30MILES – Small port every 30 miles apart

Development of services for lively water tourism in the Gulf of Finland

Questionnaire on small ports and harbour services

The 30MILES project aims at creating a network of small ports and harbours every 30 nautical miles apart as well as improving the overall service level and safety of the ports. Within the 30MILES project, the University of Helsinki will develop a Bayesian decision model to improve the sustainable development of marinas and small ports. Sustainability is considered as a three-dimensional concept covering the aspects of environmentally friendly operation, sustainable business development, and accessibility and safety of ports.

The decision model will be developed based on the results of this questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire is therefore to improve the small port and harbour services and it hopes to find out, which environmental and safety-related factors are considered important by the visitors and what type of services should the ports invest in. Here, the results of the questionnaire will be summarized.

Background information

The total number of the questionnaire responses was 366. Most of the respondents of the questionnaire were Finnish (95%), while 5 % were Estonian. In addition, one of the respondents was Norwegian. As shown in Figure 1, most of the Finnish respondents were from around the Gulf of Finland: either from the Helsinki region (including Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa) (27%) or Porvoo (31%), but a number of respondents were also from Hamina (10%), Kotka (13%) and Loviisa (6%). In addition, there were respondents from Turku (5%) and Tampere (2%). Others (6%) included e.g. Virolahti, Lappeenranta, Hämeenlinna, Lahti and Kouvola.

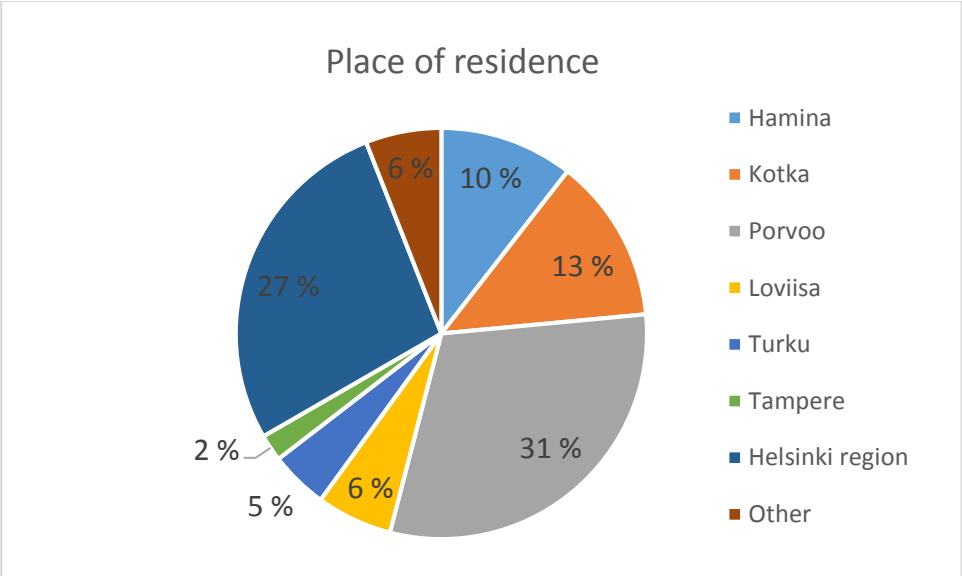


Figure 1. Place of residence (Finnish respondents).

Most of the respondents were male (69%), where as 29 % were female (Figure 2). As shown by Figure 3, the majority of respondents were born either between 1960-69 (31%) or 1970-79 (23%). A high percentage of the respondents had a bachelor's degree (24%) or a master's degree (31%) (Figure 4). The average income (per household) was between 41 000- 70 000 euros for 23% of the respondents and between 71 000- 100 000 for 20% (Figure 5).

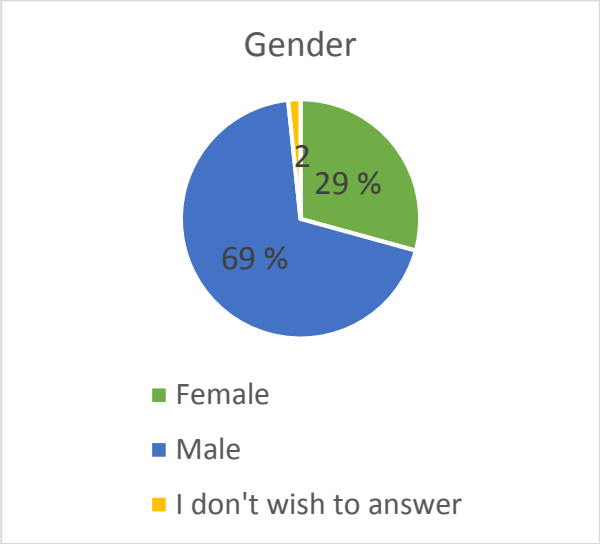


Figure 2. Gender of the respondents.

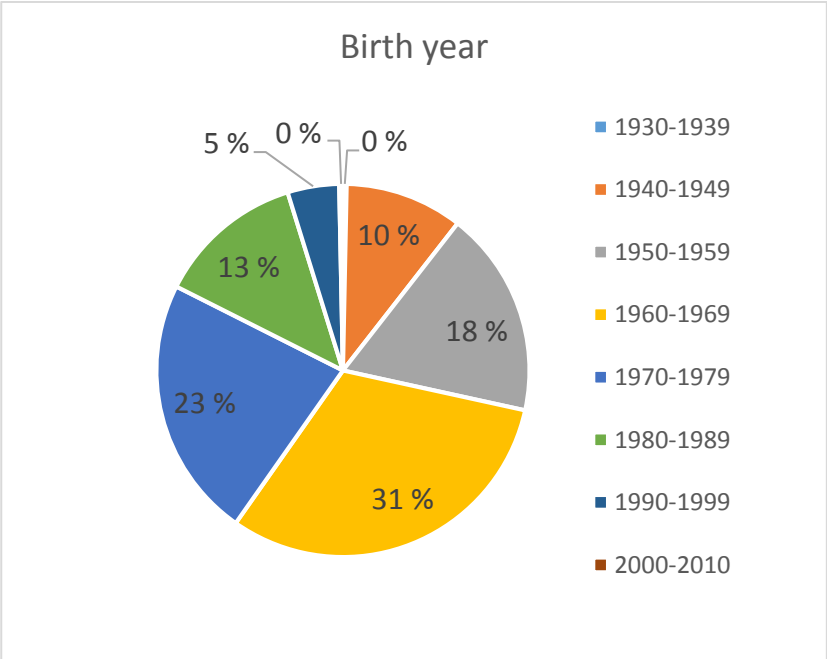


Figure 3. Birth year of the respondents.

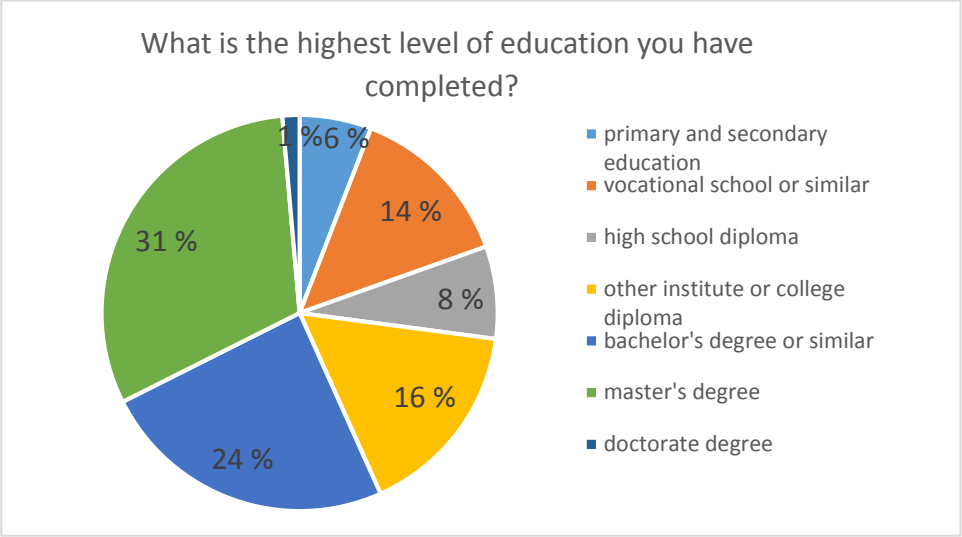


Figure 4. Highest level of education completed.

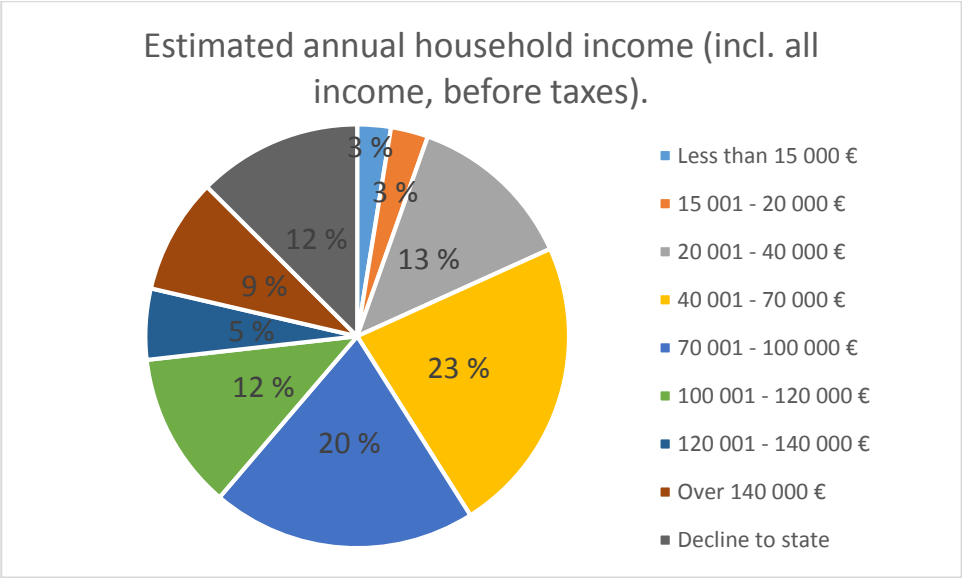
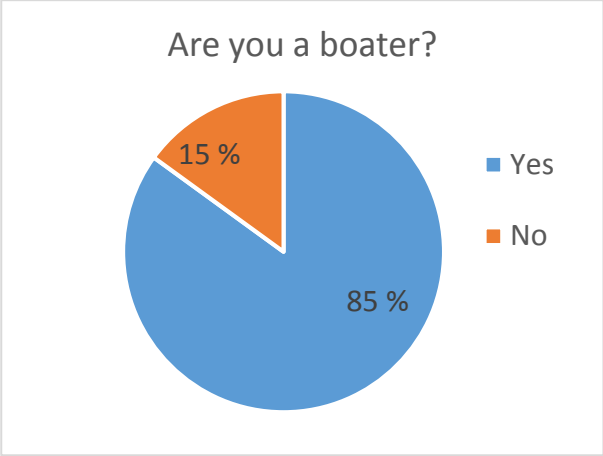
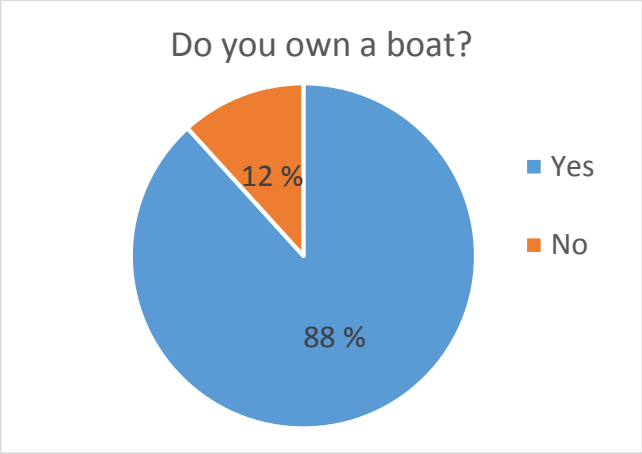


Figure 5. Estimated annual household income (incl. all income, before taxes).

Questions for boaters

Most of the respondents were boaters (85%) (Figure 6) and owned their own boat (88%) (Figure 7). The most common types of boats owned were motor/powerboat (55%) or sailboat (34%) (Figure 8). The boats owned were typically between 5- 9.9 meters in length (n=152) and between 2-3.9 meters in width (n=248). However, up to 73 boats were more than 10 meters in length and there were 67 boats that were more than 15 meters in height (Table 1). Most of the respondents (56%) stored their boats in a small boat harbour subject to charge (Figure 9).





Figures 6& 7. Boaters and boat ownership.

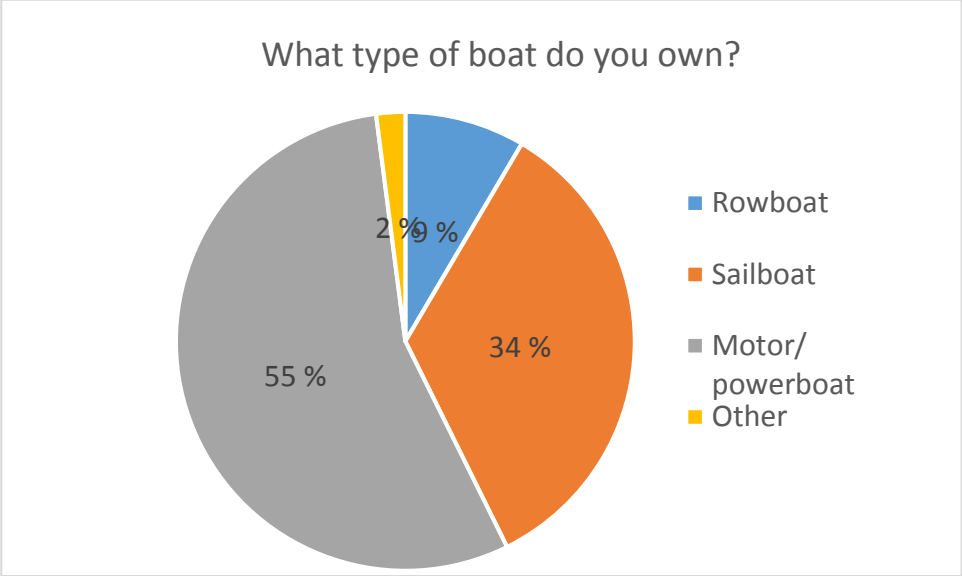


Figure 8. Type of boat.

Table 1. Boat dimensions: the draft, length, width and height of boats (in meters).

DRAFT of the boat in meters	Less than 1m	1-1.9m	2m or over	
Number of boats	95	150	20	
LENGTH of the boat in meters	Less than 5m	5-9.9m	10m or over	
Number of boats	14	152	73	
WIDTH of the boat in meters	Less than 2m	2-3.9 m	4m or over	
Number of boats	16	248	19	
HEIGHT of the boat in meters	Less than 5m	5-9.9m	10-14.9m	15m or over
Number of boats	102	9	39	67

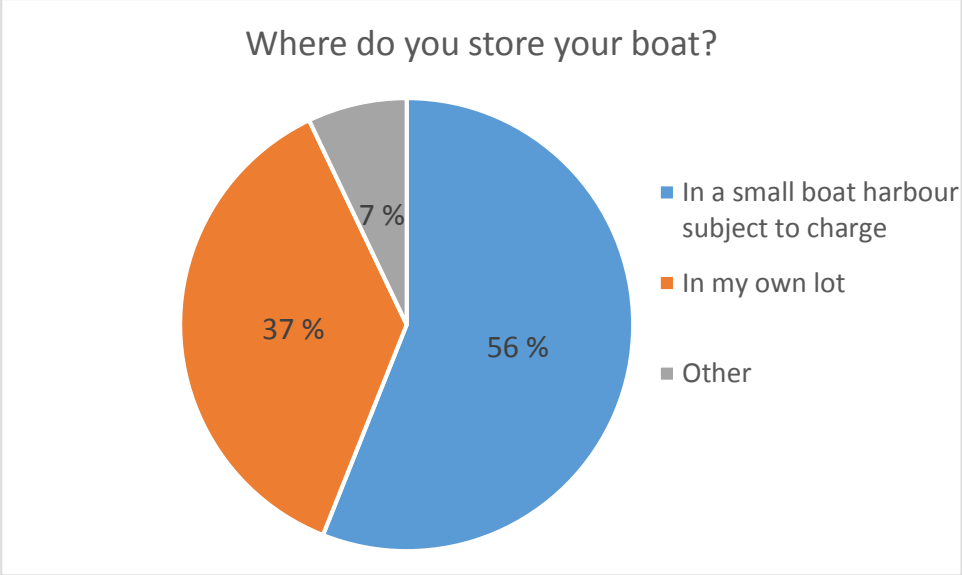


Figure 9. Where do you store your boat in winter?

The respondents typically visited the Eastern Gulf of Finland (44%), the Archipelago Sea (22%) and/or the Western Gulf of Finland (22%) (Figure 10). Day trips (no nights) and short trips (1-3 nights) were the most common types of trips (Figure 11) and the respondents typically spend one night (47%) per small port or harbour charging harbour fees (Figure 12). Whereas 10 % spend a few days and 12% a week per season boating, a majority of boaters spend two weeks or more boating. Also, 17 % spend more than a month per season boating (Figure 13).

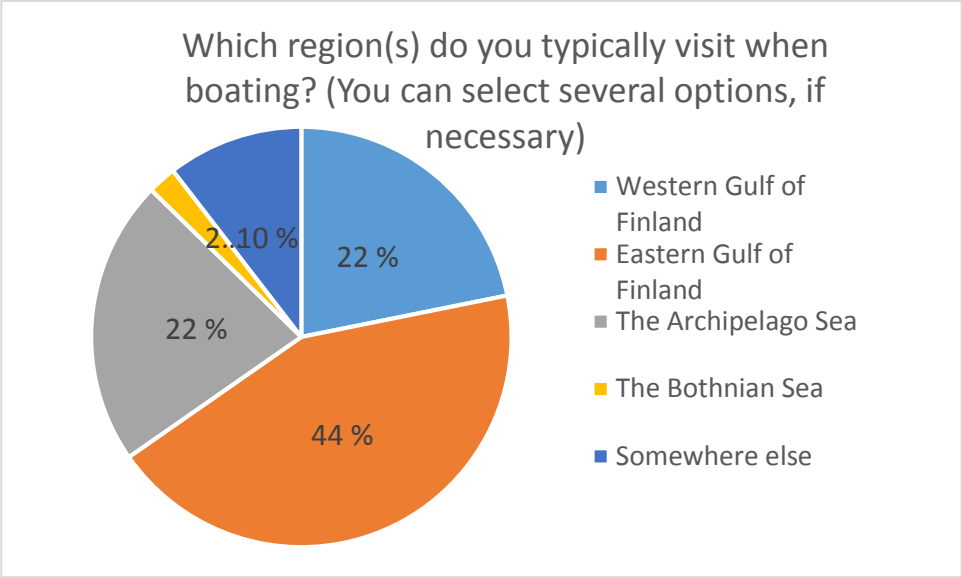


Figure 10. Typical regions visited when boating.

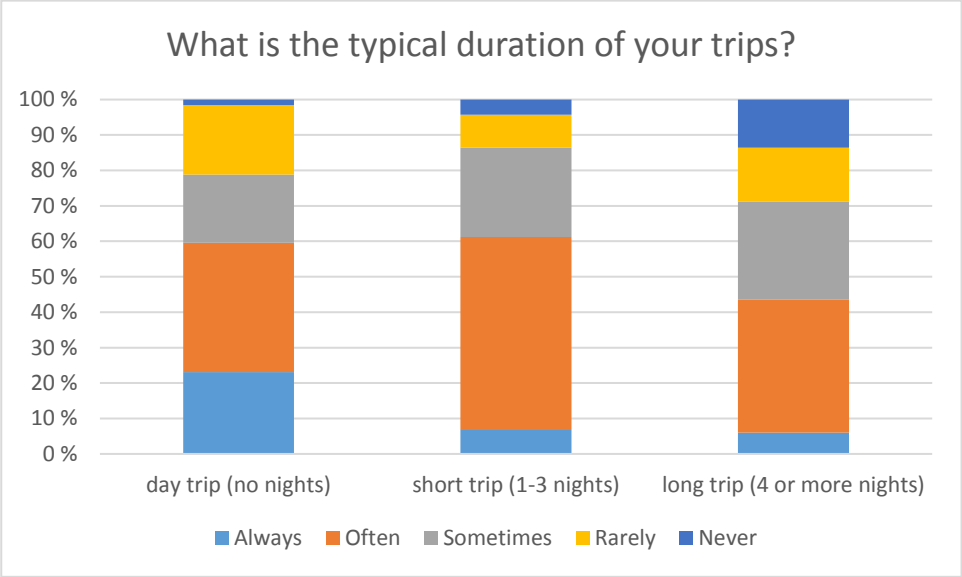


Figure 11. The typical duration of trips.

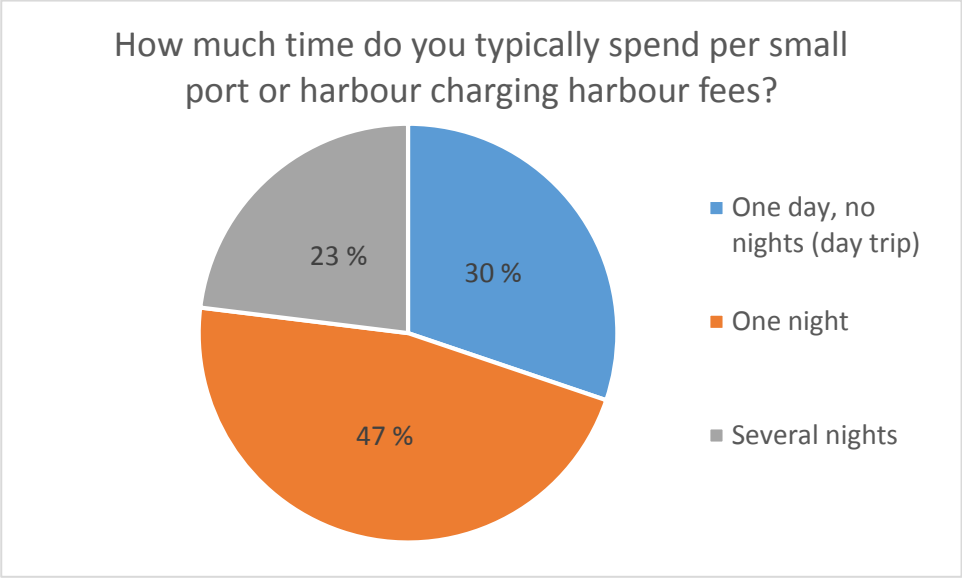


Figure 12. Amount of time typically spend per small port or harbour charging harbour fees.

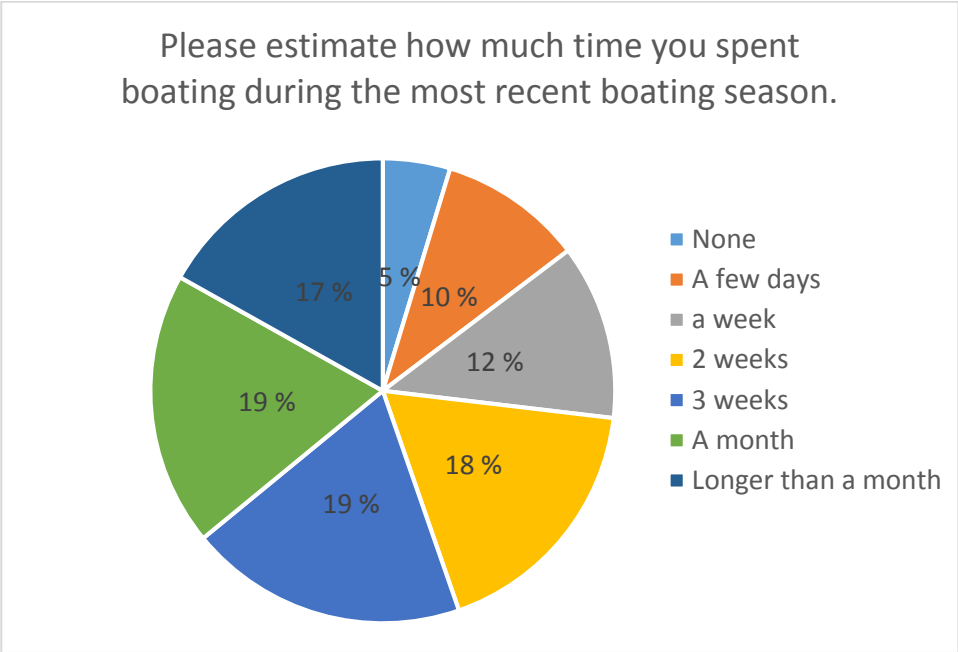


Figure 13. Estimated time spent boating during the most recent boating season.

Questions for non-boaters

The questionnaire also included questions for non-boaters, i.e. people who visit small ports or harbours but do not participate in boating activities. Non-boaters were very likely (41%) or likely (25%) to choose a travel destination in which a small port or harbour exists. For 34% of non-boaters, the small port or harbour played no role in the decision (Figure 14). The non-boaters usually visited the harbour by car (44%), by bicycle (24%) or by other means (16%) (i.e. walking) (Figure 15). The typical visits were day trips (52%) or the visits were for one night (31%) (Figure 16).

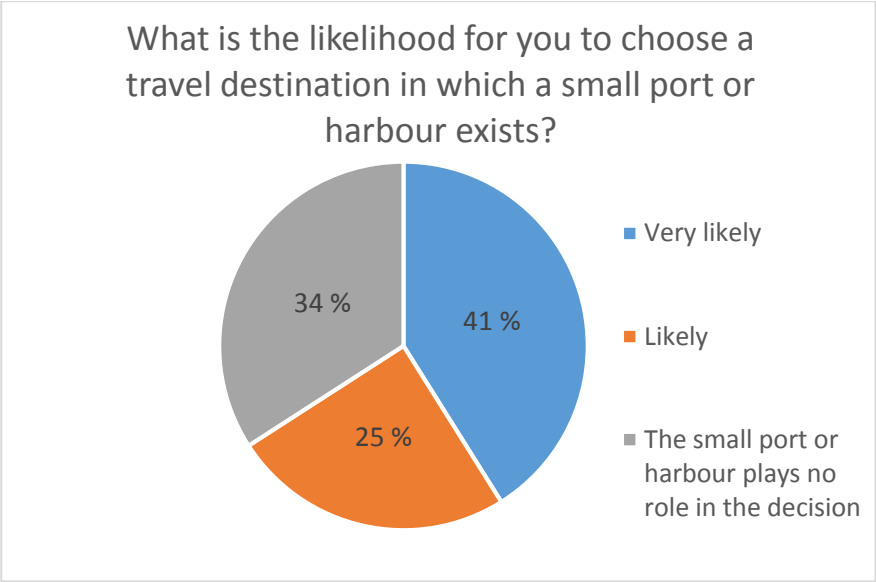


Figure 14. The likelihood of choosing a travel destination in which a small port or harbour exists.

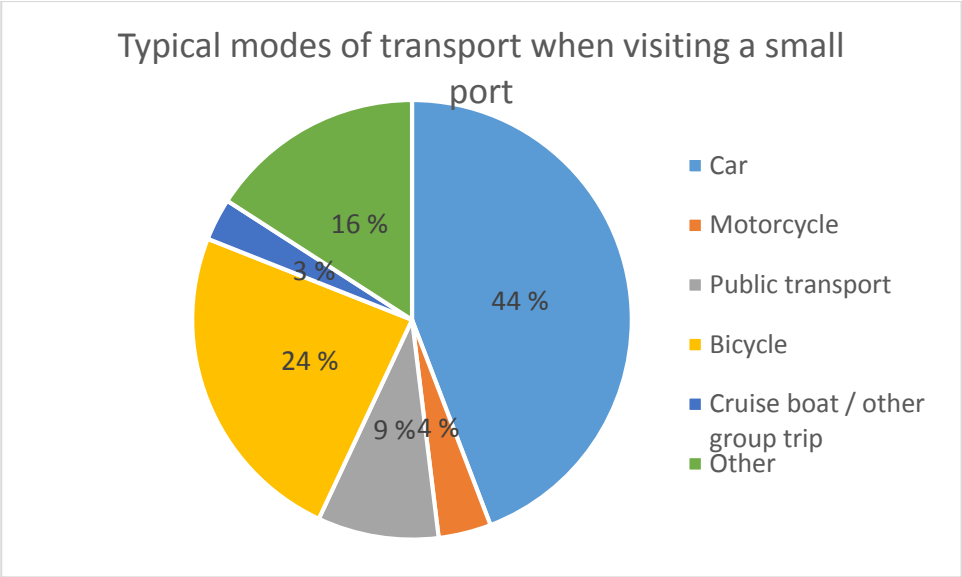


Figure 15. Typical modes of transport when visiting a small port.

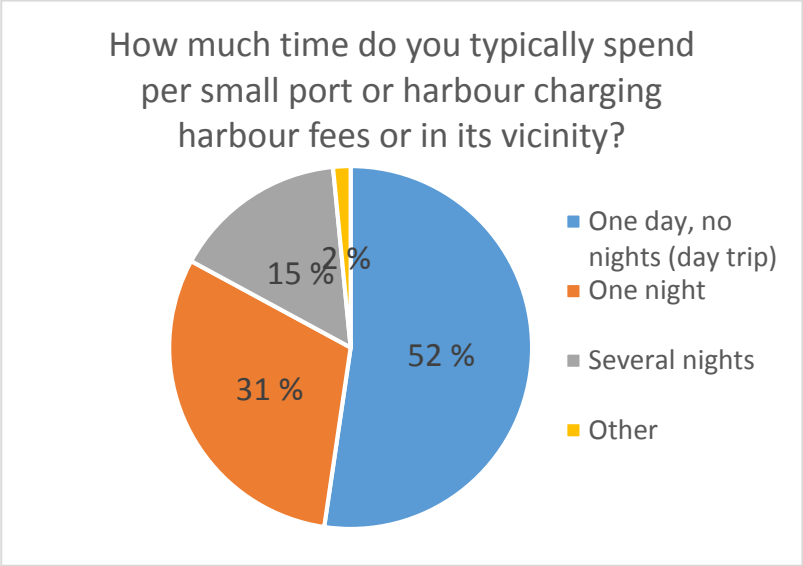


Figure 16. Typical amount of time spend per small port or harbour charging harbour fees or in its vicinity.

Services for visitors

The respondents (both boaters and non-boaters) considered the general safety of the port, the availability of basic services and the accessibility of harbour by sea as the three most important services in a small port or harbour. The second most important services were the quality of the customer service, the general price level and the closeness of the port to nature. The services considered the fifth most important were accessibility of harbour by land, cultural events and family-friendliness (Figure 17).

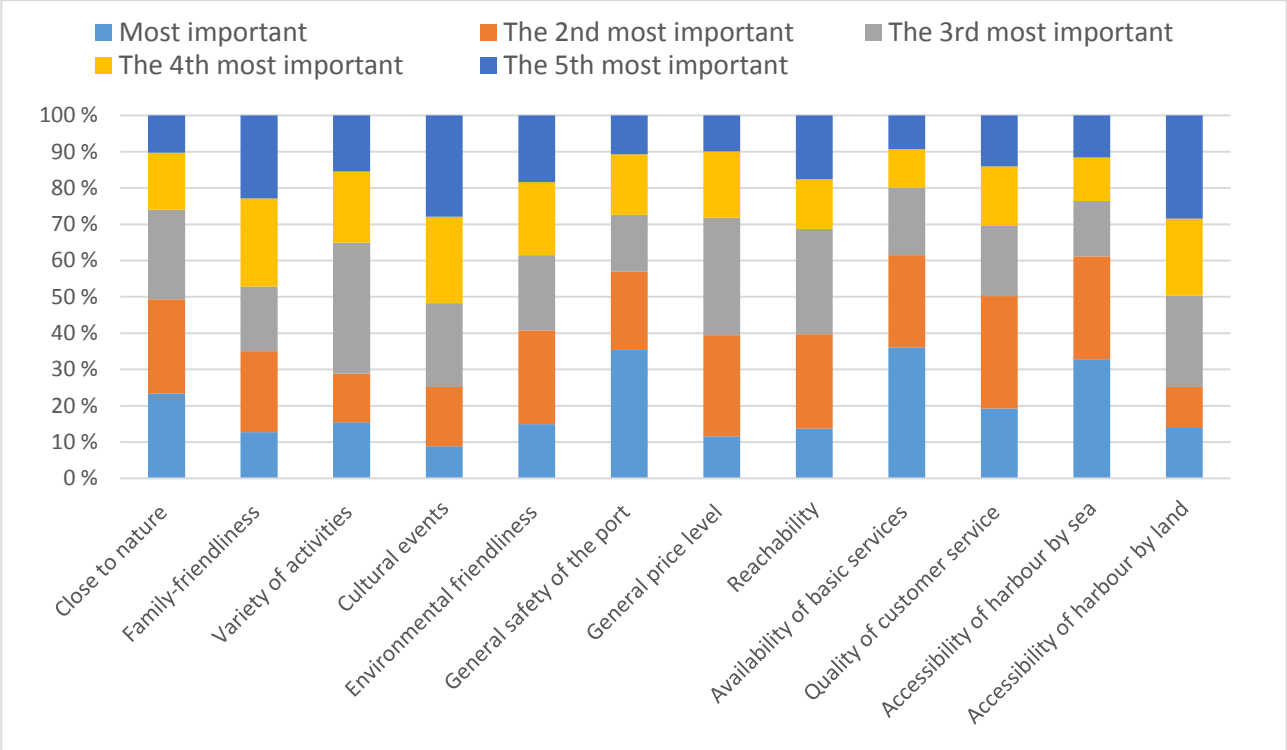


Figure 17. When visiting a small port or harbour, how important are the following to you? Please select the five most important factors, only one per column.

Out of the different small port or harbour services, the respondents used the basic services such as toilets, showers, saunas, restaurants and café services as well as shop services / boutiques and kiosks the most. In addition, berths and waste management were considered important. However, services such as rental cabins, camping areas, hotel/hostels, other accommodation, golf course or wellbeing services were "never" used by most of the respondents and so considered less important. In addition, services such as events, cultural attractions as well as hiking trails were not among the most often used services but were still used "sometimes" (Figure 18)

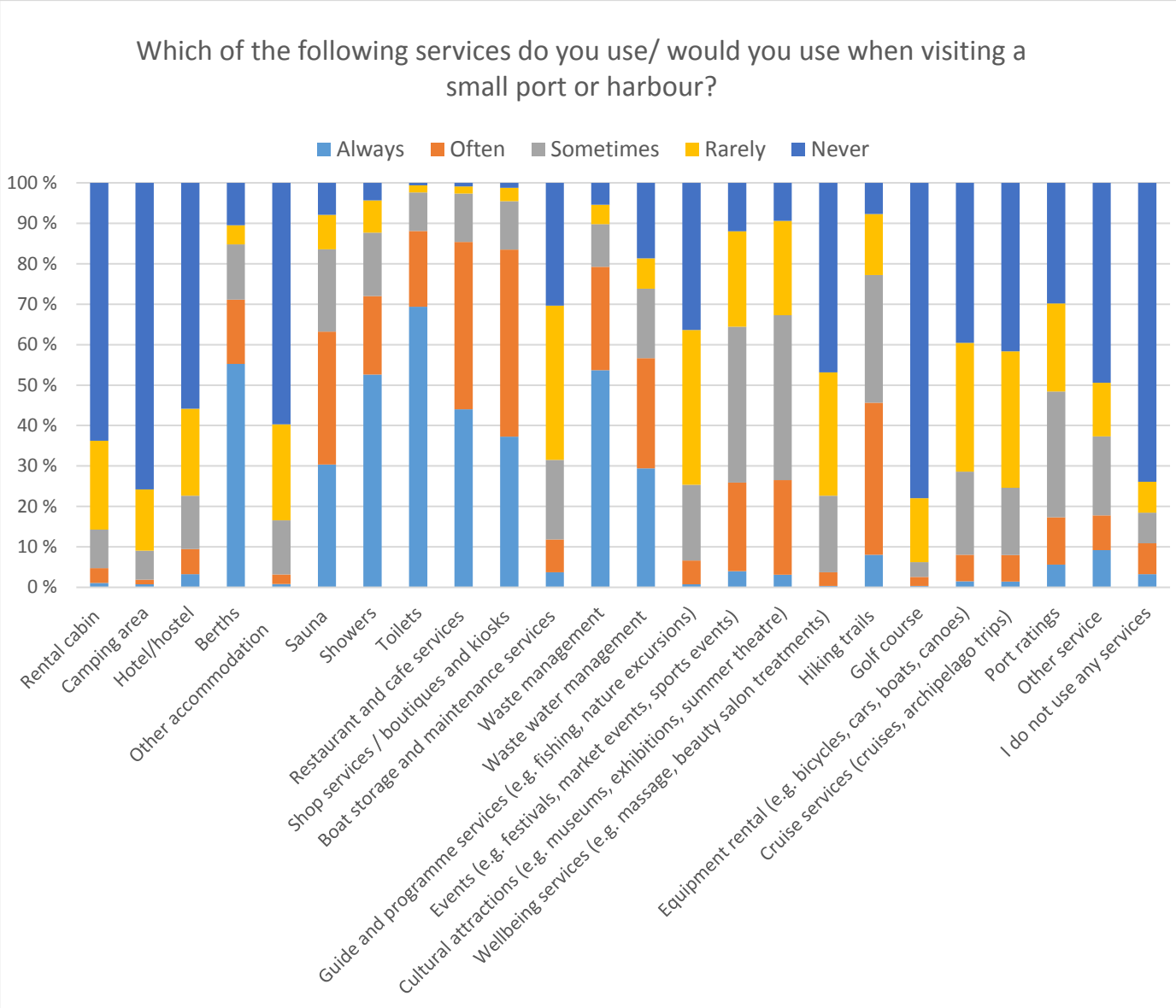
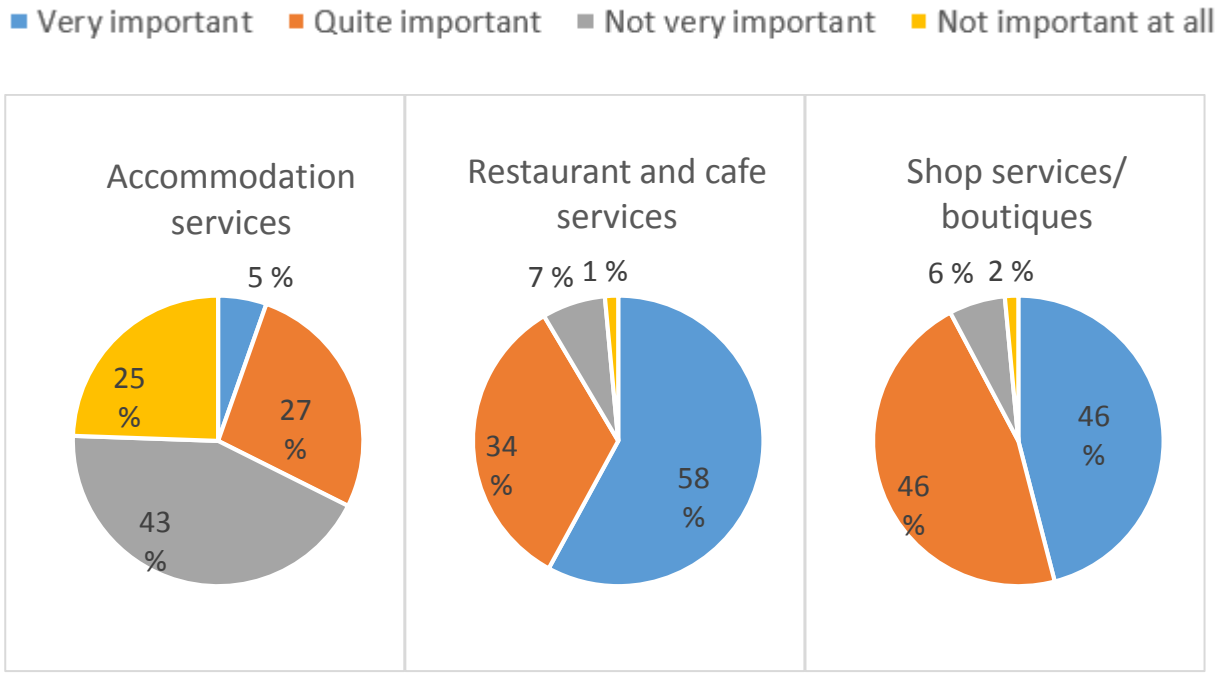
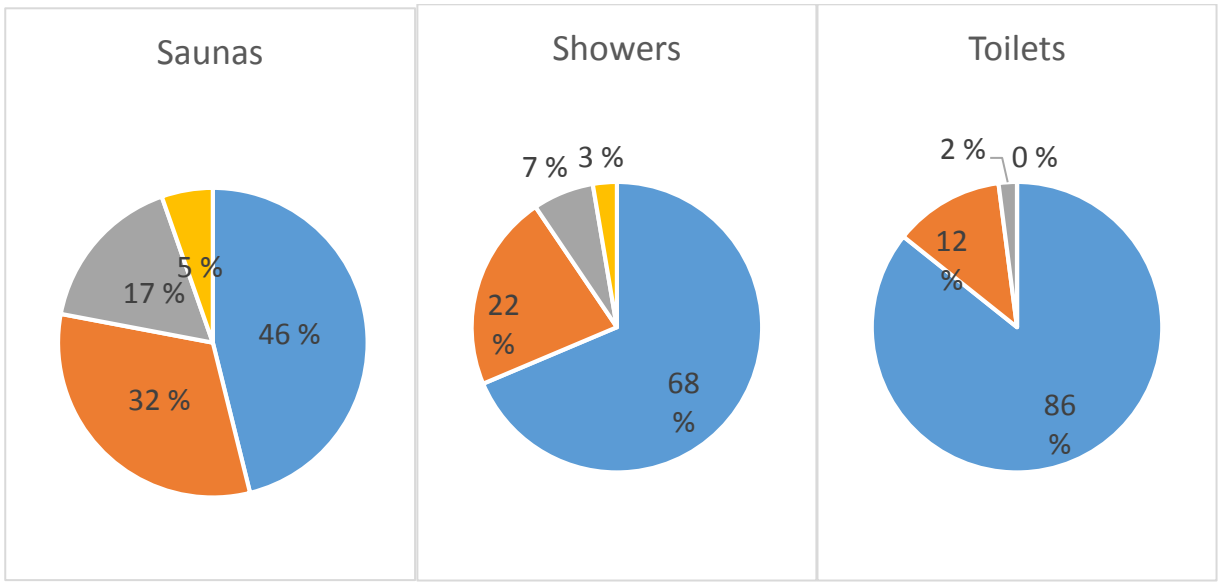


Figure 18. The different services used when visiting a small port or harbour.

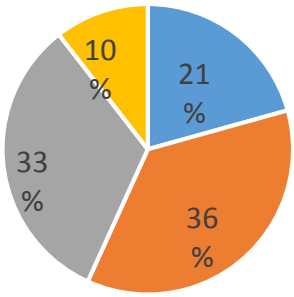
General services

In this part of the questionnaire, the different services were assessed more specifically and the importance of each service was estimated. Out of the all the general services, most of the respondents considered the following services "very important": toilets (86%), saunas (46%), showers (68%), restaurants and café services (58%), shop services and boutiques (46%) as well as the quality of customer services (48%). "Quite important" services included, in addition to the already mentioned ones, proximity to the city center, information and signposting provided of nearby services, cooking possibilities/barbeque area as well as swimming places. Various winter activities (e.g. tours, skating, skiing trails) and wellbeing services (e.g. massage, beauty salon treatments) were considered "not important at all" by most of the respondents (Figures 19- 45).

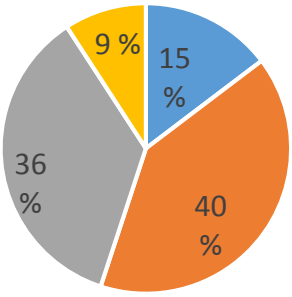




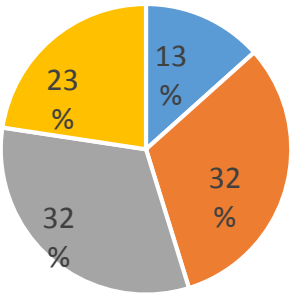
Washing machines / dryers



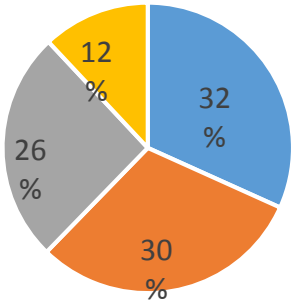
Swimming place



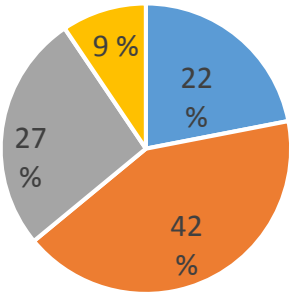
Playground for children



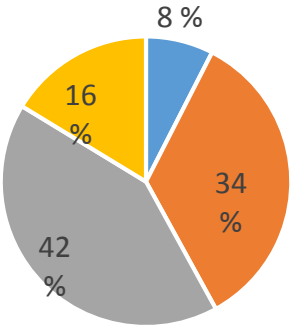
Internet connection

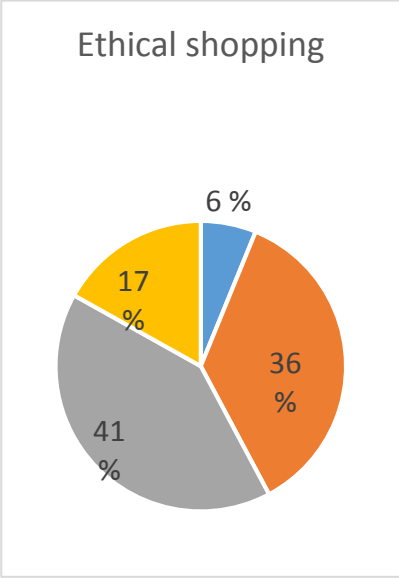


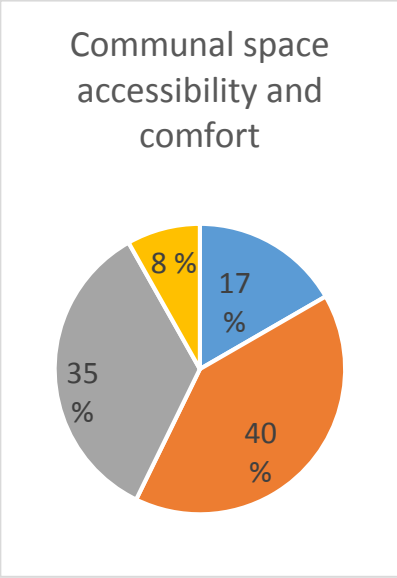
Cooking possibility/ barbeque area

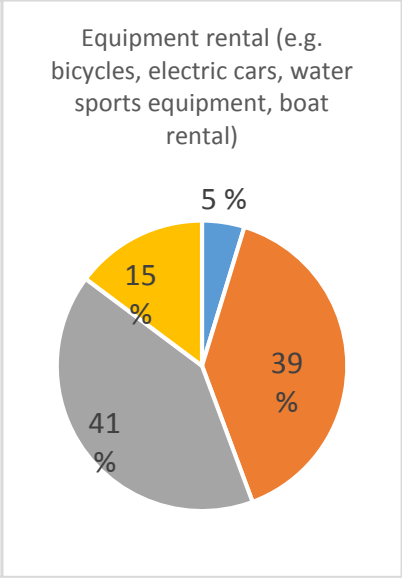


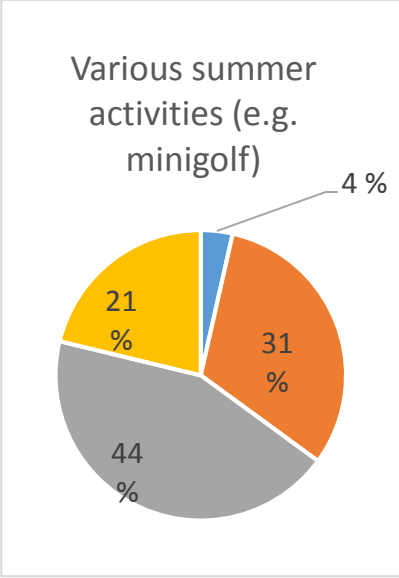
Local and/or organic food

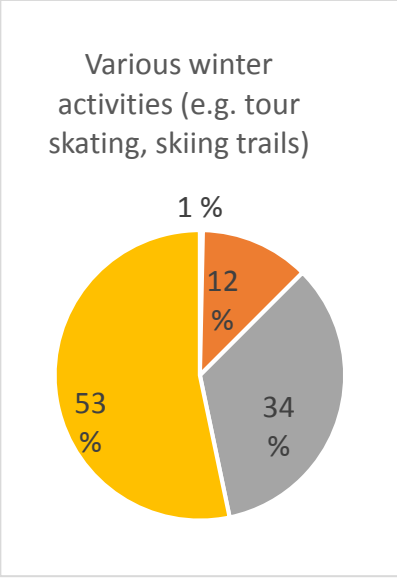


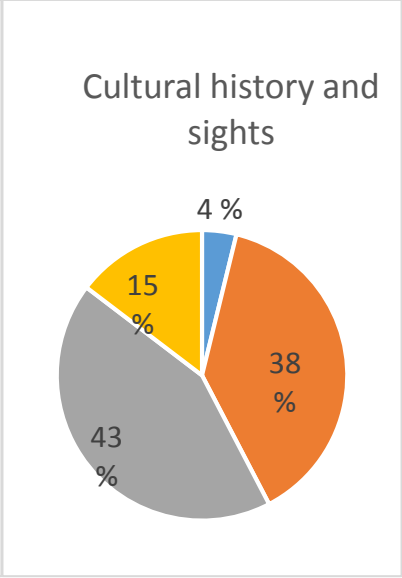

Ethical shopping
6 %
36 %
41 %
17 %

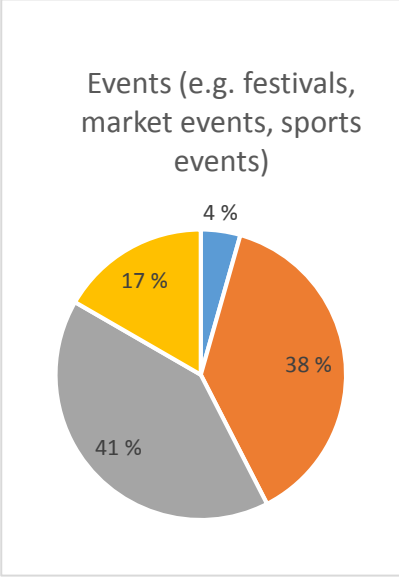

Communal space accessibility and comfort
8 %
17 %
40 %
35 %

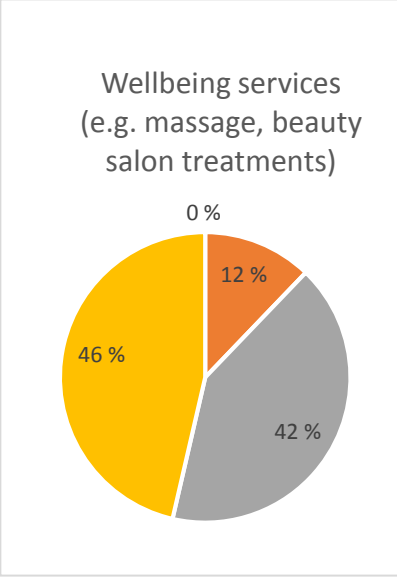

Equipment rental (e.g. bicycles, electric cars, water sports equipment, boat rental)
5 %
39 %
41 %
15 %

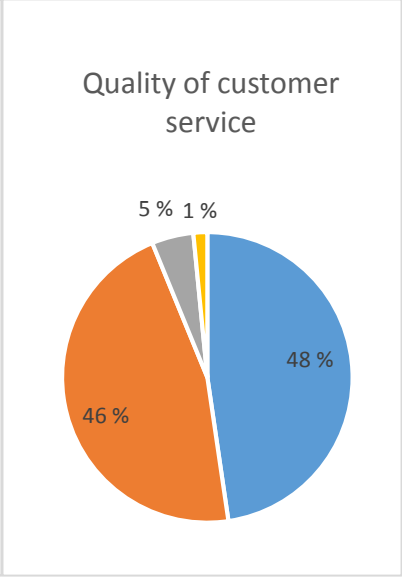

Various summer activities (e.g. minigolf)
4 %
31 %
44 %
21 %

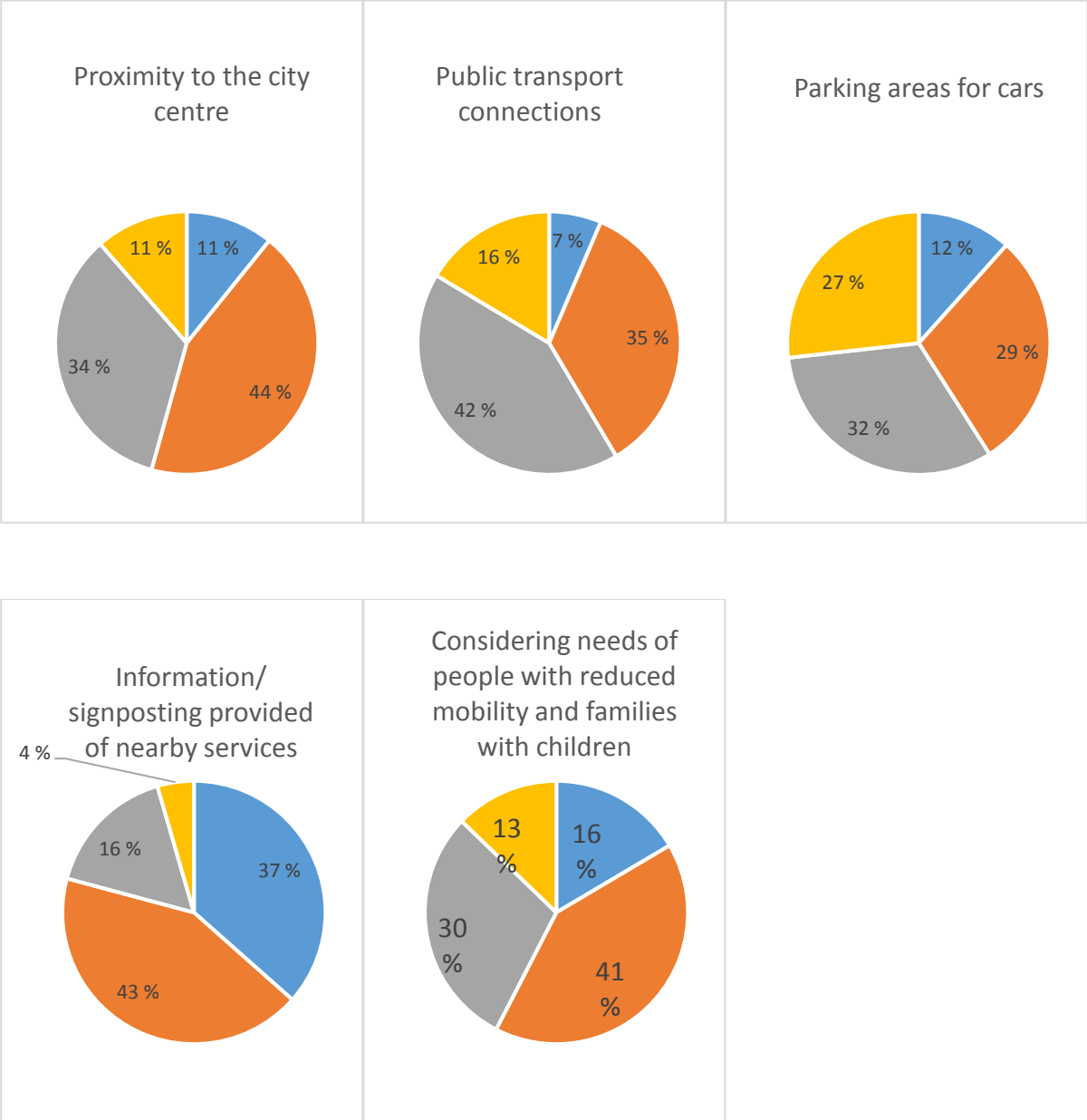

Various winter activities (e.g. tour skating, skiing trails)
1 %
12 %
34 %
53 %


Cultural history and sights
4 %
38 %
43 %
15 %


Events (e.g. festivals, market events, sports events)
4 %
38 %
41 %
17 %


Wellbeing services (e.g. massage, beauty salon treatments)
0 %
12 %
42 %
46 %

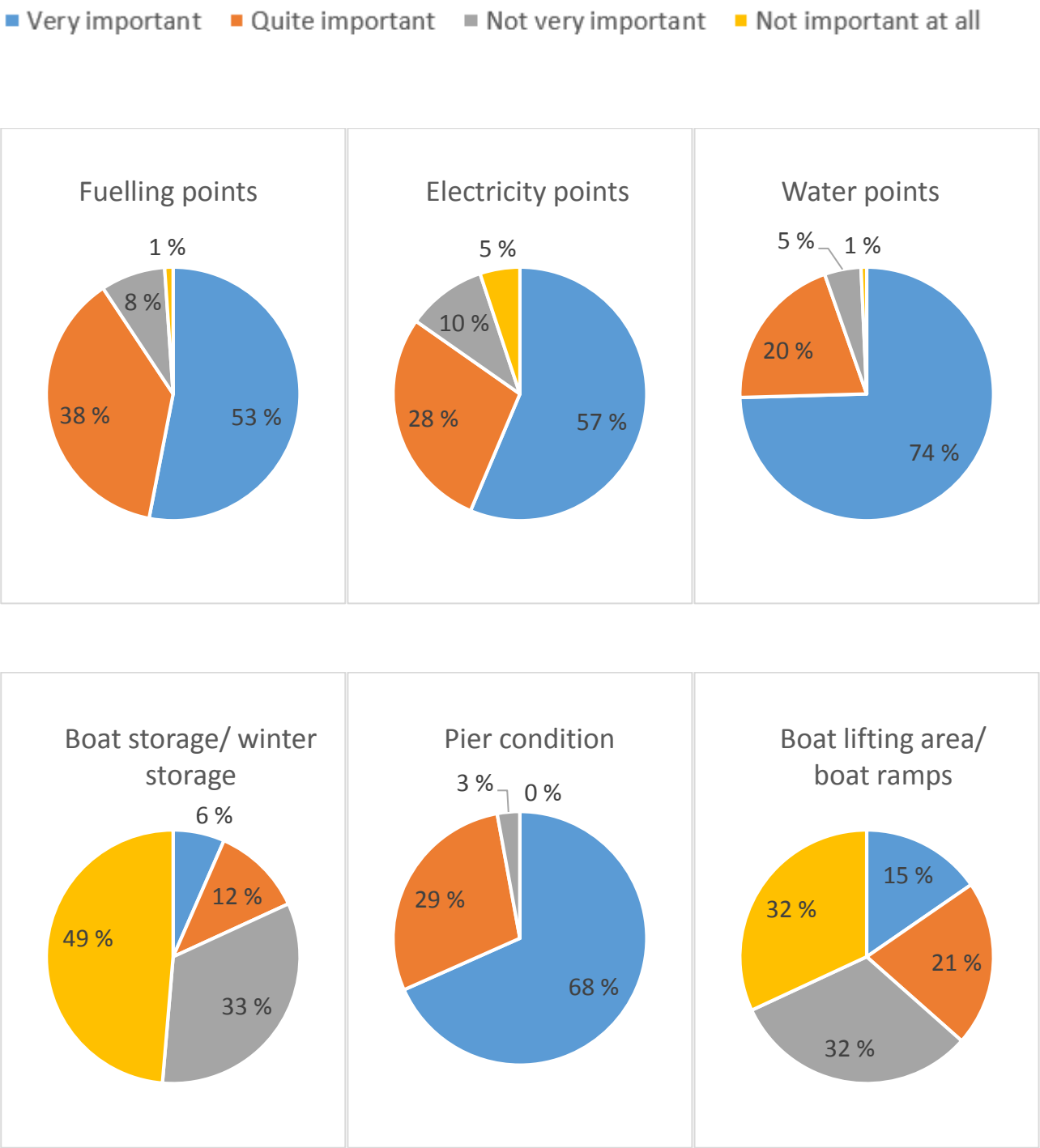

Quality of customer service
5 %
1 %
48 %
46 %

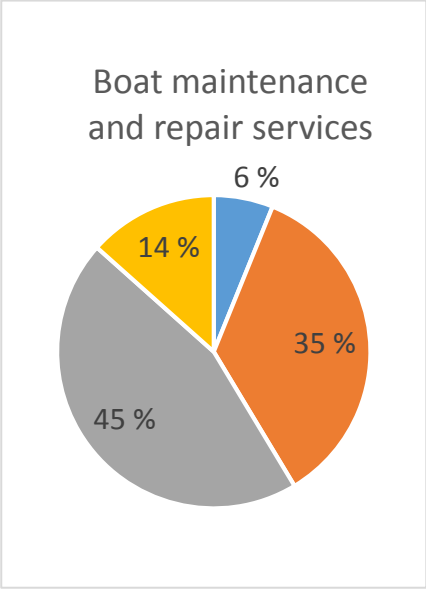


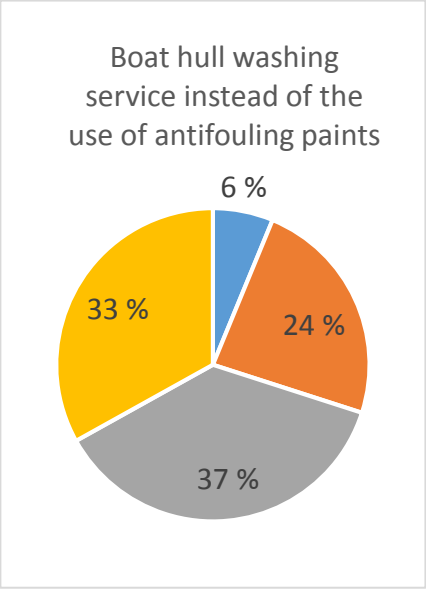
Figures 19- 45. How important is it to you, that the small port or harbour provides the following services?

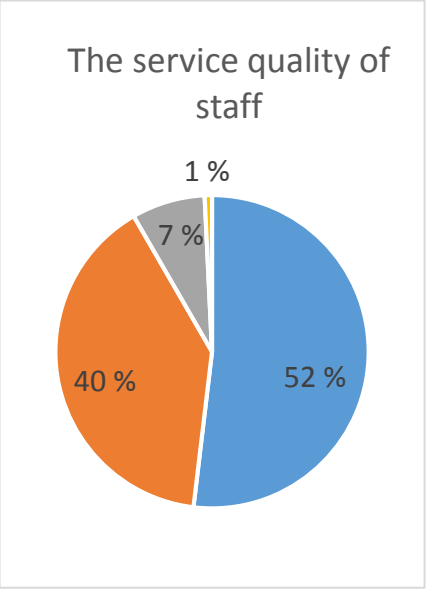
Boat services

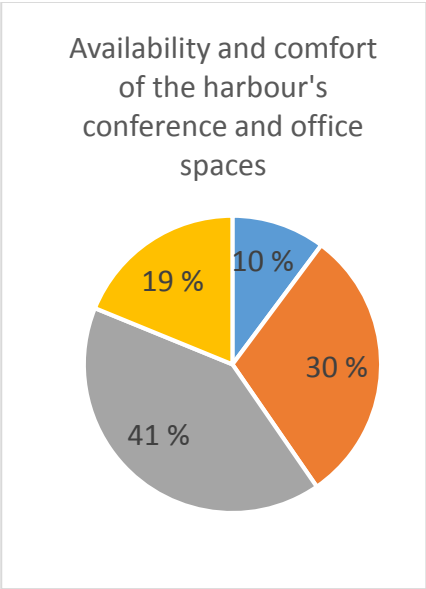
The following boat services were considered "very important" by most of the respondents: the availability of water points (74%), pier condition (68%), availability of electricity points (57%) and availability of fueling points (53%). On the contrary, most of the respondents found e.g. boat storage/ winter storage "not important at all" (49%), as well as boat hull washing service instead of using the antifouling paints (33%) and boat lifting area/boat ramps (32%) (Figures 46- 59).

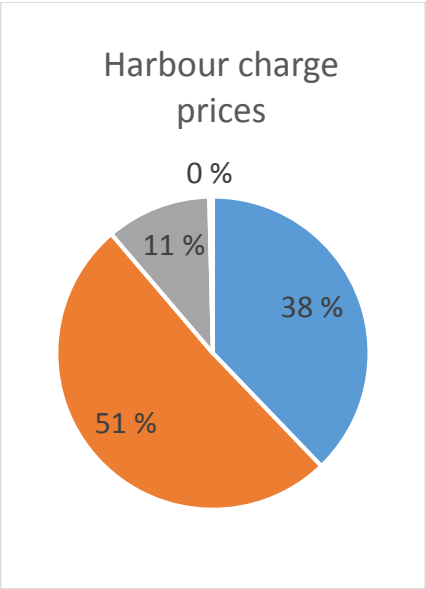


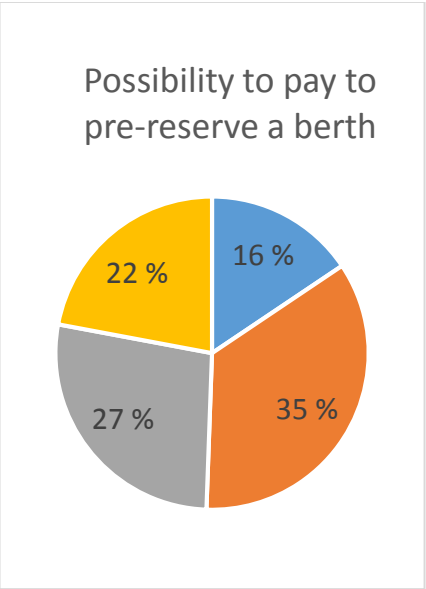

Boat maintenance and repair services
6 %
35 %
45 %
14 %

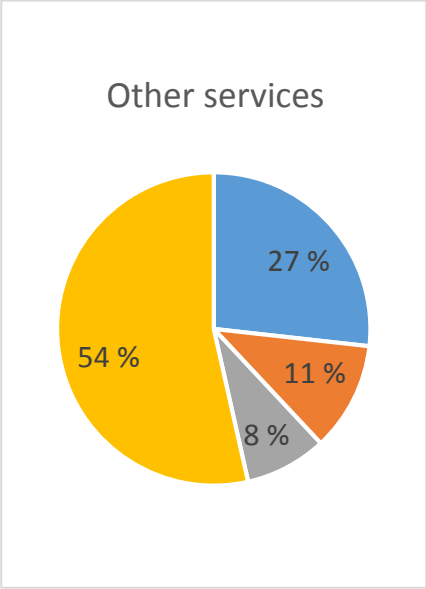

Boat hull washing service instead of the use of antifouling paints
6 %
24 %
37 %
33 %


The service quality of staff
1 %
7 %
40 %
52 %


Availability and comfort of the harbour's conference and office spaces
10 %
30 %
41 %
19 %


Harbour charge prices
0 %
38 %
51 %
11 %

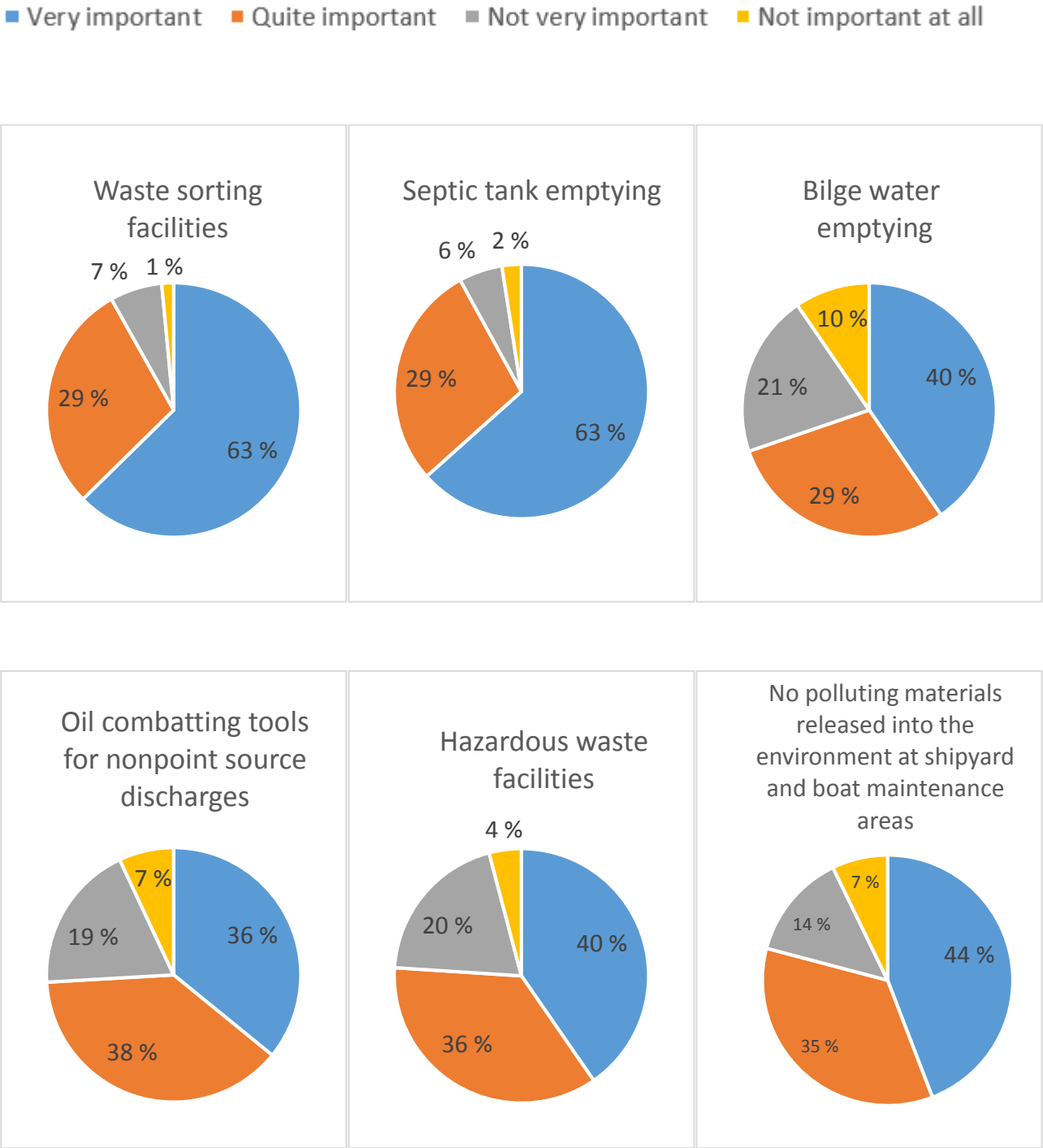

Possibility to pay to pre-reserve a berth
16 %
35 %
27 %
22 %

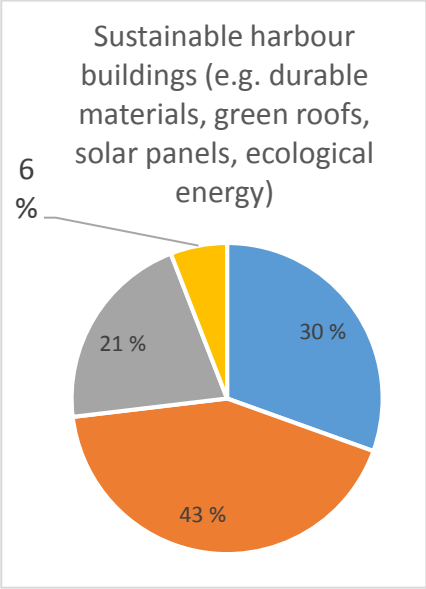


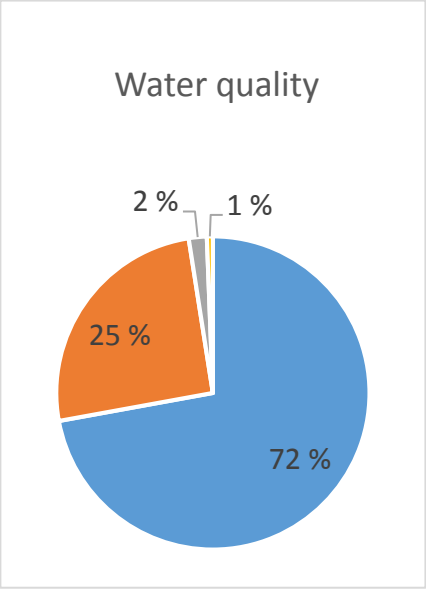
Figures 46- 59. How important is it to you, that the small port or harbour provides the following services?

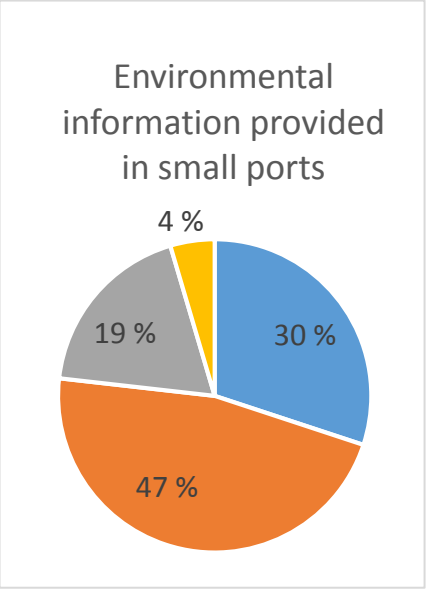
Environmental services

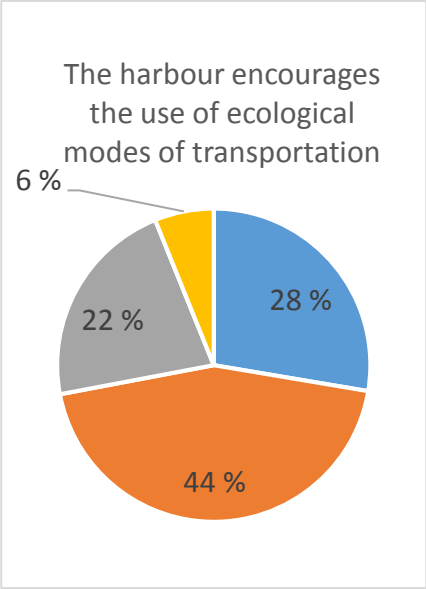
The following environmental services were considered "very important" by most of the respondents: water quality (72%), waste sorting facilities (63%) and septic tank emptying services (63%). On the contrary, environmentally friendly produced electricity of the port and controlling the driving and parking car only in designated areas were considered "not important at all" by most of the respondents (Figures 60- 73). Other services mentioned by the respondents included e.g. providing space for washing dishes as well as the importance of tidy and rubbish free port surroundings.

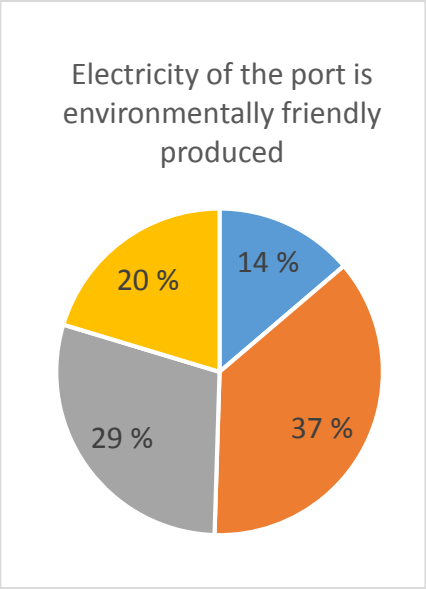


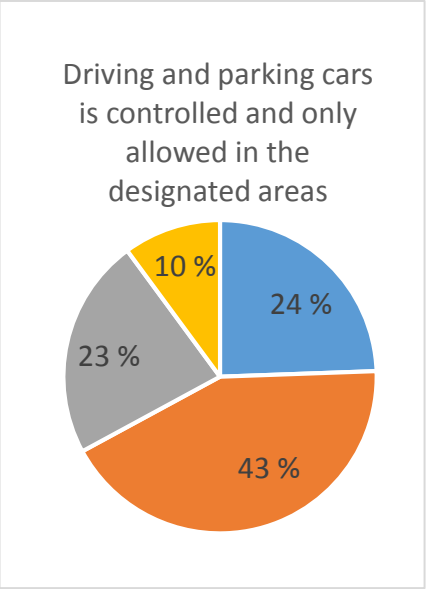

Sustainable harbour buildings (e.g. durable materials, green roofs, solar panels, ecological energy)
6 %
30 %
21 %
43 %

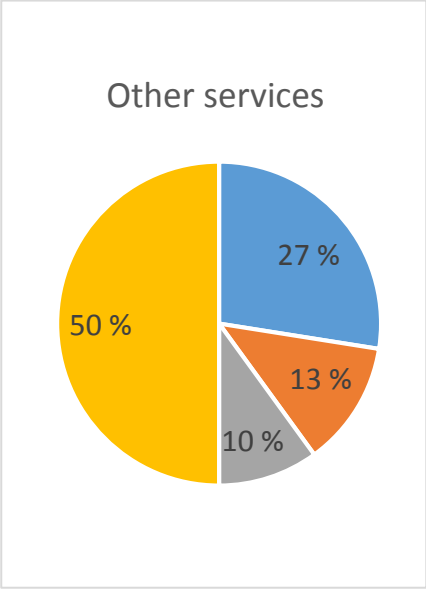

Water quality
2 %
1 %
25 %
72 %


Environmental information provided in small ports
4 %
19 %
30 %
47 %


The harbour encourages the use of ecological modes of transportation
6 %
28 %
22 %
44 %


Electricity of the port is environmentally friendly produced
20 %
14 %
29 %
37 %

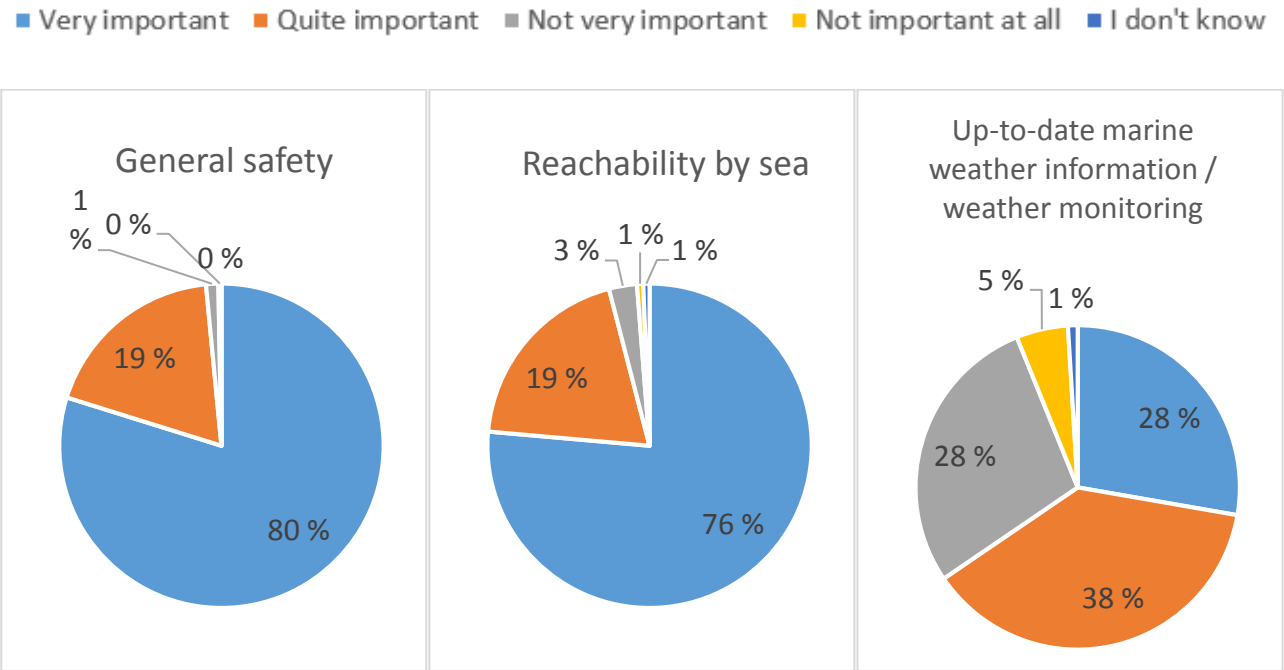

Driving and parking cars is controlled and only allowed in the designated areas
10 %
24 %
23 %
43 %

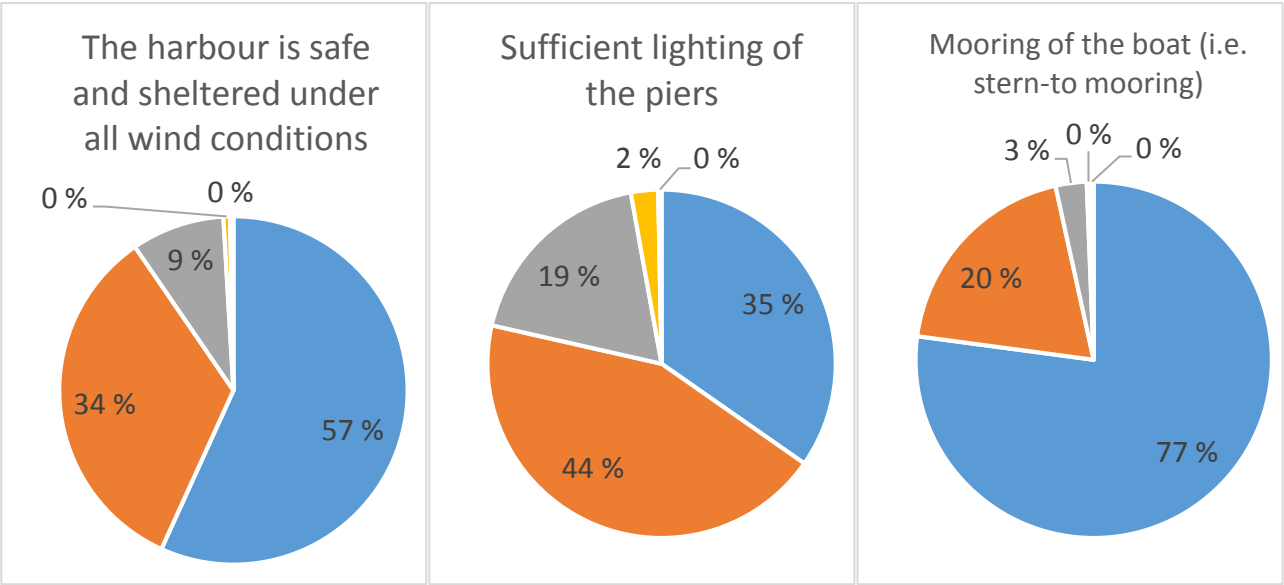


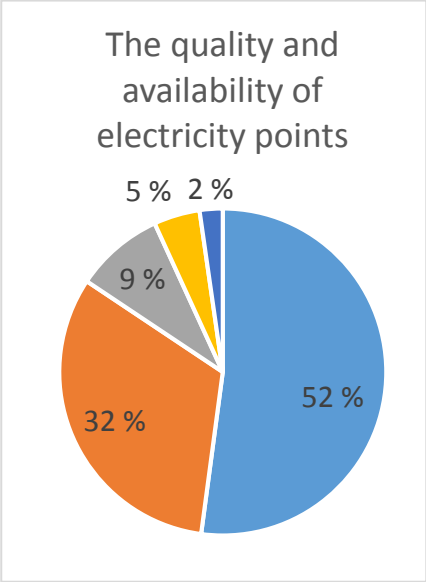
Figures 60- 73. How important is it to you, that the small port or harbour provides the following services?

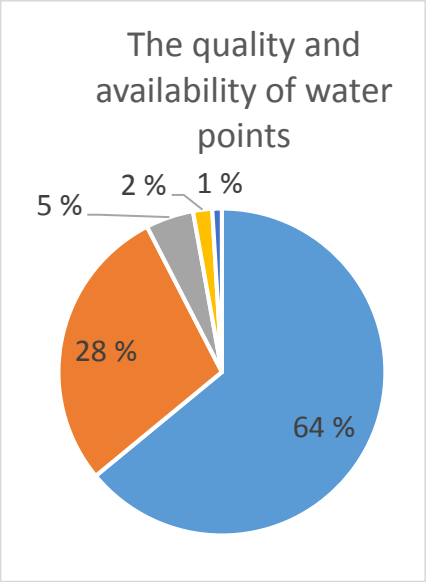
Safety services

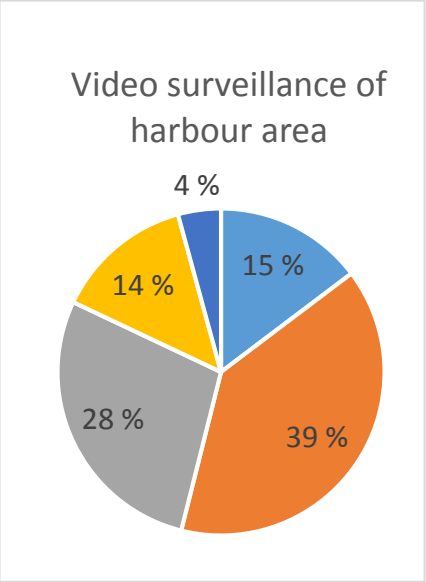
The following safety services were considered "very important" by most of the respondents: general safety (Area is generally tidy, the condition of the piers, buoys, piles and beams has been inspected, the safety instructions are clearly displayed) (80%), reachability by sea (fairways and the depth of fairways have been clearly marked, sufficient lightning of the fairways) (76%) as well as the mooring of the boat (i.e. stern-to mooring) (77%). In addition, the quality and availability of water points (64%) and the quality and availability of electricity points (52%) were considered "very important" (Figures 76-90). The other services mentioned by the respondents included e.g. the importance of a competent harbor master.

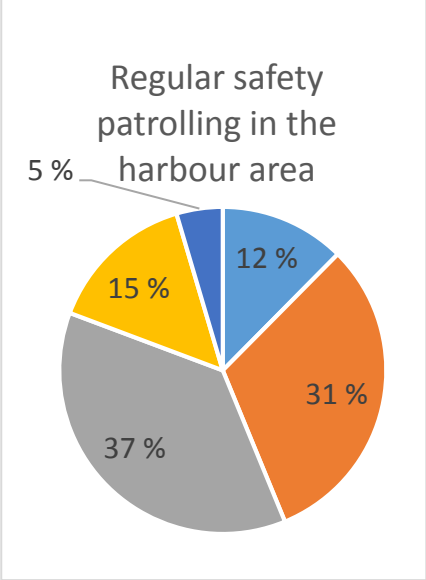


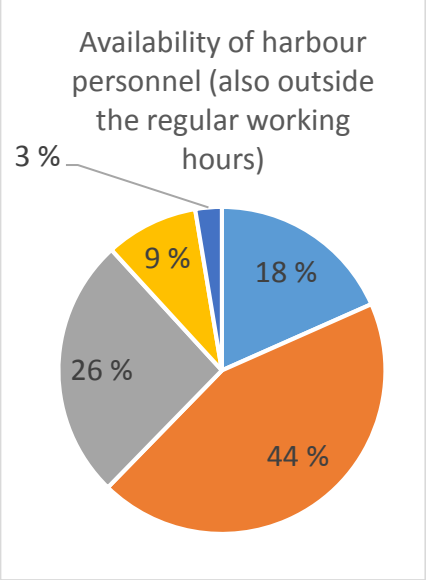


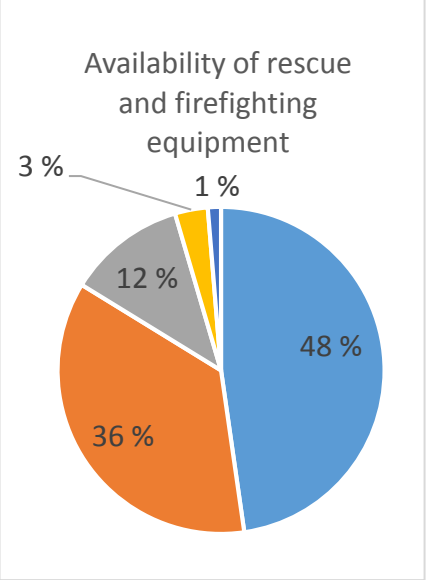

The quality and availability of electricity points
5 %
2 %
9 %
32 %
52 %

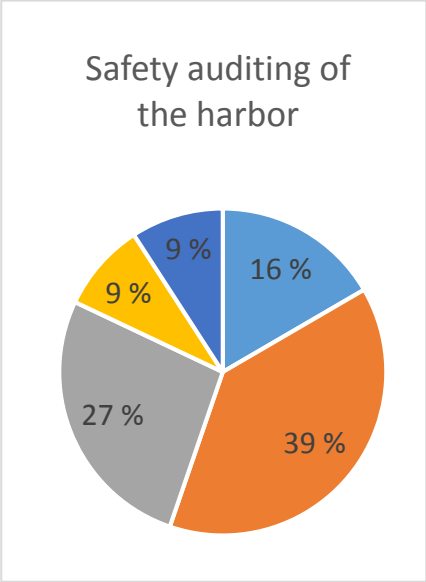

The quality and availability of water points
5 %
2 %
1 %
28 %
64 %

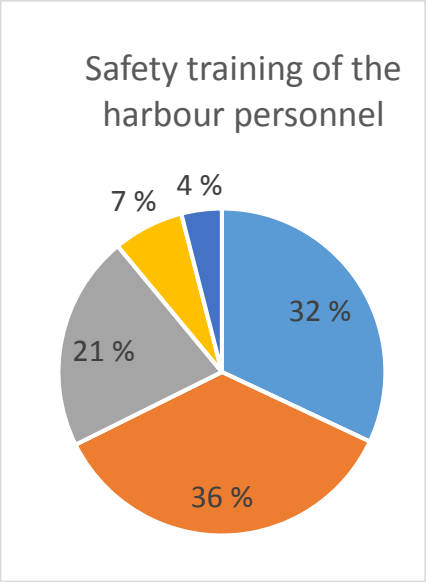

Video surveillance of harbour area
4 %
15 %
14 %
28 %
39 %

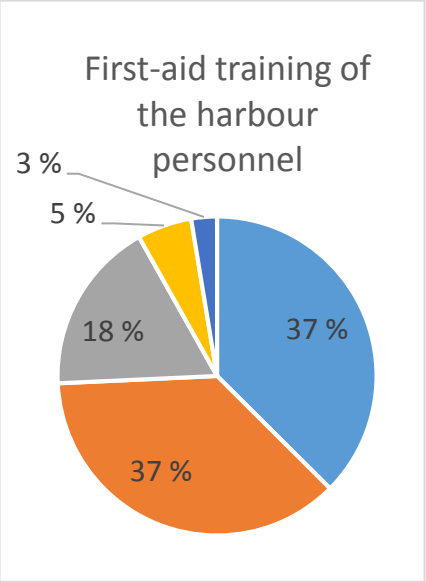

Regular safety patrolling in the harbour area
5 %
12 %
15 %
31 %
37 %

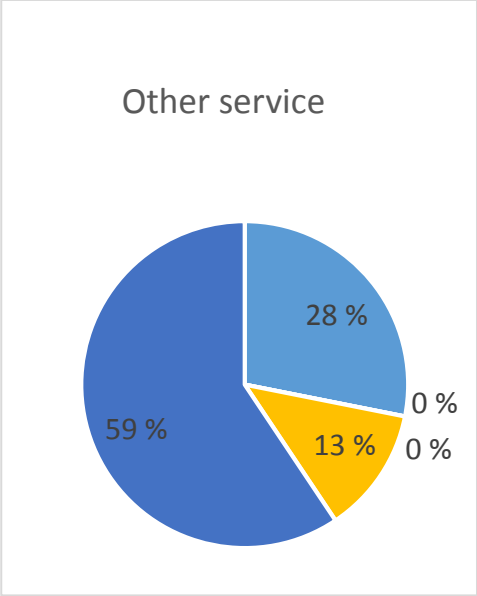

Availability of harbour personnel (also outside the regular working hours)
3 %
9 %
18 %
26 %
44 %


Availability of rescue and firefighting equipment
3 %
1 %
12 %
48 %
36 %





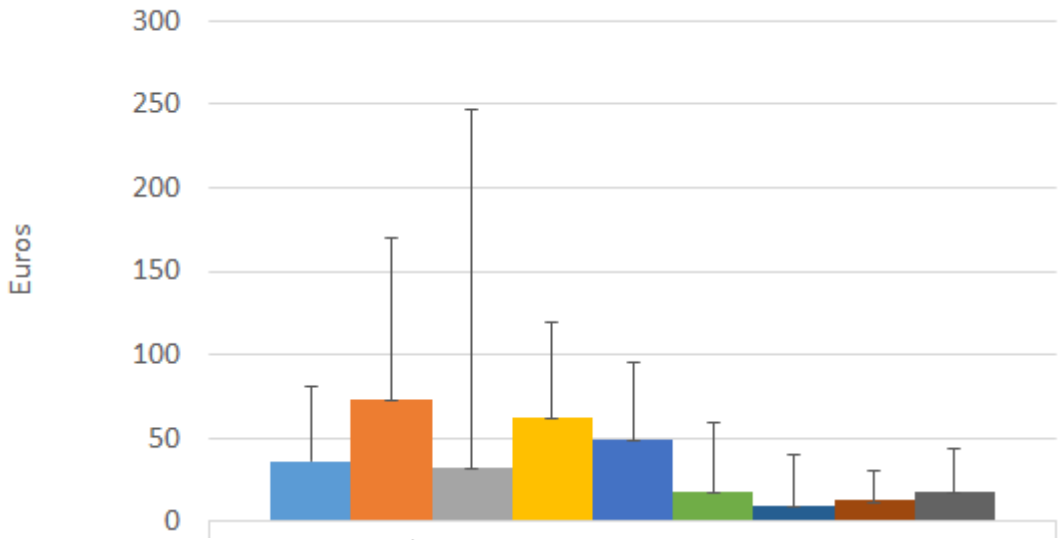




Figures 74- 90. How important is it to you, that the small port or harbour provides the following services?

Expenditure

The respondents were also asked to estimate their expenditure (in euros) per day and per travel group in a small port or harbor. Fuel and other maintenance costs had the highest average (73,51 euros), but money was also spend on food and other groceries (49,59 euros) as well as in cafés and restaurants (62, 13 euros) (Figure 91).



Harbour charges	36,12
Fuel and other maintenance costs	73,51
Boating equipment	32,17
Cafes and restaurants	62,13
Food and other groceries	49,59
Accomondations	17,65
Local travel costs	9,6
Programme and recreational services	12,7
Other	17,88

Figure 91. Average expenditure (in euros) and standard deviations for the different costs.

Open ended questions

A summary of the replies to the open ended questions is provided here, however, the responses will be further analyzed during the 30MILES project. At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to describe: 1) their dream home harbours and 2) their dream guest harbours. Majority of the respondents described the dream home harbor as being situated near-by and also being safe and sheltered from the wind. The availability and good condition of the water and electricity points were considered important, as well as the good condition of the piers and berths. According to the respondents the home harbour also needed to be peaceful and tidy and provide basic services for boaters.

Similarly to the dream home harbour, the dream guest harbour was described as being safe, peaceful and tidy. In addition, basic services needed to be situated nearby including a café and/or restaurant, grocery shop, and preferably a sauna. The quality of customer service was also highlighted.

In addition, the respondents were asked to describe a sustainable small port. Here, the respondents highlighted the need for more waste sorting and septic tank emptying facilities as well as the functionality of such facilities. A sustainable small port also needed to consider the safety elements and provide basic services. The respondents also emphasized the importance of locality: the respondents saw the marketing of local specialties important, but, in addition, the respondents pointed out the importance of the locals acting as entrepreneurs as well as having an active role in decision-making concerning the development of small ports and harbours.

Finally, the respondents were also asked if there were any services or facilities that were often missing in the guest harbours: the mentioned ones included e.g. sauna, washing machines and driers, waste sorting facilities, septic tank emptying facilities, cooking possibilities/ barbeque area as well as a good quality restaurant and grocery store situated near the harbour.