Inaugural study by Gprnt and PwC finds SMEs lagging in sustainability readiness, urges more public-private collaboration and ecosystem support to help them go green

- New study engaged over 560 SMEs across 19 sectors and is supported by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) and Sustainability Alliance (SA)
- Findings show three in four SMEs struggle to kickstart sustainability journeys due to constraints in money, skills and time
- Over 70% of SMEs have not accessed any form of government assistance or available support despite the presence of various schemes
- Study calls for a series of coordinated ecosystem actions to strengthen sustainability awareness and support for SMEs

SINGAPORE, November 12, 2025 – Gprnt and PwC Singapore today launched the inaugural 2025 SME Sustainability Barometer, a study capturing the sustainability readiness of Singapore's small and medium enterprises (SMEs). With the support of SBF and SA, the SME Sustainability Barometer deep-dives into the challenges faced by SMEs in going green, and offers ecosystem-wide recommendations for how the public and private sectors can partner to help SMEs better capture opportunities in green procurement, financing and business growth.

More ecosystem support for local SMEs

SMEs are the backbone of the economy and central to the nation's low-carbon transition. Despite this, the Barometer found that three in four SMEs[1] had yet to commence their sustainability journeys, citing constraints in money, skills and time as the top barriers:

- **Money:** More than half of SMEs studied viewed sustainability as hard to justify in view of tight operating margins and more pressing business needs, with four in five citing a lack of clarity on the tangible returns from their investments.
- **Skills:** Three in four SMEs lack the technical know-how needed to translate sustainability into concrete action plans and demonstrable outcomes.

[1] The study engaged over 560 SMEs through surveys, interviews and roundtables with trade associations.

- **Time:** Over 40% of SMEs cited limited availability of time and resources, compounded by rising economic pressures stemming from geopolitical tensions. This leaves little bandwidth to properly explore the range of available programmes and opportunities.

Over 70% of SMEs have not accessed any form of government assistance or available support despite the availability of various schemes, which suggests persistent challenges in awareness, accessibility, and perceived relevance of such schemes. These findings highlight the need for stronger public-private collaboration to help SMEs get started on and stay engaged in sustainability. As an immediate step, the Barometer features 'tear sheets' that point SMEs to readily available resources, with future editions set to consolidate more assistance from across the local ecosystem.

"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." said **Ravi Menon, Singapore's Ambassador for Climate Action**. "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."

Strengthening collaboration toward focused outcomes

The Barometer goes beyond these immediate measures to propose five sets of key recommendations that greatly enhance the sustainability value proposition for SMEs. Delivering these will require stronger coordination across the public and private sectors, reflecting the shared responsibility of greening the SME community at scale:

1. **Help SMEs realise the value of sustainability:** Only 10% of SMEs starting out on sustainability reported measurable gains, compared to nearly half of those in a more mature state. A central case bank that consolidates success stories, supported by data and benchmarks to quantify the benefits, could spur more SMEs to follow suit.
2. **Help SMEs get started with clear and simple steps**: Once SMEs recognise the value of sustainability, they need clear first steps. The Barometer recommends that SMEs designate a staff member to 'champion' their sustainability effort, who can be guided by a simple and practical first-year roadmap to deliver quick, visible wins.
3. **Help SMEs scale their efforts through flagship programmes:** As SMEs progress, sustained engagement and incentivisation are key. Flagship initiatives like

sustainability-focused Queen Bee programmes – where large corporates engage SME suppliers and customers to build green capabilities – have proven effective, with 86% of participants reporting business benefits from such programmes. These gains can be amplified through government leadership and tighter public-private coordination to expand green procurement opportunities for SMEs.

4. **Help SMEs keep costs trim through shared solutions**: 46% cite high costs of sustainable materials and solutions as a major barrier. SMEs can reduce expenses by pooling common activities to achieve economies of scale, and trade associations can play a pivotal role in identifying shared challenges and co-creating sector-wide solutions with government partners.
5. **Help SMEs be recognised for their efforts:** SMEs should be recognised for their sustainability progress and be able to convert this into meaningful business and financing advantages. A unified sustainability 'passport' can simplify this process by helping SMEs navigate fragmented certification landscapes and showcase their progress in a clear, credible way.

"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," said **Lionel Wong, Gprnt's Chief Executive Officer**. "Gprnt's digital utilities play a catalytic role in helping businesses to automatically generate their basic sustainability metrics at no cost, which greatly lowers the barrier for local SMEs to get started. But to truly bring SMEs into the fold, we need to go further by layering clearer market signals and stronger incentives atop these foundations, in the form of green procurement, financing, and market access opportunities. This requires collective effort across the public and private sectors to make sustainability not just viable, but valuable."

Lee Bing Yi, Financial Services Assurance, Sustainability and Climate Change Partner at PwC Singapore added: "Nearly three-quarters of Singapore's SMEs have yet to tap available sustainability support. Closing this gap is critical to help them start and sustain their green journeys – a key objective of this study. Through collective action and a coordinated ecosystem approach, we can lower barriers and build a compelling business case for SMEs to take action. At PwC, we see sustainability as an opportunity for growth and resilience, and we're proud to collaborate with Gprnt on this meaningful study."

From insights to collective action

Following from these recommendations, Gprnt, SBF and SA will engage with partners across the public and private sectors to study the feasibility of implementing these initiatives, to translate the Barometer's insights into tangible outcomes for SMEs and the wider economy.

"SMEs lack manpower, technical and financial resources for net zero transition. In today's tough economic climate, sustainability can easily take a back seat. The SME Sustainability Barometer is a timely reminder on where SMEs stand and where support is most needed. It calls for stronger public-private partnerships, and for Queen Bees to drive sustainability by integrating environmental considerations into purchasing decisions to drive positive change across their supply chain," said **Kok Ping Soon, Chief Executive Officer of SBF**. "SMEs need to consider decarbonisation as an investment to reduce costs through utilities savings and gain new business by fulfilling demand for sustainable products/services. SBF is committed to help SMEs translate sustainability from aspiration to action, for meaningful and lasting business impact."

Frank Phuan, Chief Executive Officer of Equator Renewables Asia and Co-Chair of SA said: "The Sustainability Alliance supports the call for closer collaboration and collective action to help SMEs go green. Together with Gprnt and SBF, we invite trade associations and partners across the ecosystem to pool resources and co-create sustainability solutions that achieve economies of scale for SMEs and help them begin their green journeys."

Access the 2025 SME Sustainability Barometer here:
https://www.gprnt.ai/resources/smesustainabilitybarometer

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About Gprnt

Gprnt is a digital platform for sustainability disclosures and granular, verifiable ESG data. Launched by the MAS, it equips businesses of all sizes with an automated Disclosure solution and value-added services Marketplace, underpinned by an open and interoperable data platform. By harnessing technology to make sustainability reporting accessible and actionable, Gprnt empowers businesses to measure and act on their sustainability efforts at scale. For more information on Gprnt, please visit www.gprnt.ai.

About PwC Singapore

At PwC, we help clients build trust and reinvent so they can turn complexity into competitive advantage. We're a tech-forward, people-empowered network with more than 364,000 people in 136 countries and 137 territories. Across audit and assurance, tax and legal, deals and consulting, we help clients build, accelerate, and sustain momentum. Find out more at www.pwc.com.

About Sustainability Alliance

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, please visit: www.sustainabilityalliance.sg

About Singapore Business Federation (新加坡工商联合总会)

Singapore Business Federation (SBF) is the apex business chamber with over 32,000 members across diverse industries. With a vision to advance Singapore towards a globally competitive and sustainable economy, SBF mobilises the business community to be future-ready and magnify transformation opportunities through policy advocacy, partnership platforms and capability programmes. For more information, please visit: www.sbf.org.sg.

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