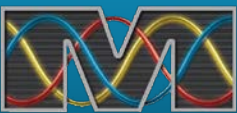


# MRO 2017 Stakeholder Survey

## Summary Results

Conducted in October 2017



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## Preface

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Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) is dedicated to its vision to *maintain and improve the quality of life through a highly reliable regional bulk power system.*

MRO operates as a cross-border Regional Entity and is headquartered in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The MRO Region covers roughly one million square miles spanning the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and all or parts of the states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The region includes more than 130 organizations that are involved in the production and delivery of electricity to more than 20 million people. These organizations include municipal utilities, cooperatives, investor-owned utilities, transmission system operators, a federal power marketing agency, Canadian Crown Corporations, and independent power producers.



MRO's primary responsibilities are to: ensure compliance with mandatory reliability standards by entities who own, operate, or use the interconnected, international bulk power system; conduct assessments of the grid's ability to meet electricity demand in the region; and analyze regional system events.

# Executive Summary

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## Target Audience

MRO's Annual Stakeholder Survey is sent to all MRO members, registered entities and industry stakeholders that do business, are subject to the regulatory oversight, or have an interest in Midwest Reliability Organization. Recognizing that individual experiences may vary, MRO encourages participation from multiple individuals within an organization and does not limit responses in any way.

## Background

Annually, MRO seeks feedback on MRO's performance in six areas: service, communication, leadership, training and education, reliability improvement, and the board. The results of this survey are used primarily to benchmark MRO's year-over-year performance related to stakeholder satisfaction, as well as to identify areas for improvement.

The survey is conducted anonymously so respondents can be open and honest in their responses. Respondents are asked to rate MRO on a 4-point scale of "Excellent, Good, Average, and Poor." Respondents can also respond "Not Applicable." Qualitative comments can be provided in response to all questions. We define these ratings as follows.

- **EXCELLENT** - Outstanding. Consistently embodies MRO's Principles of doing the right thing in the right way to support the reliable operations of the bulk power system. MRO creates substantial value for bulk power system reliable operations.
- **GOOD** - Superior. More than acceptable. Reflects MRO's Principles of doing the right thing in the right way to support the reliable operations of the bulk power system. MRO creates value for bulk power system reliable operations.
- **AVERAGE** - Passable without distinction.
- **POOR** - Seriously deficient and unacceptable. Often runs counter to expected behaviors under MRO's Principles.

In 2017, one question was added to help measure the success of MRO's outreach efforts. Responses to this question does not impact the numerical ratings for the year-over-year performance in the six areas noted above.

Finally, at the end of each survey we ask respondents to comment on any particular areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

## Survey purpose

The primary purpose of the annual survey is to provide a basis for performance improvements using candid feedback from stakeholders, as well as to provide future performance metrics. The eight basic questions have remained the same to ensure consistency year-over-year. The survey is short to provide focus and ease of completion.

## Survey Results

The 2017 stakeholder survey was available to complete between November 1 and November 15. The complete survey results are shared first with MRO's Governance and Personnel Committee and then with the entire board. Following the board's review, this summary of the survey results is posted on MRO's public-facing website.

## Performance Measurements

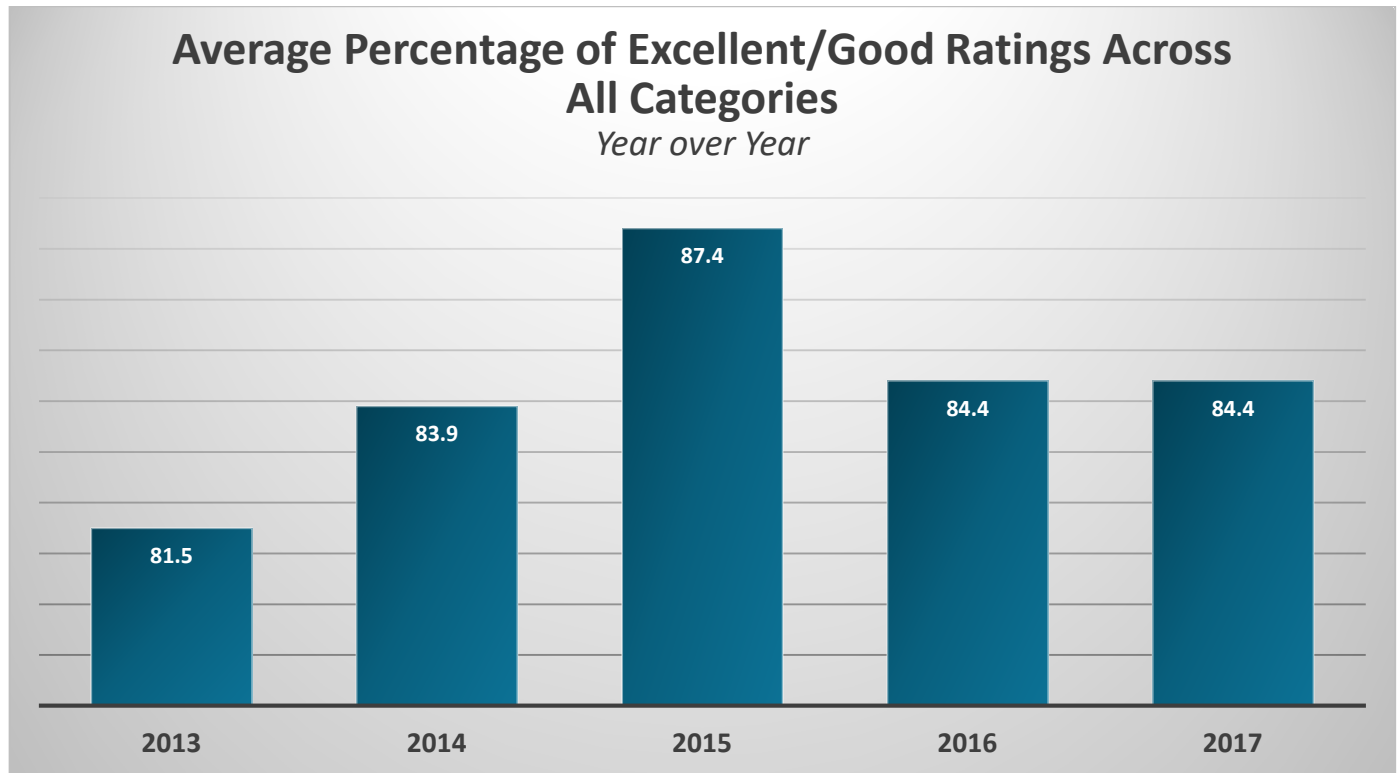
MRO first performed its annual stakeholder survey in 2010 and has performed it each year after.

The 2017 survey reflected a drop in stakeholder participation, with 56 respondents in 2017 as compared to 60 respondents in 2016. All sectors participated in the survey and the proportion of respondents who have compliance roles remained the highest at 62.5%. The percentage of respondents with operations and executive-level roles were the same at 12.5%, and those in engineering roles comprised 7.1% of the survey participants.

Below is a summary of the year-over-year "Excellent" and "Good" responses by survey category. In 2015, we removed the "not applicable" rating from the results so these "zero" ratings would not affect the weighted average. The "not applicable" rating was also removed from previous year's survey results to provide accurate year-over-year comparisons.

As you will see by the data provided, 2017 ratings of MRO's performance continue to remain high, with the average percentage of year-over-year "Excellent" and "Good" ratings remaining the same as 2016. The *Communication, Training and Education*, and *Board* categories all saw an increase in "Excellent" and "Good" ratings, while the *Service, Reliability Improvement*, and *Leadership* ratings all saw decreases. The results from each category are summarized in this report.

## Year-Over-Year Comparisons

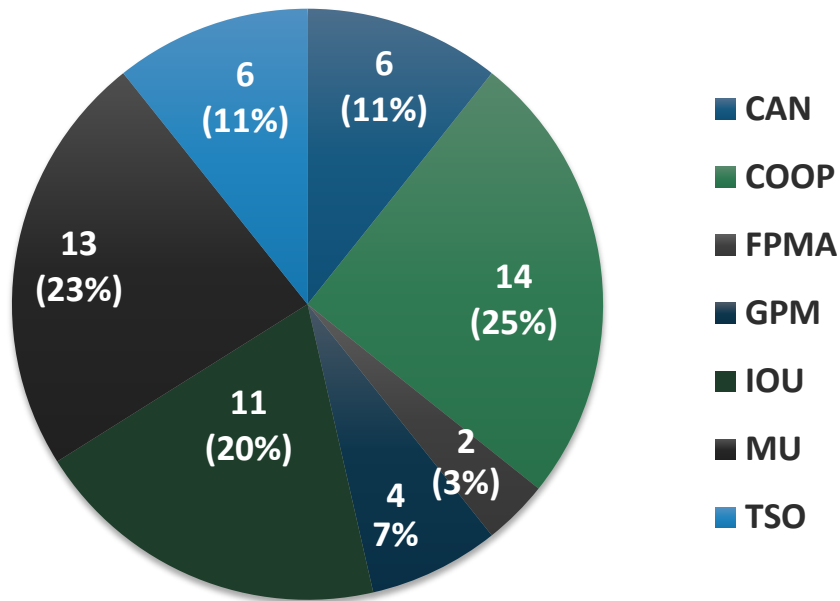


Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Service	69	87.3	57	86.4	53	84.1	48	87.3	39	79.6
Communication	67	84.8	59	81.9	60	89.6	49	84.5	47	87.0
Training and Education	64	80.0	58	81.7	58	85.3	49	83.1	48	88.9
Reliability Improvement	62	76.5	52	77.6	55	83.3	47	85.5	42	80.8
Leadership	66	81.5	62	87.3	62	93.9	52	88.1	44	84.6
Board	56	78.9	54	88.5	53	88.3	35	77.8	36	85.7
<b>Average % across all categories:</b>		<b>81.5</b>		<b>83.9</b>		<b>87.4</b>		<b>84.4</b>		<b>84.4</b>

# 2017 Summary Results

## Question 1: Sector

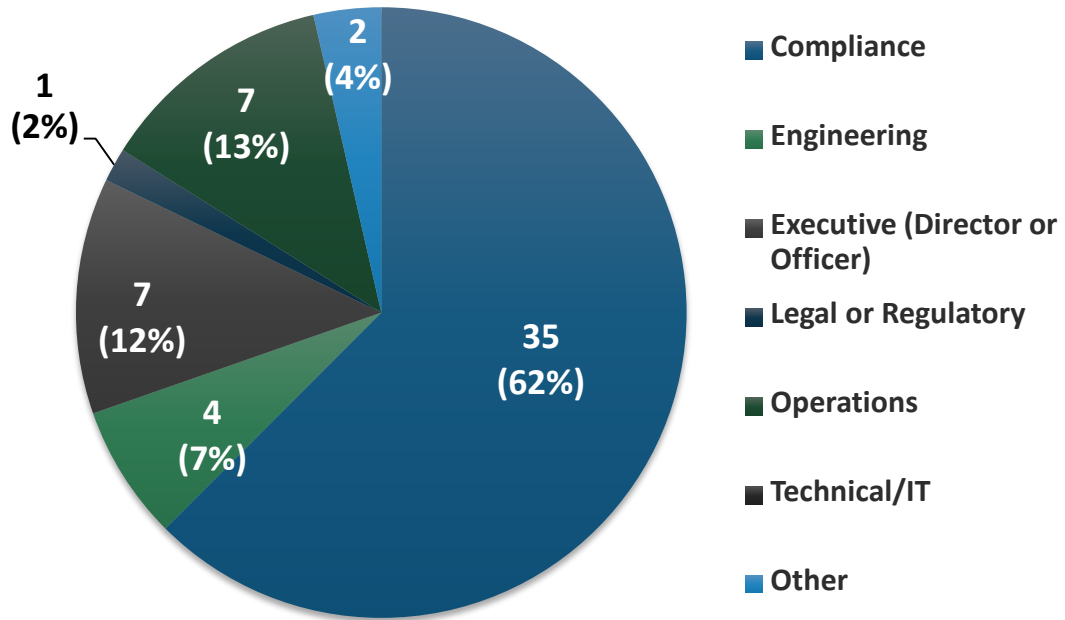
My Organization Belongs to the Following Sector:



Sector	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
CAN (Canadian Utility)	5	8	8	5	6
COOP ( Cooperative Utility)	15	16	11	14	14
FPMA (Federal Power Marketing Agency)	2	0	2	3	2
GPM ( Generator and/or Power Marketer)	12	9	6	4	4
IOU (Investor Owned Utility)	20	16	17	17	11
MU (Municipal Utility)	15	12	11	9	13
TSO (Transmission System Operator)	7	6	8	6	4
Other	6	4	6	2	2
Skipped		1	0	0	0
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>

## Question 2: Role

My role within the organization is:



Role	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Compliance	41	39	42	37	35
Executive (Director or Officer)	10	8	6	5	7
Engineering	10	10	12	7	4
Legal or Regulatory	8	3	1	1	1
Operations	11	8	5	5	7
Technical/IT	2	1	0	2	0
Other	1	3	3	3	2

## Question 3: Newsletter

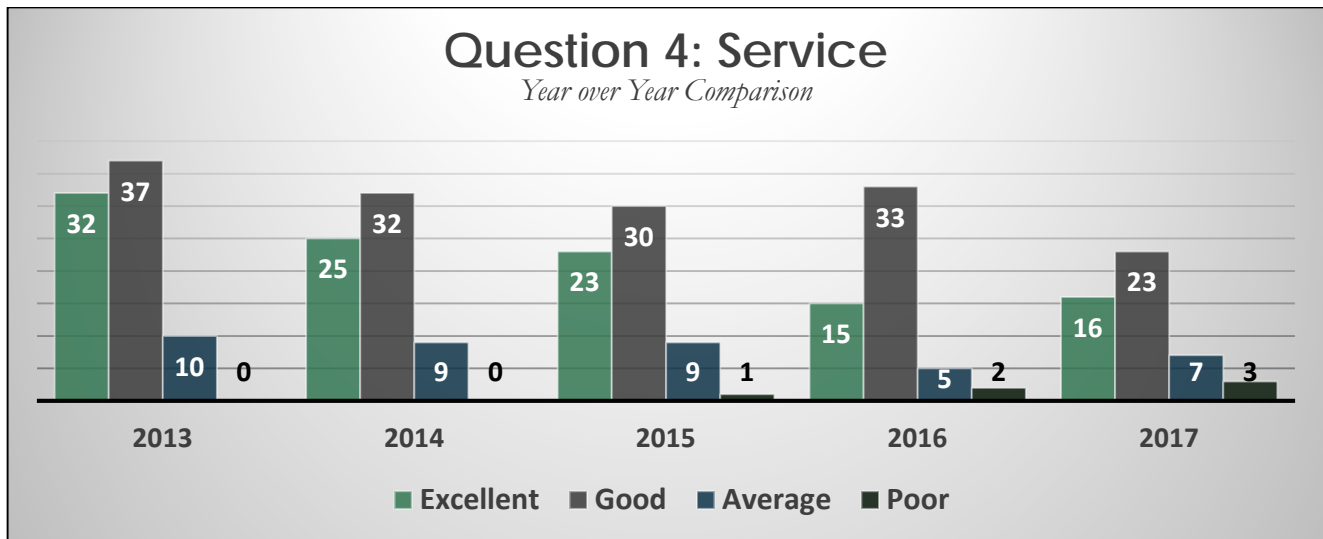
Are you a regular reader of the MRO newsletter Midwest Reliability Matters?

	2013	2014	2015	2016	%	2017	%
Yes	N/A	68	62	55	91.7	46	83.6
No	N/A	4	7	5	8.3	9	16.4



## Question 4: Service

When my company asks a question regarding reliability matters, how well does MRO staff address these questions and concerns in a timely, responsive manner?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Excellent	32	40.5	25	37.9	23	36.5	15	27.3	16	32.7
Good	37	46.8	32	48.5	30	47.6	33	60.0	23	46.9
Average	10	12.7	9	13.6	9	14.3	5	9.1	7	14.3
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6	2	3.6	3	6.1
N/A	4	0	5	0	6	0	5	0	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>66</b>		<b>69</b>		<b>55</b>		<b>49</b>	

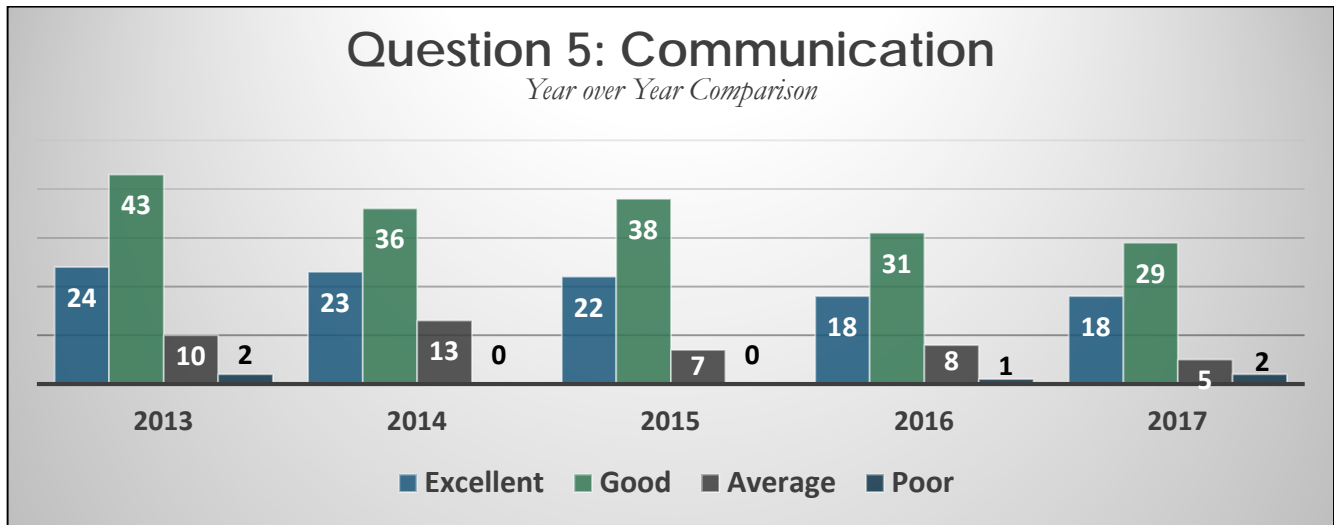
Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Service	69	87.3	57	86.4	53	84.1	48	87.3	39	79.6

### Feedback and Suggestions

The responses in this section continue to reflect high satisfaction with the level of service MRO provides to its stakeholders—79.6% of respondents provided either Excellent or Good ratings. Respondents expressed that overall, MRO staff are thorough and knowledgeable in their responses to stakeholder requests. One respondent noted that “[M]RO can be counted on to give a useful answer for any compliance question in a timely manner while preserving its independence...” Three poor ratings were received and some respondents expressed frustration with delayed and longer than usual response times. MRO staff continues to work closely with the ERO on the development and implementation of risk-based processes and procedures, which adversely affects response times in other areas. MRO leadership will continue to evaluate resources and workload in 2018 and look for opportunities to continue to improve the timeliness of staff responses to stakeholder inquiries.

## Question 5: Communication

How well does MRO share information to help you improve reliability?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Excellent	24	30.4	23	31.9	22	32.8	18	31.0	18	33.3
Good	43	54.4	36	50.0	38	56.7	31	53.5	29	53.7
Average	10	12.7	13	18.1	7	10.4	8	13.8	5	9.3
Poor	2	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.7	2	3.7
N/A	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>72</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>58</b>		<b>54</b>	

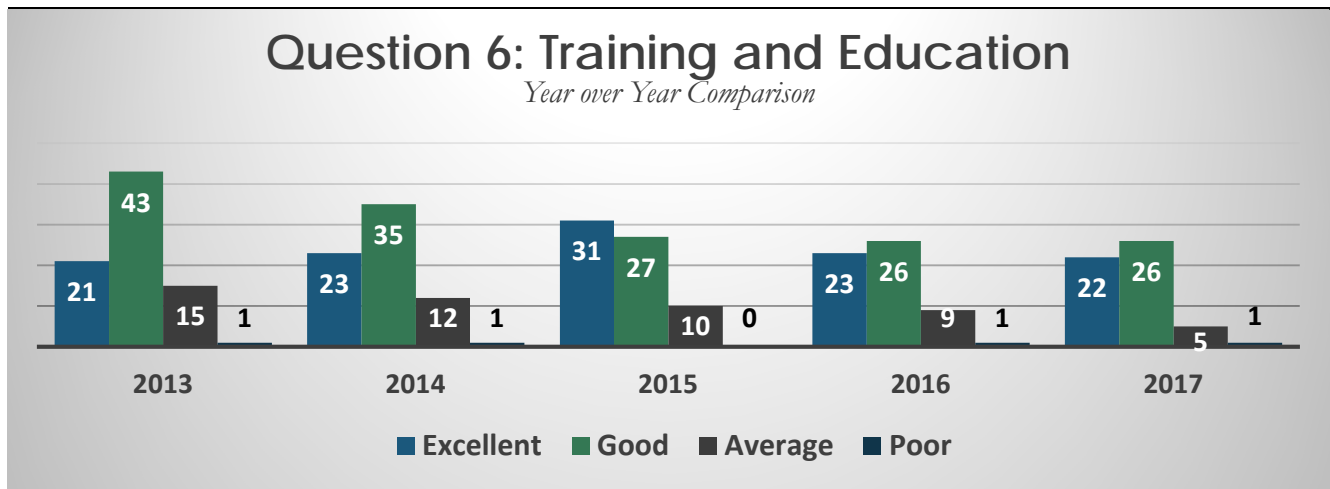
Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
<b>Communication</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>84.8</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>89.6</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>87.0</b>

### Feedback and Suggestions

Respondents continue to be very satisfied with the information MRO communicates regarding reliability issues. One respondent noted that “MRO is strong in this area, sharing in a timely manner using multiple approaches. Newsletter, Hot Topics meetings and conferences are appreciated and valuable. Standards Application Guides are very much appreciated, as is the opportunity to participate in those efforts.” Another responded that “Our organization is very pleased with the outreach conducted by MRO and hopes to see it continued in the future.” Based on the responses, there is a clear desire for MRO to continue its outreach efforts. MRO will also continue to focus on improving and expanding its communication and outreach activities in 2018.

## Question 6: Training and Education

Has MRO effectively created opportunities for you and your staff to participate in the organization through committees, workshops and other areas?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Excellent	21	26.3	23	32.4	31	45.6	23	39.0	22	40.7
Good	43	53.8	35	49.3	27	39.7	26	44.0	26	48.2
Average	15	18.8	12	16.9	10	14.7	9	15.3	5	9.3
Poor	1	1.3	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	1.7	1	1.9
N/A	3	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>71</b>		<b>68</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>54</b>	

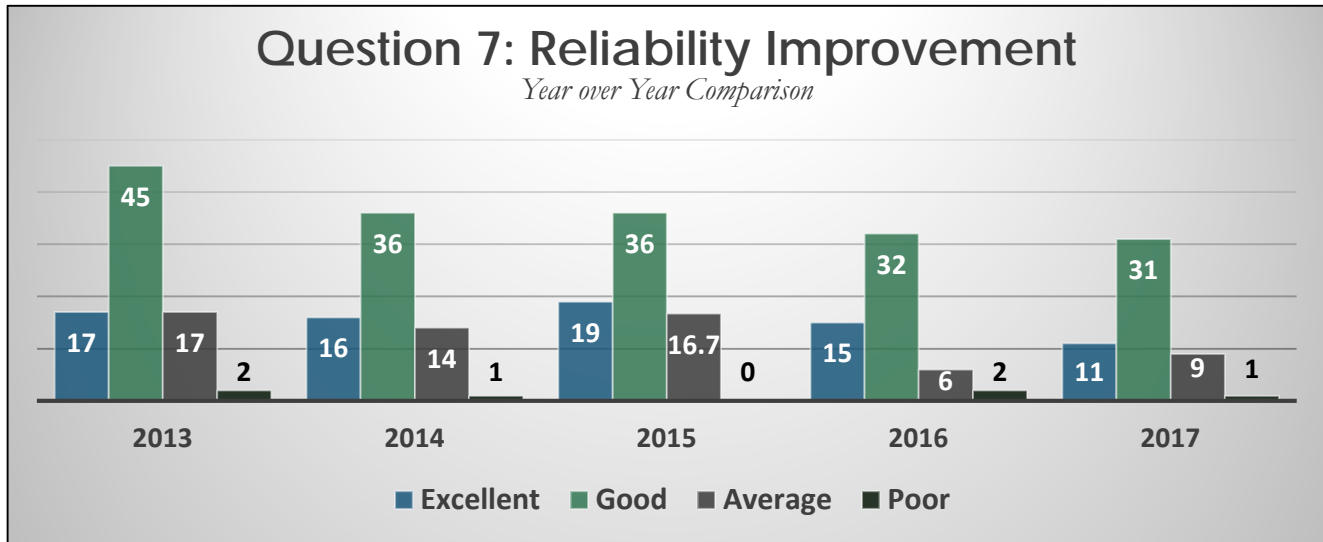
Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
<b>Training and Education</b>	64	80.1	58	81.7	58	85.3	49	83.0	48	88.9

### Feedback and Suggestions

Respondents continue to be very satisfied with the number and type of educational opportunities offered by MRO. One respondent stated that “MRO workshops are always very informative and address current topics. Adding in NERC speakers at conferences is of great value. The recent Security Conference was excellent.” In 2017, MRO offered remote attendance to many of its webinars and conferences. Based on the feedback received, being able to attend conferences remotely is very cost-effective and much appreciated. MRO records many of its conferences and webinars, which can be viewed in our stakeholder outreach [video library](#). Respondents also expressed appreciation for the training and outreach provided by MRO’s new Security Advisory Council. You can view Security Advisory Council webinars [here](#). If you would like to suggest a future training topic, please contact [training@midwestreliability.org](mailto:training@midwestreliability.org).

## Question 7: Reliability Improvement

How well has MRO assisted your company in addressing matters related to reliability?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Excellent	17	21.0	16	23.9	19	28.8	15	27.3	11	21.2
Good	45	55.6	36	53.7	36	54.5	32	58.2	31	59.6
Average	17	21.0	14	20.9	11	16.7	6	10.9	9	17.3
Poor	2	2.5	1	1.5	0	0.0	2	3.6	1	1.9
N/A	2	0	5	0	2	0	5	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>66</b>		<b>55</b>		<b>52</b>	

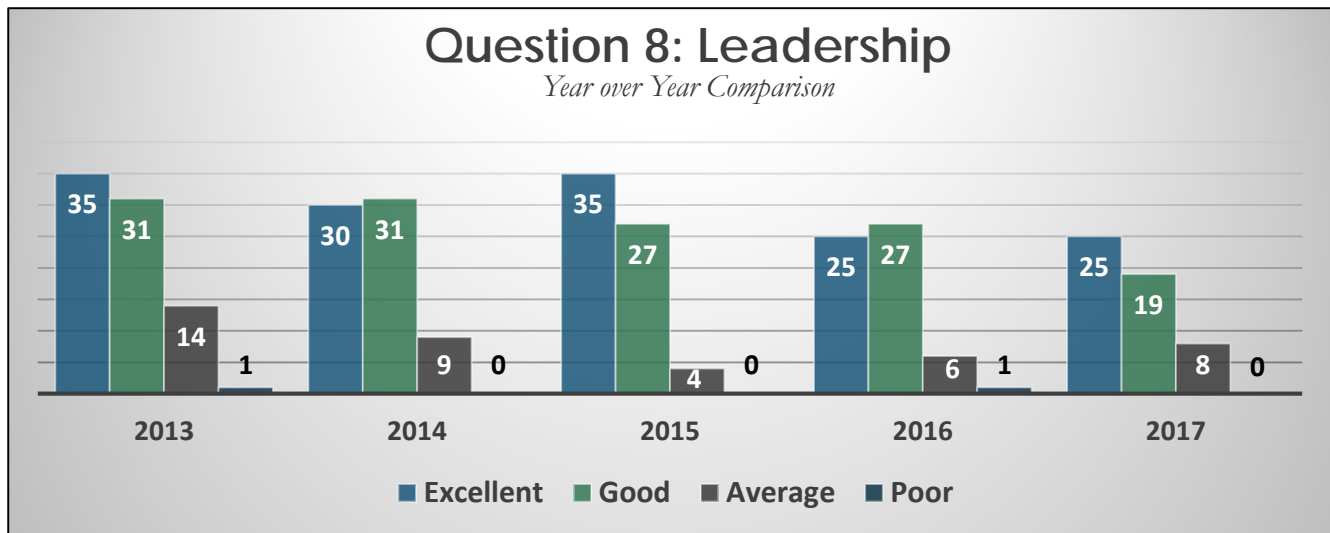
Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Reliability Improvement	62	76.6	52	77.6	55	83.3	47	85.5	42	80.8

### Feedback and Suggestions

Respondents continue to be generally satisfied with MRO's efforts to improve reliability. Respondents expressed that MRO has done a good job of focusing on reliability, instead of just compliance, and conveying information that helps industry understand and address reliability risks. One commenter observed "MRO's focus on risk-based compliance has helped us to implement our own risk assessment, which has been extremely valuable to us. We followed the process provided by [MRO] a couple of years ago and it led us down the reliability path and not the compliance path. Maintaining compliance is much easier when we focus on reliability." In 2018, we will continue working on ERO-wide initiatives to improve reliability.

## Question 8: Leadership

Overall, how would you rate MRO’s leadership to improve reliability and address risks to the bulk power system?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Excellent	35	43.2	31	43.7	35	53.0	25	42.4	25	48.1
Good	31	38.3	31	43.7	27	40.9	27	45.8	19	36.5
Average	14	17.3	9	12.7	4	6.1	6	10.2	8	15.4
Poor	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.7	0	0
N/A	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>		<b>71</b>		<b>66</b>		<b>59</b>		<b>52</b>	

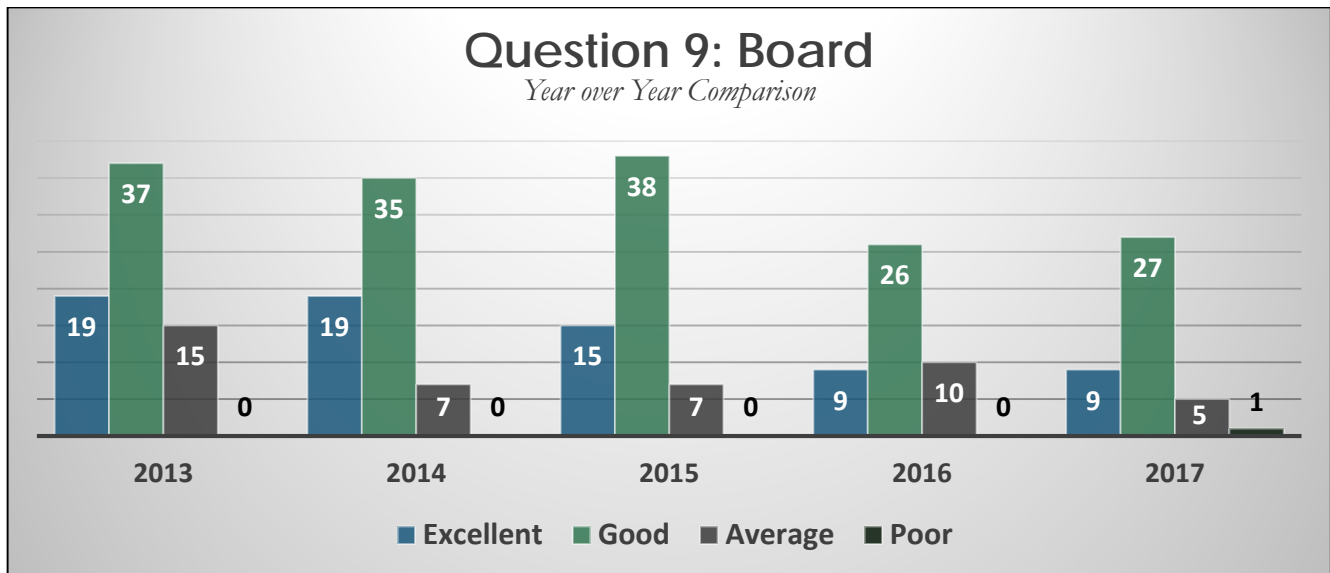
Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
Leadership	66	81.5	62	87.4	62	93.9	52	88.2	44	84.6

### Feedback and Suggestions

The responses in this section continue to reflect a very high level of satisfaction with the leadership of the organization—84.6% of respondents provided either *Excellent* or *Good* ratings. The comments from respondents were overwhelmingly positive; one respondent said that “In my opinion, MRO is at the forefront of addressing risks and improving reliability. MRO is a leader in improving processes associated with NERC compliance.” Another stated that “We appreciate the consistent tone and messaging of MRO, and Dan Skaar in particular, that compliance should not come at the expense of reliability.” The MRO leadership team will continue to seek opportunities to promote the ERO Vision to be a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system through support of highly effective reliability organizations or HEROs in 2018.

## Question 9: Board of Directors

How well do you feel that the board provides adequate strategic guidance and review of the activities of MRO?



Number of Year over Year Responses by Category										
	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
<b>Excellent</b>	19	26.8	19	31.1	15	25.0	9	20.0	9	21.4
<b>Good</b>	37	52.1	35	57.4	38	63.3	26	57.8	27	64.3
<b>Average</b>	15	21.1	7	11.5	7	11.7	10	22.2	5	11.9
<b>Poor</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	1	2.4
<i>N/A</i>	11	0	10	0	9	0	14	0	14	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>		<b>61</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>42</b>	

Number and Percentage of Excellent/Good Ratings by Category										
Category	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
<b>Board</b>	56	78.9	54	88.5	53	88.3	35	77.8	36	85.7

### Feedback and Suggestions

The number of *Excellent* and *Good* responses in this area significantly increased this year, however, 14 respondents still rated this question as *Not Applicable*. Respondents generally stated they had limited exposure to the board and do not follow the board's activities. One respondent stated that "[W]e could surmise that MRO leadership is following the guidance of the board, but that guidance, even if made available to us, is simply something we do not pay attention to." MRO will continue to seek ways to communicate information about the work of the board to its stakeholders.

## **Question 10: MRO's Outreach Efforts**

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on MRO's outreach efforts (publications, guidance documents, webinars, conferences, etc.).

Thirty respondents provided feedback on this question, twenty-eight of whom noted overwhelming satisfaction with the quality and content of MRO's outreach. Several stated they have seen a marked improvement in MRO's outreach efforts over the past few years. The majority of the responses indicated that MRO's publications and guidance document are useful and valuable, and many commenters noted that MRO's conferences and facilities are excellent. One respondent stated that "MRO provides outstanding outreach support. Everything from webinars to publications provide the registered entity with valuable tools to help maintain a viable compliance program."

Two respondents noted that information can be hard to find on MRO's website, and three respondents stated that although the information published by MRO is very good, the sheer volume of it makes it hard to digest and may detract from important messages. MRO staff will continue to assess its outreach efforts and look for ways to improve the delivery of information in 2018.

## **Question 11: Satisfaction**

Respondents were asked to list any specific characteristics of MRO with which they were SATISFIED. Thirty-two respondents provided comments; several complimented the knowledge, willingness and professionalism of MRO staff, the level of stakeholder outreach and communication, and MRO's leadership of risk-based regulation.

One respondent noted that "MRO's culture and desire to be part of the reliability solution are outstanding." Another stated that "MRO's continued leadership of self-logging and keeping the small stuff small is appreciated." Several respondents complimented the competency of MRO staff and the proactive work of MRO's Risk Assessment and Mitigation team to partner with registered entities to improve compliance programs and overall system reliability.

Respondents also expressed appreciation for the opportunities MRO provides registered entities to participate and influence the direction of MRO.

## **Question 12: Dissatisfaction**

Respondents were asked to list any specific characteristics of MRO with which they were DISSATISFIED. Of the twenty-two comments received, six were "none." Most of the responses related to timeliness of certain CMEP processes and the desire for shorter timeframes for closing out audits. One respondent noted that more discussion on Internal Controls is warranted, and another suggested that MRO's office location in downtown Saint Paul is not convenient as it is about 20 minutes from the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport.

In 2017, MRO staff continued to focus on developing risk-based oversight practices, such as performing Inherent Risk Assessments of each registered entity and developing MRO's Regional Risk Assessment. Significant resources were dedicated to ensure the success of these programs. MRO leadership will continue to monitor resources and workload in 2018.

### **Question 13: Remaining Thoughts**

Respondents were asked to share any remaining thoughts about their experiences with MRO, including suggestions for improvement. Twenty comments were received. Respondents generally expressed appreciation for MRO's innovativeness and effectiveness as a regulator, and encouraged a continued focus on risk and more streamlined approaches to compliance and enforcement.

A few suggestions were made for NERC and the Regional Entities to continue working to improve the quality of Reliability Standards and CMEP processes. Only two suggestions were MRO-specific; one was to extend MRO's outreach opportunities to a wider audience and consider alternate event locations; the second was to provide a staff roster on MRO's website. These suggestions will be considered by the MRO leadership team.



## Conclusion

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MRO's Annual Stakeholder Survey provides an opportunity for stakeholders that do business, are subject to the regulatory oversight, or have an interest in Midwest Reliability Organization to provide input and feedback on MRO's performance as a regulator. We sincerely appreciate the open and honest responses we receive through this survey each year, and will continue to use it as a tool to identify inefficiencies and areas for future improvement.

We'd like to thank those who responded to this year's survey, and will work to enhance the areas identified for improvement in 2018, along with continuing to promote our Vision of a reliable regional bulk power system through adaptive, risk-based regulation.