

Code administrators performance survey

Master Registration Agreement (MRA)

Gemserv

Introduction

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

The first study was conducted in 2017 and intended to evaluate 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.

The study was not intended to take account of the relative funding of the Code Administrators (CA), or whether they offer value for money.

In 2018, the study has been repeated to monitor performance and identify any developments. Specifically, the survey has been developed to:

- **Identify:** Organisations' interaction with codes and CAs; including awareness of CA responsibilities, confidence in dealing with codes, and expectations of the service which Code Administrators should be providing
- **Measure:** Overall performance of CA on key metrics, including overall satisfaction, support, communications and modification process
- **Assess:** Specific aspects of service delivery, including email, websites, meetings and accession process.

Method

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

- A total of five depth interviews to inform questionnaire design (14-20 Feb 2018)
- A core survey with 216 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **42 participants answering about the MRA** (27 Mar – 11 May)
- 25 follow-up depth interviews to get an understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (18 May – 20 Jun)

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

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

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

Organisations still acknowledge that codes are inherently difficult to navigate with some more technical than others. While the environment is challenging:

- Organisations do expect the governance of codes to be stringent
 - They believe that this is essential as it protects business, and smaller organisations in particular
- There is recognition that complexities associated with an individual code impact the way each code administrator operates

Perception that Ofgem could play a much bigger role in providing guidance and protection for business; this is driven by a view that the market does not always lend itself to a level playing field:

- Concerns around some businesses submitting tactical modifications for their own commercial gain
- View that smaller organisation more likely to be impacted as they have limited resource for personnel to attend meetings and to raise such modifications

Executive summary

Overall, Gemserv is rated positively across most key indicators.


- Around three quarters are satisfied with their dealings with the CA and nearly all (97%) are satisfied with the provision of support
 - Satisfaction with provision of support scores are significantly up from 2017
- Support around the understanding of modifications raised by other organisations is an area that customers are less satisfied with
- There are further areas in which Gemserv could further improve their service:
 - *Teleconference facilities being fit for purpose*
 - *Improving the website user experience*

Organisation profiling


The level of expertise organisations have to deal with codes remains consistent with 2017. It is encouraging that there is a positive directional improvement around availability of resource.

The means to deal with the codes and their requirements is linked to the size and experience of the company. However, compared to 2017, smaller businesses are reporting greater confidence in their ability to deal with codes.

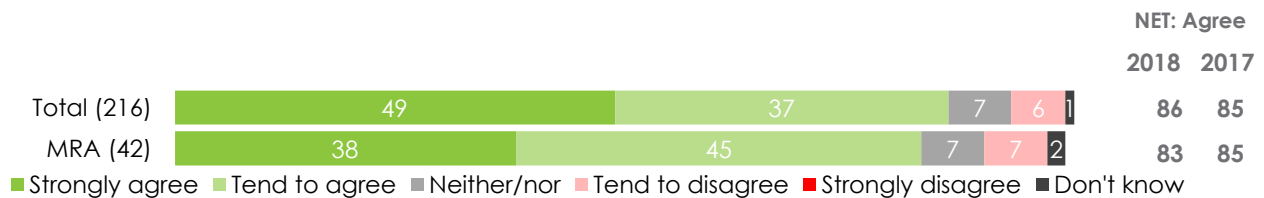
ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (216)	18%	16%	14%	47%
MRA (42)	12%	17%	14%	52%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

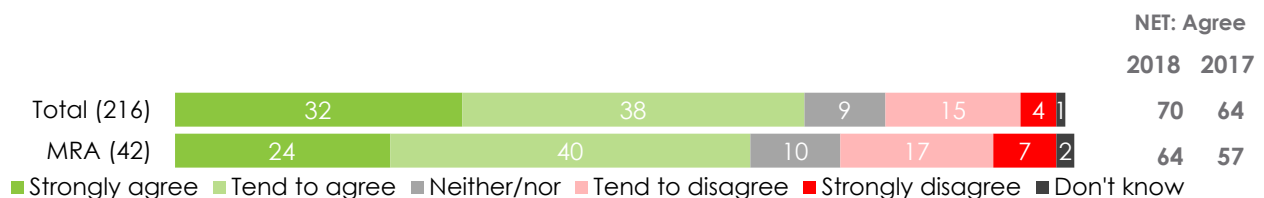
	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Total (216)	16%	6%	76%
MRA (42)	24%	5%	71%

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 %)

Smaller organisations indicate that they often deal with multiple codes, which can make it challenging to know the intricate detail of the MRA, or other codes they may deal with.

Key findings

KPIS

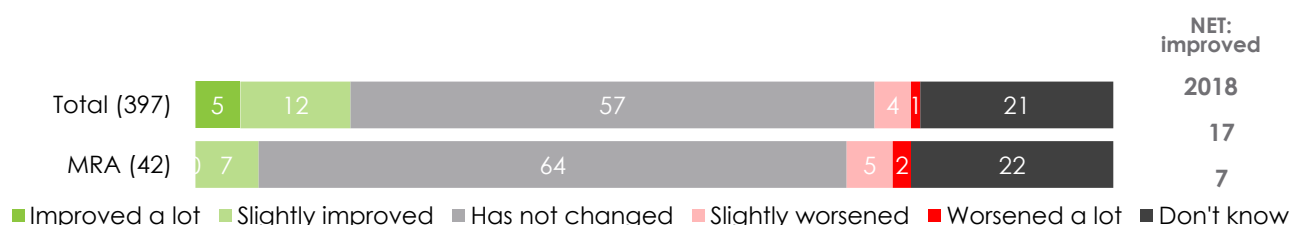
The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

1. Perceived improvements from service received in the last year (new for 2018).
2. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation.
3. Satisfaction with the provision of support.
4. Satisfaction with support received when requested.

Organisations are generally positive about the MRA. However, there is some reticence among some customers, with one in five giving a neutral score when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the service provided.

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

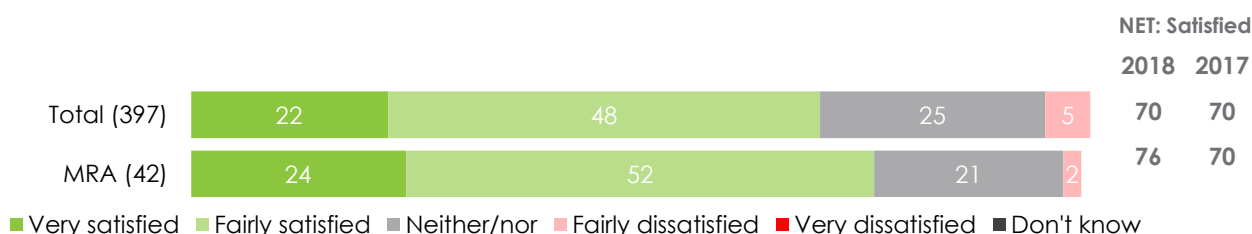
A high proportion of organisations feel the service received in relation to their code has not changed (57%). For MRA, 64% indicate that the service levels have not changed from last year. Seven percent feel that there have been some improvements in the service provided in the last year.



Q29b. Thinking about the service that you have received in relation to the <code> in the last year, would you say it has improved, remained the same or got worse? (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their Code Administrator. Three quarters of organisations are satisfied with Gemserv's service in regards to the MRA. While only two percent are dissatisfied, one in five are indifferent about the service that they receive.



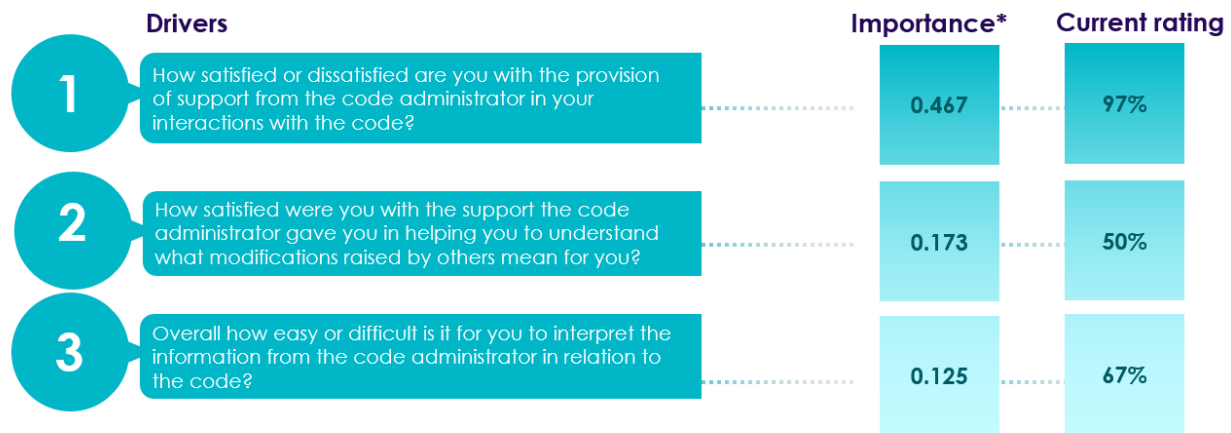
Q10. Thinking about all aspects of your dealings with the code administrator in relation to <this/these> codes, overall how satisfied are you with the service provided to your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

Smaller organisations highlight a need for greater support:

"Better engagement with small suppliers."

"More support for small suppliers."

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.)

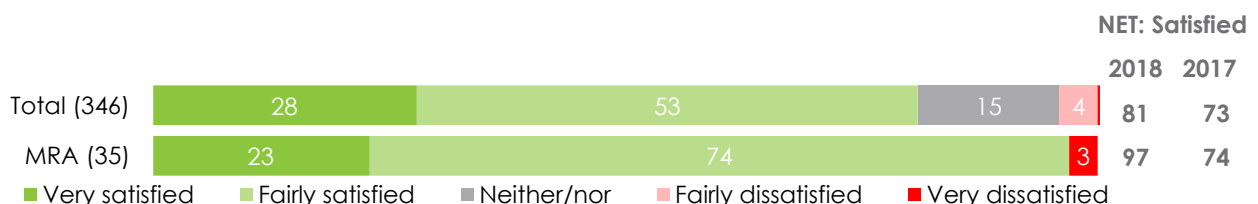
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores are based on the combined total for all codes and the current rating is specific to the MRA.

At an overall level, the three key drivers of satisfaction continue to be around support and information. There are opportunities to improve service around two of the three key drivers. With service improvements to these core areas, it is likely that there will be a positive lift in reported overall satisfaction.

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

More generally, Code Administrators are perceived as having improved the provision of support to small businesses from the previous year. There is a significant increase in reported satisfaction from 2017; smaller organisations tended to be less satisfied than larger organisations. It is however worth noting that although the gain for the smaller organisations is highly significant, larger organisations still report greater satisfaction.

Nearly all Gernserv customers are satisfied with the level of support they receive in relation to the MRA. This is a significant increase from last year where 74% were satisfied (vs. 97% in 2018).



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 %)

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.

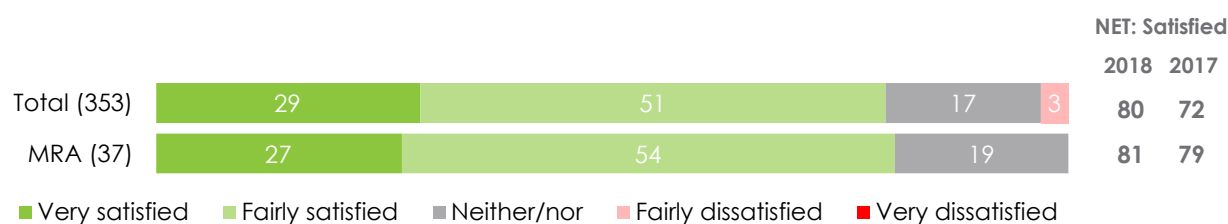
Some of the changes that Gemserv has put in place are being acknowledged by businesses:

"I think Gemserv has recently started putting all changes into a single downloadable spreadsheet. That sort of shared common of practice is incredibly helpful."

"They are more professionally run and show more willingness to roll up their sleeves and get involved with change, they have a functional insight."

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Satisfaction with the support received when requested from Gemserv is high. However, some give a neutral response.



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 %)

A comment made by one organisation indicates that there may be some issues with aspects of customer communications:

"What I find difficult is to speak to the MRA. It is difficult to actually get in touch with them, they delay their response to emails because sometimes they don't have the answers to all our questions so there is no ease with communication there. I am just talking about good practice, you send an email, you are expecting a response of some form within 28 / 48 h and the resolution within x amount of days/hours."

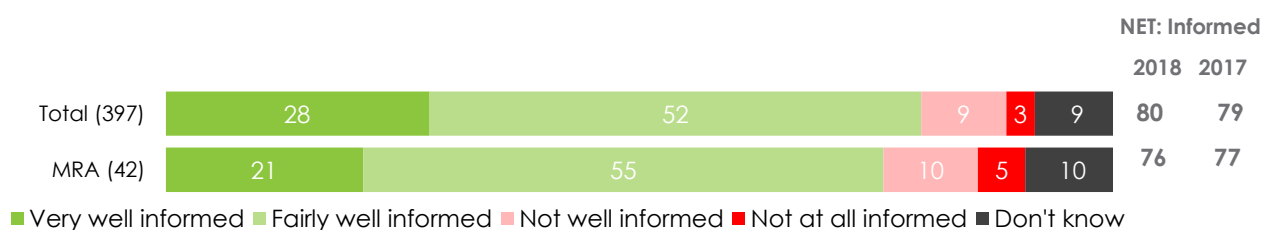
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the MRA from Gemserv once or twice a fortnight and for the majority (72%), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

Although customers agree that they are kept informed, there are some concerns around CA resourcing and the view that some CA teams are stretched. As we observed last year, there is still a view that those who are less familiar with the codes struggle to interpret the information received. So while the obligation to provide information is being met, there is a need to continue to simplify and to target communications.

Gemserv performs relatively well in this area: 76% say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the MRA. Fifteen percent of organisations do not feel well informed.

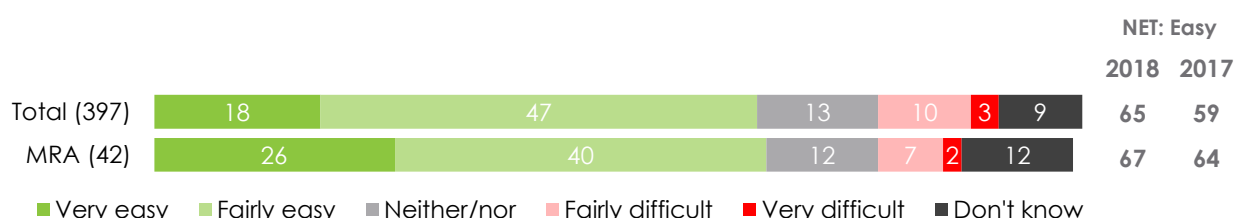


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

More generally, those with more personal experience of codes and in organisations with 250+ employees are more likely to find interpreting information easier. However, encouragingly, there has been a positive uplift in reported ease among those within smaller organisations and those in the energy market for 5 years of less.

Two thirds of organisations find it easy to interpret information from Gemserv regarding the MRA.



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 %)

For some, there is a perception that the MRA is complex and therefore inherently difficult to interpret.

"The legacy of how the MRA code is structured is a bit challenging, you can't just pick it and read. Which in a way is true of all codes to some extent. But I have the confidence that I understand it."

Perceptions of direct services

EMAIL

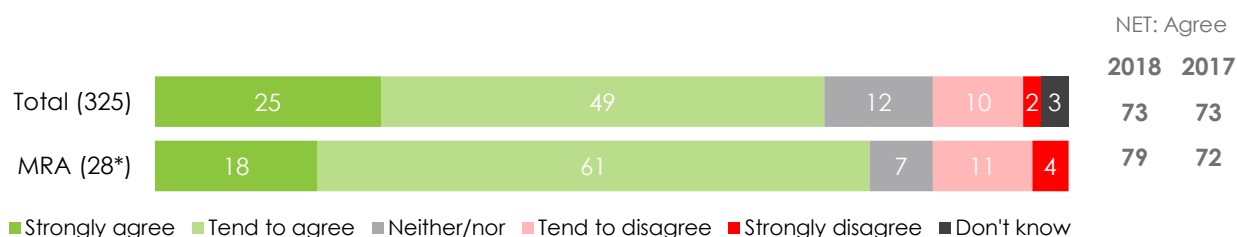
Overall, information is easily accessible via email – it is the most used both by CAs to provide information and by organisations to seek information. Communication by email means there are regular updates of information and organisations can stay on top of changes to the code. Organisations also prefer using email as it ensures there is an audit trail.

Email can however be overwhelming as CA communications are only one of many; this is especially so when several emails related to a code are sent in a single day. Furthermore, when emails do not include the key take outs, core messages can get lost.

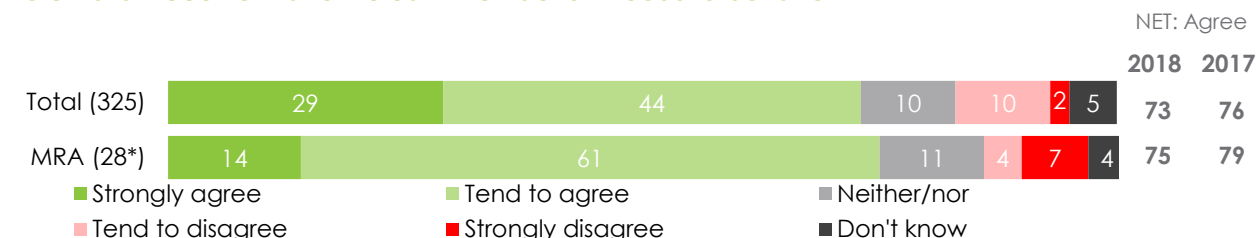
The volume of emails can make it difficult for organisations to identify which messages contain vital information, which ones need immediate action or prioritisation against those providing more general updates.

There is a high level of agreement that Gemserv's emails in relation to the MRA are easy to understand (79%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (75%). This said, there is a cohort of organisations who find emails they receive difficult to understand (15%) and others feel emails are not clear about the actions needed (11%).

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

The Huddle is highlighted as inaccessible by some:

"Cease the use of HUDDLE as it is an inefficient form of communication. Enable Supplier Agents to raise Issues and/or Modifications."

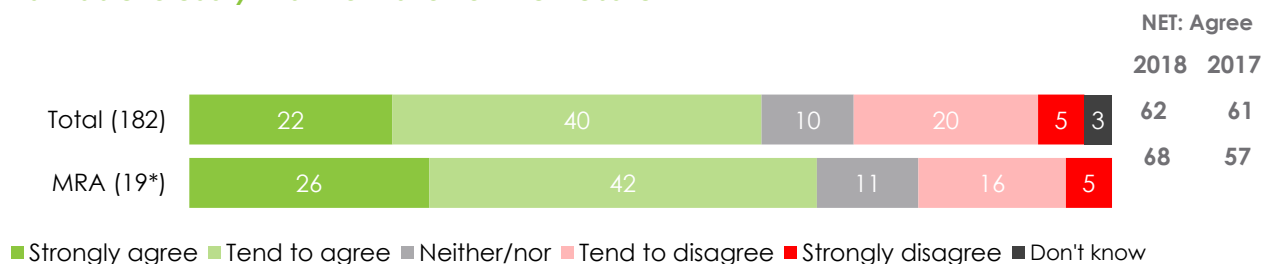
WEBSITES

Generally, customers value having information on websites, they use them to keep up to date with various code changes. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate codes.

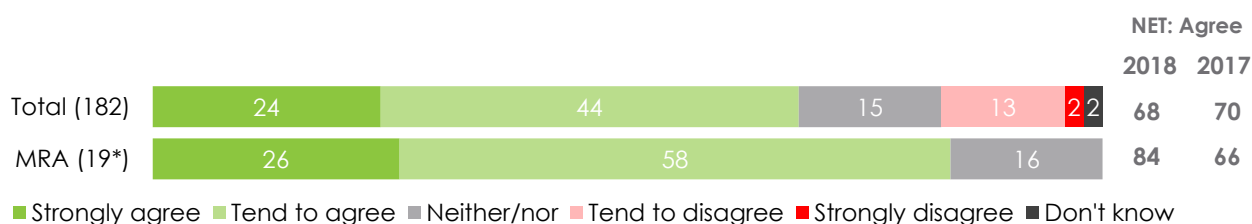
There are some highlighted concerns around the ability for customers to easily navigate websites, and limited signposting. Overall, there is a decline in the proactive use of websites (52% in 2017 vs 28% in 2018). While customers perceive websites as not fit for purpose use may decline further.

Around seven in ten agree that Gemserv's website keeps them significantly informed of any changes or modifications to the code. However, there is also some dissatisfaction expressed, one in five (21%) disagree that they are able to easily find information.

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



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



*Low base
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 %)

Improving website accessibility could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it more easily:

"The tracker that is online on the website it is very hard to follow and they need to make sure it is clearer."

"More information on the website about meetings that are taking place."

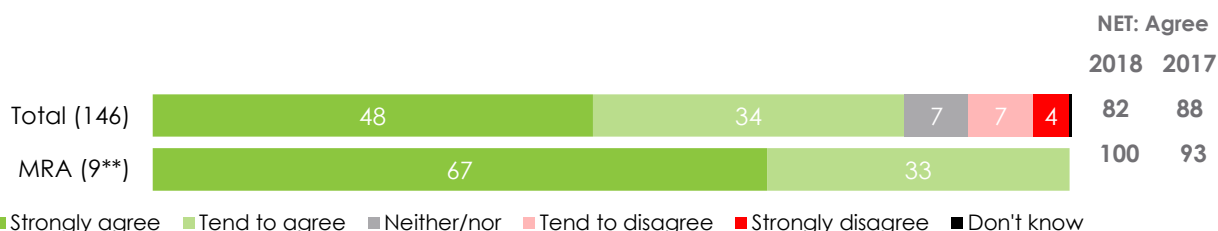
"...with regards to the website, the search facility could be enhanced and where results are found, display in date order."

MEETINGS

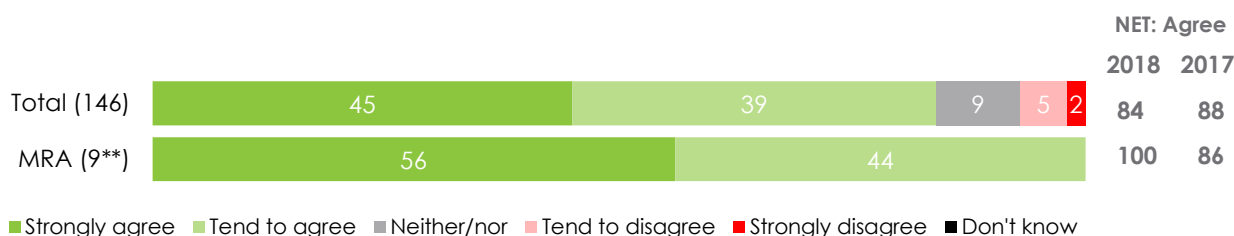
One in five, have attended a meeting or workshop about the MRA in the last 12 months. At an overall level, 37% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with.

Of the nine organisations attending meetings in the past 12 months, ratings of the different aspects of Gemserv's meetings are positive. However, teleconference facilities are highlighted as the aspect where improvements could be made.

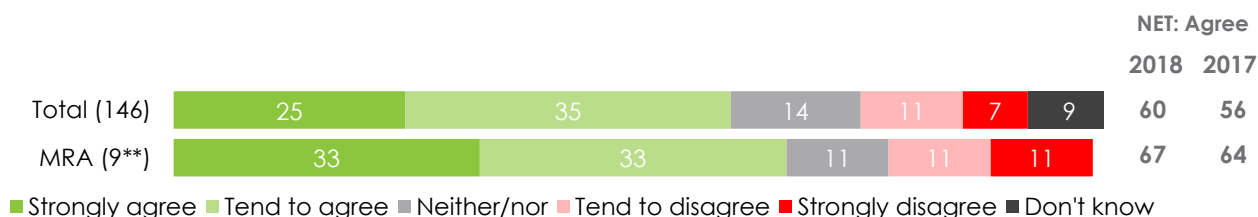
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



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



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



**Very low base

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 %)

"The only successful way to be part of a meeting is to be there. Despite having money behind them, technology has not been invested in to make it easy to take part remotely."

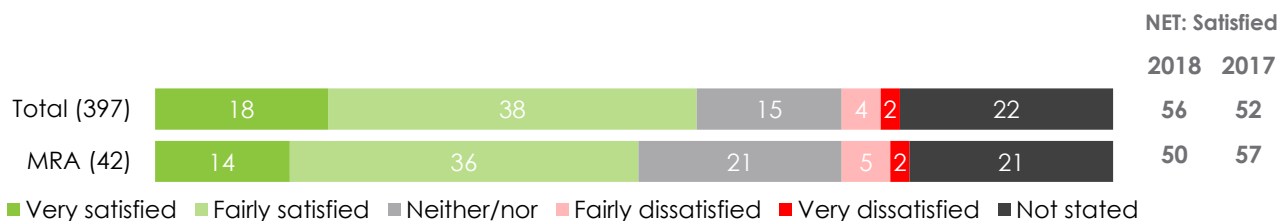
RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Ten percent (four organisations) have raised MRA modifications within the last 12 months.

Of those raising a modification, all feel the process of raising a modification was easy and are satisfied with the support Gemserv gave in the development of their proposal.

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Half of organisations are satisfied with Gemserv's efforts to help them understand MRA modifications. One in five give a neutral response, and a similar proportion could not provide an informed response. Seven percent say they are dissatisfied.



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 %)

"Even after two years of doing this, I need support in terms of interpreting requests into the change documents. It can take a while to do that. I understand that it is complicated. So I just need CA support to do that."

ACCESSION PROCESS

Eleven individuals (26%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the MRA in the last five years. Of these, four found the process easy, three found the process difficult, the rest gave a neutral response or had no direct involvement in the process.

Conclusions

- Gemserv performs well on many aspects of service provision in relation to the MRA
 - The MRA particularly excels at providing support to enable organisations to interact with the code
- Ratings of Gemserv's direct services are, on balance positive. However, there are specific areas highlighted as in need of improvement:
 - Ease of finding information on the website is perceived as an issue by some
 - Teleconferencing facilities are also seen as not fit for purpose by some organisations