



Capacity building and lessons to be learned for the institutionalization of sustainable energy policies in the municipalities' operations

Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE)

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Report on twinning evaluation

D3.2 Report

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Preface

This report is prepared within the framework of **GREEN TWINNING** project (IEE/11/964/SI2.615949), supported by Intelligent Energy Europe.

Green Twinning aims at strengthening the capacity of public authorities in institutionalising sustainable energy policies into their operations. This will be accomplished through direct exchange of experience, peer-to-peer and twinning approaches between local authorities from the EU that are experienced in the sector and learning ones. “Learning from each other – working together & avoiding repetition of past errors” is the project concept.

The project promotes permanent long-term partnerships and networking between “experienced” and “learning” local authorities towards achieving commonly agreed results in joint project implementation process.

The project will be carried out by a consortium gathering associations/networks of local authorities and consulting firms from Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Greece, Poland and Spain.

Project Partners

N°	Participant name	Short name	Country
CO1	Regional Union of Municipalities of Attica	PEDA	Greece
CB2	Exergia Energy and Environment Consultants S.A.	EXERGIA S.A.	Greece
CB3	Sofia Energy Centre	SEC	Bulgaria
CB4	Association of Rhodope Municipalities	ARM	Bulgaria
CB5	Polish Network "Energie Cités	PNEC	Poland
CB6	Municipality of Giurgiu	Giurgiu	Romania
CB7	Building and Civil Engineering	ZRMK	Slovenia
CB8	Energy Agency of La Ribera	AER	Spain
CB9	Municipality of Vrhnika	Vrhnika	Slovenia
CB10	Harghita County Council - Energy Management Agency	HCC-EMA	Romania



Serviciul Public de Management Energetic Harghita
Harghita Megyei Energiatakarékosági Közszolgálat

Abbreviations

CO₂	Carbon dioxide
CoM	Covenant of Mayors
EACI	Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation
EC	European Commission
EE	Energy Efficiency
ESCO	Energy service company
EU	European Union
GHG	Green House Gases
MWh	Megawatt hour
PoE	Pool of Expertise municipalities
PoL	Pool of Learning municipalities
PPP	Public private partnership
RES	Renewable energy sources
RUE	Rational use of energy
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
t	Tonne
toe	Tonne of oil equivalent

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1 Introduction

The European Union (EU) is leading the global fight against climate change, and has made it a top priority through its related EU energy policy and ambitious initiatives.

One such major initiative is the Covenant of Mayors (CoM), which recognize the leading role of local authorities in mitigating climate change through sustainable energy management and Green House Gases (GHG) emission mitigation actions. Nowadays, more than 4600 local and regional authorities have signed the CoM and have committed to reduce their CO₂ emissions by more than 20% by 2020 through low carbon measures in their territories and implementation of sound local energy and climate policies.

Nevertheless, one of the major barriers that local authorities face in their transition towards low carbon communities is their lack of technical and financial capacity in the fields of sustainable energy policy and implementation. It is to be noted that although the impressive numbers of CoM signatories, only 2800 Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) have been submitted in this context and very few have been implemented.

Green Twinning project aims at strengthening the capacity of public authorities in institutionalizing sustainable energy policies into their operations. This will be accomplished through direct exchange of experience, peer – to - peer and twinning approaches between local authorities from Spain that are experienced in the sector and learning ones from the EU-27 (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Slovenia). “Learning from each other – working together & avoiding repetition of past errors” is the project concept. Spain is in many aspects one of the more advanced in its sustainability between other EU countries and can act as a magnet “pulling” less advanced local authorities towards sustainable energy policy and implementation.

The project will be based, among others, on the establishment of twinning agreements between a Pool of Learning (PoL) and a Pool of Expertise (PoE) municipality for the development and implementation of SEAPs.

2 Twinning agreements and activities

The most relevant Green Twinning project activities can be summarized in three major groups: training courses on SEAP preparation & development, the Helpdesk contained in project web site and lastly the formulation of twinning agreements.

Within the Green Twinning project framework has been established 20 twinning agreements: 10 informal and 10 voluntary agreements. Voluntary twinings are the 10th agreements stated at the beginning of project activities and including former PoE and PoL members. Voluntary twinning partnerships have been created with counterparts outside the consortium, not directly participating in, at the end of the project.

Twinning agreements bring together municipalities in order to develop the administrations capacity related to Covenant of Mayors initiative and even to facilitate the adoption by both partners of successful renewable energies (RES) and rational use of energy (RUE) initiatives implemented previously by the other partner.

Emerging from twinning agreements, the common work plan is one of the first stages in twinning procedure. The work plan must be a roadmap to achieve the specific objectives of the twinning agreement in terms of SEAP preparation and actions implementation.

The present document expects to analyse the voluntary twinning agreements in terms of effectiveness, impacts and effects induced and achieved by all of them. The twinning activities have been evaluated by the municipalities involved in twinning activities and Green Twinning project Consultants.

3 Evaluation methodology

The effectiveness of twinning agreements' activities will be analysed from two points of views:

- 1) Using quantitative indicators. The indicators initially proposed in work plans and Green Twinning contract (Annex I) and official project action plan (number of SEAP actions "implemented" (kWh energy savings/green energy produced, t CO2 avoided, etc.)
- 2) And also using qualitative indicators. Focused on evaluating the level of satisfaction of municipalities and Consultants involved in twinning activities.

A questionnaire was circulated among twinning agreements participants in order to gather the opinion of municipalities' representatives (politicians and civil servants) and project consultants about the twinning activities/partnerships in order to evaluate the barriers, challenges, impacts and, definitely, the effectiveness of twinning agreements.

Furthermore, the survey included some questions about post twinning activities or how making the partnership keeping alive after project end.

4 Twinning performance indicators

As a result of the implementation of the different Green Twinning partnerships work plans, at least one PoL SEAP action must be prepared for investment financing. This is the main indicator that can be used to duly measure the performance level of twinning partnerships.

Below, the table compiles the informal twinning agreements SEAP actions replicated by PoL using several units:

Table 1. Quantitative results of informal twinning agreements

Municipality / SEAP action	Energy savings or produced [1]	CO2 emissions savings [2]	Investment [3]	Annual benefits [4]
Giurgiu				
Street lighting refurbishment	2,208	1,548	1,551,959**	--
EE in school buildings	124.3	87,1	400,066	--
Ilion				
EE in public street lighting	235	93	175,890	20,728
Green roofs on buildings	2	1	159,051	6,049
Illioupoli				
Public awareness campaign	35,216	11,720	50,000	2,724,009
Kardzhali				
Street lighting	2,672	1,483	735,750*	205,209*
Kocevje				
Wood gasification plan	45,000	17,060	20,000,000	2,000,000

Municipality / SEAP action	Energy savings or produced [1]	CO2 emissions savings [2]	Investment [3]	Annual benefits [4]
Kosciierzyna				
Thermal solar plants	160	77.5	550,125	51,900
Miercurea Ciuc				
Street lighting for 4 districts	78.12	42.6	387,856.64	19,732
Piaseczno				
EE in public buildings	176.24	280.29	528,600	--
Smolyan				
District heating biomass CHP	18,000	4,201	3,031,960	1,127,340
Vrhnika				
EE in public buildings (library)	616	40	1,104,624	48,000
TOTAL				
	104,487	36,633	28,675,881	--

[1]. Primary energy savings (MWh/year) or Production of RES energy (MWh/year)

[2]. CO2 emissions savings (tCO2/year)

[3]. Investments made in RES & RUE actions or project cost (€)

[4]. Annual socioeconomic benefits (€/year)

[*]. Kardzhali. Calculation made supposing scenario II

[**]. Giurgiu. Investment made with variant 1

In total, 12 SEAP actions knowledge have been transferred from PoE to PoL and prepared for investing. Moreover, 104,487 MWh/year of primary energy savings and renewable energy production have been induced with informal twinning agreements. With regards to greenhouse gases emissions, 36,633 t CO2/year have been avoided with SEAP actions designed. Finally, almost 29 M€ of cumulative investment will be made by PoL municipalities participating in informal twinning agreements.

It is relevant to highlight that two of SEAP action listed above was a soft energy reduction measure.

More detailed information about SEAP actions ready for implementation produced within informal twinning agreements is presented in D 4.2 of Green Twinning project.

5 Twinning effectiveness evaluation

The information analysed in the present chapter emanates from the data obtained with the twinning evaluation questionnaire, distributed through informal twinning participants.

Evidences collected with the survey about their experience, obstacles and results observed by twinning participants distributed in 5 categories.

Firstly, the report shows the profile of effectiveness questionnaire respondents. Secondly, there is an analysis of respondents' opinion related to twinning activities development. Next, are exposed the impression of participants regarding the incentives for taking part in this sort of capacity building activities. Afterwards, chapter 5 gathers the effect of twinning agreement in the municipalities and participants. Lastly, the overall level of participants' satisfaction is examined.

A. TWINNING QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

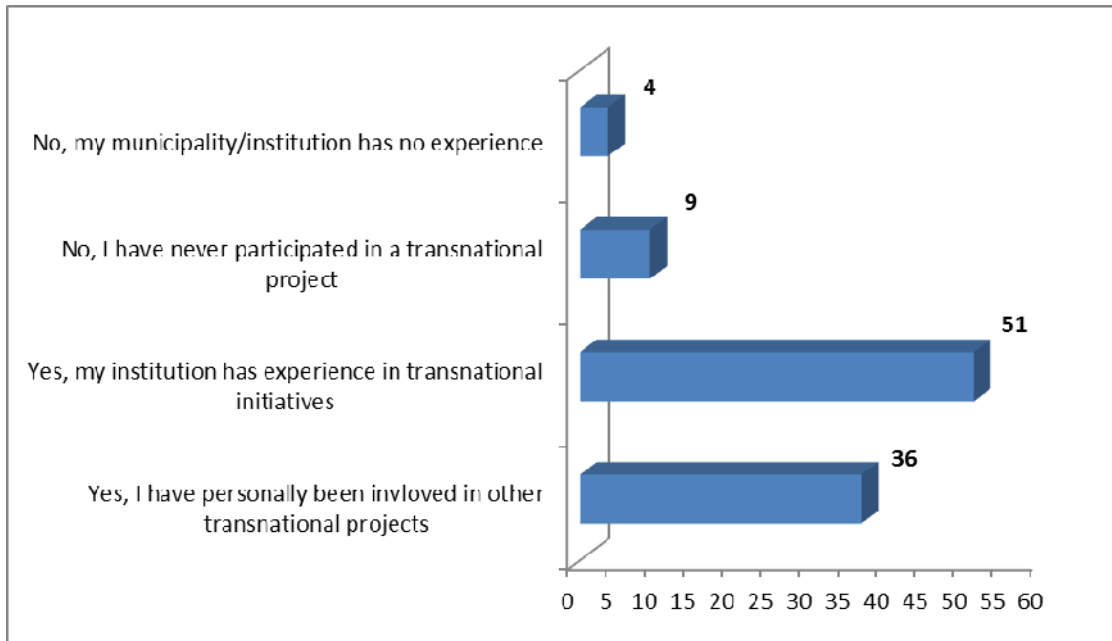
The main objective of the effectiveness evaluation questionnaire was to seek the level of satisfaction of the personnel involved in twinning activities within Green Twinning project framework. The survey was trying to collect the response of municipalities (from both technical personnel and local political board) and their assistants (mostly the Consultants).

In total, 38 responses were received from participating entities representatives, being 21 of PoE, 17 of PoL members, and comprising their respective Consultants.

Concerning the survey participant typology some of them had a political profile (political representatives) and the rest were members of the entity technical board. The very large majority of the respondents in the survey were energy consultant.

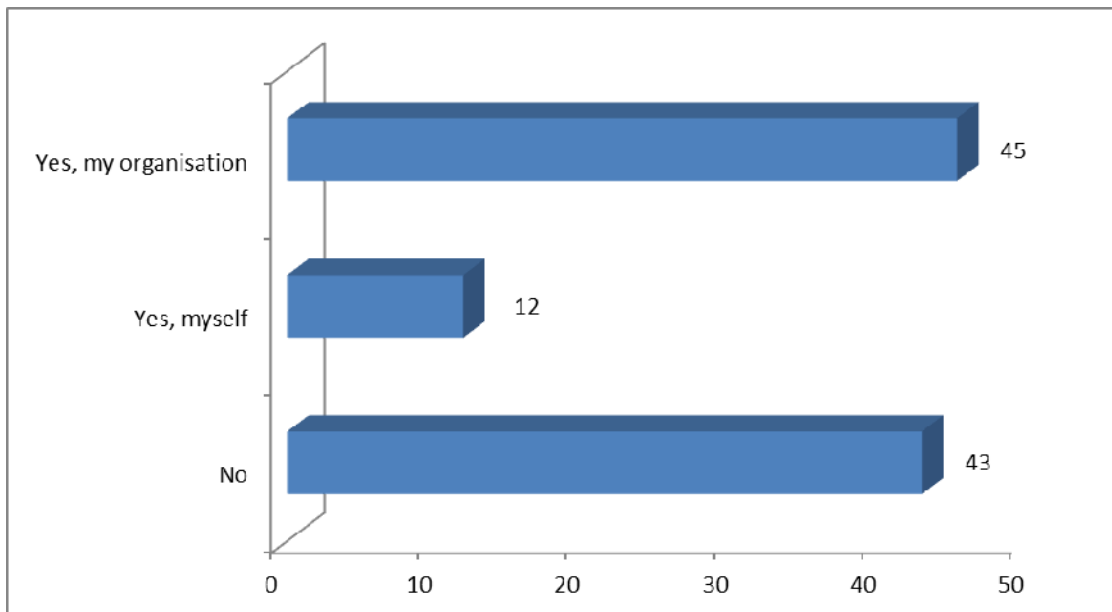
Related to the previous experience of respondents and their entities, 87% had personally or their institution been involved in other transnational projects previously. Only 13% have never participated before in a transnational initiative.

Table 2. Experience of respondents concerning transnational initiatives



Concretely, 57% of them have taken part of a twinning process or their municipality is twinned with other municipality, as shown in the graph below.

Table 3. Have you ever participated in twinning partnerships in the past?



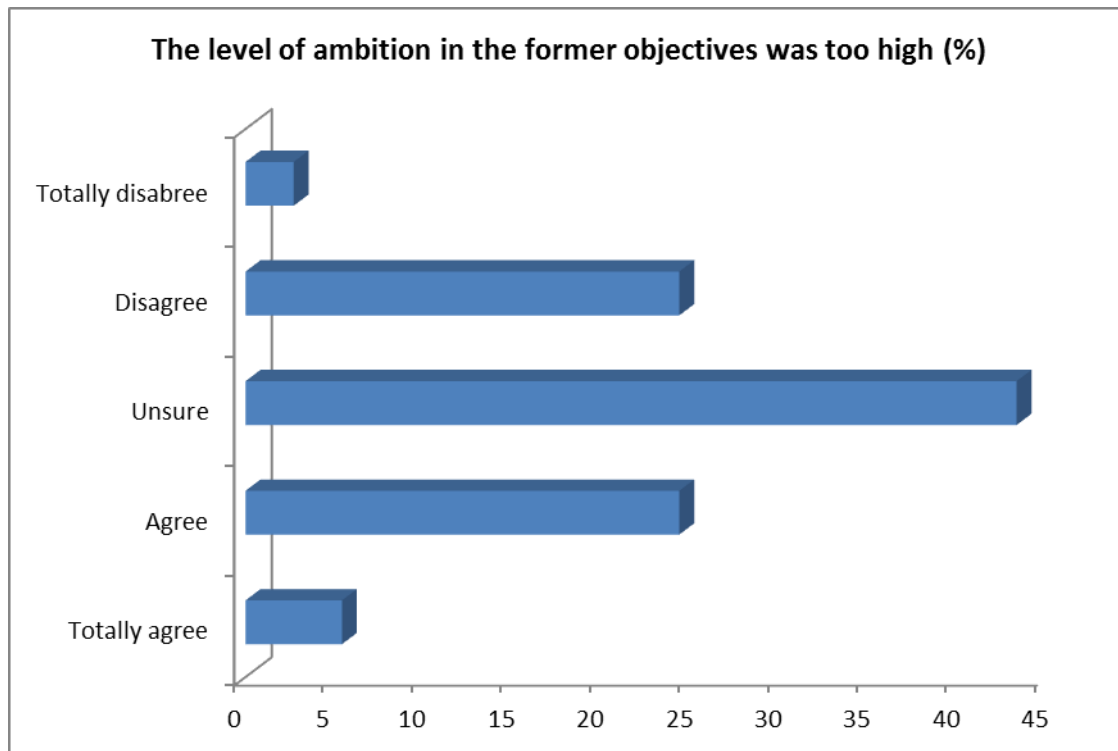
Regarding the local authority participating staff, in 100% of twinning bodies, from 1 to 5 professionals have been directly involved in the twinning process.

B. ASSESSMENT OF TWINNING ACTIVITIES DEVELOPMENT

Twinning partnerships and their activities are analysed in the following graphs.

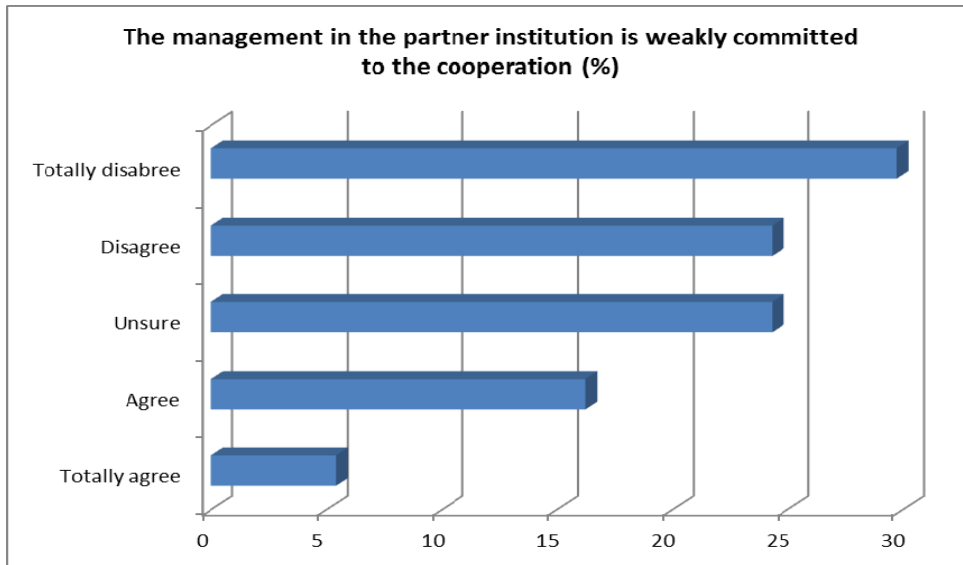
What concerns to the cooperation among counterparts, the half of respondents (54%) appreciated that the level of ambition in the former work plan objectives were not too high. On the other hand, almost the half was not able to value this topic.

Table 4 Level of ambition in the former work plan objectives



The evaluation of twinning partners' commitment showed that 54% reported that counterpart twinning management were eager to cooperate with them, as shown in the table below.

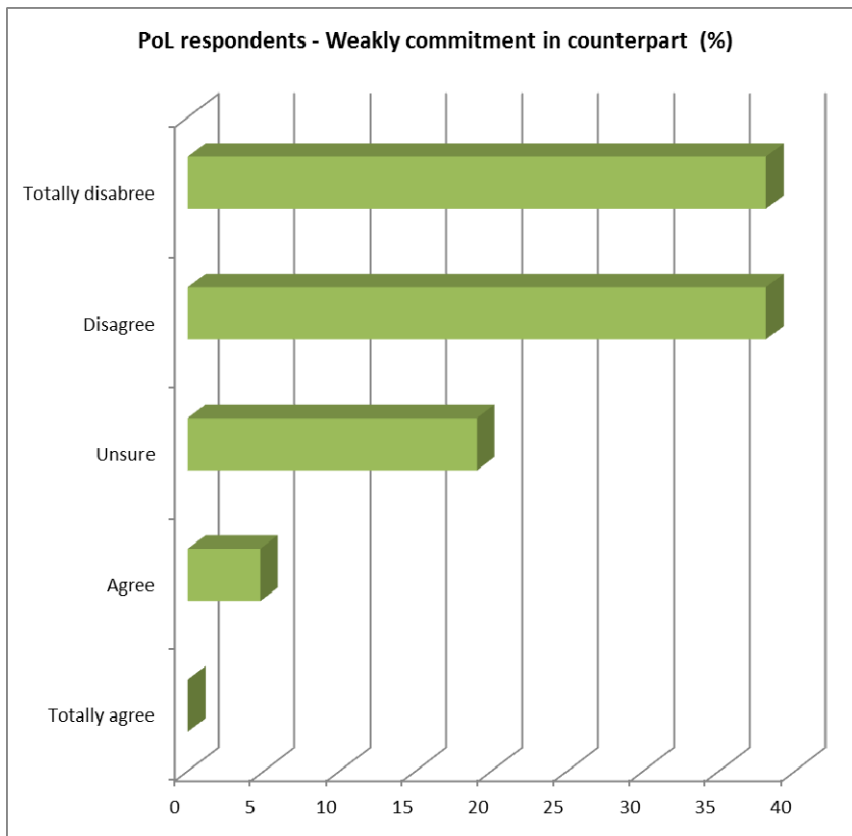
Table 5 Commitment of pair management for cooperation



It is relevant to note that only 21% of survey respondents reported that their management’s counterpart willingness was not really interested in collaborating.

However, going into detail there are some significant differences among PoE and PoL replies, as can be discerned from the following graph.

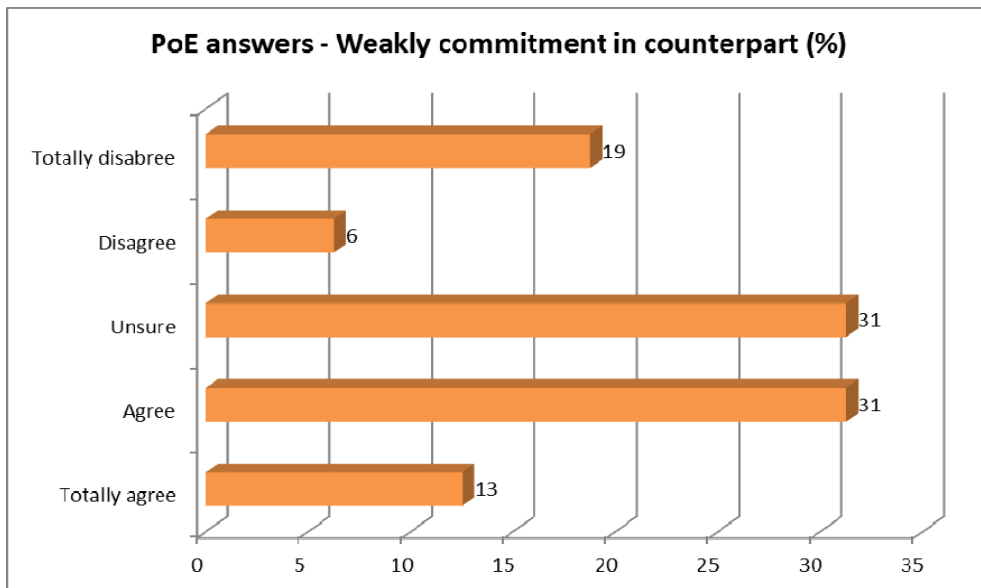
Table 6 PoL responses regarding Commitment of partners for cooperation question



PoL respondents perceived that their expertise counterpart were really committed to collaboration (76% of them). Only 5% believed that PoE counterpart commitment was not positive.

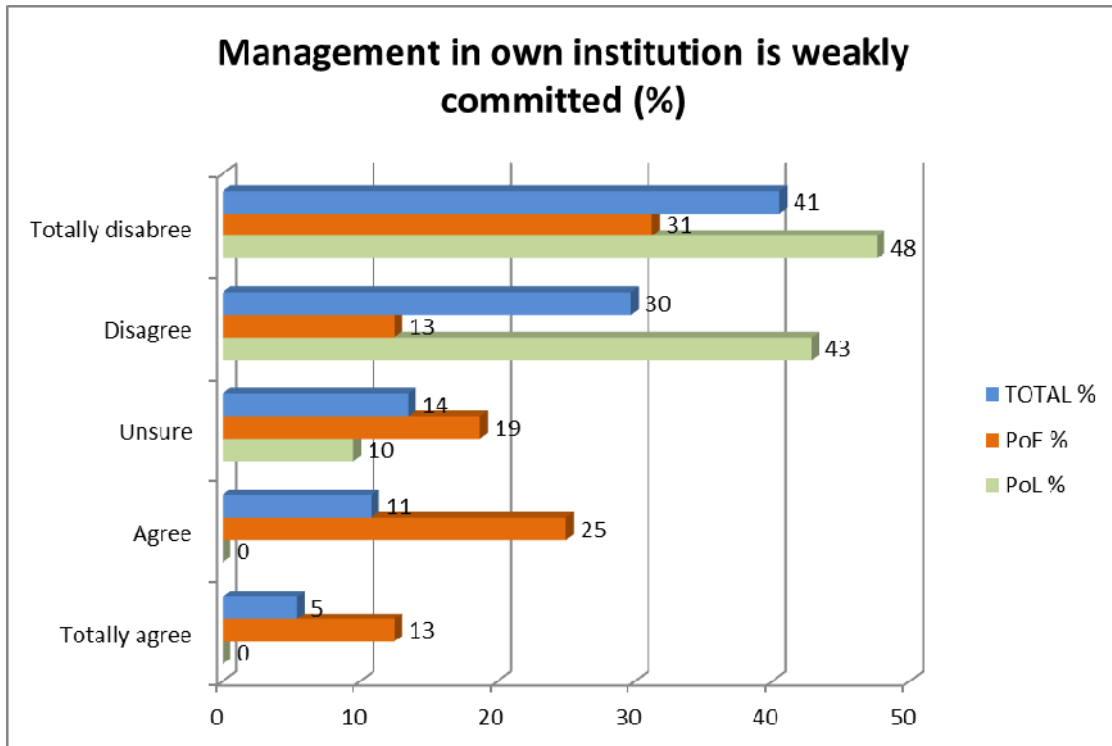
Nevertheless, when is Poe who gave the response, 44% considered that the PoL counterpart were not really committed in sharing knowledge. This is sure dute to the fact that know-how sharing has only gone in one direction (from PoE to PoL) instead of being a mutual learning process.

Table 7. PoE responses regarding Commitment of partners for cooperation question



On the other hand, respondents considered that their own institution was strongly committed in twinning cooperation (71% of total responses). But considering only PoE responses, 38% believed that their own institution was not really committed in twinning partnership activities. Clearly, the absence of apparent benefits is a handicap.

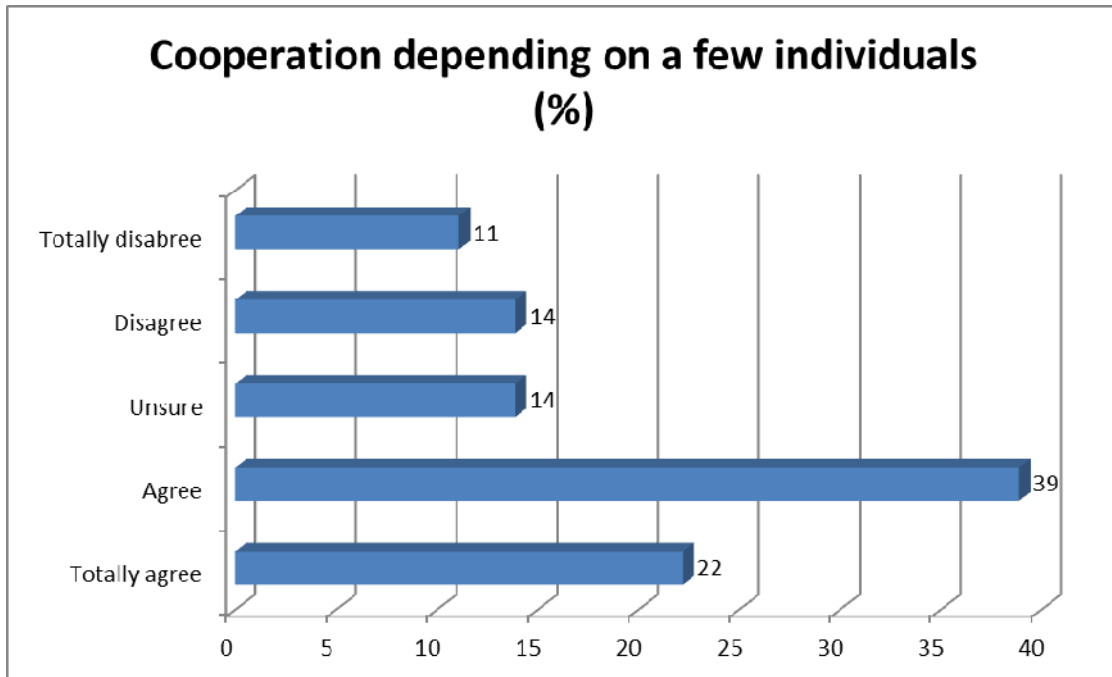
Table 8. Commitment in your own institution



Differences among PoL and PoE answers deduced from participants commitment appreciation, may be derived from the lack of a two-way learning process in the most of informal twinning agreements within Green Twinning framework (as shown in the next pages).

On the other hand, consulted on the number of people engaged in twinning activities, the questionnaire collected manifestly the opinion that twinning partnership activities depended on a few members of the entities.

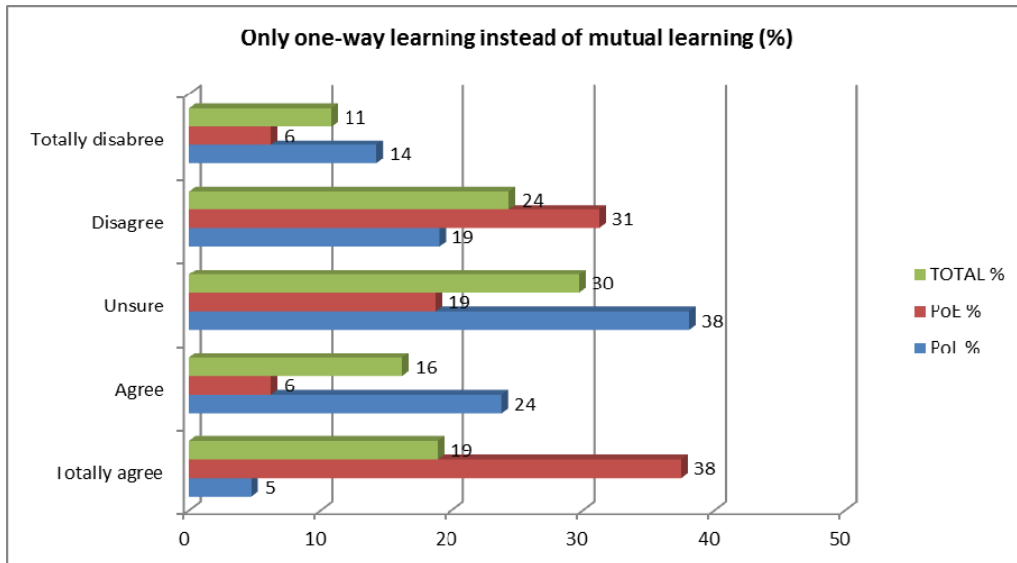
Table 9. People involved in twinning process.



Although Green Twinning was focused on promoting twinning agreements in order to facilitate the transfer of RES & RUE information and energy “best practices”, the objective was to train PoL participants. Later, during twinning work plan design, was introduced the idea that both partnership members should gain from the process. Certainly, due to the lack of time the two-way learning process has not been possible. As can be observed from the following graph, two-thirds of total number of survey respondents thinks that their twinning partnership has not been a two-way learning process.

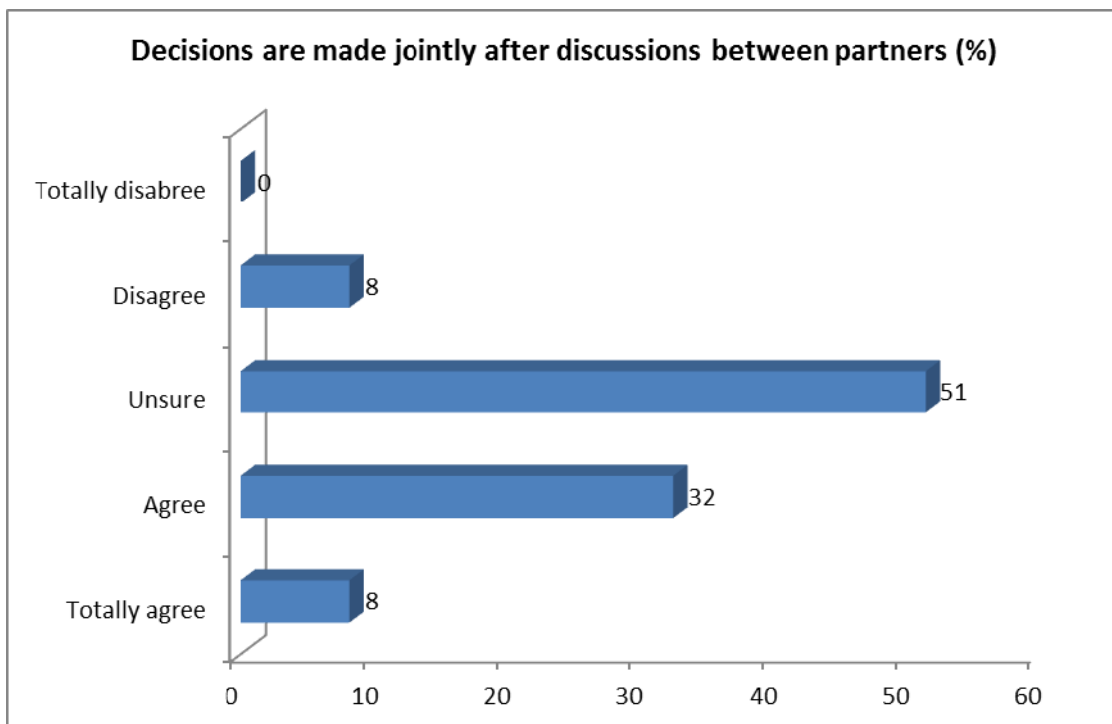
Stripping the survey man can observe that 44% of PoE members participating in the survey think that there is only one-way learning process (from PoE to PoL) and 19% of them were not sure about this idea. 29% of PoL respondents thought that the statement was right and 38% was not able to value if it was a two or one-way learning.

Table 10. Flow of expertise in one-way or mutual learning



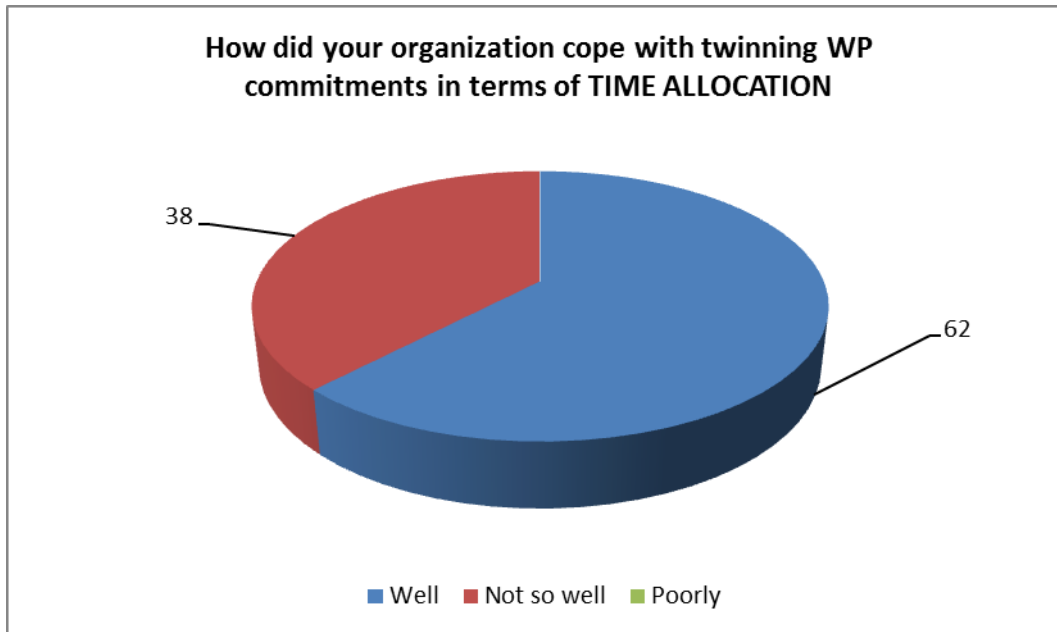
Asked about how twinning partnership made the decisions, the following graphic shows that 40% believed that decisions taken during twinning process were agreed and only 8% thought that decisions were not shared.

Table 11. Are the decisions made jointly after discussions between both partners?



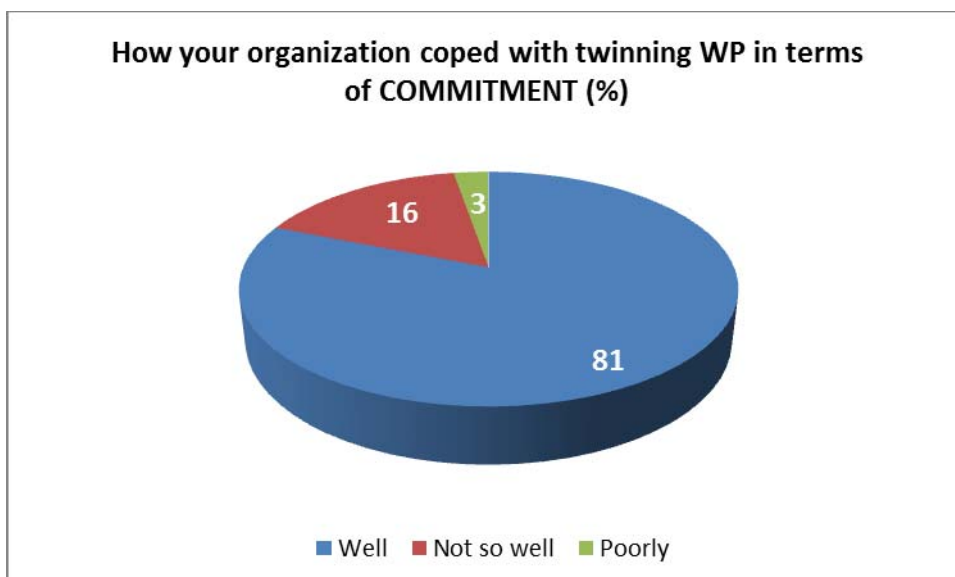
Asked about how their own organisations had coped with twinning work plan commitments from different point of views, for instance, in terms of time allocation, 62% of survey participants stated that they managed former twinning work plan properly regarding activities scheduled.

Table 12. Development of twinning activities: time allocation



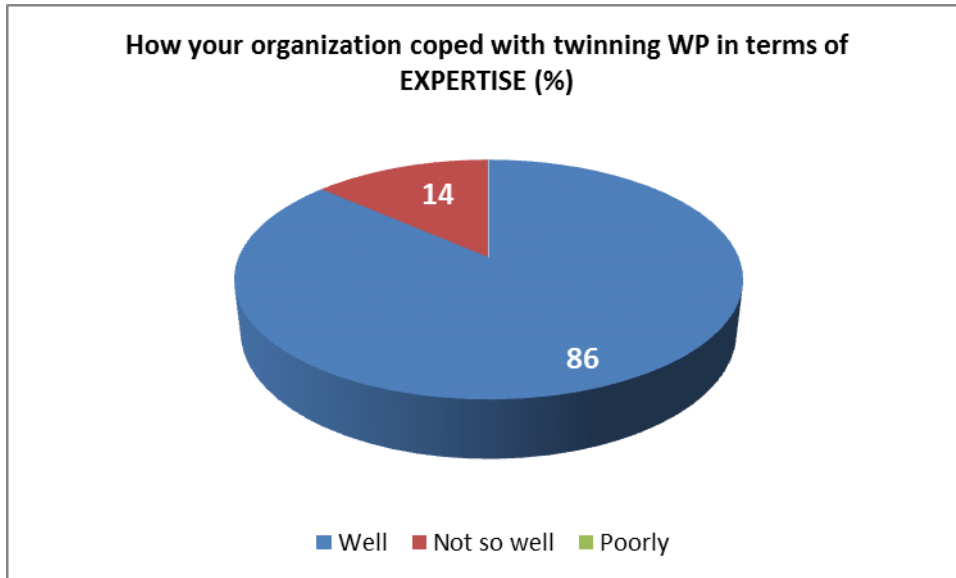
Requested to help evaluating their general level of commitment in work plan implementation, more than 80% of survey respondents considered it was high. Only 3% of participants considered that their entity commitment was poor.

Table 13. Work plan municipalities commitment



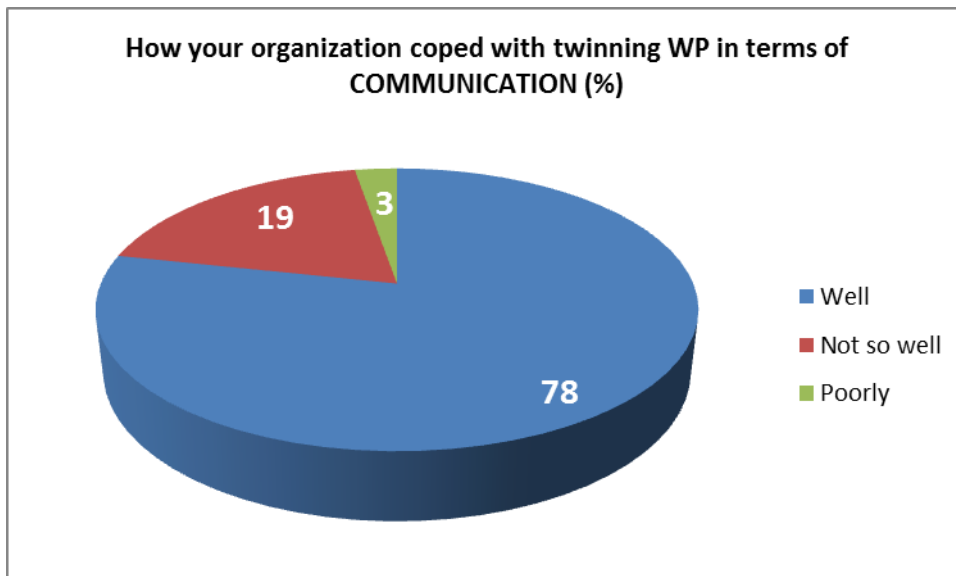
Survey participants were asked to indicate if twinning activities participants skills fitted with common work plan commitments. Clearly, 81% of participants answered affirmatively.

Table 14. Twinning municipalities' expertise needs



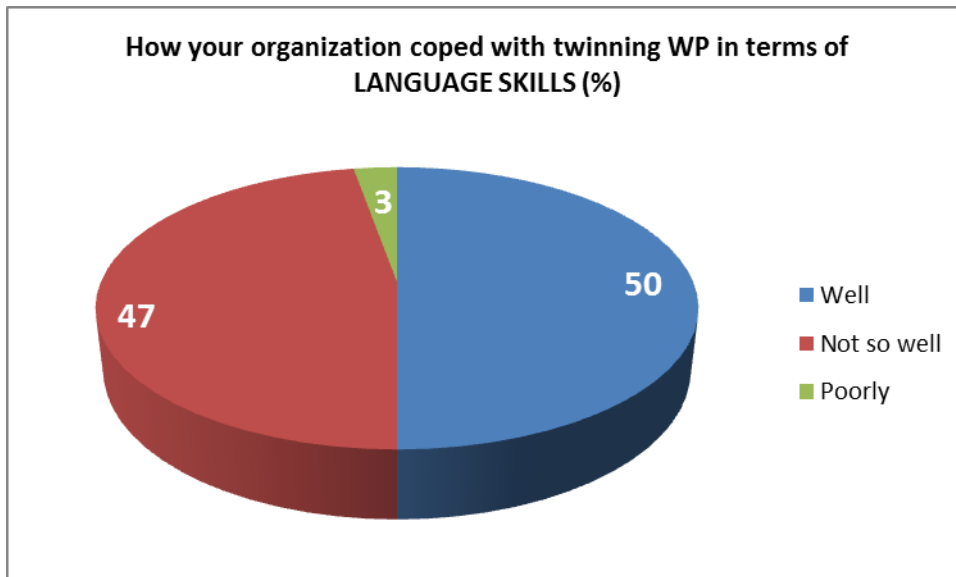
In terms of work plan communication commitments the 3 out of 4 respondents believed that the exchange of information among counterparts was effective and efficient.

Table 15. Work plan commitments: communication



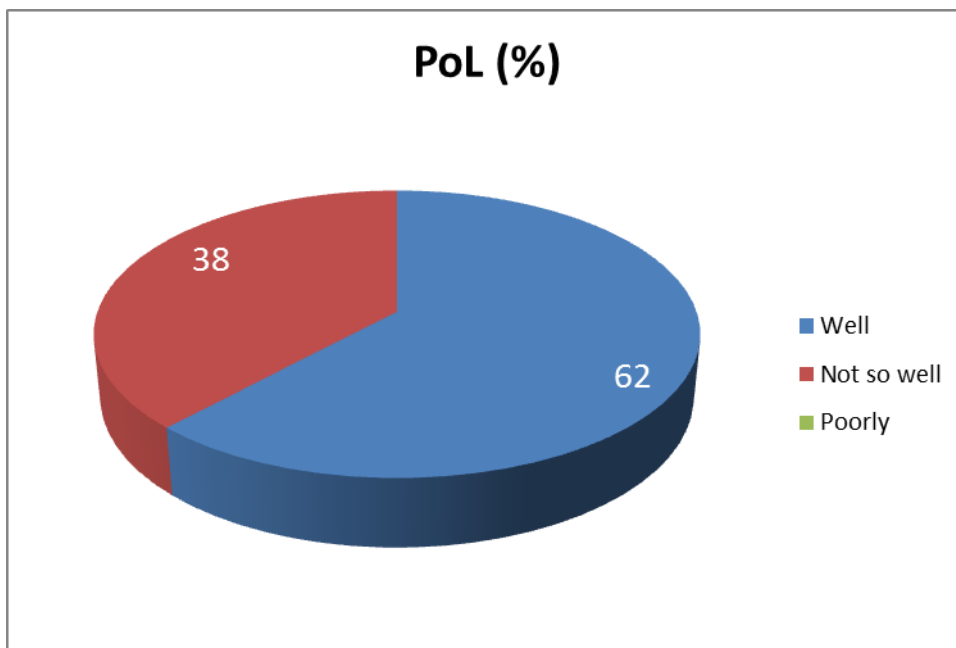
As can be observed from the following graph, most of questionnaire respondents considered that their organization coped properly or sufficiently with work plan commitments in terms of language skills.

Table 16. Work plan goals achievement in terms of language skills



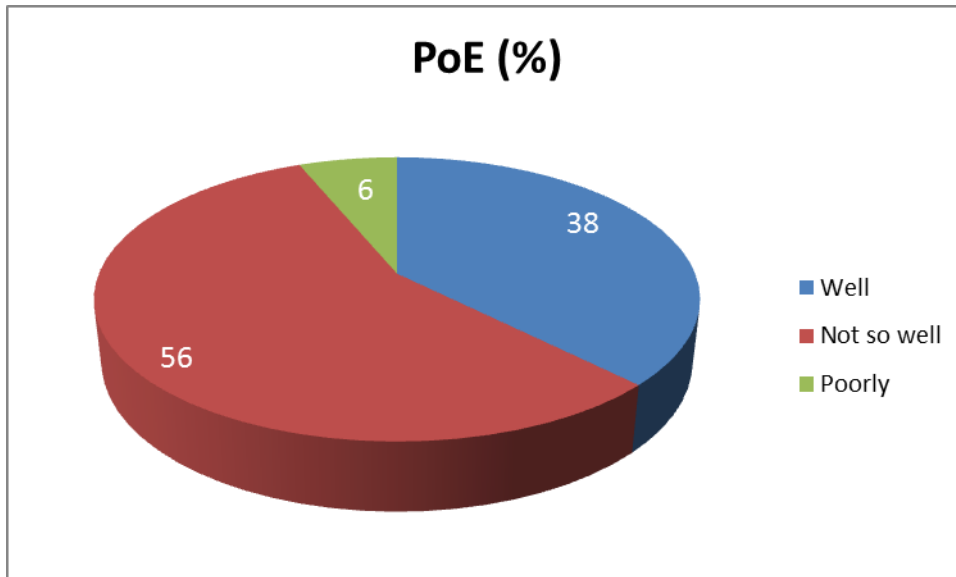
If going into more detail, learning municipalities' respondents considered that their public local government covered the requirements included in twinning work plans concerning language skills.

Table 17. PoL member's respondents: Language skills requirements



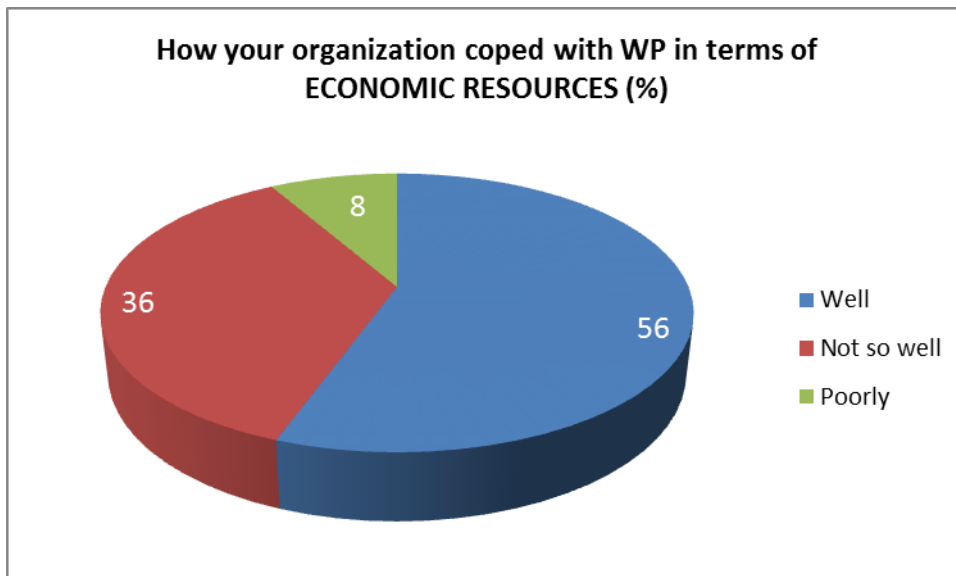
However the expertise municipalities' participants were not so optimistic and only 38% stated that they have not got problems with language issues while work plan development. And even 6% answered that due to language constraints they had not developed properly work plan activities.

Table 18. PoE member's respondents: language skills requirements



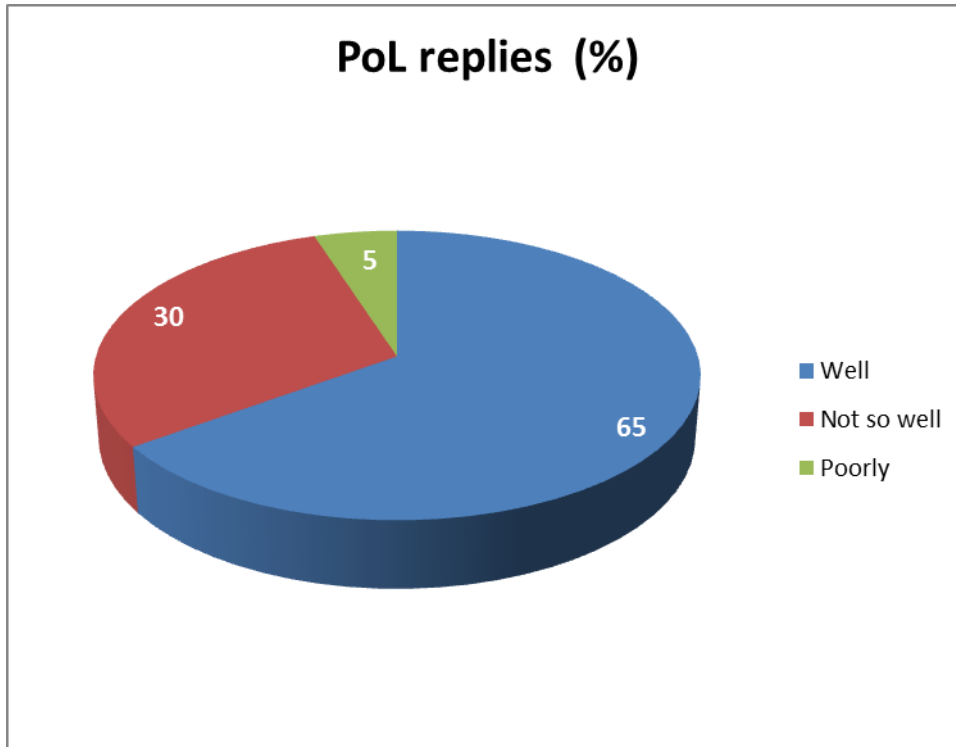
The shortage of economic resources had not affected the implementation of twinning work plan, because only 8% of participants understood that economic aspect was a hurdle.

Table 19. Work plan implementation: economic resources



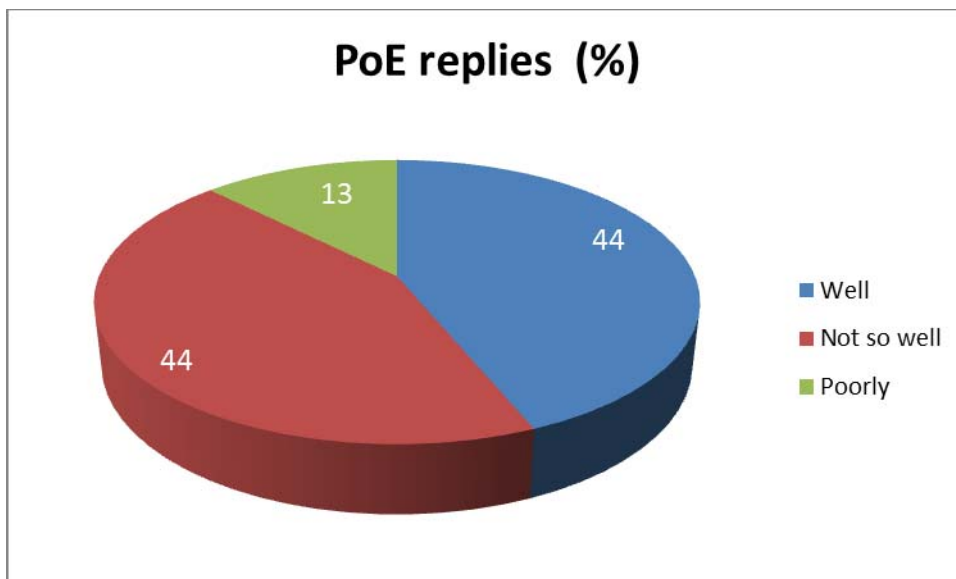
Analysing PoL members' answers, 65% considered that economic resources were not an obstacle and only 5% highlighted the economy as a problem.

Table 20. PoL replies: work plan and economic resources



In the case of expertise replies, 44% considered that they didn't face problems for work plan execution due to economic issues, and 56% believed that it was an additional obstacle.

Table 21. PoE replies: work plan and economic resources

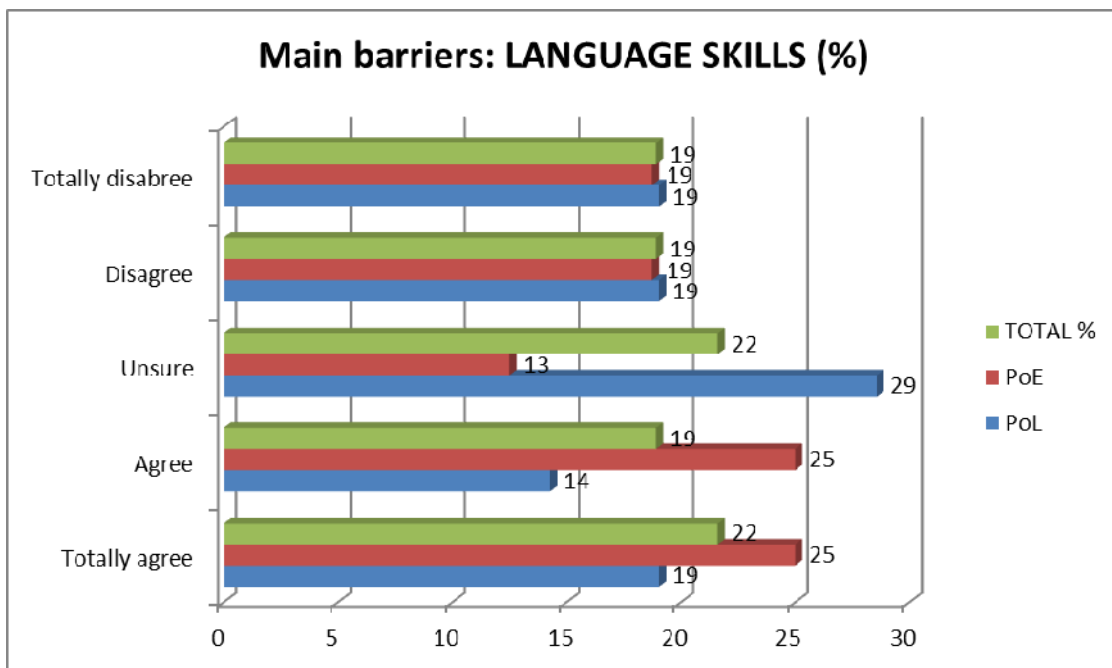


Survey participants were examined about the main barriers to be tackled in pursuing twinning particular objectives.

At the graph below can be noticed that, in general, 41% of respondents are agree or totally agree about insufficient English language skills as a barrier. Besides, 22% are not sure about if different languages were one of the main barriers.

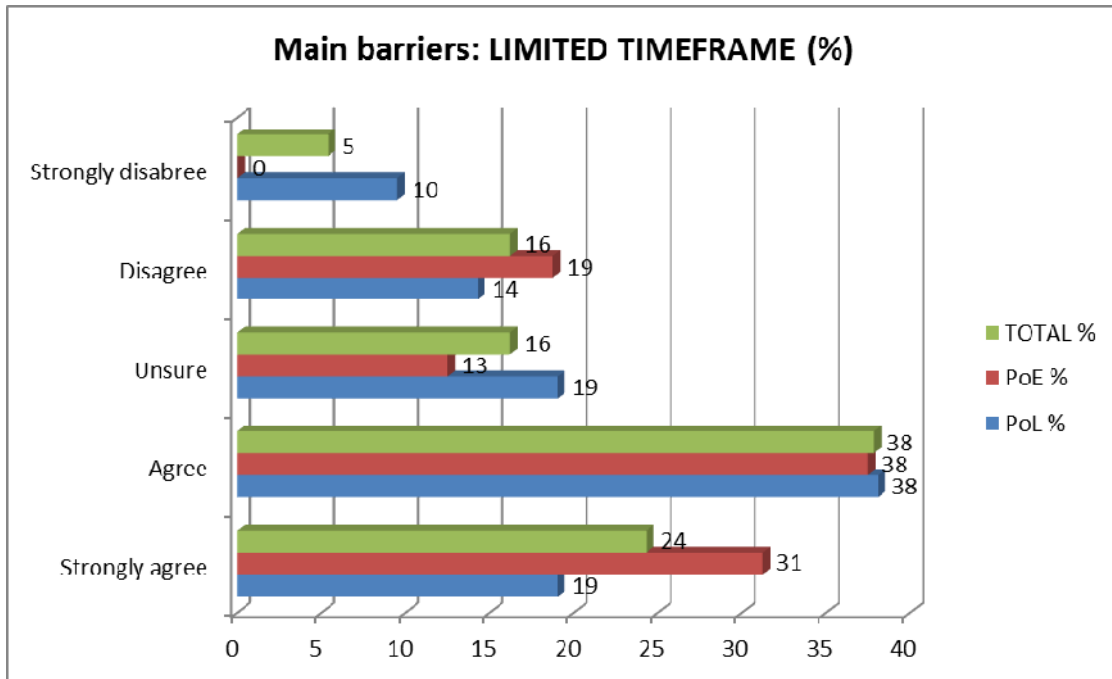
Analysing the graph in more detail, PoE respondents felt in higher degree than PoL that language was a barrier.

Table 22. Main obstacles encountered during twinning activities: language problems



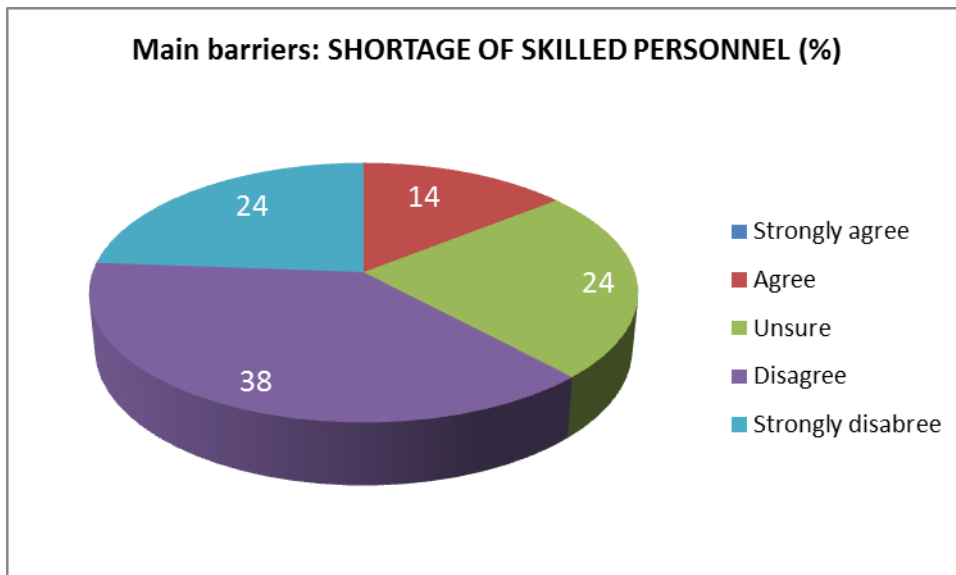
Almost two thirds of survey respondents thought that a very limited project timeframe was a barrier in overtaking twinning partnership objectives. Differences among PoE and PoL answers did not differ too much, although expertise cities participants rose the percentage.

Table 23. Survey about main barriers: lack of time or limited timeframe



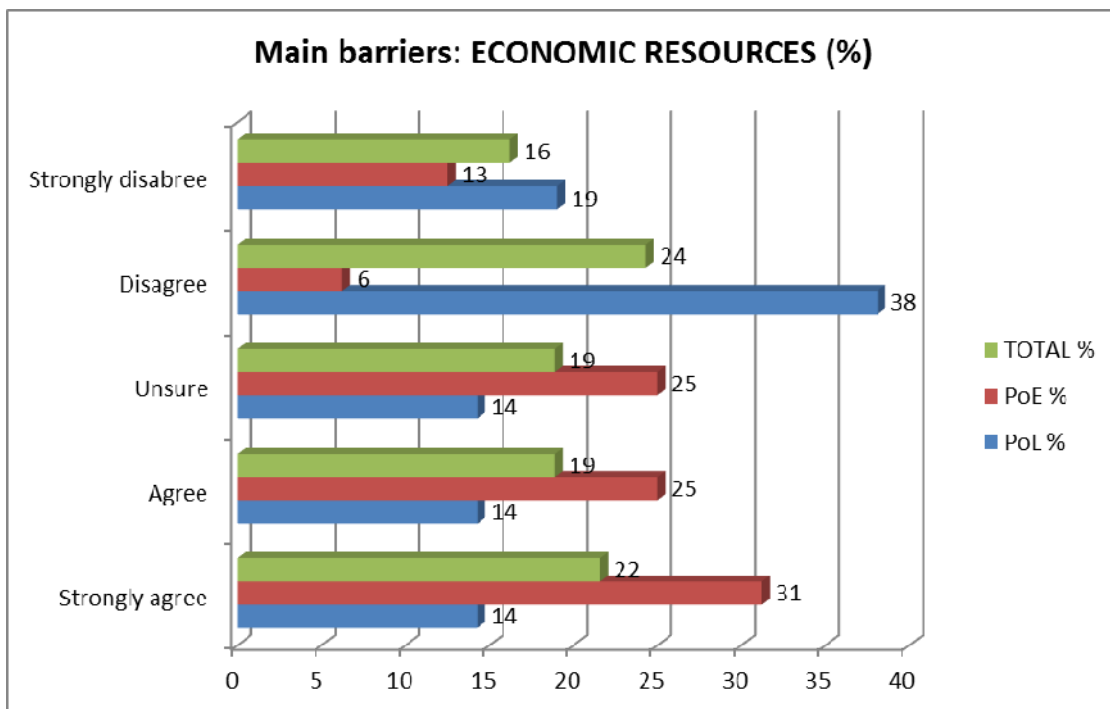
In the following graph can be noticed that respondents believed that lack of skilled staff was not a barrier. Only 14% agree about skilled human resources as a main barrier and nobody were strongly agree with this statement.

Table 24. Response of participants about the lack of skilled personnel



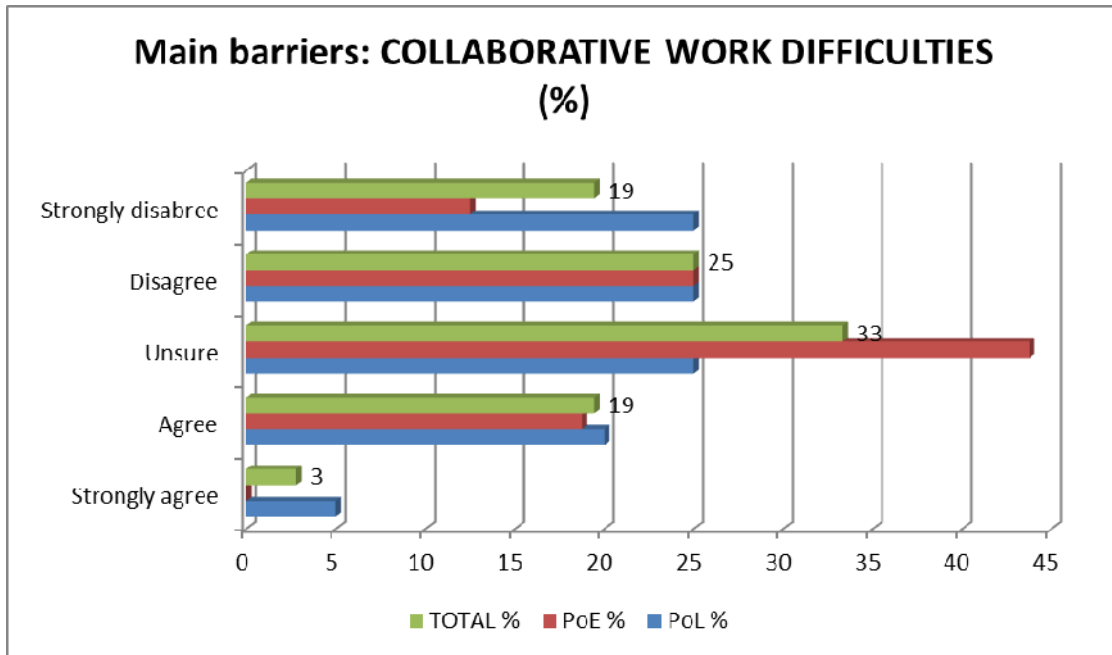
From the following graph can be observed that, in general, deficiency of economic resources to carry out twinning activities was not significantly considered a main barrier. It's worth highlighting that only 19% of PoE answers disagree or totally disagree and 56% thought it was one of the major barriers. However, 57% of PoL considered that project budget allocation was not a problem. It could be due to twinning activities were focused on getting knowledge transfer from PoE to PoL and for that reason most of the project budget was allocated in the learning entities.

Table 25. Main barriers during activities implementation: deficiency of economic resources



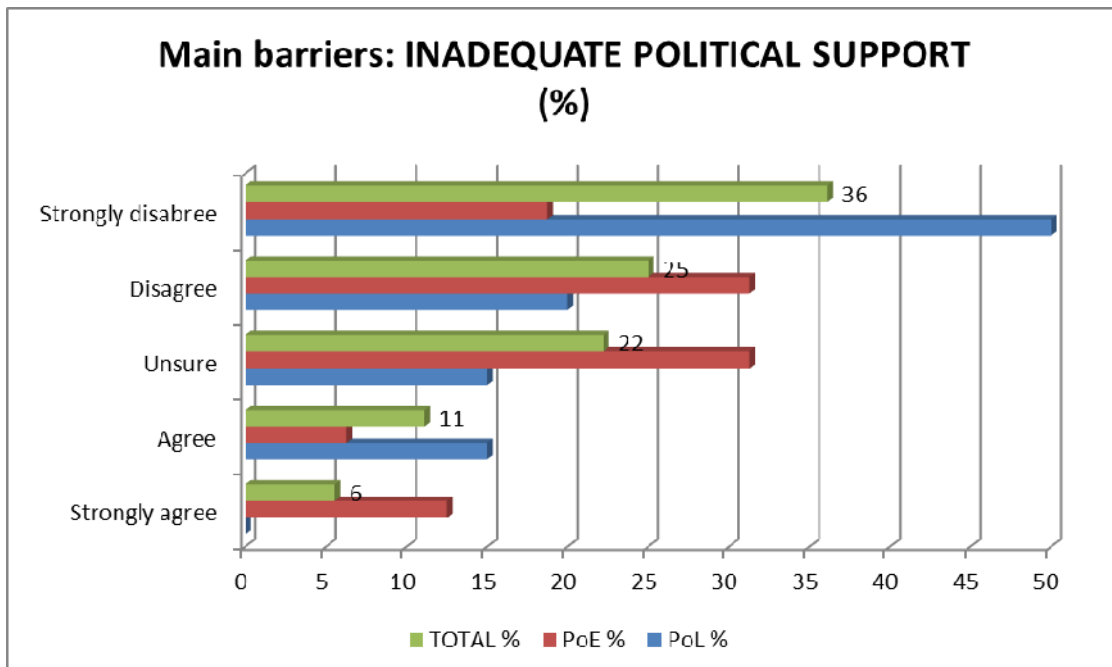
Collaboration with counterpart has not been mentioned as main barrier in twinning activities. Less than 25% of the respondents considered that the organization of collaborative work has been difficult.

Table 26. Main barriers: difficulties to organize collaborative work



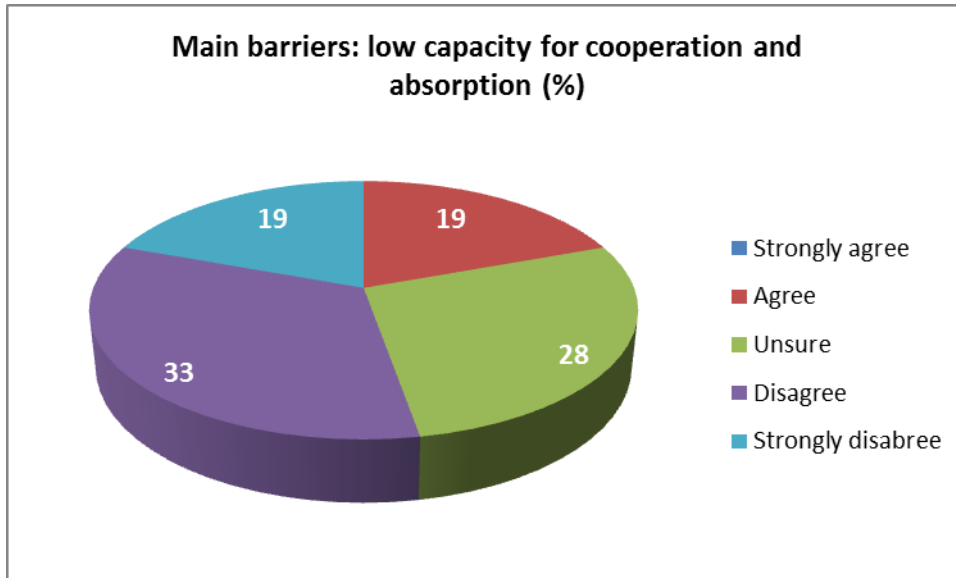
Less than 20% of the respondents said that one of the main barriers was an inadequate political support in one of the two counterparts.

Table 27. Was the lack of political support stated as main barrier for twinning development?



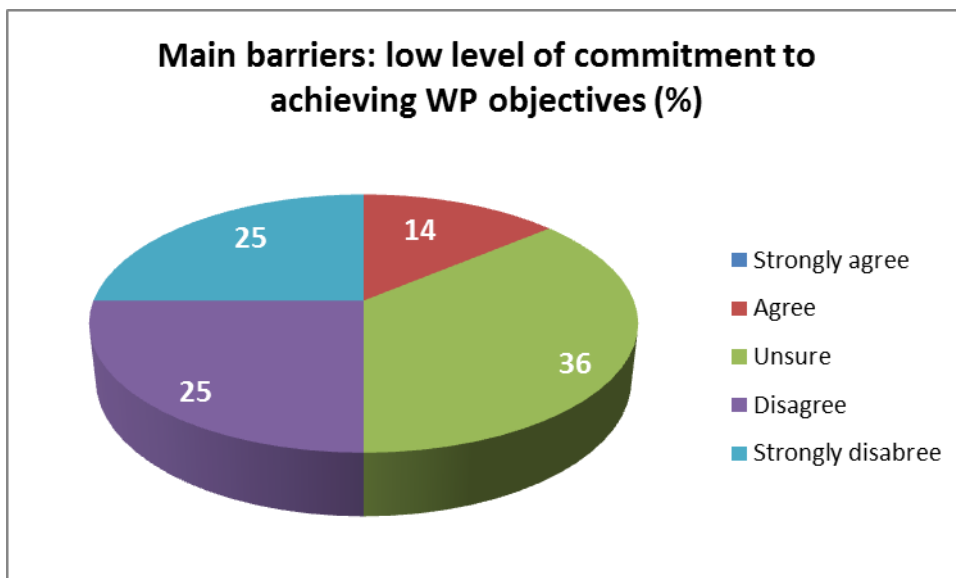
Participants were asked to indicate if a possible low capacity of their entities for cooperation and absorption at the operational level was considered a barrier. Less than 20% agree with the statement. But almost one third was not unsure about it.

Table 28. Main barrier: low capacity for cooperation and adsorption



From the graph can be deduced that only 14% of PoL and PoE members' respondents thought that a low level of commitment with regard to jointly achieving twinning objectives was an obstacle.

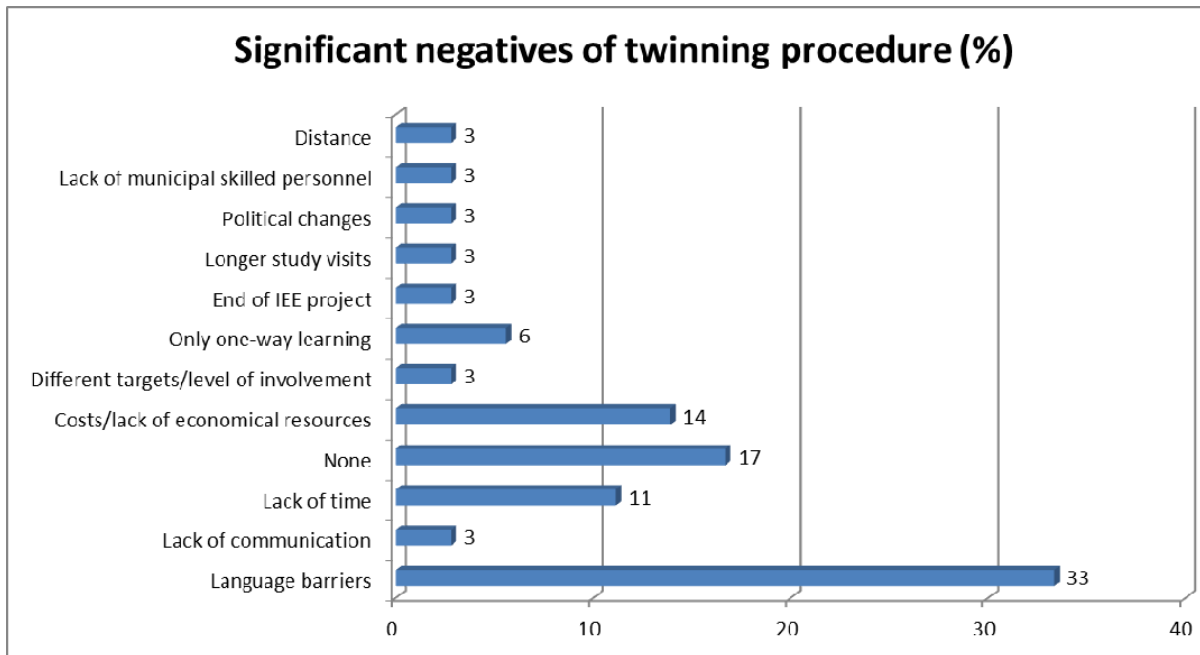
Table 29. Main barriers: a low level of commitment



Participants were asked to identify the most significant negatives and positives of twinning, besides outlining what worked best and the major failures from their experience.

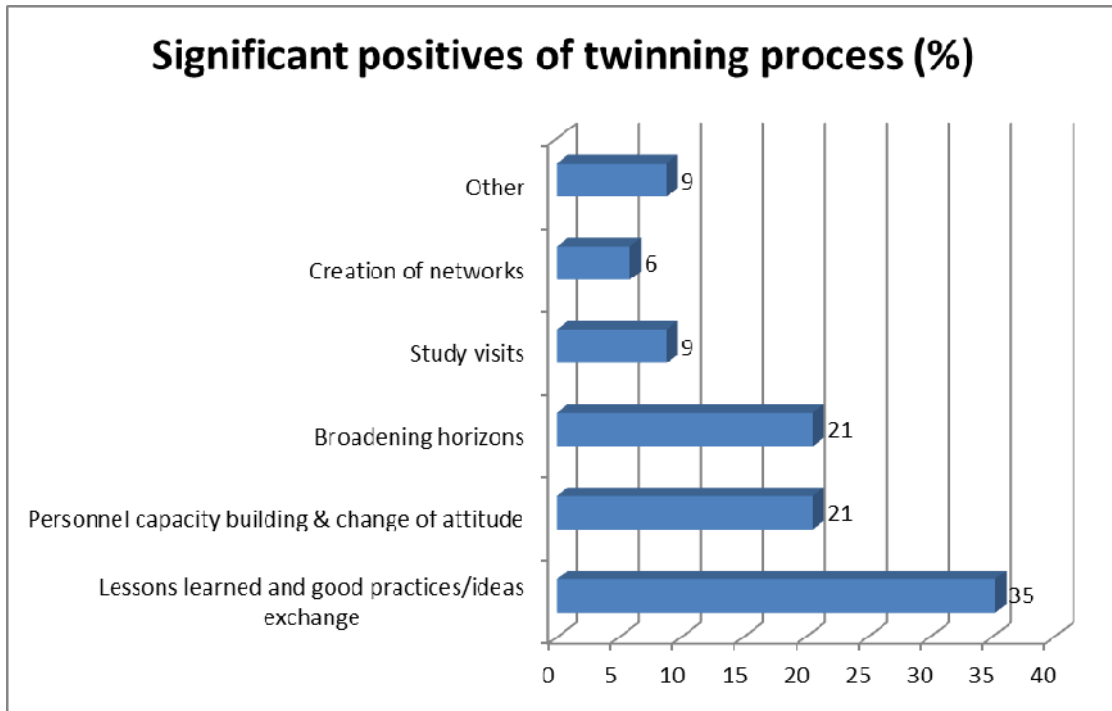
As can be seen below, language barriers, lack of economic resources and a very limited of time were identified as the most significant negatives of twinning activities. An interesting response has been “none” raised by 17% of respondents.

Table 30. Identification of significant negatives of twinning partnership



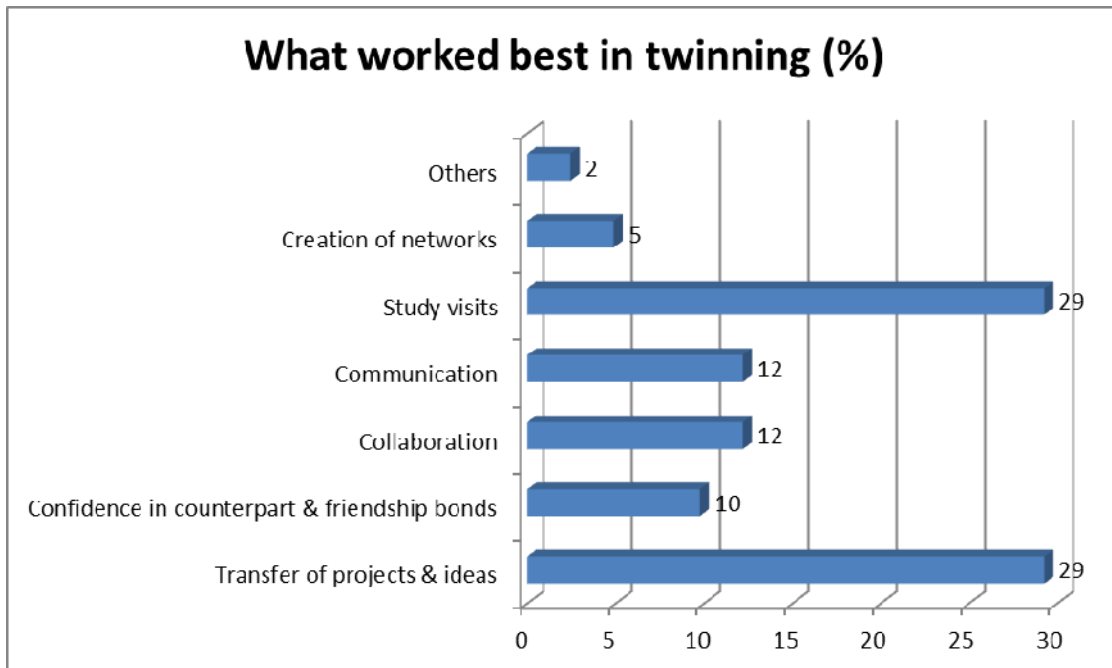
What refers to identifying the significant positives, 35% of respondents mentioned that the best practices and ideas exchange was the most positive output. 21% declared that both broadening entities horizons and personnel capacity buildings/change of attitude was very positive.

Table 31. Significant positives of twinning process



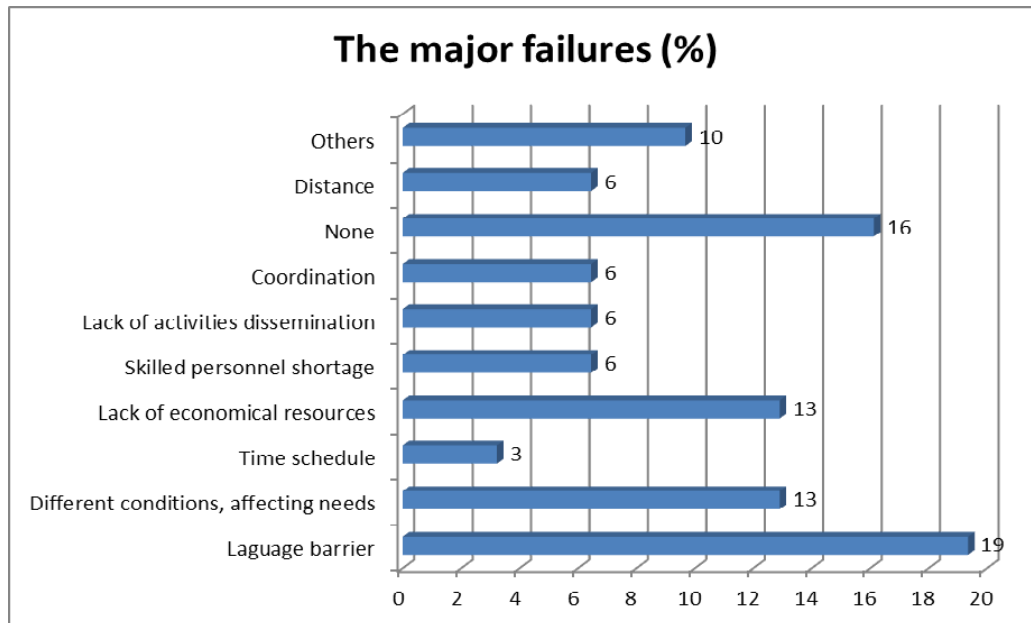
When survey participants were asked to identify what worked best in their twinning partnership, 29% reported that the best had been both the study visits and the transfer of projects and ideas.

Table 32. What worked best in twinning partnerships.



As can be observed from the next graph, 19% of respondents reported that language obstacles had been the major failure. 16% of PoE and PoL did not find any failure and 13% highlight that local area different conditions (geographic, socioeconomic, climate, etc.) of counterparts and the lack of economic resources had been other failures.

Table 33. The major failures in twinning process

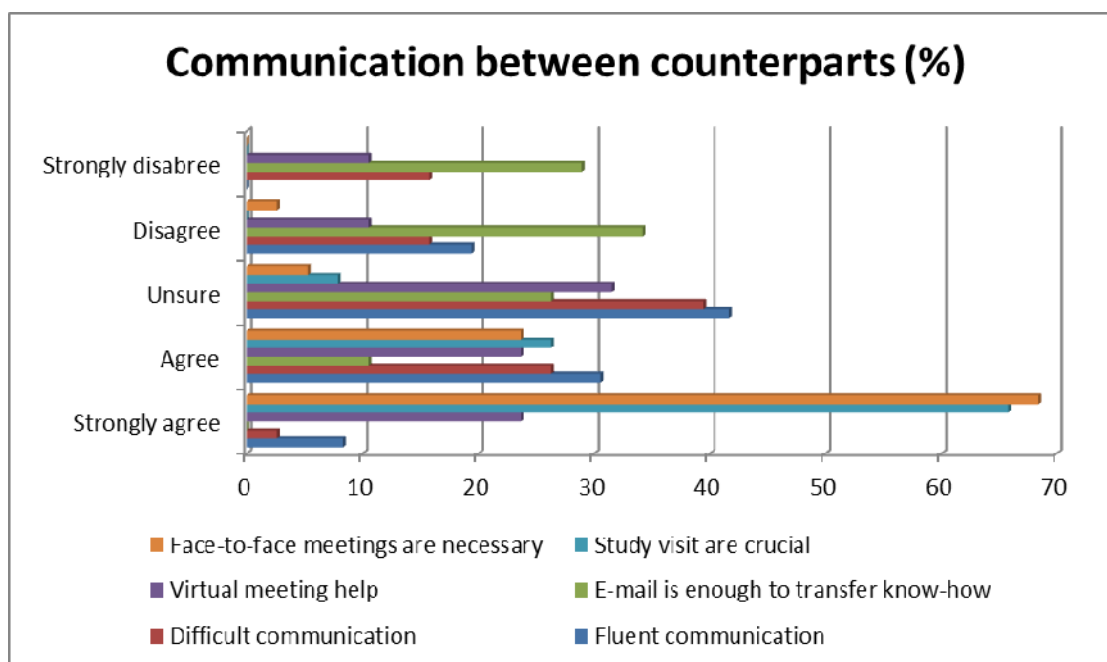


Lastly, communication with counterparts was considered fluently with almost 40% of the survey participants' votes. Meanwhile, 42% was not able to value it ("unsure" rated).

As can be observed in the graph, one third of people considered that internal communication had been difficult and the other third disagreed about this idea.

In terms of communication channels, it is clear that exchange of communication using e-mail tools is not enough for a suitable cooperation (63% disagree).

Table 34. Communication between counterparts



Concerning virtual meeting as a tool for making twinning activities happen, 44% answered that they made it running smoothly. But 32% was unsure about validity and reliability of this virtual communication channel.

From the above graph we can clearly indicate that study visits and face-to-face meetings are totally necessary for a successful twinning partnership.

C. INCENTIVES FOR COUNTERPARTS PARTICIPATION

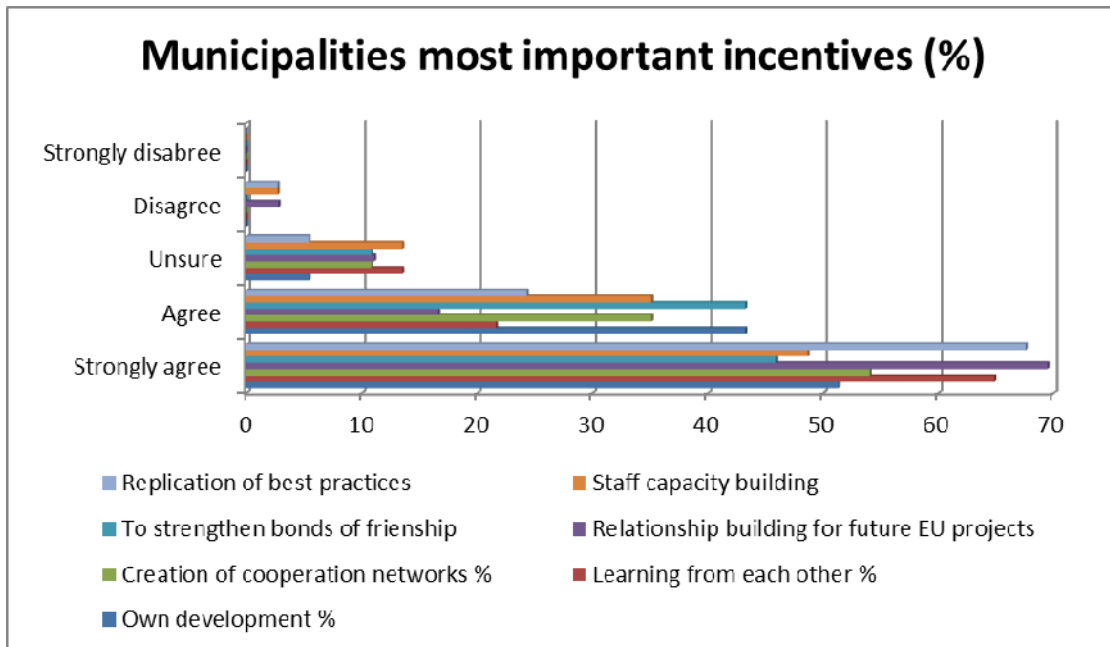
PoL and PoE participants were asked to evaluate the organizations’ incentives for taking part in twinning institutional cooperation.

As can be seen from the graph below, for all the incentives listed in the survey, more than 80% of respondents considered that had been an important reason for participating in twinning activities.

If we examine more closely the information collected, the items “relationship building for participating in future EU projects” (69% of totally agree answers), “the replication of best practices” (68% totally agree) and “local government mutual learning” (totally agree, 65%) got the higher percentage rates.

On the other hand, both reasons “to strengthen bonds of friendship with other countries” and “staff capacity building” got the lower percentage rates with 46 and 49% respectively of totally agree answer votes.

Table 35. Municipalities’ most important incentives

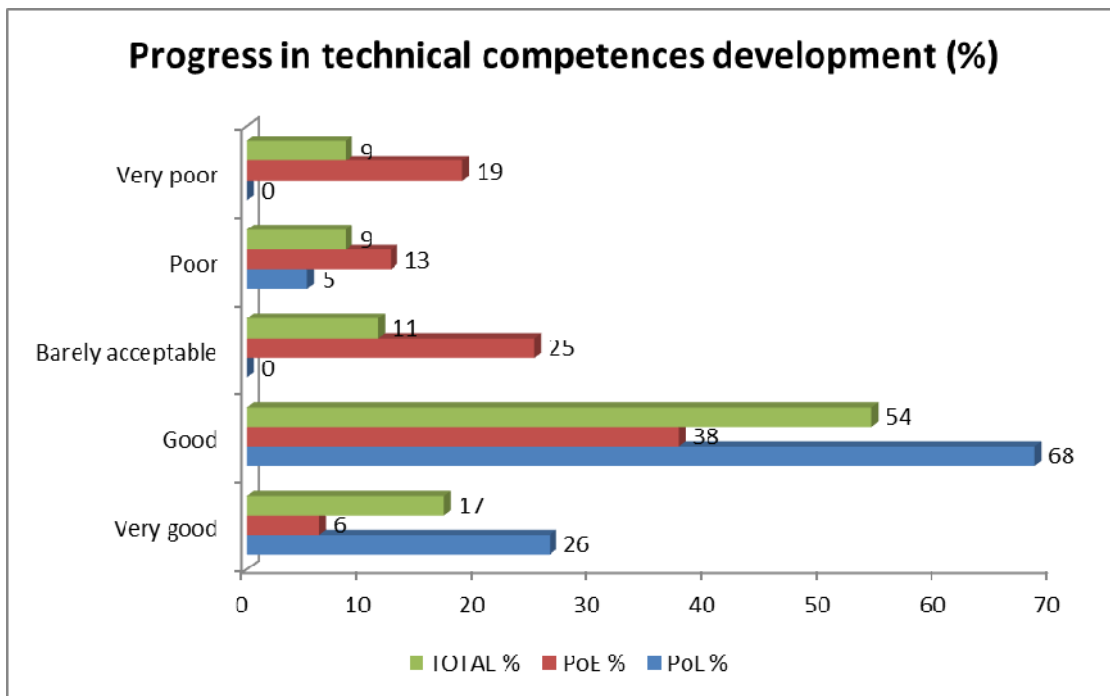


D. IMPACT OF TWINNING COOPERATION

Participant PoL, PoE and Consultant were asked to indicate the effect of twinning activities/partnership for their institutions. As can be observed from the graph below, 71% of total participants considered that twinning activities have strengthened local governments RES & RUE competences.

On the other hand, almost all PoL participants (95%) agreed that progress in development of technical competence was good or very good.

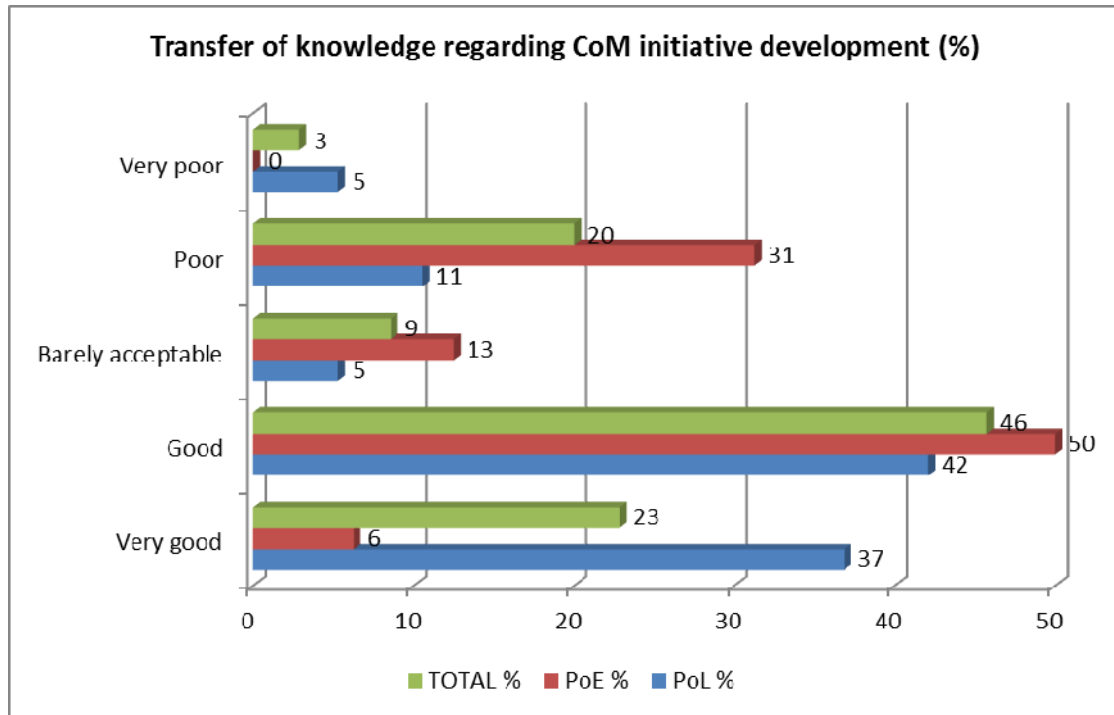
Table 36. Progress with building technical or general competences



Regarding Covenants of Mayors initiative development transfer of knowledge, the vast majority of PoL, 8 out of 9, considered that the progress in that area were good or very good.

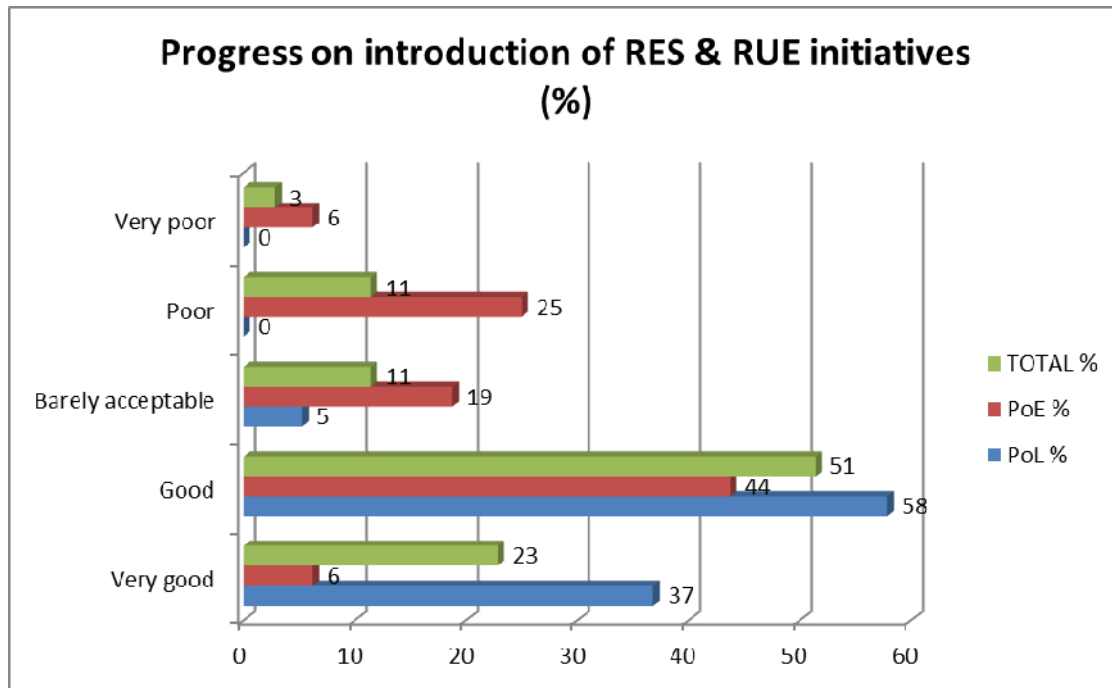
Otherwise, 44% of PoE believed that twinning activities didn't produce any progress in CoM know-how. Anyway, it is logical because all PoE had already joined CoM movement and prepared their SEAP.

Table 37. Transfer of knowledge regarding CoM initiative development



As shown below, 74% of total survey responses (grouping PoL and PoE answers) raised the idea that the transfer of know-how related to SEAP actions was good. However, going into survey details man can observe that the opinion of PoL and PoE members are totally different. While 95% of PoL respondents considered that their progress was good or very good, only 50% of PoE believed so.

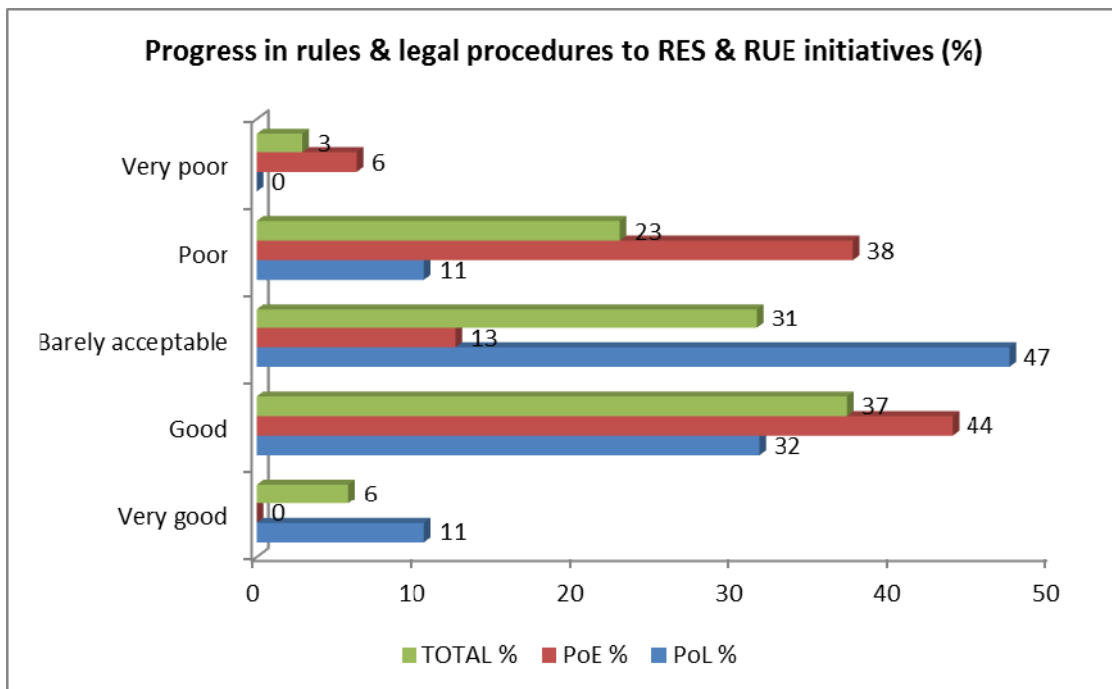
Table 38. Transfer of knowledge regarding RES & RUE initiatives



Participants were asked to indicate the effect of twinning on their municipality competences regarding rules and legal procedures. As can be seen from the graph below, almost half of PoL members stated that their progress has been barely acceptable.

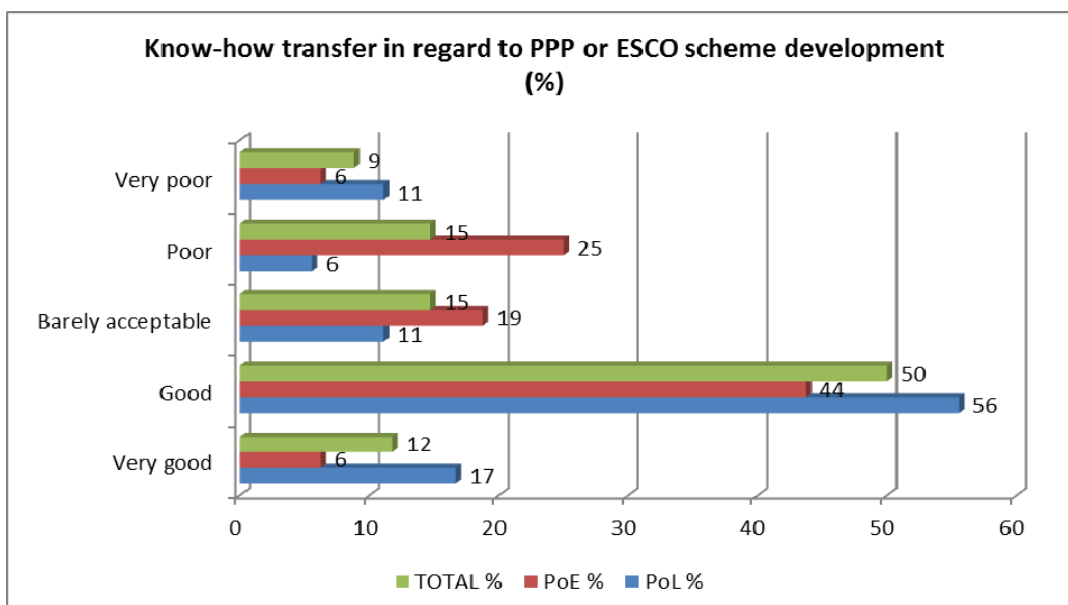
The low impact of twinning activities in transferring rules and legal procedures is due chiefly to sharp differences in EU member States' national legislation.

Table 39. Transfer of rules and legal procedures related to RES & RUE actions



What refers to public-private partnership (PPP) and/or ESCO schemes, 62% of total participants considered that progress has been good or very good. The rate rises to 73% in case of PoL representatives that considered the transfer flow of knowledge such a good or very good. However the half of expertise participants examined, considered that twinning procedure didn't improve their/their municipality PPP or ESCO know-how.

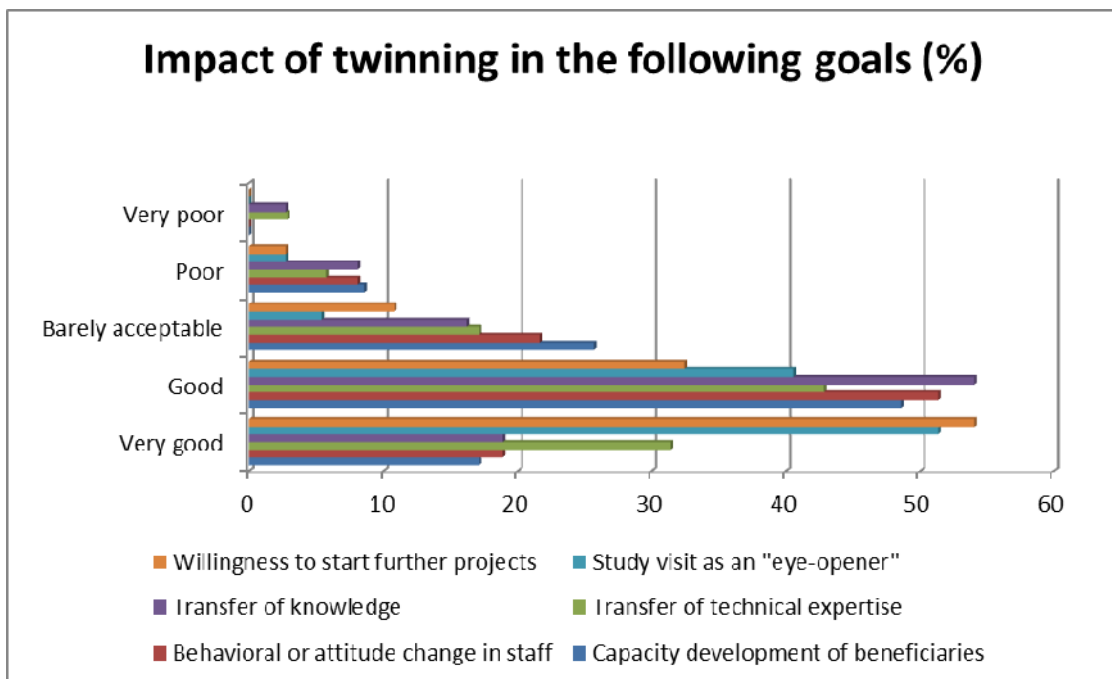
Table 40. Transfer of PPP or ESCO schemes



Moreover, participants were invited to value the impact in a set of general goals previously indicated. As can be perceived from the following graph, twinning activities had a very positive impact in all general goals listed within the questionnaire.

If we examine in more detail the six goals listed, we could highlight from the answers that study visits have acted as an eye-opener for RES & RUE projects and twinning activities have increased the willingness of local authorities to start further RES & RUE innovative projects.

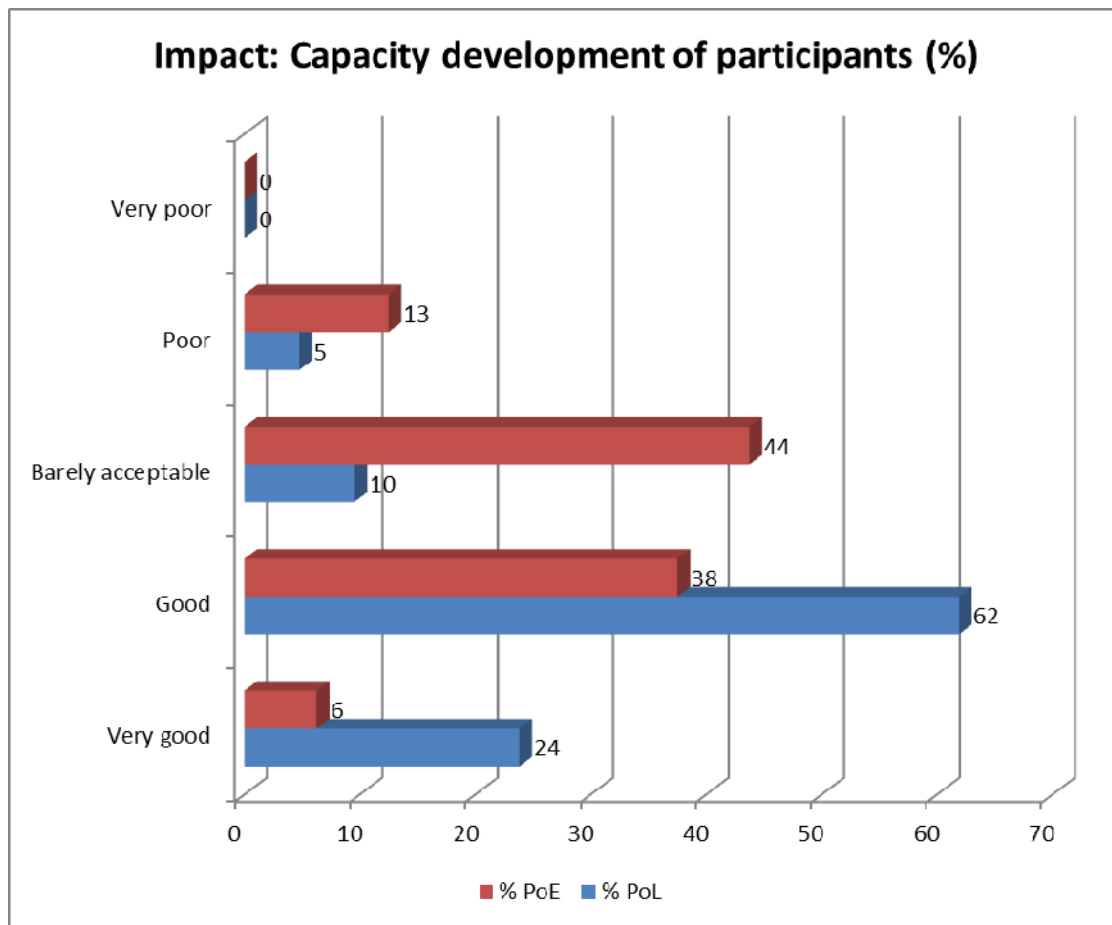
Table 41. Impact of twinning partnerships in several goals



We have observed some differences between PoL and PoE answers when analysing two of the goals: capacity development of beneficiaries and transfer of technical expertise.

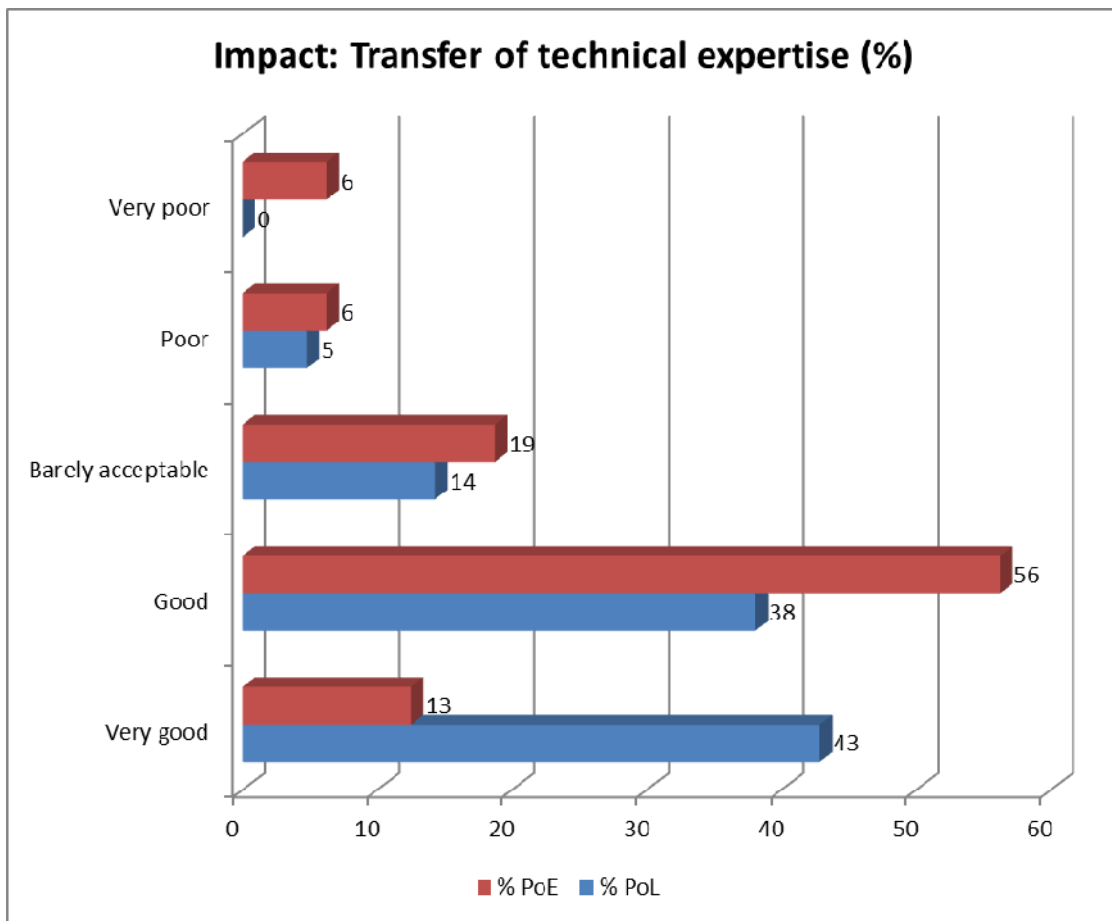
Concerning the development of beneficiaries' capacity, 86% of PoL respondents considered that the impact had been good or very good but the percentage decreased in the case of PoE respondents (42% good or very good rated).

Table 42. Impact of twinning activities in participant's capacity development



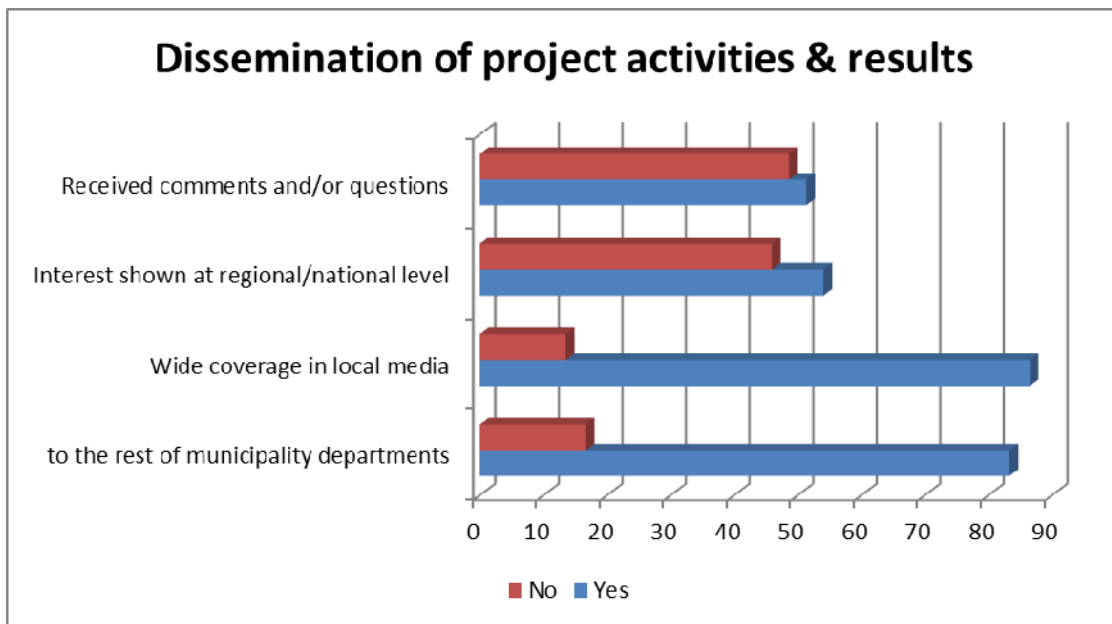
In the second mentioned goal, the impact in transferring technical expertise, 43% of PoL questionnaire participants considered it very good. Only 13% of PoE respondents rated the impact as very good.

Table 43. Impact of twinning in transferring technical expertise



In terms of communication, 83% of questionnaire respondents spread project activities and results to the rest of the municipality departments and personnel. Furthermore, 86% believed that local twinning activities got a wide local media coverage. More than half of the respondents (54%) considered that regional and/or national media were interested in twinning partnership and 51% received comments and suggestions regarding twinning activities.

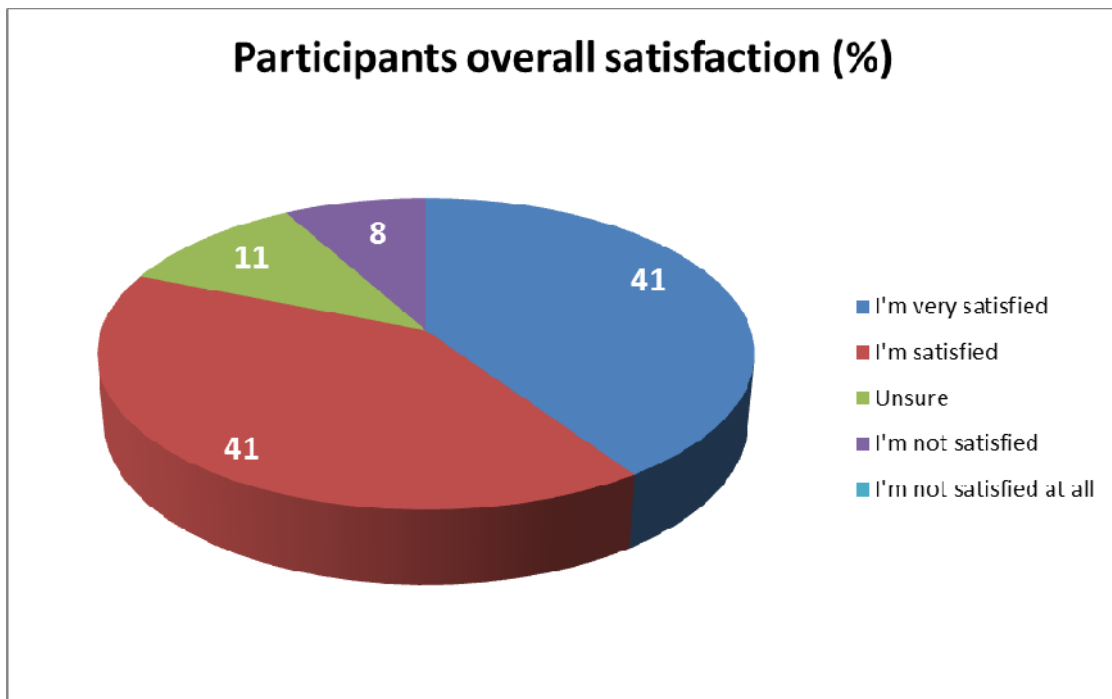
Table 44. Communication and dissemination of project activities and results



E. OVERALL SATISFACTION

82% of survey respondents who participated in twinning activities were satisfied or very satisfied when were invited to value the outcome of twinning cooperation. The fact that only 8% of them stated that were not satisfied is a remarkable result.

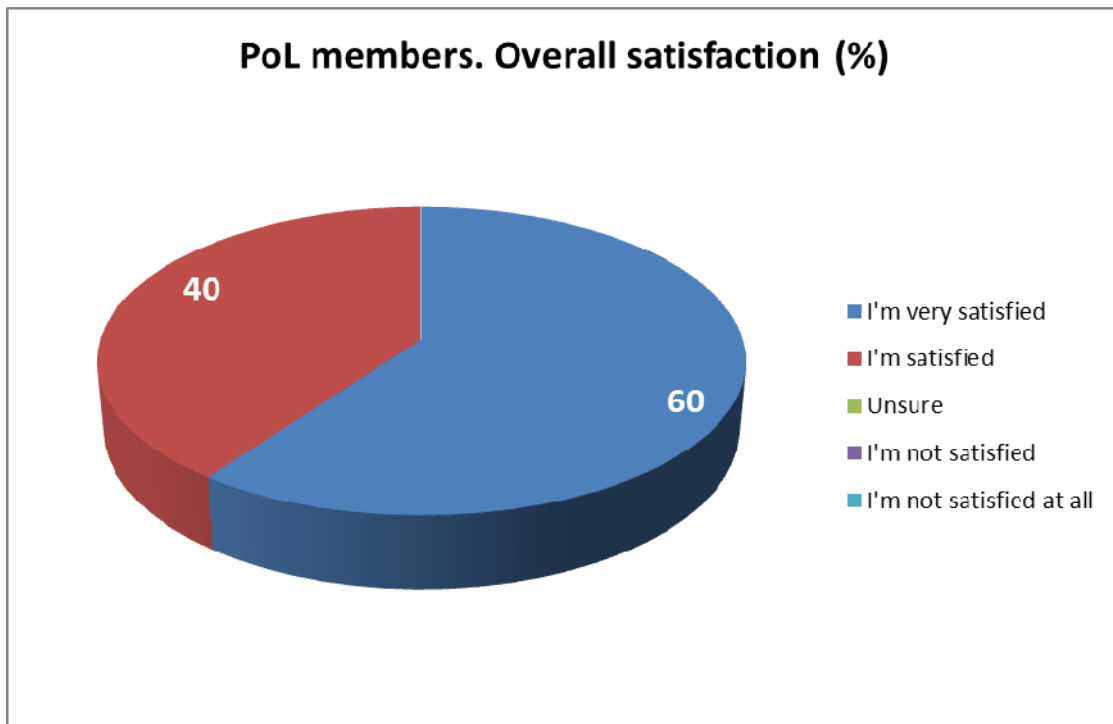
Table 45. Characterized the outcome of twinning cooperation



If we analyse the PoL and PoE response separately, it is possible to observe significant differences.

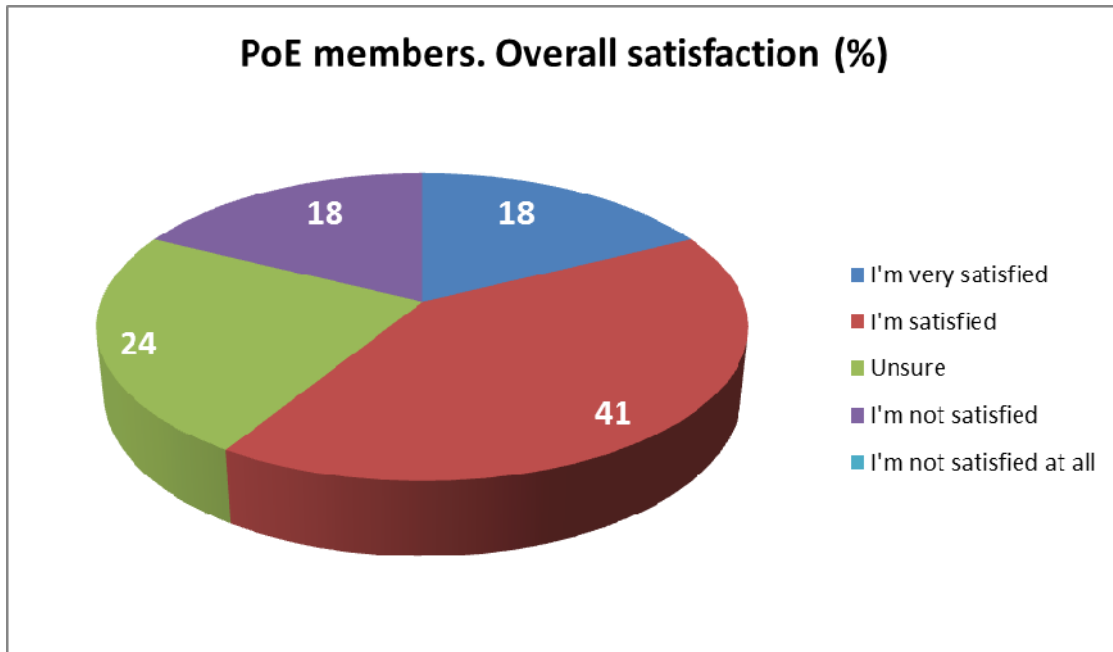
In particular with PoL answers, 100% of participants are very satisfied (60%) or satisfied (40%) as can be observed below.

Table 46. Overall satisfaction of PoL participants



In case of PoE, 41% answered that was satisfied, but 24% is not sure about the level of satisfaction and 18% is not satisfied with twinning results.

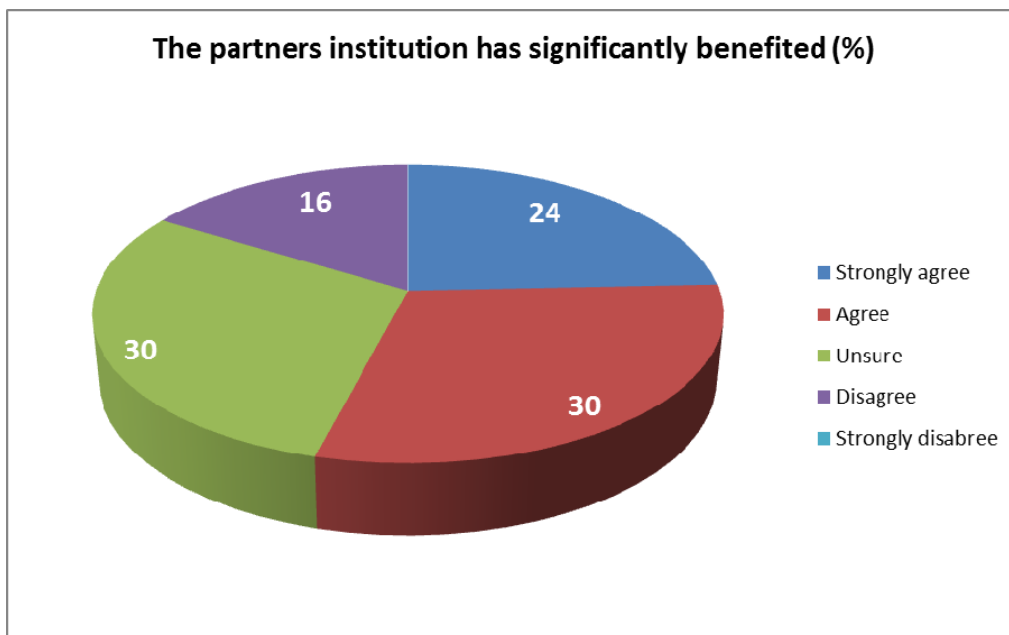
Table 47. Overall satisfaction of PoE participants



The questionnaire introduced a pair of questions regarding the benefits of twinning activities for the own or the partner institution.

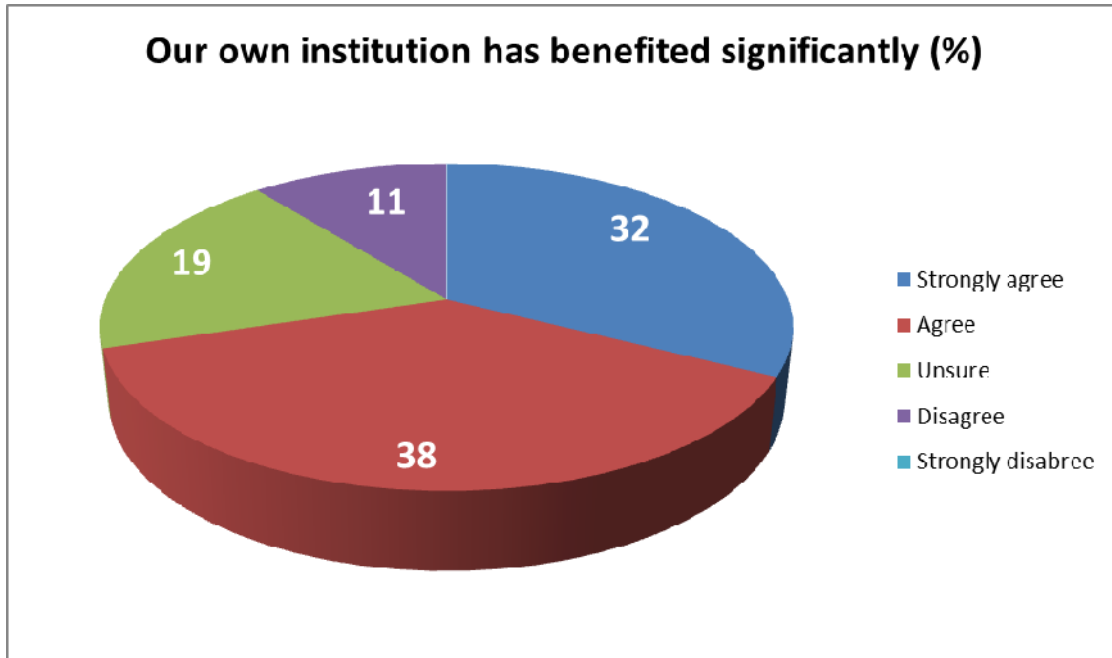
54% of respondents considered that the counterpart institution has got significant benefits with twinning collaboration.

Table 48. Benefits from the twinning cooperation



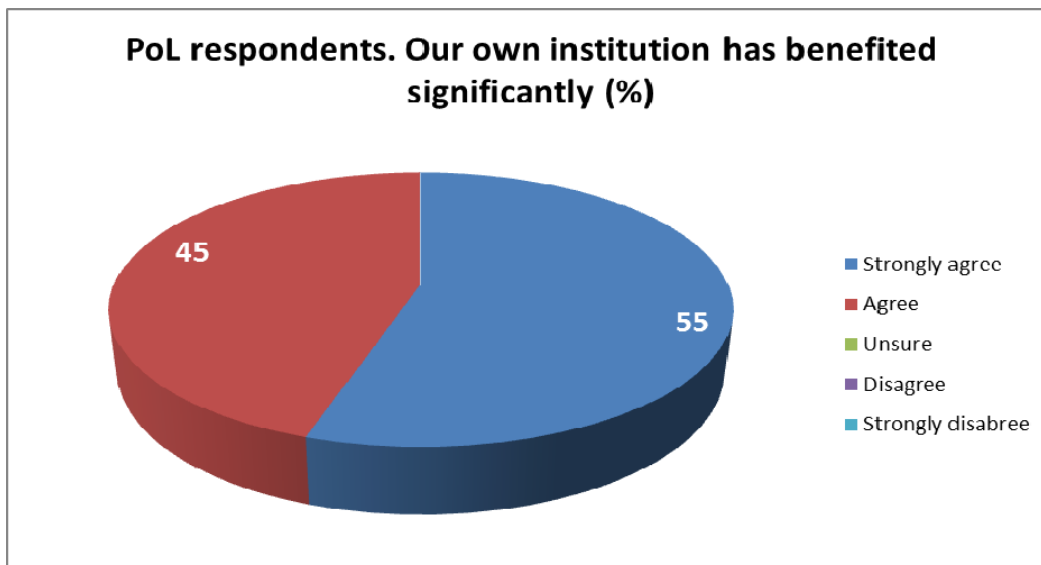
When participants are asked about own institution benefits obtained with twinning cooperation, 70% agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Table 49. Own institution benefits



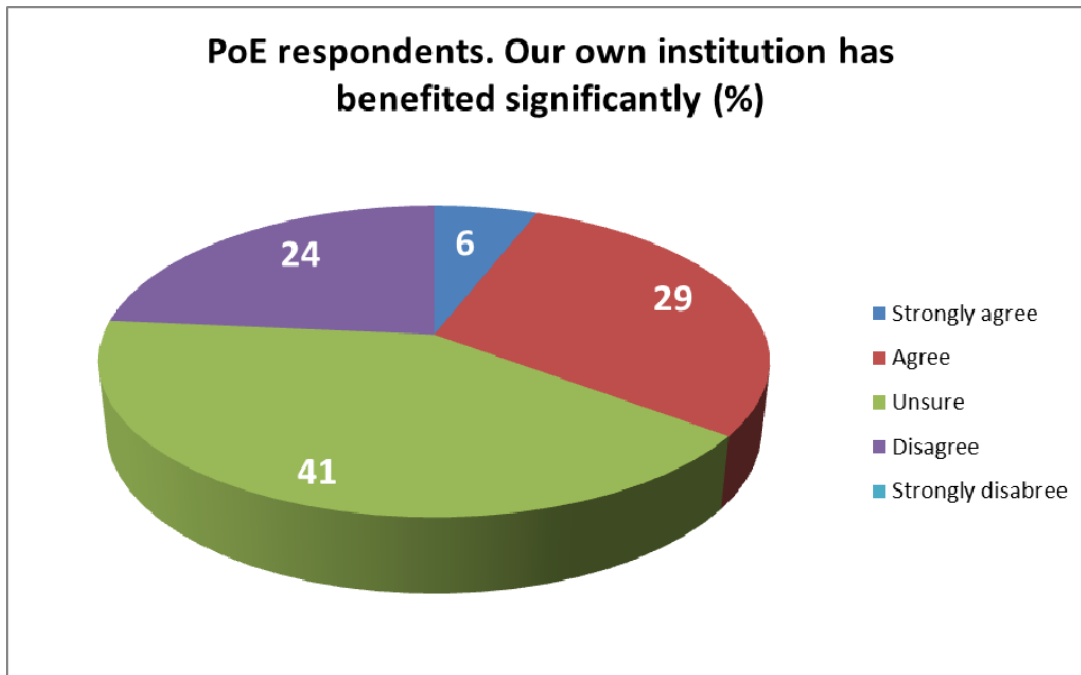
If we analyse PoL respondents separately, 100% agree or strongly agree that their own institution was benefited by twinning procedure.

Table 50. Our own PoL institution has benefited significantly



However, only 6% of PoE respondents strongly agree about the statement of their own institution has benefited and 29% agree. It is relevant to mention that 24% considered that they did not get benefits and 6% did not at all.

Table 51. Our own PoE institution has benefited significantly



Finally, when participants have been asked about if they or their institution were interested in going on with the twinning activities, 100% of replies were affirmative.

6 Conclusions

The key conclusions about the effectiveness of Green Twinning project partnerships that can be obtained from quantitative data and qualitative partners' perception is summarized below:

- The number of SEAP actions replicated and prepared for investment financing has been greater than foreseen. 12 SEAP actions instead of the initial 10. Thus, the main work plan objective has been perfectly achieved.
- Twinning partnerships have involved a reduced group of local representatives in twinning activities. Generally, most small and some medium-sized cities have participated in Green Twinning project. So that, this could be the reason, a few staff members. For the same reason, the participation of the Consultants has been crucial for reaching project objectives, because they have been catalysing and driving the process.
- Differences among PoL and PoE answers deduced from participants' commitment appreciation may be derived from the lack of a two-way learning process in the most of informal twinning agreements within Green Twinning framework.
- Green Twinning project included the obtaining of outputs and capacity building of PoL municipalities. That is the reason why 2/3 of respondents considered it was an only one-way learning process.
- After analysing the different opinion of participants about their twinning work plan evaluation, can be concluded that time and economic resources was not some of the main barriers to be overtaken in order to fulfil twinning work plan activities. But, it is clear that timeframe was tight and work plans only considered the transfer of knowledge in one way. Concerning work plan commitment or goals, participants considered that objectives have been properly achieved and respected by partnership members. Moreover, municipalities personnel involved in twinning activities were recognized as suitable skilled. In terms of twinning participants' communication, respondents considered it was considered effective and there were not troubles in getting in touch. Lastly, participant's language skills were enough to conduct activities included within the work plan. However, PoL respondents expressed certain difficulties with language had affected WP development.
- Limited time frame has been identified by respondents as main obstacle encountered in pursuing twinning partnership objectives (it is important to differentiate between work plan objectives and twinning partnership objectives). Again the lack of a transfer of knowledge to both counterparts seems to be the main reason. Language skills and economic resources problems were distinguished by as other barriers by PoE.

- The most repeated “significant negatives” have been the language barriers, the lack of economic resources (mostly by PoE respondents) and limited time. It is worth mentioning that 17% of responses were “none”.
- Twinning partnerships have provided really successful and applicable RES & RUE case studies and have broaden local authorities horizons, at the same time that improve local authorities representatives attitude towards sustainable energy projects.
- Study visits (as an important “eye-opener”) and the transfer of projects know-how and ideas were highlighted for being the most successful approaches or actions carried out during twinning activities.
- The major failures determined were: language barriers and counterparts’ local area different conditions (geographic, socioeconomic, climate, etc.). It is due to the fact that Green Twinning project schedule obliged project partnership to select the PoL and PoE participants in informal twinning agreement in a short period of time.
- As appointed out earlier, study visits and face-to-face meeting are crucial for achieving twinning work plan objectives. Although, virtual tools/meeting helped in.
- The main incentives stressed by the participants in order to involve local governments in twinning partnerships were chiefly two: relationship building for future EU projects and best practices replication and mutual learning. It is relevant that questionnaire respondents answered that municipalities were not interested in their staff members’ capacity building. So that, can be concluded that twinning participants willingness is obtaining practical information about certain project but not especially training their personnel. Improving staff competency would be a by-product but not a goal by itself.
- Concerning the appreciated impact, twinning partnerships has helped municipalities to: develop municipality technical competency (95% of PoL), develop CoM initiative (PoL, 79%) and (95% of PoL) to introduce RES & RUE initiatives.
- Participants found that twinning partnership has increased the willingness of local authorities to initiate RES and RUE projects.
- The impact of twinning in PoE municipalities was perceived as mediocre. But even PoE respondents considered they were benefited or rated the process with a positive impact.
- Twinning activities were transmitted internally, through municipality departments. Furthermore, twinning got a wide impact in local media.

- The level of satisfaction of twinning participants was unbeatable. 100% of PoL respondents were very satisfied or satisfied. Meanwhile, 41% of PoE survey participants were satisfied and only 18% were not satisfied with twinning results.
- 100 of PoL survey participants considered were benefited by twinning. However, 30% of PoE thought they didn't take advantage of twinning.
- Finally, it is remarkable to underline that 100% of informal twinning municipalities and the respective Consultants are interested in going on with their twinning process.

7 How to improve twinning agreements

The twinning effectiveness evaluation survey was a good opportunity to gather the opinion of municipalities' representatives (politicians and civil servants) and project Consultants about the twinning activities/partnerships in order to evaluate the barriers, challenges, impacts and, definitely, the level of satisfaction found during the whole process.

Despite the answers from twinning participants showed that they were satisfied with the process and interested in the continuation of twinning activities. However, due to the lack of time (Green Twinning project presented a very tight time frame) was almost impossible to share knowledge and experience in the two directions. It is important to ensure that twinning counterparts learn about each other's expertise.

The idea of "Learning municipalities" and "Expertise municipalities" must be avoided and bear in mind that **mutual learning is the only way to keep twinning partnerships alive**.

Municipalities' staff members conducting twinning partnerships and/or twinning activities must include **sufficient** (referring to number of people) **professional and qualified** people. Moreover, towns should appoint a technician and a political responsible for leading the process. Language skills are an important hurdle in the way of succeeding. Green Twinning town participants have paved the mentioned way with the Consultants assistance. Logically, small or medium-sized municipalities must face, in most of the case, the shortage of technical or skilled personnel.

Twinning partnership must be understood as a **long-term planning process**. Twinning partners must be aware that the objectives of counterparts will not be obtained immediately. Also, it is sure if **counterparts share common objectives**, twinning partnership will increase the possibilities of succeeding. Furthermore, it is important to **match similar cities** (as much as possible), with similarities in terms of size, economic activities or sectors, climatologically, etc. In that case, **a preliminary assessment of municipality needs** would help choose the most appropriate partner.

Twinning work plans must reflect clearly the counterparts' expectations and must be realistic and flexible in order to make possible its adaption to the member's situation.

Study visits have been appointed the most successful activities or approaches followed, because it was a remarkable project "**eye-opener**". Thus, at least one study visit per partner should be foreseen.

Organization's most important incentives, underlined by survey participants, for taking part in twinning cooperation are both the potential future cooperation in EU programmes and RES & RUE best practices replication. **Europe for Citizens and Youth in Action EU programmes present an excellent opportunity** to initiate a sustainable energy twinning partnership.