

MFAT Stakeholder Research 2024

Report



Introducing Verian

Verian is the new name for Kantar Public (formerly Colmar Brunton).

Following our divestment from our former parent company, we are now an independent research and evaluation agency, providing evidence and advisory services to government and the public realm, across Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

Get in touch if you would like to know more.

Céline Yockney
Michael Winder



Powering decisions
that shape the world.

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Key findings

MFAT is seen as very consistent, which can be a double-edged sword

Stakeholder sentiment is mostly positive

The majority are satisfied and think MFAT is effective. Satisfaction continues to outperform Verian's stakeholder satisfaction benchmark.

More stakeholders understand MFAT's direction/purpose than in 2022, especially among NGOs.

Many individuals see the good and bad rather than having wholly negative or positive feelings towards MFAT, e.g. stakeholders may find individual staff especially good to work with but are less positive about how MFAT operates.

Sentiment overall has remained mostly consistent over time. MFAT is seen as a very stable organisation, which works both for and against MFAT who...

Consistently perform well on many key measures

but

Can be seen as unwilling/unable to change, with similar issues raised over time and a perception that MFAT is not taking feedback onboard.

Senior stakeholders are slightly more attuned to improvements, recognising a softening of the culture of superiority and attempts to improve transparency/visibility.

Stakeholders want to feel heard and see action

Although broadly positive, **stakeholders continue to identify similar areas for improvement** to previous years. There is a risk of increased stakeholder apathy:

"Quite frankly... I don't have the confidence that anything will change... nothing ever appears to change."

MFAT's approach can feel one-way and top-down. Many stakeholders value the advice they get from MFAT, but there is a sense that MFAT are not as good at receiving or acting on advice or information from stakeholders. MFAT's timing and approach when seeking feedback can also feel insincere and create frustration.

Stakeholders feel MFAT lacks diversity of thought internally and can also be seen as unwilling to listen to diverse thought from external sources.

While many Māori partners feel MFAT knows its role as a Treaty partner, they feel **MFAT falls short by not sufficiently valuing or utilising Māori knowledge or resources.**

Moving forward

With high levels of stability, the 2024 results suggest a need for more action to address ongoing stakeholder concerns, or better communication to inform stakeholders of changes that have been made and to promote success stories.

What MFAT continues to do well

Individual staff continue to be an asset and are generally seen as professional and competent, as well as passionate, committed and well respected.

Senior stakeholders in particular hold their working relationships with MFAT staff in very high regard.

MFAT also provide a breadth of knowledge and quality analysis.

MFAT is seen to be effective at advocating for New Zealand's interests, as well as understanding what matters to New Zealand. MFAT plays a role in achieving practical and demonstrable impacts for stakeholder's organisations (i.e. they actually make a difference)

What MFAT still needs to improve on

Staff rotation policies continue to cause frustration. As staff are a key driver of satisfaction, losing staff relationships can also drive dissatisfaction.

Stakeholders struggle with navigating MFAT's organisation and processes. Less than half of stakeholders think MFAT has easy to understand processes and are able to coordinate internally.

MFAT continues to be seen as too risk-averse, inhibiting fresh or innovative solutions.

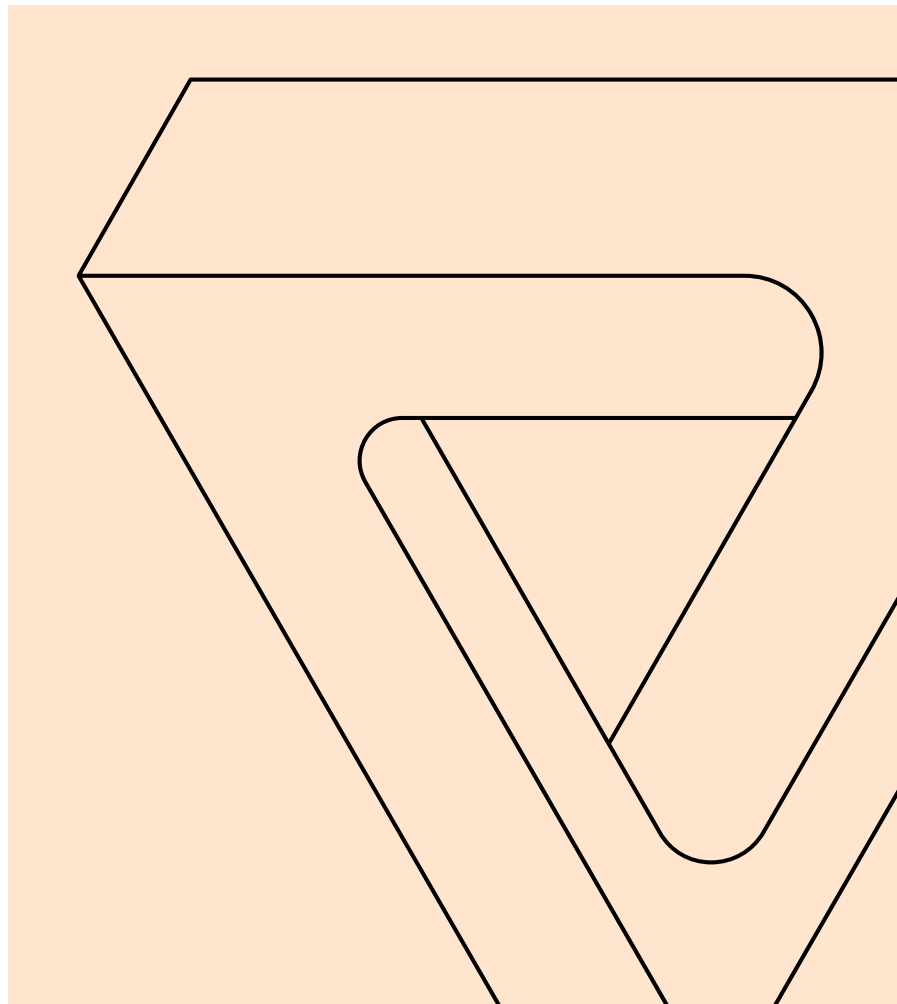
Some stakeholders feel there is insufficient collaboration or ability to function as a team when dealing with NZ Inc. **They also want a more sincere consultation process.**

Stakeholders want more clarity (and communication) around conflicting aspects of its remit, e.g. how MFAT balances trade with the environment.

Background

Objectives

MFAT aims to better understand their stakeholders through feedback on stakeholders' experiences and expectations in order to explore opportunities to improve stakeholder engagement.



Verian was commissioned to undertake qualitative and quantitative research with MFAT's stakeholders. In particular, the research aims to understand perceptions of how well MFAT...

- Performs overall
- Performs as a treaty partner
- Supports trade
- Advocates for Aotearoa
- Builds relationships

As well as stakeholders' familiarity and understanding of MFAT's...

- Strategy
- Direction overall
- Navigating its processes

The above are tracked over time, with comparisons made to the initial 2017 benchmark and subsequent rounds in 2019 and 2022.

Methodology – Quantitative survey



Approach

MFAT provided Verian with contact details for a broad range of stakeholders who were invited to take part in an online survey.

Surveying was from 10th April - 6th May 2024.

The survey was 12 minutes on average.

Significance

The maximum margin of error on a sample of 192 is 5.89% at the 95% confidence level.

Statistically significant changes year-on-year have been denoted on charts throughout with triangles. Significance has been calculated at the 95% confidence level.

Māori stakeholders

Questions specific to Māori were incorporated to understand the views of those who personally identify as Māori, work for a Māori organisation or an organisation with strong Māori ownership/values. The survey included 29 Māori stakeholders.

	Stakeholders contacted	Surveys complete	Response rate
2017	526	205	41%
2019	1250	325	26%
2022	1,343	268	20%
2024	622*	192	31%

A note on interpreting data

Base sizes (i.e. the number of responses a result is based on) are provided throughout. Some results are based on a smaller number of stakeholders e.g. where a question was not asked of all stakeholders, or when analysing results for a sub-group.

Results based on a smaller number of stakeholders can provide an indication of sentiment but must be treated with caution e.g. results may appear higher or lower than a previous wave, or when compared to the average, but this difference may not be statistically significant. Results based on 30 or fewer stakeholders have been identified with a blue dot throughout: ●

Methodology – Qualitative interviews

Qual

Approach

20 individual interviews were undertaken with senior stakeholders of MFAT, including:

- 6 NZ Inc. agencies
- 8 NZ Business Representatives
- 6 Māori Partners

Interviews were conducted online or by phone, and typically lasted around 45 minutes.

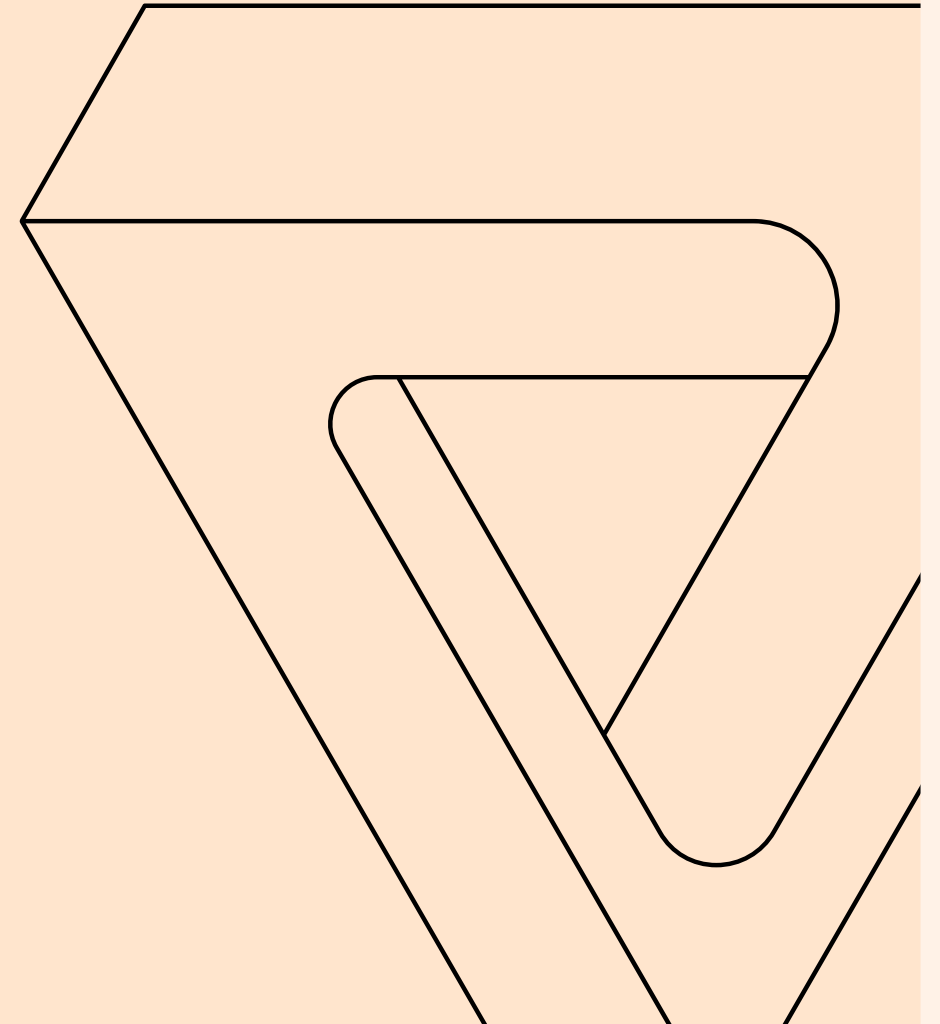
MFAT provided lists of stakeholders.

Fieldwork was completed during April and May 2024.

Note

The stakeholders who took part in the qualitative research hold senior positions within their organisations and tend to interact with MFAT primarily on strategic matters. Hence the term 'stakeholder' in the context of the qualitative findings refers to senior stakeholders. This is similar to qualitative research conducted in previous years.

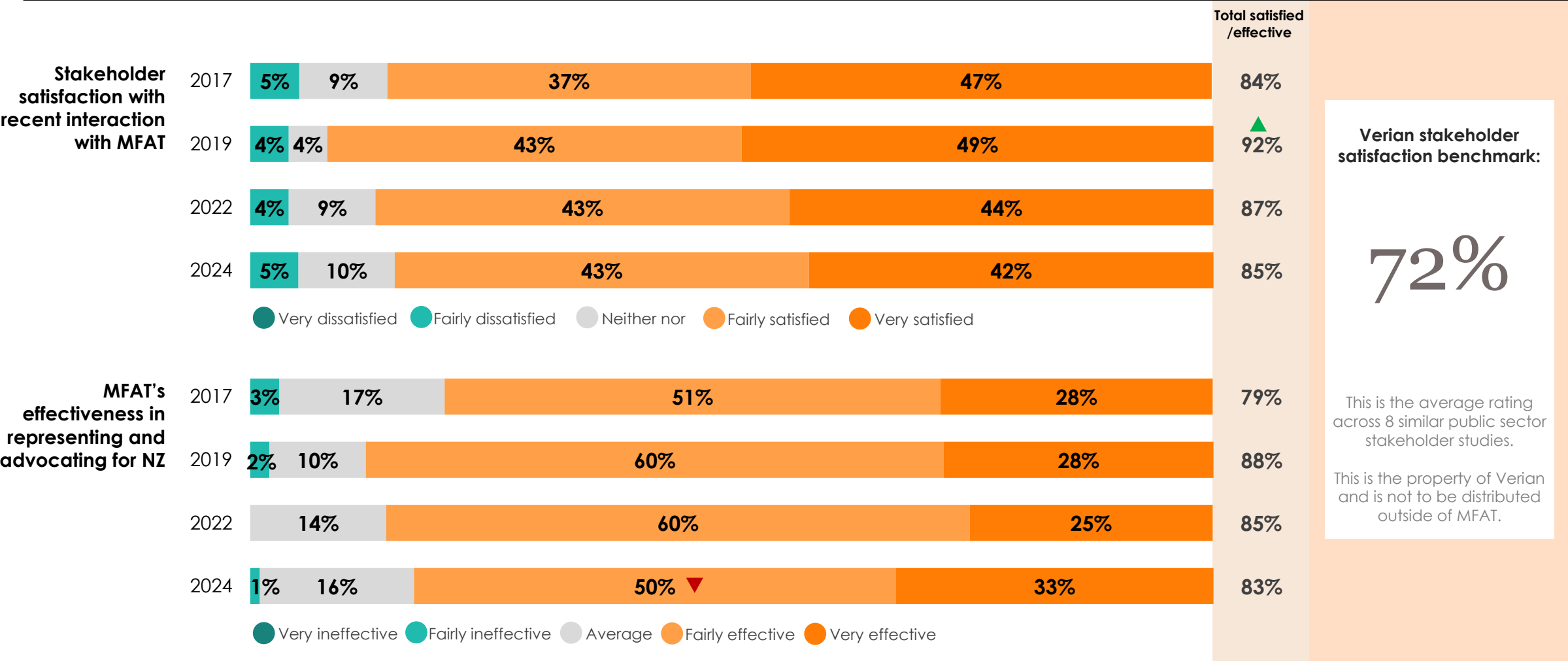
In the quantitative research, stakeholders who took part came from all levels of their organisation ranging from junior to more senior roles.



Overall perceptions of MFAT

Stakeholders remain positive about MFAT overall.

Over four in five stakeholders are satisfied with their recent interaction or find MFAT effective in advocating for New Zealand. This has remained stable over time and continues to outperform the Verian satisfaction benchmark.



Source: **Satisfaction:** M4B. Now please think about interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently. Although your views on staff are likely to vary depending on the staff members, the context, and the particular interactions, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently?

Effectiveness: M10. Overall, how effective do you think MFAT is at representing and advocating for New Zealand's interests internationally?

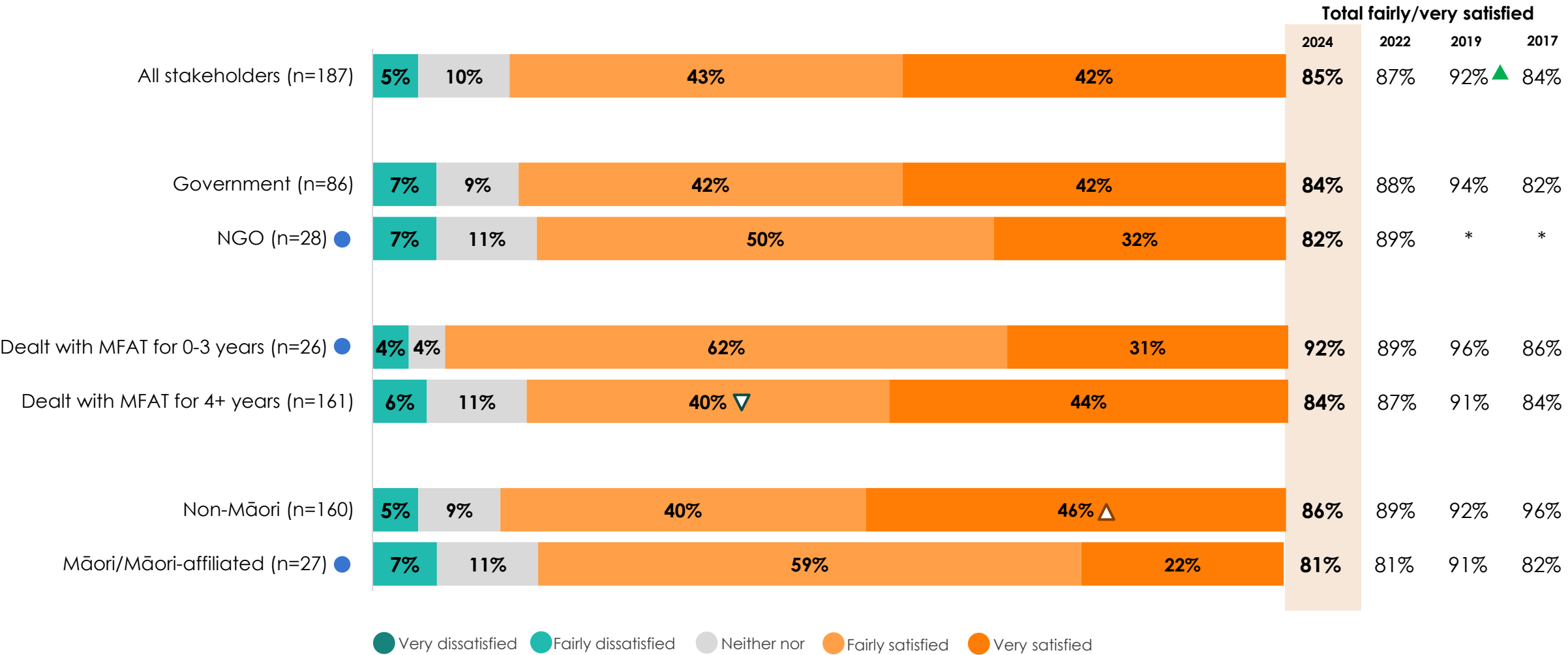
Base: **M4b** 2017 n=184, 2019 n=300, 2022 n=255, 2024 n=187. M10 2017 n=118, 2019 n=292, 2022 n=234, 2024 n=172. Excludes 'don't know' responses

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Satisfaction varies slightly by subgroup, but is stronger for non-Māori stakeholders.

Stakeholder satisfaction with recent interaction with MFAT by stakeholder group

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: M4B. Now please think about interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently. Although your views on staff are likely to vary depending on the staff members, the context, and the particular interactions...overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently?

Base: Stakeholders who have had an interaction with MFAT in the past year. Results shown for groups with 20 or more people. Excludes 'don't know' responses

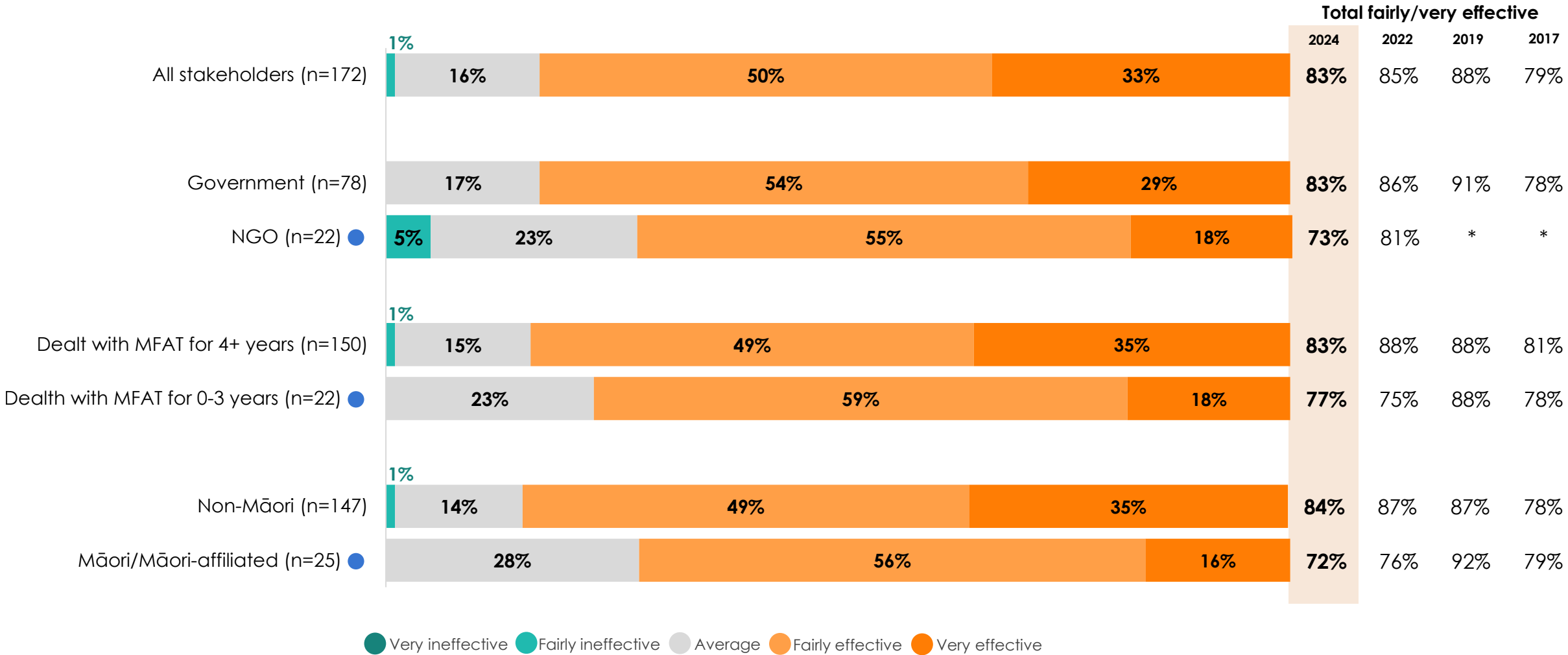
*Previous years not available due to small sample size.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey, ▲ Subgroup significantly higher than the total, ▼ Subgroup significantly lower than the total

Perceived effectiveness is fairly consistent across stakeholder types.

MFAT's effectiveness in representing and advocating for NZ by stakeholder group

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: M10. Overall, how effective do you think MFAT is at representing and advocating for New Zealand's interests internationally?
Base: All stakeholders. Excludes 'don't know' responses.
Note: Results shown for groups with 20 or more people. Due to the smaller base sizes of some groups, some differences that appear larger are not statistically significant.
*Data not shown for all years due to small sample size. Excludes 'don't know' responses
▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey ▲ Subgroup significantly higher than the total, ▼ Subgroup significantly lower than the total

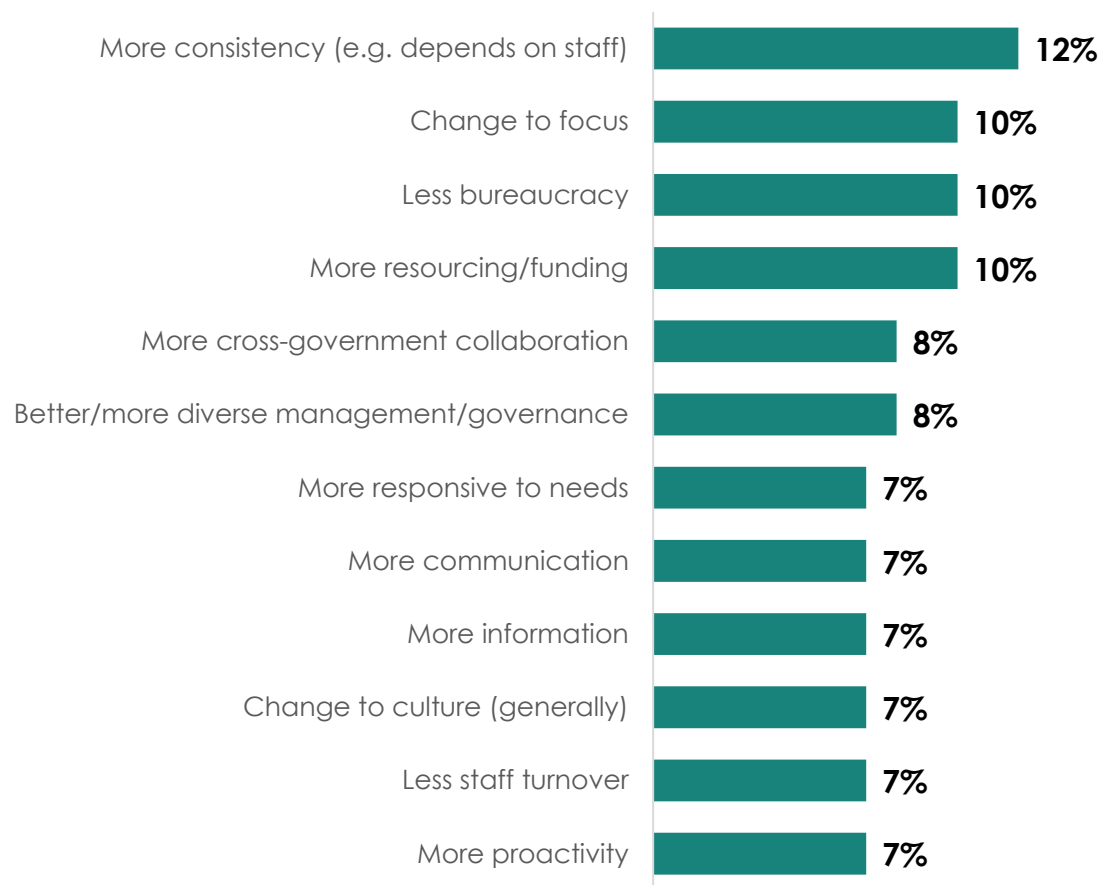
Individual staff are a key driver of positive experience.

Whereas, broader perceptions of MFAT as an organisation are driving negative perceptions, with some stakeholders seeing MFAT as inconsistent, un-focused or bureaucratic.

Stakeholders are positive about...



Stakeholders suggested improvements/changes to...



Source: F1 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with, or your perceptions of, MFAT?
Base: All stakeholders who provided a comment. 2024 n=60. Only showing responses with more than 5%.

Senior stakeholders continue to speak very highly of individual staff.

Qual

Both NZ Inc. and Business stakeholders can easily articulate a broad range of positive characteristics strongly associated with MFAT staff.

Staff are often seen as...

- **Intelligent**
- **Well informed** about a broad range of issues
- **Capable/talented** in the way they carry out work
- **Professional** in how they conduct themselves
- **Passionate/committed** to their role and New Zealand

This feeds perceptions that MFAT and its staff are highly respected on the world stage, with halo effects attributed to New Zealand as a whole.

"I think they've got some incredibly talented people. I think the international experience that they have, through overseas postings, ensures that they've got a big picture view of the world and I think that's absolutely invaluable..."

Business stakeholder

"At MFAT, nobody works nine to five... no one. It really is a profession, not just a job. It's something that you put your life into."

Business stakeholder

"They're deeply committed to New Zealand. They're deeply committed to the diplomatic craft."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

They also value their strong relationships with staff.

Qual

Stakeholders often characterise their relationship as...

- Responsive
- Open
- Proactive
- Collaborative
- Acting as a conduit, connector

“Our nearest and dearest partner.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“Together we are stronger.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“Without MFAT we simply couldn't deliver. They are integral to us... they are world class.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“I think the thing that distinguishes the brilliant people there in the way that they operate, is understanding that what they do as embassies, is actually about serving others' objectives. Having a successful embassy isn't the point. It's something you need to achieve something else. And the good ones really get that... and they see their job as that connector, as that interpreter, as the people who create the conditions for success for others.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“They're like a close sibling. We've got a very close relationship, but you can also see all the flaws at the same time.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“MFAT is a very good partner for us, incredibly supportive, they're intelligent, effective. An organisation that is a treasure for New Zealand and would rank very, very well globally in terms of what they do.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

However, MFAT can be seen as a mixed bag – ‘MFAT is good, but...’



“In general, MFAT does a good job but often the project managers don’t understand the nuances of international work or the challenges.”

“While at an individual level MFAT staff can be brilliant (and many are) ...no matter how good the individual staff you're dealing with, you know that MFAT will throw you and your agency under the bus if it's at all convenient to do so.”

“Generally our interactions with diplomats posted overseas have been positive, even though they seldom agree exactly with our position, but our experience with staff based in Wellington has been much more varied - some very positive, others very negative.”

“MFAT is two separate organisations – Posts (who are excellent, responsive, capable, helpful, professional team players), and WLG HQ (which is sluggish and unhelpful).”

“MFAT has highly skilled individuals, however, the overall culture of the organisation is insular and inward focused and MFAT does not understand or support on delivering of domestic economic objectives.”

“The NGO partnership team have been excellent in all interactions, but other branches of MFAT including overseas representatives in the Pacific region have been a bit more mixed.”

“MFAT does an incredible job in some areas (diplomacy, trade negotiations), however they fall short in being responsive in other areas and the risk aversion approach slows NZ Inc down at times.”

“Positive flexibility and support from MFAT within the structures they operate within however the structures themselves could benefit from more flexibility.”

In particular, senior stakeholders' perceptions of staff motives are mixed.

Qual

Some concerns around the criteria by which MFAT staff are rewarded and promoted through the ranks.

A prevalent perception that MFAT staff have the needs of New Zealand at the forefront – it's more about serving the country than yourself.

But, there is an emerging perception that, for some, priorities have shifted to serving the individual staff member (and what they can get out of it, in conjunction with their ability to self-promote).

"What's always really heartening, is when you see good people making their way up through the system and being rewarded for creating opportunities for others. It's always really great to see that. But equally, you're starting to see a bunch of people go through, who you like a lot and respect that person's intellect, but they're in it to position themselves for their next job. And that is something that really comes through strongly."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"So, the way you get promoted within MFAT is to be really, really good at policy, or whatever the thing is that you're doing... You don't get the sense that people are rewarded for their ability to bring others along or to create opportunities for others. In fact, it almost starts to look like a disadvantage because you're not promoting yourself enough as you do that."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"Some of them are on more of a career track than others. [They think] you're not going to help me, so I'm not gonna waste my time. Some of them, especially the younger ones, can be quite brutal."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

Many still feel that MFAT has an air of superiority, but this is softening.

Qual

As in previous years, many senior stakeholders see MFAT as elitist, however there is an acknowledgement that this seems to be shifting and reducing over time.

Some stakeholders acknowledge a shift over time.

From...



Towards...

Elitist

Progressive

Transactional
relationships

Collaborative
/nuanced
relationships

Others suggest the air of superiority is more obvious at Posts where there is separation between New Zealand and local MFAT staff, where MFAT staff can look down on local staff.

"They were old set, British style, hierarchical diplomats who are pompous and full of their self-importance and looked down their nose at anyone, distrust anyone who wasn't in the inner circle. That breed has been slowly bred out and you've still got a few of them left, but some of the younger ones coming through are informed, progressive."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"The MFAT New Zealand people are cordoned off behind a security door, and the MFAT locally engaged people are another part of the embassy, and this is all around the world. Their argument is around security. In China they might have a point, but they haven't got a point everywhere else. So, they have got a division in their ranks colloquially between the locally engaged and the New Zealand citizens."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I think there's a willingness to collaborate that has probably increased over time. There's certainly a language that's changed. I mean, words of leadership, and growing the team in a way that probably wasn't used years ago."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I guess it's having a grown-up conversation about what to do, as opposed to it being a bit more dictatorial."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

Senior stakeholders are positive about the demonstrative effects MFAT has.

Qual

This includes MFAT's impact on stakeholders' organisations and their ability to carry out their core functions.

Stakeholders point to MFAT...

- **Building relationships** at a country-to-country level (which facilitates relationships in other areas)
- **Establishing FTA's** (underpinned by world-class negotiators)
- **Advocating for New Zealand**
- **Helping to make connections**
- **Being a catalyst** for getting the right people in the room.

"They kick the doors down and we bring the companies through."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I think it's an extraordinary bunch of people, who are very highly committed. They're generally extraordinarily talented in one area, but I think the distinguishing feature is their thinking and the breadth that goes beyond their specialist area."

Business stakeholder

"MFAT and the embassy are at the core of the relationship between [country] and New Zealand... and that's politics, security, trade, economics, the whole shooting box, that's the government-to-government relationship at the core of all that. If we didn't have a government-to-government relationship, that trade relationship would be in trouble."

Business stakeholder

However, some foresee constraints.

Qual

This includes a continued perception that MFAT are risk-averse (which is softening over time), but also growing concerns about resourcing and cutting back moving forward.

On the one hand, there is acknowledgement that MFAT must operate cautiously.

On the other hand, there is a sense that MFAT (and New Zealand) have been bolder in their approach and communicating their point of view on the world stage.

"If I believe what I've been told in the newspapers, we have been the subject of spying by the Chinese government. And I thought it was very well handled... The language made our point, but it was done in a way which reflected that the relationship is really important, and trade is important."

Business stakeholder

Resourcing appears to be a topical issue

Some Business stakeholders express concern about whether MFAT will have the necessary resourcing to fulfil their role effectively, particularly in the context of the new Government's policies – actively increasing exports, while simultaneously cost-cutting across agencies.

Concerns about foreign language competency

Some stakeholders also mention that the ability of staff with foreign language competency is decreasing, which in turn may (negatively) impact their ability to do their job.

Some express a desire for foreign language training be available for staff.

"I worry about resourcing, is MFAT going to have the people in the future that we need to have? The current government's policy is to double export value over the next 10 years... it's a great ambition. MFAT's got a role, from trade perspective, to play. My question would be are they going to have the people there to play the role they have to play?"

Business stakeholder

"I have been concerned to be honest, that the language training component has dropped away... nowadays it seems they do limited training... if we're operating a foreign service then we should have people competent in the language... [without them] it means you're dependent on the English language speakers. And the English language speakers might not necessarily be the decision makers."

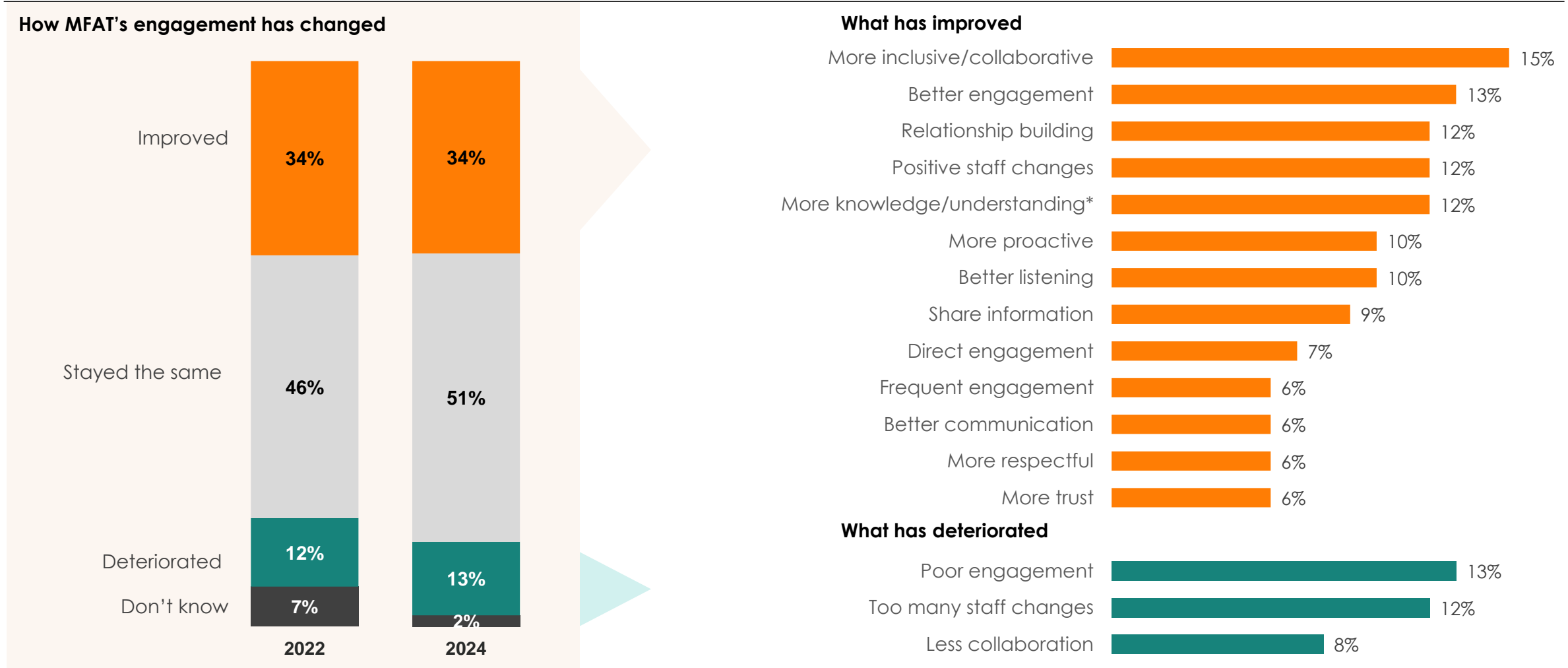
Business stakeholder



Building stakeholder relationships

A third of stakeholders feel that MFAT’s level of engagement has improved.

Inclusivity is the most commonly-cited reason for improvement. The quality of engagement and changes to staffing are key drivers both among those who feel MFAT’s engagement has improved or deteriorated.



Source: J4 Would you say that the way MFAT engages with your entity/organisation has improved, deteriorated or stayed the same over the past two years?
J5 Why did you say that the way MFAT engages with your entity/organisation has improved/deteriorated?

Base: All stakeholders. J4 2022 n=267, 2024 n=193. J5 2024 n=86.

Note: These questions were added in 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022. *Including knowledge of individual organisations, their mandates etc.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

What has improved or deteriorated in stakeholders' own words



What has improved?

"In difficult circumstances they are responsive and quick to respond. Point you in the right direction very fast."

"Eagerness and proactiveness to share information and add value as needed."

"Better shared understanding of each other's work programmes, and how these intersect."

"The level of trust and mutual respect in the working relationship has grown."

"Taken steps to hire staff with relevant sector knowledge and expertise."

"They have stopped having staff move every few years - made them fixed roles."

"Open to understanding more about our roles and functions, some changes in staff [who are now] more open."

"There's also been an enthusiasm to learn about our agency and our work programme and to identify areas where our two agencies might collaborate."

"Individual staff in MFAT are getting a lot better at genuinely appreciating that domestic agencies hold expert knowledge and strategic nous. They also have eased up on their previous strong obsession with status and hierarchy."

What has deteriorated?

"No consistency in who to reach out to to get help."

"More reluctance to pick up pieces of work that are directly relevant to MFAT's core interests, often due to a lack of resources."

"High turnover of MFAT staff managing contracts with our organisation, extended consultations lacking clear outcomes or next-steps, opaque processes with months passing without any follow-up guidance from our focal points, and poor communication."

"MFAT appears to have become more risk adverse, more insular and less well-led... With that MFAT's priorities and areas of focus are opaque."

"Response has become slower and therefore needs to be followed up. Tone of some communications has deteriorated."

"Change in desk officers who did not have the knowledge of our business."

"Written correspondence has dropped significantly over the past decade to the point that officials will only engage via telephone calls. Officials are doing the bare minimum but not seeking to build and deepen relations. Increasingly they tell me what to do and I am their stakeholder."

Senior stakeholders' perceptions around communications are mixed.

Qual

MFAT's communication is seen as especially strong when...

- **Discussing areas of interest/expertise**, e.g. they are organised when communicating about free trade agreements
- **Economic updates**, providing great analysis
- **Releasing information** it feels is appropriate

However, MFAT's communication can be seen as not so strong, or problematic, including...

- **Perceived (mis)use of the formal message system** (among NZ Inc. stakeholders), e.g. some agencies were surprised about messages going directly to their Minister's office (referencing priorities that may be different to the agency's).
- **Overly formal (one-sided) approach**, e.g. MFAT typically provides a set piece briefing on an issue – an explanation of the issue, along with this is MFAT's process for dealing with it, rather than saying 'this is what we're seeing, we're thinking of approaching it this way, what do you think?'
- **MFAT could communicate on sensitive issues more effectively** (and more frequently).
- **Perceived lack of consultation** among NZ Inc. and Business stakeholders, e.g. MFAT contacting [industry body] the night before signing FTAs and these FTAs having labour laws or non-tariff barrier agreements within them.)

In their own words, senior stakeholders describe MFAT's communication as...

Qual

Communication strengths

"Economic updates underscore them as an agency that's thinking deeply about things and what's happening in markets... they're a great source of information... I quote them in some of my board reports."

Business stakeholder

"We had [Deputy Secretary of Trade and Economic] speak at our AGM... and over a year later, people are still talking about the messages he gave... that increased profile of MFAT has been really valued by [sector] helping us understand some of the complexity that's facing the commercial side of the sector."

Business stakeholder

Communication issues/concerns

"That one particular piece of communication architecture that they have [formal message system] is incredibly powerful. And they just need to be really judicious about making sure that they're not using it to veto other agencies or impose their own priorities without consulting others."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"Every so often, you'll get someone who's out at a Post who's frustrated that Wellington isn't taking their country seriously, who just throws a bomb into the system about it..."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"When it doesn't work well is when there is silence from MFAT and you have to chase them for what you need."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"There can be a real casualness with how they pick up other agency's priorities in their messages... then all of a sudden, I'm in a deficit position with my Minister, that I haven't done something that the embassy is saying needs to be done [regardless of approval processes, resourcing, budgets]. And that puts me in a very difficult position."

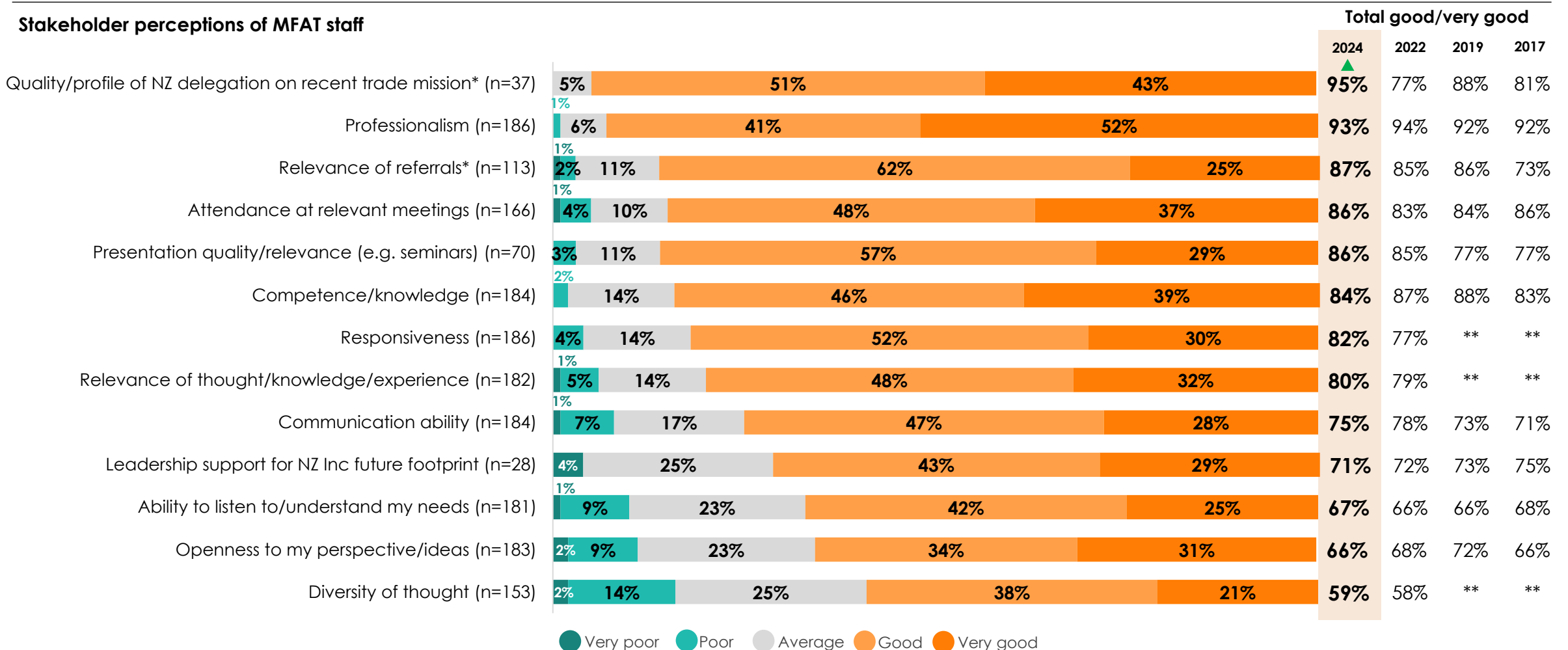
NZ Inc. stakeholder

"They're very good at talking to stakeholders about trade stuff... they start to get a little less good when it comes to sensitive areas... in times of strain and difficulty there's a tendency to communicate less, when probably there's a need to communicate more."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

After a dip in 2022, satisfaction with delegations on trade missions has increased.

This may reflect a 'return to normal' in post-COVID trade missions. Stakeholders continue to be least satisfied with the diversity of thought within MFAT, as well as MFAT's openness to diversity of thought from others.



Source: M1: Thinking about recent interactions you have had with MFAT, how do you rate each of the following?

Base: Stakeholders who have had any interaction with MFAT in the past year. Excludes 'don't know' and 'not relevant' responses

Note: * Only asked of stakeholders who had a relevant interaction **Asked for the first time in 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022

Staff diversity remains a topical issue.

Qual

There is a persistent perception that MFAT staff lack diversity, both in terms of their backgrounds and thought.

Some stakeholders suggest ...

- **MFAT need to shift away from classic 'Type A' personalities** with bureaucratic tendencies, towards greater consideration given to practical, self-starters who possess the 'softer' people/relationship skills.
- **The (lack of) diversity in senior roles is further inhibited by the exclusivity of the recruiting process.** There is a perception that MFAT is closed off to new staff above a certain level, which is reinforced as senior roles tend not to be advertised externally.
- **The use of secondments for MFAT staff into other agencies, could be an effective vehicle** to help develop diversity of thought – with a particular focus on junior staff who may lack experience/exposure.

However, a few stakeholders do feel steps have been taken to actively increase diversity amongst staff.

“Are they all lawyers with a focus on trade?”

Business stakeholder

“A lot of them come from very similar backgrounds. They've often studied the same five university subjects. They're all smart people but they've all done very remarkably similar things. And I think that's why the diversity of thought is lacking, because they don't have that broader range of life experience.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“It is really noticeable how closed off MFAT is to new staff above a certain level. The reason I say that is, every time I go and meet a friend from MFAT, they say ‘when are you coming back’? And I go, ‘I honestly have no idea, the senior roles aren't advertised’, in fact very few roles are ever advertised. There's a sense of that now that I've left, I've been excommunicated from the family...”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

Some stakeholders also find the consultation process insincere.

Qual

Insufficient opportunity to provide input

Some are critical that they are not provided the opportunity to provide appropriate input. This reflects a sense that MFAT has little interest in hearing other perspectives.

Insufficient time to provide input

Senior NZ Inc. stakeholders express frustration about the expected timelines given when MFAT solicits input or feedback. In addition, there appears to be little consideration for the impact their requests have on NZ Inc. agencies and staff.

Lack of a feedback loop

Senior Business stakeholders query if their feedback has been taken on board or MFAT are undertaking a 'box ticking' exercise.

Stakeholders suggest greater clarity and transparency around timeliness could be helpful, e.g. providing advance warning of input required, along with explanation of reasons as to why an urgent response is required.

"Because they have taken so long to get it to us, then it goes back [to MFAT], but then nothing will happen to it for another week... and you've had people working all hours during the night, around the world... so that gets a little bit annoying."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I do wonder at times, what their definition of urgent means... By the time we get it, it is always quite urgent... and I don't think that it's some ploy so we don't reply. I genuinely think it's because their system is such that by the time that gets to us, there's five minutes left, and it is a scramble."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"It certainly gets people a little bit pissed off... [It's urgent] so the team are working on it overnight. And then we know that it doesn't get to the Minister for another week, because it wasn't that important or wasn't as urgent as they'd made it out to be. That is unhelpful."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"They published a strategic assessment last year. They gave it to Ministers, and they published a redacted version. They said, 'oh, we've consulted with agencies'. They didn't consult with us at all. We got the final document a week out from when it was going to Ministers saying, 'are there any showstoppers in this?'. There was a lot that we would have framed up differently. And this is a really bad example of their 'we'll call you, don't call us' approach. We were never invited to give our first principles views on it before they started doing it. And so, we weren't involved in the process until it was effectively a fait accompli."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

However, some senior NZ Inc. stakeholders note a concerted effort by MFAT to engage more effectively and enhance its presence.

Qual

“They play under the radar... I think there's been a bit of an attempt to lift up and out. Some of the engagement that they're doing on a more regular basis with engaging business, getting insights, I think that's been quite noticeable.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“They've made a bit more of a deliberate attempt over the last few years... to really engage business, engage associations... and they've really lifted out more broadly than just key stakeholders. I definitely think they did a really great job... Taking quite a holistic view.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“[Deputy Secretary of trade] is absolutely respected everywhere for his grasp of the details of international trade... but also his grasp of the politics behind it in every country, and he has an ability to communicate in language that is readily understood by somebody who's not an expert. He does it in a way that puts him on the same level as everybody... in a way that people feel they're being engaged respectfully.”

Business stakeholder

Senior stakeholders identify a number of opportunities to add value

Qual

Greater efficiencies from working more cohesively as NZ Inc, including...

- Collaborative team approach
- Cost savings/allocation of resources
- More frequent CE meetings

A **more liberal, optimistic and ambitious** culture.

Remembering the value of service exports (tourism/education), not just products.

Reinstating an MFAT directory (to mitigate staff churn/rotation effects).

Career pathways to provide broader perspectives (secondments) and development of special knowledge areas.

“This new government has quite a significant growth agenda, wanting to double exports. And we just really encouraged MFAT to work with agencies on that work, thinking about it from both a goods and services export.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“I’m just conscious of the fact that we’re all being asked to do more with less and if we can work together... because there’s not new resources coming down the pipeline, we’re just going to have to really move efficiently with what we’ve got... so how can we do that with an NZ Inc view.”

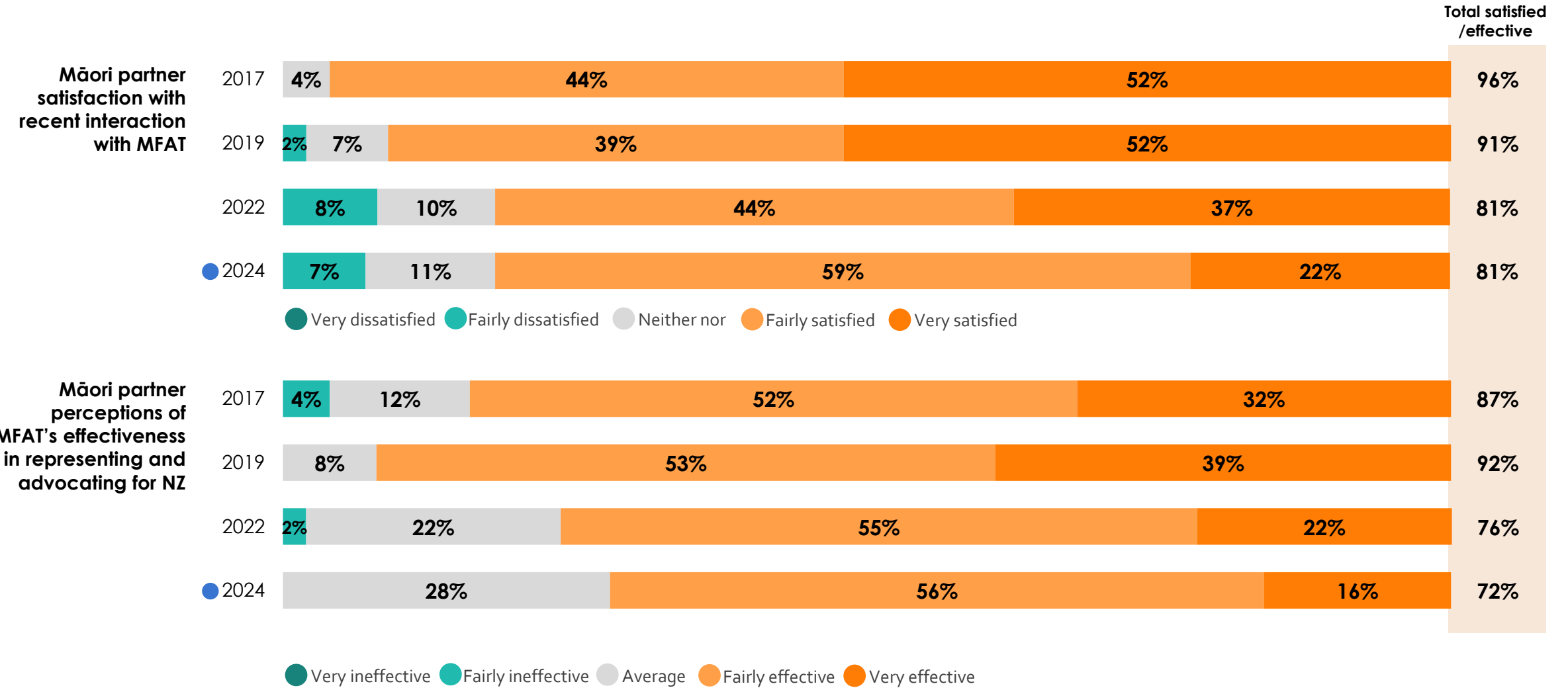
NZ Inc. stakeholder

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue button-down shirt, is looking down at a tablet device. She has a tattoo on her chin. The background shows a large window with a view of the CN Tower in Toronto under a blue sky with clouds. The text "Perceptions of MFAT as a treaty partner" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Perceptions of MFAT as a treaty partner

Perceptions of MFAT have remained fairly stable among Māori partners.

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: **Satisfaction:** M4B. Now please think about interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently. Although your views on staff are likely to vary depending on the staff members, the context, and the particular interactions...overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently?

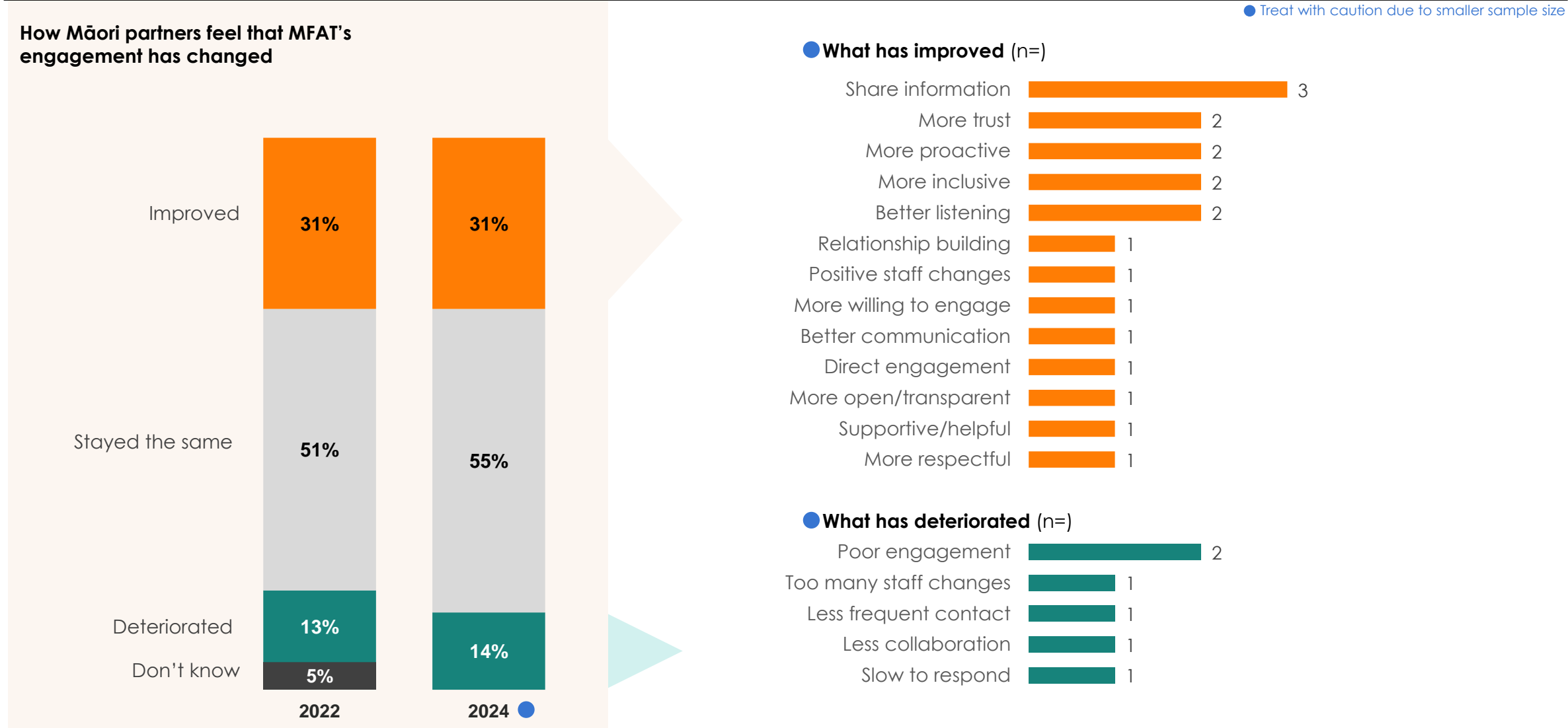
Effectiveness: M10. Overall, how effective do you think MFAT is at representing and advocating for New Zealand's interests internationally?

Base: Māori stakeholders only. **M4b** 2017n=25, 2019 n=44, 2022 n=52, 2024 n=27. **M10** 2017 n=25, 2019 n=38, 2022 n=51, 2024 n=25. Excludes 'don't know' responses

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Almost a third of Māori partners feel that MFAT’s engagement has improved.

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: J4 Would you say that the way MFAT engages with your entity/organisation has improved, deteriorated or stayed the same over the past two years?
J5 Why did you say that the way MFAT engages with your entity/organisation has improved/deteriorated?
Base: Stakeholders who personally identify as Māori, work for a Māori business/organisation, or for a business/organisation with strong Māori ownership or values base.
J4 2022 n=55, 2024 n=29. J5 2022 n=21, 2024 n=12. **Note:** These questions were added in 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022.
▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

What has improved or deteriorated in Māori partners' own words.



What has improved?

"Two-way engagement has improved via meetings, consultations and events."

"Greater trust in our engagement, with more information sharing and more engagement before decisions are made."

"...I [have] observed a dramatic transition from an adversarial relationship to one of deep respect and Trust that related to the relationship, and Māori becoming completely transformed to the point of securing massive new FTA's especially with the UK and EU that open doors massively for Māori produce and diversifying away market risk that is seriously overexposed to a single huge market (China). This all happened in a short period of time. The challenge now is to sustain this type of engagement AND to deliver on the opportunity presented by these new gold standard FTA's for Māori and New Zealand."

"Greater partnership, more openness to discussion and learnings (even if difficult), better listening and understanding of needs and priorities (in both directions)."

"Personnel have changed and are more engaged"

"As chairs we hosted APEC in San Francisco. And we asked for their home people, their indigenous people to attend our meeting and welcome. And after some struggle with USA, that's what we got."

Qual

What has deteriorated?

"On the particular engagement with MFAT I've had in the past couple of months, MFAT tried really hard to shirk its responsibilities and manoeuvred to get other agencies to do its job."

"Too many changes of 'point of contact' staff."

"The engagement did not appear to be mindful of the operating environment with the new government and ministers. The feedback and engagement we received went outside their role."

"...it is difficult to get real change when engaging with MFAT vis-a-vis established posts. Perceptions of Māori international have changed, and Māori themselves are more capable and outwardly-looking, and so there seems a lag in these changing perceptions amongst post staff."

"The cultural arrogance of Australia, New Zealand and the US in the Pacific. And then as soon as the Hainamana (Chinese) come along, everyone is freaking out."

Qual

Indigenous Chapters in the UK and EU FTAs are seen as significant achievements. Qual

The opportunity is to capitalise on the interest generated by this 'unique' world first to increase Māori participation in trade negotiations and to promote Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationships as part of a Māori and Aotearoa New Zealand trade strategy.

"The Indigenous Chapter in the UK FTA was a world first. The first FTA to acknowledge the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. Then hot on the heels we got the EU, European FTA."

"It started by MFAT taking on board the idea of a new trade architecture and new trade arrangements which were a progressive trade agenda."

"We wanted a specific chapter on cooperation with Māori, Māori reflected throughout the agreement and to have that historical kaupapa with the UK acknowledged which was actually what we got."

Māori partners report specific and tangible initiatives and programmes that are coming by having a heightened focus on Māori. For example, the wāhine Māori entrepreneur tech benefitted from the FTAs and MFATs connections in the region.

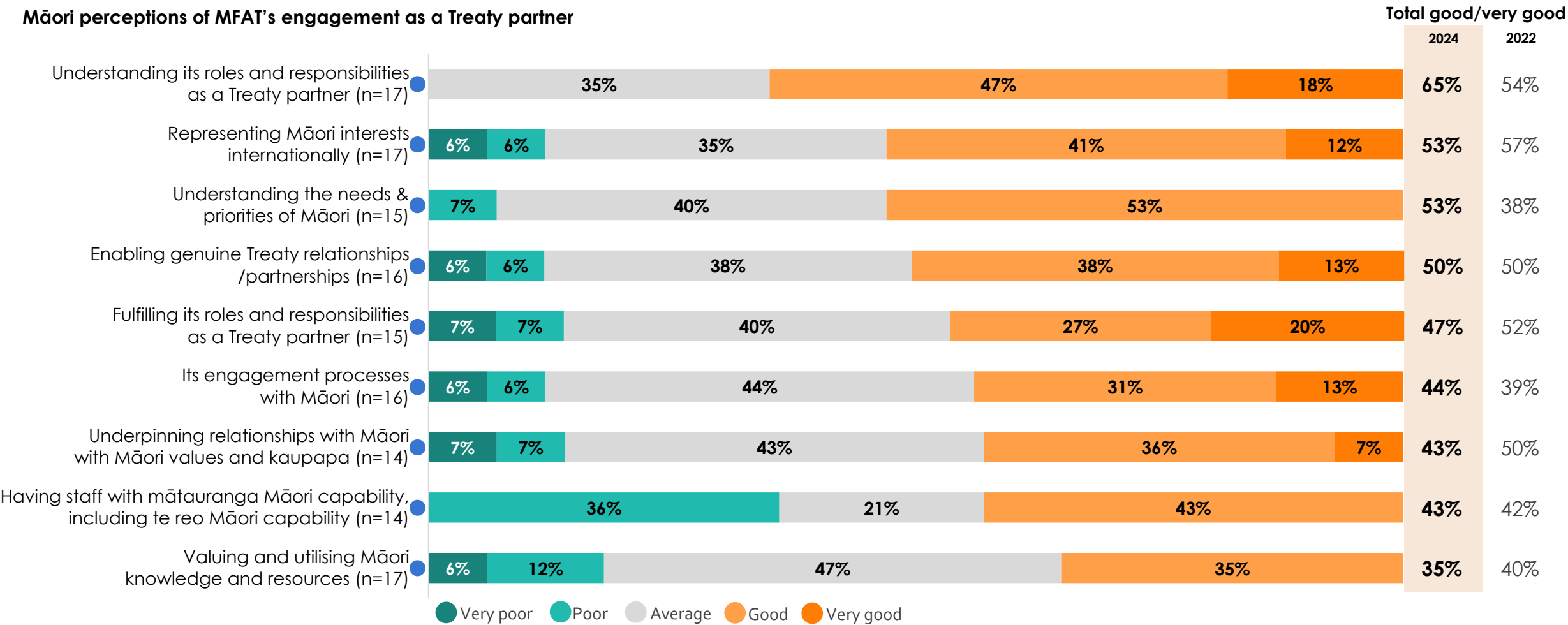
"The EU agreement was particularly significant as EU governments were not particularly well known for recognition of indigenous peoples and populations in their trade arrangements, so it was great outcome... These FTAs are groundbreaking, and this is where Māori are leading."

"MFAT have been working alongside of us. We had to push for it because they were ambivalent. At times we've been the protagonist and pushing them a bit more."

Two thirds of Māori partners feel MFAT knows its role as a Treaty partner.

However, in practice there is room to improve on how MFAT values and uses Māori knowledge and resources.

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: J3 Thinking about MFAT and its roles and responsibilities to Māori and as a Treaty Partner, how would you rate each of the following?
Base: Stakeholders who personally identify as Māori, work for a Māori business or organisation, or for a business or organisation with strong Māori ownership or values base.
Note: Don't know responses are excluded. This question was added in 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022.

Māori partners have mixed views about how well MFAT gives effect to Treaty.

Qual

“They do a very good job of initial consultation. But thinking about Māori businesses specifically, I don’t see their ability to trade internationally easing. And I don’t see many more Māori exporters.”

“MFAT is likely working hard and has good intentions but this is not visible to those on the ground, so how would we know?”

On the one hand

“We have Treaty of Waitangi exception clauses, which preserves the right for our government to meet their obligations under Te Tiriti, and no trade agreement will usurp that.”

“The Treaty was about partnership, about us doing our bit too. I am very excited about the wāhine Māori in tech opportunities in the UK and EU market – and what a great opportunity it is for us.”

“They are overly generous with their time, and really go out of their way to support you to try and resolve issues.”

“They regularly attend our forums, and really understand our needs, goals, and aspirations.”

On the other hand

“We want that Treaty partnership to bite, so when you start the rhetoric around advancing partnerships with Māori, knowing how does that translate all the way through the values and value chain. And, if there is a piece which has Māori collaboration, cooperation or implementation, you should commit to resourcing that in some ways.”

“MFAT’s engagement with Māori lacks true partnership qualities, such as collaboration and reciprocity, leading to a sense of a ‘big black hole’ where feedback and follow-up are absent.”

“We see ourselves as being hugely involved in Free Trade Agreements and under Te Tiriti arrangements that we get to lead in those discussions.”

“For starters, I just have an expectation that there are equitable opportunities to participate. And I want to understand why are more Māori and Pacific peoples not ending up in leadership roles? I want to see our young ones make it through to becoming ambassadors.”

Moving forward, Māori partners see areas to improve.

Qual

Similar to non-Māori, Māori partners see MFATs senior leaders, staff stability and highly knowledgeable staff as an asset. Māori partners recommend MFAT capitalise on the UK/EU FTAs, increase Māori participation in trade and leverage the cultural and relational capital and legitimacy of Māori partners.

Māori partners suggest:

A broader focus on the Asia-Pacific region.

Expand its focus beyond traditional “Anglosphere” interests to include more engagement with Asia-Pacific nations, leveraging New Zealand’s unique position and relationships in the region.

Increased inclusion of Māori partners in trade negotiations and agreements

Leverage the high levels of trust and legitimacy that Māori bring to NZ international relations, particularly in the Pacific.

Promote Indigenous-to-Indigenous trade

Foster trade relationships between indigenous communities internationally, creating platforms for collaboration and mutual economic development.

Strengthen Treaty partnerships

Embed Treaty of Waitangi considerations in all levels of MFAT’s operations, ensuring that Māori rights and interests are consistently protected and promoted.

Resource Māori Initiatives

Commit to resourcing Māori initiatives included in trade agreements, ensuring that commitments translate into tangible support and development.

Enhance cultural competence and inclusion

Increase the inclusion of Māori perspectives and values in all trade agreements and international negotiations. Ensure senior MFAT roles are filled by individuals with a deep understanding of Māori culture and values.

Adopt a more progressive trade agenda

Incorporate environmental, cultural, and gender considerations in trade policy and strategic direction.

More Māori representation in senior MFAT positions to reflect the bicultural nature of NZ

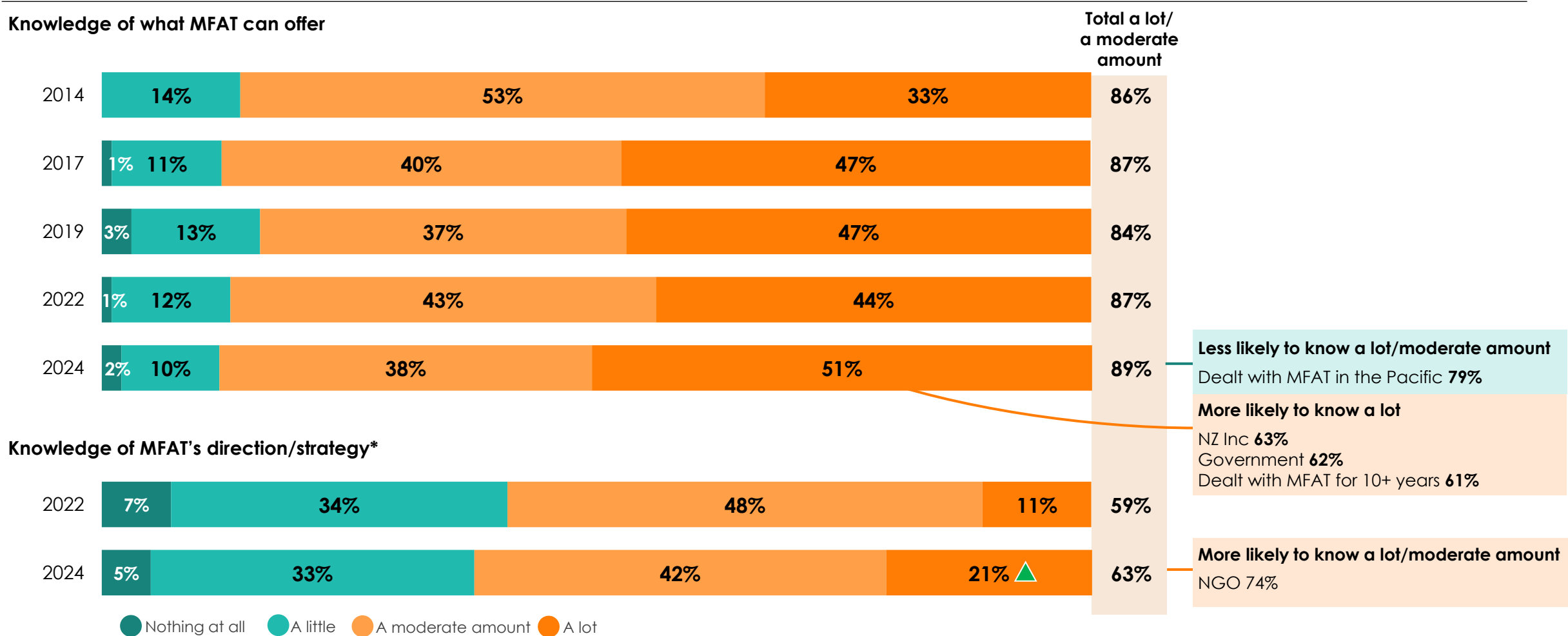
Develop career pathways and support for Māori.



Familiarity with MFAT and its strategy

Most stakeholders feel they understand what MFAT offers.

Unsurprisingly, familiarity comes with more experience with MFAT. Since 2022, unfamiliarity with direction/strategy remains similar, but there has been a shift among those who do understand the direction towards knowing ‘a lot’.



Source: I2. How much do you feel you know about what MFAT can offer your organisation? J1 How would you describe your awareness and understanding of MFAT's strategy and future direction?

Base: I2 All stakeholders 2014 n=36, 2017 n=205, 2019 n=325, 2022 n=267, 2024 n=193, J1 2022 n=263, 2024 n=190. J1 excludes 'don't know' responses

Note: *J1 was asked for the first time in 2022, so no data prior to 2022 is available

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Subgroup significantly less likely to have higher knowledge, subgroup significantly more likely to have higher knowledge

Senior stakeholders value the role MFAT plays.

Qual

In particular, business stakeholders value MFAT's role in...

- **Connecting** businesses/industry bodies with appropriate people overseas
- **Adding value** through removing barriers to trade or facilitating trade negotiations
- **Advancing New Zealand's prosperity** through global settings
- **Providing access** to embassies and/or embassy staff which serves to add credibility and presence with in-country relationships

"Without their help, we would have a lesser presence."

Business stakeholder

"Typically, if we're going somewhere for a conference or a meeting, before we go, we'll reach out to MFAT and ask who should we be meeting while we're there. We usually would get to meet with the Ambassador and maybe the Trade Commissioner, and sometimes if they're really being helpful, they'll organise us to meet with their local expat group of Kiwi businesses. So, that is appreciated because it makes it much more worthwhile visit from our perspective."

Business stakeholder

"If you get invited to an embassy in [country], it is a big deal. So, the embassy has a very important role there to play. The embassy has considerable status. So, if you want to make a connection, being able to work with the Ambassador and ask if they would be prepared to host a dinner or an event at the embassy as a way of progressing something, is really effective. I think they do that very well."

Business stakeholder

But, some stakeholders observe potentially conflicting aspects of MFAT.

Qual

What's best
for trade

vs

What's best
for the
environment

Focusing
on big
challenges

vs

Low hanging
fruit

Foreign policy
agendas

vs

Outcomes for
New Zealand

Stakeholders suggest greater communication around how these potential frictions are managed.

"I feel like we've got two sides to MFAT. We've got the ones that are really pro-trade and are trying to get trade deals and to reduce export costs and to reduce trade barriers. And then you've got the other side, which is going off to sign environmental trade deals, which potentially put cost on New Zealand. And they cancel each other out a bit."

Business stakeholder

"They often see everything in the world as a pawn of foreign policy, rather than something that is tied intrinsically to outcomes that we need as a country."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I think that they're just not joined up enough. The economic part and the environmental part seem to go off in slightly diverging directions. They are potentially working at odds to each other."

Business stakeholder

"We have been concerned recently that there seems to have been a little bit of loss of ambition or articulation around some of those really big challenges that will remain, and can be multi year challenges. That language around New Zealand's FTA coverage and the extent of that, and we have done really well at creating FTA coverage. But for dairy, sometimes that coverage has not completed the job in itself because we've still got tariffs and barriers within that. So, it's the narrative of 'job done or move on' that has us concerned, that we won't see the same level of ambition and advancing it in the future as we have seen in the past." **Business stakeholder**

"An observation I've made is that the trade and economic part of MFAT feels increasingly distinct from the foreign policy and security side of MFAT. And so quite often something will happen on the foreign policy or security side, with no consideration given to [agency] at all, and then we'd find that blow back on us in some way." **NZ Inc. stakeholder**

Some business stakeholders also lack clarity of roles and responsibilities of agencies involved with trade, e.g. MFAT, NZTE, MPI.

Qual

And to a lesser extent the roles of MFAT and MfE in the context of climate change.

Others suggest there is an opportunity for greater clarity around navigating other organisations (like research institutes and accelerators) to capitalise on their involvement.

“From my perspective, at times on some trade issues, where’s the line between MFAT and MPI, for example... you’ve got two arms of government involved... also there’s a bit of uncertainty of where NZTE ends and MFAT starts...”

Business stakeholder

“I don’t think this is nailed yet from a holistic perspective... what is the ecosystem that companies need to go through? We’ve got local agencies like Regional Business Growth, how do they build on or feed up into organisations like Callaghan, universities, accelerators? ...and where does MFAT fit in this? I think it’s quite a messy piece to really understand and navigate easily.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“I don’t think the role of MFAT and MfE in representing New Zealand internationally on climate change issues is as clear as it could be.”

Business stakeholder

Perceived transparency has improved.

Qual

Senior NZ Inc. stakeholders generally perceive MFAT to be open and frank with an appropriate level of transparency (and note improvements in this area).

They are also realistic about transparency, with some business stakeholders suggesting greater transparency to help facilitate a collaborative relationship, while also acknowledging the need to err on the side of caution.

"I think they've become more and more open to the extent that they can... it means greater levels of high-quality information... like being as a trusted partner with government, as opposed to just being an organisation that gets consulted with after the fact."

Business stakeholder

"Transparency is something where improvements have been made. With negotiations we were able to see drafted text that was shared with us... there were pretty strict confidentiality requirements, which seemed a bit weird, but if that's the price of being able to be part of the circle of trust, it's a small price."

Business stakeholder

"They have improved on sharing information, whereas historically they kept their cards close to their chest, especially when briefing on the progress of FTA negotiations."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"With long standing New Zealand counterparts, not foreign counterparts, they could be just a little bit looser sometimes in what they're prepared to say... it would enhance the feeling that we're all working on this together."

Business stakeholder

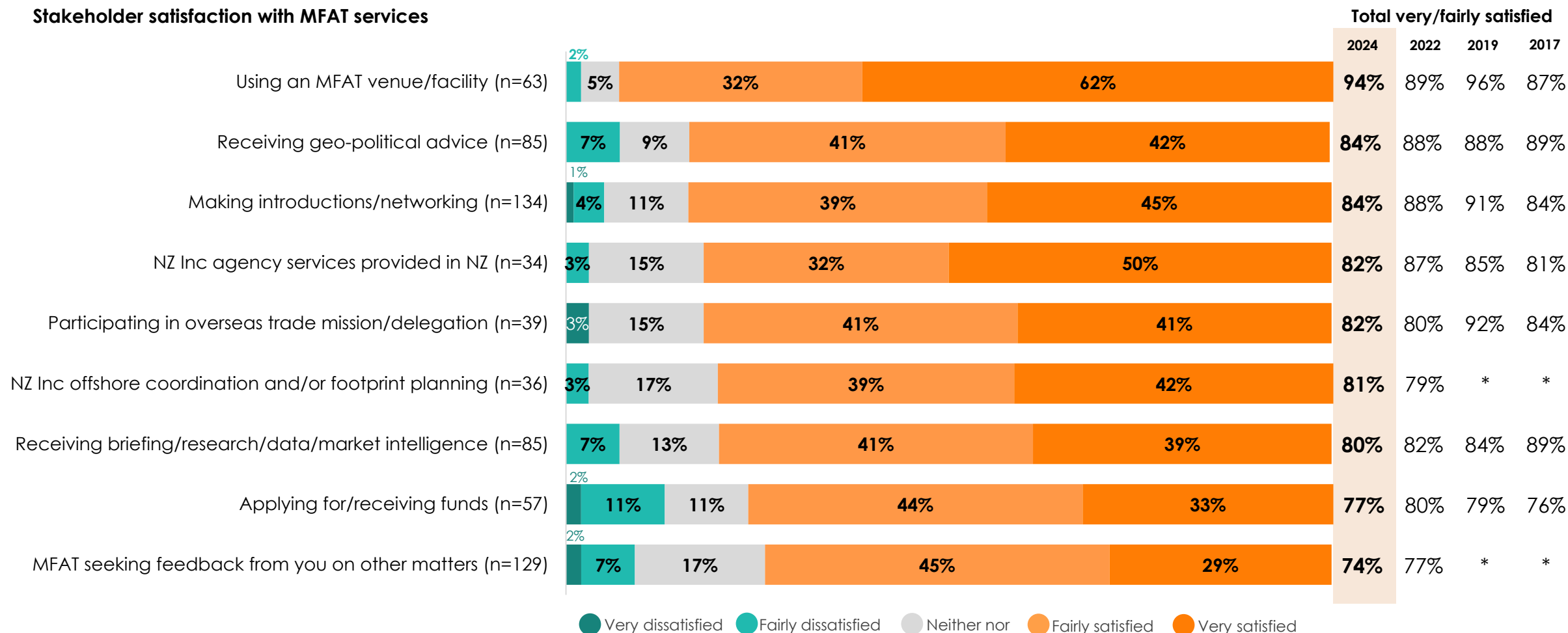
A group of five diverse business professionals are seated around a conference table in a modern office setting. They are all smiling and appear to be engaged in a positive meeting. The text "Satisfaction with services" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Satisfaction with services

Overall, satisfaction with MFAT's services is fairly high.

Stakeholders tend to be more satisfied when receiving information or advice from MFAT, but less satisfied with MFAT taking advice or feedback from stakeholders, suggesting a somewhat one-sided exchange of information.

Stakeholder satisfaction with MFAT services



Source: M1G. You mentioned that you have received a service or services from MFAT in the past year. Overall how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of service delivery for each of the services you've received?

Base: Stakeholders with experience with each service. Excludes 'don't know' responses. Excludes Tariff finder online, Assistance or advice with exporting, Receiving support to overcome a particular trade barrier or issue, Receiving support in key meeting, Identifying new international business opportunities due to small base sizes. *New to 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

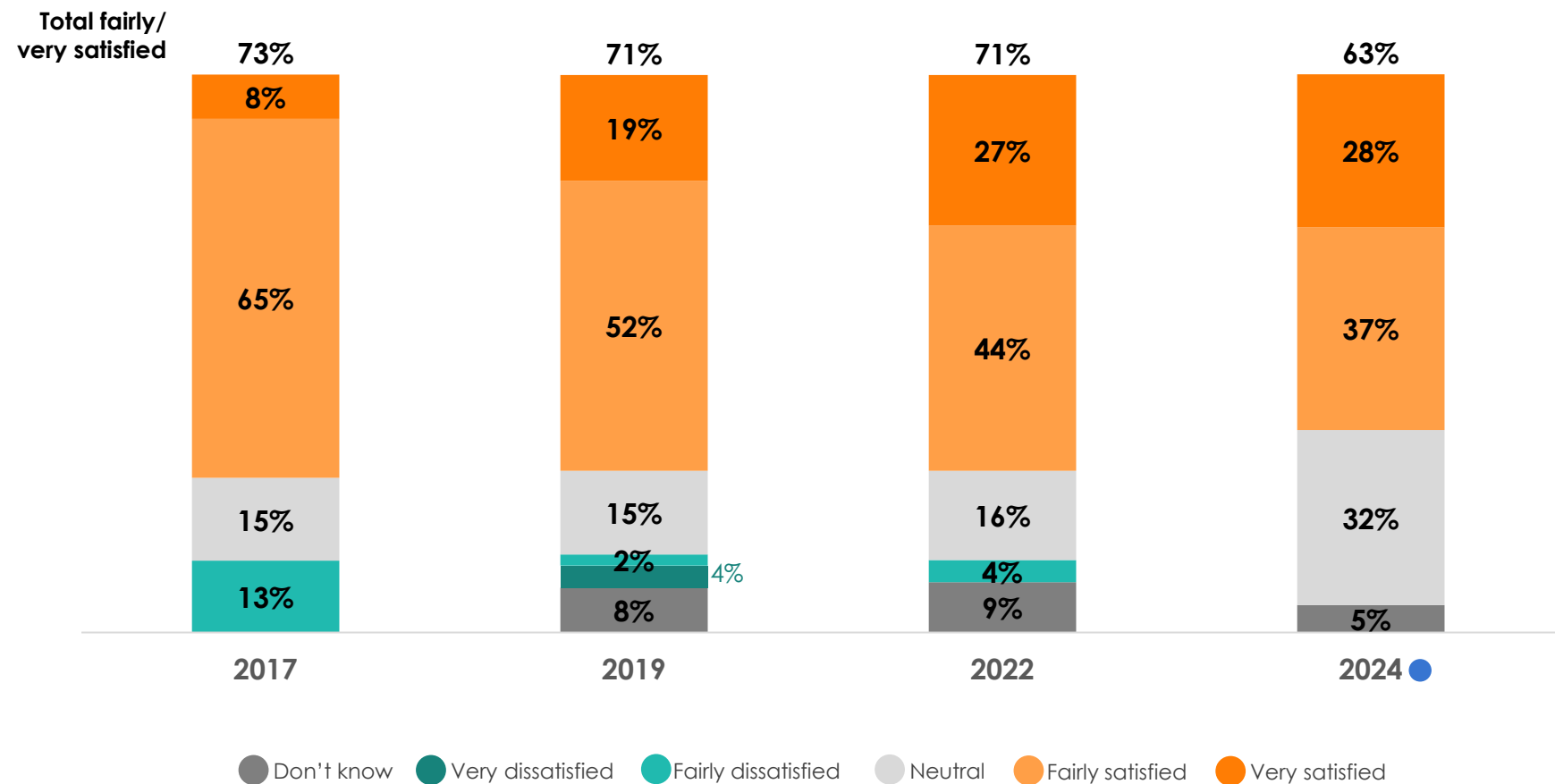
A photograph of two women wearing traditional headscarves, looking down at a document. The woman on the right is wearing a black and white patterned headscarf and a colorful patterned top with a red strap. The woman on the left is wearing a white headscarf with red and black geometric patterns. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a map or a large screen.

Navigating the Ministry and its processes

Two thirds of stakeholders are satisfied with support services offered.

Satisfaction with MFAT's support services

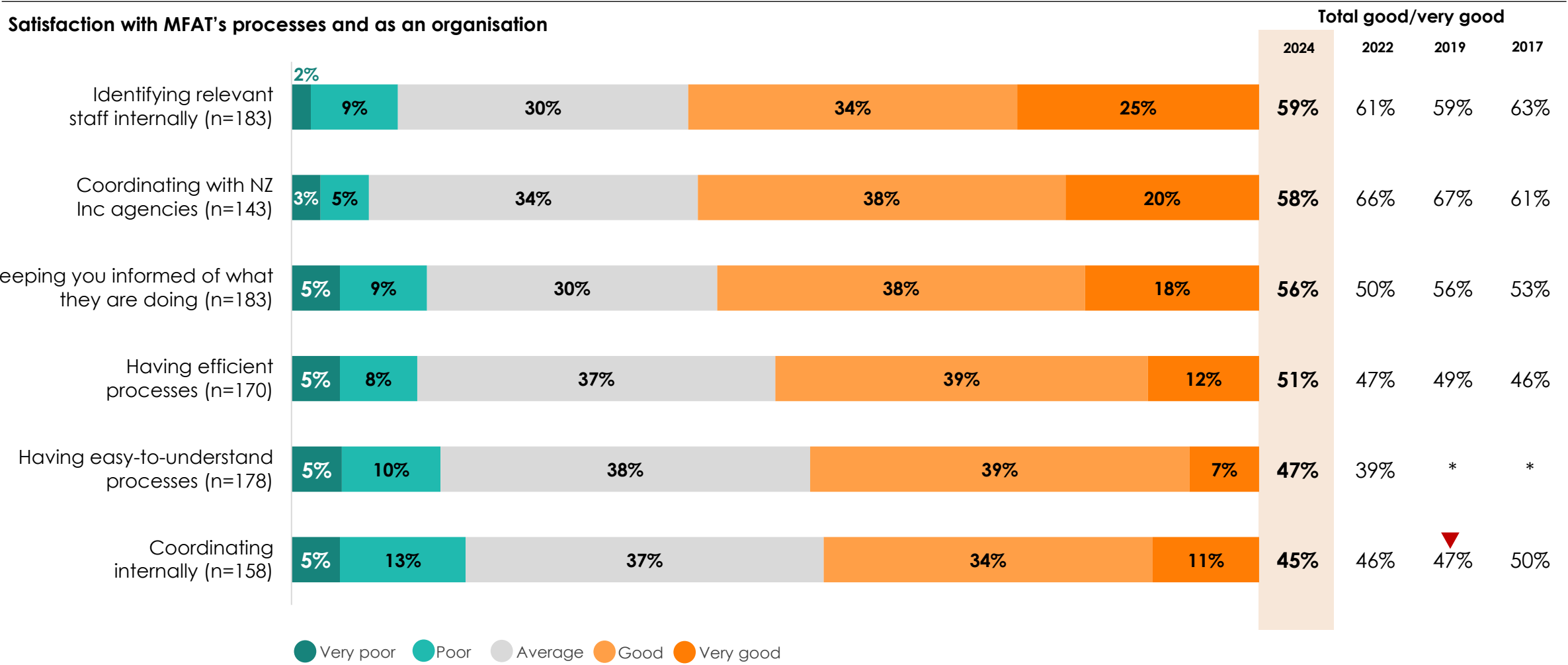
● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: M1E. How would you rate support services provided by MFAT (including, property, IT) which enable you to perform your role?
Base: Government stakeholders who have experienced NZ Inc agency services provided at an overseas post 2017 n=40, 2019 n=48, 2022 n=45, 2024 n=23. Excludes 'not relevant' responses
Note: In 2022 the scale was changed from Very poor/poor/neither/good/very good, to a satisfaction scale. This means data prior to 2022 is not directly comparable

Compared with other areas, stakeholders are less positive about MFAT's processes.

This has remained low over time, with no significant improvements. Notably, less than half of stakeholders feel that MFAT has good processes or can coordinate well internally.



Source: M1: Thinking about recent interactions you have had with MFAT, how do you rate each of the following?
Base: Stakeholders who have had any interaction with MFAT in the past year. Statements only asked of stakeholders who have had a relevant interaction. Excludes 'don't know' and 'not relevant' responses *Asked for the first time in 2022, so no data is available prior to 2022

Generally, senior stakeholders accept that a level of bureaucracy comes with the territory, but they also think this could be improved.

Qual

While some suggest that there are 'layers to the process' that simply come with the territory, others feel there is need to create efficiencies in its way of working.

Senior stakeholders understand...

- **The significant number of people involved**
- **A 'slow and ponderous' way of operating**
- **A hierarchical structure**
- **Risk aversion** – bordering on pessimism
- **A need for extended timelines** to achieve outcomes

"Sometimes it feels like there's a lot of bells and whistles, but at the same time, I just respect it's how they've got to operate given the type of Ministry that they are."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"Once you get too many people, then you can do a lot of hand wringing and a lot of cogitation."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"Because they are really thoughtful at times and purposeful on things, and there are probably so many people involved, things don't move at pace."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"They take a grim view of the world and what's going on, and always have. They point out all the bad aspects... it's all about power and the securities things are overwhelming and it's all cataclysmic. I think there is a risk aversion, a pessimism, a negativism that pervades the system. And that's quite contagious. They could do with a bit of an optimistic shot in the arm."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

The rotation policy continues to cause frustration.

Qual

Although, a few senior NZ Inc. stakeholders express fewer issues, likely due to their established, long-standing relationships with their peers at MFAT.

Relationships suffer under the policy:

- **Variable relationships** impacting on overall effectiveness
- **Difficulty engaging with MFAT**, not knowing how/who to contact)

As does knowledge:

- **Loss of institutional knowledge**
- **Misaligned knowledge**, with MFAT staff often holding generalist knowledge (e.g. on agricultural trade), whereas stakeholders often hold more specialist knowledge

However, some suggest a few of the core roles at MFAT have remained relatively stable recently.

"They do have a huge churn internally. So, sometimes you have to have the same conversations on a repeated basis because the people on the MFAT side have changed. You have to re-explain everything."

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"I go from really close, long standing working relationships to newbie, introductory relationships because of the rotational system. I can be at either end of the spectrum."

Business stakeholder

"The thing with MFAT is, it can be a difficult beast for stakeholders to engage with because people rotate round roles so much. You have a few people that stay in the one position for longer periods, and they're quite important to the external stakeholders because you do have that consistency. So, [Deputy Secretary Trade and Economic] for example, and he's been a fixture in his role for quite some time and that's quite helpful."

Business stakeholder

"For long standing relationships on trade issues that impact on dairy, I'm being talked to and engaged with as a trusted advisor or a trusted source of industry information, and there will be some kicking the tyre on potential New Zealand strategies to resolve an issue. At the other end, we can encounter new people to a subject who are briefing us generally on the subject, possibly don't have a lot of familiarity to us as a stakeholder and would best be described as mansplaining me on issues that I've worked on for decades."

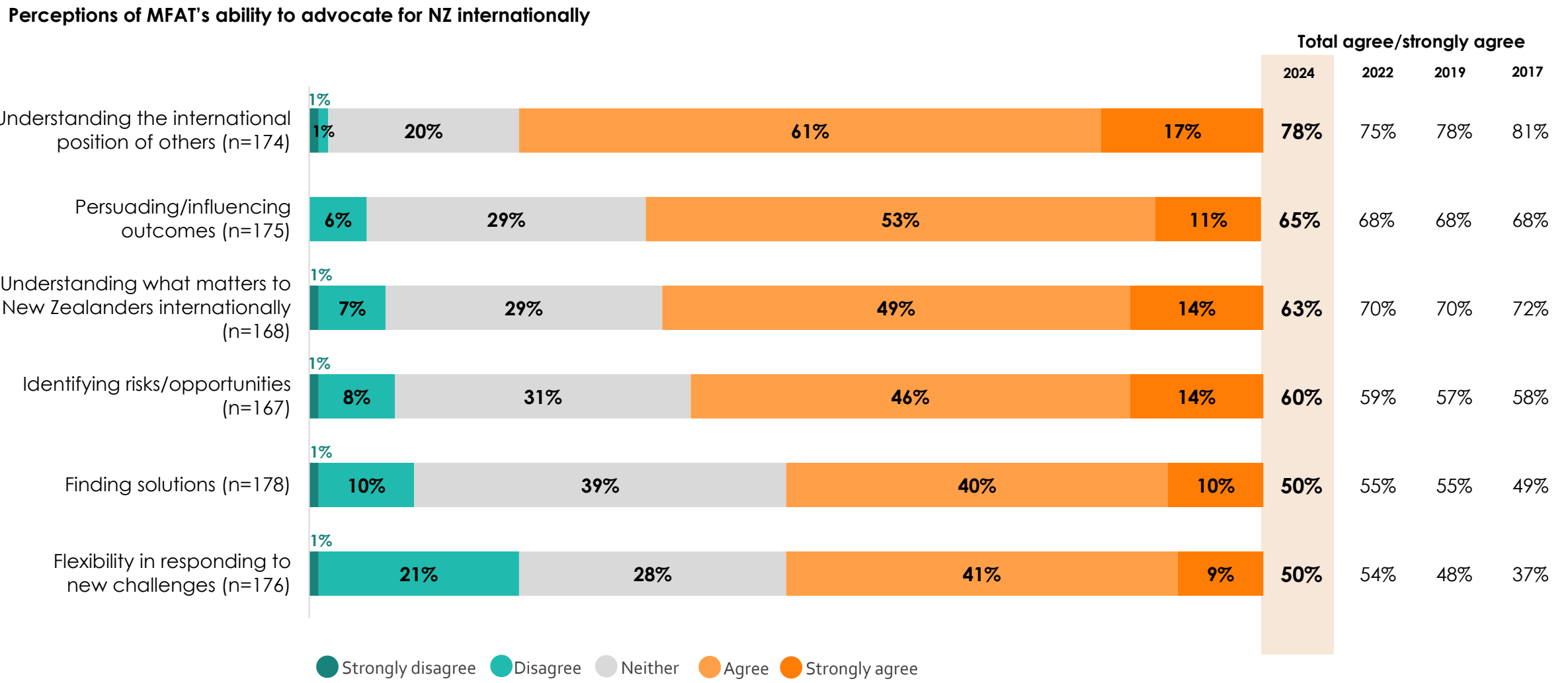
Business stakeholder

A man wearing a white hard hat and an orange safety vest over a grey shirt is smiling and looking off to the side. He is holding a white coffee cup in his right hand. The background shows a port or industrial area with shipping containers, cranes, and parked cars under a cloudy sky.

Advocating for Aotearoa

Stakeholders are somewhat positive about MFAT’s ability to advocate for NZ.

However, just half of stakeholders are positive about MFAT being flexible or able to sufficiently problem-solve.



Source: M9: Thinking about MFAT’s role in the area of representing and advocating for New Zealand’s interests internationally, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All stakeholders. Excludes 'don't know' responses
Note: Don't know responses range from 8-13% for each statement

On the other hand, senior stakeholders tend to be very positive about MFAT's advocacy, especially those with in-country relationships with senior MFAT staff.

Qual

"There's a good understanding with the embassy that we work together but they are careful not to encroach on our wish to lead on the [organisation] agenda. For example, we might be in touch with the embassy from time to time to go in support of something or that we want to happen, but they wouldn't take any initiative on a particular agenda item unless they knew that we wanted it to happen."

Business stakeholder

"[MFAT are] a connector for New Zealand with the rest of the world."

Business stakeholder

"They're really good at taking a NZ Inc. centric view on things. So, when we need them, we need a little bit of status or supporting the work we do, they are always willing to help. And we really value that. "

NZ Inc. stakeholder

"We actually had an email from [country ambassador] this morning, saying 'you've got your [meeting] coming up in [month], are you interested in the embassy hosting a pre-meeting reception as an ice-breaker?'."

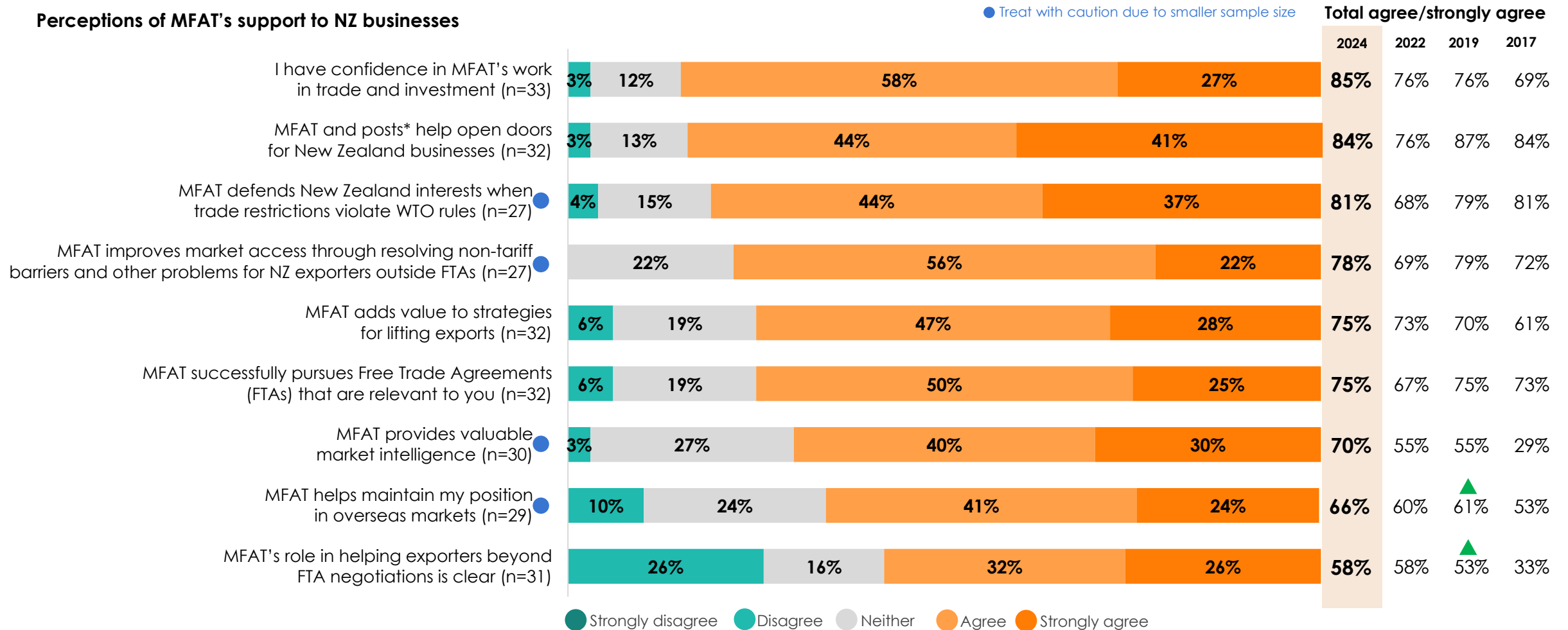
Business stakeholder



Supporting trade

Stakeholders are broadly confident in MFAT's trade and investment work.

However, following increases in 2019, perceptions of MFAT's abilities beyond free trade agreements and MFAT's ability to help stakeholders maintain their overseas position have plateaued.



Source: M6: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MFAT's role in supporting New Zealand businesses....?

Base: Stakeholders who are businesses or trade organisations. Excludes 'don't know' responses

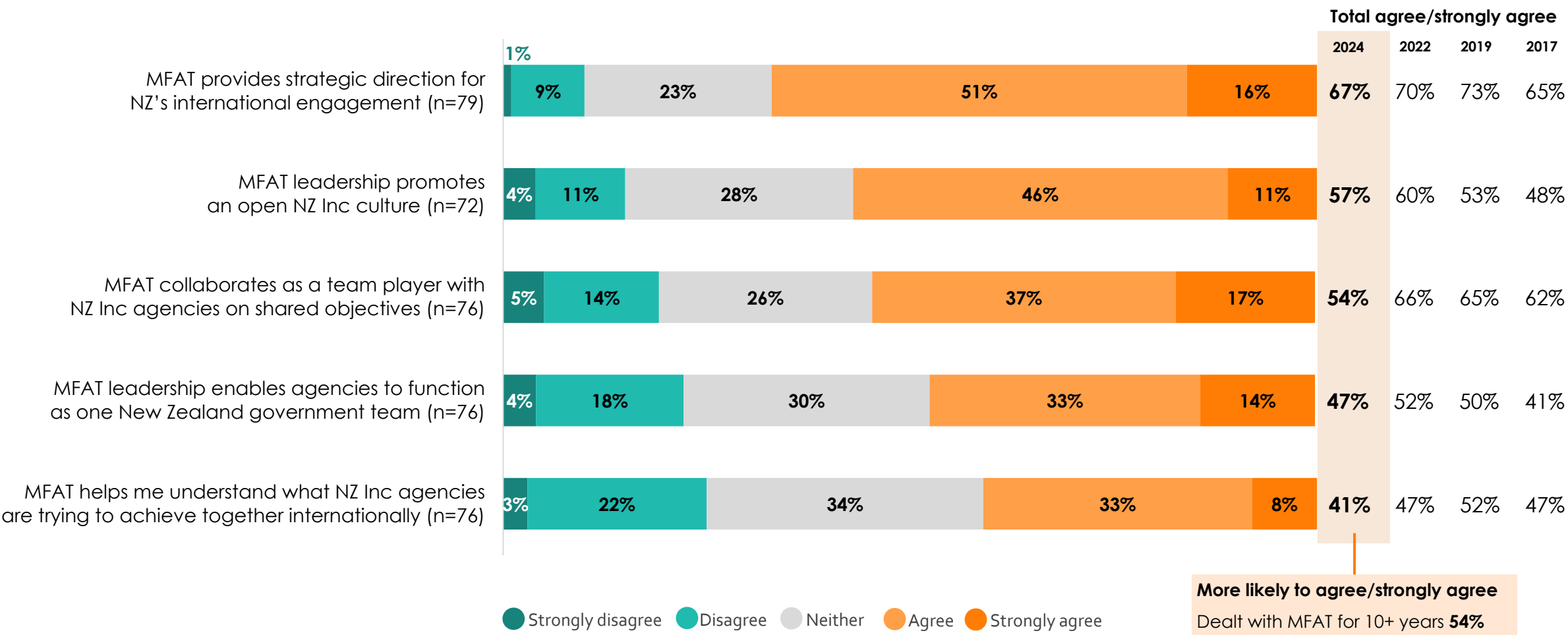
Note: Don't know responses range from 3-21%, with higher uncertainty around whether MFAT improves market access, or whether MFAT defends NZ interests) *Posts include Embassies, High Commissions or Consulates). The 2017 questionnaire included a 'Not relevant' code which was removed in 2019.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

Stakeholders lack understanding of what NZ Inc is trying to achieve.

There is also a sense that agencies are not collaborating sufficiently, or not functioning as a team.

Perceptions of NZ Inc



One NZ team?

Qual

Senior NZ Inc. stakeholders are confident in their understanding of what NZ Inc. is trying to achieve.

However, there is some frustration as to how this is executed and suggest a greater team approach could be beneficial, with MFAT working harder to bring other agencies on board and being more supportive.

“We're running the same policy positions... so a suggestion is to see us as part of the team, rather than a difficult agency that might be arguing with them behind closed doors. But at the end of the day, we're all on the same team working for the same government.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“I would say there's a reasonably good understanding that [sector] is important to New Zealand and we need to work closely on that. There's less understanding of the detail, which would be fine if we were brought into walk alongside MFAT on stuff, rather than being seen as a subsidiary of it.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“When things don't go as well as they could or should, I think the conservative risk averse nature [of MFAT] kind of rears its head a bit... and you can at times feel you are left owning it yourself.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

“I've even been in meetings where they've said 'oh well, if you can't solve it, then you can come to us and we'll help you solve it'. So, they're the grown up that can just come in and fix it. Sometimes it's as blatant as that, and other times it's just a little bit more implied.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

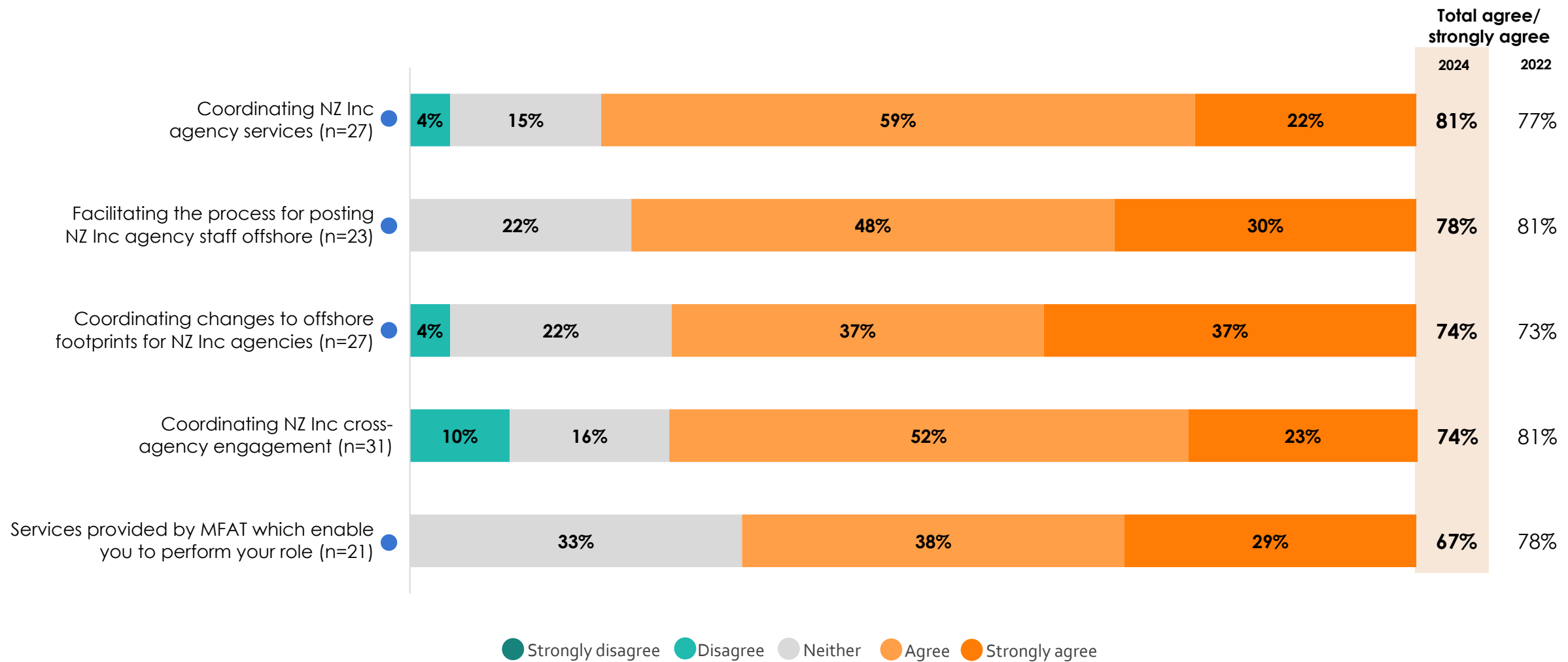
“MFAT is really good at leading things, but hopeless at supporting other agencies to be the lead. They're either in charge or they're absent, there doesn't seem to be very much in between. And sometimes we just need them to be there as a supporting partner.”

NZ Inc. stakeholder

Four in five Government partners say MFAT enables NZ Inc service coordination.

Perceptions of Government stakeholders who have experienced NZ Inc. agency services

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size

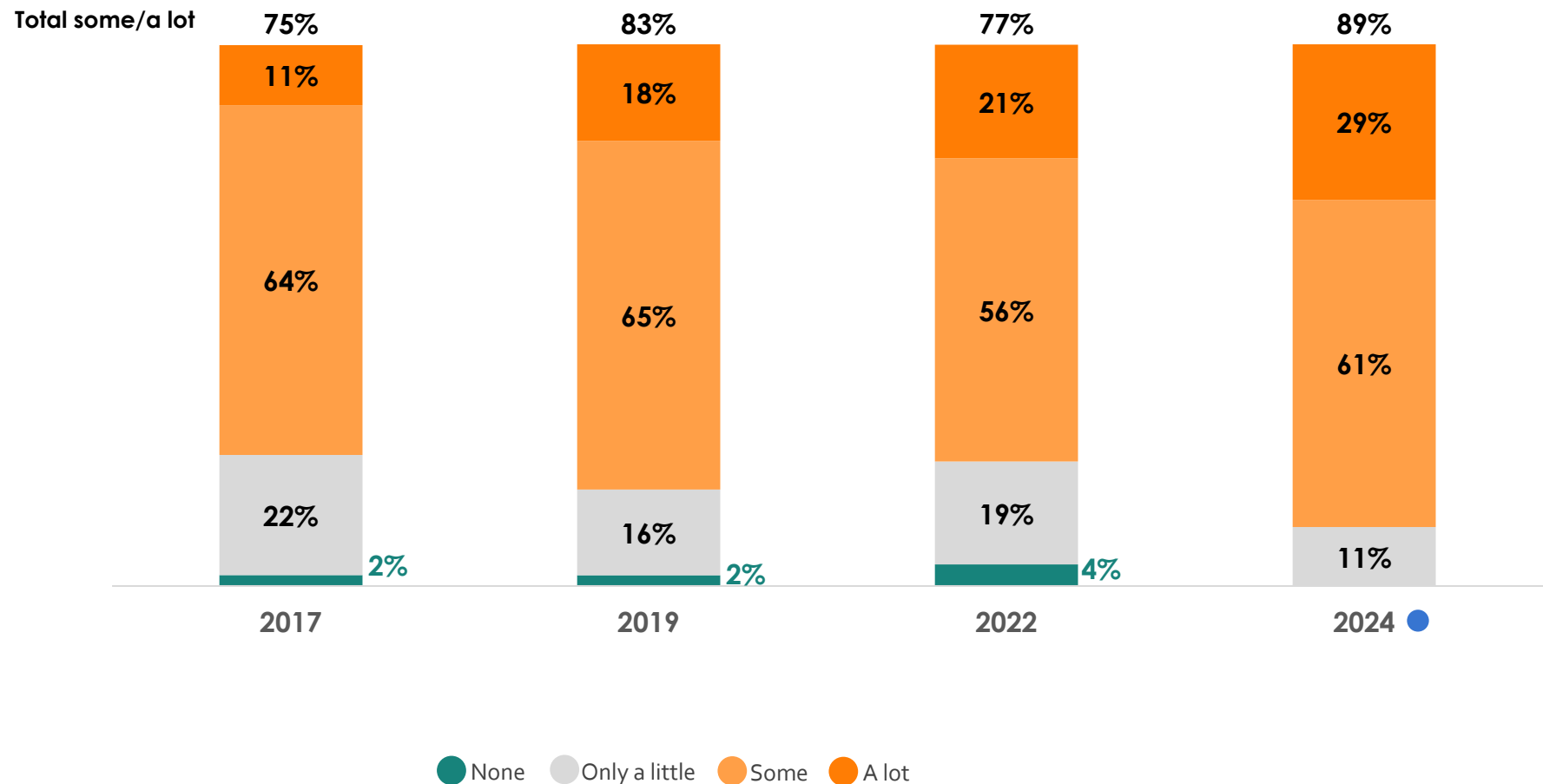


Source: M1B. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of service delivery regarding the following?
Base: Government stakeholders who have experienced NZ Inc. agency services provided at an overseas post. Excludes 'don't know' responses
Note: These statements were asked for the first time in 2022, so no data prior to 2022 is available

Most stakeholders feel there is joint planning among NZ Inc.

Extent to which there is joint operational planning in NZ Inc. team

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: M1F. To what extent do you feel there is joint operational planning in the NZ Inc. team?

Base: Government stakeholders who have experienced NZ Inc. agency services provided at an overseas post 2017 n=48, 2019 n=62, 2022 n=52, 2024 n=28.
Excludes 'not applicable' and 'don't know' responses

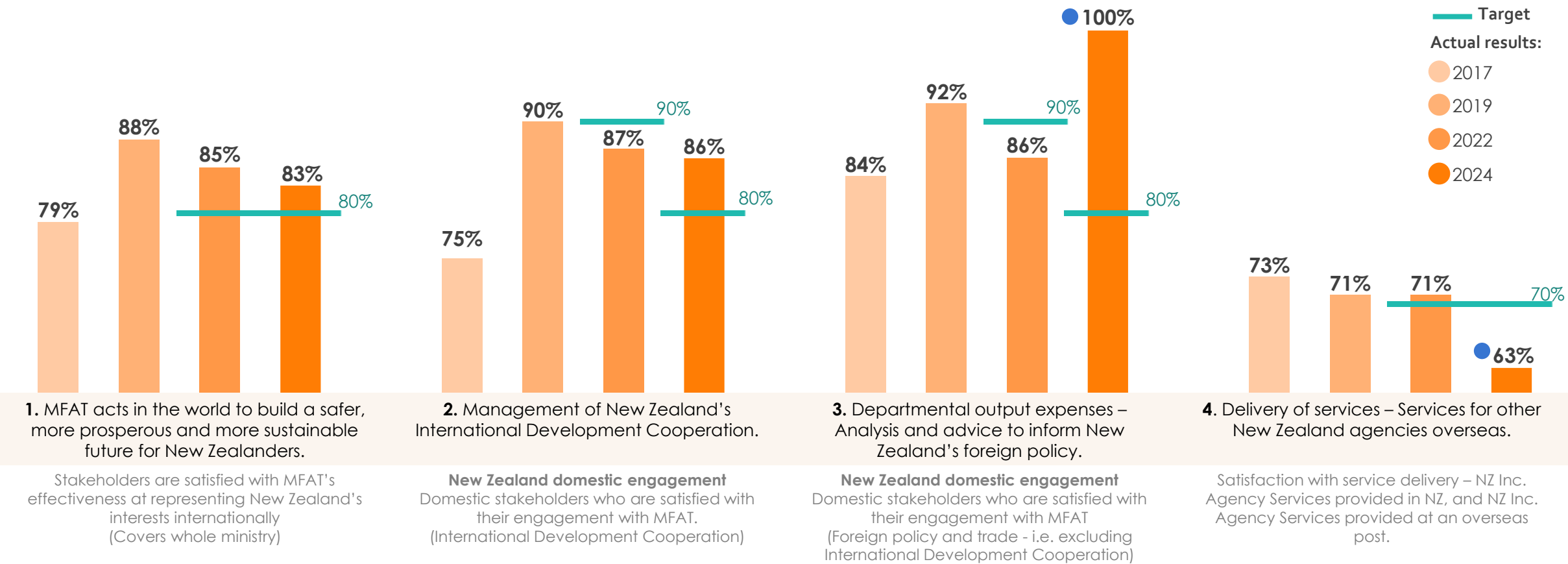
Performance measures

A photograph of two men in an office setting. In the foreground, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue sweater, is looking towards the right. In the background, another man with light brown hair and a beard, wearing a red and black plaid shirt, is leaning over a computer monitor and looking at the screen. The monitor is partially visible in the lower right corner.

MFAT has met targets for building New Zealand’s future and managing international development cooperation.

Key performance indicators

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



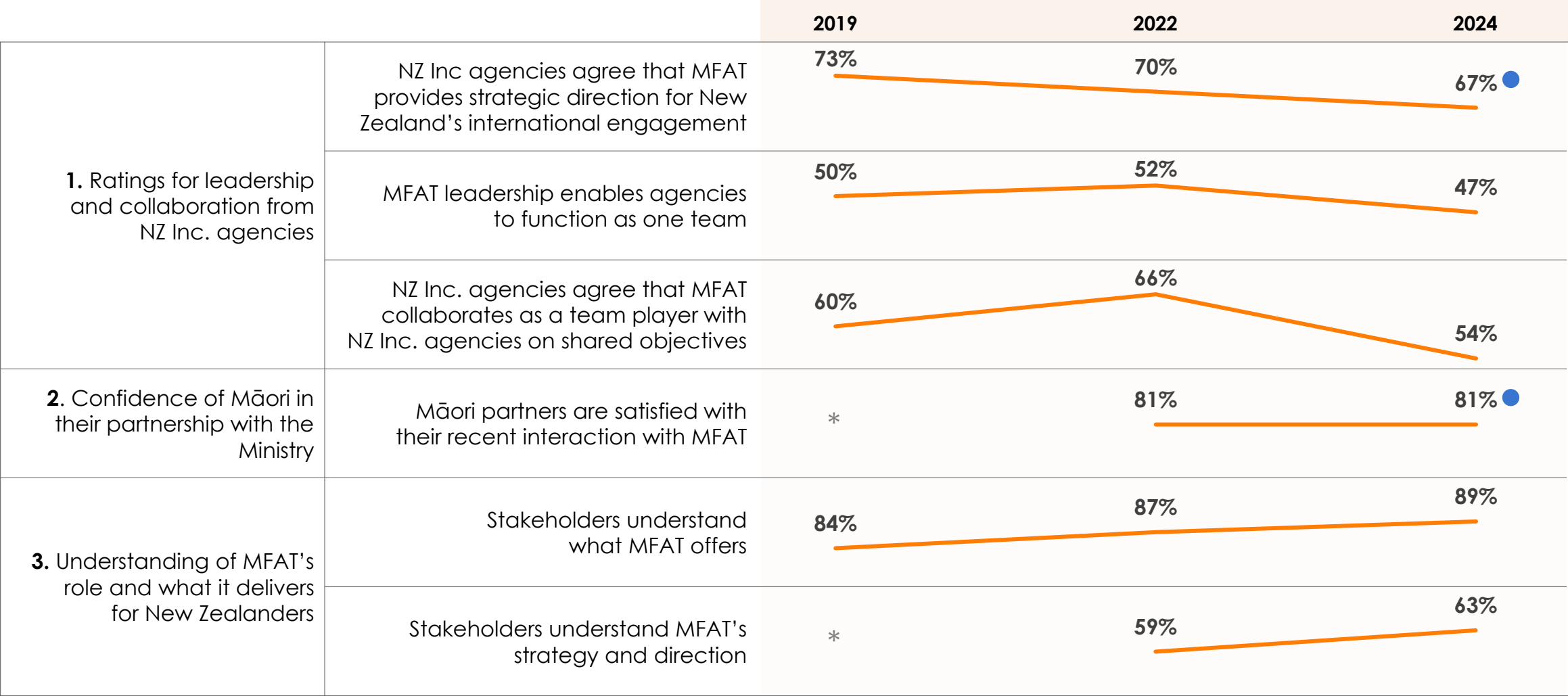
Source: 1 M10 - Overall, how effective do you think MFAT is at representing and advocating for New Zealand's interests internationally? –All stakeholders (2024 n=187).
2 M4b - Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently? – Non-international Development Cooperation stakeholders (2024 n=113).
3 M4b - Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently? – International Development Cooperation stakeholders (2024 n=10)
4 M1e - How would you rate support services provided by MFAT which enable you to perform your role? – Government stakeholders with NZ Inc agency experience at overseas post (2024 n=23) Confidential

Note: All results exclude 'don't know' or 'not applicable' responses

Additional performance measures

The target is to increase or maintain the trend below, rather than a specific target set for the year.

● Treat with caution due to smaller sample size



Source: 1 M8 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about NZ Inc?
2 M4b – Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the interactions you have had with MFAT staff recently?
3 I2 How much do you feel you know about what MFAT can offer your organisation?
J1 How would you describe your awareness and understanding of MFAT's strategy and future direction?

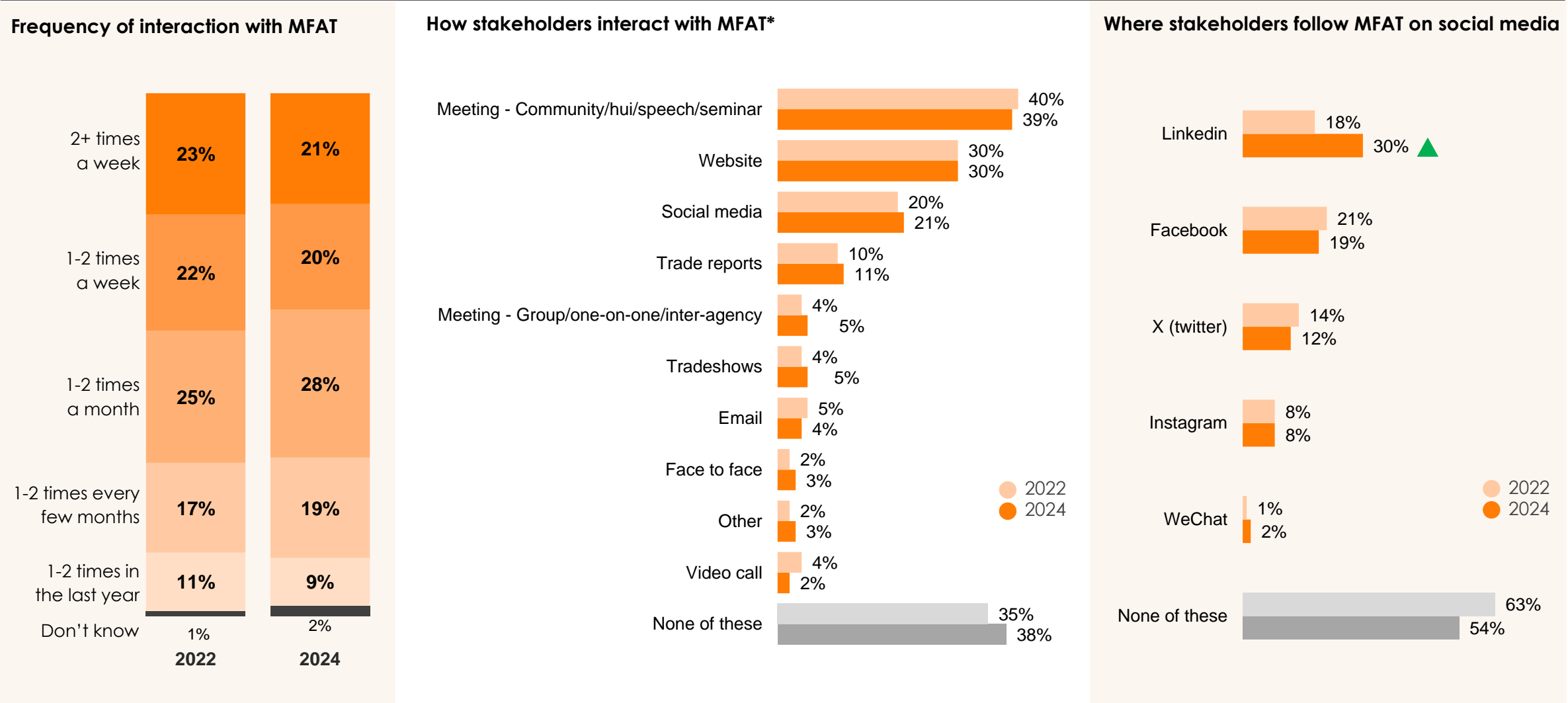
Statement 1 n=27, statement 2 n=76, statement 3 n=76
n=27
n=193
n=190



Appendix – Information/ communication channels

MFAT’s reach via LinkedIn has increased in 2024.

Although overall, stakeholders interact with MFAT through similar channels and with similar frequency as in 2022.



Source: Q50. When was your most recent interactions with a person at MFAT? By this we mean an interaction where you received a personalised response via any channel – email, the website, phone or in person. Q52. And have you interacted with MFAT using any of the following channels in the past year? Q53. Do you follow MFAT on any social media channels?

Base: All stakeholders 2022 n=325, 2024 n=193.

Note: Starting in 2022, those who had contact with MFAT more than 2 years ago are excluded. *Only showing responses with 2% or more.

▲ Significantly higher than previous survey, ▼ Significantly lower than previous survey

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