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National Report Slovenia

Report compiled by
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Official Project Description

(GMIT)

The ECOSME project aims to support hospitality SME's on their sustainability journey, through the provision of flexible open source multi-lingual training tools informed by stakeholder research. The project partners recognise the global post-covid challenges being experienced within the hospitality sector but equally recognises the importance for development of sustainable futures within the sector.

This project aims to:

- Raise awareness of the advantages of sustainable business management.
- Raise awareness of the advantages of developing green skills for business, society, community and the environment.
- Support SME's through their "green transition" with relevant training tools.
- Encourage sustainable entrepreneurship.
- Enhance employability skills for individuals wishing to upskill or reskill in areas of sustainability.
- Expand the educational offering to academics/educational providers to support an industry needs.
- Build a network of sustainable hospitality businesses across the partner countries.

1.2 National Report explaining the background of EcoSME and Purpose of Survey

(EURAKOM)

The consultation about the post-Covid 19 sustainability challenges and skills needs of hospitality SME staff (PR1) aims at learning more about the current sustainability challenges and skills needs of SMEs and microbusinesses in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. With our consultation, we'll find out about the areas SMEs have already made or envisaged making changes and why, the details about the challenges they are facing as a result of the pandemic, or their current level of understanding of sustainability among others. This consultation will inform all subsequent project activities and project results and will hence be essential to reaching the project

objectives at all levels (regional/national through country analysis and at the European level through consolidated analysis).

This consultation is led by EURAKOM (France) for the project EcoSME with its partners the Atlantic Technology University (ATU) (Ireland) as the project coordinator, VSGT in Maribor (Slovenia), DOMSPAIN (Spain), the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo (Portugal) and Bia Innovator Campus CLG (Ireland).

This result will be able to provide new evidence and information about which challenges persist as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and inform subsequent project results including the final result (guidelines and policy recommendations) to better serve the sector and build the resilience of SMEs in the hospitality sector. It will give the partnership indications that will lead to the development of a highly relevant training programme (targeted and tailored designed to meet the real needs of professionals in the hospitality sector) and OER as well as build the case around establishing the EcoSME network.

The national reports and final consultation report will primarily inform local/regional/national authorities/governments, policymakers and sector representatives including the EU level in order to make better decisions when it comes to supporting SMEs in the sector. The consultation questions will be publicly available as an Annex to the national/consolidated consultation report which allows for other regions/countries to use the questions to carry out similar surveys.

The country reports & analytical report does not only serve as a basis for all subsequent project results but can also be disseminated to local/regional/national policy makers/VET schools/sector associations in order to highlight the importance to invest in CVET and particularly in the area of sustainability to strengthen the sector.

The project will produce policy recommendations to be sent to policy makers together with the consultation report.

[1.3 National context linked to the state of play of sustainability in the hospitality industry \(accommodation + food/beverage\).](#)

Slovenia is considered a pioneer and one of the best in the field of sustainable tourism development and of a strategic approach to sustainability at the national level. Through the

Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism, Slovenia is one of the first countries that systematically approached sustainable tourism development at the national level. Based on the example of Slovenia, at least two schemes are being created in Europe today, in Estonia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Strategy for sustainable growth of Slovenian tourism was adopted in 2017 (Strategija Trajnostne Rasti Slovenskega turizma 2017–2021, 2017). Green, sustainable and responsible development was set as the pillar of Slovenian tourism, and all its stakeholders have committed themselves to these ideas. Slovenia has started to market itself as a global green boutique destination for demanding guests who are seeking a diverse and active experience, peace of mind and personal benefits.

The strategy defined six key policies: 1) a new organisational structure: macro destinations and tourism products; 2) institutional and legal framework; 3) accommodation, tourism infrastructure and investments; 4) human resources in tourism industry; 5) space, cultural and natural assets; 6) small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) (ibid.).

Firstly, macro destinations have been established and they contributed to a clearer and more focused marketing communication and positioning of Slovenia on foreign markets. Secondly, institutionally and legally, tourist tax and its distribution has been reorganised and Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) strengthened its role as the national tourist organisation (NTO). Further glamping and other innovative forms of accommodation in the great outdoors has been acknowledgement as a type of accommodation. The 'Hotelstars' classification system has been introduced and several nature-based activities have been regulated within the green tourism offer. Thirdly, a major restructuring with the renovation of tourism infrastructure has been planned. Fourthly, standards and specializations within vocational educational training have been updated in order to promote standards of sustainability and digitalisation. Finally, tourism development policy focuses on sustainable (green) growth and on closing two gaps: a gap between tourist green potential and its economic turnover, and a gap between the 'green' promise and the actual quality of tourist experience. Here, a plan for green (sustainable) tourism is drafted (Ratification of international conventions regarding sustainable tourism development and a plan for the integration of UNESCO world heritage in tourism); monitoring of visitor satisfaction, resident satisfaction in regard to tourism development, green monitoring of green scheme products and their promotion, a plan for the development of tourism in Slovenia's protected areas is drafted, inclusion of cultural heritage is planned. In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises, the trademark of Gostilna Slovenija is

introduced (gostilna = restaurant; the Brand promotes traditional local-based cuisine), activities and the promotion of cuisine under the brand 'Taste Slovenia' through strengthening the vertical link to regional/local culinary brands is intensified, culinary diplomacy is established in order to promote Slovenian cuisine, also the healthy food is promoted (cf. Ministry of economic development and technology, 2017). Finally, the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism started to operate as a national program and a certification scheme under the umbrella the SLOVENIA GREEN brand. Here, Slovenia Green is the fundamental platform for defining, measuring and monitoring the implementation of the promise of a "green" Slovenia. The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism combines all efforts for the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia, destinations and providers and offers concrete tools for evaluating and improving sustainable operations, through the brand Slovenia Green and green operation also promotes (Sustainability report - I feel Slovenia, 2022).

At the beginning of 2020, covid-19 brought the tourism industry to a global halt and put it under extraordinary circumstances, due to which the economic situation of the tourism industry in Slovenia worsened and the ambitious strategy from 2017 (Strategija Slovenskega turizma 2022- 2028, 2022). To mitigate the effects of the pandemic, the Government allocated more than one billion euros in relief to tourism providers, which allowed the sector to survive and preserve jobs and alleviated companies' liquidity problems. However, the volume of overnight stays decreased by 42.7%, from 15,775,331 in 2019 to 9,204,374 in 2020. In 2020 domestic guests contributed almost 2/3 of the tourism realization and significantly mitigated the drop in foreign overnight stays, which decreased by 71% compared to 2019. The data for 2021 indicate a comparable season in which a 30% increase in foreign guests and a 20% lower number of domestic guests is observed as of 2020. GDP generated directly in the tourism industry decreased by 34.7%, from EUR 2,258 million in 2019 to EUR 1,473 million in 2020. The share of tourism GDP in the entire GDP of Slovenia fell from 4.7% in 2019 to 3.1% in 2020. The number of employees in tourism decreased by 13.5% or 5,119 jobs (from 37,967 to 32,848 in 2020), which represents half of all lost jobs in the Slovenian economy in the year 2020. Total added value created in tourism decreased by 26% between 2020 and 2019 from 835 million EUR to EUR 618 million, in the Slovenian economy by only 1.2%. Added value per employee was lower in the activity by 19.6% (from EUR 28,893/employee in 2019 to EUR 23,216 EUR/employee), in the hotel industry by even 24.7%, while in the Slovenian economy it even increased (+0.9%). The tourism industry achieved only half of the added value per employee in the Slovenian economy. (STO, 2022)

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on the development of tourism in Slovenia in the past two years, the industry is now also affected by the war in Ukraine. After the pandemic and in light of the war in Ukraine, the guests value safety and health, where Slovenia has considerable comparative advantage. Tourists are looking for green tourism services and products and activities in nature, which Slovenia can deliver.

With the support of the State, the tourism sector will therefore have to adapt and focus on promoting Slovenia as a safe, sustainable and crowd-free destination. This year, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology will focus on stimulating the investment cycle in tourism with 140 million euros, adopting a new tourism development strategy and adapting Slovenia's tourism promotion to nearby markets (ibid.).

Thus, as delivered through our study of best practices as well, the hospitality and tourism sector is in a low but steady pace of recovery. Covid pandemic had a tremendous negative effect on the economy, but the coming winter with the skyrocket process is presenting an even bigger threat. Here, sustainable business models, focusing on economic and environmental aspects, are still in the forefront of the trendy offer, proving their strength.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 EcoSME Consultation

(EURAKOM)

EURAKOM, with the support of all partners, has developed an online consultation in English with a total of 32 questions. Each partner has translated the survey into their national language - the questionnaire was available in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Slovenian.

The consultation has been promoted by all partners using different methods and channels depending on local networks and communication cultures. The survey, applied to managers and owners of SMEs and microbusinesses in the hospitality sector, was initially open until mid-March and then extended twice until the end of May. The reason for the extension was that partners had difficulty with collecting responses despite considerable databases of thousands of contacts and a very close network of relevant partners in the different countries.

EURAKOM also prepared the structure for the National Reports which was discussed by the partnership and subsequently slightly amended. EURAKOM also developed a template that will

be used by all partners and will ensure that all national reports will be visually attractive to the target groups.

The results and responses of the consultation will be published.

2.2 Analysis

Each partner analysed their national data and prepared the national reports for the different countries in English.

The presentation and analyses of both qualitative and quantitative data, based on the data collected and reported in five national reports (i.e., one national report in each of the 5EU countries), will be presented in a Comparative Report.

3 CONSULTATION RESULTS

3.1 Overview and main trends

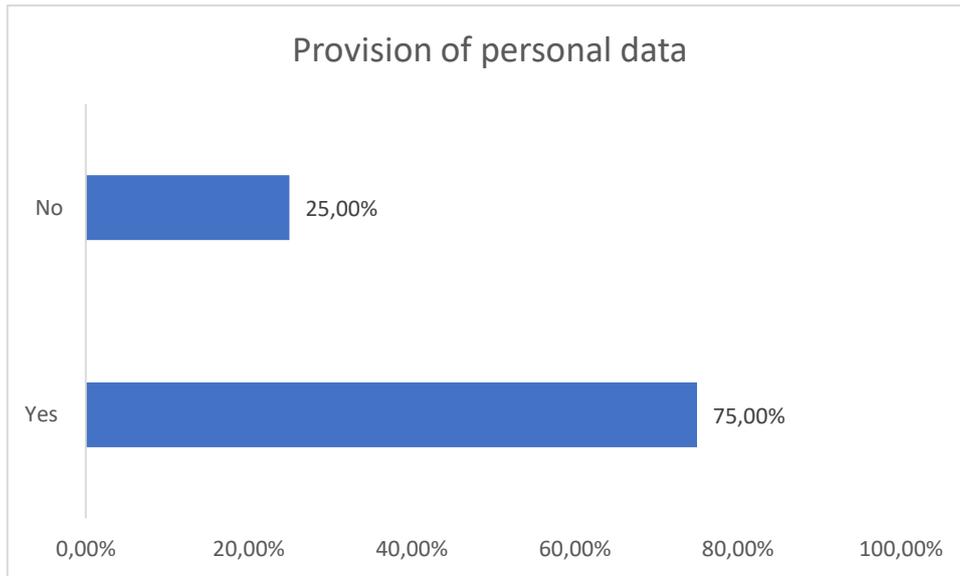
VSGT Maribor administered an online survey between 10th February 2022 and 10th August 2022, obtaining 52 answers.

The survey was sent by email to SMEs through school's Alumni network in the hospitality sector (food and beverage and accommodation). In order to engage regional and national partners, VSGT Maribor has been in contact with Chamber of Hospitality and Tourism that also helped to distribute the survey through its networks. The survey was also disseminated through social media.

3.2 Consultation Questions and Answers

Introductory questions

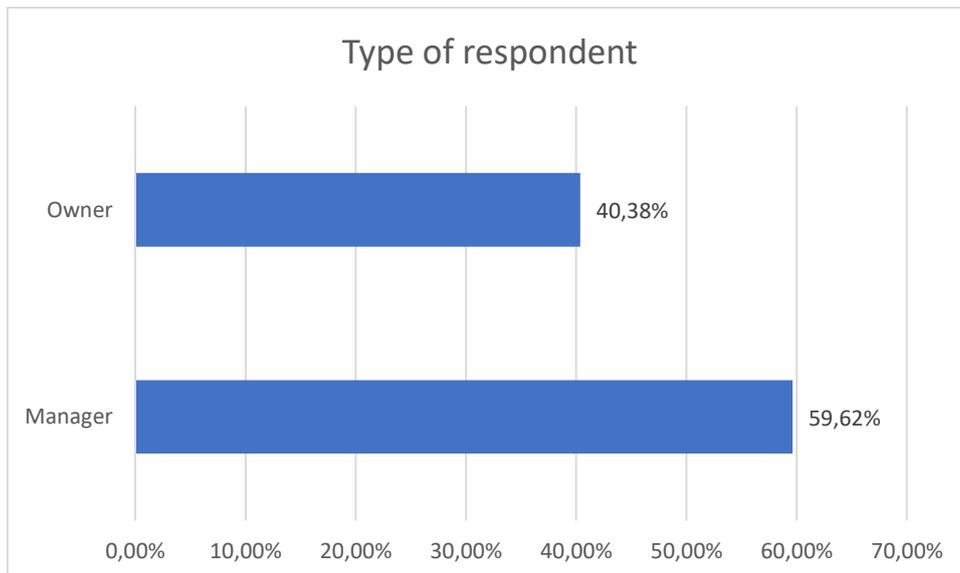
FIRST QUESTION. PROVISION OF PERSONAL DATA



75% of the respondents accepted to provide their personal data in order to receive relevant project information, invitations to events, invitations to participate in surveys and other communications related exclusively to the EcoSME project. Equally, at the end of the survey, 24% of all participants filled with their personal information. Low provision of personal data reveals a sensitivity to sustainability issues within the SME's and also reluctance to reveal personal information in this matter.

SECOND QUESTION: TYPE OF RESPONDENT

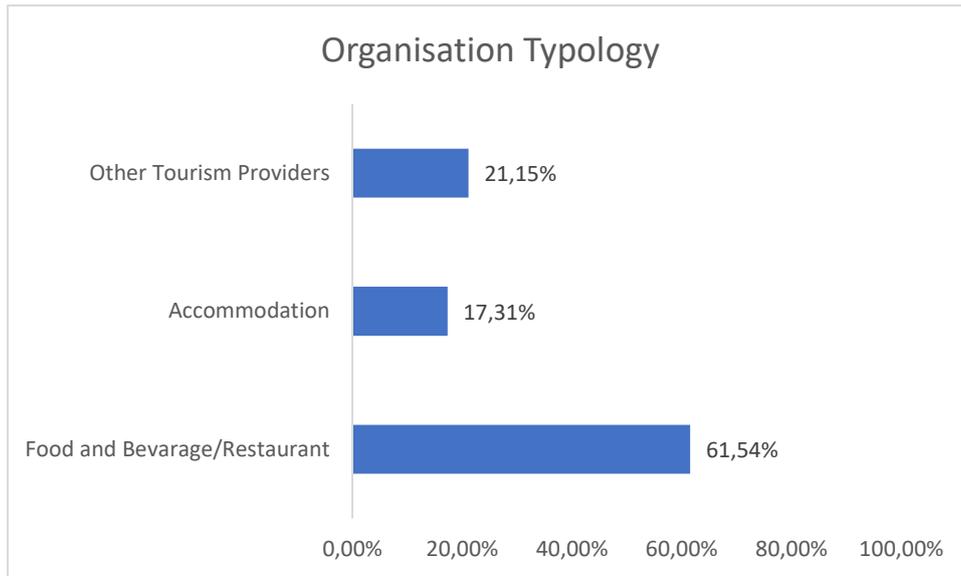
"I am responding to this consultation as a..."



Almost 60% of the participants were managers, while approx. 40% were owners.

QUESTION 3. ORGANISATION TIPOLOGY

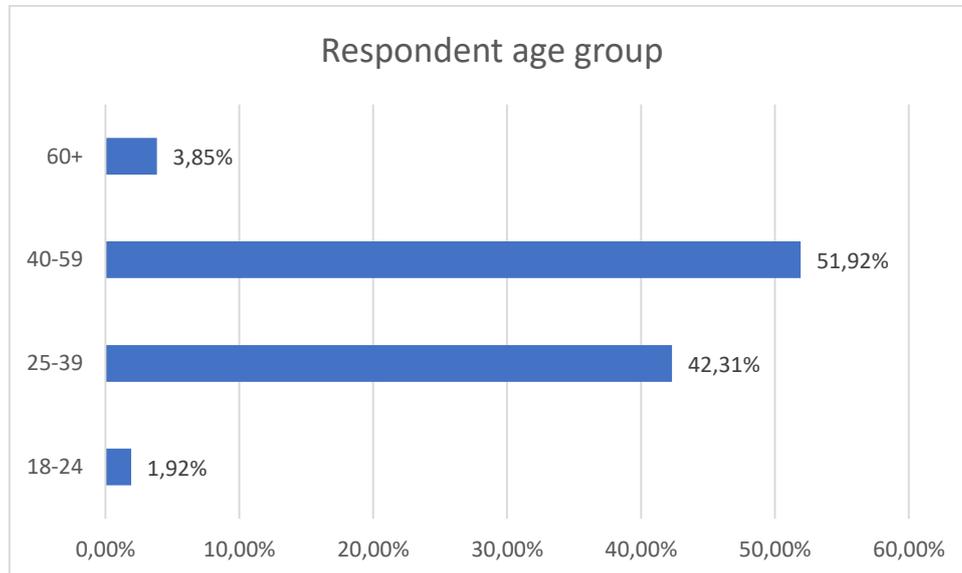
"My SME is..."



The majority of the answers were obtained from the F&B sector, which translates the idea of strong networks of F&B within the Chamber of Commerce for Hospitality and Tourism.

QUESTION 4. RESPONDENTS AGE GROUP

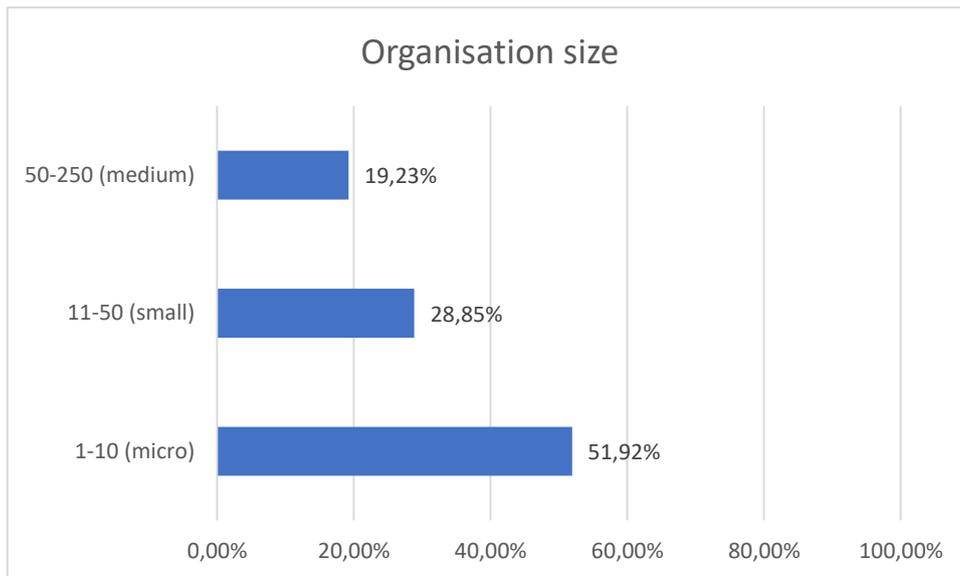
“Which age group do you belong to?”



Most participants (approx. 52%) are between 40 and 59 years old. On the one side, this is an expected result due to their position (managers or owners), equally it reflects more active online presence of the owners and managers below 60 years of age.

QUESTION 5. ORGANISATION SIZE

“Your organisation size (full & part-time employees)”

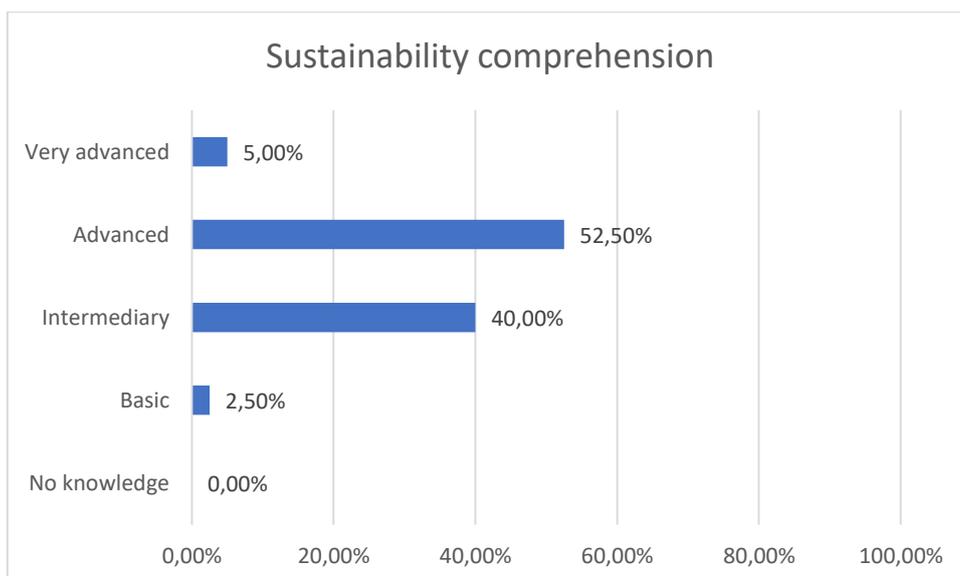


There is a dominance of micro-enterprises within the sample (approx. 50%), followed by the representation of small enterprises (approx. 30%) and the representation of the medium size enterprises (20%). The skewness of the sample towards the dominance of the micro enterprises reflects the dominance of the F&B sector within the sample, predominantly small-scale businesses.

Sustainable Business Concepts

QUESTION 6. SUSTAINABILITY COMPREHENSION

“How do you judge your current understanding of sustainability principles in a business context?”



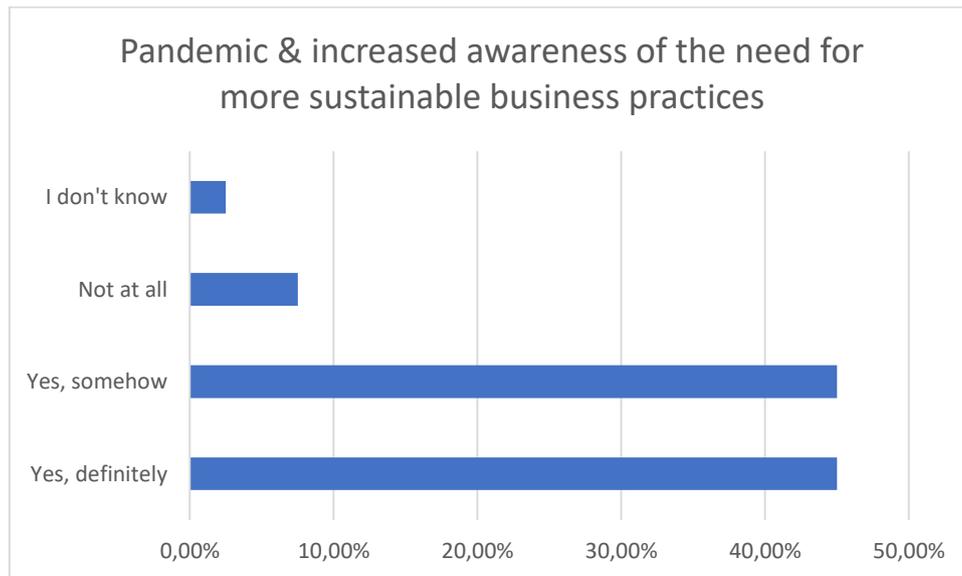
On this question, only 40 answered, while 12 skipped.

Most of the participants answered to have an advanced knowledge of sustainability principles or intermediary (40%) in a business context. The answers clearly represent high level of data

skewness towards the highest levels of comprehension of sustainability principles within the sample. The skewed data reflect the greater interest on the topic among the owners and managers in Slovenia that are clearly following the sustainable business model already.

QUESTION 7. PANDEMIC & INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

“Has the pandemic contributed to an increased awareness of the need for more sustainable business practices of your SME?”

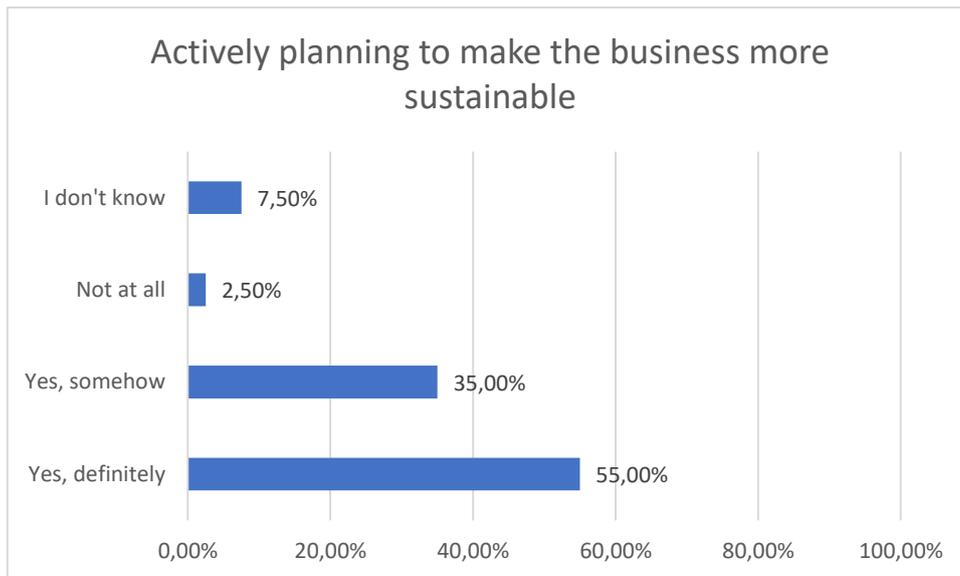


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Altogether, 90% of participants responded that the pandemic somewhat contributed to an increased awareness of the need for more sustainable business practices for their SMEs.

QUESTION 8. ACTIVELY PLANNING TO MAKE THE BUSINESS MORE SUSTAINABLE

“As an SME, are you actively planning to make your business more sustainable?”

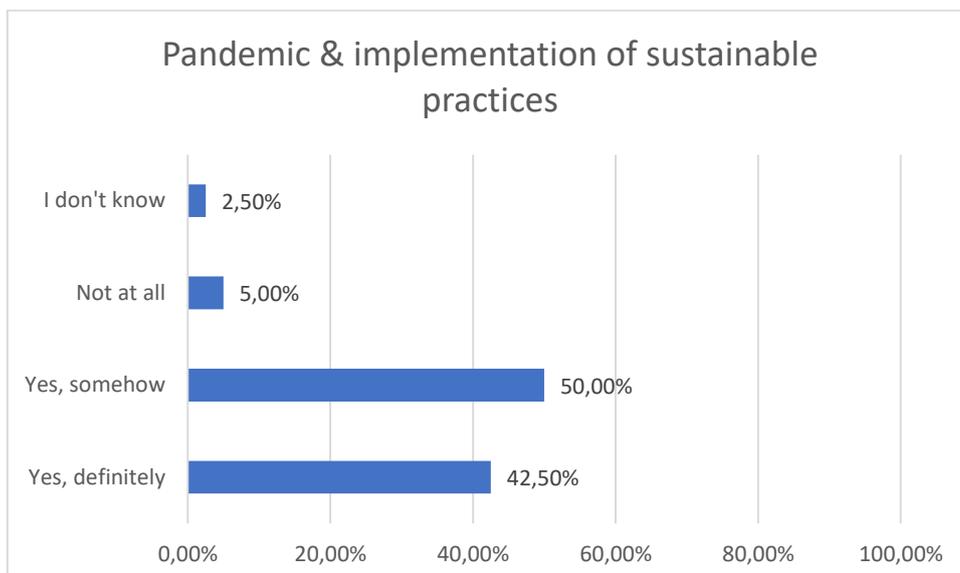


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

90% of participants are actively planning to make their business more sustainable. The answers could be interpreted in the context of higher level of knowledge on the sustainable business models within the existing sample and does not necessarily reflect the equal level of motivation towards the implantation of the sustainability models within the Catering and Tourism sector.

QUESTION 9. PANDEMIC & IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

“Has the pandemic led to the implementation of more sustainable practices for your SME?”



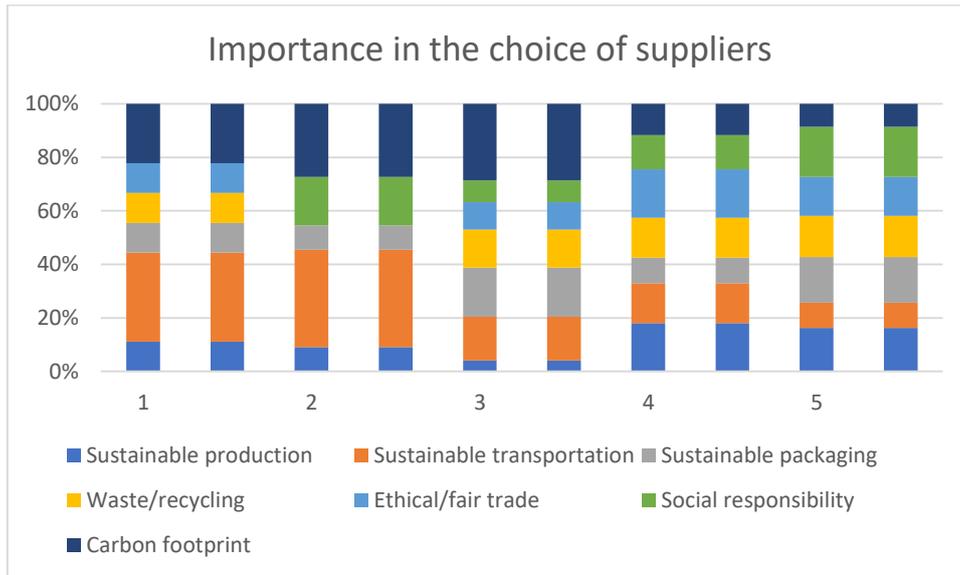
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Approx. 90% of participants responded that the pandemic at least somewhat led to the implementation of more sustainable practices in their SMEs. It is possible that the pandemic

contributed to the implementation of sustainable business models, from multiple perspectives, since the businesses operated under the strict lock-down rules and reinvent the existing business models, especially in the context of their environmental impacts.

QUESTION 10. IMPORTANCE IN THE CHOICE OF SUPPLIERS

“Please rate the importance of the following in terms of how you choose your suppliers. (1-5 for each, 5 being the most important)”

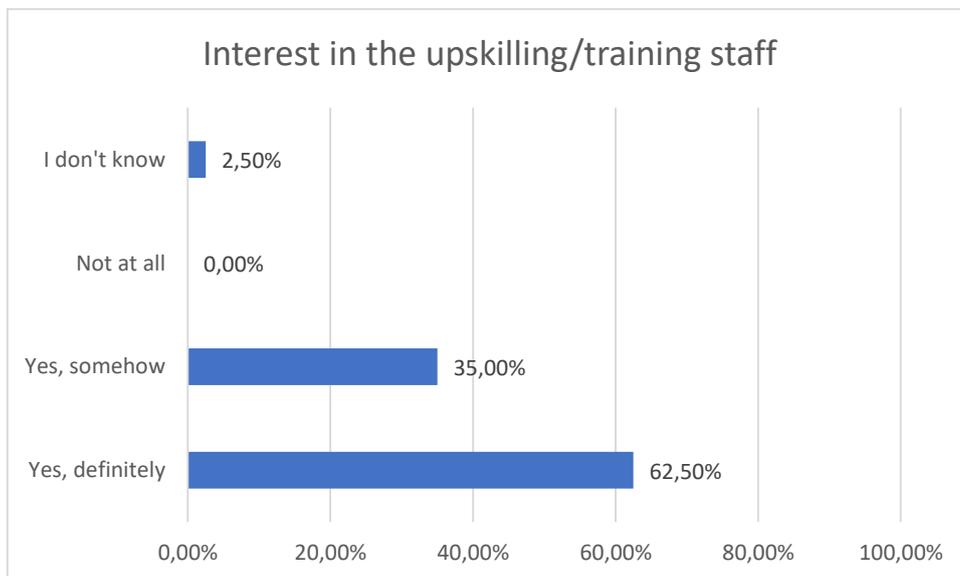


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

When rating the importance in the choice of suppliers, participants consider it to be the most important: waste/recycling, social responsibility; sustainable packaging and ethical/fair trade.

QUESTION 11. INTEREST IN UPSKILLING/TRAINING STAFF

“Are you interested in upskilling/training staff to improve and develop sustainable practices?”

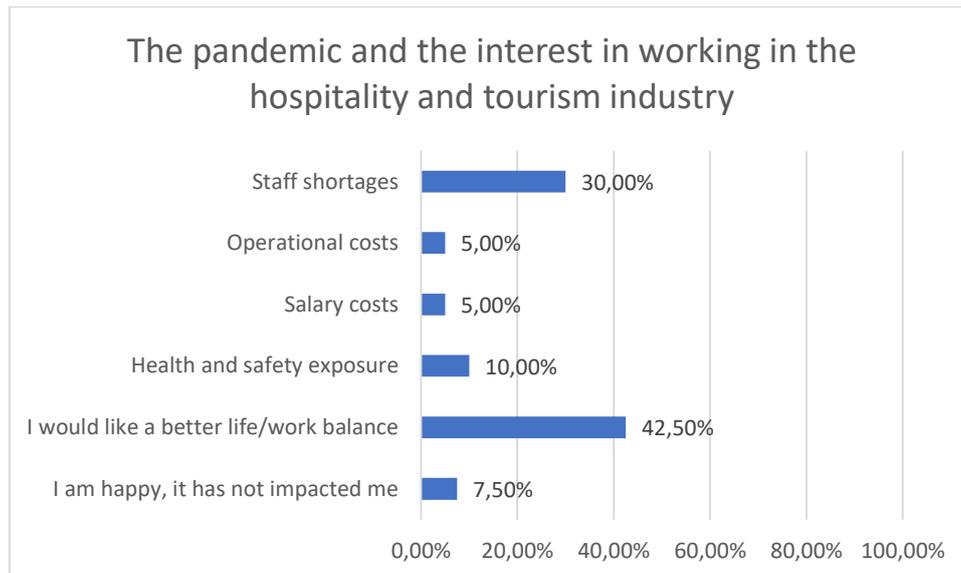


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

95% of participants are somehow interested in upskilling/training staff to improve and develop sustainable practices, which links to the interest on the sustainable management business model. Equally, it links to the previous question, showing the level of knowledge that participants already have on the sustainable management topics.

QUESTION 12. THE PANDEMIC AND THE INTEREST IN WORKING IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

“Has the pandemic impacted on your interest in working in the hospitality and tourism industry?”

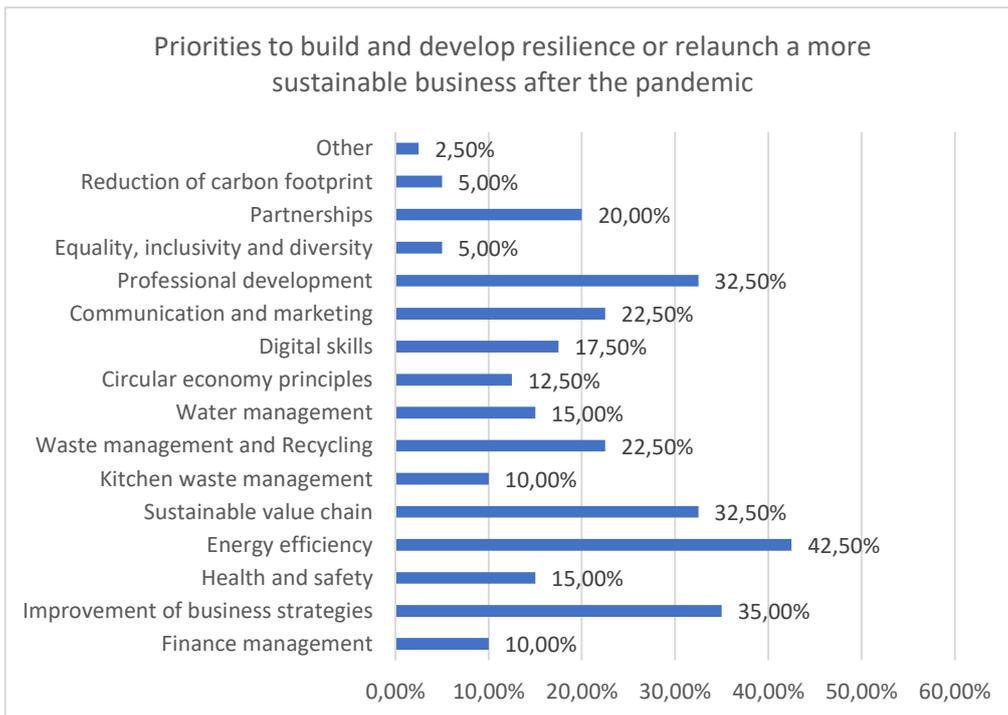


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

The majority, i.e. 42% of participants expressed that they would like to have a better work/life balance and 30% expressed that the pandemic impacted their staff shortage. 10% expressed the health and safety exposure to be impacted by the pandemic. The least impacted were salary cost (5%) and operational cost (5%), whereby 7.5% felt no impact of the pandemic. This answer seems to coincide with the lack of human resources interested in working in this sector after the pandemic and the exposure of the remaining staff to the health and safety hazards, not only in Slovenia but as a general problem in Europe during the pandemic.

QUESTION 13. PRIORITIES TO BUILD AND DEVELOP RESILIENCE OR RELAUNCH A MORE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AFTER THE PANDEMIC

“Which of the following areas does your SME consider to be a priority in order to build and develop resilience or relaunch a more sustainable business after the pandemic. Taking environmental, economic and social factors into account? (Select the 3 most relevant answers for your business)”



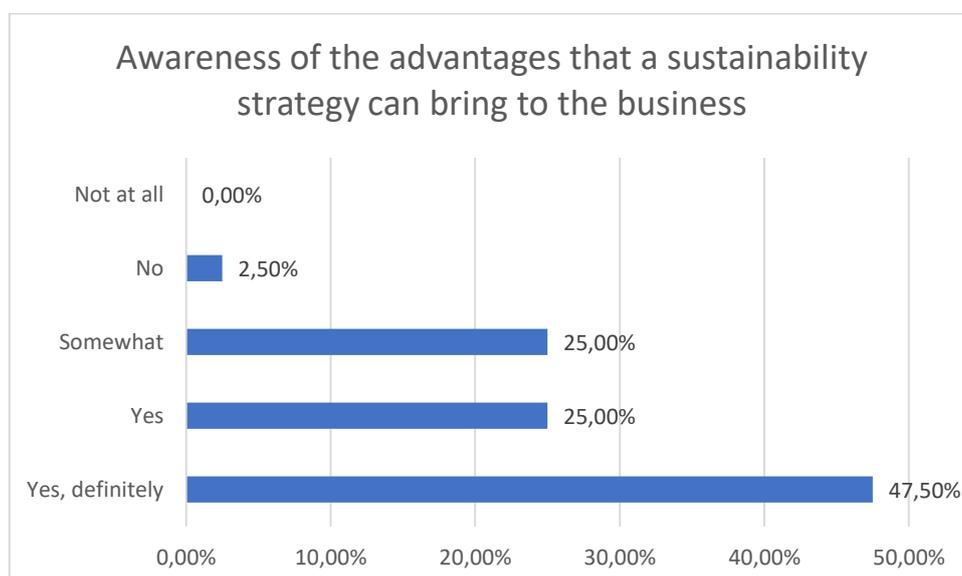
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Overall, soft and less tangible principles of business model (i.e. equality, inclusivity, reduction of carbon footprint) are less prioritized as hard and more tangible business model elements (i.e. energy efficiency, professional development and overall business strategy) (cf. *Strategija Slovenskega turizma 2022- 2028, 2022*).

Challenges and Opportunities

QUESTION 14. AWARENESS OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT A SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY CAN BRING TO THE BUSINESS

“Are you aware of the advantages that a sustainability strategy can bring to your business?”

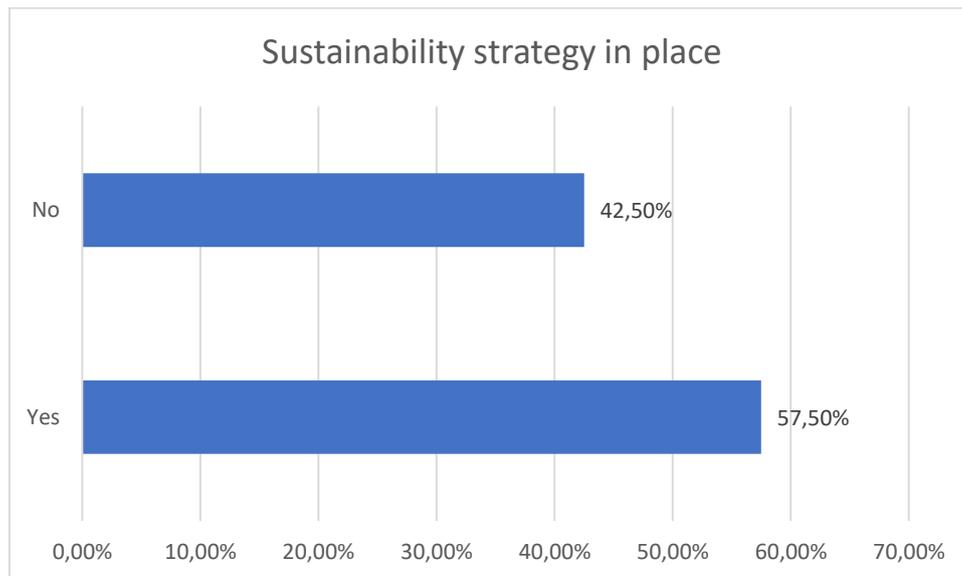


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Majority of participants are aware of the advantages of a sustainability strategy for their businesses, which links to the idea that within the sample there is a majority of the owners/managers that are generally good educated on the premises of the sustainable business models.

QUESTION 15. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY IN PLACE

“Do you already have a sustainability strategy in place?”

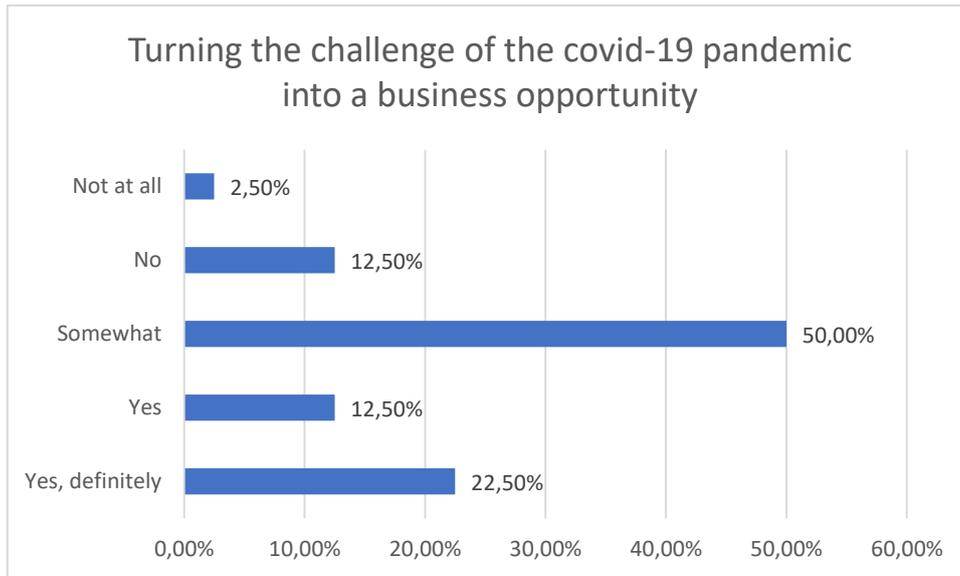


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Almost 60%% of participants answered that they have a sustainability strategy in place which links to the idea of the sample being skewed towards the business owners and managers that have a high level of knowledge on the sustainable business models.

QUESTION 16. TURNING THE CHALLENGE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC INTO A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

“Have you been able to turn the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic into an opportunity for your business?”

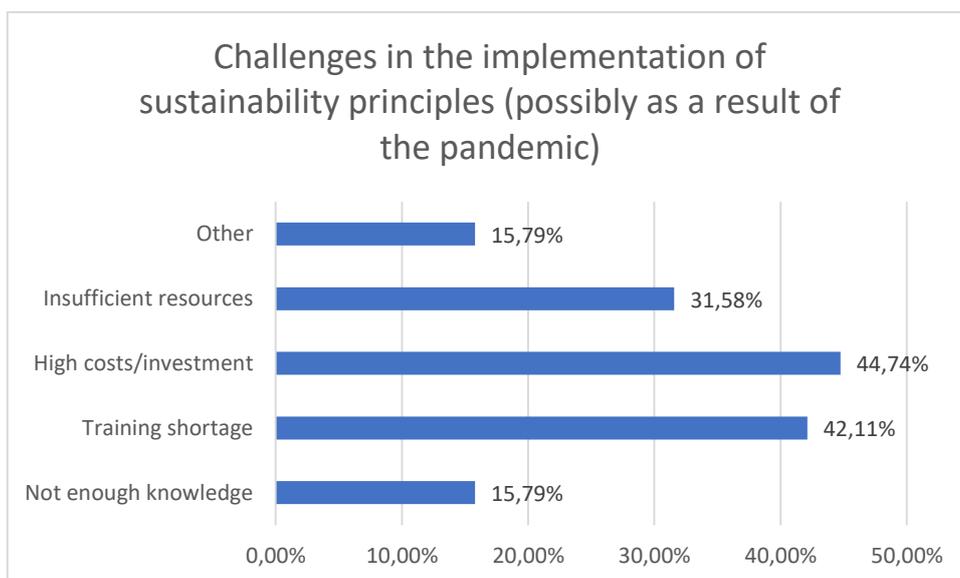


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

50% of the respondents answered that they have somewhat been able to turn the challenges of the covid pandemic into a business opportunity. When asked how they turned challenges into opportunities, several participants mentioned that they – equally as business in other partner countries - adopted the new reality by adapting the business, for example by implementing takeaway and selling at the doorstep and adapting greater concern for food waste.

QUESTION 18. CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES (POSSIBLY AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC)

“Which challenges, if any, do you face in the implementation of sustainability principles (possibly as a result of the pandemic)?”



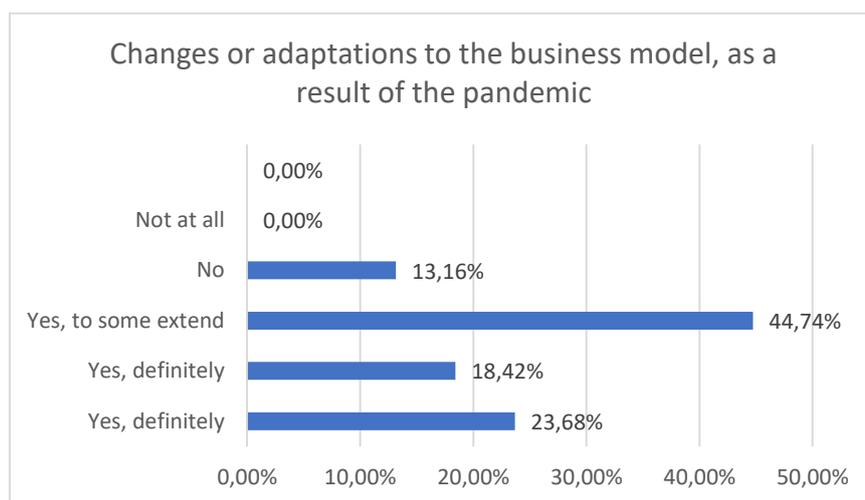
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Regarding the challenges in the implementation of sustainability principles (possibly as a result of the pandemic), most participants mentioned the high costs/investment (approx. 45%), followed by a balance between training shortage (approx.. 42%) and insufficient resources (approx. 30%).

Previous strategy of tourism development in Slovenia has put a lot of focus on the lack of investments in the tourism and catering businesses and on the notion of the EU finances being available to the tourism businesses. Thus, it would be interesting to see the answers on the similar question in the coming 4-5 years when the first results of bigger investments in the tourism will be seen.

QUESTION 19. CHANGES OR ADAPTATIONS TO THE BUSINESS MODEL, AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC

“As a result of the pandemic, has your business looked into changing or adapting its business model?”



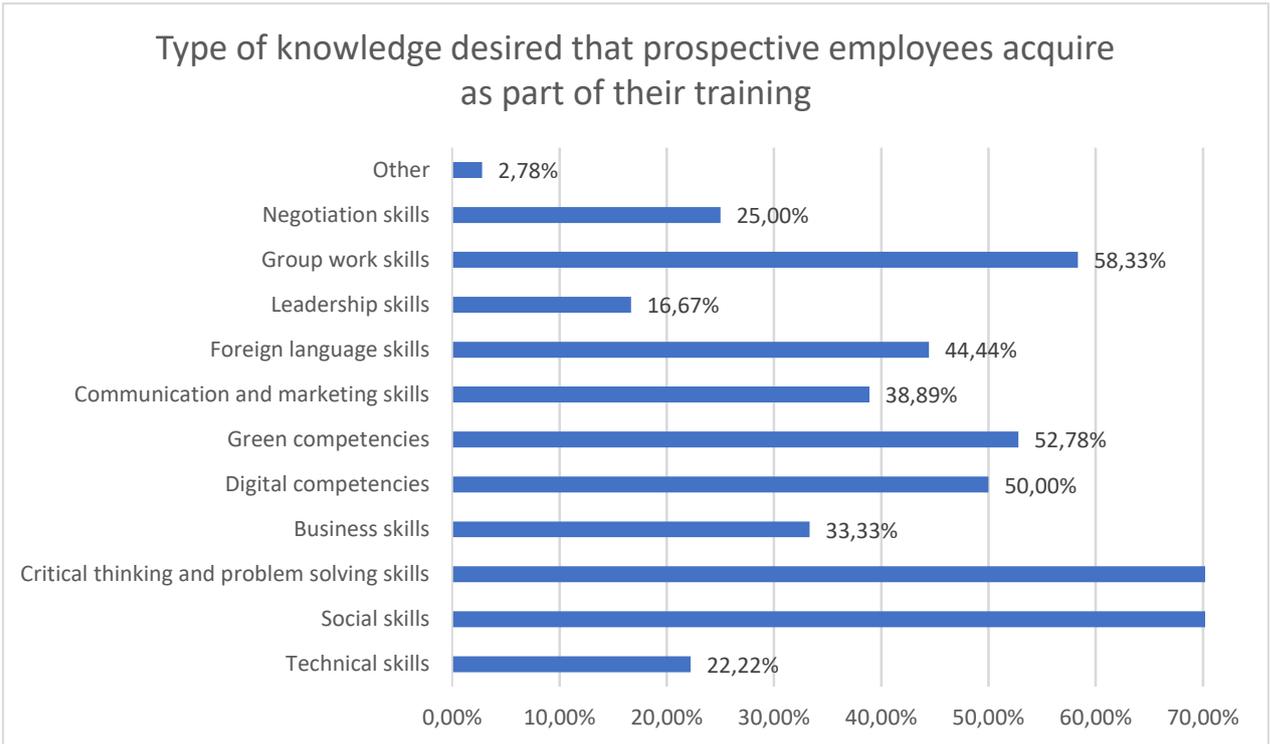
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Almost 45% of the answers revealed some changes of the business model, which makes sense since the survey has been applied after the strictest lock-down period in Slovenia. The businesses that have been surveyed have lived through pandemic, thus, it is reasonable to assume that they have adopted their business models to some extent

The role of innovation, technology and strategy for sustainability

QUESTION 20. TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE DESIRED THAT PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES ACQUIRE AS PART OF THEIR TRAINING

“What type of knowledge do you want your prospective employees to acquire as part of their training? (Top 5 important ones)”

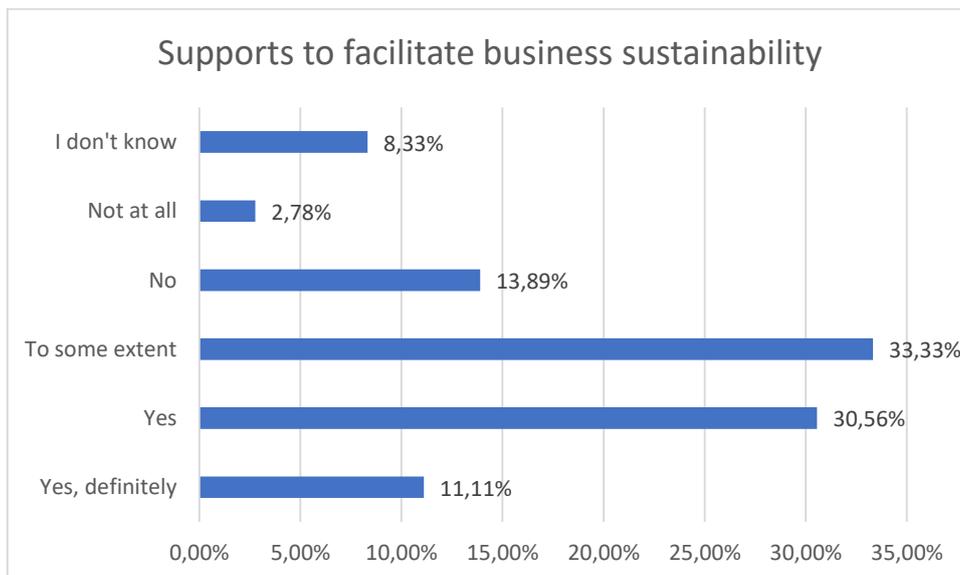


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Most of the participants mentioned that the five most important types of knowledge desired that prospective employees acquire as part of their training are: critical thinking and problem solving, social skills and customer service, technical skills, foreign language skills, and teamwork and collaboration.

QUESTION 21. SUPPORTS TO FACILITATE BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

“Are there enough supports in your region/country to facilitate business sustainability?”

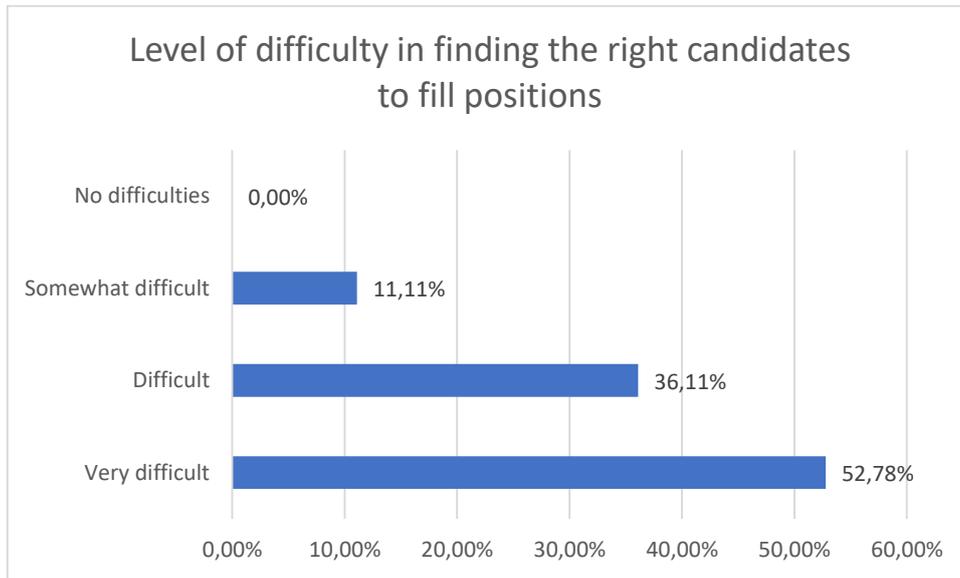


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

The majority of the respondents answered that there is enough support in their region/country to facilitate business sustainability (approx. 70%). This links to previous results that identified high level of knowledge and support for the implementation of sustainable business models in Slovenia. Equally, this reflects the tourism agenda that fosters the implementation of sustainable business models.

QUESTION 22. LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY IN FINDING THE RIGHT CANDIDATES TO FILL POSITIONS

“What level of difficulty do you experience in finding the right candidates to fill positions? (with reference to skills, talents, knowledge, abilities)”

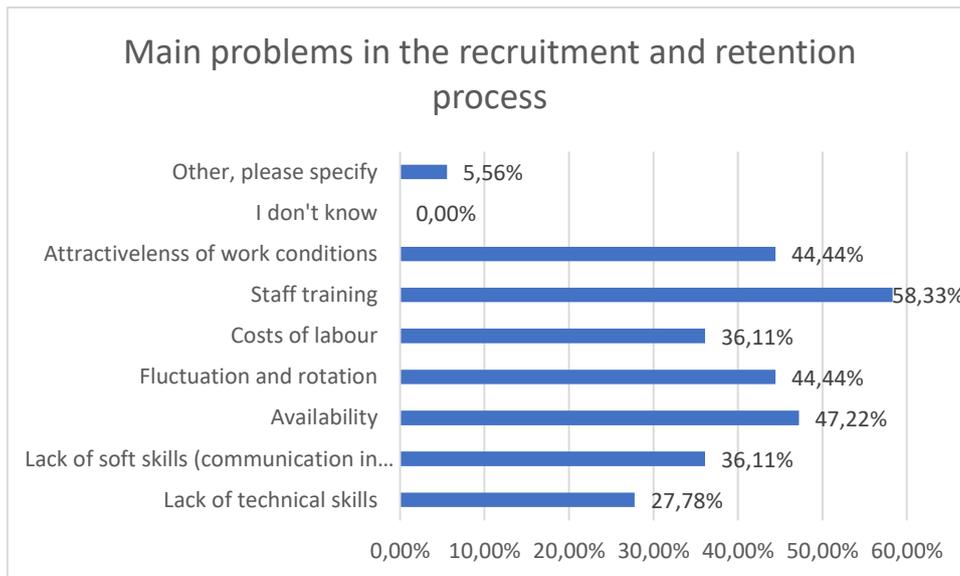


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

The majority of the participants said it was very difficult to find the right candidates to fill positions (regarding skills, talents, knowledge, and abilities), which reflects the post-pandemic tourism labour market that currently has major issues with staff shortages and lacks 20% of its total staff needs (WTC, 2022).

QUESTION 23. MAIN PROBLEMS IN THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROCESS

“What are the three main problems you face as part of the recruitment and retention process? (Select the 3 main ones)”

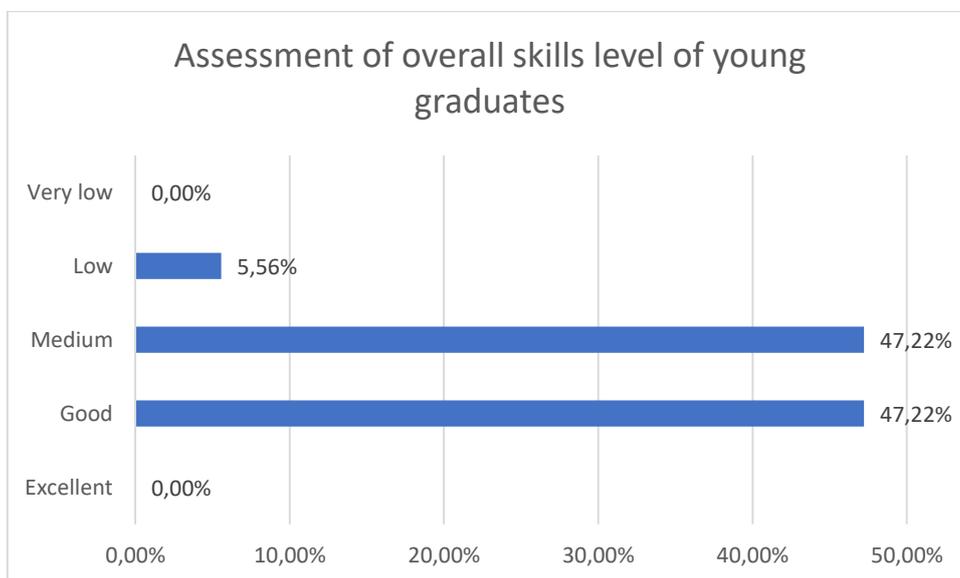


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Most of the participants considered that the three main problems in the recruitment and retention process are: staff training (58%), availability (47%) and attractiveness of work conditions (44%).

QUESTION 24. ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL SKILLS LEVEL OF YOUNG GRADUATES

“How do you judge the overall skills level of young graduates?”

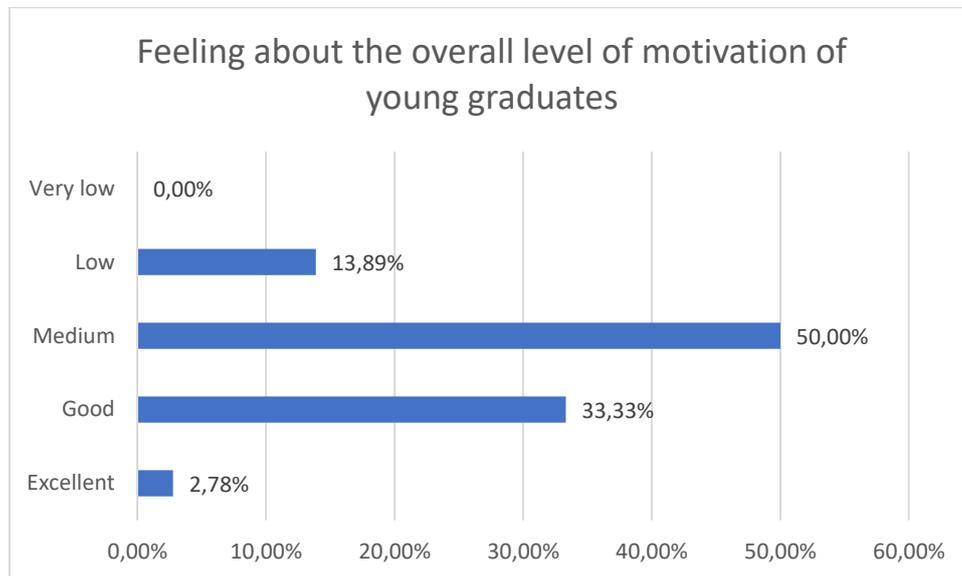


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

The participants assessed the overall skills level of young graduates as good or excellent by high majority (approx. 90%).

QUESTION 25. FEELING ABOUT THE OVERALL LEVEL OF MOTIVATION OF YOUNG GRADUATES

“How do you feel about the overall level of motivation of young graduates?”



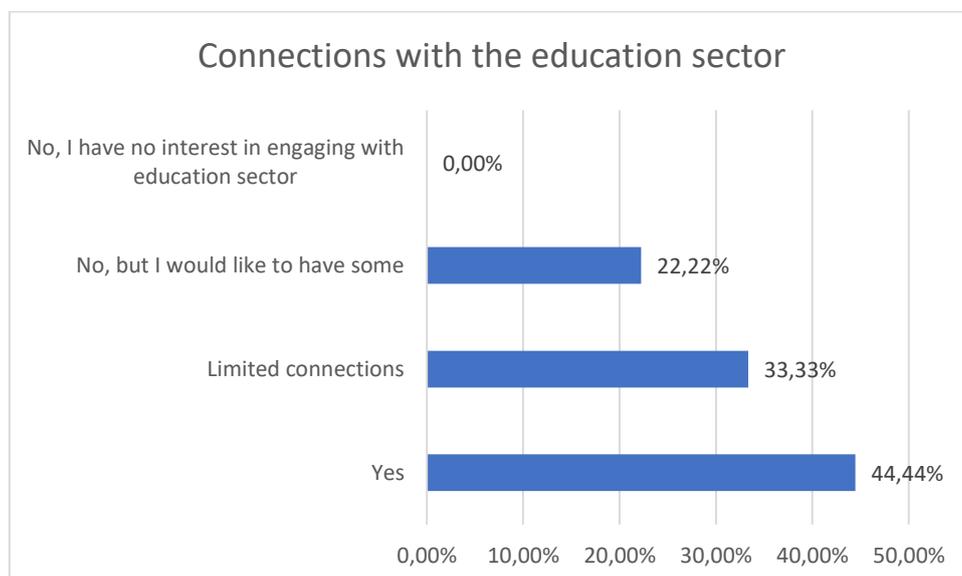
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

The participants felt the overall level of motivation of young graduates as medium (50%) and good (33%). So, the results are satisfactory, since approximately 80% of graduates are motivated.

Partnerships and collaborations

QUESTION 26. CONNECTIONS WITH THE EDUCATION SECTOR

“Do you have connections (at any level) with the education sector (for recruitment, training, knowledge exchange, educational programmes etc.)?”



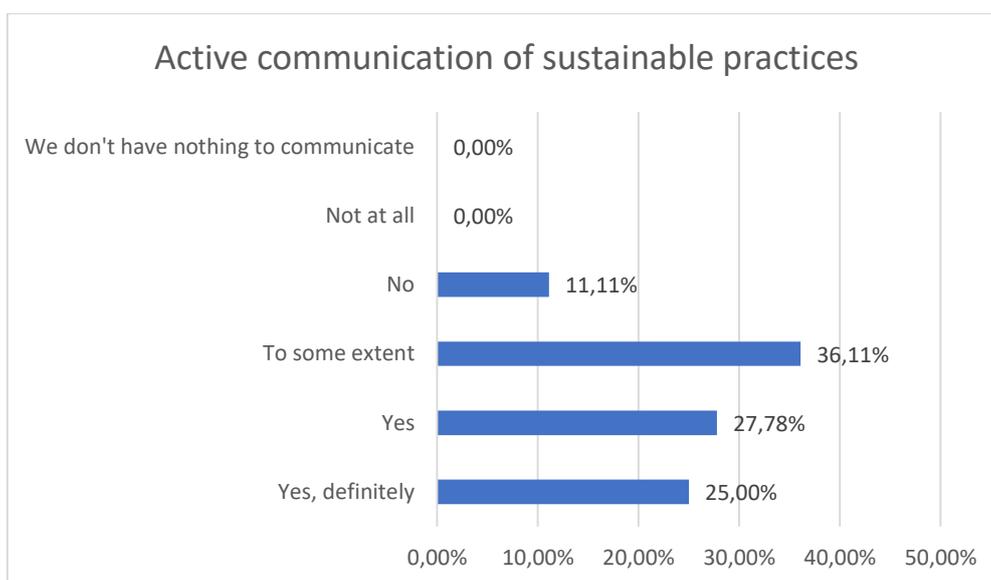
There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

80% of participants have connections (at any level) with the education sector (for recruitment, training, knowledge exchange, educational programmes etc.). 22% have no connections with the educational sector but would like to have some, thus, there is a need identified for the higher level of engagement of the education sector.

Communication and Marketing

QUESTION 27. ACTIVE COMMUNICATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

“Does your business actively communicate its sustainable practices?”

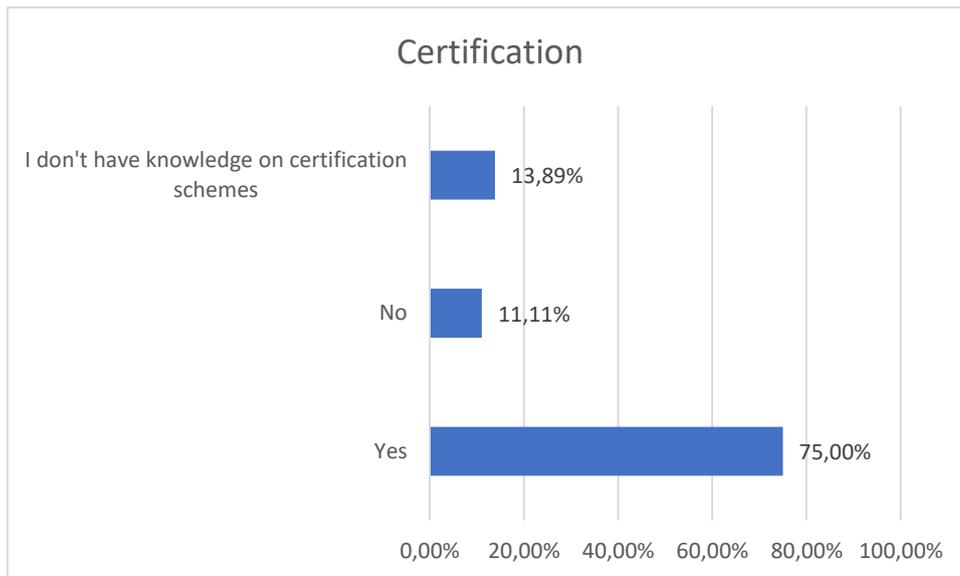


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

90% of the participants revealed that they do communicate their sustainable practices. This means that they see the marketing value of these practices and they have implemented them for economical or conscious responsibility. The idea links back to the sustainable tourism strategy of Slovenia that market the value of the implementation of sustainable business practices (*Strategija Slovenskega turizma 2022- 2028, 2022*).

QUESTION 28. CERTIFICATION

“Are you interested in certification of your business in order to demonstrate your sustainability efforts?”

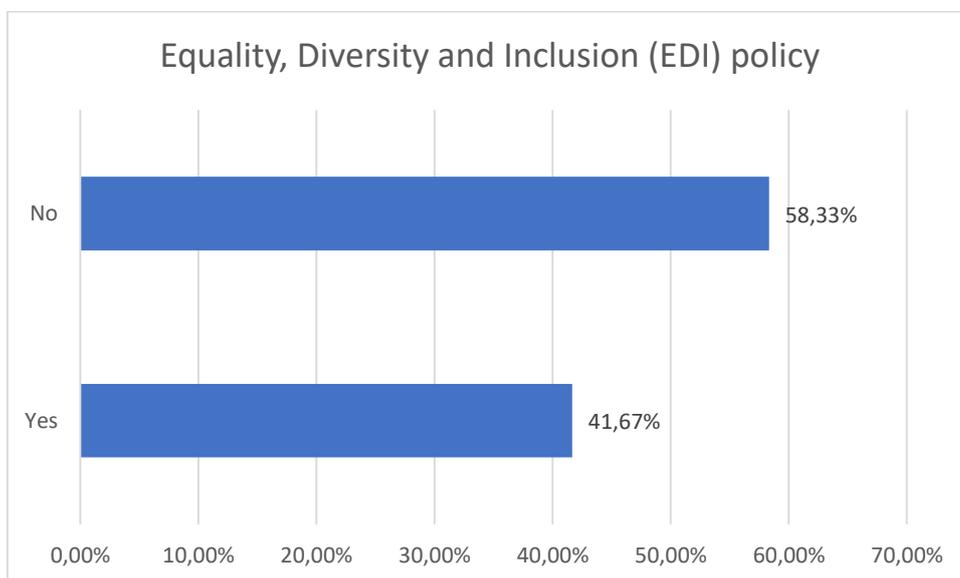


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

75% of participants are interested in certification of their business in order to demonstrate their sustainability efforts. 11% are not interested and 14% answered that they have no knowledge of certification.

QUESTION 29. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICY

"Does your business have an equality, diversity and inclusion policy (EDI)?"



There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Only participants (42%) stated that their business has equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy and 58% answered that their business does not have EDI policy. Compared to other partner countries the figures are turned upside down. However, the reason behind this might

be in lower levels of diversity in Slovenia where the environment is historically less multicultural, thus inclusion policies have only recently become a standard.

With the best practices compilation, the most interesting will be identified.

QUESTION 30. STAFF TRAINING

“Among the following training options, apart from sustainable business management, which ones could your business and staff benefit from? (multiple answers possible)”

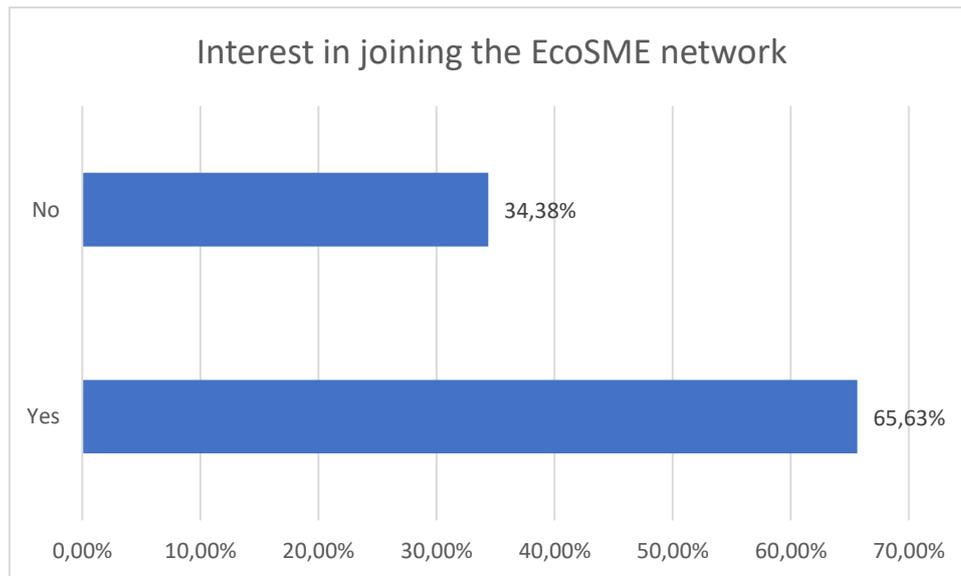


There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

Among all the skills stated, the most desired trainings are on digital competencies and innovation in gastronomy. Most of the topics pointed out by owners and managers can be worked on from the point of view of sustainability in the training modules.

QUESTION 31. INTEREST IN JOINING THE ECOSME NETWORK

“Are you interested in joining the EcoSME network of stakeholders in order to network with other SMEs across Europe and exchange best practices about sustainable business management?”



There were 40 answers to his question, while 12 respondents skipped this question.

66% of participants are interested in joining the EcoSME network of hospitality SMEs, which will allow for networking and the exchange of best practices on sustainable business management.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Results highlight the pandemic contributed to an increased awareness of the need for more sustainable business practices for their SMEs in Slovenia. The pandemic has led most to implement more sustainable practices in their SMEs and are actively planning to make their business more sustainable. This also results from the fact that the majority are aware of the advantages of a sustainability strategy for their businesses. Pandemic has created opportunities for some and not for others.

Equally, the results are coming to light in an interesting time of drastic increase of energy prices. The question on energy prices has been previously linked to sustainability business model, however, in the light of coming socio-economic challenges, this might not be the case anymore. These previously argued 'hard sustainability elements' (i.e. energy) will now become essential and 'soft sustainability elements (i.e EDI policy) will become of less importance. Nevertheless, in the light of the application of sustainable business models both are remaining a must.

5. REFERENCES

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