



# The Road to Net Zero

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Regional  
Insights

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November 2020

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# ABOUT THE ROAD TO NET ZERO SURVEY

The goal of this survey was to benchmark business opinions around South East Asia on sustainability perspectives, actions and commitments.

Questions referenced sustainability as a business priority, commitments and frameworks, and sustainability reporting. The survey ran from 28 Sep - 23 Oct 2020 with invitations sent to organisations from the British Chambers in Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, the Philippines and Thailand.

## THE BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SINGAPORE IS CARBON NEUTRAL

We are proud to confirm that we have achieved carbon neutrality for 2019, offsetting our carbon emissions with the support of member company Swire Pacific Offshore. Since Sep 2019, the Chamber has been focused on the sustainability of our own activities and holding important conversations with our network across the global agenda. As a first step, the Chamber announced an Equality and Sustainability Commitment in 2019, peer-reviewed by our engaged member committees. On World Earth Day in April 2020 we launched our Road to Net Zero theme to position the important discussions around COP26 in a commercially relevant understanding for our members.



BRITCHAM SINGAPORE IS





British  
High Commission  
Singapore

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREEN RECOVERY

H.E. KARA OWEN CMG CVO  
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SINGAPORE

We are at a turning point for our planet. As we recover from COVID-19, it is critical that we build back better, greener and more resilient. Decisions we take now will affect the direction of growth and innovation for the next decade and beyond, and the pace of transition to reach zero carbon emissions.

Guided by science, the UK government is investing in a green recovery at home and abroad, to create sustainable jobs and address the urgent and closely linked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and public health.

Next year, with our partner, Italy, the UK will host the UN climate change conference COP26 in Glasgow. In preparation, on December 12 this year, the UK will co-host a Climate Ambition Summit with the UN and France, and in partnership with Chile and Italy. This Summit marks the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement and will provide a platform for countries willing to commit to new, more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, long-term strategies to net zero, as well as new commitments on climate finance and adaptation. We need to use this Summit to move from words to action.

The UK wants to play a key role in encouraging a more rapid transition. As part of the commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has set out £160m in funding to increase the UK's offshore wind capacity- already able to meet 10% of our electricity demand and the largest in the world. The COP26 Energy Transition Council, chaired by the UK alongside the UN, aims to bring countries, industry, development banks, investors and civil society together to find solutions that will ensure all countries are able to more rapidly overcome barriers to transitioning to renewables ahead of COP26.

The UK has invested over £1 billion in clean power programmes in developing countries in the last 5 years. In September, an additional £50 million was invested in a new Clean Energy Innovation Facility (CEIF) under the UK's International Climate Finance. This will help vulnerable countries access innovative clean energy, especially in growing sectors like cooling, smart energy and storage. Building on the strengths of our innovative R&D and business sectors, we've begun a process of sustainable growth that might once have been deemed too risky. The current unprecedented pandemic is an unlikely impetus: this has underlined the urgency of adopting new sustainable ways to how we live, work and play in these extraordinary times.

Between April and June this year, the UK went 67 days without using any coal power: we are committed to ending our use of coal power by 2024. Today, electric vehicles are cheaper to run than new fossil fuel cars and experts estimate that prices of such vehicles will fall further in this decade.

The economic case is clear – renewable energy is increasingly cost-competitive with coal due to the dramatic fall in costs over the past several years, and has huge potential for job creation.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Singapore's survey demonstrates that there are genuinely heartening insights into how businesses are thinking: The ongoing pandemic has encouraged an increase in sustainability responsibility for close to 78% of respondents in this survey. Businesses across Southeast Asia, both British and local, are realising that a green recovery can help provide market differentiation and translate directly to cost-savings. Going green is not just good for the environment, it's good for business.

As we work towards COP26 in Glasgow, we will continue collaborating with governments and businesses in this region on strong climate action. I am proud to share that last month, the ASEAN Secretariat and its Member States endorsed the ASEAN-UK Cooperation Framework on COP26 – enabling even closer partnership between us on climate. Singapore remains a key partner for us on this work. The framework will build momentum towards action on the climate issues of greatest importance to Southeast Asia, including energy transition, nature, and adaptation and resilience.

Such change will require collective business action and leadership, committed to taking bold steps for the benefit of our future generations. I commend the Chamber on undertaking this survey, the results of which clearly evidence the need - and the will - for change.



## FOREWORD

SARAH CRAGG

CHAIR, BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SINGAPORE  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

In January 2020 for the first time in its 10-year history, the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report recognised environmental risks as the five most likely risks for doing business over the next decade. These included climate action failure, biodiversity loss, extreme weather, natural disasters and human-made environmental disasters. Despite the unprecedented slowdown of the global economy due to COVID-19, these predictions are already coming true.

2020 is likely be the world's hottest year on record, with the five hottest years ever measured in the last five years. There were unprecedented forest fires in Australia and California. There has been deadly flooding in Vietnam, Indonesia, Jamaica, Bangladesh and India. These occurrences are happening with such frequency that they often no longer attract global headlines or attention. However, it is easy to see how they all make our planet less safe and make doing business less predictable.

While this reality can feel overwhelming, there is good news. As all entrepreneurs will tell you, with risk comes opportunity. Businesses, large and small, are quickly realising that finding ways to tackle these environmental and social issues brings dividends, especially to those who do it first and do it right. And for those who are not so inclined to make the change, consumer and shareholder pressure will quickly make having a transparent and meaningful sustainability strategy a non-negotiable.

Carbon emissions and commitments play an important role in these strategies, which is why to celebrate Earth Day 2020, Britcham launched the Road to Net Zero campaign. To date, the Chamber has held over 15 events and published many thought leadership pieces to raise awareness of the importance of reducing our carbon emissions, the role of business and net zero commitments and available industry expertise to inspire and help businesses to take action.

It is of course vital to walk the talk which is why the announcement from the Chamber earlier this year that they have achieved Carbon Neutrality is so important. As a small organization it shows that whatever your size you can play your part.

Thank you to all those who took part in our sustainability outreach. These responses will help us to tailor our program for 2021 and in the run up to the all-important COP 26, taking part in Glasgow in November 2021. We understand that sustainability is a journey and that everyone is at a different stage so we want to ensure that whatever size of company, whatever industry, our events and programs help you to take your next steps. Your responses will help us to ensure this is the case.

Albert Einstein is credited with saying, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.” We know the current system isn’t working, not only for the planet but also for many of the people we share this planet with. I’m proud to be part of a Chamber that is making the changes we need and inspiring others, whether businesses or individuals, to also take action. Join us as we #buildbackbetter.



<https://netzero.britcham.org.sg>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the collection of data from this regional outreach, we witnessed several companies beginning their response with enthusiasm, yet faltering when questions became more specific to targets, commitments and reporting on progress. This pattern illustrates a common issue within the business community - many appreciate the importance of sustainability and net zero ambitions, yet have no internal responsibility on the issues or consider themselves too small to be able to make a difference.

Our own recent carbon neutrality announcement illustrates that positive change **can** be made, even in a small national organisation of less than 20 people.

Within the results, almost three-quarters of all respondents stated that sustainability is an issue that can provide market differentiation, translate directly to cost-savings, and requires collective action. In the past five years, environmental issues have increased as a strategic priority for 89% of all respondents, significantly so for 64%. Over half had sustainable activities driven at a global level, and Covid had increased organisations to be more sustainable in 78% of cases.

Over three-quarters have sustainability commitments, with most around emission and/or waste targets and most linked to SDGs. Those who had no commitments faced obstacles from senior management buy-in, considered their business to be too small to take action, or were actively working on a framework.

Despite the interest in carbon emissions, only 45% had long-term reduction targets in place.





# WHY IS NET ZERO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

MEMBERS ACROSS OUR BUSINESS COMMITTEES SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

## **William Hudson, Head of Southeast Asia, The Carbon Trust**

The Carbon Trust is a global, mission-led organisation that works with businesses, governments, investors, and organisations to accelerate the delivery of sustainable, low carbon economies. The widespread global adoption of net zero targets is an important lever for driving ambitious climate action. Deep cuts to emissions in line with a 1.5°C pathway and the permanent removal of any remaining greenhouse gases will be needed in order to achieve these targets – both of which are critical to addressing climate change. It will undoubtedly require innovation – but we are here to help. We are working with corporates, institutions and governments around the world to help set rigorous net zero targets and support their delivery.

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## **Simon Bennett, GM-Sustainable Development, Swire Pacific Offshore**

Whilst shipping is by far the most fuel efficient method of keeping world trade moving, it is also a material emitter of Greenhouse Gases (some 2.5-3% of the global total, equivalent to that of Germany, if the sector were a country). The transboundary nature of our business (and of aviation) led to our exclusion from the Kyoto and Paris Agreements to assist in sealing the deal, but that does not remove our implicit responsibility to our world and to future generations to also work to decarbonise our business; to do our part to keep global warming to below a 2 degC increase, and to strive for limiting the increase to 1.5degC. Since ships moved from using coal about 100 years ago, shipping has burned Fuel Oil; a residual, almost waste (and thus cheap) by-product of refining fossil fuel to make petrol and diesel. Along with CO<sub>2</sub>, our combustion of FO in ships' internal combustion engines also emits pollution such as SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, Particulate Matter, Black Carbon and so on. The negative costs of this pollution have been externalised to the areas around berths in ports, and those who breathe air (=us!). It is now crucial that the shipping sector cleans up its act, and changes asap to using a sustainable, cleaner, low or zero carbon energy source to play our fair part in the reduction of global warming, and leaving a world fit for future generations.

## **Tim Rockell, Chair, British Chamber of Commerce Singapore Energy & Utilities Committee**

I hoped that 2020 would be a year of 'sensible conversations' on climate change. That is why I am delighted that the Chamber has come together and led around the theme of the 'Road to Net Zero'. It's highly relevant that the UK is hosting the COP26. My view is that COVID-19 will be an accelerator, not a brake, for addressing climate change issues. Not just because of the cleaner air in polluted cities but because we are working differently and aspirations around vehicle ownership and how we view issues like mobility are already shifting in the minds of Gen-Zs. Every word counts but for me the key word is 'Net'. This will be a decades long transition. Energy access needs to be achieved and rising middle classes won't stand for going without. A transition needs to be financed and new business models need to evolve. This is where the UK is in a leading position with test-bed projects aiming at world-firsts on emission reduction and levelised playing fields so that industries can collaborate and also compete across borders.

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## **Mohit Grover, Deloitte Southeast Asia Sustainability Leader**

Deloitte commits to achieving net-zero emissions by 2030 and extending our impact beyond ourselves. We partner with our clients and guide them through the decision-making process to attain sustainable operations and sound climate choices that directly address the world climate crisis. We're there with you every step of the way - partnering from the very beginning with insight-driven strategy culminating in the impactful transformation necessary for your business to thrive. We've learned the key to business survival lies in demonstrating sustainable practices that meet our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. With more than 20 years of experiencing quantifying climate risk, Deloitte changed its practices to adapt to this environment, and we help our clients find their unique solutions to lead the way in a new sustainable economy. Whether you are trying to measure your impacts, build and define how to operate your climate strategy, report on your sustainable achievements or build a more inclusive workforce, we have the innovative approaches, digital solutions and deep-industry experience to map your way forward. Together we can rewrite the playbook on authentic business responsibility.

## Phil Turley, Venture Director, Shell

Shell has been partnering the government and industry partners to co-create Singapore's energy future and deliver more and cleaner energy solutions together. In line with our ambition to become a net-zero energy emissions business by 2050, or sooner, Shell is building on our strengths as an integrated global business by refocussing our core businesses in Singapore and launching low carbon solutions to help our customers decarbonise. We have launched a rapid charging service for electric vehicles (EV) at Shell service stations in 2019 – a first in the country and in Southeast Asia – in step with Singapore's shift towards cleaner energy vehicles. We have also launched carbon neutral driving for fleet customers. Carbon offsetting is not the only way to lower emissions, but it paves the way for our customers and us to work towards a sustainable future. Shell is also collaborating with key players to co-create and innovate energy solutions. We are embarking on a feasibility study with the National Environment Agency for the set-up of waste segregation facilities and plastic pyrolysis plants to recycle Singapore's plastic waste. We are also boosting the local start-up scene by building up energy start-ups in the smart, clean energy space.

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## Ben Moo, Technical Director, Mott MacDonald

We have a wonderful opportunity to achieve net zero by leveraging the lessons of the past, the science of today, and the insights from our data for our future. We are incredibly well placed to solve our planet's greatest challenges, and it excites me greatly that we, now, have such great means to contribute to this cause effectively. The built environment is where we work, play, and live. Our commitments to Sustainability and any adopted pathways to net zero must be considered beyond mere duty; but rather, embraced with enthusiasm for the boundless opportunities it brings. Net zero to me means improved places, advancements in technology, and a more cohesive and inclusive culture; definitely a world I would want to live in, and be proud to pass on to future generations. For more on Mott MacDonald's carbon neutral status visit [www.mottmac.com/releases/mott-macdonald-is-certified-carbon-neutral-globally](http://www.mottmac.com/releases/mott-macdonald-is-certified-carbon-neutral-globally).

## Allard Nooy, CEO, InfraCo Asia

In today's environment, investments in infrastructure strategically focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. Private sector investments have a pivotal role to play in accelerating the region's transition towards clean energy, climate resilient infrastructure and net zero emissions. As a company of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), InfraCo Asia has been a pioneer in promoting sustainable infrastructure and remains steadfast in its commitment to addressing climate change, reducing carbon intensity by providing the funding and development expertise needed to de-risk these endeavours, and 'crowd-in' private sector participation in infrastructure that promotes sustainable and inclusive growth.

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## Nadege Claudel, General Manager, BSI Group Singapore

COP26 in Glasgow next year will be a critical date for Governments and corporates alike, to show progress on their zero-carbon journey. BSI, as the organisation that has created standards and solutions to help companies improve, we are often asked what zero carbon truly means as a target. Although globally we have seen some of the big brands and their supply chains rally behind the process, it is worthwhile taking a moment to reflect, that as zero-carbon world is likely to be as disruptively positive, as the first Industrial Revolution. With the process of growth and decarbonisation creating great opportunities by the creation of new business models, technology and ways of working and living. To achieve this, we have seen in some countries, improving electricity supply by switching from fossil fuels and increasing the use of wind and solar power. But these changes in comparison to what needs to be achieved is the easy bit; we need to see programmes of carbon-cutting actions across all parts of today's society, starting with energy supply but also embracing activities as diverse as agriculture, built environment and fashion. Central is the mindset that companies need to apply to this challenge and perspective that this is not about individualism, but working together, using the technology that is available in the market. Although in Singapore there is no target date to achieve zero carbon, progress is being made in favour of electric vehicles, as well as the high level of ambition by various corporates to be zero carbon by the end of the year. Whatever you look to set as your level of ambition, BSI is here to support you on the journey to improve.

## International Baccalaureate Organization

The commitment to reach carbon net zero by 2050 is a crucial, ambitious but admirable goal. Climate change is the greatest threat to the current and every future generation. Equipping the children of today with the knowledge and the awareness of the need to protect our environment is paramount to bringing about genuine and impactful change for a better world. The International Baccalaureate (IB) programme strives to create global citizens who will help to shape a world where humans are more in tune with their environment and surroundings, and are aware and respectful of other cultures and belief systems. Across its global community of schools, the IB supports initiatives and both teachers and students taking action to promote sustainability within their schools and wider communities. Also, through the IB Diploma Programme (DP) students have the option to explore environmental issues further with the Environmental systems and societies course, where students observe the scientific, ethical and socio-political issues behind the emergency. The IB steadfastly supports the protection of the environment and the importance of educating the leaders of tomorrow on how to take meaningful action to achieve a better world for all.

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## Cecilia Leong-Faulkner, Founder, British Theatre Playhouse

I was recently invited by Professor Benjamin Horton, Director of Earth Observatory Singapore at NTU to a Zoom session on Climate Impact Asia with some distinguished climate scientists, including Dr Sylvia Earle. Allow me to share this message: "we are in this together". The science and evidence of climate change are all there, and we can access what the problem is. We are the cause, and we are the solution. What to expect if we take no action to change and help to repair our planet? We can expect increased sea-level rise resulting in flooding and coastal hazards, increased wildfires, declining water supplies and threats to our food security. We can't afford to ignore climate change - we need to protect and restore our oceans and forests and fund a sustainable low carbon future by bringing back the Paris Agreement to the table to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change.

# SURVEY RESULTS

SUSTAINABILITY AS A  
STRATEGIC PRIORITY

COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

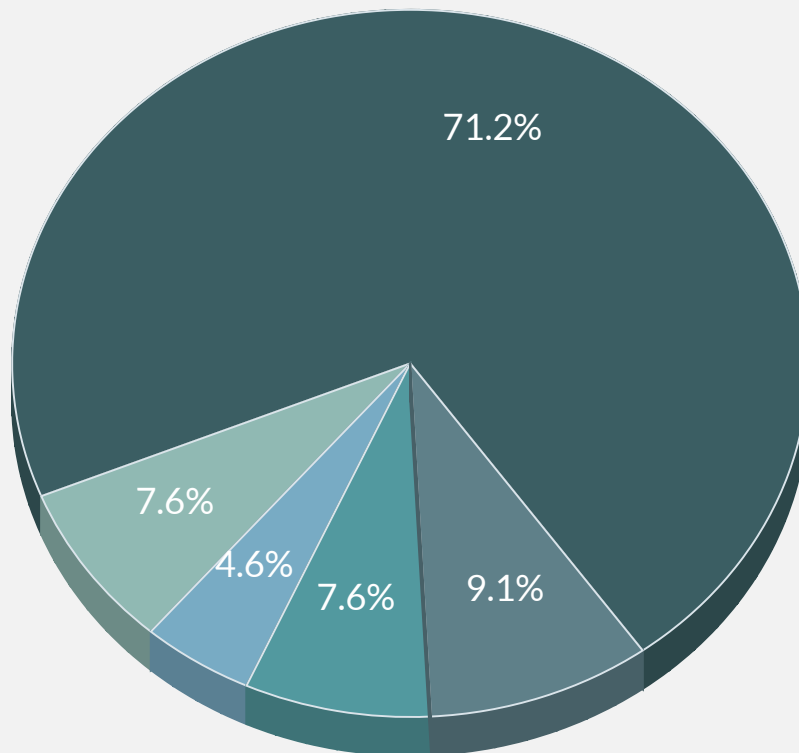


PARTICIPATING  
CHAMBERS



# SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

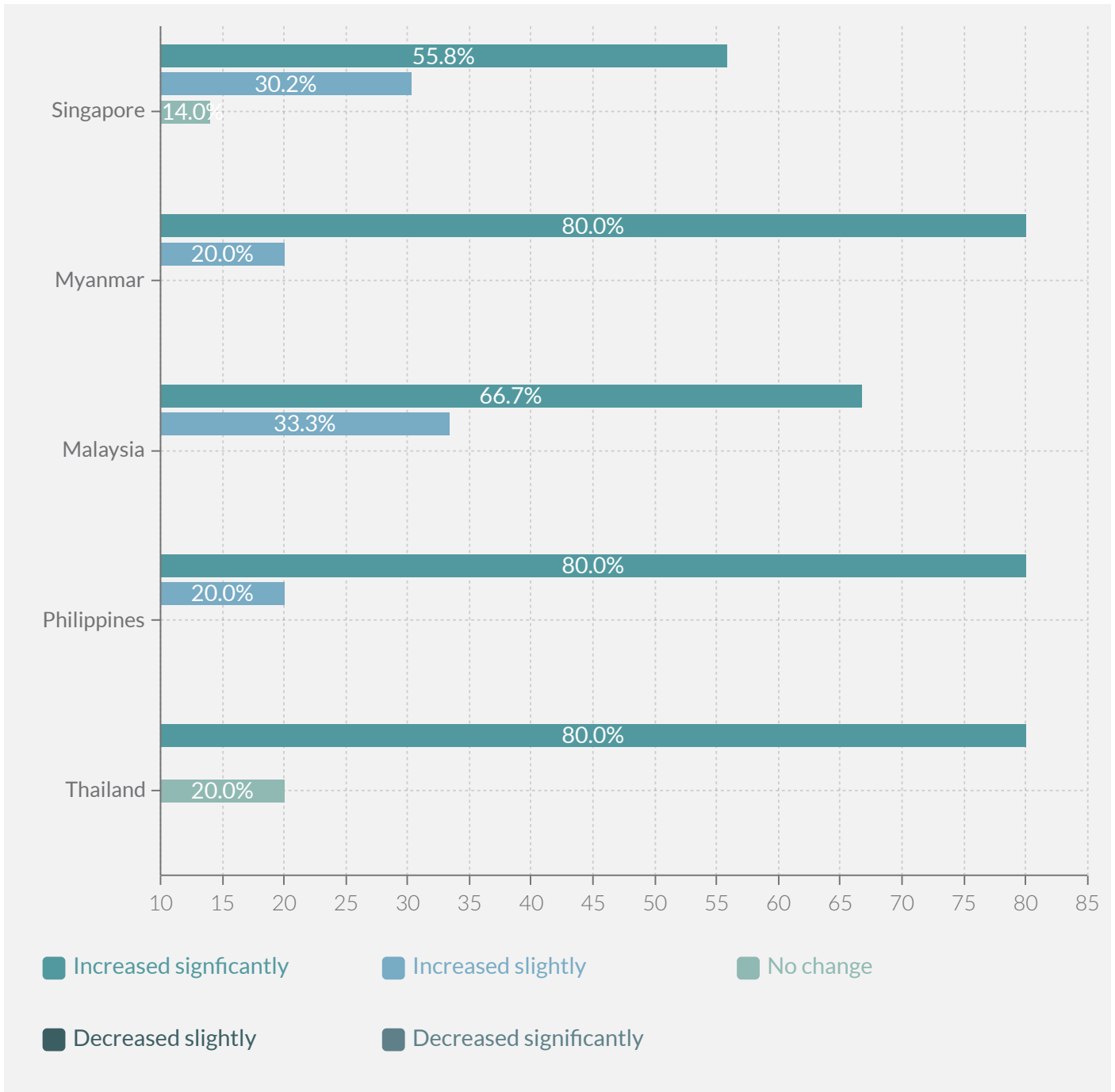
## Q. How do you regard sustainability?



<input type="checkbox"/> An issue that can differentiate your organisation from others from the branding sense, and thereby drive competitive advantage in terms of marketing	7.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> An issue that can translate directly into cost savings for your business	4.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> An issue that requires collective action among many firms in order to make environmental challenges pre-competitive	7.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> All of the above	71.2%
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above	9.1%

# SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

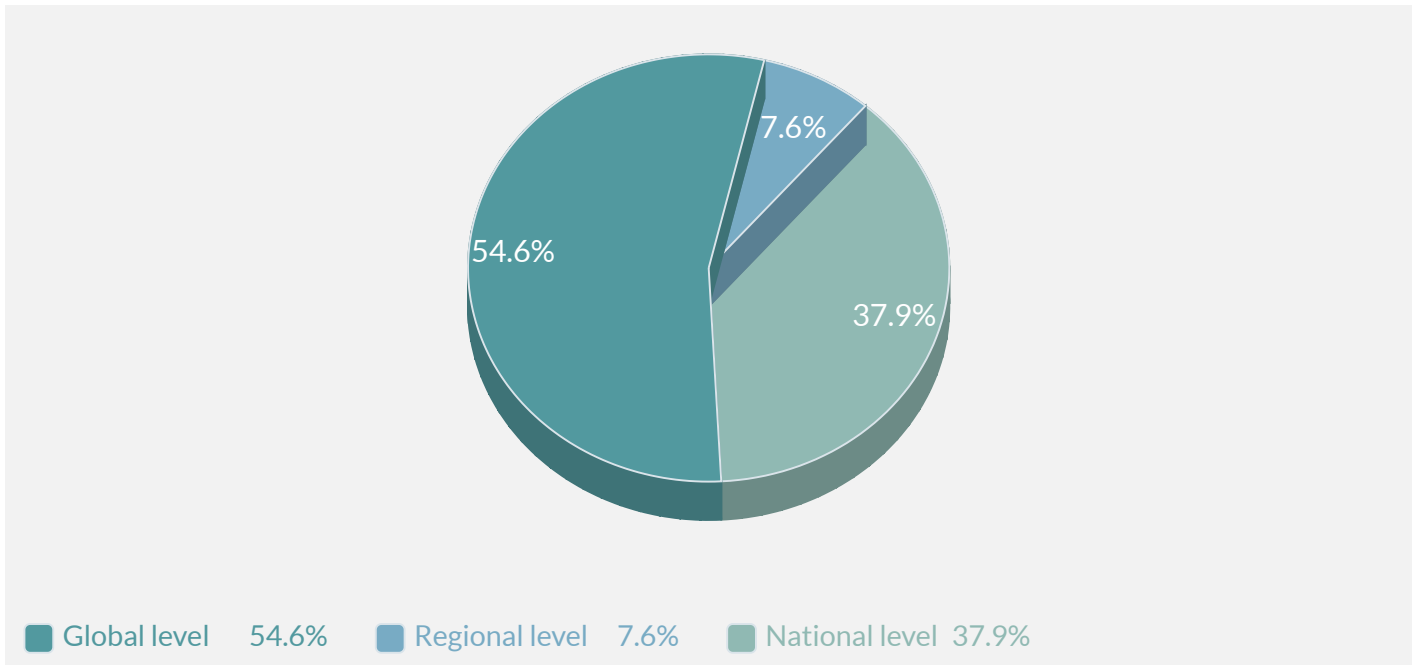
Q. Compared to five years ago, how has environmental sustainability changed as a priority at your company?



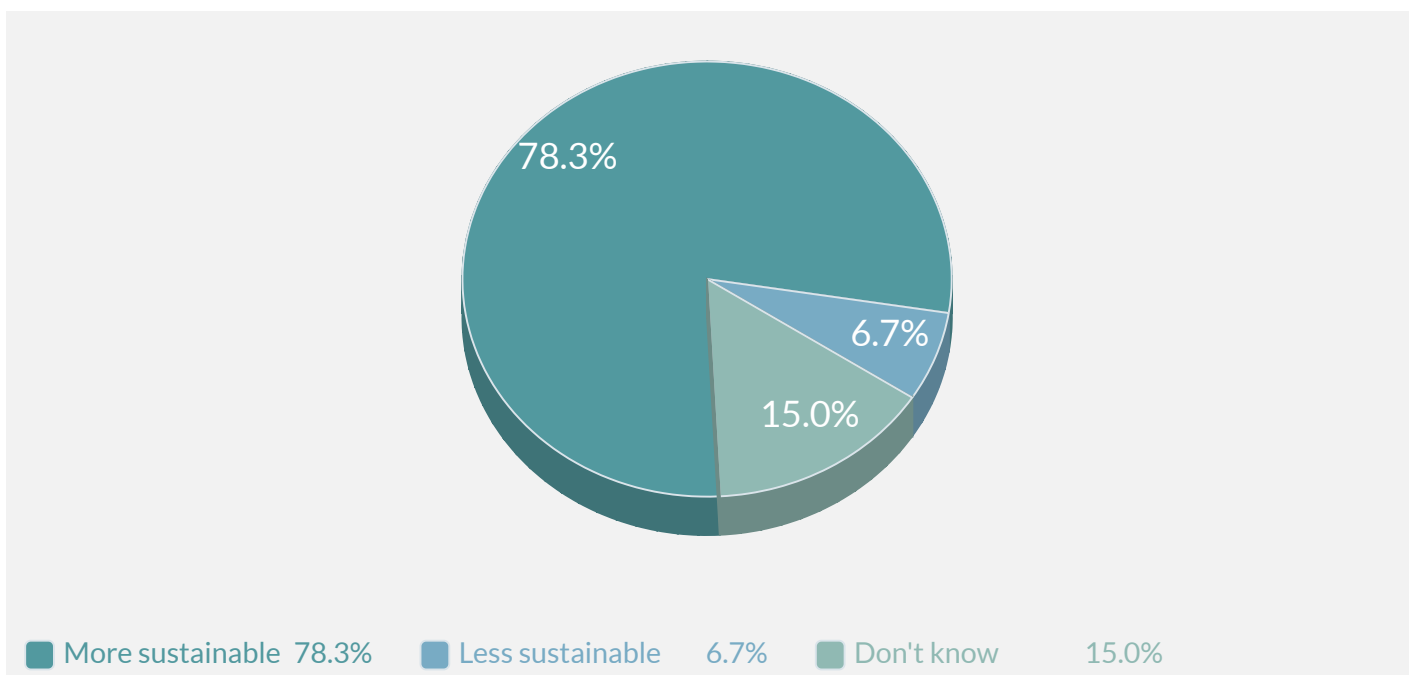


## SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Q. Where are your company's sustainability activities driven from?

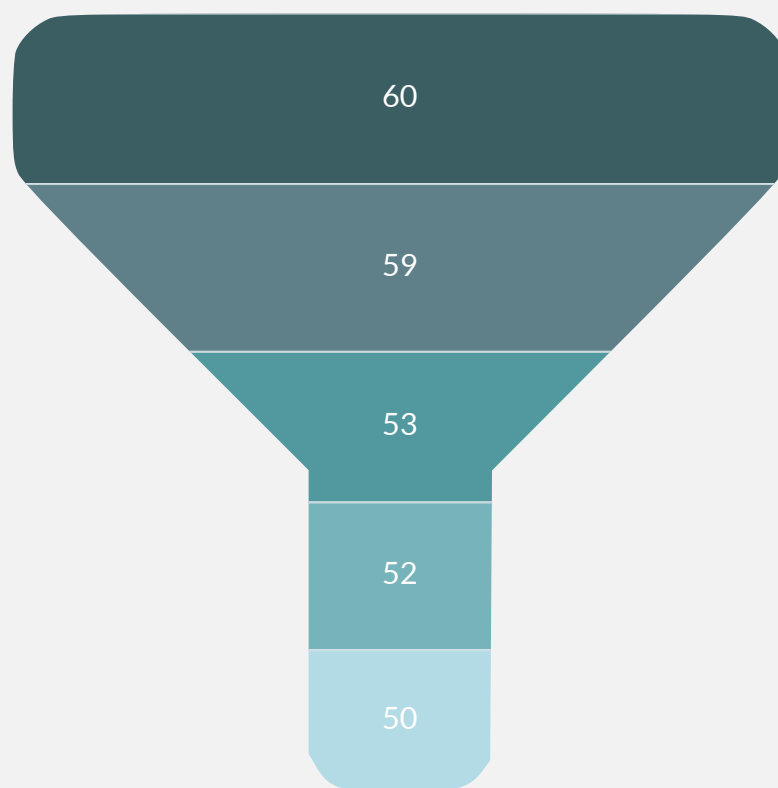


Q. Has COVID-19 encouraged your organisation to be more or less sustainable?



## SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

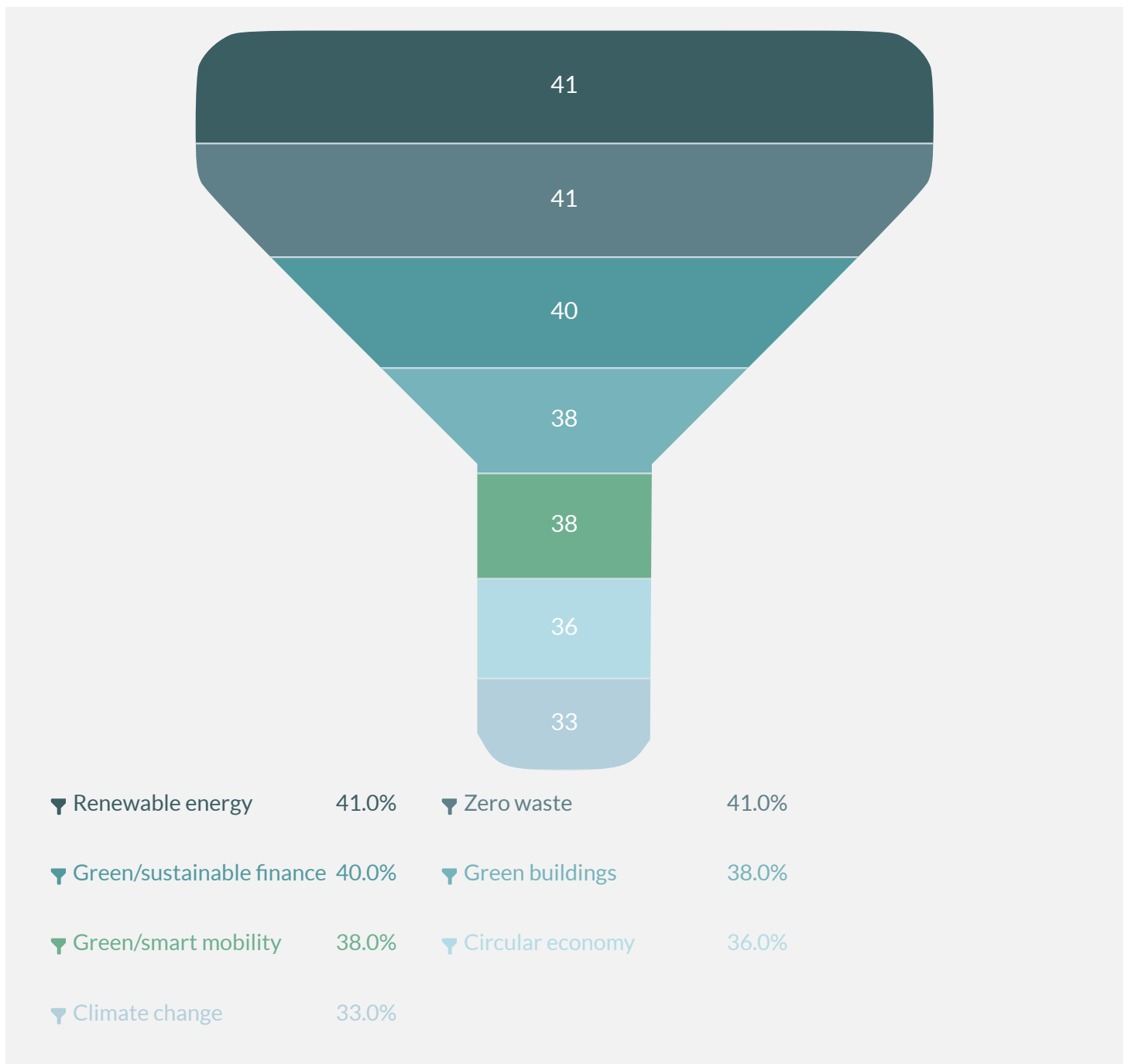
**Q. With your company's focus on environmental sustainability in mind, on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being highest, how does your company prioritise the below in importance?** *Percentages reflect responses of 8 or higher*



▼ Seek sustainable alternatives in business procurement	60.0%
▼ Educate staff about sustainable choices	59.0%
▼ Reduce the carbon footprint of doing business	53.0%
▼ Mobilise employees to involve themselves in environmental causes as part of Corporate Social Responsibility	52.0%
▼ Accelerate innovation to bring new green solutions to market	50.0%

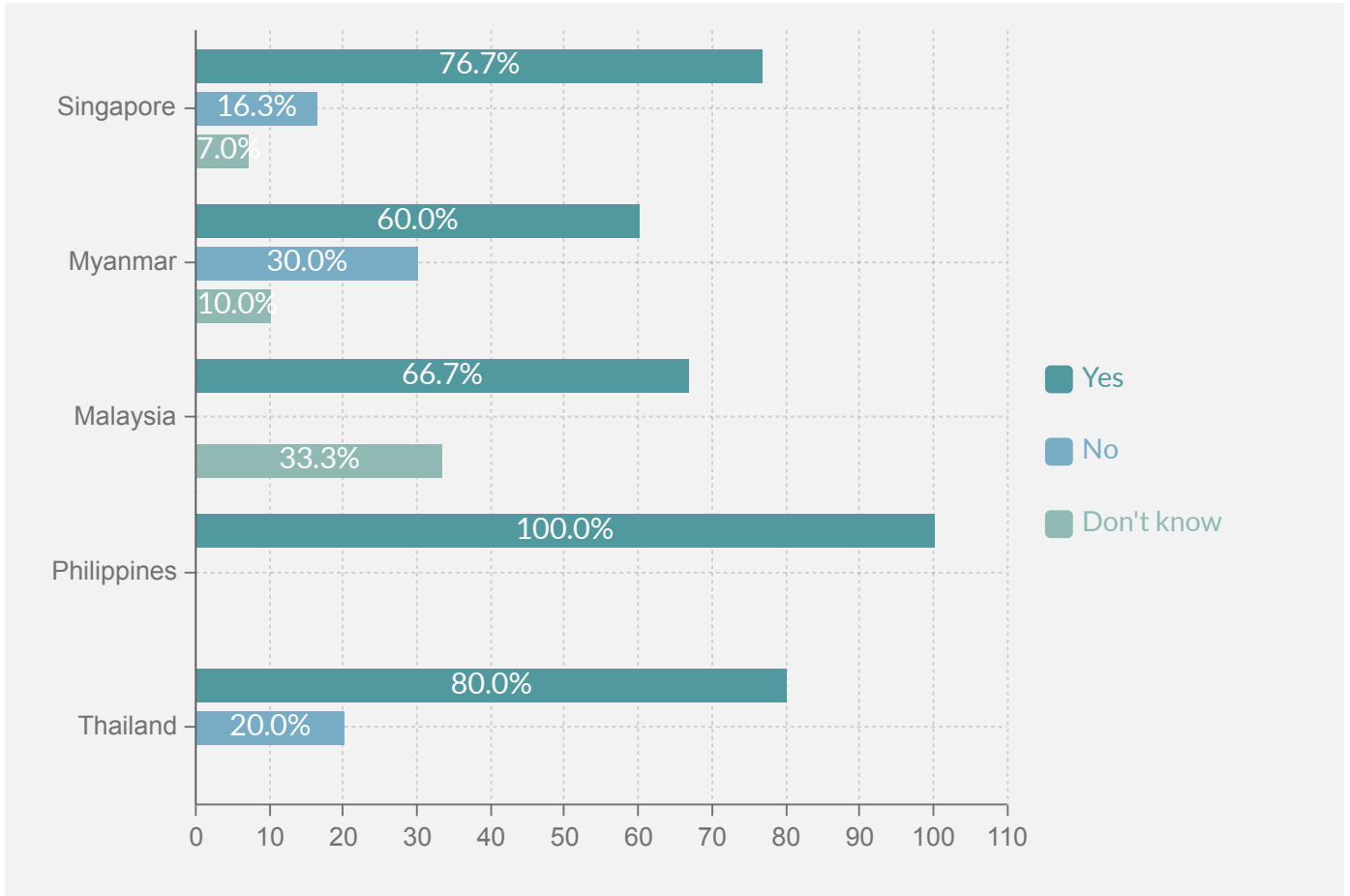
## SUSTAINABILITY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

**Q. Where is your company currently prioritising environmental sustainability spending? Scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest level of spend. Percentages reflect responses of 8 or higher**



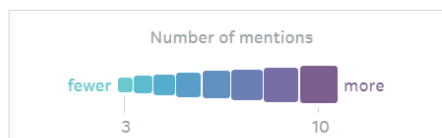
# COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

Q. Does your company have any sustainability commitments?



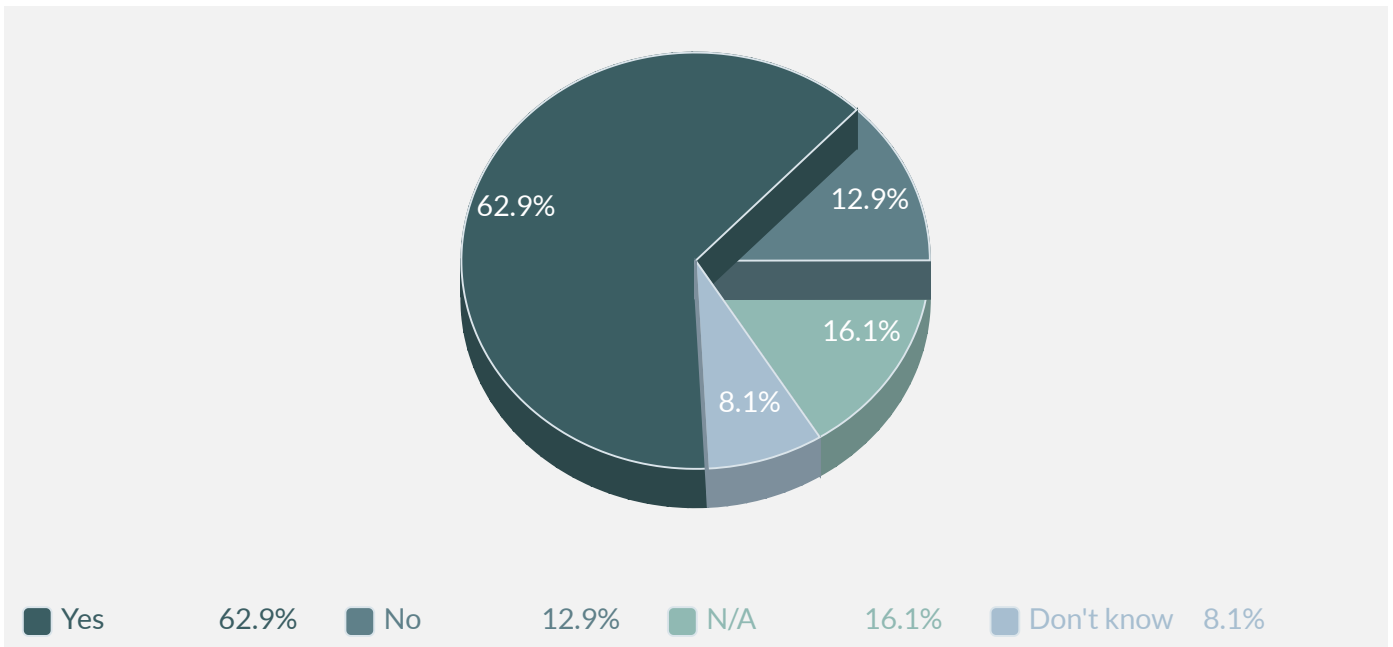
Q. What are the focus areas of these sustainability commitments?

waste reduction<sub>use</sub>  
 carbon emissions reduction<sub>sustainable</sub>  
 water<sub>recycling</sub> waste Zero reduction  
 plastic carbon emissions<sub>paper</sub> carbon  
 2030 targets<sub>single use plastic</sub> reduce

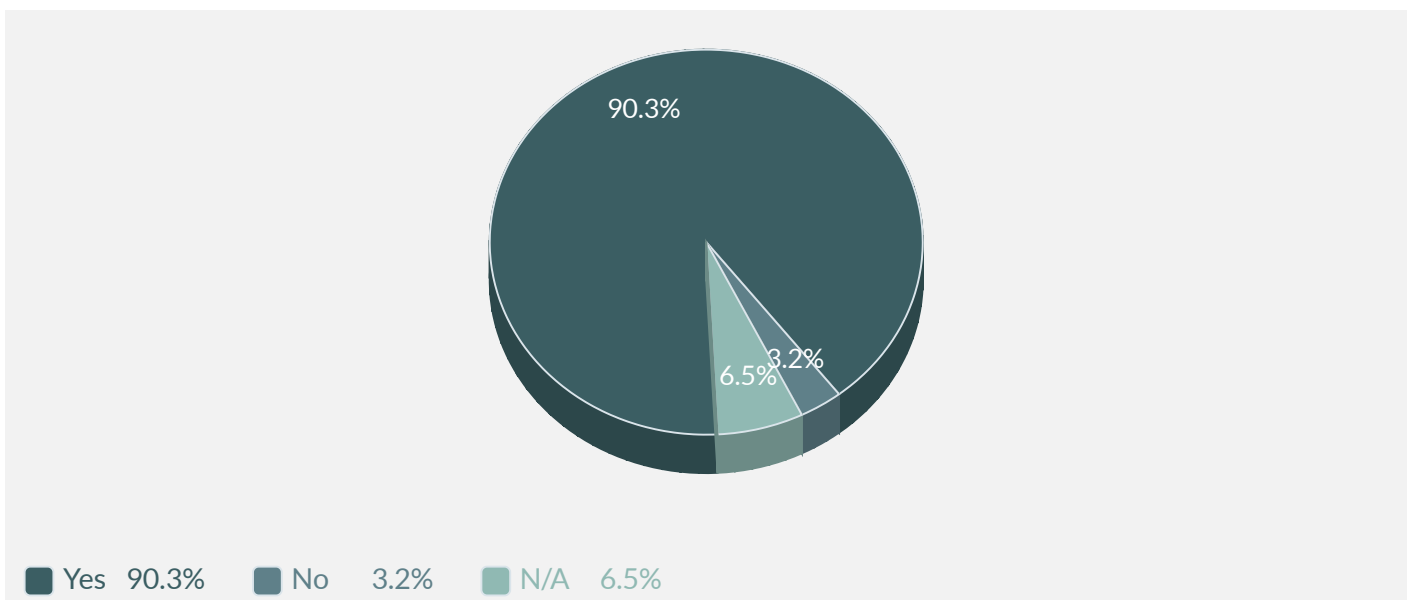


## COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

**Q. Does your company link its commitments or sustainability activities to the Sustainable Development Goals or other measures?**

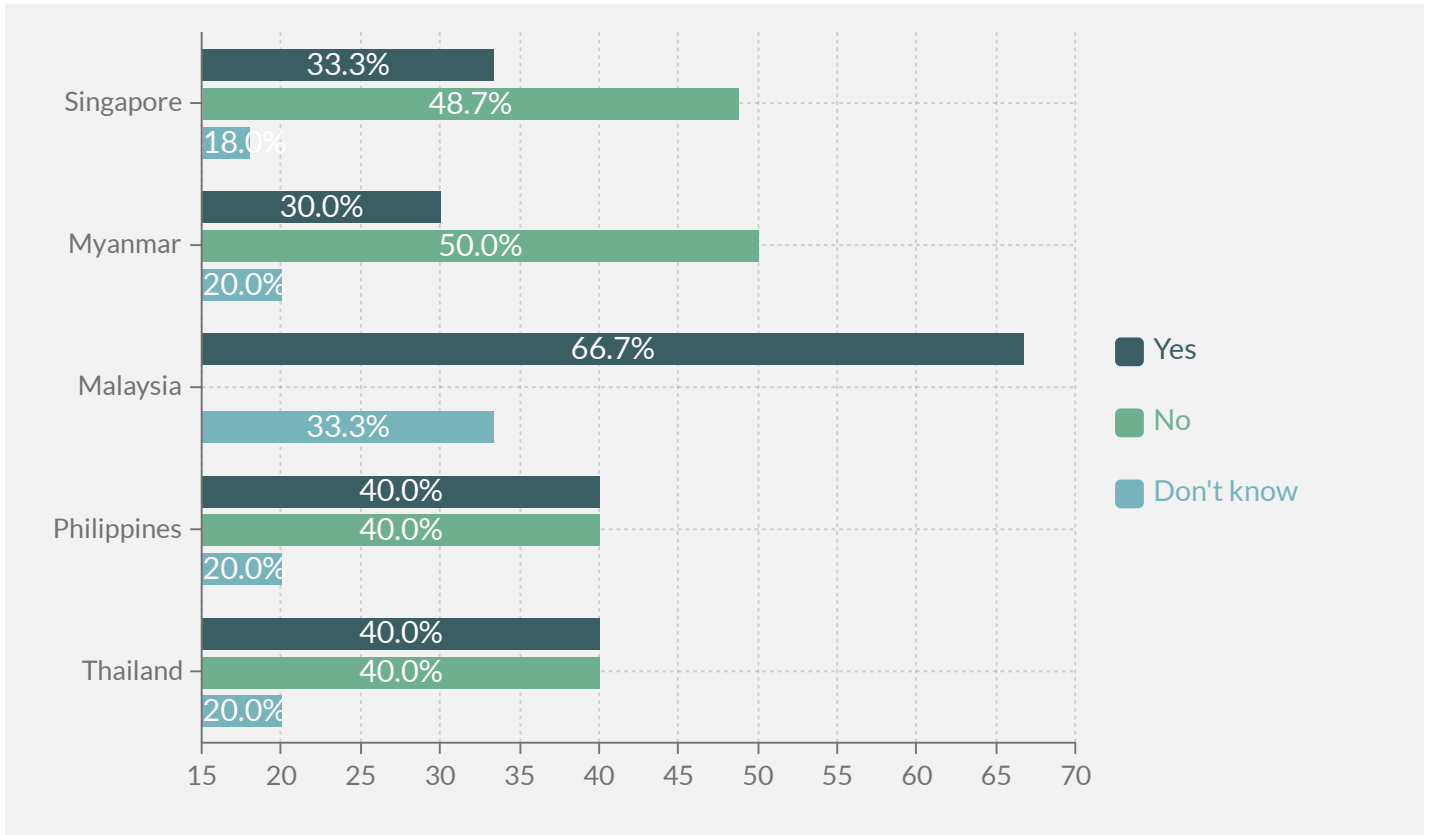


**Q. Are your company's sustainability commitments or activities relevant to you and your job?**



# COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

Q. Has your company committed to any climate or sustainability related initiatives? For example, RE100, EV100, EP100, CDP?



*Race to zero*

*ISO14001:2015*

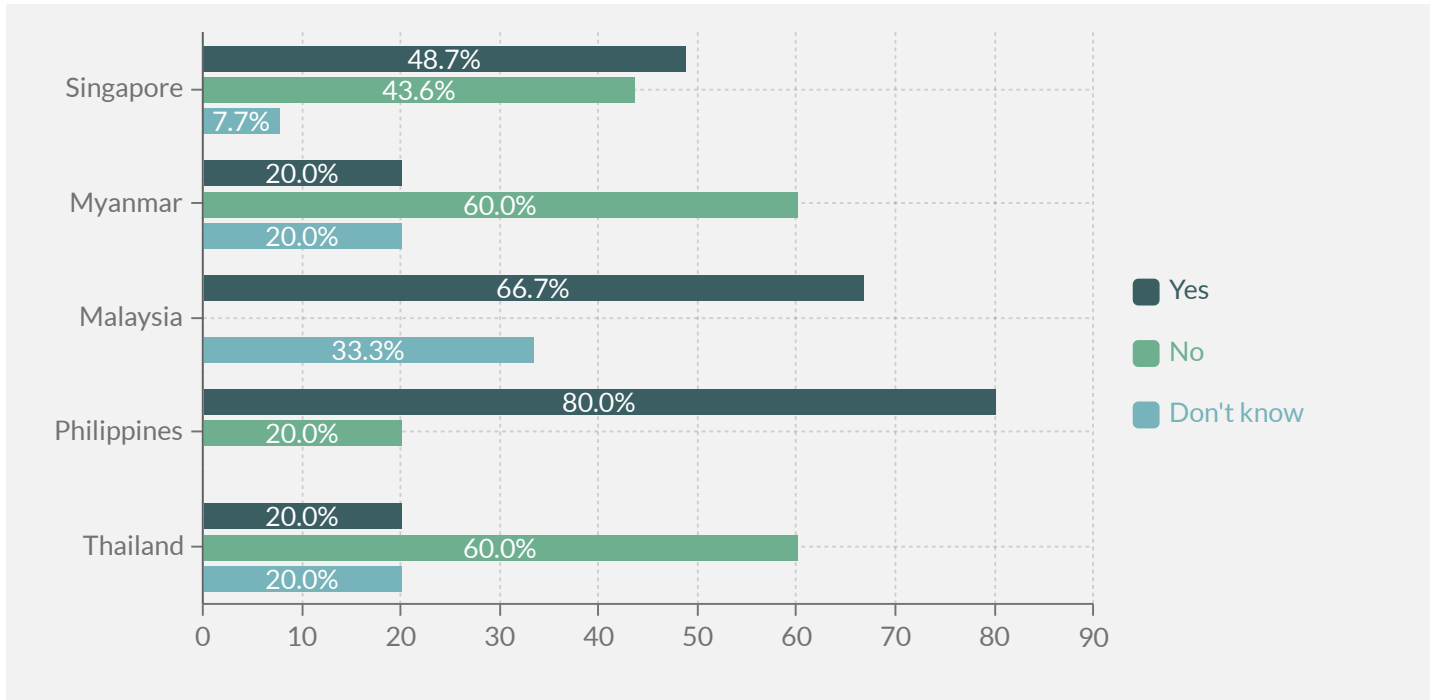
*One Tree Planted*

*Planning to become a UN PRI signatory*

*EP100*

# COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

Q. Does your company have long-term targets to reduce its carbon and other Green House Gas emissions?



Net zero carbon emissions by 2030

Reducing emissions by 20% by 2025, 40% by 2030

Carbon neutral within next 5yrs

70% reduction by 2035

Net zero carbon emissions by 2050

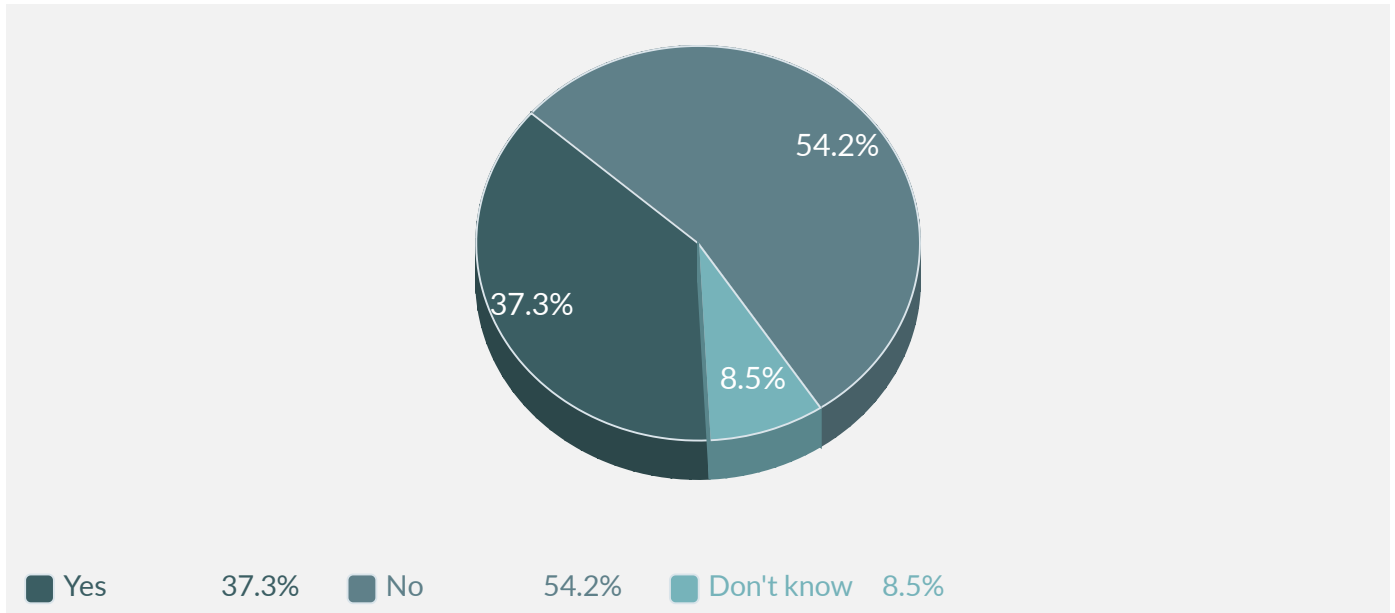
65% reduction in CO2 from energy p/tonne of production since 2008

Carbon neutral by 2021, carbon removal involvement 2022

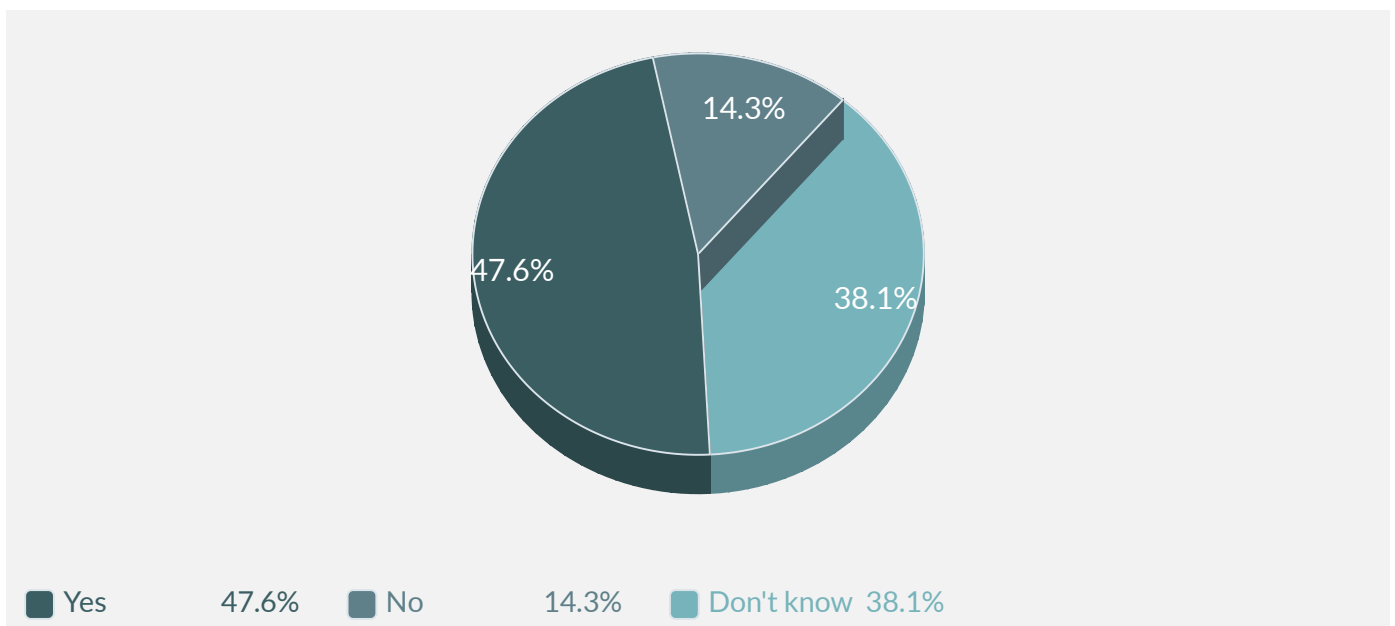
To keep as close to zero as possible as we grow

## COMMITMENTS & REPORTING

Q. Does your company have a sustainability report?



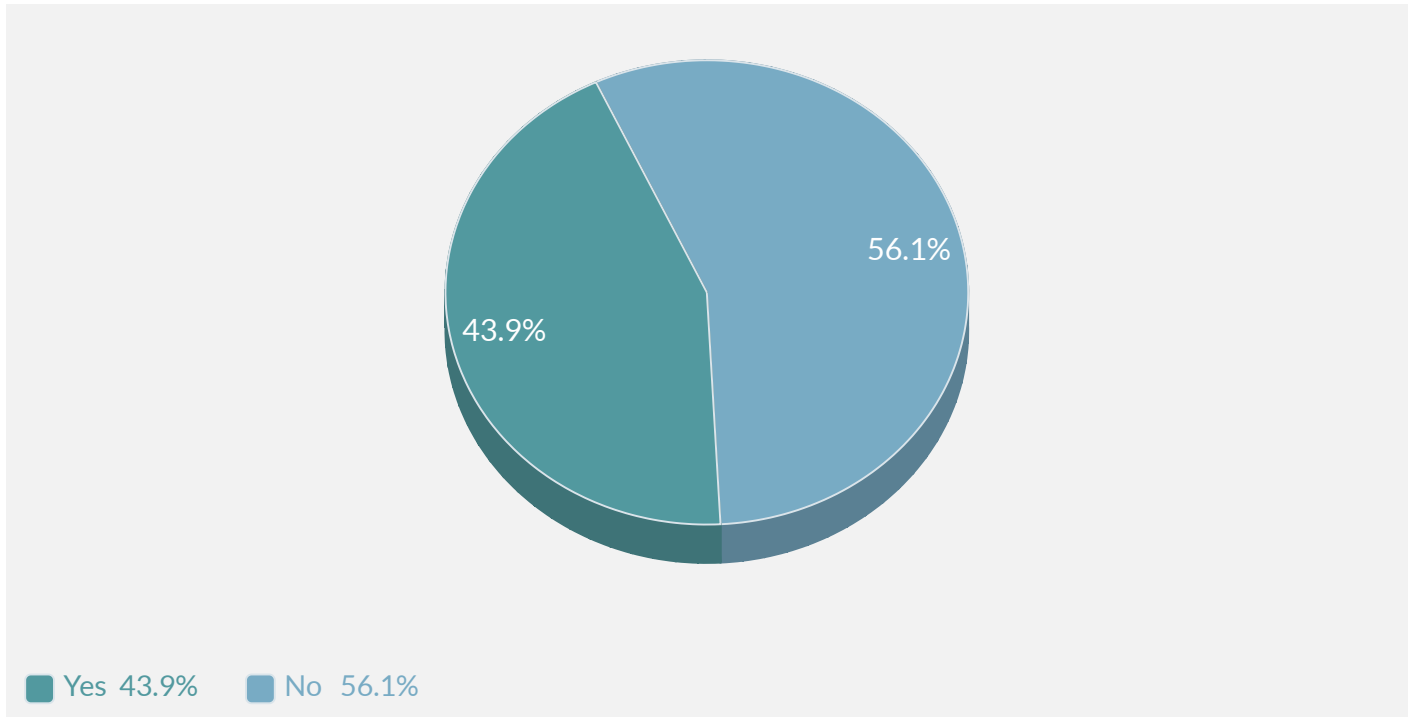
Q. If you have a Sustainability Report, does it follow a framework such as GRI, Global Compact, SDGs, Equator Principals, SG NEA Carbon Emissions, SGX or TCFD?





## OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

Q. Are there key sustainability issues that you think your company is not tackling?



*Circular  
economy*

*Biodiversity*

*Recycling  
options*

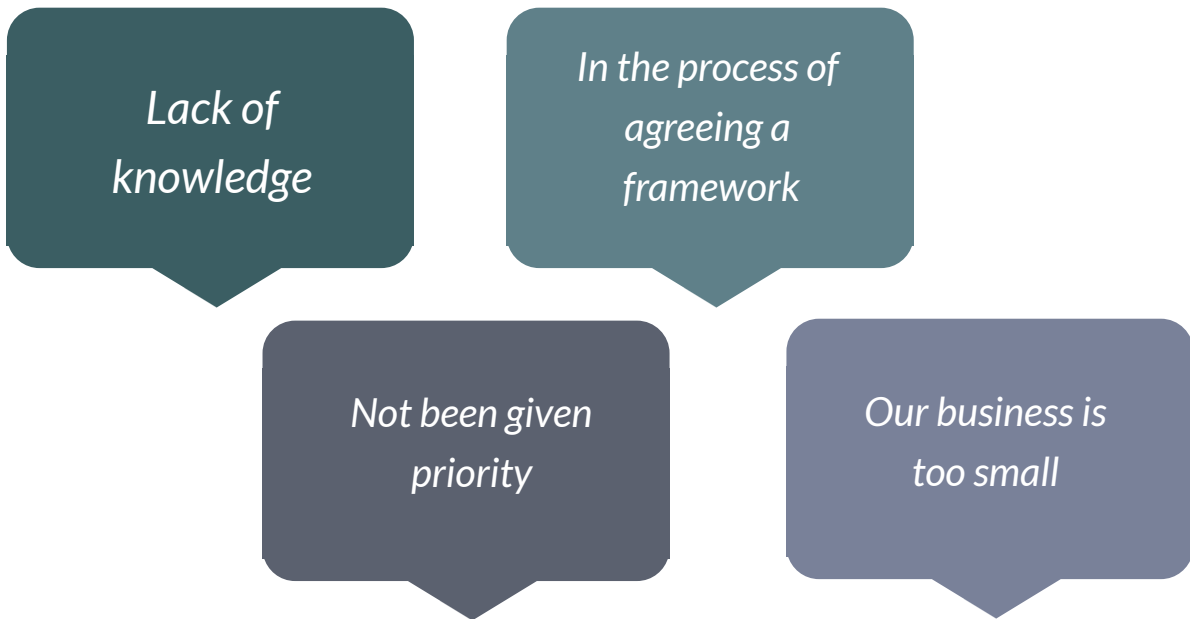
*Transportation  
impacts*

*Vendor  
responsibilities*

*Internal carbon  
footprint*

## OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

**Q. If there are no Sustainability Commitments, why do you think this is the case?** *Most common responses*



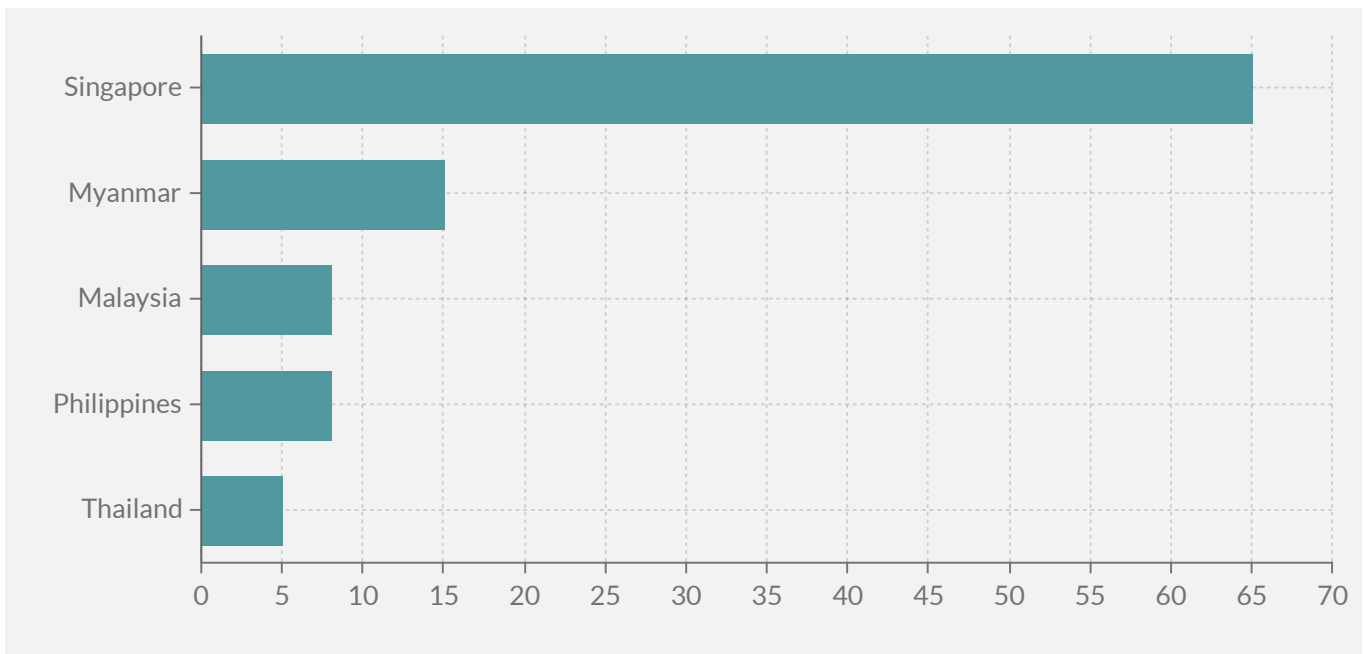
**Q. What are the challenges or obstacles that are preventing your company from becoming more ambitious when it comes to sustainability?** *Most common responses*



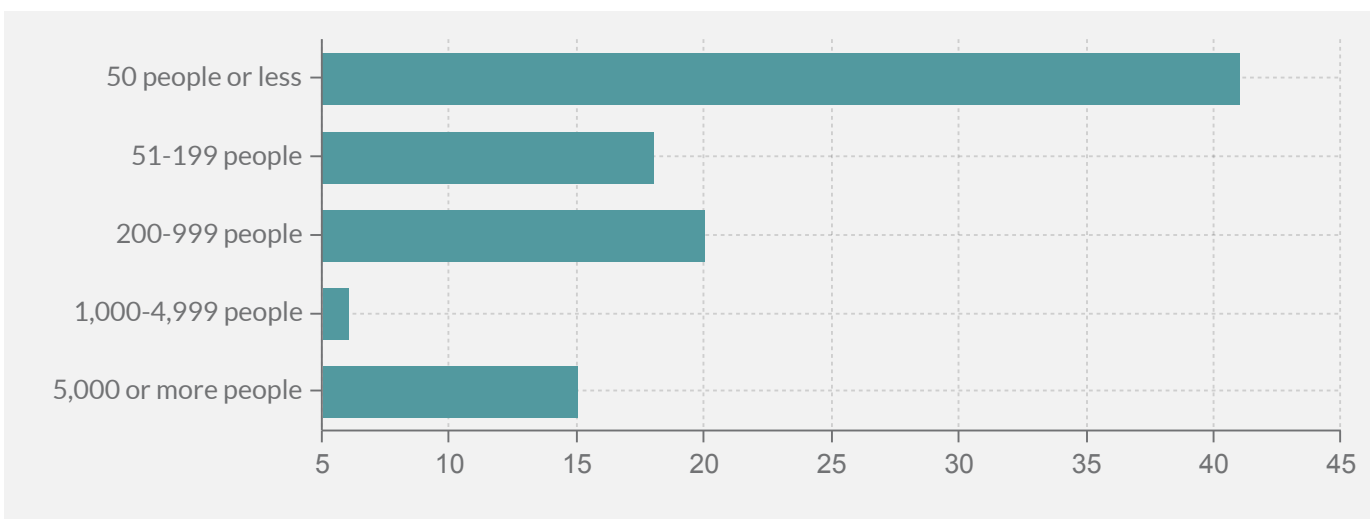
# DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey size: 66 companies. Editors Note: Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand responses should not be considered an indication of country-wide interest due to limited sample size.

## % by Country

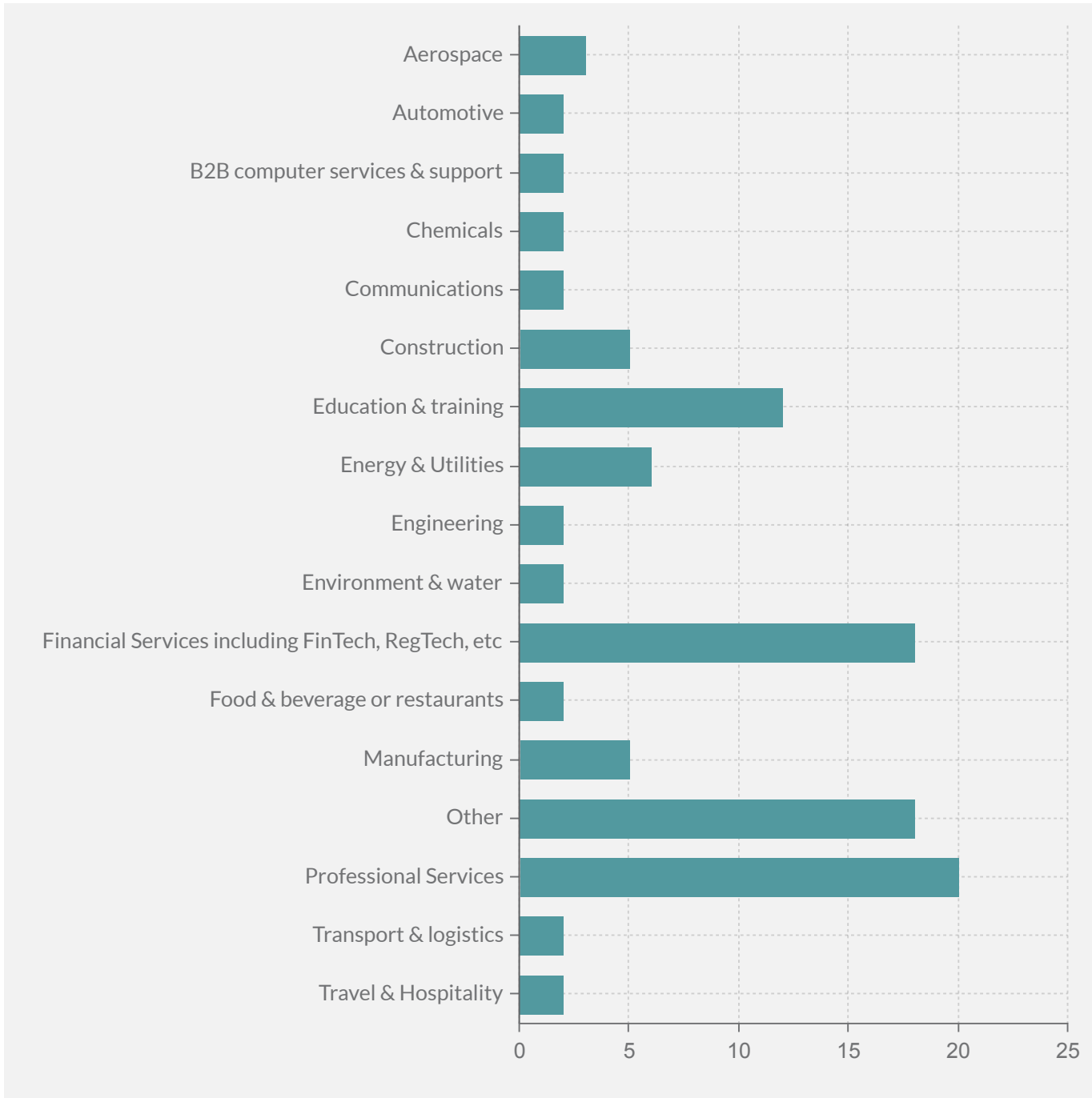


## % by Size



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## % by Industry



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## % by Seniority

