

# Global Agenda Council on Sustainable Consumption 2012-2014



## Understanding/Context

A clear gap exists between the intentions and actions of consumers regarding sustainability. Today's demographic shifts, linked to the growth of millennials in BRIC nations, have led to a new middle class consumer society, which is likely to be unsustainable should the European and North American patterns of consumption be replicated. New business models need to emerge. When consumers are surveyed around the world, 72% say they are willing to buy green products, but only 17% actually do. Information campaigns have not had much impact on consumer behaviour.

The Global Agenda Council on Sustainable Consumption has identified the demand side of sustainable consumption as a key challenge of the sustainability agenda, while it simultaneously presents significant opportunity. The difficulties in creating real and meaningful behavioural change among consumers are significant, requiring a deep understanding of personal and contextual elements and the linking of those elements to effective triggers that stimulate action. The Council argues that long-term behavioural change in consumers towards more sustainable lifestyles can be achieved if stakeholders work together.

## Shaping the Agenda

Over the past year, the Council initiated a process to help businesses understand how to engage consumers to trigger behavioural shifts towards a more sustainable lifestyle. The Council believes that with a targeted approach, behaviour can be changed. Since the Summit on the Global Agenda 2012, the Council has become involved in the Forum's Engaging Tomorrow's Consumer initiative, which is designing collaborative initiatives that will create a movement to change

consumer attitudes and behaviour towards sustainability. The Council is supporting the project's board members, consisting of business community representatives, to achieve the project's objective.

The Council has developed three pilot experiments that focus on:

- Collaborative consumption, which highlights the opportunities and challenges of a "sharing economy"
- Waste, by conducting research using timers to raise awareness of excessive food, water and energy use
- Individual messaging, which explores the factors that cause behaviour change and how to scale them up

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Over the next eight months, the Council will continue its work on these focal points and support the Engaging Tomorrow's Consumer project.

## Contact Information

**Research Analyst:** Stefan Hall, Associate, Global Agenda Councils, stefan.hall@weforum.org

**Council Manager:** Mayuri Ghosh, Senior Project Manager, Consumer Industries, mayuri.ghosh@weforum.org

**Forum Lead:** Sarita Nayyar, Managing Director, Head of Consumer Industries, sarita.nayyar@weforum.org