



BLM Stewardship Contracting Assessment Study Results



Study Outline

◆ Methodology

◆ Survey Findings

- I. Site Visitation Process
- II. Bidding and Proposal Process
- III. Stewardship Contracts

◆ Exploring What is Needed for Effective Stewardship Contracts



Methodology



Methodology

- ◆ 48 Stewardship Participants participated
- ◆ 31 BLM Contract Managers participated
- ◆ 15-20 minute phone survey/ interview



Methodology

- ◆ BLM Contract Managers provided contact information for Awardees, Non-Awardees (bidders), and Site Visit Attendees (only) as well as corresponding BLM Contract Managers involved in Stewardship Project.
- ◆ Survey focused upon three aspects of Stewardship Contracting:
 1. Site Visitation Process
 2. Bidding and Proposal Process
 3. Contracting Process



Survey Findings

Site Visitation



Rating Stewardship Items (1-5 scale)

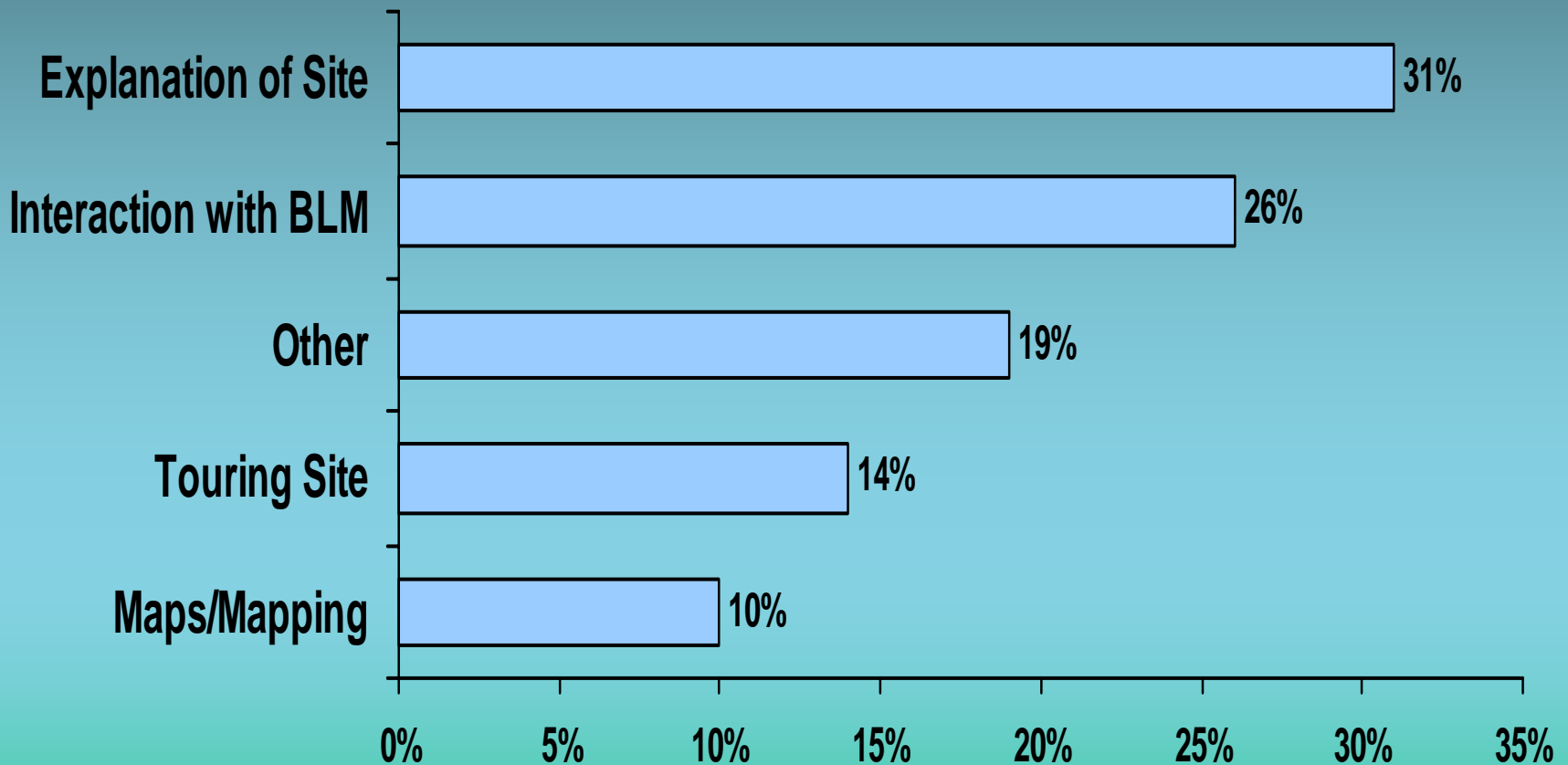
I. Site Visitation Process

- ◆ Stewardship Participants rate the site visitation process **positively**, with an average score of **4.15**.
- ◆ BLM Contract managers rate the site visitation process **moderately positive**, with an average score of **3.69**.



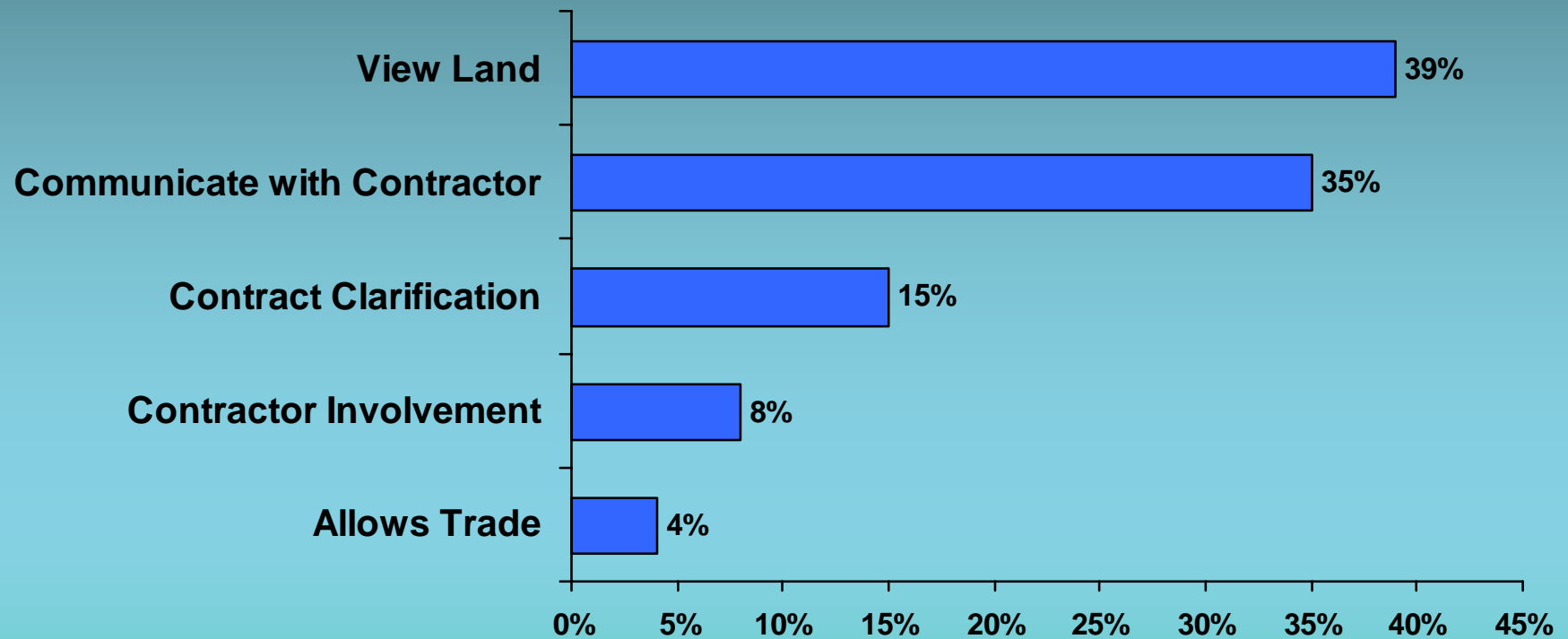
I. Site Visitation Process

Aspects of Site Visits that Work Best for Stewardship Participants



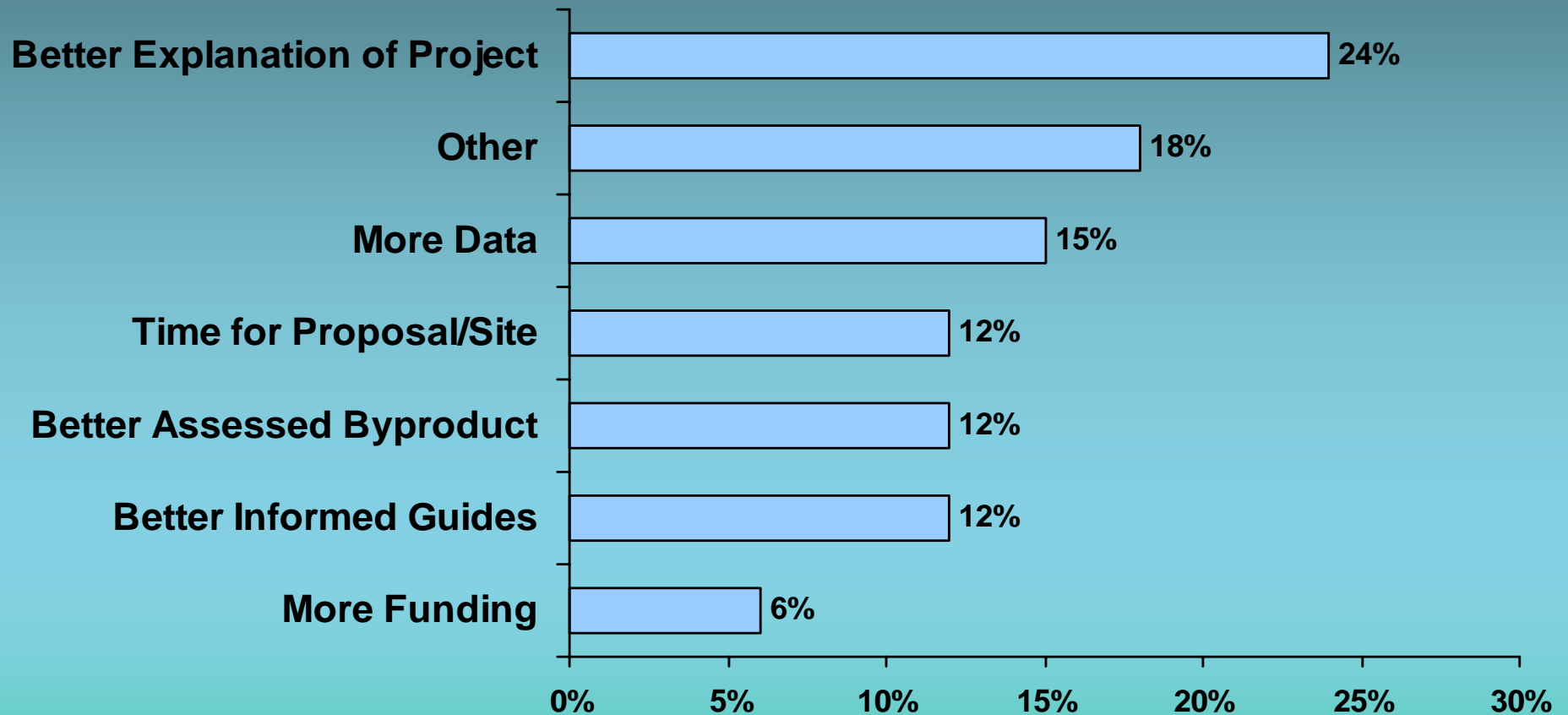
I. Site Visitation Process

Aspects of Site Visits that Work Best for BLM Stewardship Contract Managers



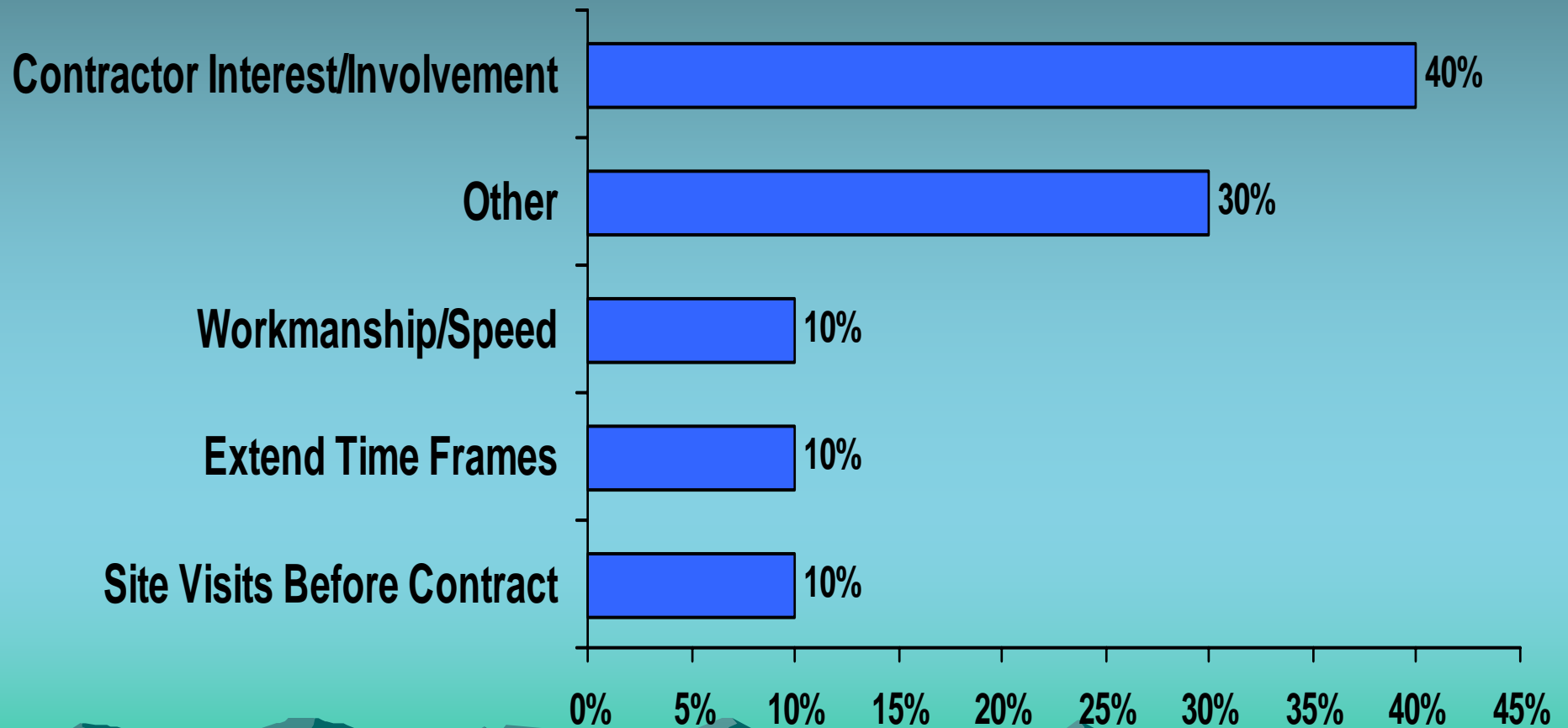
I. Site Visitation Process

Aspects of Stewardship Site Visits Needing Improvement for Stewardship Participants



I. Site Visitation Process

Aspects Stewardship Site Visitations Needing Improvement for BLM Stewardship Contract Managers



Survey Findings Bidding & Proposal Process



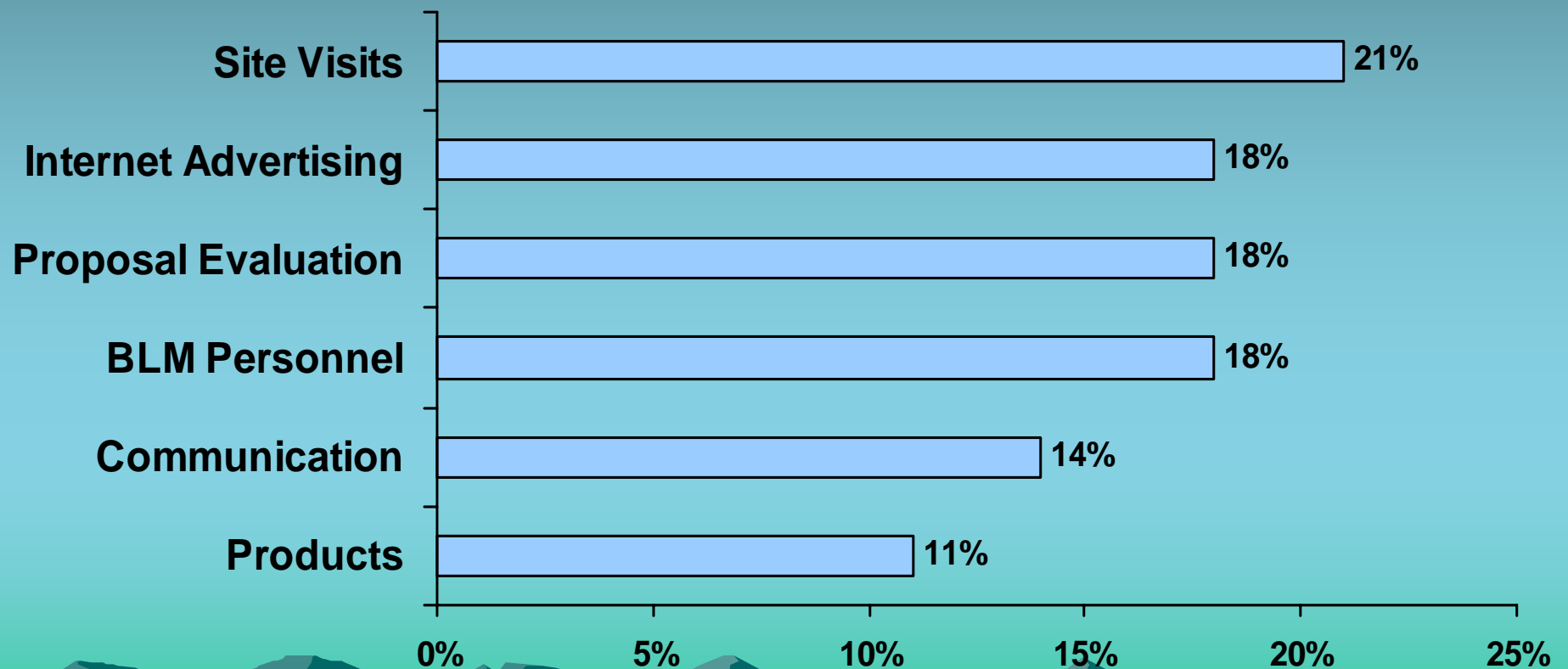
Rating Stewardship Items (1-5 scale)

II. Bidding and Proposal Process

- ◆ Stewardship participants rate the effectiveness of the bidding and proposal process **moderately**, with an average score of **3.55**.
- ◆ BLM Contract managers rate the effectiveness of the bidding and proposal process somewhat **negatively** with an average score of **2.52**.

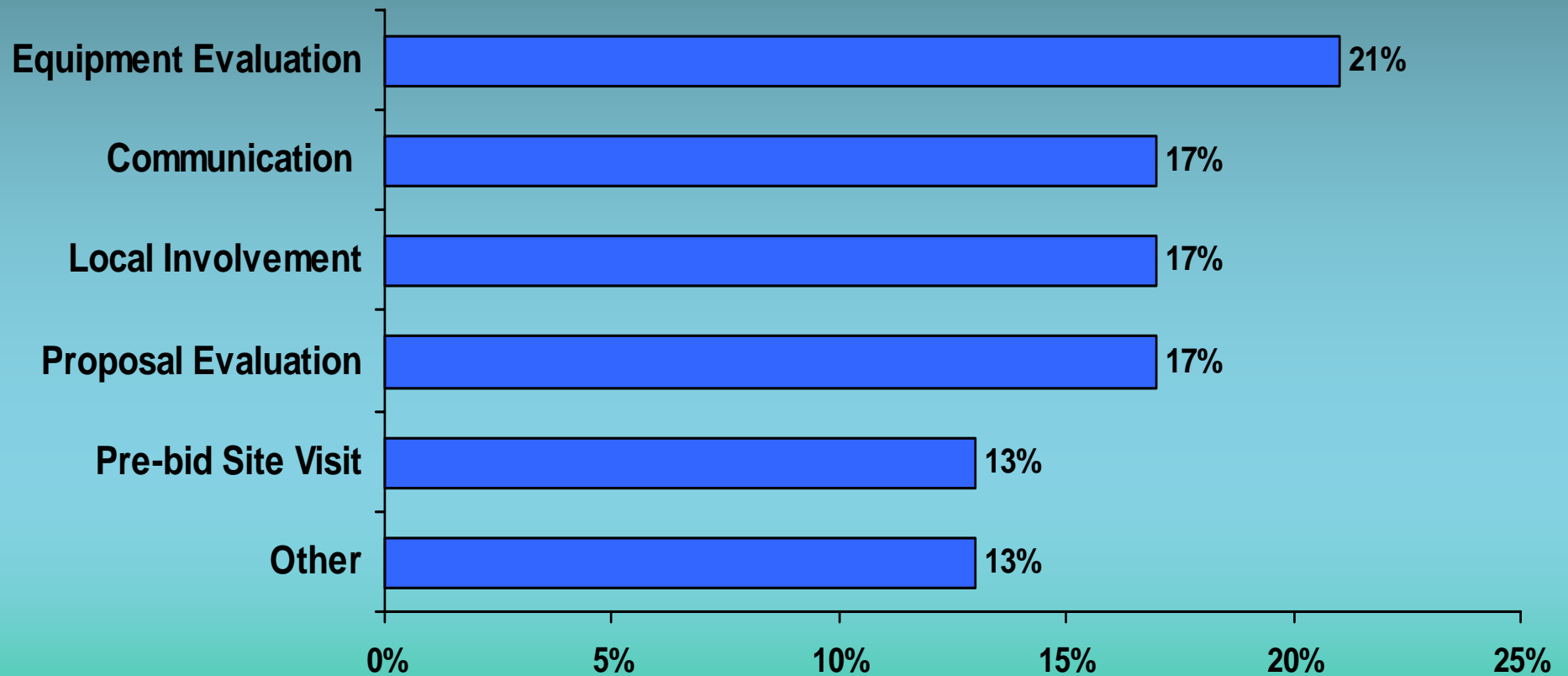
II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Aspects of Bidding and Proposal Process that Work Best for Stewardship Participants



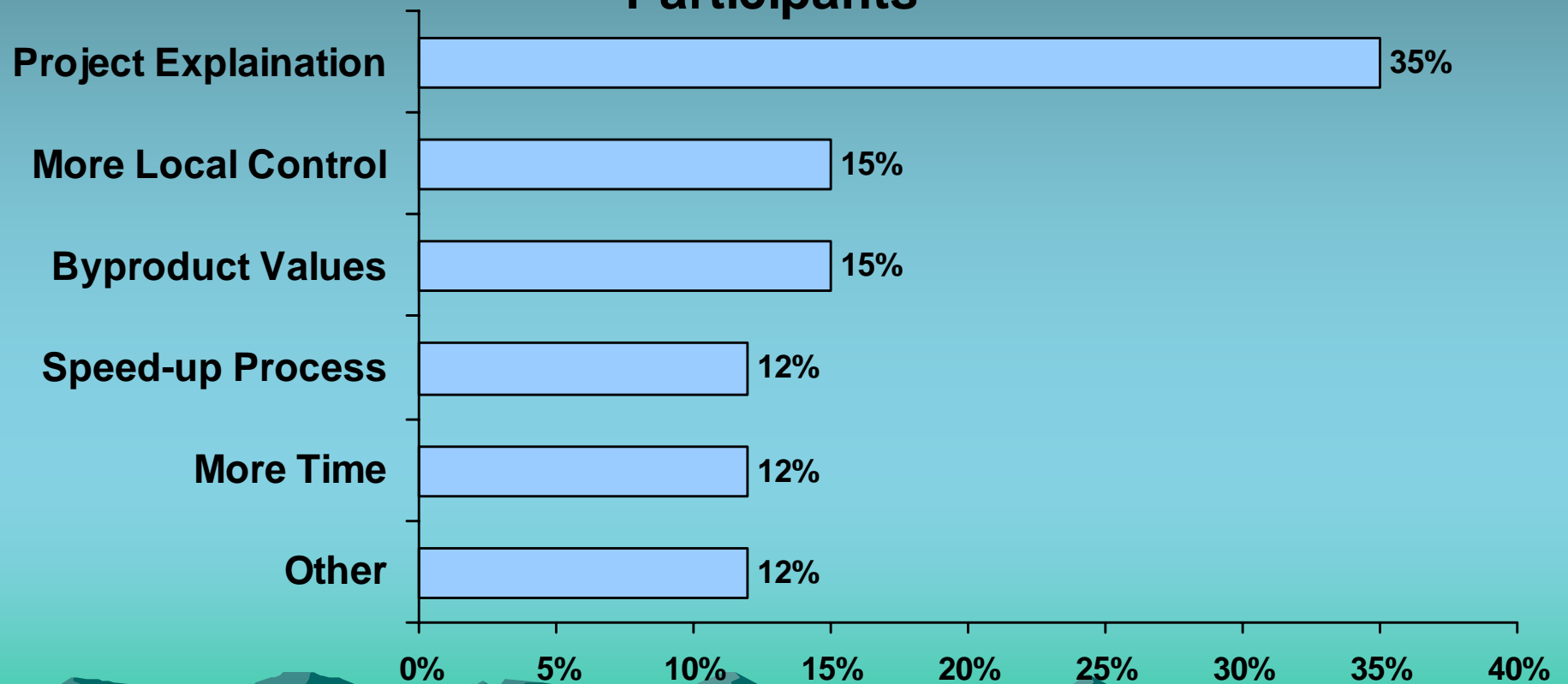
II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Aspects of Bidding and Proposal Process that Work Best for BLM Stewardship Contract Managers



II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Aspects of Bidding and Proposal Process that Need Improvement Among Stewardship Participants



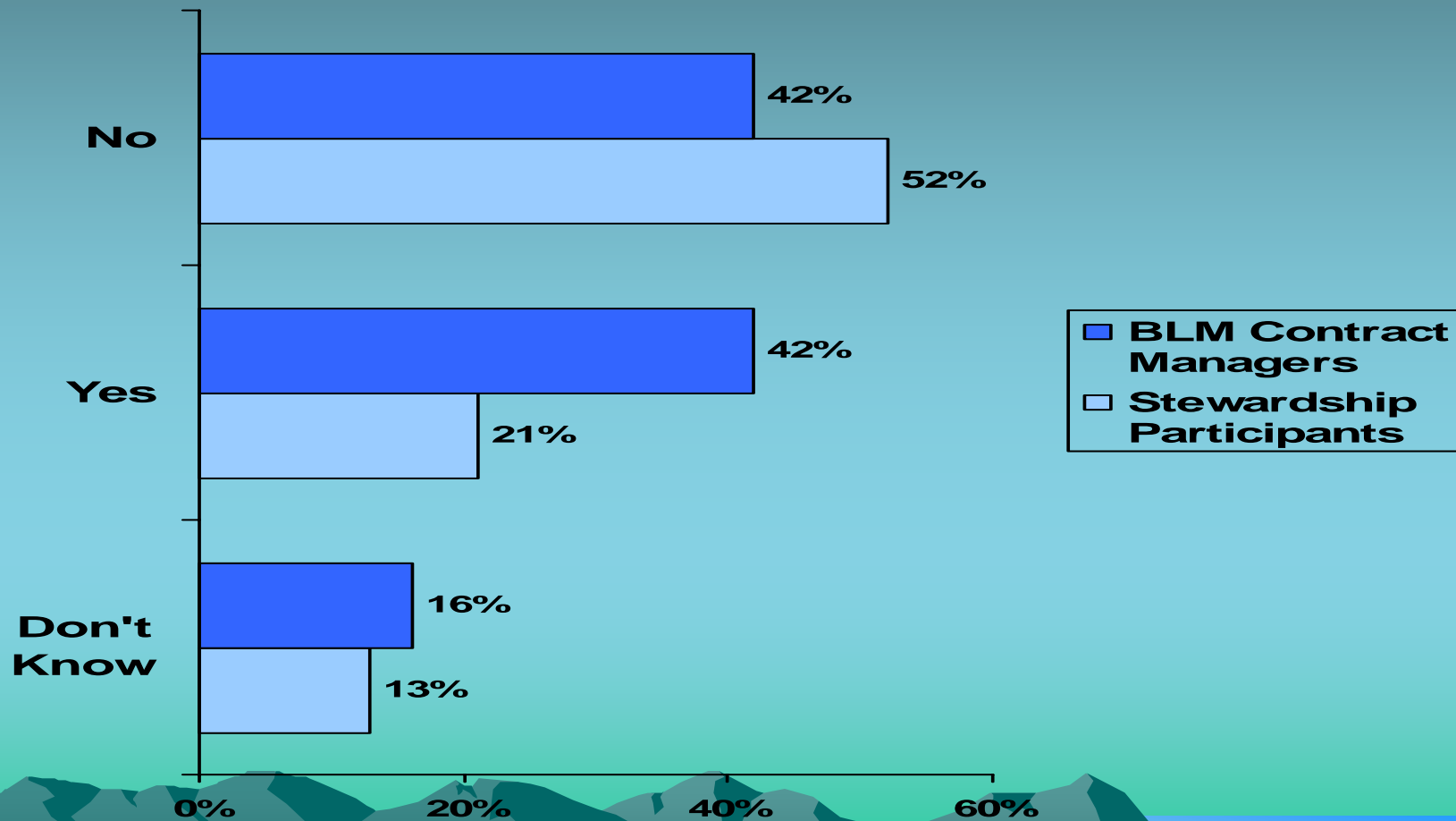
II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Aspects of Bidding and Proposal Process Needing Improvement for BLM Contract Managers



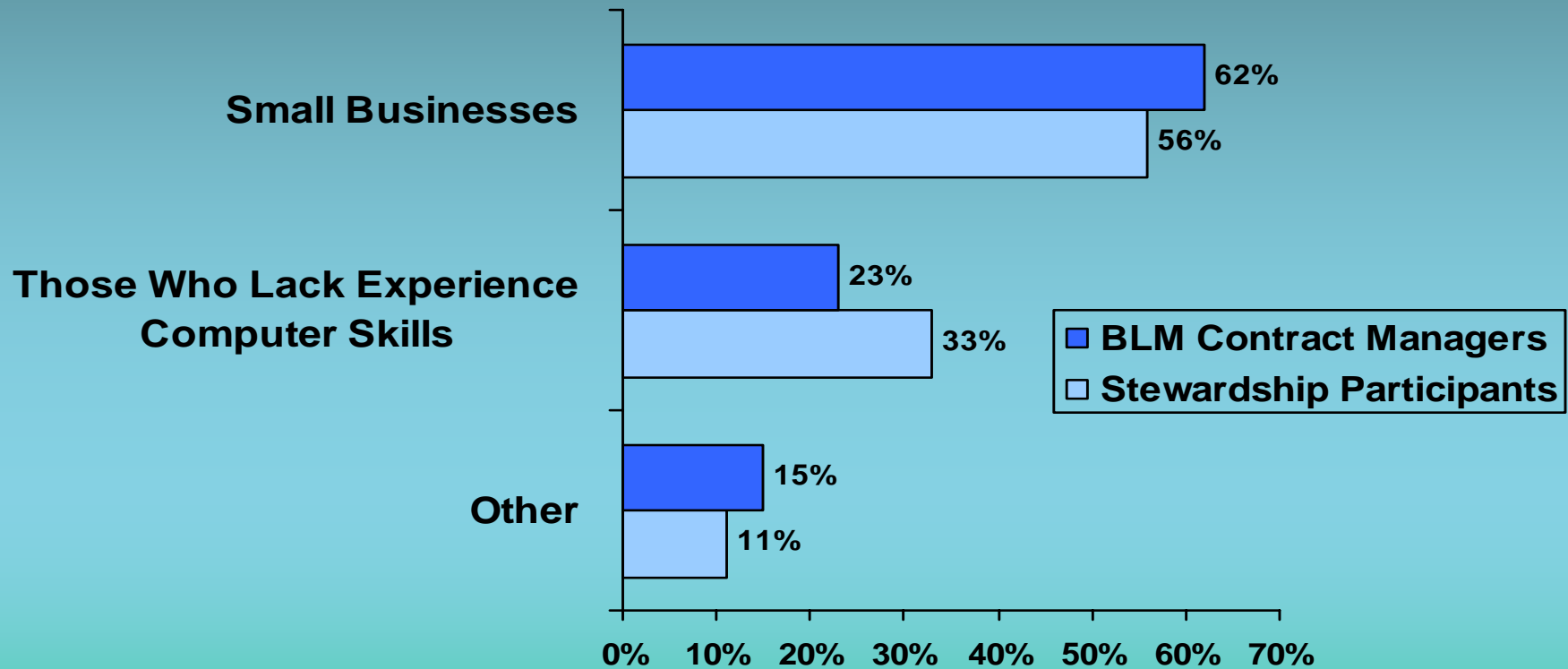
II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Do Requirements/Regulations Limit Groups in the Bidding and Proposal Process?



II. Bidding and Proposal Process

Excluded Groups in the Bidding and Proposal Process



Survey Findings

Stewardship Contracts



Rating Stewardship Items (1-5 scale)

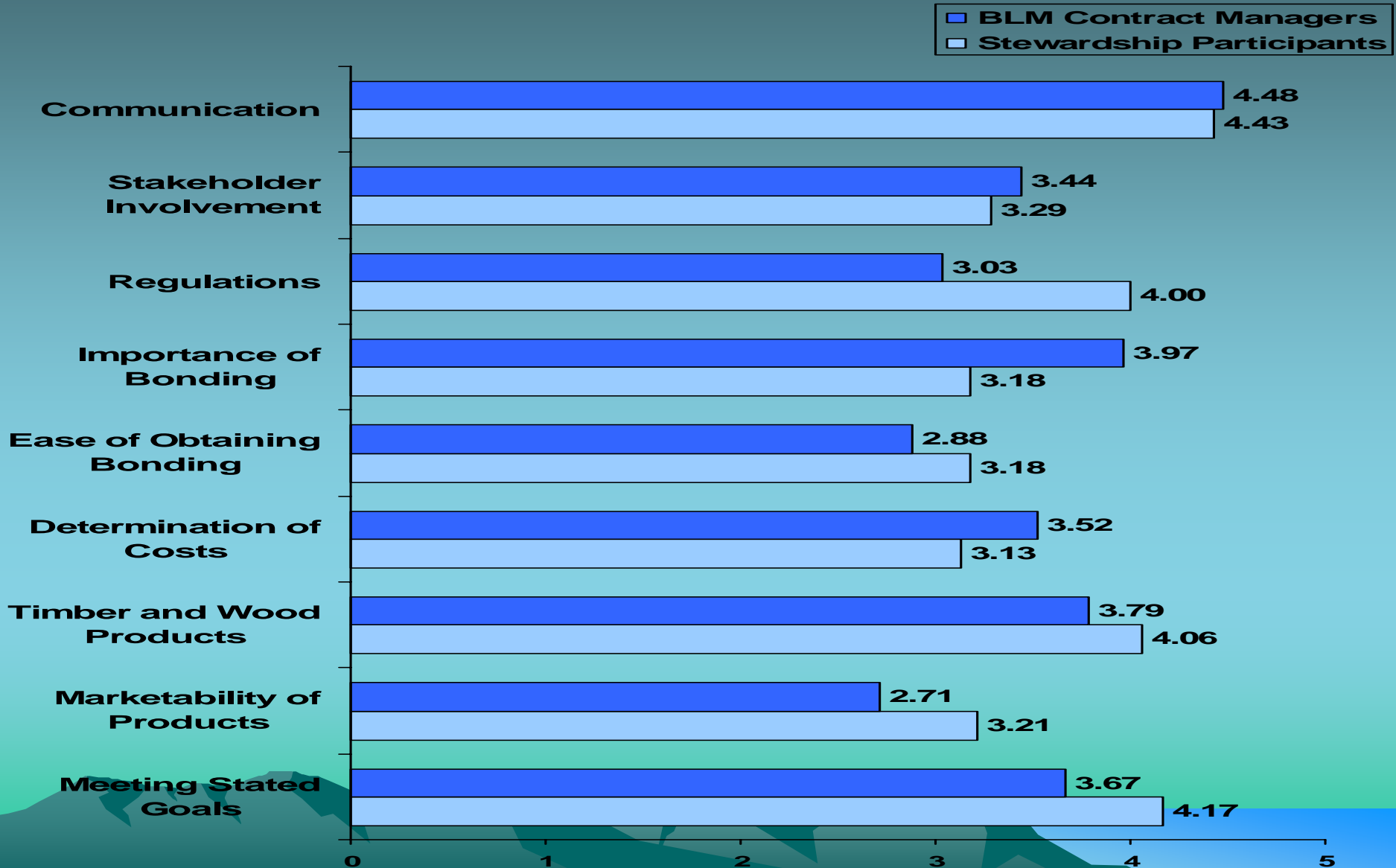
III. Stewardship Contracts

- ◆ In general, Stewardship participants rate the Stewardship contracting process **very positively**, with an average score of **4.43**.
- ◆ However, BLM Contract managers rate the Stewardship contracting process **moderately** with an average score of **3.23**.



III. Stewardship Contracts

Average Ratings of Stewardship Contracting Items (1-5 Scale)



Exploring What is Needed for Effective Stewardship Contracts



Improving Communication

***Improving Communication between
Awardees and BLM Managers***



Improving Communication

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants:**
 - Rate communication with BLM very positively (average rating of 4.48)
 - Note there is a lack of physical communication such as radio contact in remote areas.
 - Improve availability of BLM representatives after office hours and holidays.



Improving Communication

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers:**
 - Rate communication with contractors very positively (average rating of 4.49)
 - Increase understanding of contract processes among awardees, the program, and general duties.
 - Similar to awardees, they also suggest better phone and cell phone coverage, especially in remote areas.

Stakeholder Involvement

*Stewardship Participants and BLM
Contract Managers explain their ratings
of stakeholder involvement.*



Stakeholder Involvement

- ◆ **Among Stewardship Participants:**
 - Rate stakeholder involvement slightly positively (average rating of 3.29) but lower than BLM managers.
 - Likely groups to be involved are those who benefit economically from products.
 - There is a small percentage of people who oppose projects.
 - Other stakeholders may take on less active, observational role.

Stakeholder Involvement

- ◆ ***BLM Contract Managers indicate that:***
 - Rate stakeholder involvement somewhat positively (average rating of 3.44).
 - Fire planners, the Forest Service, and homeowners/landowners are very involved in land projects.
 - However, a few suggest slowing down the initiative process and providing a forum with presentations to broaden stakeholder involvement.

Regulations

*What changes to current regulations
would make BLM Stewardship
contracting more effective?*



Regulations

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants:**
 - Rate regulations quite positively (average rating of 4.00), much higher than BLM managers.
 - Suggest year-round employment for contractors and the implementation or revision of environmental assessments.
 - Prefer relaxing the standards on acceptable types of wood products.



Regulations

◆ BLM Contract Managers:

- Rate regulations moderately (average rating of 3.03), much lower than contractors.
- They suggest adding wood products and selling byproducts by the ton;
- Reduce paperwork, simplify the methods/language of the bidding process;

Regulations

◆ BLM Contract Managers:

- Include different types of contracts to encourage small businesses without losing funds;
- Some BLM Managers report that the process is overregulated at the national level. They suggest the delegation of authority to the local field offices and BLM Contract Managers, provided they are given adequate information.



Bonding

*How important is bonding to effective
Stewardship Contracts?*



Importance of Bonding

- ◆ Overall, **bonded Stewardship Participants** rate the importance of bonding much lower than BLM managers (average rating of 3.18).
- ◆ Bonded Stewardship Participants vary on the importance of bonding:
 - Bonding is not used widely enough through-out a project to warrant its requirement; work history is a good source of information.
 - Bonding is indicative of stable companies and is not necessarily problematic, especially with short-term projects.

Importance of Bonding

- ◆ **BLM Contract manager** rate the importance of bonding much higher than BLM managers (average rating of 3.97).
- ◆ **BLM Contract managers say:**
 - Bonding can be important, relative to project size and product value; and bonding is a way to insure job completion.
 - However, while it reduces risk, it also has the potential to deter and intimidate local contractors; perhaps a new contract type is needed.

Ease of Obtaining Bonding

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants** say obtaining bonding is relatively easy (average rating of 3.18).
- ◆ **Among Stewardship Participants:**
 - Awardees who either have the money, experience, or a good performance history, say bonding is relatively easy.
 - Others say that bonding companies are hard to find; they may choose self-bonding or agent bonding as an alternative.
 - Bonding is an issue when working on potentially hazardous projects for the BLM.

Ease of Obtaining Bonding

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers** say obtaining bonding is somewhat easy (average rating of 2.88).
- ◆ **Among BLM Contract Managers:**
 - Obtaining a bond is easier and more affordable for larger contractors.
 - Small contractors find bonding more difficult and expensive.
 - Need to review bonding on a case by case basis.

Cost Determination

*Improving the determination of costs
for Stewardship contracts*



Determination of Costs

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants** give a moderate rating to the determination of costs (average rating of 3.13), slightly lower than BLM managers.
- ◆ **Stewardship Participants suggest:**
 - Engaging more experienced BLM officers in conjunction with including project contractors in the determination process.
 - Cooperation might insure feasibility of prices (such as freight costs) and marketability of products that keep costs down.
 - Suggest raising margin of error in new areas; lowering cost of materials and products; and a running price system for long term projects.

Determination of Costs

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers** give a more positive rating to the determination of costs (average rating of 3.62), than Stewardship Participants.
- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers:**
 - Suggest engaging more experienced BLM officers. Experience and cooperation improve determination of freight and transportation costs.
 - BLM Contract Managers suggest better understanding of marketability of products to reduce unnecessary costs of transporting unprofitable material a long distance.

Timber & Wood Products

***Combining timber harvesting services
with wood products production***



Timber and Wood Products

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants** give a strong positive rating to the combining of timber harvesting and wood products (average rating of 4.06),
- ◆ **Among Stewardship Participants:**
 - This is a positive way to maximize removal and use of wood byproducts.
 - It creates jobs/economy while diminishing costs for contractors. And returns capital to government.
 - Others express difficulty finding market for products (such as fine wood), or available processing.

Timber and Wood Products

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers** give a slightly less positive rating to the combining of timber harvesting and wood products (average rating of 3.79).
- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers:**
 - Suggest more comprehensive awareness of the interrelationship between product markets;
 - Emphasize the significance of combining the two to insure success and capital return;
 - Size and remoteness impact the project;
 - Be aware of existing infrastructural limitations.

Marketability of Products

***How marketable are the products
from Stewardship contracts?***



Marketability of Products

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants** say stewardship contract products are relatively marketable (average rating of 3.21).
- ◆ **Stewardship Participants:**
 - BLM needs to address product type, marketability, and site location.
 - Success and satisfactory ratings are relative to high demand for product in area where the product is being extracted.
 - Less than satisfactory ratings are consistent with high transport cost, low marketability due to distance from buyers, and limited biomass processing facilities.

Marketability of Products

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers** rate the marketability of stewardship contract products slightly lower with an average rating of 2.71.
- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers:**
 - BLM managers say that an optimal market/product relationship can be generated by a well-written contract.
 - Need to explore new areas and ideas.



Meeting Stated Goals

How well is the Stewardship contract meeting stated goals?



Meeting Stated Goals

- ◆ **Stewardship Participants** strongly agree that stated contract goals are being met (average rating of 4.17).
- ◆ **Stewardship Participants:**
 - Many note “no system is perfect,” but goal-oriented design coupled with provisional flexibility is working.
 - Clearer goal descriptions in bid contracts, such as contract titles and cost efficiency initiatives, have potential to improve goal achievement.

Meeting Stated Goals

- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers** also agree that stated contract goals are being met but to a lesser degree (average rating of 3.67).
- ◆ **BLM Contract Managers:**
 - Satisfied with the achievement of goals; believe the Stewardship is a good tool, or are optimistic that improvements will occur over time.
 - Unsatisfactory ratings come from the inability to find a contractor at BLM cost; they are experiencing too low a sales volume to meet district goals; or their program is not working because they need support from the state.

Conclusion

- Overall, both contractors and BLM managers are very positive about stewardship contracting.
- Both identify several areas of strength and areas for improvement.
- Nearly all of those interviewed say the process is improving over time.



BLM Stewardship Contract Assessment Study

