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SUPPLY CHAIN EVOLUTION

KPIs to Measure Supply Chain Viability

Report 3

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Executive Summary

There **is no one-size-fits-all** set of indicators

On-Time Delivery Bridges Efficiency and Resilience

Sustainability is Gaining Ground, but **Cost Still Dominates**

This report introduces a structured framework for evaluating Supply Chain Viability (SCV), defined as the long-term ability of a supply chain to survive, adapt, and thrive. SCV encompasses efficiency, resilience, and sustainability, that must be balanced to ensure enduring competitiveness.

The study combines a comprehensive literature review with a large-scale survey of 214 supply chain professionals. From over 600 KPI mentions, 265 distinct indicators were distilled and categorized across the SCV dimensions. Using pairwise comparisons, survey respondents evaluated the relevance of these KPIs, revealing both cross-industry priorities and context-specific preferences. Notably, On-Time Delivery emerged as a "bridge KPI," ranking highly in both efficiency and resilience, while emissions and energy-related indicators gained traction in sustainability.

A key finding is that no universal KPI set applies across all organizations. Instead, SCV must be operationalized through company-specific frameworks that reflect strategic trade-offs and maturity levels. The report presents a five-step model to guide this process, supporting the development of targeted, actionable KPI systems. Overall, the study provides conceptual clarity and practical tools to make SCV measurable and manageable.

Why Metrics Matter for Supply Chain Viability

In the face of growing global disruptions and the intensifying demands for responsible business practices, companies can no longer rely on intuitive decision-making or isolated performance indicators to assess the strength of their supply chains[1,2]. As supply chains evolve into complex, interconnected systems, the concept of Supply Chain Viability (SCV) has emerged to capture the long-term ability of a supply chain to survive, adapt, and thrive under changing conditions[3]. SCV integrates three core dimensions (efficiency, resilience, and sustainability), each of which uniquely contributes to a supply chain's performance[4]. However, the dynamic balance between these dimensions creates new challenges for both strategic planning and operational execution.

To navigate these challenges effectively, organizations need a set of measurable, meaningful, and actionable metrics that reflect how well their supply chains are achieving this balance. Without such metrics, SCV remains an abstract ideal rather than a tangible management goal. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are therefore critical in translating the concept of SCV into practical application. They provide visibility into trade-offs, enable evidence-based decision-making, and support the alignment of internal and external stakeholders toward shared objectives. Moreover, well-designed SCV metrics help uncover blind spots, identify structural weaknesses, and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement initiatives across the entire supply chain network.

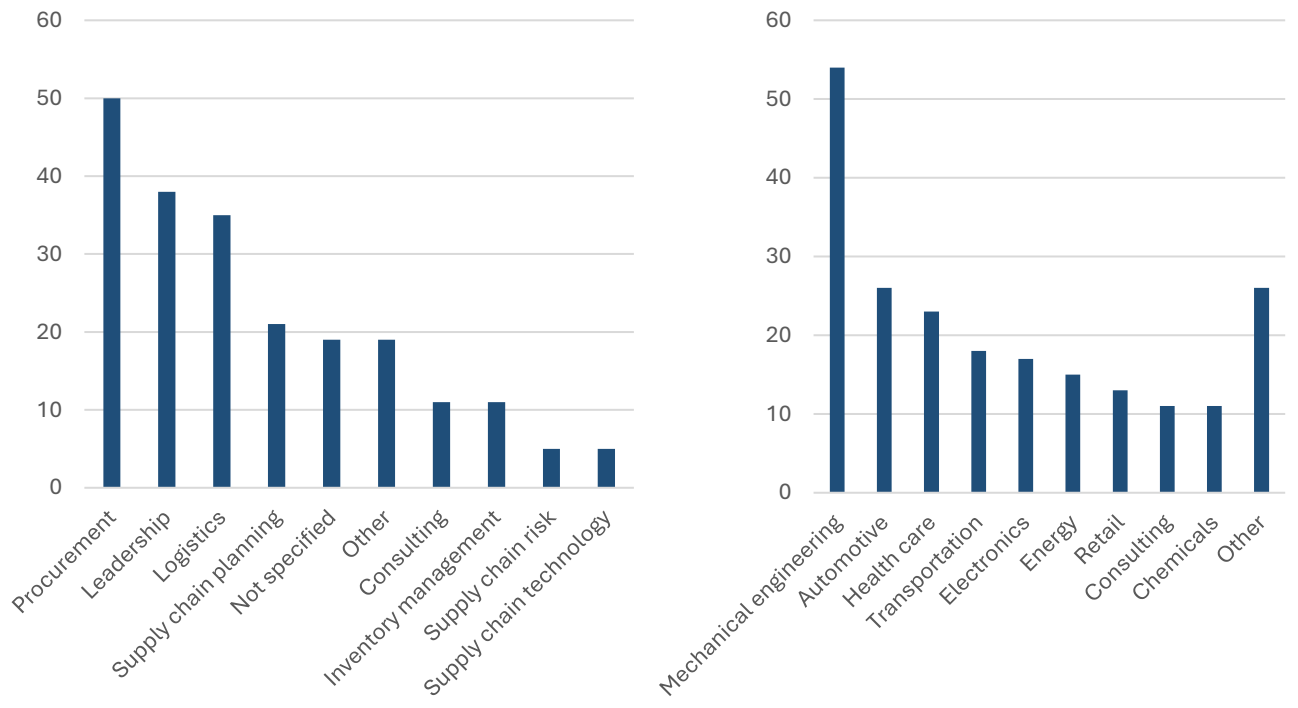
The need for such metrics is amplified by the increasing complexity of supply chain environments[5]. Companies are expected to maintain operational continuity during disruptions, reduce environmental impact, and simultaneously control costs[6]. These expectations cannot be managed through gut feeling or generic financial ratios alone. Instead, targeted SCV metrics must reflect the specific interdependencies and tensions inherent in modern supply chains. This report introduces a structured set of KPIs that empower companies to measure, monitor, and enhance their SCV, forming the foundation for sustainable competitiveness in volatile markets.

Research Methodology

This study builds on a mixed-methods approach combining an extensive literature review with a large-scale survey to identify and prioritize KPIs for measuring SCV[7,8]. The literature review synthesized academic publications, practitioner reports, and industry frameworks to compile a comprehensive list of 368 distinct KPIs. These indicators were categorized along the three dimensions of SCV (efficiency, resilience, sustainability), ensuring a balanced representation of different performance areas.

To evaluate the practical relevance of these KPIs, a survey was conducted among 214 supply chain professionals from various industries. The survey employed pairwise comparisons as the core method, asking participants to assess the relative importance of different KPIs within and across the three SCV dimensions[9,10]. This approach enabled a nuanced understanding of how practitioners prioritize indicators when making trade-offs between efficiency, resilience, and sustainability. The combination of literature-based breadth and practitioner-based depth ensures that the resulting KPI set is both theoretically grounded and practically validated.

Figure 1
Job Role and Industry Distribution of Survey Participants



n = 214

Findings

Literature Review

The literature review yielded a total of 265 unique KPIs from academic sources, industry reports, and established performance frameworks. These indicators were systematically categorized along the three dimensions of Supply Chain Viability (SCV): efficiency, resilience, and sustainability. Beyond this primary classification, each KPI was assigned to specific application areas such as transport optimization, supplier management, IT infrastructure, or social sustainability. This categorization revealed both thematic concentrations and conceptual gaps.

A large share of KPIs belonged to sustainability-related application areas (22 in "Sustainability – Social", 17 each in "Sustainability – Economic" and "Environmental"). This signals the growing pressure to monitor environmental and social performance: an evolution from earlier cost- and reliability-focused performance models. However, many sustainability KPIs still lack standardized calculation logic and remain loosely defined, complicating benchmarking and cross-company comparisons.

The indicators also varied in structural form. While some were simple ratios (e.g., Inventory Cost, Lead Time, Energy Use), others reflected broader system behaviors (e.g., Risk-sharing Rate, Carbon Intensity, Cost of Recovery Implementation). Moreover, many KPIs captured outcome measures (e.g., OTD, GHG emissions), while fewer addressed process quality or capability readiness (e.g., Alertness, Resilience Training Hours). This imbalance suggests a need for maturity-oriented KPIs that reflect organizational preparedness, not just past performance.

Figure 2
Descriptive findings of the literature review

128
efficiency KPIs in 37 application areas

81
resilience KPIs in 19 application areas

56
sustainability KPIs in 16 application areas

Based on content review, the following KPIs stand out as especially relevant for practical SCV implementation:

Efficiency KPIs

These indicators reflect cost control, resource usage, and performance stability.

- **Delivery reliability** – the ability to meet promised deadlines
- **Customer Order Cycle Time** – responsiveness from order to delivery
- **Inventory Cost** – cost of holding stock, balancing cost and service
- **Utilization Rate** – efficiency of resource deployment
- **Total Logistics Cost** – aggregated view on transportation, warehousing, and inventory-related costs

Resilience KPIs

These reflect preparedness, adaptive capacity, and robustness under disruption.

- **Minimum Recovery Time** – speed of returning to steady state after disruption
- **Risk Assessment Index** – systematic capture of identified risk exposures
- **Cost of Recovery Activities** – economic impact of incident response
- **Alertness** – degree to which weak signals are detected and acted upon
- **Redundancy Ratio** – system-level slack (e.g., capacity or supplier)

Sustainability KPIs

These monitor ecological and social responsibility, and increasingly link to regulatory reporting.

- **CO_2 emissions per unit shipped** – direct link to logistics-related emissions
- **Percentage of Waste** – share of materials not reused or recycled
- **Energy Use per Unit** – operational energy efficiency
- **Recycling Rate** – effectiveness of circular processes
- **Carbon Intensity** – emissions per revenue or per product unit

Across all dimensions, the literature review underlined the importance of KPIs that are quantifiable, reproducible, and context-sensitive. Many KPIs had overlapping scopes (e.g., lead time vs. cycle time), highlighting the need for careful selection to avoid redundancy. Moreover, few KPIs explicitly linked multiple SCV dimensions – a potential area for further development.

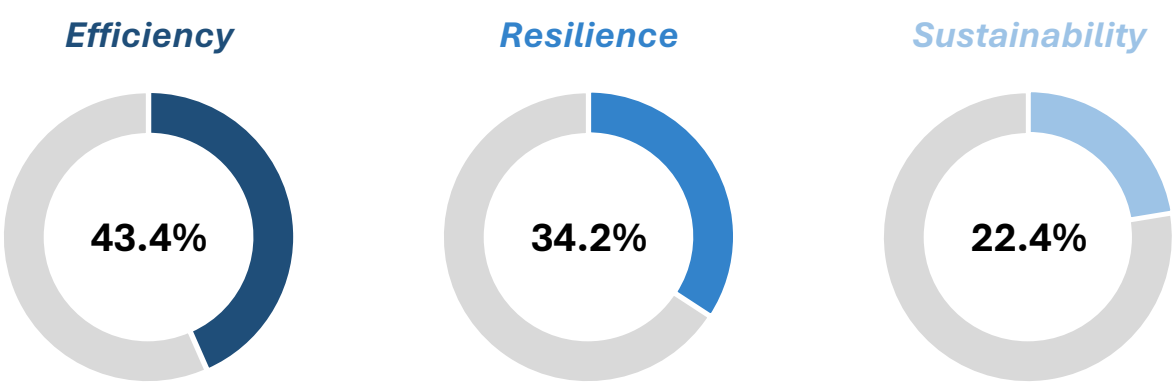
This review provided the empirical foundation for the subsequent prioritization study, helping ensure that the selected KPIs are not only academically grounded but also diverse and practically interpretable across industries.

Survey-based Prioritization

To translate the broad set of KPIs from the literature into a practically relevant performance measurement framework, an empirical survey was conducted with 214 supply chain professionals. The survey was designed not only to prioritize individual KPIs within the dimensions of efficiency, resilience, and sustainability but also to determine the perceived importance of these dimensions themselves in the context of SCV.

Participants were first asked to distribute 100 points across the three SCV dimensions to express their relative importance for long-term supply chain viability. The results revealed a clear prioritization pattern: Efficiency received the highest weight (43.4%), followed by Resilience (34.2%), and then Sustainability (22.4%). This distribution suggests that, while all three dimensions are recognized as relevant, economic performance and robustness under disruption are currently considered more critical than ecological or social considerations.

Figure 3
Relevance of target dimensions for SCV



The results revealed clear and interpretable preferences among respondents. The three most highly rated KPIs for each SCV dimension are as follows:

Efficiency

- **On-Time Delivery (OTD)** – Seen as a core indicator of operational control, directly linked to customer satisfaction and cost avoidance.
- **Inventory Turnover** – Widely used to assess how efficiently stock is managed relative to sales volumes.
- **Total Logistics Cost** – Captures the overall financial burden of inbound, in-house, and outbound logistics.

Resilience

- **On-Time Delivery (OTD)** – Also emerged as a resilience indicator, due to its sensitivity to disruptions in planning, sourcing, and transport.
- **Forecast Accuracy** – Reflects the company's ability to anticipate demand and adjust procurement and production accordingly.
- **Inventory-to-Sales Ratio** – Represents buffer capacity in relation to demand, a key proxy for adaptive capability.

Sustainability

- **CO_2 Emissions per Shipped Unit** – Viewed as the most tangible and policy-relevant KPI in environmental reporting.
- **Recycling Rate** – Indicates progress toward circularity and reduction of landfill dependency.
- **Energy Consumption per Unit** – Signals resource efficiency in operations and production processes.

Several findings stand out. First, On-Time Delivery (OTD) appeared among the top three in both the efficiency and resilience dimensions, indicating its role as a "bridge KPI" that reflects both cost-effective reliability and robustness. Second, sustainability indicators, particularly those related to emissions and energy, were ranked highly – showing that environmental concerns are not marginal but are becoming integral to performance management.

The use of pairwise comparisons enabled the emergence of a nuanced picture that goes beyond mere frequency counts or subjective ranking. It also highlighted KPIs that may be overused in theory but underappreciated in practice, and vice versa. For instance, while numerous KPIs focused on digitalization and system integration were identified in the literature, they received lower relevance scores in the practitioner ranking, possibly due to implementation complexity or lack of standardization.

In sum, the survey translated an extensive academic KPI landscape into a focused set of indicators that reflect practitioners' real-world priorities. These prioritized KPIs form the basis for the validation and trade-off alignment discussed in the next section.

No one-size-fits-all KPI

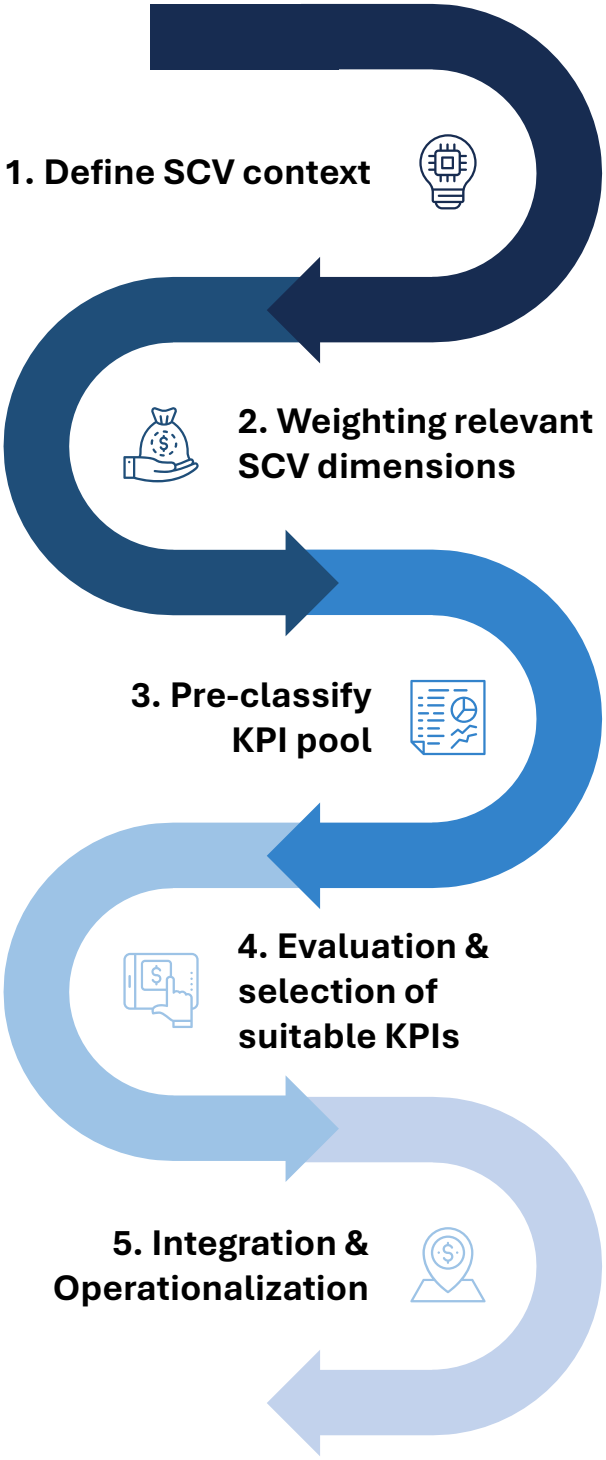
Beyond the quantitative results, a critical insight emerged from the open feedback provided by participants: there is no universal definition of Supply Chain Viability that fits all companies or industries. While the survey identified generally preferred KPIs, their applicability and importance vary significantly depending on sector-specific risks, strategic priorities, and maturity levels. For example, energy-intensive industries may prioritize carbon efficiency far more than service-driven sectors, while highly regulated industries may value compliance metrics over cost indicators.

This insight underscores a key implication: there can be no one-size-fits-all KPI set for SCV. Instead, each organization must define what viability means in its own operational and strategic context. This includes specifying which trade-offs are most critical, what level of risk is acceptable, and how long-term objectives are weighed against short-term constraints. Based on these reflections, companies can then build a custom SCV performance framework that integrates suitable KPIs across efficiency, resilience, and sustainability – anchored in their unique environment.

This finding reinforces the notion that SCV is not a static benchmark but a dynamic, context-sensitive construct. The provided KPI set and prioritization results should therefore be viewed as a toolkit or starting point rather than a prescriptive solution.

To support companies in building a tailored performance framework for SCV, a five-step approach is proposed (Figure 4). This model helps translate a large set of KPIs into a focused and context-specific monitoring system that reflects each company's individual understanding of viability and its specific trade-off landscape.

Figure 4
Individual SCV KPI Procedure



1. Define SCV context

The process begins with a foundational step: defining what SCV means for the organization. Since viability is not a universally fixed concept, each company must clarify how it interprets the balance between efficiency, resilience, and sustainability. This includes identifying key risk exposures, regulatory obligations, strategic priorities, and typical operational trade-offs. Ideally, this definition is developed collaboratively in cross-functional workshops involving supply chain, risk management, sustainability, and finance stakeholders.

2. Weighting relevant SCV dimensions

In a second step, companies are encouraged to weigh the three SCV dimensions in terms of their relative importance. Using structured methods such as point allocation or AHP-based weighting, stakeholders assess which dimension carries more strategic weight. For example, a manufacturing firm facing frequent supply disruptions may assign higher weight to resilience, while a consumer goods company under regulatory pressure may emphasize sustainability. These weights serve as guiding principles for subsequent KPI selection.

3. Pre-classify KPI pool

The third step involves pre-filtering the KPI pool based on contextual criteria. From the broader list of 256 KPIs (Appendix), companies can exclude indicators that are not applicable to their industry, supply chain design, or maturity level. This step may also include clustering KPIs by type (e.g., input, process, outcome) or by function (e.g., sourcing, production, logistics) to improve manageability and relevance.

4. Evaluation & selection of suitable KPIs

In the fourth step, companies evaluate and select their most relevant KPIs. This can be done through scoring workshops or multi-criteria decision-making methods. Each KPI is assessed based on dimensions such as data availability, interpretability, steering impact, and its usefulness in managing trade-offs. The result should be a concise but representative set of KPIs covering all three SCV dimensions while aligning with internal strategic goals.

5. Integration & Operationalization

Finally, in step five, the selected KPIs are integrated into regular business processes and decision routines. This includes defining target values, assigning responsibilities, embedding the KPIs into dashboards, and linking them to existing steering mechanisms such as S&OP, risk reviews, or ESG reporting. Since supply chain conditions and strategic priorities evolve, the KPI framework should remain dynamic, with feedback loops to adapt indicators over time.

Discussion

This study confirms that measuring SCV is both essential and inherently complex. The integration of efficiency, resilience, and sustainability into one viability construct reflects a holistic understanding of supply chain performance, yet it also creates tension. These tensions are not only conceptual but highly practical, as companies face daily decisions involving trade-offs across these dimensions. The identification and prioritization of KPIs serve as a bridge between abstract viability goals and operational reality.

One of the most important findings is the lack of a universally valid KPI set. While some metrics, such as On-Time Delivery (OTD) or CO_2 emissions per unit, have broad relevance, their interpretation and strategic weighting depend on industry context, company size, risk exposure, and stakeholder expectations.

As such, SCV should not be treated as a standardized benchmark but rather as a strategic orientation that needs to be operationalized individually. The proposed five-step model provides companies with a systematic yet flexible process to do so, grounded in academic evidence but adaptable to practical realities.

The results also highlight a persistent dominance of efficiency metrics, both in perception and in practice. Despite growing awareness of sustainability and resilience, many companies still prioritize short-term cost and service metrics. This may reflect existing data availability, internal incentives, or a lack of maturity in resilience and sustainability performance management. However, this imbalance risks undermining long-term viability, especially in the face of increasing regulatory pressure and disruption frequency. Future management systems will need to address this bias by integrating "non-financial" indicators into core decision processes.

A further insight is the conceptual fragmentation of existing KPI systems. The literature review revealed hundreds of indicators, often with overlapping or unclear definitions. Many sustainability KPIs lacked standardization, while resilience KPIs were often vague or indirect. This underlines the need for harmonized, cross-dimensional indicators, especially those capable of capturing trade-offs explicitly (e.g., TCO, inventory-to-sales ratios, or energy-adjusted delivery performance). Developing such indicators may be a key avenue for future research.

Finally, the survey results suggest that SCV is not just a technical measurement problem, but a question of organizational alignment and capability. Selecting the "right" KPIs is only valuable if these indicators are understood, accepted, and acted upon. This reinforces the role of participatory processes, internal communication, and continuous feedback loops in developing an effective SCV performance framework.

This study contributes both conceptual clarity and practical tools for measuring SCV. It shows that while metrics cannot solve all viability challenges, they are indispensable for making SCV operational and actionable in an increasingly uncertain world.

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Appendix

Efficiency KPIs			
Delivery reliability	Product development cycle time	New product time-to-first scale	Daily profits
Customer Order Cycle Time	Customer returns	Value of stock-out	Cost of raw materials and components
Costs in a supply chain	Product range	Number of complaints handled per week	Cost of using new technologies
lead time	Labour Productivity	Warranty cost	Variation from budget
Capacity Utilisation	Order Fulfilment	Perceived Value of the Product	Liquidity
Inventory Cost	Manufacturing lead time	Number of Faulty Notes Invoiced	Percentage of product remanufactured
On-time shipping	Innovativeness	Customer Order Path	Production time/piece
Total logistics cost	Net earnings	Day's Sales Outstanding	Products cost
Delivery Time	Turnover	Cost of shipping per unit	Profitability
Inventory Movement	New product time-to-market	Cycle Time for pick and pack	Decisiveness
Gross Margin Return on Investment	Warehousing Costs	Inventory velocity	Cash flows
Fill Rate	Sales versus costs in supply chain	Return ground	Cost efficiency
Absolute Order Rate	Net profit margin on sales	Return on equity	Setup time
Effectiveness of master production schedule	Speed of delivery	Operating profit growth rate	Value (redefine their valuation methods to account for unpriced costs and benefits)
Cost of production	Frequency of delivery	Total Asset Turnover	Change in the configuration of the new product
Information processing cost	ROS	Percentage of products in transit	Increased inventory level
Quality of delivered goods	Productivity	Effective production over planned production	Access restrictions
Material use	Labor productivity	Products' safety	Brand equity
Cost per unit	Return on Asset	Percentage of new clients	Order cycle time variability
Time Cycle in cash-to-cash	Market Share	% effective time of production over potential	Items picked per person per hour
Cycle Time for the Supply Chain	Labour Cost	Profit per client	Percent error pick rate

Efficiency KPIs

Product Service availability	Packaging cost	Opportunity loss for not being first to market
Distance travelled	Quality of packaging material	Percentage of purchases made electronically
Unnecessary runs	Time required for raising funds for acquiring a new equipment/software/ labour	Customer satisfaction
Empty runs	Receivables turnover	
Volume/truck transported	Average collection period	
Volume/Customer transported	Debt Ratio	
Tonne-kilometer/transport mode	Debt-to-equity ratio	
Shipping errors	Interest coverage	
No. of claims due to delayed deliveries as % of total revenues	Return on working capital	
Quality of delivery documentation	Finished Goods Inventory (FGI Costs)	
Loading and unloading time from trucks	Incentive Costs	
Cargo carried in terms of volumes for fiscal year	Intangible Costs	
Inventory value	Average Earliness Time	
Number of MHE (material handling equipment) per square feet of warehouse	Customer query time	
Types of storage facility	Post transaction measures of customer service	
Level of IT implementation for financial transactions	Cost associated with assets and return on investment	
Quality of the input data	Bid management cycle time	
Online booking facilities	Conformance to specifications	
Transaction cost	Inventory Costs	
Investment in IT as a percentage of total revenue	Selling price	
Claims (in INR) per month vs monthly turnover	Value added	

Resilience KPIs

Forecasting accuracy	Change in production plan	Inventory gap	Number of backorders
Supplier's delivery performance	Culture of quality	Redundancy rate	Number of warehouses
Percentage of storage use	Technological threats	Risk-sharing rate	Capacity of the warehouse space/terminal parks
Buyer-supplier relationship	Percentage of local/national/provincial suppliers by an organization	Visibility	Level of IT implementation of WMS-module on purchase system
Flexibility	Weeks of supply	Distributed production rate	Level of IT implementation for track and trace process of goods
Information sharing	Average backorder fill time	Supplier assistance in solving technical probl.	Level of integration of multiple decisions
Integration	Stock outs	Maximum on-time deliveries	RFID enabled warehouse operations helps in identification of goods with precise details
Flexibility of production	Product Flexibility	Stock-out time	Use of EDI for full IT enablement of all information/data exchanges
Minimum recovery time	Ratio of inventory to sales	Cost of pre-positioning emergency inventory	POS data usage helps in replenishing the stock
Customer loyalty	Proportion of Products Sold	Cost of implementation of recovery activities	Intelligence in setting the logistics parameters in the Re-order system
Investments R&D	Quality of infrastructure	Percentage of unfulfilled demand	Information systems flexibility
Timely information about the event	Risk assessment index	Peak demand	IT enablement in responding to urgent deliveries
Delivery flexibility	Fragility index	Power cuts (recovery to shutdown)	Accuracy and reliability of the acquired information
Quality	Partners' satisfaction	Knowledge of operating assets	Labor Flexibility
Order entry methods	Impacts of breaks over total hours of production	Effective communication	Expansion Flexibility
Responsiveness	Competency	Lead time reduction	Forecasting accuracy
Data accessibility	Alertness	Fast re-routing of requirements	Production run stops due to material shortages
Loss per unit of time	Quickness	Last mile connectivity	Virtual meetings of teams during project duration
Customer service level	Market sensitivity	Number of Fleet of trucks Owned/leased	
Sale lost ratio	Cooperation	Capacity of contracted fleet from market	
Product/Service variety	Safety stock	Inventory accuracy	

Sustainability KPIs		
Greenhouse gas emissions	Level of products reused	Total annual air emission by an organization
Hazardous material output	Compliance with latest regulations	Total size of the operational site/facility
Percentage of waste (trash)	Use of Packaging material	Specific size of the operational site/facility
Recycling	Carbon Intensity	Average hours of training for female employees in an organization
Energy use	Carbon Productivity	Average hours of training for male employees in an organization
Water use	Green Revenue Share	Total number of employees given training in an organization
Percentage of production and office materials recycled	Green certificates	Total number of incidents of consumer complaints
Occupational Health and Safety performance	Green competences	Total number of incidents of engaging in misleading, deceptive, fraudulant or unfair practice
Suppliers' green image	Number of green products	Total number of non-compliance with social criteria or regulations
Employees' satisfaction	Net life cycle cost	Total annual amount of wages and benefits given to employees by an organization
Labour turnover	Recycling revenues	Total annual payments made to the Government (taxes) ba an organization
Obsolete (or left over) value %	Disposal costs	Ratio of entry-level wage given to male employees in an organization to the minimum wage
Number of accidents in the workplace	Percentage of renewable resource use	Ratio of entry-level wage given to female employees in an organization to the minimum wage
Actual environmental efficiency	Gas use	Total annual sustainability expenditures by an organization
Certifications	Total annual renewable energy consumption of an organization	Number of accidents (employees)
Use of new Technology	Total annual renewable material consumption of an organization	Number of accidents (non-employees)
Environmental impacts	Total annual volume of wastewater discharged by an organization	Work conditions
Philantropic investments	Specific annual wastewater discharge by an organization	Noise volume
Employees' satisfaction	Total annual amount of ozone-depleting substances	Time of noise emission
Average hours of training per employee in an organization	Specific annual amount of ozone-depleting substances	Noise emission in urban areas
Number of accidents that involve company vehicles	Total annual amount of particulate matter emissions by an organization	Employment increase

Sustainability KPIs	
Employees skills	Packaging proportion = Proportion of total value of packaging to total output
Number of newly trained employees	Proportion of total waste water produced to total output
Percent of labour cost spent on training	Proportion of total waste water treated to total product output
Staff retention	Use of vehicles that run on renewable energy, electricity, and natural gas (for distribution of finished products)
Level of absence	Proportion of output recovered from customers after use and put back in the supply chain, if any
Level of absence due to sickness	
Number of improvement suggestions from employees	
Level of spillages	
Fossil fuel consumption	
Energy efficiency per tonne-kilometre	
Energy consumption/revenue	
Level of bio-degradable materials used	
Temperature control during transportation	
Fuel consumption (in Litres) per tonne-km of cargo carried	
Electricity consumption (in Kw-hrs) per sqft of warehouse	
Labour practices & decent work	
Human rights	
Society	
Product responsibility	
Proportion of cost of energy in production to total value of output (%)	
Proportion of total cost of renewable energy in production to total value of output (%)	