



**BALANCE**  
*green and stable*

# Green and stable SMEs

## Needs analysis survey

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Programme	Erasmus+
Key action	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Action	Strategic Partnerships for adult education
Project acronym	BALANCE
Project title	BALANCE - Green & Stable - Bringing Sustainability and Environmental Action Together for Better Future
Project starting date	01/11/2020
Project duration	24 months
Project end date	31/10/2022

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## NATIONAL REPORT

### Online surveys to SME's decision takers

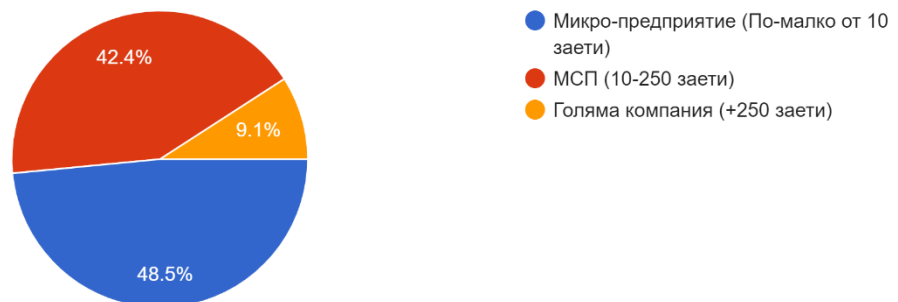
#### Introduction

We have shared the online survey with over 50 SME's decision takers. We have received 33 answers in total in order to gather information regarding their business's needs, the level of readiness for change management, the level of awareness on green policies and their level of green transition.

#### Analysis of the survey

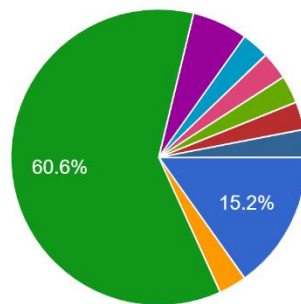
##### SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SME'S

##### 1. What is the size of your organisation?



Out of 33 participants taken the survey, as a micro SME with less than 10 employees constitute 48,5% or 16 organizations, the traditional SMEs with between 10 and 250 employees are 42,4% or 14 organizations and 9,1% or 3 organizations are having over 250 employees.

2. Which sector does your organisation belong to?



- Производство
- Земеделие и животновъдство
- Строителство
- Услуги
- Ресторантьорство
- Фармацевтична компания
- Телекомуникации
- Технологии, Реклама

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The survey involves diverse set of sectors and industries. The major one is the one of the Services primary connected to tourism – 60,6%. The other sectors are represented as follows:

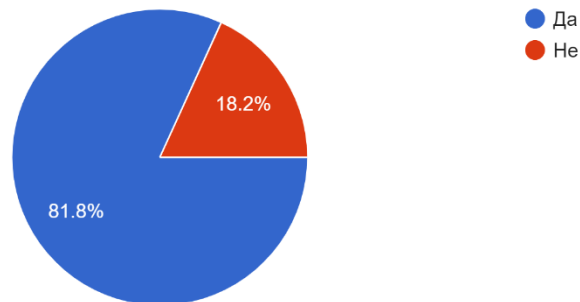
- Manufacturing – 15,2 %
- HoReCa – 9,2 %
- Pharmaceuticals – 3%
- Construction – 3 %
- Agriculture and pharming – 3%
- Trading – 3 %
- Technology & Advertising – 3%
- Telecommunication –3%

- Технологии, Реклама
- Телекомуникации

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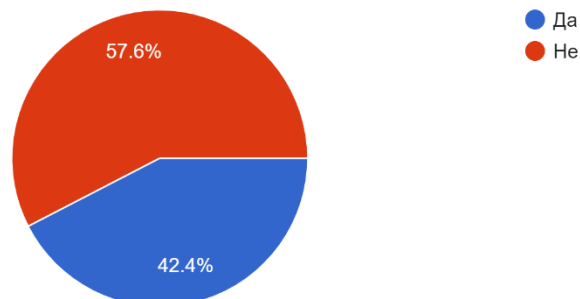
## SECTION 2: AWARENESS RELATED TO GREEN ECONOMY

3. Are you aware that Europe aims to be a climate-neutral continent by 2050?



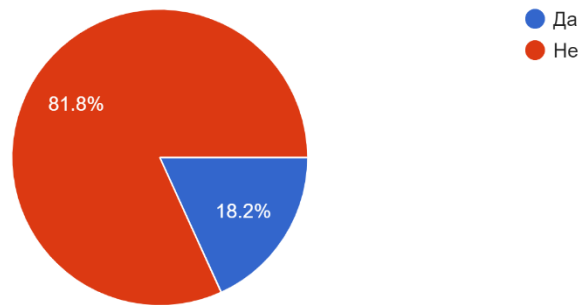
Only 18,2% do not possess any knowledge about the EU goals to become climate-neutral continent by 2050. The rest – 81,8% know about EU climate goals.

4. Are you aware of the green policies in your country?



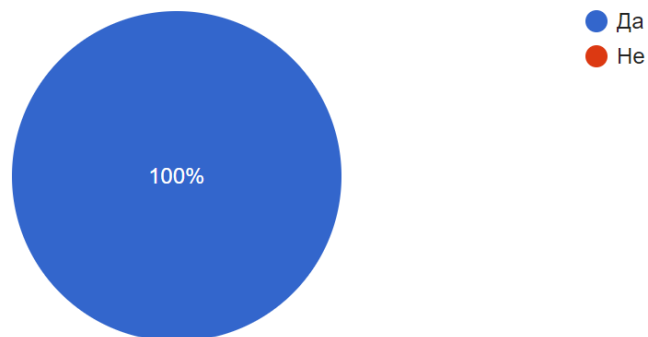
The majority of the respondents of the survey are not aware about any national green or environmental policies that are existent. They represent 57,6 % of all answers. The rest 42,4% respondents express that they have awareness over the national environmental policies.

5. Do you know about the existing financial environmental aids in your country?



Those who know about the existing financial mechanisms in Bulgaria for environmental innovation and impact are only 18,2%. The majority (81,8%) do not know any financial mechanisms on national level.

6. Do you think you need more information related to green policies?



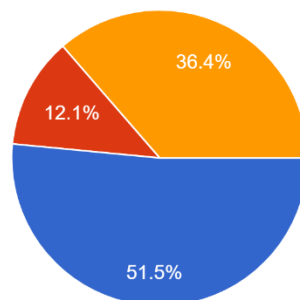
All participants (100%) in the survey express their need to know more about the topic of green policies.

## SECTION 2: AWARENESS RELATED TO GREEN ECONOMY

### 6.1. Which sources you use to get the information on funding opportunities:

We have received no specific answers on this question. To the awareness of the participants there is no such source where they know they can find the needed information about funding for green transformation.

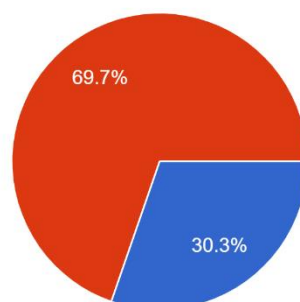
### 7. What do you think about implementing green measures in your company?



- В бъдеще това ще бъде от финансова и екологична полза за компанията
- Полезно за околната среда, но се съмнявам в икономическата възвръщаемост в бъдеще
- Полезно от екологична гледна точка, но това ще носи икономически разходи за компанията

Slightly more than the half of the participants (51,5% exactly) believe that implementing green measures in their company will bring both environmental and financial benefits. 36,4% of them believe that this implementation will benefit the environment, but it will bring more expenses to the company. And 12,1% are answering that even though this would be beneficial towards the environment, their doubt the return on the financial investments made.

### 8. Do you apply any circular economy methods within your SME?



- Да
- Не

Unfortunately, only in 30,3% of the answered companies there are any methods of circular economy implemented. 69,7% of the answers indicate that there are no measures or elements of circular economy implemented.

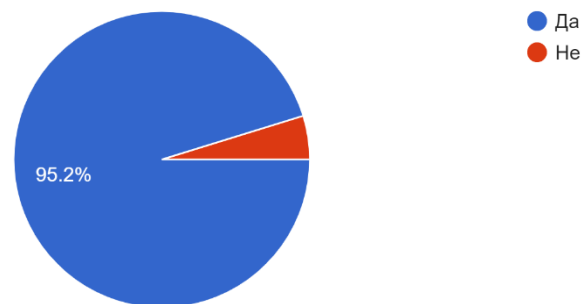
### SECTION 3: GREEN MEASURES

#### 8.1. Please explain the circular economy methods you apply:

The mentioned answers under “Circular economy” include the following statements:

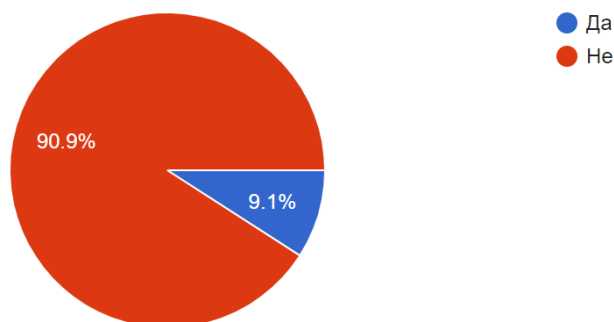
- We are aiming to use biodegradable office supplies whenever it is possible. As we do participate actively at the organized cleaning events around our office building.
- Instead of paper we use towels when drying our hands. We use metal straws and we do not use any plastic cutlery. Our electrical devices are set on ecological consumption.
- We avoid printing unless it is absolutely necessary. We recycle almost everything – electronics, paper and etc. All company vehicles are electric. Our air conditioning systems are energy efficient.

#### If no: 8.2. Would you like to know how to apply circular economy tools?



Almost all of the companies answered the survey (95,2%) would like to know how to apply circular economy tools into their business.

#### 9. Do you know the generated carbon footprint of your company? (all greenhouse gases emitted by direct or indirect effect)

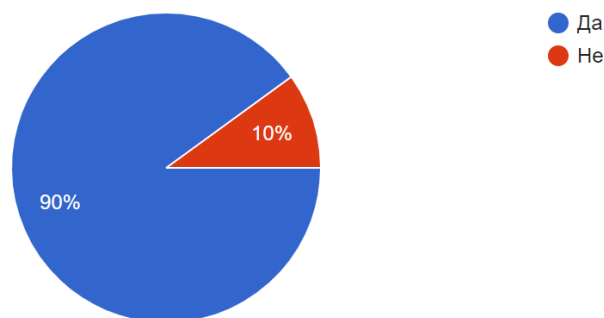


90.9% of the answers express lack of knowledge on the amount of carbon footprint is generated by their company. Only 9.1% point out that they do have a measurement in place.

If yes: 9.1. Please indicate which calculator you use:

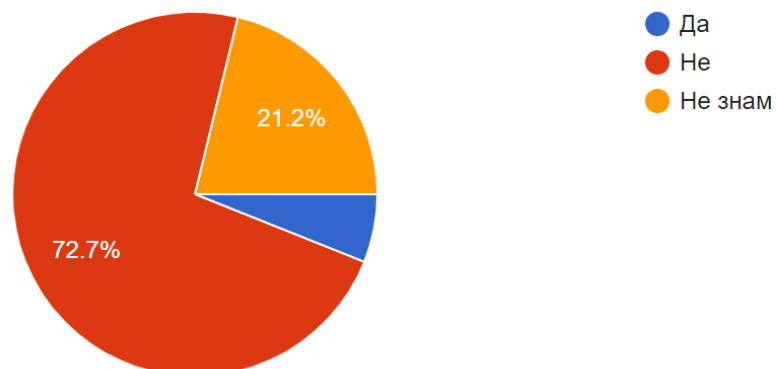
None of the participants in the survey know concretely which specific calculator the responsible employee uses.

If no: 9.2. Would you like to learn how to measure the carbon footprint of your SME?



90% of SME's owners are sharing that they would like to learn and implement a process in order to measure the carbon footprint, while 10% would not.

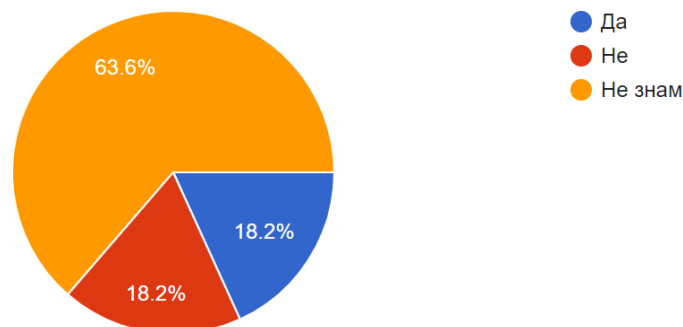
10. Do you measure the environmental footprint of your SME?



Most of the participants of the survey do not measure the environmental footprint in their SME (72.7%). Another 21.2% do not know if they have any measurement system in place and only 6.1% of the asked SMEs are positive that they do have a measurement.



### 11. Is your SME energy efficient?

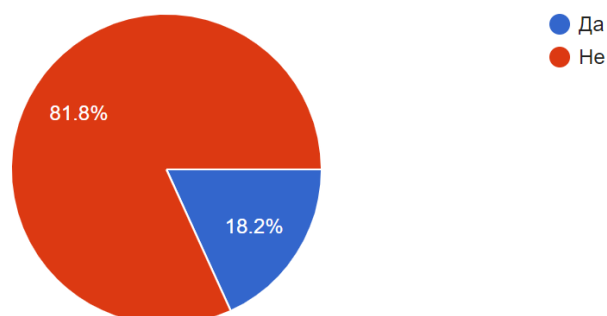


The majority (63.6%) of the SMEs taken place in the needs analysis do not know if their SME is or isn't an energy efficient one. The rest are divided equally into 18.2% who are certain that their SME is energy efficient and 18.2% who know that their SME is not.

#### 11.1 If yes, In which ways is you company energy efficient?

- energy efficient air conditioning systems and usage of electro mobiles
- usage of new innovative technologies
- EURO 6 standard
- We have changed our office location from a big business building with high electro consumption into a house outside the town with smart home systems which regulate the consumption.

### 12. Do you follow any internal communication strategies to establish green operation measures in your SME? If yes, please explain.

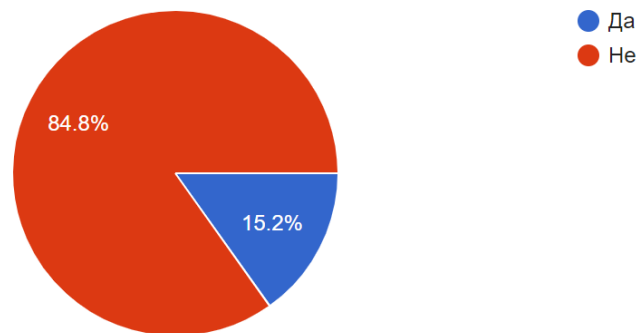


Most of the participants answer negatively – 81.8% do not follow any internal communication strategies in order to establish green measures. 18.2% do have such strategies for internal communication.

**Answers:**

We have an instruction for re-usage of everything that could be reused, for recycling (besides paper it includes electronics, batteries, plastics and etc.). Printing is used only when truly needed. All the administration operates digitally, all employees have digital signatures.

13. Do you train your employees to stay aware of green measures? If yes, please explain how.



Only 15.2 % share that they do have such trainings. The rest (84,8%) have not.

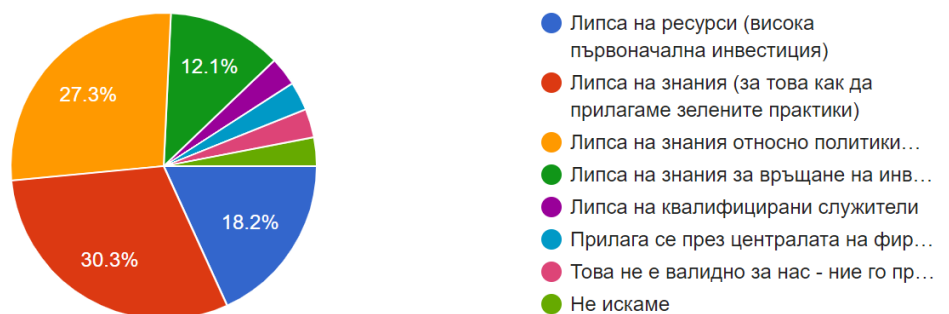
**Answers:**

Respondent 1: We have a company policy for environmental action and biodiversity protection.

Respondent 2: We communicate this topic through meetings, team building, by providing instructions and internal policy.

Respondent 3: By organizing trainings by external speakers on the topic.

14. We have been willing to apply green practises but we have not yet due to:



30.3% share that they lack knowledge on how to apply such practices. 27.3% answer that they lack knowledge on policies and funding opportunities. On third place with 18.2% are those who are willing to apply green practices but they lack the financial capacity for initial investment. 12.1% of the respondents share that they lack knowledge on how to return the required investment (ROI). The rest of the respondents are divided with 3 % with the following reason of not applying yet green practices: lack of competent employees to do the transition, lack of synchronisation between the different departments. Another 3% are simply not willing to apply any green measures.

#### 15. What are your concerns when applying green measures?

Respondent 1: We have no concerns

Respondent 2: Lack of information

Respondent 3: Concern that the measures won't be followed

Respondent 4: concern how would the measures be applied on local level

Respondent 5: No concerns

Respondent 6: We doubt the achievement of the ambitious goals for cutting the carbon footprint emissions of our SME.

Respondent 7: Too much costs with no certain benefit

Respondent 8: It requires huge resources

Respondent 9: I don't know

Respondent 10: A lot

Respondent 11: Increasing the cost of our services

Respondent 12: Uncertainty

Respondent 13: Most measures have long-term effect, but now it is needed to be applied urgent measures.

Respondent 14: None

Respondent 15: Lack of the required experience

Respondent 16: Lack of financial resources

Respondent 17: We can make a better organization within the company when it comes to the green measures. However, up until the moment we have direct our effort to the basic one.

Respondent: 18: We do have concerns and we need more knowledge over the topic.

Respondent 19: We lack the human resources to implement such measures.

Respondent 20: We doubt their efficiency.

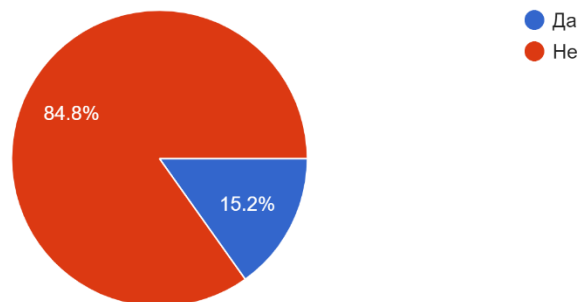
Respondent 21: The main concern is that they require high investment.

Respondent 22: Return on the investment is the main concern.

Respondent 23: Not enough knowledge.

Respondent 24: No specific concern.

16. Have you received any training on the topic of environmental impact of the business operations?



Only 15,2% of the respondents have received a training over the topic of the business environmental impact. 84,8% have not participated or provided such training.

16.1 If yes, what was the outcome and was the information useful?

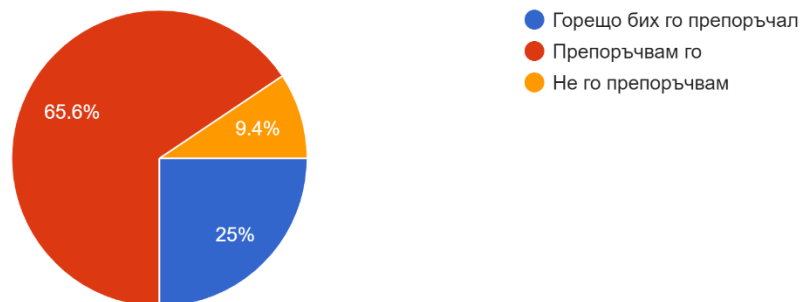
Respondent 1: It was really useful.

Respondent 2: Useful.

Respondent 3: It was positive.

LAST SECTION: BALANCE project

17. How likely would you recommend this report to other stakeholders?



65,6% of the respondents would recommend the Report Green Policies and Financial Sustainability. 25% would recommend it highly. Only 9,4% would sustain recommendation. When asked about the reasoning, 2 out of 3 companies shared that is due to the fact that the report is in English, and it is hard to fully understand. The third company answered that would sustain of recommendation remained doubtful in general over the green transition of the business.

18. How can the BALANCE Project help your organization become greener and more sustainable? Please, explain in detail your needs.

Include answers

Respondent 1: It can provide ideas over how to implement measures into the company.

Respondent 2: Not certain yet.

Respondent 3: With more information and communicational knowledge.

Respondent 4: I have to reflect on it.

Respondent 5: By organizing events around the topic.

Respondent 6: If we face difficulties, we could gain knowledge from the project.

Respondent 7: By providing information over green policies and funding opportunities.

Respondent 8: Not sure yet.

Respondent 9: I like the project in general.

Respondent 10: By providing information in general and information over funding opportunities and organizational development.

Respondent 11: By providing more information over eco products in the construction sector.

Respondent 12: I really like the idea of the project.

Respondent 13: We would need more information.

Respondent 14: By explaining the Green Deal, by bringing more clarity and by providing trainings.

Respondent 15: By providing us with information how to measure the CO2 emissions.

Respondent 16: Information and funding opportunities.

Respondent 17: By providing information.

Respondent 18: With building better PR towards the topic.

Respondent 19: By directing our attention on the fact how easily we can switch our operations into a greener direction. By recommending us a strategy for implementation of green practices.

Respondent 20: I sure the project will help us.

Respondent 21: We would apply green measures only if the government provide us with the needed funding opportunities.

Respondent 22: By letting us know what type of information we need to measure.

Respondent 23: By providing examples of good practices.

Respondent 24: I would need to read the project's report.

## Conclusion

The survey was completed by 33 SMS's decision makers which represent diverse set of business sectors in Bulgaria according to its current economical background. The biggest sector of services followed by HoReCa (Tourism sector) and production show interest in responding to the questions and have actively looked for more information over the project and the topic.

One of the key learnings that was reconfirmed by the survey was on the fact that the general awareness of the connection between the business and the environment action need to improve drastically. While the basic knowledge exists, that EU aims to become climate-neutral continent (81,5% were positive they know about EU goals), less than half (42,4%) know any national policies over the topic. Only 18,2% were aware of any funding opportunities that would help them greener their business. They also shared that there is disconnection between the goals and an actual action over the matter. All of the respondents share that they need more information about green practices and their implementation.

This clearly indicates that more practical knowledge is needed as well as increasing the general awareness.

One of most interesting points of the survey is revolving around the concept of potential benefits of implementing green practices. Around the half (51,5) believe that implementing greener operations will help them develop financially as well. The rest remain doubtful of the possibility of return on the investment and 34,5% are certain that implementing green measures would affect them negatively in financial terms. This leads us into the conclusion that the financial information on the green practices in the Balance project shall not be left behind. Instead, there is a clear and undeniable need to be demonstrated that green measures could be financially beneficial for those SME who are willing to implement them.

30,3% of the respondents have declared that they to apply methods of circular economy. However, with the answers given later on the survey it is visible that circular economy is not clear, and it is confused with other green measures. This leads us into the conclusion that throughout the project it is needed to be provided more information over what the elements of the circular economy are.

Only 6,1% of the SMEs decision makers taken part in the survey know how to measure their environmental footprint. None of them was able to share a specific calculator they use in the SME. When it comes to energy efficiency of the SMEs – the majority of the answers present that the decision-makers do not know.

A small portion (18,2%) of the companies that answered the survey are applying internal communication strategies to establish green operation measures in their SMEs mainly by training sessions with new employees to make sure that they are

aware of the green policies and only 15,2% provide or have been provided with a training.

The answers under section 3 clearly show a general confusion over the topic of environmental transition. Which shows that education over the different components is certainly needed and validates the project plan of development.

When we examine the reasons of why the SME's decision makers have not yet implemented green measures, we can easily observe that the general reasoning is revolving around the lack of knowledge and the financial concerns. Only one of the respondents shared that they are lacking enough human resources to implement such measures.

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When asked what type of information they need out of BALANCE project the majority shared that they need to understand better the green transitioning process and its' amplifications. Certainly there is a need to better understanding which measures could be useful to them and efficient both to the environment and to their financial development.