Code administrators performance survey

Distribution Connection Use of System Agreement (DCUSA)

ElectraLink Ltd

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 Distribution Connection Use of System Agreement (DCUSA) administered by ElectraLink Ltd (Electralink) and all verbatim comments were provided in respect of the DCUSA and/or ElectraLink , 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 (29 participants answering about the DCUSA)
- 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 DCUSA (due to small base sizes, results are not broken down by subgroup)

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

If DCUSA 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 ElectraLink performs well:

- Across all key performance indicators, ElectraLink is, on balance, rated positively
- Just over four in five say they are satisfied with the service provided to their organisation (with a quarter saying they are 'very satisfied')
- The majority are satisfied with the provision of support (79%) and the support received when requested (76%)
- However, there are a few areas where ElectraLink could further improvements to their service:
    - *Helping organisations with interpreting information*
    - *Improving the website user experience and clarity of information*

Organisation profiling

ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	**50-249**	**250-999**	**1,000+**
Total (204)	27%	17%	15%	38%
DCUSA (29*)	41%	10%	14%	31%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

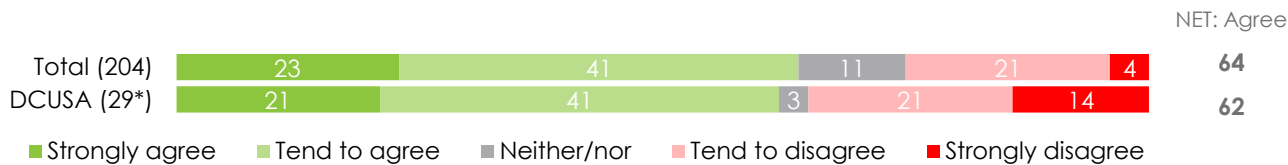|	**0-5 years**	**6-9 years**	**10+ years**
Total (204)	13%	10%	76%
DCUSA (29*)	10%	3%	86%

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

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Total (204)	51	34	10	4	1	**85**
DCUSA (29*)	52	28	17	3		**79**

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree
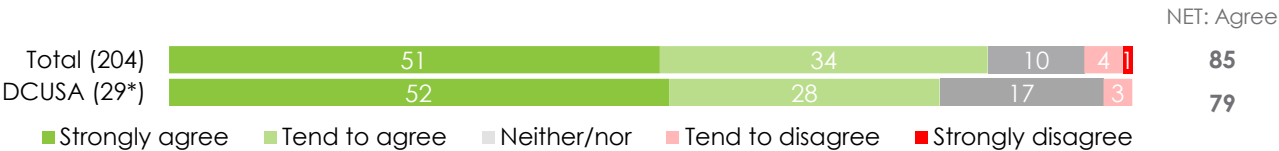
Q1. To what extent would you agree or disagree that your organisation has sufficient expertise to enable you to deal with the codes you are responsible for or interact with? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

ORGANISATION'S RESOURCE

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Total (204)	23	41	11	21	4	**64**
DCUSA (29*)	21	41	3	21	14	**62**

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree

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 %)

"It would be nice to have a hand holding exercise for those that do not have the resource and the knowledge as others to sort of level the playing field. Most code modifications are brought up by big utilities, supported and approved by them. The smaller, independent generators are just passengers and cannot be fully active participants."

"Very inaccessible to new market entrants and that although complex, a lot more effort could be put in to accessibility (guides, training and workshops)."

Key findings

KPIS

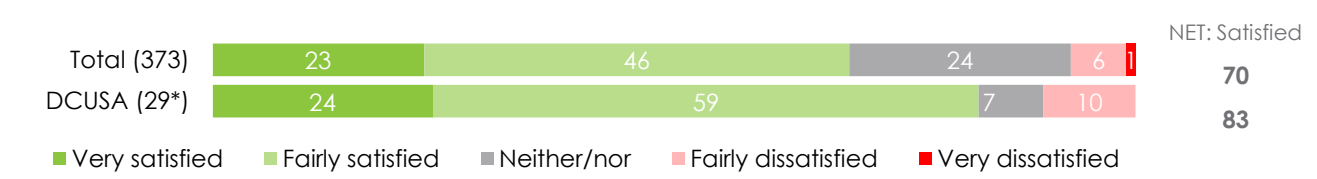The survey collected three measures of satisfaction:

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

At least three-quarters of organisations are satisfied with Electralink across any of the measures and only one in ten report being dissatisfied with the overall service provided.
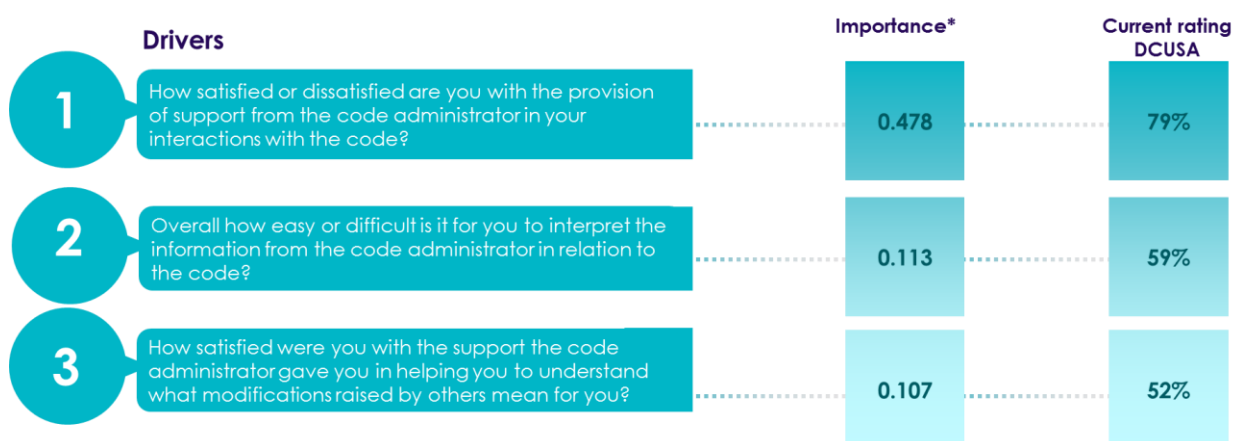
OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their code administrator. ElectraLink receives a slightly higher rating than the average with just over eight in ten saying they are satisfied.

NET: Satisfied

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither/nor	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	NET
Total (373)	23	46	24	6	1	70
DCUSA (29*)	24	59	7	10		83

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 %)

"ElectraLink tend to have quite a light touch approach, but they're all doing quite a good job."

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:

Drivers	Importance*	Current rating DCUSA
1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of support from the code administrator in your interactions with the code?	0.478	79%
2. Overall how easy or difficult is it for you to interpret the information from the code administrator in relation to the code?	0.113	59%
3. How satisfied were you with the support the code administrator gave you in helping you to understand what modifications raised by others mean for you?	0.107	52%

* 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.)
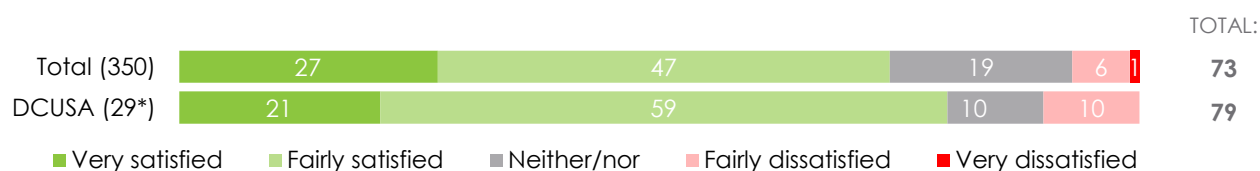
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the DCUSA.

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.

Some organisations mention that the DCUSA differs in that it is a commercial agreement between various parties and Electralink is less heavily involved in supporting customers, although for most this is satisfactory. Almost eight in ten ElectraLink customers say they are satisfied with the provision of support.

[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.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither/nor	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	
Total (350)	27	47	19	6	1	**73**
DCUSA (29*)	21	59	10	10		**79**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

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 %)

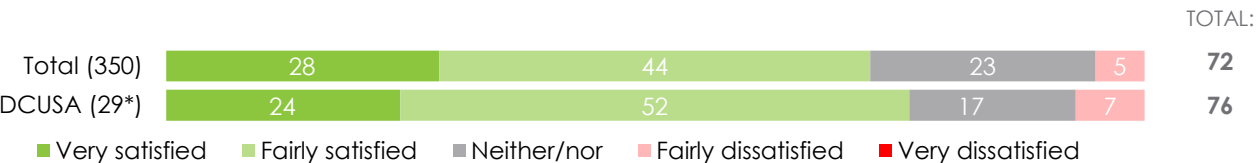Organisations highlight some specific support that could be offered by Electralink .

"More interaction with people in case they need help."

"To act more of a critical friend and be able to provide impartial support with regards to what impacts changes have on my organisation. Making sure teams are aware of code changes across the industry. Make sure the CACoP is implemented."

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

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Over three-quarters of organisations are satisfied with the response from Electralink . When they request information. A few highlight that they had difficulties getting to grips with the Hunter system [2]and would have liked additional support

TOTAL:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither/nor	Fairly dissatisfied	
Total (350)	28	44	23	5	**72**
DCUSA (29*)	24	52	17	7	**76**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

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 %)

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

"Increased understanding of the DCUSA and wider industry by staff members."

"There were webinars on the Hunter System but there was not enough information and the helpdesk was unable to provide any firm help."

Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the DCUSA from ElectraLink 1-2 times a week and for the majority (78%), 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.

---

2 A system that harnesses energy data to help identify and prevent energy fraud

ElectraLink performs well in this area: almost eight in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the DCUSA.

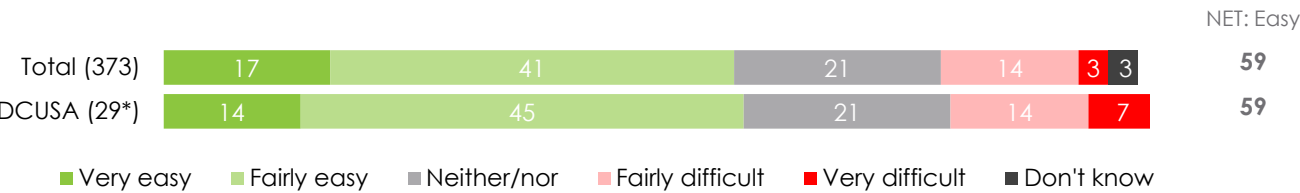TOTAL:

	Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Not well informed	Not at all informed	Don't know	
Total (373)	30	49	12	4	5	**79**
DCUSA (29*)	24	55	14	7		**79**

■ Very well informed ■ Fairly well informed ■ Not well informed ■ Not at all informed ■ Don't know

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

Around six in ten say information from Electralnk . Is easy to interpret. At an overall level, those with more experience of industry codes find it easier to interpret related information.

NET: Easy

	Very easy	Fairly easy	Neither/nor	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Don't know	
Total (373)	17	41	21	14	3	3	**59**
DCUSA (29*)	14	45	21	14	7		**59**

■ Very easy ■ Fairly easy ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly difficult ■ Very difficult ■ Don't know

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 (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Organisations feel there is a need for specific support around interpretation of information.

"It's that clarity about what the codes actually mean to each organisation. Sometimes it's not clear whether or not it has an impact on each individual group. The detail is not there specifically around that."

"Better understanding of who it's going to affect and to help people to understand what the impacts are going to be."

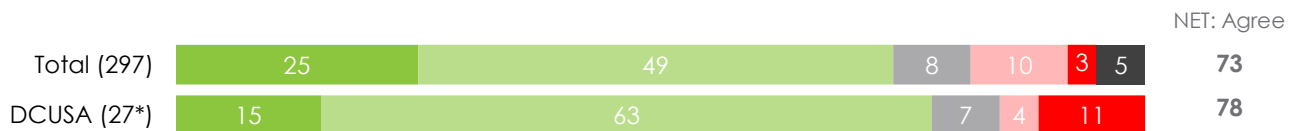## *Perceptions of direct services*

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.

There is a relatively high level of agreement that ElectraLink's emails are easy to understand (78%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (78%). ElectraLink could further improve these scores by simplifying and tailoring information for different types of organisations.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	NET: Agree
Total (297)	25	49	8	10	3	5	**73**
DCUSA (27*)	15	63	7	4	11		**78**

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

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	NET: Agree
Total (297)	38	38	7	10	2	5	**76**
DCUSA (27*)	37	41	4	19			**78**

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

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 (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)
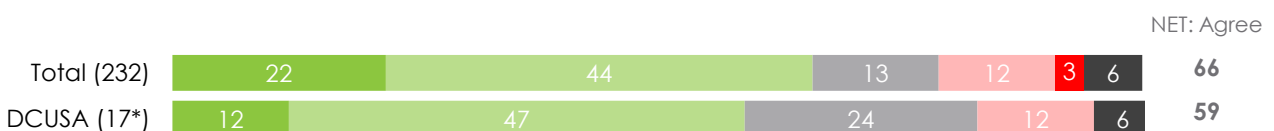
"The size of the emails are sometimes too big, and they tend to get repeated and causes quite a few problems."
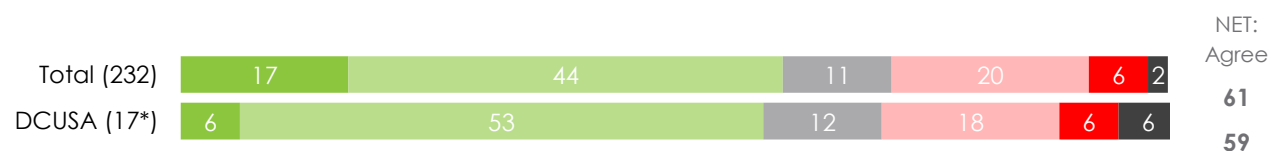
WEBSITES

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.

There is some dissatisfaction expressed with ElectraLink's website: almost a quarter disagree that they are able to easily find information and almost one in five disagree that the information on the website is easy to understand Improving website accessibility could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it to find the information they are looking for more easily.
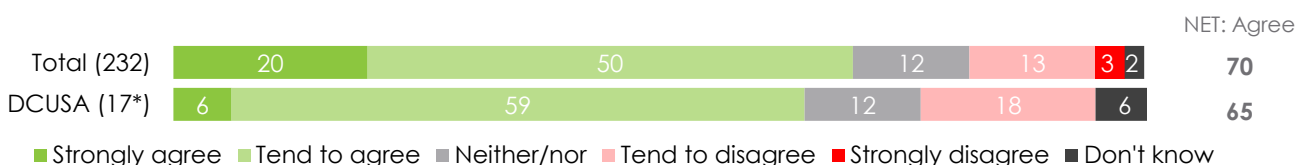
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the <code>'

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	NET: Agree
Total (232)	22	44	13	12	3	6	**66**
DCUSA (17*)	12	47	24	12		6	**59**

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

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	NET: Agree
Total (232)	17	44	11	20	6	2	**61**
DCUSA (17*)	6	53	12	18	6	6	**59**

'The information on the website is easy to understand'

NET: Agree

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	NET: Agree
Total (232)	20	50	12	13	3	2	**70**
DCUSA (17*)	6	59	12	18		6	**65**

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

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 (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Organisations suggest a range of improvements to the Electralink website.

"Update the website and the login area."

"Make their website more user friendly."

"It would be good if they could keep the website frequently updated on modifications. To list changes but by release."

"Updating the website with metrics so that we can see how many consultations there are or have been, and how many changes have been implemented in the few last months."

MEETINGS

Across all codes, meetings and workshops are generally 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.

At an overall level, 43% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with, compared to 52% with regards to the DCUSA. Four in five ElectraLink customers agree that they receive information in sufficient time before meetings and that meeting facilities are fit for purpose.
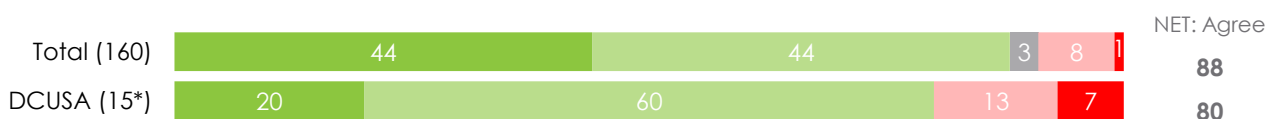
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'

						NET: Agree
Total (160)	30	51	8	6	6	**81**
DCUSA (15*)	40	40	7	7	7	**80**

'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'

						NET: Agree
Total (160)	46	43	4	6	1 1	**89**
DCUSA (15*)	33	47	20			**80**

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

					NET: Agree
Total (160)	44	44	3	8	1	**88**
DCUSA (15*)	20	60	13	7		**80**

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

					NET: Agree
Total (160)	41	47	7	4	2	**88**
DCUSA (15*)	40	60				**100**

'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'

NET: Agree

		NET
Total (160)	21 · 35 · 9 · 13 · 11 · 10	**56**
DCUSA (15*)	20 · 60 · 13 · 7	**80**

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither/nor ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know
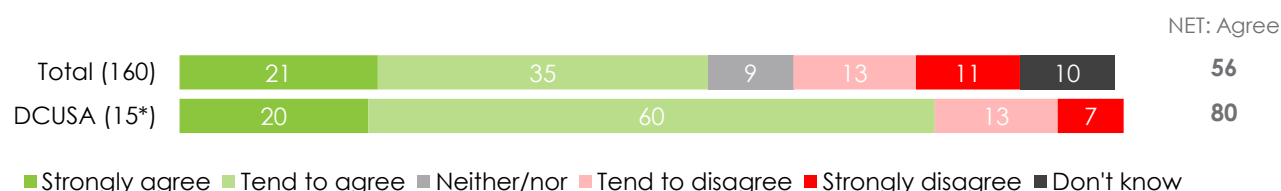
Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following in relation to the <code/codes>? Base: All responses for those attending meetings (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"I would suggest firmer actions and firmer controls within the working groups, and much firmer chairing in the working groups."
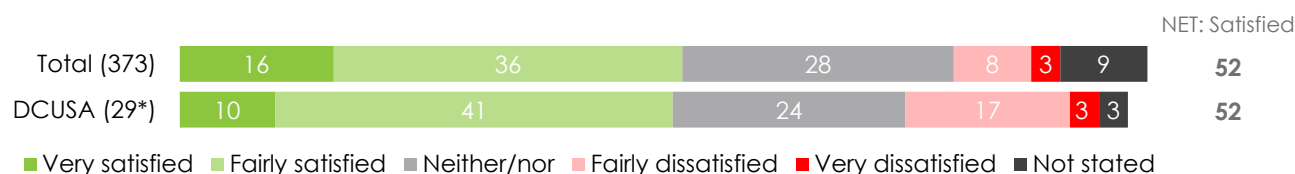
RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Three people (10%) have raised modifications in respect of the DCUSA within the last 12 months which is similar to the average (13%) for all codes.

Of those raising a modification, two said the process of raising a modification was easy and both were satisfied with the support ElectraLink gave in the development of their proposal.

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Half of organisations (52%) that interact with DCUSA are satisfied with the support ElectraLink gives them in understanding modifcations, though one in five are dissatisfied.

NET: Satisfied

		NET
Total (373)	16 · 36 · 28 · 8 · 3 · 9	**52**
DCUSA (29*)	10 · 41 · 24 · 17 · 3 · 3	**52**

■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied ■ Neither/nor ■ Fairly dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Not stated

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 (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

"It would be good to not just put the modification number but also the name, to remind people of which is which, otherwise it wastes time."

ACCESSION PROCESS

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

Conclusions

- ElectraLink is performing well on most aspects of service provision.

- There is scope to improve the ease of interpreting information for the organisation. Improving this aspect of service may increase overall satisfaction with the service ElectraLink is providing in relation to the DCUSA.

- There are aspects of the website that are identified as in need of attention; particularly the ease of finding information on websites and clarity of information.