



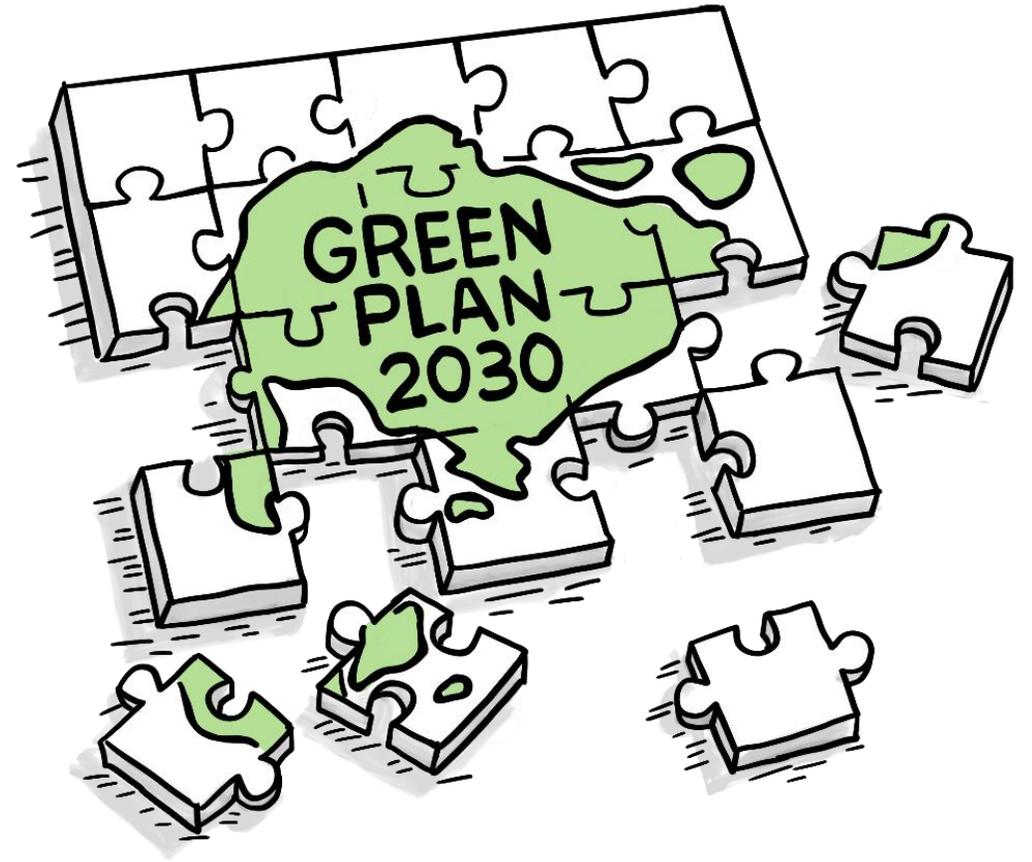
The **2025**
**SME Sustainability
Barometer**

brought to you by



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Chapter 1

Executive Summary



Ravi Menon

Singapore's Ambassador for Climate Action

Senior Adviser to the National
Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS)
Chairman of the Global Finance
and Technology Network (GFTN)

The Sustainability Barometer offers a timely look at the sustainability journey ahead for Singapore's SME community.

Many SMEs are keen to pursue sustainability as a source of growth and competitiveness, yet remain daunted by practical hurdles – limited time and resources, uncertainty on where to begin, and difficulty demonstrating tangible returns. These challenges are amplified by a shifting global context of geopolitical uncertainty, trade frictions, and questions over the future of the sustainability agenda itself.

We want to help our SMEs to stay the course. It will not be easy, but it is necessary.

Necessary because environmental sustainability will become an increasingly important driver of competitiveness and new growth, as climate change intensifies in the years and decades ahead. Supply chains and customers have begun to prioritise companies that demonstrate credible climate action, and will increasingly do so. Going green is not about compliance – it is about staying relevant and resilient.

We must enable SMEs to view sustainability not as a cost to bear, but as a business strategy for securing their place in the carbon constrained economy of the future.

Transition planning must become integral to business planning. Those who move early will be better positioned to capitalise on green opportunities in procurement, financing, and new market access.

The Barometer delivers a clear message: stronger ecosystem coordination is essential.

Policymakers, financiers, corporates, and solution providers must align around shared frameworks, data, and incentives to make sustainability simpler, more practical, and more rewarding for SMEs in their value chains and business networks. With clear direction and collective resolve, we can help our SMEs to not only commence their sustainability journey, but grow through it to unlock new lines of business and opportunity.

I hope this Barometer serves as both a mirror and a map: reflecting where we are today, and guiding where we must go next.



Lionel Wong

Chief Executive Officer
Gprnt

Before Gprnt became a digital platform company, we were a green fintech policy unit within the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). This Barometer reflects those roots — allowing us to closely engage the voices of SMEs and trade associations, triangulate the current blockers to sustainability adoption, and translate these insights into practical recommendations. Through this process, we've gained a deeper understanding of what SMEs need to start, and stay, green.

These lessons guide how Gprnt builds digital tools to make sustainability more simple, meaningful, and rewarding for every business.

But the impact doesn't stop there. When SMEs go green, they don't act alone. They lift the networks around them — their buyers, suppliers, customers, and financiers. They green the value chains they power, and in doing so generate high-quality data from the ground up.

To bring more SMEs into this momentum, we must give them clear signals, real incentives, and tangible returns. This calls for a collective effort across the public and private sectors to make sustainability not just viable, but valuable. The Barometer offers up some ideas for how we might begin.

We believe that tackling sustainability among SMEs is where Singapore can truly lead by example — by enabling the quiet, steady work of thousands of businesses that choose to do better. By engaging our SMEs more deeply, we can help solve two of the world's biggest sustainability challenges: improving the reliability of environmental data, and brokering a lasting balance between people, profit and planet.

The Barometer captures our collective effort, and we hope it becomes a regular fixture on Singapore's sustainability calendar — a living document that traces the steady greening of its business community, and grows wiser with every participating voice.



Fang Eu-Lin

Partner, Sustainability & Climate
Change Practice Leader
PwC Singapore

As we launch the SME Sustainability Barometer, I am reminded of the immense potential for our small and medium enterprises to help drive us towards a more sustainable future. Often forming an integral part of wider corporate supply chains, SMEs have a crucial role to play in ensuring the resilience and sustainability of entire sectors. This inaugural survey of 560 SMEs sheds light on where we stand—and where we must go.

An opportunity to assemble the building blocks of sustainability.

The findings are clear: business benefits increase with SMEs' sustainability maturity. Yet, three out of four SMEs have yet to engage with sustainability, often held back by uncertainty about the benefits and a lack of dedicated resources. With extended timelines for mandatory climate reporting, SMEs have a valuable runway to build capabilities.

It takes a community to advance SMEs along their sustainability runway.

This runway must be matched with ecosystem support. We must provide SMEs with inspiring success stories, clear guidance, accessible pathways to sustainability alongside 'Queen Bee' programmes. Structurally, we should push for public and private sector green procurements to create demand, and joint solutions to shared pains like shared service models for green SMEs and collective bulk purchasing agreements.

With collective action, we can turn sustainability from a challenge into an opportunity — a driver of innovation, growth, and relevance in a rapidly evolving economy. Let us empower SMEs to not only embark on this journey, but to thrive as pioneers of a sustainable future.

It's tough for our SMEs to justify sustainability. And it's getting tougher.

How our SMEs are faring

3 out of 4 SMEs have not started on sustainability or have only just started exploring this topic	
82% have not considered how environmental risks might affect their business	4 out of 5 SMEs have not started because they're unsure what's in it for them
77% have not appointed someone to explore or 'champion' sustainability	82% have not allocated any budget to sustainability or related initiatives
73% have not accessed any available solutions or government support	94% do not track progress against sustainability metrics or targets

The situation worldwide

a challenging global environment

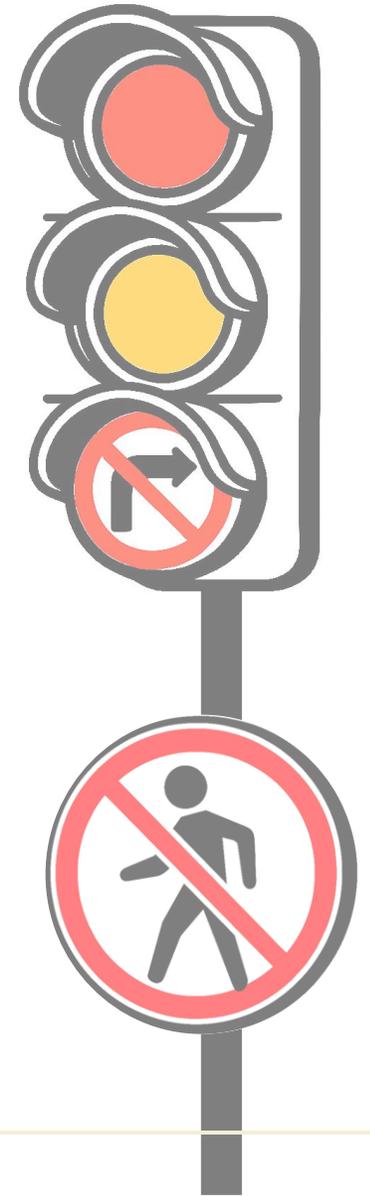
as more global economies and MNCs **re-rationalise their climate commitments**

an unclear regulatory outlook

as authorities **backpedal or postpone climate rules** amid uncertainties over the global net zero trajectory

a fraught business landscape

as SMEs **grapple with heightened uncertainty** from geopolitical tensions and trade tariffs



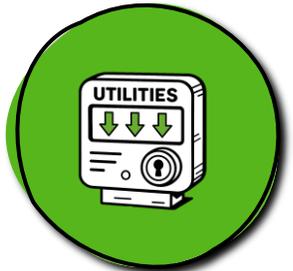
Research shows that embarking on sustainability delivers real and tangible business benefits for SMEs.

4-5% Increase in EBITDA margins



Customer advocacy

- Command **higher prices** by using sustainability as a differentiator
- **Increase market share** by attracting new ESG-focused customers



Cost savings

- **Cost optimisation** from improved efficiency of resource usage
- Tap **green grants and public funding** for early adoption



Cost avoidance

- **Build readiness** toward carbon taxes and heightened energy costs
- Access competitive green or sustainability-linked **financing**

Source: Overcoming Barriers to Singapore SME Decarbonisation, SBF and Bain & Company (2024)

Singapore also offers one of the most enabling environments in the world.

digital infrastructure

Access to the world's first **nationwide utility** for sustainability reporting

[Gprnt](#) is a first-of-its-kind platform offered freely to all Singapore companies to generate basic emissions values using government-sourced data

public-private support

Widespread availability of **'kickstarter' programmes, initiatives and grants**

From playbooks to subsidised training courses, grants to tailored advisory, the support landscape in Singapore is rich, yet largely untapped

a thriving ecosystem

A diverse landscape of **innovative and competitive solutions** to partner with

Initiatives like [SME Sustainability Hub](#) and [NetZeroHub.SG](#) consolidate sustainability tools and resources, helping SMEs navigate the support ecosystem



With well-placed interventions, sustainability can be made a lot easier and more compelling for our SMEs.

We can help our SMEs by strengthening access to...



Green opportunities

through better coordination of public and private procurement

Pathfinding support

on what 'good' looks like for SMEs across different sectors

Queen Bee programmes

that offer structured pathways while defraying starting costs

Guidance on getting started

by enacting clear and simple roadmaps

Comparable case studies

with insightful datapoints to inspire newcomers

Chapter 2

Introduction



The recently-announced timeline extension for mandatory climate reporting affords SMEs a longer runway to build capabilities and level the playing field.



EXTENDED TIMELINES FOR MOST CLIMATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT COMPANIES LARGE LISTED COMPANIES CONTINUE TO LEAD EFFORTS

Singapore, 25 August 2025 – The Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) and Singapore Exchange Regulation (SGX RegCo) have extended the timelines for implementing climate reporting (including external assurance) requirements, to support listed companies and large non-listed companies (Large NLCos) in developing reporting capabilities.

2 All listed companies will continue to report Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the financial year (FY) commencing on or after 1 January 2025, while Straits Times Index (STI) constituents will continue to lead efforts to implement other International Sustainability Standards Board-based (ISSB-based) climate-related disclosures (CRD) from FY2025 and Scope 3 GHG emissions from FY2026.

3 The extension of timelines takes into account the uncertain global economic landscape, as well as feedback to take into greater consideration the varying levels of resources and readiness in climate reporting. In particular, the Singapore Business Federation provided feedback that smaller listed companies need more time to be fully ready for ISSB-based CRD¹. The time extension would allow them to build up data collection processes and learn from larger companies who have started to produce ISSB-based CRD.

Source: [SGX Group Media Centre](#)



Chia-Tern Huey Min

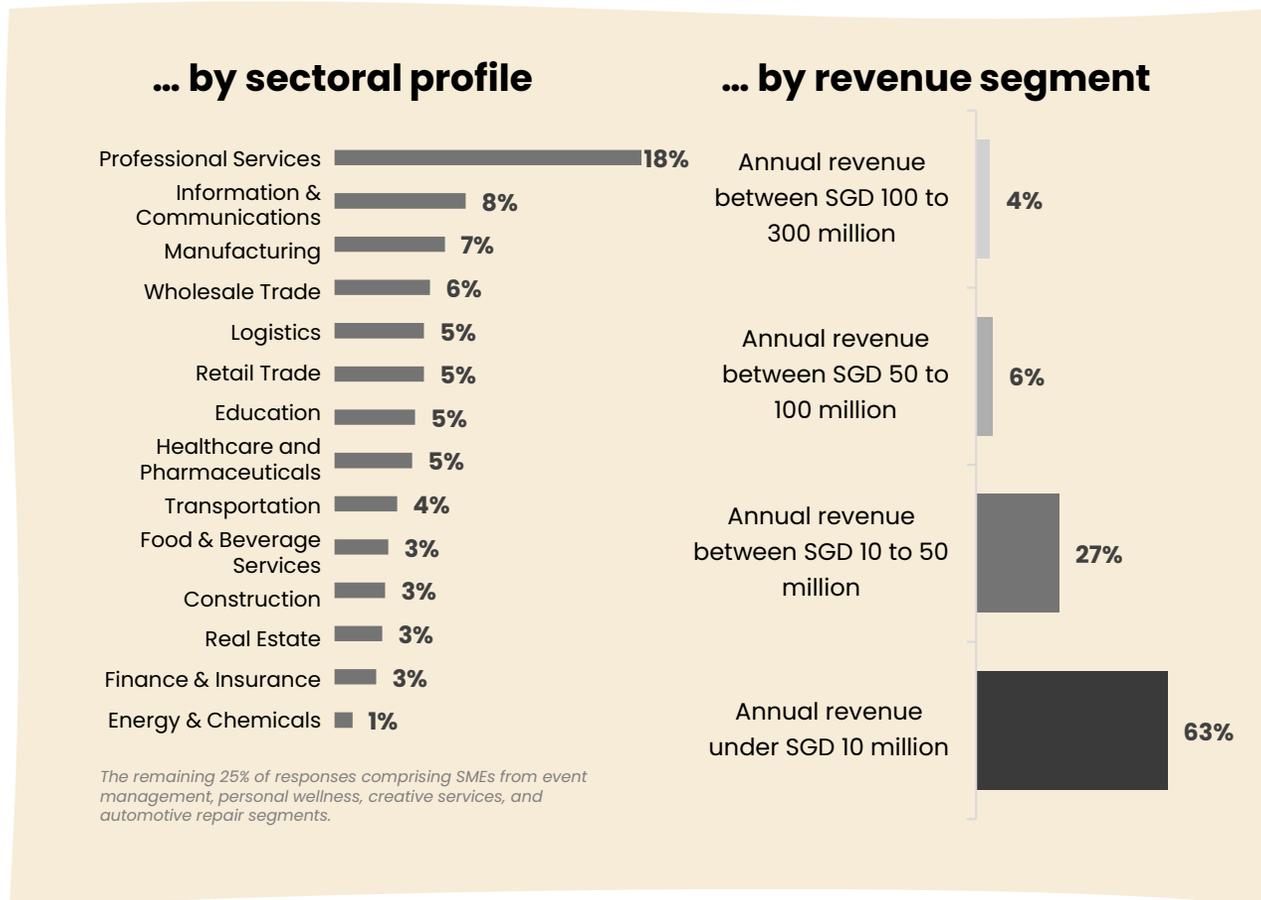
Chief Executive, ACRA

“ Our differentiated implementation approach provides companies who are less ready with some relief in the near term **so that they can build up capabilities for the future...** paving the way for more meaningful and higher quality climate-related disclosures in the long run.

ACRA-SGX media release on “Extended Timelines for Most Climate Reporting Requirements to Support Companies”

We surveyed almost 600 respondents on the challenges impeding them from building sustainability capabilities swiftly and efficiently.

A breakdown of respondents



The approach we took

Conceptualisation

We saw value in regularly surveying SMEs' attitudes and challenges, to voice recommendations for how their adoption of sustainability might be improved over time.

Co-development

Gprnt and PwC Singapore co-developed our approach with the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) and Sustainability Alliance (SA), and consulted various government agencies.

Validation

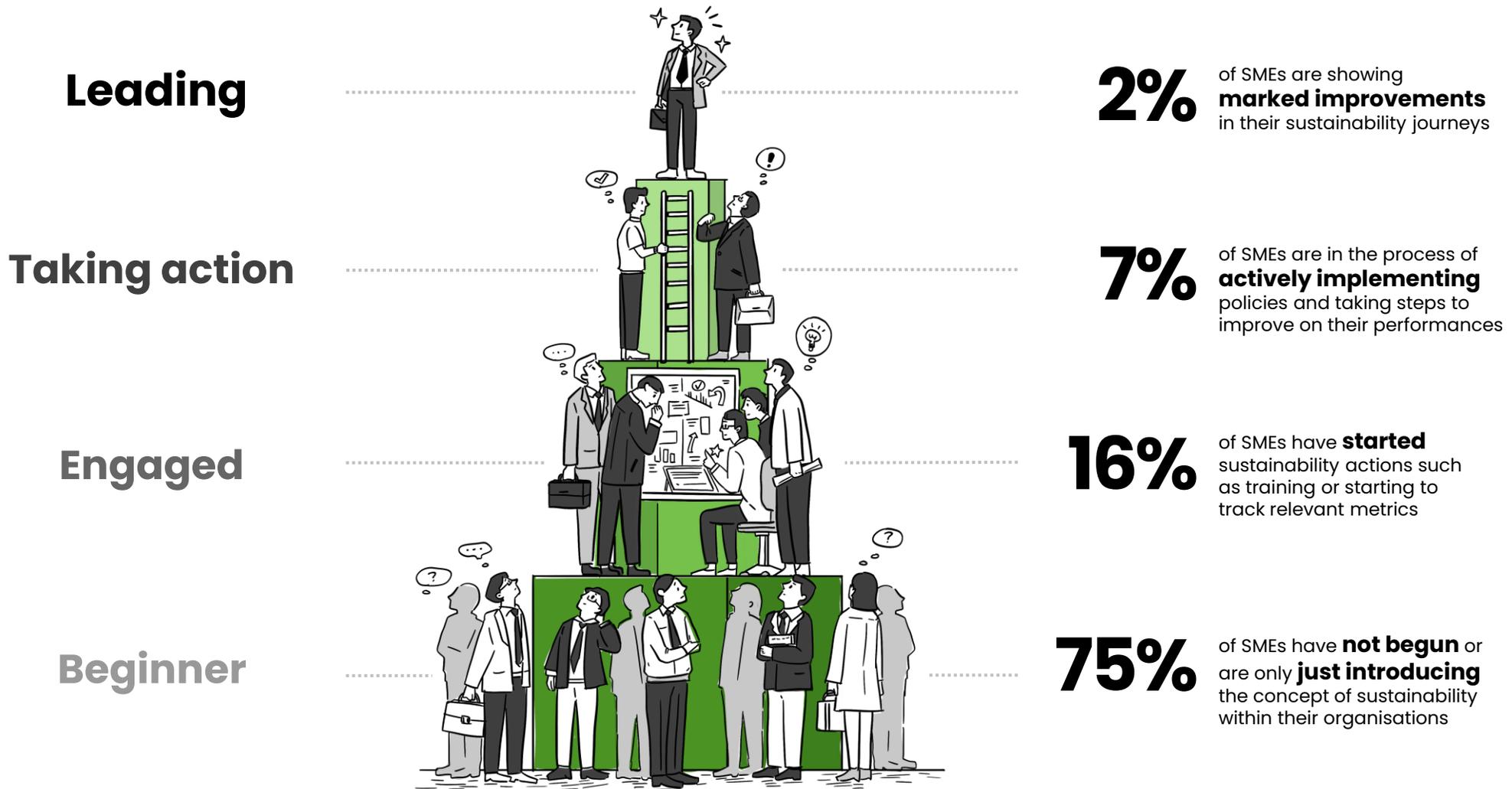
560

SMEs were surveyed
We also engaged 18 SMEs and trade associations through interviews and roundtables.

Consolidation

We synthesised the data to inform the findings and recommendations in this report.

Many of the SMEs we spoke with are stuck at the earliest stages. We want to help these SMEs advance up the sustainability ladder.



The top three challenges inhibiting SMEs? Money, Skills and Time.



52%

reported **constraints in funding**

They are concerned about:

- 58%** high **investment costs**
- 55%** uncertainty about **ROI**
- 46%** cost of **materials or technology**



46%

told us they **lacked the right skills**

They want to learn about:

- 73%** **technical** know-how
- 41%** data analysis and **reporting**
- 28%** **strategic planning** for sustainability



43%

said they **couldn't spare the time**

Of SMEs surveyed, only:

- 30%** relate sustainability to their **business**
- 27%** engage internal **stakeholders**
- 21%** collect and track sustainability **data**

Overcoming these challenges requires a strengthening of ecosystem support, coupled with decisive action on SMEs' part. Both must work hand in hand.

While the ecosystem needs to do more to strengthen support for SMEs...

"It is time to **mobilise collective action in the public and private sectors** to equip companies of all sizes... with the knowledge, resources and roadmaps needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world, ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition to a more sustainable future."

World Economic Forum
Sustainability Meets Growth: A Roadmap for SMEs and Mid-Sized Manufacturers, June 2025

... SMEs themselves need to step up and capitalise on these support mechanisms.

73%

of local SMEs we surveyed
have not accessed any available resources or government support



" We are achieving a paradox of **active government support for personal responsibility**, rather than active government support to take over personal responsibility or community responsibility.

Tharman Shanmugaratnam
at the 2015 St. Gallen Symposium

SMEs

Queen Bees

Trade Associations

Public Sector

Check these tags
to see if a recommendation
might be relevant to you



Chapter 3

Findings and Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Articulate the ROI

When it comes to sustainability, many SMEs are still asking, "What's in it for me?" And that's where we think the journey best begins.

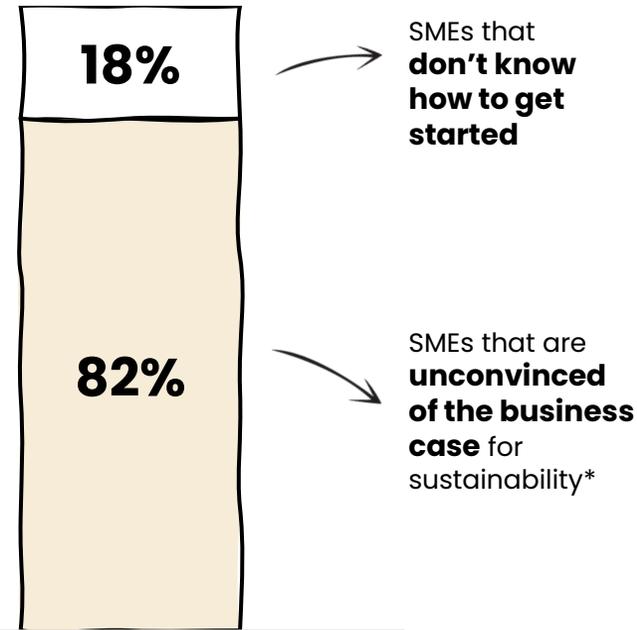
We need more success stories as reference points for these SMEs. We do this by spotlighting relatable case studies of real businesses that've achieved real benefits. When paired with data and industry benchmarks, these stories help SMEs see that sustainability isn't just good for the planet, but also good for business.

By building a public casebank that celebrates wins across the SME community, we create a ripple effect. Recognition fuels momentum, and momentum drives action.

Many SMEs remain sceptical that sustainability delivers real business benefits.

Most SMEs struggle to comprehend what's in it for them

Reasons for inaction include*



35%
are **unclear** of the business benefits

26%
believe it is **irrelevant** to their business

49%
are focused on **other business priorities**

SMEs that have not started on sustainability

* Reasons are not mutually exclusive and hence do not sum up to 82%.

Leading SMEs found benefits to be more apparent as they went along. Spreading word of this can spur more Beginner SMEs to earlier action.

Our findings affirmed that business benefits increased with SMEs' sustainability maturity...



Benefits	Beginner	Engaged	Taking action	Leading
Improved customer engagement and retention	2%	15%	10%	36%
Access to new markets, customers or opportunities	2%	16%	17%	36%
Enhanced brand reputation	8%	27%	32%	45%
Cost savings from utilities efficiency	10%	39%	37%	36%

1 We need to drive **more recognition** among 'Beginner' SMEs of the tangible benefits of sustainability.

2 We can help them by amassing relatable case studies from SMEs that've already unlocked **quick wins** through cost savings and improved brand recognition.

3 We can augment these with **more advanced case studies** of SMEs that have successfully paved their way to strategic business and market opportunities.



Meta Fusion Pte Ltd
Award winning design agency

"The journey has been transformative, equipping us with practical tools, strategic insights, and a deeper understanding of ESG reporting... **It's a powerful catalyst for growth and resilience.**"



SASM & EPte Ltd
Air-conditioning installation, servicing and related services

"The (CDL SME Supplier Decarbonisation Queen Bee) programme opened our eyes, especially to the significant downstream emissions from our after-sales support... **We've begun investing in technologies to recover and recycle these fugitive gases.**"

Expanding the public casebank of success stories, backed by statistics and benchmarks, equips SMEs with the information they need to justify getting started.

Recommendations

Build a public casebank of success stories
 A central repository can consolidate and profile successes to inspire other SMEs to action

Prioritise stories with commercial wins
 Spotlight SMEs that've unlocked new markets, secured major clients, or improved profit margins

Back case studies with good data
 Start consolidating statistics and building benchmarks to quantify the business impacts

Some datapoints from real case studies

30% cost savings
 from electricity bills on account of solar power from newly installed panels

50% cost savings
 from optimised washing process which lowered water consumption

5% cost savings
 from reduced packaging procurement and HVAC optimisation

Successful retention
 of customers satisfied with reduced use of plastic in products

Future proofing
 of business model to comply with sustainability rules in buyers' markets



Singapore Business Federation
Recommendations to enhance the quality, efficiency and comparability of ISSB-based climate-related disclosure in Singapore

“ A central platform which hosts reliable sustainability data in a standardised format for Singapore companies will **facilitate national and sectoral-level benchmarking for meaningful analysis and decision-making.** ”

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SBF.



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KICKSTART YOUR SUSTAINABILITY
JOURNEY WITH THE

SUSTAINABILITY PLAYBOOK FOR ENTERPRISES

Step-by-step guide for businesses
to assess your ESG readiness, and a list
of relevant resources to help you get
started on the sustainability journey.

Recommendation 2

Define SMEs' first steps

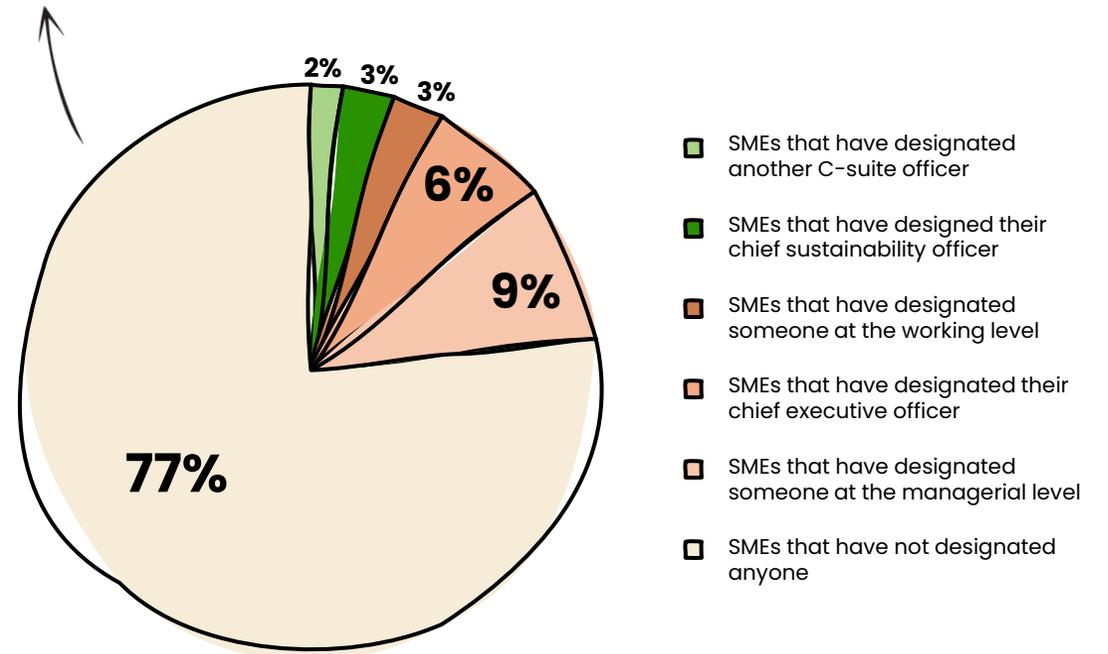
Once SMEs see the value, the next challenge is knowing how to start.

It begins by tasking someone in the organisation to examine the benefits, the hurdles, and the most resource-efficient approaches to take. This person can help the organisation set simple and achievable first year goals, and marshal internal and external resources toward these.

Our champions will need as much help as they can get from the ecosystem. We can help them by clearly defining what 'good' looks like in Year One – offering them a simplified roadmap that's easily executable while presenting immediate benefits.

Even when convinced of the benefits, SMEs remain unsure of how to get started.

2 in 5 SMEs don't know how to get started
3 in 4 SMEs have not designated anyone to take charge



The journey begins by allocating someone to take the lead. SMEs can start by identifying and equipping an existing person of best fit.

Sustainability is often double-hatted with these functions...



Marketing / Communications

Sustainability requires clear messaging and securing internal buy-in, which marketing & communication experts can help to deliver.

Finance / Accounting

Sustainability reporting often relies on these individuals for their tools of the trade.

Operations / Procurement

No business can be truly sustainable in isolation, hence an ability to understand and work with partners is crucial.



XCEL

Pallet manufacturer driving sustainable packaging solutions

“ **The role of a sustainability champion often begins as a supplementary responsibility**, where individuals adopt it alongside their primary duties. I believe this approach is ideal for SMEs: starting small.



SPIN

Producer of stylish and functional ceiling fans

“ I work in the marketing department, and **I was chosen to lead our company's sustainability initiatives because our department is closely tied to promoting sustainability**. It's crucial for our business that we effectively market our products as sustainable.

What does equipping a sustainability champion look like?

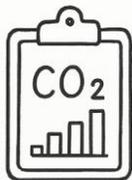
Champions can focus on building *core competencies*...

... by applying for *foundational courses* and tapping on *government support*.



Forge general awareness of sustainability topics
Including concepts such as carbon emissions and management, global reporting frameworks.

Get started on carbon measurement and tracking
You can't reduce what you don't measure – start calculating and tracking your footprint with support from free tools such as Gprnt.



Understand your decarbonisation levers
Identify practical ways to implement sustainability within your organisation.

Some good examples:





RP's goEco Ambassador programme
empowers professionals to begin championing sustainability in their companies through a two-day training and an optional consultancy project, covering circular economy, GHG accounting, and sustainability reporting amongst other topics.

SUSS' Sustainability Management (ESG501)
is a foundational course to equip sustainability champions with the knowledge and tools to build capability in ESG management and drive corporate impact within their teams.

Sustainability for Practitioners: Sustainability Reporting Benchmarking ESG Performance
aims to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills on sustainability reporting against standards, frameworks and guidelines.

Take up modular **Short Courses** designed to help new sustainability champions, with eligibility for **SkillsFuture Subsidies**

With option of **Salary Support** for eligible employees under the Career Conversion Program for Sustainability (CCP-S)

We want sustainability champions to view their work as doable, not daunting.

Fear of complexity

is the **top reason** why SMEs struggle with internal buy-in

Lack of technical skills

cited as a deterrent by **2 in 5 SMEs**

Translating data into action

is a **challenge for 9 in 10 SMEs** who don't use their data to identify areas for improvement

Comprehending climate risk

is an **issue for 4 in 5 SMEs**

From **challenge** to **clarity**

We propose introducing a simple and practical first-year roadmap for SMEs

My Year One Sustainability Roadmap

What is it?

- A **basic template** to help guide SMEs' first year journeys
- Outlines **foundational milestones** that SMEs can work toward in a lean and efficient manner
- Doubles as a **reference guide** that signposts SMEs to useful tools and resources

Why does it matter?¹

- Offers a **structured approach** to integrate sustainability within the SME's mission and culture
- Helps the SME pinpoint and strengthen environmental aspects of its **day-to-day operations**
- It pushes the SME to **continually stay abreast** of challenges and maximise business outcomes relative to sustainability

¹ UN SSE (2025) "Model guidance for SMEs to integrate sustainable business practices" - A template for exchanges

A simple and standardised roadmap can prime SMEs to move forward with greater confidence, and sets the right foundation for further progress.



At the one year mark...

- Secure management's buy-in on benefits of sustainability and proposed next steps
- Publish a simple **policy statement** to tell the story of your company's progress, further actions planned, and longer-term objectives

By the ninth month...

- Take stock of progress made to date and potential pathways for further progress
- Start preparing proposals and justifications for more concerted sustainability action and publication of company's commitments

By the sixth month...

- Set and track simple emissions reduction targets and monitor associated cost savings
- Explore options (e.g. solutions, upskilling, financing) to power further reductions or drive greater resource efficiencies

In the first three months...

- Calculate baseline Scope 1 and 2 emissions using the free and automated Gprnt utility
- Study free resources and engage trade associations to learn more about sustainability and the benefits of decarbonisation

The four tenets of a good sustainability policy ¹

1 Define **objectives and priorities** and consider aligning them to wider frameworks

"Minimise environmental footprint by reducing construction waste and promoting recycling in line with the Zero Waste Masterplan"

2 Establish **metrics and targets** to track your efforts.

"Reduce energy consumption by 10% over the next 12 months through LED upgrades"

3 Outline an **implementation strategy** to achieve goals

"Designate a sustainability team to oversee conduct of energy audits, apply for energy efficiency grants, and retrofit facilities for better energy efficiency"

4 Set **governance** roles and responsibilities to manage efforts.

"Exco to review team's progress on a quarterly basis, and refresh policy statement with further initiatives on an annual basis"

¹ Adapted from GFANZ (2022) "Expectations for Real-Economy Transition Plans"
– "Most critical components for SMEs and companies starting to develop transition plans"

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SBF



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BUILD YOUR GREEN WORKFORCE

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Go beyond calculating your baseline emissions. **Build your net zero plan** based on your sector's decarbonisation levers.

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Engage qualified Sustainability Advisors on a fractional or project basis to support your organisation's sustainability needs.

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ENTERPRISE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME

Support for Singapore companies to build sustainability capabilities and capture new opportunities.

Includes financial support to help companies take sustainability action.

Recommendation 3

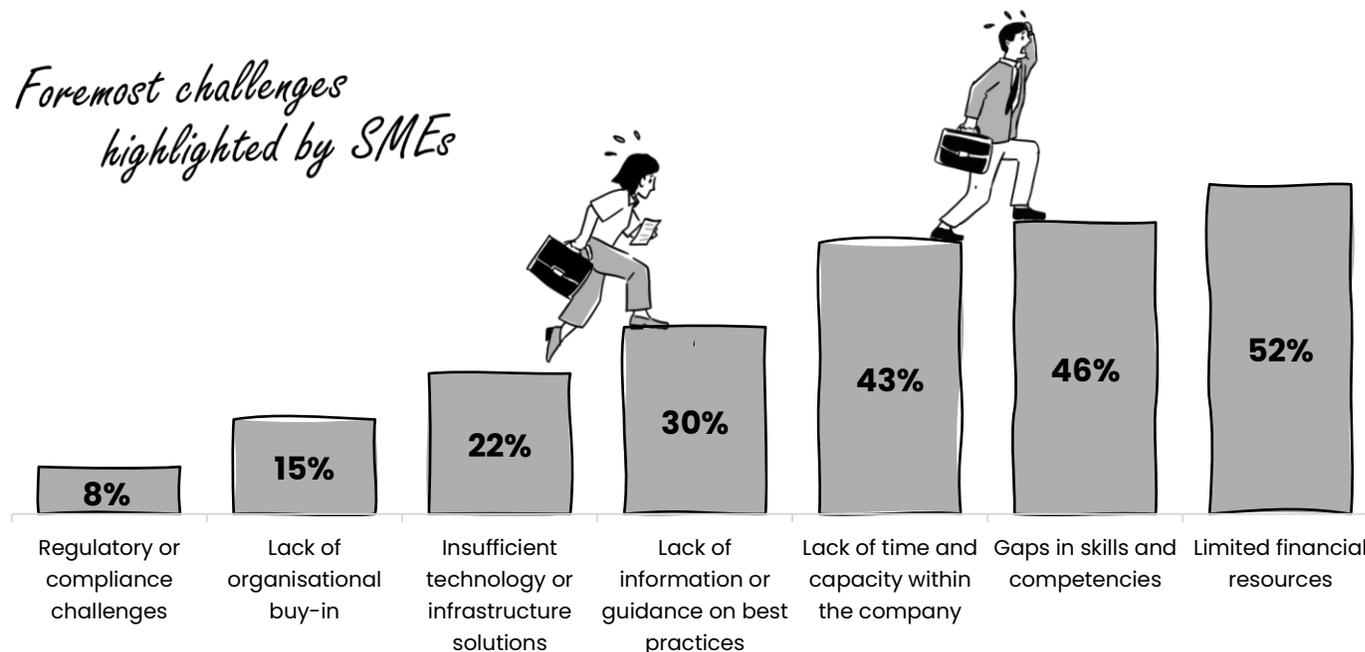
Sustaining the momentum

SMEs that move beyond year one will encounter more challenges and require more ecosystem support. Fortunately, Queen Bee programmes offer an optimal way to help these SMEs build more advanced skillsets and capabilities. We should enhance these programmes and make them more readily available to the SME community.

Beyond participating in these programmes, it's important to maintain strong incentives for SMEs to stay vested in their green efforts. Sustained demand in the form of Queen Bee procurement is crucial. When buyers consistently prioritise sustainability, SMEs will be empowered to keep pushing forward.

The journey can get tougher for SMEs as they progress beyond the first year.

Foremost challenges highlighted by SMEs



Manufacturing industry representative

“ We took a life cycle assessment course that was **educational but lacked ongoing support for implementation.** SMEs need long-term support to properly implement sustainability practices.

Queen Bee programmes are a sensible and structured approach to help SMEs surmount the hurdles and stay vested in sustainability.

What are Queen Bee programmes?

Programmes in which **Enterprise Singapore** works with and supports **large corporates** to accelerate outreach and drive sustainability action amongst **local SME suppliers and customers**, to work towards **“win-win-win” outcomes** for the large corporate, participating SMEs, and national efforts to green the business community.

Examples include:

- [CDL Queen Bee Compact](#) by CDL
- [ESG Ready](#) by DBS
- [FPG GenZero](#) by Fairprice Group
- [QUEST](#) by SBF and SingPost
- [SAGE](#) by UOB
- [SME Start-ESG](#) by OCBC



Why Queen Bee programmes are helpful for SMEs

35% of SMEs need help accessing more **industry-specific toolkits & resources**

30% of SMEs cited a need for **personalised consultation and ongoing support**

86% of Queen Bee participants reported **positive business impacts** ¹

Recommendations to enhance the Queen Bee model

- 1 More availability** by ramping up the number of Queen Bee programmes available for SMEs to participate in
- 2 More support** for these programmes by strengthening alignment to existing sustainability-related grants and schemes, where applicable ²
- 3 More coordination** paves the way for sector-wide programmes featuring multiple Queen Bees, unlocking economies of scale and widening the range of benefits for participating SMEs
- 4 More value** by encouraging Queen Bees to offer clearer procurement and financing incentives, as well as supply chain-related opportunities, for participating SMEs

¹ The Business Times (2025) “Professionalisation of adult educators, more ‘Queen Bee’ companies among SkillsFuture updates”

² Such as incorporating SME green financing support schemes into these programmes (e.g. MAS’ [GSLs](#) and Enterprise Singapore’s [EFS-Green](#))

We need more Queen Bees to step forward and lead such programmes. For this to happen, Queen Bees themselves must be convinced of the benefits.



case study

The Queen Bee Compact Programme



Abridged version of a successful first run



Equips CDL's **existing and prospective suppliers** with essential capabilities to stay abreast of mounting green procurement requirements



SMEs receive:

- Sustainability **advisory**
- **Digital capabilities** for data collection
- A **decarbonisation roadmap** that's useful for tracking sustainability goals and accessing green financing
- A **product or service carbon footprint report** that's useful for communicating SMEs' green product offerings to clients
- A **corporate GHG emissions report** that's useful for tender applications
- **Guidance** from SBF on more supporting grants and programmes

42 SMEs

successfully graduated from the programme's first run

up to **70%**

grant support from Enterprise Singapore

up to **90%**

salary support for 6 months from WSG Career Conversion Programme



Kai Xiang Huat Pte Ltd

Leading fresh produce supplier

“ The programme **made ESG approachable, even for companies starting from scratch.**”



GasHub United Pte Ltd

Leading provider of LNG and energy-related solutions

“ The Queen Bee programme **equipped us with the knowledge and tools to reduce emissions, strengthen our process, and demonstrate leadership.**”



Sherman Kwek

Group CEO, CDL

“ With large corporates striving to meet stringent carbon reporting requirements, there is a stronger business case for SMEs to embrace carbon reduction.
In today's highly competitive economy, SMEs who show capacity for carbon reporting will stand out as preferred suppliers.”

Queen Bee procurement is a powerful lever to keep SMEs motivated. The Government plays a pivotal role in setting an example for the private sector.

For SMEs, green procurement is both challenge and opportunity

45% are motivated by customers' green expectations

25% find it hard to market their green goods and services

87% don't use their green data to power branding & marketing

The Government, as a major Queen Bee, is taking the lead ¹

60% of procurement by contract value already incorporate green considerations
In 2025

2028 Target extend green considerations to **all procurement** in a manner keeping pace with industry readiness and international developments



Strengthening public-private collaboration can help to...

- Synergise industry-wide approaches to green procurement
- Establish clearer green procurement pathways for SMEs
- Amplify ecosystem-wide incentives for SMEs to start, and stay, green



“Corporate customers collect everything to cover all bases, which can be time consuming to fulfil. **It would be useful if there was a simplification of sustainability requirements.**”

¹ Parliamentary Reply: [“Timeline to Include Environmental Sustainability Requirements and Evaluation Criteria into All Government Procurements” \(2025\)](#)

² These recommendations draw on international best practices such as the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) framework and the UK Government Buying Standards (GBS).

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SBF



MOBILISE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN AS A QUEEN BEE THROUGH THE

QUEST PROGRAMME

Equip your suppliers with the tools and expertise to report credible carbon emissions data through our workshop, capstone project completion, and tailored advisory support.

Queen Bees

gprnt



DIGITISE AND STREAMLINE YOUR QUEEN BEE JOURNEY WITH

GPRNT ADVISORY

Collaborate with Gprnt to identify capabilities needed to green your networks and collect supplier data.

Receive one-stop advice to structure your programme, leveraging our network of qualified trade associations, solution providers and financial institutions.

Queen Bees

pwc



CRAFT YOUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY WITH

SKILLSFUTURE QUEENBEE (SFQB)

Level-up your sustainability skills through participation in specialist-led courses and personalised mentorship projects, covering a wide range of topics essential to crafting your sustainability ambitions, strategy and journey.

Up to 90% subsidies available, supported by SkillsFuture.

SMEs

OCBC



ACCELERATE YOUR SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY WITH

OCBC SME START-ESG PROGRAMME

Empower your business to take the next step towards sustainability with the OCBC SME Start-ESG Programme.

Designed to support SMEs in building its sustainability capabilities, the programme defrays up to 70% of the eligible costs for sustainability assessments

SMEs

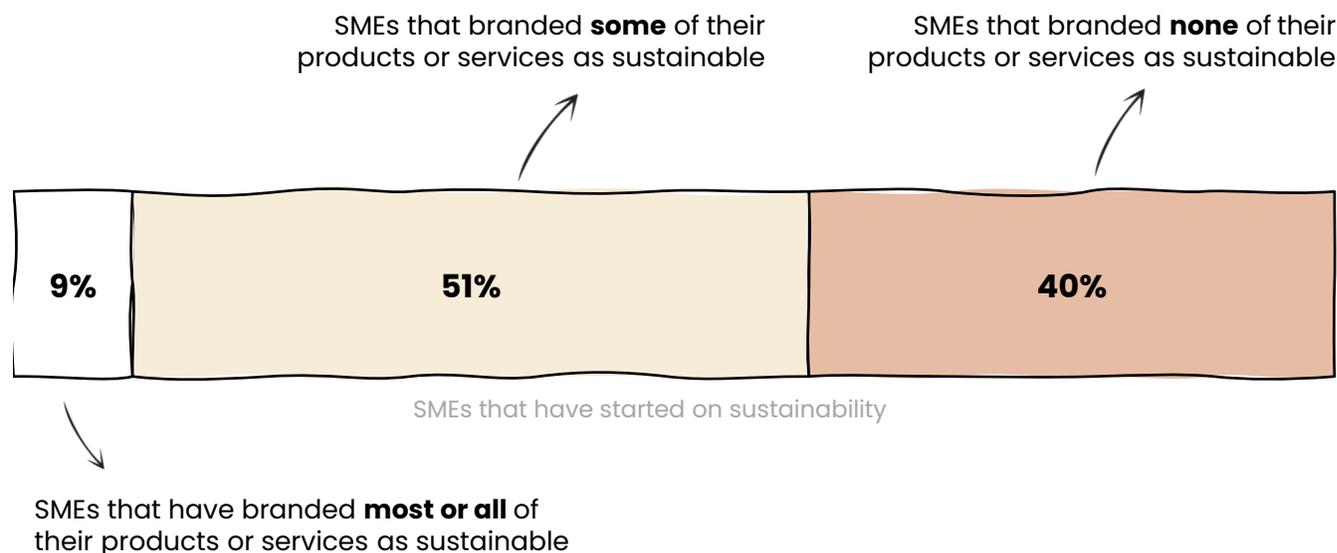
Recommendation 4

Conveying achievements

SMEs should be recognised for their green efforts. We want to strengthen the correlation between sustainability achievements and better brand value. More than that, we want SMEs to be able to translate these achievements into economic benefits when dealing with business and financing partners.

Green labels and marks are a form of recognition. However, certifications are costly and the landscape is fragmented. A sustainability 'passport' can offer SMEs pathfinding support on what 'good' looks like in their respective sectors, and help them to convey their progress in a concise, easy-to-understand manner.

Many SMEs experience difficulties in conveying their sustainability achievements in an impactful and scalable way.



While certifications and badges are a great way to elevate branding, SMEs are confronted by a diversity of choice and accompanying costs.



XCEL

Pallet manufacturer driving sustainable packaging solutions

“ We considered the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme but ultimately did not apply for it as it was **too expensive for us to maintain.**”



ZODA

Activewear brand blending technology, sustainability and community

“ One of the challenges we face in pioneering sustainability is **effectively communicating the complex value and benefits...** to a diverse audience.”



No Time to Waste

Sustainable design company focused on upcycling

“ We are so **focused on maintaining financial sustainability** that it's a challenge to pursue these certifications.”



Enacting a Sustainability Passport can guide SMEs on optimal selections, and doubles as a progress tracker and credibility signal for sustainability progress.



The passport should introduce a tiering of certs and badges

It should offer guidance on **progression pathways** from basic schemes to more advanced qualifications, in a logical manner befitting SMEs' specific sectors and needs.



The passport should endeavour to qualify the costs and benefits of each scheme

SMEs should be able to weigh the benefits they derive from each scheme, and **make informed decisions** whether to sign up.



Consider a free badge that recognises starting SMEs

A starting badge could be awarded to SMEs that take their first steps in sustainability, granting **immediate recognition** while acting as an on-ramp to more advanced badges.



Government agencies should be closely engaged on the passport's development

Public sector involvement is crucial to align the passport with national initiatives and **generate buy-in** by scheme owners and industry users.

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ECOVADIS RATING

GET YOUR TRUSTED SUSTAINABILITY RATING TODAY

Join over 150,000 companies of all sizes and industries who partner with EcoVadis to help them forge opportunities from sustainability challenges.

Recommendation 5

Economies of scale

Sustainability can be expensive.

We can help SMEs defray the costs by banding common activities to promote economies of scale.

Trade associations can play a key role – in consulting their constituents, identifying shared challenges, and collaborating with the Government to design sector-wide solutions that lower costs and ease access.

Making the journey more affordable allows more SMEs to get aboard, and stay aboard, the sustainability train.

SMEs struggle with the incremental costs of going green.

58%

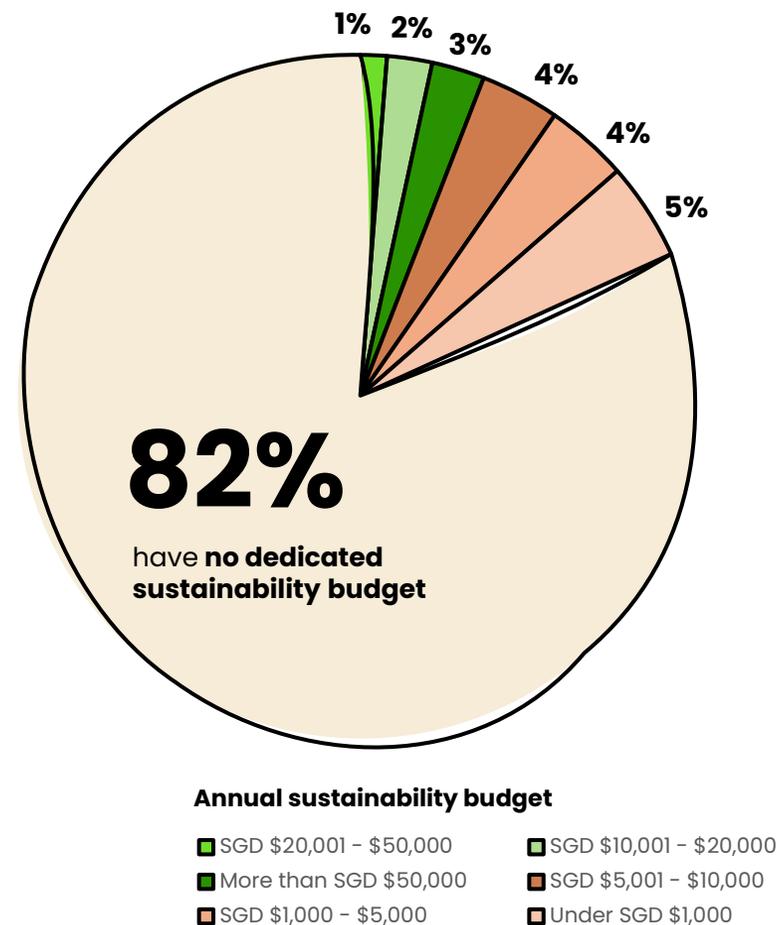
of SMEs **struggle with initial investment costs** for sustainability initiatives

46%

cite **high costs of sustainable materials and solutions** as a key challenge

30%

are concerned about **high costs of technology upgrades**



While programmes and grants help SMEs to defray costs in the short term, structural fixes can be explored to optimise their spend over the long run.

sfic

Singapore Furniture Industries Council

“ **Rising warehousing and logistics costs** remain a key challenge for many furniture enterprises. Exploring collective and scalable solutions can help SMEs enhance productivity, improve resource efficiency, and build greater long-term resilience while advancing sustainability.

[CAELI]

CaeliEco

Sustainable and ethically-made apparel for women

“ Offering sustainable products is a tough road because the **cost of sustainable materials is really high** and it's hard to compete with competitors. Consumers are still really drawn to low prices...

Finding the right suppliers is [also] very difficult. Our **minimum order quantity is too low** for most sustainable fabric suppliers.

Trade associations can engage their SME constituents to identify shared pains, and work with government agencies and industry actors to design **collaborative solutions**.

Example #1

Introduce **shared services arrangements** for green SMEs in inventory-heavy sectors

These could include:

- Centralised discovery and group buys of sustainable materials, to reduce costs of market research, transactions and logistics
- Communal warehousing for sustainable inventory, with subsidised rates for SMEs with basic green credentials

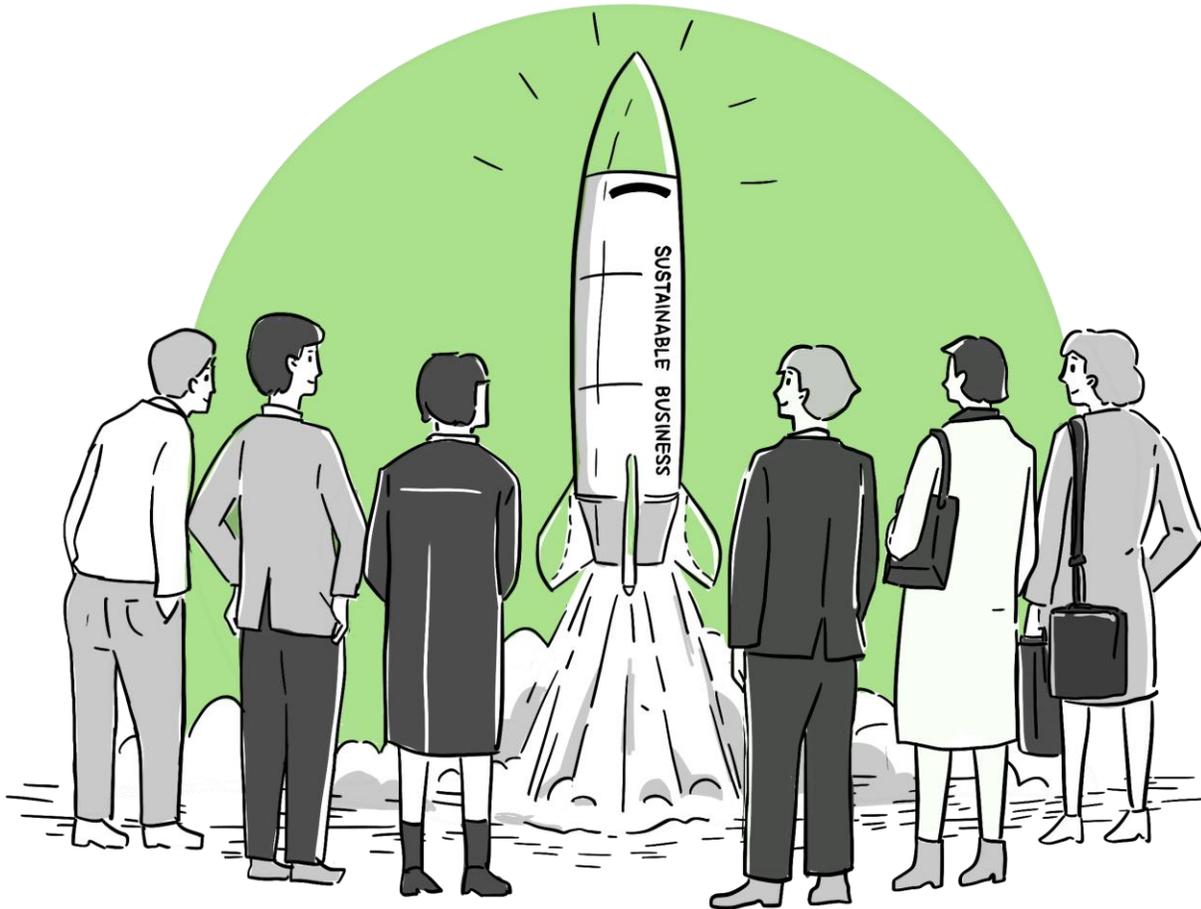
Example #2

Negotiate **bulk tenders** for multiple SMEs seeking to engage common solutions

Solutions that SMEs frequently explore but are deterred from engaging due to cost concerns:

- Sustainability advisory
- Emissions reporting
- Limited assurance
- ISO certification
- Supplier scoring or rating

What happens next?



Recommendation 1
Articulate the ROI

Build a public casebank of success stories

A central library that celebrates SME success stories and serves as a reference point to help more SMEs justify getting started.

Recommendation 1
Articulate the ROI

Use data to quantify the benefits of sustainability

Start building key datasets and benchmarks to convey the business benefits for SMEs to start and advance along their sustainability journeys.

Recommendation 2
Define the first steps

Help SMEs appoint a sustainability champion

Designate a representative to set simple and achievable first year goals, equip them with the right skills, and marshal resources to support them.

Recommendation 2
Define the first steps

Introduce a Year One roadmap for SMEs

A basic template that helps SMEs to navigate their first year, allowing them to unlock achievable milestones with immediate benefits.

Recommendation 3
Sustain the momentum

Expand and enhance Queen Bee programmes

Expand availability of programmes and explore sector-wide iterations featuring multiple Queen Bees, to widen the range of benefits for participating SMEs.

Recommendation 3
Sustain the momentum

Maximise use of green procurement

Public-private coordination to leverage Queen Bees' buying power can help to unlock clearer incentive pathways for SMEs to start and stay green.

Recommendation 4
Convey achievements

Pursue a Sustainability Passport for SMEs

A pathfinder for SMEs on what 'good' looks like in their respective fields, that doubles as a green progress tracker and credibility signal.

Recommendation 4
Convey achievements

Issue a free recognition mark for starting SMEs

A green starter badge that's free, is easy to obtain, offers immediate brand benefit, and primes them for more advanced accreditations.

Recommendation 5
Harness economies of scale

Design collaborative fixes for shared pains

Identify common costs experienced by multiple SMEs and design sector-wide solutions to manage these more efficiently.

We've issued a set of ecosystem-wide recommendations.

Enacting these will require varying degrees of time, effort, and collaboration.

Gprnt, SBF and SA will engage the public and private sectors to study the feasibility of their implementation, with a view to prioritising the more immediate and achievable actions in 2026.

Meanwhile, SMEs should step up by designating their sustainability champions to help them get started.

Chapter 5

Acknowledgments



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This report is the culmination of a joint effort by the following co-authors:

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Gprnt, a green fintech launched by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, operates the world's first nationwide sustainability reporting utility for all Singapore businesses to freely and easily generate their basic emissions using government data.

This report was prepared by the [Green Circle](#), Gprnt's inhouse advisory arm.

For more information, visit: www.gprnt.ai



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The Sustainability Alliance brings together Singapore's leading trade associations and corporate partners in a shared mission to drive sustainable development. Together, we will shape a resilient, green future for businesses and communities.

For more information, visit: www.sustainabilityalliance.sg