

NAP & ERP Initiatives

Understanding Local Government User Needs

6th October 2023



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

GAME CHANGERS



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Background & objectives



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Background

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is undergoing extensive work to limit the impacts of climate change and reduce communities' exposure and vulnerability to a changing environment.

MfE's Climate Change Division is developing several initiatives to help drive climate action which are both mitigation and adaption focused. To inform this work, an understanding of the needs of various groups is required to help develop risk-informed resources (including guidance and tools) to drive climate action.

Objectives

To understand how to enable climate action with guidance and tools that are based on local government needs:

- Understand councils' current and future needs and barriers in their climate-related work, and how MfE can address these needs through the development of tools, guidance, data provision, and resources
- Gauge what kinds of tools / resources / data would help councils in their climate-related work and in driving climate action in their region (not including policy statements or instruments)
- Understand how these needs are organised, from critical to low priority

Research approach



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Approach

QUALITATIVE

The qualitative stage aimed to test the quantitative questionnaire outline with key council staff (selected from the Ministry's lists), targeting councils likely to have high, yet different needs.

- **Sample size:** n=3 x 1-hour interviews online via Microsoft Teams
- **Fieldwork:** 28 June–5 July
- **Recruitment:** Via MfE contacts list
- **Incentive:** Participants did not receive an incentive

Note: Qualitative insights are based on a small sample size (n=3), but we are confident these insights are reflective of council staff.

QUANTITATIVE

The quantitative stage aimed to better understand the needs of NZ councils.

- **Sample size (completed interviews):** n=50 local government staff responsible for managing climate response and action in their communities, consisting of various ratepayer bases and council staff sizes; recruited via client-provided lists
- **Methodology:** Online interviews
- **Fieldwork dates:** 15 August–12 September
- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Weighting:** Data was not weighted
- **Response rates:** Due to the use of an open link, it is not possible to calculate response rates. An email invite to the survey was sent by Ipsos to n=484 respondents with an individual link. An open link (to be used by multiple respondents) was sent to members of ACAN and ACCN. Recipients could also forward the open link to other relevant colleagues.

Sample makeup

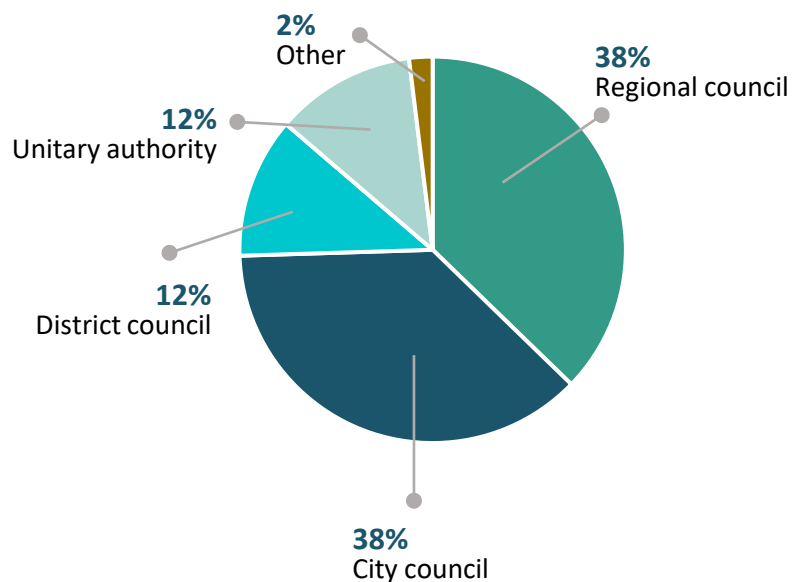
COMPLETED AS AN INDIVIDUAL VS GROUP

n=7
Individual

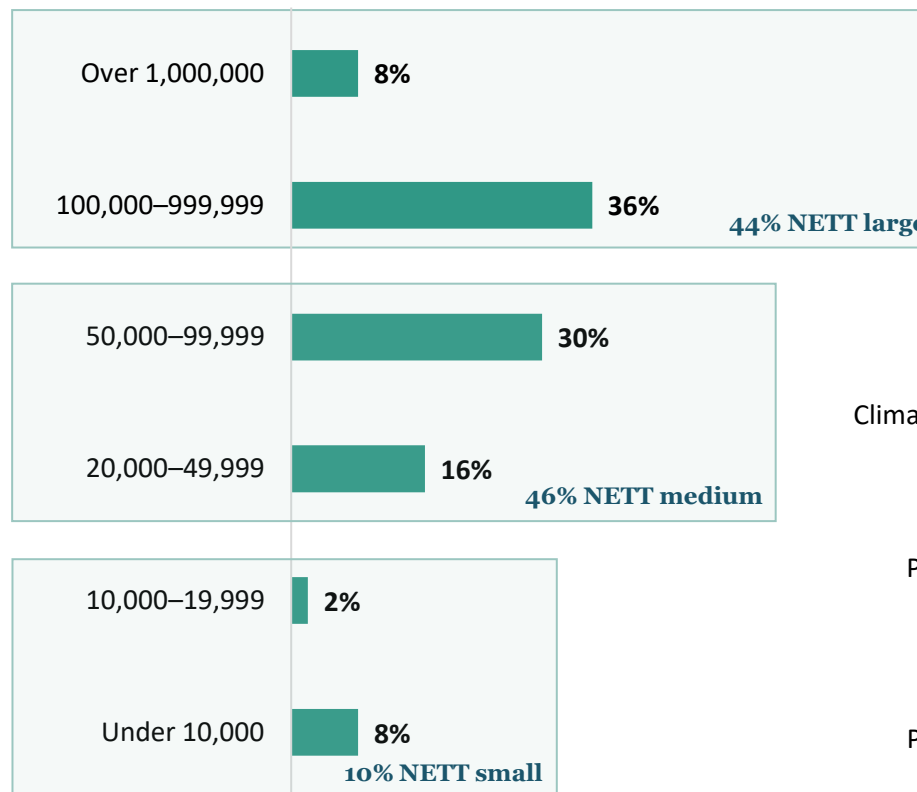
n=16 (70%*)
As a group

n=27
Not asked the question

COUNCIL TYPE



RESIDENTS IN COUNCIL

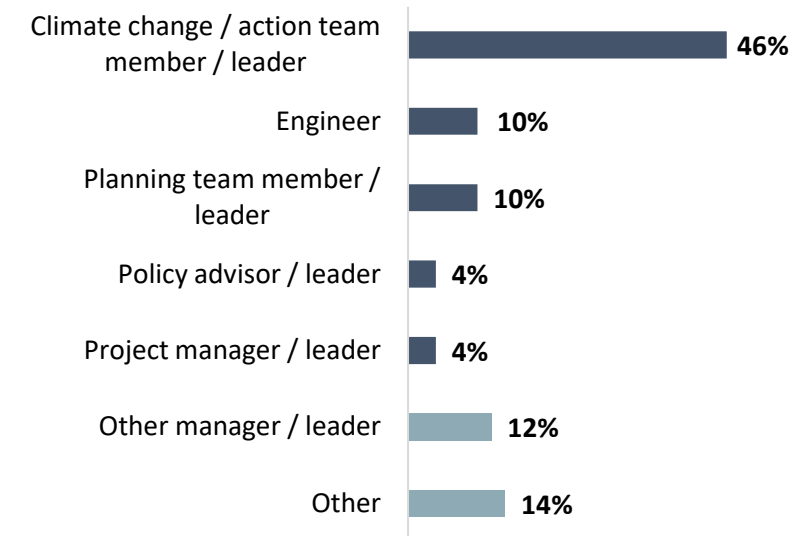


SAMPLE SOURCE

n=11
ACAN list

n=39
Other list / source

ROLE IN COUNCIL



QA1: Are you completing this survey as an individual or as part of a group with colleagues? / **QG1:** And finally, some questions about your council. Which of the following are you from? / **QG2:** And how many residents are there in your council? / **QG3:** Which of the following best describes your role / team in your council?

Base: Total sample (n=50). ***Note:** Of those asked the question (n=23).

Key findings



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Key findings

- **Climate change may be widely acknowledged and accepted; however, councils are still struggling to have it prioritised**
 - For the majority, climate change is a priority, but other priorities are higher. The biggest barrier to climate change action is *funding*, while *resourcing* and *expertise* are also high. A large proportion report to still be dealing with *issues of acceptance / denial of facts* regarding barriers to unlocking climate action.
- **Priorities are set to change during the next LTP round.**
 - Adaption processes are something that all councils are currently dealing with. Most commonly they are updating policy / planning documents and assessing climate change / multi-hazard risks. Nearly a third are still dealing with climate change scepticism within the council itself.
- **A need for standardisation and guidance features widely in tools and data gaps.**
 - Councils are using a range of tools and data sources in their climate change workstreams, with most common being data from Stats NZ and LINZ, and government agency guidance (such as coastal hazard guidance). Close to two thirds are relying on external consultants. When asked why some of the tools are not used, councils mostly stated they *hadn't heard of the tools*.
- **It is clear that MfE's proposed tools would be valuable to councils. There is a high level of both urgency and need, especially for a geospatial risk assessment tool. A number of councils are also keen to be involved and work with MfE to co-design tools.**

Climate change in councils – some context

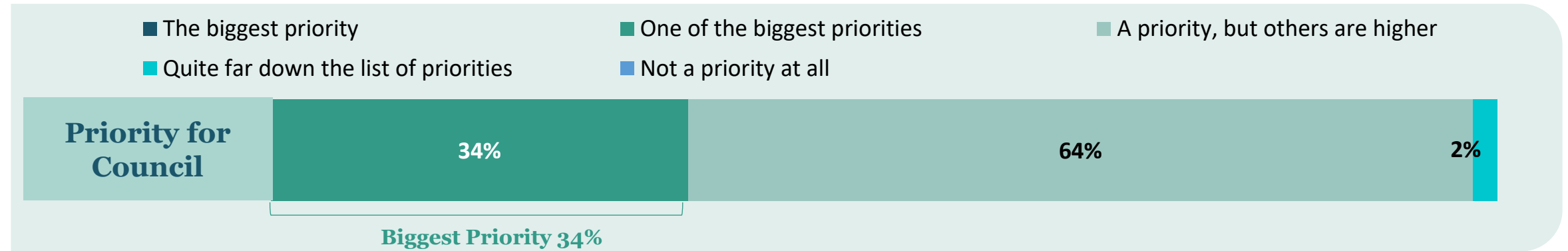
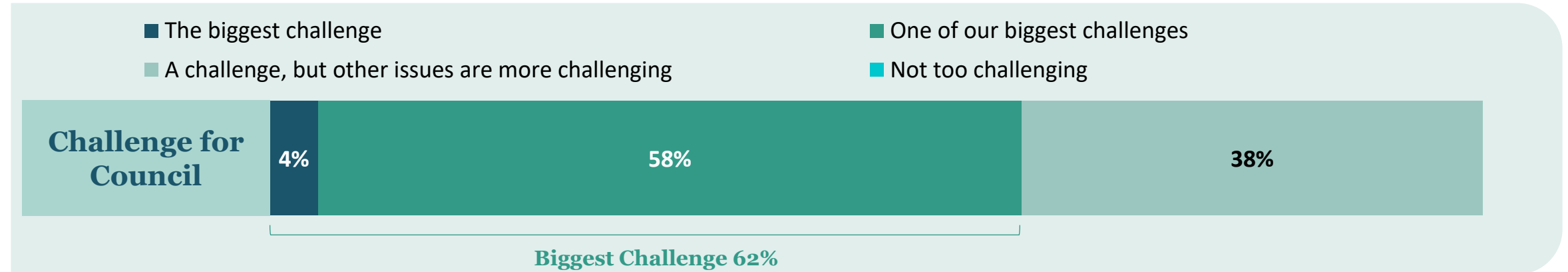


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Climate change as a challenge

The majority view climate change as *one of the biggest challenges* facing their council; however, it isn't seen to be as large of a *priority* for council.



QUALITATIVE QUOTATIONS



“Climate action is not a priority for this Council.”



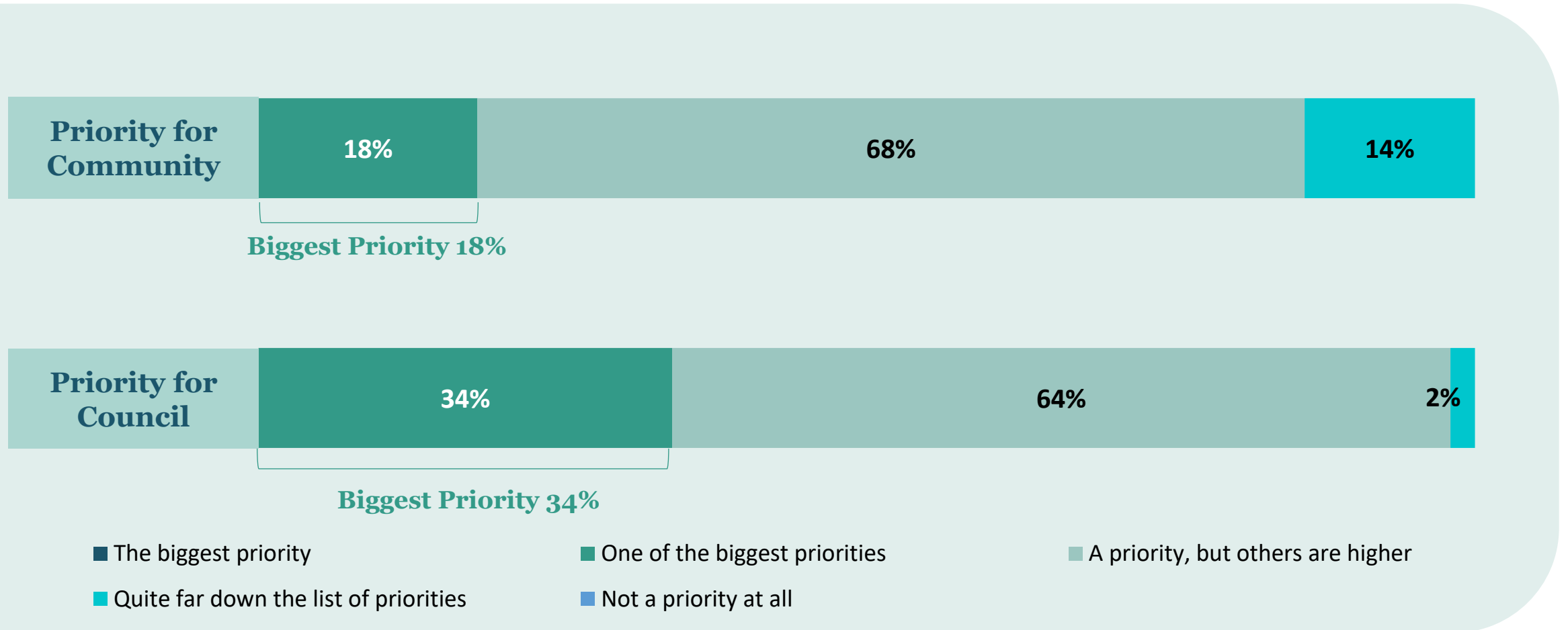
“We have two strongly ‘green’ minded Councillors.”



“Priorities are more around protecting the community’s economic abilities and development.”

Climate change as a priority

Climate change is considered to be a bigger priority for councils than for their community.



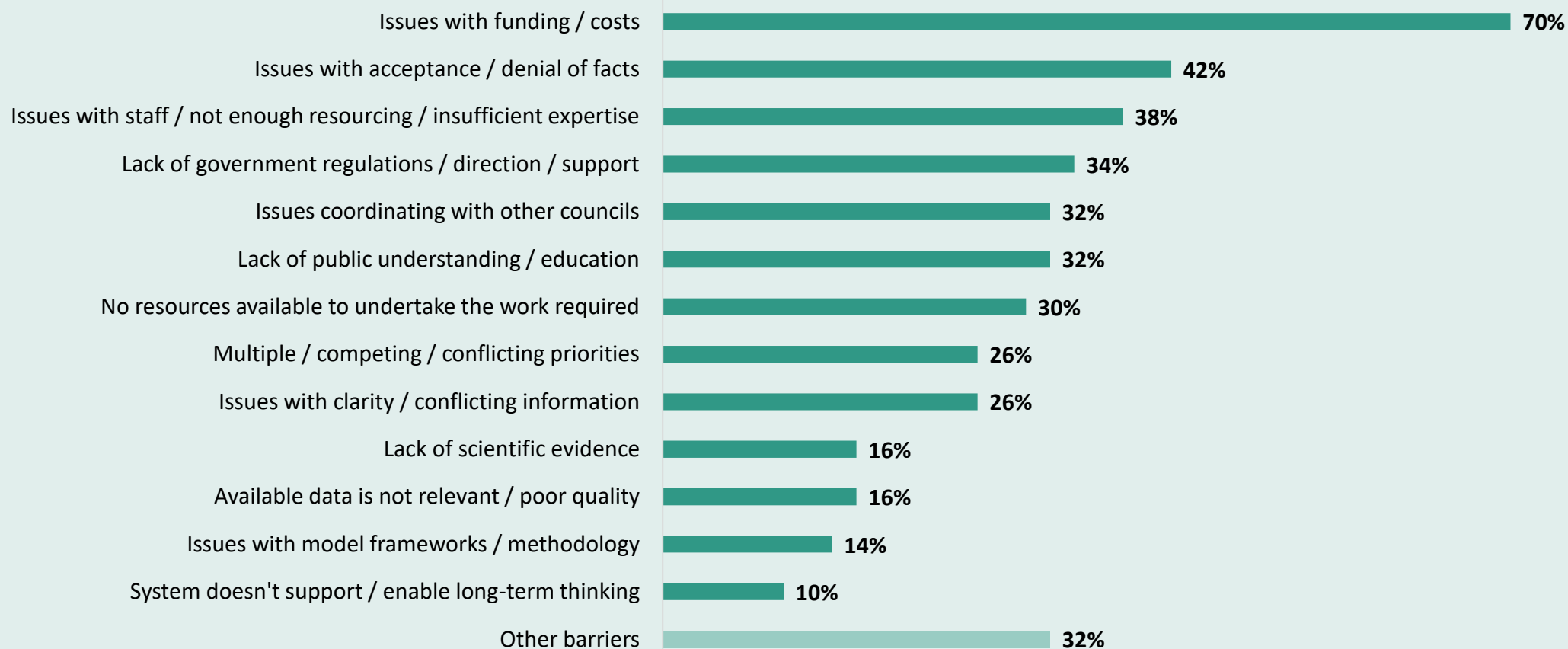
QB4: Thinking now about all the workstreams and priorities across your council, how much of a priority would you say climate change workstreams are for **your council**? / **QB6:** And now thinking now about all the different priorities across your local communities, how much of a priority would you say climate change workstreams are for **your local communities**?

Base: Total sample (n=50)

Barriers to unlocking climate action

The biggest barriers to climate action are issues around *funding / costs* & *issues of acceptance / denial*, with *resourcing & expertise* being prevalent for a large proportion.

BIGGEST BARRIERS TO UNLOCKING CLIMATE ACTION



QC1: And thinking now about the different climate change related work or workstreams at your council, what do you think are the barriers that your council needs to overcome to unlock climate action?

Base: Total sample (n=50)

High-level climate change work stream & priorities

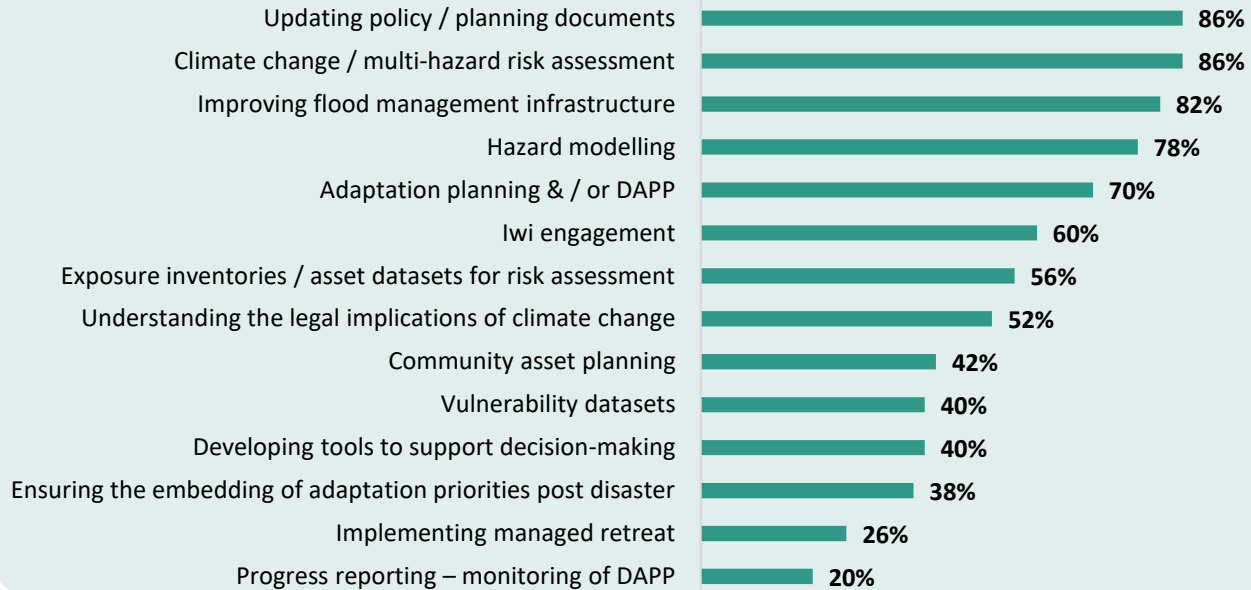


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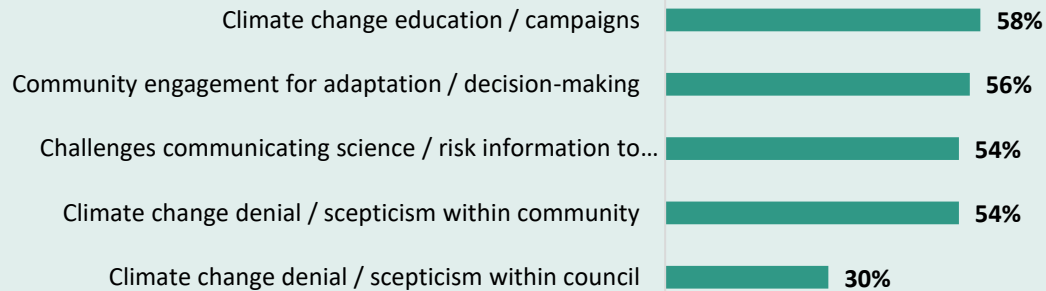


Current issues breakdown

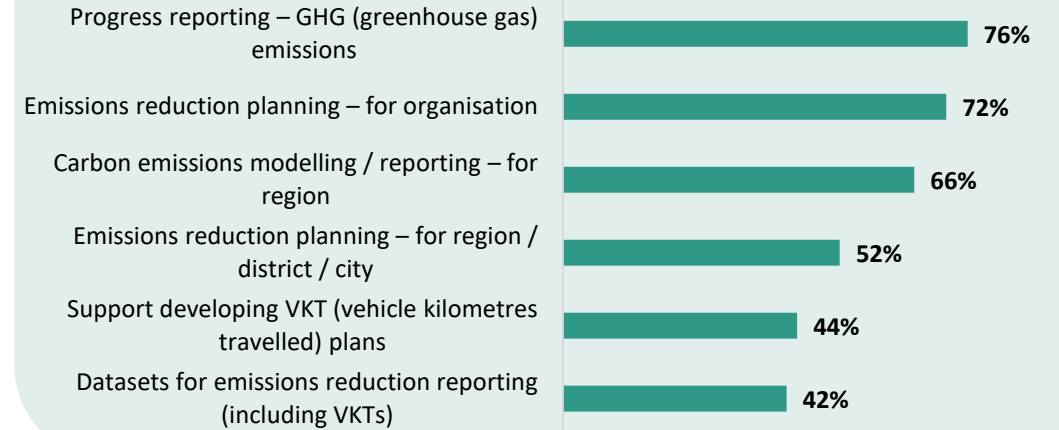
ADAPTATION PROCESSES



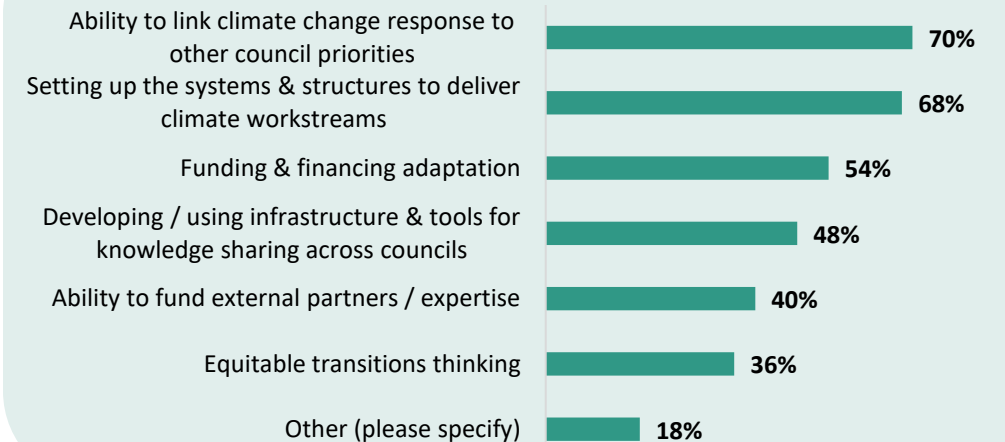
COMMS & ENGAGEMENT



EMISSIONS REDUCTION



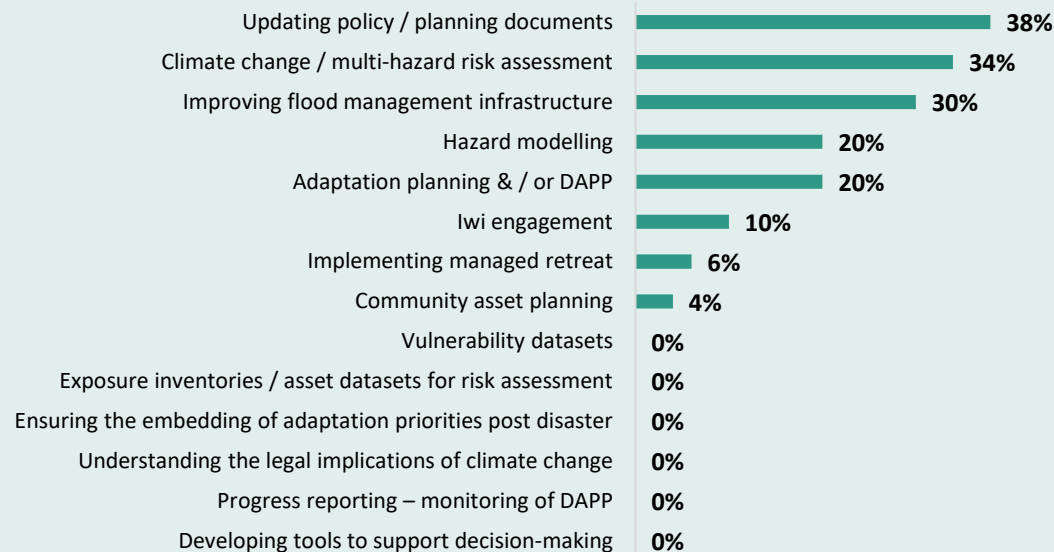
GENERAL / OTHER



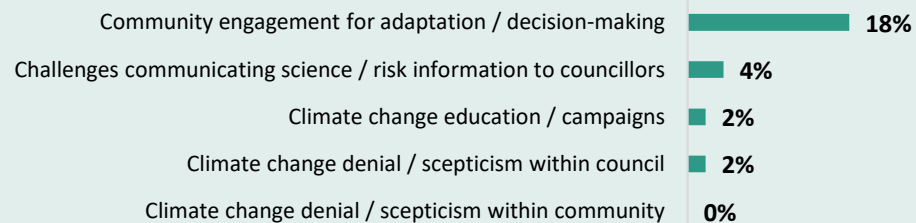
Top-3 priorities now

The top priorities for councils now are mostly *adaption processes* such as *updating policy / planning documents, climate change assessment & improving flood management infrastructure*.

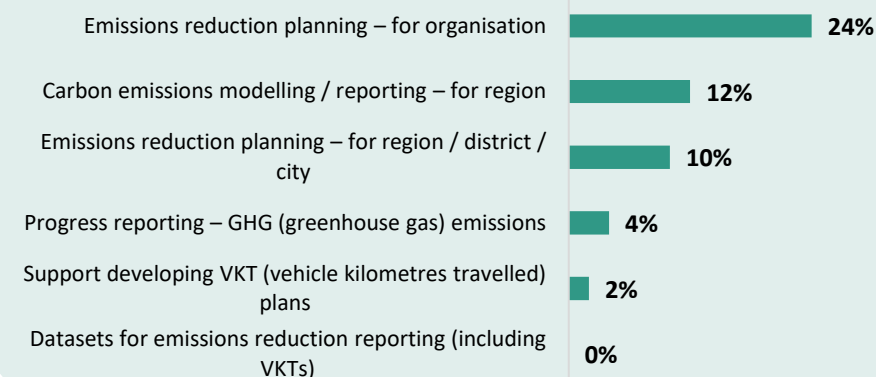
ADAPTATION PROCESSES



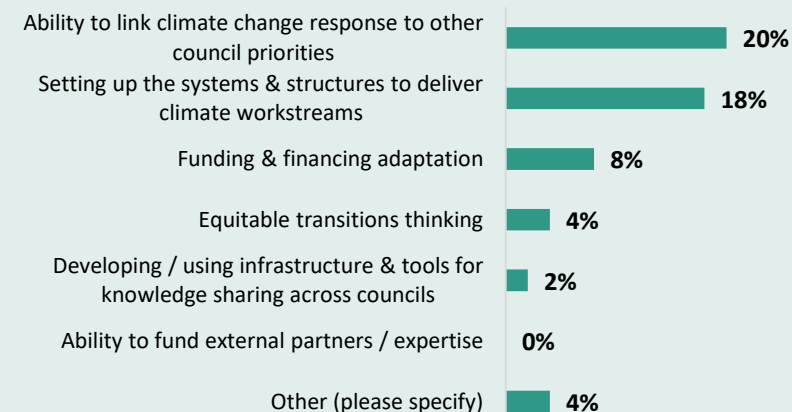
COMMS & ENGAGEMENT



EMISSIONS REDUCTION

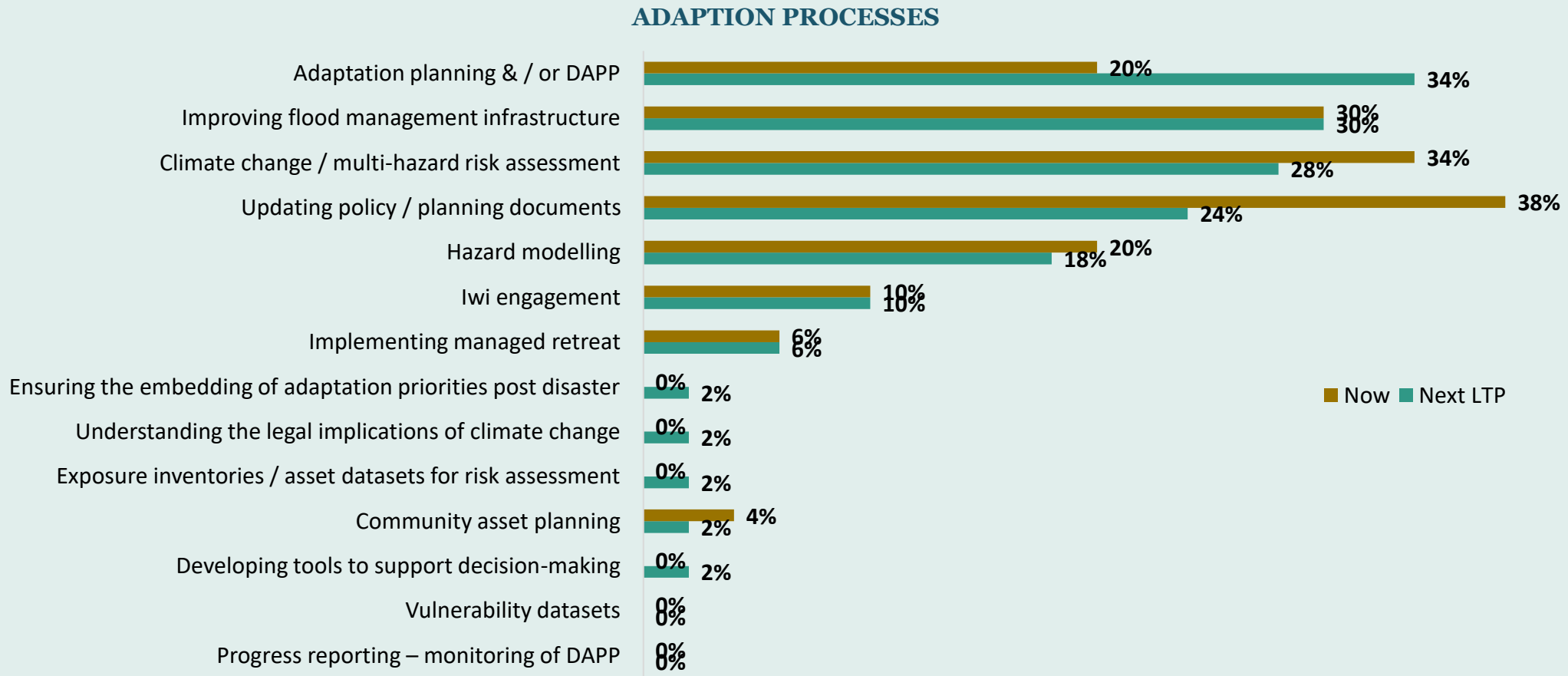


GENERAL / OTHER



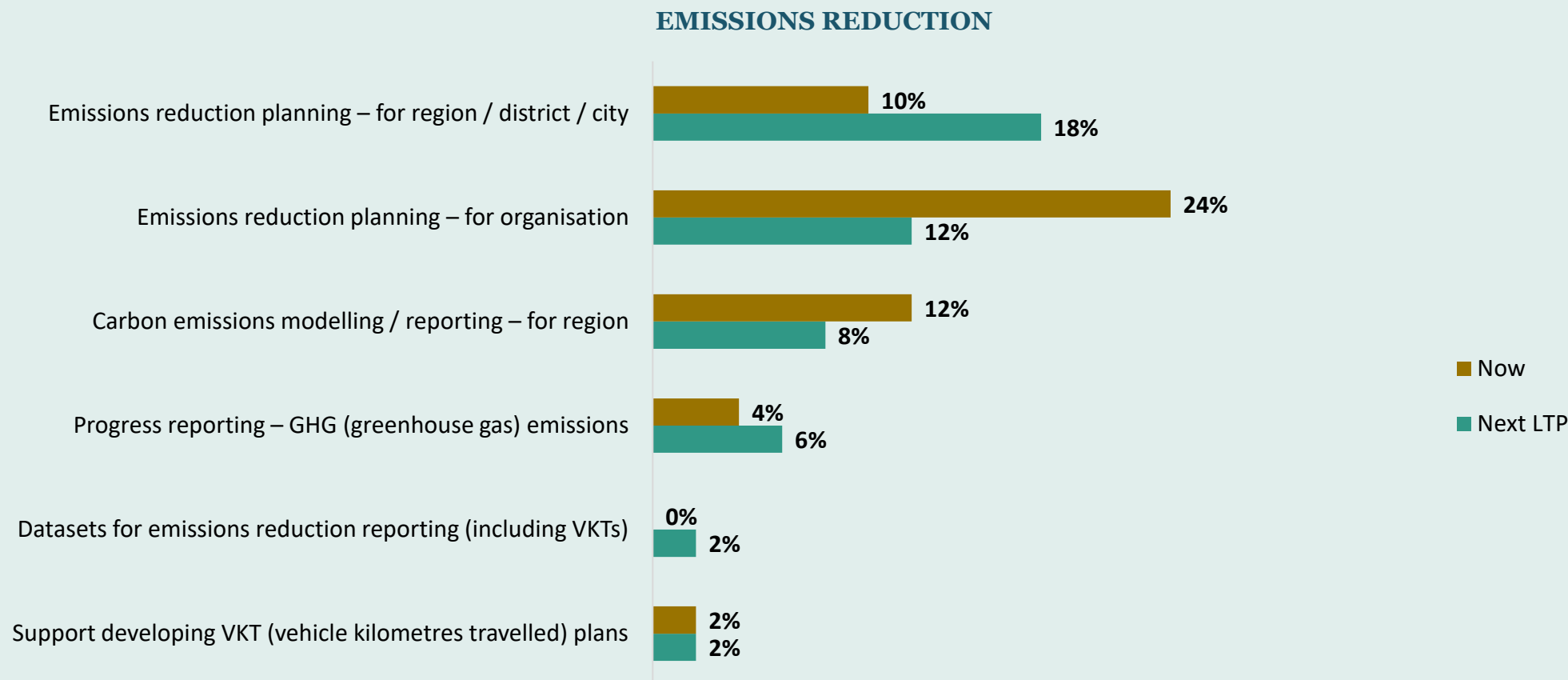
Top priorities now vs next LTP

The top priority for the next LTP for adaption processes is *adaption planning / DAPP*, which will be more of a focus in the next LTP than it is currently. This is in contrast with *updating policy / planning documents & climate change / multi-hazard risk assessment*, which are a bigger focus now than in the future.



Top priorities now vs next LTP

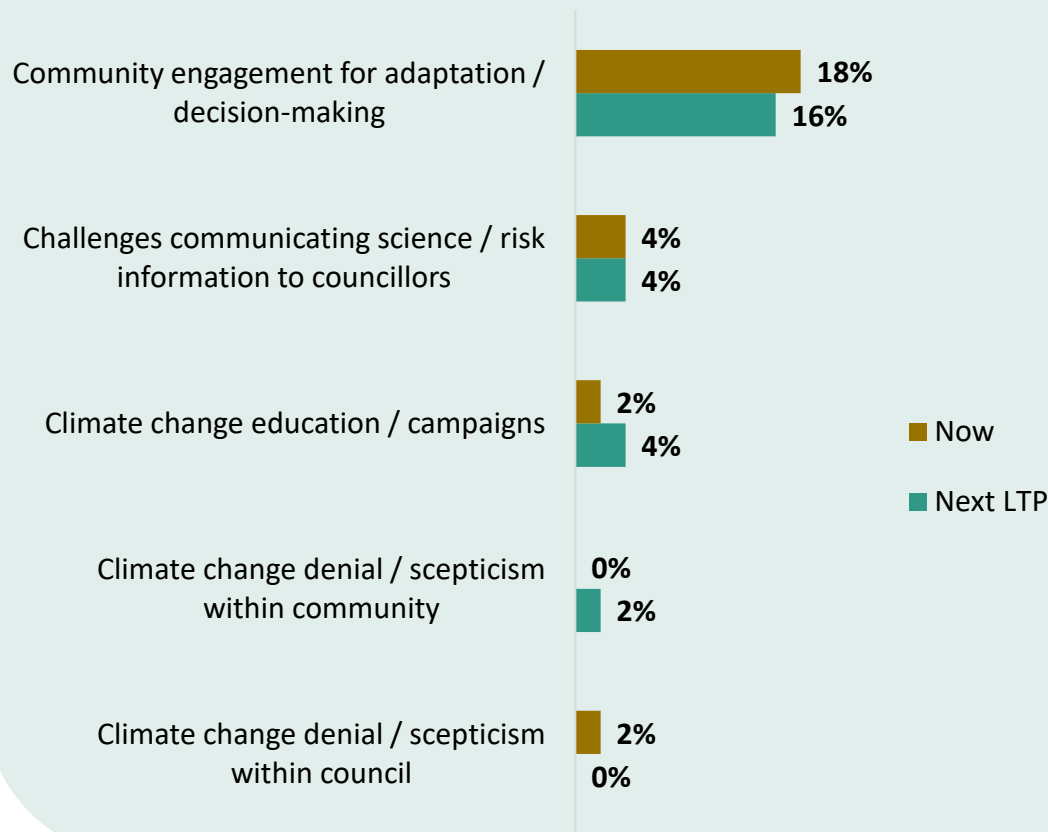
The top priorities for the next LTP for emissions reduction issues are *planning for region / district / city* & *for organisation*, followed by *carbon emissions modelling / reporting*.



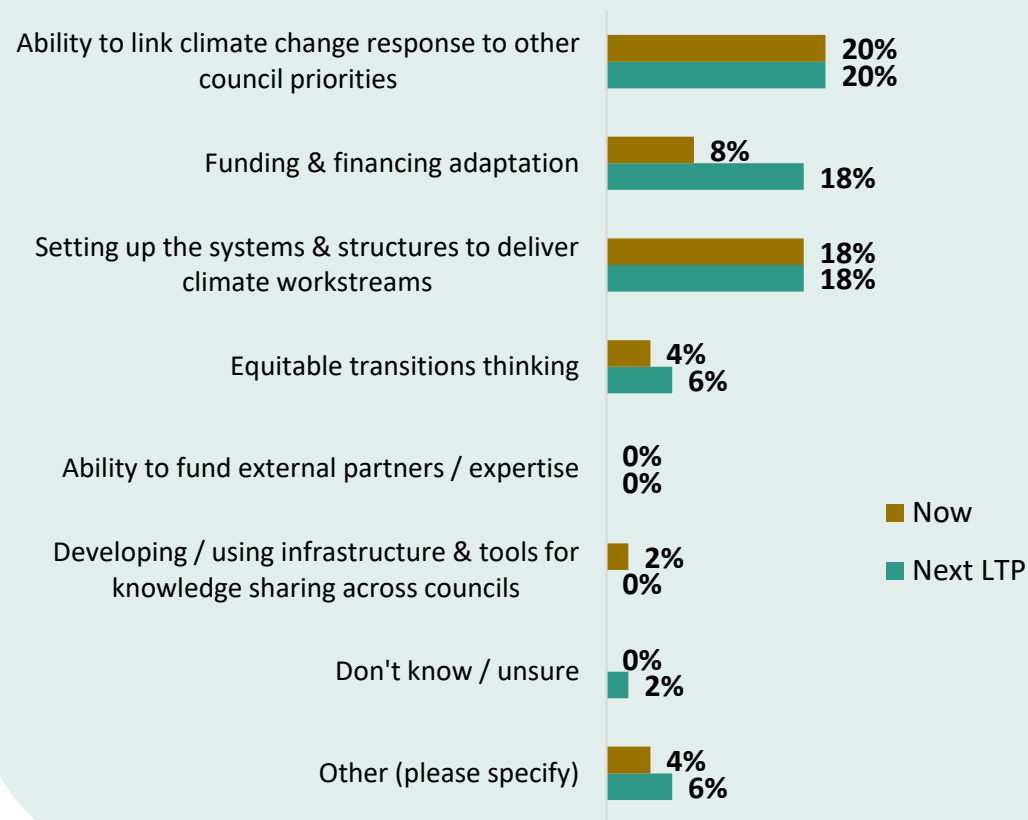
Top priorities now vs next LTP

Most comms & engagement & other activities will retain the same level of priority in the next LTP as they have now, except for *funding & financing adaptation*, which is more likely to be a priority in the next LTP.

COMMS & ENGAGEMENT



GENERAL / OTHER



Current data sources / tools usage & gaps



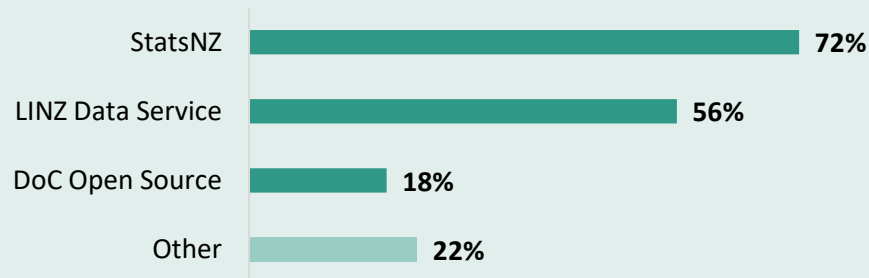
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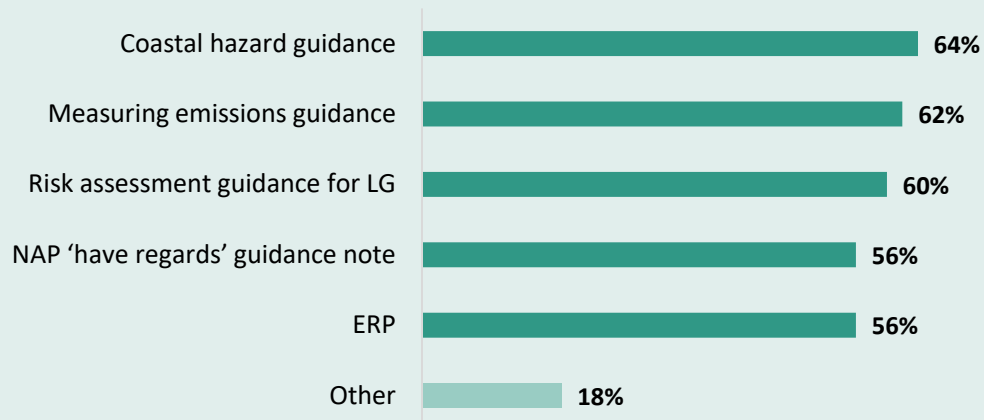
Current tools / resources councils are using

The most commonly used tools / resources are *StatsNZ*, *coastal hazard guidance* & *external consultants*.

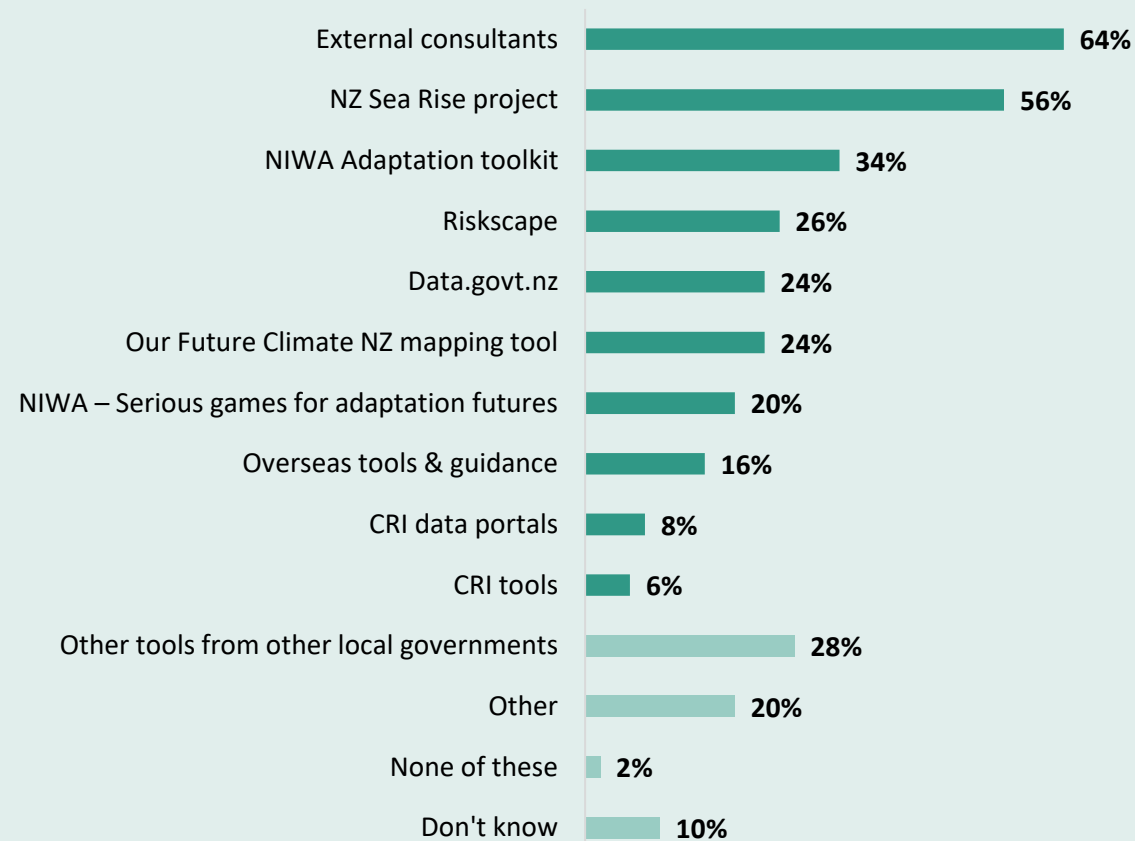
GOVERNMENT AGENCY DATA PORTALS



GOVERNMENT AGENCY GUIDANCE



OTHER TOOLS / DATA



External consultants

External consultants are used in climate workstreams for...

“

*“GHG scope boundary, external peer review.” – **Large regional council***

“

*“Climate change risk assessment, natural hazard mapping, community carbon footprint, corporate carbon footprint audit and certification.” – **Large regional council***

“

*“Our council worked with consultants for a regional climate change impacts assessment, an adaption plan, and a regional reduction plan.” – **Large regional council***

“

*“Adaption planning, risk assessment, GHG emission modelling and calculations.” – **Large regional council***

Reason for not using tools – by least used tools

For the least used tools, the reason for not using is typically due to *not having heard of it*.

Our Future Climate New Zealand mapping tool*	NIWA Adaptation toolkit*	DoC Open Source*	Riskscape*	NIWA*
I have not heard of this (74%)	I have not heard of this (44%)	I have not heard of this (94%)	It's not something we need (25%)	I have not heard of this (50%)
We don't have enough staff to make use of this (16%)	We don't have enough staff to make use of this (11%)	It's not something we need (18%)	I have not heard of this (19%)	We don't have enough staff to make use of this (25%)
We don't have enough skills in our team to make use of this (5%)	We don't have enough skills in our team to make use of this (6%)		It's too complex / difficult to use (12%)	It's not something we need (6%)
Other alternative (16%)	It's not something we need (6%)		We don't have enough staff to make use of this (12%)	We don't have enough skills in our team to make use of this (6%)
Other (5%)	It's not updated / recent enough (6%)		We don't have enough skills in our team to make use of this (6%)	Other (25%)
	Other (11%)		We don't have the funds for this (6%)	
			It doesn't cover our area (6%)	
			It's too complex / difficult to understand (6%)	
			It's not updated / recent enough (6%)	
			Other alternative (12%)	
			Other (6%)	

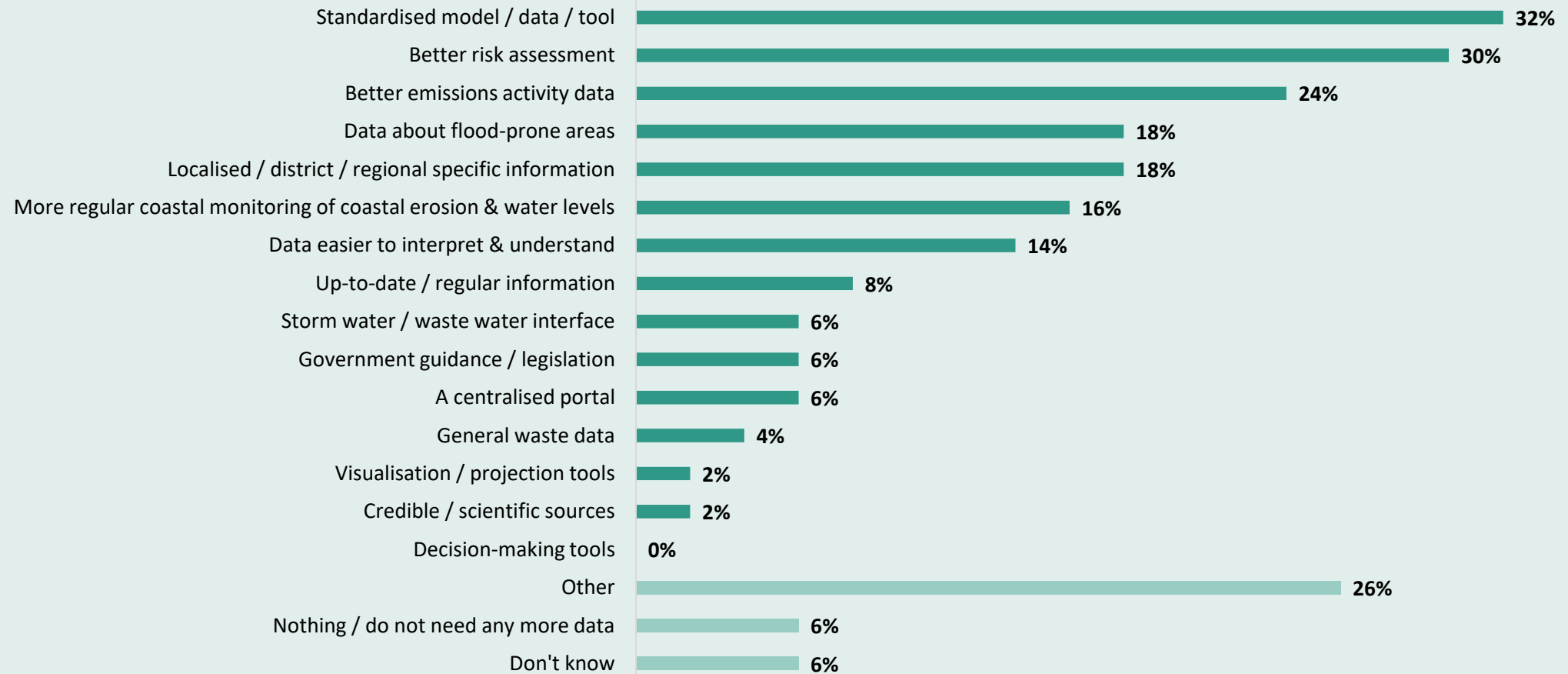
QD3: And which of the following reason/s do you not currently use <INSERT TOOL NOT SELECTED FROM QD1>?

Base: Did not select – Our Future Climate NZ Mapping (n=19*), NIWA Adaption Toolkit (n=18*), DoC Open Source (n=17*), Riskscape (n=16*), NIWA (n=16*). ***Caution:** Low base size, indicative results only.

Data needed

The data needed to help with climate change workstreams focuses on *standardised model / data / tool*, *better risk assessment* & *better emissions activity*.

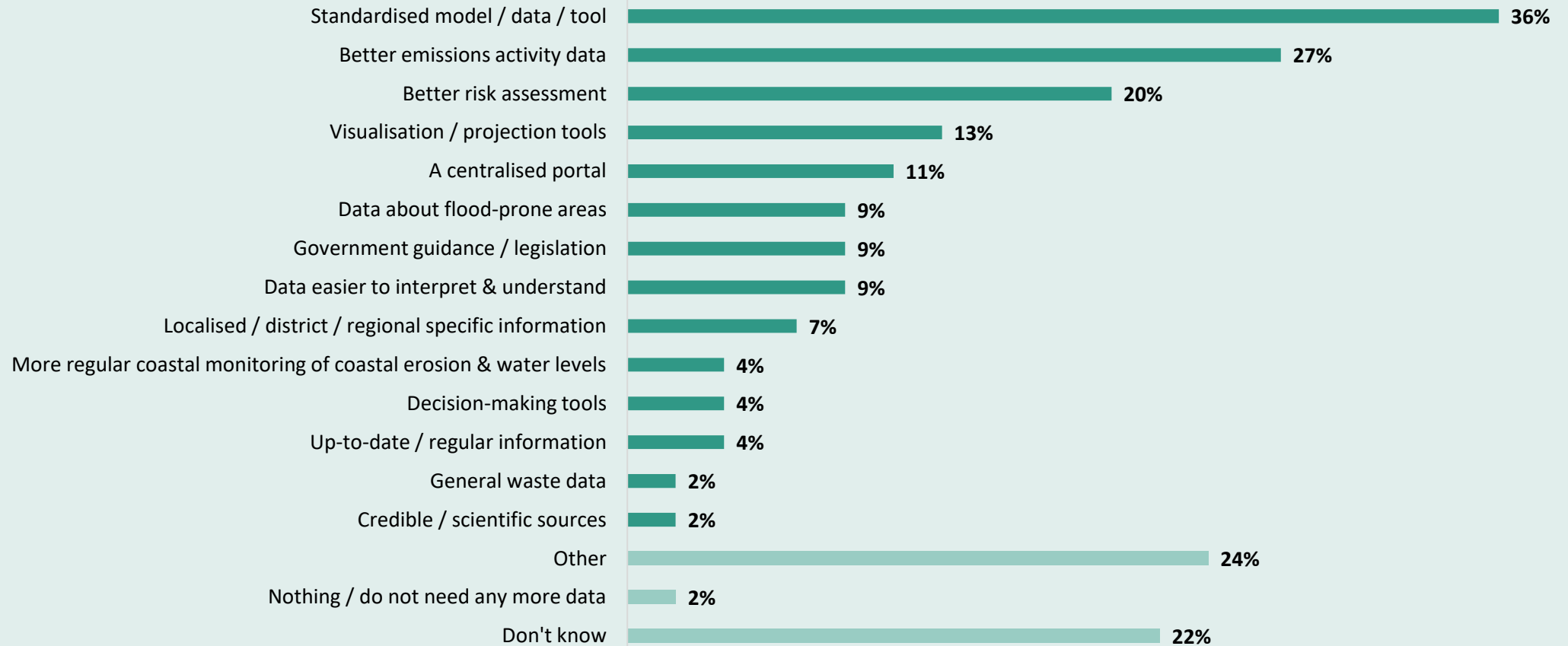
DATA NEEDED TO HELP IN CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSTREAMS



Tools needed

Similar to the data needed, the *tools* that are needed for climate change workstreams focus on *standardised model / data / tool*, *better emissions activity data* & *better risk assessment*.

TOOLS NEEDED TO HELP IN CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSTREAMS



Tools needed – in their own words...

STANDARDISED MODEL / TOOL

“

“Emissions models based on ground up methods. We are probably better placed to do that as we are already doing it for other emissions to air.”

– **Large regional council**

“

“Standardised methodologies for calculating our current situation and evaluating the effects of alternatives.”

– **Small district council**

“

“Up to date flood modelling based on different climate change scenarios (this is work in progress but will take a long time to implement). Stronger national guidance enforceable under the RMA or BA.”

– **Large unitary council**

“

“Common emissions inventory methodology linking national-regional-district GHG inventories. A common emission trajectory model to understand emission reduction scenarios in a consistent way across local government.”

– **Medium district council**

“

“Standardised tool to assess the emissions impact of infrastructure investments. A standardised project management tool to assess decisions against Council’s legislated climate change obligations.”

– **Medium district council**

Tools needed – in their own words...

BETTER EMISSIONS ACTIVITY DATA

“

“Greenhouse gas information is opaque and sometimes hidden behind financial barriers (electricity data). Lack of specificity in national adaptation and emission reduction plan on how it might be applied at a local level. Lack of adaptation metrics.”

– **Large regional council**

“

- *“Climate change projection data raw dataset as well as report.*
- *Guidance on how to match regional and national emissions budgets to achieve goals.*
- *Sea level rise models at regional scales.*
- *Precipitation change models at regional scales.*
- *Regional level extreme events predictions.”*

– **Large regional council**

“

- *“Capital works projects, infrastructure projects emissions calculator - both for embodied and lifecycle emissions.*
- *A dashboard reporting tool for showing our climate action overall, including emissions reduction and our climate related risks and management actions.*
- *A riskscape platform / digital risk explorer tool that we can use in community engagement and Tangata Whenua engagement in adaptation planning.”*

– **Medium district council**

Tools needed – in their own words...

BETTER RISK ASSESSMENT



*“(1) Community GHG emissions projection tool
(2) Councils urgently need national directive of how residual flood risk should be managed, particularly for guidance on the regulatory provisions to restrict inappropriate development in flood-prone areas behind protective structures.”*
– **Medium unitary council**



“Risk assessment tools suitable for applying at the regional / localised level.”
– **Medium district council**



“Regional LiDAR use of AI for future risk assessment, pulling together interpreting and presenting source information / data.”
– **Large regional council**



“Possibly a tool that allows for visualization of different climate scenarios affecting different hazards, associated risk and cumulative risk.”
– **Large regional council**

Value of potential tools



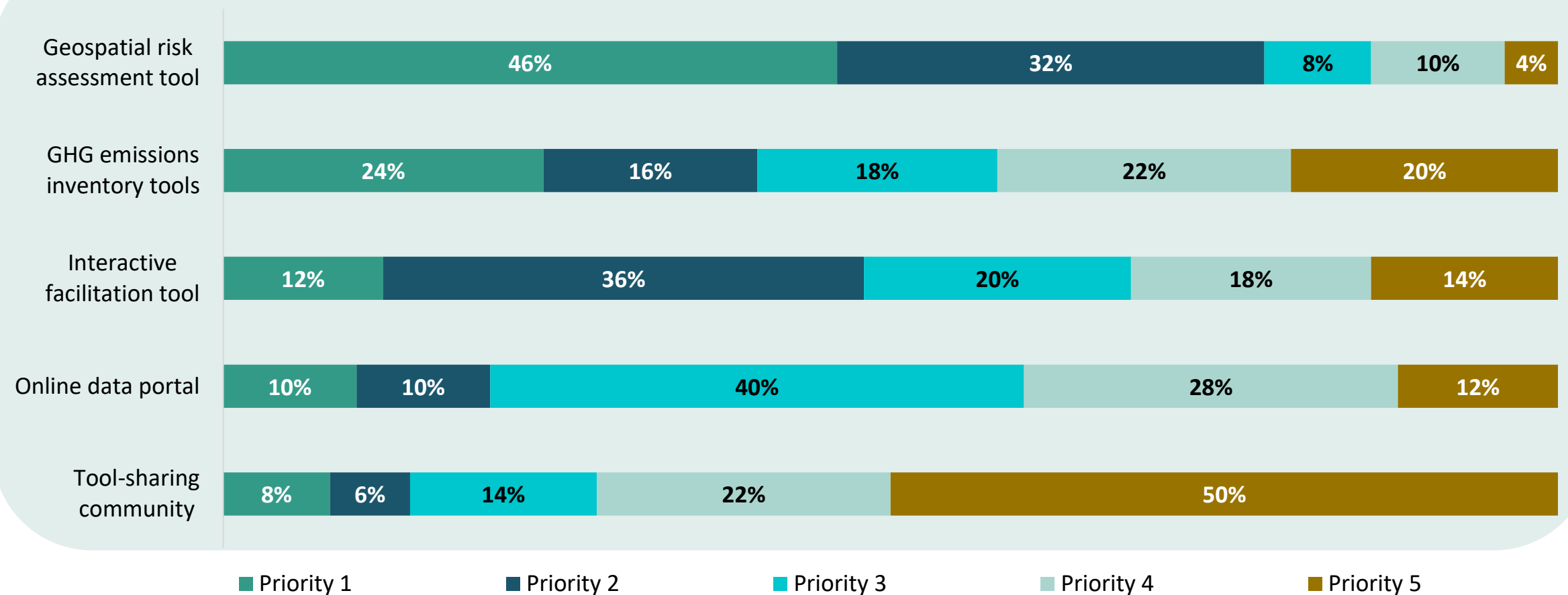
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Ranking of tools

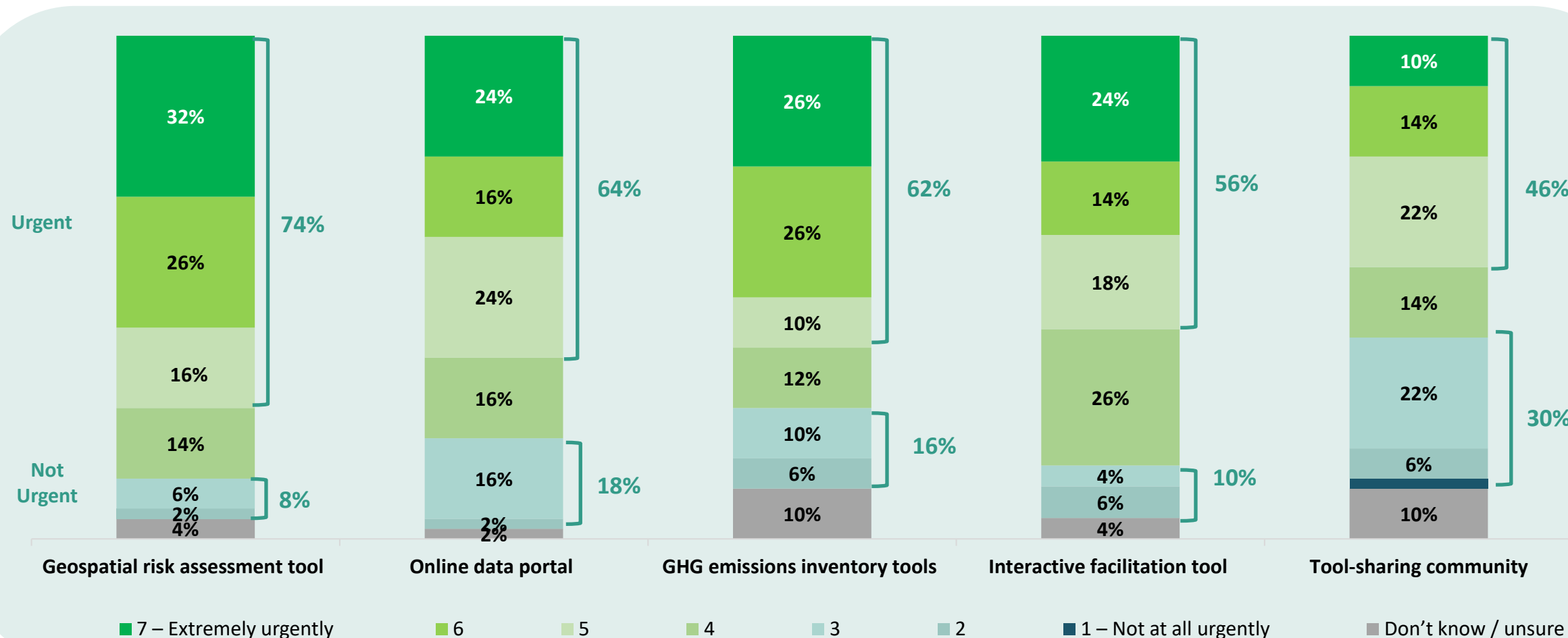
A *geospatial risk assessment tool* was most commonly ranked as the highest priority for development, whereas a *community-of-sharing tool* was most commonly ranked as the lowest priority.

PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPMENT



Urgency of tools

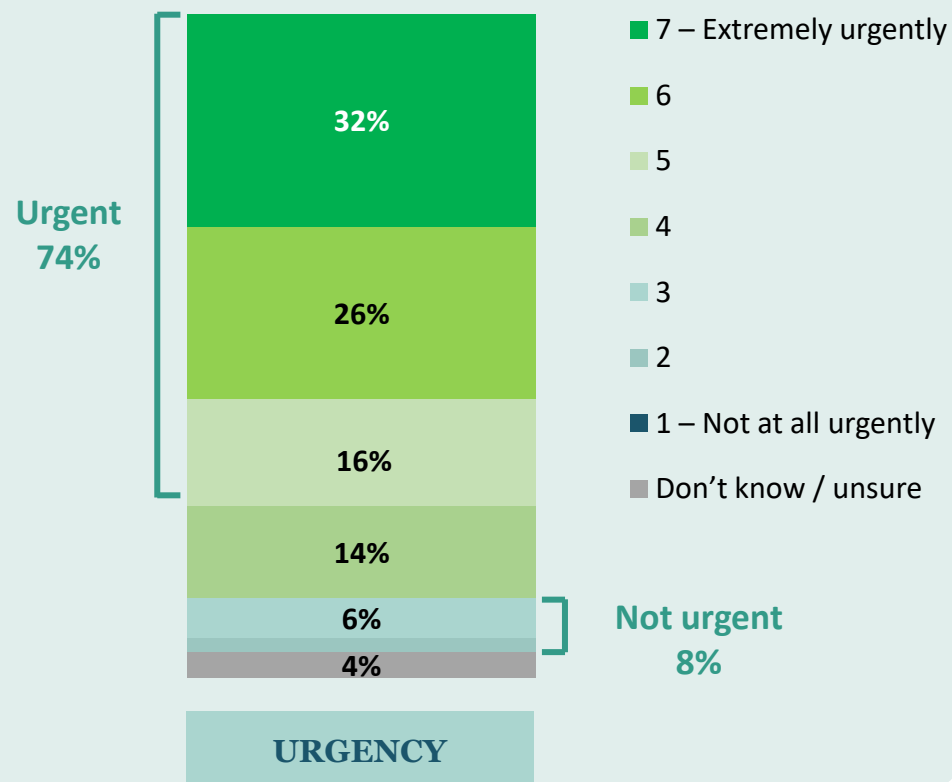
A *geospatial risk assessment tool* is most urgently needed by councils, followed by *online data portal* & *GHG emissions inventory tools*.



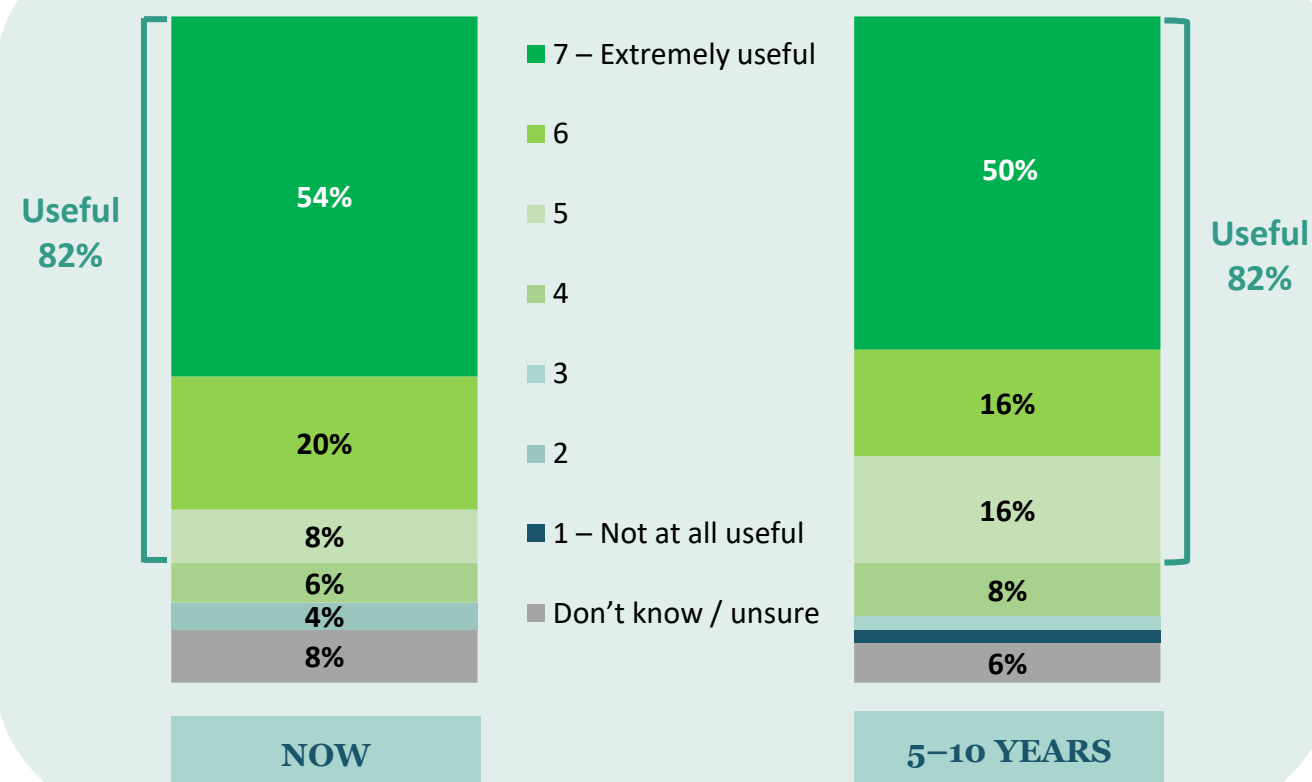
Geospatial risk assessment tool

A geospatial risk assessment tool is viewed as urgently needed by over 70% of respondents & likely to be useful now & in the next 5–10 years.

URGENCY OF TOOL



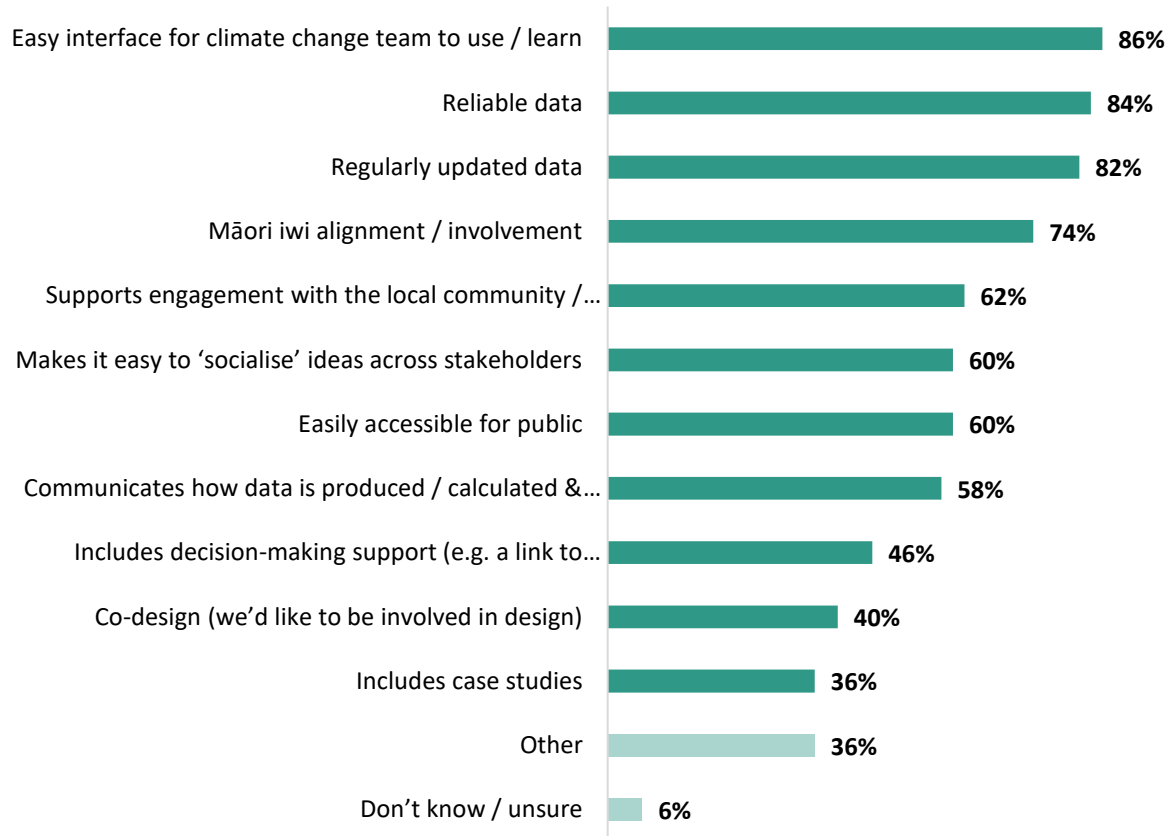
USEFULNESS OF TOOL



Geospatial risk assessment tool

Developing a geospatial risk assessment tool that is *easy to use*, with *reliable & regularly updated data*, plus having *Māori iwi alignment / involvement* is crucial.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOL



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK



"Critical that this is developed with local government involvement."
– **Large city council**



"The tool needs to be able to drill down to a local level and also be made in a way that everyone understands and uses in their work."
– **Medium district council**



"Functionality to be able to insert our own hazard modelling into the tool to ensure we are using regionally and local accurate natural hazard modelling at the appropriate level. If you are using centralised data and drawing out regional and local risk information, this is not actually accurate because the modelling and results are at two different scales."
– **Large regional council**

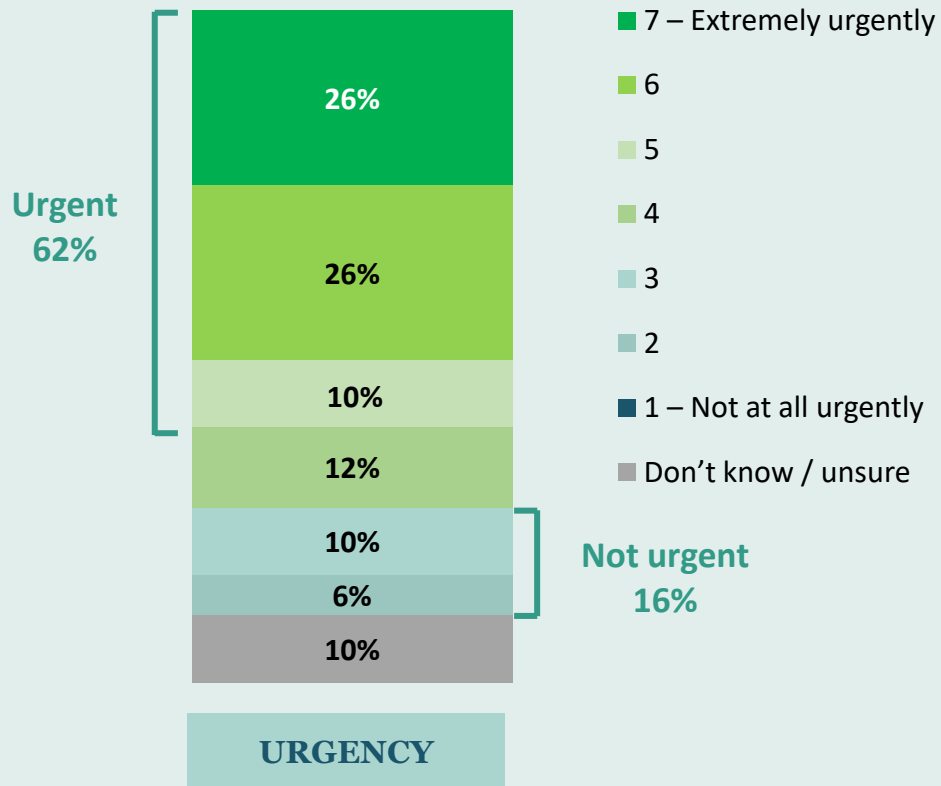


"Make sure councils are kept informed of progress on this tool so we don't do the work that might be later covered."
– **Medium city council**

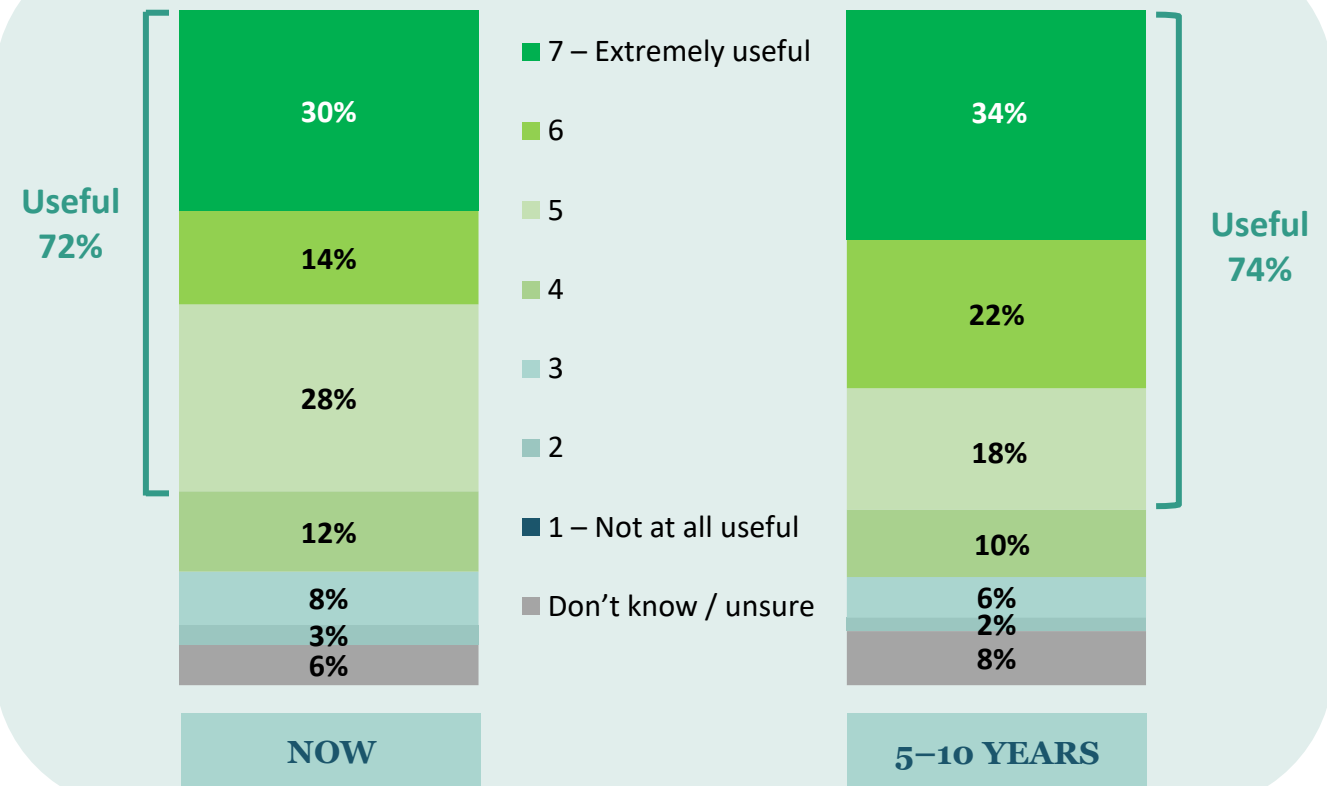
GHG emissions inventory tools

GHG emissions inventory tools are viewed as urgent & likely to be useful now & in the next 5–10 years.

URGENCY OF TOOL



USEFULNESS OF TOOL



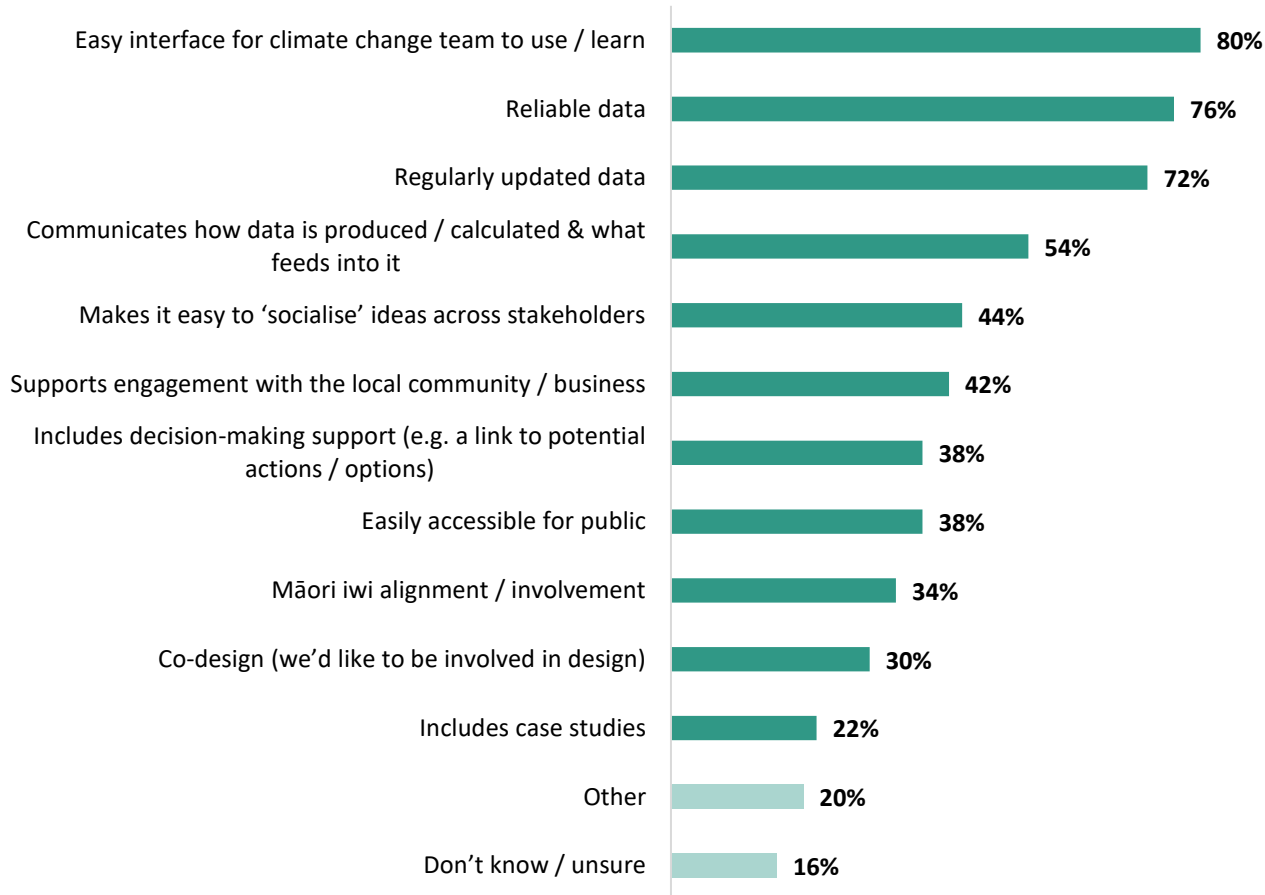
QF3: And how urgently does your council need a tool like this? / **QF1:** How useful do you think this tool would be for your council's climate change workstreams now? / **QF2:** And how useful do you think this tool would be for your council's climate change workstreams in the next 5–10 years?

Base: Total sample (n=50)

GHG emissions inventory tools

The crucial attributes of this tool are an *easy-to-use interface*, *reliable & regularly updated data*, as well as *communicating how data is produced*.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOL



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK



"A standardised GHG inventory tool is a great start in terms of efficiency of resources (avoid councils separately paying consultants to produce) and consistency across the country."

– Large regional council



"Refinement of the local government existing emissions tool is required to standardise the approach across the motu."

– Medium district council



"Every council is gathering their own data – this is extremely inefficient. Analysis to help understand GHG footprints at a regional / district scale would avoid duplication."

– Large city council



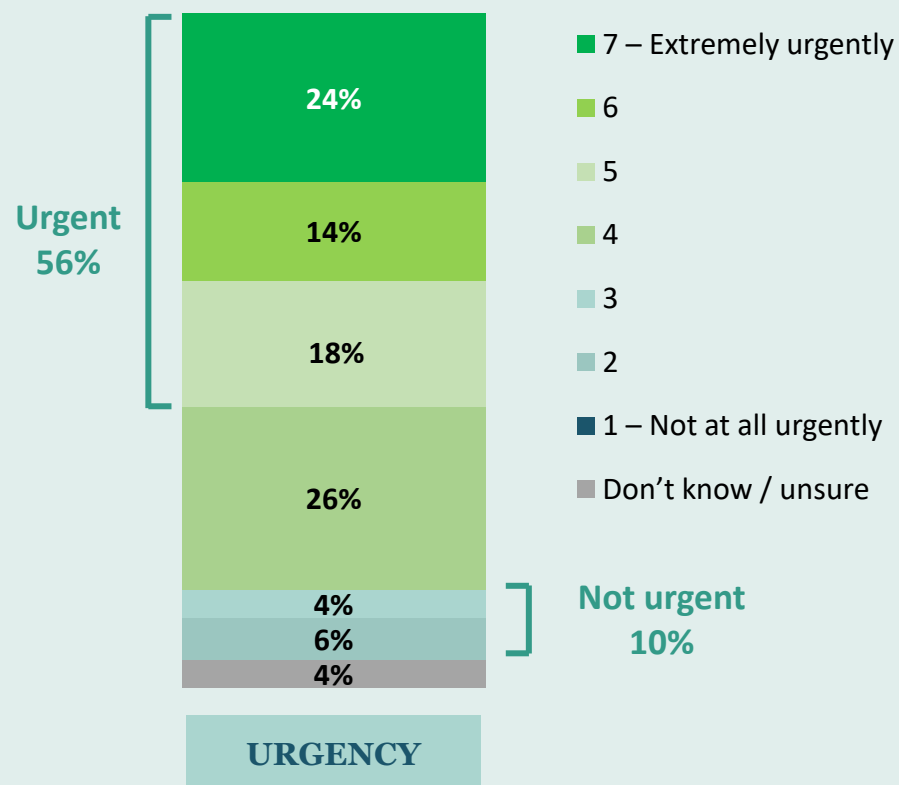
"Needs to include the marine environment and blue carbon. Often GHG, tools, biodiversity, etc. Have a terrestrial bent, so miss key information. Even if information does not exist, it needs to be highlighted as a gap."

– Large regional council

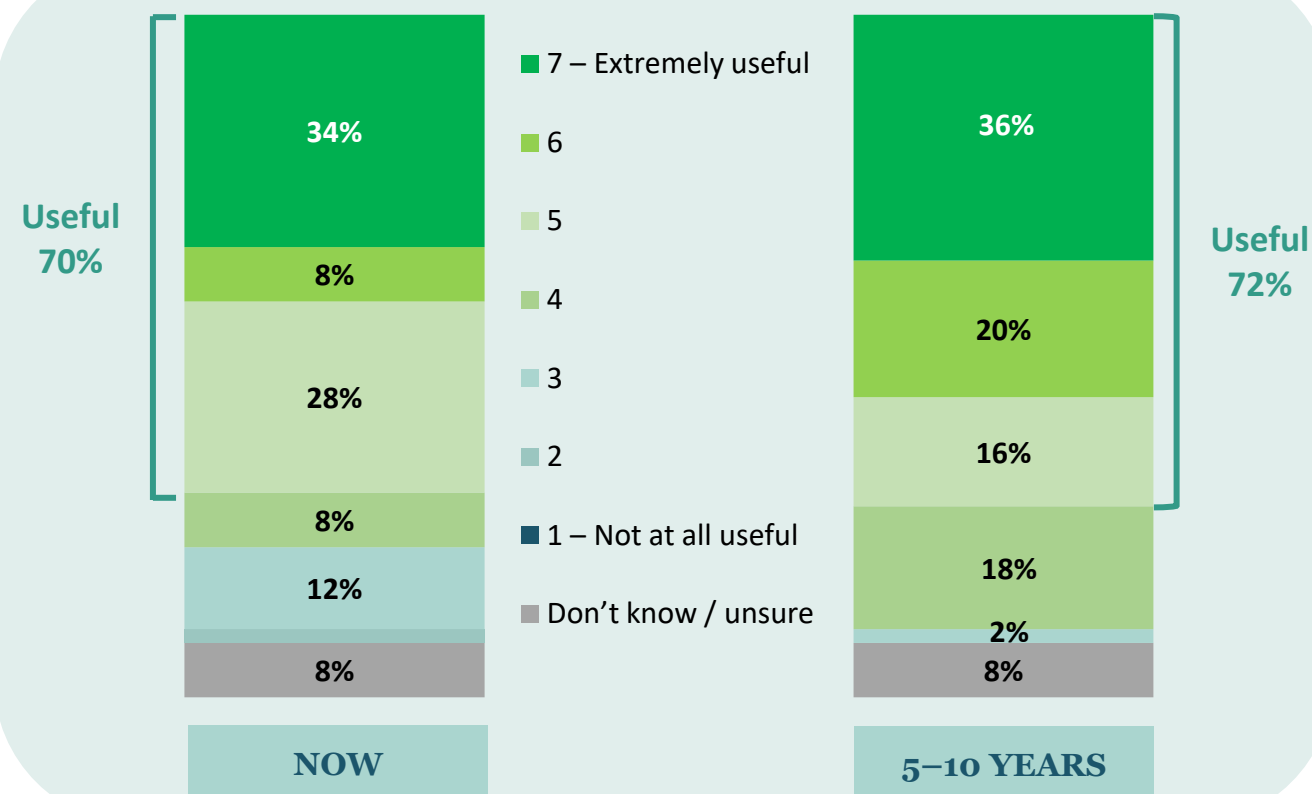
Interactive facilitation tool

Although just over half consider an interactive facilitation tool as urgently needed, around 70% will find it useful now & in the next 5–10 years.

URGENCY OF TOOL



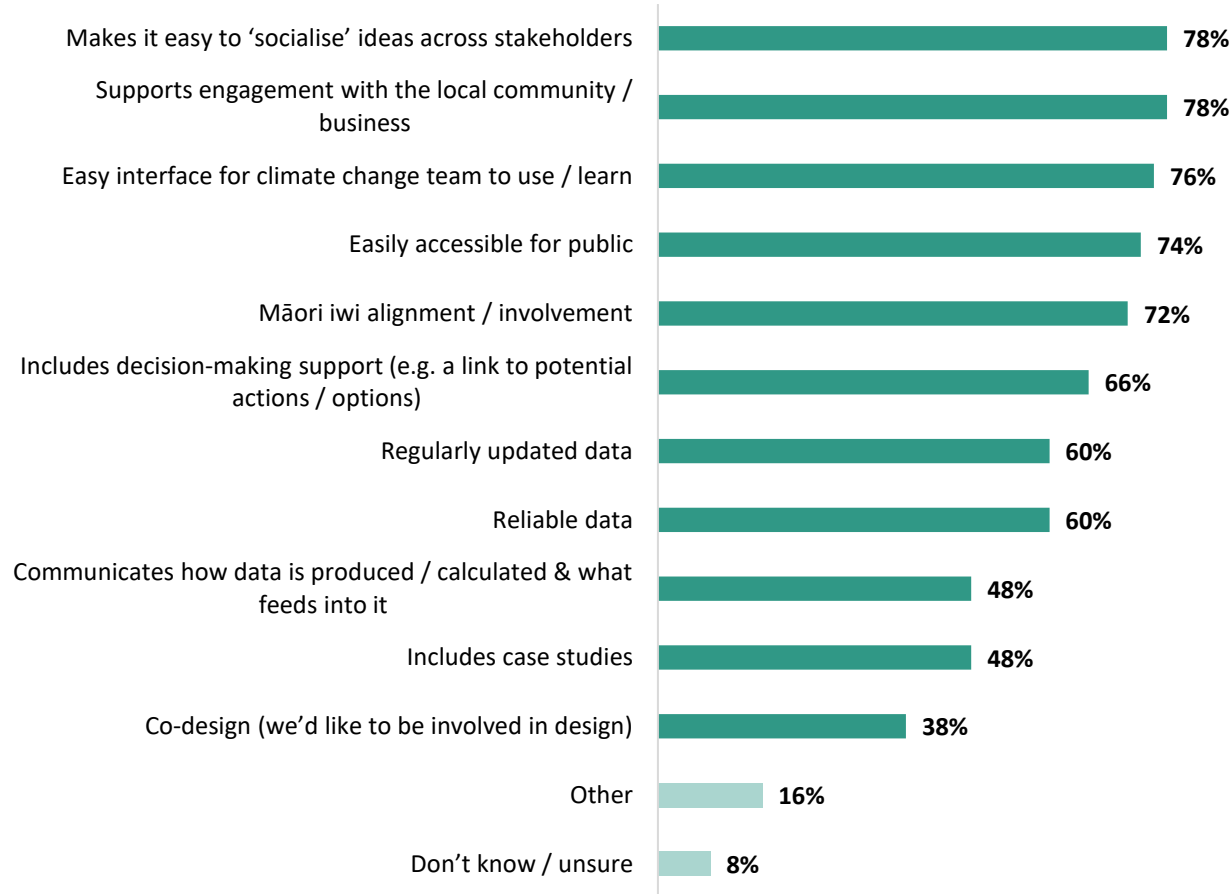
USEFULNESS OF TOOL




Interactive facilitation tool

An interactive facilitation tool needs to *make it easy to socialise ideas, support engagement & have an easy interface that can be easily accessed.*


CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOL




ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK




"Unsure how this could work at different scales with different communities."
– **Large regional council**




"The power of such a tool is not in the interface, but in the analysis that sits underneath it."
– **Medium unitary council**



"This is essential in directing councillor decisions, consulting on them, and communicating with the public. Coordinating all the disparate data sources and impacts and compiling a comprehensive analysis of outcomes is really hard at present."
– **Medium city council**



"This would help to support these conversations with community that we will be commencing through the next LTP."
– **Large city council**

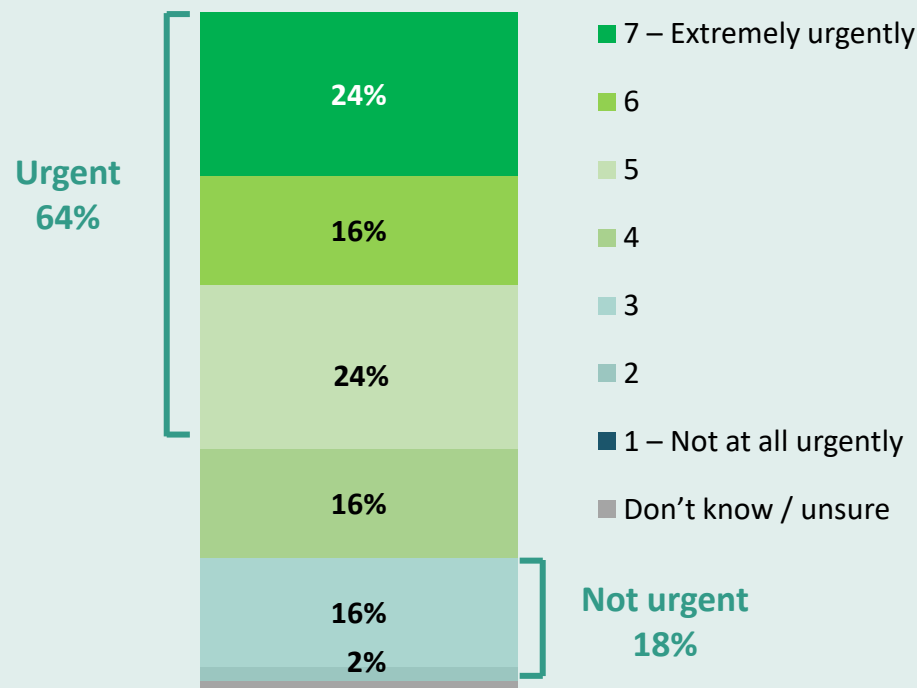


"Valuable to have a standardised approach to adaption decision making. Good to have as a modular tool to account for different community issues and scale (physical area and number of hazards)."
– **Medium district council**

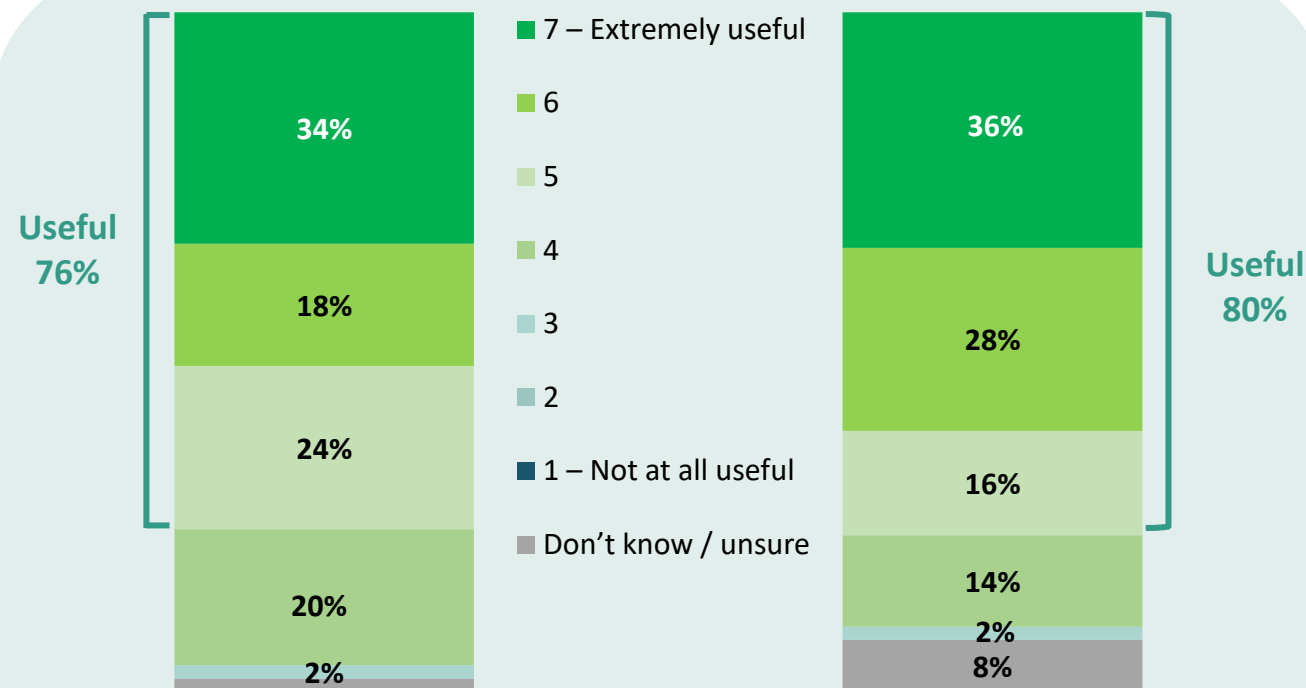
Online data portal

An online data portal is considered as urgently needed by over 60% of respondents & is likely to be useful now & more so in the next 5–10 years.

URGENCY OF TOOL



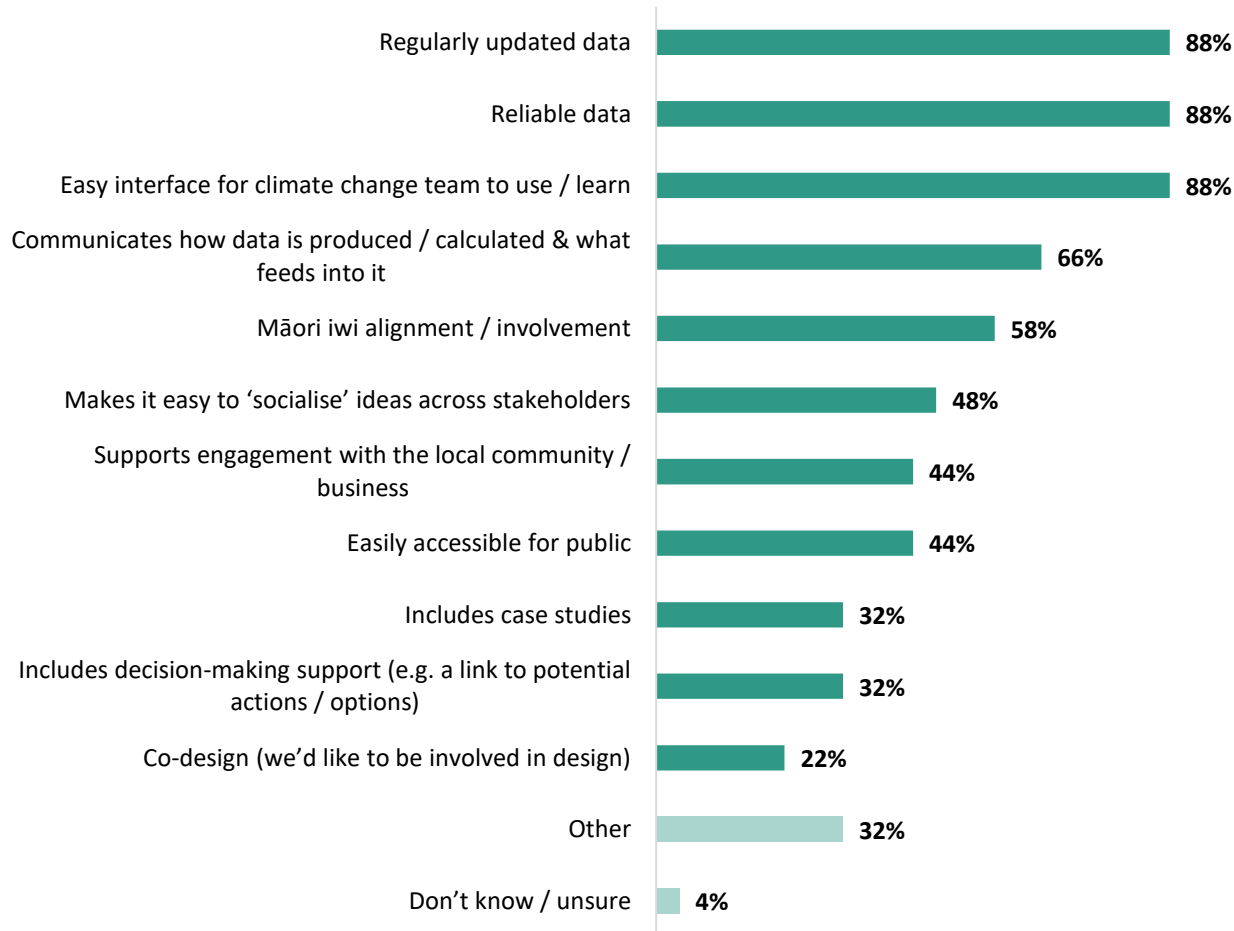
USEFULNESS OF TOOL



Online data portal

An online data portal needs to have *regularly updated & reliable data & an easy-to-use interface.*

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOL



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK



“How will all the data be kept up-to-date as every council develops masses of its own constantly updating data?”
– **Large unitary council**



“Data made available should answer our local needs, especially regarding climate adaptation. Whilst interesting, national data does not provide information that is easily usable by local and regional council when it comes to climate-related risk assessment, climate adaption planning, decision-making processes, community engagement, etc.”
– **Large regional council**



“This would be extremely valuable and save considerable time and funding to get these data from other sources.”
– **Large city council**

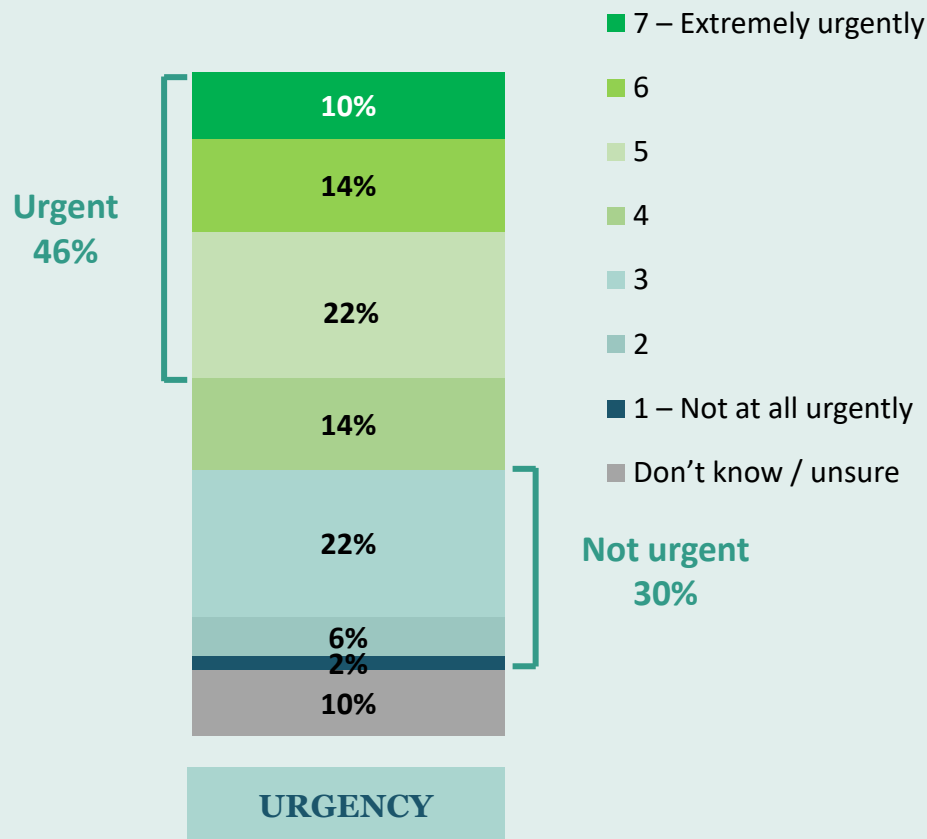


“Understanding what other councils are doing would be beneficial to support our work. Also understanding where and how adaption reduction data sets are reported specifically to governance is key. It is paramount that we all work off the same accurate data.”
– **Medium district council**

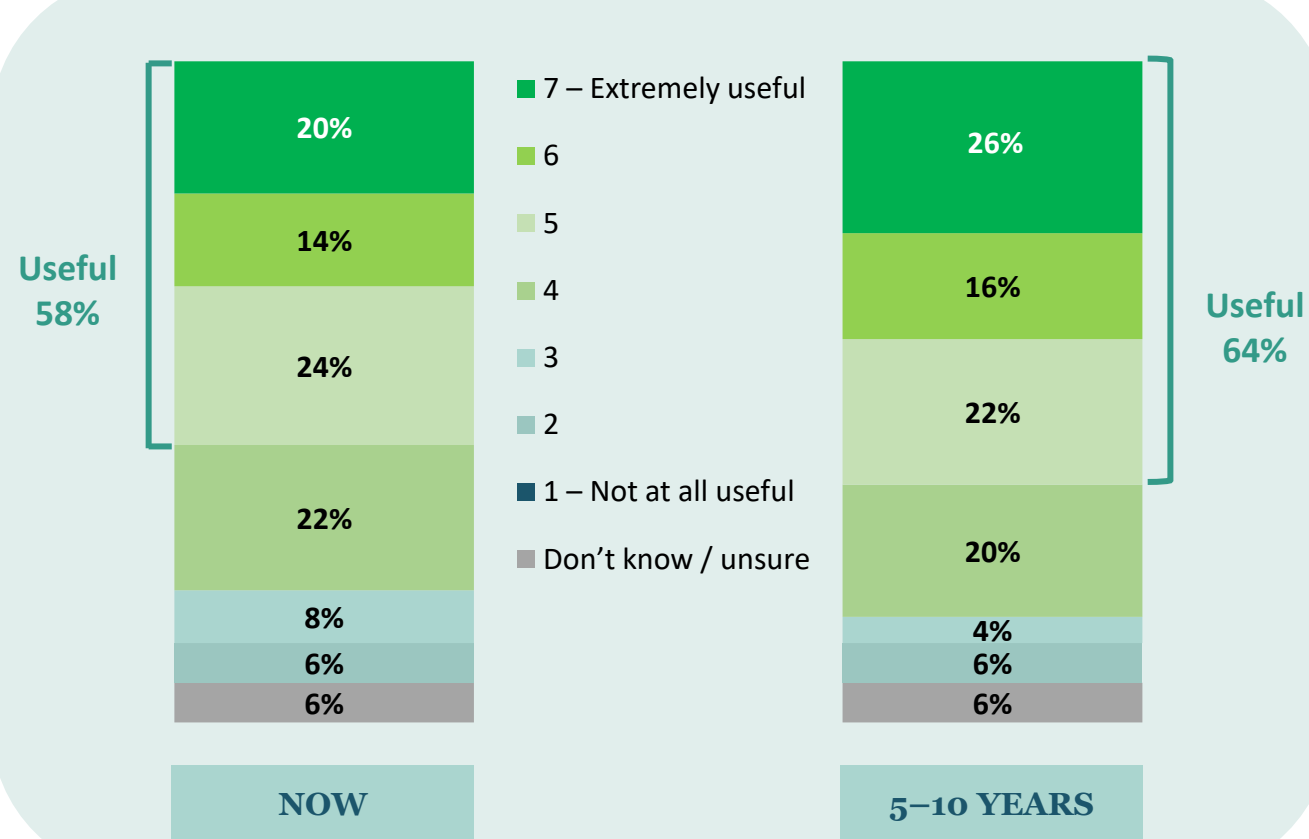
Tool-sharing community

Both the urgency & usefulness of a tool-sharing community are the lowest of all the tools assessed.

URGENCY OF TOOL



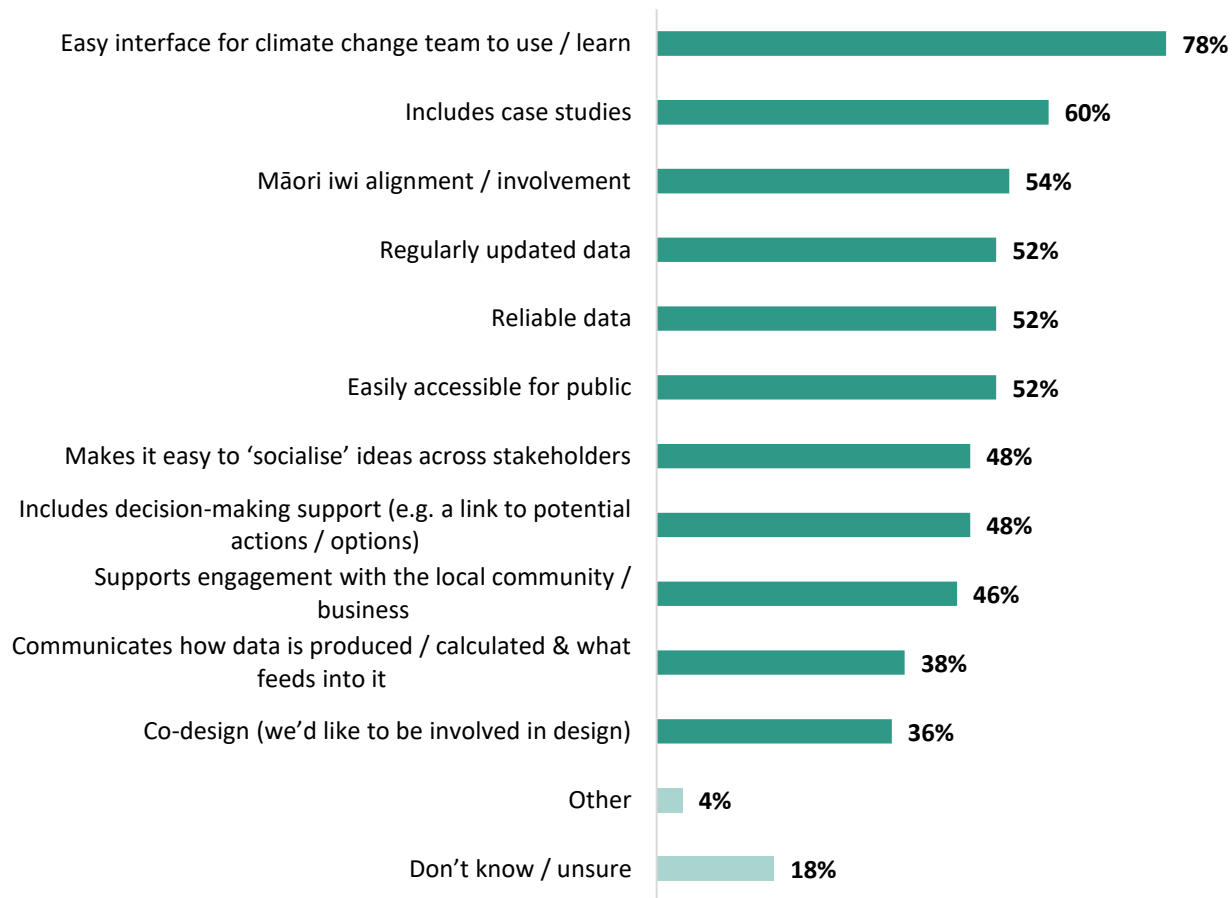
USEFULNESS OF TOOL



Tool-sharing community

An *easy-to-use interface*, inclusion of case studies & Māori iwi alignment are crucial attributes. However, the feedback states that this is already happening in other areas & shouldn't be a MfE focus.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOL



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK



"Let's build on the existing work and initiatives that have been done by other councils across the country and scale up ... No need to reinvent the wheel."
– **Large regional council**



"The usefulness of this will be greatly dependent on the data contained in it. Unless the reporting tool is somehow mandatory, then the relevance of examples could be slow to develop."
– **Medium city council**



"These sorts of activities are already happening on an informal regional and national basis through council networks. It would be helpful to have different user interfaces that allow iwi and community groups to use it for their own projects."
– **Medium district council**



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Ngā mihi

Amanda Dudding, Aiden Regan, Sara Beccari & Sarah McGruddy

GAME CHANGERS

