



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES REPORT

PREPARING THE EU PEACE PLUS
PROGRAMME 2021 –2027

October 2021



Riailas na hÉireann
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Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has the statutory responsibility for the implementation of the current EU PEACE IV (€270m) and INTERREG VA (€283m) Programmes and for preparing the successor programme, PEACE PLUS.

The purpose of this consultation was to provide citizens and other key stakeholders with an opportunity to share their views on the content and administrative arrangements of the draft PEACE PLUS Programme for the 2021-2027 period, as well as findings from the Equality Screening Exercise and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

1.2 The PEACE PLUS Programme

The PEACE PLUS Programme aims to contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland and leave a lasting legacy. The Programme will achieve this by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to cross-border economic and territorial development. It will build upon previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. The EU regulations pertinent to this Programme were published in draft form by the European Commission. Provision was made for an indicative budget of approximately €1bn, including proposals from the EU budget, the Government of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government.

The Programme also aims to help address long-standing social and economic challenges that have, and continue to impact communities, particularly those in rural border areas and ongoing challenges that exist in urban settings. It also recognises the devastating impact of Covid-19 on society and the risks associated with the UK's exit from the EU. Accordingly, the Programme has been developed within the broader political, economic, social and environmental context.

1.3 Development of the PEACE PLUS Programme

The SEUPB commenced the Programme development process for PEACE PLUS in 2019. Since then, there has been a considerable amount of preparatory work, research and stakeholder engagement undertaken.

In particular, the Programme has been informed by:

- The EU Framework and objectives for all Programmes across Europe and the EU Border Orientation Paper;
- Priorities and objectives set out in New Decade, New Approach, Project Ireland 2040 and the Programme for Government;
- A socio-economic profile of the Programme area that was commissioned in 2019. An addendum to the report has been added to include Covid-19 impacts. The impacts of Covid-19 were considered in each Theme as they were developed;
- A Stakeholder Engagement process initiated in November 2019 through to February 2020. Public events across the Programme area and over 300 surveys provided important information and views from the citizens;

- Bi-lateral engagement with government departments in Northern Ireland and Ireland resulting in Joint North-South Draft Position Papers on core elements of the Programme; and
- Meetings with stakeholders from a wide range of sectors at all levels, including statutory agencies, local government, business representatives, social enterprises, and community and voluntary organisations.

The Programme Development process is also supported by a Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG) comprising a broad range of representatives and experts, which meets regularly to provide guidance and advice to the SEUPB. The PDSG membership includes Member State officials; economic, social and environmental partners; non-governmental organisations; social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination representatives; government departments; and local government representatives.

The public consultation, which took place from the 10 March to 12 May 2021, received 415 consultation response surveys. The responses were analysed and used as part of the process to finalise the PEACE PLUS Programme. The conclusion of the consultation and publication of the Summary of Consultation Responses Report is an important milestone for the Programme development process.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation.

The Programme has been submitted to the NI Executive and Irish Government for approval and the North-South Ministerial Council.

The final stage of the Programme development process will be submitting the Programme to the European Commission for approval.

1.4 Consultation Information Document

The Consultation Information Document provided the basis for consulting on the content and delivery of the Programme. This document can be downloaded from the SEUPB website. [PEACE PLUS Consultation Information Document](#) It provided information on the following:

- An overview of how the Programme was prepared;
- A summary of the proposed Programme Strategy including the six Themes and twenty two Investment Areas of the PEACE PLUS Programme;
- The indicative budget allocations for each of the Themes and Investment Areas;
- A summary of the administrative arrangements proposed to simplify the Programme;
- Key questions on the proposed Themes and Investment Areas as well as administrative arrangements for the Programme;
- The Equality Screening Findings; and
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

It also outlined the Programme development process, including how to respond and background information, including research that helped inform the development of the Programme.

1.5 Summary of Consultation Responses Report

The Summary of Consultation Responses Report to the PEACE PLUS Programme details the process involved in preparing and conducting the consultation and the findings of the consultation. In addition, this report summarises the views provided in relation to the Programme Themes and Investment Areas, indicative budgets, proposals to reduce the administrative burden, the Equality Screening Findings and Strategic Environmental Assessment, and our responses to these.

1.6 Equality Screening Findings and Strategic Environmental Assessment

To ensure the PEACE PLUS Programme meets statutory and regulatory requirements, the accompanying Equality Screening Findings and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the PEACE PLUS Programme were also issued for consultation.

Equality Screening Findings

The Equality Screening Findings identified potential constraints and opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations through the proposed PEACE PLUS Programme.

A summary of the views received concerning the Equality Screening Findings from the Consultation Response Survey is contained in Section 7.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SEA promotes sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the proposed PEACE PLUS Programme will ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making.

A summary of the views made in relation to the Strategic Environmental Assessment from the Consultation Response Survey is contained in Section 8.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this public consultation was to gauge how citizens and stakeholders responded to the draft PEACE PLUS Programme and if it was reflective of their needs and views. A quantitative research design was used to measure attitudes on the draft content, indicative budget allocations and administrative arrangements of the draft PEACE PLUS Programme for the 2021-2027 period, and findings from the Equality Screening Exercise and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The research design helped to reveal patterns where respondents agreed and disagreed, thus enabling the SEUPB to consider areas that were identified as requiring further attention. A quantitative approach also enabled generalisations to be made regarding the level of support on key aspects of the Programme and the overall endorsement of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

2.1 Data Collection

A Consultation Response Survey was designed and consisted of four multiple response questions, three check box questions, eight Likert scale questions, eight multiple textbox questions and two text box questions. The consultation questions are contained in the Consultation Information Document available on the SEUPB PEACE PLUS webpage or by clicking [HERE](#).

The five-point Likert scale questions presented clear, well-defined options to measure respondents' attitudes. This was preferred over a yes, no, don't know question as this allowed for more variance on the nuances of respondents' thinking. The midpoint/neutral measurement was deemed important in terms of the indicative budgets and areas of the Programme that were not within respondents' areas of expertise/interest.

Given the broad remit of the new hybrid Programme, including PEACE and INTERREG activities, the SEUPB anticipated a range of respondents with potentially differing interests. To keep the survey relevant to the respondent, there was no requirement to answer all the questions unless they wished to do so. Responses were subject to character limitations to ensure focused responses that could be effectively and efficiently analysed in the final stage of the consultation process.

The Consultation Response Survey was available to complete online via the Survey Monkey platform from 10 March until 12 May 2021. Respondents also had the option to respond to the survey by email or post through the MS Word Consultation Response Template available on request. Documentation was also available on the consultation webpage in Irish, and other accessible formats were available on request.

A wide range of communication tools were employed through the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation, reach as many audiences as possible and help obtain a high level of good quality responses through the Consultation Response Survey. This included:

- The SEUPB website with a dedicated consultation page;
- A print and advertising campaign;
- A social media advertising campaign on the SEUPB's LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook channels;

- Direct emails to approximately 2,300 recipients via a specially created PEACE PLUS contacts database;
- Communications partnering with relevant interest groups, who acted as communications multipliers to help promote the public consultation, such as NICVA, the Community Relations Council, Pobal, Irish Social Enterprise Network, Catalyst, East Border Region and Disability Action;
- A bespoke PEACE PLUS consultation video, available via the SEUPB’s website, social media channels and YouTube account; and
- A video message and adapted presentation materials for online focus groups of young people.

No physical events were able to take place due to the Covid-19 emergency and restrictions on public gatherings.

The material supporting the consultation was developed to help engage a wide range of audiences and maximise their understanding of the draft Programme and how to respond. This included:

- A PEACE PLUS Consultation Information Document which was made available online, in Easy-Read format and Irish;
- An infographic; and
- Specially prepared online navigation papers and presentations aimed at different sectoral groups, such as business, the community and voluntary sector, the environmental sector, the youth sector, SMEs, the rural community and the health sector.

All of this information remains available on the SEUPB webpage
<https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

2.2 Data Analysis

Responses submitted through Survey Monkey and MS Word Surveys were imported onto the IBM SPSS statistical software package before analysis could begin. The dataset was checked for missing data. Variable names and properties were created, and the data was coded and labelled. The data was analysed using statistical software SPSS, by frequency, cross-tabulation, multiple response datasets/frequencies, and custom tables.

For analysis purposes and to enhance reader understanding, comments obtained in the multiple text boxes and text box questions were categorised into key Themes and summarised.

While it has not been possible to include the full detail of all responses, the SEUPB PEACE PLUS team have reviewed every response and made every effort to represent all responses as fairly and comprehensively as possible in this Summary of Consultation Responses Report. In addition, some respondents emailed and posted additional documents, which have also been read by the PEACE PLUS team.

415 valid responses were received (317 organisations and 98 individuals), and all were treated equally.¹ A complete list of respondents who permitted the name of their organisation to be published is attached in Appendix 1.

The SEUPB Response to the Consultation Comments Received

The SEUPB has summarised in each Investment Area the comments that were received. Those comments most similar are grouped together, and where there is a very small number of comments in any area, they have been included as views expressed in the interest of completeness.

The inclusion of comments in the analysis does not signify agreement or disagreement with the views expressed by respondents. The SEUPB has highlighted within its response to the comments, those that have had the most impact on the area, this does not mean that the other comments have been disregarded, but that there was not space to reference each individual comment.

2.3 Young Voices Consultation

Investing and empowering our young people is one of the key Themes in the PEACE PLUS Programme to help ensure long term peace and prosperity. It was, therefore, important to engage with young people to hear their views on the Themes, Investment Areas and indicative budget allocations for the PEACE PLUS Programme.

On behalf of the SEUPB, Youth Pact coordinated and facilitated 17 hours of discussion using a qualitative research design during 11 online focus group sessions with 66 young people on the proposals within the PEACE PLUS Programme during the public consultation phase in April/May 2021. The 66 young people, both current and past Peace4Youth participants, shared their insights alongside 18 Peace4Youth workers. This was then used as a platform for considering the six Themes, Investment Areas and indicative budgets contained in the PEACE PLUS Programme proposals. A short video produced by the SEUPB specifically for this consultation process with young people was used in clips. The video featured the SEUPB Chief Executive, Gina McIntyre, who briefly spoke about what the SEUPB does before outlining the scope of each of the six Themes and how the SEUPB would use the information gathered.

Following each clip, YouthPact staff shared some additional information from the SEUPB consultation documents and invited young people to give their thoughts, views, and opinions on each proposed Theme. The views from the consultation focus groups are captured in the Young Voices report, 'Something to Say about PEACE PLUS'. The key findings have been incorporated under each Theme throughout the main body of this consultation report.

Overall, the report confirms a very high level of broad agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme proposals, including the six Themes and specific Investment Areas.

¹ A response was deemed valid if the respondent provided their name, address and answered at least one question in the survey. All valid responses received an acknowledgement email from the SEUPB.

3. Respondents to the Consultation

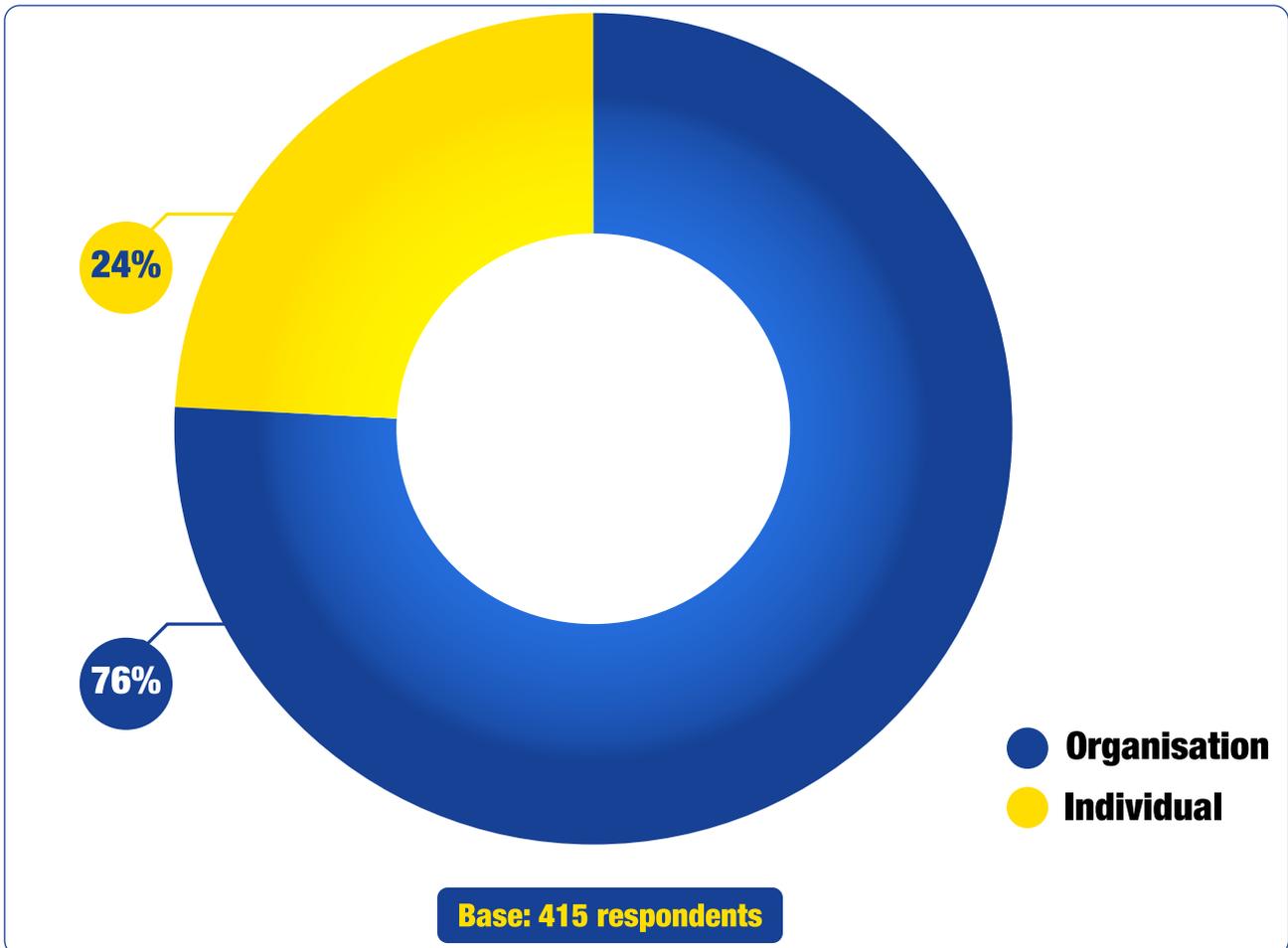
Total number of respondents - 415

See Appendix 1 for the list of organisations who responded.

3.1 Respondents by Individual or Organisation

Q.a Are you responding on behalf of an individual or an organisation?

FIGURE 1



As shown in Figure 1 above, 76% of responses (317) were provided by organisations, and 24% of responses (98) were from individuals.

3.2 Respondents by Location

FIGURE 2

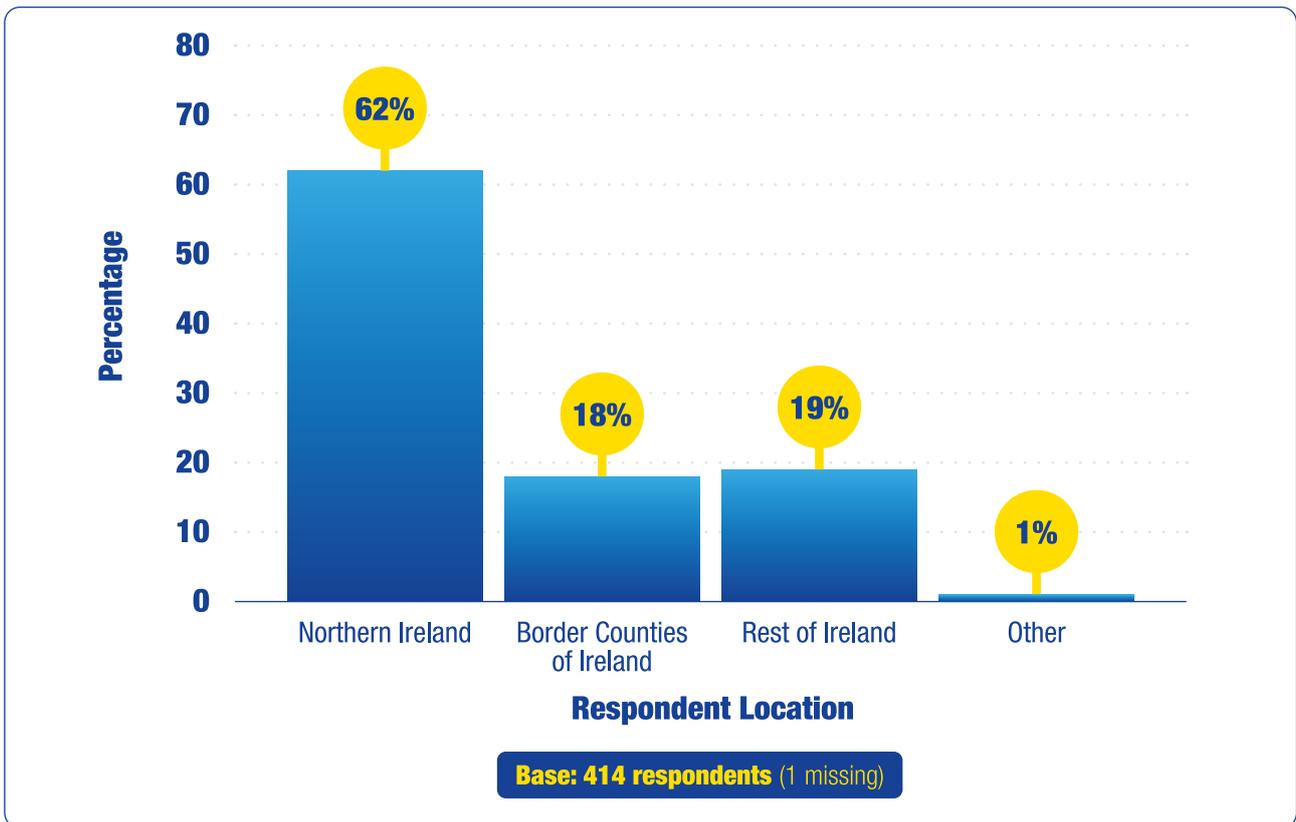


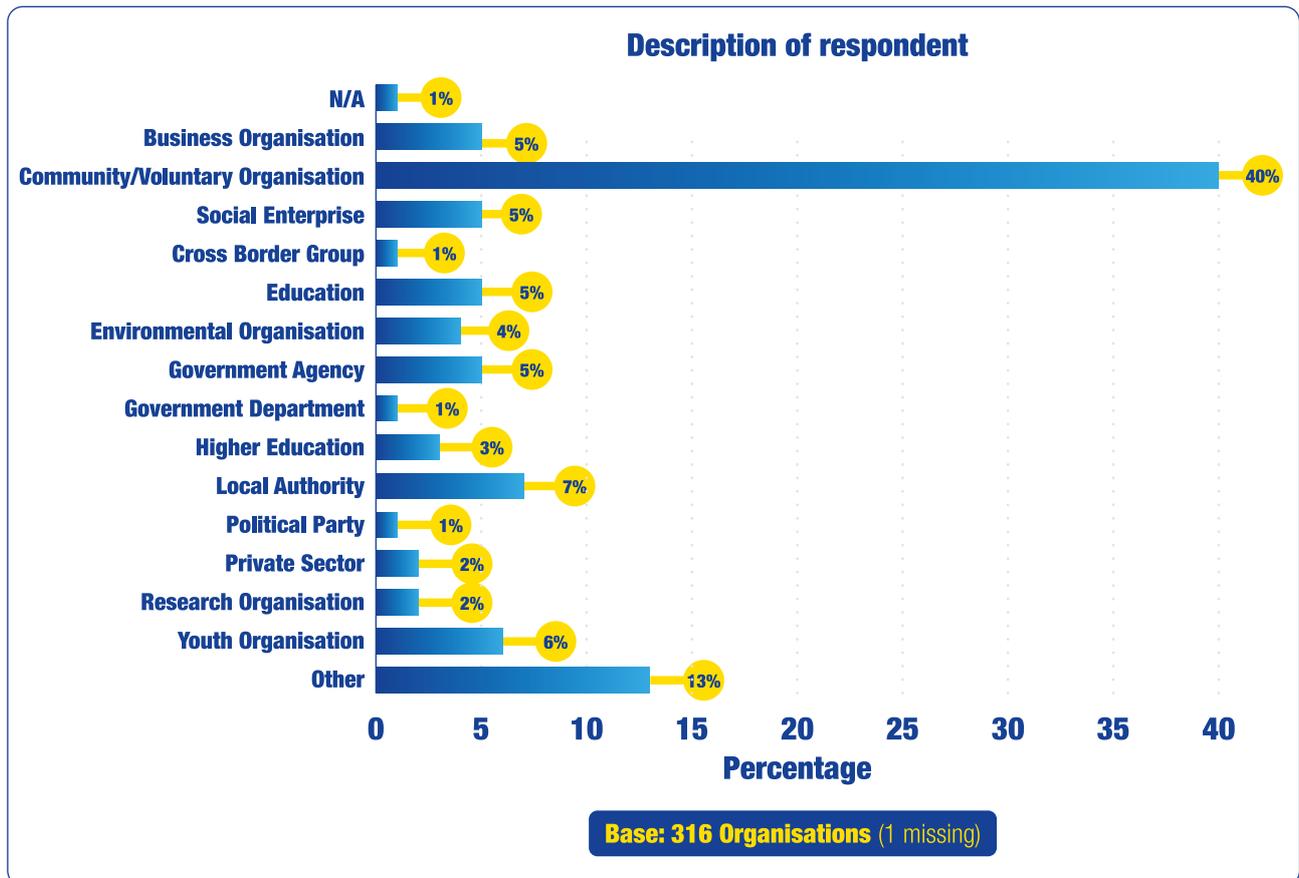
Figure 2 above shows the location of survey respondents.

- The majority of respondents (257) were based in Northern Ireland (62%);
- Almost one fifth (18%) represented those in the border counties of Ireland (73 respondents);
- 19% (79 respondents) resided in other counties in the rest of Ireland; and
- 1% (5) of respondents were located in other areas including, Scotland, England, and America.

3.3 Respondents by Type of Organisation

Q.b Please state which of the following best describes your type of organisation.

FIGURE 3



(N.B. differences to 100% are due to rounding)

As shown in Figure 3, a wide range of organisations responded to the consultation. This included:

- 5% from business organisations;
- 40% from community and voluntary organisations;
- 5% from social enterprises;
- 1% from cross-border groups;
- 5% from education;
- 4% from environmental organisations;
- 5% from government agencies;
- 1% from government departments;
- 3% from higher education;
- 7% from local authorities;
- 1% from political parties;
- 2% from private sector organisations;

- 2% from research organisations;
- 6% from youth organisations; and
- 13% from other types of organisations.

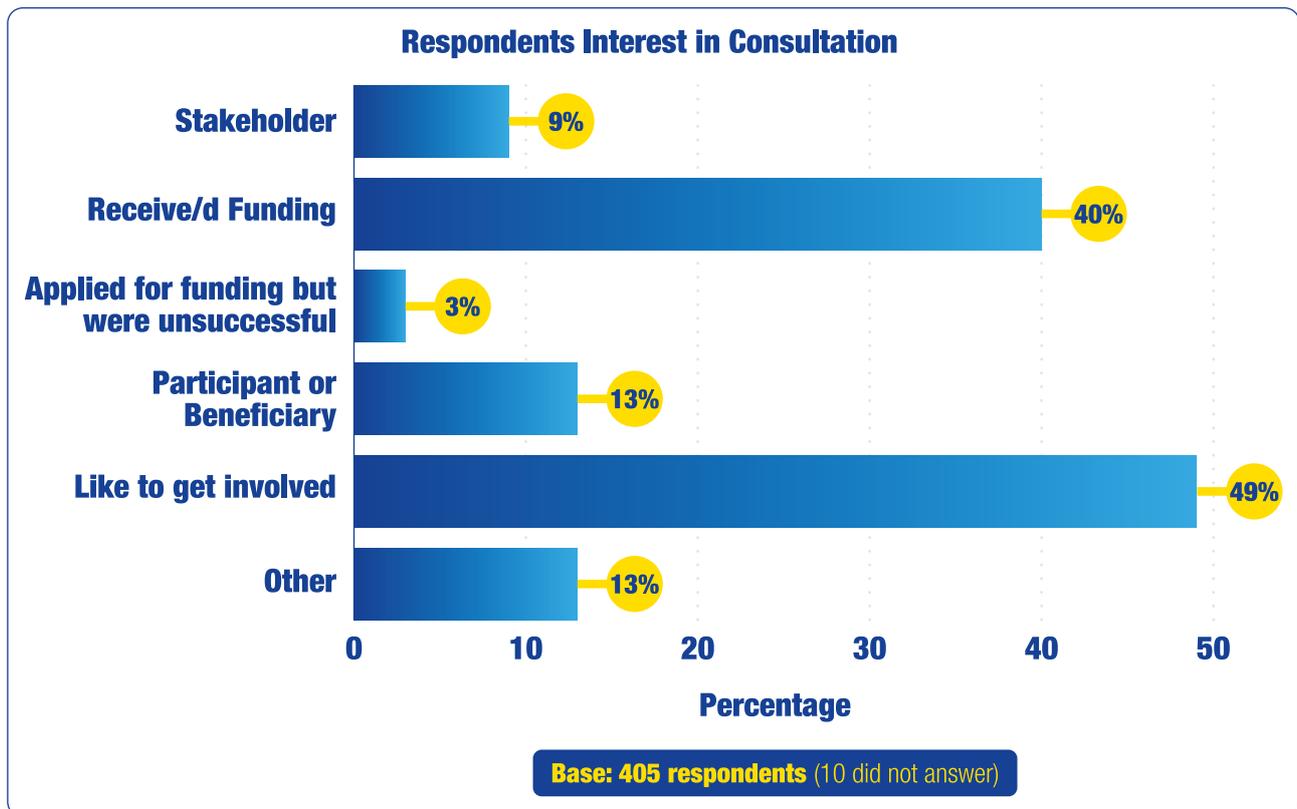
Responses provided by those who described their organisation as other included; NGO's, arts and cultural organisations, sporting organisations, a human rights organisation, an arm's length body, accredited bodies, a credit union, a church, a public transport operator, advisory bodies, local development companies, specific projects, non-departmental public bodies, a north-south implementation body, a trade union, a vocational training company, and a social farmer.

See Appendix 1 for the list of organisations who responded.

3.4 Respondents by Interest in the Consultation

Q.c Please state which of the following best describes your interest in this consultation?
(Select as many as applicable)

FIGURE 4



As shown in Figure 4,

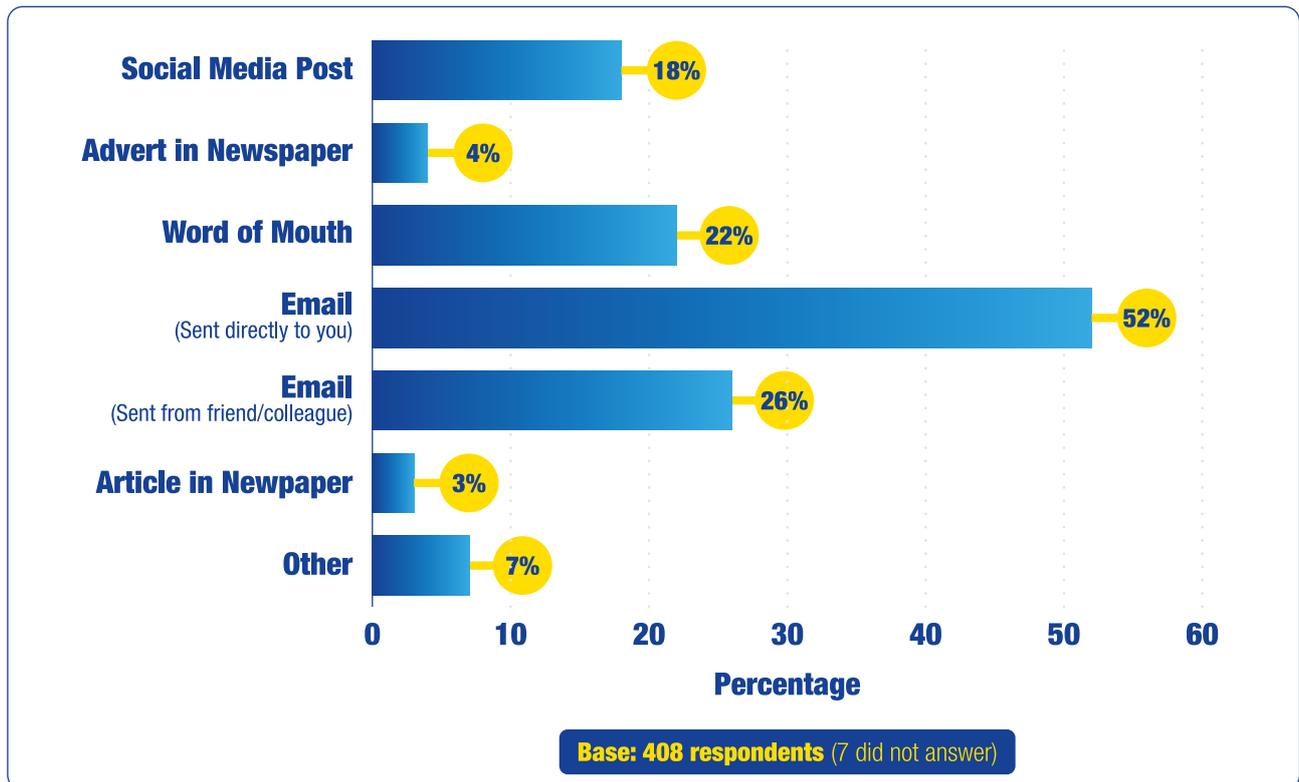
- 9% of respondents were stakeholders associated with the management of the PEACE OR INTERREG programmes;
- 40% of respondents receive or have previously received funding from the PEACE or INTERREG programmes as a project partner, partner lead or a subcontracted organisation;
- 3% of consultation respondents had previously applied to the SEUPB for funding from the PEACE OR INTERREG programme and had not been successful in receiving a funding award;
- 13% of respondents were participants or beneficiaries of a PEACE or INTERREG funded project;
- 49% who took part in the consultation response survey would like to get involved with the PEACE PLUS Programme; and
- 13% of respondents described themselves as other. This included citizens and companies with an interest in the PEACE PLUS Programme.

(NB. Percentage exceeds 100% as respondents could choose more than one category. Seventy eight respondents choose more than one option.)

3.5 Respondents by Consultation Communication Methods

Q.d. How did you hear about this consultation? (Select as many as applicable)

FIGURE 5



(NB. Percentage exceeds 100% as respondents could choose more than one category. Seventy nine respondents choose more than one option.)

As shown in Figure 5 above, respondents heard about the consultation through the following communication methods:

- 18% through social media posts;
- 4% read an advert in a newspaper;
- 22% heard through word of mouth;
- 52% were informed through the direct mail campaign;
- 26% were sent an email from a friend/colleague;
- 3% read an article in a newspaper; and
- 7% heard through other methods.

Other methods respondents heard about the consultation included through an online search, through current projects and previous engagement with the stakeholder engagement process, through membership bodies including their website and e-zines, through government departments, and directly from the SEUPB.

4. Analysis of the Themes and Investment Areas

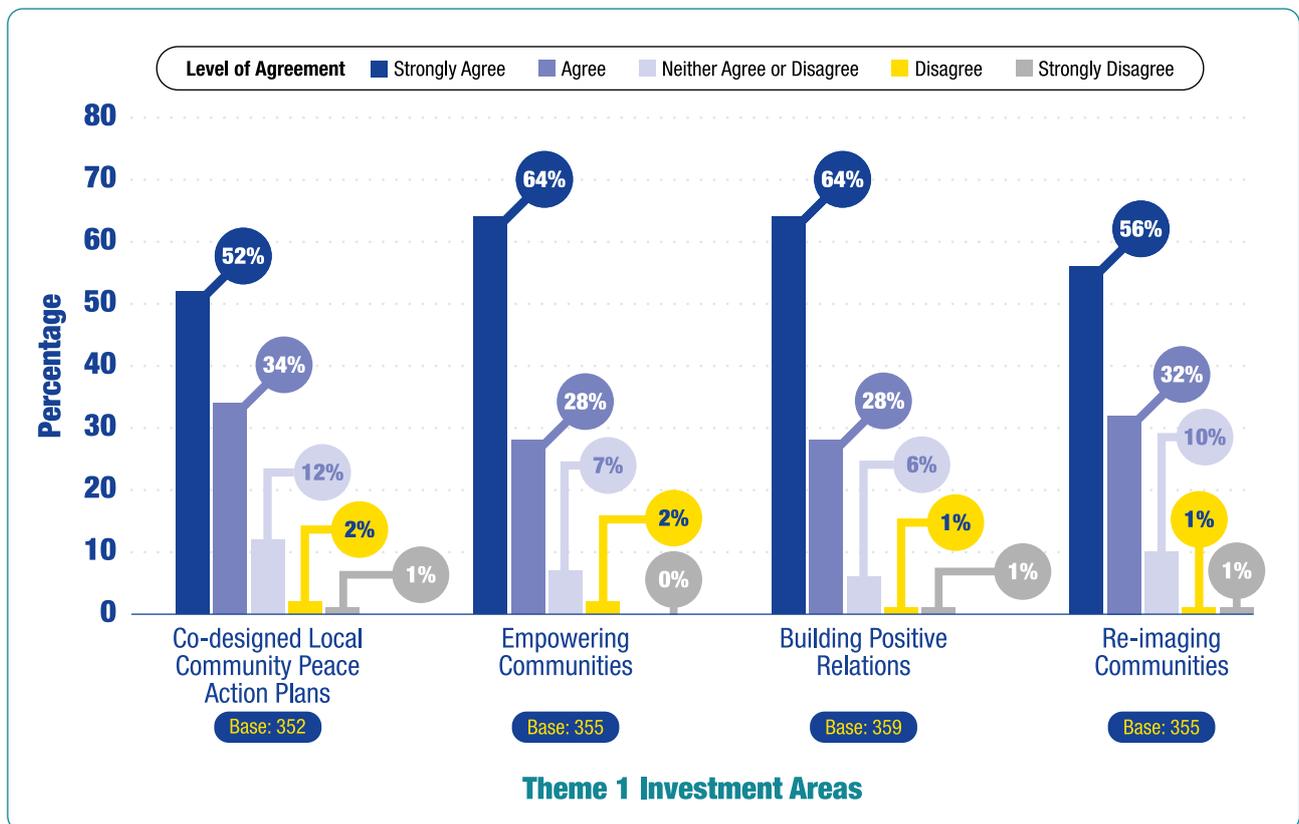
4.1 Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities

Q.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 1?



Q.2 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.1.

FIGURE 6



Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 1.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 86% to 92%.

4.1.1 Investment Area 1.1: Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans

In total, there were 352 responses to this question, and 63 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 86% of respondents agreed with Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans Investment Area under Theme 1.

As shown in Figure 6 above,

- 52% strongly agreed;
- 34% agreed;
- 12% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The majority of respondents who provided reasons for agreement with this Investment Area advocated that they support the involvement of local grassroots communities in the design and delivery of peace-building activities to target the specific needs of local communities, particularly post Covid-19 and Brexit. However, some respondents noted that divisions are still evident, which have recently manifested in the resurgence of conflict. A few respondents referred to organised crime and illegal organisations still recruiting and operating in predominately single identity areas. Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans were recognised as important to address these challenges.

Several respondents drew on the importance of Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans as an opportunity to provide local responses to local needs, deliver real change, empower communities, support government policy priorities, drive economic growth, and contribute to lasting peace and reconciliation.

Investment in Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans were supported across a number of cohorts and areas including in children and young people, health and wellbeing, community regeneration, education and skills, social innovation, and environment and sustainability.

Respondents provided several recommendations on the development and implementation of Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans, including that they must be evidence-based; a draft plan or template should be developed with a level of standardisation but with the flexibility to acknowledge the challenges and opportunities between different locations. Other recommendations included; they must take a grassroots approach, led by local people who understand local needs and experiences and can connect with hard to reach groups; they should be co-designed, co-delivered, co-managed and co-reported in partnership with local authorities, community and voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises, local businesses, and FE and HE colleges. In addition, they should be cross-community and inclusive of the range of perspectives within them, including those with lived experience, marginalised groups, children and young people, older people, women and those living in rural communities.

Furthermore, some respondents stressed partnerships must be transparent; objectives clearly defined; the financial model sustainable to ensure long-term project success; agreement reached on how to measure peace and reconciliation; and care must be taken to avoid the duplication of activities through coordinating with funding organisations, embedding with relevant community plans and ensuring existing programmes are part of the planning process.

Depending on their interest and remit, two contrasting views emerged from the analysis. On one side, some respondents believed local authorities should play a lead role in carrying out detailed needs analysis, managing resources, designing, or at least providing oversight of the Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans, and coordinating the efforts of community groups. There was also a call for sufficient resources for local authorities to create and implement these Plans. Conversely, on the other side, some respondents felt the Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans should not be a top-down approach from local authorities, their fees should be capped, funding ring-fenced and care must be taken to ensure that the Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans do not become an extension of local authority projects.

Whilst the analysis showed the overwhelming majority of respondents were in agreement, some respondents outlined limitations and included as a rationale for their disagreement, that the local design approach could result in an overemphasis on wants rather than needs; the focus is on short term initiatives, and there is uncertainty on how Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans differ from Community Plans already in place. Several respondents also highlighted concerns about representativeness in partnerships and truly involving local people/communities.

4.1.1.1 The The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme.

The SEUPB will work with local authorities to ensure a co-design process that local authorities will undertake as part of the development of local peace action plans under PEACE PLUS. Whilst the SEUPB acknowledges the wide needs within local communities, the Programme must maintain a focus on peace and reconciliation around the three core areas outlined, which have emerged during the development process as critical areas to support. The plans will be developed to complement existing community planning arrangements.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €110,000,000.

4.1.2 Investment Area 1.2 Empowering Communities

In total, there were 355 responses to this question and 60 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 92% of respondents agreed with Empowering Communities as an Investment Area under Theme 1, making this one of the most highly agreed Investment Area under Theme 1.

As shown in Figure 6 above,

- 64% strongly agreed;
- 28% agreed;
- 7% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 0% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

Several respondents who agreed with the Empowering Communities Investment Area highlighted the current low level of grassroots community capacity to engage. In addition, respondents deemed Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic as contributing factors in the need for this type of investment.

Respondents emphasised this Investment Area would help build confidence and leave behind a legacy in which communities will be better placed to move forward. Some respondents also acknowledged that previous investment in similar activities was inclusive and successful.

Empowering communities to do things themselves rather than relying on external organisations was regarded by some respondents as a positive and sustainable approach. Communities were seen as having the solutions to social problems which should lead from the bottom up within their communities. In recognition that communities need support to lead themselves, respondents provided several recommendations to help deliver on this Investment Area. Firstly, it was recommended to start with small, manageable projects to put support mechanisms in place to enable communities to lead on specific aspects of community life, for example, the environment. Secondly, it was suggested that interactive learning would help develop the required skills, including maintaining current and future action plans. Respondents also voiced their support to establish young leaders to create a lasting impact within their communities and a specific focus to help empower rural communities.

4.1.2.1 The The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.

4.1.3 Investment Area 1.3: Building Positive Relations

In total, there were 359 responses to this question, and 56 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 92% of respondents agreed with Building Positive Relations, making this one of the most highly agreed Investment Area under Theme 1.

As shown in Figure 6 above,

- 64% strongly agreed;
- 28% agreed;
- 6% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

The majority of respondents advocated the importance of this Investment Area and recognised that we are still living in a very segregated and increasingly diverse society. However, while there was consensus that much has been achieved through building positive relations to date, respondents agreed there is a great need to continue developing community relations in Northern Ireland.

Respondents with first-hand experience of building positive relations recognised this Investment Area as core to peace-building and encouraging cross-community contact and engagement. In particular, respondents welcomed this investment to help work against sectarianism and build relationships central to restorative practice. There was also strong support for linking communities via cultural initiatives in delivering, enabling people to respect individual traditions in a shared environment.

Respondents drew on the importance of this Investment Area as an opportunity to build more positive relations, which would help lead to long-term understanding and trust; achieve better community relations; encourage cultural awareness and diversity; and move communities forward together to achieve lasting peace.

Some recommendations made by respondents included the need to work with the younger generation to dispel myths and provide opportunities across the political divide to come together in a more meaningful and longer-lasting way, building strong positive relationships with all organisations from both communities, as well as all those from more diverse populations from within our community, not just 'green and orange'. Respondents also suggested the need to consider new ways to engage in building trust and relations, including through an online environment. Some respondents also believed peer influence could help drive community and social acceptance, and cross-community projects were the best vehicle to help facilitate this. Several respondents also suggested reaching a more comprehensive range of organisations rather than connecting with the same people again. Some ex-prisoner groups commented that there was a need to recognise the challenges they face. Finally, some respondents voiced their desire to build on the progress made by encouraging cross-border relations with like-minded interest groups, including youth and tidy town groups.

4.1.3.1 The The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme. There were a number of organisations and individuals wishing to get involved in the Programme for the first time which is a good indication that new groups will be part of projects. Some of the other issues raised were not within the remit of the PEACE PLUS Programme, but rather are legal and justice issues.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €35,000,000.

4.1.4 Investment Area 1.4: Re-imaging Communities

In total, there were 355 responses to this question, and 60 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 88% of respondents agreed with Re-imaging Communities as an Investment Area under Theme 1.

As shown in Figure 6 above,

- 56% strongly agreed;
- 32% agreed;
- 10% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

There was widespread agreement among respondents on creating a positive and cohesive society through the Re-imaging Communities Investment Area. Respondents welcomed the potential opportunities to look at alternative ways of working and interacting within communities and recognised that while some communities need re-imaging, others may be happy with their image. In particular, there was support for more positive re-imaging to help within some areas of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Respondents described accessible, modern community facilities as the corner stone of any community and some highlighted this is the case especially for rural communities. Respondents felt investment in facilities to enable communities to come together gives the community a focal point and helps develop community cohesion. Moreover, respondents felt living in a vibrant, well managed, and progressive area would help communities have pride in the place they live and would help foster good community relations. Respondents also believed re-imaging could include the availability of long-term job opportunities and attractive facilities and activities that could help to reduce the brain drain, encouraging educated young people to work and live in their area.

Respondents recognised this Investment Area would allow groups to be creative in their plans for re-imaging. For example, some respondents suggested arts can be used to re-imagine new visions for a peaceful and shared future for all, bringing in hard-to-reach groups and diverse communities as well as exploring sensitive issues.

4.1.4.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €75,000,000.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 1

There was widespread acceptance that further work is needed under Theme 1, Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities, as segregation in education and housing continues to be a reality with the lived experiences of young people. Some participants also stated that it was important to challenge the attitudes of older generations. **Overall, participants agreed that investment should be made in this area.**

For the SEUPB response to Theme 1 Investment Areas, see sections 4.1.1.1, 4.1.2.1, 4.1.3.1, and 4.1.4.1.

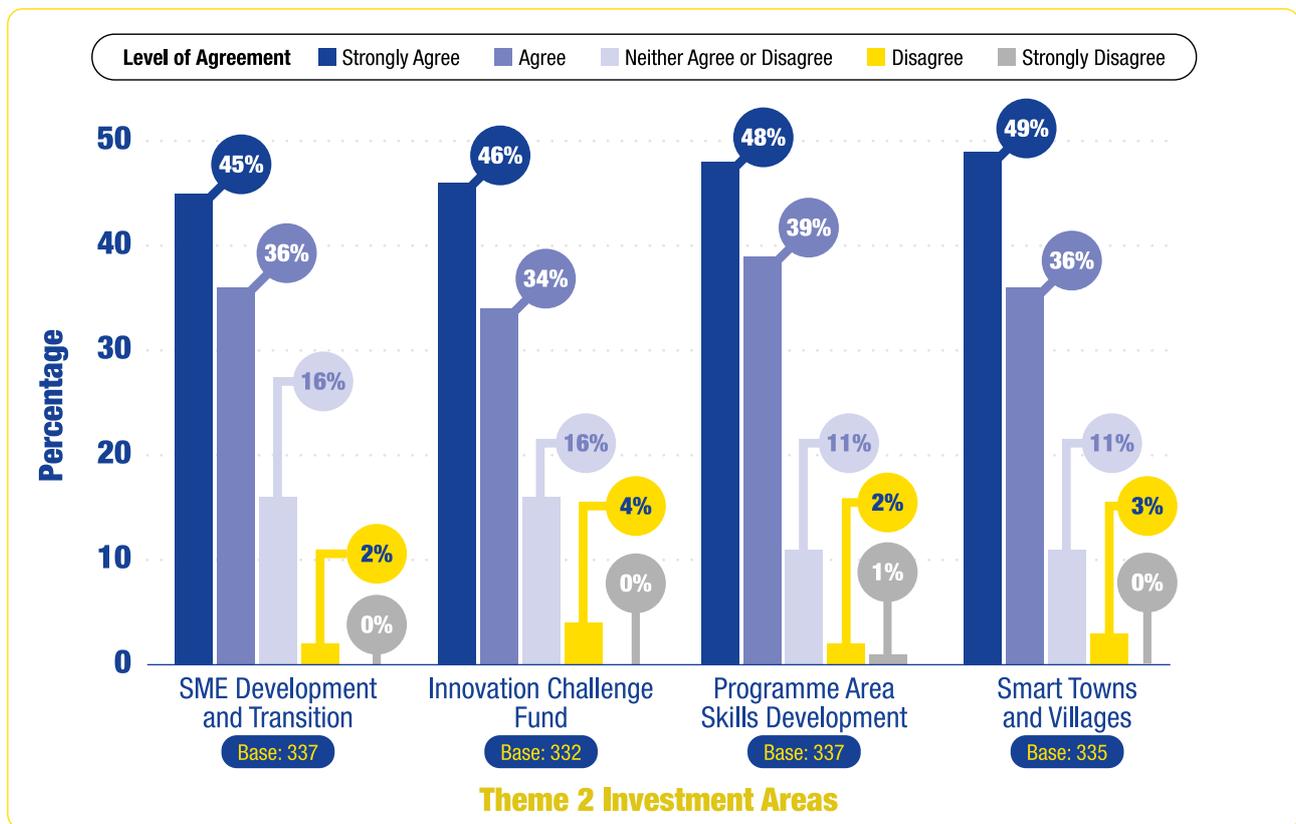
4.2 Theme 2 – Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation

Q.3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 2?



Q.4 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.3.

FIGURE 7



Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 2.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 80% to 87%.

4.2.1 Investment Area 2.1 SME Development and Transition

In total, there were 337 respondents to this question, and 78 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 81% of respondents agreed with SME Development and Transition as an Investment Area under Theme 2.

As shown in Figure 7 above,

- 45% strongly agreed;
- 36% agreed;
- 16% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 0% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

A majority of respondents advocated for the importance of this Investment Area and referenced the centrality of SMEs to the local economy. In addition, many respondents highlighted the significance of SMEs in providing local employment, supporting rural communities, establishing and harnessing cross-border partnerships, tackling marginalisation and poverty, providing opportunities for young people to thrive, and promoting peace and stability in society.

Moreover, respondents voiced particular support for the potential for this Investment Area to provide much-needed support to crucial local businesses, and in particular, the manufacturing and tourism sectors, as they navigate the recovery period following the impact of Covid-19, as well as the ongoing issues related to the UK's exit from the EU.

Several respondents drew on the importance of this Investment Area as an opportunity to support the long-term sustainability and resilience of SMEs, in particular, supporting SMEs to successfully innovate and adjust to other key operational changes and challenges, including technology diversification and up-skilling, as well as incorporating environmental sustainability measures into business practice.

As explored above, respondents indicated an overwhelming level of support for this Investment Area. In addition, there have been some recommendations by respondents for the Investment Area including an increase in the funding allocation (in particular due to the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit), as well as ensuring that the Investment Area has a community-level rather than large business focus, with some respondents expressing their views that the funding is currently and/or should be provided by other sources. Finally, some respondents voiced their desire to include vocational qualifications and development, which they felt would be beneficial within the Investment Area.

4.2.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.

Given the level of support, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €25,000,000. It should also be noted that the focus of this Investment Area will be on SMEs rather than larger businesses or corporations.

4.2.2 Investment Area 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund

In total, there were 332 respondents to this question, and 83 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 80% of respondents agreed with the Innovation Challenge Fund as an Investment Area under Theme 2.

As shown in Figure 7 above,

- 46% strongly agreed;
- 34% agreed;
- 16% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 4% disagreed; and
- 0% of respondents strongly disagreed.

Respondents very much welcomed this Investment Area.

Several respondents noted the impact of Covid-19 on the increased reliance of businesses and society on digital communications, as well as new and emerging technology centred solutions. It was suggested that this Theme should seek to support innovation and skills development in this area. In particular, some respondents highlighted the importance of the Innovation Challenge Fund Investment Area in supporting businesses/grassroots organisations that do not have previous experience in these areas to adapt and innovate.

In addition to supporting digital technology, the potential for this Investment Area to have a positive impact in promoting innovation across sectors was noted by numerous respondents. Some areas highlighted include agriculture, life sciences, STEM, health and social care, opportunities for young people, education and training, green energy technology, and advanced manufacturing.

Other respondents remarked favourably of the potential for this Investment Area to complement and build upon existing programmes, partnerships and collaborations, and the potential for the Challenge Innovation Fund to support opportunities for cross-border initiatives for enhancing research and development across multiple areas.

As explored above, respondents indicated an overwhelming level of support for this Investment Area. In addition, some respondents expressed their view that this Investment Area falls within governmental-level responsibility, with others suggesting that the Investment Area was not sufficiently aimed at providing community-level support.

Recommendations for the Investment Area were highlighted, including an increase in the funding allocation (in particular due to the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit).

4.2.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. In line with the European Regulations, which underpin the PEACE PLUS Programme, the activity and focus of this Investment Area are entirely within the remit of European Programmes, including PEACE PLUS, and the SEUPB will ensure complementarity with other funding sources.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €65,000,000.

4.2.3 Investment Area 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development

In total, there were 337 respondents to this question, and 78 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 87% of respondents agreed with Programme Area Skills Development as an Investment Area under Theme 2, making this the most widely agreed Investment Area under Theme 2.

As shown in Figure 7 above,

- 48% strongly agreed;
- 39% agreed;
- 11% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

Strong support for this Investment Area was expressed by respondents, many of whom cited the importance of skills development and growth for future prosperity. There was a broad acknowledgement that this Investment Area would support crucial skills development and capacity building across several areas, including addressing key skills gaps concerning meeting climate challenges; alongside addressing the skills shortage in engineering/digital; specialist skills development in built and natural heritage conservation and tourism as well as the harnessing skills in data analysis; communication; marine tourism; security; youth work and social farming. The need for investment in skills development was noted as being of particular importance in the challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Respondents expressed specific support for the potential for this Investment Area to support job creation and its potential to facilitate viable employment opportunities to key groups, including young people in particular. Respondents further expressed support for an emphasis on skills growth related to green and environmental sectors. Views expressed that skills development would be crucial to ensure that individuals were able to avail of an increasing number of employment opportunities in this area as support climate targets.

Collaboration was a key area identified by respondents with several potential links identified, including collaborative programme elements to complement the development of other programme interventions; collaborations between public and private sectors; residential and non-residential sectors; commercial and not-for-profit organisations and energy suppliers, as well as the potential for the development of synergies between education providers. Some respondents also voiced support for a cross-border approach to address skills gaps and training needs.

While most respondents agreed with the need for this Investment Area, a view expressed was the suggestion to prioritise groups with limited access to further achieve equality. To achieve this, it was recommended that the Investment Area engage with organisations to both understand and remove engagement barriers effectively, including childcare, transport, confidence and language.

Some respondents also highlighted their need to ensure that the Programme is distinctive from and additional to the government funding targeting skills development.

4.2.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme, including positive removals of barriers to engagement, which the SEUPB fully supports. Furthermore, the SEUPB will continue to engage with government departments to ensure complementarity with government-funded programmes both in Northern Ireland and Ireland. The SEUPB are aware of the importance of this activity and the limited availability of other Programmes which may have in the past supported skills development.

Given the support expressed and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €50,000,000.

4.2.4 Investment Area 2.4 Smart Towns and Villages

In total, there were 335 respondents to this question, and 80 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 85% of respondents agreed with Smart Towns and Villages as an Investment Area under Theme 2.

As shown in Figure 7 above,

- 49% strongly agreed;
- 36% agreed;
- 11% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 3% disagreed; and
- 0% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

Respondents indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to the proposed Investment Area and welcomed the potential for investment in Smart Towns and Villages to make a tangible difference, providing a direct benefit across the community. In particular, several respondents highlighted the prospect for positive impact with the regeneration of vacant spaces and facilities within towns and village centres as a means to: empower communities; to help with the delivery of sustainable patterns of growth by reducing the need for urban footprint expansion; to protect the natural environment; and to stimulate urban regeneration in a post Covid-19 society.

Several respondents highlighted how the development of Smart Towns and Villages could help make the regions more sustainable, mainly through investment in new, smart, renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions. Respondents also highlighted the need to address the digital divide between rural and urban areas, with a particular focus on improving service access and broadband connectivity. This area was seen as being of particular importance in the facilitation of remote working and in helping to reduce urban sprawl.

Whilst the majority of respondents were in agreement with the need for this Investment Area, there was an acknowledgement of the scale of the task and the need for a whole society approach to SMART living. Recognising the crucial importance of investment in Smart Towns and Villages, some responses expressed that this Investment Area was the responsibility of governmental departments. In contrast, others stressed the need to ensure a community-level focus and avoid duplication with existing programmes.

4.2.4.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. It should be noted that the activities and focus of this Investment Area is entirely in line with the requirements within the EU regulations that underpin the PEACE PLUS Programme, the cross-border nature of the activity will add value and complement any other government funded programmes.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 2

There was consensus across all 11 focus groups that this Theme should be resourced.

Several participants recognised the need to support small businesses that Covid-19 has impacted. Focus group participants also highlighted the importance of investing in high-quality training opportunities that provide positive learning experiences. Some participants identified limited job opportunities available, particularly in the border counties of Ireland, and felt investment in jobs and the local economy would enable young people to stay in border areas. There was also support for investing in young entrepreneurs. In addition, young people identified the economy as having a role to play in building confidence, self-esteem, and aspiration. Role models, particularly in communities where some employment sectors are underrepresented, were viewed as offering potential sources of aspiration.

Investment in infrastructure, such as ensuring broadband and internet access for everyone, including those in rural areas, was considered important, and the need for investment in transport connections, which was referenced in a cross-border area.

For the SEUPB response to Theme 2 Investment Areas, see sections 4.2.1.1, 4.2.2.1, 4.2.3.1, and 4.2.4.1

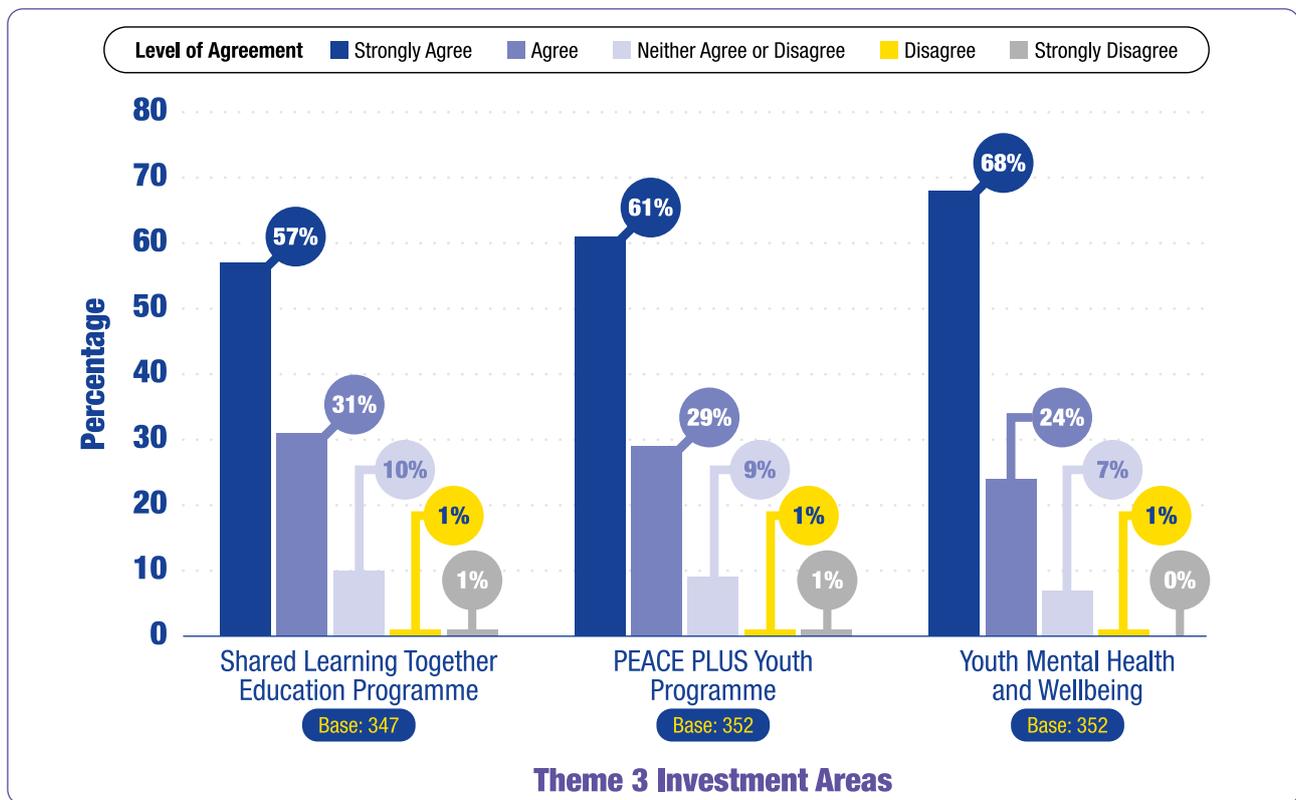
4.3 Theme 3 – Empowering and Investing in our Young People

Q.5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 3?



Q.6 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.5.

FIGURE 8



Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 3.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 88% to 92%.

4.3.1 Investment Area 3.1 Shared Learning Together Education Programme

In total, there were 347 respondents to this question, and 68 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 88% of respondents agreed with the Shared Learning Together Education Programme as an Investment Area under Theme 3.

As shown in Figure 8 above,

- 57% strongly agreed;
- 31% agreed;
- 10% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

In outlining the need for this welcomed Investment Area, some respondents described the segregation of children as contributing to the perpetuation of ‘others’ as different, and highlighted a shared learning and skills agenda as integral to building peace and reconciliation. Respondents also referred to young people’s desire for shared education as outlined in a NI Assembly research report, and positive evaluation and outcomes based on young people’s experiences of current shared education programmes.

Within this Investment Area, respondents particularly welcomed the extension of participation to early years settings and non-formal education delivered by the youth sector and plans to increase the number of schools participating in the Shared Learning Together Programme.

Some respondents also provided recommendations for the Shared Learning Together Programme, including; early engagement starting with supported parent and toddler groups, extending the cohort to include older people and intergenerational learning, extending beyond the traditional groups in recognition of other faiths and background, facilitating the participation of cross-community school partnerships/clusters in rural areas where proximity is limited, and delivering the programme through sports, arts, and environment. To ensure a lasting legacy, some respondents also felt they need to be created and delivered to make real differences in the minds of the young people taking part.

Although the majority agreed with the Investment Area, a few respondents also referred to the importance of integrated education as standalone, which they feel needs greater funding.

4.3.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €51,210,735.

4.3.2 Investment Area 3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme

In total, there were 352 respondents to this question, and 63 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 90% of respondents agreed with the PEACE PLUS Youth Programme as an Investment Area under Theme 3.

As shown in Figure 8 above,

- 61% strongly agreed;
- 29% agreed;
- 9% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The high level of support for this Investment Area is attributed to the challenges young people face and people working with young people. Respondents recognised the Covid-19 pandemic as exacerbating difficulties including poverty, youth unemployment, mental health and wellbeing, segregation, and educational inequalities experienced by young people especially, those living in disadvantaged, 'at risk', rural and border communities. The need to focus on mentoring and skills and addressing young people's social and emotional needs was particularly welcomed. There was also support for building on the learning and success of what has been achieved in previous PEACE Programmes.

Many respondents recognised the impact of youth work programmes, methodologies, and principles on improving the positive outcomes for young people. Investment at the early intervention and prevention stage was particularly welcome as respondents identified this as the time to create real change.

Many respondents drew on the importance of the youth programmes under this Investment Area to help build relationships, break down stigmas/myths, develop peer-to-peer learning, provide mentor support and positive roles, and provide young people with a shared, safe and neutral space. Respondents also felt this Investment Area would help meet many of the challenges identified; leading to the development of skills, training and employment, increasing physical and mental wellbeing, as well as increasing the respect, confidence, and capacity of young people, directing them to a more positive pathway and diverting them from negative influences.

Whilst the majority of respondents were in agreement with the need for this Investment Area, one area raised by some respondents from the analysis was to broaden the age of participants to 0-24 because the experience on the ground is showing that young people under 12 are becoming more marginalised and involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour and early intervention is needed. In addition, respondents provided other recommendations including; young people to help shape the PEACE PLUS Youth Programme, the inclusion of projects of interest to young people, for example, arts, sports, drama, gaming/ICT and environmental issues, as well as opportunities for skills in critical thinking and problem-solving. There were also suggestions for young people to progress into employability, including work placements, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship.

4.3.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support provided for this Investment Area. The age range of 14-24 has been selected following careful consideration and is in line with other initiatives in terms of focusing on the age group where the need is greatest and impact is required, particularly from a good relations perspective. Investment area 3.1 Shared education is available for children under 14.

Given the agreement for this area and analysis of the consultation findings the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €47,000,000.

4.3.3 Investment Area 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

In total, there were 352 respondents to this question, and 63 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 92% of respondents agreed with Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing as an Investment Area under Theme 3.

As shown in Figure 8 above,

- 68% strongly agreed;
- 24% agreed;
- 6% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 0% strongly disagreed.

This Investment Area was the most widely agreed across all of Theme 3, which most respondents agreed (92%). The negative impact of the pandemic on the mental and wellbeing of young people was a key reason cited for the strong endorsement for this Investment Area. Many respondents recognised this as a key challenge, with some outlining young people's struggles with isolation, stress, anxiety, substance misuse, self-harm, and suicide. Respondents also outlined other contributing factors, including trans-generational trauma, poverty, and addiction. In addition, children and young people in both rural areas and areas of conflict were believed to experience higher levels of mental ill-health.

Respondents deemed this Investment Area to offer new and exciting opportunities to develop programmes in partnership with young people which are customised to their needs. The anticipated outcomes of good youth mental health and wellbeing initiatives included; support for the social, emotional, and environmental wellbeing of young people, coping mechanisms to enhance emotional resilience, and the building of mental capacity for the future. In addition, resilient young people were believed by respondents to create resilient communities.

Respondents also provided some recommendations to develop the potential outcomes of this Investment Area including; extending the age of the programme to include young children from age 3-24 in recognition that early intervention can help to build social and emotional skills, the inclusion of adult mental health, a focus on suicide prevention, a wraparound approach that brings schools, parents, other agencies into a single focus around the children, and the inclusion of projects that connect with nature, animals, and people as well as drama, arts, and sports, all of which have shown to help enhance mental health and wellbeing.

Respondents also outlined several recommendations for the successful delivery of this Investment Area, including involving the community and voluntary sector in the delivery of the programme in recognition of their expertise to help address the impact of trauma, mental health and wellbeing, poverty, and deprivation in local communities. Furthermore, respondents supported the innovative delivery of programmes through mediums young people are comfortable and willing to engage in, including social media, podcasts, vox-pops, and youth councils. Several respondents also highlighted the need for this Investment Area to support the Department of Health’s Mental Health Strategy and links into national programmes in Ireland, for example, Healthy Ireland.

Whilst the strong support for the Investment Area, some respondents expressed their views that this funding should be provided by other sources, notably mainstream funding from government departments.

4.3.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme, and will ensure complementarity with statutory services provided.

Given the agreement for this area and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €25,000,000.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 3

There was a high degree of consensus across all 11 focus groups that this Theme, and the proposed Investment Areas, should be funded.

Young Voices comments on 3.1 Shared Learning Together Education Programme

Whilst some participants had previously participated in shared learning programmes, most participants were unaware if they had prior involvement. Nonetheless, they **agreed it should be resourced and welcomed the extension beyond schools and into youth work programmes.** Participants felt it was important to help young people venture beyond their community groups, especially as there may be limited opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds. Several participants recommended that the themes within shared education programmes should be broader and longer-term and not just focused on Catholic/Protestant Communities but focus on race, gender sexual orientation too.

Young Voices comments on 3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme

Young people across all the Peace4Youth projects represented supported the proposal for funding this Investment Area. They also agreed that an employability element would be a welcome addition to further enhance PEACE PLUS Youth Programmes.

Recommendations by young people on other elements that could be contained within the focus on employability included; understanding employment rights and responsibilities, advice on starting your own business, understanding different financial services, understanding credit scores, good budgeting/financial management, and understanding employee contributions. A flexible approach to work placements was recommended as these could be valuable to some young people and feel like an additional pressure for others. Time for sourcing valuable placements and supporting young people during work placements was emphasised.

Young Voices comments on 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

Resourcing a specific Youth Mental Health Programme was widely welcomed across all the focus groups. Young people outlined an increase in mental health issues that arose during the lockdown and recognised that statutory mental health services are under-resourced, creating a shortage of available services when people ask for help.

Lack of understanding from parents and teachers was also cited, and this can further damage the mental health and wellbeing when a young person confides and is not provided with the proper support. Some participants believe that mental health training is too generalised. Parents and teachers need the training to recognise signs of young people experiencing mental health issues and understand how to respond appropriately to help. Mental health and wellbeing were recommended as a cross-cutting theme across the PEACE PLUS Programme. Some young people who participated in the focus groups also questioned why only €20m was allocated to youth mental health given the need for this Investment Area and a higher level of the allocated budget earmarked for the other Investment Areas under this Theme. It was also suggested that investment in mental health and wellbeing would positively impact other areas as young people could be better supported to build relationships with others.

For the SEUPB response to Theme 3 Investment Areas, see sections 4.3.1.1, 4.3.2.1, 4.3.1.1.

The SEUPB places great emphasis on the young voices comments on the content of this Theme, which is specifically targeted at young people, and will incorporate the comments into the Call development process.

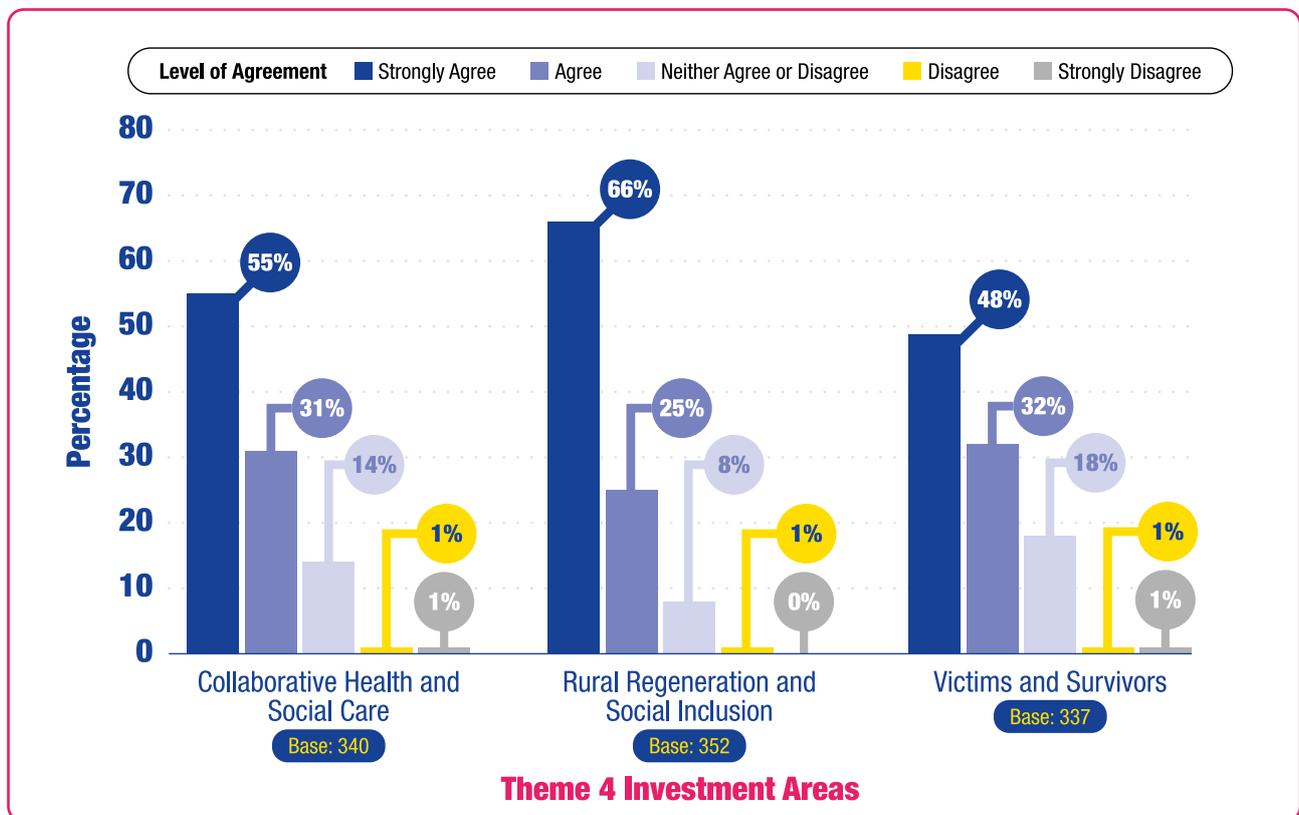
4.4 Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities

Q.7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 4?



Q.8 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.7.

FIGURE 9



Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 4.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 80% to 91%.

4.4.1 Investment Area 4.1 Collaborative Health and Social Care

In total, there were 340 respondents to this question, and 75 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 86% of respondents agreed with Collaborative Health and Social Care as an Investment Area under Theme 4.

As shown in Figure 9 above,

- 55% strongly agreed;
- 31% agreed;
- 14% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The importance of health and wellbeing to individuals and the community was cited within the overwhelming support for this Investment Area. In addition, many respondents drew on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was seen to exacerbate challenges facing the sector.

The opportunities to build, expand and strengthen cross-border collaboration in healthcare provision were highlighted and welcomed by several respondents. In particular, the respective impacts of both Covid-19 and Brexit were identified as rationales for the need for increased investment in cross-border cooperation within the health sector. Identifying key areas of opportunities for this Investment Area, respondents highlighted recommendations to expand and strengthen existing cross-border cancer services and the potential to address the need for drug, addiction, and crisis intervention services.

Action to support innovative community-based models of health and social care was very much welcomed by respondents, who highlighted the importance of collaborative strategies to ensure proper care across the community; focusing on community-based health services was particularly welcomed. The need and opportunity for initiatives within this Investment Area to address health inequalities were further welcomed, with the recommendation that the positive impact of learning opportunities on the wider social determinants of health be built into initiatives to transform lives and reduce health-related inequalities. Potential focus areas highlighted by respondents included: rural areas, young people, older people, and carers – with the Investment Area’s capturing of the challenges facing rural areas being particularly welcomed.

4.4.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €97,000,000.

4.4.2 Investment Area 4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion

In total, there were 352 respondents to this question, and 63 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 91% of respondents agreed with Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion as an Investment Area, making this the most widely agreed Investment Area under Theme 4.

As shown in Figure 9 above,

- 66% strongly agreed;
- 25% agreed;
- 8% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 0% strongly disagreed.

There was a warm welcome from a majority of respondents for the inclusion of this Investment Area. The focus on rural regeneration and social inclusion was deemed necessary and worthwhile, with the potential for programmes in this area to support many groups, including young people, older people, those living in rural communities, farmers and those with disabilities. In particular, there was an acknowledgement of the potential for initiatives to address what some felt was the imbalance between rural and urban areas in terms of investment in regeneration. To support this endeavour, it was suggested that an investment readiness programme might be beneficial to support rural communities to prepare and be ready to access future investment opportunities.

Recommendations within the Investment Area included programmes that focus on rural regeneration and social inclusion, particularly those targeted at young people for the future, and intergenerational programmes of identified needs-based support. Respondents expressed further recognition for this Investment Area to promote social, economic and environmental projects, which could contribute to sustainable regeneration, social inclusion and the creation of healthy, green and thriving rural communities.

4.4.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.

4.4.3 Investment Area 4.3 Victims and Survivors

In total, there were 337 respondents to this question, and 78 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 80% of respondents agreed with Victims and Survivors as an Investment Area under Theme 4.

As shown in Figure 9 above,

- 48% strongly agreed;
- 32% agreed;
- 18% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

Across several responses, there was a recognition of the vital support that PEACE Programmes have provided for Victims and Survivors. Moreover, the provision for continued support under this Investment Area within PEACE PLUS was welcomed. Key areas of importance for this Investment Area highlighted by respondents include:

- The impact of continued legacy issues;
- Addressing societal divisions;
- Providing support for the physical and mental health needs of victims and survivors; and
- Understanding and providing support for trauma and the profound, cyclical and intergenerational nature of its impact across the community.

In this way, there was a recognition of the need to ensure access to trauma-informed integrated support and services, including a resilience programme to address victims and survivors' long-term and changing needs. Views were expressed that mental health support and the building of resilience was crucial to deal with the trauma of the past and the ability to move forward in a healthy and positive way.

Several respondents queried the eligibility criteria under the Investment Area, with clarity sought on who will be eligible for/falls under the remit of funding under victims and survivors and whether the term related to direct or indirect experiences. Furthermore, there was a recommendation for recognition, consideration, and support for carers' roles in caring for victims and survivors, who some respondents felt should be eligible under this Investment Area. Some respondents also expressed concern regarding the lack of support and provision to address equality of rights, discrimination and isolation experienced by political ex-prisoners, who respondents cite as being recognised as victims of the conflict under the Victims and Survivors Order 2006. Finally, some respondents expressed that the Investment Area focused too much on the past rather than the future, with others suggesting that support is already provided through other funding streams.

4.4.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments made as part of the development of Calls for Applications during the implementation phase of the Programme.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 4

There was consensus across all consultation focus groups that this Theme, Healthy and Inclusive Communities, and all the Investment Areas should be funded.

Several focus group participants outlined the need for this Investment Area, and specifically referenced the impact of intergenerational trauma on families and communities and suggested that if this is not properly addressed, people's mental health will continue to be negatively impacted. Participants also supported a space to share/talk about their experiences and provide closure to all families affected by the troubles.

For the SEUPB response to Theme 4 Investment Areas, see sections 4.4.1.1, 4.4.2.1 and 4.4.3.1.

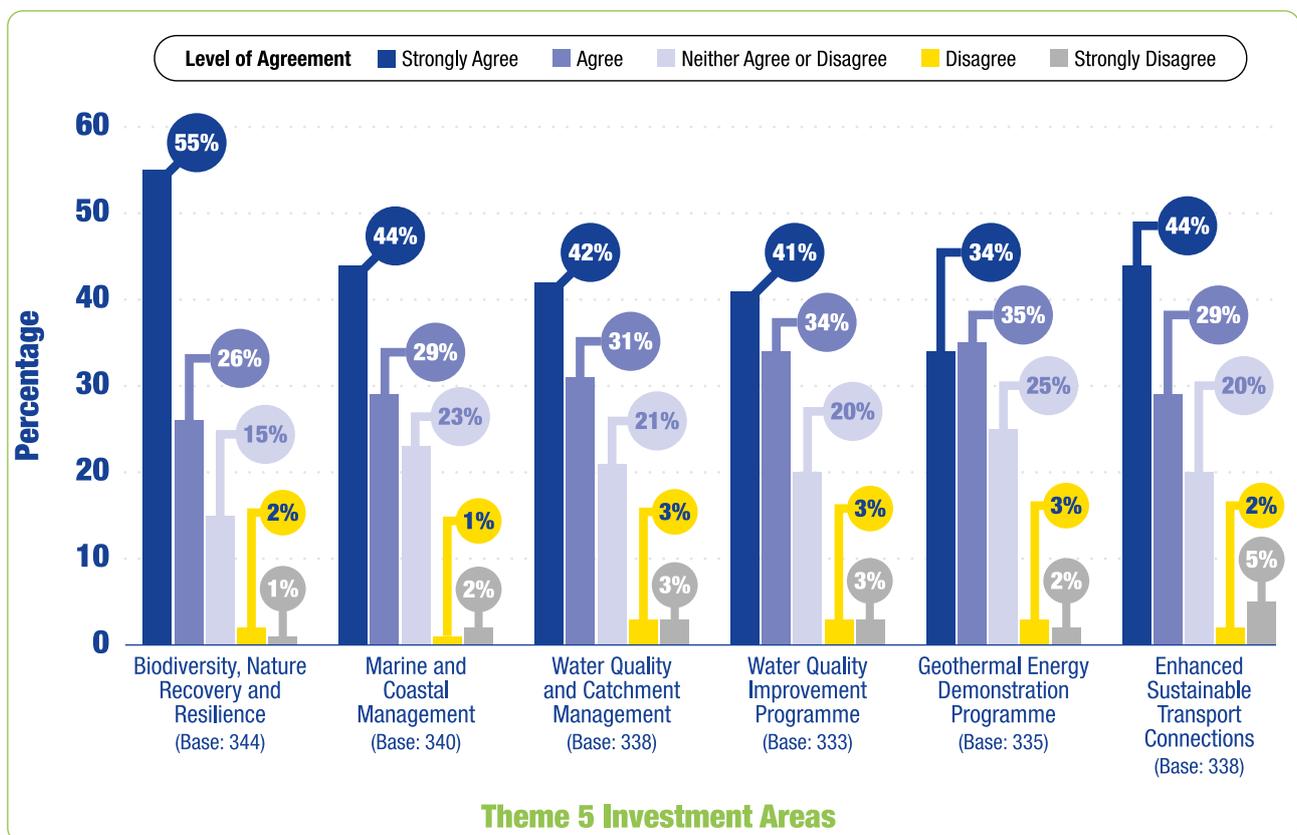
4.5 Theme 5 – Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future

Q.9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 5?



Q.10 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.9.

FIGURE 10



Theme 5 Investment Areas

Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 5.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 69% to 81%.

4.5.1 Investment Area 5.1 Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience

In total, there were 344 respondents to this question, and 71 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 81% of respondents agreed with Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience as an Investment Area, making this the most widely agreed Investment Area across Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 55% strongly agreed;
- 26% agreed;
- 15% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

There was strong support for the Investment Area, with the belief that it is a high priority and of great importance to all our futures. Many respondents referred to the link between climate change and biodiversity given that climate change is the challenge of our time; problems exist today and need to be addressed urgently.

The positive linkage between the environment, biodiversity and health and wellbeing, and economic prosperity, was highlighted by a number of respondents. The significant cross-border element was also mentioned in the context of a single biographic region, therefore cross-border partnerships and actions are required.

A number of respondents commented that education and awareness are vital to help with addressing biodiversity preservation and protection. Also, nature and climate emergencies are shared by all communities, and the environment is a common cause for communities. Therefore, local communities have a vital role to play. In addition, the community and voluntary sector and social enterprises have a role to play to address biodiversity and climate change challenges.

Whilst the majority of respondents were in agreement with the need for this Investment Area, a very small number of respondents believed that the focus of Theme 5 is too restrictive highlighting their perspective that there are many environmental challenges in NI and in the border counties that need to be recognised within PEACE PLUS. However, the most significant recommendation made by respondents was the need to address what they perceived as the insufficient budget allocated to this Investment Area.

4.5.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Given the level of support expressed and the new evidence of potential projects that could be undertaken, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €40,000,000.

4.5.2 Investment Area 5.2 Marine and Coastal Management

In total, there were 340 respondents to this question, and 75 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 73% of respondents agreed with Marine and Coastal Management as an Investment Area under Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 44% strongly agreed;
- 29% agreed;
- 23% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 2% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

There was widespread agreement among respondents on the importance of this Investment Area. Respondents highlighted the vulnerability of the marine and coastal environment within the context of the adverse effects of climate change. The importance of management and actions to protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment was recognised by respondents.

The importance of nature-based solutions was emphasised by a number of respondents as an important element of marine and coastal management, contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation.

The need for datasets to develop best practices and assist with decision making was highlighted by some respondents.

Some respondents viewed education and awareness-raising, as well as strong community engagement and participation as an important element of this Theme.

Respondents highlighted the cross-border element of this Investment Area, referencing the transboundary nature of the marine and coast environment and the interconnectedness of the assets. They recommended cross-border cooperation and collaborative approaches to develop common management strategies and action plans.

Although there was a majority in agreement with the Investment Area, some respondents who provided comments voiced their concerns that the level of budget allocation to this Investment Area was insufficient to effectively address the issue, given the scale of work required.

4.5.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Given the level of support expressed and the new evidence of potential projects that could be undertaken the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €24,786,522.

4.5.3 Investment Area 5.3 Water Quality and Catchment Management

In total, there were 338 respondents to this question, and 77 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 73% of respondents agreed with Water Quality and Catchment Management as an Investment Area under Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 42% strongly agreed;
- 31% agreed;
- 21% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 3% disagreed; and
- 3% strongly disagreed.

Many of the comments provided by respondents outlined support for the Investment Area, welcoming and endorsing the proposals.

A number of respondents, when referring to their support, also mentioned that they were supportive of the indicators and, in particular, the focus on nature-based solutions. Respondents acknowledged the importance of water quality and management, viewing it as critical within the context of climate change and adaptation. The management of water quality was recognised as important to public health and brought benefits and positive impacts to the economy, nature, people (health and wellbeing), and climate.

A number of respondents mentioned the cross-border dimension of this Investment Area. Cross-border catchments need cross-border collaboration, cooperation, management and investment.

Several respondents highlighted the role agriculture has to play within the Investment Area. There was support for dealing with nutrient pollution of land and water. It was also highlighted that proposals need to be mindful of the economic needs of communities and the sustainability of farming. Working and engaging with communities, especially those involved in agriculture, is key.

Several respondents highlighted the need to educate and train people properly to protect water quality. A focus on behavioural change was welcomed, especially where initiatives are developed with the community.

4.5.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments during the Call development process.

4.5.4 Investment Area 5.4 Water Quality Improvement Programme

In total, there were 333 respondents to this question, and 82 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 75% of respondents agreed with Water Quality Improvement Programme as an Investment Area under Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 41% strongly agreed;
- 34% agreed;
- 20% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 3% disagreed; and
- 3% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

There is support for the Investment Area, including the indicative list of actions, as evidenced by the qualitative comments. In addition, several respondents voiced their support for the inclusion of cross-border management plans, highlighting that effective catchment management must include nature-based solutions and green infrastructure.

A number of respondents believed there was a degree of overlap with Investment Area 5.3 (Water Quality and Catchment Management), highlighting that water quality is an important issue for both areas. Several respondents also noted that the consultation exercise referenced three bodies of water for investment and felt that there should be consideration of the needs of other locations and cross-border catchments.

The cross-border dimension of water quality improvement, the interconnectedness of the water resources and the opportunity for cross-border partnership were highlighted by some respondents.

Finally, the need to consider how local people can be engaged in initiatives was highlighted, with reference to support for the delivery of education and outreach events. The involvement of all stakeholders in the development of sustainable solutions was emphasised, e.g. farmers, local communities and regulatory authorities.

4.5.4.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. However, regarding the comments made by respondents on the selection of the three bodies of water, it must be recognised that there is a finite amount of funding available, and there must be a focus on cross-border activity. The selection of these water bodies has been on this basis, and in consultation with the relevant policy Departments.

4.5.5 Investment Area 5.5 Geothermal Energy Demonstration Project

In total, there were 335 respondents to this question, and 80 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 69% of respondents agreed with Geothermal Energy Demonstration Project as an Investment Area under Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 34% strongly agreed;
- 35% agreed;
- 25% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 3% disagreed; and
- 2% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The majority of comments about this Investment Area expressed support for the geothermal programme in the need to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The current climate crisis, the need for climate action and the need to reach net-zero carbon emissions were cited by many respondents as a reason why this Investment Area is important. Increasing the uptake of renewable and sustainable energy is a priority that needs support.

A number of respondents, whilst welcoming the investment in geothermal, commented that the Investment Area should be broadened to include other types of renewable energy; mentioning solar, wind, tidal, hydropower, hydrogen and anaerobic digestors/biogas as examples.

It was noted that decarbonisation would be achieved through a low carbon renewable mix.

Some respondents highlighted their support for a demonstration project to assist with gathering evidence, making policy and the regulatory/legislative requirements. The need to learn from external expertise, experience, and other approaches was also mentioned, and the need to involve the general public and raise citizen awareness and understanding.

Finally, some respondents emphasised that any supported actions in this Investment Area must ensure no negative impact on nature/biodiversity.

Although there was majority support for the Investment Area, some respondents expressed concern of potential limitations regarding the sole selection of geothermal energy for development, with others highlighting their perspective that the scope of the Investment Area should have a wider remit to cover other sustainable, renewable energy sources or energy efficiency measures available to all areas.

4.5.5.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments as part of the Call development process. In response to some respondents comments on the focus on geothermal alone, the selection of this Investment Area has been made based on the potential cross-border activity, and also on the basis that there is a finite amount of money available, and the Programme must focus on areas that offer a high degree of potential for cross-border activity between organisations.

4.5.6 Investment Area 5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Transport Connections

In total, there were 338 respondents to this question, and 77 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 73% of respondents agreed with Enhanced Sustainable Transport Connections as an Investment Area under Theme 5.

As shown in Figure 10 above,

- 44% strongly agreed;
- 29% agreed;
- 20% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 2% disagreed; and
- 5% strongly disagreed.

There was broad support for the Investment Area. Many respondents welcomed the investment, highlighted the Belfast-Dublin railway's strategic importance, and referred to the positive environmental impact and benefits, and also highlighted other positive impacts for trade, commerce, regeneration and economic performance generally.

Several respondents also cited the importance of sustainable transport to the tourism sector, and some respondents also mentioned cross-border mobility for healthcare, education and employment.

Many respondents raised the lack of rural public transport services and the need to provide sustainable travel connectivity for rural areas (including rural border areas) to enhance the economic and social prosperity of these areas. In addition, respondents felt a need to consider connectivity and sustainable travel options more broadly from geographical and transport mode perspectives; looking at railways beyond the Belfast-Dublin line, public bus services, cycling, walking, greenway development and active travel routes.

Although a majority agreed with the Investment Area, some respondents who provided comments voiced their concerns regarding the level of funding allocated to the Belfast-Dublin railway line. For example, they advocated for redistributing funding across the thematic area and investment given to rail/transport infrastructure across other locations, including rural areas.

4.5.6.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The Belfast – Dublin railway is a critical piece of cross-border infrastructure that will support economic development and connectivity across the region. The investment in this critical infrastructure has been made on this basis, and other Investment Areas within this theme have been allocated an uplift in budget, as stated above.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 5

There was widespread agreement that the Investment Areas under Theme 5, Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future, were important Investment Areas and should be funded.

Young people in the consultation focus groups highlighted environmental issues, such as climate change, affect us all and recognised the role everyone in society has to protect the environment. In particular, they felt awareness-raising initiatives were important to help people understand their role and the negative impact of actions like deliberate fires in the Mourne Mountains. Young people also welcomed opportunities to get involved in regeneration and environmental issues. Furthermore, investment in practical solutions that support people to make better environmental decisions was also considered valuable.

A recommendation that emerged from the consultation focus groups included funding to support people to advocate, campaign and challenge, to ensure that government and organisations can be held accountable on environmental issues.

For the SEUPB response to Theme 5 Investment Areas, see sections 4.5.1.1, 4.5.2.1, 4.5.3.1, 4.5.4.1, 4.5.5.1 and 4.5.6.1.



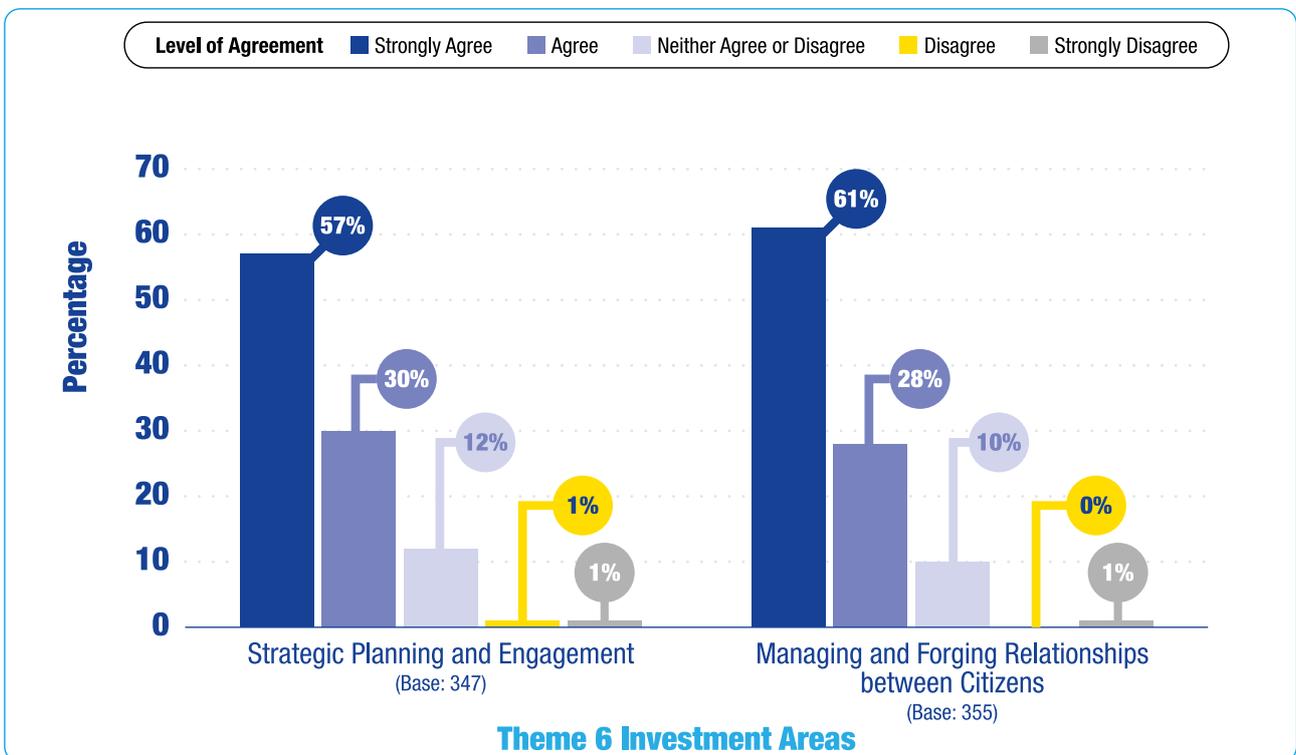
4.6 Theme 6 – Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration

Q.11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas under Theme 6?



Q.12 Please outline your reasons why for answers on Q.11.

FIGURE 11



Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agree with all the Investment Areas across Theme 6.

The level of agreement across the Investment Areas ranged from 87% to 89%.

4.6.1 Investment Area 6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement

In total, there were 347 respondents to this question, and 68 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 87% of respondents agreed with Strategic Planning and Engagement as an Investment Area under Theme 6.

As shown in Figure 11 above,

- 57% strongly agreed;
- 30% agreed;
- 12% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 1% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The majority of respondents welcomed Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration in the PEACE PLUS Programme. However, they recognised the challenges and obstacles to cross-border cooperation and the additional time, skill and expertise required. Specific reference was made regarding the need and appropriate timing for investment in cross-border engagement activities to resolve issues related to diverging legislation on either side of the border.

Actions widely supported by respondents in this Investment Area included: scoping, developing, analysing, and delivering cross-border strategies in areas such as energy; the environment, including climate action and air quality sub-theme; tourism branding/marketing; business and economic growth and health; cross-border feasibility studies and data collection; developing pilot project initiatives; sharing expertise/experience; and training to enhance capacity.

Strategic planning and engagement with political buy-in and engagement across sectors and government departments was described by respondents as a powerful peace-building tool and would ensure EU policy objectives are met alongside PfG requirements. In particular, respondents felt this investment would provide strategic support and impetus to identify and overcome barriers to cross-border working and advance cooperation in different sectors. It was also deemed by some respondents to be crucial in building positive, sustainable relationships within and between communities, on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Great Britain. Furthermore, it was suggested that proposals for shared learning, training, and staff exchanges would build institutional capacity for future collaboration.

Environment sector representatives on both sides of the border expressed concern about the risk of divergence in environmental legislation and standards. However, they believe this Investment Area would facilitate a strategic approach, reducing the risk from divergence and improving sectoral and citizen engagement in environmental issues on both sides of the border. This Investment Area was also seen to offer significant potential to help progress the commitment in place from both governments, council areas, and universities to realise the potential of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.

Respondents also recognised efficiencies and potential opportunities through this investment. For example, geographically and thematically linked clusters, e.g. heritage, food, and sustainable tourism; developing strategic relationships between the FE/HE Colleges in Northern Ireland, Institutes of Technology, and Technological Universities in Ireland; increasing citizen involvement in the planning process; a pilot or all-island demonstration project in areas such as rural regeneration and nature-based cultural tourism; and cross-border initiatives with youth sector partners. Furthermore, respondents also recommended ensuring a strategic/operational fit, avoiding duplication with the Shared Island Initiative, and developing this investment as an ongoing activity, not a five or six year plan.

4.6.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments during the Call development process.

Given the level of support and analysis of the consultation findings, the budget allocation for this Investment Area was increased to €32,000,000.

4.6.2 Investment Area 6.2 Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens

In total, there were 355 respondents to this question, and 60 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 89% of respondents agreed with Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens as an Investment Area under Theme 6, making this the most highly agreed Investment Area under Theme 6.

As shown in Figure 11 above,

- 61% strongly agreed;
- 28% agreed;
- 10% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 0% disagreed; and
- 1% strongly disagreed.

There was widespread agreement among respondents on the importance of this Investment Area. Trust between partners, organisations, and citizens was an essential requirement for effective cross-border cooperation and would contribute to social and economic cohesion in Ireland. Respondents viewed the exchange of knowledge and ideas and the continued development of partnerships, understanding, and relationships in civic society networks as important, particularly post Brexit.

Also emerging from the responses was support for actions, including:

- Small scale accessible funding for cross-border projects;
- Shared challenges such as climate change;
- People-to-people project supports; and
- Linking up with sports clubs, cultural organisations, and community groups.

In recognition aware of the time, effort, and financial cost of building trust, many respondents also welcomed the long-term commitment of this Investment Area that would enable effective change.

Some respondents who agreed with the inclusion of this Investment Area believe it would help stimulate grassroots level organisations and citizens to engage in cross-border activities around shared challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change. It was also thought to provide opportunities for communities to deliver on investments of benefit to their areas.

Enhanced collaborative partnerships (north/south and east/west) at all levels in society were deemed crucial to the peace process and to realising the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement's aims and building positive and sustainable relationships.

Several respondents also made some recommendations for this Investment Area, including:

- No requirement for all cross-border work to have a specific peace and reconciliation or cross-community ratio to participate;
- A broad remit instead of narrow interest groups;
- Projects developed with relevant and diverse civil society organisations, including women's organisations;
- The inclusion of strategic interventions;
- Citizen-led rather than experts advising local citizens;
- A focus on youth links; and
- Consideration of the role of educational institutions.

Finally, some respondents voiced their desire to include funded projects in areas such as the environment, anti-poverty, health, sports, culture/arts, and business.

4.6.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this Investment Area and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments as part of the Call development process, and has kept this theme very flexible to facilitate the inclusion of a wide range of sectors and activities. Cross-border work is also Peace Building work by its nature.



Young Voices Consultation on Theme 6

There was general agreement that funding should be available to promote and support cross-border collaborations as focus groups participants felt it was important to promote good relations and find common ground under Theme 6. However, several young people were also keen to emphasise that cross-border collaborations should involve a wide spectrum of different communities and groups from Northern Ireland that need to be cross-community for this to work.

For the SEUPB response for Theme 6 Investment Areas, see sections 4.6.1.1 and 4.6.2.1.

5. Analysis of the Indicative Budgets Allocations

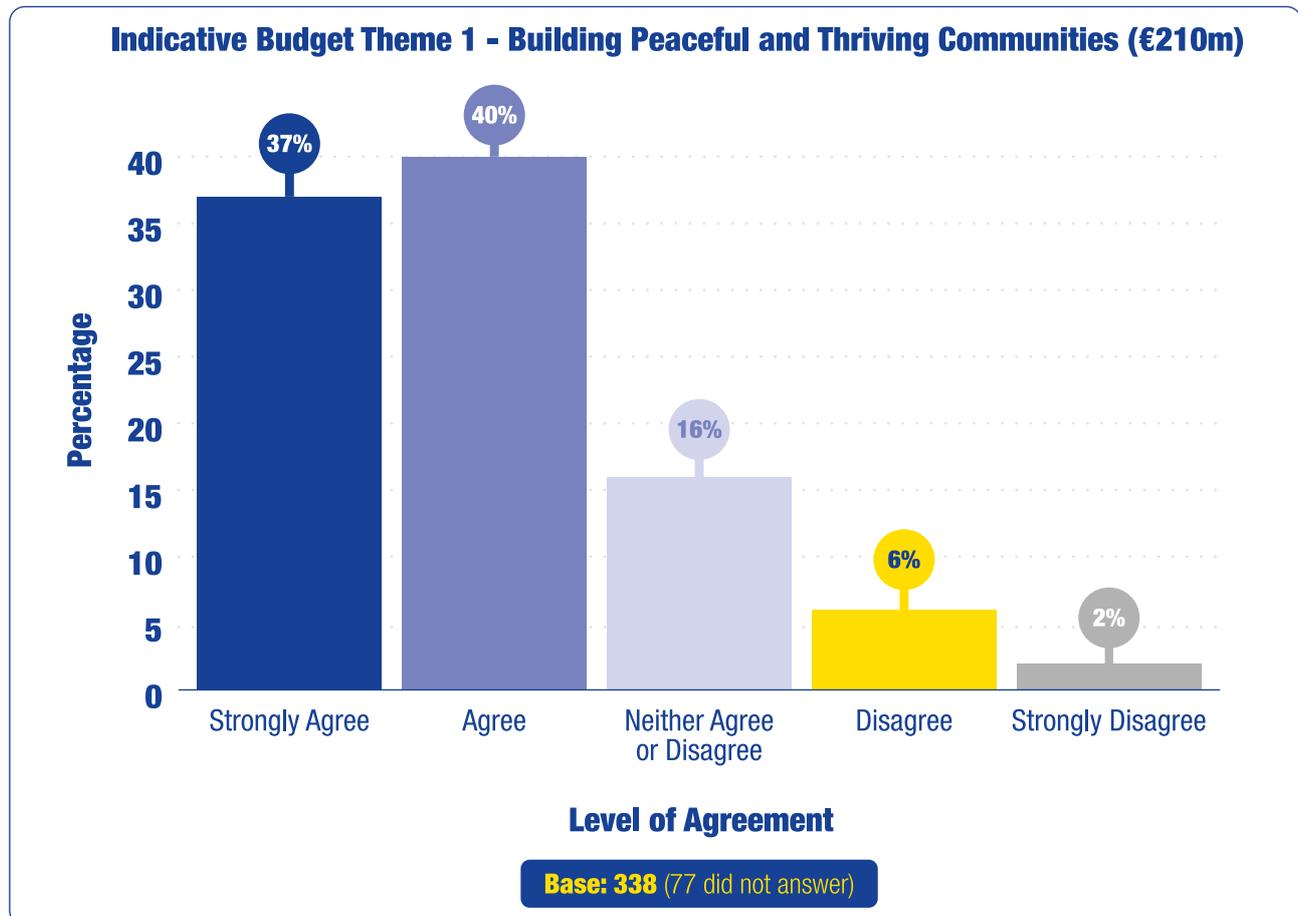
Q.13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the indicative budget allocations for the six key Themes outlined below?

Q.14 Please outline the reasons for your answers on Q.13.

Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with each of the indicative budget allocations for each Theme under the draft PEACE PLUS Programme.

5.1 Indicative Budget Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities (€210m)

FIGURE 12



In total, there were 338 respondents to this question, and 77 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 77% of respondents agreed with the indicative budget of (€210m) for Theme 1, Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities, making this the most widely agreed indicative budget allocation. As shown in Figure 12 above, 37% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 16% neither agreed nor disagreed, 6% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

The majority of respondents agreed with the indicative budget allocation for this Theme. They believe this has the most explicit link to peace and underpins the other initiatives, helping to create a lasting legacy. Other reasons why respondents agreed with the indicative budget allocation included the wide reach of the Theme and the amount invested, which was believed could make a real difference in communities. Several respondents also welcomed the indicative budget allocation, which they felt was necessary, particularly in the current context of Brexit, tensions surrounding the NI Protocol, and post-pandemic.

Whilst the majority agreed, some respondents highlighted the indicative budget was inadequate for Investment Area 1.4 Re-imagining communities, and the indicative budget was too high an allocation for Investment Area 1.1 Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans. Furthermore, a few respondents recommended the funding balance should be evenly spread across the Investment Areas in Theme 1. A small number of respondents who disagreed with the indicative budget allocation also commented on the lack of investment to address discrimination towards political ex-prisoners. Other suggested the need to reallocate some of the funding ring-fenced for councils to provide further financial support for skills.

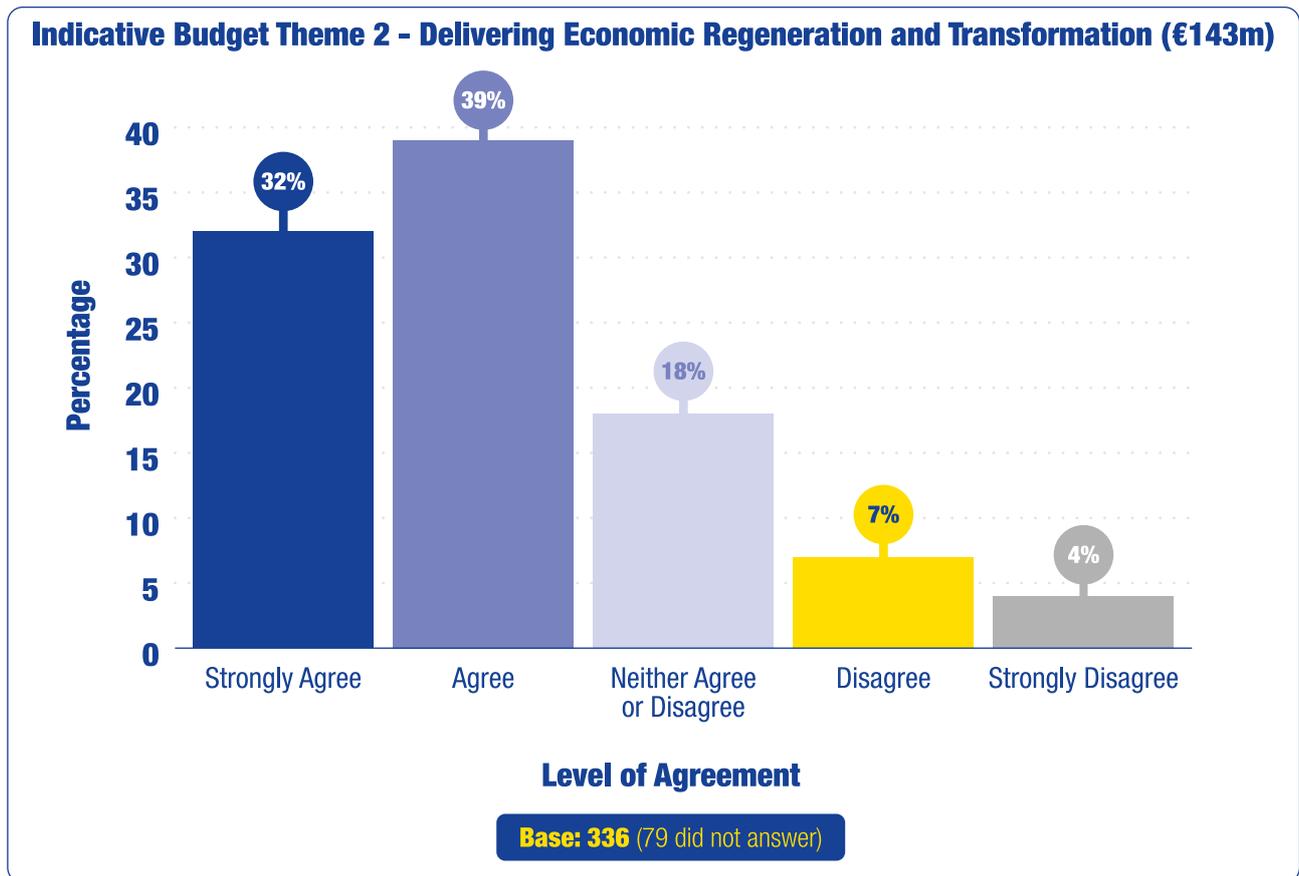
5.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 1 was increased to €250,000,000. The budget allocations for Investment Areas 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4 were increased to €110,000,000, €35,000,000, and €75,000,000, respectively.

5.2 Indicative Budget Theme 2 – Delivering Economic Development and Transition (€143m)

FIGURE 13



In total, there were 336 respondents to this question, and 79 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 71% of respondents agreed with the indicative budget of (€143m) for Delivering Economic Development and Transition. As shown in Figure 13 above, 32% strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 18% neither agreed nor disagreed, 7% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed.

Respondents expressed significant agreement with the indicative budget levels assigned to Theme two, Delivering Economic Development and Transition (€143m).

Investment in this area was recognised as important in the context of Covid-19 and Brexit and their wider economic impacts in the future. Supporting economic regeneration through this Theme was seen as having the potential to be an empowering, transformative and vital element of the PEACE PLUS Programme more generally. Moreover, several respondents cited the importance of economic stability and job creation on securing long-term peace and stability in society.

Supporting the proposed investment, some respondents highlighted a need to ensure that the allocation of funds within the Theme would adequately support the SME sector, particularly the tourism sector, which has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and may also be heavily impacted upon by Brexit. Moreover, respondents stressed the importance that the budget allocation also sufficiently considers the needs within rural areas.

Some respondents advocated for the need for increased budget allocations throughout this Theme. Several cited the potentially unknown impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on both local and national economies, and others suggested that the scale of the transformative potential of initiatives within this thematic area warrants the additional investment.

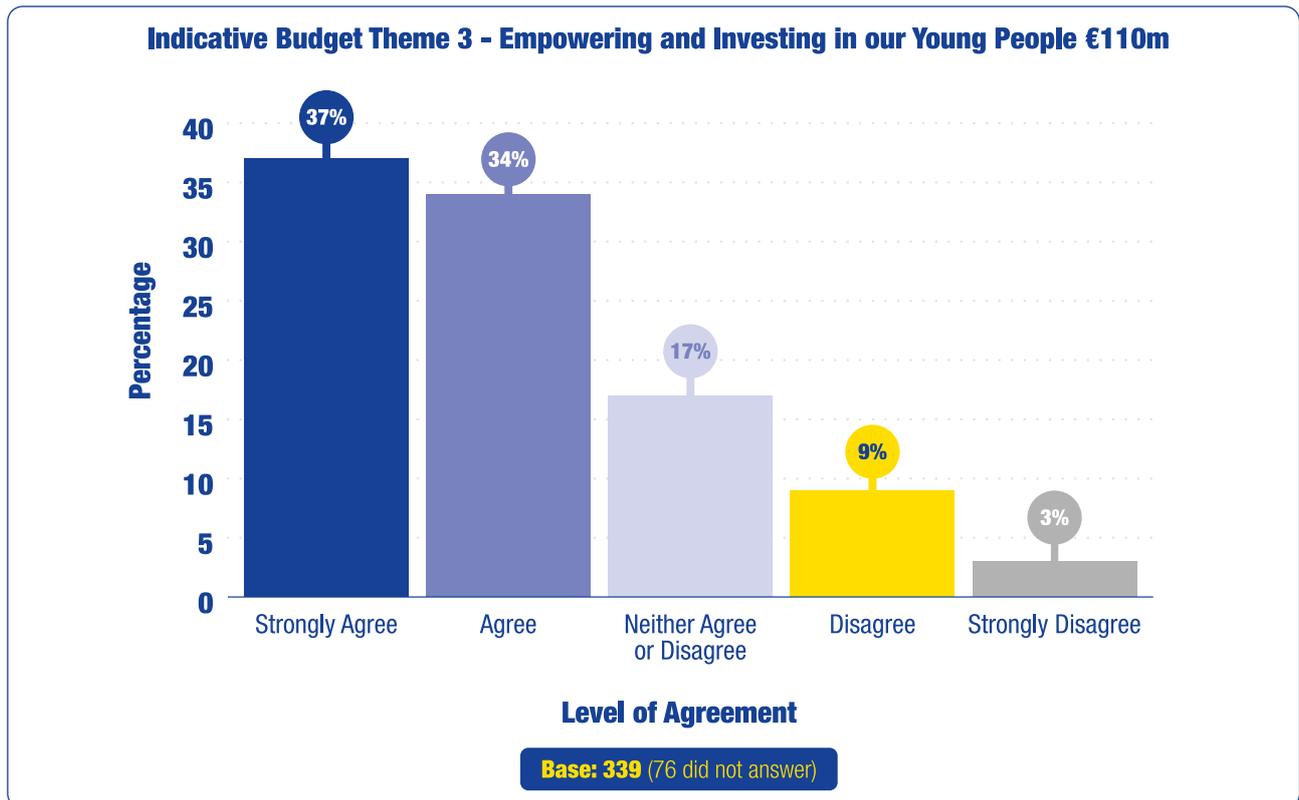
5.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 2 was increased to €170,000,000. The budget allocations for Investment Areas 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 were increased to €25,000,000, €65,000,000, and €50,000,000, respectively.

5.3 Indicative Budget Theme 3 – Empowering and Investing in our Young People (€110m)

FIGURE 14



In total, there were 339 respondents to this question, and 76 respondents did not answer.

Overall, 71% of respondents agreed with the indicative budget of (€110m) for Empowering and Investing in our Young People. As shown in Figure 14 above, 37% strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, 9% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed.

The majority of respondents who provided comments agreed with the indicative budget allocation for Theme 3. They recognised the importance of investing in young people who they described as our future. Respondents also expressed urgency on the need for adequate funding to support young people who face new challenges due to Brexit, political divisions related to the NI Protocol, and the impact of Covid-19 that was said to negatively impact their personal development, education, employment opportunities, and mental health.

Given these emerging concerns and, in particular, the scale of the need for mental health support, some respondents advocated for increased budget allocations through this Theme but specifically, Investment Area 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing. Respondents viewed this as under-resourced and insufficient to make any real difference, and some respondents recommended an uplift of the indicative budget of €20m for this Investment Area to the indicative budget of €45m for the other Investment Areas under Theme 3.

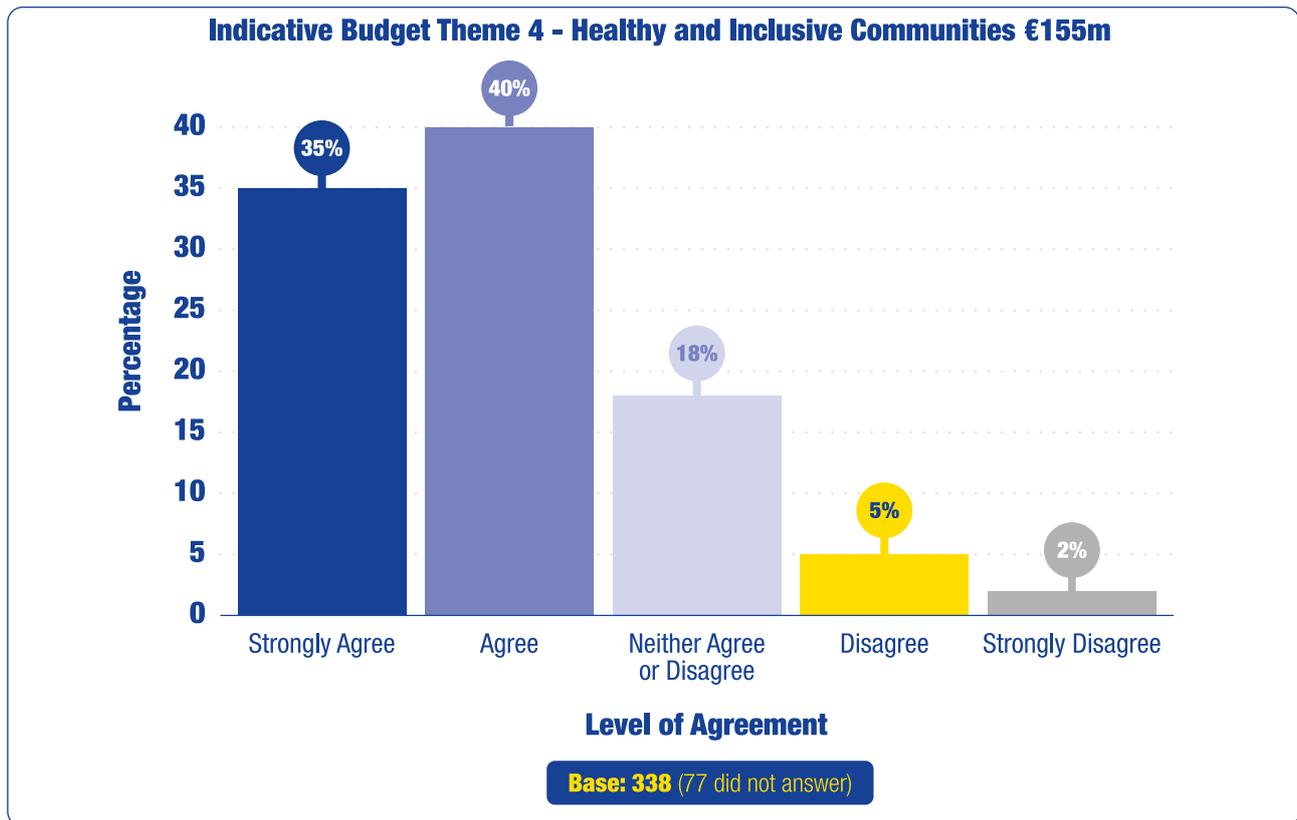
5.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 3 was increased to €123,210,735. The budget allocations for Investment Areas 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 were subsequently increased to €51,210,735, €47,000,000 and €25,000,000, respectively. It is important to note that funding in Investment Area 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing, must not replace or replicate services that should be provided by the statutory agencies.

5.4 Indicative Budget Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities (€155m)

FIGURE 15



In total, there were 338 responses to this question, and 77 respondents did not answer.

The majority of respondents (75%) agreed with the indicative budget of (€155m) for Theme 4, Healthy and Inclusive Communities. As shown in Figure 15 above, 35% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 18% neither agreed nor disagreed, 5% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed.

The majority of respondents who provided comments supported the budget allocation because of the significance of the Theme. Respondents noted the importance of health and wellbeing to society and to long-term peace, and felt the proposed, substantial level of investment was warranted. The imperative nature of investment in health was identified by several respondents, which they felt was ever-increasing as a consequence of Covid-19. Respondents further welcomed the potential for investment to provide opportunities for cross-border collaboration, providing support to victims and survivors, and providing support to rural areas.

Some respondents advocated for an increase in the budget allocation in this area, particularly referencing the scale of need within the thematic area and the unknown longer-term impact of Covid-19.

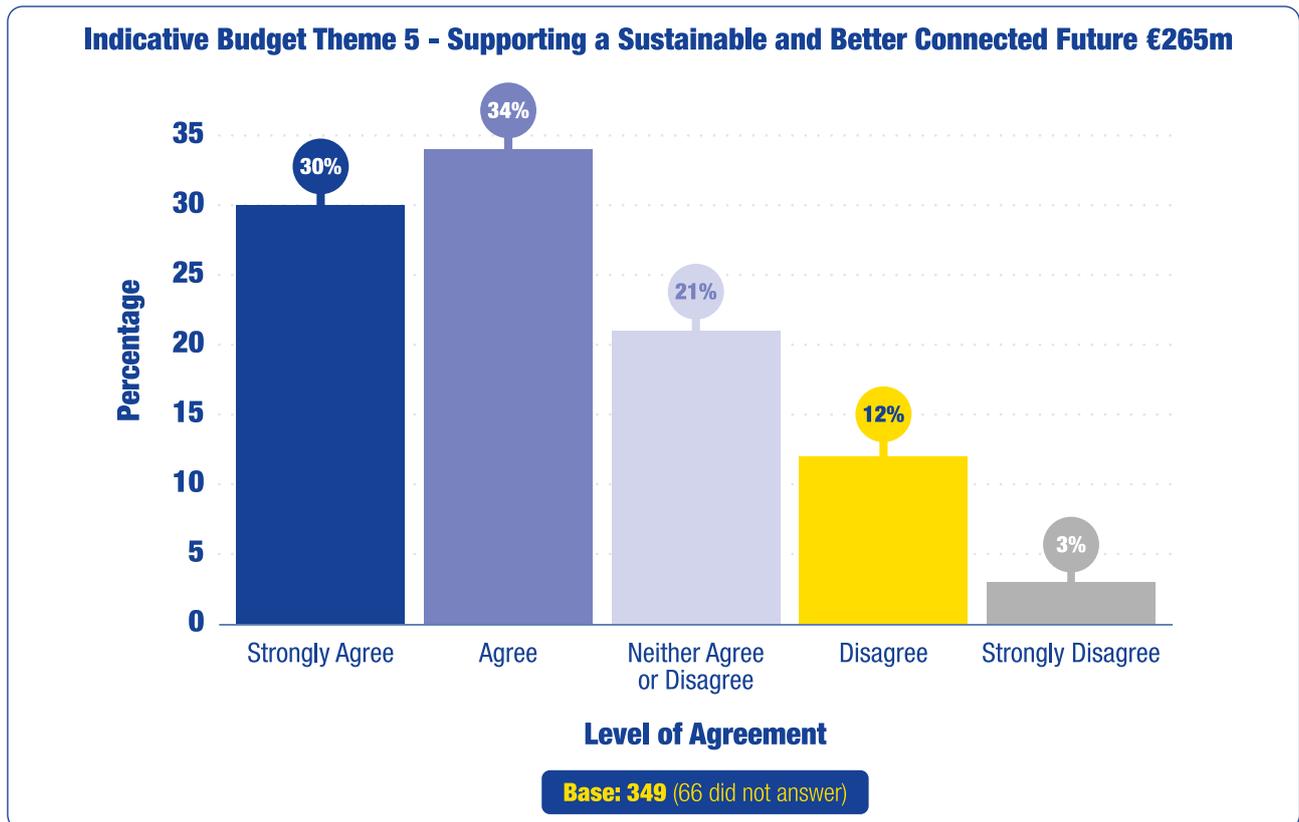
5.4.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 4 was increased to €172,000,000. The budget allocation for Investment Area 4.1 was increased to €97,000,000. The SEUPB recognises the importance of healthcare post pandemic, however it is important to note that this Theme provides funding to non-statutory interventions.

5.5 Indicative Budget Theme 5 – Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future (€265m)

FIGURE 16



In total, there were 349 responses to this question, and 66 respondents did not answer.

The majority of respondents (64%) agreed with the indicative budget of (€265m) for Theme 5, Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future. As shown in Figure 16 above, 30% strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 21% neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed.

The majority of respondents who provided comments supported the budget allocation because of the significance of the Theme. The importance of our environment generally, as well as to our health and wellbeing was highlighted. The necessity of a sustainable approach to how we live was mentioned, alongside climate change and action. The importance of a sustainable, connected future to any development (economic or social) was also cited as a reason to support the indicative budget allocation.

A number of respondents referred to the biodiversity emergency and opined that more money was needed for Investment Areas 5.1 and 5.2. Some comments also suggest that less of the budget allocation should be on the single deliverable of the train infrastructure between Belfast and Dublin. Suggested redirections include the areas mentioned above or investment in sustainable travel across all areas, with particular reference to transport links in rural settings and further investment in broader environmental issues.

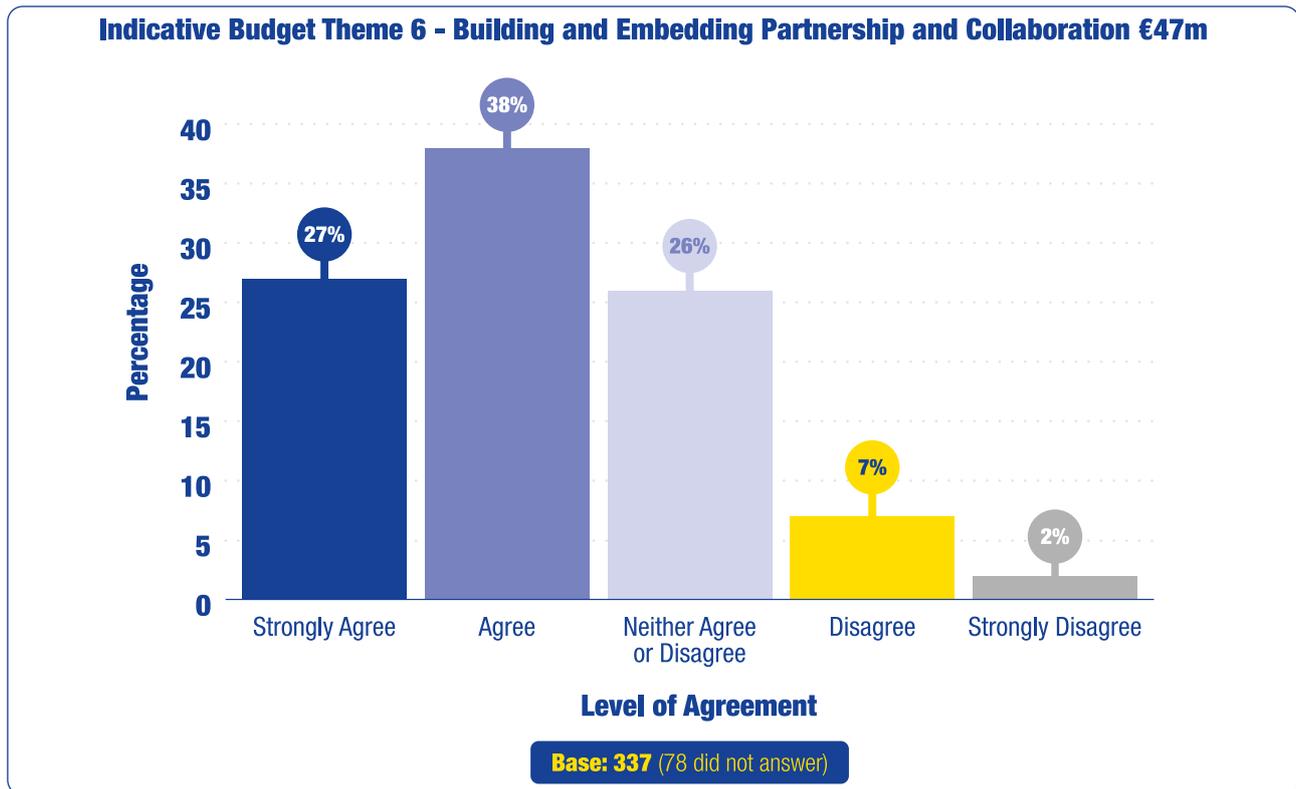
5.5.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 5 was increased to €302,786,522. The budget allocations for Investment Areas 5.1 and 5.2 were increased to €40,000,000 and €24,786,522, respectively, in recognition of evidence presented of a pipeline of cross-border projects.

5.6 Indicative Budget Theme 6 - Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration (€47m)

FIGURE 17



In total, there were 337 responses to this question, and 78 respondents did not answer.

The majority of respondents (65%) agreed with the indicative budget of (€47m) for Theme 6, Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration. As shown in Figure 17 above, 27% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed, 7% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed.

The majority of respondents who provided comments agreed with the indicative budget allocation for Theme 6, as working in partnership was deemed a key priority of the PEACE PLUS Programme. Respondents also recognised the wide range of opportunities that could potentially be funded under this Theme and considered the level of investment as appropriate for the outcomes to be achieved. Furthermore, several respondents cited the commitment to long-term investment under Investment Area 6.2 as another reason to support the indicative budget allocation.

Several respondents advocated the need for an increased budget allocation through this Theme. The main reason outlined why an increase in budget was needed was because it would support research, strategic and practical cooperation across a wide range of areas, and there was a concern it could be over-subscribed. To alleviate this concern, some respondents recommended that budget allocations are not linked solely to population levels but weighed to consider the needs of border counties and address rural disadvantages.

5.6.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the budget allocation to this Theme and notes the specific comments made by respondents.

Following the consultation process, the budget allocation for Theme 6 was increased to €52,000,000. The budget allocation for Investment Area 6.1 was increased to €32,000,000 to consider the needs outlined by respondents.

6. Analysis of the Proposals to Reduce the Administrative Burden

Q.15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following proposals would help to reduce the administrative burden for applicants to the new Programme?

Q.16 Please outline your reasons why for answers in Q.15.

Key findings: Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that all the proposals would help to reduce the administrative burden for applicants to the new Programme.

The level of agreement across the proposals for reduce the administrative burden ranged from 83% to 94%.

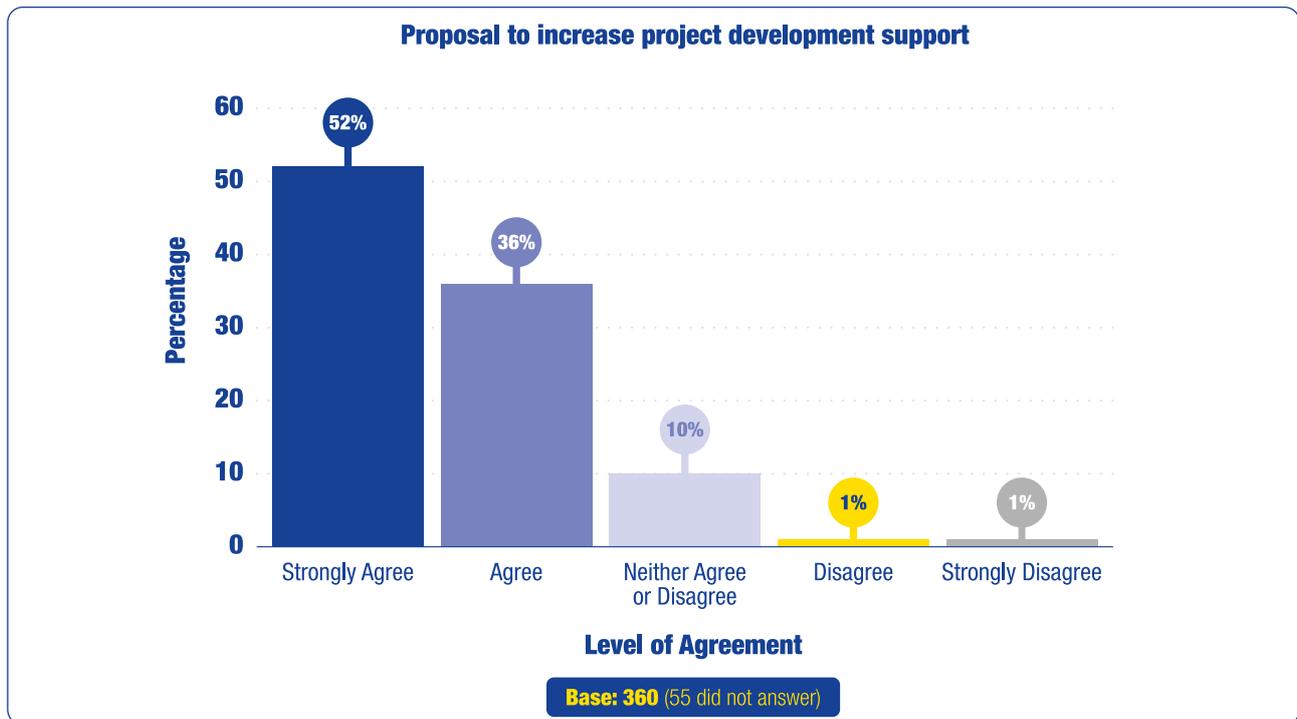
Of all the proposals, the most widely agreed proposals to help reduce the administrative burden for applicants to the new Programme included:

1. Proposal to simplify the application process (94% of respondents agreed);
2. Proposal to make the monitoring system more user-friendly (93% of respondents agreed);
3. Proposal to increase the use of simplified cost options (91% of respondents agreed); and
4. Proposal to increase flexibility in project management (91% of respondents agreed).

In the sections below, the level of agreement for each proposal to reduce the administrative burden is examined.

6.1 Proposal to increase project development support

FIGURE 18



In total, there were 360 respondents to this question, and 55 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 88% of respondents agreed with the proposal to increase project development support.** As shown in Figure 18 above, 52% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, 1% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

A large number of respondents welcomed and strongly agreed with the proposal to increase project development support. In particular, respondents appreciated the inclusion of any measures to reduce administrative burden and welcomed the opportunity to develop organisational capacity and capability.

Whilst support for this proposal was viewed as relevant to organisations of all sizes, the importance of the proposal to smaller organisations was evident from the qualitative comments. Assistance at an early stage of project development was deemed important for smaller community, voluntary and grassroots organisations with limited capacity. Also, this support should widen participation and the reach of the Programme.

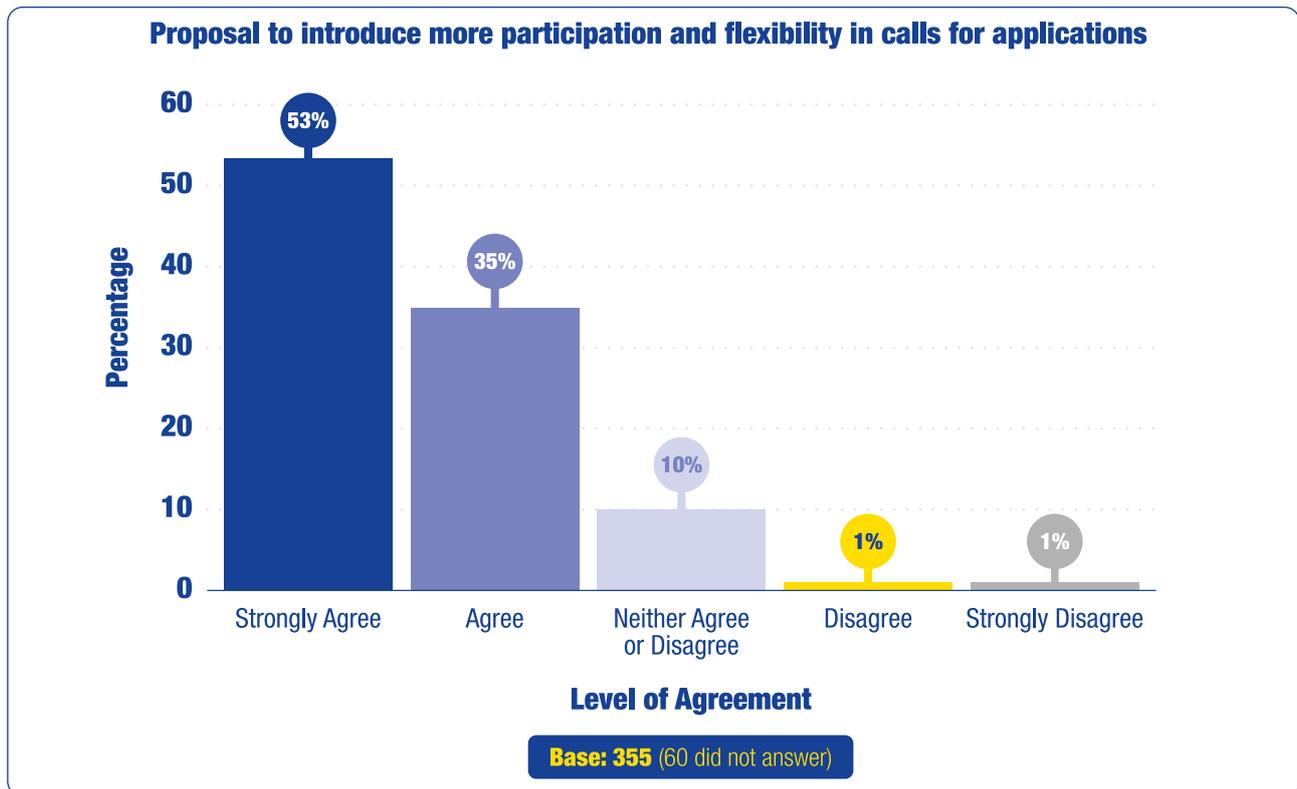
Finally, many respondents emphasised that increasing project development support should lead to better quality applications and ultimately improved quality of projects.

6.1.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and is working on a plan of activity to increase the project development support in the application and assessment phase.

6.2 Proposal to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls for applications

FIGURE 19



In total, there were 355 respondents to this question, and 60 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 88% of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls for applications.** As shown in Figure 19 above, 53% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, 1% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

The proposal to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls for applications was viewed as a positive and welcome development and strongly supported by respondents.

Encouraging greater interest in the Programme and ensuring a wider variety of organisations making applications was highlighted as favourable. In addition, many respondents emphasised the benefits of the proposals to smaller organisations in terms of facilitating more participation for those organisations who may lack capacity and need time to respond to calls.

Staggered calls were viewed as beneficial to all applicants, giving more time to prepare, develop and submit applications. Some respondents suggested a timetable or schedule of calls would be helpful to organisations in their planning processes.

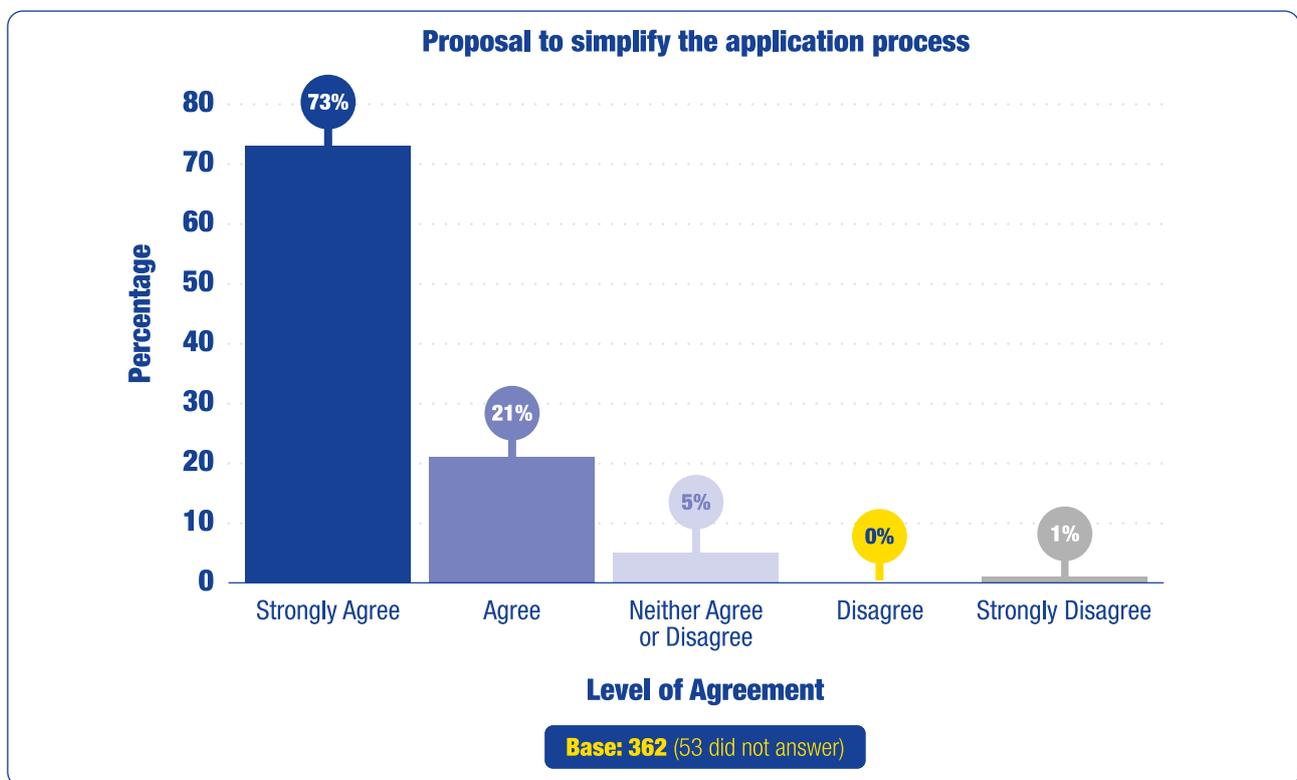
A key point highlighted by a number of respondents was the need for flexibility in the Programme to respond to emerging needs and changing circumstances, such as the pandemic.

6.2.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and is working on a plan of activity to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls during the application and assessment phase.

6.3 Proposal to simplify the application process

FIGURE 20



In total, there were 362 respondents to this question, and 53 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 94% of respondents agreed with the proposal to simplify the application process.** As shown in Figure 20 above, 73% strongly agreed, 21% agreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 0% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

There was resounding, strong support from respondents to the proposal to simplify the application process. Therefore, any simplification and streamlining of processes were welcomed.

Many respondents emphasised the importance of reducing the administrative burden and complexity associated with the application process. Historically, this has been viewed as a deterrent to funding applications, particularly for smaller, community, and voluntary sector organisations. Therefore, proposals to simplify the application process were considered necessary, especially for smaller organisations with less capacity, to be encouraged to apply for funding. Also, several respondents highlighted that there is potential to attract more applicants and improve accessibility to the Programme, widening participation, inclusion, and diversity due to a simplified application process.

Some respondents proposed that consideration should be given to a two-stage application process to ensure organisations’ optimal investment of time and resources.

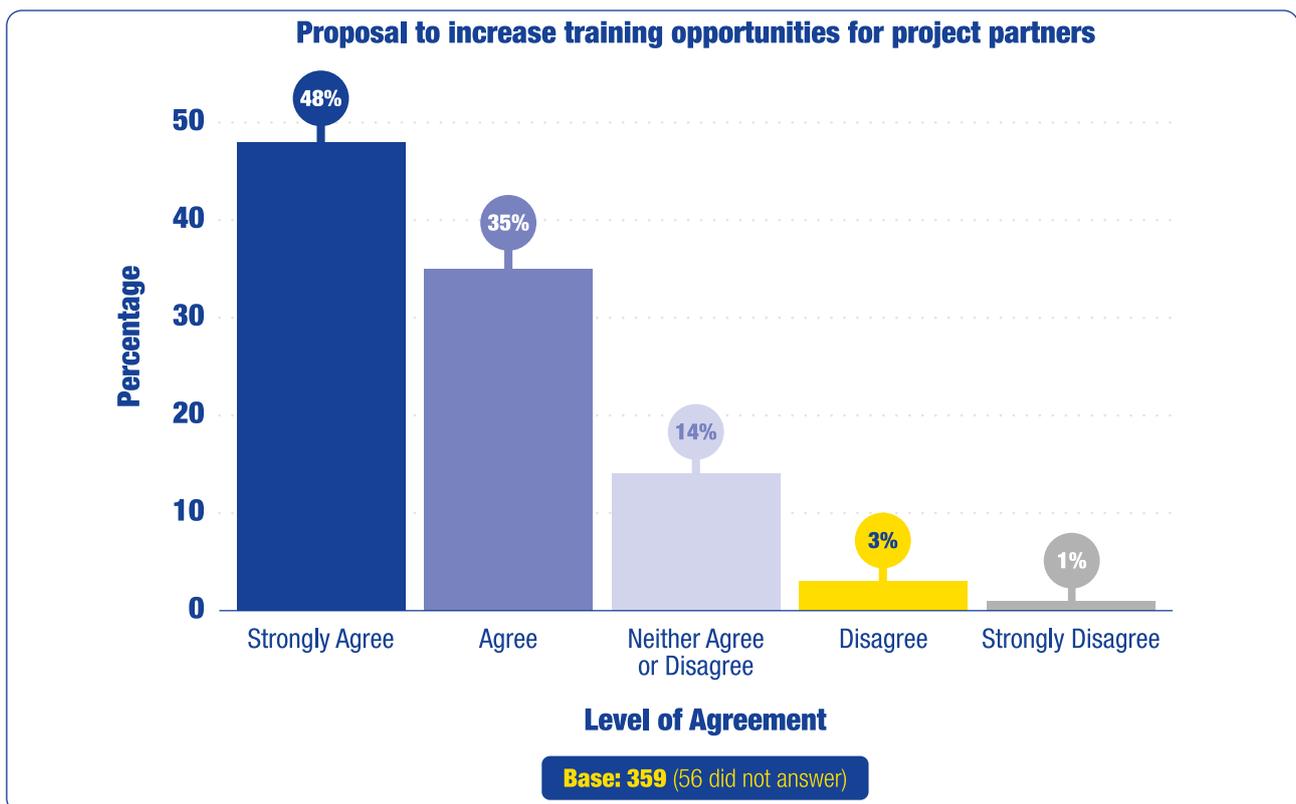
Finally, some respondents welcomed the proposal for greater coordination between the SEUPB and Accountable Departments.

6.3.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and a plan of measures to simplify the process, including simplified application forms for smaller grants.

6.4 Proposal to increase training opportunities for project partners

FIGURE 21



In total, there were 359 respondents to this question, and 56 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 83% of respondents agreed with the proposal to increase training opportunities for project partners.** As shown in Figure 21 above, 48% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed, 3% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

There was strong support for the proposal to increase training opportunities. Respondents cited various benefits from training, including building capacity and capability across all sectors and communities.

Several respondents commented on the timing of training and felt it should be offered over the lifetime of the Programme and delivered promptly.

Some respondents referred to the type of training required, commenting that it should be targeted to meet the needs of project partners. The opportunity for collaboration and sharing best practices as part of the training was highlighted by some respondents as potentially beneficial, particularly learning from previously funded project partners. Alongside training, some respondents also indicated networking opportunities and events, as well as the one to one support for projects, would also be useful.

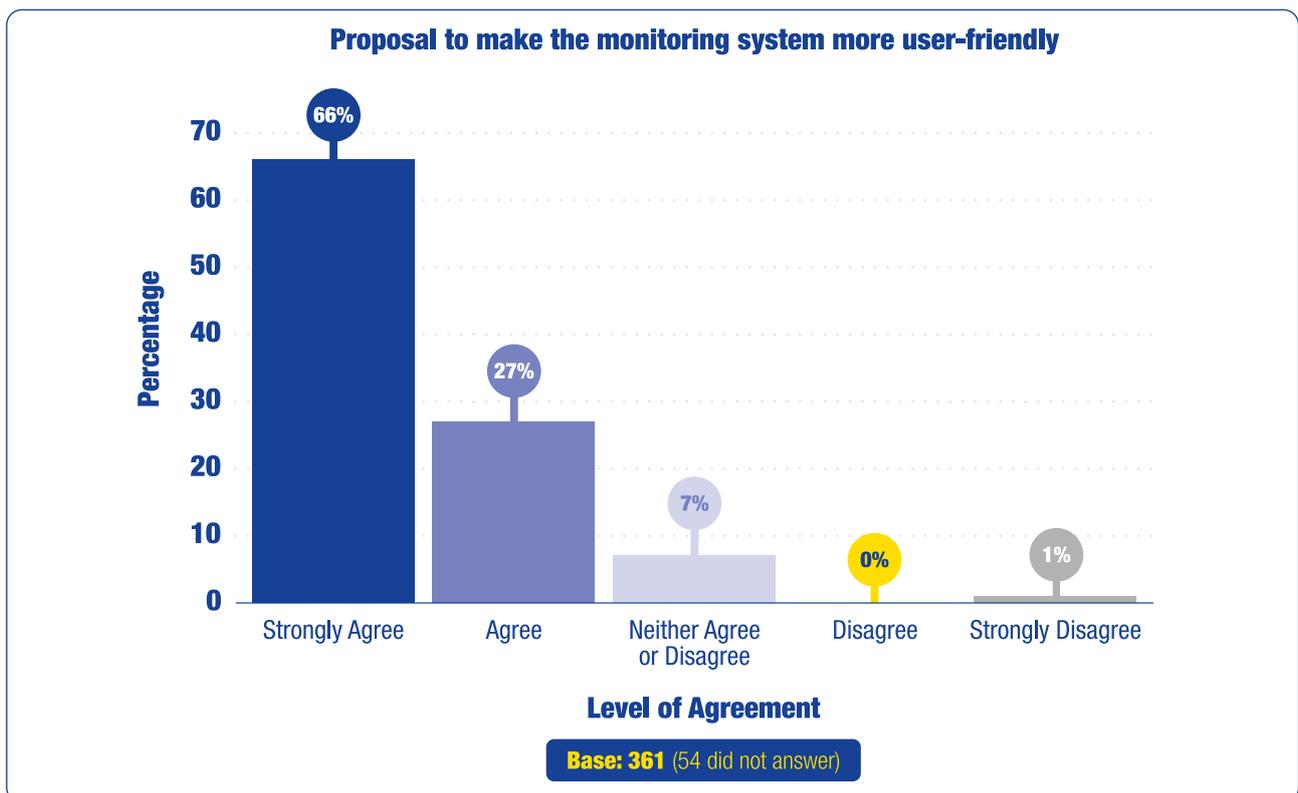
Finally, several respondents felt more online training and resources should be considered.

6.4.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and is working on a plan of activities which will increase the number of training opportunities for project partners as part of the planning and implementation phase of the Programme.

6.5 Proposal to make the monitoring system more user-friendly

FIGURE 22



In total, there were 361 respondents to this question, and 54 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 93% of respondents agreed with the proposal to make the monitoring system more user-friendly.** As shown in Figure 22 above, 66% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 7% neither agreed nor disagreed, 0% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

(Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

Respondents strongly supported the proposal to make the monitoring system more user-friendly. Support was given in the context of comments about the current Electronic Monitoring System (eMS), which many respondents described as cumbersome, time-consuming, not intuitive and lacking user-friendliness. Therefore, any improvements to the monitoring system would be welcome and reduce the administrative burden of reporting.

There were numerous comments from respondents about how the eMS could be improved, including avoiding the duplication of entry of information and retaining information from previous reporting periods.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of streamlining and reducing the time spent on monitoring to allow organisations more time to focus on project delivery.

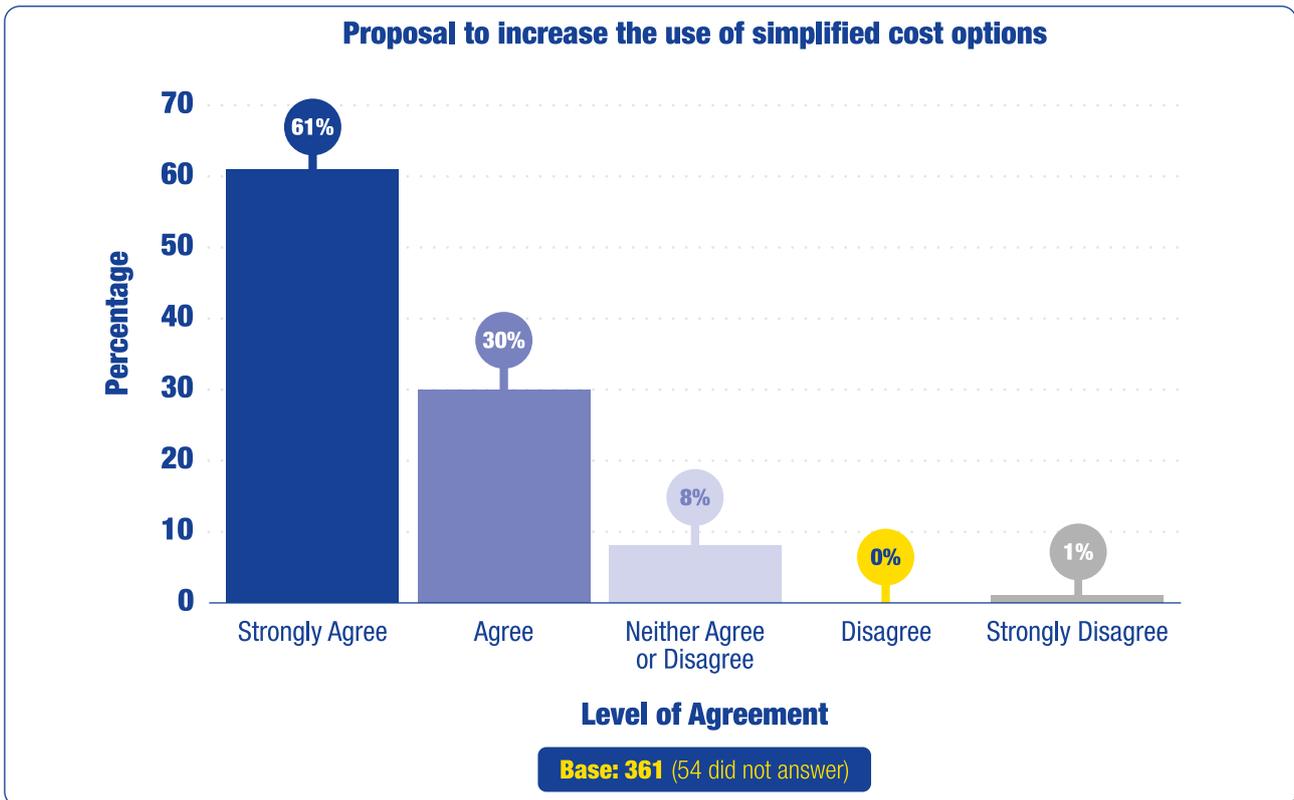
Finally, some respondents commented on the overall approach to monitoring; with the suggestion that it could be simplified.

6.5.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the comments that have been made and are in the process of putting in place a new monitoring system taking into account some of the challenges from the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

6.6 Proposal to increase the use of simplified cost options

FIGURE 23



In total, there were 361 respondents to this question, and 54 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 91% of respondents agreed with the proposal to increase the use of simplified cost options.** As shown in Figure 23 above, 61% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, 0% of respondents disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

Respondents strongly supported the proposal to increase Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) and regarded it as a useful, beneficial development. Any simplification of processes was welcome.

Many respondents commented that Simplified Cost Options would assist in reducing the administrative burden on organisations, improving efficiency, and allow projects to spend more time delivering projects.

A number of respondents cited their positive experience of simplified cost options in the current INTERREG and PEACE Programmes. These SCOs had worked well and had reduced the administrative burden successfully.

Procurement requirements were raised as an issue by some respondents who commented that requirements were a potential barrier, particularly to smaller groups.

6.6.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and increase the use of simplified cost options in the Programme.

6.7 Proposal to increase flexibility in project management

FIGURE 24



In total, there were 362 respondents to this question, and 53 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 91% of respondents agreed with the proposal to increase flexibility in project management.** As shown in Figure 24 above, 60% strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, 0% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

Respondents were highly supportive of the proposal to increase flexibility in project management, indicating that this was a positive and welcome development.

Many respondents referred to the current processes for modification requests which can cause delays and potentially impact project delivery. They welcomed the proposal to streamline modification processes for change. They supported more flexibility that would allow adjustment of certain aspects of projects, recognising that this had to be within pre-established parameters for change and that the changes did not fundamentally impact project delivery. Overall, respondents agreed that this proposal could improve decision-making, avoid delays, speed up project delivery, and make project delivery more efficient.

Some respondents commented that giving Lead Partners increased flexibility and more control over project changes and management would be beneficial.

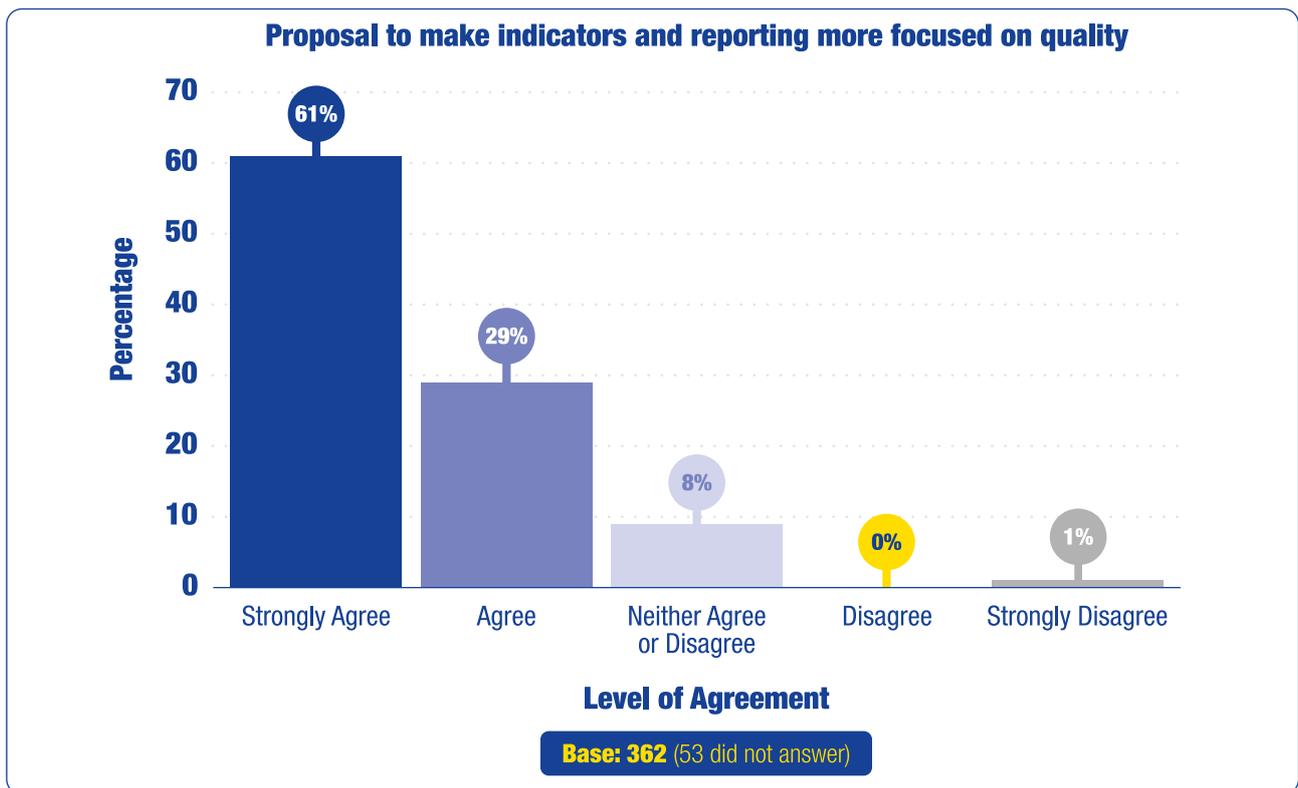
A number of respondents emphasised that flexibility in project management was essential to be responsive and adaptive to changing circumstances, new opportunities and emerging needs.

6.7.1 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB notes the support from the comments provided. The SEUPB will work with project partners to ensure that the Programme offers flexibility in project management but within the rules and regulations of the Programme.

6.8 Proposal to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality

FIGURE 25



In total, there were 362 respondents to this question, and 53 respondents did not answer. **Overall, 90% of respondents agreed with the proposal to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality.** As shown in Figure 25 above, 61% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 9% neither agreed nor disagreed, 0% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed.

Respondents strongly supported the proposal to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality. Some respondents welcomed a shift of emphasis from quantitative indicators, which they believe had been dominant in previous Programmes.

Many respondents highlighted that a focus on quality would ensure that a complete picture is presented of what has been achieved by projects and that the demonstration of outcomes and impacts is vital when assessing the benefits of projects.

Several respondents commented that while they welcomed indicators more focused on quality, it was challenging to ensure that they were appropriate, relevant, and meaningful. These indicators also needed to be agreed upon with stakeholders from the outset of projects. Some respondents also cautioned that any addition to monitoring could potentially take time away from project delivery.

Furthermore, several respondents indicated that Protestant/Catholic indicators are binary and need to be inclusive of other cultural groups and identities.

Finally, recommendations were made about achieving more focus on quality indicators and reporting, including the use of case studies, speaking directly with participants, narratives, and other evaluative tools that could contribute to a longer-term understanding of the qualitative outcomes of projects.

6.8.1 The SEUPB Response

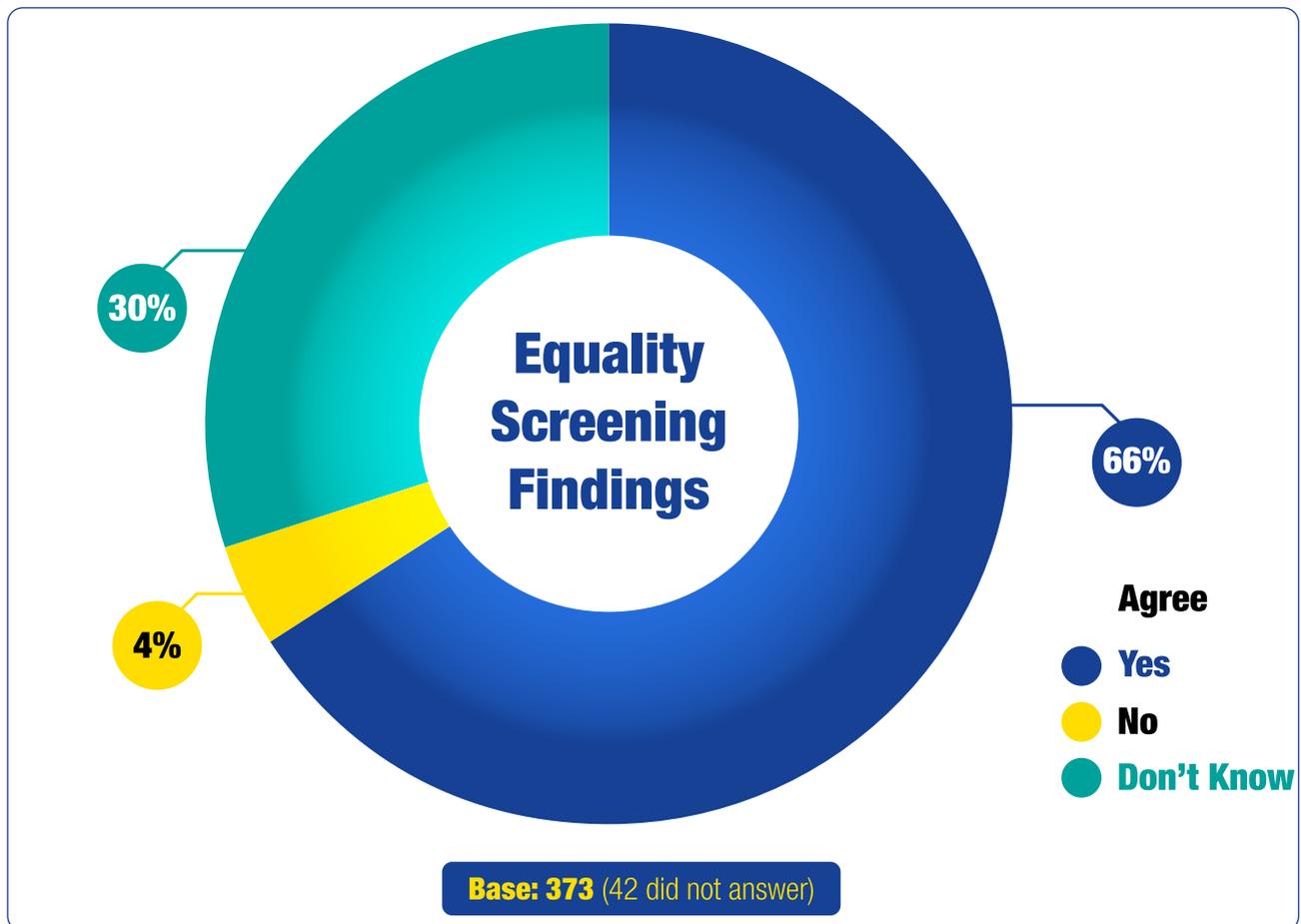
The SEUPB welcomes the support for this proposal and notes the specific comments made by respondents. The SEUPB will further analyse the comments and is undertaking work to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality.

7. Analysis of the Equality Screening Findings

7.1 Agreement with Equality Screening Findings

Q.17 Do you agree with the Equality Screening (Section 75) findings for the PEACE PLUS Programme?

FIGURE 26



There was widespread support for the equality screening process and screening decision, with two-thirds (66%, 246 respondents) agreeing. 4% (16 respondents) did not agree with the Equality Screening findings, and 30% (111) did not know.

Q.18 If no, what additional actions do we need to take and why?

Of the 4% who said no, only one respondent supported an alternative screening decision, that is, the need to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). The comments also raised a diverse range of interesting and constructive issues regarding the implementation of PEACE PLUS in general, including greater engagement and consultation concerning/gender identity, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, ex-prisoners and those with political status. It is noteworthy that the comments included very few references to the screening process or decision. A small number of issues raised by respondents included opportunities to update the screening report by referencing more recent data and alternative sources of information, particularly regarding gender. This included the Feminist Recovery Plan, expert papers for the four social inclusion strategies in Northern Ireland and data about sexual orientation.

7.2 The SEUPB Response

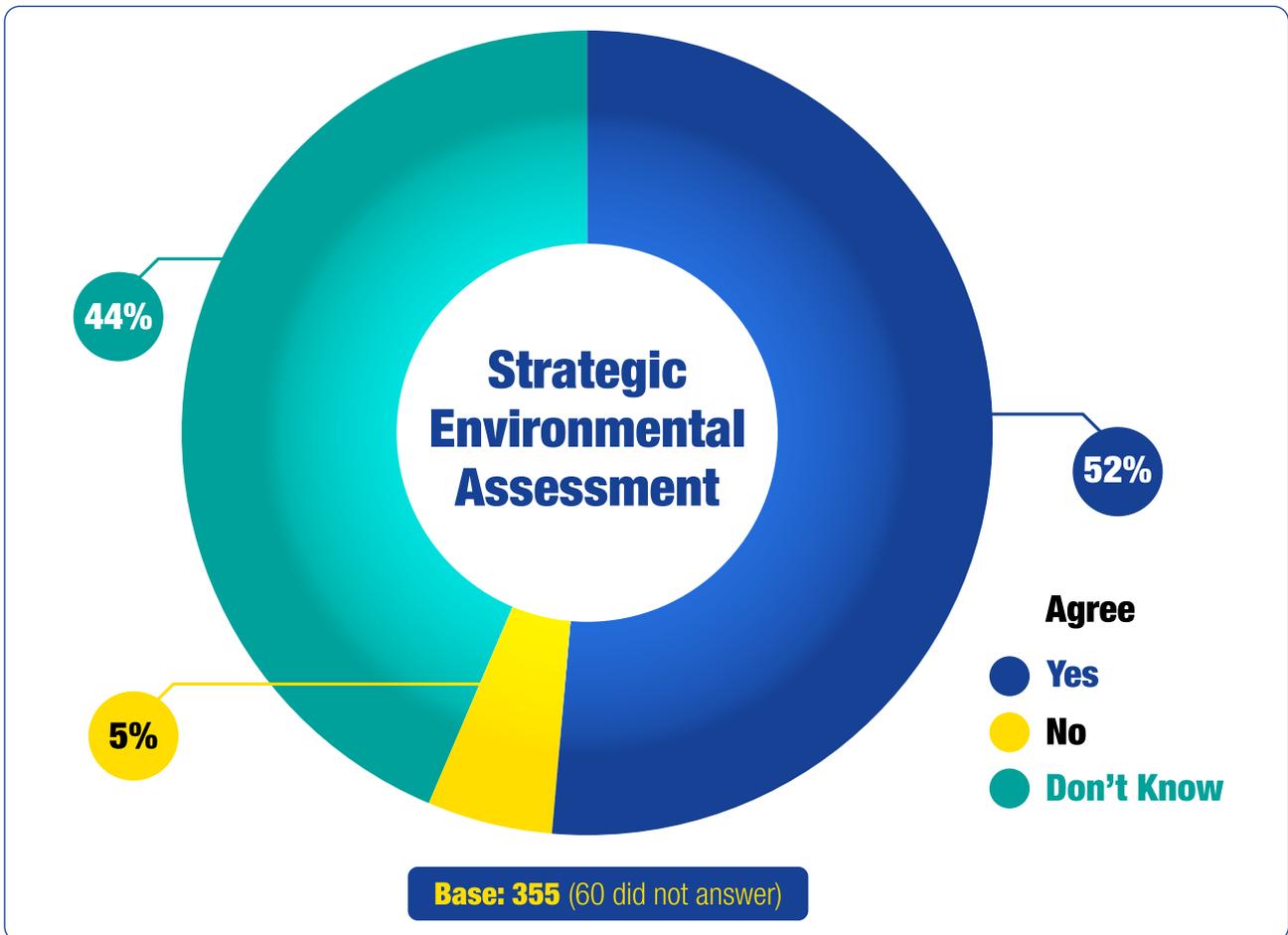
The SEUPB welcomes the support provided by respondents to the Equality Screening Findings. Following some of the comments raised by respondents in the consultation, the SEUPB reviewed the Equality Screening document and augmented the screening report with further information in the Available Evidence section. Furthermore, an addendum was generated to describe how the new evidence relates to the responses from the consultation. This additional information helped strengthen the report's evidence base but did not affect the overall Equality Screening decision, which remains the same.

8. Analysis of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

8.1 Agreement with SEA Findings

Q.19 Do the findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the PEACE PLUS Programme cover all the relevant information?

FIGURE 27



Over half (52%) of the respondents (184) agreed that the findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the PEACE PLUS Programme covered all the relevant information. However, 44% did not know (155), and 5% (16 respondents) did not agree that the SEA covered all the relevant information. (N.B. Differences to 100% are due to rounding.)

Q.20 If no, what else do we need to consider and why?

Of the 5% of respondents who answered no, some provided considerations they believe need to be incorporated in the Strategic Environmental Assessment. For example, further attention regarding geothermal energy, the marine environment, the net environmental gains for all developments, specific inclusions in the Water Quality Improvement Programme, and amends to some of the sub-objectives within the SEA to better identify whether potential adverse effects may arise. These considerations form part of the review of the Environmental Report, and a final SEA statement will outline how these considerations have been taken into account in the final form of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

8.2 The SEUPB Response

The SEUPB welcomes the support for the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Following the comments raised by respondents in this consultation, the SEUPB reviewed the SEA and will further consider, where relevant, adequate mitigation measures, including incorporating project-level environmental appraisals before the funding of projects. Upon the adoption of the PEACE PLUS Programme, a final SEA Statement will be produced to provide information on how the Environmental Report and respondents views were taken into account in deciding the final form of the PEACE PLUS Programme. This will be made available on the SEUPB PEACE PLUS webpage <https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

9.1 Conclusion

The overall responses to the consultation demonstrate a very high level of support for all six Themes and accompanying Investments Areas of the proposed PEACE PLUS Programme as well as the indicative budget allocations, administrative proposals, equality screening findings and Strategic Environment Assessment.

There were no significant issues identified within the Themes or Investment Areas that impacted the acceptance of the proposed content of the PEACE PLUS Programme. There have been a number of increases to budget allocations as a result of additional funding being available and also following the consultation responses. This has been allocated where the need is greatest.

Following the key points raised in the consultation, the following amendments and considerations have been included in final PEACE PLUS Programme.

Themes and Investment Areas



THEME 1

IA 1.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €90,000,000 to €110,000,000.

IA 1.3 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €30,000,000 to €35,000,000.

IA 1.4 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €60,000,000 to €75,000,000.



THEME 2

IA 2.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €20,000,000 to €25,000,000.

IA 2.2 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €58,000,000 to €65,000,000.

IA 2.3 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €35,000,000 to €50,000,000.

Further engagement with government departments in Northern Ireland and Ireland will ensure government programmes in Northern Ireland and Ireland are complementary.



THEME 3

IA 3.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €45,000,000 to €51,210,735.

IA 3.2 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €45,000,000 to €47,000,000.

IA 3.3 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €20,000,000 to €25,000,000.



THEME 4

IA 4.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €80,000,000 to €97,000,000.



THEME 5

IA 5.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €15,000,000 to €40,000,000.

IA 5.2 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €12,000,000 to €24,786,522.



THEME 6

IA 6.1 The budget allocation will increase from the proposed €27,000,000 to €32,000,000.

Indicative Budget Allocations

As noted above, the final budget approved for the PEACE PLUS Programme has been increased and will be approximately €1.145bn.

Taking into account the increase in the overall budget, engagement with government departments and the responses provided during the consultation process, there will be an increase in the budget allocations for each of the six Themes. The final budget for each of the Themes are outlined below.

Theme 1 – Final Budget €250,000,000

Theme 2 – Final Budget €170,000,000

Theme 3 – Final Budget €123,210,735

Theme 4 – Final Budget €172,000,000

Theme 5 – Final Budget €302,786,522

Theme 6 – Final Budget €52,000,000

Please note that there is also a TA Budget of: €74,899,808.

Proposals to Reduce the Administrative Burden

Respondents widely supported all proposals to reduce the administrative burden. The most popular proposals included simplifying the application process, making the monitoring system more user-friendly, increasing the use of simplified cost options, and increasing project management flexibility. We will further analyse specific comments made by respondents as part of the development of Calls for Applications as part of the implementation phase of the Programme.

Equality Screening Findings

A small number of issues raised by respondents included updating the equality screening document with recent data and alternative sources of information; greater engagement and consultation concerning gender identity, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, ex-prisoners and those with political status; and one respondent supported carrying out a full Equality Impact Assessment. Following the comments raised by some respondents to the consultation, a revised equality screening document and addendum has been produced. It should be noted that no significant issues were identified with the equality screening findings that impact on the Equality Screening decision.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Following some comments raised in the consultation, mitigation measures will be considered, including project-level environmental appraisals prior to project funding. A final SEA statement will be produced post-adoption of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

9.2 Next Steps

The PEACE PLUS Programme has been approved by the governments in Northern Ireland and Ireland and will be submitted to the European Commission for approval.

The SEUPB wishes to take this opportunity to thank all of those who responded to this consultation, previous consultations, and engagement with us during the developmental process for the PEACEPLUS Programme. We have listened to your views and believe that the final Programme content is reflective of needs and views in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, and is all the much better for your input.

10. Appendix 1

List of Consultation Respondents

When completing the survey, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. The following 185 organisations submitted a response.

4C UR Future CIC	Centre for Cross Border Studies
Action Mental Health	Centre for Independent Living NI
Age Friendly Ireland local government shared service	CITB NI Construction Industry Training Board
Annagh Social farm CIC	Climate Action Regional Office
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Commission for Victims and Survivors
AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation	Community Development Association
Ards and North Down Borough Council	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
Ards Peninsula coastal erosion group	Community Places - PB Works
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Community Restorative Justice Ireland
Armagh Observatory and Planetarium	Community Wetlands Forum
Association of Principal Teachers in Integrated Schools	Community Work Ireland
Badoney Development Partnership	Conradh Na Gaeilge
Ballinamore Area Community Council Ltd.,	Cooley Peninsula Community Alert and Peninsula Marine Litter Project
Bawnboy Workhouse Ltd.	Co-operation Ireland
Belfast City Council	County Down Rural Community Network
Belfast Metropolitan College	Creative Spark
Benburb Priory	Cross Border Local Enterprise Partnership
BirdWatch Ireland	Cushendall Development Group
British Geological Survey	DAERA CNCC
Butterfly Conservation	Derry Search Youth Group
Butterlope Farm	Dervock and District Community Association
Catalyst	Development Perspectives
Cavan County Council	Diversitec Ltd
Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre	Donaghadee Community Development Association
	Donegal County Museum

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Donegal Youth Service	Institute of Geologists in Ireland
Drumsna Development Association	Integrated Education Fund
Early Years	International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD)
East Border Region	Iomob
Education Authority	Irish Bongs
Environmental Pillar	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Equality Commission for NI	Irish Heart Foundation
Erne Atlantic Greenway	ISOGG Ireland
Farm Relief	Kabosh
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
Fermanagh Rural Community Network	Leitrim International Community Group
Fighting Words Northern Ireland	Lisburn Credit Union
Finca Skin Organics	Local Authority Waters Programme
Focus	Loughs Agency
Focus Family Resource Centre	Louth County Council
Forest Friends Ireland	Macra Na Feirme
Forthspring Inter Community Group	Market Development Association
Foyle Cup	Mayo County Council
Geological Survey Ireland	Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education Training Board
Geothermal Association of Ireland	Medicines Optimisation Innovation Centre
Good Energies Alliance Ireland	Mencap
Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland	Men's Alliance
Guysmere Trust Co Ltd	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Hands That Talk	Mid South West Region
Herr Ltd	Monaghan Children and Young People's Services Committee
ICBAN Irish Central Border Area Network	Monaghan County Council
iCRAG, SFI Research Centre for Applied Geosciences	Monaghan Tourism
Include Youth	MYMY Mind Your Mate and Yourself
Inishowen Community Media Network	NCYCS Youth Work Ireland North Connaught
Inishowen Development Partnership	Newbeginnings Community Development Group
Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWA) Dublin branch	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

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NFU Mutual	Shaping Ourselves and Our Children
NI Environment Link	Sinn Féin
NI International Volunteering Consultation Group	Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality
NIACRO NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	Social Farming Ireland
NICSSA Sport and Leisure	Social Signature NI
NICVA NI Council for Voluntary Action	South Eastern Regional College
North West Tongues, Tones and Tapping	Springhill Community House
Northern Ireland Water	Strand Arts Centre
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform	Strategic Investment Board
NPWS, Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Stroke Association
NWCAM North West Centre for Advanced Manufacturing	Suffolk Community Forum
Paper Trail (Legacy Archive Research)	Tar Anall
Pat Finucane Centre	Tar Isteach
PeacePlayers Northern Ireland	Technological Higher Education Association
Portadown Heritage Tours	The Agri-food and Bioscience Institute (AFBI)
Portglenone Enterprise Group	The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Portstewart Community Association	The Bright Umbrella Drama Co
Pro-Social Ireland CLG	The Bryden Centre
Quarries Farm	The de Borda Institute
Queen's University Belfast	The Executive Office - Strategic Policy Equality and Good Relations
Redburn Loughview Community Forum	The Genesis Programme/Louth Leader Partnership
River Blackwater Catchment Trust	The Irish Cyclist Advocacy Network
RNIB Royal National Institute for Blind People	The National Trust
RSPB NI Royal Society for Protection of Birds	The Woodland Trust
Rugby Cubz NI Community Interest Company	Together in Music
Rural Action	Train 2B Smart
Rural Area Partnership in Derry Ltd	Translink
Rural Community Network	Transport Scotland
Scottish Government	Treinfer Clan
SEAI Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland	Truagh Development Association CLG

Ulster Farmers' Union

Ulster GAA

University of Ulster

Ulster Wildlife

University College Dublin

University of Atypical

University of the Highlands and Islands

Waterways Ireland

Women's Support Network (Women's Regional Consortium)

Youth Initiatives NI

Youth Link: NI

Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland Louth

Youth Action NI

A further 132 organisations submitted a response but did not give consent for the details of their organisation to be published.

We have not published the 98 individuals who responded; however, all responses were given equal status in the analysis.

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