



IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE X: Overview of mode of operation and WGs' activities; Results of questionnaire Section A

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*Working Groups Chairs' meeting
5 April 2022, online*



Content

- Recap recommendations Ljubljana 2017 and their implementation
- Recap mode of operation Phase X
- Overview of WG Activities Phases IX and X
- Questionnaire to WG Chairs – Section A (scores, analysis and suggestions for improvement)



Recommendations from WG Chairs (Ljubljana 2017)

1) WG membership: Full member and Associate member

ExCo: WG open to several members, possibility to identify contact person

2) WG representation: inputs of Chairs to decision-making process

ExCo: Chairs meetings as regular events in advance of SC meeting, for WGs coordination and to provide feedback to SC

3) Re-introduce Vice-Chair

ExCo: accepted at the WG discretion



Recommendations from WG Chairs (Ljubljana 2017) – cont.

4) Fund all WGs

ExCo: opportunity to have easier access to funds (flexible meetings and grant scheme)

5) Better communication across WGs

ExCo: introduced Chairs meetings. Better use of Chairs listservers, joint Grant scheme applications

6) Promote use of germplasm (inter-institutional cooperation)

ExCo: activities included among the ECPGR objectives



Recommendations from WG Chairs (Ljubljana 2017) – cont.

7) Develop crop portals and communication targeted to breeders

ExCo: crop portals welcome but not prioritized for use of ECPGR funds

8) Maximize lobby for funding with appropriate Task Force

ExCo: Ongoing task of ExCo and SC

9) Develop joint activities (genebanks/seed companies/small farmers/local governments/training/biodiversity agencies)

ExCo: Within the remit of ECPGR objectives



Recommendations from WG Chairs (Ljubljana 2017) – cont.

10) Strengthen AEGIS-related activities

ExCo: Organized specific workshop on AEGIS – Madrid 2018

11) EURISCO-related activities

ExCo: suggestions considered for further development of EURISCO and partly implemented



ExCo recommendations (Ljubljana 2017)

- Confirmation of all Chairs in Phase X ✓
- Letter of thanks every year to the institute of the Chair (if agreeable)
- ECPGR Certificate of service at end of term ✓
- Inclusion of picture and CV on website (if agreeable) ✓

Phase X: mode of operation

Two budget lines of similar amounts:

- Meetings
- Other actions

Meetings

Principles:

1. Meetings should be planned to enable proactive WG members to collaborate **towards implementing ECPGR objectives**
2. The most important crop collections and crop distribution areas of given gene pools should be represented in the meetings, as far as possible.
3. Meetings should be organized according to criteria of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, also merging different WGs and taking advantage of synergies with other fora (EUCARPIA, COST, etc.)
4. Organization of meetings should be made in collaboration between WG Chairs and the Secretariat.
5. The country quota system guarantees balanced participation.

Meetings

Practice:

1. Each WG can apply for funds to organize a meeting
2. Applications can be submitted **at any time** to the ExCo through the Secretariat and should indicate: purpose of the meeting; criteria of efficiency and cost-effectiveness; possible synergies; names of participants; suggested date and location of the meeting
3. Applications would be **processed within 4 weeks** from the submission



Meetings

Limitations:

1. The meetings can span through **maximum three nights**
2. **Only WG members** can be funded by ECPGR
3. **The country quota system applies.** One quota allows attending one meeting



Other activities (Grant Scheme)

- To implement ECPGR objectives
- Funded through the Grant Scheme
- Meetings or different actions
- Country quota does not apply

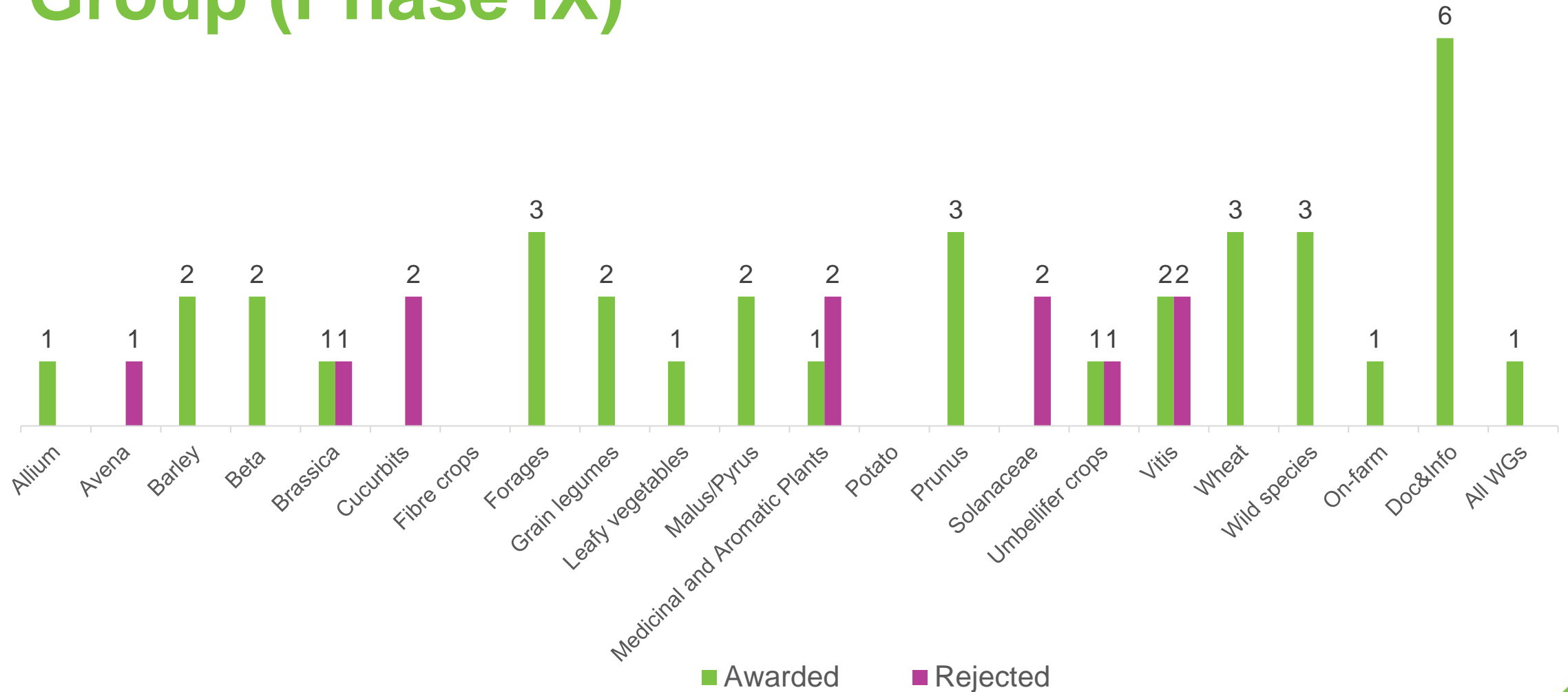


Grant Scheme proposals received, and budget awarded (Phases IX and X)

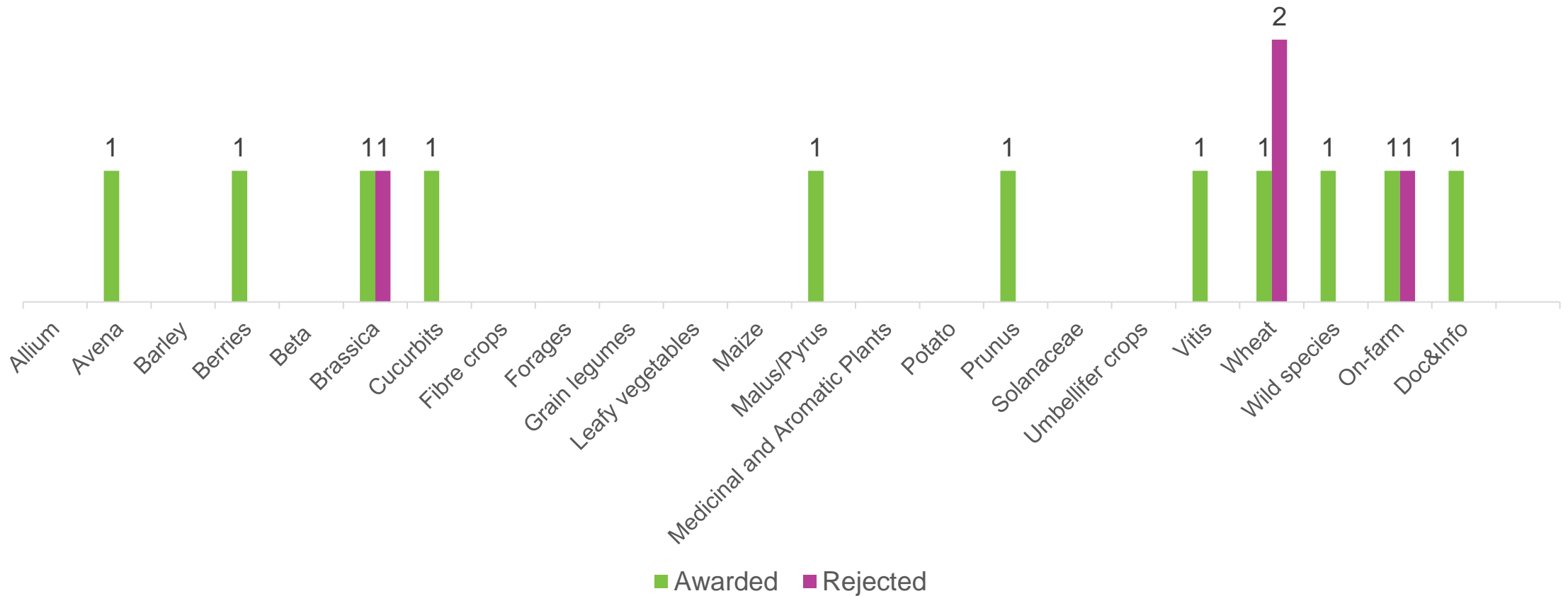
PHASE IX	1st Call	2nd Call	3rd Call	4th Call	5th Call	6th Call	Total
Number of eligible proposals received	11	10	8	8	3	5	45
Number of proposals awarded	8	6	7	5	2	3	31
Total budget awarded (in €)	119,650	86,350	104,350	118,500	44,000	44,988	517,838

PHASE X	1st Call	2nd Call	3rd Call	4th Call	5th Call	Total
Number of eligible proposals received	3	2	3	3	3	14
Number of proposals awarded	2	1	2	2	2	9
Total budget awarded (in €)	27,000	15,000	38,450	39,800	62,437	182,687

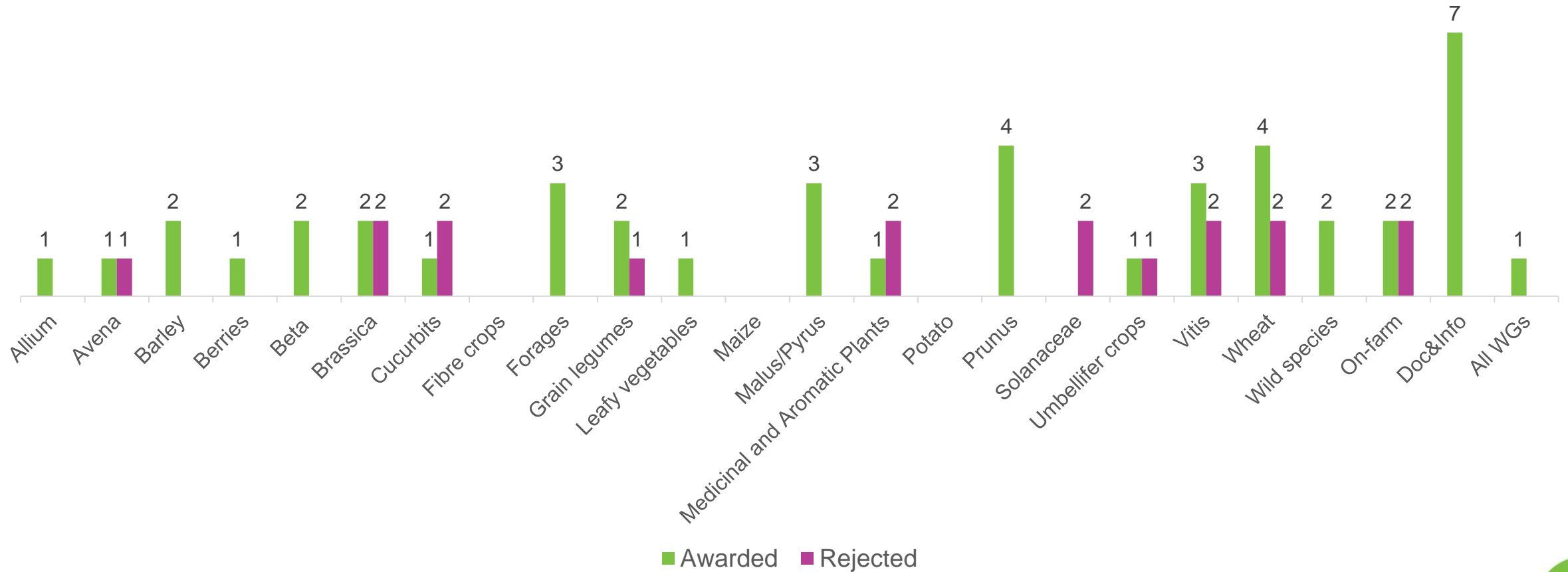
Activities awarded for each Working Group (Phase IX)



Activities awarded for each Working Group (Phase X)

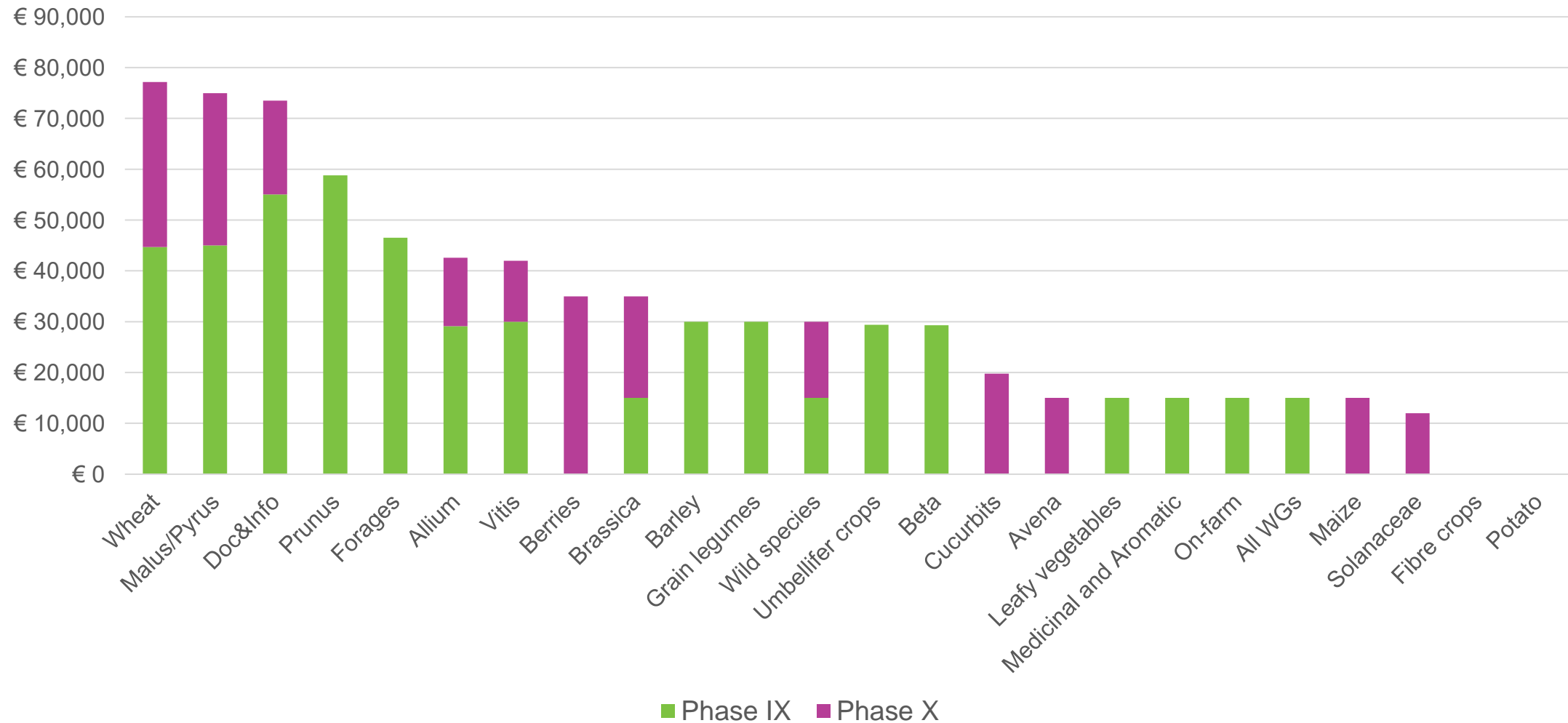


Activities awarded for each Working Group (combined Phases IX & X)



Total funds allocated for each WG (2014–2022)

[Grant Scheme + meetings]



Questionnaire to Chairs

Objectives:

- Seek feedback on WGs effectiveness for current and future ECPGR objectives
- Receive suggestions for improvement

Sent 26 January 2022 to Chairs of 21 WGs

14 replies received

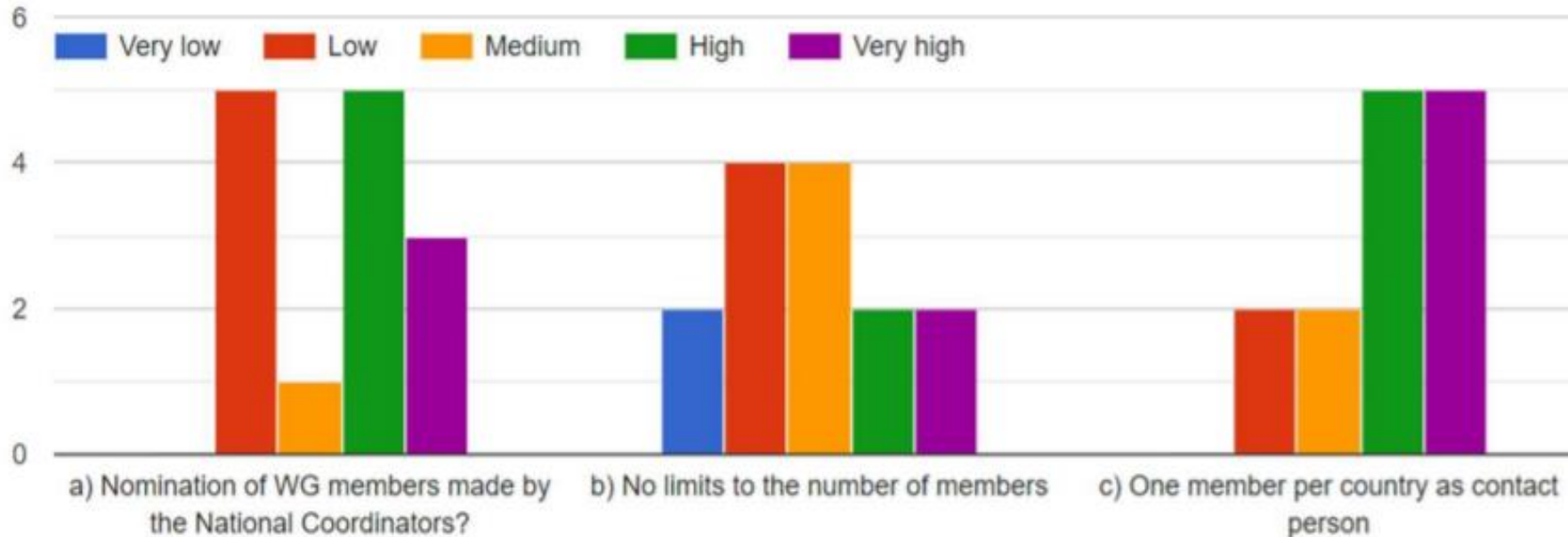


Questionnaire Section A

Effectiveness
towards current
objectives



1. How effective is the structure of the individual WGs



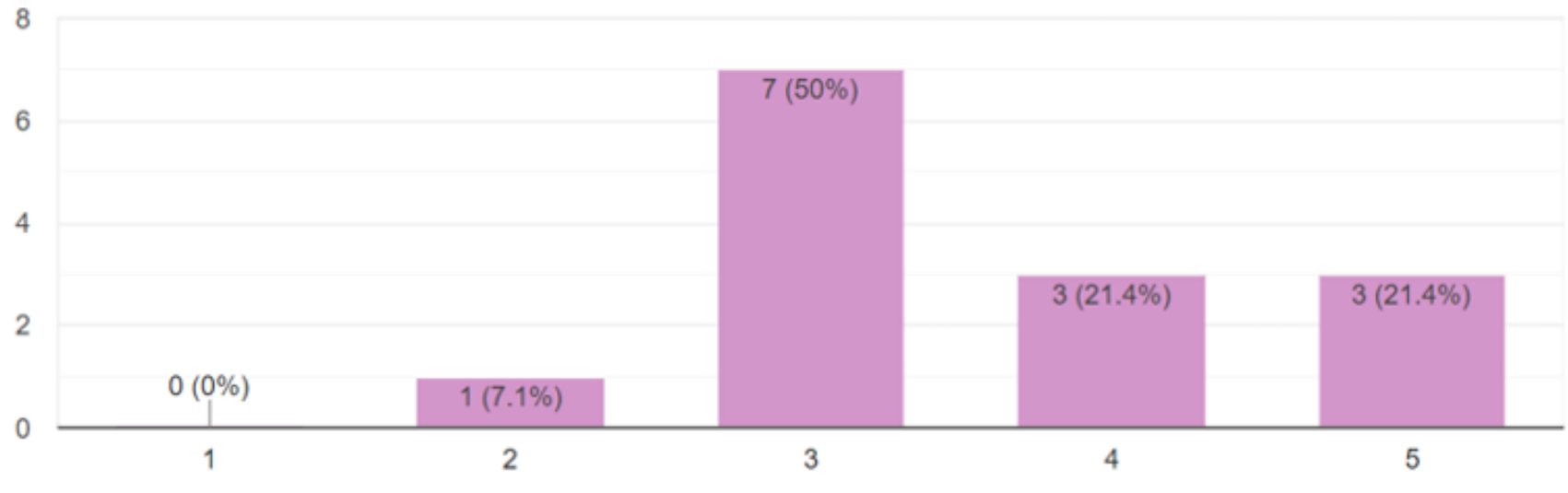
- Average scores: a = 3.4; b = 2.9; c = 3.9
- Large groups of people who don't know each other, low responsiveness, composition may be not be ideal, but good flexibility – need for contact person

1. Suggestions for improvement – Structure of WGs

- Encourage identification of a contact person in each country
- Allow the Chair to propose new members through the intermediation of the Secretariat with respective NCs
- Discourage membership of the same person in too many groups, which reduces effectiveness.



2. How effective is the role of the WG Chair with the current Terms of Reference?



- Average score: 3.6
- Evident limitations are a load of tasks that cannot be accomplished, especially on a voluntary basis and without active collaboration by the WG members. Some tasks in the current terms of reference are beyond the possibility of the Chair (e.g. the definition of crop-specific workplans). The role of a Vice-Chair is considered important.

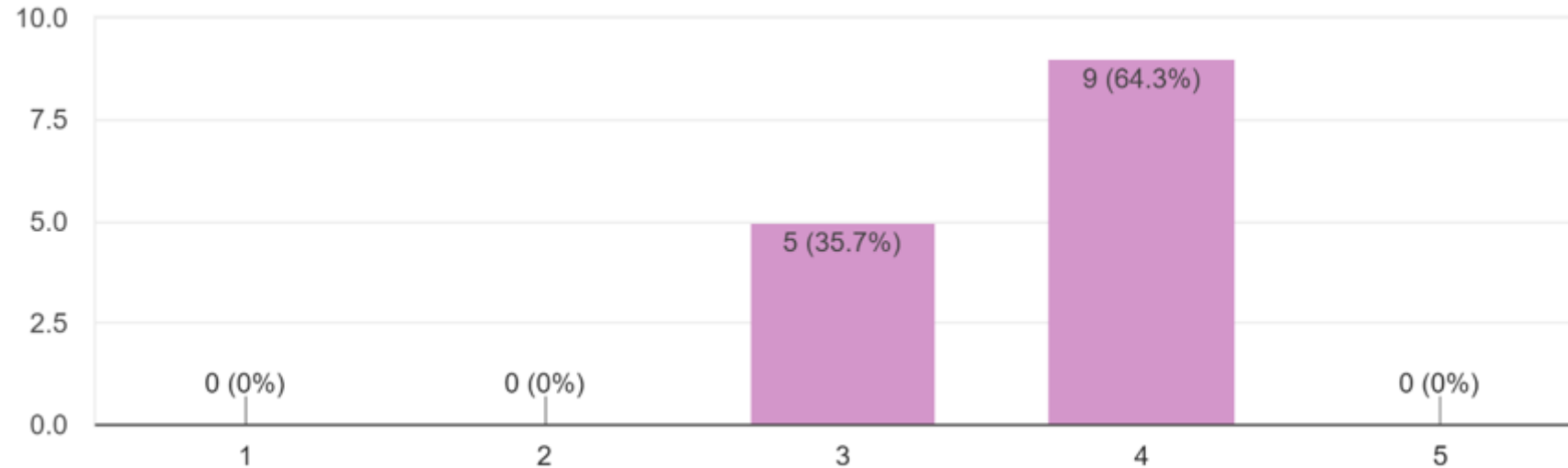


2. Suggestions for improvement – Terms of Reference

- Terms of Reference of the Chairs should be revised, reducing the expectations (i.e. AEGIS)
- The role of the Vice-Chair has been already reintroduced in Phase X, left at the discretion of individual WGs, and its implementation should be considered by WGs
- The SC might consider incentivizing the role of Chairs and Vice-Chairs at least with a symbolic compensation for their role.



4. How effective would you rate the current structure of ECPGR's Working Groups



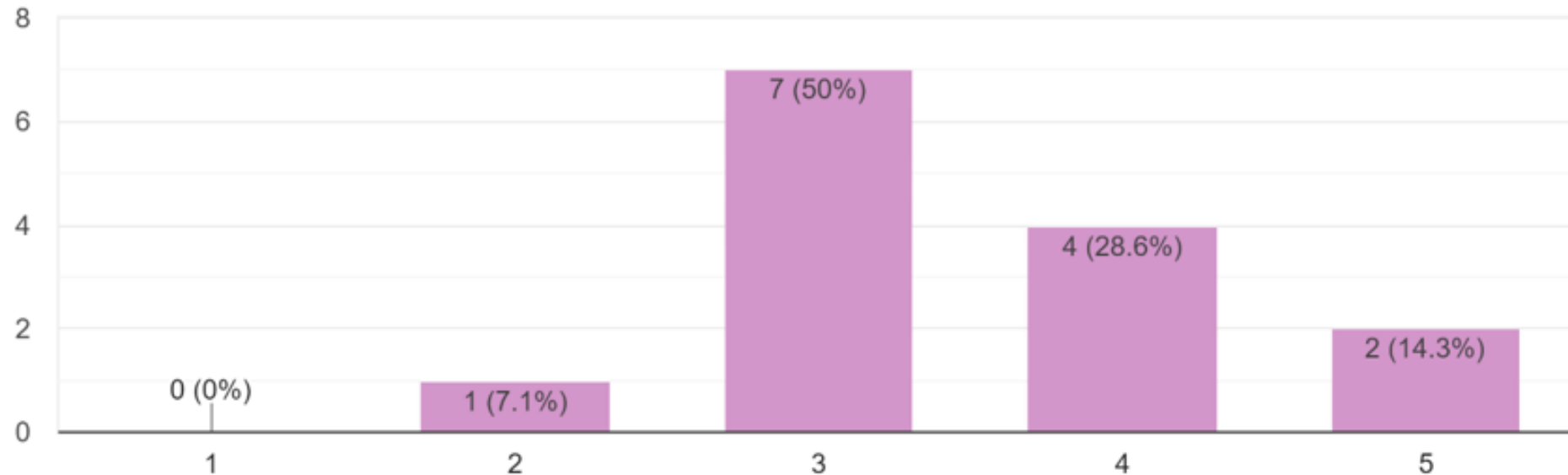
- Average score: 3.6
- An individual comment proposes again the possibility to merge some WGs (e.g. cereals, vegetables), which has been often debated in the past (and also partially experimented with the creation of crop networks). Another individual comment calls for the need for thematic WGs more than crop WGs.

4. Suggestions for improvement – Structure of WGs

For discussion within the framework of
Phase XI objectives



5. How effective is the presence of ‘country quotas’ to ensure a balanced participation of countries in activities/meetings



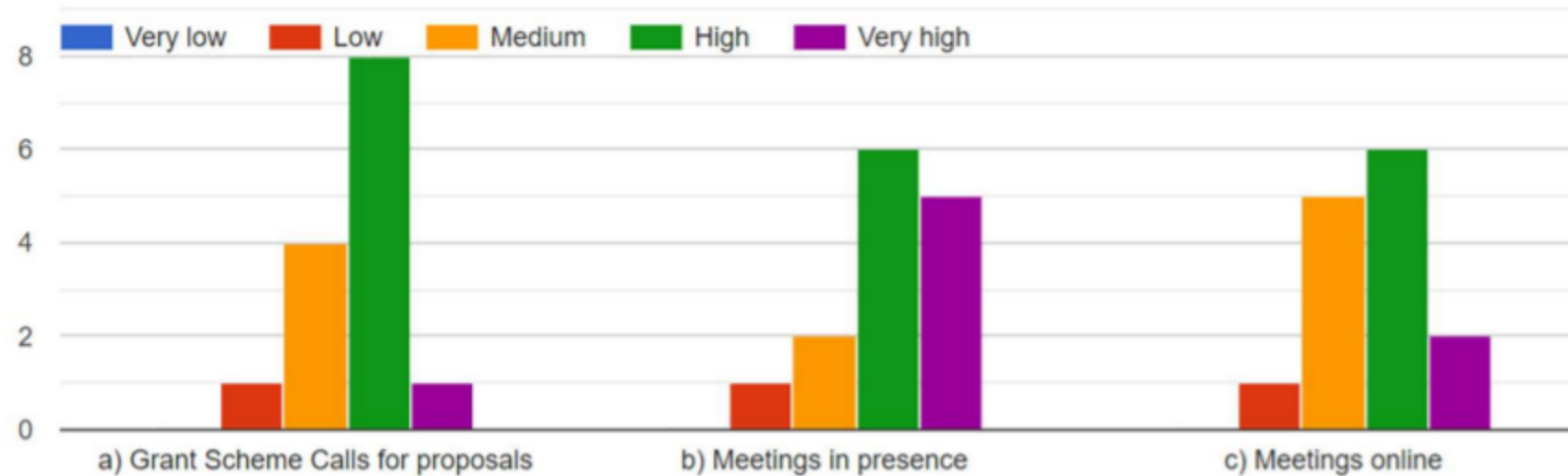
- Average score: 3.5
- There is appreciation for a mechanism that can balance participation in meetings, although the effect is probably overestimated

5. Suggestions for improvement – Country quotas

The Secretariat recommends the elimination of the quota system, which generates an overload of bureaucracy to monitor and manage the mechanism. Balanced participation might be guaranteed by common sense and monitoring the situation on a case-by-case basis, without the definition of too many rules.



6. Efficiency of ECPGR tools to support activities that contribute to the achievement of ECPGR objectives



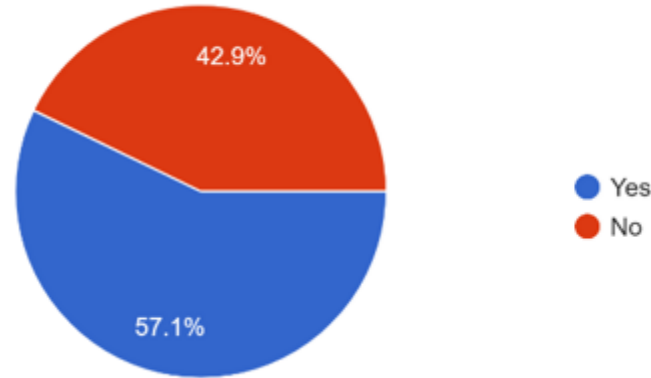
- Average scores: a = 3.6; b = 4.1; c = 3.6
- High appreciation for meetings in presence. Also, online meetings gained support
- The Grant Scheme is considered a useful tool, with a clear limitation related to the little funds that it provides.



6. Suggestions for improvement – ECPGR tools

- A balanced use of the Grant Scheme, online and physical meetings is the preferred scenario by the Chairs, possibly with a more significant budget made available for the Grant Scheme
- This is the current Phase X scenario

7. Do you think it would be interesting to consider other types of tools?



Suggestions made include participation in calls for project proposals, set up of task forces, regular meetings, interactions with other consortia and associations, study visits, creation of newsletters and crop portals. Any of these items is within the current possibilities of the Working Groups, although usually these have been implemented with their own resources.

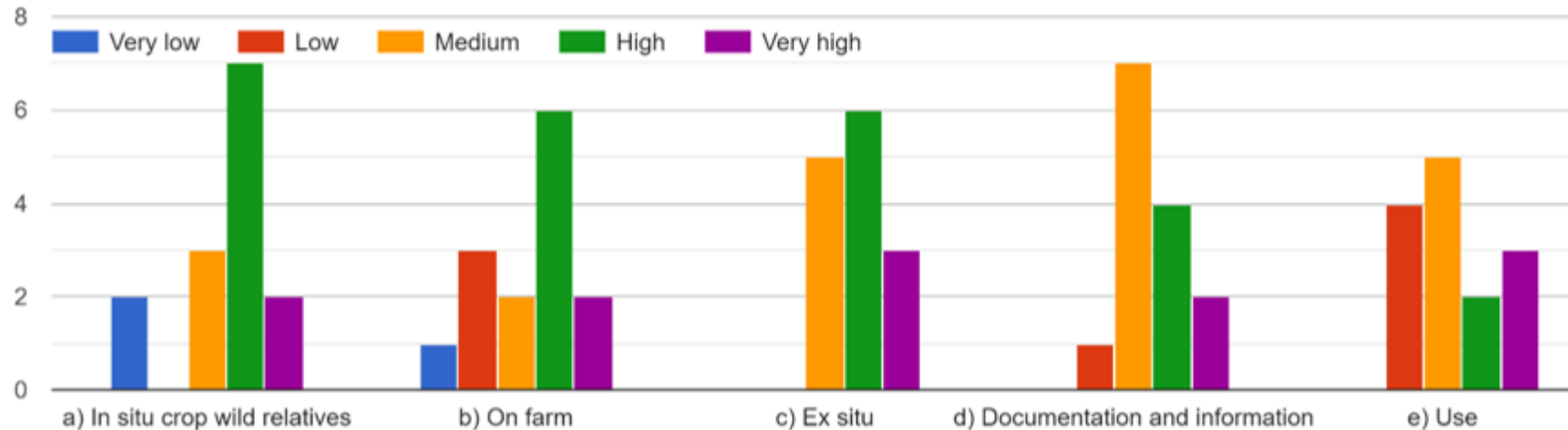


7. Suggestions for improvement – other types of tools

Access to funds to implement alternative tools or actions could be made more flexible for the Working Groups, provided actions and tools are justified towards the accomplishment of specific ECPGR objectives.



8. How suitable would you rate the current modus operandi within these five operational areas?



- Average scores: a = 3.5; b = 3.4; c = 3.9; d = 3.5; e = 3.3
- Medium suitability for 'ex situ' and 'documentation', more contrasting opinions for other objectives; lower suitability especially for 'use' and 'on-farm'. The comments do not elaborate sufficiently on the reasons for inadequacy.

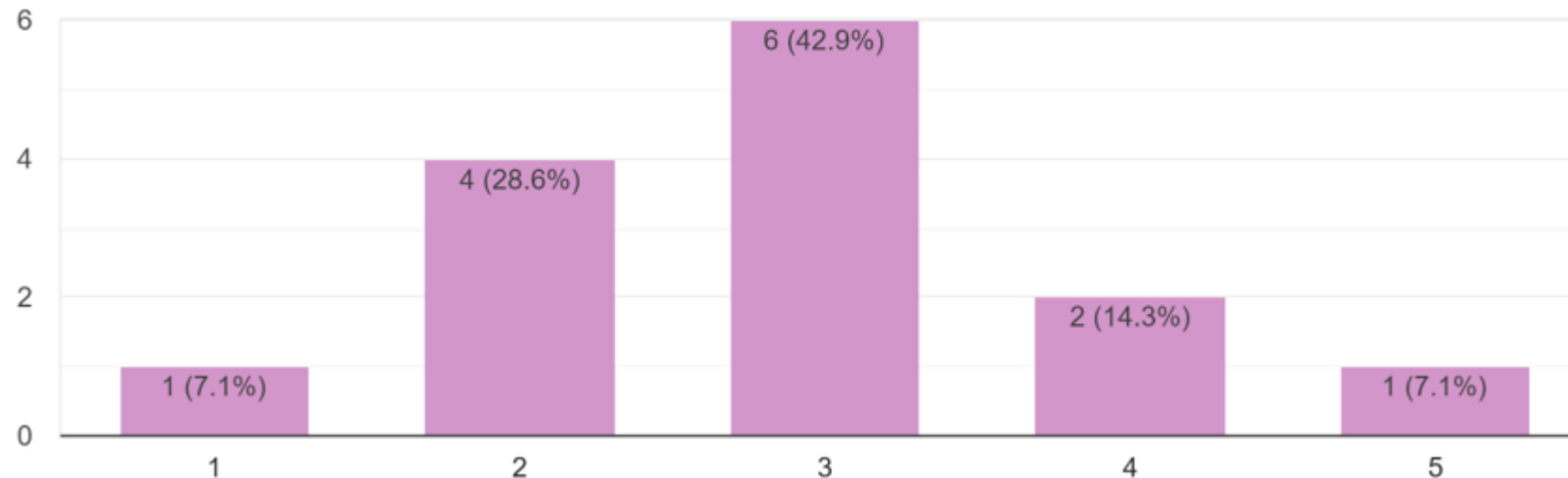


8. Suggestions for improvement – effectiveness towards the various objectives

Since the current modus operandi of the Working Groups seems less adequate to deal with the objectives of **‘on-farm’** and **‘use’**, discussion with the WG Chairs and the SC should possibly reflect on possible ways to deal more adequately with these objectives.



9. How intense and effective has been the communication within your Working Group



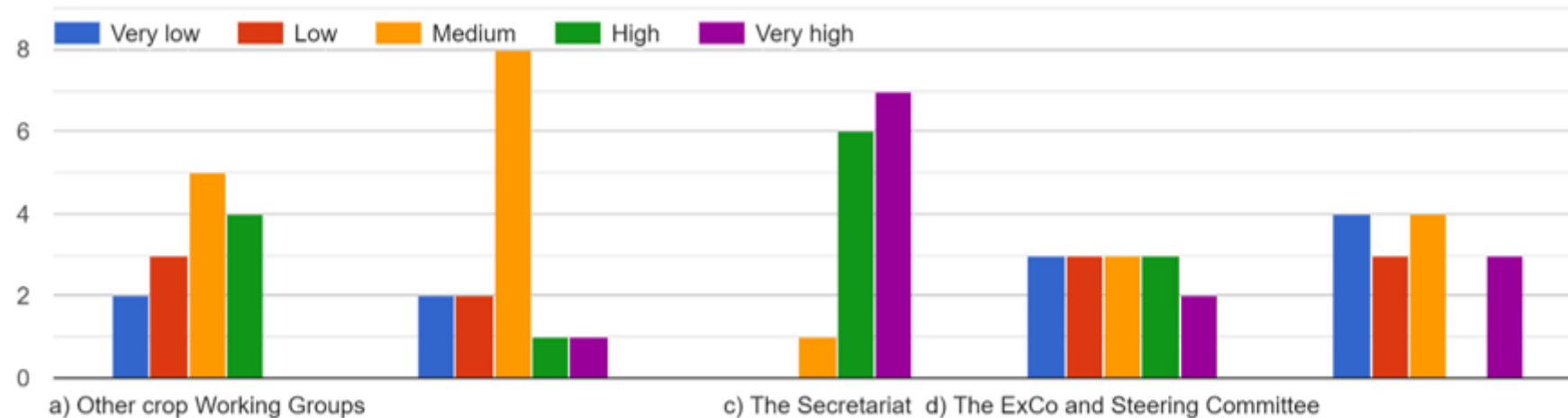
- Average score: 2.9
- Communication is more frequent when there are ongoing activities, such as related to EVA, Horizon or Grant Scheme. The reduction of meetings or activities during the COVID-19 period has slowed down interactions. Responsiveness limited to just a few members is a common problem.

9. Suggestions for improvement – communication

It would be important that motivated members are nominated in the Working Groups, ideally with a specific national mandate to contribute to the objectives. Nomination of national contact persons, as currently suggested, can also be helpful.



10. How valuable has been your interaction with other ECPGR bodies



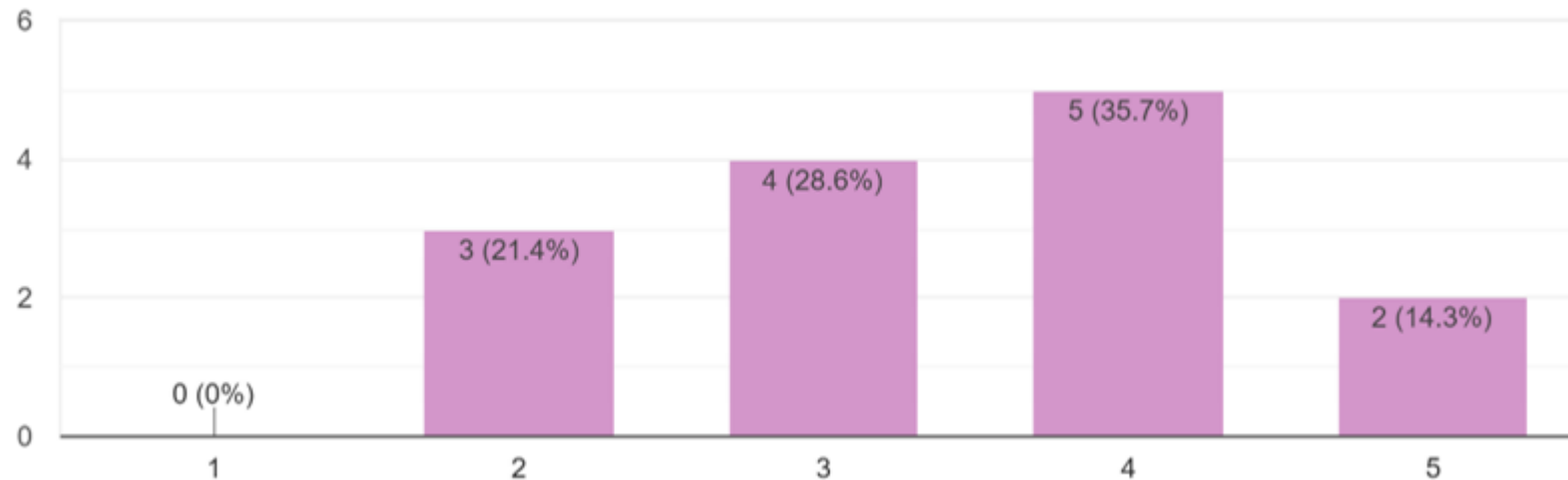
- Average scores: a = 2.8; b = 2.8; c = 4.4; d = 2.9; e = 2.6
- Interaction across Working Groups seems good for the fruit trees WGs, but much less developed in other cases, with only punctual exceptions. The comments show an aspiration to better communicate with the documentation and information WG and to get involved in the EVA network.

10. Suggestions for improvement – Interactions with other ECPGR bodies

Opportunities for interaction exist (Chairs list server, joint Grant Scheme applications, information on website, meetings of the Chairs) and can be effective when needs arise. The Secretariat can play a role to help establishing specific interactions requested by the WGs.



11. How valuable has been the interaction with other networks, such as EUCARPIA, ISHS, others?



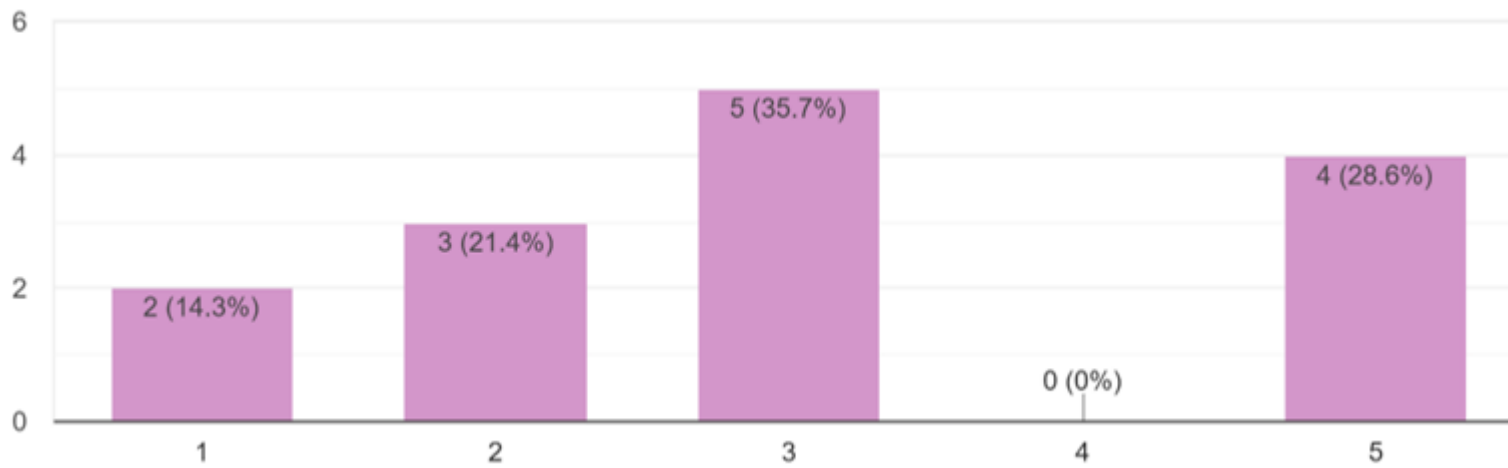
- Average score: 3.4
- Good examples quoted by the Grain legumes, Leafy vegetables, Maize, *Prunus* and Solanaceae WGs. Activities consist of joint projects or workshops and exchange of information.

11. Suggestions for improvement – Interactions with other networks

Interactions with ISHS, EUCARPIA, EUFRIN and others should be kept in mind by the Chairs and the Secretariat for the opportunity to join forces in projects and exchange information in joint workshops.



12. How valuable has the WG been as a framework to lobby for fundraising (EU or other)?



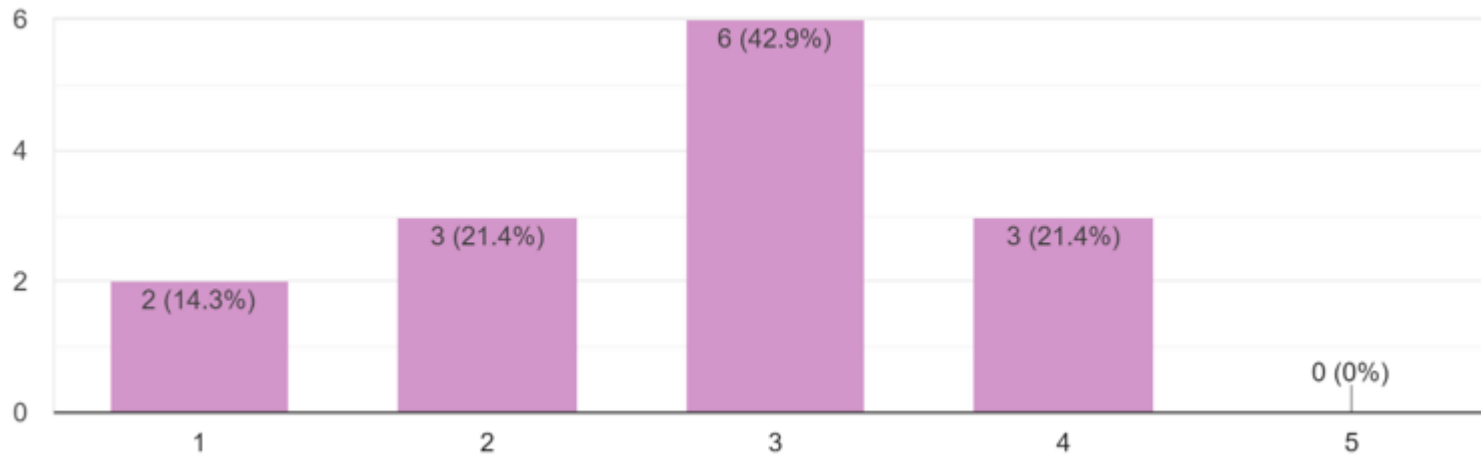
- Average score: 3.1
- Cases where the value has been very high and others where the value was considered low due to unsuccessful project submissions.

12. Suggestions for improvement – WG as framework for fundraising

Since the potential value of the WG as a framework for fundraising remains significant in a number of cases, it may be worth to continue using the existing framework.



13. How effective has the WG been towards proposing activities for the Grant Scheme



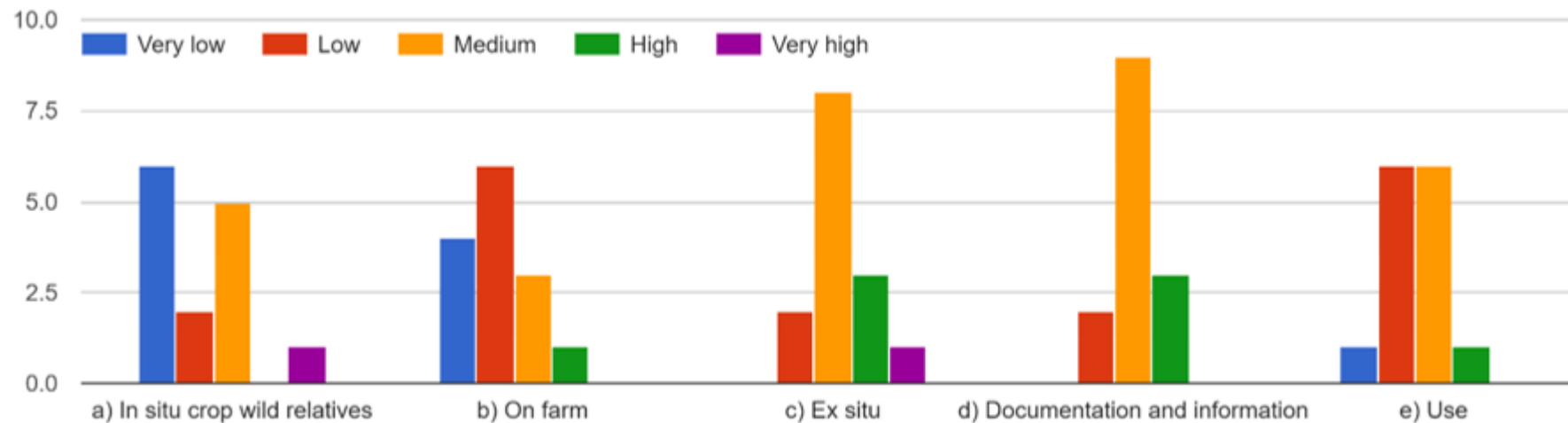
- Average score: 2.7
- This score is somewhat contrasting with the rating of the Grant Scheme as a tool of medium-high value (Question 6a). The feelings of the Chairs are rather mixed, with both cases of success and unsucess reported and mostly referring to the experience of the previous Phase IX. The problem of low reactivity within some Working Groups, expressed in previous answers, is reflected here as well.

13. Suggestions for improvement – effectiveness of WG towards proposing Activities

Target objectives for the Grant Scheme proposals could be made more focused, accompanied by more significant budgets, to facilitate and incentivize the submission of proposals.



14. What is the level of achievement that you think you have reached in terms of ECPGR objectives implementation?



- Average scores: a = 2.1; b = 2.1; c = 3.2; d = 3.1; e = 2.5
- Apparent higher suitability of the modus operandi to address *ex situ* and documentation objectives. The few comments received do not add much to enable a better analysis. However, the indication is that the Chairs do not feel that the WGs have been very effective towards the implementation of the ECPGR objectives.

14. Suggestions for improvement – Achievement of ECPGR objectives

Either the potential effectiveness of the WGs should be better empowered (see improvements suggested above) or the current mode of operation through Working Groups should be revised to better direct the focus of the network towards the implementation of more specific objectives.



Brief summary of the main pros and cons identified in the WGs during the last Phases IX and X

Comments focus on **cons** rather than pros:

- Restraints of the COVID-19 lockdown
- Absence of physical meetings
- Low responsiveness of Working Group members
- Inability of the Chair to be proactive due to excessive workload.



**Thank you
for your attention**

