



ONTARIO
ENERGY
BOARD

OEB Response to Ipsos Survey Results

CONTEXT

The OEB conducted an online stakeholder survey of 255 stakeholders in late 2020, with design and development support from the market research firm, Ipsos. Stakeholders surveyed included electricity and natural gas distributors, transmitters, retailers, marketers, USMPs, storage providers, intervenors and some other select industry associations and business groups. A total of 113 stakeholders completed the survey, representing a 44 per cent response rate.

The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from stakeholders that would provide a baseline level of performance which could help inform a gap analysis and serve as a starting point for measuring OEB improvement going forward. The OEB Response includes 14 observations from the feedback received, that are organized under five distinct categories: **1) Performance as a Regulator; 2) Trust and Confidence; 3) Adjudicative Hearings; 4) Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement; and 5) OEB Communications.** An OEB response has been prepared for each observation and select initiatives have been cited for each, including many that align back to our Business Plan, Top Quartile Regulator initiative, and Strategic Plan.

Stakeholder feedback is very important in that it will assist us in effectively delivering a modernized OEB and will help inform the development of new key performance indicators that focus on decision cycle time, organizational excellence and stakeholder satisfaction.

PERFORMANCE AS A REGULATOR

Overall satisfaction with the OEB as a regulator: 37% satisfied

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB is delivering on its responsibilities

- **46% satisfied**

OEB consults with stakeholders outside of the formal adjudicative process

- **37% satisfied**

OEB is operationally effective

- **35% satisfied**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will communicate early, clearly and in a timely and transparent manner with stakeholders including how regulatory policies and processes deliver on the organization's mandate.

OEB is committed to enhancing protocols for communications with external stakeholders and undertaking website enhancements as committed in the OEB Business Plan 2021-24.

OEB will operationalize new approaches to improve and enhance engagement with stakeholders outside of adjudicative processes.

OEB will institute pre-meetings and debriefs with utilities for major applications. Commissioners will also participate in the applicant orientation session and OEB is looking to create an Adjudicative Modernization Committee.

OEB is reviewing its internal Performance Management Framework. Existing KPIs will be examined and revised, new KPIs will be developed. This is part of our ongoing continuous improvement cycle.

OEB will strive to achieve performance outcomes outlined in the forthcoming Strategic Plan and deliver on the Top Quartile Regulator report.

TRUST & CONFIDENCE

The level of trust that stakeholders have in the OEB to make decisions about rates and the electricity and natural gas systems that are in the best interests of Ontarians: 52% positive

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB makes decisions in an independent manner

- **38% agree**

OEB is fair, well-reasoned and responsive to stakeholders in developing policy

- **Fair – 45% positive**
- **Well-reasoned – 50% positive**
- **Responsive – 30% positive**

OEB RESPONSE

The *OEB Act, 1998*, and the new Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Chair of the OEB speak to the independence of the OEB on adjudicative matters in particular. Further Commissioner training will also be implemented as part of the Chief Commissioner Plan.

The OEB will be transparent about the drivers for developing policy, i.e. prompted by government directive vs. internally generated, and will ensure project and consultation plans around directives are made public where appropriate so that work is traceable.

OEB will clearly articulate purpose, objectives and scope when developing new policies and will consult with stakeholders on policy priorities. OEB is developing an improved Stakeholder Engagement Framework to ensure stakeholders are informed and consulted and their input is heard and considered.

As set out in the Business Plan and the Top Quartile Regulator Report, an Engagement Guide will also be developed that will include principles and options for consulting on policy matters.

OEB will implement an annual Policy Day to obtain stakeholder input on policy prioritization as well as input to business and strategic planning.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB is fair, well-reasoned and responsive in making decisions

- **Fair – 47% positive**
- **Well-reasoned – 45% positive**
- **Responsive – 30% positive**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will continue to ensure best practices and procedural fairness are adhered to while improving efficiency of adjudication.

OEB will review and enhance internal protocol documents around roles and responsibilities between Commissioners, OEB staff and parties to a proceeding, to ensure everyone involved has a clear understanding of responsibilities for each step of the regulatory process.

ADJUDICATIVE HEARINGS

Overall satisfaction with OEB’s efficiency, effectiveness and independence of adjudicative proceedings: Efficiency - 27% satisfied, Effectiveness - 34% satisfied, Independence - 38% satisfied

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB makes decisions in a timely manner

- **37% positive**

OEB processes applications efficiently

- **33% positive**

OEB manages intervenor process efficiently

- **27% positive**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will continue to improve the efficiency of adjudication while ensuring best practices and procedural fairness.

Several initiatives are already underway or are in the planning stages as part of the Chief Commissioner Plan. Examples include: implementation of pilot programs to allow stakeholders to monitor proceedings and expected decision date, implementation of enhanced workload and Commissioner resource forecasting.

OEB will review intervenor processes to identify opportunities to operationalize efficiencies and to ensure process provides substantive value, while ensuring broad representation.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB right-sizes filing requirements for applications and asks only for information that is needed

- **18% satisfied**
- **58% say filing requirements most burdensome**

OEB RESPONSE

As outlined in the Chief Commissioner Plan, work is underway to define “substantial” interest for the purposes of intervening in proceedings. A jurisdictional review will also be undertaken to inform strategies for improvement and opportunities for reduction in overlap and duplication.

OEB will consider strategies to reduce filing requirements and avoid overlap and duplication of information to be filed.

Efforts are underway to adapt the application process to size of the local distribution company and to reduce costs to end-use customers. OEB is also looking to assess the potential for greater reliance on data submitted through the Reporting and Record-Keeping Requirements (RRRs) for non-incentive rate applications.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

Overall satisfaction that OEB’s consultation and engagement activities are relevant: 46% positive

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB consults with stakeholders on the right policy issues

- **33% positive**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will establish a framework to provide enterprise-wide governance on OEB’s approach to stakeholder engagement to improve overall transparency and stakeholder satisfaction.

OEB will establish an annual Policy Day to consult with stakeholders on areas of priority.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB coordinates engagement with government and other agencies to avoid stakeholder fatigue

- **23% positive**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will operationalize a Stakeholder Engagement Framework that provides effective scheduling while reducing any duplicative engagement efforts.

OEB will create a dedicated stakeholder web page including a calendar of stakeholder consultations and engagements.

OEB facilitates innovation in the energy sector

- **16% positive**

OEB will work with stakeholders to facilitate innovation and regulate only when necessary. Projects outlined in the Business Plan will be focused on and driven forward. Some project examples include: Framework for Energy Innovation: Distributed Resources and Utility Incentives; Distributed Energy Resources Connections; implementation of enhancements to the Regional Planning process; and, renewal and enhancement of the Innovation Sandbox.

OEB COMMUNICATIONS

Overall satisfaction with OEB's channels of communication with stakeholders: 50% positive

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

OEB continues to enhance digital communication

- **93% of stakeholders prefer pertinent communication through electronic forms**

OEB RESPONSE

OEB will continue to pursue digital enhancements where possible.

As per the Business Plan, OEB will be looking to automate the licensing process and IRM applications.

OEB improves and enhances the Industry Relations Enquiry (IRE) system

- **Participant Comments**

OEB recently completed an internal audit of the IRE system and will review and consider recommendations where appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The 2020 Ipsos Stakeholder Survey paints a stark picture of the perceived shortcomings of the OEB. Like the Modernization Review Panel Report, the survey results are a clear call for change and will require thoughtful and deliberate actions to address the gaps and shortcomings of the organization. Through detailed analysis of the survey results, the OEB has developed a concrete plan to move forward in five key areas of focus. The OEB is committed to gaining deeper insights from stakeholders, and this survey will be repeated again in late 2021 and 2022 to measure the outcomes of the initiatives and actions that are currently underway.

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