

Sweden's global image

The perception of Sweden abroad

Sweden's position in the Nation Brands Index 2024

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Preface

We live in a current era marked by conflict, economic uncertainty, and geopolitical tensions. These factors affect people's views of other countries. The Nation Brands Index (NBI) 2024 shows that people today, regardless of where they live, generally have a less positive attitude towards the world around them compared to years past. This is, of course, worrying because trust between people, organisations, and government is often crucial for international cooperation, business, and global progress. It is, therefore, extremely gratifying that Sweden is a country that not only continues to have a very high level of trust against this backdrop but is also one of the world's strongest nation brands.

Sweden ranks eighth out of 50 countries on this year's NBI. This is a remarkable achievement in terms of both the previous year's ranking and Sweden's size. The other top countries include democratic nations with some of the world's most robust economies, such as Japan, Germany and the USA. It should also be noted that Sweden's current image in Turkey has improved significantly compared to what it was in 2023.

Finally, NBI 2024 confirms two key findings from previous studies: 1) Personal experience with Sweden is an important factor for a positive perception. 2) Knowledge of Sweden is relatively low in large parts of the world. Going forward, authorities, companies, and academic institutions, therefore, must continue sharing fact-based and positive stories about Sweden internationally. The more that do so, the stronger the impact will be.

Madeleine Sjöstedt, Director-General



Overall conclusions

- 1. The image of Sweden is positive and has remained stable over time.** Sweden is found at the top of the Nation Brands Index (NBI), together with some of the strongest economies and politically significant countries in the world. Sweden's ranking on the NBI has improved by two positions and now places eighth out of the 50 countries surveyed in 2024 (in 2023, it was tenth out of 60 countries). Sweden's NBI ranking has fluctuated between eighth and tenth place over the past decade.
- 2. An increasingly polarised world affects how people view other countries.** As found in previous reports, the image of Sweden is most positive in the Western countries surveyed. It's also positive, although not quite as much, in surveyed countries belonging to the intergovernmental organisation BRICS – which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and more. The difference cannot be fully attributed to a lack of familiarity with Sweden. A gradual downward trend in the perception of Sweden can be observed over the last ten years in several BRICS+ countries. Meanwhile, a gradual upward trend can also be discerned for the same time period in Western countries. This is a reflection of increasing polarisation.
- 3. Sweden has a strong brand profile.** Different parts of the world view Sweden as excelling in the same areas, such as society and social governance, environment and climate, contributing to improved global peace and security, as well as combating poverty. Although awareness of Sweden is relatively low, many that are aware of it have strong and positive associations.
- 4. Sweden is attractive** for trade and investment, as well as tourism. The appeal in terms of trade and investment is driven by the perception of Sweden as a country where there is a high quality of life and social equality. As a tourist destination, its appeal is driven most by the perception of a place filled with natural beauty.
- 5. Personal experience with Sweden gives a more positive perception that creates resilience.** Those who have personally experienced Sweden in various ways through visits, Swedish products, or direct information about Sweden view it more positively. Compared to last year, Sweden's image in Turkey is recovering. However, there are no signs of improving perceptions in Saudi Arabia. Events that gain the attention of the general public can affect the image of a country, but the effect isn't necessarily permanent if there's already a foundation of relationships, interactions, and positive perceptions in regard to that country.

About the survey

The Anholt Nation Brands Index (NBI) is an annual survey that assesses the strength of countries' nation brands. The survey is conducted by asking the public in 20 countries about 50 other countries. The sample countries are chosen to represent a large proportion of the world's population and GDP and have varying degrees of economic, political and cultural influence. Due to sanctions imposed on Russia, no new data has been collected in the country, and data from 2023 was reused.

The study includes questions about knowledge, experience and perception of different countries as well as questions in the areas of social governance, population, exports, talent and investment, culture and tourism. Respondents' answers are compiled into a score for each country and survey question, resulting in an overall ranking for the countries in relation to the other countries in the survey.

This year's survey was conducted in July and August 2024 with 40,000 respondents, all of whom were individuals with access to the internet. The survey has been carried out every year since 2005, which makes it possible to follow how perceptions of different countries have changed over time. The underlying questions in the survey are the same, but the number of countries covered has varied between 50 and 60.

Region	Countries
North America and Western Europe	Canada, USA, France, Italy, Great Britain, Sweden, Germany
Central and Eastern Europe	Poland, Turkey, Russia (2023 data)
Asia and the Pacific	Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Mexico
Middle East and Africa	Saudi Arabia, South Africa

Sweden's global image

Nation Brands Index 2024

Photo: Jann Lipka/imagebank.sweden.se

Nation Brands Index 2024

The past year has been characterised by the conflicts in the Middle East, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and economic recession. Democracy has continued to be challenged while countries with half of the world's population go to the polls in the 'super election year' of 2024. The turmoil around the world has been polarising and affected the mood of the global public. People are less favourably disposed to other countries. The polarisation between the West and countries that want to form a counterpoint to its economic dominance, the BRICS+ countries, is evident in how people in those countries assess each other. Respondents in Western countries consistently have a more negative view of BRICS+ countries, while BRICS+ countries have a more varied view of countries in the West. The BRICS+ countries also don't have a consistently positive view of each other. Such polarisation is evident in the survey results about Sweden. The most positive perception of Sweden is in other Western countries. There are positive views of Sweden in the BRICS+ countries that participated in the NBI, but there's also a noticeable trend of negative perceptions of Sweden, especially in China and Saudi Arabia. Last year, Sweden's global image was challenged in several countries in connection with the NATO process, Qur'an burnings, and influence campaigns. This year, there hasn't been as much focus on Sweden, and its image has recovered in some instances. Newsworthy events within a country and a country's actions on the global stage can affect the world's perceptions of it. Ukraine and Israel, for example, currently rank low on the NBI. It is clear that in terms of nation brands, no country benefits from war and conflict.

Stability and polarisation characterise this year's NBI

For the second year in a row, Japan ranks first as the world's strongest nation brand. Among the top-ranked countries on the NBI, not much has changed since 2023. The same nation brands that are in the top ten this year were in the top ten last year. The fact that seven out of ten countries changed places is mainly due to very small differences in scoring. This confirms that, on the whole, country images change very slowly.

Japan is followed in the rankings by a number of Western countries. Italy, Switzerland and Sweden have increased in ranking, while the UK, Canada, USA, and France have fallen in rankings since 2023. BRICS+ countries such as China, India, Brazil, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates are, as before, among the lowest-ranked countries.

In terms of scores, which represent survey respondents' ratings of specific countries, few countries have improved their standings compared to last year. The general mood in the world has been affected by the global climate of uncertainty, and people's attitudes towards other countries are getting colder.

Nation Brands Index 2024

Previous year in parentheses

		Score
1 (1)	Japan	69,86 (69,85)
2 (2)	Germany	68,92 (69,43)
3 (5)	Italy	68,78 (68,69)
4 (7)	Switzerland	68,47 (68,24)
5 (4)	United Kingdom	68,25 (68,80)
6 (3)	Canada	68,11 (68,91)
7 (6)	United States	68,06 (68,43)
8 (10)	Sweden	67,54 (67,75)
9 (9)	Australia	67,45 (67,80)
10 (8)	France	67,16 (67,95)

Overall scores and rankings for NBI 2024 – all countries

Country	Score	Ranking	Country	Score	Ranking	Country	Score	Ranking	Country	Score	Ranking
Japan	69,86 (69,85)	1 (1)	Finland	64,81 (65,36)	16 (15)	China	58,47 (59,14)	30 (31)	Russia	51,94 (53,02)	46 (59)
Germany	68,92 (69,43)	2 (2)	Austria	64,35 (65,08)	17 (17)	Czech Rep	58,31 (59,32)	32 (30)	Ukraine	51,90 (53,82)	47 (57)
Italy	68,78 (68,69)	3 (5)	Ireland	63,68 (64,66)	18 (18)	Mexico	57,42 (58,61)	33 (34)	Kenya	51,59 (53,86)	48 (56)
Switzerland	68,47 (68,24)	4 (7)	Belgium	63,56 (64,12)	19 (19)	Slovakia	57,33 (57,97)	34 (35)	Israel	49,32 (55,91)	49 (46)
United Kingdom	68,25 (68,80)	5 (4)	Greece	62,95 (63,59)	20 (21)	Estonia*	56,94	35	Palestine*	44,43	50
Canada	68,11 (68,91)	6 (3)	Iceland	62,94 (63,46)	21 (22)	Türkiye	56,73 (57,85)	36 (37)			
USA	68,06 (68,43)	7 (6)	Portugal	62,76 (64,08)	22 (20)	Egypt	56,60 (57,91)	37 (36)			
Sweden	67,54 (67,75)	8 (10)	Wales	62,01 (62,43)	23 (23)	Chile	56,21 (56,83)	38 (41)			
Australia	67,45 (67,80)	9 (9)	South Korea	61,56 (62,17)	24 (24)	Peru	55,83 (57,15)	39 (39)			
France	67,16 (67,95)	10 (8)	N Ireland	61,13 (61,62)	25 (25)	Romania	55,51 (56,57)	40 (43)			
Spain	66,30 (66,81)	11 (11)	Singapore	60,91 (61,52)	26 (26)	South Africa	55,37 (56,60)	41 (42)			
Norway	66,15 (66,55)	12 (12)	Brazil	60,08 (60,64)	27 (27)	Indonesia	55,05 (56,26)	42 (44)			
Netherlands	65,85 (66,34)	13 (13)	Poland	59,66 (60,32)	28 (28)	UAE	54,89 (56,24)	43 (45)			
New Zealand	65,61 (65,96)	14 (14)	Taiwan	58,82 (58,92)	29 (32)	India	54,62 (57,79)	44 (38)			
Scotland	65,10 (65,28)	15 (16)	Argentina	58,47 (59,74)	30 (29)	Saudi Arabia	52,90 (54,42)	45 (54)			

Numbers in parentheses refer to data from 2023.

*comparison points for 2023 are missing

Overall scores and rankings for NBI 2024 – all countries

Numbers in parentheses refer to data from 2023.

*comparison points for 2023 are missing

Sweden's global image

Sweden's brand position is strong and has remained stable over time

Sweden is one of the world's strongest nation brands. It currently ranks eighth out of 50 countries in this year's NBI. Sweden's position has risen by two ranks in this year's survey and thus returned to its highest-ever placement on the NBI. This is a notable achievement, especially when viewed in the full context of the last ten years.

However, there's little difference between the top-ranked countries in terms of scoring. The score difference separating the nation brands ranked eighth and ninth, as well as the difference between ninth and tenth place, is within a margin of error (+/- 0.35%). Sweden's score is close to the one in ninth place but not as close to the score in seventh place.

Sweden's position in the Nation Brands Index 2010–2024



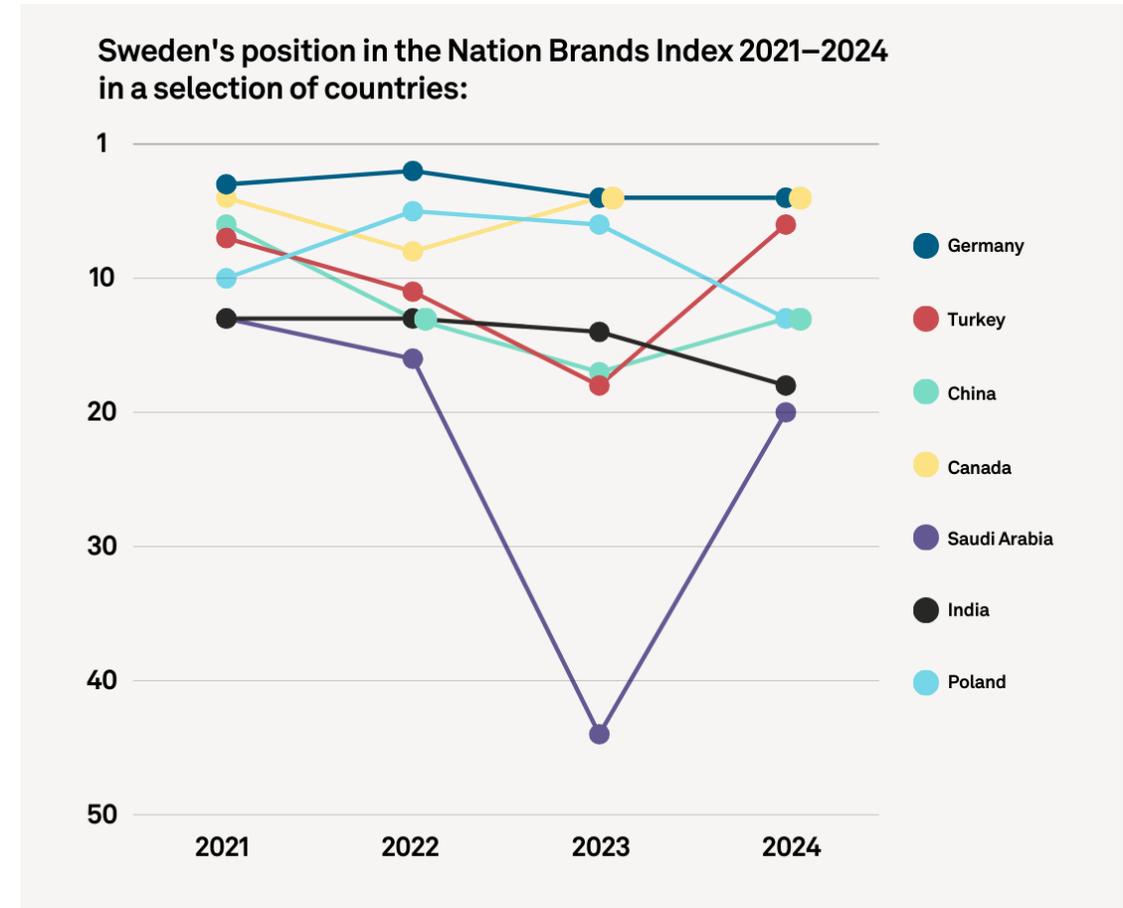
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Sweden's
ranking in 2024

More than perceptions of Sweden – geographical differences

Sweden ranks highest among other Western countries. Strong historical ties have been strengthened in recent years through, among other things, the united stance in support of Ukraine and Sweden's NATO application. The most positive perceptions of Sweden are in Canada, Germany and France. Favourable views can also be found in some BRICS+ countries but are weaker in countries such as India, China, South Africa, and Brazil than in Western countries. There have been no obvious changes in perceptions in the short term, but when analysed over a ten-year period, there's a noticeable trend of negative perceptions in several BRICS+ countries, such as Saudi Arabia and China.

Following the publicity surrounding the Qur'an burning incidents and Sweden's progress in joining NATO, Sweden's reputation fell significantly in Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The NBI shows that positive perceptions of Sweden have returned in Turkey, but it's a different story in Saudi Arabia. In Turkey, views of Sweden over the last ten years have been trending positively, with this year being one of Sweden's highest rankings ever among respondents. Sweden's image is improving in Saudi Arabia, but it should be considered that the public there has much less positive perceptions of other countries. Sweden's image isn't as negative as others, but perceptions of it have not become more positive than last year. A retrospective shows that the trend in recent years has been negative.



Sweden's score and ranking in all surveyed countries

Country	Score	Ranking	Country	Score	Ranking
Canada	69,25 (69,06)	4 (4)	USA	66,68 (65,85)	8 (7)
Germany	67,66 (67,51)	4 (4)	South Korea	65,04 (66,18)	8 (9)
France	64,71 (62,54)	4 (10)	Japan	55,55 (56,70)	11 (9)
Italy	65,57 (65,57)	5 (5)	Brazil	69,40 (68,94)	13 (11)
Türkiye	72,13 (69,13)	6 (18)	Poland	64,78 (68,35)	13 (6)
Mexico	72,47 (71,78)	8 (10)	China	64,50 (67,72)	13 (17)
Argentina	71,43 (68,91)	8 (9)	South Africa	69,54 (72,71)	17 (17)
UK	68,06 (66,28)	8 (6)	India	72,83 (72,24)	18 (14)
Australia	67,35 (70,04)	8 (7)	Saudi Arabia	66,22 (68,72)	20 (44)

Numbers in parentheses refer to data from 2023.

Sweden ranks high or relatively high in all surveyed countries. The ranking per country is based on Sweden's overall score compared to the scores of other countries. The differences in scores are related to how respondents in various countries tend to answer surveys. Factors such as culture, the general mood of a country and survey psychology have an impact. For comparing the perception of Sweden to how other countries are viewed, rankings tend to give better results. Yet, when it comes to monitoring the image of Sweden by specific countries, it's best to track scores and rankings over time.

Sweden's global image

Sweden's profile

Photo: Jann Lipka/imagebank.sweden.se



Sweden's global image

Knowledge of Sweden is relatively low in many countries. Despite that, the themes people associate with Sweden are consistent around the world. There's no difference in what is perceived as its areas of strength over time or between countries. However, those who are more aware of Sweden have a clearer picture. Democracy, social governance, and the green transition are areas in which Sweden both performs well and is perceived as performing well. There's a long-established and internationally promoted image of Sweden as a democratic and egalitarian country. More recent messaging has strongly tied the green transition with Swedish society and its business community. This has created strong credibility. Sweden also has deep historical and contemporary relations with its neighbouring Nordic countries, as well as shared values. Those nations have similar international profiles. So far, Sweden has benefited the most due to higher awareness and the most positive perception of it as a country. While Sweden has always been at the top of the NBI, the other Nordic countries have improved their rankings over the years. They haven't caught up yet, but they're not too far behind.

Governance is considered Sweden's main strength

As in previous years, survey respondents viewed Sweden's system of social governance as its main area of strength. The country is regarded as honest and fair, characterised by an overall sense of equality. Sweden ranks among the top countries for all indicators in this area, which also reflects the extent to which a country is considered to be acting responsibly in addressing environmental and climate issues. Only Switzerland outranks Sweden in that aspect.

Views of Swedish society and Sweden's population are also positive. This helps make Sweden highly appealing for international talent and investment, as well as a country to visit. People in Sweden are characterised as welcoming with a society that's egalitarian and has a high quality of life. These two metrics show that Sweden ranks first or second among all the countries featured in the survey.

Sweden is also identified with international responsibility. Only Switzerland, Canada and Norway are considered to contribute more to international peace and security. Combatting global poverty is additionally strongly associated with Sweden. Culture and tourism, meanwhile, are not main areas of Sweden's perceived strength, but it ranks stronger for them compared to most other countries.

Sweden's ranking by subcategory in 2024 Previous year in parentheses



Export
7 (8)



Governance
2 (3)



Culture
12 (14)



Tourism
13 (13)

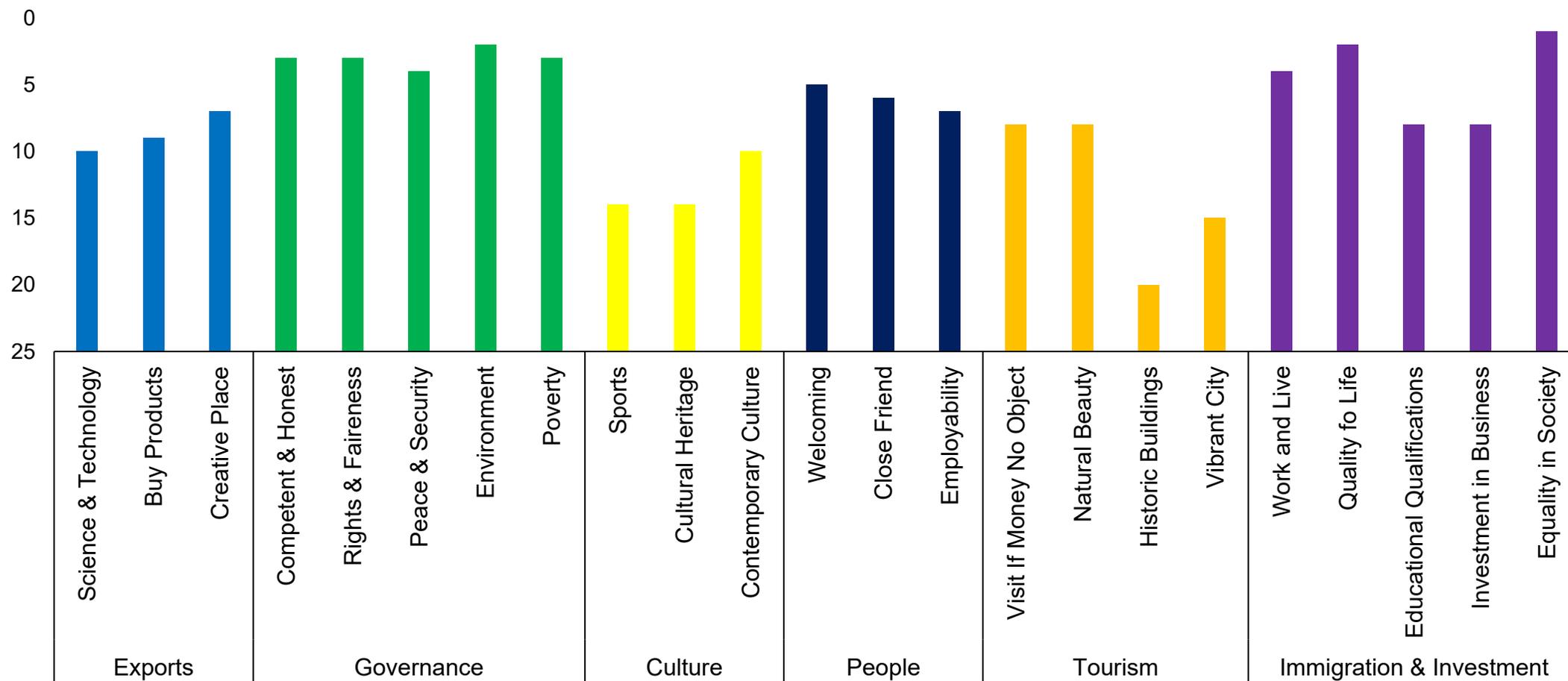


Immigration-
Investment
4 (4)



People
6 (6)

All survey categories and indicators for 2024



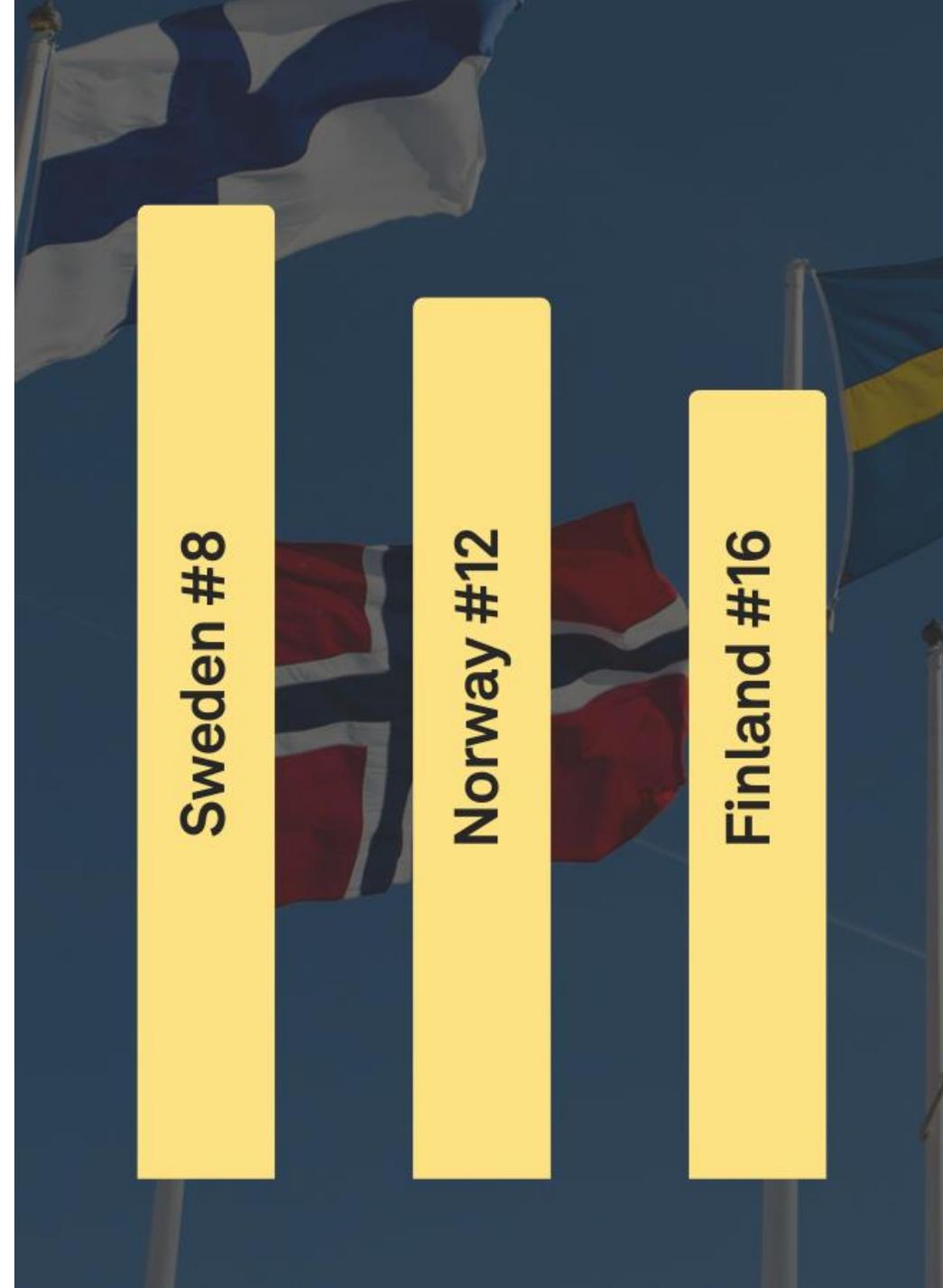
Sweden's global image

A common Nordic identity

An overall picture of countries in the Nordic regions emerges when surveying the global public. One that's a common identity based on the same areas of strength. Like Sweden, the other Nordic countries are perceived as democratic societies that have a high quality of life. Sweden ranks higher this year than Norway and Finland in the NBI and seems to benefit more from this common identity.

Society, social governance and international contribution form the basis of this common identity. The Nordics are considered competent and honestly governed but also viewed as contributing to global peace and security. There are minimal differences between the Nordic region countries in this area, but Norway outranks Sweden and Finland. Sweden, however, ranks slightly better in terms of social equality and high quality of life. Another common area of strength is environmental responsibility and sustainability. Here, Sweden ranks above Norway and Finland, but again, the differences are very slight.

The biggest disparity between perceptions of the Nordic countries relates to familiarity. Compared to other nation brands featured in the survey, the Nordics are relatively unknown internationally. In terms of awareness among the global public, Sweden ranks 21st, Norway is 27th, and Finland is 37th.



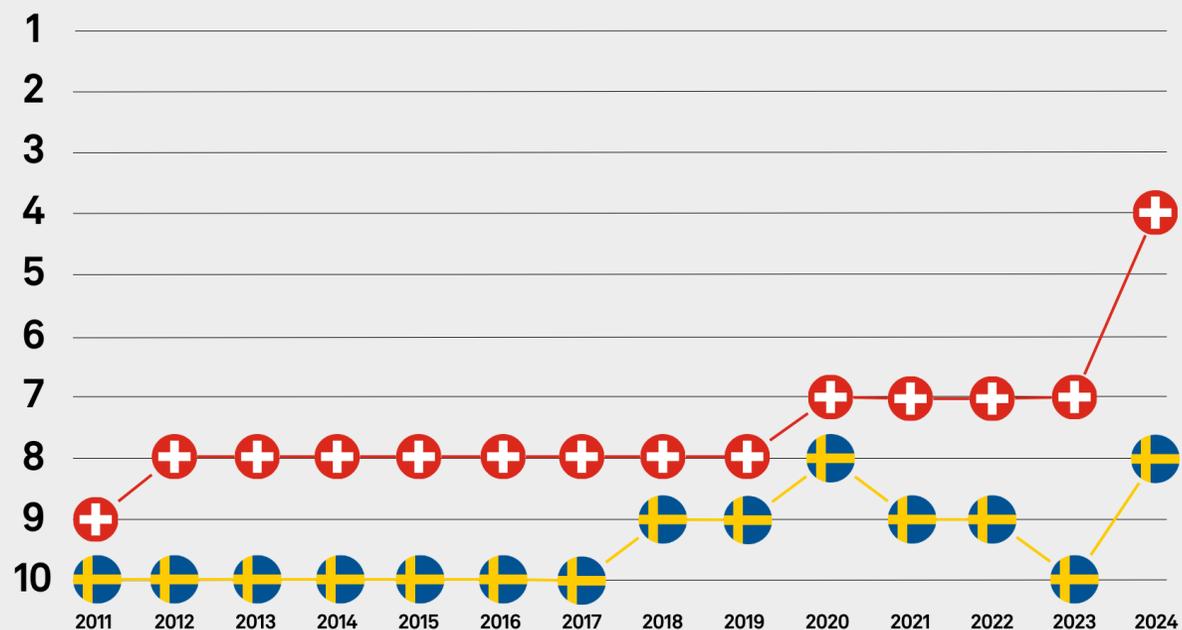
Sweden and Switzerland, in comparison

Switzerland is one of the world's strongest nation brands. The country ranks higher than Sweden in five of the six main survey categories except for one: culture. Social governance, for example, is an area in which Switzerland ranks highest out of all countries, while Sweden shares second place with Norway. Switzerland also ranks highest in talent and investment – an area in which Sweden is fourth and Norway tenth, just as they were ranked last year. Like Sweden, Switzerland's relatively weakest ranking is in culture, where they are 15th while Sweden is 12th.

An in-depth analysis shows that Sweden is stronger than Switzerland in some metrics, such as equality in society, interesting contemporary culture and a welcoming population.

Globally, Sweden has a stronger overall rating than countries such as Norway (with a total rank of 12th on the NBI), Finland (16th), the Netherlands (13th), and Austria (17th).

Sweden's and Switzerland's positions in the Nation Brands Index from 2011 to 2024



Sweden's global image

The appeal of Sweden

Photo: Jann Lipka/imagebank.sweden.se



Sweden's global image

Sweden appeals to people in other countries, both in the West and other parts of the world. Alongside events that gain international headlines, governments strive to develop and strengthen their country's nation brands through things like international relations and trade.

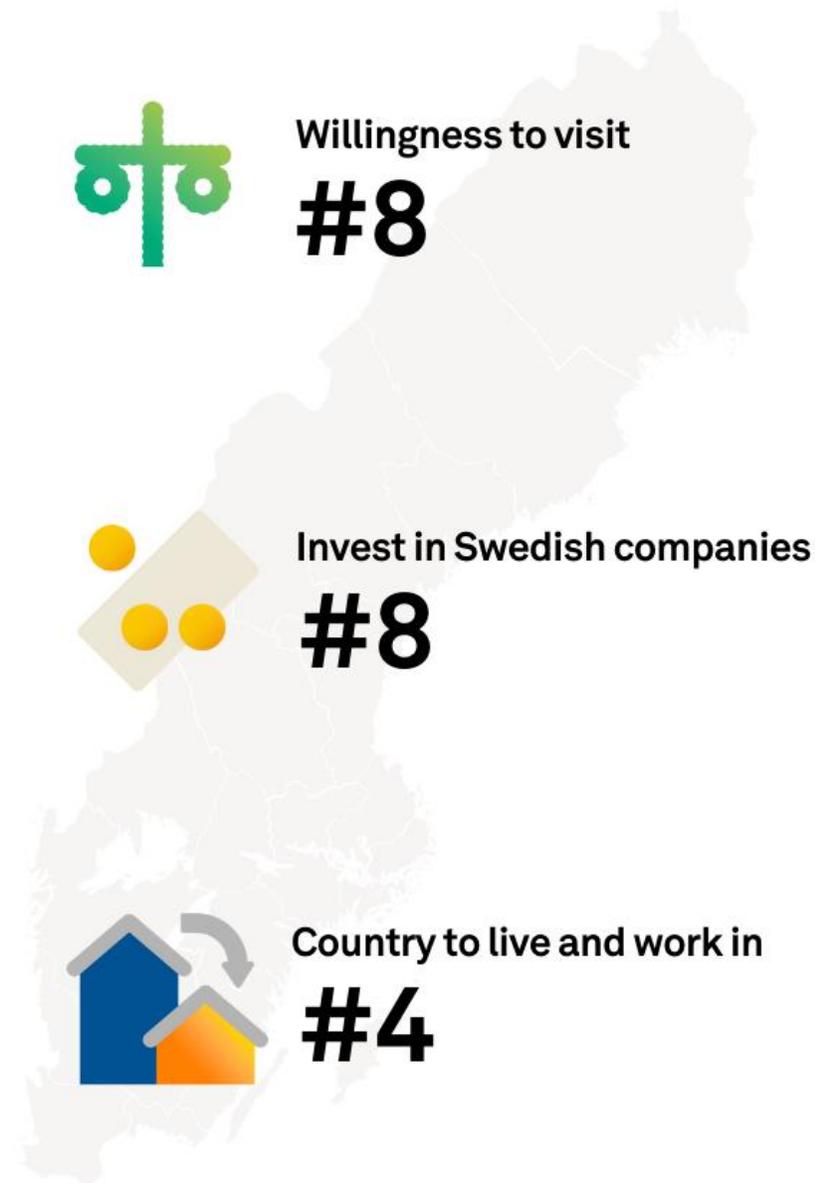
In this respect, Sweden is both relevant and attractive. It's appealing as a tourist destination, as well as a country for global talent and investment. Key factors for Sweden's appeal are the natural beauty, quality of life, and equality that people associate with it as a country. Sweden is also considered to offer strong educational opportunities. Additionally, it's clear that those who have personal experience with Sweden in some way also have a more positive view of it, which in turn creates conditions for increased influence and further appeal. A positive image is also necessary for ensuring a country's global reputation is resilient if it's challenged.

Sweden is attractive to investors, talent, and tourists

There is a strong international interest in Swedish companies. Sweden ranked eighth among survey respondents asked to assess the attractiveness of countries' companies for investment, ahead of both Norway (ranked 13th) and Finland (14th). This emphasises the strength of prominent Swedish companies and brands.

Sweden is also considered one of the most attractive countries in which to live and work. Only Canada, Switzerland, and Italy were viewed as more appealing. The most positive perception of Sweden as a country in which to live and work was found among respondents in Germany, France, and Canada.

When the global public is asked to rank what countries they would like to visit if travel costs were not an issue, Sweden scores high. Respondents placed Sweden eighth in this category, above classic tourist destinations like Greece, Great Britain, France and the USA. Interestingly, the top spots were made up of three Alpine countries: Italy, Switzerland, and Austria.



Sweden's global image

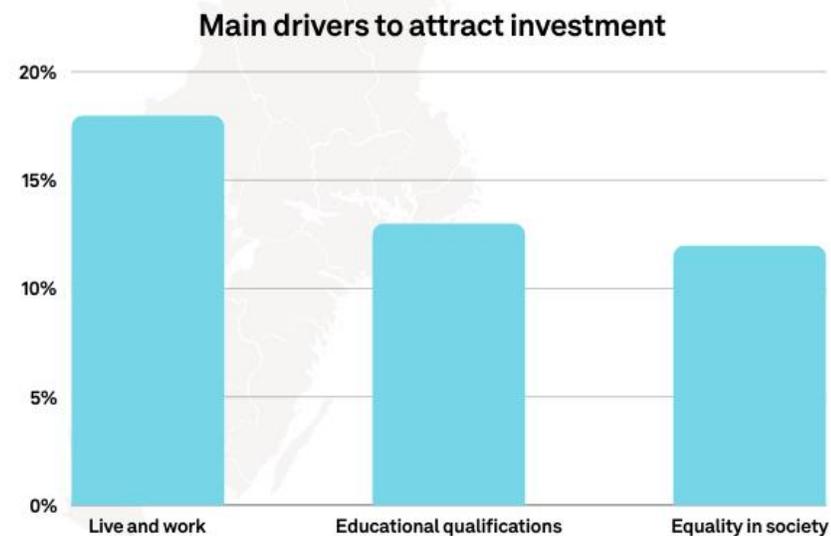
Driving forces to attract visits and investment

Visiting Sweden

Natural beauty is most often the main driver for people to want to visit most countries. This is also true for Sweden and becomes evident when analysing what factors make people want to visit. Interest in Sweden as a country to live and work in is another strong driver and also something that generally attracts visits to other countries. Other aspects of Sweden's appeal as a tourist destination that stand out include the quality of life and the perception that people in Sweden are welcoming to visitors.

Invest in Swedish companies

The main driver behind the willingness of international talent to relocate to a country tends to be the appeal of living and working there, as well as educational opportunities. In this regard, Sweden is strongly attractive to a global audience, who are easily able to imagine living and working there. Those same factors are also the main drivers for wanting to invest in Sweden. Another key motivator for investing in Swedish companies is the perception of Sweden as a country that values social equality.

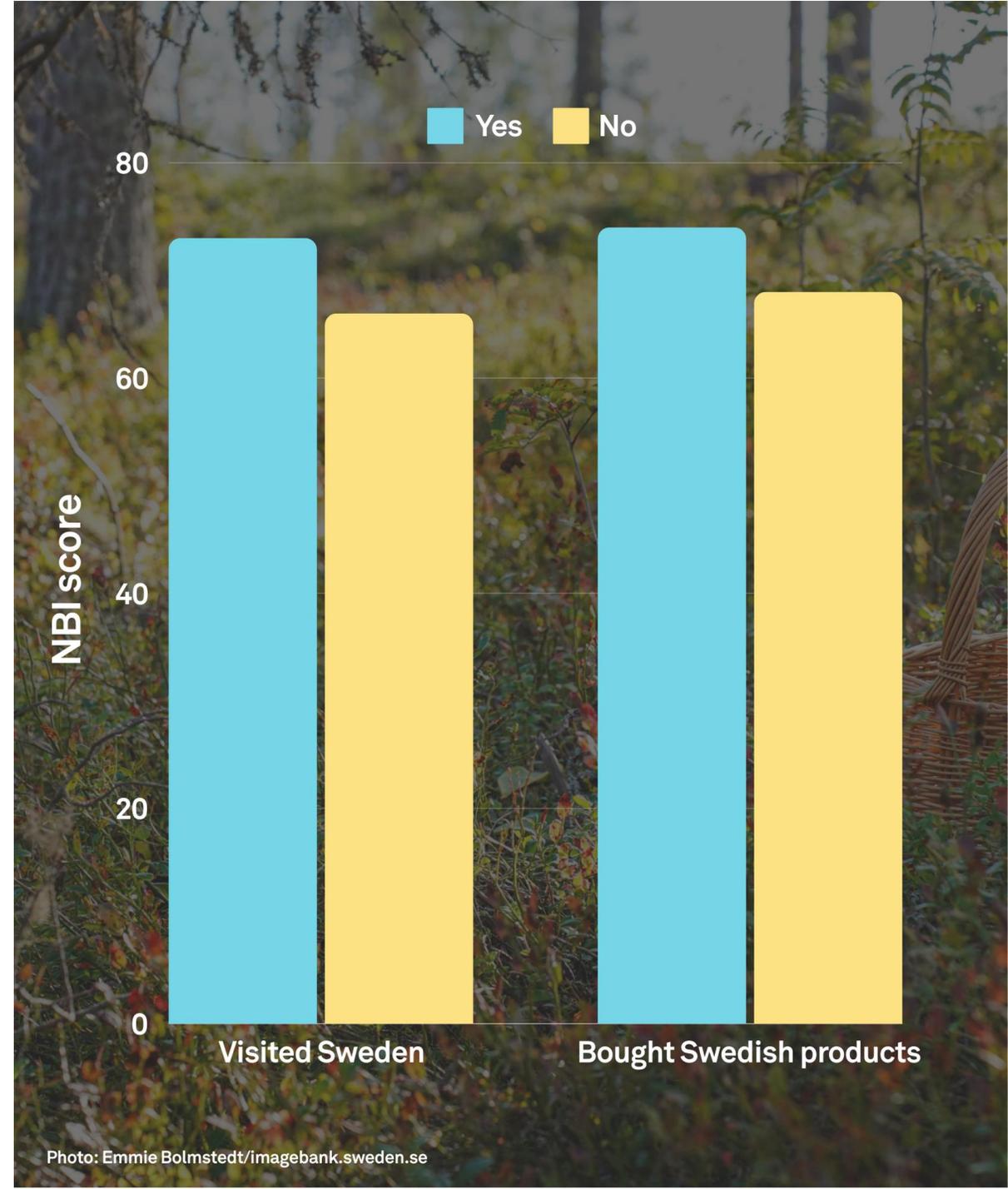


Sweden's global image

Personal experiences with Sweden encourage positive perceptions

Personal experiences with a country are key for positive perceptions of its nation brand. Respondents who stated that they had visited Sweden, bought Swedish products, or directly received information about Sweden generally held a more positive view of it as a country.

This can be found to hold true in countries that differ culturally and have differing relations with Sweden. Among those surveyed in, for example, Germany, USA, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, a more positive perception correlates with respondents that state they have some type of personal experience with Sweden – either directly, such as by visiting the country, or more indirectly as in, for example, buying Swedish goods.



Sweden's global image



Photo: Jann Lipka/imagebank.sweden.se