



ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES  
IN NATURE CONSERVATION  
DEVELOPING A TOOLBOX

10-11-12:13 OTTOBRE 2012 / FONTE CERRETO - L'AQUILA

# Brown bear: a trouble maker or a kind neighbour?

*Project LIFE07NAT/IT/000502 EX-TRA: "Improvement of preservation conditions for  
large carnivores – sharing of good practices"*

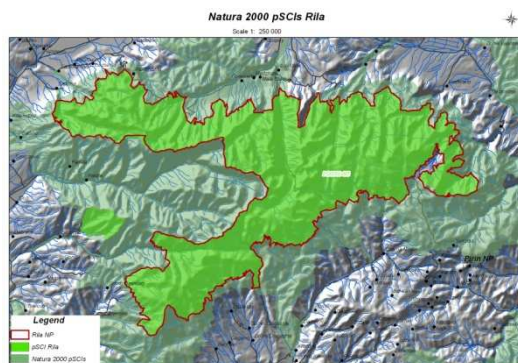
10-12 October 2012  
Italy

# Surveys conducted within the project

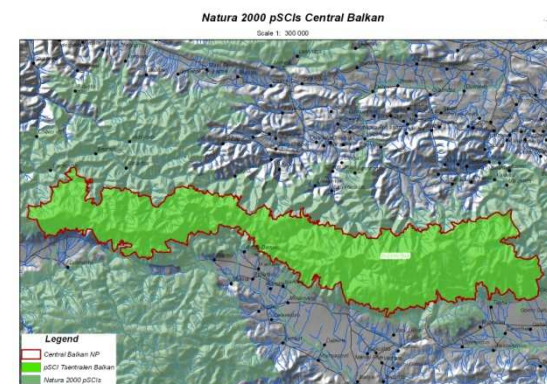
- ❑ Stakeholder analysis – August – December 2009
  - Qualitative survey: in-depth interviews and group discussions
  - Goal: to identify all interested and affected parties in brown bears' protection process and to identify the interest of each party
  
- ❑ Evaluation of the effect of the project: May – September 2012
  - Qualitative survey: in-depth interviews with stakeholders
  - Goal: to evaluate the effect of the project implemented by BALKANI
  
- ❑ Local Population Attitudes towards Brown Bears: August - September 2012
  - Qualitative survey: self-completed and face-to-face questionnaire
  - Goal: to study local people attitudes towards brown bears, awareness about BALKANI project and attitude towards such projects

# Scope of the surveys: 4 regions

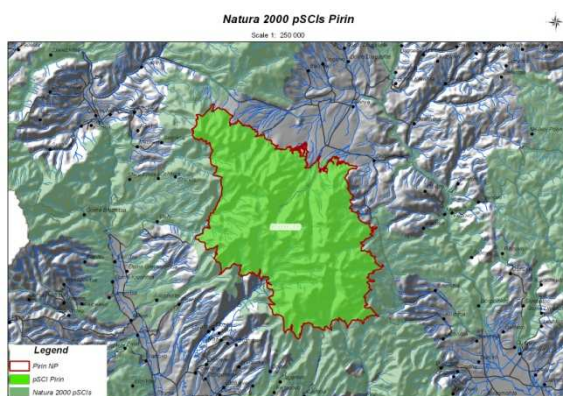
☐ Region Rila: territory of NP Rila



☐ Region Centralen Balkan: territory of NP Centralen Balkan



☐ Region Pirin: territory of NP Pirin



☐ Region Rodopi: West Rodopi Mountain





# SHA revealed 4 main groups of problems/conflicts



Problems in regard to number of bears	Problems based on current legislation	Institutional problems	Problems with local population
Lack of common methodology for bears' counting. Insufficient funding and limited human resources in order to implement reliable bears' counting on national level.	Responsibility – who has to take care and be responsible for bears; which institution does what – monitoring, preservation, control?	Tension and lack of regular communication between MEW and EFA as well as between their regional structures, based on different, often contradictory interests.	Local people abuse - they frame up damages caused by bears.
Division of bears to “our” and “your”; bears on “our territory” and bears “on your territories”	Bear is protected species but with hunting quota (hunting is allowed in accordance with specific conditions cited as exceptions in Directive 92/43 and Biodiversity Law	Insufficient human resources – RIEWP employees are overloaded in order to respond immediately to damages signals.	Local mass media and representatives of State Hunting Units Agencies and State Forestry instill negative attitude toward bears by exaggerating and overexposing situations.
Due to economic interest, employees of State Hunting Units Agencies and State Forestry – both structure of EFA – increase purposely number of bears, according to representatives of MEW	Contradictions and poor relationships between different laws concerning quittance pay off procedure – commission up to one week, which is in contradiction to another law (Animal Health Act)	Insufficient human resources – RIEWP employees are overloaded in order to respond immediately to damages signals.	Lack of knowledge, low awareness and educational culture of local people
Lack of practices/reasons to prove that a certain bear cause damages – so called ‘problem bears’.	Local people often take law into their own hands – poaching. This is caused by distrust that quittance will be paid off in case of damages. On its turn, this is caused by ineffective existing system for quittance pay off.	Rangers in national parks cover vast territories and are not effective.	Traditions in raising livestock and bees – ownerless grazing, unprotected bee-hives
	Legislation is not enforced the same way by different regional MEW structures in all regions – some RIEWP does not describe damages duly.	External pressure on MEW and from MEW over RIEWP in regards to particular cases for bear shooting – bear's trophy is highly valued among hunters, especially by senior government officials with license to shoot or foreign hunters.	Unlawful economic activities of local people - use of meadows without permission, unregulated grazing, irregularities in livestock's passports/documents
	Lack of effective and noticeable by society jurisdiction - there are no punished people; the volume of paid fines is small		Feeding up economically significant game on the by racks not steady on bears' attacks.

## The coexistence of local people with bears is quite different in 4 regions



The Rodopi region is the most conflict region: bear's attacks over the stocks and beehives; 2 serious incidents last 4 years; local population feel fear towards bears. At the same time people there are "soft", they consider as the most effective measure to put bears in protected territories, not to kill them. However, generally the attitudes towards bears is the most negative compared to other 3 regions.

In the region of Centralen Balkan there are few "hot" spots: bear's attacks over the fruit trees; local population has a positive attitude towards bear but the most effective measure to handle bears' attacks is considered to be killing them.

Pirin region: seem to have no visible conflicts between local population and bears, the most positive attitude towards bears in comparison to other regions. The focus is on wolfs, problems with poachers.

Rila region: no visible conflicts between local population and bears, positive attitude towards bears. People there consider the measures should be taken on local level and the best solution is to kill bears.

# Project's effects: evaluation of stakeholders



Evaluated activities:

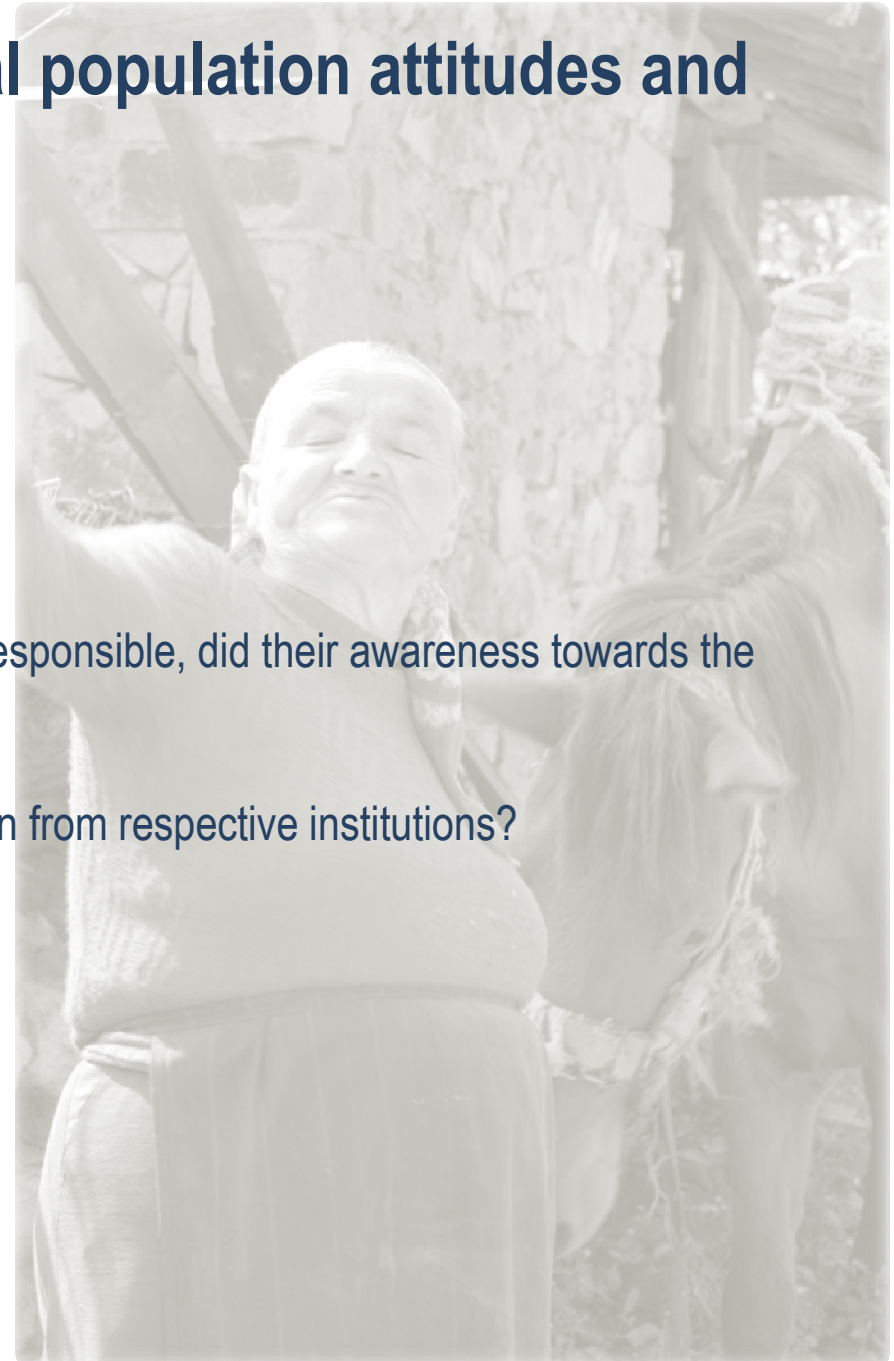
- Distribution of electric fences. This activity was mainly implemented in Rodopi region.
- Rangers and other institutions training to evaluate damages caused by large carnivores.
- Establishing and training of local urgency teams (Rodopi region).
- Meeting with local population. This activity was implemented mainly in Rodopi region where some conflicts appeared.
- Information campaign (dissemination of brochures/leaflets or other printed material).
- Raising awareness on compensation payment procedure.
- Marking bears.
- Placing photo-traps.



# Project's effects: change is local population attitudes and beliefs

Collected opinions on:

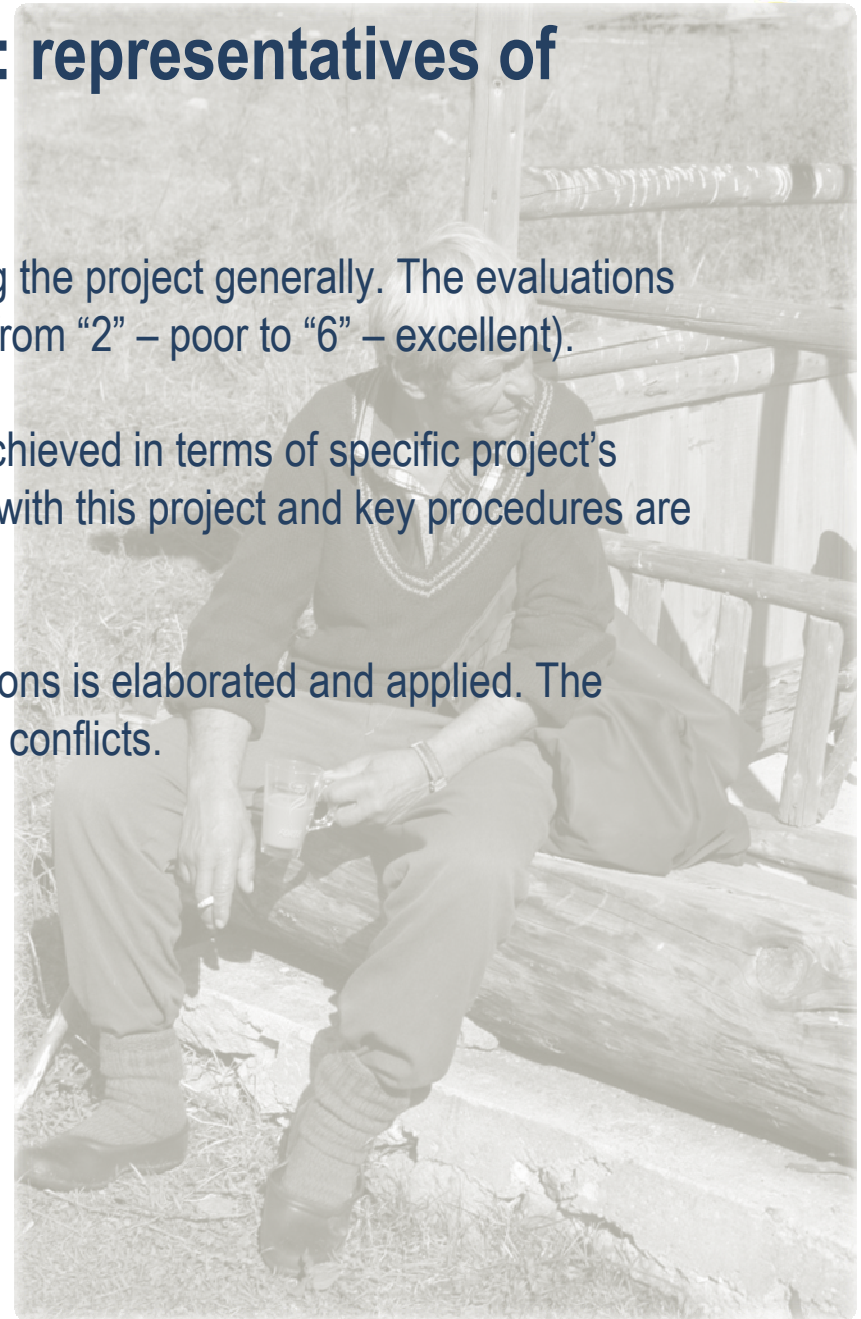
- Change in local people beliefs.
- Did local people become more interested, more responsible, did their awareness towards the topic increase?
- Do local people receive the necessary cooperation from respective institutions?
- Was conflicts people-bears soften?





# General evaluation of the project: representatives of institutions

- ❑ Project's strengths are distinguished when evaluating the project generally. The evaluations given are usually near the average "4" (using the scale from "2" – poor to "6" – excellent).
- ❑ Respondents consider that satisfactory results are achieved in terms of specific project's activities. They emphasize that a good start was set up with this project and key procedures are developed and clarified.
- ❑ An effective algorithm to deal with problematic situations is elaborated and applied. The algorithm could be replicated in many regions in case of conflicts.



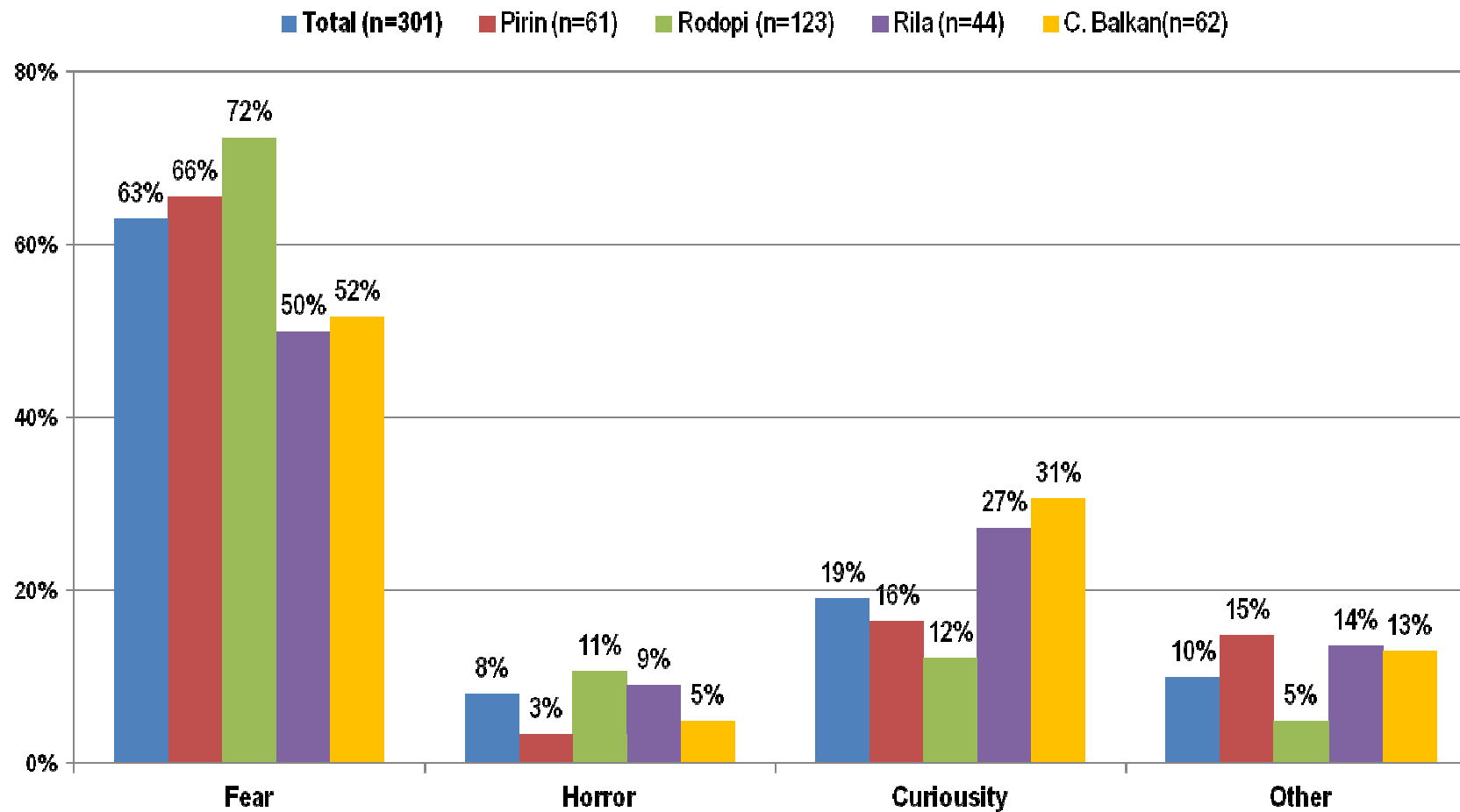


**Local population survey 2012**

# Feelings when meeting a bear



Question: "IMAGINE YOU MEET A BEAR WITHOUT BEING AGGRESSIVE? WHAT IS THE FEELING YOU WILL MOST PROBABLY FEEL?"



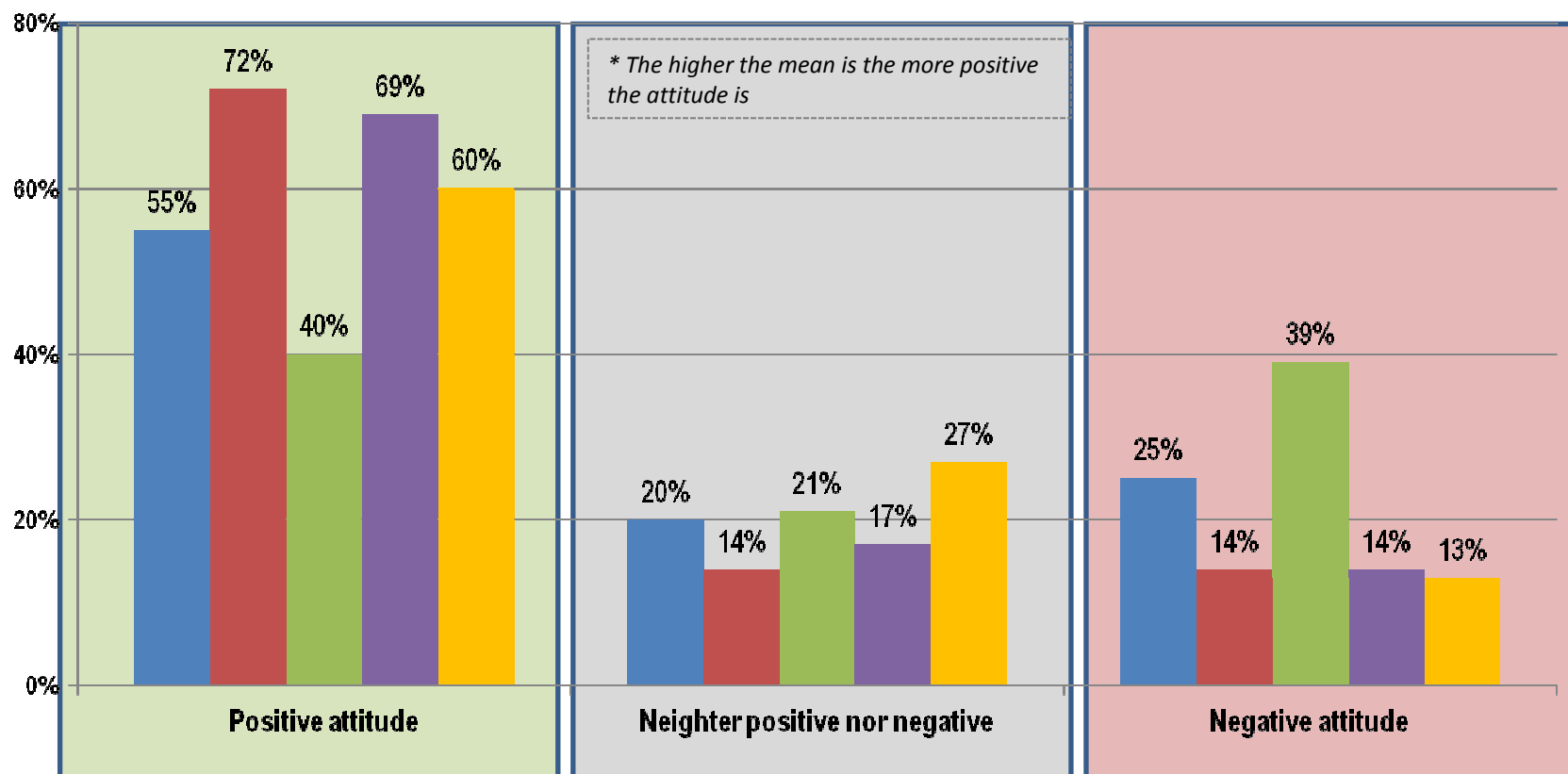
# Attitudes towards bears



Question: "WHAT'S YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS BEARS?" (SCALE FROM 1 TO 5 WHERE 1 IS THE LOWEST AND 5 IS THE HIGHEST EVALUATION)

■ Total (301) ■ Pirin (65) ■ Rodopi (126) ■ Rila (48) ■ C. Balkan (62)

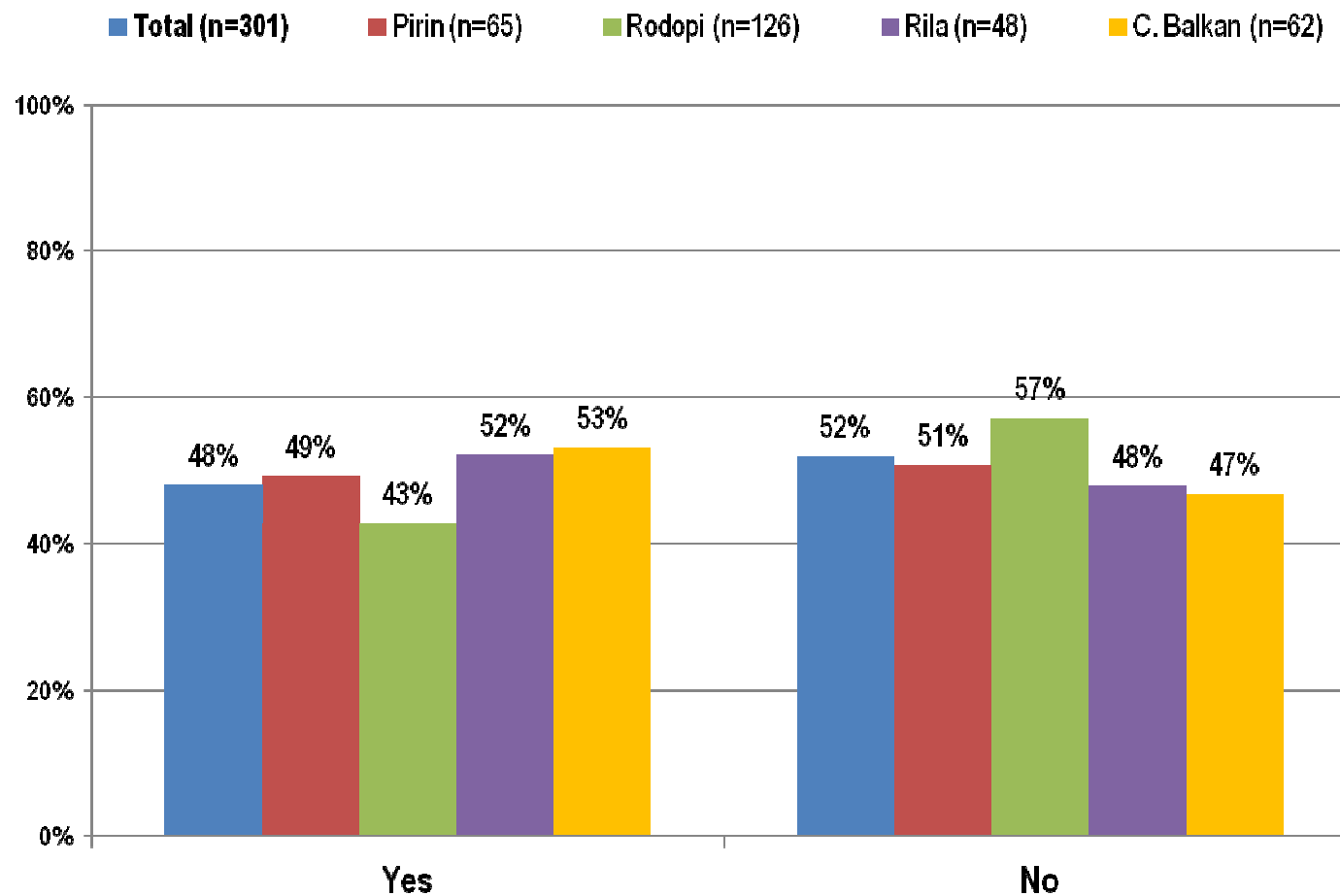
Mean*	3.5	4.0	3.02	3.9	3.8
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# Awareness towards bears' protection related projects



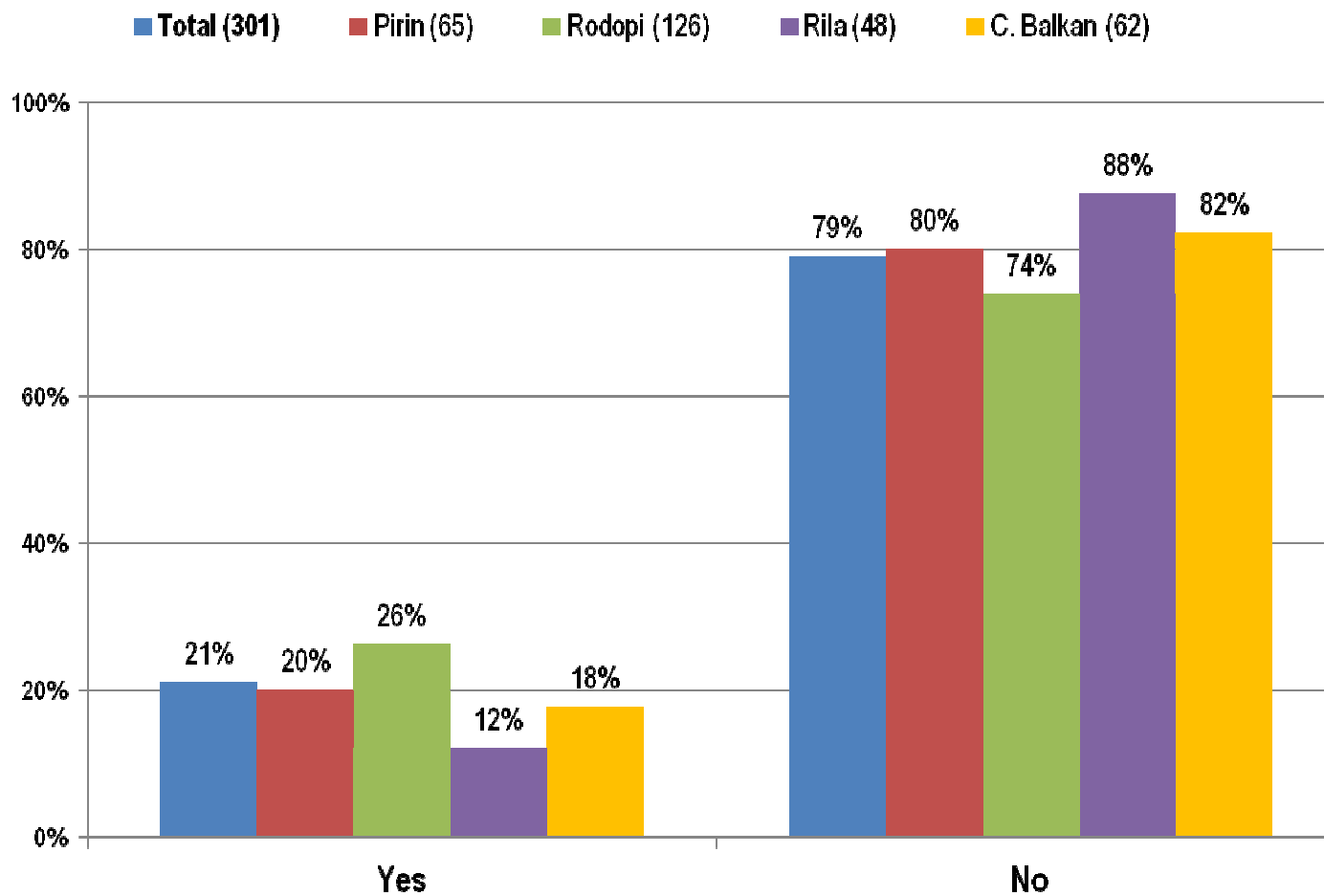
Question: "HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT PROJECTS THAT AIM AT BROWN BEARS PROTECTION?"



# Awareness about BALKANI project



Question: "ARE YOU AWARE SUCH A PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED IN THE REGION?"



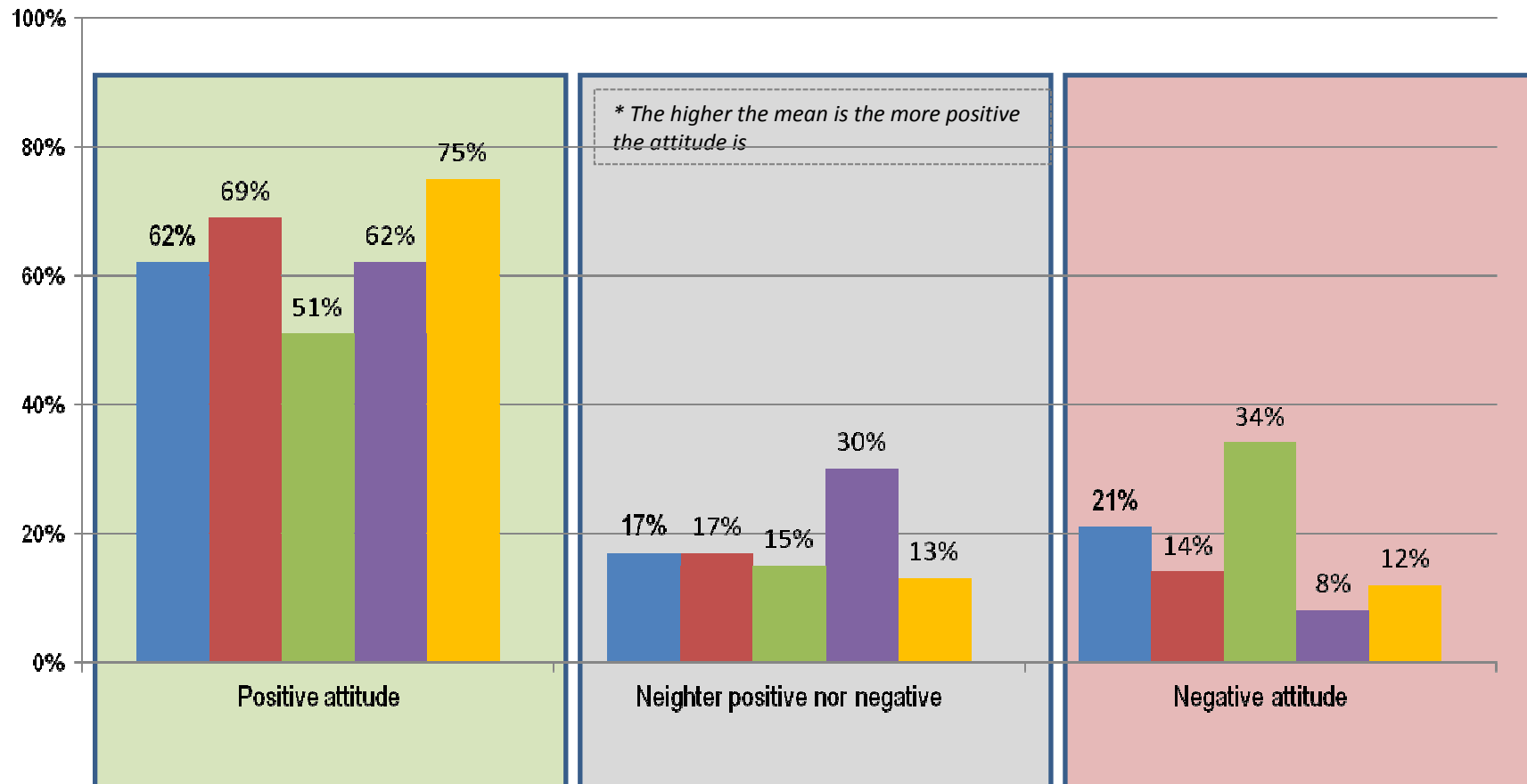
# Attitude towards project related to brown bears' protection



Question: "WHAT'S YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROJECTS THAT AIM BEARS PROTECTION?" (SCALE FORM 1 TO 5 WHERE 1 IS THE LOWEST AND 5 IS THE HIGHEST EVALUATION)

■ Total (301) ■ Pirin (65) ■ Rodopi (126) ■ Rila (48) ■ C. Balkan (62)

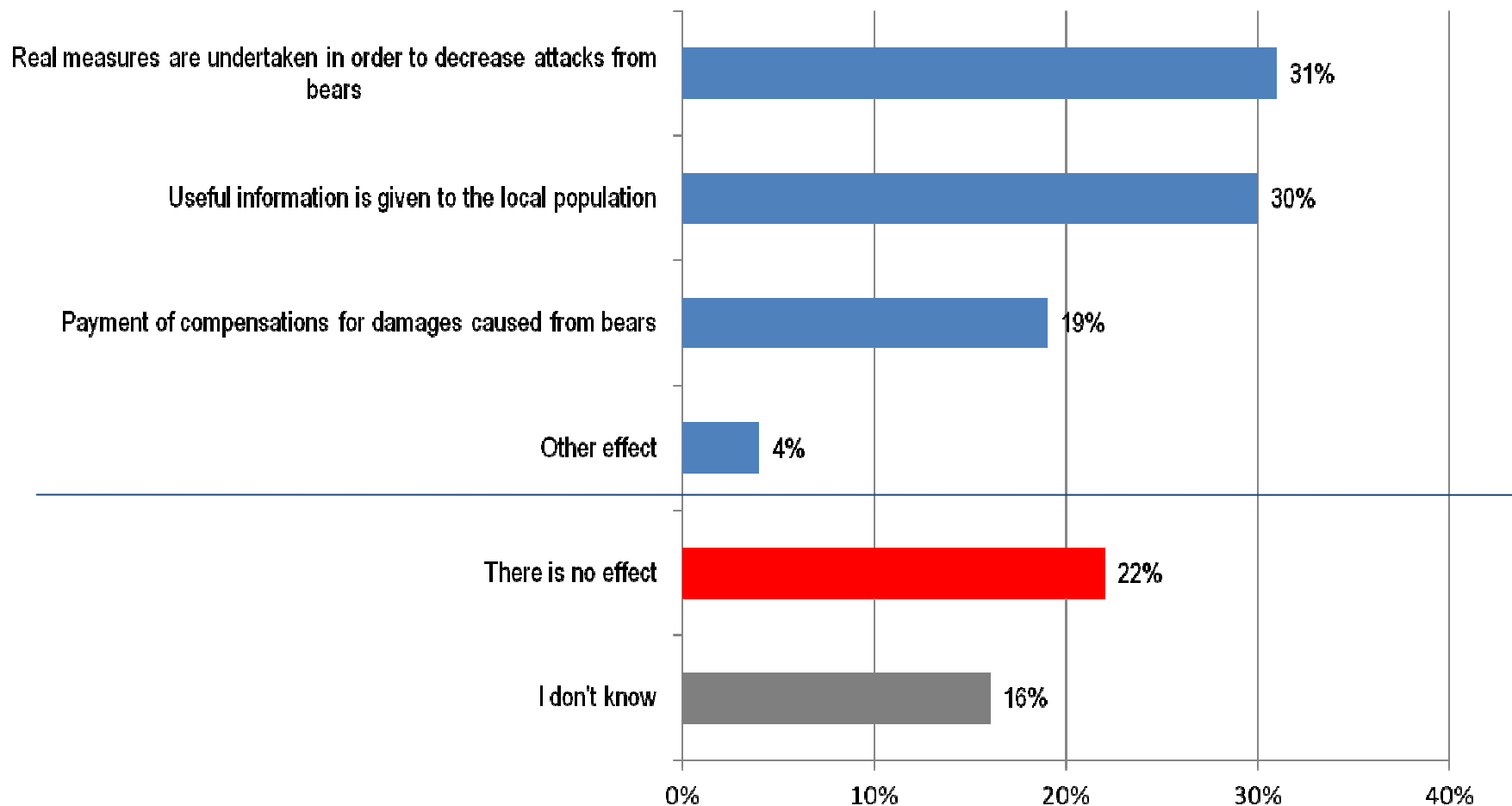
Mean*	3.7	3.9	3.3	4.0	4.1
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# Effect from projects related to bear's protection



Question: "WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE EFFECTS FROM PROJECTS THAT AIM AT BEARS' PROTECTION?"

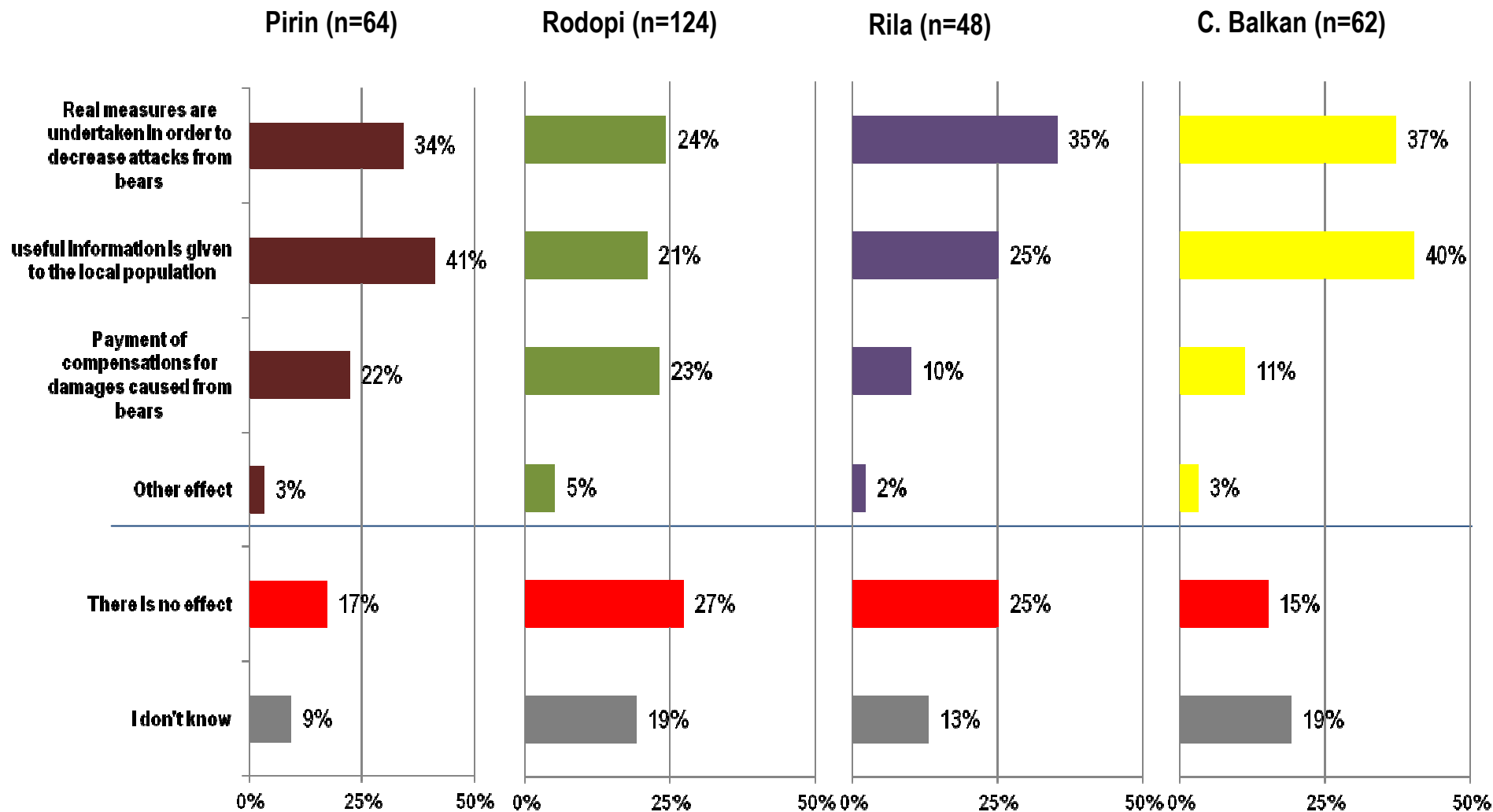




# Effect from projects related to bear's protection: regions



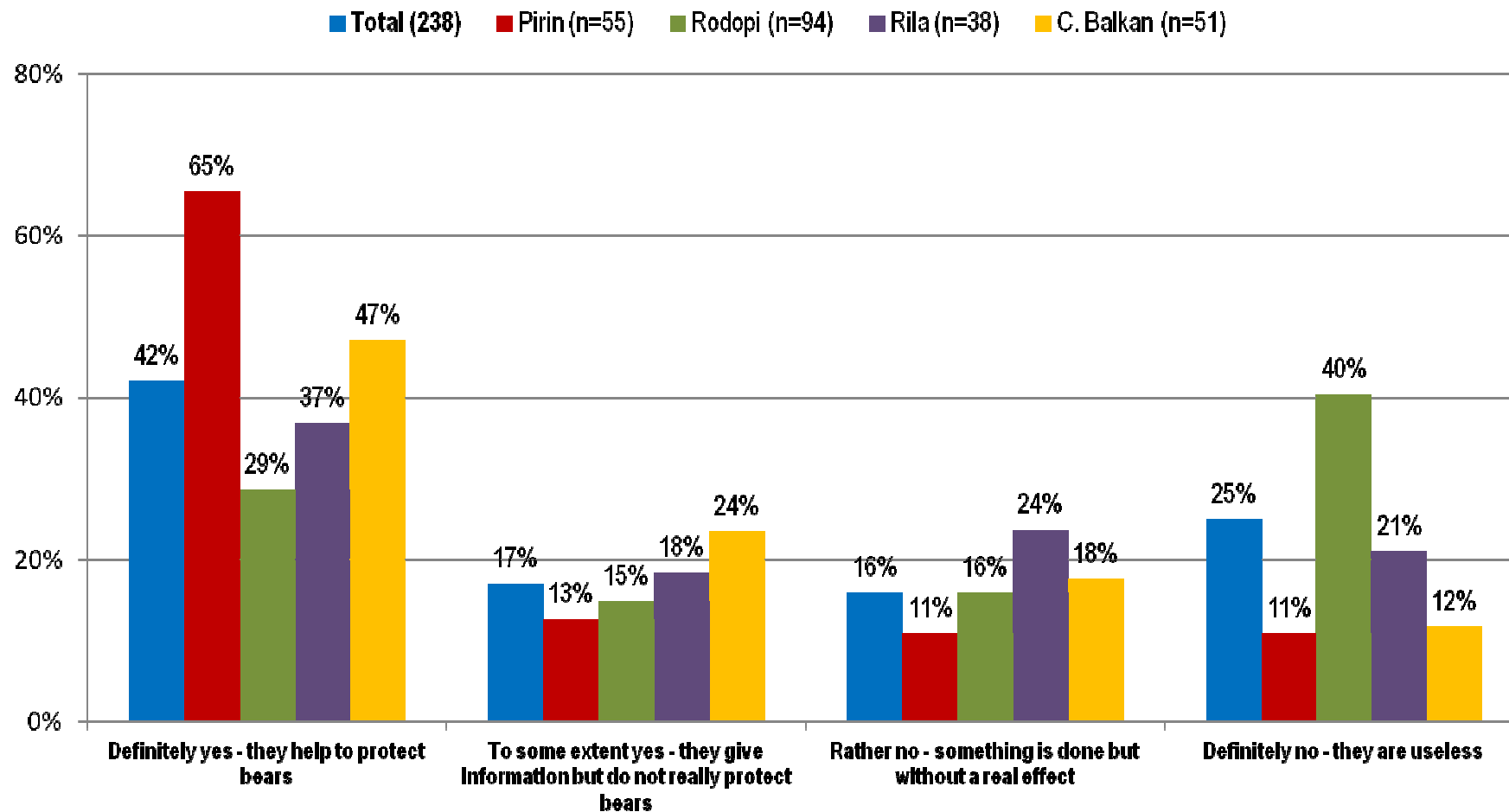
Question: "WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE EFFECTS FROM PROJECTS THAT AIM AT BEARS' PROTECTION?"



# Effectiveness of projects related to bears' protection



Question: "DO YOU CONSIDER SUCH PROJECTS MAKE SENSE TO IMPLEMENT?"



# Level to take measures



Question: "AT WHAT LEVEL DO YOU THINK MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN?"

