

# Sustainability in Swiss SMEs: practices, ambitions and challenges

## Key findings of our 2025–2026 survey

Sustainability is increasingly establishing itself today as a framework for economic policies in Europe and, by extension, in Switzerland.

The European Union (EU) set up ambitious regulatory frameworks, notably the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). This requires certain companies to publish standardised environmental, social and governance information about their activities in order to increase transparency and steer investment towards a more sustainable economy.

Although Switzerland is not a member of the EU, Swiss SMEs are subject to more and more sustainability requirements. This pressure comes through several channels: commercial relations with European partners or multinationals, for instance, as well as Switzerland's own regulatory framework. In particular, the Climate and Innovation Act (CIA) adopted in 2023 requires all companies to develop a decarbonisation roadmap to 2030. And banks and financial institutions are also imposing increasingly stringent requirements.

As a result, companies are often called upon to provide data that is comparable to European standards, without always having the tools, resources or visibility necessary to structure their processes.

With this in mind, CleantechAlps conducted a survey of SMEs to better understand the specific challenges they face. This made it possible to assess their level of awareness and commitment in order to guide the implementation of specific support measures adapted to their reality. The following is our findings based on 680 responses from company managers, most of whom were C-suite executives. Interestingly, this represents the largest number of responses on the subject in western Switzerland.

The profile of the participating companies is illustrated in the infographic: most of the companies have fewer than 50 employees, 75% of them are engaged in some form of industrial activity, and two-thirds offer a product or a combination of products and services.

An analysis of the results shows that, while most companies are sensitive to sustainability issues, only a minority are implementing structured and robust practices.



## 5. There are clearly identified support needs

Of the respondents, 45% believe they have no need for assistance with sustainability issues. The others are looking for tools to help them establish a concrete action plan, recommendations for certification, a suitable label or support in carrying out a carbon assessment. A further 12% need to define key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitor them.

## 6. The roadblocks are mainly financial and organisational

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of companies identify financial resources as the main obstacle to implementing sustainability measures. More than 40% also cite other priorities they consider more urgent. Administrative overload is perceived as a greater obstacle by small businesses, while resistance to change appears to be more significant in larger organisations.

## 7. Risk management is not (yet) a priority for businesses

Almost 50% of companies do not have a formal risk management plan. This figure mirrors that of a survey conducted in autumn 2022, when there was a threat of energy shortages and the federal OSTRAL plan was triggered for the approaching winter. Three years later, despite the difficulties and uncertainties caused by the war in Ukraine and the political and economic turmoil surrounding Donald Trump's rise to power, this figure has still not increased.

## 8. Mobility plans are quite rare

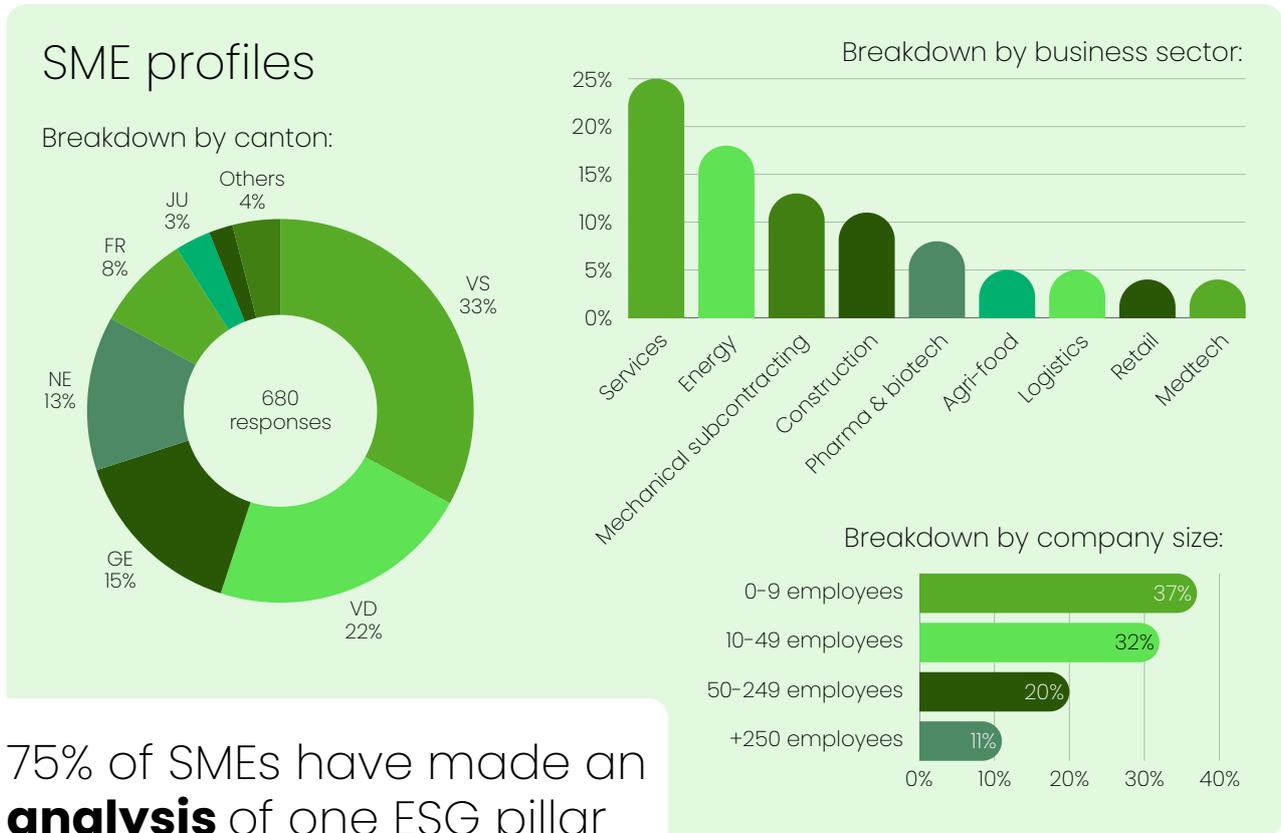
Mobility plans have still to be widely adopted. A large majority of companies say they do not have a formal plan: 42% of them are not considering one at present, while 18% are unfamiliar with the concept. On the other hand, 22% of companies already have a mobility plan and 18% are in the process of developing one, which shows an emerging but still uneven interest in this approach.

Businesses mainly prefer to rely on remote working and flexible working hours to improve their employees' mobility, with 65% of them adopting these measures. In addition, 40% of respondents are introducing incentives to use public transport, such as subsidised travel passes or financial subsidies. In any event, the issue of mobility does not influence businesses' location strategies (industrial estate, city centre or other), as stated by 62% of the companies that responded to the survey.

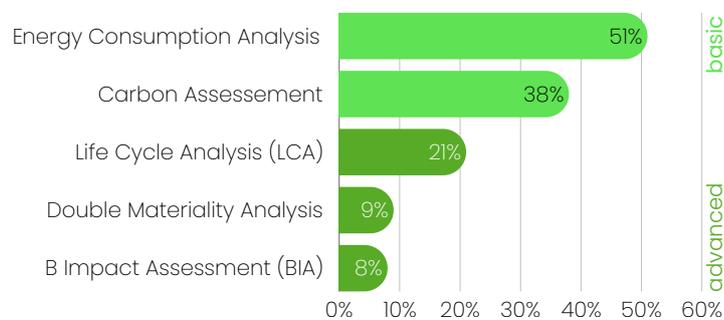


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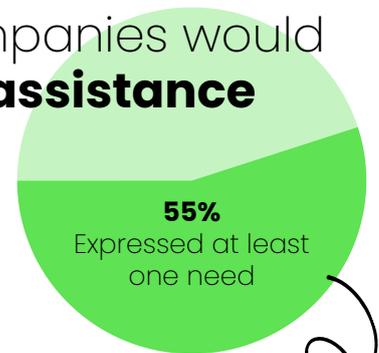
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75% of SMEs have made an **analysis** of one ESG pillar



More than half of companies would like **assistance**



Nearly one in two companies have no **certification**

