



SUMMARY REPORT

2022 on CINEA Services

Satisfaction Survey

CINEA's mission is to support stakeholders in delivering the European Green Deal through high-quality programme management

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES

This summary report presents the results of the first CINEA services satisfaction survey exercise launched on 25 April 2022. Approximately 2,400 unique¹ recipients were approached to fill in the survey, which remained open for three weeks.

CINEA services satisfaction survey is the main qualitative indicator in the Agency's key performance framework as established in its [2021 Annual Work Programme](#) (AWP). It is performed every two years and is the instrument through which the Agency measures the applicants/beneficiaries/contractors' level of satisfaction with its services. Furthermore, it gives the opportunity to the Agency's counterparts to provide direct feedback that serves as a base for further improvement of the provided services.

THE TARGET SET IN THE
2021 AWP IS AN OVERALL
SATISFACTION RATE OF MORE
THAN 90%

The objectives of the survey are to:

- » Receive feedback on the satisfaction with CINEA's services;
- » Collect ideas for improvement in the surveyed areas.

The expected outcomes of the survey are to:

- » Receive first-hand information from applicants, beneficiaries and contractors;
- » Maintain and improve the quality services provided by CINEA;
- » Consolidate CINEA as a top performing executive agency.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the survey was elaborated by a dedicated working group in close cooperation across all CINEA programmes and was approved by the Agency's management.

The survey was addressed to three focus groups:

- » successful and unsuccessful applicants for grants;
- » beneficiaries of grant agreements;
- » contractors of ongoing contracts.

Experts were excluded from the scope of the survey in order to keep it focused on project management activities and because they are regularly surveyed after evaluations.

The survey targeted only coordinators of projects (i.e. project partners were excluded) in order to reduce the respondents to a manageable number and because coordinators are those who deal directly with the Agency.

¹ Respondents were approached only once regardless of the number of applications, grant agreements or contracts they had.

The sampling was done assuming full continuation between legacy and new programmes and was composed of:

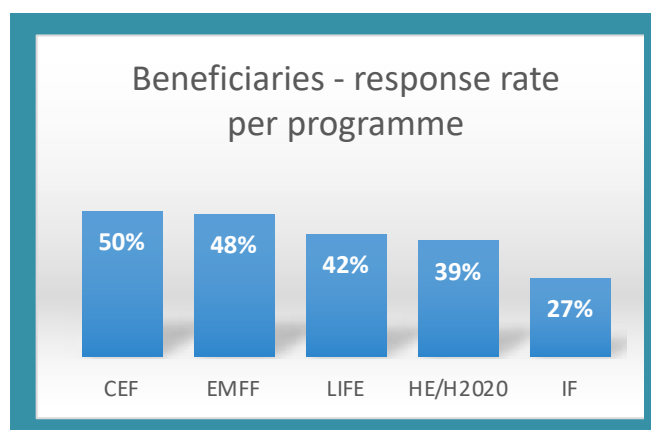
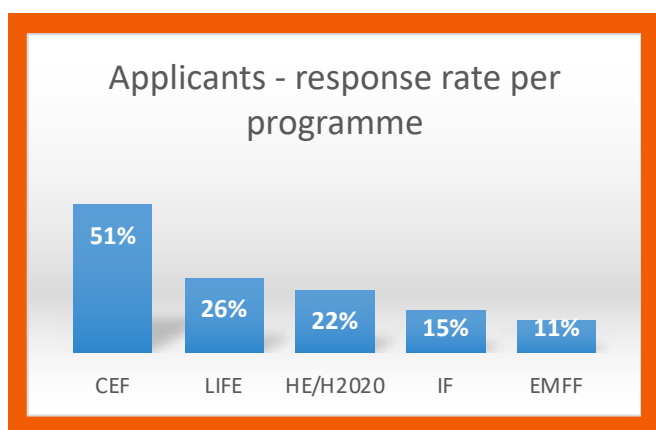
- » Successful and unsuccessful applicants from the latest closed call² per programme/ sector;
- » All contractors of ongoing tenders at the launch date of the survey;
- » All beneficiaries of grant agreements signed from the 2019 and 2020 calls, with the rationale to encompass:
 - projects that have gone through at least one reporting cycle (2019 calls);
 - projects with recent experience with the Agency such as grant agreement preparation after the establishment of CINEA (2020 calls).

The target set in the 2021 AWP was an overall satisfaction rate of more than 90%, measured through a dedicated question on the overall satisfaction asked to all respondents ('Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by CINEA?'). In addition, the survey contained questions relevant to CINEA's support throughout the entire grant management cycle. More specifically, it included questions on the following Agency activities:

- » Calls & Evaluations, including on the clarity of the information provided to applicants, the responsiveness of CINEA to questions and the usefulness of the feedback provided after the end of the evaluation process;
- » Grant management, including different aspects of the grant preparation process, the quality of the Agency's services during the implementation of the projects and the reasonableness of the monitoring and reporting requirements;
- » Communication, including the effectiveness of CINEA's communication activities and support provided to its beneficiaries to enhance the visibility of the funded projects.

2. RESPONSE RATE

A total of 2,469 unique³ recipients were approached to fill in the survey, which remained open for three weeks. Almost 800 replies were received resulting in an **overall response rate of 32%**. The response rate per target group was 23%, 42% and 36% for applicants, beneficiaries and contractors respectively. The higher response rate observed in the beneficiaries' group compared to the one of applicants could be explained by the longer lasting and stable relationship of the beneficiaries with the Agency.



² A call is considered closed when applicants have been informed.

³ Respondents were approached only once regardless of the number of applications, grant agreements or contracts they had.

Applicants

297 out of 1,276 approached applicants filled in the survey (23% response rate). Out of them 60% were successful and 40% unsuccessful. Among the programmes, CEF was the most represented with a 51% response rate, followed by LIFE and HE with 26% and 22% respectively. The IF and EMFF programmes registered a rather low response rate of 15% and 11% respectively⁴.

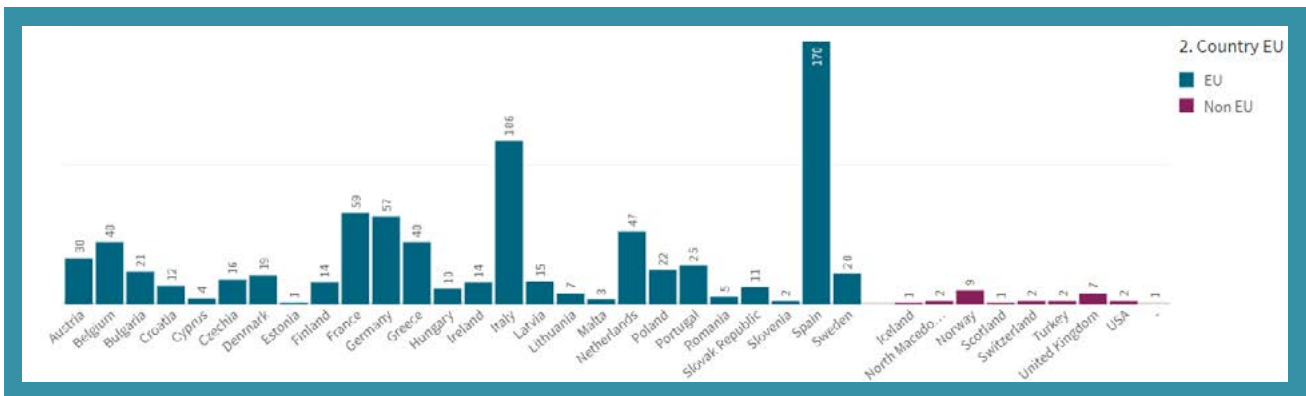
Beneficiaries

483 out of 1,146 approached beneficiaries⁵ filled in the survey (42% response rate). Among the programmes, CEF was again the most represented with a 50% response rate, followed by EMFF, LIFE and HE/H2020 with 48%, 42% and 39% respectively. The response rate for the IF was below the Agency's average and amounted to 27%.

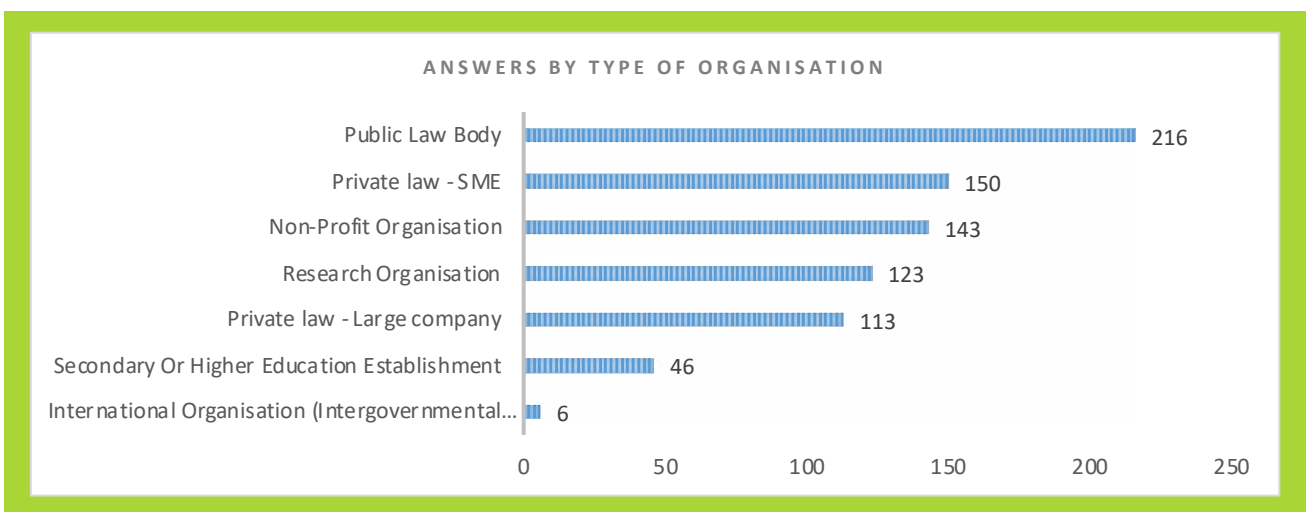
Contractors

In total, 17 out of 47 approached contractors⁶ filled in the survey (36% response rate).

In terms of geographical representation, replies were received from all EU countries except Luxembourg. The highest share of the replies came from Spain and Italy. Replies were also received from respondents in several non-EU countries, including the UK and Norway.



As far as the type of legal entity is concerned, the number one selected option was public law body. This could be explained by the high response rate in CEF as 188 out of the 216 public law body organisations that replied belong to this programme. The biggest share of SMEs came from H2020/HE followed by LIFE and EMFF. For non-profit organisations most of the respondents had applicants or projects under LIFE and HE/H2020.



⁴ To be noted that results for these two programmes might be biased by the low response rate.

⁵ To be noted that applicants with more than one projects were approached only once.

⁶ To be noted that contractors with more than one project were approached only once.

3. QUESTIONS ON SATISFACTION

3.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION

CINEA reached the target for the overall satisfaction rate set in its 2021 AWP as **93% of the respondents** in the three groups combined (applicants, beneficiaries and contractors) replied that they were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with CINEA’s services. Only 1% reported to be ‘very dissatisfied’ and 3% could not tell.

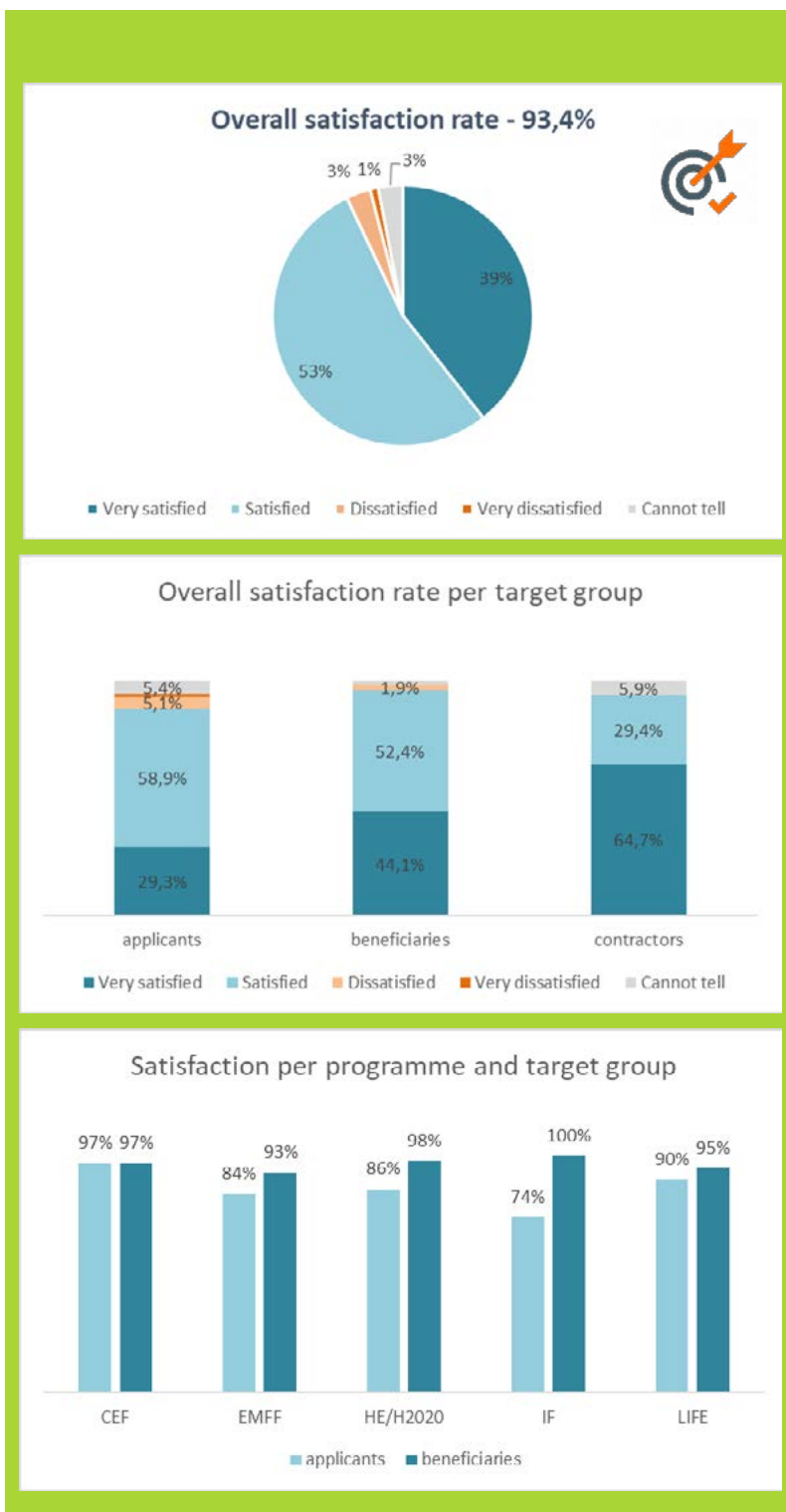
The satisfaction rate was higher for beneficiaries (96%) and contractors (94%) compared to applicants (88%). However, this may be due to the relatively high percentage of unsuccessful applicants that replied (40%).

At programme level, CEF scored above the average results for both applicants and beneficiaries whereas EMFF registered results slightly below the average for both target groups. For the other programmes, more fluctuations in the results between the two target groups were observed albeit close to the average in the case of LIFE and HE/H2020.

The main comments of dissatisfied applicants referred to the rejection of their proposals or to the difficulty encountered with the submission platform. Applicants who replied positively pointed out the quick replies received by CINEA, including its improved communication about the available funding opportunities.

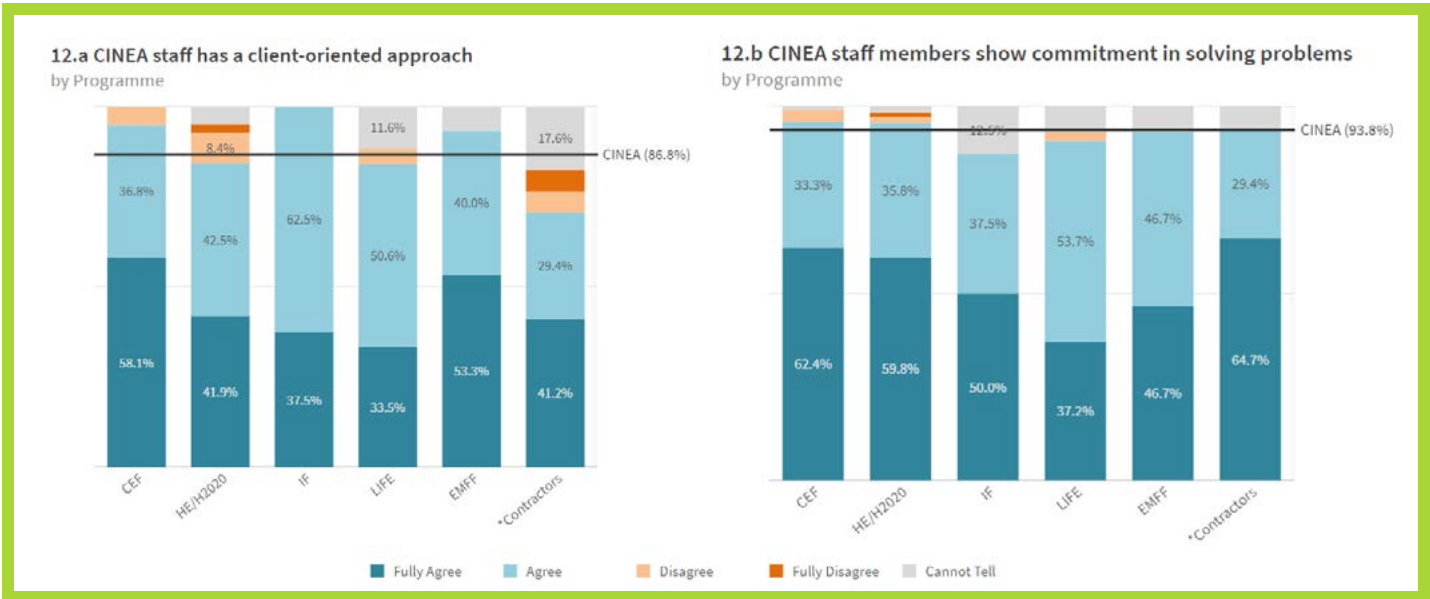
As to beneficiaries, in their comments they praised the Agency for ‘carrying out valuable work in a professional manner’ and qualified the experience with CINEA staff as ‘very good and cooperative’. However, some respondents pointed out that their level of satisfaction depended on their relationship with the Agency’s project managers, including the availability and individual approach of the latter. The change of project managers was also mentioned as an obstacle for smooth cooperation.

Contractors did not leave any relevant comments.



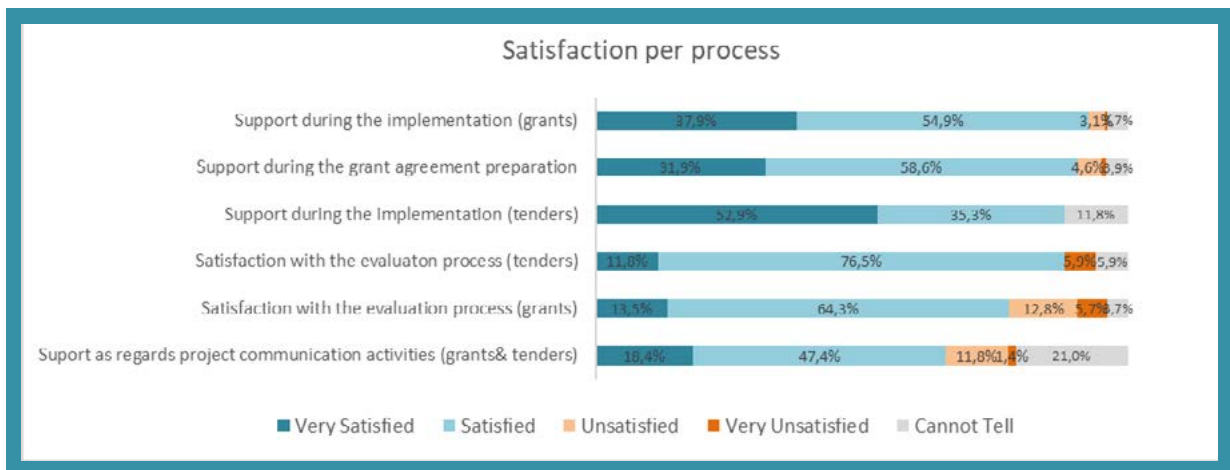
3.2 SATISFACTION WITH CINEA STAFF

Respondents from the beneficiaries and contractors' groups⁷ were asked to provide their satisfaction level regarding the client-oriented approach and commitment to solving problems of the Agency's staff. 94% of the respondents agreed that CINEA staff showed commitment in solving problems whereas a slightly lower percent – 87% replied positively as to whether the Agency's staff had a client – oriented approach. Detailed statistics per programme are shown in the graphs. Two of the programmes – CEF and EMFF - scored above CINEA's average to both questions. Innovation Fund respondents agreed at 100% that CINEA staff had a client-oriented approach whereas this percentage was only 70% for the contractors' group. Less divergence was observed in the replies concerning CINEA's staff commitment to solving problems with most programmes scoring close to the average of the Agency, with the exception of the IF, which registered 88%. However, no negative replies to these questions were registered from the IF respondents as the rest replied 'I cannot tell'.



3.3 SATISFACTION WITH CINEA'S SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE GRANT MANAGEMENT CYCLE

In addition to the overall satisfaction, the survey contained questions relevant to CINEA's support throughout the entire grant management cycle. The processes that gathered the **higher satisfaction** concerned CINEA's support during the **implementation of grants** (93%) and throughout the **grant agreement preparation phase** (91%). They were followed by the support provided during the implementation of contracts and the satisfaction with the evaluation of tenders (88% each). The processes that scored the lowest level of satisfaction were the evaluation of project proposals (78%) and the support provided to beneficiaries and contractors as regards project communication activities (66%).



⁷ Applicants were excluded as during the submission and evaluation phases contacts with the Agency staff are not allowed.

At programme level, replies varied across the different areas as follows:

- » Evaluation – CEF, LIFE and HE/H2020 registered satisfaction above the average, whereas the IF scored at the lower end, followed by EMFF with a score below the average;
- » Grant agreement preparation phase – the IF scored the highest satisfaction followed by CEF and HE/H2020. The overall satisfaction for LIFE and EMFF was slightly below the Agency’s average;
- » Communication – CEF and EMFF exceeded the Agency’s average and HE/H2020 met it. Contractors and LIFE beneficiaries registered results below the average. Half of the IF beneficiaries replied positively whereas the other half said that they could not tell.

4. KEY RESULTS AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The high overall score given by the applicants, beneficiaries and contractors confirms that CINEA is a top performer organisation and a trustworthy partner. Comments were left in this regard stating that the work of the Agency was considered of ‘an overall excellent level which concretely helps projects to achieve their results more effectively’. The Agency’s support throughout the grant agreement preparation and implementation phases were rated particularly high (over 90% satisfaction) and 94% of the beneficiaries and contractors agreed that CINEA staff showed commitment to solving problems. Support to tenders and contractors was also appreciated.

Simultaneously, replies showed that CINEA could further improve its services and suggestions from respondents that scored at the top of the lists were to:

- » Detail further the evaluation criteria and provide more details when evaluation results are communicated⁸;
- » Give more practical examples and provide more time for Q&A when info days are organised;
- » Organise as a standard practice at the start of the grant agreement preparation a meeting to discuss the process in advance;
- » Make reporting templates more user-friendly and simplify the reporting requirements⁹;
- » Improve time to amend;
- » Provide more information on the timing of the procurement and on the available tender opportunities.

CINEA’s communication activities require further efforts and particular areas of attention should be the Agency’s support to beneficiaries for disseminating project results and the provision of opportunities for exchange and networking.

In order to improve its services the Agency has drawn up an action plan based on the comments received by the respondents. The action plan will be implemented in 2023 and a new survey will be launched in 2024.

⁸ The request to provide more details when evaluation results are communicated scored high within both applicants and tenders.

⁹ Selected by both beneficiaries and contractors.

