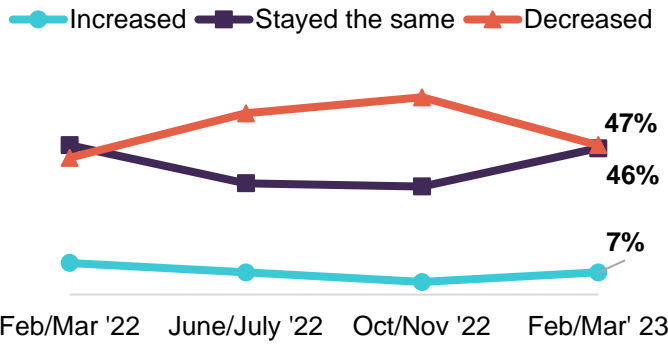


ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE AND OUTLOOK

Economic optimism increased this wave. Net confidence* was -40, up from Oct/Nov 2022 (-58) and June/July 2022 (-50) but still lower than in Feb/March 2022 (-33).

Confidence in economic outlook for Scotland over last 6 months



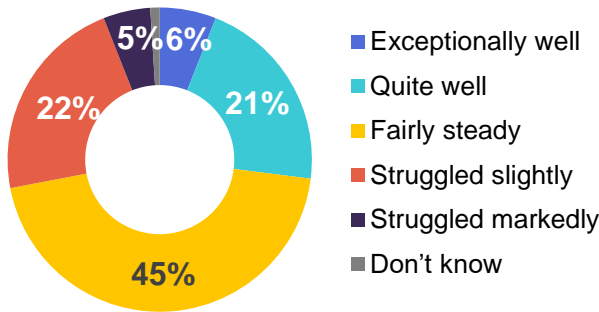
Thinking about the next 12 months, confidence was higher than the previous wave: 46% were confident while 53% were not (compared with 37% confident and 61% not in Oct/Nov 2022).

Confidence in economic outlook for Scotland over next 12 months



PERFORMANCE OVER LAST 6 MONTHS

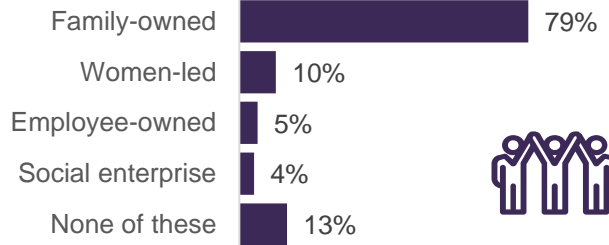
27% of businesses had performed well in the last six months, while 27% had struggled.



- Performed well:**
- 25+ staff (61%)
 - Confident in their future viability (30%)
 - Investing to support growth (34%)
- Struggled:**
- Creative industries (43%)
 - In urban areas (34%)
 - Not confident in viability (72%)
 - Scaling back operations (51%)

BUSINESS STRUCTURE

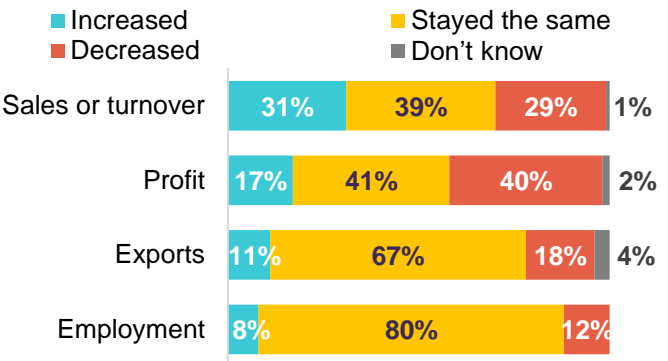
Types of business structure



Base: Women-led/social enterprise – all businesses (611); family/employee-owned – all employers (468)

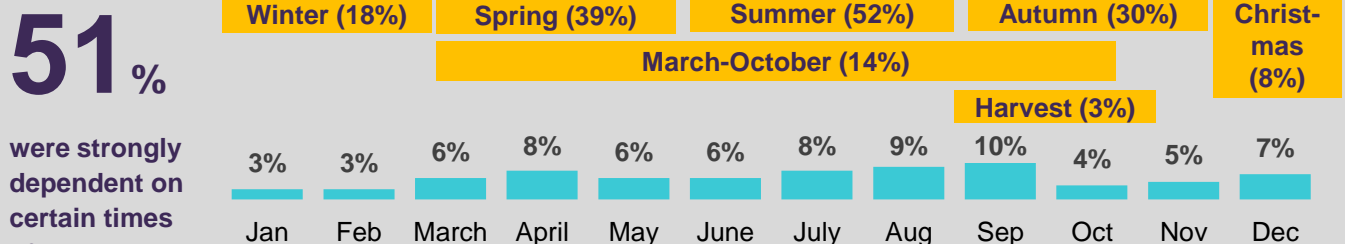
ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

Over the last six months



SEASONALITY

Times of year businesses said they were dependent on



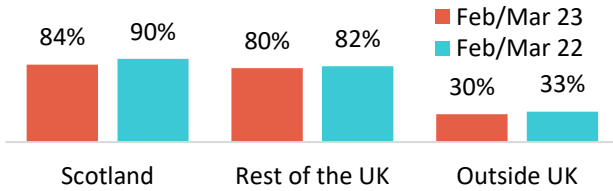
Base: Those strongly dependent on a time of year (315).

Note: Other times of year were mentioned by smaller proportions of businesses - these are included in the full report.

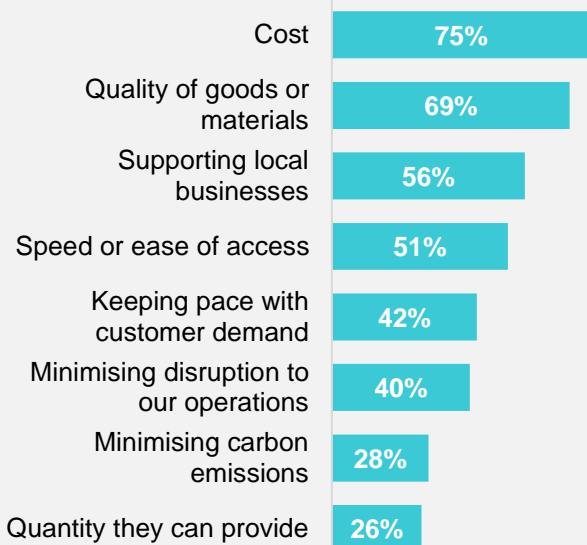
IMPORT MARKETS AND ACTIVITY

82% were importing from outside Scotland, with 30% importing from outside the UK.

Markets from which goods were sourced



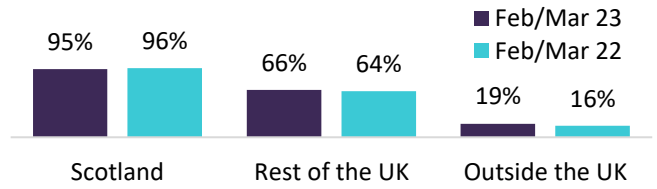
When choosing where you source goods or materials from, what factors are most important?



EXPORT MARKETS AND ACTIVITY

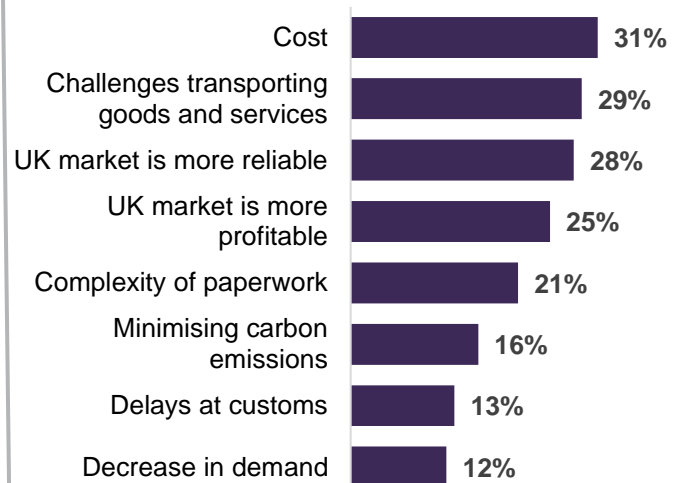
67% were exporting goods or services outside Scotland, with 19% exporting outside of the UK.

Markets to which goods were sold



24% of businesses were taking steps to focus on selling within the UK instead of outside the UK

Reasons for change in approach to export markets



Base: Those focussing on selling in UK instead of outside UK (147)

VIABILITY

Confidence in viability over the next six months

87%

Confident

11%

Not confident

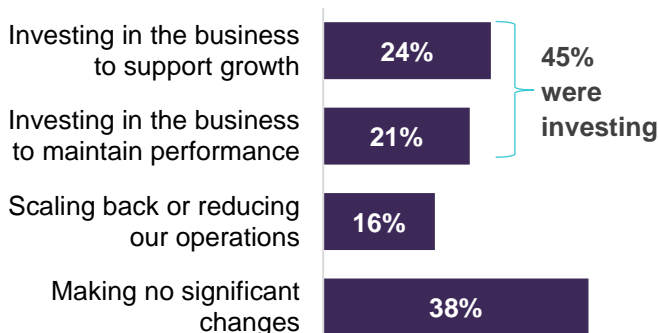
More confident average:

- Performed well in past six months (96% confident)
- Reported steady performance (95%)

Less confident than average:

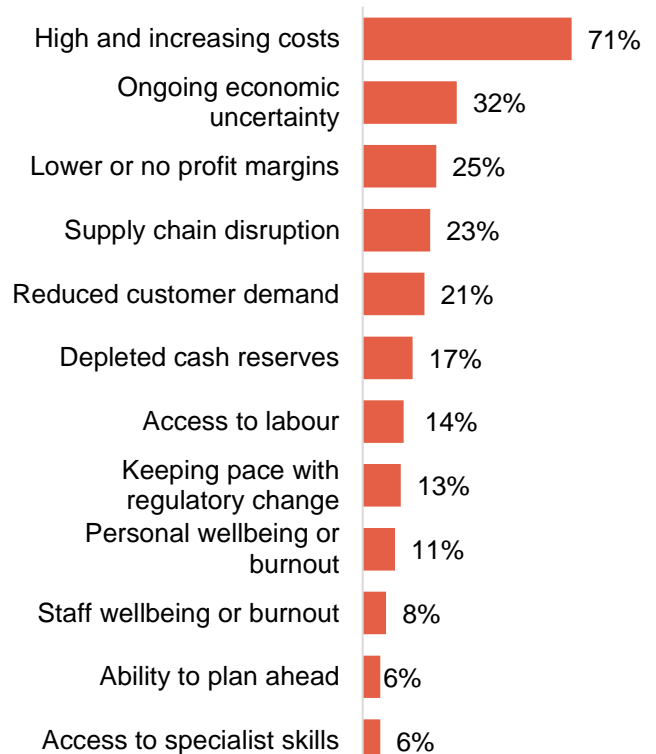
- Food and drink (16% not confident)
- Struggled in past six months (31%)

Approach taken to help business remain viable:



CONCERNS

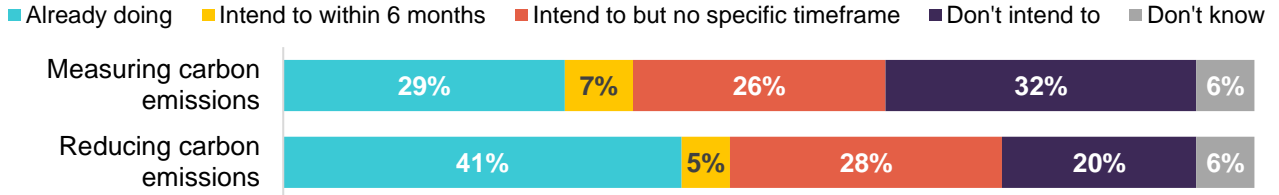
Top concerns for the next 6 months



MEASURING AND REDUCING EMISSIONS

36% were measuring carbon emissions or planning to within 6 months.
46% were reducing carbon emissions or planning to within 6 months.

73% were well informed about their climate change responsibilities.



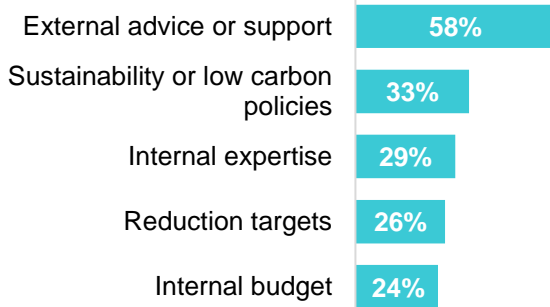
27% were both measuring and reducing their emissions (or planning to within 6 months).

16% were neither measuring nor reducing their emissions, and did not intend to do either.

RESOURCES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Of those already/planning to reduce emissions, 85% had resources or plans in place to support this

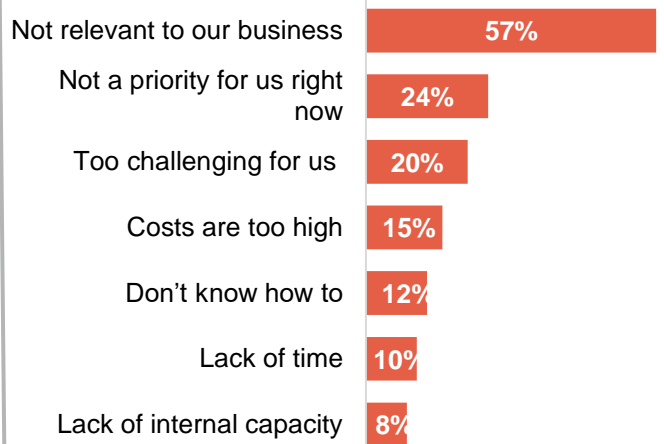
Resources in place (Top 5)



Base: All those planning or taking action to reduce emissions (455)

BARRIERS TO REDUCING EMISSIONS

Reasons for not reducing carbon missions



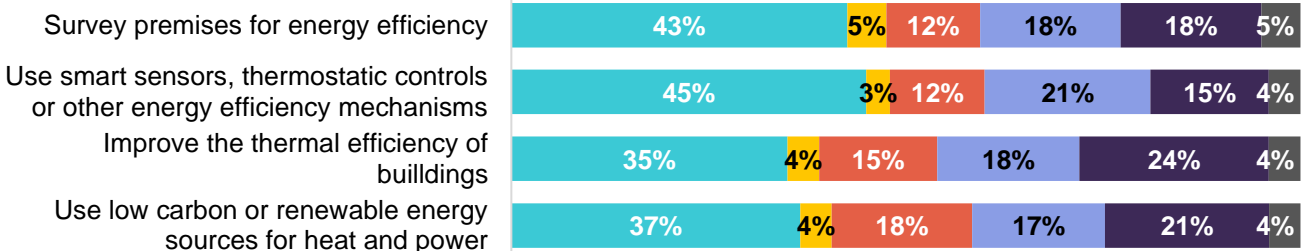
Base: All those not planning or taking action to reduce emissions (123)

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF PREMISES

66% of businesses were taking action in relation to the energy efficiency of their premises, or planning to within six months

Actions to improve energy efficiency of premises

■ Already doing
 ■ Intend to within 6 months
 ■ Intend to but no specific timeframe
■ Don't intend to
 ■ Not within our control
 ■ Don't know



More likely than average to be taking any action to improve energy efficiency of premises

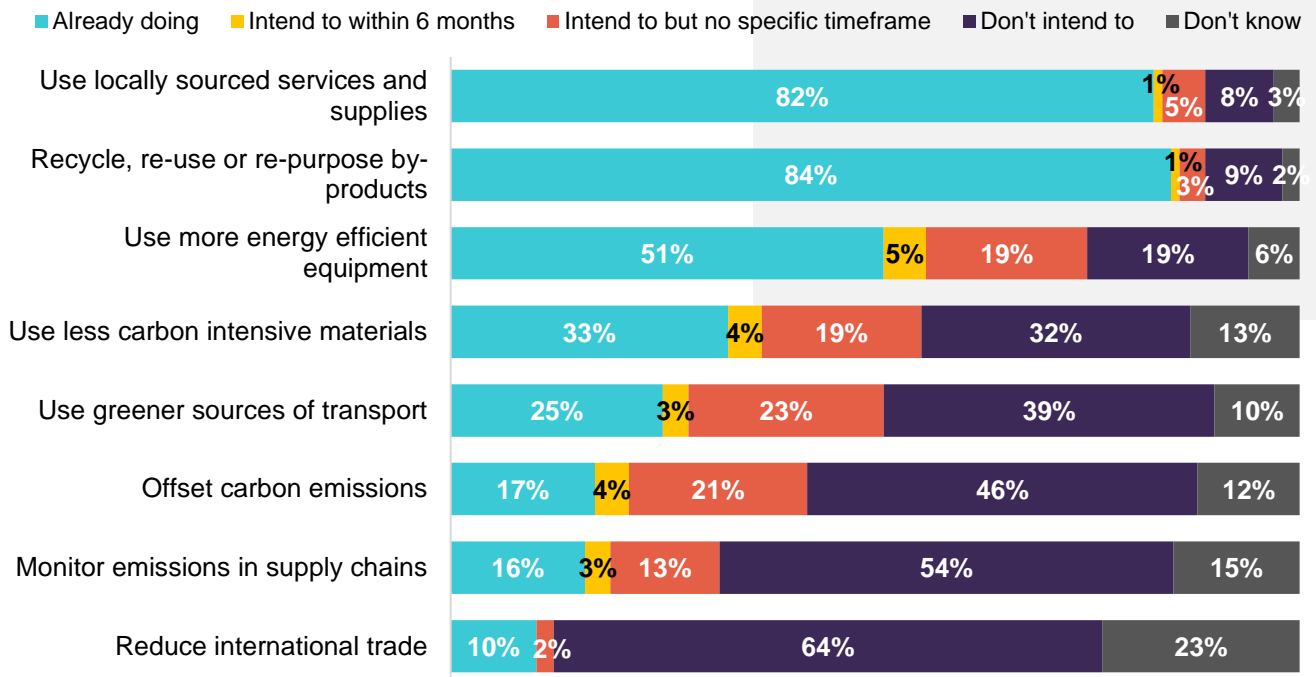
- Tourism (78% vs 66% overall)
- Food and drink (71%)
- Those investing to maintain performance (76%)
- Well informed of their climate change responsibilities (71%).

Less likely than average to be taking any action to improve energy efficiency of premises:

- Sole traders (59% vs 66% overall)
- Those scaling back their operations (58%)
- Not well informed about their climate change responsibilities (52%)

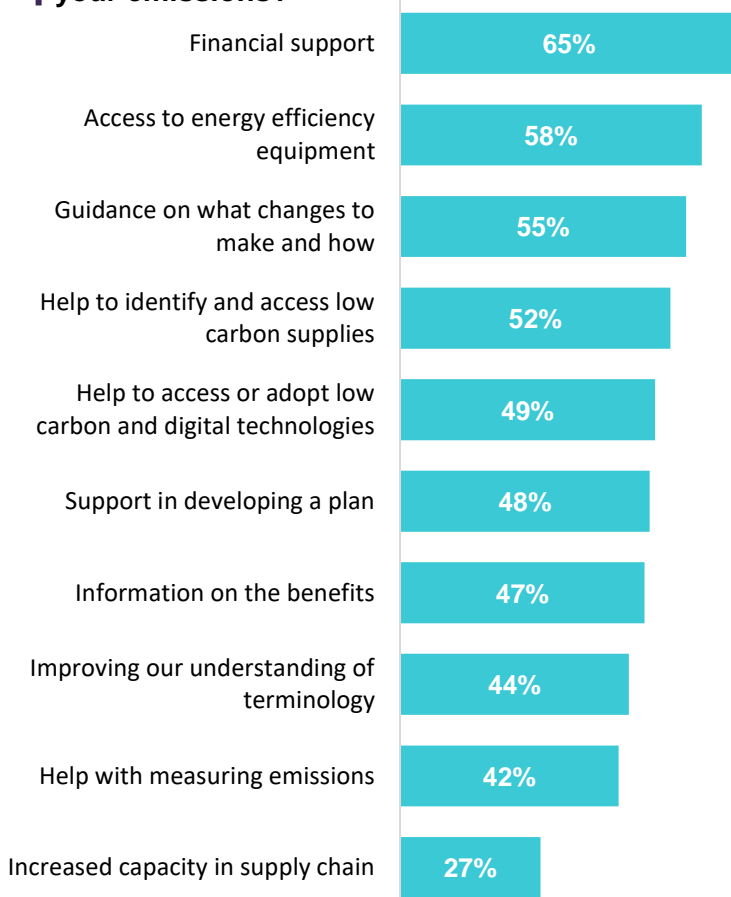
IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS

96% of businesses were taking action related to the environmental impacts of their operations or planning to within six months



HELP WITH LOWERING EMISSIONS

Which of the following would help you to lower your emissions?

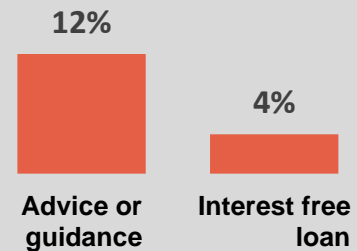


BUSINESS ENERGY SCOTLAND

13% Had accessed support from Business Energy Scotland



Types of support accessed



NOTES: Survey fieldwork was conducted between 6 February and 13 March using telephone interviewing. In total 611 businesses and social enterprises participated. Findings are weighted to ensure a representative sample of the regional business base. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers