

2018 NIEL Membership Survey – Key Findings

Thank you very much to everyone who took the time to complete the 2018 NIEL Membership Survey earlier this year.

This survey was designed to fulfil a number of vital tasks – to update our contact database, collect key statistics from the sector, to inform the 2019-22 NIEL strategy, and to provide an opportunity for members to provide feedback on how NIEL can deliver an effective service.

One response was invited from each member. In total, 73 members responded to the survey – a 68% response rate.

Below is a summary of some of the key findings:

- NIEL represents 65 full members (voluntary organisations) and 43 associate members (statutory organisations, companies or individuals).
- Members employ 1,400 paid staff and attract 1.5m visitors per annum to sites throughout Northern Ireland.
- Many NIEL members are membership bodies, representing a combined total of over 90,000 members in Northern Ireland.
- Members host over 1,700 volunteers to assist in the delivery of their work.
- Members have a combined annual turnover of £66.5m in Northern Ireland.
- The majority of Members operate within NI, ROI and in GB. A considerable number of members operate at a localised level – e.g. within local communities, designated sites.
- NIEL members are involved in a wide range of thematic areas such as biodiversity, sustainable development, environmental education, energy, planning, marine, protected area management, climate change and freshwater.
- Members highly value NIEL's role in providing a joint sectoral voice for the environment, enabling access to policy and decision makers and information sharing.
- Members indicated strong support for a NIEL policy forum.
- Members highlighted interest in a number of specific strategic issues including Brexit, Funding and PfG implementation.
- Members indicated strong support for, and willingness to be involved in, the NIEL Brexit Coalition.
- Members would be keen to learn more about the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Member updates, NIEL e-bulletin, policy consultation responses and events were identified as the most useful member services.
- In terms of financial resilience, 30% of respondents have 1-3 months of financial reserve, 30% have 4-6 months of financial reserve; 20% have 12 months reserve and 20% of respondents have over 12 months.
- 43% of respondents observed an increase in organisational income, whilst 37% observed no change and 20% observed a decrease.
- Members receive the majority of their funding through earned income, central government and membership subscriptions. Members also receive funding through local government, charitable trusts and foundations, and through donations.
- A majority of Members would be interested in trialling new approaches to income generation.
- The majority of respondents did not wish to participate in a shared services pilot programme.