Results from the Survey RSN1

Comitato Scientifico Nazionale 1: **Galassie e Cosmologia**

Stefano ANDREON
Angela BONGIORNO
Gianfranco BRUNETTI
Michele CANTIELLO
Alessandro CAPETTI
Paola CASTANGIA
Roberto DECARLI
Gabriella DE LUCIA
Anna GALLAZZI
Amata MERCURIO
Alessia MORETTI
Marco SCODEGGIO

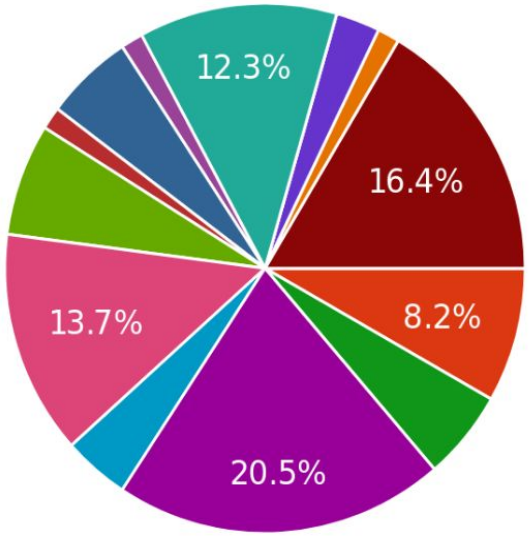
- Announced on August 4, deadline September 10, 2022
- Organized in 6 blocks:
  - Demography of the answers
  - Role of the CSNs
  - INAF forms (“schede”)
  - INAF funding scheme (Astrofisica di Eccellenza)
  - Areas of activity
  - RSN1 days

Demography of the answers

- 73 users answered (@ 7/10/2022) ~40% of RSN1 affiliates
- Feedback received from all the institutes, with numeric predominance of the larger ones (not normalized by number of local affiliates)

Q1.1 Select your INAF institute (the survey is anonymous, data useful only for statistical reasons).

73 responses

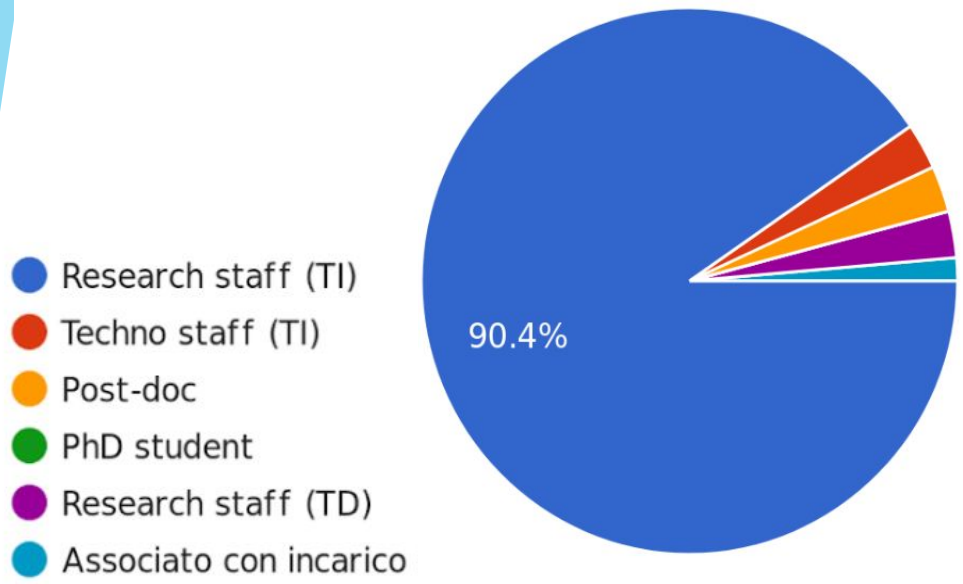


Demography of the answers

- Mostly staff from users with RSN1 as primary

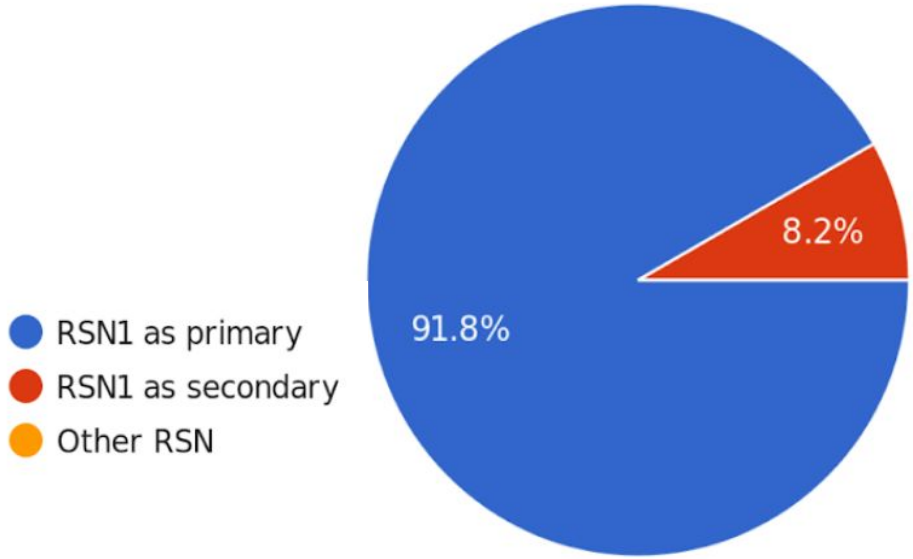
Q1.2 Your position (data used only for statistical purposes)

73 responses



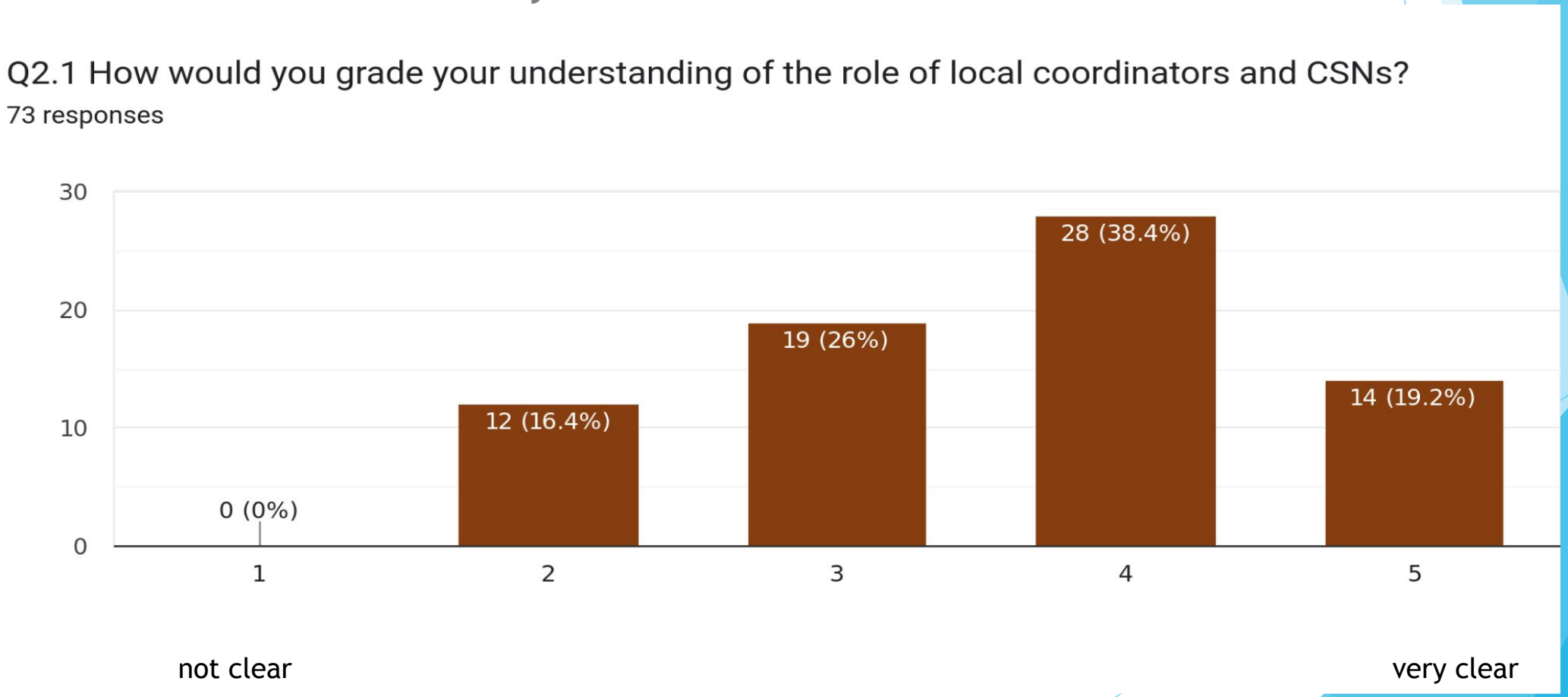
Q1.3 Your RSN affiliation is:

73 responses



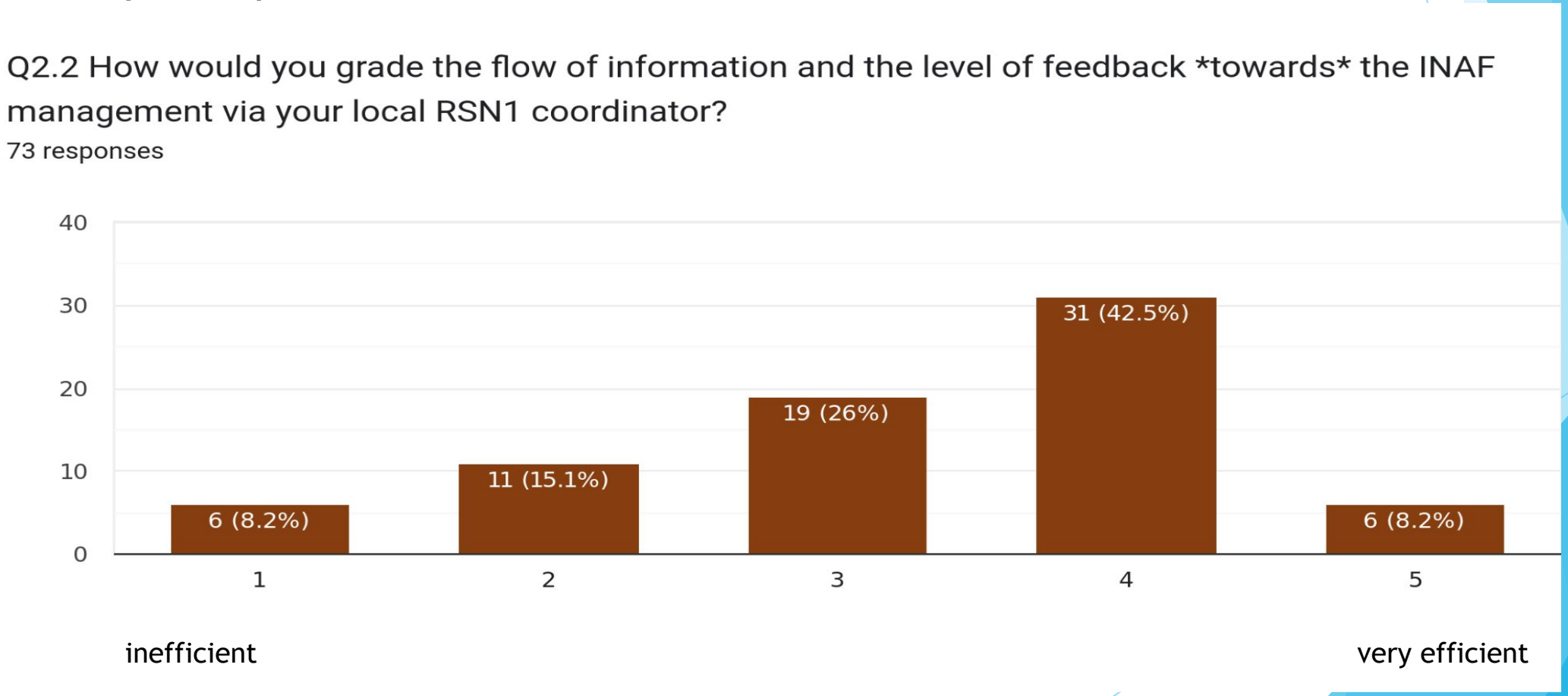
Role of the CSN

- The role of local RSN coordinators and CSN is mostly clear: only 16% think that the role is not sufficiently clear



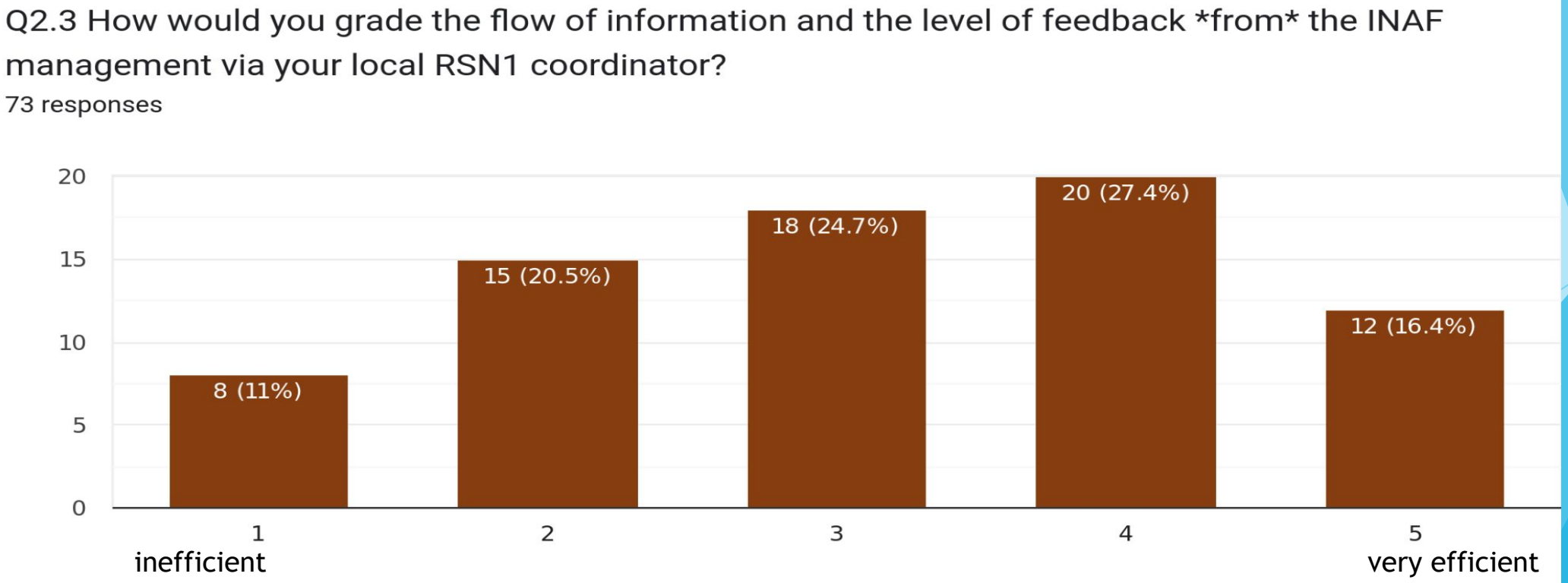
Role of the CSN

- The bottom-up flow of information is perceived as efficient (>=4) by ~50% of the participants



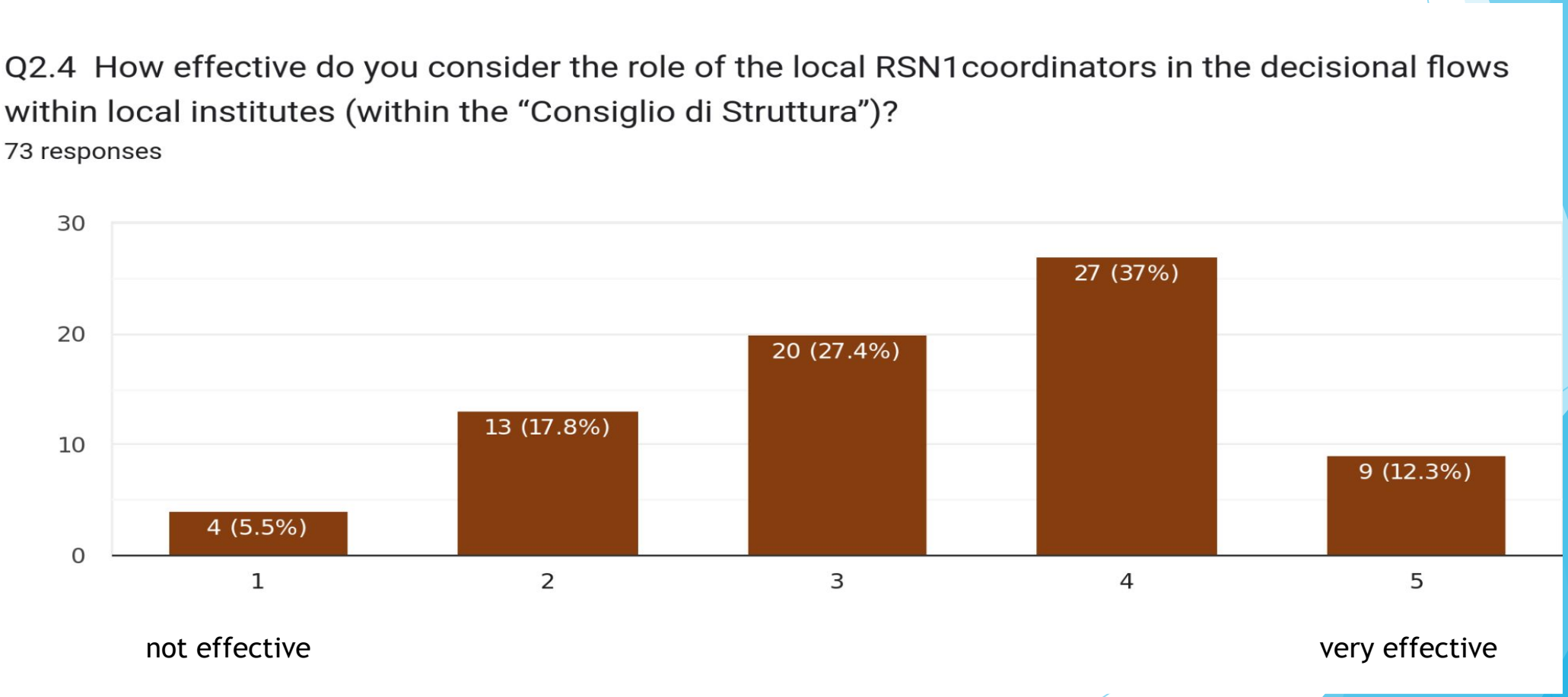
Role of the CSN

- Larger spread in the perception of the efficiency of the top-down flow of information: overall good (~43%) but could be improved



Role of the CSN

- The RSN1 coordinators are considered effective within the CdS by ~50% of the participants



Role of the CSN

- Overall, the existence of a local RSN coordinator and of the CSN is considered positive and overall useful/effective in a bottom-up process.

- However, important issues have been expressed by 38% of the participants (28/73 articulated responses):
  - CSN1 feedback from the community to INAF management and CSN1 recommendations were not followed up.
  - The CSN are called to do a “secretary” job that involves several duties, with no relevant impact on the community and without being influential in the decisional flow.
  - The perception is of a unilateral process (i.e. top-down flow).

- The perception of the role as CdS members is more diverse, due to their different involvement in the Director’s decisions and/or their different initiatives.

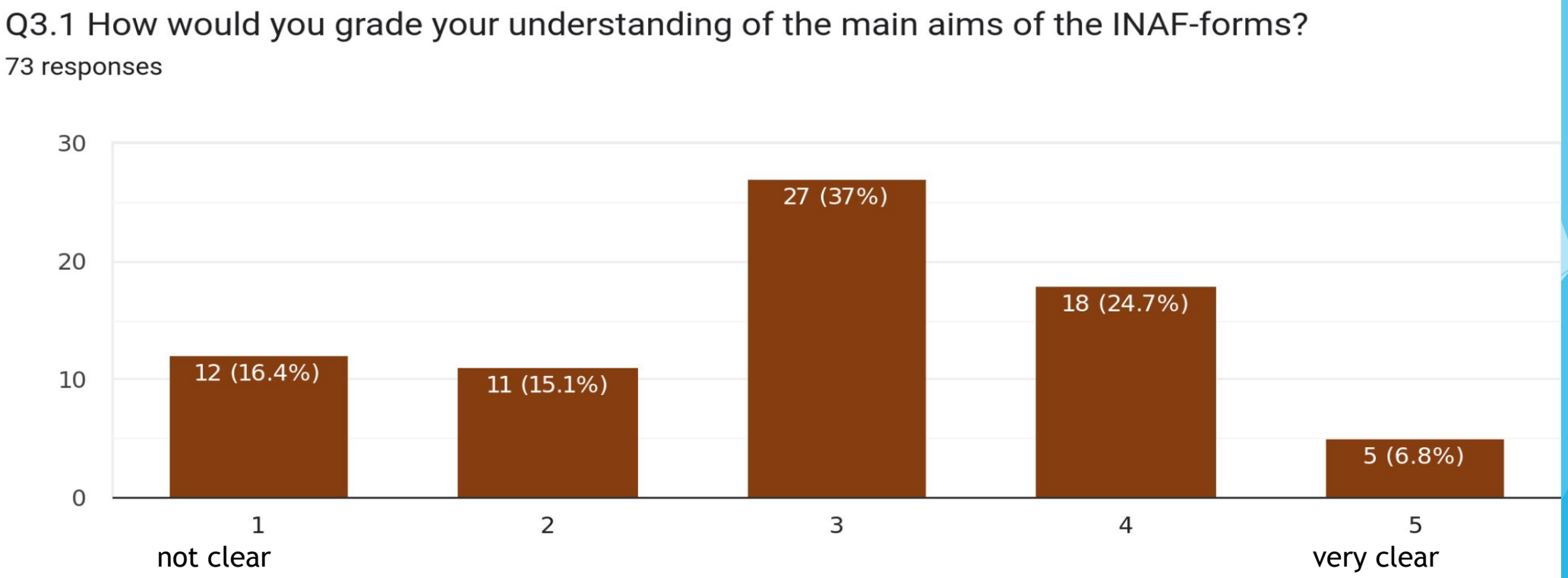
Role of the CSN

- A number of constructive suggestions:
  - Commitment for timely and regular communications, followed by written reports, among all INAF organs to discuss criticalities, opportunities and define agenda for RSN1 core business.
  - Favor interactions and exchanges within RSN1 members through:
    - regular workshops, possibly replacing the auditions
    - newsletter to report activities
    - collect feedback through surveys
  - promote local inter-RSN activities

- Some express a pessimistic view that the impact and usefulness of the CSN can improve without a significant modification of the Statuto that should foresee a more direct decisional role and executive power of the CSN

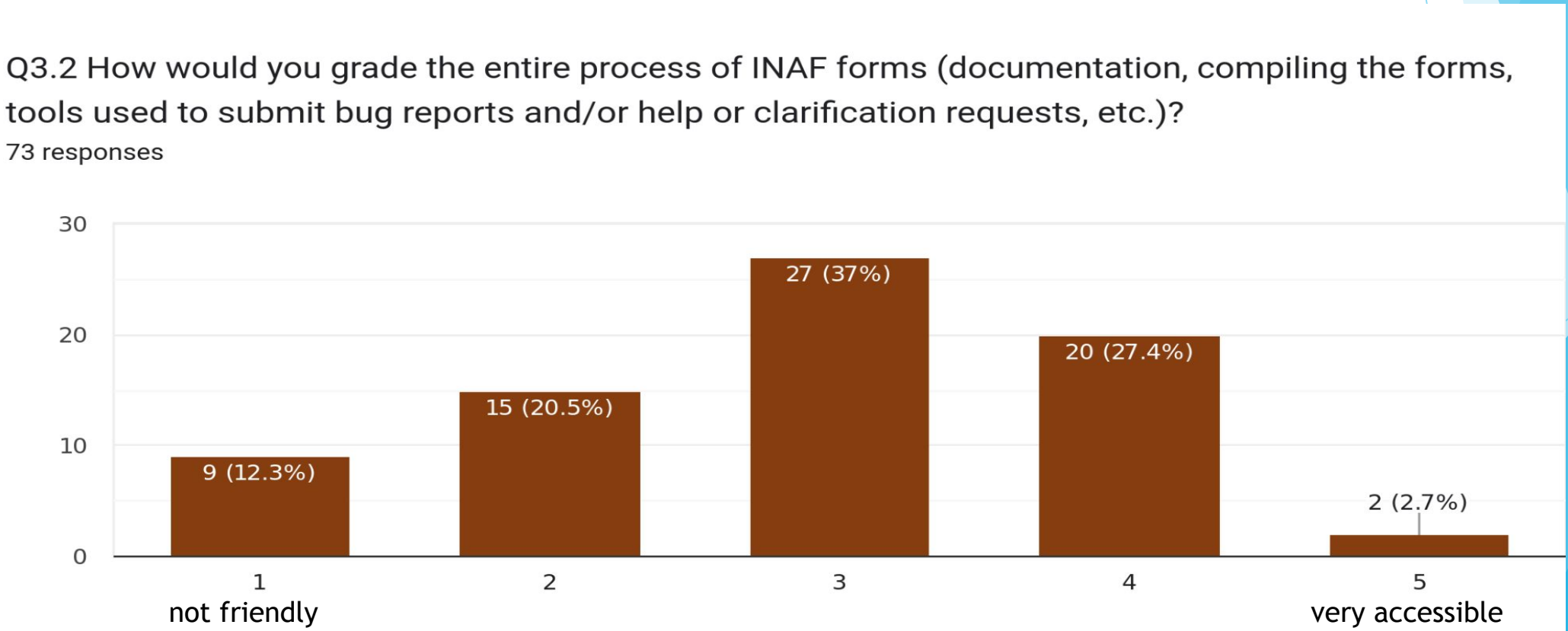
INAF forms (“schede”)

- There is confusion about the main aims of the INAF forms: almost equal share between those that have a clear idea of their aim and those that are very uncertain about it



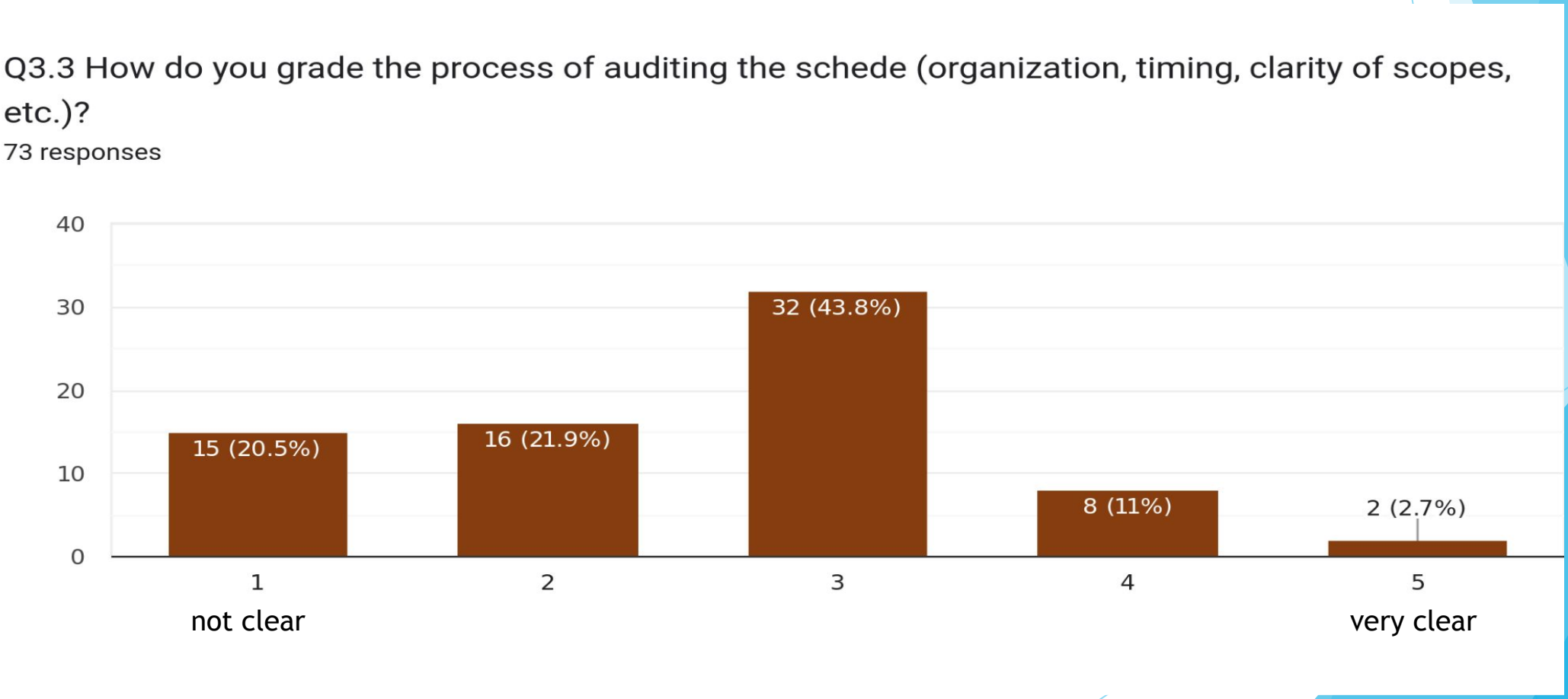
INAF forms (“schede”)

- The technical implementation of the forms as well as the documentation for properly filling out each field should be improved



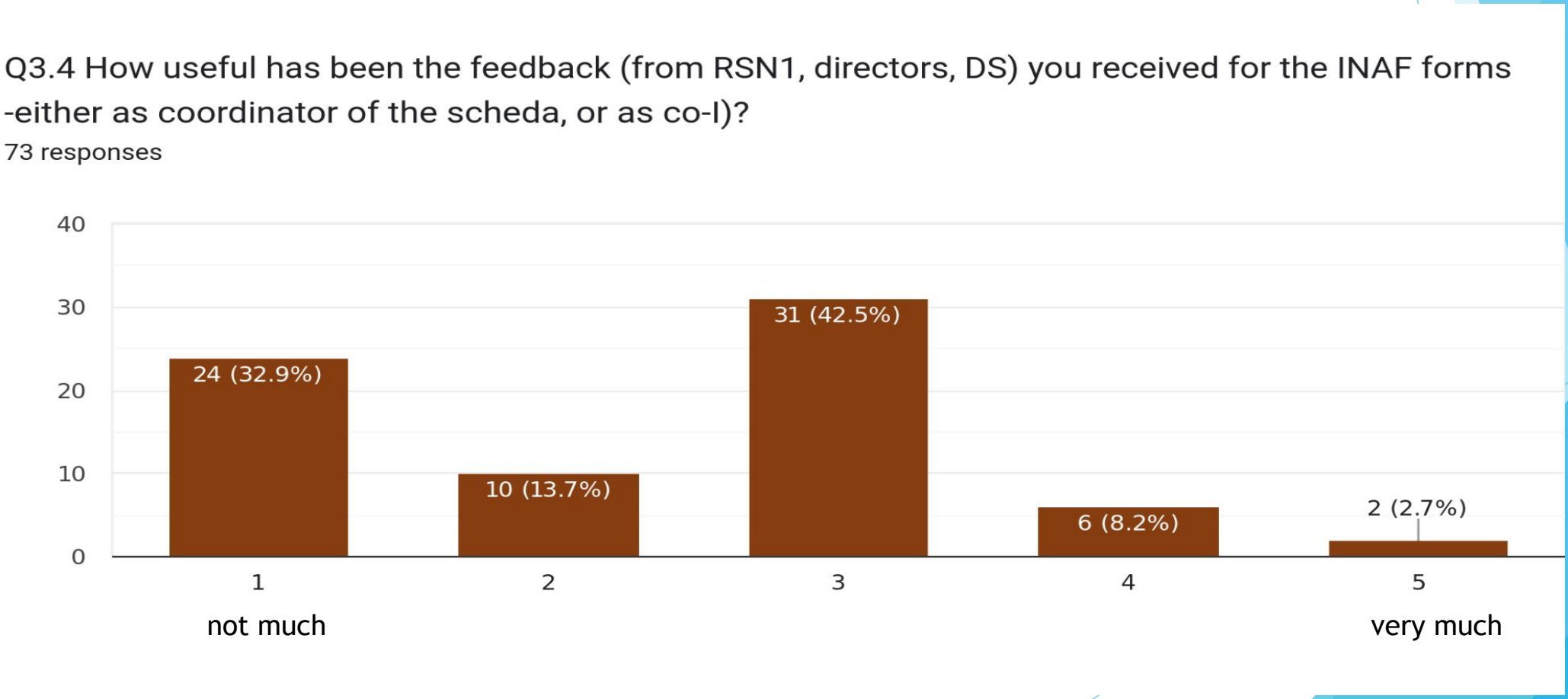
INAF forms (“schede”)

- 40% express dissatisfaction with the audition process; only 14% consider the whole process clear



INAF forms (“schede”)

- Only 11% of the participants find the feedback received (only from the CSN1) useful



INAF forms (“schede”)

Q3.5 If you were unsatisfied with the feedback received, can you elaborate on the reasons? What kind of feedback would you find more useful?

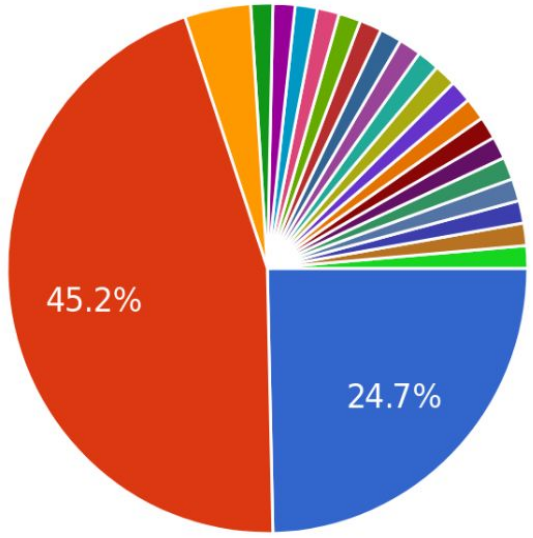
- From 30/73 answers it emerges that:
  - the purpose of the comments is not clear - until this is clarified, the process is ill-posed and the utility of this huge effort vanishes;
  - the purpose of the comments can be clarified only once the scope of the forms is clarified;
  - this confusion manifests itself in the expectation by many that the comments would refer to the scientific validity of a project and/or that they would be connected with the evaluation of the grant proposals;
  - some think that, in order to be useful, the comments should either give a scientific evaluation or refer to the management/sustainability of the projects. *Neither of these can be provided by the CSN*.

INAF forms (“schede”)

- Only <25% think the forms should be submitted every year. Most think a time-scale of ~2 years is adequate, *provided first of all that the scope of the forms is better clarified*

Q3.6 Do you think that INAF forms should be submitted:

73 responses



- Every year
- Every two years
- never
- Every 4 years. From my experience, p…
- It depends: INAF forms could be usef…
- every year might be fine, assuming th…
- every three years
- Not sure about their utility: I do not ne…
- Two to three years is a reasonable tim.
- 3-5 years or even more.
- never. The RSN should provide a cen..
- If really one wants to, then it shuld go..
- Every 3 years
- 5 years
- keep the forms open (and public). So t..
- Every 5 years.
- before that clarify the role of the forms
- Dipende dal loro scopo, che non è ancora del tutto chiaro. Allo stato attu…
- any time a new project starts or needs…
- in concomitanza con il Piano Triennale
- I think that there should be a distinctio…
- Completely canceled
- every five years

INAF forms ("schede")

- Open questions:

Q3.7 Can you comment on information that *you think it would be useful to add to the current forms* and on those information that are currently requested and that *you do not consider useful? (22 answers)*

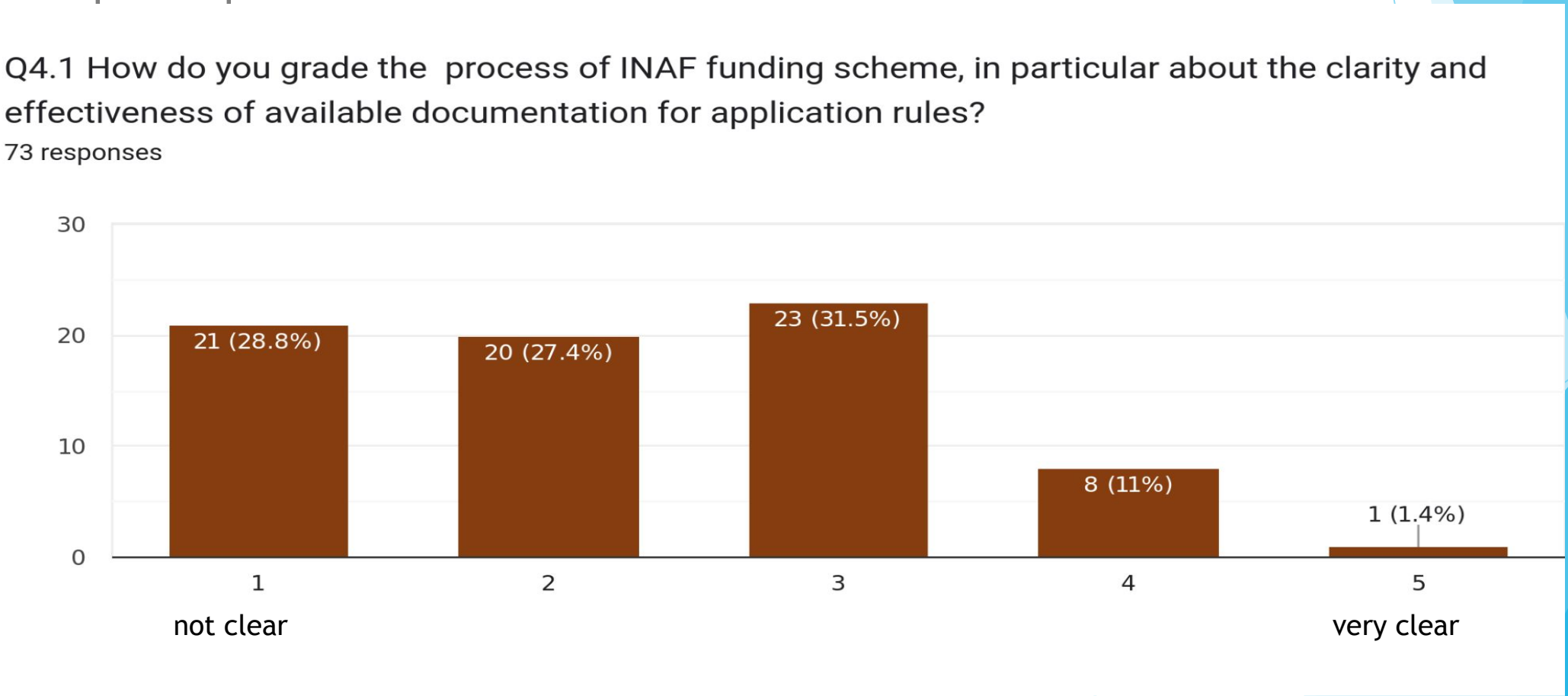
- 30% of the participants is still confused about the actual goal of the forms - under this condition they find it hard to provide suggestions
- some question the use of FTE to quantify the involvement in a project - difficult to interpret when FTEs dedicated to a given work are split over more forms
- at the same time, more stringent rules on FTE are needed if they are used as a quantitative measure (no FTE=0, no total FTE>1)
- the absence of a clear standard resulted in very dishomogeneous forms both in the information provided and in the way projects are organized

Q3.8 What do you think can be done to improve the impact and usefulness of the INAF forms for the community? (36 answers)

- all express the need for a clear statement of the long-term purpose of the forms and their use from INAF Boards
- make them simpler with better defined purposes
- Quite general request to have the forms public in ALL their sections (public queryable database)
- restructure the auditions or replace them with scientific meetings such that also smaller projects are heard

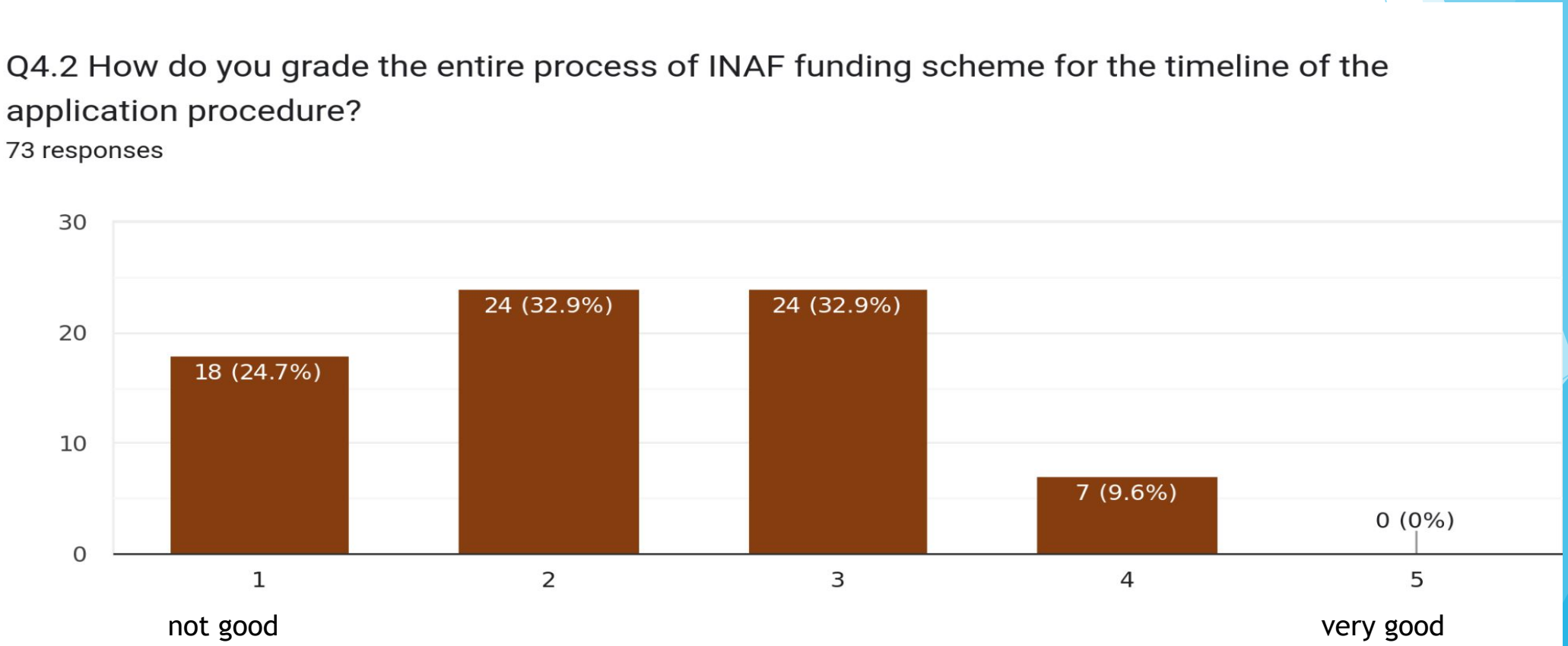
INAF funding scheme

- The recent funding scheme is considered poorly documented by >50% of the participants



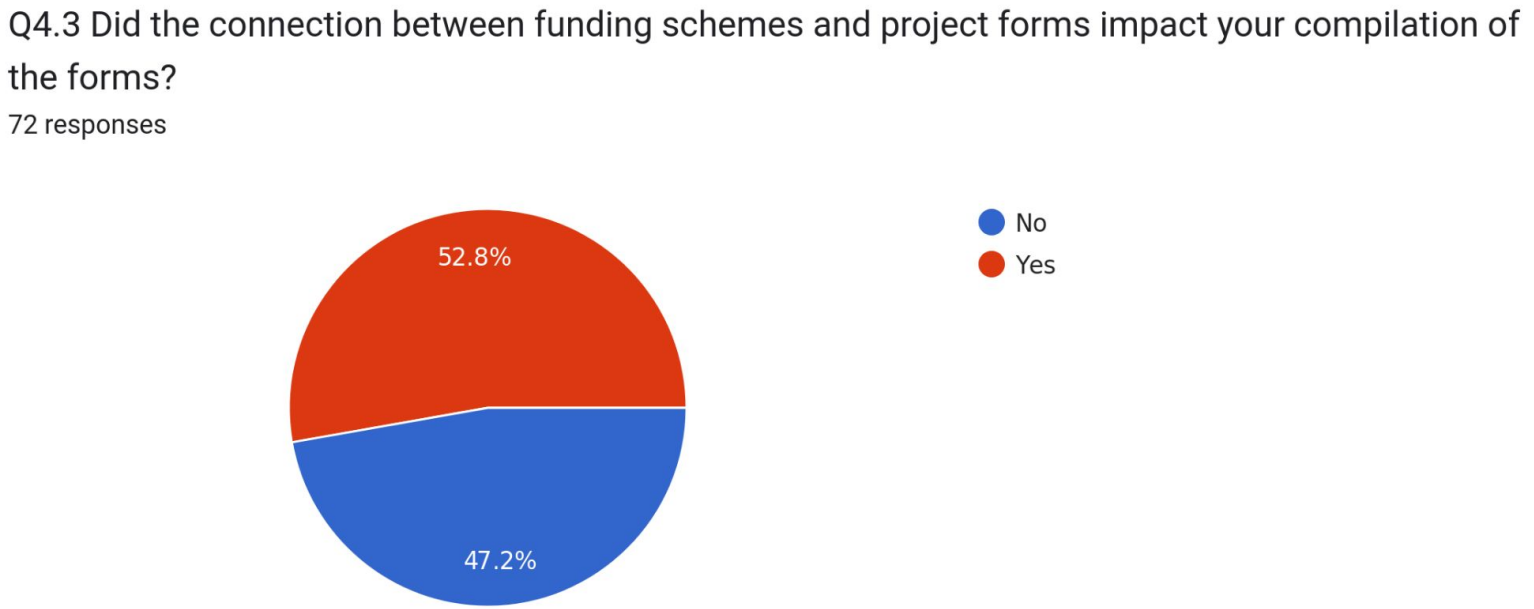
INAF funding scheme

- Relevant perplexities also on the timeline (~60% negative answers)



INAF funding scheme

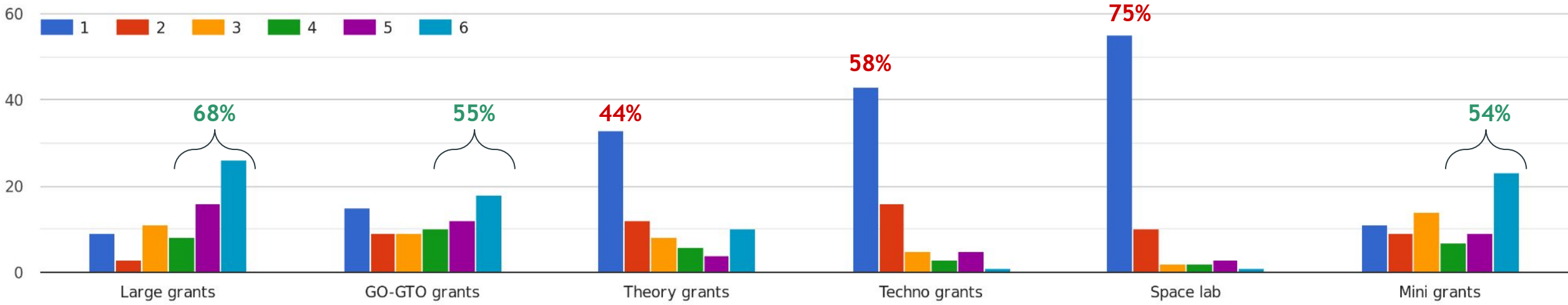
- The connection between funding requests and project forms influenced the compilation of the latter (and viceversa) for about one half of the participants, although initially they had parallel scopes



INAF funding scheme

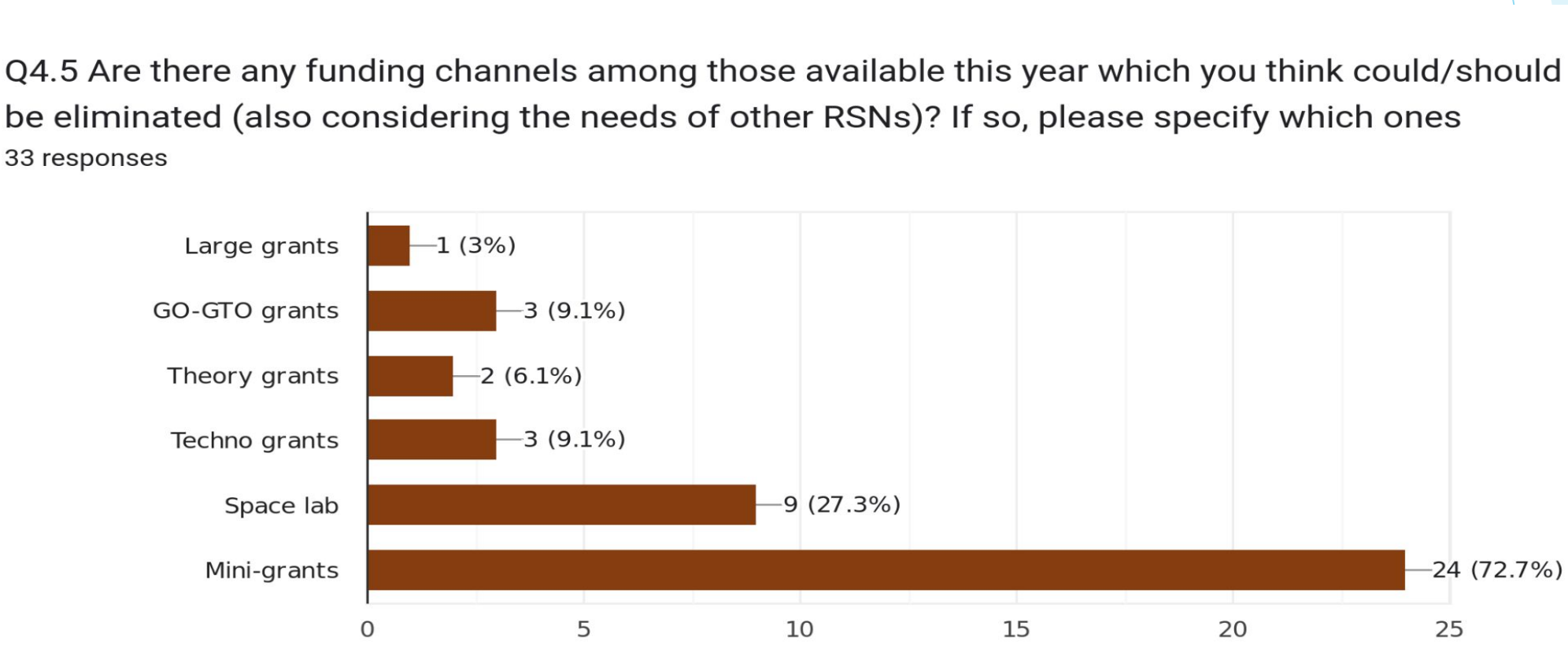
- The funding channels considered most relevant for RSN1 researchers are: Large Grants; GO-GTO Grants; Mini-grants
- The least relevant for RSN1 are: Space Lab, Techno Grants, Theory Grants

Q4.4 Can you rank the funding channels offered from the least (1) to the most (6) relevant for your research?



INAF funding scheme

- >70% of those who replied think that mini-grants could/should be eliminated as a funding channel

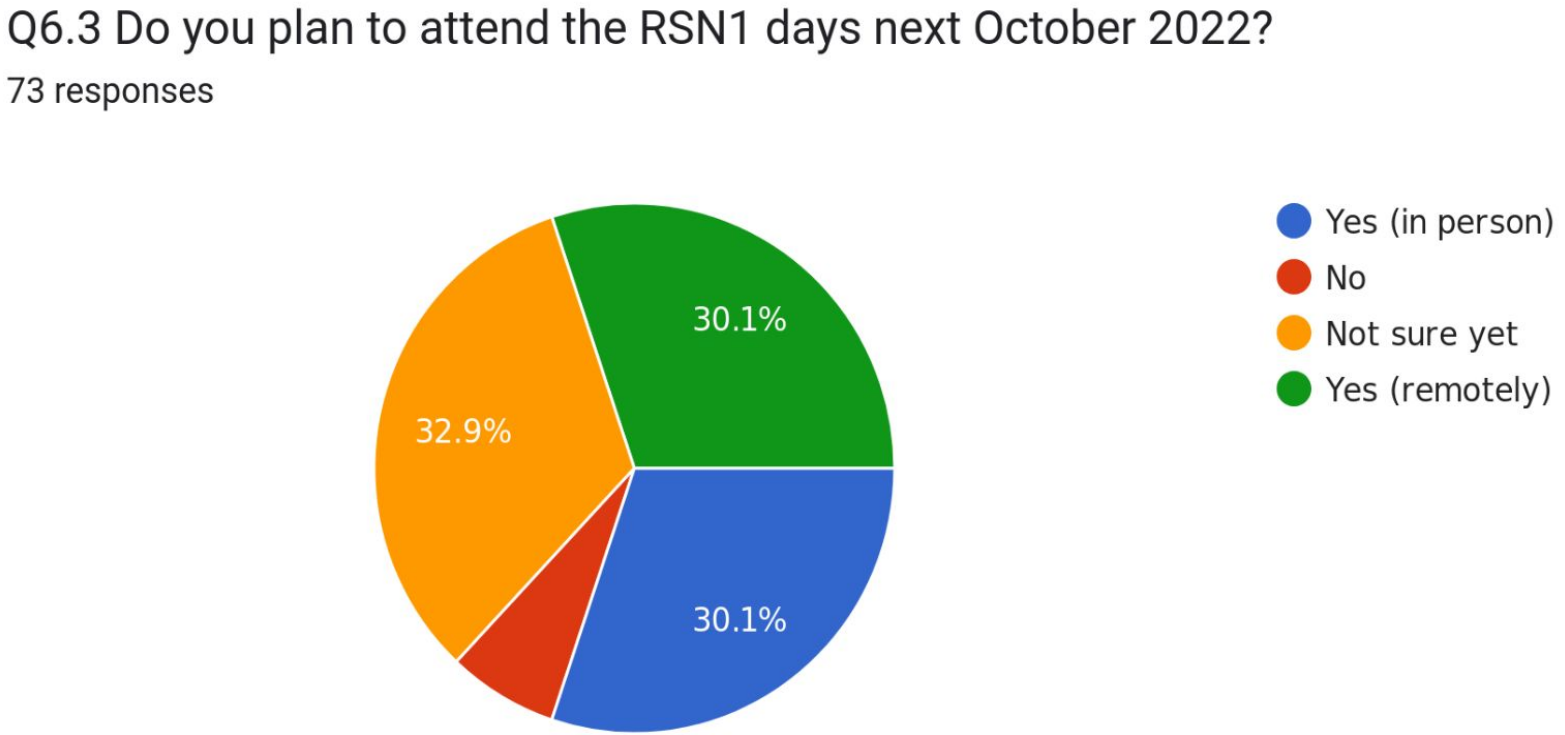


INAF funding scheme

- Q4.6 **What do you think are the main limitations, if any, of the funding channels?** (48 replies!)
  - Confusion
    - rules not clear, timeline long and uncertain, too small panels: need a clear and complete bando
    - too many channels: fewer, longer duration, more impactful
  - Mini-grants, as they are implemented, are mostly criticized (relocate to RdB and let Director+CdS manage them)
- Q4.7 **Is there a funding channel which you think is missing and would instead be important?** (23 replies)
  - General reference to 'lack of individual grants for hiring'
  - Other than that, very different opinions (also opposite directions)
  - Doubts whether the implementation of GO-GTO grants is optimal;
- Q4.8 **If you did not lead or participate in any funding proposal, what was the main reason?** (15 replies)
  - dissatisfied by fragmentation and unclear rules

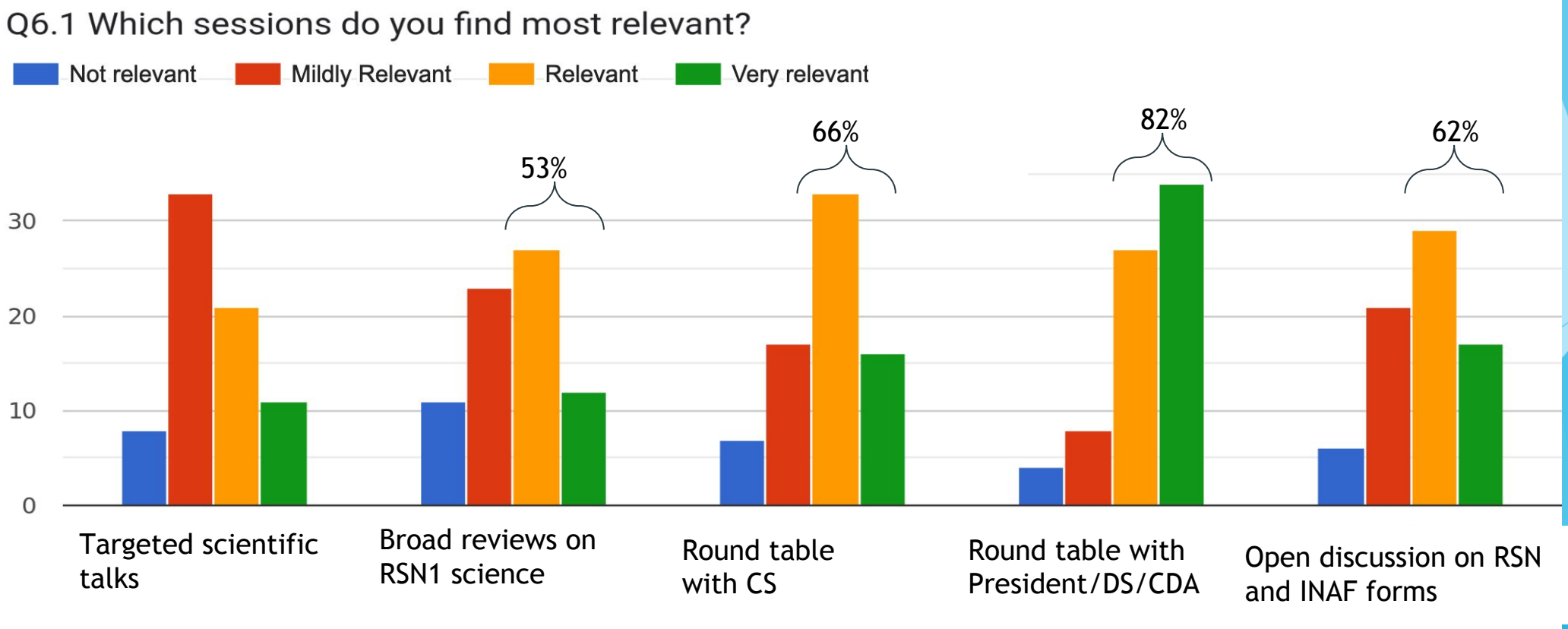
RSN1 days

- General interest in attending (60%)
- Actual participation: registered 68 in person + 61 remotely



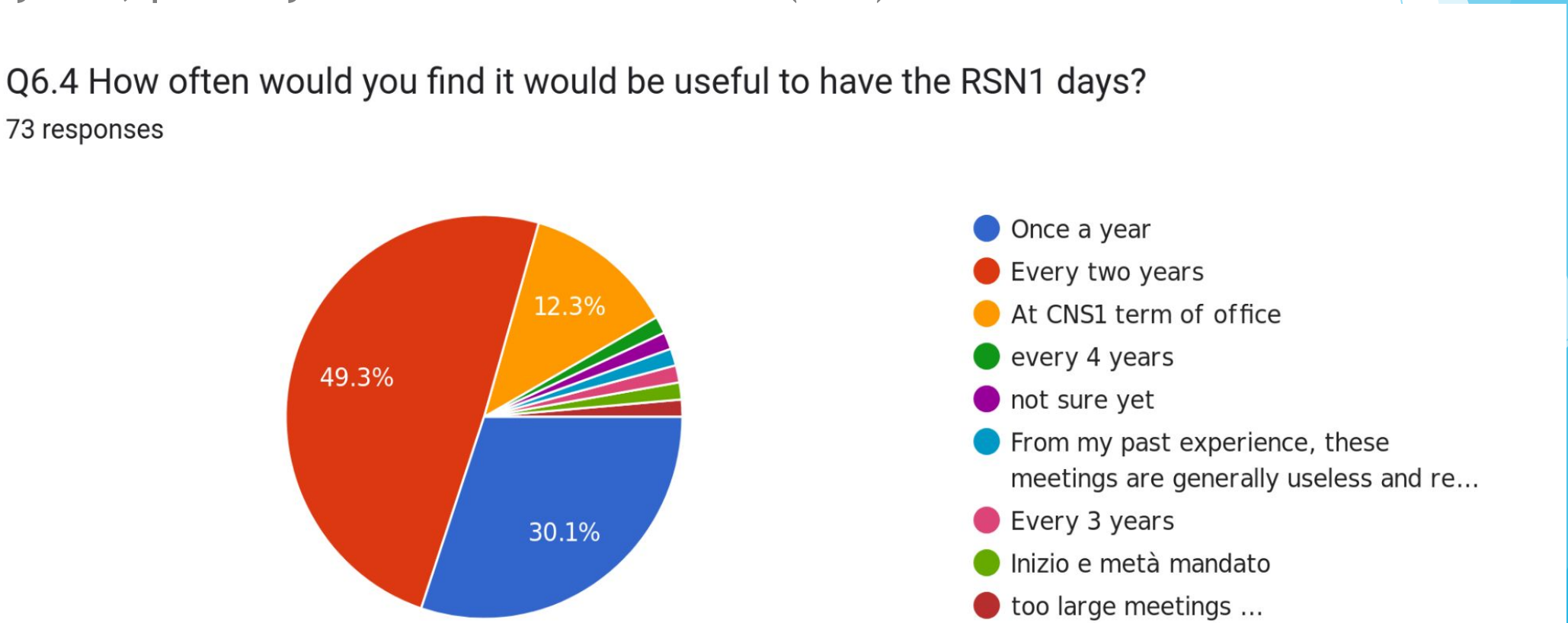
RSN1 days

- Most relevant: round tables on projects/funding with President/CDA/DS; round tables on science with CS; open discussion on forms and RSN



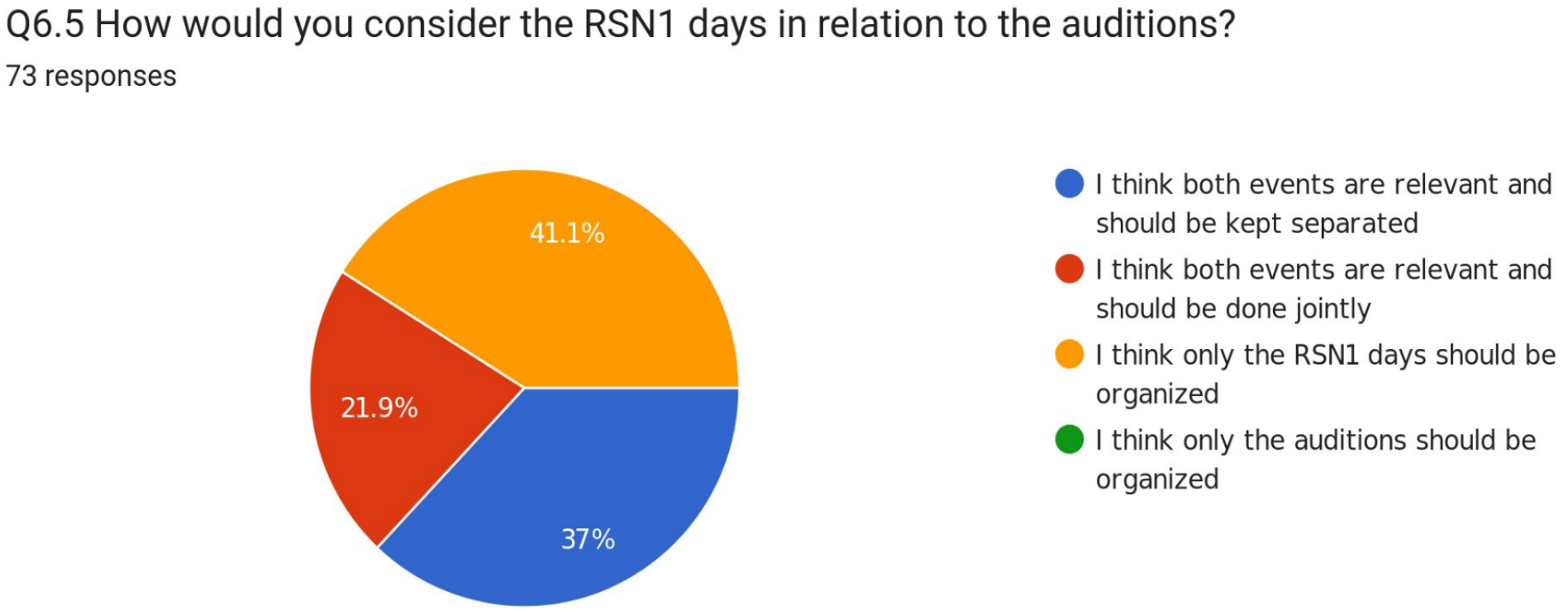
RSN1 days

- ~70% think RSN1 days should be done every 2 years (50%) or more years, possibly at CSN1 term of office (12%)



RSN1 days

- Almost 60% consider both RSN1 days and auditions relevant, to be done jointly or separated
- None of the participants think the auditions are sufficient



Concluding remarks and CSN1 considerations

- CSN and local coordinators
  - Generally welcome (generally, not universally), but:
  - Their role is mostly perceived as *information carriers* (‘segretari’)
  - Different perception at ‘local’ (+) and ‘national’ (-) level
  - promote interaction and exchange between RSN1 members

CSN1 consideration:

- *to define mode and timeline of CSN actions, need to converge on the “Disciplinare dei rapporti tra i CSN e la DS”*
- *Many of the duties the CSN has been called to do in these years delayed other actions from the CSN1*

Concluding remarks and CSN1 considerations

- INAF Schede
  - A useful snapshot of science/technology in INAF
  - But still unclear scope and use, comments oddly perceived
  - Make all forms public in all (or nearly all) their sections

CSN1 considerations: After two years and after the feedback provided by CSN1 (and other) on the INAF forms, the major perplexities from the RSN1 community about the implementation of the forms remains the same as expressed by the CSN1

Concluding remarks and CSN1 considerations

- Funding scheme Astrofisica di Eccellenza
  - RSN1 community expresses several criticalities and dissatisfaction with the proposed funding channels and procedure

CSN1 considerations: important and substantial opportunity for supporting fundamental research which should be defined at best to be impactful.

Based on the INAF forms and auditions, CSN1 had already provided a number of indications. These remain substantially the same after the first call and based on RSN1 feedback.

- *less fragmented funding channels, balancing large grant for groups (~synergy grants) and medium-sized individual grants*
- *mini-grants channel doesn't optimally respond to RSN1 needs -> allocate extra RdB funds managed locally*
- *regular calls, well defined timing, clear rules, no cuts to approved proposals*

Thanks!