

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 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 in-depth interviews to inform questionnaire design (14-20 Feb 2018)
- A core survey with 216 participants to measure experience and performance of code administrators – **36 participants answering about the DCUSA** (27 Mar – 11 May)
- 25 follow-up in-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 DCUSA (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, reviews of ElectraLink are mixed:

- Just under three in five say they are satisfied with all aspects of their dealings with the CA for DCUSA
 - *Although, this is a significant decrease from the 83% satisfied score from 2017, this is mainly from organisations becoming more neutral than negative.*
- However, the majority are satisfied with the provision of support (71%) and the support received when requested (79%)
- There are some areas where ElectraLink could make further improvements to their service:
 - *Helping organisations with interpreting information sent via email*
 - *Improving the website user experience and clarity of information*

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.

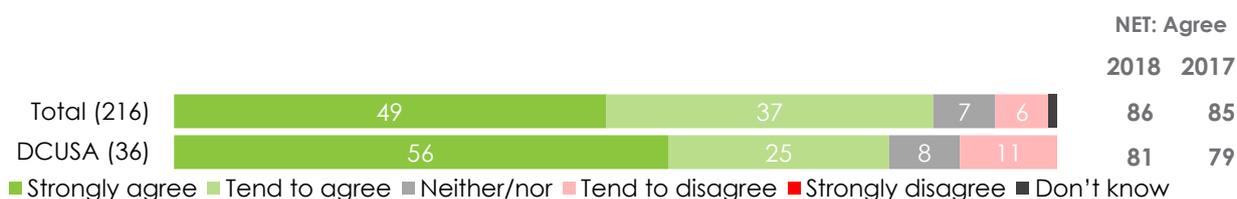
ORGANISATION'S SIZE

	No. of employees			
	0-49	50-249	250-999	1,000+
Total (216)	18%	16%	14%	47%
DCUSA (36)	14%	11%	17%	58%

ORGANISATION'S ENERGY MARKET EXPERIENCE

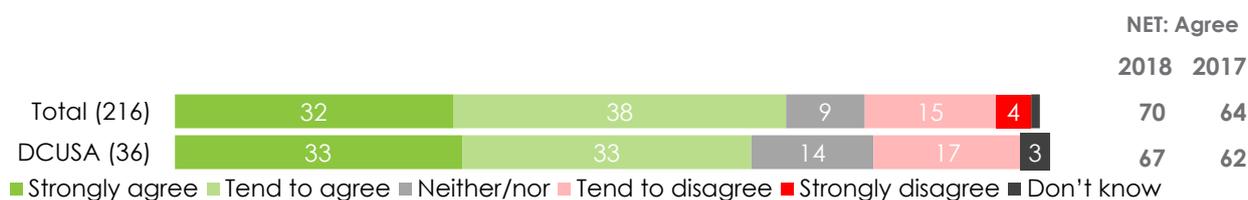
	0-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
	Total (216)	16%	6%
DCUSA (36)	8%	14%	78%

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 DCUSA, or other codes they may deal with.

"The ElectraLink governance team demonstrates a lack of experience and quality in its work, so rigour and quality control needs to be introduced into the governance team."

Key findings

KPIs

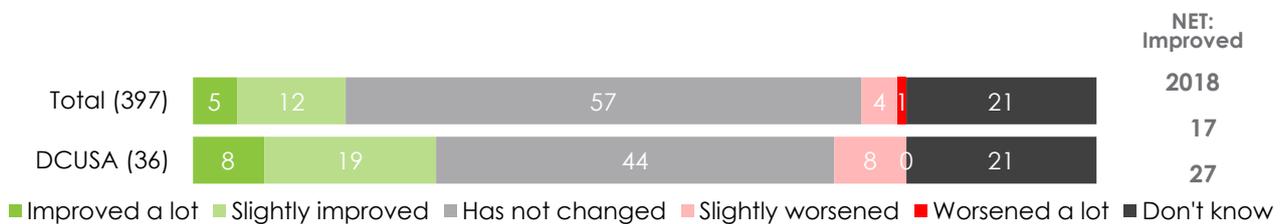
The survey collected four wide measures of satisfaction:

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 service offered by Eletralink in relation to DCUSA. There is little dissatisfaction reported across the measures, although only 58% are satisfied with the overall service – a significant decrease from 2017 (83%), four in ten are neutral about the service.

PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT

A high proportion of organisations feel the service received in relation to their code has not changed (57%). For DCUSA, 44% say the service has not changed over the last year. Encouragingly, over a quarter say the service has improved.

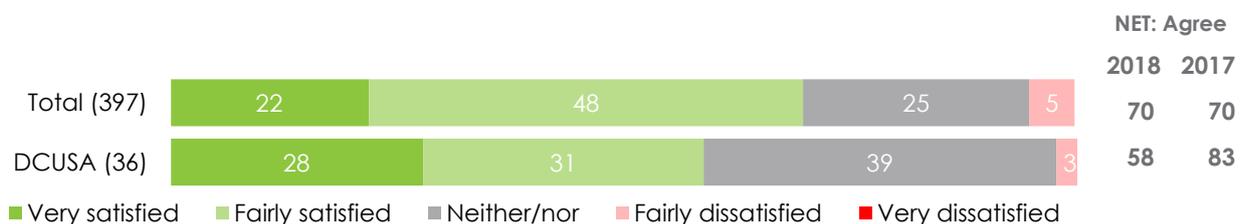


Q29b. Thinking about the service that you have received in relation to the <code> in the last year, would you say it has improved, remained the same or got worse? (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

OVERALL SATISFACTION

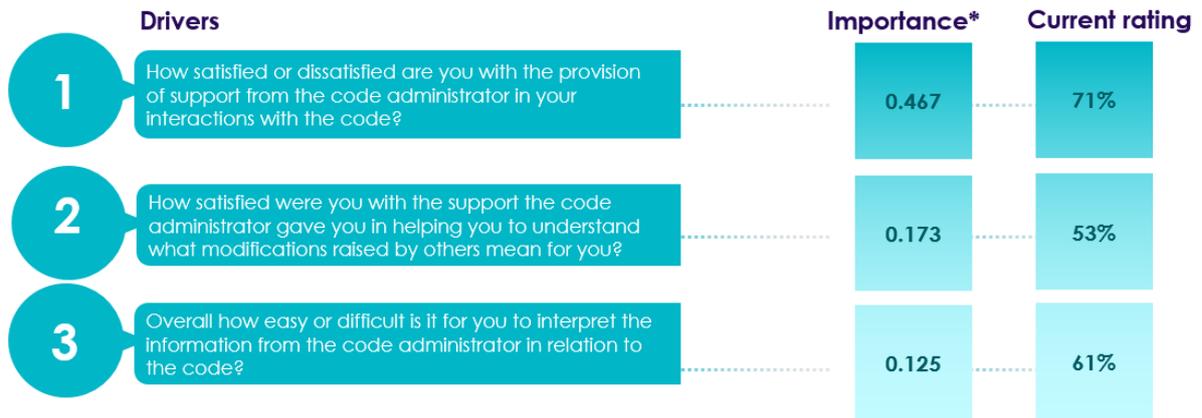
At an all code level, seven in ten say they are satisfied with the service provided by their Code Administrator. Around six in ten (58%) customers are satisfied with the overall service offered in relation to DCUSA, a directional decline from 2017. While only 3% are dissatisfied, four in ten (39%) are neutral about the service.

Although there was a significant decrease in satisfaction seen year on year, this is due to an increase of those being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and not a rise in dissatisfaction.



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 %)

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:



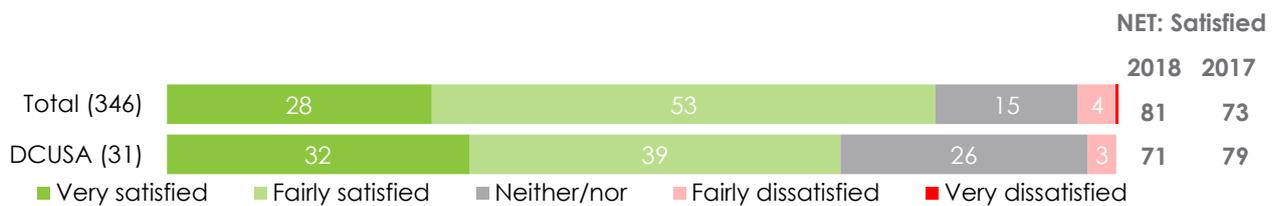
* The importance value will always have a value between -1 and +1, where, a large positive correlation means two ratings 'move together' and a negative correlation means the ratings move in the opposite direction. A correlation of 1 means an exact linear relationship (i.e. everyone gives the same rating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

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 to have 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.



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 highlighted their support for ElectraLink's service.

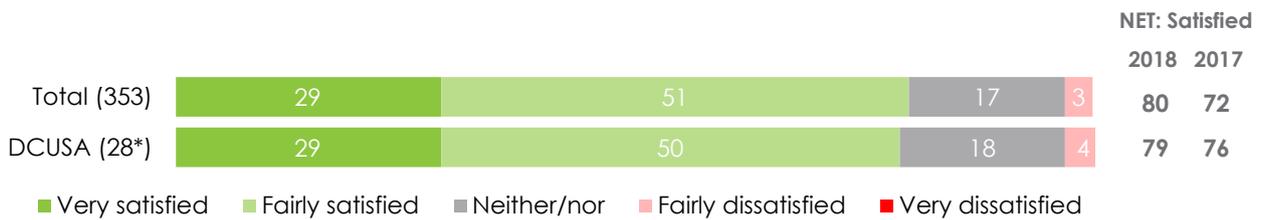
"We are happy with the service provided."

"DCUSA have just created an account manager. They are in the process of creating the account manager matrix."

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.

SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT RECEIVED WHEN REQUESTED

Experience of the code plays the greatest part in influencing perceptions of support received when directly requesting it from Code Administrators. Eight in ten organisations are satisfied with the support received from ElectraLink when they request it.



* Low base

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 %)

One organisation highlighted a desire to have the Critical Friend in place during proposal changes.

“To act more as a critical friend during change of proposals”

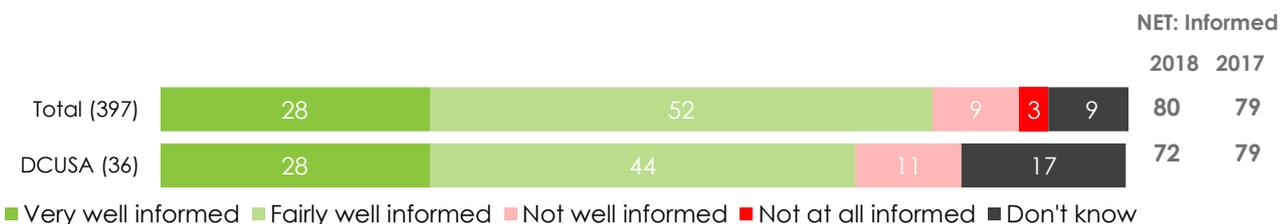
Perceptions of information provision

On average, organisations receive information about the DCUSA from ElectraLink 1-2 times a week and for the majority (86%), 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.

ElectraLink performs well in this area: over seven in ten say they feel 'very' or 'fairly' well informed about the DCUSA. There is however a small cohort who not feel well informed (11%).

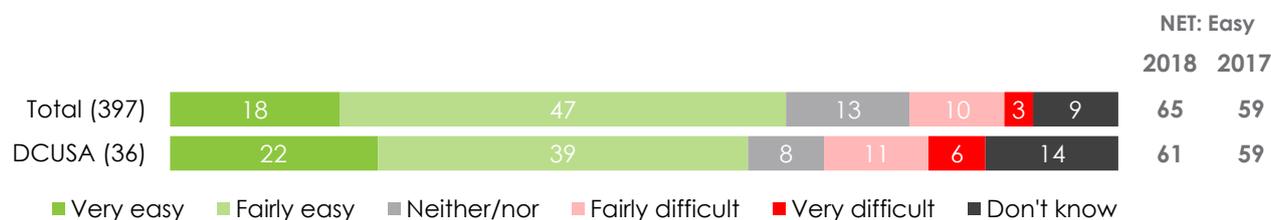


Q14/Q14b. How well do you feel your code administrator keeps you informed about the <code>? Base: All responses for those involved with code (number of respondents in brackets) (results in %)

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.

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. Around one in six organisation find it difficult to interpret information in relation to DCUSA.



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 %)

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.

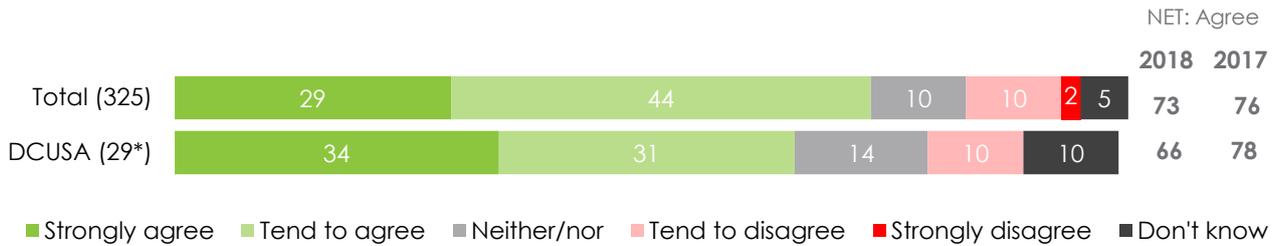
The volume of emails can make it difficult for organisations to identify which messages contain vital information, which ones need immediate action or prioritisation against those providing more general updates.

There is a relatively high level of agreement that ElectraLink's emails in relation to DCUSA are easy to understand (69%) and make it clear when action needs to be taken (66%). For both aspects, there are some organisations who highlight a need for some improvements.

'The emails I receive are easy to understand'



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



* Low base

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 %)

One organisation highlighted a concern with the volume of email received.

"But there is an awful lot of email from the DCUSA. We discussed with the account manager last week that it would be more beneficial to get a single email either on a weekly basis or whichever week we are meeting."

WEBSITES

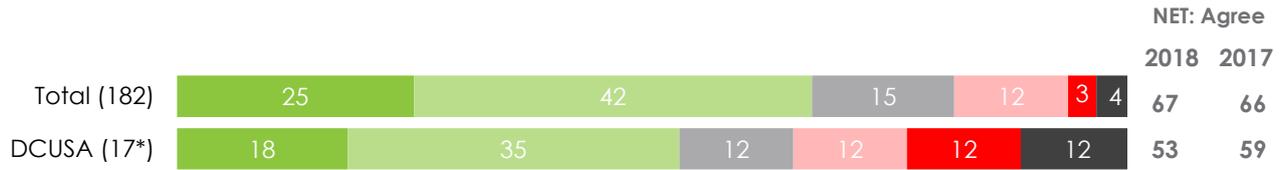
Generally, customers value having information on websites, they use them to keep up to date with various code changes. Information included on websites can be insightful, providing businesses with the depth of understanding they require to navigate codes.

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.

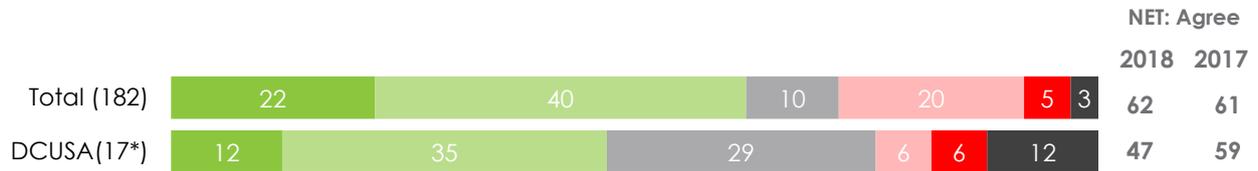
There is some dissatisfaction expressed with ElectraLink's website in relation to DCUSA: a quarter (24%) disagree that the website keeps them sufficiently informed about any changes or modifications and one in six (18%) disagree that the information on the website is easy to understand.

Improving website accessibility could help those less familiar with the code to navigate it to find the information they are looking for more easily.

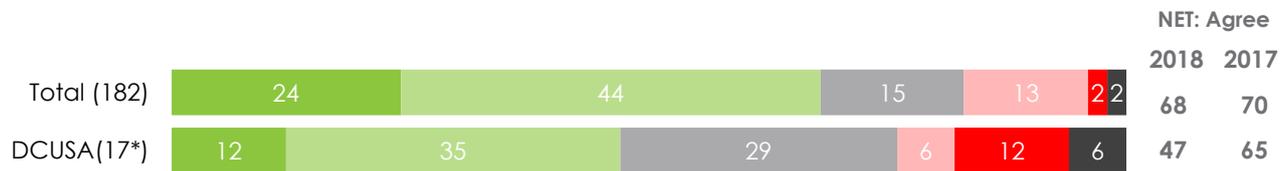
'The website keeps me sufficiently informed of any changes or modifications to the DCUSA'



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



'The information on the website is easy to understand'



* Low base

■ 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 creating a more user friendly ElectraLink website.

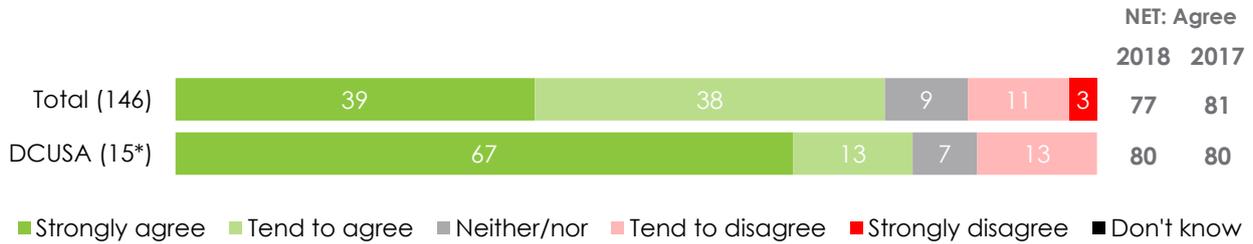
"More user friendly websites."

"Provide a better user friendly website."

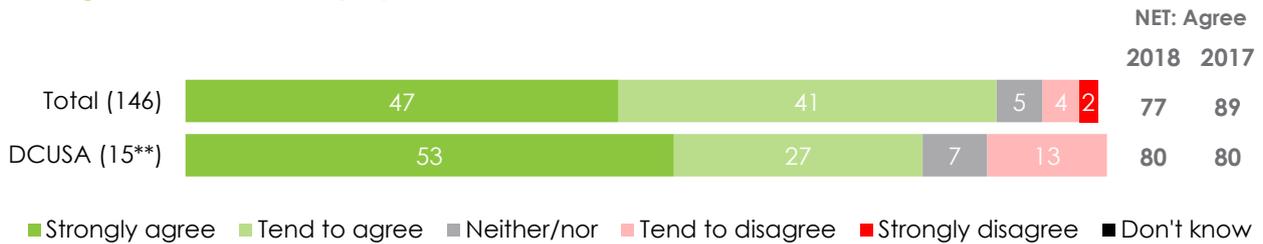
MEETINGS

At an overall level, 37% have attended a meeting or workshop in relation to the code they interact with. For DCUSA, 42% had attended a meeting. Four in five ElectraLink customers agree that they receive information in sufficient time before meetings, that meeting facilities are fit for purpose and that they are able to actively participate in discussions during meetings.

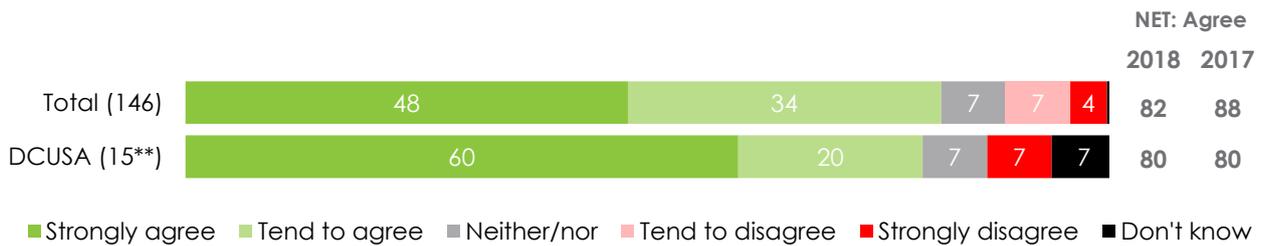
'I receive information in sufficient time before meetings'



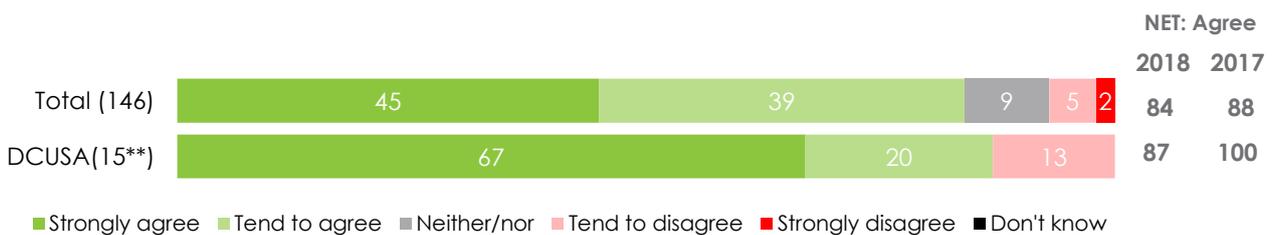
'Meeting facilities are fit for purpose'



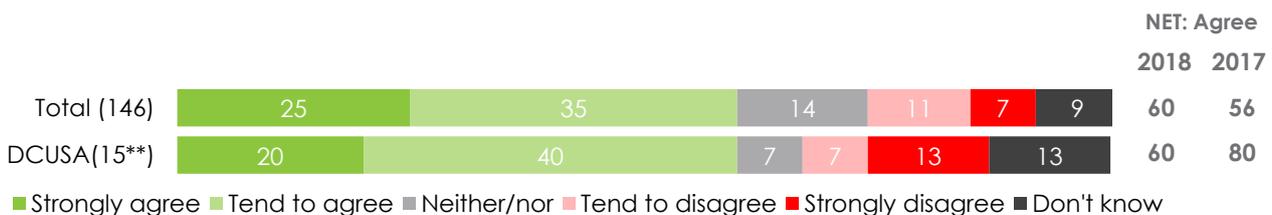
'It is easy for me to actively participate in the discussion'



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



'Teleconference facilities are fit for purpose'



* 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 %)

Teleconference facilities were highlighted as an area for improvement, one in five are dissatisfied with this aspect of service.

"Lots of problems with skype/teleconference facilities - would be good to resolve these"

"Better communication regarding conferences and changes."

RAISING MODIFICATIONS

Four people (11%) have raised modifications in respect of the DCUSA within the last 12 months. Of those raising a modification, all four say the process of raising a modification was easy.

UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATIONS

Around half of organisations (53%) that interact with DCUSA are satisfied with the support ElectraLink gives them in understanding modifications. However, one in ten 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 %)

"I can't engage with it. I have been removed. It is very difficult to get involved with it, because everything is done on an individual change and I find it very difficult to follow what's happening, why it is happening and what the impacts are."

ACCESSION PROCESS

Ten people (31%) are employed by organisations who became party, or began the process to become party to, the DCUSA in the last five years. Of these, half found the process easy, one said neither easy nor difficult and four had no direct involvement in the process.

Conclusions

ElectraLink overall performance is mixed however service delivery on some aspects is very high

- A quarter feel that the service provided in relation to DCUSA has improved over the last year
- Provision of information is generally very good

There is scope to improve some aspects of service

- Interpreting of information is highlighted as an issue by some organisations
- Greater clarity on whether emails sent to organisations need to be actioned
- Aspects of the website are identified as in need of attention