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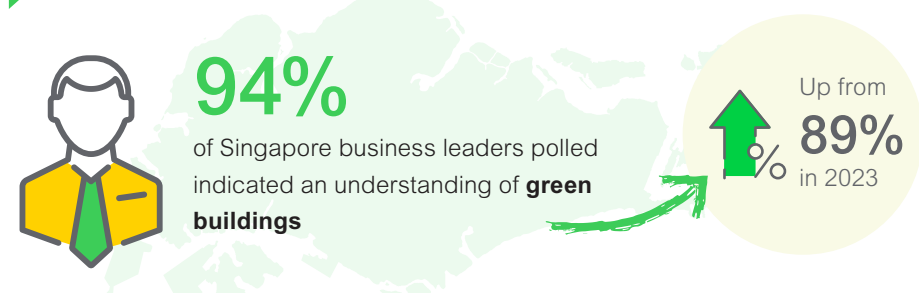
Awareness to action:  
Insights for a **Greener  
Built Environment**

July 2025

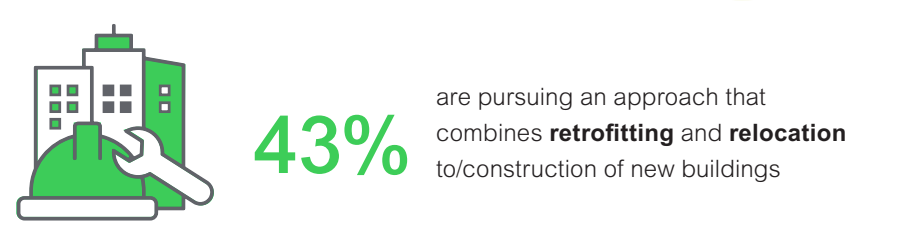
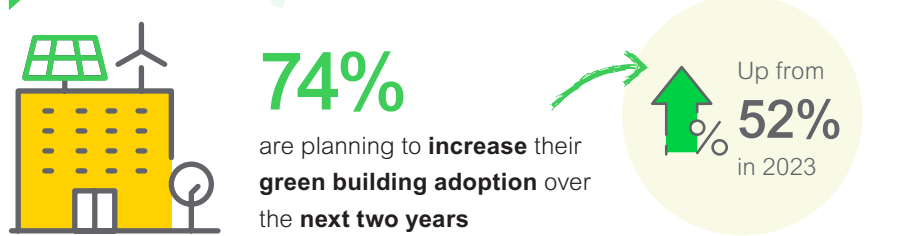
A joint report by Schneider Electric Singapore  
and the Singapore Green Building Council

# Awareness to action: Insights for a Greener Built Environment

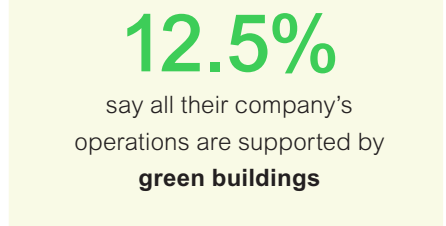
## Awareness: Green building knowledge is increasing



## Intentions: Plans for further adoption of green buildings are in motion



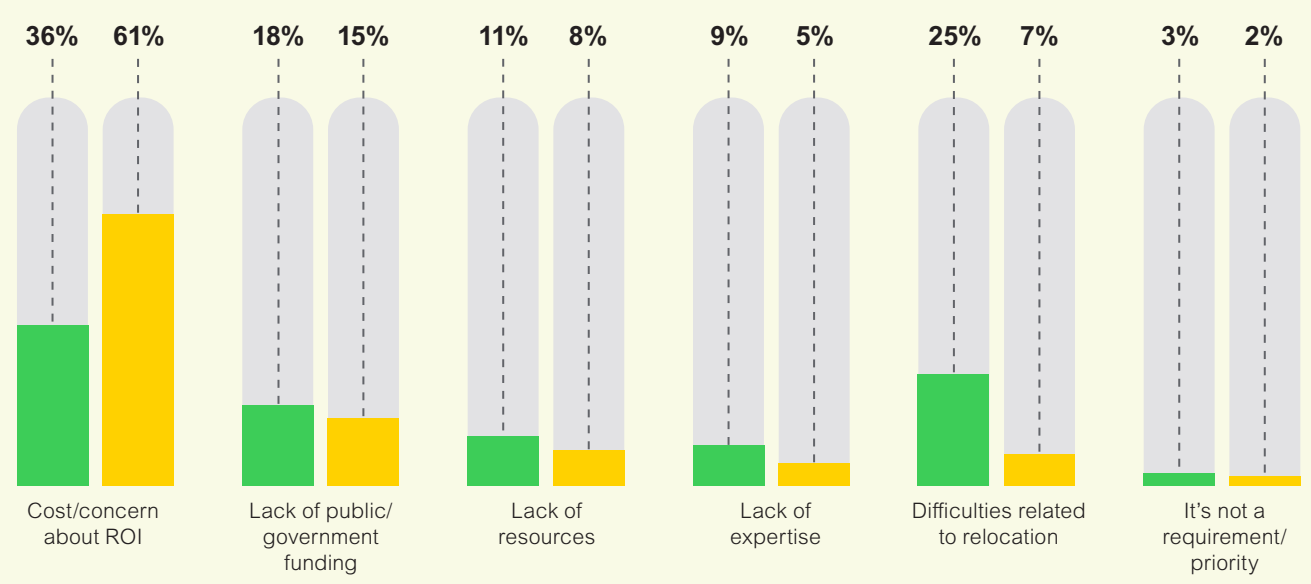
## Actions: Adoption has not progressed significantly in the past two years



## Challenges: Cost remains the largest barrier by a significantly reduced margin

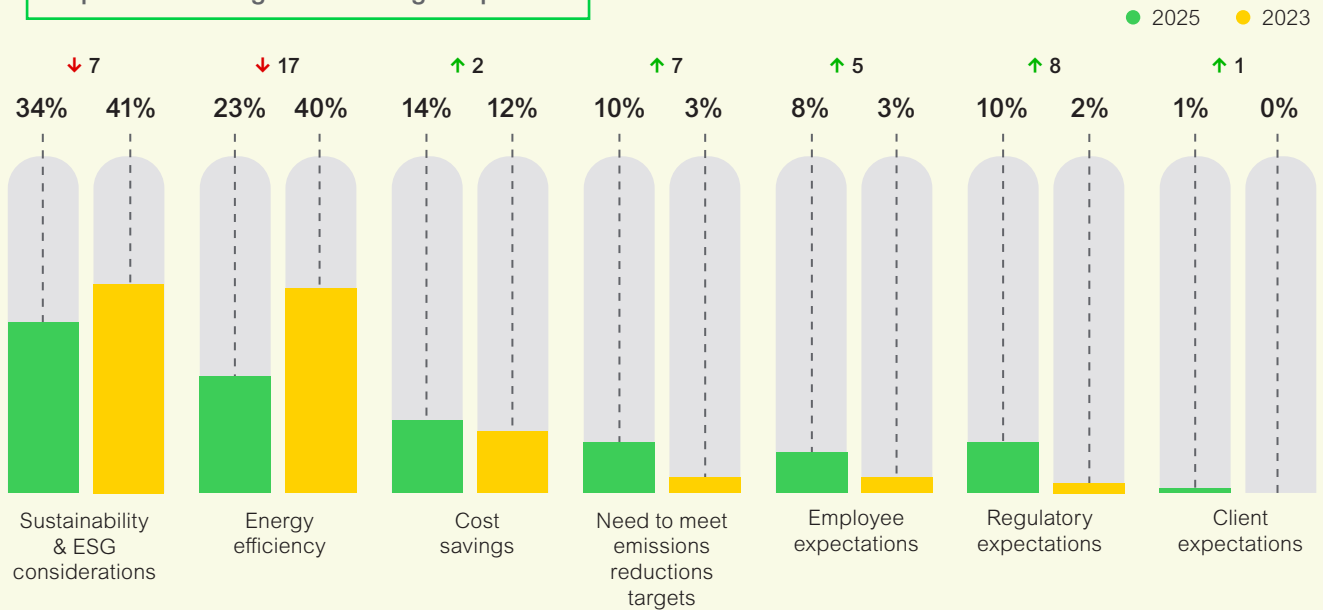
Top barriers to increasing green building use:

● 2025 ● 2023



## Opportunities: Meeting sustainability and emissions targets while unlocking considerable ROI

### Top reasons for green building adoption:



Roughly four in five have achieved emissions reductions of more than 10% from the use of a range of green building technologies



of respondents saw **emissions reductions** of 11% or more from **energy efficiency technologies** such as HVAC<sup>1</sup> upgrades and LED lighting



for **renewable energy integration** such as solar panels



for **building materials and design elements**, such as the use of recycled materials and passive design principles

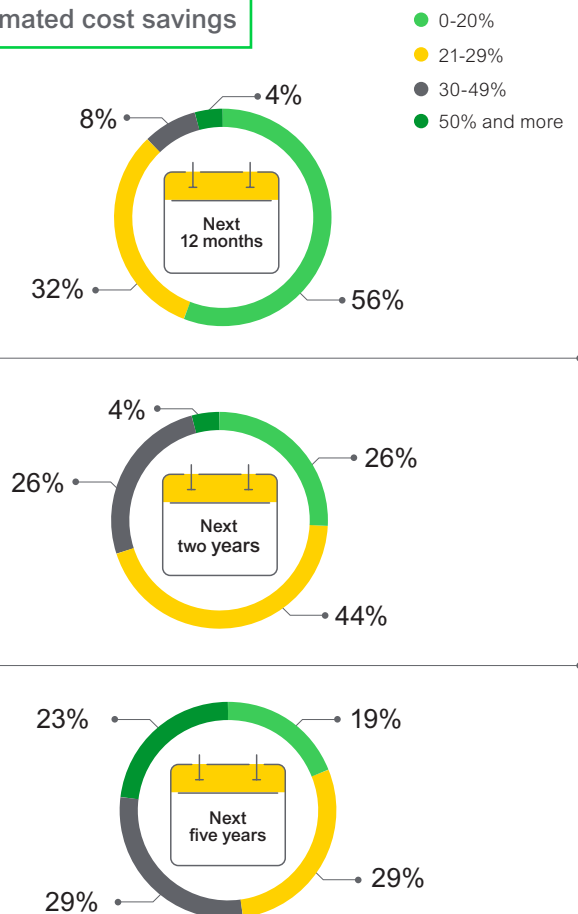


for the **installation of transportation infrastructure** such as electric vehicle charging stations and facilities for cyclists

<sup>1</sup> Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning

Over the next 12 months, 44% of respondents expect to achieve cost savings of more than 20% from the use of energy efficiency and sustainability technologies.

### Estimated cost savings



# Foreword

**Evidence in support of green buildings has strengthened in recent years. We have extensive data to show that investments towards green buildings reduce energy bills and carbon emissions.**

Advancement in this area is also critical to mitigating the increasing impacts of climate change. Buildings account for over 20% of Singapore's carbon emissions<sup>2</sup>, while data from Schneider Electric's Sustainability Research Institute shows retrofit investments for commercial buildings can yield carbon savings of 15% to 80% and energy bill savings of 15% to 80%.

Our latest research – as laid out in this report – finds a slight plateauing of Singapore's green building adoption rate in recent years. Nevertheless, technological advancements and greater availability of supply suggest the green building space is poised for an exciting acceleration.

Business leaders are strongly in support of the decarbonisation of the built environment and the Singapore Green Building Masterplan. The percentage of leaders who report a familiarity with green buildings has increased, as has the percentage of those who are planning an increase in the adoption of green buildings in their operations.

A plateau is, perhaps, to be expected. While many of the largest landlords in Singapore have moved more quickly than counterparts in many markets, installing solar panels and building management systems at a rapid pace, the cost of upgrading may still be prohibitive for others.

Technological advances offer new and positive developments on this front. We see growth in the adoption of several green building technologies by landlords, and the cost savings of these technologies are experienced by more landlords and tenants.

Despite the challenges, which are universal, Singapore has a lot to be proud of in what it has

achieved to date. It has one of the highest rates<sup>3</sup> of green building certification in the Asia Pacific region, and 100% of its Grade-A office buildings are green-certified.

Indeed, Singapore's business leaders are to be applauded for their continued commitment to sustainability. Our survey also shows support of environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals remains strong, even in the face of mounting geopolitical and macroeconomic pressures.

While we remain some distance from Singapore's national goal to green 80% of buildings by gross floor area (GFA) by 2030, continued positive momentum and technological advances make this goal achievable. With our survey finding that 96% of local business leaders still support this target, I am certainly not alone in this view.

We hope this report will provide useful insights to business leaders across Singapore as they progress green building adoption plans, and that it sparks useful conversations among key stakeholders involved in this area. It is important that Singapore not only keeps up the momentum, but actually accelerates the rate of green building adoption. We stand ready to play our part, as always, partnering with organisations of all sizes as they continue this green journey.



**Yoon Young Kim**  
Cluster President  
Schneider Electric Singapore  
and Brunei

<sup>2</sup> Building and Construction Authority

<sup>3</sup> CBRE Research

# Message from the Singapore Green Building Council



We are delighted to collaborate with Schneider Electric on this second edition of the Singapore Green Buildings Survey.

Our first report, *Going Green from the Inside Out*, was published in April 2023, as green building adoption was taking off in Singapore. At the time, at least 49% of buildings in Singapore were considered green.

Since then, we have made substantial progress. Just under 60% of buildings by GFA had been greened as of July 2024. This is a commendable figure, especially when compared with the rates of adoption in neighbouring countries.

As an organisation dedicated to fostering public-private partnerships that can drive a greener and more sustainable built environment in Singapore, we are proud of the collaboration that has produced this progress.

At the same time, we hope to highlight the importance of sustaining this momentum, even in the face of macroeconomic and geopolitical challenges.

As evidenced by this survey, many business leaders want to operate from green buildings to meet regulatory obligations, satisfy investors and attract employees. To do so, they need the supply of green building space to grow.

Although all newbuilds in Singapore today are green buildings, and more of such continue to be built, many of these business leaders operate from existing buildings that need retrofitting to qualify as green. Most are reluctant to relocate, citing cost constraints and change management challenges.

Retrofitting must, therefore, be one of our industry's key areas of focus in the next couple of years. Even as Singapore celebrates its 60th birthday this year, the average age of our buildings remains a relatively young 26 years.

While building smarter, greener new buildings continues to be an attractive proposition for landlords, we hope with this research to encourage alternative viewpoints in the discussion on greening Singapore's built environment.



**Allen Ang**  
President  
Singapore Green Building Council

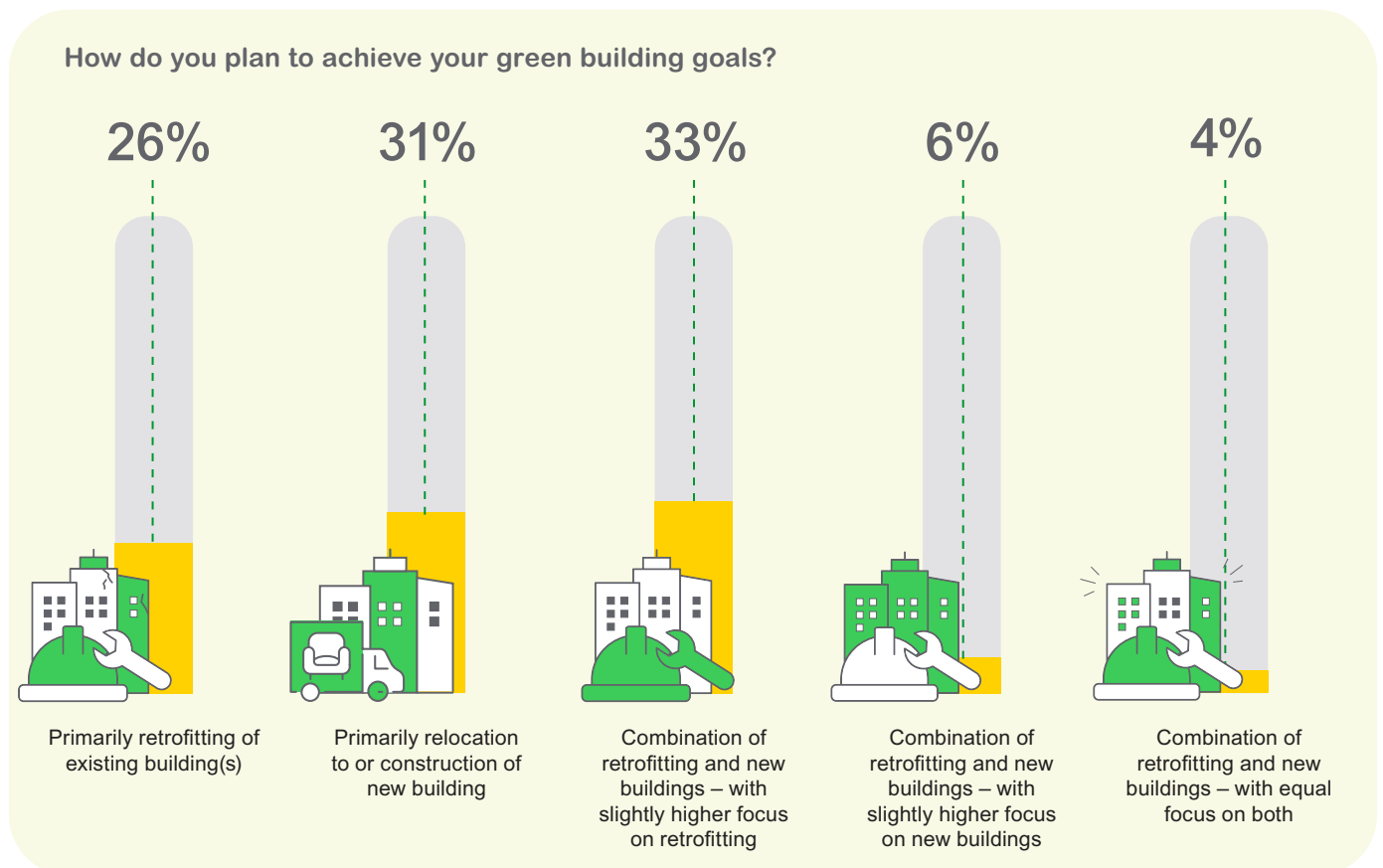
# Knowledge and momentum around green building adoption in Singapore is rising

Education levels about green buildings<sup>4</sup> among Singapore's business leaders have increased over the past two years, with 94% indicating at least a general understanding of green buildings and 42% reporting a high level of understanding. This is a marked increase from 89% and 38%, respectively, in 2023.

As understanding has broadened, so too have intentions. Nearly three quarters (74%) of leaders say they plan to increase green building adoption in the next two years, which is again a significant jump from 2023 when only 52% planned to do so.

Our survey respondents – who represent a combination of owners, building managers and tenants – indicate they are not pursuing any singular path towards green building adoption in their operations.

Rather, 43% say their organisation's green building approach combines retrofitting existing buildings as well as relocating to or constructing new buildings that are green. The highest portion say their plans have a slightly higher focus on retrofitting.



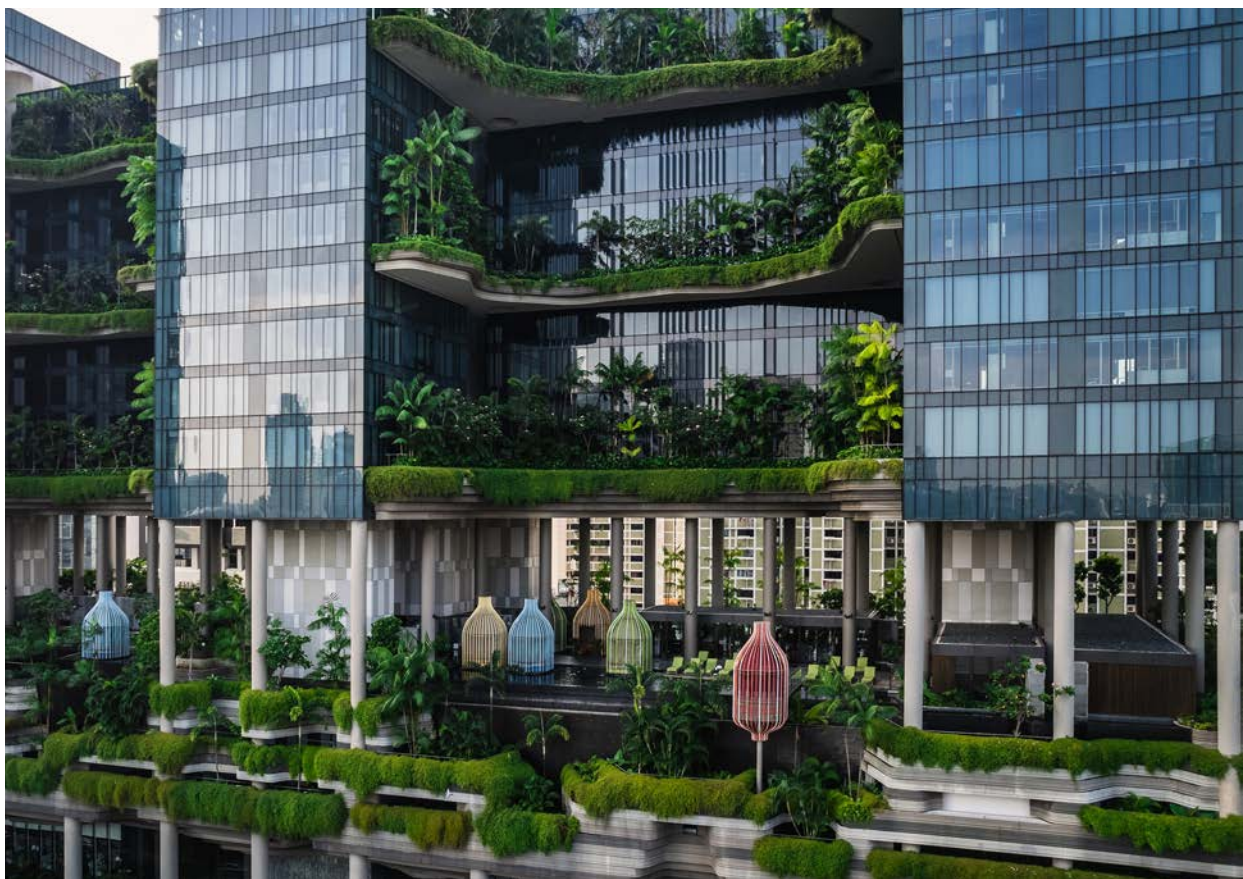
<sup>4</sup> Singapore's certification scheme for green buildings, the Green Mark certification scheme, rates buildings on five criteria: climatic responsive design, building energy performance, resources stewardship, smart and healthy building, and advanced green efforts.

The primary reasons driving decisions to retrofit relate to space or regulatory constraints (45%), reducing environmental impact by extending the life of existing structures (34%) and keeping costs down (21%).

Key reasons for preferring newbuilds are being able to integrate or enjoy advanced technologies in new designs (40%), having greater design flexibility (36%) and cost management if retrofitting is more expensive (24%).

Our analysis does, however, suggest that tenants are more likely to skew towards a retrofitting strategy; whereas property owners and/or managers may have a more neutral stance. A few respondents hinted at a perceived lack of incentives to push landlords in the retrofitting direction.

The additional challenges of stronger climate scepticism coming out of the US and growing pressure on companies based there to drop some of their ESG commitments could also hurt the green momentum.



# Green building momentum should restart, with new technologies helping boost adoption advancement through cost reductions

The higher levels of understanding and plans for future adoption come at a key time, as green building adoption has recently plateaued. Only 12.5% of leaders say they are fully employing green buildings in their operations, which is relatively unchanged from 12% in 2023.

As in 2023, cost considerations (among tenants) and the potential return on investment (among property owners and/or managers) remain the top barriers to increased green building adoption. However, our survey shows that this concern has considerably reduced over the past two years – with only 36% citing it as a barrier compared with 61% two years ago in 2023.

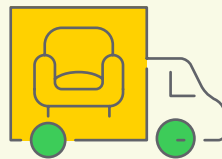


## Changing green building barriers and priorities



**Cost concerns are down**

36% cited costs as a top barrier in 2025 vs 61% in 2023



**Relocation concerns are up**

25% cited difficulties related to relocation as a top barrier in 2025 vs 7% in 2023



**Cutting energy cost is no longer the dominant concern**

23% cited energy efficiency as a top priority in 2025 vs 40% in 2023



**Employee welfare is a growing driver**

8% cited employee expectations as a top priority in 2025 vs 3% in 2023

Technological advances have made green building investments far more cost efficient and profitable. Respondents noted up to 20% in energy savings achieved through green building solutions over the past 12 months, and projected savings of up to 45% over the next five years.

In the last couple of years, digital twin solutions and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions have emerged as key enablers of these savings.



**25%**

of respondents said **digital twin solutions** produced cost reductions of **30%-49%**



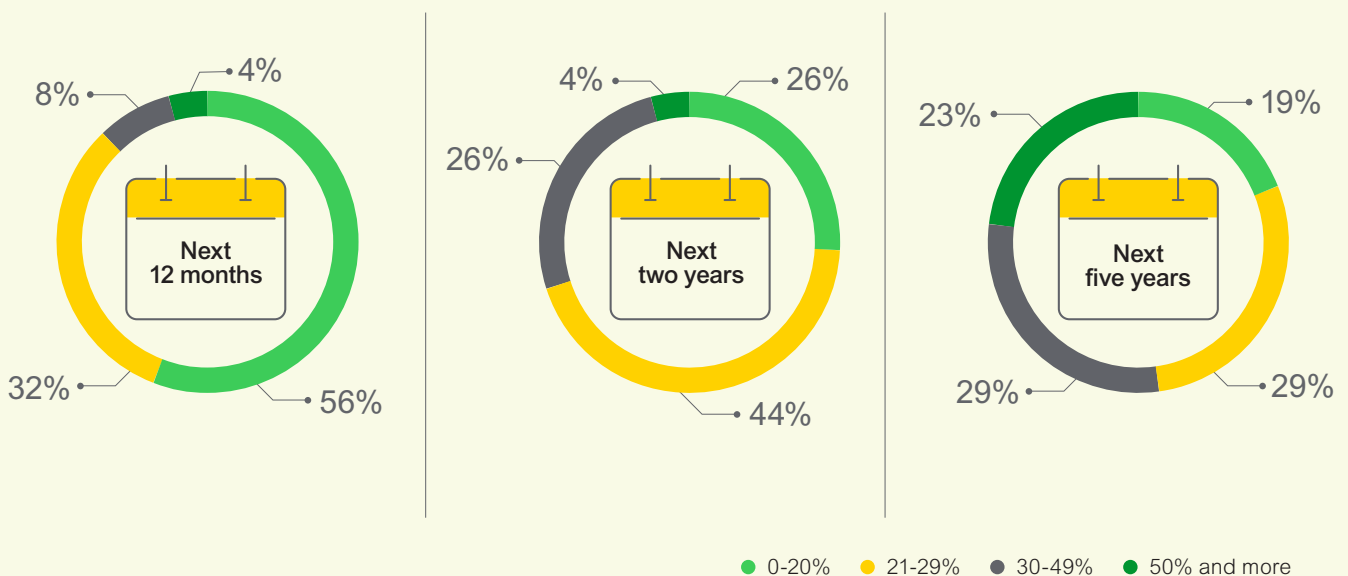
**24%**

of respondents said **AI solutions** produced cost reductions of **30%-49%**

Over the next 12 months, 44% of respondents also expect to achieve cost savings of more than 20% from the use of energy efficiency and sustainability technologies.



**Estimated cost savings**





As the benefits of such technologies become more widely experienced and recognised, adoption of these can only be expected to increase.

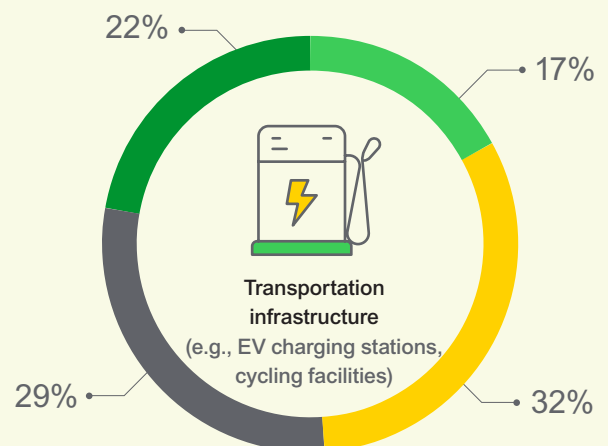
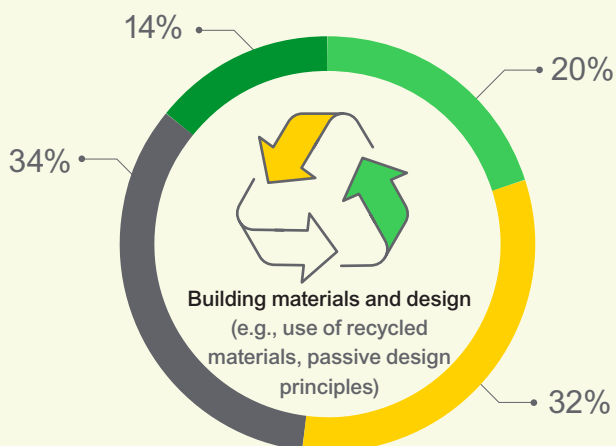
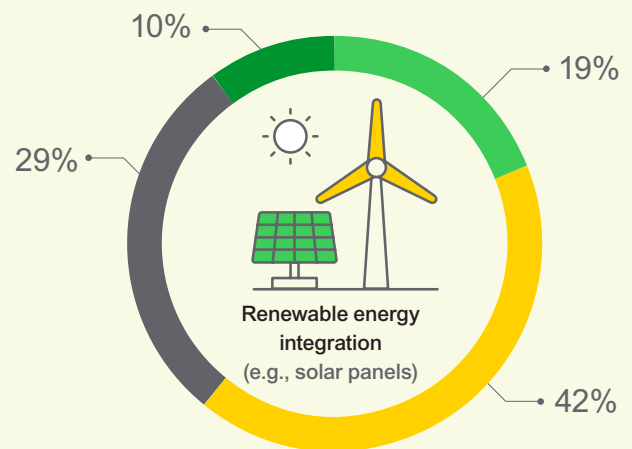
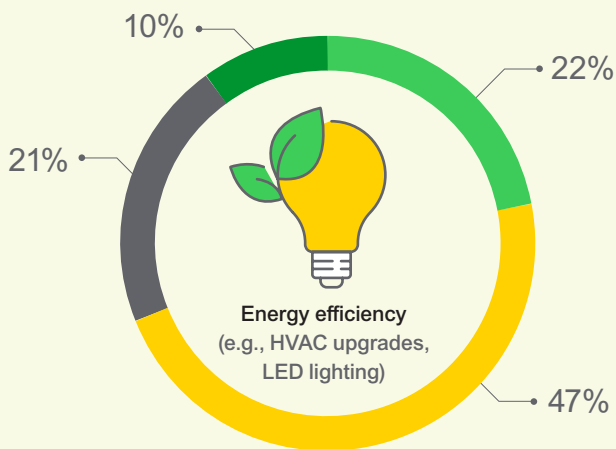
Beyond cost savings, these technologies are also helping companies cut their carbon emissions.

These savings are important because Singapore's business leaders continue to prioritise sustainability targets.



### Estimated emissions savings

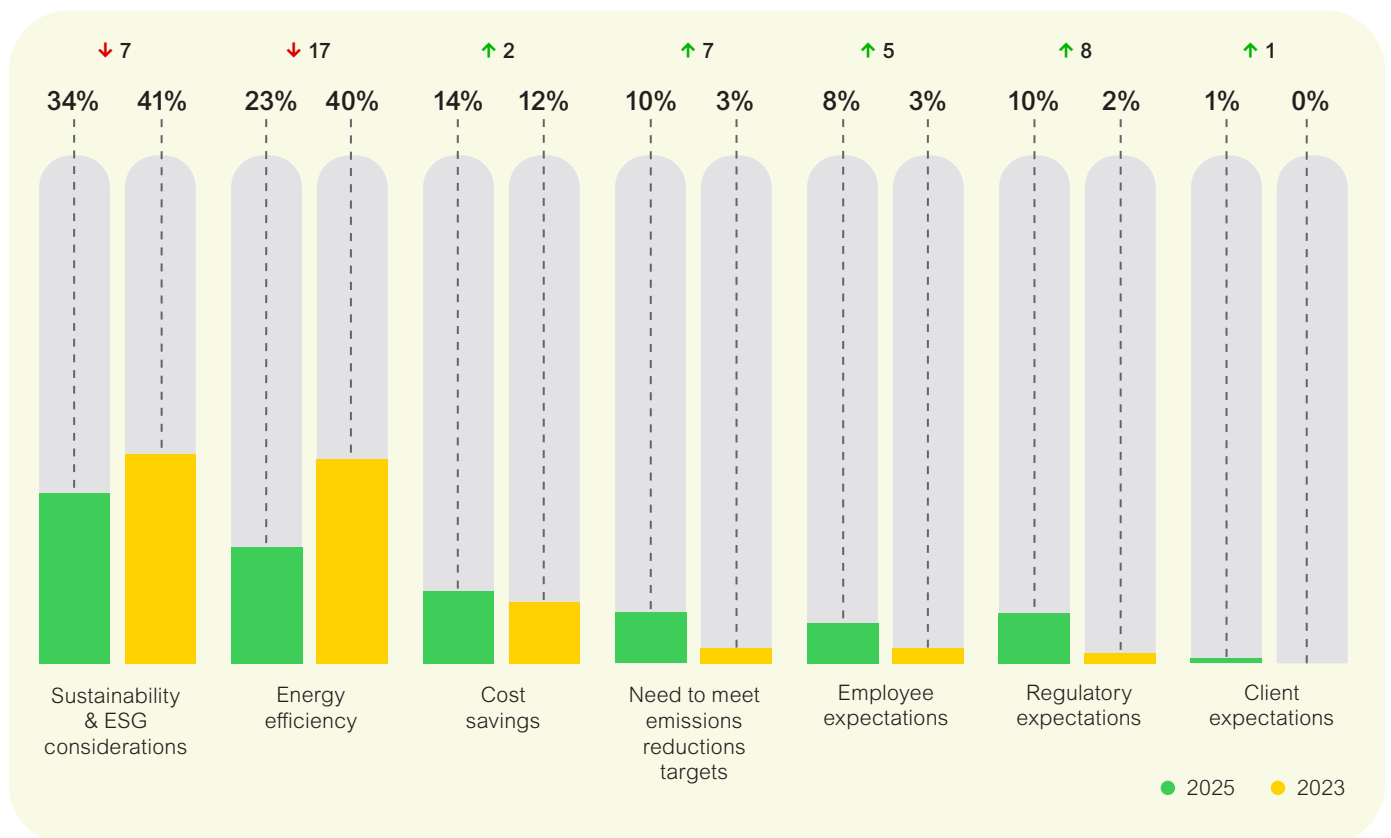
Percentage of respondents



● 0-10% ● 11-25% ● 26-50% ● Over 50%

# Sustainability targets remain a core driver of green building ambitions

Despite a shifting global geopolitical agenda that is not favouring sustainability initiatives and policies, sustainability and ESG considerations remain the top driver for leaders in pursuit of their organisations' green building strategies.



As Singapore steps up its green building ambitions, there is also a significant increase in the percentage of business leaders citing regulatory compliance as the top driver for green building adoption.

This could be attributable to Singapore's Mandatory Energy Improvement (MEI) regime<sup>5</sup>, which takes effect in the third quarter of this year.

The outlook for Singapore's built environment is, nevertheless, bright, with 96% of business leापore indicating support of Singapore's green building goals (vs 95% in 2023).

This positive commitment, coupled with a closer look at the green building elements that are being prioritised, bodes well for the future of Singapore's built environment.

<sup>5</sup> The MEI regime applies to energy-intensive buildings with a gross floor area of 5,000 square metres or more. Upon receiving an MEI audit notice, building owners must conduct an energy audit and develop an energy efficiency improvement plan.

# Recommendations

## Business leaders should broaden their perspectives when calculating the costs and returns from green building adoption:

Property owners and/or managers may look beyond immediate returns from short-term increases in rentals and **consider the longer-term implications as tenants grow more concerned with attracting talent.** Although such softer concerns continue to be overshadowed by economic uncertainties, momentum is likely to build and will reward those with the courage and foresight to make the right moves today. Investments in greening buildings also have a very much longer-term payoff from a positive impact on the environment, which both tenants and landlords should bear in mind.

## A larger pool of green building professionals is needed to support companies:

As green building standards evolve and technologies improve, the **talent pool must grow in both size and skillsets.** Retrofitting strategies are particularly complex and require a wider range of expertise. Institutes of higher learning can help support this demand, but companies too must play their part by encouraging upskilling of their workforce. Accelerating green building adoption should be a goal for all business leaders, and the right talent is crucial to accomplish this.

## Retrofitting must become a priority:

A combination of both regulation and incentives is needed to encourage the retrofitting of older buildings. Singapore has recently upgraded its regulatory requirements for green buildings, but the momentum for such efforts needs to be sustained even in the face of challenging macroeconomic and geopolitical circumstances. To mitigate the concerns of businesses, **any step-ups in regulatory requirements can also be accompanied by step-ups in public funding.** Greater awareness of standards and incentives may also be necessary, and industry participants will need to collaborate on efforts to promote retrofitting. Learning journeys, case studies and large datasets may go some way towards assisting such an effort; and green finance could be made widely available at incentivising rates.





## Methodology

This report presents the findings of a quantitative survey of 505 senior business leaders based in Singapore, conducted from December 2024 to January 2025. All respondents are involved in the sustainability strategies for their organisations and have some level knowledge of and/or involvement in emissions management for the buildings used by their organisations as part of operations.

The quantitative findings from this initial survey were also supplemented with qualitative and quantitative responses from SGBC.

Respondents' roles are spread across general management, finance, operations, technology and sustainability; at the seniority levels of board member, C-level, director and senior manager.

Categorised by size, 35% come from companies with under 250 employees, 20% from those with between 250 and 999 employees, and 45% from those with 1,000 employees or more.

Life Is On

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