Skillnet Climate Ready Academy

Enterprise Climate Readiness 2026

Closing the Gap between Climate Recognition and Enterprise Readiness

November 2026



20FIFTY PARTNERS

About the Skillnet Climate Ready Academy

The Skillnet Climate Ready Academy is Ireland's national training initiative focused on Green Skills and Climate Resilience. Funded by Skillnet Ireland and delivered by 20FIFTY Partners, it equips businesses with the skills and capabilities to build resilience and sustain competitive advantage in a changing world.

The Academy offers accredited, practical learning pathways focused on mitigation and adaptation, enabling businesses to respond to climate risk, regulatory change and market disruption.

It commissioned this survey to identify enterprise capability gaps and inform evidence-led skills and support priorities.

This report examines how Irish enterprise decision-makers understand climate-related risks, assess their organisations' preparedness and translate recognition into action.

The findings identify gaps in climate-risk assessment, adaptation planning and organisational capability, providing an evidence base for strengthening enterprise resilience and competitiveness through targeted skills development and practical support.

RED C Research independently conducted the survey in August and September 2026. Findings describe respondents' perceptions and reported practice.

November 2026

Research collaborators:

Skillnet Climate Ready Academy

20FIFTY PARTNERS

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Key Insights

Skillnet Climate Ready Academy

Key Insights

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Businesses recognise the importance of climate adaptation and are most concerned about commercial and operational impacts.

76%
consider adaptation important to the future success and resilience of their organisation

Highest-Ranked Major Concerns

Rising Energy Costs	82%
Employee Health and Wellbeing	58%
Supply Chain Disruption	55%

Lowest-Ranked Major Concerns

Flooding	33%
Risks to Nature-Related Services	31%

SELF-ASSESSED PREPAREDNESS

Self-assessed preparedness is higher than reported climate-risk assessment and adaptation planning.

37%
describe their organisation as prepared to manage climate risks

24%
of organisations report a climate-risk assessment

16%
of organisations report having a climate resilience or adaptation plan in place

OVERCOMING CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY CHALLENGES

Businesses need the capability to turn recognition into practical action.

43%
rate climate risk understanding as strong

13%
rate adaptation planning as strong

CONSTRAINTS

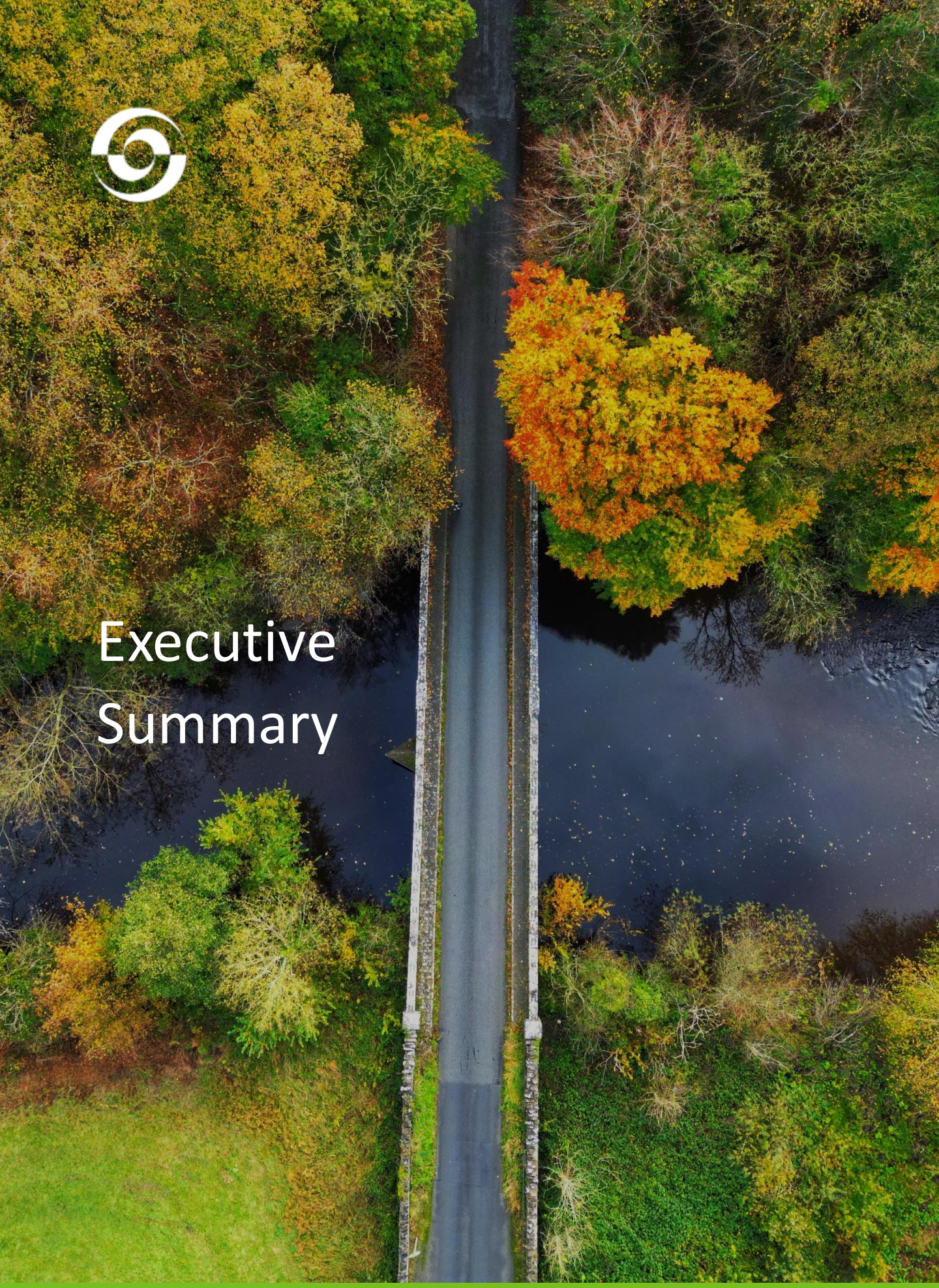
Knowledge and planning gaps, alongside time and resource constraints, are limiting progress.

68% TIME

63% MEASUREMENT

61% RESOURCES

59% EXPERTISE



Executive Summary

Skillnet Climate Ready Academy

Executive Summary

The Skillnet Climate Ready Academy commissioned the Enterprise Climate Readiness Survey 2026 to provide evidence on how enterprise decision-makers across Ireland perceive climate-related risks and describe their organisations' preparedness, current actions, capabilities and support needs. The survey was conducted among 300 enterprise decision-makers, with the data weighted to be nationally representative of Irish enterprises by enterprise size and sector.

The strategic imperative of climate readiness for Irish enterprise

The survey shows broad recognition of climate adaptation as a business issue. 76% of respondents consider adaptation important to future success and resilience, with concerns extending across operating costs, employees, supply chains, extreme weather, regulation and customer expectations. However, only 24% report having assessed climate risks and 16% have an adaptation or resilience plan.

A perception gap: self-assessed preparedness exceeds formal actions

Although 79% report at least some degree of preparedness, including 37% who describe their organisation as prepared and 42% as somewhat prepared, formal adaptation activity is much less widespread. Across all respondents, only 24% report having conducted a climate-risk assessment and 16% have an adaptation or resilience plan. These findings come from separate survey questions, but together they raise questions about how enterprises understand preparedness and whether formal risk assessment and adaptation planning are recognised as essential components of climate readiness.

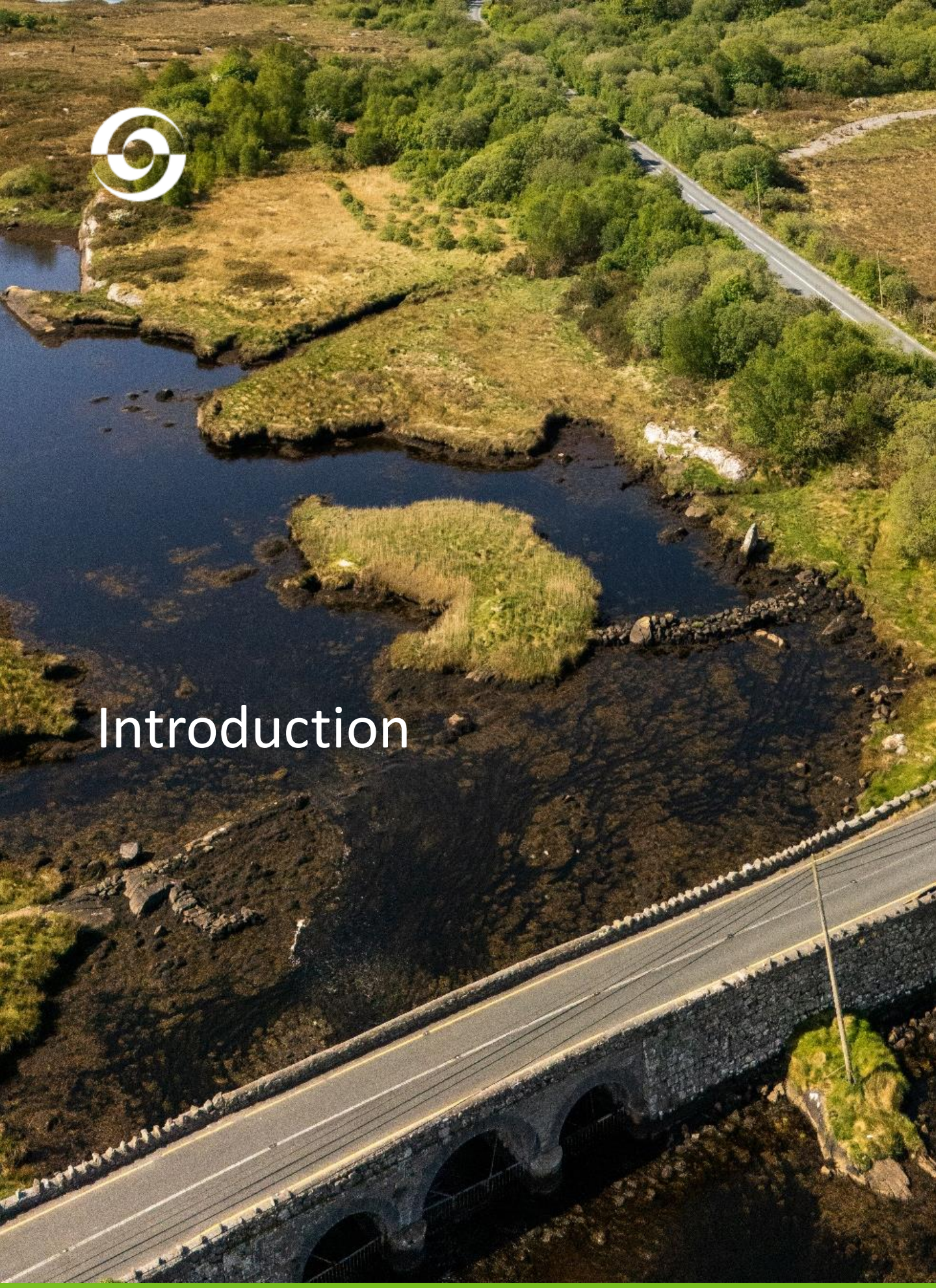
Limited capacity and capability are key constraints to climate resilience

Enterprises report overlapping constraints involving time, resources, expertise and leadership. In addition, **63% report difficulty measuring impacts and 58% are unsure what actions are required**, strengthening the case for applied guidance, practical tools and proportionate implementation support. Budget and resources are most frequently identified as the principal barrier to further action.

Building organisational capability for climate resilience

Businesses report stronger capability in understanding climate risks than in planning for them: **43%** rate climate-risk understanding as strong, compared with **13%** for adaptation planning. Interest in skills development is broad, particularly in energy management, sustainability leadership, climate risk and resilience, and supply-chain resilience. Businesses need both technical capabilities and transversal capabilities such as leadership, prioritisation, measurement, collaboration and change implementation.

The priority is to help businesses translate climate-risk recognition into structured assessment, informed decisions, practical plans and sustained implementation, with proportionate support for enterprises with limited specialist capacity.



Introduction

Introduction

Climate readiness

The ability to understand material climate risks and dependencies, assign responsibility, assess exposure, plan and implement proportionate actions, and review progress as risks and organisational circumstances change.

Why is climate adaptation a business resilience and competitiveness issue?

Climate change is already affecting some enterprises directly through damage to premises, equipment and infrastructure, and indirectly through disruption to energy, water, transport, communications and supply chains. Workforce impacts, changing insurance conditions and higher or less predictable operating costs can also affect productivity, business continuity, investment decisions and long-term competitiveness.

Mitigation reduces greenhouse-gas emissions, while adaptation reduces vulnerability to actual or expected climate impacts. For enterprises, adaptation is therefore not solely an environmental issue. It is relevant to risk management, continuity, investment, procurement, workforce planning and supply-chain management, helping businesses anticipate disruption and respond proportionately as risks and operating conditions change (IPCC, 2022; EEA, 2024).

Why do organisational knowledge and capability matter for climate readiness?

Recognition of climate risk does not necessarily mean that an organisation is prepared to manage its consequences. For the purposes of this report, enterprise climate readiness is presented as a connected five-stage process: Recognise, Assess, Plan, Implement and Review. This conceptual framework was developed for the report by synthesising established organisational and policy approaches to climate adaptation (ISO, 2019; OECD, 2024).

Why did the Skillnet Climate Ready Academy commission this research?

The Academy commissioned the survey to establish a clearer evidence base on how enterprises understand climate-related risks, assess preparedness, report current measures and capability, and identify barriers and skills needs. The findings are intended to inform businesses, policymakers and enterprise-support organisations about where practical capability-building and implementation support are most needed.

Research question

Is recognition of climate risk matched by the formal assessment, planning and organisational capability needed for effective action?

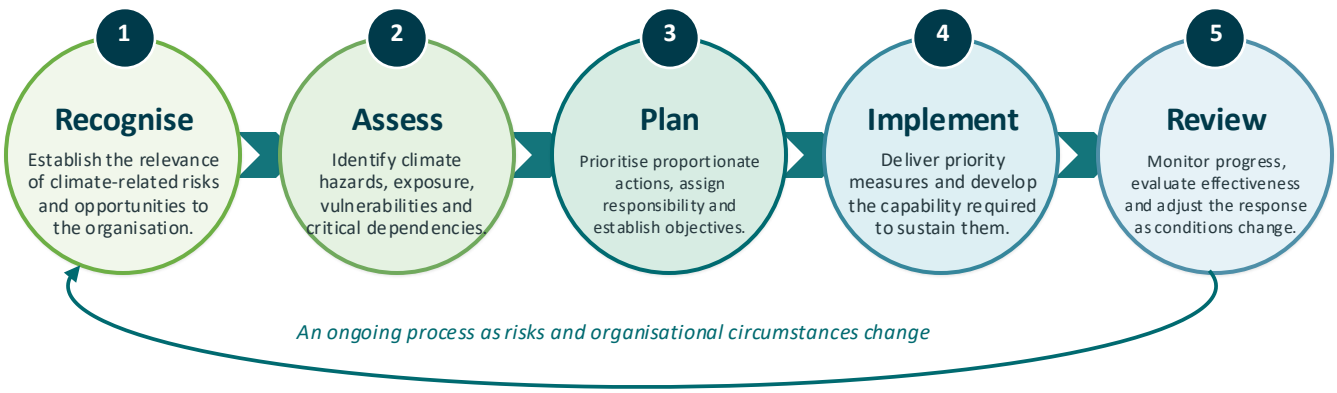
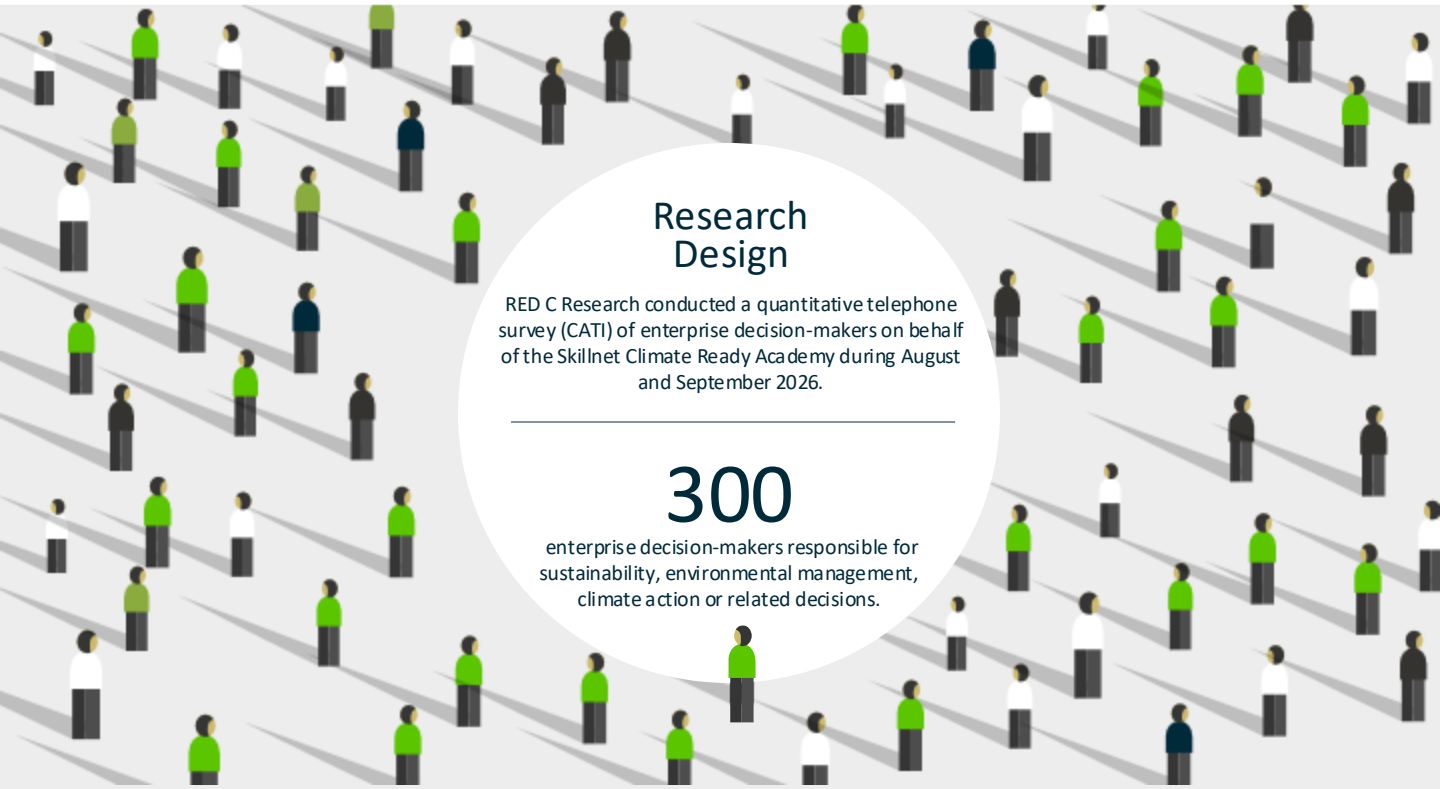


Figure 1: ***Conceptual five-stage enterprise climate-readiness process developed for this report, drawing on ISO 14090:2019 and OECD (2024).***

Research Approach



Research Design

RED C Research conducted a quantitative telephone survey (CATI) of enterprise decision-makers on behalf of the Skillnet Climate Ready Academy during August and September 2026.

300

enterprise decision-makers responsible for sustainability, environmental management, climate action or related decisions.

Sample profile

The weighted sample spans sectors and locations. Size groups use employee numbers, rather than the full EU enterprise-size definition.

Sectoral breakdown of participants

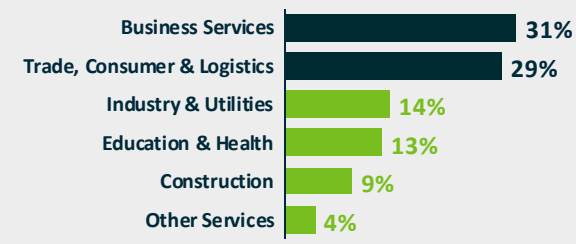


Figure 2: Sectoral breakdown of participants

Breakdown by enterprise size

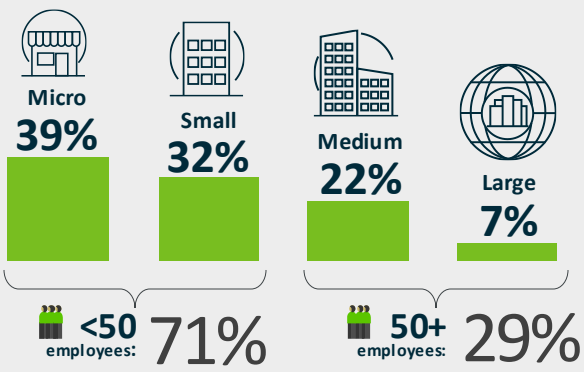


Figure 3: Breakdown by enterprise size

Notes on Methodology:

Weighting: The data were weighted by sector and company size based on the latest available CSO data on enterprises in Ireland, to provide a nationally representative picture of Irish enterprises.

Reporting conventions: "Important" combines very important and quite important. "Prepared" combines very prepared and quite prepared. "Somewhat prepared" remains a separate category. "At least some preparedness" combines very prepared, quite prepared and somewhat prepared. "Strong" and "weak" each combine two adjacent capability ratings. Multiple-response questions may total more than 100%, and percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Interpretation and limitations: Findings reflect respondents' perceptions, self-assessments and reported practices. Strategies, plans and capabilities were not independently verified; self-assessed preparedness therefore does not demonstrate enterprise climate readiness. Subgroup comparisons are descriptive and have not been significance-tested, so findings based on small respondent groups should be interpreted cautiously.

Geographic breakdown of participants: 28% of respondents were from Dublin and 72% from outside Dublin.



Research Findings

The findings are organised around four connected themes:

1. The Strategic Imperative of Climate Readiness for Irish Enterprise
2. A Perception Gap – Self-assessed Climate Preparedness Exceeds Formal Actions
3. Limited Capacity and Capability Are Key Constraints to Climate Resilience
4. Building Organisational Capability for Climate Resilience

The Strategic Imperative of Climate Readiness for Irish Enterprise

76% of Irish enterprise consider climate adaptation important to future success and resilience

43% very important and 33% quite important

Three in four respondents recognise climate adaptation as important to future business resilience

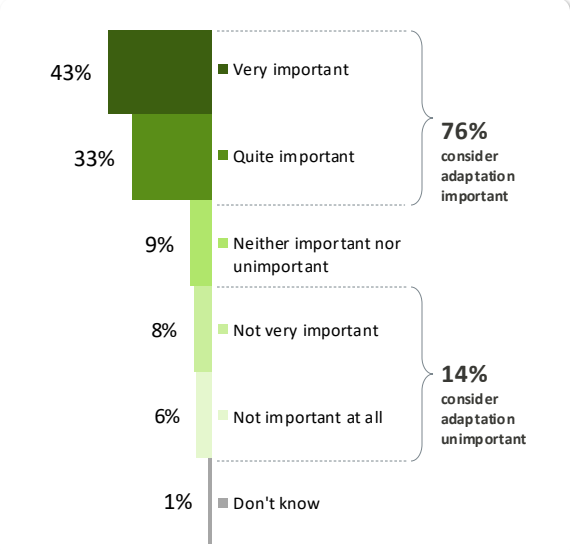


Figure 5: Importance of climate adaptation over the next five years
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Recognition generally increases with enterprise size

Among those surveyed, 68% of micro-enterprises consider adaptation important, compared with 79% of small enterprises and approximately 85% of enterprises with 50 or more employees.

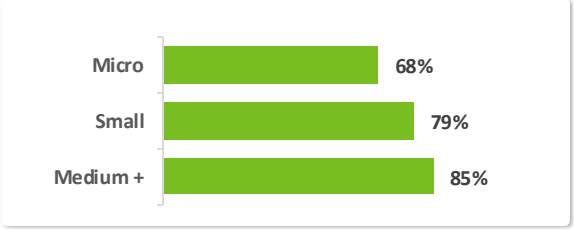


Figure 6: Importance of climate adaptation by enterprise size
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Energy dominates climate-related concerns, but the overall pattern extends beyond energy

Rising energy costs are the most frequently reported concern, although this reflects commercial affordability and mitigation priorities as well as resilience. Concern also extends to employee wellbeing, supply-chain disruption, extreme weather, regulation and customer expectations.

Recognition of these pressures does not necessarily mean that an enterprise has assessed its own exposure. Businesses need to understand how climate risks could affect their operations, people, suppliers and critical dependencies before they can determine proportionate responses.

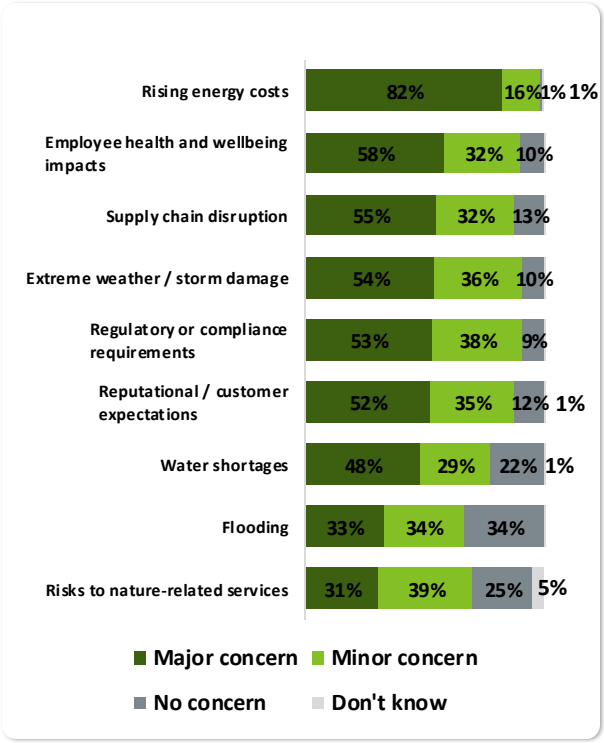


Figure 7: Climate-related areas of concern
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

A Perception Gap – Self-assessed Climate Preparedness Exceeds Formal Actions

37% of respondents report their organisation as prepared to manage climate-related risks, but only 16% have a resilience plan

Fewer than four in ten describe their organisation as prepared, while 42% are somewhat prepared for managing climate-related risks.

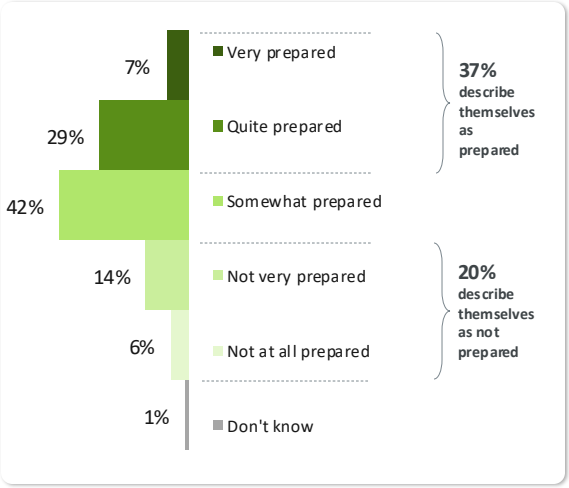


Figure 8: Preparedness to manage climate-related risks (BASE: All respondents – 300)

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; totals and combined categories are calculated using unrounded data and may differ from the sum of displayed figures.

Self-assessed preparedness is more widespread than formal planning

Almost four in five respondents report at least some degree of preparedness to manage climate-related risks, including 37% who describe their organisation as prepared and 42% as somewhat prepared. However, formal adaptation measures remain less common: 24% report a climate-risk assessment, 16% report having an adaptation or resilience plan, and 27% report having updated a business-continuity plan to consider climate risks.

The results do not provide a complete measure of enterprise climate readiness. However, the contrast raises questions about how respondents understand preparedness and whether formal assessment and planning are recognised as essential components of readiness.

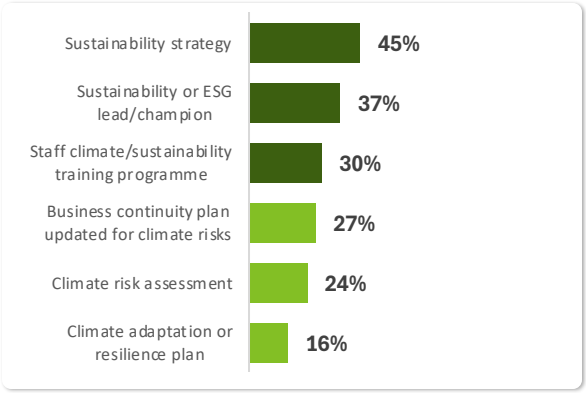


Figure 9: Current measures in place (BASE: All respondents – 300)

Strengthening Current Climate Adaptation Measures

Broader sustainability arrangements, including sustainability strategies, designated responsibility and staff training, are more widespread than adaptation-specific activities. These may support resilience, but do not necessarily demonstrate that physical climate risks and organisational dependencies have been assessed.

Self-assessed preparedness and formal preparation vary by enterprise size

26% of micro-enterprises describe themselves as prepared, compared with 42% of small enterprises and 45% of enterprises with 50 or more employees.

11% of micro-enterprises report a climate-risk assessment, compared with 47% of enterprises with 50 or more employees. Adaptation plans are reported by 9% and 29%, respectively.

Micro and small enterprises may require proportionate, accessible routes into formal climate-risk assessment and adaptation planning.

A Perception Gap – Self-assessed Climate Preparedness Exceeds Formal Actions

Understanding climate risk does not necessarily translate into planning capability:

43% rate climate-risk understanding as strong, compared with 13% for adaptation planning.

Enterprises rate their understanding of climate risks higher than their ability to plan for them

43% of respondents rate their organisation's climate-risk understanding as strong, compared with **13%** for adaptation planning.

Approximately half rate adaptation-planning capability as weak. This distinction suggests that understanding climate risks and having the organisational capability to plan a response are separate dimensions of enterprise climate readiness.



Figure 10: Organisational capability rated as weak or strong

(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Capability generally increases with enterprise size

Larger enterprises participating in the research report stronger capability across all seven areas, reinforcing the size pattern found in preparedness and formal measures.

Capability is also strongly associated with self-assessed preparedness

Respondents who describe their organisations as prepared report stronger capability across all areas assessed, with the largest differences in climate-risk understanding (64% vs 25%), energy and resource management (51% vs 21%) and supply-chain resilience (46% vs 21%). This finding indicates that self-assessed preparedness is associated with a broad capability base rather than a single strength. These relationships are descriptive and do not establish that capability causes preparedness, or that self-assessed preparedness verifies organisational readiness.

Limited capacity and capability are key constraints to climate resilience

58% of respondents are unsure what actions are required. Building enterprise capability must go hand in hand with addressing the practical barriers to implementation.

Businesses face overlapping barriers to action

Businesses face several interconnected barriers to taking action on climate adaptation. Lack of time is the most widespread barrier, reported by 68% of respondents. Difficulty measuring impacts, lack of resources and expertise, and uncertainty about the actions required are also reported by around six in ten. The pattern indicates that enterprises are not held back by one isolated issue. They face a connected set of practical and organisational constraints that make it difficult to translate recognition into structured action.

The prevalence of measurement difficulty and uncertainty about required actions makes a strong case for applied learning, diagnostics, practical tools and implementation guidance rather than information provision alone.



Figure 11: Barriers to action
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Barriers are greater among less-prepared and smaller enterprises

Respondents describing their organisations as not prepared report higher knowledge, leadership, measurement and resource constraints than respondents describing their organisations as prepared.

Uncertainty about required actions is reported by approximately 65% of both micro and small enterprises, compared with 40% of enterprises with 50 or more employees.

Budget and resource constraints are the biggest barrier to implementation

When respondents identify one main barrier, budget and resources rank first at 23%, ahead of time at 17%, lack of knowledge or expertise at 13%, and uncertainty about required actions at 12%. The comparison indicates that time is the most widespread constraint, while access to budget and resources is most often identified as the principal barrier to further action.

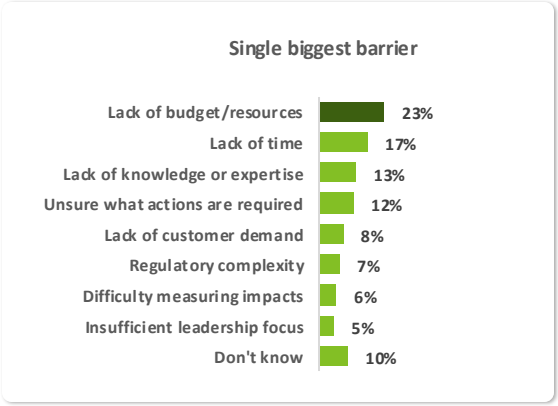


Figure 12: Single biggest barrier to action
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Building Organisational Capability for Climate Resilience

Interest in skills development is broad, spanning technical and transversal capabilities.

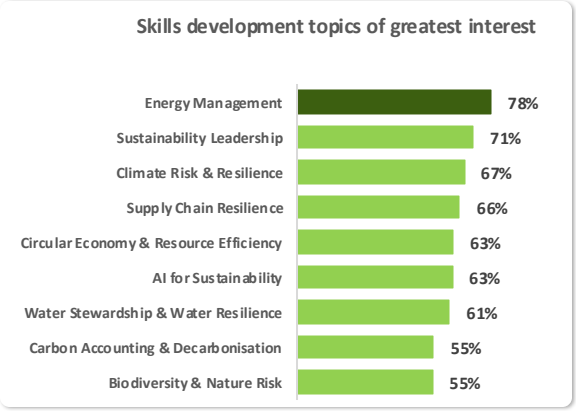


Figure 13: Skills development topics of greatest interest
(BASE: All respondents – 300)

Every proposed topic is selected by more than half of respondents. Energy management leads at 78%, followed by sustainability leadership at 71%, climate risk and resilience at 67%, and supply-chain resilience at 66%. These areas reflect a combination of technical and transversal capabilities. Technical capabilities include climate-risk assessment, adaptation planning, energy and resource management, supply-chain resilience, water resilience and carbon accounting. Transversal capabilities include leadership, strategic decision-making, prioritisation, collaboration, measurement, change implementation and the ability to integrate climate considerations across business functions.

The barrier findings reinforce the importance of transversal capability. Difficulty measuring impacts, uncertainty about required actions and insufficient leadership focus cannot be addressed solely through technical knowledge; enterprises also need the ability to interpret evidence, make decisions, assign responsibility and implement change.

Related capability and skill development topics of interest findings

Interest in climate risk and resilience is 67%, while only 13% rate adaptation-planning capability as strong. These measures come from separate questions and should not be interpreted as a respondent-level skills gap.

Supply-chain resilience is especially relevant: 55% identify supply-chain disruption as a major concern, 31% rate current supply-chain-resilience capability as strong and 66% express interest in developing these skills. These measures come from separate questions but collectively underline the strategic relevance of supply-chain capability.

Larger enterprises report broader specialist demand

Larger enterprises show stronger demand than micro-enterprises for sustainability leadership (82% vs 64%), AI for sustainability (76% vs 54%) and carbon accounting and decarbonisation (73% vs 49%).

Accessible entry points and deeper applied learning both matter

Flexible learning formats have the broadest appeal, with 74% selecting self-paced learning and 72% short webinars. Interest is not limited to short formats: in-depth online programmes attract 65%, peer learning 63%, and half-day workshops 62%.

The pattern supports a capability approach combining accessible entry points with opportunities to apply learning to real organisational challenges.

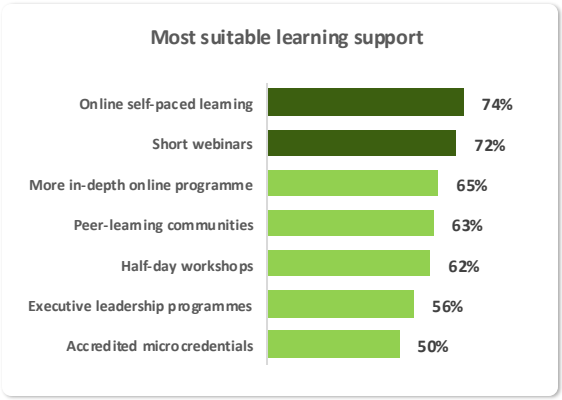


Figure 14: Most suitable learning support
(BASE: All respondents – 300)



Recommendations

Insights and Recommendations

The findings highlight a clear challenge for Irish enterprise: translating recognition of climate-related risks into the skills, organisational capability and practical actions needed to build resilience. Addressing this challenge requires a coordinated response from businesses, enterprise agencies, skills providers and policymakers. The following recommendations identify four priorities for strengthening enterprise climate readiness and supporting long-term competitiveness.

Recommendation 1:

Make climate readiness a core enterprise capability

Recommended action:

Businesses increasingly recognise the importance of climate adaptation, but many have yet to translate that recognition into structured assessment and planning. Closing this gap requires a clearer understanding of what climate readiness involves and the practical steps businesses need to take.

A common, business-focused approach to climate readiness should be developed and promoted through existing enterprise and skills supports. This should help businesses progress from recognising climate risks to assessing their exposure, identifying critical dependencies, planning appropriate responses and implementing and reviewing actions.

Crucially, this approach should be supported by targeted skills development, practical guidance and accessible assessment tools, enabling businesses to build the internal capability needed to manage climate risks rather than relying solely on external expertise.

Lead organisations:

Enterprise agencies, policymakers and skills bodies

Supporting organisations:

Business-support organisations, sector bodies, professional bodies and businesses

Recommendation 2:

Embed climate resilience in business strategy and transformation

Recommended action:

Support businesses to integrate climate-risk assessment and adaptation into strategic planning, investment, procurement, business continuity and workforce development, with clear responsibility and oversight at senior-management level.

Enterprise agencies should embed climate resilience within existing business-transformation, productivity, investment and advisory supports. Skills bodies and professional bodies should strengthen leadership and management capabilities, enabling decision-makers to identify emerging risks, assess their business implications, prioritise proportionate responses and lead organisational change.

This combined approach will help ensure that climate resilience becomes part of mainstream business planning and decision-making rather than remaining the responsibility of sustainability specialists alone. Building transversal capabilities alongside technical and operational skills can help enterprises manage disruption, identify opportunities and strengthen long-term competitiveness.

Lead organisations:

Businesses and enterprise agencies

Supporting organisations:

Skills bodies, professional bodies and business organisations

Insights and Recommendations

Recommendation 3:
Prioritise applied skills development that turns knowledge into action

Recommended action:
The research identifies a clear gap between businesses' understanding of climate risks and their capability to develop appropriate responses. This points to a need for more than general awareness-raising. Businesses require practical skills that enable them to assess vulnerabilities, evaluate options, make informed decisions and implement effective measures.

Enterprise and skills bodies should prioritise investment in industry-led training and upskilling that addresses these gaps. Provision should combine technical skills in areas such as climate-risk assessment, adaptation planning, energy and resource management and supply-chain resilience with broader organisational capabilities in leadership, measurement, decision-making and change management.

Training should provide accessible entry points alongside opportunities to progress into more advanced and accredited learning, reflecting different business needs and levels of readiness. Importantly, programmes should emphasise practical application, enabling participants to use their learning to address real challenges within their organisations.

Closer collaboration between industry, skills providers and enterprise-support organisations will help ensure that training remains responsive to evolving business needs and delivers measurable improvements in organisational capability.

Lead organisations:
Skills bodies and enterprise agencies

Supporting organisations:
Businesses, sector bodies, professional bodies, training providers, advisers and business-support organisations

Recommendation 4:
Make climate-readiness skills and support more accessible to SMEs

Recommended action:
Micro and small enterprises (with fewer than 50 employees) face particular challenges in building climate readiness. Many operate with limited specialist capacity, while competing business priorities, limited time and resource constraints make it difficult to undertake formal risk assessments and develop adaptation plans.

A more accessible and coordinated approach to skills development and practical support is needed, reflecting the different capacities and circumstances of smaller businesses.

This should include flexible introductory learning, opportunities for progression into more in-depth training, practical assessment tools, sector-specific guidance and access to relevant expertise. Support should help businesses identify their most significant risks and take manageable steps towards addressing them.

Skills development must also be connected to implementation. Enterprise agencies, skills providers and business organisations should work together to simplify access to existing supports and ensure that businesses have clear routes from initial learning and assessment to practical action.

The objective should be to make climate readiness achievable for smaller enterprises without requiring significant additional internal resources or creating unnecessary complexity.

Lead organisations:
Enterprise agencies, local enterprise offices and skills bodies

Supporting organisations:
Policymakers, business organisations, sector bodies, training providers and business-support organisations

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Government of Ireland

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