

Renewable Energy Report

2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Samoa's National Private Sector Organization, is pleased to present the 2024 Renewable Energy Survey Results Report.

It is important to note here that the main limitation was the survey time constraint in which this exercise was rapidly executed to align with the Business Confidence Survey in the first quarter 2024. Nevertheless, this survey will serve as a benchmarking exercise given it is a first of such survey conducted for the private sector.

The Renewable Energy Survey garnered 141 responses from the private sector with its primary objective to gauge their views on climate change impacts, current sustainability practices, and perspectives on renewable energy sources such as solar sources and electric vehicles.

Highlights from the Renewable Energy Survey Report includes:

- The majority of private sector who participated in the survey are micro businesses (44%), followed by classified as small (27%), medium sized enterprises (16%) and large businesses representing (13%) of the survey. From the total number of participants, 11% are paid members whilst 89% are non-paid members.
- Weather events significantly affect business operations. A combination of Tropical Cyclones, Heavy rains and floods were reported as the highest and most severe impact (64%); 18% highlighted Floods & Heavy rain followed by Tropical cyclones (10%) and high temperature (8%). These weather conditions have damaged infrastructure and interrupted productivity resulting in significant financial losses and causing behavioural changes of customers and producers; hence it underlines the vulnerability of businesses to climate change impacts.
- Businesses are responding to climate change by implementing adaptive strategies such as recycling and waste management, solar lights and construction of seawalls to counter strong waves and coastal land erosion.
- 35% of the respondents are micro businesses who stated that their average electricity bill ranges from \$250-\$500 per month. The 20% tariff imposed by the government further aggravates the cost of electricity.
- Findings show that (39%) of respondents have limited or no understanding of solar energy largely due to affordability concerns and competing business priorities.
- 4% of businesses show limited knowledge on electric vehicles, this stems from uncertainties about Electric Vehicle (EVs) infrastructure, its reliability, technical support available and practicality i.e. charging station, financial constraints and limited awareness.
- The survey results showcase that (21%) of businesses have preference for grants & financial support to fund electric vehicles and (15%) for renewable energy initiatives, highlighting the urgent need for increased awareness and government assistance in driving adoption across both public and private sectors.

The collective feedback indicates the need for collaboration between government and the private sector with the emphasis on providing SMEs with renewable energy training to enhance understanding and foster sustainability practices. This enables informed decision-making, leading to cost savings and reduced environmental impacts. The report recommends the Chamber to advocate for government-led financial incentives, awareness campaigns, and capacity building initiatives to support renewable energy adoption among MSMEs.

We hope you find this report useful.

Thank you,

Fa'aso'otauloa Sam Sali
PRESIDENT

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Abbreviation

SCCI	Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
PDS	Pathway for the Development of Samoa
BATS	British American Tobacco Samoa
EV	Electric Vehicle
EPC	Samoa Electric Power Corporation
SPREP	The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program
PCCC	Pacific Climate Change Centre
MSMEs	Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises
SRWMA	Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association

INTRODUCTION

Renewable Energy and Climate Change are at the forefront of many international priorities for many countries particularly those in the Pacific region who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate impacts. The International stage has been and continues to be the leading force behind the fight against climate change and countering the increasing visible effects we are now seeing.

As a small island developing state, Samoa's commitments to international frameworks such as the UN SDGs and the Paris Agreement, are critical for driving climate resilience and renewable energy adoption.

At the sectoral level, Climate Change and Renewable energy is well embedded within various sector plans. The National Environment Sector Plan 2017-2021¹, under outcomes 2 & 3 emphasizes sustainable and resilient environment as well as mainstreaming Climate Change and Disaster risk management across all sectors. Furthermore, Samoa's Energy Sector Plan 2024-2028² under its Key Strategies 1, 2 & 4 promotes the need to expand usage and investment of renewable energy, improve infrastructure and service quality for renewable electricity generation as well as improving energy efficiency mechanisms in transportation and infrastructure.

The Samoa Chamber of Commerce, as the voice of the private sector, is uniquely positioned to facilitate this transition by aligning business interests with national climate and energy goals.

BACKGROUND

Samoa in its efforts to transition into renewable energy has so far implemented several projects which are currently operated by the Samoa Electric Power Corporation (EPC) such as, Hydropower, five Solar Energy farms, one Wind farm and one Biomass renewable energy project.

Electric vehicles is a new concept to Samoa and EPC is currently in the Phase 2 pilot project trialling out this prototype with plans to import more in the coming months.

Furthermore, businesses and organizations also have ongoing projects. The British American Tobacco Samoa (BATS) launched its Roof top solar system in 2023, with its commitment towards transitioning into a low-carbon economy by 2030.³ The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) through its Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) also launched its Roof-top Solar System in 2022 with the initiative aiming to provide 100% of PCCC's electricity to power its daily operation. Radio Polynesia also has a roof top solar system as part of its own commitment to decarbonization.

As the National Private Sector Organization, it is vital that we take the first step towards action. This is a first of such surveys conducted by the Samoa Chamber and is intended to be conducted biennially. This initial Renewable Energy Survey looks at three major components which includes:

- Weather Events
- Solar Energy

¹ National Environment Sector Plan: 2017-2021

² Samoa Energy Sector Plan: FY 2023/2024-2027/2028

³ BAT Green Renewable Energy Project,

<https://www.radiopolynesiasamoa.com/local/bat-launches-project-green-renewable-energy-initiative>

- Electric Vehicles

Survey Objectives

The purpose of this initial survey is to:

- Understand and assess the impact of climate change on Chamber members, and to
- Understand and assess their current practices towards sustainability and perceptions of renewable energy sources and electric vehicles

Survey Methodology

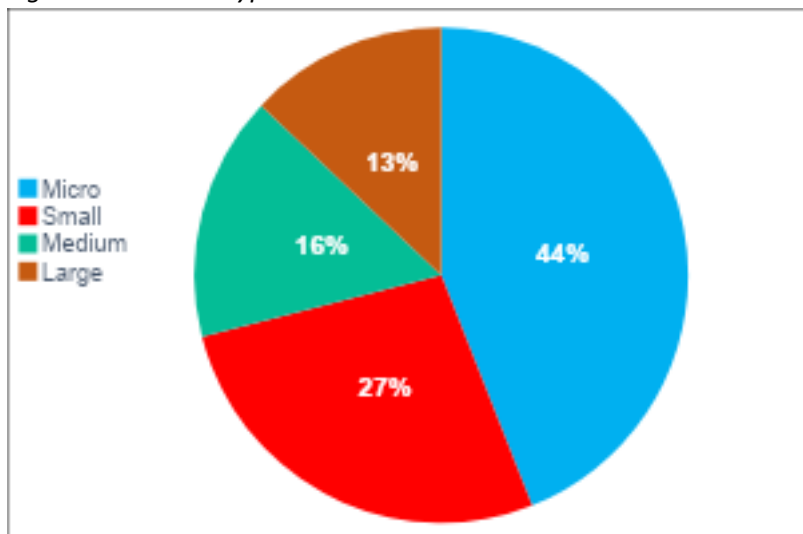
The following methodology was adopted by Samoa Chamber in conducting this survey:

- Email
- Telephone (including follow ups)
- Door to door approach also included non-members
- Coordination with BLP visit (Savaii only)

Findings: Impacts of Climate Change on Businesses

Business Types by Employment

Figure 1. Business Type



A total of 141 businesses were surveyed. Most businesses that participated in the survey comprise of various industries, such as Retail and Manufacturing, Personal Services, Tourism and Hospitality, Healthcare to name a few.

Figure 1 shows, 44% of the SMEs are Micro businesses with an employment size of

less than 10 employees, followed by 27% Small Businesses with 11-40 staff. 16% of Medium enterprises with employees ranging from 41-100 and Large Businesses (13%) with an employment size of more than 100 employees.

I. IMPACTS OF WEATHER EVENTS

Figure 1.1. Types of Weather Events affecting Businesses

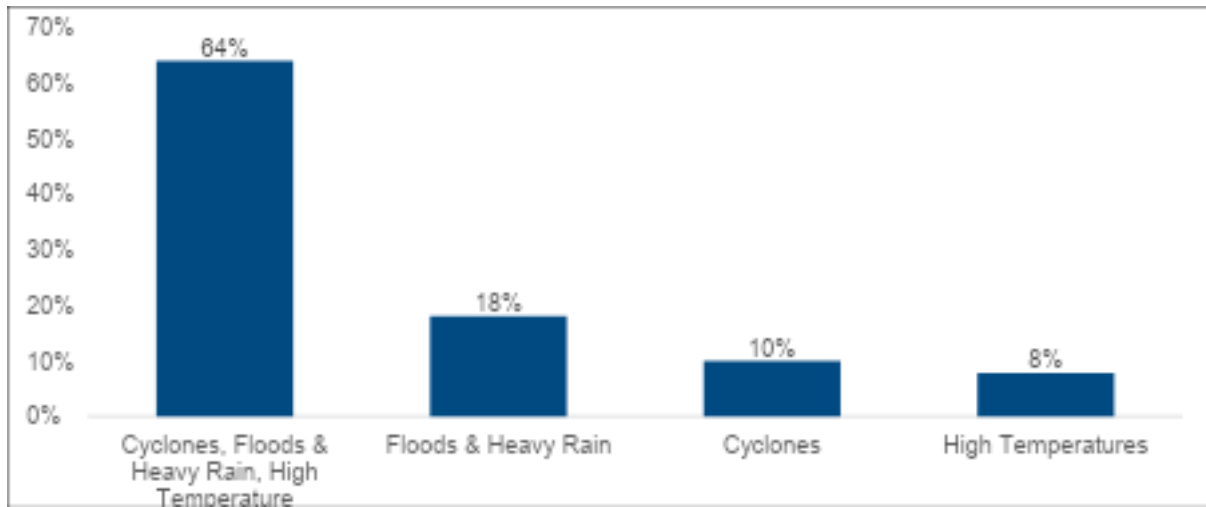
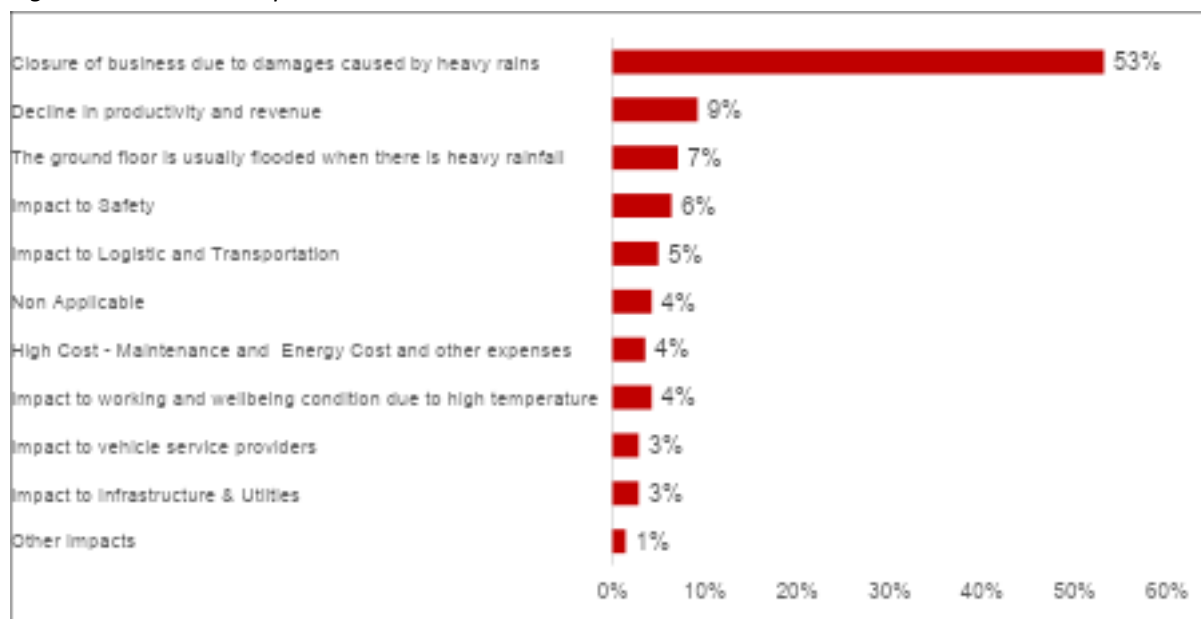


Figure 1.1 shows 64% of the respondents who are micro businesses stated that the after effect of cyclones, floods and heavy rain as well as high temperatures significantly affected their businesses financially.

18% of the respondents who are situated at low lying areas identified Floods and Heavy Rain as the main weather events that affect their businesses.

10% of the respondents who are from the Tourism, Retail & Accommodation and Food Services sectors such as Beach Fales, Retail outlets and Restaurants identified cyclones as the main climate event impacting their businesses. The remaining 8% highlighted High Temperatures affecting their businesses.

Figure 1.2 Weather impacts on Businesses



Climate change and its after-effects have an adverse impact on the private sector as highlighted in Figure 1.2. The respondents stated the following of ‘loss of income, financial burden, cost, a decline in productivity, safety, health and wellbeing’ as the greatest impacts of weather events on their businesses.

53% of the respondents who are mainly micro enterprises highlighted ‘Closure of Business’ as the number one impact of heavy rains on businesses. However, this does not necessarily reflect a permanent closure of business but rather a temporary closure while they rebuild post emergency stage.

The remaining 47% articulated the various weather events and its implications on their businesses hence the need for temporary closure of their businesses.

In addition, severe weather events affect business operations, but it also changes both business and customer behavioural preferences. Behavioural preferences related to Climate Change is a notable factor affecting decision making as resonated by the Accommodation and Food Services industry (‘Others’ -1%) whereby Hotels and Restaurants have opted to install air conditions in their facilities to accommodate customers preference as an outcome of extreme heat.

II. SOLAR ENERGY AND WHAT IT IS

Extreme weather events can affect energy supply. Shifting to renewable energy sources is key to decarbonization and minimizing carbon emissions produced from fossil fuels.

The Government of Samoa’s long-term goal is to be sustainably powered through renewable energy⁴. This is further articulated within the Samoa Energy Sector Plan 2023/24-2027/28 whereby Samoa aims to achieve 70% of renewable energy usage by 2031.⁵

We are now seeing efforts to make this transition through Government commitment to various renewable energy projects and initiatives. Investing in Solar energy is one aspect of these long-term commitments stipulated under the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS).

2.1. Business Perception on Adopting Solar Energy

Figure 2.1. Business View on Adopting Solar Energy

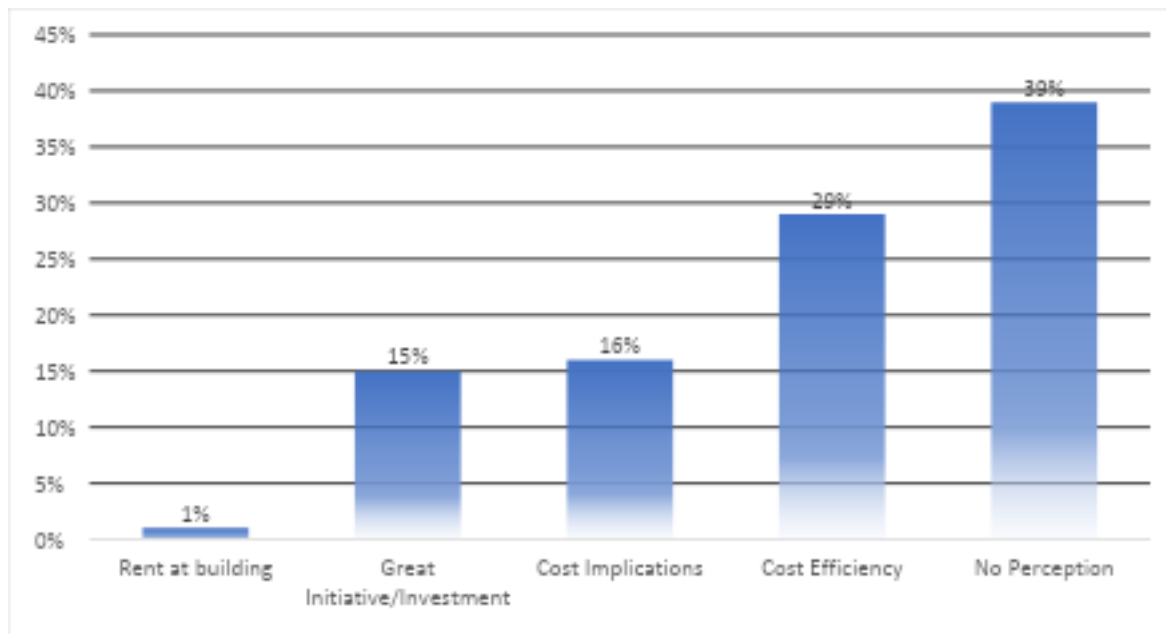


Figure 2.1 presents the different views by the businesses on adopting solar energy initiatives. 29% of respondents stated implementing solar energy measures is cost efficient and saves electricity cost to their businesses; 15% indicated support and their interest for investment; 16% stated that it was too costly to invest and maintain; 1% stated they are tenants; and 39% of the respondents indicated the ‘Lack of Awareness’ as it was not a business priority, and it was perceived as an additional operational cost (equipment and installation costs) and the lack of financial support provided by the government.

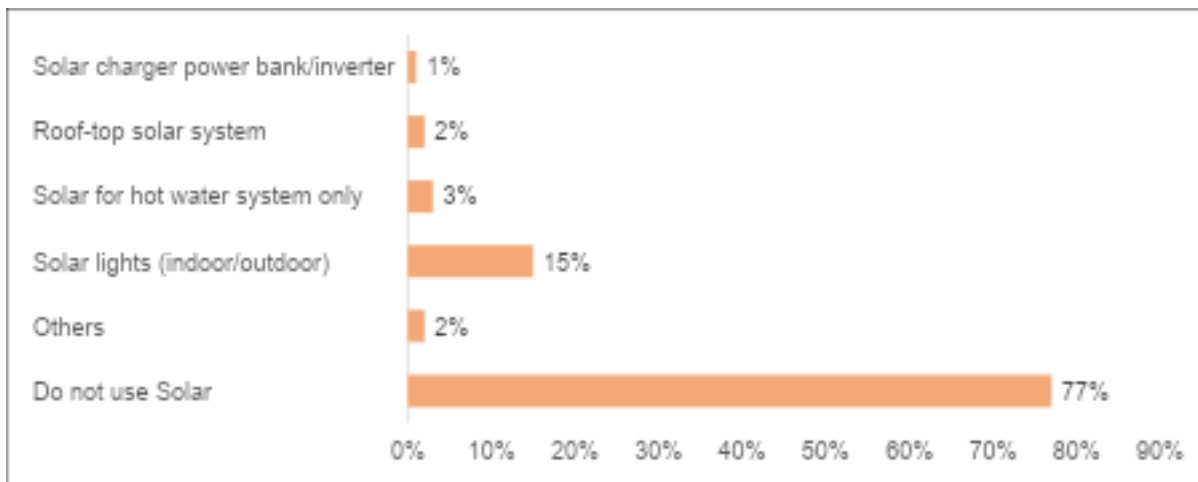
2.2. Types of Solar Power Products used by Businesses

Figure 2.2 shows that 15% of businesses are using solar lights (mainly hotels) as it was cost-efficient; 3% using solar for hot water systems only; 2% roof top solar system; 1% are using solar charger power bank/inverters; 2% are using solar air-conditioning systems and 77% of the respondents do not use solar power in their operation due to cost and that it was not a business priority.

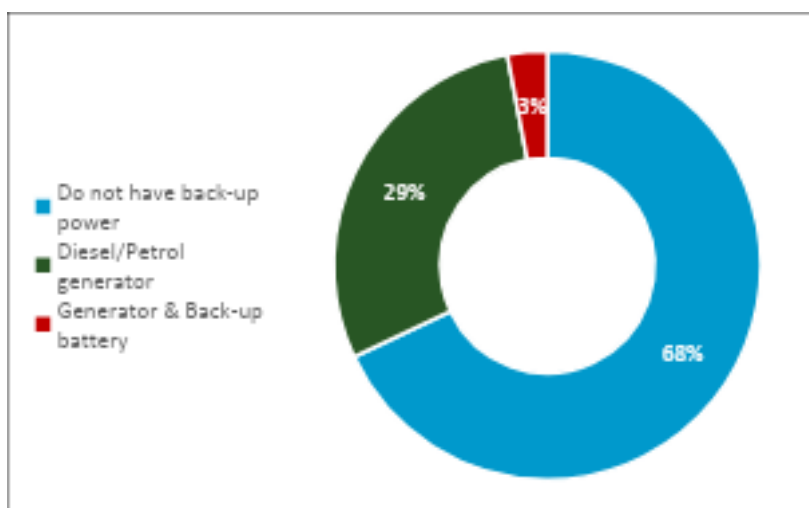
⁴ Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS): FY2021/22-2025/26

⁵ Samoa Energy Sector Plan: 2023/24-2027/28

Figure 2.2 Solar Power Products used by Businesses



2.3. Types of Back-up Power Businesses use

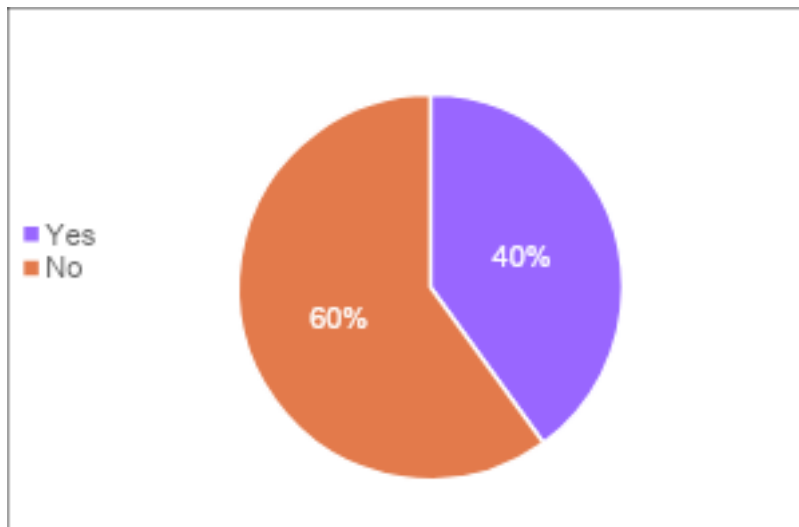


Businesses are more conscious and have recognized the need to have some form of backup power due to unplanned power cuts they have experienced and its impact on their businesses.

29% of the businesses stated they have diesel/petrol powered generators as power backup. These are medium and large businesses mainly

from the Accommodation and Food Services, Retail and Wholesale industries with 3% of businesses that have battery powered generators. 68% of respondents do not have back-up power as a result of affordability as most of these enterprises are micro businesses with small profit margins.

2.4. Have you considered Investing in a Roof Top Solar System?



Cost implication and business size are the main attributing factors as to why the respondents (60%) do not consider investing in a roof top solar system.

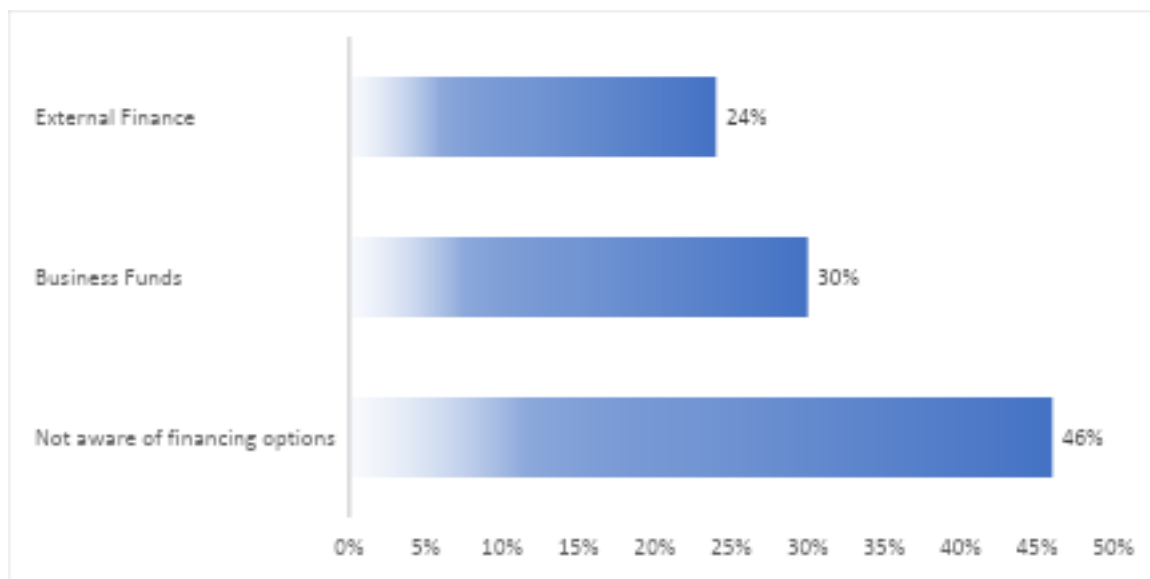
However, the respondents welcome the initiative as a future investment, but it's not an immediate business priority for them.

40% of the respondents

viewed the roof top solar system as a great investment for their businesses with benefits such as reduction in electricity cost, backup power source and is an environmentally friendly and clean alternative.

2.5. Financing Preferences: for Roof-Top Solar System

Figure 2.5 Financing Preference for Roof Top Solar Initiative



As shown in Figure 2.5, 30% of respondents who are mostly large businesses, indicated preference of self-financing from their own business funds; 24% of which are predominantly micro, small and medium businesses indicated they need external financing (loans and grants) from financial institutions, Government or development partners. The remaining 46% of the businesses responded that they are 'not aware of financing options' available for solar energy products. Businesses further commented that they are not aware of available funds and projects from development partners that are channelled through to the Government as they are not well communicated across for the awareness of the private sector.

III. ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND WHAT THEY ARE

Electric vehicles (EVs) simply refer to cars/vehicles with motors that are powered by electricity rather than liquid fossil fuels. Making the transition from fossil fuel powered cars to electric vehicles is important for decarbonization. Road transport accounts for around one-sixth of global emissions making it more critical to transition into renewable and clean energy sources.

EVs possess a lot of potential benefits, including:

- Reduced air pollution through reduced Green-House Gas emissions
- Contributes to a cleaner and greener environment
- Reduces/Offsets carbon footprints

The Government's long term view in this area is to ensure that Samoa makes the transition into renewable energy initiatives. This is articulated within the Samoa Energy Sector Plan⁶ under its Key Sector Outcome 1: Renewable Energy Investments Increased and further implemented under its Key Strategies 1, 2 and 4.

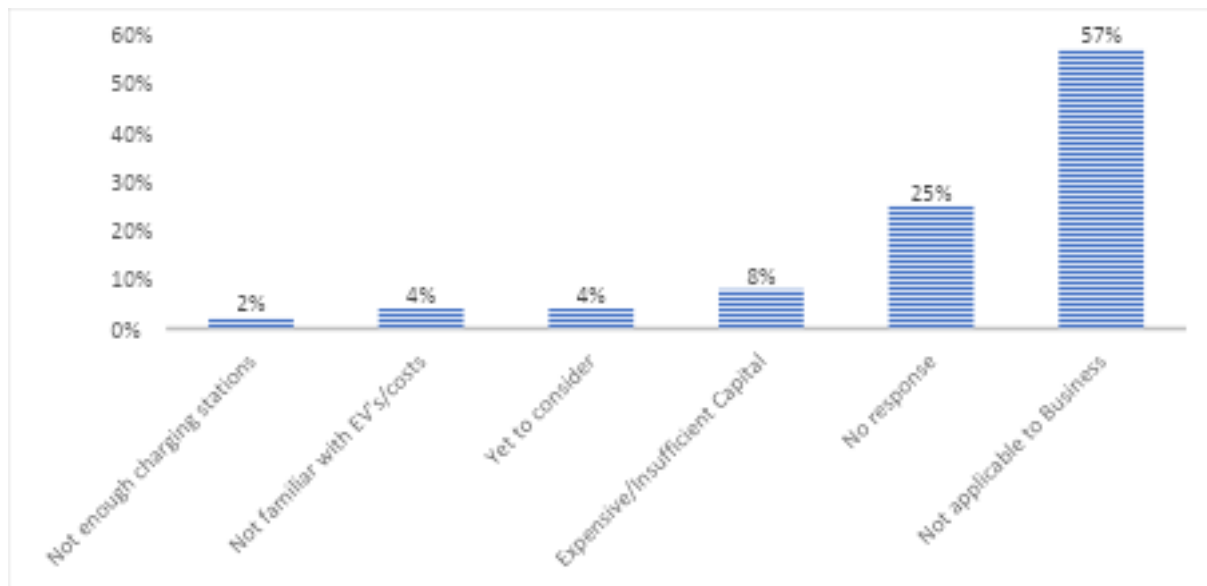
In addition, the Transport and Infrastructure Sector Plan 2023-2028⁷ under its Goal 2: Infrastructural developments effectively designed and constructed to ensure sustainability and resilience to Climate Change, further strengthen the Governments move towards transitioning into green energy usage.

Furthermore, the Electric Power Corporation (EPC) is now in its Phase Two of its Electric Vehicle Pilot Project⁸. Phase One was to pilot these EVs and the project was able to acquire 3 EV trucks and 2 EV vans. With the increasing influx of second-hand cars brought into the country, the Government is looking to urgently promote inclusive transformation of the land and maritime transport sectors towards decarbonization, making the transition very important.

Business Perceptions on Adopting Electric vehicles

Electric vehicles are a new sustainable alternative to be introduced in Samoa. The survey finds that the majority of businesses prefer fossil fuel cars over EV's. 7% perceived the Expensive/Insufficient Capital as the number one barrier to adopting EVs. The price of an electric vehicle (Hyundai SUV's only) ranges from \$150,000 to \$200,000 Samoan Tala⁹. In comparison, businesses would likely opt for cheaper fossil fuel powered cars

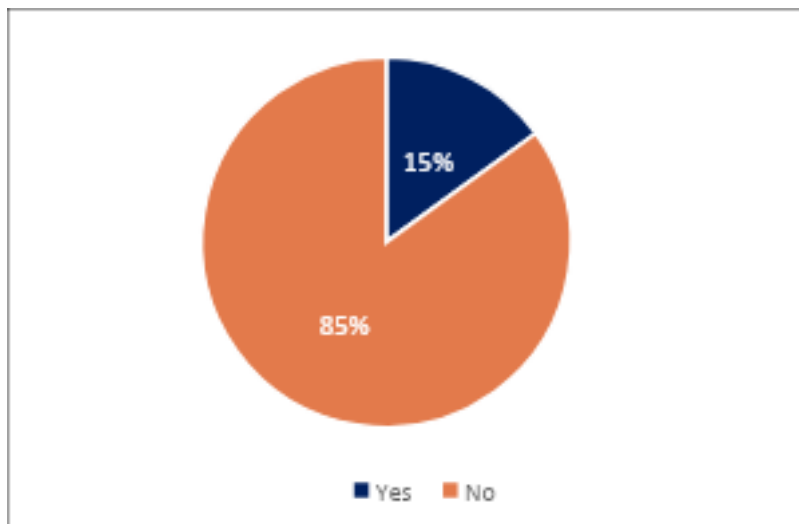
Figure 3.1 Business Views on Adopting Electric Vehicles



4% responded that they were not familiar with EVs and its associated costs due to lack of awareness while the other 4% of businesses stated 'Yet to consider' due to differing business priorities as they already have laid out short term plans and priorities in the direction of where they should go and goals to be met. Respondents have emphasized that rather than investing and adopting EVs now, they see this as a potential future investment for the business to look at.

The 2% of respondents raised concerns with regards to the lack of availability of sufficient public charging stations as well as the technical support available in terms of mechanics and engineers. 57% majority stated that this was not applicable to their businesses as a result of various reasons including not relevant to the nature of their businesses. 8% of respondents viewed Insufficient Capital/Expensive as reasons for not adopting electric vehicles, while the remaining 25% had no views on electric vehicles.

Have you considered Adopting Electric Vehicles for your Business?



85% of businesses answered 'No' to adopting EVs for business operations. Businesses have highlighted electric vehicles as expensive to purchase and maintain compared to vehicles they currently use. Not only are they conscious of the associated costs but are concerned in regards to the lack of technical expertise (qualified mechanics and

engineers) available in the country specialising in electric vehicles.

The lack of awareness on electric vehicles and differing business priorities are other contributing factors highlighted by businesses as to why they have said 'No'.

The remaining 15% of respondents have shown interest and have considered purchasing EVs as they are aware and understand the long-term benefits to their businesses. As reported in the survey, businesses are viewing this as a great cost effective and efficient investment for the future as well as contributing to promoting a greener and cleaner environment.

Financing Preferences for Electric Vehicles

Figure 3.3. Financing Preference for Electric Vehicles

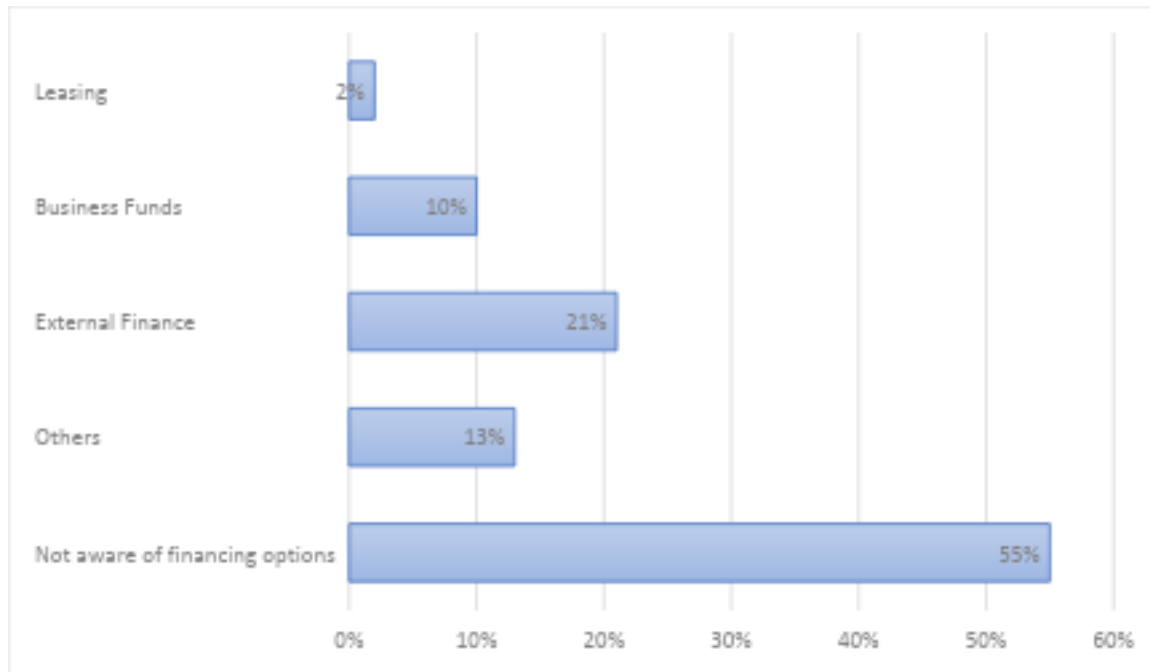


Figure 3.3 shows, 55% of businesses are 'Not aware of financing options' available to purchase electric vehicles. They would like the government in collaboration with the private sector to provide more awareness on EVs benefits and challenges and financing options such as tax levy, subsidies to name a few.

13% of respondents have identified; External financing, Business/Self-funding and Leasing arrangements as preferred funding sources with 21% of respondents stating External financing as a main preferred funding option. These come in the forms of; grant or loan funding, and projects. 10% highlighted Business/Self-funding as a source of financing and only 2% indicated preference for a Leasing arrangement.

Depending on the size of the business, not all businesses are willing to self-fund their EVs particularly the micro, small, medium enterprises with small profit margins and cannot afford such vehicles thus the preference for external funding assistance.

Electricity Usage and Experiences

Figure 4.0. Average Monthly Power Bill

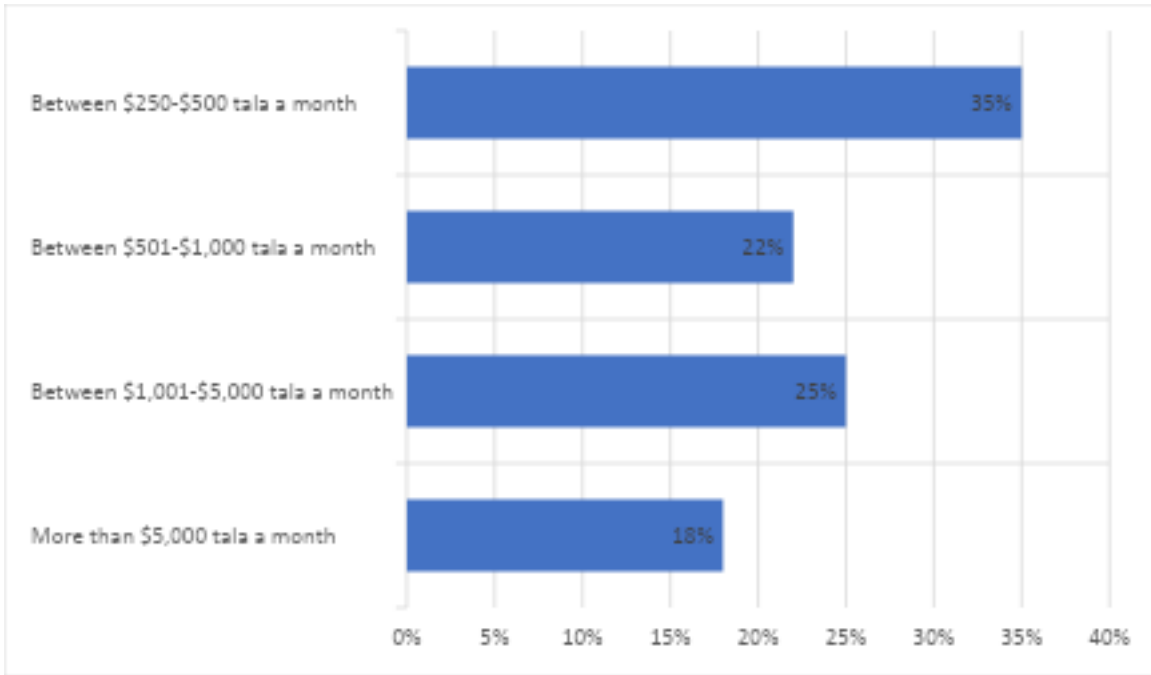


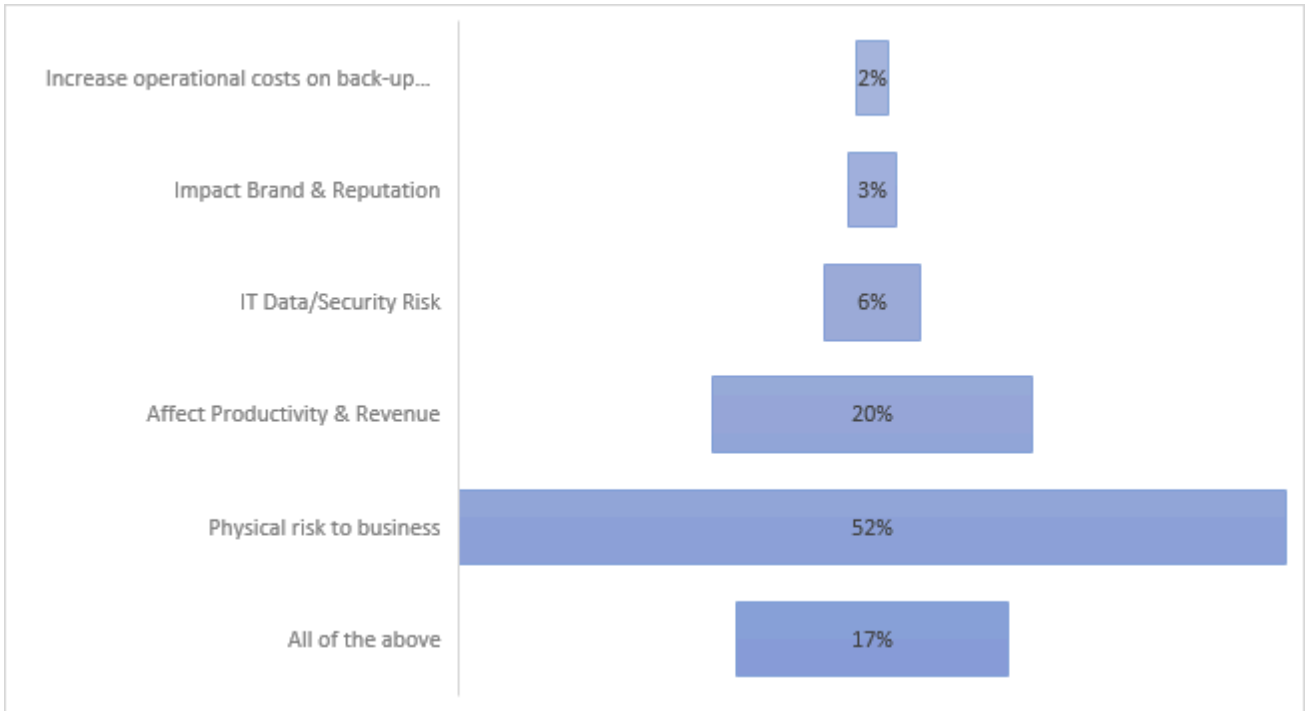
Figure 4.0 illustrates that the majority of the businesses surveyed depend on electricity for their operation have highlighted this as the highest operational cost to their businesses.

35% of the respondents are micro businesses who stated their average electricity bill ranges from \$250-\$500 per month. 18% of the respondents are from large businesses, mainly hotels, who spend more than \$5,000.00 per month on electricity due to the nature of their businesses where they depend heavily on electricity to operate.

Businesses reflected on the increasing price for electricity with great concern given that some of the micro businesses are barely able to make ends meet. The Government's 20% electricity tariff imposed on businesses further exacerbated the cost of electricity.

4.1. Impacts of Unplanned Power Cuts to Businesses

Figure 4.1. Impacts of Unplanned Power Cuts to Businesses

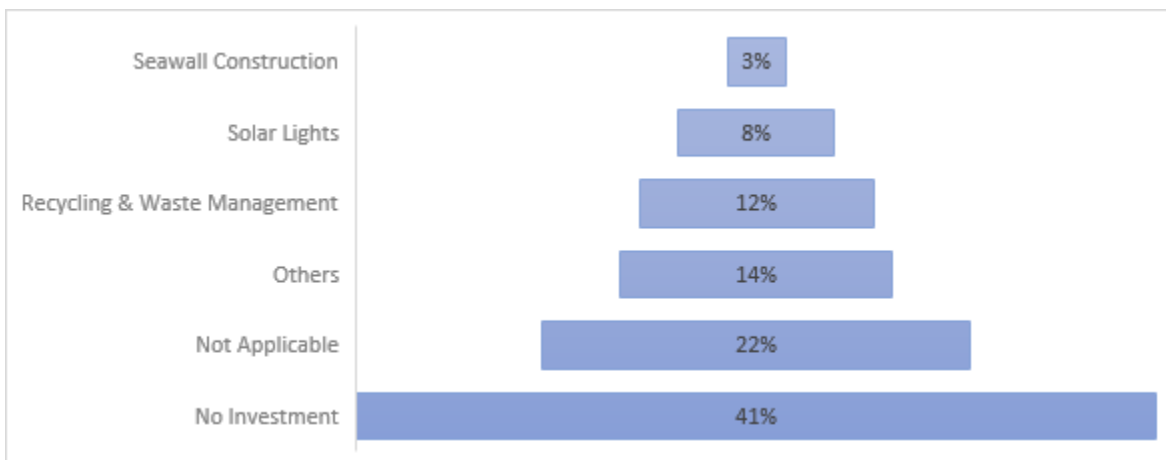


The impacts of unplanned power disruption to the private sector are quite significant. 52% of the respondents highlighted Physical Risk to Businesses as the biggest impact to businesses; 20% affect business productivity and loss of revenue (equipment failure); 6% stated risk to their IT Data and security (disarming of security system); 3% impacts their branding and service reputation; 2% of businesses had to invest more on back-up power equipment while 17% stated all of the above impacts.

Sustainability Policies, Practices & Investments

Climate change and its substantial implication on SMEs has prompted a shift of business focus to invest on resilient renewable energy initiatives to combat its effect and for sustainability of businesses.

Figure 5.0. Sustainability Investments and Disaster Risk Reduction



3% of the respondents from the Hospitality industry, mainly the Beach Fales, have invested in seawall to reduce the impact of strong waves and sand erosion. 8% of the businesses have invested in solar lights as a form of energy efficiency and cost saving initiative.

12% of the respondents have invested in Recycling and Waste Management, for instance, the Retail industry is using recyclable and biodegradable shopping bags. Other businesses are in partnership with SRWMA (Samoa Recycle and Waste Management Association) in the collection and disposal of plastics, cans, waste, metals and electronic waste.

14% of businesses responded with 'Other Investments' including environment friendly cleaning chemical products, the use of upcycled materials for repurposing. In addition, the Accommodation and Food Services industry have invested in commercial earth ovens to reduce reliance on commercial gas and electric ovens.

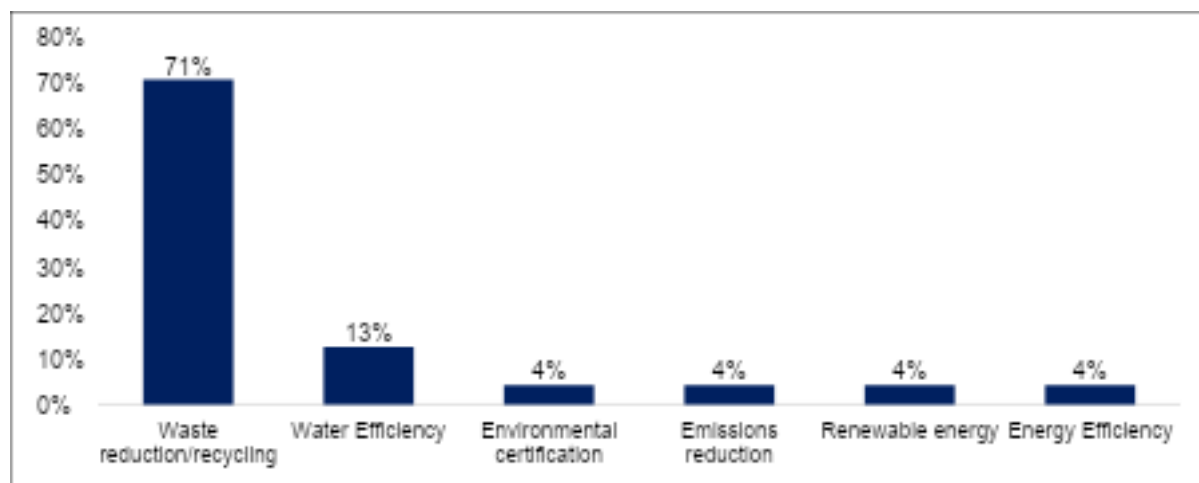
22% of businesses responded with 'Not Applicable', indicating that even though they are aware of the positive impacts, they however, have yet to consider investment due to the nature of their businesses and the associated costs involved. The remaining 41%, stated 'No Investments' at all in any renewable energy initiatives with no justifications provided.

5.1. Sustainability Policies and Practices to address Climate Change

The survey reports that there are no sustainability policies and practices created by the businesses themselves, however, they have adopted Government policies and practices such as the Single Use Plastic Regulation¹⁰ and other government proposed policies such as the Waste Levy.¹¹

Figure 5.1 highlights various best practices implemented by several sectors to assist in minimizing climate change effects.

Figure 5.1 Sustainable Policies and Practices



71% of the respondents have implemented waste reduction and recycling practices through limiting use of single use plastic. Some businesses are now in partnership with the Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association (SRWMA) regarding plastic and collection which are processed into

¹⁰ Waste Management Regulation 2015-2018

¹¹ National Waste Management Strategy 2019 - 2023

pellets or bailed and exported to larger scale plants in Australia. Furthermore, electronic waste are collected from businesses by SRWMA¹² and shipped overseas for recycling and disposal. In addition, the Samoa Stationery and Books under its E-waste Project, facilitates its electronic waste collection to counter the increasing influx of e-waste brought into the country.¹³

13% of businesses have adopted Water efficiency practices such as installation of water tanks for rainwater harvesting, leak detection and water coolers strategically located around hotel vicinity to encourage clients to fill their water bottle rather than purchasing single use plastic water bottles.

4% of the businesses mentioned using indoor/outdoor solar lights as a form of 'Energy Efficiency' and as a good practice.

Challenges and Opportunities

The key challenges as well as opportunities identified from the survey are as follows:

1. Cost Implications and Opportunities:

- *Weather Events* - Physical damages sustained by businesses as a result of extreme weather events are costly. Costs on post recovery efforts and repairs to businesses are significantly high and are further exacerbated by the temporary closures of businesses resulting in further loss of revenues, and significant decrease in business productivity.

Poor business infrastructure and business planning are other key challenges highlighted from the survey that impacted their businesses. Proper planning in consultation with all key stakeholders is a must for alignment and collaboration to address drainage issues around urban areas as well as seawall infrastructure for high-risk areas that are prone to severe weather impacts to adapt and minimize climate change effects on businesses.

Investment in public infrastructure is another key area to consider. Infrastructure in terms of electric vehicle charging stations, more hydro power plants and more solar power plants to ensure that there is sufficient electricity supplied to power for operations but to also cater for the transition of using electric vehicles.

The Chamber should lead efforts to convene government and private sector stakeholders to co-design resilient infrastructure plans. This includes integrating renewable energy systems into urban planning and incentivizing private investment in solar and EV technologies.

- *Solar Energy & Electric Vehicles*- As highlighted throughout the report, solar energy and electric vehicles are expensive renewable energy alternatives for most so far. These costs include the infrastructure/equipment, installation fees as well as maintenance costs. The reliability of both solar power and EV's is an area of concern flagged by some businesses. With a 100% reliance on a solar system fuelled by the sun, Samoa's changing weather patterns as a result of climate change, is of great concern particularly during the rainy season.

For EVs, the availability of charging stations and facilities is also a concern. More investment by the Government is required to ensure sufficient public charging stations and facilities are

¹² [Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association \(srwma.ws\)](http://www.srwma.ws)

¹³ SSAB E-Waste Project: <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/98339>

available. Additionally, concerns around the availability of qualified mechanics and engineers are highlighted. And finally, more education opportunities to address specific technical skills for mechanics and engineers.

Establish a phased rollout plan for EV charging stations, starting with high-density urban areas, to encourage adoption.

To introduce government-backed grants to cover up to 50% of the installation costs for roof-top solar systems.

The Samoa Chamber of Commerce to advocate for targeted subsidies and tax incentives for businesses investing in renewable energy. Partnering with financial institutions to develop loan packages tailored for solar energy and EV's can address cost concerns.

2. Awareness on Renewable Energy

As electric vehicles become an important part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprints, it is important for the Government to promote awareness and educate the public on electric vehicles. Capacity building opportunities should be provided to address the skills and knowledge gap of our mechanics and engineers to ensure that there is the availability of qualified local personnel to service and maintain EVs.

Limited knowledge and the lack of awareness present significant barriers. Respondents have highlighted the need for respective government agencies to collaborate, provide and share with the private sector relevant information and awareness on various opportunities so that the private sector are well informed and are kept abreast on renewable energy related developments such as duty concession scheme on imported electric vehicles, funding renewable projects and initiatives and government subsidies to name a few.

The Chamber can play a critical role in bridging this gap by organizing workshops and promoting public-private partnerships to disseminate information on renewable energy benefits, financing options and technical support.

3. Funding Implications and Opportunities

The survey identified that there is limited to none Government financial support provided to the private sector to fund renewable energy projects. In addition, there are also very little to no incentives and subsidies provided to the private sector to assist fund any renewable energy initiatives.

Funding is the biggest challenge faced by most businesses. Some businesses are small in operation and profit, thus do not have the financial capacity to fund renewable energy initiatives such as the roof top solar energy system or electric vehicles.

Government to consider concessional measures as highlighted by the Chamber under the Customs Act (HS 2022) Review conducted in 2021 which included Renewable Energy sector.

The Private Sector is the key driver of Samoa's economy. For the Government to achieve its obligations, it requires the support from the Private sector to achieve its goals. Effective collaboration and communication amongst the Government, Civil Society and the Private Sector as this is the key

to addressing development challenges and a key factor in making the transition together with the Private Sector.

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