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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation:	Definition
DEMo4PPL	Digital Education Modules 4 Participatory Planning
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
HEI	Higher-education Institution
PPL	Participatory planning
RO-BG CBC	Romania-Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Programme
THE	Tourism, hospitality and events
VUM	Varna University of Management

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1. Introduction

This overview of participatory planning courses in academic curricula and training programmes at national level in Bulgaria has been elaborated by the Varna University of Management within the frame of the Erasmus+ project “Digital Education Modules 4 Participatory Planning” (DEMo4PPL) with the aim to review and outline how planning and participatory planning are addressed within the educational setting in Bulgaria as a basis for the elaboration of an interdisciplinary modular training curriculum about the participatory planning using digital tools.

The report is to contribute to the identification of specific needs, gaps and goals and pathways for training and digital education on participatory planning in the Bulgarian context. Attention is placed on how both macro- and micro-level perspectives of the planning processes in the courses of the mainstream academic programs from governance and sectoral perspective. At the same time, non-formal education initiatives of the higher-education institutions were also considered as they provide prompt ad hoc response to emerging concurrent skilling and training needs in the society and economy.

1.1 Project Partner overview

Varna University of Management (VUM) is an established business school specialised in social sciences and offers study programs in business, management, administration, tourism and cultural industries. It also provides innovative education in culinary arts, food technologies, arts, hospitality as well as in business information systems. VUM’s main achievements are related to research and project development targeting special-interest tourism, culinary arts, hospitality management, sustainable development and utilisation of IT and new technologies in the areas of tourism, services, education and culture. VUM’s programs are double-degree, delivered both in Bulgarian and English and accordingly over 50% of the students come from outside Bulgaria, creating a uniquely diverse intercultural community.

The research activities at the Varna University of Management are channelled and disseminated through

- the Regional Centre of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, hosted at the university
- the European Journal of Tourism Research (EJTR, <http://ejtr.vumk.eu>, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science) with an editorial board of 52 leading lecturers and researchers in the tourism field from 26 countries, as well as the Journal of Pedagogy and Educational Management (<http://jpem.vumk.eu/>), published by the university
- established partnerships with the Institutes of Economic Research, Ethnology and Folklore Studies, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Oceanology and others of the Bulgarian Academy of Science as well as with all higher education institutions in Varna
- research and teaching cooperation with over >120 partner universities from >50 countries on five continents including Europe, Asia, South and North America, Africa, channelled through many best-practice under Erasmus+, Horizon, INTERREG, Europe for Citizens, national research fund, national operational programs of Bulgaria, and other relevant programs.

VUM prioritises interdisciplinarity in both education and research and fosters cross-fertilisation of innovations from and into social sciences by cooperating with partner HEIs, research institutes and business entities from Bulgaria and all over the world. Excellence in business education is also demonstrated by the evaluation of the quality of the existing Bachelor, Master and MBA programs by the different international ratings for appraisal of the quality of the higher schools.

1.2 Academic area of interest

VUM specialises in tertiary education and research in tourism, hospitality and services and offers highest quality-education programs as to the annual national ranking of the higher education institutions Bulgaria elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Science (<https://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu4/#/>).

The university is accredited to offer programs in the following fields as to the ISCED Classification:

- 01 Education => 0114 Teacher training with subject specialization (vocational subjects)
- Tourism,
- 03 Social sciences, journalism and Information => 0311 Economics, 0322 Information science
- 04 Business, Administration and Law => 0413 Management and administration
- 07 Engineering, manufacturing and Construction => 0721 Food processing/Food science and technology
- 10 Services => 1013 Hotel, restaurants and catering, 1015 Travel, tourism and leisure

In addition, it runs an accredited MBA (0413) and a Doctoral program in Tourism (1015).

In 2023 VUM ranks 2nd in the academic and professional field “Tourism”, 3rd in the academic and professional field “Administration and Management” and 4th in the in academic and professional field “Economics” in Bulgaria as to the national ranking system of the Ministry of Education. In all three professional fields (i.e. tourism, administration and management, and economics), VUM is the highest ranking university in eastern and central Bulgaria.

VUM has been actively working on introducing new themes to business and entrepreneurial education along the modern development trends driven by the industries’ need to adapt to changes regarding sustainability by embracing proactive innovation. It has been experimenting with pilot pathways for permeability of qualification units between vocational and higher education as well as with roadmaps for accreditation of alternative premises for work-based learning in a distance mode. The modular structures of the programs allow for synergies between undergraduate, postgraduate and lifelong-learning training programmes in higher education.

As VUM focuses on tertiary sector-specific vocational education, its role in DEMo4PPL research is to consider the perspective of the sectoral professionals aside from urbanism and spatial planning in the participatory planning and the needs for building their civic and collaboration expertise so that they can efficiently contribute to the contextualisation and impact of the planning processes.

1.3 Description of the academic and educational area of interest in relation to Participatory Planning (PPL) teachings

The academic programs of VUM target the micro-economic level and refer to planning and participation in view of sustainability, destination management and experiential tourism practices in the different aspects that affect business operations and the companies’ behaviour as social agents.

The “International Hospitality Management” Programme at Bachelor level includes the following sets of courses: “Eco and rural tourism” (5 ECTS) and “Cultural tourism” (5 ECTS) consider stakeholder engagement, community empowerment, and sustainable development principles in the tourism industry; “Corporate social responsibility” (5 ECTS) reflects the importance of integrating environmental, social, and governance considerations into corporate decision-making processes; “Sustainable development” (5 ECTS) teachers strategies for promoting sustainable tourism, hospitality, and events management practices, including

destination stewardship; “Sustainability in THE industries” (5 ECTS) addresses key sustainability challenges facing THE industries, such as over-tourism, resource depletion, accessibility, cultural commodification, and refers to planning as a challenge-mitigation strategy.

The programme „International Business Management” at Bachelor level also includes courses on “Corporate social responsibility” (5 ECTS) and “Sustainable development” (5 ECTS) while focusing on the general implications of these concepts across the different economic sectors and businesses.

The Master Programme “International Hospitality and Tourism Management” includes courses “People, places and practice: contextualizing the T.H.E. Industries” (10 ECTS) and “Exploring Hospitality and Tourism Landscapes” (10 ECTS) that refer to destination management, development, planning processes, sustainable management practices, stakeholders’ dynamics including destination communities in tourism.

Even though the courses do not refer to participatory planning directly, they consider generally planning and participatory processes in the context of THE and beyond as well as the viable utilisation of places as tourism resource.

On the intuitional level, VUM researchers work on the different aspects about raising the sustainability performance of tourism and hospitality in particular and of business in general. They participate in the expert consultations on the development of the integrated territorial investment programs of Varna and Dobrich Municipalities where the main university campuses are located as well as in the development of integrated territorial development plans. Three INTERREG projects have been particularly focused on action-planning and policy recommendation about improving the sustainability performance of tourism and hospitality - “Interdisciplinary Solutions for Smart Sustainable Tourism and Services for Blue Growth in the Black Sea Basin” (INTERSMARTS), “Promoting Heritage- and Culture-Based Experiential Tourism in the Black Sea Basin” (PRO EXTOUR) and “Entrepreneurial Learning Exchange Initiative for Sustainable Hospitality SMEs in the Balkan-Mediterranean Region” (HELIX).

Accordingly, the research team of the VUM is particularly interested in those aspects of participatory planning that refer to sustainable development, sustainable tourism and tourism destinations, experiential tourism, integrated investments and smart specialization at local and regional level.

Participatory planning is a field that has a high potential to add quality to the training and research programs of VUM in the field of tourism as regards destination management and in view of the related twin transition processes that are to drive forward the sustainability performance of tourism sector. It can serve as a methodological tool or process within the broader scope of destination management, helping to facilitate collaborative decision-making and stakeholder engagement in the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

2. Methodology

2.1 - Introduction

This overview outlines the concurrent state of integration of participatory planning as a theme and issue in the academic and continuous education curricula of the Bulgarian universities. The focus of the DEMO4PPL project on spatial planning predefines that planning education is surveyed from that perspective. However, planning subjects and courses are included in many non-formal education programmes targeting public administration and their relevance to (digital) participatory planning is surveyed as well. Lastly, as

participatory spatial planning is an element of the sustainable management of the tourist destinations per se, the programs about tourism destination management were also studied.

The research started with the HEIs that are accredited to teach “Architecture and construction” where participatory planning directly belongs. Given the integration of public participation in the governance studies, the highest-ranking programs in “Public Administration” were studied as well. The accredited programs in “Tourism” that include destination-management and/or similar courses were surveyed to identify particular themes and elements referring to planning and participatory planning if the case. Finally, the practice of training of civil servants at central and local governmental levels has been researched as the capacity-building of public administration in office in Bulgaria, including about planning, occurs main in non-formal context though utilising subject-specific and teaching expertise from the academia.

The survey behind the overview combines three processes: desk survey of the accredited university programs and courses, desk survey of the training programs of the instantons responsible of the capacity-building of public administration in Bulgaria, structured interviews with students and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in education and capacity-building about participatory planning. In each instance, efforts were made to determine whether digital technologies were incorporated into the education and training processes and whether forms of digital participation were taken into account, especially considering the novelty of these instruments in Bulgaria at present. The potential for cross-fertilization and development of interdisciplinary courses that bring together topics related to planning, participation, participatory planning, regional planning, and destination management overall has also been taken into account.

2.2 Selection of the programmes [ISCED and/or national classification]

The scope of the tertiary education programs in Bulgaria is defined by the Higher Education Act (1995, last amended in 2024) and the Decree No 125 on Approving the Classification of the Fields of Higher Education and the Professional Fields in Bulgaria (2002). The Decree outlines the vocational fields according to which the vocational training institutions – HEIs, colleges, centres - and their curricula become accredited to deliver training and recognise results of prior learning if the case.

The study was based on a review of the institutional and program accreditation of the higher education institutions under the ISCED Field 073 Architecture and construction and Vocational Field 5.7. Architecture, construction and geodesy under the Decree No 125 on Approving the Classification of the Fields of Higher Education and the Professional Fields in Bulgaria; ISCED Field 0413 Management and administration and Vocational Field 3.7 Administration and Management under the Decree No 125; and ISCED Field 1015 Travel, tourism and leisure and Vocational Field 3.9 Tourism under the Decree No 125.

For ISCED Field 073 Architecture and construction these include:

- University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia
- Academy of the Ministry of Interior- Sofia
- “Lyuben Karavelov” Higher School of Construction, Sofia
- "St. Ivan Rilski" Mining and Geological University, Sofia
- "Chernorizets Hrabar" Varna Free University
- “Todor Kableshkov” University of Transport - Sofia
- New Bulgarian University, Sofia
- "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" Shumen University, Shumen
- "Angel Kanchev" University of Ruse, Ruse

For ISCED Field 0413 Management and administration the programs of 21 higher education institutions were surveyed and for the SCED Field 1015 Travel, tourism and leisure - the programs of 10 higher education institutions were considered following the national institutional and programme ranking for 2023 (Annex I).

2.3 Desk research

The desk research was performed based on the information published on the official web-sites of the Bulgarian University Ranking System of the Ministry of Education and the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency that provide actual information about the accredited institutions and programs throughout the country. The general information about the programs and courses was further verified through study curricula and contents published on the web-site of the surveyed higher education institutions.

The training needs analyses and course catalogues of the Institute of Public Administration with the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria were consulted to consider the short-course education programme which the elected and nominated civil servants are to be qualified in 2024. As non-formal courses for municipal servants are organized by the National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria and the regional municipal associations – such as the Union of the Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities, Association of the Danube-River Municipalities, Regional Association of Municipalities “Trakia”, Association of the South-Western Municipalities and others – their training programs were studied as well.

2.4 Interviews

Interviews with stakeholder experts and students (Annex III) were held to discuss the practice of participatory planning education and practice in Bulgaria considering the selected academic programs and the practice of continuous capacity-building of civil servants. The interviews were held in a non-structured form – based on general questions (Annex II) – and held through personal meetings. The profile of the experts included people with expertise in local self-government, public administration, tourism management, architecture and construction, education management. They were identified through the business-university cooperation channels sustained by VUM’s Career Centre. The purpose was to identify concrete education programs in participatory planning and digital participatory planning (if the case) in Bulgaria as well as to discuss their outreach and contents.

2.5 Survey. Channels of distribution

Further and in order to identify the possible needs and gaps of participatory planning courses in academic curricula and training programmes in Bulgaria a standardised questionnaire was disseminated through the social network channels of VUM, encompassing over 23K followers, between 26/02/2024 and 31/03/2024. The questionnaire was organised in two sections: the first – about the general knowledge about participatory planning and its digital turn, and the second - about the presence of information about participatory planning in the education and training programs. The questionnaire was presented in English and in Bulgarian in order to address the national student community in without limitations. As a result, 14 responses were submitted in English and 7 in Bulgarian (Annex IV). The survey assessed the general awareness and knowledge about participatory planning, digital tools facilitating public participation in planning and integration of these issues in the university and training programs.

3. The state of art of planning education in Bulgaria

The planning education in Bulgaria, referring to preparing the individuals for working in regional, environmental, urban or transportation planning is provided by institutions from different vocational fields. As the subjects related to the achieving the sustainability of communities and regions are multi-disciplinary, many other academic and professional fields refer to them as indicated further.

Architecture and construction

In Bulgaria, seven higher education institutions have accredited programs in the ISCED Field 073 Architecture and construction – five of them are located in the capital city of Sofia, one in Varna, one in Rouse and one in Shumen. The HEI in Varna offers only a doctoral programme.

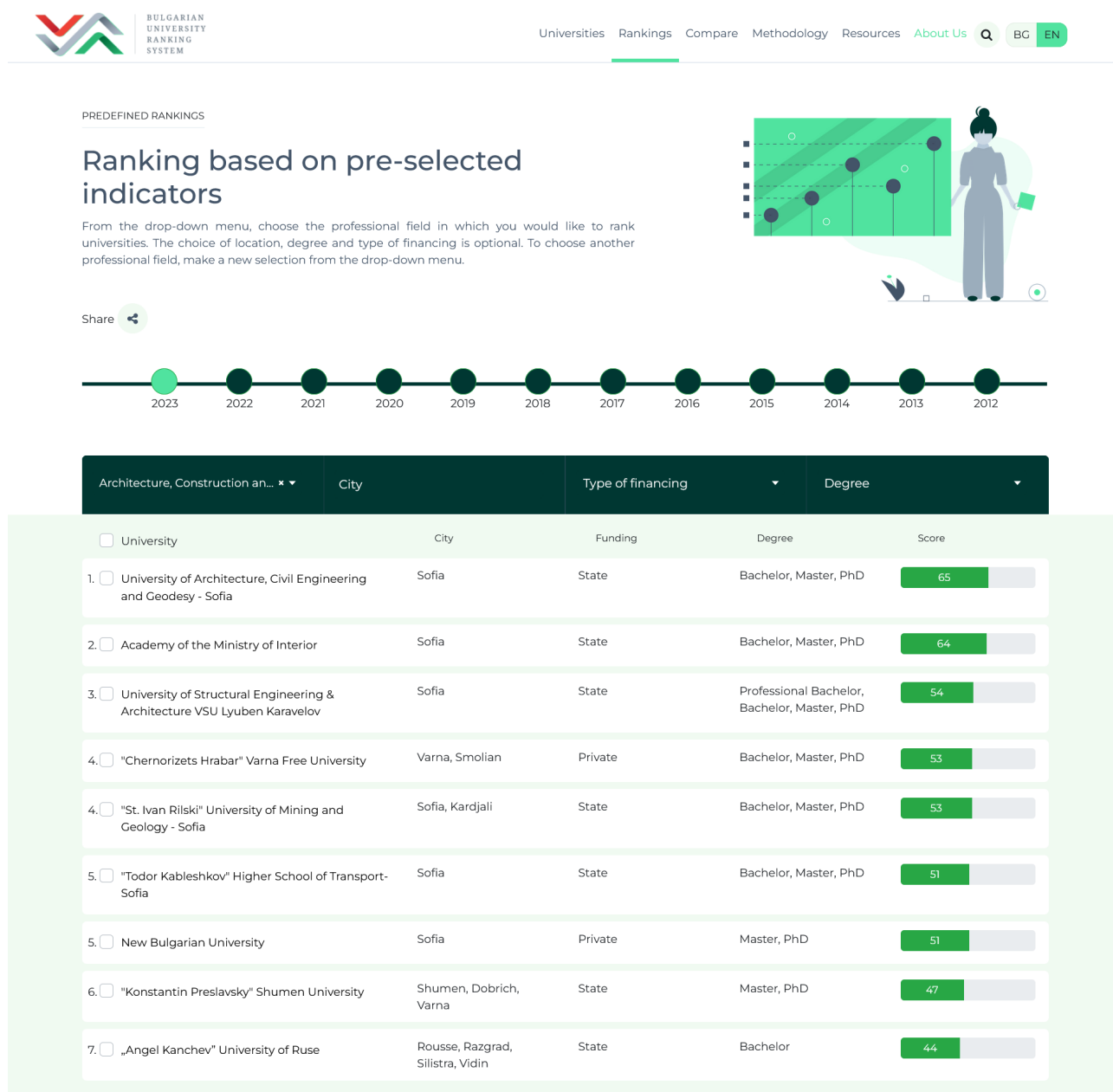


Figure 1. Higher education institutions in Bulgaria, accredited in the Vocational Field 5.7. Architecture, construction and geodesy

Source: <https://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu4/#/> (accessed on 15.04.2024)

Among them only four have accreditation for the field “Architecture”, two have accredited programs for “Urbanism” and one for “Spatial planning” as follows:

- University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia - offers Bachelor and Master Programmes “Architecture”, “Urbanism”, “Land and Real Estate Management and Planning”, a Master Programme “Spatial Planning” and a Doctoral programme “Territorial, Landscape and Urban Planning”. The Master Programme “Urbanism” offers an elective course on “Tourism Planning”.
- “Lyuben Karavelov” Higher School of Construction, Sofia - offers a Bachelor Programme “Construction and Architecture” and Master Programs “Architecture” and “Urbanism”
- "Chernorizets Hrabar" Varna Free University - offers a Doctoral Programme “Territorial, Landscape and Urban Planning”
- New Bulgarian University, Sofia - offers a Master Programme “Architecture” and a Doctoral Programme “Architecture of Buildings, Structures, Facilities and Details”.

The overview of the information published on the official web-sites of the Ministry of Education, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and the web-sites of the higher education institutions, registered therein, confirm that there no undergraduate programs about territorial and spatial planning that are offered in Bulgaria outside the capital of Sofia and the specific training and research activities in this field are concentrated there as well. On the one side, given the demographic and economic profile of the country these accredited HEIs do provide the number of qualified specialists that are needed on the labour market (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2022). On the other side, due to the concentration in the capital city they cannot always respond to the emerging up-skilling needs of the planners and experts in public administrations and the experts that perform the planning polices at local and regional level. Therefore, the gap is completed through non-formal education and continuous skill-building courses.

Public Administration

Eleven higher education institutions in Bulgaria offer Bachelor, Master and/or Doctoral Programmes in “Public Administration” and a few of them include planning courses offered mainly as electives. The examples include:

- “Territorial and Administrative Organisation” (6 ECTS) and “Innovative Development of the Territory” (6 ECTS) at the University of the National and World Economy, Sofia
- “Territorial Planning” (3 ECTS) and “Public Law and Citizen Participation” (3 ECTS) at the “St.Kliment” Sofia University
- “Territorial and Settlement Planning” (3 ECTS) at the Varna University of Economics, and others.

At the Master levels more programs target directly regional planning. The examples refer to:

- “Planning and Management of Territorial Systems” (MA) at the “St.Kliment” Sofia University
- “Local Self-Government” (MA), “Smart Cities Development” (MA), “Regional Development and Policy” (MA) at the University of the National and World Economy, Sofia
- “Regional Management” (MA) at the Burgas Free University
- “Regional Studies” (MA) at the “Dimitar Tsenov” Academy of Economics

- “Management of Regional Development” (NB. a Bachelor-level program) at the Agrarian University in Plovdiv, and others.

All these programs and courses consider planning in the complex sense as integrated concept including a combination of interrelated and harmonised economic planning, social planning, environmental planning and spatial planning and in the sense of the overall regional policy of the country. Specific courses or themes about participatory spatial planning do not exist in the Bachelor and Master programmes under the for ISCED Field 0413 Management and administration for the time-being.

Tourism

Destination management is an established theme in tourism studies as well as in research and due to the complexity of the topic it is delivered at ISCED 7 (Master) level. Accordingly, “Tourism Destination Management” is offered as a Master Programme course by the Southwest University in Blagoevgrad, University of Economics - Varna, and the New Bulgarian University in Sofia. As mentioned, VUM offers similar courses entitled “People, places and practice: contextualizing the T.H.E. Industries” (10 ECTS) and “Exploring Hospitality and Tourism Landscapes” (10 ECTS). These courses consider planning from the integrated economic, social and environmental perspectives. The only exception is the “St.Kliment” Sofia University that offers a Master Program “Tourism Destination Management” with a course “Territorial and Spatial Planning of Tourism” (3 ECTS), however it does not refer to participatory planning.

Continuous education and training

Considering that regional and territorial spatial management and planning is carried out by specialized state and municipal authorities, the survey covered the channels through which public administration is trained in Bulgaria. The process includes specialisations, on-the-job trainings and continuous skill-building for the civil servants at different governmental levels where academic institutions offer expertise but less often participate as education providers.

Public participation trainings are delivered as in-formal and non-formal courses by stakeholder institutions with the support of different initiatives, the majority of which have been supported by the Operational Programme “Good Governance” within the National Reform Programme to improve the business environment and modernise public administration to increase the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy. It has been developed in partnership with all stakeholders from the administration, the judiciary and the civil sector and resulted in the training of over 60 000 civil servants in the period 2016-2022 on courses organised by the Institute of Public Administration and the National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria (Ministerial Council of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2023) (Ministerial Council of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2022).

Since the 1990s the knowledge and competence trainings of the municipal servants - elected officials and experts from municipal administrations, municipal councillors, representatives of municipal enterprises and subordinate authorising officers, representatives of commercial companies with municipal participation - has been entrusted with the National Association of the Bulgarian Municipalities and the simultaneously created seven regional municipal associations. They provide regular trainings on public participation forms and legislation together with on other themes that are foundational for the administrative service every four year following the local elections and ad hoc on the request of the municipalities. In 2023-2024 the main trainings referred to “Smart Solutions For Optimizing Administrative Processes In Municipalities” (regarding also digitalisation) and “Increasing the capacity of municipalities to implement integrated territorial development” (National Association of the Municipalities in Bulgaria, 2024).

The servants in regional and central public administration have been trained by the Public Administration Institute, created in Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria in 2000. In 2024 the Public Administration

Institute offers courses for “Smart Specialization Policy and Implementation at Local Level”, “Public Participation and Citizen Consultation” and “Digital transformation of the public administration” (Institute of Public Administration, 2024). The course contents are based a nation-wide research of the training needs of the civil servants in Bulgaria for the period 2022-2024 that takes out cooperation with citizens and civil society as key topics (Institute of Public Administration, 2021). The usual duration of the courses is between 12 and 16 study (academic) hours, but there are autonomous learning programs that are offered through the institute’s web-site.

Other similar trainings are provided by civil society organisations on grassroots level and at various schedules (Citizen Participation Forum, 2015); (Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2018).

The semi-structured interviews with stakeholder experts, performed by VUM researchers, reconfirmed that the although the use of participatory methods and tools in planning in Bulgaria clearly defined in legislation, the stakeholders learn how to use them mainly through informal training and self-education. The role of civic organisations in this regard was recognized. The on-line survey indicated similar results as 47% of the respondents replied that they have searched for learning materials about participatory methods and tools outside the university programs (Annex IV).

4. Overview of how Participatory Planning is intended and taught in Bulgarian academic programmes

4.1 Introduction

The survey of the accredited academic programs in Bulgaria indicates that participatory planning is not directly integrated in the curricula – rather its elements are spread across different subjects and courses. In general, over 32 courses with references to planning and participation were identified – three in “Architecture and construction”, three in “Tourism” and over ten in “Public Administration” (2024) and six non-formal education programs offered by the Institute of Public Administration and the National Association of Municipalities.

Usually about one or two courses per program deal with civic participation in planning and management of public resources and their focuses are very specific and consider subject-specific legislation. The observation was confirmed by interviewed stakeholder experts as well as by the results on the on-line survey, where only 42% of the respondents confirm that they are aware with participatory planning as a concept.

When referring to the practice of spatial planning, it was reconfirmed by the research and the interviewees, that the relevant expert positions in the administrations are occupied by graduates with architectural and engineering degrees who are up-skilled in office. Likewise, the sectoral policies are managed by experts with relevant tertiary vocational qualifications entailing form programs that do not necessarily refer to public participation in the course of study. Hence the importance of increasing the cross-disciplinarity and comprehensiveness of the master and non-formal education programmes that are offered to the public administration in the country.

4.2 Courses with reference to participation and planning

The researched programs in the three selected vocational fields – “Architecture and construction”, “Public Administration” and “Tourism” – along with the non-formal education programs offered to the public administration gave the following indications about reference to participatory planning:

Architecture and construction

Even though the accredited programmes in “Architecture” and “Urbanism” do not include courses on participatory planning, participation-related themes are included in courses at Master level such as: “Regional Planning” (2 ECTS, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, “Architecture” Programme) about the provisions of the Regional Development Act regulates for citizen participation in the integrated territorial planning; “Sociology of Architecture” (2 ECTS, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, “Architecture” Programme) and “Sociology for Architects („Lyuben Karavelov” Higher School of Construction, “Architecture” Programme) about civic/citizen perspective in general; „Contemporary Spatial Policies for Sustainable Development“ (2 ECTS, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, “Architecture” Programme) about balancing societal needs in planning; “Planning Law” (6 ECTS, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, “Urbanism” Programme) and “Law and Norm Bases in Architecture and Civil Engineering” (3 ECTS, New Bulgarian University, “Architecture” Program) about the Spatial Planning Act that refers to stakeholder participation is specific property-related issues; “EU Urban Policy and Programs” (4 ECTS, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, “Urbanism” Programme) about the general European frameworks.

The courses in this vocational field refer to civic participation only within the framework of legislative norms that refer to spatial planning and construction and disregard the general participation regulations that are covered by the governance-related documents.

Public Administration

The courses focus on the participatory aspect and planning is considered from the perspective of the planning and programming processes that occur at national, regional and local levels and in line with the National Strategy for Regional Development. Participation is a theme that is included with reference to governance or legal subjects, for example about the implementation of the Regional Development Act in view of citizen participation in the integrated territorial planning, about the implementation of the Law on Public Consultation, Law on Direct Participation of Citizens in Public Government and Local Self-Government and other legislative acts where relevant. Civic participation in the processes of formulating, implementing and monitoring public policies is considered generally as these programs entail careers in public administrations at different levels and positions.

Examples of relevant courses include about public participation include:

- “Local government” (7 ECTS, “St. Kliment” Sofia University, “Public Administration” Programme at Bachelor level) – covers democracy and efficiency, politics and local governance, political leadership and accountability, citizen participation in local governance as themes
- “Civil Society and Non-Governmental Sector” (3 ECTS, New Bulgarian University, “Public Administration” Programme at Bachelor level)
- “Public Law and Citizen Participation” (7 ECTS, “St. Kliment” Sofia University, “Public Administration” Programme at Bachelor level) presents the relationship between the implementation of governance in the constitutional state and the participation of citizens in this process
- “Public Stakeholder Consultations” (3 ECTS, “St. Kliment” Sofia University, “Policy Evaluation and Impact Assessment Programme” at Master Level)

- “Civic Participation” (4 ECTS, University of University of the National and World Economy, Sofia, “Public Administration” Programme at Master level)
- “Civil Society Institutions” (6 ECTS) and “Decentralization and Local Government” (6 ECTS, University of University of the National and World Economy, Sofia, “Public Administration” Program at Bachelor and Master levels)

The digital aspect refers to planning issues are covered by other courses such as:

- “Digital Transformation and Regional Management” (4 ECTS, University of University of the National and World Economy, Sofia, “Smart Cities Development” Programme at Master level)
- “Application of Distance Methods in Territorial Planning” (3 ECTS, National and World Economy, Sofia, “Regional Development and Policy Program” at Master Level)

Territorial planning is integrated in yet another cluster of courses:

- “Territorial and Spatial Planning” (4 ECTS, Burgas Free University, “Regional Management Programme” at the Master level) covers the practical functioning of territorial planning, land use and development, including spatial planning and control
- „Regional and Local Planning (6 ECTS, “Dimitar Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svisthov, “Regional Studies” Programme at the Master level)
- “Regional Development and Spatial Planning” (3 ECTS, Agrarian University in Plovdiv, “Management of Regional Development” Programme at the Master level), and others.

Tourism

Regional and territorial planning is indirectly referred to in line with the community engagement issues in the elaboration of tourism products and in view of the assessing the impact of tourism on the hosting communities – e.g. in line with considering the sustainability aspects of tourism. The formation of tourist regions at to the Law on Tourism (2015) is regarded from the macro-economic planning perspective.

The course “Territorial and Spatial Planning of Tourism” within the Master Program “Tourism Destination Management” at the “St. Kliment” Sofia University considers spatial planning for recreational areas within the perspective of marketing and management of tourism destinations and refers to planning for, with and by tourism stakeholders.

The course “Exploring Hospitality and Tourism Landscapes” within the International Hospitality Management Master Program of the Varna University of Management considers Local, regional, national and international government policies and initiatives; local resident perspectives, labour market potential and requirements and Concept of Sense of Place and innovative applications to hospitality and tourism. The course “People, places and practice: contextualizing the T.H.E. Industries” refers to the complexity of the relationship between THE and the settings in which it takes place and includes topics on tourist places as a counterpoint of tourist experience, stakeholder and network analysis, the role and significance of partnerships, community and other stakeholders in responsible tourism management.

Continuous education and training

Though the scope and focus of the non-formal education courses provided to the municipal servants change over time, they are based on state-of-arts needs assessment that are regularly performed by the Institute of Public Administration with the Council of Ministers.

In 2023, the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria organised three on-site courses “Territorial Development” (16 study/academic hours each) covering the European policies and regulations in the sphere of spatial planning, current changes in the Spatial Planning Act, the Regional Development Act and subordinate legislation, electronic administrative services in spatial planning and digitalisation of the investment processes. Another thematic training - "Enhancing the Capacity of Municipalities to Implement Integrated Territorial Development"(16 study/academic hours) – focused on the regulatory framework and implementation mechanism for the integrated territorial development approach, specific requirements for working in partnership, beneficiaries and public consultations of the concepts. The forum “Smart Solutions for Optimizing Administrative Processes in Municipalities” (2024) trained municipal councillors about the functionalities of specialized AI-based software for smart and safe urban environment, covering work processes such as parking management, intelligent traffic systems and intelligent urban transport, charging stations, etc.

The course “Digital Transformation of the Public Administration” (12 study/academic hours) of the Institute for Public Administration focused on the use of technologies in policymaking, including planning in general, covering themes about the digital transformation in the design and implementation of public policies as well as civic participation. The online module for self-study “Smart Cities – Digital Solutions and Sustainable Policies” offered by the Institute for Public Administration targets the state officials interested in the relationship between new technologies and the development of urban environment. In the course of the module, they are introduced to the conceptual foundations of "smart city", the role of technology, data and data analytics in building a sustainable urban environment. The course “Public Participation and Citizen Consultation” (16 study/academic hours) focuses on the nationally adopted standards for public consultation, focusing on the principles, the legal requirements and the organisation of the relevant procedures as well as on the participation of interested parties in the consultations held in connection with the carrying out of an environmental assessment of plans and programmes. In the course “Smart Specialization Policy and Implementation at Local Level” (16 study/academic hours), the training covers the basics of smart specialisation theory, its introduction into strategic planning and the possibilities for its effective implementation at local level.

4.3 Contents: Participatory Planning intended within the courses

The courses surveyed focus on specific aspects of participatory planning from the context of the sectors they offer training for.

The courses in “Architecture and construction” about regional planning consider the mechanisms and provisions for involving citizens in the planning process as defined in the Regional Planning Act and the relevant sub-normative documents. The courses about sociology of architecture refer to the social dynamics within built environments and the role of architecture in shaping societal interactions. The courses about contemporary spatial policies for sustainable development reflect the intersection of societal needs, environmental concerns, and sustainable development in spatial planning. The courses on planning law and law and norm bases in architecture and civil engineering consider the specific sectoral legislation.

The courses in “Public Administration” consider civic participation and planning from policy and governance perspective. Thus, they cover a wide range of documents that regulate civic participation in the decision-making processes in general, the planning related legislation and approaches for policy-impact assessment. They refer to how governments involve citizens, interest groups, and other stakeholders in identifying needs, setting priorities, and formulating policies – that is to say in public management. Digital participatory tools – when discussed – refer to the digital solutions for public participation in general – such as the on-line portal

for public consultations of the Council of Ministers or the Information System for Management and Monitoring of the EU Funds in Bulgaria.

The courses in “Tourism” refer to planning from the perspective of management of tourism destinations and striving towards sustainability with balancing the caring capacity of the places and communities with the visitors’ and business’ interests. Their perspective is focused on planning as an element of the integrated building and promotion of destinations.

The continuous skill-building (non-formal) education courses target themes that become relevant of for the civil servants at local, regional and central level at a specific period of time – usually when changes in legislation are introduced together with new approaches for the implementation for public territorial investment – such as the integrated territorial investments. Digital tools are considered in the context of smart specialization and from the perspective to improve the quality of life for its residents, enhance sustainability, and optimize the efficiency of urban services and infrastructure.

The online survey participants substantiate that in only 19% of the cases there is basic introduction to participatory methods/tools in their education courses and that in only 14% of the participatory methods and tools are consistently part of the curriculum.

4.4 Methods for teaching Participatory Planning

In the higher-education courses usually combine lectures, seminars, workshops and guided independent study (in laboratories, libraries, coursework, homework, etc.). Participation in class discussions, written assignments, individual or group elaboration of theme-specific projects are part of the evaluation processes together with on-site written and/oral examinations. Case-studies are used during seminars to engage students in active learning and to foster their ability to analyse complex problems, make informed decisions, and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Established experts from practice and business are often invited as guest lecturers to share experience and insights from the practical implementation of the course themes. Field visits to institutions and companies are included as part of the independent study activities.

In the non-formal education courses, the training provides both lecture activities and group work on specific cases identified by the trainees. In order to pass the course, the trainees have to prepare and present a project for digitalization of an activity, process, service of the institution they represent.

Various digital teaching tools are used depending on the field of study. Common learning management systems like Moodle and Blackboard are widely used to manage course materials, assignments, quizzes, and discussions. Many universities have their own tailored systems with similar functionalities as well as on-line collaboration spaces. On-line survey and mapping tools like Canva, Slido, Kahoot, Mentimeter, GoogleMaps are used for project work and assignments as well as to support learning interaction during lectures and seminars.

Along this reasoning, the online survey indicates high interest towards courses/programs featuring practical exercises on participatory methods/tools (48% of the respondents) and towards courses courses/programs featuring practical exercises on digital participatory methods/tools (52%).

4.5 Digital PPL tools

Digitalisation is priority drive for the public administration in Bulgaria and accordingly the different types of digital services and mechanisms as they used by the governmental administration are considered in the training courses as real-case examples. As mentioned, these include the national on-line platform for public consultations and the on-line platform for access to public information. In addition, the Social media platforms such as Facebook Groups and LinkedIn provide spaces for the citizens and groups facilitate discussions around specific topics, events, or interests, fostering engagement and community building – both public administrations and citizen formations use this channel widely to interact. On-line surveys and polls are popular in surveying public opinion about the integrated territorial investment plans and before the organization of the on-site public consultations. Geographical Information Systems and platforms are often covered by the specialized courses provided to the relevant civil servant and municipal experts as continuous training. Digital petition tools are widely used by grassroots civic organization to channel public opinion towards important local issues, including about planning, however they remain as a theme in informal learning.

Still, the majority of the participants in the survey are not certain if they could understand how participatory methods/tools work thanks to the study of actual projects/case study (52%), to reflect on how to apply participatory methods/tools in one or more real-life exercise (47%) and to use to use participatory methods/tools when I will finish my university courses (62%). This is because the digital PPL-tools are mostly included in the non-formal education courses.

5. Good practices on participatory planning education and training

5.1 Major strengths and weaknesses in PPL teaching

Teaching participatory planning in Bulgaria has specific features that require careful consideration when analysing the educational landscape and contextualizing the topic within both formal tertiary education and informal vocational training. These have the following

Strengths:

- There are references to the different elements of participatory planning in a multitude of courses across various vocational fields which an excellent pre-requisite for a mutli-sectoral perspective towards the issue;
- Theme-related issued are delivered as continuous non-formal education courses for civil servants at all governmental levels which is prerequisite for keeping the relevant skills and knowledge aligned with the current needs of society and economy;
- Teaching about participation and planning involves case-study and project-based activities that are based on practical examples and initiatives and focus on particular institutional problems, practically in the non-formal courses;
- There are many themes about activism and participation across the vocational subjects – even though they refer to particular elements of the participation-related legislation – which is bound to

raise the participatory culture of professionals across sectors, hence the quality of planning and the opportunities of the authorities to mobilize civic knowledge;

- Civic participation, activism and society is largely a domain of non-formal and informal education activities, provided by the NGO-sector and as a lifelong learning process, which increases the opportunities for continuous learning and results in many impactful grass-roots initiatives, particularly as the local level.

And Weaknesses:

- There are no courses that focus purposefully on participatory planning in its entirety – the elements are distributed across vocations, courses and training-delivery institutions;
- The training in the different vocational fields focuses on specific elements of civic participation that are embedded in the laws and associated sub-statutory documents relevant for the field, hence the difficulty in developing holistic and cross-sectoral approaches and consideration of all stakeholders' perspectives;
- Teaching civic participation in academic programs often emphasizes general concepts, principles and frameworks while neglecting the practical pathways along which it actually occurs at the different governance levels.

5.2 Review of good practices on PPL education

5.2.1 Tools for Enhancing Youth Engagement in Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation - RoBulUs

Institution: International Management Institute/Varna University of Management

Format: Civic education initiative, non-formal education

RoBulUs aimed to improve the involvement of young people in the planning and implementation of the Cohesion policy 2021-2027 at the regional and local level in Bulgaria and Romania focusing on the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Programme. It raised awareness and drive interest in the utilisation of legal opportunities for participation in decision-making processes on the planning and implementation of the Operational Programmes among young people and developed pilot tools to support the engagement of young citizens in the design and future implementation of the RO-BG CBC Programme in their communities and regions.

The initiative was implemented within 12 months and resulted in a practical Outline of the Mechanisms through which the citizens can engage in the design and future implementation of the Operational programmes at the regional and local level in Bulgaria and Romania; online Mobile App for raising young people's knowledge of the Cohesion Policy and RO-BG CBC Programme 2021-27 and their new priorities; an online Step-by-step guide for participating in the decision-making process at the regional and local level regarding the planning and future implementation of the RO-BG CBC Programme 2021-27; experimental workshops and a final conference, presenting opportunities for citizen participation and best achievements in the design and implementation of the RO-BG CBC Programme 2014-20.

The main output of the initiative was that RoBulUS application has been offering a set of functionalities about civic engagement in the public discussions of integrated territorial development plans of municipalities, of the Operational Programmes for the period 2021-2027 and the RO-BG CBC Programme. In addition, the

application has the functionality to link to the open calls providing support to civic initiatives in Bulgaria and Romania.

The initiative was implemented in 2021 as an information measure about the Support for citizen engagement in the implementation of cohesion policy of the DG REGIO. It was presented as a best practice in a Border Focal Point Network Debate of the European Commission in 2022.

5.2.2. Public Law and Citizen Participation

Institution: “St. Kliment” Sofia University

Format: Academic programme course, formal education

The course “Public Law and Citizen Participation” is offered as an elective course in the eight semester of the Bachelor programme “Public Administration”. It presents the relationship between the implementation of governance in the constitutional state and the participation of citizens in this process. The forms of direct democracy, participatory democracy and deliberative democracy are discussed. Separate attention is paid to the models of interaction of the administration with the structures of civil society in the process of elaboration of normative acts by the legislative and executive power - procedure of public consultations, participation in public councils and working groups, proposals and petitions of citizens, citizens' initiative. The forms of direct democracy are also studied – such as the national and local referendum on citizens' initiative, national and local citizens' initiative.

5.2.3. Smart Cities’ Development

Institution: University of National and World Economy

Format: Qualification programme, formal education

“Smart Cities’ Development” is a two-semester modular qualification programme designed for managers and experts in local administrations engaged with territorial development as well for other interested professionals with tertiary qualifications that seek careers in public administration. The programme is delivered in on-site and distance-learning formats. It presents the different aspects of sustainable urban development, financing of regional projects and the development of smart cities. It combines academic content with practical example and study of practice-based cases with implication as to the functioning Bulgarian legislation. The programme includes courses on digital economy, impact assessment of the sustainable urban development, models for the development of smart cities, e-government in smart cities, digital turn in regional management and others. The programme is delivered by experts working in business and administration.

5.2.4. Public Consultations and Civic Participation

Institution: Institute for Public Administration, Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria

Format: Qualification course, non-formal education

The course introduces the approaches and standards for conducting public consultations under the current legislation, as well as the principles and forms of citizen participation. The training presents "Standards for Conducting Public Consultations" of the Council for Administrative Reforms of the Republic of Bulgaria, focusing on the principles, legal requirements and organisation of the relevant procedures. It deals with the conduct of consultations when carrying out preliminary and ex-post impact assessments of legal acts, before submitting a draft legal act for adoption by the Council of Ministers, the participation of stakeholders in proceedings for the issuance of a general administrative act and consultations carried out in connection with

the environmental assessment of plans and programmes. The training also covers the principles of citizen participation and the forms of interaction between the administration and civil society in decision-making.

It is important to emphasise that innovative tools mobilising civic support and collective intelligence such as crowdsourcing and civic IT support (civic hacking) are also studied.

Upon completion of the training, participants are expected to: know the principles, legal requirements and organisation of public consultations; know the procedures for conducting four specific types of public consultations; understand the role of citizen participation and its contribution to the decision-making process; and have the skills to apply the tools for conducting public consultations; know innovative forms of engaging citizen participation.

The course is delivered as on-site training civil servants for 16 study hours.

5.2.5. People, Places and Practice: Contextualising the Tourism, Hospitality and Events Industries

Institution: Varna University of Management

Format: Academic programme course, formal education

The modular course “People, Places and Practice: Contextualizing the Tourism, Hospitality and Events Industries” is a main subject of the double-degree Master Program “International Hospitality Management” delivered by the Varna University of Management in Bulgaria and the Cardiff Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. It leads to 10 ECTS credits and aim to ensure students develop a critical insight into the structure and characteristics of the tourism, hospitality and events industries, and develop an understanding of the relationship of these industries to place management and marketing. The assessment methods include inter alia a practical assignment for developing an experience/product linked to a place, using a multisensory mapping and video-content.

The course focuses on the structure and characteristics of the THE industries and the associated interest groups across the commercial, governmental and third sector; provides a critical insight into how developments in the THE industries are both contested and advocated; encourages critical assessment of sector and professional practices that are transforming THE experiences – including the urban environment; promotes a critical evaluation of the relationship between THE and place and an assessment of how communities and consumers influence and (co-)create THE environments and experiences.

The course topic include the following learning units: (i) Tourist place as a counterpoint of tourist experience – characteristics, factors, multisensory experience, (ii) Identification and analysis of major players operating within the tourism industry and the major events, (iii) Stakeholder and network analysis – external and internal stakeholders – analysis of the complexity of relationships, possible conflicts and interests of each group, (iv) The role and significance of partnerships, community and other stakeholders in responsible tourism management, (v) Models and theoretical approaches to People, Places, Practice in THE, (vi) Managing the tourist experience by the compilation of practices and mutual cooperation among the people from the THE industries and (vii) Environmental, social, ethical and economic aspects of place and stakeholder management.

6. Common needs and gaps

Civic participation is not a sectoral or issue-related theme, rather a transcending governmental principle and process. As such it is not targeted as vocational knowledge, competence and skill-building, rather as civic competence. Consequently, most aspects of the holistic concept of participatory planning are integrated in courses from ISCED Field 0413 Management and administration and more precisely “Public Administration”. They offer a more integrated approach to presenting participation and planning from the governance perspective. The accredited courses under ISCED 073 Architecture and construction and ISCED Field 1015 Travel, tourism and leisure refer to participation and planning from concrete sectoral perspectives. Holistic courses about participatory planning have not been offered at higher education level. At the same time, public, civic or citizen participation are central themes in the qualification and up-skilling courses offered to and sought after by the civil servants as well as digitalization. The three main elements – participation, planning and spatial planning, digitalisation – appear separately in the education programs and people develop their knowledge and skills about them either through individual/ independent training or in practice.

The concept of participatory planning still needs promotion and though there is interest in training about participatory planning and the digital tools associated with it, the preference goes towards more practical courses and training. This is re-confirmed by the results of the on-line survey performed within the frame of the DEMo4PPL project (Annexes II, III and IV) as well as by the semi-structured interviews with professionals engaged in the policy and practice of integrated territorial planning in Bulgaria.

In this sense a good approach for delivering training based on the micro-credentials concept could be particularly useful for delivery both in mainstream and non-formal learning environments. Small learning experiences (short courses) leading to micro-credentials (qualification units) allow for a targeted acquisition of skills and competences adapted to a fast-changing society and labour market while not replacing traditional qualifications (European Commission, 2021). They allow learners to combine modules from different disciplines as to their individual learning experiences while building upon their existing competencies and expanding their expertise over time. This approach would fit most efficiently the situation in which participation, planning and spatial planning, digitalisation themes are included in the relevant tertiary and non-formal vocational education programs in Bulgaria and would allow immediate integration of courses without heavy administrative procedures. The course can be offered initially as elective subjects or specialisations by the interested higher-education institutions.

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Annexes

Annex I – List of surveyed programmes

I. ISCED Field 073 Architecture and construction

Higher education institution	Program	Level
“Lyuben Karavelov” Higher School of Construction, Sofia	Architecture	Master (ISCED 7)
New Bulgarian University, Sofia	Architecture	Master (ISCED 7)
University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia	Architecture	Master (ISCED 7)
	Urbanism	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	Land and Real Estate Management and Planning	Master (ISCED 7)
	Spatial Planning	Master (ISCED 7)

II. ISCED Field 0413 Management and administration

Higher education institution	Program	Level
Agrarian University, Plovdiv	Management of Regional Development	Master (ISCED 7)
Burgas Free University	Regional Management	Master (ISCED 7)
“Dimitar Tsenov” Academy of Economics	Territorial Development	Master (ISCED 7)
“Neophyte Rilski” South-west University, Blagoevgrad	Public Administration	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	Public Management and Administrative Authority	Master (ISCED 7)
	Management of Regional Development	Master (ISCED 7)
New Bulgarian University, Sofia	Public Management and Regional Development	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	Public Administration	Master (ISCED 7)
"St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo	Public Administration	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
“St.Kliment” Sofia University	Public Administration	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	Regional Development and Policy	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	Planning and Management of Territorial Systems	Master (ISCED 7)
Varna Free University	Public Administration	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
Varna University of Economics	Public Administration	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	Public Management and Administrative Authority	Master (ISCED 7)

University of the National and World Economy, Sofia	Public Administration	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	Local Self-Government	Master (ISCED 7)
	Smart Cities Development	Master (ISCED 7)

III. ISCED Field 1015 Travel, tourism and leisure

Higher education institution	Program	Level
"Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" Shumen University	Tourism	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
"D-r Assen Zlatarov" University of Burgas	Tourism	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	Tourism Destination Management	Master (ISCED 7)
"Neophyte Rilski" South-west University, Blagoevgrad	Tourism	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
	New Bulgarian University, Sofia	Tourism
	Tourism Management	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	International Tourism Management	Master (ISCED 7)
	Cultural Tourism	Master (ISCED 7)
"St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo	Tourism	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
"St.Kliment" Sofia University	Tourism Destination Management	Master (ISCED 7)
	Tourism	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	Eco-tourism	Master (ISCED 7)
Varna University of Management	International Hospitality Management	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	International Tourism	Master (ISCED 7)
Varna University of Economics	Public Administration	Bachelor, Master (ISCED 6, 7)
University of Forestry, Sofia	Alternative Tourism	Bachelor (ISCED 6)
	Management of the Alternative Tourism	Master (ISCED 7)

Annex II – Interview protocol

Introductory information

This questionnaire will serve an international team of researchers to collect information on how *public participation* and *participatory planning* are taught in Bachelor and Master Programmes in Bulgaria.

In doing so, particular attention is dedicated to the knowledge delivered in relation to both traditional and *digital participatory planning* tools.

- *Public participation*: A process that directly engages the civic society in decision-making and, more in general, in public action.
- *Participatory planning* (PPL): A process by which a community undertakes to reach a specific goal by consciously assessing its elements and outlining a course of action to address those elements.
- *Digital participatory planning* (digital PPL) tools: digital tools facilitating public participation in planning, allowing community members to generate/communicate/share knowledge and information about their environment.

Categories of digital PPL tools:

- Collection of experience-based data (e.g. AR participatory platforms; participatory mapping; online comment system)
- Participation enhancement (e.g. Geo-design; online planning forum; open-source PPL tools)

Following the survey only aggregate data will be reported and published.

Questions:

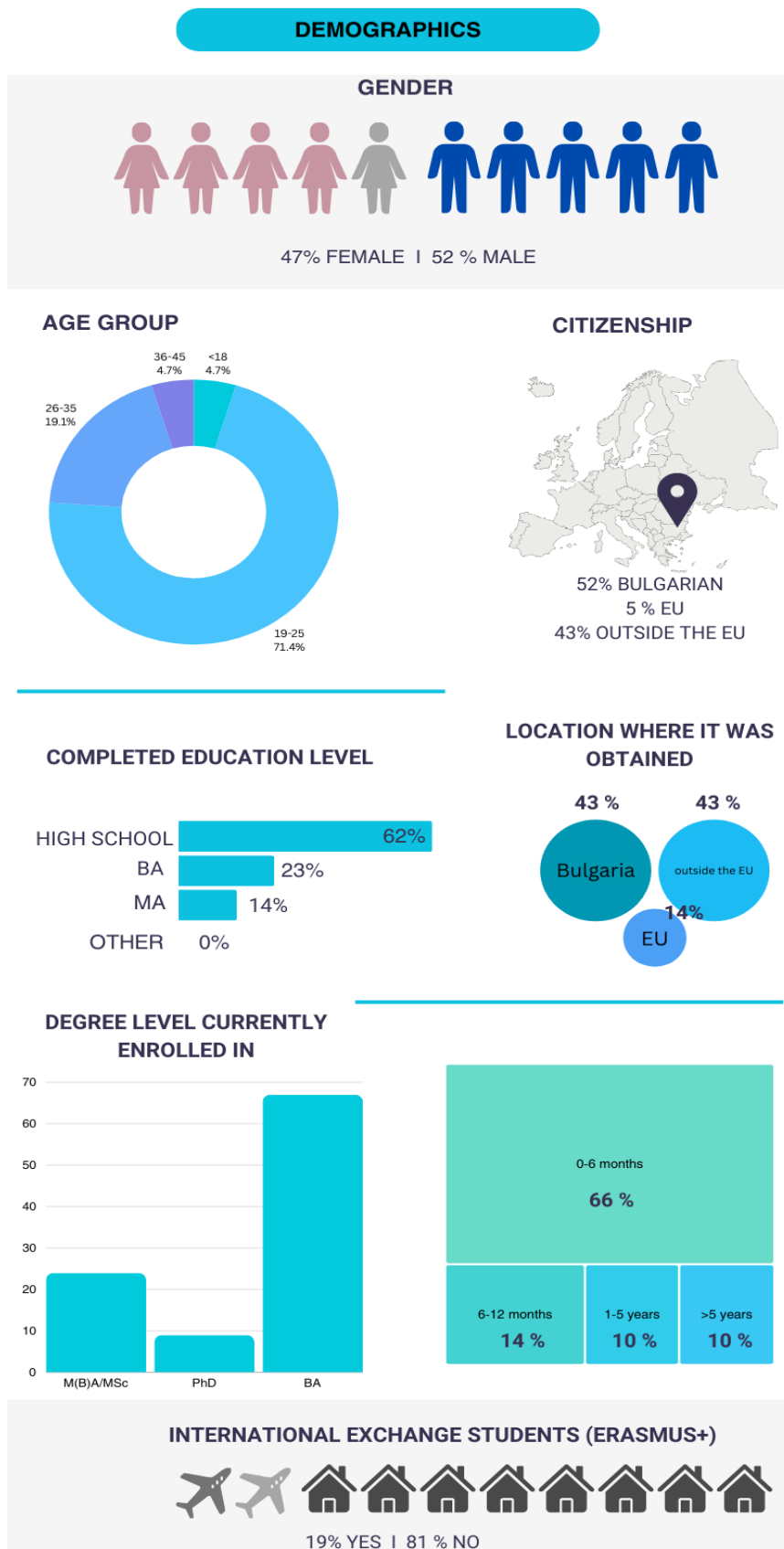
- Do you think that the use of participatory methods/tools in planning in Bulgaria is well established?
- Are you aware of education programs and or courses in Bulgaria about participatory planning and digital participatory planning?
- In your professional career have you studied about participatory planning/ digital participatory planning and in what form – university course, non-formal course, self-study?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages of the above defined forms of study?
- Have you conducted a course on participatory planning?
- Can you suggest examples of programs/courses that refer to participatory planning in Bulgaria?

Annex III – List of interviewees

	Profile/Role	Affiliated Institution
1.	Accreditation expert	Varna University of Management
2.	Student	University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia
3.	Architect – working on a project for the rehabilitation and development of the central area of a Bulgarian town	University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia, alumni
4.	Architect – civic activist	University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia, alumni
5.	Expert – responsible for the organisation of public consultations	Regional Information Centre of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
6.	Trainer	Regional Association of Local Authorities
7.	Expert	Member of the Chamber of Engineers in Investment Design
8.	Trainer, former Mayor	National Association of the Bulgarian Municipalities
9.	Students	Varna University of Management

Annex IV – Survey structure and results

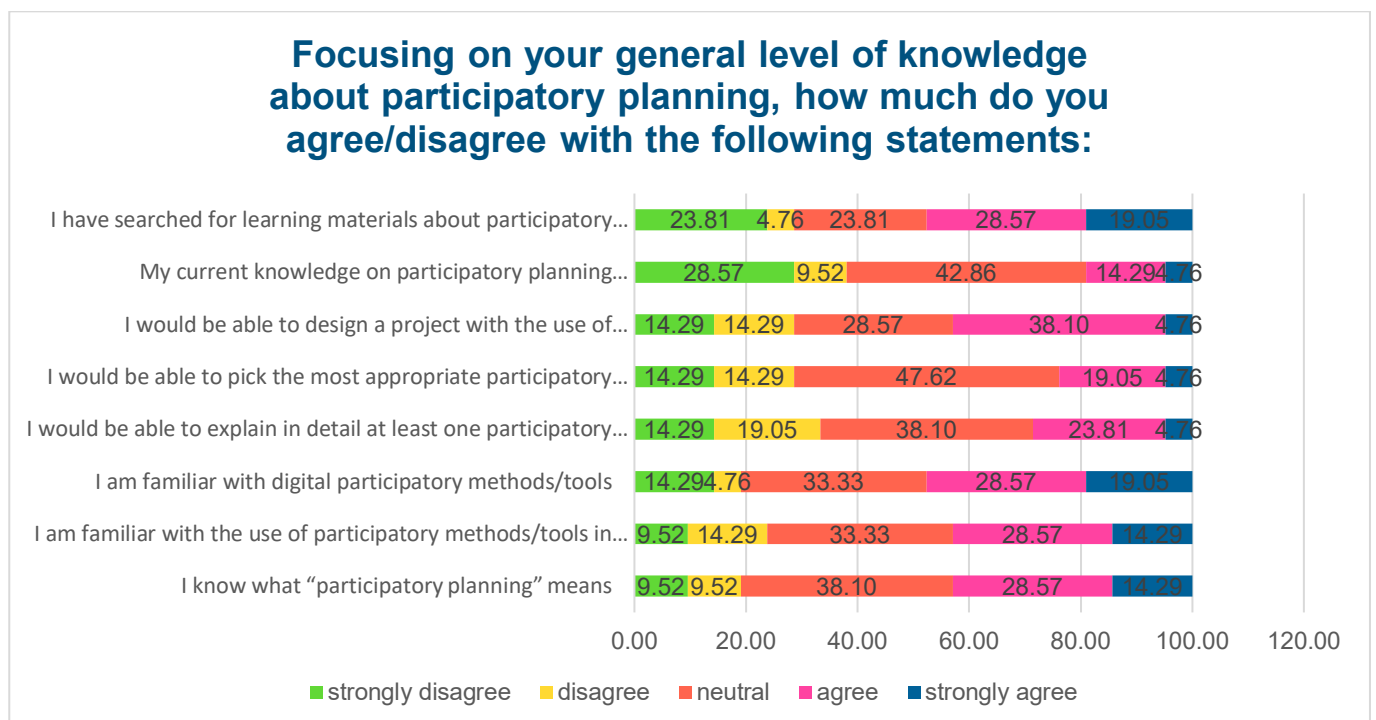
A total number of 21 responses were received. The profile of the respondents is as follows:



Section 1: General knowledge about PPL and its digital turn

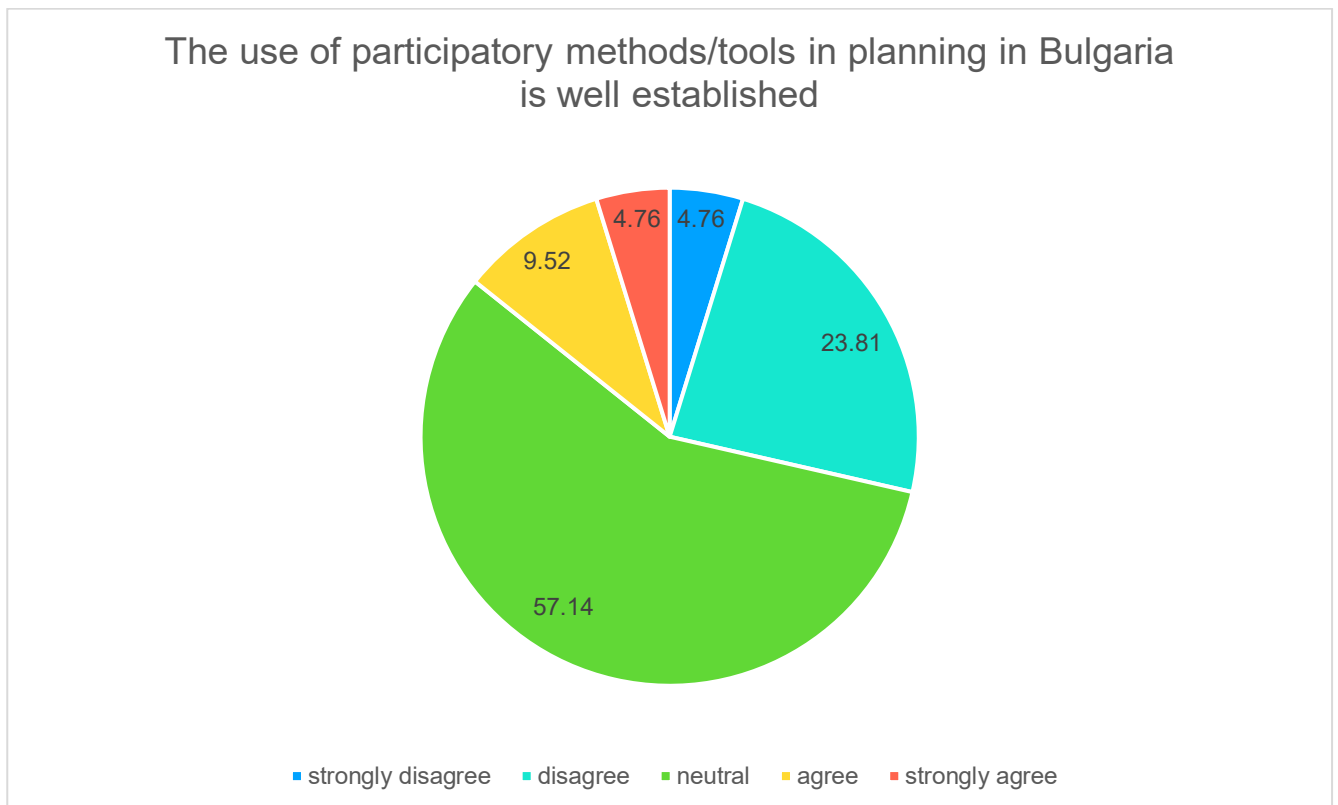
Q1:

<i>Focusing on your general level of knowledge about participatory planning, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I know what “participatory planning” means	2	2	8	6	3
I am familiar with the use of participatory methods/tools in planning	2	3	7	6	3
I am familiar with digital participatory methods/tools	3	1	7	6	4
I would be able to explain in detail at least one participatory method/tool	3	4	8	5	1
I would be able to pick the most appropriate participatory method/tool for a specific project/goal	3	3	10	4	1
I would be able to design a project with the use of participatory methods/tools	3	3	6	8	1
My current knowledge on participatory planning methods/tools are the result of my university education	6	2	9	3	1
I have searched for learning materials about participatory methods/tools outside the university program	5	1	5	6	4

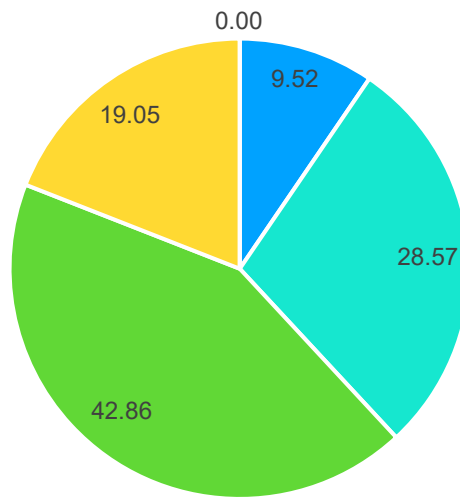


Q2:

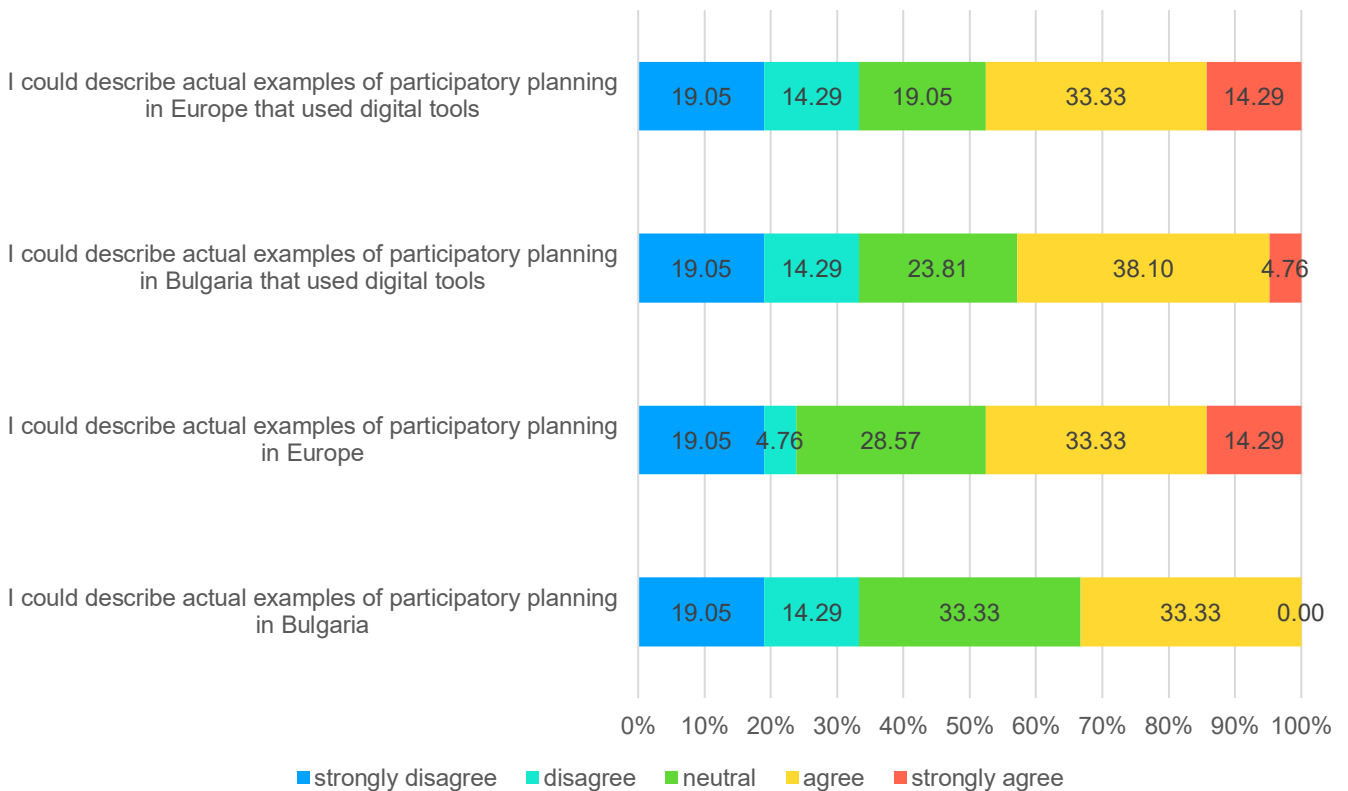
<i>Focusing on the level at which participatory planning is being used, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The use of participatory methods/tools in planning in Bulgaria is well established	1	5	12	2	1
The use of participatory digital tools in planning in Bulgaria is well established	2	6	9	4	0
I could describe actual examples of participatory planning in Bulgaria	4	3	7	7	0
I could describe actual examples of participatory planning in Europe	4	1	6	7	3
I could describe actual examples of participatory planning in Bulgaria that used digital tools	4	3	5	8	1
I could describe actual examples of participatory planning in Europe that used digital tools	4	3	4	7	3



The use of participatory digital tools in planning in Bulgaria is well established



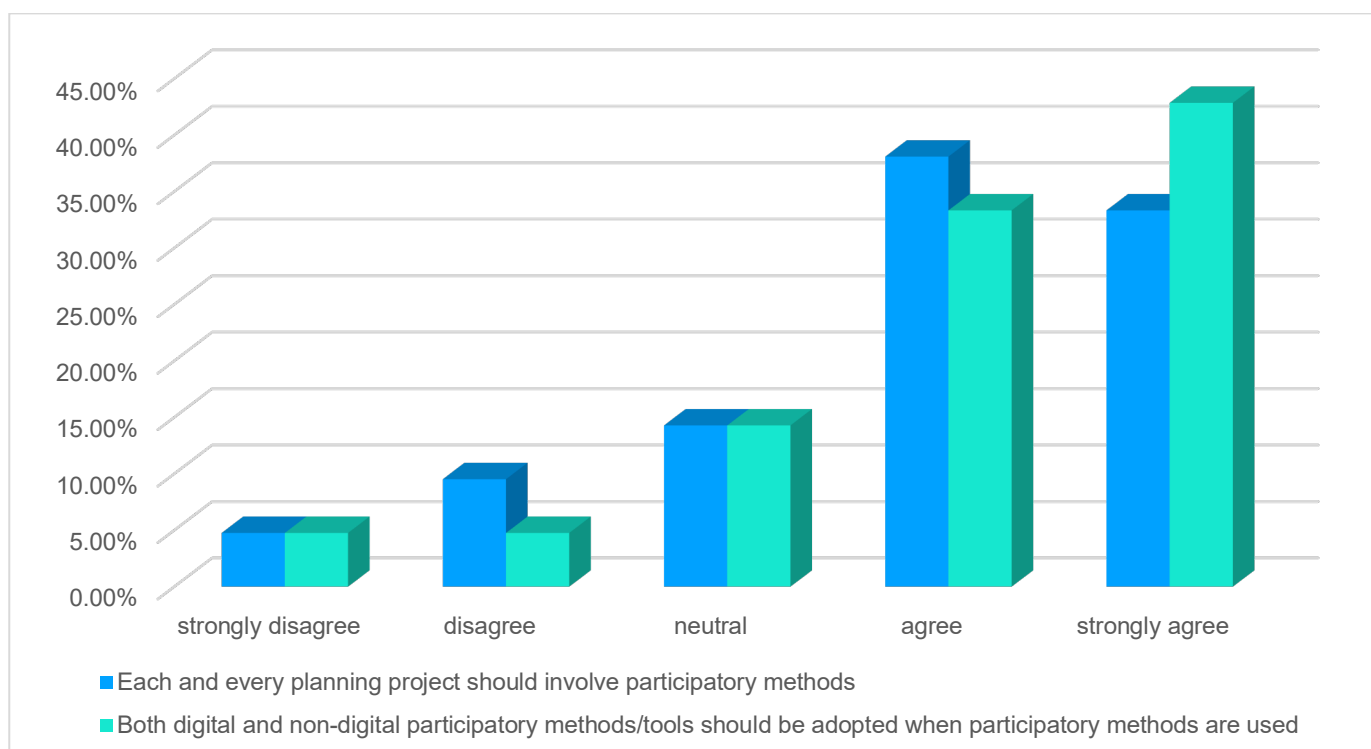
■ strongly disagree ■ disagree ■ neutral ■ agree ■ strongly agree

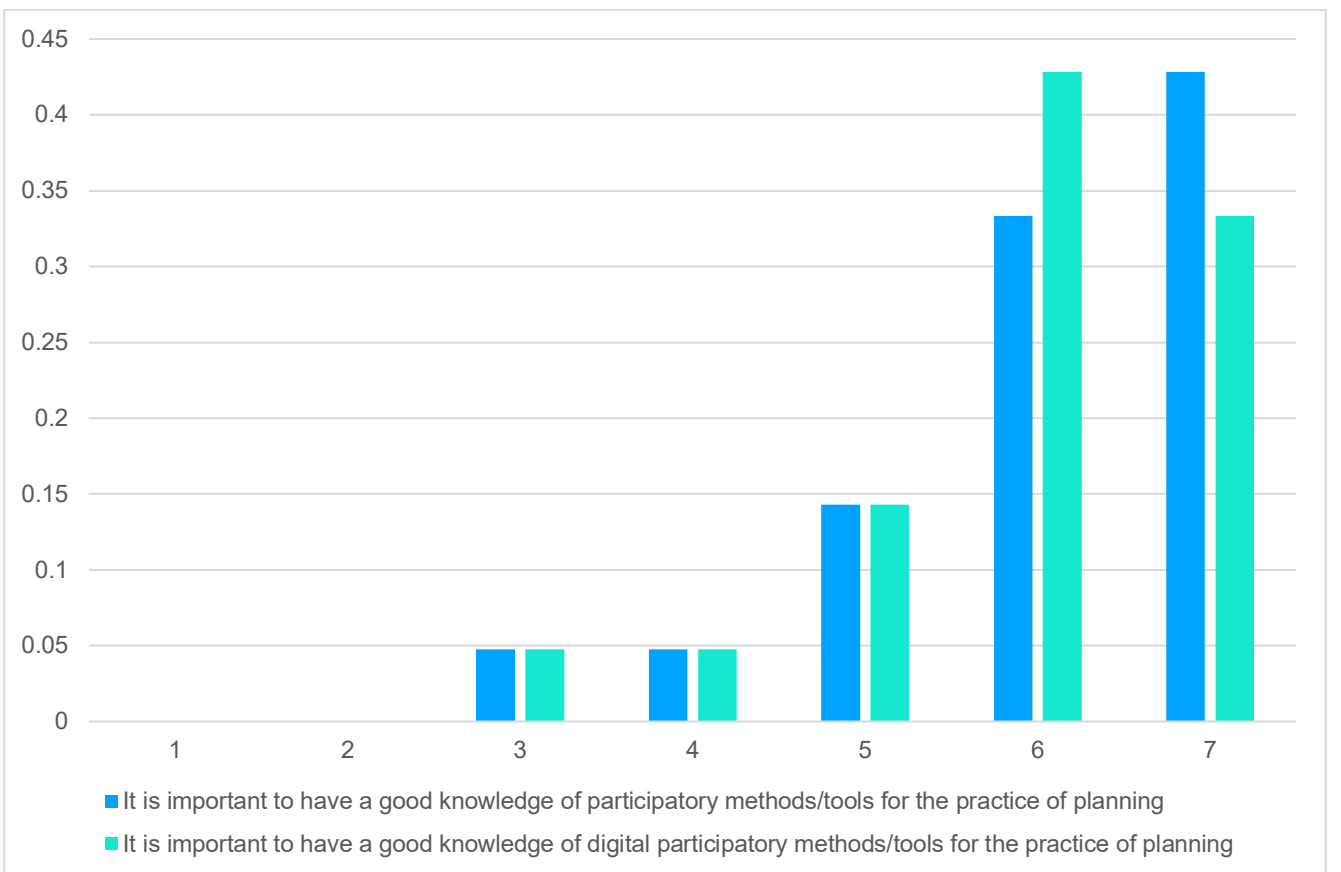
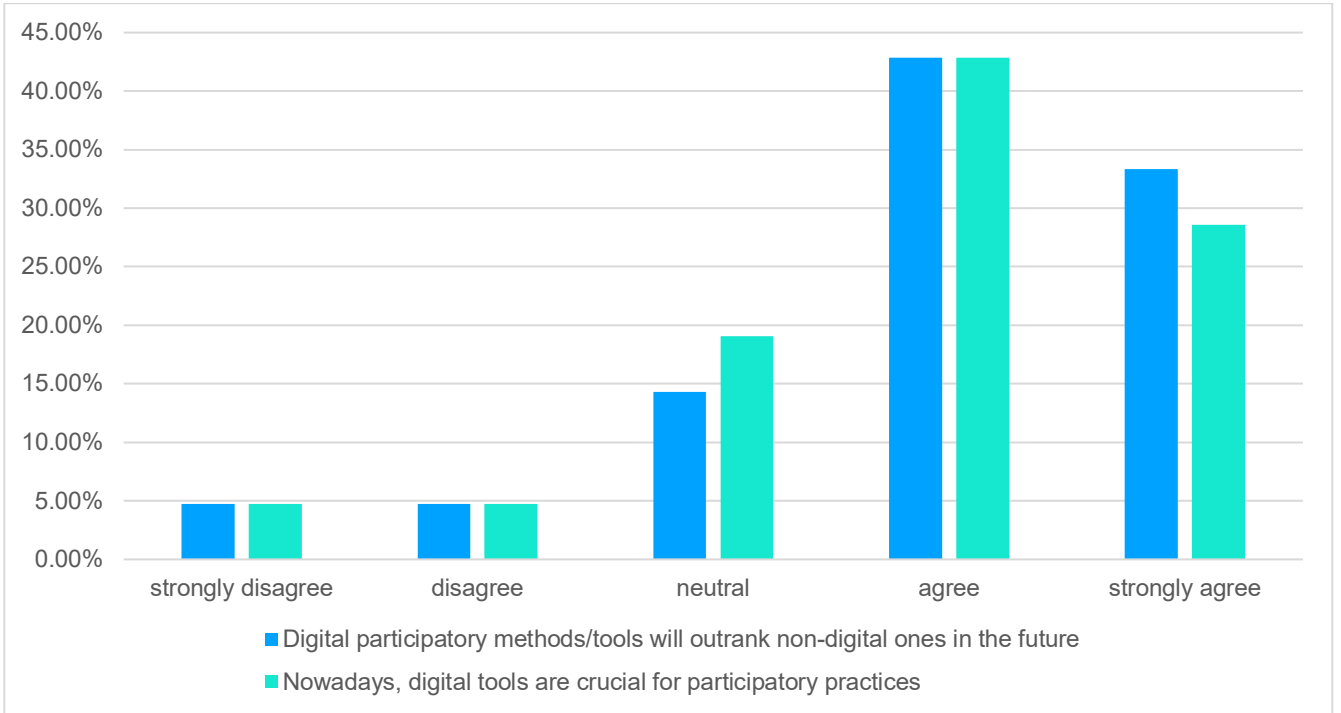


■ strongly disagree ■ disagree ■ neutral ■ agree ■ strongly agree

Q3:

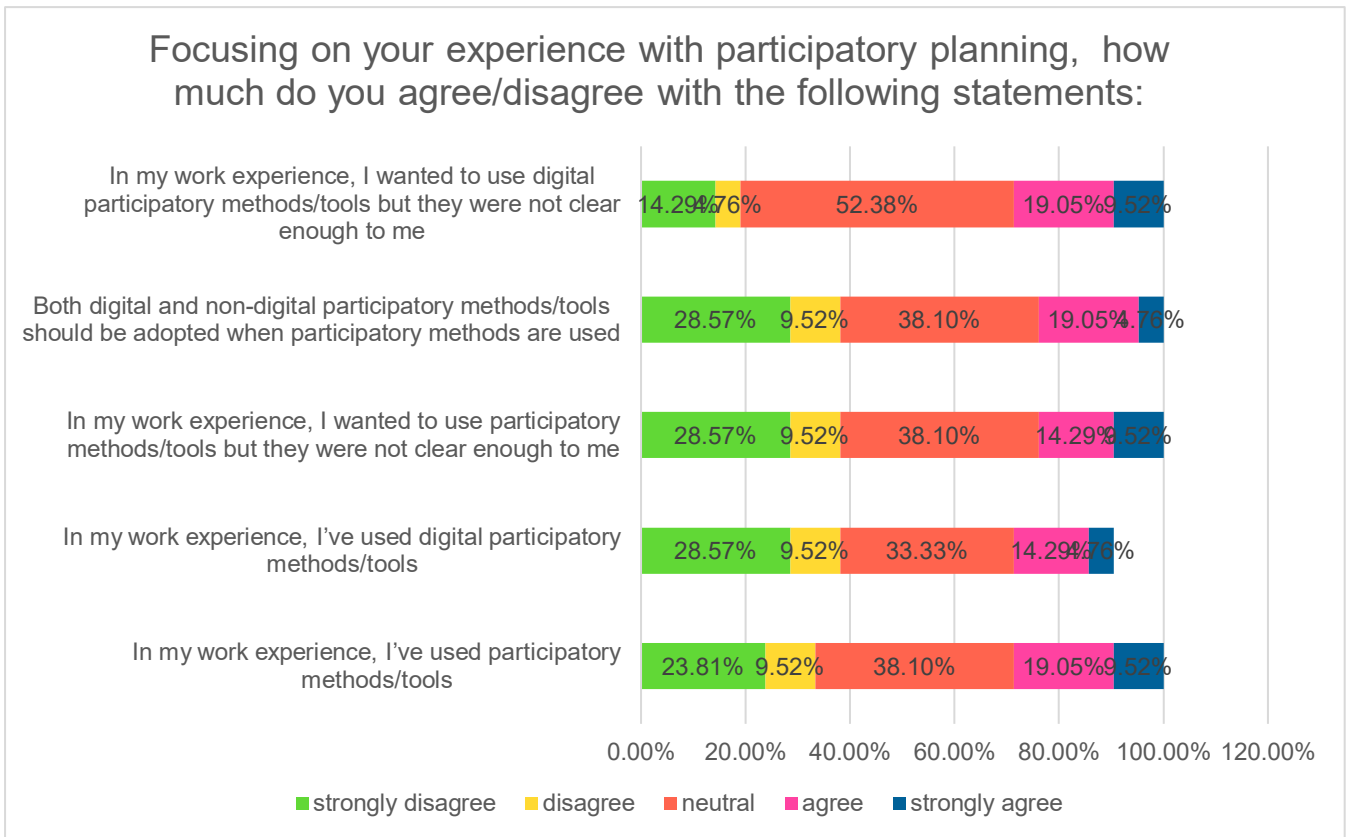
<i>Focusing on current state of use of participatory planning in your region, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Each and every planning project should involve participatory methods	1	2	3	8	7
Nowadays, digital tools are crucial for participatory practices	1	1	4	9	6
Digital participatory methods/tools will outrank non-digital ones in the future	1	1	3	9	7
Both digital and non-digital participatory methods/tools should be adopted when participatory methods are used	1	1	3	7	9
It is important to have a good knowledge of participatory methods/tools for the practice of planning	1	1	3	7	9
It is important to have a good knowledge of digital participatory methods/tools for the practice of planning	1	1	3	9	7





Q4:

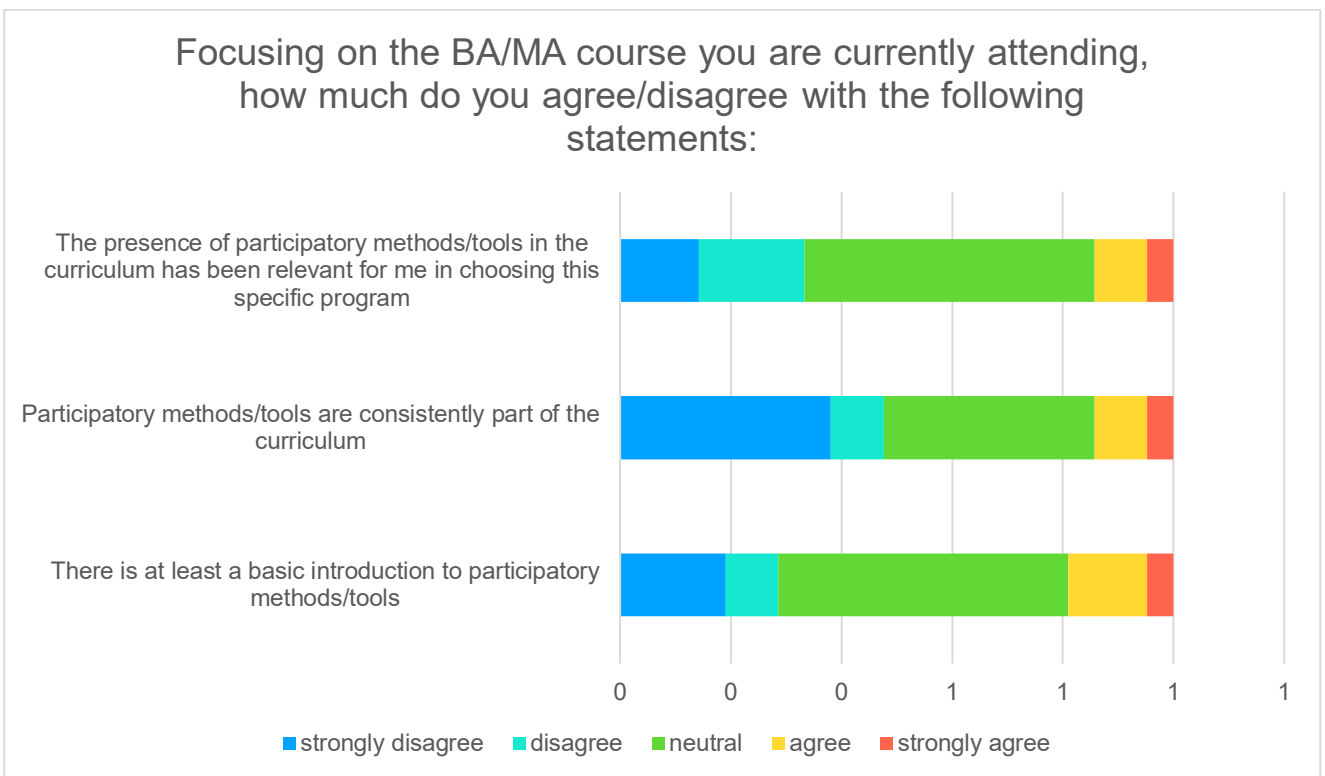
<i>Focusing on your experience with participatory planning, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
In my work experience, I've used participatory methods/tools	5	2	8	4	2
In my work experience, I've used digital participatory methods/tools	6	2	7	3	1
In my work experience, I wanted to use participatory methods/tools but they were not clear enough to me	6	2	8	3	2
Both digital and non-digital participatory methods/tools should be adopted when participatory methods are used	6	2	8	4	1
In my work experience, I wanted to use digital participatory methods/tools but they were not clear enough to me	3	1	11	4	2



Section 2: Info concerning the course currently attended and desiderata

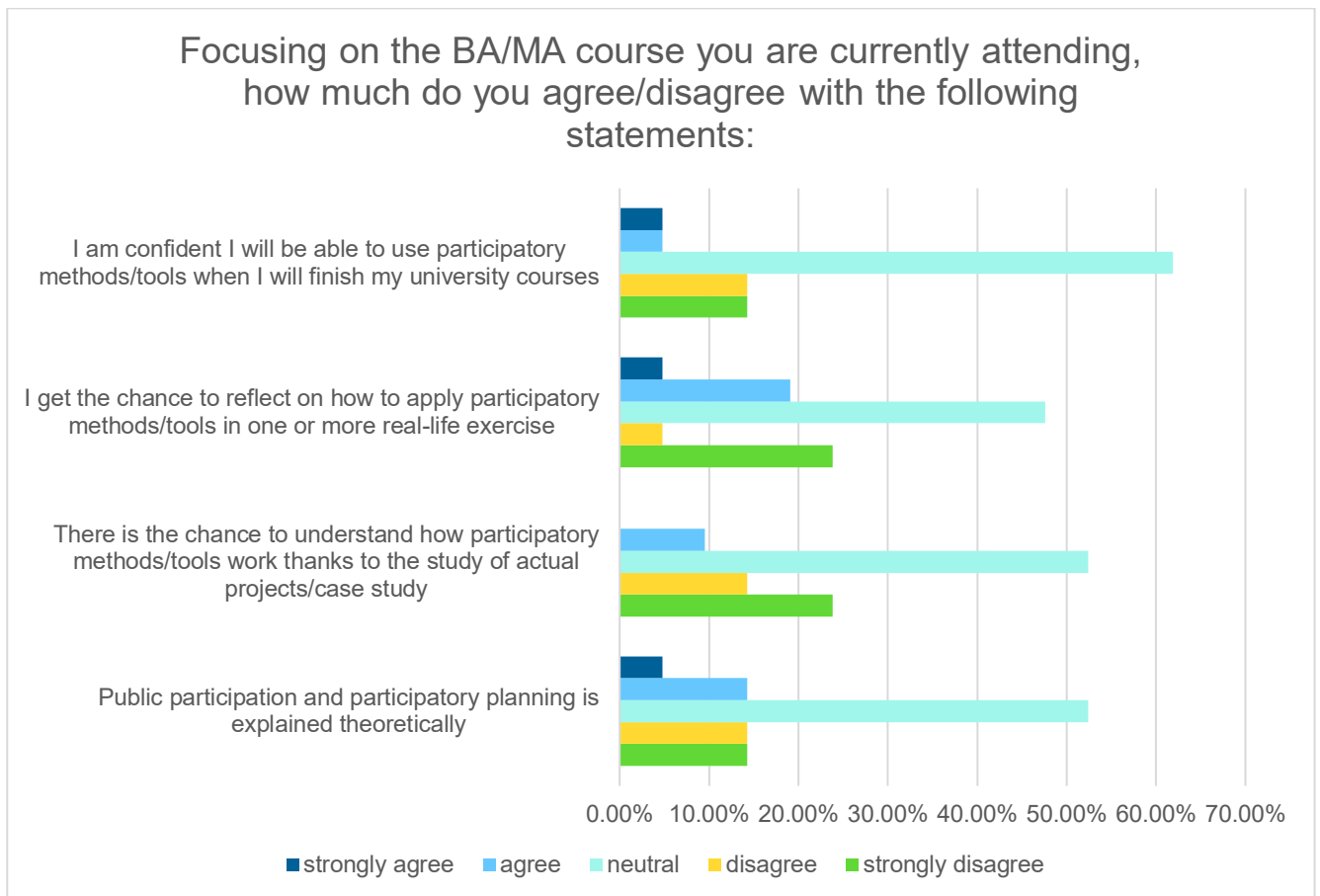
Q5

<i>Focusing on the BA/MA course you are currently attending, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
There is at least a basic introduction to participatory methods/tools	4	2	11	3	1
Participatory methods/tools are consistently part of the curriculum	8	2	8	2	1
The presence of participatory methods/tools in the curriculum has been relevant for me in choosing this specific program	3	4	11	2	1



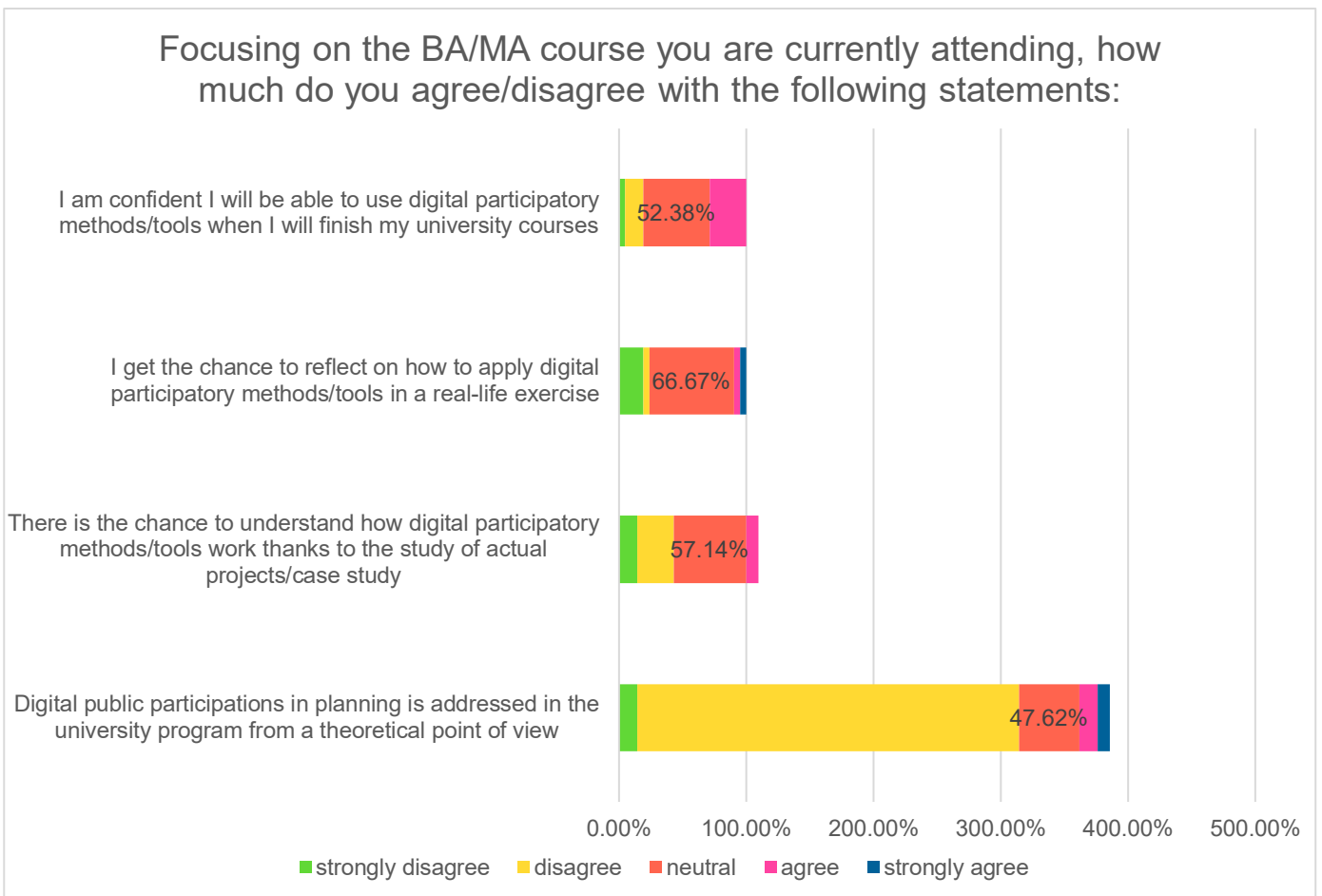
Q6

Focusing on the BA/MA course you are currently attending, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Public participation and participatory planning is explained theoretically	3	3	11	3	1
There is the chance to understand how participatory methods/tools work thanks to the study of actual projects/case study	5	3	11	2	0
I get the chance to reflect on how to apply participatory methods/tools in one or more real-life exercise	5	1	10	4	1
I am confident I will be able to use participatory methods/tools when I will finish my university courses	3	3	13	1	1



Q7

Focusing on the BA/MA course you are currently attending, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Digital public participations in planning is addressed in the university program from a theoretical point of view	3	3	10	3	2
There is the chance to understand how digital participatory methods/tools work thanks to the study of actual projects/case study	3	6	12	2	0
I get the chance to reflect on how to apply digital participatory methods/tools in a real-life exercise	4	1	14	1	1
I am confident I will be able to use digital participatory methods/tools when I will finish my university courses	1	3	11	6	



Q8

<i>Focusing on your level of interest in participatory planning, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements:</i>					
	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I would attend theoretical courses/programs on participatory planning, if available	2	2	11	5	1
I would attend courses/programs featuring practical exercises on participatory methods/tools, if available	1	2	7	9	1
I would attend theoretical courses/programs on digital participatory planning, if available	0	2	10	7	2
I would attend courses/programs featuring practical exercises on digital participatory methods/tools, if available	2	1	7	7	4

