secNewgate
Insight. Communications. Advocacy.

HONG KONG SAR
SUMMARY

ESG MONITOR 2024

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC'S VIEW ON RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN 2024?

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Background & methodology

For the fourth year running, SEC Newgate has conducted this major survey to understand community awareness and perceptions around Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues.

1,027

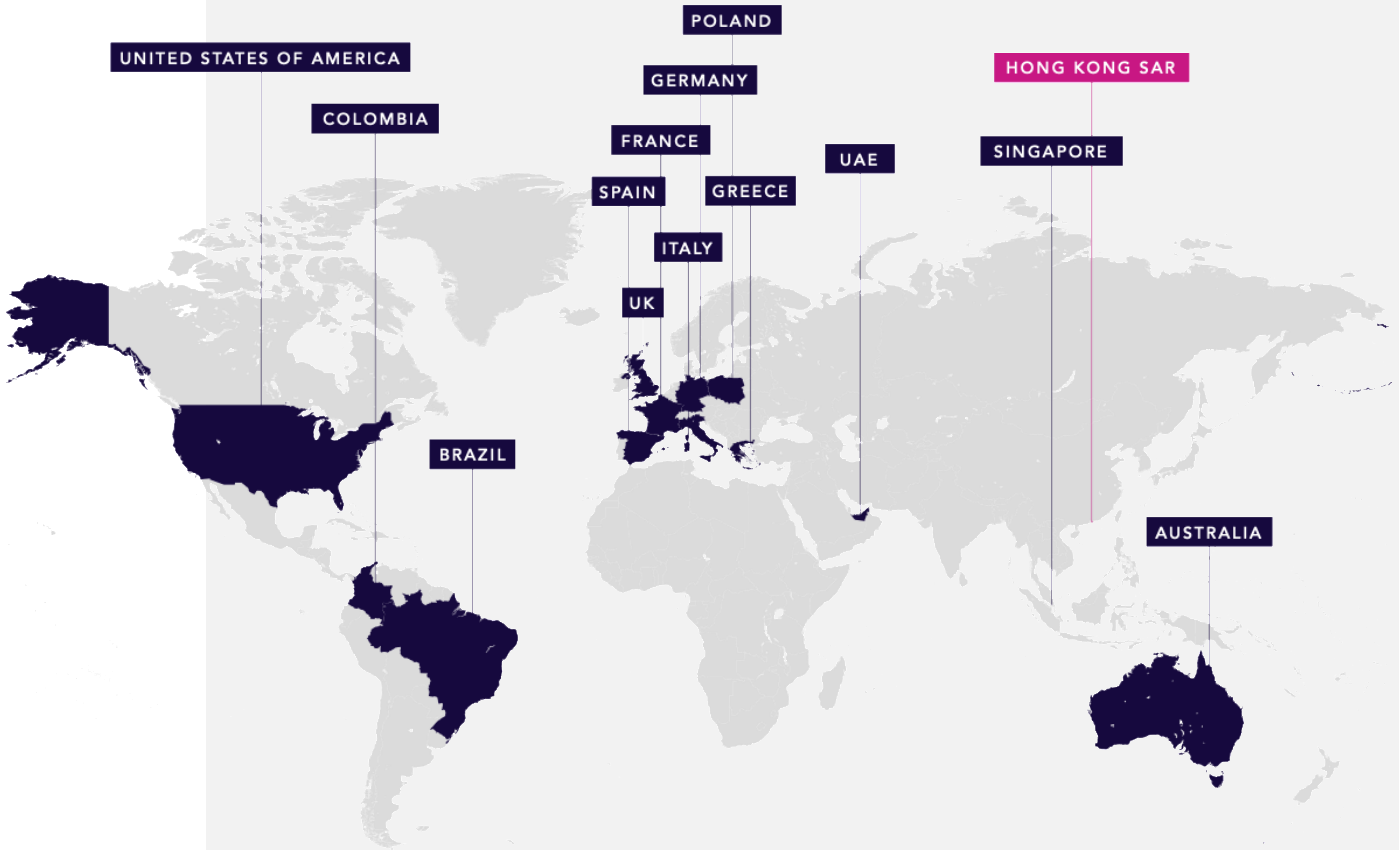
Sample of n=1,027 in **HK SAR**

14,352

people surveyed across **14 countries and territories**

Participants were sourced from global panel provider PureProfile, with the survey translated and completed in-language where appropriate. Fieldwork was conducted over the period 4-29 July 2024.

Quotas were set by age, gender and location to ensure a **nationally representative sample of citizens aged 18+**, and the final results were weighted by the actual age and gender proportions within each country or territory. For the 'total' results, each country is given equal weighting.



Other notes

1. Survey questions and sample sizes are shown at the bottom of each page. Unless otherwise specified, questions were asked of all participants.
2. Results may not always total 100% due to rounding or questions allowing multiple-responses.

Summary of key insights

#01

Governments and businesses are falling well below the public's ESG related expectations

Importance of conducting business in responsible ways
(Importance rated as 7-10 out of 10)

Performance of conducting business in responsible ways
(Performance rated as 7-10 out of 10)

#02

There is a large variation in ratings of industries for conducting their business responsibly

Top performing industries:
(Performance rated as 7-10 out of 10)

1. Banking & financial services (64%)
2. Technology & telecommunications (63%)
3. Pharmaceutical (60%)
4. Online marketplaces & e-commerce (59%)
5. Healthcare (59%)

Bottom performing industries:
(Performance rated as 7-10 out of 10)

26. Agriculture (46%)
27. Nuclear energy (46%)
28. Defence (45%)
29. Chemical industry (43%)
30. Mining & resources (43%)

#03

The majority in Hong Kong SAR see companies as having a role to play in relation to ESG issues

68% agree that they expect **companies to play a more active role in society these days**

68% agree that **companies can be profitable** while also performing well on their **environmental, social and governance responsibilities**

64% think companies should **act in the best interests of *all* stakeholders**, rather than prioritising shareholders (*compared to* **78%** *globally)* - with a majority of investors (**64%**) also believing this

#04

People in Hong Kong SAR are still very much focused on their immediate needs in terms of addressing issues in their market, but they also care a lot about broader social and environmental issues

75% think HK SAR is on the right track (much higher than the global average of **47%**)

Top issues of importance:

1. Strengthening the economy
2. Ensuring quality affordable healthcare for everyone
3. Addressing the rising cost of living

67% think it's important to transition to renewable/clean energy sources

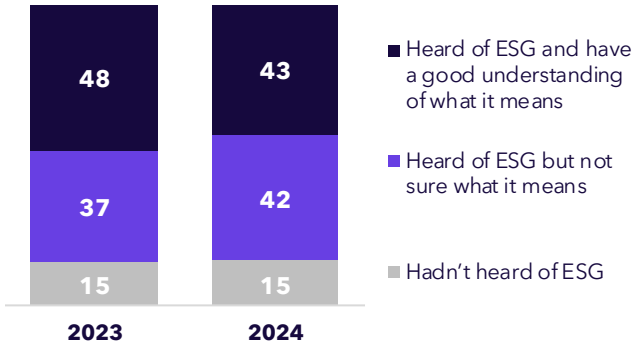
67% think it's important to act decisively on climate change

39% feel the energy transition is occurring too slowly (and **17%** too fast)

Summary of key insights *cont'd*

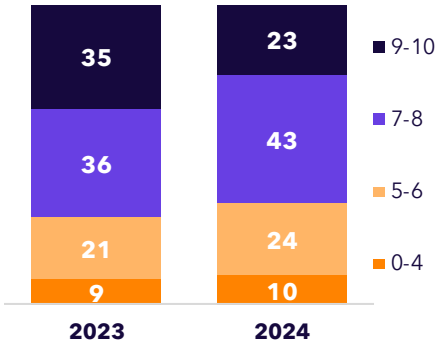
#05

Awareness of ESG as a concept is up slightly since 2023, with 8 in 10 aware of the term, which is significantly higher than the global average. 4 in 10 say they have a good understanding of it



85%
Aware of ESG
(Unchanged with 2023)

Despite relatively high awareness, only 1 in 4 people in Hong Kong SAR are very highly interested in ESG issues; a significant drop from last year



23%
Highly interested in ESG
(-11% vs 2023)

#06

What does the community expect of companies? The top priorities are to focus on core functions, with lower expectations on 'speaking out' on issues – particularly on political or social issues not directly related to the business

Top five actions of importance for companies:

Bottom five actions of importance for companies:

Summary of key insights *cont'd*

#07

Despite the relatively lower importance placed on 'speaking out', there are still expectations of corporates to do so – where relevant. Shortcomings in other ESG-related communications are also clear to see

66% agree that companies should **speak out on issues that are important to their employees and customers**

66% agree that **companies should more clearly communicate** what they are doing to **address the needs of their stakeholders**

65% agree that companies should **more clearly communicate** what they are doing to **improve their performance on ESG issues**

41% agree that they **don't trust what companies claim** about their ESG activities or performance

#08

Reinforcing the importance of ESG in the corporate landscape, people have overwhelmingly positive associations with businesses focused on addressing ESG issues, while negative associations are fairly low-level

Most common word associations:

1. Green (76%)
2. Sustainability (76%)
3. Responsible (73%)
4. Future focused (72%)
5. Diverse (69%)

Least common word associations:

23. Naive (36%)
24. Unsuccessful (33%)
25. Distracted (31%)
26. Fake (31%)
27. Boring (30%)

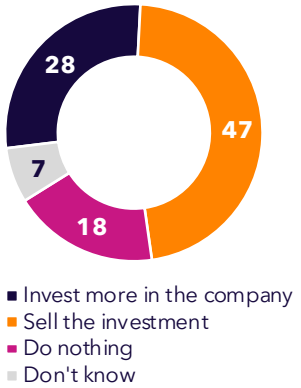
#09

Factors related to the financial returns of an investment are the top drivers when making decisions to invest. However, ethical decision making and sustainability/environmental concerns are also important to many

Importance of factor in investment decision (average score out of 10)

#10

There are far-reaching risks to businesses engaging in unethical behaviour or practices – and the community is sensitive to greenwashing



47% say if they found out there were **unethical behaviours or practices** at a company they had invested in, they would be **most likely to sell**

57% say **greenwashing is a big problem in HK SAR** (rating the issue at 7 or more out of 10), suggesting a level of public scrutiny companies need to expect and be ready to respond to

For more information and to explore how we can work together to enhance your company's reputation and ESG impact, please contact esgmonitor@secnewgate.com

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