



Shaping a Socially Sustainable Future for Businesses in Singapore

Launching the Findings of the
2025 Social Sustainability
Study

22 August 2025



About the study



This inaugural **Social Sustainability Study 2025** aimed to assess the current state of **social sustainability (SS)** and its impact on businesses in Singapore as well as investigate the prevalence of **corporate volunteering (CV)** and the factors that motivated businesses to participate in such activities.



This study took place in the middle of 2025 for **2 months**, from **March to May**.



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

Key purpose of the study:



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



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



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

Survey topics and key questions answered

Our goal is to understand businesses' current SS and CV engagement, motivators, barriers, and the support they need as enablers.

1 Business profile

Industry, revenue, headcount, etc.

2 Engagement status

Businesses' involvement in SS and CV

3 Engagement type

Type of SS initiatives implemented and CV causes supported

4 Key motivators

Drivers of businesses to engage in SS and CV

5 Key enablers

External supports required to facilitate and progress SS and CV

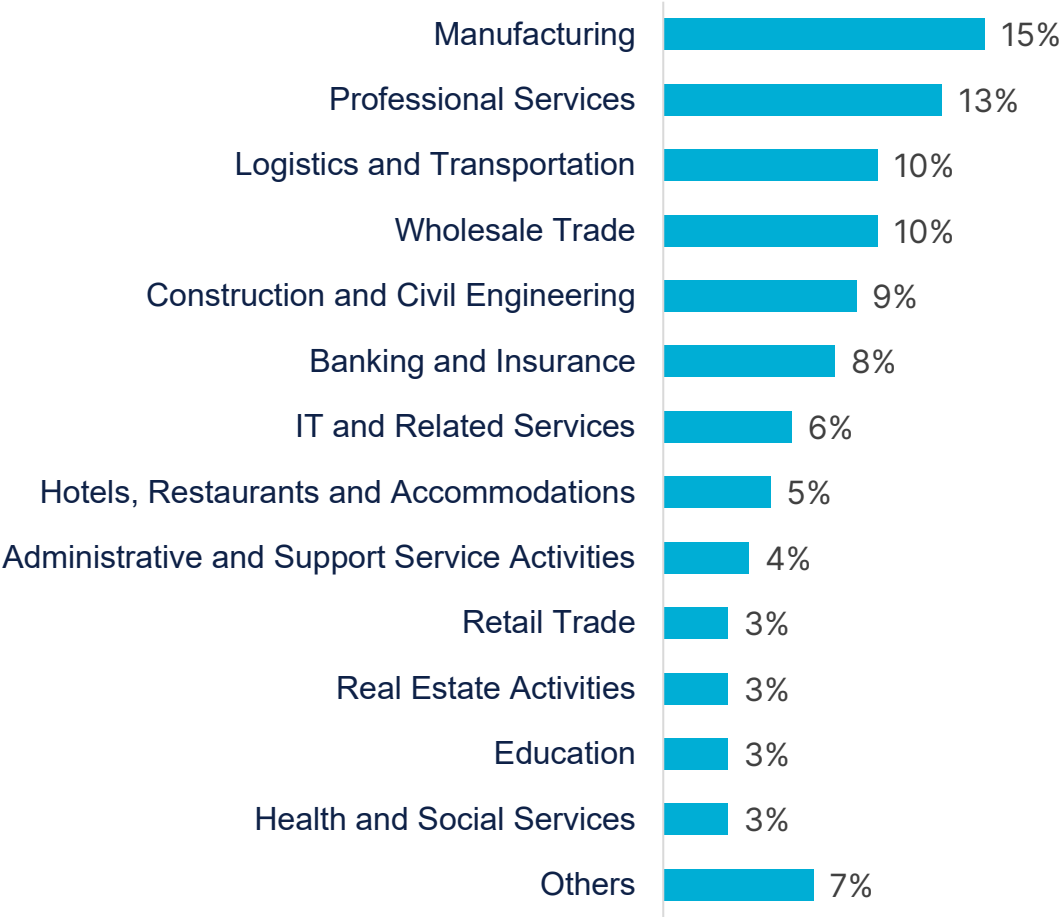
6 Key barriers

Barriers that hinder businesses from engaging in SS and CV

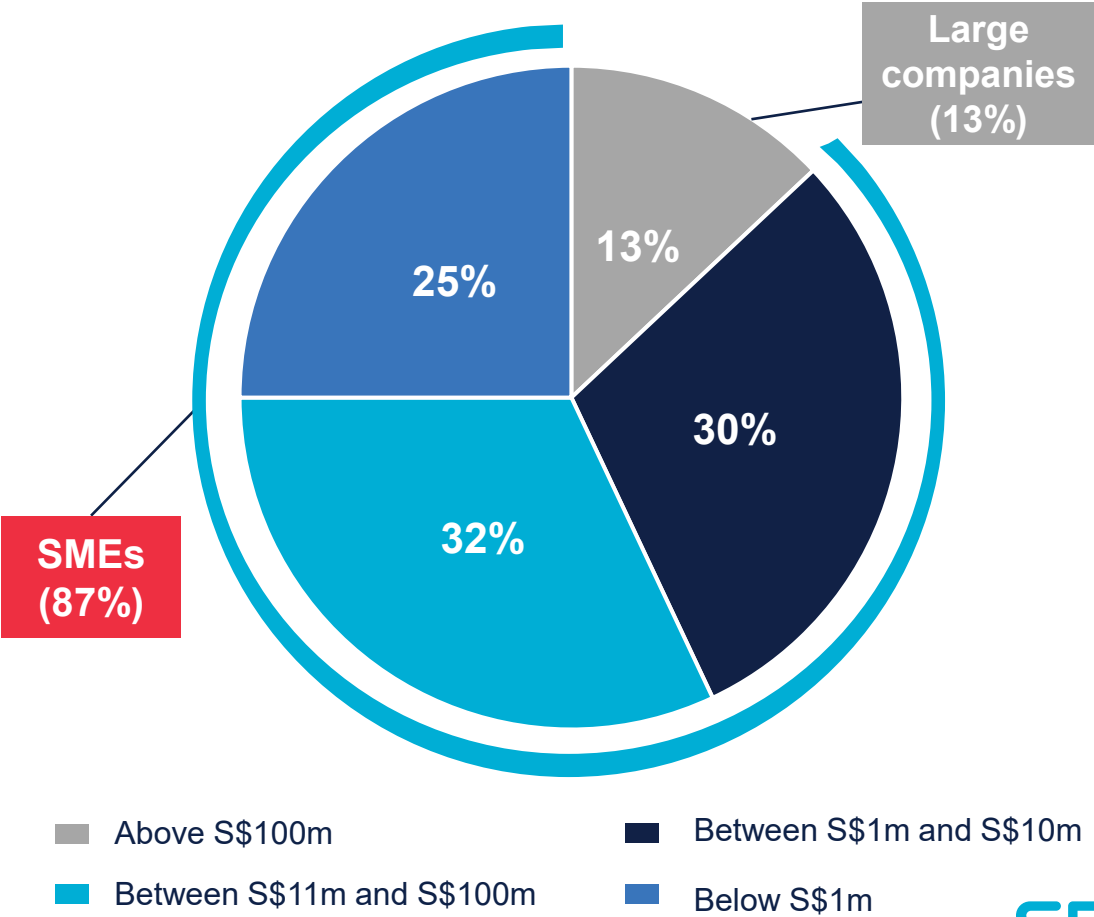
Profiles of businesses

The study captured responses from 14 distinct industries, ensuring a broad and representative view of Singapore’s business landscape. SMEs made up a significant 87% of the sample.

Responses by industry



Responses by revenue size



Executive summary

90%

Of the businesses rated SS as an **important** ESG area to their business

Key SS initiatives implemented

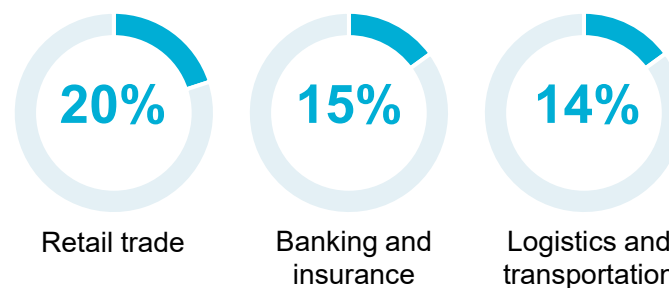


CV emerged as one of the top choices for implementation in the next 12 month



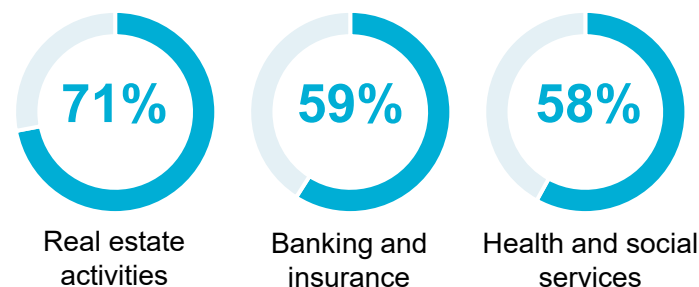
Industry forerunners in SS

Industries with most businesses **spending above SGD\$500k**



Industry forerunners in CV

Industries with most businesses **engaging in CV**



While higher revenue may indicate broader engagement in SS and CV, **businesses of all sizes generally encounter similar motivators, enablers, and barriers**

Key motivators

- Boost employee engagement and morale
- Strengthen business reputation and brand image

Key enablers

- Financial and incentives drivers
- Training and capacity-building programmes
- Better measurement and reporting tools

Key barriers

- Competing business priorities
- Financial constraints
- Inadequate manpower or resources

Overview of the key social sustainability initiatives

Businesses in Singapore can play a pivotal role in advancing social sustainability – whether through **employee-focused initiatives** (e.g. employee training, progressive wages) or **broader community engagement** (e.g. corporate volunteering, donations). Incremental efforts, when sustained, can lead to significant and lasting impact.

Workplace Safety and
Health (WSH)

Employee Training and
Skills Development

Progressive Wages and
Fair Employment

Inclusive Hiring

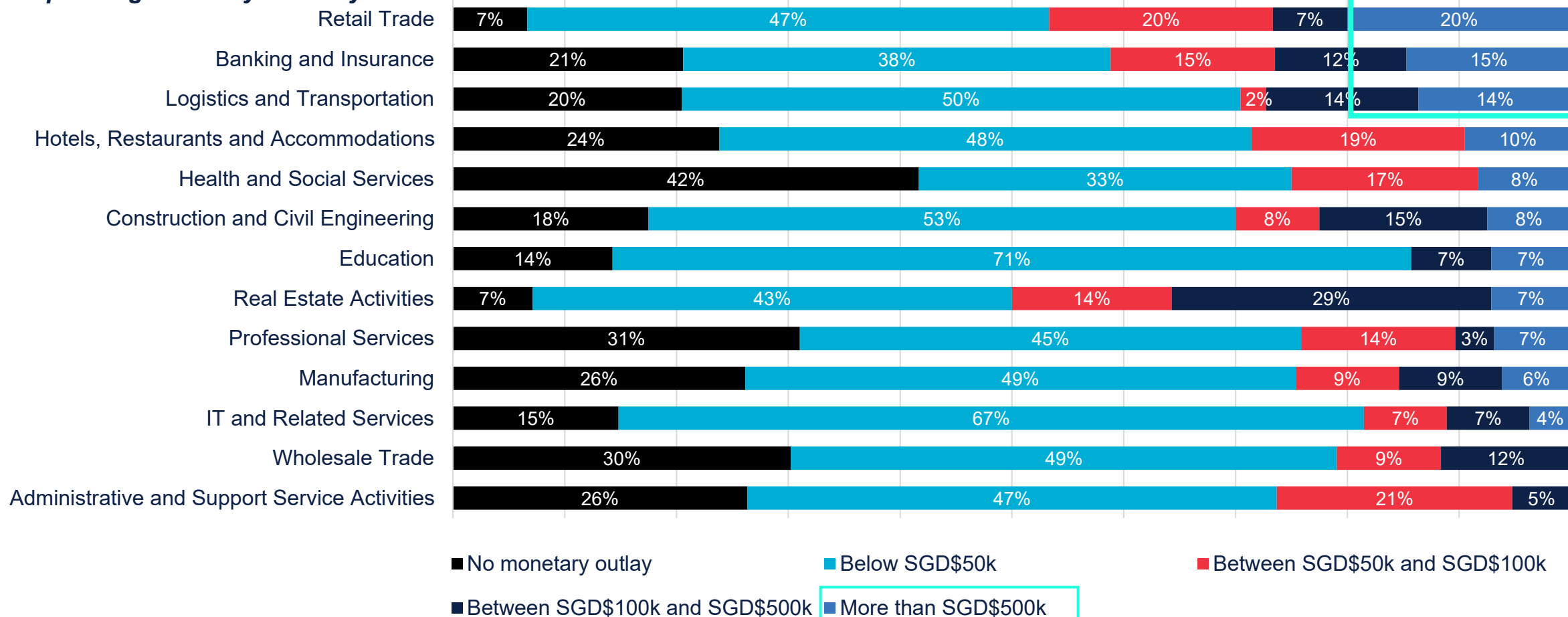
Fair and Ethical
Procurement

Community
Engagement

3 sectors led in social sustainability spending

The retail trade, banking and insurance, and logistics and transportation sectors led in social sustainability spending, with some companies investing over SGD\$500K annual. These sectors are well-placed to serve as models for others.

Spending on SS by industry



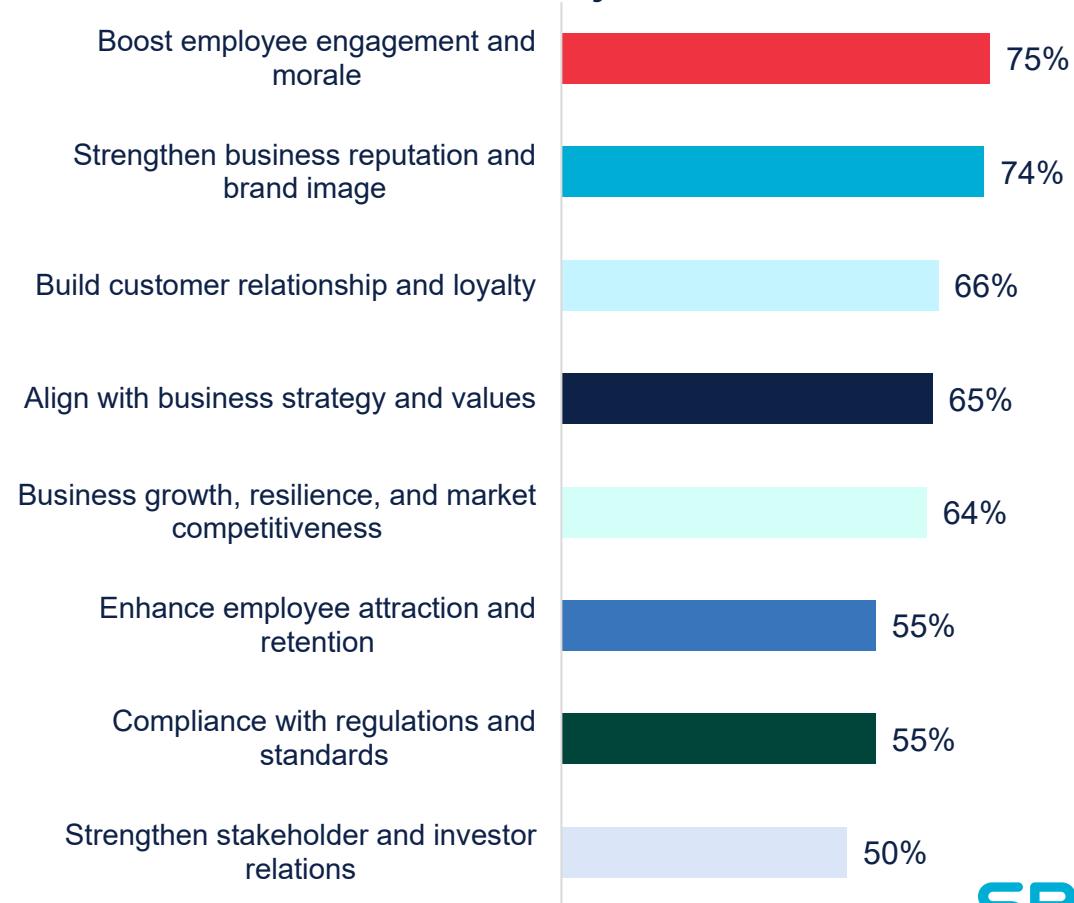
Regardless of size, more businesses recognise SS as a driver of long-term business value

The momentum of embedding social sustainability into businesses' core strategies is clearly building. More companies recognise that social sustainability is not only a responsibility but a business imperative.

Key SS motivators of large companies



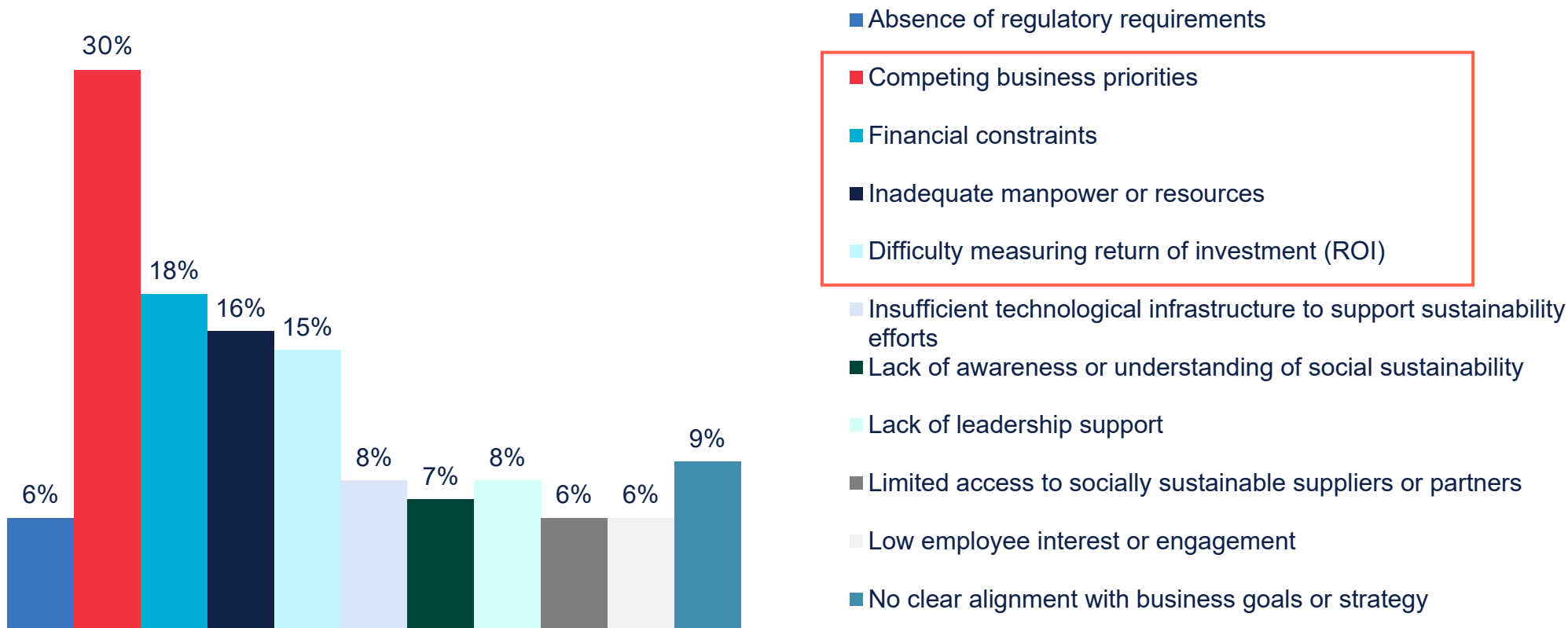
Business value of SS selected by SMEs



Understanding key barriers to SS implementation can help businesses move from intention to action

Regardless of size, businesses struggle to prioritise SS amidst other competing business priorities or demands. Financial constraints were also a common concern for both sizes. SMEs highlighted inadequate manpower and large companies cited difficulty in measuring ROI.

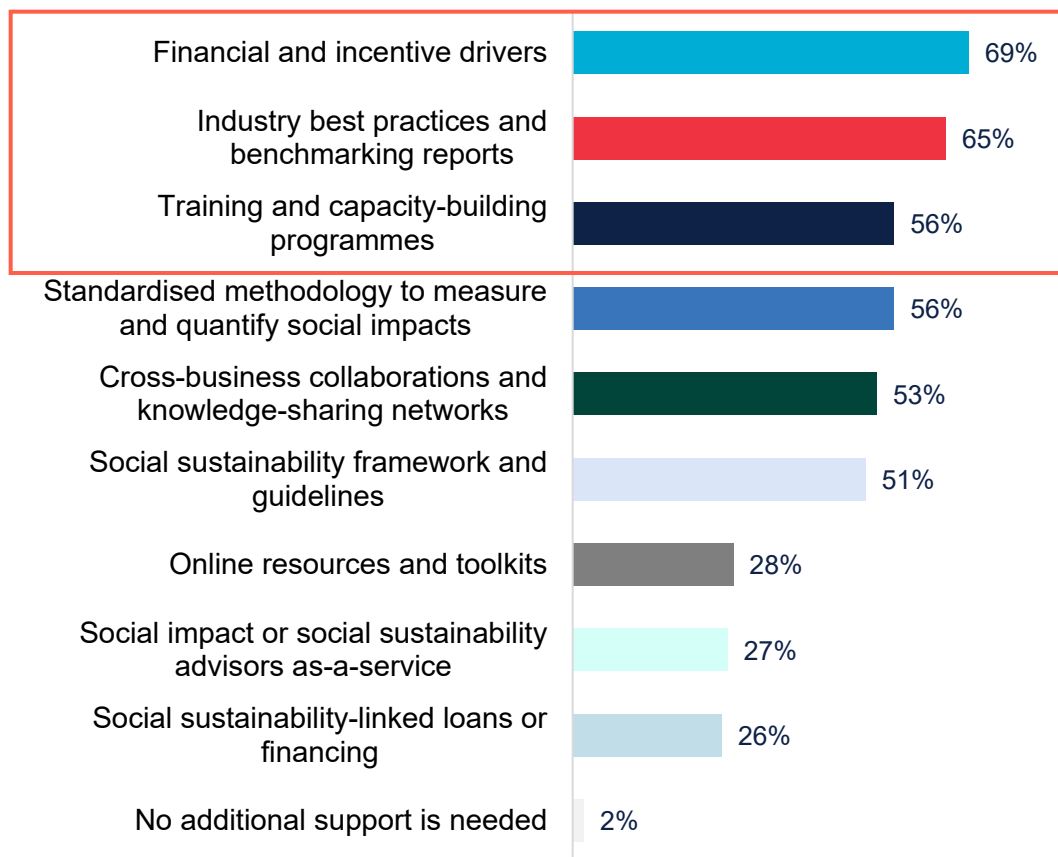
Key barriers that hinder SS initiatives of all businesses



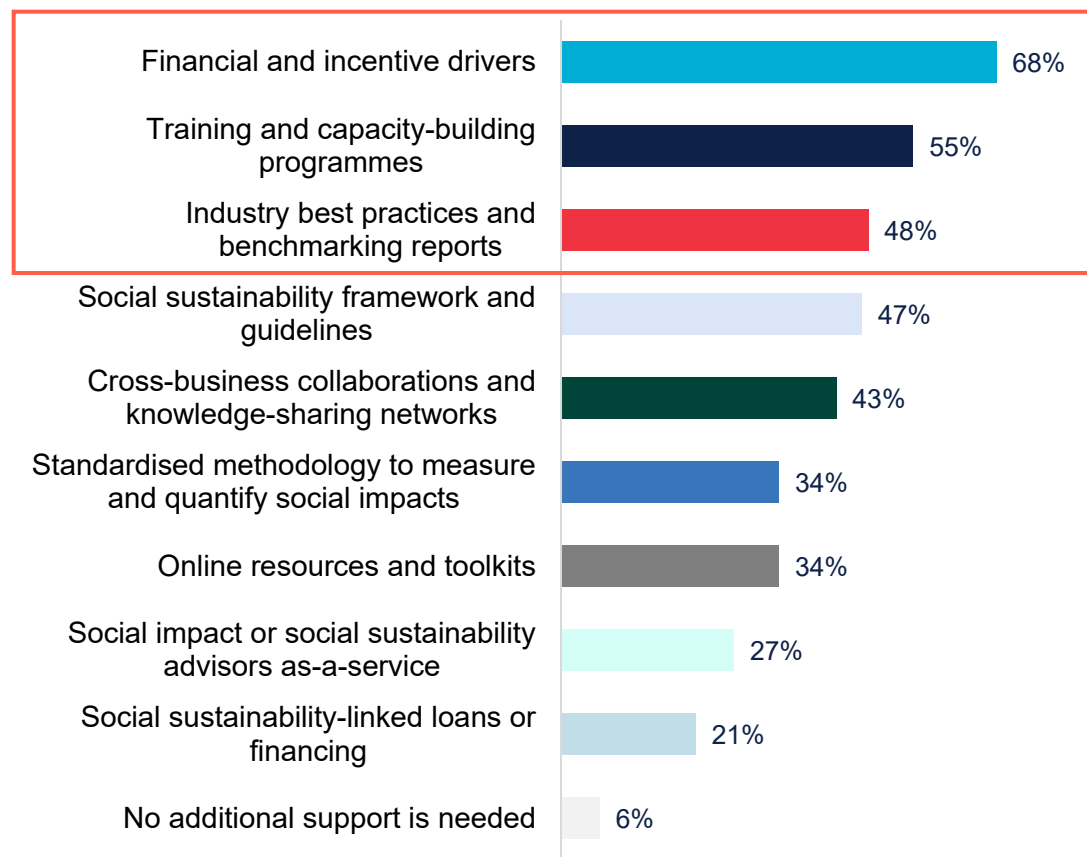
Tangible supports and practical guidance can turn businesses' potentials into action

Financial and incentive drivers can reduce the cost burden to implement SS and lower entry barriers and strengthened the business case for SS. On the other hand, capacity building programmes and benchmarking reports can provide the necessary knowledge and tools to build up confidence and SS efforts.

Key enablers of large companies



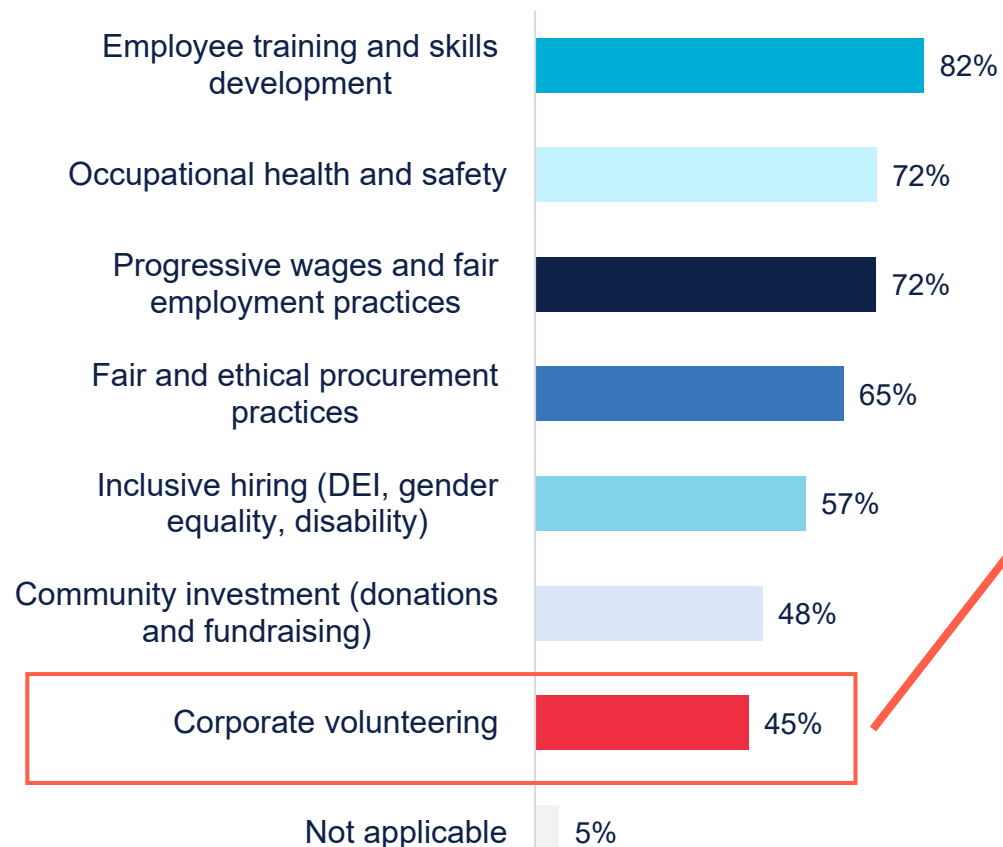
Key enablers for SMEs



Business are looking outward to expanding their social impact beyond the workplace to the community.

CV emerged as one of the top choices and planned for implementation in the next 12 months.

SS initiatives currently implemented



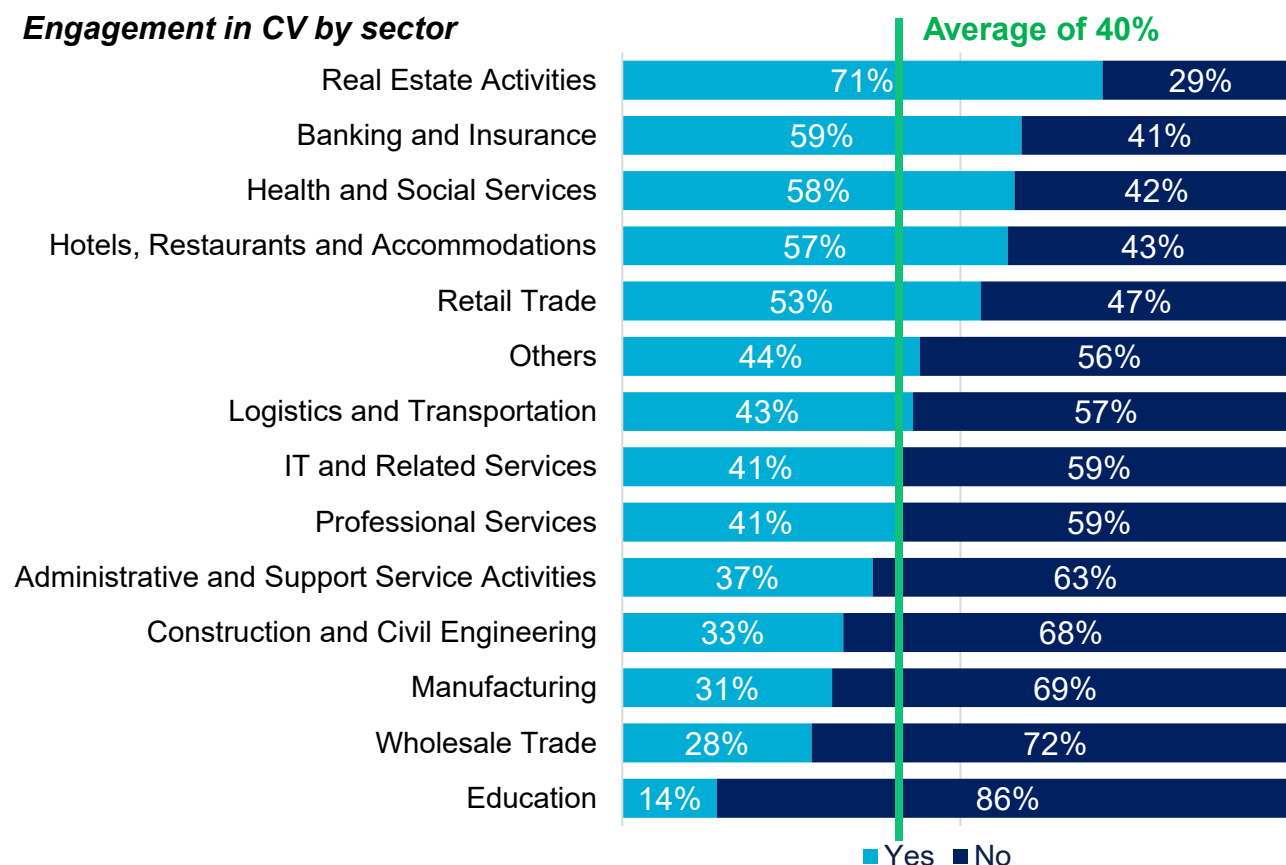
SS initiatives planned to be implemented next year



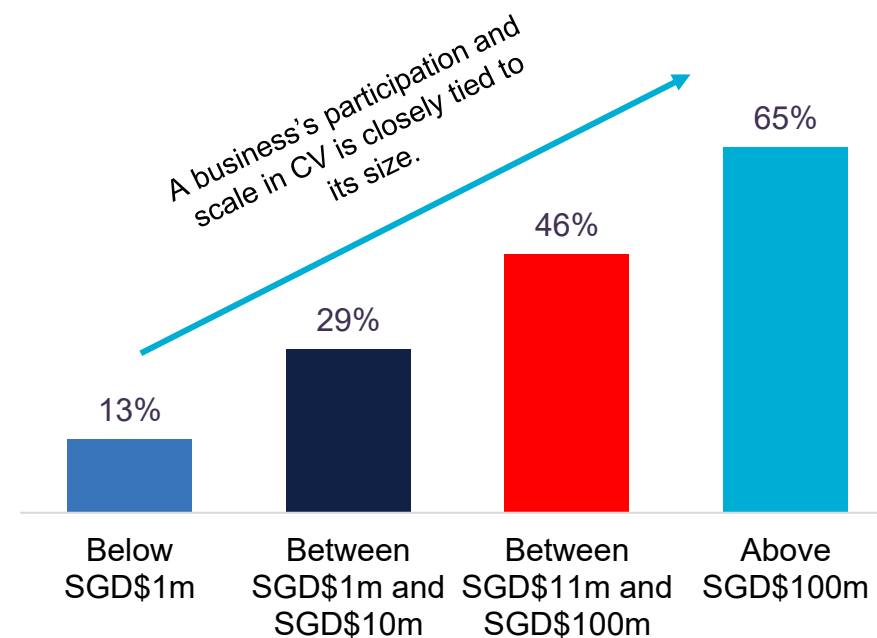
While 95% of businesses have implemented at least one SS initiative, only 40% are engaged in CV.

The study reveal a gap between the engagement levels of SS and CV. 40% of businesses have engaged in CV initiatives while 65% of large companies (with revenue above SGD 100 million) and only 13% of micro-businesses (revenue below SGD 1 million) had done so.

Engagement in CV by sector



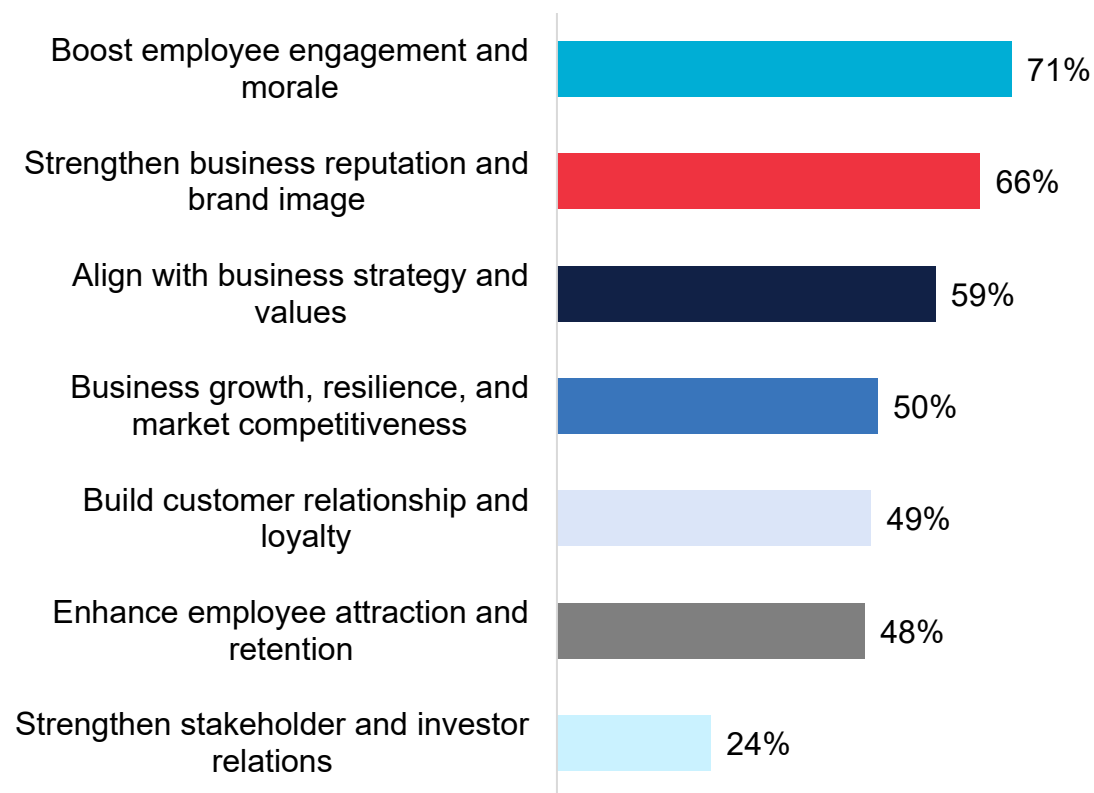
Percentage of business engaged in CV by revenue size



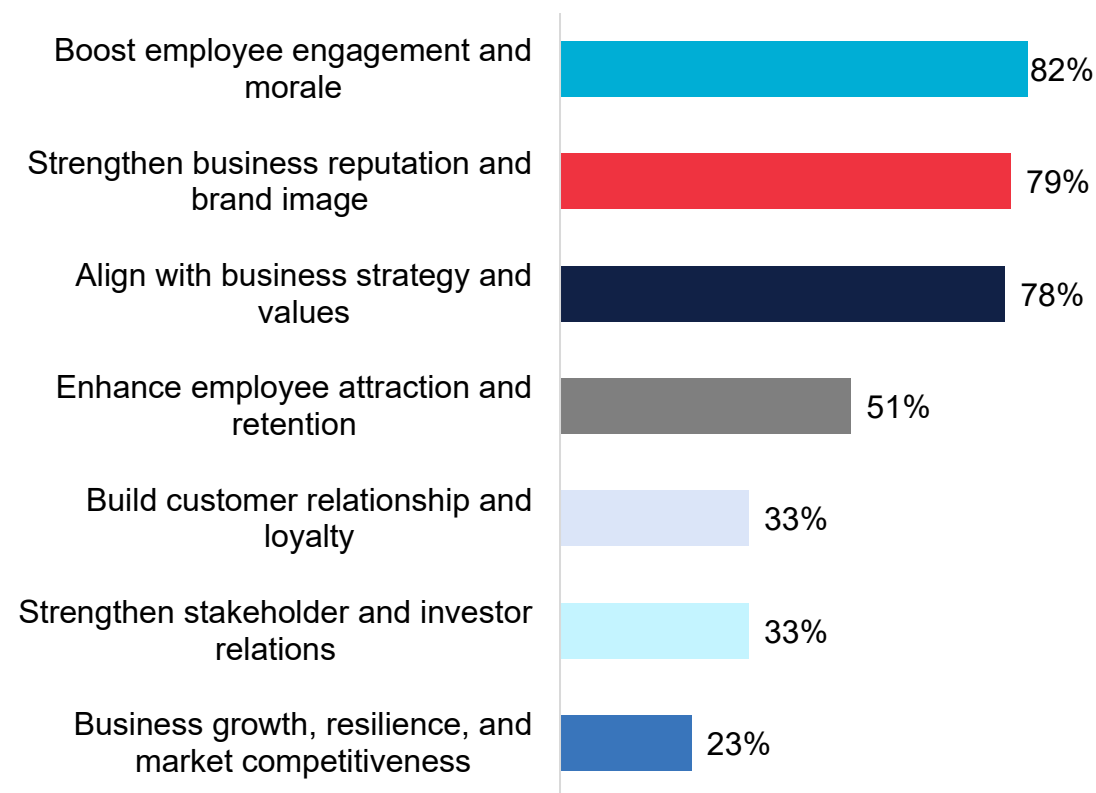
Corporate volunteering is increasingly recognised as a meaningful way to build employee morale and community connection

Businesses are choosing to engage in CV because it is increasingly recognised as a meaningful way to build employee morale and community connection, not because businesses are required to

Key motivating factors to start CV



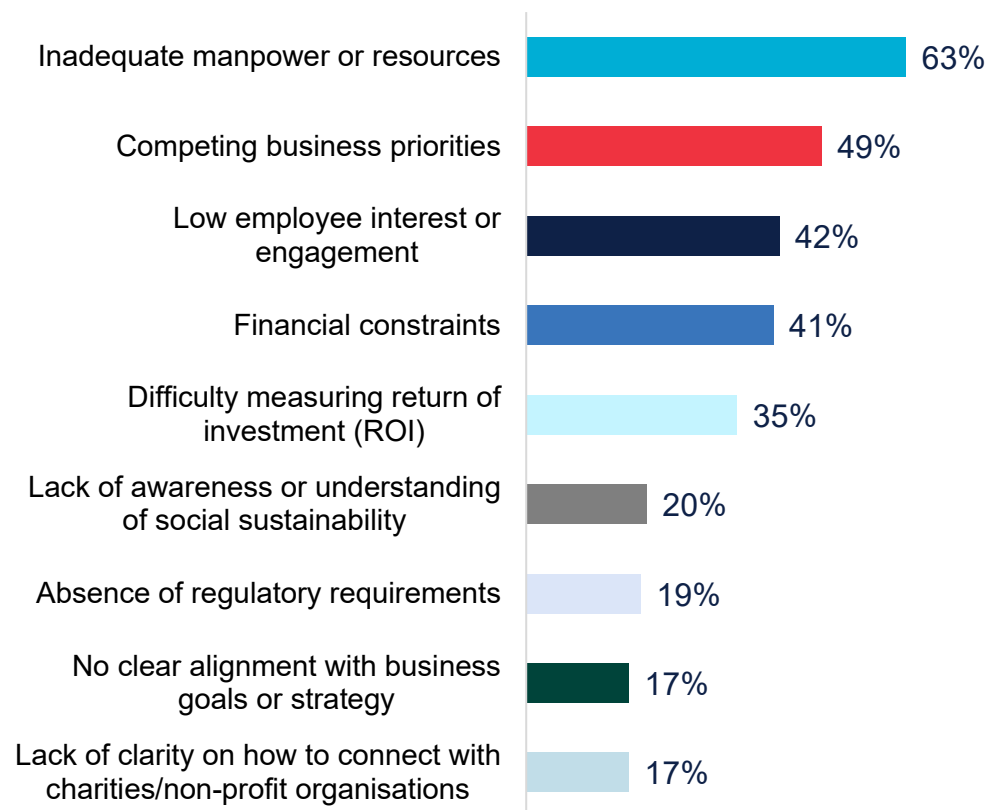
Key motivating factors to scale CV



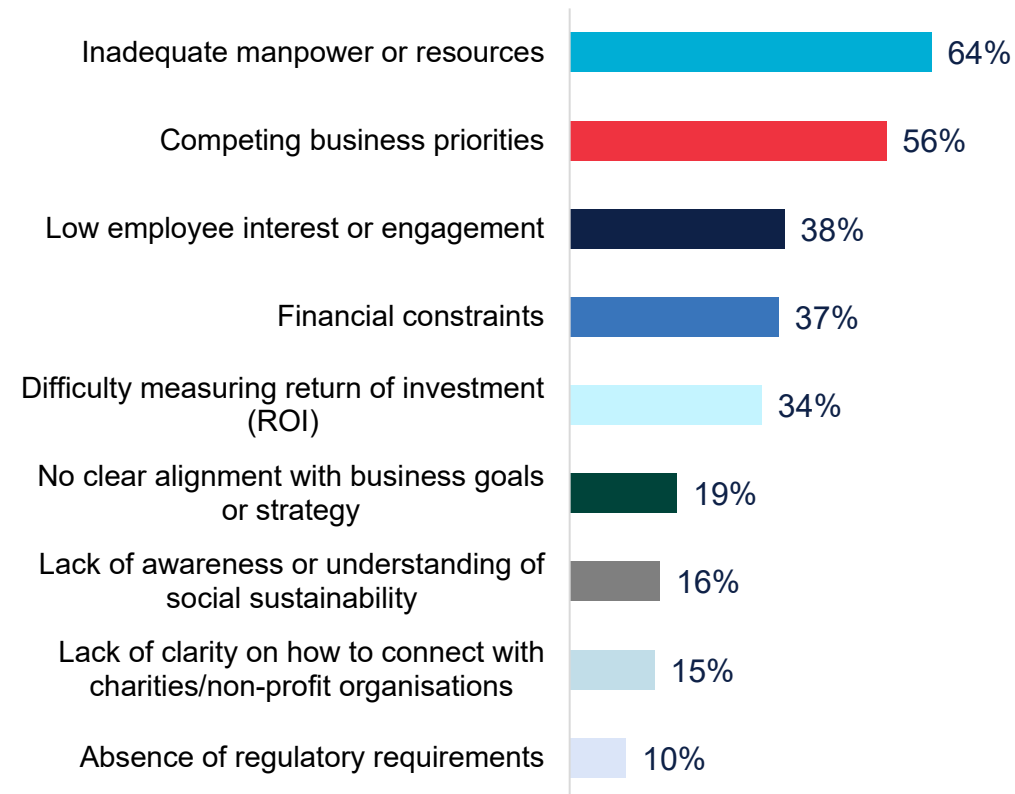
Inadequate manpower or resources as the top barrier for CV

Inadequate manpower or resources affected 64% of businesses. This is followed by competing business priorities, and low employee interest or engagement.

Key barriers for business to start CV



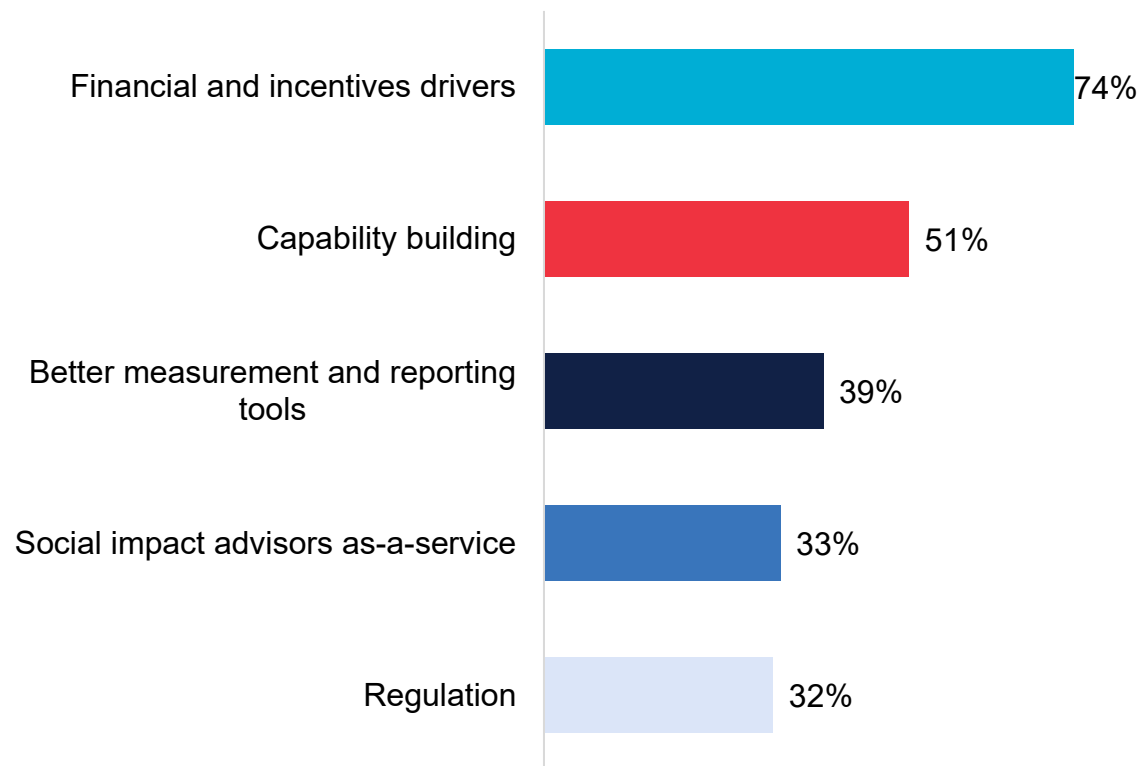
Key barriers for business to scale CV



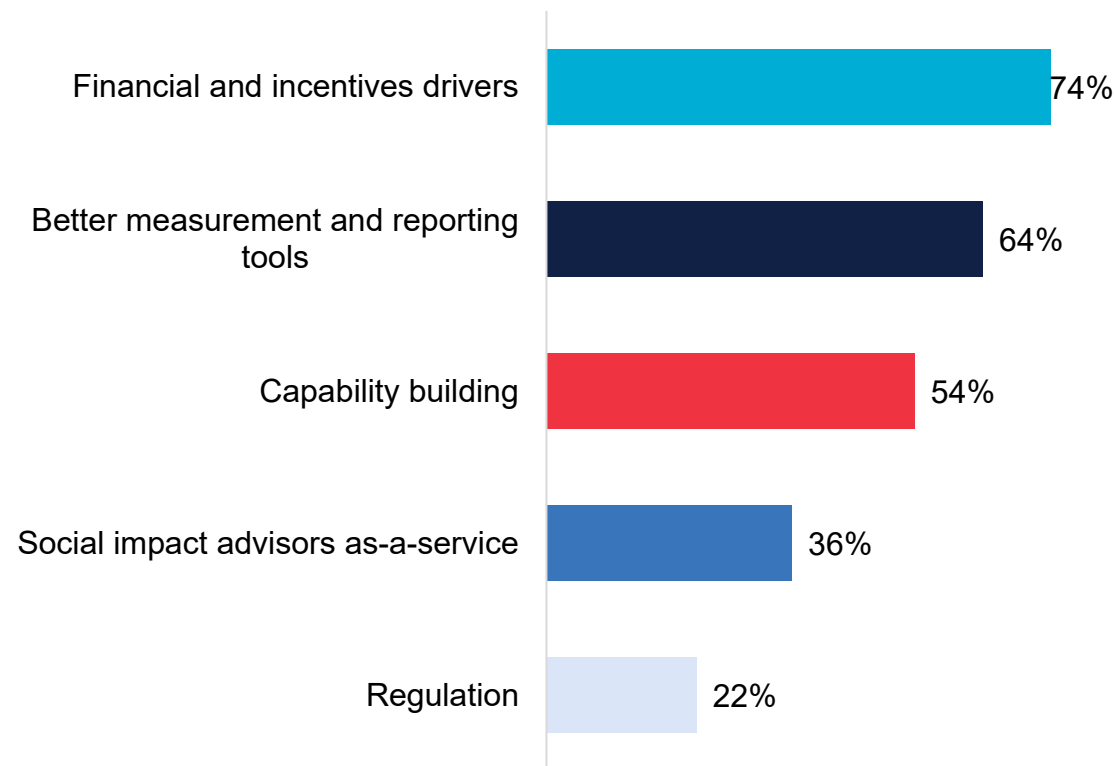
There is need for maturity-based support tailored to businesses at different stages of their CV journey.

Financial and incentive drivers can reduce the cost burden to implement CV and lower entry barriers and strengthened the business case for CV. On the other hand, capacity building programmes can build up confidence and CV efforts, and measurement and reporting tools can justify the ROI.

Key enablers to start CV

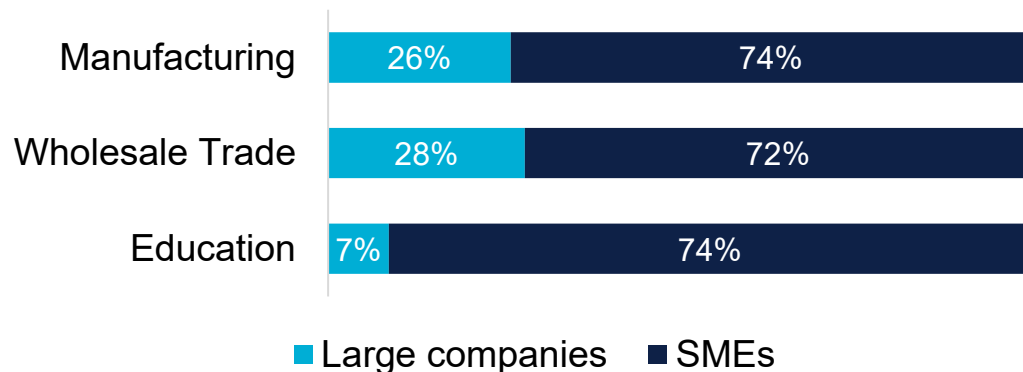


Key enablers to scale CV



Sectors least engaged in CV prefer more financial and incentives drivers

Company size breakdown for least engaged sectors engaged in CV



Enablers



Financial and incentives drivers



Better measurement and reporting tools



Social impact advisors as-a-service

Type of CV engaged in



CV causes supported



Manufacturing



Wholesale Trade



Education



Community (85%)
Environment (70%)
Elderly (60%)



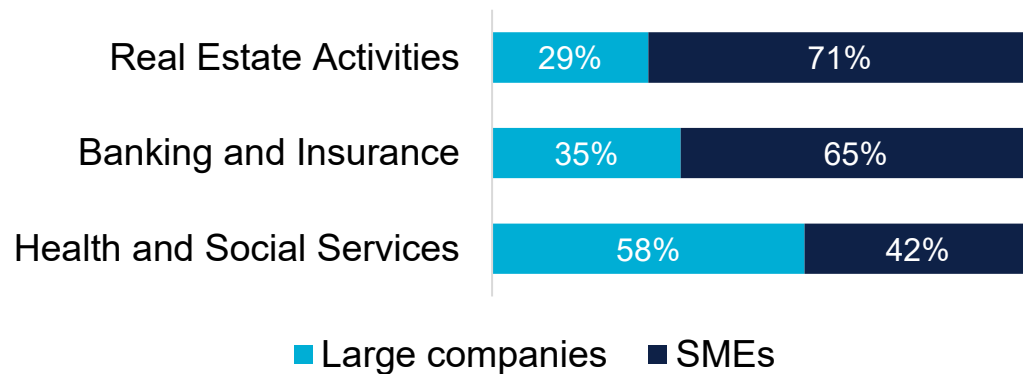
Community (83%)
Elderly (67%)
Environment (50%)



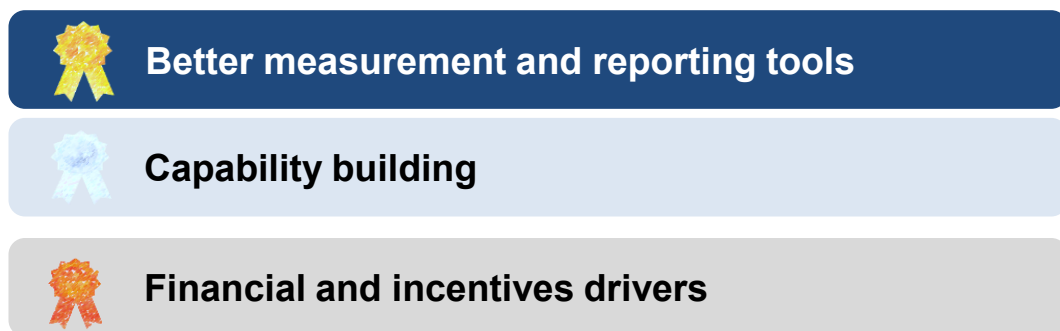
Children (100%)
Elderly (50%)
Youth (50%)

Top 3 sectors prefer better measurement and reporting tools

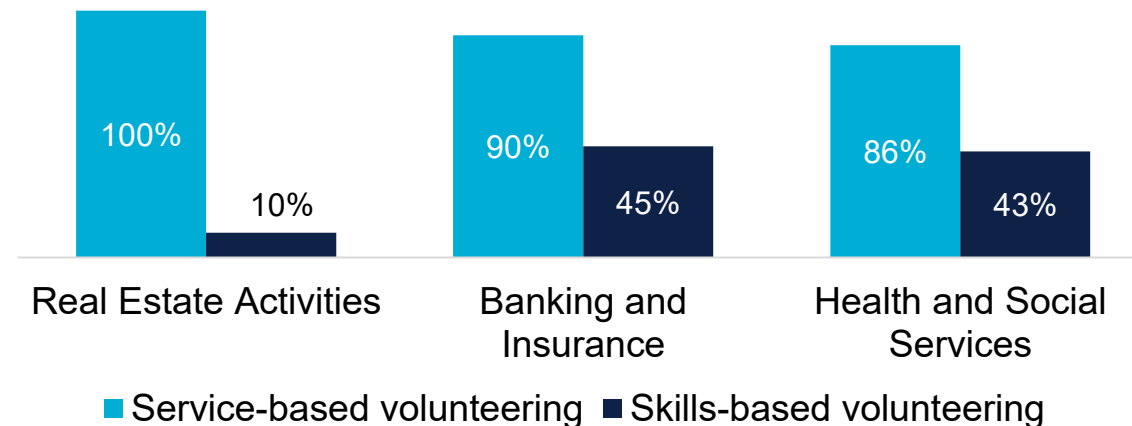
Company size breakdown for top 3 sectors engaged in CV



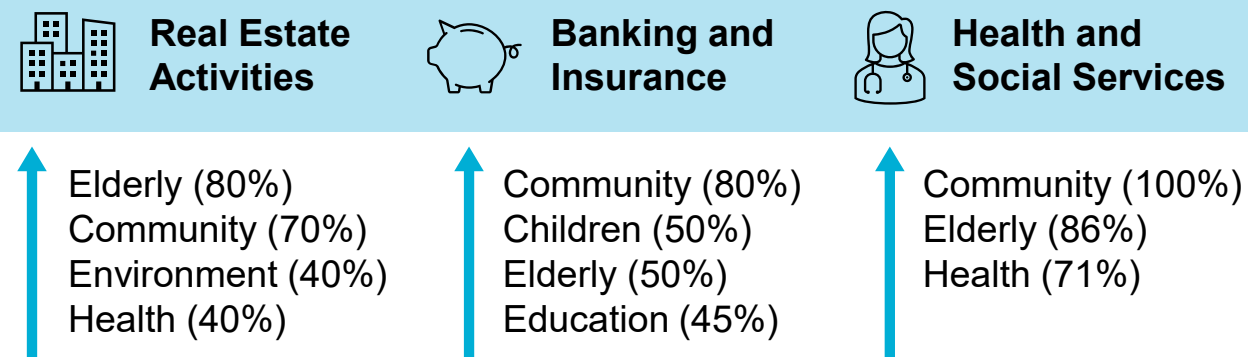
Enablers



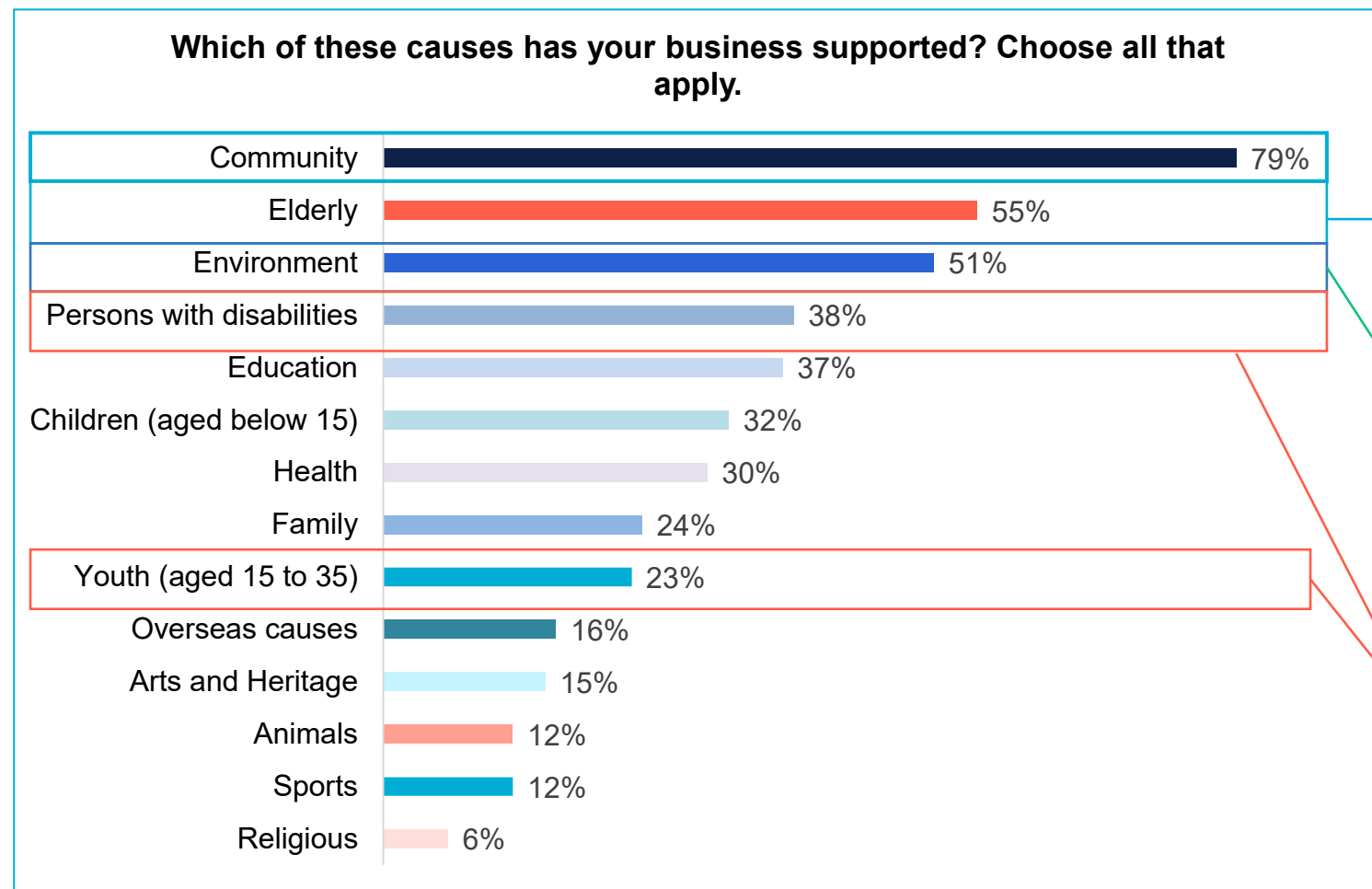
Type of CV engaged in



CV causes supported



Community causes were most popular, followed by elderly, environment, and persons with disabilities



In the **Corporate Giving Study 2021¹**, **elderly** was also one of the top causes supported by businesses, with **45%** of businesses supporting it.



In recent years, businesses supported many more **environmental causes**, with only **8%** of businesses supporting it in 2021.



Persons with disabilities and **youth** causes remained popular among businesses, with **38%** and **23%** of businesses supporting them respectively in 2021.

1. [Corporate Giving Study \(2021\)](#)