

# CLIMATE LEADERSHIP IN THE ELEVENTH HOUR

The 2021 United Nations Global Compact–  
Accenture CEO Study on Sustainability



United Nations  
Global Compact

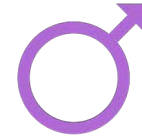
accenture

# THE WORLD'S LARGEST CEO RESEARCH STUDY ON SUSTAINABILITY

+ 1,230 CEOS PARTICIPATED

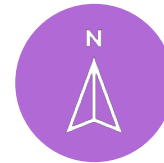
+ 120 IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

ACROSS 113 COUNTRIES + 21  
INDUSTRIES



886 MALE  
CEOs


143 WOMEN  
CEOs



563 CEOs FROM THE  
GLOBAL NORTH REGION

559 CEOs FROM THE  
GLOBAL SOUTH REGION

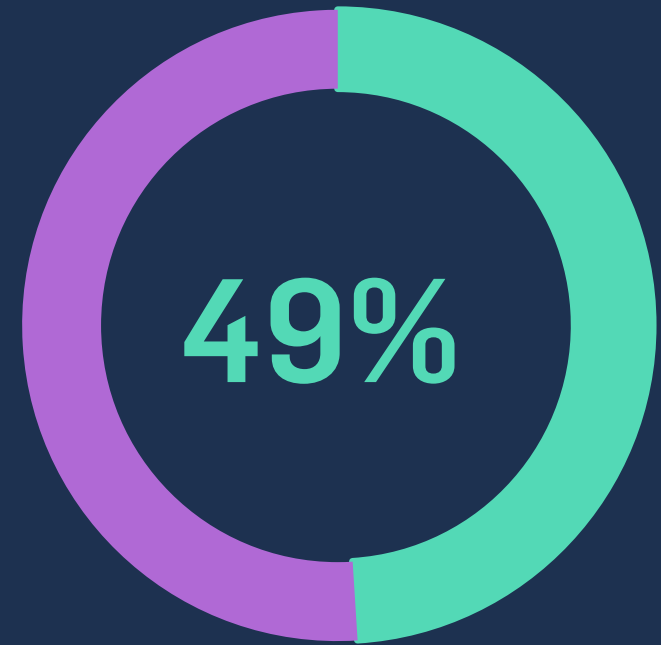




**CEOs REPORT THAT THEIR BUSINESSES  
ARE EXPERIENCING THE DAMAGING  
EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ARE  
READY TO TAKE BOLD ACTION.**

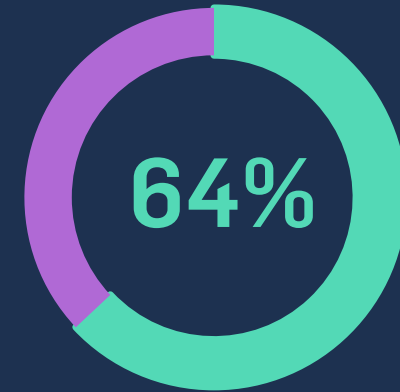


**THEY ARE NAVIGATING  
INCREASED  
FREQUENCY OF  
NATURAL DISASTERS  
AROUND THE WORLD...**

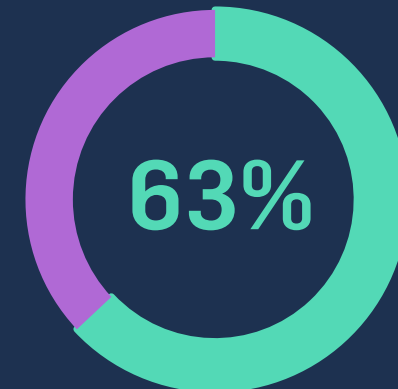


% of CEOs that report supply-chain interruptions due to extreme weather events are a top risk

**...WHICH IS CREATING  
AN URGENT NEED TO  
ADAPT AND BUILD  
RESILIENCE —  
PARTICULARLY ACROSS  
SUPPLY CHAINS.**

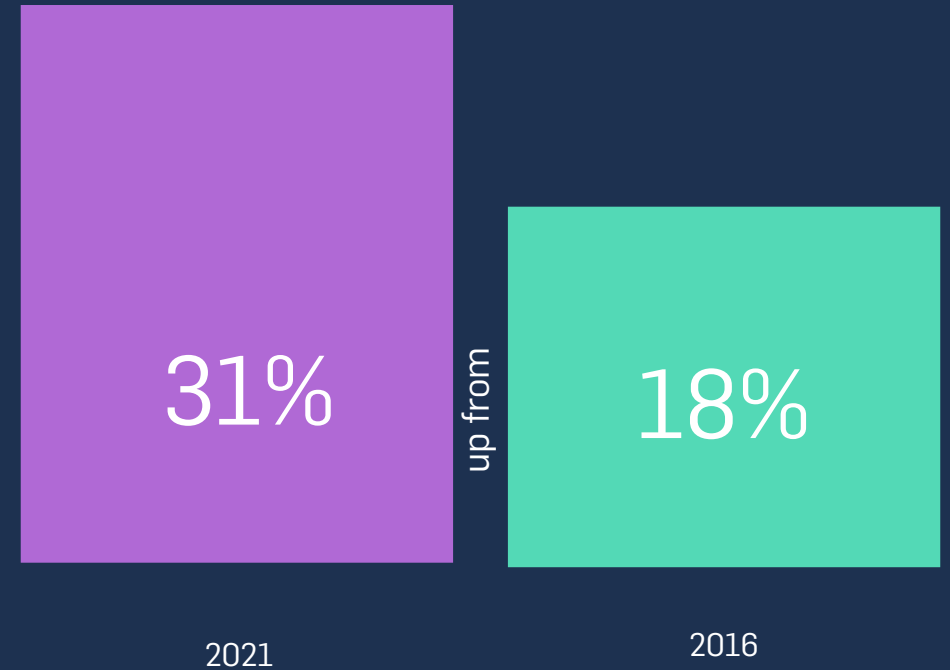


% of CEOs that say they have begun diversifying their material inputs in products and operations



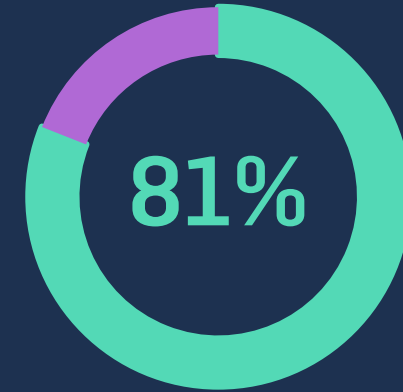
% of CEOs that say they have begun geographically diversifying their workforce and operations

**PRESSURE FROM INVESTORS AND CAPITAL MARKETS IS INCENTIVIZING MORE RAPID CLIMATE ACTION—ALL AMID A GLOBAL PANDEMIC.**

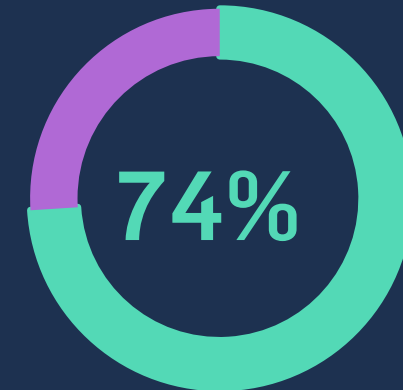


% of CEOs that cite investors as among the most influential stakeholders to manage future sustainability efforts

**CEOs SAY THE IMPACTS ARE A WAKEUP CALL THAT'S ACCELERATING THEIR TRANSITION TO MORE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS.**

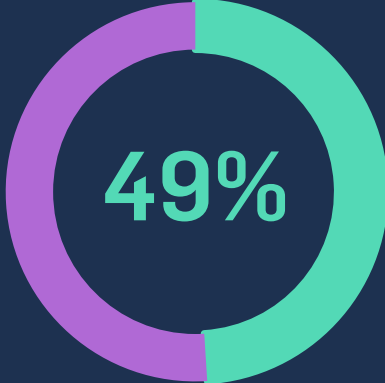


% of CEOs that say they are already developing new sustainable products and services

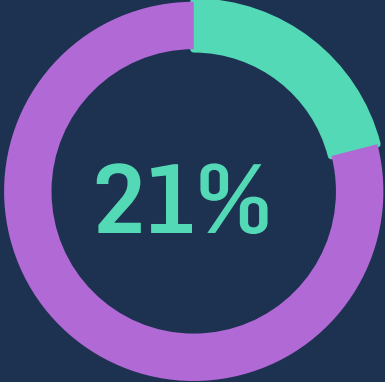


% of CEOs that say they have begun deploying new and circular business models

**SOME COMPANIES  
HAVE FORMED  
PARTNERSHIPS WITH  
COMPETITORS AND  
ARE ADDRESSING  
BIODIVERSITY RISKS...**



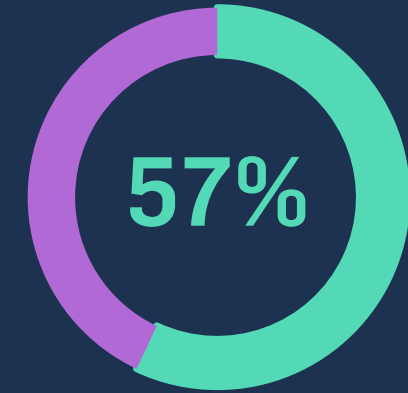
% of CEOs that say they are engaging in cross-sectoral initiatives on greenhouse gas reduction



% of CEOs that cite loss of biodiversity and related ecosystem services as a risk to their business



**...WHILE HUNDREDS  
HAVE SET SCIENCE-  
BASED TARGETS IN  
LINE WITH THE  
PARIS AGREEMENT...**



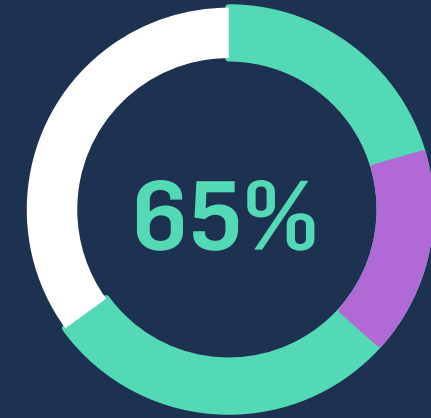
% of CEOs that say they believe they are working towards a 1.5°C temperature rise trajectory, yet only 2% of these have a target validated by the Science Based Target Initiative

...but thousands more need to increase their ambition to ensure a viable future.

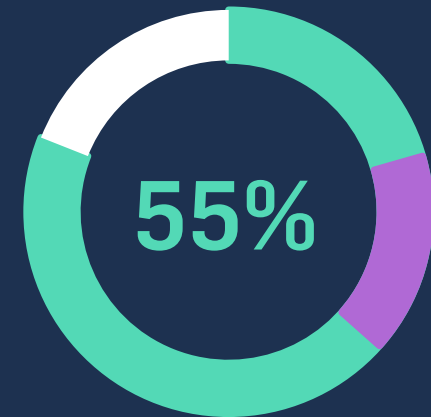


**CEOs SAY THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY  
TO TURN THINGS AROUND IS CLOSING,  
BUT KEY ACTIONS CAN HELP.**

# AS CEOs TRANSITION TO NET-ZERO BUSINESS MODELS, SOME REPORT THEY ARE STRUGGLING TO MANAGE SCOPE 3 GHG EMISSIONS...



% of CEOs that say they have already started advancing net-zero business models, yet only **16%** say they are at an advanced level



% of CEOs that say they have begun measuring and reporting scope 3 GHG emissions, yet only **16%** are doing so at an advanced level

# ...AND HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN ADVANCING NATURE BASED-SOLUTIONS TO BUILD MORE RESILIENT COMPANIES.

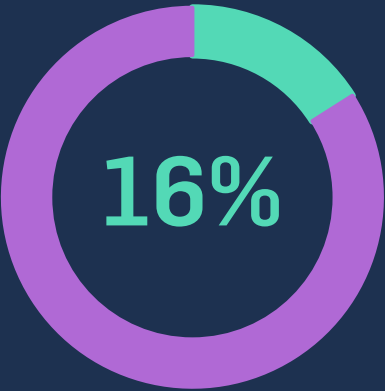
% of CEOs that say they have begun exploring nature-based solutions

46%

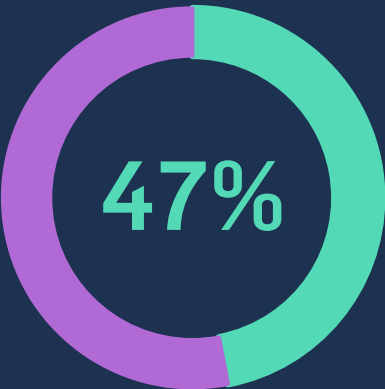
% of CEOs that say they are utilizing them at an advanced level

7%

**CEOs ALSO SAY THEY  
HAVEN'T DONE ENOUGH TO  
MITIGATE WORKFORCE  
DISRUPTION AND ENSURE A  
JUST TRANSITION TO A  
GREEN ECONOMY.**



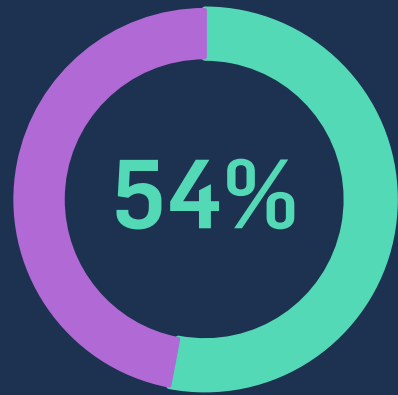
% of CEOs that say they consider reduced opportunities from the impacts of climate change for workers to be a top risk



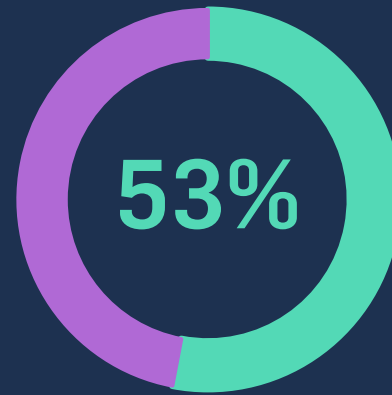
% of CEOs that say they are investing in green jobs to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement

# CEOs AGREE THAT TECHNOLOGY IS ENABLING NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND WILL UNLOCK THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRY DECARBONIZATION.

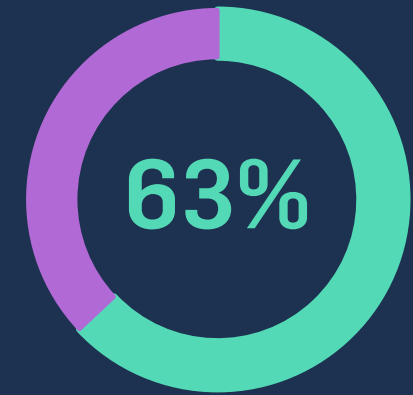
But to fulfil technology's promise, CEOs will need effective data management across the value chain and must overcome affordability and knowledge constraints.



% of CEOs that cite the affordability of technologies as a critical barrier to efforts



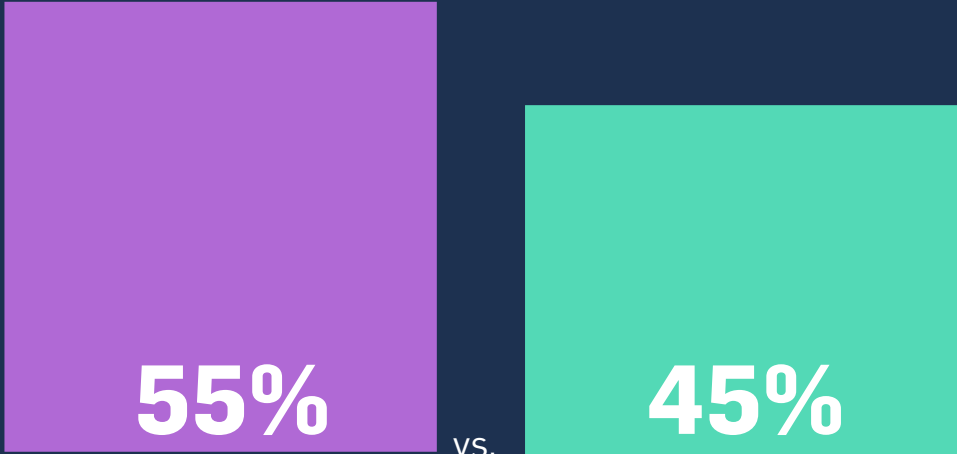
% of CEOs that report they struggle to understand which technologies can enhance their credentials



% of CEOs that say difficulty in measuring ESG data across the value chain is a barrier to sustainability



# CEOs ARE DEMANDING AN INCREASE IN CLIMATE FINANCING FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH TO CATALYZE THEIR RESPONSE.

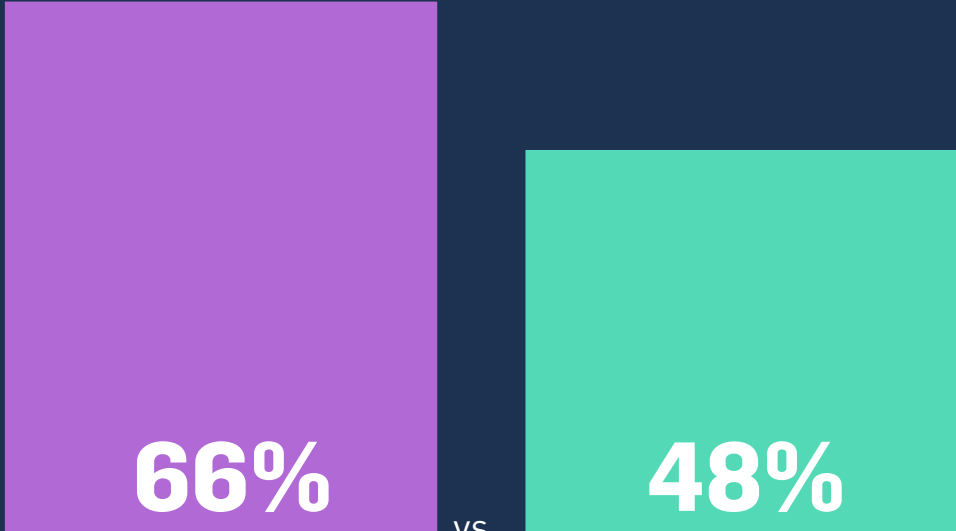


Global South

vs.

Global North

% of CEOs in the Global South vs. the Global North that cite a lack of financial resources as a top barrier to implementing their sustainability strategy




Global South

vs.

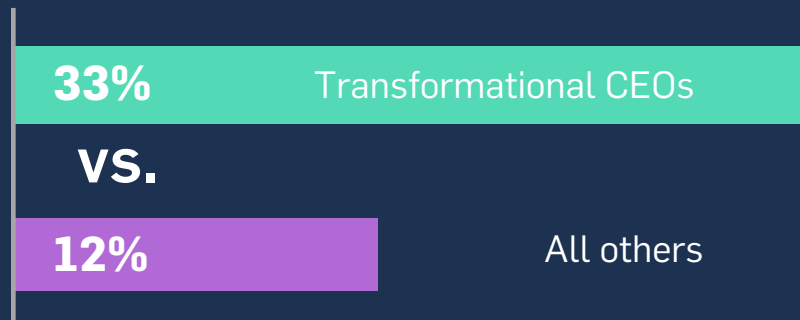
Global North

% of CEOs in the Global South vs. the Global North that cite affordability of available technology as a top barrier to implementing their sustainability strategy

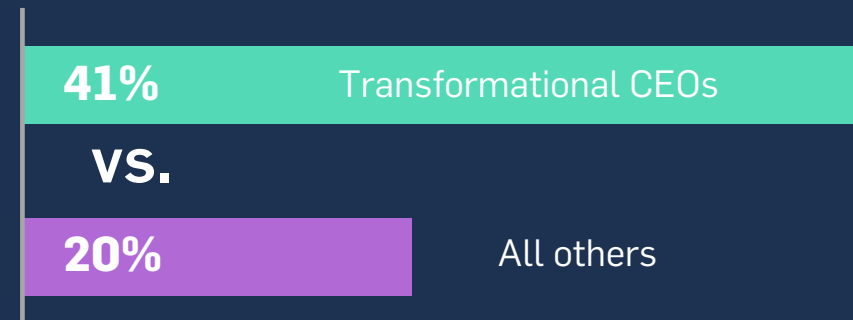


**SOME CEOs HAVE A HEAD START.  
THESE TRANSFORMATIONAL\* LEADERS  
DEMONSTRATE BEHAVIORS THAT ARE  
CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING A COMPETITIVE  
ADVANTAGE FROM SUSTAINABILITY.**

# LEADING CEOS SAY THEY HAVE BEGUN DIVERSIFYING THEIR OPERATIONS AND WORKFORCES...

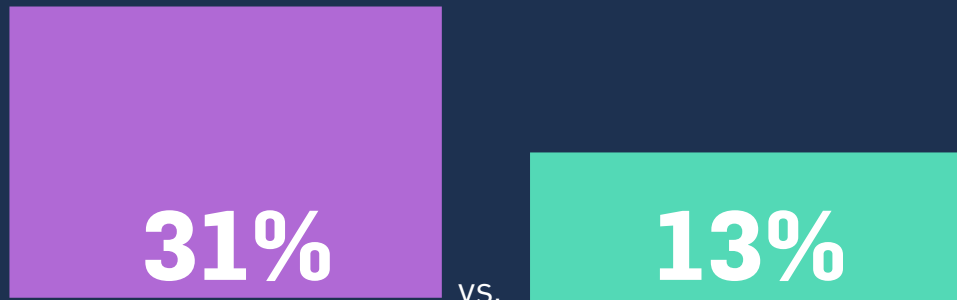


Nearly three times as many transformational CEOs say they are advanced in diversifying material inputs required for products and operations



Twice as many transformational CEOs say they are advanced in designing resilient infrastructure

# ... ARE ACCELERATING R&D INVESTMENT IN CLIMATE-RESILIENT SOLUTIONS AND ARE HOLDING THEMSELVES TO HIGHER STANDARDS OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

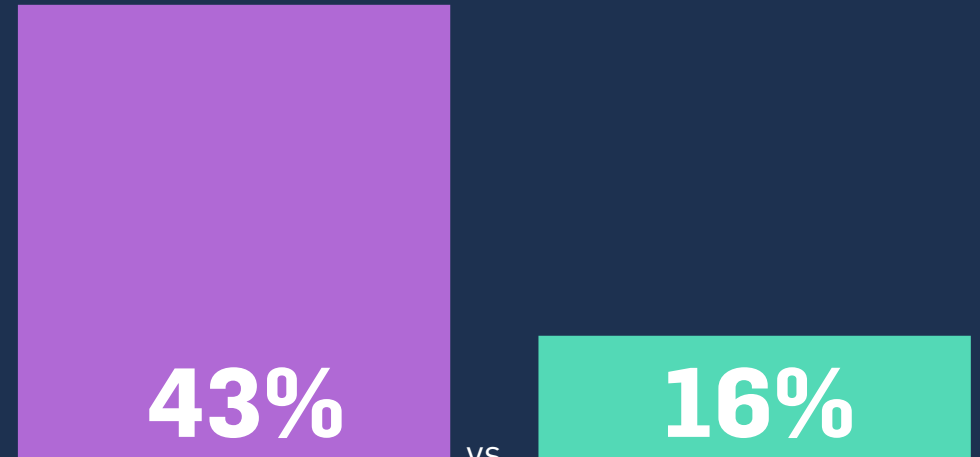


Transformational CEOs

vs.

All others

Nearly twice as many transformational CEOs say they are advanced in boosting research and development investment for climate-resilient solutions



Transformational CEOs

vs.

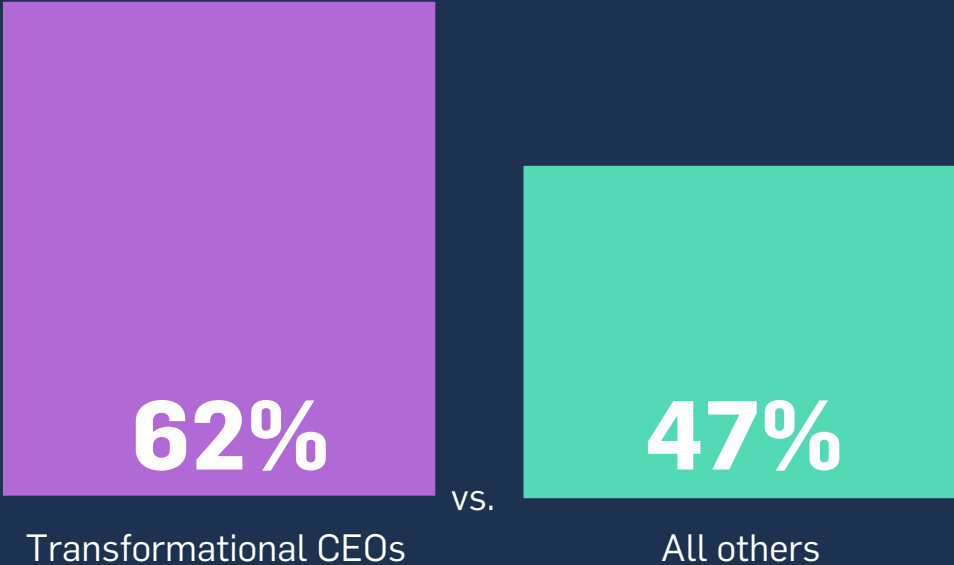
All others

Nearly three times as many transformational CEOs say they are advanced in assessing and disclosing climate-related financial risk

# THESE TRANSFORMATIONAL COMPANIES ARE SHIFTING FROM FOSSIL FUEL USE FASTER AND RESKILLING THEIR WORKFORCE IN SUSTAINABILITY.



Almost twice as many transformational CEOs say they are advanced in their journeys to divest from existing fossil fuel investments



A larger percentage of transformational CEOs say they are investing in green jobs to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris agreement

# TO MAKE THE MOST IMPACT, CEOs SAY POLICY MAKERS MUST TAKE CRITICAL ACTIONS.

Only 18% of CEOs say governments and policymakers have given them the clarity needed to meet their sustainability goals.

CEOs are asking for five critical policy actions:



Align Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on the pathway to limit global temperature rise to a 1.5° warming trajectory



Enhance global cooperation on carbon pricing mechanisms aligned with the Paris Agreement



Meet and exceed the USD 100 billion commitment in climate financing goal for the Global South



Establish common standards for biodiversity protection and pathways for nature-based solutions



Increase business engagement in climate policy formation for collaborative climate action



# ABOUT THIS STUDY

The United Nations Global Compact–Accenture CEO study on sustainability offers a call to action, from more than 1,230 CEOs across 113 countries and 21 industries, at the urgent opportunities and challenges towards addressing the climate crisis.

\* To identify “transformational companies” we used Accenture’s Competitive Agility Index (CAI). We assessed the performance of more than 9,000 of the largest companies globally on indicators for growth, profitability, and sustainability/trust. Using each company’s raw scores across these indicators respective to their industry peers, we isolated four distinct segments—transformational, transactional, notional and vulnerable—to identify various classifications of high-performance business and sustainability leadership.



United Nations  
Global Compact

