Key Findings from Questionnaire

D1. Overview

The questionnaire responses from 10 island municipalities and regional districts highlight strong interest in collaboration on modernization, cybersecurity and shared services, while also confirming that most partners are not yet ready to commit funding. The findings below summarize the common themes and goals.

D2. Key Findings – Interest, Themes and Common Goals

1. Strong interest in collaboration - especially on modernization and cybersecurity

Across the 10 respondents, modernization of legacy services, cybersecurity and cloud transformation emerged as dominant strategic priorities for 2025–2026. Respondents see value in working together to modernize while managing risk and cost, rather than pursuing isolated, one-off initiatives.

2. Clear appetite for shared services in specific operational areas

The questionnaire identified several operational areas where there is shared interest in working together to gain efficiencies and common benefits, including:

- Group buying and centralized contracts (e.g., security tools, cloud services, business systems)
- Telecom/network services as a first "call-down" category under provincial or shared agreements
- Artificial Intelligence/Large Language Model (AI/LLM) pilots focused on practical use cases such as citizen-service chat/frequently asked questions (FAQ), policy synthesis and compliance checks and drafting council/board materials
- Common minimum standards for cybersecurity, privacy and data residency

These areas are seen as high impact, with clear potential for cost savings, improved service delivery and reduced duplication of effort.

3. Broad support for CRD or a central body to act as convener – under shared governance

Respondents expressed strong support for CRD (or a similar central body) playing a convener and coordinating role, provided that:

- Governance is shared (e.g., through a Chief Information officer advisory council or equivalent)
- Local governments retain opt-in and opt-out rights for specific initiatives
- Any consortium or coordination office operates on a transparent cost-recovery basis with clear terms of reference

There is no indication of resistance to CRD leadership; respondents primarily want to ensure that regional collaboration remains inclusive and accountable.

4. High interest in AI/LLM – paired with mature guardrails

Municipalities are open to AI/LLM pilots, particularly where they can:

- Improve citizen service (high-volume inquiry chat/FAQ)
- Reduce staff workload (policy synthesis, report drafting, compliance checks)
- Enable shared experimentation in a controlled environment

At the same time, respondents stressed that AI work must proceed policy-first, with guardrails such as Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) - aligned Personally Identifiable Information handling, human-in-the-loop review, clear vendor terms, logging and data residency controls.

5. Provincial agreements are attractive but under-used

Respondents see value in leveraging provincial agreements—especially for telecom/network services—but identified barriers related to:

- Contract terms (e.g., FOIPPA and indemnity clauses)
- Technical fit and integration
- Pricing structures
- Internal capacity to onboard and manage new services

A centrally led coordinating effort could help address these barriers by consolidating requirements and providing shared templates, guidance and lessons learned

6. Cost sharing and budget: interest is high, but financial readiness is lo

Only four of the ten respondents selected a specific cost-sharing model (e.g., pro-rata by population, tiered flat fee, or usage-based) and only two identified a clear budget timing window. Most respondents indicated unknown timing or dependencies on internal governance (Executive and Council/Board approvals), and six did not select a cost-sharing model at all.

This confirms that while there is strong support in principle for regional collaboration, most municipalities are not yet able to commit resources or funding. Any next steps should therefore focus on scoping, design, and alignment rather than implementation spending.