

## The Best and Worst Destinations for Sustainability

InterNations publishes its first Environment & Sustainability Ranking, revealing the best and worst countries for the sustainable expat.

- Finland (1st), Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Switzerland (5th) are the best countries for the sustainable expat. India (60th), Kuwait, Egypt, Indonesia, and Vietnam (56th) come last.
- The Environment & Sustainability Ranking is based on the *Expat Insider 2020* survey, one of the most extensive surveys about living and working abroad.

Munich, 30 September 2020 — In its first Environment & Sustainability Report, [InterNations](#), the world's largest expat community, identifies the best and worst countries for the sustainable expat. The results, which are based on the [Expat Insider 2020 survey](#), reveal that Finland, Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Switzerland excel at offering a sustainable environment. At the other end of the ranking, India, Kuwait, Egypt, Indonesia, and Vietnam are rated the worst countries for the sustainable expat.

### The Best & Worst Destinations for the Sustainable Expat



The Environment & Sustainability Ranking is based on eight individual factors, such as expats' satisfaction with the availability of green goods and services and the air quality. It also includes their perception of how much the government supports policies to protect the environment and how interested the local population is when it comes to environmental issues.

## The Top 10 Destinations for the Sustainable Expat

### 1. Finland

Coming in at the very top of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, Finland ranks 1st out of 60 countries worldwide. The Nordic country is also voted best in the Quality of Environment subcategory, with almost all expats rating the natural environment (98% vs. 82% globally) and the water and sanitation positively (96% vs. 72% globally). Another factor Finland scores well in is air quality (95% positive ratings vs. 62% globally). In fact, a South Korean expat specifically mentions *“nature, clean water, and air”* as what she likes most about life in Finland.

The country comes second in both the Products & Policies and the Policies & People subcategories, only beaten by Sweden. Showing that the government’s attitude towards the environment is key, 89% of expats in Finland agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally). Finally, 90% of expats are happy with the local waste management and recycling efforts (vs. 60% globally).

### 2. Sweden

Sweden comes in second place overall in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. It even takes first place in the Product & Utilities subcategory, with 93% of expats rating the availability of clean energy and the ability to save energy positively (vs. 62% globally). Another 93% are satisfied with the local waste management and recycling measures (vs. 60% globally). Additionally, nearly nine in ten expats (88%) are happy with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 63% globally).

The country is also first in the Policies & People subcategory: not only do expats agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (80% vs. 55% globally), but they also think that the local population is very interested in environmental issues (84% vs. 48% globally).

A US American expat specifically mentions the *“environmental awareness”* as something she likes about living in Sweden. However, the country comes fourth — therefore performing slightly worse than Finland (1st out of 60) — in the Quality of Environment subcategory, where its weakest factor is the natural environment (9th). Still, 95% of expats are happy with the country’s natural environment, compared to 82% worldwide.

### 3. Norway

Ranking third worldwide in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, Norway performs best in the Quality of Environment subcategory (2nd out of 60). This is due to expats’ satisfaction with the air quality (93% happy vs. 62% globally), as well as water and sanitation (97% happy vs. 72% globally). A Ukrainian expat says that *“the beautiful nature, the clean air and tap water, and the focus on the environment”* are what she enjoys most about life in Norway.

The country places fifth worldwide in the Policies & People subcategory, with almost nine in ten expats (89%) agreeing that the Norwegian government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally). Norway also comes in at fifth place in the Products & Utilities subcategory, with its weakest factor being the local availability of green goods and services (11th). However, 76% of expats are still happy with these services, which is not enough for Norway to lead the ranking, but still 13 percentage points above the global average (63%).

#### **4. Austria**

Coming in 4th place overall in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, Austria is the first non-Nordic country among the global top 10. There is not a single factor for which Austria does not rank in the top 10 worldwide. It comes in third place for the Products & Utilities subcategory, even ranking first globally for the availability of green goods and services: 90% of expats rate this factor positively (vs. 63% worldwide). What is more, expats are also happy with Austria's energy supply (90% vs. 62% globally), as well as the country's waste management and recycling efforts (91% vs. 60% globally).

In the Quality of the Environment subcategory (5th), most expats (95%) rate the factor water and sanitation positively (vs. 72% globally), and 97% like the natural environment (vs. 82% globally). A British respondent — like several other expats — mentions the *“environment and the mountains”* as things he especially likes about living in Austria.

Lastly, the country ranks sixth in the Policies & People subcategory: More than three in four expats (78%) agree that the population is very interested in environmental issues (vs. 48% globally), with more than one quarter (26%) agreeing completely. A Philippine expat even says that Austria is *“the most organized, the most environmentally friendly, and the most beautiful country”* he has lived in so far.

#### **5. Switzerland**

Just like its neighbor Austria (4th), Switzerland (5th) also features in the global top 10 for every single factor of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. The country even comes in first place for its natural environment, with an almost perfect rating (98% positive responses vs. 82% globally) — including 83% of expats who are *very* happy with the natural environment.

The majority of expats is also satisfied with the factor water and sanitation (95% vs. 72% globally), as well as the air quality in Switzerland (91% vs. 62% globally). This results in Switzerland's third place in the Quality of the Environment subcategory, right after Finland and Norway. A US American expat living in Zug especially likes the *“beautiful nature that is easy to access”*, and a Malaysian respondent in Geneva mentions *“the parks, lakes, and air quality”* as Switzerland's best features.

The country also does well in the Products & Utilities subcategory (6th), with 88% of expats rating the energy supply positively (vs. 62% globally) and 83% being happy with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 63% globally). Switzerland ranks lowest in the Policies & People subcategory; however, it still comes in an excellent 7th place. Exactly five in six expats (83%) agree that the Swiss government supports policies to protect the environment, which is significantly higher than the global average of 55%.

#### **6. Denmark**

Denmark comes in 6th place overall, doing best in the Policies & People subcategory (3rd). Expats agree that the local population is very much interested in environmental issues (83% vs. 48%

globally) and also think that the government supports policies to protect the environment (84% vs. 55% globally).

A South African expat notes that *“the Danish are environmentally conscious. Organic food and products are easily available, and they are good with recycling.”* In fact, Denmark ranks 4th out of 60 countries in the Products & Utilities subcategory, with 89% of expats being satisfied with the waste management and recycling efforts (vs. 60% globally), the availability of green goods and services (vs. 63% globally), and the energy supply (vs. 62% globally).

The country ranks just a little lower in the Quality of the Environment subcategory (10th), where the ranking is affected by the natural environment (38th). Yet, 87% of expats still rate this factor positively, five percentage points above the global average (82%). What is more, most expats are happy with Denmark’s air quality (94% vs. 62% globally), as well as water and sanitation (93% vs. 72% globally).

## 7. New Zealand

Ranking 7th out of 60 countries, New Zealand lands among the global top 10 countries in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. This is especially due to its great performance in the Policies & People subcategory (4th): 85% of the expats in New Zealand agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally), and 79% agree the population is very interested in environmental issues (vs. 48% globally). *“New Zealand values the environment”*, summarizes a US American expat. After Sweden (1st), Denmark (2nd), and Finland (3rd), New Zealand is voted the best non-Nordic country in this regard.

The country also features in the top 10 worldwide for the Quality of Environment subcategory (6th), with the natural environment (3rd) as the highest-ranking factor: 96% of the survey participants are satisfied with it (vs. 82% globally). *“The environment is the best,”* a Taiwanese expat agrees. Even though water and sanitation (17th) affect the overall ranking of this subcategory slightly negatively, five in six expats (83%) are still satisfied with this factor (vs. 72% globally) — 49% even very much so (vs. 34% globally). What is more, New Zealand ranks 12th for Products & Utilities, with 79% of expats satisfied with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 63% globally), as well as the energy supply (vs. 62% globally).

## 8. Germany

Germany ranks 8th out of 60 countries in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, coming in seventh place worldwide for the Products & Utilities subcategory. Expats in Germany are really satisfied with the availability of green goods and services (86% vs. 63% globally), with the country ranking among the global top 5, behind Finland (4th), Denmark (3rd), Sweden (2nd), and Austria (1st). Moreover, expats are happy with Germany’s energy supply (83% vs. 62% globally), as well as its waste management and recycling efforts (85% vs. 60% globally).

The country also ranks among the top 10 in the Policies & People subcategory (9th): Three in four expats (75%) agree that the population is very interested in environmental issues — compared to 48% globally. A Colombian expat specifies: *“I enjoy the rising awareness about environmental issues and the alternatives the government and society are developing.”* In fact, 80% of respondents in Germany also agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally).

Germany performs worst — though still above average — in the Quality of the Environment subcategory (14th), which is mainly due to the natural environment (28th). Even so, nine in ten expats

are happy with the natural environment (vs. 82% globally), and 90% rate the factor water and sanitation positively (vs. 72% globally).

### **9. Canada**

Coming 9th out of 60 destinations worldwide, Canada is the only North American country in the top 10 of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. It ranks especially high in the Quality of Environment subcategory (8th), with 96% of expats rating the natural environment positively (vs. 82% globally) and 74% even saying it could not be any better (vs. 49% globally).

Expats are also satisfied with the factor water and sanitation (90% vs. 72% globally). A Russian expat mentions *"clean water and air"* as some of her favorite things about Canada. With an excellent availability of green goods and services (80% vs. 63% globally) and 81% of survey respondents satisfied with the energy supply (vs. 62% globally), the country ranks 11th in the Products & Utilities subcategory.

In the Policies & People subcategory (13th), 71% of respondents state that the Canadian population seems to be very much interested in environmental issues (vs. 48% globally). This also seems to be the case for the Canadian government, as 76% of expats think that it supports an environmental agenda, 19 percentage points more than the global average (55%).

### **10. Luxemburg**

Luxembourg places 10th out of 60 countries worldwide in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, as well as in the Products & Utilities subcategory (10th). Exactly four in five expats (80%) rate the country's energy supply positively (vs. 62% globally), and another 84% are satisfied with the waste management and recycling infrastructure (vs. 60% globally).

Luxembourg also does well in the Policies & People subcategory (11th); 83% of expats agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally). And the majority of expats (70%) also thinks that the local population is very interested in environmental issues (vs. 48% globally). Luxembourg's lowest-ranking subcategory is the quality of environment (13th); however, it still ranks in the global top 20 here.

A Belgian expat especially likes *"the green and lush scenery"*, and a US American also points out the *"access to nature for hiking and bicycling"* as a clear benefit of living in Luxembourg. In fact, 92% of respondents like the natural environment (vs. 82% globally). Moreover, almost nine in ten expats (89%) rank the quality of water and sanitation in Luxembourg positively, 17 percentage points above the global average (72%), and 78% of expats are happy with the air quality (vs. 62% globally).

## **The Bottom 10 Destinations for the Sustainable Expat**

### **60. India**

India is the worst-performing country overall and comes last in all three subcategories of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking as well. Moreover, the South Asian country comes in last place for six out of the eight rating factors featured in the survey.

With regard to the Products & Utilities subcategory (60th out of 60 destinations worldwide), almost nine in ten expats (87%) are dissatisfied with the waste management and recycling efforts (vs. 28% globally), and nearly three in five respondents (59%) rate the availability of green goods and services negatively (vs. 21% globally).

Regarding the Policies and People subcategory (60th), 62% of expats do not agree that India's government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 25% globally). What is more, 59% think that the local population is not very interested in environmental issues either (vs. 30% globally). This is, however, one factor for which India actually ranks ahead of other destinations — i.e. Egypt (59th) and Kuwait (60th). The other one is the natural environment, for which India ranks 59th and Kuwait comes in 60th place.

Nevertheless, India still comes last worldwide in the Quality of the Environment subcategory (60th), as 82% of expats rate the air quality poorly (vs. 24% globally), with 55% even saying that it is *very bad* (vs. 7% globally). A South African expat mentions the *"pollution and poor air quality"* as what she does not like about living in India. Additionally, 69% of expats in India are unhappy with the water and sanitation infrastructure (vs. 15% globally).

### **59. Kuwait**

Coming in 59th place out of 60 destinations in total, Kuwait only ranks ahead of India (60th) in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. It lands in the bottom 10 worldwide for all rating factors featured in the survey — except for one: energy (e.g. availability of sustainable energy and saving energy), for which it comes in 50th place. Even so, 38% of expats are unhappy with this factor, far more than the global average (18%).

Additionally, expats are unsatisfied with the availability of green goods and services (23% happy vs. 63% globally) and the local waste management and recycling infrastructure (17% vs. 60% globally). This results in Kuwait's low 57th rank in the Products & Utilities subcategory. The results look even worse regarding the Policies & People and the Quality of the Environment subcategories, with Kuwait ranking 59th in both.

The country performs worst worldwide for its natural environment (60th), which only 12% of the respondents are satisfied with (vs. 82% globally). On top of that, 36% of expats rate the local water and sanitation infrastructure negatively (vs. 15% globally). An Australian expat points out that the *"poor sanitation and inept waste management"* are among the worst things in Kuwait. Finally, the results look similarly grim in the Policies & People subcategory, with nearly three out of four respondents (74%) considering the population not very interested in environmental issues (vs. 30% globally). Additionally, only 28% think that the government supports policies to protect the environment, which is 27 percentage points less than the global average of 55%.

### **58. Egypt**

Coming 58th out of 60 countries in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, Egypt ends up among the bottom 3 worldwide in all subcategories of the survey. In the Products & Utilities subcategory, only India (60th) ranks worse than Egypt (59th). Not even a fifth of the survey participants (18%) rate the local waste management and recycling efforts positively (vs. 60% globally), and just 21% are satisfied with the country's energy supply (vs. 62% globally).

There seems to be *“no care for the environment”*, a Polish expats remarks. In fact, only 22% of expats think the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally), and even fewer respondents (13%) agree that the population is very interested in environmental issues (vs. 48% globally). Only Kuwait (60th) ranks even worse for the latter factor (60th). Lastly, Egypt comes 58th in the Quality of the Environment subcategory: Only 34% of expats rate the water and sanitation infrastructure positively (vs. 72% globally), and more than half the respondents (52%) are unhappy with the air quality in Egypt. This is 28 percentage points above the global average (24%). Moreover, fewer than half of the respondents (49%) are satisfied with the natural environment (vs. 82% globally). A US American expat describes the *“dirtiness of the environment”* as one of the worst aspects of life in Egypt.

### **57. Indonesia**

In the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, Indonesia comes in at 57th place out of 60 destinations worldwide. The Southeast Asian country comes 58th for the Products & Utilities subcategory, with three out of four expats (75%) rating the local waste management and recycling efforts negatively (vs. 28% globally).

A German expat claims: *“There is no waste management. All rubbish is going to the rivers and into the ocean.”* Additionally, over two in five expats (43%) are unhappy with the energy supply in Indonesia (vs. 18% globally). In the Policies & People subcategory, Indonesia ranks 57th out of 60, with as many as 62% of expats agreeing that the population is just not very interested in environmental issues (vs. 30% globally).

Indonesia performs best in the Quality of Environment subcategory (55th). While half of the survey participants (50%) are dissatisfied with the local water and sanitation infrastructure (vs. 15% globally), the ranking is boosted a little by more than three-quarters (76%) rating the natural environment positively. However, this is still six percentage points below the global average (82%).

### **56. Vietnam**

Vietnam ranks 56th out of 60 countries in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking overall. This includes a disappointing 57th place in the Quality of Environment subcategory, the country's weakest point. Almost seven in ten expats (69%) have a negative opinion of the air quality in Vietnam (vs. 24% globally), and only 38% are happy with the water and sanitation infrastructure (vs. 72% globally). Vietnam ranks best for its natural environment, but it still ends up in 50th place out of 60 worldwide, with its share of negative ratings twice as large as the global average (18% vs. 9% globally).

The country comes 54th for the Policies & People subcategory, with only 26% of expats agreeing that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally). A Dutch expat mentions *“air pollution, noise, bad waste management, and rodents”* as things he does not like about living in Vietnam. In the Products & Utilities subcategory, Vietnam comes in at 55th place. Almost half the expats (47%) are dissatisfied with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 21% globally), and 37% rate the energy supply negatively (vs. 18% globally).

### **55. Thailand**

Just like the Philippines, Thailand (55th) also ranks among the bottom 10 worldwide in each subcategory. The country performs best in the Products & Utilities subcategory (53rd), ranking 52nd out of 60 for both the energy supply and the waste management and recycling measures.

An Australian expat mentions *“the filth and garbage left lying around”* as things they dislike about living in Thailand. The country also seems to lag behind when it comes to sustainable products: three in seven expats (43%) are dissatisfied with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 21% globally), and 10% even rate it as *very bad* (vs. 5% globally). Thailand comes in at 56th place in both the Policies & People and Quality of Environment subcategories. The latter features the only factor for which Thailand does not land among the bottom 10: natural environment (48th).

Almost two-fifths of the respondents (37%) are not satisfied with the water and sanitation infrastructure (vs. 15% globally), and two-thirds (67%) are unhappy with the air quality (vs. 24% globally). A US American lists the *“air pollution and the government’s inability to enforce air pollution laws”* as their least favorite aspect of expat life in Thailand. In fact, over half the respondents (53%) agree that the government is not supportive of policies to protect the environment, more than double the global average of 25%. Another 54% of expats consider the population not to be very interested in environmental issues (vs. 30% globally).

#### **54. Philippines**

Ranking in 54th place out of 60 countries worldwide, the Philippines places in the bottom 10 for each subcategory. It performs worst for products and utilities (56th) — only Kuwait (57th), Indonesia (58th), Egypt (59th), and India (60th) rank even lower. Four in nine expats (44%) are dissatisfied with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 21% globally), and 16% even rate it as *very bad* (vs. 5% globally).

Expats are not happy with the energy supply (56th) and the waste management and recycling infrastructure (55th) either. An Australian expat thinks that there is *“no sense of stopping rubbish”*. The Quality of Environment subcategory (53rd) includes the only two factors that are not in the bottom 10: natural environment (47th) and air quality (48th). But the water and sanitation infrastructure (57th) lowers the subcategory’s general ranking: 37% of expats are not satisfied with this factor (15% globally) — only Kenya (58th), Indonesia (59th), and India (60th) perform worse.

When it comes to the Policies & People subcategory (52nd), 45% of expats think that the government does not support policies to protect the environment (vs. 25% globally), and half the expats (50%) agree that the population is not very interested in environmental issues (vs. 30% globally). A British expat claims that there is *“no environmental care”*.

#### **53. Kenya**

Coming in 53rd place out of 60 countries, Kenya lands in the bottom 10 of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, with its worst performance in the Products & Utilities subcategory (54th). In fact, almost three-quarters of the expats in Kenya (72%) are unsatisfied with the country’s waste management and recycling efforts (vs. 28% globally) — only Kuwait (57th), Egypt (58th), Indonesia (59th), and India (60th) perform worse in the expat ranking. Kenya does not do a lot better in the Policies & People subcategory (50th) either: only 31% of expats agree that the government supports policies to protect the environment (vs. 55% globally), and fewer than one-quarter (23%) believe that the population is very interested in environmental issues, which is even less than half the global average (48%).

Kenya performs best in the Quality of Environment subcategory, although it comes only in 47th place out of 60 countries. The natural environment (17th) is Kenya’s strongest factor, 28 ranks



higher than its next best ranking — air quality (45th). Like many other respondents, a Greek expat mentions the *“nature and wildlife”* as what she likes most about the country. In addition to air quality, the factor water and sanitation makes Kenya lose several ranks: 50% of expats are unhappy with this factor (vs. 15% globally), placing Kenya once again among the bottom 10 worldwide (58th).

## 52. Malta

Coming in at 52nd place out of 60 countries, Malta is the only European country in the bottom 10 of the Environment & Sustainability Ranking. The country performs poorly in every subcategory, with its weakest point being the Policies & People subcategory (55th). In fact, 67% of expats think that the Maltese government does not support policies to protect the environment (vs. 25% globally), with 24% even stating they *do not agree at all* (vs. 8% globally) — only Brazil (59th) and India (60th) perform even worse for this factor.

Additionally, more than half the expats (52%) also believe that the local population is not very interested in environmental issues (vs. 30% globally). One British summarizes: *“It is a shame that they have not embraced environmental issues as much as they could. For example, wind farms and electric buses would be a good idea.”* Malta also ranks in the bottom 10 for the Quality of Environment subcategory (51st), with 28% of respondents dissatisfied with the natural environment. This is 19 percentage points more than the global average (9%).

Malta does best in the Products & Utilities subcategory, but still only manages to come in at 46th place. Four in nine expats (44%) are not satisfied with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 21% globally), and 40% are unhappy with the energy supply (vs. 18% globally). A Portuguese expat points out the *“lack of greenery, the air pollution, and the lack of environmentally friendly transportation options”* as the worst part about living in Malta. The factor for which Malta ranks highest is waste management and recycling (32nd), with 61% of expats rating it favorably, about the same as the global average (60%).

## 51. Hong Kong

The first to place in the bottom 10, Hong Kong ranks 51st out of 60 destinations worldwide, performing poorly across the board. It does best in the Quality of Environment subcategory (48th), which includes the two highest-ranking factors: the natural environment (37th) and the water and sanitation infrastructure (37th). More than two in three expats (68%) rate the latter positively — this is, however, still below the global average of 72%. Hong Kong performs a lot worse for air quality (55th), which results in a lower ranking for the entire subcategory: 69% of expats rate the air quality negatively, compared to 24% globally.

When it comes to the Products & Utilities subcategory (50th), 36% of expats are not pleased with the availability of green goods and services (vs. 21% globally), and two in seven (29%) rate the energy supply negatively (vs. 18% globally). Hong Kong narrowly misses the bottom 10 for waste management and recycling (50th). A Hungarian expat comments: *“The government does not do anything for the environment. Instead, they still have landfill sites. And food waste is also a huge problem.”*

Hong Kong does rank among the bottom 10 worldwide in the Policies & People subcategory (51st), performing even worse with regard to the population’s interest in environmental issues (55th). Moreover, 45% of expats think that the local government is not supportive of policies the environment (vs. 25% globally).

### **About the Environment & Sustainability Report**

To identify the best and worst countries for a sustainable life abroad, survey participants of the *Expatriate Insider 2020* survey were asked to rate their personal satisfaction with the following factors on a scale of one to seven: air quality, the natural environment, water and sanitation, the availability of green goods and services, energy supply, and the local waste management and recycling infrastructure. The rating factors also include their perception of how strongly the government supports policies to protect the environment and how interested the local population is when it comes to environmental issues.

For a country to be featured in the Environment & Sustainability Ranking, a sample size of at least 75 survey respondents per country was necessary. In 2020, 60 destinations met this requirement, with more than 15,000 expats in total taking part in the survey, representing 173 nationalities and living in 181 countries or territories.

### **About InterNations**

With around 4 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](#) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the New Work SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), [in our company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

#### **Press Contact**

Caroline Harsch  
Media Spokesperson

InterNations GmbH  
Schwanthalerstrasse 39  
80336 Munich, Germany

Email: [press@internations.org](mailto:press@internations.org)  
Homepage: <https://www.internations.org/press>