

Revisiting STAC Effectiveness

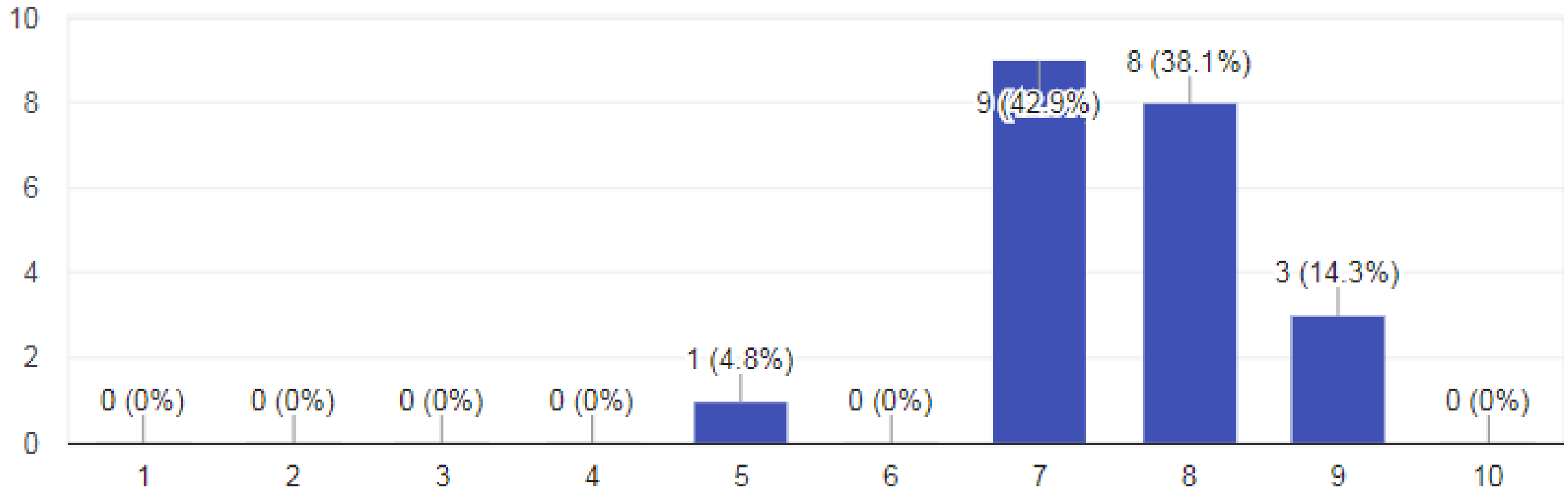
September 13, 2017

STAC Quarterly Meeting

Overview of Survey

- Sent to current and recent STAC members and alternates (45 recipients)
- Focus on STAC activities and meetings from 2015 - present
- 21 respondents; all current STAC members
 - 9 have participated in a STAC workshop
 - 4 of these have also served the role of workshop chair/lead
 - 6 have participated in a STAC peer review
 - 3 have led/chaired a review

Rate STAC's overall effectiveness since 2015 on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very effective)



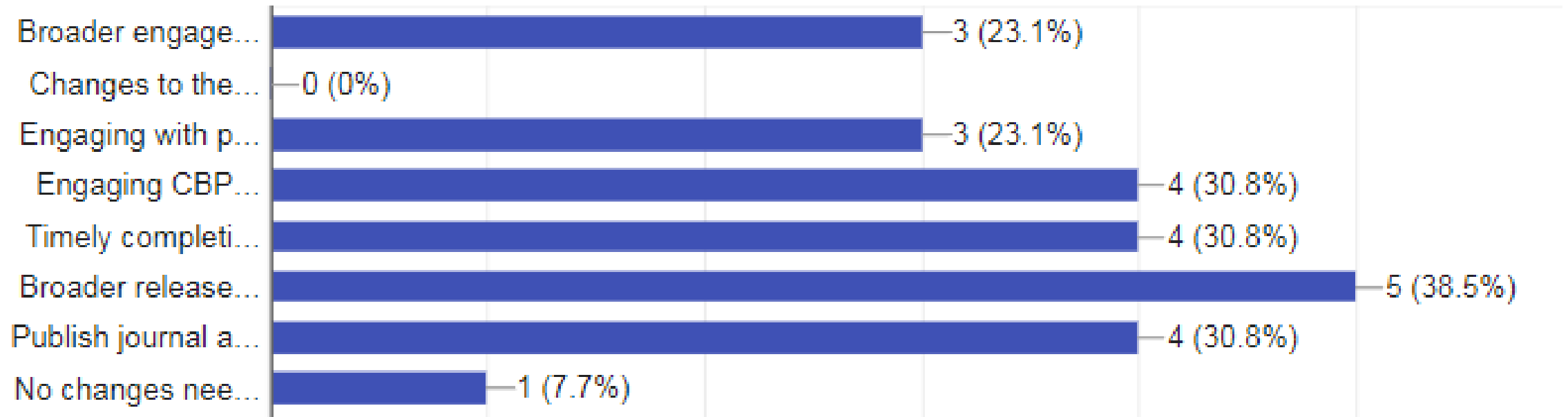
Where has STAC been especially effective in addressing a specific issue?

- Drainage ditch management
- **Review and Assessment of Conowingo Dam sedimentation**
 - Workshop pulled together an impressive range of experts to share knowledge and build our collective understanding of reservoir sediment dynamics on the Lower Susquehanna .
 - Helped keep the community's response to this issue more appropriate and scientifically based than it would likely have otherwise been.
- STAC has been sending a strong message for years about **multiple models, uncertainty and climate change**
- Conducting the P6 nutrient inputs review while methodology was still under development, allowing our comments to influence source and methods decisions in a timely manner.
- Microplastics/microbead issue
- When being proactive - identifying a new problem, summarizing the information available, and reporting out to the appropriate CBP committee that needs that information. Ex. Blue catfish, microplastics, and phosphorus

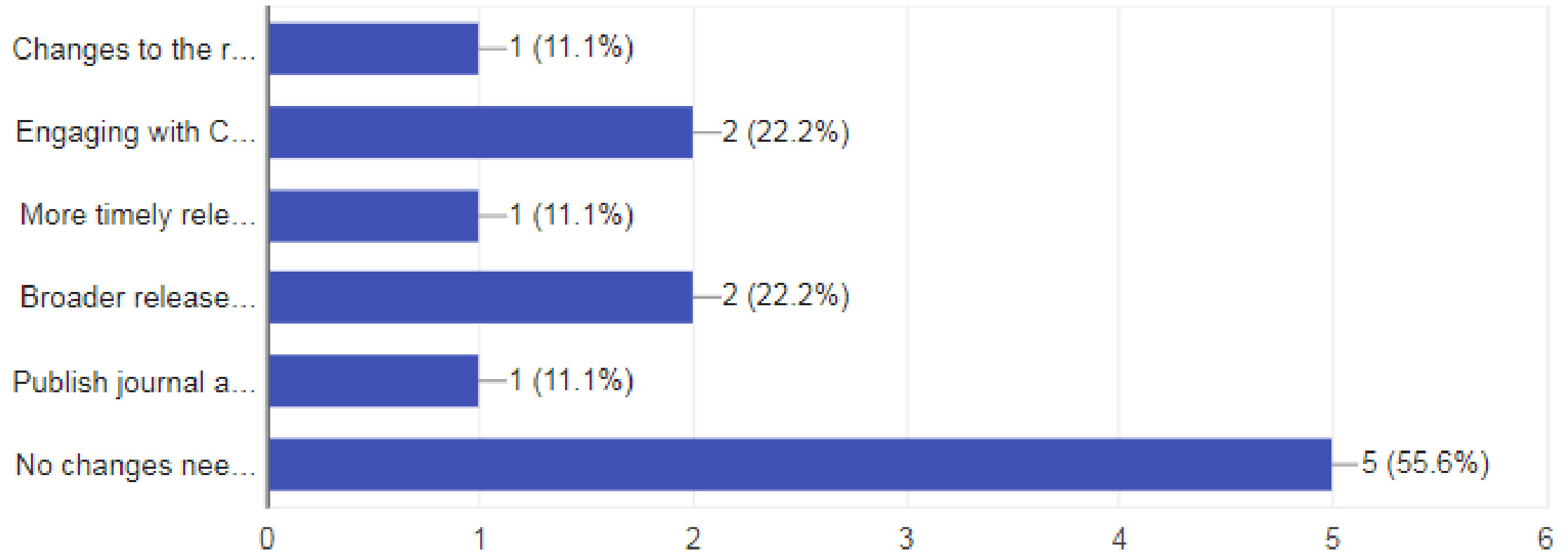
EFFECTIVENESS OF STAC ACTIVITY REPORTS

If you led or participated in a STAC WORKSHOP (2015 -), what would have made the workshop more impactful?

- Clearer vision of how the workshop discussion fits into the Bay Program's adaptive management framework, and hence more effective co-engagement of stakeholders and scientists.
- We were extremely impactful - important elements of that success were: 1) prioritizing recommendations 2) follow up to report back to the CBP committees (including the MB) that supported or sponsored the workshop 3) having a printed version of workshop made available (only appropriate/useful for some workshops)

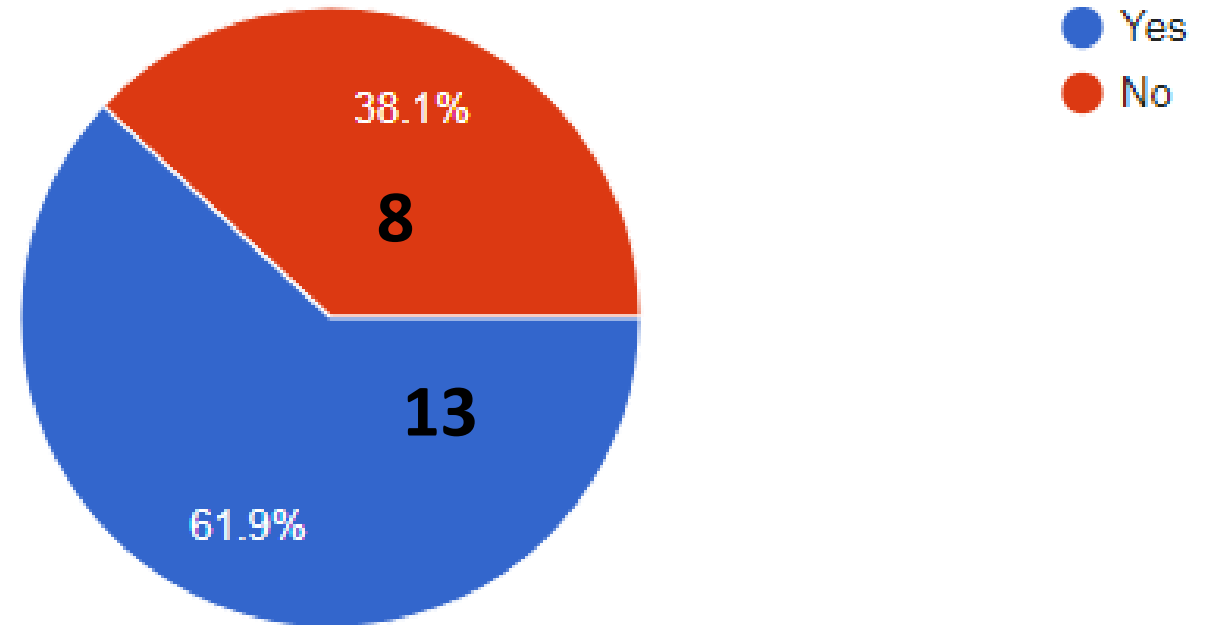


If you served as chair or participated in a STAC PEER REVIEW (2015 -), what would have made the review more impactful?



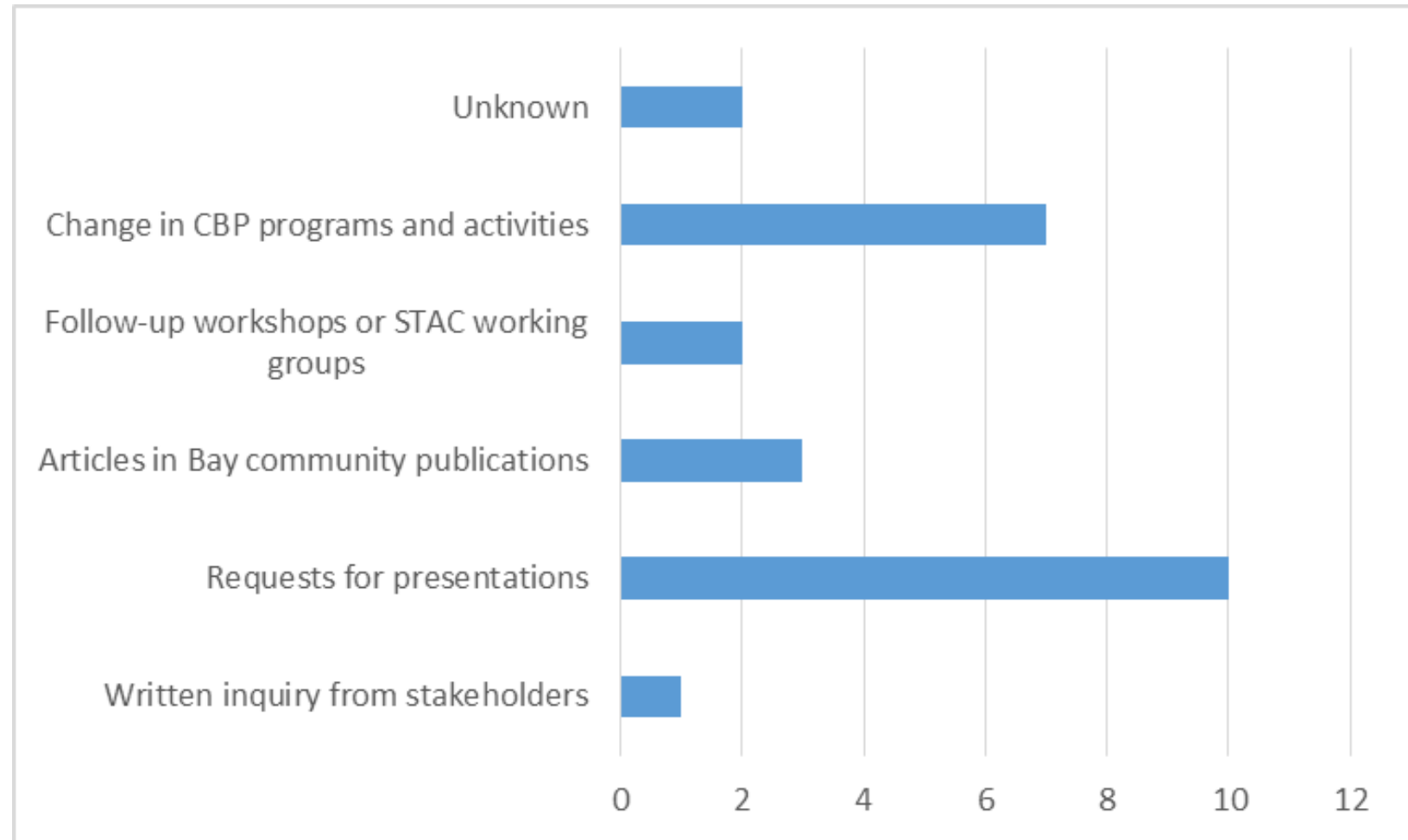
For the STAC activity(s) you have participated in, has a report been released?

- Out of 13 respondents, 7 participated in a second activity with a completed report
 - Responses collected for 20 activities
 - 50% workshops/reviews



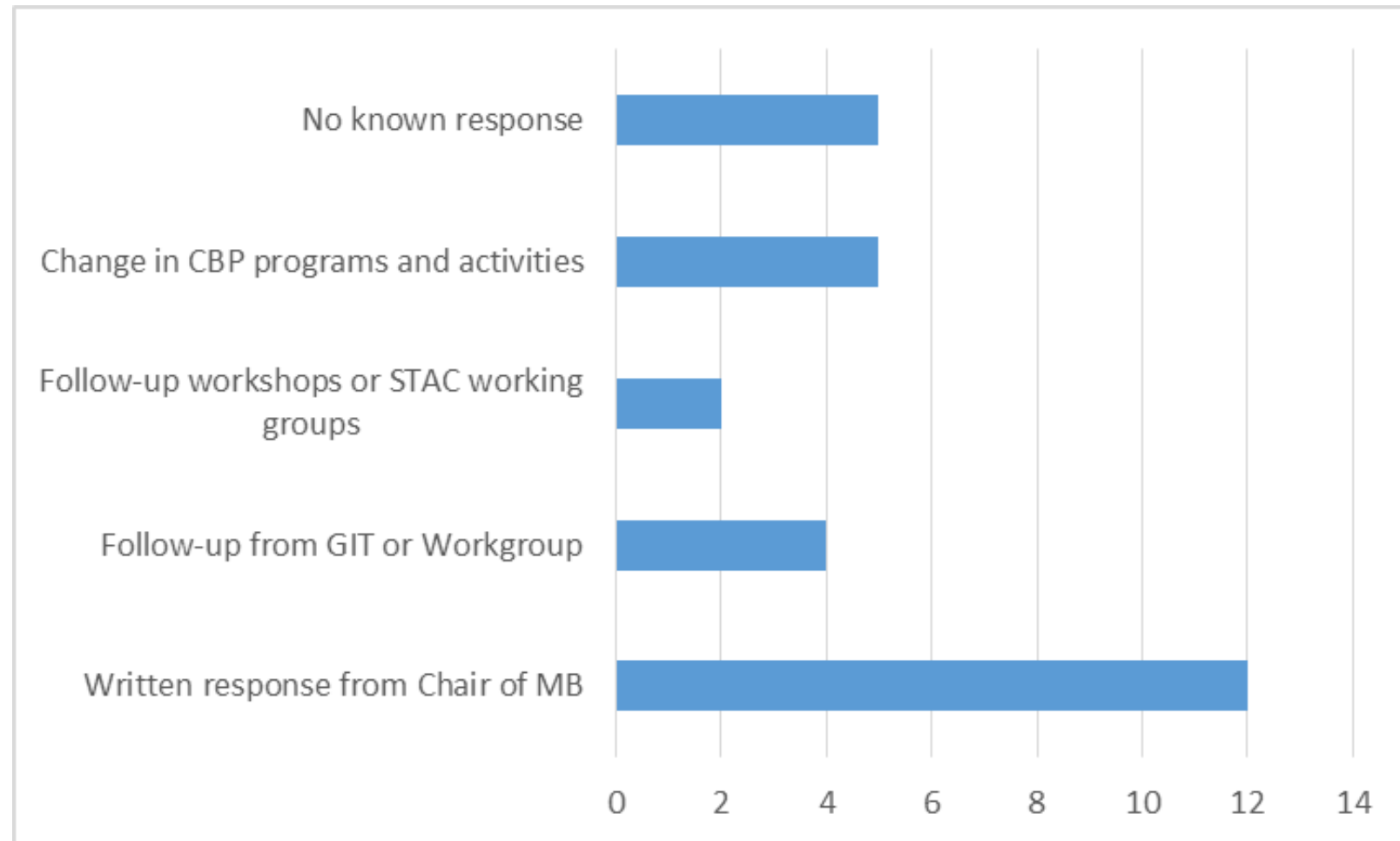
Is there evidence that the report reached the intended audience?

- Requests for presentations, and changes in CBP activity or actions ranked high
- Information will feed into Bay's monitoring program
- Collaborative interaction with CBP staff
- Unknown/too early to tell



In what manner has the CBP responded to the recommendations made in the STAC report?

- Main response mechanism continues to be written response from Chair of the CBP Management Board
- Too soon to tell / response still in preparation
- Funding for two separate research grants

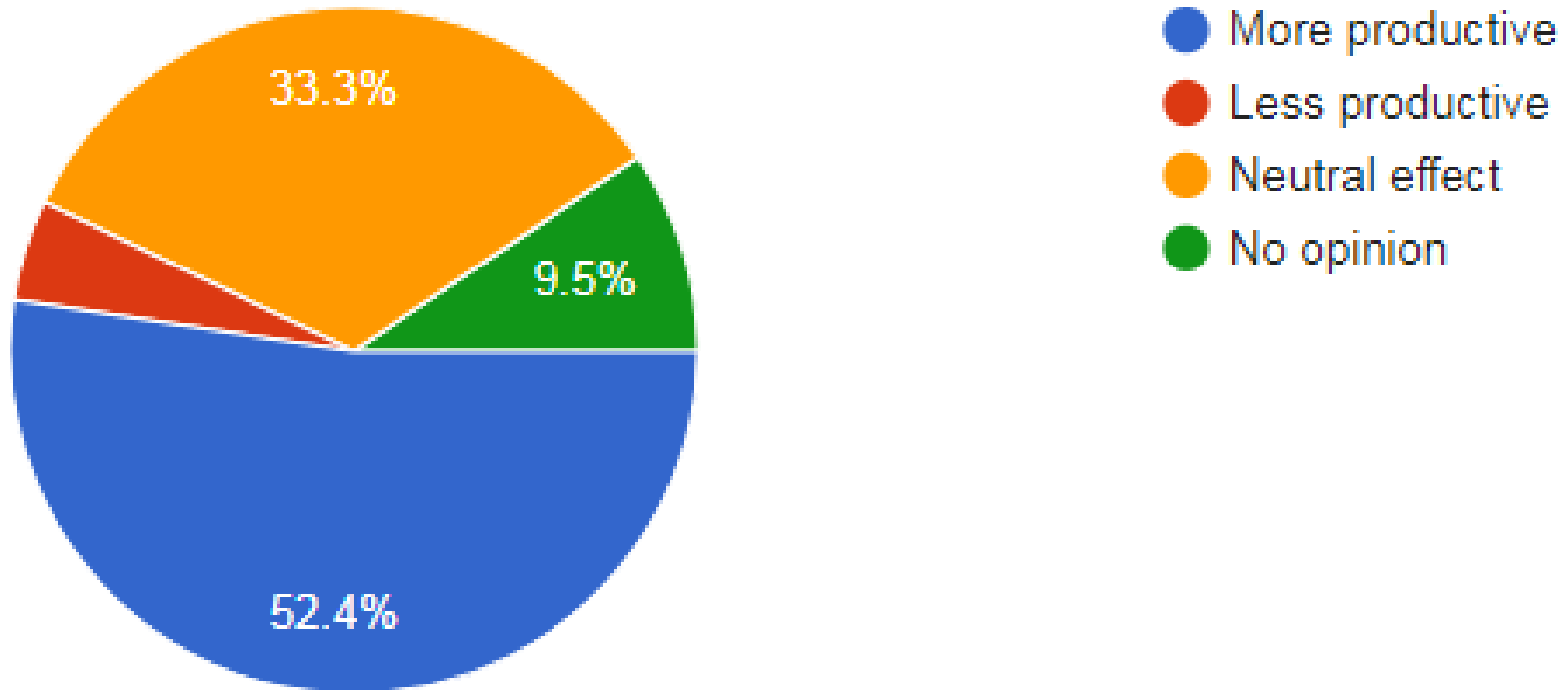


Additional thoughts on the CBP's response

- We worked closely with the CBP before and during the review.
- The reply to the review report was thorough and appropriate.
- Although a response has not yet been released, I believe the peer review provided a good opportunity to provide technical feedback to the Bay Program.
- Impact was more immediate by reviewing a work in progress, rather than waiting and reviewing a finished product. This allowed our comments to be taken into consideration during development of the product.
- More mileage that could have been gained from follow-up STAC discussions, both from a technical and a policy/stakeholder side.
- The perfunctory "response" letter to the Workshop recommendations from CBP was worth very little, in our case. I (as co-chair) was asked to write (and did write) the draft response from the CBP to the recommendations we made, without any real latitude to truly commit the Program's actions, nor to direct funding to any specifics. This part of the system is broken, as I see it.

STAC PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Recent STAC quarterly meetings have been, to the extent possible, organized around a central theme. Has this change made meetings:



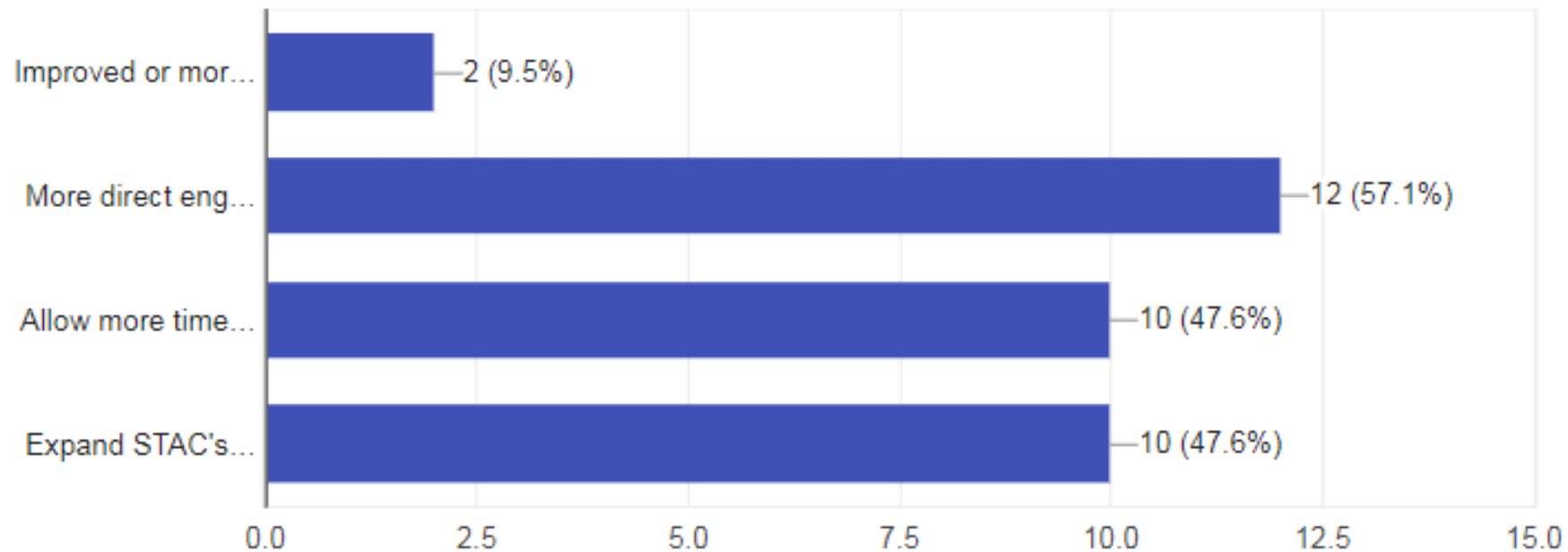
Should STAC consider restructuring meetings in the future?

1. No. Maintain the 1.5 day-long quarterly meetings and continue the current practice of having multiple topical presentations focused on a specific theme. Each meeting should include an update from CBP staff. 5 (23.8%)
2. Yes. Maintain the 1.5 day-long quarterly meetings but reduce the number of topical presentations. Block out time during the meeting for “work sessions” where members can collaborate on on-going workshops/reviews, etc. Each meeting should include an update from CBP staff. 5 (23.8%)
3. Yes. Reduce the number of in-person meetings to two per year. The remaining two meetings would be held via the web/conference call. 8 (38.1%)

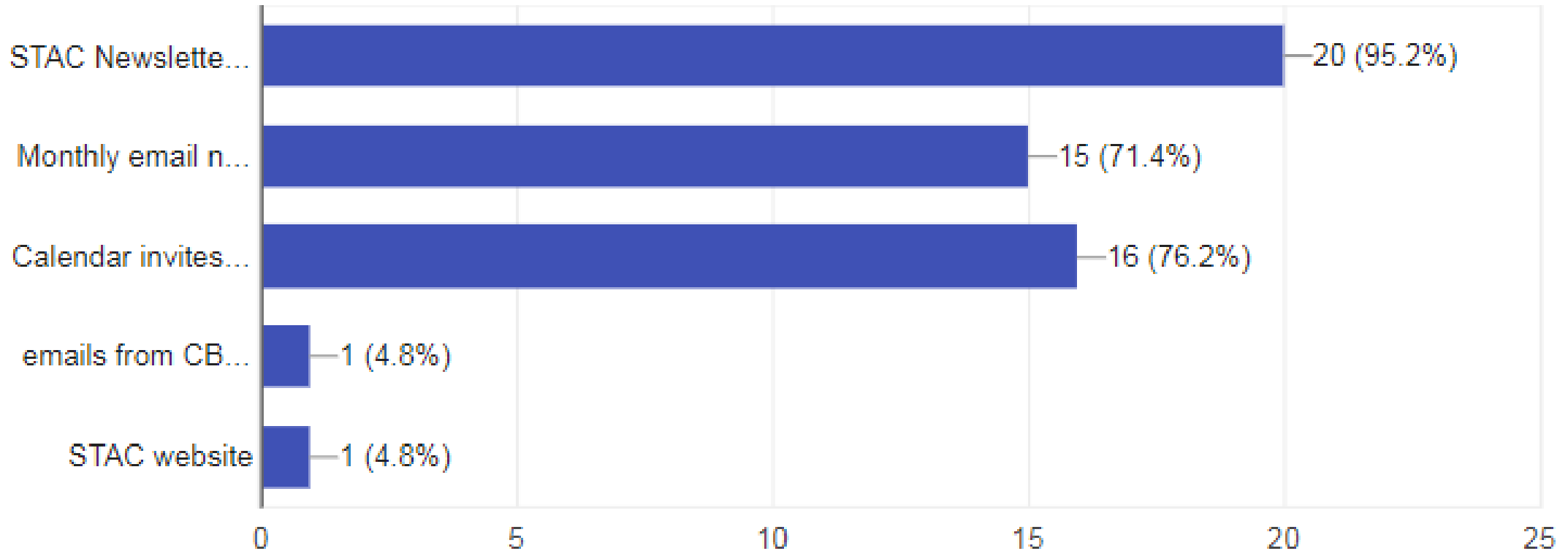
- **The 1.5 day, in-person format works best. It provides great opportunity to connect with the other scientists more effectively.** If costs are a critical consideration, perhaps have one (shorter) virtual meeting a year. Some training or guidance on expectations might be useful, particularly with regard to understanding the need (and opportunity) to synthesize our expertise to support explicit decisions in resource management.
- A combination of #2 and 3 would be an interesting experiment. **The focal presentations may work well in an online format, and the in-person meetings could then devote more time to collaboration.**
- **One size does not fit all - We should remain flexible,** where the default is our current format, but customizing the meeting format to fit the topic. If small group discussions are useful, do them; if not, maybe a phone meeting will be just fine. I see the **trend toward having more time for members to discuss and interact** is a very positive change. **Move away from one presentation after another, with no discussion.**

If you could propose any changes to STAC processes or procedures to improve our effectiveness, what would they be?

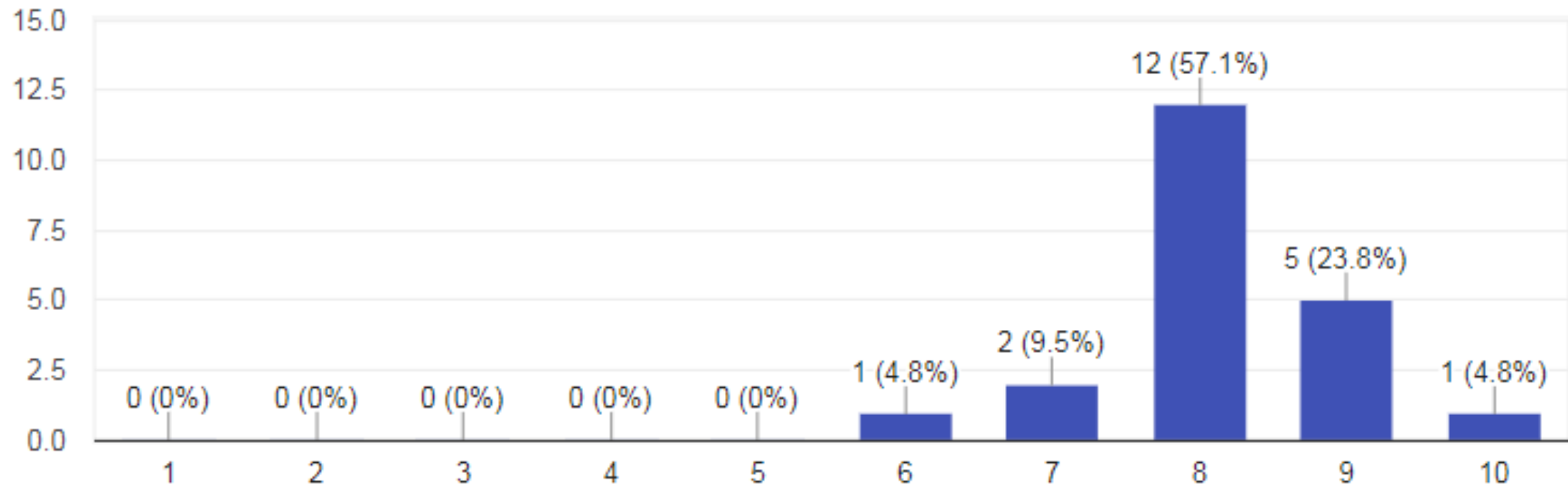
- Broad support for:
 - More direct engagement with the CBP,
 - Allowing more time at STAC meetings for collaboration, and
 - Expanding STAC's capacity to generate different activities/products



What tools do you find useful in staying connected to the CBP and various workgroups?



STAC recently revised how workshop proposals are evaluated. Rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how effective you find this revised RFP process.



- Let's stick with the same process for a few years – ask again when we can reflect on criteria with hindsight of previous workshops, reports, and impacts
- Keep in mind that future refinement will be necessary to be responsive to changing needs of the CBP

Key Take-Aways

- Explore ways to widen the release of workshop findings and recommendations
- Circle back with the CBP on their responses to workshop/review recommendations
- Pursue more direct engagement with the CBP (e.g., workgroups, GITs)
- Revisit the STAC Newsletter, and continue to strengthen regular communication between STAC and the CBP

Key Take-Aways

- Consider changing up quarterly meetings. Allow more time for connection, collaboration, and discussion, with the possibility of holding some meetings via webinar – stay flexible!
- Expand STAC's capacity to generate different products, and get more mileage by following-through
- Proceed with the current RFP process for the time being, allowing for refinement as needed