



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

**NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT**



New Zealand Government Procurement Business Survey 2018: Community service providers

Many thanks to the community service providers who took part in the survey this year. We really appreciate your feedback.

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New Zealand Government

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Introduction

New Zealand Government Procurement Business Survey

New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), runs an annual business survey to understand suppliers' and community service providers' (providers) experiences of government procurement. The survey helps track how the initiatives of NZGP to improve practice within government are affecting businesses and providers.

In March 2018, the fifth edition of this survey was conducted. A link to the survey was sent to everyone who had subscribed to a tender on the Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS) and was made available on the NZGP website. It was also sent to providers via several government agencies and umbrella groups. The survey was open from the 6th of March to the 10th of April 2018. Feedback was received from 2,534 businesses which included 413 providers. This is compared to 2,095 businesses in 2017 which included 255 providers.

Structure of the report – focusing on community service providers

This is a companion report to the New Zealand Government Procurement Business Survey Report 2018 and is focused on providers' experiences doing business with government. It is structured around three key areas: relationship management, tender activity and contract management. This is the second year that results for this group have been made available, with the first report published in 2017.

The voices of community service providers are included throughout the report and an analysis of the comments is provided towards the end. There were many comments made. Some echoed themes from last year while others grouped into new emerging themes. There were several positive comments and helpful suggestions. The results provide useful guidance for government agencies and will help to inform our work programme.

Initiatives to improve government procurement practice

Survey results from the companion report last year identified areas where government could improve its procurement practice to better partner with providers and more effectively procure social services. Some developments that have taken place over the last year or more as a result of the areas identified in the survey include:

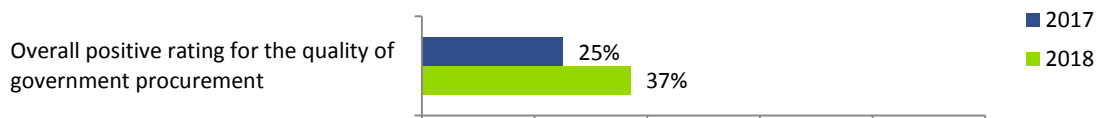
- Establishing a Social Services Procurement Capability Team at MBIE.
- Meeting regularly with providers to better understand their experiences.
- Bringing together providers and government agencies to design more streamlined processes and improved ways of working.
- Meeting regularly with government agencies and the Social Services Procurement Committee to establish a partnership and work together on joint initiatives.
- Publishing the [Guide to social service procurement](#) on the MBIE website.
- Delivering contract management training to over 150 government agency people from ten government agencies.
- Developing a long-term training strategy and plan in partnership with government agencies.
- Establishing the *2017 Social Services Procurement Capability Baseline Results* to be able to track progress towards growing government procurement capability.

Key findings

- **There are improvements in almost all of the areas** from last year. It is difficult to determine if this is due to the larger sample size or government’s efforts to make improvements resulting in a more positive experience for providers.
- **The area of greatest improvement was relationship management** with providers more positively rating initial engagement, shifting from 33% to 47% (a 14% increase), and provider relationship management, shifting from 37% to 50% (a 13% increase).
- **The areas showing the lowest** positive ratings by providers were incentivising performance (31%) and receiving a useful follow-up (32%).
- **Compared to the total sample**, providers were **less** positive about the amount of time given to respond to tenders and receiving a useful follow-up after tenders but **more** positive about the timing of transactions and incentivising performance.
- **The majority of providers said they mainly provided services for central government** departments (62%) and District Health Boards (19%) and that doing business with New Zealand government was extremely important (61%).

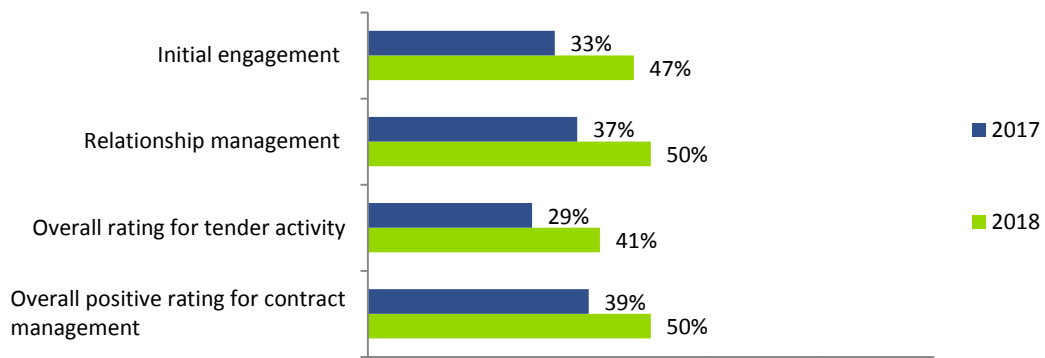
Improvements in provider’s experiences from last year

Over a quarter (37%) of respondents positively rated the overall quality of government procurement. This is a substantial increase of 12% from last year when providers positively rated it as 25%.



“The Government is becoming much better at working in partnership with providers. This is a good development.”

Last year, when asked to rate specific procurement activities, around a third of respondents rated them positively. This year has seen an increase for all activities with almost half positively rating three of the four key activities.



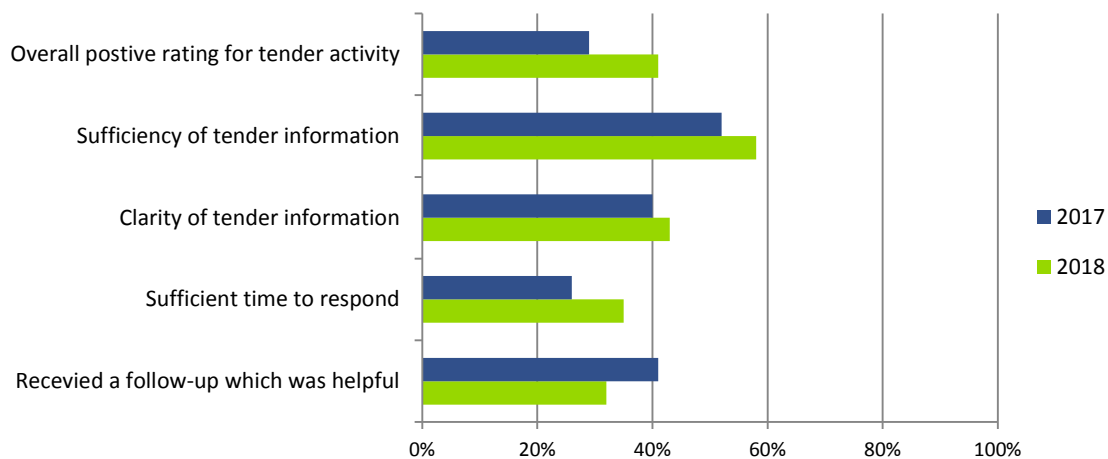
“When the government agency has come and done the initial engagement in a face-to-face dialogue - it’s been very good.”

Quality of tender activities

Almost 60% of respondents said the information provided was always/often sufficient while 43% said the information was always/often easy to understand.

Around 35% said they always/often have enough time to respond. This is an improvement from last year when just over a quarter (26%) positively rated the amount of time provided to respond.

Last year 41% said they received a reasonably helpful follow-up after they bid for a tender. However this year there has been a drop with just under a quarter (24%) reporting they always/often receive a follow-up after they bid for a tender by government agencies and 32% saying it was helpful.¹



“Meaningful feedback following the process so organisations can learn, understand what the department were looking for and improve for the future.”

Quality of contract management

Half of respondents (50%) positively rated the overall quality of contract management, while 32% rated it as average, and 19% rated it as poor or very poor.

Over half (64%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their contract manager’s level of professionalism and knowledge and 58% were satisfied or very satisfied with the timing of transactions.

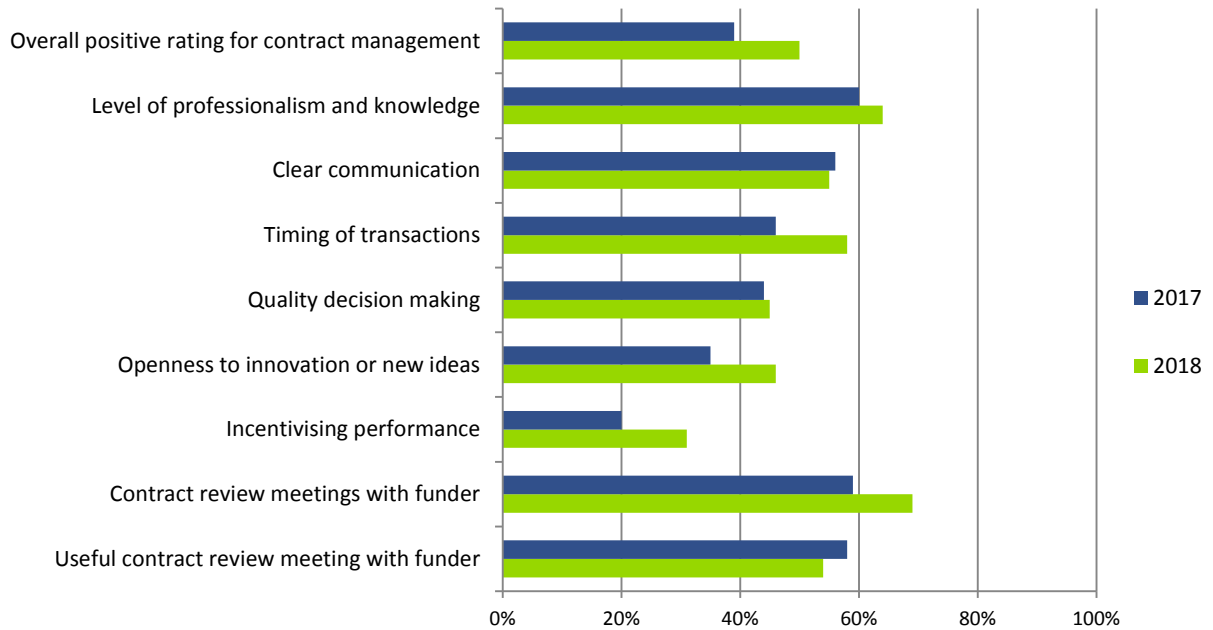
Last year, a third (35%) positively rated their contract manager’s openness to innovation or new ideas and only 20% positively rated their ability to incentivise performance. This year there has been a substantial increase with 46% positively rating their contract manager’s openness to innovation or new ideas and 31% positively rating their ability to incentivise performance.

The majority (69%) of respondents said they had regular contract review meetings (an increase from 59% from last year). The usefulness of these meetings was rated similar to last year.

¹ Note: This could be due to changes to the wording of the question and breaking it into two questions.

“Be more open to new ideas and reframe the relationship between the community sector and government.”

“Be open to redesigning/improving services that have been contracted for years.”



“Provide opportunity for feedback on issues around contract delivery and be open to varying contracts to reflect on-the-ground experiences and learnings that arise through service delivery once contracts are implemented.”

Barriers and success factors when bidding for government contracts



Top three factors which reduced bid effectiveness:

1. Complicated procurement processes
2. Complex or unclear information
3. The size of my business

Top three factors which increased bid effectiveness:

1. Experience in the market place
2. Engagement and dialogue with government agencies
3. Clear information



Main source of information about government contracts

Over half (57%) of respondents said their main source of information about government contracts was through the Government Electronic Tender Services (GETS) with just over a quarter (27%) saying it was through a government agency.

Awareness and use of advisory services/resources

Over half (57%) of respondents were not aware of any advisory services/resources and only 11% had used the resources and found them useful. Several providers made comments about the type of support that could be helpful.

“Having some supporting guidelines, exemplars to support us in understanding how best to answer the question and what sort of information is required.”

Awareness of and use of complaints processes

Eighty-one providers said they complained to the procuring agency about a problem while 114 (around 28%) were not aware of any options to complain.

Differences between provider’s results and the total survey results

Survey results for providers are generally very similar to the total survey results across the two years as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Survey results for providers compared to the total sample for 2017 and 2018

Positive ratings for:	2017		2018	
	Total sample	Providers	Total sample	Providers
Overall quality of government procurement	24%	25%	34%	37%
Initial engagement and relationship management				
Initial engagement	35%	33%	42%	47%
Relationship management	30%	37%	47%	50%
Tender activity				
Overall positive rating for tender activity	31%	29%	39%	41%
Tender documents give all the information I need	48%	52%	59%	58%
Information in tender documents is easy to understand	39%	40%	48%	43%
Sufficient time to respond during the tender process	46%	26%	52%	35%
Received a follow-up which was helpful	33%	41%	41%	32%
Contract management				
Overall positive rating for contract management	38%	39%	45%	50%
Level of professionalism and knowledge	63%	60%	59%	64%
Clear communication	60%	56%	53%	55%
Timing of transactions	50%	46%	47%	58%
Quality decision making	49%	44%	44%	45%
Openness to innovation or new ideas	49%	35%	43%	46%
Incentivising performance	29%	20%	23%	31%
Contract review meetings with funder	45%	59%	49%	69%
Useful contract review meetings	55%	58%	57%	54%

There are a few but substantial differences between the results. Providers compared to the total sample were:

- **Less positive** about the amount of time given to respond to tenders (17% difference) and receiving a useful follow-up (9% difference).
- **More positive** about the timing of transactions (11% difference) and incentivising performance (8% difference). While providers are more positive about their contract manager’s ability to incentivise performance, it is the lowest rated area for both years.

Almost 70% of providers said they had contract review meetings as compared to around half of the total sample (20% difference)

Areas for improvement

There is room to improve government tender activity and in particular ensure that:

- Providers receive a follow-up after a tender process which is useful in terms of helping them to improve for the next time.
- Providers are given sufficient time to respond during the procurement process, particularly if the services are complex or required collaboration.
- Information in tender documents is easy to understand.
- Easy to follow procurement processes that keep to the timeframes.
- Effective engagement and dialogue.

There is also room to improve contract management, particularly in terms of exploring ways government agencies could incentivise performance.

Lastly, there is scope to improve awareness of advisory services/resources and, in particular, the usefulness of these resources.

Definitions and interpretation of results

Business size

Respondents were asked to indicate how many full time employees (FTEs) they had. These groups are categorised as:

- Micro (0 – 5 FTEs)
- Small (6 – 19 FTEs)
- Medium (20 – 49 FTEs)
- Large (50+ FTEs).

Ratings

The term 'positive rating' is used throughout this report. It means two ratings have been combined for example good/ very good or always/often.

Unspecified/blank responses

For some questions respondents were able to select 'not applicable'. Where this occurred these have been removed from the results.

Limitations

While the number of respondents has increased significantly from last year (255 to 413), the sample size is still relatively low compared to the total number of community service providers in New Zealand. Several providers participating in the survey said their experiences ranged greatly from very good to very bad depending on the government agency meaning it was difficult to generalise. For these reasons, the results should be considered indicative.

Methodology

There were four substantial changes made to the survey in 2018.

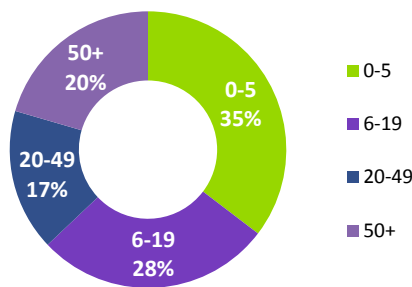
1. A greater focus was placed on the regional location of businesses. An extra question was added in order to capture this, as well as two amendments to questions that allowed respondents to identify whether their regional location affected their bid effectiveness
2. In regards to supplier debriefs, this question was split into two this year, with one question asking about frequency, and the other regarding the helpfulness of debriefs.
3. The previous supplier complaints question was expanded into three distinct questions this year, in order to understand what specific complaints processes businesses know about, and why they are/are not being utilised.
4. On a number of questions pertaining to tender documents, contract opportunities, the tender process, and follow-ups, the rating scales have been changed. This was to provide consistency in the scaling as they previously differed between questions.

Profile: Community service providers

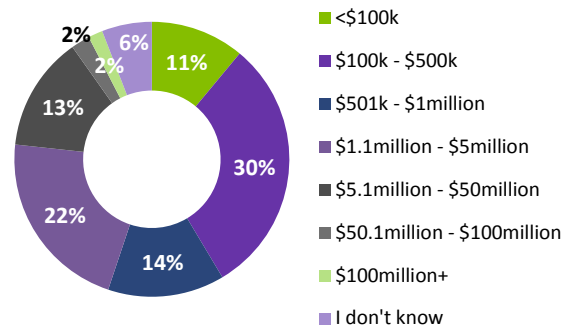
Business size, turnover and location

- Business size:** Over half of respondents (63%) were small and micro providers with between 0 – 19 FTEs and 37% were medium to large providers with between 21-51+ FTEs.
- Turnover:** Over a quarter of respondents (30%) had turnover between \$100k to \$500k per year while just under a quarter (22%) had turnover between \$1.1 million and \$5 million per year.
- Location:** Approximately 27% of providers responding said that their organisation is based in the Auckland region, 13% said the Wellington region and 11% said in the Waikato.

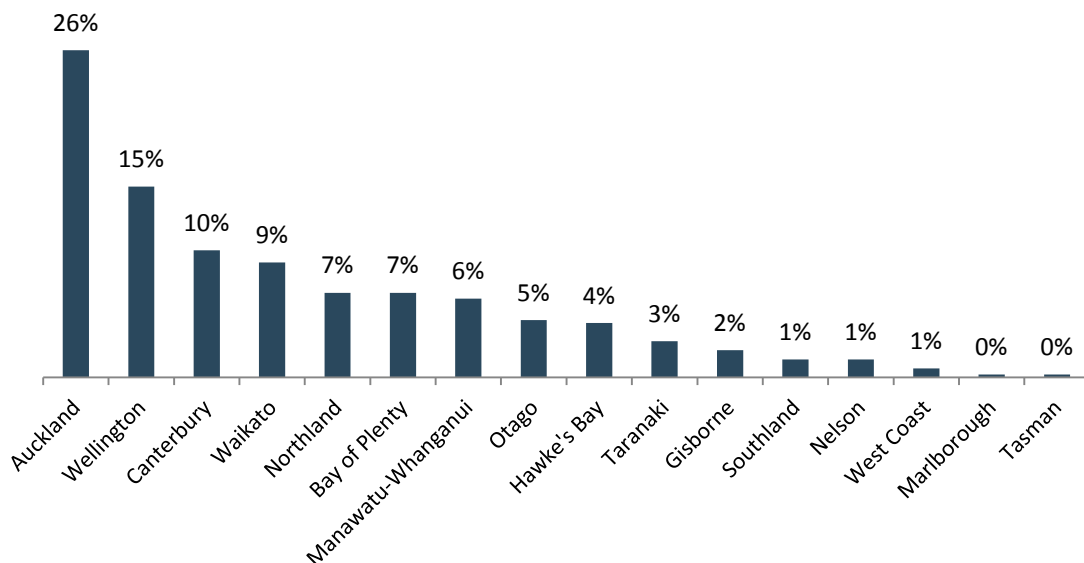
1. In full time equivalents, how many people work in your organisation?



2. What was your approximate annual turnover in New Zealand dollars in the last financial year?



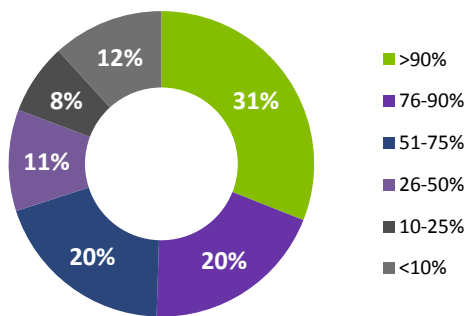
3. In which region is your organisation based?



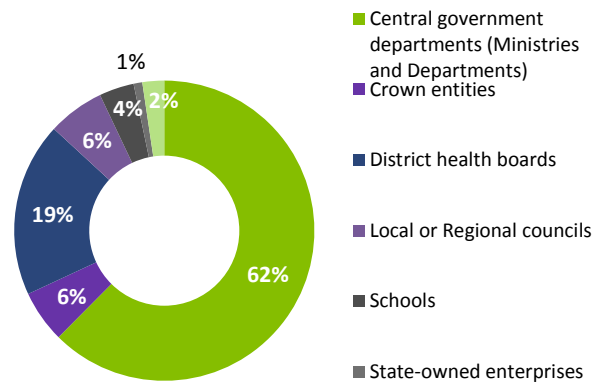
Government agencies supplied

- Approximately 31% of providers said that over 90% of their turnover came from supplying New Zealand government agencies while 20% said between 76% – 90% and 20% said between 51% – 75%.
- Over half (62%) of respondents said central government departments were their primary customer followed by 19% saying District Health Boards were their primary customer.
- The majority of respondents (79%) had bid for government contracts in the last five years.
- The majority (83%) reported they currently had a contract with government.

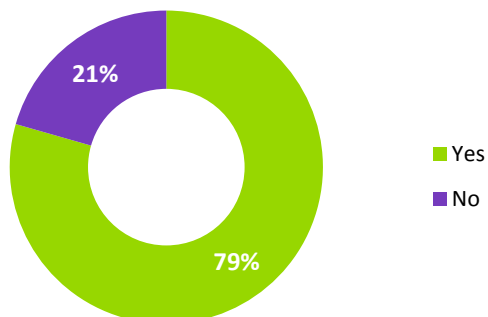
4. Approximately how much of your turnover comes from supplying New Zealand government agencies?



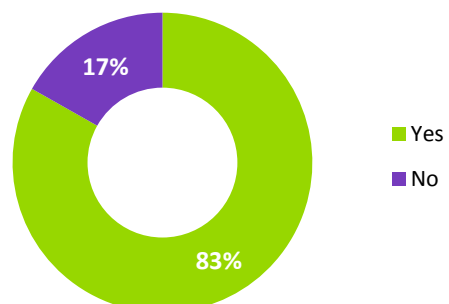
5. Of the agencies you supply which is your primary customer?



6. Have you bid for any government contracts in the last five years?

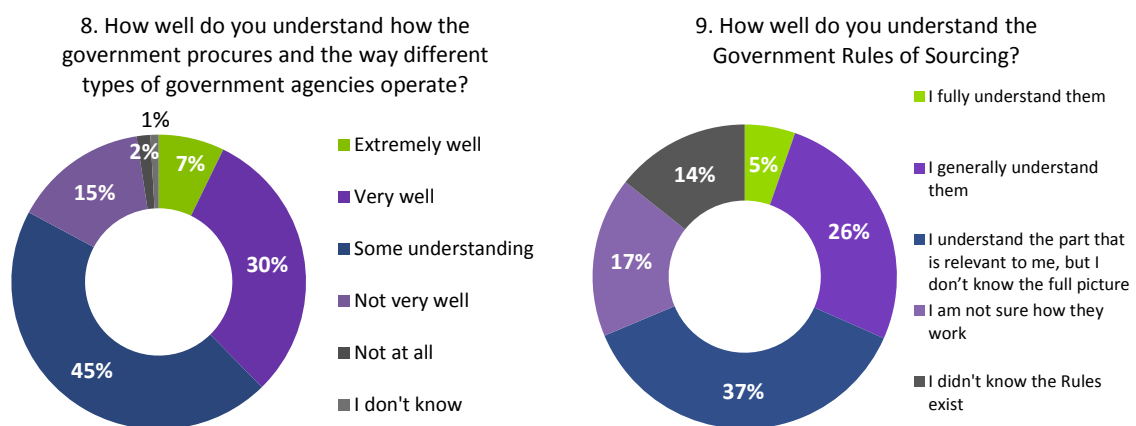


7. Do you currently have a contract with government?



Business knowledge of government procurement

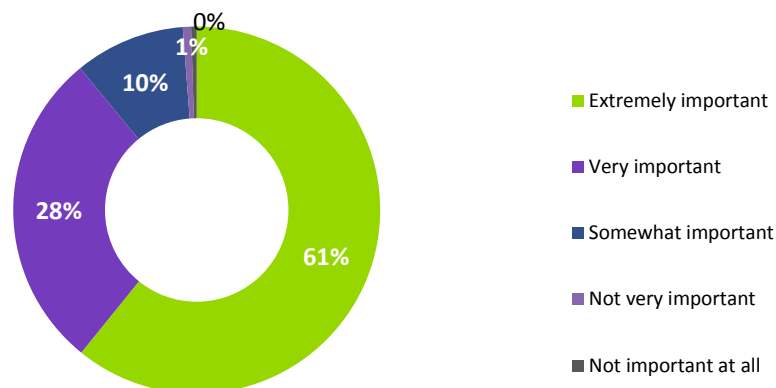
8. Almost half of respondents (45%) said they had some understanding of how the government procures and the way different types of government agencies operate, while a just over a third (37%) said they understood it very or extremely well.
9. Over a third (37%) said they understood the part of the Government Rules of Sourcing that was relevant to them but they didn't know the full picture, while 26% said they generally understood them. Approximately 17% said they were unsure how they worked and 14% didn't know they existed.



The importance of government business

10. Over half of respondents (61%) said that doing business with New Zealand government was extremely important while 28% said it was very important.

10. How important is New Zealand government business to your organisation?

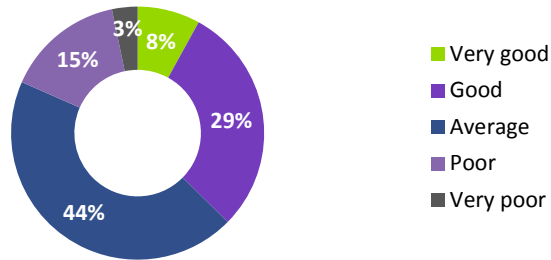


Quality of government procurement activities

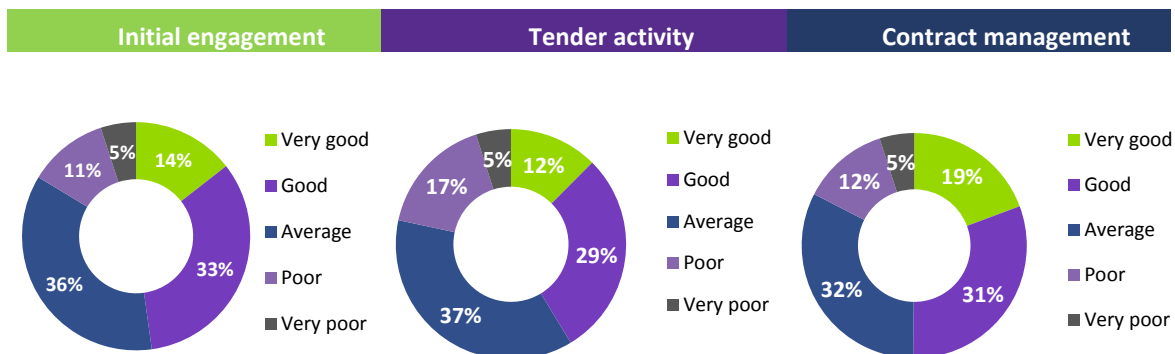
Initial engagement, tender activity, and contract management

11. Providers were asked to rate the overall quality of government procurement activity. Approximately 37% of respondents positively rated the overall quality of government procurement activity as compared to 25% in 2017. Approximately 44% rated it as average and 18% as poor or very poor.

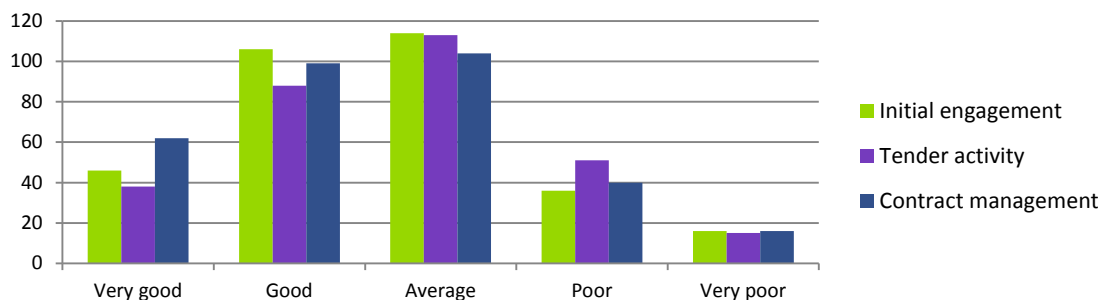
11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of government procurement activity?



12. When asked to rate three specific procurement activities almost half (47%) positively rated initial engagement, 41% positively rated tender activity, and half (50%) positively rated contract management (compared to 33%, 29% and 39% respectively in 2017).



12. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the following government procurement activities?



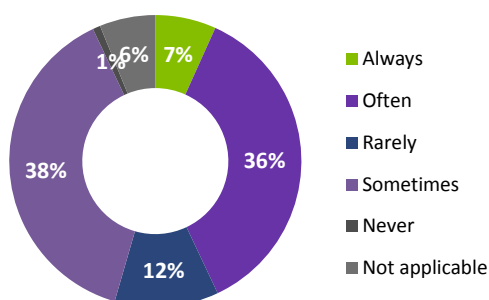
Quality of tender activities

Clarity, sufficiency of information, time to response, and feedback

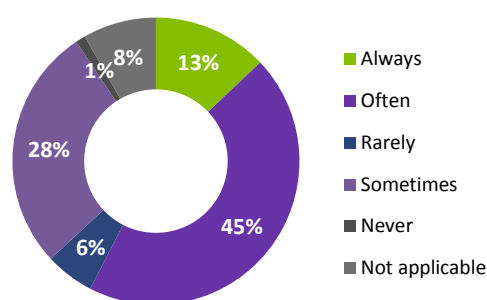
13. **Tender clarity:** Approximately 43% of respondents said the information in tender documents was always or often easy to understand. However 38% said it was sometimes easy to understand while a further 13% said it was rarely or never easy to understand.
14. **Sufficiency of information:** Over half (58%) of respondents said the information provided was always or often sufficient while 28% said sometimes, and 7% said rarely or never.
15. **Time provided to respond to government tenders:** Around 35% said they always or often have enough time to respond while 35% said they sometimes have enough time and 23% said they rarely or never have enough time to respond.
16. **Feedback after a tender response:** Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents said they always or often receive a follow-up from government agencies after they bid for a tender with 32% saying it is always or often helpful.

On average, how would you rate the following aspects of the tender documents provided by government agencies?

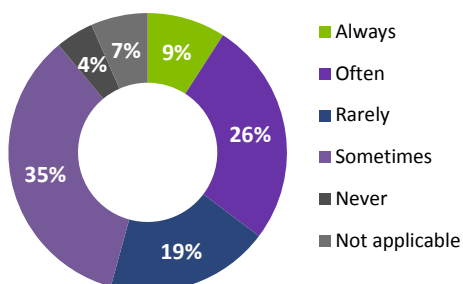
13. The information is easy to understand



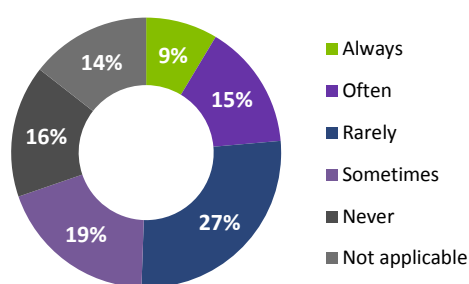
14. They give all the information I need



15. Do you generally have enough time to respond during the procurement process?



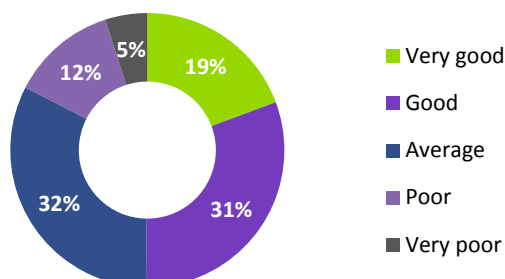
16. After you bid for a tender what follow-up (eg debrief) is generally provided by government agencies?



Quality of contract management activities

Overall quality of contract management

17. Half (50%) of respondents positively rated the overall quality of contract management while 32% said it was average and 17% said it was poor or very poor.



18. Providers were asked to rate how satisfied they were with various aspects of their contract manager's performance. Approximately 64% of respondents positively rated the level of professionalism and knowledge followed by over half of respondents (58%) positively rating the the timing of transactions. Further results can be found in **Appendix 1**.

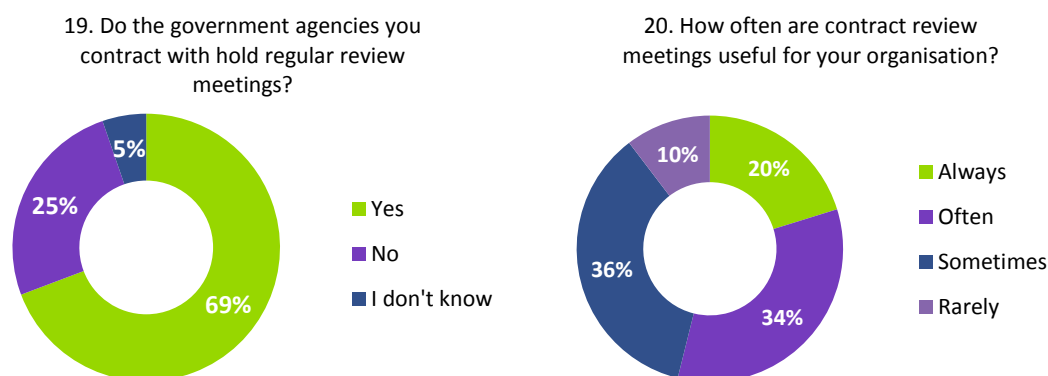
Table 3: Positive ratings for contract manager's performance

Area of contract manager performance	Positive rating	
	2017	2018
Level of professionalism and knowledge	60%	64%
Clear communication	56%	55%
Timing of transactions	46%	58%
Quality of decision making	44%	45%
Openness to innovation or new ideas	35%	46%
Incentivising performance	20%	31%

Contract review meetings

19. The majority (69%) of respondents reported they had regular contract review meetings with the agencies they worked with.

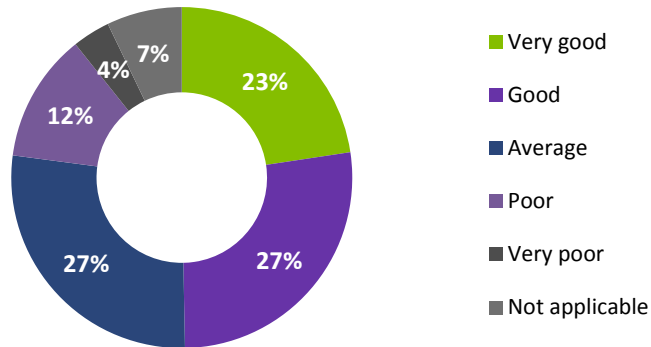
20. Over half (54%) of respondents said contract review meetings were always (20%) and often (34%) useful.



Relationship management

21. Half (50%) of respondents positively rated their relationship with government agencies while 27% rated it as average and 16% rated it as poor or very poor. This is a significant improvement from last year when 37% positively rated their relationship.

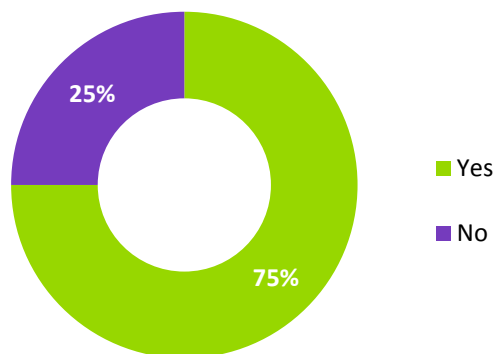
21. How would you rate how government agencies manage their supplier relationships?



Success factors and barriers when bidding for government contracts

Confidence

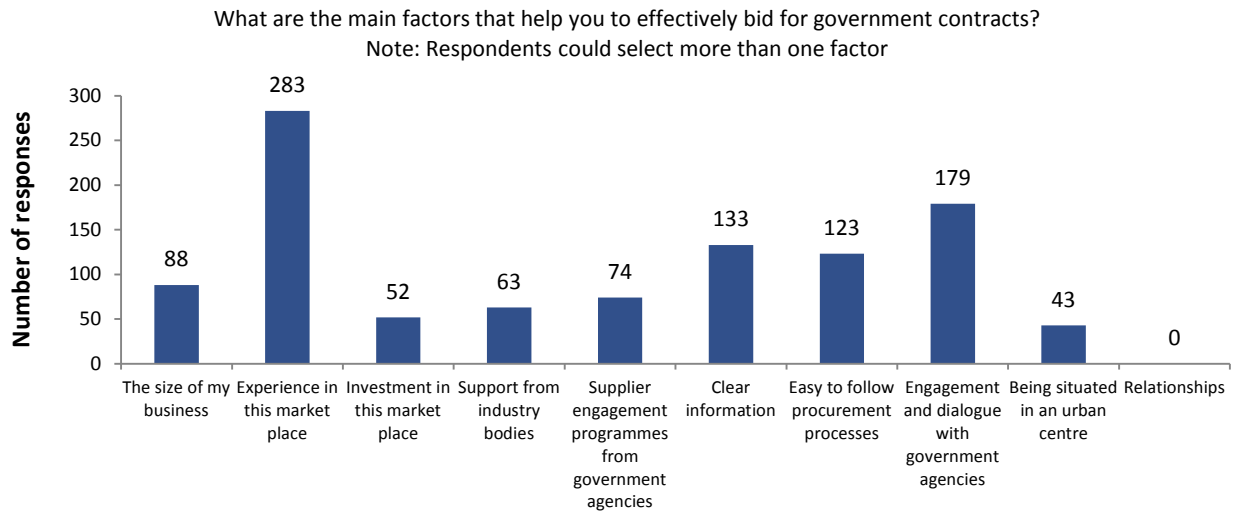
22. When asked if they can effectively bid for government contracts, 75% of respondents felt they could effectively bid.



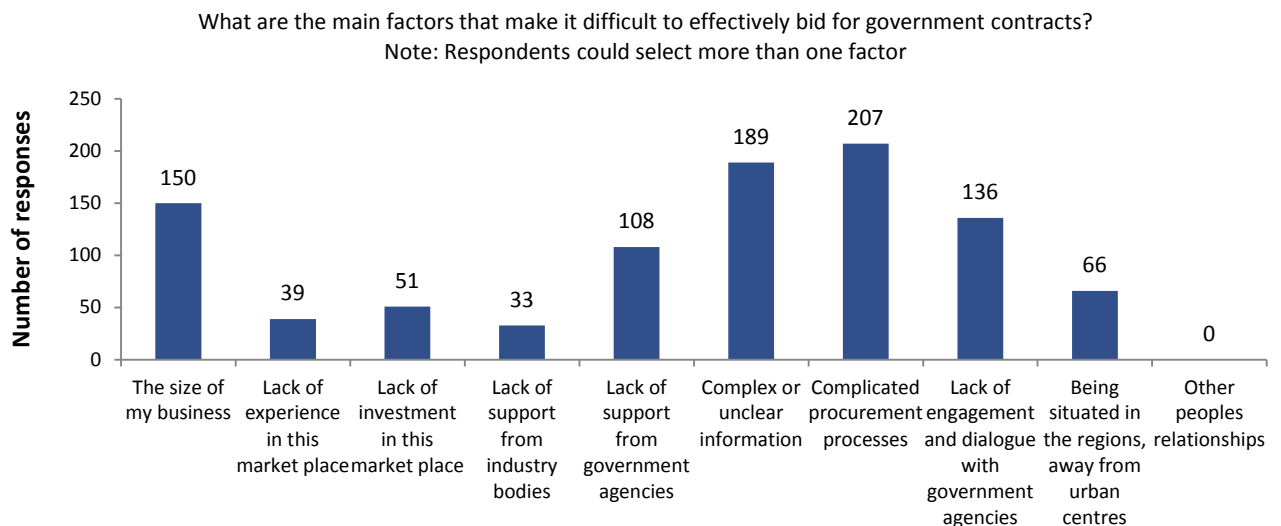
Success factors and barriers

23. Respondents were asked to select from a list of eight factors those that helped them to bid effectively for government contracts the most, and which factors reduced bid effectiveness the most.

Success factors



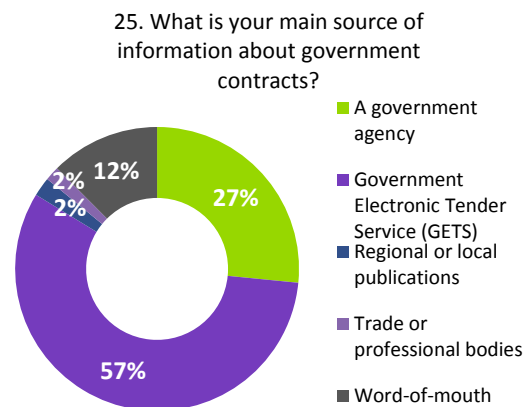
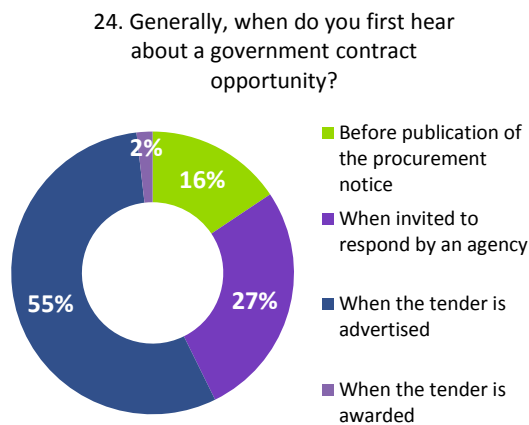
Barriers



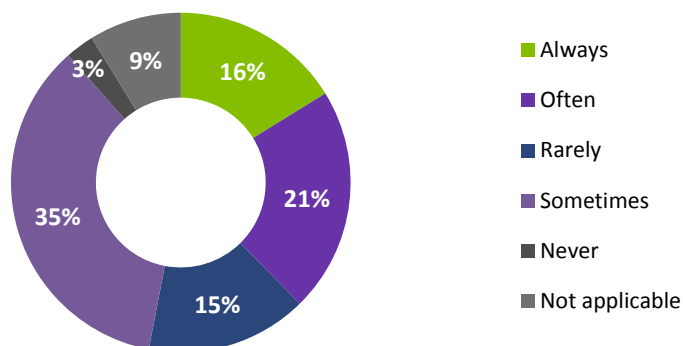
Bidding for government contracts

Knowing about contract opportunities

- 24. Over half (55%) of respondents first heard about a government contract opportunity when it was advertised, while 27% first heard about it when invited to respond by an agency and 16% first heard about it before publication of the notice.
- 25. Over half (57%) of respondents said their main source of information about government contracts was through the Government Electronic Tender Services (GETS), while 27% said through a government agency.
- 26. When asked how openly government officials discussed their requirements with providers when they asked for more information about a contract opportunity, 37% responded positively (saying openly) while 38% responded negatively (saying not openly).



- 26. How openly have government officials discussed their requirements when you have asked for more information about a contract opportunity?



Government asking for improvements

27. Providers were asked how often the government agency or agencies asked them to do a range of things such as improve their products and services.

Table 4: Government asking for improvements

Area	2017			2018		
	Sometimes	Often	Always	Sometimes	Often	Always
Improve management practices and reporting	23%	10%	5%	22%	10%	6%
Improve products and services	21%	10%	4%	23%	11%	6%
Improve health and safety management practices and reporting	19%	9%	3%	20%	7%	5%
Use digital technology more often (ICT, online processes)	17%	13%	3%	18%	11%	6%
Increase staff training and development	14%	7%	2%	16%	8%	3%
Use product standards more often	12%	4%	1%	13%	7%	3%
Use other technologies (eg new/improved machines)	11%	3%	1%	11%	4%	1%

Generally the results are similar to last year with slightly more providers saying government always asks for improvements across the areas listed above.

Government adopting providers' ideas

28. Providers were asked how often their ideas to develop the following areas were adopted by the government agency or agencies.

Table 5: Government adopting providers' ideas

Area	2017			2018		
	Sometimes	Often	Always	Sometimes	Often	Always
Improve management practices and reporting	16%	9%	1%	22%	11%	4%
Improve products and services	20%	9%	1%	22%	11%	5%
Improve health and safety management practices and reporting	9%	3%	1%	17%	6%	4%
Use digital technology more often (ICT, online processes)	10%	3%	0%	17%	8%	2%
Increase staff training and development	14%	5%	1%	15%	8%	3%
Use product standards more often	11%	1%	1%	19%	7%	3%
Use other technologies (eg new/improved machines)	8%	1%	1%	10%	4%	1%

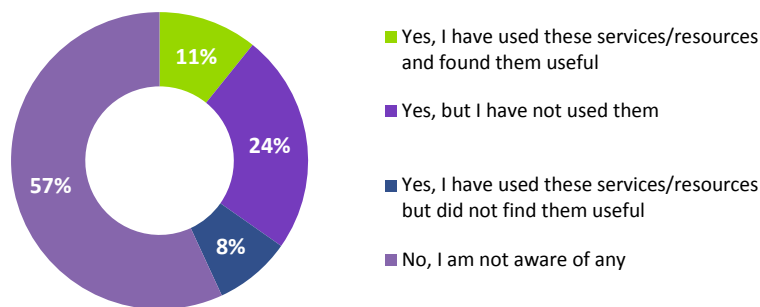
Across all areas and ratings there was an increase from the previous year, particularly regarding improving health and safety.

Awareness of advisory services/resources and complaints processes

29. Over half (57%) of respondents were not aware of any advisory services or supplier/provider resources offered by government agencies. From the remaining 43% who knew about them:

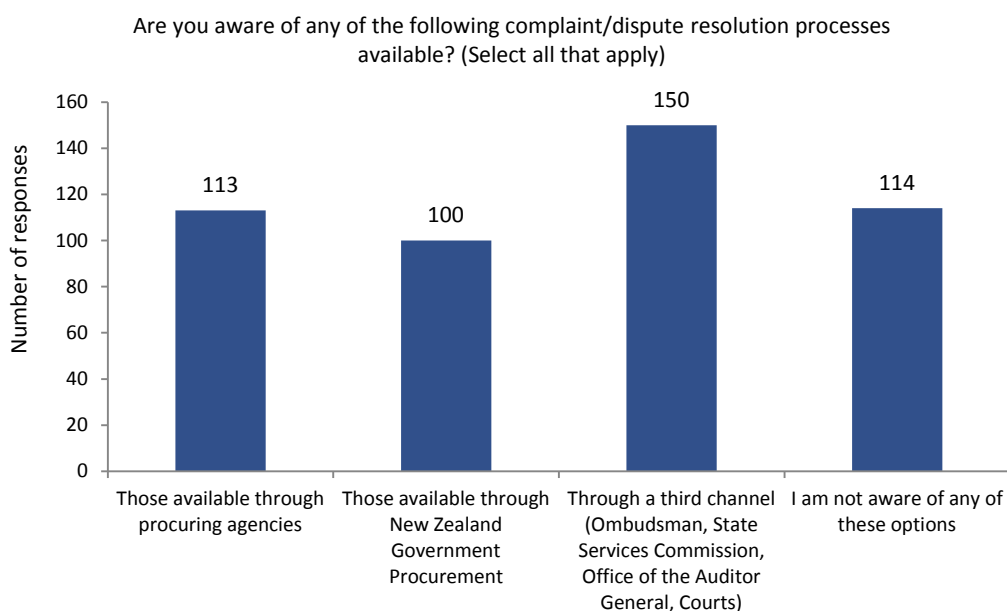
- almost a quarter (24%) had not used them
- 8% had used them but not found them useful, and
- only 11% had used them and found them useful.

29. Are you aware of any advisory services or supplier resources offered by New Zealand government agencies?



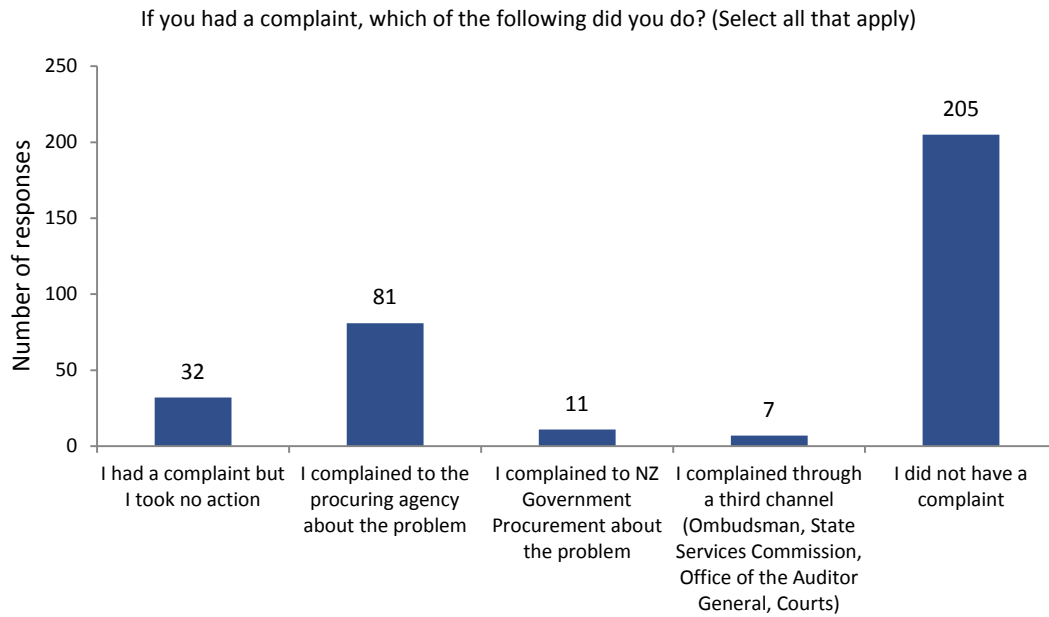
Awareness and use of complaints processes

30. Providers were asked if they were aware of specific complaint/dispute resolution processes.² Around 28% of respondents (114) were not aware of any options while around a quarter or more were aware of each of the processes outlined in the graph below.

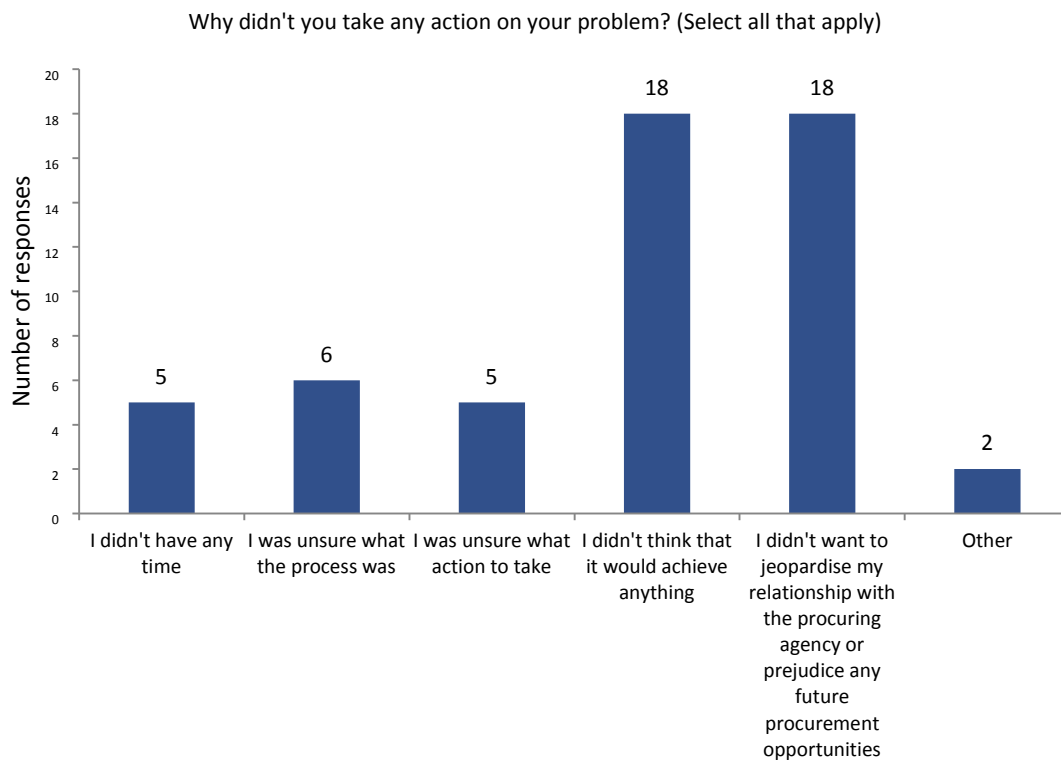


² Note providers could select more than one therefore the results are presented as numbers not percentages.

31. Eighty-one providers said they complained to the procuring agency about the problem while 32 had a complaint but took no action.

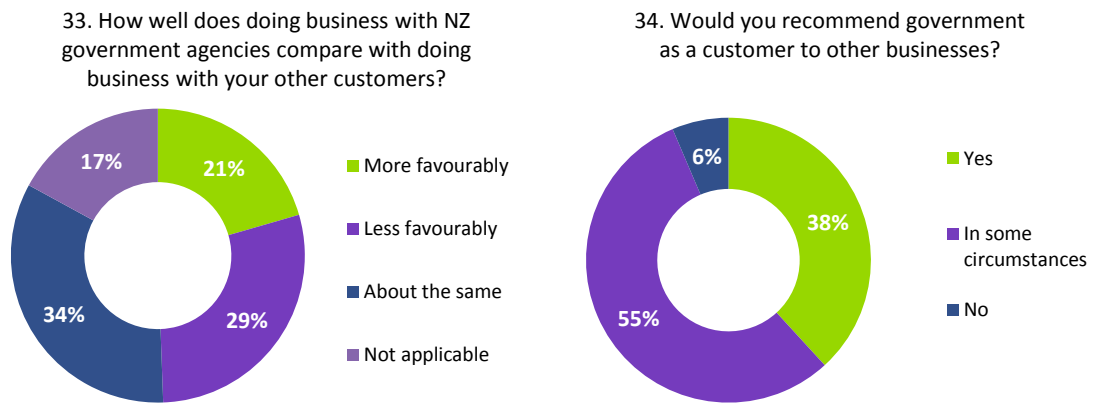


32. Of these, 18 providers said they didn't take any action because either they didn't think it would achieve anything or they didn't want to jeopardise any future procurement opportunities they might have.



Government as a buyer

33. Providers were asked to rate how government agencies compare with their other customers. Over a quarter 29% said about the same, 8% more favourably and 34% said not favourably. Last year 39% said about the same.
34. Respondents were also asked whether they would recommend government as a customer to other businesses. Over half (55%) said they would in some circumstances while 38% said yes, and 6% said no. Last year 29% said yes.



Comments from providers

This year the volume of comments was far greater compared to last year - most likely due in part to the greater number of providers participating. Survey participants were provided with an opportunity to add in a comment for the following questions:

- What differences (if any) do you see with how government agencies manage contracts compared to your other customers?
- What are the main factors that help you effectively bid for government contracts?
- What are the main barriers that hinder you from effectively bidding for government contracts?
- Would you recommend government as a customer to other businesses?

The majority of the comments were provided in response to the first question listed above. All of the comments have been summarised into key themes and provide useful guidance for government agencies. The Social Services Procurement Team at MBIE will also use this information to inform our work programme and future training and guidance for government agencies.

Similar to last year, four strong themes were:

Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and consider alternatives • Have more regular engagement, face to face discussions, consistent, long-term, meaningful relationships • Be more responsive and helpful, transparent, open, honest, inclusive, and respectful
Fair and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple, efficient, transparent, fair processes • Be consistent and fair • Be more transparent, open and honest
Easier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use everyday language and provide clear information about what is sought after • Have a good idea of what you want before commencing the tender process • Increase the timeframes for RFP deadlines • Provide an opportunity to present a solution in person
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to redesigning/improving services that have been contracted for years • Being open to new initiatives and working in a holistic model

Several providers explained the importance of **clear information** in terms of understanding what the government was looking to procure and if it was something they could deliver. When the information wasn't clear and the process was time consuming, some providers felt they had wasted a lot of time submitting an unsuccessful application.

"The process of my last tender took over 80 hours to do. Most of that was trying to make sense of the inconsistent direction and poor communication."

"It's never clear exactly what the government is after so could be a waste of time putting in a tender to respond to an RFP."

Longer contracts and adequate **funding** also featured strongly as did **greater consistency across government**. Many providers said it was hard to generalise across the different government agencies when completing the survey as some were really good and others were not so good to work with. Many said that greater consistency, standards, and standardised processes across government agencies would help.

“Most agencies have moved toward standardised best practice guidelines around procurement that really improves our lives. However some have not and it makes the process complex, onerous and costs a lot of money to respond.”

New themes emerging this year included:

- **Increase cultural awareness** among government agency staff members when working with providers and in particular, a greater understanding of Māori culture.
- **More understanding and knowledge** about the services and the nature of the work with some providers suggesting high staff turn-over as a reason for why staff had limited knowledge.
- The **type of relationship** providers wanted with government focused more on a partnership approach.
- Getting **useful feedback** was seen as important to help improve.
- **Site visits and face-to-face meetings** – providers want staff to visit, to see the service in action, and to provide helpful insights and advice.
- **Making GETS more user-friendly** – and to make the information clearer, the process easier to follow, and allow more engagement.

A selection of participant’s comments is outlined in the table below against the new themes.

Cultural awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Become more Māori culturally aware.</i> ● <i>Other customers invest time to get an in depth understanding of the outcomes they are seeking to achieve and apply Te Ao Māori values to imported internal models.</i> ● <i>Recognise Māori want to work in cultural paradigms and they work for our people.</i>
More understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>There is a very low level of understanding on the subject matter which hinders innovation.</i> ● <i>They need to be able to understand the environment that the NGO sector works in and be more supportive and understanding rather than judgemental and critical without really knowing the details.</i> ● <i>Provide opportunity for feedback on issues around contract delivery and be open to varying contracts to reflect on the ground experiences and learnings that arise through service delivery once contracts are implemented. In addition, it would be very helpful to have more initial consultation within the sector when government is developing contracts.</i> ● <i>Difficult to work with as they do not see life from an NGO perspective and are often ill-informed.</i> ● <i>Have people that actually understand the nature of the work we do. We are often having to upskill and educate officials on the work we do.</i>

Cultural awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Become more Māori culturally aware.</i> • <i>Other customers invest time to get an in depth understanding of the outcomes they are seeking to achieve and apply Te Ao Māori values to imported internal models.</i> • <i>Recognise Māori want to work in cultural paradigms and they work for our people.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It would help if the government agency really understood what a smaller supplier could offer and what we usually do offer anyway because it's our passion.</i> • <i>More understanding of the business realities rather than what agencies think it should be.</i>
Type of Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government does not often act like a partner...more like a servant/master relationship.</i> • <i>We are not in a business customer relationship so changing that mind-set may help. We are a community service provider.</i> • <i>Our organisation struggles with the imposition of a profit-oriented business model to not-for-profit organisation.</i> • <i>Communication is one way. We are told what to do.</i> • <i>Government agencies tend to take a command and control approach. There is an expectation that suppliers are subservient to the demand of government. This approach does not embody Manaakitanga. Suppliers are less likely to feel like valued partners with shared interests in addressing issues. Other customers value what we bring to the partnership and are open to learning along the way.</i> • <i>Government see themselves as the power holders and don't hesitate to exercise that 'sense of power' eg 'well if you don't like it we will just get someone else' can be a prevailing attitude which is a real killer of innovation and improvement.</i> • <i>Power imbalance – we are providing a service to the government that they themselves can't fulfil, they are servants of the people rather than us being beholden to them.</i> • <i>There is a very low level of understanding on the subject matter which hinder innovation.</i>
Useful feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meaningful feedback following the process so organisations can learn, understand what the department were looking for and improve for the future.</i> • <i>More feedback after RFPs both successful and unsuccessful. It's important to me to know what went well and what didn't.</i>
Site visits, face-to-face meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More face-to-face meetings and visits, meet the governance board, meet service recipients, understand the opportunities and challenges.</i> • <i>Meet with us and ask us how you can help us instead of always asking us to do better, differently, more.</i> • <i>Physically inspect and meet the business initiatives of the operating processes in on the ground floor.</i> • <i>More personnel on the ground as opposed to central based.</i>
Making GETS more user-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>GETS is an awkward machine to work with. It should be more user-friendly for smaller services.</i> • <i>The GETS advertised ones are frequently not clear or are complicated or allow no engagement so when the bid is via this mechanism these factor make it difficult.</i>

Cultural awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Become more Māori culturally aware.</i> • <i>Other customers invest time to get an in depth understanding of the outcomes they are seeking to achieve and apply Te Ao Māori values to imported internal models.</i> • <i>Recognise Māori want to work in cultural paradigms and they work for our people.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The final submission of the tender was hard to work out and meant we nearly missed the deadline.</i>

Positive comments from providers

There were also many more positive comments from providers this year. Most were general in nature with some clustering around the themes of relationships and processes.

Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Government is becoming much better at working in partnership with providers. This is a good development.</i> • <i>A great partner when all parties are engaged.</i> • <i>When the government agency has come and does the initial engagement in a face-to-face dialogue it's been very good.</i> • <i>Feedback loops are more immediate, if there are issues then there is active management and resolution.</i>
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear and easy most of the time.</i> • <i>They have clear processes which includes relationship management.</i>
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expectations are clear and measurable.</i> • <i>They are usually really great.</i> • <i>Find government agencies positive and good to work with.</i> • <i>Our local government funders are extremely supportive.</i> • <i>There are some awesome people within government who can be truly helpful to our service.</i> • <i>They are good to work with and have professional staff.</i> • <i>They are willing to understand the environment you work in.</i> • <i>Very competent – they work well with us.</i>

Helpful suggestions from providers

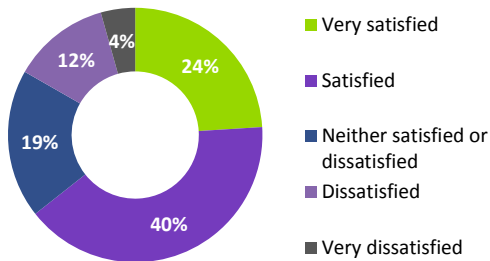
Finally, there were several helpful suggestions from providers:

- *Having some supporting guidelines, exemplars to support us in understanding how best to answer the question and what sort of information is required.*
- *More procurement information and workshops.*
- *Provide some training for small players to showcase their skills more effectively when tendering for work.*
- *Tender newsletters and increase communication.*
- *An online real-time reporting system.*
- *The webinars are helpful so keep these up please.*

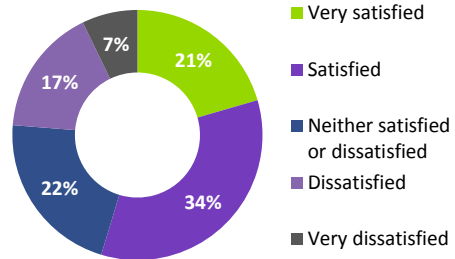
Appendix 1: Further detailed results

Quality of contract management

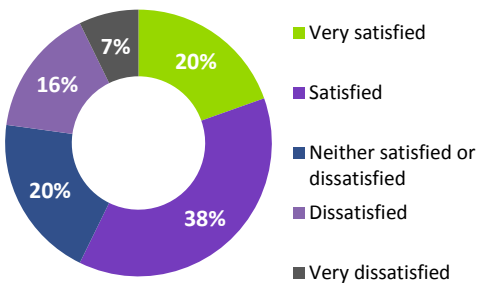
The level of professionalism and knowledge



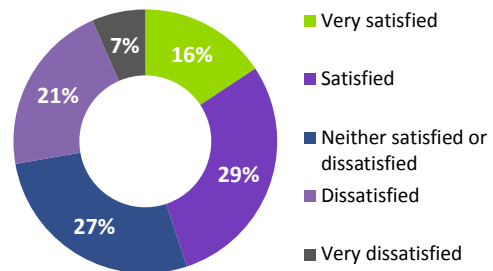
Clear communication



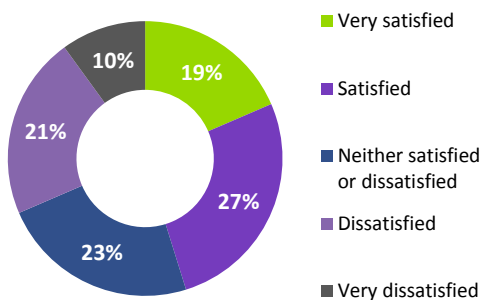
The timing of transactions



The quality of decision making



Openness to innovation or new ideas



Incentivising performance

