



study

Erasmus+ Adult Education

## Impacts of Strategic Partnerships in Germany

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Erasmus+  
ADULT EDUCATION

Nationale Agentur  
beim Bundesinstitut  
für Berufsbildung

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# 1\_INTRODUCTION

Are strategic partnerships in adult education achieving the intended objectives of Erasmus+? The present publication summarises the key results of an extensive impact study.



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**S**trategic partnerships in adult education have a positive and sustainable effect on both the persons involved and on the participating organisations. They drive the development of new approaches towards dealing with social, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. They also create a modern, dynamic, committed and professional environment for the organisations involved. Work in a European context will lead to improved enablement and professionalisation of activities at a European and international level. Management competencies will be enhanced, and internationalisation strategies will be developed.

Such are the aims which Erasmus+ associates with strategic partnerships in adult education.

But to what extent are the projects fulfilling these expectations? Are Erasmus+ projects really resulting in better knowledge of languages, improved digital competencies and a greater degree of understanding of and openness to societal, linguistic and cultural diversity? Is there evidence that a more positive

attitude is being displayed towards the European Union and its values, as was the hope?

These questions gave rise to an extensive study of the impacts of Erasmus+ Adult Education commissioned by the NA at BIBB. This was conducted between May 2019 and August 2020 and concentrated on strategic partnerships during the years from 2014 to 2019. Although evaluations of previous programmes and selected questionnaires with and self-declarations by project managers permit the conclusion that positive effects have emerged, the present study enables us to confirm in a systematic and factually based way that many of the target impacts have been achieved in a total of four areas of activity—within the organisations, in the target groups, in cooperation with partner organisations and in the environment of the organisations.

In numerous cases, European projects are producing both an innovation thrust and a significant boost in digitalisation at the institutions. The multi-perspective approach adopted and a willingness to look beyond the familiar are leading to high-quality, innovative outcomes. Transnational networking is bringing about a significant increase in product quality. The products are also consolidating a sense of European togetherness and raising awareness amongst education and training staff on how to deal with diversity.

The study further indicates that strategic partnerships in adult education are connecting with many people who are impossible or very difficult to reach via the vehicle of formal educational provision, a result which is important and pleasing in equal measure. Numerous projects address vulnerable groups in a targeted manner. These benefit from European networking or from cross-border approaches and solutions that have been jointly developed. Many projects report that participants from different target groups have been able to gain experiences of self-efficacy. Experiences of this kind are a fundamental prerequisite for participation and involvement in a democratic society.

At an organisational level, institutions are profiting from an expansion of their networks. Projects are opening up points of access to local functionaries and other stakeholders. Institutions are enjoying an

image boost and are being perceived as potential partners within their environment. A positive response is also emanating from professional circles in the form of invitations to presentations, technical discussions and conferences. This means that new types of cooperation at a local level are being created in some cases.

The study comes to the conclusion that European adult education is an indispensable component of lifelong and lifewide learning. Its non-formal, multifarious and flexible approaches provide a particular way of engaging with target groups which remain excluded from the formal educational context. We need to view the heterogeneity of adult education and the variety of the topics offered as an opportunity and as a strength of this sector!

We would like to express our thanks to all respondents who took part in the study, to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for providing the funding, and to our contractor EQ Evaluations GmbH for the excellent collaboration.

The German language version of this publication is available in print as well as online and may be downloaded – together with the final report of the study in full – at

[www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de](http://www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de)

**Sibilla Drews**

Head of the Adult Education Team

# ADDED VALUE EUROPE – STUDY CONFIRMS IMPACTS OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN ADULT EDUCATION



## INSTITUTIONS

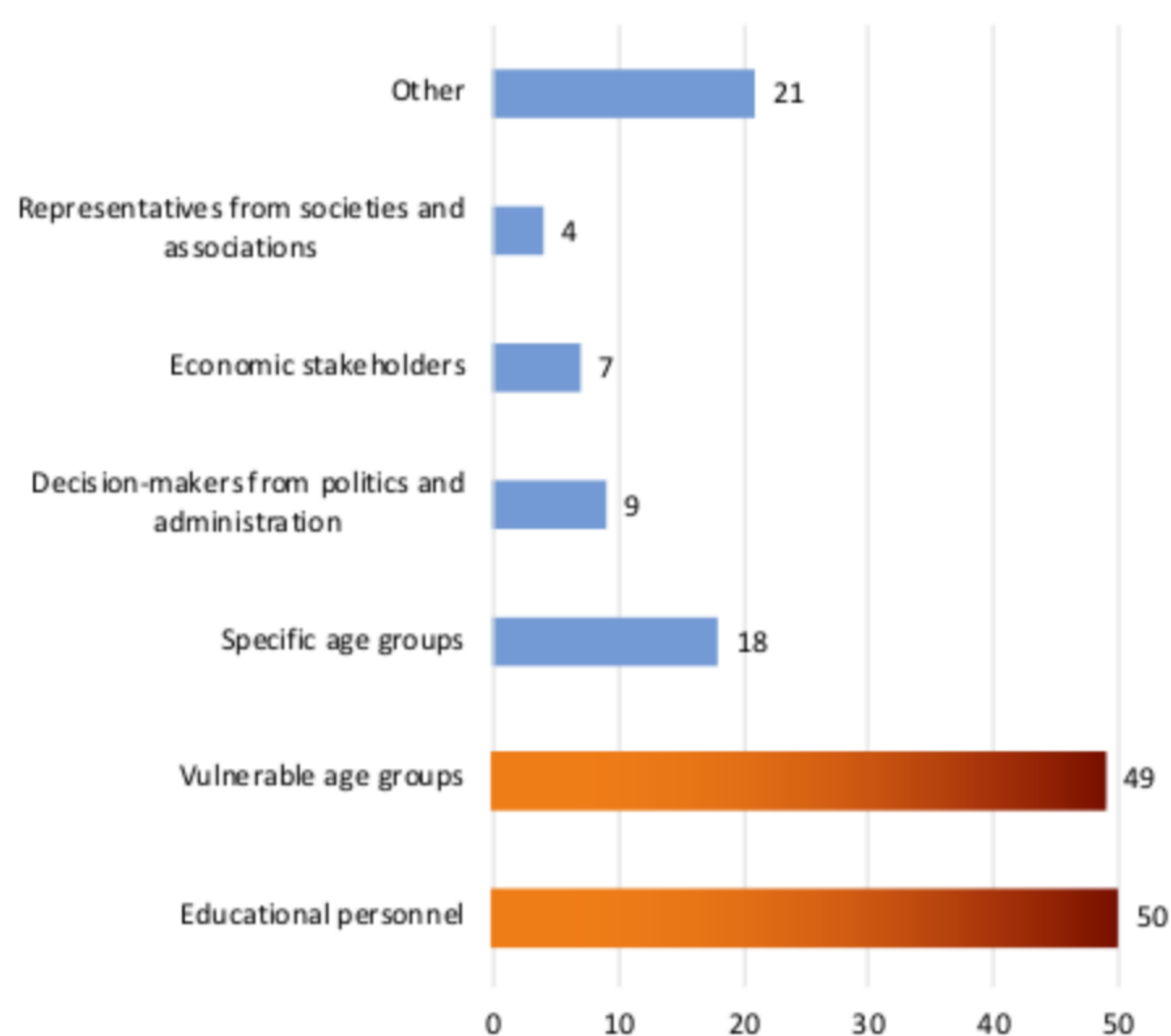
- Two thirds of the project holders surveyed have **no more than 30 employees**. It was possible to implement a majority of the projects by using existing staff.
- The projects are triggering a **boost in digitalisation** at the institutions. Digital information and communication tools are, for example, being deployed on a permanent basis. By way of contrast, lasting structural changes rarely occur.
- The **project results** are usually adapted before **being integrated into the provision of the institutions**.

# 88%

of the institutions\* found that transnational cooperation or the intellectual output such cooperation produced has brought about an improvement in the quality of their provision.



Education and training staff and vulnerable people are the target groups most frequently addressed.



## TARGET GROUPS

gain experiences of self-efficacy in particular

are mainly able to raise their decision-making competence

→ The Erasmus+ Programme has funded a total of 250 strategic partnerships in the adult education sector in Germany since 2014. Within the scope of these cooperation arrangements, institutions from at least three European countries work together on various topics related to adult education. The aims are to network on good practice and/or to develop products which can support innovation. The impacts of these projects in Germany has been systematically recorded for the first time in a study carried out on behalf of the NA at BIBB.



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## RESPONSE

- The projects help to **promote the image of the institutions**.
- The project results frequently allow the organisations involved to create a **USP**.
- The project results are meeting with a positive **response in professional circles**. Project managers are in demand as experts.

**87%**

of the institutions\*  
say that they enjoy  
recognition from local  
stakeholders.

of institutions\* found  
that their project has enabled  
them to make an important  
contribution to regional  
development at a local level.

**67%**



## COOPERATION

Transnational cooperation offers significant added value.

**98% = 100%**

- of the institutions\* agreed fully or partially when asked about four possible impacts of transnational cooperation:
- enabled exchange to take place on common and differing values;
  - strengthened our international network;
  - consolidated a sense of European togetherness;
  - led to a greater awareness of how to deal with diversity.

\* N = 129 – group of "funded" institutions



## 2\_SPECTRUM OF FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

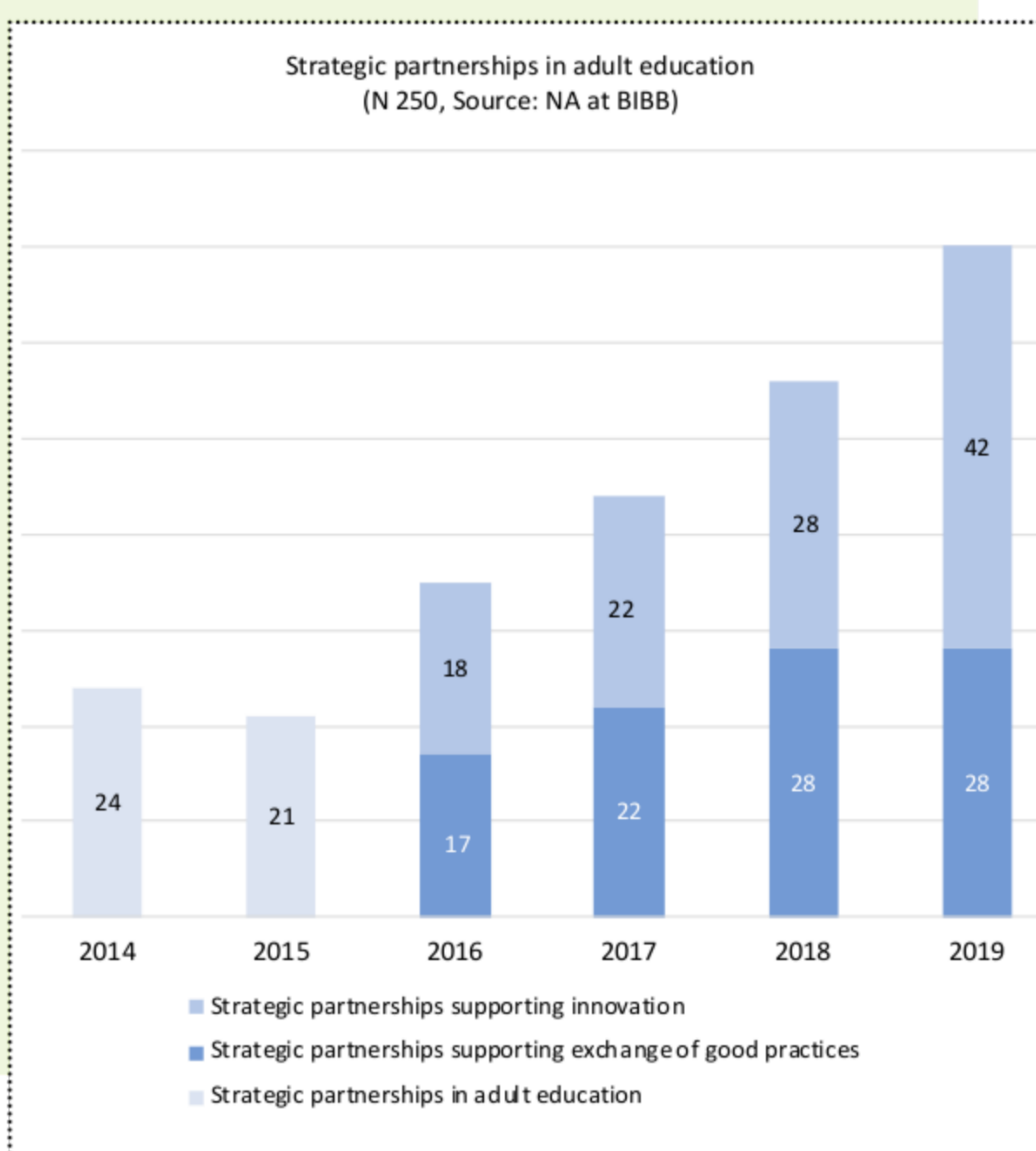
How many and what type of organisations have received funding via Erasmus+ Adult Education since 2014? Who takes on which tasks, and which topics do the projects focus on? Chapter 2 provides the answers to these and other questions.



A total of 74 final reports were systematically analysed for the study. 471 institutions in Germany were surveyed online (response rate 33 percent or N = 154), and eight organisations which had received funding were visited and interviewed (case studies). This scientifically collected data was used to prepare a detailed report, which can be downloaded at <https://www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de>. The present publication draws on these study results and is also available in German. The original citations used in the study as evidence of individual findings are taken from the final reports and the case studies.

Three different groups were surveyed within the scope of the online questionnaire. These were **funded institutions** from 2018 and previous years, **institutions receiving funding for the first time in 2019** and **institutions which have not been funded thus far**. These colours are used in the charts to denote the respective groups.

**Figure 1: Number of strategic partnerships funded during the period from 2014 to 2019**



## 2\_1

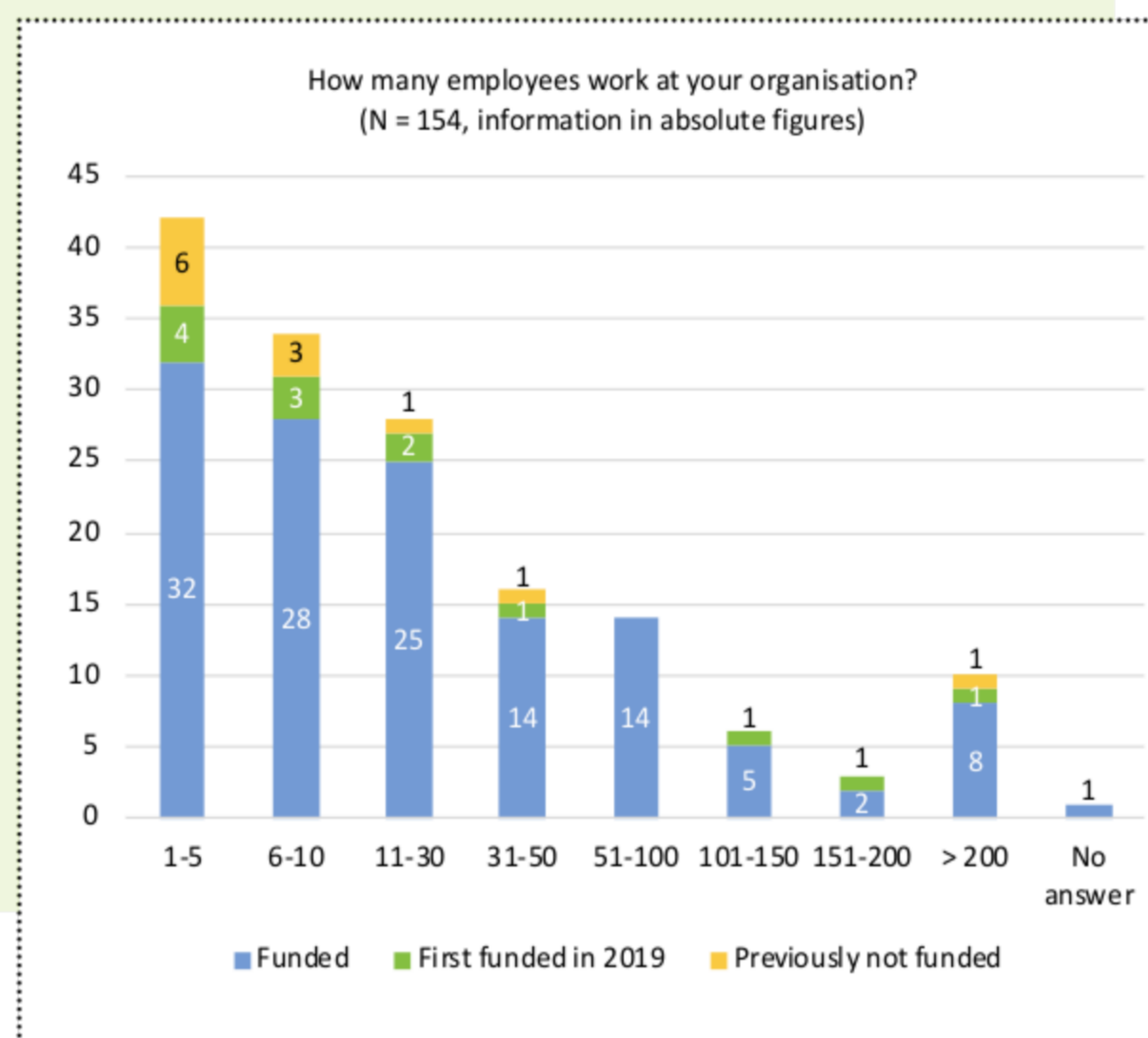
### WHO HAS RECEIVED FUNDING THUS FAR

A total of 250 strategic partnerships<sup>1</sup> coordinated via institutions based in Germany have received funding from Erasmus+ in the area of adult education since 2014. The number of projects supported has risen consistently since this time. Since 2016, institutions submitting an application have been able to decide whether their project is a better match for the funding format of "Supporting exchange of good practices" or the funding format aimed at "Supporting innovation". This differentiation did not exist prior to this point, and in the years 2014 and 2015 it was only possible to submit a general application for "strategic partnerships in adult education". (Fig. 1)

Most institutions submitting an Erasmus+ project application are small (1 to 10 staff) or medium-sized organisations

In Germany, projects are primarily implemented by **institutions with fewer than 30 staff**.

<sup>1</sup> The present publications uses the terms "strategic partnerships" and "projects" synonymously.

**Figure 2: Number of staff at the institutions submitting applications**

(11 to 30 employees). The dominant organisational structures are societies, foundations and companies. These categories include organisations such as adult education centres, associations and church institutions. Institutes of higher education, universities, research institutes and entities under public law all tend to be represented to a lesser degree. (Fig. 2)

## 2\_2 WHO DOES WHAT

Persons responsible for Erasmus+ projects within the institutions are mostly senior managers. They are often Managing Directors, Heads of Division, Project Managers or Project Coordination Managers. It is extremely uncommon for projects to be managed by a person who is specifically responsible for EU affairs. 36 percent of online respondents have begun to manage European projects over the course of the past five years. By way of contrast, 61 percent can draw on a pool of experience which extends back six years or more.

Project implementation is very frequently performed by a tandem of people. An advisory committee is occasionally put in place to provide support to the Project Head. This committee comprises persons from within the organisational environment of the coordinating organisation. High workloads are created during project implementation, because all those involved need to carry out their respective tasks within the organisation as well as executing the Erasmus+ project. This is reflected in the assessment of the time and trouble which is felt to relate to project implementation. Implementation of an Erasmus+ project tends to represent a major effort for 74 percent of institutions surveyed, although 68 percent view execution as a matter of routine.

Two thirds of the organisations implement the strategic partnership using existing staff. New employees are therefore only recruited in one third of cases. 24 percent of staff involved are sent for further training beforehand. These courses mostly take place in topics relating to the project in the areas of project management, foreign languages, finances and administration.

In 78 percent of cases, it is possible to retain staff after completion of the

strategic partnership. This usually takes the form of an extension of existing fixed-term contracts, the conclusion of freelance agreements or continuation on a voluntary basis.

## 2\_3 WHAT TOPICS FORM THE FOCUS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The spectrum of topics covered by the strategic partnerships is very wide ranging. They were often dedicated to problems or niche topics which obviously needed to be addressed urgently and also picked up on issues which were already an object of public debate but required further attention. An analysis of the 74 final reports showed that many of the funded projects relate to the topic of health and well-being. Others look at issues including integration, societal participation, European values, and democracy. Consumer, environmental and data protection topics are all also examined alongside specific problems relating to rural areas. The action radius within which the institutions operate in the context of the strategic partnerships generally has its origins in the delineation of target groups and/or in the area of responsibility of the participating partner organisations.

**The project launched in 2016, about a year after most people arrived (editorial note: the reference here is to the 2015 wave of refugees). Until this point, there had been no opportunity to reflect on the overall position or on the situation of “unknown trainers” because everyone was busy providing urgent assistance. This project allowed the focus to be placed on the “unknown trainers” for the first time. Consideration was also (...) given for the first time to whether the volunteer helpers themselves required assistance in their work, such as in the shape of initial, advanced and continuing training programmes. Which training schemes are useful to helpers who are looking after people from**

a different cultural area? (Source: KA204-003366, Final Report, p.10)



**The aim of this project was to react to the problem that frequent consumption of pornography (including to an increasing degree by children and young people) jeopardises relationship skills, fosters sexual violence and has a large potential to create addiction (...) The project content was to counter this risk to health and well-being via education and by supporting families in the way they deal with the situation. (Source: KA204-002427, Final Report, p. 16)**

## 2\_4 WHAT IS PRODUCED AND HOW

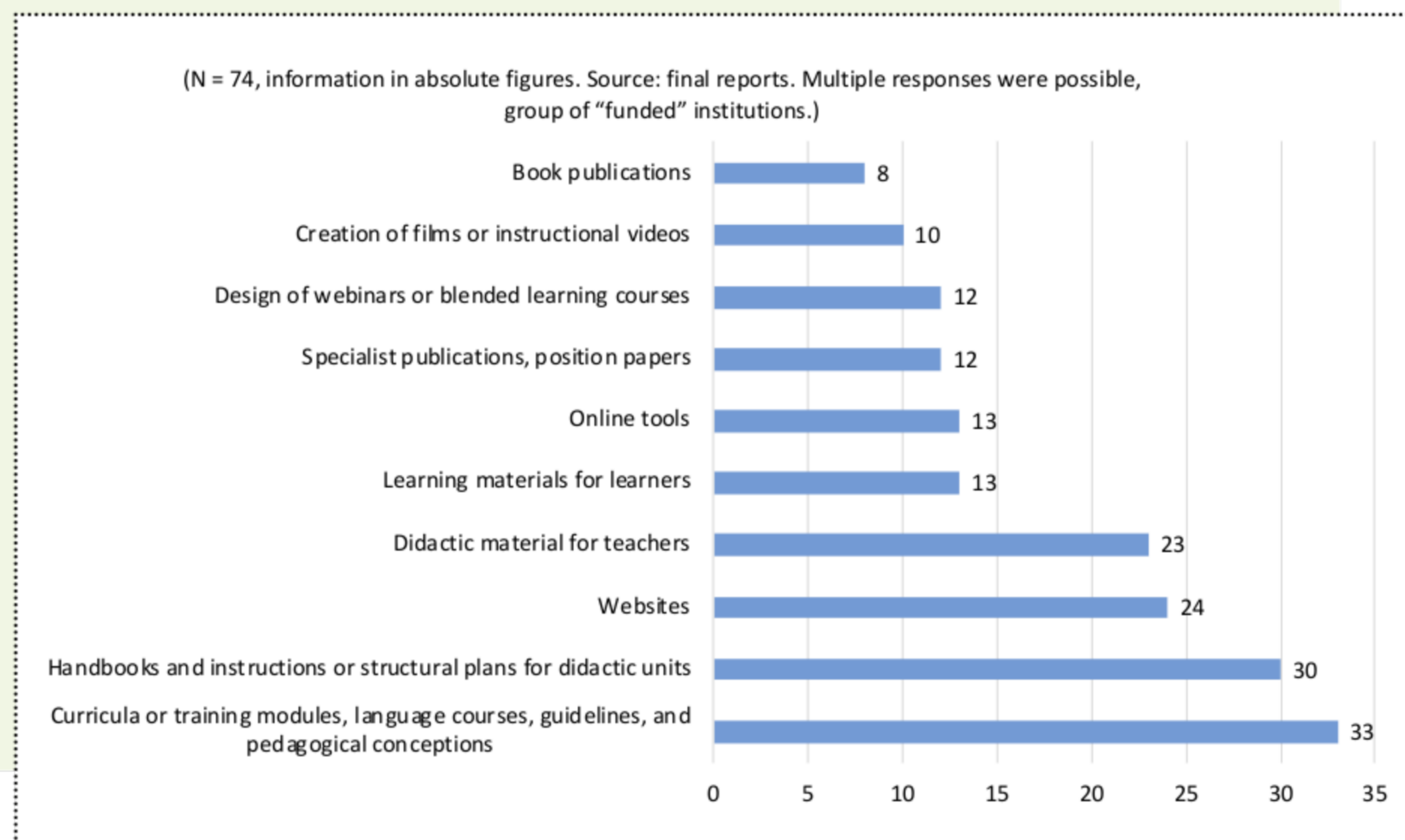
Both funding formats fundamentally offer the possibility of creating products which can be transferred to the existing inventory or range of services of the institutions once the financing comes to an end. In the "Supporting innovation" funding format, the creation of a product is mandatory (this is referred to as "intellectual output"). 87 percent of products developed in this action are entirely new. Although the development of a product is not obligatory in the "Supporting exchange of good practices" funding format, just under two thirds of institutions go on to create one. The spectrum of products developed encompasses curricula, handbooks and instructions and didactic teaching material. Digital products are also created in many cases. These include blended learning courses, websites, online tools and apps to name just a few. (Fig. 3) In a small number of cases, there are reports that an upstream needs analysis has been undertaken as part of the product development process. Respondents

believe this makes it possible to align the material to the respective wishes of the direct target group in a much more precise manner.

In many instances, the project partner institutions also report on whether it is more useful to adapt existing products or to design completely new products. The establishment of joint websites, some of which make the products created available for download, is a relatively frequent occurrence. In numerous cases, the concentrated work undertaken to develop tangible and intangible products is highly conducive in overall terms to the establishment of new professional contacts and even of friendships as relationships between the partner organisations intensify.

The institutions believe that it is very important to deliver products which are of high quality. Targeted planning of test phases, review procedures, trials and many other vehicles besides all aim to ensure that the products are ultimately "ready for serial use".

**Figure 3: Frequency of products developed within the scope of the strategic partnerships**





## 3\_IMPACTS WITHIN THE ORGANISATIONS

What professionalisation effects occur amongst the staff who are in charge of managing the organisational side of the Erasmus+ projects? What increases in competence are discernible, and which structural further developments are triggered within the institutions? Chapter 3 examines these questions in more detail.

### 3\_1 WHICH COMPETENCIES UNDERGO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The analyses uncovered numerous results to indicate professionalisation effects amongst the staff who are in charge of managing the organisational side of the Erasmus+ projects. These impacts essentially relate to the following aspects.

- Gaining of didactic competencies
- A personal content-related and professional development through the project
- Expansion of foreign language skills
- Further increases in personal competencies
- An increasingly professional project management and/or application process

The professionalisation effects triggered by the projects are revealed by dint of the fact that managers believe that a gaining of didactic competencies has occurred. International networking is

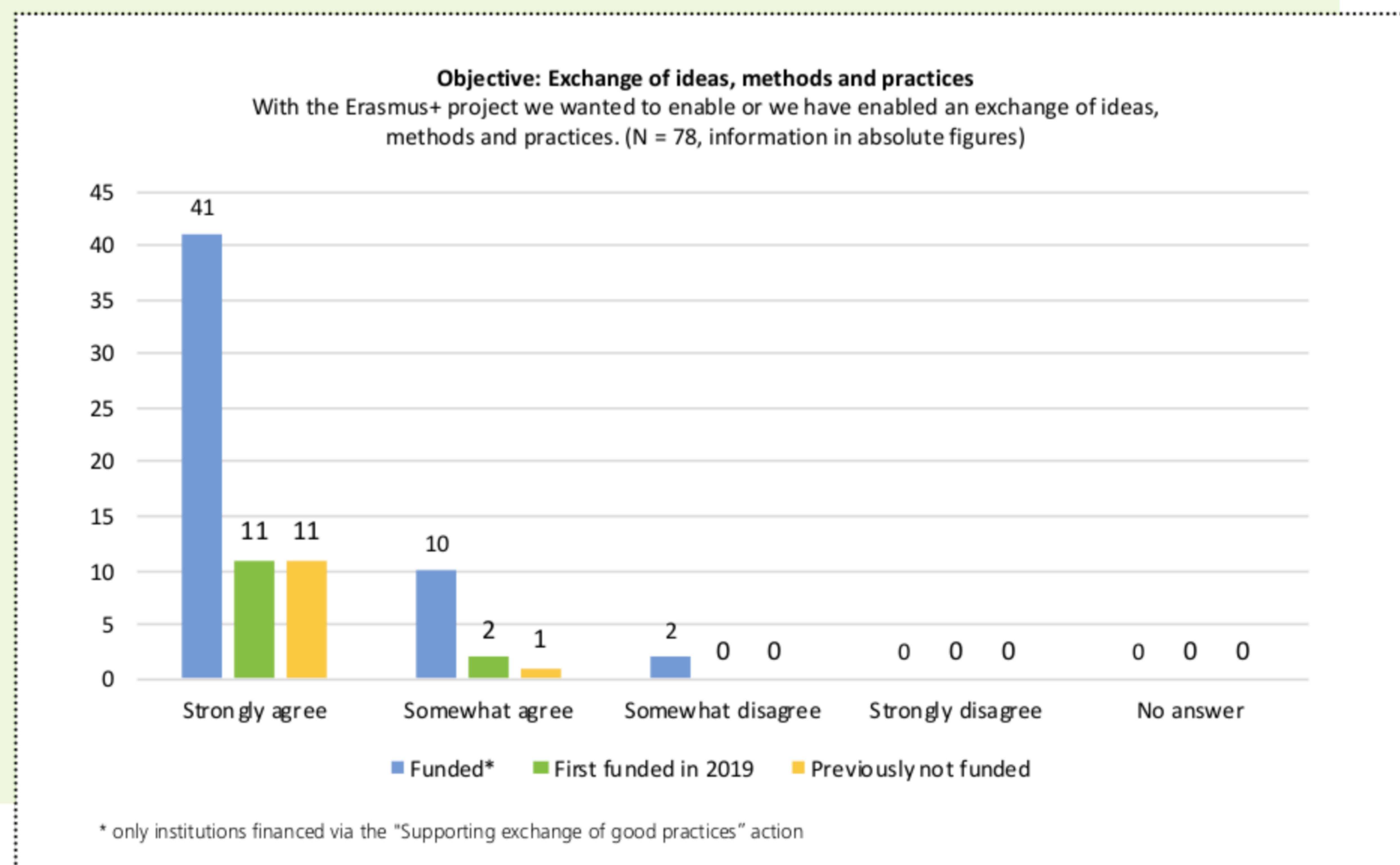


particularly helpful in terms of allowing institutions to familiarise themselves with and to try out new approaches which are then incorporated into their own repertoire. A broad spectrum of professional competencies is also consolidated and expanded alongside these didactic competencies. These include increases in project-specific knowledge drawn from various European sources. Secondly, specialist knowledge is built up to a point where expert status can be attained.

Numerous projects report how the next stage of the process can involve transferring the knowledge acquired to the institution's own practice on a permanent basis. (Fig.4)

Expansion of personal competencies at an (inter)cultural level also takes place in many cases. These learning processes are triggered by personal encounters with persons such as partner representatives within the scope of project meetings and are also activated via networking (in various formats) on different general conditions, approaches and many other aspects besides during the entire course of the project. Numerous reports contain passages describing how intensive cross-European cooperation has led to recognition of cultural differences and how the other party or parties have acted as a mirror to enable organisations to perceive their own reality in a more focused way. Successful processes that have resulted in a shift of perspective are frequently mentioned.

**Figure 4: Objective: Exchange of ideas, methods and practices**





Networking between partner institutions **strengthens European awareness.**



**Discussions with our Eastern European partners were particularly helpful in terms of enabling participants to understand political positions. (Source: KA204-003366, Final Report, p. 14)**



**A change in perspective towards finding a way of dealing with the disease which is oriented to resources rather than deficits represents a very hopeful and meaningful approach for project participants, persons affected, family members and staff in the assistance system. Strategies adopted by individuals can be useful for others regardless of the group of persons, and this is an approach which set off a positive reaction at multiplier events and with regard to public relations work within the project. (Source: KA204-003249, Final Report, p. 8)**

The European encounters and cooperation that take place in Erasmus+ Adult Education enable a familiarity with and understanding of unknown and unusual routes to be gained. In many cases, the intensive study of topics from a transna-

tional perspective in particular leads to a departure from patterns of thought that are characterised by typical attributes of the nation state. The benefits of a European (thought) approach become obvious. In some cases, this European awareness also becomes apparent within the institutions amongst colleagues who are not directly involved with the project. On occasion, the effects thus make a “jump” inside the organisations.



**I think ... that the greatest effect felt here is that this European question ... is always present whenever we say that we want to do something related to the area of employment law or employee protection. (Source: Case study 1)**

In many cases, the knowledge built up via the Erasmus+ projects is secured by integrating assigned staff into the organisation on a permanent basis. Knowledge is passed on in writing in the form of transfer protocols or notes and verbally in equal measure.

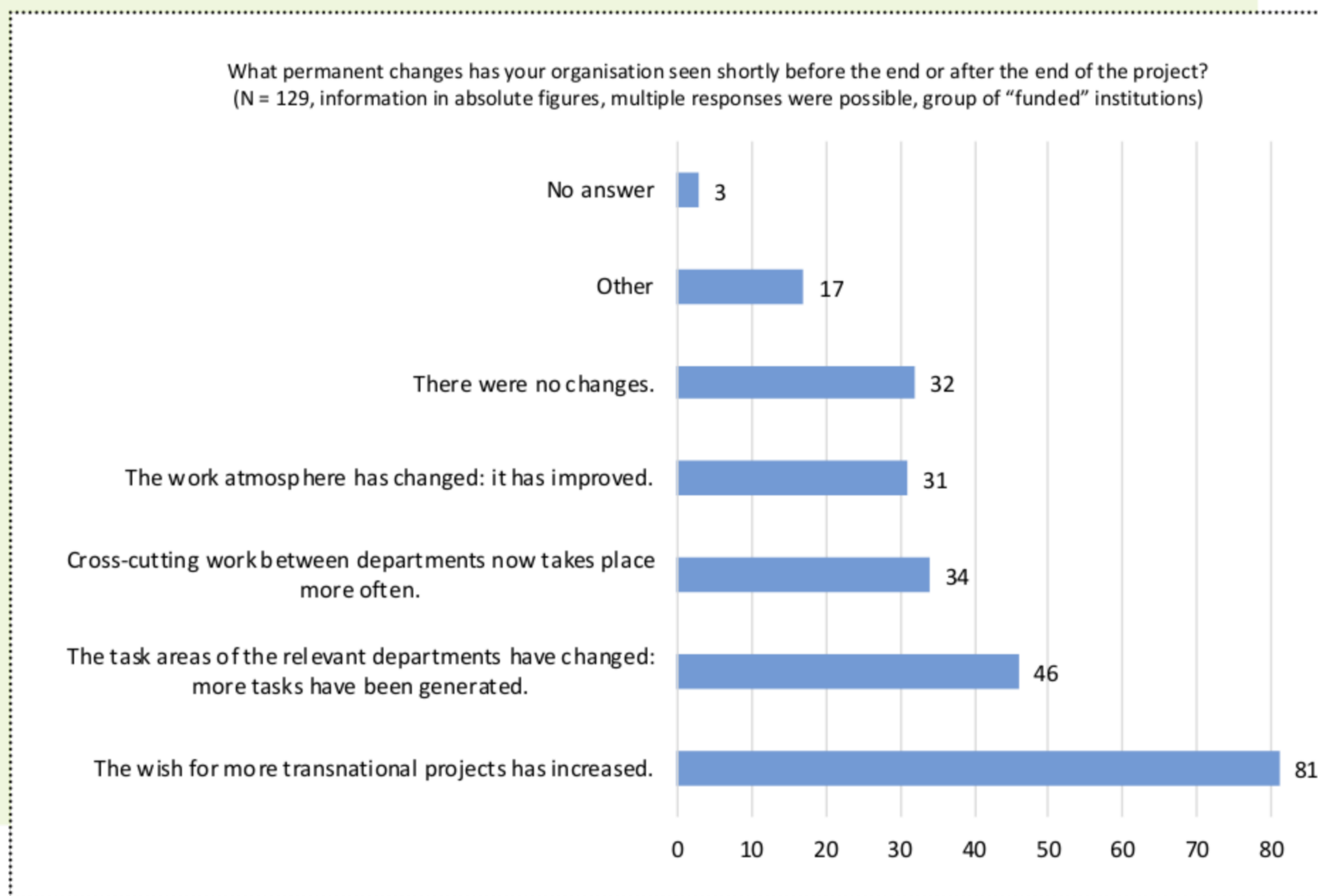
### 3\_2 WHICH STRUCTURAL CHANGES OCCUR

Although the Erasmus+ projects instigate numerous impacts at a staff level, structural effects tend to be lower. The data collected within the scope of the study give rise to the conclusion that strategic partnerships do not usually bring about structural change in the organisation. Neither the case studies nor the final reports state that new jobs have been created or that work units have undergone restructuring in the wake of the project. The duration of any structural changes which take place is generally confined to the term of the project. Several projects accordingly appointed quality representatives at each partner institution to be responsible for evaluation of the activities. Less extensive structural changes on the other hand, such as an alteration in task areas within the relevant department, were certainly observed by 36 percent of the respondents to the online survey. They stated that the Erasmus+ project had generated more tasks. 26 percent also recorded an increase in cross-cutting work between departments, whilst 24 percent noted an improvement in the work atmosphere. (Fig. 5)



The projects are relatively **unlikely** to lead to permanent **structural changes** at the institutions, ....

**Figure 5: Permanent changes brought about by the Erasmus+ project**



...., but they help to create a **digitalisation boost within the organisations.**

Even if the strategic partnerships do not trigger extensive structural changes within the institution in most cases, there are definitely numerous occasions on which they instigate a significant digital boost which leads to the permanent introduction of digital information and communication tools and to the continued deployment of these after the

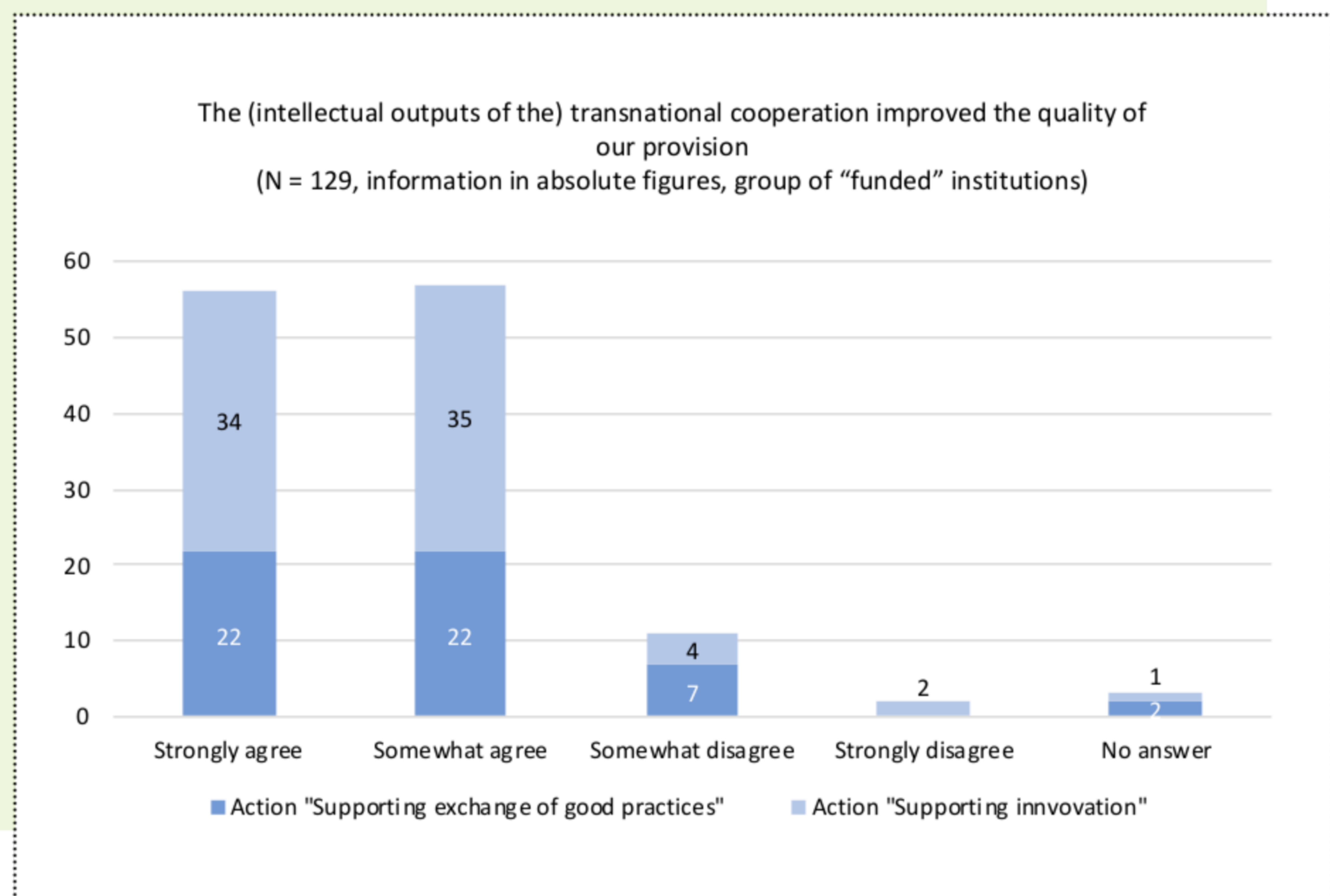
project has ended. Transnational networking on the benefits and drawbacks of individual tools is especially capable of delivering a certain innovation thrust and of extending the perspective of organisations beyond familiar tried-and-tested instruments.

**I think that what we have ultimately got out of this (is) a commitment to Open Educational Resources. In future, we will be seeking to expand these materials, our materials, further and also to make them available free of charge. (Source: Case study 6)**

### 3\_3 HOW THE SERVICES OFFERED BY ORGANISATIONS DEVELOP FURTHER

With regard to use of and demand for the project results and products, 91 percent of online respondents report that they were subsequently able to present the product they had created at a conference or similar event. Substantial demand especially still exists for didactic material, curricula, structural plans for didactic units, websites, handbooks and book publications.

88 percent of those surveyed online believe that transnational cooperation or the products developed via this route improve the quality of their own institution's provision. Endeavours are ongoing to update the project results and products, and in some cases this is being financed via a cost contribution from the project partners or

**Figure 6: Improvement in quality of own provision**

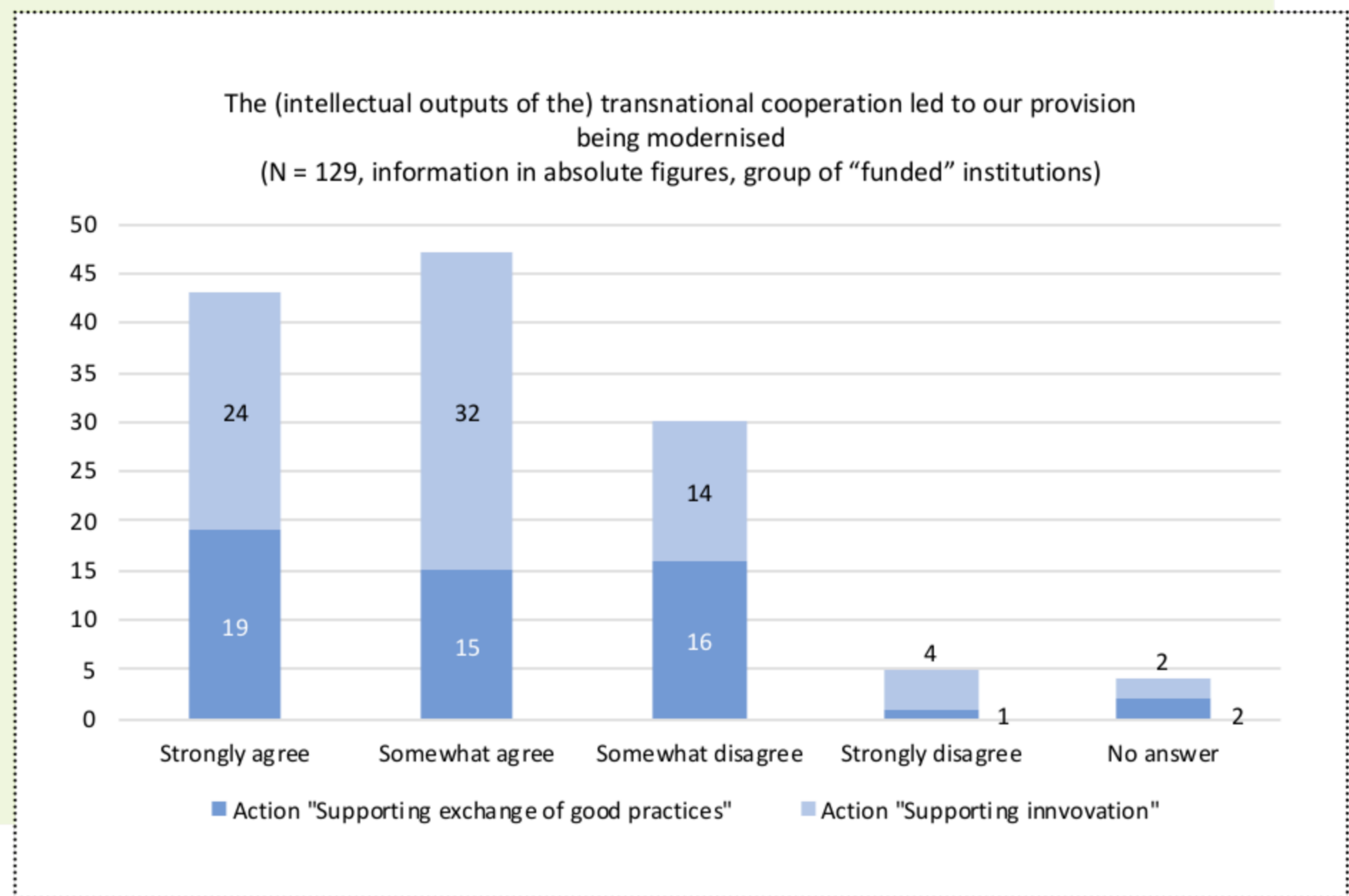
via other funding sources. This documentary analysis outcome could not, however, be confirmed in the case studies. In the case studies, a majority of interviewees stated that updating is contingent on a) technical capabilities and b) available resources, and that this frequently constituted a bottleneck. (Fig. 6)

In overall terms, it is possible to identify that the tangible and intangible project results and products are significantly improved by transnational cooperation. They benefit to an extraordinarily high degree from transnational networking. The online survey revealed that intellectual outputs inform the portfolio of the institutions in 80 percent of cases and help to modernise provision. Nevertheless, the case studies show that these outputs tend to be integrated in an adapted form rather than being included in the institution's regular service portfolio on a 1:1 basis. This applies to both actions. (Fig. 7)

**We are adding educational provision [to our] portfolio in the form of the respective curriculum and the relevant certification or accreditation, but this is primarily due to the pilot training of staff. (Source: KA204-001553, Final Report, p. 37)**



Figure 7: Modernisation of own provision



**Transnational cooperation** makes a major contribution to **product quality**.



The **project results** are usually adapted before being **integrated** into the provision of the institutions.



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## 4 IMPACTS ON THE TARGET GROUPS

Which target groups are benefiting from the strategic partnerships? What characterises these groups, and which changes can be observed? Chapter 4 turns its attention to these questions.

### 4\_1 WHO BENEFITS FROM THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Erasmus+ Adult Education is characterised by a broad spectrum of target groups. Education and training staff, who for example deploy the products developed in the Erasmus+ projects, are considered to be one such target group. However, the learners themselves are perceived as a further target group. (Fig. 8)

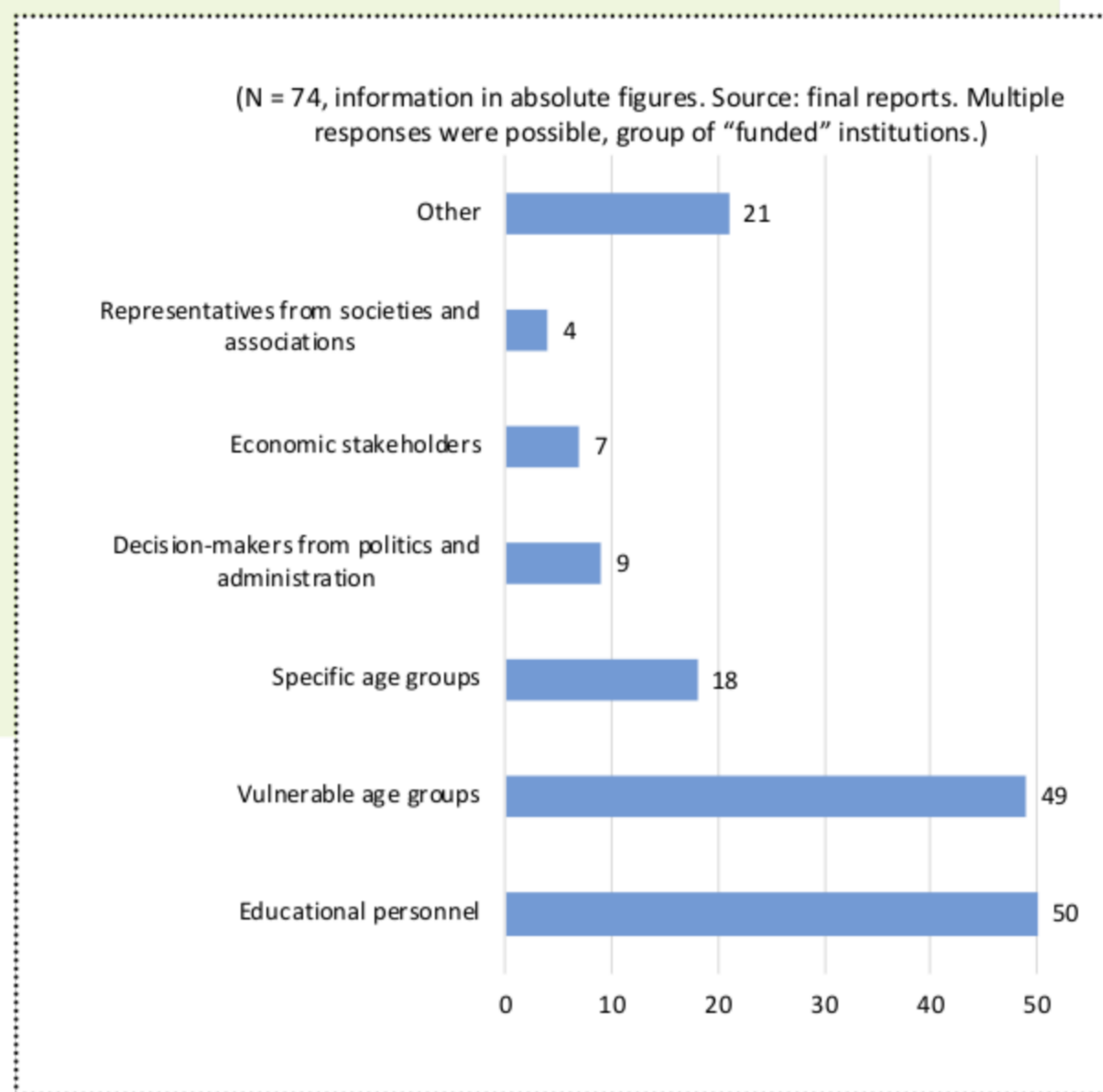


The analyses showed that Erasmus+ Adult Education is able to appeal to many people who are frequently not reached via formal educational provision. Vulnerable groups can also be addressed to a particularly large degree. So-called "hard to reach groups" make up around one third of the target groups.

The "vulnerable group" listed in Figure 8 includes refugees and migrants, the low-skilled, persons with multiple placement difficulties, Sinti and Roma people, persons with a disability, low-income households, the (long-term) unemployed, persons with mental disabilities, older dependent people, and single-parent families. Each of these is addressed in a targeted way in numerous projects.

Those listed in the "specific age group" category include, for example, people aged over 60, children and young people, parents and grandparents, students studying a wide range of specialisms,

Figure 8: Target groups stated in Erasmus+ final reports



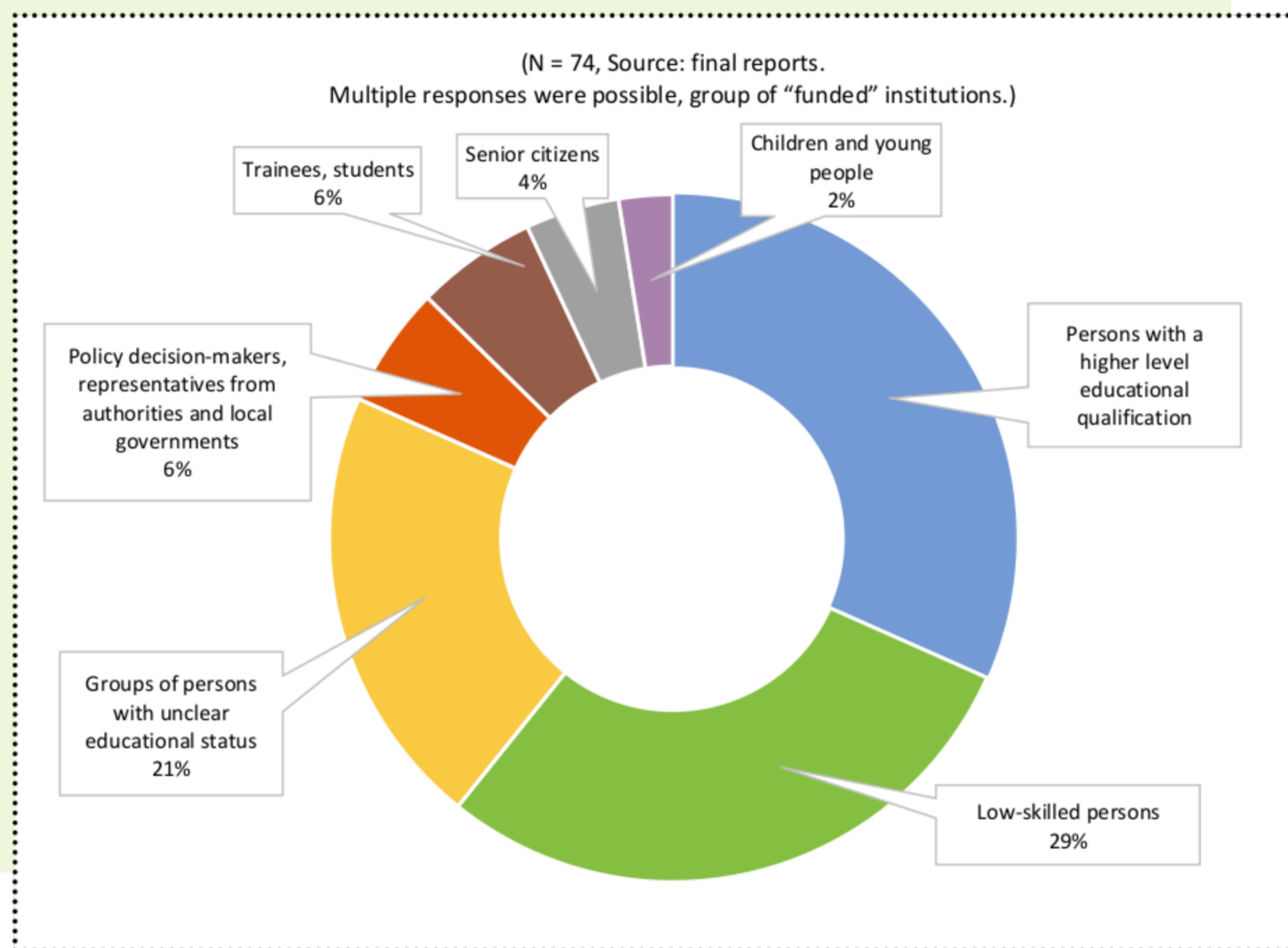
higher education drop-outs and young adults. These groups are addressed in combination with other groups in some cases. (Fig. 9)

**Just under 850 farmers, education professionals, NGO representatives and others received seminar-based training in [our] project. (Source: KA204-003393, Final Report, p. 22)**

**Roma people are particularly reached via active involvement in the situational analysis, via study visits to their communities and via publications relating to the project on Facebook. (Source: KA204-004216, Final Report, p. 20)**

**6 of a total of 65 workshop participants were representatives of public employment services or employment agencies. 39 were company representatives, and 4 represented local and regional government bodies. (Source: KA204-001553, Final Report, p. 41)**

**Social disadvantage, many years of social exclusion, life stories characterised by negative learning experiences and low self-esteem were common to many participants. (Source: KA204-003249, Final Report, p.15)**

**Figure 9: Target groups sorted by the socio-structural characteristic of educational status**

Numerous project heads made comments underlining the extreme importance for professional project implementation of finding out about the socio-demographic and socio-structural characteristics of the target group/s at an early stage so that provision can be designed to properly and precisely fit. Socio-structural characteristics include, for example, educational status, employment and occupation, income and place of residence. In the final reports, project heads mainly addressed educational status. This enabled a picture to be traced within the scope of the study which shows that 29 percent of projects are aimed at the low-skilled, persons with a low level of school education and persons whose educational certificates and qualifications are not recognised in Germany. By way of contrast, a further 32 percent of the projects were directed at persons with a higher level educational qualification.

**Employees and heads of companies and of nursing and elderly care organisations were surveyed in advance in order to ensure that the design concept for the training modules was exactly right. The results of these surveys were evaluated and then processed to create training modules for the purposes stated above. They were also tested with the project partners, and this led to the identification of recommendations for the setting of the policy and statutory framework. (Source: KA204-001476, Final Report, p. 6)**

One challenge which the transnational projects constantly need to face is the fact that a target group which is presumably the same may vary from country to

country. This requires internal differentiation in the project execution. The target group "refugees", for instance, may certainly differ within Europe. Against this background, relevant project provision is adapted to meet specific requirements at a local level, and an internally differentiated understanding of the target group is adopted.

**Whereas the other partners expect a large number of refugees from crisis regions in the Middle East such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, most refugees in Spain clearly come from Venezuela and are seeking to come here for economic reasons. [Against this background, provision needed to be adjusted accordingly to meet the specific requirements.] (Source: KA204-003268, Final Report, p. 11)**

## 4\_2

## HOW THE TARGET GROUPS ARE REACHED AND STRENGTHENED

All project heads confirm in their surveys that their respective "planned" target group has also "actually" been reached. With regard to the strengthening of the target groups, the results especially showed a reporting of impacts which were identified during the term of the project and which in some cases were systematically surveyed (via evaluations). After the end of the project, however, direct contacts to the target groups are frequently broken off or else are only maintained with individual sub-groups. A return to daily business follows, and for this reason project heads are able to provide little in the way of data-based reporting on longer term effects on the target groups.

In overall terms, the impacts identified on the target groups may be sub-divided into the following categories.

- Awareness of the respective situation or topic
- A specific acquisition of knowledge
- An increase in experiences of self-efficacy
- A strengthening of action competence
- A strengthening of the role of multiplier
- Promotion of employability

The respondents found it relatively easy to report on the awareness processes and subsequent learning processes instigated in respect of the target group. In the case of the strategic partnerships directed at vulnerable groups, for example, a certain cascade of effects can be discerned. This may be described as follows. The projects offer assistance with the acceptance of life circumstances which are personally difficult, encourage

people to recognise their own possibilities even if they possess very few or no basic skills, and create opportunities via which the learning or experiences gained can be tried out and positively reinforced. It becomes clear that acceptance of personal life circumstances is an




The projects instigated **awareness and learning processes** amongst the target group in many cases.




The **target groups expanded their knowledge** in fields such as health education.

extremely important initial step in terms of being able to undertake any further steps at all.

The imparting of knowledge to the target groups is one of the aims of virtually all of the projects. Most project heads confirm that this objective is actually achieved. Extensive evaluation procedures are sometimes deployed to monitor this. The specific knowledge to be imparted depends strongly on the individual tailoring of the projects.

—  —

**The partners undertake [to disseminate] the project results in their countries by participating in education fairs, job exchanges, conferences and workshops. (Source: KA204-003370, Final Report, p. 26)**

—  —

**Workshops were conducted in different countries. Each of these involved representatives from the municipal authority, health authorities and social welfare offices, welfare associations and advisory agencies and representatives of Roma organisations, other NGOs, doctors and hospitals. [The project heads expect that these representatives will exercise a key function with regard to use of the project results.] (Source: KA204-004216, Final Report, p. 21)**

A small number of institutions report that a lack of foreign language skills on the part of some target group representatives is one stumbling block to acquisition of knowledge, especially if transnational encounters occur. In some instances, this requires the deployment of interpreters whose costs cannot be covered via Erasmus+ funding.



**A total mind explosion [took place in the practice phases]. (...) This enabled the [team members] to make progress with the topic at a personal level and also fostered intercultural competence as they met people from other countries. Such a lot happened in the informal period. (Source: Case study 2)**



**Educational and training staff** in particular increase their **decision-making competences** through European project work.



Target groups achieve the prerequisite for **active participation** by gaining **experiences of self-efficacy**.

in this regard. Nevertheless, it was noticeable that improved decision-making competences were extremely unlikely to be reported beyond the training staff involved, i.e. at the level of the target group. It seems that monitoring in this respect may be methodologically difficult or scarcely possible to achieve during the project term because such an effect can only be observed after somewhat of a time delay. For this reason, project heads mainly reported on improved decision-making competences at the level of the training staff or agents.

Target groups gained experiences of self-efficacy in numerous projects. Project heads facilitated this by adopting different starting points in each respective case and then by working either with extrinsic motivation (especially in the case of the vulnerable groups) or by using intrinsic motivation. Enhanced decision-making competences are certainly the objective to which every project aspires. Although numerous general conditions need to be right in order to enable this aim to be actually achieved, some project heads were able to report success

## DEFINITION OF “VULNERABLE GROUPS”

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The Erasmus+ Programme places a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups. According to the 2020 Programme Guide (p. 10), this encompasses the following persons.

### EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Erasmus+ Programme aims at promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating access to existing provision for participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers whenever disadvantage limits or prevents participation in transnational activities for reasons such as:

- disability (i.e. participants with special needs); people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;
- educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; low qualified adults; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;
- social obstacles: people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities).



## 5\_IMPACTS ON COOPERATION WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Which types of organisation cooperate within the scope of Erasmus+ projects? Who brings what sort of expertise to the table, which changes are triggered by cooperation and which follow-up activities take place after funding ends? These questions form the focus of Chapter 5.



## 5\_1 WHO COOPERATES WITH WHOM

The number of partners cooperating within the scope of a Strategic Partnership under Erasmus+ varies between three and eleven institutions. Cooperation partners usually include at least one or two institutions which are experienced in the implementation of international projects using public funds and which have already established relevant management expertise. Numerous projects incorporate a minimum of one partner characterised by a strong alignment to academic research. This may be an institute of higher education, a university, or a scientific institute. In order to monitor whether products are a good match for the needs and requirements of the target groups, care is taken when selecting partners to ensure that at least one (and

usually more than one) institution has direct contact with the target groups. Participating organisations perceive this heterogeneous composition as a benefit.

The **heterogeneity** of the partner institutions favours **successful cooperation**.

**At an institutional and organisational level, the project partners involved in the Strategic Partnership approached the topic from very different perspectives because these partners were highly various in institutional terms. (...) This fostered networking and led to high-quality results which will also in turn have a impact on the way in which the organisations work. (Source: KA204-003282, Final Report, p. 18)**

The projects are mostly depicted in the form of a coordination and management plan, to which tasks, milestones and deadlines are added. The reporting duties which are incumbent on the individual partner institutions demonstrate the commitment which most partners are prepared to take on board. Some projects choose a team approach. This involves an overall coordination group rather than a situation in which only one individual person assumes responsibility for the entire project management. Great importance is attached to the integration of all participating partner organisations so that the respective competencies of the institutions can make the best possible contribution to the project process. In numerous cases, explicit care is taken to ensure that the development of products and results is undertaken by representatives from several institutions and is thus structured in a transnational way so as to derive synergies from the comprehensive activities and tasks.

Virtually all cooperation partners agree that quality assurance of the organisational process forms part of useful and targeted cooperation. Such quality assurance relates to all aspects of the project organisation, including financial management, internal and external responsibilities and evaluation.

**Each country undertook major endeavours to develop the [project] in accordance with its own needs and to involve large numbers of people in further development at a local level from the very outset. This meant that**

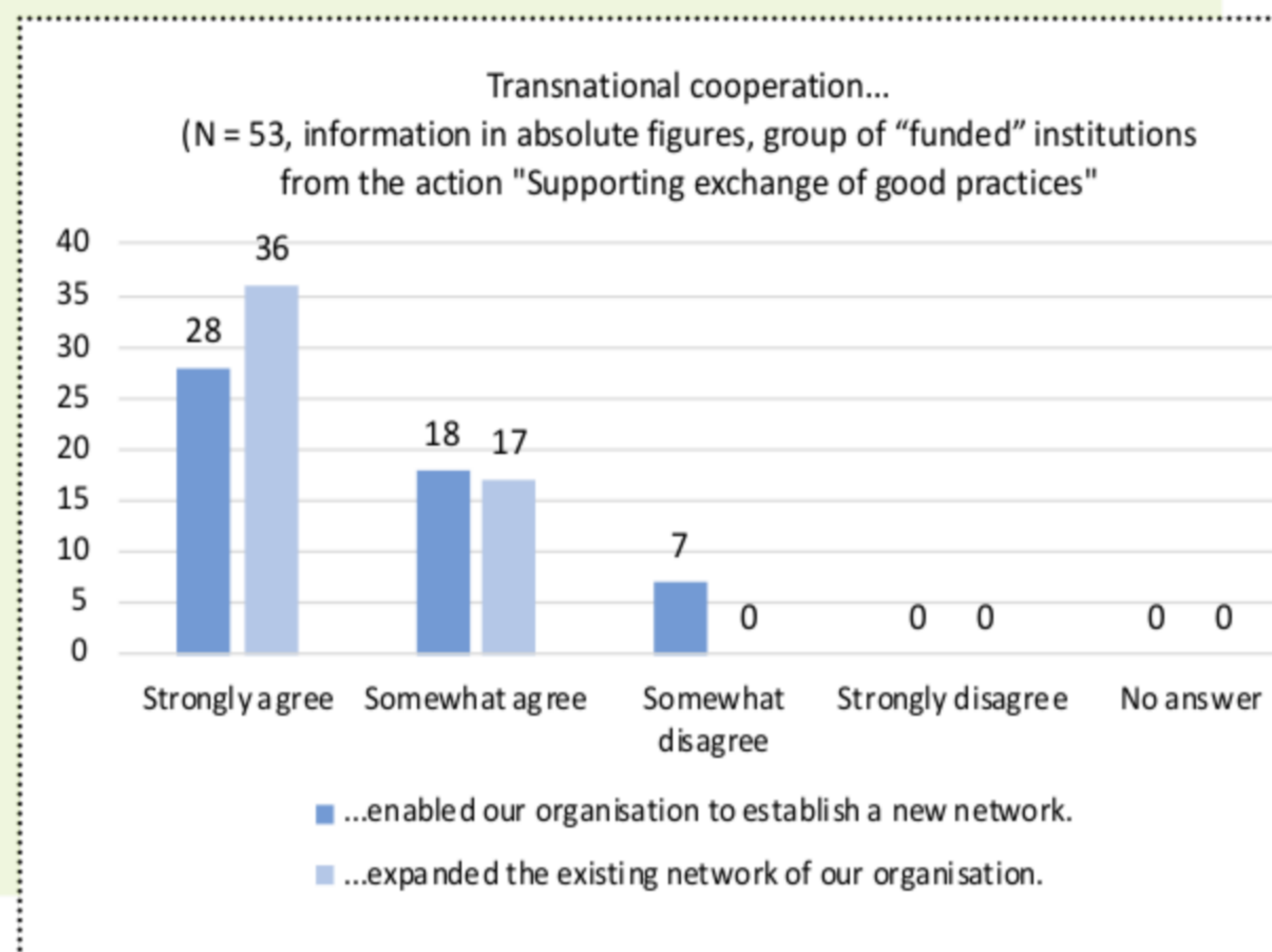
**further persons were actively integrated alongside the project teams. The latter were then also present when project meetings took place in their own country. (Source: KA204-003249, Final Report, p. 9)**

Many Erasmus+ projects incorporate other stakeholders in certain project phases in order to make use of their expertise, feedback or contacts on the ground in a situation-related way and to derive benefits for the project. Both local and regional networks maintained by the participating partner organisations are relevant in this context. These play an important role in the piloting and implementation of products, in reaching the target groups, and in the development of effectiveness. Face-to-face and international meetings during the project implementation frequently serve the purposes of getting to know local stakeholders and establishing networks.

Both national and international networks are primarily of relevance when the next stage of the project is geared towards a national roll-out or if a project has the potential to be scaled up. Some final reports also indicate that contacts with partner organisations directly involved are in themselves sufficient to equate to an international network to which they are able to have recourse in future. (Fig. 10)

A **high degree of importance** is attached to **quality assurance** of the organisational processes.

**Figure 10: Impacts of transnational cooperation – establishment and expansion of networks**



## 5\_2

### THE CHANGES WHICH THE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS INSTIGATE

Extremely positive reports regarding cooperation with partner organisation are provided across all three survey forms (documentary analysis, online questionnaire, case studies). The climate of cooperation is perceived to be inspiring, horizon-broadening and an enrichment. It is also fundamentally viewed as being a beneficial and successful part of the implementation process.

The heterogeneity of the partner organisations and the way in which the specialist expertise deployed is able to supplement itself lead to synergies with regard to the joint generation of ideas, and the development and placement of the products or results. The multi-perspective approach is considered a major benefit. This ultimately leads to high-quality and innovative tangible and intangible products. A further synergy effect is generated by the recognition that an international composition enables cooperation partners to familiarise themselves with new approaches.



Project cooperation fosters the **expansion of existing networks.**



**Europe is integral to our lives. (...) We need this project work. We need this encounter. What we have within the team still exists when we communicate via Zoom or chat. If we have a question, we send a short message. (...) Then the Greeks come on the phone and we discuss matters. (...) Actually, there are not many of us. But there are lots of us really. It's just that they are not visible. But they are there.**

**It's a great feeling. Not something I would like to miss out on. (Source: Case study 8)**

Within the framework of the online survey, the funded institutions delivered a clear statement with regard to the further impacts of transnational cooperation. There was virtually unanimous agreement that such cooperation

- consolidates a sense of European togetherness;
- strengthens an institution's own international networks;
- facilitates an exchange of views on joint and differing values;
- and leads to a greater awareness of how to deal with diversity. (Fig. 11)

Contacts between the participating partner organisations remain very stable after the conclusion of joint project work. In 96 percent of cases, links with the European partner institutions remain intact even when the project has ended. These contacts give rise to joint follow-up activities on 81 percent of cases. (Fig. 12)

Cooperation with partner institutions also plays an important role for institutions which have not previously received funding. The latter also need to reach agreement with such partner institutions during the course of the application process. For this reason, the online survey specifically asked what became of such contacts in the event of the application being rejected. The evaluation showed that a majority of respondents were of the view that the contacts should be reactivated because they were so good. These respondents also stated that contact clearly remains in place with some of the partner institutions and that joint subsequent activities had been pursued or were being pursued with individual partner institutions.

Figure 11: Effects of cooperation with European partner organisations

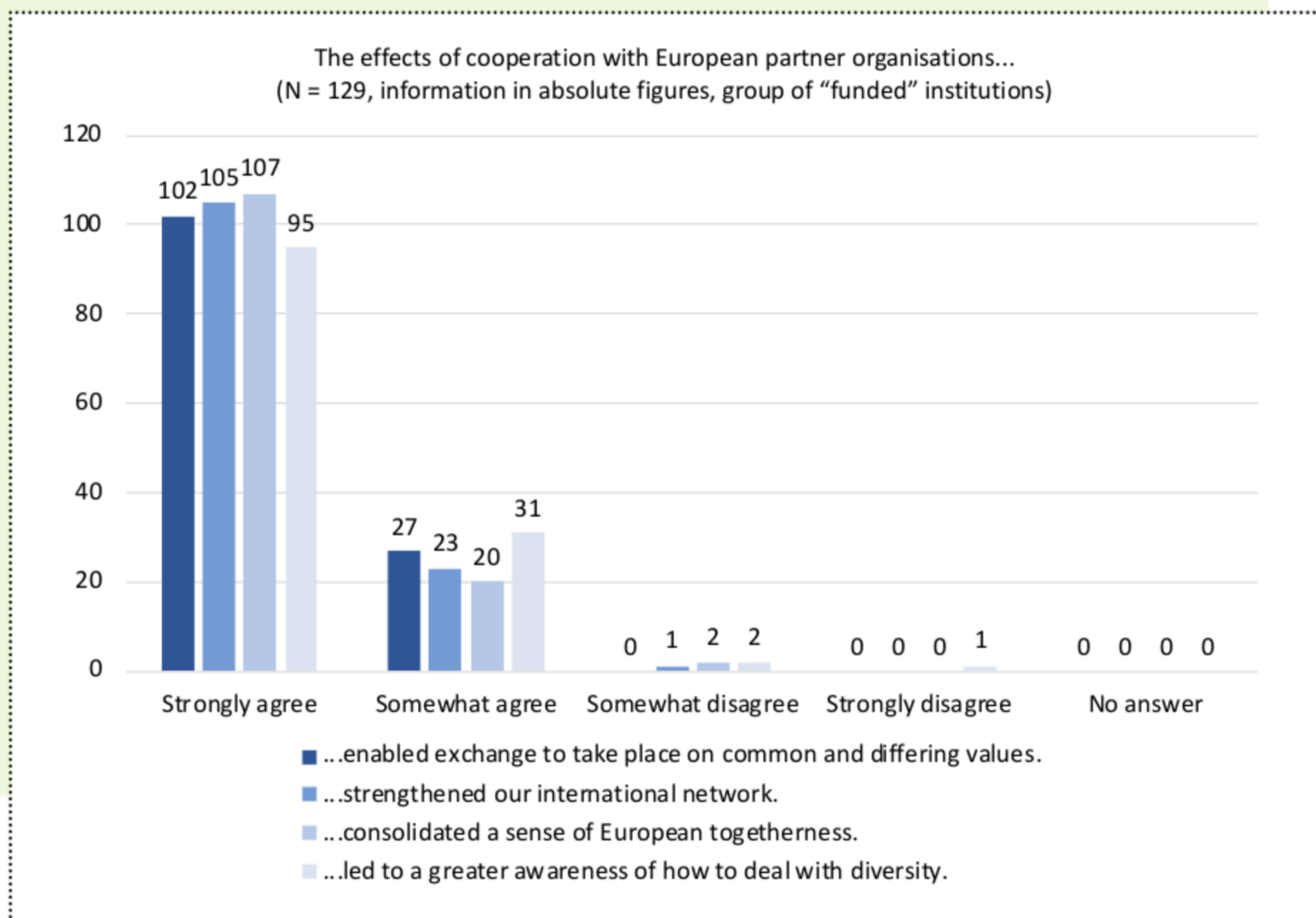
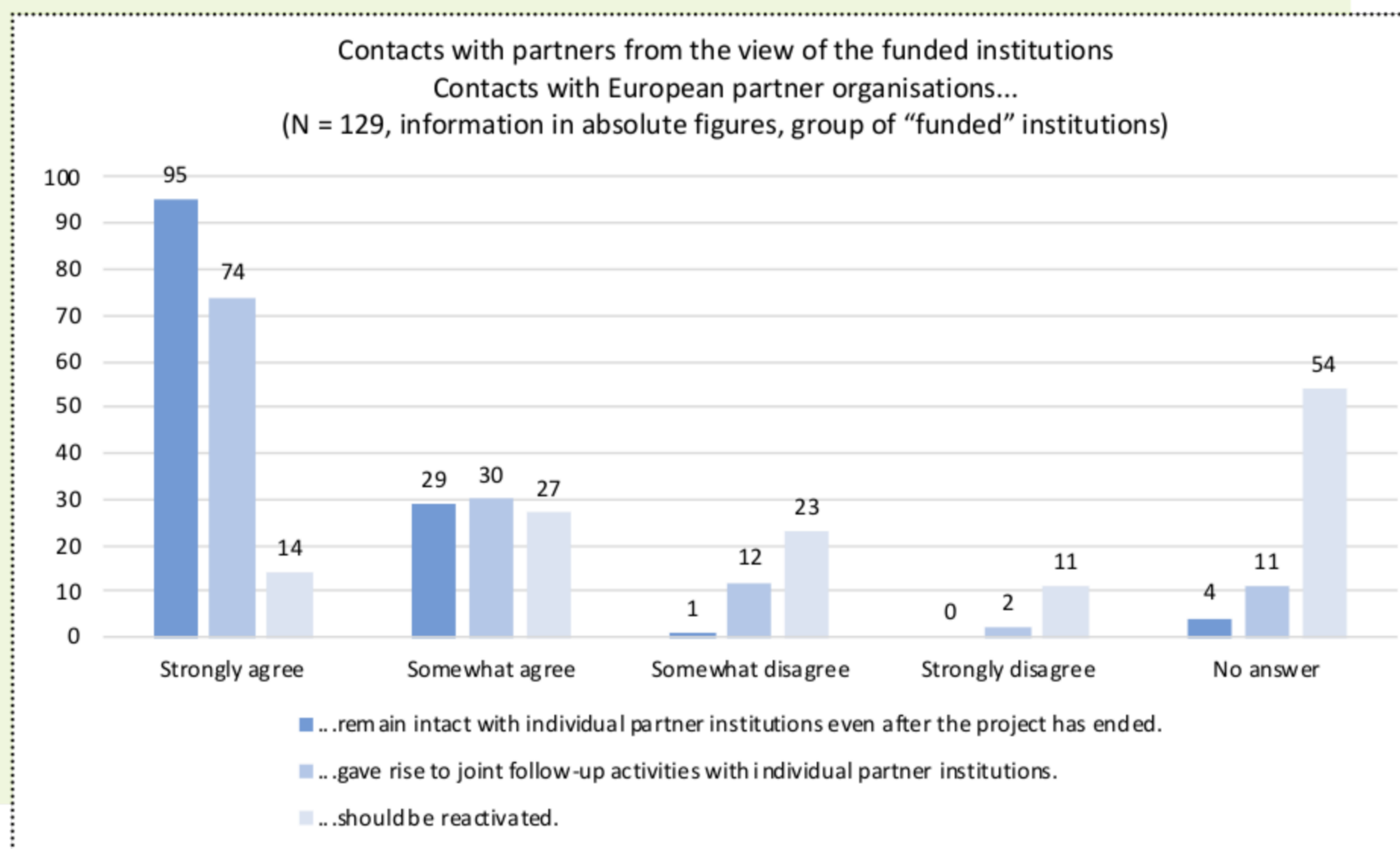


Figure 12: Development of contacts with partner institutions





The **multi-perspective approach** of the projects is leading to high-quality, innovative outcomes.

These indicate that the main reasons for launching further cooperative projects are a desire to continue addressing topic contents or to pursue the further development and distribution of tangible and intangible products already realised. However, good experiences gained from previous cooperation also give rise to a wish to implement new projects together (perhaps with a different content alignment).

In numerous cases, the follow-up activities conducted after the end of the project are frequently directed towards regional or international dissemination of results. On the other hand, the perspective adopted in some cases is more geared to distributing results amongst new target groups not previously addressed.



**[At the moment, the products are still being used in the language training courses and continue to be accessed by teachers online. However, the way in which the materials have been further developed] means that they are not necessarily only being used for people with reading and writing difficulties [and are also being applied to those with normal continuing language training needs.] (Source: Case study 6)**

With regard to the case studies, it emerged that, although direct steps occur after the end of official funding in every instance, a return to daily business follows after a certain time. This means that project contents only occupy a limited scope today. In many cases too, the highly intensive contact to the target groups is broken off. This is the reason why only very little fact-based reporting



**We still have direct contact with half of the stakeholders. (Source: Case study 3)**

### 5\_3 THE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES WHICH ENSUE

The results show that virtually every project leads to a project phase which takes place after official Erasmus+ funding has ended. New projects are frequently launched with two to three partners. However, not all of these are submitted to Erasmus+. 43 percent of organisations which had already concluded Erasmus+ projects reapplied for funding from the programme. 27 percent reported that they were currently designing project ideas, and a further 17 percent stated that they were presently implementing a follow-up project without the use of EU funding.

The motivations for continuing joint activities can be reconstructed on the basis of the final reports and case studies.



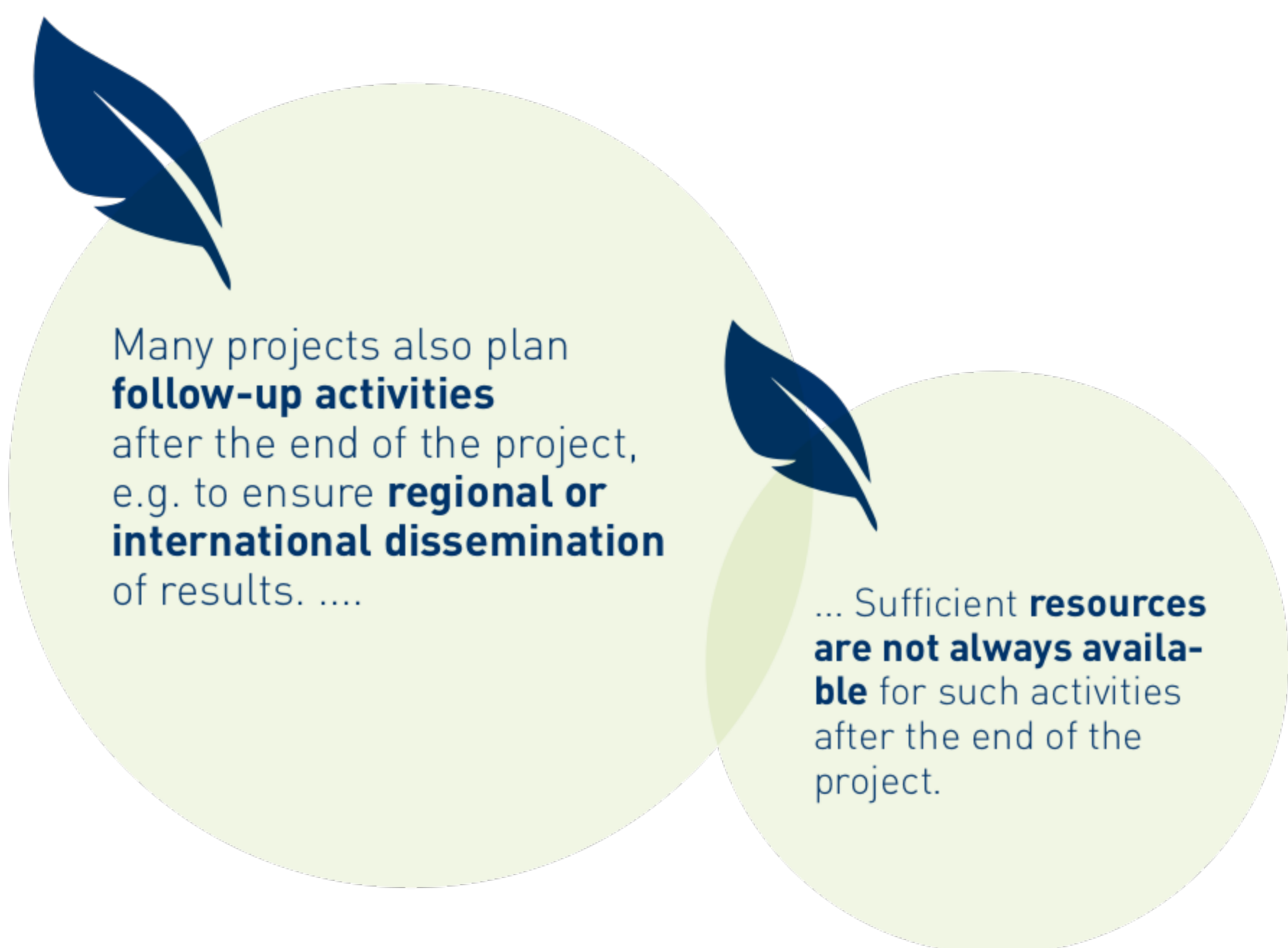
A majority of the strategic partnerships maintains **contact with their European partners, even after the end of the project.**

can be provided in respect of further developments at the target group level. Follow-up activities also frequently only address individual groups from within the overall target group spectrum of the original project. Interviewees mostly speak of regular “day-to-day” business or of the “normal” annual programme of the institution into which the follow-up activities are transferred in a certain way.

Some of the cases which reported new applications for Erasmus+ projects

that there are occasionally Erasmus+ projects which extend over several phases and in respect of which a new application is submitted for each phase.

These “multi-part” projects are either follow-up projects or consist of a tool kit of various types of support provision for the same target group, for which applications are staggered over time. In some cases, follow-up applications also have their basis in aspects such as findings which have emerged from previous projects. The intention then is to pursue these further.



Many projects also plan **follow-up activities** after the end of the project, e.g. to ensure **regional or international dissemination** of results. ....

... Sufficient **resources are not always available** for such activities after the end of the project.

are projects which involve cooperation with selected partners from the current venture. Numerous institutions also report that, as well as contacting familiar partner organisations, they have spoken to entirely new organisations with a view to acquiring these for future cooperation. The analysis of the final reports showed

## 6 IMPACTS WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE ORGANISATIONS

What response do the projects receive in the immediate environment of the participating institutions? What image-enhancing effects are reported, and what is the nature of the response at a political level? Chapter 6 answers these questions.



### 6\_1 THE RESPONSE WHICH THE PROJECTS RECEIVE IN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

The study measured impacts within the environment of the funded organisations in terms of:

- how the perception of third parties changes;
- how their reputation as a potential cooperation partner rises;
- which general image-enhancing effects can be identified and
- the response accorded to the results or products in professional circles and beyond.

The organisations enjoy a stronger degree of local perception which is triggered by the Erasmus+ projects. Online respondents, for example, gave relatively clear feedback that the projects led to improved perception of their institution by third parties.

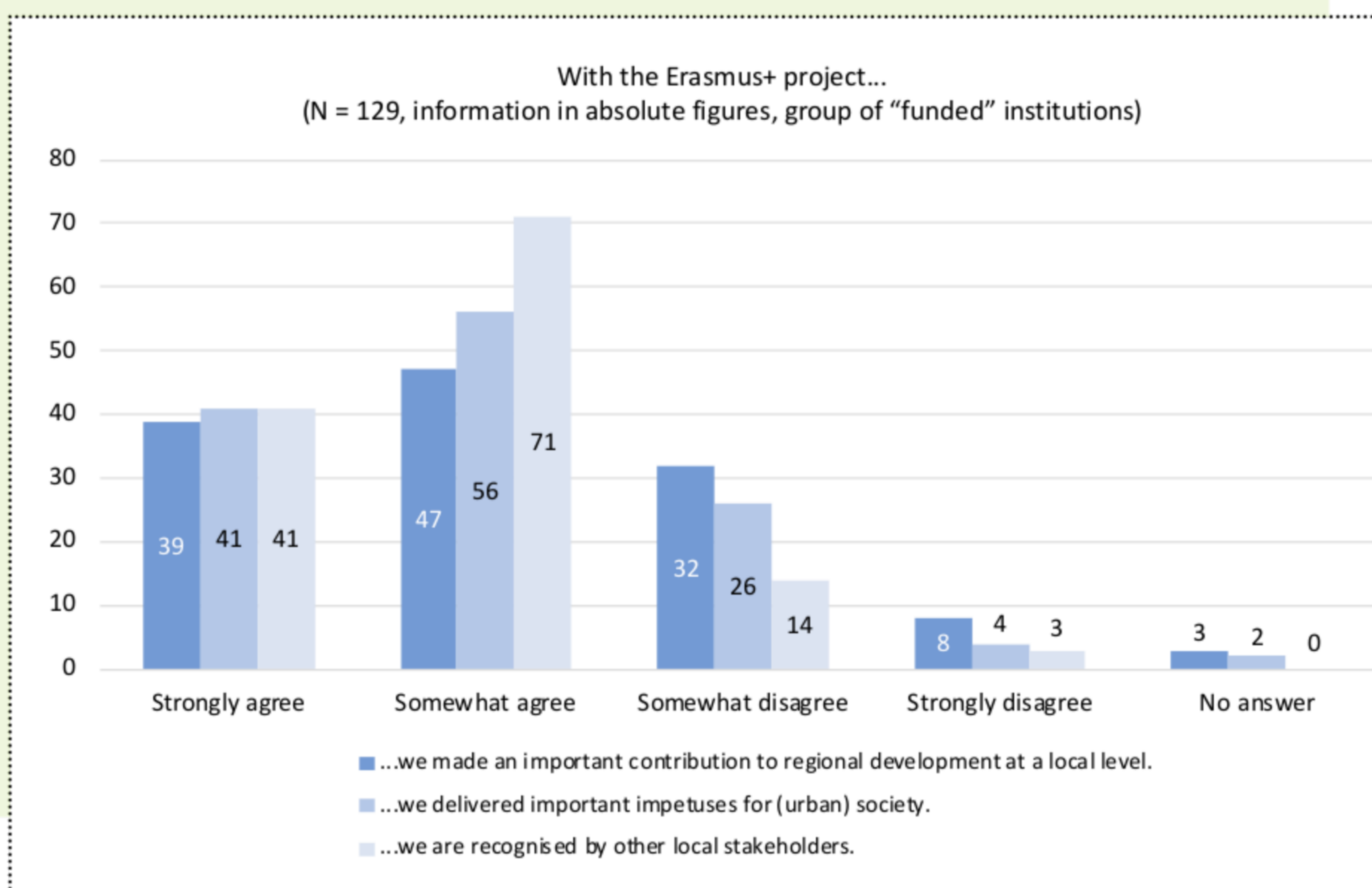
From the point of view of the funded institutions, projects are recognised by local stakeholders first and foremost. They are also able to deliver important impetuses for (urban) society. And, last but not least, 68 percent are of the view that they make a significant contribution to regional development. (Fig. 13)

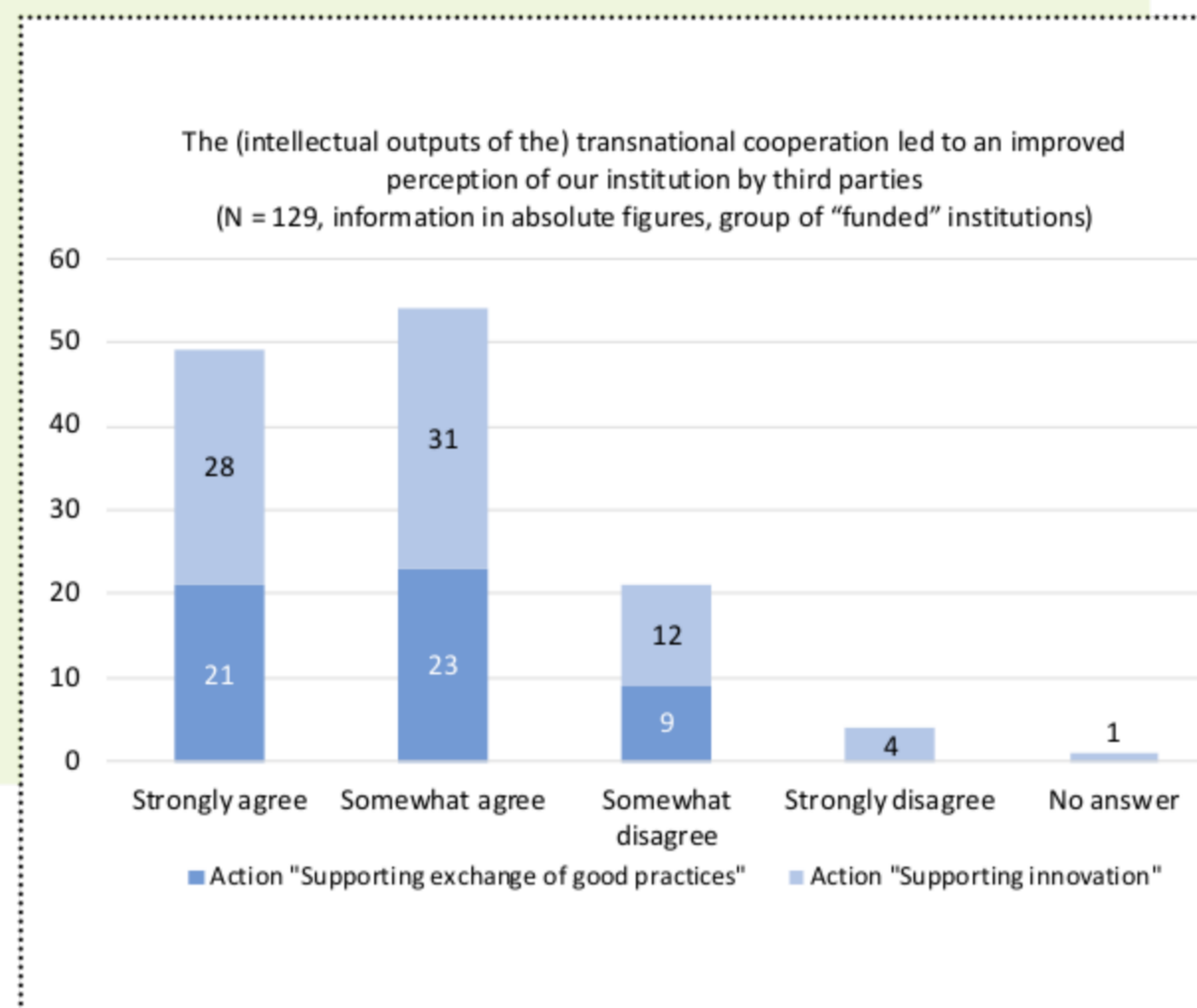
Individual parts of both the final reports and cases studies contain indications which can be evaluated as a positive response on the part of the local population, local stakeholders or the media. With regard to the local stakeholders, there are reports that the projects facilitate the "opening of doors" to local functionaries and professional circles. Various aspects which play a role in the respective Erasmus+ projects (political patronage, niche topics, a European approach) also generate increased perception of the organisation by the media.

Thanks to the Erasmus+ projects, the funded institutions are also taken more seriously as a potential partner organisation within their environment. (Fig. 14)



Figure 13: Effects of the Erasmus+ projects at a local level



**Figure 14: Third-party perception of the funded institutions**

The data also permits the indirect conclusion that the Erasmus+ projects exert a slight image-enhancing effect on the organisations conducting them. The visibility created via the projects generates a positive impact for some institutions at a local level. Individual project heads report an increase in the degree of awareness they enjoy. Some Erasmus+ projects also receive prizes and awards at a regional or national level, and this gives rise to the conclusion that they enhance the image of the institutions. It is also possible to assume that enquiries received by the institutions from interested parties also promote the image of the former. These may, for example, include enquiries from other institutions seeking to address concepts developed within the scope of Erasmus+ projects. The final reports contained frequent mentions of mobilising effects of this kind, which relate to individual interested institutions, to whole networks or to bordering regions.

The tangible and intangible products often create a USP for the organisations. The respondents are of the view that the development of such products, which takes place via transnational networking, results in a level of quality which can be clearly differentiated from comparable products, which tend to be created "only" with the participation

of local (national) stakeholders. With regard to the project results, it is clearly that the topics or problems addressed are considered in a multi-perspective way and that ideas and suggestions which were previously relatively unfamiliar are integrated within the relevant professional circles. The results also stand out by dint of the fact that they address issues or problem situations which have been rarely been investigated by other stakeholders hitherto or else not considered at all. This is something which is constantly fed back to the funded institutions by professional circles and interested parties from within the environment of the projects.

**In the adult sector, I believe that we were really the first [anywhere in Germany] to submit an Erasmus+ application in this field. (Source: Case study 2)**

The assessment of the respondents is that applying for and implementing an Erasmus+ project is usually associated

with a great deal of work. For this reason, many organisations shy away from these endeavours and do not submit European project applications. The institutions surveyed report that they receive even greater recognition from within their environment if they choose nevertheless to embark upon this route. They are accorded esteem and recognition from various stakeholders,

- in their own organisation and any related association structures and
- in their field

if they adopt such a European approach and embrace a spirit of partnership in this way.

This appreciation is mostly provided verbally. On rare occasions, however, acknowledgement also occurs in the form of awards or invitations to enter the policy-making arena. There is constant mention of the respect given for having the "confidence" to take on a European project.

**Because of their project participation, the partner organisations received a boost to their activities, target groups and contents, and they continue to use this to showcase themselves publicly. (Source: KA204-002354, Final Report, p. 9)**

The **project results** frequently allow the organisations involved to create a **USP**.



The funded institutions also sometimes receive a positive response to their projects from professional circles and from other adjoining areas. This feedback may arrive during or after the project term. Project heads are invited to presentations, technical discussions, conferences and specialist international fairs in fields in which they are already involved because of the thematic alignment of the project. They also push the presentation of their results in these circles themselves. As well as receiving feedback from their own professional circles, project heads also sometimes receive a positive response to their projects from related professional areas. When project results can be introduced into professional circles, new forms of cooperation arise in some instances.

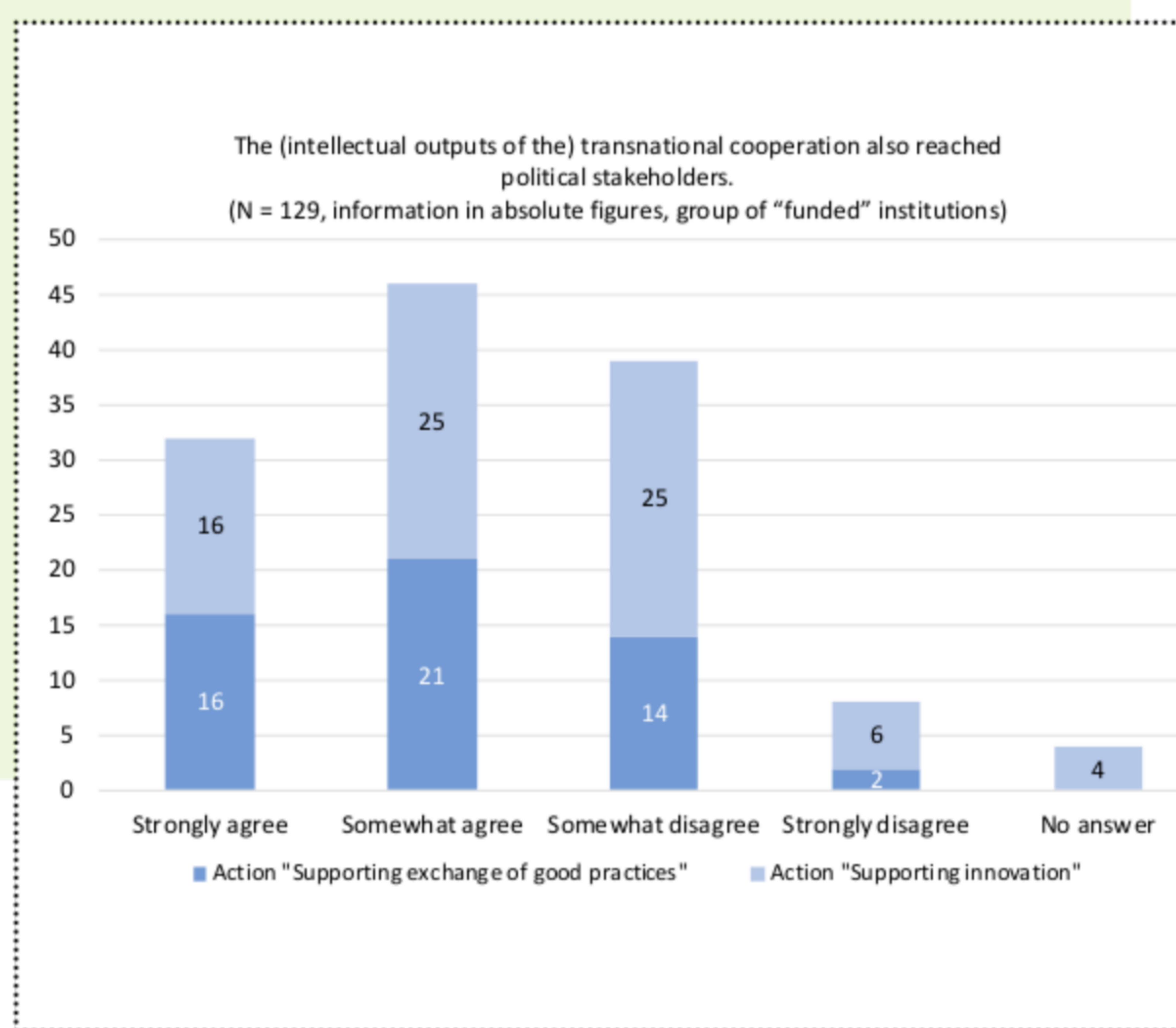
respondents is partially reflected in the final reports and case studies. In this instance too, numerous project heads explained that a declared objective of many projects is to reach stakeholders at local government, federal state, national and European policy level (e.g. trade unions, churches, civic organisations) and that relevant endeavours are undertaken in this regard, but also admitted that this aim is mostly only achieved to a limited extent. (Fig. 15)

Whether and how integration of policy decision-makers occurs and the level that needs to be addressed for this purpose

cerned success stories. In one project, for example, political patronage assisted in obtaining good access to the health authorities. In this project, the targeted approaching of the ministries responsible and of other downstream bodies generated a response in all countries involved, and now further changes are being initiated everywhere within the national assistance systems. Another project reported how establishing contact with policymakers succeeded in generating a new sense of impetus within a competent body. As the final report went on to state, this led to a great deal of interest from this body with regard to future co-

The project results meet with a **positive response in professional circles.** Project managers are in demand as experts.

Figure 15: Reaching political stakeholders



## 6\_2 THE RESPONSE WHICH THE PROJECTS RECEIVE AT A POLICY LEVEL

The number of projects analysed which reach political stakeholders is not inconsiderable. 60 percent of respondents stated that they had "completely" or "partially" achieved this from their own point of view. On the other hand, 36 percent reported that they believed that their projects "(usually) did not" reach policy stakeholders. This slightly sceptical assessment from just over a third of

depend heavily on the general design of a project and on its direction of impetus. It does not always appear useful to address and incorporate these stakeholders. However, various approaches exist at a local government, regional, national and European level if it is necessary to do so. Both the final reports and the case studies provided a number of indications regarding the effects achieved by addressing policy decision-makers. The instances related in the final reports mostly con-

operation with the project partner. Heads of other projects also met with similar interest.



**[Just under nine months after the conclusion of the project, the project heads were given the opportunity to present their demands in Brussels. Five of the six partner organisations participated in the preparation for this presentation and in some cases raised their own private funds in order to be able to travel to Brussels.] It was absolutely no problem to pick up with these people [partners] again and invite them to get involved. This was something they wanted too. They wished to speak about their experiences and talk about how much the [project] had changed them and left its mark on them. (Source: Case study 2)**

In overall terms, however, all sources (online survey, case studies and final reports) also contain a number of sceptical assessments with regard to reaching the political level. It frequently seems that project heads are no longer able to keep their eye on the ball to the same extent once the project has ended because daily business than once again takes precedence. Resources are therefore lacking in order to continue to provide adequate support at a political level for the processes which have been initiated. Some project heads also seem to lack the necessary points of access to relevant decision makers. In some cases, the opportunities which organisations have to reach policy decision-makers is also contingent on a) their level of involvement in local networks and b) their organisation composition.

Adult education centres, for example, are frequently funded by local government and thus enjoy good links with the mayor's office and local council. Other institutions, on the other hand, do not have such points of access at their disposal.

In addition to this, recognition also needs to be accorded to the fact that not all Erasmus+ projects contain a political dimension. This means that establishing contact with policy decision-makers is not always a focus per se.



Projects can also exert an **impact at a policy level** if stakeholders are integrated in a timely manner.



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## 7\_SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS FACTORS

Erasmus+ Adult Education can be described as an extraordinarily successful European funding programme. A very large number of the projects which received financial support between 2014 and 2019 went on to achieve their objectives. But what is it precisely which makes all these projects so effective? How can we describe the success factors which make the difference? These questions form the focus of Chapter 7.

## 7\_1 WHAT CHARACTERISES THE ORGANISATIONS

Numerous institutions have recourse to staff who already possess extensive experience in the implementation of EU-funded projects. Many of these have been working at the same institution for many years and do not normally require supplementary training in order to be able to execute the Erasmus+ project. Inexperienced project participants do not therefore have much of a detrimental effect within the context of cooperation with partner organisations. They tend to be taken under the wing of their more experienced colleagues and are able to become acquainted with the processes. (Fig. 16)

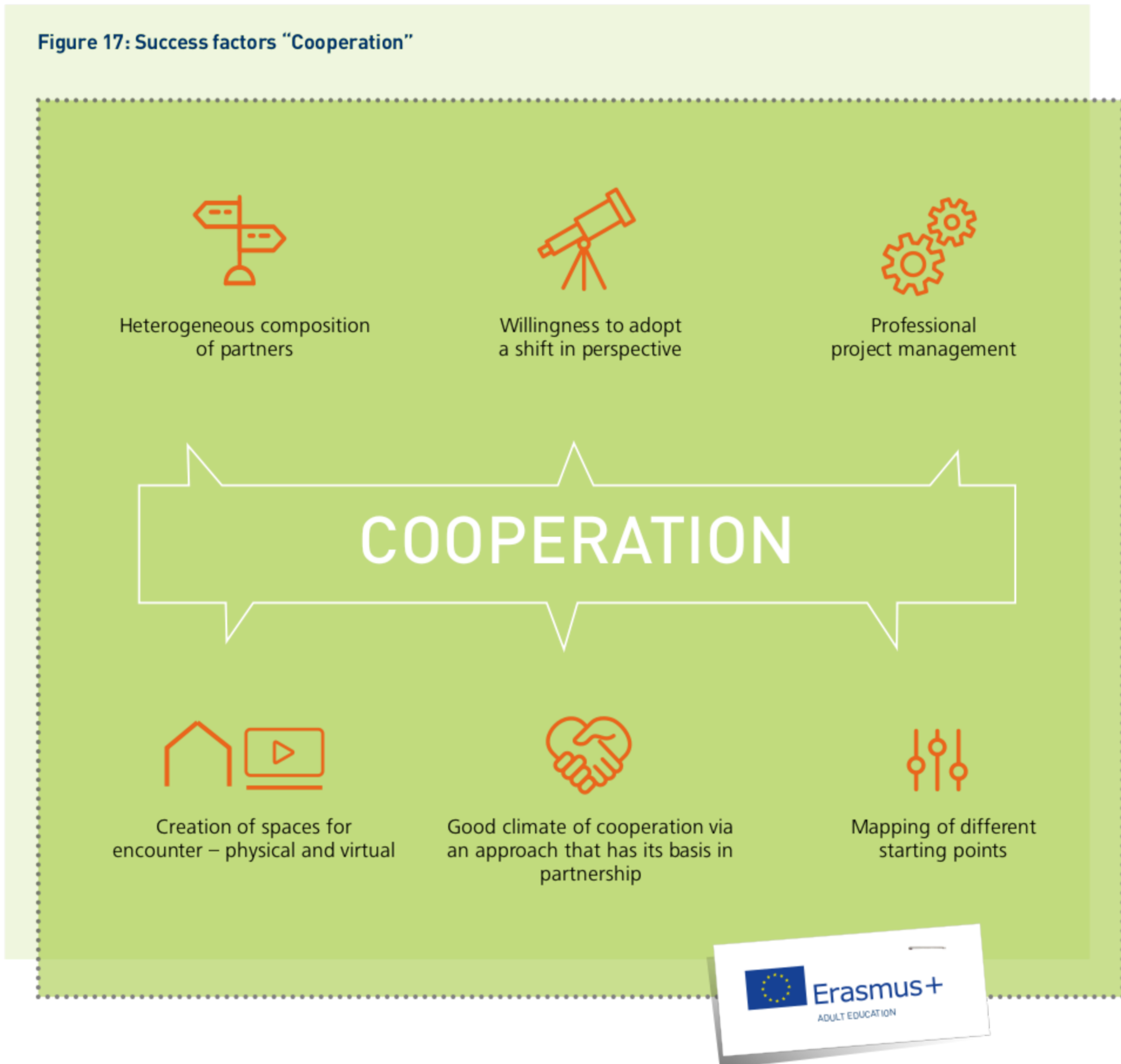
The staff situation outlined, in which persons involved mostly become associated with the institution even after the end of the project, means that in many cases the organisation is able to make permanent use of the expertise established. One of the consequences of this is that it now becomes possible for institutions to pursue follow-up processes. This is because there are people who have already dealt with the relevant topics and partner relationships in a detailed way and are thus familiar with the procedures. Potential follow-up activities can thus use personal links as well as being organisationally related. The Erasmus+ projects represent an addition to the regular programmes of the institutions in most instances. Erasmus+ tends to take place "on top". Nevertheless, the topics or problems

addressed are objectives which are taken very seriously by the initiators. This gives rise to the supposition that project heads bring a great deal of commitment to bear. They are prepared to become involved in the project despite the effort associated with the application process and implementation. Within the institution, responsibility for the project is very frequently borne by a tandem of people or a small team. This implies that projects rest on several shoulders rather than being the "heart's desire" of "lone warriors".

Figure 16: Success factors "General conditions"



Figure 17: Success factors “Cooperation”



## 7\_2 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

The partner organisations usually complement one another very well. They exhibit a heterogeneous composition in that:

- they come from different countries;
- some institutions have experience of EU projects and others do not;
- they have their origins in various specialist disciplines or content alignments;
- they may or may not have links to research institutes, institutes of higher education or universities;

■ they may or may not have direct access to the target group. All of this means that the stakeholders involved are able to learn a great deal from one another and that each organisation is able to contribute its own competencies. The overall effect, therefore, is that Erasmus+ projects generate a professionalisation boost for many participants. In some cases, professionalisation is extensive enough to enable the participating stakeholders to gain specific knowledge and thus establish themselves as experts in professional circles and beyond.

A team approach is often selected in respect of cooperation with the partner organisations. In many instances, the combination of this collective philosophy and a positive atmosphere

of cooperation allows broadly based decisions to be made and “collective responsibility” to be assumed. (Fig. 17)

Detailed cooperation over a considerable period of time enables the parties to get to know one another better. It also permits them to gain an awareness of both differences and commonalities, to map differing starting points, to familiarise themselves with various approaches, to use others as a mirror to perceive facts and circumstances and to achieve a shift of perspective. One pre-condition for facilitating increases in personal competence of this kind is a willingness to exchange thoughts and ideas. This was present in virtually all of the projects. Such networking takes place in other “spaces” besides face-to-face

meetings. Nevertheless, opportunities for stakeholders to encounter one another physically are often characterised as key moments. The view is that these encounters engender trust and provide motivation and information. They pave the way for successful cooperation within a virtual space during the longer part of the project when the partners are scattered across Europe. The digital forms of communication and media chosen are one of the factors determining success in these phases. In this case, it is once again revealed that the partners complement one another and are able to find solutions. This is because at least one partner organisation will normally have already gathered good experiences with certain tools in different contexts, and all others are then able to benefit from this.

Professional project management is certainly a further important prerequisite in terms of implementing projects successfully. The data showed that the approach adopted was extremely professional in most cases. The partner organisations usually feel bound by agreements. This facilitates a type of cooperation which places the main emphasis on work on the product or the result and on quality assurance.

### 7\_3

#### WHY THE PROJECTS ENJOY SUCH A POSITIVE RESPONSE

Joint project work takes place against the backdrop just described. In this regard, it is revealed that a high level of quality is especially achieved if the participants are able to depart from patterns of thought that are characterised by typical attributes of the nation state and conduct discussions from a transnational perspective over the course of the development phase. If this is achieved, transnational networking on local challenges facilitates recognition of the areas in which these challenges are in some cases similar across Europe and of instances in which they are very specific or individually localised. The consequence is that products or results can be made highly "rich in perspective" whilst at the same time being tailored to the needs of the target group/s on the ground. Professional networking and joint finding of ideas

can only be instigated by the collation of expertise from various partner organisations, and this process leads to high-quality and innovative results. (Fig. 18)

In many cases, the individual organisations make use of their networks within the scope of the cooperation to ensure that a) partner institutions receive access to these networks and b) stakeholders in such networks are integrated into the development of products or results in a targeted way. This leads in turn to a further boost in the quality of the products or results and to an expansion of all the previous networks of each organisation.

The process of product development or work on the project results is planned and implemented in a highly conscientious manner in most cases. Products or results seem to be of particularly high quality whenever

- needs are very precisely ascertained beforehand;
- an intensive process involving all partners has taken place to clarify whether existing products should be used as a basis or entirely new products should be developed;
- consideration has been given to the national context into which the products will ultimately be introduced;
- importance has been attached to quality assurance, e.g. in the form of test phases and pilot deployments.

If these criteria are met, the course is essentially set for the products or results to be used permanently by the participating institutions, even if this frequently does not take place on a 1:1 basis. These adaptations appear advisable in order to adjust the products to the regular programme and core audience of the institutions. In some cases, the latter differs from the target groups addressed via the projects.

If high-quality project work geared towards needs and oriented to the target group can be secured, this puts important mechanisms in place which will allow the results to be used and disseminated after the end of the project. In addition to this, the following factors seem to exert a particularly positive effect on dissemination.

- Active integration of local stakeholders during the project term itself
- (Political) patronage of the project
- Early communication of (interim) results to professional circles

Figure 18: Success factors "Quality and impact"



## 8\_METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Who and how many adult education organisations were surveyed and when? Which further information was taken into account? Chapter 8 answers these questions and explains how the study forming the basis for the statements in this publication was conducted.



The academic research study on the impacts of Erasmus+ projects was carried out between May 2019 and August 2020. The National Agency "Education for Europe" at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB) commissioned the company EQ Evaluations GmbH to conduct the survey.



**In order to achieve the greatest possible comparability of results, the study focused exclusively on the key action of "strategic partnerships"<sup>2</sup>. The following documents and contacts from the years from 2014 to 2019 were available for this key action.**

- 74 final reports from Erasmus+ projects coordinated in Germany
- 429 contact addresses for German coordinating institutions and German partner institutions whose Erasmus+ project application was approved
- 42 contact addresses for German coordinating institutions whose Erasmus+ project application (during the years from 2017 to 2019) was not approved

**Figure 19: The study was structured into five phases**



<sup>2</sup> The further key actions "Mobility" and "Support for policy reform" were not investigated.

### 8\_1 PREPARATION OF DATA COLLECTIONS AND ANALYSES

Documents such as the EU Commission's interim evaluation report on the Erasmus+ Programme (2017/2018) and a survey on institutional impacts of European projects in Erasmus+ (2017) were examined in the first stage of the study. This formed the basis for a delimitation of the questions and the development of an analysis grid. This grid was agreed with the National Agency and was used as a foundation for the subsequent phases of the investigation.

### 8\_2 CRITERIA-LED ANALYSIS OF THE FINAL REPORTS

In the second phase, 74 final reports from funded Erasmus+ projects which were available as of June 2019 were subjected to deductive investigation across the analysis grid. These reports each covered a project period of between one and three years. The oldest reports are from the 2014–2017 phase, and the most recent originate from the 2016–2018 phase. One report is from the 2017–2019 phase.

### 8\_3 ONLINE SURVEY OF FUNDED AND NON-FUNDED INSTITU- TIONS

The documentary analysis was followed by an online survey directed at three different groups.

- Institutions which were involved in a funded Erasmus+ project in 2018 or previously in a capacity of the German coordinating institution or as a partner institution ("funded")
- Institutions which were involved in a funded Erasmus+ project in 2019 for the first time in a capacity of the German coordinating institution ("first funded in 2019")
- Institutions which submitted an unsuccessful Erasmus+ project application to act as a German coordinating institution on one or more occasions between 2017 and 2019 ("previously not funded")

Figure 20: Database of the online survey

	Statistical population	Response Absolute terms (Questionnaires not fully completed)	Response Absolute terms (Questionnaires fully completed)	Response in percent (Relating to questionnaires fully completed)
Funded	403	188	129	32%
First funded in 2019	26	17	13	50%
Previously not funded	42	16	12	29%

The survey was available for completion online from the end of October 2019 until the end of January 2020.

In overall terms, the study was able to use the following statistical populations and response rates. (Fig. 20)

#### 8\_4 QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES

In this phase of the data collection, a total of eight qualitative case studies were conducted during the winter of 2019/2020. Selection of cases took place in a criteria-led and structured way on the basis of the results which emerged from the documentary analysis.

The persons to be questioned in each case study were identified beforehand in conjunction with the project heads of the respective organisations. They included both representatives of the coordinating institution and representatives of the partner organisations and/or target group of the project. An assessor travelled to the institutions to conduct each case study on the ground. Guided interviews and focus group interviews were conducted. Consent was obtained from all respondents to make audio recordings and subsequent transcriptions of the interviews.

#### 8\_5 DATA EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The primary and secondary data was evaluated immediately following phases II to IV. This means that partial results could be presented to and discussed with the NA at BIBB on an ongoing basis. The final reports of the funded Erasmus+ projects were subjected to a deductive analysis for this purpose. The online data was evaluated descriptively, and a content analysis of the case studies was carried out.

This scientifically collected data was evaluated and used to prepare a detailed report in German, which can be downloaded at <https://www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de>. The present publication draws on these study results and is also available in German – online and in print.

#### INFORMATION

The detailed Final Report of the Study and the German version of the present publication are available on our website at:  
**[www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de](http://www.na-bibb.de/strat-part-de)**

Information on Erasmus+ funded strategic partnerships can be found in the EU Project Database (Erasmus+ Project Results Platform) at:  
**<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects>**

The National Agency Education for Europe at the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB) has been in existence since 2000 and works on behalf of and with financial support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). It is the National Agency for the EU education programme Erasmus+ in the fields of vocational education and training (VET) and adult education in Germany.

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