

6th GFRAS Annual Meeting

Global Good Practices in Rural Advisory Services

14 - 17 September 2015, Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan

Participants Evaluation of the 6th GFRAS Annual Meeting

Introduction

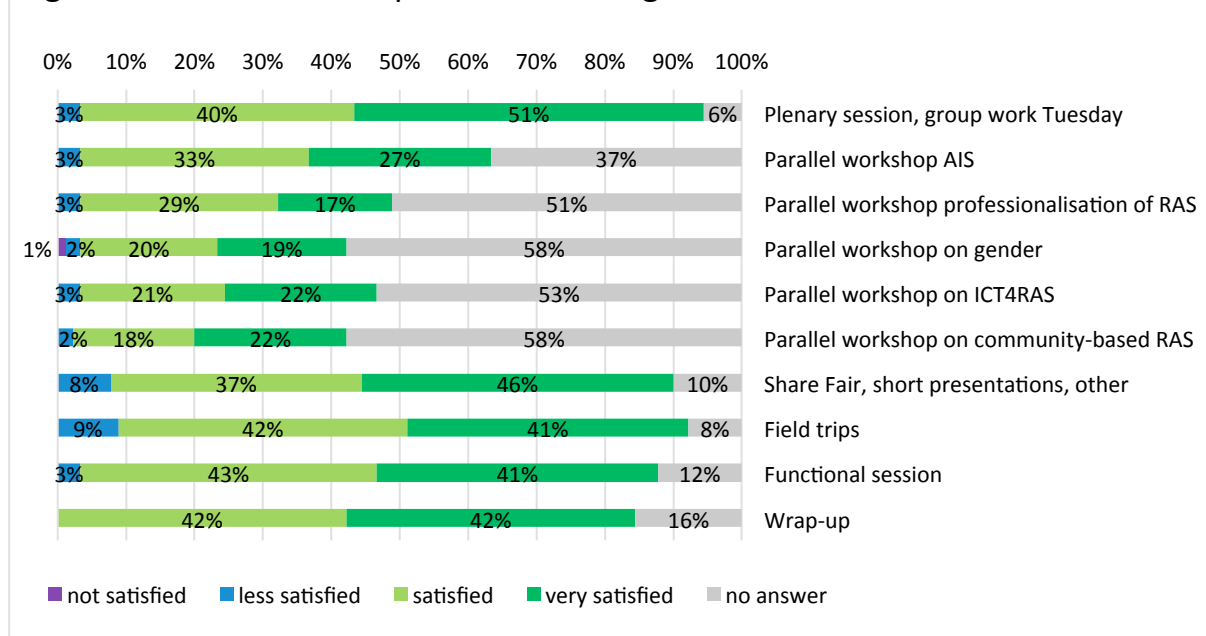
This document gives an overview of the results of the evaluation of the 6th GFRAS Annual Meeting.

The results shown below are taken from the evaluation form provided to the participants. They were asked to evaluate the agenda and inputs, the opportunities for participation and the facilitation of the event, the organisation and preparation of the event, as well as topics for future meetings. In total, 90 of 130 participants provided their feedback to the event.

This feedback is taken seriously and will be used to optimise the next annual meeting and to ensure that the meeting corresponds to the needs and wishes of the entire GFRAS community.

Inputs and exchange sessions: Agenda and programme

Figure 1: Evaluation of inputs and exchange sessions



The inputs and programme points were mainly rated between satisfactory to very satisfactory (see Figure 1). The overall density of the programme was considered a good mix by a clear majority of participants, with some wishing for more innovative and in-depth discussions during the parallel sessions, while others wished for a lighter agenda or more parallel workshops, short presentations, and share fair slots. The moderation methods used in the plenary sessions were repeatedly commented on as very good and creative.

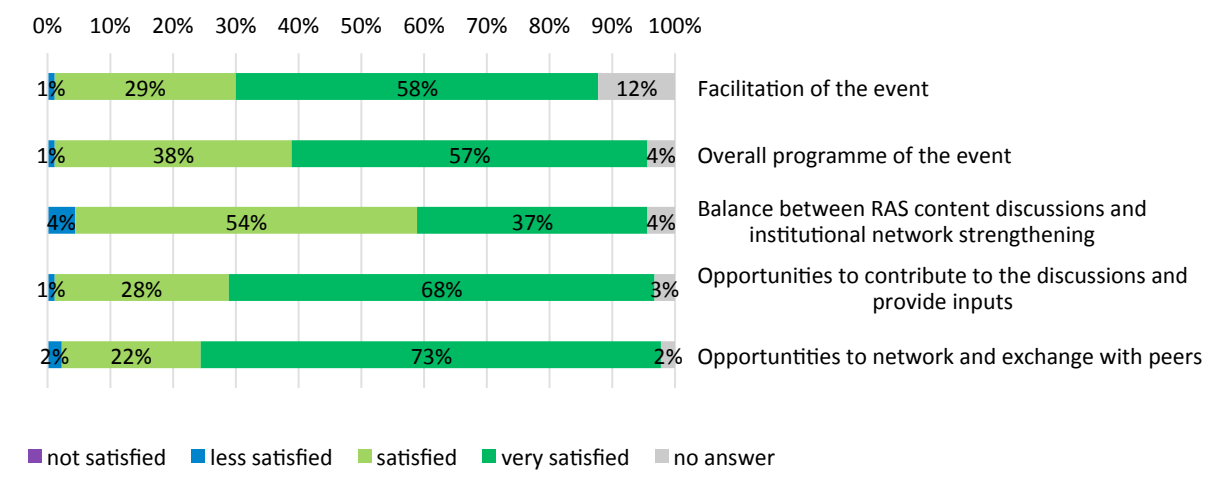
Opinions on the share fair and short presentations are slightly divergent, with some comments wishing for more stands, suggestions on improving its organisation, and more time accorded to

the share fair rather than short presentations, while others highly appreciated the newly introduced format of short presentations and wish to see this at future meetings. The rating on the field trips highly depended on which field-trip was attended, but also remains predominantly positive. One of the overarching wishes was to have more targeted visits, including, amongst others, a stronger focus on smallholder farmers and on local RAS as opposed to the local agricultural system.

Opportunities for participation and facilitation of the meeting

Many of the overarching comments about the meeting referred to the opportunities to network and exchange with peers, which were rated as very satisfying, with one comment wishing for more time before and during meals. The balance between RAS and content discussions was rated least satisfactory in this category, but there were no reasons given on how this could be optimised (see Figure 2).

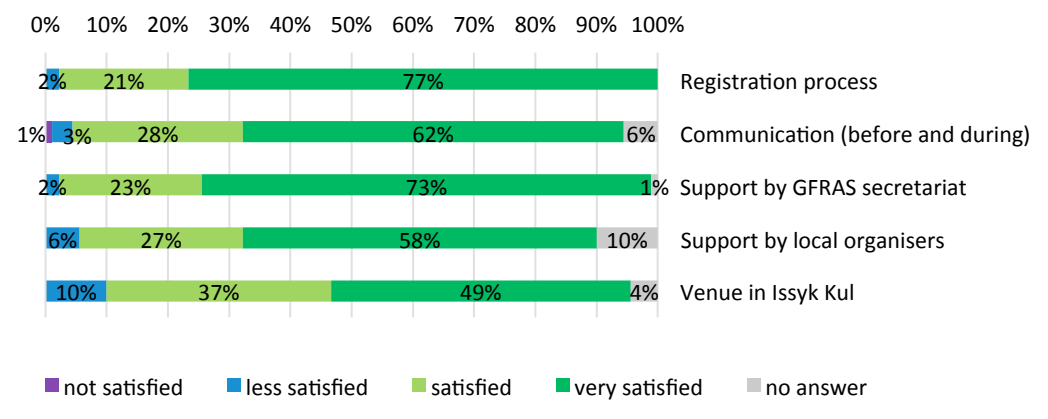
Figure 2: Participation and facilitation



Preparation and Logistics

In general the participants rated the preparation and logistics as very positive (see Figure 3). The venue in Issyk Kul inspired very differing opinions, between being a great and beautiful place, with the added benefit of the community being almost isolated and thus much closer. At the same time, some considered it to be too far from the airport, while especially the two different hotels, the sometimes unreliable internet, and the room prices were considered a downside. The general support by the secretariat and local organisers was also perceived very positively, while the

Figure 3: Preparation and logistics

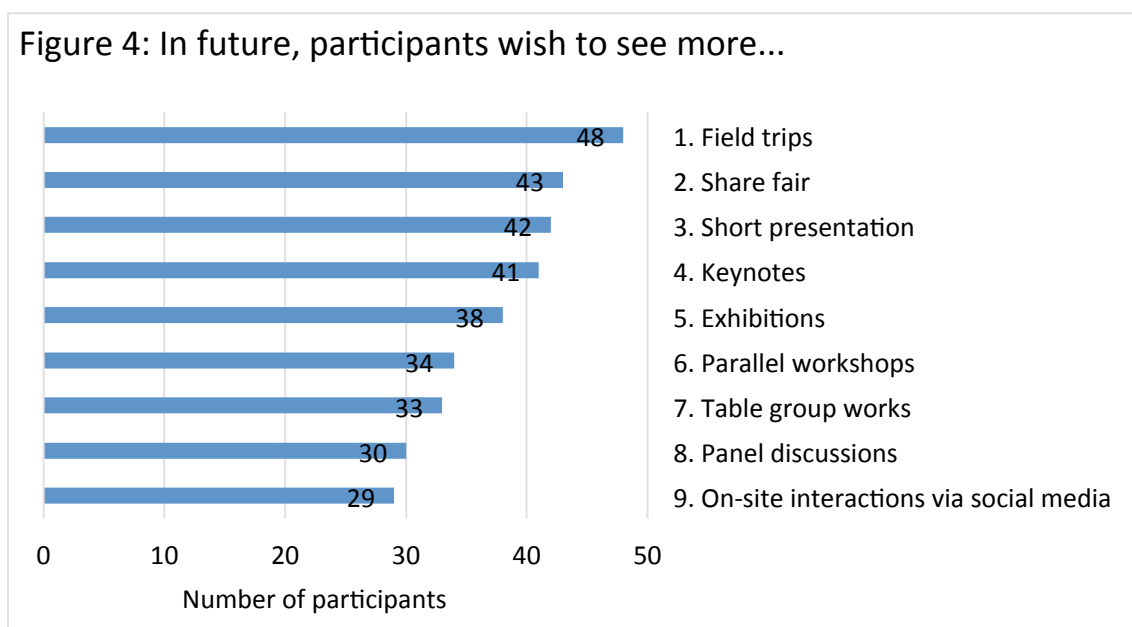


negative remarks mainly referred to the sometimes long wait at the airport for the visa approval.

Overall assessment and outlook

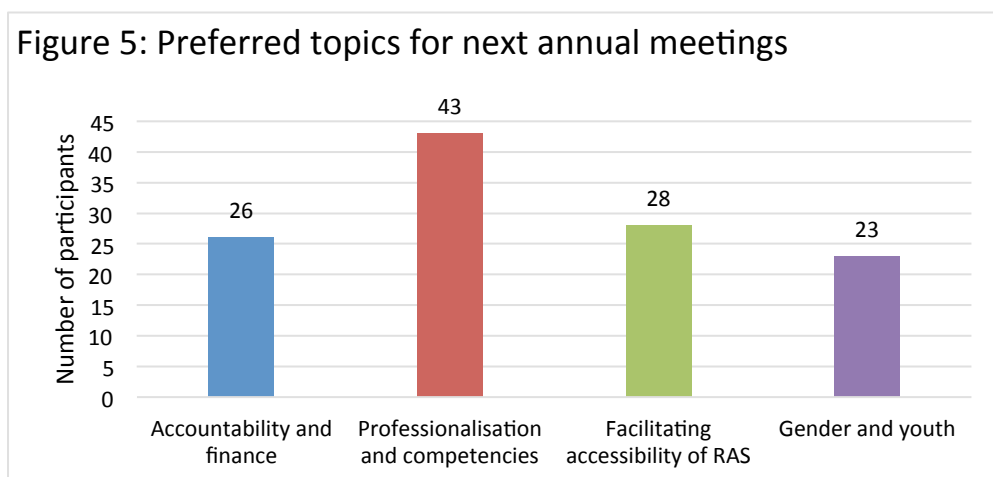
Overall the comments were, once again, very positive with 38 % rating the event as satisfactory and 49 % as very satisfactory. One of the most repeated requests was to make an effort to have more farmers and representatives, field-extensionists, and private sector stakeholders attend and participate in the meeting. At the 6th GFRAS Annual Meeting, the private sector composed 8% of participants, while 5% were farmer representatives. There was no category for field-staff active in extension, which could be introduced for the next meeting.

In response to the question, which activities participants wish to see more of in future meetings, participants selected among the options provided to have more field trips and keynotes, and especially more “creative” or smaller inputs, such as the share fair, short presentations, and exhibitions, which offer opportunities to contribute to the meeting and present own learnings and projects (see Figure 4). Among other suggestions coming from the participants, training sessions



and peer exchanges between the regional networks and country fora were put on the wish list.

The preferred topic for the next GFRAS Annual Meeting is „professionalisation” (see Figure 5), although many other valid and interesting suggestions were made, indicating the hot topics or fields of interest of members of the GFRAS community. ICTS, climate-smart agriculture, or integrating climate change and food security, as well as requests for general topics around improving RAS and promoting innovation amongst RAS were all mentioned by three participants



each.

Reaction by the GFRAS secretariat

As an immediate reaction to the results above, the GFRAS secretariat commits itself to work toward the following adaptations for the 7th GFRAS Annual Meeting, to be held in Cameroon in October 2017:

- Hold the conference on a topic related to professionalisation in RAS
- Find a good mix between informative and well-presented keynotes and plenary discussions, parallel sessions that allow for in-depth discussions, as well as space for own inputs at the share fare or during short presentations.
- Organise targeted field trips that related to the topic of the conference
- Keep the agenda light enough for participants to have own meetings and to network
- Try to find more incentives for more private sector, field staff, and farmer organisations to attend
- Hold the meeting in one single venue, with a fair WIFI connection, and which is in a reasonable distance to the international airport
- Keep the procedure of registration and call for inputs, as well as general communication similarly simple and straightforward