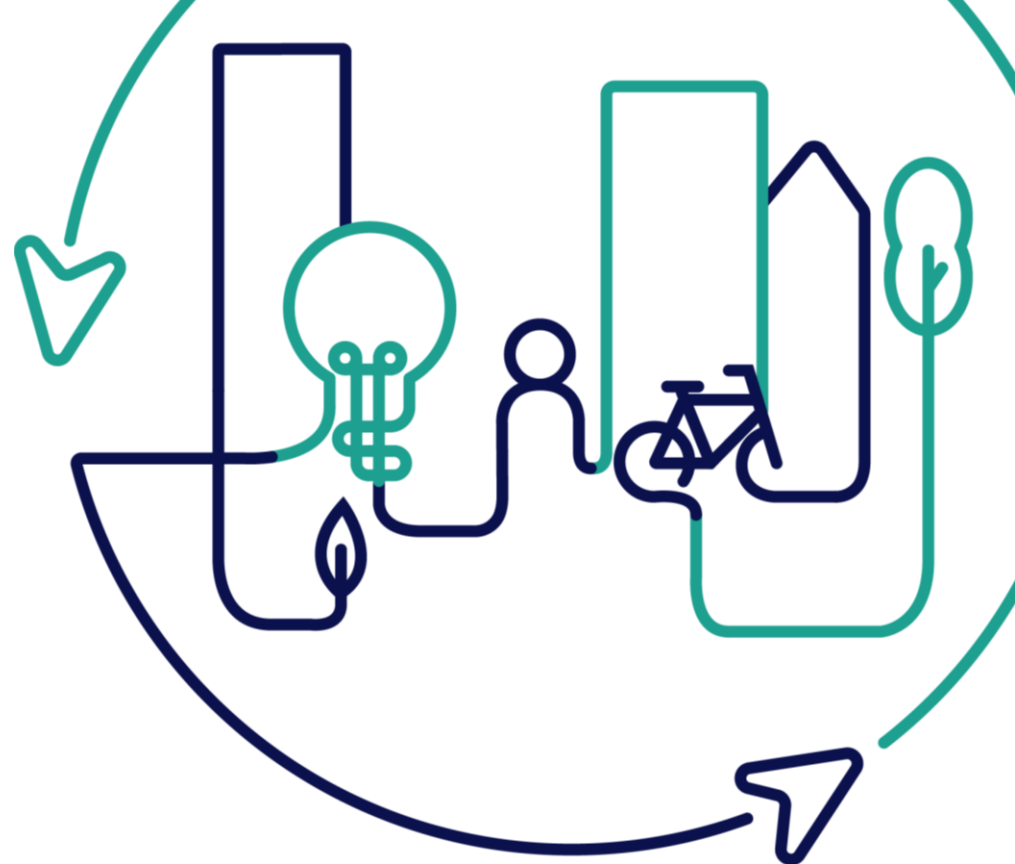


# EUROPEAN U R B A N INITIATIVE



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# URBAN NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

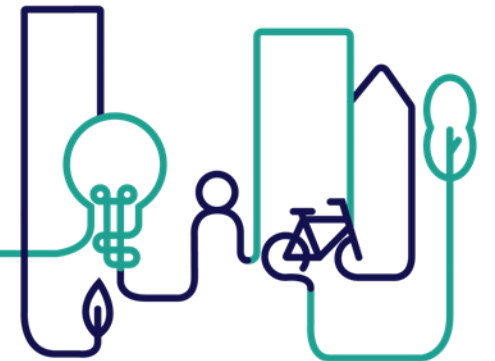
## Results of the Forward-Looking Survey

European Week of Regions and Cities

08 October 2024

Carlotta Fioretti, European Urban Initiative Expert

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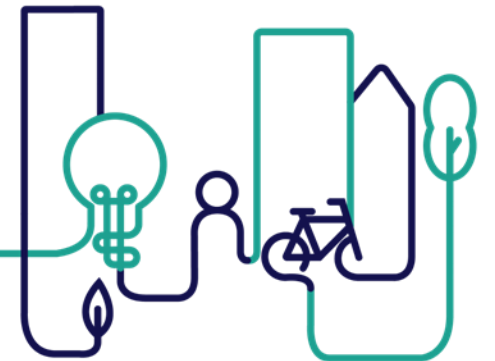
# The Forward-Looking Survey

Activity of the European Urban Initiative – EUI

Objectives:

- **to hear the voice of EU cities** and all relevant stakeholders
- **to identify priorities, challenges and support needs** in the field of sustainable urban development.
- to ensure that EUI **activities and services are aligned** with them.

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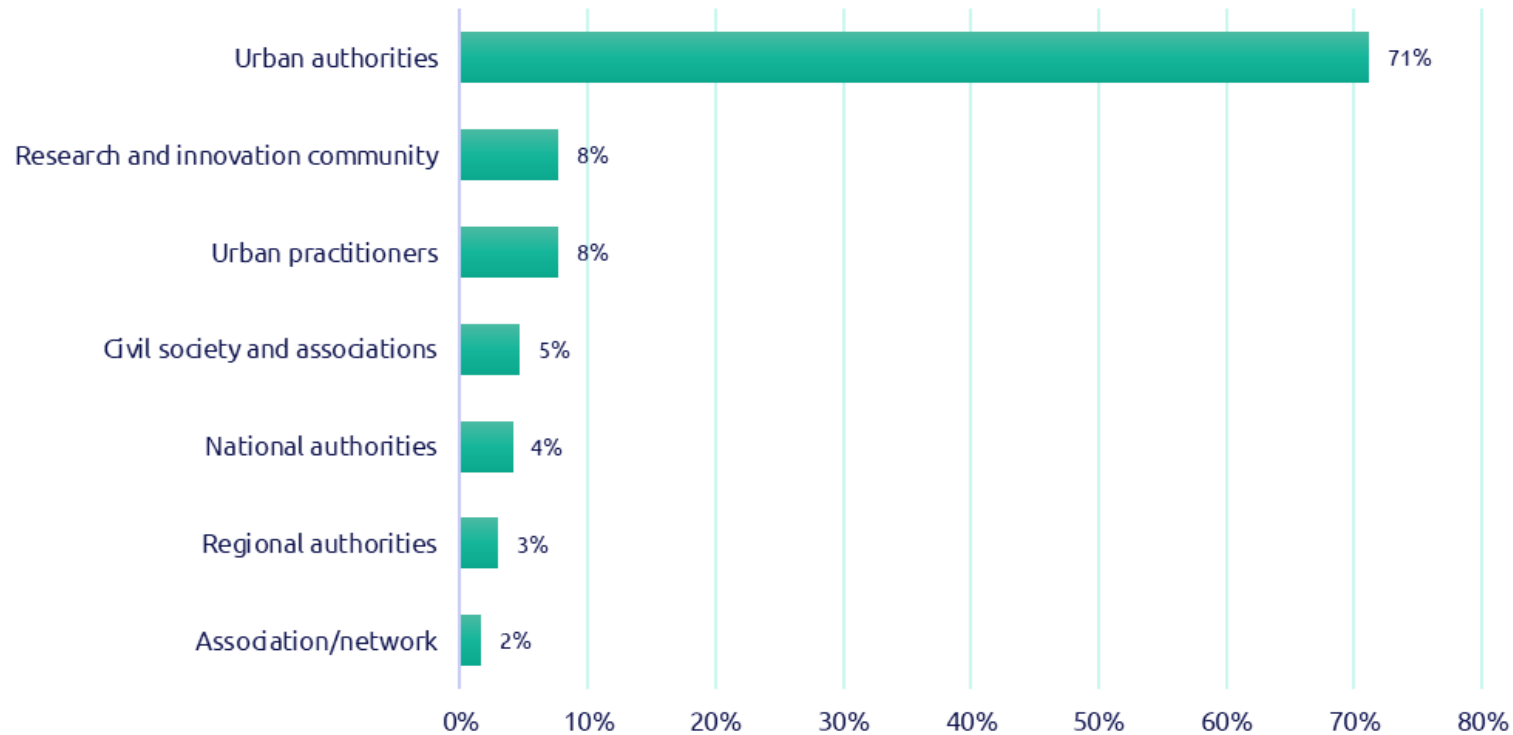
**1**  
**PROFILE OF  
RESPONDENTS**



## Who responded to the survey

- **364 responses** coming from **104 different regions across 25 EU countries**, covering almost all Member States (except Luxembourg and Malta)
- Most of the responses, **54%**, came **from less developed regions**
- Extremely **high participation from Poland and Portugal**, followed by Spain, Hungary and Italy

## Which type of organisation/community do you represent?



- **259 responses (71%)** came from representatives of **urban authorities**
- **76%** of urban authorities who responded were either **towns or small cities** (less than 250.000 inhabitants)



2

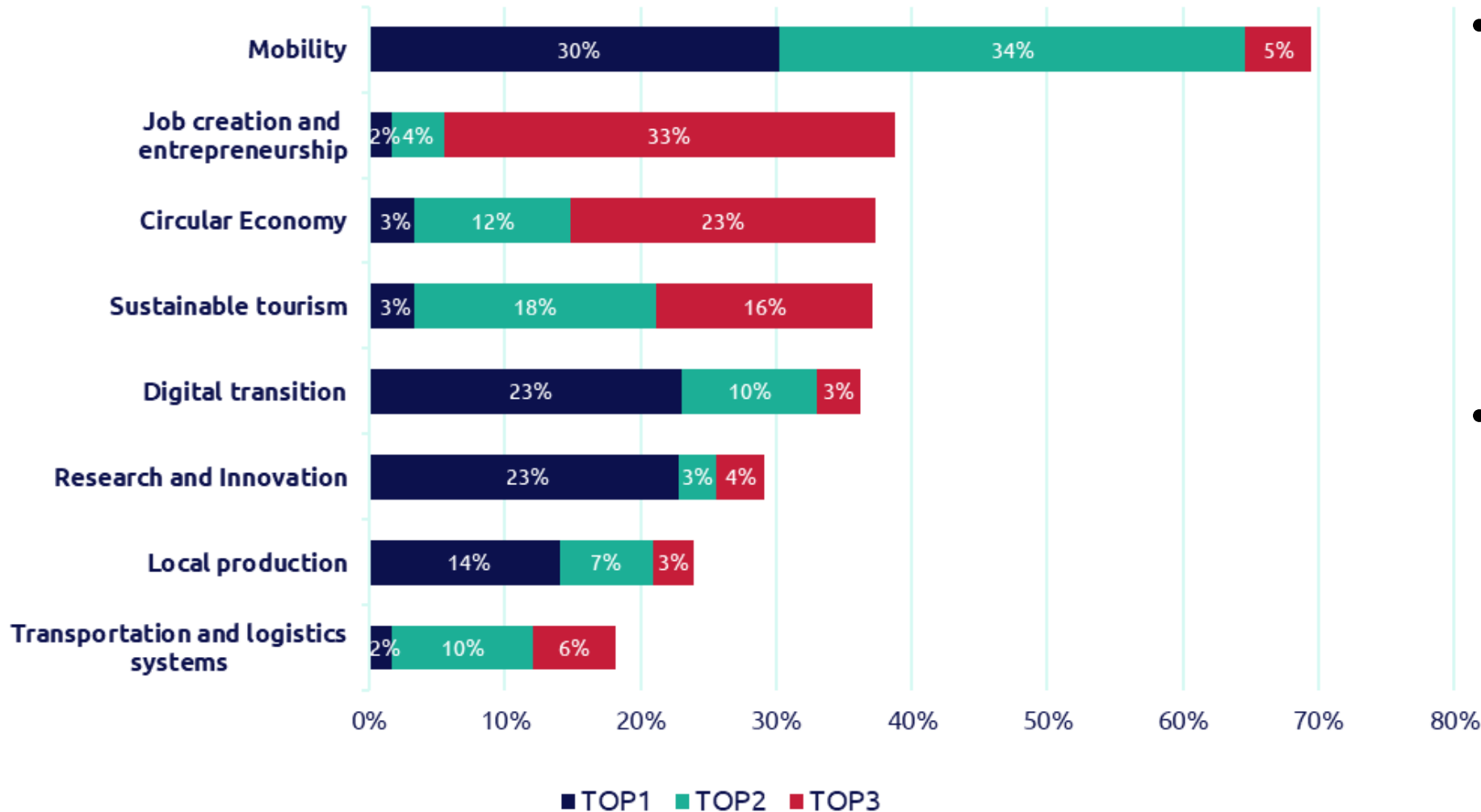
**PRIORITIES  
AND NEEDS**

# MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT



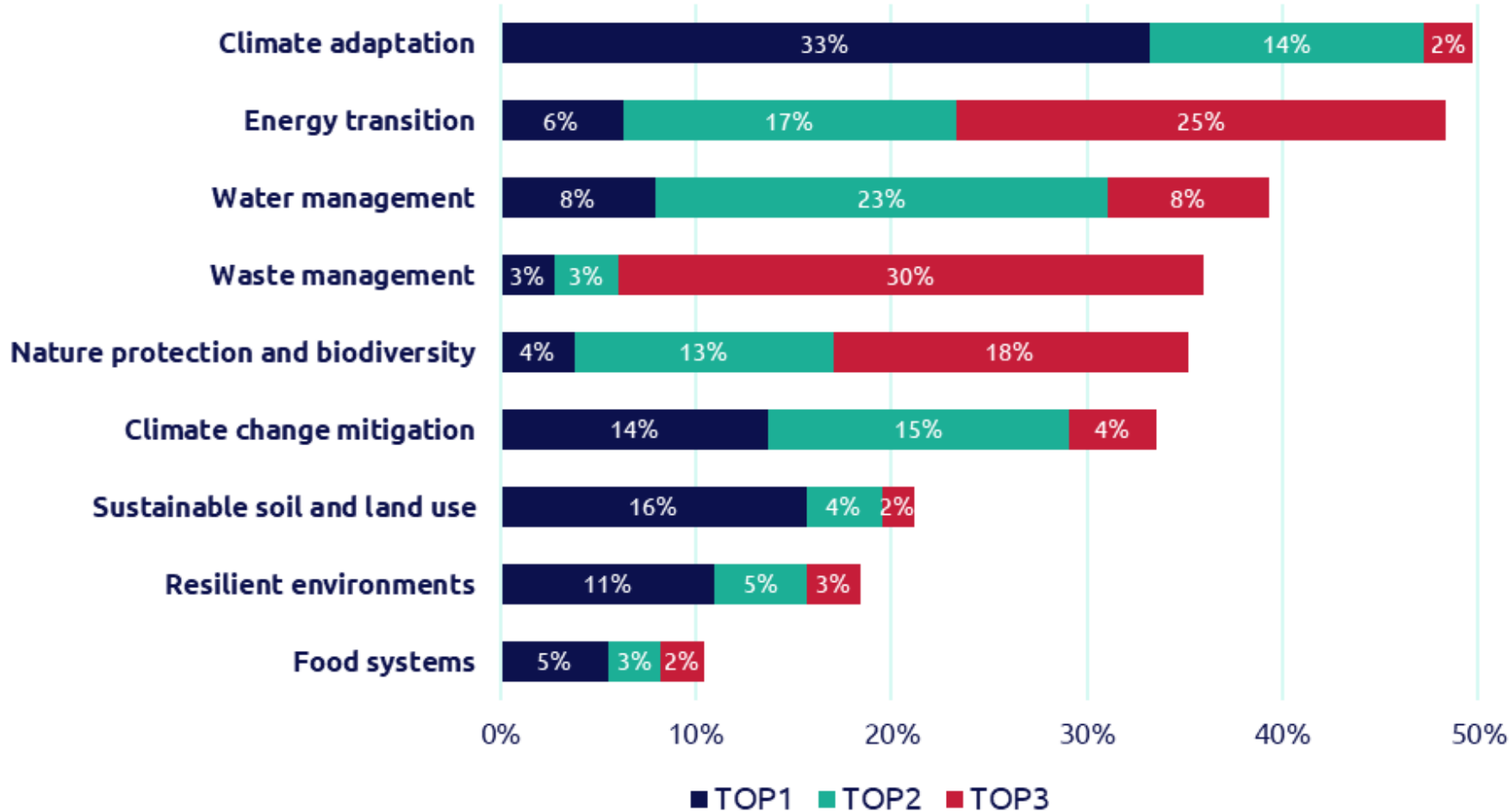


# Priorities for the productive, smart and connected city



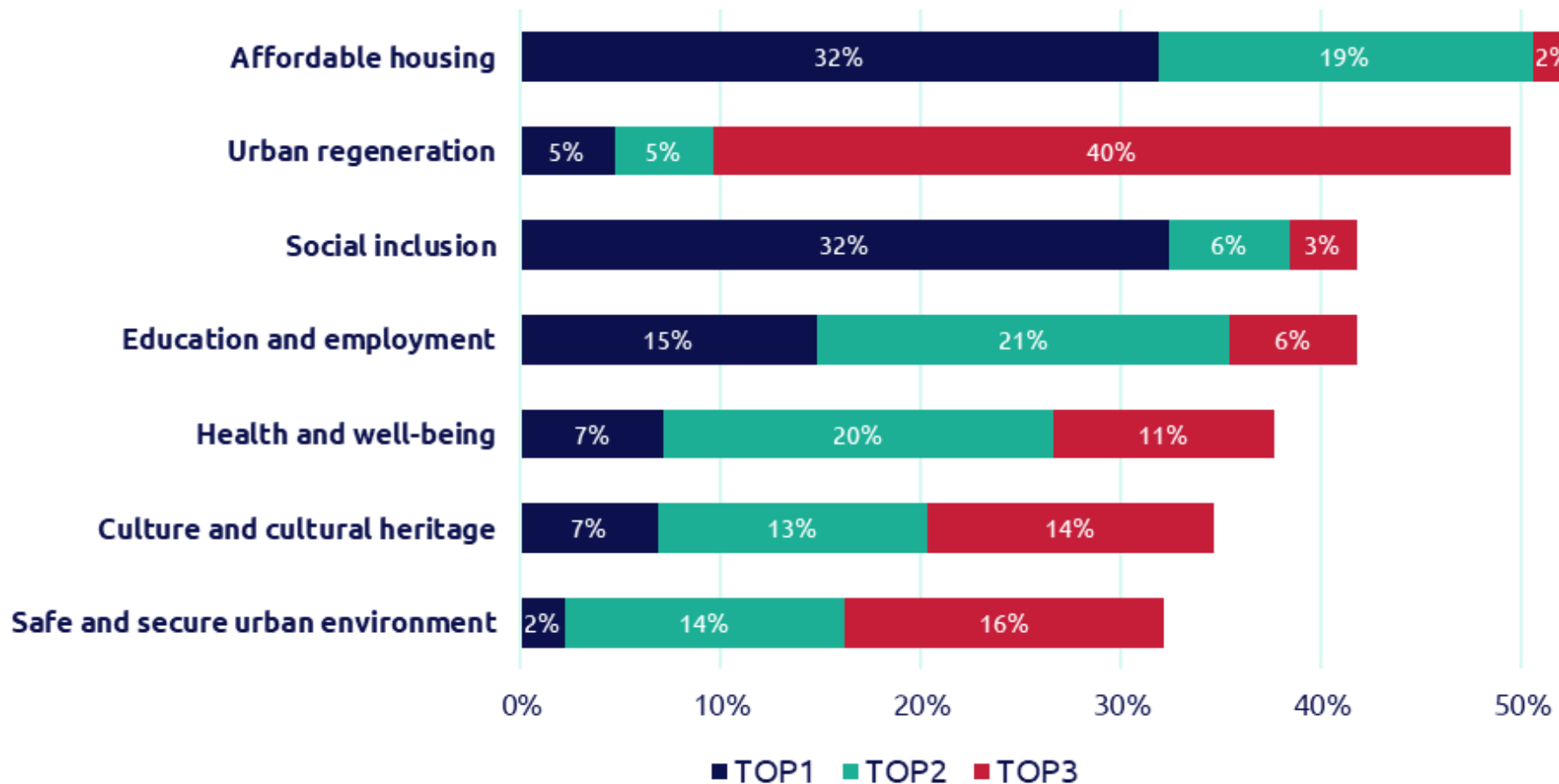
- **Mobility** was selected as the top 1 priority by 30% of respondents and by 70% of respondents overall
- **Key words:** active mobility, walkable and cyclable cities, green public transport, sustainable mobility, traffic management

# Priorities for the green city



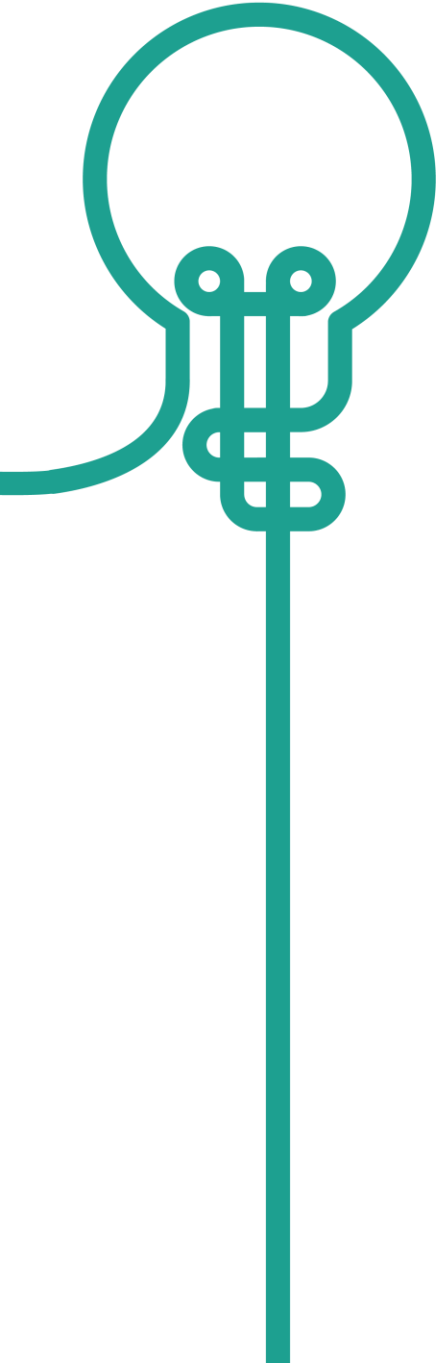
- **Climate adaptation** was selected as the top 1 priority by 33% of respondents and by 50% of respondents overall
- **Key words:** green and blue infrastructures, urban heat mitigation, rainwater management, extreme weather conditions

# Priorities for the just and inclusive city



- **Affordable housing** was selected as the top 1 priority by 32% of respondents and by 53% of respondents overall

- **Key words:** public housing, vulnerable groups, housing market, rental housing, housing policy, city centres, housing inequalities



- The most important priorities for sustainable urban development vary according to the **level of development of the region** and the **size of the city** reflecting the **unique characteristics and needs of urban areas**

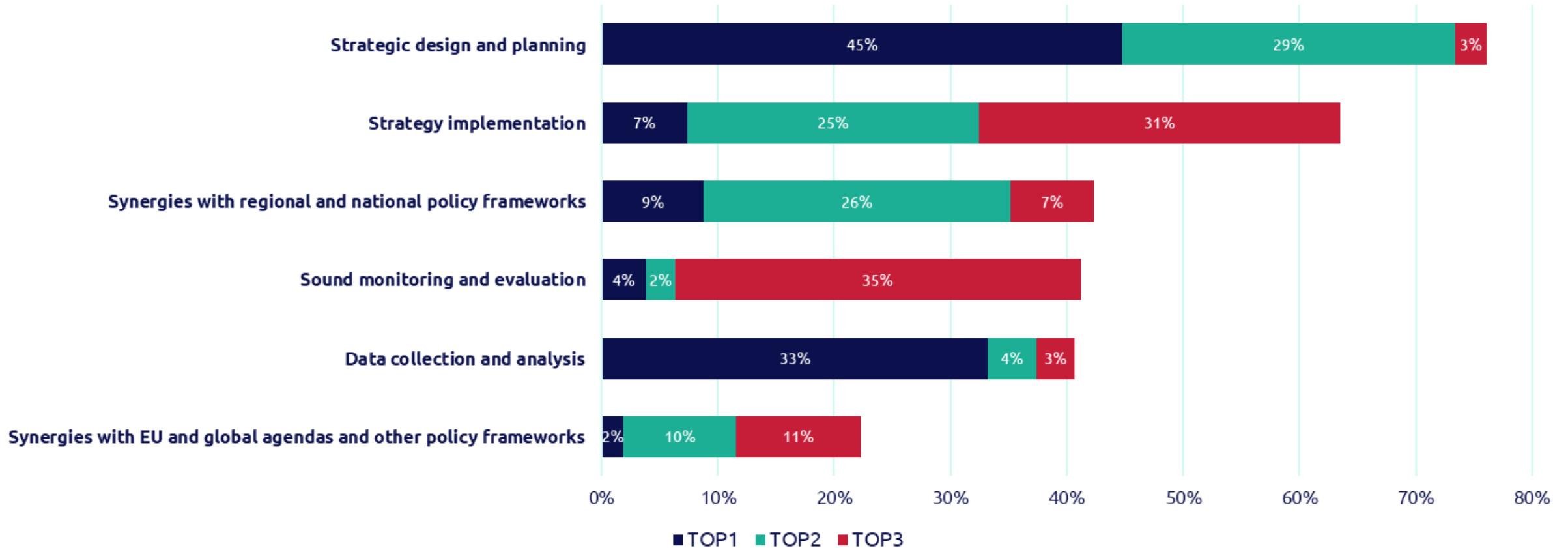
- **Larger cities and more developed regions** prioritise **circular economy and research and innovation, climate adaptation and mitigation**
- **Affordable housing**, and even more evidently, **Social inclusion**, become more prioritized as the size of the city grows

- **Smaller cities and less developed regions** prioritise **job creation and digital transition, water and waste management**
- **Culture and heritage**, and even more evidently, **health and wellbeing**, become more prioritized as the size of the city shrink

# **MOST CHALLENGING OPERATIONAL NEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

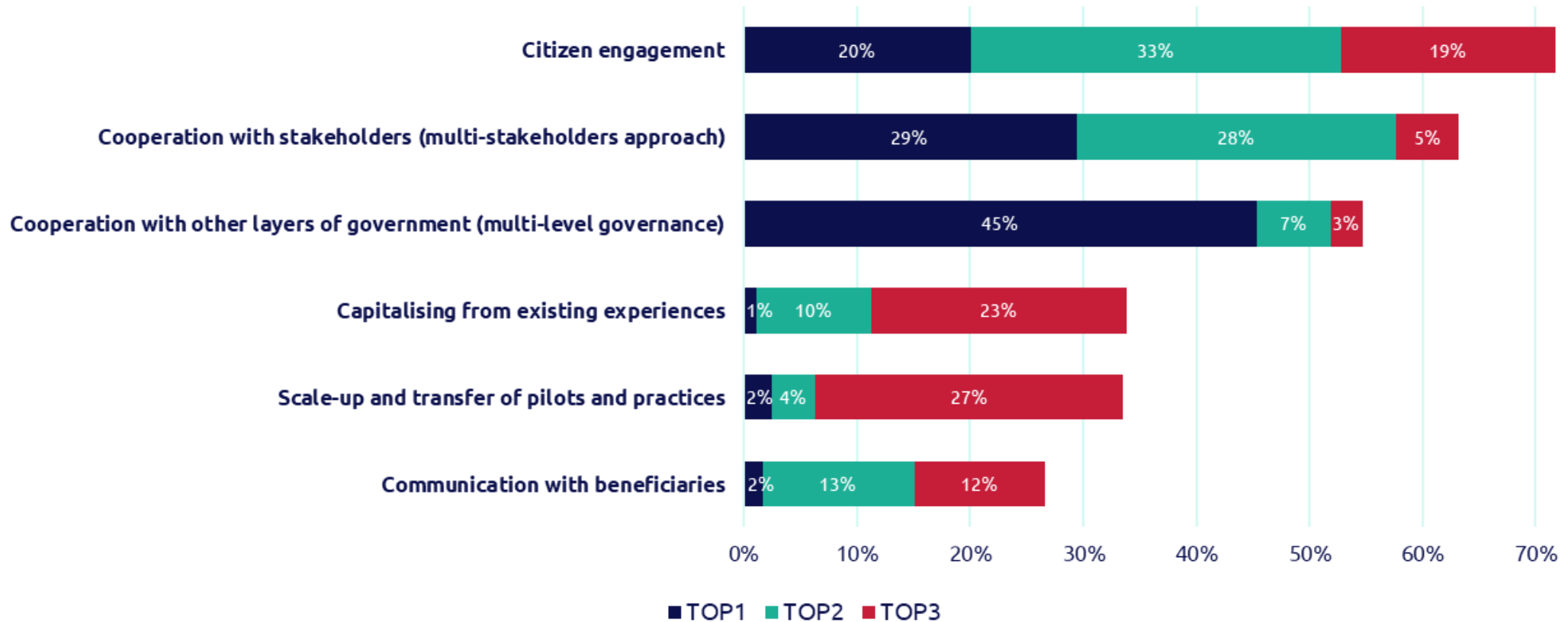


# Operational needs for the strategic policy process



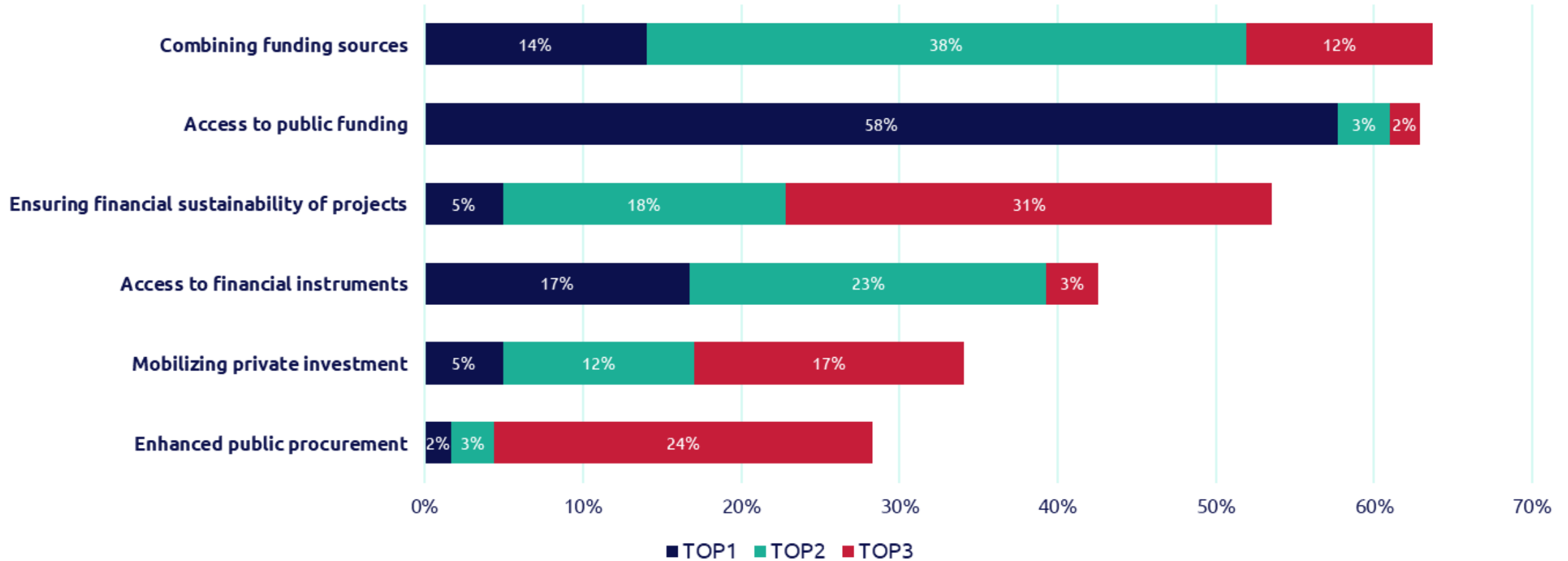
- **Strategic design and planning** was selected as the top 1 operational need by 45% of respondents, and overall by 76% of them
- **Key words:** local context, governance, implementation mechanisms, long-term goals, strategic vision

# Operational needs for governance and cooperation



- **Multi-level governance** was selected as the top 1 operational need by 45% of respondents, and overall by 55% of them
- **Key words:** mechanisms of collaboration, metropolitan and regional governance, communication, political issues

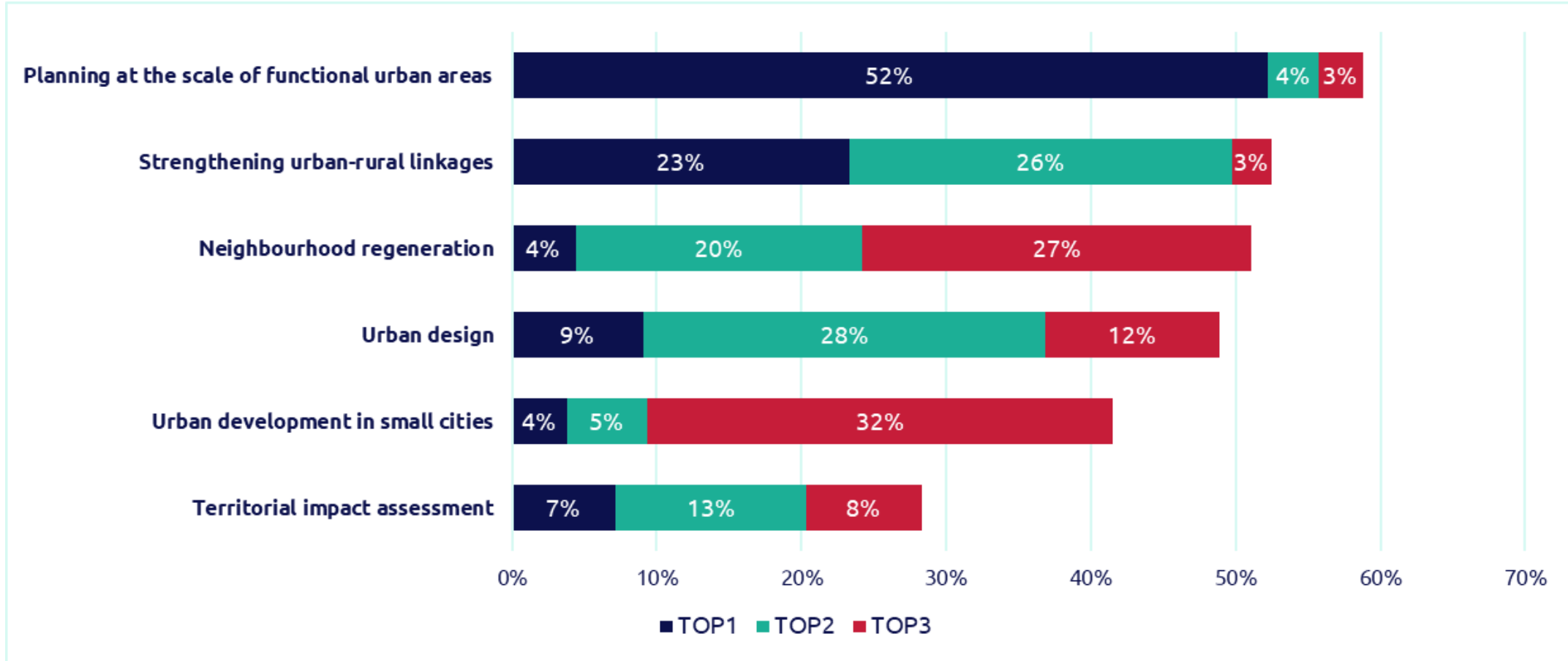
# Operational needs for funding and finance



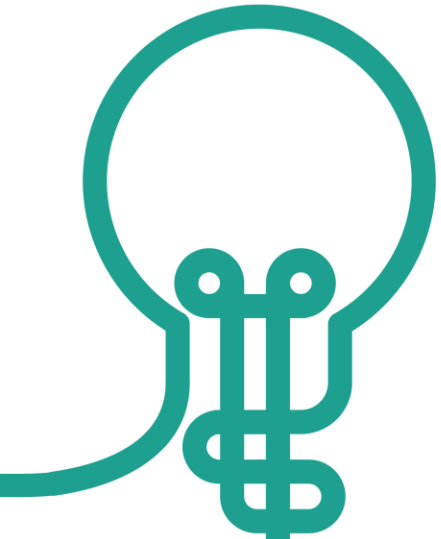
- **Access to public funding** was selected as the top 1 operational need by 58% of respondents, and overall by 63% of them
- **Key words:** application process, identification of sources, funding criteria, local resources, lack of funding



# Operational needs for territorial focus and scale



- **Planning at the scale of the FUAs** was selected as the top 1 operational need by 52% of respondents, and overall by 59% of them
- **Key words:** cooperation, cross-border projects, FUA delineation, planning instruments, administrative framework



- The most challenging operational need for sustainable urban development vary to certain extent according to the **size of the city** reflecting the **different levels of complexity of the governance system**, and **the different structures, capacity and resources of the local administrations according to the size**

**Larger cities** focus more on strategy implementation, multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance, combination of funds

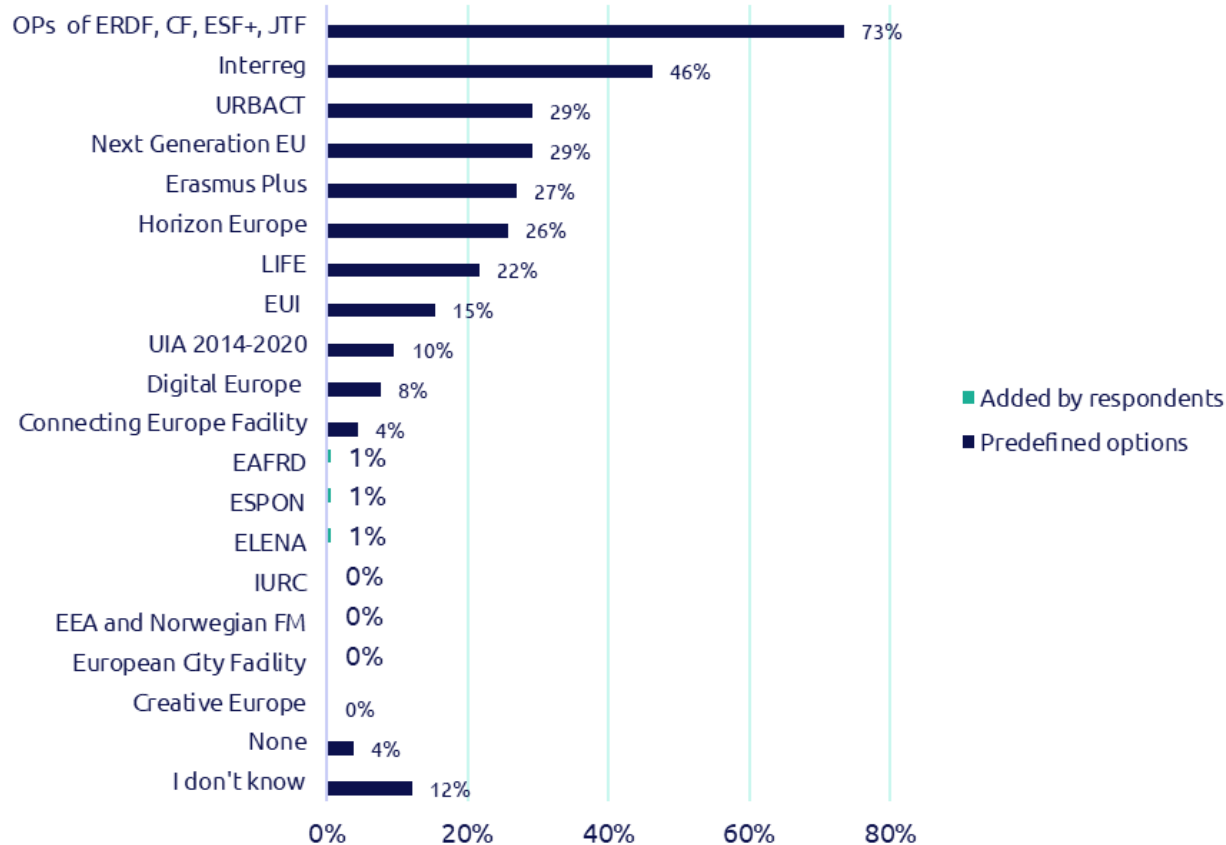
**Smaller cities** focus more on strategy design and citizen engagement



**3**  
**URBAN  
DIMENSION OF  
EU INITIATIVES**

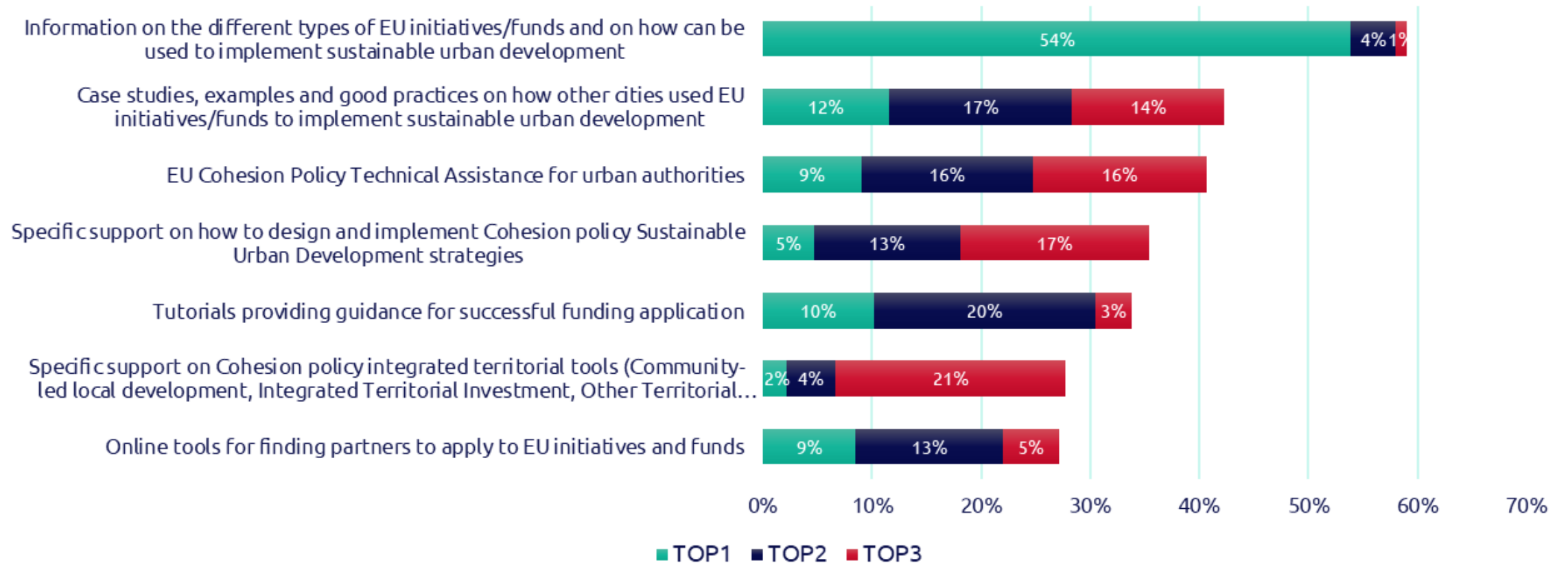
# Use of EU initiatives to implement sustainable urban development policies

Which ones of the following EU initiatives and/or funds has your city/organization used to implement sustainable urban development strategies or broader urban policies in the past 10 years ?



- 51% of respondents selected from **2 to 5 EU initiatives**
- **Cohesion Policy** initiatives are the most often selected
- **Erasmus Plus** was selected in particular by towns and **Horizon and Life** by medium-large cities

# Most needed support to better use EU initiatives



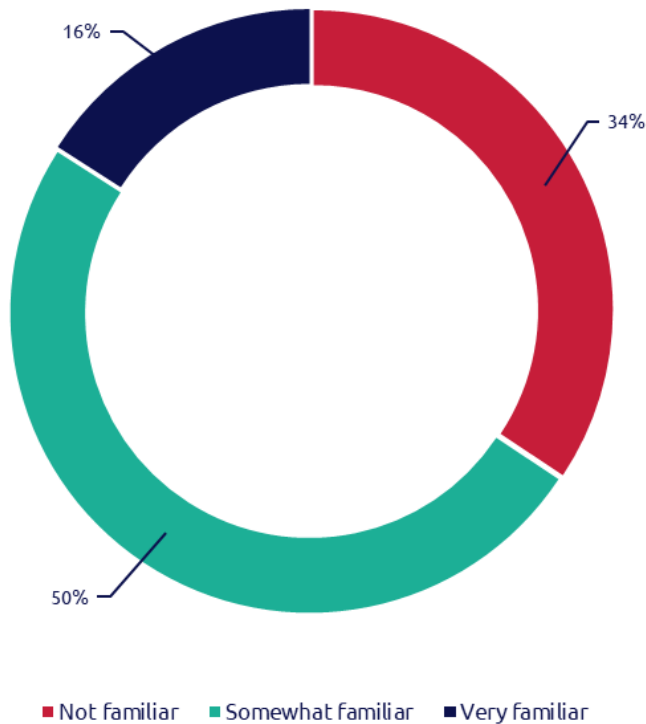
Notwithstanding the large use of EU initiatives, respondents think that the most important type of support they need is **more accessible information** on the **different types of EU initiatives** and funding opportunities.



**4**  
**EUI & ITS**  
**SERVICE OFFER**

# Knowledge of the European Urban Initiative

How familiar are you with the European Urban Initiative - EUI?



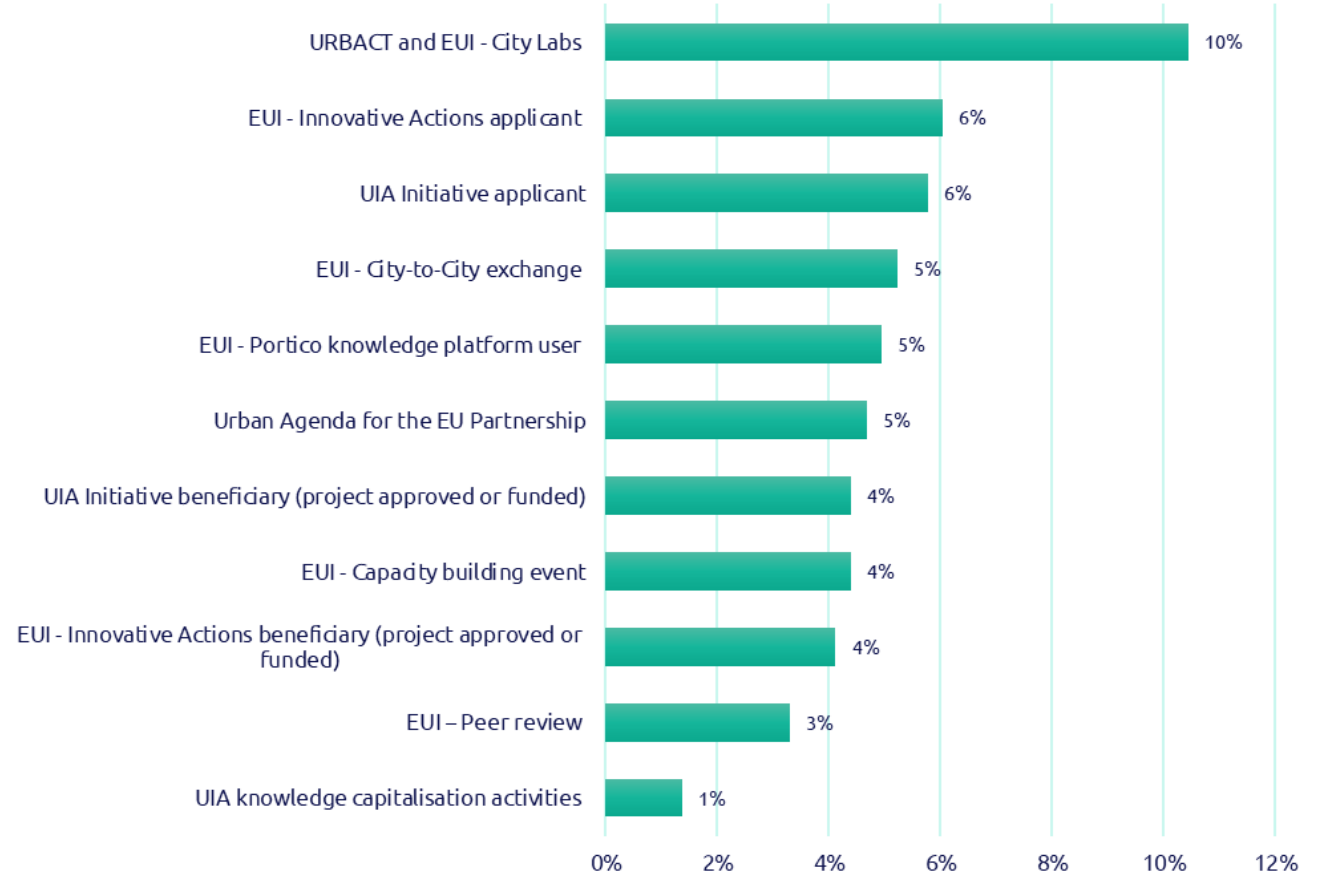
- Most of respondents (**74%**) **are familiar** with the European Urban Initiative
- They associate it with the key words **Sustainable urban development** (69%); **Innovation** (36%) and **Funding opportunities** (31%)
- Among respondents representing **towns**, more than **50%** were **not familiar with EUI**

# Participation into EUI activities

Has your city or organisation ever been involved in one of the activities of the European Urban Initiative (EUI) and/or Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) ?



## Which activity have you participated in?

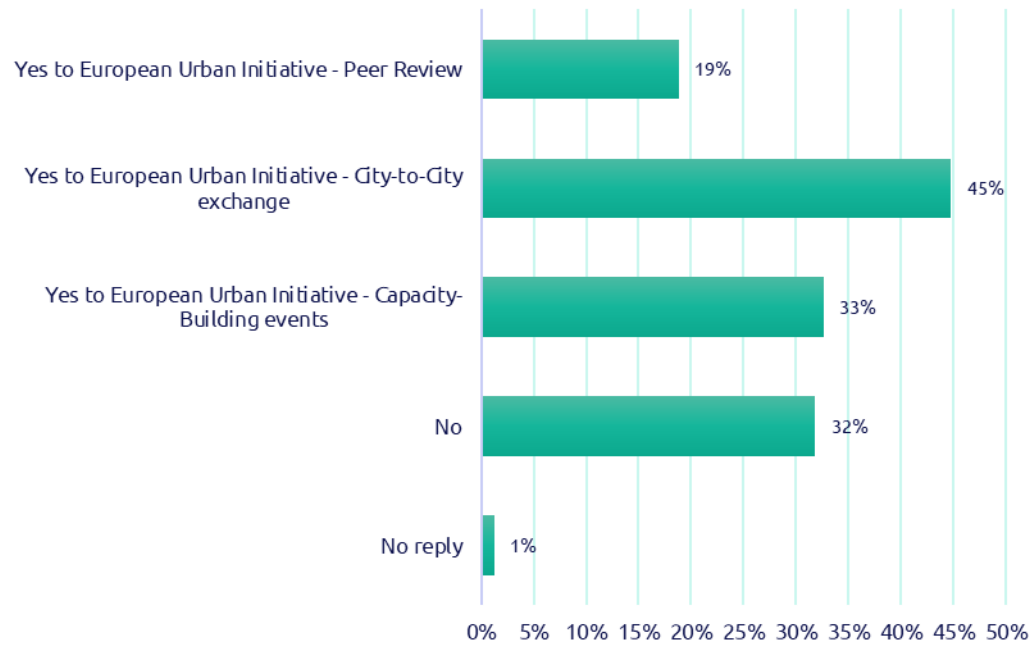


**22% of all respondents** have taken part to **Innovative Actions** and **13% to Capacity Building activities**

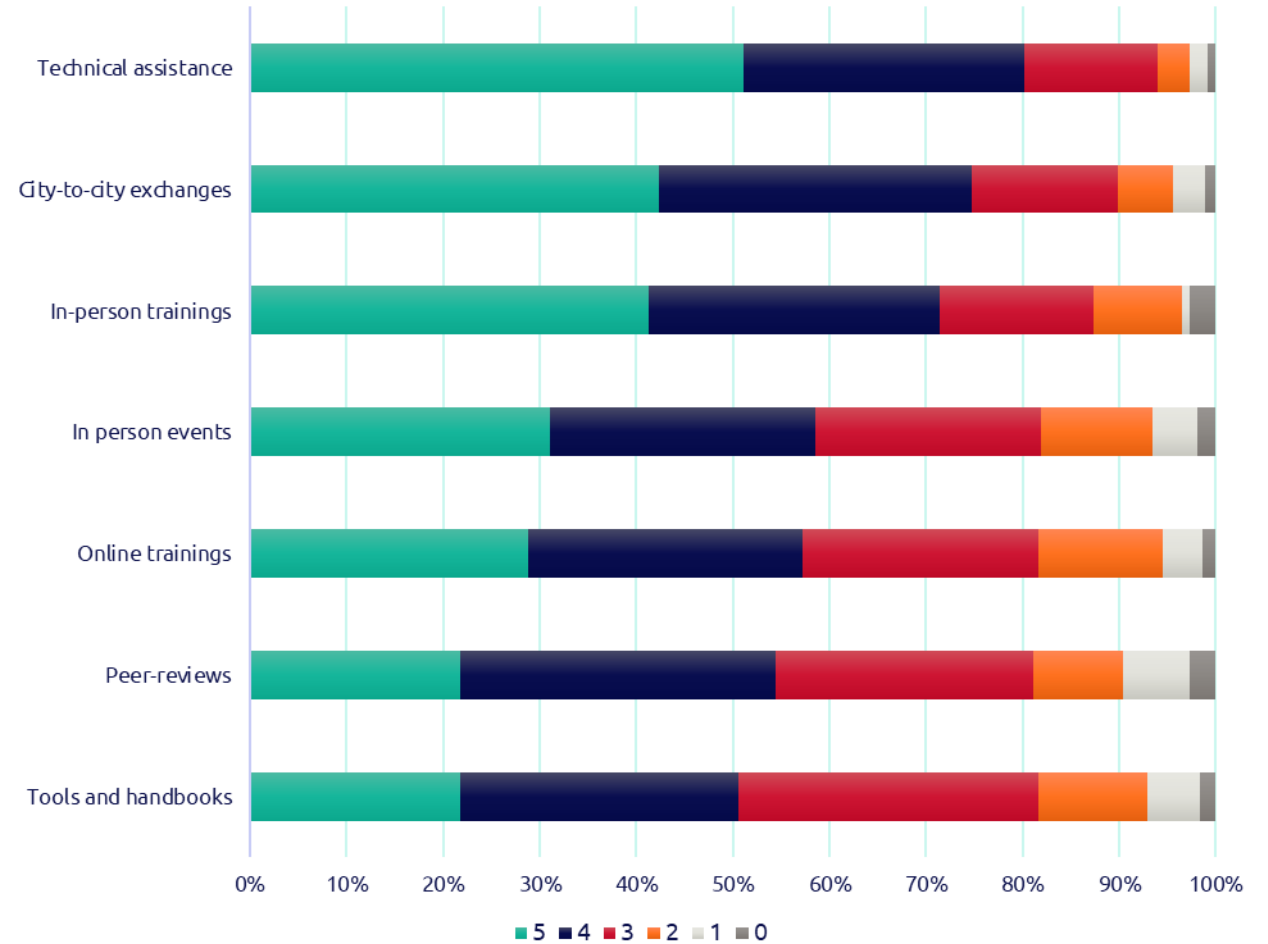


# Capacity Building

Is your city or organisation planning to participate in EUI Capacity Building activities in the future?



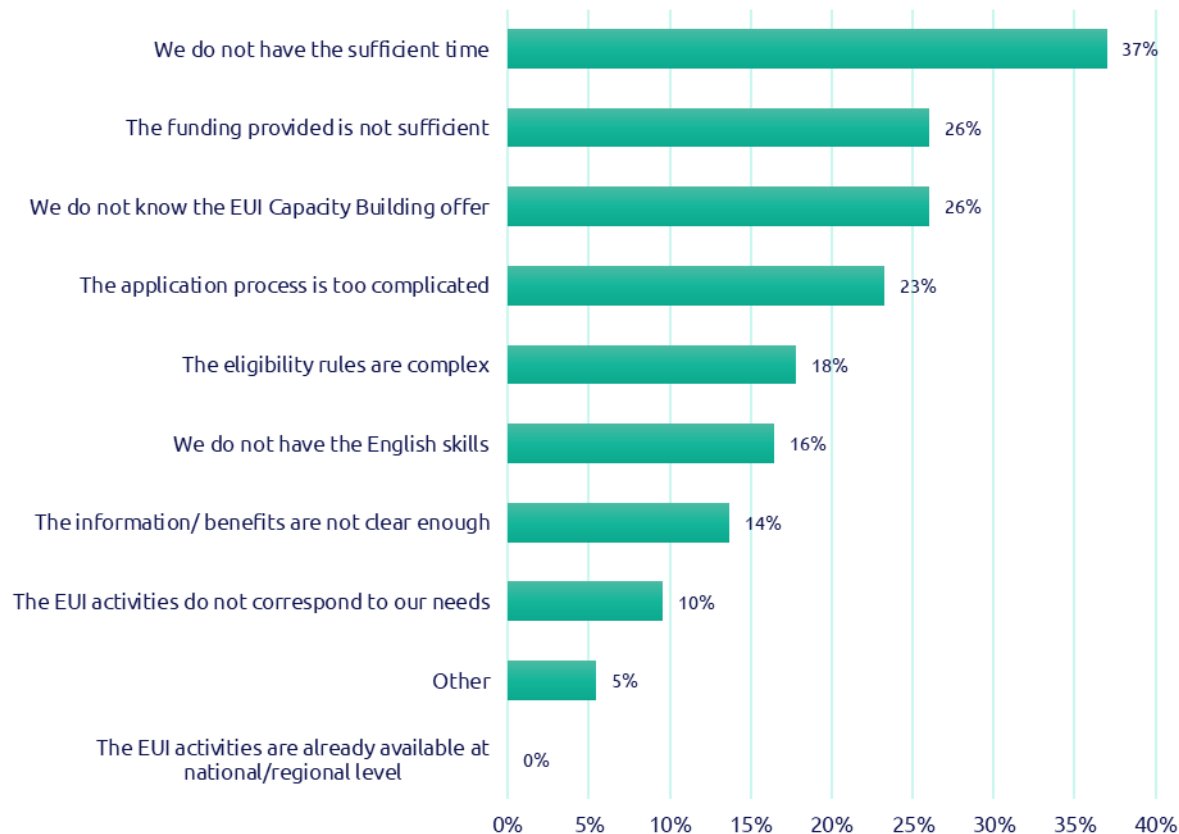
Which type of format is more useful in terms of capacity building for sustainable urban development?



- Of the 239 respondents who are familiar with the EUI offer, **67%** them are planning to participate in one of the EUI capacity building activities **in the near future**.
- There is especially high interest for **City-to-City Exchanges**

# Reasons for not participating in capacity building activities

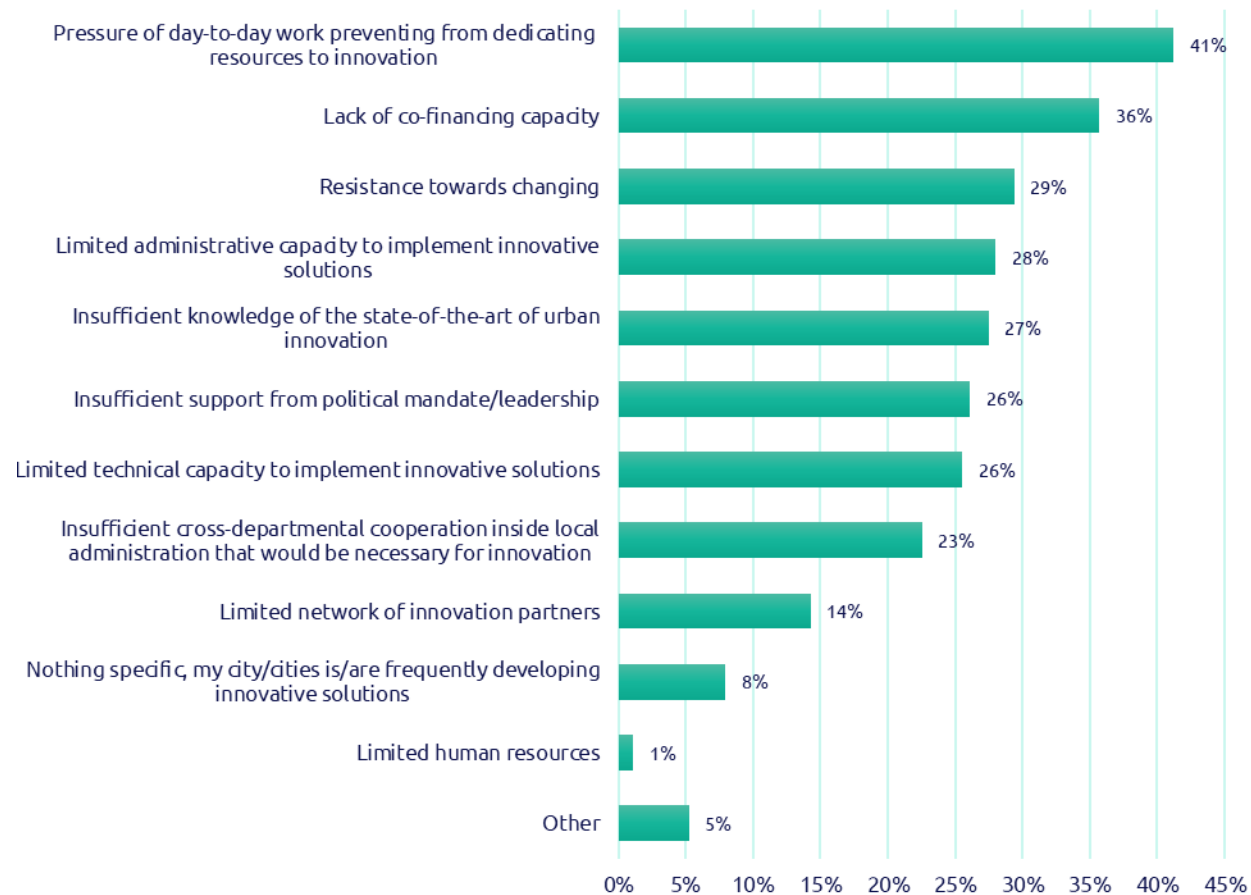
What are the reasons for not participating to EUI Capacity Building activities?



- The main barrier to participation is the **lack of time, followed by insufficient funding and lack of information.**
- **Only 7 respondents** to this question (10%) said that **the EUI offer does not correspond to their needs.**

# Barriers to innovation

What are the three main barriers preventing your city/cities from developing innovative solutions for urban challenges?



- Top barriers: **Pressure of day-to-day work, lack of co-financing capacity** and **resistance towards changing**
- Slightly **different ranking for cities' representatives**, also according to their **size**. E.g. Medium and large size cities identified as a key barrier the **Insufficient cross-departmental cooperation inside local administration**

## Key messages

- The survey successfully reached its main target: **urban authorities, less developed regions, and small cities** (a unique opportunity to listen to this specific segment).
- **Priorities and needs vary** depending on the level of development of the region and the size of the city, reflecting the unique characteristics of urban contexts
- Cities are **proactive in using EU initiatives** to promote sustainable urban development policies. Not just Cohesion Policy funds (e.g. Erasmus Plus, Horizon).
- There is high interest in **City-to City exchanges** as a format for capacity building
- **Innovative Actions** is a popular activity promoted by EUI, but there are still several types of barriers that prevent cities from innovating

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**Thank you**

