

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 study is now in its third year and is designed 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 is not intended to take account of the relative funding of the Code Administrators (CA), or whether they offer value for money.

In 2019, the study has been repeated to monitor performance and identify any developments. Specifically, the survey will be used 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.

Throughout the report, we will show data for 2017, 2018 and 2019 and draw comparisons as appropriate.

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Method

A mixed mode programme of research was conducted with organisations interacting with industry codes. The scope of the research included:

- Telephone discussions with Code Administrators prior to commencing the research programme. The conversations were designed to establish any major changes in service provision, thus allowing Future Thinking the ability to contextualise results from the 2019 survey.
- A mixed mode quantitative survey (online and telephone) with 203 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **36 participants answering about the MRA** (17 June – 12 July 2019).

- 25 follow-up in-depth interviews to get an understanding of drivers of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (15 July – 8 August).

Throughout the report, results are shown:

At a total level (aggregated results for all codes)

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

Quotes from respondents included in the report 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 more caution and is indicative only.*

Industry context

The current structure and perceptions of the energy industry in which organisations operate are seen to have an impact on interactions and attitudes towards Code Administrators and should be taken into account when interpreting survey results.

Organisations acknowledge that the codes are necessarily complex and that the environment is challenging but believe fundamental changes in their administration could help to simplify processes and introduce greater consistency.

A key area for desired change in 2019 is reviewing CACoP with the belief that it can better serve customers by unifying Code Administrators. There is appetite among customers for CACoP:

- to have its own website.
- to deliver greater guidance to CAs on uniformity of information provision.
- to enforce levels of consistency around support provided through the modifications process.
- to provide weekly cross-code round-ups of forthcoming changes and expected impact on organisations.

While customers recognise the differences between codes, and the level of complexity associated with each, there remains a belief that simplifying and unifying operational aspects of codes would greatly assist CAs and the service delivery to customers.

There is also a preference for Ofgem to work more closely with CAs at earlier stages of modifications to avoid delays and further complications.

These wider external factors can influence how organisations perceive the service provided by individual code administrators.

Executive summary

Gemserv is generally rated positively across most key indicators and overall satisfaction remains stable at 75% (27 respondents out of 36).

There is little active negativity reported across any of the four KPI measures, and a higher proportion (17% in 2019, six out of 36 respondents) have reported that they have noticed improvements since 2018.

Areas demonstrating positive trends in satisfaction are:

- for the support received when requested
- and the website, where customers are increasingly reporting that it is easier to navigate/locate information they are looking for and that the information on the website is easy to understand

There are some areas where some improvements could be made. Gemserv should examine how it communicates with customers in terms of keeping customers informed about the code, and implementing ways to make emails clearer when action needs to be taken regarding the code.

The CA could also examine ways to better illuminate in emails any code modifications when they occur.

Teleconference facilities would also benefit from improvement.


Organisation profiling

The level of expertise organisations have to deal with codes remains consistent with previous years. However, availability of resource in 2019 has slightly declined.¹

More generally, in 2019, there is some evidence of larger organisations indicating that they are having some resourcing challenges.


"We are a large company but we have some challenges. A lot of our employees are not in energy, so although we are large, when it comes to engagement, it is difficult."

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S SIZE



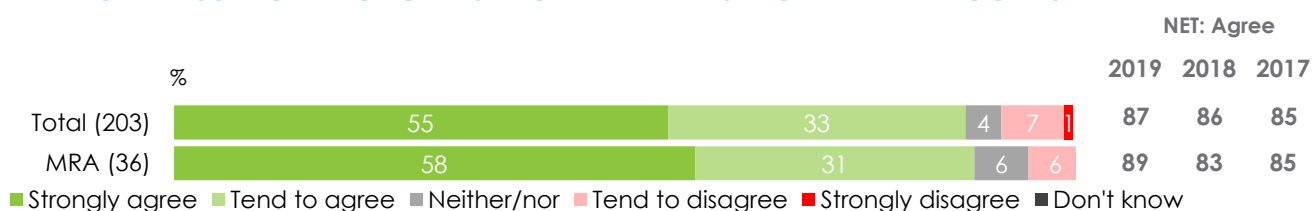
	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (203)	24%	15%	14%	45%
MRA (36)	33%	14%	11%	39%

SELF-REPORTED ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE



	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
	Total (203)	15%	7%
MRA (36)	19%	8%	72%

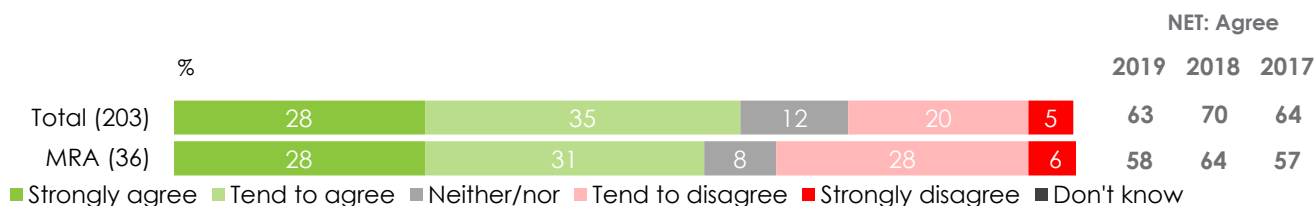
SELF-REPORTED SUFFICIENT ORGANISATIONAL EXPERTISE TO DEAL WITH CODES



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 responses shown in brackets).

¹ There is a weak correlation between an organisation's self-reported level of resource and overall satisfaction with Code Administrators. However, this does not imply causation.

SELF-REPORTED 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 responses shown in brackets).

Challenges around availability of resource impact both small and large organisations; any support therefore has to reflect the organisation's individual circumstance rather than size.

Key findings

KPIs

The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

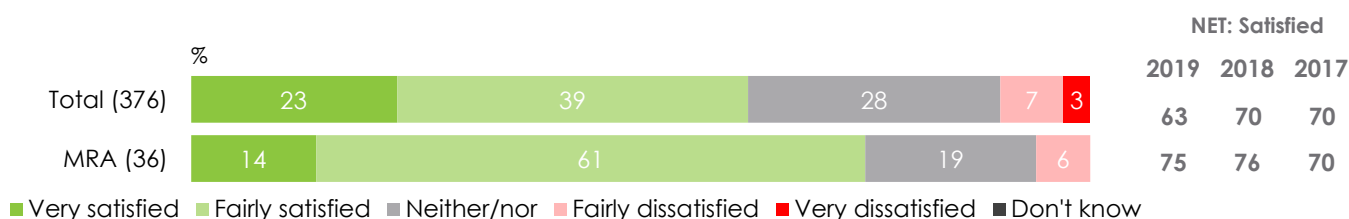
1. Overall satisfaction with the service provided to their organisation.
2. Satisfaction with the provision of support.
3. Satisfaction with support received when requested.
4. Perceived improvements from service received in the last year (introduced in 2018).

Organisations are generally positive about Gemserv's delivery of the MRA code, with very little active dissatisfaction/ negativity recorded across the four KPI measures.

A perceived improvement in service has not translated into any significant increase in satisfaction levels overall, however aspects such as improved ratings for the website and the support received when requested are evident.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

At an all organisational level, we see a shift in reported overall satisfaction, down from 70% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. Examining the MRA's results, satisfaction remains comparable with 2018, 75% (27 respondents) say they are satisfied and just six per cent (two respondents) report being dissatisfied.

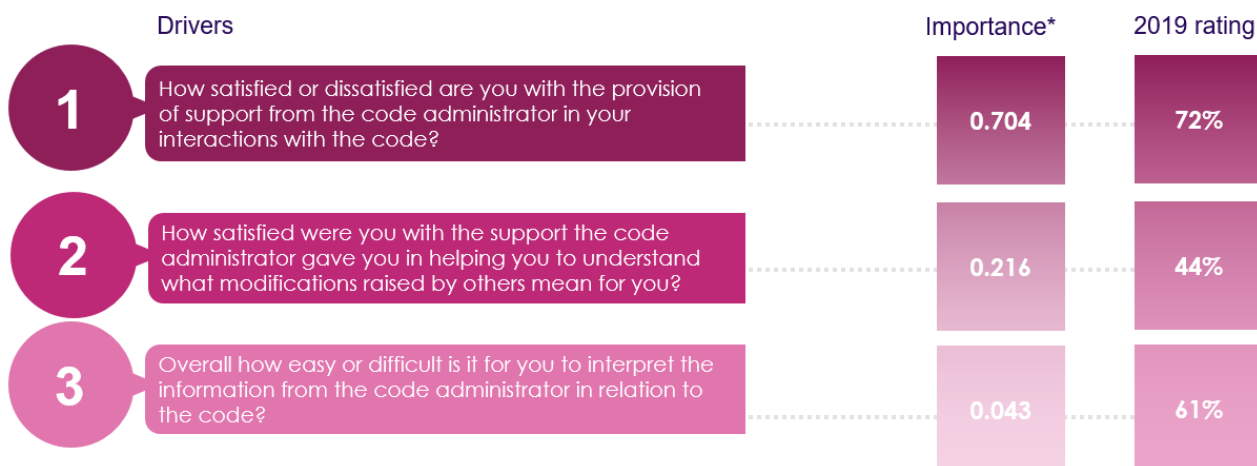


Q10. Thinking about all aspects of your dealings with the code administrator in relation to <this/these> codes, overall how satisfied are you with the service provided to your organisation? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

Smaller organisations highlight a need for greater support for older codes such as the MRA. The historical framework can also be difficult for organisations who have not been interacting with the code for a long time. There were suggestions on how to make the MRA more accessible:

"Could provide more onboarding support: guidance, documents, training etc."

To understand the aspects of service delivery that most impact overall satisfaction, key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted.² 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.)

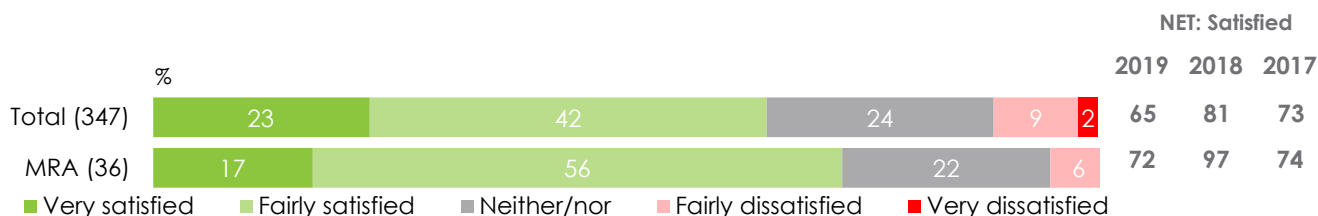
Due to the small base sizes, it is not possible to identify the key drivers for individual codes. The importance scores in the chart above are therefore based on the combined total for all codes and the 2019 current rating is specific to the MRA.

At an overall level, the three key drivers of satisfaction continue to be around support and information. While provision of support is still the most important driver for satisfaction, it has become even more important (rising from 0.467 to 0.704 in 2019). It is however striking that the reported satisfaction around these key areas has dropped significantly at a total level as well as for the MRA. There are opportunities to improve service around all the three key drivers of satisfaction. With service improvements to these core areas, it is likely that 2020 may see a positive lift in reported overall satisfaction.

SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION OF SUPPORT

After the strong uplift seen in 2018, 2019 sees a significant decline in reported satisfaction with provision of support from Code Administrators, and now stands at 65% (from 81% in 2018).

Satisfaction among Gemserv customers regarding the level of support they receive from the MRA has fluctuated over the last three years. Seventy two percent (26 respondents out of 36) are satisfied in 2019 which is comparable with 2017 however significantly less than in 2018. There is still very little active dissatisfaction, only six percent (two respondents) were fairly dissatisfied with this aspect of the MRA's service in 2019.



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 aware of support (number of responses shown in brackets).

However, not all organisations believe that Gemserv uphold a personal relationship:

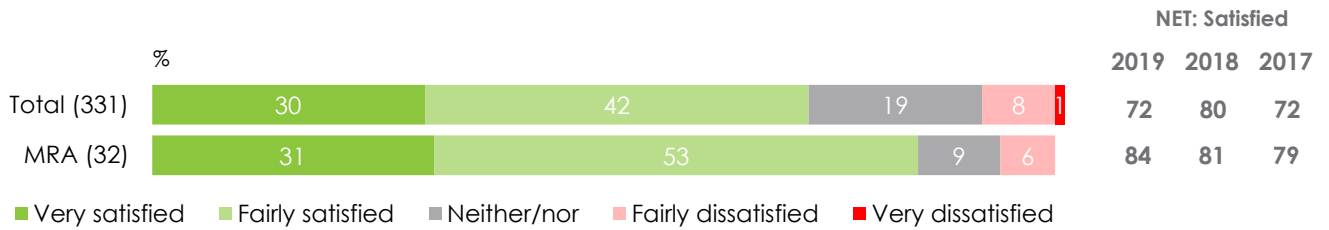
"Don't have named contact. Anonymous sources."

² 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.

"It always comes from anonymous sources."

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

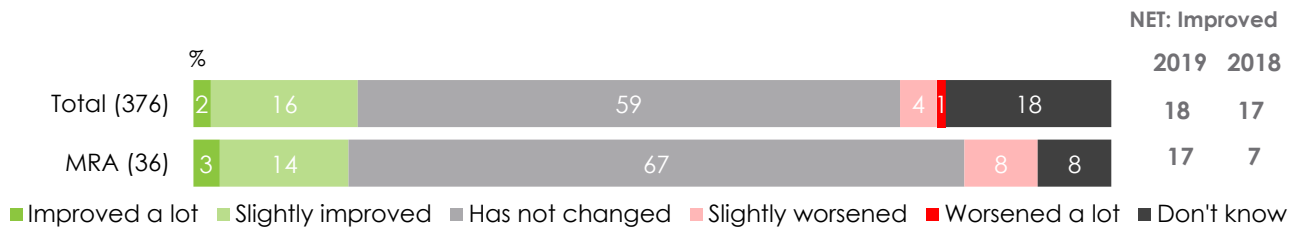
Again, we see a decline in satisfaction with support received when organisations request it. Overall, satisfaction is back to the 2017 level and stands at 72%. Conversely, Gemserv's performance figures reveal a positive trend emerging. Any improvements Gemserv have implemented surrounding the MRA should be retained.



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 proactively seeking support (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

At an overall level, organisations tend to believe that the service they receive has not changed over the last year. Among MRA customers, 67% (24 respondents) report that they have observed no change in the service over the past year. However, it is encouraging to note that 17% (six respondents) had noticed improvements, 10 percentage points more than recorded in 2018.



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? All responses for those involved with code (number of responses shown in brackets).

Organisations provided insight into areas they felt had improved:

"I know better what area to contact."

"More Personal."

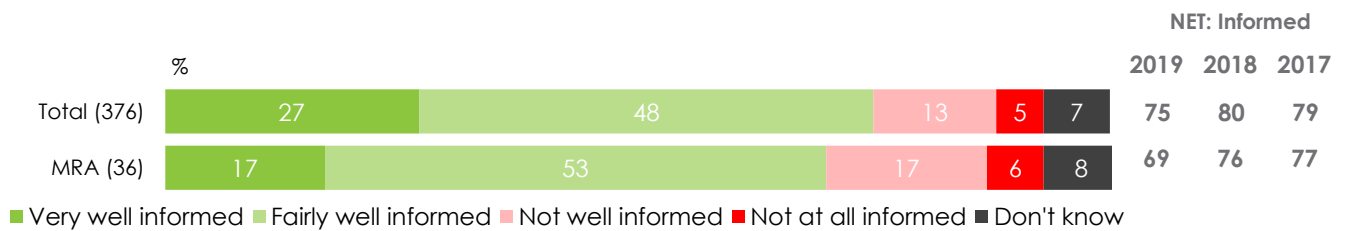
"Communication seems more frequent than it used to be."

Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations claim to receive information about the MRA from Gemserv once or twice a fortnight and for 79% (23 respondents), this frequency is about right.

KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE CODE

Typically, organisations believe that Code Administrators keep them well informed about the codes; we however see a very slight decline in those feeling very or fairly informed (from 80% in 2018 to 75% in 2019). Gemserv should examine its proactivity in terms of informing customers about matters concerning the MRA because a negative trend in satisfaction has emerged. From 77% and 76% satisfied in 2017 and 2018 respectively, the figure has reduced to 69% (25 respondents) in 2019.



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 responses shown in brackets).

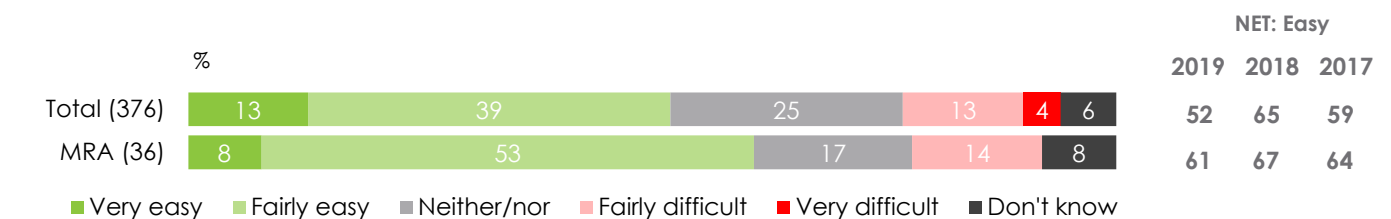
Some organisations felt overburdened by the amount of information provided about the code. When there is lots of information, it makes the process of finding the critical information harder:

"Lots of documents which is good, but too much info. They should highlight what is important."

EASE OF INTERPRETING INFORMATION

After the positive uplift seen in 2018, reported ease of interpreting information has declined. Overall, around half of organisations feel it is easy to interpret information from Code Administrators in relation to their codes.

The majority still find it easy to interpret information from Gemserv regarding the MRA, but it is an area to monitor as results fluctuate.



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 responses shown in brackets).

Perceptions of direct services

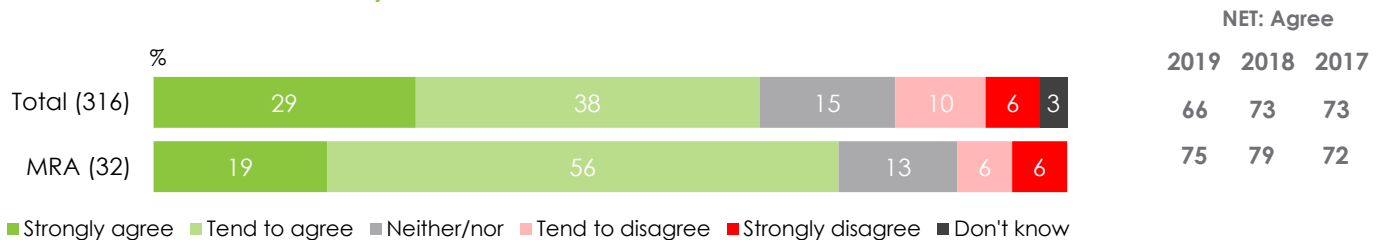
EMAIL

Organisations continue to be reliant on receiving information via email. It is generally perceived as accessible and provides a traceable audit trail. While organisations highlight some innovations that have made email communications from Code Administrators more manageable, there is a view that more can be done to streamline information sent via email.

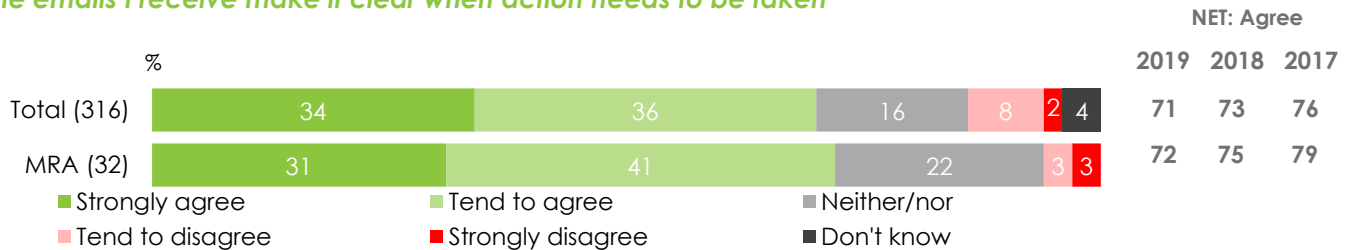
Organisations value email communications that are succinct, clear and give direction on the action (if any) that they may need to take as a result. Some organisations called for more dynamic provision of information; with email used to provide topline information and complementing digital platforms used as repositories for more detailed information.

Seventy five percent state Gemserv's MRA emails are easy to understand (24 respondents of the 32 receiving emails). Twelve per cent (four respondents) *disagreed* that emails were easy to understand. A downward trend in satisfaction with emails communicating when action needs to be taken is observed and should be monitored. Gemserv should ensure consistency across all communications with accounts, and carefully consider any complex communications for clarity and tailor appropriately according to this and the recipients.

'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 responses shown in brackets).

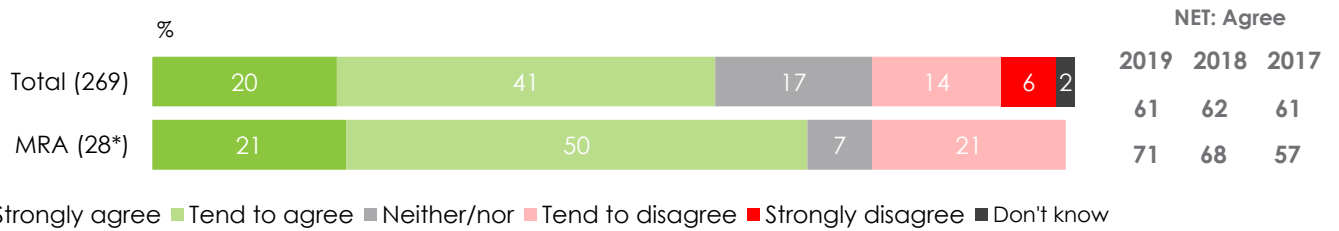
WEBSITES

Websites remain important for most organisations. They are seen as a vital resource for keeping up to date with various code changes and general information related to the code. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate codes.

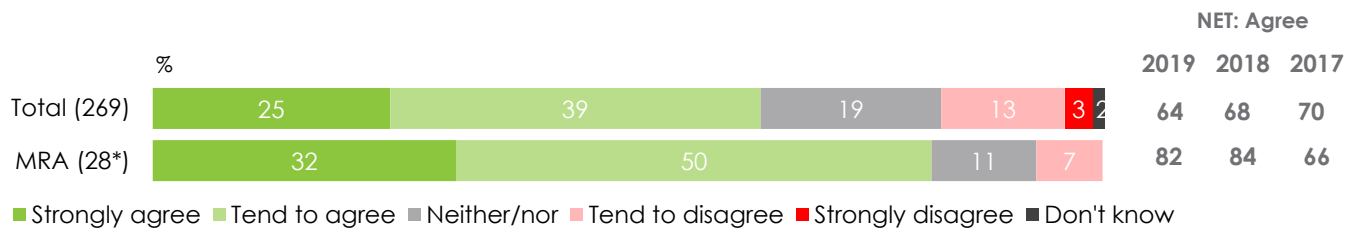
Customers feel it is critical that information that is on websites is kept up to date and is also easy to find. This continues to be an area that most Code Administrators need to work on; at an overall level, 61% indicate they are able to easily find information on the website.

Base sizes are relatively low, but among MRA customers the indication is that they are finding it increasingly easier to navigate to and locate relevant information on the website. The clarity of information contained on the website is also well rated, 82% (23 respondents out of 28 accessing the website) agreeing that information was easy to understand.

'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 responses shown in brackets).

However, making the terminology used on the website easier to understand could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it more easily:

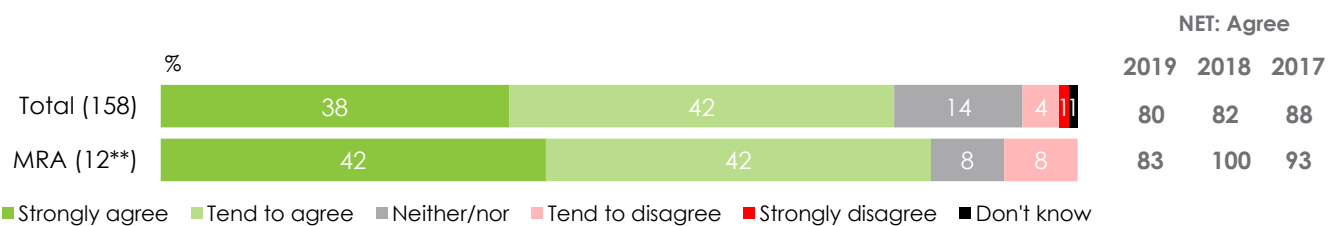
"The MRA is ok, but can be tricky because of the terminology. They use acronyms, so if you are not used to using this website you can find it quite difficult to navigate through it. They could do with more plain English."

MEETINGS

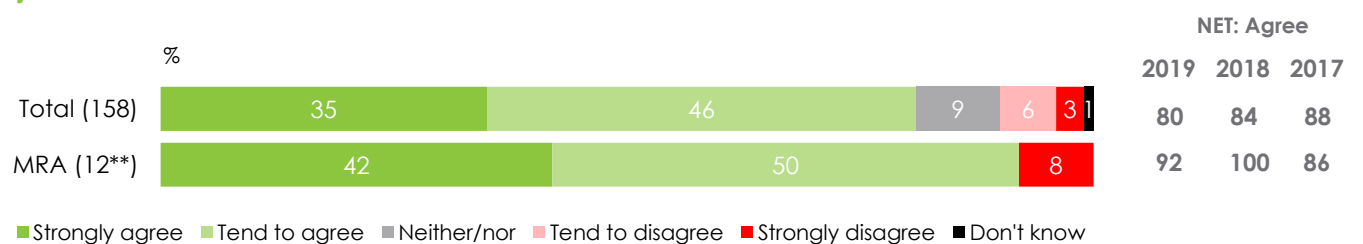
At an overall level, 42% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. Thirty three percent of organisations interacting with the MRA code had attended a meeting or workshop in the last 12 months (12 respondents).

As was observed in previous years, most organisations are positive about meetings. Results for the MRA code are indicative only (with just 12 respondents attending) but it appears that there is room for improvements for teleconference facilities.

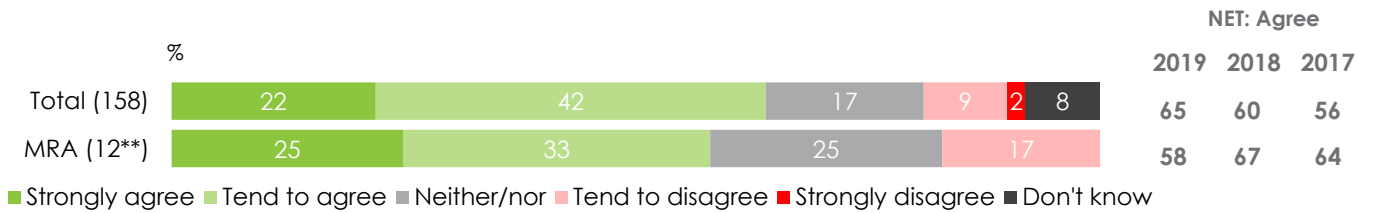
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



'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 responses shown in brackets).

RAISING AND UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Eight per cent (three 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. Although certain areas of raising a modification were positively reported upon, there are still some areas to be improved:

"I was very close to it and I drafted the MRA change. It was great to have the support of the SA as they had been on the working group."

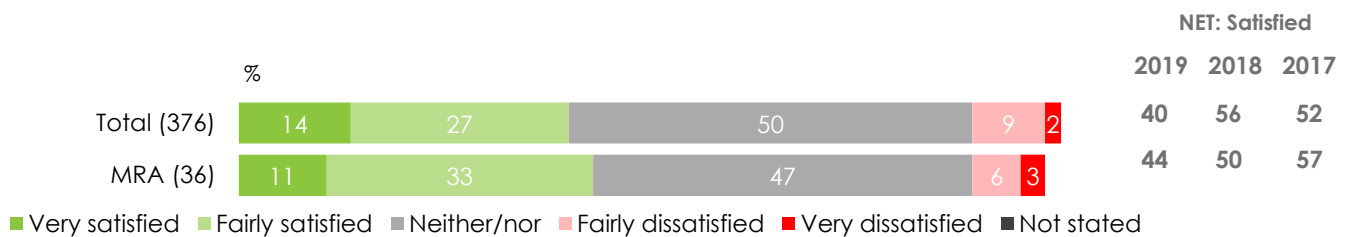
"Both change proposals had to go for legal review; it was convoluted, the MRA and SPAA had their own preferred lawyers. For me as the proposer I would prefer to know which lawyers I can go to and it could be sorted up front."

Overall, we see a decline in organisations saying they are satisfied with the support their Code Administrator gives them to understand what modifications mean for them.

A declining trend in satisfaction emerges with Gemserv's efforts to help customers understand MRA modifications, now down to 44% (16 respondents). However, only nine percent (three respondents) were actively dissatisfied with this aspect, with 47% not expressing an opinion either way.

There was positive feedback about the availability of support when modifications occur:

"They give a good response if there are questions."



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 responses shown in brackets).

ACCESSION PROCESS

Seven individuals (22%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to the MRA in the last five years. Those directly involved in the accession process found it easy.

Conclusions

Gemserv is performing well on many aspects of service provision in relation to the MRA, but there are areas that should be monitored before downturns in performance become protracted.

Gemserv's strengths are the support received when requested and the website navigation/ clarity of information provided

Areas where Gemserv can focus arresting downward trends or boosting positive encounters would be:

- examine how it communicates with customers in terms of keeping customers informed about the code.
- make it clearer in emails when action is required in relation to the code and highlighting when modifications occur
- teleconference facilities would also benefit from improvements