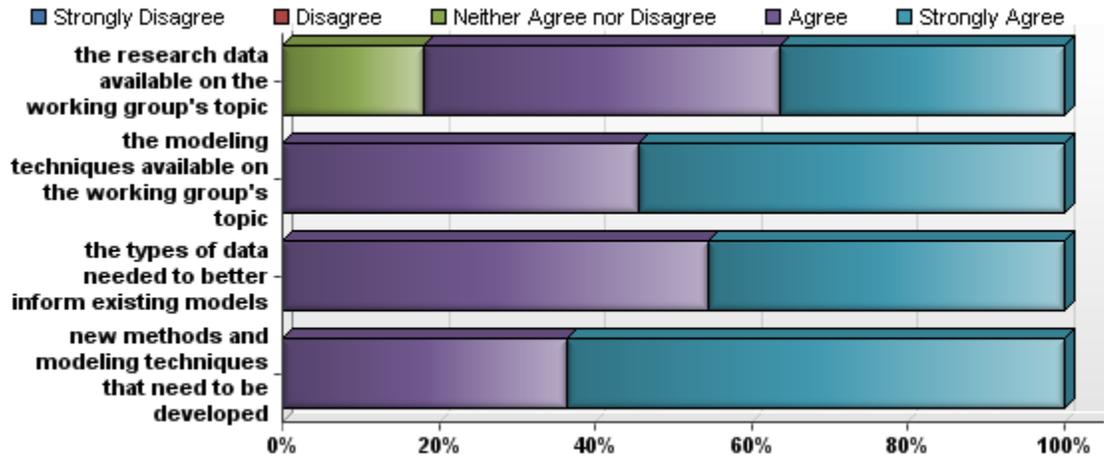


NIMBioS

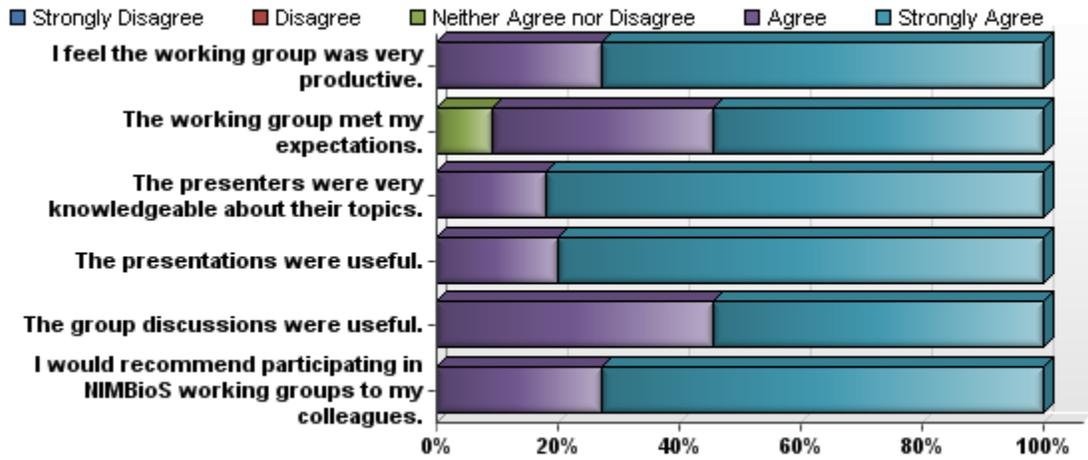
National Institute for Mathematical
and Biological Synthesis

Plant Soil Feedback WG M1 Report

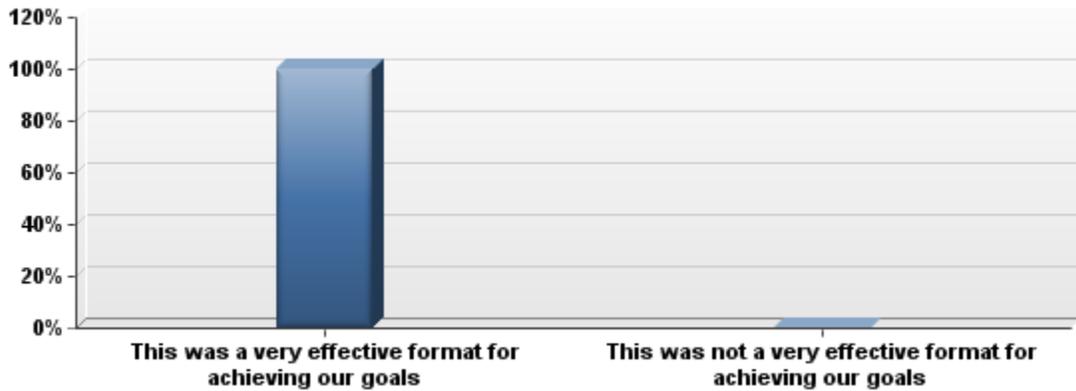
1. Please check the appropriate box to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. As a result of participating in this working group, I have a better understanding of:



2. Please check the appropriate box to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about this working group:



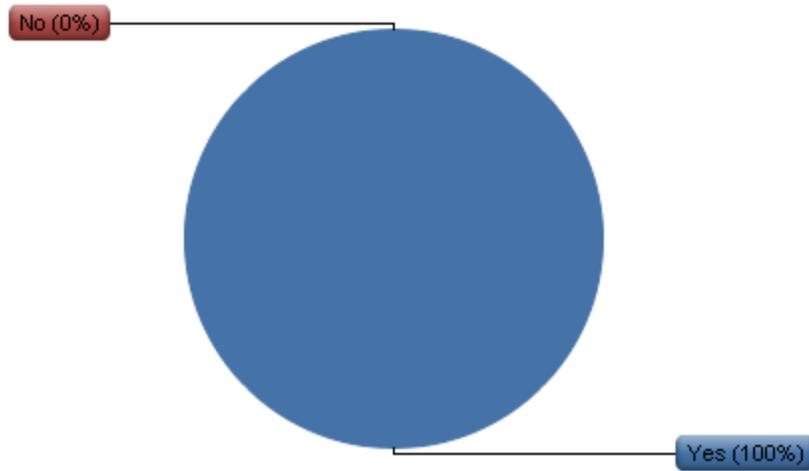
3. How do you feel about the format of the working group?



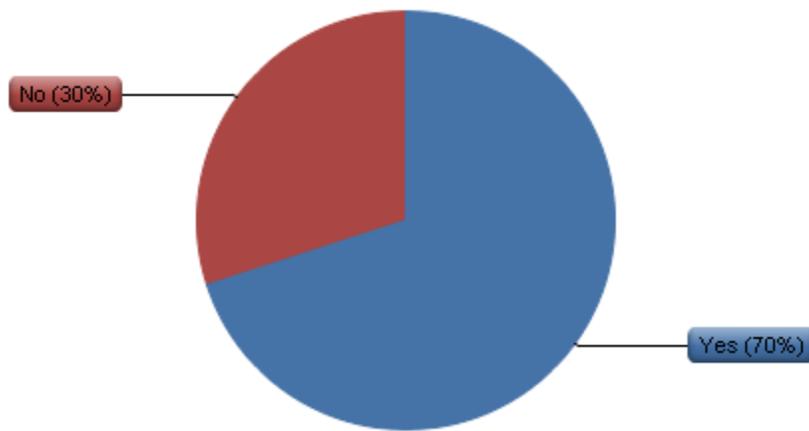
4. Do you feel the working group made adequate progress, for its first meeting, toward finding a common language across disciplines in the research area?



5. Do you feel the participating in the working group helped you understand the research happening in other disciplines in the group's topic area?



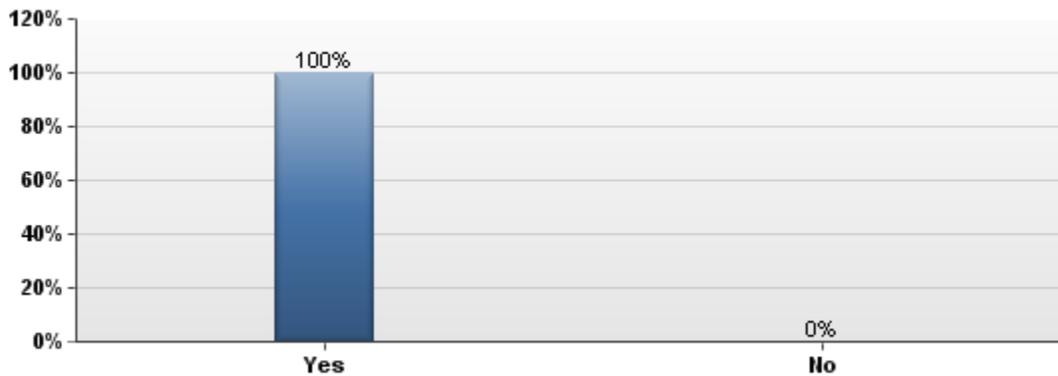
6. Did you develop unanticipated plans for collaborative research with other working group participants?



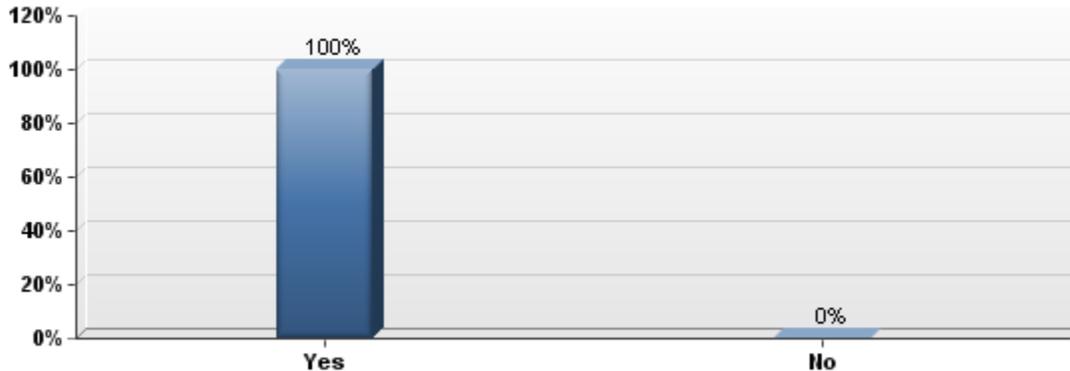
7. Please explain:

Possibly, we discussed potential collaborators.

8. Do you feel that the exchange of ideas that took place during the working group will influence your future research?



9. Do you feel the expectations for the next working group are clear (in the sense that you are leaving this meeting with a good idea of what your contribution will be at the next meeting)?



10. What do you feel was the most useful aspect of the working group?

Researchers in our working group take a diversity of theoretical, experimental and observational approaches to understanding frequency dependence in plant communities (with most focused on plant-soil feedbacks). This diversity of approaches is leading to some very interesting synergies and opportunities for synthesis.

The presentations were critical to bring me up to speed. The next most useful were the breakouts into sub-groups

The facilities were very conducive to the workshop structure. Having a large meeting room for the whole group and break out rooms for smaller groups really made the whole experience comfortable and easy. The quality of scientists at the workshop was excellent too.

Simply having everyone in the same room at the same time was the most useful. Everyone brought a different perspective and knowledge base.

Learning about other researchers' approaches and methods. Sharing perspectives of research groups working on the same topic but in different systems or using different approaches.

I attended remotely, sometimes it was hard to hear people that were adjacent to the phone/camera rather than straight in front.

The intense face-to-face interaction with a variety of empiricists and theorists on a focused topic.

The composition of the group is sufficiently diverse in terms of general research questions and methodologies that each participant brings something useful to the table, and the specific questions of the working group allows us to focus this diversity.

11. What, if anything, would you change about the working group?

I was totally happy with the opportunities provided by NIMBioS and the progress we made as a working group. The biggest change is that I hope we are able to find a time that everyone can attend next time!

A unbiased facilitator may have helped smooth out some of the discussions that went a little too long and ranged too far afield.

More information from working group leaders before the meeting about what to expect and how to prepare (e.g. a list of key papers to read before the meeting).

12. The working group format would have been more effective if:

Maybe if we had spent a little less time on introductions.

there were a better way to organize shared files. Basecamp does not appear to allow you to create folders for subgroups or to have subfolders for particular topics.

We had more time.

13. Please provide any additional comments about your overall experience with the working group:

I am excited to continue the work we started during the our first meeting.

It was really great. I feel like I know what everyone in the working group does and the informal interactions after the official meetings were very useful.

Overall it was a fun and productive working group. The group dynamics was very good - lively, but respectful discussions and debates, and we left with a clear plan for moving forward on a number of different projects/manuscripts.

I have been to a number of Workshops before, and compared to my previous experiences this Working Group meeting has been very productive. I think that there are multiple reasons for this. First of all, I think NIMBioS' strategy to form working groups that meet multiple times really increases the commitment of participants and the incentive to establish new collaborations. Second, the facilities offered and (technical) assistance provided really enabled all of us (organizers/participants) to completely focus on the content of our workshop. We have come up with a number of very concrete projects to work on, and have formulated clear expectations for where we would like to be at the start of our next working group meeting (scheduled at the end of spring '14)