Co-funded by the European Union

YEE - HUB

YOUTH ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

PROJECT NO. 2023-2-PL01-KA220-YOU-000178470

WP2/A1/T2
GERMAN NATIONAL REPORT

AFRIDAT UG

OCTOBER 2024

Table of Contents

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

INTRODUCTION

This national research report presents the findings of a literature review and an online survey conducted as part of the **YEE-HUB project**, aimed at exploring the attitudes of young entrepreneurs towards ecological practices. The first task of this project focuses on gathering insights into how ecological awareness shapes the actions of young business owners, particularly in relation to their roles as entrepreneurs, consumers, family members, and community participants. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand the knowledge, awareness, and perceptions of ecology within these groups.

The diagnosis was carried out in two key stages. Step one involved a detailed analysis of existing research on the attitudes of entrepreneurs—especially millennials and Generation Z—towards ecology. This review provided a foundation for identifying trends and gaps in pro-ecological behaviours among young business leaders.

Step two involved conducting an online survey to collect primary data on the ecological attitudes of young entrepreneurs born between 1990 and 2004. The survey assessed the consistency of their pro-environmental behaviours across different life roles, as well as the key factors enabling or hindering the adoption of sustainable business practices.

The research was conducted across five partner countries: Poland, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and Spain. This report refers specifically to the research conducted in Germany.

This report consolidates the results of both steps, offering valuable conclusions and recommendations for promoting ecological behaviours among the youngest generation of entrepreneurs. The insights gained will contribute to the selection of character criteria for the ideal eco-entrepreneur.

LITERATURE RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

The field research methodology for this project involved a comprehensive analysis of eight studies or reports on the pro-ecological behaviour of entrepreneurs in the respective country. These reports, published between 2004 and 2024, were reviewed with a focus on correlating national data with broader European and global trends.

The literature review was guided by several key aspects:

- Entrepreneurs' behaviours in the ecological context
- Factors positively or negatively influencing pro-ecological behaviour
- Pro-ecological behaviours as customers and citizens
- The level of knowledge and awareness about the impact of business on the natural environment
- Challenges faced by companies in implementing pro-ecological activities

- Market and legal conditions affecting the adoption of sustainable practices
- Examples of successful pro-ecological activities that led to financial benefits
- Other relevant insights and findings

This approach allowed for a thorough understanding of the current state of pro-ecological entrepreneurship and the identification of key factors supporting or hindering sustainable business practices.

RESULTS

Findings on entrepreneurs' behavior in the ecological context

Young entrepreneurs are increasingly focusing on environmental sustainability in their business practices. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023) reports that around 59% of entrepreneurs have adopted eco-friendly measures, while 66.5% consistently consider environmental factors when planning their companies' futures. Many startups report positive economic outcomes from these green initiatives. According to the Deutscher Startup Monitor (2023), the number of startups identified as part of the Green Economy has surged in recent years. The Green Startup Monitor (2023) also reveals that 79% of startups recognize the importance of social or ecological impact, but there is often a significant gap between the desire and ability to achieve it. For the first time, the report explored this gap by analyzing "impact competence," highlighting the qualifications and data needed to reach ecological goals. Examples of green startups include ForTomorrow, a non-profit offering a CO_2 offset subscription service, the Loadster e-bike for logistics in densely populated areas, and companies like Hortiya and Pydro, which focus on resource-saving technologies (Green Startup Monitor, 2021).

Furthermore, the article "How entrepreneurial is German Generation Z vs. Generation Y?" investigates the ecological behaviors of entrepreneurs, comparing Millennials and Gen Z in their approach to work, technology, and sustainability. Millennials are seen as digital natives seeking meaningful work with balance and variety, while Gen Z, having grown up in a post-digital world, demonstrates even greater technological adaptability, which may make them more open to change (Dreyer et al., 2023). In conclusion, research shows that young entrepreneurs are increasingly integrating eco-friendly practices into their businesses, not only enhancing their ecological impact but also experiencing positive economic benefits as a result.

Findings on factors that influence pro-ecological behavior of entrepreneurs (positively and negatively)

Green startups, in particular, are leading the way with innovative solutions aimed at combating the climate crisis and ensuring a sustainable future. However, the pro-ecological behavior of entrepreneurs is influenced by a range of factors, both positive and negative, which affect their ability to drive meaningful environmental change.

Positive Influences on Pro-Ecological Behavior

- Environmental Considerations in Decision-Making

Data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) highlights that a significant number of young entrepreneurs actively incorporate environmental considerations into their decision-making processes. In 2023, 66.5% of young entrepreneurs reported that they always take environmental factors into account when making business decisions, while 58.8% had already implemented measures to reduce their companies' environmental impact. These findings demonstrate that entrepreneurs are increasingly aware of the ecological implications of their activities and are taking proactive steps to mitigate their environmental footprint.

- Economic Benefits of Sustainability

The integration of environmental considerations has proven to yield economic benefits for businesses. Many entrepreneurs report positive economic outcomes from adopting sustainable practices, such as cost savings from energy efficiency and the use of environmentally friendly materials. These benefits provide a further incentive for businesses to pursue sustainability, as they can realize both ecological and financial gains.

- Generational Shifts in Entrepreneurial Values

Generations Y and Z, who are emerging as key entrepreneurial groups, are more inclined towards sustainability due to their value systems. Gen Y prioritizes work-life balance, flexibility, and meaningful work, which often leads to a preference for sustainable business models. Gen Z entrepreneurs are particularly motivated by environmental concerns and corporate social responsibility. Their familiarity with technology and social media also allows them to stay informed about sustainability issues, enabling them to adopt pro-ecological behaviors in their businesses.

- Supportive Networks and Hubs

Entrepreneurs are increasingly seeking collaboration with established companies and stakeholders to foster sustainability. Green startups, in particular, express a desire for greater support in exchanging ideas with established businesses. The establishment of regional "Sustainability Innovation Hubs," which focus on GreenTech and sustainability, can bridge this gap. These hubs would facilitate the matching of green startups with medium-sized companies and investors, accelerating the introduction and adoption of environmental innovations.

- Proactive Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurs are known for their proactive and innovative approach to problem-solving, a trait that is especially relevant in the context of sustainability. They are often quick to recognize the need for change and take initiative to implement solutions to ecological, social, and economic challenges. This entrepreneurial mindset, defined by autonomy and self-direction, enables them to independently pursue sustainable practices without waiting for external guidance.

- Social Capital and Networking

Networks of entrepreneurs, local groups, and organizations play a key role in promoting sustainability. By pooling internal and external resources, entrepreneurs can gain legitimacy for new environmental practices and create a collective movement toward sustainable business models. Access to social capital—trust, collective action, and participation—further enhances the capacity of entrepreneurs to adopt pro-ecological behaviors.

Negative Influences on Pro-Ecological Behavior

- Financial Barriers to Sustainability

Despite their desire to implement sustainable practices, many green startups face significant financial challenges. A major issue is the gap between the demand for funding and the availability of financial resources. While 42% of green startups seek government funding, venture capital, or business angel investment, only 16% have been able to secure this type of financing. This financial undersupply severely limits the growth potential of startups that focus on sustainability.

- Challenges for Highly Innovative Startups

The financial barriers are particularly pronounced for startups that are highly innovative. For instance, nearly 31% of highly innovative green startups have been unable to obtain venture capital, despite their desire for such funding. This gap between innovation and access to capital hinders the ability of these companies to scale their solutions and have a meaningful ecological impact.

- Generational Tensions

Although Gen Y and Gen Z entrepreneurs are generally more inclined toward sustainability, their individualistic tendencies can sometimes conflict with their environmental values. For example, Gen Y's emphasis on personal freedom may lead to a reluctance to engage in collective environmental efforts, while Gen Z's impatience and materialism may conflict with the long-term focus required for sustainable business practices. These generational traits can act as barriers to consistent pro-ecological behavior.

- Complexity and Multidimensionality of Transformation

Transformations toward sustainability require persistence and long-term commitment across multiple sectors. Entrepreneurs often face challenges related to the complexity and interdependence of sustainability with other areas, such as digitization and global economic trends. While these transformations cannot be avoided, entrepreneurs must navigate these challenges in ways that integrate sustainable practices across their operations, which can be a difficult and resource-intensive process.

- Fear of Failure and Economic Constraints

Young entrepreneurs, in particular, may be discouraged from pursuing sustainability-focused ventures due to personal economic constraints and a fear of failure. Factors such as household income and the uncertainty of success in new markets may lead them to prioritize short-term survival over long-term ecological benefits. These concerns can prevent them from fully committing to pro-ecological behaviors in their business activities.

Addressing these issues through improved financial support, policy interventions, and the establishment of sustainability-focused networks will be crucial in fostering a more sustainable entrepreneurial landscape. Entrepreneurs, by actively shaping the future of sustainability, can drive the transformative changes necessary to build a resilient and environmentally conscious economy.

Findings on behavior as customers and citizens in a pro-ecological context

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on sustainability, both in the business world and among the general public. It has examined how individuals behave as both customers and citizens within a pro-ecological context. By understanding the motivations, obstacles, and behaviors driving sustainable actions, we can better comprehend the role individuals play in shaping a more environmentally conscious society.

1. Pro-Ecological Behavior as Citizens

- Entrepreneurial Aspirations and Sustainability

Among young people, sustainability has become a strong motivator for entrepreneurship. One in three young individuals expresses interest in founding a sustainable business, with those possessing a basic level of education being the most likely to imagine themselves starting such ventures. The primary motivation behind this entrepreneurial spirit is the desire to make a personal contribution to sustainable development. This reflects a growing recognition among younger generations that economic activity can serve as a powerful tool for promoting sustainability and addressing ecological concerns.

- Social Influence and Collective Action

Citizens also play an essential role in advocating for and supporting renewable energy projects, as demonstrated by the success of the biomass district heating project (DHP). The project's core group leveraged a mix of individual and collective benefits to gain public support, including offering personalized consultations and estimates of the cost and benefits for each household. A key factor in the success of this project was the use of social networking and "word-of-mouth" recommendations. Early adopters of the project helped convince their neighbors, leading to widespread adoption within the community. This approach highlights the importance of peer influence and community-based efforts in promoting ecological initiatives.

2. Pro-Ecological Behavior as Customers

- Willingness to Support Sustainable Businesses

While individuals as citizens express interest in sustainable practices, there are significant challenges in their role as customers. The most prominent obstacle identified by respondents is the customers' willingness to pay for sustainable products and services. Many individuals recognize the value of sustainable offerings but hesitate to pay premium prices. This reluctance to spend more on eco-friendly products presents a major barrier to the broader adoption of sustainable consumer behaviors.

- Crowdfunding and Sustainable Consumer Goods

Despite the challenges, green startups have found success in leveraging alternative financing methods, particularly crowdfunding. Green startups are significantly more likely to turn to crowdfunding than their non-green counterparts—16% of green startups aim to use crowdfunding, compared to 7% of non-green startups. In the consumer goods industry, green startups show an even stronger reliance on crowdfunding, with 17% opting for this financing method, compared to 0% of non-green startups. However, even in this area, there remains a gap between the desire to use crowdfunding and its actual implementation, indicating the need for further development of financing mechanisms for sustainable ventures.

- Balancing Personal and Collective Benefits

A key insight from various case studies, such as the biomass DHP, is that consumers are more likely to support ecological initiatives when they perceive a balance between personal benefits (e.g., cost savings and direct control of energy supply) and collective benefits (e.g., carbon neutrality and regional economic growth). Tailoring sustainability campaigns to highlight both individual and societal gains can significantly enhance customer engagement and willingness to adopt sustainable products and services.

The findings suggest that while many individuals are motivated to support sustainability as both citizens and customers, there are significant barriers that need to be addressed. As citizens, individuals are eager to contribute to ecological projects, often through collective action and community-based efforts. However, as customers, their willingness to pay for sustainable products remains a challenge, hindering the broader adoption of eco-friendly consumer behaviors. Entrepreneurs face difficulties in securing financing and convincing consumers of the value of their offerings. Ultimately, continued efforts to educate customers about the personal and collective benefits of sustainable consumption will be essential to achieving a more ecologically responsible society.

Findings on level of knowledge and awareness about the impact of business on the natural environment

More than 70% of entrepreneurs who have started businesses in the past few years actively consider environmental factors in their strategic development. Whether it involves aligning supply chains, offering eco-friendly products, or adopting greener operational practices, the trend towards environmental consciousness is evident. The recognition of both positive and negative environmental impacts of entrepreneurial activities at an early stage is essential for minimizing harm and maximizing sustainability. Green startups, particularly, showcase a "double dividend"—contributing to both economic success and environmental sustainability. They go beyond the traditional goals of profitability by also generating social value, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Studies show that 76% of startups in Germany recognize the importance of incorporating ecological and social impact into their strategy, demonstrating a shift in how businesses view their role in environmental stewardship. Despite the growing awareness, there remains a significant implementation gap. Many startups and businesses acknowledge the importance of sustainability, but factors such as lack of impact competence, insufficient data, and financial limitations hinder their ability to fully integrate these practices. The Green Startup Monitor 2023 highlights the need for more qualification and data to effectively achieve the desired ecological outcomes.

Younger generations, particularly Gen Z, exhibit high levels of environmental awareness. These individuals are actively engaged in climate change movements, and many show a preference for companies that are transparent about their environmental impact. However, while Gen Z is at the forefront of demanding sustainable business practices, there are still gaps in knowledge and implementation. Gen Y also values sustainability but may be more prone to prioritizing convenience or personal gain over collective environmental responsibilities. Both generations, however, demonstrate the potential to influence business decisions and consumer behaviors as their knowledge and expectations about sustainability evolve. Studies indicate that while 40-50% of German adults believe they have the skills to start a business, many younger people feel less confident, particularly in the areas of sustainability and entrepreneurship.

While there is growing knowledge and awareness among businesses about their environmental impact, challenges persist in translating this awareness into concrete actions. Education and support are key to empowering entrepreneurs and businesses to adopt sustainable practices. With further advancements in environmental awareness, businesses can play a pivotal role in addressing the ecological challenges of our time, fostering innovation, and contributing to long-term sustainability.

Findings on challenges in implementing pro-ecological activities in companies.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted even the most meticulous plans, highlighting the need for adaptability. However, engaging younger generations - Gen Y and Z - in sustainability efforts poses significant challenges. Gen Y's individualistic tendencies often prioritize personal convenience over collective environmental efforts, while Gen Z's materialistic inclinations can overshadow their desire to make a positive impact (Kinetics, 2017). This generational divide underscores the importance of tailored approaches to sustainability. The German Startups Association's report reveals the alarming impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with nine out of ten start-ups experiencing disrupted business activities and eight out of ten facing existential threats. Sales, capital raising, and product development emerge as key hurdles, with 63%, 49%, and 46% of ecologically oriented start-ups struggling respectively (Hirschfeld & Gilde, 2020).

Financial constraints further exacerbate these challenges. Insufficient resources limited technical options, and customers' unwillingness to pay for sustainable offers hinder pro-ecological efforts. Inadequate human resources, including lack of specialist knowledge and soft skills among employees, also pose significant obstacles. Generational differences and knowledge gaps further complicate sustainability initiatives. Middle-aged entrepreneurs prioritize short-term financial goals, while younger Germans lack know-how and expertise in sustainable practices (Schøtt et al. 2015). Older entrepreneurs, post-55, are less inclined to adopt innovative sustainable practices. To overcome these challenges, companies must adopt agile Human Resource Management practices, empowering young entrepreneurs and adapting to changing circumstances. Entrepreneurial education and training can bridge gaps in soft skills and sustainability knowledge.

The journey to integrate pro-ecological activities into the fabric of corporate culture is complex and multifaceted. As companies navigate this path, they must confront the unique challenges posed by different generations, financial constraints, and knowledge gaps.The bioenergy village concept in Germany shines as a remarkable example of innovation and resilience. Through collaboration, forward-thinking leadership, and a commitment to sustainability, this groundbreaking project has successfully navigated complex challenges. Its achievement inspires businesses to embrace a culture of eco-consciousness, empowering generations to work together towards a common goal: a greener, more sustainable tomorrow.

Findings on market and legal conditions affecting the implementation of pro-ecological activities

Green startups face unique challenges in the market and legal landscape. Compared to non-green startups, they encounter significantly more tax and legal issues, particularly in heavily regulated markets like food and energy.

According to Borderstep Institute and the Federal Association of German Startups, green startups struggle to access financing, with 16% citing tax and legal issues as major hurdles, compared to 10% of non-green startups. Growth-stage green startups report even greater challenges, with 21% facing difficulties, versus 6% of non-green startups. To overcome these obstacles, green startups rely heavily on state venture capital. However, Germany's startup support system has clear deficits in targeted support for green startups. Almost half of green startups prioritize the creation of a dedicated 'Sustainability' funding line with tailored financing offers.

Sustainability transformation requires more than just financial support; it demands social innovations that complement market economy mechanisms. This involves fostering a culture of adaptability, creativity, and innovation. A functioning regulatory framework, aligned with transformation goals, is essential to regulate market forces, promote intrinsic motivation, and set extrinsic incentives for climate protection and resource equity.

A case study of the biomass District Heating Project (DHP) illustrates these challenges. Initially, local resistance stemmed from skepticism about new technology and fear of losing control. However, intermediary organizations played a vital role in convincing residents to join the Co-operative. Government subsidies covered one-third of connection costs, making the project accessible to many households. The success of pro-ecological initiatives hinges on addressing these challenges. Policymakers must develop targeted support systems, establish dedicated funding lines, and foster social innovations. Streamlining regulatory frameworks to align with transformation goals will encourage green startups to thrive.

Examples of good practices, implementation of pro-ecological activities in companies that brought financial profits

In recent years, Germany has emerged as a global leader in climate technology, harnessing innovation to drive sustainable growth. This trend is exemplified by companies like Enpal and 1KOMMA5, which have achieved the coveted unicorn status, surpassing valuations of $1 billion. These trailblazers are redefining the future of entrepreneurship, where environmental responsibility and financial success go hand-in-hand.

At the heart of this revolution are pioneering companies like Neko, which offers affordable, natural heat solutions for homes. By leveraging photovoltaics and electricity storage, Neko empowers homeowners to break free from fossil fuels and their fluctuating market prices. Similarly, Ekomo is transforming the heating industry with smart, efficient alternatives that seamlessly integrate with existing systems.

Windhorst Elektronik GmbH, founded by serial entrepreneur Lars Windhorst in 1993, has long been a beacon of innovation and sustainability. This German electronics company has mastered the art of harnessing renewable energy, reduced waste, and promoting eco-friendly practices. From electronic components to customized systems, Windhorst Elektronik GmbH's expertise spans the spectrum. Despite differences in industry focus and business models, these companies share a common thread – a commitment to sustainability. Neko and Ekomo focus on heating solutions, while Windhorst Elektronik GmbH excels in electronics. What sets these companies apart is their scalability. Enpal and 1KOMMA5 have achieved unicorn status, while Neko and Ekomo are smaller, agile enterprises. Windhorst Elektronik GmbH has maintained its innovative edge over three decades.

The next generation of entrepreneurs, Gen Z, is also making waves. Armed with social consciousness and digital savvy, these young innovators are leveraging social media to promote sustainable products and services. Building massive followings and customer bases, they're revolutionizing the business landscape. Gen Z entrepreneurs span various sectors, united by their dedication to eco-friendly practices. As BlackRock CEO Larry Fink noted in 2021, climate tech is the future of entrepreneurship. Germany's success stories demonstrate that sustainable innovation can drive financial growth, environmental responsibility, and a better future.

ONLINE SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

The environmental attitude survey was conducted among young entrepreneurs born between 1990 and 2004. This anonymous survey was designed to gather insights into their attitudes toward climate change, its impact and the ecological actions undertaken.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

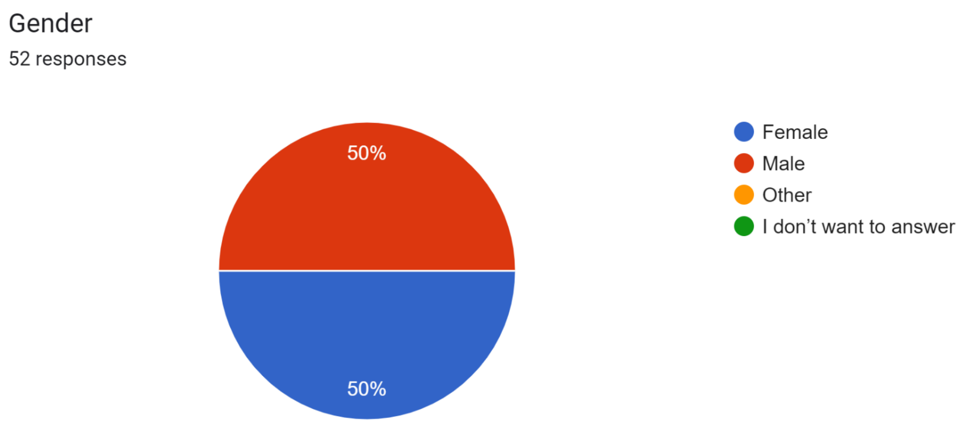
1. Respondent Profile
2. Business Data
3. Personal Shopping Preferences
4. Citizenship Behaviour
5. Knowledge & Learning Preferences

The survey consisted of 35 open and closed questions, providing both qualitative and quantitative data on the respondents' environmental attitudes and behaviours of young people.

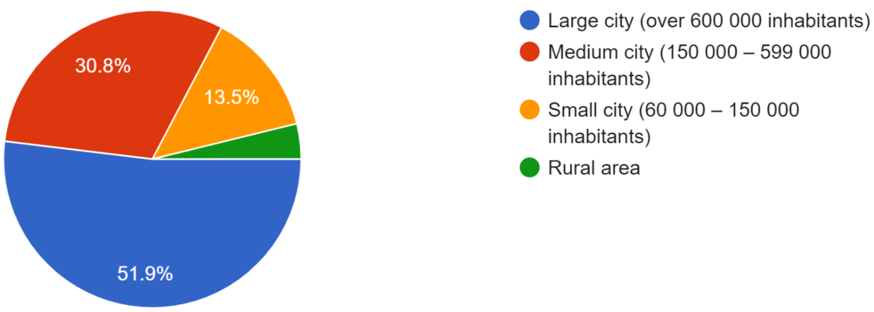
The online survey in Germany was conducted between September and October 2024, with a total of 52 participants. The data collected were analysed collectively.

RESULTS

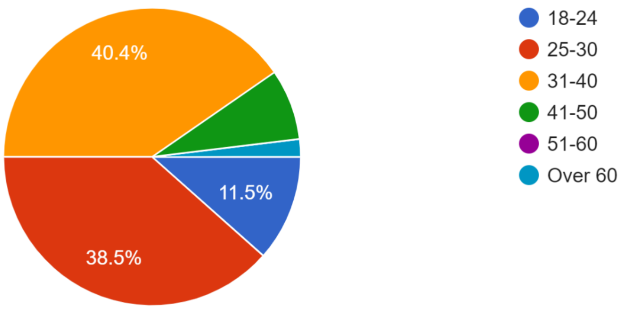
A. RESPONDENT PROFILE



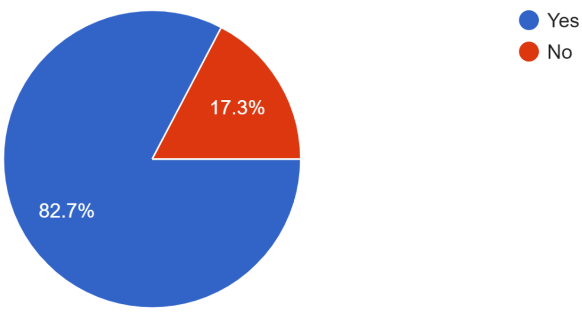
Place of residence
52 responses



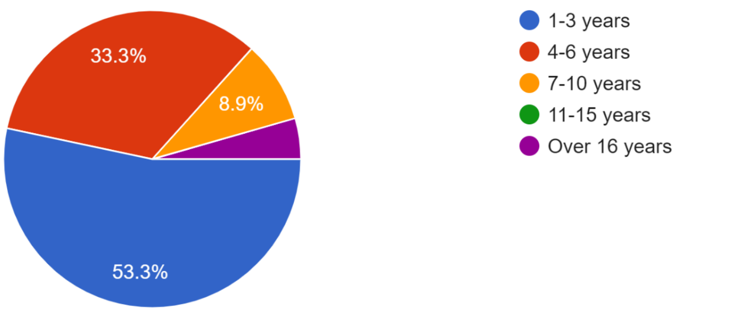
Age
52 responses



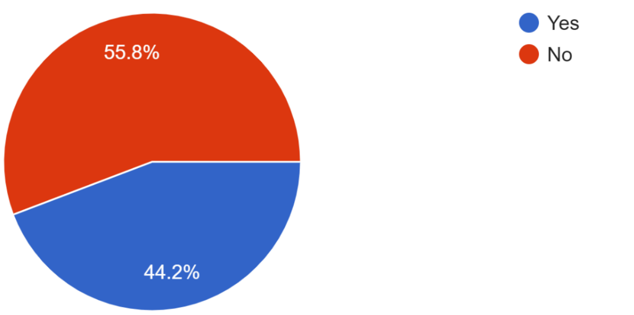
I have run my own business (I have been self-employed)
52 responses



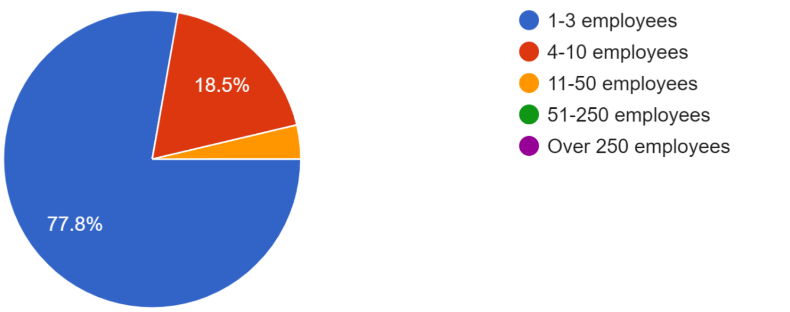
(if you answered 'yes' to the previous question) How long have you been self-employed?
45 responses



I employ staff
52 responses

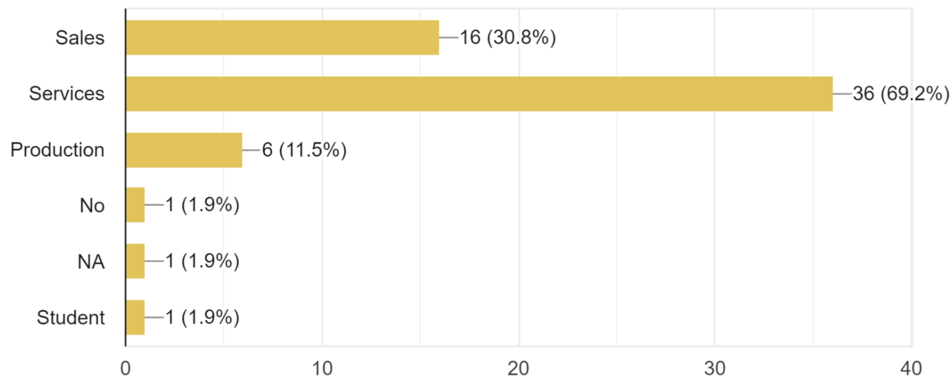


(if you answered 'yes' to the previous question) How many employees do you have?
27 responses



What is the profile of your business?

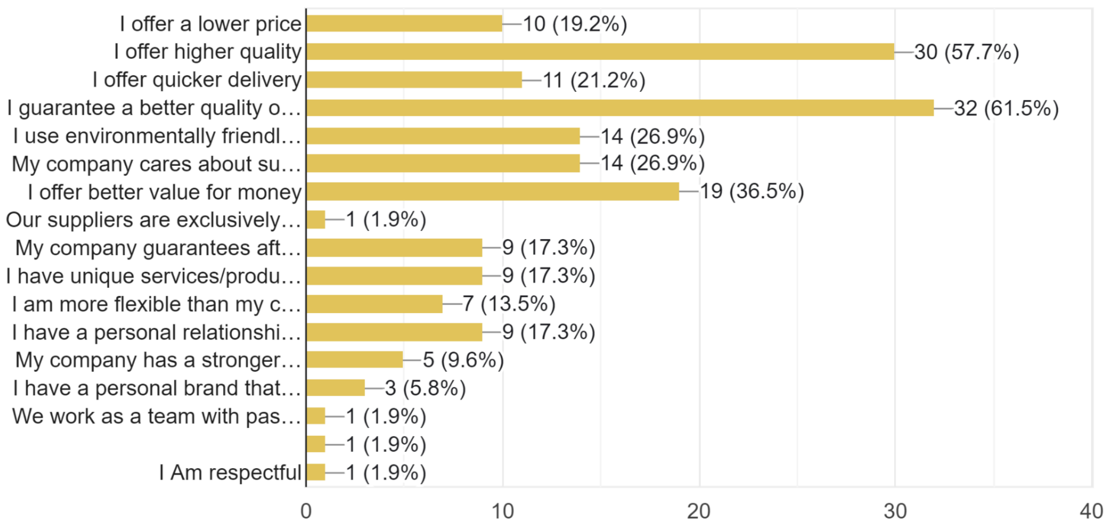
52 responses



B. BUSINESS DATA

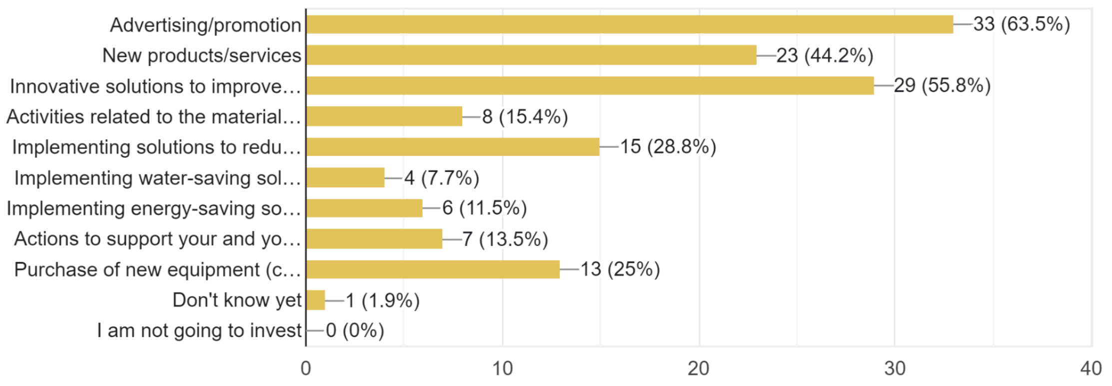
1. What is your competitive advantage? Why do your clients buy from you and not your competitors? You can select up to 3 answers.

52 responses



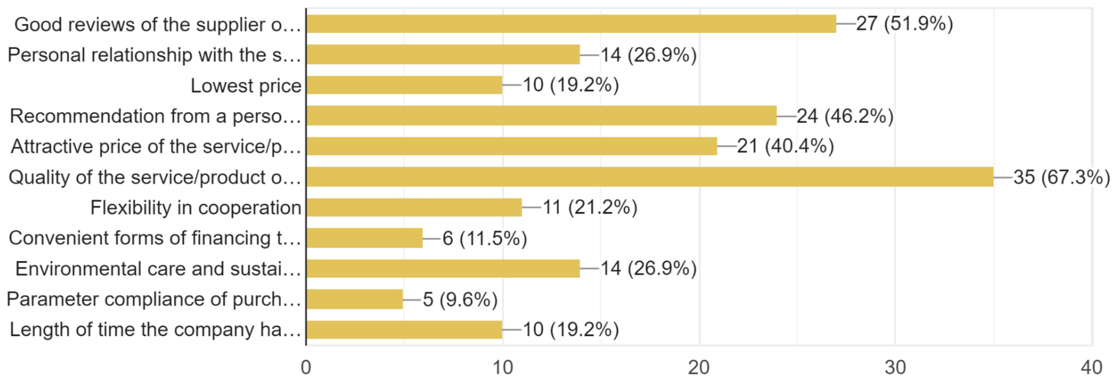
2. When planning your business activities, what do you intend to invest in over the next 6 months?

52 responses



3. How do you select service/technology/solution/product suppliers for your business?

52 responses



4. What pro-social or pro-environmental action undertaken by you so far are you most proud of?

36 responses

I am very proud, with our project in photovoltaics

Being dynamic in business

Reduce waste

Empowering Youth and local coastal communities to invest in sustainable Blue economy

Reducing carbon emission and footprints

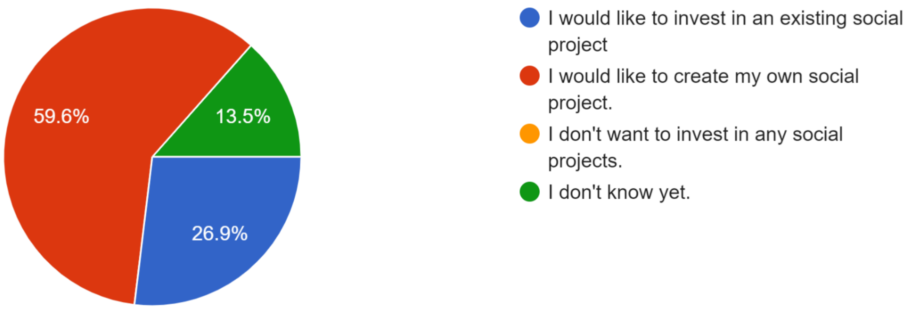
sustainable outdoor environmental education

Free outreach services as a give back to society

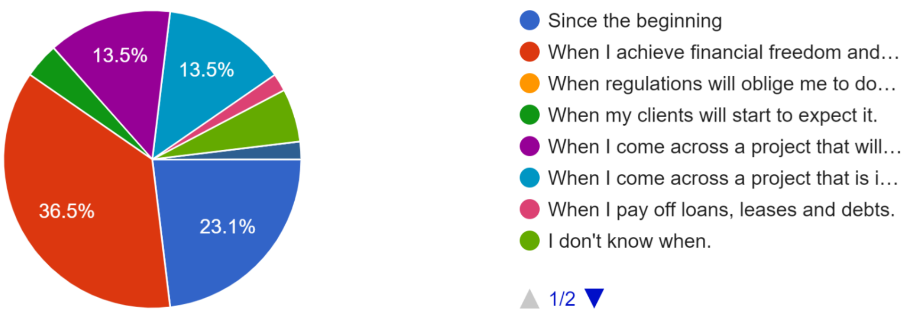
Using sustainable products

Disposing wastes properly and influencing people to do so as well

5. Would you like to invest in an existing social project? Or would you like to create your own social project to make your company's resources more efficient and useful?
52 responses

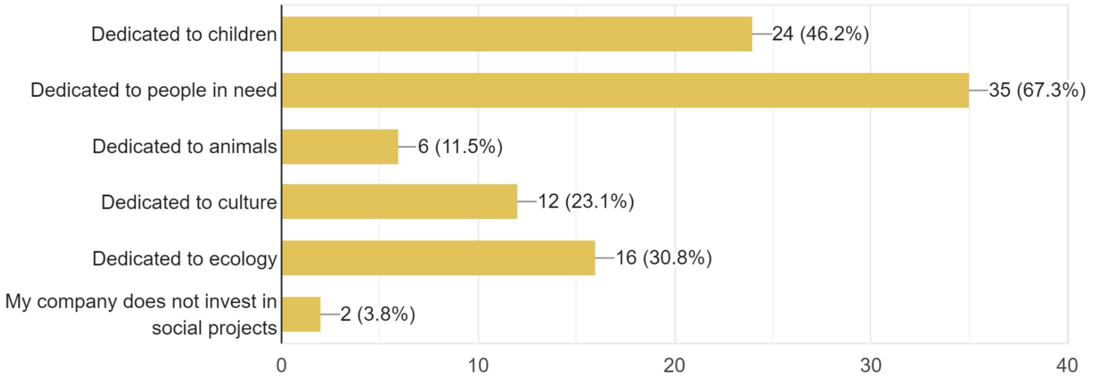


6. When after establishing your business would you consider investing in social projects?
52 responses



7. What kind of social projects is your company investing in or would like to invest in in the near future?

52 responses



8. What environmental regulations do you know that apply to your business?

52 responses

None

None

The legal and regulatory framework of the electricity sector.

Climate

Currently, there are no environmental regulations affecting my business in any way.

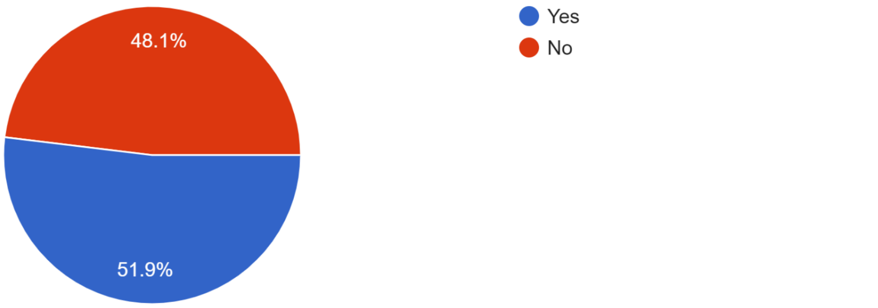
https://www.nemc.or.tz/uploads/publications/sw-1576228517-ema%20act2004.pdf

Reducing waste and energy losses. Enusuring good waste disposal practices.

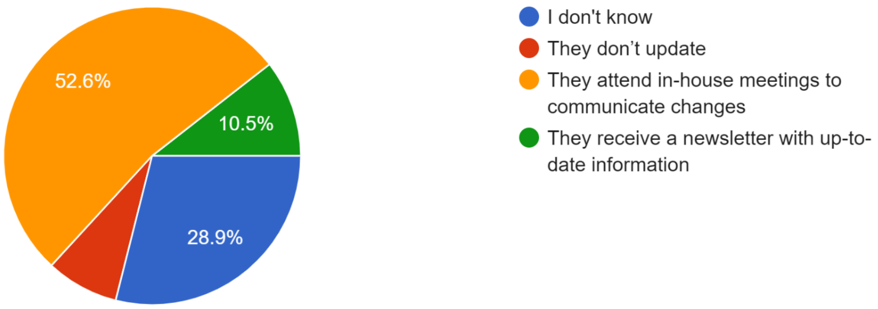
Waste

we do not have formal regulations

9. Do you have an eco-strategy at your company? Do you have regulations specifying how the company cares for the environment?
52 responses

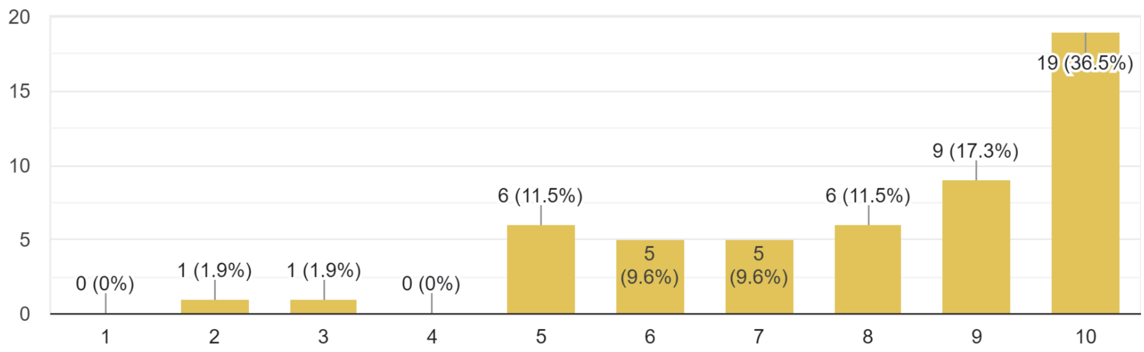


10. (if you answered 'yes' to the previous question) How do your employees update their knowledge of the strategy?
38 responses



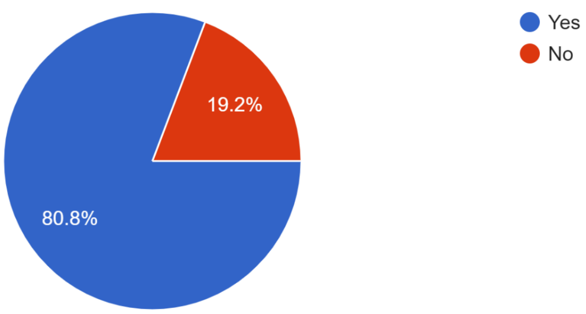
11. Determine on the scale below, to what extent you care about the positive impact on the environment in your company.

52 responses

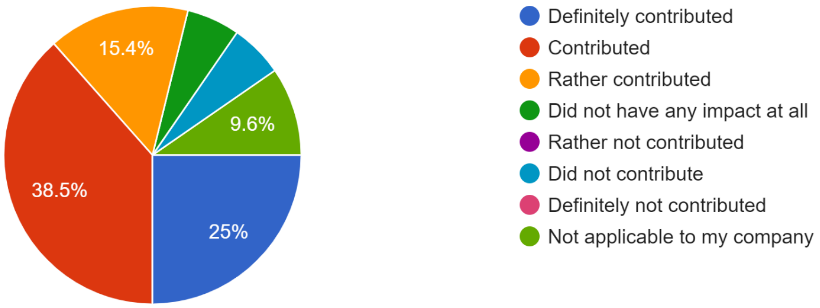


12. Does your company communicate to its customers that it operates in an environmentally friendly way?

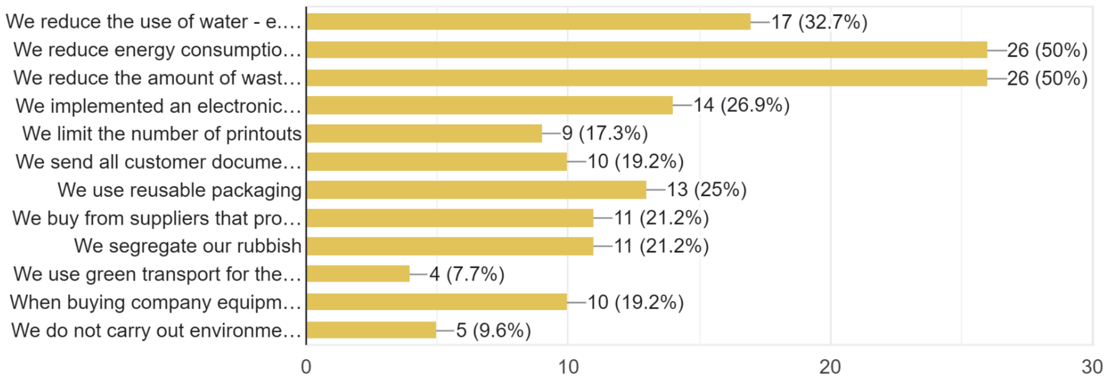
52 responses



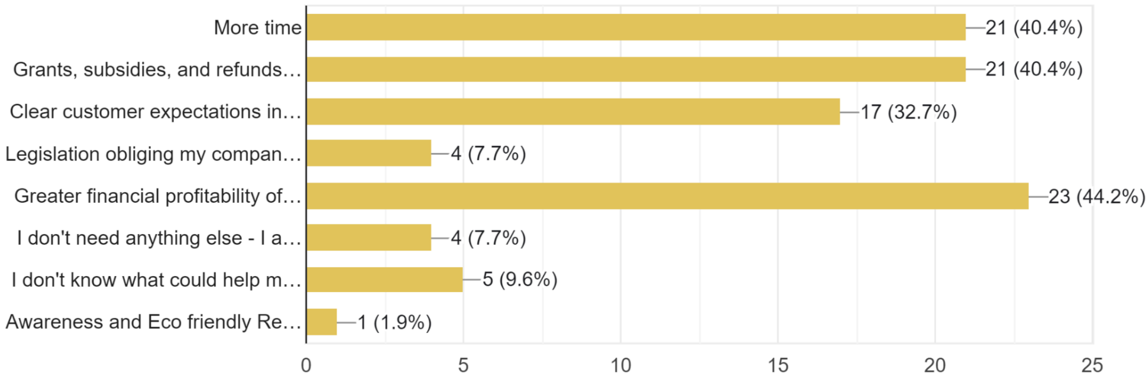
13. To what extent has the implementation of eco-friendly activities contributed to your company's profits?
52 responses



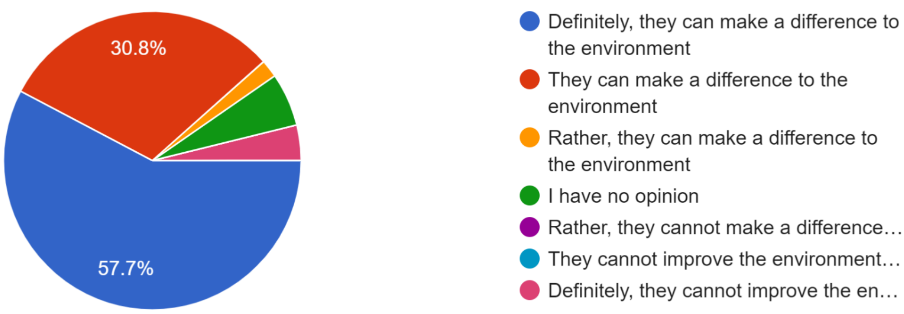
14. Select those environmentally friendly actions you take as a company.
52 responses



15. In order to implement additional eco-friendly actions, my company needs...
52 responses



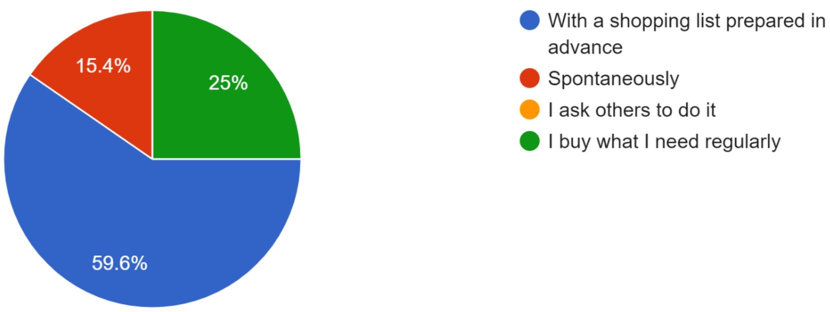
16. To what extent do you think the environmental activities of entrepreneurs like you can make a real difference to the environment and reduce nega...anet, over-consumption of natural resources, etc.?
52 responses



C. PERSONAL SHOPPING PREFERENCES

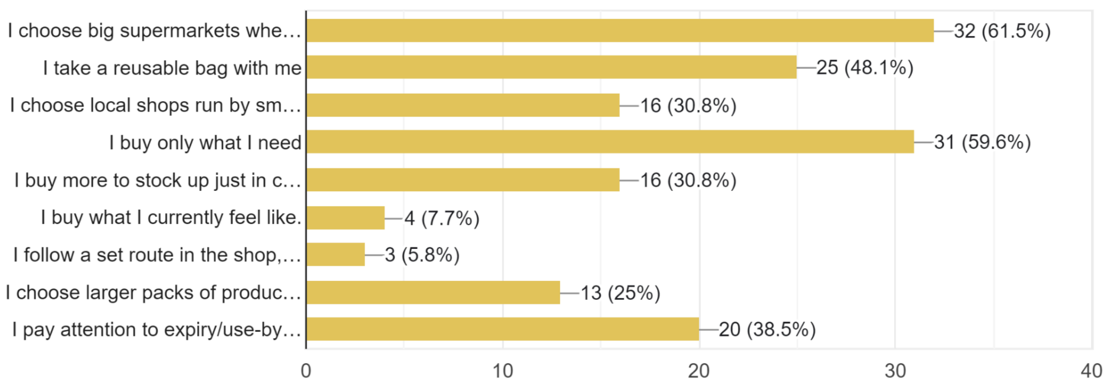
17. I do my grocery shopping (for my household)

52 responses



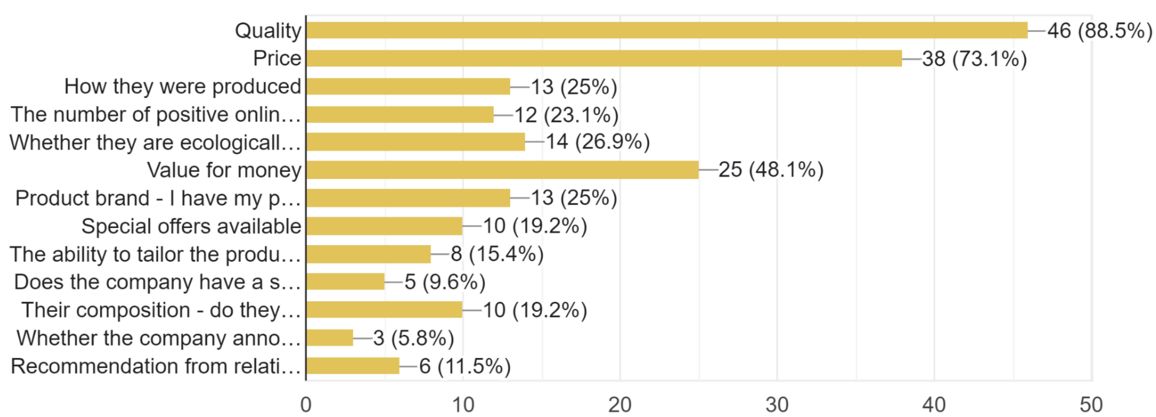
18. When going grocery shopping (select all the behaviours you undertake):

52 responses



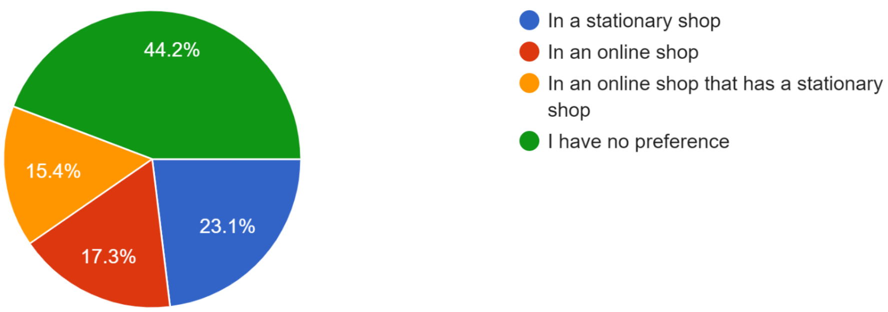
19. When choosing products, I pay attention to …

52 responses



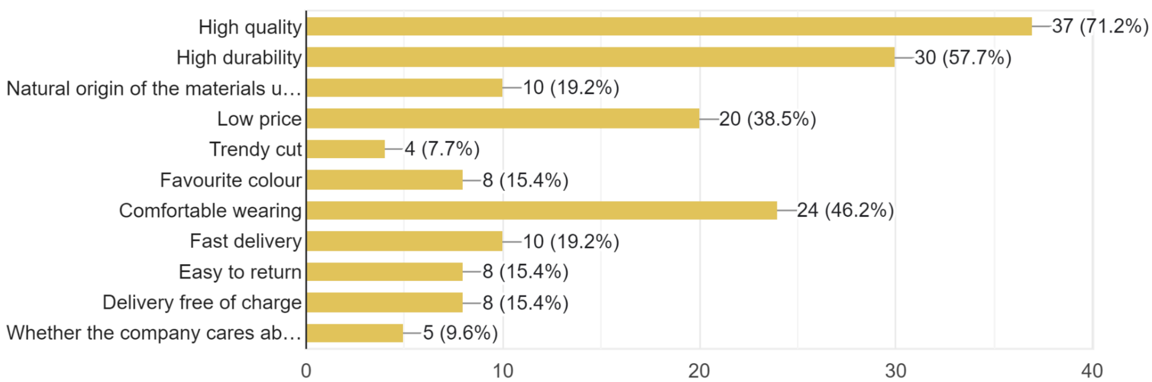
20. I usually buy everyday items, clothes, electronics, etc. (not including food)

52 responses



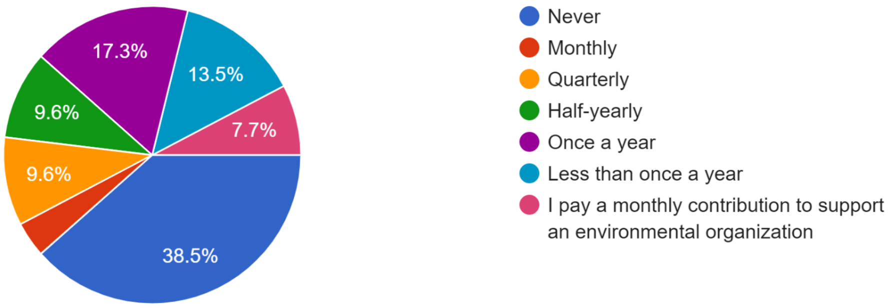
21. When deciding to buy clothes, I choose primarily by paying attention to:

52 responses



D. CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

22. I invest my private funds in environmental activities. (For example: you financially support pro-ecological organisations, such as Green Peace...u remotely adopt animals of endangered species).
52 responses



23. As a citizen, I take the following environmentally friendly actions:52 responses

Tree planting and environmental education

Decisions actions

Donation to projects, volunteering

Reduce waste

Minimizing waste pollution damage on our environment

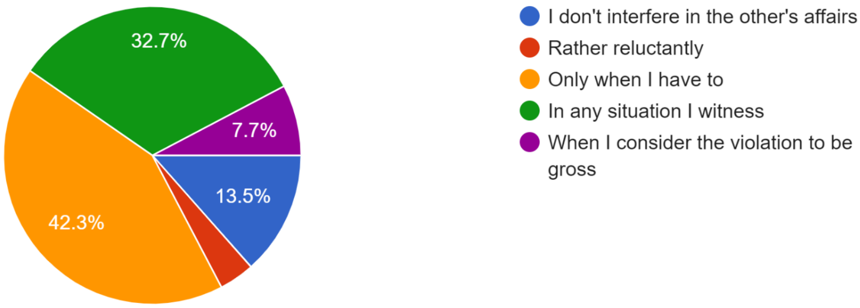
Attending clean up events, My Household waste management

Reducing waste and energy losses. Enusuring good waste disposal practices. Reducing carbon emission and footprints

Care for needy

I am vegetarian, try to bike and select my trash

24. Do you point out to other people that they should take care of the environment with their behaviour? (e.g. dispose of waste in appropriate containers, don't leave rubbish in the forest/park).
52 responses



25. What eco-friendly initiative can you suggest for implementation in your country?52 responses

None

Tree planting ,environmental education and also encourage development projects that meet ecological requirements

None that I could think of adding to what already exists

Education on climate change issues

We need waste recycling infrastructure and eco friendly waste incinerators.

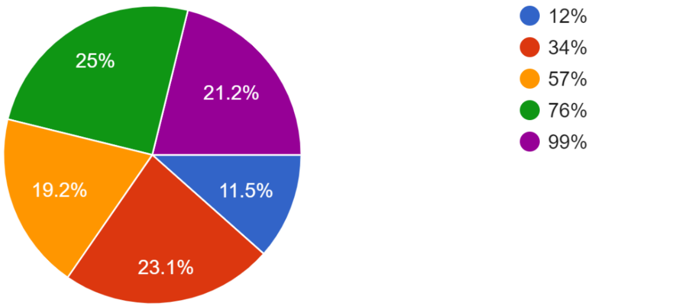
Sustainable Circular economy,carbon credit and sustainable Aquaculture

Reducing waste and energy losses. Enusuring good waste disposal practices. Reducing carbon emission and footprints

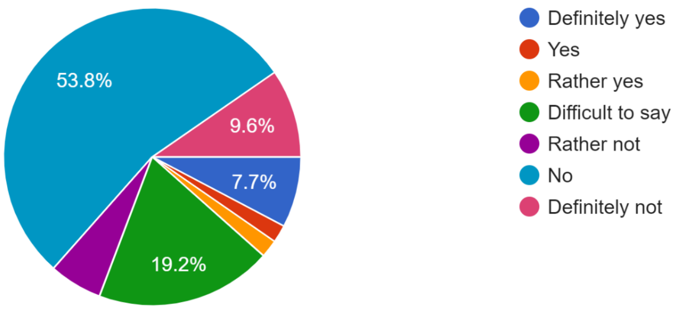
Recycle

E. KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING PREFERENCES

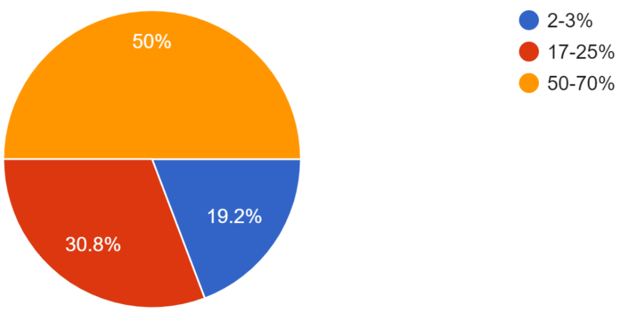
26. What percentage of all companies in Europe are SMEs?
52 responses



27. Do you think your company has a negative impact on the environment?
52 responses

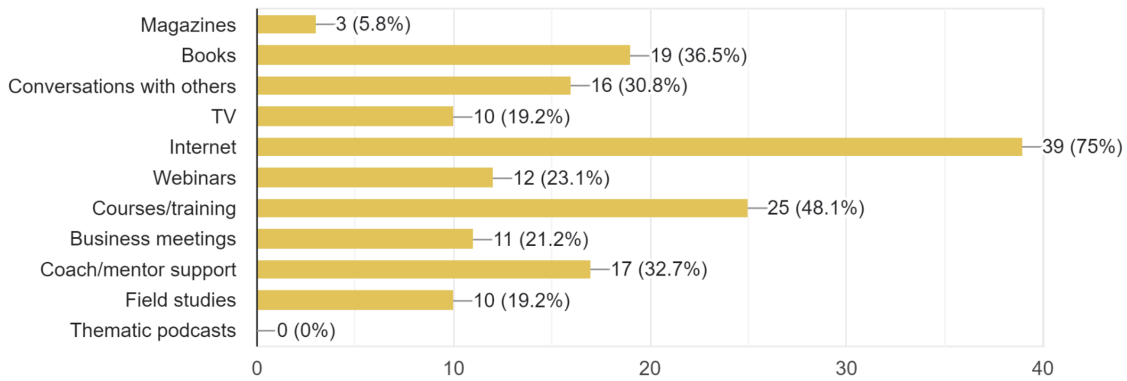


28. What percentage of industrial pollution in Europe are SMEs responsible for?
52 responses



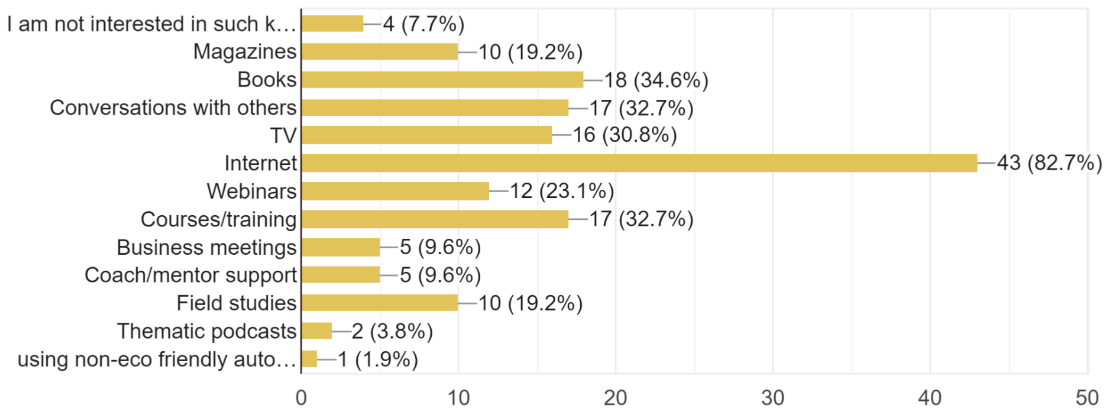
29. What is the main source from which you draw your knowledge about running a business?

52 responses

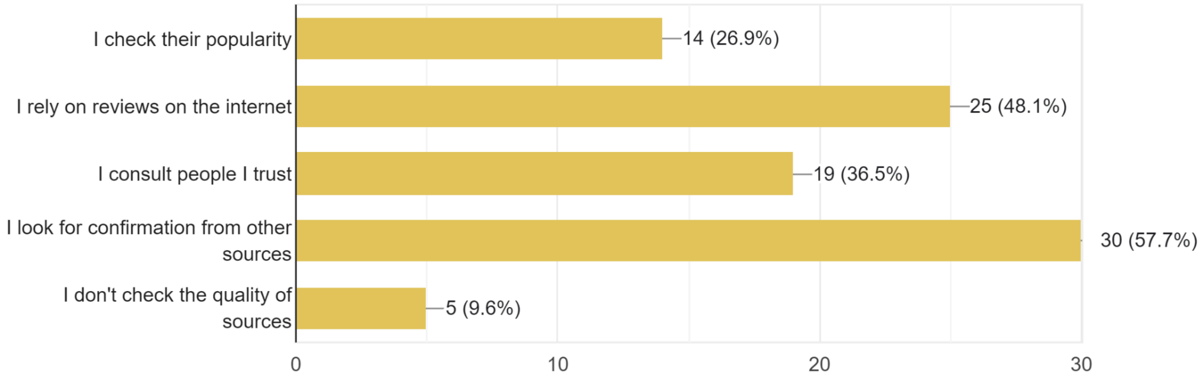


30. From which sources do you draw your knowledge of the factors affecting environmental pollution?

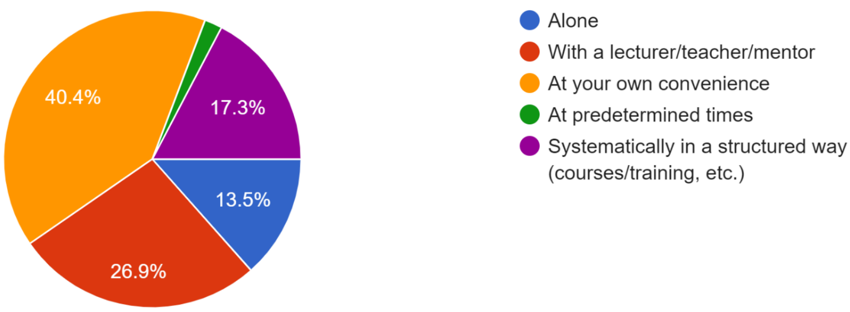
52 responses



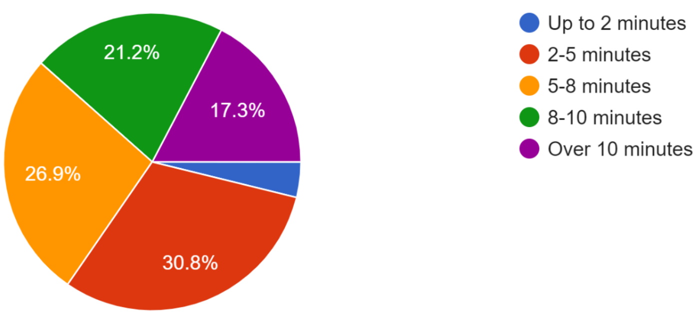
31. How do you verify the quality of the sources from which you draw your knowledge?
52 responses



32. How do you most enjoy learning?
52 responses

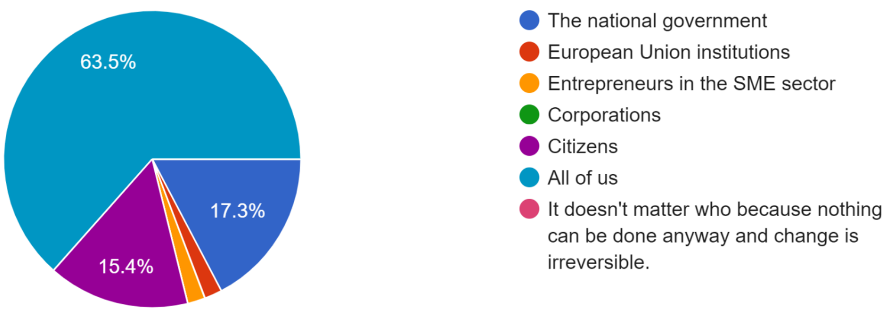


33. How long should the most convenient learning videos last?
52 responses



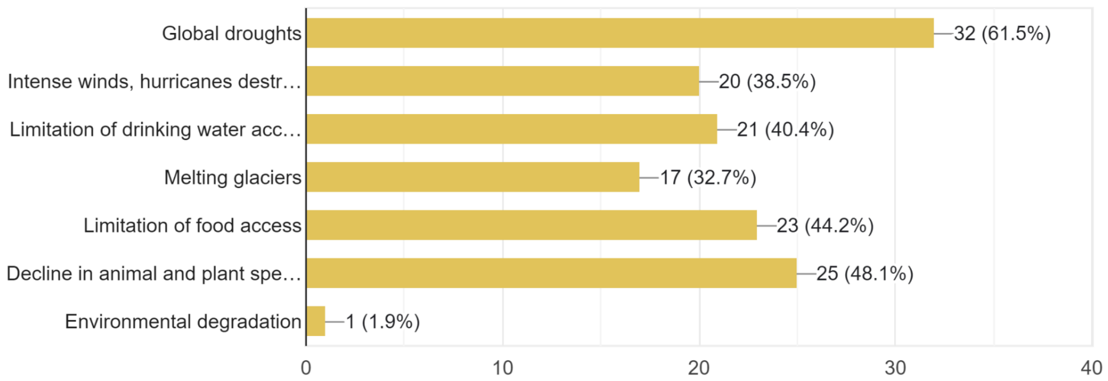
34. Who do you think should be primarily responsible for environmental action?

52 responses



35. What kind of risks can be caused to the environment by negligence of environmental measures?

52 responses



A. RESPONDENT PROFILE

Our survey garnered responses from 52 entrepreneurs, offering valuable insights into the demographics and characteristics of eco-conscious business leaders.

- Our respondent pool boasted an equal split between males (50%) and females (50%), indicating a refreshing balance in eco-entrepreneurial endeavors.
- A significant majority (51.9%) resided in large cities, followed by 30.8% in medium-sized cities and 13.5% in small cities or habitats. Only a small percentage live in **small cities or rural areas.** This indicates that the survey sample is urban-focused, with respondents mostly from large cities.
- Most respondents are in the **25-40** age range, which aligns with a prime working age demographic, potentially representing early-career professionals and entrepreneurs.
- An impressive 82.7% of respondents had founded and run their own businesses, demonstrating a strong entrepreneurial drive. Among those, the majority have been self-employed for **1-3 years**. This reflects a relatively new but growing group of entrepreneurs.

B. BUSINESS DATA

- Entrepreneurs revealed the key factors driving client's loyalty. The responses underscored a focus on quality, value, and exceptional service.
- Better Quality of Service (61.5%): Entrepreneurs emphasized their commitment to delivering superior service, exceeding client expectations.
- Higher Quality Products (57.7%): Offering top-notch products was the second most popular response, highlighting the importance of quality in eco-friendly businesses.
- Better Value for Money (36.5%): Providing cost-effective solutions without compromising on quality or service rounded out the top three responses.

C. PERSONAL SHOPPING PREFERENCES

When making purchasing decisions, eco-conscious entrepreneurs revealed their top considerations. The findings highlight a thoughtful approach to consumption.

- Quality (88.5%): Entrepreneurs overwhelmingly prioritize product quality, seeking durable and effective solutions.
- Price(73.1%): Cost remains a significant factor, with entrepreneurs weighing affordability against other considerations.
- Value for Money (48.1%): The intersection of quality and price, value for money, rounds out the top three priorities.

D. CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

The survey revealed inspiring environmental initiatives undertaken by entrepreneurs, Their proactive stance demonstrates a commitment to sustainability.

- Tree Planting: Citizens prioritize reforestation, promoting biodiversity and oxygen production.
- Environmental Education: Spreading awareness about eco-friendly practices and climate change.
- Donations to Eco-Projects: Supporting initiatives that protect the environment.
- Volunteering: Active participation in community clean-ups and conservation efforts.
- As citizens, they demonstrated greater environmental awareness like community cleaning, recycling, minimizing waste pollution damages, reducing carbon emission and ensuring good waste disposal practices.
- Many respondents believe **"All of us"** (individuals, governments, and companies) are responsible for environmental action.
- A significant number also place responsibility on **the national government**.
- The most frequently mentioned risks of neglecting environmental measures are **global droughts**, **intense winds or hurricanes**, and **limitation of food or water access**.
- This suggests a high awareness of climate change and environmental degradation among respondents.

E. KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING PREFERENCES

- Many respondents prefer learning at their own convenience, likely due to busy schedules. Some prefer systematic learning through courses or structured environments.
- The most preferred video lengths are **2-5 minutes** and **5-8 minutes**, showing a preference for short, concise learning materials.
- This reflects modern learning habits, where micro-learning is becoming popular.
- The top 3 primary knowledge sources of knowledge are the internet, course/training and books.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the literature review unveiled a compelling narrative of young entrepreneurs championing sustainability. The literature review revealed a growing awareness of environmental issues, motivating entrepreneurs to adopt eco-friendly practices. Financial benefits, social responsibility, and personal values emerged as key drivers. However, barriers persisted, including limited resources, knowledge gaps, and regulatory hurdles.
Undeterred, entrepreneurs forged ahead, leveraging education, mentorship, and policy incentives to propel eco-entrepreneurship.
The administered survey highlighted a dynamic group of entrepreneurs who prioritize environmental responsibility alongside business success. With an equal representation of men and women, most respondents reside in urban areas and have built their expertise through hands-on experience. Their purchasing decisions are driven by quality, value, and delivering exceptional customer experiences, while eco-friendly practices such as environmental education, tree planting, and waste reduction are key pillars of their approach.

Digital resources, coaching, and networking play a vital role in fueling their growth. With a strong emphasis on sustainability, these entrepreneurs are reshaping business practices. By supporting policy initiatives, fostering collaborative networks, and offering eco-focused training, their vision for a greener future can be realized.

References

- Sternberg, R., & Breitenbach, D. (2023). Youth entrepreneurship in Germany: empirical evidence on the how, the why, the how many, the who and the when. *Economies*, *11*(6), 161.
- Mahzouni, A. (2019). The role of institutional entrepreneurship in emerging energy communities: The town of St. Peter in Germany. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, *107*, 297-308.
- Block, J. H., Halberstadt, J., Högsdal, N., Kuckertz, A., & Neergaard, H. (2023). *Progress in Entrepreneurship Education and Training: New Methods, Tools, and Lessons Learned from Practice* (p. 488). Springer Nature.
- Dreyer, C., & Stojanová, H. (2023). How entrepreneurial is German generation Z vs. generation Y? A literature review. *Procedia computer science*, *217*, 155-164.
- Entrepreneurship in Germany - GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2024). Retrieved on 16 September 2024 from https://www.gemconsortium.org/economy-profiles/germany-2
- Deutscher Startup Monitor (2023). Retrieved on 16 September 2024 from https://www.pwc.de/de/branchen-und-markte/startups/deutscher-startup-monitor.html
- Green Startup Monitor (2023). Retrieved on 17 September 2024 from https://www.existenzgruendungsportal.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/green-startup-monitor-2023.html
- Green Startup Monitor (2021). Retrieved on 16 September 2024 from https://www.existenzgruendungsportal.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/green-startup-monitor-2021.html

Project no. 2023-2-PL01-KA220-YOU-000178470

Co-funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.