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Waking the Sleeping woods of Lochaber

Simwood Final Conference
12 - 13 October 2017

Defining the problem

- ***The pilot project in Lochaber was a journey which started by establishing the key reasons why some woodlands were being managed and some were not.***
- It developed through an iterative series of interviews, events and workshops, working hand in hand with stakeholders to establish the best route forward to bring underutilised woodland in the region into management and products to markets.
- *Identifying the sleeping woods and the reasons for under-management*

Step 1 - The Regional profile

This established that productive management was limited by the geography of the region, lack of capacity and knowledge, and the economics of extraction and getting products to markets.

The Focus Study – Provided more information about the motivations of woodland owners and managers with respect to management –

It reinforced that the main issues centred around capacity and economics – managing woodland was often not their ‘main job’ & the scale and type of operation needed to mobilise the wood



Research steps – the Pilot Project

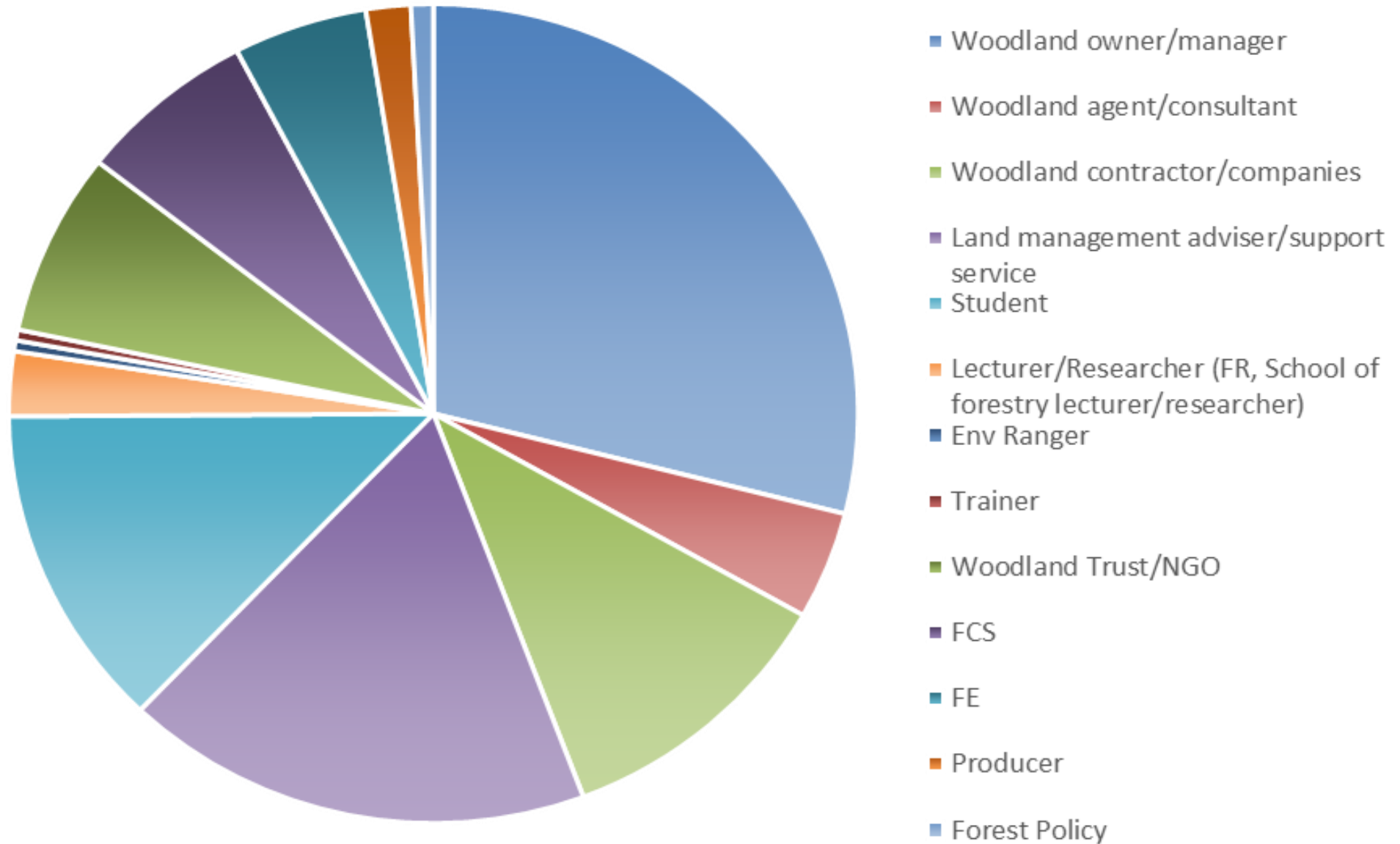
Step 2

- Regional Learning Laboratories, workshops and interviews were held with stakeholders –
- *To share knowledge and gain feedback from their experience and to assess how they felt barriers could be overcome*

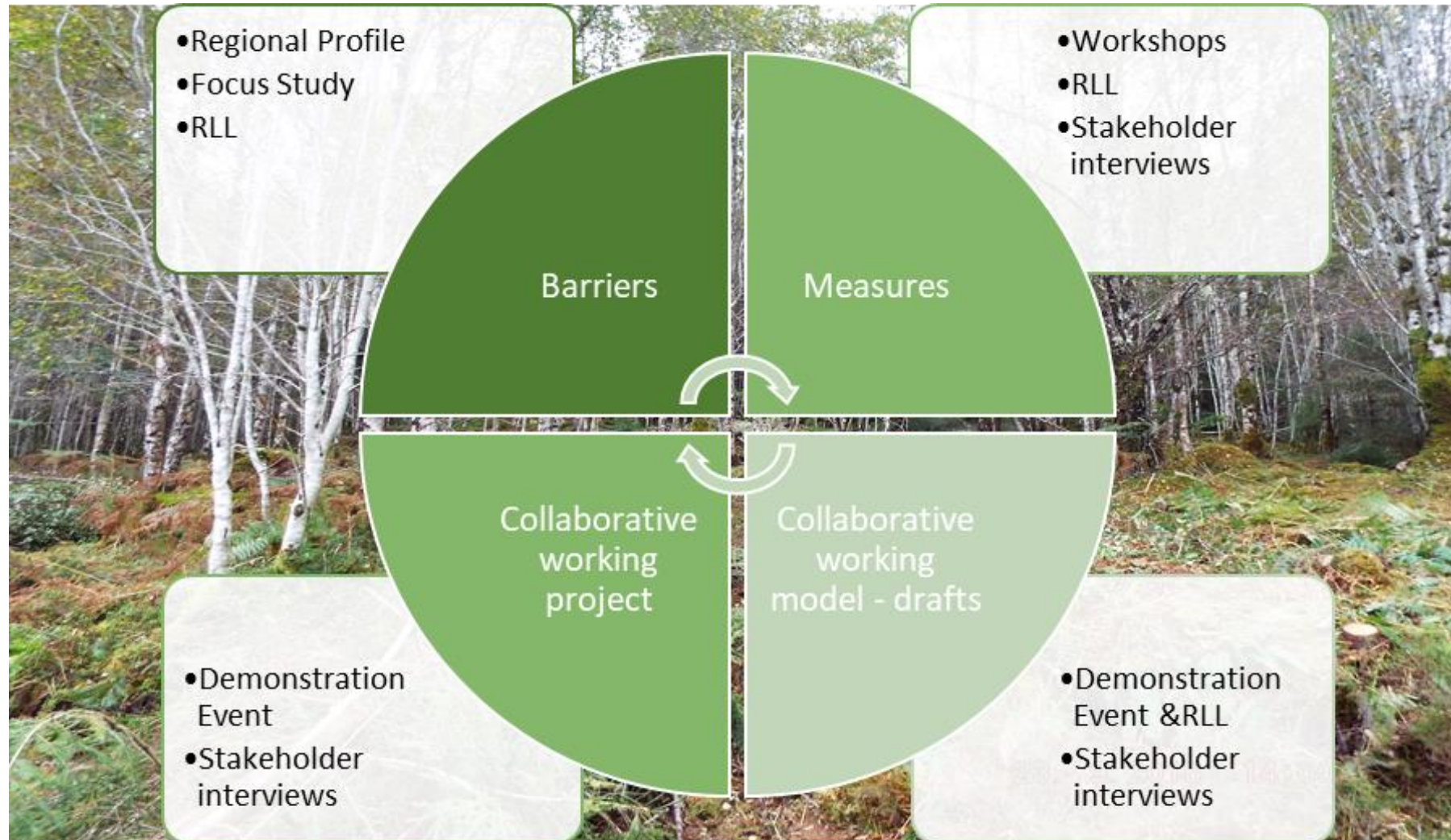
Step 3

- Desktop research, discussions with SIMWOOD partners, further events and interviews plus the feedback from step 2 formed the base of a new collaborative working model for Lochaber to help increase the capacity of woodland owners and managers, and improve the economics of management through
- Addressing the scale of operation, the scale of equipment used and the degree of cooperation

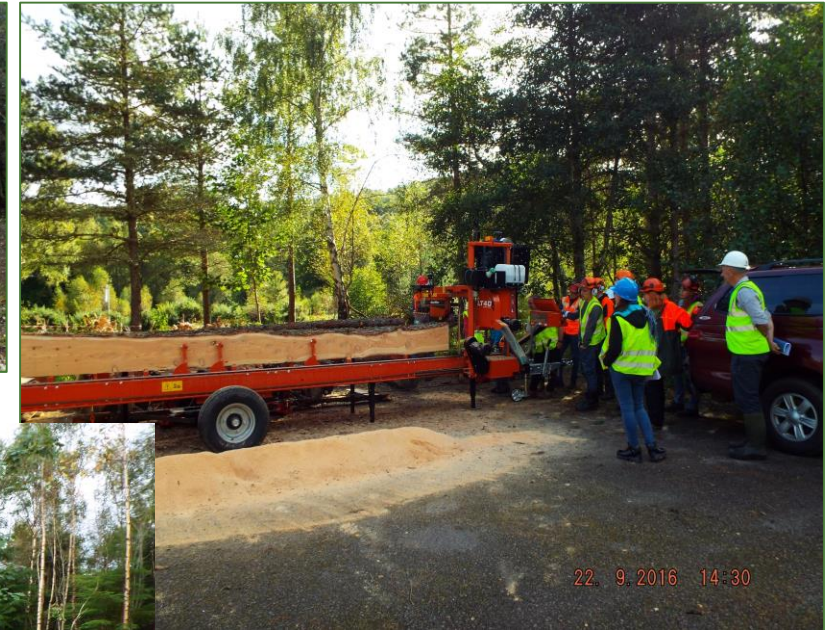
Pilot project participants



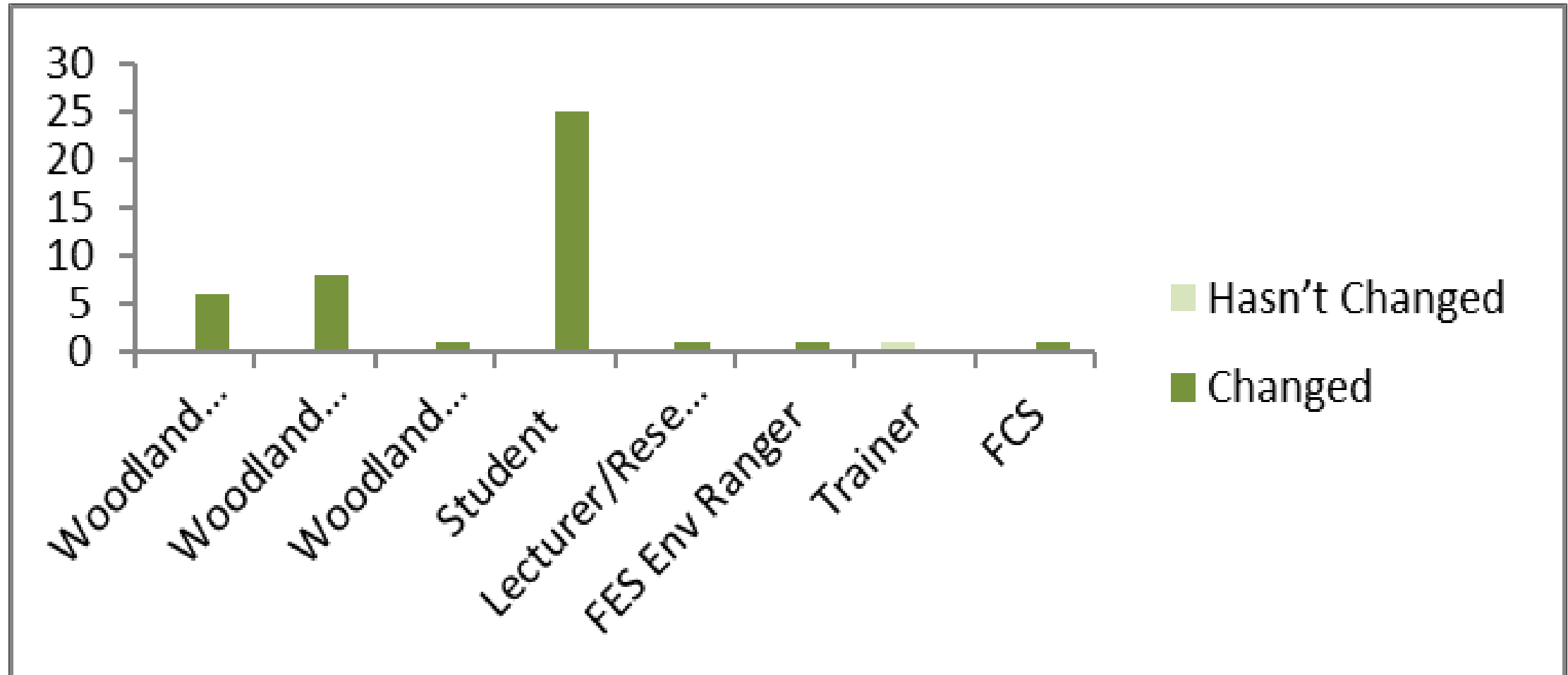
SIMWOOD Lochaber in overview

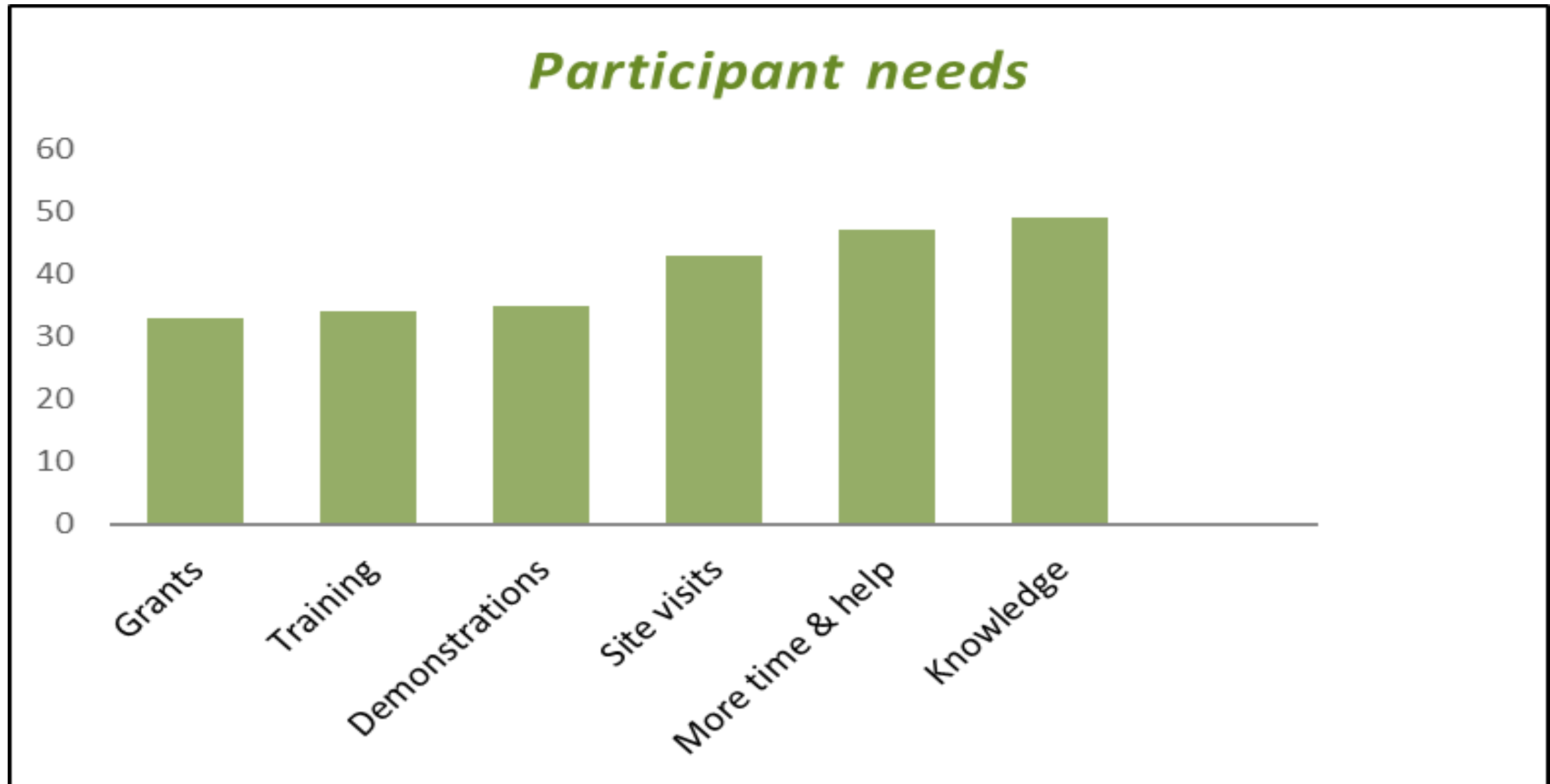


Demonstration – Shows how “waking” can work

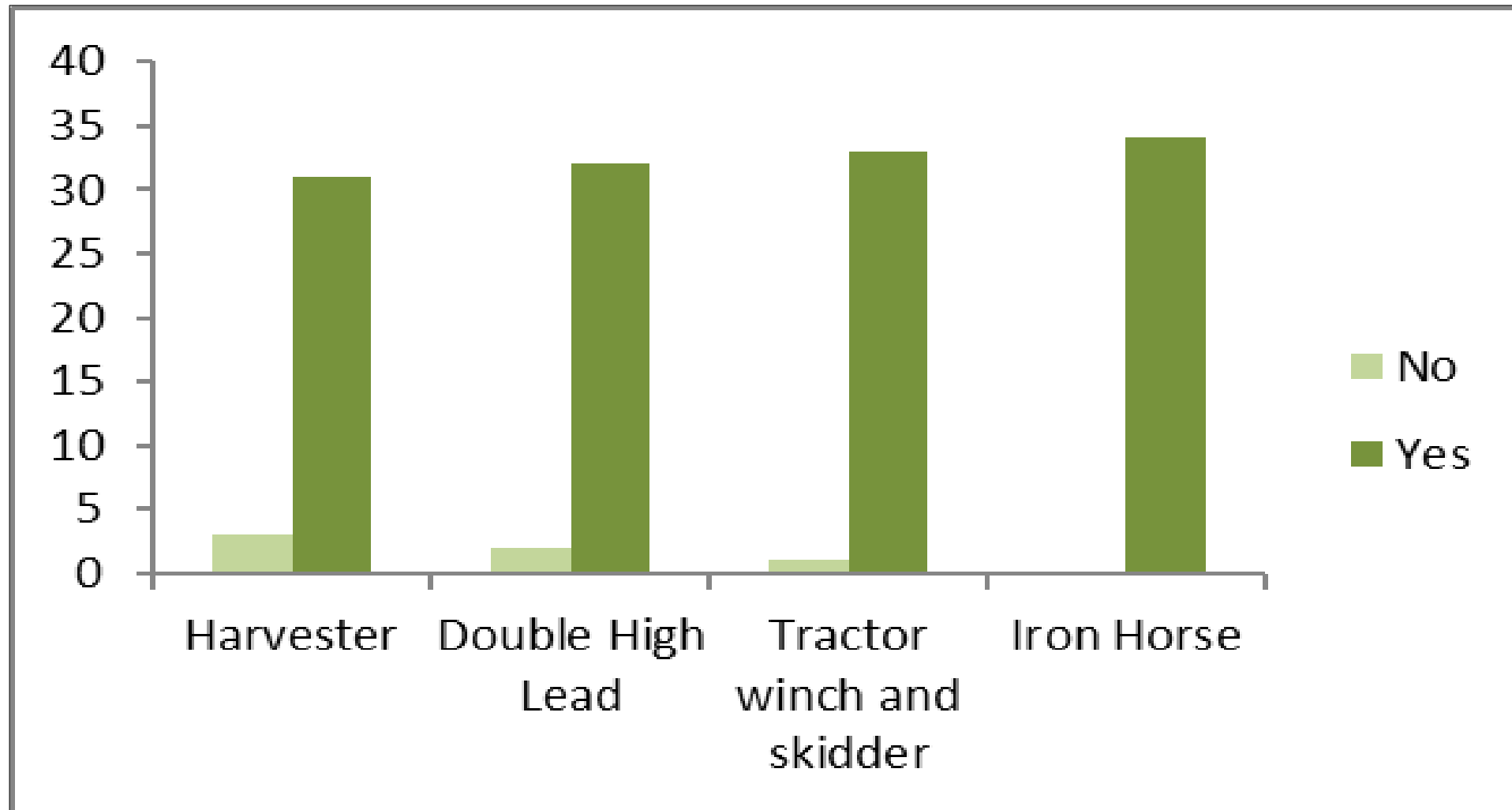


Level of knowledge after SIMWOOD demonstration





Usefulness of harvesting demonstrations



Usefulness of processing demonstrations



Outcomes

- Established that there is a need and an appetite for an increase in knowledge about small scale extraction techniques and equipment
- The Forest owners and managers that had engaged with the project had an increase in knowledge and understanding and are willing to manage their woodlands if they have appropriate support and advice.
- Identified the need and demand for follow on projects – “the woods can be woken”
- Identified the needs and gaps
 - Facilitation for cooperation
 - Knowledge
 - Access to equipment

Steps towards solutions – steps needed in “waking”

- Increase knowledge and awareness of the benefits of small scale extraction equipment amongst owners and managers
- Increase availability of contractors with experience and sensitivity for small scale mobilisation
- Increase availability of equipment for small scale mobilisation
- Increase scope for and demonstrate benefits of cooperation
- If this enabling context is developed then grants can really help, but without it the grants simply reward the few “in the know” and in the absence of relevant skills and equipment, smaller woods will continue to miss out and their resources wasted

Final thoughts

- You can't choose your forest owners, but you can choose how they are informed
- Smaller woods are often marginal, neglected and regarded as uneconomic and “too difficult” and ownership is fragmented
- *However*
- Awareness raising and promotion of cooperation can overcome these barriers

Conclusion and next steps

- *Woodland managers and owners would like to be involved in a follow-on project to actively manage their woodlands and bring more products onto the market*

Legacy

- Funding applications submitted to support a collaborative working project across three regions of Scotland and five regions in England based on the work achieved and with evidence of need provided through SIMWOOD

The woods are waking

Thank you for your attention



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