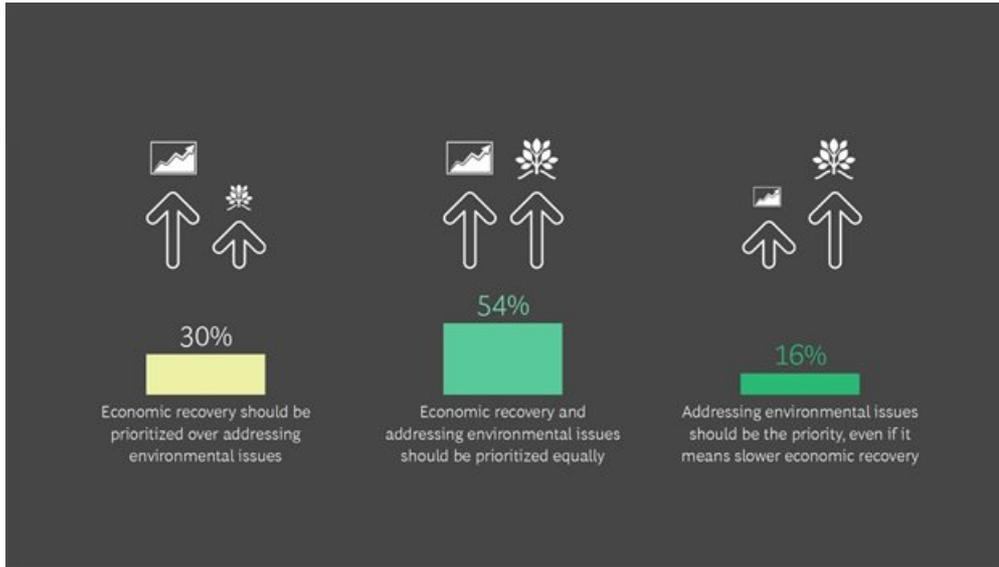


Covid-19 pandemic driving heightened environmental awareness

By [Nicolas Kachaner](#), [Jesper Nielsen](#), [Adrien Portafaix](#), [Florent Rodzko](#)

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A recent BCG survey of more than 3,000 people across eight countries, including South Africa, has found that in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, people are more concerned about addressing environmental challenges and are more committed to changing their own behaviour to advance sustainability.



View the full slideshow [here](#).

Some 70% of survey participants said they were more aware now than before Covid-19 that human activity threatens the climate and that degradation of the environment, in turn, threatens humans. And three-quarters of respondents said environmental issues are as concerning as — or more concerning than — health issues. 80% of South African respondents echo this sentiment that both issues are equally concerning.

Individual sustainable behaviour

The survey also found that people want to see aggressive action on the environmental front. More than two-thirds of respondents think that economic recovery plans should make environmental issues a priority. The crisis is driving change at the individual level, too, with 40% reporting that they intend to adopt more sustainable behaviour in the future. Among the top actions people are doing more consistently are reducing household energy consumption, increasing recycling and composting, and buying locally produced goods.

“The increased commitment to sustainability has major implications for companies and governments as 87% of respondents felt companies should integrate environmental concerns into their products, services and operations to a greater extent than they have in the past,” says Hans Kuipers, MD and partner, BCG Johannesburg.

Private sector environmental responsibilities

When placing the spotlight on the South African numbers, 93% of respondents think private companies should integrate environmental considerations into their products or services more than they have done before. Additionally, 77% somewhat or strongly agree that companies likely to benefit from public aid or grants should take on extra environmental responsibilities and commitments.

“People’s intentions to adopt more sustainable behaviours has certainly been accelerated during the pandemic. And, the commitment to sustainability is even more pronounced among younger people who have greater conviction that individual action can make a difference in addressing environmental action and who expect environmental concerns to be front and centre in recovery plans,” concludes Kuipers.

For more insights into how Covid-19 is reshaping how people think about the sustainability, click [here](#).

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