



Centre for
Cross Border Studies

2021 QUARTERLY SURVEYS on the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation

Report on the findings
from the four Quarterly Surveys
on North-South and East-West cooperation in 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of 2021, the Centre for Cross Border Studies undertook four quarterly surveys on the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation, aimed at community organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland. In order to understand the underlying context for these forms of cooperation and the relations underpinning them, the surveys focused on four dimensions: the political, social, regulatory and material contexts. The main findings and central issues arising from the results of these surveys are as follows, with further details provided in the body of this report.

- Responses show strong commitment to North-South and East-West cooperation among community organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland, and significant determination to maintain cross-border relations and continue collaborative activities despite what was considered to be a negative political context.
- There are indications of an emerging trend that should caution against taking the commitment to cooperation of community organisations – particularly those in the Republic of Ireland – for granted. The decline in respondents from the Republic of Ireland to the surveys, coupled with other evidence gathered by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, suggest a serious risk of emerging although still isolated attitudes among some civic society organisations in the Republic of Ireland. Smaller organisations with limited resources and with various competing organisational priorities within their own jurisdiction, are beginning to view cross-border cooperation with Northern Ireland as potentially overly problematic and, therefore, something they may feel increasingly reluctant to be engaged in even if they still recognise its inherent value. Comments offered by respondents from the Republic of Ireland also noted decreasing contact with counterparts in Great Britain, resulting from the latter's departure from European Union networks and projects. In some instances, this was also seen as being the case for organisations from Northern Ireland.
- Apart from the second quarter of 2021, the majority of respondents from the Republic of Ireland were not in receipt of funding for their North-South collaborative activities, while this was only the case for respondents from Northern Ireland in the third quarter.
- The most common source of funding for North-South cooperation in every quarter, according to respondents, was the Irish Government (e.g. the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund), followed by the European Union (e.g. PEACE, INTERREG and LEADER). Some way behind these was the Northern Ireland government and charitable foundations, followed by the UK Government.
- Across all quarters in 2021 the vast majority of organisations from the Republic of Ireland were not in receipt of funding for their collaborations with counterparts in Great Britain (reaching a peak of 83.3% in Q4). This was also the case for organisations from Northern Ireland for the first three quarters, although by the final quarter 50% said they were in receipt of funding for their East-West collaborations.
- The primary sources of external funding support for East-West cooperation were charitable foundations, followed by the EU, and then the UK Government. Other, less significant sources, were the Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, although many respondents indicated that they used their own core funding to support their East-West activities. A perceived lack of funding support for East-West cooperation was raised as a concern in comments offered in a number of responses.
- Perhaps unsurprisingly given geographical and other realities, responses revealed a greater degree of contact on a North-South basis, with the vast majority of respondents indicating

that they had had meetings with organisations in the other jurisdiction on the island Ireland in every quarter of 2021 (steadily rising from 70% in the first quarter to 76.5% in the final quarter).

- In the first three quarters of 2021 the majority of respondents had had no meetings with organisations in Great Britain, although that majority declined from quarter to quarter, until we saw a majority (56.9%) in the final quarter indicating that they had been involved in East-West meetings.
- Respondents involved in East-West meetings revealed that obstacles to their collaboration activities were not a significant topic of their discussions. The highest percentage (17.2%) indicating that challenges to East-West cooperation were discussed to a significant extent was in the final quarter. In contrast, those involved in meetings with counterparts in the other jurisdiction on the island of Ireland discussed challenges to North-South cooperation much more frequently, with 38.5% in the final quarter saying that this issue featured to a significant extent (the peak being 42.3% in Q2).
- The political context for both North-South and East-West cooperation was seen by 60% of respondents as having deteriorated in the first quarter of 2021, and to have remained more or less the same for the rest of the year. Among the major factors seen as shaping the negative political context was the destabilising effects of political division in Northern Ireland due to attitudes towards the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and the UK Government's relations with the EU.
- Although in commentary offered by respondents the social context for cooperation was seen as being affected by political tensions, the majority response was that community support for North-South cooperation was relatively stable (rising from 47.5% who thought so in Q1 to 60.8% in Q4). The same was the case in relation to the social context for East-West cooperation, with 41.3% of respondents saying it had remained more or less the same in the first quarter, rising steadily to 70.6% in the final quarter.
- The regulatory context for both North-South and East-West cooperation was seen by the majority of respondents as having deteriorated in the first quarter (61.3% in relation to North-South cooperation, and 63.7% in respect of East-West cooperation). It was seen as remaining in that state in terms of North-South cooperation by the majority of respondents in the following quarters, whereas in terms of East-West cooperation Q3 saw a majority indicating it had deteriorated once more. One of the core issues seen as affecting North-South and East-West cooperation was the different public health restrictions imposed by the various jurisdictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Smaller majorities of respondents considered the material context for North-South and East-West cooperation to have deteriorated in the first quarter of 2021: 50% in relation to North-South, and 52.5% in relation to East-West. In the remaining quarters the majority of respondents judged the material context to have remained more or less in the same state.
- It should be noted, however, that as is discussed in more detail in the body of this report, there are important variations between the responses offered by those in the Republic of Ireland and those in Northern Ireland, with the former in many cases revealing a comparatively more pessimistic view of the underlying contexts for North-South and East-West cooperation.

The core findings and issues raised in the responses to the quarterly surveys are explored in greater detail in what follows.

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES

The Centre for Cross Border Studies, based in Armagh, Northern Ireland, has a strong reputation as an authoritative advocate for cross-border cooperation and as a valued source of research, information and support for collaboration across borders on the island of Ireland, Europe and beyond.

The Centre empowers citizens and builds capacity and capability for cooperation across sectors and jurisdictional boundaries on the island of Ireland and further afield. This mission is achieved through research, expertise, partnership and experience in a wide range of cross-border practices and concerns (for more details visit www.crossborder.ie).

1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2021 the Centre for Cross Border Studies undertook its first quarterly survey on the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation.¹ Aimed at civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland, the purpose of this and the subsequent three quarterly surveys over the course of 2021, was to gain insights as to the extent to which Article 11 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland is being adhered to, and whether organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland were maintaining their collaborative relations with counterparts in Great Britain. In other words, the surveys sought to understand whether the Protocol was being implemented and applied in a manner **'so as to maintain the necessary conditions for continued North-South cooperation'** (Article 11), and whether the United Kingdom's commitment set out in the preamble to the Protocol **'to protecting and supporting continued North-South and East-West cooperation'** was being borne out by respondents to the surveys.

The reason why these surveys were aimed specifically at civic society organisations and local authorities was due to the Centre for Cross Border Studies' concern that that the mapping exercise of North-South cooperation undertaken in 2017 by the UK and EU to inform the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU may have overlooked the kinds of cross-border cooperation they often undertake. This possibility was highlighted by both the UK and EU, admitting that "areas of informal, local and community-level cooperation may not have been captured by this exercise" (para 16 of Department for Exiting the European Union's December 2018 "Technical Explanatory Note: North-South Cooperation Mapping Exercise"; see also European Commission's "Negotiations on Ireland/Northern Ireland, Mapping of North-South Cooperation", p.4). Moreover, the Centre for Cross Border Studies was also concerned that attention be paid to the evolving experiences of civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland in their collaborative relations with Great Britain. Those concerns had already been expressed in August 2018 during the negotiations on the UK's departure from the EU,² and in November of the same year following the publication of the draft Withdrawal Agreement (as negotiated by the UK Government under Theresa May). In the latter, the Centre for Cross Border Studies noted:

¹ We are grateful to the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund, whose support for the "Maintaining the necessary conditions for cooperation and cross-border lives" project made much of this work possible. We also thank the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for the core funding the Centre for Cross Border Studies receives, which enables us to continue to support, promote and advocate for improved cooperation.

² In our "Briefing Paper 4: The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU" (August 2018), we stated: 'The post-Brexit preservation and development of the full range of socio-economic relations and North-South cooperation between the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland are essential to the continued adherence to the 1998 Agreement. But so is the preservation and development of relations and cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, which includes not only relations between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, but also between England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. That is to adhere to the full spirit of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement' (p.27).

The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in the draft Withdrawal Agreement of November 14th represents the best deal on offer for Northern Ireland that safeguards against a 'hard' border on the island and protects North-South cooperation. **As it presently stands, however, the Protocol does not protect the totality of existing socio-economic relations within and between these islands, notably the East-West dimension, of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.** Although primarily concerned with the "unique circumstances on the island of Ireland", the Protocol could have more fully integrated the institutions created under Strand 3 of the 1998 Agreement, in recognition that some of the "unique circumstances" on the island of Ireland arise from its relations with Great Britain. However, we also recognise the difficulty in this, given the UK's decision to leave the Single Market and Customs Union.³

The Centre for Cross Border Studies' Research Briefings published after each quarterly survey over the course of 2021 have highlighted the evolution of the tensions surrounding the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and the often fractious relationship between the UK Government and the EU, which is intermittently graced by moments of if not mutual understanding, at least of the sense of drawing back from impending breakdown.⁴ However, this report focuses on the responses to the four quarterly surveys and to any significant trends that may have emerged over 2021, and therefore its purpose is not to offer a detailed commentary on the evolving political discussions over the Protocol.

This report begins, then, by setting out the overall methodology employed by the quarterly surveys and the nature of the respondents. This latter point is given further focus in the subsequent section, looking at the changing make-up of the respondents, before examining the responses on the context for North-South cooperation, followed by an analysis of responses on the context for East-West cooperation. In both cases, we examine the political, social, regulatory and material context. The report then briefly sets out responses received in terms of levels of knowledge of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and the main sources of information used by respondents, before offering some concluding remarks.

³ Centre for Cross Border Studies, "Centre for Cross Border Studies Statement on draft Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union" (November 2018), p.3.

⁴ These Research Briefings, among others, can be accessed at <https://crossborder.ie/what-we-do/research-policy/briefing-papers/>.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Centre for Cross Border Studies' Quarterly Survey on the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation uses an online questionnaire, constructed using Google Forms. Each survey is advertised on all the Centre's online platforms (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and website),⁵ and through the Centre's monthly Border-Zine.⁶



This means that respondents are self-selecting, and although they must provide an email address in order to complete the survey, the surveys are anonymised. When an individual respondent completes the survey for the first time (which was the case for all respondents in the first quarterly survey), they must submit some basic information regarding their organisation or local authority, including their experience of North-South and/or East-West collaboration and relations. When completing the survey on subsequent occasions, repeat respondents no longer have to provide this organisational information.

The main sections of the questionnaire focus on North-South and East-West cooperation, gathering respondents' views on the evolving political, social, regulatory and material contexts for their cooperation activities, as well as their levels of North-South and/or East-West contact. In terms of their North-South and/or East-West contact, the survey also asks whether those contacts have involved discussions on challenges to their cooperation, whether respondents are involved in current collaboration projects (and what their sources of funding are), as well as whether they are considering new collaboration activities.

Respondents are asked to compare many of these factors with the previous quarter, such as "In comparison with the previous quarter [...], do you think the political context has a) improved, b) deteriorated, c) stayed more or less the same, d) don't know". In many cases the questions require a response, but in others not all respondents need to provide an answer. This is the case, for

⁵ @CCBSCrossBorder (Twitter), @crossborderstudies (Facebook), Centre for Cross Border Studies (LinkedIn), www.crossborder.ie (website).

⁶ To see past copies of the Border-Zine, visit <https://crossborder.ie/border-zine/>.

example, where a respondent indicates that their organisation or local authority is not in receipt of funding, which means that they are not asked to respond to the subsequent question on sources of funding.

The full list of questions contained in the surveys are included in Appendices 1 and 2. However, it is important to note that the reason the questions are set out in two separate appendices is because of two differences between the survey for the first quarter of 2021, and the subsequent quarterly surveys. Those differences relate, in the first instance, to the fact that from the second quarter onwards the surveys included "open text" questions to allow respondents who so wished to offer some explanation as to the basis for their responses on the political, social, regulatory and material contexts for North-South and East-West cooperation. The other difference in the content of the surveys is that from the second survey onwards respondents were asked about their views on the adequacy of the information available on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, how informed they perceived themselves to be in relation to the Protocol, and what were their principal sources of information.

The nature of the surveys means that the majority of the questions (and this was certainly predominantly the case in the first quarterly survey) produce responses that can be analysed in percentage or numerical terms. In other words, for example, we can see the percentage of respondents who consider the political context for North-South cooperation to have deteriorated or improved in comparison to the previous quarter. However, as noted above, from the second quarter onwards the surveys also provided some elements of explanatory commentary from respondents, which could allow for the identification of common issues raised by a number of respondents. Analysis of these responses, and other issues related to what these surveys may tell us, merits some additional consideration.

3. UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE RESPONSES

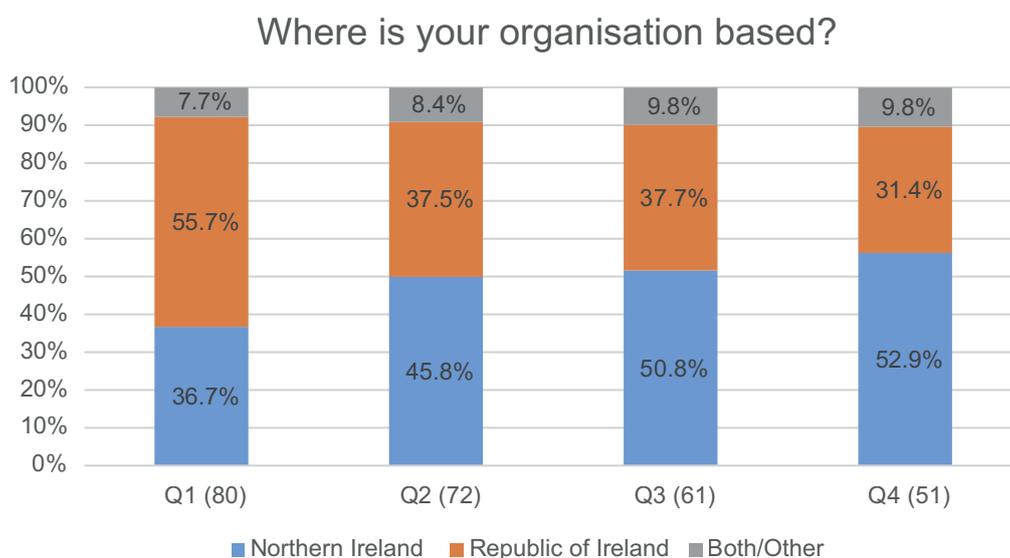
There are some important factors that need to be borne in mind when considering the nature of the responses to these quarterly surveys, and what they can tell us. It is important to recall that respondents are self-selecting. Moreover, although these quarterly surveys are aimed at civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland, and therefore not at individual citizens, nevertheless the responses cannot be assumed to be “corporate” responses that offer the conclusive views of an entire organisation or local authority. Instead, we should assume that those responding are individuals with responsibility for or an interest in North-South and/or East-West cooperation within their organisation or local authority. Notwithstanding this, given that such individuals are usually more conscious of the potential impacts on North-South and/or East-West cooperation of the evolving underlying contexts than those who are not immediately involved or have an interest in such cooperation, their responses offer us valuable insights into the nature of the current conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation. A very small number of responses to the surveys are from organisations that although principally active in North-South cooperation, are international entities headquartered outside the island of Ireland.

Another important factor to be considered is the changes to the composition of the panel of respondents to each individual quarterly survey. The one-off participation of some respondents to the surveys (i.e. responding to only one of the quarterly surveys) means that in the first instance each survey offers a snapshot in time of how respondents view the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation. The identification of any emerging trends and how those conditions are evolving from quarter to quarter needs to be largely based on the answers provided by repeat respondents. This means that we can be more confident of the precise nature of emerging trends from Quarter 3 onwards given the greater proportion of repeat respondents. The evolving nature of the composition of the respondents to these surveys is what concerns us next, and is an issue that begins to raise some important questions.

4. THE CHANGING COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents to the quarterly surveys are asked where their organisation or local authority is based. What we have seen over the course of 2021 is a significant change in the proportion of respondents located in the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, as set out in Figure 1 (with the number in brackets at the foot of each column indicating the number of responses).

Figure 1



Whereas in the first quarter of 2021 the majority of respondents (55.7%) were located in the Republic of Ireland, from the second quarter onwards the majority were located in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the proportion of respondents based in the Republic of Ireland saw a steady decline over 2021, with only 31.4% of respondents to the 4th survey being from that jurisdiction. **This change in the composition of respondents is an issue that raises concerns and that merits ongoing attention. The decline in the proportion of respondents from the Republic of Ireland reflects reports the Centre for Cross Border Studies has been receiving, and chimes with what has been raised at meetings of the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation,⁷ of organisations in the Republic of Ireland increasingly seeing issues related to the Protocol and the Protocol itself as essentially concerning Northern Ireland and those within that jurisdiction, and not something they can influence or have any say in. This poses a serious risk of embedding emerging although still isolated attitudes among some civic society organisations in the Republic of Ireland, particularly smaller organisations with limited resources and with various competing organisational priorities within their own jurisdiction, that view cross-border cooperation as potentially overly problematic and, therefore, something they may feel increasingly reluctant to be engaged in even if they still recognise its inherent value.** In this regard it is hoped that the opportunities presented by the PEACE PLUS programme will encourage organisations in the Republic of Ireland who may currently have some apprehensions, to continue

⁷ The Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation, which the Centre for Cross Border Studies convenes and draws together a range of organisations from both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, was established in May 2020 to act as the prime contact point for purposes of meaningful consultation between cross-border civil society and regional, national and EU bodies on matters relevant to cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and between the island of Ireland and Great Britain.

to engage in cross-border cooperation activities. Those activities, as indicated by respondents to the surveys, are wide-ranging, although with certain areas having a more significant number of organisations and local authorities involved. These include education, community development, peace and reconciliation, support for cross-border cooperation, rural development, citizens' information, economic development, and arts, culture and creative industries.

Another issue of potential concern is the decline in the numbers of respondents to the 2021 surveys, from 80 in the first quarter to 51 in the final quarter. This trend raises two central questions: is it reflective of increasing fatigue in relation to Brexit in general and the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in particular, or a diminishing interest in taking part in these surveys? While both could be underlying factors in this decline, the issue of fatigue could contribute to disengagement from matters concerning how the Protocol's implementation may affect the conditions for North-South cooperation, which will only be exacerbated if the views of civic society organisations and local authorities are not actively sought by those responsible for the operation of the Protocol. As to maintaining respondents' interest in the quarterly surveys, this is a challenge the Centre for Cross Border Studies will have to address, not least because – unless there is some seismic political reversal – the Protocol will be with us for the foreseeable future, and therefore means we will have to continually monitor the extent to which conditions are being maintained for North-South cooperation, especially that undertaken at the local, community level.

The same issues are of relevance to East-West cooperation, although in this case it is perhaps the operation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the EU that needs to be monitored and assessed in relation to how it can safeguard collaborative relations between civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland and Great Britain. Increasing fatigue and disengagement could jeopardise any potential of the structures for civic society engagement established under the TCA to monitor the health of East-West collaborative relations, as well as wider relations between UK and EU civic society.⁸ The extent of collaboration between civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland with counterparts in Great Britain over 2021 is what this report will focus on later, but first we turn to cooperation on a North-South basis.

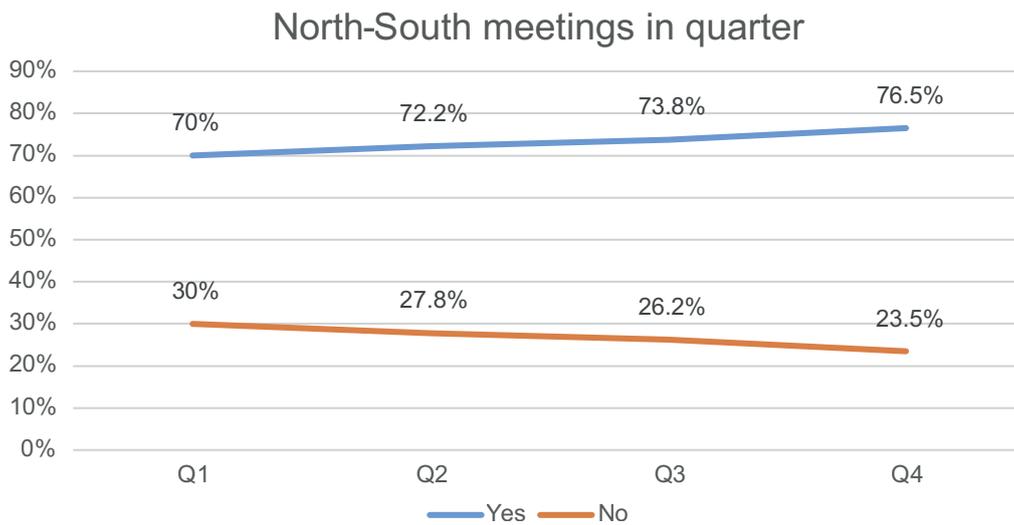
⁸ The structures for engagement with civic society are set out in Articles 12 to 14 of the TCA, which include the establishment of Domestic Advisory Groups and of a Civil Society Forum. In a written submission (November 2021) to the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation recommended 'that the UK Government fully supports and facilitates East-West channels of civic society cooperation and engagement through the mechanisms established (or being established) under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), particularly the UK Domestic Advisory Group and the EU-UK Civic Society Forum' (p.3). See also the Centre for Cross Border Studies' earlier (June 2021) submission to the same Sub-Committee.

5. THE NORTH-SOUTH DIMENSION

5.1. Contact and collaboration

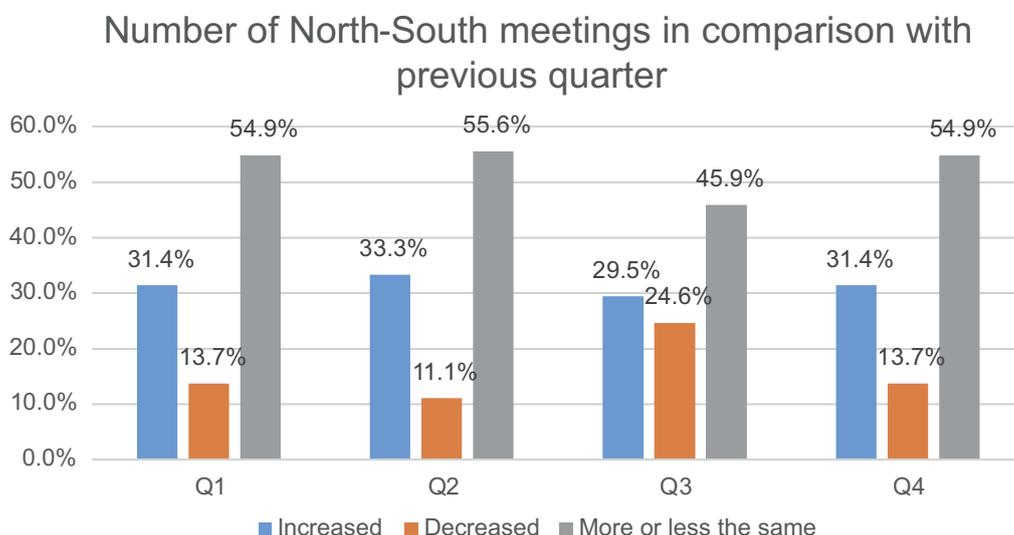
The trend over the course of 2021 in terms of the levels of cross-border contact between organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland was one where a steady but gentle increase was observed in meetings taking place between respondents from the two jurisdictions.

Figure 2



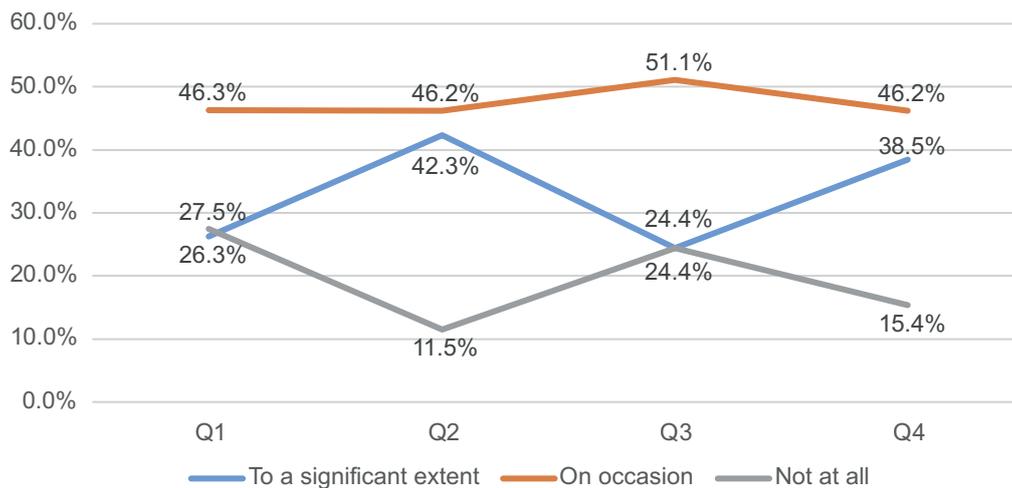
As can be seen in figure 2 above, whereas in the first quarter of 2021 70% of respondents reported having had meetings with organisations in the other jurisdiction (with 30% saying they hadn't), by the fourth quarter that had increased to 76.5% (with only 23.5% reporting they hadn't met with organisations in the other jurisdiction). In each quarterly survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether the number of meetings they had had with organisations in the other jurisdiction had increased, decreased, or stayed more or less the same in comparison with the previous quarter. The predominant response across all four quarters, as set out in figure 3, suggested a general maintenance of levels of North-South contact between organisations and local authorities, with Quarter 3 perhaps unsurprisingly given that it captures the summer months, having the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the number of North-South meetings they had been involved in had decreased (24.6%).

Figure 3



Quarter 2 not only saw the highest percentage (33.3%) of respondents indicating the number of North-South meetings had increased in comparison with the previous quarter, it was also the quarter where meetings discussing challenges to cross-border cooperation did so to the greatest extent. Figure 4 below sets out the levels of discussion of challenges to cross-border cooperation across 2021, with respondents identifying whether their North-South meetings had discussed these to a significant extent, on occasion, or not at all.

Figure 4 Discussion of challenges to cross-border cooperation



There was a significant variation across 2021 as to the extent to which North-South meetings discussed challenges to cross-border cooperation to a significant extent. Whereas Q2 saw 42.3% of respondents indicating that such challenges had been a major theme in their discussions, with 38.5% saying the same in the final quarter, only 26.3% did so in the first quarter, with the percentage dropping to its lowest (24.4%) in Q3. In fact, we can observe that challenges to cross-border cooperation were not discussed at all by 27.5% of respondents in the first quarter, and by 24.4% in the third. Whereas the highest incidences of meetings that discussed challenges to cross-border cooperation (Q2 and Q4) may have corresponded to periods that experienced heightened tensions between the UK Government and the EU with repercussions for political and community stability in Northern Ireland, we can nevertheless observe that the majority of North-South meetings between organisations and local authorities discussed challenges to cooperation on occasion.

From the more detailed responses offered by those completing the surveys, a challenge to cross-border cooperation frequently discussed at North-South meetings was the Covid-19 pandemic, which featured across every quarter. The pandemic's impacts were not only on how travel restrictions were hampering the ability of organisations and local authorities to meet on a cross-border basis, but also on the challenges citizens in general were encountering in terms of navigating differences in public health regulations put in place by the two jurisdictions.

- “The failure to implement a coordinated response to Covid-19 pandemic” (Quarter 1).
- “The Covid restrictions” (Quarter 2).
- “Covid related matters also being raised” (Quarter 2).
- “Covid restrictions on movements” (Quarter 2).”
- Variations in Covid regulations” (Quarter 2).
- “The delivery of of public health restrictions, and other cross-border health and social care challenges in two jurisdictional regions with similar high Covid rates” (Quarter 2).
- “Working from home in one jurisdiction and employed in the other – tax issues” (Quarter 3).
- “Covid-19 restrictions on both sides of the border” (Quarter 3).
- “Implications of Covid policies on citizens with cross-border lives e.g. access to Covid passports” (Quarter 3).
- “Absence of joined-up covid responses” (Quarter 4).
- “The reduction is to do with Covid and challenging logistics more than anything political” (Quarter 4).
- “Again Covid passport/vaccinations and access to services/social settings and how that may vary cross-border” (Quarter 4).

Unsurprisingly, however, the major challenge to cross-border cooperation discussed most frequently by organisations and local authorities in North-South meetings was the UK’s withdrawal from the EU and the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. In many instances respondents simply indicated “Brexit” as the challenge without further explanation, but in others the responses pointed to a number of impacts, some of which are reproduced below.

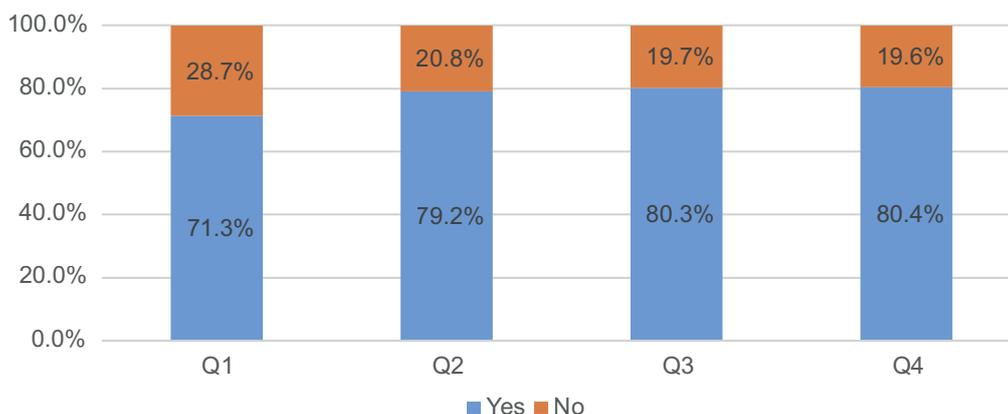
- “Uncertainty around the implementation of Brexit’s Irish protocol” (Quarter 1).
- “Challenges including political tensions arising from implementing the Ireland/NI Protocol” (Quarter 1).
- “Brexit meaning no UK participation in EU projects” (Quarter 1).
- “Student teacher exchange – post-Brexit challenges” (Quarter 1).
- “Challenges associated with Brexit and implementing EU projects” (Quarter 1).
- “Barriers created by Brexit, loss of cross-border/international EU programmes” (Quarter 1).
- “Mainly the day-to-day impact of Brexit and not just trade” (Quarter 1).
- “Changes in perspectives on social values – moving from EU perspectives that support and encourage linguistic diversity to a more inward-looking society less tolerant of linguistic diversity in the north, and the variation between north and south increasing” (Quarter 1).
- “Supporting moves to enable NI students remain in the Erasmus+ programme” (Quarter 1).

- “Brexit impact on immigrants depending on status” (Quarter 1).
- “The potential impacts of Brexit in creating further divergence between UK and EU [agricultural and environmental] policies is concerning” (Quarter 2).
- “The UK’s exit from the EU and the economic, social and environmental implications for people living in the fully integrated North West City Region of Ireland” (Quarter 2).
- “Fear of engaging due to toxicity of NI/Ireland Protocol narrative” (Quarter 2).
- “Deteriorating political climate due to tensions over Protocol” (Quarter 2).
- “Brexit, Protocol, political fall-out, Unionist distrust of ROI, potential withdrawal from Northern institutions by DUP, border poll issue” (Quarter 3).
- “The political agendas in ‘talking up’ protocol problems that are readily resolved by cross-border cooperation” (Quarter 3).
- “The new requirement by local NI authorities to use EU-based laboratories to test food for statutory compliance” (Quarter 3).
- “Free movement of EU employees who are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement or the Common Travel Area rules” (Quarter 4).
- “The principal issues we discussed were the problems caused by one or two political leaders who reject the Good Friday Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol, whereas our professional members saw the Protocol as providing the North with a valuable capability of being able to trade with Britain and the EU” (Quarter 4).
- “Northern Ireland Protocol and need for more civil society engagement” (Quarter 4).

The future operation of the Common Travel Area and the status of non-Irish/UK citizens, as well as potential challenges to collaboration and cross-border mobility in the education sector, were also issues identified by a number of respondents as items for discussion in their North-South meetings.

Notwithstanding the challenges to North-South cooperation discussed in meetings by organisations and local authorities, our quarterly surveys revealed a significant level of current North-South collaboration throughout 2021, as can be seen in figure 5.

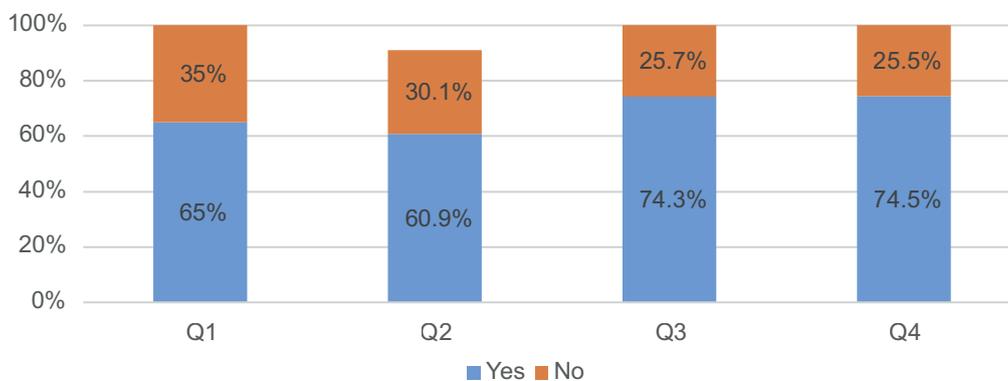
Figure 5 Currently involved in North-South collaboration



The main areas of activity that those actively involved in North-South collaboration identified were promotion and support for cross-border cooperation, education, community development, peace and reconciliation, rural development, environment and, to a somewhat lesser extent, economic development. However, it should be stressed that there were many other types of activity in which respondents were currently engaged on a North-South collaborative basis, such as human rights, transport, youth, equality, local government, and health, among others.

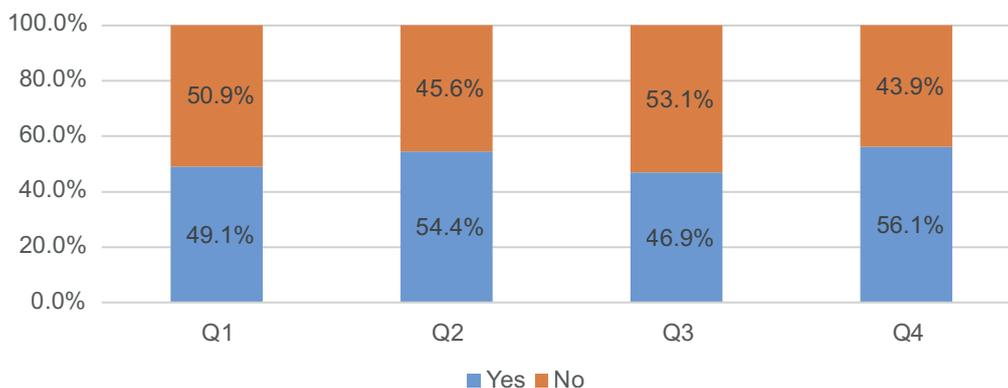
Another positive sign of the commitment of organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland to North-South cooperation is in how many respondents indicated that they were actively considering new collaboration activities. As shown in figure 6, in each quarter of 2021 significant majorities said that they were looking for new North-South cooperation projects, although that majority was at its smallest in Q2 (60.9%).

Figure 6 Actively considering new North-South collaboration activities



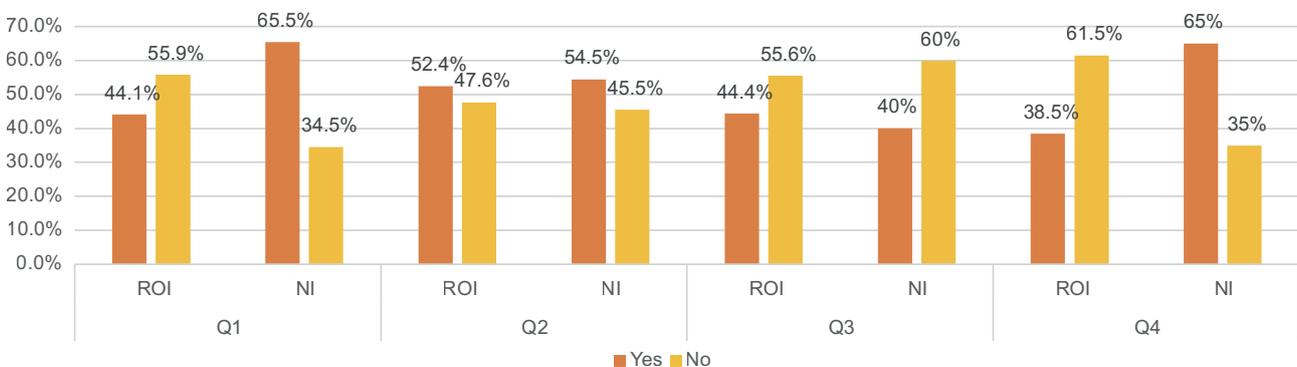
However, an area of concern arises as to whether the levels of commitment to North-South cooperation among organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland can be sustained at their current levels going forward, particularly if the context for such cooperation becomes more challenging. Figure 7 shows the percentage of respondents in each quarter of 2021 who indicated that they were in receipt of funding to support their current North-South cooperation activities, and the results reveal substantial numbers who stated they received no funding.

Figure 7 Currently in receipt of funding for North-South cooperation activities



With a majority of respondents in Quarters 1 and 3 (50.9% and 53.1%, respectively) stating that they were not funded for their North-South collaborations, and with significant minorities in Quarters 2 and 4 indicating the same (45.6% and 43.9%), there is a risk that organisations may not be willing to invest their own resources into North-South cooperation if the context becomes more challenging and, perhaps, more costly in terms of resourcing. Indeed, focusing only on those respondents located in either of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, and thereby excluding those identifying themselves as all-island organisations or located outside the island but involved in cooperation activities here, this risk may be greater for those in the Republic of Ireland. Figure 8 looks at the responses of organisations and local authorities in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland that indicated they were currently involved in North-South cooperation activities, and shows whether or not they were in receipt of funding for this.

Figure 8 Currently in receipt of funding for North-South collaboration (respondents in ROI and NI)



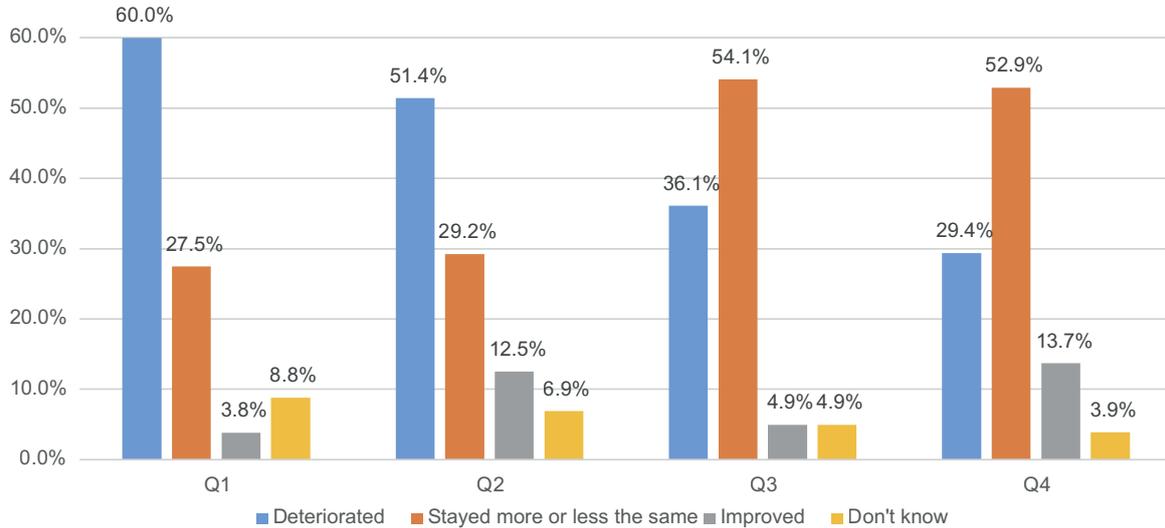
What we can see here is that apart from Quarter 2, the majority of organisations in the Republic of Ireland indicated that they were not in receipt of funding for their North-South collaboration activities. By contrast, apart from Quarter 3, the majority of organisations in Northern Ireland stated that they were funded for their current cross-border collaborations. If we take into account our earlier observations on the changing composition of respondents across our four quarterly surveys, and how the number of those from the Republic of Ireland had fallen over 2021, this issue of the percentage of respondents from the Republic of Ireland indicating that they were not funded for their current North-South cooperation activities takes on an added importance. It underlines the potential for those organisations to increasingly withdraw from such cooperation if the underlying context becomes more challenging.

When asked to specify their sources of funding for North-South cooperation, the third most frequent source identified by respondents in every quarter was their organisation's own core funding. The most important source of funding in every quarter, according to respondents, was the Irish Government (e.g. the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund), followed by the European Union (e.g. PEACE, INTERREG and LEADER). Some way behind these was the Northern Ireland government and charitable foundations (19 and 12 respondents respectively in total for 2021), with four respondents in 2021 identifying the UK Government as a funder.

5.2. The political context for North-South cooperation

Over the course of 2021, respondents to our quarterly survey were asked for their views on the underlying context for North-South cooperation according to four dimensions: the political, social, regulatory and material contexts. Figure 9 sets out how respondents thought the political context had fared in comparison to the previous quarter.

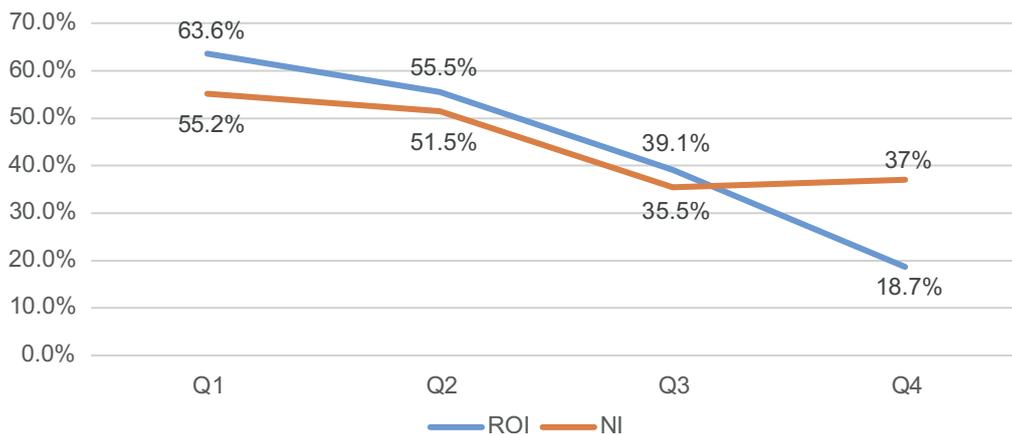
Figure 9 Political context for North-South cooperation 2021



According to the responses, the overall trend is one where a significant majority (60%) in the first quarter thought the political context had deteriorated, with the majority in the second quarter (51.4%), although not as marked as the first, considering it to have deteriorated further, but with majorities in the last two quarters of 2021 judging it to have stayed more or less the same as the previous quarter (54.1% and 52.9% respectively). Those who thought the political context has having improved were always a minority, with the last quarter seeing the largest percentage who thought this to be the case (13.7%).

If we exclude respondents representing the views of all-island organisations or those located outside the island of Ireland but involved in North-South cooperation, and focus exclusively on those located in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, we see in figure 10 that the latter were generally more inclined to view the political context for North-South cooperation as having deteriorated, although this situation was reversed in the final quarter.

Figure 10 % of ROI and NI respondents considering political context as deteriorating



Although it should be stressed that this is a matter of conjecture, there could be a relation between the drop-off in response rates to the quarterly surveys from organisations in the Republic of Ireland (see Section 4 of this report) and the inversion in Q4 of those from the two jurisdictions who considered the political context for North-South cooperation to have deteriorated. What we are suggesting may be taking place here is that the respondents from the Republic of Ireland who have continued to respond to the surveys throughout 2021 could be more resilient in the face of a more challenging context, with those who stopped responding after quarters 1 and 2 having done so precisely as an indication of an increasingly negative political environment, leading to a disconnect (even if temporary) from discussions on North-South cooperation.

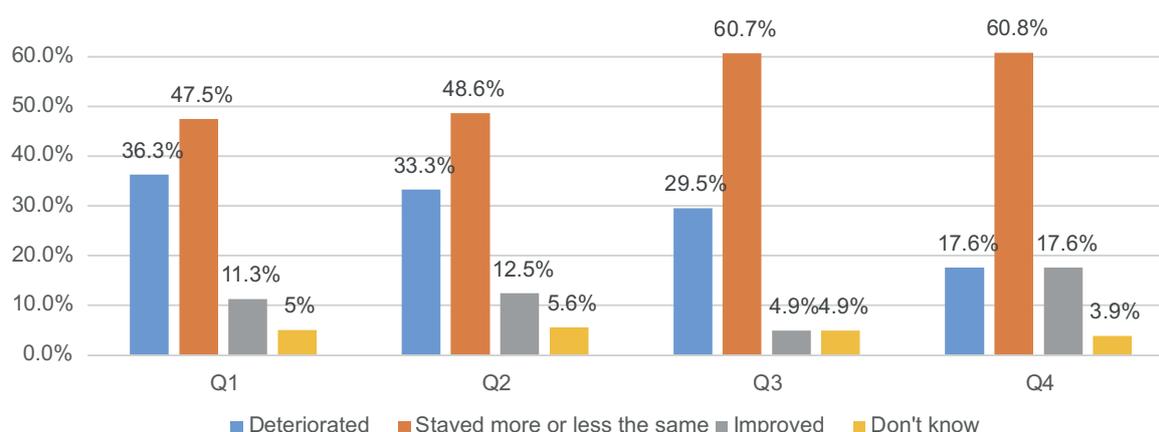
With respondents from Q2 onward being able to offer more detailed commentary on their opinions on the status of the political context for North-South cooperation in 2021, among the major factors seen as shaping that context was the destabilising effects of political division in Northern Ireland due to attitudes towards the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and the UK Government's relations with the EU. However, while some respondents pointed to the increasingly important role of civic society in maintaining North-South relations in the absence of functioning political relations, a small number offered some more positive assessments of the political context. An indicative selection of the comments made are reproduced below.

- "The ongoing issues relating to the Protocol and unionist fears regarding alienation from the UK, has led to a hardening response within the DUP. This has knock-on impacts for collaboration among our members, creating uncertainties and fears for the marching season. The main Irish political parties have not helped the situation by raising the prospect of a border poll at this time" (Quarter 2).
- "Cross-party attendance at the North South Ministerial Council has been a concern" (Quarter 2).
- "Loyalists and Unionists are feeling politically angry and are moving further and further away [from] engagement with any collaboration with the Republic of Ireland" (Quarter 2).
- "The majority of political parties seem open to collaboration, however that doesn't often reach media headlines which often skews public perception" (Quarter 3).
- "[W]hile we are very conscious that the political context has deteriorated to a very significant extent, largely because of Brexit and the response to it by one or two political parties in the North, we find that our working relationships have not been affected in any way. On the contrary, we have found that we have been drawn together by a mutual dissatisfaction with the way in which the situation has been handled by the British government" (Quarter 3).
- "There isn't a political drive for more collaborative dialogue and certainly our main political parties do not lead by example. It appears that the onus (and presences) is on Civil Society to facilitate dialogue" (Quarter 3).
- "New Common Travel Area rules and proposed Electronic Travel Authorisations are impacting the political context and tone of discussion" (Quarter 4).
- "Greater willingness on the ground from within both jurisdictions to make things work despite political posturing from UK government and DUP at media level" (Quarter 4).
- "There is a continuation of uncertainty due to the repeated references to potential triggering of Article 16" (Quarter 4).

5.3. The social context for North-South cooperation

Respondents to the quarterly surveys were asked to consider the social context for North-South cooperation, meaning attitudes within communities to such cooperation. In general terms, and in comparison to respondents' assessments of the political conditions for cooperation, the social context for organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland involved in North-South collaboration was seen as more accommodating throughout 2021, despite the political turbulence experienced over the year. Figure 11 sets out the evolution of responses on the social context across the four quarters.

Figure 11 Social context for North-South cooperation in 2021

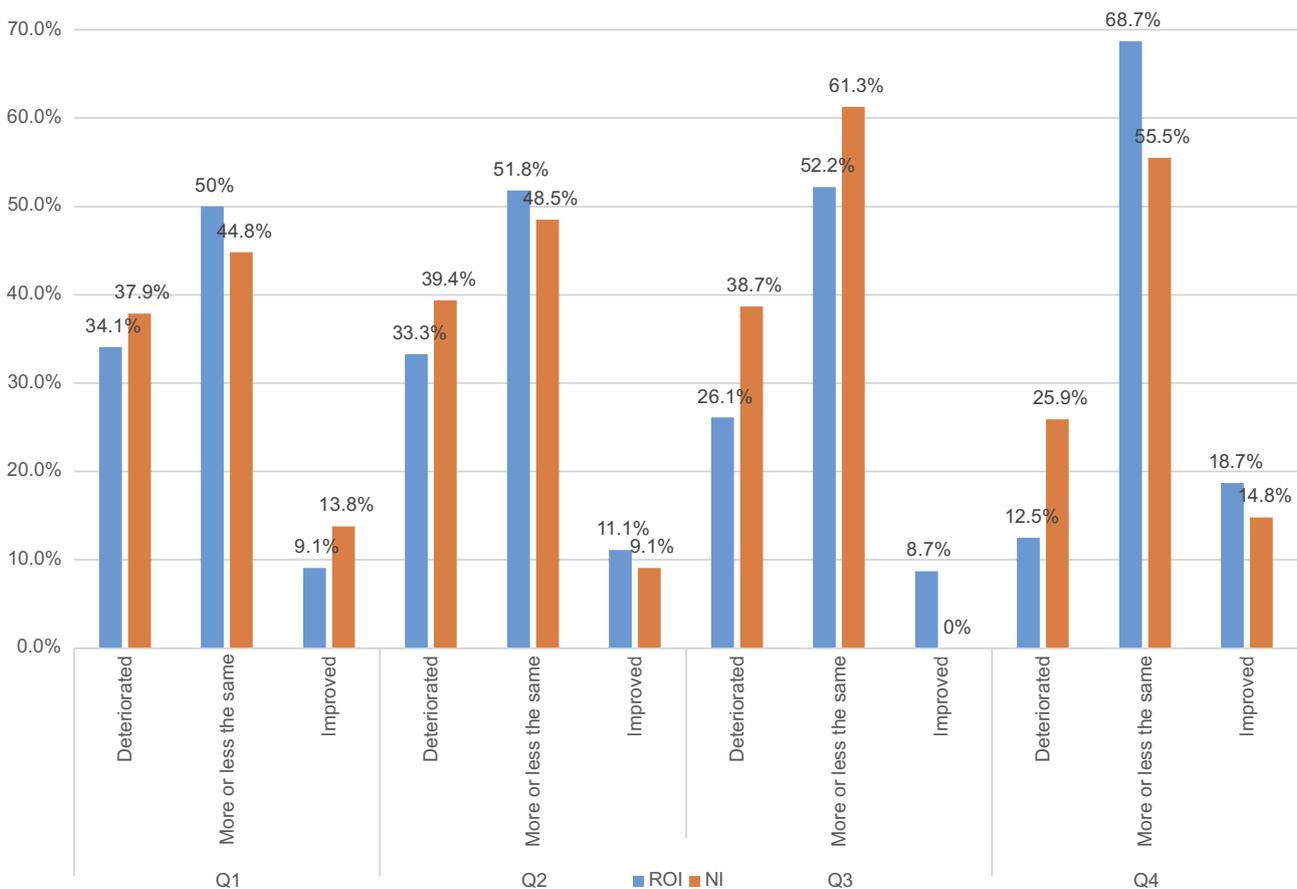


The chart shows that the majority response in every quarter of 2021 was that the social context for North-South cooperation had stayed more or less the same as the previous quarter, with that majority increasing from 47.5% in the first quarter to 60.8% in the last. Conversely, the percentage of those who saw the social context as having deteriorated declined from its peak of 36.3% in Q1 to its lowest in Q4 of 17.6%. However, while the percentage of those who considered the social context to have improved in the first quarter stood at 11.3%, with 17.6% saying the same in the final quarter (which is the same percentage as those who thought it had deteriorated), there was also a significant decline between Q2 (12.5%) and Q4 (4.9%) in the number of responses seeing an improvement in social conditions. As Figure 12 suggests, there was also a difference between how organisations and local authorities in the two jurisdictions viewed the social conditions for North-South cooperation, with those from Northern Ireland showing a comparatively greater degree of pessimism.⁹

Not only did no respondents from Northern Ireland consider the social conditions to have improved in Q3 (with 8.7% of respondents from the Republic of Ireland considering this to have been the case), in every quarter those from Northern Ireland were more inclined to see those conditions as having deteriorated than those from the Republic of Ireland. Nevertheless, irrespective of whether the respondents were located in one or other of the two jurisdictions, the majority response was always that the social conditions had remained more or less the same, suggesting a general perception that they were more favourable to North-South cooperation than the political conditions.

⁹ We are focusing here exclusively on organisations and local authorities located in or other of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, and not including those organisations located in both jurisdictions. We are also excluding "don't know" responses.

Figure 12 NI and ROI responses on social conditions for North-South cooperation



With respondents given the opportunity from the second quarterly survey onwards to offer more detailed commentary, we are able to see evidence of a belief in communities' underlying support for North-South cooperation, tempered with a degree of uncertainty as to how that support will fare in the short-term given social tensions arising from political divisions. This is particularly the case – although not exclusively – in Northern Ireland, which may account for the greater degree of pessimism among respondents from that jurisdiction. A representative sample of the comments offered from Q2 onwards is reproduced below, which also points to a factor unrelated to Brexit impacting on the social context for North-South cooperation.

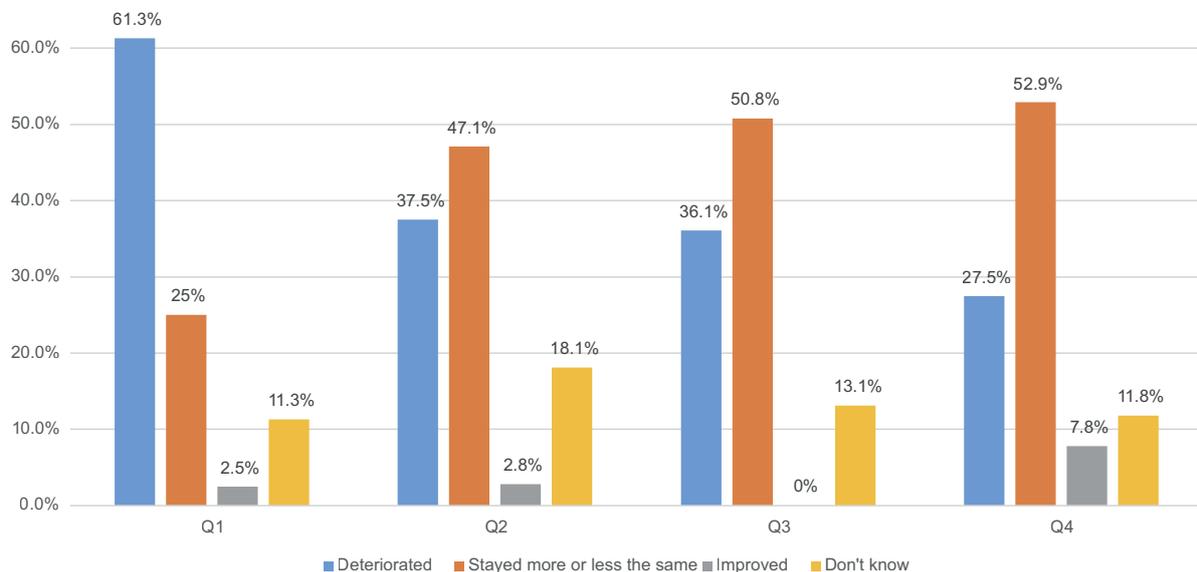
- “Local communities interested in collaborating with similar groups in the other jurisdiction on matters of mutual concern” (Quarter 2).
- “I think there is a real risk that organisations in our sector will return to looking inwardly at the Republic and turn their backs to the border as a result of the current lack of leadership” (Quarter 2).
- “We are now seeing social unrest on the streets in NI. This is a very dangerous development” (Quarter 2).
- “Personal relations and communication channels have remained open and constructive” (Quarter 2).
- “Due to COVID-19 – no change” (Quarter 2).

- “Political messaging at upper level has altered, though at community level on the ground there is no obvious change in attitude” (Quarter 3).
- “Social context largely driven by civil society orgs who generally do not get the coverage required in order to drive change in this regard” (Quarter 3).
- “The appetite for cross border connectivity, be that across social infrastructure, for social and cultural connections and collaboration is at the same level as it has been, since Brexit” (Quarter 3).
- “Perceptions about the actors in the other jurisdiction have (fairly or unfairly) deteriorated in some communities we work in” (Quarter 3).
- “Concerns about spreading the virus” (Quarter 3).
- “There is a real resentment within unionist communities to engage with ROI” (Quarter 4).
- “Loyalism in North is generally retreating from North-South engagement” (Quarter 4).
- “Better awareness of importance of cross border cooperation” (Quarter 4).
- “My own take is that civic society groups are more determined than ever to remain engaged” (Quarter 4).
- “Covid seemed to have retreated a little, increasing social traffic. At community and community organisation level this has enabled re-engagement at more social level, but incremental rather than significant change” (Quarter 4).

5.4. The regulatory context for North-South cooperation

The third dimension the quarterly surveys examined was the regulatory context for North-South cooperation, and whether legislation and regulations were supportive of or undermining cross-border relations. What the responses show, as set out in Figure 13, is that the regulatory context had deteriorated in the first quarter of 2021, which coincides with the end of the Brexit transition period and the entry into operation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Figure 13 Regulatory Context for North-South cooperation 2021

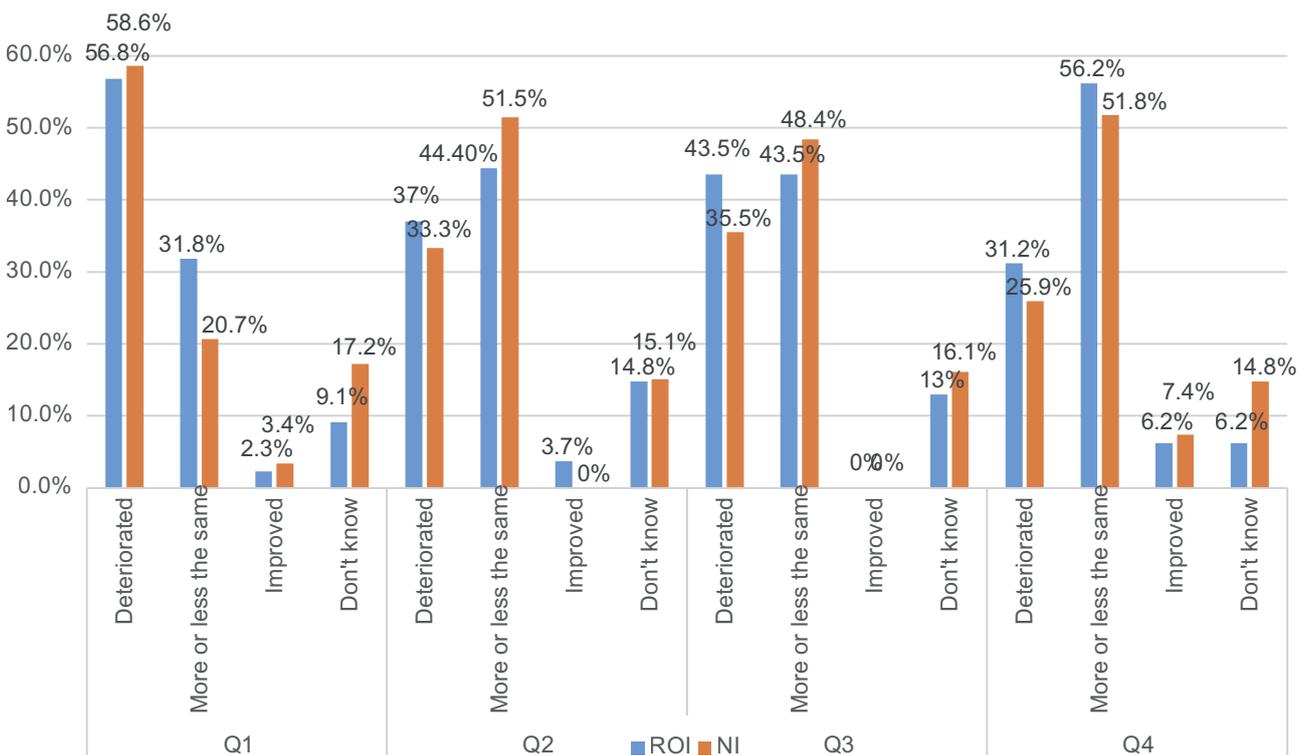


The overall trend in 2021 was one where a significant majority (61.3%) in Q1 considered the regulatory context for North-South cooperation to have deteriorated, with a gradually increasing majority of respondents in the following quarters believing it to have remained more or less the same. However, this implies a sense from civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland that 2021 brought a more negative regulatory context for North-South cooperation within which they were having to operate, with the stability indicated from Q2 onwards being of a less favourable context. In other words, the gradually growing majority who judged the context to have stayed more or less the same (from 47.1% in Q2 to 52.9% in Q4) could be indicative of respondents becoming accustomed to the new context, although with significant minorities (from 37.5% in Q2 to 27.5% in Q4) still considering the regulatory context to have deteriorated further. Also of significance is the number of respondents in every quarter who did not feel they were in a position to provide an assessment, which even if relatively small (with 18.1% in Q2 being the highest percentage of those who responded “don’t know”) could nevertheless suggest a degree of uncertainty as to whether the end of the Brexit transition period and the entry into operation of the Protocol had indeed altered the regulatory context in a manner that would impact on their North-South cooperation activities. What is also clear from the responses is that few thought the regulatory context for North-South cooperation to have improved, with no respondents at all thinking this was the case in Q3, and with 7.8% (in Q4) being the highest percentage of responses indicating an improvement.

If we focus on the responses from organisations and local authorities based in one or other of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland (Figure 14), two issues arise. One is that from Q2 onwards it is those located in the Republic of Ireland who register a more negative perception of the regulatory context for North-South cooperation, with the other being that those in Northern Ireland were more likely than those in the other jurisdiction to indicate that they didn’t know whether the context had improved or deteriorated.

Figure 14

NI and ROI responses to the regulatory context for North-South cooperation



Whereas in the first quarter of 2021 there was a higher percentage of respondents located in Northern Ireland who thought the regulatory context to have deteriorated in comparison to those in the Republic of Ireland (58.6% in Northern Ireland, and 56.8% in the Republic of Ireland), from Q2 onwards the situation is reversed. We also see a consistently higher percentage of those from Northern Ireland selecting the “don’t know” option (17.2% in Q1, and 14.8% in Q4).

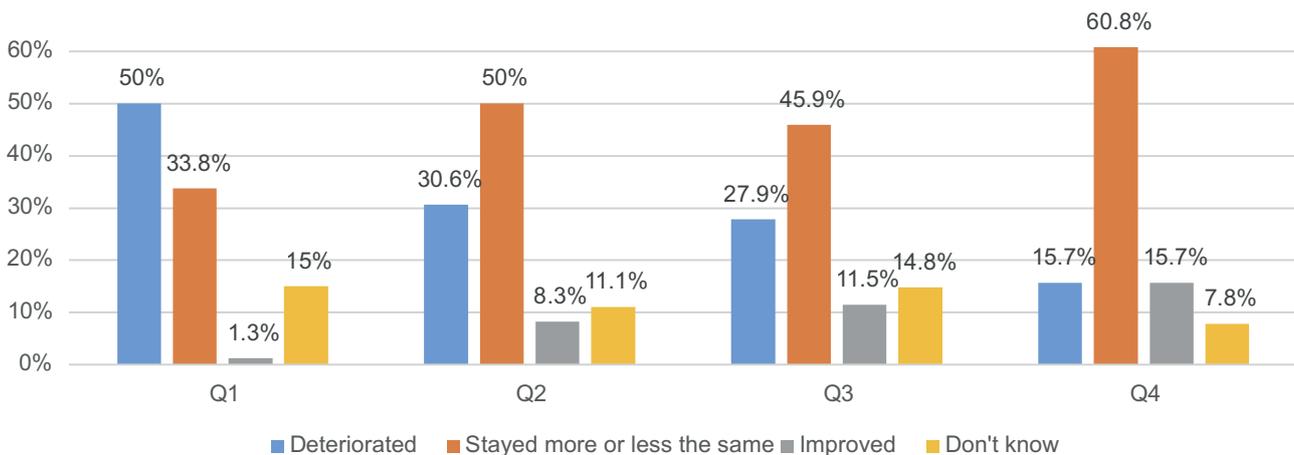
However, what the comments from respondents appear to show above all else is uncertainty as to the extent to which Brexit is impacting on the regulatory context for North-South cooperation, rather than widespread experience or knowledge of any specific impacts on their ability to cooperate, although there were some who noted issues related to the cross-border mobility of non-Irish/UK citizens. Instead, we see some responses pointing to the impacts on North-South cooperation brought about by the introduction of Covid-related regulations, with other responses touching on matters that are not related to legislation or regulations. The sample of comments reproduced below gives some sense of this.

- “Impact of Brexit is still unclear but there are still fears. The Protocol has eased some of the fears” (Quarter 2).
- “As Brexit unfolds and the Protocol evolves it’s hard to know where people stand on this issue” (Quarter 2).
- “As NI is no longer part of the EU – more red tape in research submissions to the EU” (Quarter 2).
- “Navigating two sets of COVID regulations has been difficult for citizens living within this cross border region. It has also been difficult for citizens who live and work on a cross border basis given the travel restrictions” (Quarter 2).
- “New UK immigration rules affecting capacity to accept interns from EU (other than Ireland)” (Quarter 3).
- “Concerns about delivering meals on wheels to older vulnerable service-users in NI from RoI” (Quarter 3).
- “What we are finding challenging is the uncertainty of the regulatory context – it has not deteriorated, nor has it remained the same, but the context has become much more uncertain, as neither we nor our colleagues in the North know what is being decided in London, and how that will affect our work” (Quarter 3).
- “The different pace of reopening the economy is causing frustration and confusion. Lack of synchronicity is causing anxiety around vaccination cards/certs, travel abroad, etc.” (Quarter 3).
- “So many ‘untruths’ or ‘not sures’ so people have problems in who they can trust to pass on correct information” (Quarter 4).
- “The consideration of the UK Government on introducing the need for travel documents for other EU/EEA citizens resident in either Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland to cross the border” (Quarter 4).
- “New Common Travel Area rules increase bureaucracy re crossing the border” (Quarter 4).
- “More & more red tape... year end difficulties re VAT & tax... uncertainty around Brexit rules” (Quarter 4).

5.5. The material context for North-South cooperation

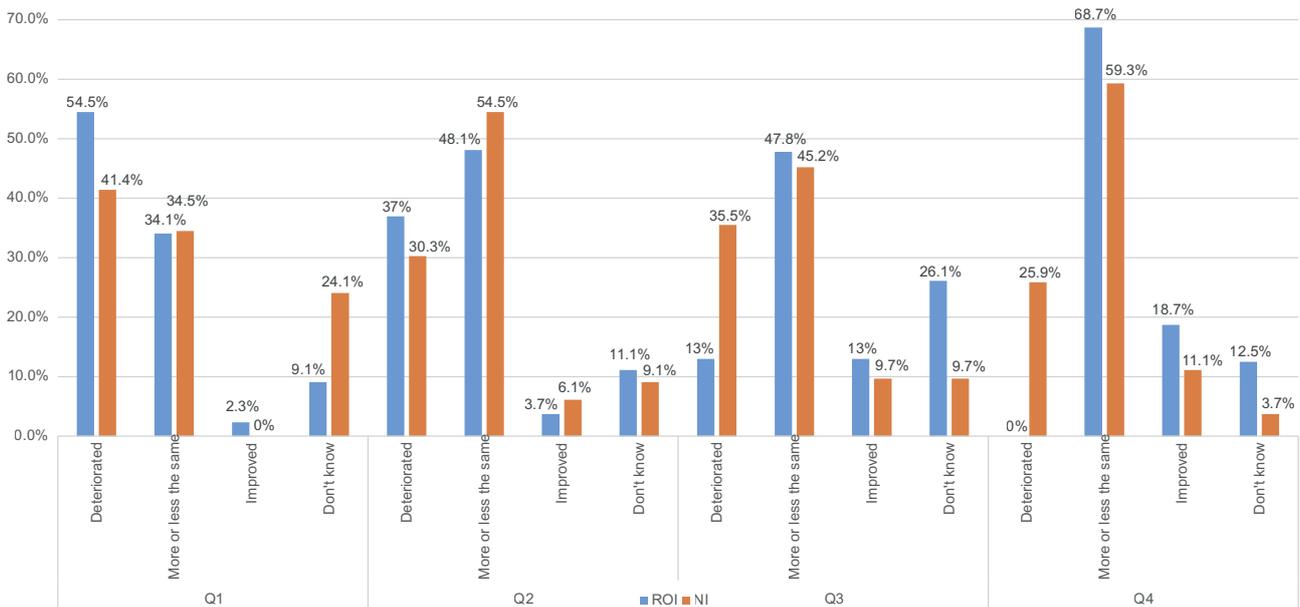
When it comes to how respondents to our quarterly surveys in 2021 saw the material context for North-South cooperation, meaning how access to goods or services necessary for them to operate their collaborative activities effectively, the overall trend is one of general stability following an initial perception of some deterioration. As can be seen in Figure 15, whereas the largest percentage of respondents (50%) thought the material context for North-South cooperation had deteriorated in the first quarter, the majority response in subsequent quarters was that it had remained more or less the same.

Figure 15 Material Context for North-South cooperation 2021



While in the first quarter 33.8% of respondents considered the material context to have remained more or less the same, this rose to 50% in Q2 and to 60.8% in the final quarter of 2021. Although in Q3 the percentage of respondents judging the context to have remained more or less the same fell back to 45.9%, in the same quarter there was also an increase in the percentage of those who thought the context had improved (from 8.3% in Q2, to 11.5% in Q3). Moreover, the final quarter also saw the largest percentage of respondents (15.7%) who considered the material context for North-South cooperation to have improved. There were also significant minorities of respondents who did not know whether the material context had improved or not, although with some notable variation from quarter to quarter (15% in Q1, declining to 11.1% in Q2, then increasing again to 14.8% in Q3, before falling to its lowest in Q4, at 7.8%). However, when we concentrate on the responses from civic society organisations and local authorities located in one or other of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, we can denote a notable shift in perceptions of the material context for North-South cooperation, as can be seen in Figure 16.

Figure 16 ROI and NI responses on the material context for North-South cooperation



While in the first two quarters of 2021 there was a greater percentage of respondents from the Republic of Ireland (54.5% in Q1 and 37% in Q2) who considered the material context to have deteriorated in comparison to those from Northern Ireland (41.4% in Q1 and 30.3% in Q2), the situation was reversed to a significant degree in the last half of the year. In Q3, while 35.5% of Northern Ireland respondents thought the context had deteriorated, only 13% of those from the Republic of Ireland thought the same, and by the final quarter no respondents from the Republic of Ireland thought this to be the case, while 25.9% of those from Northern Ireland did.

The comments offered by respondents suggest a difference in perceptions as to the nature of the material context, with some noting moves to acquire goods within the island of Ireland in order to avoid complexities in sourcing goods from Great Britain, others pointing to increased prices, while others referred to problems related to cross-border insurance. Reproduced below is a representative sample.

- “Problems around driving licences and insurance have surfaced” (Quarter 2).
- “Time and time again we cannot access goods/materials post-Brexit” (Quarter 2).
- “Changing bank services” (Quarter 2).
- “Our public and employer liability insurance does not allow us to work and trade services in ROI without additional insurance cover” (Quarter 2).
- “Cross-border trade substantially increased” (Quarter 3).
- “Transport form-filling has improved with experience and knowledge. Business is finding new sources of goods” (Quarter 3).
- “Increase purchasing goods from NI (Quarter 3).
- “Slower, more costly and without reciprocal end-to-end buy-in to ensure receiving goods is seemly for the NI based receiver of goods” (Quarter 3).

- “The growth of trade in goods and services between North and South, as a direct result of Brexit, has highlighted the distinct opportunities and benefits that exist to expand trading relationships with both the UK and EU” (Quarter 4).
- “We’re probably buying more within Ireland than previously as shipping from GB is a nightmare” (Quarter 4).
- “Increasingly, what is made difficult to get via UK because of Brexit is secured via ROI and vice versa” (Quarter 4).
- “People based in one jurisdiction who are providing services in the other jurisdiction seem to be operating as usual” (Quarter 4).

5.6. Summary conclusions on the conditions for North-South cooperation in 2021

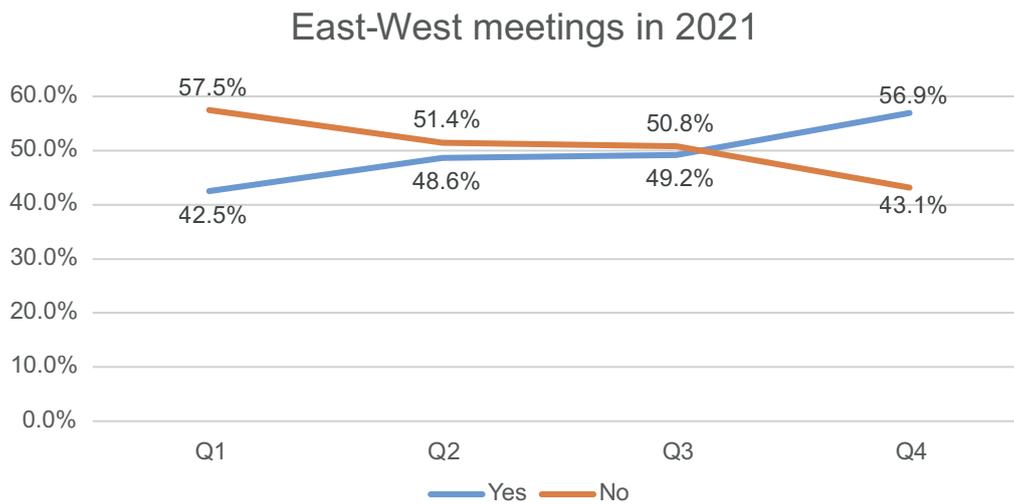
Among the conclusions that can be drawn from the results of our quarterly surveys in 2021 is that the most problematic context for North-South cooperation is at a political level. Tensions between the UK and the EU, between the UK and Irish governments, and between Northern Ireland’s political parties were considered by a significant majority of respondents as not providing a positive context for North-South cooperation. These tensions were seen as simultaneously feeding into and impacting on social cohesion, particularly in terms of unionist and loyalist communities’ perceptions of relations with the Republic of Ireland and the legitimacy of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. However, what can also be concluded from the responses received over 2021 is the resilience of North-South relations and cooperation between civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland. There is a sense that organisations recognise the strength of civic society in the face of political instability, and that they are prepared to show leadership in maintaining North-South relations. Although respondents identified a deterioration in the regulatory and material contexts for North-South cooperation at the start of 2021, what we can perceive is that organisations and local authorities continued to pursue their North-South collaborative activities within negative contexts that were seen as then largely stabilising. What we will now turn to is what our surveys tell us about East-West cooperation in 2021.

6. THE EAST-WEST DIMENSION

6.1. Contact and collaboration

In terms of contact and collaboration between civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland responding to our surveys and counterparts in Great Britain, the responses suggest an increase over 2021 in the number of meetings, as can be seen in Figure 17.

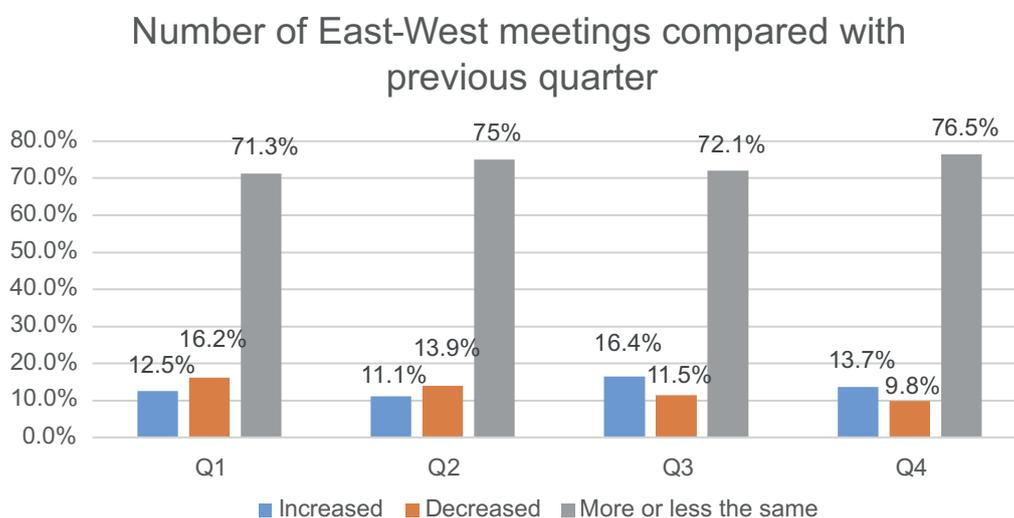
Figure 17



However, perhaps unsurprisingly, the chart above also shows how in the first three quarters of 2021 the majority of respondents had had no meetings with organisations in Great Britain, although that majority declined from quarter to quarter, until we see a majority (56.9%) in the final quarter indicating that they had been involved in East-West meetings. We should recall that in the case of North-South meetings (see Section 5.1.) there was always a significant majority of respondents who had had meetings with organisations in the other jurisdiction on the island of Ireland (growing steadily from 70% in Q1 to 76.5% in Q4). In other words, we can observe a greater degree of contact on a North-South basis than along the East-West axis.

Bearing in mind what we have just noted in terms of the lower levels of overall East-West contact, Figure 18 below nevertheless suggests that the quarterly levels of East-West contact remained generally stable over the course of 2021.

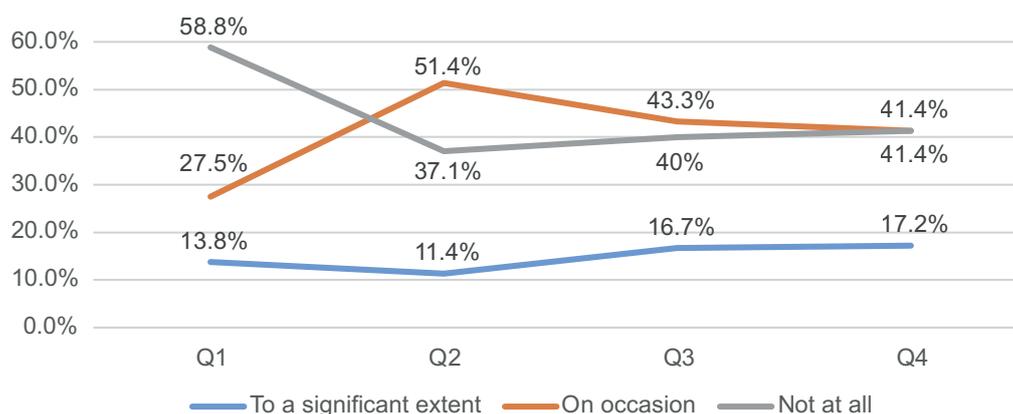
Figure 18



However, whereas the vast majority of respondents in every quarter indicated that the number of East-West meetings they had was more or less the same as in the previous quarter (always above 70%), there was also a shift between the first and second half of 2021 in terms of the percentages of those who reported that the number of meetings had increased or decreased. In the first two quarters the percentages of those reporting that they had had less meetings with counterparts in Great Britain than in the previous quarter were above those who indicated that they had had more meetings. In the second two quarters of 2021, this situation is reversed, with higher percentages reporting an increased number of East-West meetings than those reporting a decrease.

There is a significant difference in terms of the extent to which discussions on obstacles to cooperation featured in East-West meetings in comparison to North-South meetings, as shown in Figure 19. The overall trend suggested by respondents is that obstacles to East-West cooperation either did not feature at all in discussions between civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland and their counterparts in Great Britain, or that they were discussed occasionally. As noted earlier in this report (Section 5.1.), over 2021 discussions of obstacles to cooperation were either discussed occasionally or to a significant extent in North-South meetings.

Figure 19 Discussions of obstacles to East-West cooperation 2021



Although Q4 saw the highest percentage (17.2%) of meetings that featured discussions on East-West cooperation to a significant extent, by the same quarter we also see equal percentages (41.4%) of East-West meetings that either did not discuss this at all, or only did so on occasion.

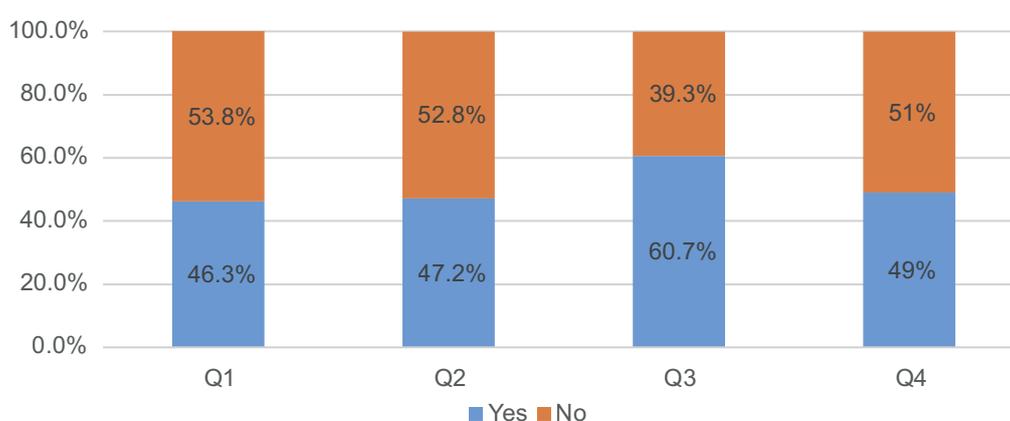
Where obstacles to East-West cooperation were discussed, according to the more detailed comments offered by respondents, the major issues raised were the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on East-West relations, the future of East-West collaborations currently supported by the EU's INTERREG programme and of UK participation in other EU cooperation programmes, as well as perceived centralisation by the UK Government in regards funding support for cooperation activities. A sample of the comments offered by respondents featuring these issues, as well as a number of other areas of concern, are reproduced below.

- "Covid restrictions" (Quarter 1).
- "Challenges around implementing EU funded project in context of Brexit" (Quarter 1).
- "Increased and increasing tendency of UK Government to move to tighter centralisation post-BREXIT and push a UK approach [versus] an approach of an equal partnership of devolved nations" (Quarter 1).
- "Discussion has been more about co-operating to counter shared obstacles faced by member organisations (e.g. due to Brexit). Some obstacles to co-operation discussed e.g. loss of NI-Scottish co-operation through loss of Interreg" (Quarter 1).
- "more C19 than Brexit" (Quarter 2).
- "The obstacles are mainly due to European negative approach to resourcing this work, [...] to unionists the focus from SEUPB is North-South and unionists are angry with this push" (Quarter 2).
- "The impact of UK being outside EU re EU citizens living here; impact of Covid; impact of new immigration legislation" (Quarter 2).
- "Scope for cooperation limited especially on Interreg programmes due to Brexit" (Quarter 2).
- "Position of UK partners on EU funded projects" (Quarter 3).
- "All engagement is on a voluntary basis which is constrained by resources and ability to commit time to strategic action including cooperation and looking outwards to work with others" (Quarter 3).
- "Uncertainty re Interreg cooperation" (Quarter 3).
- "The questions as to whether the UK Gov[ernment] will embrace any inclusion in the next INTERREG programmes, or regulatory frameworks, that can enable easier cooperation between our organisations" (Quarter 3).
- "The fluctuating impacts of the pandemic in imposing restrictions on physical meetings, this making it difficult to plan for network meetings out of Ireland/NI" (Quarter 4).
- "Again, the fact that NI is 'special' has been a focus of the work we are doing. We are neither fully in nor out of EU and so partners in UK are unsure as to how that impacts on their working with us – we have had to assure them it has little to no bearing" (Quarter 4).
- "Move to UK-wide commissioning of services with reduction to regional budgets impacting on Northern Ireland which is not in GB, but sometimes England-based decisions forget that and that a different local infrastructure exists here, e.g. role of local government; different remits of statutory departments; and different departmental structures for commissioning (as opposed to grant-aid).
- "Significant impact of non-devolved immigration v[ersus] Racial Equality in NI given new UK immigration legislation" (Quarter 4).
- "Discussions around the national policy context for the work of Community Development Trusts, particularly in the context of Levelling-up, Community Renewal and Community Ownership Fund" (Quarter 4).

Given geographical realities, it is perhaps unsurprising that when respondents were asked in each quarter of 2021 whether they were involved in active East-West collaboration activities, there was a marked lower level of East-West collaboration in comparison with North-South cooperation (where it had been 71.3% in Q1, increasing steadily to 80.4% by Q4). Those who were actively involved in one or more East-West collaborations indicated that the principal themes of their collaborations were education, community development, economic development, human rights, and peace and reconciliation, with rural development, youth, and cross-border cooperation also featuring as major areas among a range of others. As Figure 20 below shows, the highest percentage of civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland indicating that they were actively involved in one or more East-West collaborations was 60.7% in Q3.

Figure 20

Currently involved in East-West collaboration

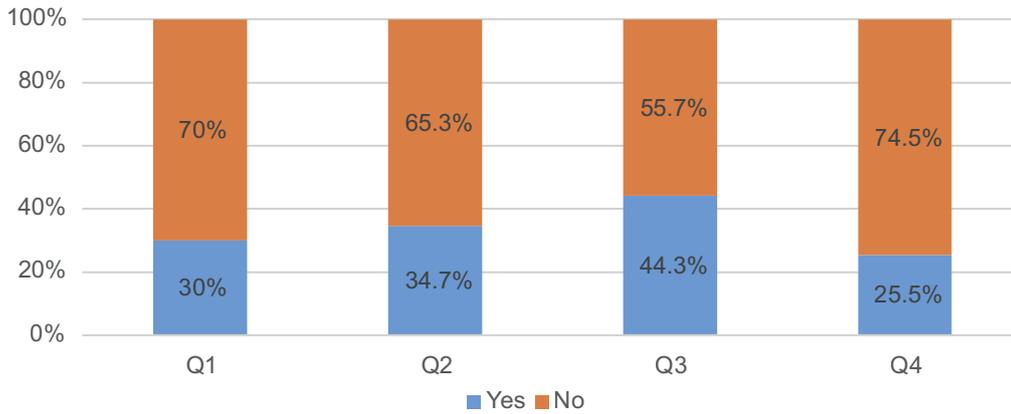


In fact, in all other quarters of 2021 the majority of respondents were not actively involved in any East-West collaboration activities. These results could be an area of concern, particularly when recalling the levels of uncertainty around the future of East-West collaborations supported by the EU's INTERREG programme, and the East-West relations supported through Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland involvement in wider EU programmes. In terms of the future of East-West collaborations currently enabled by INTERREG A (cross-border) programmes,¹⁰ these could be safeguarded to a greater or lesser extent by the PEACE PLUS programme, which combines the existing PEACE and INTERREG A programmes, and allows for the involvement of partners from outside Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

Again, in terms of respondents' intentions on future East-West collaboration activities, the picture is less positive than was the case for North-South cooperation. Whereas, in relation to active consideration of new North-South collaborations the lowest percentage of respondents who indicated that they were doing so was 60.9% in Q2 (with the highest being 74.5% in the final quarter of 2021), over every quarter of 2021 the majority of respondents were not considering new East-West collaborations. In fact, as Figure 21 shows, by the end of the year only 25.5% said they were looking for new East-West cooperation activities, which was the lowest percentage seen in 2021.

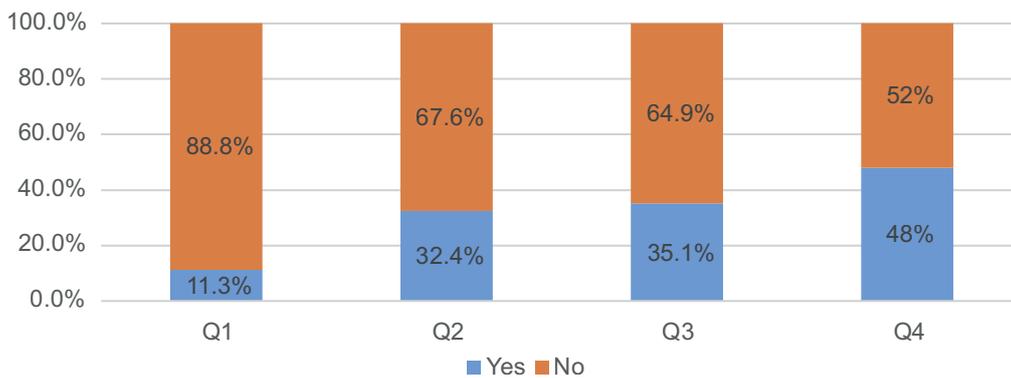
¹⁰ The INTERREG A programmes of relevance here, are the INTERREG VA Ireland-Northern Ireland-Scotland programme, and the INTERREG VA Ireland-Wales programme.

Figure 21 Actively considering new East-West collaborations



Notwithstanding the possibility that geographical realities mean it may be easier and there may be more impelling rationales to engage in North-South cooperation, if the East-West dimension is considered to be of importance in light of the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, these results are another cause for concern. They suggest that community organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland are even less inclined to explore new East-West collaborations than is already the case, with the potential for even lower numbers involved in such collaborations than those seen in the results of our 2021 quarterly surveys. Although, as can be seen in Figure 22, the percentage of respondents indicating they were in receipt of funding for East-West collaboration activities was at its highest in the final quarter of 2021 (at 48%), the fact that the majority cooperating with counterparts in Great Britain did so without such support should be another cause for concern.

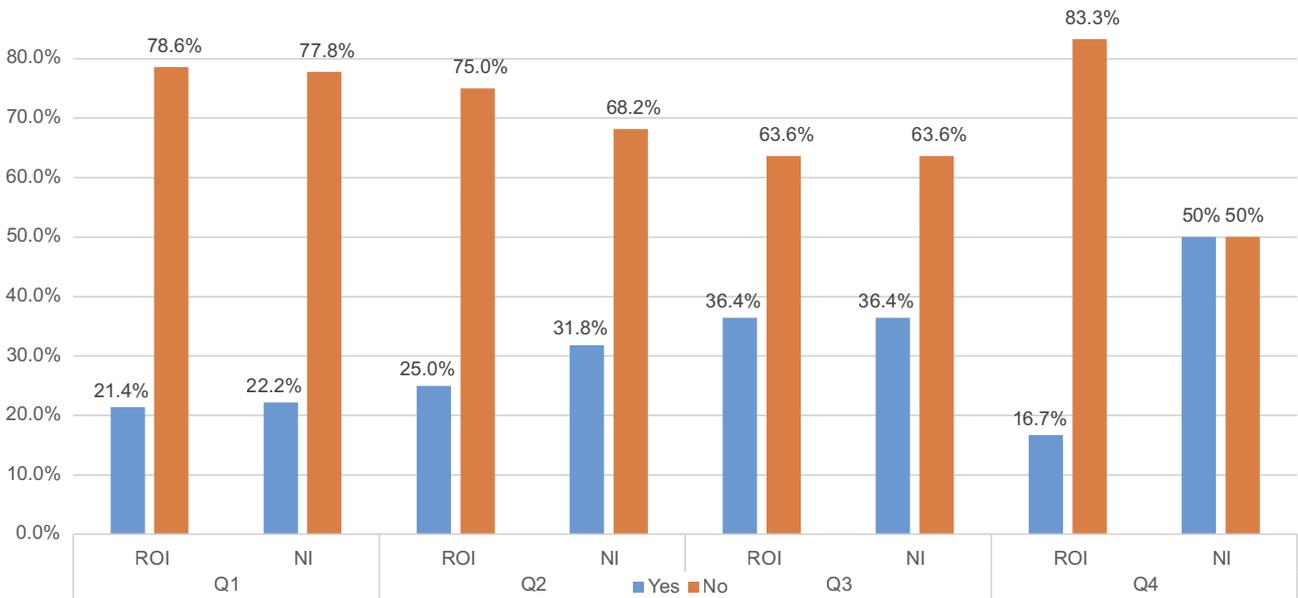
Figure 22 Currently in receipt of funding for East-West collaboration activities



According to respondents, the primary sources of external funding support for East-West cooperation were charitable foundations, followed by the EU, and then the UK Government. Other, less significant sources, were the Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, although many respondents indicated that they used their own core funding to support their East-West activities. If we focus on organisations and local authorities in either the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland, and exclude those that are all-island, in every quarter except one those from Northern Ireland were more likely to be funded for their East-West cooperation activities than those from the Republic of Ireland, as can be seen in Figure 23.

Figure 23

Organisations currently in receipt of funding for East-West collaboration (ROI and NI)



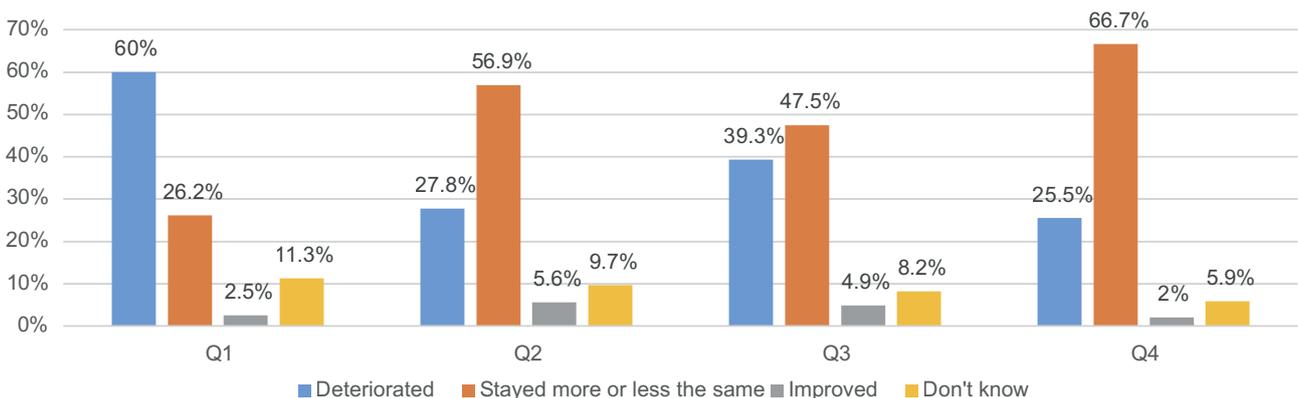
Although in Q3 the percentage of those who were funded for their East-West collaborations was the same for organisations in either of the jurisdictions on the island of Ireland (36.4%), in the final quarter of 2021 we saw a significant decrease in those from the Republic of Ireland in receipt of funding (down to 16.7%), whereas the percentage of those from Northern Ireland rose to its highest (50%). This is a more acute version of the situation regarding funding support for North-South cooperation, as set out in Section 5.1. of this report, where we also saw a significant proportion of respondents from the Republic of Ireland indicating they were not funded for their participation in collaboration with partners in Northern Ireland. In the case of East-West cooperation the proportion of respondents indicating they were not in receipt of funding for these activities is higher than was the case for North-South cooperation.

6.2. The political context for East-West cooperation

When asked about the extent to which the political context was supportive of East-West cooperation, the overall trend over the course of 2021 was somewhat similar as to that found in relation to North-South cooperation (see Section 5.2.). As can be seen in Figure 24, a very significant majority in Q1 were of the view that the political context had deteriorated, while in subsequent quarters the majority thought the context had remained more or less the same as in the previous quarter.

Figure 24

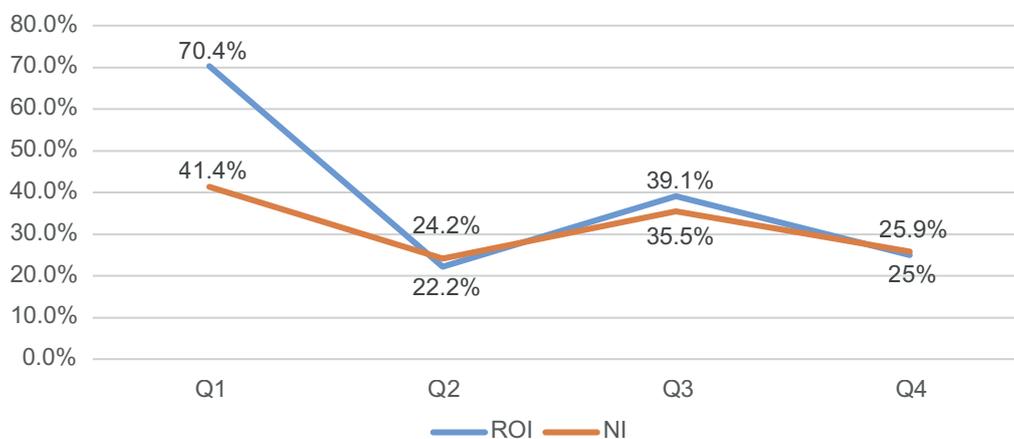
Political context for collaboration with GB in 2021



However, while the overall trend bears some similarities as to what we saw in relation to North-South cooperation, there was a greater sense in Q2 that the political context for East-West cooperation had stabilised (with 56.9% saying it had remained more or less the same as the previous quarter), whereas in the same quarter a majority (51.4%) thought the political context for North-South cooperation had deteriorated. On the other hand, in Q3 we see a more significant minority (39.3%) feeling the context for East-West cooperation had deteriorated than was the case in the same quarter in relation to North-South cooperation (where 36.1% thought the political context had deteriorated). What we can also observe is that fewer respondents than was the case in relation to North-South cooperation thought in any quarter of 2021 that the political context for cooperation with partners in Great Britain had improved (with the highest percentage being 5.6% in Q2).

If we omit respondents representing the views of all-island organisations or those located outside the island of Ireland but involved in East-West cooperation, and narrow our focus exclusively on those located in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland who considered the political context to have deteriorated, as can be seen in Figure 25 there is a considerable divergence of opinion in Q1. The much greater pessimism of community organisations and local authorities in the Republic of Ireland in comparison to their counterparts in Northern Ireland (70.4% of ROI respondents, and 41.4% of NI respondents) in how they viewed the political conditions for East-West cooperation in Q1 is even sharper than had been the case in relation to North-South cooperation (where it had been 63.6% of ROI respondents, and 55.2% of NI respondents).

Figure 25 % of ROI and NI respondents considering political context for E-W to have deteriorated



From this acute divergence between respondents from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in the first quarter of 2021, we then observe a general convergence of opinion in terms of those who view the political context for East-West cooperation having deteriorated further in subsequent quarters. However, it should be noted that in the first quarter the same percentage (41.4%) of respondents from Northern Ireland indicated that the political context had remained more or less the same, which implies that when we look at the overall picture (as shown in Figure 24), there may be a different starting point for respondents from the two jurisdictions. In other words, as majorities from Q2 onwards consider the political context for East-West cooperation to have stabilised, what that means for those from the Republic of Ireland may not be the same as those from Northern Ireland, with the former seeing it as worse than the latter.

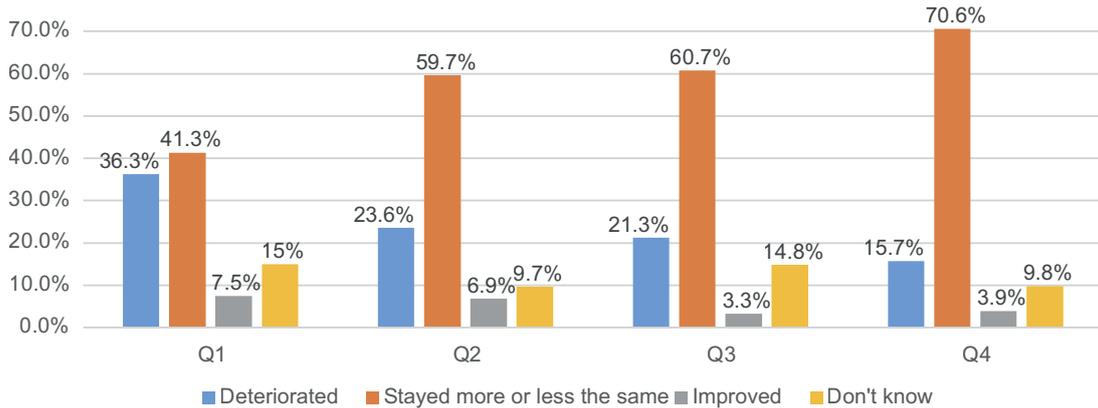
However, the comments offered by respondents from Q2 onwards present a mixed picture in terms of perceptions of the political context for East-West cooperation. As the sample of responses reproduced below indicates, while some point to uncertainty, lack of trust, and the belief that some parties create blockages to cooperation, others note progress in the establishment of funding programmes, support from political parties to engage, and a determination on the part of organisations to continue their East-West collaborations despite any political turmoil. Prominent as a factor seen as negatively affecting the political context is Brexit and the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and the tensions arising from the disagreements between the UK Government and the EU. These, in turn, are viewed by a number of respondents as spilling over into communities and their perceptions of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and the EU/Brussels.

- “Trust in British government has deteriorated” (Quarter 2).
- “Brexit is at fault for much of the political disputes and Covid certainly is not helping the situation” (Quarter 2).
- “UK Government is creating a lot of uncertainty here in NI and for EU” (Quarter 2).
- “Political instability hampering Economic Development” (Quarter 2).
- “The same challenges remain in dealing with the implementation in NI of new UK Government (post-Brexit) programmes and policies. Experience of collaborating with UK civil society organisations remain positive and useful” (Quarter 3).
- “An unstable, uncertain political context remains” (Quarter 3).
- “GB does not seem to have answers for mitigating for Brexit in NI. Good Friday Agreement at risk if Stormont is pulled down” (Quarter 3).
- “Misplaced blame for Brexit fallout on the Irish Government is a distraction to the need for UK-EU dialogue” (Quarter 3).
- “Failure to move on from the Brexit agreement and implementation of the protocol are facilitating the deterioration of relationships within NI” (Quarter 4).
- “Growing support for the union and building relationships with other unionists in GB (Quarter 4).
- “Irish-British intergovernmental relations are not positive. No united fronts when it comes to engaging around NI. Combative attitudes prevail around Brexit” (Quarter 4).
- “There appears to be a complete lack of trust between NI and GB. Neither side fully listening to the other” (Quarter 4).

6.3. The social context for East-West cooperation

Over the course of 2021 there was a growing majority of respondents who thought the social context for East-West cooperation had remained more or less the same, as set out in Figure 26. In fact, in Q4 of 2021 the percentage of those who stated the social context for cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain had remained the same as the previous quarter was higher than was the case in relation to North-South cooperation (where the percentage was 60.8%).

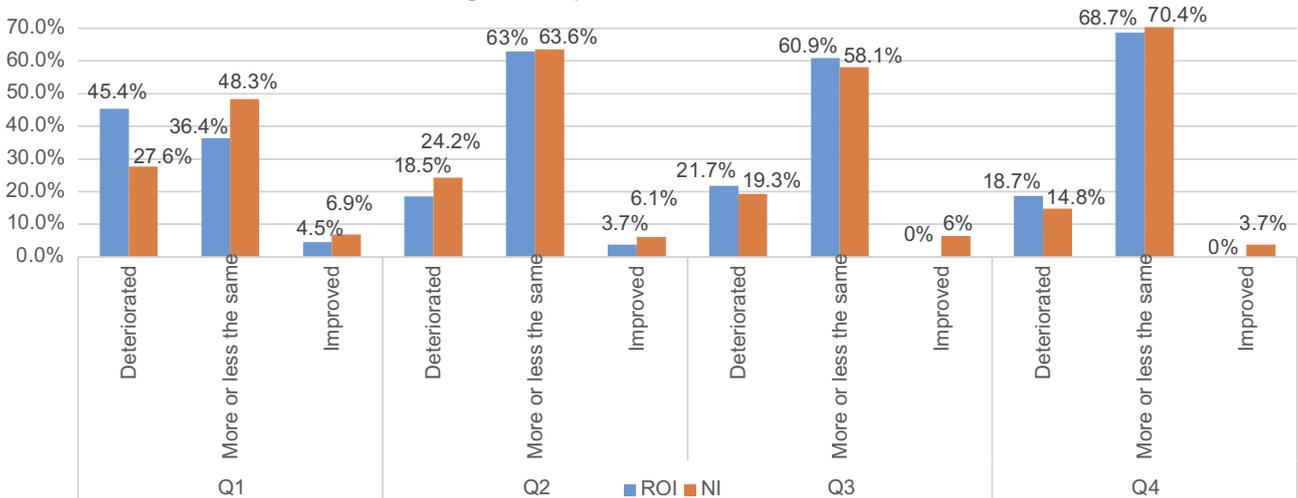
Figure 26 Social Context for collaboration with GB in 2021



However, while the majority (41.3%) of responses to the survey in Q1 pointed to general stability in terms of community attitudes to East-West cooperation and relations, there was also a significant minority (36.3%) who suggested they had deteriorated. This minority decreased over the course of 2021 as the majority of those who thought the social context had remained relatively stable grew, but it also should be noted that the percentage of those who considered it to have improved decreased from 7.5% in Q1 to 3.3% in Q3, before rising slightly to 3.9% in the final quarter. According to the results, therefore, the sense of optimism surrounding the social context for East-West cooperation is less pronounced than it was in relation to North-South cooperation (where the peak stood at 17.6% in Q4).

If we focus on the views from community organisations and local authorities from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, leaving aside those organisations that would be all-island and “don’t know” responses, we can see in Figure 27 how it is those from the Republic of Ireland who tend to be more pessimistic as to community attitudes towards East-West cooperation and relations.

Figure 27 Social context for East-West cooperation according to respondents from NI and ROI



Except for Q2, in every quarter of 2021 the percentage of respondents from the Republic of Ireland who considered the social context to have deteriorated was greater than that of those from Northern Ireland, with the difference being most marked in the first quarter (with 45.4% of respondents from the Republic of Ireland, and 27.6% from Northern Ireland). Indeed, in the first quarter the most favoured response from those from the Republic of Ireland was that the social context had deteriorated, with those considering it to have remained more or less the same standing at 36.4%. Although the percentages of those from Northern Ireland who thought so remained low throughout the year (falling steadily from a peak of 6.9% in Q1), in the final two quarters of 2021, there were no respondents from the Republic of Ireland indicating that the social context for East-West cooperation had improved.

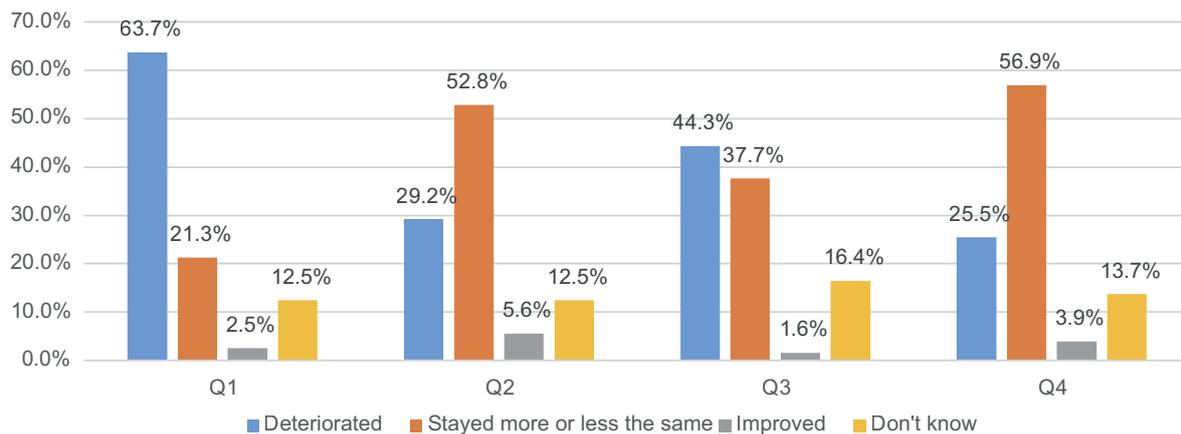
It was noted in the previous section how respondents' comments suggested a spill-over from the political context into community relations. This effect appears to be supported when examining the comments respondents offered on their assessment of the social context for East-West cooperation and relations, with political tensions seen as affecting communities' perceptions. As the representative sample of comments reproduced below demonstrate, there are also some indications of willingness among organisations to continue their East-West activities, but also concerns around a breakdown of trust and a lack of awareness of communities' specific needs when it comes to (UK) government funding programmes.

- "Brexit protocol arrangements have been difficult for unionist communities" (Quarter 2).
- "Former serving military are meeting regularly and discussing socially" (Quarter 2).
- "Brexit has soured relations" (Quarter 2).
- "It's just much more difficult to travel and the attitude and actions of the British government hasn't endeared anyone here to the average English person, regardless of how little responsibility they may personally hold" (Quarter 2).
- "The Levelling Up agenda is slow, with the Levelling Up fund first tranche not yet being announced and the 2nd tranche we are unable to determine when this will happen. [...] Regional balancing is almost impossible when continuing to use the Barnett formula [...]. The Irish government does seem to have turned a corner with Cork, it appears a Belfast-centric approach is enough to satisfy the balance between the UK nations and tick the "NI done" box" (Quarter 3).
- "Some protests against NI Protocol still happening, although seems with small numbers. Good Friday agreement at risk if Stormont pulled down" (Quarter 3).
- "People within the PUL community are being fed a political agenda that's impacting good relations" (Quarter 3).
- "Organisations want to continue the engagement and will continue it. As it is voluntary, there isn't that pressure to be relying on funding for the continuation of the network and therefore collaboration" (Quarter 3).
- "Does GB want us?" (Quarter 4).
- "Change of circumstance exists and the cultural attitudes coping with policy changes was not planned for and now has to be included in a new negotiation" (Quarter 4).
- "It's a matter of balance. One side will possibly feel that they have improved if the role of the British Government is seen to reflect its aspirations (removal of the Protocol), whilst the other might consider it's deteriorating as the British Government is seen to have reneged on its legal responsibilities. This is further seen in the approach being taken to Legacy Legislation and an Irish Language Act at Westminster" (Quarter 4).
- "Prevalence of lack of awareness of/interest in NI across GB civic society" (Quarter 4).

6.4. The regulatory context for East-West cooperation

When it came to respondents' views on the nature of the regulatory context for East-West cooperation, and how supportive they thought it was, the overall picture offered in 2021 is more negative than was the case for North-South cooperation. As can be seen in Figure 28, the majority of responses in the first quarter (63.7%) indicated that the regulatory context had deteriorated.

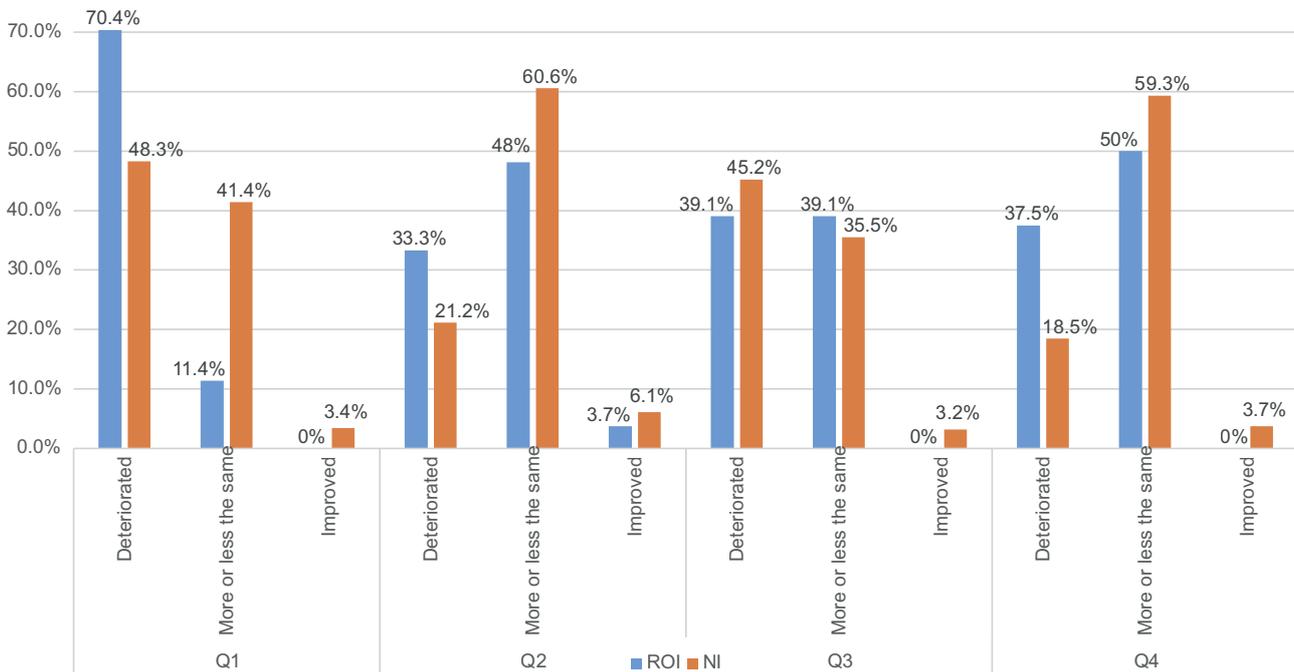
Figure 28 Regulatory context for collaboration with GB in 2021



The greater degree of pessimism shown by civic society organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland in relation to the legislative and regulatory context for their collaborative relations with counterparts in Great Britain in comparison to the same context for their North-South cooperation activities is not only apparent in Q1 (where 61.3% of respondents thought it had deteriorated), but also in Q3. Here, although 37.7% considered the context to have remained more or less the same as in Q2, the majority (44.3%) thought it had deteriorated once more. This period coincided with the publication in July by the UK Government of its Command Paper – “Northern Ireland Protocol: The way forward” – that included a proposal that the UK and EU agree a “standstill” on existing arrangements, including the operation of grace periods in force, and a freeze on the European Union’s existing legal actions and processes. Among its other proposals, the Command Paper also sought to remove the oversight role of the EU’s Court of Justice that had been accorded to it in the Withdrawal Agreement in relation to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. What the responses to the 2021 quarterly surveys appear to suggest is not only a certain amount of turbulence in terms of how the regulatory context for East-West cooperation was perceived, but also some uncertainty, which the percentages across all four quarters of respondents who indicated that they didn’t know whether the context had changed or not seem to point to.

When we break down the responses according to those civic society organisations and local authorities based in either one of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, those from the Republic of Ireland were much more pessimistic about the regulatory context for East-West cooperation than those from Northern Ireland, as set out in Figure 29.

Figure 29 Regulatory context for East-West cooperation according to respondents from NI and ROI



It was only in Q3 that the percentage of those from Northern Ireland who thought the regulatory context had deteriorated on the previous quarter was greater than those from the Republic of Ireland (45.2% and 39.1% respectively). In every other quarter of 2021 there was a significantly higher percentage of respondents from the Republic of Ireland who considered the context to have deteriorated, with the divergence at its most extreme by the final quarter. Moreover, even though the percentage of those from Northern Ireland who saw the context as having improved was always small, it was also noticeable that in three out of four quarters there were no respondents from the Republic of Ireland who thought the same. These results suggest a much sharper division between respondents from the two jurisdictions than had been the case in relation to the social context, with the degree of pessimism shown by those from the Republic of Ireland being considerably greater.

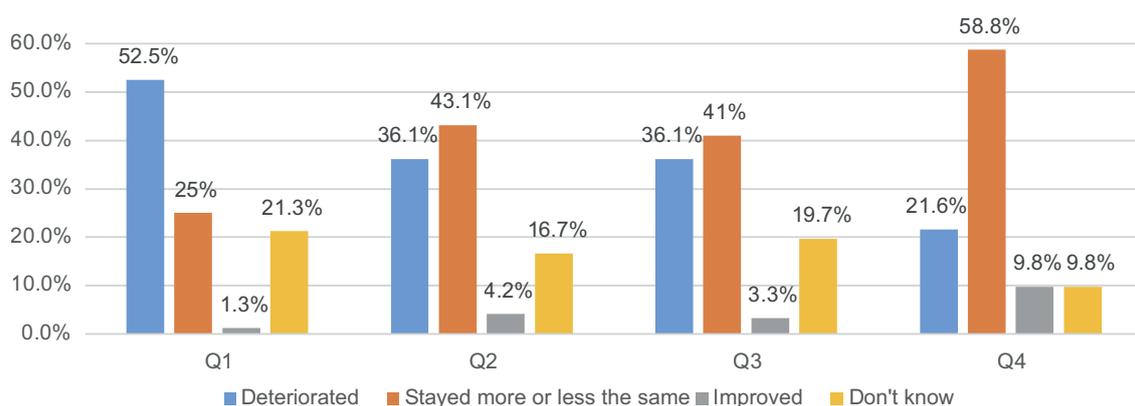
However, when we consider the comments offered by respondents in relation to this issue, the question arises whether their assessment was driven more by perception than direct experience of increased regulatory complexity affecting East-West cooperation and relations. Indeed, although there are a small number that refer to a more complex regulatory burden, some comments suggest explicitly that their evaluation of this context is not informed by their own experience, but rather by what they were informed was being experienced by others. Instead, as can be seen in the illustrative sample of comments reproduced below, uncertainty over what the regulatory context is or what it might become is a repeated sentiment, which is often considered to be a result of UK Government unilateral actions that undermines trust.

- “According to the media reports things are more complex” (Quarter 2).
- “It has been such a difficult quarter politically that all of the regulatory context has been compromised, e.g. Westminster committing to deliver parts of the NDNA [New Decade, New Approach] instead of the [NI] Executive undoubtedly shifts the balance of the regulatory context” (Quarter 2).
- “Protocol has brought more regulation, that was to be expected... but should be kept to absolute minimum to support GB/NI trade” (Quarter 2).
- “The regulatory context for collaboration with Great Britain appears to have deteriorated, though we are not engaged in any collaborative activities. However, the regulatory context is becoming more uncertain, as we don’t know (for example) if Britain will abandon the CE quality mark and other European designations in favour of some similar, but not exactly the same, British designations” (Quarter 3).
- “Inaccurate claims about implementation of the Protocol is stifling normal trade relations” (Quarter 3).
- “Unilateral actions around the NI Protocol on the part of the UK government are undermining confidence and trust” (Quarter 3).
- “The stated policy has shifted from inception due to outcomes experienced and this has frustrated understandings and relationships” (Quarter 4).
- “We understand that the regulatory context has deteriorated, but we have no direct experience ourselves. Colleagues have informed me that collaboration with agencies in Scotland has improved, in recent years” (Quarter 4).
- “Coming towards end of period of flexibilities but no certainty of what rules will be in 2022” (Quarter 4).
- “The government has taken a harder approach to the Protocol” (Quarter 4).

6.5 The material context for East-West cooperation

The final core dimension respondents were asked to consider in our quarterly surveys in 2021 was the material context for East-West cooperation. In other words, whether access to goods or services necessary for organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland had altered in ways that affected their ability to collaborate effectively with organisations in Great Britain. Here, as set out in Figure 30, the overall trend was somewhat more positive than was the case in respect of the regulatory context, and more or less comparable to the assessment offered by respondents in terms of the material context for North-South cooperation.

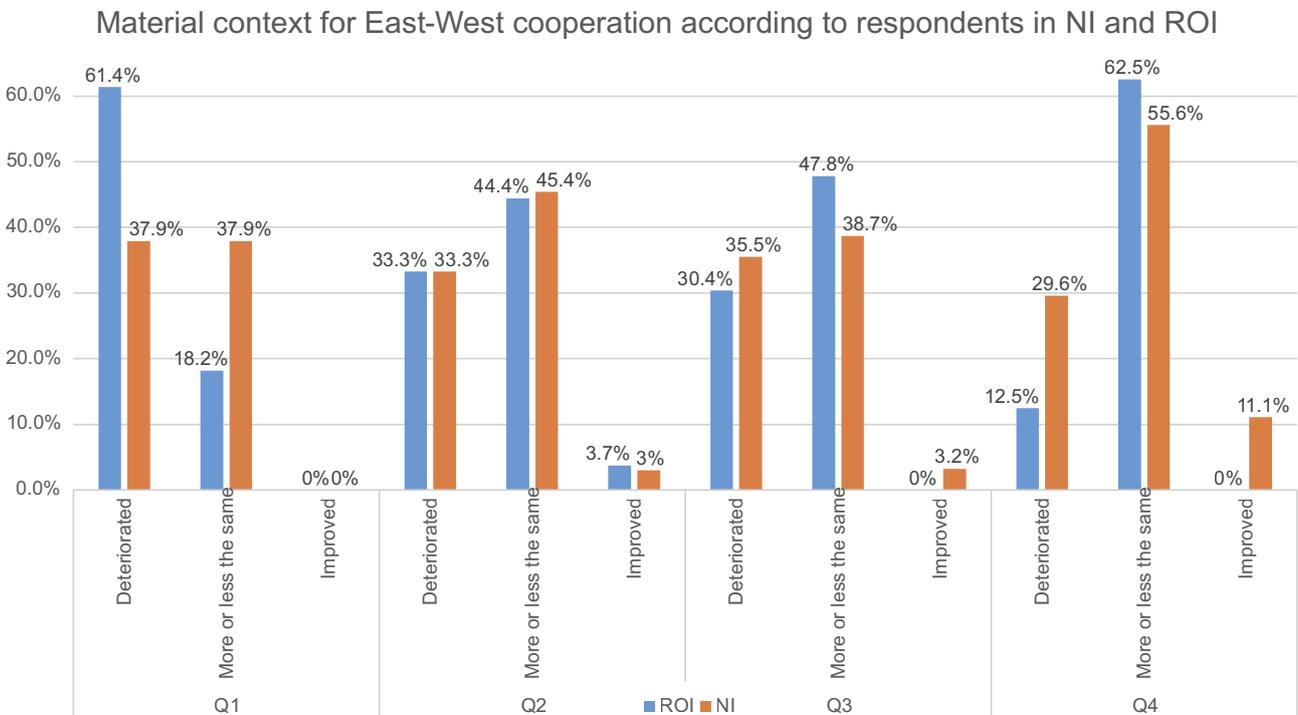
Figure 30 Material Context for collaboration with GB in 2021



What the chart shows is a majority (52.5%) in the first quarter judging the material context to have deteriorated, but with majorities throughout the rest of 2021 considering it to have remained more or less the same. Of course, as was the case in many other areas relating to both North-South and East-West cooperation, this suggests that the material context was perceived to have worsened at the beginning of the year, and stabilised at that level for the remaining three quarters. However, by the final quarter not only was the percentage of those who thought the material context to have remained more or less the same at its highest (58.8%), it also saw the highest percentage of respondents who were of the view that it had improved (9.8%, as compared to 1.3% in Q1). Another issue of note is the fairly significant percentages of responses indicating some uncertainty in relation to the nature of the material context for East-West cooperation, with 21.3% of respondents in Q1 answering “don’t know”.

The picture becomes more complex when focusing on the responses from organisations and local authorities based in either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, therefore omitting those who are all-island organisations or with operations in both jurisdictions. As set out in Figure 31, in contrast to what was the case in relation to the regulatory context for East-West cooperation, in the second half of 2021 respondents from the Republic of Ireland were generally less pessimistic about the material context than those from Northern Ireland, although only in Q2 were there any from the Republic of Ireland who considered the context to have improved from the first quarter. It should be noted that a number of the respondents who indicated the context to have improved, as shown in the previous chart (Figure 30), were from all-island organisations or organisations with operations in both jurisdictions.

Figure 31



However, this comparatively less pessimistic view of respondents from the Republic of Ireland in the second half of 2021 should be considered within the trend in the first half of the year. In Q1 there was a significantly higher percentage (61.4%) of respondents from the Republic of Ireland who judged the material context for East-West cooperation deteriorated than those from Northern Ireland (37.9%); and although no respondents from Northern Ireland – like those from the other jurisdiction – thought the context had improved, 37.9% assessed it to have remained more or less the same as at the end of 2020. Therefore, what these results suggest is that those in the Republic of Ireland placed the material context for East-West cooperation in a much more negative state than those from Northern Ireland at the outset of 2021, from where it was seen as remaining more or less the same for the remainder of the year. Those from Northern Ireland, on the other hand, became markedly more pessimistic about the material context in the second half of 2021, but having started the year with only 37.9% judging it to have deteriorated.

Where respondents offered explanatory comments on their views of the material context for East-West cooperation, as was the case with the regulatory context there is a sense that they sometimes reflect an indirect assessment rather than direct experience. However, there are also some examples offered of where access to goods or services has become more challenging, as can be seen in the representative sample of comments offered from the second quarter onwards.

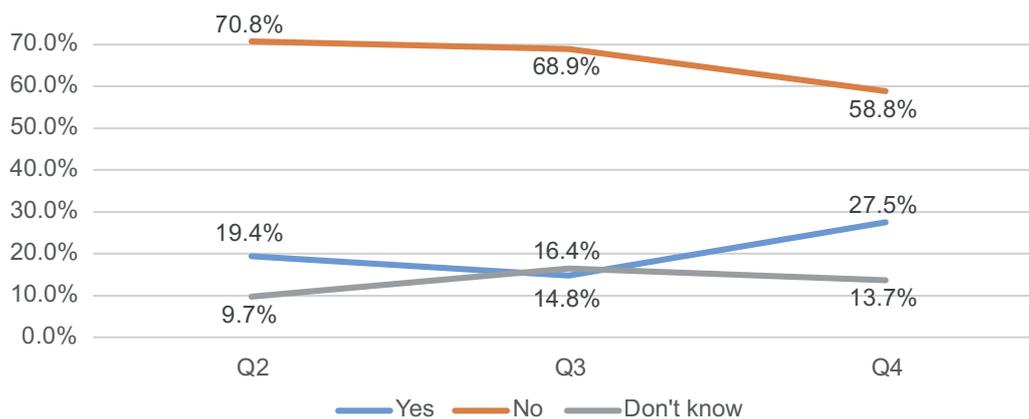
- “We have direct experience of access issues” (Quarter 2).
- “Again, no experience in this area, but according to the press/media things are a lot more difficult” (Quarter 2).
- “It’s difficult getting deliveries and supplies from Britain” (Quarter 2).
- “GB businesses not prepared for Brexit and this had consequences on the supply chain. It is improving” (Quarter 2).
- “Due to VAT implications we are less inclined to purchase supplies from GB” (Quarter 3).
- “Another extension, by definition, tells us we are not good to go” (Quarter 3).
- “Yes, especially among Great Britain stores there seems to be less products in these stores with some stores cutting these lines from Irish stores. Also shopping online, the charge to return products to some stores (depending on delivery service used)” (Quarter 3).
- “The decisions made by some of the big mobile telecoms providers not to bring in charges for inadvertent roaming between NI and ROI, is welcomed, and aids cross-border communities and workers, who are a very, very small share of the revenue bases for these multinationals” (Quarter 3).
- “The continuing impacts of Brexit, creating uncertainty and frictions” (Quarter 4).
- “It is a perception that things have changed that working with NI is more challenging because of the rhetoric about the protocol which people see as a barrier. But when we talk to them they then understand that it has limited scope” (Quarter 4).
- “An item ordered online costing €22, ended up costing €50 when delivered” (Quarter 4).

7. THE PROTOCOL ON IRELAND / NORTHERN IRELAND: KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

Given its prominence in discussions over North-South and East-West cooperation and relations, and its specific role in maintaining the necessary conditions for cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, from the second quarter of 2021 onwards respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they felt informed about the Protocol, whether there was enough relevant information available to those involved in cooperation, and what were their sources of information.

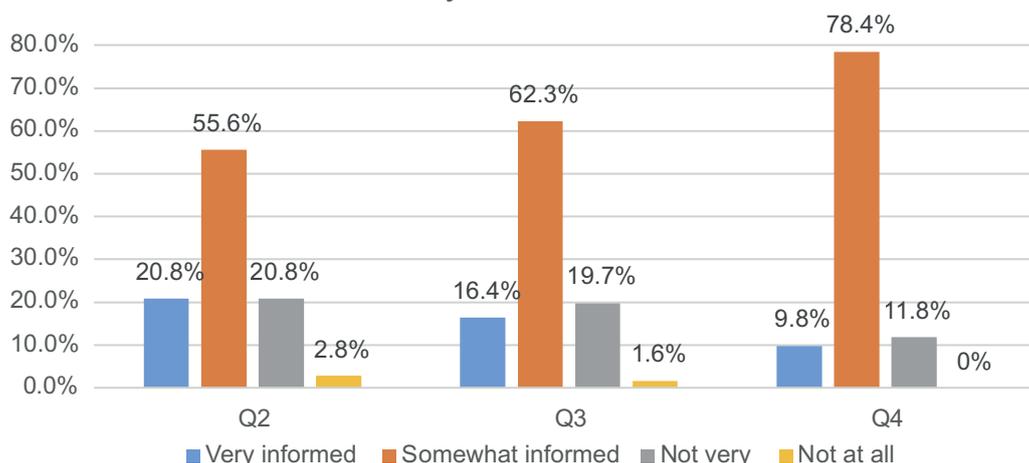
In terms of the availability of relevant information on the Protocol for those involved in North-South and/or East-West cooperation, the majority view in every quarter was that this was not the case, although that majority gradually reduced over the course of 2021 (from 70.8% in Q1 to 58.8% in Q4). As set out in Figure 32, the final quarter also saw the largest percentage of respondents who thought that there was enough relevant information (27.5%), but also with a significant minority that indicated they didn't know (13.7%).

Figure 32 Enough relevant information on the Protocol for those involved in N/S and E/W cooperation?



When we look at how informed respondents thought they were about the Protocol, at first glance, given the growth over 2021 of those who considered themselves somewhat informed, it could have been reasonably assumed that there was an increase in knowledge of the Protocol as the year progressed. However, this needs to be tempered by the percentages in each quarter of those who felt themselves to be very informed, as shown in Figure 33.

Figure 33 How informed do you feel about the Protocol?



Although the percentage of those considering themselves to be somewhat informed about the Protocol rose from 55.6% in Q2 to 78.4% by the final quarter, there was also a decrease in the percentage of respondents who considered themselves to be very informed – from 20.8% in Q2, down to 9.8% in the last quarter. This overall trend, whereby respondents increasingly placed themselves in the “somewhat informed” category rather than in the “very informed” or “not very” or “not at all” informed, could be reflective of an increasing familiarity with the Protocol in general, simultaneously coupled with a growing realisation of its complexities. In other words, whereas the Protocol maintained a high degree of prominence in public debate, particularly at times of increased political tensions, which would keep the issue and its general contours in the public consciousness, as the year wore on people’s capacity to keep abreast of all the technical details and their many ramifications being discussed by the UK and EU diminished. This could also be impacted by uncertainties resulting from opposing or contradictory interpretations of the facts, and a lack of trust in the motivations behind how the main parties involved interpreted the Protocol and the impacts of its implementation.

8. FINAL THOUGHTS BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION

Each of the quarterly surveys offered respondents to add any final thoughts they might have, and many did so. What came through strongly in these comments was the commitment from community organisations and local authorities on the island of Ireland to North-South and East-West cooperation and relations despite the significant challenges they see arising from Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. They also voice enormous frustration at how political divisions and policy development often undermine or fail to match the energy and vision for North-South and East-West cooperation that community organisations and local authorities possess, which means they frequently see themselves as undertaking valuable cooperation activities and nurturing good North-South and East-West relations *despite* the political and policy context rather than supported by it. A number of comments identify the need for greater attention to be paid and more support to be given to East-West cooperation, with some seeing this state of affairs as politically driven and resulting in growing unionist and loyalist antipathy towards North-South cooperation.

Although the commitment to and drive for North-South and East-West cooperation was evident in the results of our quarterly surveys in 2021, it is vital that these are not taken for granted. If the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation are not safeguarded, particularly the political context, there is a significant risk that community organisations in particular will gradually withdraw from cooperation with organisations in the other jurisdictions across these islands. Such a withdrawal, which some evidence from our surveys and through the Centre for Cross Border Studies' other work suggests is already beginning to happen in the Republic of Ireland, would lead to greater insularity and isolation. Given the size of its community and voluntary sector in comparison with the other jurisdictions across these islands, this may be an increased risk for Northern Ireland unless positive actions are taken. However, while our quarterly surveys in 2022 will help us to continue to monitor the state of health of the conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation, we will give the final words to our respondents, with some of their final comments reproduced below.

- "The existence of the Northern Ireland Protocol has changed PUL attitudes for the worse!" (Quarter 1)
- "Building trust and relations happens at all the various levels, from local to strategic, so it's important that the correct signals are sent and that strategic action is planned over years. Connecting Derry to Donegal by rail is an example of a BIG project that would send the right signals" (Quarter 1).
- "Government of Ireland and Scotland have recently signed a new framework for collaboration; perhaps bringing NI into this might present an interesting three-way opportunity for collaboration in higher education and research" (Quarter 1).
- "Through a European network we are members of we are able to collaborate with members from Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. These organisations will remain members and indeed have become more involved since Brexit and see the need for this collaboration to continue" (Quarter 1).

- “There is very limited funding support for proper collaboration. Many peace and reconciliation projects are short term, contract based, and do not often provide the opportunity for deeper collaboration from design to delivery. [...] As poor as this has been South to North on the island of Ireland, the funding and impetus for East-West work both from the south and north of Ireland has been under-prioritised – very few policy or funding avenues for this work. Where it takes place it would seem to be directed at higher levels, e.g. statutory/semi-statutory” (Quarter 1).
- “The impact of the UK withdrawal from the EU has impacted significantly – while access to goods and services will probably be ironed out – the absence of formalized structures to support what were previously informal relationships and contacts has been overlooked – so dialogue, information sharing and problem sharing mechanisms are still stuck in the 1990s” (Quarter 1).
- “The North West Development Fund – jointly funded by both governments – has enabled a range of highly innovative social, economic and environmental collaborative projects to significantly improve wellbeing and enhance regional development in the Derry City and Strabane District and Donegal County Council. This funding is due to close in March 2022 and further commitments are needed to ensure that important mechanism for cross-border cooperation continues” (Quarter 2).
- “Our work with ROI/NI colleagues will continue despite the political failures. People on the ground are getting on with their work and are exasperated by political wranglings” (Quarter 2).
- “Knock the politicians’ heads together and make them come to a sensible agreement instead of squabbling like a bunch of headless chickens in respect of Brexit and Covid policy” (Quarter 2).
- “This has been a hugely challenging quarter to work through; to support the sharing of accurate information, to seek and utilise opportunities to convey the real, ‘on the ground’ realities with all actors whilst the political tone has been often unhelpful and our own devolved government has lurched through weeks of instability and crisis” (Quarter 2).
- “Collaborative engagement across the nations has deteriorated” (Quarter 2).
- “Implementation and outworking of Protocol still very much a work in progress so this work and engagement are enormously important” (Quarter 2).
- “As an education trade union we are stepping up engagement with similar unions in the Republic. We see this engagement likely to deepen over time” (Quarter 2).
- “Unless we challenge the deliberately negative narrative from the UK and DUP, we will end up not resolving the solvable issues on trade and creating a worse situation on trade and everything else” (Quarter 3).
- “The ordinary people on the street would get on well together if they were not stirred up by mindless and bigoted politicians on both sides of the political divide” (Quarter 3).
- “We are an amateur group with local interests. We are at a standstill, owing to Covid restrictions AND Brexit” (Quarter 3).
- “Political stability is key to NI economy success” (Quarter 3).
- “At the strategic level there has been for too long a reluctance to develop connectivity. The last major development in terms of top-down lead was the Shannon-erne canal” (Quarter 3).

- “Pandemic has been the cloud over exchange and interaction over the past year. Uncertainty breeds doubt and reluctance. [...] Once the pandemic passes I think normal business will resume regardless of the Protocol. Re future visa requirement for entry from ROI to NI that would have an impact” (Quarter 4).
- “More information on cross-community groups’ attitudes and activities, to get a sense of the public’s attitudes and expectations, rather than politics” (Quarter 4).
- “There are so many opportunities for exchanging information, working together, collaborating, and developing better integration that have either been lost or ignored – and this has led to a feeling of frustration, though not any reduction in the desire to work together, North and South” (Quarter 4).
- “Extending the Common Travel Area to everyone lawfully resident in either jurisdiction would solve a lot of problems at a stroke” (Quarter 4).
- “There should be more publicly available information as to what the priorities are for North-South relations and the same for East to West relations. There has been a recent arts funding call out for East to West and North-South projects, the first in a very long time. Need more active promotion and probably even more East to West as South to North” (Quarter 4).
- “The unionist community feel that SEUPB and Peace Plus is strongly designed to encourage north-south relationships and part of a EU and ROI plan to support an all-Ireland agenda. There has to be serious investment in East-West development or unionists will not engage in the programme” (Quarter 4).
- “Inform the marginalized before they are led by wrong information” (Quarter 4).

APPENDIX 1

THE QUESTIONS FROM THE 1st QUARTERLY SURVEY

1st Quarterly Survey on conditions for North-South and East-West Cooperation (Jan-Mar 2021)

Results of this survey are anonymised. Your participation in this survey is crucial for our understanding of the extent to which the necessary conditions for North-South cooperation are being maintained as the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland is implemented, and how relations between the island of Ireland and Great Britain are operating. This survey is undertaken by the Centre for Cross Border Studies (www.crossborder.ie).

1. Email * * Required

Your organisation: the basics

2. Name of your organisation *

3. Where is your organisation based?

Mark only one oval.

- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland
- Other:

4. Have you completed this survey in a previous quarter?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes *Skip to question 14*
- No

5. What is your organisation's main area(s) of activity (you can check more than one box)? *

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

The North-South dimension

6. Since 2016 has your organisation's contact with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND (choose one): *

Mark only one oval.

- Increased
- Reduced
- Stayed the same

7. Has your organisation been (over the last 5 years) or is it currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 9*
8. If your organisation has been involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, in what main area(s) of activity were these in (you can check more than one box)? *
- Check all that apply.*
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture and creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your organisation's context: the East-West dimension

This section of the survey allows us to understand the context of your organisation and the extent of its relations with organisations IN GREAT BRITAIN.

9. Does your organisation have regular contact (more than once a year) with one or more organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales)? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 11*
10. With which other part of the UK do you have most contact?
Mark only one oval.
- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- All more or less the same
11. Would you say since 2016 your organisation's contact with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN has *
Mark only one oval.
- Increased
- Reduced
- Stayed the same
12. Over the last five years, has your organisation been or is it currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales)? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 14*

13. If your organisation has been or is currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales), in what main area(s) of activity were/are these in (you can check more than one box)?

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

North-South engagement

This section of the survey focuses on the intensity of North-South engagement and collaborations ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND in the 1st quarter of 2021

14. Has your organisation had meetings this quarter with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No
15. In comparison with the previous quarter, has the number of meetings your organisation has had this quarter with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND * *Mark only one oval.*
- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed more or less the same
16. Have meetings with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND discussed obstacles/challenges to cross-border cooperation * *Mark only one oval.*
- To a significant extent
- On occasion
- Not at all
17. If obstacles/challenges to cross-border cooperation have been discussed, please briefly describe the nature of those obstacles/challenges.
18. Is your organisation CURRENTLY involved in one or more collaborations with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 20*

North-South engagement - organisational context

19. What main area(s) of activity does this collaboration relate to (you can check more than one box)? *

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. Is your organisation currently actively considering to initiate NEW collaborative projects with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

North-South engagement - funding context

21. Is your organisation currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 23*

22. If your organisation is currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, is the source of that funding (you can check more than one option) *

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation's core funding | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EU (e.g. PEACE IV/PEACE PLUS, INTERREG, LEADER) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Government (e.g. Reconciliation Fund) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Ireland Government Department | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK Government | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charitable foundation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

North-South engagement - external context

23. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the POLITICAL CONTEXT for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

24. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the SOCIAL CONTEXT (i.e. attitudes within communities) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

25. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the REGULATORY CONTEXT (i.e. legislation and regulations) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

26. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the MATERIAL CONTEXT (i.e. access to goods or services necessary for organisations to operate effectively) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

East-West engagement

This section focuses on collaborations BETWEEN THE ISLAND OF IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN

27. Has your organisation had meetings this quarter with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

28. In comparison with the previous quarter, has the number of meetings your organisation has had with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed more or less the same
29. Have meetings with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN discussed obstacles/challenges to cooperation? * *Mark only one oval.*
- To a significant extent
- On occasion
- Not at all
30. If obstacles/challenges to cooperation have been discussed, please briefly describe the nature of those obstacles.
31. Is your organisation currently involved in one or more collaborations with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 33*

The East-West dimension - organisational context

32. What main area(s) of activity does this collaboration relate to (you can check more than one box)? * *Check all that apply.*
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

33. Is your organisation currently actively considering to initiate NEW collaborative projects with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No

The East-West dimension - funding context

34. Is your organisation currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 36*

35. If your organisation is currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN, is the source of that funding (you can check more than one box). *

Check all that apply.

- Organisation's own core funding
- EU
- Irish Government Department
- Northern Ireland Government Department
- UK Government
- Charitable foundation
- Private sector
- Other:

The East-West dimension - external context

36. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the POLITICAL CONTEXT for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

37. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the SOCIAL CONTEXT (i.e. attitudes within communities) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

38. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the REGULATORY CONTEXT (i.e. legislation and regulations) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

39. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the MATERIAL CONTEXT (i.e. access to goods or services necessary for organisations to operate effectively) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

40. If you have any final comments, please add them here.

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CLICK ON SUBMIT!

Your answers will be crucial to ensuring North-South and East-West collaborations are maintained. If you have a questions please contact the Centre for Cross Border Studies' Director, Anthony Soares (a.soares@qub.ac.uk).

APPENDIX 2

THE QUESTIONS FROM THE 2nd QUARTERLY SURVEY¹¹

2nd Quarterly Survey on conditions for North-South and East-West Cooperation (Apr-Jun 2021)

Results of this survey are anonymised. Your participation in this survey is crucial for our understanding of the extent to which the necessary conditions for North-South cooperation are being maintained as the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland is implemented, and how relations between the island of Ireland and Great Britain are operating. This survey is undertaken by the Centre for Cross Border Studies (www.crossborder.ie).

1. Email * * Required

Your organisation: the basics

2. Name of your organisation *
3. Where is your organisation based?
Mark only one oval.
- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland
- Other:
4. Did you complete this survey in the previous quarter?
Mark only one oval.
- Yes *Skip to question 14*
- No
5. What is your organisation's main area(s) of activity (you can check more than one box)? *
Check all that apply.
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your organisation's context: the island of Ireland North-South dimension

This section of the survey allows us to understand the context of your organisation and the extent of its relations with organisations ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND.

6. Since 2016 has your organisation's contact with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND (choose one): *
Mark only one oval.
- Increased
- Reduced
- Stayed the same

¹¹ The 2nd Quarterly Survey is representative of the format for the subsequent surveys, with the only differences being in terms of the dates referred to in some of the questions.

7. Has your organisation been (over the last 5 years) or is it currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 9*
8. If your organisation has been involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, in what main area(s) of activity were these in (you can check more than one box)? *
- Check all that apply.*
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture and creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your organisation's context: the East-West dimension

This section of the survey allows us to understand the context of your organisation and the extent of its relations with organisations IN GREAT BRITAIN.

9. Does your organisation have regular contact (more than once a year) with one or more organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales)? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 11*
10. With which other part of the UK do you have most contact? *Mark only one oval.*
- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- All more or less the same
11. Would you say since 2016 your organisation's contact with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Increased
- Reduced
- Stayed the same

12. Over the last five years, has your organisation been or is it currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales)? * *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No *Skip to question 14*

13. If your organisation has been or is currently involved in collaborative work with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction IN GREAT BRITAIN (England, Scotland or Wales), in what main area(s) of activity were/are these in (you can check more than one box)?

Check all that apply.

Ageing

Human rights

Arts, culture, creative industries

Justice

Citizens' information

Local government

Community development

Peace and reconciliation

Cross-border cooperation

Rural development

Economic development

Sport

Education

Tourism

Environment

Transport

Equality

Youth

Health

Other:

North-South engagement

This section of the survey focuses on the intensity of North-South engagement and collaborations ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND in the 2nd quarter of 2021 (i.e. April to June)

14. In comparison with the previous quarter, has the number of meetings your organisation has had this quarter with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND * *Mark only one oval.*

Increased

Decreased

Stayed more or less the same

15. Has your organisation had meetings THIS QUARTER with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No *Skip to question 18*

16. Have meetings with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND discussed obstacles/challenges to cross-border cooperation *

Mark only one oval.

To a significant extent

On occasion

Not at all

17. If obstacles/challenges to cross-border cooperation have been discussed, please briefly describe the nature of those obstacles/challenges.

18. Is your organisation CURRENTLY involved in one or more collaborations with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No Skip to question 22

Organisational context

19. What main area(s) of activity does this collaboration relate to (you can check more than one box)? *

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Funding context

20. Is your organisation currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No Skip to question 23

Funding context

21. If your organisation is currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, is the source of that funding (you can check more than one option) *

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organisation's core funding | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EU (e.g. PEACE IV/PEACE PLUS, INTERREG, LEADER) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Government (e.g. Reconciliation Fund) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Ireland Government Department | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK Government | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charitable foundation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Organisational context

22. Is your organisation currently actively considering to initiate NEW collaborative projects with organisations/entities in the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No Skip to question 23

External context

23. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the POLITICAL CONTEXT for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know
24. If you would like to expand on your experience of the POLITICAL context for collaboration ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, please do so here (optional).
25. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the SOCIAL CONTEXT (i.e. attitudes within communities) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know
26. If you would like to expand on your experience of the SOCIAL context for collaboration ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, please do so here (optional).
27. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the REGULATORY CONTEXT (i.e. legislation and regulations) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know
28. If you would like to expand on your experience of the REGULATORY context for collaboration ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, please do so here (optional).
29. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the MATERIAL CONTEXT (i.e. access to goods or services necessary for organisations to operate effectively) for collaboration with the other jurisdiction ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know
30. If you would like to expand on your experience of the MATERIAL context for collaboration ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND, please do so here (optional).

East-West engagement

This section focuses on collaborations BETWEEN THE ISLAND OF IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN

31. In comparison with the previous quarter, has the number of meetings your organisation has had with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN * *Mark only one oval.*
- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed more or less the same
32. Has your organisation had meetings THIS QUARTER with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 35*
33. Have meetings with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN discussed obstacles/challenges to cooperation * *Mark only one oval.*
- To a significant extent
- On occasion
- Not at all
34. If obstacles/challenges to cooperation have been discussed, please briefly describe the nature of those obstacles.
35. Is your organisation currently involved in one or more collaborations with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 39*

Organisational context

36. What main area(s) of activity does this collaboration relate to (you can check more than one box)? * *Check all that apply.*
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture, creative industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' information | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> |

Funding context

37. Is your organisation currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No *Skip to question 39*

38. If your organisation is currently in receipt of funding for collaboration with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN, is the source of that funding (you can check more than one box). *

Check all that apply.

- Organisation's own core funding
- EU
- Irish Government Department
- Northern Ireland Government Department
- UK Government
- Charitable foundation
- Private sector
- Other:

39. Is your organisation currently actively considering to initiate NEW collaborative projects with organisations/entities IN GREAT BRITAIN? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

External context

40. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the POLITICAL CONTEXT for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

41. If you would like to expand on your experiences of the POLITICAL context for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN, please do so here (optional).

42. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the SOCIAL CONTEXT (i.e. attitudes within communities) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

43. If you would like to expand on your experiences of the SOCIAL context for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN, please do so here (optional).

44. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the REGULATORY CONTEXT (i.e. legislation and regulations) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has *

Mark only one oval.

- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know

45. If you would like to expand on your experiences of the REGULATORY context for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN, please do so here (optional).
46. In comparison with the previous quarter, do you think the MATERIAL CONTEXT (i.e. access to goods or services necessary for organisations to operate effectively) for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN has * *Mark only one oval.*
- Improved
- Deteriorated
- Stayed more or less the same
- Don't know
47. If you would like to expand on your experiences of the MATERIAL context for collaboration WITH GREAT BRITAIN, please do so here (optional).

The Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland

We would like your views on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, which came into effect on 1st January 2021.

48. Do you think there is enough relevant information on the Protocol available to those involved in cross-border (North-South and/or East-West) cooperation activities? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No
- I don't know
49. How informed do you feel about the Protocol? * *Mark only one oval.*
- Very informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not very
- Not at all
- Other:
50. What have been your sources of information on the Protocol? (Choose as many as are relevant to you). *Check all that apply.*
- UK Government
- European Union/European Commission
- Irish Government
- Business Groups
- Community & Voluntary Sector Bodies
- Local Government associations
- The press, social media
- Universities/academics
- Other:

51. If you have any final comments, please add them here.

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CLICK ON SUBMIT!

Your answers will be crucial to ensuring North-South and East-West collaborations are maintained. If you have any questions please contact the Centre for Cross Border Studies' Director, Anthony Soares (a.soares@qub.ac.uk).

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