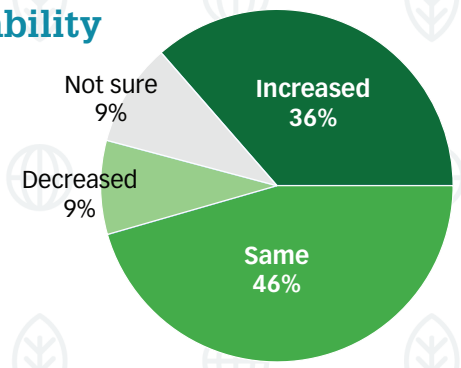
DCVINFOGRAPHIC

No “pandemic pause” for supply chain sustainability

Given all the uncertainty and chaos brought by the pandemic, it would have been understandable if companies had put their sustainability efforts on hold last year. Yet surprisingly, the opposite may have been the case. According to the *State of Supply Chain Sustainability 2021* report, companies’ commitment to supply chain sustainability (SCS) has stayed the same or even increased since the coronavirus began its lethal march across the globe. Here are some highlights from this year’s report:

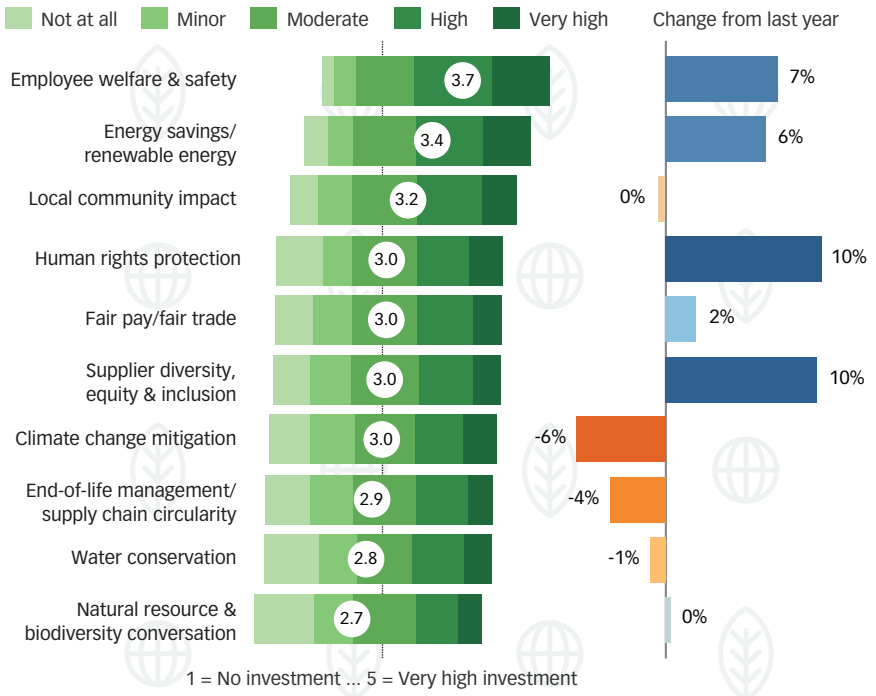
Companies’ commitment to supply chain sustainability

More than four out of five executives surveyed (82%) said their company’s commitment to supply chain sustainability had either stayed the same or increased since the start of the pandemic.



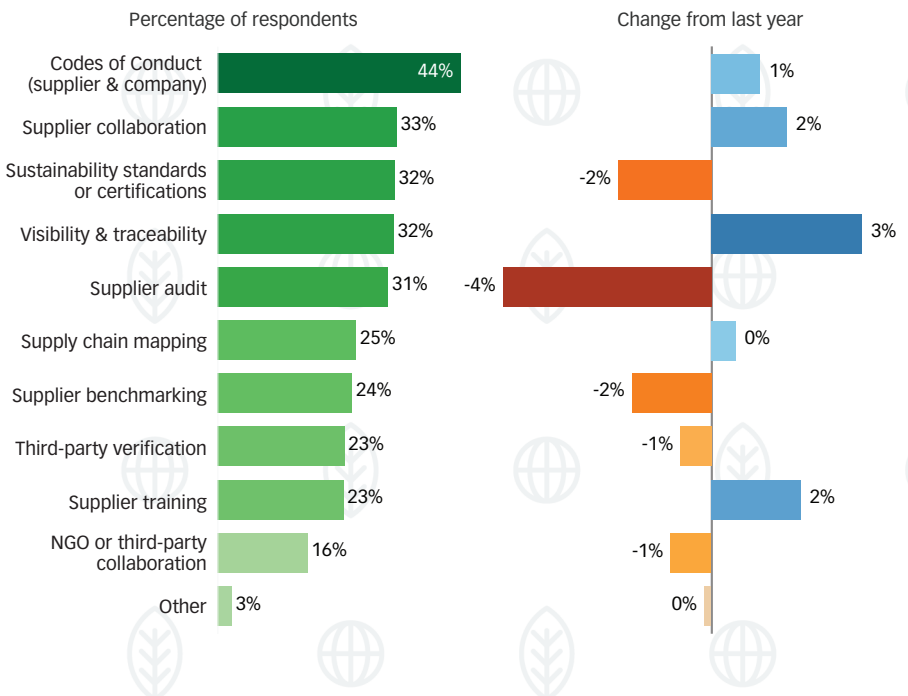
Respondents’ SCS investment priorities

Respondents are devoting more of their SCS dollars to social issues than they did a year ago—probably no surprise given the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and recent outcry over human rights abuses in China. Meanwhile, the pandemic has brought renewed focus to employee welfare and safety.



Types of practices used to manage SCS efforts

When asked what SCS management practices they had in place, nearly half (44%) of respondents cited codes of conduct—both within the company and with suppliers. Other top choices included supplier collaboration, the use of sustainability standards, and improvements in visibility and traceability.



Percentage of companies that have adopted an SCS practice, by business sector

As this heat map shows, there’s wide variation among industries when it comes to the types of SCS practices they have adopted and their progress along the sustainability journey. (The darker shades indicate more commonly used practices.)

	Environmental impact reduction	Supplier development	Visibility
Agriculture	25%	30%	33%
Business consulting	10%	19%	23%
Construction	14%	21%	17%
Healthcare	15%	27%	29%
Manufacturing	25%	36%	35%

	Environmental impact reduction	Supplier development	Visibility
Mining	21%	33%	25%
Retail	25%	29%	34%
Technology	21%	28%	28%
Transportation	33%	30%	37%
Wholesale	12%	33%	36%

ABOUT THE STUDY: Produced through a partnership between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Center for Transportation & Logistics (CTL) and the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP), the annual *State of Supply Chain Sustainability* report looks at corporate supply chain sustainability efforts and their evolution over time. This year’s report was based on a survey of 2,400 supply chain professionals from around the world conducted in late 2020. To download a copy of the report, visit https://sscs.mit.edu.