	NATIONAL	2-15 January 2026
2	Australia	Luma Research	CAWI	549	NATIONAL	29-30 January 2026
3	Brazil	Market Analysis Brazil	CAWI	1000	INTERNET POP	9-16 January 2026
4	Canada	LEGER	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	12-25 Dec 2025
5	Chile	Activa Research	CAWI	1095	NATIONAL	8-13 January 2026
6	China	WisdomAsia	Online Panel	1000	URBAN	14-19 January 2026
7	Colombia	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	CATI	500	NATIONAL	6-12 February 2026
8	Côte d'Ivoire	EMC	CATI	502	NATIONAL	24-30 January 2026
9	Croatia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana Fides	CAWI	591	NATIONAL	8-12 January 2026
10	Denmark	Opinion Denmark A/S	CAWI	1007	NATIONAL	13-21 January 2026
11	Ecuador	Centro de Estudios Y Datos - CEDATOS	CAPI	1104	NATIONAL	28-31 January 2026
12	Finland	Taloustutkimus Oy	Online Panel	1093	NATIONAL	31 Dec 25 – 7 Jan 26
13	France	Online Way	Online Panel	1007	NATIONAL	16-19 January 2026
14	Georgia	GORBI Eurasia LTD	F2F	2050	NATIONAL	31 Jan -13 Feb 2026
15	Germany	Produkt+Markt	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	19 Dec 25 – 6 Jan 26
16	Greece	Alternative Research Solutions	CAWI	502	NATIONAL	3 Dec 25 – 12 Jan 26
17	Hong Kong	Consumer Search Group (CSG)	Online Panel	500	TERRITORY WIDE	9-15 January 2026
18	India	DataPrompt International Pvt. Ltd.	Online	1000	NATIONAL	29 Dec 25 -21 Jan 26
19	Indonesia	DEKA	Online	987	INTERNET POP	16-31 January 2026
20	Republic of Ireland	RED C Research & Marketing Ltd	CAWI	1013	NATIONAL	8-13 January 2026
21	Italy	SWG S.p.a	CAWI	1002	NATIONAL	7-12 January 2026
22	Japan	Nippon Research Center, LTD.	CAWI	1100	NATIONAL	22-27 January 2026
23	Malaysia	Central Force International	CAWI	1001	INTERNET POP	27 Nov – 3 Dec 2025
24	Mexico	Brand Investigation S.A.de C.V	Online	1000	NATIONAL	7-12 January 2026
25	Morocco	Integrate Consulting	Online	500	NATIONAL	8-9 January 2026
26	Netherlands	Motivaction International B.V.	CAWI	1005	NATIONAL	6-20 January 2026
27	Norway	Opinion AS	CAWI	1029	NATIONAL	13-19 January 2026
28	Pakistan	Gallup Pakistan	CATI	1000	NATIONAL	6 Dec 2025 -14 Jan 2026
29	Paraguay	ICA Consultoría Estratégica	CATI	501	NATIONAL	2 Dec 25- 29 Jan 26
30	Peru	Datum Internacional	P2P	1202	NATIONAL	16-10 January 2026

31	Philippines	The Philippine Survey and Research Center (PSRC)	PAPI	1000	NATIONAL	9-26 January 2026
32	Poland	Mareco Polska	CAWI	530	NATIONAL	8-14 Dec 2025
33	Serbia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana Adria	CAWI	522	NATIONAL	8-15 January 2026
34	Slovak Republic	Go4insight	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	16-26 January 2026
35	Slovenia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana	CAWI	1018	NATIONAL	8-9 January 2026
36	South Korea	Gallup Korea	CAWI	1200	NATIONAL	21-28 January 2026
37	Spain	Instituto DYM	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	15-18 January 2026
38	Sweden	Demoskop AB	CAWI	1012	INTERNET POP	19 Dec 2025 – 23 Jan 2026
39	Thailand	INFOSEARCH LIMITED	F2F	500	NATIONAL	16 Dec 25 -15 Jan 26
40	Turkey	BAREM Research	CATI	725	TR Urban	30 Jan – 4 Feb 2026
41	United Kingdom	ORB International	Online	1194	NATIONAL	12-22 Dec 2025
42	USA	LEGER	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	12-25 December 2025
43	Venezuela	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	CATI	302	NATIONAL	1-5 February 2026
44	Vietnam	DXL Research & Consulting	F2F	900	URBAN	12-28 Dec 2025