

BIRD Online Survey



The meaning of Broadband

1. Preface

Many people have no idea of the importance of a well developed broadband infrastructure. Much too often even decision takers and politician - especially in rural areas - cannot imagine how essential broadband is for existence and set up of companies.

A part of the tasks of the BIRD Project is to highlight the need and importance of Broadband.

Discussions concerning responsibilities are held much too often. Putting innovation into action mainly depends on availability of knowledge. For this it is necessary to have a good broadband infrastructure. It offers many possibilities to cooperate and strengthens knowledge transfer between humans, enterprises and regions.

2. Introduction

The asked questions were chosen to give an overview about the attitude of the participants towards their strategies and opinions concerning Broadband. The answers were recorded during a longer period to gather them for this analysis. Target is to measure the growing importance of broadband.

All in all there were seven questions to answer:

- Please choose the background of your perspective.
- Do you have ideas how to improve the coverage of broadband in your region?
- Do you have ideas how to improve the usage of broadband in your region?
- From your point of view: Should the subject "Broadband" be a regional matter?
- Do you have broadband strategies in your region?
- Please describe the most important points of the strategy.
- What recommendations do you have for the regional development of broadband?

The survey was not private. Everyone could participate.

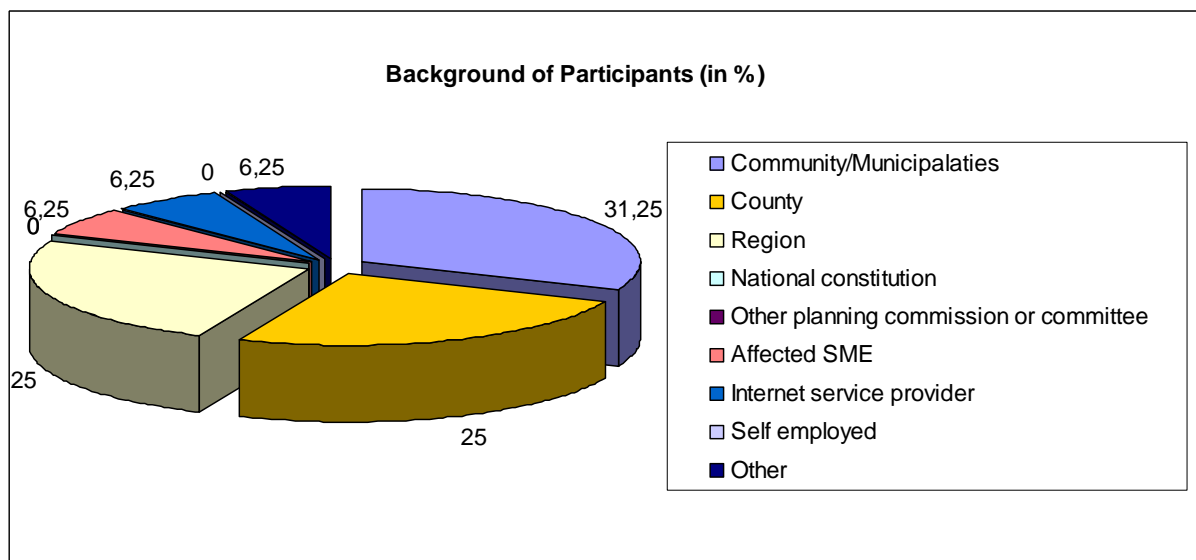
Please be aware of the following: This survey is not representative. It only can be seen as a trend.

3. Results of the survey

3.1. Background of the participants

In order of being a public survey the first question was concerned with the background of the participants.

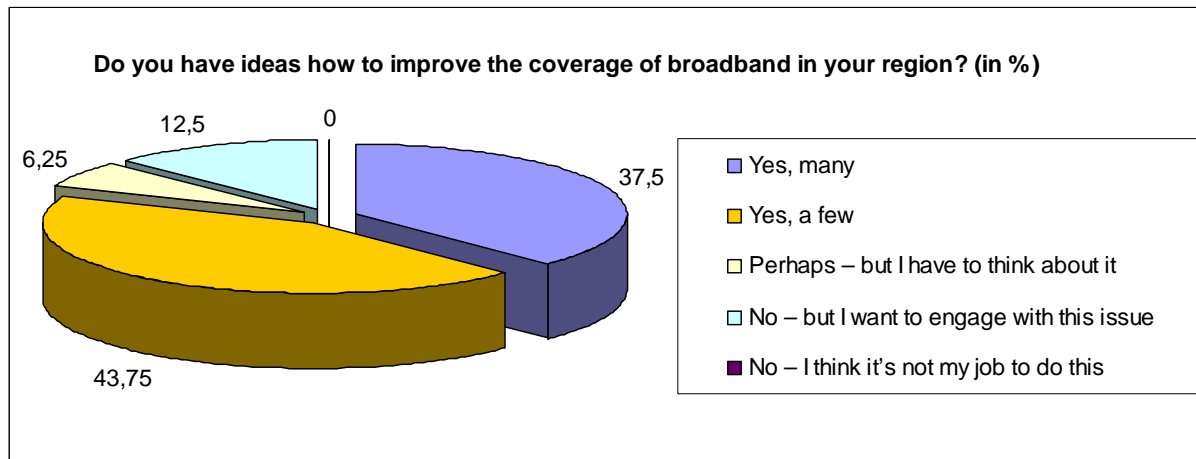
The ones who participated this survey are aware of the importance of the topic broadband. Furthermore the background of the participants is giving an indicator of who is responsible for the being concerned with the problem.



Most of the participants were ambassadors of communities/municipalities closely followed by Counties and Regions. Furthermore there were some Internet service providers, Affected SMEs and some other participants which did not fit to the given choices.

3.2. Ideas how to improve the coverage of broadband

Second question we asked the participants was if they have ideas how to improve the coverage of broadband in their region. The coverage of broadband is an essential indicator. If e.g. a region has identified a broadband lack as one reason for a common problem of the regional infrastructure it is very important to have ideas how to improve this situation.

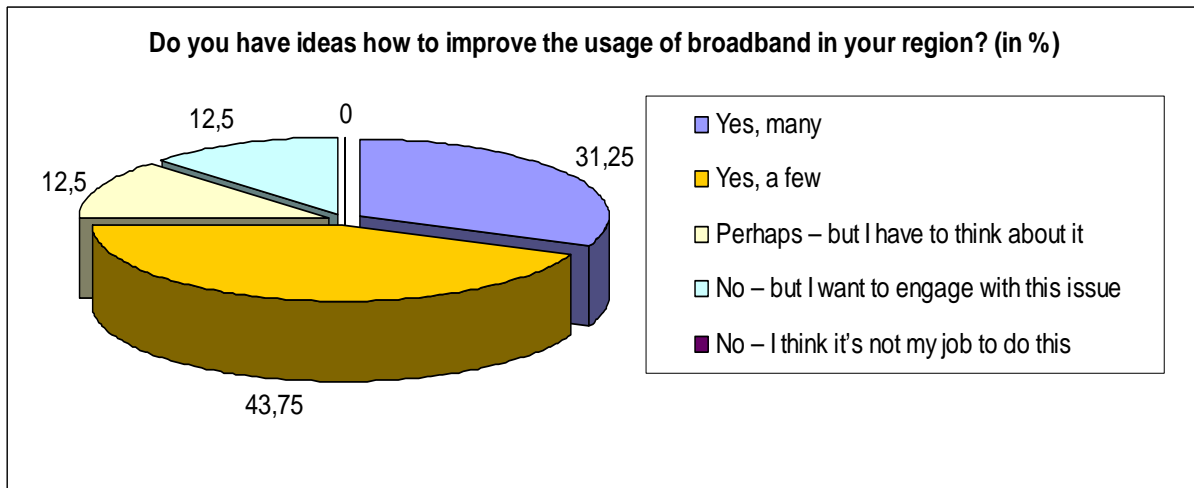


The answers appear to be quite positive. No one answered that it wouldn't be his job to be engaged in thinking about this issue.

More than 80 % has ideas how to improve the coverage of broadband – more than one third even has many ideas. The rest of answerers wanted to engage with this issue.

3.3. Ideas how to improve the usage of broadband

Ideas how to improve broadband usage could e.g. be to improve the coverage, existing online services, establish new services like eGovernment, eLearning and many more.



Asking for the improvement of broadband usage the results are quite similar to the answers concerning coverage.

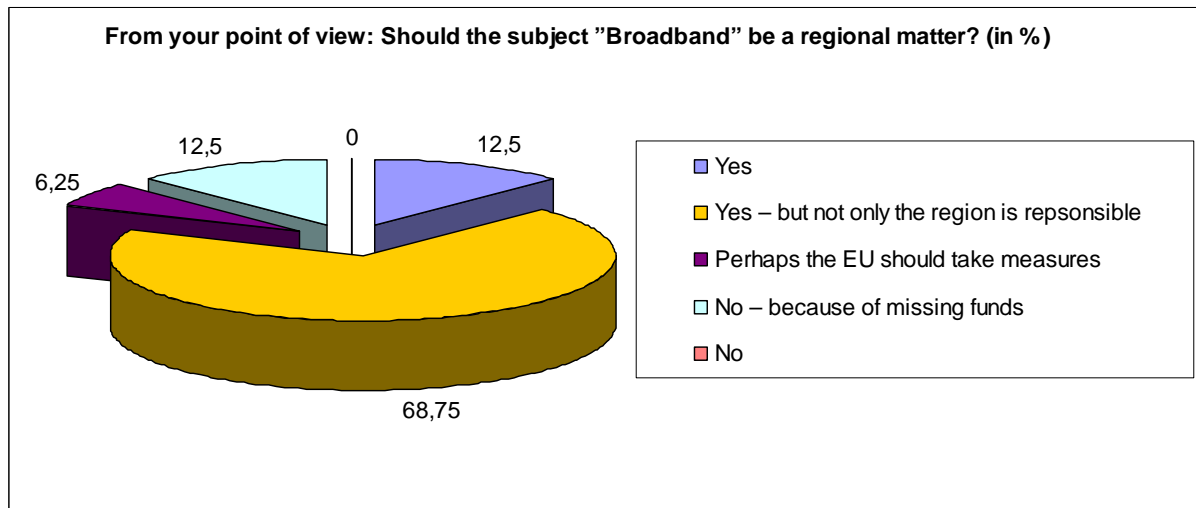
Three quarter of the participants have at least few ideas how to improve the usage. Furthermore the participants answered this question – as on the one before – that even if they do not have ideas for improvement at the moment of answering, they want to engage in this issue.

Only few – 12.5 % - have no idea how to improve the usage of broadband.

This result shows that we are on a good way. Having Ideas how to improve something is the first step to achieve improvement.

3.4. Matter of broadband

Knowing that there still is a lack of broadband connections in many regions we have to think about whose matter this is.



Here we have a very clear voting: Broadband should be a regional matter. But almost 70 % of the participants also state that the responsibility is not only pertained to the regions.

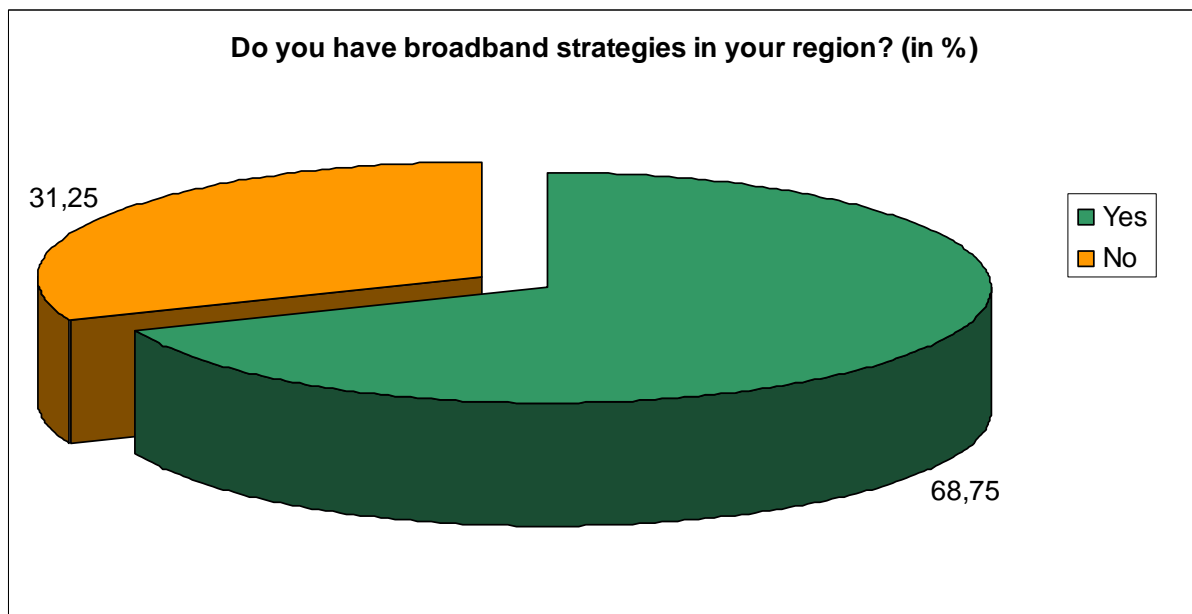
Anyhow, 12.5 % of the answers declare that the reason why regions should not be responsible for improvement of broadband connections is that there are no supporting funds. None of the answerers thought that regions are not responsible at all.

We can draw a conclusion based on these answers: Almost all recognized that "Wait and see" cannot be a solution.

3.5. *Broadband strategies*

Regions which still have a lack on broadband connections cannot come from getting connected by itself.

Knowing that broadband is becoming more and more important, creating regional strategies is essential. This is the reason why we asked the participants if they have broadband strategies.



More than two third of answerers already have strategies - so much the worse that the rest of them don't.

This result affirms the ones of the question before. The participants recognized that is time to get active by them selves.

3.6. *Points of the strategy*

After the first five questions concerning common information we also asked the participants to describe the most important points of their broadband strategy.

The given answers were diversified. There were some common answers like e.g.:

Universal coverage for all citizens and businesses!

This seems to be more a wish than a strategy. Nevertheless it is a very short description of a part of the Think Tank recommendations. The Think Tank recommendations "A new Broadband definition" can be downloaded from the BIRD web site.

But there also were recommendations like:

- *Develop and boost broadband services,*
- *Inform citizens and enterprises about the necessity of broadband,*
- *Upgrade the coverage of broadband*
- *Upgrade the available bandwidth.*

or:

- *We are working with five municipalities, and some of them do focus on ensuring accessibility of broadband in terms of fibres throughout the municipality. This strategy is seen as necessary in order to ensure local development.*

or very detailed:

- *Our region has made a public-private-partnership with two cooperative electricity distribution companies which ensures that every household and company within the municipality will be offered Fibre-To-The-Home with at least 100/100 Mbit/s.*

Summing up we may say that the ones who engaged with this topic thoroughly have good ideas and approaches. Partly the strategies already are very detailed and matured.

3.7. Recommendations for regional broadband strategies

In the second free text answer we asked the participants to write down their recommendations for regional broadband development. Of course there were a couple of crossovers with the strategies. The reason is that if a participant has a good strategy and is committed to it entails that he recommends copying this strategy.

Here we had two really excellent answers we want to pass on:

- *Focus on private and public partnerships;*
- *Split up content and availability of issues;*
- *Work with best practices and case studies;*
- *Provide eLearning activities with focus on IT-skills;*
- *Make sure to focus on long term strategies, so next generation technologies can work without having a new lack.*

And the second one:

- *The vision must be "Fibre to everyone" because it is the only solution with enough bandwidth for delivering triple play services or more in the future. After that we can be wireless in the end of the fibre with very high capacity - that will necessary.*

4. Conclusions

The given answers show one thing very clearly: The knowledge about necessity of broadband availability becomes more and more common.

The majority of the participants of this survey seem to know keenly about this and act upon it.

All the participants which already seemed to be engaged to the topic also seemed to have strategies to improve their regional broadband situation. But we also have put in bluntly that regions which don't mind about having a lack of broadband, in common will not fill a survey like this one. Probably this also is the reason for the fact that we had no answers like "No – I think it's not my job to do this".