

REDC



Coillte – Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate

Public Consultation

October 2022

Job Ref: 583522



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01 Introduction



Coillte has developed a strategic vision for the future forest estate to deliver the multiple benefits of forestry under the four main values of climate, nature, wood and people.

Coillte has carried out public consultation on this strategic vision.

This report presents the summarised results of the consultation which included a public attitude survey and public consultation survey carried out over the summer of 2022.

The data, responses and comments will be used in the development of Coillte's strategic vision.

Public Attitude Survey Methodology

- Online research was conducted with 1,007 ROI adults aged 18+.
- Respondents were recruited using RED C Live, RED C's own online panel of over 40,000 members.
- Quota controls were used to ensure a nationally representative sample of ROI adults aged 18+, with interlocking quotas to provide extra confidence in sample profile.
- Data was weighted across gender, age, region and social class to ensure a nationally representative sample based on latest CSO projections.
- Fieldwork for this research took place from 9th – 15th June 2022.

Public Consultation Methodology

- Web based survey which could be accessed via the Coillte website open for submissions from 24th May – 5th July 2022.
- Respondents were provided with an information booklet outlining Coillte's "Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate" under the four key pillars of Forests for Climate, Nature, Wood and People.
- 599 responses were collected via the online questionnaire which included both closed and open ended questions.
- Data analysis subsequently undertaken by RED C.

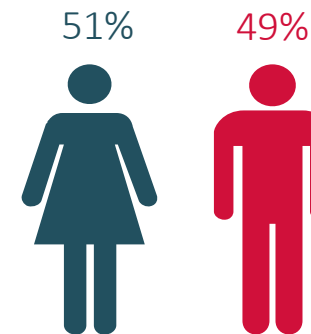
Sample Profile (Public Attitude Survey)



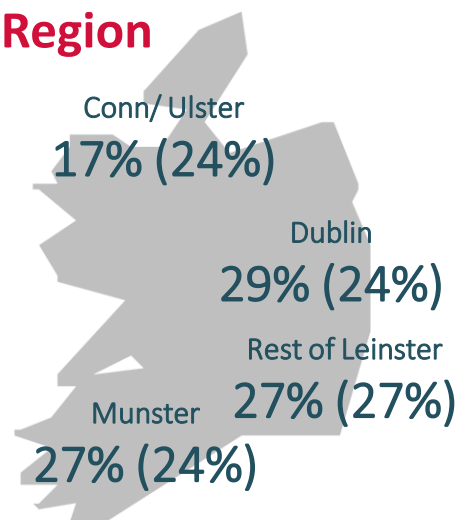
() Denotes Public Consultation

Response Breakdown (where relevant data was gathered)

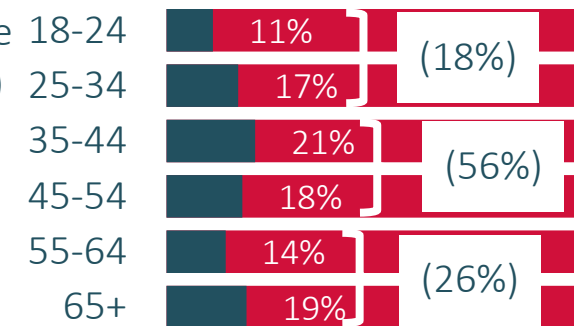
Gender



Region



Age



NOTE: Some slight differences in question wording and answer codes served in the Public Attitude Survey to those served in the Public Consultation survey.

Some differences also in the order some questions were served.

Not all questions were served to both the Public Attitude and the Public Consultation surveys.

02

Summary of Results



1

Forests for Climate

There is an almost universal view that Irish forests are important in helping to address the climate crisis.

There is a strong degree of support for planting more trees and increasing forest cover with over 4 in 5 Irish adults agreeing with this, while support is even higher in the public consultation. There is overwhelming support for broadleaves. There is also strong support for conifers from the general public, whilst opinions on conifers are more polarized from the public consultation.

Coillte's ambition to create 100,000 hectares of new forests by 2050 is seen as just about right by 2 in 5. The general public were far more likely to be unable to comment on this ambition than those who responded to the public consultation, who believed the ambition to create 100,000 hectares of new forests wasn't ambitious enough.

The majority agree with Coillte's ambition to redesign peatland forests where they present a significant carbon emission risk (redesign relates to rewetting or rewilding).

2

Forests for Nature

An overwhelming majority believe that Irish forests are important for nature and biodiversity.

Similarly, there is almost unanimous agreement that Coillte has a role to play in addressing the biodiversity crisis.

However, there is relatively low awareness that approximately 20% of Coillte's estate is currently managed primarily for biodiversity, especially in the public attitude survey.

There was a divergence of views on Coillte's nature ambitions with those in the public consultation more likely to think Coillte's plans didn't go far enough.

Summary of Results - II



3 Forests for Wood

A majority of Irish people believe that Irish forests are important in supporting the construction of sustainable homes.

There were high levels of support evident that more timber frame houses should be built in Ireland rather than using concrete or steel.

There was also high endorsement that Ireland should be self-sufficient for its timber requirements, that wood should come from independently certified forests and that Coillte should innovate and promote wood products to support the bioeconomy and de-carbonise our built environment.

4 Forests for People

Forests are seen as hugely important in terms of providing spaces for both outdoor physical activity and also for mental health and wellbeing. In line with this, a strong majority agree with Coillte's ambition to double the number of recreation sites to 500.

Three quarters believe that these new recreational forests should be located both near population centres, and in rural areas.

Peace and quiet is rated as the most important feature of a forest site. Personal safety, along with welfare and exercise facilities are also deemed important as are map boards and way marked trails. Adventure experiences and coffee / snack facilities are deemed of lesser importance.

A strong majority endorse Coillte's ambition to enable investment in world-class visitor destinations on the estate to support growth in tourism and recreation, while three in every four believe that Coillte forests are important for rural employment and economic activity.

5

Balancing Benefits

Over 4 in 5 asserted that balancing the benefits of Coillte's forests across the four pillars of Climate, Nature, Wood and People is important.

Almost half of those who took part in the public consultation believed that Coillte's ambitions were appropriately balanced, while almost 3 in 10 disagreed. One quarter had a neutral viewpoint.

03

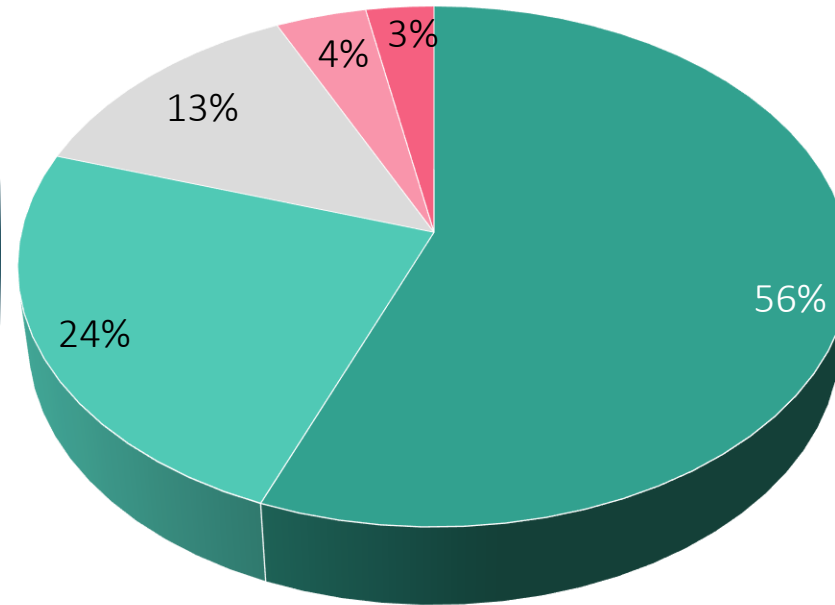
Forests for Climate



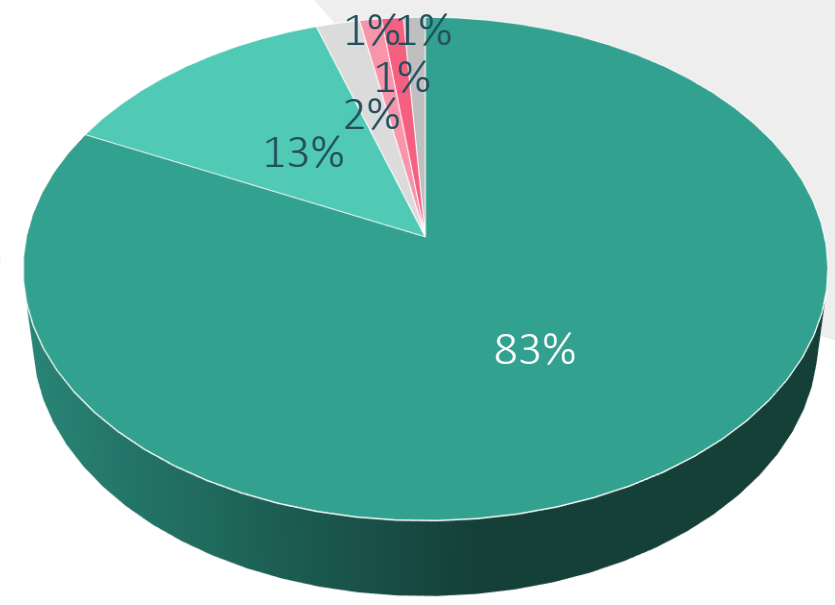
There is an almost universal view that Irish forests are important in helping to address the climate crisis.

Importance of Irish Forests in Helping Address Climate Crisis

Public Attitude



Public Consultation



■ Very important ■ Quite important ■ Somewhat important
■ Not very important ■ Not at all important

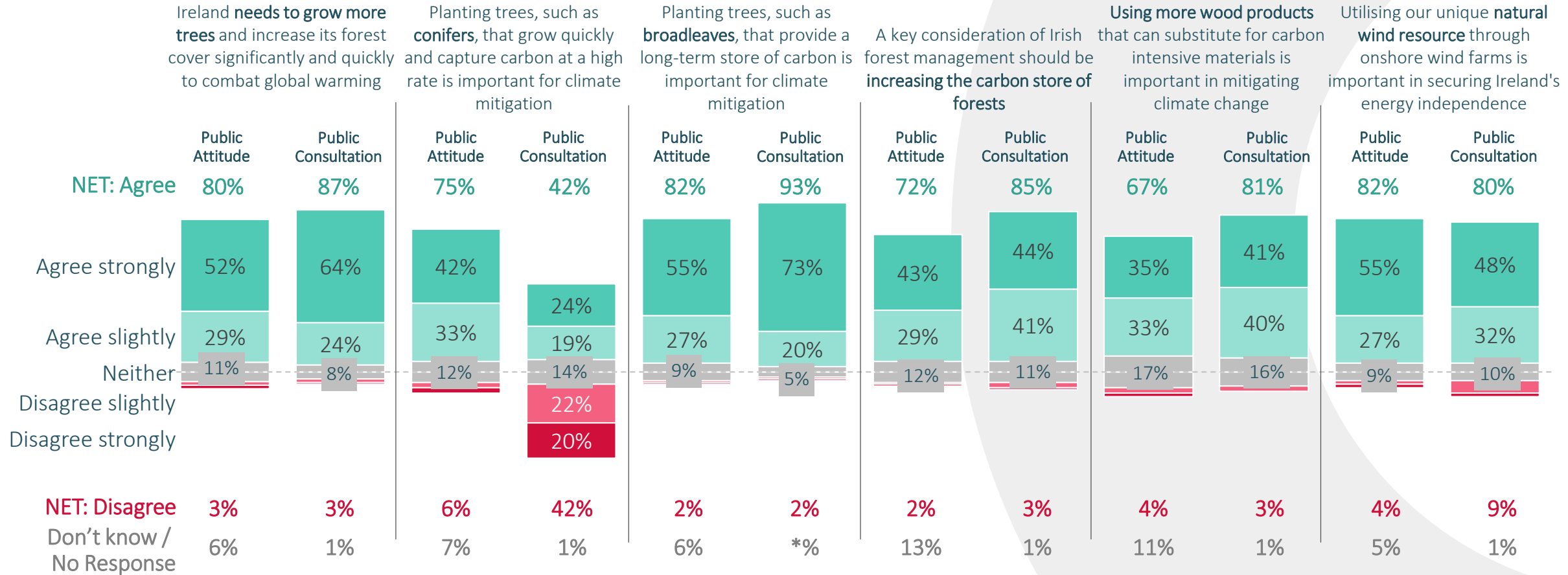
■ Very important ■ Important ■ Neutral
■ Unimportant ■ Very unimportant ■ No response

*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

Strong degree of support for planting more trees and increasing forest cover

Over 4 in 5 Irish adults agree with planting more trees, with support even higher in the public consultation. Overwhelming support for broadleaves. Strong support for conifers from the general public, whilst opinions on conifers more polarized from public consultation.

Views on trees and climate - Summary



*NOTE : Some NET and Total figures may not add exactly due to rounding

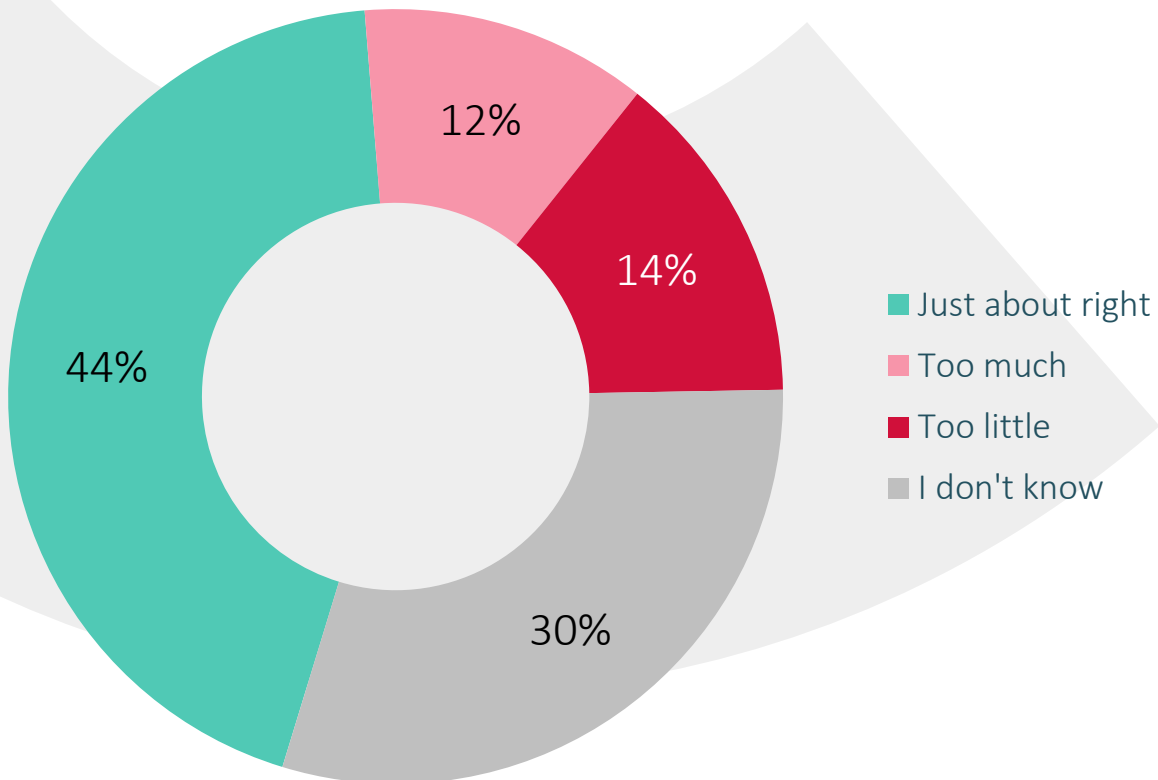
Ambition to create 100,000 hectares of new forests by 2050 is seen as just about right by 2 in 5



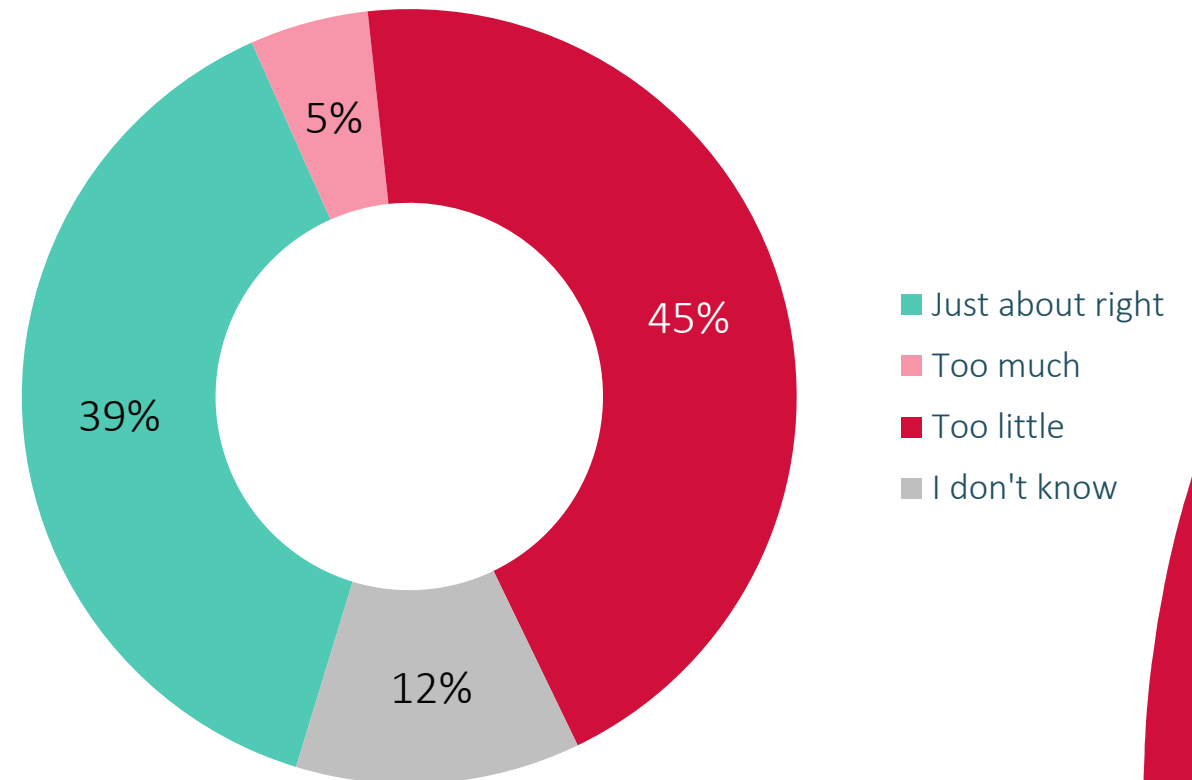
While 2 in 5 of the general public were in agreement with Coillte's plans to create 100,000 hectares of new forests by 2050, a quarter indicated it was either too much or too little, while 1 in 3 didn't know. However, just less than half of those in the public consultation believed the 100,000 hectares by 2050 was too little.

Agreement with Coillte's plan to create 100,000 hectares of new forests by 2050

Public Attitude



Public Consultation



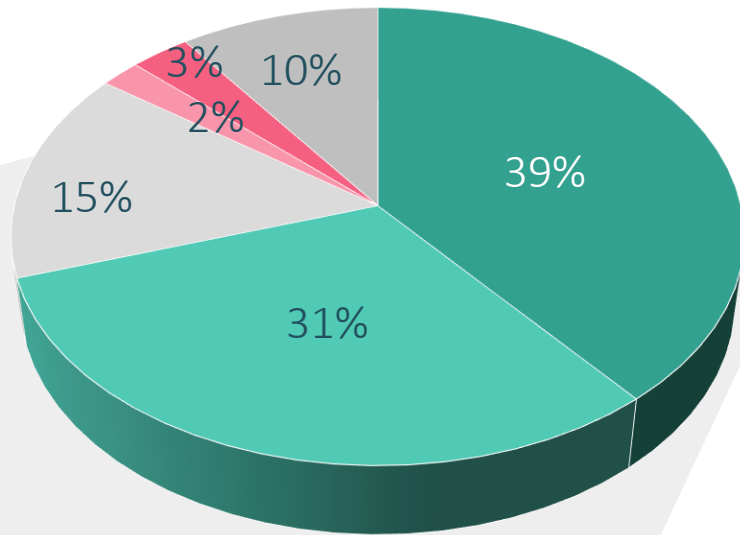
*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

Majority agree with Coillte's ambition to redesign peatland forests where they present a significant carbon emission risk



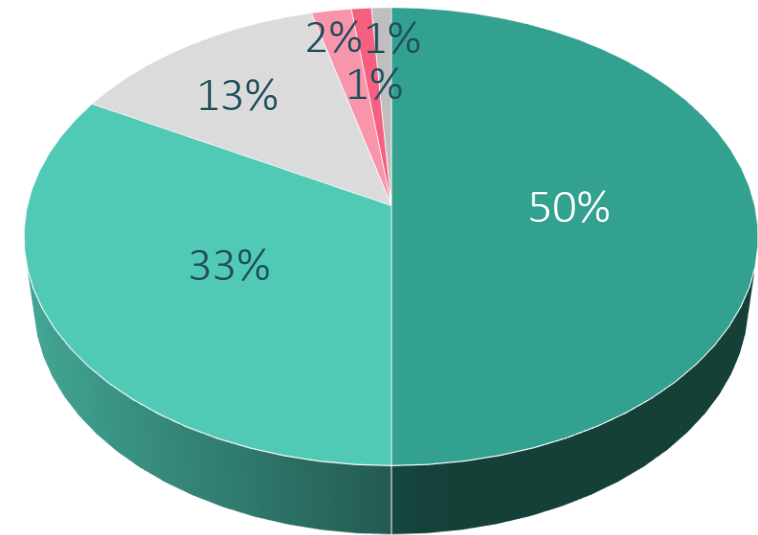
Agreement with Coillte's ambition to redesign peatland forests to reduce the emission risk and improve carbon storage (Redesign relates to rewetting or rewilding)

Public Attitude



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Public Consultation



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response



04

Forests for Nature



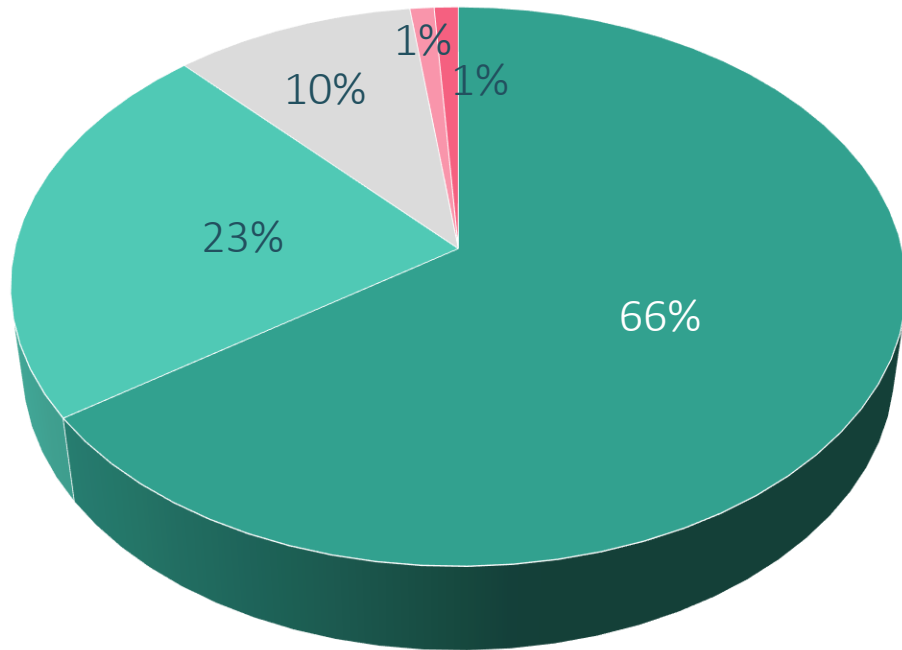
Almost universal view that Irish forests are important for nature and biodiversity



This view is held more strongly by those who took part in the public consultation.

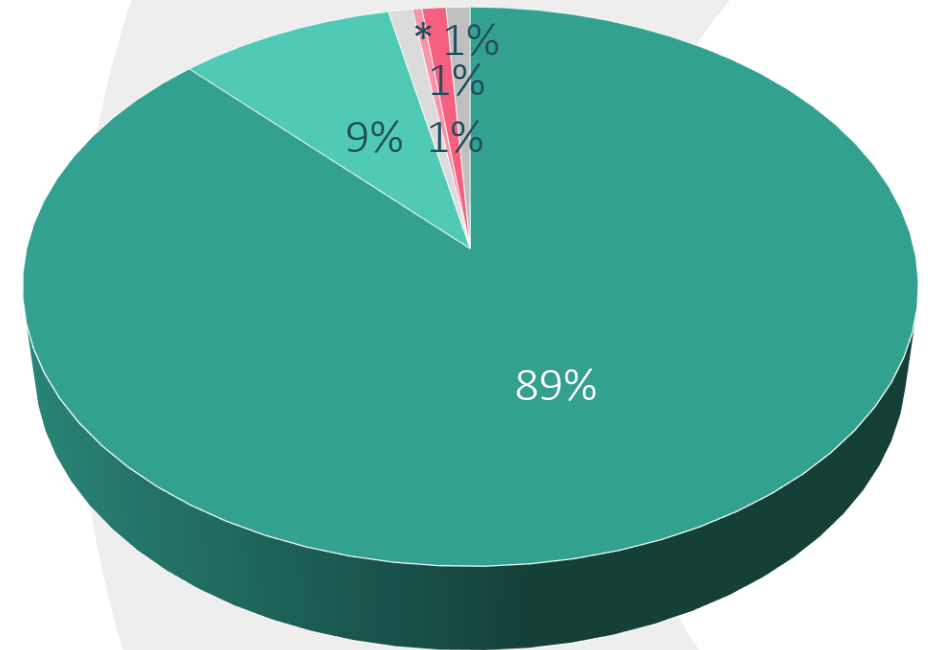
Importance of Irish Forests for Nature and Biodiversity

Public Attitude



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Public Consultation



- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very unimportant
- No response

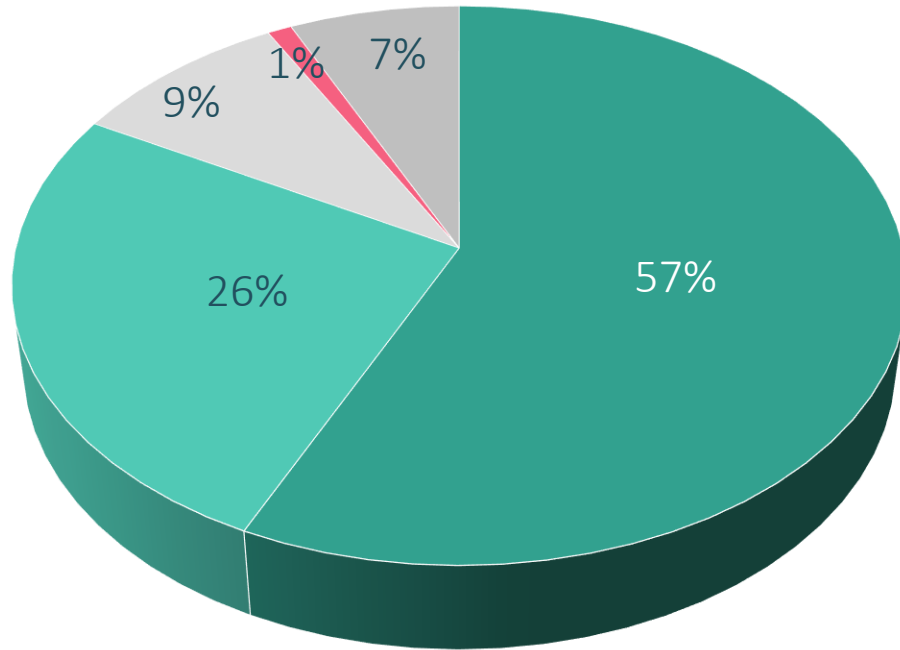
*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

Almost unanimous agreement that Coillte has a role to play in addressing the biodiversity crisis



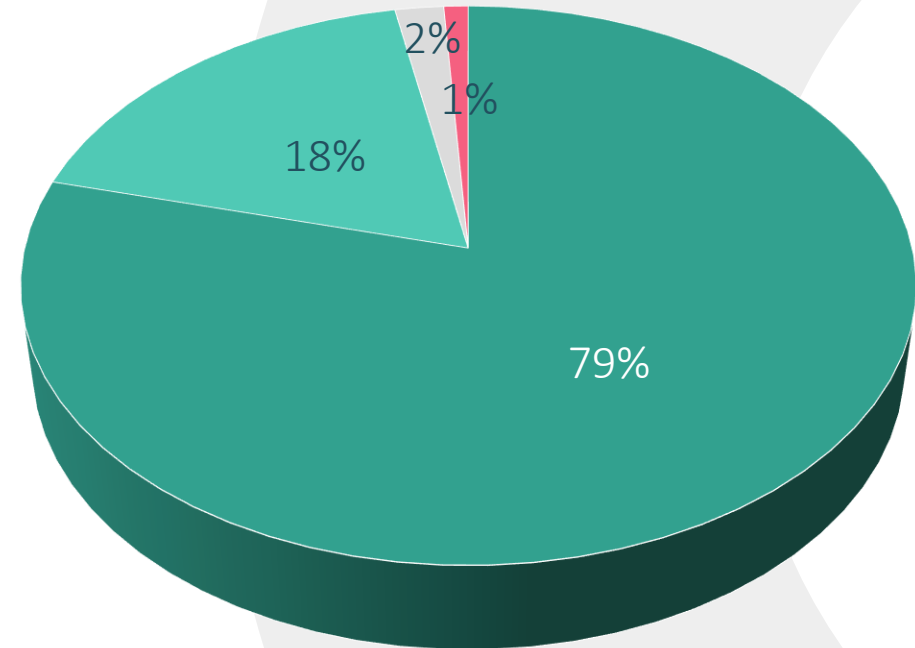
Coillte has a role to play in addressing the biodiversity crisis

Public Attitude



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Public Consultation



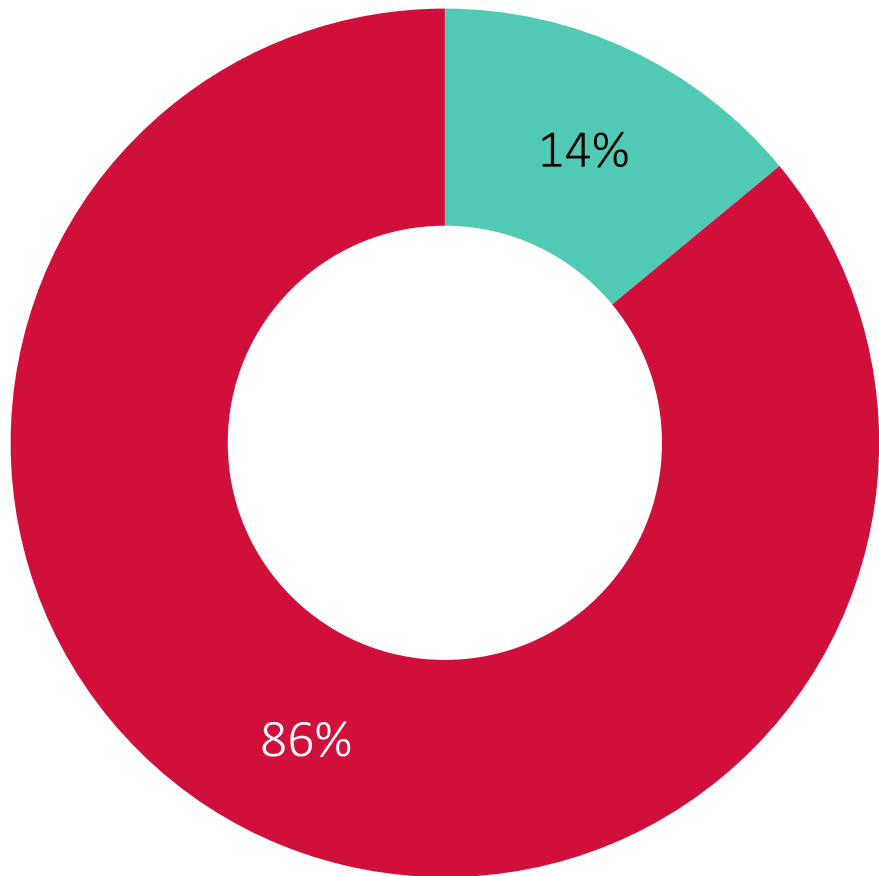
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response

Low awareness that c20% of Coillte's estate is managed primarily for biodiversity, especially among the general public.

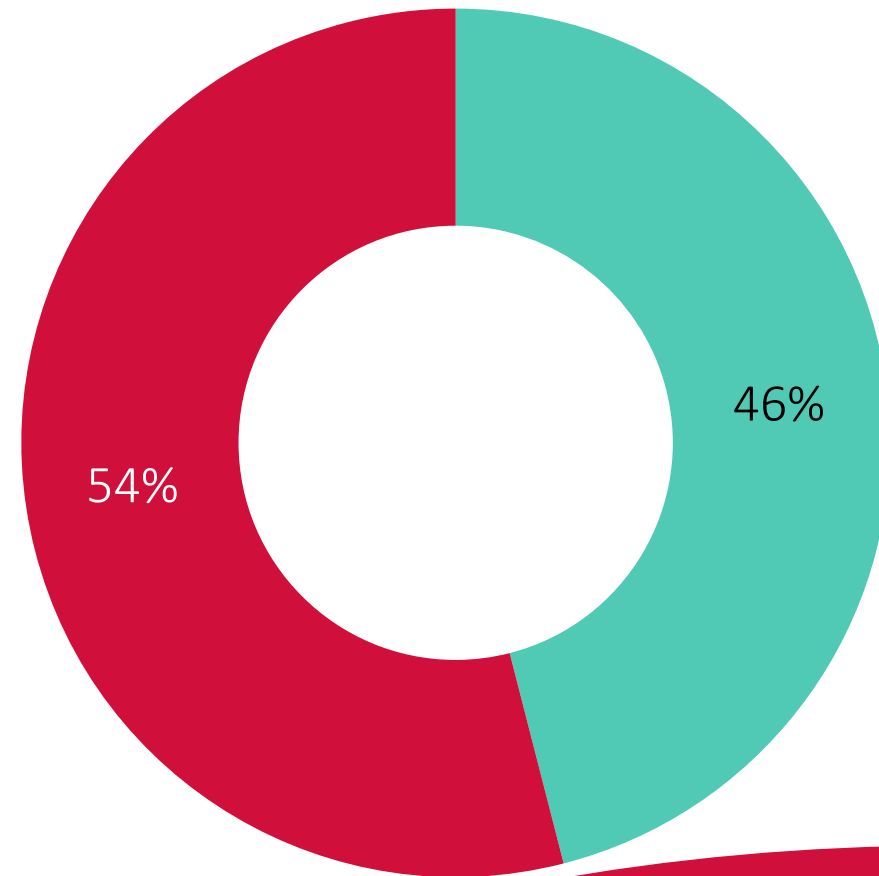


Awareness that over 90,000 hectares of Coillte's estate (circa 20%) is managed primarily for biodiversity

Public Attitude



Public Consultation



■ Yes
■ No

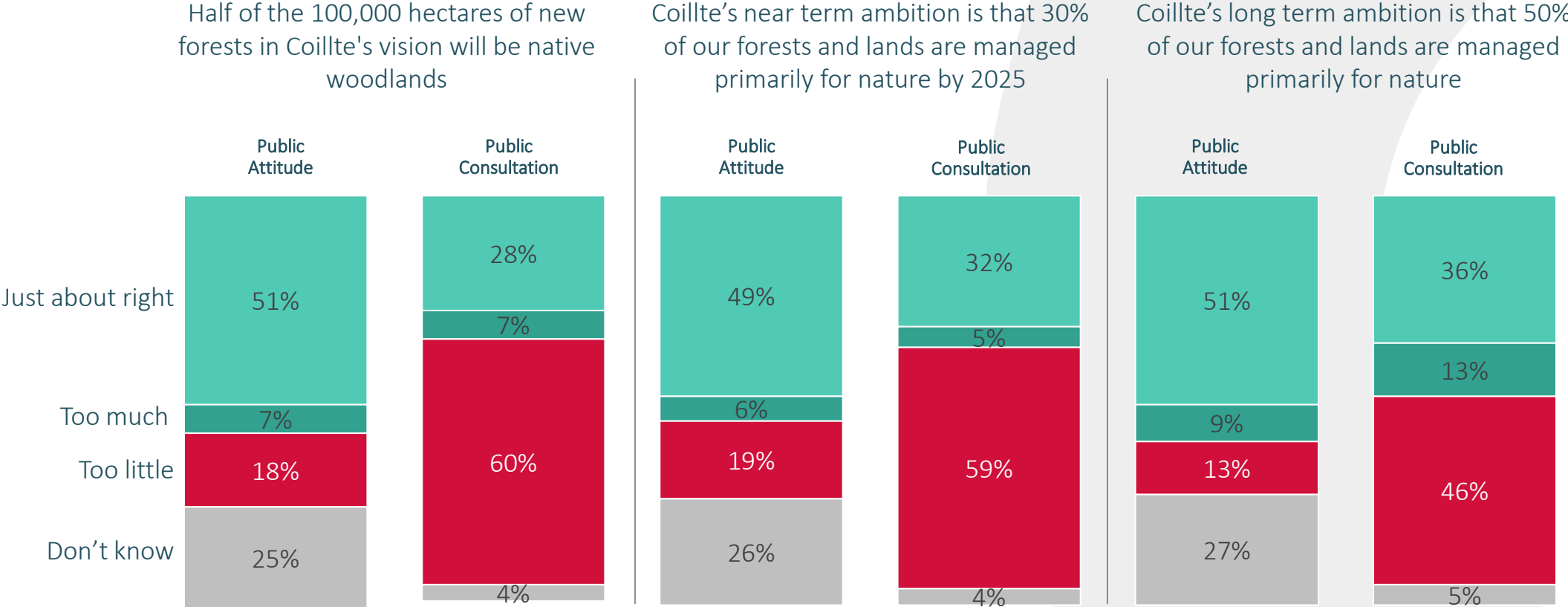
■ Yes
■ No

Divergence of views on Coillte's nature ambitions for Irish forests



Approximately half of all respondents of the public attitude survey felt that Coillte's forests for nature ambitions are just about right while a significant proportion of the public consultation respondents felt the nature ambitions didn't go far enough.

Rating of Coillte's plan for Irish forests - Summary



*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

05

Forests for Wood

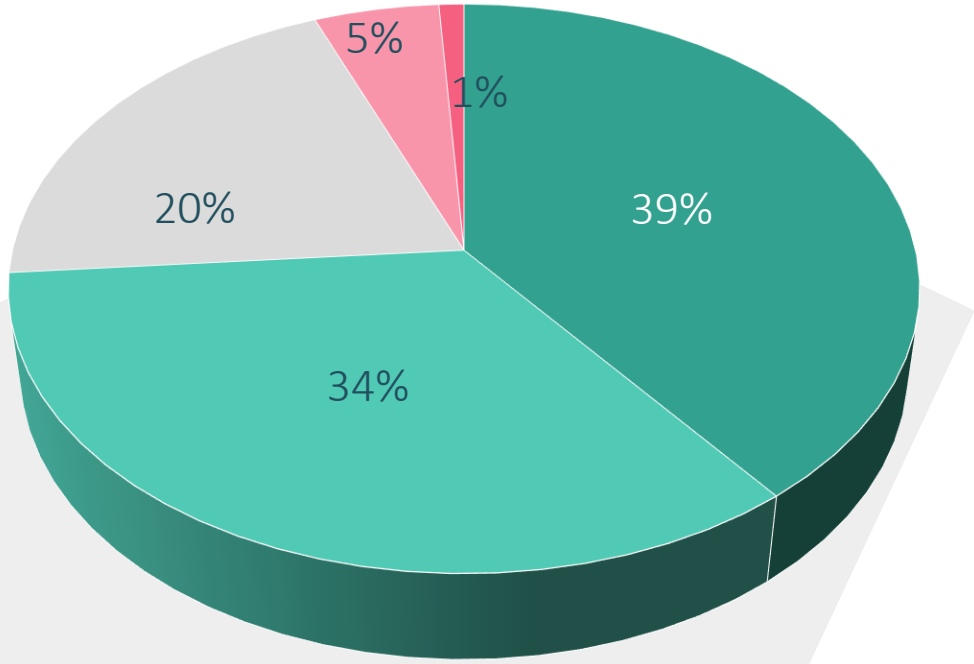


Majority believe that Irish forests are important in supporting the construction of sustainable homes.



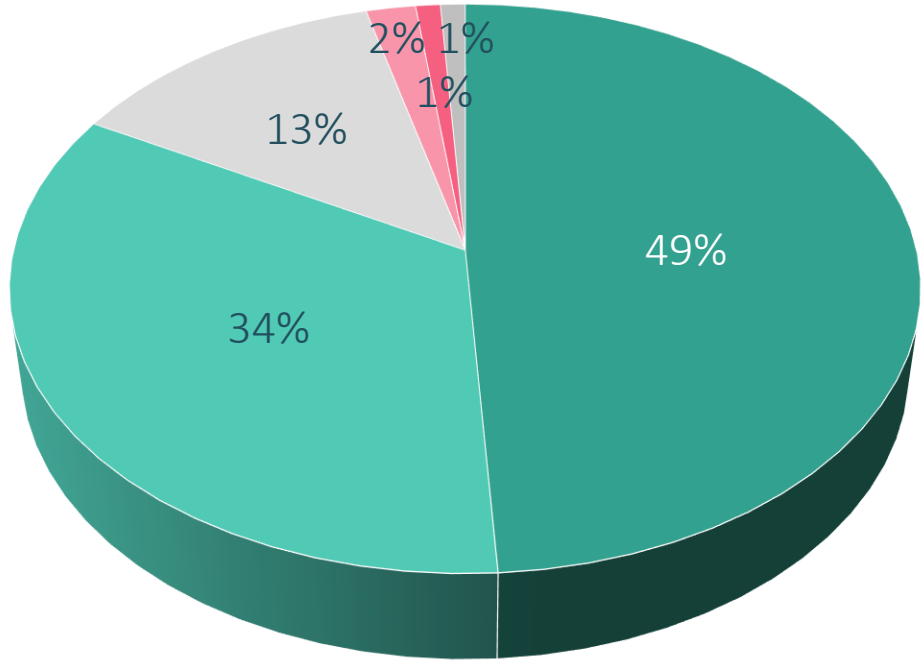
Importance of Irish Forests in Supporting the Construction of Sustainable Homes

Public Attitude



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Public Consultation



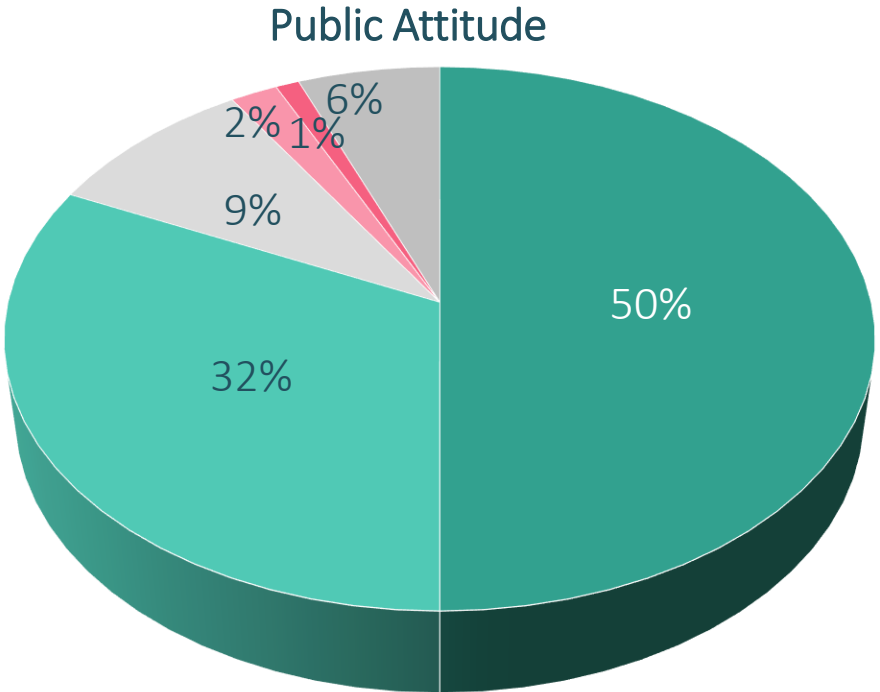
- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very unimportant
- No response

*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

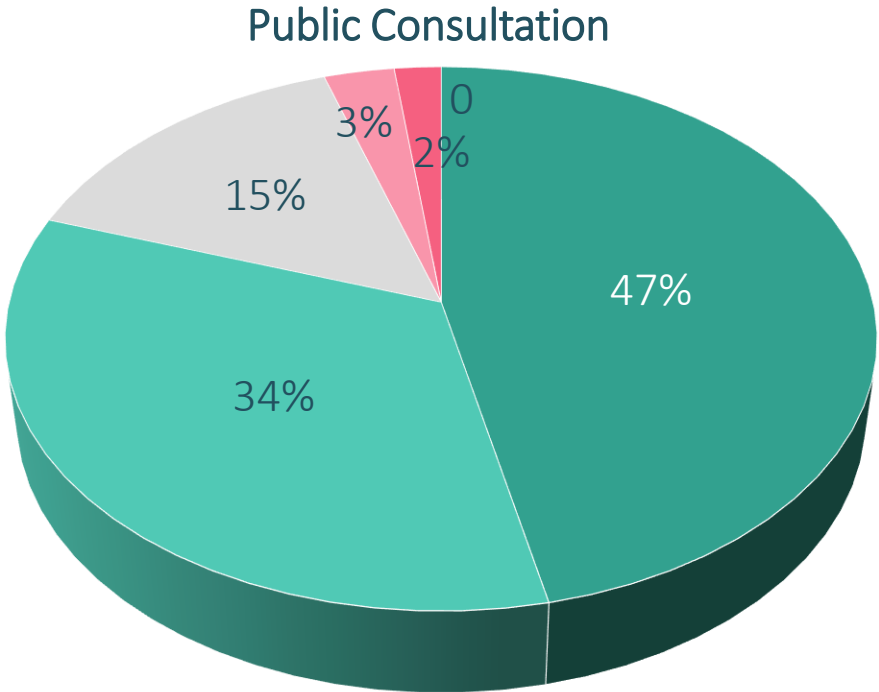
Over 4 in 5 agree we should continue to produce enough certified Irish wood to support the construction of homes in Ireland



Agreement with Coillte's ambition to continue to produce enough certified Irish wood to support the construction of homes in Ireland is the right thing to do.



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response

*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

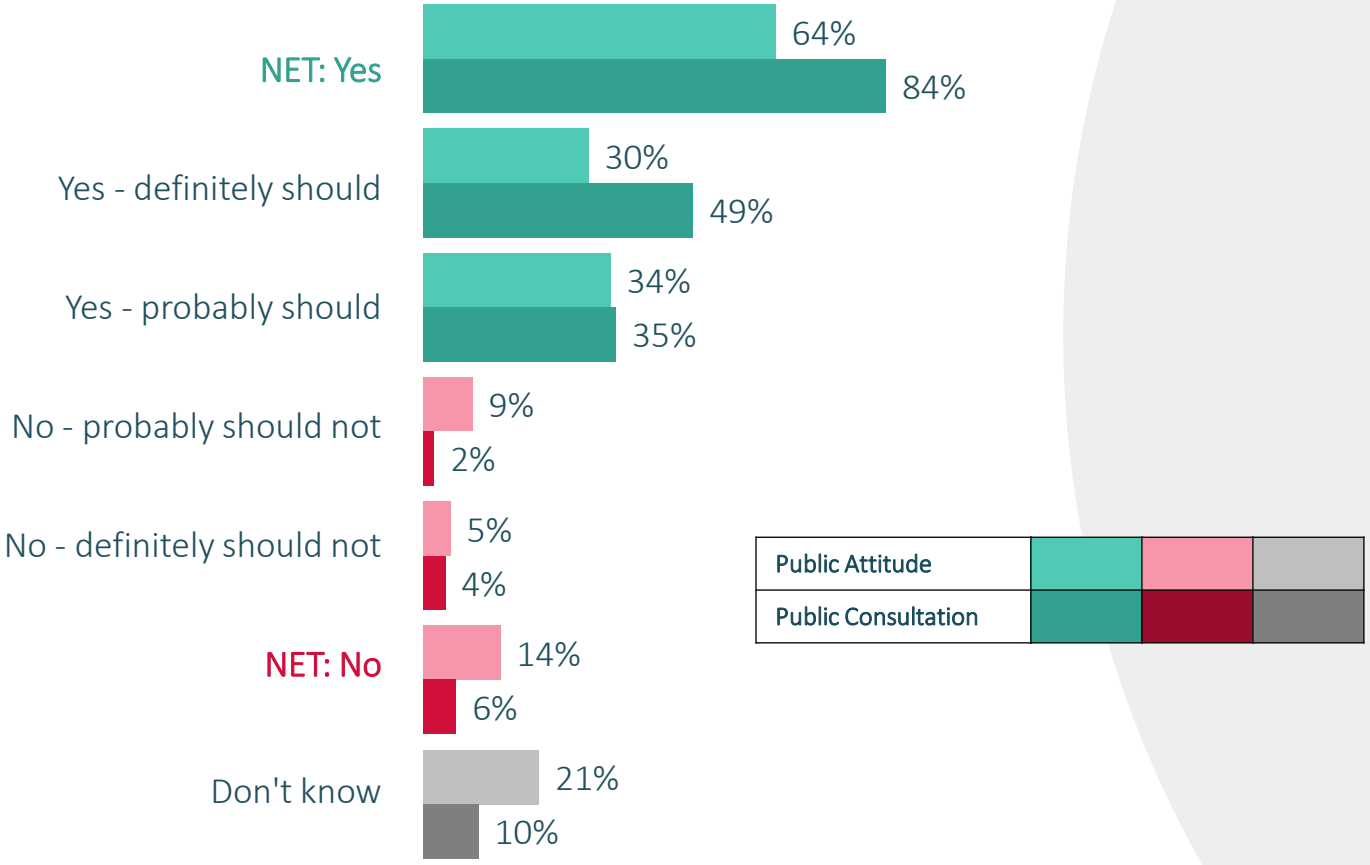


High levels of support for more timber frame houses in Ireland



Those in the public consultation were more likely to have a view on this topic with only 1 in 10 saying “Don’t know” compared to double that amount among the general public.

Should more timber frame houses be built in Ireland rather than using concrete or steel?



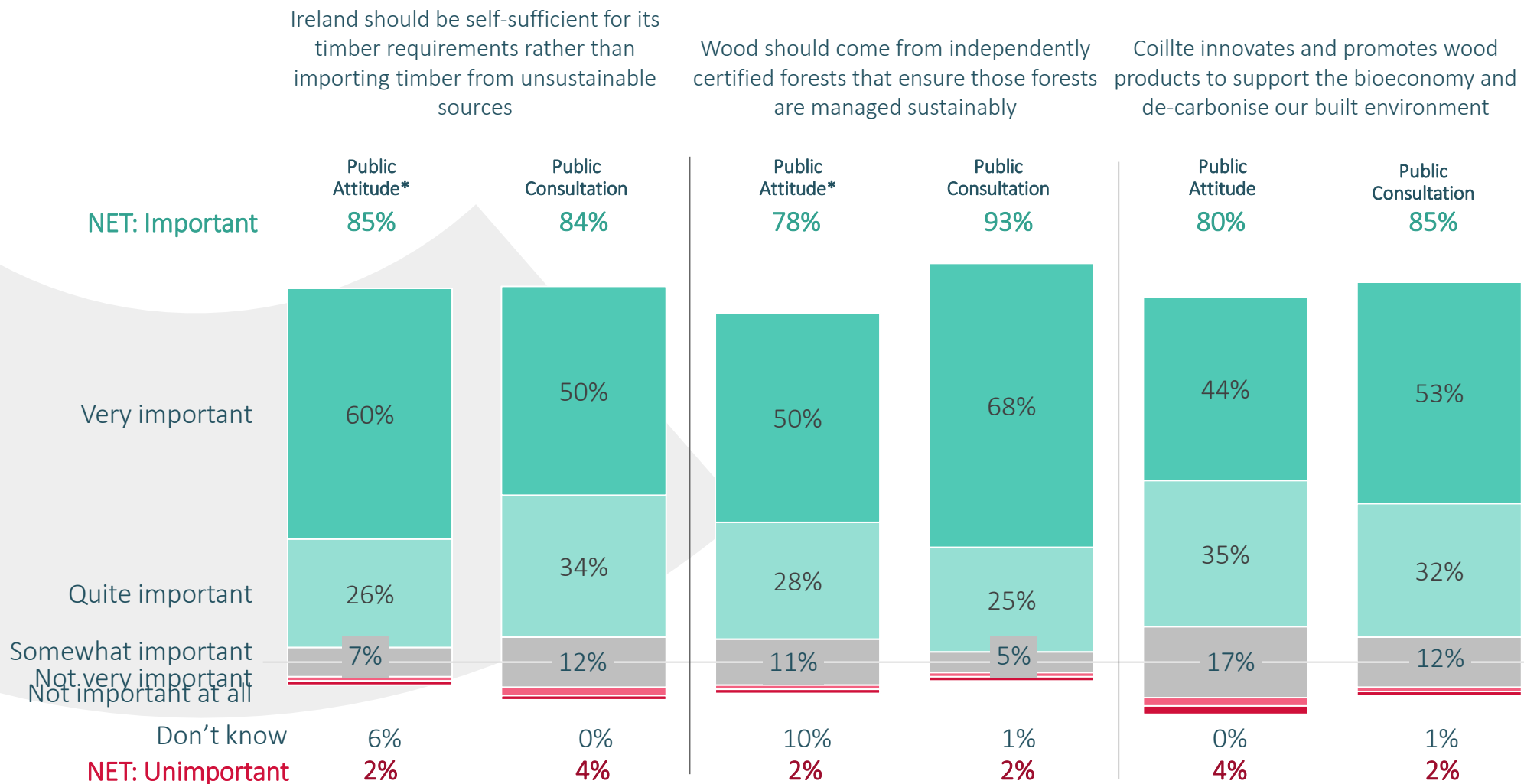
*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

Strong endorsement for self-sufficiency, certification and innovation



At least 4 in every 5 endorse each statement, with near unanimous agreement among the public consultation that wood should come from independently certified forests.

Importance of Irish Forests for Wood - Summary



*NOTE : Agreement Scale Used in Public Attitude Survey.

*NOTE : Some NET and Total figures may not add exactly due to rounding

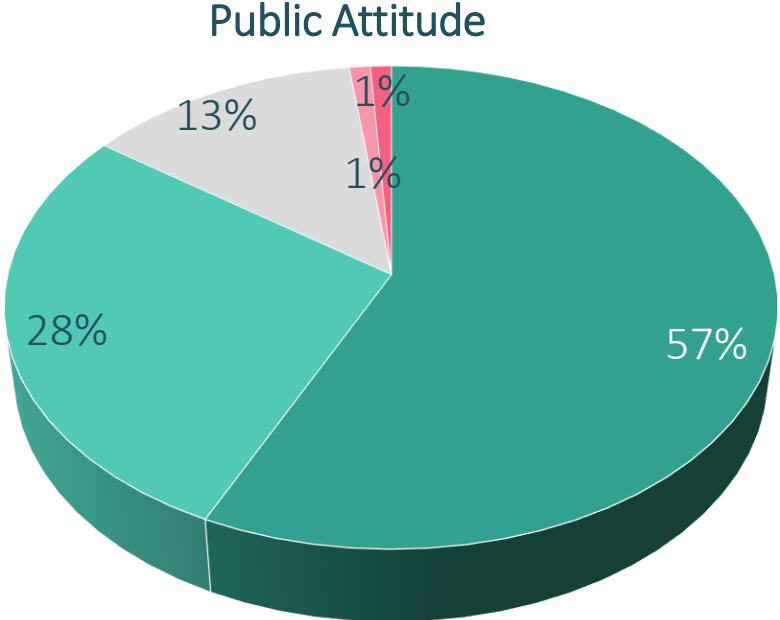
06

Forests for People

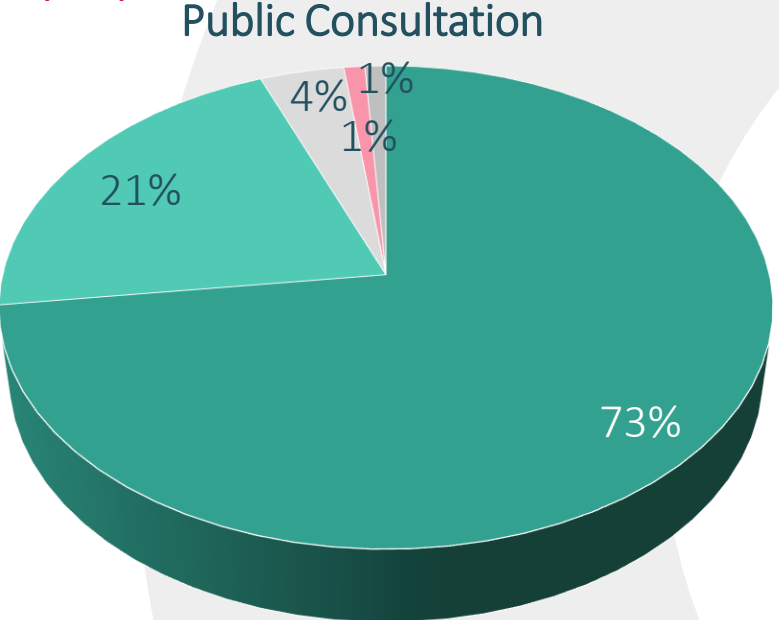


Very important that forests provide spaces for mental health & wellbeing

Importance of Irish forests for providing mental health and wellbeing spaces for people



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

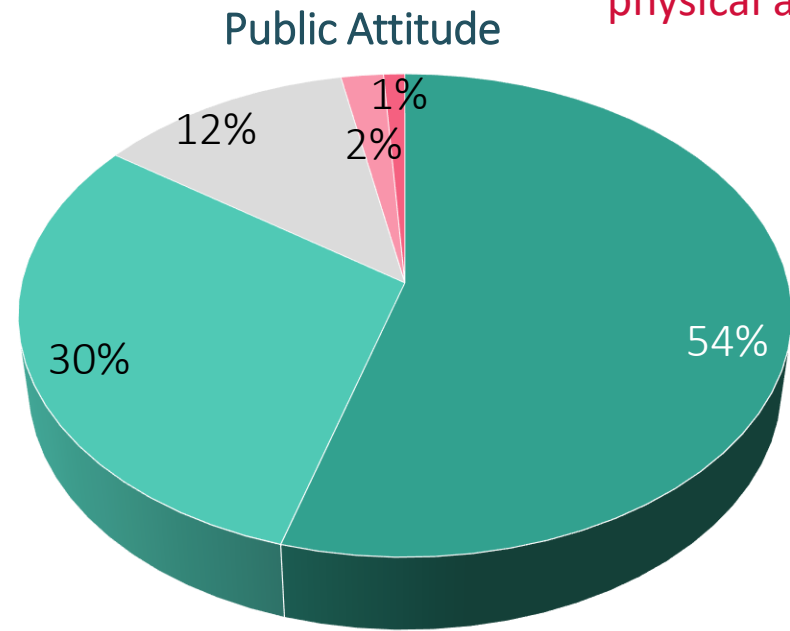


- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very unimportant
- No response

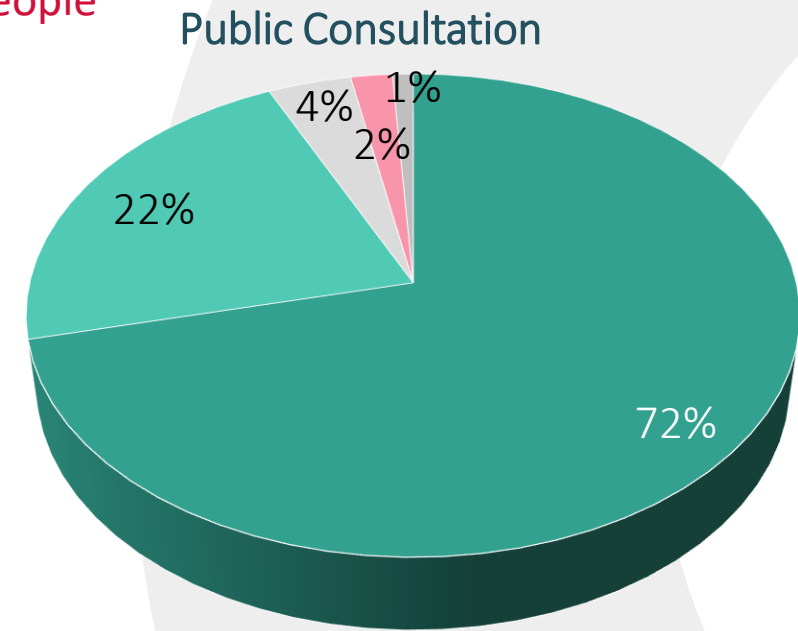
Very important that forests provide spaces for outdoor physical activity



Importance of Irish Forests for providing outdoor physical activity spaces for people



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all



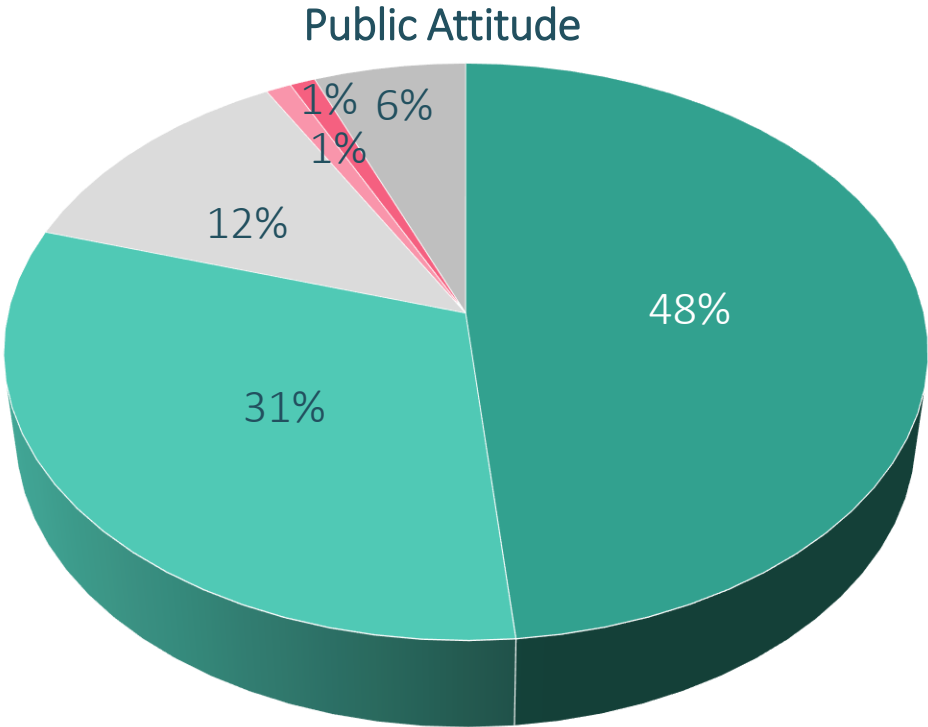
- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very unimportant

*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

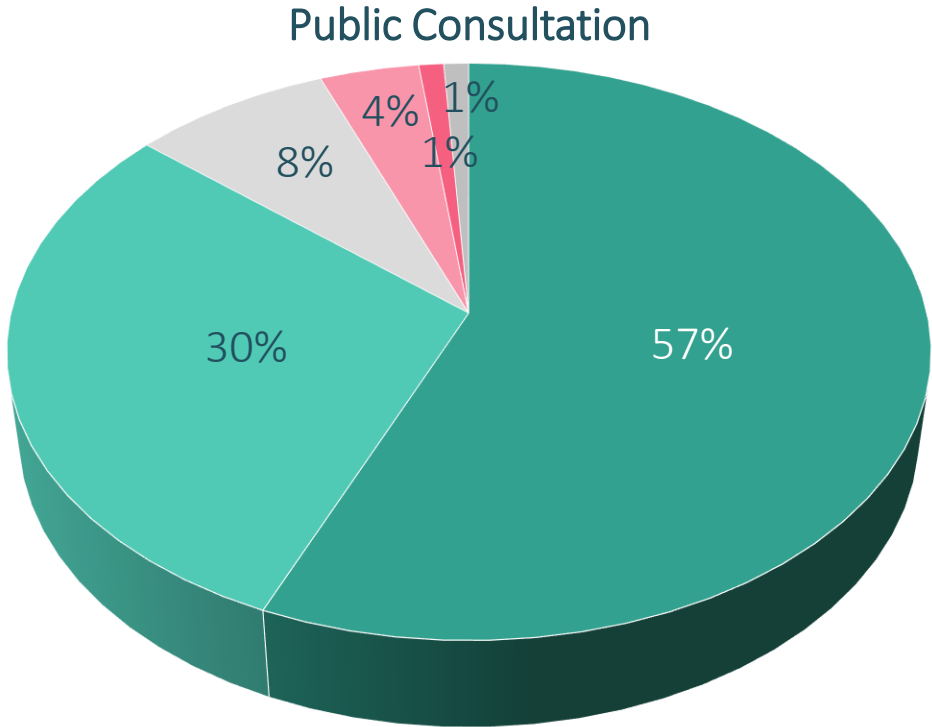
Most (at least 4 in 5) agree with Coillte's ambition to double the number of recreation sites to 500



Agreement with Coillte's ambition to double the number of recreation sites to 500



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response

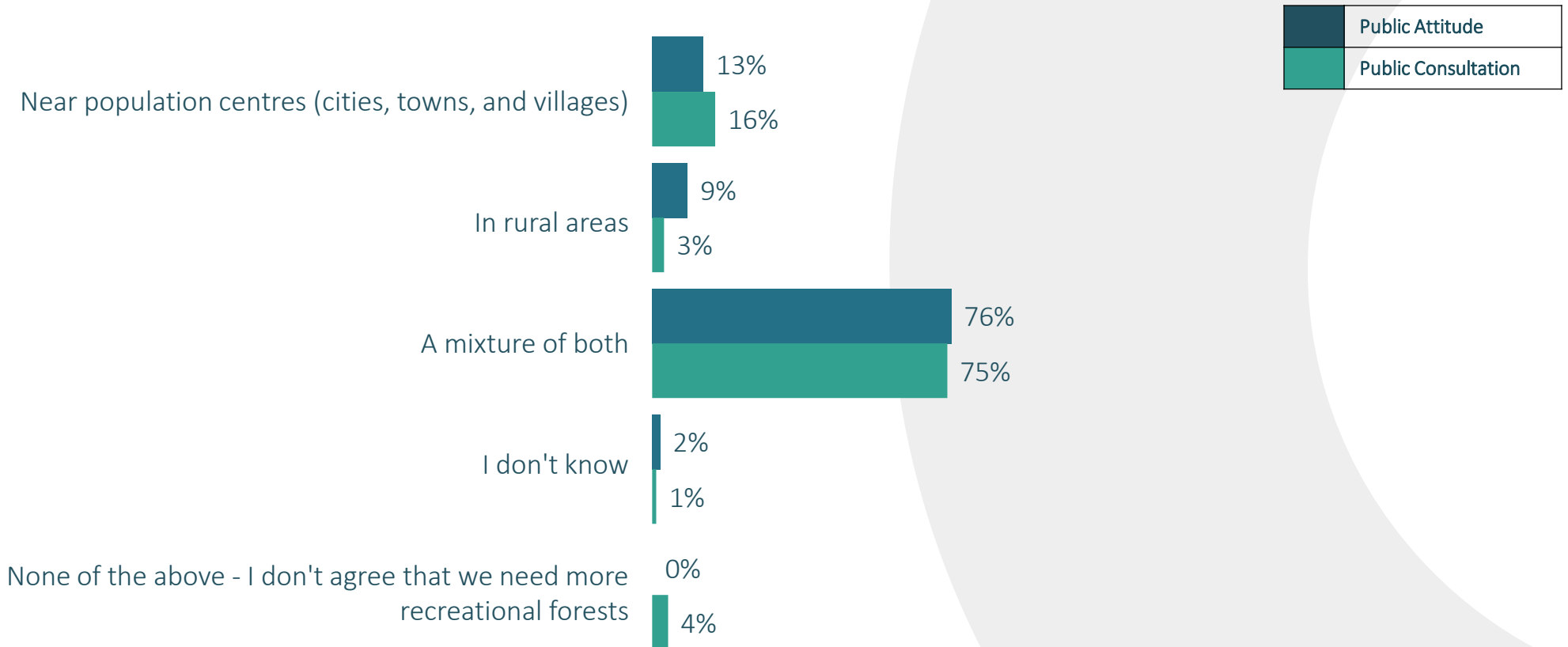
*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding



Three quarters believe new recreational forests should be located both near population centres, and in rural areas



Where should new recreational forests be located



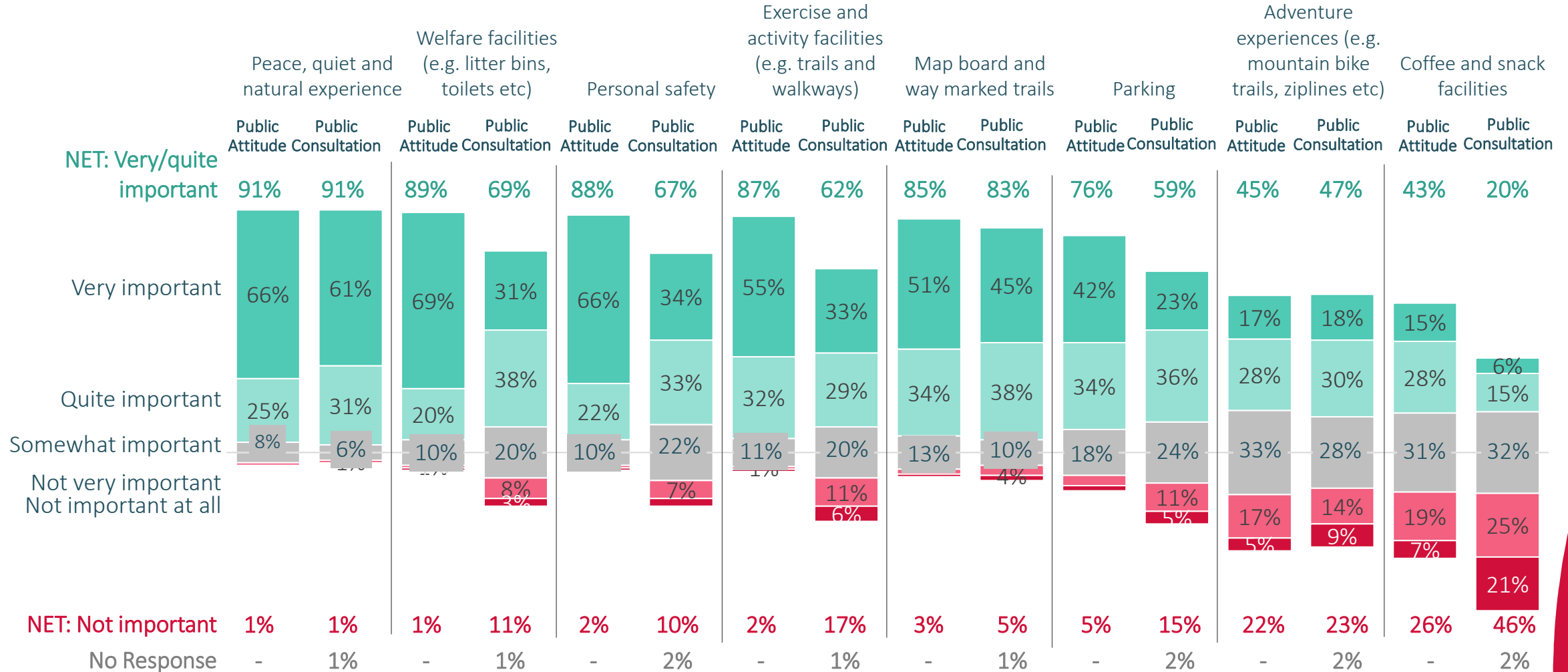
*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

Peace and quiet rated as most important feature of a forest site



Personal safety, along with welfare and exercise facilities are also deemed important as are map board and way marked trails. Adventure experiences and coffee / snack facilities are deemed of lesser importance.

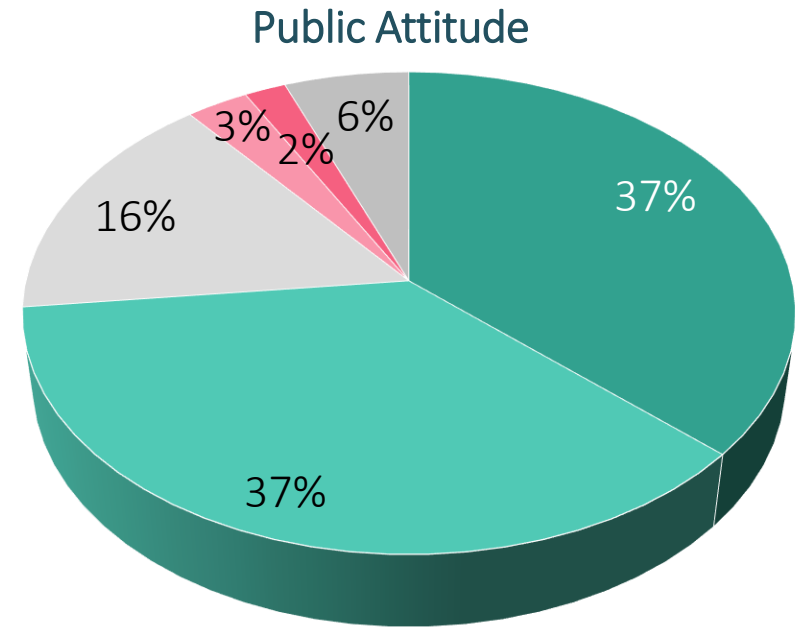
Importance of features in a recreational forest site - Summary



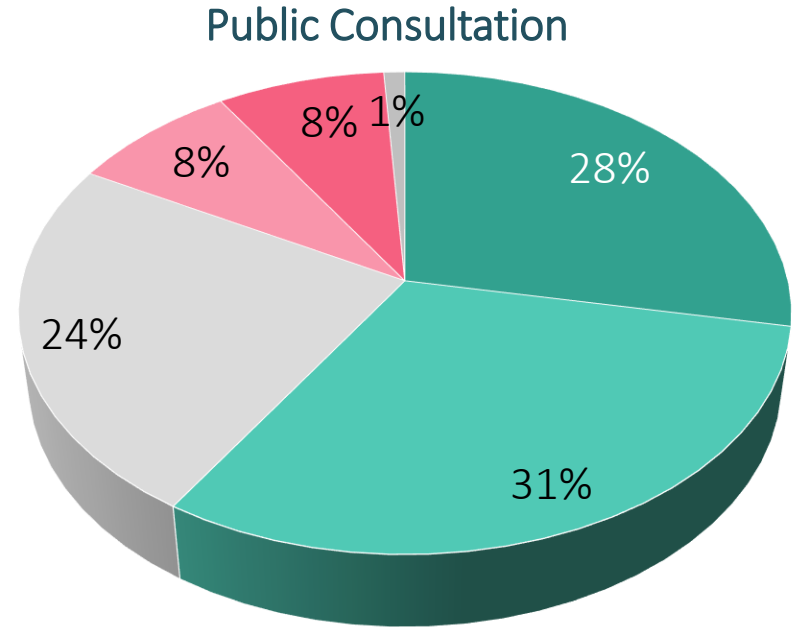
*NOTE : Some NET and Total figures may not add exactly due to rounding

A strong majority endorse Coillte's ambition to enable investment in world-class visitor destinations on the estate to support growth in tourism and recreation

Agreement with Coillte's ambition to enable investment in world-class visitor destinations on the estate to support growth in tourism and recreation



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Don't know



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response

*NOTE : Some figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

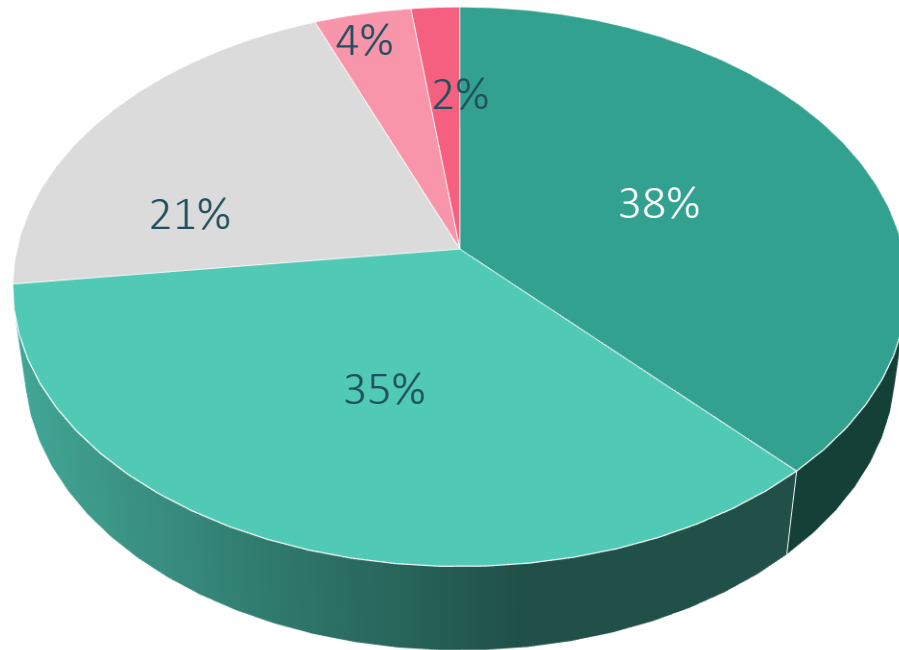


Three quarters believe that Coillte forests are important for rural employment and economic activity.



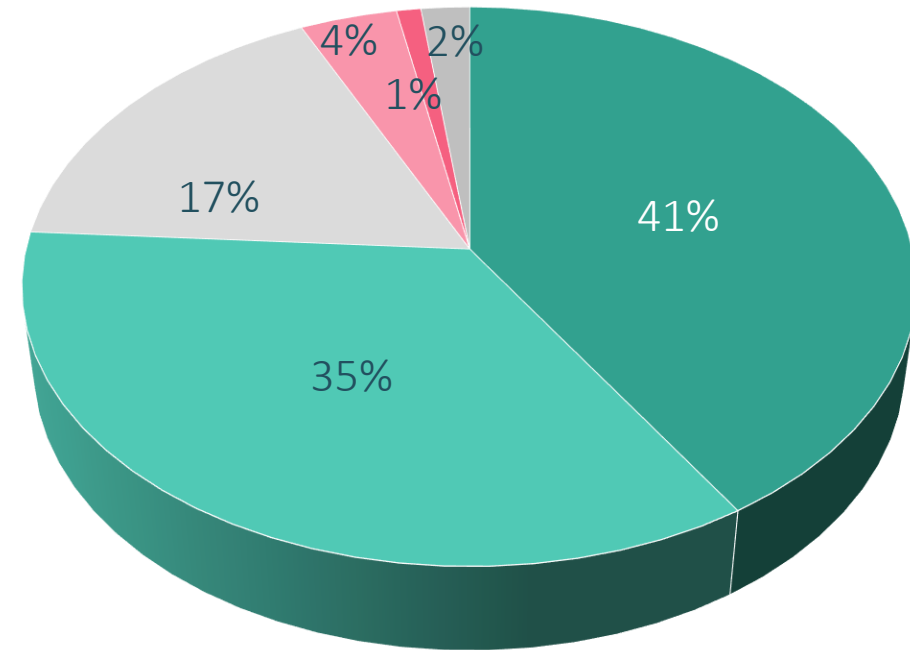
Importance of Irish Forests for Rural Employment and Economic Activity

Public Attitude



- Very important
- Quite important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Public Consultation



- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very unimportant
- No response

07

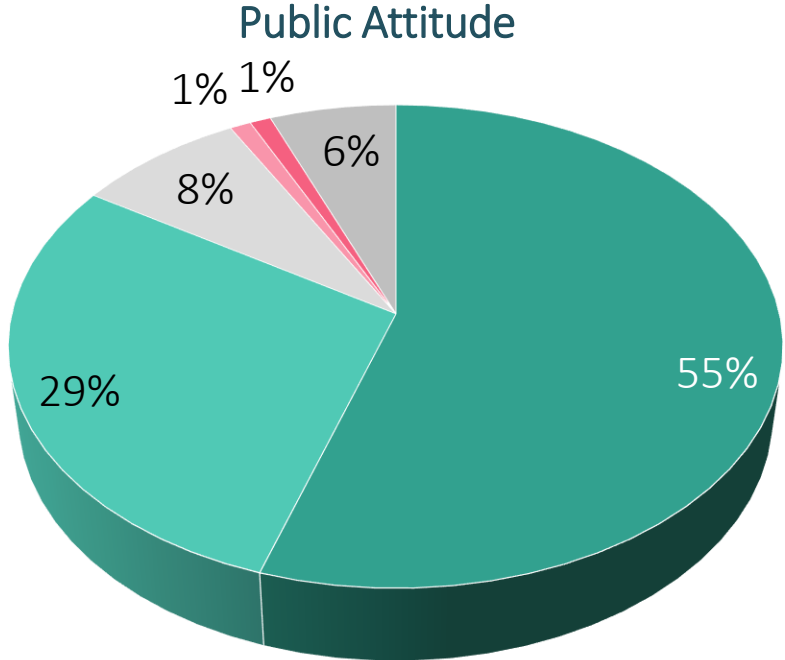
Balancing Benefits



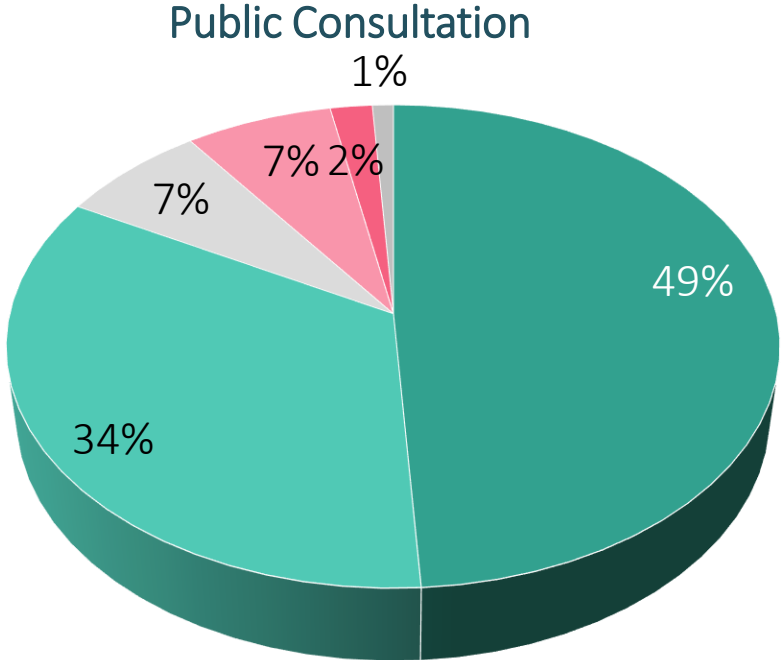
Over 4 in 5 assert that balancing the benefits of Coillte's forests across the four pillars is important



Importance that Coillte's forest estate balances the benefits for Climate, Nature, Wood and People



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



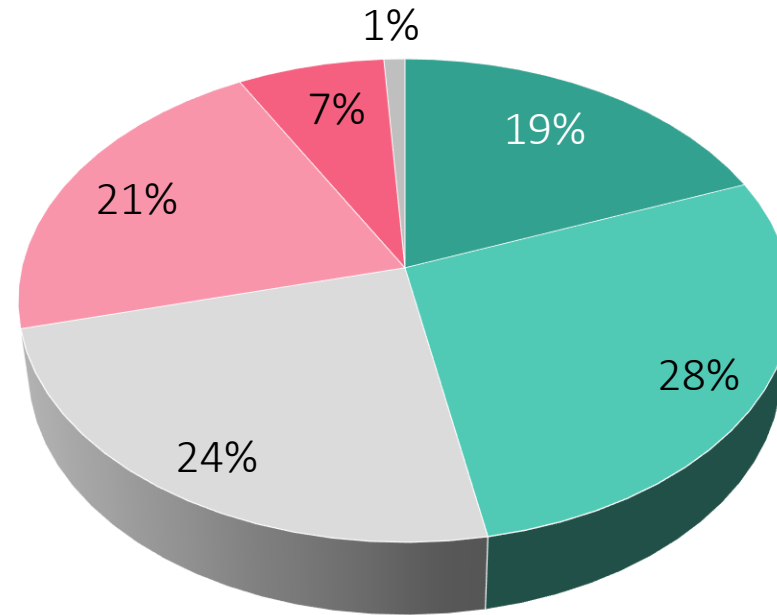
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response

Almost half believe Coillte's ambitions are appropriately balanced, while almost 3 in 10 disagreed. One quarter had a neutral viewpoint.



Coillte's ambitions for climate, nature, wood and people are appropriately balanced

Public Consultation Only



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No response



08

Appendix

Long Term Sustainability

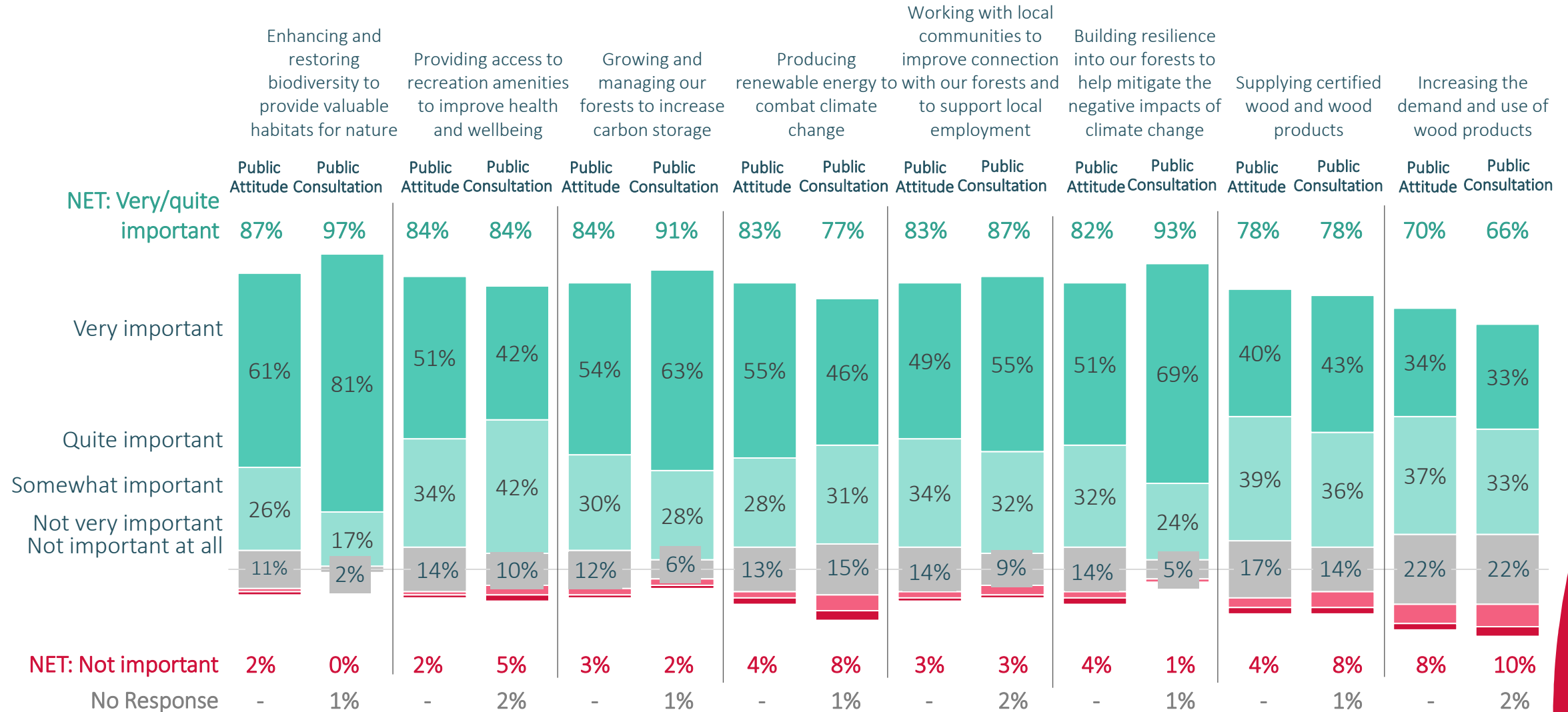
This appendix provides the results of the survey question on the key areas where Coillte can potentially have the most material impact (positive or negative) in relation to sustainability

All areas where Coillte can have a long-term impact are deemed important



Enhancing and restoring biodiversity is endorsed most as the main area for Coillte impact. Those in the public consultation were more likely to rate building resilience into our forests to help mitigate the negative impacts of climate change as very important.

Importance of features in a recreational forest site - Summary



*NOTE : Some NET and Total figures may not add exactly due to rounding