

Sustainability in Manufacturing - Sustainability Demands, Customer Maturity and the Role of PLM

Findings from Symetri's sustainability survey to manufacturing customers 2025



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A SYMETRI TECHNOLOGY

Executive summary

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information

Sustainability is a growing priority in manufacturing, driven mainly by government regulations rather than customer demand. While 43% of businesses report a rapid increase in focus, only 13% see a matching rise in customer requests.

CSRD compliance & regulatory pressures

67.5% of manufacturers are impacted by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), with 55.6% actively preparing. Beyond CSRD, businesses face 17 other regulatory pressures, including the Digital Product Passport (DPP) and investor-driven reporting.

Sustainability reporting & PLM role

Most companies are early in sustainability reporting, with 45% using data for compliance. Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems are crucial, with 83% expecting to rely on PLM for sustainability data within three years. PLM integration with ERP enhances data accuracy and decision-making.

Emissions measurement & supplier data

Manufacturers prioritize material and weight-based emissions calculations (55%) over spend-based (35%). Accurate Scope 3 emissions tracking focuses on energy use, material weight and composition, waste, and logistics. High-quality supplier data integration with PLM is essential for precise reporting, with 50% emphasizing its importance.

CONCLUSION

To stay ahead, manufacturers must implement flexible sustainability frameworks, leverage PLM for data management, and prioritize supplier-specific sustainability reporting. Manufacturers who adopt integrated PLM solutions and prioritize supplier data will be best positioned to meet evolving sustainability demands.

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information

Manufacturers are rapidly increasing their focus on sustainability, with government regulations being the most significant driving force. However, customer demand is lagging behind the internal push for sustainability, suggesting that companies are preparing for future expectations rather than merely reacting to current requests.



**FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY
IS INCREASING
RAPIDLY**

43%

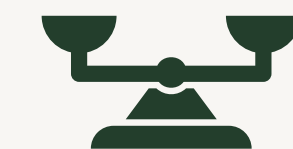
of businesses say they have rapidly increased the focus on sustainability in the past year



**GOVERNMENTAL PRESSURES
REMAIN THE MAIN DRIVER
OF SUSTAINABILITY**

58%

of businesses say government is very/extremely influential in their sustainability planning



**INCREASED FOCUS ON
SUSTAINABILITY IS OUTPACING
CUSTOMER REQUESTS**

Only **13%**

of companies say that requests from customers increase at the same rate as the focus on sustainability

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

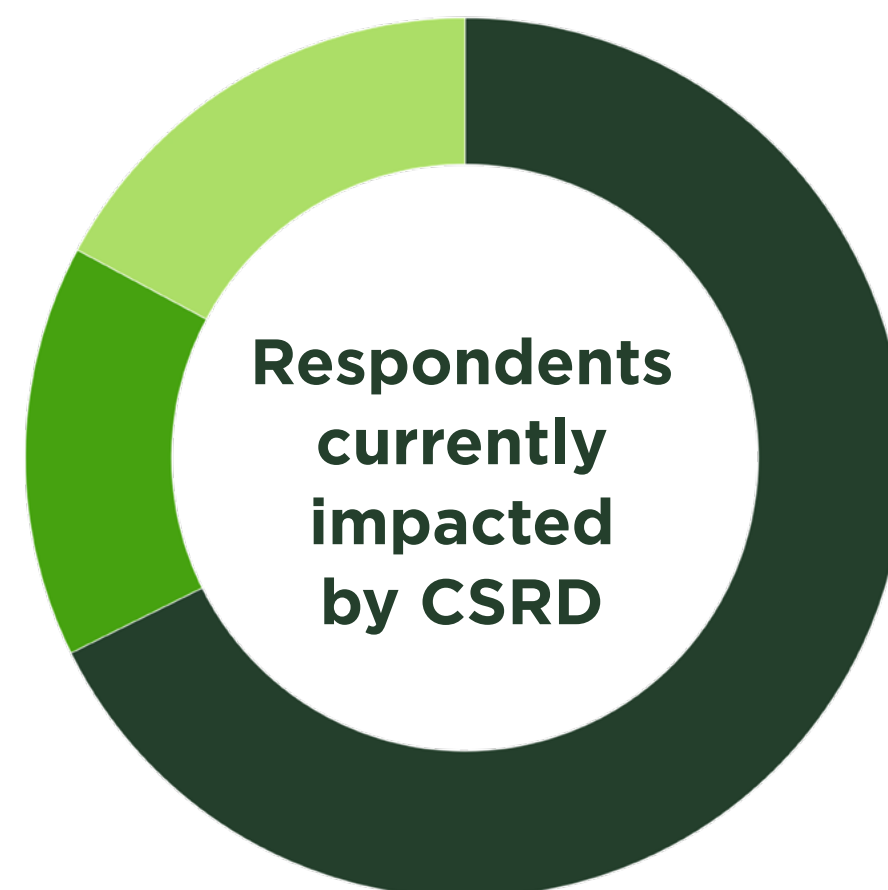
Data collection

Reporting outside the company

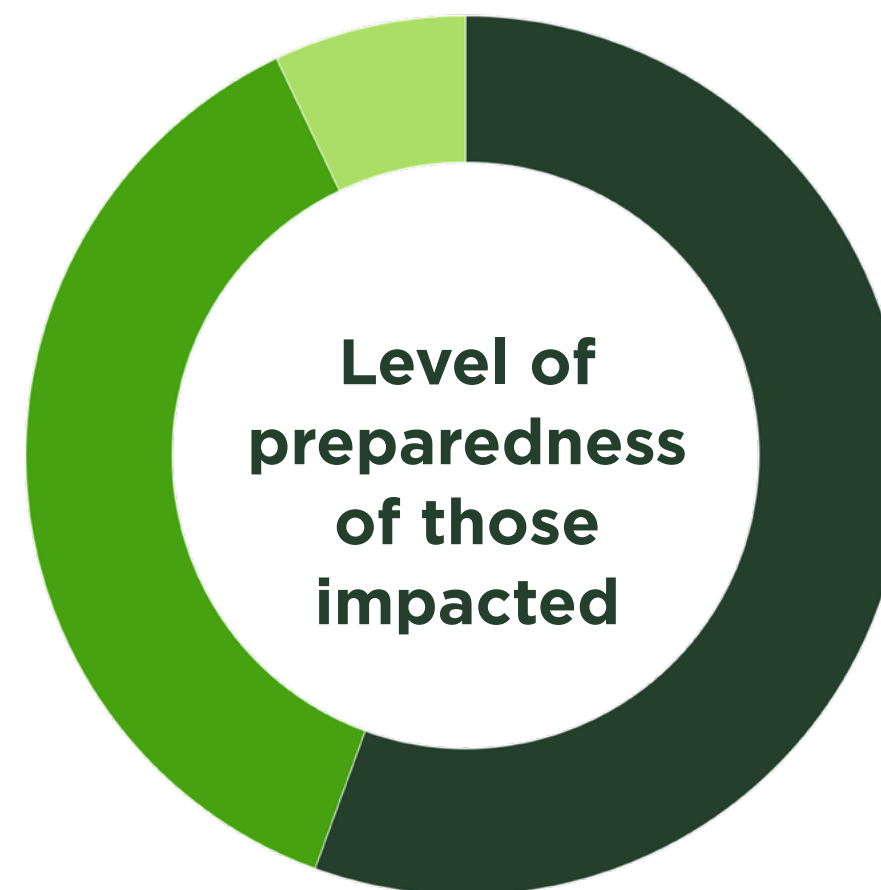
Summary

Background information

Manufacturing companies are largely aware of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), with most already taking steps to comply. Whilst a majority are actively preparing, some are still in the early stages, highlighting the need for structured strategies and data management solutions to meet upcoming reporting requirements.



● Yes | 67,5%
● No | 15%
● Unsure | 17,5%



● Actively preparing | 55,6%
● Early stages | 37%
● Not yet started | 7,4%

WHAT IS CSRD?

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is an EU regulation that requires companies operating in the EU to report comprehensively on their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts, with implementation rolling out in phases from 2024 to 2028. The directive applies to large EU companies, listed SMEs, and non-EU companies with significant EU operations, mandating detailed sustainability reporting and independent verification of these reports.

Pressure

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers
and increased focus

CSRD awareness and
preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside
the company

Summary

Background
information

CSRD is just one of many reporting obligations manufacturers must take into consideration. With multiple regulatory pressures such as the Digital Product Passport, investor-driven reporting, and global compliance requirements, companies must establish flexible and comprehensive sustainability reporting frameworks to stay ahead.

CSRD is only one of 17 other reporting pressures that were mentioned in the responses, impacting businesses in the next 3 years

These regulations were most often mentioned by the respondents:

- Digital Product Passport (DPP)
- Owner/Investor Reporting
- Customer requests
- Global regulations (general)



Maturity

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers
and increased focus

CSRD awareness and
preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside
the company

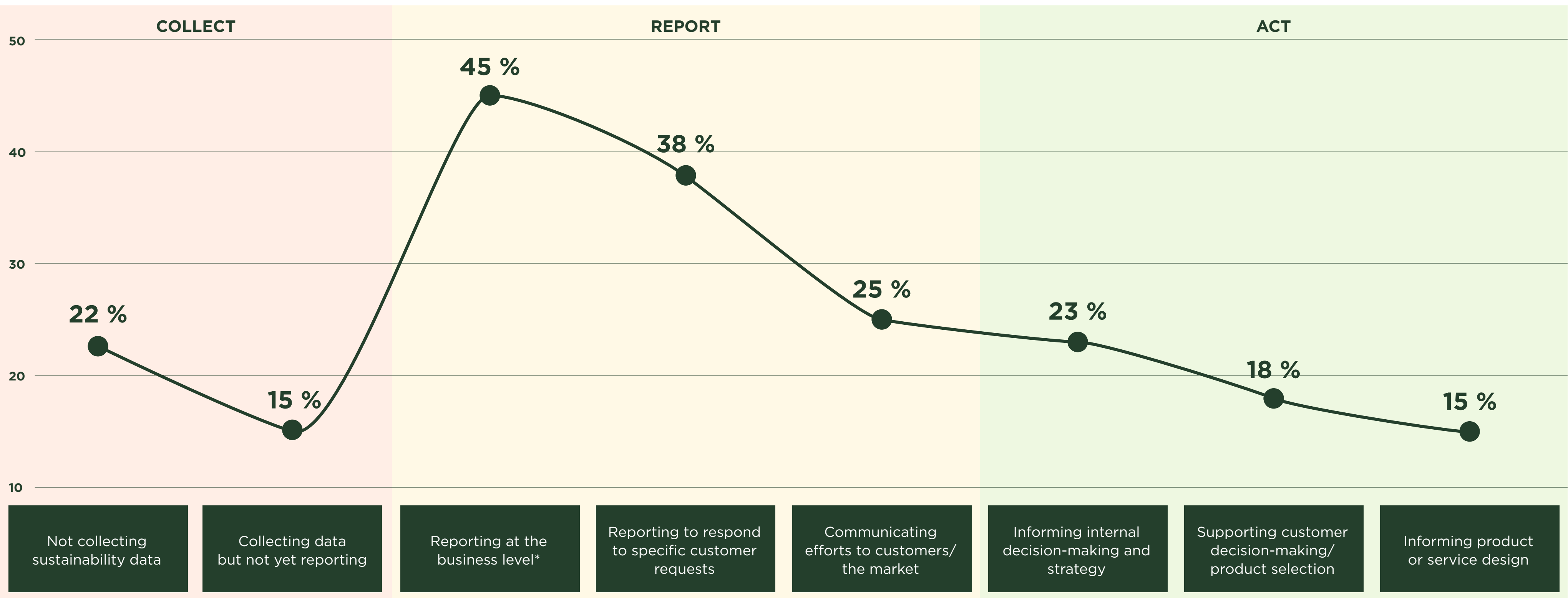
Summary

Background
information

Sustainability reporting is still in its early stages for most companies, with many only beginning to collect data and use it for reporting. However, businesses that go beyond compliance and use sustainability data for decision-making and product design will gain a competitive advantage in the long run.

Sustainability roadmap: Collect, report and act

How is your organization using the sustainability information you collect? Select all that apply.



* for regulatory or investor-focused purposes.

The role of PLM

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers
and increased focus

CSRD awareness and
preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside
the company

Summary

Background
information

As sustainability reporting becomes more data-intensive, Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems are emerging as critical tools. Companies are increasingly relying on PLM for sustainability data collection and reporting, with expectations for its role to grow significantly in the coming years.

REPORTING RELIES ON DATA.

How are companies capturing the data needed for reporting?

83%

of customers with PLM expect to rely on
their PLM system for sustainability data
collection and reporting in the next 3 years

150%

increase in those relying on the PLM
being their primary system



CONCLUSION

PLM plays a significant role in sustainability data collection and reporting

**A well-integrated PLM and ERP
system forms the digital backbone
for sustainability data management.**

- ERPs are the primary system businesses will rely on alongside a PLM environment
- Companies that implement a PLM system typically also utilize an ERP system, as the two are closely interconnected. The PLM system supplies critical data to the ERP, and maintaining high-quality data within the PLM system ensures accurate, reliable information in the ERP. This, in turn, supports well-informed decision-making.
- In addition to ERP, companies rely on sustainability-specific solutions such as those to product LCAs

Measurement approach

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers
and increased focus

CSRD awareness and
preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside
the company

Summary

Background
information

Manufacturers use different methods to measure emissions, with material and weight-based calculations being the most common. However, qualitative research reveals that spend-based calculations, although widely used, may lack the detail businesses need. This underlines the importance of accurate and granular measurement approaches.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING METHOD IS YOUR ORGANIZATION PLANNING TO USE TO MEASURE EMISSIONS IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS?*



* Some companies are going to use both Materials & weight-based and Spend-based

INTERVIEWS

Based on the interviews, we found that spend-based calculations don't offer the level of granularity business needs.

“

Material and weight can be more important than spend-based.... We can work more proactively because everything comes down to our design of the product.”

Martin Lundgren,
Business Systems Improvements Manager, Dellner

Data collection

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information

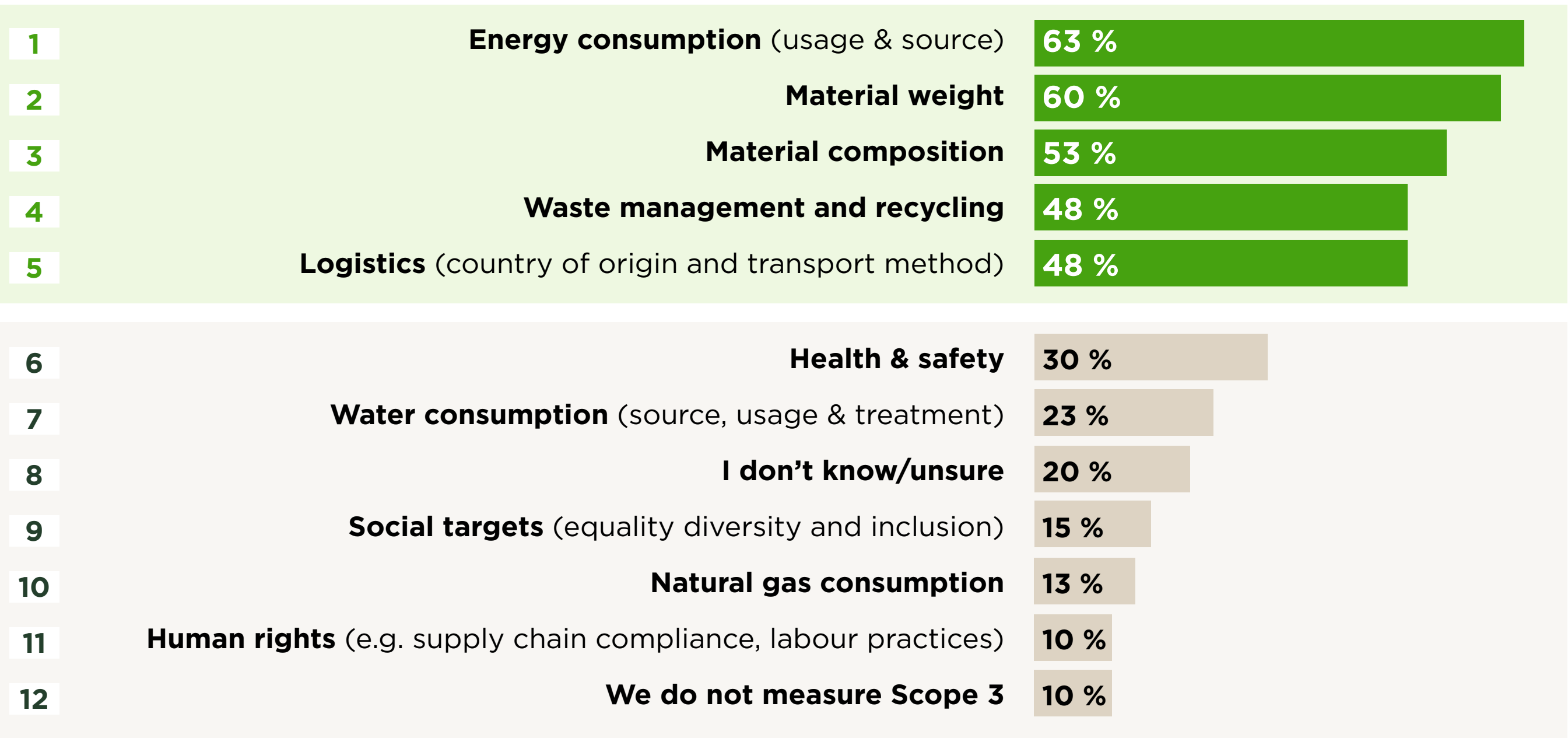
Scope 3 emissions reporting presents a complex challenge, requiring businesses to track various data points, from energy consumption and material composition to logistics and human rights compliance. These are the five key areas where most companies focus in their Scope 3 reporting. If your company has not started to collect Scope 3 data yet, consider starting with these data points.

SCOPE 1–3

- **Scope 1:** Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by a company
- **Scope 2:** Indirect emissions from purchased energy
- **Scope 3:** Indirect emissions from the supply chain

The 5 leading data points for scope 3 measurement

Which of the following is your organization looking to measure as part of its Scope 3 sustainability efforts?



Reporting outside the company – Supplier data and PLM integration

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information

Accurate Scope 3 reporting requires supplier-specific data, but many manufacturers are still adopting or figuring out the process. Rather than relying on generic industry averages, companies recognize the need to use their own material databases enriched with supplier data for more precise sustainability calculations.

PLM systems support this by centralizing material data and making it available for reporting. When integrated with a company's material database, PLM becomes a key tool for managing and accessing high-quality, supplier-based data.

50%

of respondents strongly agree linking their own material database to the PLM is important in material data collection and analysis

SUPPLIER



MATERIAL DATABASE



PLM



REPORTING TOOLS

Summary

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information

Although we have gathered insights from a wide range of design and manufacturing companies, one thing is clear to me. Every company's sustainability journey is different, just as everyone's view of sustainability differs. What is certain, however, is that sustainability is becoming increasingly important in this sector.

Tracking, recording and reporting sustainability-related data is an iterative process. The important thing is to start now with whatever information you have. Then over time, refine the data gathering and find ways of reporting the missing information. Waiting until the perfect information or system exists is a false economy, as the boundaries keep moving as knowledge grows and stakeholder expectations evolve.

Many of the tools currently available in the design and manufacture space can support the collection of sustainability information. In particular, a PLM in connection with an ERP solution represents the best toolset to capture the sustainability information needed for tracking and reporting.

At Symetri, we are here to support you on this journey - from understanding regulatory requirements to implementing digital solutions that enable accurate, actionable sustainability reporting.

Tim Ray
Head of Product, Sovelia at Symetri



Background information

Executive summary

Growth – main drivers and increased focus

CSRD awareness and preparedness

Pressure

Maturity

The role of PLM

Measurement approach

Data collection

Reporting outside the company

Summary

Background information



First, interviews with existing Sovelia Core customers were conducted.
Next, a structured online survey was carried out in January 2025, with 40 responses.

Who responded

Range of industries. More than half of the respondents came from industrial equipment or architecture, engineering & construction.



- Industrial equipment **37,5 %**
- Architecture, engineering & construction **22,5 %**
- Marine & offshore **10 %**
- Transportation & mobility **10 %**
- Energy, process & utility **7,5 %**
- Consumer packaged goods **5 %**
- High tech **2,5 %**
- Other **5 %**

Primary roles were outside of sustainability



- Design/Engineering **30 %**
- Product development/management **30 %**
- Technology/Systems/IT **22,5 %**
- Sustainability **7,5 %**
- Purchasing **2,5 %**
- Other **7,5 %**

...yet, respondents are largely impacted by sustainability.



- Sustainability ...**
- ... has some influence on my role **62,5 %**
 - ... is a significant part of my role **22,5 %**
 - ... is my primary responsibility **7,5 %**
 - ... has minimal or no influence on my role **7,5 %**

65 % of respondents have a PLM system in use and out of those, the majority uses the system daily.



- Daily **65,4 %**
- Weekly **15,4 %**
- Never **15,4 %**
- Monthly **3,8 %**

Interested in learning more about sustainability in manufacturing?

Connect with us to explore how Sovelia and Symetri can support your journey.

www.sovelial.com

info@sovelial.com

Find your local Symetri contact: www.symetri.com

