BeIPD-COFUND satisfaction survey | Results

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Introduction and context

A survey has been performed in December 2015 >January 2016 in order to measure the level of satisfaction of the applicants who, in 2013, 2014 or 2015, applied for an incoming or outgoing BeIPD-COFUND postdoctoral grant.

A total number of **557** applicants applied for a BeIPD-COFUND research grant. **136** persons participated in this survey, which represents a participation rate of **24,4%**

The survey participants *gender balance* is satisfying:

Survey participants: gender

7 — no answer
69 — male
60 — female
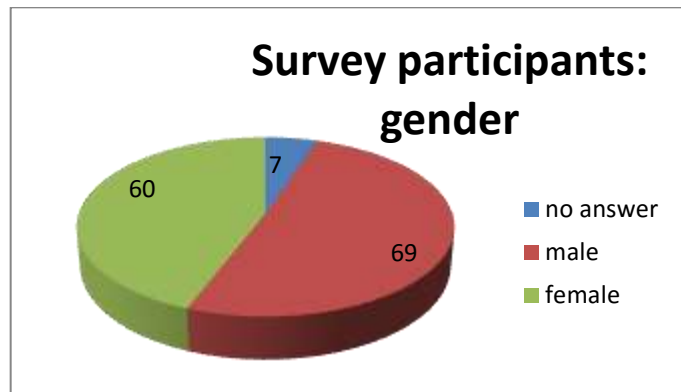
As well is the *origin* of the survey participants, which also is quite representative for the overall balance of EU/ non-EU applicants during the C1, C2 + C3 incoming & outgoing calls which is 60,5% EU/ 39,5% non-EU:

TOP 1 French nationality/ **18**
TOP 2 Italian/ **15**
TOP 3 Belgian/ **11**
TOP 4 Spanish/ 10
TOP 5 Indian/ 8
TOP 6 Egyptian/ 5
TOP 7 Tunisian/ 4
TOP 8 Cameroonian/ 3
TOP 9 Polish/2
TOP 10 Australian/ 2

Other represented nationalities (2 or 1 hits) **: British, Canadian, Chinese, Greek, Portuguese, Swiss, Argentinean, Benin, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Colombian, Croat, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Iranian, Irish, Malagasy, Mauritian, Portuguese and Brazilian, Romanian, South Korea, Swedish, Turkish, Uzbekistan, Venezuelan, Yemen.**

The survey participants had the possibility to answer **anonymously** and their answers have been treated in a confidential way.

The survey participants participated in these calls:
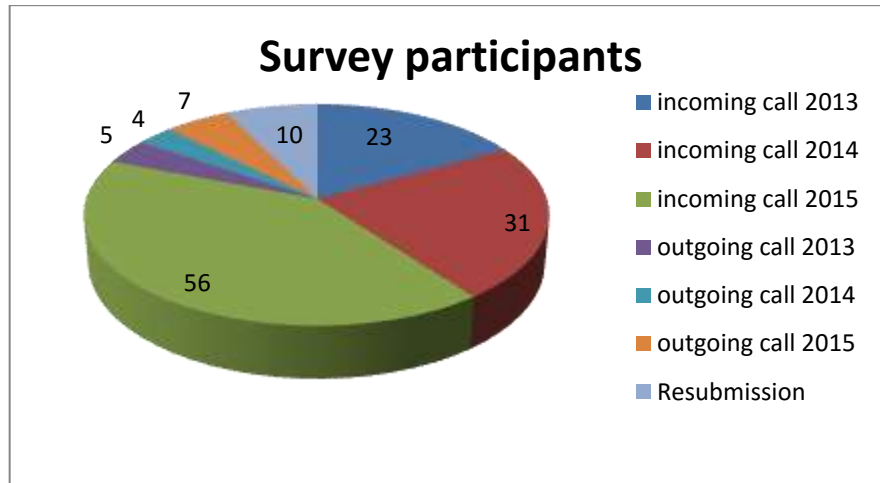
The online survey outlined the following issues and chapters (herewith following the OTM-R Guidelines):

1. Recruitment procedure **(OTM-R Advertising and application Phase)**
3. BeIPD-Marie Curie COFUND fellowship grants **(OTM-R Selection and evaluation Phase)**
4. BeIPD-Marie Curie COFUND distributed fellowships **(OTM-R Appointment Phase)**
5. Career Development
6. ULg hosting facilities
7. Personal data

Chapter 1 Recruitment procedure (OMT-R Advertising and application Phase)

1.1 Call communication & advertising practice

This first chapter of the survey focused on the way the applicants got introduced to the BeIPD-COFUND programme and in which media the call(s) in which they have participated has been perceived. It further questioned the media channels that the applicants happen to use on a more regular basis and think worthwhile to publish the call advertisement in as well.
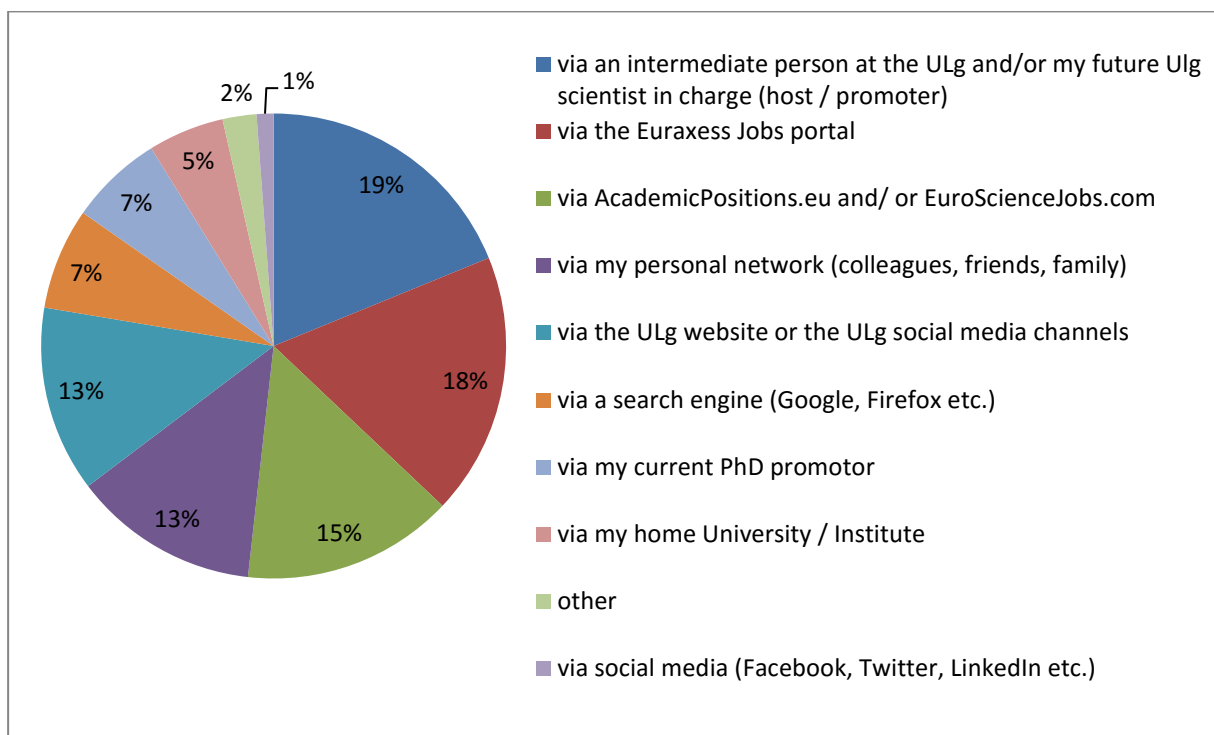
Additional publication channels that the survey participants suggested:

- More visibility on the social networking sites (ResearchGate, Acedemia.edu, Evoldir (Biology);
- Additional job adverts on e.g. **Nature Jobs, Academic Transfert, jobs.ac.uk**;
- **Partner University mailing**;
- Other suggestions containing **TV spots on leading TC channels, advertising via some generalist scientific journal, academic job newsletters & professional associations**.

Some of the participants came across the offer via other media channels, which indicates that the vacancy is being redirected to additional media channels (an archaeological blog, jobs.ac.uk, academic newsletter)

1.2 BeIPD-COFUND competitiveness on the international "fellowship market"

1.2.1 Participation rates & research destinations
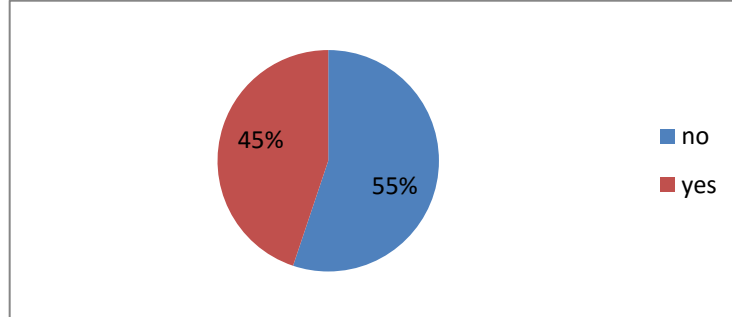
Only **45%** of the survey participants applied to several national and international postdoctoral fellowship programmes simultaniously. Those who applied to different programmes and grants, beside the BeIPD-COFUND programme, applied for fellowship positions in the following countries:
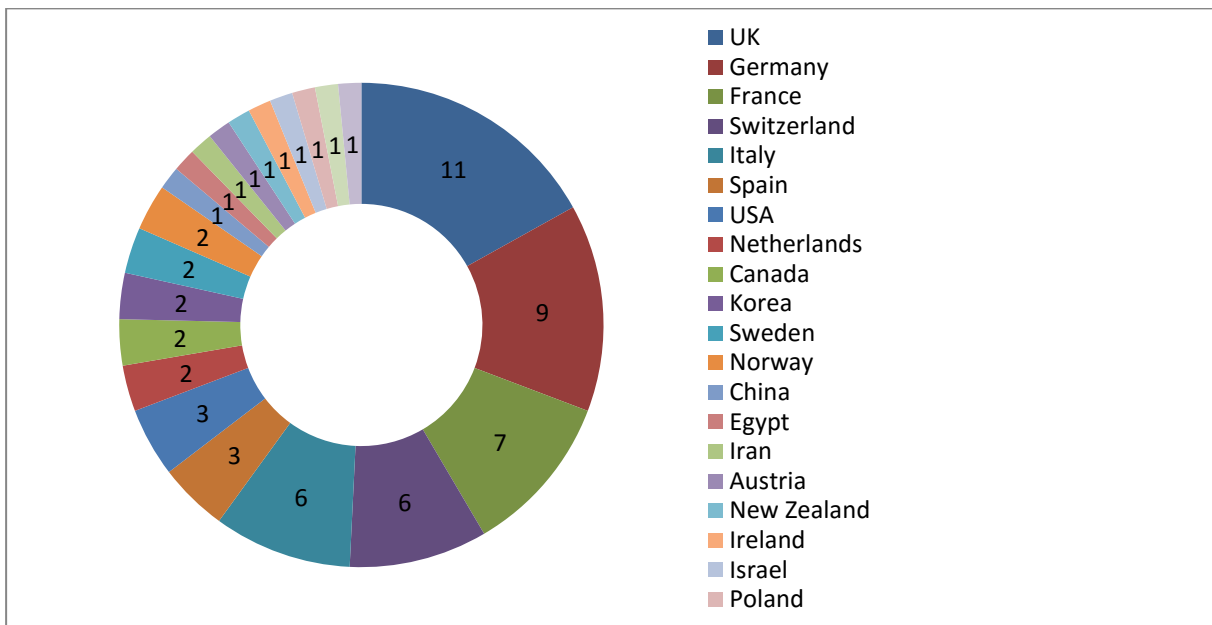
1.2.2 The competiveness of the BeIPD-COFUND scheme compared to other fellowship grants

1.2.2.1 Advantages and special features of the BeIPD-COFUND postdoctoral scheme

The participants have been asked to rank the specific advantages of the BeIPD-COFUND fellowship according to their knowledge of the advantages that other existing fellowship programmes offer. The overall result shows that the possibility to work on a project of one's own design (TOP 1) predominates the other advantages that the BeIPD-COFUND scheme offers. The working conditions (TOP 2) are the second important feature that the applicants revealed as a strong feature of the BeIPD-COFUND programme. The salary conditions (TOP 3) are also emphasised on. The other 2 features (reputation of the granting university & the possibility to conduct interdisciplinary research) have both been ranked as TOP 4 (identical score).

The open question that completed the question regarding the specific advantages of the BeIPD-COFUND programme compared to other fellowship grants that they've participated in, raised the following additional comments.
(for transparency reasons, we did not make a selection of pertinent/ non-pertinent comments):

- *The application form was simpler*
- *Having a good research budget and two years for the project*
- *the amount of research funding available*
- *Fairly fast resolution*
- *possibility of doing independent research*
- *prestige, reputation, working conditions*
- *The support and well-established framework around the Marie Curie, it provides you a guarantee it is a good choice.*
- *The funding is large enough to hire a big number of Ph.D:s*
- *short duration from call announcement to notification of decision*
- *duration*
- *It is made for scientific researchers*
- *I found that hearing about the feedback from the reviewers very helpful to picture my proposal critically*
- *Research funding*
- *Collaboration with other researchers in various fields of study*
- *reputation of the university and funding programme*
- *The project allowance (around 30000€ for 2 year) is very better than other fellowships*
- *A bilingual university for bilingual researchers! It is very rare!*
- *bottom-up approach*
- *Possibility to work with a host professor*
- *Time in which the outcome of the proposal is reported*
- *Mostly the freedom of designing and conducting an independent research project. It is challenging but very intriguing. Also the grant coming along with the fellowship is another very attractive element.*
- *clarity regarding the whole procedure*
- *mobility grant and tax exemption*

- *personalised approach*
- *hosting conditions and research network*
- *The possibility to receive feedback from international expert*
- *Duration of fellowship*
- *attract foreign postdocs*
- *the fact that we get an evaluation report after decision*
- *For 'outgoing': remaining a staff member of the University of Liège*

1.2.2.2 Features for choosing a fellowship

The following **question**: "Which elements do you think generally important when choosing a fellowship?" shows the following results:

TOP 1 Researchers career development possibilities/ **515**
TOP 2 Possibility to enhance my research network/**512**
TOP 3 Autonomy in leading your own research project/ **509**
TOP 4 Duration of the fellowship/ 488
TOP 5 Salary and working conditions/ 486
TOP 6 Reputation of the funding programme (e.g. Marie Curie)/ 477
TOP 7 Respect of the OMT recruitment principles/ 472
TOP 8 Reputation of the university or research institute which awards the fellowship/ 465
TOP 9 Possibility to continue working with a peer/ 451
TOP 10 Hosting conditions (Euraxess, Mobility & Career services)/ 444
TOP 11 Family friendliness/ 414

The complementary question (**question:** which other elements do you think important when choosing a fellowship?) revealed some interesting additional comments
(random order of comments, no selection has been made):

- *reputation and quality of a research department; amount of the project's budget and rules for its implementation; project's official language(s)*
- *languages barrier*
- *Having clear instructions and deadlines*
- *reputation of the lab*
- *Capacity-building and dissemination of the results of our research, sharing experience and knowledge sharing*
- *The research project is a key point to finally choose a fellowship*
- *less advantaged researchers criteria*
- *I do not "choose", I simply apply to all the fellowships I can*
- *It is important that the application process is simple so that it doesn't take too much time to apply - because many people will unfortunately have to apply to a number of fellowships before being accepted*
- *Housing facilities, in-country integration programme, possibility to bring your family*
- *continuation of research with product development company*
- *the possibility of continuing after*
- *the available resources to develop your project and the CV of the promoter*
- *Clear guidelines and administrative support during application process*
- *The excellence of the administration! Highly motivating supervisor!*
- *A well-balanced improvement of both as an independent researcher and team-worker. A mutual benefits between employee and employer.*
- *Language.*

> *Success rate*

1.3 Perception of ULg's excellence in research acknowledgment

69% of the survey participants are not aware the University of Liege is 'Excellence in Research' acknowledged. Those informed mainly got informed by browsing the ULg institutional web page http://www.ulg.ac.be (50%). The other participants got informed via the following channels:

TOP 1 via ULg brochures, flyers, information sheets, posters on which the HR4R logo is displayed;
**TOP 2** via the Euraxess/ EU platform;
TOP 3 via other channels.

HRS4R: aware or not?

31%
69%

■ no
■ yes
■ (vide)
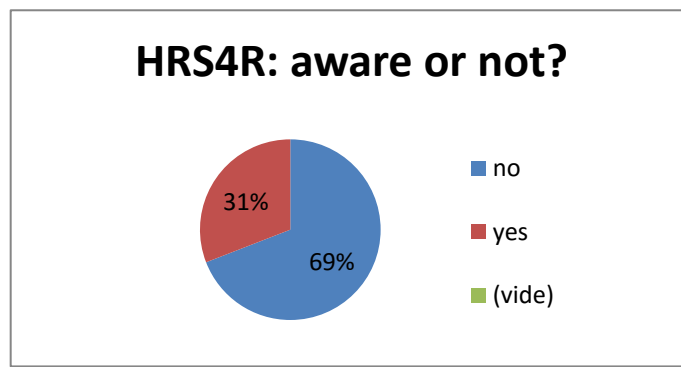
## 1.4 The BeIPD-COFUND application procedure: practicalities, specific features and (technical) matters

Question: Do you think that the call information regarding the evaluation and selection procedure was **easily accessible** (figure 1), **sufficiently documented** (2) and **clear** (3)*?

4% 7%
15%
32%
42%

3% 7%
17%
38%
35%

4% 10%
15%
35%
36%

*
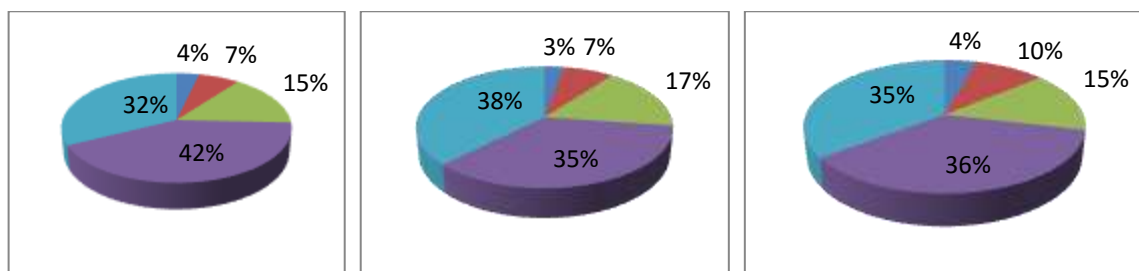
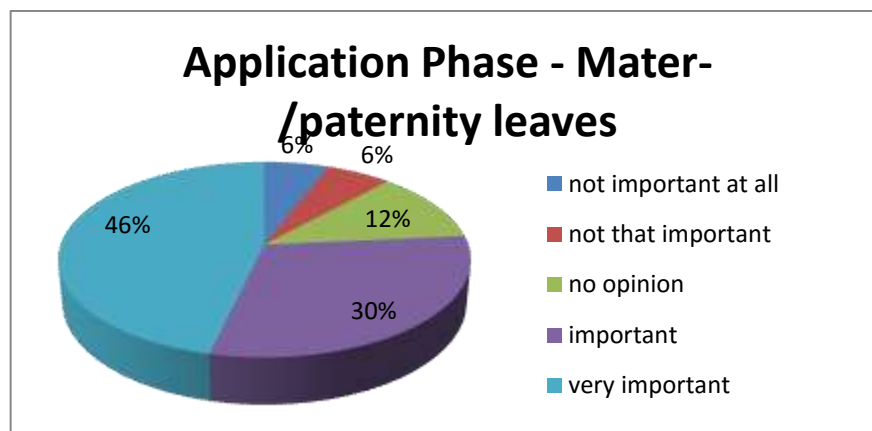■ not at all
■ not that much
■ no opinion
■ pretty much
■ very much

Question: You applied online. Do you think that an online information about the follow-up status of your application would be...(n=103)
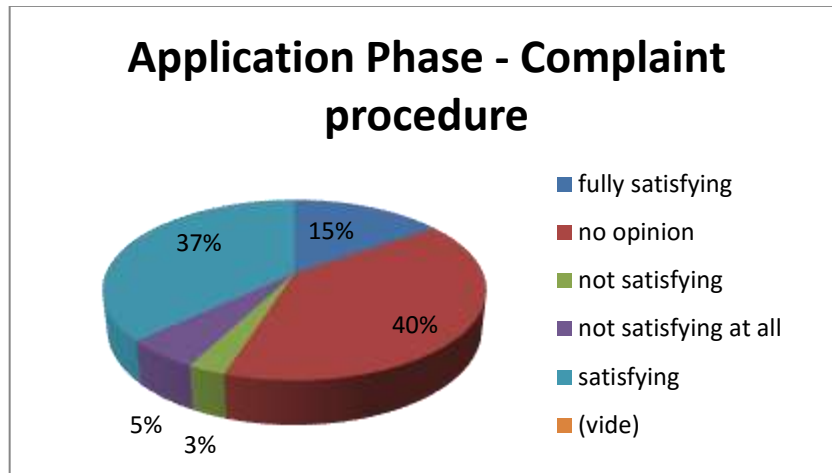
Application Phase - Online status follow up

- necessary 45%
- not needed 6%
- useful 49%
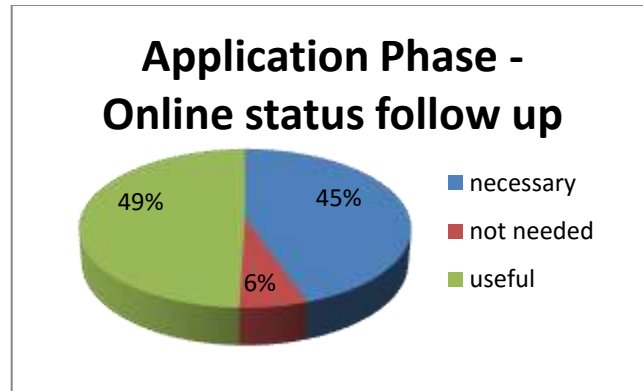
Question: Do you think that the duration of the whole evaluation and selection procedure (February > June) was...

Application phase - Timing

- adequate timing 71%
- too long 29%
- (vide)
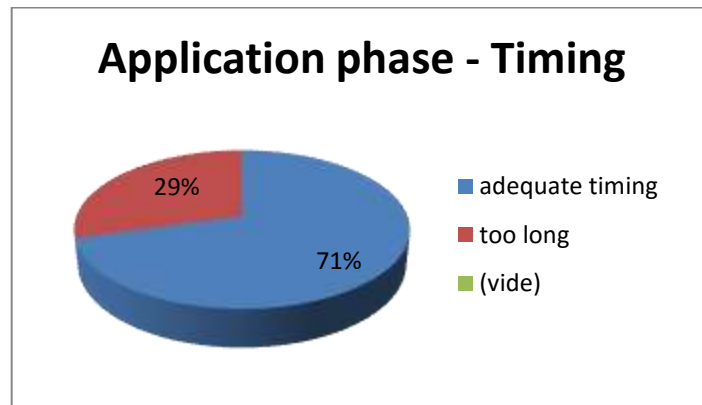
Question: Maternity / paternity leaves are taken into account in the evaluation and selection procedure. Do you think this to be...

Application Phase - Mater-/paternity leaves

- not important at all 6%
- not that important 6%
- no opinion 12%
- important 30%
- very important 46%

Question: What do you think about our complaint procedure?

Application Phase - Complaint procedure

- fully satisfying
- no opinion
- not satisfying
- not satisfying at all
- satisfying
- (vide)

15%
40%
37%
5%
3%

Many of the survey participants have not been confronted with the available option to introduce a **redress request** because their application was not lacking information or any details. They thus did not experience the complaint procedure themselves, which could explain the big amount of participants stating that they don't have a specific opinion regarding this matter.
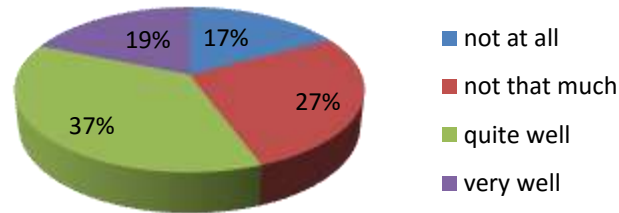
Question: Did you, at any moment during the evaluation and selection procedure, contact the BeIPD-COFUND Project Manager?

Application Phase : contacted the Project Manager?

0%

45%

55%

- no
- yes
- (vide)
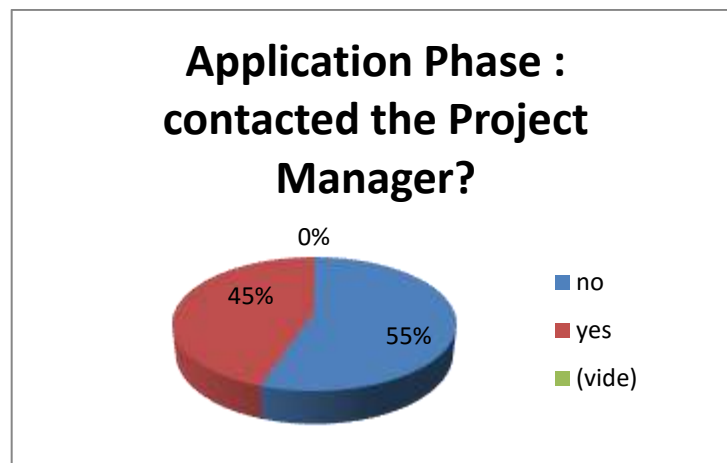
1.5 The feedback report

Question: Did the feedback report enable you to understand in a better way how you can optimise your research proposal and / or your research profile?

The feedback of the survey participants displays a somehow undetermined appreciation of the content of the feedback report.

(Only) **33% of the survey participants** found the feedback report useful in the sense that they've adapted their practice and/ or implemented specific measures following its reception (**Question:** Did you take any specific measures or action following the reception of the feedback report?)
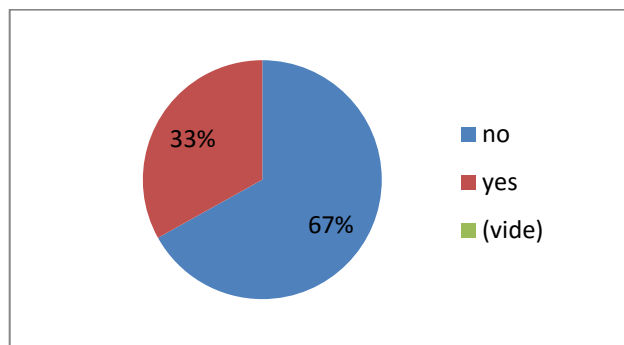

Those who took specific actions, did the following:
*(**a selection of adequate answers has been made**)*

- *Contact my supervisor*
- *slightly reshaped my project, my agenda and objectives*
- *strenghten enough proposal and personal experience for next submission*
- *Next Time, when I apply again, I will choose a supervisor with the same research interests similar to mine*
- *I published a chapter of my PhD as a standalone monograph.*
- *I reshaped my research project accordingly*
- *I changed the lenght of my fieldwork as reviewers advised*
- *I requested more information*
- *I chose to improve the draft and propose it to other fellowship offers*
- *improve my publications*
- *I have slightly modified some points of the original research plan.*
- *feedback was very basic so I asked for more information*
- *I wrote an e-mail explaining my disappointment and indignation in reslation the feedback which I would point as prejudiced and even offensive one.*

- *Accelerate the publication of articles in International Journals; improve and update the research project*
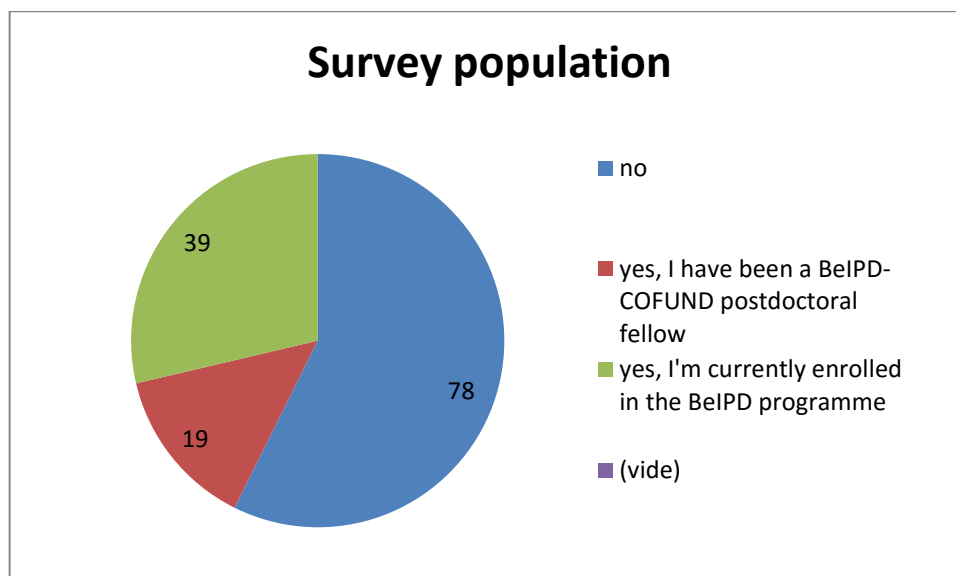- *Clarify on technical problems*

1.6 BeIPD-COFUND: ever again?

Question: Supposing that you still meet the eligibility criteria, would you apply again for a BeIPD-COFUND fellowship?
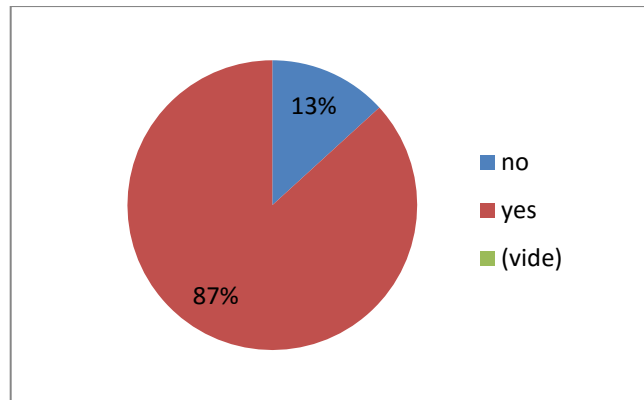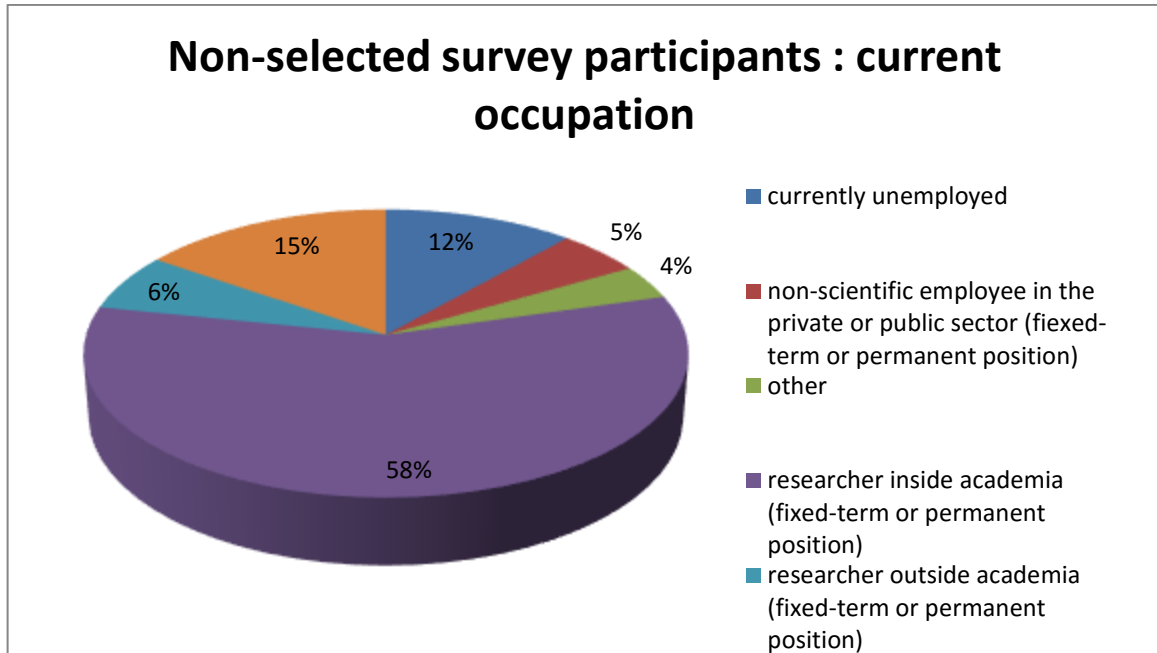

Chapter 2 Survey population characteristics

2.1 Survey population outline

Question: Have you been awarded a BeIPD-COFUND fellowship at the University of Liege?

Non-selected survey participants : current occupation

- currently unemployed
- non-scientific employee in the private or public sector (fixed-term or permanent position)
- other
- researcher inside academia (fixed-term or permanent position)
- researcher outside academia (fixed-term or permanent position)

12%
5%
4%
15%
6%
58%

41 non selected survey participants continue their professional career in their home country. 36 persons got recruited elsewhere. 1 person did not answer this question. This figure shows that the mobility rate amongst non selected applicants is relatively high and that people find academic positions outside their home country.

Non-selected survey participants: mobility

1
36
41

- No
- Yes
- no answer
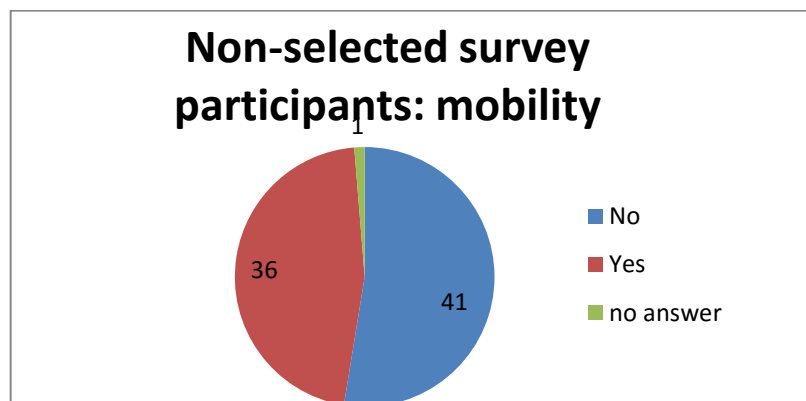
2.3 BeIPD-COFUND Alumni: current career statement

19 (C1 calls/ 2013 In & Out) Alumni participated in this survey.
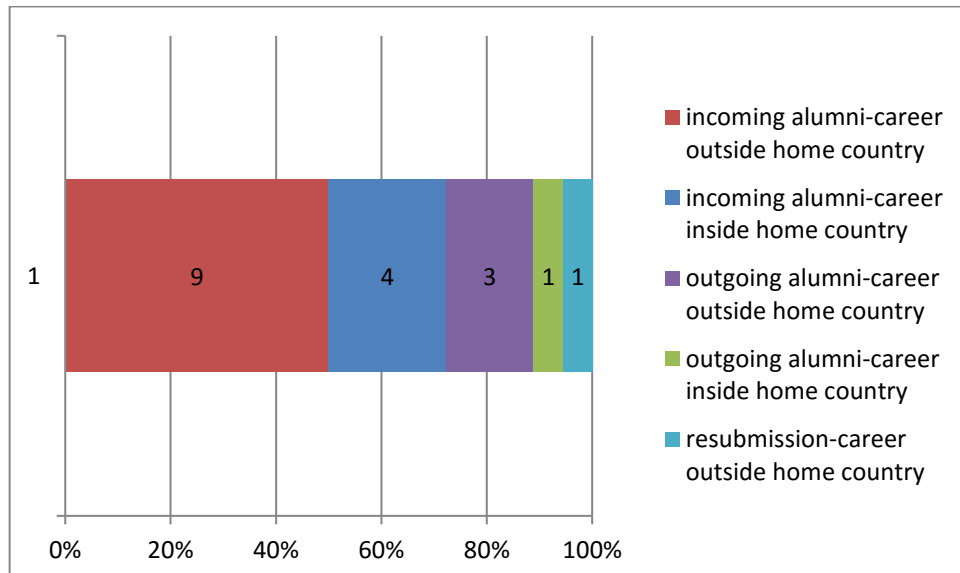The response group is composed of:

> **12 incoming fellows 2013**
> **2 incoming fellows 2014**
> **4 outgoing fellows 2014**
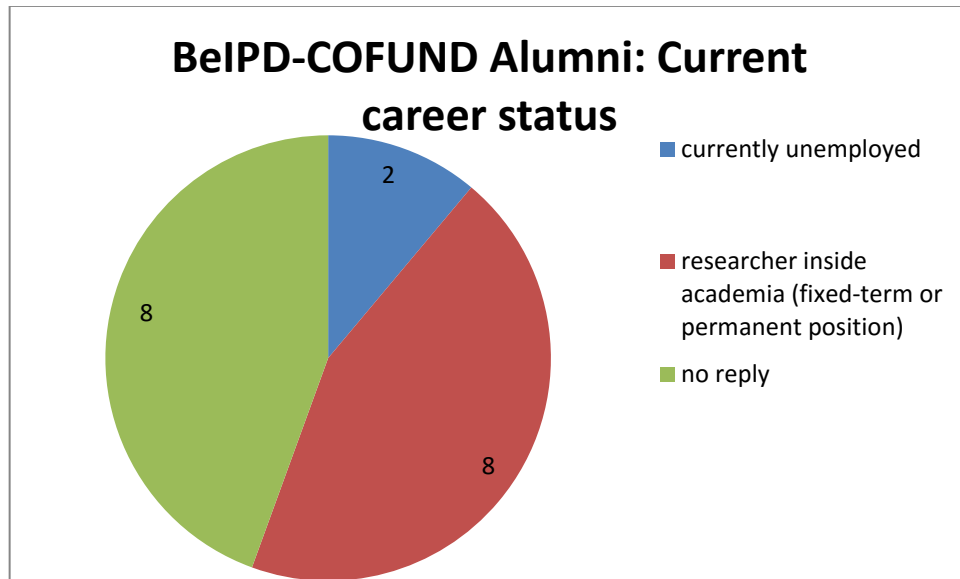
* Both currently unemployed participants are C1 incoming call 2013 Alumni.
The 8 academia employed participants are also C1 incoming calls 2013 Alumni.

2.3.1 BeIPD-COFUND Alumni: Mobility

Question: Are you currently pursuing your career (academic or not) in your home country?

2.4 Selected BeIPD-COFUND fellows (Alumni & current)

The reponse group (n=58) is composed of:

> **IPD2013: 12 participants**
> **IPD2014: 17 ''**
> **IPD2015: 18 ''**
> **OPD2014: 4 ''**
> **OPD2015: 4 ''**
> **Resubmission (incoming): 3 ''**

Chapter 3 The BeIPD-COFUND fellowships: features, standards, motivations & findings of selected fellows (OMT-R Selection and evaluation Phase)

3.1 BeIPD-COFUND general working (research) conditions

Question: Do you think that the duration of your fellowship stay allows/ allowed you to successfully accomplish your research project?
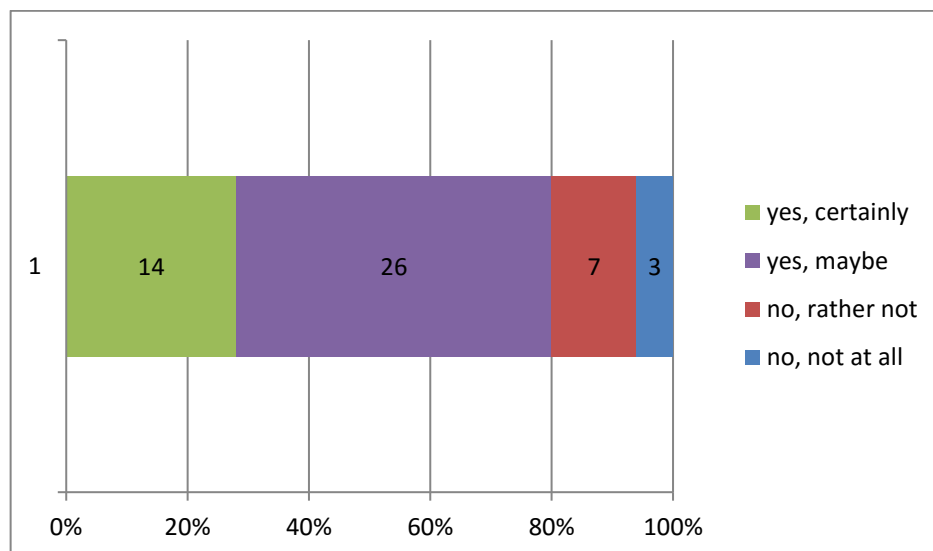
Following the **question** (What do/ did you particularly appreciate about your research stay at the University of Liege?), the following answers were given by two C1-incoming researchers:
> ➢ Collaboration with other researchers and with the professors
> ➢ Easy conditions to work

A single comment was formulated following the **question:** Could you describe any particular problems that you have encountered during your research stay?:
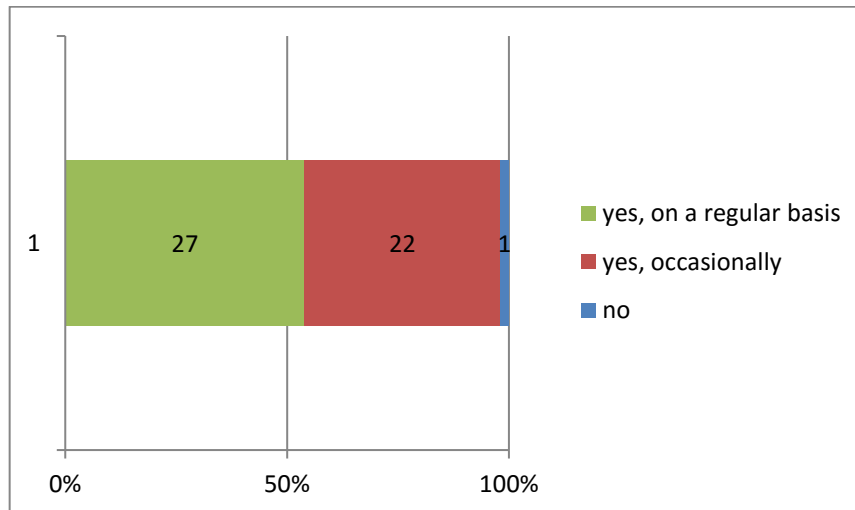> ➢ Language problems with University administration

Question: Does/ Did the ULg offer sufficient resources that enable(d) you to build your scientific network that is beneficial to your future career?
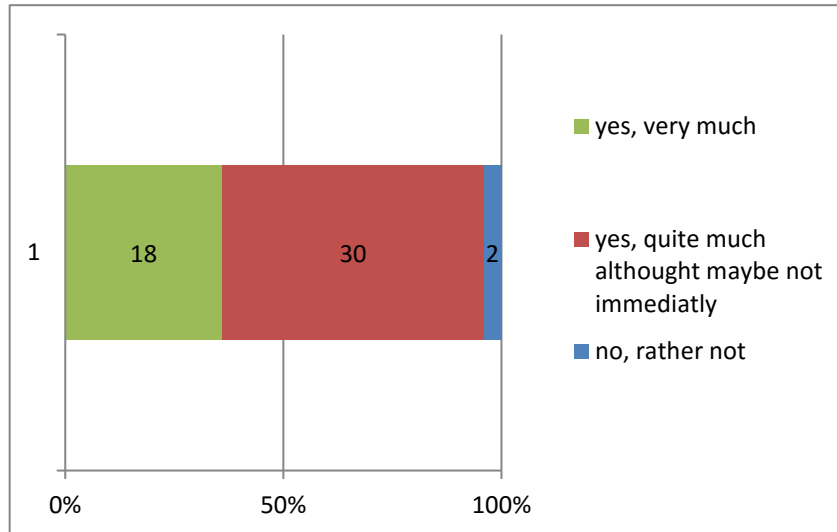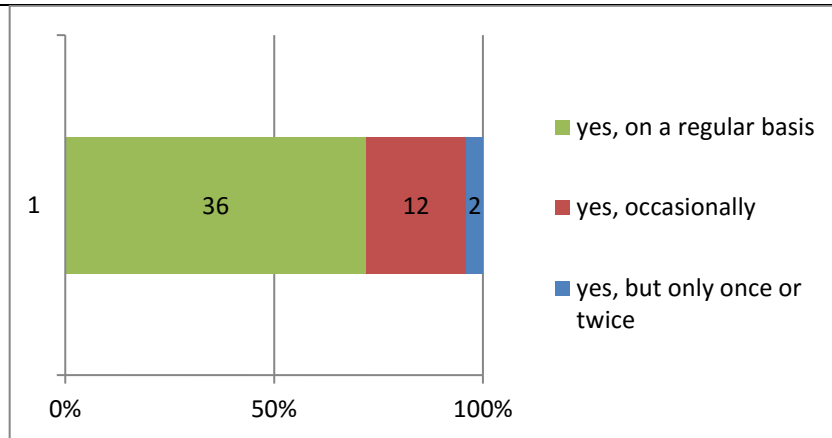

Question: Do/ Did you have the opportunity to present yourself during the research unit team meetings?
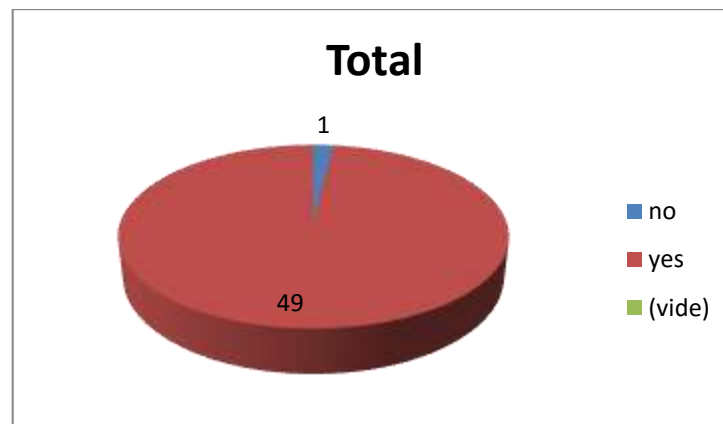

Question: Do/ Did you have mentor meetings with your host/ scientist-in-charge?
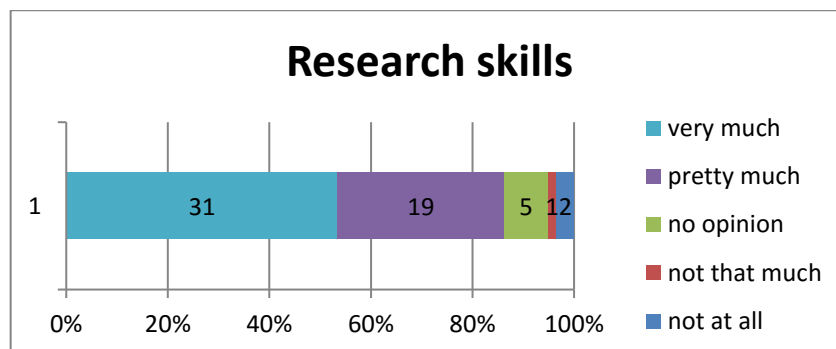
Questions: Would you recommend a research stay at the University of Liege to your peers?
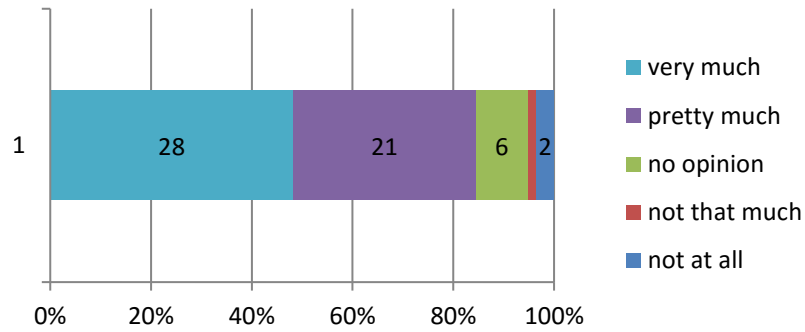

Reason for not recommending the ULg as a research destination: Too little ration of (scientifically) active permanent members / temporary members (post doc, phd). This leads to less long term research projects and more short term publication races.
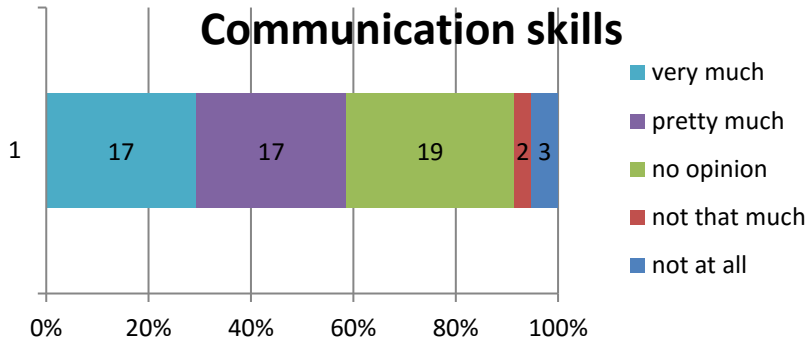
3.2 BeIPD-COFUND Research Competencies

Question: To what extend do you think that your ULg research stay is enhancing your:

Université
de Liège

Scientific networking skills

	very much	pretty much	no opinion	not that much	not at all
1	28	21	6		2

Communication skills

	very much	pretty much	no opinion	not that much	not at all
1	17	17	19	2	3

Language skills

	very much	pretty much	no opinion	not that much	not at all
1	18	16	13	7	4

Teaching skills

3	10	13	11	21

1

- very much
- pretty much
- no opinion
- not that much
- not at all

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
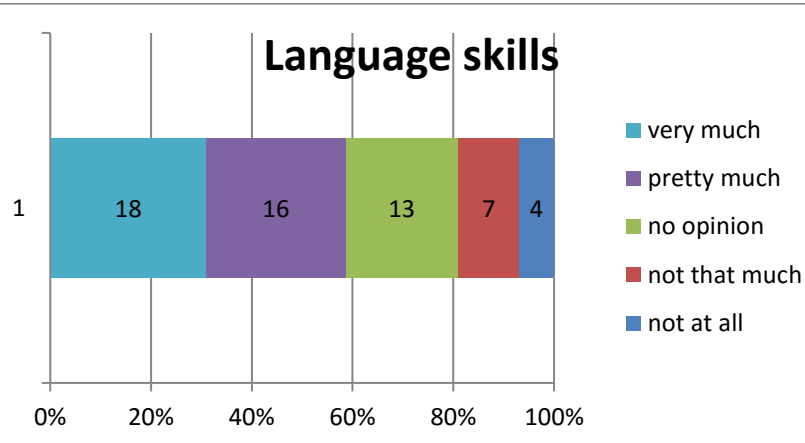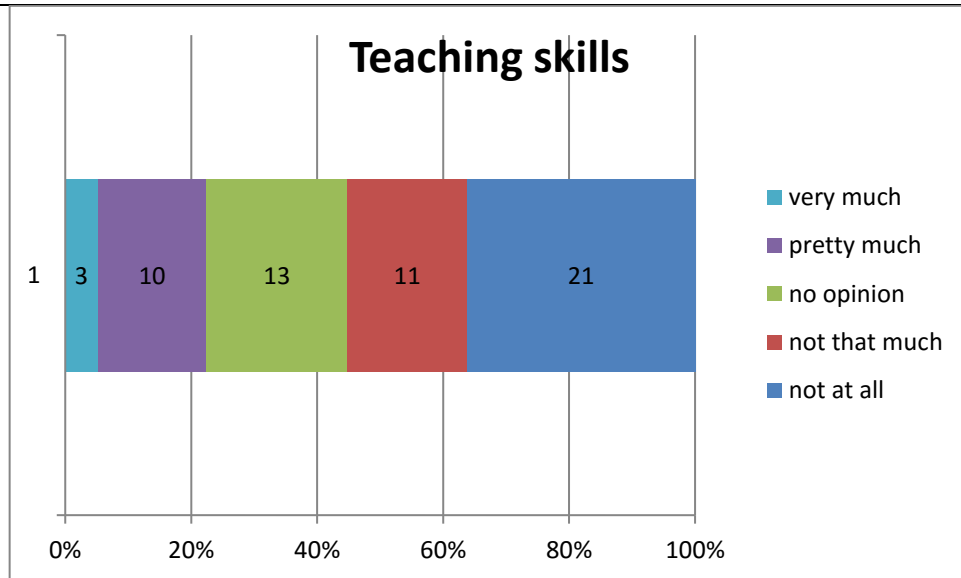
3.3 BeIPD-COFUND Transversal Competencies Trainings
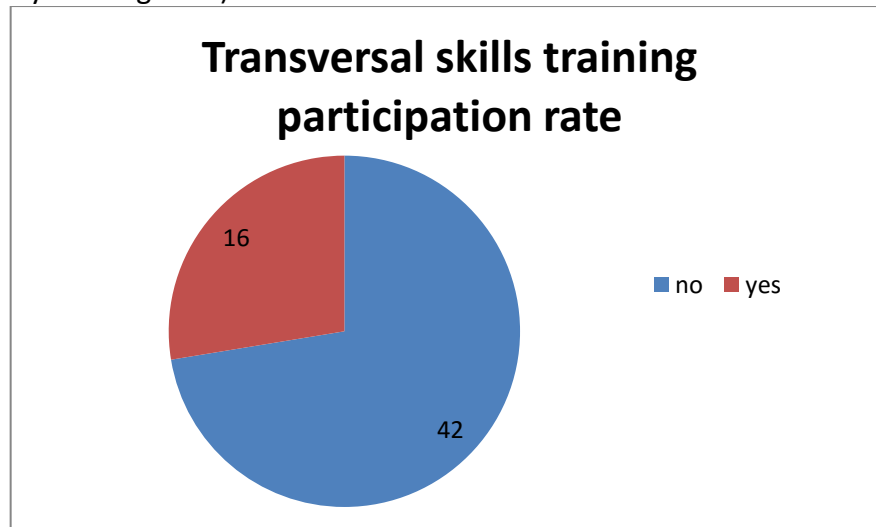
Question: Do you think that transversal/ "soft" skills are important in becoming an independent researcher?
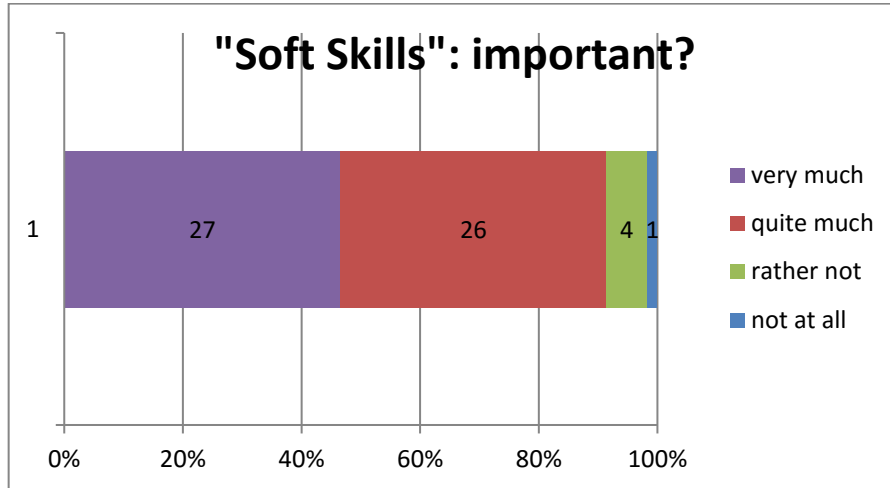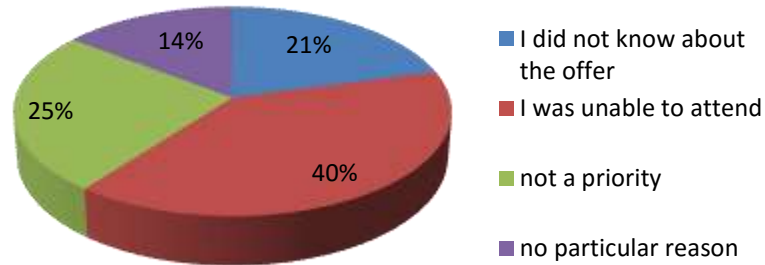

Question: Did you attend any transversal trainings that are organised by the ULg (ImpactE, ARD, Interface, faculty trainings etc.)?

Question: If no, why not?

3.4 BeIPD-COFUND Capacity building

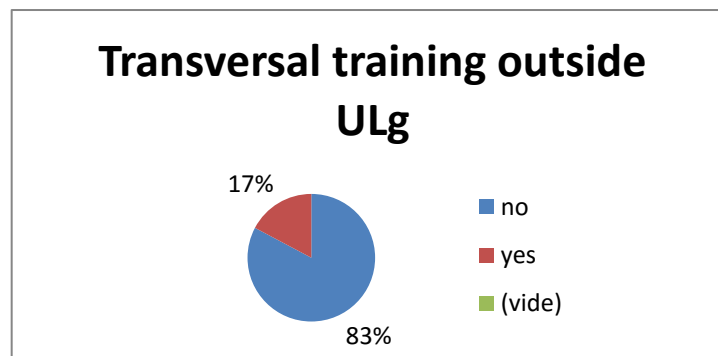**Question:** To what extend do the following training topics appeal to you?

TOP 1 Knowledge and intellectual abilities/ 227
TOP 2 Personal effectiveness/ 209
TOP 3 Research governance and organisation/ 204
TOP 4 Engagement, influence and impact/ 202

Question: Did you attend any other transversal trainings outside the ULg?

Question: If yes: which ones and where?

> ➤ *I have attended several workshops on citizenship organised in Maastricht (in collaboration with the ULg), a workshop on multiculturalism at the London School of Economics as well as the UACES teaching and learning workshop "Innovating Teaching and Learning: how, why and why not?" at the Faculty of Law in Bilbao, Spain.*
> ➤ *Marie Curie ones*
> ➤ *French courses for foreigners, PhD seminars (2x)*
> ➤ *Scientific conferences, special workshops*
> ➤ *scientific meetings*
> ➤ *Trainings in methodologies*

Question: In which topics should the ULg suggest additional trainings?

- ➢ Preparing to obtaining additional funding (2x)
- ➢ Academic English
- ➢ Developing your network

Chapter 4 ULg hosting facilities (OTM-R Recruitment Phase)

4.1 Euraxess

Question: Did you contact the ULg Euraxess Mobility Centre to prepare your research stay?

Euraxess Mobility Manager contacted?

- 31% no
- 69% yes
- (vide)
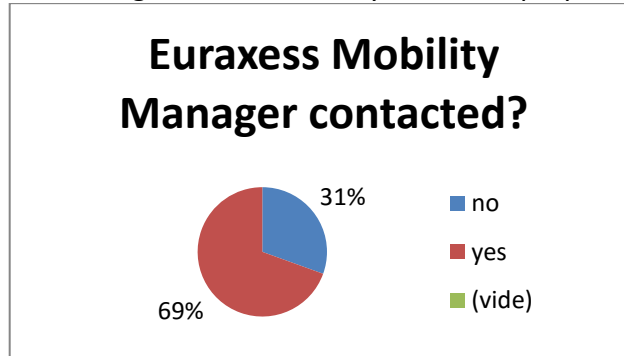
Question: Are there any mobility or administrative questions and/ or administrative issues that have never been solved?

- ➢ *Still don't sure about my tax regime (2x)*
- ➢ *no housing offers for families!*
- ➢ *how to obtain a visa for a one-year stay (outgoing)*
- ➢ *Unemployment allocation in my country after the postdoc (there were no good explanations)*

Question: Is there something that you particularly liked or disliked about the provided administrative support?

- ➢ *Everyone was very supportive, but I would especially like to point out at three exceptional ladies who were always ready to help with their kind advice: Ms Brigitte Ernst, Ms Raphaela Delahaye and Ms Jeni Atanassova*
- ➢ *Very efficient and friendly*
- ➢ *Availability and relevance of the answers/provided support*
- ➢ *Even with the help of the administration, finding accommodation was difficult*
- ➢ *the administrative support was very helpful, especially for the tax report!*
- ➢ *possibility of continuity the research at Ulg*
- ➢ *I have to cover myself expenses and then request reimbursement. There is always a lag in dealing with my expenses and it is very time-consuming to deal with it. However, here the issue was always solved very well. Contrary, Department administration is not supportive at all and ignores me. IT completely ignored me and for many months I did not have access to the printer. I still work on my own computer since IT unit ignored my requests and did not help me in purchase of my office equipment.*
- ➢ *The administrative support team are immensely helpful, quick to respond and have excellent knowledge.*
- ➢ *that someone not answered my mail and spoke with me as if I were a schoolboy (service logement)*
- ➢ *Some members were extremely helpful, and others never replied to emails*
- ➢ *The overall/general outline of the administration process is a bit unclear - this include after arrival*

➢ *I got all the support I needed. I think the administrative staff is doing a great job.*
➢ *the short time to answer*

4.2 ULg welcome activities for young researchers

Question: Did you participate in any welcome activities (Inbound Researcher Welcome Meeting, International Student Welcome, Linkin' Wallonia etc.)?
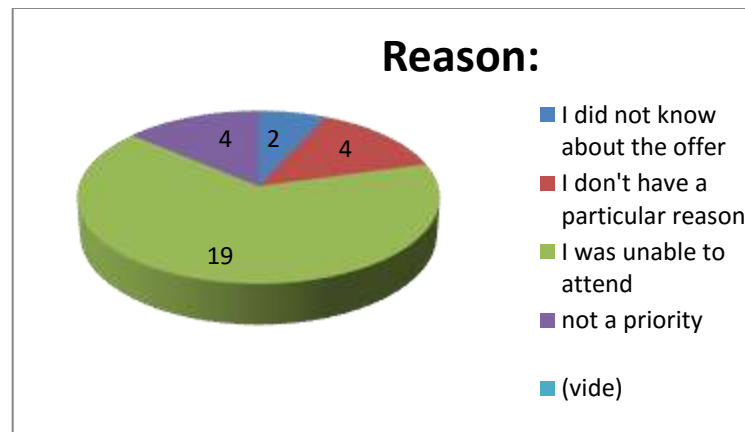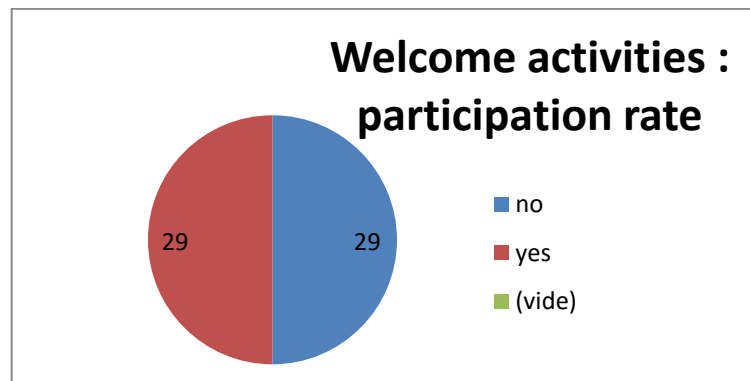
Question: If yes (participation confirmed), did they help you to better integrate in your new environment?
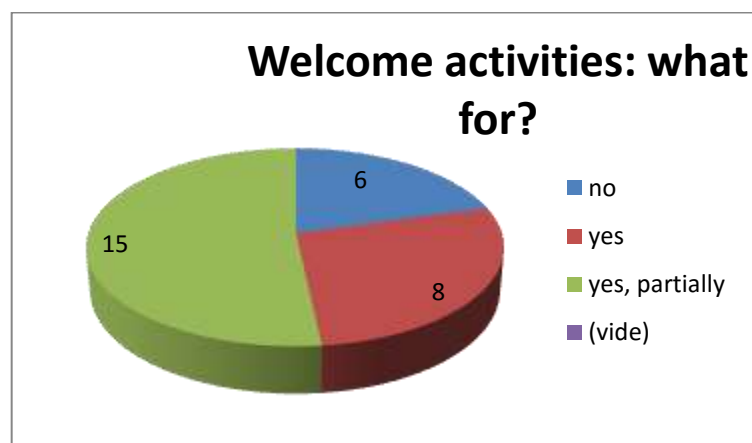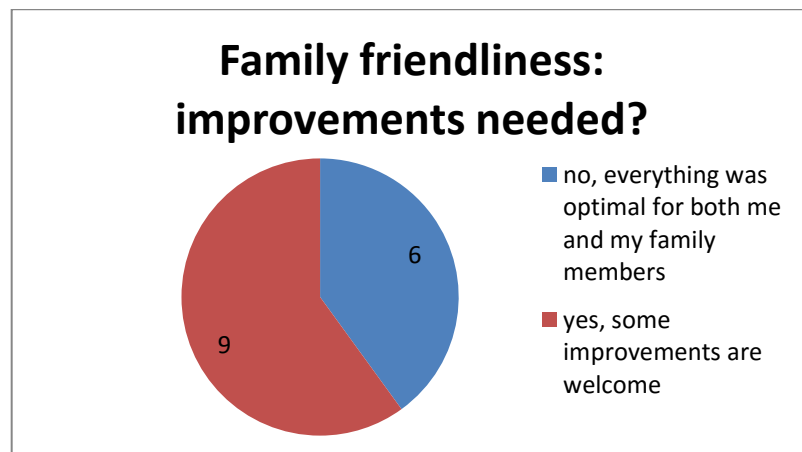
Additional comments:

> *Very good idea, but it was only a one-time activity. It would be helpful to repeat them ona regular basis*
> *I met other COFUND people at the research intake meeting and it was useful to discuss their projects and approach*
> *It was an excellent moment to meet interesting people*
> *Although I understand the need to "break the ice", I disliked the "games" during the researcher welcome meeting because they seemed appropriate for undergraduates, not postdocs*
> *This was a great event, and helped me meet some friends here. I would actually suggest to have a similar event twice a year instead of once, for people arriving at different times of the year*

4.3 Family friendliness

Question: (for those being accompanied by their family members) If yes, do you feel that the ULg could enhance its practice with regard to its family friendly policy?

Family friendliness: improvements needed?

- no, everything was optimal for both me and my family members: 6
- yes, some improvements are welcome: 9

Question: Which improvements do you suggest?

> *Many good programmes, courses, workshops, etc. are organised late in the afternoon which prevents postdocs with children to attend them*
> *Family allowance, help with schools, include family in relocation costs*
> *More comprehensive consultation related to the different family situations of fellows*
> *Language learning must be intensive and at the start of the fellowship not ongoing two nights a week. This will not work with someone who has small children and home commitments.*
> *Better administrative support for researchers - there is not enough staff for the everyday support in the management of our projects.*
> *Family Housing! Child-care facilities! Programmes for relatives!*
> *insurance for both*