



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

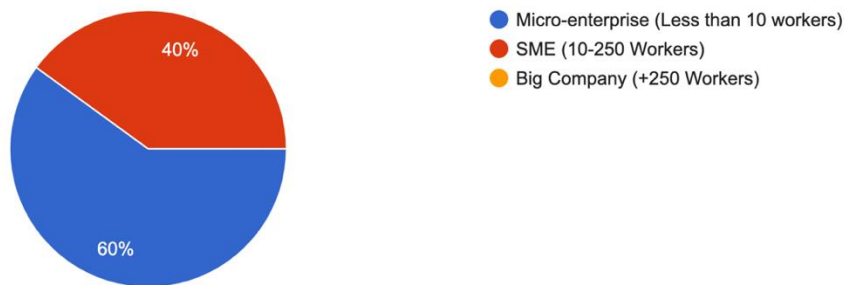
We have shared the online survey (<https://forms.gle/xS9zB5MWsaifi61E9>) with SME's decision takers. We have received 15 answers in total in order to gather information regarding their business's needs, the level of readiness for change management, the level of awareness on green policies and their level of green transition.

Analysis of the survey

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SME'S

1. What is the size of your organisation?

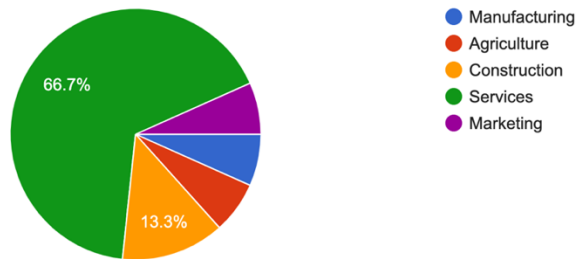
15 responses



- Comments

They were mainly micro-enterprises and SMEs. There were no bigger companies.

2. Which sector does your organisation belong to?



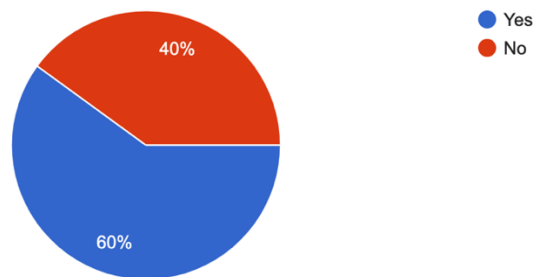
- Comments

Most companies who responded were in the service sector.

SECTION 2: AWARENESS RELATED TO GREEN ECONOMY

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

15 responses

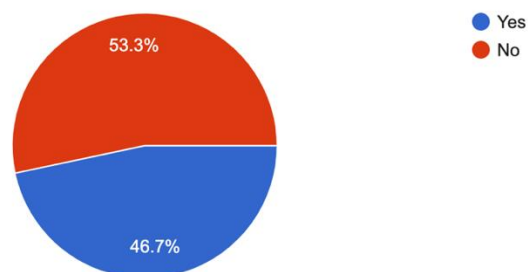


- Comments

Only 60% were aware of the European policy to be climate neutral.

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

15 responses

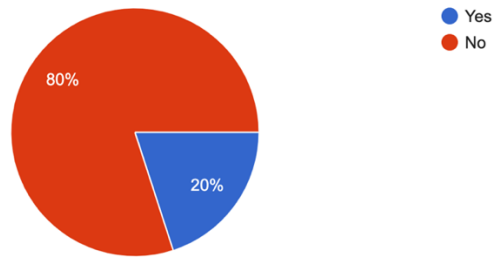


- Comments

Fewer than half of the companies were aware of national green policies.

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

15 responses

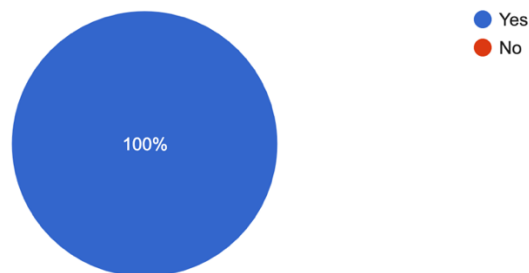


- Comments

Most respondents were unaware about existing financial opportunities. In their country.

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

15 responses



-Comments

All respondents would like to get more information.

SECTION 2: AWARENESS RELATED TO GREEN ECONOMY

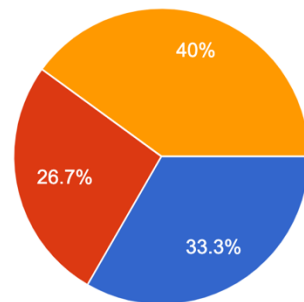
6.1. Which sources you use to get the information on funding opportunities:

Include answers

Not applicable – no responses

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

15 responses



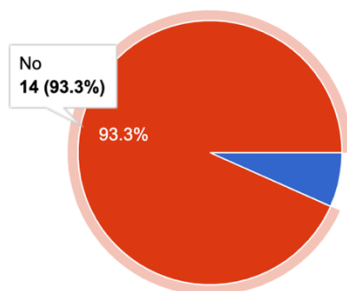
- It will be financially and environmentally beneficial for the company in the future
- Beneficial environmentally speaking but I doubt about the economic return in the future
- Beneficial environmentally speaking but it will carry an economic cost for the company

- Comments

There were mixed responses to this question, all participants thought it would be beneficial, but only one-third thought it would be financial beneficial.

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

15 responses



- Yes
- No

-Comments

Only one company applied circular economy measures in their operations.

SECTION 3: GREEN MEASURES

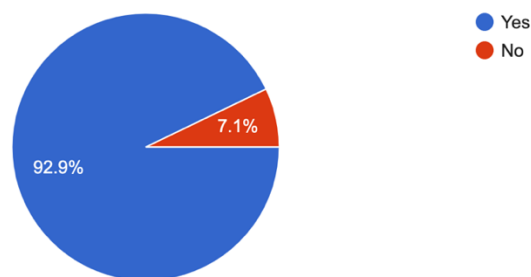
8.1. Please explain the circular economy methods you apply:

The one answer provided was:

We are involved in recycling and repurposing products to make them more valuable and we network through our Chamber of Commerce for economies of scales for increased purchasing power

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

14 responses

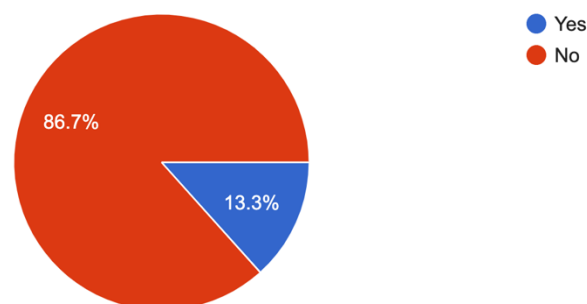


-Comments

Only one company did not want to know how to apply this.

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

15 responses



Only 2 respondents knew the carbon footprint of their company.

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

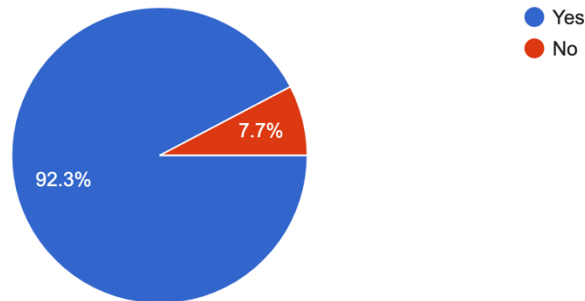
The tools used to measure carbon footprint were:

Carbon Trust

DFGE

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

13 responses

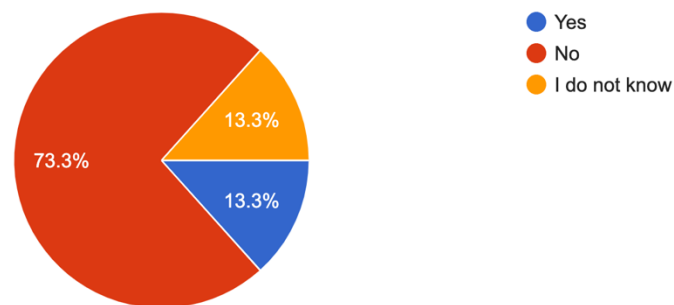


-Comments

Only one company did not want to learn how to measure their carbon footprint.

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

15 responses

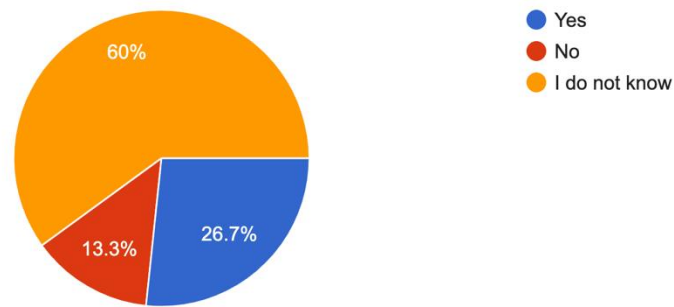


-Comments

Most companies did not measure their environmental footprint.

11. Is your SME energy efficient?

15 responses



-Comments

More than half of the companies did not know whether they were energy efficient. Only 4 of them said they were

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

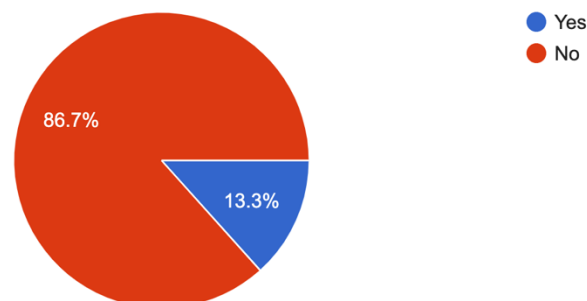
Include answers

- efficient in energy, heat loss, waste, water
- energy and water
- we use recycled construction materials - we are starting to use electric powered motor transport
- We are housed in an environmentally friendly building - water and heating is very efficient - coordinated as part of an environmental scheme

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

Include answers

15 responses



-Comments

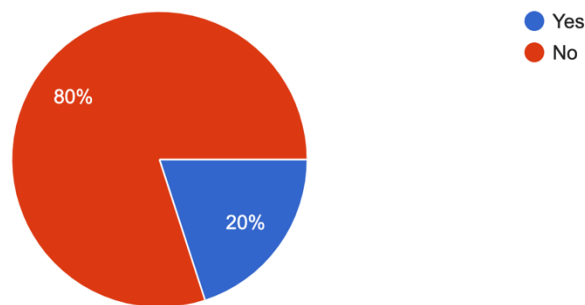
Most companies did not have a communication strategy for green operations. The two that commented said:

- provide information to employees, share ideas and network with other organizations
- we train staff about it

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

Include answers

15 responses



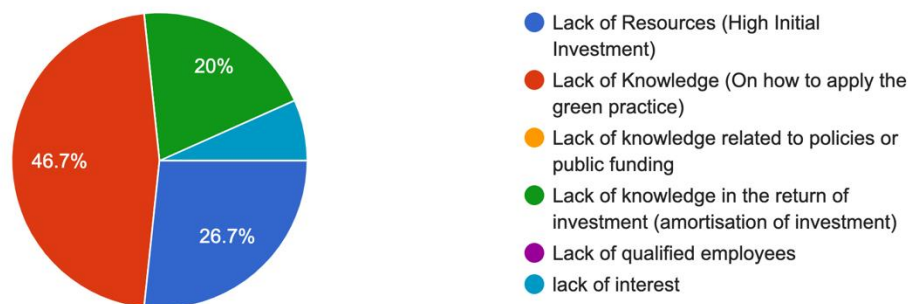
Most companies did not train their companies about green measures.

Those that did said the following:

- we do ongoing training - induction for new staff
- employees get on the job training, use consultants
- They receive a briefing on a regular basis - we have an internal newsletter

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

15 responses



-Comments

Almost half the companies cited lack of knowledge on how to apply green practices. A quarter cited lack of resources and 20% lack of knowledge on the return on investment.

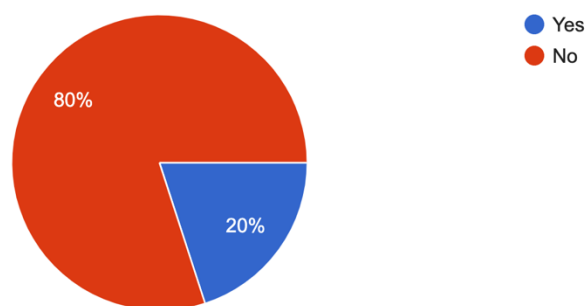
15. What are your concerns when applying green measures?

The companies cited the following concerns:

- Will be too costly
- make major changes which can be expensive
- Little knowledge
- cost high
- I don't understand how it will benefit the company
- Too busy to change methods - also Covid
- don't know about green measures
- don't understand them
- will it be beneficial in efficiency?
- Might be expensive
- not enough time
- we are worried it will be too expensive - we will lose profitability
- we need to see fast benefits for the company
- we need to be more competitive so being green enables us to promote ourselves, however we believe the costs are higher
- We do not have enough knowledge or commitment to change what we do

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

15 responses



-Comments

Most had not received any training.

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

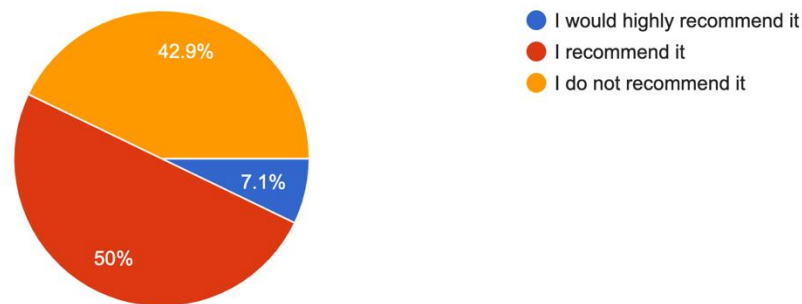
The answers included:

- Did a short one-day course offered by local government / chamber of commerce
- found hard to implement
- we had training from the local Chamber of Commerce - but we need more information, support and financial incentives

LAST SECTION: BALANCE project

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

14 responses



- Comments

Half would recommend the report but more than 40% would not.

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

The answers included:

- I don't know
- we would like expert advice - link to experts who can support the company
- Don't know
- Financial guidance
- I don't know - provide information
- provide training and support / guidance
- don't know
- training??
- more advice and update staff
- unsure don't know enough about BALANCE
- don't know as not aware of the project
- We need training and advice - especially on financial matters and possible grants
- How to get green grants
- Provide regular information, guidance and feedback on initiatives



Conclusion

Despite widespread dissemination, it was very difficult to get responses to the survey. SMEs are under pressure post-pandemic. It was surprising how little knowledge or awareness there was of green measures, environmental sustainability, monitoring possibilities or the potential of initiatives, grants and subsidies. A lack of training and support can be cited as main causes. Small and micro-companies are likely to find it difficult to respond to initiatives due to lack of resourcing, time and effort.

This outcome is not surprising as Belgium lags behind many other countries in the EU for eco-innovation, as confirmed by the 2019 EU Eco-innovation Index rating, where Belgium ranks 17th in the ranking list of the EU28 with a score of 85 and well below the EU average of 100 (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/belgium_en). The detailed factors leading to this score are indicated in the diagram below.

