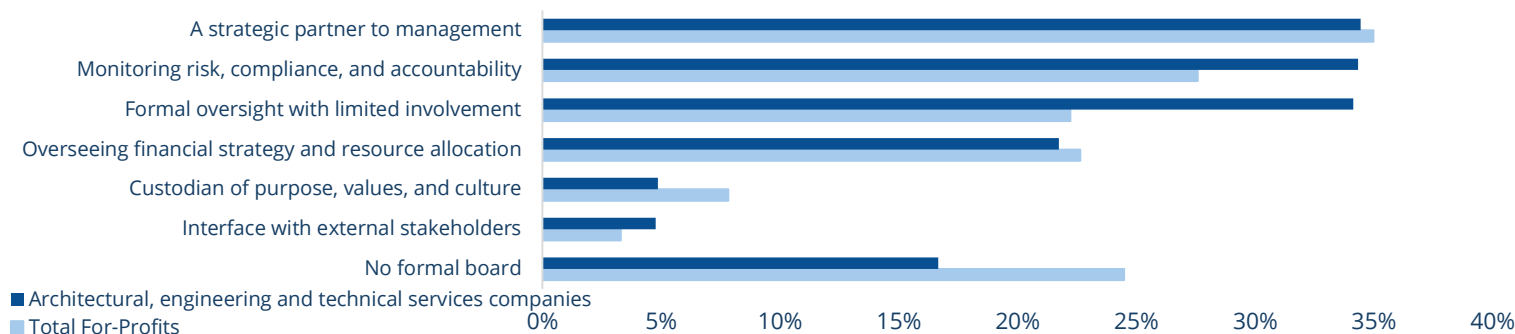


## Section 1: Purpose-led Governance and Board Leadership

### Primary Purpose of Board



CEOs most frequently identify their board's primary purpose as a strategic partner to management (34%), followed by monitoring risk, compliance, and accountability (34%). CEOs could select up to two roles, as boards may have more than one primary purpose (total selections >100%). Architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 12 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to report formal oversight with limited involvement as their board's primary purpose.

### Board and management alignment



Alignment between board and management roles is important for governance because it underpins clear decision rights, accountability, and effective oversight. Alignment is generally strong, with 33% of CEOs stating that the roles are completely aligned. However, some organisations may still face risks associated with role ambiguity or boundary overlap. It highlights an opportunity to enhance role clarity and optimise governance effectiveness.

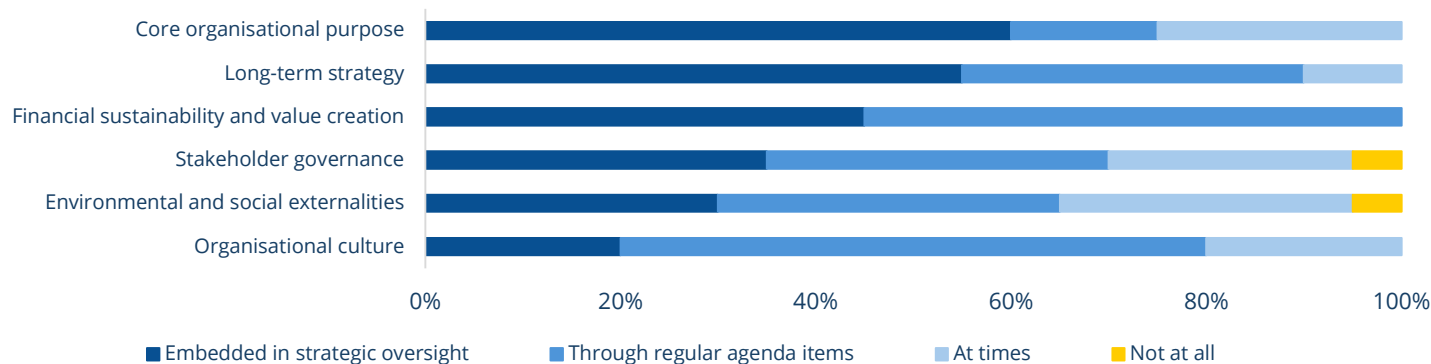
### Board structure and composition for effective governance



Boards most commonly report that their structure ensures integrated financial and non-financial reporting (55%) and oversees performance metrics on culture (55%). In contrast, fewer report that their board structure oversees performance metrics on sustainability (40%) and aligns composition to reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of stakeholders (25%), highlighting an opportunity to strengthen how board structures support broader organisational priorities. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are 33 percentage points more likely to report that their board fully 'oversees performance metrics on culture'.

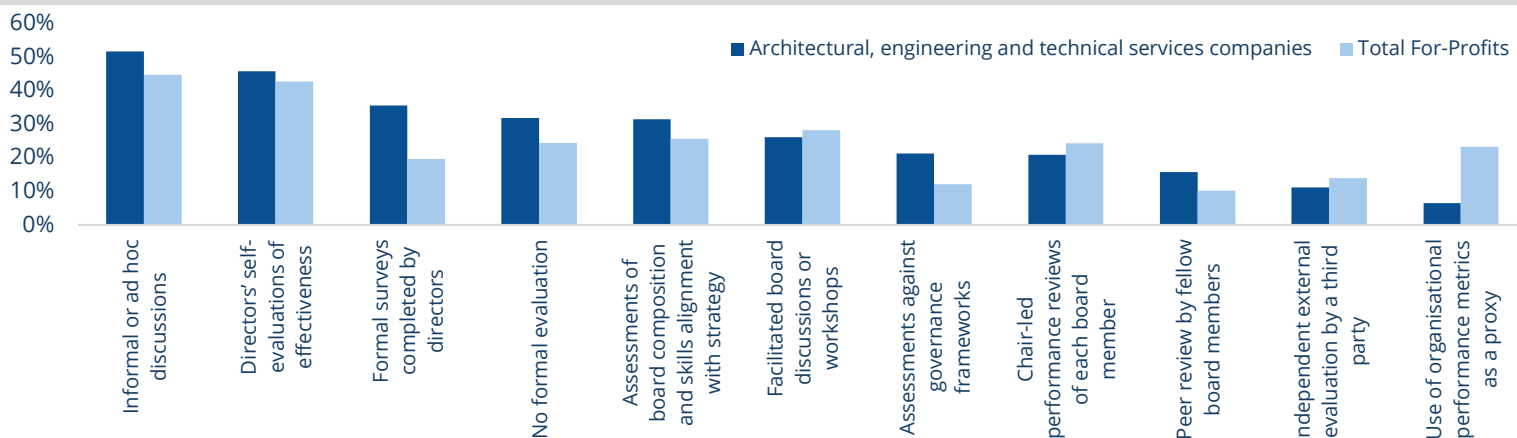
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Extent of formal board oversight across key areas



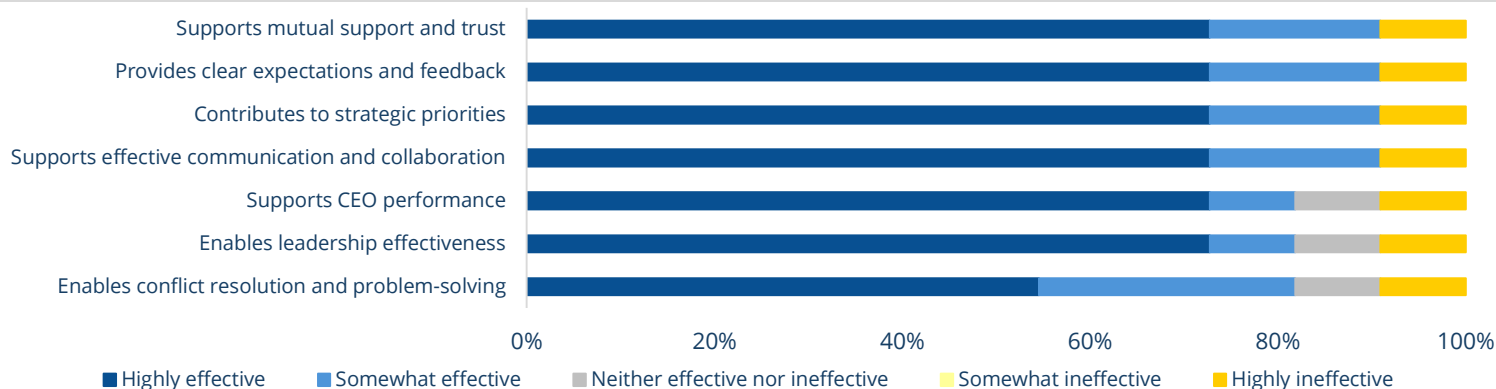
Many boards embed oversight of core organisational purpose (60%), long-term strategy (55%), and financial sustainability and value creation (45%) within strategic oversight. However, fewer boards embed stakeholder governance (35%), environmental and social externalities (30%), and organisational culture (20%), highlighting an opportunity for organisations to more consistently integrate factors that influence strategy, risk, and long-term value. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to report that their board embeds environmental and social externalities into strategic oversight.

## Board methods of evaluating own governance and oversight effectiveness



While organisations routinely evaluate management and organisational performance, board governance itself is often assessed more informally. With 52% relying on informal or ad hoc discussions and 46% using directors' self-evaluations of effectiveness, many boards have an opportunity to strengthen oversight and better enable organisational performance by adopting more formal, objective evaluation methods. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are less likely to rely on the use of organisational performance metrics as a proxy.

## Effectiveness of CEO-chair relationship



The CEO-Chair relationship is central to governance, sitting at the interface between board and management and shaping oversight, communication, and strategic alignment. CEO-Chair relationships are very strong: 73% of CEOs rated the chair "highly effectively" 'supports mutual support and trust', 'provides clear expectations and feedback', 'contributes to strategic priorities', 'supports effective communication and collaboration', 'supports CEO performance' and 'enables leadership effectiveness'. The lower rating for 'enables conflict resolution and problem-solving' indicates an opportunity to enhance the CEO's ability to lead optimally.

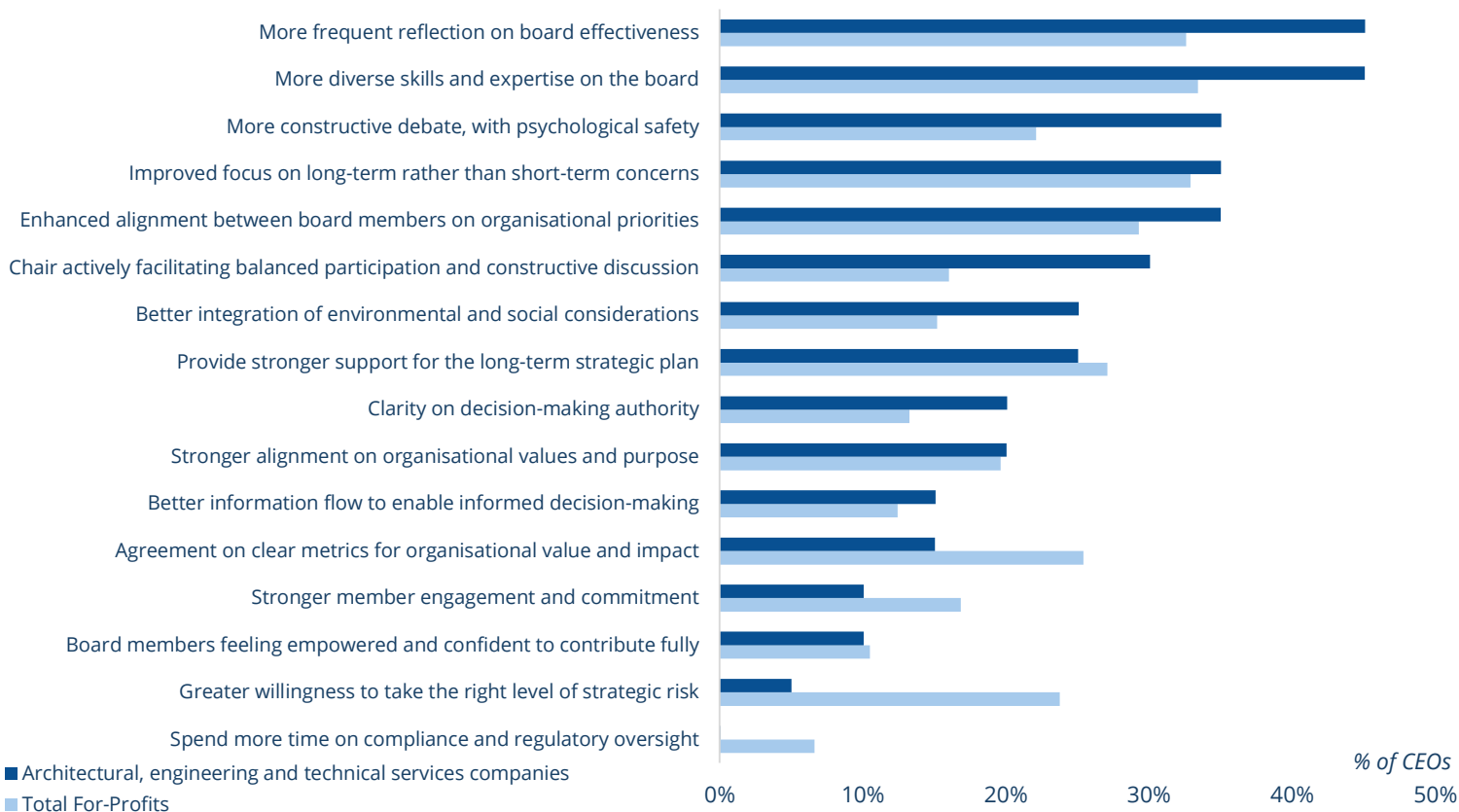
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Board effectiveness in enabling organisational purpose



Even some of the strongest boards have room for improvement: 50% of CEOs rate their board as 'highly effective' in supporting oversight of compliance and organisational risks, followed by 40% in supporting long-term orientation, and 40% in providing strategic guidance and decision-making. More than 50% of boards are not highly effective in enabling organisational purpose in these factors; if these are not addressed, they risk leaving value on the table. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are less likely than total for-profits to rate highly on 'supporting effective stakeholder engagement and accountability' in enabling organisational purpose.

## Areas the board could more effectively support and enable leadership

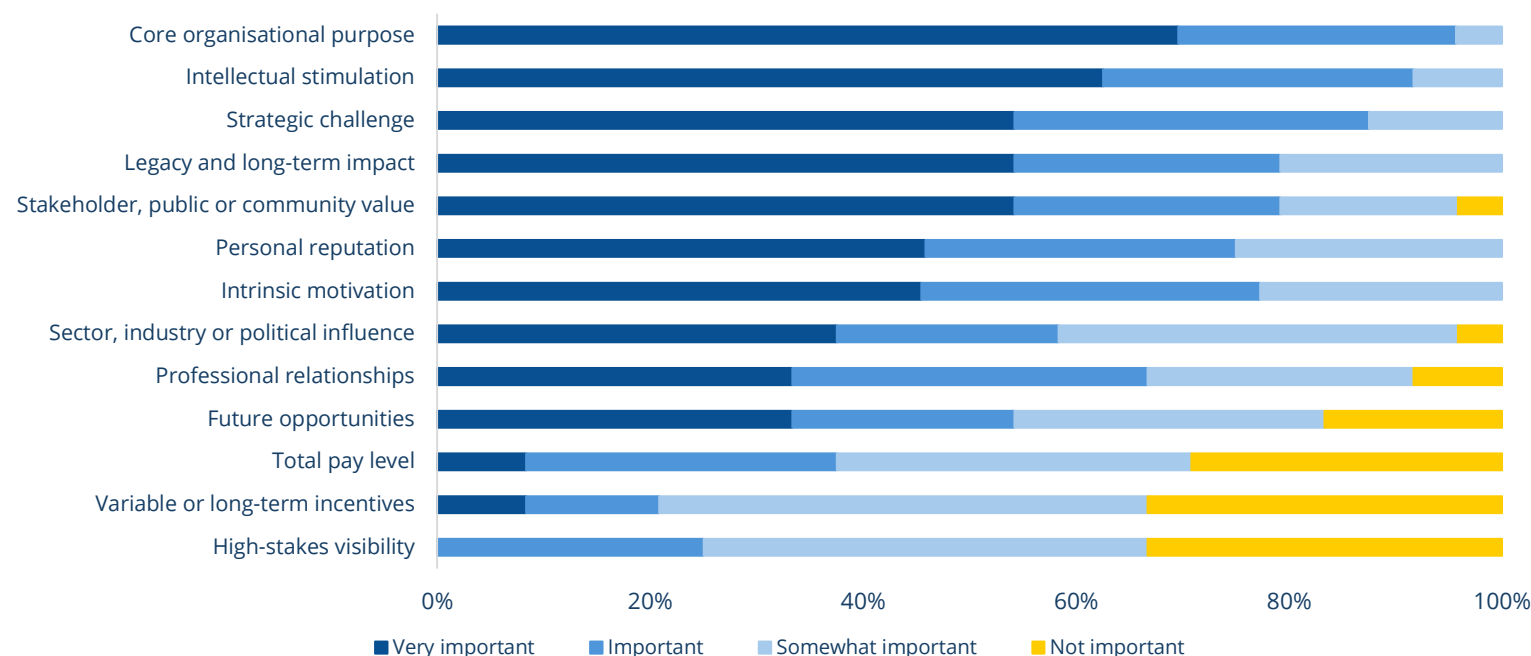


CEOs view board effectiveness as an important contributor to organisational performance. CEOs identify that boards could more effectively support and enable leadership, with 45% highlighting more frequent reflection on board effectiveness, 45% more diverse skills and expertise on the board, and 35% more constructive debate, with psychological safety. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are 19 percentage points less likely than total for-profits to identify 'greater willingness to take the right level of strategic risk to enable organisational purpose' as a way to enhance organisational performance.

# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

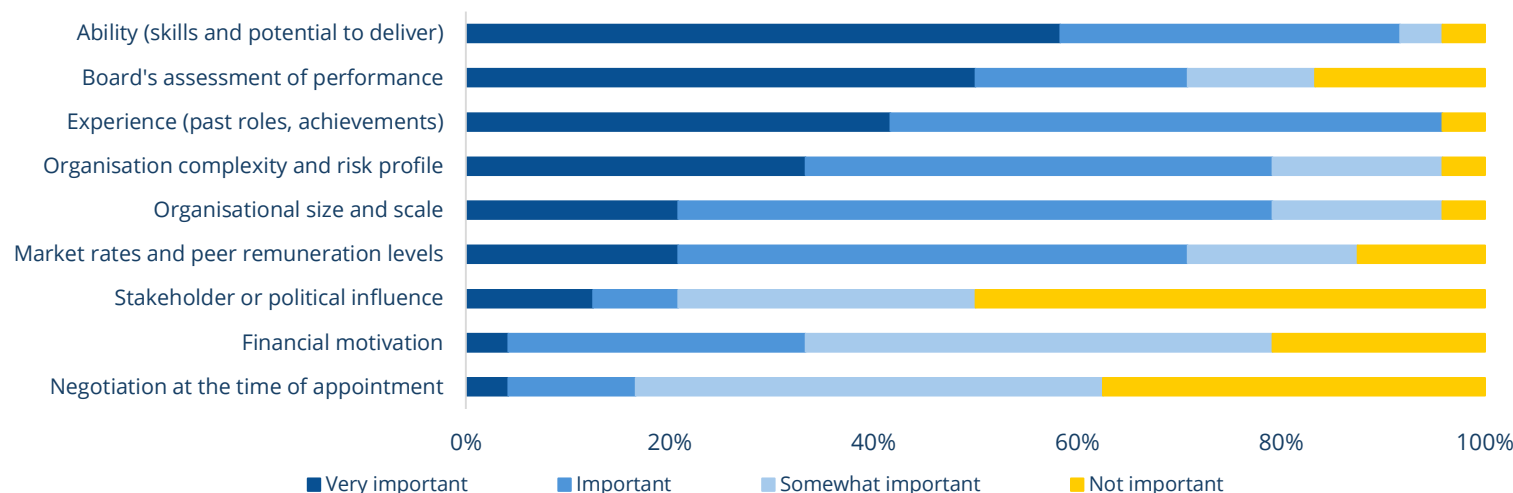
## Section 2: CEO Personal Motivation, Values, and Alignment

### Personal CEO motivations



CEO motivation is an important issue that has not been studied directly by asking CEOs. Attracting and retaining the right CEO is an important governance issue. The existing literature does not directly measure CEO motivation, instead inferring it from incentive structures (such as compensation design), observed CEO behaviour (e.g. risk-taking or earnings management), and governance outcomes (e.g., pay-performance sensitivity or compensation levels). CEO responses suggest that intrinsic and purpose-driven motivations rank highest, followed by reputation-related motivations, while financial or visibility-related factors are least prominent. Specifically, 70% of CEOs rated core organisational purpose as very important, followed by intellectual stimulation (63%) and strategic challenge (54%), whereas only 8% rated variable or long-term incentives and 0% rated high-stakes visibility as very important motivators.

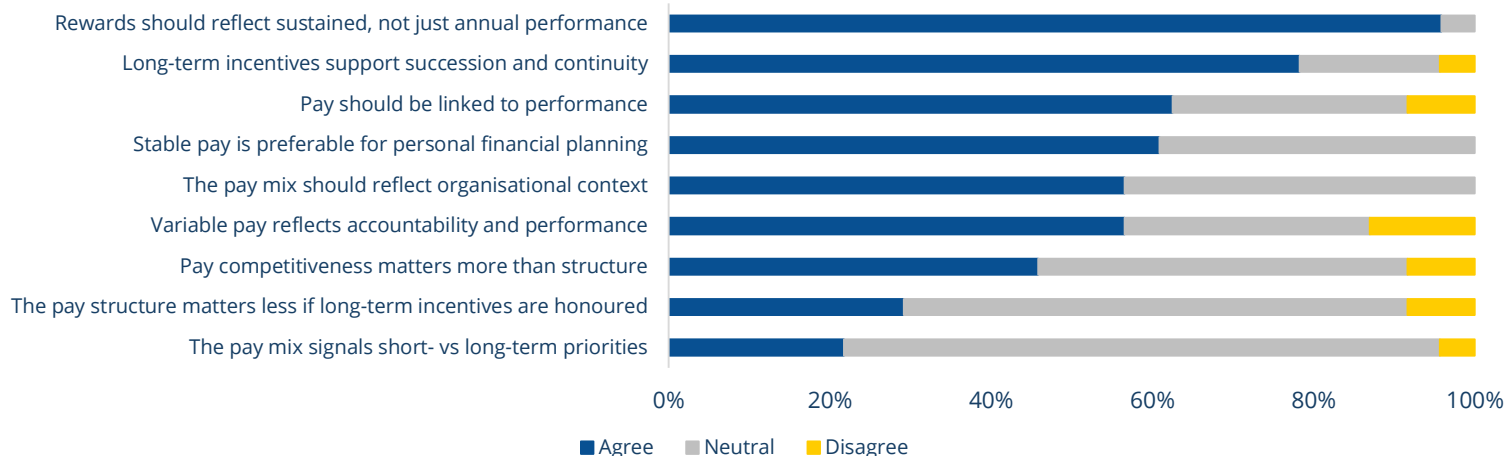
### Key factors CEOs view as determinants of their pay



While the literature emphasises market benchmarks, managerial bargaining power, and incentive alignment, CEOs instead view pay as primarily driven by perceived individual ability and board judgment, with relatively little importance placed on negotiation or financial motivation. Specifically, 58% rating ability (skills and potential to deliver), 50% board's assessment of performance and 42% experience (past roles, achievements) as very important determinants of pay, compared with 13% for stakeholder or political influence, 4% for financial motivation and 4% for negotiation at the time of appointment. CEOs view remuneration as recognition of the strategic value they are expected to create and the risks they assume in delivering organisational outcomes. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are 10 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to consider the board's assessment of performance as a key determinant.

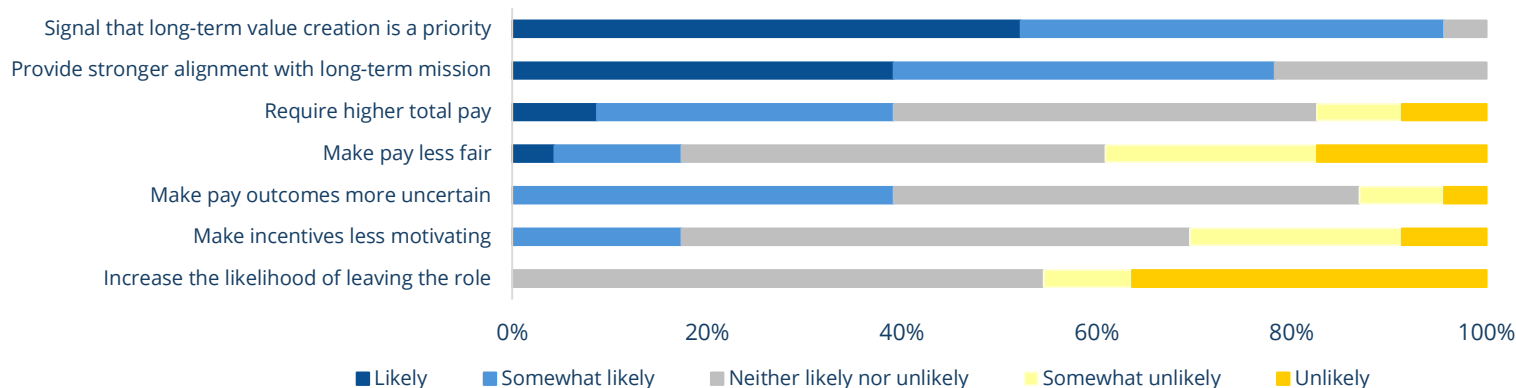
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## CEO's views on fixed and variable pay



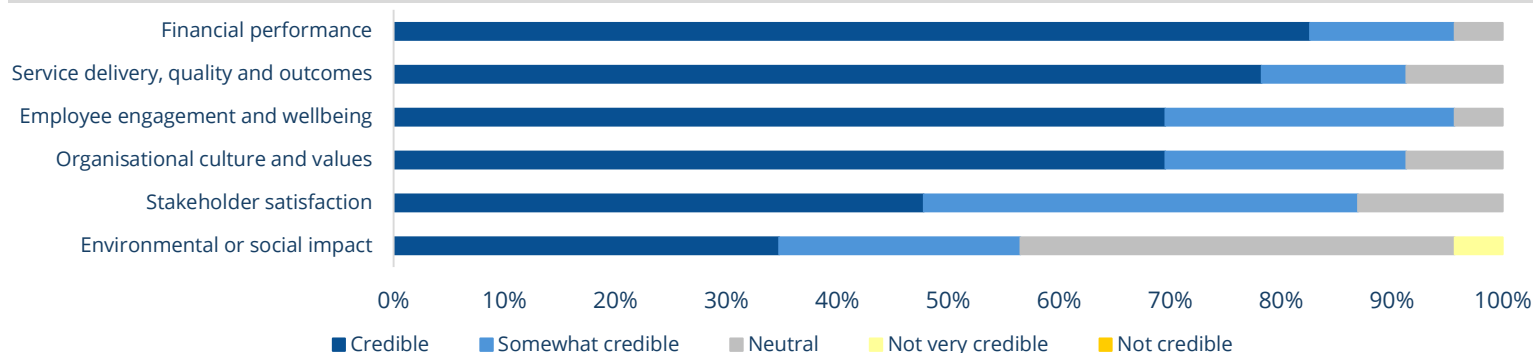
Most CEOs agree that 'rewards should reflect sustained, not just annual performance' (96%), that 'long-term incentives support succession and continuity' (78%), and that 'pay should be linked to performance' (63%). In comparison, CEOs are most neutral on 'the pay mix signals short- vs long-term priorities' (74%) and on whether 'the pay structure matters less if long-term incentives are honoured' (63%), indicating comfort with variable-based pay structures. CEO responses show limited evidence of self-interested, short-term or rent-extractive behaviour as assumed in the academic literature.

## CEO perspective on the impact of current incentives being made longer-term



Most CEOs agree that longer-term incentives tend to 'signal that long-term value creation is a priority' (96%) and 'provide stronger alignment with long-term mission' (78%). Despite academic research suggesting executives prefer more immediate pay, CEOs are most neutral that they 'make pay outcomes more uncertain' and 'make incentives less motivating'. Many said it is unlikely or somewhat unlikely that it would 'increase the likelihood of leaving the role'.

## CEO's views on the credibility of pay-linked KPIs for their own performance

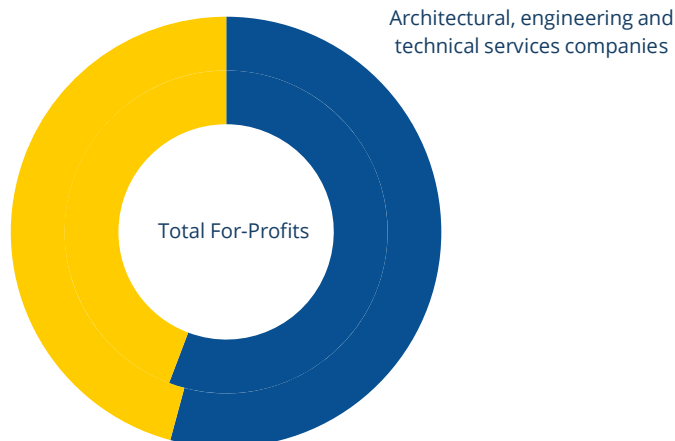


CEOs believe that pay-linked KPIs are most credible for 'financial performance' (83%) and 'service delivery, quality and outcomes' (78%), moderately credible for 'employee engagement and wellbeing' (70%) and 'organisational culture and values' (70%), and least credible for 'stakeholder satisfaction' (48%) and 'environmental or social impact' (35%). Many see these measures as somewhat credible, with very few rating any measure as not credible. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are 22 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to agree that organisational culture and values are a credible and fair way to assess CEO performance.

# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

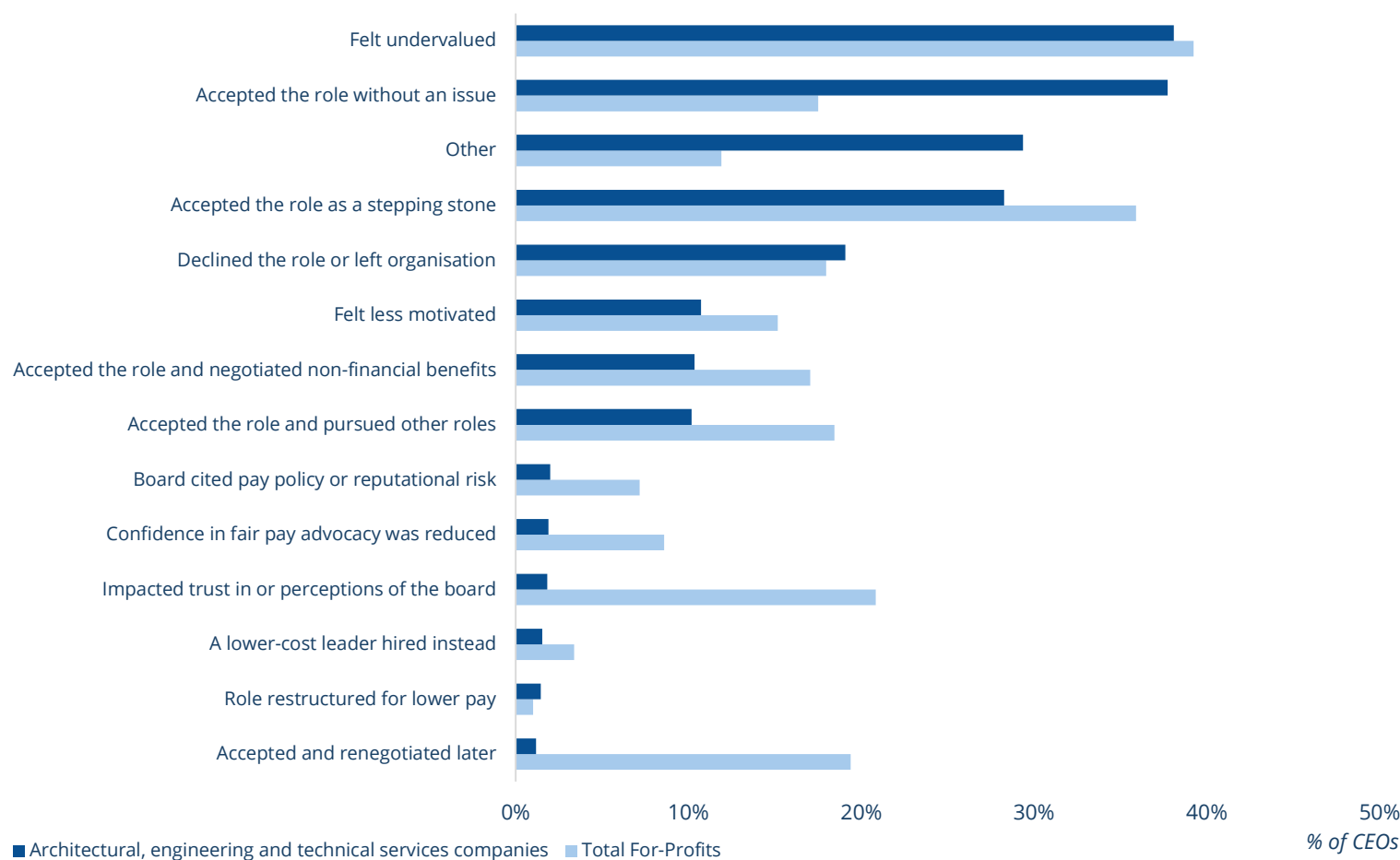
## CEOs offered below-expected remuneration during their time in leadership

- Not offered below-expected pay
- Offered below-expected pay



A key governance signal is potential misalignment between CEO remuneration and candidate expectations, creating attraction, retention, and leadership continuity risk. During their time in leadership, 46% of CEOs reported experiencing total pay offers below what they felt was appropriate, often leading to career-management responses, whereas 54% did not. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 2 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to have been offered below-expected pay.

## Leader consequences of lower-than-expected pay offers

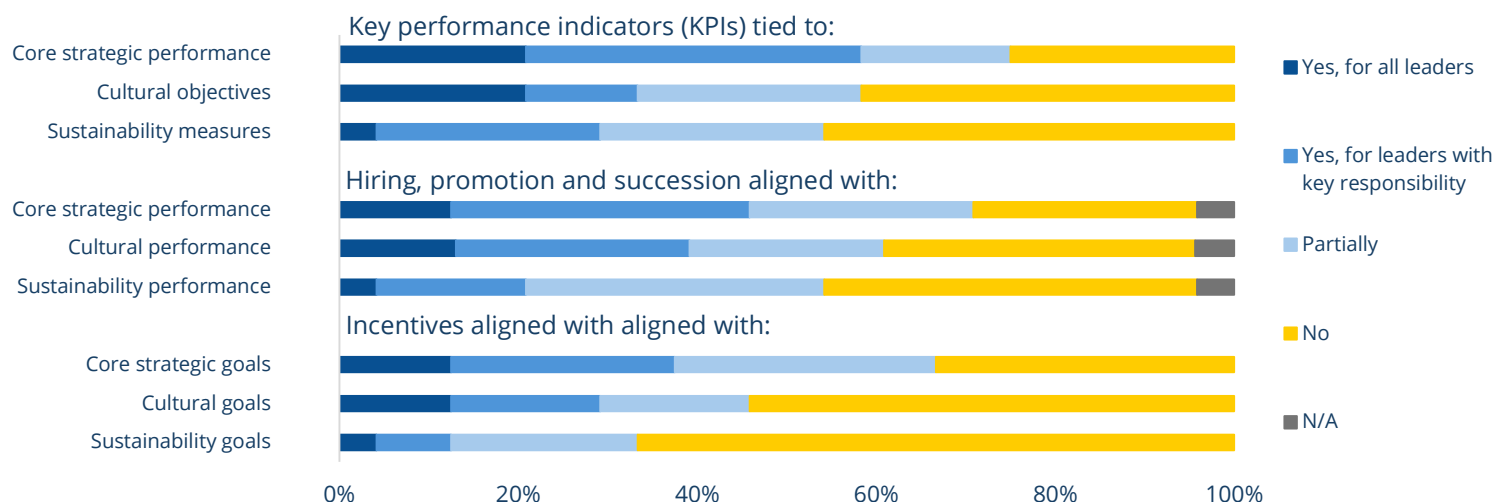


Boards risk weaker leadership quality, poorer strategic continuity, and reduced ability to attract and retain capable CEOs when pay is set below appropriate market levels. The most common responses for CEOs who received lower than expected pay offers included that they felt undervalued (38%) and accepted the role without an issue (38%), highlighting that executives often respond to perceived underpayment by managing their career trajectory around it, with potential implications for longer-term commitment and board-CEO alignment. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 20 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to have accepted the role without an issue.

# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

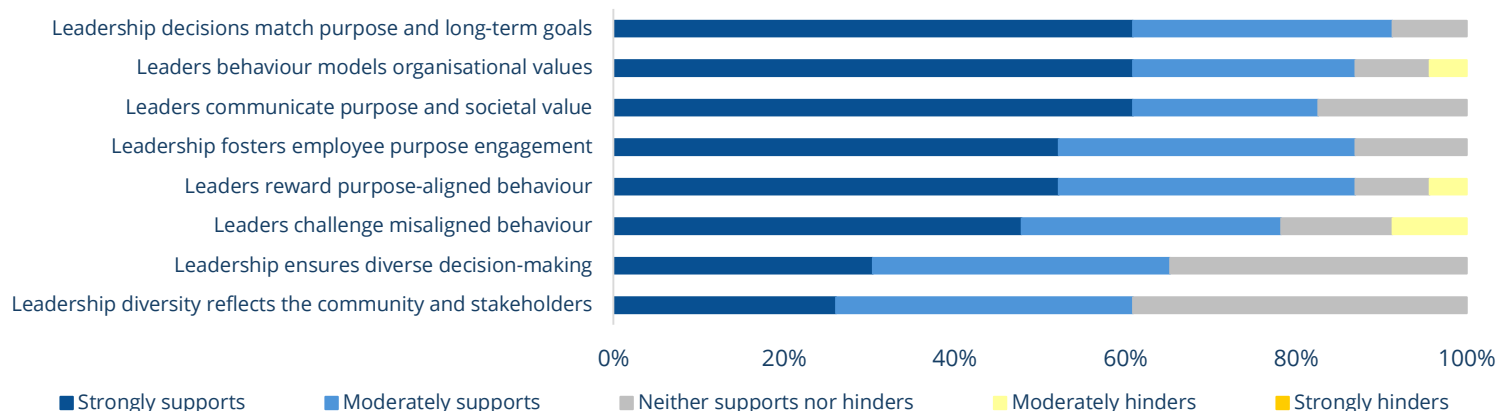
## Section 3: Executive and Senior Leaders Signals, Pay and Incentives

### Signals of strategy, culture, and sustainability for executive & senior leaders



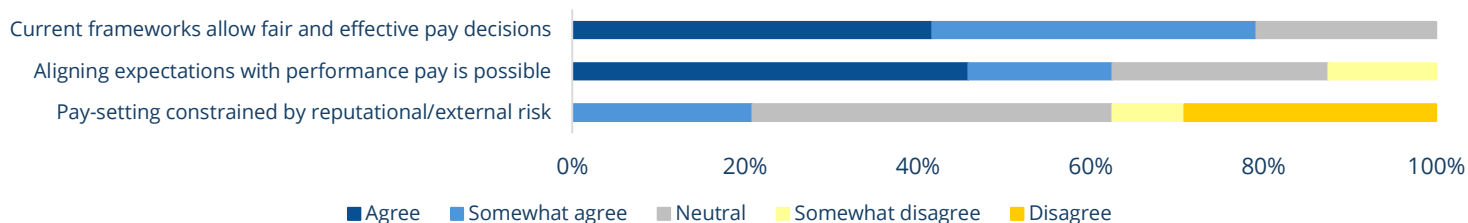
Leadership incentives, KPIs and succession decisions aligned with sustainability, culture and strategy are social and governance mechanisms as they determine how effectively leadership behaviour is shaped, monitored and held accountable for delivering organisational purpose and sustained value creation. 46%–58% of CEOs integrate core strategic performance into executive hiring, promotion, succession and KPIs, compared with 33%–39% for culture and 21%–29% for sustainability. Reward systems have a stronger focus on strategic goals rather than their execution (culture) or being a responsible citizen (sustainability).

### Senior leader behavioural alignment with organisational purpose and values



Alignment between leadership behaviour, decision-making and representation influences organisational trust, inclusivity and long-term effectiveness. Between 48% and 61% of CEOs report that senior leaders strongly support organisational purpose through communication, modelling, decision-making and behavioural reinforcement. In comparison, only 30% believe leadership ensures diverse decision-making, and 26% say leadership diversity reflects the community and stakeholders, highlighting an opportunity to align behaviour and structural inclusivity.

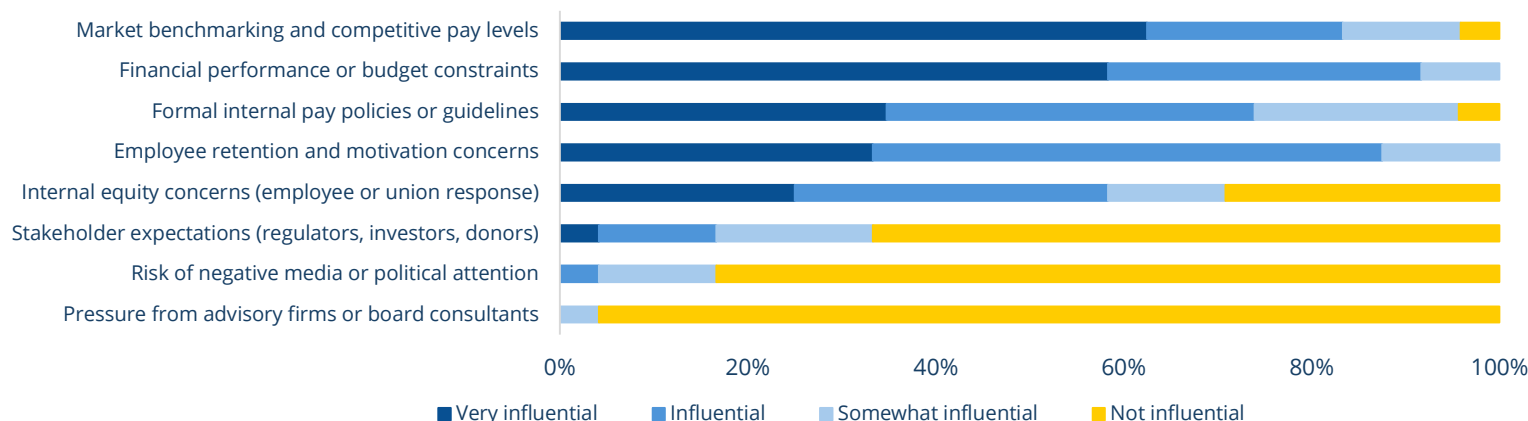
### Executive remuneration framework effectiveness



Effective remuneration systems are important because they support fair, performance-linked pay, strengthen accountability, and help align leadership behaviour with organisational objectives while maintaining trust in social and governance processes. 79% of respondents agree or somewhat agree that current frameworks support fair and effective pay decisions, and 63% agree or somewhat agree that expectations can be aligned with performance pay. In contrast, 21% perceive pay-setting to be constrained by reputational or external risk.

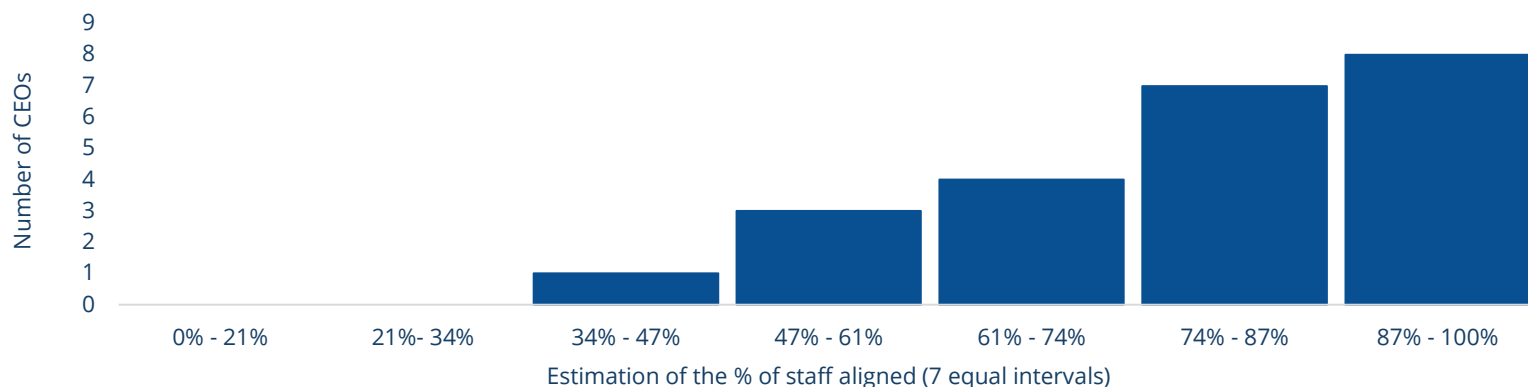
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Factors influencing executive or senior leader pay decisions



Executive and senior leader pay decisions are driven primarily by governance factors, including financial performance, benchmarking, stakeholder expectations and formal pay policies, which reflect how boards exercise oversight, manage accountability and align remuneration with organisational objectives. Social factors are also evident, with employee retention, motivation and internal equity concerns reflecting workforce and cultural implications of executive pay decisions, including fairness, trust and cohesion. Comparatively, external pressures such as advisory firms, media or political risk have limited influence. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 31 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to cite market benchmarking and competitive pay levels.

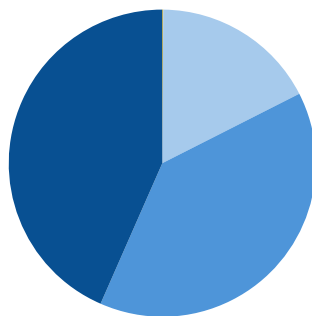
## Percentage of staff motivated by sustainability goals



The majority of CEOs believe that staff are highly aligned with the organisation's purpose, including social, environmental, and broader stakeholder objectives, with the average CEO estimating alignment at around 77% of all staff. This percentage is meaningful because it indicates the extent to which that purpose is embedded in employee behaviour, shaping execution capability, cultural coherence, and the credibility of the organisation's ESG commitments.

## Willingness to support culture shift for sustainability goals

- Not at all open to change
- Minimally open to change within current norms
- Moderately open to change with structured plans
- Fully open to transformational change



An organisation's willingness to pursue cultural change for sustainability is important because it signals whether environmental and social commitments can be embedded in organisational behaviour and governance, rather than remaining at the level of policy or reporting. 82% of organisations are willing to pursue cultural change to support sustainability goals, with 39% favouring structured change and 43% open to transformational change. Because willingness is high, organisations may benefit from targeted support such as practical tools for embedding sustainability, leadership guidance, and staff or board training to enable deeper, systemic change. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 11 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to be fully open to transformational change.

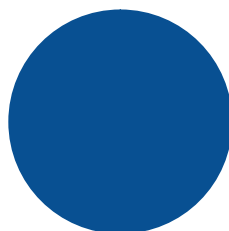
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Section 4: Sustainability Strategy and Investment Priorities

### Impact of **environmental** and **social investments** on organisational value

■ Do not add value

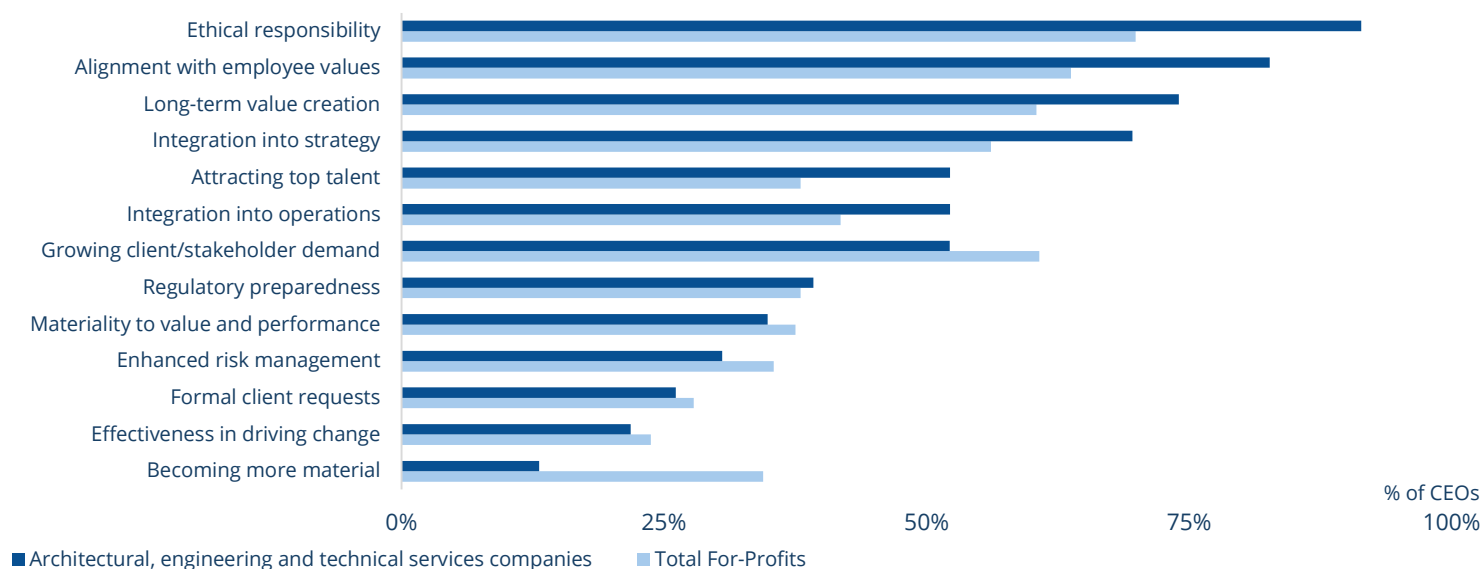
■ Add value



All CEOs (100%) believe investing in environmental and social practices enhances their organisation's value. This highlights that CEOs view environmental and social practices as value-enhancing, reinforcing their role as a core driver of long-term strategic decision-making rather than a peripheral concern. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 19 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to believe these practices add value.

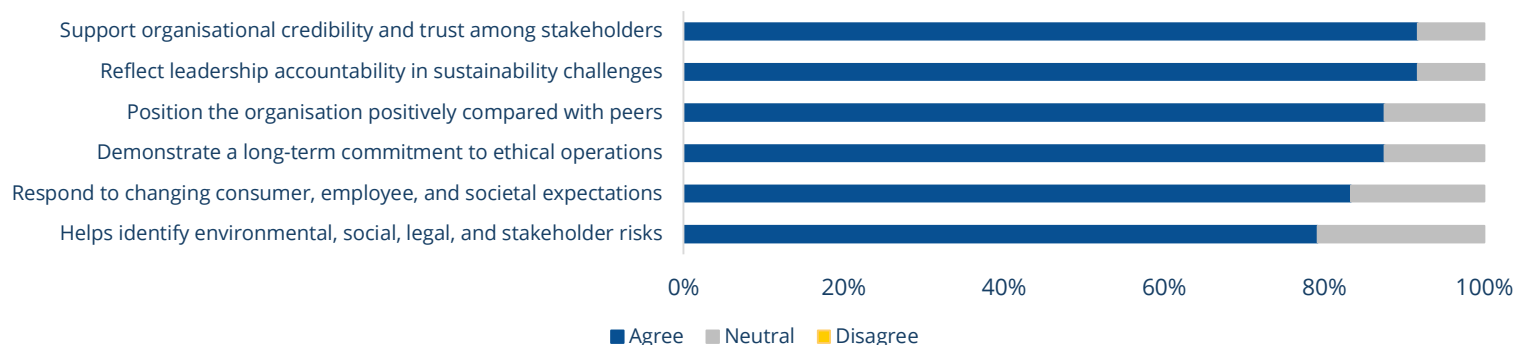
#### Reasons sustainability adds value

#### Sustainability does not add value due to:



100% of CEOs say sustainable practices enhance their organisation's value, primarily due to an ethical responsibility (91%), alignment with employee values (83%), and long-term value creation (74%). CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 21 percentage points more likely to believe these practices are an ethical responsibility.

#### Agreement with statements on sustainable business practices

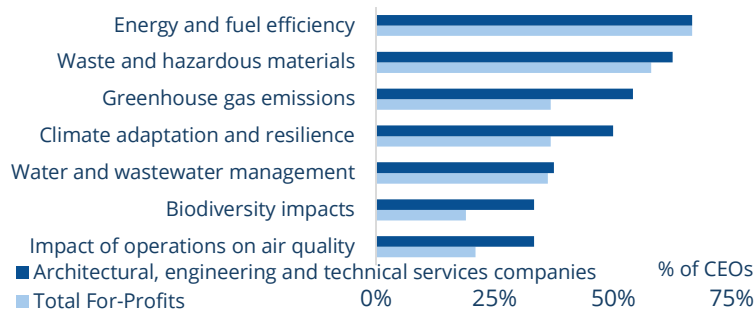


The majority of CEOs agree that sustainable practices support organisational credibility and trust among stakeholders (92%), reflect leadership accountability in sustainability challenges (92%) and position the organisation positively compared with peers (88%). Sustainable business practices are viewed as an integrated driver of competitiveness, stakeholder trust, and risk management, rather than a peripheral activity.

# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

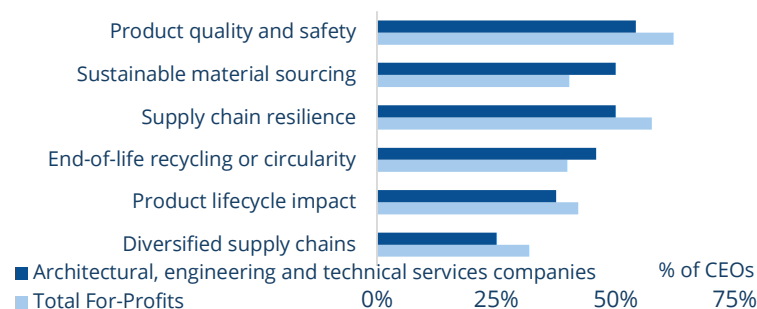
## Material **environmental** factors driving strategic priorities and long-term value

### Environmental sustainability factors



CEOs view energy and fuel efficiency (67%) and waste and hazardous materials (63%) as the primary drivers of long-term environmental value. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to view greenhouse gas emissions as material.

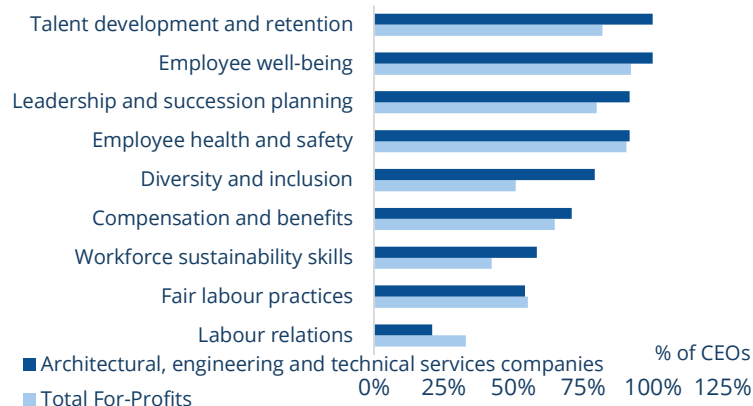
### Product and supply chain sustainability factors



CEOs view product quality and safety (54%) and sustainable material sourcing (50%) as the primary drivers of long-term product and supply chain value. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to view sustainable material sourcing as material.

## Material **social** factors influencing strategic priorities and long-term value

### Workforce sustainability factors



CEOs view talent development and retention (100%) and employee well-being (100%) as the primary workforce sustainability value drivers. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to consider diversity and inclusion as material.

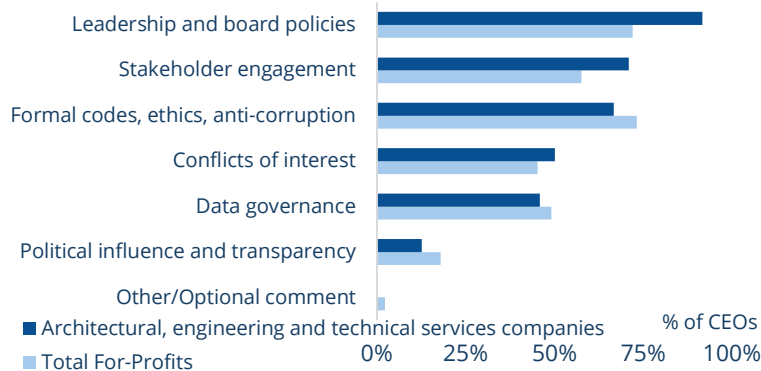
### Stakeholder sustainability factors



CEOs view customer sustainability satisfaction (92%) and accessibility and inclusive design (67%) as the primary social stakeholder drivers of long-term value. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to view accessibility and inclusive design as material.

## Material **governance** factors

### Governance sustainability factors



CEOs view 'leadership and board policies' (92%) and 'stakeholder engagement' (71%) as the top governance drivers of value. Architectural, engineering and technical services companies are more likely to consider 'leadership and board policies' as material.

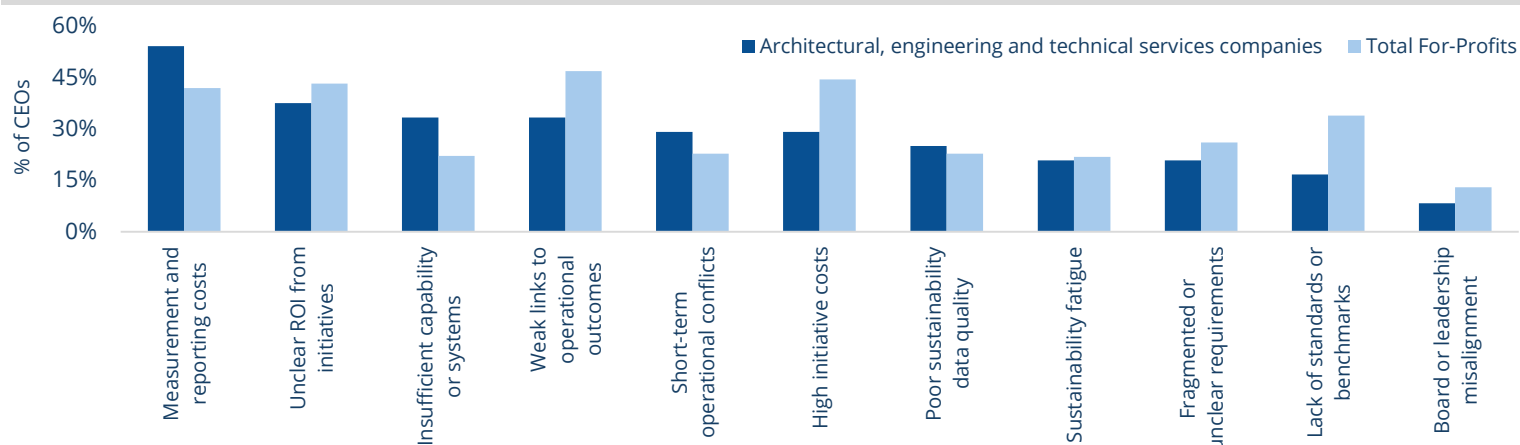
## Approach to sustainability strategy



The most common approach to sustainability is full integration: sustainability is woven into the fabric of the organisation, embedded in strategy, culture, operations, and innovation (25%).

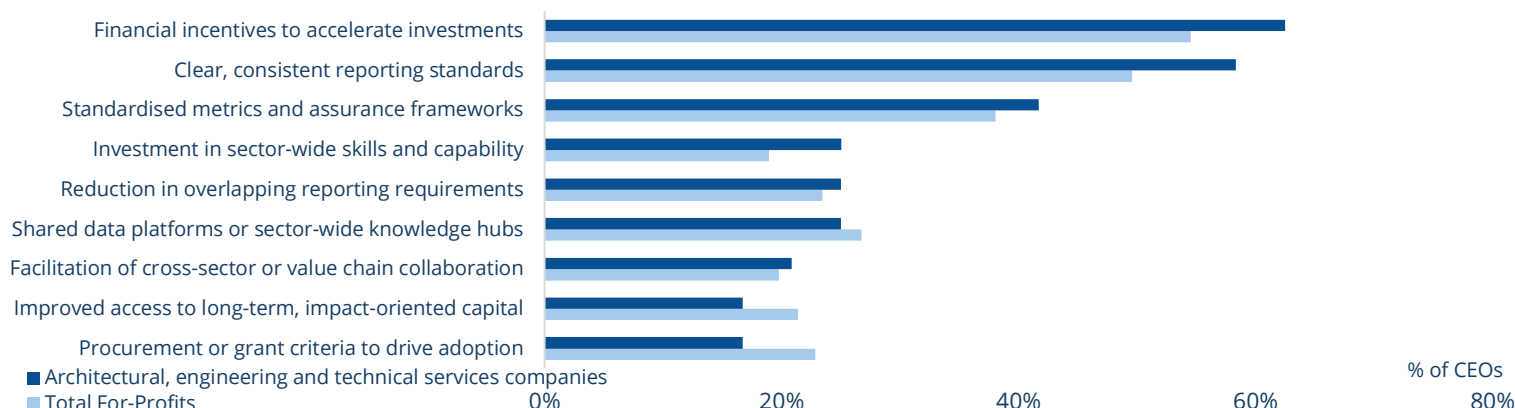
# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Key barriers to integrating sustainability into strategy and operations



Organisations see measurement and reporting costs (54%) as the most common barrier to integrating sustainability into strategy and operations, followed by unclear ROI from initiatives (38%) and insufficient capability or systems (33%). CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 17 percentage points less likely than total for-profits to see a lack of standards or benchmarks as a barrier.

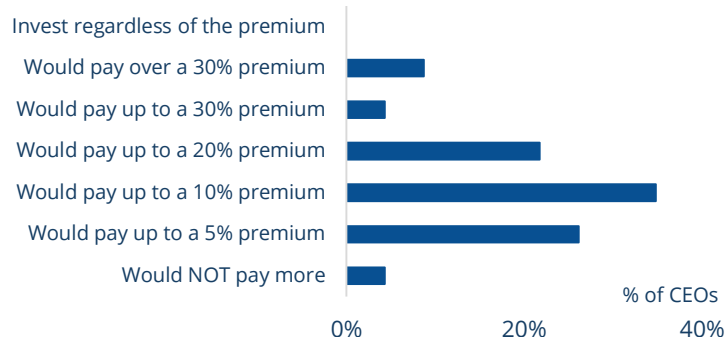
## Government or industry body actions that most support sustainability goals



Based on selection frequency, CEOs identify financial incentives to accelerate investments (63%) and clear, consistent reporting standards (58%) as the most important actions government or industry bodies can take to support sustainability goals, followed by standardised metrics and assurance frameworks (42%). CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 9 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to see clear, consistent reporting standards as important.

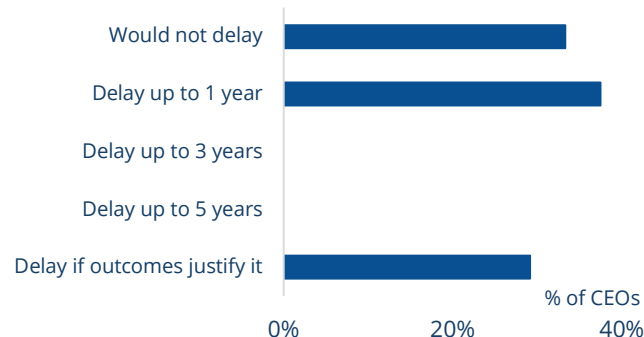
## Willingness to pay for greener outcome Tolerance for sustainable project delays

### Greener versus conventional options (% of CEOs across premium levels)



61% of CEOs would pay a moderate premium (5%–10%) for greener technology: 35% would pay a premium of over 20%, while 4% would not pay more. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 21 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to say they would pay over a 30% premium.

### Time delay for environmental or social gains (% of CEOs by delay length)

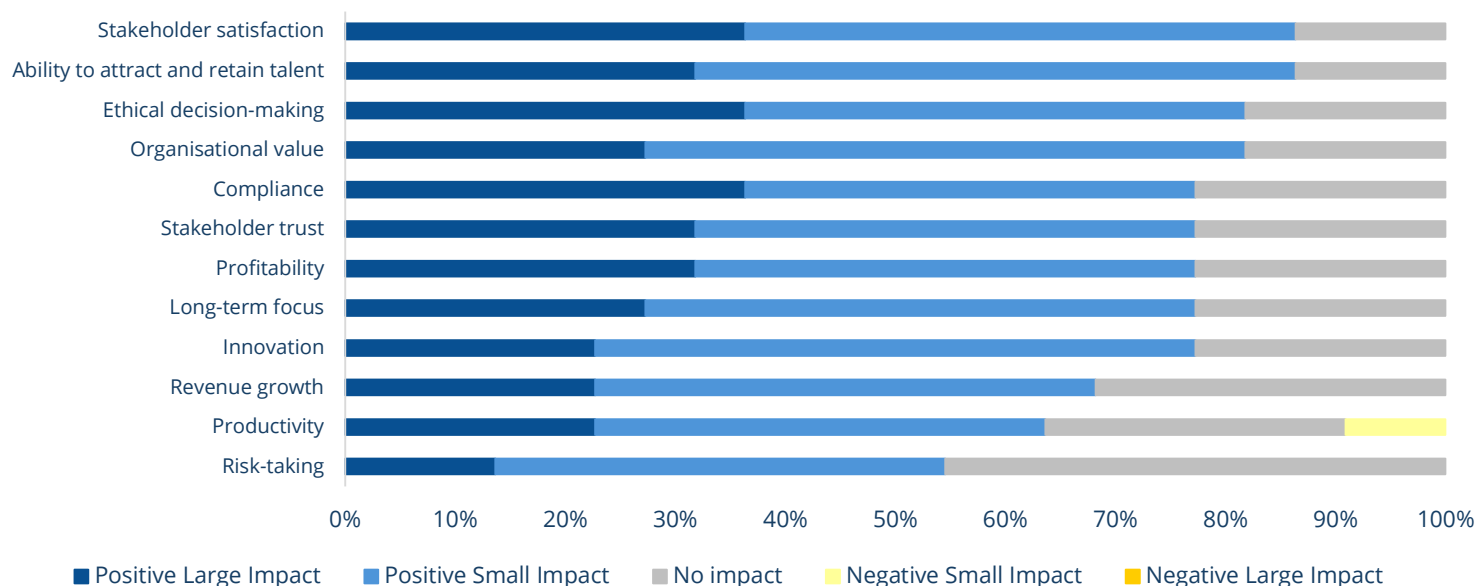


Most CEOs tolerate short delays for higher environmental or social gains: 38% up to 1 year, 0% up to 3–5 years, and 33% would not delay. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 10 percentage points less likely than total for-profits to say they would not delay.

# Architectural, engineering and technical services: 24 CEOs

## Summary: Overall influence on long-term organisational performance

### Impact of environmental, social and governance sustainability on factors



ESG sustainability positively impacts long-term performance, particularly stakeholder satisfaction and talent attraction and retention. CEOs in architectural, engineering and technical services companies were 20 percentage points more likely than total for-profits to say that ESG factors positively impact their ability to attract and retain talent.

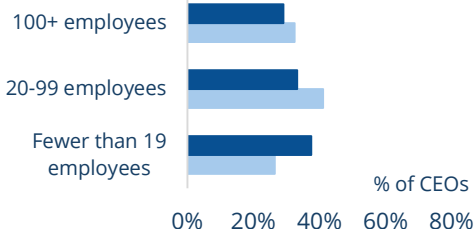
## Demographics: CEOs and Boards

### Number of employees

### CEO gender identity

### For-profit / not-for-profit

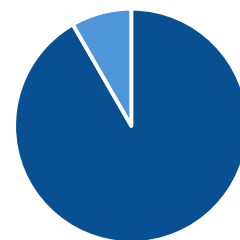
Architectural, engineering and technical services companies  
Total For-Profits



Architectural, engineering and technical services companies



Male Female Other (incl. prefer not to say)



For-profit Not-for-profit

## Female board representation

## Ethnic board representation

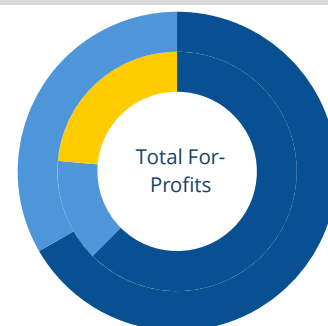
Architectural, engineering and technical services companies

Male-dominated (< 1/3 female)  
Gender-balanced (1/3 to 2/3 female)  
Female-dominated (> 2/3 female)



Architectural, engineering and technical services companies

Pākehā-dominated (< 1/3 non-Pākehā)  
Ethnic-balanced (1/3 to 2/3 non-Pākehā)  
Non-Pākehā dominated (> 2/3 non-Pākehā)



Women comprise 47.4% of the NZ workforce (Household Labour Force Survey, June 2023), highlighting the importance of examining the systemic barriers that limit their progression to leadership and governance roles.

The 2023 NZ Census showed 47% identify as either Māori (17.8%), Pasifika (8.9%), Asian (17.3%), or other (3%), with 53% primarily NZ European/Pākehā. Boards do not reflect this, emphasising the need to understand the barriers.