

# Memorandum

**To:** Strategic Advisory Committee

**From:** Denise Jamal, Director, Stakeholder and Community Engagement

**Date:** June 26, 2024

**Re:** IESO Business Update – 2023 Engagement Survey Results

The following provides an update to members of the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) on the results of the 2023 Stakeholder and Community Survey.

## **Summary**

According to the 2023 Stakeholder and Community Survey results, attitudes towards the IESO and the electricity system are consistent with survey results from previous years. Confidence in the IESO remains high and respondents are providing very positive satisfaction ratings about the IESO's performance in delivering on its mandate and with IESO engagements. New questions added to this year's survey show that respondents find IESO engagements are meaningful and impactful, and the majority feel that the IESO provides effective engagement opportunities. This is reflected in the results for this year's Corporate Performance Measure (CPM) where 76% of survey respondents report that their experience with IESO engagements met or exceeded their expectations. While this falls slightly short of the 80% CPM target set for 2023, it represents an improvement from the 2022 CPM of 74%.

## **Survey Results**

Each year, the IESO undertakes a survey of stakeholders and communities to better understand their perceptions of the electricity sector broadly, the IESO as a whole, and IESO engagements - to inform how the organization's efforts to meet their needs. The 2023 survey was administered by Forum Research, and a summary of the results is attached.

### *Electricity Sector Overall*

At the sector level, respondents rated the top three most pressing issues related to the electricity system as: (1) planning/design for the future; (2) cost/price/affordability, and (3) sustainability/clean energy. This represents a shift from previous years where cost was identified as the primary issue and planning for the future was not cited in the top three. Previously, reliability was included in the top three, but shifted into fourth place this year.

Positive views about the state of the electricity system as a whole have continued to soften. While the majority of respondents still feel positive about the sector (65%), an increasing number of respondents have shifted to a neutral rating (27% versus 17% in 2022). The group with the most positive overall impression of the sector is distributors/transmitters and the least is municipalities (14%).

### *IESO Familiarity, Trust, Reputation and Performance*

One of the key measures of the survey is the level of trust respondents have in the IESO to deliver on the three key pillars of the IESO's corporate strategy. This year's results show a decline in respondents' ratings:

- Ensuring System Reliability While Supporting Cost-Effectiveness – 70%, down from 80% in 2022
- Drive and Guide the Sector – 63%, down from 68% in 2022
- Drive Business Transformation – 56%, down from 62% in 2022

A key finding from the survey is that the level of trust of different respondent groups in the IESO varies greatly; the key takeaway from this is that the IESO is expected to deliver on a number of priorities to earn trust scores across an increasingly diverse group of audiences.

Respondents provided high satisfaction ratings with respect to the IESO's performance in delivering on its mandate of a reliable (84%), affordable (62%) and sustainable (69%) supply of electricity. Confidence also remains high as respondents indicate that they would continue to speak highly of the IESO (34% versus 32% in 2022). The respondent group most likely to speak highly of the IESO are Indigenous communities, and the group most likely to speak negatively about the IESO are environmental advocacy groups.

Consistent with the previous year, the top areas of IESO performance are operating a reliable electricity system, followed by expertise of staff and seeking input from a broad audience of communities, customers and stakeholders. Distributors and transmitters provided the highest

ratings for operating a reliable system, while other levels of government rated the IESO highest for the expertise of staff and seeking input from a broad audience.

### *Corporate Performance Measure*

Each year, the survey asks whether IESO engagements have met or exceeded respondents' expectations, and these results make up the Corporate Performance Measure (CPM). The vast majority (76%) of survey participants report that their experience with IESO engagements has met or exceeded their expectations. While the 2023 CPM target of 80% was not met, a moderate increase was seen over the 74% CPM reported in 2022. The top reasons cited for ratings that met or exceeded expectations are effective communication and engagement, professional and helpful staff and good information where people felt informed. The top reasons provided for ratings that fell below expectations are that the IESO does not consider suggestions for improvement or feedback, poor information, and lack of action.

### *IESO Engagements*

Respondents indicate that the IESO is performing well in clearly communicating in a timely manner and on topics of interest and is providing opportunities for engagement early enough in the decision-making process to impact outcomes. With regards to suggested areas of improvement, 47% have no improvement to suggest with respect to the IESO's interactions with respondents. For those who provided suggestions, top areas include: improve the information provided (e.g. transparent, complete and accurate), improve rationale provided for decisions, increase communications (e.g. more methods, more frequent), increase visibility and accessibility (e.g. more sessions, meetings, discussion groups and training), and listen to feedback.

A new question to last year's survey probed the extent to which respondents felt the IESO's engagement activities are meaningful and impactful. Overall, almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents indicated that the engagements were meaningful and impactful regardless of the number of engagements respondents had participated in.

Over two-thirds (67%) felt that the IESO provides effective engagement opportunities by providing good communication and supporting information, as well as offering numerous engagement channels. Areas cited for improvement include the opportunity for engagements to be more inclusive (e.g. less technical, more flexible), and increasing opportunities for open discussion and networking.

A final new question added to this year's survey focused on how much respondents rely on the IESO's communication and information channels to inform their work and perceptions of the sector. Over three-quarters (76%) of respondents indicated that they rely on the IESO's communication and information channels.

Overall, the engagement survey results are consistent with the interviews, workshops and research undertaken to inform the development of the IESO's refreshed external relations engagement framework. The IESO has already begun to incorporate the Framework's guidance into engagement initiatives today, and will undertake a formal release later in 2024, which will include a presentation to SAC.

Preparations are underway for the 2024 Stakeholder and Community Survey with information to be shared in August, followed by the opening of the survey in September. Attendees in the IESO's engagement activities will be contacted about the survey and others can opt in to participate by sending an email to [engagement@ieso.ca](mailto:engagement@ieso.ca).