



# **Empowering Change: A Study on Social Sustainability in Singapore's Business Landscape**

Final Research Report

**June 2025**





## Kok Ping Soon

Chief Executive Officer Singapore  
Business Federation

# Foreword for Singapore Business Federation

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of Singapore's economy, making up 99% of all enterprises and employing around 70% of the workforce. As the nation advances its sustainability agenda, ensuring inclusive and people-centric progress is essential.

Guided by one of SBF's six Action Agendas, the Social Impact Action Agenda – jointly led by SBF and the SBF Foundation – aims to mobilise the business community to enhance their societal contributions through socially impactful initiatives.

To understand how businesses in Singapore engage with social sustainability, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) partnered with KPMG to conduct a study on local business practices, focusing on how businesses – particularly SMEs – adopt social sustainability, the challenges they face, and the support they need.

The findings revealed that while many businesses recognised the importance of contributing positively to society, they often faced constraints such as limited awareness, insufficient practical support for implementation and measurement, and scarce resources. Most SMEs focused primarily on internal initiatives and less on external efforts, such as corporate volunteering, due to these limitations and concerns – despite expressing interest. When it came to measurement, SMEs frequently encountered difficulties in reporting their social impact, largely due to the absence of standardised frameworks.

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Recognising these barriers, SBF is committed to providing more robust support to businesses.

In 2025, we will launch a new corporate volunteering programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), along with key intermediaries and agencies within the volunteering ecosystem under the Social Sustainability Division (SSD). Designed to mobilise businesses to address community needs and enhance employee engagement, the programme will provide tailored support for businesses at various stages of their volunteering journey – whether they are just beginning or looking to scale up their efforts.

Furthermore, the SSD will also review global best practices, guidelines, and policies in social sustainability to develop a set of unified, practical metrics tailored to Singapore businesses. These efforts aim to address the challenges businesses face in measuring and reporting social impact by equipping them with relevant tools and frameworks.

SBF remains committed to supporting its members on their social sustainability journey. By raising awareness of government schemes, fostering partnerships, and showcasing successful models of corporate social contribution, we aim to help businesses realise the full value of social sustainability. Together, we can build a Singapore where businesses grow responsibly and communities thrive.

# ESG WORKS HAND IN HAND WITH CSR FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The three ESG pillars are interconnected, ensuring sustainable, ethical operations and long-term stakeholder value

## Environment:

Evaluates a company's impact on the planet through resource use and environmental stewardship

## Social:

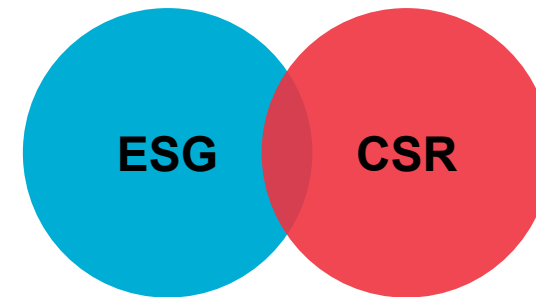
Assesses how a company manages relationships with employees, communities, and customers

## Governance:

Examines a company's leadership, ethics, and accountability in decision-making processes

## Sustainability:

Aligning philanthropy and ethical practices with long-term ESG goals creates a comprehensive approach to impact and risk management



## ESG

Integrates sustainability and ethical practices into core business operations and governance

## CSR

Focuses on voluntary corporate efforts for community and societal well-being

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report “Empowering Change: A Study on Social Sustainability in Singapore’s Business Landscape” is jointly produced by the Singapore Business Federation and KPMG. The contributing authors are as follows:

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 **Executive Summary**
- 02 **Introduction**
- 03 **Background**
- 04 **Key Findings**

# 01

## Executive Summary



# NAVIGATING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (SS): BARRIERS, DRIVERS, AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS IMPACT

## Executive Summary

This social sustainability study was conducted from March to May 2025, analysing the SS sentiments from 438 businesses in Singapore. From this study, we derived the following key findings:

	INSIGHTS	DRIVERS / BARRIERS	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	<p>94% of large companies and 88% of SMEs rated SS as important, indicating that the majority of businesses has the appetite for it and recognises its value.</p>	<p><b>Competing business priorities</b> was the top barrier to SS, regardless of the size of the business.</p>	<p>As a form of measurement, a <b>unified SS framework</b> with a scoring system and incentives could encourage businesses to strengthen their SS efforts.</p>
2	<p>The <b>retail trade sector</b> led in SS spending (&gt;\$500K) followed by banking and insurance and logistics and transportation sector. These sectors have the <b>propensity for higher spending</b> (e.g. 40% of retail trade sector were large companies) and are <b>forerunners</b>, providing best practices for other sectors.</p>	<p>While <b>financial and incentive drivers</b> and <b>training and capacity-building programmes</b> were key SS enablers, businesses further along in their SS journey increasingly emphasised the need for impact measurement tools.</p>	<p>To enhance accessibility, a <b>consolidated resource platform</b> could help businesses easily access all relevant resources and build capabilities to boost SS.</p>

# NAVIGATING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (SS): BARRIERS, DRIVERS, AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS IMPACT

INSIGHTS	DRIVERS / BARRIERS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<div>3</div> <p><b>Employee training, health and safety, and progressive wages</b> have the most government support schemes and emerged as the top implemented SS topics, suggesting that businesses tend to start from within before moving towards SS initiatives that impact the community.</p>	<p>Overall, the top business value was <b>strengthening business reputation and brand image</b>. <b>Boosting employee engagement and morale</b> was also a key business value, especially for SMEs.</p>	<p>To build capability, a <b>community of practice</b> could be helpful in sharing SS-related knowledge and experiences.</p>
<div>4</div> <p>In contrast, <b>fair and ethical procurement and community engagement</b> are less implemented and could do with more support from government schemes such as regulations, policies, badges, marks, platforms, programmes and activities.</p>		<p>To strengthen the SS landscape in Singapore, government support schemes could focus on <b>community engagement</b> and <b>fair and ethical procurement practices</b>.</p>

*Overall, businesses recognised SS and its business value.  
Tangible support and practical guidance can help them start and scale SS.*

# 02

## Introduction



# ABOUT THE STUDY

This inaugural **Social Sustainability Study 2025** aimed to assess the current state of **social sustainability** and its impact on businesses in Singapore, as well as investigate the prevalence of **corporate volunteering** and the factors that motivated businesses to participate in such activities. Throughout this report, “**SS**” refers to social sustainability while “**CV**” refers to corporate volunteering.

## This study sought to:

01

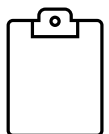
Assess the current state of ‘S’ in ESG with a focus on the SS of businesses.

02

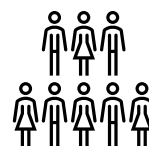
Understand the barriers and barriers businesses face in implementing SS initiatives, as well as identify the key drivers that motivate businesses to implement these initiatives.

03

Identify gaps and recommend key areas of support that businesses need in the adoption and implementation of SS initiatives.



The survey period of the study was from **25 March to 23 May 2025**, and drew responses from businesses across all key industries.



A sample size of **n = 438** was used for this report.

# THIS STUDY AIMED TO SPUR THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SS INITIATIVES

SS plays a crucial role in benefiting businesses, the community, and broader society in several impactful ways:



**Enhanced business performance through resilience**



**Improved reputation and brand loyalty**



**Strengthened employee engagement and retention**



**Positive local community impact**



**Long-term societal benefits and systemic change**

Embracing SS is not only beneficial for individual businesses in terms of **performance** and **reputation** but also holds far-reaching benefits for the community and broader society. By integrating SS into business practices, businesses can **drive positive impact, foster collaboration**, and contribute to a **more sustainable future** for all stakeholders.



## Insights from Study

- Gain an understanding of the SS landscape among businesses in Singapore
- Highlight gaps, opportunities, and areas for improvement



## Action Plan

- Enable stakeholders to develop targeted support schemes or programmes to address the identified gaps, promoting SS in Singapore
- Empower businesses to deepen their social impact

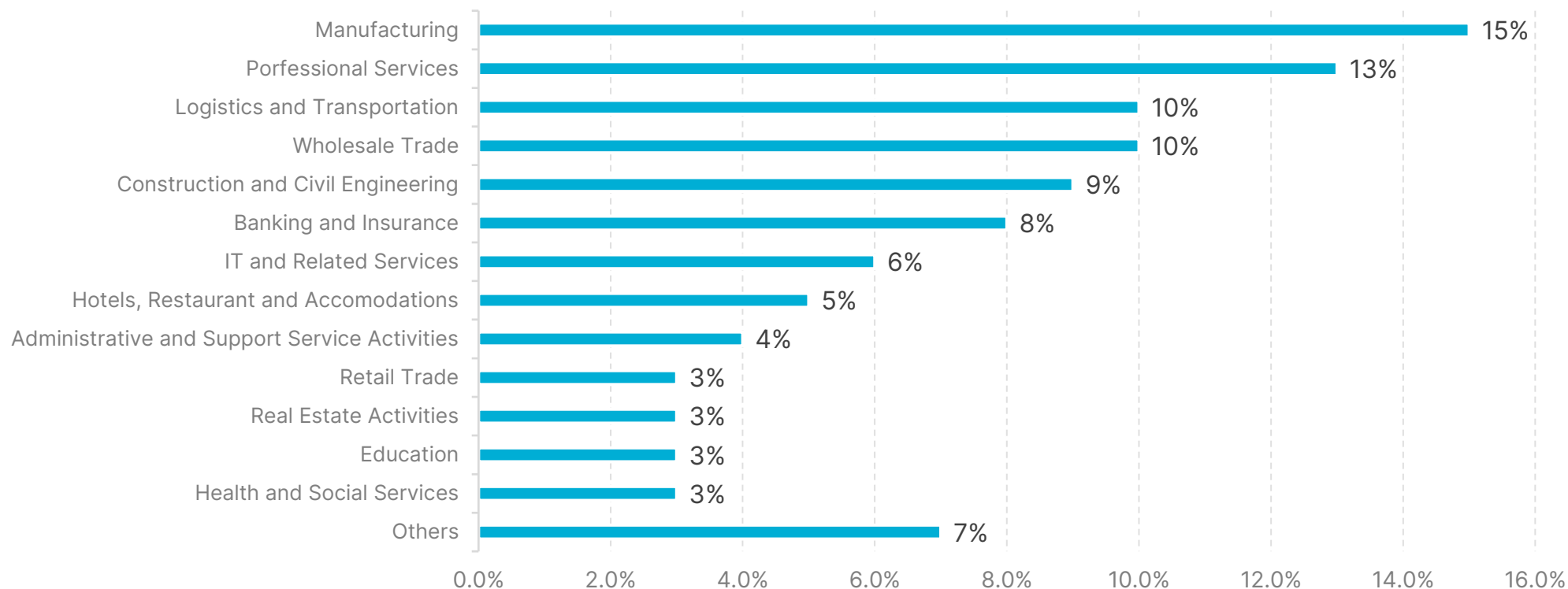


## Impact on Singapore

- Contribute to strengthening Singapore's social compact
- Foster a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable society

## The study leveraged insights from businesses in Singapore across revenue segments and sectors

### Response by industry



## INTRODUCTION

# The study leveraged insights from businesses in Singapore across revenue segments and sectors

## Responses from

438

RESPONDENTS

14+

INDUSTRIES

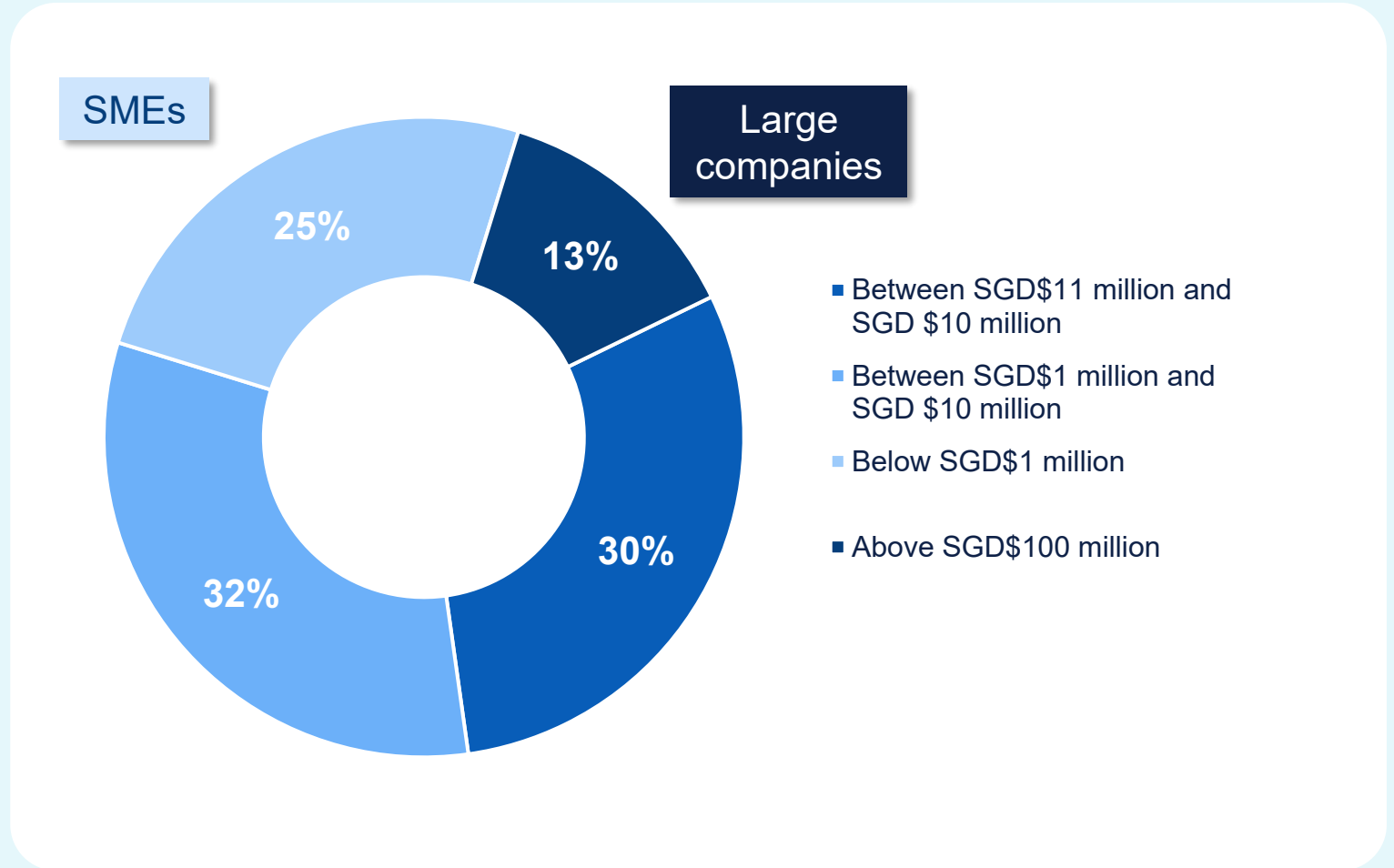
87%

SMEs

13%

LARGE COMPANIES

SMEs refer to businesses with a range of revenue sizes below SGD\$100 million while large companies refer to Multinational Corporations (MNCs) or Large Local Enterprises (LLEs).



# 03

## Background



# SETTING THE CONTEXT



## SS as a Global Trend

### United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)<sup>1</sup>

- The UNGC is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, calling for businesses to align strategies and operations with universal principles and take actions that advance societal goals.
- It defines SS as identifying and managing business impacts, both positive and negative, on people.



#### UNGC Encourages Business to:

- Contribute to improving the lives of the people they affect
- Make strategic social investments and promote public policies that support SS
- Partner with other businesses, pooling strengths to make a greater positive impact

*Social sustainability moves CSR from ad-hoc giving to embedded strategies that deliver shared value for employees, customers and community. SS is a necessary step forward as Singapore moves from “proliferation” to “consolidation” of social.*

Note: 1. United Nations Global Compact (UNGC); 2. Forward SG

## Singapore's Approach



### Forward Singapore<sup>2</sup>

- Launched in 2022 by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Lawrence Wong, Forward SG is a new way forward in the Singapore ecosystem – prompting us to come together, examine our values and aspirations, and build consensus.



#### Key Outcomes:

Greater shared responsibility across all segments of society



**Government**



**Community**



**Businesses**



**Individuals and Families**

Working together to support one another and **strengthen social cohesion**, helping Singapore remain **resilient and united** for the long term.

# SBF'S VISION FOR BUSINESSES IN SINGAPORE: TO BE SOCIALLY IMPACTFUL AND SUSTAINABILITY-CENTRIC

## SBF's Vision

Globally Competitive Sustainable Economy, Future-Ready Business, Impactful Trade Associations and Chambers

## Action Agendas

Scaled Internationally, Smart-Enabled, Skills-Empowered, Sustainability-Centric, Socially Impactful<sup>1</sup>



As part of this vision, SBF focuses on **socially impactful** and **sustainability-centric** action agendas, which is something that businesses cannot afford to ignore.

## Our Vision for Businesses in Singapore

Businesses need to be **BOTH**:



### Socially Impactful

Embed social responsibility into business purpose and contribute meaningfully to the community



### Sustainability-centric

Incorporate sustainability into all aspects of their business and for it to be a source of competitive advantage

Note: 1. Singapore Business Federation (SBF)

# 04

## Key Findings



# Section 4.1

## Insights from Study

for social sustainability

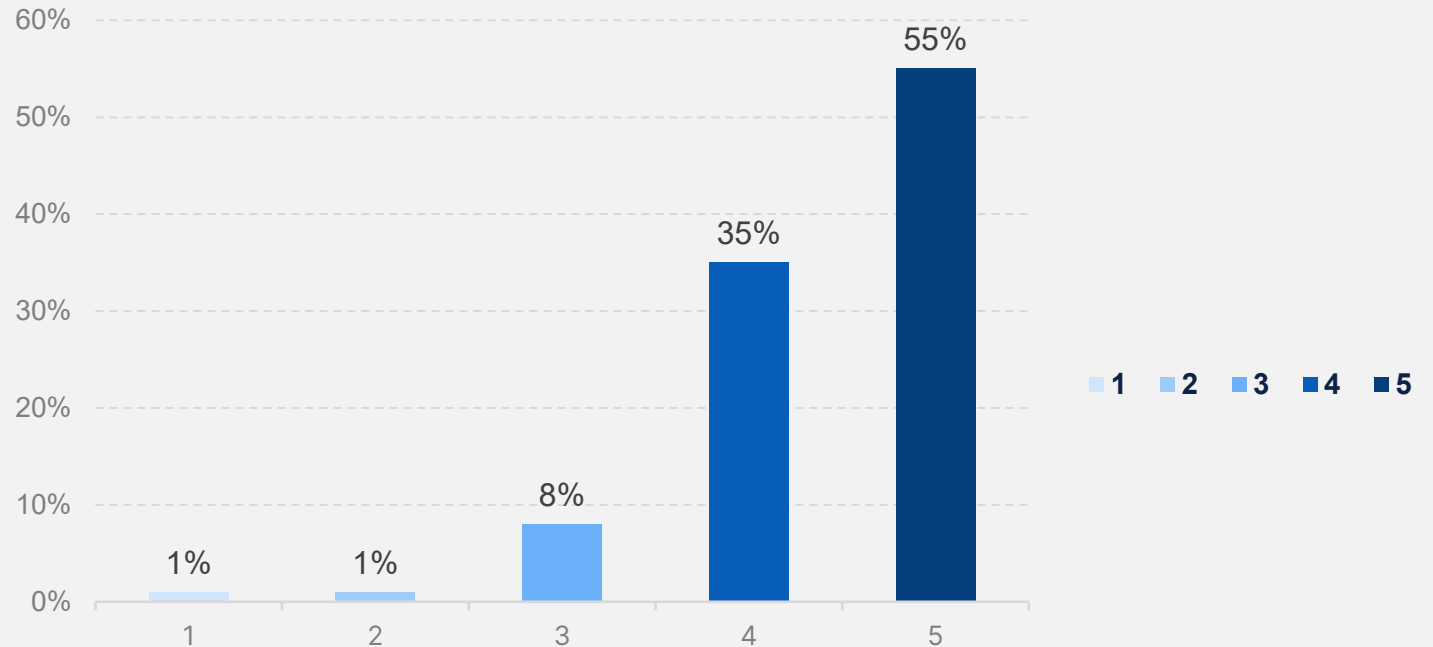
## Regardless of size, businesses generally recognised the importance of SS

### Businesses in Singapore recognised the importance of SS

**90%**

of businesses rated SS as an important ESG area to their business (Rated as 4 or 5).

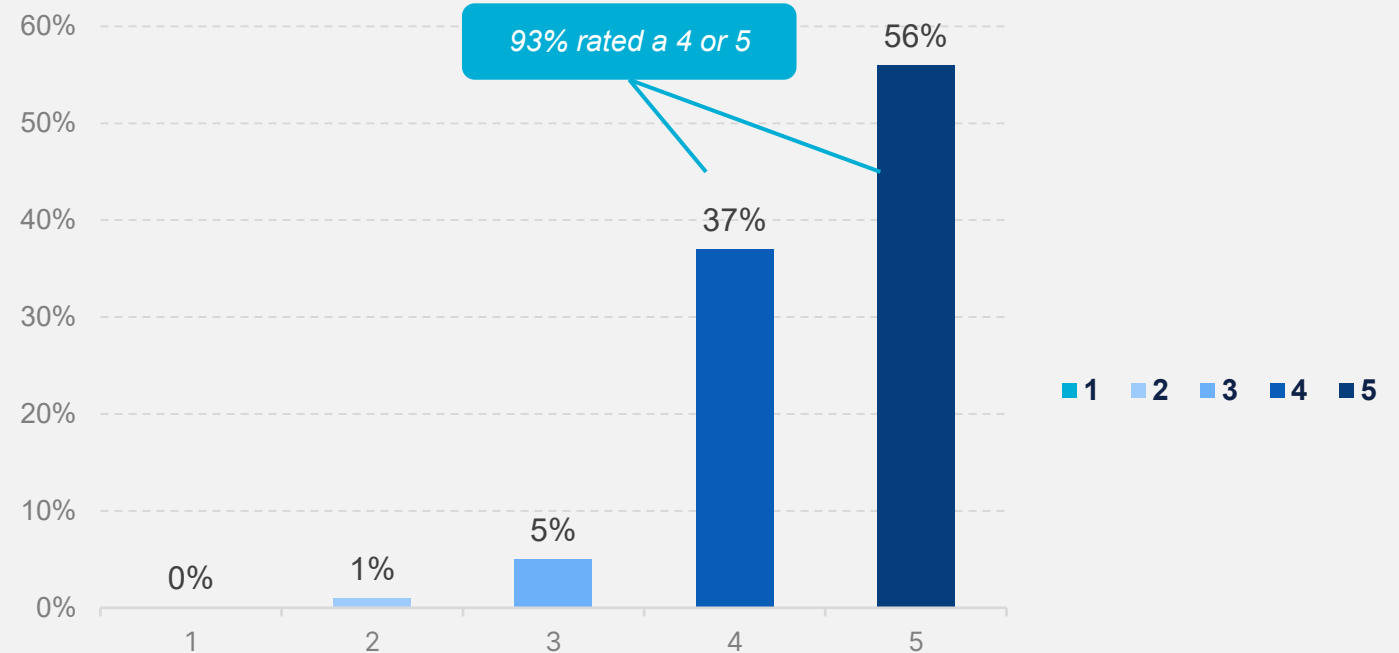
[1 = Not important at all, 2 = Somewhat not important, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Somewhat important, 5 = Very Important]



## Regardless of size, businesses generally recognised the importance of SS

### Rating of SS by large companies

[1 = Not important at all, 2 = Somewhat not important, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Somewhat important, 5 = Very Important]



## Regardless of size, businesses generally recognised the importance of SS

### Rating of SS by SMEs

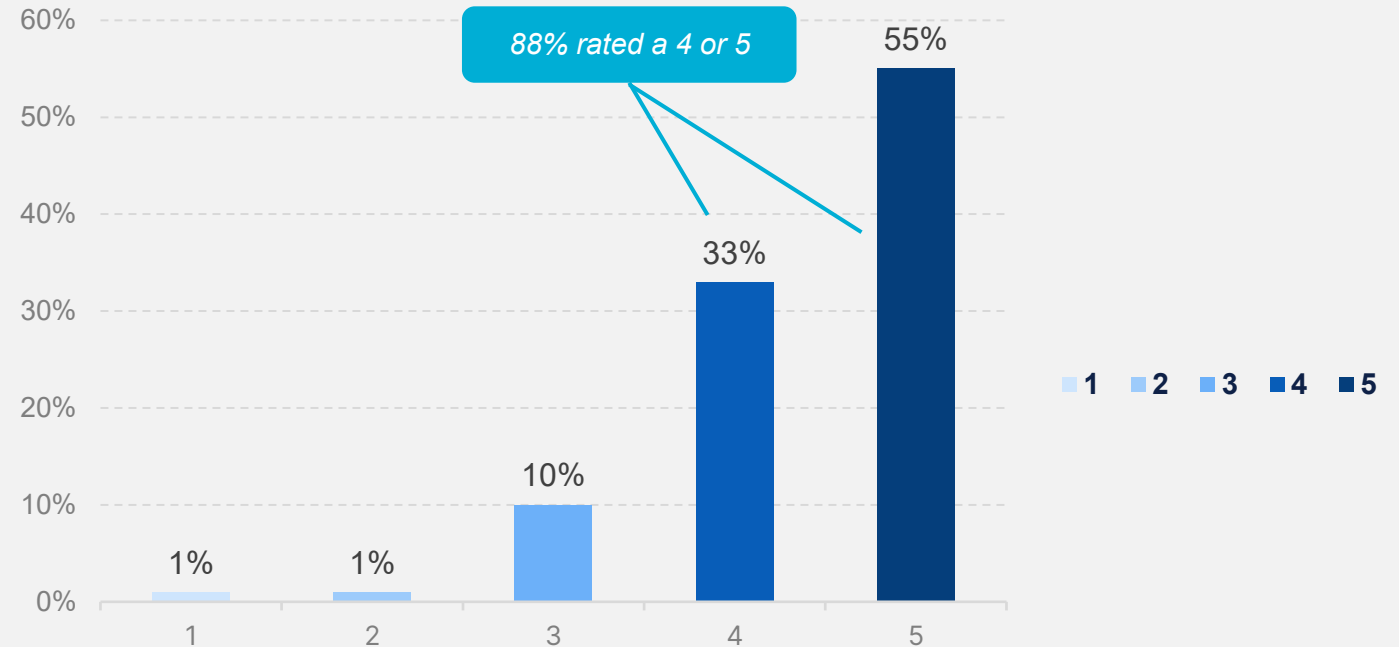
#### Further Breakdown

**89%** of medium size SMEs (revenue SGD \$10 million to \$100 million) rated 4 or 5, while

**88%** of micro-SMEs (revenue less than SGD \$10 million) rated 4 or 5.

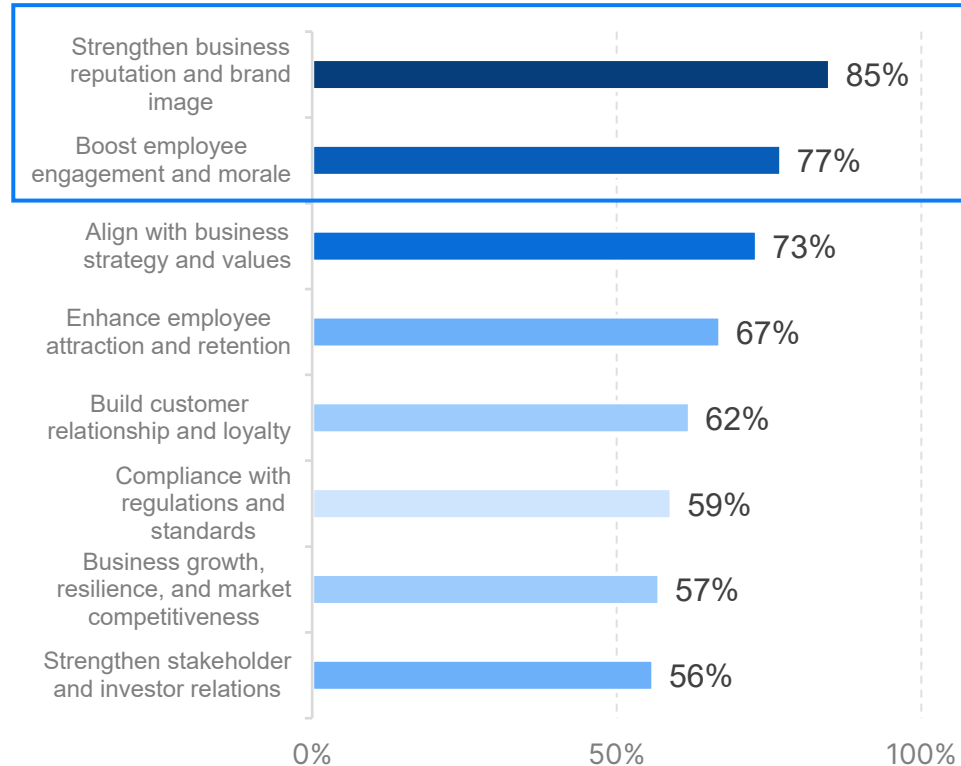
Regardless of size, their rating of the importance of SS is similar.

[1 = Not important at all, 2 = Somewhat not important, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Somewhat important, 5 = Very Important]

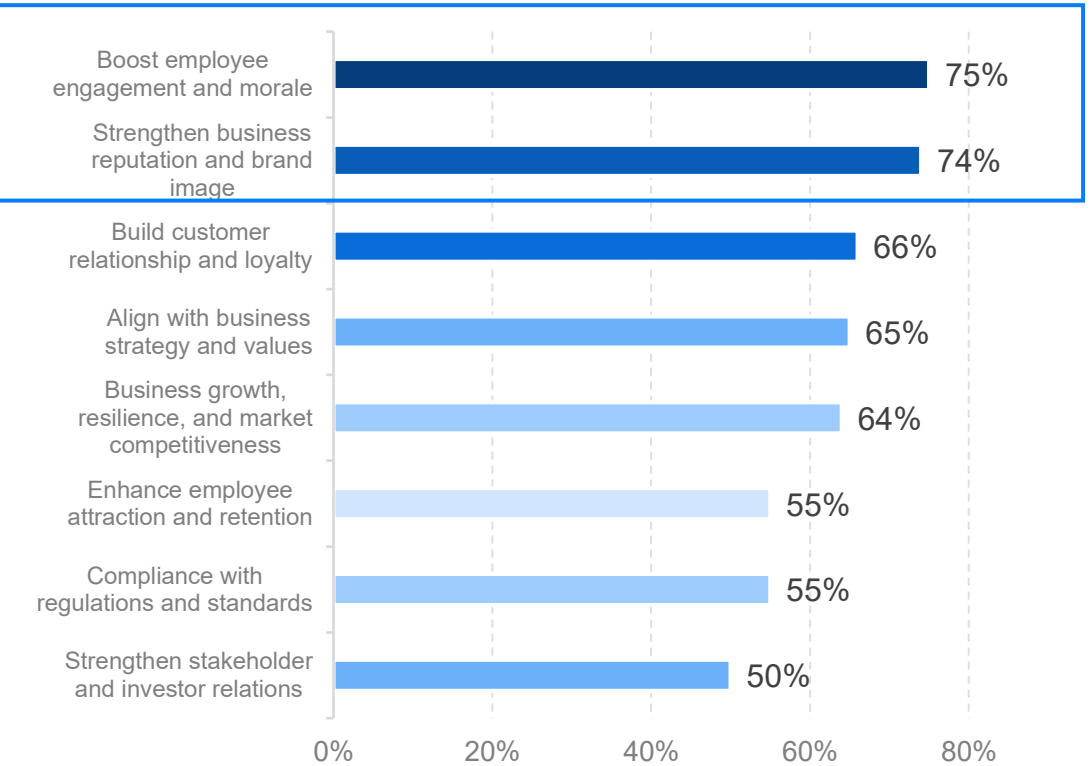


## Strengthening reputation and boosting employee engagement were the most widely recognised business value of SS across all business sizes

**Business value of SS selected by large companies**



**Business value of SS selected by SMEs**



## Businesses largely drive SS through assigning dedicated teams to lead and implement relevant programmes

How has your business committed resources to drive SS initiatives?  
Choose all that apply.

**Close to 50%** of businesses have assigned dedicated teams to lead and implement SS programmes.

For the remaining, specialised support such as **social impact advisors as-a-service**, can encourage the implementation of SS initiatives.

Some businesses have not committed resources to drive SS initiatives, citing these reasons:

“No resources”

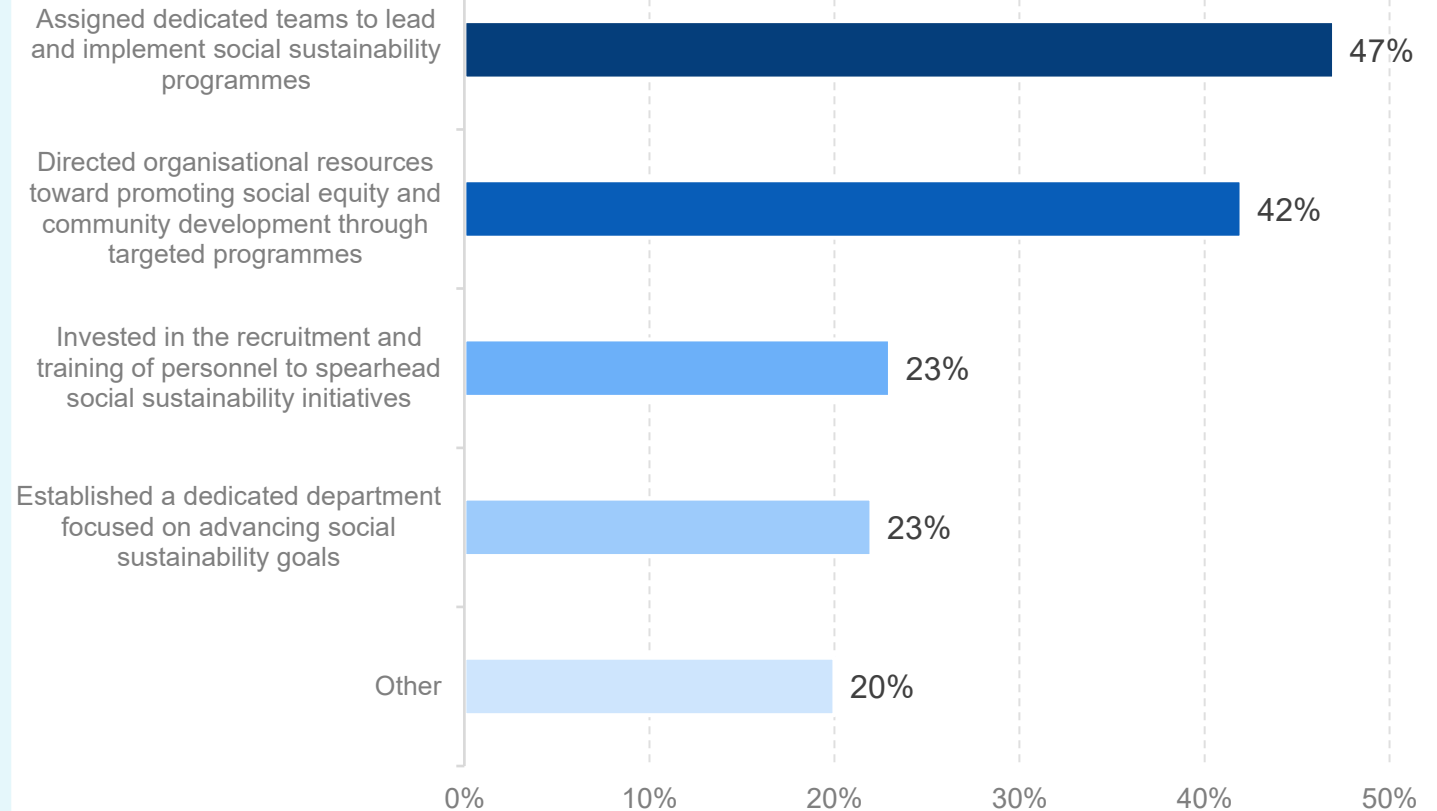
“No budget”

“We are start ups / SMEs”

“No time”

“Not a priority”

“This is for HR to decide”



## In general, businesses with greater revenue tend to spend more on SS initiatives

### Annual business revenue vs. Annual spending on SS

# 25%

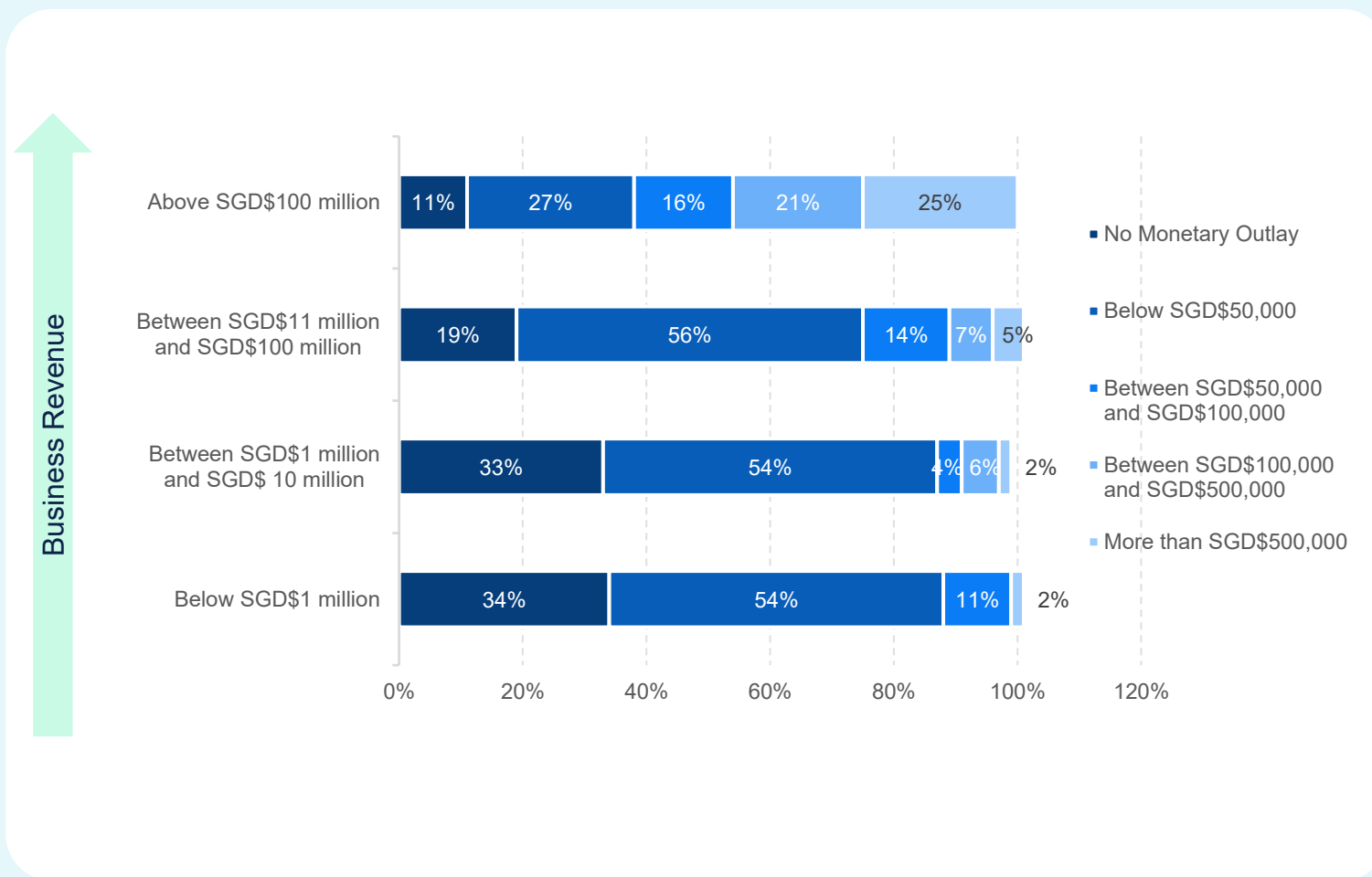
of large companies (more than SGD\$100 million in revenue) spend **more than SGD\$500,000** on SS.

Micro-SMEs (below SGD\$10 million in revenue) tend to spend **under SGD\$50,000** on SS

# 8%

of SMEs (SGD\$1 million to SGD\$100 million in revenue) spend **more than SGD\$500,000** on SS

Although SMEs spent less in absolute terms, their spending reflected a greater proportion of their business revenue.



# Incentives and practical guidance can foster SS progression among businesses, with employee engagement and business reputation as the key motivators

## Annual business revenue vs. Annual spending on SS

### Business with spending above SGD\$500,000

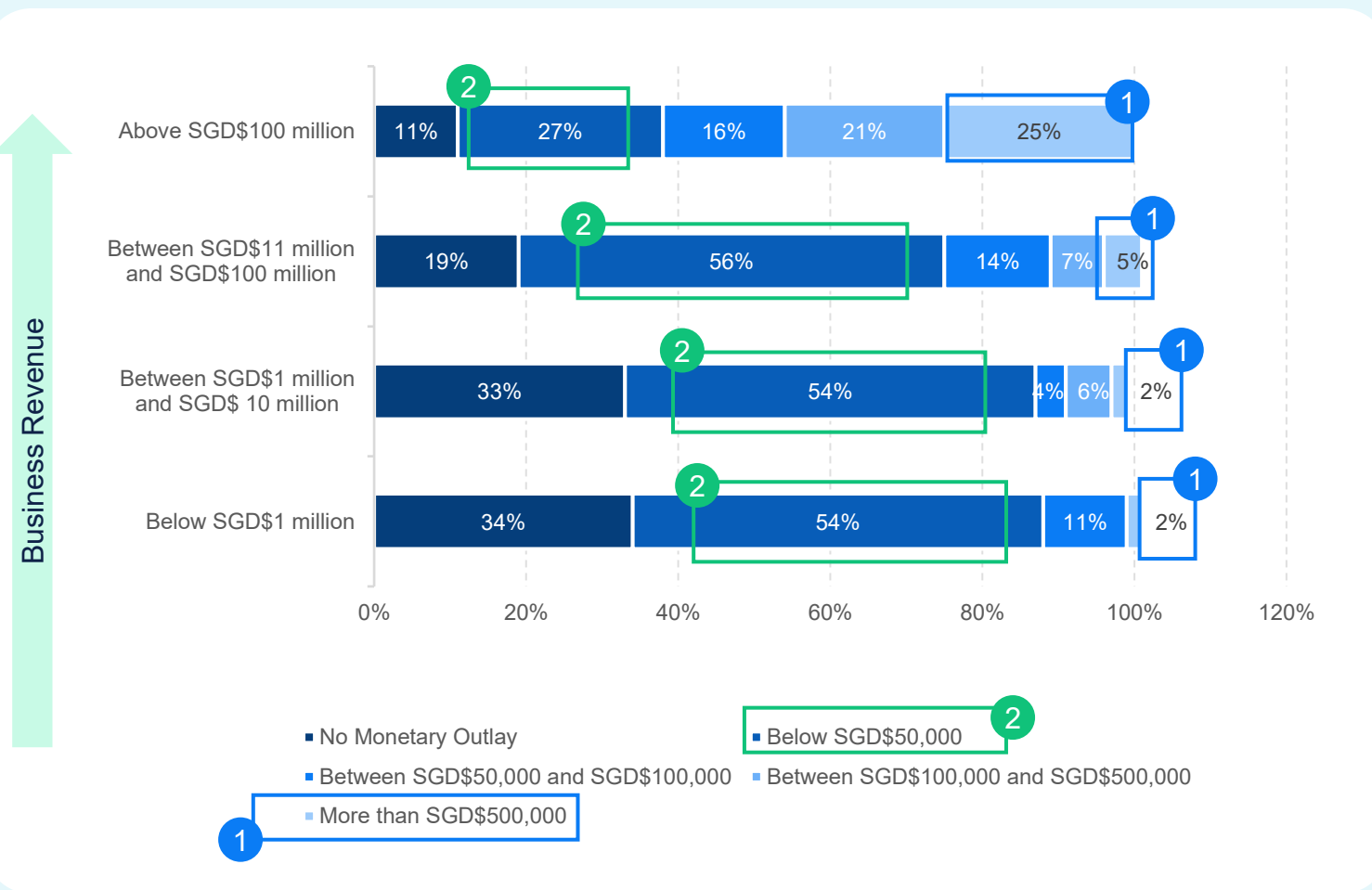
**Large companies** considered **standardised methodology to measure and quantify social impacts** as the key enabler to foster SS progression.

**Medium size and Micro-SMEs** considered **financial and incentive drivers** as the key enabler to foster SS progression.

### Businesses with spending below SGD\$50,000

In general, businesses considered financial and incentive drivers as the key enabler to foster SS progression, regardless of their size.

Regardless of size and spending, businesses were motivated by **employee engagement** and **business reputation** to foster SS progression.



## Spending on SS initiatives by sector

### Insights from the top 3 sectors

#### Insights from the top 3 sectors spending above SGD\$500,000 on SS

These sectors have a higher proportion of large companies (e.g. 40% of businesses in the Retail Trade sector are **large companies**). This could suggest greater financial capabilities to invest in SS.

#### Key SS motivators:

These 3 sectors identified the following SS motivators:



Boost employee engagement and morale

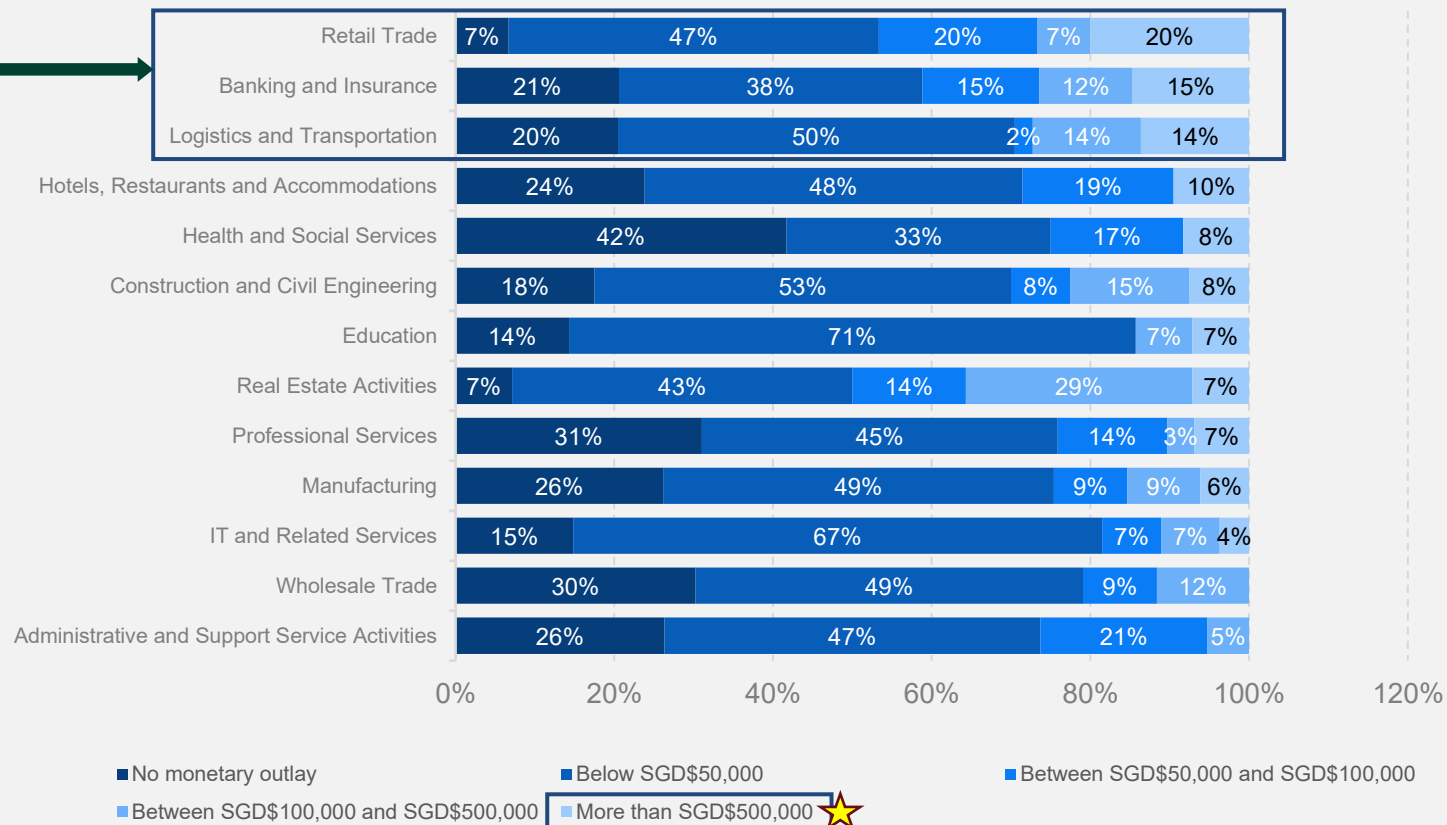


Build customer relationship and loyalty /  
Strengthen brand image and reputation

#### Key SS enabler:

While **Retail Trade sector** selected “**financial and incentive drivers**” as the top enabler, the other sectors selected guidance-related enablers:

- Banking and Insurance sector: **Industry best practices and benchmarking report**
- Logistics and Transportation sector: **SS framework and guidelines**



## Spending on SS initiatives by sector

### Insights from the bottom 3 sectors

#### Insights from the bottom 3 sectors spending above SGD\$500,000 on SS

These sectors have a lower proportion of **large companies** (e.g. 15% of businesses in the IT and Related Services sector are large companies). This could suggest lower financial capabilities to invest in SS.

#### Key SS motivators:

These 3 sectors identified the following SS motivators:



**Business growth, resilience, and market competitiveness**

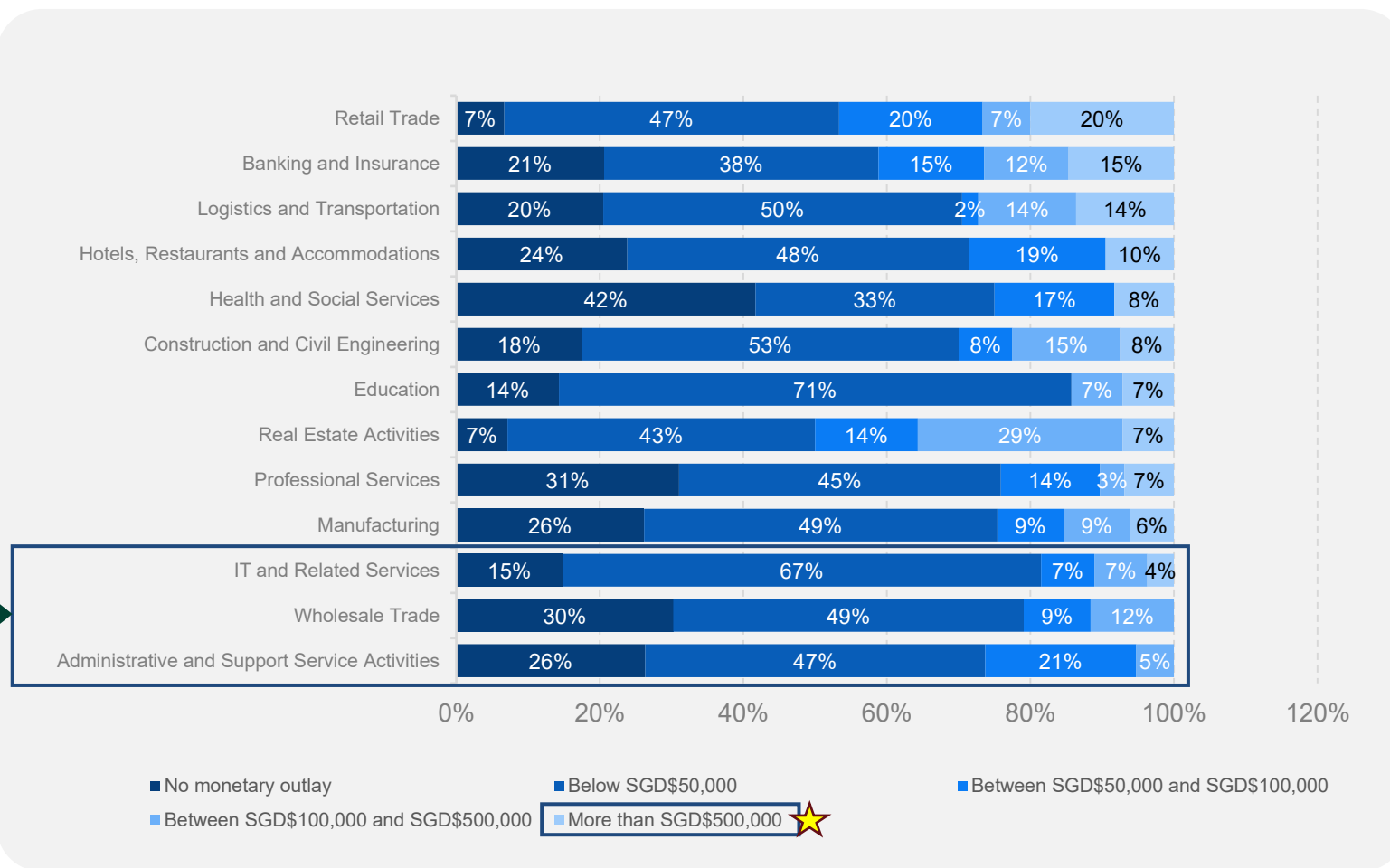


**Strengthen brand image and reputation**

#### Key SS enabler:

While the **Administrative and Support Service Activities** sector selected “**training and capacity-building programmes**” as the top enabler, the IT and Related Services sector and the Wholesale Trade sector selected “**financial and incentive drivers**”.

From the findings, sectors that spent less on SS often identified “**financial and incentive drivers**” as their key SS enabler.



# Employee-centric SS initiatives were the most implemented among businesses in Singapore

## SS initiatives currently implemented

**The top 3 most implemented SS initiatives** impact **core business performance** and are part of **regulatory requirements** (e.g. employee training, occupational health and safety).

These are employee centric **SS initiatives**, which are largely aligned with SGX's Core ESG metrics<sup>1</sup> on "Social," which primarily focus on employees.

Businesses tend to start from within, then move towards SS initiatives that impact the community, such as:



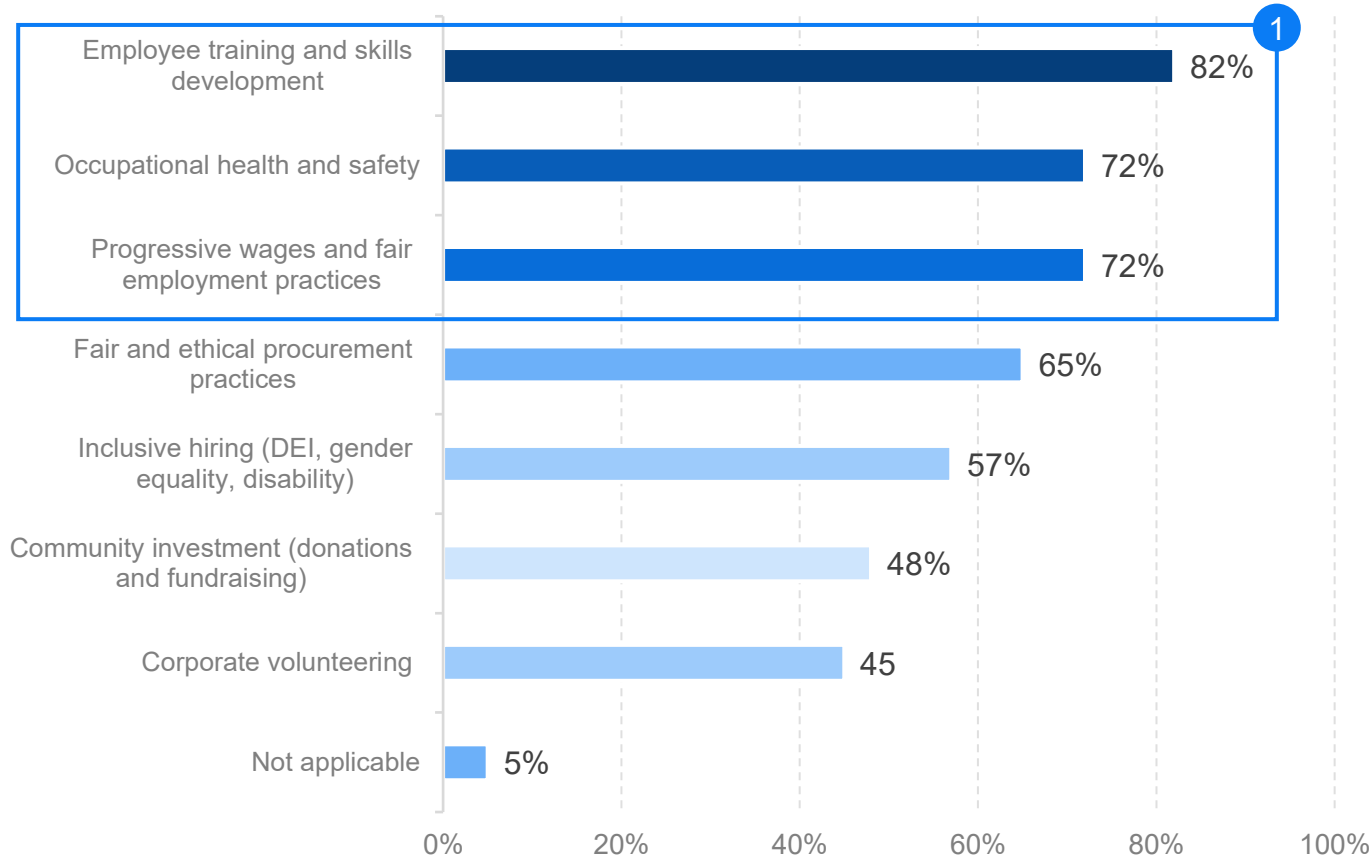
CV (43%)



Fair and ethical procurement practices (42%)



Community investment via donations and fundraising (37%)



## In the next year, we expect CV and mental health initiatives to be most implemented

### SS initiatives planned to implement within the next year



**Mental health and well-being initiatives** are top of mind for businesses within the next year.

1

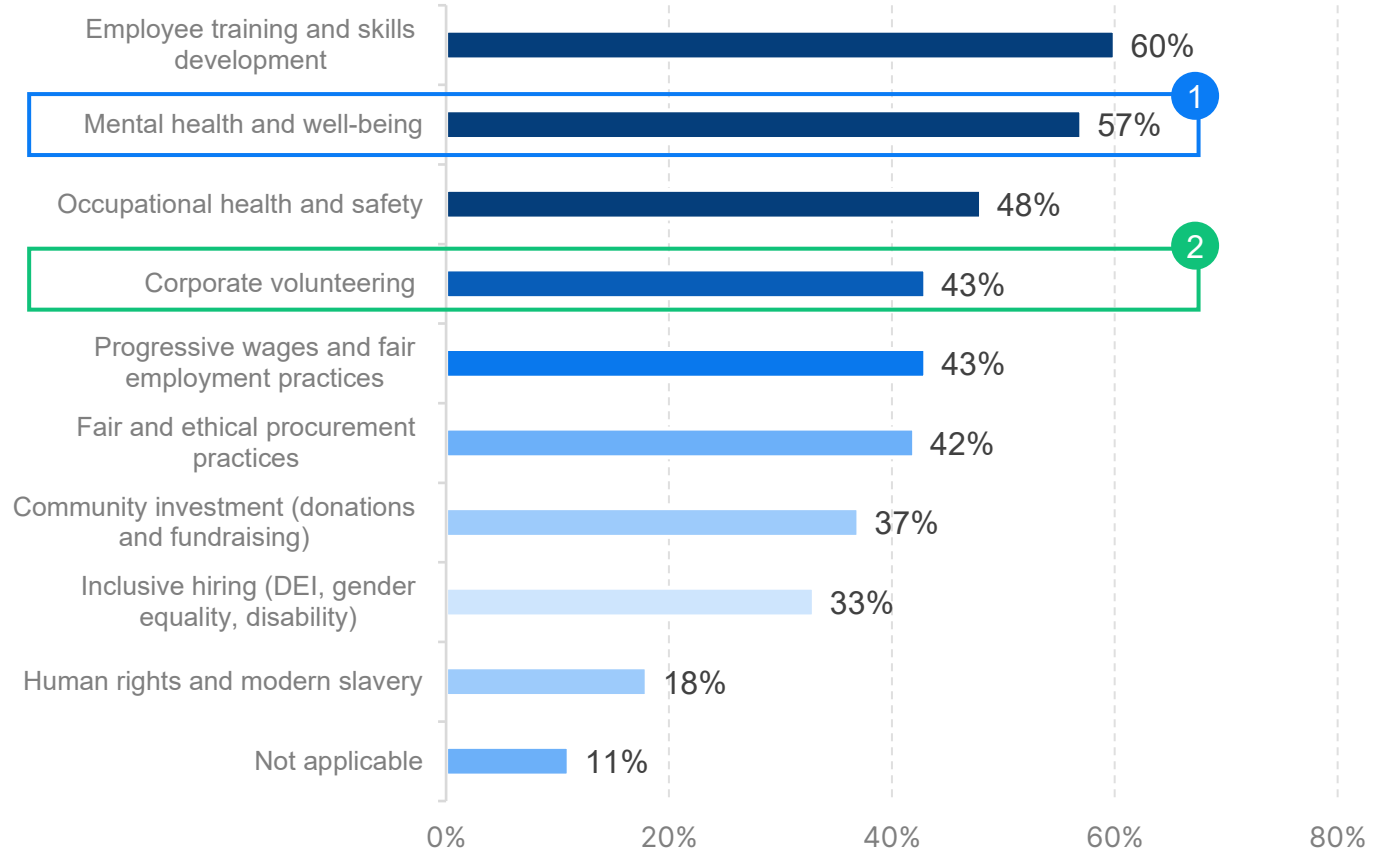


**CV** is among the top 4 SS initiatives that businesses planned to implement within the next year.

2



This could suggest that **CV is on the rise**, reflecting a growing recognition of its dual value – enhancing community well-being while strengthening employee engagement and business reputation.



## Businesses prioritised employee or workplace related SS initiatives

### Implementation of SS initiatives by company size



**Larger companies** had greater capacity to implement all types of SS initiatives.



In contrast, **SMEs** prioritised SS initiatives that are **employee or workplace related**.



CV was the least implemented SS initiative among SMEs.

The result indicated a **difference in readiness and support required for certain initiatives**.

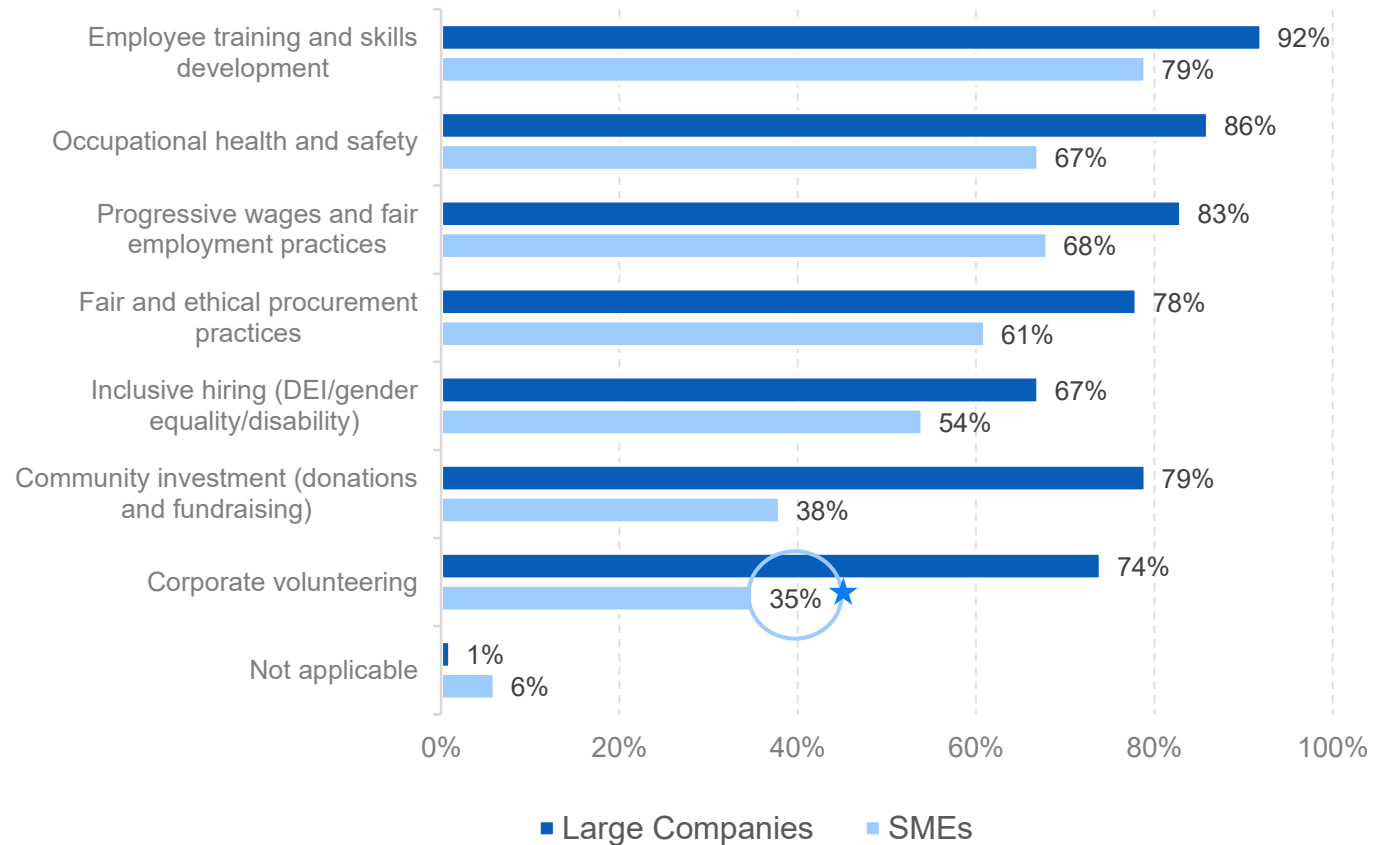


How do we **start** adopting SS initiatives like CV?



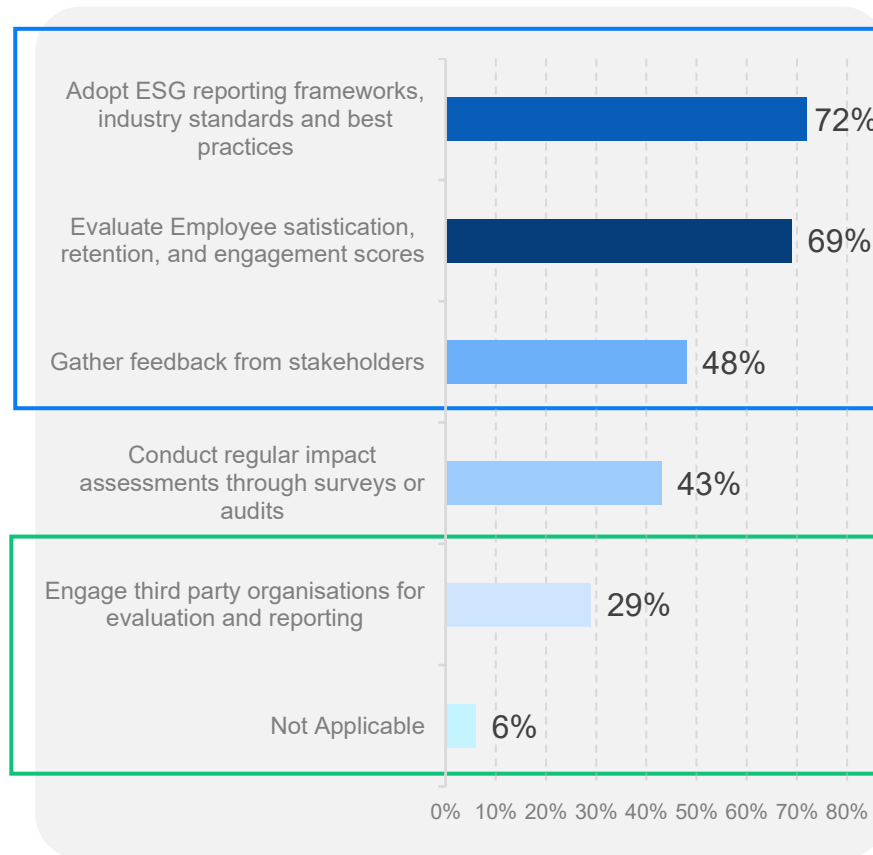
How can we better **monitor and measure** our impacts?

Overall, the difference in implementation rates between large companies and SMEs suggested that SS initiatives could be **resource intensive**.

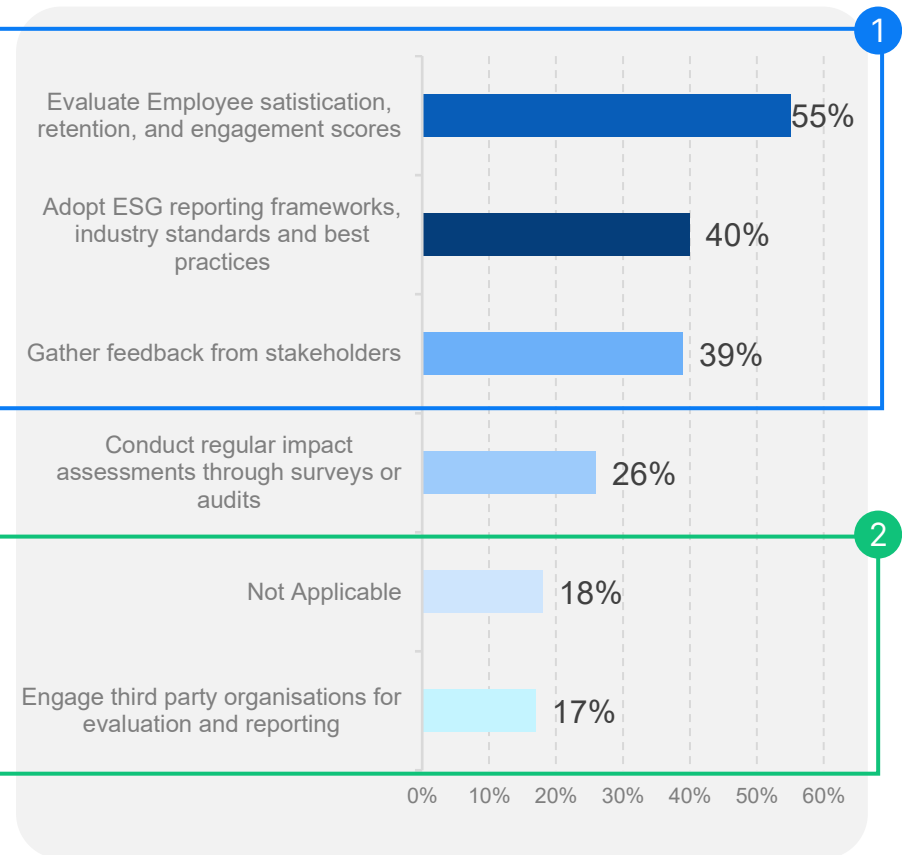


# While most large companies used framework and standards to measure the impact of their SS initiatives, most SMEs used employee evaluation for measurement

## Measuring method of large companies



## Measuring method of SMEs



**72% Large companies** selected **“adopting ESG reporting frameworks, industry standards and best practices”** as their measurement approach.

This may correlate with their reporting obligations as large companies.

**18% of SMEs** selected **“not applicable.”**

**“Company is too small. It is currently not prioritised.”**

— A SME from the administrative and support activities sector

## Some businesses tracked the impact of SS initiatives for improvement, while others were driven by tangible incentives

From our focus group discussions (FGDs), businesses shared varying views on the need to track and measure the impact of their SS initiatives.

### Reasons why businesses felt the need to track and measure impact

“Allows businesses to identify areas for improvement.”

— A SME from logistics and transportation sector

“To assess and compare the effectiveness of various SS initiatives.”

— A large company from retail trade sector

“To convince Senior Management that SS initiatives can generate business value.”

— A SME from real estate activities sector

“Some SS initiatives will only have an impact in the long-term.”

— A large company from manufacturing sector

### Reasons why businesses did not feel the need to track and measure impact

“No consequences for not measuring impact.”

— A SME from manufacturing sector

“Unsure about what SS metrics to track and it is not a priority.”

— A SME from retail trade sector

“Some SMEs feel that they are still a start-up with only a few SS initiatives and are not mature enough to begin measuring impact.”

— A SME from administrative and support service activities sector

### Examples of how businesses could measure impact:



Offer training programmes to local communities, to upskill the beneficiary group



Track the number of people who successfully got a job that requires such skills



Inclusively hire individuals from other nationalities, elderlies, PWDs, Yellow Ribbon Project, etc.



Track the employee retention and turnover rates before and after implementing this initiative

# Tangible incentives, reputational signals, and ease of implementation helps businesses move from awareness to action

## What could help businesses move from awareness to action?



### Ease of implementation and practical guidance

Schemes with lower operational burden, hands-on support, and step-by-step instructions may be more approachable and more likely to be adopted.



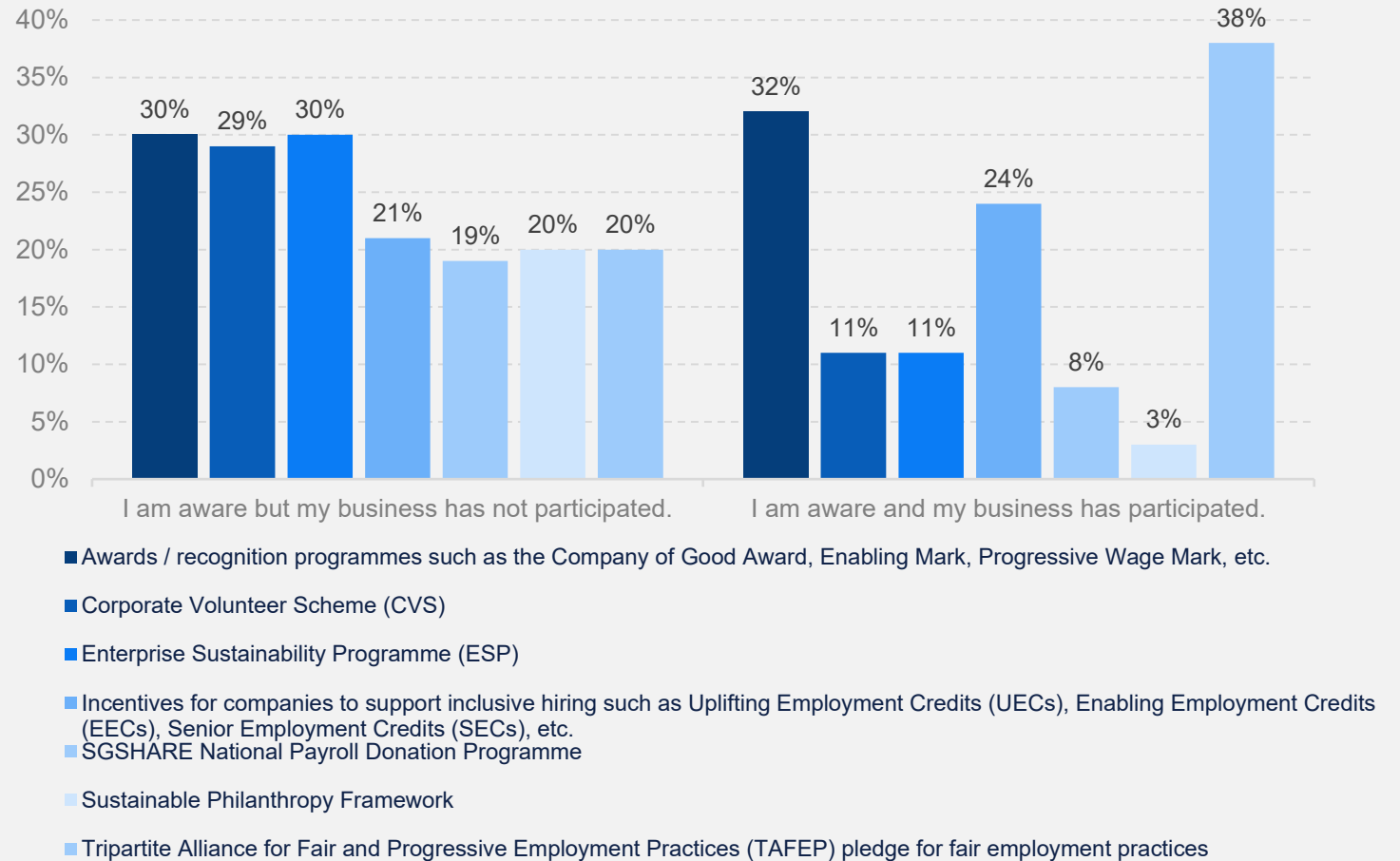
### Demonstrated business value

Schemes that show impact on outcomes like retention, reputation or incentives may encourage greater adoption. This aligns with our key finding: employee engagement and enhanced business reputation were the key business value generated from SS.



### Norms and sector signaling

The perception that certain practices are becoming industry norms can motivate businesses to take action. Soft signals – such as public commitments, peer involvement, or alignment with recognised frameworks (e.g. TAFEP) can shape expectations and encourage SS adoption.



## Reasons for why businesses did not participate in SS-related government schemes could be grouped into 4 categories

### Doing Good by Nature

“Doing good is more important than certifications for us.”

— A SME from manufacturing sector

“Our ESG goals are ground up initiatives. Due to paperwork requirements and because we do it based on our beliefs, there's **no need for nationwide recognition.**”

— A SME from wholesale trade sector

### Progress in Motion

“Waiting for entry when the opportunity arises in the near future.”

— A SME from professional services sector

“We are unsure of how to go about doing so and we are also **in the process of planning** to take action.”

— A SME from manufacturing sector

“We remain open to exploring these schemes in the future if the resources allow for it.”

— A SME from manufacturing sector

### Not Ready to Act

“These schemes are **not key priorities** for us to channel resources into. Additionally, the key priorities are **determined by our board.**”

— A SME from hotels, restaurants and accommodations sector

“We are **overwhelmed with our workload.**”

— A SME from IT and related services sector

“As privately owned start-up, we worry more about our own business and **survival.**”

— A SME from administrative and support service activities sector

### Yet to Discover

“We are **not familiar** with these initiatives.”

— A SME from others sector

“We do not know **how** to participate.”

— A SME from wholesale trade sector

“We are **new to Singapore.** We do not know much about this country in general.”

— A SME from banking and insurance sector

“We are **not aware** and **not sure** about these schemes.”

— A SME from manufacturing sector



Participation in SS-related government schemes reflected varying **levels of readiness and awareness**, shaped by internal beliefs, institutional preparedness, and operational constraints.

# Section 4.2

## Drivers and Barriers

for social sustainability

## Top barriers to implementing SS initiatives were competing business priorities and inadequate manpower or resources

The **top barrier** indicated that **regardless of size**, businesses struggled to prioritise SS amidst other pressing **business priorities** or demands.

**Financial constraints** were also a common concern for both groups.

### Key barriers for large companies



Competing business priorities



Difficulty measuring ROI



Financial constraints

### Key barriers for SMEs



Financial constraints

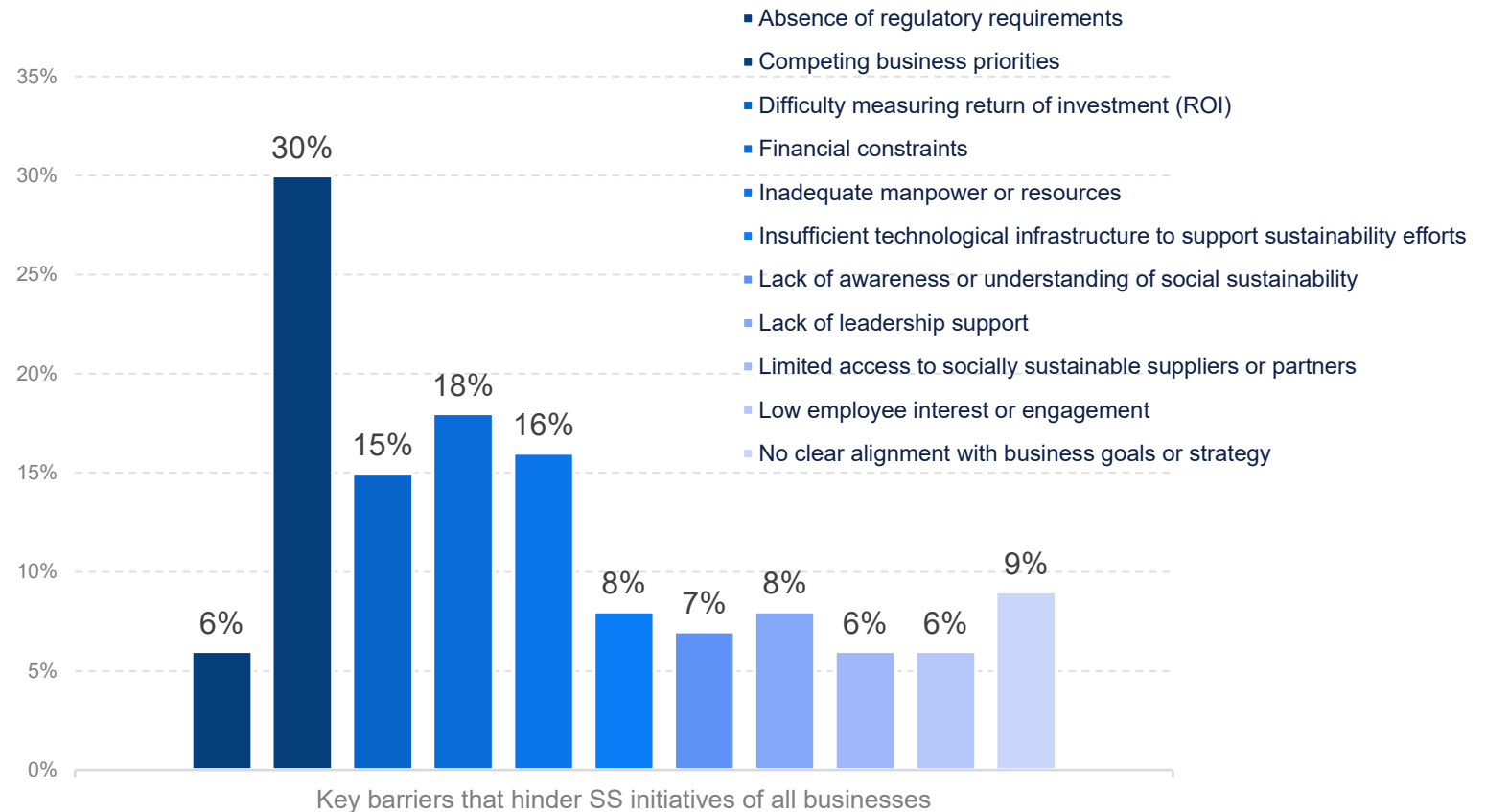


Inadequate manpower

## Top barriers to implementing SS initiatives were competing business priorities and inadequate manpower or resources

SMEs highlighted **inadequate manpower** as a major barrier to SS, which reflected limited internal resource and capacity.

Large companies, in contrast, cited **difficulty measuring ROI** as a more significant barrier. This might suggest that while large companies had the capacity, they required clearer evidence of business value generated to justify SS implementation.



# Financial and incentive drivers could enable businesses to engage in SS while adding value to businesses regardless of their size

## What could help businesses move from awareness to action?



### Financial and incentive drivers

- Reduced the cost burden to implement SS
- Lowered entry barriers and strengthened the business case for SS



### Training and capacity-building programmes

- Provided the necessary knowledge and tools to build up confidence and SS efforts



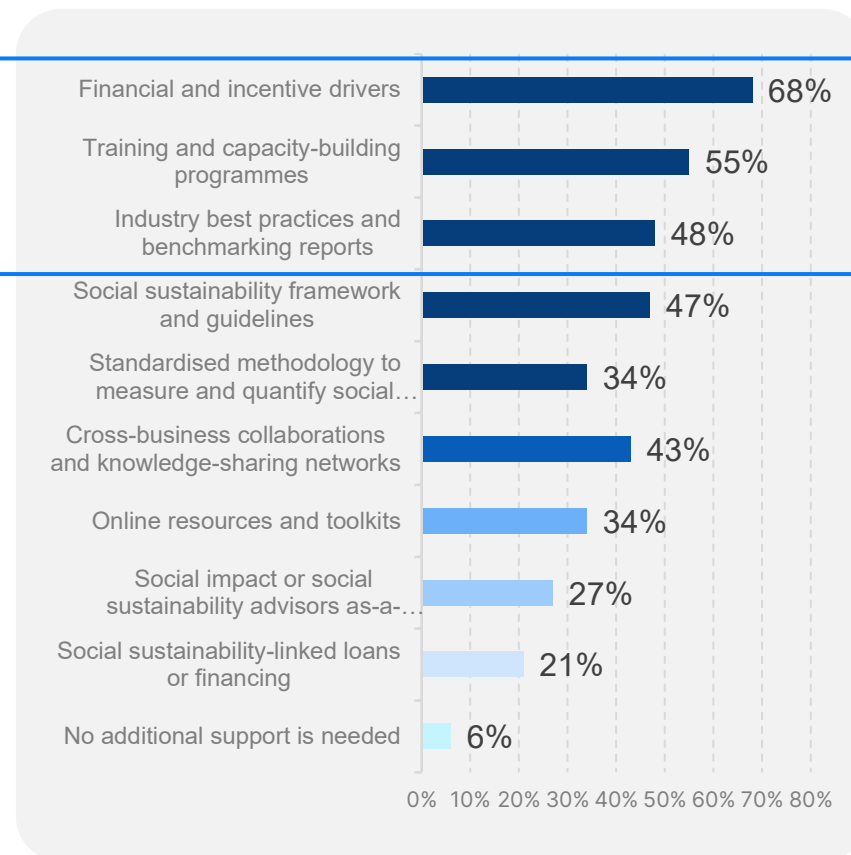
### Industry best practices and benchmarking reports

- Provided the necessary knowledge and tools to build up confidence and SS efforts

## Measuring method of large companies



## Measuring method of SMEs



# Section 4.3

## Recommendations and Opportunities

for social sustainability

# OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON KEY FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS	RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>1 Unifying SS framework including a scoring system with incentives</p>	<p>37% of businesses selected “SS framework and guidelines” as a key enabler for SS, which could also support businesses’ need mentioned below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% of large companies identified “A standardised methodology to measure and quantify social impacts” as a key enabler for SS. It also emerged as the top enabler among businesses with more advanced SS progression, highlighting the critical need for consistent measurement frameworks to support continued scaling and impact assessment.</li> <li>• 15% of businesses selected “Difficulty measuring ROI” as a key barrier for SS, ranking it as the 4th barrier overall and the 2nd most significant among large companies.</li> </ul>
<p>2 Centralised platform to consolidate resources</p>	<p>Although the TAFEP Pledge for Fair Employment Practices was the most widely adopted scheme, 22% of businesses were still not aware of it. Meanwhile, the Sustainable Philanthropy Framework, despite highlighted as useful during FGD, was the least known, with 59% of businesses unaware. The awareness gaps suggest that useful support schemes may be overlooked, limiting their potential to assist businesses effectively.</p>
<p>3 Government support schemes for community engagement</p>	<p>The landscape scan of SS-related policies, programmes, platforms, and resources in Singapore showed that most areas were well supported. However, notable gaps remained in the areas of fair and ethical procurement and community engagement, where additional government support could make a meaningful difference.</p>
<p>4 Community of practice for businesses</p>	<p>35% of businesses selected “Cross-business collaborations and knowledge-sharing networks” as a key enabler for SS.</p>

# A national unifying SS framework aligned with the Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD) could serve as guidelines to track, measure, and report on social impact

## Recap of Study Findings

From the study, some businesses were interested to find out how they can track and measure the impact of their SS initiatives.

39%

of businesses felt that having a standardised methodology to measure and quantify social impact would be a key SS enabler

61%

of businesses who engaged in CV felt that having better measurement and reporting tools would be a key CV enabler

### The purpose of measurement could be to:



Compare the impact of various SS initiatives implemented



Assess the effectiveness of SS initiatives through measuring ROI



Assess the effectiveness of SS initiatives through measuring ROI

### The SS Framework should be aligned with global SS-related disclosures, such as the Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD)<sup>1</sup>



Launched in September 2024, the TISFD aims to develop a framework for businesses and financial institutions to assess and report on social impacts, risks, and opportunities, particularly related to inequality, in alignment with international standards.



Aligning with TISFD enables Singapore to effectively tackle social issues while advancing its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1. Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD)

# A tiered approach to SS metrics can enable businesses at various stages of SS maturity to effectively evaluate the social impact of their initiatives

## [Illustrative] Tiered SS Metrics for Businesses in Singapore

For businesses that have established basic reporting practices and are looking to deepen their analysis of SS

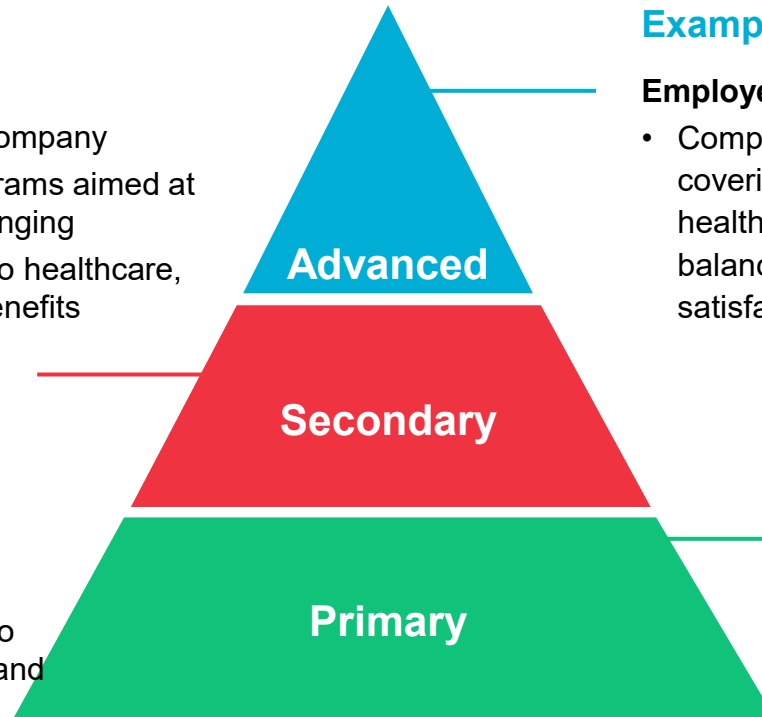
### Examples

#### Employees

- % of employees leaving the company
- No. and effectiveness of programs aimed at promoting inclusivity and belonging
- % of employees with access to healthcare, retirement plans, and other benefits

#### Community

- % of employees leaving the company
- No. and effectiveness of programs aimed at promoting inclusivity and belonging
- % of employees with access to healthcare, retirement plans, and other benefits



For businesses with mature reporting processes that want to lead in SS and provide deeper insights into their impacts

### Examples

#### Employees

- Composite score covering mental health, work-life balance, and job satisfaction

#### Community

- Total investment in community development programs
- Analysis of social risks in the supply chain and mitigation strategies
- Methods and frequency of stakeholder engagement to assess social impact and gather feedback

Foundational metrics that all businesses should consider, regardless of their maturity level. They are straightforward, easy to measure, and provide a basic understanding of SS

### Examples

#### Employees

- % of employees by gender, ethnicity, age, and disability status
- Employee satisfaction score from annual surveys
- Average hours of training per employee per year
- Number of workplace health and safety accidents per year

# Businesses could be incentivised by a tangible support scheme that provides benefits to encourage SS efforts

## Recap of Study Findings

54%

of businesses ranked financial and incentive drivers as the top SS enabler. The findings reinforced a key theme across both SS and CV domains: Businesses need both practical guidance and tangible support to activate and scale social impact efforts.

## Scoring System and Supporting Ecosystem

### How does this scoring system work?



Building on the set of SS metrics, this scoring system aims to allocate **points** to business who have engaged in SS.



This scoring system quantifies the impact of SS initiatives, allowing for **comparison and benchmarking against peers** to guide strategic improvements.



These social credits can be exchanged for tangible benefits like **tax reliefs, manpower concessions, preferential interest rates**, and more.



### Employee level

Chance to claim movies, concert, or gym passes or discounts



### Business level

Access to greater tax incentives or Friendlier loan rates

## Various local schemes integrate SS considerations into businesses

### Corporate Volunteer Scheme (CVS)<sup>1</sup>

#### Background:

CVS encourages businesses to support community causes by allowing employees to volunteer with Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs).

#### Key features:

- Allows **250% tax deduction** on qualifying expenditures when employees volunteer.
- Includes virtual volunteering and off-site activities.
- Applies to all business types, including SMEs.

#### Outcomes:

Promotes employee engagement, community development, and corporate social responsibility.

### SG Enable & the Enabling Mark<sup>2</sup>

#### Background:

Enabling Mark is a national level accreditation introduced by SG Enable. It recognises businesses for their commitment to disability inclusion.

#### Key features:

- Includes three-tier accreditation: Bronze, silver, and gold levels based on the depth of inclusive practices.
- Assesses inclusive hiring, workplace culture, accessibility of physical and digital environment, and training and development for employees

#### Outcomes:

Promotes equality and a more inclusive workforce while enhancing business's brand reputation and future opportunities.

### Exploratory

### Partnerships for Capability Transformation (PACT)<sup>3</sup>

#### Background:

PACT is a Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) initiative that fosters collaboration between large companies and SMEs to build capabilities and drive innovation.

#### Key features:

- Supports projects in areas like co-innovation, supplier development, and shared resources.
- Encourages knowledge transfer and long-term partnerships.

#### Outcomes:

Contributes to inclusive growth by uplifting SMEs, promoting fair employment, and enhancing local supply chain resilience.

1. [Corporate Volunteering Scheme \(CVS\)](#); 2. [Enabling Mark Accreditation](#) 3. [Enhanced Partnerships for Capability Transformation \(PACT\)](#);

# Schemes like SkillsFuture can empower Queen Bees to amplify social sustainability through enterprise capability building

## SkillFuture (SSG) Queen Bee Programme

### Background:

Led by SSG, this programme aims to accelerate skills development and enterprise transformation, especially for SMEs, by leveraging the expertise of industry leaders (the "Queen Bees").

### Key features:

SSG appoints Queen Bee companies to mentor SMEs through tailored training, skills advisory, and peer learning networks.

### Outcome:

SMEs become more competitive, sustainable, and socially impactful through workforce and business transformation

### 01 SkillFuture Queen Bee Programme

- SSG selects, onboards and trains the Queen Bees companies

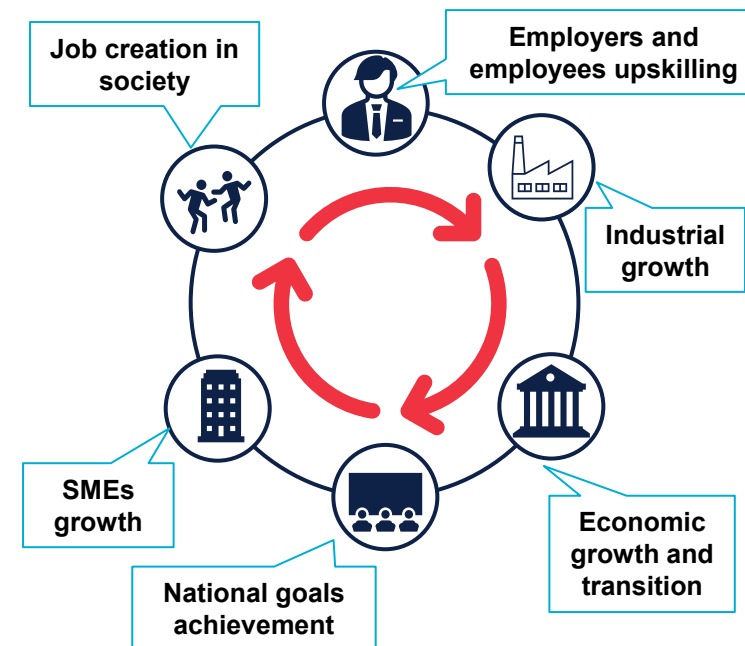
### 02 Queen Bee Companies

- Queen Bees Companies' employees are trained and uplifted.
- Queen Bees Companies will engage SMEs to provide resources and trainings

### 03 Beneficiaries SMEs

- SMEs employees are trained and uplifted. SMEs acquired the skills for transformation
- SMEs continue to create impacts to workforce and society

### Impacts are created and amplified:



*Queen Bee schemes can unite companies, offer guidance, and quietly amplify impact across industries and communities*

## A centralised, user-friendly platform could allow businesses to easily access consolidated resources and information

The fragmentation within the ecosystem solutions and incentives may present a case for a unified SS framework.

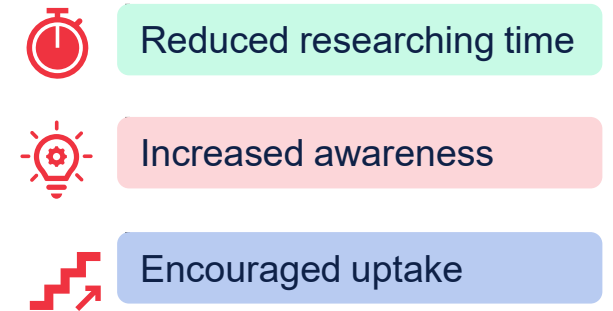
### Existing Consolidated Platforms



### How does it work?



### Intended Outcomes



## SS-related government support schemes and programmes should focus on promoting fair and ethical procurement, as well as community engagement

### Recap of study findings

WHS, employee training and skills development, progressive wages and fair employment, as well as inclusive hiring are well covered by government support schemes and programmes in Singapore. Therefore, efforts should focus on **promoting fair and ethical procurement, and community engagement**.

### Fair and Ethical Procurement

Gaps Identified: Lack of programmes, resources, awards, frameworks, playbooks, etc.

Recommendation: Develop a playbook to help businesses understand how to build and ensure a sustainable supply chain.

Key concepts could include ethical sourcing, modern slavery, labour rights, and more.

### Community Engagement

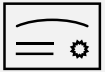
Gaps Identified: Lack of targeted programmes, existing resources and frameworks may not be well publicised.

Recommendation: Launch specific programmes or initiatives that complement existing policies, awards, and frameworks.

Key community engagement initiatives could include CV, donations, fundraising, and more.

## SS-related government support schemes and programmes should focus on promoting fair and ethical procurement, as well as community engagement

Government schemes could provide practical guidance and tangible support to encourage and sustain engagement in SS initiatives.



**Motivate**  
businesses to  
maintain or improve  
their performance



Provide **social  
recognition** to boost  
morale and status



**Enhance** brand  
reputation and  
stakeholder trust



Provide **access to  
funding**, such tax  
deductions



**Promote** talent  
attraction with  
shared values



Enable  
**benchmarking** with  
peers and provide  
**guidance** to  
improve practices  
over time

## Like-minded businesses that are committed to SS could form a community of practice, to exchange knowledge and best practices

During the FGDs, many business representatives networked and exchanged contact information with other like-minded individuals, in an effort to foster collective growth and development.



The FGDs included businesses of various sizes and maturity levels

Forming a community of practice could be beneficial as businesses can:



Share knowledge, resources, and best practices



Build partnerships and networks for collaboration



Navigate through barriers and challenges together



**As the apex business chamber, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) champions the interests of the business community in Singapore in trade, investment and industrial relations.**

It represents more than 32,000 businesses, as well as key local and foreign business chambers.

Nationally, SBF acts as the bridge between businesses and the government in Singapore to create a conducive business environment. Internationally, SBF represents the business community in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora for the purpose of trade expansion and business networking.

In SBF, Social Sustainability Division (SSD) supports the promotion of socially sustainable business practices. It focuses on raising awareness and encouraging the adoption of responsible practices that contribute to employee engagement, community well-being, and long-term business resilience.



#### **Vision**

Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy, Future-Ready Businesses, Impactful Trade Associations and Chambers.



#### **Mission**

Shape Solutions, Build Partnerships and Foster Capabilities with businesses to advance Singapore.

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