

Code administrators performance survey

Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC)

National Grid Electricity Transmission plc

Introduction

As part of its 2016 Code Governance Review Final Proposals (Phase 3) (CGR3), it was decided that Ofgem should commission a standardised cross-code study to monitor and assess the performance of code administrators in their role in respect of each code that they administer.

The study evaluates the service provided by code administrators in accordance with the principles of the Code Administration Code of Practice (CACoP) which aims to align processes across the industry codes and identify areas of best practice.

This report looks specifically at the results for the Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC) administered by the National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid) and all verbatim comments were provided in respect of the CUSC and/or National Grid, however, they may be more widely applicable.

Method

A mixed mode programme of research was conducted with organisations interacting with industry codes consisting of:

- 15 depth interviews to inform questionnaire design
- A core survey with 204 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators (38 participants answering about the CUSC)
- 22 follow-up depth interviews to get a more detailed understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

At a total for the CUSC (due to small base sizes, results are not broken down by subgroup)

*If CUSC results are significantly higher than the average, the total is shown in **green***

*If CUSC results are significantly lower than the average, the total is shown in **red***

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this could be due to rounding or the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'Not applicable' responses

Quotes from respondents included in the report and are not intended to be representative of the range of views, but rather offer a range of opinions, feedback and suggested improvements

*Where base sizes are small, this is shown by an * for bases less than 30 and ** for bases less than 15. This indicates that the data should be treated with caution*

Industry context

It is important that the structure and perceptions of the energy industry in which organisations operate are taken into account when interpreting survey results.

Organisations recognise that the energy market is going through a transitional phase and that the changes occurring may affect how they interact with codes. Highlighted changes include:

- Requirement for codes to be in line with European legislation
- Prevalence of new entrants into the market
- Attempts to streamline processes, such as the Code Administrators Code of Practice

Some feel that the market is getting more complex and there are occasions when Ofgem can add to the complications of processes associated with codes.

Codes are perceived as complex and typically very different, with some being more technical than others. Organisations highlight that increased cross-code coordination overall and simplifying operational aspects of codes would greatly assist them. For example, when changes to one code affect another, communications and associated processes should be in place for all the codes that are impacted. There is also a call for a cross-code accession process (to avoid having to provide the same information to each code administrator).

Some organisations believe that industry-wide interventions could be initiated centrally to help streamline processes.

These external factors can influence how organisations perceive the service provided by code administrators. Nonetheless, they are generally considered to be performing well.


Executive summary

Overall, perceptions towards National Grid are mixed:


- Just under half (47%) are satisfied with the service provided to their organisation overall, though levels of dissatisfaction are low (i.e. many organisations gave a neutral response regarding the service they receive).
- Just over half are satisfied with the provision of support (54%) and the support provided when requested (56%).
- There are a number of areas identified where National Grid could provide additional support or improve upon:
 - Helping to interpret information for the organisation
 - Clarity of emails
 - Ease of finding information on the website
 - Meeting and teleconference facilities

Organisation profiling

ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (204)	27%	17%	15%	38%
CUSC (38)	29%	21%	13%	32%

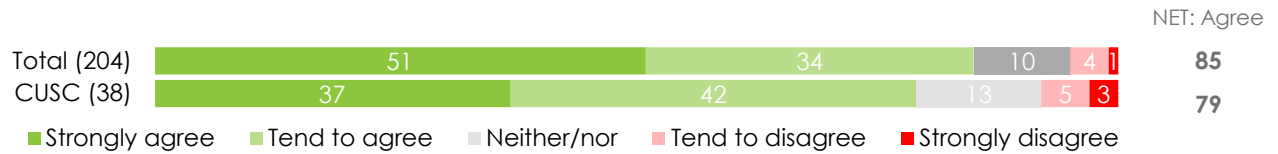
ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (204)	13%	10%	76%
CUSC (38)	8%	8%	84%

Across all codes, there are some broad differences between organisations of different sizes and their length of operation in the energy market. Individuals employed by small organisations (0-49 employees), or new entrants to the market (within the last 5 years) tend to express slightly lower

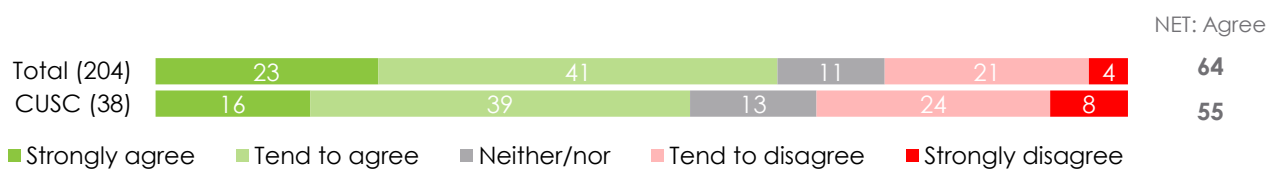
levels of contentment throughout the survey across all codes. It is likely this is due to lack of resource and expertise, which are more frequently highlighted as issues by these groups. However, even those working for larger organisations say they sometimes face challenges when interacting with codes.

SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



Q1. To what extent would you agree or disagree that your organisation has sufficient expertise to enable you to deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

ORGANISATION'S RESOURCE



Q2. And to what extent would you agree or disagree that you have enough resource within your organisation to sufficiently deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Some smaller organisations indicate that they would benefit from further support.

"Support for smaller companies/organisations to understand code and implications, perhaps including training courses."

Key findings

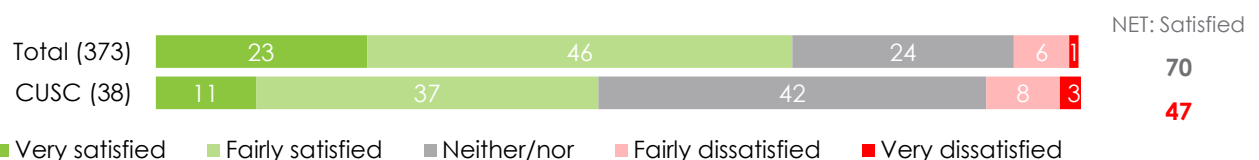
KPIS

The survey collected three measures of:

1. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation
2. Satisfaction with the provision of support
3. Satisfaction with support received when requested

OVERALL SATISFACTION

A large minority (47%) of organisations say they are satisfied with National Grid's service regarding CUSC.

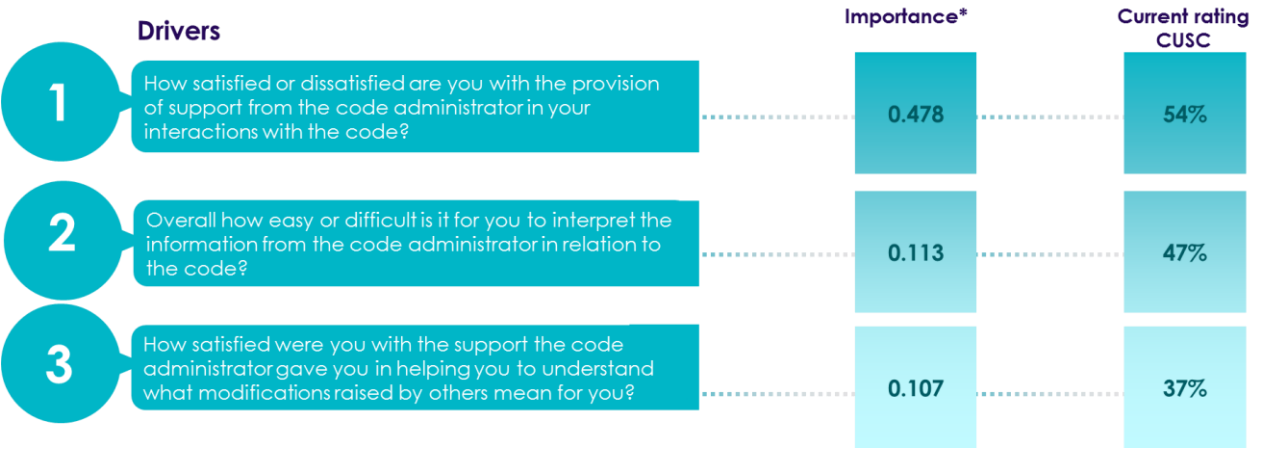


Q10. Thinking about all aspects of your dealings with the code administrator in relation to <this/these> codes, overall how satisfied are you with the service provided to your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"Keep it more up to date with the current development of industry (eg. renewable energy)."

"Impartial advice, National Grid can be too focused on their company objectives rather than the code. Much better telecon facilities are required."

To understand the aspects of service delivery that most impact overall satisfaction, key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted.¹ The aspects of service that have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction are:



* The importance value will always have a value between -1 and +1, where, a large positive correlation means two ratings 'move together' and a negative correlation means the ratings move in the opposite direction. A correlation of 1 means an exact linear relationship (i.e. everyone gives the same rating for overall satisfaction as for provision of support.)

Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the CUSC. National Grid receive a relatively low overall satisfaction score for the CUSC and could make improvements to aspects of service such as information provision and all direct services.

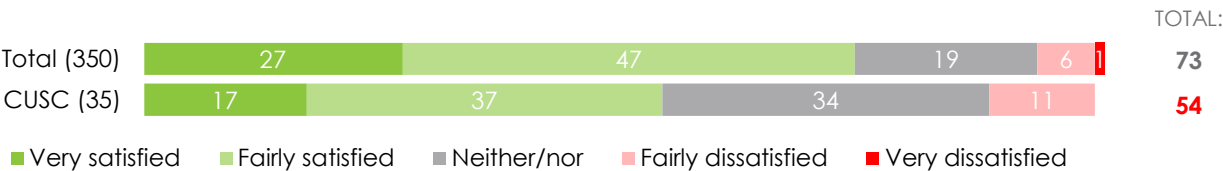
Some customers are confused between National Grid's commercial arm and the code administrators.

"The lack of distinction between the commercial body of National Grid versus the code administrator is confusing, even for bigger organisations like mine."

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

Generally, organisations acknowledge the need for comprehensive detail from administrators. However additional support in interpreting this information is appreciated, particularly for small organisations or those new to the market. National Grid customers mention that documentation can be hard to find and understand, and that they could be more proactive in providing support.

One in ten organisations are dissatisfied with the provision of support from National Grid and a further third are neutral. However most customers are satisfied.



Q11a/Q11c. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"They don't explain how things affect you."

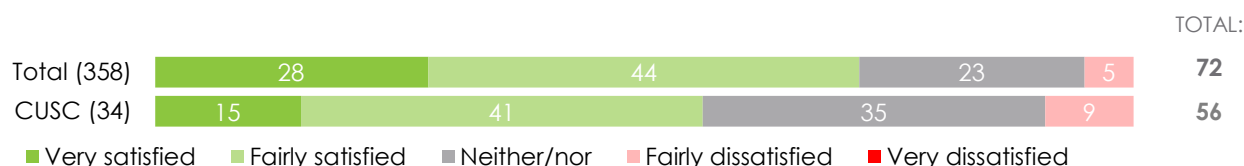
¹ KDA tests the strength of the correlation between ratings of core metrics against perceived level of satisfaction by which we can derive which factors have the greatest impact on overall attitudes – this is a subconscious measurement rather than a stated level of importance.

"They're not very transparent as they don't allow open governance (extend open governance for markedly better results)."

"National Grid need to listen more than dictate their own understanding and terms."

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Most organisations (56%) are satisfied with the support they receive from National Grid when it's requested. However more than a third (35%) are neutral towards the support. National Grid customers mention that they can have difficulties identifying who it is they need to speak to for support and there is no clear helpdesk service that they can refer to when they have queries.



Q13/Q13b. And when you request support from the code administrator in relation to the <code> how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you receive? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Improvements in communications are likely to improve satisfaction with support.

"More simple information of what these things are and what they mean rather than assuming people know a lot more than they do."

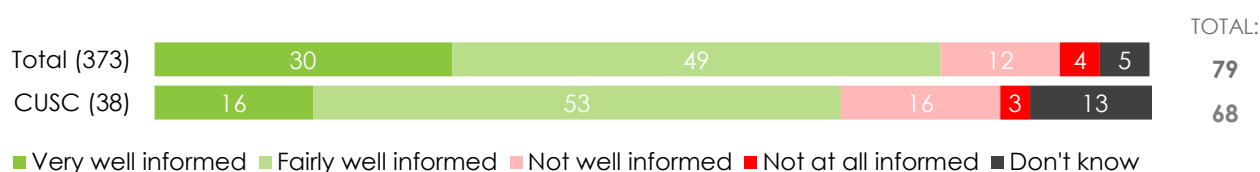
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the CUSC from National Grid 1-2 times a week and for the majority (87%), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

At an overall level, there is correlation between the experience and size of an organisation and perceptions of being informed about the codes. This demonstrates that resource and familiarity tend to produce a more comfortable position in which to deal with code processes.

National Grid, on balance, performs well on this aspect, just over two-thirds say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the CUSC. There is a perceived service gap among some customers, one in five say they are 'not well' or 'not at all well' informed.

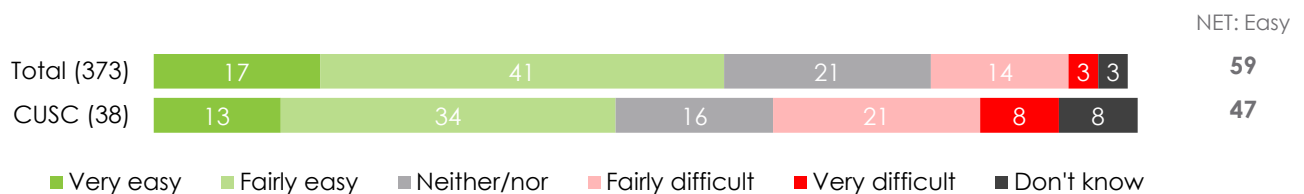


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

At an overall level, those with more experience of industry codes find it easier to interpret related information. While organisations face some challenges with interpretation across all codes, they acknowledge that it may be difficult to simplify information due to the complexities of the code itself.

Less than half of organisations say that it's easy to interpret information from National Grid about the CUSC.



Q15/Q15b. Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to Base: All responses for those involved with code (in brackets) (%)

Organisations highlight a range of suggestions to improve interpretation of information.

"More explicit in their correspondings (more layman's terms and understandable)."

"To almost have a laymans executive summary on documents, to make sure you don't need to know every line of the CUSC to understand."

"Make documentation easier to understand, like the language used in it."

"Open significantly more time & more tutorial on specific issues to prevent organisations with more expertise to control the process."

Perceptions of direct services

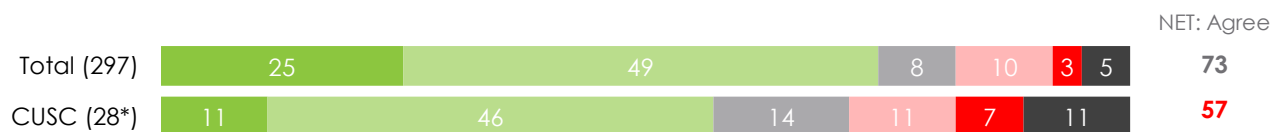
EMAIL

Generally, organisations prefer to receive information via email so they do not have to manually search through websites to keep track of developments. It helps them to stay on top of changes to the code and provides a ready-made audit trail they can reference.

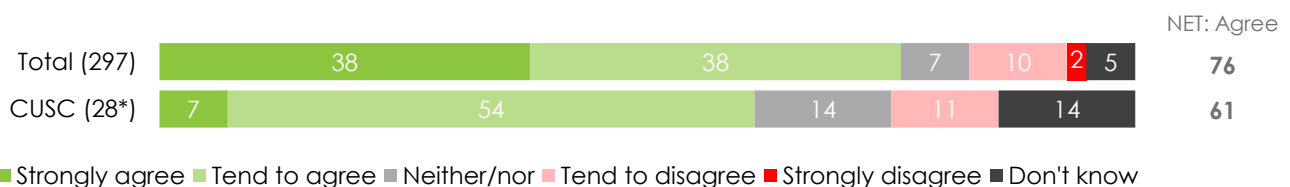
Some emails are considered too content heavy and the volume of information can be hard to digest for those with limited resource. Organisations mention difficulties in identifying which emails require immediate action or contain information that is relevant to them. This can lead to important information being missed. There is appetite for a more tailored service, such as mailing lists that are specific to company type (such as generators or suppliers) or company size across all codes.

Around three in five agree that emails from National Grid in relation to the CUSC are easy to understand (57%) and are clear when action needs to be taken (61%).

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'



'The emails I receive make it clear when action needs to be taken'



Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those receiving information from code administrator (in brackets) (%)

"For the emails to explain more than just the number of the code/link etc - should have a brief summary explaining what they actually do."

"Language needs to be clearer as some emails are still very hard to read."

"Accurate e-mails and up to date website - many times in the last year the CUSC website has not been updated in a timely manner."

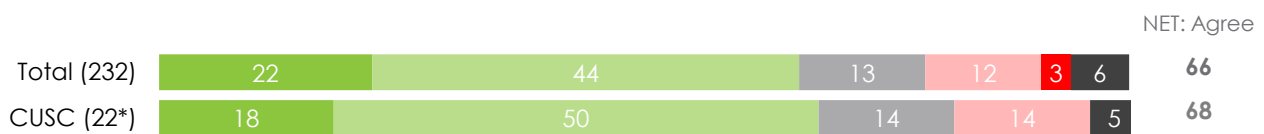
WEBSITES

At an overall level, those accessing specific code websites more regularly find them easier to navigate, while those less familiar feel it can be difficult to find the information they are looking for. Code administrator websites are thought to vary in quality and some are not updated as frequently as others.

About two-thirds (68%) agree that National Grid's website keeps them sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the code. However, there are some aspects of the website customers are dissatisfied with. Over a third do not think it is easy to find information on the website.

National Grid's website is consistently highlighted as being in need of improvements. Organisations say it is difficult to navigate unless you are familiar with the code and it is slow to be updated. There are also some issues around who to contact with code-related queries, which is not clear on the website.

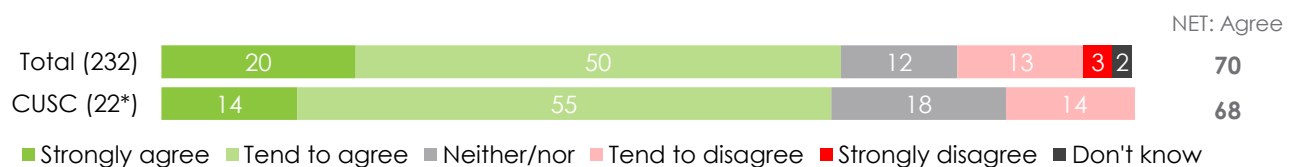
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'



'I am able to easily find information on the website'



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



Q20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those using code administrator website (in brackets) (%)

"The website is really bad: especially for modifications as it's hidden really deep in the website and the site itself is really slow."

"The website is difficult to navigate."

"A stand alone site for CUSC only."

MEETINGS

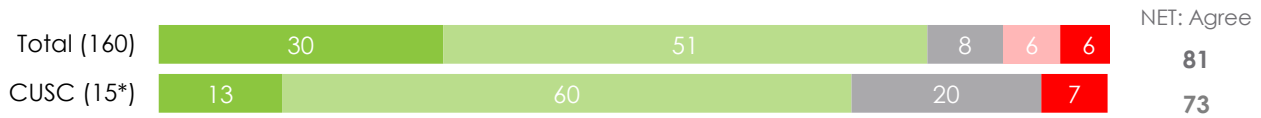
Overall, meetings and workshops are perceived as well run and useful. Introductory sessions are valuable for new entrants, chairs are generally impartial and effective, and organisations find it easy to contribute. Organisations indicate that code administrators try to encourage attendance from stakeholders.

However, organisations say it can be difficult to attend all meetings due to resource and financial constraints. Meetings are perceived as mainly London centric, which can be problematic for those not based in the capital.

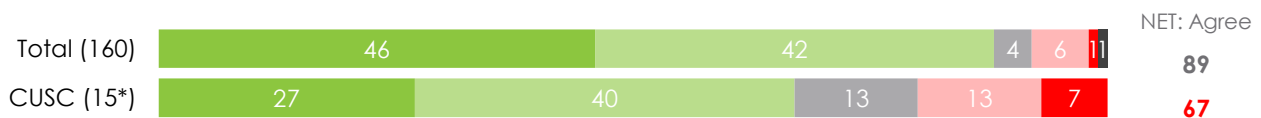
Teleconference facilities can be problematic due to audio problems (hearing and being heard), and confusion about who is talking.

The proportion of those who have attended a meeting or workshop about the CUSC in the last 12 months is in line with the average at 39%. At an overall level, 43% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Organisations are generally dissatisfied with teleconference facilities at CUSC meetings.

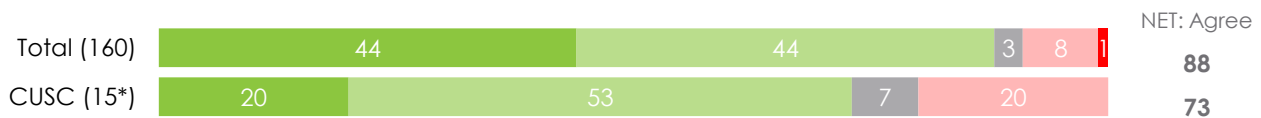
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



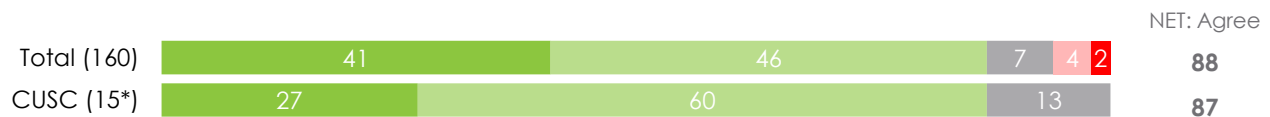
'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



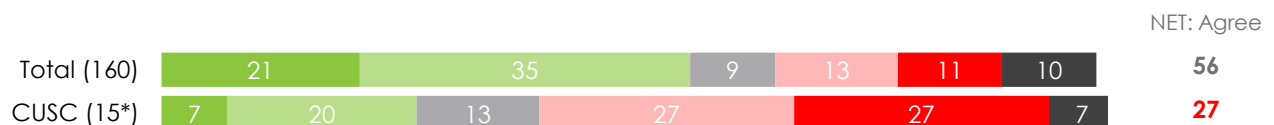
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



'The materials that I receive prior to the meeting(s) provide me with enough information about the objectives'



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those attending meetings (in brackets) (%)

"To be able to get the teleconference facilities working better, they are getting better but due to the amount of meetings, they do need to be improved."

"Meeting facilities outside National Grid House are occasionally poor and there are frequent problems with teleconference facilities."

"Better teleconference facilities would be useful."

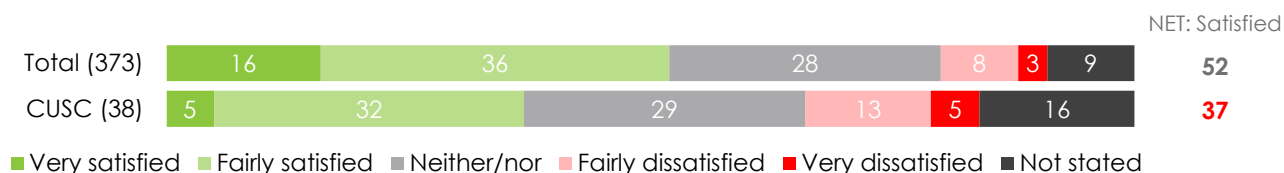
RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Thirteen per cent have raised modifications in respect of the CUSC within the last 12 months which is in line with the average (13%) for all codes.

Of those raising a modification, 80% say the process of raising a modification was easy and all (100%) are satisfied with the support National Grid gave in the development of their proposal.

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

A minority (37%) of organisations are satisfied with the support given by National Grid to help them understand CUSC modifications.



Q28. How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (in brackets) (%)

“Communication on the modifications to be clear about who it will impact and how it may impact them to enable me to prioritise any involvement with the modifications.”

ACCESSION PROCESS

Five people are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to, the CUSC in the last five years. Of these, two found the process easy, one found the process difficult and the rest said neither easy nor difficult or had no direct involvement with the process.

Conclusions

- There is scope to improve the support provided in relation to the CUSC. More could be done in helping interpreting information for organisations and making emails easy to understand. Improving these aspects of service may increase overall satisfaction with the service National Grid is providing in relation to the CUSC.
- There are aspects of meeting facilities and the website that are identified as in need of attention.
- Likewise, organisations would appreciate it if National Grid could distinguish more clearly between the commercial and the code administration aspect of the business; making clearer who they need to approach depending on their query.