



SEC Newgate

ESG Monitor

2022

Singapore Report

2022 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Background & methodology.


For the second year running, SEC Newgate conducted research to understand community awareness and perceptions around Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues.



The research involved a 15-minute online survey conducted with a total sample of n=12,063 residents across 12 countries and territories. **This report presents the findings from Singapore** (n=1,008).

Participants were sourced from global panel provider PureProfile. Fieldwork was conducted in mid to late July 2022. Quotas were set by age, gender and location to ensure a nationally representative sample of residents aged 18 or over, and the final results were weighted by the actual age and gender proportions for Singapore.

Other methodological notes to keep in mind

- #01 Survey questions and sample sizes are shown at the bottom of each page.
- #02 Results may not always total 100% due to rounding or questions allowing multiple-responses.
- #03 Where possible, results are compared to the 2021 survey results for Singapore as well as the 'global total' i.e. for all 12 countries and territories included in the study in 2022.
- #04 Down ↓ and up ↑ arrows show where results for Singapore are significantly lower / higher than the previous year (95% confidence level).
- #05 Down ▼ and up ▲ triangles show where results for Singapore are significantly lower / higher than other countries and territories surveyed in 2022 (95% confidence level). Please note that throughout the report, when comparisons have been made to the global total or average, the significance testing has been conducted between Singapore and all other countries and territories surveyed.
- #06  This symbol throughout refers to the global results.

Executive Summary.

For many in Singapore, 2022 carries a sense of optimism. Five in six participants (84%) felt that things in Singapore were headed in the right direction, well above the global average for 2022 (46%).

When it came to the **top three priorities** for Singapore's future, participants gave the highest priority to addressing the rising cost of living, ensuring secure and affordable food supplies, ensuring quality, affordable healthcare for everyone and strengthening the economy.

Unprompted **awareness of the term 'ESG'** in Singapore was comparable to last year, with 72% of participants having heard the term before and about three in ten participants (31%) claiming to have a good understanding of it. This is well above the global total, where about 46% of participants said they heard of the term 'ESG' before and one in seven participants (15%) reported having a good understanding of the term. Similarly, of over 1,000 respondents in Singapore, one in five participants (22%) felt they had a good understanding of the term 'Net Zero' – significantly more than other countries and territories (17% globally).

About two in five (42%) participants in Singapore claimed to actively **research company ESG activities** or performance, above the global total of 33%. Among those searching for ESG-related information, search engines, the company's website and social media were the top consulted sources.

Interest in ESG issues decreased significantly this year (from a 6.8 score out of 10 in 2021, to 6.6 in 2022), but was still in line with the global average (6.5).

When asked which aspects of ESG-related activities are most important, respondents said that addressing climate change (16%), protecting the environment (14%), and reducing waste and recycling (12%) were the most important issues. Overall, environmental issues (55%) remain top-of-mind for Singaporean respondents, while attention towards social issue has increased – now at 26%, up from 16% last year.

Compared to the global average, people in Singapore placed greater **importance on ESG issues** influencing their own day-to-day purchase decisions (average of 6.8 out of 10 compared to 6.4 globally) and this rating also increased significantly compared to the 2021 survey (6.4).

Unlike the global average, the Singaporean government was rated highest for its **ESG performance** (at 6.9 out of 10 on average), ahead of the country overall (6.7) and large companies (6.5). The general public (6.1) and small companies (5.9) were rated lowest. Compared to 2021, ratings for the Singaporean government, Singapore overall, and the general public have all increased significantly this year.

When it comes to perceived **ESG performance for specific industries**, the highest ratings were awarded to healthcare, education and training and banking and financial services. Mining and resources, alcohol and fashion scored the lowest. The perceived performance of airlines, construction and infrastructure, the automotive and the chemical industries improved significantly this year.

Key Findings Snapshot: Singapore.



#01

Top country priorities

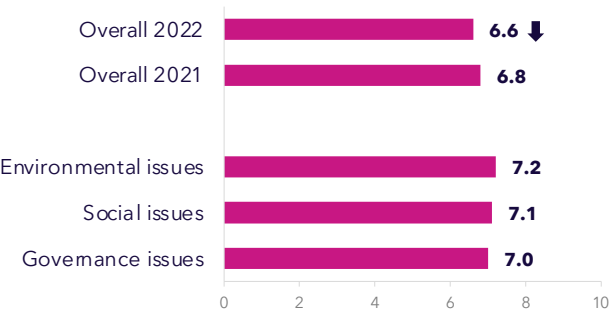
(% RANKING IN TOP 3)

- 1. Addressing the rising cost of living (54%)
- 2. Ensuring secure and affordable energy and fuel supplies (31%)
- 3. Ensuring quality, affordable healthcare for everyone (31%)

#02

Interest in ESG

(AVERAGE OUT OF 10)



#03

Perceived importance of ESG

(AVERAGE OUT OF 10)



Importance of companies taking action on ESG issues

7.6 out of 10



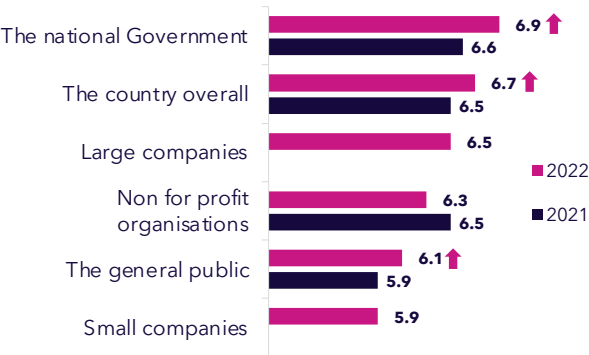
Importance of ESG issues in influencing consumers' own purchase decisions

6.8 out of 10

#04

Ratings of ESG performance

(AVERAGE OUT OF 10)



*Small and large companies not asked in 2021

#05

Top 3 ESG concerns

- 1. Climate change / global warming (16%)
- 2. Environmental protection / sustainability (14%)
- 3. Reducing waste and plastic use / recycling (12%)

#06

Industry ESG ratings

(AVERAGE OUT OF 10)

Top 3 industries

- 1. Healthcare (6.8 : 6.8)
- 2. Education and training (6.8 : 6.7)
- 3. Banking and financial services (6.6 : 6.6)

Bottom 3 industries

- 1. Mining and resources ↑ (5.8 : 5.5)
- 2. Alcohol (5.8 : N/A)
- 3. Fashion (5.9 : N/A)

Legend: (2022 : 2021)

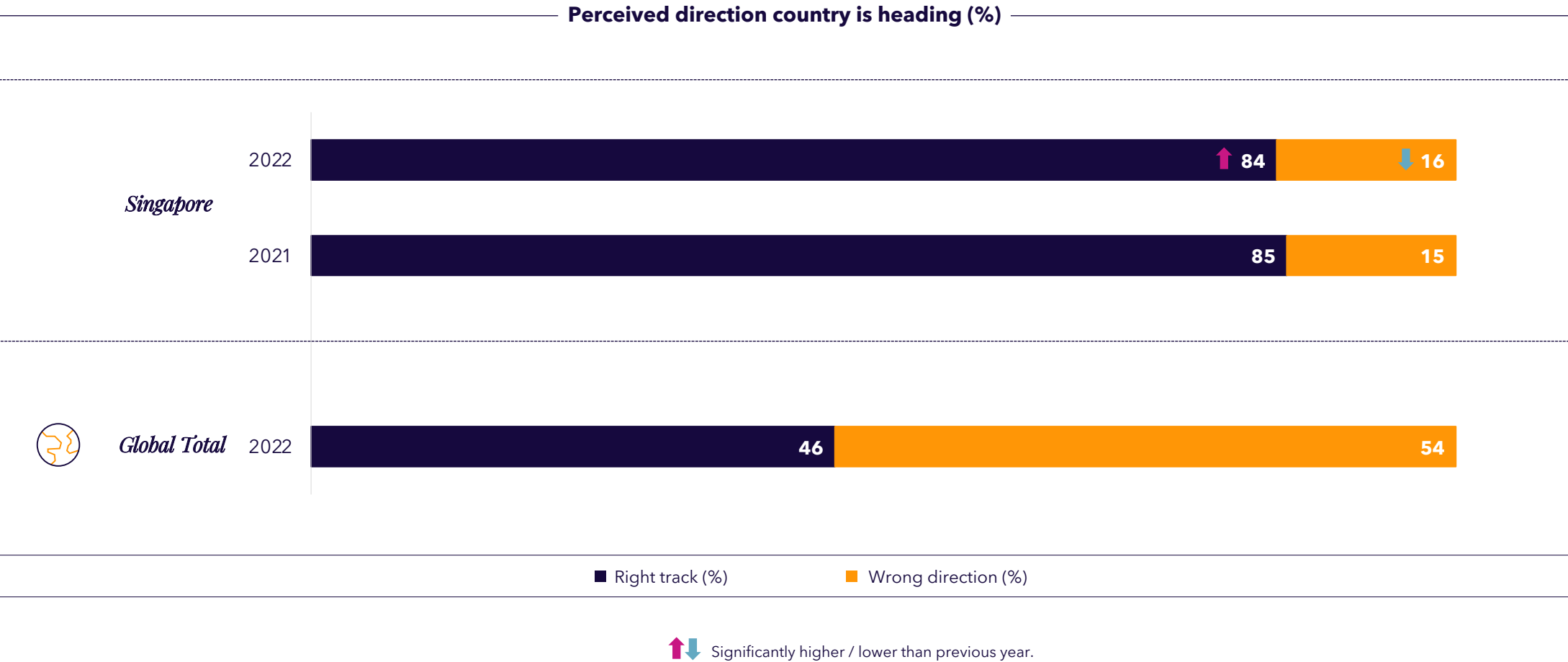
↓ ↑ Significantly higher / lower than previous year.

SECTION 1

Where does ESG fit in?

Perceived direction Singapore is heading in.

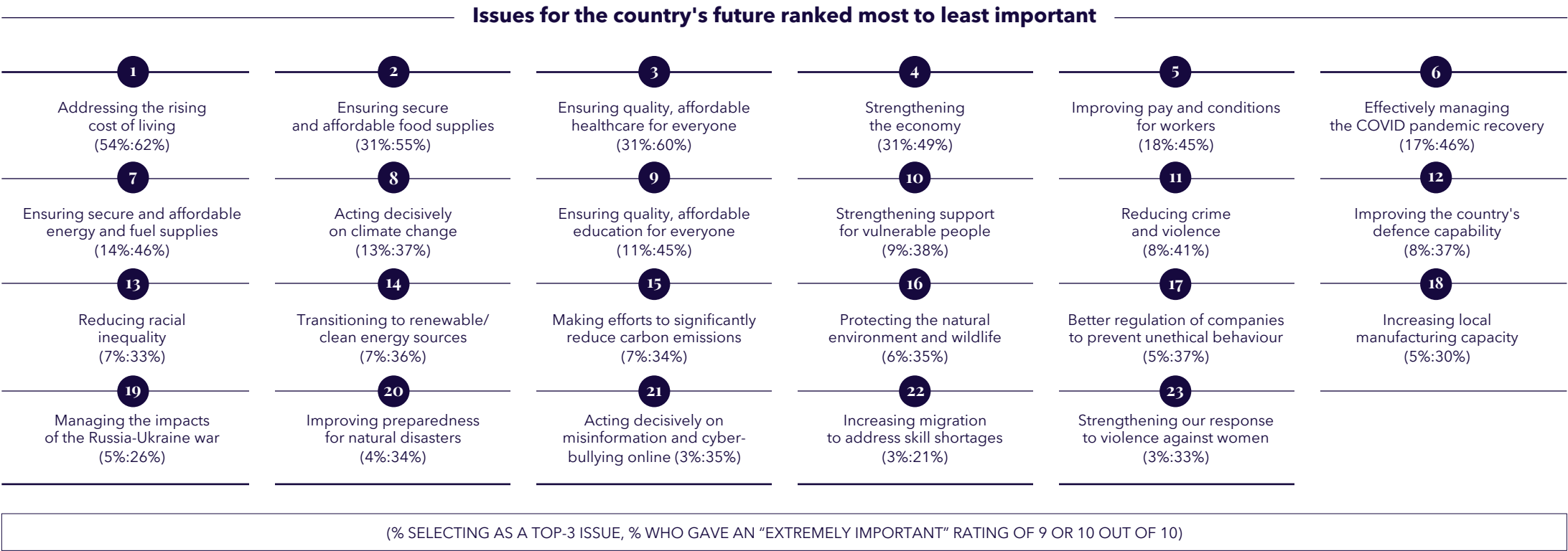
Singaporean respondents seemed optimistic about Singapore's future, with about five in six participants (84%) opining that the country was progressing in the right direction. This is also significantly above the global total for 2022, where less than half (46%) felt that things were heading in the right direction in their country.



Priority issues at the country level.

Survey participants were shown a list of 23 priority issues and asked to rate how important each one was for their country's future (out of 10). They were then asked to select their top 3 priorities. The diagram below shows the 23 issues ranked in terms of the proportion of participants who selected each in their top 3 (the first number in brackets, the second number was the proportion who gave it an importance rating of 9 or 10 - where 10 was 'extremely important').

When it came to the top three priorities for Singapore's future, participants gave the highest priority to addressing the rising cost of living, ensuring secure and affordable food supplies, ensuring quality, affordable healthcare for everyone and strengthening the economy.

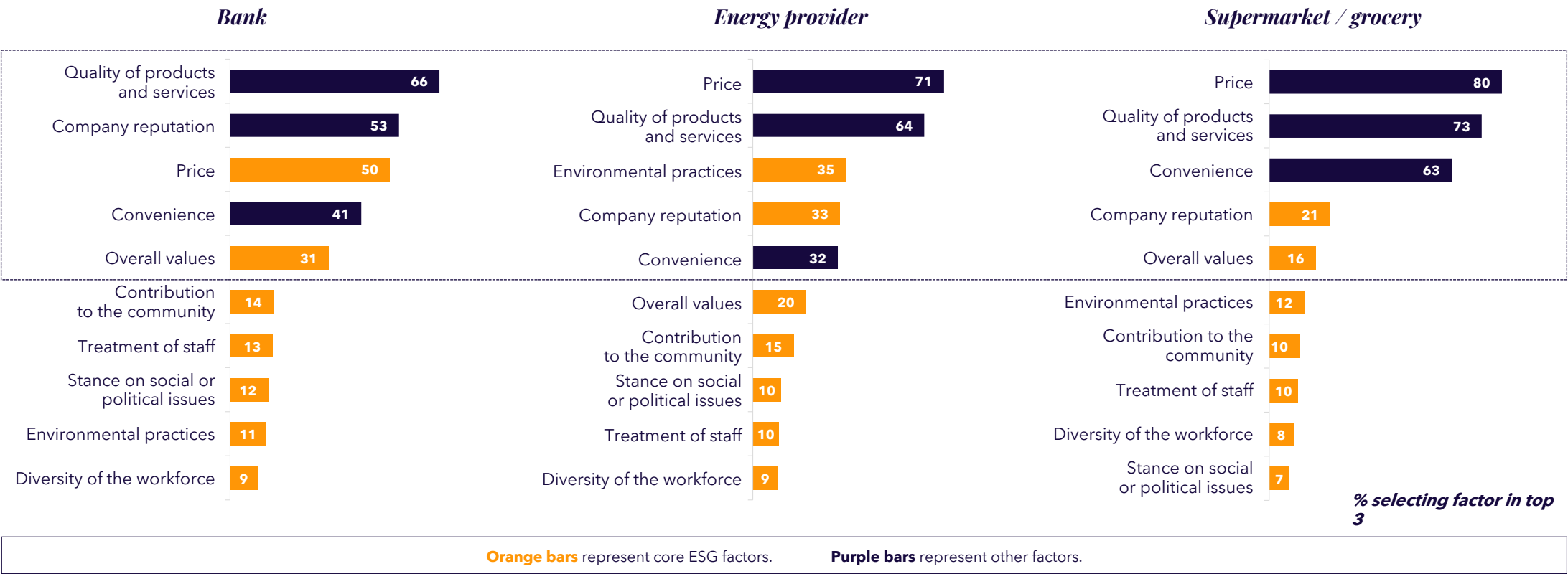


Base: All survey participants in Singapore (n=1,008)
Q19. The following are things that some people believe are important for [INSERT COUNTRY'S] future. How important are these things to you personally? / Q20. From the following list, please select the three things you personally feel are most important for [COUNTRY'S] future. Rank them from 1 to 3 where 1 is the most important thing and 3 is the third most important thing. [SAME LIST OF 23 ITEMS SHOWN IN Q19 AND Q20]
Q19 and Q20 not asked in 2021

Priorities when choosing a company to do business with.

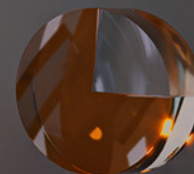
When asked about the relative importance of different factors when choosing a company, price, quality and convenience were naturally high on people’s list of priorities. When choosing a bank or energy provider, residents in Singapore also placed high importance on ‘core ESG factors’, such as company reputation, environmental practices and overall values.

When choosing a bank, an energy provider, a grocery store/supermarket, how important are the following factors?



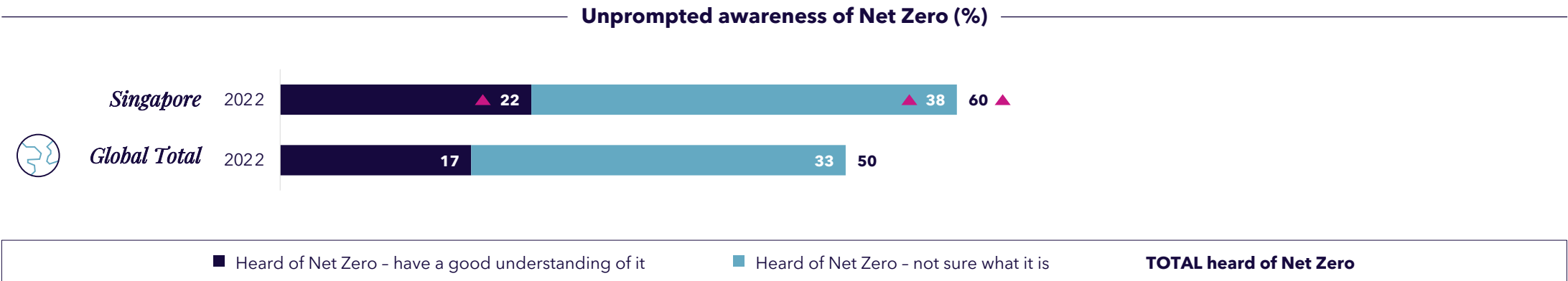
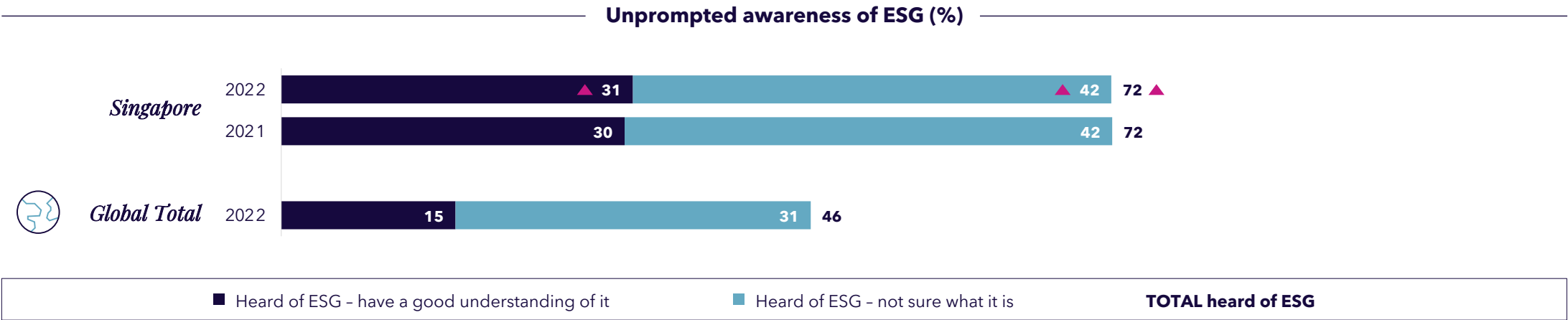
SECTION 2

How much do we really care about ESG?



Awareness and knowledge of the terms 'ESG' & 'Net Zero'.

Unprompted awareness of the term ESG in Singapore was comparable to last year, with nearly one in three participants (31%) claiming to have a good understanding of it. This is significantly higher than the global total, where one in seven participants (15%) reported having a good understanding of the term. Similarly, awareness of the term 'Net Zero' was higher in Singapore with more than one in five (22%) saying they had a good understanding of the term compared to 17% globally.



What is ESG?

After asking participants whether they had heard of the term ESG without explaining what it is, they were shown the following text:

As you may already know, the term “ESG” refers to standards, policies and behaviours that organisations have in relation to **Environmental**, **Social** and **Governance** issues.

Some examples of these issues include:



Environmental

Action on climate change, use of natural resources, waste management, pollution, toxin free environments and the preservation of habitats and living creatures.



Social

Human rights, working conditions, health and safety, social equality, diversity and inclusion, contributing to the local community, speaking out on social or political issues.



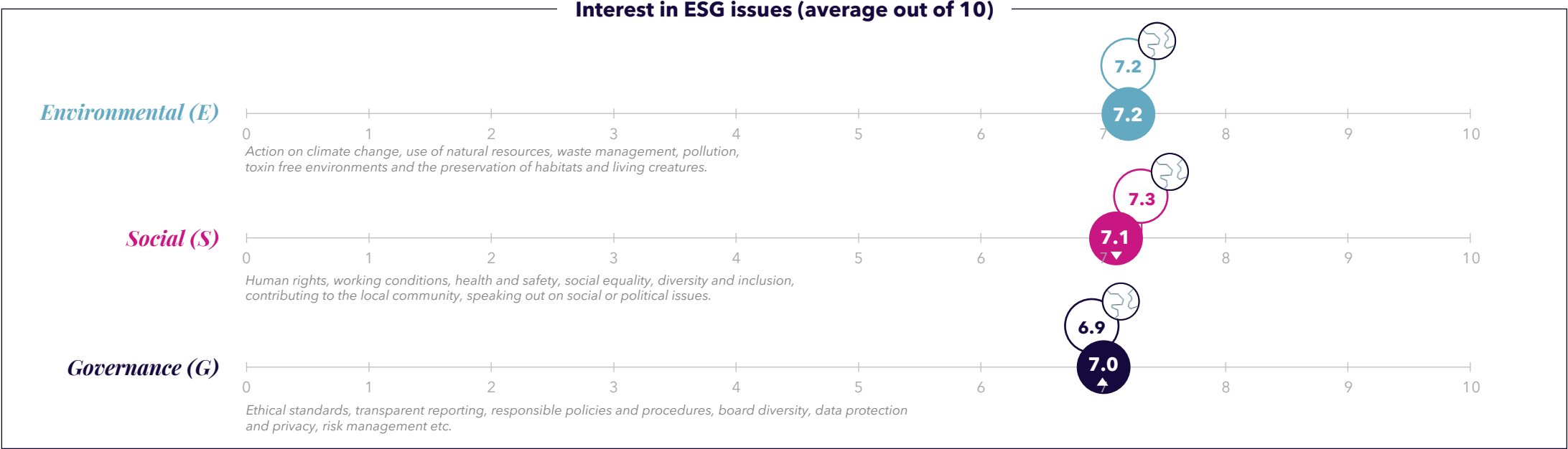
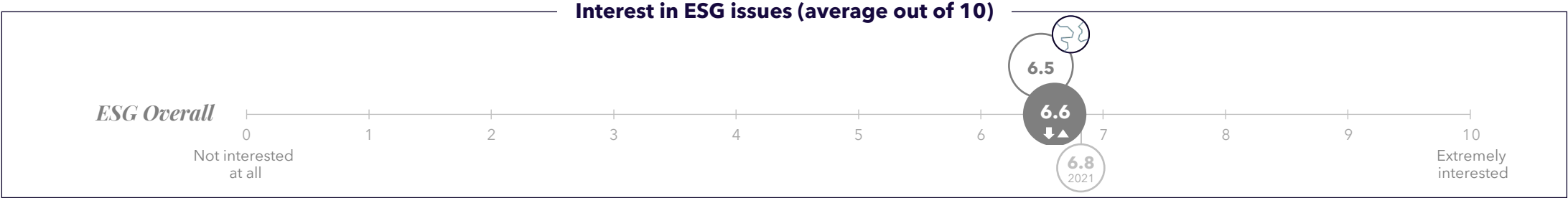
Governance

Ethical standards, transparent reporting, responsible policies and procedures, board diversity, data protection and privacy, risk management etc.



Interest in ESG in Singapore.

In Singapore, interest in ESG was relatively moderate, with participants giving an average rating of 6.6 out of 10 - this was a significant drop from 2021 (6.8) but still above the global average (6.5). Interest in individual ESG pillars was higher than overall interest, with environmental issues receiving the highest level of interest (average rating of 7.2), followed by social (7.1) and governance (7.0) issues.



▲▼ Significantly higher / lower than global total. ↑↓ Significantly higher / lower than previous year.

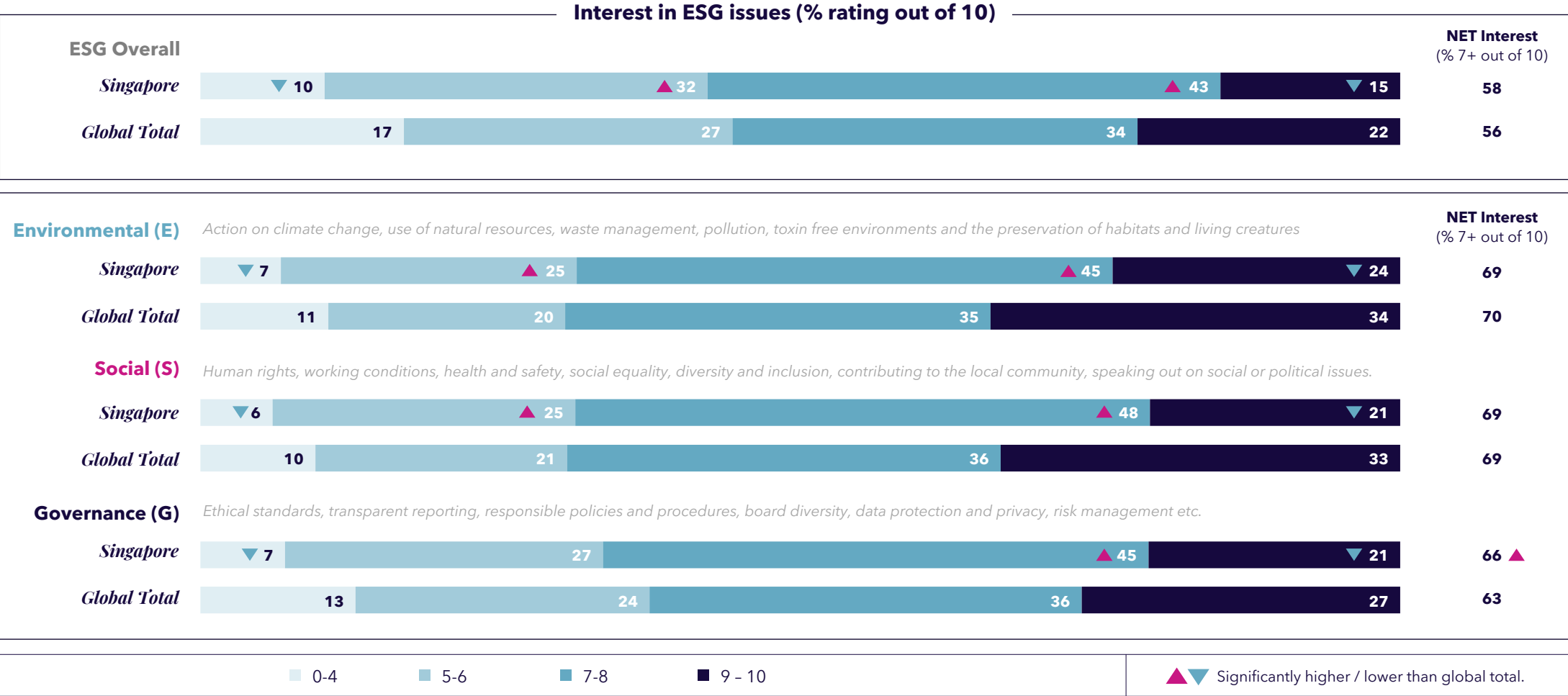
Base: All survey participants in [COUNTRY] (2022: n=1,008, 2021: n=1,024), Global total survey participants (2022: n=12,063)

Q4. How interested are you in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues, if at all?

Q22. And how interested are you in following aspects of ESG, if at all? Scale: 0=not at all interested, 10=extremely interested. Q22 not asked in 2021

Interest in ESG in Singapore *cont'd.*

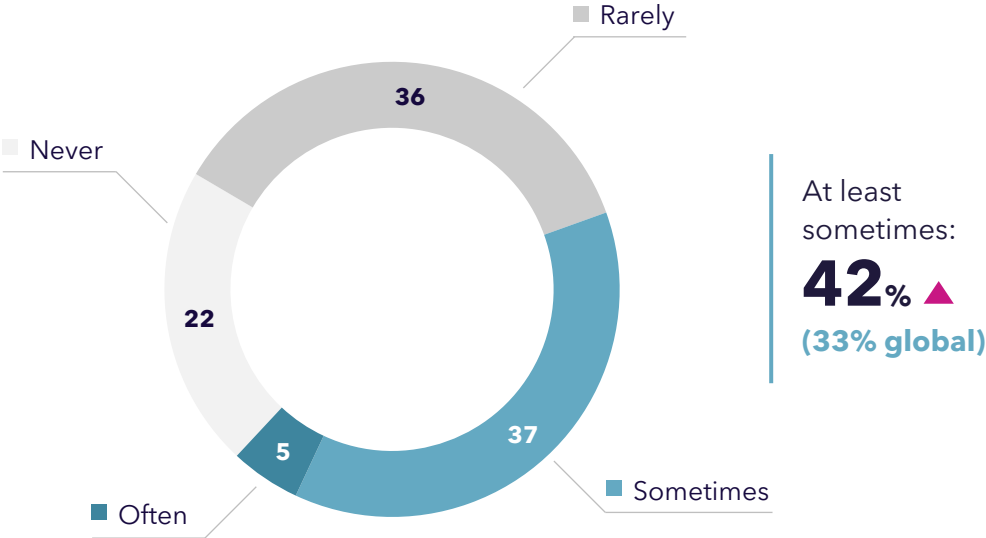
Nearly three in five (58%) participants in Singapore indicated their interest in ESG overall (rating 7 or higher out of 10), which was slightly higher than the global total (56%). Interest in individual ESG pillars was higher than overall interest.



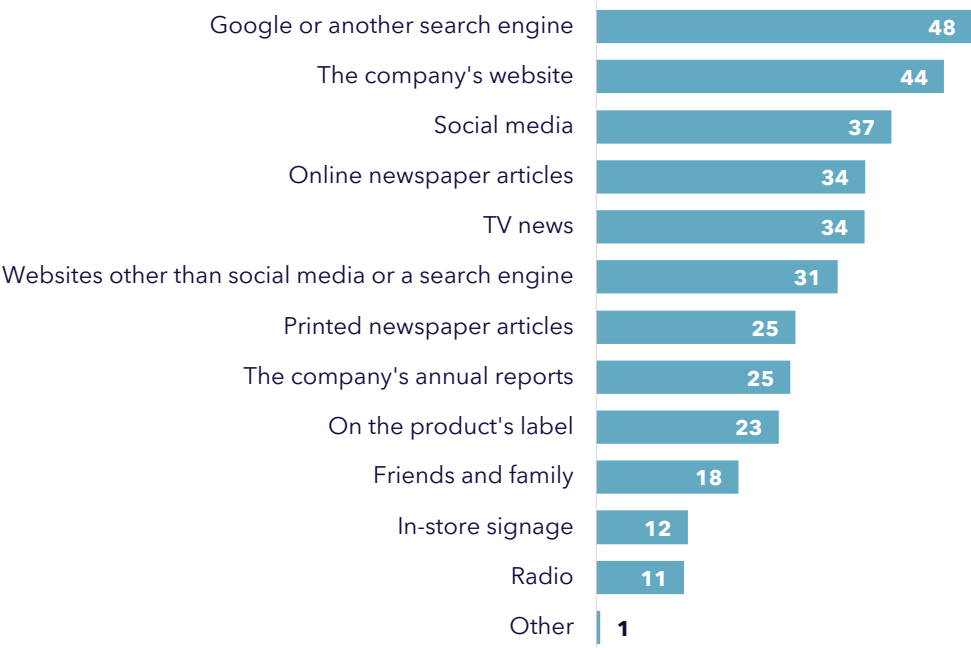
Information seeking on company ESG performance.

About two in five participants in Singapore (42%) claimed to actively research company ESG activities or performance, with only 5% doing so 'often'. Just over a third (36%) rarely look for this information and about one in five (22%) never do so. Search engines, company websites and social media were the top sources people in Singapore consult for information on companies' ESG activities and performance.

Frequency of looking for information on companies' ESG activities and performance (%)



Sources of information on companies' ESG activities and performance (% among those who do look for information)

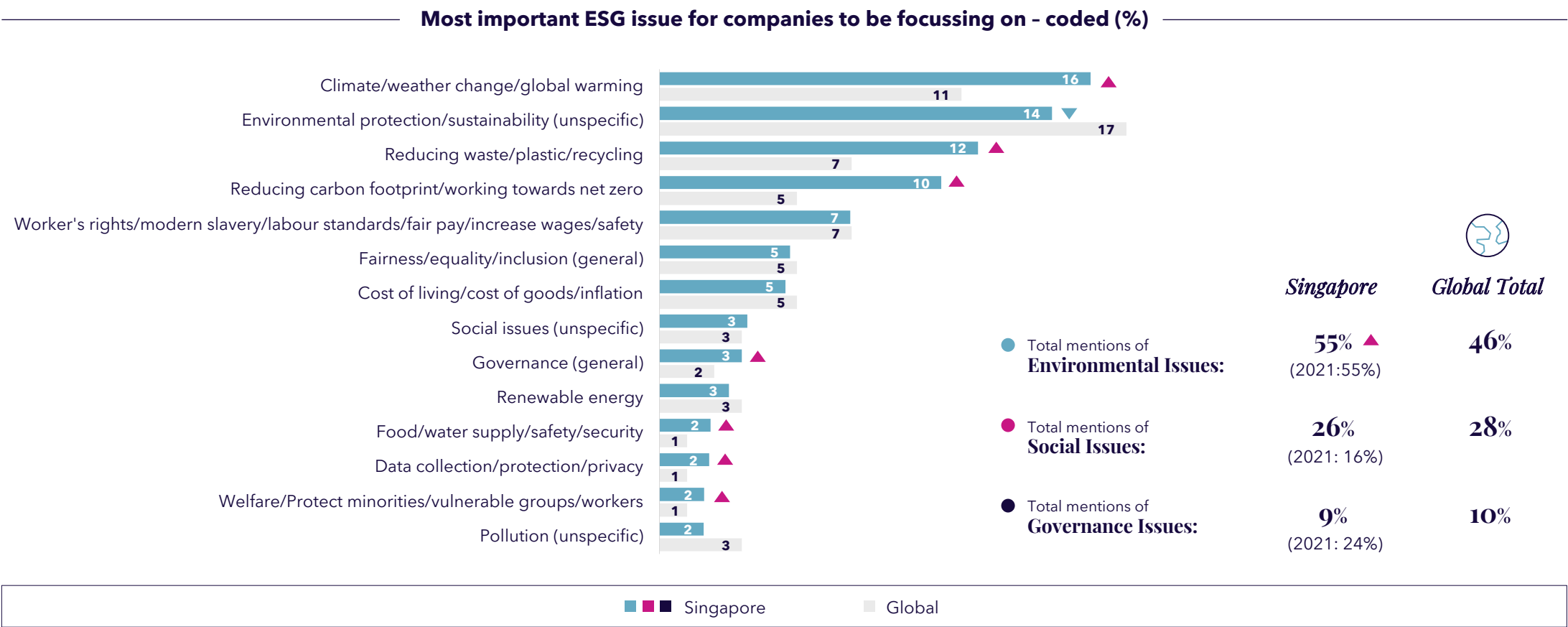


▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than global total.

Base: All survey participants in Singapore (n=1,008), Global total survey participants (n=12,063)
Q26. How often, if ever, do you look for information or do research on a company's ESG activities or performance?
Base: Those who rarely, sometimes or often look for information (n=792)
Q27. Where do you go for information about a company's activities or ESG performance?
Q26 and Q27 not asked in 2021

Top ESG issues (unprompted).

When asked which aspects of ESG are most important for companies in Singapore, addressing climate change (16%), protecting the environment (14%), and reducing waste (12%) were the front-runners. Overall, the largest share of Singaporean participants (55%) cited environmental issues as being the most impactful drivers for companies looking to advance their ESG agenda – significantly more than the global total (46%).



Importance of acting on ESG issues.

Singaporeans placed high levels of importance on companies taking **action on ESG issues** (rating of 7.6 out of 10) and this is comparable with the global average. Whilst Singaporeans placed less importance on ESG issues on their own day-to-day purchase decisions (rating of 6.8 out of 10) vs. the importance of companies acting, they still gave a significantly higher rating than other countries or territories surveyed (6.4). Further, this rating increased significantly compared to last year where the average rating was 6.4 out of 10.



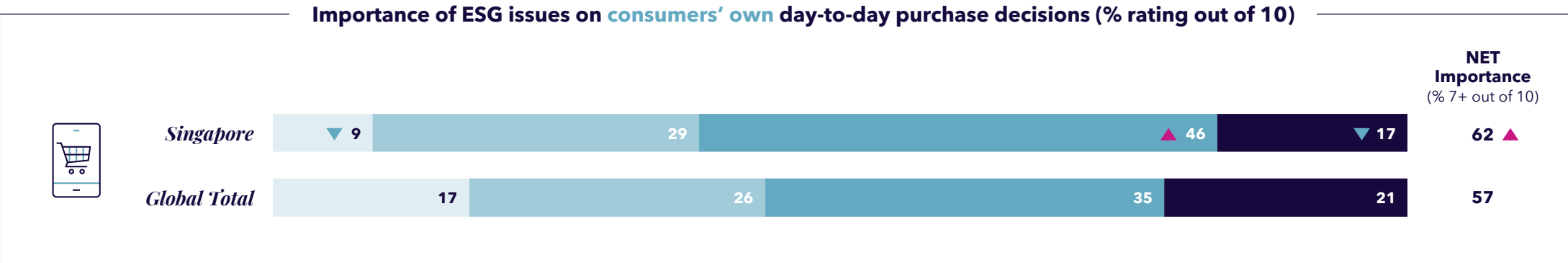
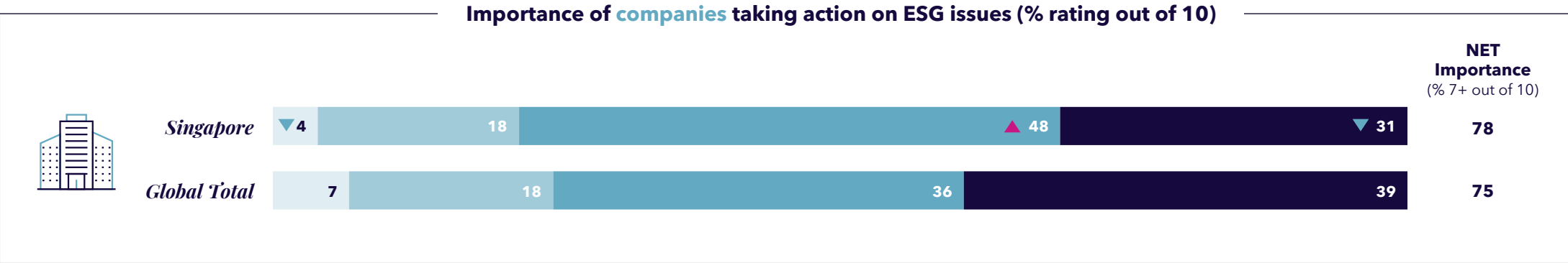
▲▼ Significantly higher / lower than global average. ↑↓ Significantly higher / lower than previous year.

Base: All survey participants in Singapore (2022: n=1,008, 2021: n=1,024), Global total survey participants (2022: n=12,063)
Q23. How important do you think it is for companies to take action on environmental, social and governance issues? Q23 not asked in 2021

Q10. And in your day-to-day life, how important are ESG issues in influencing whether you decide to purchase products or services from specific companies?
Scale: 0=not at all important, 10=extremely important

Importance of acting on ESG issues *cont'd.*

Nearly four in five (78%) participants in Singapore think it is important for companies to take action on ESG issues (rating 7 or higher out of 10) and this is comparable with the global average (75%). Slightly fewer people (62%) feel ESG issues are important on their own day-to-day purchase decisions, but the proportion was still significantly higher than other countries or territories surveyed (57%).

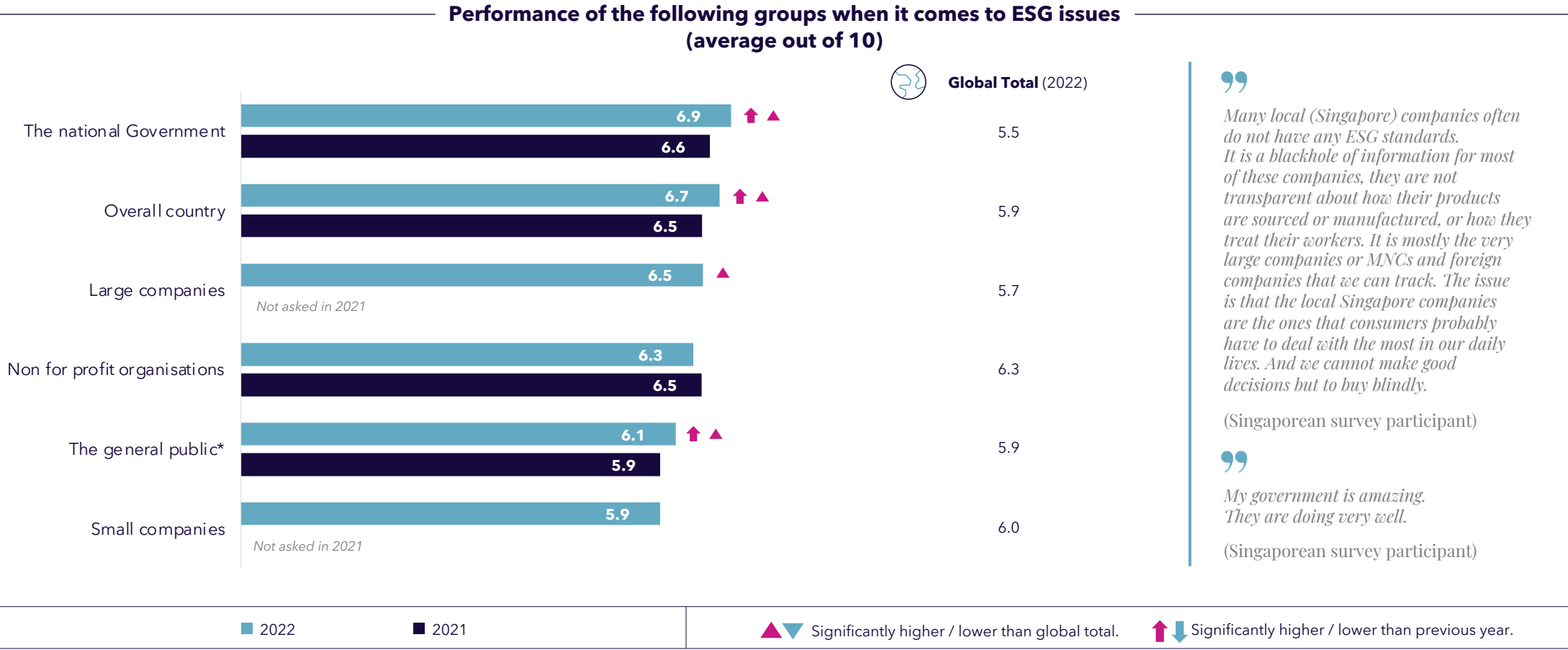


SECTION 3

How are we performing on ESG?

Ratings of ESG performance by group.

The Singaporean government was rated highest for its ESG performance (6.9), ahead of the country overall (6.7). Singaporean respondents also endorsed the government’s ESG performance at a much higher level than elsewhere in the world. There was a significant increase in approval ratings for the performance of the Singaporean government, the country overall and the general public since 2021.

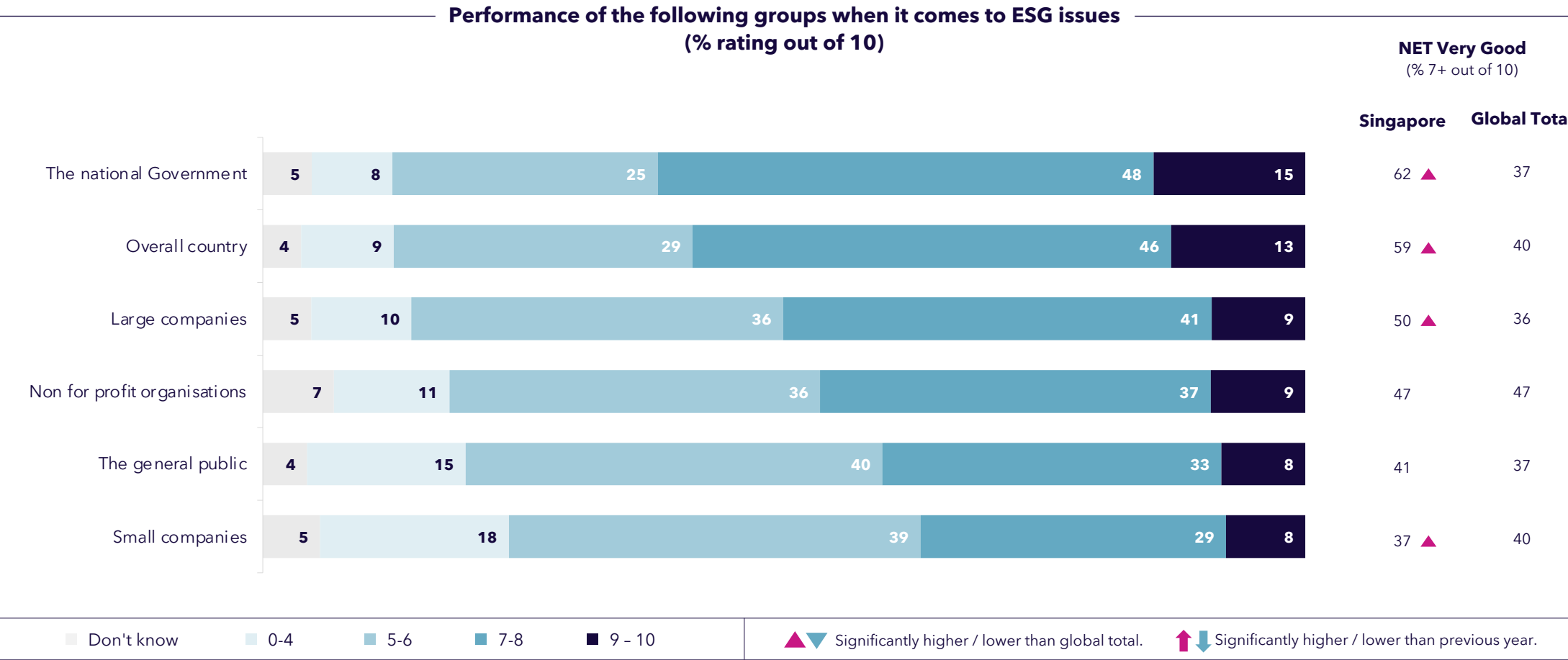


“Many local (Singapore) companies often do not have any ESG standards. It is a blackhole of information for most of these companies, they are not transparent about how their products are sourced or manufactured, or how they treat their workers. It is mostly the very large companies or MNCs and foreign companies that we can track. The issue is that the local Singapore companies are the ones that consumers probably have to deal with the most in our daily lives. And we cannot make good decisions but to buy blindly.”
(Singaporean survey participant)

“My government is amazing. They are doing very well.”
(Singaporean survey participant)

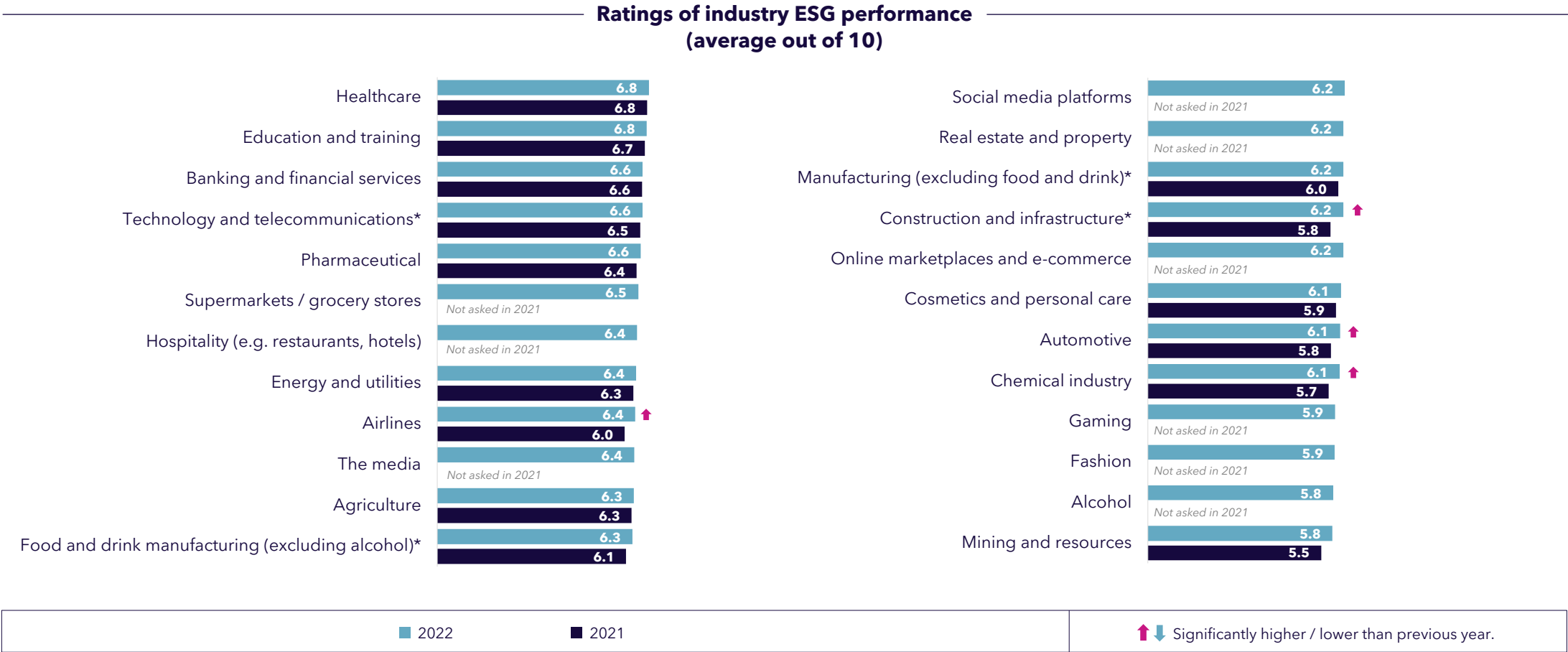
Ratings of ESG performance by group cont'd.

The Singaporean government was rated highest for ESG performance, with more than three in five people (62%) giving a rating of 7 or higher out of 10, followed by the country overall (59%) and large companies (50%). These were significantly higher compared to the global total.



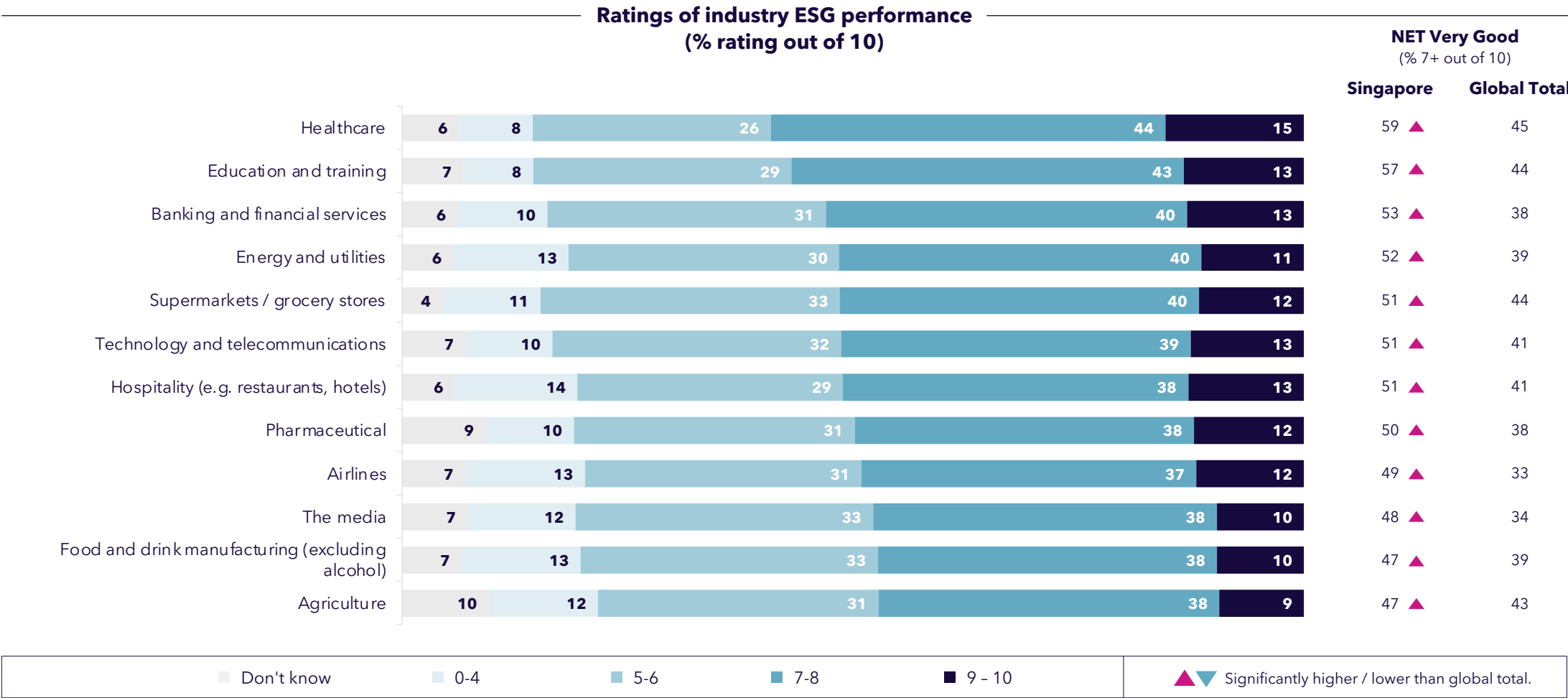
How are specific industries performing on ESG?

Consistent with last year’s findings, **healthcare, education and training, and banking and financial services** were rated as the sectors that act most responsibly on ESG issues. Mining and resources, alcohol, and fashion scored the lowest. Notably, the perceived performance of airlines, construction and infrastructure, the automotive and the chemical industries recorded significant year-on-year improvements in their performance ratings.



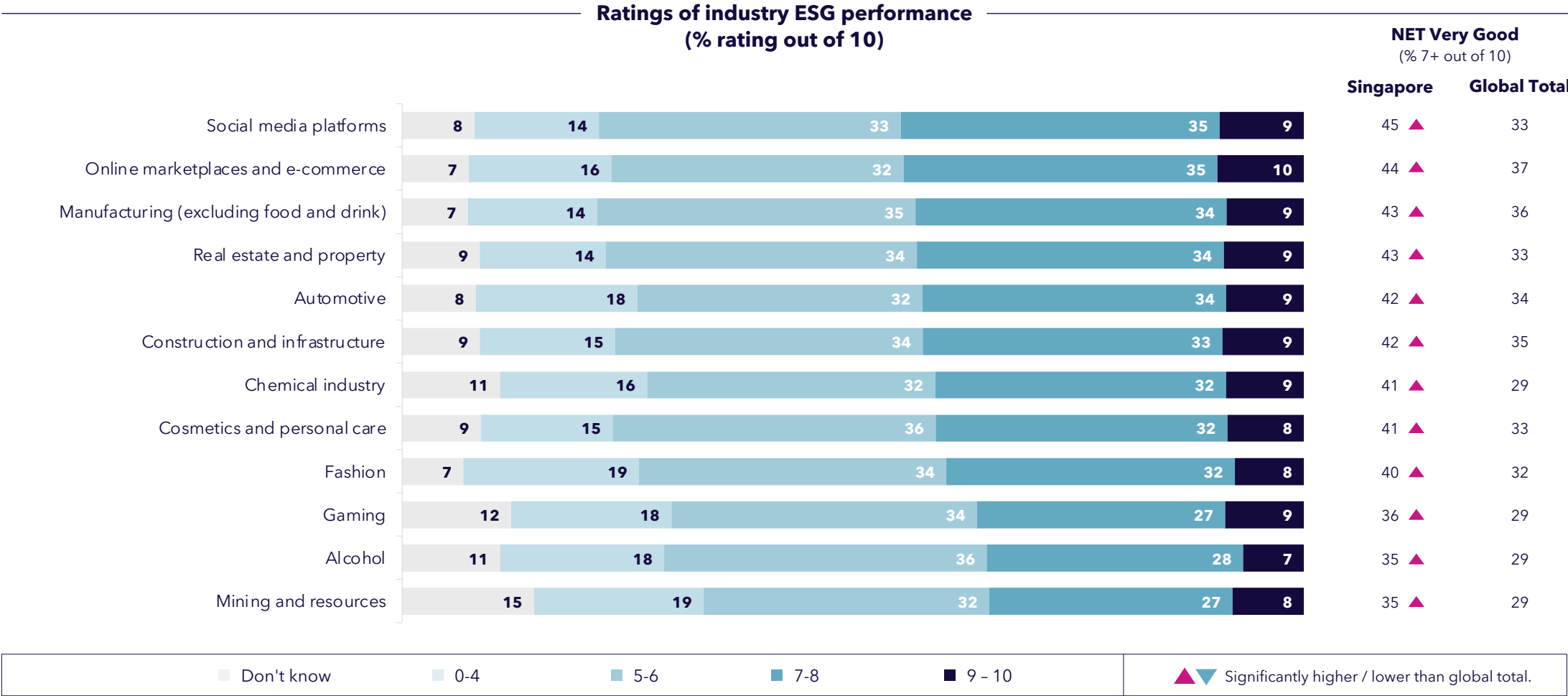
How are specific industries performing on ESG? *cont'd*

When it comes to specific industry ESG performance, **healthcare, education and training, and banking and financial services** received the highest rating in terms of proportion of those who rated 7 or higher out of 10. Overall, Singaporeans rated companies higher than the global total.



How are specific industries performing on ESG? *cont'd*

Fashion, alcohol, and mining and resources scored the lowest, even though the proportion of those who rated these industries positively (7 or higher out of 10) were still significantly higher than the global total.

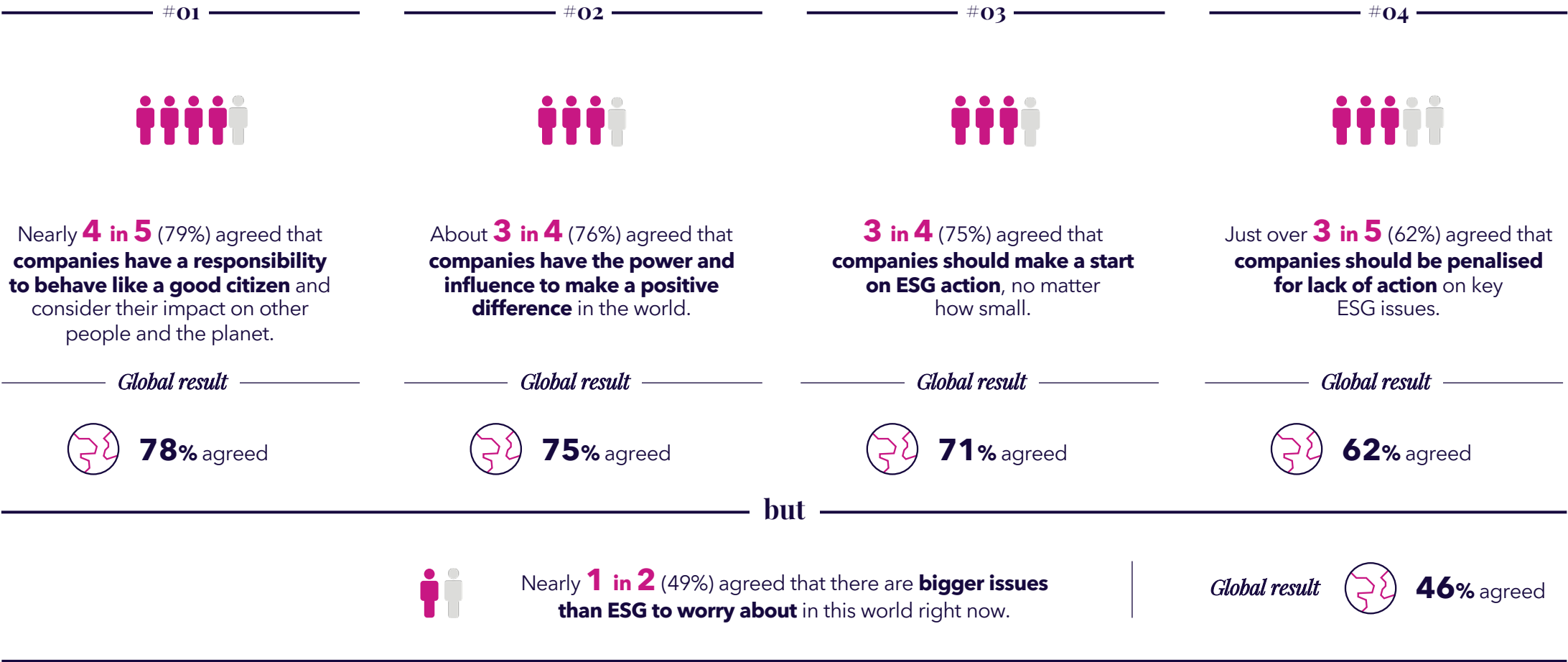


SECTION 4

Community expectations and behaviours.

Community expectations around ESG action.

Singaporeans expect companies **to take action on ESG** – even if it’s not the most important issue for them currently.



Community expectations around ESG performance.

Singaporeans expect companies to **do more on a range of ESG actions.**

#01

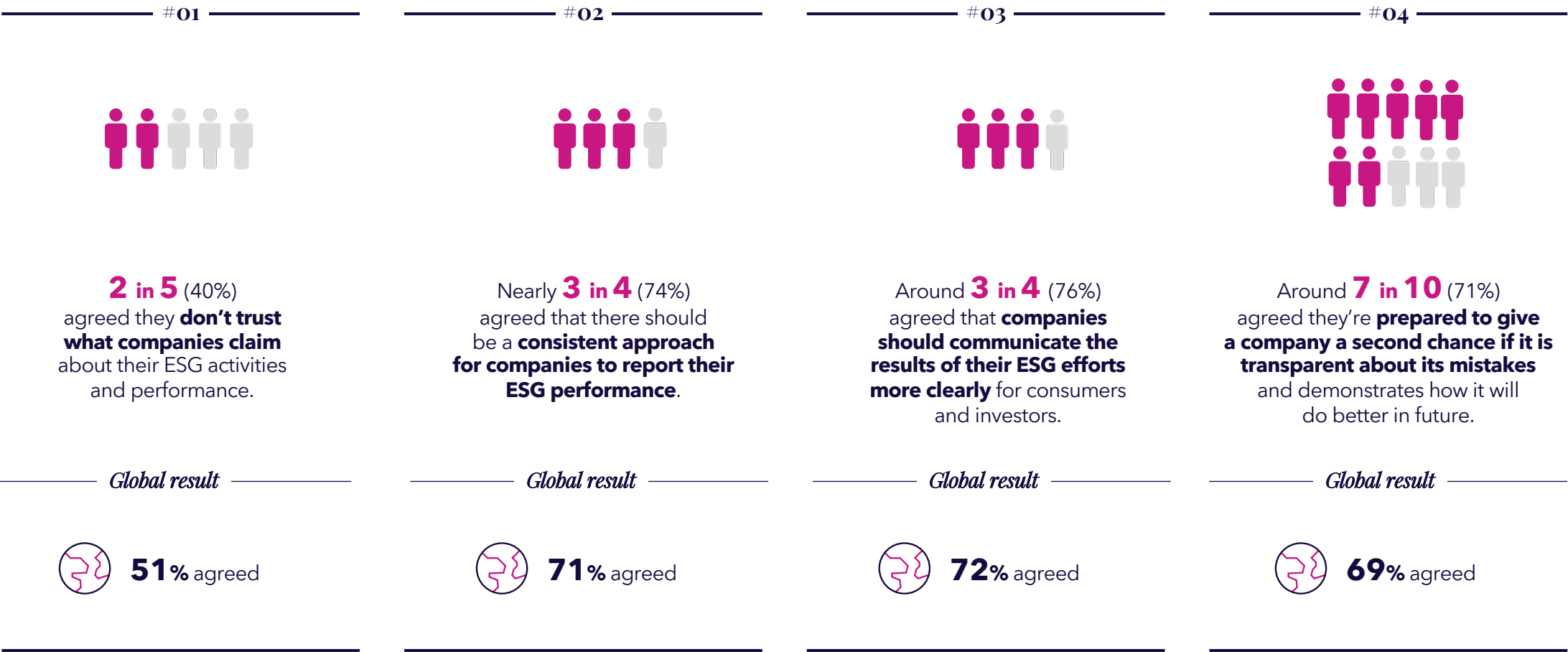


About **3 in 4** agreed that companies could be doing more to:

- **Minimise their environmental impact** (77% vs. 78% global)
- **Look after their employees** (77% vs. 77% global)
- **Take responsibility for** the conduct and performance of **supply chains** (77% vs. 76% global)
- Have processes in place to **identify and stop unethical behaviours** (77% vs. 71% global)
- **Support vulnerable or marginalised groups** of society (74% vs. 68% global)

Community expectations around ESG reporting.

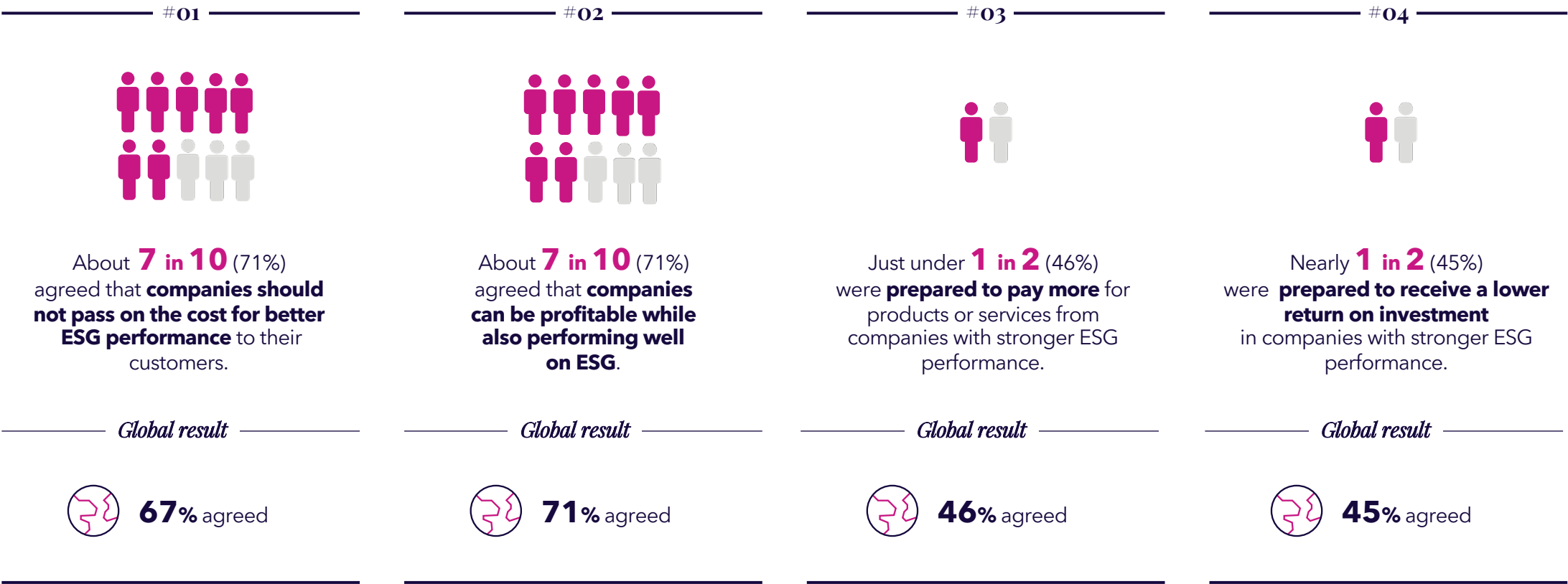
Singaporeans are looking for a **clear and consistent approach** to reporting on ESG performance, although some of them still do not trust companies' ESG claims about their ESG activities and performance - this is largely consistent with global findings, where 51% said the same.



Community expectations around the cost of doing ESG.

The majority of Singaporeans assigned the responsibility of ESG costs to companies, over individuals. While 71% participants surveyed in Singapore opined that companies should not pass on the costs in improving its ESG performance to customers, just 67% of participants across the globe shared the same sentiment.

Nonetheless, 46% of Singaporean respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay a premium for products and services from companies with stronger ESG performance. In addition, 45% of Singaporean respondents noted that they were prepared to receive lower returns on their investments in companies with stronger ESG performance, on par with the global average.



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