



# **2022 Environmental Body Satisfaction Survey**

## **Overview**

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## **2022 ENVIRONMENTAL BODY (EB) SATISFACTION SURVEY**

### **1. PURPOSE OF PAPER**

- 1.1. This paper sets out the findings of the 2022 Environmental Body (EB) Satisfaction Survey. The survey findings are used to help inform decisions, identify areas for improvement and develop an Action Plan that will drive better performance.

### **2. 2021/22 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. As part of Entrust's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we are required to undertake and complete an EB Satisfaction Survey by 31 August each year.
- 2.2. Among other surveys (for example, the Compliance Review and the Helpline feedback surveys), the EB Satisfaction Survey acts as an annual benchmark of how our stakeholders perceive and assess Entrust and the impact, we make in regulating the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF).
- 2.3. By conducting this survey on an annual basis, we can track changes in opinion over time as well as look for any emerging themes and issues that need addressing. The opportunity for collecting such feedback is invaluable to Entrust as it provides an understanding of how EBs experience our services and allows us to address any issues before they become serious.
- 2.4. The Action Plan that we develop in response to these findings, we believe helps us to improve our services and performance as a regulator, ensuring that our activities are aligned with what stakeholders expect of us.

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1. The report is an integral part of our Evidence Base and assists us in assessing the quality of our services that we deliver. As an organisation that is committed to being open and transparent, we have also published the results of the survey alongside our action plan.
- 3.2. The principle aims of the exercise are to:
  - Gather information to help us to assess the level of satisfaction EBs have with our services during the 2021/2022 period;
  - Analyse the results to enable us to identify any trends, or areas for improvement;
  - Develop an Action Plan to facilitate an improvement in the quality of our services and our performance as a regulator; and
  - Publish the results alongside details about any actions taken on our website.
- 3.3. Through administering this survey on an annual basis, we continue to strive towards meeting stakeholder needs and expectations, taking the actions needed to drive better performance.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1. To ensure the continued effectiveness of the survey, we have applied the following key methodology points:

- All EBs were invited to complete the survey online, using SurveyMonkey;
- The use of jargon was avoided to reduce confusion and encourage responses. Where there was no alternative but to use specific terms, a definition was included;
- We continued to collect data on how frequently EBs have contacted, or accessed our services across this year. This allows us to segment respondents and analyse results according to whether they are frequent or infrequent users;
- The survey was drafted to ensure that respondents were directed to only answer questions that were relevant to them. Where the question was not relevant to the respondent they were directly routed to the next group of questions; and
- The length of the survey was dependent on how much contact each EB has had with Entrust in the year and the teams that they worked with.

## 5. TRANSITION PERIOD

- 5.1. Looking back over 2021/2022, it should be noted that Entrust transitioned out of a prolonged period of 'lighter touch' regulation, which was brought about in response to the Pandemic (for example, supporting EBs in managing projects during this period). In moving out of the Pandemic, we moved back to a more robust, and challenging regulatory approach. Naturally, this transition raised several challenges, which, taken together, we believe negatively affected EB's satisfaction scores.
- 5.2. For one thing, the end of lockdowns in November 2021 saw a much more condensed timeframe in which to conduct Project Site Visits (PSV) in 2021/2022 (between November 2021 and March 2022). For another thing, Entrust's Staff required time to develop their understanding and familiarise with this new type of work, which as direct restricted our ability to find the time and space to fully communicate, explain and oversee the development and implementation of new ways of working as much as we would have liked.
- 5.3. Nevertheless, we have identified several things we could have done better in order to help facilitate and manage future changes. First, we must communicate changes with EBs in advance and provide them with clear explanations with regards to their purpose and benefits. Additionally, we should be proactive in providing assistance to EBs who find themselves struggling with any new requirements, or processes introduced as part of this transition period. And finally, our teams must endeavour to work in a more cohesive and "joined-up" fashion, so that we can identify issues at the earliest possible time and address them before they become more serious concerns.
- 5.4. By taking a thoughtful and collaborative approach, we believe all of this can be achieved. As such, details around each of these transitional changes, alongside an analysis of what we could have done better, has been provided below:

### A. More Robust Registration Process:

The resumption of a more robust registration process after the Pandemic is believed to have resulted in an overall decline in EB satisfaction for several reasons. First, the normal process requires a minimum level of evidence that Entrust requires to approve a project, which we believe was frustrating for EBs who had grown familiar with the previous (lighter) regulatory framework established during the Pandemic. Second, our processes often require additional information from the EBs, which can take time and effort to prepare. And finally, our

registrations processes may have caused some confusion and frustration for EBs who were unclear about the rationale behind the return to the pre-Pandemic approval framework.

#### **What We Could Have Done Better:**

We believe that the robust registration process, as opposed to a lighter framework during the Pandemic, is believed to have resulted in an overall decline in EB satisfaction because of the impact on EB's time and effort. Moreover, the lack of adequate stakeholder communication when we returned to pre-Pandemic processes is also believed to have caused some level of confusion and frustration across the board.

To help address these issues going forwards, we should strive to provide as much clarity as possible on the rationale behind further changes, minimising the potential for confusion and frustration among applicants who might be unclear about why we are taking certain measures. More than that, though, we must be consistent in communicating these changes in an understandable and timely manner; ensuring that EBs / Project Applicants know and understand what is expected of them.

In addition, we should strive to be more proactive and resourceful when it comes to offering assistance to EBs who are experiencing difficulty during any transition period. This might, for example, involve providing specialised resources or tools that could potentially help simplify the process for EBs, such as: revising online guidance materials; producing bespoke FAQs that address common problems in an easy-to-understand manner; exploring the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> party software to allow applicants to 'sense-check' applications prior to submission, as well as triaging support where appropriate; revising the layout of the website to help direct applicants / EBs to the right information quickly and effectively.

By taking a thoughtful and collaborative approach, striving to address EB / applicant concerns with empathy and support, we should be able to resolve the downward pressure on EB satisfaction and drive more positive results in the future.

#### **B. Changes to the Compliance Review Process:**

There several reasons why we consider that changes to our compliance and assurance processes facilitated a fall in EB satisfaction scores. First, some of our compliance and assurance work has become more in depth and robust, which can be frustrating for those EBs who are not expecting this added level of scrutiny. Second, the transition back into our more usual regulatory approach has involved more challenging PSVs, with an increased range of questioning, which has been more testing for those EBs who have not possessed the necessary information to answer our questions in all cases. Third, these changes may have been poorly communicated to EBs / stakeholders ahead of time, causing confusion and frustration for those EBs who were unclear about the rationale behind the switch towards a more robust framework. And finally, on a limited number of occasions the assurance reports were not issued to the relevant EBs; resulting in reduced transparency over the end-to-end process.

#### **What We Could Have Done Better:**

We understand how difficult it can be for EBs who are not expecting added levels of scrutiny, or challenge in the compliance and assurance process. As such, we are working hard to equip our team with the tools and resources needed to provide EBs with full transparency over the

process, so that they can better understand what is being asked of them and have clear explanations about why any changes are happening in the first place.

Generally speaking, we believe that with a focus on open communication; understanding EB needs and providing them with tailored support throughout the compliance and assurance process, while working hard to provide transparency over the end-to-end process (for example making EBs more aware of our Breach Management Framework and how this relates to compliance inspections) we can make the wider compliance and assurance process as streamlined and efficient as possible. This will help us catch any issues before they evolve into more serious problems and reduce the potential for confusion and frustration among certain EBs, and the subsequent downward pressure this can have on EB satisfaction.

As such, our team is currently working hard to maintain open lines of communication throughout the compliance and assurance process from start to finish, creating an atmosphere where EBs feel respected and understood, and communicating the rationale behind our actions in a prompt and timely manner.

### **C. Project Site Visit (PSV) Reports:**

The end of the Pandemic in November 2021 created a much more condensed timeframe in which to conduct PSVs for the 2021/2022. For one thing, our Staff required time to familiarise themselves with new ways of working and we as a company lacked the necessary time and space to fully communicate, explain and oversee these changes as we would have liked. For another thing, we did not communicate these changes with EBs in advance and provide them with clear explanations with regards to their purpose and benefits. When EBs feel that their concerns are not being listened to, or addressed, they may begin to feel frustrated and unsatisfied.

#### **What We Could Have Done Better:**

By taking a thoughtful and collaborative approach, collecting and taking on board in-depth feedback from a wider range of EBs, we have developed an action plan that will: (1) ensure that PSV reports are submitted to a high standard going forwards, and; (2) address historic concerns that EBs have had over the wider reporting process. These steps have been laid out in the following document: "October 2022: ADEB PSV Action Plan," which was developed following the most recent ADEB meeting. However, the key steps we have committed to taking have also been summarised below.

First, we have mandated that all relevant EBs receive a copy of the PSV reports once completed, ensuring that EBs receive full transparency over the end-to-end process going forwards. Second, to inform EBs of the date and time of PSVs so that they can support Entrust in carrying out its regulatory duties and liaising with the various projects. Third, to assess and consider where it is practical to combine PSVs with EB visits, so as to minimise the administration burden on EBs. Fourth, to clarify Entrust's Breach Management Guidance, including possible remedial actions, to provide a "joined-up" approach over the end-to-end process. And finally, to provide EBs with training on due diligence checks that should be carried out on Project Applicants, to mitigate the risk of non-compliant projects being supported by EBs in the future.

## D. Staff Churn

Staff Churn, particularly when individuals have been in post for a number of years, can have significant second and third order effects on EB satisfaction. When employees leave, they often take with them valuable institutional knowledge and expertise. This can lead to disruptions in service delivery towards EBs. Furthermore, while Staff left Entrust due to the economic climate in 2022, this led to a delay in recruiting replacement Staff, which, in turn, has resulted in certain individuals having to undertake two, or three roles.

### **What We Could Have Done Better:**

While we recognise that over the last twelve month Entrust has been through a transition period—with several long serving members of Staff-leaving the company—we have, in recent months, filled all outstanding Staffing vacancies and now find ourselves in a position to move forward with a complete team. Moreover, with the addition of fresh skills and perspectives to the company, from a wide range of diverse and complimentary backgrounds, we have a great opportunity to expand our capabilities and deliver even better results for stakeholders. For this reason, it's important that we focus on training and development over the next twelve months.

This being the case, we will focus on two staff-related areas over the next several months: (1) Training and Development, and; (2) cultivating a more 'joined up approach' between the different teams in our organisation. This will include strengthening internal systems and processes; creating a more joined-up approach between different individuals; and offering staff regular opportunities to develop both professionally and personally. One such example that has already been discussed at a recent Management Meeting will be to invite all Staff to attend at least one PSV over the course of the next year, giving everyone a frontline perspective on the work that we do, as well as encouraging them to build stronger networks with each other.

## E. Lack Of Joined Up Stakeholder Communications:

We believe a lack of clear and transparent stakeholder communication, with regards to changes in our regulatory approach during 2021/2022, had, on occasion, resulted in a disconnect between Entrust and our stakeholders. When EBs feel that their concerns are not being listened to or addressed, they may begin to feel frustrated and unsatisfied, which we believe has been reflected in the EB satisfaction survey.

### **What We Could Have Done Better:**

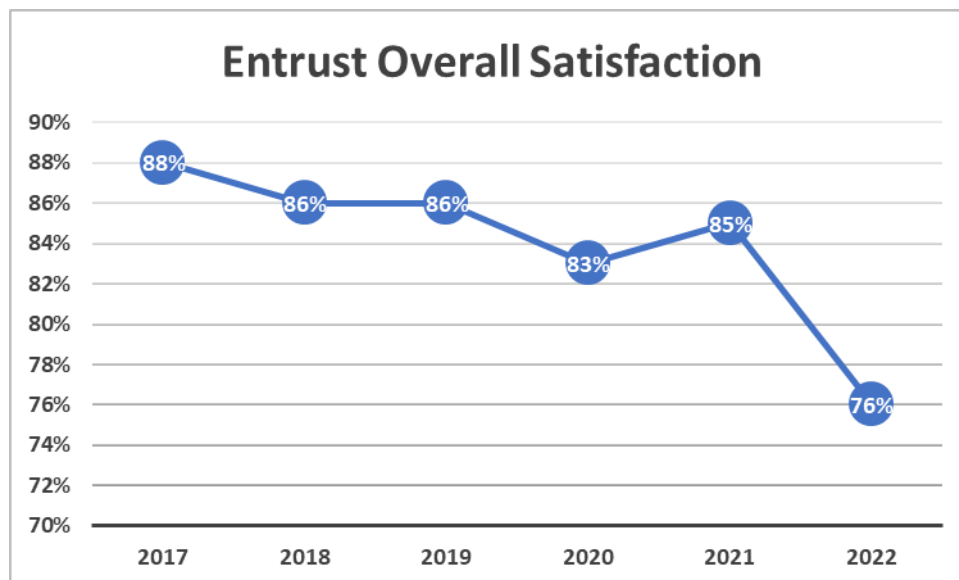
As a result, we have identified several areas for development which will ultimately be presented to our Board in our Communications Strategy in March 2023. Generally speaking, we believe, we must communicate any potential changes with EBs in advance and provide them with clear explanations regarding their purpose and benefits. This can be done through various channels, such as surveys, phone calls, newsletters, updates to the website and, social media.

In addition, we should be proactive in providing assistance to EBs who find themselves struggling with any new requirements, or processes introduced as part of this transition period. This can be achieved through regular Communications meetings with Policy & Registrations / Compliance, which will, in turn, allow us to identify specific requirements for further communications input at the outset and address these issues before they become more

serious concerns. And finally, we should ensure that online guidance materials—a major information vector for EBs—are updated in line with evolving stakeholder expectations and requirements. This will likely involve materially redesigning and updating the website, alongside associated content and website layout. For this reason, we are already in the process of exploring various web development proposals.

## 6. OVERALL SATISFACTION

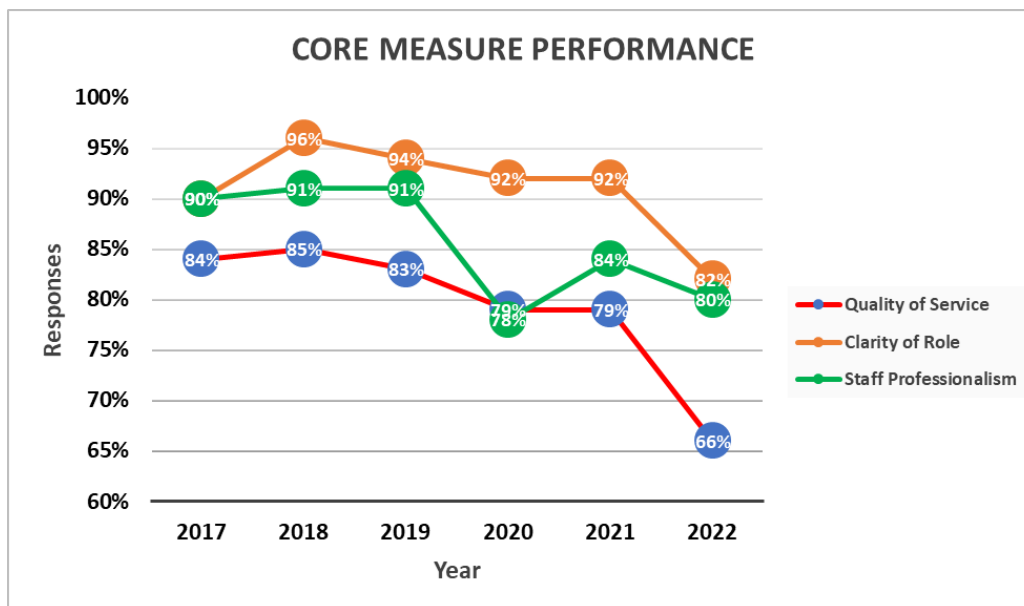
- 6.1. The overall satisfaction rating is calculated across the survey as the overall percentage of questions requiring a response from 1-5 and we have classified positive responses as those having a rating of 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree). For the purposes of benchmarking year on year satisfaction results, this rating does not include the five values questions, which were reported on separately (with a year-on-year comparison included amongst these five questions).
- 6.2. The overall level of satisfaction reported for 2022 was 76 per cent which is a nine per cent decrease on the 2021 satisfaction score of 85 per cent:



## 7. CORE MEASURES

- 7.1. Since 2013, we have asked three core questions, with the aim of obtaining EB views on our performance and the quality of our services. Only respondents from EBs who had worked with, or contacted us, or accessed our services since 1 April 2022 were able to provide a response.
- 7.2. For clarity, all three core satisfaction measures are detailed below:
- **82 per cent** agree that they 'understand the role that Entrust undertakes as Regulator of the LCF' (2021: 92 per cent);
  - **80 per cent** agree that 'Entrust staff are very professional when dealing with me and my EB' (2021: 84 per cent); and
  - **66 per cent** agree that 'overall Entrust provides high quality services' (2021: 79 per cent).





- 7.3. We note from the above illustration that the overall score in each of our core measures has dropped over the last twelve months (Entrust provides a high-quality service: (- 13%); I understand the role that Entrust undertakes as LCF regulator: (- 10%); Entrust staff are very professional when dealing with me and my EB: (- 4%).
- 7.4. For comparison purposes, we have benchmarked these figures against wider industry trends (see below).

## 8. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. The EB Satisfaction Survey is an integral part of our Evidence Base and allows us to measure the quality of our services. The principle aims of the exercise are to generate findings that can be used to help inform decisions, identify areas for improvement, and develop an Action Plan that will drive better future performance.
- 8.2. The Action Plan developed in response to this survey will be used to help improve our services and performance, ensuring that our activities as a regulator continue to be in alignment with what stakeholders expect of us.
- 8.3. Over the last 12 months, we note that Entrust's operational procedures have undergone significant changes. The aim of these changes has been to help ensure the integrity of the LCF while also providing more effective governance over our operations. However, we also understand that making changes to existing procedures has caused disruption and we take any dissatisfaction seriously. To ensure the continued satisfaction of our EBs, we have reviewed our performance and we have identified what we could have done better, in order to minimise the disruption and improving overall EB satisfaction
- 8.4. It is important for Entrust to remain adaptable as the regulatory landscape continues to evolve around us. We understand the importance of staying up-to-date with EB Satisfaction in order to ensure all our stakeholders continue to receive the highest quality service possible. For this reason, we are intending to conduct a thorough review of the survey methodology, along with reviews of the website, social media strategy and wider communications methods.