

A survey* of more than 1,000 UK businesses carried out by the British Chambers of Commerce in partnership with SUEZ reveals a significant disconnect between UK businesses' awareness of the importance of an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) approach and how many have these policies in place.

- Two thirds (64%) of businesses overall say they do not currently have an environmental sustainability policy;
- Over 8 out of 10 businesses overall say they do not have a social value policy;
- 7 out of 10 (69%) of respondents overall say an environmental led approach is predominantly about cutting carbon emissions;
- Over 8 out of 10 consider recycling and reusing items or materials to represent 'environmental sustainability'.

Which firms have implemented the following policies? (n=1,013)

	Environmental suitability policy	Social value policy
Firms with more than 50 employees	57%	25%
Firms with 10 to 49 employees	39%	16%
Firms with less than 10 employees	24%	9%

*1,072 participants took part in the online survey. 29% were operating in the manufacturing sector, 32% were B2C service firms and 38% were B2B service firms. 94% were SMEs with fewer than 250 employees. 46% of respondents reported that they export internationally and 47% said they their business was established more than 20 years ago. The fieldwork for this survey was conducted between 5 and 23 July 2021.

What do businesses think 'environmental sustainability' and 'social value' mean?

- Most respondents (82%) think 'environmental sustainability' is about recycling and reuse of materials, while 72% say its about reducing the need for single use products, and 69% think its is about cutting carbon emissions.
- 71% think 'social value' is about having a positive impact on employee welfare or job creation, while 68% think its about making a difference in the local community. 46% think it is about a having a positive economic impact

Barriers to implementing a social value policy

40% do not consider implementing a social value policy is a priority at present, 23% think there is lack of demand from stakeholders – staff, customers and their own boards, and 22% think the costs are too high



Shevaun Haviland
 Director General, BCC

"This research shines a light on the mismatch between the clear understanding among UK businesses of what benefits can flow from environmental and social value policies and the reality of how many actually have these in place."

"That's why the Chamber Network has been supporting its members to find more environmentally sustainable ways of doing business and identifying opportunities to boost their social value impact."



John Scanlon
 Chief Executive Officer,
 SUEZ recycling and
 recovery UK

"With just two months until the UK hosts COP26 the time is ripe for a sea-change in approach to make environmental and social value policies a core part of UK business strategy."

"Businesses are looking to Government for a supportive regulatory framework that will help accelerate a green recovery and promote business growth that not only benefits our economy and jobs, but that also enriches local communities and protects the environment."