

11<sup>th</sup> Edition



# India CSR Outlook Report 2025



## 10 Years to India CSR Outlook Report Publication – A Journey in Tandem with CSR Compliance

Over the past decade, the **India CSR Outlook Report**, initiated by **CSRBOX in 2014**, has chronicled a transformative journey in corporate social responsibility, evolving alongside India's CSR compliance landscape under the Companies Act, 2013.

From its inaugural snapshot of CSR spend among 250 BSE-listed companies to the comprehensive 2024 edition analyzing 301 large listed entities, the report has grown in scope, reflecting a maturing ecosystem where CSR spending surged from ₹24,834 crore in FY 2014-15 to over ₹34,909 crore in FY 2023-24, as per National CSR Portal Data.

This consistent documentation has been impactful, offering actionable insights into sectoral shifts, geographic disparities, and compliance trends, empowering corporations to align with national goals and fostering equitable, sustainable impact across India's socio-economic fabric.

## 10 Years of the India CSR Outlook Report



**Celebrating a Decade of Impact : ICOR 2025**

## Introduction

In 2025, India's CSR framework has evolved from compliance to strategic impact over a decade. Recent amendments on unspent funds, impact assessments, and governance norms emphasize accountability and transparency. Companies are now tasked with long-term, scalable projects aligned with national priorities like education, skilling, climate resilience, health, and livelihoods.

This shift offers corporations strategic opportunities, integrating CSR into sustainability and ESG goals, while NGOs face rising demands to professionalize and enhance reporting. Digitized M&E and stricter agency norms boost sector credibility.

Moving ahead, CSR will deepen ties with business strategies and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Success hinges on corporate governance, NGO data-driven models and policy balance between flexibility and accountability, driving inclusive growth and societal value.

## About the Report

The India CSR Outlook Report (ICOR) 2025, CSRBOX Group's flagship publication, delivers a comprehensive analysis of CSR spending trends among 301 leading Indian companies. Extending beyond mere financial metrics, it delves into CSR priorities, entity performance, corporate decision-makers' perspectives, implementation leaders' future plans, and on-ground challenges.

By combining primary research (surveys and stakeholder interviews) with secondary data (including official disclosures), the report provides a holistic overview of evolving CSR compliance, key investment areas, and shifting funding dynamics in India.

ICOR 2025 incorporates nuanced insights from corporate leaders and their partnerships with non-profit organizations, blending ecosystem viewpoints to spotlight both advancements and persistent gaps in CSR execution. This data-driven narrative, enriched with real-world realities, equips stakeholders with actionable intelligence.

These insights are particularly valuable for designing targeted projects by identifying high-impact intervention areas and best practices and shaping strategic directions for the future, enabling companies, NGOs, policymakers, and others to align initiatives with emerging trends, optimize resource allocation, and foster sustainable, scalable impact.

**Section I, CSR Portfolio of Large 301 Companies** delves into the CSR spending of top corporates in FY 2023–24, exploring compliance patterns, trends in sector-wise investment, and the presence of women in CSR committees. It also discusses the reasons behind unspent CSR funds and the sectors that saw the most significant contributions.



**Section II, Corporate Perspectives on CSR Priorities,** captures insights from major CSR decision-makers, outlining the strategic objectives, challenges, and emerging focus areas within corporate CSR agendas.

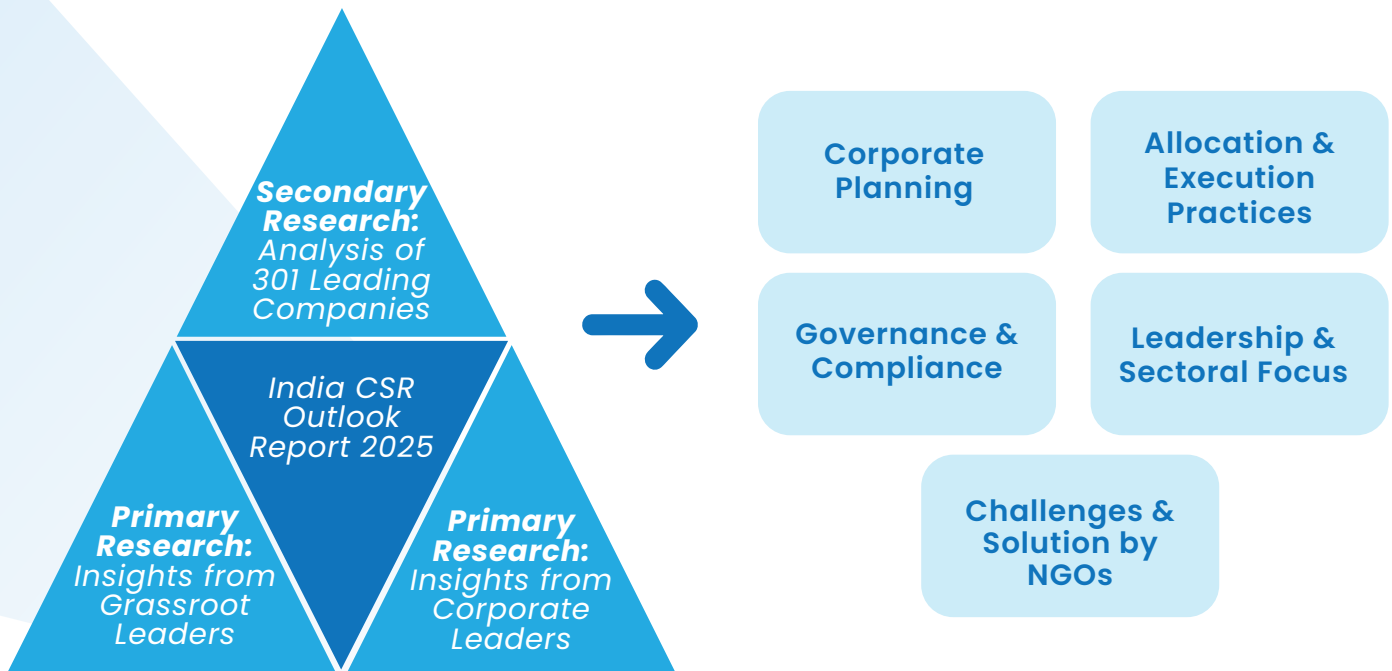


**Section III, NGO Insights on CSR Trends and Collaborations,** presents a deep dive into the role of NGOs in CSR projects, focusing on their funding sources, partnerships, and thematic priorities, as well as their approach to monitoring and evaluation.



## Scope and Coverage

The research covers the 5 dimensions of CSR landscape:



## Key Highlights

**Education 25%, Healthcare 18% and Environment & Sustainability 13%** emerged as the **most prioritized sectors**, valued equally by both corporates and implementation partners.

Prioritisation of **EVP Opportunities in CSR Initiatives increased to 92% (2025) from 80% (2024)**

**56%** of corporates expressed **willingness for government partnerships** in CSR projects, with **Education (72%)** being the most accessible thematic area, followed by **Livelihood and Skill Development (64%)** and **Healthcare and WASH (52%)**

Though improving, **28%** companies still do **not have female representation** in CSR committees.

Over **60%** of Organisations **implemented fewer than 5 CSR projects** in FY 2024-25, with **21% operating** in only **1-2 states/UTs**

The average actual CSR spend per company increased to **INR 59 cr** in **FY 2024-25** from **INR 26 cr** in **FY 2015-2016**

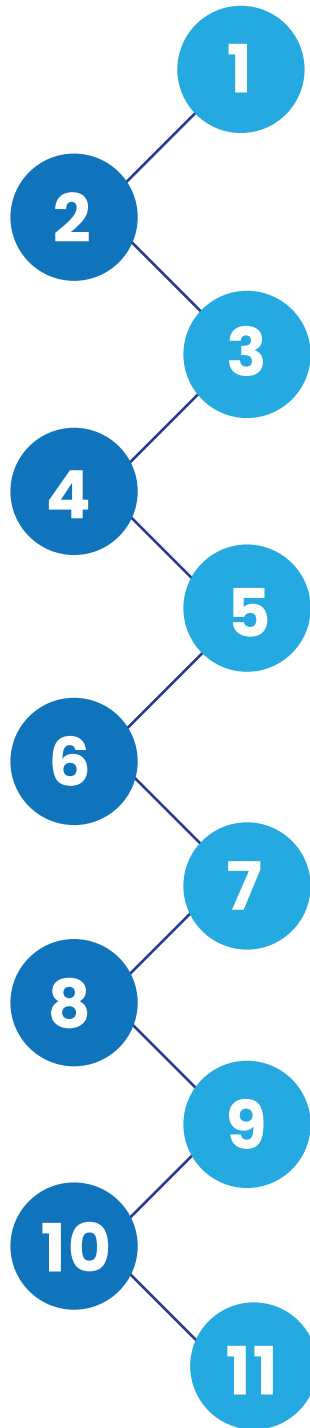
**76%** of corporates prefer working with implementing agencies, reflecting the significance of external expertise in CSR project execution.

**60%** of **corporate leadership** and **53%** of **implementation partners** favored **CSR projects with a duration of 2-3 years or more**, emphasising the preference for long-term initiatives.

Majority of **NGOs (46%)** rely on internally **customized data management** systems **tailored to donor requirements**, reflecting a strategic focus on donor alignment.

**Shifts in CSR funding** is mainly driven by **changing donor priorities (67%)** and increased **competition for funding (51%)**, as reported by implementation partners.

Over **48%** of **implementation partners** have **fewer than 50 staff members** within their Organisation.

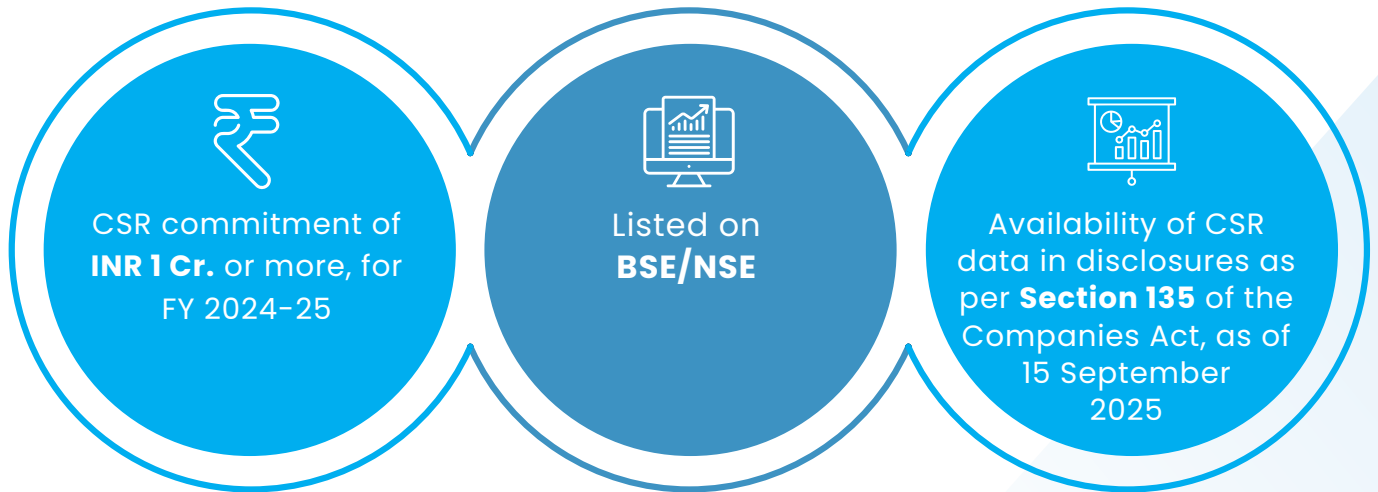




Section 1:  
**CSR Portfolio of Large  
301 Companies**  
(FY 2024–2025)

This section comprehensively presents the CSR portfolio of 301 leading companies, encompassing their investment pattern, modalities of allocation, project prioritisation, and profiling of the primary organisations contributing to CSR funds.

## ► Criteria for Selecting Large 301 Companies



## ► 1.1 Actual vs. Prescribed CSR Budget

**Prescribed CSR :**

**INR 18,216 Cr.**

**Actual Spent CSR :**

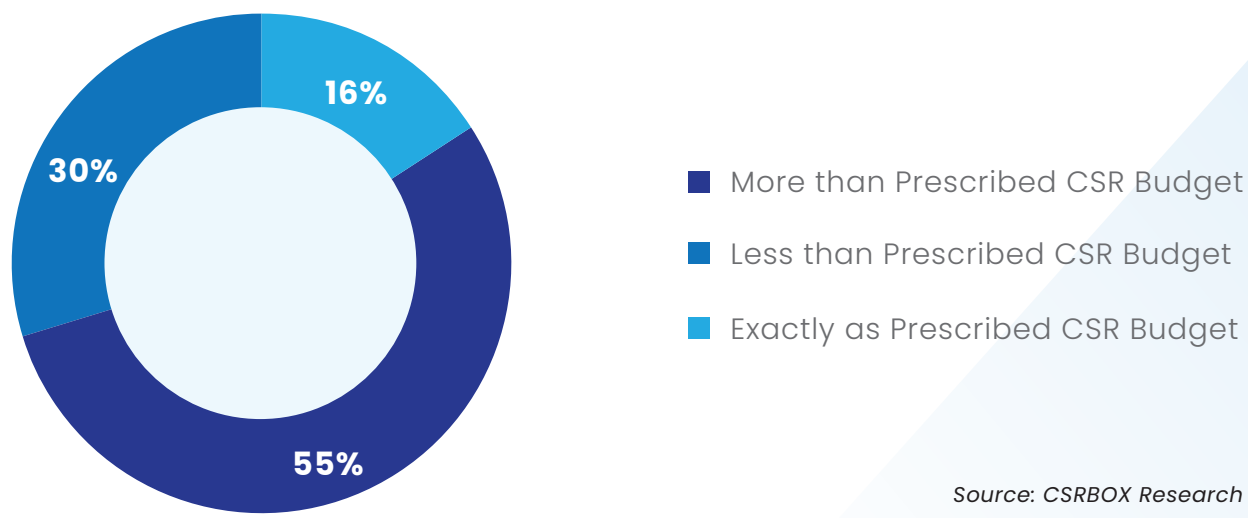
**INR 17,742 Cr.**



► **From Mandate to Mission: A Strategic CSR Outlook**

71% of companies are meeting or exceeding their CSR mandate, with 55% spending more (vs. 48% in 2024) than required. This widespread over-investment signals a critical shift: CSR is now a strategic investment for corporate resilience and long-term value creation, moving decisively beyond mere regulatory compliance.

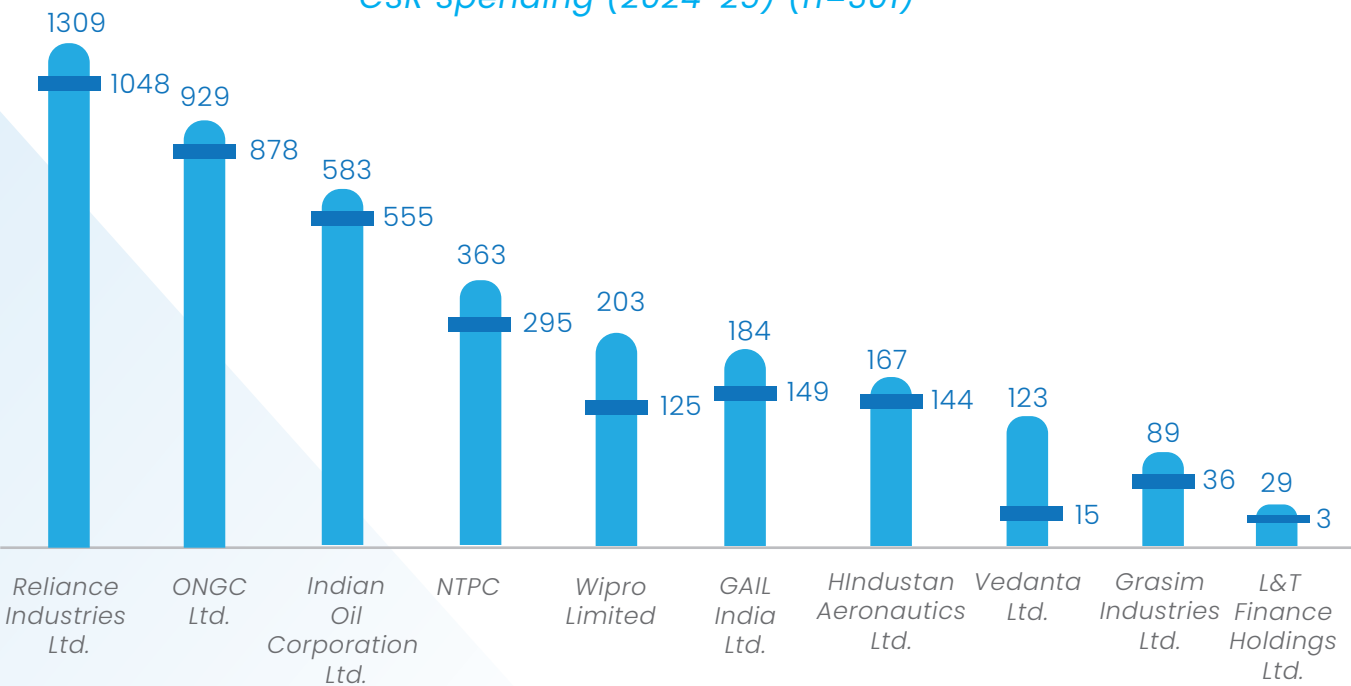
*Proportion of Companies Meeting Respective CSR Compliance Requirements (n=301)*



Source: CSRBOX Research Desk

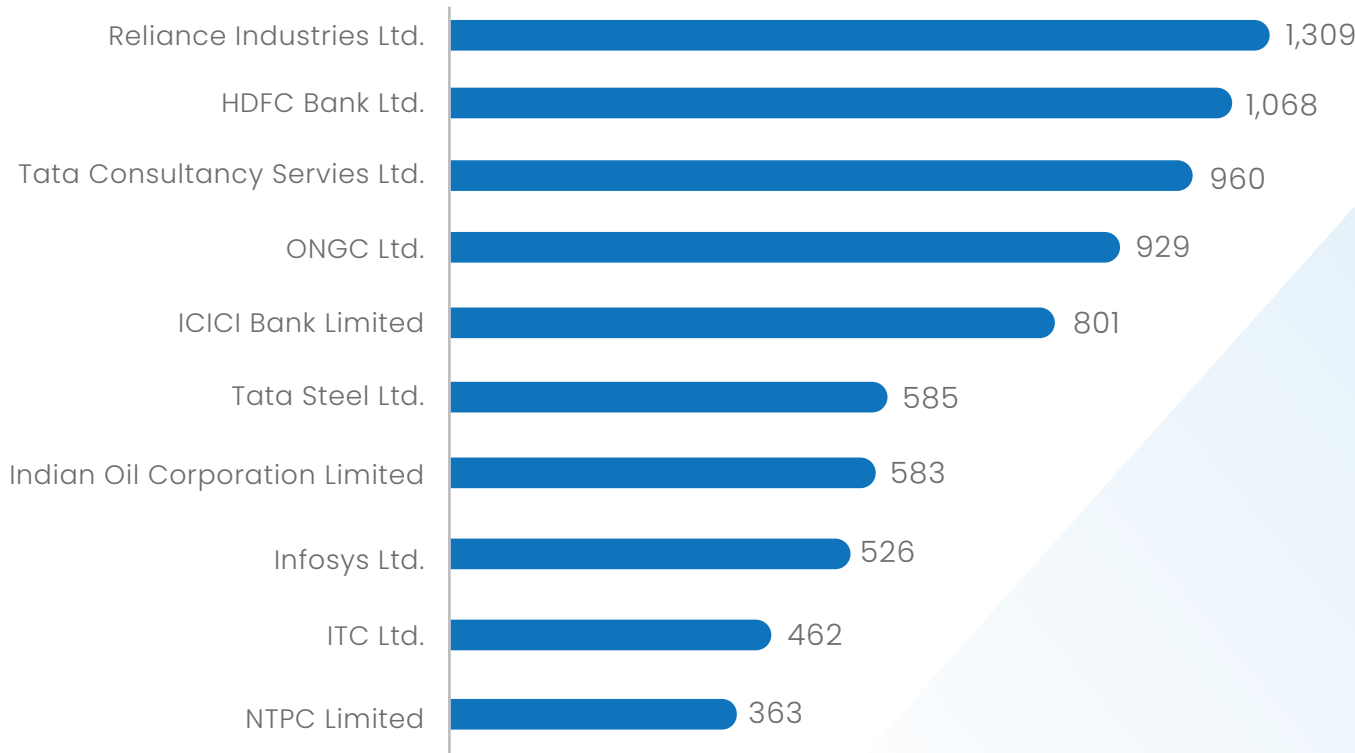
► **More Than a Mandate: Going Beyond CSR Compliance**

*Beyond Compliance: Companies Going Prescribed CSR Spending (2024-25) (n=301)*



► **Sectoral Leaders Driving Social Impact: Top CSR Contributors**

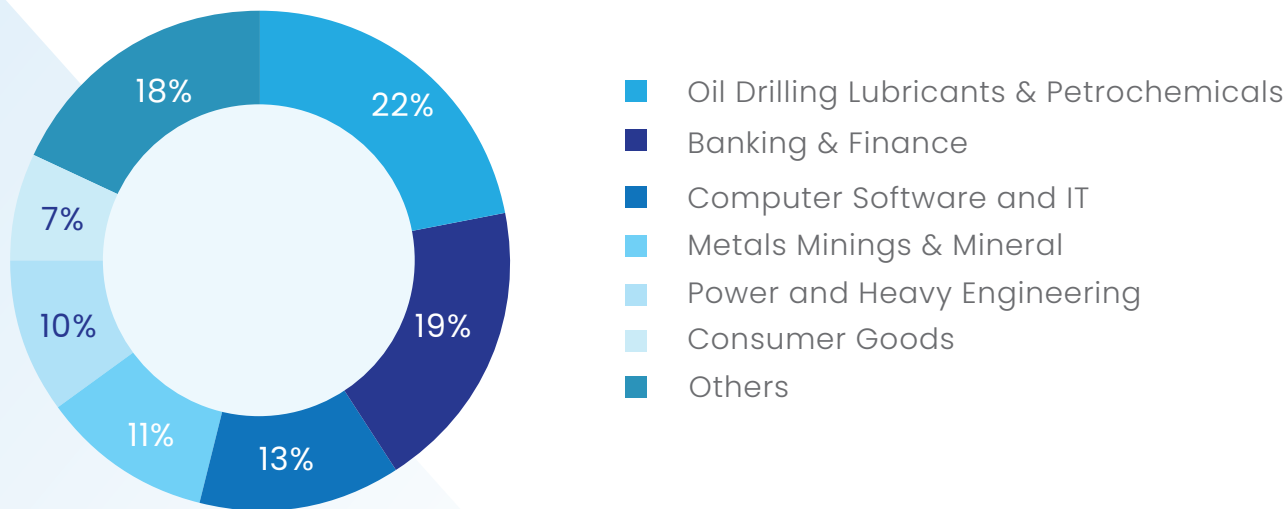
*CSR Powerhouses: Top 10 Companies with the Largest CSR Spend (2024-25) (n=301)*



\*Amount in CR.

► **Sectoral Dominance in CSR Spending**

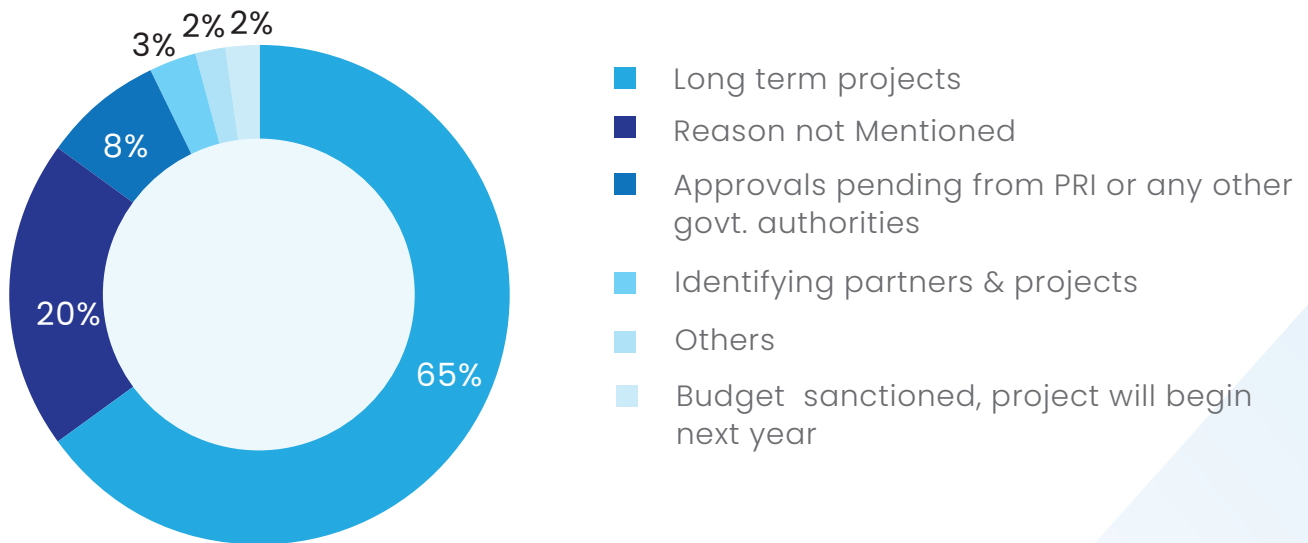
*Sector-Wise Contribution to CSR Spending (n=301)*



**Others:** Auto and Auto Ancillaries, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals Pesticides and Fertilizers, Cement, Miscellaneous, Construction Contracting and Infrastructure, Cables and Telecommunications, Food Processing and Beverages, Tyres, Textiles, Media and Entertainment.

## ► Why CSR Funds Go Unspent

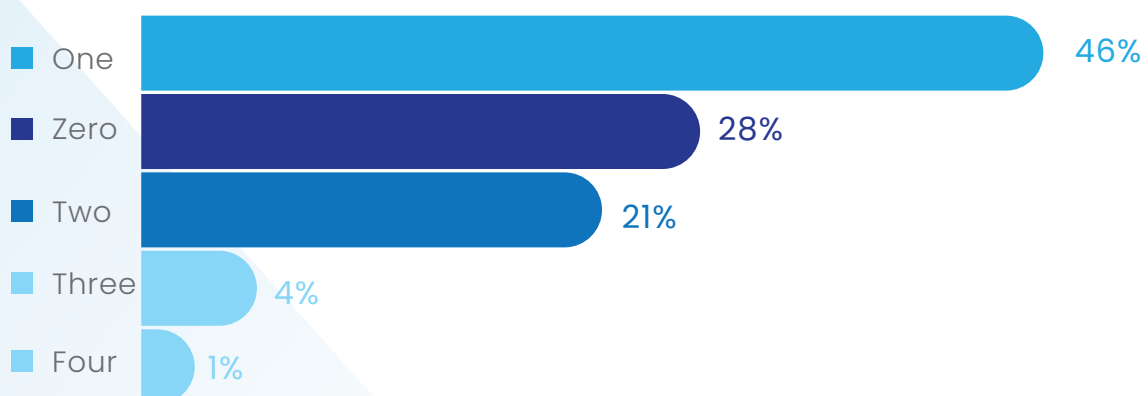
*Understanding Unspent CSR Funds: Key Reasons for Underutilisation (n=92)*



**Others:** 1. Specific project issues: dropout of trainees and misalignment with academic cycle  
2. Compiled and spent in excess, so no unspent. The company utilised ₹303.74 million of excess CSR expenditure from previous years, set off against the current year's obligation as per the Companies Act, 2020 amendments, which allow offsetting excess CSR spending (up to a limit) for up to three subsequent years.

## ► The Tipping Point: A Look at Gender Diversity in CSR Governance

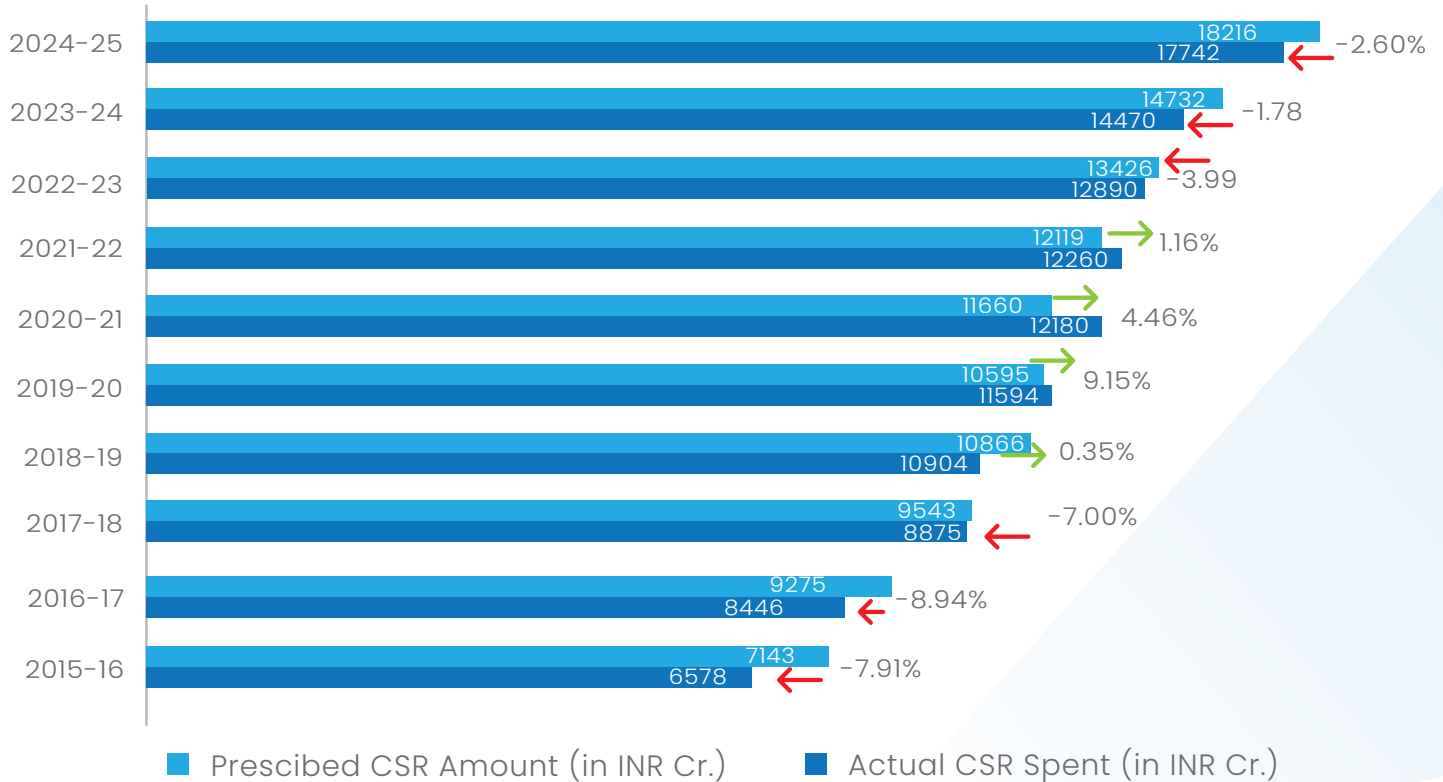
*CSR Committees: Proportion of Female Members Across Companies (n=301)*



Companies are moving out of the lowest representation categories into a more diverse, 2-member structure. Companies with 2 female members saw a substantial increase of 4% from last year and for the first time, 1% in 4 females.

## ► The Evolution of CSR Spending over 10 Years

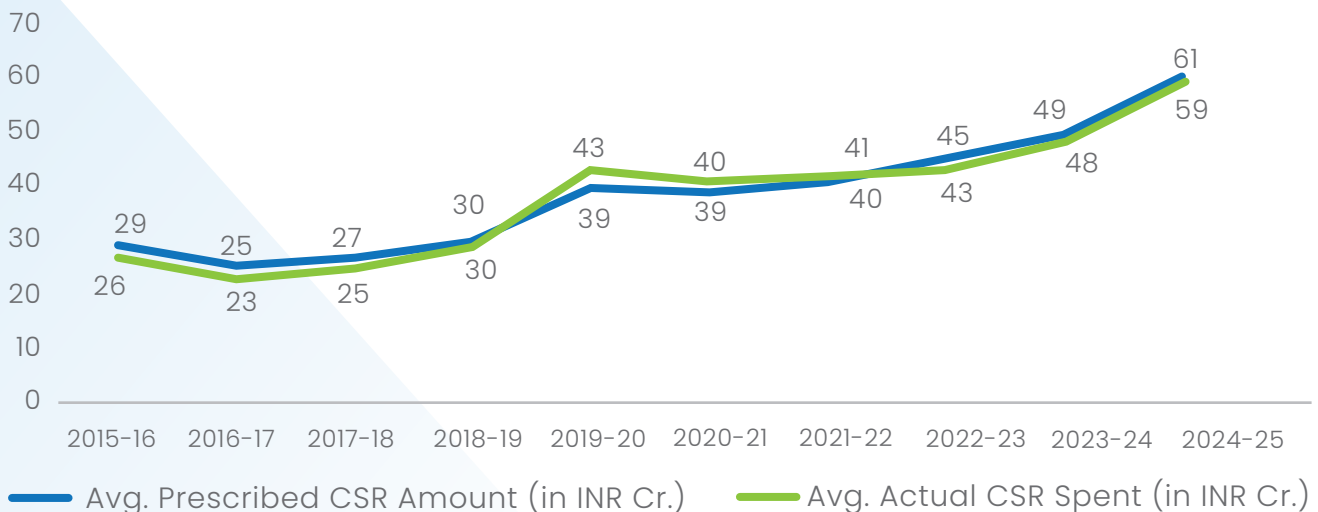
*Year-wise Analysis of Prescribed and Actual CSR Spending: Trends from FY 2014-15 to FY 2023-24*



**Actual CSR spending** has consistently **increased** from **6578 Cr** in **2015-16** to **17,742 Cr** in **2024-25**, outpacing prescribed amounts in most years.

## ► The Maturation of Average CSR Spending (301 companies)

*Year-wise Analysis of Avg. Prescribed and Actual CSR Spending: Trends from FY 2015-16 to FY 2024-25*



Over 10 years, the corporate social responsibility **obligations** and the **actual commitment** to spending have more than doubled on average for leading 301 companies.



Section 2:

# **Corporate CSR Practices and Future Pathways**

(Based on the primary survey with  
CSR Leaders of leading companies)

This section offers an overview of CSR strategies and practices from a diverse set of corporations. The data, collected through quantitative surveys, provides a comprehensive perspective on the evolving priorities and approaches within CSR ambit.

Thematically, **Education, Healthcare and WASH, Environment and Sustainability, and Skill Development** account for **72%** of the entire projects' focus.

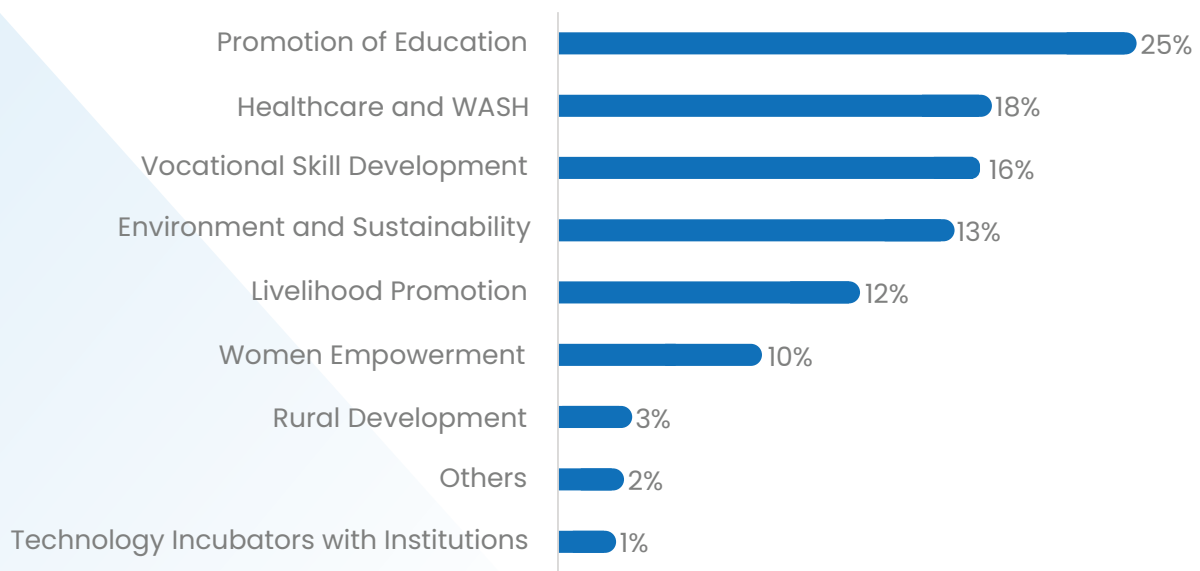
**56%** of companies **prefer Government Partnerships** for CSR, valuing scale, legitimacy, and reach.

**60%** of company leadership favoured CSR **projects** with durations of **more than 3 years**, indicating a strong preference for **long-term impact**.

**76%** of organisations **prefer working with implementing agencies**, reflecting the importance of external expertise in executing CSR projects.

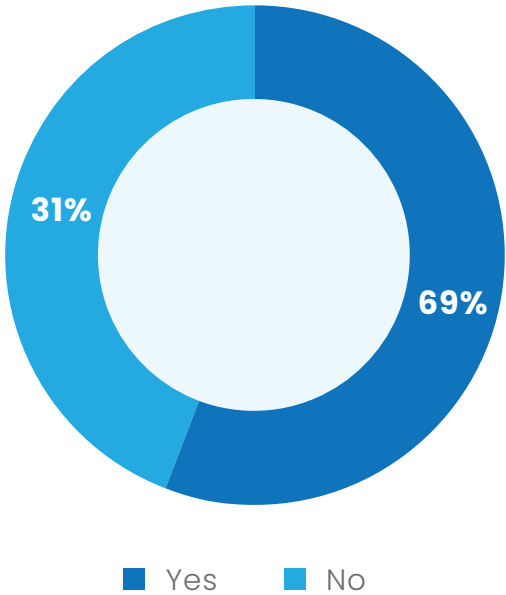
## ► Thematic Priority Areas for CSR Projects

### Top Priority Thematic Areas for CSR Projects



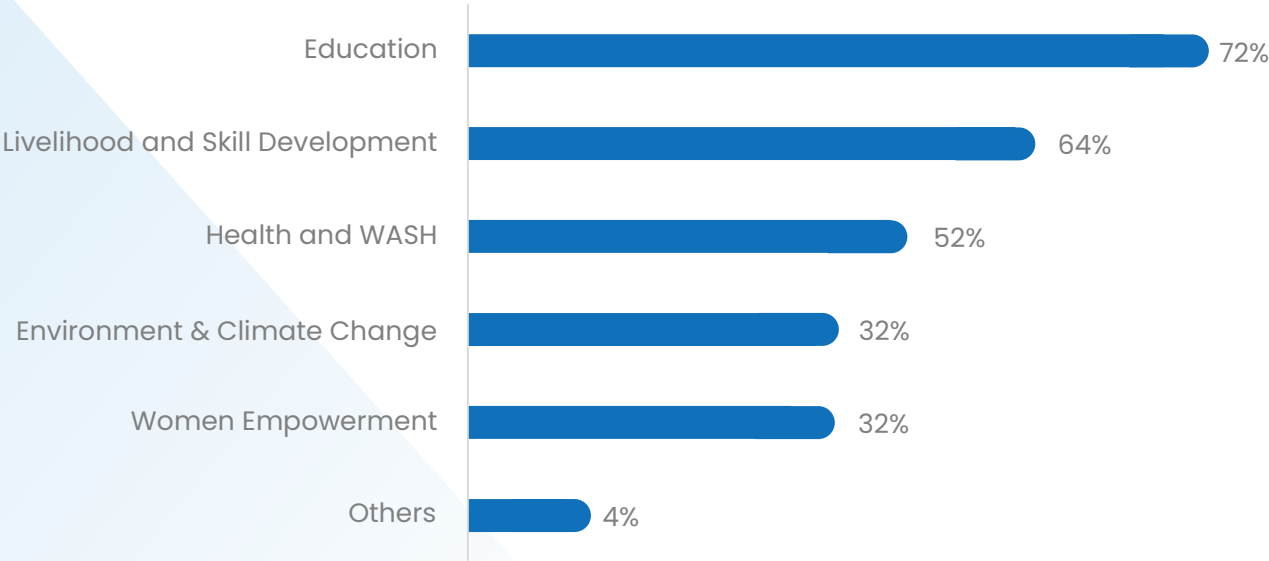
► **Willingness for government partnerships:**  
**Government Partnerships vs. Independent Action**

*Government Partnerships in CSR Projects*



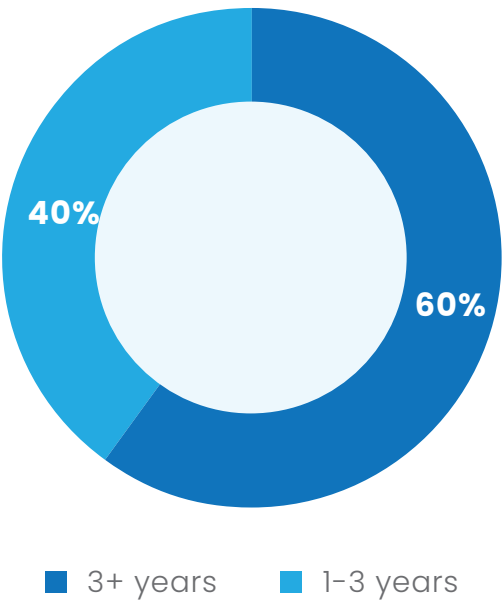
**Mapping the Ease of Government Collaboration by Sector**

*Ease of Govt Partnerships in CSR: Key Thematic Areas*



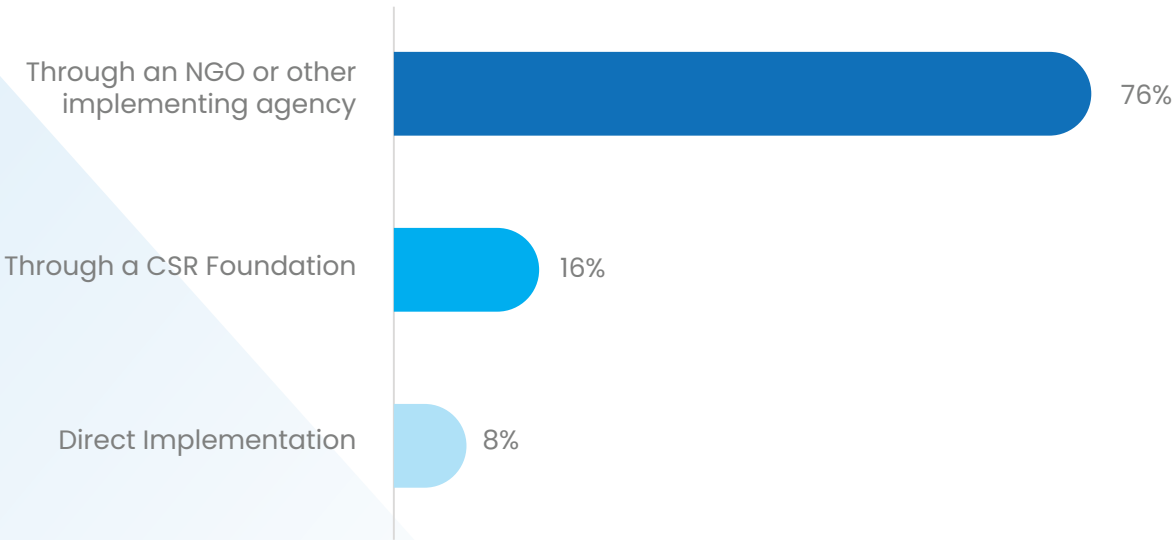
► **Leadership's Pivot to Lasting Impact of CSR Programs**

*Preferred Project Duration for CSR Initiatives: Leadership Perspective*



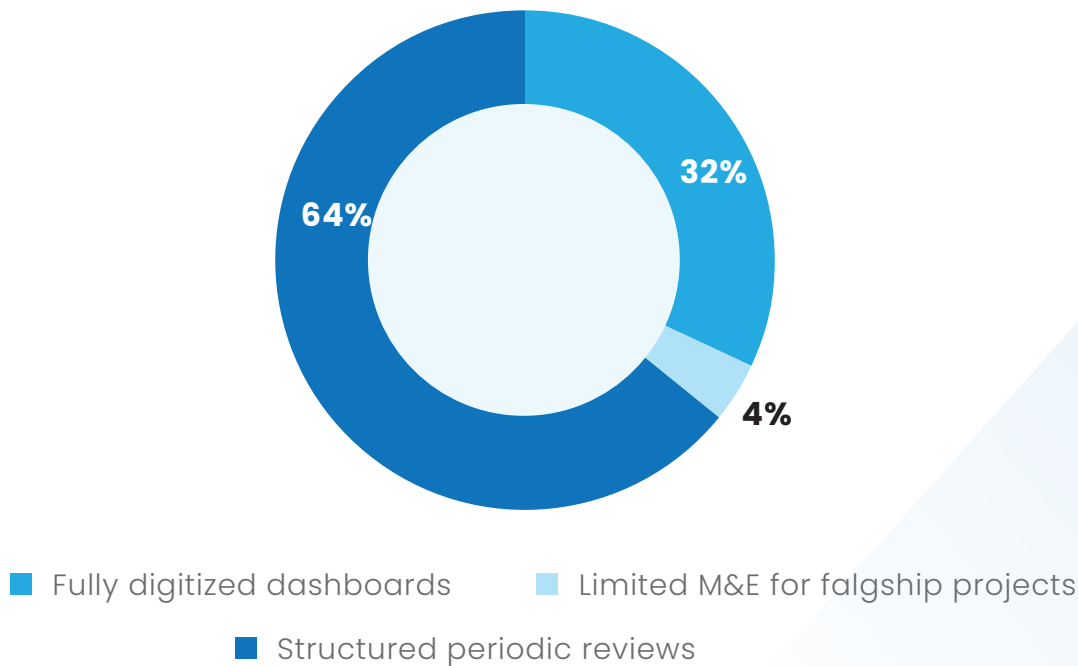
► **Implementation Pathways for CSR: How Companies Execute**

*Preferred Way of CSR Implementation*



► **Monitoring Evaluation in CSR: From Review-Driven Oversight to Real-Time Dashboards**

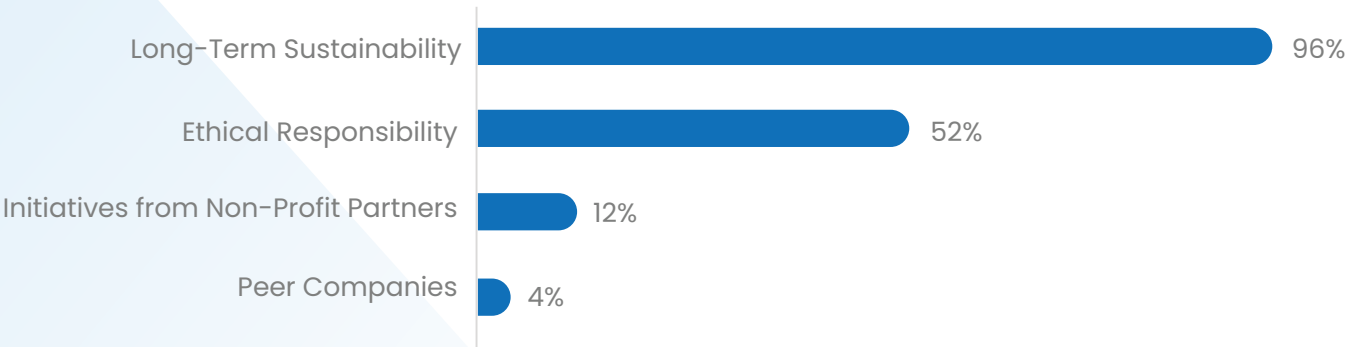
*Distribution of CSR Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches*



The data reflects a clear transition towards more efficient and potentially real-time oversight in CSR.

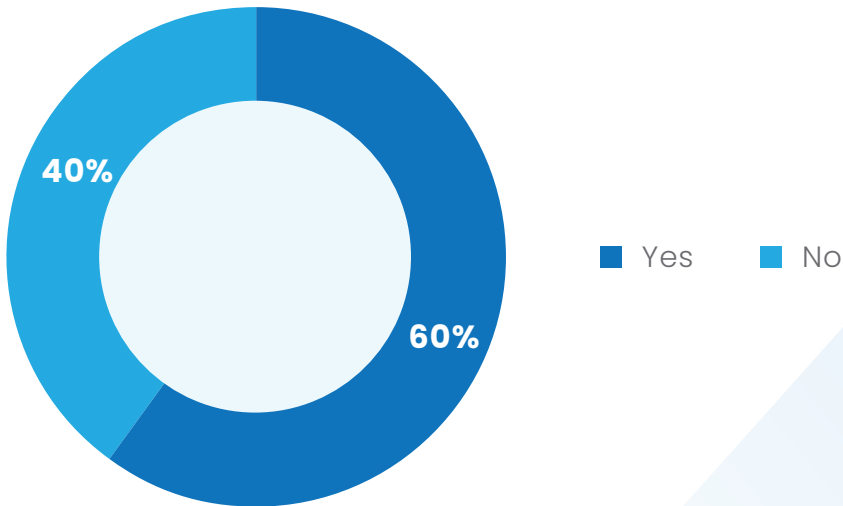
► **Intrinsic Motivation: What Drives Corporate Climate Action?**

*Organisational Motivations for Climate Change and CSR Engagement*



► **The Net Zero Effect: How Climate Goals are Shaping Environmental CSR**

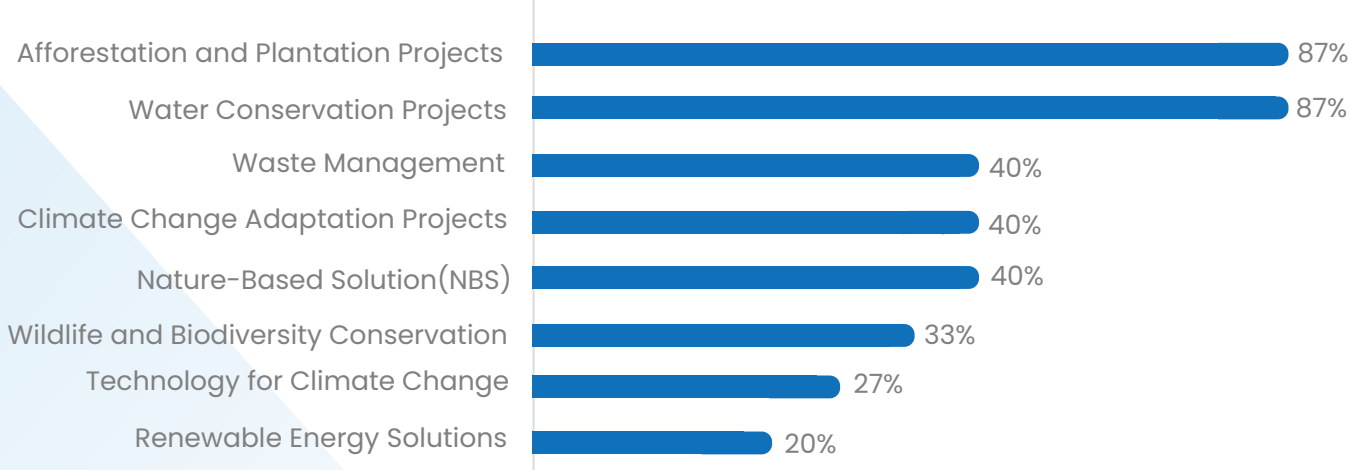
*Influence of Net Zero Ambition on Environment related CSR Projects*



**60%** of CSR projects align with net-zero goals; **40%** focus on traditional community projects; highlighting the need for **stronger GHG strategy integration** and **emissions tracking**.

► **Pragmatic Planet-Savers: Where Environmental CSR is Focused**

*CSR Contributions Towards Environmental Conservation and Sustainability*



A majority **60%** of companies are voluntarily spending on Environment & Climate Initiatives, indicating a strong internal recognition of sustainability.

**40% of organizations** are investing in social entrepreneurship. The social enterprise sector needs to focus on rigorous metrics and demonstrated scalability to unlock broader corporate capital. For companies in **climate coalitions**, the primary benefit is **Knowledge Exchange (52%)**; significantly **outweighing Resource Sharing (28%)**.



Section 3:  
**Insights from  
NGOs on Evolving  
CSR Trends and  
Challenges**

This section presents a detailed analysis of the operational dynamics, funding structures, thematic priorities, and key challenges faced by organisations engaged in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities during FY 2024-25. The data collected reflects a diverse range of scales, thematic areas, and operational geographies.

**01**

**Promotion of Education** and **Healthcare & WASH** are the leading focus areas, **reflecting** strong emphasis on **foundational community needs**. **Environment** and **sustainability** gets moderate priority, suggesting a **balanced approach** to **ecological concerns**.

**02**

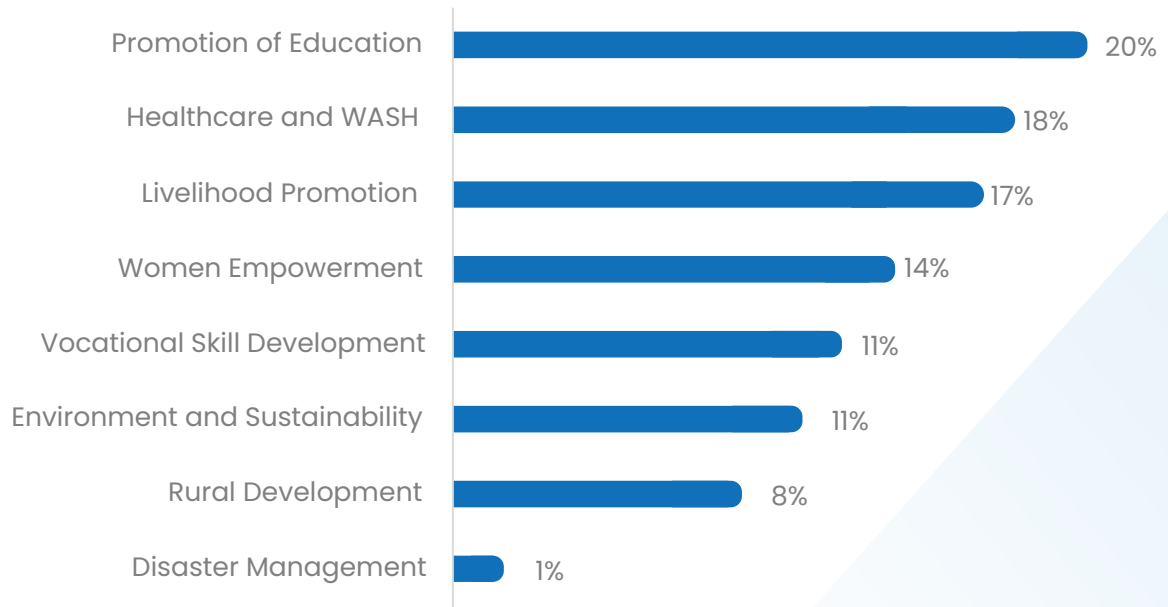
A total of **46% rely on five donors or fewer**, suggesting that deeply committed, multi-year, strategic partnerships are prioritized over a broad, fragmented donor base.

**03**

**CSR decision-makers** are beginning to **value long-term, verifiable results** over short-term visibility or funding partnerships alone.

## ► Implementation Partners' Perspectives on Key Priority Areas for CSR Projects

### Top Priority Areas for CSR Project Implementation

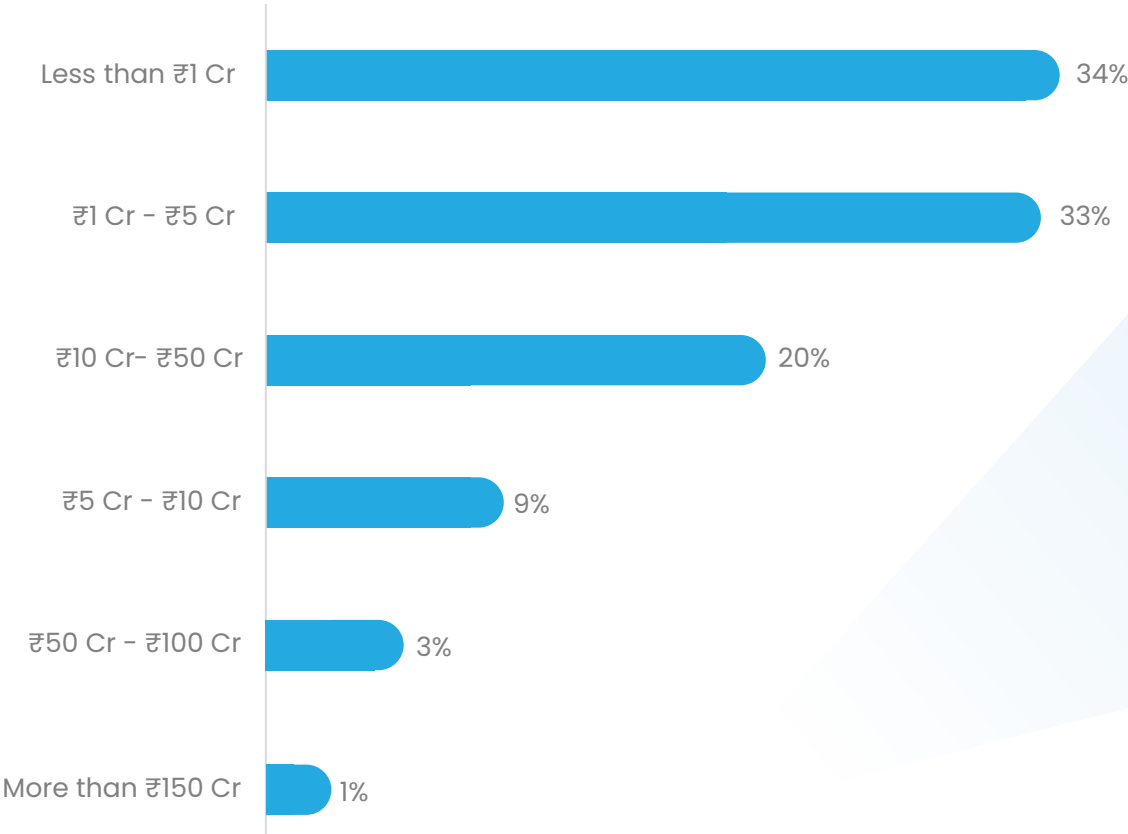


## ► Key Features of Successful Flagship CSR Projects



► **A Three-Year Look at Project Investment Scales**  
**Areas for CSR Projects**

*Trends in Average Project Budget Sizes Over the Past Three Years  
(% of Organisations)*

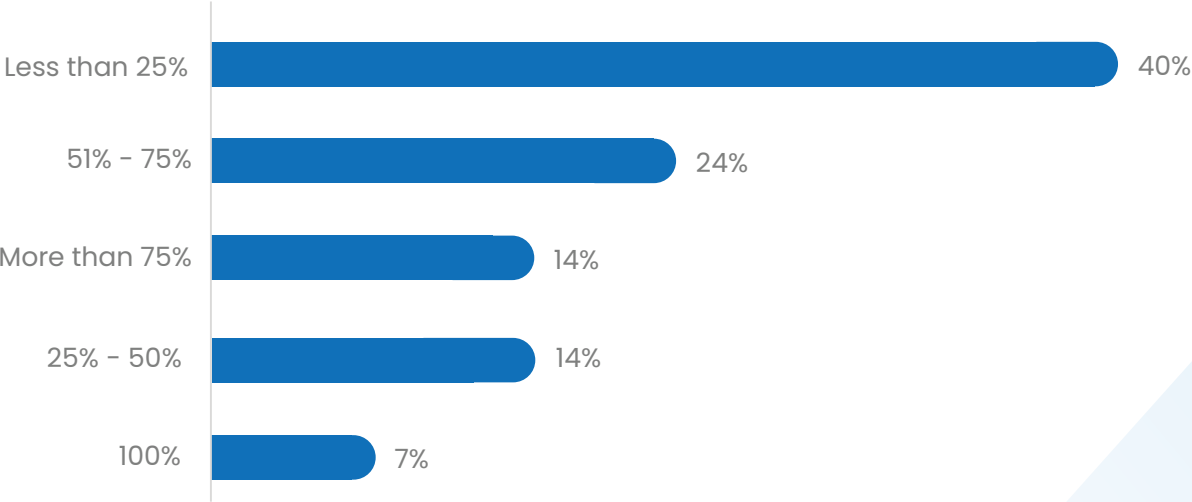


**67%** of organizations maintain average **project budgets under ₹5 Cr**, favoring agile, low-risk implementations via local NGOs or community partners for quick community impact.

**29%** allocate **₹5-50 Cr budgets**, reflecting **maturing CSR strategies** with partnerships to specialized agencies for **scalable, multi-year social projects**.

► **Proportion of CSR Funding in the Overall Budget of Implementing Agencies**

Analysis of CSR Funding within Total Organisational Budget for FY 2024-25

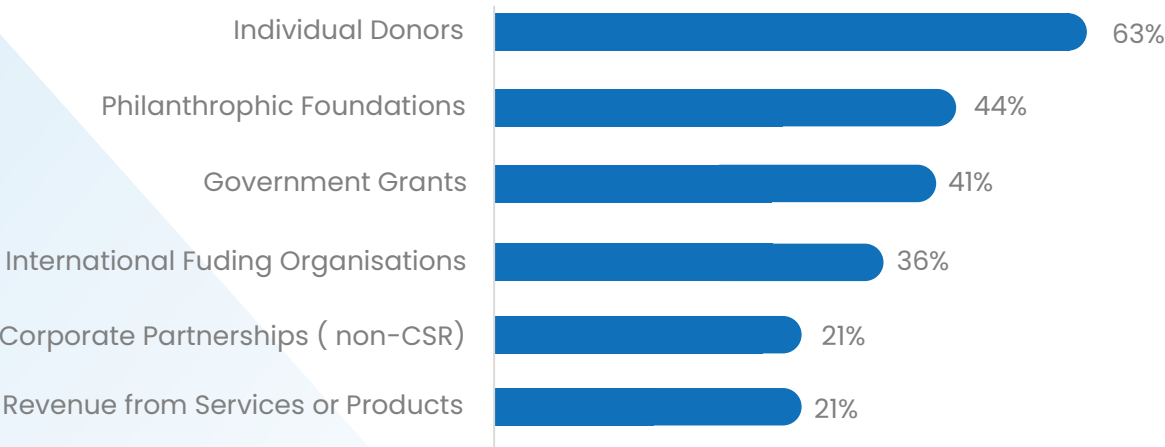


**40%** implementation agencies receive **less than 25%** of their **organizational budget** from **CSR funds**, indicating diverse funding sources for FY 2024-25, with a niche group of agencies **(7%)** fully dependent on CSR.

The distribution highlights a mixed approach, with most agencies balancing CSR with other revenue streams, reflecting strategic diversification.

► **Alternative Funding Sources of Implementation Partners Beyond CSR**

Overview of Alternative Funding Sources Beyond CSR (% of Organisations)

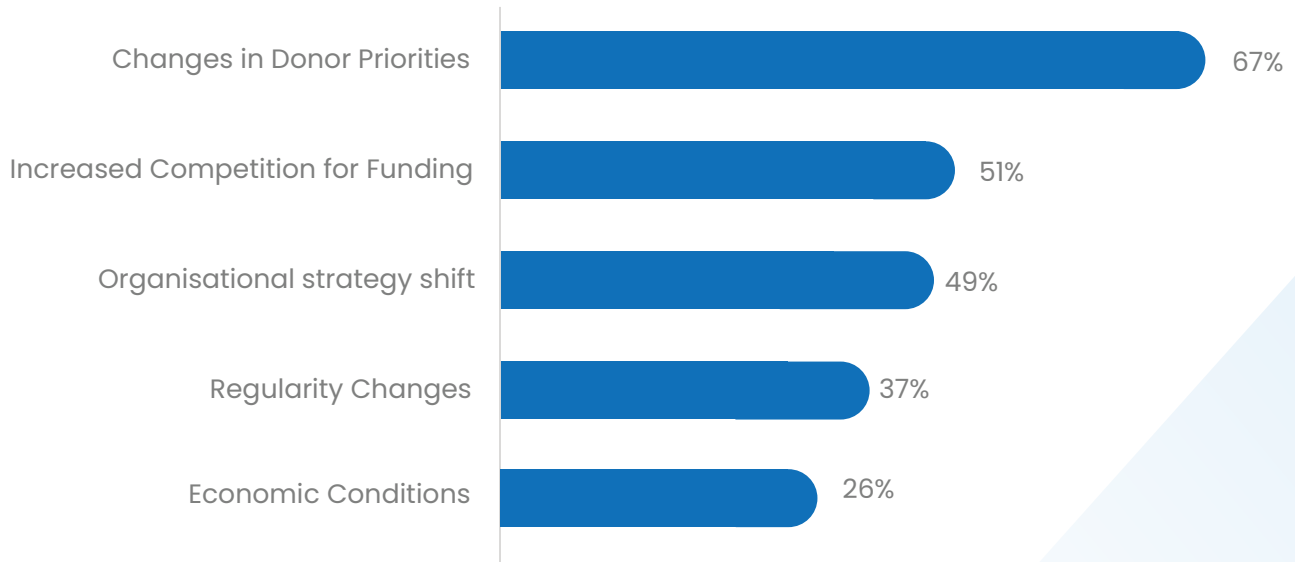


A majority of organizations depend on individual donors, with significant contributions from philanthropic foundations, indicating a strong public-driven funding base.

Government grants **(41%)** and international funding organizations **(36%)** provide substantial alternative revenue, reflecting **diverse external support systems**.

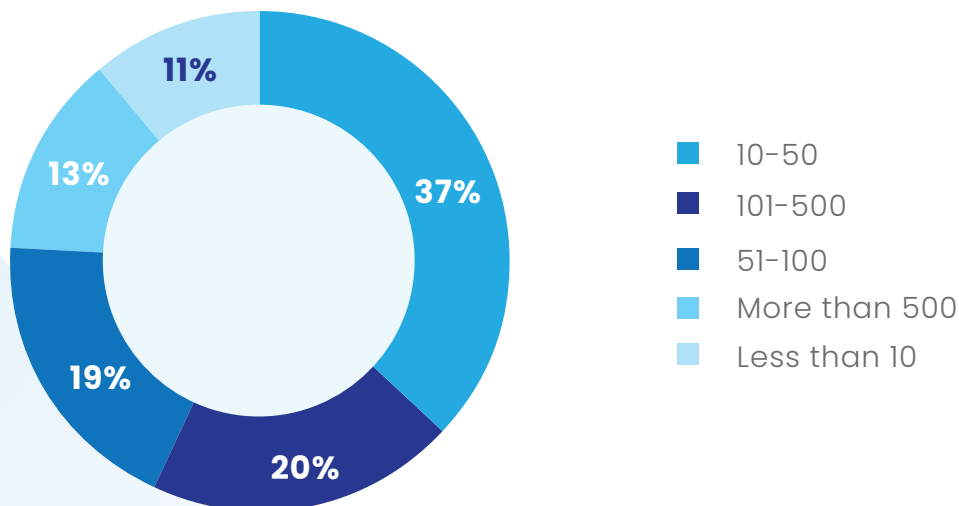
## ► Influencing Factors for Shifts in CSR Funding

### *Assessing the Factors Driving Shifts in CSR Funding*



## ► Implementation Partner's Staff Size and Distribution

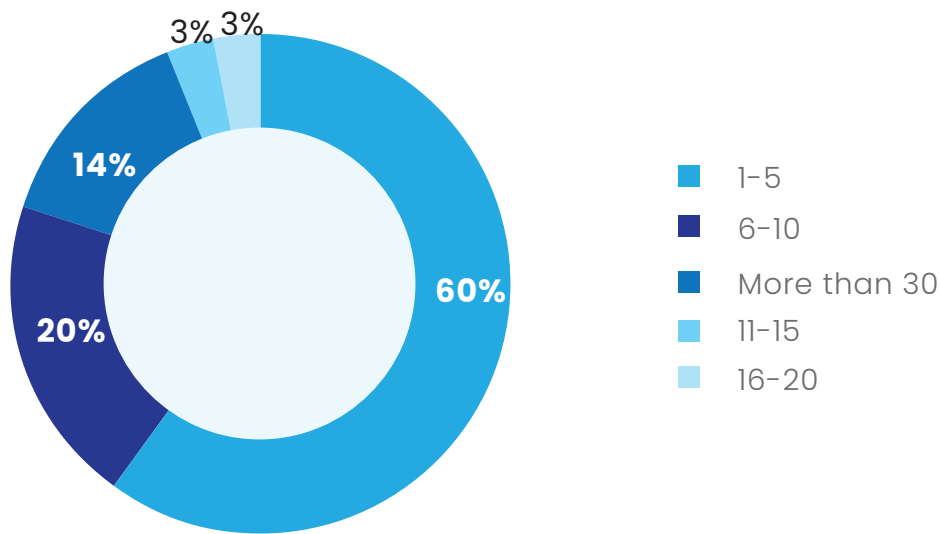
### *Distribution of Total Staff Members Across Organisations*



**37%** of implementation agencies indicate a strong presence of mid-sized organizations driving CSR projects.

## ► Number of CSR Projects Implemented by Organisations

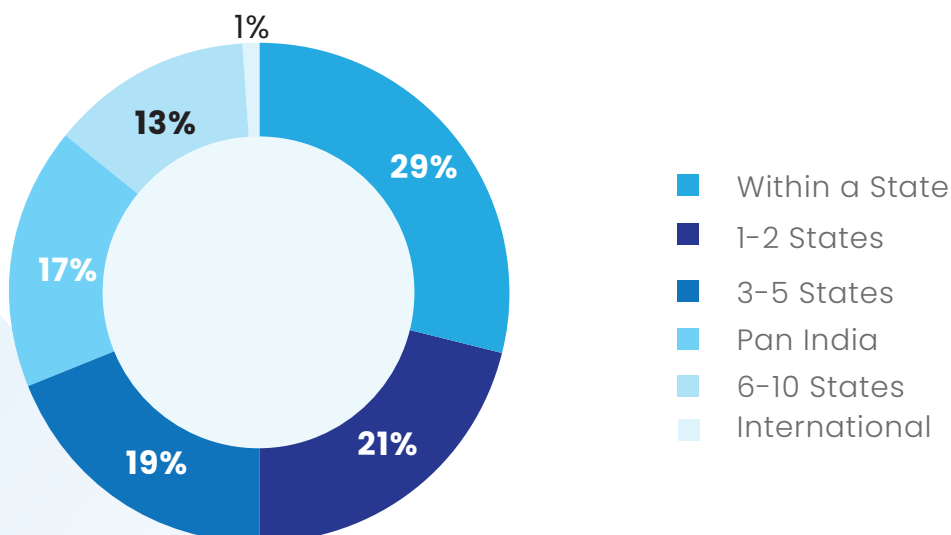
*Number of CSR Projects Implemented in FY 2023-24 (% of Organisations)*



**60%** of implementation agencies handle **1-5 projects**, indicating a focus on smaller-scale CSR efforts in FY 2024-25. There is an **increasing trend** in **mid-level projects (6-10)** among agencies over the year.

## ► State and UT-wise Distribution of CSR Projects: A Geographic Overview

*Geographic Distribution of CSR Projects Across States and UTs (% of Organisations)*

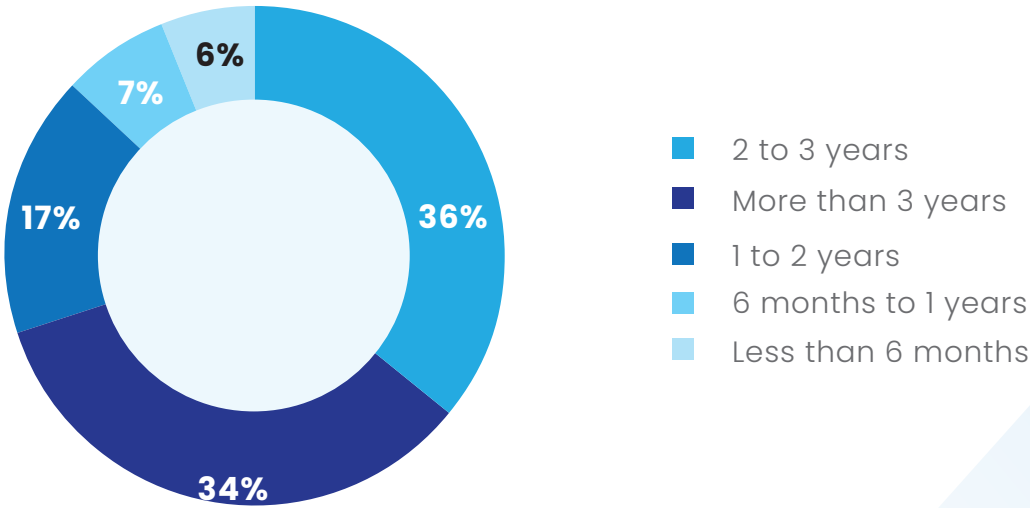


**Localized Deep Impact Strategy:** Organizations implementing CSR within a single state demonstrate the strength of **community-focused, high-intensity interventions**, building trust and fostering sustainable local development.

**Regional and National Scale Strategy:** **49%** organizations operating across multiple states or at the Pan-India level reflect a growing emphasis on **scalable, collaborative models** that bridge regional disparities and drive wider socio-economic transformation.

► **How Long Should a CSR Project Be?**

*Ideal Timeline Recommendations for CSR Projects*

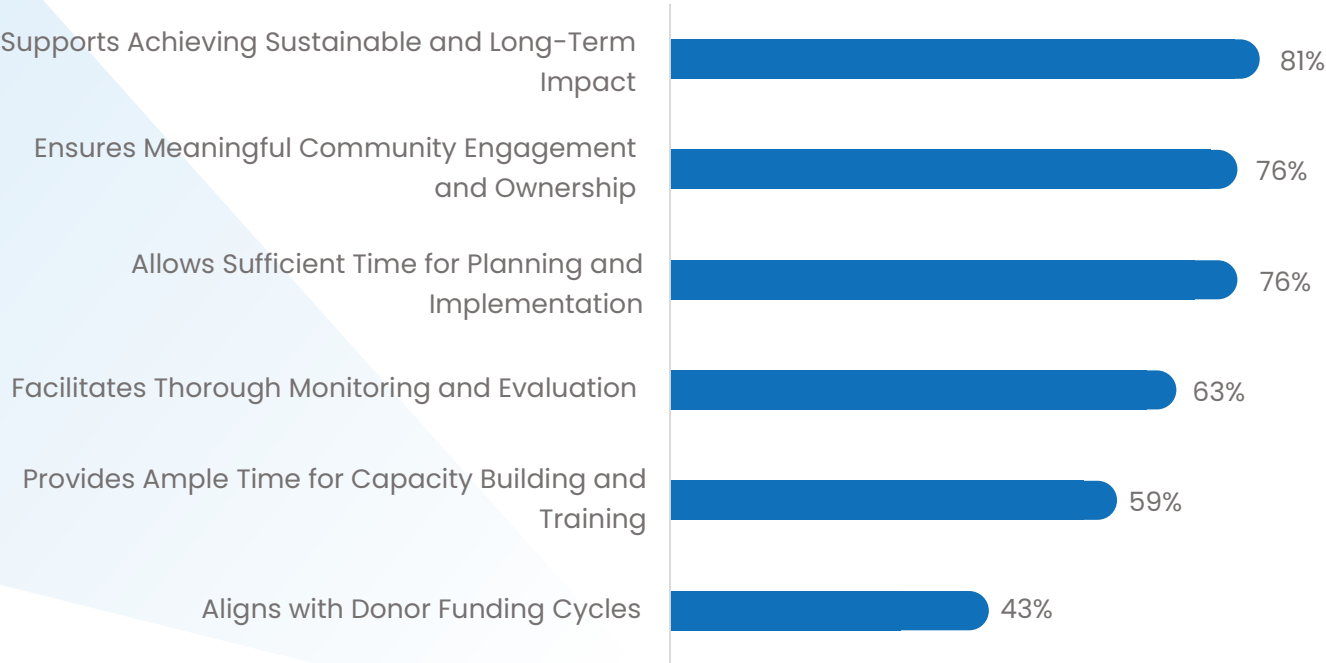


**70%** recommending project timelines of **2 years or more** indicates a clear consensus that **meaningful, transformative impact** requires an investment of time well beyond a single fiscal year.

**36%** of organizations recommend **2 to 3 years** as the ideal timeline, a **definitive shift toward long-term and sustained Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives**.

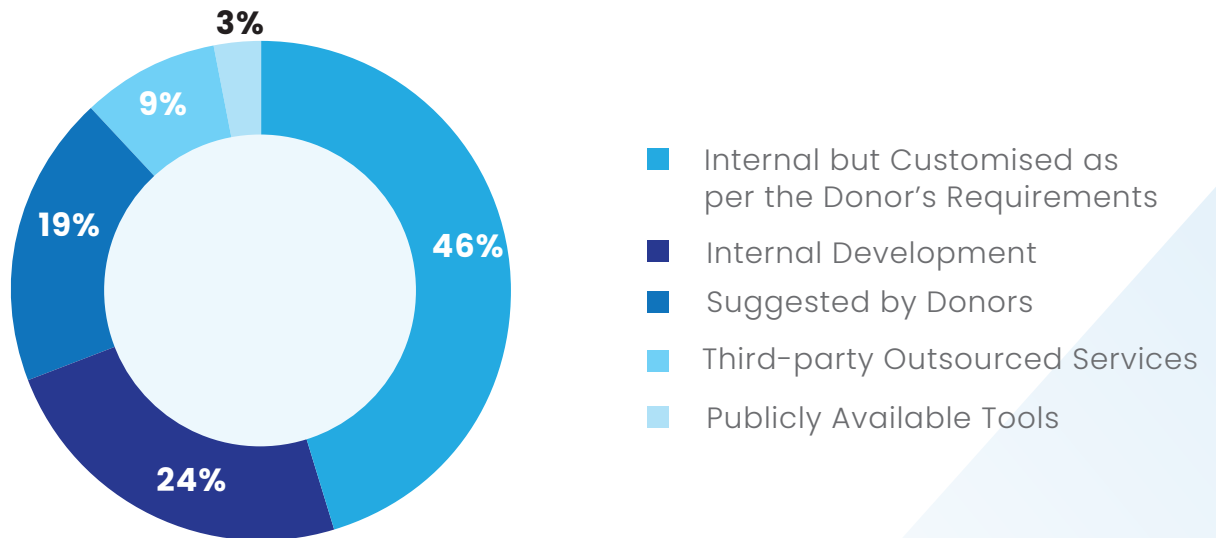
► **Understanding the Rationale Behind Ideal Project Durations in CSR Initiatives**

*Rationale Behind Ideal Project Durations in CSR Initiatives*



## ► Data Management Solutions Employed by Implementation Partners for CSR Initiatives

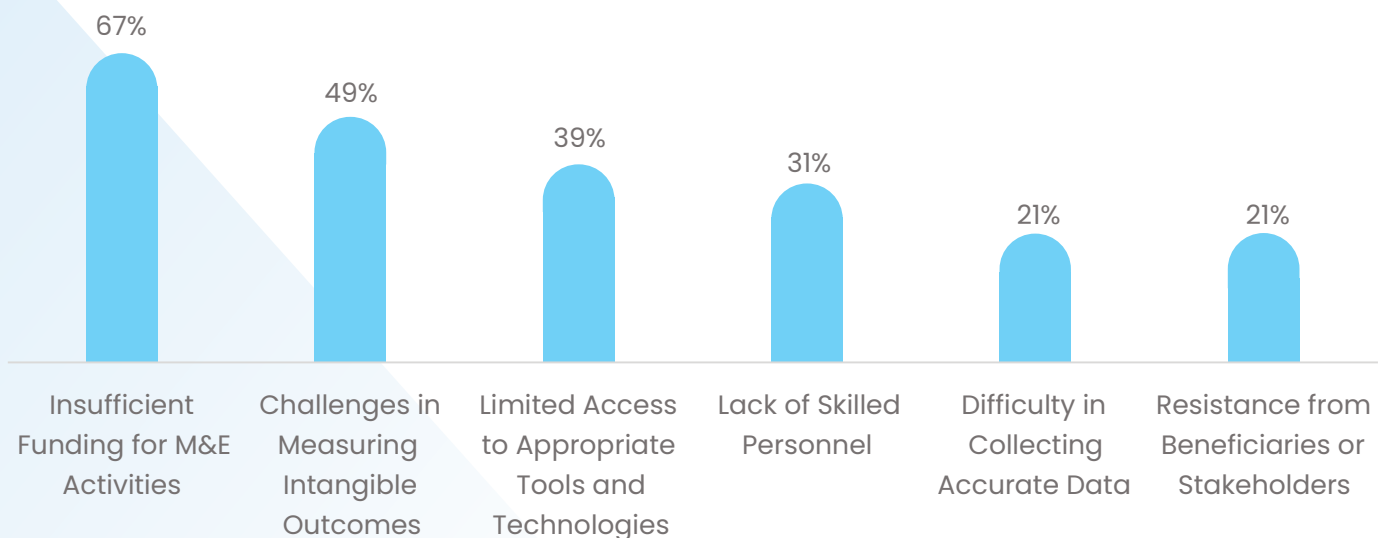
*Sources of Data Management Systems for M&E*



The M&E data ecosystem is highly characterized by a drive for **tailored solutions** where **internal system ownership** is used as the primary mechanism to meet **specific donor and internal reporting needs**.

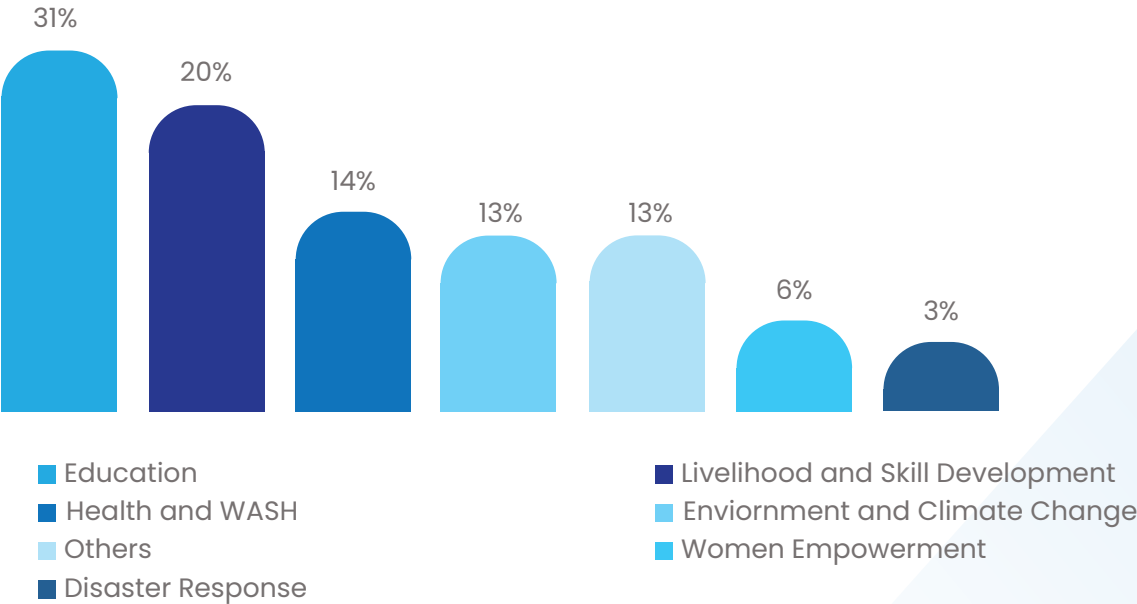
## ► Barriers to Effective Monitoring and Evaluation of CSR Initiatives Faced by Implementation Partners

*Barriers in Effective Monitoring and Evaluation of CSR Initiatives*



► **Ease of Government Partnerships in Thematic Interventions: Experiences of Implementation Partners**

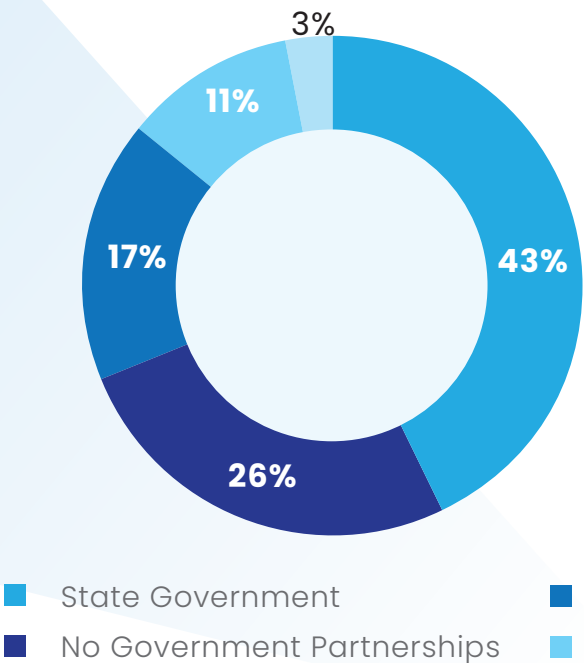
*Thematic Areas Facilitating Government Collaboration for CSR Projects*



Successful government partnerships are heavily clustered around **standard, high-priority areas** related to **Human Capital Development and Economic Stability**.

This highlights the need of **strategically prioritizing CSR investment** in sectors that align directly with core government mandates.

► **A Two-Year Review of Government Partnership Levels**

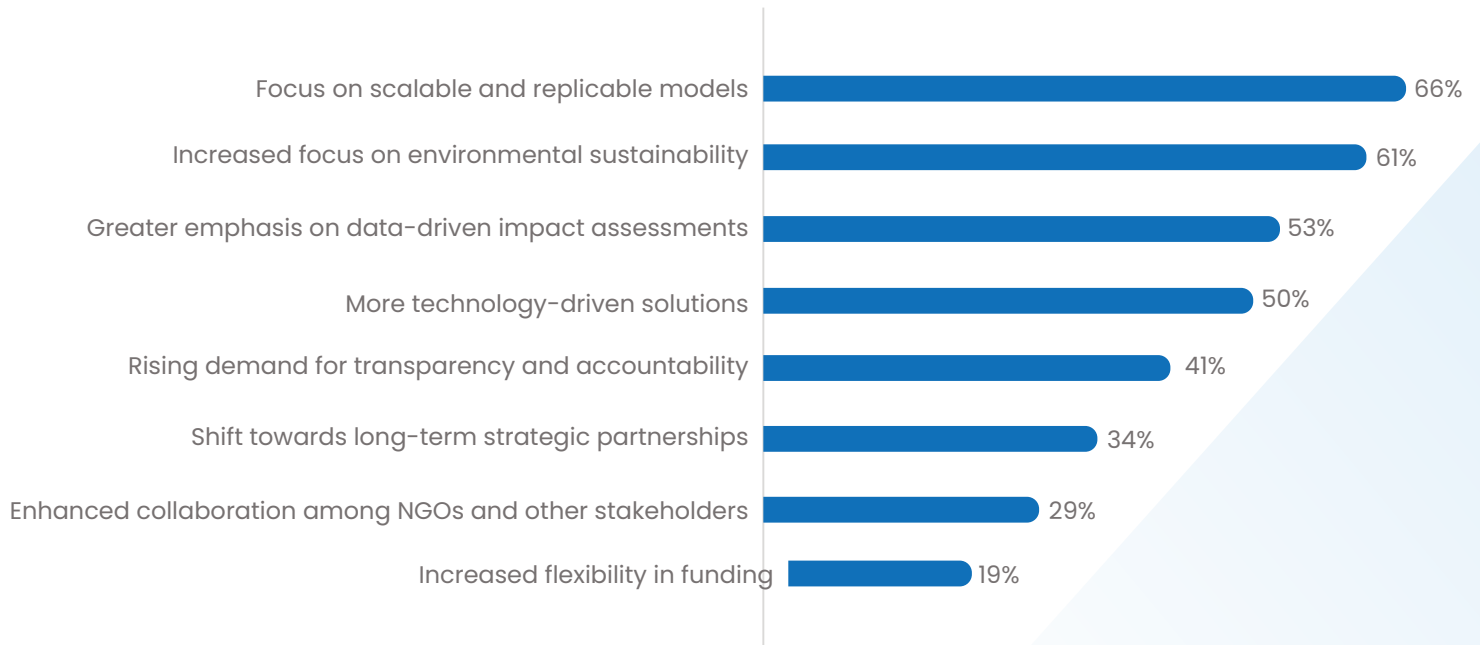


**74%** of organizations successfully secured government partnerships

The vast majority of government partnerships **(54%)** secured by organizations are at the sub-national level (State and Local)

## ► Emerging Expectations of Funding Partner in CSR Project Management Approach

### *Emerging Expectations of Funding Partner in CSR Project Management Approach*



Funding partners are pushing for a **modern, evidence-based, and forward-looking approach** to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), prioritizing efficiency and systemic impact over simple grant allocation.

## About CSRBOX

CSRBOX is India's leading CSR knowledge and impact intelligence driven platform for the development sector, enabling collaboration and partnerships among CSR stakeholders. Serving over three million professionals, the platform offers a range of CSR-centric services to corporate organisations, NGOs and social enterprises. CSRBOX bridges the information deficit by enhancing organisational capacities, conducting research, planning interventions and publishing knowledge resources for greater impact amplification.

## About the 12<sup>th</sup> India CSR Summit 2025

Curated by CSRBOX and NGOBOX, the India CSR Summit and ESG Forum is Asia's largest CSR and Sustainability Forum, that brings together leaders from across the social impact spectrum to explore and discuss the evolving landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), sustainability and social impact. The three-day event features insightful panel discussions, informative keynote speeches, interactive workshops, and engaging networking opportunities, making it a must-attend event for anyone interested in CSR and sustainability space.

## Research Credits

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#### Our Presence:

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