



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Good Environmental Choice
Criteria
Grocery Shops

Version 2009:1

Good Environmental Choice

Good Environmental Choice.

The world's toughest ecolabel.

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) is a nonprofit organisation that has no political or religious affiliation. Protection of the environment and human health is our driving force. We have helped ensure that seals, sea eagles and peregrine falcons no longer are endangered in Sweden. We preserve biological diversity and are working to stop climate change, acidification, eutrophication, the spread of hazardous chemicals and much more.

But it is not enough to protect nature in reserves or to stop individual polluters. The total environmental impact must diminish. Companies that make environmental adaptations in their production methods and their products are very important in this effort.

“Bra Miljöval” (Good Environmental Choice) is SSNC’s own ecolabel and one of our tools for promoting progress toward a sustainable society. Good Environmental Choice sets high environmental requirements for the products and services that can be labelled.

Thanks to Good Environmental Choice, hundreds of products have been modified and adapted to the environment. Ecolabelling has produced concrete results. For example, Good Environmental Choice labelling has almost entirely eliminated the environmentally hazardous surfactant LAS from Swedish detergents.

Another example is that electricity bearing the Good Environmental Choice label must meet criteria for the flow of water through hydroelectric plants, which has increased biological life in watercourses. For power plants fired with biofuel, the requirement that ash be returned to nature has completed the cycle.

Good Environmental Choice is a part of SSNC’s green consumerism project. The Buy Green network is made up of active members whose activities include the yearly campaign week. Thanks to this campaign, the selection in most grocery shops is becoming increasingly environment-friendly. In the eyes of consumers the Good Environmental Choice label is a trusted symbol. For licensees the label offers competitive advantages.

Today there are Good Environmental Choice criteria for the following products and services:

- Heating providers
- Electricity supplies
- Goods transport
- Passenger transport
- Grocery shops
- Paper
- Textiles
- Chemical products



Good Environmental Choice

Read more about Good Environmental Choice at www.bramiljoval.se

The criteria can be ordered by e-mail: gbg@naturskyddsforeningen.se or downloaded from www.bramiljoval.se

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Foreword

The Good Environmental Choice label for grocery shops is one of the tools used by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation for promoting progress toward a sustainable society. These new criteria include basic requirements and yearly requirements. The basic requirements ensure a very good basic level of environmental effort at the shop; the yearly requirements cause the shop to devote special attention to different areas of its operations and assume some new challenges every year.

The basic requirements for a shop labelled Good Environmental Choice designation can be summarised as follows:

- the shop has a large range of organic groceries
- the shop has a large range of ecolabelled chemical products
- the shop has chosen not to sell products such as king prawns that are harmful from an environmental standpoint
- the shop carries out authentic environmental work of its own

All basic requirements must be fulfilled in order for the shop to bear the Good Environmental Choice designation.

The yearly requirements have different themes and are different from year to year. The initial special areas are seafood and climate. The yearly requirements list a number of measures that the shop should be able to accomplish to improve its environmental work within the area. There are points for each measure, and the shop should attain a certain number of points no later than October 1 in order to continue to bear the Good Environmental Choice designation.

Criteria for the Good Environmental Choice labelling of grocery shops are set by the SSNC's secretary general. The criteria apply from January 1, 2009 until the next version goes into effect, at the earliest on January 1, 2012.

Eva Eiderström

Director of Good Environmental Choice

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Scope of the criteria

All grocery shops can be labelled on the basis of these Good Environmental Choice criteria. The criteria set requirements for product range and the licensees' environmental efforts.

The criteria include basic requirements and yearly requirements. The basic requirements are in this document. The yearly requirements will be presented on the SSNC website and sent to all licence holders at least six months before they go into effect.

Basic conditions

The shop manager guarantees that the shop fulfils all legal requirements and has dealt with any complaints from environmental and health agencies.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

All of these requirements must be fulfilled.

1 Range of organic groceries

1.1 Dairy products

The shop sells KRAV-labelled milk.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled buttermilk or yogurt.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled butter/margarine.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled cheese.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled eggs.

1.2 Meat products

The shop sells KRAV-labelled fresh or frozen meat.
The shop sells at least one organic meat products.

1.3 Fruits and vegetables

The shop sells KRAV-labelled potatoes.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled onions.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled carrots.
The shop sells KRAV-labelled vegetables.
The shop sells two different KRAV-labelled fruits.
The shop sells some frozen KRAV-labelled vegetables.
The shop sells frozen KRAV-labelled berries.

What is meant by "The shop sells" is that the shop has at least one alternative of the product. All fats used as a sandwich spread are treated as butter/margarine. All cheeses, including soft and dessert cheeses, are counted.

What is meant by "meat product" is all processed products from animals, such as sausages, meat balls, pâté, etc. The product can be fresh or frozen. What is meant by "organic" is products bearing the KRAV label, labelled with the EU's organic label or a product for which the meat raw material comes from organic farms.

1.4 Dry products

- The shop sells KRAV-labelled regular wheat flour.
- The shop sells some additional KRAV-labelled type of flour.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled rolled oats.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled breakfast flakes or muesli.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled sugar.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled rice.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled pasta.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled coffee.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled tea.

Regular flour is wheat flour with normal protein content. Additional types of flour can be graham flour, whole wheat flour, rye flour, etc.

1.5 Bread

- The shop sells KRAV-labelled soft bread.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled hard bread.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled crackers.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled cakes.

Soft bread can be fresh or frozen.

1.6 Jars, tins, bottles

- The shop sells KRAV-labelled fruit drinks or juice.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled jam.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled marmalade.
- The shop sells KRAV-labelled baby food.

Reason for the requirements:

[1] Organic farming is the type of farming that has proceeded farthest toward sustainable agriculture. Organic farming means that no chemical pesticides or herbicides*, no artificial fertiliser and no genetically modified organisms have been used. KRAV is the ecolabel for organic groceries that is best known in Sweden. In other countries another ecolabel would be approved. To read more about organic farming's positive impacts on the environment, see the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, www.cul.slu.se/english/

* Organic farming permits the use of mushrooms and bacteria that have not been genetically modified as well as soaps, oils and plant-based extracts. In some farming copper and mineral salts also are allowed.

[1.2] In addition to the above basic requirements, KRAV has requirements for the ethical treatment of animals and strict requirements governing which additives may be used. For example, KRAV's rules stipulate that pigs should be able to go out and root in the ground, whereas the rules in the EU's organic regulations allow the time spent outdoors to be on a concrete slab. KRAV's rules forbid nitrates in meat products; the EU's permit nitrates. Since the range of KRAV-labelled meat products currently is small, the EU organic labelling on meat products is also approved.

2 Range of other products

2.1 Chemical products

Only ecolabelled

- detergents
- cleaning products
- dish liquid detergents
- dishwasher detergents
- toilet cleaners

are for sale in the shop.

Good Environmental Choice, Nordic ecolabel (Swan) and EU-flower are approved ecolabels.

2.2 Hygiene/cosmetics

The shop sells ecolabelled shampoo.

The shop sells ecolabelled soap.

What is meant by "the shop sells" is that the shop has at least one alternative of the product. Good Environmental Choice, Swan and EU-flower are approved ecolabels. Shampoos include child/baby shampoo.

3.3 Paper

Only ecolabelled

- bathroom tissue
- kitchen paper

are for sale in the shop.

Good Environmental Choice, Swan and EU-flower are approved ecolabels.

2.4 Energy

The shop sells energy-saving light bulbs.

Reason for the requirements:

[2.1-2.2] Ecolabelling requires that incoming chemical substances have minimum impact on the environment. There is a big difference between products that are ecolabelled and those that are not, even if they are the same brand and the packaging looks similar. For example, see "Non-ecolabelled detergents in Sweden" in the SSNC 2004 report.

[2.3] Ecolabelling requires that raw materials for paper do not come from devastated virgin forests and that the paper is not bleached with chlorine.

[2.4] An energy-saving light bulb uses one fifth as much electricity as a regular incandescent light bulb. If all households replaced one incandescent bulb per room with an energy-saving bulb, the savings would correspond to the household electricity required for 70,000 villas.

3 Refrains from selling products that have a large negative impact on environment

- 3.1 The shop does not sell king prawns.
- 3.2 The shop does not sell Klorin or any other product with hypochlorite.
- 3.3 The shop does not sell products made of tropical wood. FSC-labelled products are an exception and may be sold.

King prawns are marketed under names such as Scampi, Tiger Prawns, etc.

King prawns include all species in the Panaeus, Macrobrachium and Metapanaeus families.

Not counted as king prawns are the Norway lobster or "havskräfta" (Nephrops norvegicus), northern shrimp or "ishavsräka" (Pandalus borealis) or Haliporoides dionedeae, a cold-water shrimp caught outside Chile's coast.

Examples of woods that are considered tropical: Acacia, Balau, Cho Chi, Cho Xot, Cho-wood, Eucalyptus, Gmelina, Greenheart, Hevea, Jarra, Kamerere, Kamerere grandis, Keruing, Mahogany, Me, Merbau, Nyatoh, Pine, Saligna, Shorea, Tajibo, Teak, Yellow Balau, Xoan Dau.

In addition to FSC-labelled products, products from the rubber tree (Hevea) may be sold.

Reason for the requirements:

[3.1] Demand for king prawns produces serious environment consequences in the tropics in the form of devastated mangrove forests, tainted farmland, overfishing and deleted ecosystems. The problem is great for both farm-raised and wild shrimp. More information at www.natur-skyddsforeningen.se

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation has investigated the criteria for cultivation of Naturland-labelled king prawns and has concluded that they can not be approved for sale in grocery shops bearing the Good Environmental Choice label. The problem is, in part, that shrimp farmers need to comply with Naturland's rules during only 2/3rds of the shrimps' life span. That means that no rules are enforced during the sensitive first period when the young shrimp are taken out and large amounts of antibiotics often are used.

[3.2] When products containing hypochlorite are discharged in nature, there is great risk that chlororganic compounds will be formed. Many of these are extremely poisonous. One example of a chlororganic substance is dioxin.

[3.3] Devastation of tropical forests is proceeding at a furious pace. Valuable ecosystems are being lost for all time. FSC, the Forest Stewardship Council, is an international ecolabel of forestry. FSC's rules take into consideration both concern for nature and the rights of indigenous and local populations balanced against interest in sustainable production.

4 The shop's own operations

- 4.1 The shop has a person responsible for environmental issues.
- 4.2 Ecolabelled products are clearly displayed.
- 4.3 For cleaning the shop and personnel quarters, only ecolabelled dish, laundry and cleaning agents are used. The butcher's area is an exception.
- 4.4 Only ecolabelled soap, bathroom tissue and kitchen paper are used in the WC and the kitchen.
- 4.5 The shop turns over all of its hazardous waste for proper disposal.

Check to see that ecolabelled products are clearly displayed by positioning yourself so that you can see the entire bread shelf, for example. If you can point out the ecolabelled alternatives from that position, they are clearly displayed.

Good Environmental Choice, Swan and EU-flower are approved ecolabels.

- 4.6 The shop's remaining waste is sorted and turned over for recycling in batches that are suitable for the area.
- 4.7 The shop uses Good Environmental Choice electricity or purchases wind/solar energy.
- 4.8 The shop constantly monitors its energy consumption. At least once a year the shop reviews energy conservation opportunities with a consultant.

The consultant can be internal or external; what's important is that the person is competent in that area.

Reason for requirements:

[4.1] The person responsible for environmental issues has or is given the opportunity to get relevant environmental training.

[4.2] A customer who wants to buy ecolabelled products should not have to go along the shelf and check every inscription on the shelf or every single product. It should be easy to find the ecolabelled products.

[4.3-4.4] Ecolabelling requires that incoming chemical substances have minimum impact on the environment, that raw materials for paper do not come from devastated virgin forests and that the paper is not bleached with chlorine.

[4.5] It is important that hazardous waste does not end up in the regular rubbish or in the sewer.

[4.6] Recycling of waste preserves the earth's resources. For example, the mining of aluminium ore often occurs in open-cast mines, leading to contamination of nature and the discharge of poisonous material. The process of extracting aluminium from ore is very energy-intensive. It takes about 10 times as much energy to make new aluminium as it does to recycle the old.

[4.7] Electric power bearing the Good Environmental Choice label is electricity from renewable sources. In addition, there are requirements that reduce environmental impact from the generation of electricity. Hydroelectric power plants, for example, are required to always release sufficient water so that animals and plants downstream can survive. Buying electricity bearing the Good Environmental Choice label reduces the emission of greenhouse gases dramatically compared with buying conventional electricity. A shop that uses 1.4 GWh of electricity annually emits 50 kg of carbon dioxide instead of 83 tonnes.

Shops that want to bear the Good Environmental Choice label and have an ongoing contract with a supplier of electricity can be exempt from this requirement until the contract expires.

[4.8] Reducing the consumption of electric power is the best way to minimise the environmental impact of electrical usage.

5 2009 requirements

Seafood theme

A preliminary listing of requirements. Viewpoints on the requirements can be submitted to maria.palm@naturskyddsforeningen.se. An established list of yearly requirements will be sent to labelled shops and placed on the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation's home page no later than Jan. 1, 2009.

In order to retain its ecolabelling, the shop should have at least 10 of the 20 points by October 1, 2009 at the latest. If the shop has seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in a seafood counter, it should have at least 15 of 29 points.

5.1 Range of environmentally adapted products

5.1.1 The shop sells fish/shellfish that are not endangered by overfishing:

- Perch
- Alaska pollock
- Blue mussels (cultivated)
- Coalfish (saithe)
- Pike
- Pike-perch
- Lobster (trap-caught)
- Crab (trap-caught, Swedish)
- Herring, Baltic herring
- Sprat
- Flounder

Each species scores one point; however, the shop may count a maximum of 4 points for item 5.1.1.

Kippers are Baltic herring fillets; "böckling" is smoked Baltic herring.

5.1.2 The shop sells ecolabelled fish/shellfish:

- KRAV-labelled haddock
- KRAV-labelled salmon
- KRAV- labelled cod
- KRAV- labelled herring
- MSC-labelled Alaska pollock
- MSC- labelled pike-perch
- MSC-labelled hoki (blue grenadier)
- MSC-labelled ready-cooked seafood dishes in freezer compartment
- Other KRAV or MSC-labelled seafood or seafood dishes.

Each ecolabelled product scores one point; however, the shop may count a maximum of 4 points for item 5.1.2.

MSC stands for Marine Stewardship Council and is an international ecolabelling of fish and shellfish products.

The list covers ecolabelled products available for sale on the Swedish market in January 2008. Upcoming ecolabelled products will be counted in the same way.

5.2 Refrains from selling products that have a very negative impact on the environment

- 5.2.1 The shop does not sell species of seafood that are endangered and therefore red-listed by ArtDatabanken, the Swedish Species Information Centre:
- Sharks; Pobeagle (=beaumaris), *Lamna nasus*; spiny dogfish, *Squalus acanthias*
 - Atlantic halibut, *Hippoglossus hippoglossus*, fished in northeastern Atlantic
 - Salmon, *Salmo salar*, wild-caught in Baltic Sea
 - Blue skate, *Dipturus batis*
 - Cod, *Gadus morhua* (wild-caught)
 - Eel, *Anguilla anguilla*
- Deduct four points for every species sold.*

The Swedish Species Information Centre prepares Sweden's red list, which is a list of the species that are judged to not have long-term viable populations in Sweden – that is, species that run the risk of disappearing from the country: <http://www.artdata.slu.se/rodlista/index.cfm>

- 5.2.2 The shop does not sell king prawns in accord with the basic requirements. (4 points)

5.3 Guidance for consumers

- 5.3.1 Based on WWF's fish guide, the shop uses green, yellow or red labels by the product name for all fish in the shop. Ecolabelled fish also have green labels. (4 points)
- 5.3.2 The shop has WWF's fish guide hanging by the seafood counter so that customers can page through it. (4 points)

WWF's green list includes the fish listed under 5.1.1. The red list consists of the fish under 5.2.1 plus lemon sole, marlin, deep-sea monkfish, small Atlantic halibut, tropical shrimp, plaice, long flounder, swordfish, bluefin tuna and common sole. On the yellow list are varieties that are not acutely overfished, but knowledge about the population may be poor or the fishing methods damaging to the environment: catfish, Norway lobster, Atlantic halibut (farm-raised), haddock, crab, farm-raised salmon (not KRAV-labelled), locally caught mackerel, northern shrimp, turbot, rainbow trout, char, whitefish, vendace, brill, yellowfin tuna, farm-raised or rod-caught northeast Arctic cod (not KRAV-labelled) and salmon trout.

Does the shop have seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in the seafood counter? If yes:

5.4 Origin labelling and information on how the fish were caught

- 5.4.1 The shop labels all seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in the seafood counter with the zone where it was caught.
If the shop has its own packaged seafood and does not meet the requirement, 2 points are deducted.
- 5.4.2 The shop labels seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in the seafood counter with more specific information on where it was caught.
One product – 1 point, more products – 2 points, almost all – 3 points.
- 5.4.3 The shop labels seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in the seafood counter with the boat that caught the seafood.
One product – 1 point, more products – 2 points, almost all – 3 points.
- 5.4.4 For seafood packaged in-house or fresh seafood in the seafood counter, the shop makes note of what method was used to catch the seafood.
One product – 1 point, more products – 2 points, almost all – 3 points.

Examples: Baltic Sea, east of Bornholm, Kattegatt, etc.

Examples: rod-caught, trap-caught, trawled

Reason for the requirements:

[5-5.4.4] Overfishing of the seas is occurring at a furious pace. Certain areas in the North Sea are trawled up to 12 times a year, 75% of the world's fish population is fully exploited or endangered by overfishing, 34 different species are red-listed at the Swedish Species Information Centre.

[5.1.2] Ecolabelling is the easiest way to enable consumer to find the best alternative from an environmental standpoint.

[5.2.2] For more than 10 years SSNC has publicised the negative environmental impact of king prawns and carried on a dialogue with the trade on the need to not accept these products. Those who have responded to the challenge receive plus points.

[5.3.2-5.3.3] It should be easy to shop in a manner that is environment-friendly. While awaiting a larger range of ecolabelled fish and a ban on sales of endangered species, this is one way to guide customers at the point of purchase.

[5.4.1] An EU directive in effect since the beginning of 2002 requires that all fish and shellfish products sold within the EU must be labelled with the scientific name, accepted trade name and place where the seafood was caught or cultivated. Example: FOA 27 = Northeast Atlantic.

[5.4.2] FOA 27 includes the Baltic Sea, Kattegatt, Skagerrack, North Sea, Norwegian Sea, northeastern portion of the Atlantic. There is a detailed description of the Baltic Sea – FAO area no. 27 III d. The seafood population varies a great deal within the Northeast Atlantic fishing zone.

[5.4.4] The method used to catch seafood has great significance for how much environmental impact fishing has. Catching crayfish in traps uses only one-third of the energy required to trawl for them. Bycatch and destruction of the sea bottom is magnitudes greater with trawling than with more selective fishing.

6 2010 requirements

Climate theme

A preliminary listing of requirements. Viewpoints on the requirements can be submitted to maria.palm@naturskyddsforeningen.se. An established list of yearly requirements will be sent to labelled shops and placed on the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation's home page no later than Jan. 1, 2010.

In order to retain its ecolabelling, the shop should have at least 20 of the 30 points by October 1, 2010 at the latest.

6.1 Locally produced/grown products

- 6.1.1 The shop sells locally grown potatoes. *(1 point)*
The shop sells some locally grown vegetables. *(1 point)*
- 6.1.2 The shop sells some locally produced bread. *(1 point)*
The shop sells some locally produced dairy products. *(1 point)*
The shop sells some locally produced meat or meat products. *(1 point)*

"Locally grown" is within the county or within a radius of 100 km and that should be clearly stated on the product. The customer should not need to ask in order to know. Locally grown vegetables may not be grown in greenhouses heated with non-renewable energy.

6.2 Organic product range in accord with basic requirements

(5 points)

6.3 Transport

6.3.1 Air freight

The shop requires suppliers of fruit and vegetables to know which products are shipped by air and discloses that information to its customers. *(2 points)*

6.3.2 Goods transport

The shop works at reducing the environmental impact of transport in some way. *(2 points)*

The main supplier of products has ecolabelled goods transport. *(4 points)*

6.3.3 Personnel travel

The shop works at reducing the environmental impact of personnel travel in some way. *(1 point)*

6.3.4 Customer travel

The shop works at reducing the environmental impact of customer travel in some way. *(1 point)*

By "produced" we mean where the raw materials are processed – in other words, the bakery or butcher shop. "Locally produced" is within the county or within a radius of 100 km and that should be clearly stated on the product. The customer should not need to ask in order to know. "Some" means at least one.

6.4 Energy

6.4.1 Electricity

The shop uses renewable energy in accord with the basic requirements. *(3 points)*

6.4.2 **Heating**

The shop is heated by district heating or renewable energy. (1 point)

The heat or the renewable energy bears the Good Environmental Choice label. (2 points)

6.4.3 Energy conservation measures in accord with the basic requirements. (4 points)

Reason for the requirements:

[6.1] Locally grown products lead to less transport and thereby often lower emission of greenhouse gases. This does not apply to products grown in greenhouses that are heated with non-renewable energy.

[6.2] Organic production generally is better than conventional production from a climate standpoint. Among other things, this is due to the fact that artificial fertiliser, which requires a lot of energy to produce, is not used and that the concentrated feed that is used for the most part is Swedish-grown peas, not soybeans from devastated savannah forests in Brazil. A large range of organic products is a basic requirement for grocery shops bearing the Good Environmental Choice label.

[6.3] Transport makes up a very large portion of the shops' environmental impact.

[6.3.1] Fruits and vegetables shipped by air are the worst offenders from a climate standpoint.

[6.3.2] Transport makes up a large portion of the environmental impact caused by a shop. At the same time, it is difficult for each individual shop to influence how transport is handled. It is often centrally coordinated. The individual shop can be involved and influence the head office and some of the transport made directly to the shop.

Goods transport bearing the Good Environmental Choice label reduces emission of hydrocarbons and nitric oxides, among other things.

[6.3.3] Suggestions for measures to reduce the environmental impact of personnel travel:

Employee travel:

- The shop has formulated a travel policy for employee travel. Employee travel should take place as much as possible by train.
- The shop rewards carpooling to courses and meetings by granting a higher mileage allowance.

Travel to work:

- On a log in the personnel room, personnel check a box every day that they walk or cycle to work. Every check is worth SEK 5 and is redeemable in the form of ecolabelled products at Christmas.
- A lottery every month among those who have walked, ridden public transportation or carpooled to the job at least 15 times during the month. The prize is a basket of ecolabelled products.
- A gift card worth SEK 100 for all who have not travelled by car during the month.
- The shop subsidises a bus card.

[6.3.4] Suggestions for measures to reduce the environmental impact of personnel travel:

- The shop clearly informs its customers of alternatives to driving a car to the shop.
- The shop actively seeks to improve opportunities for riding to the shop collectively.
- The shop offers home delivery.

[6.4.1-6.4.2] Non-renewable energy leads to large emissions of carbon dioxide or the production of radioactive waste. If a grocery shop consumes 1.4 GWh of electricity a year and buys unspecified electricity on the Swedish market, it causes the production of 11 kg of radioactive waste and the emission of 83 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Purchasing electricity from renewable resources is a basic requirement for grocery shops bearing the Good Environmental Choice label.

[6.4.3] Reducing the consumption of electric power is the best way to reduce the environmental impact of using electricity.



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

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The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation is a nonprofit environmental organisation with the power to bring about change. We spread knowledge, map environmental threats, create solutions and influence politicians and public authorities at both national and international levels. The association has about 170,000 members who are active in local and county associations throughout the country.

We are responsible for the world's most challenging ecolabelling, Good Environmental Choice.

www.naturskyddsforeningen.se



Bra Miljöval