

## A survey about PlantLink – a summary

### Introduction:

As part of PlantLink's self-evaluation a survey about the importance of different activities was conducted. The survey was anonymous and distributed in PlantLinks newsletter as well as e-mails to company representatives that have previously collaborated with PlantLink. The purpose of the survey was to get an idea of how important different activities are perceived by persons interacting with Plantlink.

### The survey:

The survey was conducted online and anonymously, answers were collected during December 2020. In the survey the respondent was asked to answer a few questions about themselves, for us to be able to see if there are differences on a group level that we need to be aware of. These background questions were affiliation (Lund University, SLU Alnarp, A company, Other), position (undergraduate student, PhD/Post doc, Researcher, Facility manager/employee, Company representative, other), if they had received direct support by PlantLink (Yes, No) and gender identity (Female, Male, Other/Prefer not to say/Not applicable - I answer as a representative of a group).

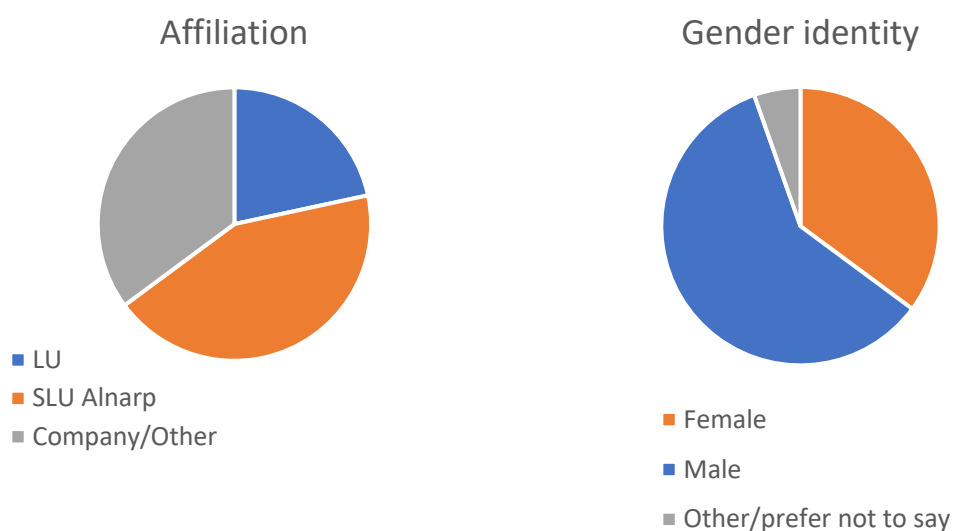
Then the respondent was asked to score 18 different activities "*based on how important you think they should be for PlantLink in the future*". Here the alternatives were number 1-5, where 1 was "not important", 3 "neutral" and 5 "very important". The alternative "do not know" was also available. All activities scored are seen in the result section.

### Results:

In total, 37 persons answered the survey, which is low compared to number of people the newsletter is addressed to. Of the respondents 35% were from outside the academia, 43% from SLU Alnarp and 22% from LU, see Figure 1. Mostly we looked at the results as given by the whole group, but we also looked independently on the groups of affiliated to the academia or not, LU compared to SLU Alnarp and if there were any marked differences based on gender. Regarding position mostly researchers within academia answered, thus no comparisons between *e.g.* undergraduate students, PhD students and postdocs compared to more senior researchers were made. No less than 43% of the respondents answered that they had received direct support from PlantLink at an earlier occasion, thus suggesting that people that have received support in higher degree answered our survey than other.

In Table 1, the average scores for the 18 different activities are shown, sorted from highest to lowest scores based on all answers. Only answers scoring 1-5 are part of the values, "do not know" is excluded. The largest differences were seen when comparing answers from people in and outside academia, thus these are also presented. The differences between groups based on gender identity or home university were relatively small, and are therefore not reported separately.

**Figure 1.** Affiliations and gender identity among respondents



|  | All | University | Company/Other |
|--|-----|------------|---------------|
| PlantLink newsletter   | 4,2 | 4,4        | 3,8           |
| Annual PlantLink day   | 4,2 | 4,2        | 4,1           |
| Support to regional research infrastructure for plant research   | 4,1 | 4,0        | 4,4           |
| Act as a meeting venue for academia and industry   | 4,0 | 3,8        | 4,5           |
| PlantLink Homepage   | 4,0 | 4,0        | 3,8           |
| Other seminars and workshops arranged by/together with PlantLink   | 4,0 | 3,9        | 4,2           |
| PlantLink's focus areas ( <a href="http://www.plantlink.se/focusareas">www.plantlink.se/focusareas</a> ) | 3,8 | 3,7        | 4,2           |
| Contacts with Danish universities  | 3,8 | 3,7        | 4,1           |
| PhD education  | 3,8 | 3,6        | 4,3           |
| Work with outreach to high schools and general public  | 3,8 | 3,6        | 4,1           |
| Bioinformatics support   | 3,6 | 3,7        | 3,4           |
| Work for the establishment of a bi-annual plant biology meeting "Swedish Plant Biology Days"             | 3,6 | 3,3        | 4,0           |
| Regulation of plant biotechnology  | 3,4 | 3,4        | 3,5           |
| Strong engagement in Nordplant   | 3,4 | 3,2        | 4,0           |
| Horizon scanning   | 3,4 | 3,3        | 3,6           |
| Work to encourage implementing Agri-tech and artificial intelligence in plant science                    | 3,3 | 3,1        | 3,7           |
| Undergraduate education  | 3,3 | 3,1        | 3,6           |
| Appoint regional leaders of the focus areas and compensate them with some salary                         | 3,0 | 2,9        | 3,3           |

Among the activities, "PlantLink's newsletter" was ranked the highest (average 4,2), especially among academic researchers. Over 90% of the university researchers ranked the newsletter as important or very important. The other top activities were "the Annual PlantLink Day", "Support to regional research infrastructure for plant research", "Meeting venue for academia and industry" and the "PlantLink Homepage". The company representatives answered a bit different, in this group the newsletter is deemed less important, and "Meeting venue for academia and industry" was scored the highest. The lowest scored activity was "to appoint regional leaders of the focus areas and compensate them with some salary", followed by "undergraduate education" and only 26% and 34% respectively of the respondents thought this was important or very important . In general, activities in which PlantLink has been engaged for a longer time were given higher scores than the ones we have not yet endeavored.