

The 2023 State of IT Sustainability Report

Global survey results



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Hello green IT!

Across the globe, businesses, governments, and consumers are embracing environmentally sustainable practices and products. No longer just a theoretical topic in CIO magazines, environmental sustainability has become a front-and-center initiative that organizations are planning for and acting on.








In this report, we'll explore the landscape of green IT. How are IT departments addressing this transformative trend? What do they see as its benefits? What are their adoption rates and levels of maturity? What implementation obstacles do they face? And what next steps will they take?

Whether you are thinking about adopting environmentally friendly practices, have already embraced them, or are simply curious about where you stand in comparison to other companies, this report holds valuable insights for you.



Key insights

To better understand the state of green IT, OpenText commissioned Dimensional Research to conduct a survey of 300+ leaders and practitioners, all with sustainability responsibilities, at medium to large companies around the world. Here's what we learned:

-  **97% of companies have implemented sustainability initiatives or plan to do so.**
-  **Across companies, IT has a higher rate of adoption (75%) than other departments.**
-  **Companies recognize that pursuing sustainability can enhance their brand image and save money.**
-  **The biggest IT sustainability challenge is a lack of proper tools for tracking and calculating carbon emissions.**
-  **The IT sustainability market is still young—50% of companies are in planning or early-implementation mode, and nearly one-third of companies are without any sustainability goals.**
-  **Sustainability is a journey—77% of companies with defined IT sustainability goals expect to meet their goals in three or more years.**
-  **European companies are, on average, more committed to IT sustainability initiatives than companies in the United States and Canada.**

Let's dive deeper into these insights. —>

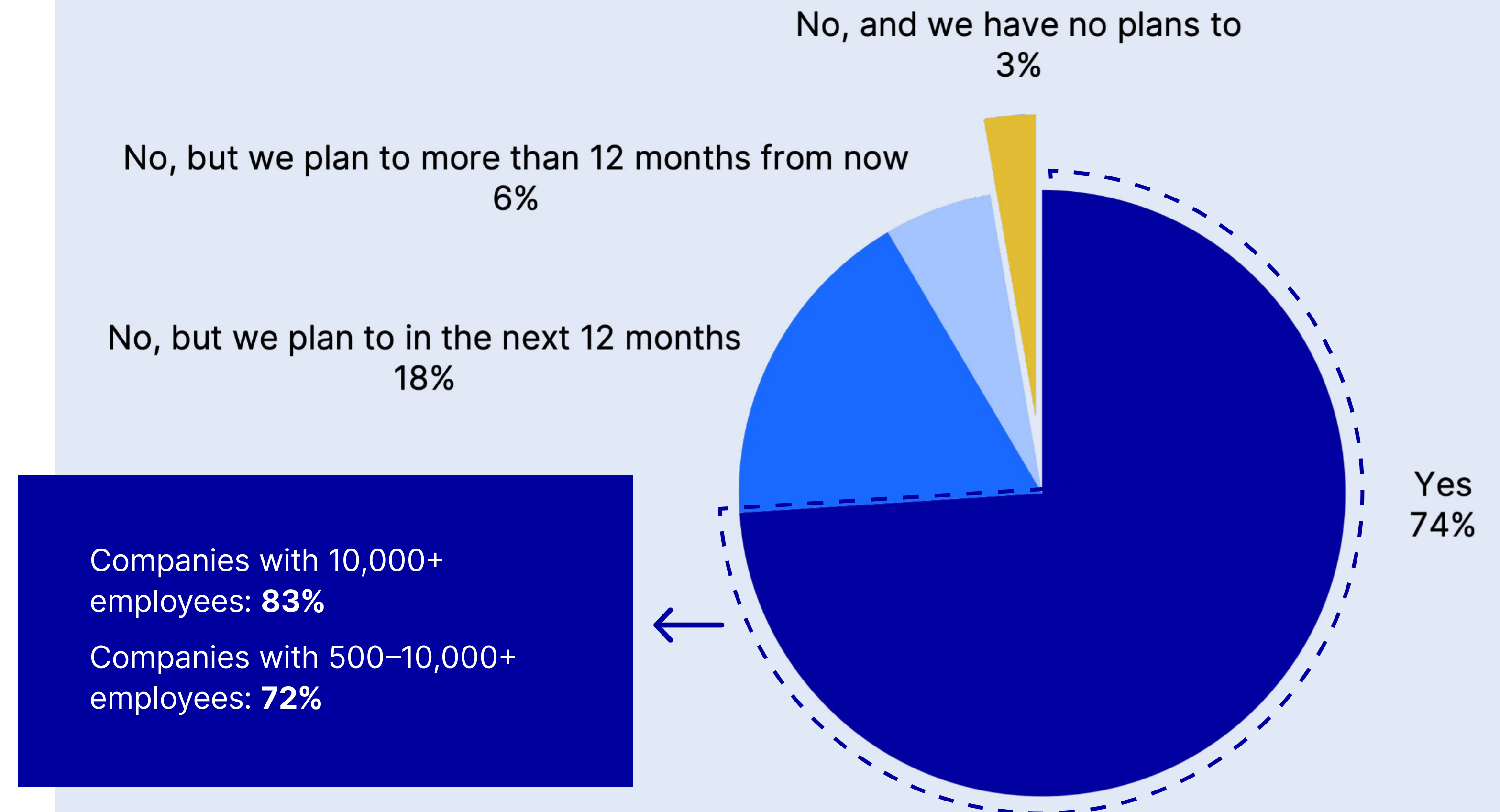
1

A staggering 97% of companies have implemented sustainability initiatives or plan to do so.

Environmental sustainability is changing everything, including business priorities. While companies of all sizes are almost fully aboard the sustainability train, larger companies have a higher adoption rate. Their lead may stem from the intense regulatory and corporate pressures they face to comply with environmental, social, and governance guidelines where carbon emissions play a significant role.

The high level of engagement suggests a broad recognition of the benefits and responsibilities tied to environmentally conscious business practices.

Has your company implemented a sustainability initiative?



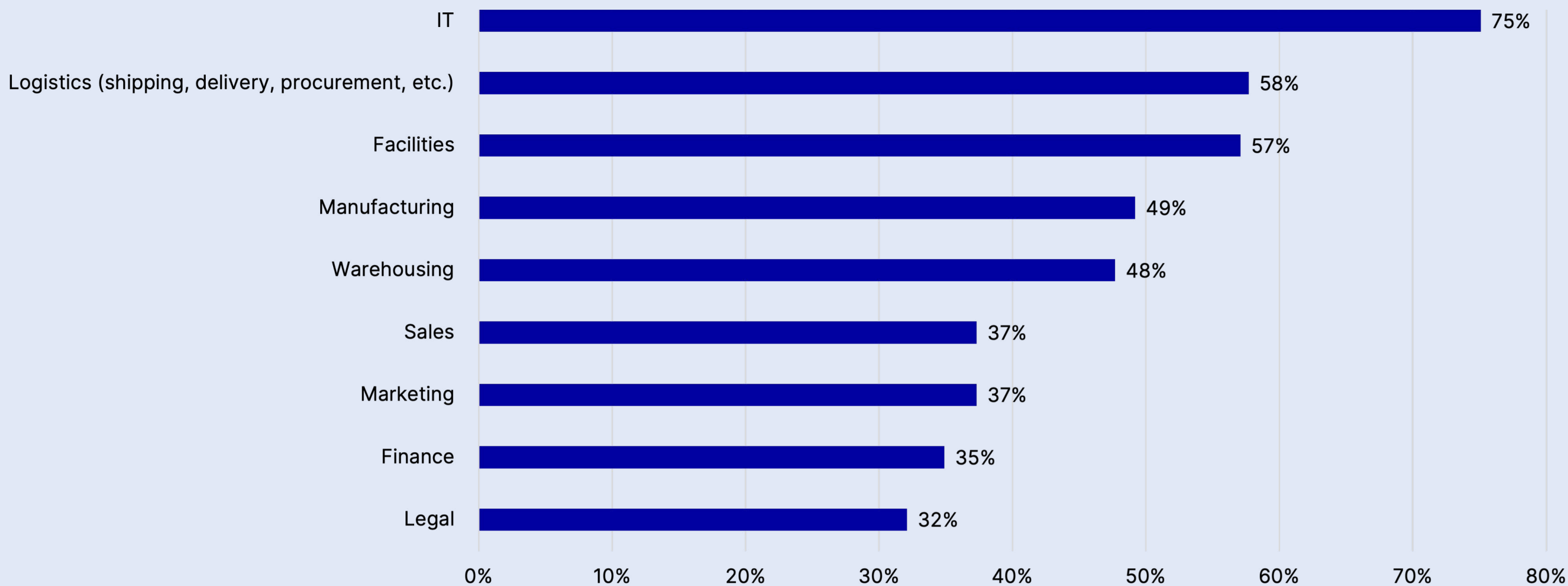
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IT departments lead the pack in adopting green initiatives.

IT has a higher adoption rate than other departments, followed by Logistics, Facilities, Manufacturing, and Warehousing. This trailblazing position may be inherent. Unlike departments that rely on intricate physical systems, heavy machinery, or complex supply chains, IT has the flexibility to pivot—for example, to the cloud, to new vendors, to optimal resources, or to cloud cost control with FinOps. All these moves support green IT without the financial outlay required by other domains.

At 19% of companies, every department has a sustainability initiative. But 88% of companies without company-wide participation plan to welcome new departments to their sustainability programs within the next year—so that 19% will grow.

At your company, which organizations have started pursuing sustainability?



19% of companies are pursuing sustainability across all their departments.
88% of other companies plan to welcome new departments to their programs in the next 12 months.

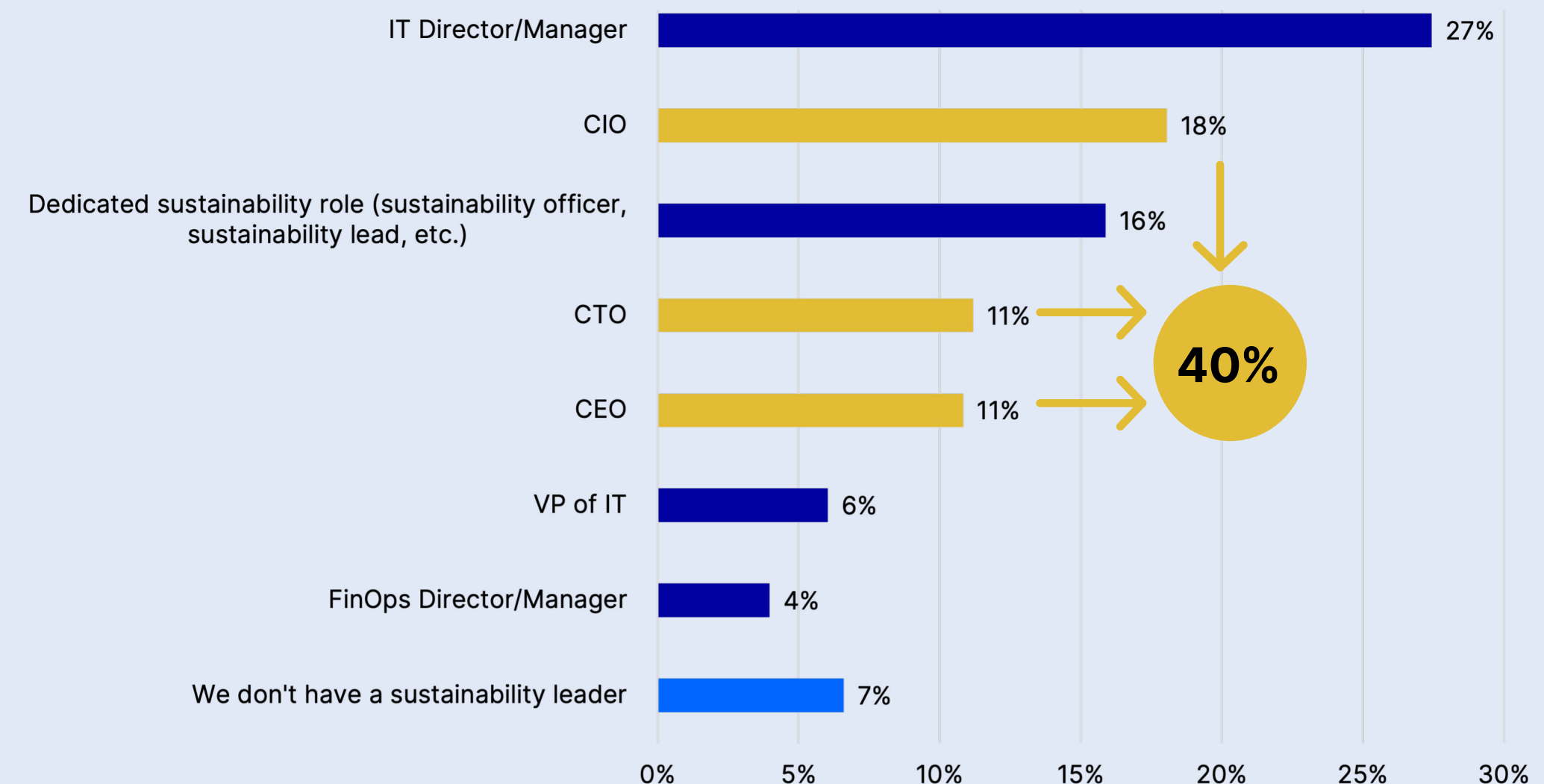
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IT sustainability programs have the eyes and ears of the C-suite.

It makes perfect sense that IT directors and managers are carrying the sustainability torch within their departments. But there's a bigger story here. Sustainability has captured the attention of leaders at the highest echelons of the company—where CIOs, CTOs, and CEOs are championing the cause (40%).

Dedicated roles are third in the leadership ranking (16%), and European companies have substantially more dedicated experts than companies in the US and Canada. But we expect that as companies expand their green programs, the number and responsibilities of dedicated experts in all regions of the world will expand as well.

At your company, which role is leading your IT sustainability initiative?



Dedicated sustainability roles:

- Europe: **25%**
- US and Canada: **11%**

4

Going green is good for business, and companies know it.

The data suggests that business benefits—led by improved brand image, cost savings, and higher ESG scores—serve as a catalyst for IT’s sustainability efforts. To a lesser degree, but not by much, external factors such as regulatory and governmental influences play a key role in driving IT sustainability initiatives. Given that regulatory and governmental requirements are on the rise, we expect these factors to rank higher on “reasons to embrace IT sustainability” in the years to come.

At your company, what are the business reasons driving the IT sustainability initiative?



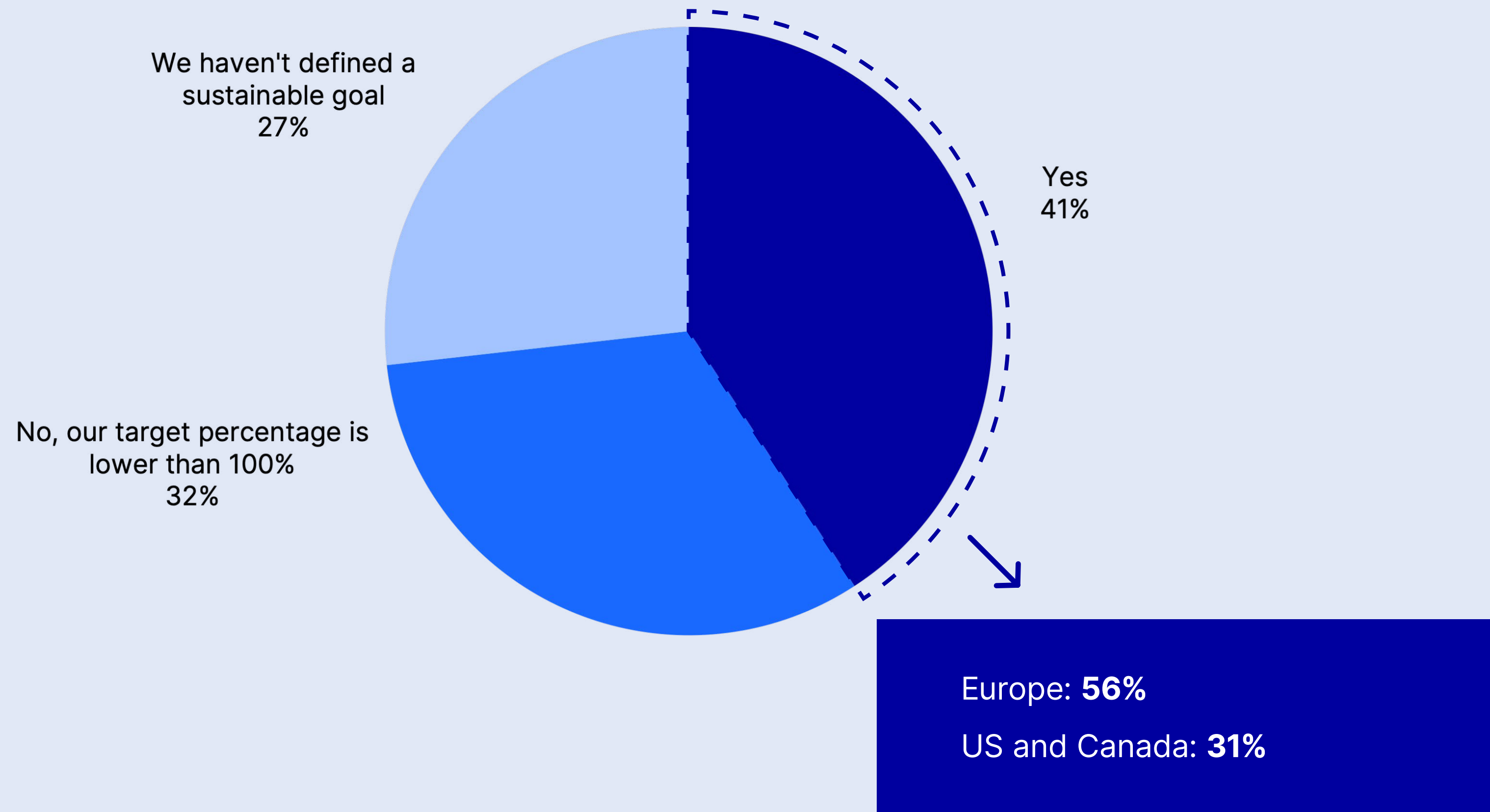
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The big IT goal—100% net carbon neutral.

Forty-one percent of companies have set an ambitious sustainability goal for their IT departments—become 100% sustainable (or net carbon neutral).

While going green makes good business sense, the monumental changes required can hurt the bottom line. Reaching net-zero emissions through reductions, offsetting (counterbalancing carbon emissions with green activities, such as reforestation), or changing infrastructure and energy sources can be prohibitively expensive. Companies need to find the right balance between sustainability targets, financial viability, and implementation timelines.

Is your company's goal to have IT become 100% sustainable (net carbon neutral)?

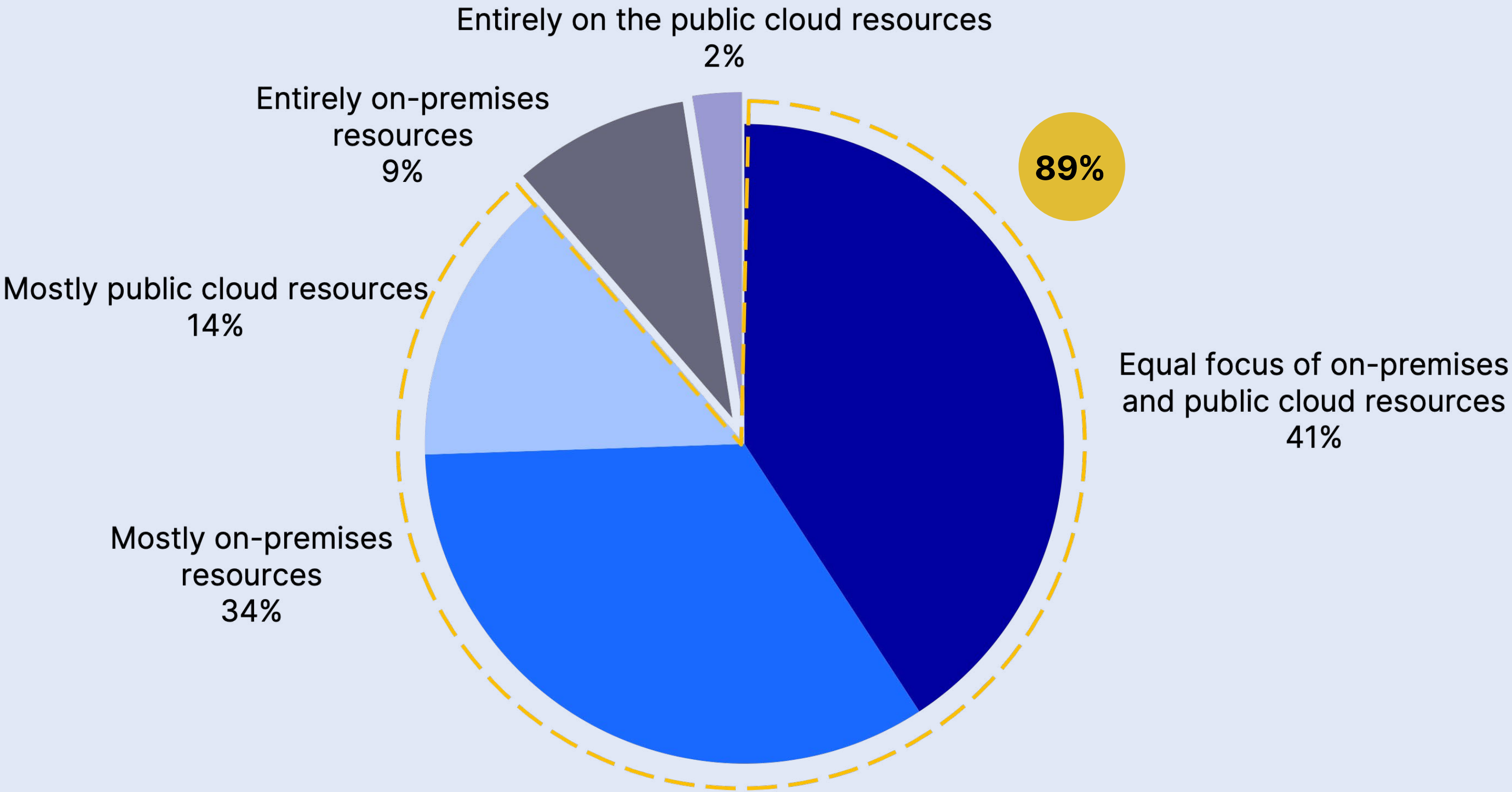


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Companies are managing the sustainability of all IT resources, both on cloud and off.

Eighty-nine percent of companies focus their IT sustainability programs across the entire hybrid estate—covering both on-prem and public cloud resources. This broad focus reflects the holistic approach that companies are taking to sustainability. The data also reveals a prioritization of on-prem resources, possibly due to the prevalence of on-prem infrastructure or the level of attention it requires.

Where is your company focusing its IT sustainability efforts?



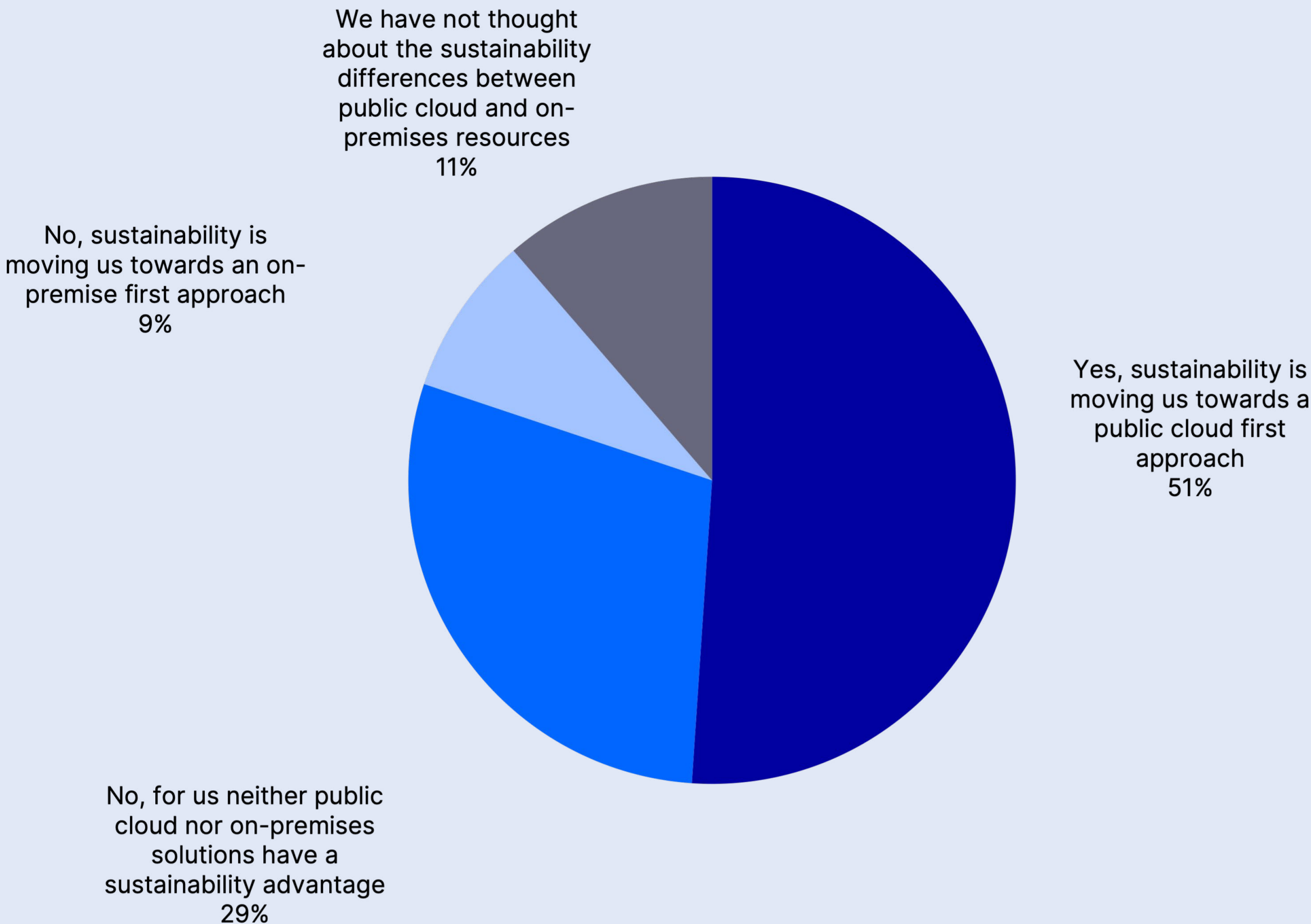
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Sustainability builds interest in the public cloud.

Fifty-one percent of companies say that sustainability is pushing them to explore a cloud-first approach. This finding aligns with industry trends and perceptions that public cloud computing is more environmentally friendly than on-prem computing.

The other 49% of companies either don't see sustainability benefits in on-prem or public cloud computing, favor an on-prem-first approach, or haven't evaluated either option. These mixed views underscore the complex decisions companies face in aligning IT strategies with sustainability goals.

Is sustainability driving increased consideration of public cloud resources at your company?



8

Environmentally conscious procurement is on the rise.

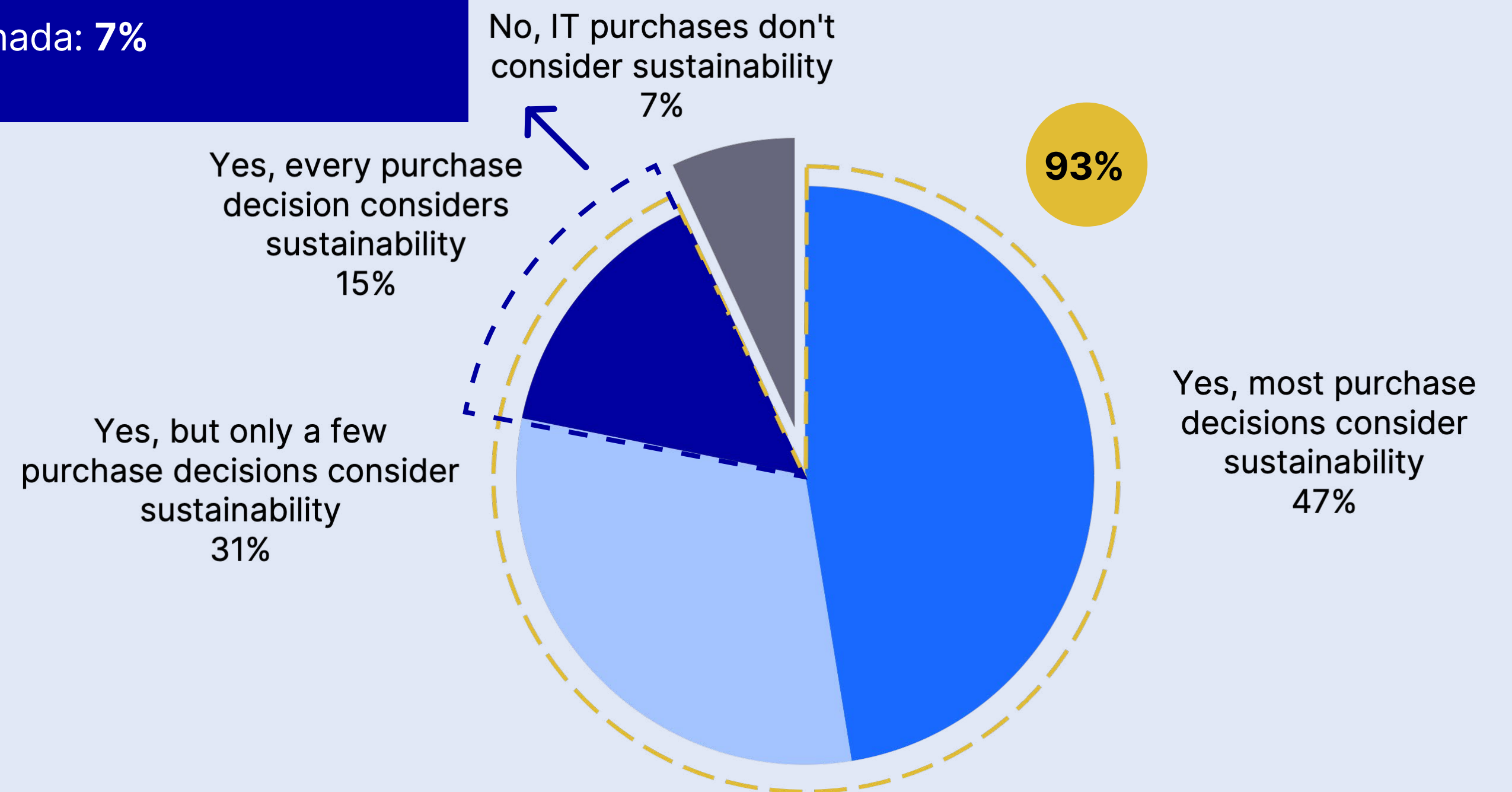
The big number says it all—93% of companies consider sustainability in their IT purchase decisions. Clearly, IT organizations are increasingly aware of the sustainability issue, and this awareness will likely result in a reduction of supply-chain-related emissions.

It's worth noting that European companies follow stricter sustainability practices than companies in the US and Canada.

Is sustainability actively considered when IT is making purchase decisions (hardware, software, services, etc.)?

Europe: **26%**

US and Canada: **7%**



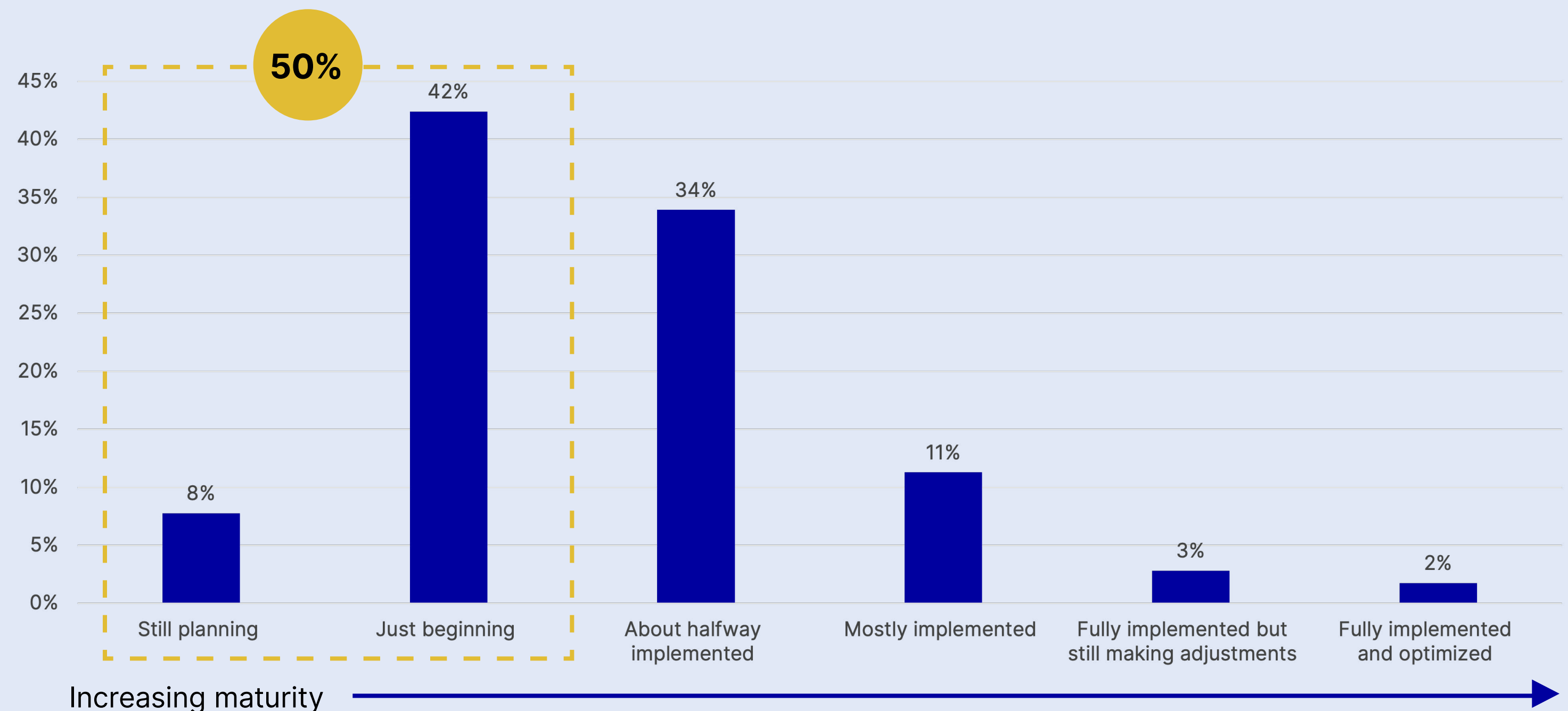
9

It's still early days for IT sustainability adoption.

Despite the overwhelming adoption rate of IT sustainability initiatives, companies are predominantly in the early stages of implementation. Half are just beginning (42%) or still planning (8%) the journey towards environmental responsibility. These percentages hold true across company sizes and locations.

We are not surprised by these results. Sustainability has been a topic of interest for many years, but only recently has it gained heightened recognition and rigorous corporate commitment.

In general, how far along is your company's IT sustainability initiative?

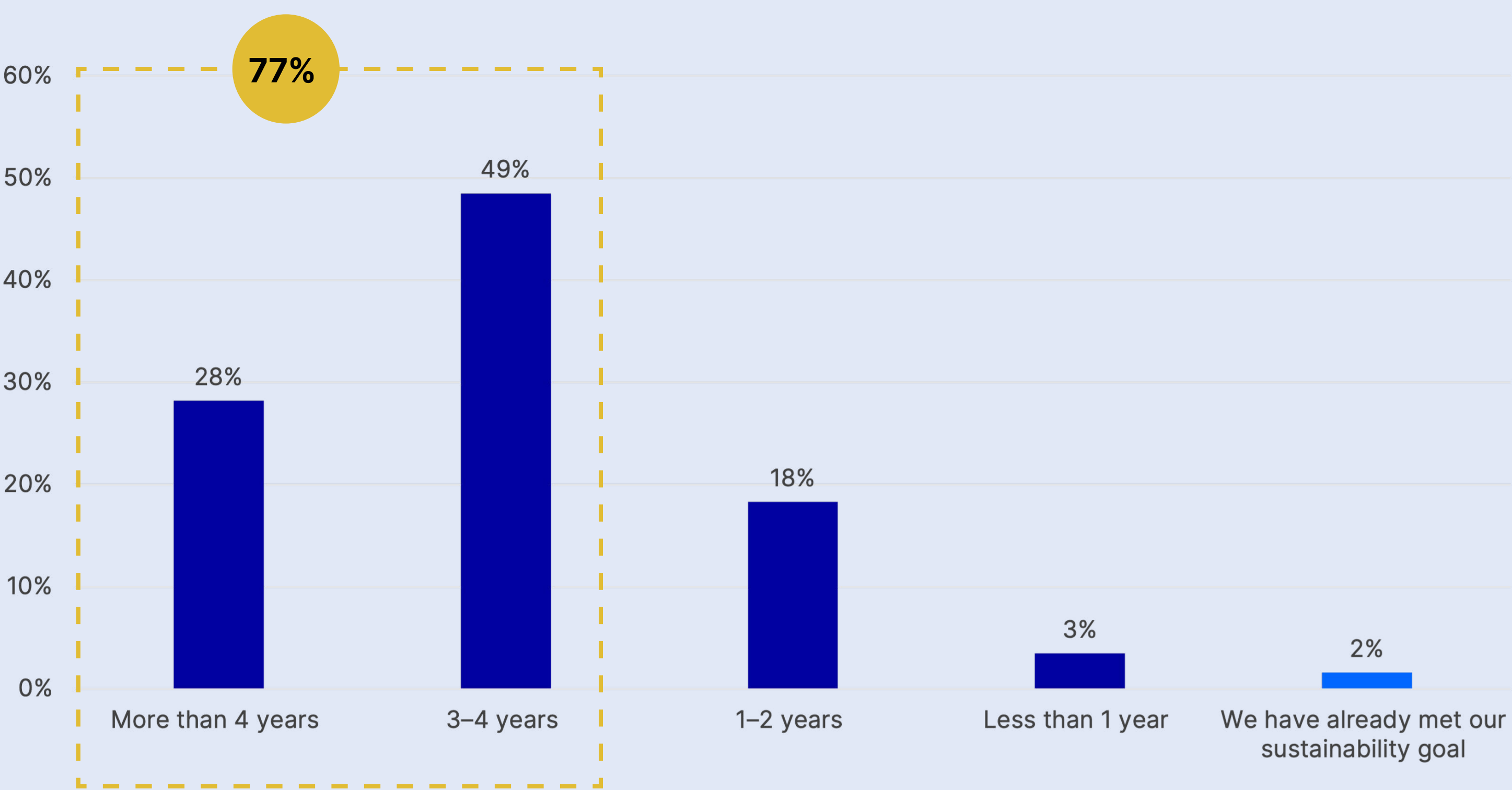


10

Environmental sustainability is more a marathon than a sprint.

Everyone is running a different sustainability race. Most companies are just getting started and three-quarters of them are pacing themselves for a marathon of three or more years. Only 3% aim to reach the finish line in less than a year, while 2% report that they’ve crossed the line and met their goals. These findings imply that the marathoners know what they’re up against and are setting realistic targets.

How long do you anticipate it will take your company to reach its IT sustainability goal?

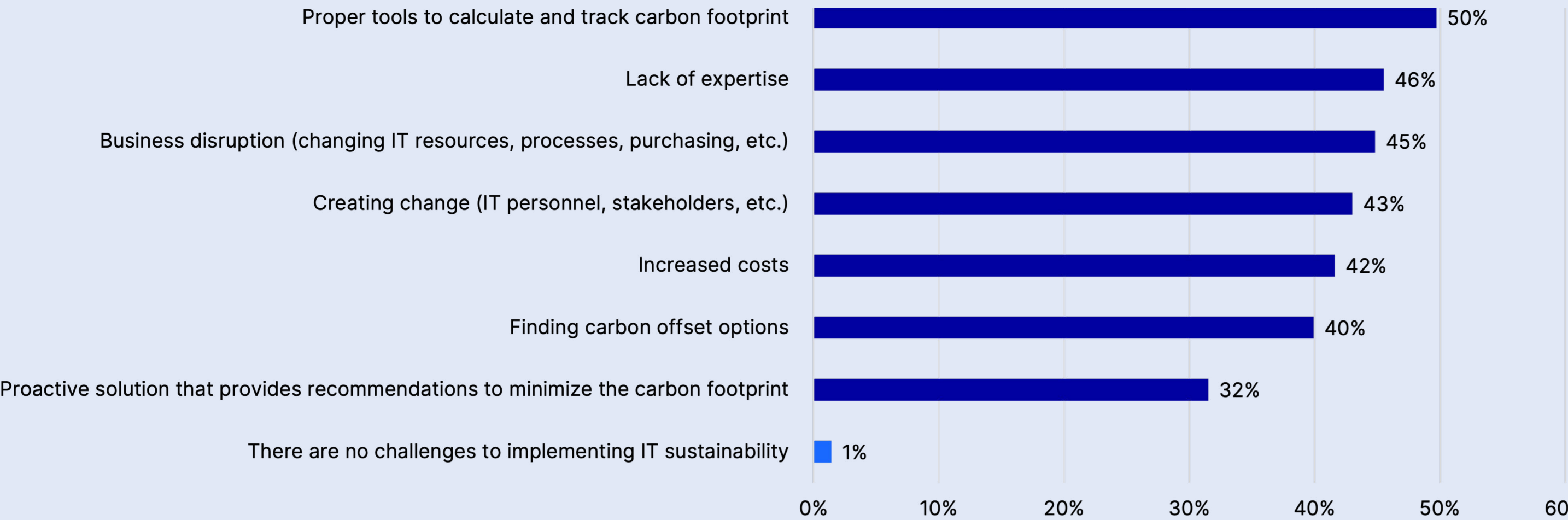


11

The largest sustainability roadblock—a lack of tools.

The top challenge faced by IT departments is a lack of tools for tracking and calculating their carbon footprints. Equally noteworthy is the substantial percentage (46%) grappling with a lack of expertise, which points to the importance of education and skill development for growing sustainable IT practices.

At your company, what are the major challenges to implementing a sustainable IT initiative?



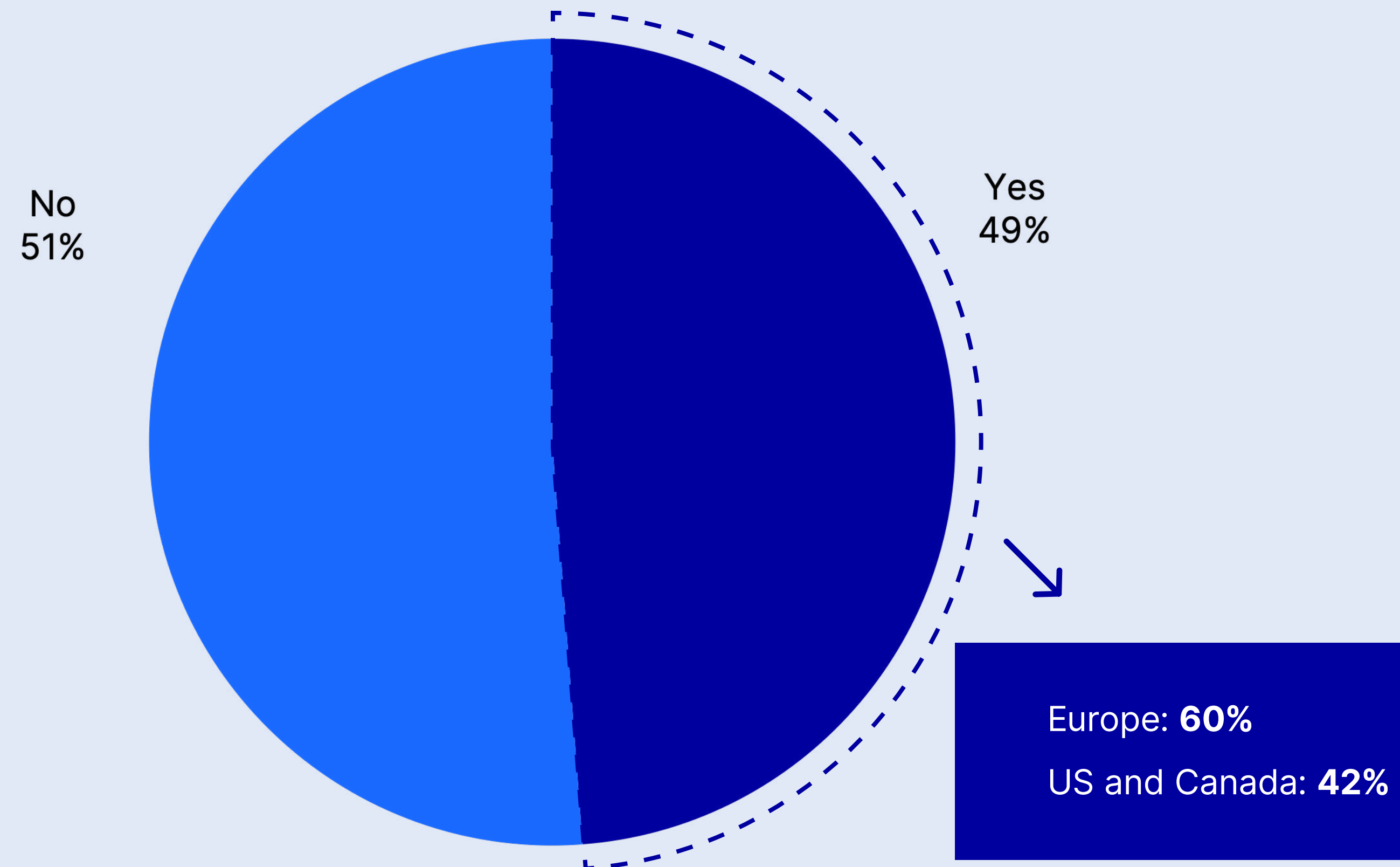
12

Software is underused for carbon footprint tracking.

Forty-nine percent of companies use carbon footprint tracking software, but 51% do not. Why is that? One reason may be that, until recently, external regulatory pressures were minimal. IT departments weren't required to focus on granular data for their carbon tracking. They could meet expectations with spreadsheets or homegrown reporting solutions that leverage existing BI tools—and these solutions still work for early data collection. But over the next two years, new regulations calling for detailed carbon reporting will likely drive greater adoption of dedicated sustainability software.

We also see a usage gap between regions. More European companies have adopted sustainability software than companies in the US and Canada, likely due to stricter regulatory reporting requirements.

Does your company use a sustainability software solution to help track your IT carbon footprint?

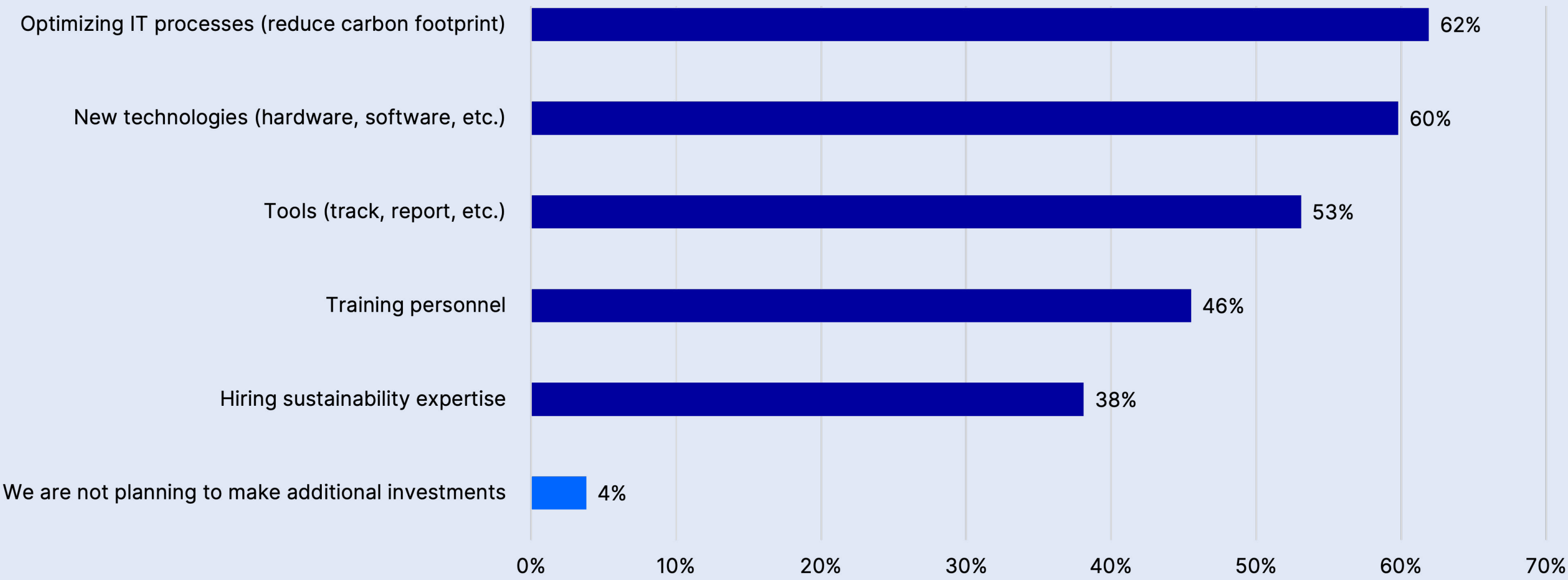


13

Nearly all companies are gearing up for further investments.

Given that most companies are still years away from reaching high sustainability maturity, it follows that additional investments are in the pipeline. In fact, a mere 4% plan to stay the course, while the majority (96%) are preparing for further investments. IT process optimization, new technologies, and new tools top the IT sustainability wish list.

Over the next two years, where is your company planning to make additional investments for its IT sustainability initiative?



The race to green IT is underway

With ambitious goals in their sights (yet hindered by a lack of proper tools), most IT departments are training for or already running the long-distance race to green IT. As you prepare yourself for the rigors of the road, keep this in mind: A successful journey requires not only commitment but also the right strategies, tools, and expertise. They'll give you the power and endurance you need to cross the finish line.

Visit [GreenOps for IT Operations](#) or [contact us](#) to learn more.



Methodology

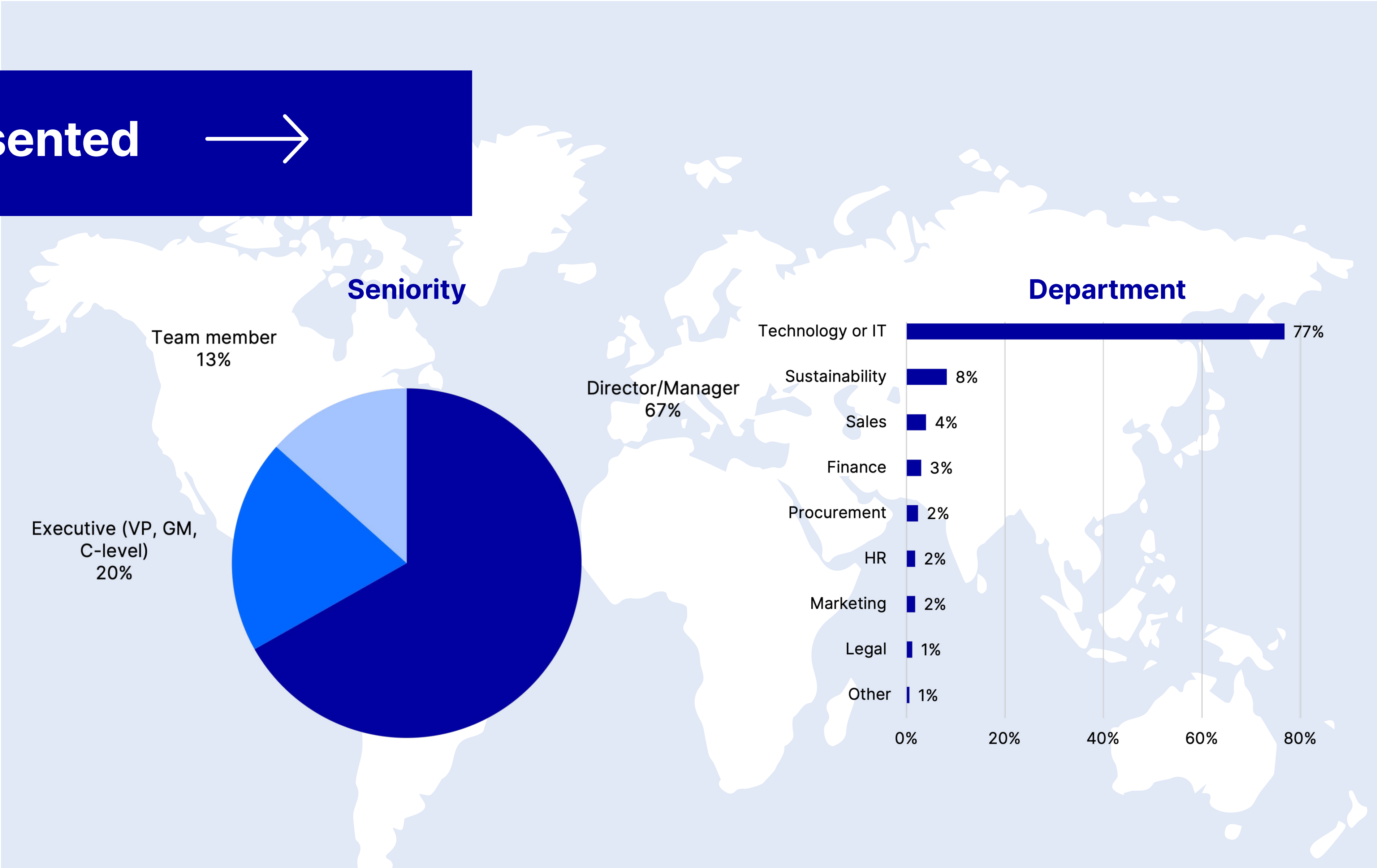
In November 2023, 365 leaders and practitioners across all seniority levels at medium- to enterprise-sized companies were invited to participate in an electronic survey on IT sustainability.

After the first survey question—“Has your company implemented a sustainability initiative?”—37 participants without sustainability plans or responsibilities were screened out. The remaining 328 respondents, all with sustainability plans or responsibilities, completed the survey.

The survey was sponsored by OpenText and conducted in partnership with Dimensional Research. Here is a detailed breakdown of respondents by role, department, responsibility, company size, geography, and industry.

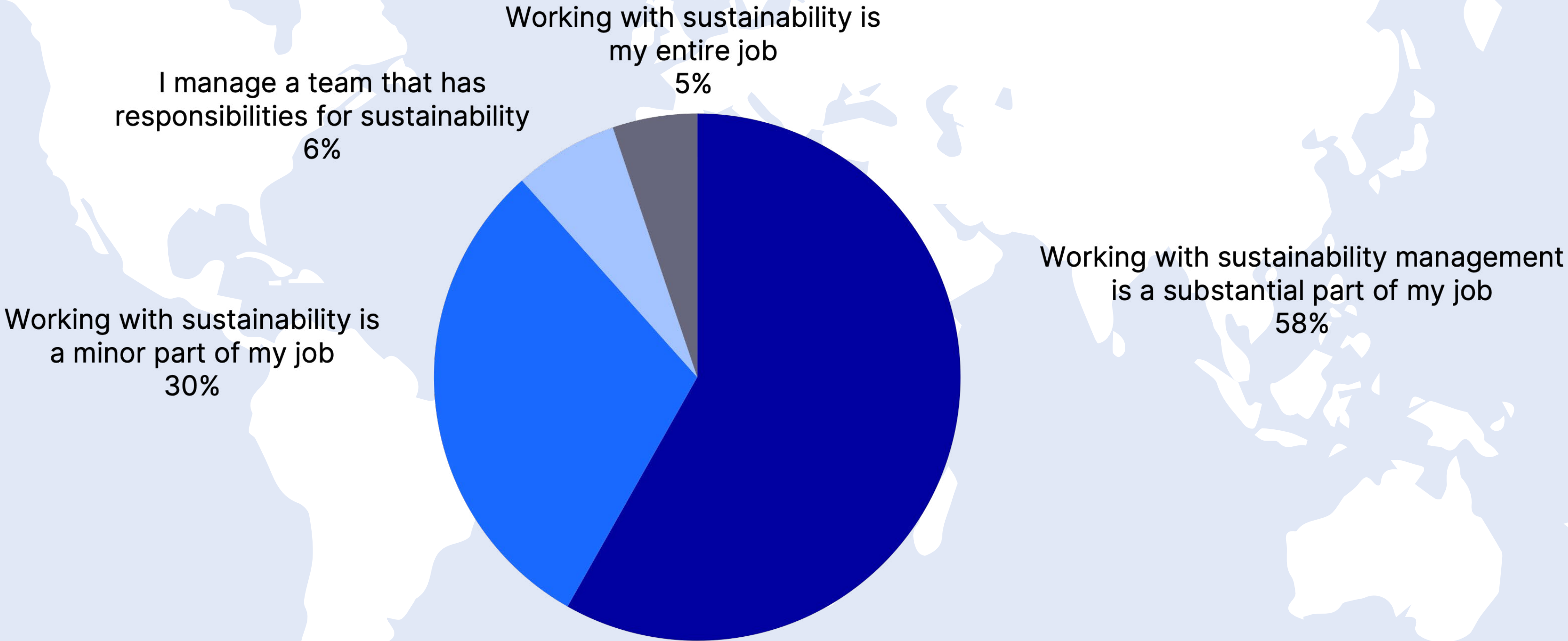


Individuals represented

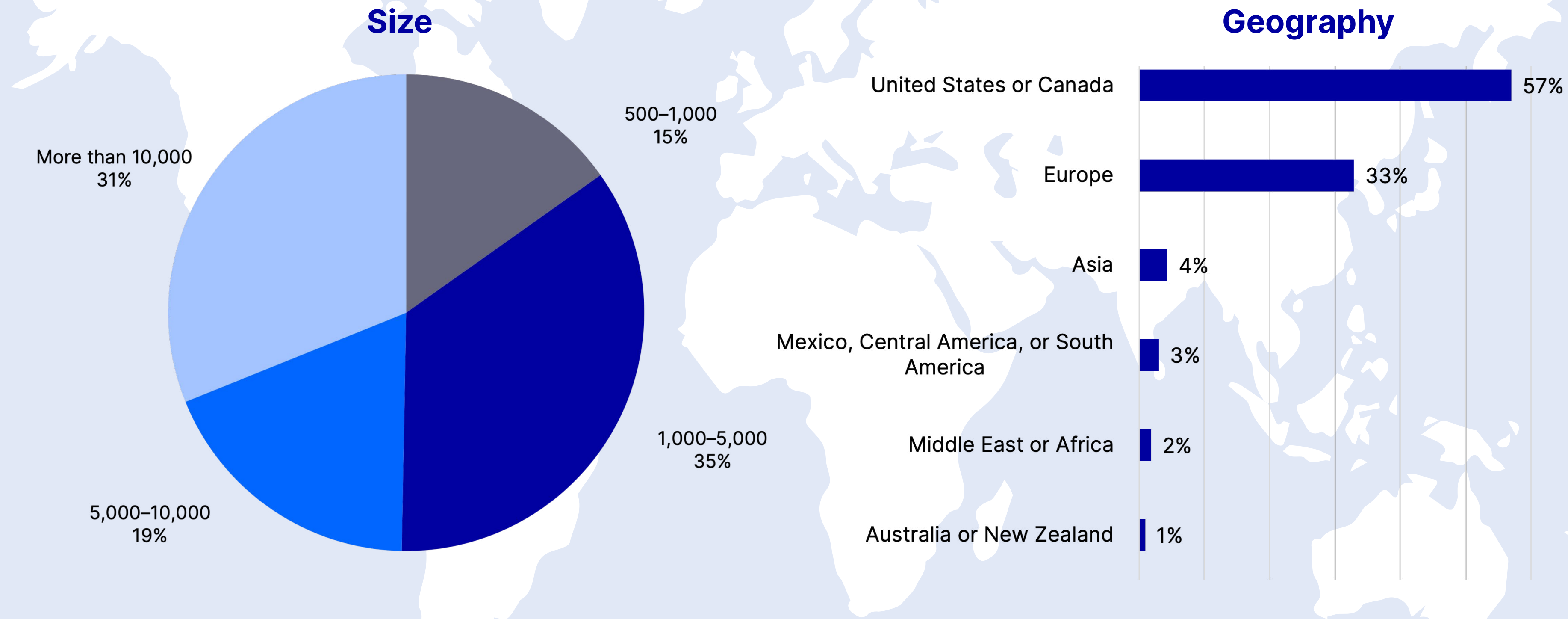


Individuals represented →

Sustainability Responsibilities

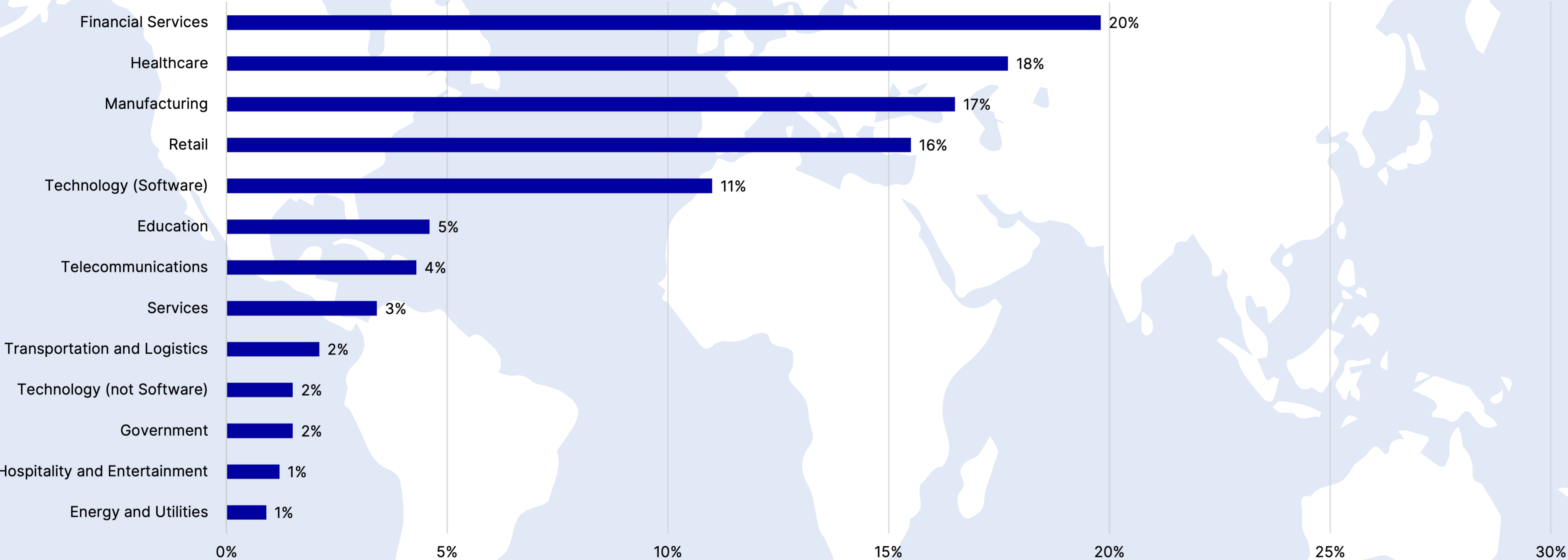


Companies represented →



Companies represented →

Industry



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