



Be-troplive

External evaluation

Summary of findings, conclusions
and recommendations

Presented to the Steering Committee

Brussels, June 8th, 2010



INTRODUCTION

[Evaluation background]

- Framework Agreement 3 (2008-2013): midterm evaluation foreseen in 2010
- Evaluation carried out between December 2009 and March 2010

Evaluation objectives

- **Learning and improving:**
 - learn lessons from past experiences => inputs for future planning and quality improvement
 - with regard to internal organisation of be-troplive, activities and achievements
- **Accountability:**
 - inform financing government and members on the quality and results of activities undertaken

Main evaluation questions

- **Response to the needs and expectations** of (different categories of) members?
- **Role** of the platform playing in the context of Belgian development cooperation + in the broader European and international context?
- Strengths and weaknesses of **internally functioning**?
- **Results** achieved so far (outputs, increased visibility, influence on the activities of member organisations, etc.), as perceived by different groups of members?
- In how far is **continuity and sustainability** of the platform guaranteed? On what does it depend?
- => How should the platform **further evolve in the future**?

[Methodology (1): steps]

- Intake meeting (Oct 7th. '09) => methodological proposal
- Data collection
 - Meeting with secretariat staff (Jan. 2010)
 - Document study (Jan. 2010)
 - Participatory evaluation workshop with Steering Committee (Feb. 15th)
 - Online questionnaire to members
- Draft Report (April 2nd)
- Validation of findings with the steering committee (June 8th)
- Final report

Methodology (2): Principles / limitations

■ Key characteristics evaluation approach

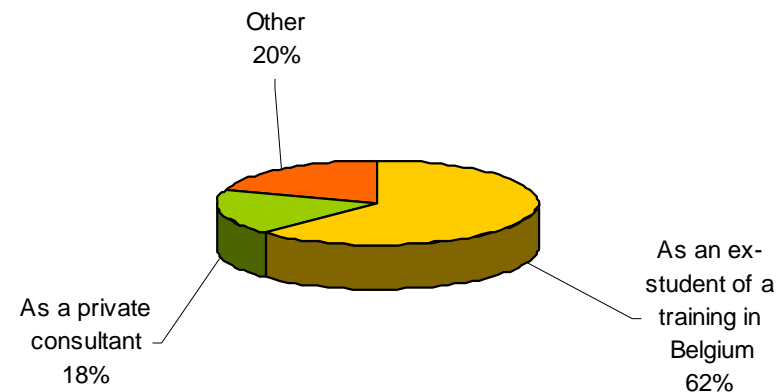
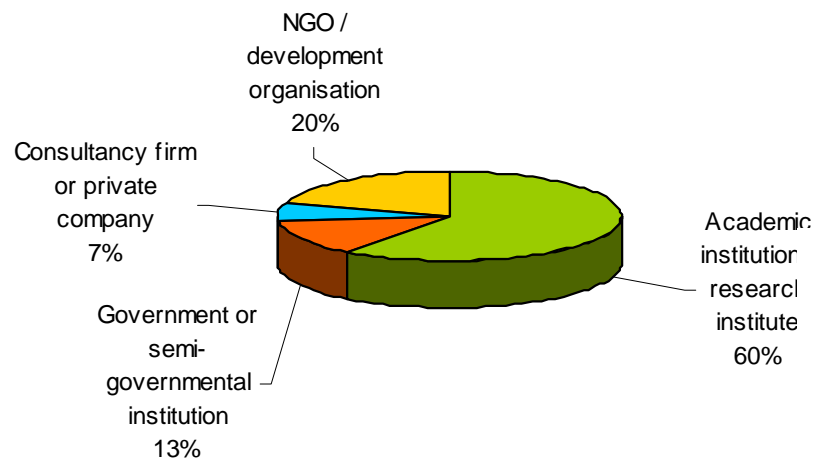
- Participatory analysis (=> ownership ↑)
- Involvement secretariat staff in coordination of the evaluation (organisation meetings, follow-up questionnaire ...)
- Retrospective + prospective analysis
- Approach adapted to the characteristics of be-troplive (multi-stakeholder platform)

■ Limitations

- Focus online questionnaire: allows gathering opinions of wide range of members but does not always allow an in-depth analysis of reality (e.g. Explaining factors for success or failure)

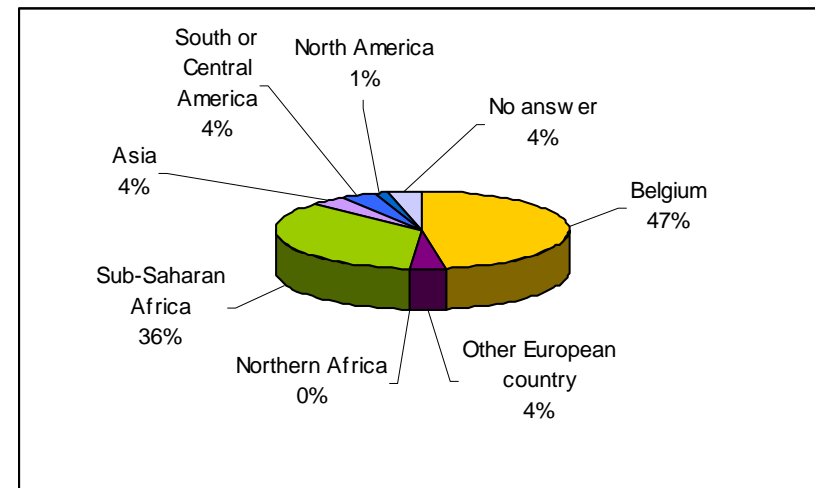
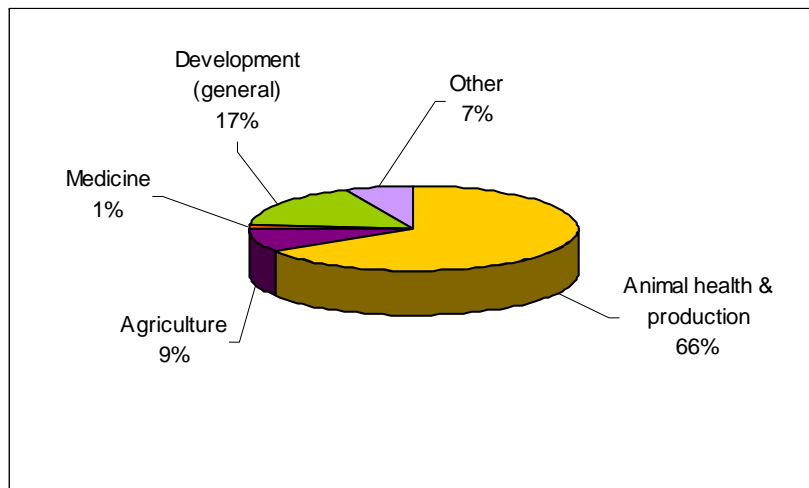
Methodology (3): Characteristics respondents

- 76 respondents (~ 36% of total number of members)
- Individual member: 80%; in name of organisation: 20%




Methodology (4): Characteristics respondents

- More than half joined be-troplive before 2008
- They learned about be-troplive through various channels
- 18% has been member of the steering committee
- Full member v. associated member: data unreliable (concept little known?)
- Sectoral & geographical distribution:



=> Used for production of disaggregated data



[2]

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

[Contents]

- Roles and objectives of be-troplive
- Activities and results
- Quality of internal functioning

Roles and objectives of be-troplive (1)

Roles / objectives according to SC-members:

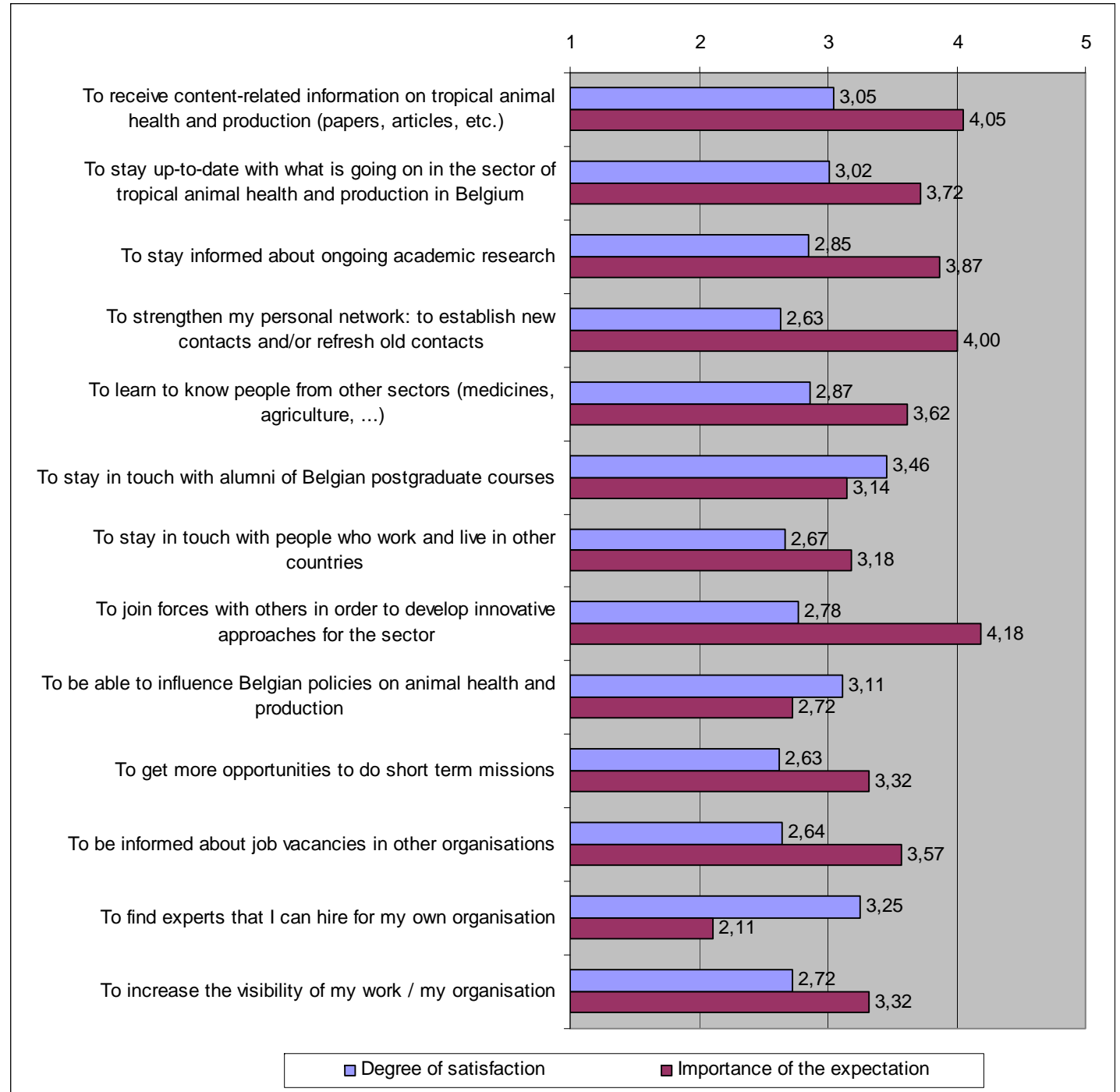
- To **learn** (personal enrichment) through exchange with others, access to information
 - To **enhance visibility and credibility** of the sector
 - To **stimulate synergy and joint action**
 - To **advocate** for the sector Belgian and international level (common voice!)
- ⇒ Good correspondence with existing objectives
- ⇒ Shows that objectives are clear + that they correspond with what (SC-)members expect from the network

Roles and objectives of be-troplive (2)

Expectations members (questionnaire results):

- Most important: receive information / strengthen personal network / join forces to develop innovative approaches for sector
- Relatively good correspondence with actual objectives of be-troplive
- Some interesting findings:
 - Influencing Belgian policies less important, especially for members living abroad
 - Many hope to find job opportunities through be-troplive, but few willing to use be-troplive to find external experts
 - Members living abroad have on average higher expectations than members living in Belgium
 - Less alternative possibilities to be part of international network, to be in contact with other experts from all over the world and to have access to the newest information on the sector?
 - Goes together with a desire to establish or strengthen N-S partnerships

Degree to which expectations have been met (1)



Degree to which expectations have been met (2)

- Only 5 expectations have a “satisfaction-score” higher than 3 (on a 1-5 scale)
 - To stay in touch with alumni of Belgian postgraduate courses (3,46)
 - To find experts that I can hire for my own organisation (3,25)
 - To be able to influence Belgian policies on animal health and production (3,11)
 - To receive content-related information on tropical animal health and production (papers, articles, etc.) (3,05)
 - To stay up-to-date with what is going on in the sector of tropical animal health and production in Belgium (3,02)
- On the other hand, “overall satisfaction” with be-troplive is high (control question)
- => Shows that members, even if satisfied, still hope to get more out of their membership of be-troplive
- Members living abroad are on average less satisfied with the degree to which their expectations have been met than members living in Belgium

[Results achieved (1)]

- Major results achieved (according to SC-members):
 - Platform exists and is effectively functioning
 - Managed to bring together the majority of actors concerned
 - Successful annual symposiums and workshops
 - Efficient secretariat; adequate diffusion of information
 - Synergies with other platforms established
 - A start was made with advocacy => common voice, increased visibility
- ⇒ Correspond with the major activities and expected results foreseen in the planning documents

[Results achieved (2)]

- Main areas for improvement:

- Remains a Belgo-Belgian affair. Need for further strengthening synergies with the South and establishing international network connections
- Coordination with other sectors should be further improved (OWOH)
- The objective of stimulating 'joint action' has not really been achieved yet
- Advocacy remains difficult. Policy-makers have limited interest for the sector
- Decrease in website use

⇒ Mainly refer to some of the more ambitious objectives of the platform, which need a longer period of time to be realised

Activities (1): website

- Questionnaire results on website use:
 - 28% of members are regular visitors of the website (at least monthly visits)
 - 38% of members visited the website only once or twice or never
 - Larger number of regular website users among members living abroad than among members living in Belgium
 - Lower number of regular website users among members working in animal health and production than among members working in other sectors (reason: relatively important group of ex-students who never visited the website)

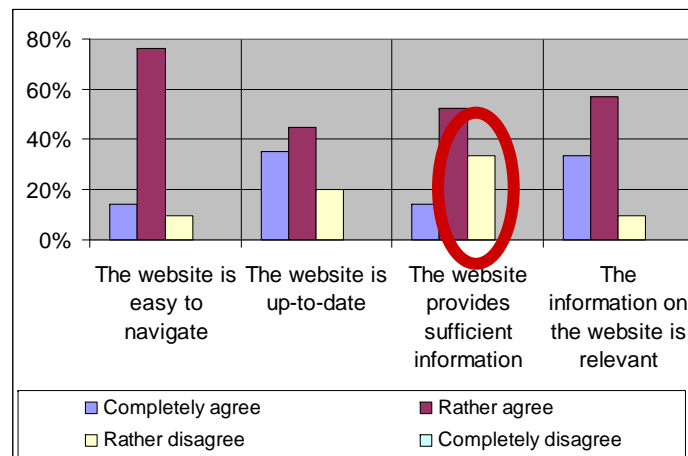
Activities (1): website (cont.)

- Quality of the website: good but can be further improved
- Major demand: more information available on website

Opinion

'frequent

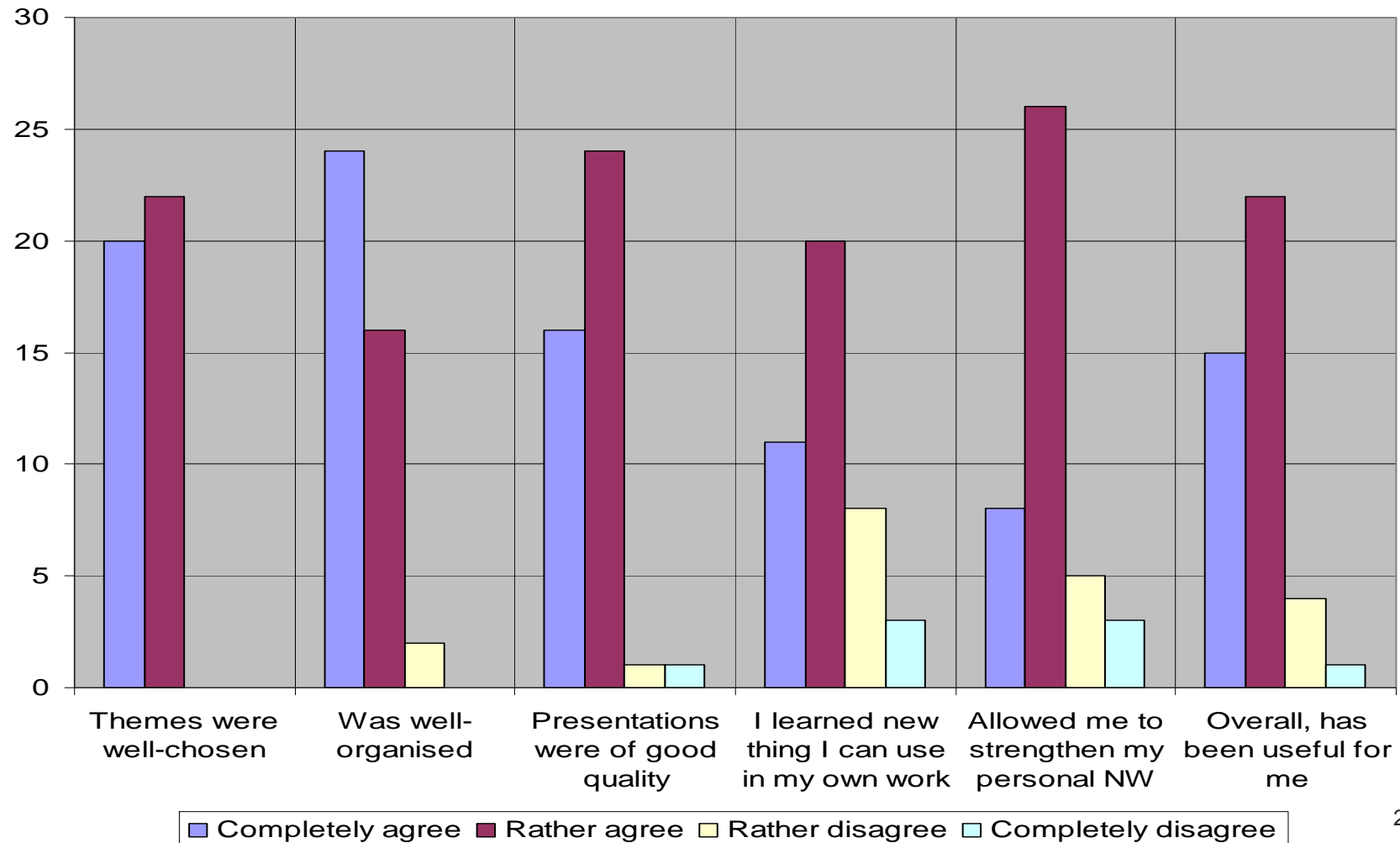
users':



Activities (2): workshops and symposia

- Workshops & symposiums: found very important by members
- High level of satisfaction with quality workshops and symposiums (contents + organisation): see next page
- Suggestion by ≠ members : include more speakers 'from the field'
- Bottleneck: difficult to attend for members living abroad
 - Is partially solved by making all documents available on the website
 - Members' demands:
 - Financial compensation (=> not feasible)
 - Organize workshops in the South (=> does not really solve the problem)

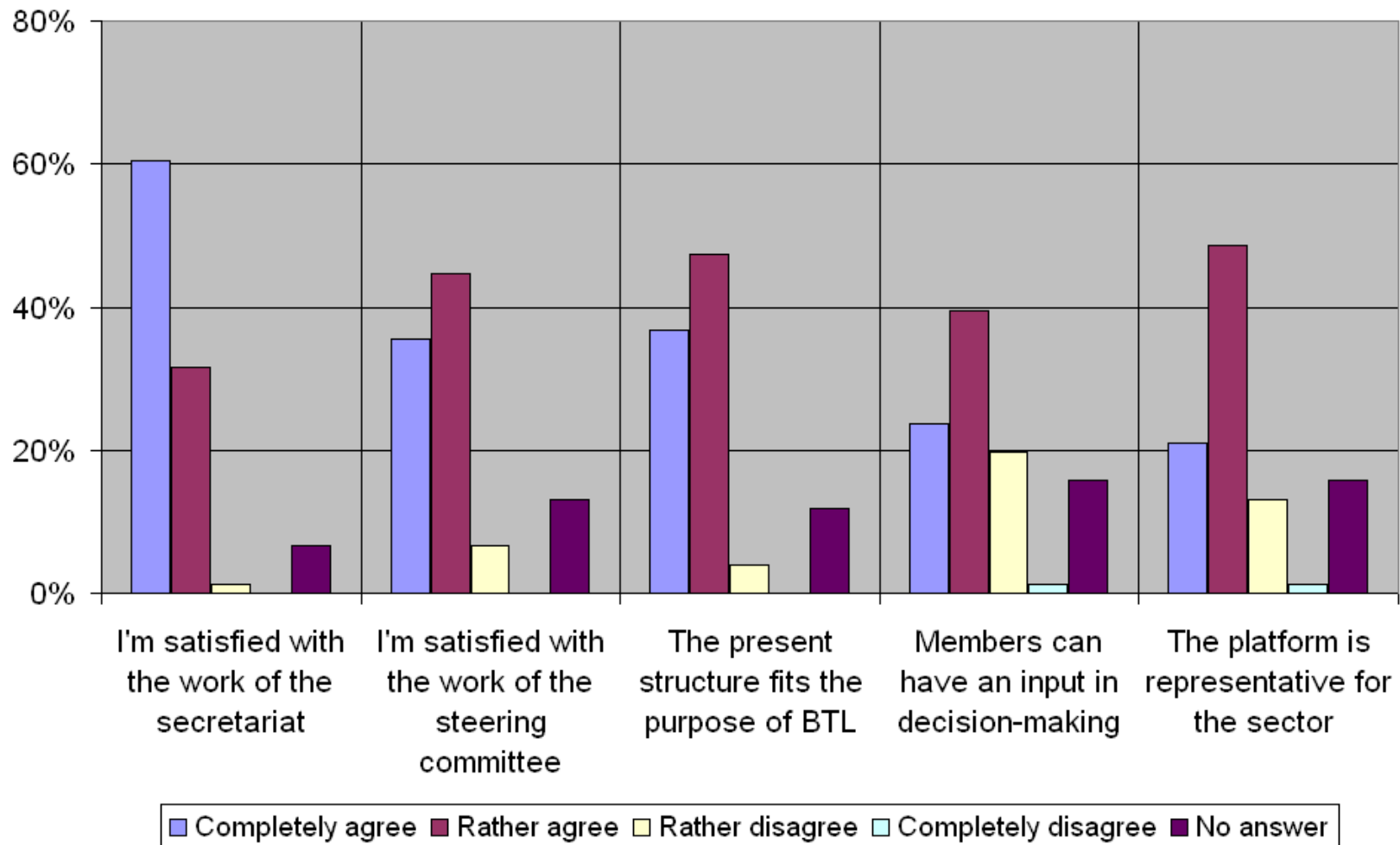
Activities (2): workshops and symposia (cont.)



[Quality of internal functioning (1)]

- Results workshop SC:
 - High level of satisfaction with how the platform is functioning
 - Major challenges:
 - Need to reach more members from other disciplines
 - Functioning of the platform depends on voluntary contributions of members. Difficult to make sufficient time available
 - Dependency on the present staff of the secretariat
 - Dependency on DGDC-financing only
- Results questionnaire
 - High level of satisfaction with how the platform is functioning: see graph
 - Recommendations members:
 - Expand membership
 - Enhance member participation (especially those living in the South)

Quality of internal functioning (2)





3

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- In general, members enthusiastic about:
 - the existence of the platform
 - the results achieved so far (website, concept note DGDC, symposiums and workshops, diffusion of information, ..)
 - the way in which the platform is organised and functioning
- Members have high expectations towards the platform. These expectations have only partially been met so far => incentive to continue investing in the platform
- Very high interest in be-troplive by members living abroad (often ex-students of courses in Belgium) => the inclusion of this group of members asks for a special engagement towards them
- Interest of members is high enough to justify further investment in the further development of the platform
- Important challenge: sustainability

Recommendations (1)

- Further intensify activities of information sharing
 - More links to relevant background documents on website
 - Stimulate members to contribute information
- Further promote website use
 - Systematically include hyperlinks to information on the website in mailings
 - Make website more interactive (e.g. include e-discussion forum)
- Stimulate joint action through be-troplive
 - Might work best through the creation of working groups
 - But only if a concrete theme, issue or idea is identified (e.g. during a symposium or through a member consultation) with potential to mobilise a larger group of members

Recommendations (2)

- Develop an advocacy strategy, with:
 - Advocacy objective
 - Stakeholders (internal, advocacy targets, allies, adversaries)
 - Priorities for the coming 3 to 5 years + strategies to be followed
- Increased attention for the participation of members based in the South. E.g.:
 - Stimulate Southern members to share experiences and/or research results with the platform (through website, e-discussion forum ...)
 - Consider use of modern communication techniques (e.g. videoconferences) during workshops and symposia
 - Invite more speakers "from the field" to symposiums and workshops (e.g. through a call for proposal sent to southern members)
 - Non-Belgian participants in working groups (with specific tasks, e.g. providing information, testing out new approaches in the field, ..)

Recommendations (3)

- Strengthen linkages with other sectors (medicines, agriculture ...)
 - Further stimulate membership of people coming from other sectors
 - Create a mixed veterinarian – medical working group after the 2010 seminar
 - Provide information to other sectors, e.g. invitations to symposiums, newsletter, etc.
- Start looking for diversification of funding. Possibilities:
 - Project funding (e.g. EC)
 - Membership fees for 'full members'

Thank you

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