

# SURVEY FINDINGS REPORT



## CLIMATE ACTION ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

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### Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise



CLIMATE ACTION  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES  
Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise



This project is supported by a range of stakeholders including:  
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This survey findings report is one of two aligned reports published as part of the early research on the project: **Economic Opportunities from Climate Action for Local Authorities**. The findings set out in the report stem from a survey of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) and Directors of Services with responsibility for Economic Development, on their awareness of, and capacity for, supporting the development of economic opportunities through climate action.

This report accompanies, and should be read in conjunction with the Policy Analysis Report which explores European, National, Regional and Local policy and initiatives on the creation of economic opportunity from climate action relevant to the economic and enterprise remit of local authorities.

The Eastern and Midlands CARO, has led preparation of the report with the support of the stakeholders identified on page two and the following section gives the context for the overall project.

## 2. BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The Local Government Act, 1991 and the Local Government Act, 2001 confers competence on local authorities to promote the interests of the local community in a range of areas, including supporting and facilitating local economic growth and enterprise development. The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 further enhanced this economic development role through the integration of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) along with a statutory requirement to prepare a Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) every five years.

This expanded economic and enterprise development role of Local Authorities is seeking to ensure that there is a cross cutting and an integrated policy framework in place across the range of local government functions, delivering an effective eco-system for enterprise growth and development. Consequently, local authorities, as leaders of local development across social, environmental, economic, enterprise, community and cultural functional responsibilities. They are ideally placed to facilitate effective collaboration and deliver the necessary multi-agency responses to drive success, while underpinning the local government-business relationship as well as developing engagement with local communities.

Through the preparation of Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, local authorities have embraced their enhanced economic remit and through the work of the Local Enterprise Offices, to support, encourage and nurture new business and innovative ideas in this sphere. These include opportunities in environmental and technological advances which are associated with climate action and which support the transition to a low carbon economy. The Local Authority Climate Action Charter (Section 3, (r)), commits local authorities to supporting enterprise through the Local Community Development Committee and Local Enterprise Offices to exploit opportunities which will arise from meeting the challenges of Climate Change.



Furthermore, local authorities are key stakeholders of the nine Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs). The REPs are an integral part of Ireland's enterprise policy, aimed at driving economic growth, fostering resilience and delivering better quality of life throughout Ireland. Each REP is overseen by a Steering Committee with members drawn from local government and from across the relevant regional economy. The Plans complement national level policies and programmes such as national enterprise policy, e.g. Enterprise 2025 Renewed, Future Jobs Ireland, IDAs Driving Recovery & Sustainable Growth 2021-24 and Enterprise Ireland's Powering the Regions.

Local authorities host the Regional Enterprise Development Offices and fund the Programme Manager role, which implement the REPs with regional stakeholders. The REPs to 2024 are currently in development. Under the Climate Action Plan, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has tasked the REP Steering Committees to include 'Just Transition' as a standing item on agendas for all meetings. This is in recognition of both the challenge of the climate and digital transition in all regions as well as the importance of ensuring the presence of key stakeholders in contributing to transition to a low carbon economy.

Furthermore, the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) work programme, as agreed between the City and County Management Association (CCMA) Climate Change, Transport and Networks Committee and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, mandates the CAROs to support local authorities to encourage economic development and innovation through the broader local authority economic and enterprise function.

Economic opportunities arising from climate action is a rapidly evolving policy area and it is important that the local government sector and local authorities position themselves to capitalize on the potential opportunities for local enterprise arising from climate action, and in doing so honor the commitments of the Local Authority Climate Action Charter.

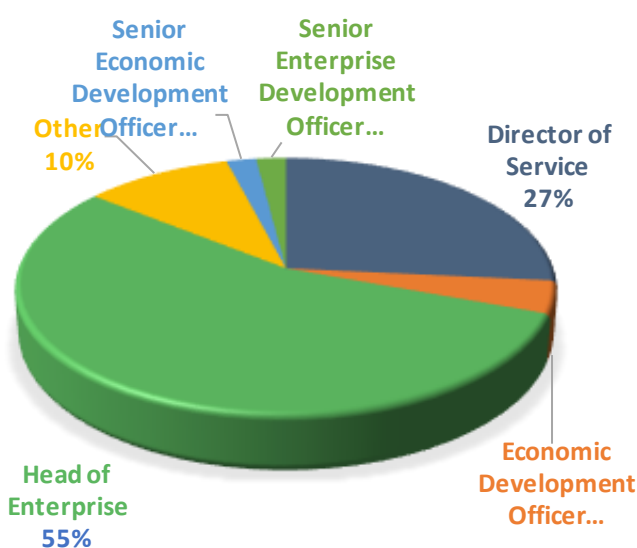


### 3. SUMMARY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1 Profile of Respondents

49 people completed the 50-question online questionnaire with this section providing a profile breakdown of respondents. This breakdown helps to highlight the level of experience behind the responses given from people working across several directorates in the local authority sector.

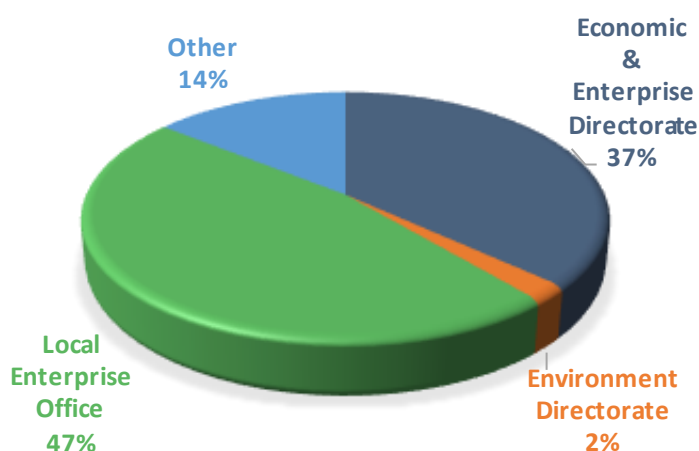
##### Grades of Respondents

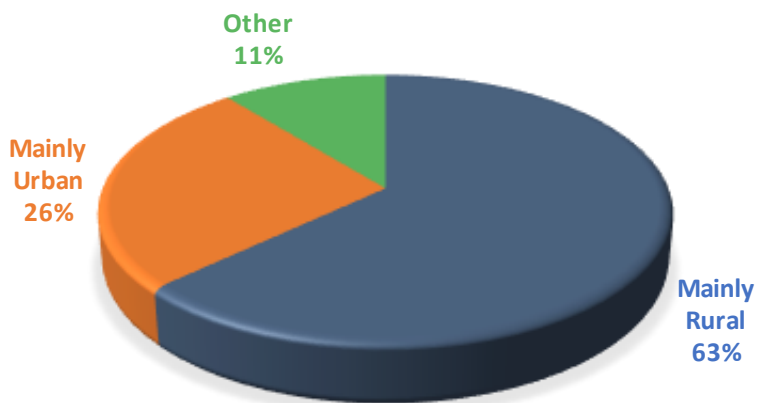


The largest proportion of respondents (55%) are at the Head of Enterprise grade with Directors of Service making up the second most (27%). 10% of respondents stated Other. This category includes people who hold the position of Acting Director of Service and Head of Economic Development and Enterprise

Of all respondents, 47% are from the Local Enterprise Offices with 37% from the Economic & Enterprise Directorate. 14% of respondents stated Other. An analysis of the Other category shows these respondents work cross-sectionally in several areas including Local Enterprise and Economic Development Local Enterprise, Special Project Development, Community, Cultural & Social Development, Planning and Environment.

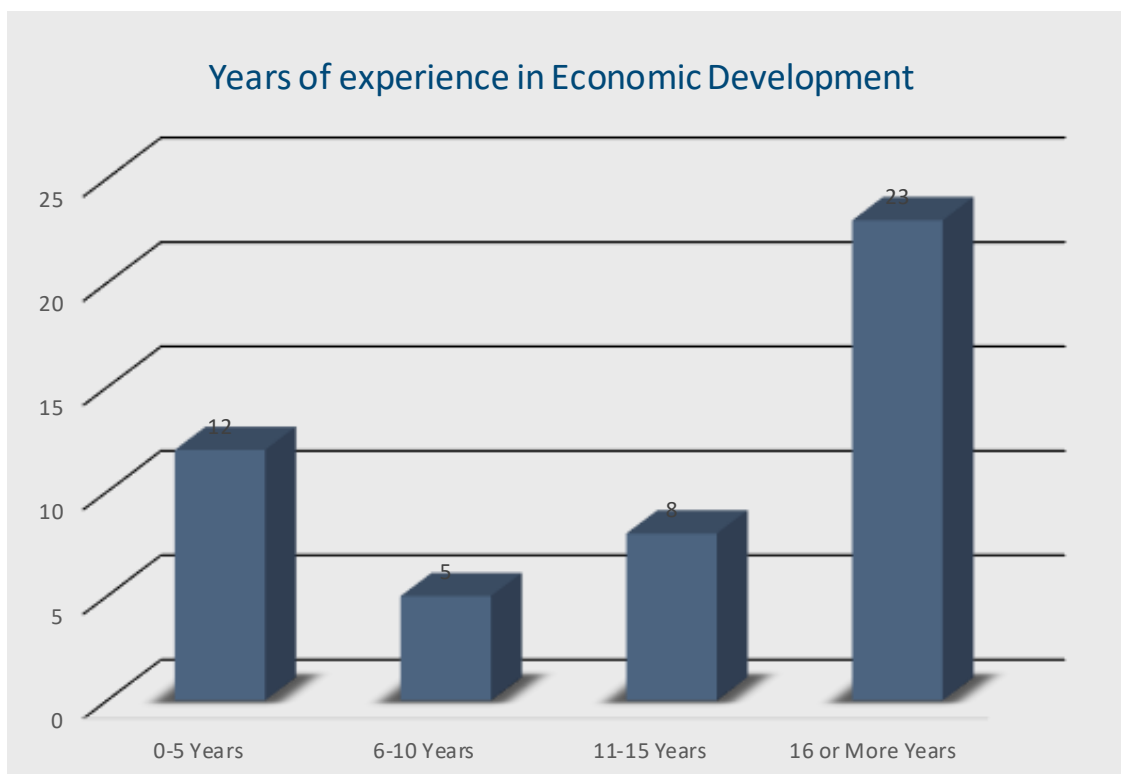
##### Section In Local Authority





In describing the type of local authority respondents worked in, 63% stated they worked in a mainly Rural local authority area. 26% stated mainly Urban with the remaining 11% stating Other. These respondents chose other as overall they serve an equal amount of urban and rural areas.

Most respondents have over 16 years' experience in Economic Development with the remaining respondents making up the other 3 experience range categories.





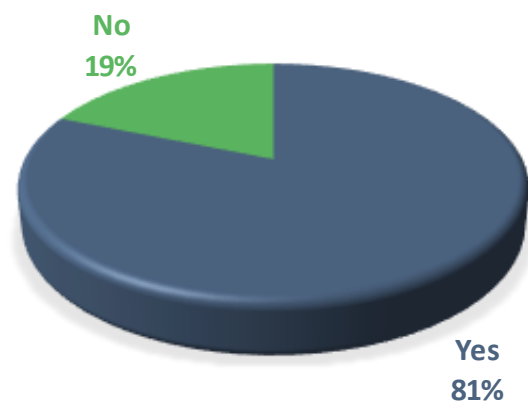


### 3.2 Awareness of Climate Action and Economic Opportunities

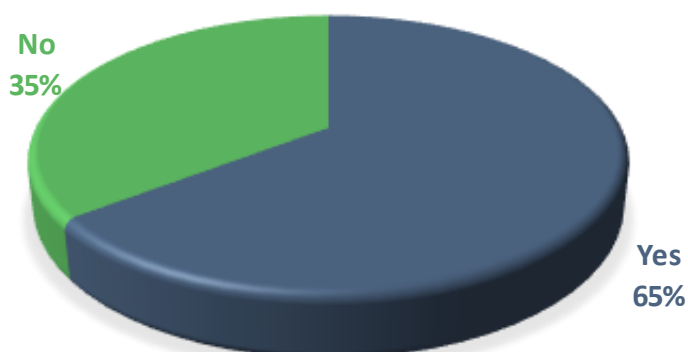
The survey aimed to understand the level of awareness of participants of the connection between climate action and economic opportunities. This knowledge would then help inform the direction the project would take as well as help identify the needs of those in positions supporting and promoting enterprise and economic opportunities. These needs may include awareness raising activities, specific training, or the sharing of industry expertise. A summary of the results of this section of the survey follow.

81% of respondents are aware of enterprise actions within their Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) showing a high level of awareness across the sector. Surprisingly however, of those who were not aware of these actions, 6 respondents have over 16 years of experience with 3 having 0-5 years' experience.

Awareness of Enterprise Actions in CCAS



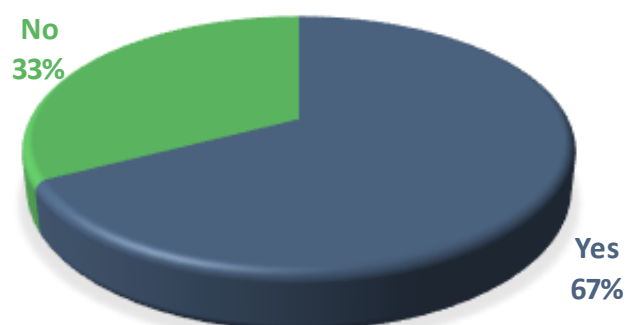
Awareness of Enterprise Actions In LA Climate Action Charter



63% of respondents are aware of enterprise actions in the Local Authority Climate Action Charter. In highlighting awareness levels among the different age categories, 50% with 0-5 years with experience and 39% with over 16 years' experience stated no awareness of these actions.



### Awareness of Emerging Economic Opportunities



33% of respondents stated they are not aware of economic opportunities that have recently emerged as a result of climate action policy. 1/3 of respondents in the 0-5 years' experience in economic development have no awareness of these economic opportunities.

Type of Opportunities identified include:

**Partnerships and Hubs** – for establishing networks, centres of excellence and incubation centres or partnerships with third level educational bodies on projects.

**Product and Process Innovation** – including greening existing businesses, expanding green tourism, promoting circular economy initiatives.

**Increasing Engagement of LEOs and Local Authorities in Climate Action** – leading to higher levels of energy efficiency and decarbonisation.

**Infrastructural Projects** – significant economic gains achieved by supporting infrastructure for green enterprises and initiatives.



### 3.3 Awareness of Policy and Funding for Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

#### Awareness of Policy or Funding Instruments Leading To Economic Opportunities



55% of respondents stated they are aware of policy or funding instruments at EU, National or local level that result in local economic opportunities arising from climate action. This level of awareness is lower than that reported with Climate Change Adaptation Strategies.

Respondents who answered 'Yes' listed the following policy or funding instruments:

**European Initiatives** – the European Green Deal; the Next Generation EU Recovery Fund; the inclusion of bio-based industry consortia within the EU; Net-zero Energy Building Standards, MegaAWE Intereg, IDEAS.

**National Initiatives** – the National Climate Action Plan; the Climate Action & Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020; the Climate Action Fund; DTTAs funding for climate change projects; the EPA's Circular Economy Research Fund; SEAI Schemes; the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy; the Bioeconomy National Policy Statement

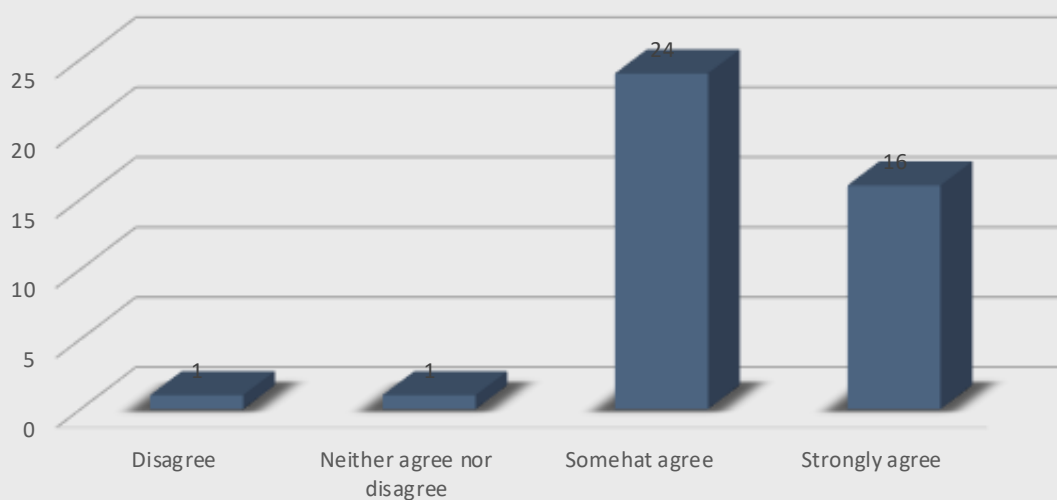
**Regional & Local Initiatives** – the Just Transition Mechanism; Lean / Green Programmes for Micro-Business; Louth County Council Energy Assessors Scheme for Enterprise

Awareness ranged from a general understanding on European policy to specific knowledge on initiatives suggesting the level of understanding of the range of opportunities to engage business in climate action is rich but dispersed across a number of fields.

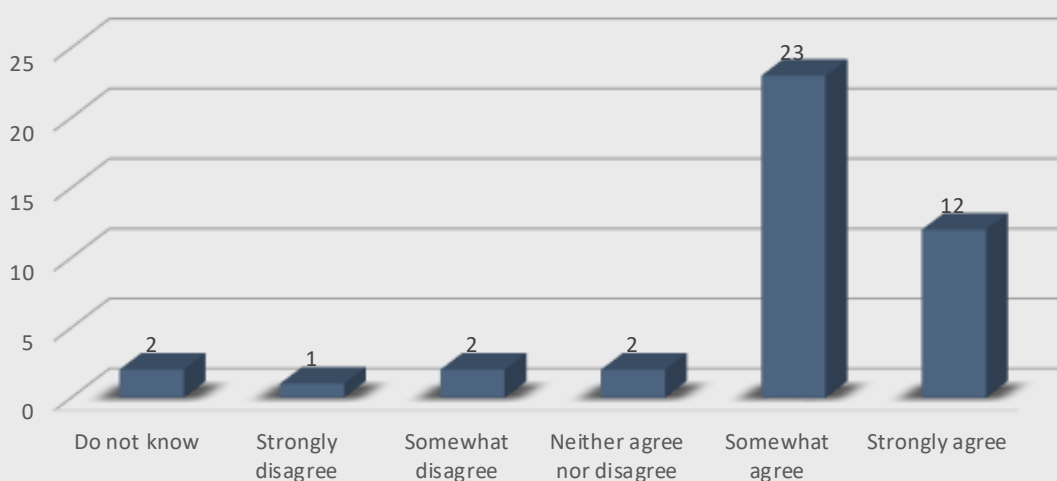
In the remaining part of this section, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements relating to Climate Action Policies, funding streams, interest level in pursuing business opportunities from climate action as well as capacity to do so.



European, national and local climate action policies and funding streams will provide economic and enterprise opportunities for local businesses

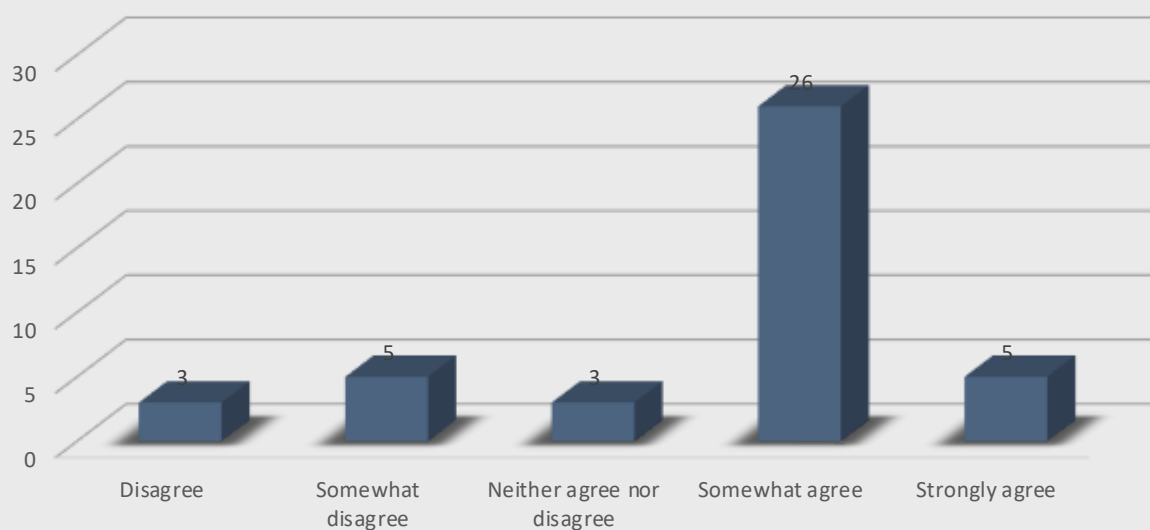


Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area will have an interest in undertaking green enterprise initiatives and availing of potential business opportunities arising from climate action

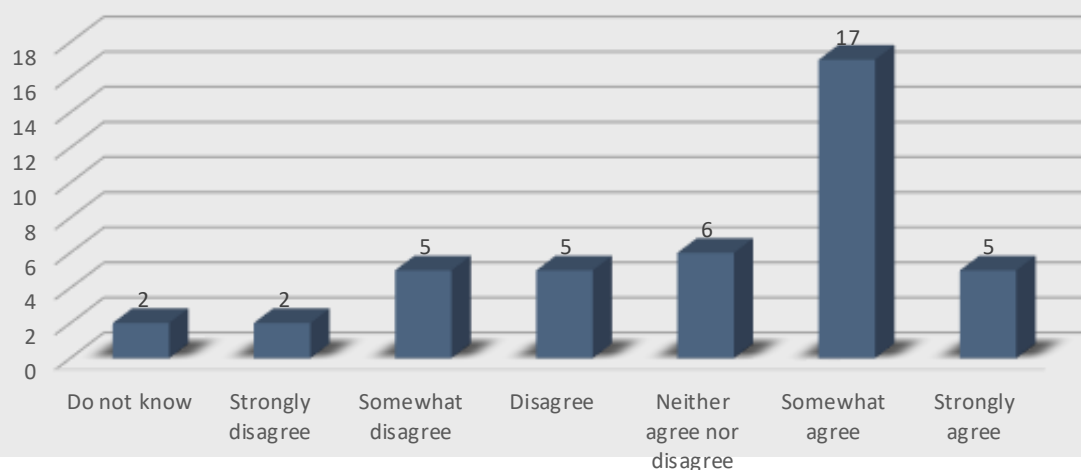




Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area have the capacity to undertake green enterprise initiatives and to identify future opportunities that arising from climate action



Your local authority and / or LEO already has the capacity already in place to identify and exploit local economic opportunities that will arise from climate action policy and funding streams



**Respondents who agreed with this statement provided the following additional information:**

- Some respondents mentioned that they had received training in relation to the circular economy, business greening, pilot schemes and sector specific areas (such as the construction sector).
- Other reported that their authorities had established centres of excellence or participated in projects with a focus on assisting businesses transition to low-carbon models.
- Some respondents noted that they had access to experts in the area, and others that it would be a benefit to have this access.
- some respondents suggested that additional resources will be required to assist existing staff to assist economic development, as there is evidence of significant 'stretch at the moment'.
- One respondent urged the creation of a dedicated function that would address strategic opportunities with non-standard funding.
- Others commented that national policy and senior level commitments in local authorities play a strong role in determining what will be supported at local level.

**Respondents who disagreed with this statement provided the following additional information:**

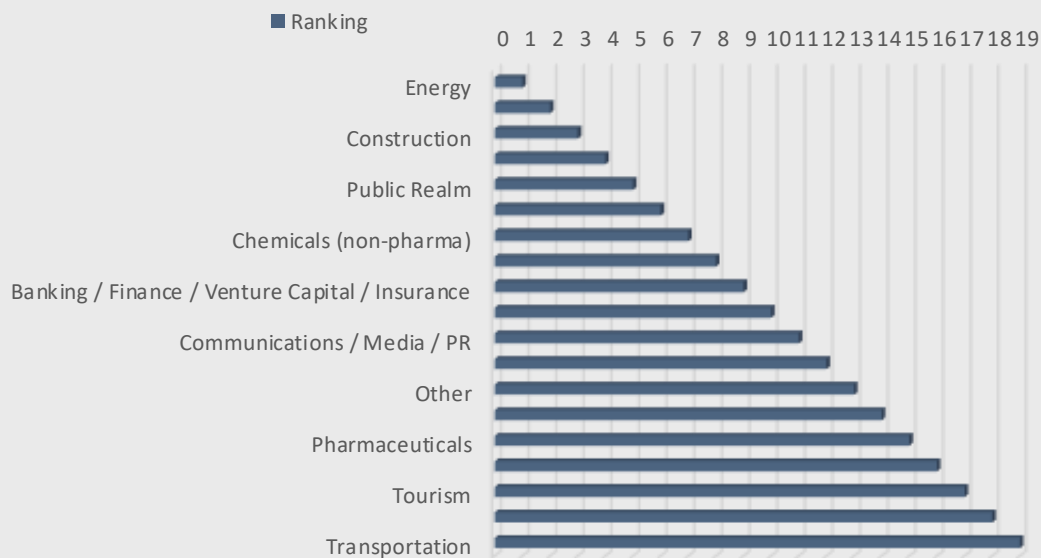
- One respondent stated that the creation of economic opportunities through climate change was not seen as a priority,
- Twelve respondents were very clear that there is a strong need to create expertise in this area through resourcing, education and training, information and examples of how local authorities and LEOs can demonstrate how economic opportunities can be created through engaging with climate action.

### 3.4 Employment and Job Creation Opportunities from Climate Action

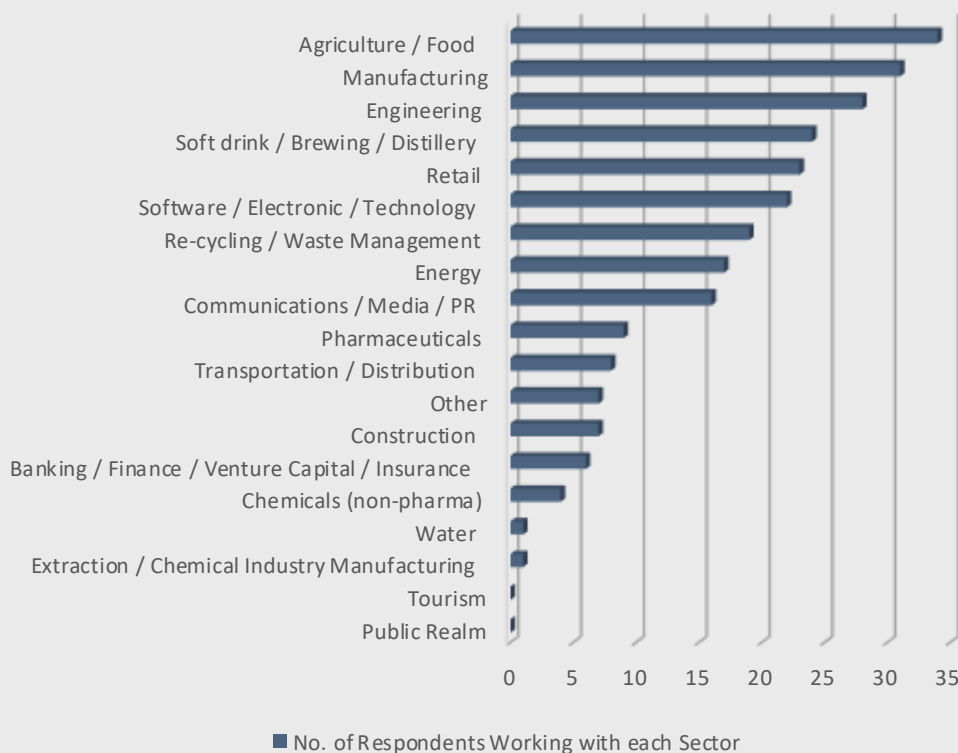
The people working in the LEOs and Economic Development have the knowledge and experience needed to help identify what sectors have the most potential to grow through taking and / or increasing their level of climate action as well as through providing goods or services towards climate action for their customers. They also can help inform, based on their continued work with a range of sectors, what the needs of each sector are and how best to deliver solutions to address these needs. The answers provided below provide the initial insight for this purpose.



## Sectors Having Most Potential for Job Creation as Ranked by Respondents



## The Sectors Respondents Currently Work With





### Respondents who selected 'Other' were asked to identify these areas. Answered included:

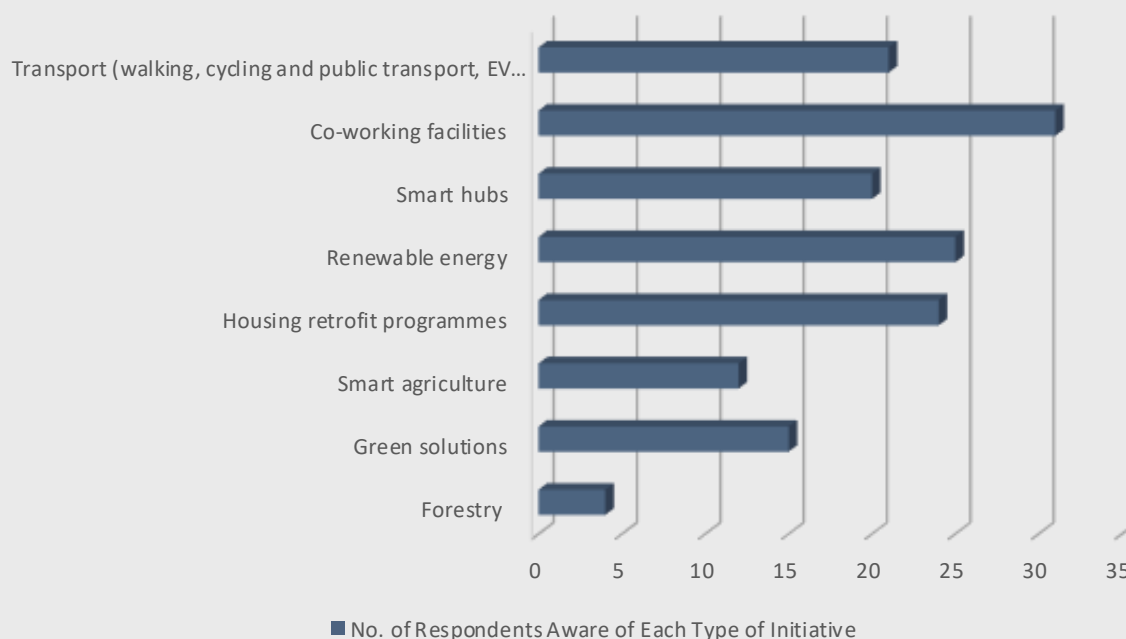
'All of the above'; artisan craft and food; creative industries (such as animation, film and graphics); general 'Green Your Business' seminars for micro enterprises regardless of sector, hospitality and tourism [note that this was an option on the questionnaire], local government and services to business.

Although there are variations in the amount of responses collected, some interesting potential areas may be worthy of further exploration. For example, respondents saw the energy sector as having the most potential for future job creation from Climate Change, but 17 respondents worked with enterprise (compared with 34 who worked with clients in the Agri-Food sector). This may be due to the stage of the development of the sustainable energy field in Ireland at a local level or other factors may be at play.

Other notable sectors where there was a mismatch between current engagement and beliefs about future job creation from climate action were the Public Realm and Tourism sectors. Future research with local enterprise and entrepreneurs is required to add additional clarity to these findings.

In terms of any particular climate action related economic initiatives they are aware of in their county or region respondents indicated their level of awareness of the following initiatives:

### Awareness of Climate Action Related Economic Initiatives in Region or County



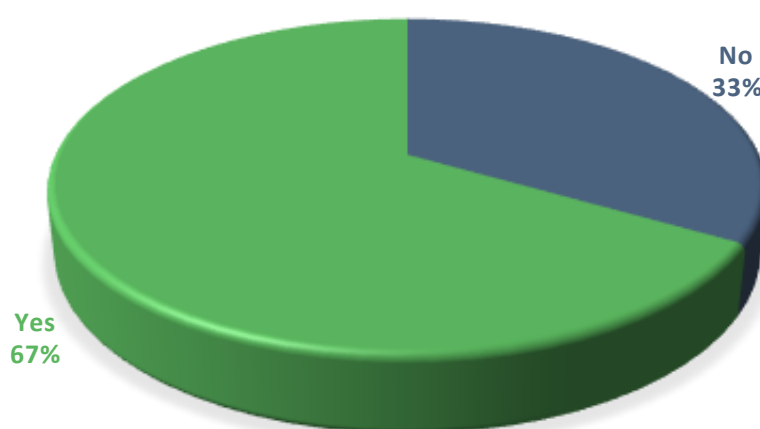




### 3.5 Current Activities in Creating Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

Knowing the current lay of the land in terms of what current activities are ongoing, as well as potential future activities, in local authorities to create economic opportunities from climate action is very important. This insight will help ensure resources used during the project are directed appropriately and utilised efficiently and effectively. The following answers provide that needed insight.

#### Does Your Local Authority And / Or LEO Run Programmes (Mentoring/Training) Aimed At Promoting Green Enterprise Initiatives And Identifying Innovation Arising From Climate Action Policy?



**Respondents who answered yes listed the following programmes they run. Listed in order of times mentioned:**

- Pilot programmes for low-carbon cost-reduction or circular economy training
- The planned 'Green for Micro' programme
- Green partnerships at a regional level with other local authorities (and in one case with an Institute of Technology)
- Involvement in the Tullamore conference on 'Economic Opportunities from Climate Change
- Other initiatives that are in the planning stage but had been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

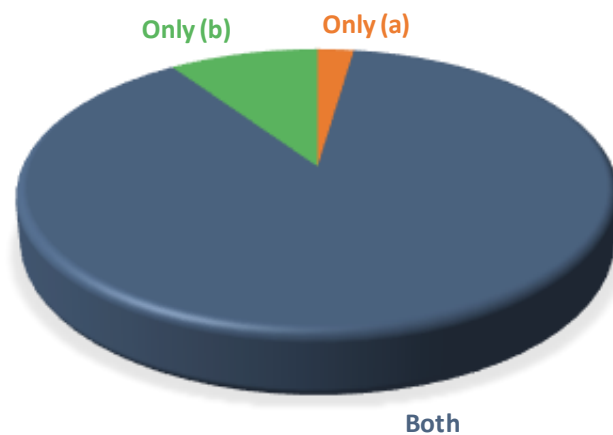


When asked will the creation of innovative solutions to climate change consist of:

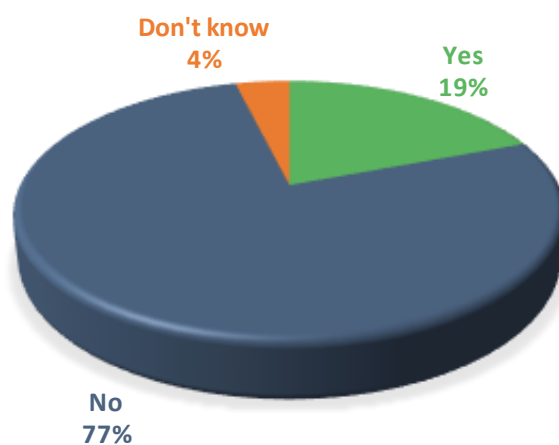
- a) the invention of new products, services and / or
- b) processes, 'tweaking' existing practice

Respondents answered:

#### CREATION OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE WILL CONSIST OF



#### CONDUCTED RESEARCH INTO LOCAL INTEREST IN GREEN ENTERPRISE



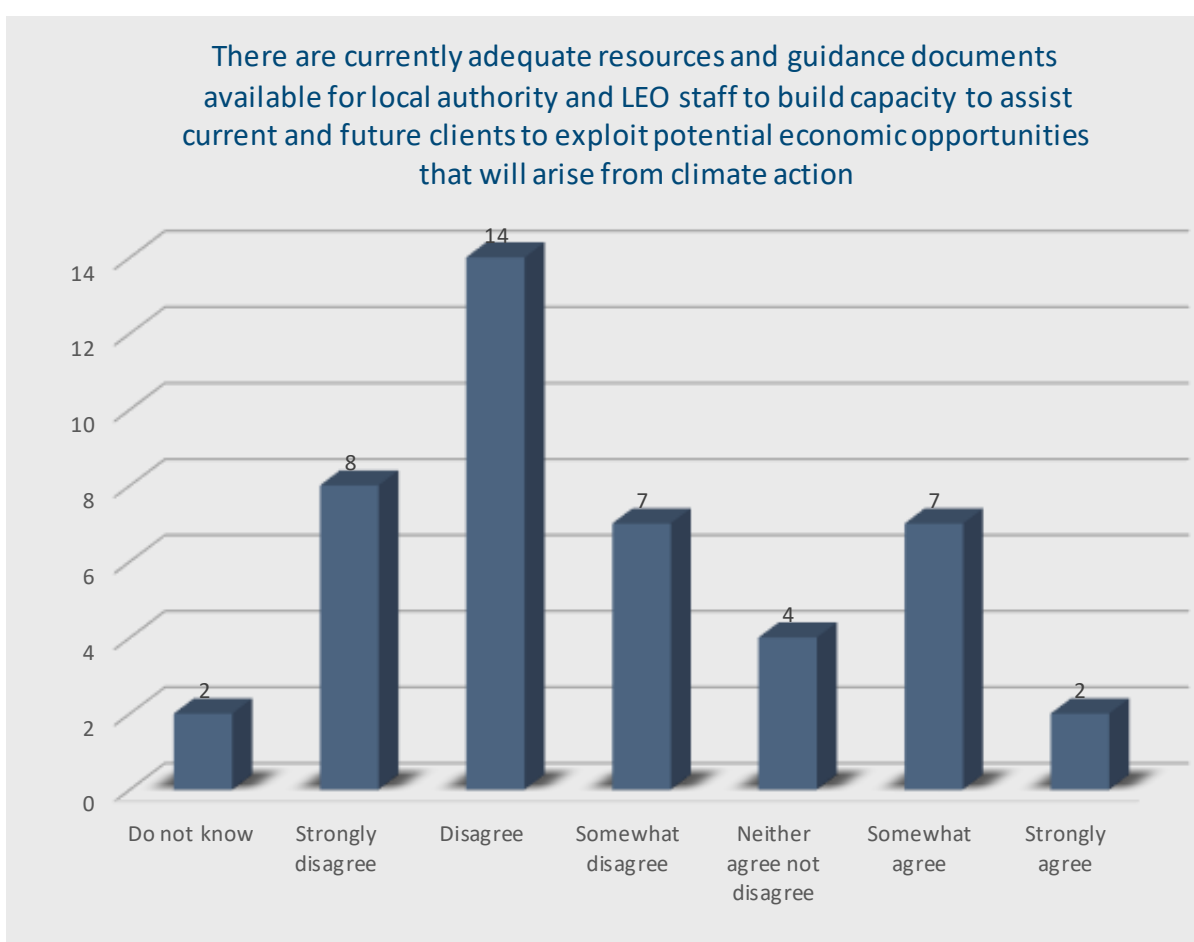
When asked has their office conducted research on local interest in green enterprise 77% answered 'No' indicating a marked lack of research (or awareness of research) in this space.

Of the respondents who answered 'Yes' that they have conducted research into local interest in green infrastructure they utilised a variety of approaches including green auditing, business discovery, surveys, and feasibility testing. Further information on the range of approaches can be found later in this report.



### 3.6 Resources and Guidance on Economic Opportunities and Climate Action

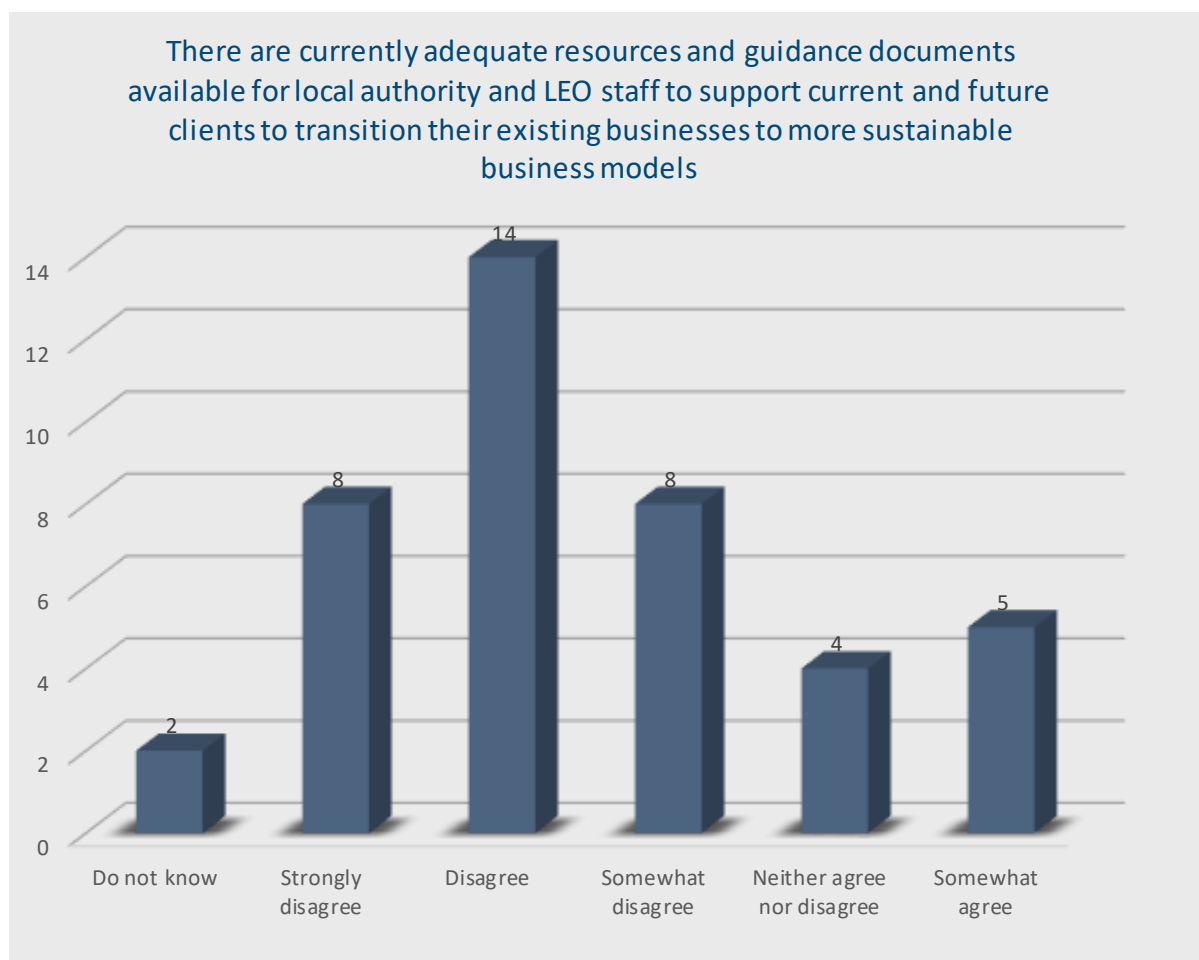
Knowledge on what supports are currently available for LEO and economic development staff provides necessary insight into what will be required into the future in terms of new resources and guidance as well as improving existing supports. To this end, participants were asked to state their level of agreement on a range of statements relating to the level of adequate resources and guidance documents available for local authority and LEO staff to promote and support economic opportunities and climate action. Respondent's answers to these follows:



Respondents who agreed with this statement listed the following resources and guidance documents their local authority and / or LEO have access to:

- resources provided by Enterprise Ireland
- provided information on climate action and strategies for decarbonisation by a staff member connected in that space
- having the capacity to run training programmes, events as well as provide mentoring & funding – also stated the need for more support funding for LEOs/Las and business to match grant assistance





Respondents who agreed with this statement listed the following comments, resources and guidance documents their local authority and / or LEO have access to:

- Training and networks are essential resources for themselves.
- resources (that are currently in development).
- “Research indicates that budget lines for LEOs will prioritise transition to low carbon/digital future. However, to enable businesses leverage the funding and resources, support funding will be required to bridge the gap between budgets actual cost of transition”.

Respondents who disagreed with the statement (or answered ‘don’t know’) listed a wide range of resources that are required to support their work in assisting their current and future clients transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models as well as assist them in developing greener products and services. The following word cloud highlights the key elements mentioned by respondents. The full list of answers is provided later in the document.

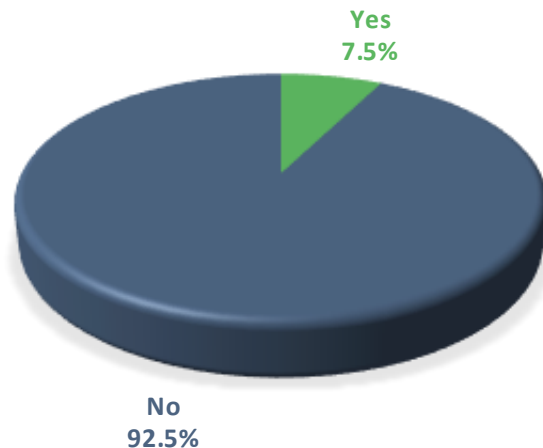


### 3.7 Knowledge of Funding for Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

Local authority and LEO staff are typically informed of potential funding sources as funding calls are announced however, whether guidance on newly announced funds connected to climate action and economic opportunities or related topics is provided by funding providers is unknown. This section of the survey aimed to understand the level of guidance currently provided as well as the level of awareness and knowledge within the LEOs and local authorities on the range of available funds. The following findings highlight the current state of play.



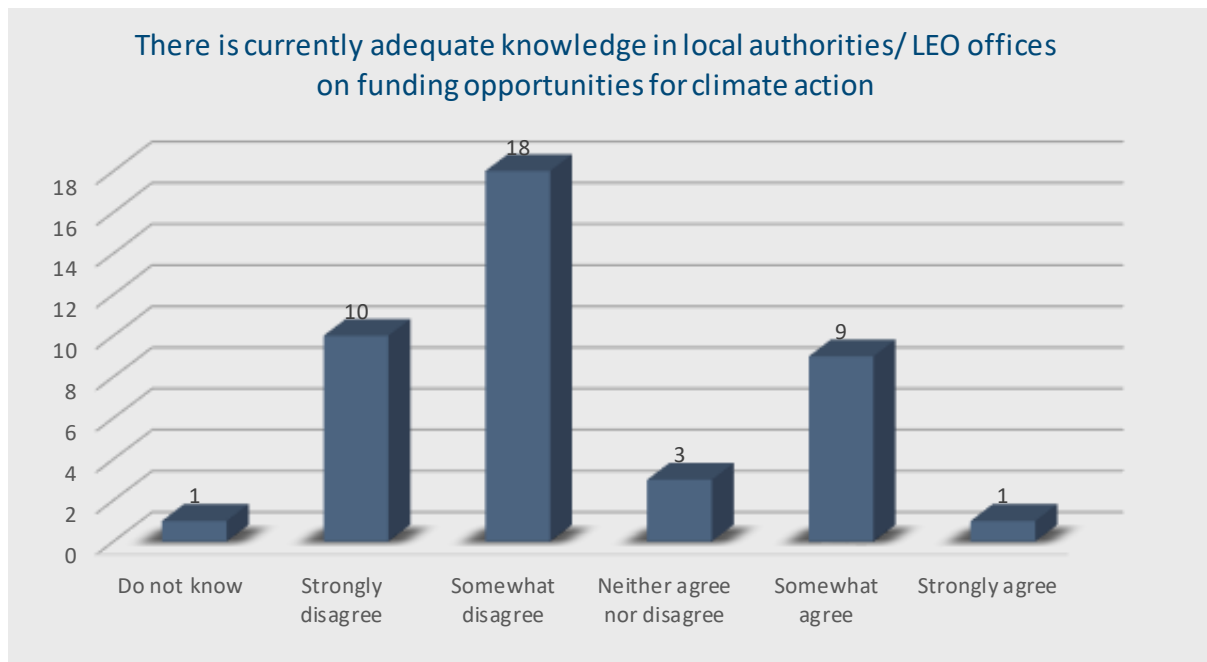
### RESPONDENTS HAVE RECEIVED GUIDANCE ON FUNDING APPLICATIONS TO SUPPORT GREEN ENTERPRISE



Participants were asked if they had received guidance on making applications for funds that support Green Enterprise. The vast majority 92.5% stating they have not received any guidance to date.

### Respondents were also asked their level of agreement with the following statement:

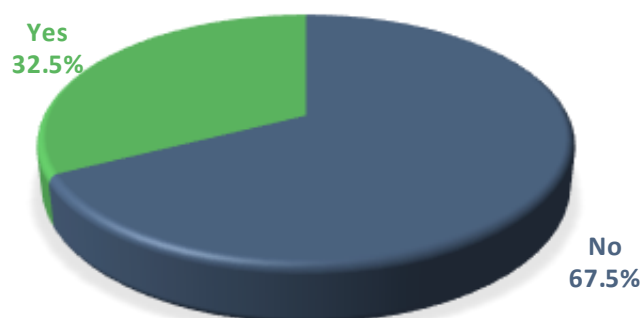
There is currently adequate knowledge in local authorities/LEO offices on funding opportunities for climate action and enterprise support for current and future clients to transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services. The answer below highlights that additional knowledge on funding opportunities will also be required.



### 3.8 Services Provided to Local Business

Identifying the range of services and supports currently provided, in relation to climate action and business, to customers and clients of local authorities and the LEOs highlights the areas where support is currently requested and provided. It will also help provide information on the current services in place that can be enhanced as well as highlight where new services may be required in the future.

#### HAVE FACILITATED AWARENESS RAISING / TRAINING FOR BUSINESSES ON CLIMATE ACTION



Participants were asked if they have, in the past, facilitated local businesses to attend awareness raising / training sessions on the subject of climate funding for business. 67.5% have not.





**Respondents who answered 'Yes' provided details on such awareness initiatives / training sessions which include:**

- Modos Programme (joint initiative by Dublin City Council & the Waste Mgmt. Plan for micro to small businesses)
- green for micro breakfast seminar
- LEO breakfast briefing
- Lower Carbon Lower Cost pilot initiative
- Lean Programmes

In terms of how many have issued such funds to local businesses only 15% have done so to date. Some examples were provided including:

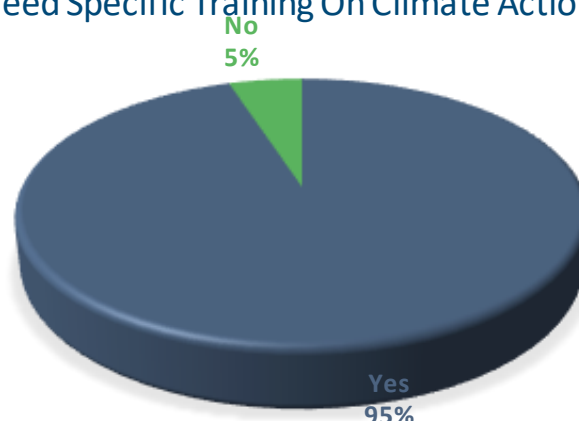
- For Green Training Programme
- For Business Auditing
- Business Support Grants
- MODOS Voucher Scheme



Participants were asked, in their opinion, what actions need to be put in place to ensure local enterprises are facilitated to access such funding? The following word cloud highlights the key elements mentioned by respondents. The full list of answers is provided later in this document.



Participants were asked if, in their view, is there a need for specific training for LEO /Economic Development staff on climate action. 95% of respondents said yes.



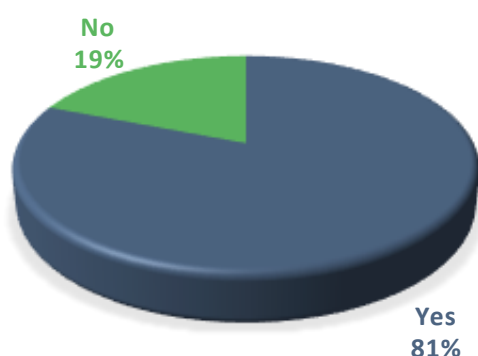


**Participants were asked what topics should be included in such climate action training.**

**Answers provided include: (a full list is available later in this document)**

- Helping businesses identify opportunities.
- Identifying sectoral opportunities.
- Carbon reducing measures and their impact on business' bottom line.
- Types of funding available and navigating funding applications.
- Identifying which sectors will be most impacted by climate change.
- Training and retraining business owners and staff to become more sustainable.
- Sharing of expertise and best practice.
- Climate Change terminology & understanding EU / National Targets / National Climate Policy.
- Exemplar case studies of businesses successfully operating more sustainably.
- Energy use / NZEB for buildings.
- Circular economy.
- Business Transition.
- Smart Agriculture.
- Sustainable travel.
- Understanding changing consumer trends.

### AWARENESS OF WORK CARRIED OUT ON CARBON FOOTPRINT MGMT. FOR BUSINESSES



Participants were asked if they are aware of any work carried out, to date, on the management of the carbon footprint of businesses. 81% are not aware of any work undertaken to date.

**Respondents who answered 'Yes' provided details / examples of this work including:**

- CDP Ireland - helps businesses assessing their carbon footprint.
- Regional energy agencies working directly with businesses to monitor their carbon footprint.
- Several clients are making efforts, varying from simple matters like lighting to plastics reduction.
- The EI/LEO 'Green for Micro' programme will provide a useful support programme for small businesses seeking to manage their carbon footprint.





- run MODOS (circular economy training for micro, small and medium enterprises) nationally via the LEO network
- This sounds like an interesting project, key factor is ease of delivery, gaining confidence of business community.
- We will all be challenged to deliver this - information/training of all customer facing staff really necessary.

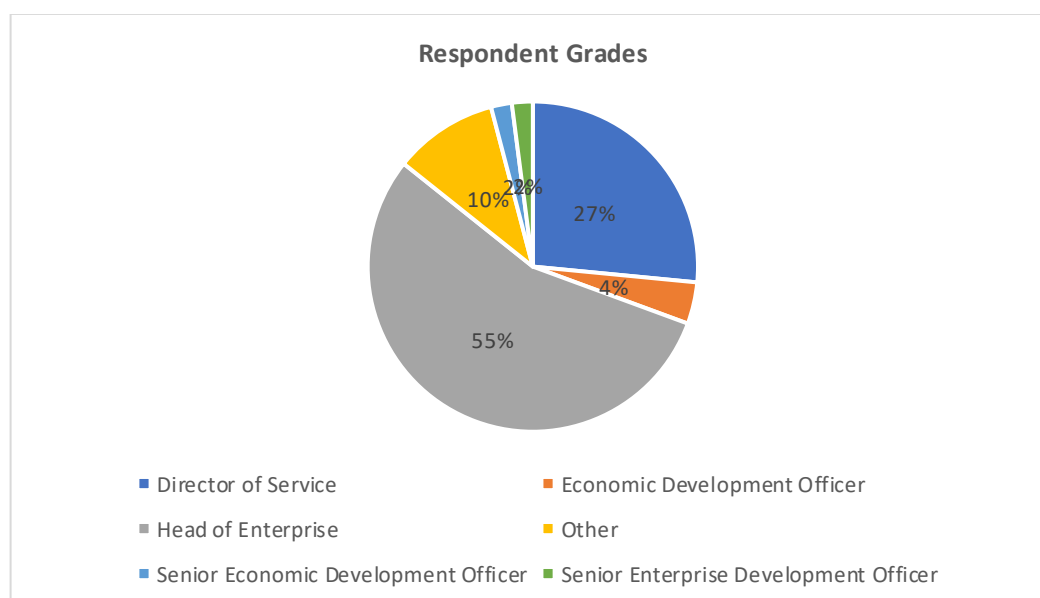




## APPENDIX 1: LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY DETAILED BREAKDOWN

### Respondent profiles

#### Q1: What is your grade?



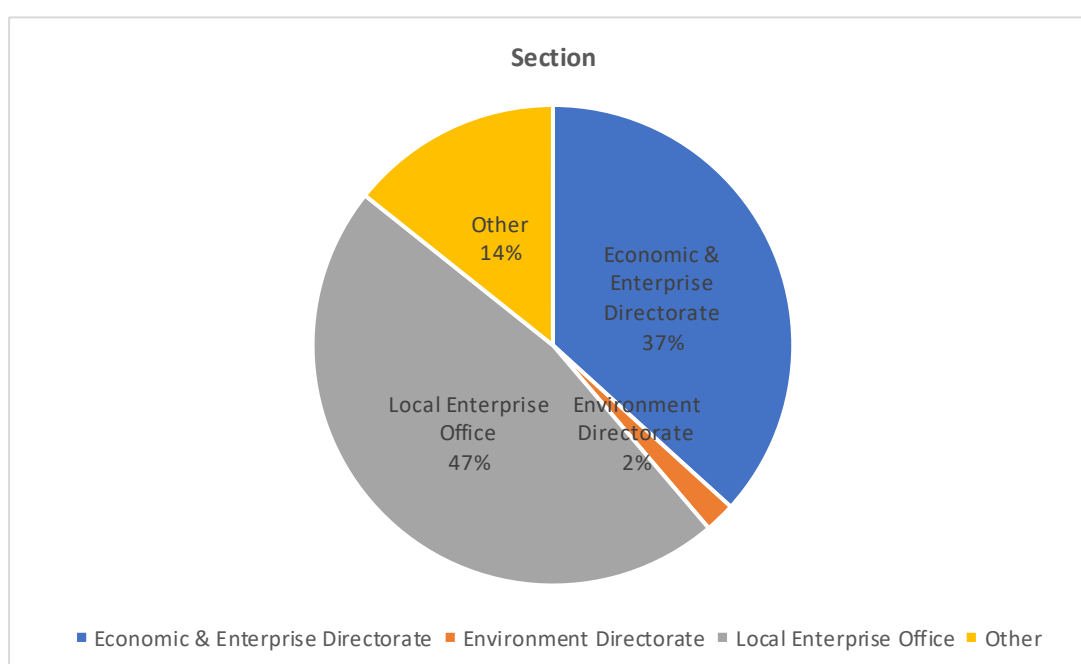
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Director of Service	13	26.5	26.5	26.5
	Economic Development Officer	2	4.1	4.1	30.6
	Head of Enterprise	27	55.1	55.1	85.7
	Other	5	10.2	10.2	95.9
	Senior Economic Development Officer	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
	Senior Enterprise Development Officer	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	



**Q2: If you answered 'other' to the previous question, please describe your level of responsibility**

"Other" respondents to the survey included acting Director of Services and Head of Economic Development and Enterprise and overall the level or response, at a suitably senior and experienced grade, is reflected in the quality and content of the submission.

**Q3: What is your specific section in the Local Authority?**



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Economic & Enterprise Directorate	18	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Environment Directorate	1	2.0	2.0	38.8
	Local Enterprise Office	23	46.9	46.9	85.7
	Other	7	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q4: If you answered 'other' to the previous question, what section do you work for'?**

9 Respondents provided more detail in a subsequent question (Question 3) which asked: 'If you answered 'other' to the previous question, what section do you work for?' The answers provided in this section revealed a significant amount of cross-sectional expertise and included: Both LEO and economic directorate; both Local Enterprise and Economic Directorate; Community, Cultural & Social Development; Environment; [Named LEO] also drives economic

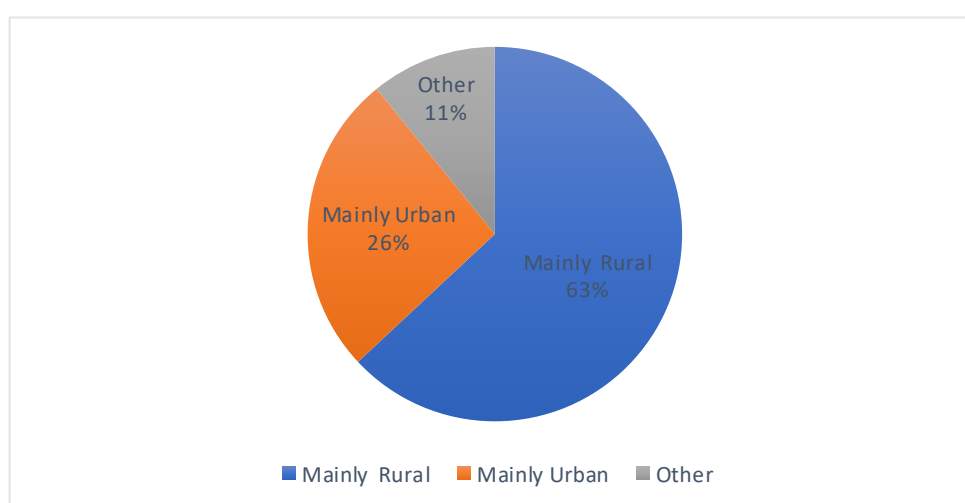




development in the County; Local Enterprise, Economic Development & Special Project Development; Planning, Economic Development & Environment, and Roads.

**Q5: Which of the following best describes the Local Authority you work for: Mainly urban; mainly rural, or other?**

46 responses were received to this question (3 missing) and demonstrated a relatively strong skew to working in rural local authorities amongst respondents.



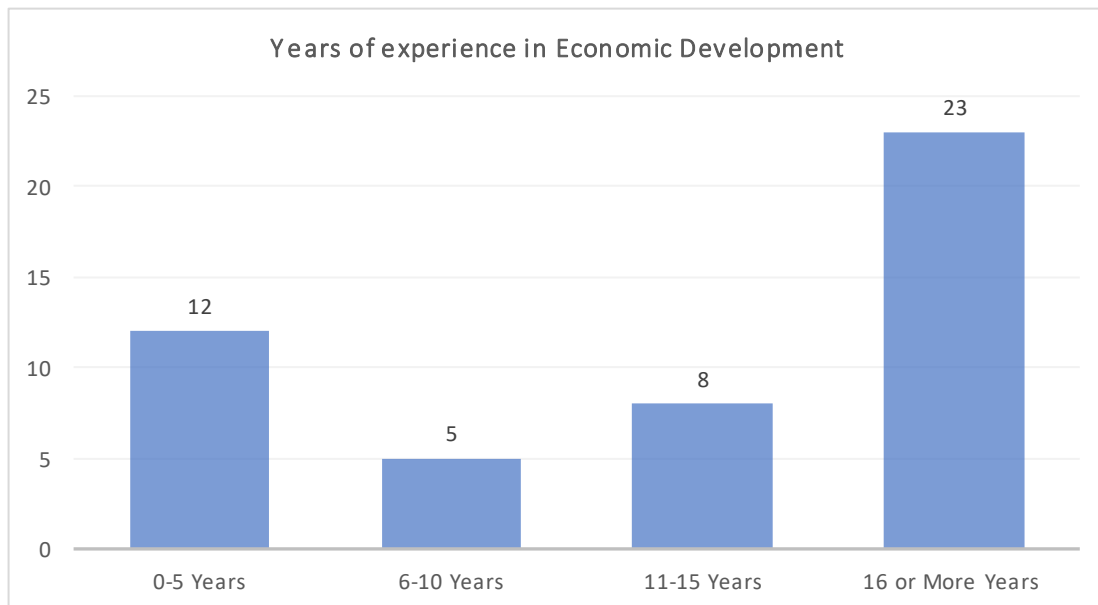
**Q6: If you answered 'other' to the previous question, please detail here**

5 respondents detailed that their local authority serves both urban and rural areas.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	6.1	6.1	6.1
Mainly rural	29	59.2	59.2	65.3
Mainly urban	12	24.5	24.5	89.8
Other	5	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q7: How many years' experience have you in economic development?**

48 respondents (98%) answered this question. The majority of respondents (46.9%) had over 16 years' experience in economic development.



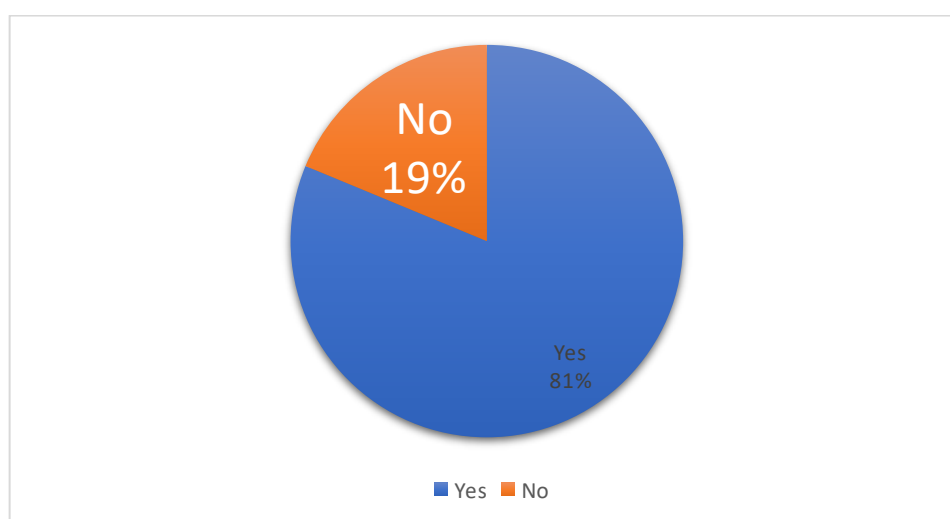
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	0-5	12	24.5	24.5	26.5
	11-15	8	16.3	16.3	42.9
	16 or more	23	46.9	46.9	89.8
	6-10	5	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	



## Awareness of Climate Action and Economic Opportunities

### Q8: Are you aware of the enterprise actions contained within of your Local Authority's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy?

48 respondents (98%) answered this question. Respondents reported very high levels of awareness of enterprise actions in their Authority's adaptation strategies. The vast majority (n = 39, 80%) answered yes to this question. Of the nine respondents who answered 'no', 6 (out of a total 23 respondents in that category) had 16 years of more experience in the area, and 3 (out of a total 12 respondents in that category) had 0-5 years of experience.

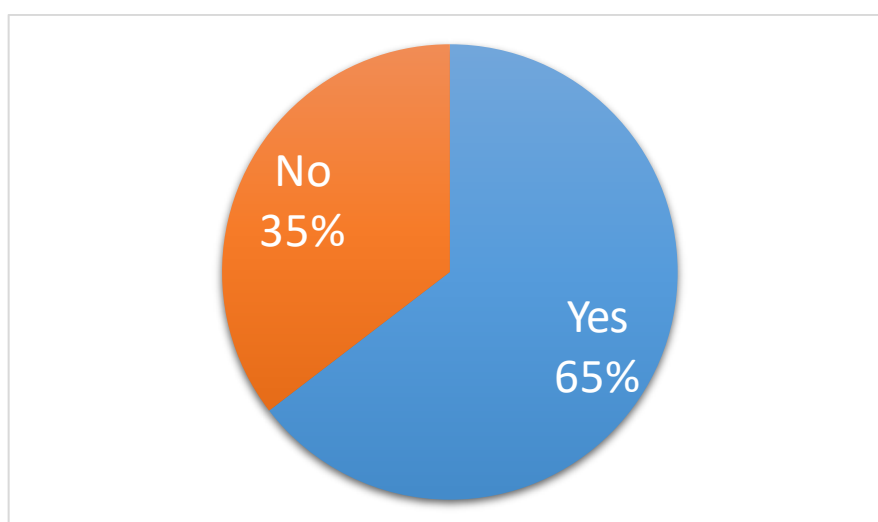


		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	No	9	18.4	18.4	20.4
	Yes	39	79.6	79.6	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	



**Q9: Are you aware of the enterprise actions contained within the local authority Climate Action Charter?**

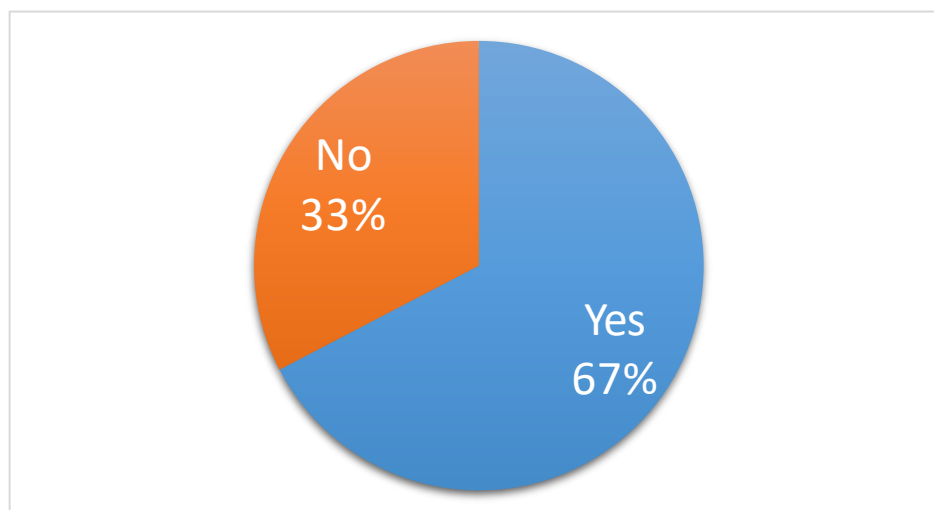
48 respondents (98%) answered this question. Although awareness levels of enterprise actions with the Climate Action Charters were high, they were noticeably lower than the enterprise actions in their Local Authority's Climate Change Adaptation Strategies. 31 (63%) were aware of enterprise actions in their Climate Action Charters, compared with 17 (35%) who weren't. 50% of the 12 respondents with 0-5 years' experience in the field of enterprise development, and 39% of the 23 respondents with 16 or more years' experience reported not being aware of enterprise actions in the Climate Action Charter.



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
No	17	34.7	34.7	36.7
Yes	31	63.3	63.3	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q10: Are you aware of any economic opportunities that have recently emerged in your area due to climate action policy?**

All respondents ( $n=49$ ) answered this question. 33% ( $n=16$ ) reported not being aware of recent economic opportunities that have emerged in recent times in their area as a result of climate action policy. One third of respondents ( $n=4$ ) in the 0-5 years of experience in economic development category reported no awareness, and 44% of respondents reported the same lack of awareness.



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	16	32.7	32.7	32.7
	Yes	33	67.3	67.3	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q11: If you answered yes to the previous question, please outline these below:**

In their answers to question 10, 25 of the 33 respondents who answered yes to the previous question, provided details of the activities that they have been involved in to create economic opportunities.

An extensive range of information about the recent economic opportunities that were engaged with, and it was clear that many of the respondents were engaged in more than one area.

These areas included:

*Partnerships and Hubs* for establishing networks, centres of excellence and incubation centres or partnerships with third level educational bodies on projects. These partnerships and hubs facilitated the growth of low carbon businesses and research and development in areas such as energy efficiency, construction and the local bioeconomy.

*Product and process innovation* such as supporting the develop of new biomaterials for product nets in the marine sector or greening *existing business activities through developing* new processes and tools for costing retrofits, assisting enterprises calculate carbon savings, supporting local food production, expanding the green tourism sector (such as the development



of greenways and businesses which can exist along and *for* them), supporting sustainable forestry and promoting circular economy initiatives. Many respondents reported green initiatives which supported sustainability in the agri-tech sector, assisting the greening of manufacturing and promoting efficient usage of energy. Respondents noted the range of opportunities that have emerged from the demand for more environmentally friendly products and the importance of creating knowledge about models such as the circular economy.

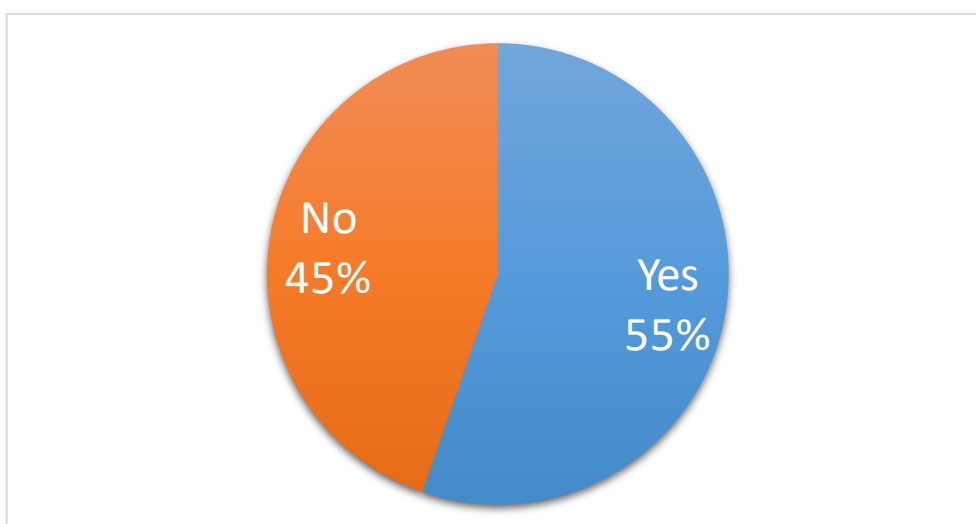
*Increasing engagement of LEOs and Local Authorities in Climate Action.* Respondents noted that securing funding for Climate Action schemes from central government departments helped them to provide leadership and example to local enterprise through, for example, refurbishment projects that lead to higher levels of energy efficiency and decarbonisation, reducing air miles and engaging in environmental and climate change awareness programmes.

*Infrastructural projects.* Respondents reported that significant economic gains were possible by supporting the development of infrastructure which green offshore and onshore energy, tourism, construction and retrofitting. Particular note was made of the potential for *Just Transitions* funding to roll out business projects in a range of areas.

## Awareness of Policy and Funding for Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

**Q12: Are you aware of any policy or funding instruments, at EU, National or local levels, that will result in local economic opportunities arising from climate action?**

47 respondents (96%) answered this question. 21 (43%) answered no; 26 (53%) answered yes. Although over half responded positively, this is a much lower level of awareness than reported in relation to local climate action strategies.



**Q13: If you answered yes to the previous question, please list these:**

Respondents who answered yes to the previous question were asked to list the policy or funding instruments that they were aware of, and 23 respondents offered examples which are categorized below as follows:



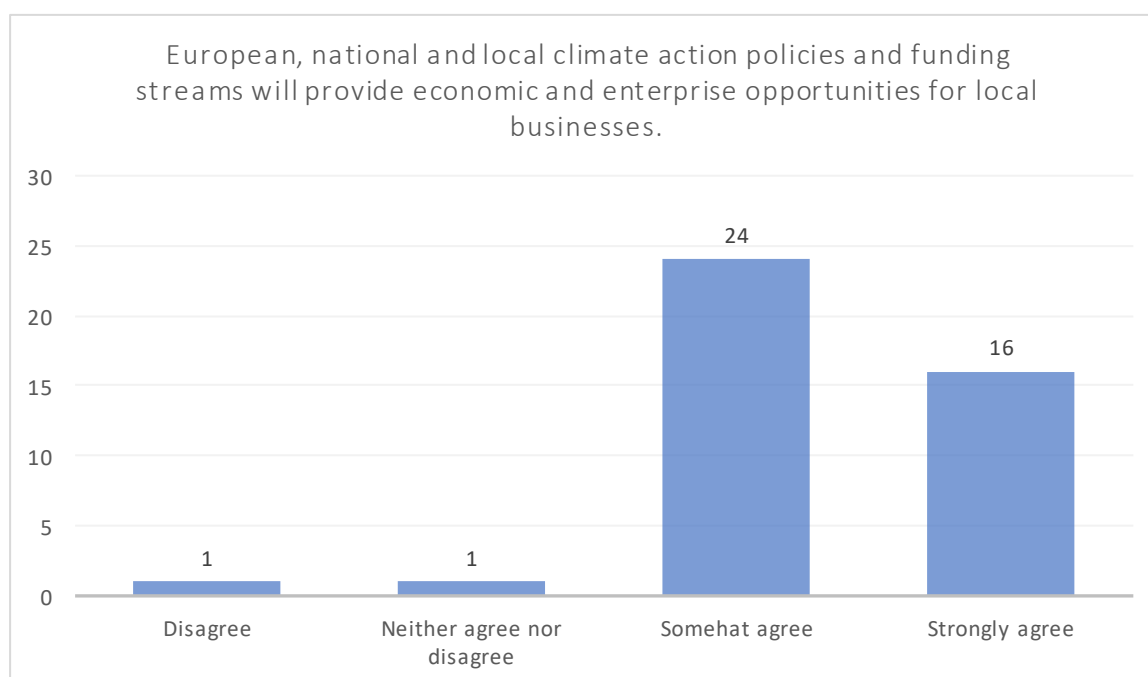
**European Initiatives:** The directives and initiatives encapsulated within the European Green Deal, The Next Generation EU Recovery fund, The inclusion of bio-based industry consortia within the EU, Net Zero Energy Building Standards, MegaAWE Interreg (North West Europe project to develop airborne wind energy), IDEAS (A Horizon 2020 project to develop novel building integration designs for energy efficient built environments).

**National Initiatives:** The national Climate Action Plan, The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020*, The Climate Action Fund, DTTAs funding for Climate Change projects, The EPAs Circular Economy Research Fund, SEAI schemes, the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, The Bioeconomy National Policy Statement.

**Regional and Local Initiatives:** The Just Transition mechanism, Lean/Green Programmes for Micro-Business, Louth County Council Energy Assessors scheme for enterprise, As above, awareness ranged from very general understandings of the EU Green Deal to quite specific initiatives, which might demonstrate that understanding of the range of opportunities to engage business in climate action is rich but dispersed across a number of fields. It was interesting to note that only one respondent mentioned the Next Generation EU Recovery Fund.

**Q14: Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: European, national and local climate action policies and funding streams will provide economic and enterprise opportunities for local businesses.**

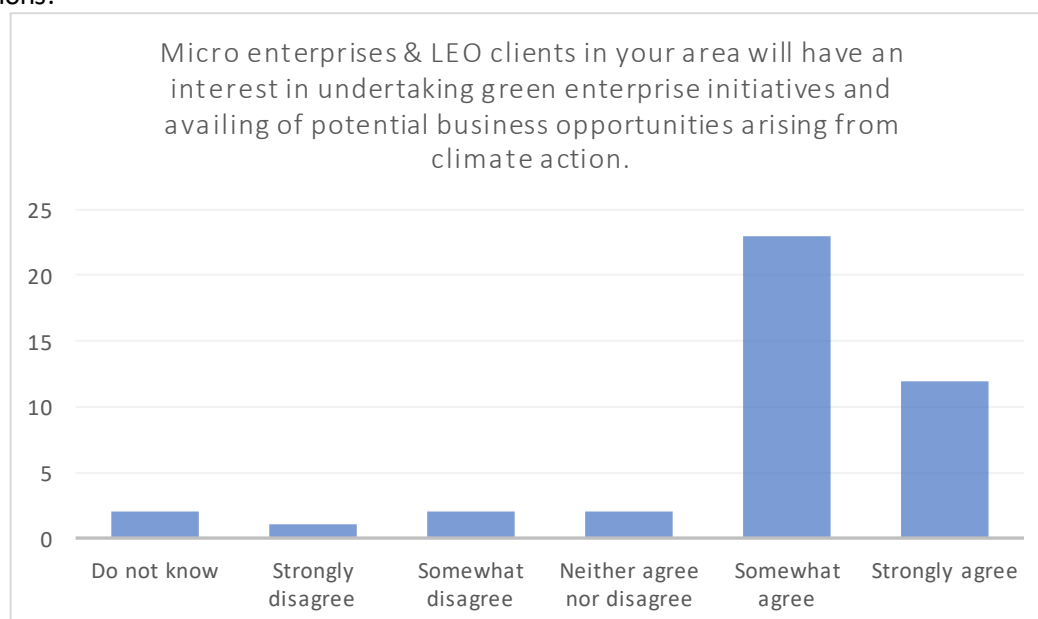
42 respondents (86%) answered this question. There was a strong skew to agreement with this statement as 95% ( $n = 40$ ) of the respondents who answered the question indicated that they either somewhat or strongly agreed with it.





**Q15: Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area will have an interest in undertaking green enterprise initiatives and availing of potential business opportunities arising from climate action.**

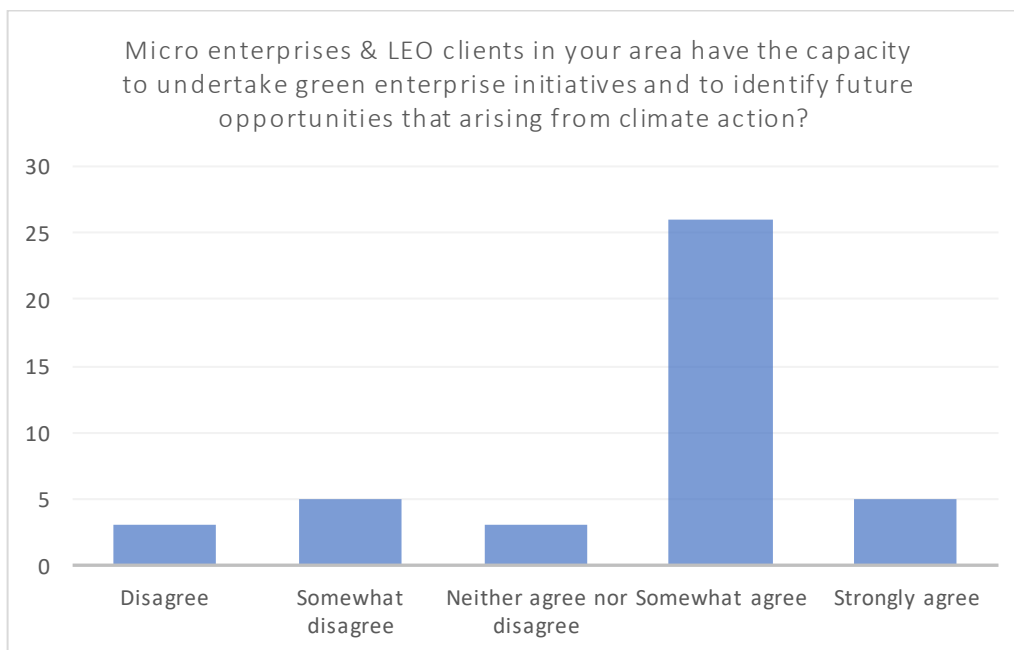
42 respondents (86%) answered this question. Although here was another skew to agreement with this statement (83%,  $n = 40$ , of the respondents who answered the question indicated that they either somewhat or strongly agreed with it), this was less pronounced than in the previous sections.



**Q16: Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area have the capacity to undertake green enterprise initiatives and to identify future opportunities that arising from climate action?**

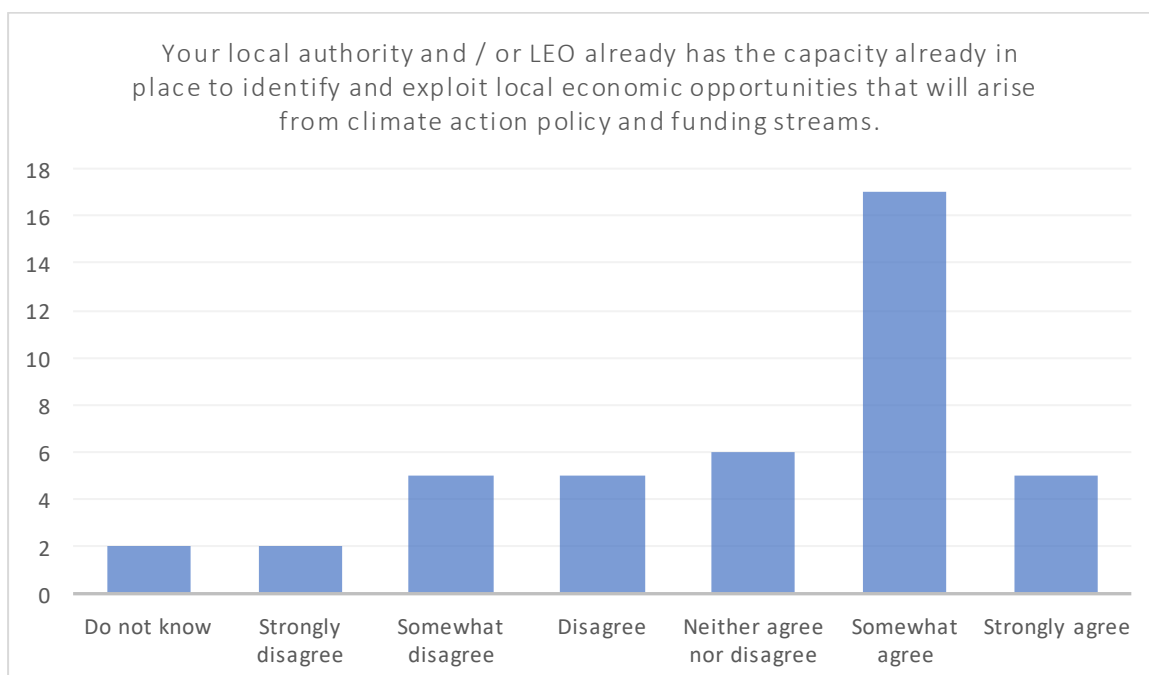
42 respondents (86%) answered this question. Answers generally positive skew towards agreement, but in terms of client capacity to engage with green enterprise initiatives, it was lower again than in the previous two questions with 74% ( $n = 31$ ), of the respondents who answered the question indicating agreement with it.





**Q17: Your local authority and / or LEO already has the capacity already in place to identify and exploit local economic opportunities that will arise from climate action policy and funding streams.**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. As with the questions above, the skew of the questions continued to be positive, but answers to this question had the lowest level of agreement; 52% ( $n=22$ ) either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement.



**Q18: Asked respondents who agreed with the statement to explain their answers.**



Some respondents mentioned that they had received training in relation to the circular economy, business greening, pilot schemes and sector specific areas (such as the construction sector). Other reported that their authorities had established centres of excellence or participated in projects with a focus on assisting businesses transition to low-carbon models. Some respondents noted that they had access to experts in the area, and others that it would be a benefit to have this access.

Although there are climate action-oriented schemes in development at the moment, some respondents suggested that additional resources will be required to assist existing staff to assist economic development, as there is evidence of significant 'stretch at the moment'. One respondent urged the creation of a dedicated function that would address strategic opportunities with non-standard funding. Others commented that national policy and senior level commitments in local authorities play a strong role in determining what will be supported at local level.

**Q19: Asked respondents who disagreed to explain their answers.**

With the exception of one response that the creation of economic opportunities through climate change was not seen as a priority, twelve other respondents were very clear that there is a strong need to create expertise in this area through resourcing, education and training, information and examples of how local authorities and LEOs can demonstrate how economic opportunities can be created through engaging with climate action.



## Employment and Job Creation Opportunities from Climate Action

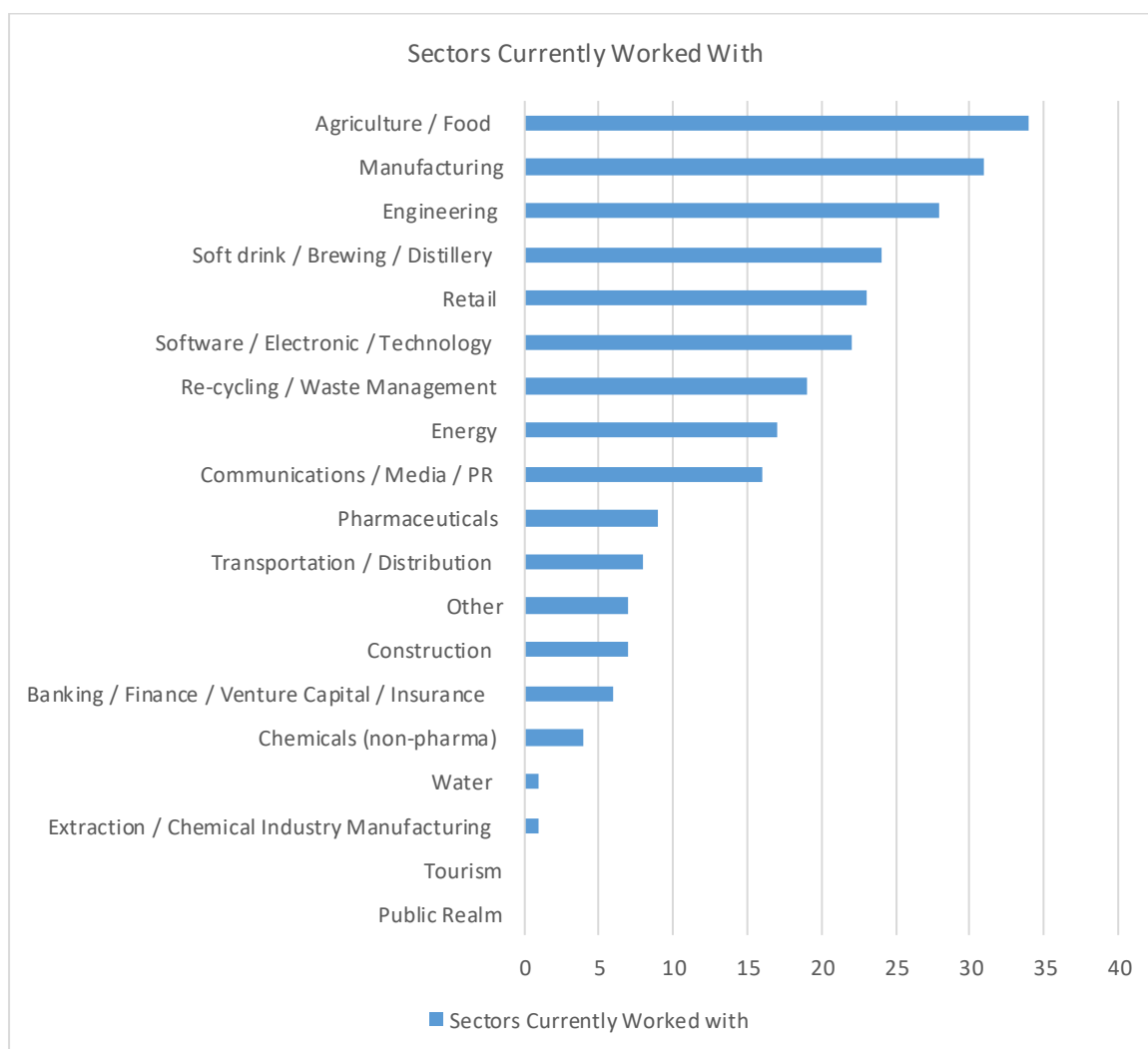
**Q20: Please rank the following sectors which you see as having the most potential for job creation, arising from climate action policies and initiatives, in the short to medium term.**

32 respondents answered this question. As rankings run from 1 for the most popular to 19 for the least, lower mean scores for each of sectors below indicate a higher range of popularity. The highest ranked mean scores for each sector were Energy (2.75), Agriculture / Food (4.38), Construction (5.47), Engineering (5.94) and Public Realm (6.19).

Rank	Sector	Mean Ranking Score
1	Energy	2.75
2	Agriculture / Food	4.38
3	Construction	5.47
4	Engineering	5.94
5	Public Realm	6.19
6	Manufacturing	7.22
7	Chemicals (non-pharma)	8.75
8	Soft drink / Brewing / Distillery	10.53
9	Banking / Finance / Venture Capital / Insurance	10.88
9	Extraction / Chemical Industry Manufacturing	10.88
10	Communications / Media / PR	11.16
10	Water	11.16
11	Other	11.29
12	Software / Electronic / Technology	11.72
13	Pharmaceuticals	12.16
14	Retail	13.63
14	Tourism	13.63
18	Re-cycling / Waste Management	13.91
19	Transportation	18.93

**Q21: Which of the following sectors do you currently work directly with to assist in the development and promotion of local enterprise through your local authority or Local Enterprise Office?**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. The sectors which most respondents worked with most were Agriculture / Food (n= 34), Manufacturing (n= 31) and Engineering (n= 28).



**Q22: Asked respondents who responded with ‘other’ to identify these areas.**

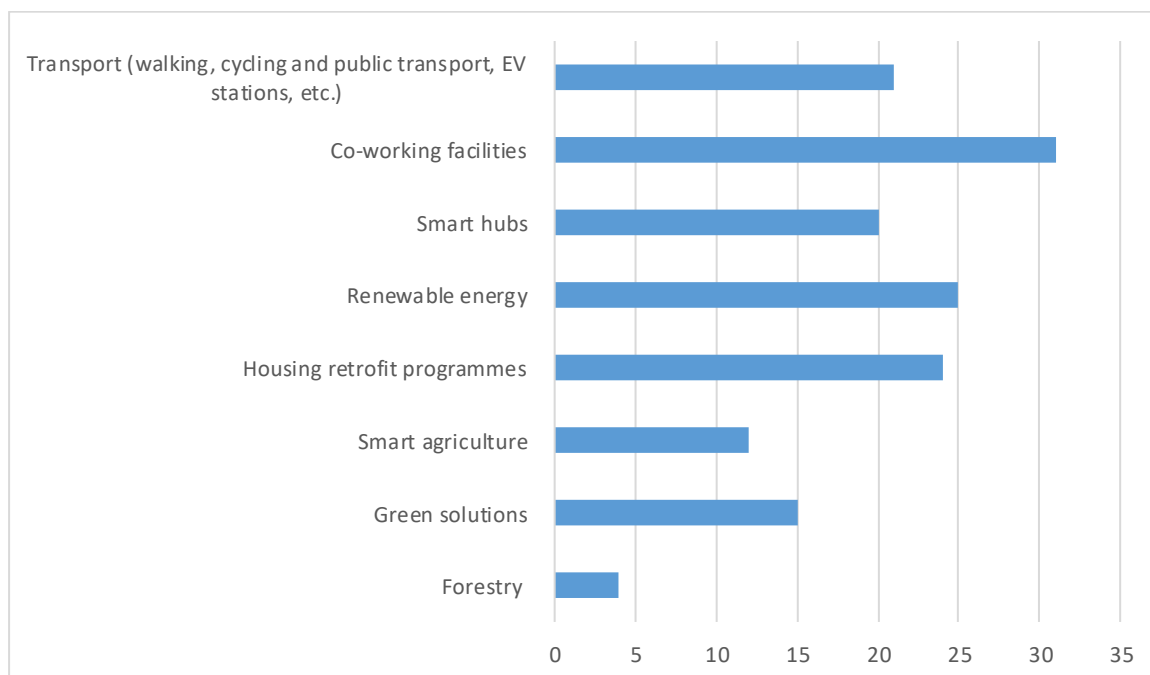
The answers provided included: ‘All of the above’; artisan craft and food; creative industries (such as animation, film and graphics); general ‘Green Your Business’ seminars for micro enterprises regardless of sector, hospitality and tourism [note that this was an option on the questionnaire], local government and services to business.

Although there are variations in the amount of responses collected for questions below, some interesting potential areas may be worthy of further exploration. For example, respondents saw the energy sector as having the most potential for future job creation from Climate Change, but 17 respondents worked with enterprise (compared with 34 who worked with clients in the Agri-Food sector). This may be due to the stage of the development of the sustainable energy field in Ireland at a local level or other factors may be at play. Other notable sectors where there was a mismatch between current engagement and beliefs about future job creation from climate action were the Public Realm and Tourism sectors. Future research with local enterprise and entrepreneurs is required to add additional clarity to these findings.



**Q23: Are you aware of any particular climate action related economic initiatives in the following areas in your county or region?**

38 respondents (n= 79%) answered this question. The area in which most awareness of climate action related economic initiatives existed was co-working facilities (n= 31). Respondents noted least awareness of initiatives in the area of forestry.



**Q24: If you have answered 'other' to the previous section, or are aware of any other initiatives, please give more detail below:**

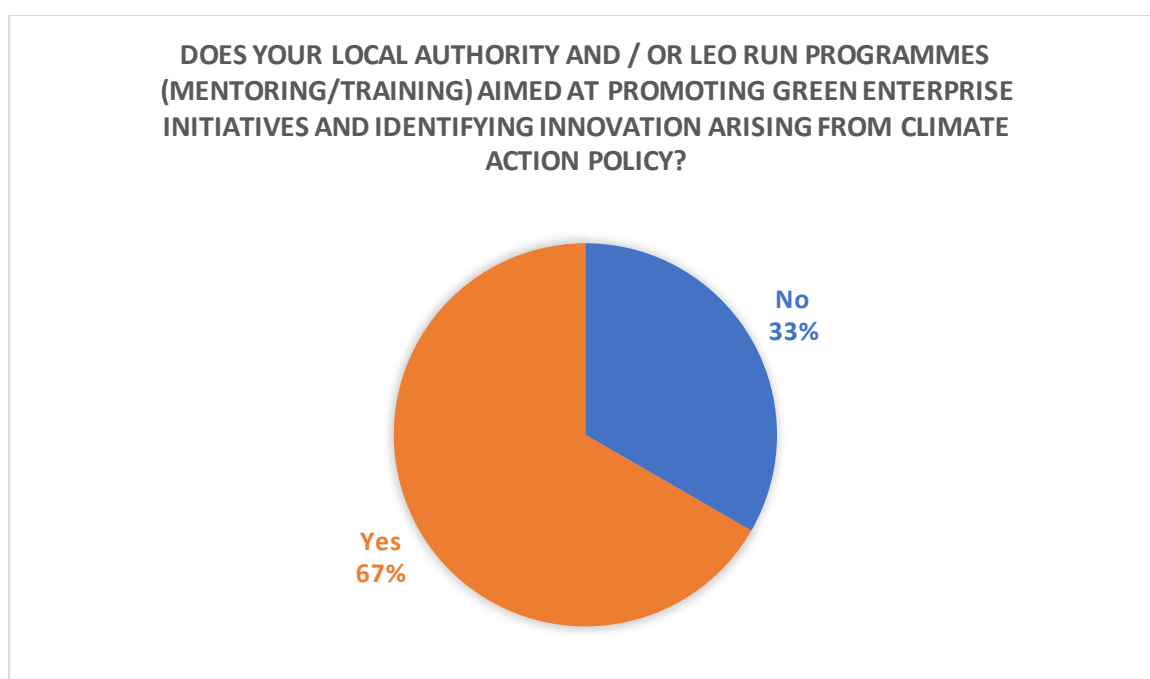
Two respondents provided additional information about initiatives: the Bord na Mona Brown to Green strategy and biomass, and the development of four co-working / digital hubs in Waterford.



## Current Activities in Creating Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

**Q25: Does your local authority and / or LEO run programmes (mentoring/training) aimed at promoting green enterprise initiatives and identifying innovation arising from climate action policy?**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. 14 (33%) responded no, and 28 (66%) with yes.



**Q26: If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please outline what programmes you run in the space below:**

In their answers to question 35 respondents who answered yes to the previous question outlined what these were. The largest number (n= 12) mentioned *pilot programmes* for low-carbon cost-reduction or circular economy training, but the majority mentioned the planned 'Green for Micro' programme. Other programmes included green partnerships at a regional level with other local authorities (and in one case with an Institute of Technology). Two mentioned involvement in the Tullamore conference on 'Economic Opportunities from Climate Change' and others mentioned that initiatives were in a planning stage but had been delayed due to Covid 19 restrictions.

**Q27: Will the creation of innovative solutions to climate change consist of: the invention of new products, services and/or processes; 'tweaking' existing practice, or; both.**

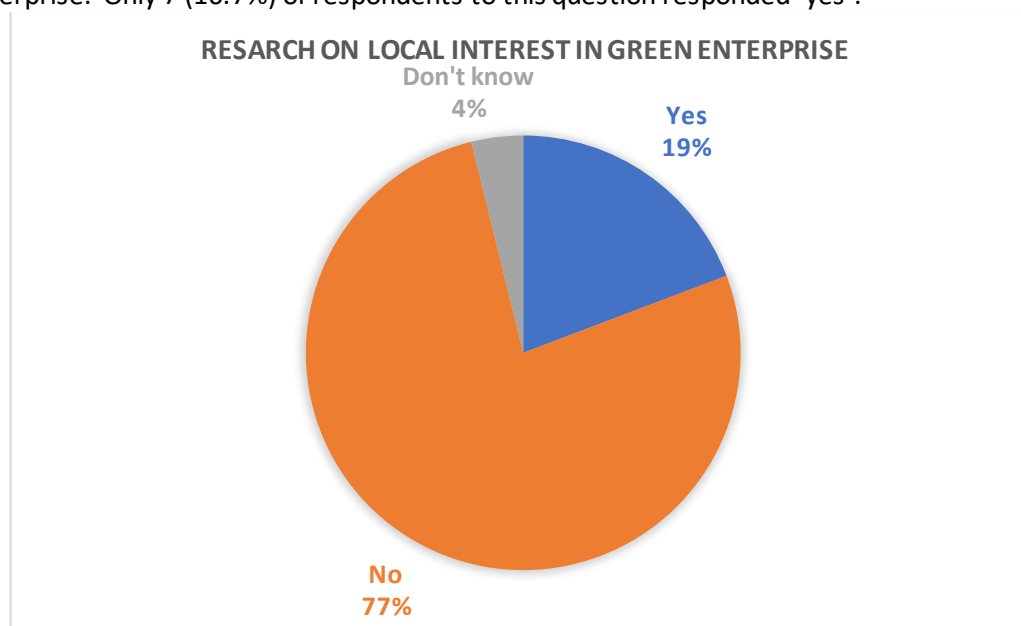
42 respondents (86%) answered this question. The vast majority, 37 (88% of respondents to this question) answered 'both'. 4 (9.5%) identified the 'tweaking' of existing practice and 1 (2.3%) felt that it would consist of the invention of new products, services and/or processes.

**Q28: Has your office conducted research on local interest in green enterprise?**

41 respondents (n= 83.6%) answered this question.



There was a marked lack of research (or awareness of research) on local interest in green enterprise. Only 7 (16.7%) of respondents to this question responded 'yes'.



**Q29: Asked respondents who had answered yes to the previous question to describe the research they had conducted.**

Although the response rate to question 37 was low, the LEOs who reported that they had conducted research, demonstrated a variety of approaches including green auditing, business discovery, surveys, feasibility testing etc. These answers are listed in Table 1 below.

Local Interest in Green Enterprise
Currently engaged with c 80 businesses to ascertain their interest
Green programme involved a one-to-one audit for 32 enterprises to identify maximum green solutions that might be affordable and delivery efficiencies and cost savings
In preparation for a centre of excellence in sustainable energy for RRDF funding in [named town]
Included in client questionnaires, pilot Going for Green Initiative
Incorporated Green response in our 2020 employment survey - relatively low level of interest in the response with some 30 firms out of 242 expressing an interest.
[Named] County Council Road section have developed a Low Energy Bound Reclaimed Asphalt Product as an alternative to conventional hot asphalt products. This will be further advanced in 2021.
Research in progress with regard to sustainable business practices in [named town]

**Table 1: Research on Local Interest in Green Enterprise**



**Q30: Has your office facilitated green entrepreneurs or innovators who have attempted to develop sustainable innovations or new products arising from climate action policy?**

41 respondents (83.6%) answered this question. 25 of the respondents who answered this question (61%) indicated that they had facilitated green entrepreneurs or innovators; 16 (39%) reported that they had not.

**Q40: Asked respondents who had answered ‘yes’ to the previous question to provide more detail.**

21 respondents (43%) provided an answer to this question. It is clear from the answers in Table 2 that an extensive range of mentoring and support have been offered that ranges from assisting on funding applications, mentoring and the utilization of innovation vouchers, etc.





<b>LEO facilitation of Green Entrepreneurship and Innovation</b>
A number of clients of the LEO have submitted projects in the last two years
As part of a EU programme we supported a sustainable development action planning project
Assisted local food festival to gain green credentials accreditation
Business are always considering new opportunities and product service development is part of this. This can comprise technical solutions e.g. reduced energy shop display lights, chimney venting systems, pollution control systems, energy efficiency, etc.
Collaborated with green entrepreneur in respect of EPA funding application for a circular economy initiative (unsuccessful)
Development of a retrofit evaluation tool; A rainwater harvesting business.
Energy efficiency eg. Solar
Exploring waste management options and sustainable production
Feasibility Study Grants, Mentoring, Priming and Business Expansion Grants
Funding to a tech business to redesign transportation/delivery routes to reduce carbon footprint of fleet
Grant assisted people auditing green practices;
Mentoring / grants
Not certain-they may have
Over the years we have funded and provided other supports to a reasonable number of businesses that are based upon eco-innovations and new products and services arising from climate change
Over the years, provided feasibility studies and other supports to ideas with potential. See also response to earlier question on current programme.
Programmes run through the LEO office, assisted with funding opportunities and applications
Provided Feasibility Studies to entrepreneurs wanting to create more sustainable products or services to the market e.g a structure that would allow for reusable cups to be cleaned hygienically at filling stations
Providing mentoring
Reclaimed Asphalt Pilot Scheme
The assumption in the question is that there are opportunities which is still unproven.
via MODOS or innovation vouchers

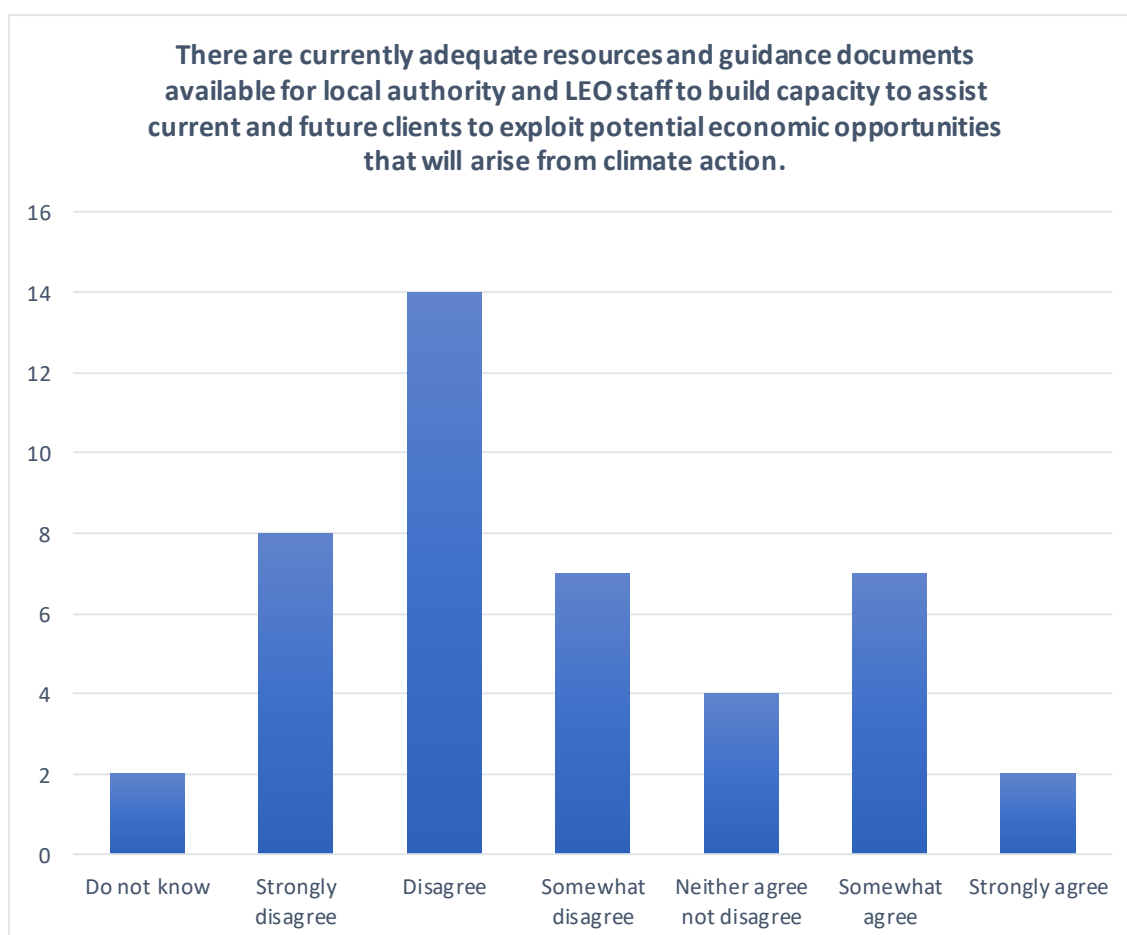
**Table 2: LEO Facilitation of Green Entrepreneurship**



## Resources and Guidance on Economic Opportunities and Climate Action

**Q32: There are currently adequate resources and guidance documents available for local authority and LEO staff to build capacity to assist current and future clients to exploit potential economic opportunities that will arise from climate action.**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. Although the answers were mixed, there was a general negative skew to the answers with 29 (69% of answers for this question) indicating some form of disagreement with the statement.



**Q33: Asked 'If you answered *agree* above, to what resources and guidance documents does your local authority and / or LEO have access to?'**

Only four responses were provided to this question. One responded that resources were provided from Enterprise Ireland, and another replied 'need to check out further'. One wrote that a senior member of their staff in an environment unit is 'part of the information stream on climate action and strategies for decarbonisation'. Finally, one respondent remarked on their capacity to run training programmes and events and provide mentoring and funding where possible. However, they also stated 'LEOs/LAs and businesses need support funding to match grant assistance'.



**Q34: Asked 'If you answered *don't know or disagree* above, what in your opinion are the key resources required to build capacity in your local authority and / or LEO to assist your current and future clients to exploit potential economic opportunities that will arise from climate action?'**

The answers are outlined in Table 3 below. It is clear that from the 26 responses provided that there is a clear need for training, expertise and examples of best practice are required.



### **Future actions required to assist LEOs help clients build capacity to create economic opportunities from Climate Action**

A better understanding of policy, its application, how to interface that with prospective opportunities and aligning resources with that is required for Council & LEO staff
Additional resources & expertise in the area
capacity and knowledge not there
Case studies on successful projects, training for staff in LA to assist clients to access economic opportunities
Definitions of terminology, wider communication, training/networking to share best practice and exemplar schemes, more & varied funding initiatives, multi-annual funding programmes focusing on key sectors
Funding & specific funding for region specific opportunities
Further training for LEO staff in particular to understand the key trends coming down the line for businesses, so they can better identify and evaluate strong business propositions in this area for further funding.
Generally refer to online resources when researching particular issues. Do not have the capacity internally to build specialist climate team in the LEO/Council does have a climate office but little by way of supporting our business engagement
Greater knowledge, resources (human and financial).
Induction to green & Climate action, terminology, concepts training
LEO staff need to become familiar on Green agenda. EI to brief staff.
More focus on green proofing every planned action or intervention
Need for upskilling and additional specialists
Need more training
No information or guidance within Local Authorities on Climate Action Policy or strategy going forward. Need to ensure consultation with Enterprise Ireland to avoid duplication of efforts in the delivery of enterprise supports in this area.
Not seen as a priority
Possibly a financial incentive scheme. tax breaks, etc.
Resources required include expertise in the area, appropriate training for staff, access to information on sectoral opportunities in climate action, access to an information resource and relevant contacts in a variety of sectors.
simple guide to resources available online - guidance/training for those staff dealing with businesses..
Staff induction on the topic of 'green'/climate action. LEO staff are dealing with a wide range of businesses and do not have a specialism with climate action given the competing volumes of work. Staff training would be very welcome and beneficial
Staff Training & Briefing
Staff training required and role out of Enterprise Ireland Green Lean Start through LEO office.
Technical expertise

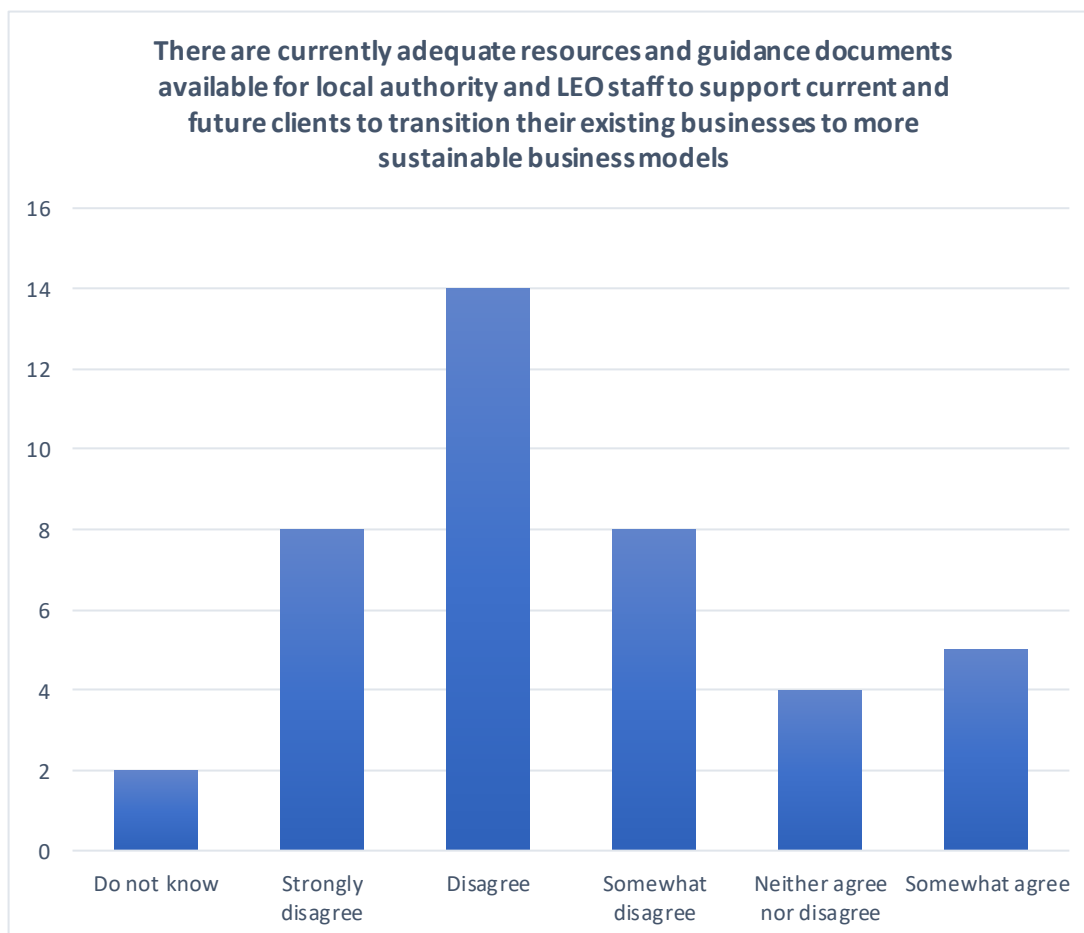


The "potential economic opportunities" need to be clearly identified and must be of more substance than public sector wish lists or political party policies. Ultimately the market will decide if there are any real opportunities and when it does it is also most likely that it will be the larger firms with the technological and financial resources that will be positioned to avail of these e.g. Dutch and Danish firms in the wind sector
There are currently no mentors in the Dublin LEO pool with an expertise in business sustainability. we also need funding to develop a green grant or voucher
Training
Training and education of LEO staff to better assist enterprises. Also upskilling of dedicated mentors.
Training regimes; examples of best practice

**Table 3: Future actions required to assist LEOs help clients build capacity to create economic opportunities from Climate Action**

**Q35: There are currently adequate resources and guidance documents available for local authority and LEO staff to support current and future clients to transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services.**

41 respondents (n= 83.6%) answered this question. There was an even higher level of disagreement with this statement than the previous one. 73% of respondents to this question (n= 30) reported some form of disagreement with this statement, and only a minor level of agreement (5 responses report that they 'somewhat agreed with the statement'.



**Q36: Asked ‘If you answered *agree* above, to what resources and guidance documents does your local authority and / or LEO have access to?’.**

Two of the respondents indicated that their answer was the same in question 41, but three reported that training and networks are essential resources for themselves. One replied these resources are in development. A final comment noted that additional supports and resources will be essential if LEOs are to deliver on their potential in this area: ‘Research indicates that budget lines for LEOs will prioritise transition to low carbon/digital future. However, to enable businesses leverage the funding and resources, support funding will be required to bridge the gap between budgets actual cost of transition’.

**Q37: Asked ‘If you answered *don’t know or disagree* above, are the key resources required to support your work in assisting your current and future clients transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services?’**

The answers to this question are reported below, and four of these refer to the answers already given in 46, and the cast majority reiterate the need for training for LEO staff in this area.



<b>Resources and Guidance Required by LEOs to support current and future clients transition their business</b>
Additional resources & expertise in the area
Again, a better understanding on options for business
An indication of the wider picture from a Local Authority perspective as to what kind of resources can be made available. The LEOs are funded by Enterprise Ireland in terms of service delivery so the enterprise supports for those businesses will be provided in terms of, for example, LEAN for Green programmes and consultancy. However, what support and incentives will be available on the infrastructural side from the Local Authorities?
Business development skills
Case studies, testimonials & links with R&D third level
Difficult to generate engagement from a number of enterprises
Financial incentives -and rated as a priority !!
I imagine there are, but not certain
LEO Staff have not had access to training and key resources to support current and future clients at present. However plans are in place to develop EI / LEO resources and will also collaborate more closely with LA
Not aware of any guidance documents and/or training made available to LEO staff on this issue
same as above
Same as above
same response as no. 20 above.
See previous answers
Staff training is needed across the board to support a change of philosophy
Staff training requirements
Structures needs to put in place to
The 'Green for Micro' Business Programme needs to be 'packaged' so it can be promoted in concise form to small businesses
training
Training for staff and Financial incentives for companies

**Table 4: Resources and Guidance Required by LEOs to support current and future clients transition their business**



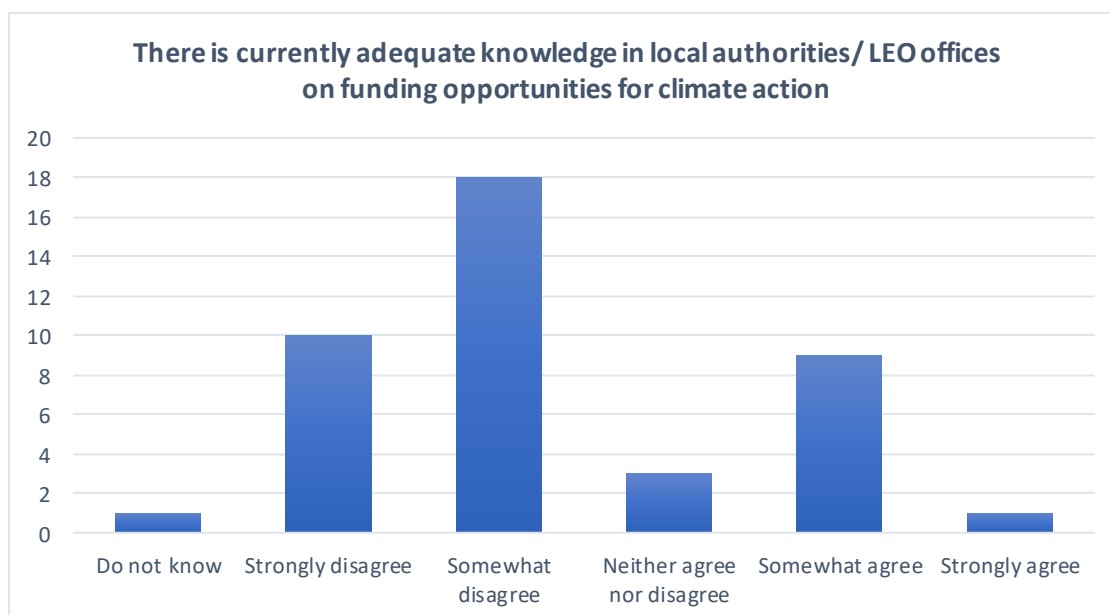
## Knowledge of Funding for Economic Opportunities from Climate Action

### Q38: Have you received guidance on making applications for funds that support Green Enterprise?

40 respondents (n= 81.6%) answered this question. The majority (n= 37) had not received guidance on applying for Green Enterprise funding. Only 3 had received guidance.

### Q39: There is currently adequate knowledge in local authorities/ LEO offices on funding opportunities for climate action and enterprise support for current and future clients to transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services.

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. Agreement with this statement tended towards negativity. 28 (66.6% of respondents to the question) expressed general levels of agreement.







## Services Provided to Local Business

### **Q40: Have you facilitated local business to attend awareness raising/training sessions on the subject of climate funding for business?**

40 respondents (81.6%) answered this question. 27 (67.5% of respondents to this question) had not facilitated training or awareness raising on climate funding for local businesses; 13 (32.5%) had).

### **Q41: Asked respondents who answered yes to provide more details.**

Two mentioned the Modos programme (which is a training initiative for micro to small business from Dublin City Council and the Waste Management Plan<sup>1</sup>). Others responded that they had provided training or briefings on the topic. See Table 6 for all answers.

#### **Facilitation of local business to attend awareness raising/training sessions on the subject of climate funding for business**

in cooperation with Dublin City - Modus Program
Initial breakfast green for micro seminar
LEO breakfast briefing
Lower Carbon Lower Cost Pilot initiative; running seminars in conjunction with SEAI over the years
Part of regional Green for Micro programme
Ran some seminars however attendance was exceptionally poor.
Same as above
Through our LEAN Programmes where one to one support is provided, also mentoring advice via MODOS network
We are running them (subject to Covid) - have also provided small grants to businesses to attend events where the green agenda featured.
We promote activities that we become aware of to our client base and mailing lists

**Table 6: Facilitation of local business to attend awareness raising/training sessions on the subject of climate funding for business**

### **Q42: Have you issued such funds to local business?**

40 respondents (81.6%) answered this question. 34 (85% of respondents to this question) had not issued these funds to local businesses; 6 (15%, had).

### **Q43: If you answered yes above, please give a brief description:**

A small number (4) provided detail on this in question 52: 20 Midland businesses currently on Green training programme and having their businesses audited; If an innovative business

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Training-Events/Management-Development/Modos-Circular-Economy.html>



application for funding is received, it can be grant aided under business grant supports; MODOS voucher scheme will launch in Jan/Feb 2021, and small retrofit grants.

**Q39: In your opinion, what actions need to be put in place to ensure local enterprises are facilitated to access such funding?**

31 respondents (63% of respondents) answered this question. Of these the key actions identified included a dedicated office or a combined suite of measures; access to expertise, advice, mentoring and support; funding for both LEOs and their clients to engage in climate action; awareness training on climate action and associated funding; additional staff.


**Actions identified to ensure local enterprises are facilitated to access such funding**

A regional Climate Change office
A suite of business supports measures dealing with climate change needs to be packaged and promoted to small businesses. The LEOs can play a key role in this respect
Access to expertise - to provide training and mentoring to clients and staff
Advisory and support services, ease of access to funding and adequate funding
An initial awareness of the Climate Funding (if any) that is available and to whom is it targeted towards and for what purpose ?
An understanding of availability and fit
As above staff training
Awareness building, information seminars, access to information/publications and advice/guidance, mentoring, deployment of specialist expertise into the LEOs.
Awareness raising, mentoring
Awareness; business mentoring; technical assistance
Briefing sessions
Capacity building workshops, green toolkit for SME's
Communications strategy to raise awareness of funding, training & increased awareness of funding with LA/LEO staff, additional staff dedicated to climate action economic development
Dedicated resourced business programme with incentives
Designated extra staff, currently we have limited staff to deal with this area
First we need to be clear on what the funds are and to whom they are targeted. Will then need very clear eligibility guidelines and routes to the funds. Once we know what these are then we would be in a better position to see how we can facilitate access to the funds for the relevant enterprises.
for a period of time, an increased amount of matched funding so businesses can see the benefit of such investments...50%-50% split might not encourage too many businesses to avail of such support
Greater awareness raising, fundamentally more resources (human and financial) required in the LEOs. Also needs to be greater clarity as to who is doing what/role of SEAI.
Greater capacity building for LA staff and awareness for enterprise
Incentives to encourage participation
Information pack and link to central Climate Action resource
Information Sessions, Mentoring & Best Practice Sharing
Information, advice, guidance, and training. Information is key at stage 1 and presented in such a way that businesses can see how they can make a real difference
Key is information
Manpower, education of staff and adequate national incentives
mentoring and training
More awareness and possibly a circular / Ezine for climate to circulate to the sustainability manager in LAs
More training and being made aware of incentives



Raise awareness and upskill business owners.
Recruitment of specialists and upskilling of existing employees
there is very little funding available for companies who want to transition to zero carbon and/or more sustainable practices

**Table 7: Actions identified to ensure local enterprises are facilitated to access such funding**

## Training for Climate Action

**Q45: In your view is there a need for specific training for LEO/ Economic development staff on climate action?**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question. The response was very positive with 40 (95% of respondents to this question answering 'yes' and only 2 responding 'no'.

**Q46: Asked respondents who answered to list 3 topics in the space that could usefully be included in such training.**

32 respondents (65%) answered this question and a range of potential topics were returned. These might be categorized into three areas: Awareness of Climate Action policy and its implications for local business; funding and support instruments and opportunities, and practical approaches to greening businesses. See Table 8 below for all answers.



### Topics Identified for Inclusion in Climate Action Training

1. Helping businesses identify opportunities in climate action 2. Variety of carbon saving/climate measures and their impact on a businesses' bottom line 3. Funding measures available to businesses which wish to pursue changes to their business practices
1. Key business Sectors that will be most impacted by Climate Change, diagnostic tools and funding supports to tackle challenges. 2. Business opportunities by key sectors together with supporting funding options and 3 Training / Retraining of business owners and staff to assist their efforts to become more sustainable
1. Sectoral opportunities; 2. Sharing expertise, learnings and best practice previous experiences of initiatives in Irl/EU and beyond; 3. Briefings on trends, relevant programmes and funding streams currently available to LEOs and details on how to access same.
1. Terminology - much of it is new and poorly understood. 2. What do the EU/national targets actually mean. 3. Available supports/funds.
All policy documents - briefings; cluster training; funding opportunities
Availability of dedicated funding
Awareness, requirements for mitigation (and thus business opportunities), exemplars of businesses that are operating successfully in this area.
Baseline policy, likely implications and opportunities for business, possible responses and opportunities
Benefits to companies-benefits to Councils-reaching targets
Carbon footprint reduction and benefits, improving business efficiencies through green and lean practice, funding mechanism available e.g. capital investment tax breaks
Carbon reduction methods, Financial aid available, Measurements
Circular Economy, Economics of Climate Action, Business transition
Circular Economy, Smart Agriculture, Sustainable Travel
Circular economy; EU funding opportunities; understanding changing consumer trends
Climate change and national policies, funding opportunities for micro enterprises, business opportunities
Climate Change Business Challenges; Climate Change Business Opportunities; Climate Change Funding Streams
Cost Reduction, innovation & Carbon Footprint
Education on why we need to change. Funding opportunities for SME sector, replication of best practice in other countries
Energy use, Global case studies,
Funding opportunities, best practice, navigating funding applications
Funding options, New technologies, Possible collaborations
funding streams, opportunities in each sector, project management
Funding Streams; regulatory standards
Green Terminology capacity building, key green enterprise policies, case study SME's
How is the climate agenda relevant to the daily operation of a small business/What do I need to know as a business owner/What sectors are most affected and in each sector detail the relevant effects



incentives, awareness, funding
National Climate Action Policy and related actions and targets
New technologies available; smart hubs; best practice case studies from elsewhere
NZEB for buildings, Data Analytics and understanding measures of climate impact on society and business
Overall overview of initiatives which can then inform specific aspects for further training.
Re-engineering a business to embrace green energy, job creation opportunities, sustainability
what is business sustainability and circular economy; why is it relevant; what other resources are available in the ecosystem

**Table 8: Topics Identified for Inclusion in Climate Action Training**

**Q47: Are you aware of any work carried out on the management of the carbon footprint of businesses?**

42 respondents (86%) answered this question, and there was a strong indication of a lack of knowledge, with 34 respondents (81% of respondents who answered this question) reporting that they were not aware of any work undertaken on the management carbon footprints for business.

**Q48: Asked respondents 'If you answered yes above, please give a description'.**

5 answered this question and demonstrate a range of knowledge about this from the very general to the quite specific (see Table 5 below).

<b>Knowledge of Work Undertaken to Assist Businesses Reduce Carbon Footprint</b>
CDP Ireland - helps businesses assessing their carbon footprint
Regional energy agencies working directly with businesses to monitor their carbon footprint
Several clients are making efforts, varying from simple matters like lighting to plastics reduction, etc. This is a very broad question.
The EI/LEO 'Green for Micro' programme will provide a useful support programme for small businesses seeking to manage their carbon footprint
Under an EU Programme we ran a programme which included this

**Table 5: Knowledge of Work Undertaken to Assist Businesses Reduce Carbon Footprint**



## Suggestions from Respondents

**Q49: We are very interested in learning about your experiences in this area and we would be delighted to hear of any examples, case studies or ideas relating to economic development and climate action that you would like to see developed and promoted through this project?**

10 respondents answered this question and the answers are reported in Table 9 below. It is clear that there is a huge range of opportunities in this area, but there is also a need for an entity to be established at local level that not only promotes and 'sells' Climate Action to local businesses, but also proactively works with them and LEOs to identify and create opportunities.

Ideas for Development.
Access to initiatives must be easy, good models have been developed elsewhere e.g. Netherlands...innovation fund specifically targeting new green tech development, schools programmes building on green tech ideas...could link in with Schools Programme.....dedicated mentors available to advise businesses whether direct employees or contract staff
Each area to establish an energy agency, Smart Towns initiative highlighted with SECs, circular economy opportunities, local awareness campaigns
E-working Centres raise potential opportunities in this area
Forestry as carbon sinks, Food Technology Platform to reduce food waste, Re-use of transport packaging, Re-use of technology hardware, Re-purposing mattresses
In the past have been involved in the now ceased SMILE waste Exchange Programme which was all about the reuse etc of resources. One big learning was the high level of handholding and proaction that was constantly required in order to gain traction and action from businesses. This is an area that will certainly require very significant staff input supporting clients so we need to find a way to both incentivize taking action by the owner/managers of small business rather than have local supports spend all their time trying to convince businesses of things they are just not responding to.
In the past, LEO Offaly initiated a Pilot and paid for Energy Audits to take place in two manufacturing businesses. While useful, it highlighted the difficulty in getting a baseline when businesses categorise and classify information differently. A range of templates (for manufacturing or service industries) could be produced and given to all start-ups ensuring they capture and record energy information correctly.
National Bioeconomy Campus project in Lisheen and the Irish Bioeconomy Foundation REDF funded project
Solar energy, new wind energy on coast, materials for construction sector
strengthen the training and mentoring; provide funding to support the implementation of green projects
This is a wish-list type question if I am reading it correctly. At the macro level in question, there is the proposal around natural gas, with bio-gas feed-in. At individual business levels, one could look at micro generation, reduction, elimination insofar as possible of plastics, re-use - this question is too broad for a simple answer.
Total

**Table 9: Ideas for Development**

**Q50: Have you any other comments that might assist with this project?**

14 responses were provided to this question. As can be seen from Table 10 below, these are quite varied in their content and ranged from questioning the need to identify business and/or economic opportunities to the need for additional incentivization or organization for the topic. The impact of the COVID-19 was mentioned (as it was in responses to many questions throughout the survey). Although the potential for LEOs to provide leadership in this area the reality of the pressures that have emerged as a result of the pandemic and Brexit has resulted in them becoming, in the words of one respondent to this survey 'overburdened' with the result that they are experiencing significant resource issues.





Final Comments
Adequate funding/incentives are not provided at national level - lip service as with Council level!
centre of excellence HPBA in Wexford aims to reduce carbon footprint in buildings
Climate action of itself is a justifiable objective and action and does not need "potential economic/business opportunities" as a means of justifying it or of selling it
Due to COVID 19 there is no doubt that time and focus was lost diluted within LEO during 2020 and consequently training of LEO and in turn delivery of Training on Sustainability and Climate Action experienced a setback. There is an opportunity by Climate Action leadership to present to LEO and provide a 'Tool kit' for Micro and Small businesses to attract their interest and engagement in creating new business opportunities / innovative ideas
Important to work closely with the EI Centre of Excellence to ensure a coordinated approach to the rollout of new initiatives.
It is critically important that there is a co-ordinated, streamlined effort and approach taken by all stakeholders involved in enterprise and economic support. As with all nationally funded schemes and initiatives we have to be mindful that we do not create a situation whereby we flood and saturate the marketplace with "me too" businesses. Any business, regardless of the sector, must be commercially viable and sustainable.
Keep any programmes as simple as possible and in language that business understands
Limited knowledge and awareness other than media articles
No
run MODOS (circular economy training for micro, small and medium enterprises) nationally via the LEO network
The LEO offices have been significantly overburdened with COVID and are expected to be similarly overburdened with BREXIT. We have a significant resource issue which needs to be addressed to become adept in this area
The question earlier that required rankings - seems to be a glitch in the system as all I could get it to do was number the options from one to nineteen, I think. Also, while your questionnaire is, understandably, very broad, I think there would be benefits in looking at interventions that might work at particular target groups. For businesses, a key consideration will be pay-back and associated timeframe. If they don't see a break even within a short number of years (studies, I understand, suggest a maximum of seven), they are far less likely to be interested.
This sounds like an interesting project, key factor is ease of delivery, gaining confidence of business community.
We will all be challenged to deliver this - information/training of all customer facing staff really necessary.

Table 10: Final Comments



## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FROM CLIMATE ACTION

**Climate change** confronts us with many challenges and opportunities and local government is to the forefront of addressing both at a local level in Ireland. One such opportunity is in the area of new business opportunities that will emerge from addressing the many requirements of recent and future climate action policies at all levels of governance. Local authorities are well placed, and indeed need to be drivers of this through their enhanced economic remit and through the work of the Local Enterprise Offices. New and innovative ideas and the exploitation of new business opportunities that will emerge from meeting the challenges of climate change will only lead to a strengthening of local economies and to ensuring that our communities prosper as the country transitions to a new low carbon economy. The **Eastern & Midlands Climate Action Regional Office** along with the **Regional Enterprise Plans**, in cooperation with the **Economic, Enterprise, Community & Culture committee**, is now seeking to explore the potential for local authorities to lead in this area and has convened an interagency group headed by the chair of the EECC committee, to explore, identify and realise potential economic and enterprise opportunities, which in turn will generate employment opportunities, arising from climate action.

**Why have you been asked to participate in this survey?** This short survey is designed to provide a broad picture of current understanding of climate change and local economic development and is being undertaken in parallel with an analysis of climate action policy and funding instruments to will identify the potential for local economic growth in the climate action area. You have been asked to participate in this survey because your work in areas related to economic development in a Local Authority. Following completion of this work, the project working group will prepare a report to advise the CCMA on potential future engagements and requirements (if any) to assist and equip local authority and LEO staff with the relevant knowledge and capacity to deliver information on climate change opportunities that are set within the context of the National Climate Change Plan, the National Economic Plan and the specific objectives of the relevant Local Authority Climate Charter.

**Who has approved this study?** This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Social Research Ethics committee. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

**How long will it take to complete the survey?** The survey should not take much more than 20 minutes to complete. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. 'It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

**What will happen to the information which you give?** All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the MU server. After ten years, all data will be destroyed (by the PI). Manual data will be shredded confidentially and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by the PI in Maynooth University. As the survey is anonymous it will not be possible to delete data once the response is submitted.



**What will happen to the results?** The research will be written up and presented as a report for the **Economic Opportunities from Climate Action Working and Steering Group**. It may also be presented in webinars to parties interested in the findings, or included in a general research report on the project.

**Any further queries?** If you require further information contact John Cullen (Maynooth University) at [john.g.cullen@mu.ie](mailto:john.g.cullen@mu.ie)

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1. What is your grade?
- ☐ Director of Service
  - ☐ Head of Enterprise
  - ☐ Senior Enterprise Development Officer
  - ☐ Business Advisor
  - ☐ Economic Development Officer
  - ☐ Senior Economic Development Officer
  - ☐ Other

Q2. If you answered 'other' to the previous question, please describe your level of responsibility?

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Q3. What is your specific section in the Local Authority?

- ☐ Local Enterprise Office
- ☐ Economic & Enterprise Directorate
- ☐ Environment Directorate
- ☐ Other

Q4. If you answered 'other' to the previous question, what section do you work for?

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Q5. Which of the following best describes the Local Authority you work for?

- ☐ Mainly urban
- ☐ Mainly rural
- ☐ Other

Q7. How many years' experience have you in economic development?

- ☐ 0-5
  - ☐ 6-10
  - ☐ 11-15
-



- 16 or more

Q8. Are you aware of the enterprise actions contained within of your Local Authorities Climate Change Adaptation Strategy?

- Yes
- No

Q9. Are you aware of the enterprise actions contained within the local authority Climate Action Charter?

- Yes
- No

Q10. Are you aware of any economic opportunities that have recently emerged in your area due to climate action policy?

- Yes
- No

Q11. If you answered yes to the previous question, please outline these in the section below.

---

Q12. Are you aware of any policy or funding instruments, at EU, National or local levels, that will result in local economic opportunities arising from climate action?

- Yes
- No

Q13. If you answered yes to the previous question, please list these.

Q14 . PLEASE INDICATE YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

European, national and local Climate Action policies and funding streams will provide economic and enterprise opportunities for local businesses

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Do not know

Q15. Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area will have an interest in undertaking green enterprise initiatives and availing of potential business opportunities arising from climate action?

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- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Do not know

Q16. Micro enterprises & LEO clients in your area have the capacity to undertake green enterprise initiatives and to identify future opportunities that arising from climate action?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Do not know

Q17. Your local authority and / or LEO already has the capacity already in place to identify and exploit local economic opportunities that will arise from climate action policy and funding streams.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ DO not know

Q18. If you agree with the above statement, please explain your answer below.

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Q19 If you disagree with the above statement, please explain your answer below.

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Q20. Please rank the following sectors which you see as having the most potential for job creation, arising from **climate action** policies and initiatives, in the short to medium term.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture / Food
- \_\_\_\_\_ Banking / Finance / Venture Capital / Insurance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chemicals (non-pharma)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Communications / Media / PR
- \_\_\_\_\_ Construction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engineering
- \_\_\_\_\_ Energy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extraction / Chemical Industry



- \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pharmaceuticals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Public realm
- \_\_\_\_\_ Re-cycling / Waste Management
- \_\_\_\_\_ Retail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soft drink / Brewing / Distillery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Software / Electronic / Technology
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tourism / Hospitality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation / Distribution
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Q21. Which of the following sectors do you currently work directly with to assist in the development and promotion of local enterprise through your local authority or Local Enterprise Office?

- Agriculture / Food
- Banking / Finance / Venture Capital / Insurance
- Chemicals (non-pharma)
- Communications / Media / PR
- Construction
- Engineering
- Energy
- Extraction / Chemical Industry
- Manufacturing
- Pharmaceuticals
- Re-cycling / Waste Management
- Retail
- Soft drink / Brewing / Distillery
- Software / Electronic / Technology
- Transportation / Distribution
- Water
- Other

Q22. If you answered 'other' to the previous question, please specify your answer below.

---

Q23. Are you aware of any particular **climate action** related economic initiatives in the following areas in your county or region?

- Forestry
- Green solutions
- Smart agriculture
- Housing retrofit programmes
- Renewable energy
- Smart hubs
- Co-working facilities
- Transport (walking, cycling and public transport, EV stations, etc.)



- Other

Q24. If you answered 'other' to the previous question, or aware of any other initiatives, please give more detail in the space below.

---

Q25. Does your local authority and / or LEO run programmes (mentoring/training) aimed at promoting green enterprise initiatives and identifying innovation arising from **climate action** policy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q26. If you answered yes to the previous question, please outline what programmes you run in the space below.

---

Q27. Will the creation of innovative solutions to climate change consist of:

- ☐ The invention of new products, services and/or processes
- ☐ 'Tweaking' existing practice
- ☐ Both

Q28. Has your office conducted research on local interest in green enterprise?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

Q29. If you answered yes to the previous question, please describe the research you have conducted in the space below.

---

Q30. Has your office facilitated green entrepreneurs or innovators who have attempted to develop sustainable innovations or new products arising from **climate action** policy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q31. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please provide more details in the space below.

---



Q32. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

There are currently adequate resources and guidance documents available for local authority and LEO staff to build capacity to assist current and future clients to exploit potential economic opportunities that will arise from **climate action**.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Do not know

Q33. If you answered **agree** above, to what resources and guidance documents does your local authority and / or LEO have access to?

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Q34. If you answered **don't know or disagree** above, what in your opinion are the key resources required to build capacity in your local authority and / or LEO to assist your current and future clients to exploit potential economic opportunities that will arise from **climate action**?

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Q35. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

There are currently adequate resources and guidance documents available for local authority and LEO staff to support current and future clients to transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services.

- ☐ Strongly agree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ☐ Disagree (5)
- ☐ Strongly disagree (6)
- ☐ Do not know (7)

Q36. If you answered **agree** above, to what resources and guidance documents does your local authority and / or LEO have access to?

---

Q37. If you answered **don't know or disagree** above, are the key resources required to support your work in assisting your current and future clients transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services?





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Q38. Have you received guidance on making applications for funds that support Green Enterprise?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q39. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT. There is currently adequate knowledge in local authorities/LEO offices on funding opportunities for **climate action** and enterprise support for current and future clients to transition their existing businesses to more sustainable business models and to assist them in developing greener products and services.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Do not know

Q40. Have you facilitated local business to attend awareness raising/training sessions on the subject of climate funding for business?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q41. If yes please give brief details:

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Q42. *Have you issued such funds to local business?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q43. If you answered yes above, please give a brief description

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Q44. In your opinion, what actions need to be put in place to ensure local enterprises are facilitated to access such funding?

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Q45. In your view is there a need for specific training for LEO/ Economic development staff on **climate action**?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q46. If you answered yes above, please list 3 topics in the space that could usefully be included in such training.

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Q47. Are you aware of any work carried out on the management of the carbon footprint of businesses?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q48. If you answered yes above, please give a brief description.

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Q49. We are very interested in learning about your experiences in this area and we would be delighted to hear of any examples, case studies or ideas relating to economic development and **climate action** that you would like to see developed and promoted through this project?

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Q50. Have you any other comments that might assist with this project?

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CLIMATE ACTION  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

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Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise