Press Release

Logistics industry agrees on solutions but struggles to scale them:

First Global Sustainable Logistics Survey sets baseline for UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

Survey finds 83% of logistics professionals expect climate adaptation to force a fundamental redesign of logistics networks, but only 45% consider current efforts adequate

- Logistics providers and their customers rate 21 sustainability solutions almost identically. Feasibility, not disagreement, influences what gets adopted.
- Infrastructure could become the bottleneck of the coming decade if low-carbon vehicles and fuels scale faster than the charging networks, terminals, and rail they rely on.
- The report makes recommendations for policymakers and logistics professionals on scaling sustainability solutions, building skills, and adapting to climate risks.

Hamburg, Germany, October 5, 2026 – Logistics companies and their customers largely agree on which measures cut emissions. But solutions that need heavy investment, public infrastructure or policy support, such as charging networks and rail, are lagging, according to the first Global Sustainable Logistics Survey (GSLS), initiated and published today by Kühne Logistics University (KLU) and the Kuehne Climate Center (KCC). The report, based on responses from 1,085 people working in logistics across 64 countries, includes 10 recommendations for policymakers and 12 for logistics professionals. The GSLS is the first global, longitudinal study on sustainable logistics and its 2026 report sets a baseline for tracking the sector over the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035).

No market divide: Feasibility is the deciding factor for adoption

The survey data does not support the idea that the least widely adopted solutions are the result of disagreement between the supply and demand sides of logistics services, regarding the merits of sustainable solutions. Both sides show remarkable agreement on the effectiveness and legitimacy of solutions. The data suggests that the reason for why solutions fail to scale lies elsewhere: Those that require co-ordinated system-level interventions or public investments, solutions such as low-carbon fuels, fleet electrification, modal shift to rail and waterways, and carbon pricing, are less widely adopted. These depend on sustained public-sector commitment and investment, together with coordinated action between policymakers and industry.

Skills shortages point to hierarchy of need

Technical and domain-specific skills are considered to be in short supply – with regional differences. A shortage of Emissions Calculation & Reporting Skills is perceived as highest (up to 60% of respondents) in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and three Asian sub-regions. This pattern nearly reverses for the supply of strategic and analytical skills: Systems Thinking appears in short supply in Western Europe (43%). One interpretation offered by the study team: Regions reporting shortages in Systems Thinking and Boardroom & Executive Engagement are not necessarily further behind but have already largely addressed the more basic needs in terms of technology or emissions measurement skills.

Redesign, not repair: Climate risk and investment needs

In 2026 the need for climate adaptation became hard to ignore: In late May, temperatures across northern India stayed above 45 °C for days, and delivery riders in Delhi had to keep working through the afternoon heat. In mid-July, a Canadian National freight train was trapped by a wildfire while waiting at a signal; in mid-August, the Rhine gauge at Kaub in Germany fell below 10 centimeters.

Four out of five (83%) respondents believe that climate change will require a fundamental redesign of logistics networks. Yet only 45% consider current adaptation efforts adequate for the foreseeable future. Extreme heat ranks as the most urgent risk to assets and operations in every transport mode and every region surveyed.

Respondents rate three measures as most effective: climate-proofing infrastructure, climate risk assessment and scenario planning, and digital tools for monitoring climate risk. All three are rated highly across every type of hazard, which suggests preferable adaptation investment builds general resilience rather than protection against one specific risk.

Prof. Dr. Johannes Meuer, Lead Investigator of the GSLS, Center for Sustainable Logistics and Supply Chains (CSLS), Kühne Logistics University: "Sustainable logistics solutions exist, but too few are making it from research and pilots into everyday practice. The 2026 GSLS Report shows what is happening on the ground and why, giving policymakers, companies, and educators the evidence to act. As the first edition of a series under the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, it establishes a baseline against which we can track progress on making global logistics more sustainable."

Mark Major, Co-Initiator and Policy Lead of GSLS, Senior Strategy Director, Kuehne Climate Center: "Even the findings from first edition show the urgency to identify system-level interventions and policies needed to tackle lagging adoption of effective solutions, skills shortages and the vulnerability of logistics due to climate change. We will contribute to this and deliver insights and recommendations that will inform debate, guide action, and help advance progress over the next decade."

The Global Sustainable Logistics Survey is a voluntary contribution to the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035), a global initiative to put sustainable transport at the center of the international development agenda. Visit the website.

The full report as well as summary reports are available on globalsustainablelogisticssurvey.org, the summary reports in six languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, and Spanish.

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About the Center for Sustainable Logistics and Supply Chains (CSLS)

The Center for Sustainable Logistics and Supply Chains (CSLS) at Kühne Logistics University (KLU) in Hamburg is an independent research center dedicated to improving the sustainability of global logistics operations and supply chains. The center builds on KLU's strong track record of logistics-focused research around environmental sustainability, leveraging the partnership and funding from Kuehne+Nagel, one of the world's largest

logistics companies. The CSLS focuses on three themes: decarbonizing logistics, closed-loop supply chains, and corporate sustainability. Its interdisciplinary team publishes in leading academic journals, develops sustainability courses and innovative teaching formats across KLU's degree and executive programs, and works closely with companies, policymakers, and NGOs. Through events, industry collaborations, and public outreach, the CSLS aims to advance knowledge on how supply chains can be managed more sustainably and to raise awareness of the scale and urgency of this challenge.

Kühne Logistics University is a leading private, state-recognized, international university based in Hamburg and Saigon. Supported by the Kühne Foundation, KLU empowers future leaders to think and act with an Operations Mindset – analytical, data-driven, and solution-oriented. Ranked among the top 5 percent of business schools worldwide (AACSB-accredited), KLU offers high-quality degree programs in Business and Management, Business Analytics and Data Science, as well as Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

www.klu.org

About the Kuehne Climate Center (KCC)

The Kuehne Climate Center works on transforming logistics from a major source of emissions into the backbone of a resilient, low-carbon society. As part of the Kühne Foundation, it leverages the foundation's global logistics expertise and network to drive the much-needed logistics transition. As an operational nonprofit organization, the KCC works on the decarbonization of global freight and supply chains, as well as on unlocking logistics for the industrial transformation and resource management. It does so by designing economically viable pilot projects for the private sector and delivering actionable insights to decision-makers in corporate and public-policy contexts. The ambition is to create success stories of systemic change, which have the potential to scale.

Founded in 2024, the Climate Center is building ecosystems for transformation with an international team from diverse disciplines. The KCC team works globally, with a particular focus on regions that are especially vulnerable to climate change and need to manage substantial economic growth in a climate-compatible way. It relies on working with trusted international partners and currently has offices in Hamburg, Germany; Nairobi, Kenya; and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

www.kuehneclimatecenter.org

About the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035)

The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035) is a global initiative to put sustainable transport at the center of the international development agenda. Launched on 10 December 2025 by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Decade raises the profile of sustainable transport in multilateral arenas and highlights its importance for people, the planet, and sustainable development at large. It is guided by an Implementation Plan developed with the UN Regional Commissions, Member States, and other stakeholders. The initiative covers all modes of transport, including road, rail, maritime transport, and aviation, and sets out six focus areas to align policy, finance, technology, and data with sustainable transport goals.
To turn this agenda into action, DESA invited Member States and other stakeholders to make voluntary commitments. At the launch event, 82 Sustainable Transport Action

Commitments from around the world were unveiled, backed by billions in financial resources. The GSLS Survey is one of these commitments. It provides a global snapshot of progress toward sustainable logistics, identifies barriers to progress, and promotes discussion to inform further action. The survey contributes to two of the Decade's six focus areas: advancing low- or zero-carbon, resilient, and environmentally sound transport systems, and enhancing efficiency while promoting sustainable connectivity and logistics.

sdgs.un.org/un-decade-sustainable-transport-2026-2035

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