

# Flash Eurobarometer 426

## Summary

### SMEs, Resource Efficiency and Green Markets

Fieldwork

September 2015

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Survey requested by the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs  
and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

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The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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(DG COMM "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)

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## INTRODUCTION

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are the economic backbone of the European Union<sup>1</sup>. Numbering more than 20 million, these companies represent 99% of European businesses and account for more than two thirds of employment<sup>2</sup>. As well as being economically important, SMEs are also environmentally important: although their individual impact is small, their cumulative impact on the environment is significant.

Although environmental policy can create challenges for SMEs, it also provides business opportunities. By increasing resource efficiency, providing circular economy solutions and participating in green markets, European SMEs can generate employment and growth as well as boost their productivity and competitiveness.

The Green Action Plan for SMEs<sup>3</sup>, adopted in July 2014, details how the Commission will work in partnership with Member States and regions to help SMEs take advantage of these opportunities<sup>4</sup>.

This survey follows from past Eurobarometers (FL342 in 2012 and FL381 in 2013) in reviewing the current levels of resource efficiency actions and the state of the green market amongst Europe's SMEs, as well as in neighbouring countries and in the US.

Topics covered include:

- Current and planned resource efficiency actions, and the reasons for taking them
- Barriers when implementing resource efficiency actions
- Experiences bidding on public procurement tenders with environmental requirements
- The role and impact of policy in supporting green business initiatives
- The current state of the green market

It should also be noted that for some of the small Member States (Cyprus, Malta and Luxembourg) and most of the non-EU countries surveyed (Albania, Iceland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova and Serbia) the sample size is relatively low and results should therefore be interpreted with caution as they carry a larger margin of error. This is particularly the case for Albania, Moldova and Montenegro where, due to the nature of the economic sector, fewer than 100 businesses were interviewed.

This survey was carried out by TNS Political & Social network in 28 Member States of the European Union, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Iceland, Moldova, Norway and the US between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2015. Some 15,020 enterprises were interviewed via telephone (landline and mobile phone) on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)<sup>5</sup>. A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Small and medium-sized enterprises are defined as those with a staff headcount below 250. In addition to the staff headcount ceiling, an enterprise qualifies as an SME if it meets either the turnover ceiling or the balance sheet ceiling, but not necessarily both. The full definition can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/green-action-plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/green-action-plan/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/index_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

Note: In this summary, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this summary correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Latvia	LV
Czech Republic	CZ	Luxembourg	LU
Bulgaria	BG	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Greece	EL	Poland	PL
Spain	ES	Portugal	PT
France	FR	Romania	RO
Croatia	HR	Slovenia	SI
Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus*	CY	Sweden	SE
Lithuania	LT	United Kingdom	UK
Albania	AL	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**	MK
Montenegro	ME	Serbia	RS
Turkey	TR		
Iceland	IS	Moldova	MD
Norway	NO	United States of America	US

\* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 28 European Union Member States. However, the 'acquis communautaire' has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the 'CY' category and in the EU28 average.

\*\* Provisional abbreviation which in no way prejudices the definitive name of this country, which will be agreed once the current negotiations at the United Nations have been completed.

*We wish to thank the people throughout Europe who have given their time  
to take part in this survey.*

*Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.*

## I. BETTER USE OF RESOURCES: WHO, HOW AND HOW MUCH

### 1 Actions to promote resource efficiency: present and future

#### a. What is being done now?

Companies were asked about the current actions they are taking to be more resource efficient<sup>7</sup>.

**- Despite the large decrease in both measures since 2013, minimising waste and saving energy are still the most common resource efficiency actions–**

Looking first at SMEs, at least half say they are minimising waste (60%), saving energy (59%) and saving materials (54%). At least four in ten SMEs are saving water (44%), or recycling by reusing material or waste within their company (40%).

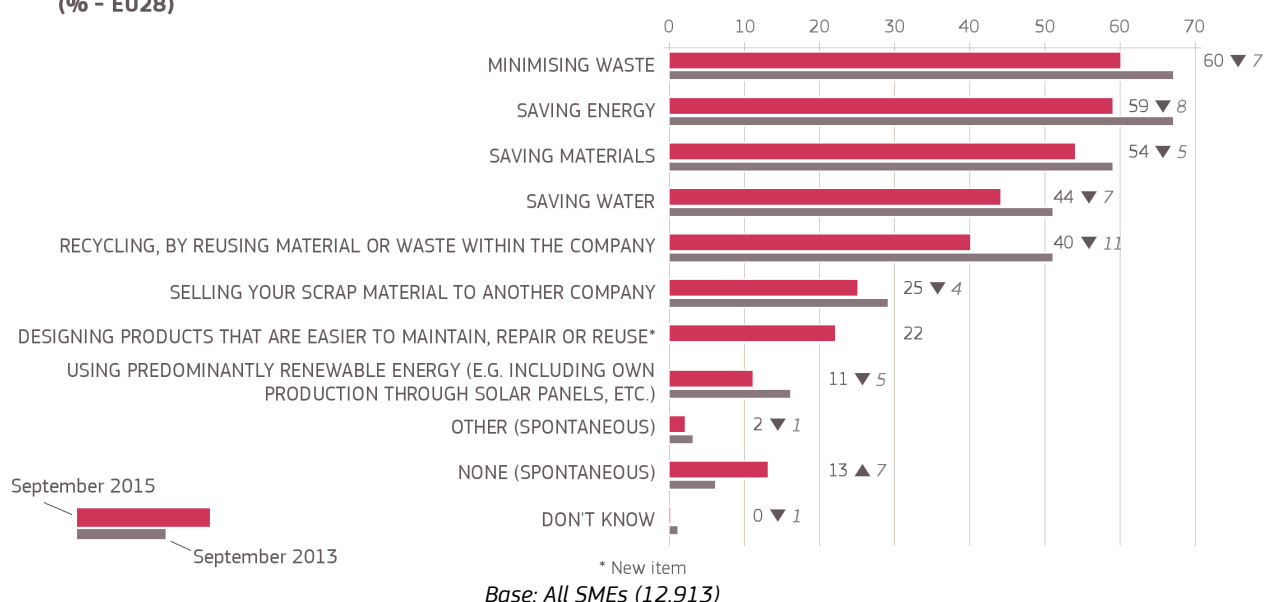
One quarter of SMEs are selling their scrap material to another company (25%), while 22% are designing products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse. Just over one in ten says they are using predominantly renewable energy (11%).

More than one in ten SMEs are not taking any actions to be more resource efficient (13%).

As the chart illustrates, SMEs are less likely to be taking actions in any of these areas than they were in 2013. The largest decline has been in the proportion of SMEs recycling by reusing material or waste within the company (-11 percentage points), followed by declines in saving energy (-8 pp), minimising waste and saving water (both -7 pp).

There has also been a seven percentage point increase in the proportion of SMEs that say they are not taking any actions to be more resource efficient.

**Q1** What actions is your company undertaking to be more resource efficient? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



<sup>7</sup> Q1 What actions is your company undertaking to be more resource efficient? Saving water; Saving energy; Using predominantly renewable energy (e.g. including own production through solar panels, etc.); Saving materials; Minimising waste; Selling your scrap material to another company; Recycling, by reusing material or waste within the company; Designing products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse (N); Other (DO NOT READ OUT); None (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

## b. What will be done in two years' time?

As well as the actions they are taking now, companies were also asked about additional resource efficiency actions they were planning to implement in the next 2 years<sup>8</sup>.

### - As was the case in 2013, saving energy and minimising water are the most commonly planned resource efficiency actions for the next two years –

Half of all SMEs plan to implement energy saving (50%), while 47% plan to minimise waste and 43% plan to save materials. At least one third say they are planning to implement actions to save water (38%) or to recycle by reusing material or waste within the company (34%). SMEs are less likely to be planning to sell their scrap material to other companies (22%), design products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse (21%), or to use predominantly renewable energy (16%).

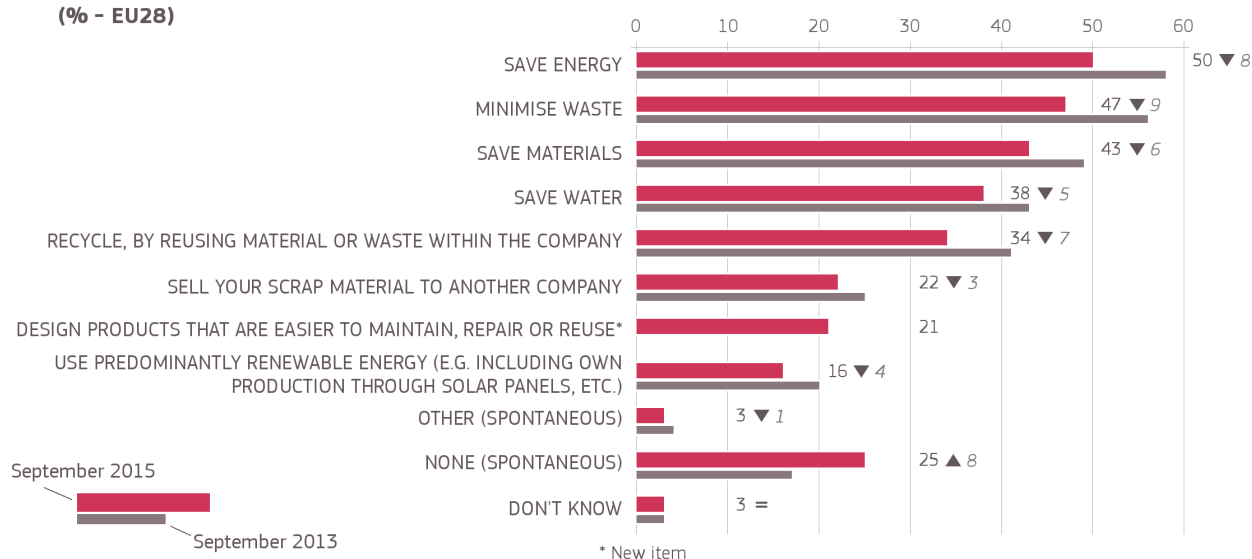
One quarter (25%) of SMEs say they are not planning to implement resource efficiency actions in any of these areas.

Not only are SMEs less likely to be taking resource efficiency actions now than they were in 2013, but they are also less likely to be planning additional actions in the next two years. The largest decrease is in the proportion of SMEs that are planning additional actions to minimise waste (-9 percentage points), followed by saving energy (-8 pp), recycling (-7 pp) and saving materials (-6 pp).

In the same period there has been an eight point increase in the proportion of SMEs that say they are not planning any additional resource efficiency actions in the next two years.

**Q2** Over the next two years, what are the additional resource efficiency actions that your company is planning to implement ?  
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

(% - EU28)



Base: All SMEs (12,913)

<sup>8</sup> Q2. Over the next two years, what are the additional resource efficiency actions that your company is planning to implement? Save water; Save energy ; Use predominantly renewable energy (e.g. including own production through solar panels, etc.); Save materials; Minimise waste; Sell your scrap material to another company; Recycle, by reusing material or waste within the company; Design products that are easier to maintain, repair or reuse (N); Other (DO NOT READ OUT); None (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA



### c. Barriers encountered when becoming more resource efficient

Companies that have taken at least one resource efficiency action were asked about difficulties they encountered when trying to set up their actions<sup>9</sup>.

#### - More than one third of SMEs encountered no difficulties when setting up resource efficiency actions –

SMEs are most likely to say that they did not encounter any difficulties when setting up resource efficiency actions (37%).

However, 29% of SMEs say they encountered complex administrative or legal procedures when setting up their resource efficiency action or actions and at least one in five say that the cost of environmental actions (23%), the difficulty to adapt environmental legislation to the company (21%), the lack of demand for resource efficient products or services, or the lack of specific environmental expertise (both 20%) were difficulties.

Almost one in five SMEs found difficulty in choosing the right actions for their company (18%), while 15% had difficulties with the technical requirements of the legislation not being up to date. Just over one in ten (11%) said the lack of supply of required materials, parts, products or services was a difficulty.

**Q12** Did your company encounter any of the following difficulties when trying to set up resource efficiency actions? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that have taken at least one resource efficiency action = 11,113

Comparing SMEs to large companies shows that SMEs are generally more likely to say each of these issues was a difficulty for them when setting up resource efficiency actions<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Q12. Did your company encounter any of the following difficulties when trying to set up resource efficiency actions? Complexity of administrative or legal procedures; Difficulty to adapt environmental legislation to your company (M); Technical requirements of the legislation not being up to date; Difficulty in choosing the right resource efficiency actions for your company; Cost of environmental actions; Lack of specific environmental expertise; Lack of supply of required materials, parts, products or services (N); Lack of demand for resource efficient products or services (N); Other (DO NOT READ OUT)  
None (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

<sup>10</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large companies, due to low base size (128).

## 2 Does it pay to be 'clean and green'?

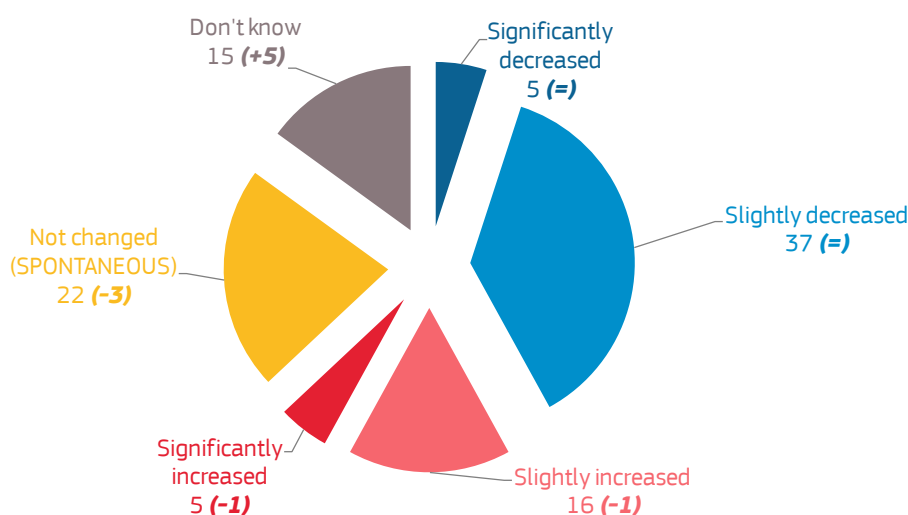
Companies were asked about the impact their resource efficiency actions have had on production costs over the past two years<sup>11</sup>.

### - More than four in ten SMEs say resource efficiency actions have decreased production costs over the past two years -

Amongst SMEs taking resource efficiency actions, 42% say these actions have decreased their production costs over the past two years - 5% say the decrease has been significant. Just over one in five (21%) say production costs have increased, with 5% saying the increase has been significant. Almost the same proportion (22%) say there has been no change as a result of these actions.

There has been relatively little change in results since 2013, with SMEs slightly less likely to say production costs have not changed (-3 percentage points) or increased (-2 pp) and no change in the proportion who say production costs have decreased as a result of resource efficiency actions.

**Q4** What impact have the undertaken resource efficiency actions had on the production costs over the past two years? The production costs have...  
(% - EU)



(September 2015 - September 2013)

Base: SMEs that have taken at least one resource efficiency action = 11,113

Large companies are more likely than SMEs to say production costs have decreased to some degree as a result of resource efficiency actions (48% vs. 42%)<sup>12</sup>.

Micro SMEs are more likely than larger SMEs to say that resource efficiency actions have increased production costs (21% vs. 15%-18%), or that there has been no change (23% vs. 13%-19%). SMEs with at least ten employees are more likely than micro SMEs to say production costs have decreased (49%-51% vs. 40%).

<sup>11</sup> Q4. What impact have the undertaken resource efficiency actions had on the production costs over the past two years? The production costs have... (M): significantly decreased (M); slightly decreased (M); slightly increased (M); significantly increased (M); not changed (DO NOT READ OUT) (M); DK/NA.

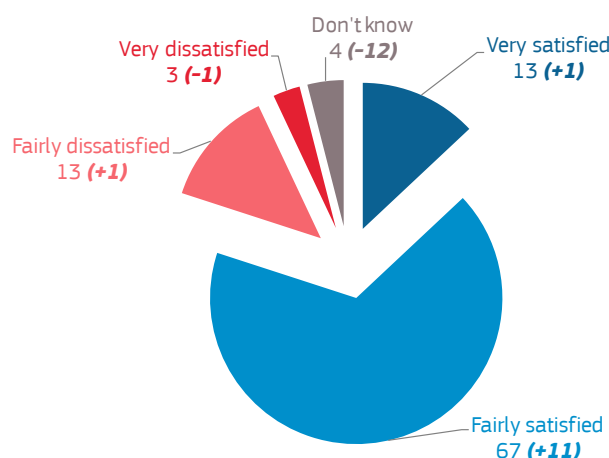
<sup>12</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large companies, due to low base size (128).

### - Eight out of ten SMEs are satisfied with the return on their resource efficiency investments -

When asked, most SMEs are satisfied with the return on the investments they have made in resource efficiency (80%) – in fact 13% say they are very satisfied<sup>13</sup>. Less than one in five is dissatisfied (16%), with only 3% saying they are very dissatisfied with the return on these investments.

SMEs are much more likely to be satisfied now than they were in 2013, with overall satisfaction increasing by 12 percentage points. Most of this increase has been amongst SMEs who are fairly satisfied (+11 pp).

**Q6** Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the return on the investments you have made on resource efficiency?  
(% - EU)



(September 2015 - September 2013)

Base: SMEs that have invested over the past two years to be more resource efficient = 6,594

SMEs in the EU are more likely than their US counterparts to be satisfied with the return on their resource efficiency investments (80% vs. 74%). Nevertheless, SMEs in the US are actually more likely than those in the EU to say they are very satisfied with the return on their investment (21% vs. 13%) and, consequently less likely to be fairly satisfied (53% vs. 67%).

In every Member State more than six in ten of the SMEs that invested in resource efficiency over the last two years are satisfied with the return on their investment. Satisfaction is highest amongst SMEs in Finland (91%), Austria (90%), Cyprus and the UK (both 89%), and lowest amongst those in Latvia (65%), Italy and Croatia (both 66%).

<sup>13</sup> Q6. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the return on the investments you have made on resource efficiency? (M) Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Fairly dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied; DK/NA

### 3 Do policies help companies to become resource efficient?

#### a. General overview

Companies were asked about the kind of support they rely on when trying to be more resource efficient<sup>14</sup>.

Amongst SMEs that have taken resource efficiency actions, at least six in ten have relied on their own financial resources (63%) or technical expertise (61%). Comparatively few rely on external support (19%). SMEs that rely on external support were asked for more detail about the kinds of external support they receive<sup>15</sup>.

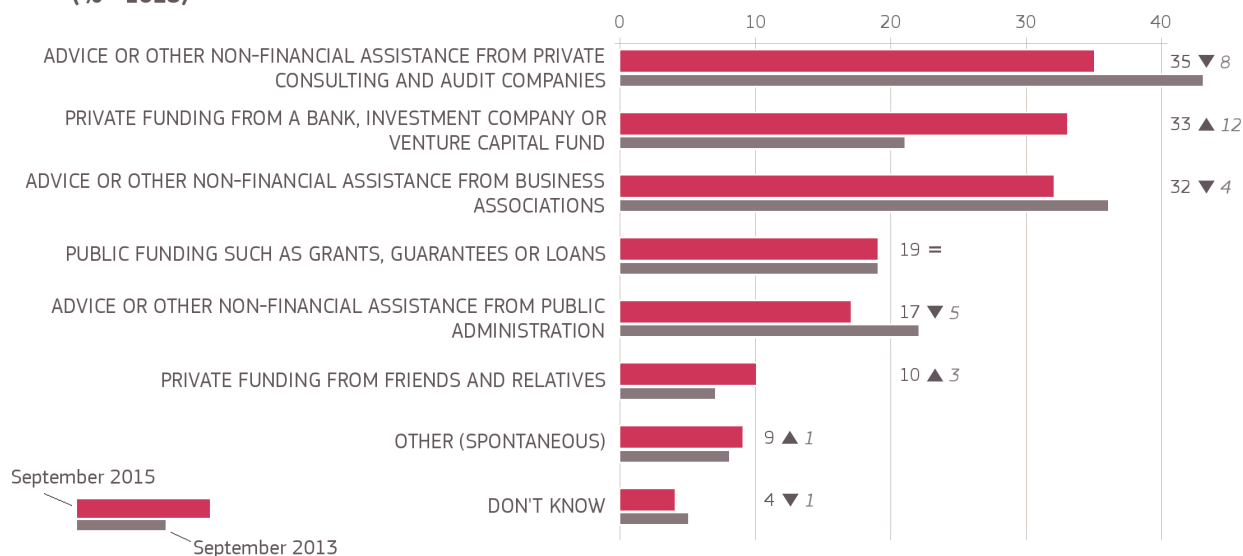
#### - SMEs accessing external support for resource efficiency actions do so from a range of sources –

SMEs that rely on external support for resource efficiency are almost equally likely to have taken advice or other non-financial assistance from private consulting and audit companies (35%), taken private funding from a bank, investment company or venture capital fund (33%), or taken advice or other non-financial assistance from business associations (32%).

Almost one in five received public funding such as grants, guarantees or loans (19%), while 17% received advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration and 10% relied on private funding from friends and relatives.

Overall SMEs are much more likely to have used private sector funding than public sector funding (79% vs. 30%).

**Q11** More precisely, which type of external support is it? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that receive external support to be more resource efficient = 2,146

<sup>14</sup> Q10. Which type of support does your company rely on in its efforts to be more resource efficient? Its own financial resources; Its own technical expertise; External support; Other (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

<sup>15</sup> Q11. More precisely, which type of external support is it? Public funding such as grants, guarantees or loans (M); Private funding from a bank, investment company or venture capital fund (M); Private funding from friends or relatives (M); Advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration; Advice or other non-financial assistance from private consulting and audit companies; Advice or other non-financial assistance from business associations; Other (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

## b. Supporting resource efficiency: where the focus should lie

All companies were asked what measures they thought would help them be more resource efficient<sup>16</sup>.

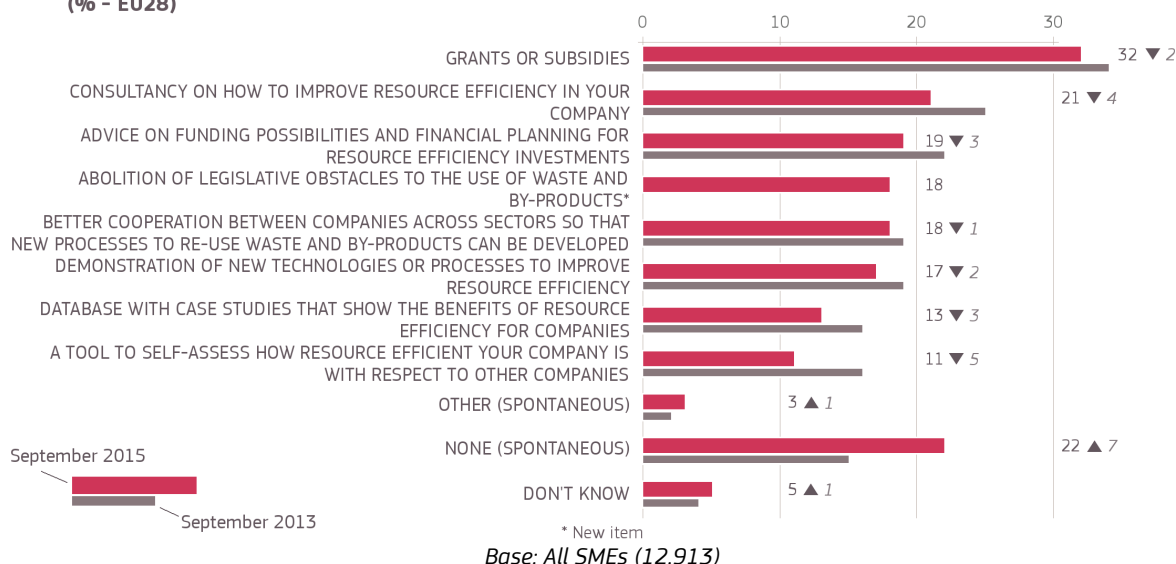
### - Grants and subsidies are considered the best form of assistance in improving resource efficiency -

Almost one third of SMEs think that grants or subsidies would help their company be more resource efficient (32%), and this is the most mentioned form of assistance. Just over one in five SMEs think consultancy on how to improve resource efficiency would be of assistance (21%), while 19% say this about advice on funding possibilities and financial planning for resource efficiency investments. Better cooperation between companies across sectors so that new processes to re-use waste and by-products can be developed, and the abolition of legislative obstacles to the use of waste and by-products are mentioned by 18% of SMEs. Almost as many (17%) say demonstration of new technologies or processes to improve resource efficiency would help them be more resource efficient.

At least one in ten SMEs say a database with case studies that show the benefits of resource efficiency for companies (13%), or a tool to self-assess how resource efficient their company is with respect to other companies (11%) would be of assistance. Just over one in five SMEs, on the other hand, say none of these things would help them to be more resource efficient (22%).

SMEs are generally less likely than they were in 2013 to say each of these measures would help them to be more resource efficient, although in most cases the difference is three percentage points or less. The largest decreases are observed in the mention of a self-assessment tool (-5 percentage points) and for a consultancy on how to improve resource efficiency (-4 pp). There has, however, been a seven percentage point increase in the proportion of SMEs that say none of these measures would help them to be more resource efficient.

**Q13** Which of the following would help your company the most to be more resource efficient? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU28)



<sup>16</sup> Q13. Which of the following would help your company the most to be more resource efficient? A tool to self-assess how resource efficient your company is with respect to other companies (M); Consultancy on how to improve resource efficiency in your company; Grants or subsidies; Advice on funding possibilities and financial planning for resource efficiency investments (M); Demonstration of new technologies or processes to improve resource efficiency; Databases with case studies that show the benefits of resource efficiency for companies; Better cooperation between companies across sectors so that new processes to re-use waste and by-products can be developed (M); Abolition of legislative obstacles to the use of waste and by-products (N); Other (DO NOT READ OUT); None (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA.

## 4 Identifying the barriers of applying for public tenders with environmental requirements

All companies were asked if they had bid for a public tender that included environmental requirements<sup>17</sup>.

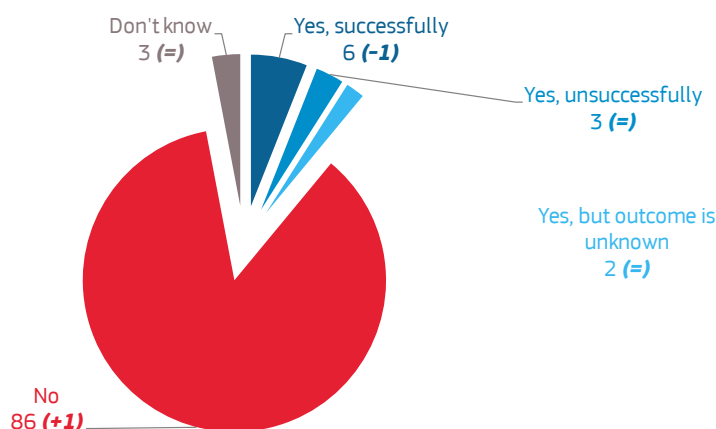
### - Most SMEs have not bid for a public procurement tender including environmental requirements in the last two years –

Just over one in twenty SMEs (6%) have successfully bid for a public procurement tender that included environmental requirements. A further 3% bid unsuccessfully, while for 2% the outcome of their bid is unknown.

Overall, 11% of SMEs have made a bid in the last two years. However, most SMEs have not bid on such a tender in the last two years (86%).

There has been no notable change since 2013.

**Q7** In the last two years, did your company bid for a public procurement tender that included environmental requirements?  
(% - EU)



(September 2015 - September 2013)

Base: All SMEs (12,913)

Compared to SMEs, large companies are more likely to have made a bid on this kind of public procurement tender in the last two years (19% vs. 11%), and in particular they are more likely to have been successful (17% vs. 6%)<sup>18</sup>.

The larger the SME, the more likely it is to have made a successful bid on a public procurement tender with environmental requirements in the last two years.

Just 4% of micro SMEs have bid successfully, compared to 12% of small SMEs and 21% of medium-sized SMEs. There are no notable differences between these groups of SMEs in terms of unsuccessful bids and bids where the outcome is unknown.

<sup>17</sup> In the last 2 years, did your company bid for a public procurement tender that included environmental requirements? (M) Yes, successfully; Yes, unsuccessfully; Yes, but outcome is unknown; No; DK/NA

<sup>18</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large companies, due to low base size (146).

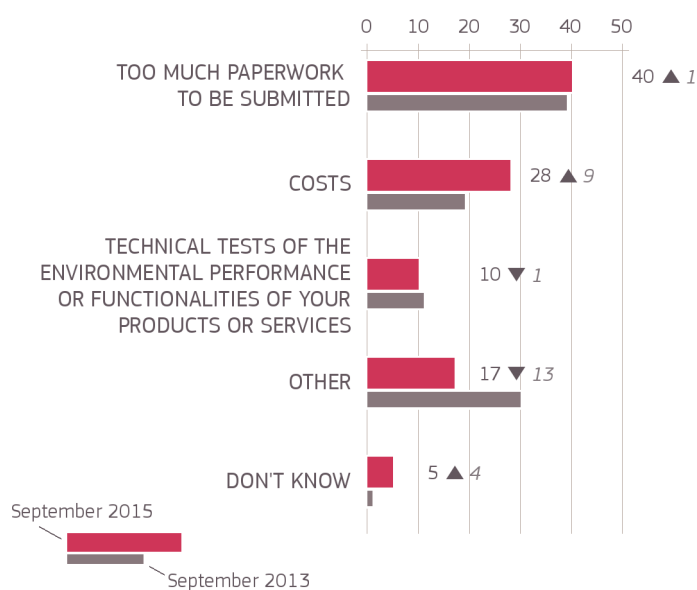
Amongst SMEs that experienced difficulties in bidding for a public procurement tender with environmental requirements, the most common issue was that too much paperwork needed to be submitted (40%)<sup>19</sup>. Costs were a problem for 28%, while 10% had difficulties with the technical tests of the environmental performance or functionalities of their products or services.

Almost one in five encountered other difficulties (17%).

Costs are more likely to be mentioned as a difficulty than they were in 2013 (+9 percentage points).

**Q9** What was the most prominent difficulty that you faced when bidding for a public procurement tender with environmental requirements?

(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that experienced difficulties when bidding for a public procurement tender in the last two years = 267

<sup>19</sup> Q9. What was the most prominent difficulty that you faced when bidding for a public procurement tender with environmental requirements? Costs; Technical tests of the environmental performance or functionalities of your products or services; Too much paperwork to be submitted ; Other; DK/NA

## II. GREEN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AND SMES: REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL RISK, MINIMISING POLLUTION AND THE USE OF RESOURCES

### 1 Green markets: profiles of SMEs offering green products or services

#### a. Profiles of SMEs offering green products or services

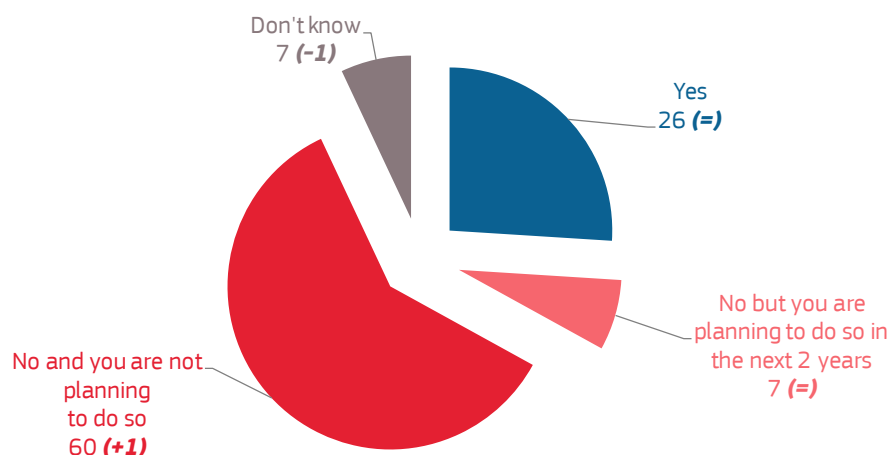
##### - More than one quarter of SMEs currently offer green products or services –

Across EU28, at least one third of all SMEs either currently offer green products or services (26%), or are planning to do so in the next two years (7%).

The majority, however, do not currently offer green products or services, and have no plans to do so (60%).

There has been no notable change in these proportions since 2013.

**Q14** Does your company offer green products or services?  
(% - EU)



(September 2015 - September 2013)

Base: All SMEs (12,913)

Compared to SMEs, large companies are more likely to currently offer green products or services (33% vs. 26%). SMEs, on the other hand, are more likely to say they do not offer green products and services, and are not planning to do so (60% vs. 54%)<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large companies, due to low base size (146).

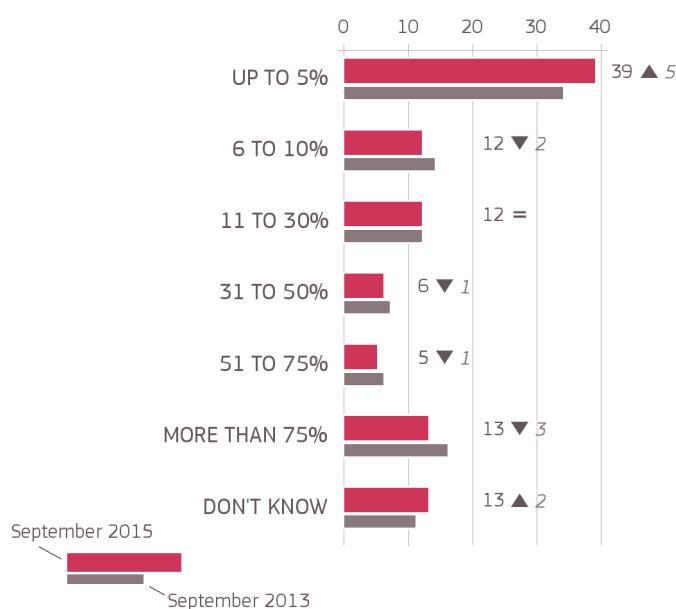


For SMEs that currently sell green products or services, these make up a relatively small proportion of their most recent annual turnover<sup>21</sup>. For 39%, green products or services represent no more than 5% of their annual turnover, while for a further 12% these products or services represented 6-10% turnover. Twelve percent of SMEs say green products or services represented 11-30% of turnover, while 6% say they accounted for 31%-50% of turnover and 5% say green products or services represented 51%-75% of turnover.

More than one in ten (13%) say green products or services accounted for more than 75% of their most recent annual turnover.

There have been relatively small changes since 2013. The exception is a five percentage point increase in the proportion of SMEs who say up to 5% of turnover was from green products or services.

**Q15** How much did these green products or services represent in your annual turnover of the latest available fiscal year?  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that offer green products or services = 3,392

SMEs in the US are more likely to report a higher turnover from green products or services than their EU counterparts: 69% report a green products or services represented at least 6% of turnover, compared to 48% of SMEs in the EU<sup>22</sup>. Most of the difference is in the lower end of the range: 39% of EU SMEs say up to 5% of their turnover was from green products or services, compared to 26% of US SMEs.

However, 26% of US SMEs say 6-10% of turnover came from green products or services, compared to 12% of those in the EU.

<sup>21</sup> Q15. How much did these green products or services represent in your annual turnover of the latest available fiscal year? (M) Up to 5% (M); 6-10% (M); 11-30% (M); 31-50% (M); 51-75% (M); More than 75% (M); DK/NA

<sup>22</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for the US, due to low base size (115).

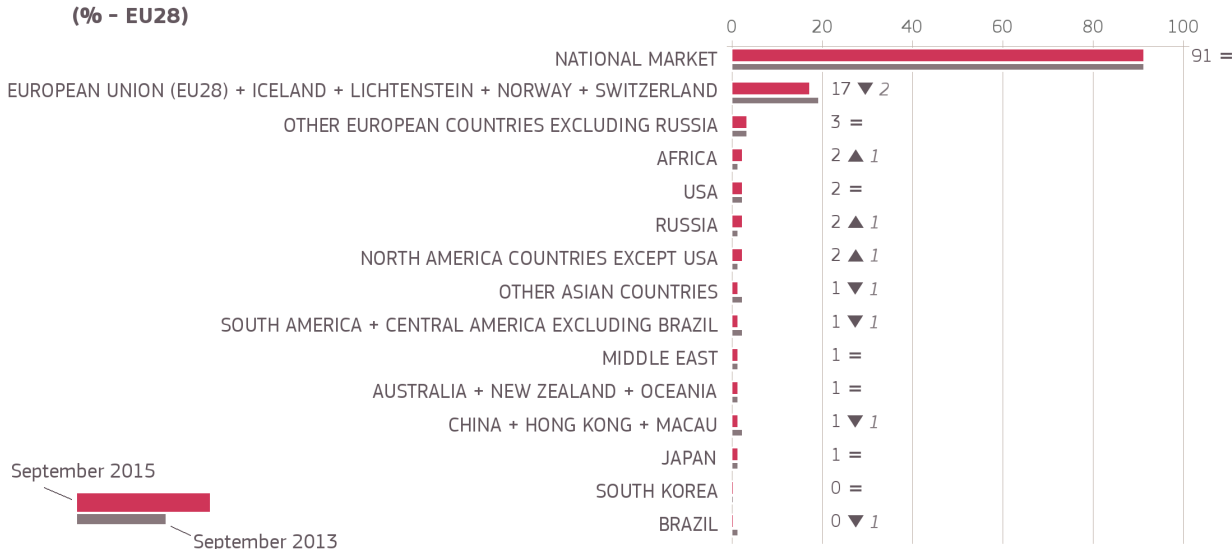
## b. Where do SMEs sell their green products or services?

SMEs were asked about the main markets, in terms of turnover in the last two years, for their green products or services<sup>23</sup>. For the large majority (91%), their national market is the main market for their green products or services. Almost one in five (17%) say their main market is the EU plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Other areas are the main markets for 3% or less of SMEs that sell green products or services.

There have been no notable changes in the main markets for green products and services since 2013.

**Q17** In terms of turnover over the past 2 years, what were the main markets (countries/ geographical regions) for your green products or services? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that offer green products or services = 3,392

SMEs with fewer than 50 employees are more likely than medium-sized SMEs to say the national market is their main market for green products or services (90%-92% vs. 82%)<sup>24</sup>. The larger the SME, the more likely it is that their main market is the EU plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland: 15% of micro SMEs say this is their main market, compared to 21% of mid-sized SMEs and 46% of large SMEs. Large SMEs are generally more likely to say each region is one of their main markets, with the exception of Brazil, China, Hong Kong and Macau, South Korea and Japan.

Manufacturing (22%) and services (21%) SMEs are more likely than those in retail (16%) and industry (12%) to say that the EU plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland is a main market for their green products or services. Retail and services SMEs are the most likely to say the national market is their main market (88% vs. 92%-94%).

<sup>23</sup> Q17. In terms of turnover over the past 2 years, what were the main markets (countries/geographical regions) for your green products or services? National market; European Union (EU-28) + Iceland + Lichtenstein + Norway + Switzerland; Other European countries excluding Russia (M); Russia; North American countries except USA; USA; South America and Central America excluding Brazil; Brazil; Africa; Middle East China, Hong Kong and Macau; South Korea; Japan; Other Asian countries; Australia and New Zealand + Oceania.

<sup>24</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large SMEs, due to low base size (112).

## 2 Do policies help SMEs to offer green products or services?

### a. General overview

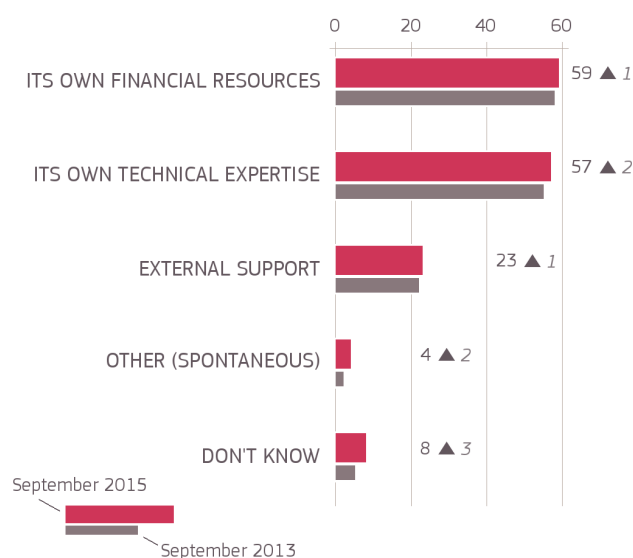
SMEs were asked about the kind of support they rely on to produce their green products or services<sup>25</sup>.

#### **- SMEs are much more likely to rely on their own resources, rather than external support, to produce green products or services –**

Almost six out of ten SMEs that offer green products or services rely on their own financial resources to produce these green products or services (59%), while almost as many (57%) rely on their own technical expertise. More than one in five says they rely on external support (23%).

There have been no notable changes since 2013.

**Q18** What type of support does your company rely on for the production of its green products or services? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



SMEs with 50-249 employees are much more likely than smaller SMEs to rely on their own financial resources (73% vs. 57%-59%)<sup>26</sup>. Those with at least 10 employees are more likely than micro SMEs to rely on their own technical expertise (64%-67% vs. 55%), but there is no notable difference in the proportions who rely on external support to produce their green products or services.

SMEs in the US are much more likely than those in the EU to rely on external support to produce green products or services (41% vs. 23%)<sup>27</sup>. SMEs in the EU are more likely than those in the US to rely on their own financial resources (59% vs. 49%) or their own technical expertise (57% vs. 52%).

<sup>25</sup> Q18. What type of support does your company rely on for the production of its green products or services? Its own financial resources; Its own technical expertise; External support; Other (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

<sup>26</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large SMEs, due to low base size (112).

<sup>27</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for the US, due to low base size (115).

SMEs that receive external support for the production of green products or services were asked about the form that support takes<sup>28</sup>.

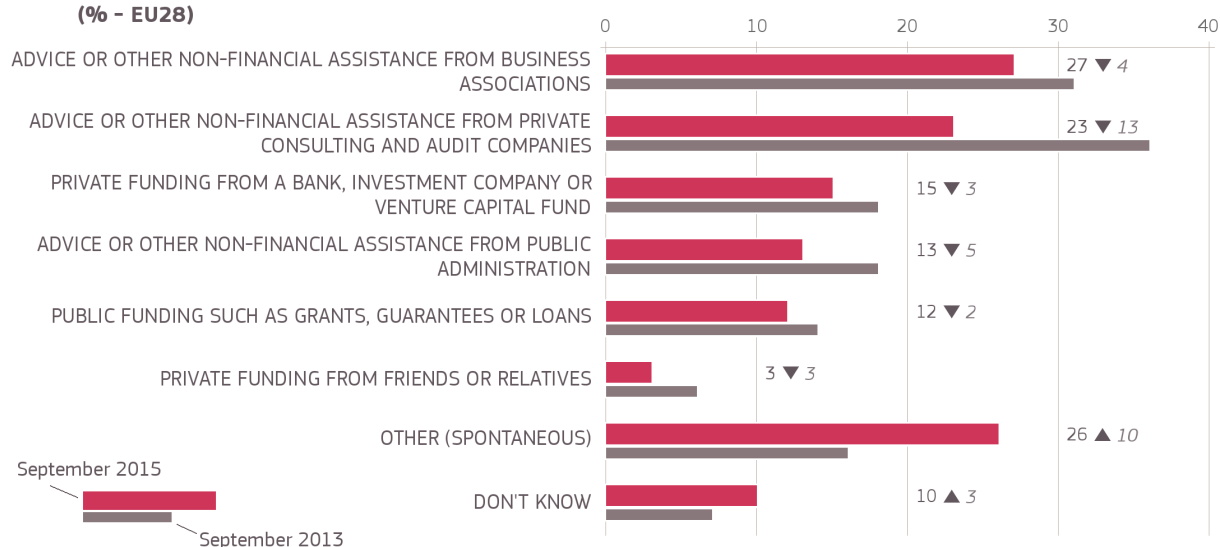
At least one in five receive advice or other non-financial assistance from business associations (27%) or from private consulting and audit companies (23%). Fifteen percent receive private funding from a bank, investment company or venture capital fund, while 13% receive advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration and 12% receive public funding such as grants, guarantees or loans. Just, three percent receive private funding from friends or relatives, while 26% receive other external support.

The proportion of SMEs receiving advice or other non-financial assistance from private consulting and audit companies has decreased by thirteen percentage points since 2013.

The proportion of SMEs advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration has declined five points, while the proportion receiving advice or other non-financial assistance from business associations has also declined by four points.

It worth to highlight that there has been a ten percentage point increase in the proportion of SMEs receiving other external support for the production of their green products or services.

**Q19** Which type of external support does your company get for the production of its green products or services? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that receive external support to produce its green products or services = 767

Micro SMEs are less likely than small SMEs to rely on private sector support (53% vs. 69%). In particular, small SMEs are much more likely than micro SMEs to rely on private funding from a bank, investment company or venture capital fund (31% vs. 11%), and are also more likely to rely on advice or other non-financial assistance from private consulting and audit companies (30% vs 21%). There is no difference between these two groups for public sector support<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Q19. Which type of external support does your company get for the production of its green products or services? Public funding such as grants, guarantees or loans (M); Private funding (e.g. from a bank, investment company or venture capital fund) (M); Private funding from friends or relatives (M); Advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration; Advice or other non-financial assistance from private consulting and audit companies; Advice or other non-financial assistance from business associations; Other (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

<sup>29</sup> Large SMEs were excluded from the analysis due to very low base size (28). Care should be taken when interpreting the results for mid-sized SMEs, due to low base size (143).

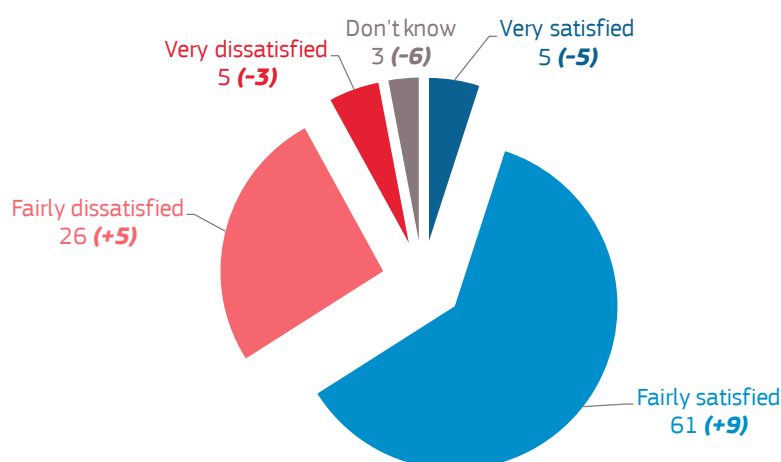
## b. Does public support work?

SMEs that receive public funding or other public support to produce their green products or services were asked how satisfied they are with the level of this support<sup>30</sup>.

Overall, two thirds are satisfied (66%), with 5% saying they are very satisfied. Thirty one percent are dissatisfied, with five percent saying they are very dissatisfied.

Compared to 2013, SMEs are more likely to be fairly satisfied (+9 pp) or fairly dissatisfied (+5 pp).

**Q20** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of public support for your green products or services?  
(% - EU)



(September 2015 - September 2013)

Base: SMEs that receive public funding or advice or other non-financial assistance from public administration to produce its green products or services = 174

<sup>30</sup> Q20 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of public support for your green products or services? (M) Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Fairly dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied; DK/NA

### c. Encouraging new green products and services: where the focus should lie

SMEs that offer green products or services were asked what kind of support would help them most to expand their offering in this area<sup>31</sup>.

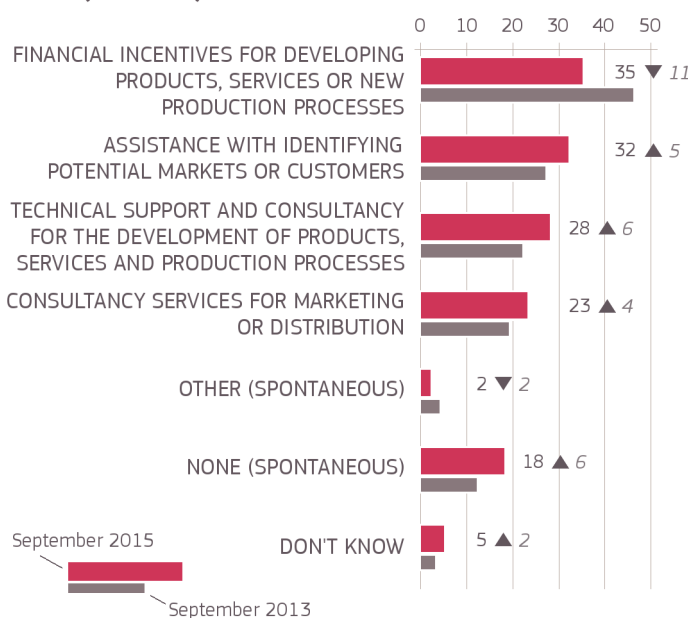
#### - Financial incentives and assistance identifying potential markets or customers are seen as most helpful in expanding green product or service offerings –

SMEs are most likely to say financial incentives for developing products, services or new production processes would most help them expand their range of green products or services (35%), closely followed by assistance with identifying potential markets or customers (32%). More than one quarter say technical support and consultancy for the development of products, services and production processes would help (28%), while 23% say this about consultancy services for marketing or distribution.

Almost one in five SMEs that offer green products or services say none of these types of support would help them expand their range of green products or services (18%).

SMEs offering green products or services are less likely than they were in 2013 to say financial incentives would most help them expand their range of green products or services (-11 percentage points). However, they are more likely to mention technical support and consultancy (+6 pp), assistance with identifying potential markets or customers (+5 pp) or consultancy services for marketing or distribution (+4 pp).

**Q21A** What type of support would help you the most to expand your range of green products or services? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU28)



Base: SMEs that offer green products or services = 3,392

Compared to SMEs in the EU, those in the US are more likely to say financial incentives for developing products, services or new production processes would most help them expand their range of green products or services (45% vs. 35%)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Q21A. What type of support would help you the most to expand your range of green products or services? Financial incentives for developing products, services or new production processes; Assistance with identifying potential markets or customers; Technical support and consultancy for the development of products, services and production processes; Consultancy services for marketing or distribution; Other (DO NOT READ OUT); None (DO NOT READ OUT); DK/NA

## d. Green employment in the SME sector

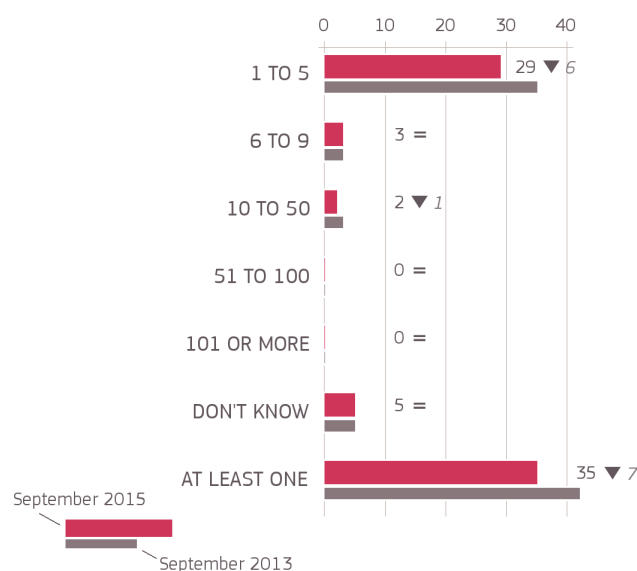
All companies were asked about employees working in green jobs<sup>33</sup> at least some of the time<sup>34</sup>.

### - More than one third of SMEs have at least one full time employee working in green jobs some or all of the time –

Almost three in ten SMEs have 1-5 full time employees working in green jobs at least some of the time (29%). A further three percent have 6-9 employees working in green jobs, while two percent have 10-50 employees in green jobs.

Most SMEs (60%) have no full time employees in green jobs at least some of the time. Compared to 2013, there has been a seven percentage point decrease in the proportion of SMEs with at least one employee in green jobs. Much of this is attributable to the six percentage point decrease in the proportion with 1-5 employees in green jobs. The proportion of SMEs with no employees in green jobs has increased by eight points.

**Q22** In your company, how many of your full time employees, including yourself, work in green jobs some or all of the time?  
(% - EU28)



Base: All SMEs (12,913)

Compared to SMEs, large companies are more likely to have at least one full time employee in green jobs at least some of the time (45% vs. 35%)<sup>35</sup>. In fact, 24% have 10 or more full time employees in green jobs at least some of the time, compared to 2% of SMEs. For SMEs the average number of full time employees in green jobs is 5.3, compared to 50.6 for large companies.

There are only three Member States where at least half of all SMEs have one or more full time employee working in a green job at least some of the time: Spain (67%), Slovakia (52%) and Finland (50%). This compares to 14% of SMEs in Estonia, 19% in Lithuania and 20% in the Czech Republic.

<sup>32</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for the US, due to low base size (115).

<sup>33</sup> A "green job" was defined in this survey as a job that directly deals with information, technologies, or materials that preserves or restores environmental quality. This requires specialised skills, knowledge, training, or experience (e.g. verifying compliance with environmental legislation, monitoring resource efficiency within the company, promoting and selling green products and services).

<sup>34</sup> Q22. In your company, how many of your full time employees, including yourself, work in green jobs some or all of the time?

<sup>35</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results for large companies, due to low base size (146).

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of September and the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, TNS political & social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the FLASH EUROBAROMETER 426 survey on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. It is a business to business survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication, "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit.

The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 426 survey has been held in the 28 Member states of the European Union and in Albania, Iceland, FYROM, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Turkey and USA. It covers businesses employing 1 or more people that are active in one of the following sectors (Nace codes):

- B Mining and quarrying;
- C Manufacturing;
- D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply;
- E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities;
- F Construction;
- G Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles;
- H Transportation and storage;
- I Accommodation and food service activities;
- J Information and communication;
- K Financial and insurance activities;
- L Real estate activities;
- M Professional, scientific and technical activities.

The survey covers large companies and SMEs; and SMEs have been benchmarked against large companies as it was done in the Flash Eurobarometer 342.

All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call centre (our centralised CATI system). The sample was selected from an international business database, with some additional sample from local sources in countries where necessary.

Quotas were applied on both company size and sectors. These quotas were adjusted according to the country's universe but were also reasoned in order to ensure that the sample was large enough in every cell.



	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	DATES FIELDWORK		Businesses 1+	PROPORTION EU28
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	468,652	2.38%
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	501	01/09/15	18/09/15	279,614	1.42%
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	920,722	4.68%
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	190,894	0.97%
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	1,927,013	9.79%
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	48,076	0.24%
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	141,717	0.72%
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	49,484	0.25%
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	2,367,950	12.03%
FR	France	TNS Sofres	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	2,343,372	11.90%
HR	Croatia	HENDAL	502	01/09/15	18/09/15	156,667	0.80%
IT	Italy	TNS Italia	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	3,688,052	18.73%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	CYMAR	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	44,164	0.22%
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	76,655	0.39%
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	108,581	0.55%
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	26,488	0.13%
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann	503	01/09/15	18/09/15	507,749	2.58%
MT	Malta	MISCO	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	43,297	0.22%
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	687,791	3.49%
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	286,334	1.45%
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	501	01/09/15	18/09/15	1,407,090	7.15%
PT	Portugal	TNS Euroteste	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	710,382	3.61%
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	426,134	2.16%
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	507	01/09/15	18/09/15	109,188	0.55%
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	386,735	1.96%
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	208,736	1.06%
SE	Sweden	TNS Sifo	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	585,723	2.97%
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	500	01/09/15	18/09/15	1,492,015	7.58%
	TOTAL EU28		13,114	1/09/15	18/09/15	19,689,275	100%*
TR	Turkey	TNS Piar	300	01/09/15	18/09/15	57,006	
MK	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	TNS BRIMA	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	31,278	
ME	Montenegro	TNS Medium Gallup	103	01/09/15	18/09/15	21,583	
RS	Serbia	TNS Medium Gallup	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	49,579	
AL	Albania	TNS BBSS	100	01/09/15	18/09/15	88,741	
IS	Iceland	Capacent	200	01/09/15	18/09/15	11,640	
NO	Norway	TNS Gallup Norway	300	01/09/15	18/09/15	249,638	
MD	Moldova	IMAS-INC SRL	103	01/09/15	18/09/15	372,112	
US	United States of America	TNS CUSTOM RESEARCH	400	01/09/15	18/09/15	18,477,363	

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Statistical Margins due to the sampling process  
(at the 95% level of confidence)

various sample sizes are in rows

various observed results are in columns

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	