

Returning Officers' Report of Proceedings Summary

44th General Election



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Acronyms and Terms

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Term |
|----------------------|--|
| AARO | Additional assistant returning officer |
| ARO | Assistant returning officer |
| AC | Automation coordinator |
| CEA | Canada Elections Act |
| COA | Control of Authorization |
| CPS | Central poll supervisor |
| CRO | Community relations officer |
| EA | Election administrator |
| EC | Elections Canada |
| ECHQ | Elections Canada headquarters |
| ED | Electoral district |
| E-Reg | E-Registration |
| ERS | Event Results System |
| FAMT | Field Assignments Management Tool |
| FAQ | Frequently asked questions |
| IDRS | Internal Document Review System |
| FLO | Field liaison officer |
| FO | Financial officer |
| FSN | Field Support Network |
| GE | General election |
| ICBMS | Incidents, Complaints and Breaches Monitoring System |
| OLMC | Official language minority community |
| PAARO | Primary additional assistant returning officer |
| PD | Polling division |
| PEA | Pre-event assignment |
| PESC | Political Entities Service Centre |
| POM | Poll operations manager |

| | |
|------------|---|
| PPE | Personal protective equipment |
| RecSup | Recruitment supervisor |
| RMS | Recruitment Management System |
| RO | Returning officer |
| ROPS/SITES | Returning Office Payment System and SITES |
| RRC | Regional recruitment coordinator |
| SA | Service agent |
| SME | Subject matter expert |
| SMSi | Supply Management System by Intranet |
| SOV | Statement of the Vote |
| SPS | Service point supervisor |
| STAT | Statistics and Analytics Tool |
| SVR | Special Voting Rules |
| TO | Training officer |
| TOPR | Targeted Outreach Program Repository |
| VIC | Voter information card |

Introduction

The 44th general election (GE) was called by proclamation of the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada. The election period spanned 36 days, the minimum required by the *Canada Elections Act (CEA)*, from August 15, 2021, to September 20, 2021. During this period, the 338 returning officers (ROs) carried out their mandate by delivering the GE in their respective electoral districts (EDs), in accordance with the *CEA* and the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). Like all elections, the 44th GE was marked by significant challenges, such as conducting the GE in a pandemic situation and the need to adapt procedures and methods to conduct an accessible, safe and secure election. However, it also meant success and evidence of resilience.

In accordance with section 314(1)(a) of the *CEA*, ROs are required to submit a *Report of Proceedings (RoP)* after each GE, to allow them to report on the issues, trends and successes in their EDs. This report is a summary of the *RoP* completed by all 338 ROs after the 44th GE. The input in this report is intended to improve processes, systems and services for future GEs and by-elections.

Executive Summary

To successfully deliver the 44th GE despite a variety of unique challenges, Elections Canada (EC) had to adapt its delivery plan to the pandemic situation, as well as deal with operational delays, a short election calendar and extreme weather events.

Overall, ROs indicated that the pre-event assignments (PEAs) and various training sessions in the pre-event period adequately prepared them and their key staff for the delivery of the 44th GE. In addition, they noted the efficiency of their teams during the revision period, as well as during advance and ordinary polling days, as one of the highlights of the GE. ROs also indicated that, overall, the communications and support received from Elections Canada headquarters (ECHQ) were effective. The ROs appreciated the addition of the primary additional assistant returning officer (PAARO) and poll operations manager (POM) positions. They hope that these positions will be retained for subsequent elections. As for the regional recruitment coordinator (RRC) position, the ROs indicated that they would like to better understand the position's scope so they can effectively leverage the RRC's support.

Of all the 338 ROs who successfully delivered the 44th GE, 104 of them did so for the first time. These new ROs recommended reviewing the integration process to allow new ROs to be mentored by experienced ROs. They also recommended the inclusion of an initial face-to-face training session to introduce the fundamentals of electoral administration and to promote a sense of belonging.

Overall, ROs reported that the pressure of a short election calendar, coupled with delays in receiving and installing computer equipment in RO offices, was felt throughout the election. Because some RO offices were not fully functional on Day 36, some activities had to be delayed and completed in a short time frame, including the recruitment and training of poll workers. ROs also noted that the lack of synchronization between the Returning Office Payment System and SITES (ROPS/SITES) and the Recruitment Management System (RMS) during the GE affected the transition from poll worker recruitment to training. ROs pointed out the need to review the distribution of poll worker responsibilities, as the removal of the poll clerk position resulted in additional work for the deputy returning officer (DRO). They also proposed simplifying the polling place closing procedures to limit the risk of errors.

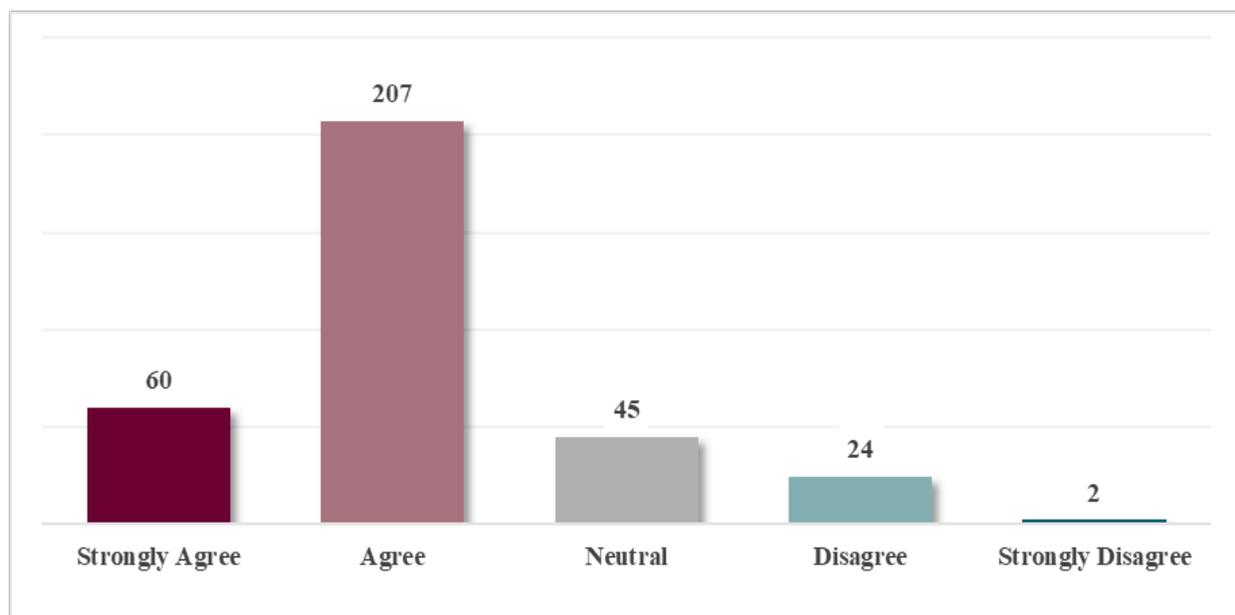
The 44th GE was marked by regional and local challenges that required an even higher level of adaptability. These included major wildfires in British Columbia, a hurricane in Newfoundland and Labrador, and record-breaking heat waves across the country. Despite all the challenges encountered, ROs and their teams worked together with their field liaison officers (FLOs) and ECHQ to successfully deliver the 44th GE.

Section 1: Conduct of the Electoral Event

1.1 Training

Returning officer training

1. *The training and information for ROs (e.g., PEAs online materials, virtual regional meetings, etc.) satisfactorily prepared me for conducting the GE.*



267 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 45 were neutral, while 26 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The PEAs were effective in preparing ROs for the delivery of the 44th GE, as they were comprehensive, flexible and ED-specific.
- The online training modules were clear and precise, adequately preparing ROs for the tasks to be performed during the event.
- The PEAs related to polling places, staffing, recruitment and training were very relevant.
- Allowing for the hiring of key staff, securing the RO and additional assistant returning officer (AARO) offices, as well as confirming polling places during the PEAs, were beneficial in preparing for the GE.
- The regional virtual meetings allowed ROs and ECHQ subject matter experts (SMEs) to share knowledge and experience on various important aspects of a GE.

- The knowledge sharing and support offered to ROs by FLOs greatly facilitated the preparation for the GE delivery.

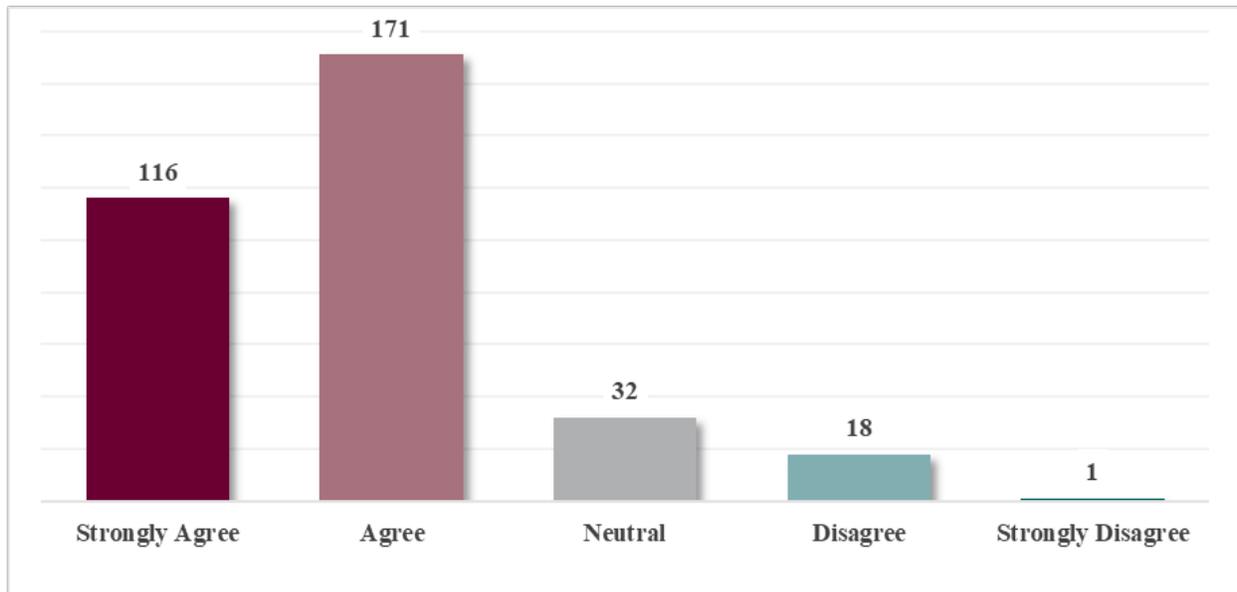
What could be improved

- Extend the length of the breakout discussions during the regional meetings to increase the quantity and quality of exchanges between ROs and ECHQ SMEs.
- Reintroduce face-to-face regional meetings to increase knowledge sharing between ROs and FLOs.
- Implement a mentoring program to guide new ROs through the completion of PEAs and training to attain a higher level of preparation.
- Establish a test environment for computer systems such as REVISE and ROPS/SITES to allow ROs to become familiar with them before the GE.
- Synthesize the training material to separate the essential elements from complementary elements, and highlight changes of procedures to ensure more efficient preparation.
- Provide training during PEAs on the primary tasks of key office staff to allow ROs to better understand each position's scope.

Key staff training

2. The training for the following key office staff positions in the RO office satisfactorily prepared them for their duties:

Automation coordinator (AC)



287 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to ACs adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 32 were neutral, while 19 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

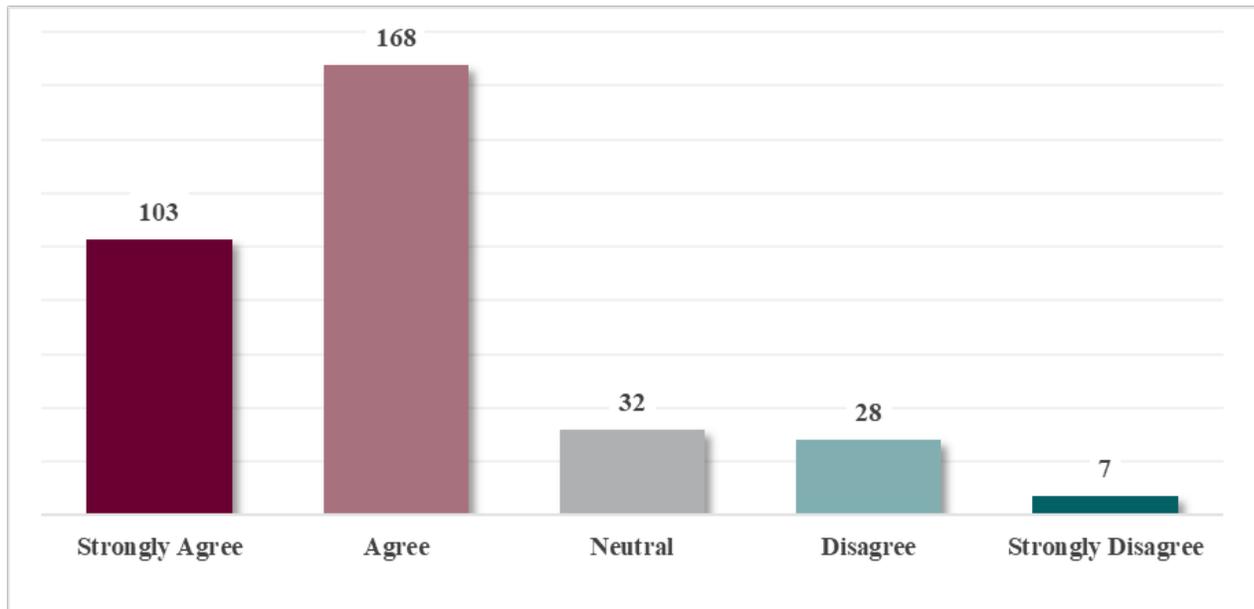
- The AC training was detailed and relevant. In addition, the online training modules allowed them to deepen their knowledge.
- The AC Manual was a great tool and support in the performance of daily tasks.
- The ECHQ-led discussion period for the ACs was very helpful in ensuring mastery of the concepts and processes covered in training.

What could be improved

- Establish a test environment for REVISE and ROPS/SITES in which the AC could practise.
- Include a mentoring component in the training for newly hired ACs to ensure that they are prepared to conduct their tasks during the GE.

Other notable comments

- While the ACs appreciated their virtual training, they would have preferred to be trained in person.

Service point supervisor (SPS)

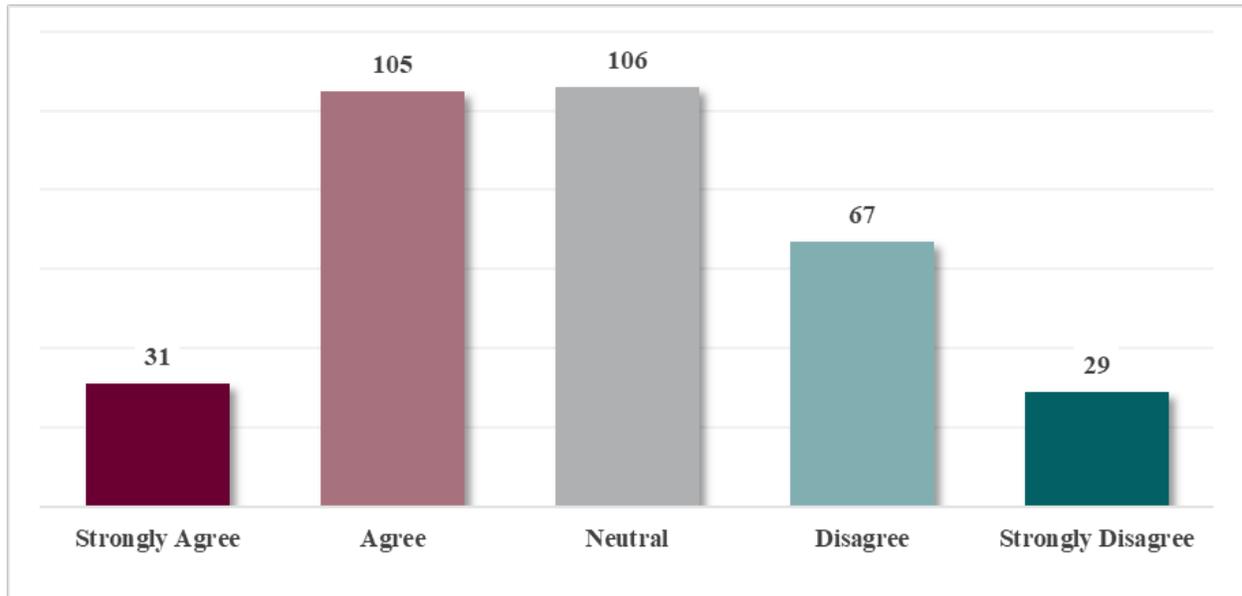
271 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to SPSs adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 32 were neutral, while 35 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The SPS Manual was a valuable tool to support SPSs in their daily tasks.
- The SPSs benefited greatly from the main training delivered during PEAs. The additional refresher training further ensured their success.

What could be improved

- Provide training to the assistant SPS during PEAs so that they gain the necessary knowledge earlier and can further support the primary SPS.
- Implement a mentoring component to the training for newly hired SPSs to ensure they are prepared to conduct their tasks during the GE.
- Provide training that more thoroughly addresses vote-by-mail and Internal Document Review System (IDRS) procedures.

Recruitment supervisor (RecSup)

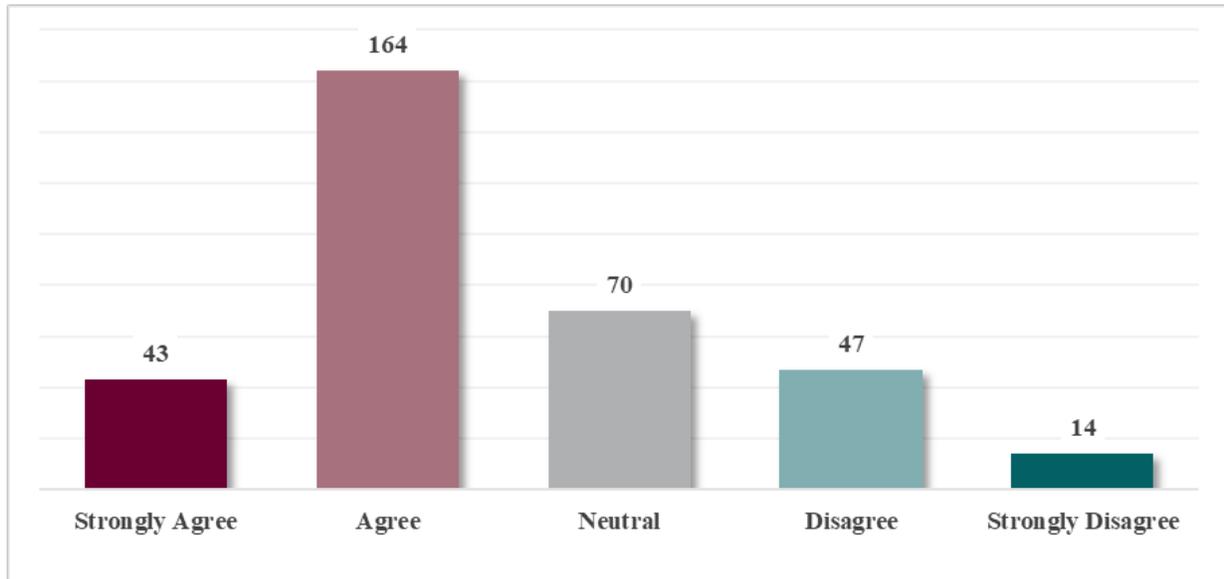
136 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to RecSups adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 106 were neutral, while 96 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The online training provided RecSups with the necessary knowledge of RMS.

What could be improved

- Implement training during the PEAs so that RecSups can complete their courses before the event.
- Include a test environment for RMS in which the RecSups can practise.

Training officer (TO)

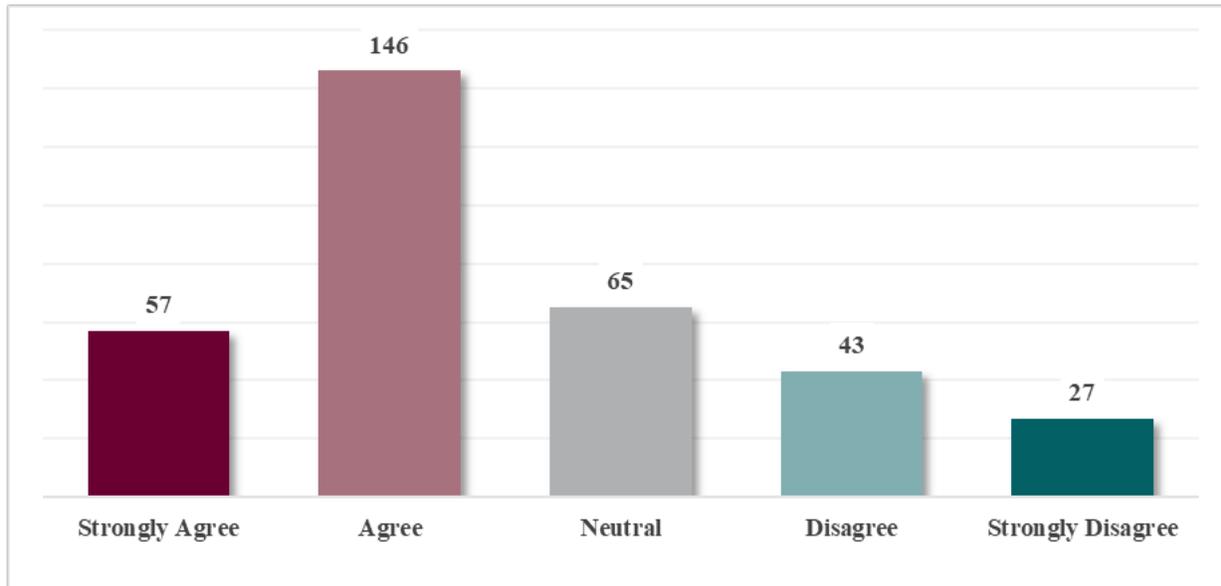
207 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to TOs adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 70 were neutral, while 61 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- TOs were better prepared to begin their duties when the writ was issued, since their training took place during the PEAs. The ROs would like to see this practice continue.

What could be improved

- Synthesize TO training materials to highlight essential concepts.
- Add a component to their training on the effective management of poll worker training sessions.

Financial officer (FO)

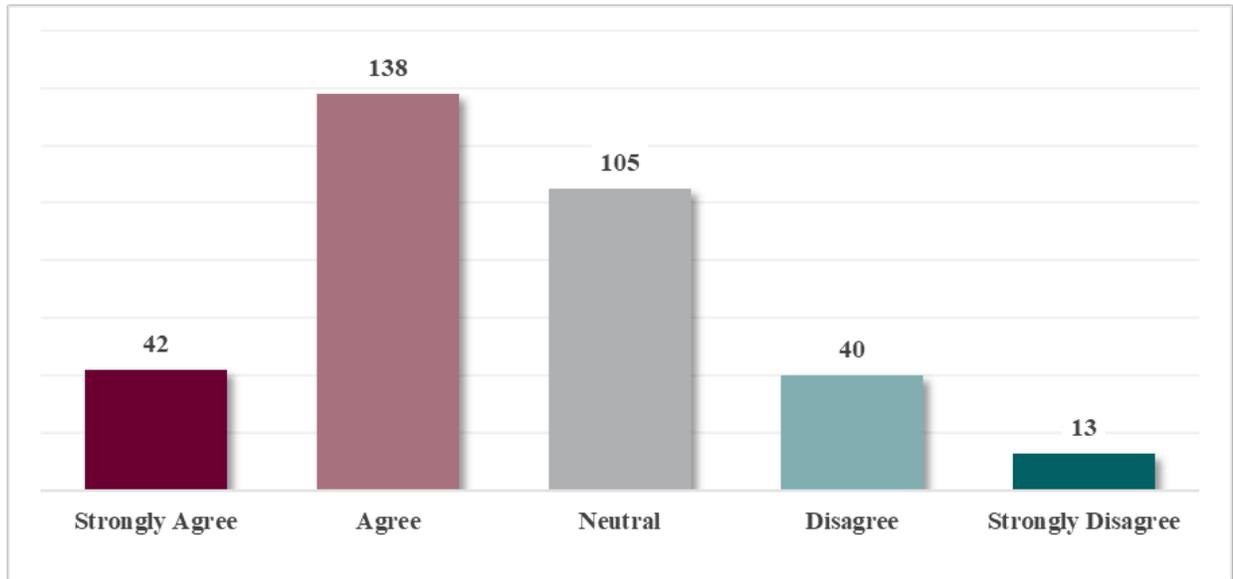
203 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to FOs adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 65 were neutral, while 70 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The FO training provided them with the comprehensive knowledge necessary to complete their daily tasks.
- The FO Manual was a key reference document for FOs throughout the election.

What could be improved

- Include a test environment for ROPS/SITES in which the FO could practise.
- Modify the FO training model to implement face-to-face training, similar to that of ACs and SPSs.

Poll operations manager

180 ROs agreed or strongly agreed that the training provided to POMs adequately prepared them to perform their duties. On the other hand, 105 were neutral, while 53 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

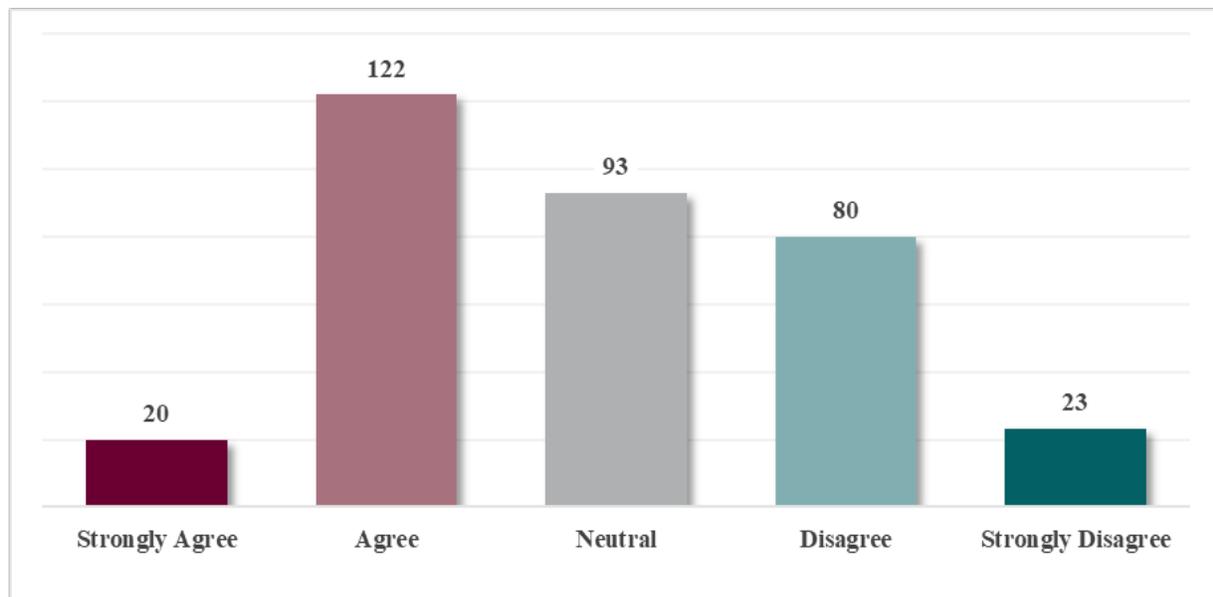
- The support materials for POMs were well detailed and relevant.

What could be improved

- Considering the importance of this position and the tasks associated with it, conduct POM training in person during the PEAs.

Poll worker training

3. *The hands-on, in-class training program and tools (i.e., guidebooks, videos and teaching aids) for poll workers satisfactorily prepared them for their duties and enabled them to exercise the correct procedures at the polling places.*



142 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 93 were neutral, while 103 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The training materials were comprehensive and of high quality, especially the guides and teaching aids.
- ROs reported that poll workers appreciated the self-training workbook.
- The virtual training was well structured, well paced and very relevant to the pandemic situation.
- The case studies were relevant and effectively linked theory to practice.

What could be improved

- Synthesize the training materials ahead of time to focus on the essential elements, as it was a challenge to deliver the training in the three hours allotted.
- Put more emphasis on *Sequence Number Sheets*, forms and office closing procedures.
- Include more practical exercises in training so that poll workers can have more practice with *Sequence Number Sheets*, forms and procedures.

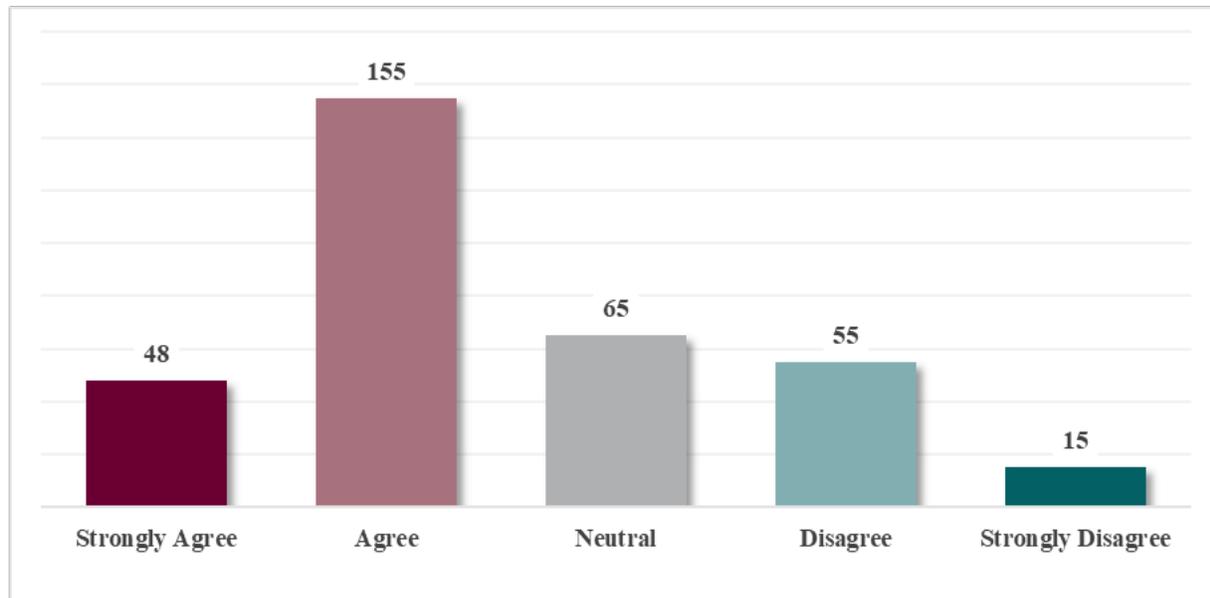
Other notable comments

- In synthesizing the training materials, TOs played a crucial role in the effective delivery of poll worker training.

1.2 Recruitment of poll workers

Poll worker staffing

4. *I was able to recruit enough competent poll workers.*



203 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 65 were neutral, while 70 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The dedication and commitment of the RecSups and recruitment officers (RecOs) were key factors in the hiring of qualified poll workers.
- Having access to lists of workers, such as those from the Census, Statistics Canada and RMS, facilitated the hiring of poll workers.
- Increased wages for poll workers and the ability to work overtime facilitated recruitment.

What could be improved

- Reinststate the poll clerk position or review poll worker responsibilities, as the removal of the poll clerk position brought several challenges, including an increased workload for the DRO.
- Ensure on-time opening of RO offices, which affects the recruitment of poll workers. The late opening of some RO offices made it difficult to thoroughly assess the quality of poll worker applications due to the number of positions to be filled in a short period of time.

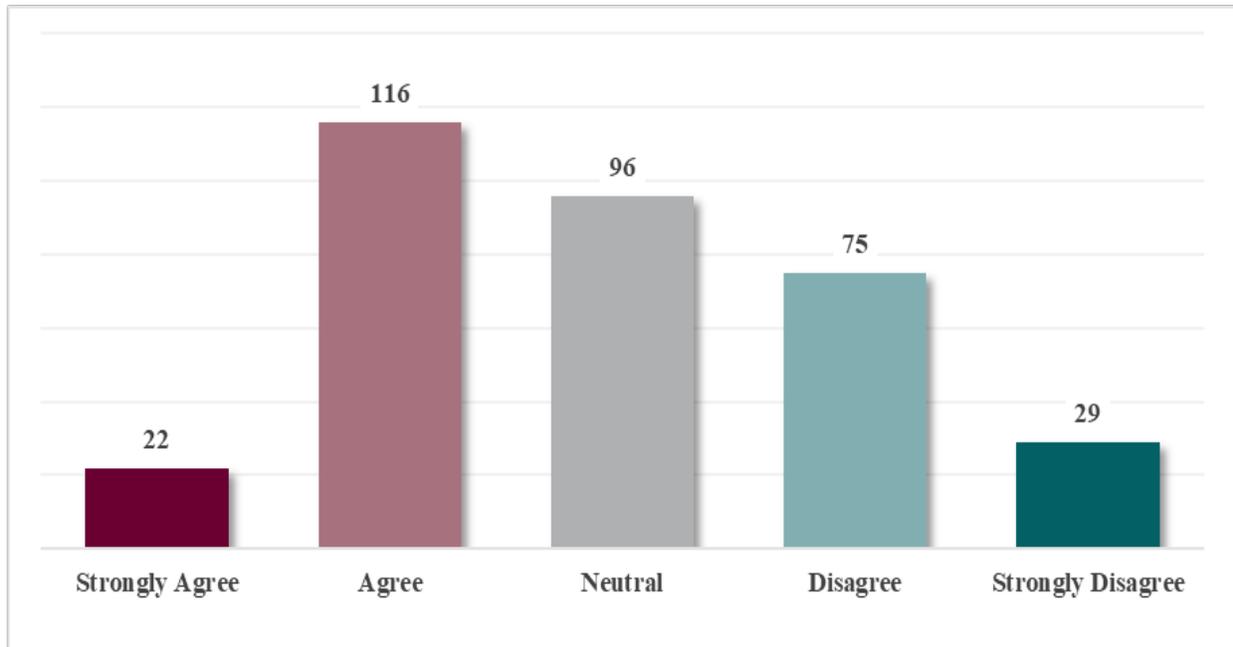
- Improve EC's online recruitment platform so that applicants can describe their relevant work experience and skills, other than those acquired during an election. This would allow the quality of applications to be more thoroughly assessed and analyzed.
- Take steps to mitigate the effects of poll worker drop-outs. The drop-out rate on advance and ordinary polling days was problematic in some regions.

Other notable comments

- Delivering the GE in a minority government context and a pandemic situation during a summer period significantly decreased the pool of potential applicants.

Recruitment tool effectiveness

5. *The recruitment tools (e.g., RMS, limited access to ROPS/SITES, Poll Worker Recruitment Plan, online application form, media plan, posters) were effective for hiring poll workers and scheduling their training.*



138 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 96 were neutral, while 104 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The poll worker recruitment plan initiated during the PEAs was a very useful and relevant tool for the RecSup.
- The RMS was very effective in generating lists of applicants with previous experience working during a federal election.
- Allowing limited access to ROPS/SITES for RecSup eliminated some paper procedures and facilitated the transition from hiring to training.
- The online application forms were very helpful in hiring poll workers in a pandemic situation.

What could be improved

- Further synchronize and automate ROPS/SITES and RMS to eliminate duplication of effort between the FO and the RecSup.
- Replace RMS and ROPS/SITES with modern system(s) to improve and streamline the hiring process and transition to training.

- Allow AAROs to access RMS and the recruitment section in ROPS/SITES to facilitate and streamline the recruitment process in AARO offices.
- To maximize the use of RMS and ROPS/SITES, train RecSupps and RecOs on RMS and ROPS/SITES during the PEAs.
- Update the RMS Applicants directory closer to the GE to provide relevant and up-to-date information for recruitment.

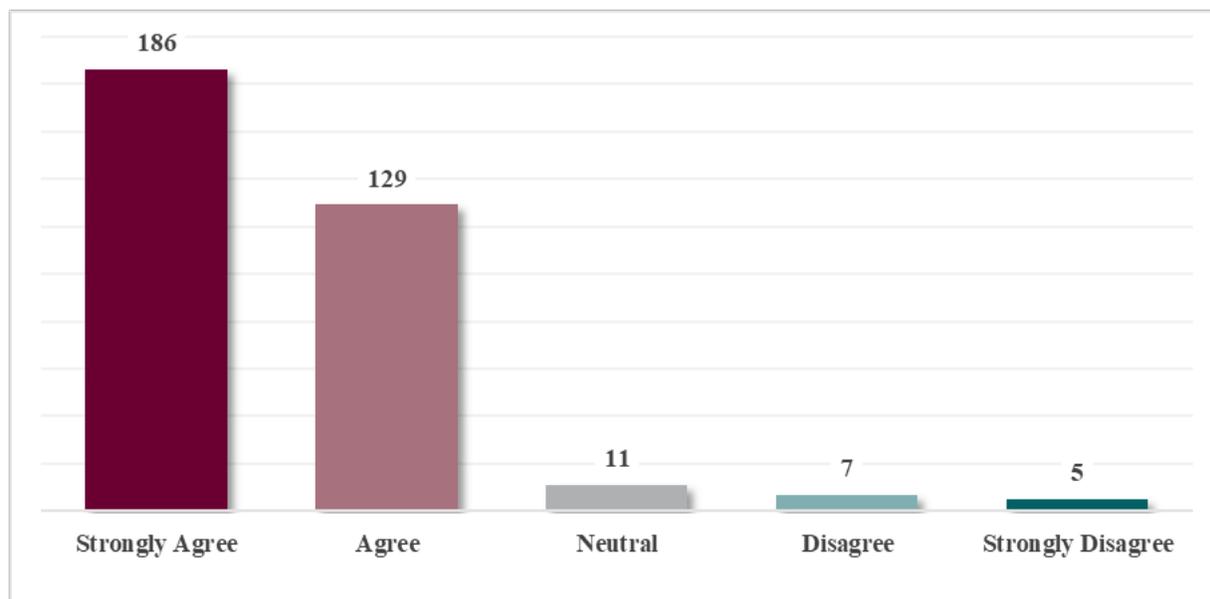
Other notable comments

- Although the media plan was implemented and posters were distributed, ROs could not quantify the population reached.

1.3 Delivering an election in a pandemic situation

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

6. *I received the required PPE and other materials required to deliver a safe GE within reasonable timeframes.*



315 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 11 were neutral, while 12 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In general, the quantity and quality of PPE delivered was more than adequate.
- The guidelines for the use of PPE were clear, useful and allowed for proper use.
- The PPE allowed the various election workers to feel safe in the performance of their duties, particularly at the polling places and in the RO or AARO office.
- Electors felt safe in the polling places thanks to the PPE used by poll workers as well as the distancing measures.

What could be improved

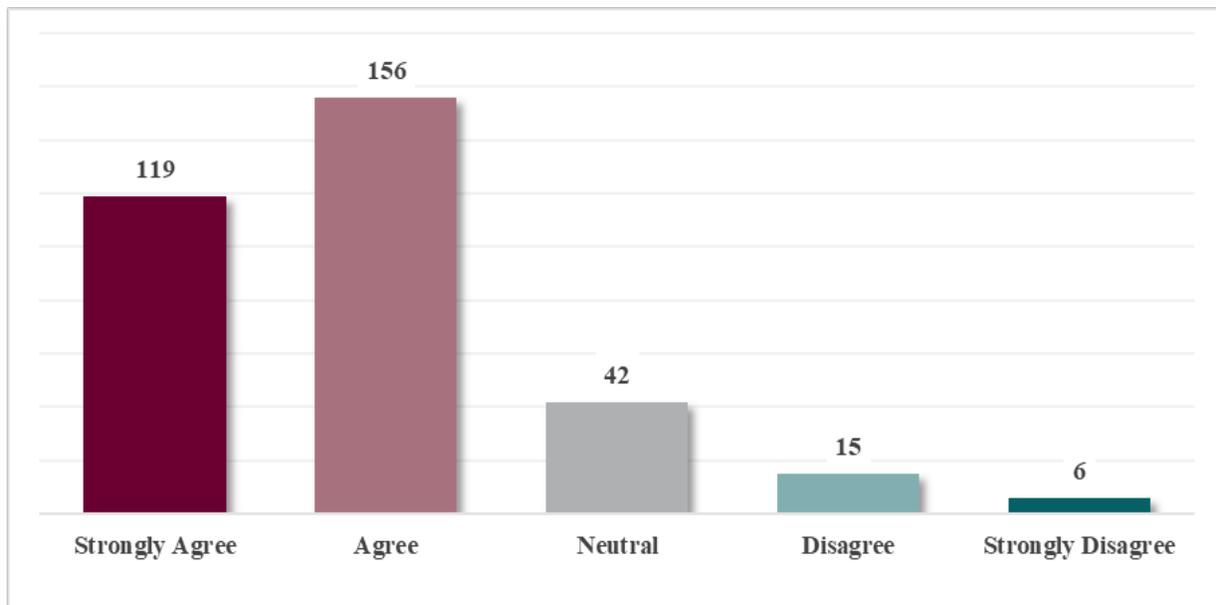
- Better adapt the quantity of PPE based on the needs of each ED to alleviate the additional handling workload (i.e., shipping PPE to the polling places and returning them back to the RO office).
- Provide a sufficient quantity of disinfectant wipes. Despite the large quantity of PPE, disinfectant wipes were in short supply.
- Provide better quality face shields. Main challenges included their discomfort and their tendency to fog.

Other notable comments

- PPE management was facilitated by the additional support of key staff and poll workers.
- Some of the unused PPE was donated locally to meet public needs.

COVID-19 procedures and guidelines

7. EC COVID-19 procedures and guidelines were effective in delivering a safe GE.



275 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 42 were neutral, while 21 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The COVID-19 procedures and guidelines were clear and relevant. In addition, they were easily available via Event+, ECDocs and the Field Assignments Management Tool (FAMT).
- The distancing guidelines allowed for effective planning of polling places. They also ensured a safe environment for poll workers and electors.
- With some exceptions, electors followed the COVID-19 guidelines during the event, significantly reducing the risk of exposure at the polling places. This suggests that the instructions to the public were well written and well implemented by poll workers.

What could be improved

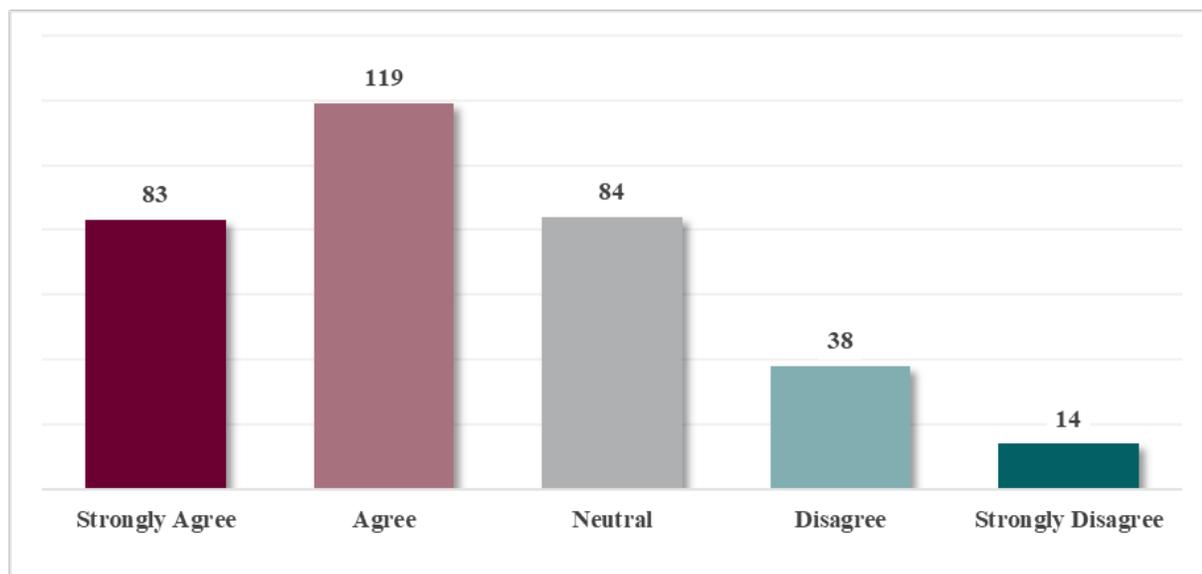
- Provide simplified pandemic management procedures and guidelines to increase understanding and facilitate their implementation.
- Limit changes in COVID-19 procedures and guidelines during a GE to reduce the level of confusion and improve their implementation.
- Receive more prescriptive guidelines for the use of masks to simplify the management of difficult situations.

Other notable comments

- PAAROs and POMs played a key role in ensuring the procedures and guidelines were followed in the RO office and at the polling places.
- Landlords appreciated being informed in advance of the COVID-19 procedures in place on their premises.

Procedures and guidelines from local, provincial, territorial and federal public health authorities

8. *I received and had access to timely, clear procedures and directions from local, provincial, territorial, or federal public health authorities.*



202 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 84 were neutral, while 52 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- For the vast majority of cases, local, provincial and territorial public health authorities were available to answer ROs' questions related to COVID-19.
- ROs were able to secure polling places more easily because of the official letters from provincial and territorial chief medical officers.
- Calling the different levels of public health authorities and consulting the websites allowed ROs to acquire more details on the guidelines to follow to ensure a safe work environment.

What could be improved

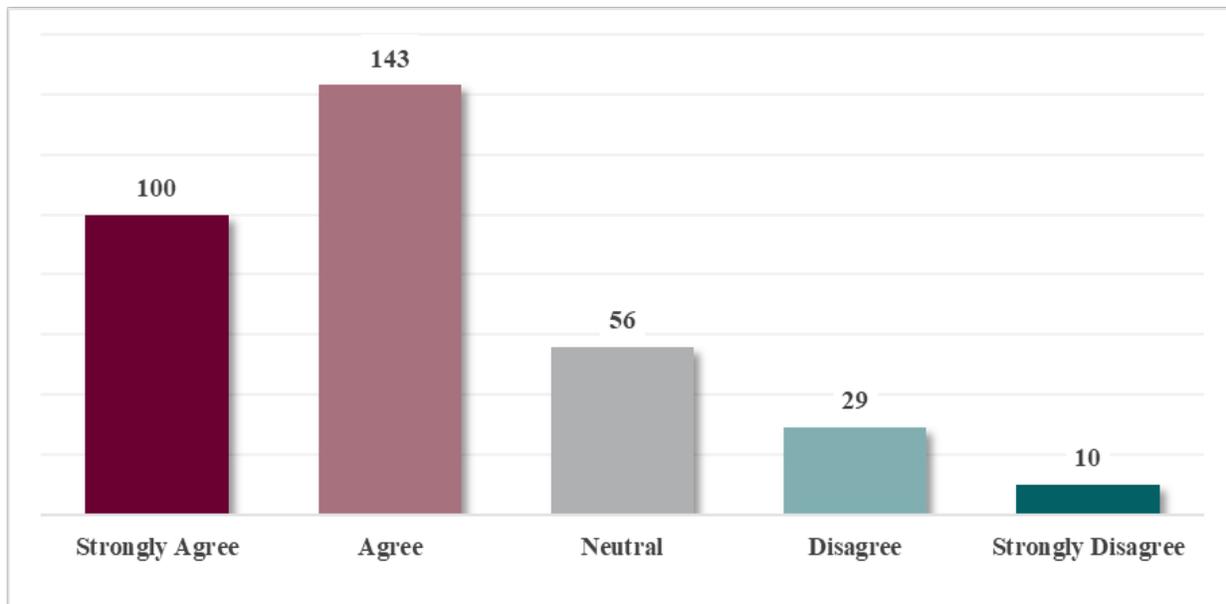
- Align EC's COVID-19 guidelines with those of municipalities and provinces to reduce confusion about which guidelines should be followed and applied in the RO/AARO offices and at polling places.
- Establish a liaison program between the RO and the various levels of public health authorities to simplify access to information, particularly at the local level.

Other notable comments

- The involvement of PAAROs and POMs in managing the evolution of COVID-19 procedures and guidelines helped their ED keep up with any major changes.

Consistency between Elections Canada procedures and guidelines and those of public health authorities

9. *EC procedures and guidelines were consistent with those of public health authorities (i.e., local, provincial, territorial, federal).*



243 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 56 were neutral, while 39 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

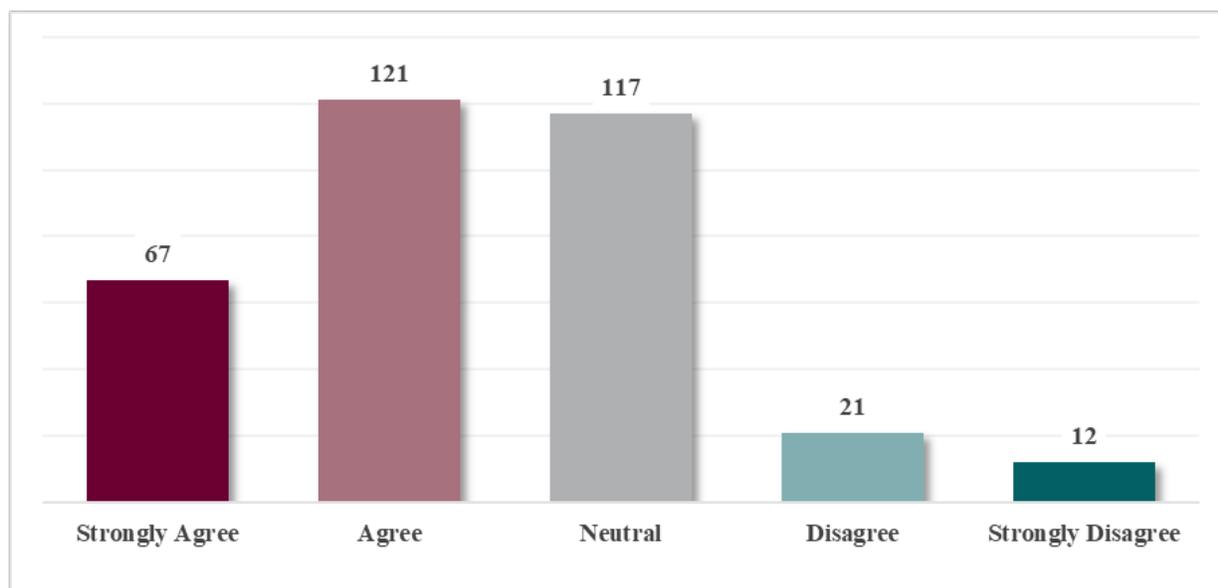
- In general, EC procedures and guidelines were consistent with those of the various levels of public health authorities.
- The COVID-19 Protocols and Measures Summary – For RO/AARO Offices and Polling Places was clear, precise and easily operationalized.
- Despite frequent changes in procedures and guidelines at the public health authority level, EC was able to adapt and provide clear and relevant updates.

What could be improved

- Align the different EC and public health authority guidelines earlier in the election cycle to allow for better understanding and synthesis of the guidelines.
- Keep up with each jurisdiction's public health procedures and guidelines. This was a challenge for ROs on several levels (e.g., constant demand for effort and attention and the need to update all staff regularly).
- Centralize information on a single platform to optimize information gathering and facilitate enforcement.

Align Elections Canada's various guidelines with those of public health authorities plus Elections Canada's support for emerging situations related to COVID-19

10. I received effective assistance from EC in adapting to new situations related to COVID-19 during the GE.



188 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 117 were neutral, while 33 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In general, EC's support for COVID-19-related situations were timely and effective.
- EC was proactive with its various communications and updates, which allowed ROs to adapt and be prepared for a public health crisis.
- The support provided by EC allowed ROs to meet their mandate and perform their duties adequately.
- In situations involving confirmed or possible cases of COVID-19, EC's support was immediate and constant until the situation was resolved.
- EC's provision of COVID-19 rapid tests during the event limited the risk of spreading COVID-19 at polling places and in RO/AARO offices.
- FLOs adequately supported ROs on COVID-19 issues.

What could be improved

- Increase the number of poll workers at polling places to facilitate the cleaning of workstations between each elector.

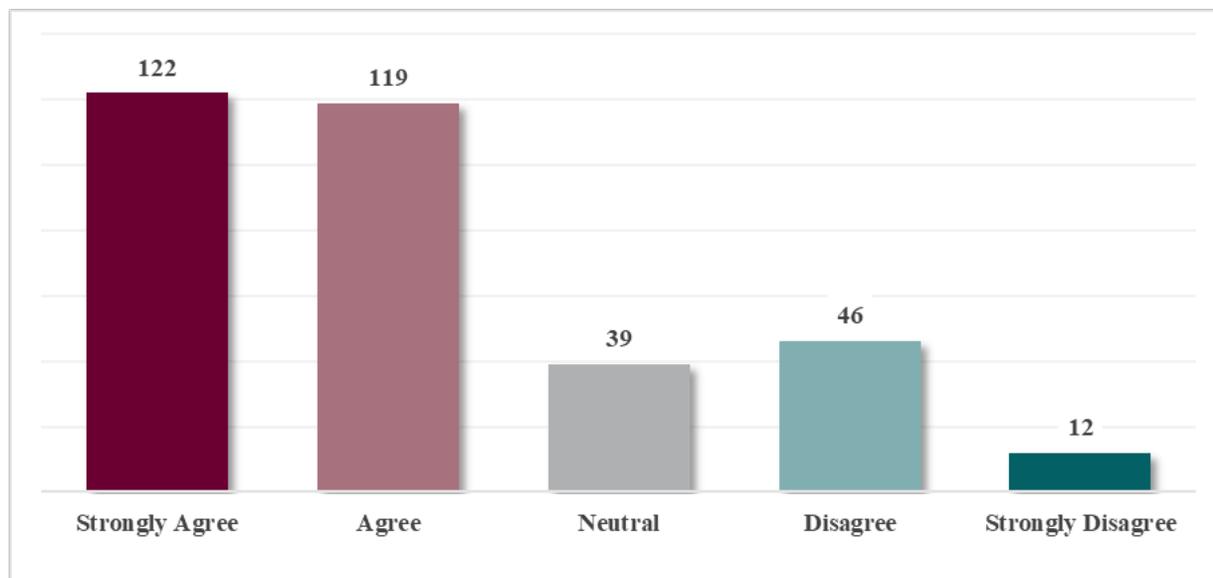
- Respond quickly to urgent requests. Despite EC's overall effectiveness in dealing with COVID-19-related requests, some responses to more urgent requests were not effectively expedited.
- Establish a training module to further support poll workers experiencing stress related to the pandemic situation. This should include advice on how to manage difficult or aggressive electors.

Other notable comments

- To comply with EC's evolving COVID-19 guidelines and procedures, ROs had to print many documents and posters, generating additional costs.

Recurring issues related to the pandemic at the polling places

11. There were no recurring issues at the polling places related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



241 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 39 were neutral, while 58 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- During the 44th GE, there were few positive cases of COVID-19 among poll workers, and RO and AARO office staff.
- In general, the guidelines and procedures developed by EC were effective in limiting the pandemic-related problems at the polling places.
- Office staff and poll workers complied with the procedures and guidelines put in place to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all.
- The majority of electors complied with the COVID-19 guidelines (i.e., mask wearing, hand sanitizing, physical distancing protocols, etc.) at the polling places.
- Most electors were patient at the polling places, especially during the advance polling days, which greatly assisted in maintaining a safe and healthy environment.
- PPE helped make polling places safe and limit the potential spread of COVID-19.

What could be improved

- Maintain health guidelines while limiting unnecessary wait times. Although EC's COVID-19 procedures and guidelines were effective in limiting the risk of infection, they resulted in longer wait times for electors at polling places.

- Implement publicity campaigns at the time the writ is issued to inform electors of the health measures in place at the polling places. This would allow for more effective management of the elector wait times.
- Develop better strategies for dealing with non-compliant electors. Certain electors' refusal to comply with the mask wearing policy was a recurring issue at the polling places, particularly in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. This led to some delicate interactions between electors and poll workers, undermining the sense of security for staff and other electors.

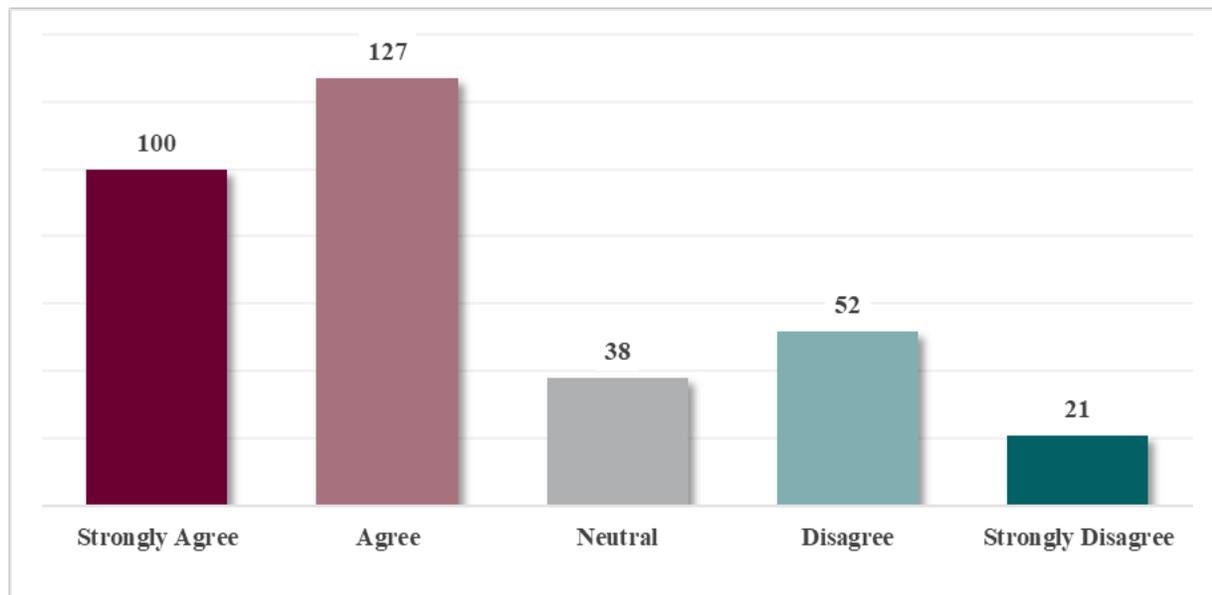
Other notable comments

- At the polling places where a security guard was hired, poll workers reported feeling safe.

1.4 Products, tools and resources

Reception of Elections Canada's required materials

12. I received all the required materials (i.e., original shipments and subsequent orders) from EC within reasonable timeframes.



227 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 38 were neutral, while 73 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In most cases, scheduled shipments arrived on time and contained all the necessary materials.
- The Supply Management System by Intranet (SMSi) platform was easy to use and ordered materials were delivered quickly and efficiently.
- ECHQ responded appropriately and efficiently to requests for assistance with additional equipment orders.

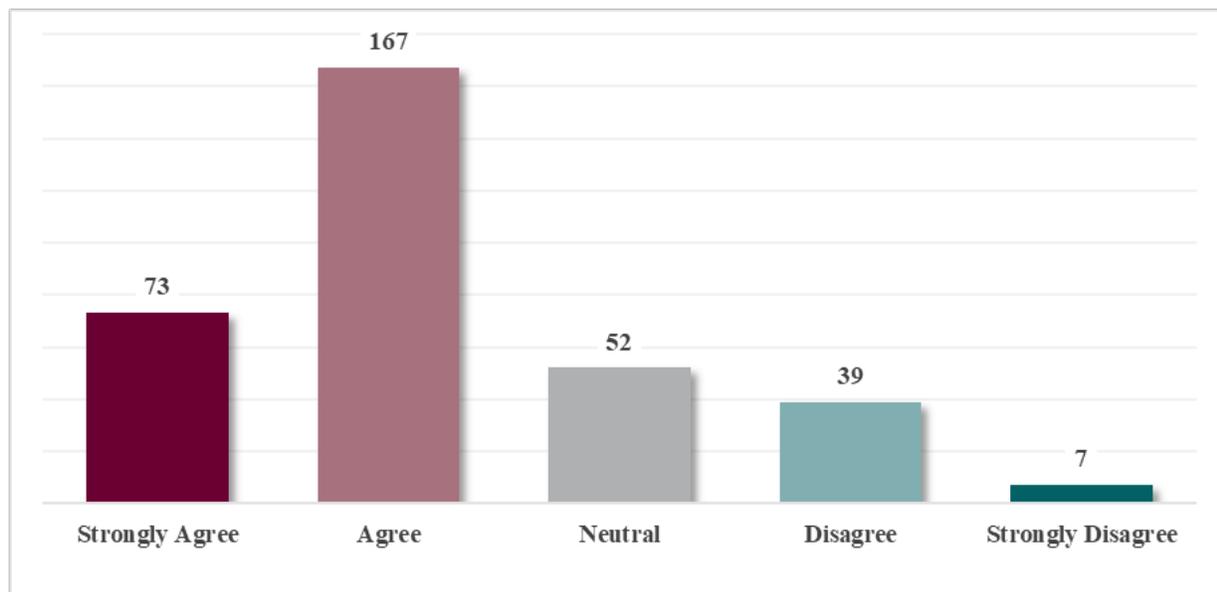
What could be improved

- Implement a shipment tracking system to alleviate the stress associated with shipment delays and allow ROs to better deal with the difficulties caused by them.
- Ensure the timely delivery of shipments. In some cases, the shipment of IBM and/or telecommunications equipment was received after the expected time frame. This delayed their installation and caused some RO offices to open after the scheduled date.

- Use a distribution centre closer to the EDs in Western Canada to properly respond to an early election. Such a change would allow for a more reasonable time frame for the delivery of equipment and materials.
- Send initial shipments to Northern Canada sooner, as redistribution to remote areas can take up to seven days.
- Ensure the timely delivery of the TO's USB flash drives. Delays in their delivery resulted in difficulties in training preparation.
- Increase the quantity of materials sent to the RO office, including training materials kits and Special Voting Rules (SVR) forms, to avoid unnecessary local printing costs.
- Send the equipment directly to the AAROs to limit the opening time for the AARO office. This would eliminate delays in transferring equipment between the RO and AARO offices.

The Field Personnel Intranet and ECDocs contained all the necessary information.

13. I found everything I needed to answer questions and meet my informational needs in ECDocs and on the Field Personnel Intranet (e.g., manuals, forms, checklists, FAQs, etc.).



240 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 52 were neutral, while 46 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- Event+ allowed ROs and other key positions to stay up to date on EC's changes of procedures and to access communications issued by EC. In addition, this tool was a great way to keep up to date with the daily tasks.
- Changes to ECDocs and the Field Personnel Intranet (e.g., the general search option and centralization of data) simplified and accelerated the search for information.
- In the majority of cases, ROs were able to find the information or documents they were looking for in ECDocs.
- In general, the FAQ section was very useful for finding quick answers to recurring questions or problems.

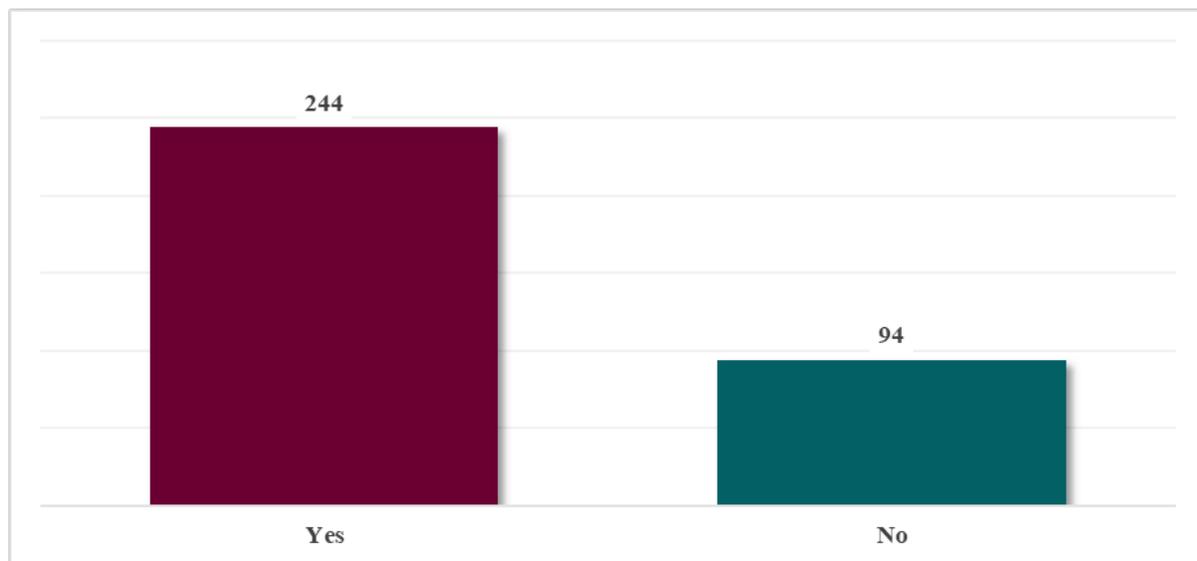
What could be improved

- Limit discrepancies in information on the same topic between EC communications and documents in ECDocs. This would reduce confusion about which procedures or guidelines should be followed and applied.

- Combine information on the same topic in one document to facilitate searches in ECDocs. This would allow for optimal search efficiency.
- Add a “forms and checklists” section in ECDocs, combining all forms and checklists to reduce the average search time.
- Implement a search history in ECDocs to allow for quick retrieval of information.
- Continually update the FAQ section to improve its effectiveness. This would ensure that the section is always current on key issues and that important information is conveyed in a strategic way.

Request for additional funds

14. Did you submit a request for additional funds for any section of your budget during the election calendar?



244 ROs reported having to submit a request for additional funds, while 94 did not have to do so.

What went well

- In general, EC processed requests for additional funds quickly and efficiently.
- Requests for additional funds were simple to complete and included the necessary steps to properly document them for approval.
- ROs were able to adjust their budgets as needed by transferring hours or funds within certain categories. In fact, this option was considered before requesting additional funds.

What could be improved

- Add a contingency fund to the budget to better equip ROs to quickly deal with unforeseen events, without having to go through the regular approval process.
- Provide amounts for each additional budget request separately, with a descriptive email. This would allow ROs to link the amount received to a specific request.
- Provide new ROs with in-depth training on the additional funding request process to allow them to be more comfortable and efficient.
- Increase the budget for FOs to meet operational needs and avoid having to transfer hours allocated to other positions.

Other notable comments

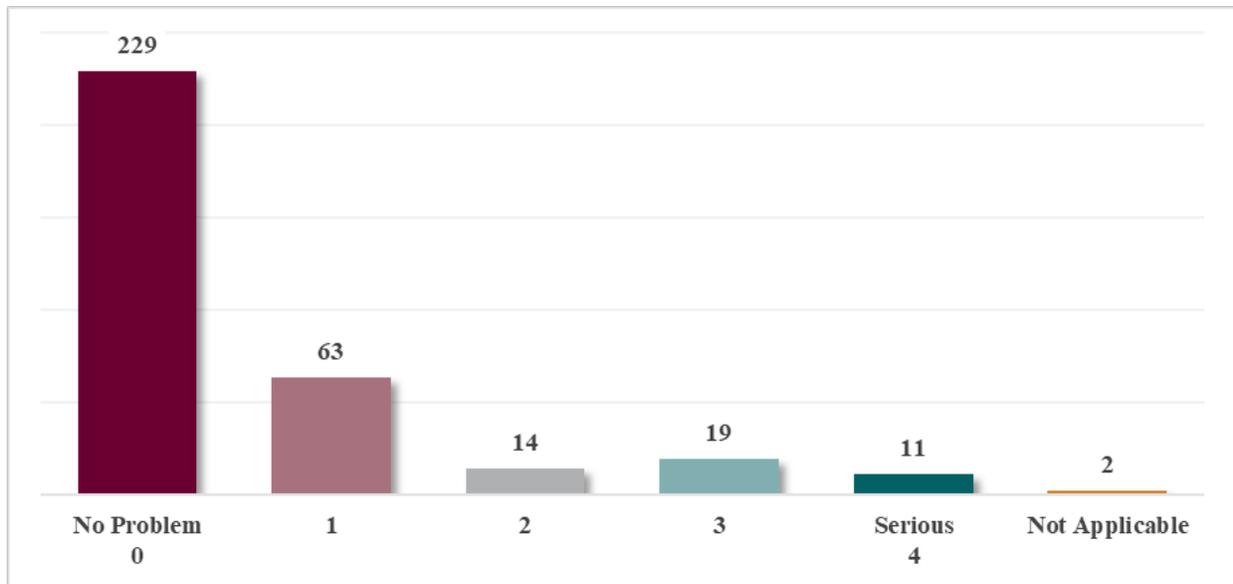
- The most frequent requests for additional funds were related to security, leasing polling places, PPE for COVID-19 and printing documents.

Elections Canada products and tools effectiveness

15. Did you experience any problems with functionality or processes related to any EC products or tools?

* For the tables in question 15, 0 indicates that no problems were observed, 1 indicates the observation of minor problems and 4 indicates the observation of major problems. *

Email system

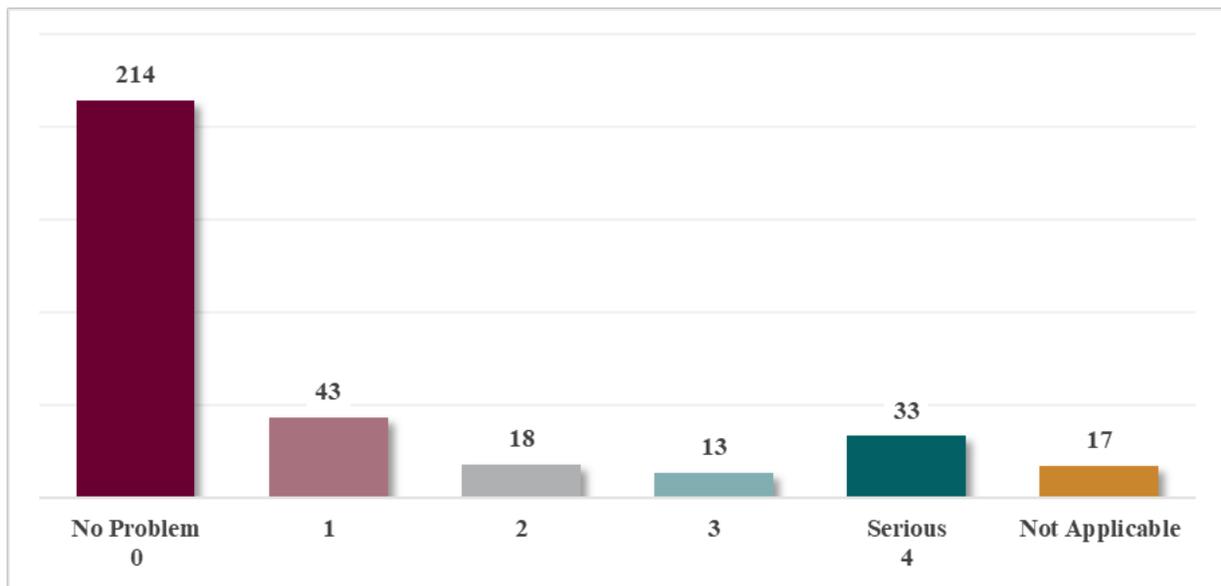


Problems experienced

- The email system was sometimes slow, making it difficult to access certain communications.
- The automatic quarantine of some emails blocked access to important emails for up to four days.
- Challenges with sending email were encountered, including delays.

What could be improved

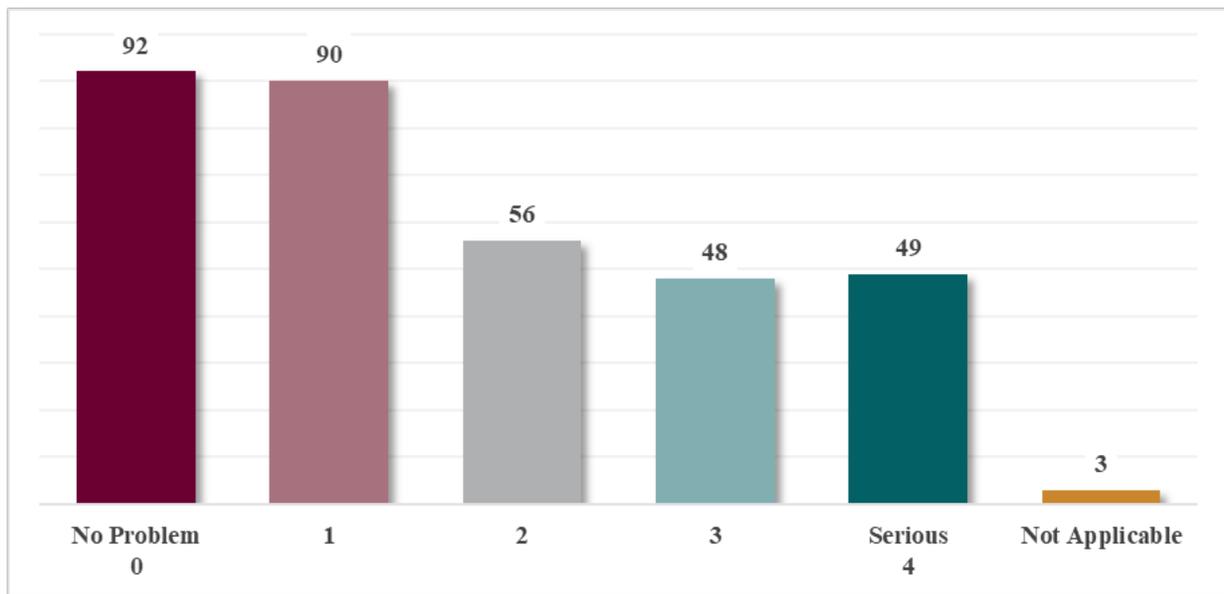
- Give EC email access to all key staff in the RO and AARO offices to allow ROs to delegate more tasks and maximize the effectiveness of each position.

Elections Canada public website***Problems experienced***

- The postal code search function on the EC website was problematic and, on a few occasions, provided incorrect information for RO offices or polling places. This resulted in a significant increase in calls to RO offices, distracting staff from their primary duties.
- The EC website was often down, especially on polling day, which affected services to electors.

What could be improved

- Upgrade EC website's servers to support high traffic.

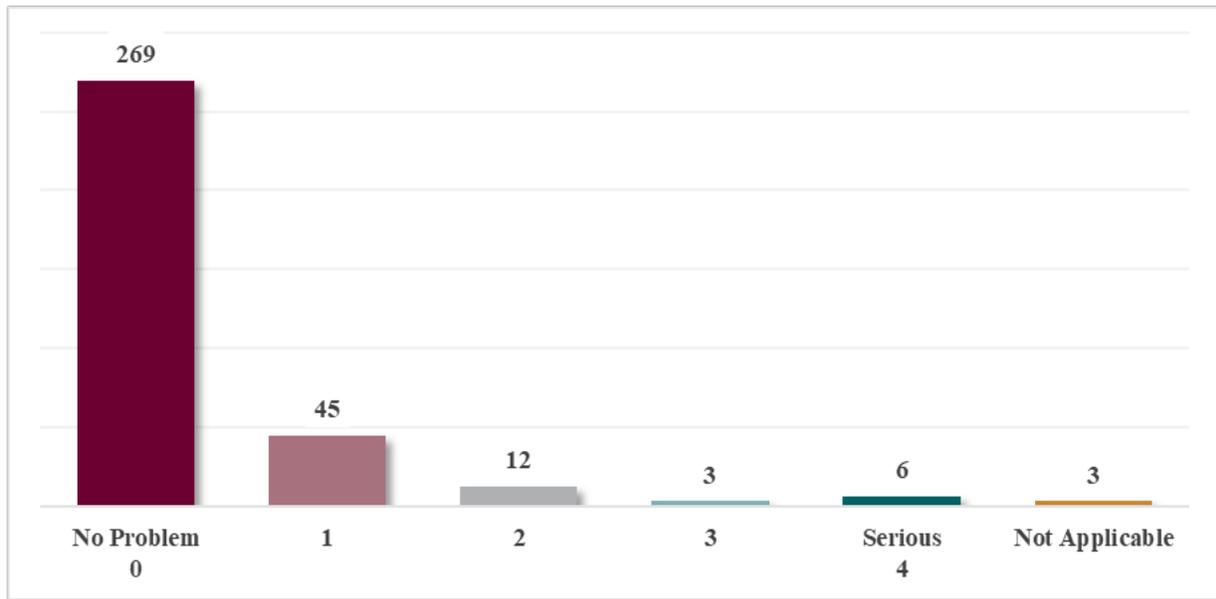
EC Connex***Problems experienced***

- EC Connex frequently had speed challenges, which caused delays when creating cases and viewing pending requests.
- Contacting the Field Support Network (FSN) was a simpler way to transmit a request, as case creation in EC Connex was cumbersome.
- The appointment process in EC Connex for political candidates remained complex, and some technical problems were experienced (e.g., loss of data, difficulty modifying a case and several freezes).

What could be improved

- Analyze and address EC Connex's speed issues to improve its efficiency.

Event Results System (ERS)



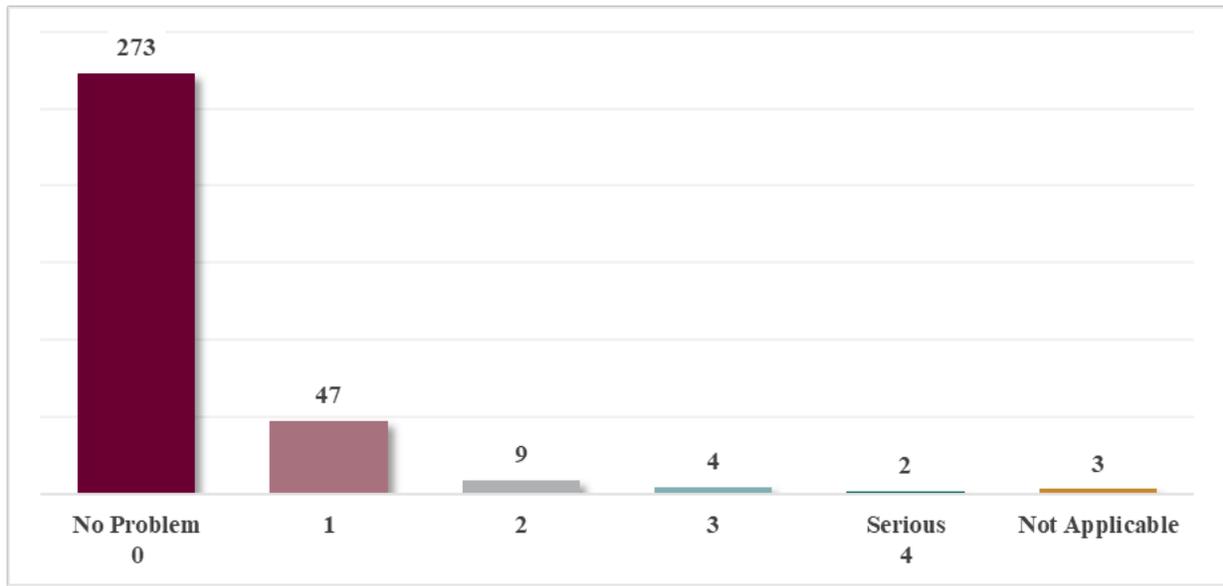
Problems experienced

- During the Election Night Results Simulations, ERS did not capture the changes made in REVISE, specifically for polling station merges.

What could be improved

- No trend observed.

Field Assignments Management Tool (FAMT)



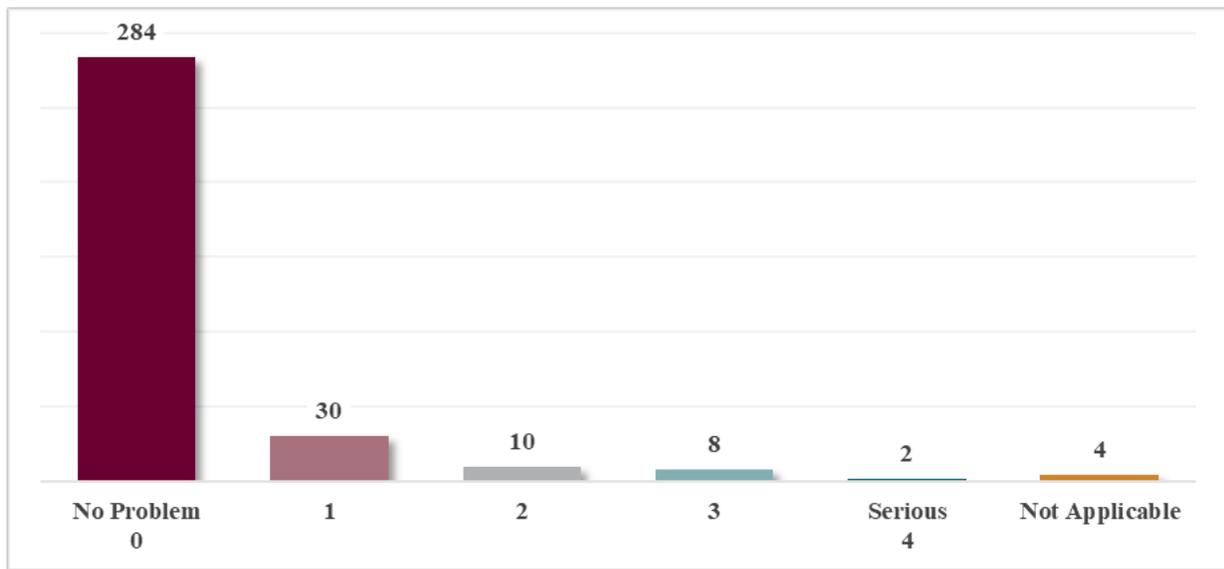
Problems experienced

- On occasion, ROs experienced problems saving in FAMT, particularly due to automatic disconnection, which resulted in loss of work completed.

What could be improved

- Implement an automatic backup in FAMT to mitigate the risk of loss of work completed.

Field Personnel Intranet



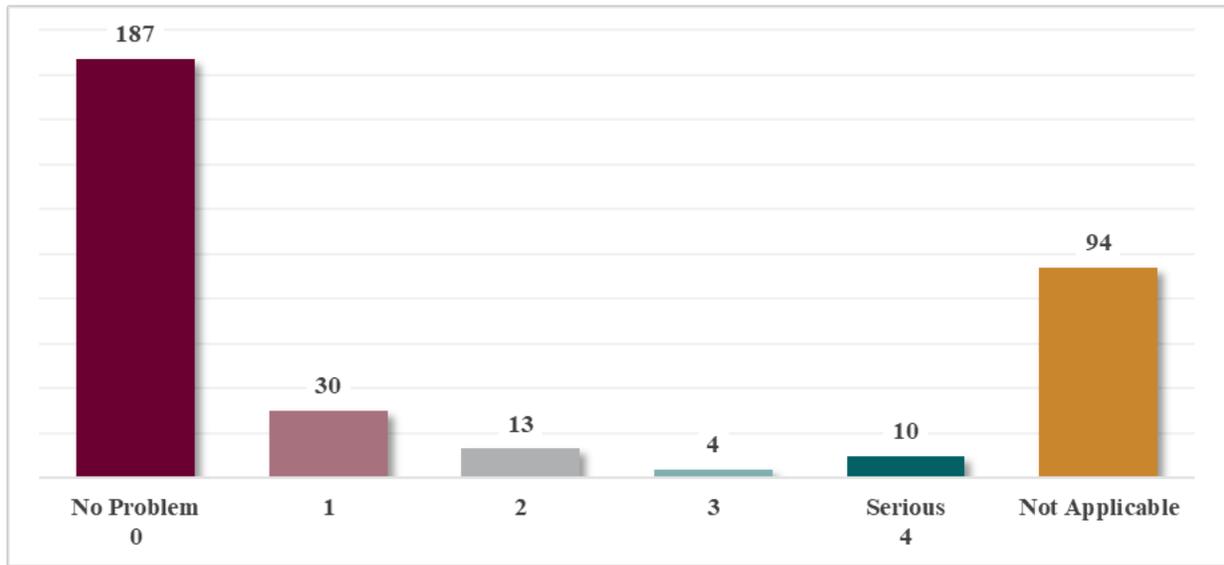
Problems experienced

- ROs had difficulty connecting to the Field Personnel Intranet with their EC laptops.

What could be improved

- Provide a refresher course for new ROs on the efficient use of the Field Personnel Intranet.

GEOExplore



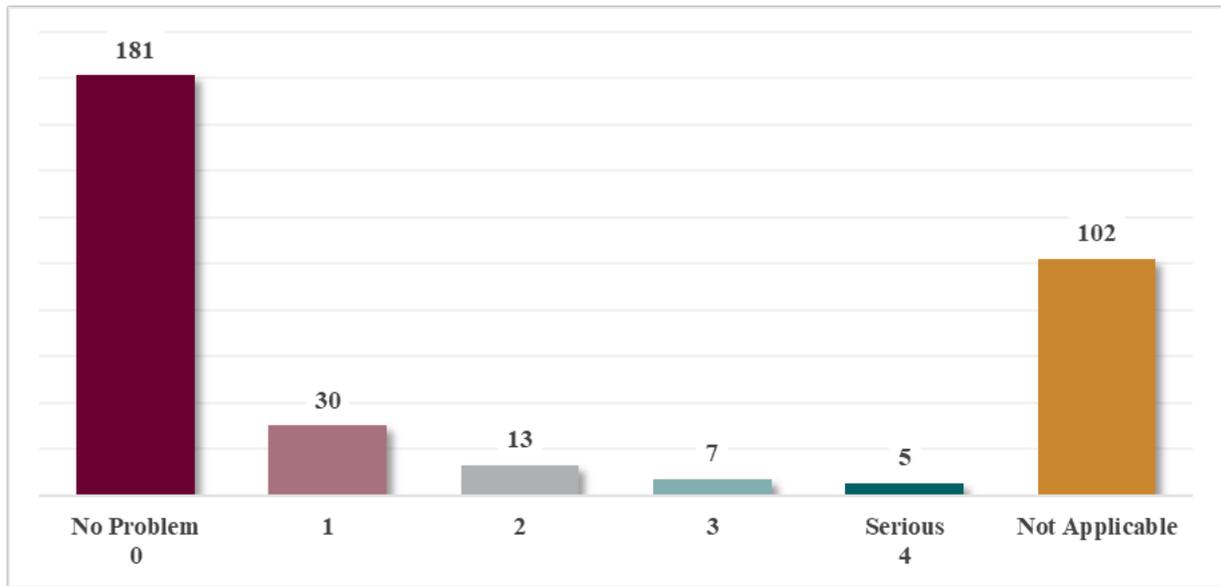
Problems experienced

- Access to GEOExplore was not made available to service agents (SAs).

What could be improved

- Provide ROs with hands-on training on GEOExplore so that they acquire the technical knowledge necessary for its optimal use.
- Make GEOExplore available to SAs.

Geography products

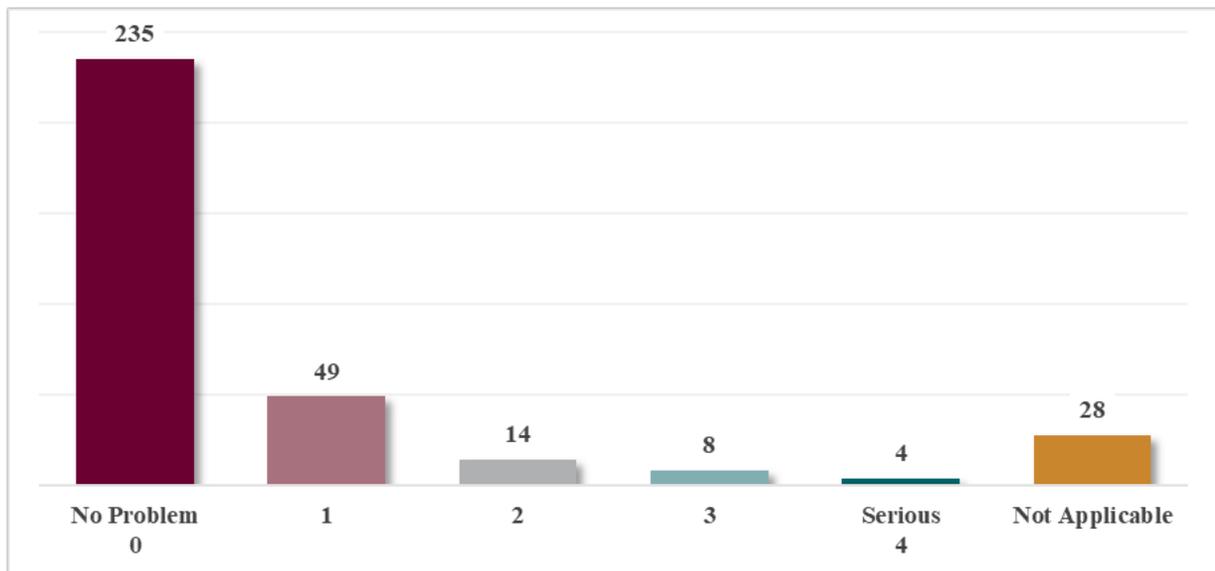


Problems experienced

- The map with the polling divisions (PDs) contained the old PD numbers, which made it of little use to ROs and candidates.

What could be improved

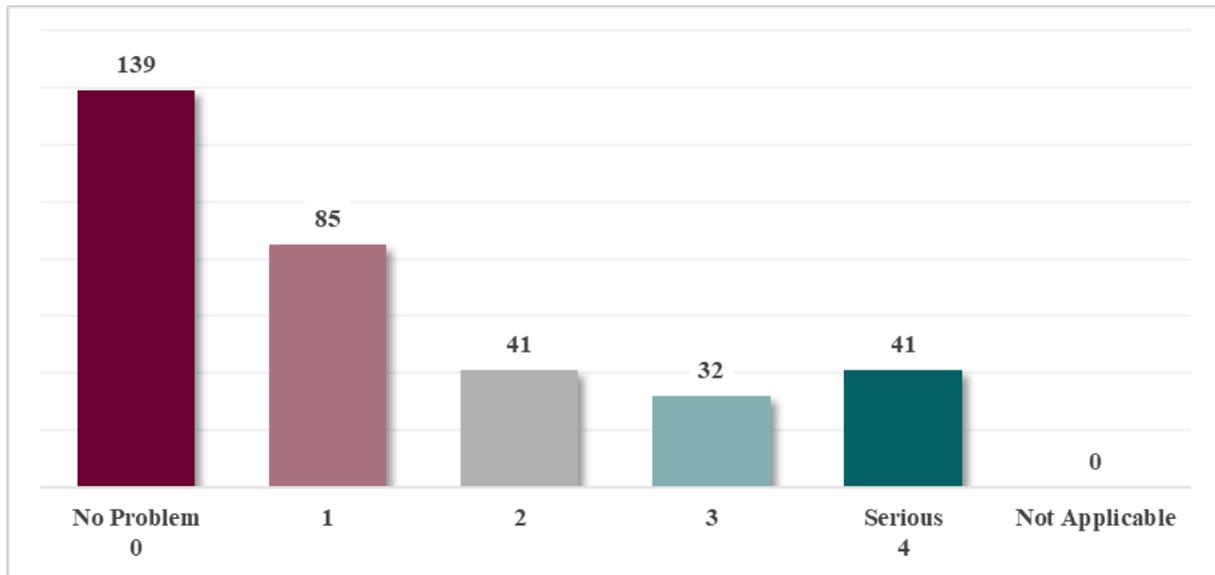
- No trend observed.

Incidents, Complaints and Breaches Monitoring System (ICBMS)***Problems experienced***

- The information fields in ICBMS did not match important sections of the Incident Report Form (EC 10051), which affected the efficiency of data entry.
- Since ICBMS generated a unique number instead of using the incident form number, it was difficult to retrieve data for a particular case.

What could be improved

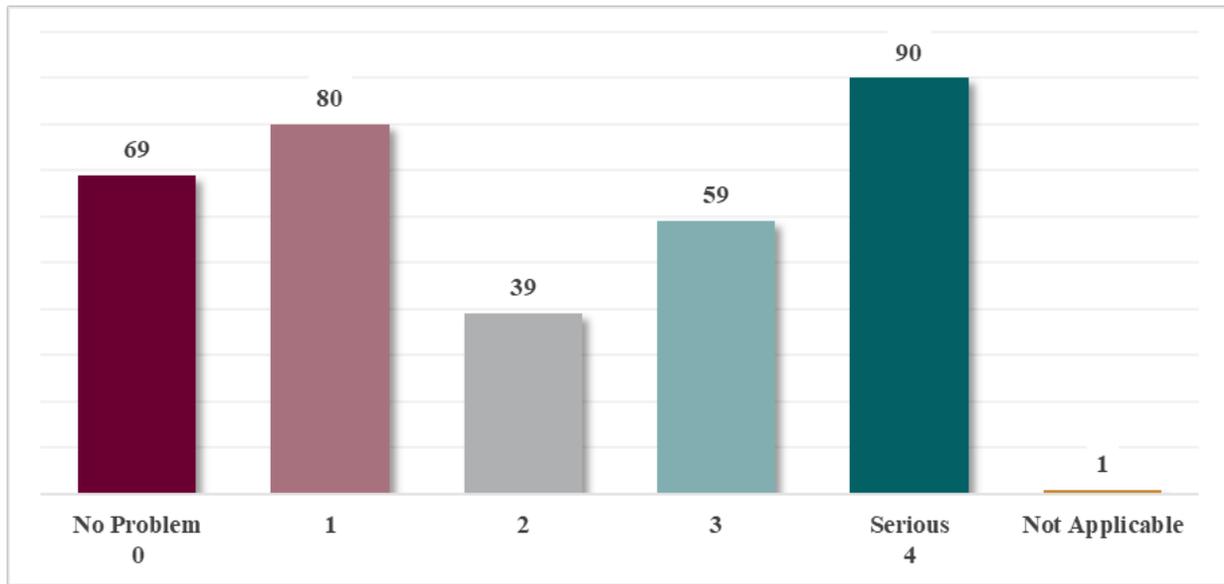
- Give the POM access to ICBMS to ensure consistency in incident management. In several EDs, the POM was sometimes responsible for ensuring that incident forms were completed.
- Implement automatic saving/backup in ICBMS to avoid the loss of progress due to forgotten saving.

Office computer equipment***Problems experienced***

- In some offices, IBM technical staff did not install the computer equipment properly the first time, resulting in operational delays.
- In some cases, there were not enough workstations for all office staff. Workstations had to be shared, limiting office efficiency.
- In some offices, the internet speed was a constant challenge.
- There were several printer-related challenges, such as printing quality or connection problems.

What could be improved

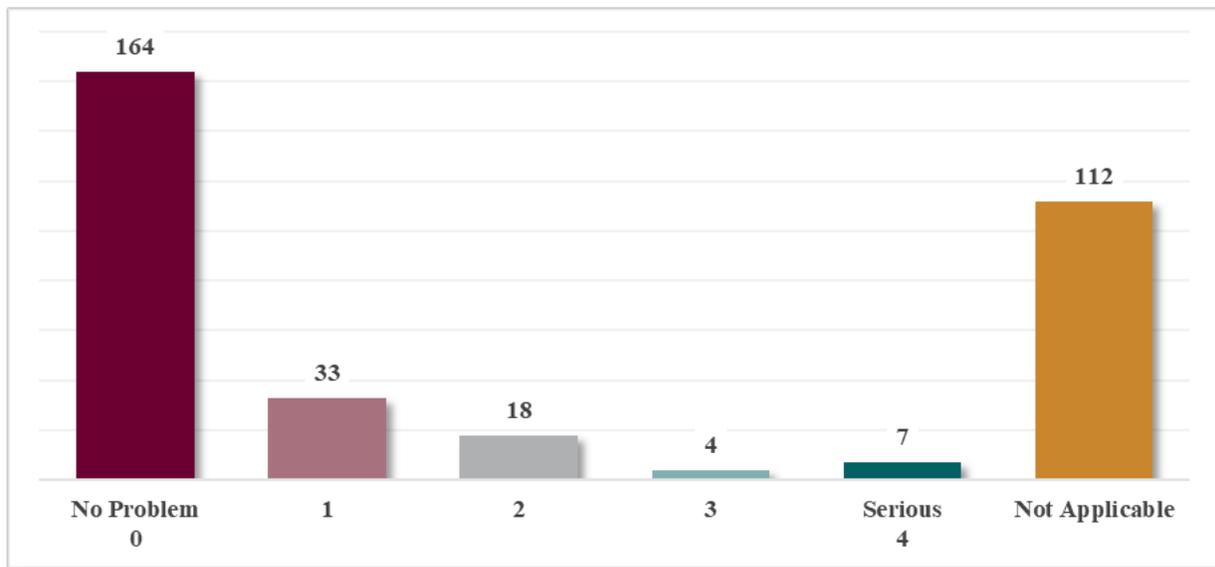
- Implement a process to ensure timely delivery of computer equipment.
- Equip RO and AARO offices with fully functional printers.

Office telephones and smartphones***Problems experienced***

- Several technical problems were encountered with the office phones, resulting in lost and missed calls.
- The office staff were not trained on the phones' functionality, which brought its own set of challenges.

What could be improved

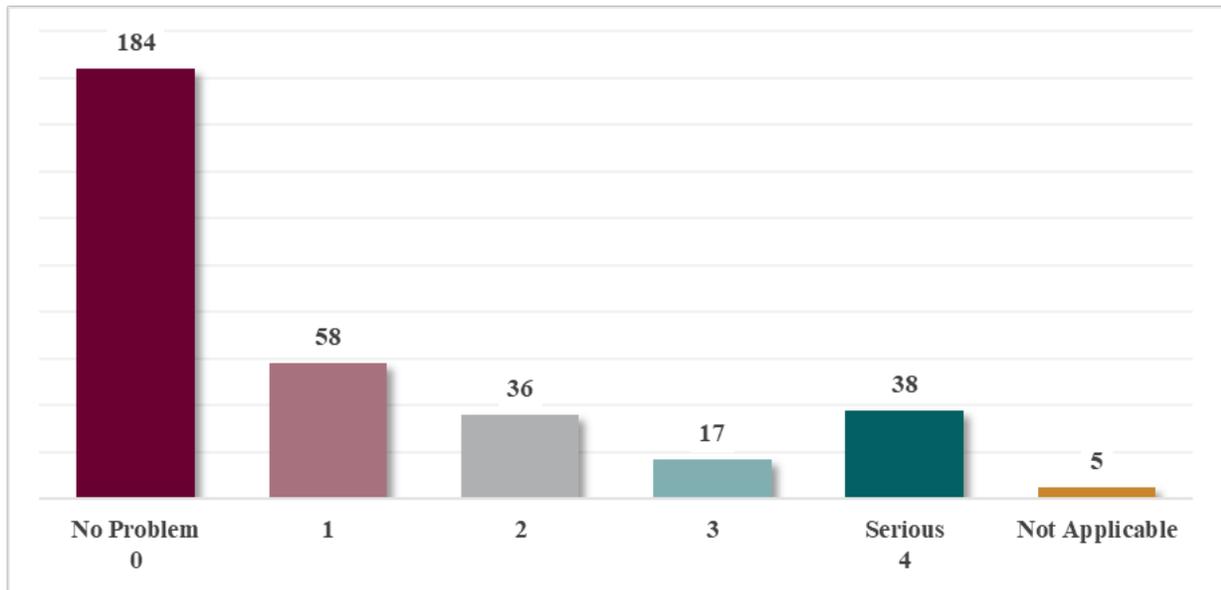
- Provide in-depth training to office staff on the use of phones in the office.

Political Entities Service Centre (PESC) portal***Problems experienced***

- Many candidates chose to obtain information directly from the RO office instead of using the PESC portal, as they were not familiar with it.
- With limited knowledge and no access to the PESC portal, it was difficult for ROs to support candidates on the PESC portal.

What could be improved

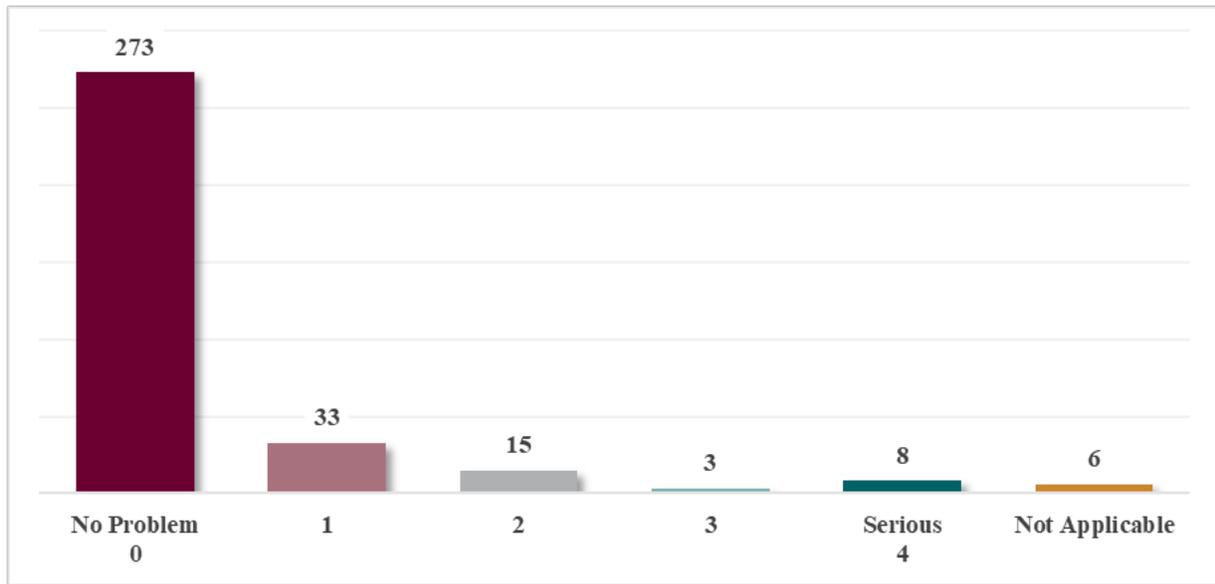
- Train ROs on the PESC portal so that they can guide political candidates.
- Educate political candidates on the PESC portal so that they have the required knowledge.

Postal services***Problems experienced***

- On some occasions, special ballots arrived late.
- There were delays in several shipments, including computer equipment.
- Many voter information cards (VICs) were returned late to the RO office due to an invalid address; these situations required an urgent response to ensure all electors received their VIC at the correct address.

What could be improved

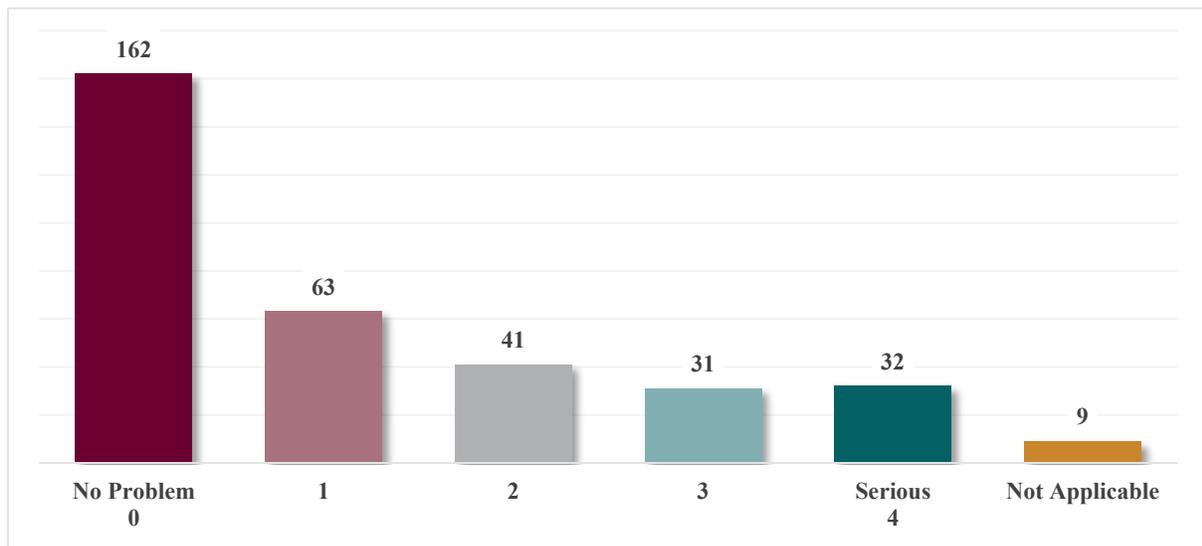
- Work with the postal services to ensure their compliance with established delivery times, especially for office equipment and VICs.

Printing of the ballots***Problems experienced***

- There were some instances of poor printing quality (e.g., misalignment).
- It was a challenge to receive extra paper for ballot printing.

What could be improved

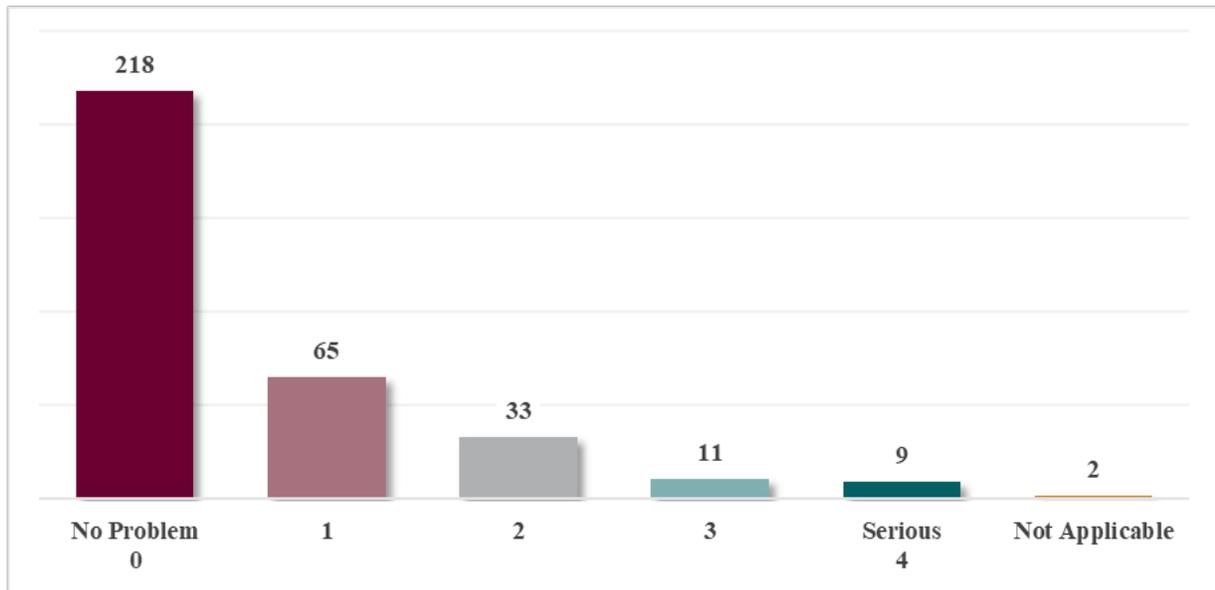
- No trend observed.

Recruitment Management System (RMS)***Problems experienced***

- Since RMS was not synchronized with ROPS/SITES, the RecSup and FO had to duplicate their work, creating a significant workload.
- RMS had speed issues and technical problems.

What could be improved

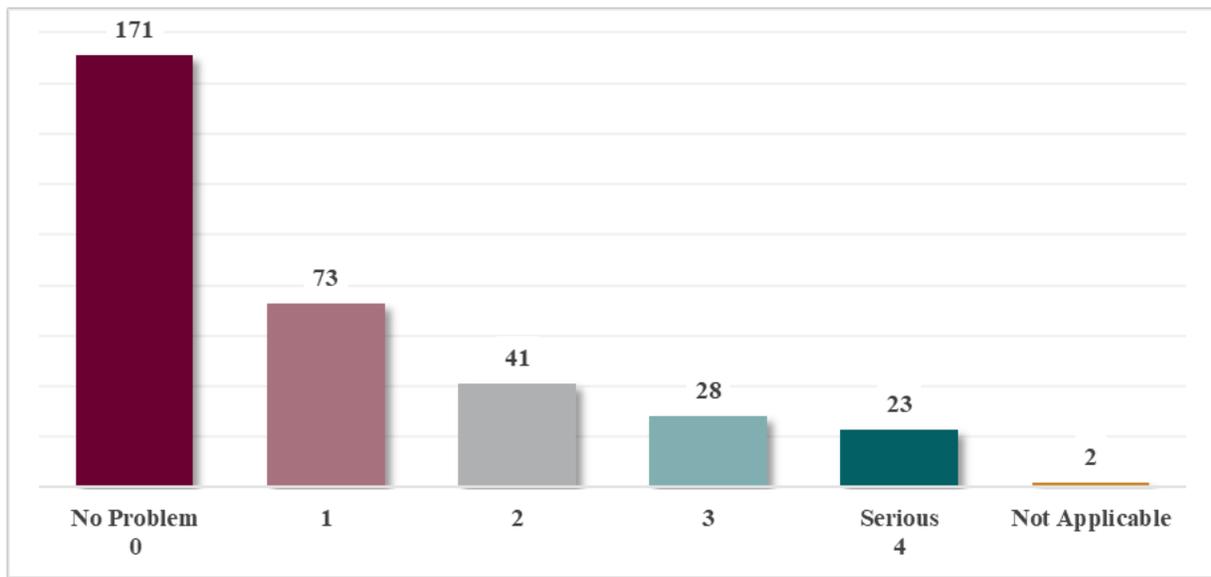
- Fully integrate RMS with ROPS/SITES to eliminate duplication of work between the FO and the RecSup.
- Provide training to key staff on RMS and ROPS/SITES before the issue of the writ to increase their skill level and efficiency.

REVISE***Problems experienced***

- Some actions in REVISE were slow, such as printing reports, generating lists of electors and merging polling stations, which caused delays.
- Synchronization problems between REVISE and ROPS/SITES caused delays in the creation of VICs.

What could be improved

- Provide ROs and AAROs with hands-on training on REVISE during PEAs to increase their knowledge of the system.
- Provide ROs and assistant returning officers (AROs) with a refresher course on the relationship between REVISE, ROPS/SITES and the Statistics and Analytics Tool (STAT) to allow them to gain a better understanding of these systems and their challenges.

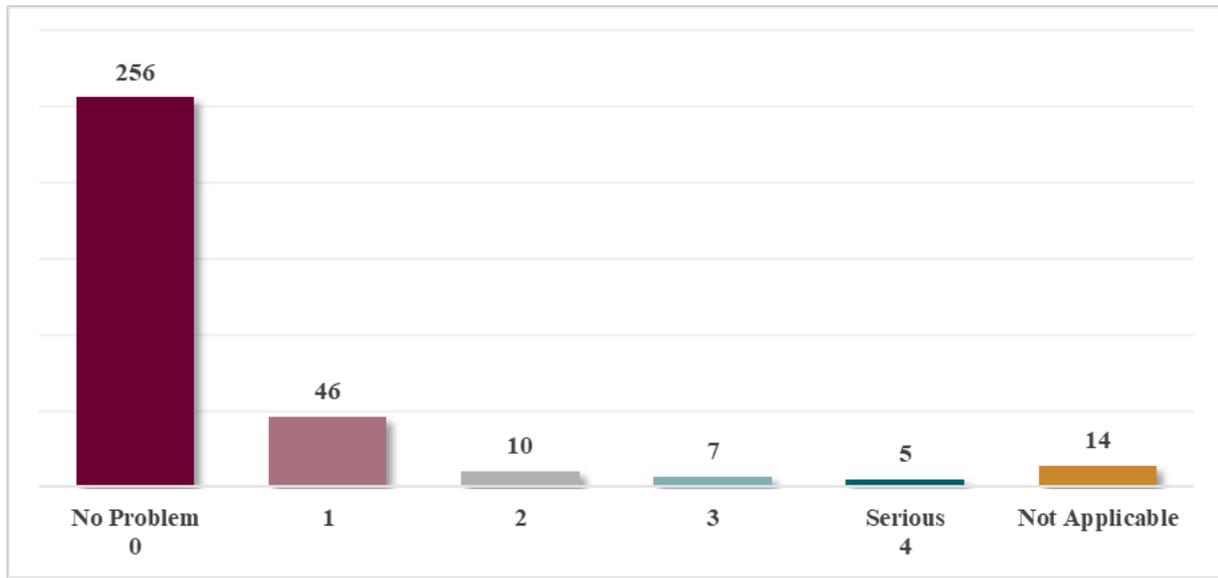
Returning Office Payment System and SITES (ROPS/SITES)***Problems experienced***

- Some budget-related information was missing.
- Sometimes, when a budget transfer between compatible sections had to be done, a technical problem with ROPS/SITES prevented the transfer from being completed.
- Connecting to ROPS/SITES was difficult at the beginning of the election period.

What could be improved

- Grant ROs, AROs, AAROs and POMs access to ROPS/SITES to allow for quicker completion of activities, including signing leases.
- Refine the search option in ROPS/SITES by adding sorting options (e.g., training numbers for printouts) to allow for more efficient use.
- Change the process related to the solemn declaration so that only one is required per worker, regardless of the number of positions worked.
 - Also, allowing it to be generated without a social insurance number would avoid many issues.
 - Finally, removing the need for a carbon copy would speed up the production process.

Supply Management System by Intranet (SMSi)



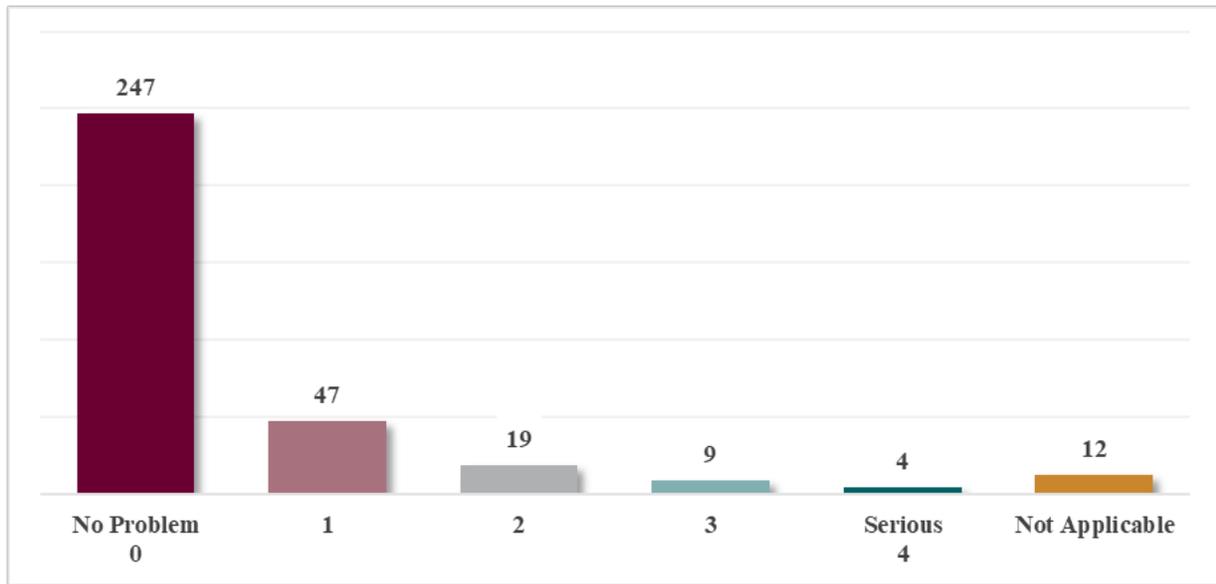
Problems experienced

- Searching for materials in SMSi was sometimes a challenge. Occasionally, searches led to a photo of the item, instead of the actual item.

What could be improved

- Simplify the search method, in addition to adding the maximum number of units that can be ordered per item.

Targeted Outreach Program Repository (TOPR)

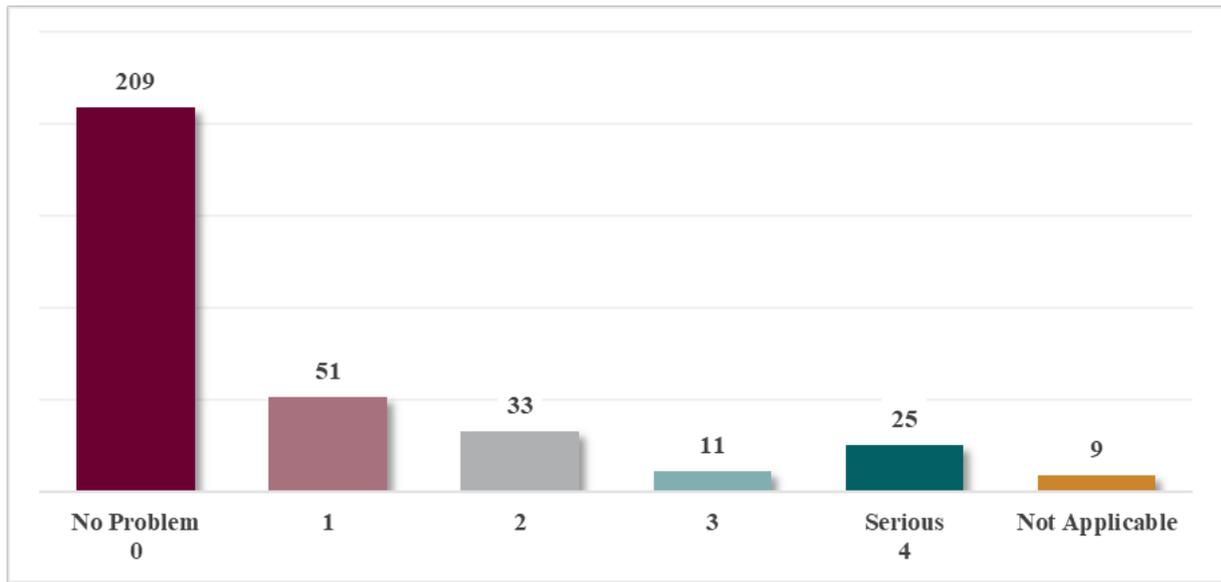


Problems experienced

- Community relations officers (CROs) were not able to complete their weekly reports, as they did not have access to TOPR while teleworking from their home.

What could be improved

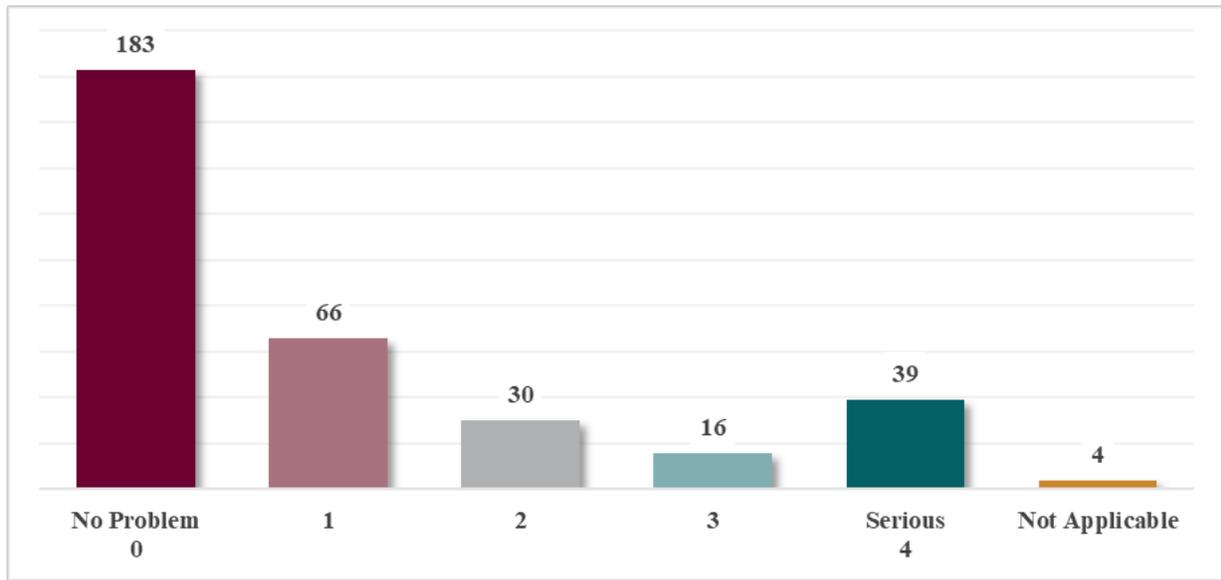
- Modify TOPR based on EDs' already established profiles to reduce the amount of time spent on data entry.

Training officer kit***Problems experienced***

- The TO kit was not sent out early enough, impacting the training set-up due to the volume of materials and information to review in a short period of time.
- The volume of training manuals and videos was very large, making it difficult to plan and deliver the training.

What could be improved

- Provide an instructional guide with the training materials to facilitate the development of the poll worker training plan.
- Synthesize the training materials to simplify the training's planning and delivery.

Voter information card***Problems experienced***

- Many electors did not receive their VIC on time due to the loss of polling places, inefficient delivery, and VIC production problems, among other things. As a result, some electors did not know where to vote during the four advance polling days.
- The number of VICs returned to the RO office due to incorrect addresses was unusually high. In addition, some VICs were returned after ordinary polling day, meaning electors never received a VIC at all.

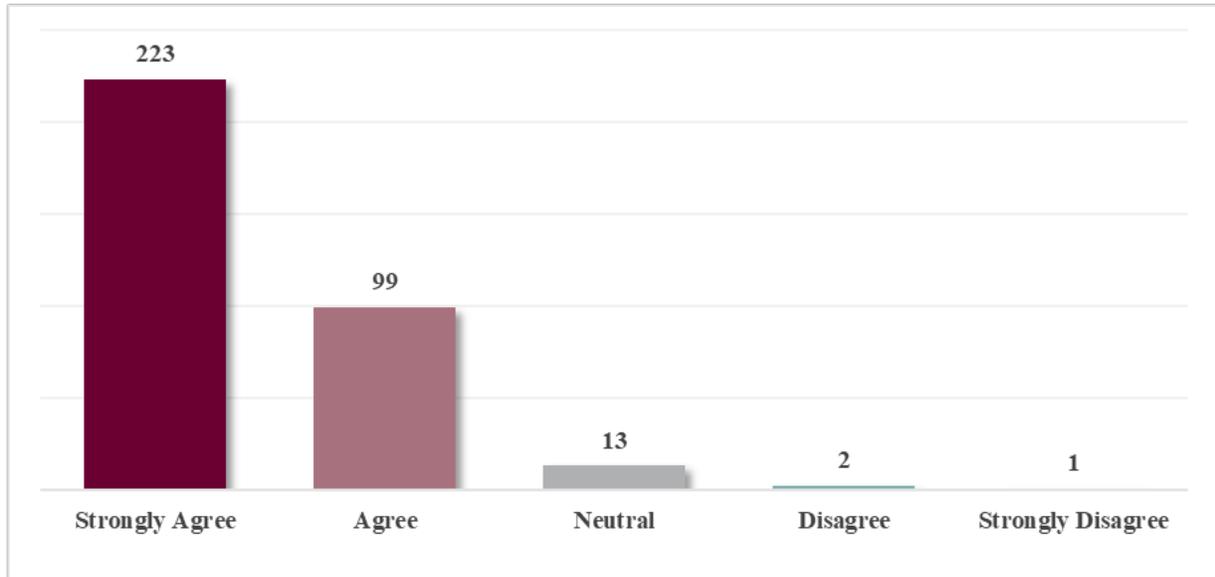
What could be improved

- Avoid VIC delivery delays by ensuring timely mailing to electors and reducing the number of undeliverable VICs due to inaccurate addresses.
- Further emphasize the deadline shown on the VIC for voting at the RO office to reduce the number of electors who show up after the deadline.

1.5 Services to political parties and candidates

Political Entities Service Centre (PESC)

16. I promoted the use of the PESC portal to candidates and prospective candidates.



322 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 13 were neutral, while 3 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

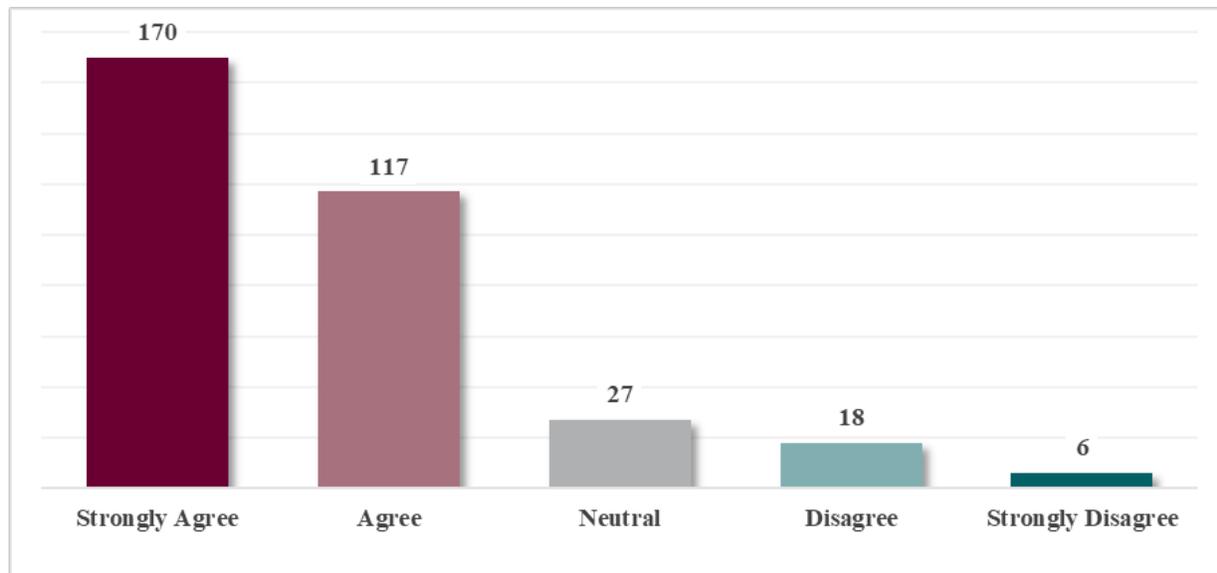
- The benefits of using the PESC portal, such as access to EC documents and information, were shared with candidates during the joint meetings with political parties.
- In general, candidates who used the PESC portal appreciated its user-friendliness.

What could be improved

- Provide training to candidates on the functionality of the PESC portal so they can become familiar with the online nomination process.
- Conduct an advertising campaign with candidates and political parties before and after the issue of the writ to promote the use of the PESC portal.

Support to candidates and campaigns

17. I did not experience any issues supporting candidates and campaigns.



287 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 27 were neutral, while 24 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

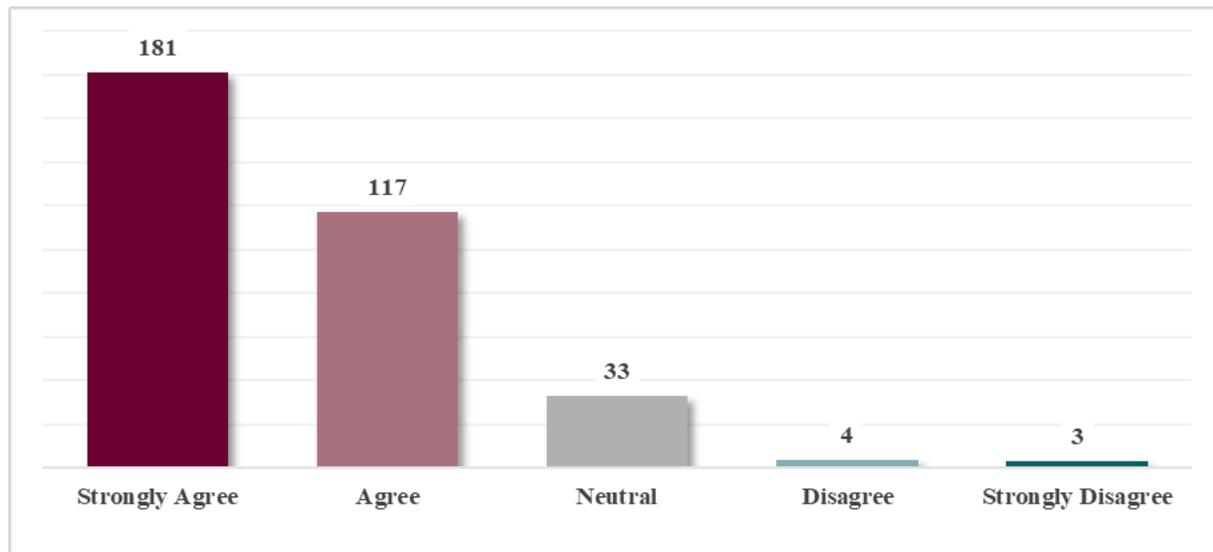
- The ability to direct candidates to the PESC portal to find information allowed ROs to be more efficient with their time management.
- Several candidates contacted ROs for support with the PESC portal, including for access to the list of electors. ROs were able to address the needs of the candidates.
- Generally, ROs were able to respond quickly to requests from confirmed and potential candidates in both official languages.
- Communication and cooperation between ROs and candidates were excellent and respectful.

What could be improved

- Provide PESC portal training during PEAs for the ROs to acquire the essential knowledge and skills to use it.
- Provide ROs with access to the PESC portal so they can effectively guide candidates through the portal when they experience technical problems.

Meetings with political parties

18. The meetings with political parties went well.



298 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 33 were neutral, while 7 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The joint meeting format (i.e., combining both face-to-face and virtual [Webex]) was well received by the political parties, their candidates and their representatives.
- The meetings provided an excellent first contact and opportunity for the exchange of relevant information between ROs and political party members.
- The agenda provided by EC for the joint meetings allowed for a good prioritization of the issues to be addressed at the meetings.

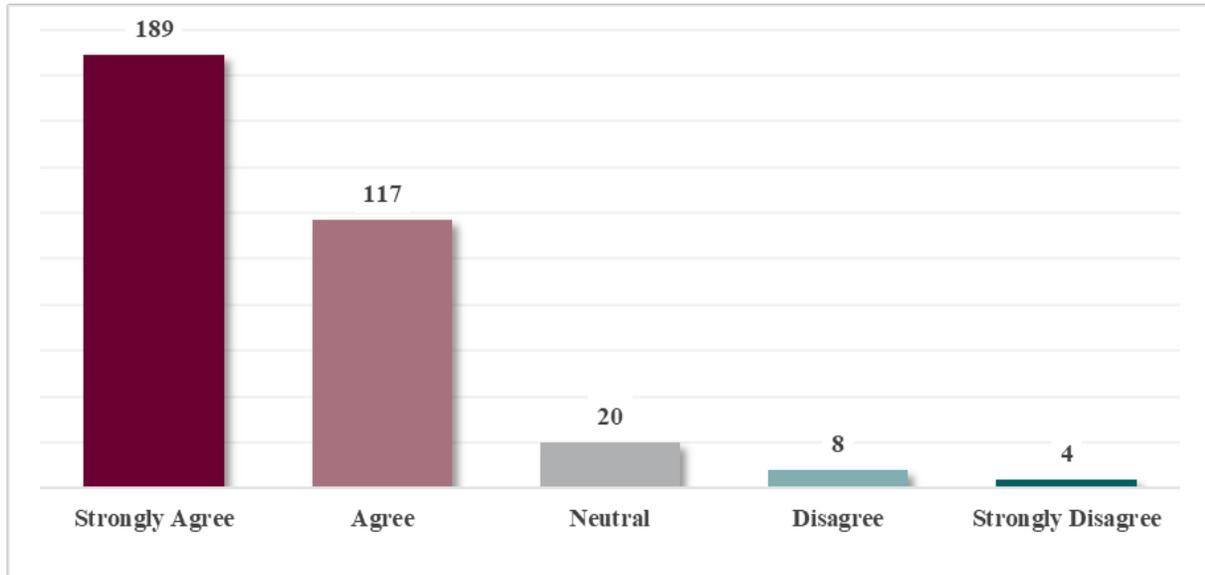
What could be improved

- Further educate political parties on the relevance and importance of attending the joint meetings.
- Develop guides on the PESC portal for political parties and their candidates, and the steps they need to follow to effectively submit their candidacy.
- Provide training and orientation for new ROs on EC's expectations for the joint meetings.
- Synthesize the agenda to focus on key topics and procedures.
- Develop an FAQ document for ROs to answer questions from political parties at meetings.

1.6 Revision

One-stop service model

19. The one-stop service model worked well.



306 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 20 were neutral, while 12 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

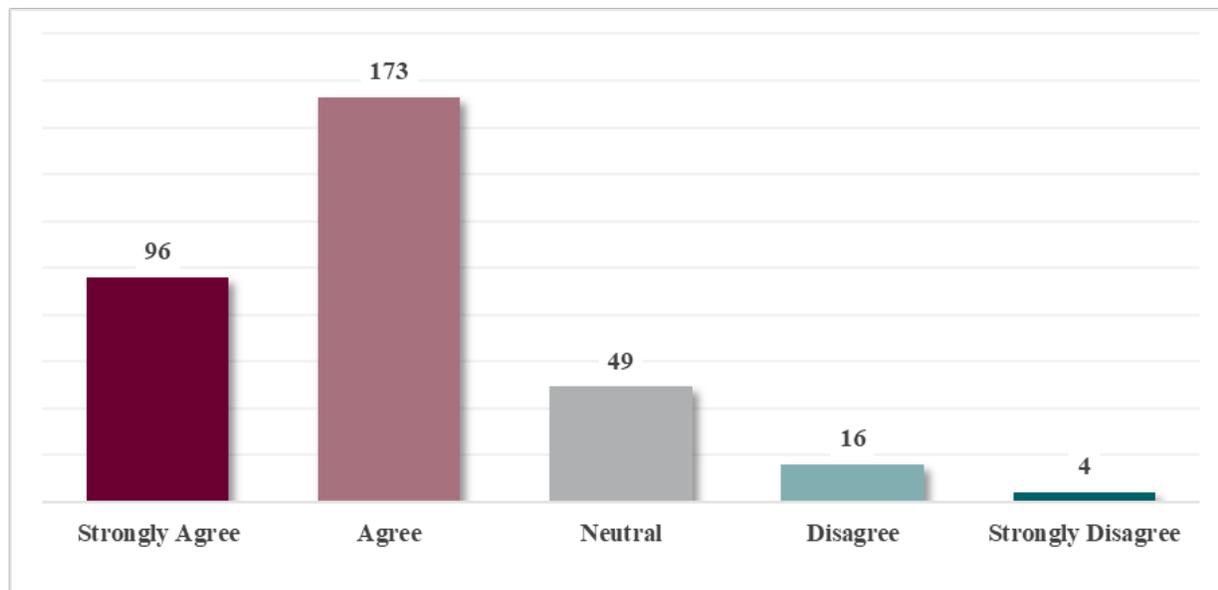
- The one-stop service model provided quick and efficient service to electors seeking revision and/or special ballot services.
- Electors appreciated being able to go to the RO office and receive both revision and special ballot services.
- SAs appreciated serving electors through the one-stop service model. In fact, they mentioned that their training covered this process well and allowed them to be effective.

What could be improved

- Ensure on-time opening of RO offices. The late opening of RO offices negatively affected the one-stop service model, as it requires the RO office to be fully operational.
- Further promote the one-stop service model to electors to maximize its use. In this respect, special ballot voting and its conditions should also be emphasized.

Effectiveness of revision procedures

20. There were no issues or challenges with revision procedures (i.e., general guidelines, targeted revision, revision at the RO office or at the AARO office [if applicable]).



269 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 49 were neutral, while 20 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In general, the procedures for revision were clear, relevant and effective. In fact, they allowed the revision activities to be completed within the established time frame.
- The budget allocated to ROs was more than adequate to carry out the revision activities effectively. A sufficient number of hours was allocated to the staff positions responsible for revision (e.g., SAs, ACs, SPSs).

What could be improved

- Develop a contingency plan to alleviate the pressure on SAs during very busy periods.
- Provide hands-on training to a number of SAs during PEAs on procedures and forms related to revision.

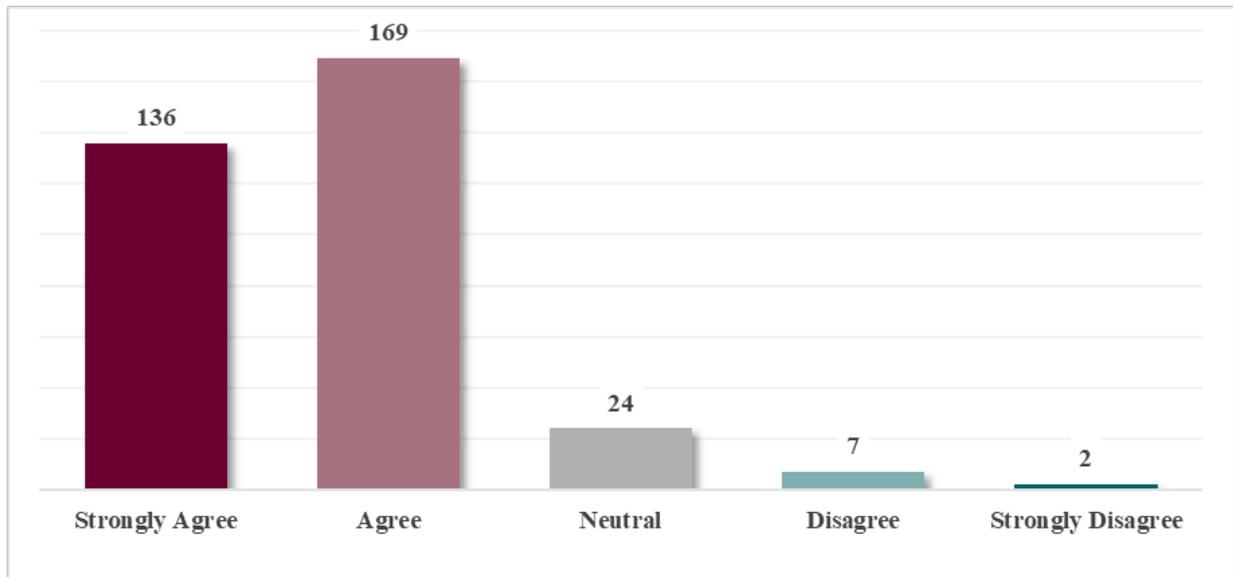
Other notable comments

- The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and the short election calendar greatly influenced targeted revision (TR). In fact, little TR took place, which brought its own challenges during advance polling days.

1.7 Outreach and accessibility

Accessibility issues

21. I resolved all accessibility issues (if any).



305 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 24 were neutral, while 9 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The PEAs on the validation of polling places and RO/AARO offices minimized potential accessibility issues.
- The VICs clearly indicated which locations were not wheelchair accessible. When an elector needed this type of service, they could contact the RO office and be presented with alternative solutions (e.g., the option of voting by mail or at the RO office, using a transfer certificate, etc.).

What could be improved

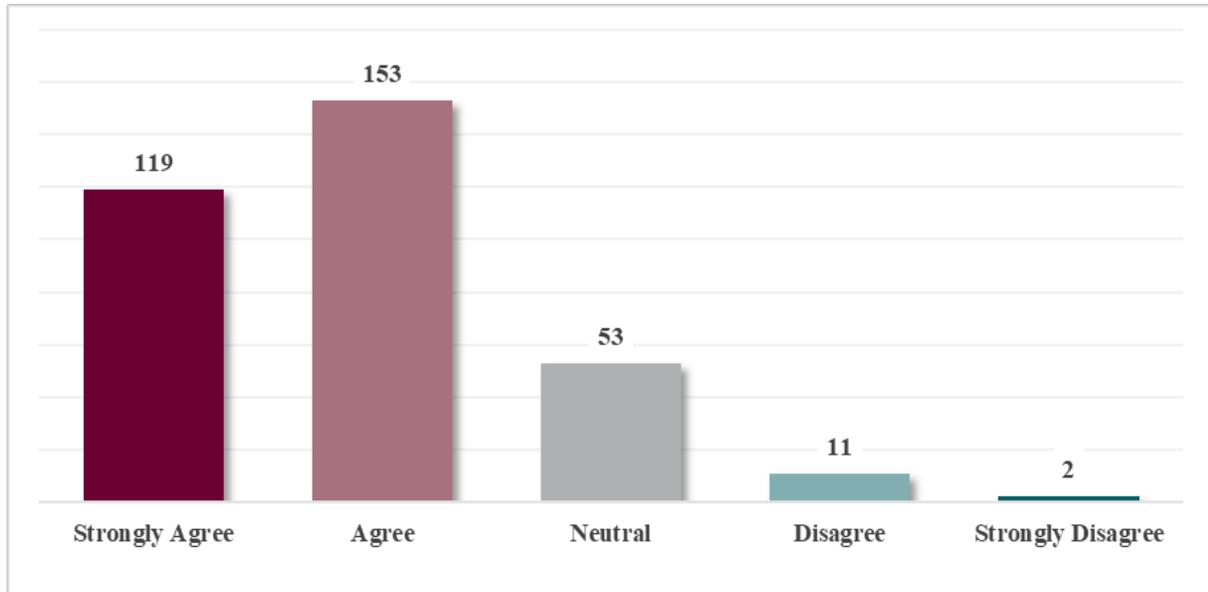
- Further promote the usefulness of a transfer certificate to electors so that they are aware of their options.
- Reduce the number of required accessibility verifications for advance and ordinary polling places, as these are repetitive and burdensome for the central poll supervisor (CPS).
- Modify the accessibility criteria to consider the dimensions of electric wheelchairs, which are generally wider than traditional wheelchairs.

Other notable comments

- ROs in rural and semi-rural EDs reported a lack of accessible locations.
- POMs were key in managing the accessibility of polling places and RO/AARO offices.

Allocation of resources to community relations officers

22. Resources (e.g., finances, materials, time allocated, etc.) were adequate for CROs to do the required work.



272 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 53 were neutral, while 13 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The allocated budget allowed CROs to perform their mandated tasks. However, it is important to note that TR activities were limited, reduced or eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, expenditures were lower than anticipated.
- In general, the tools and equipment provided to CROs were adequate to enable them to perform the required work.

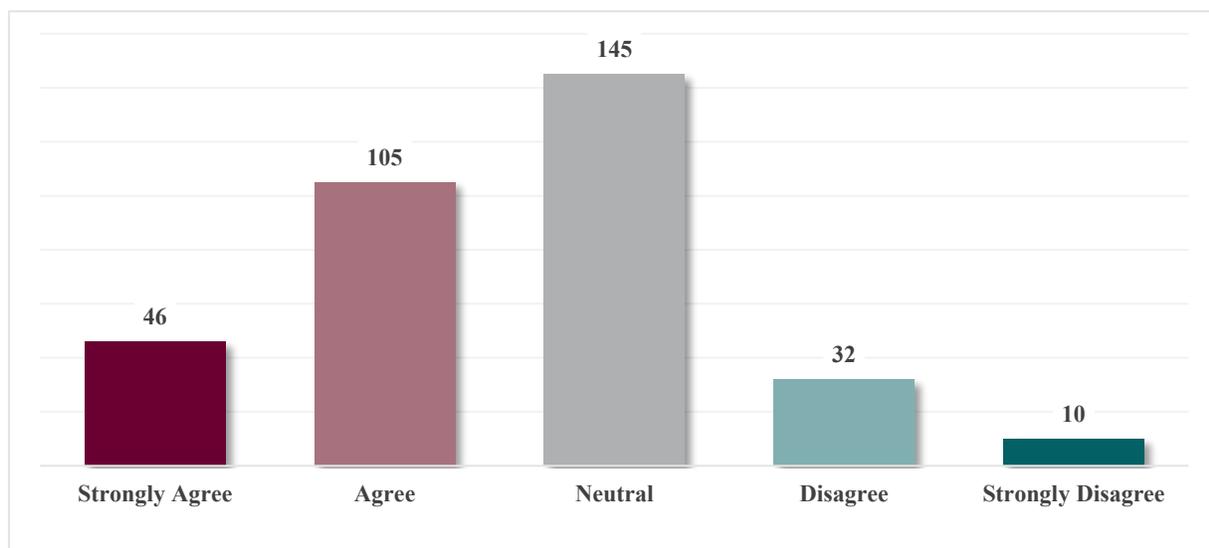
What could be improved

- Provide more promotional materials to allow CROs to address situational challenges (i.e., to compensate for the lack of face-to-face contact with their target groups).
- Hire and deploy CROs in the field before the issue of the writ to increase the effectiveness of outreach activities. Due to the combination of pandemic-related restrictions and the short election calendar, some CROs did not have sufficient time to accomplish their tasks.

1.8 Official languages

Pilot project

23. The tools put in place as part of the pilot project to facilitate the recruitment of poll workers who are capable of providing services in both official languages were effective (i.e., list of organizations included in TOPR, Inspire Democracy Program, communication strategies to minority official language communities, etc.).



151 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 145 were neutral, while 42 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

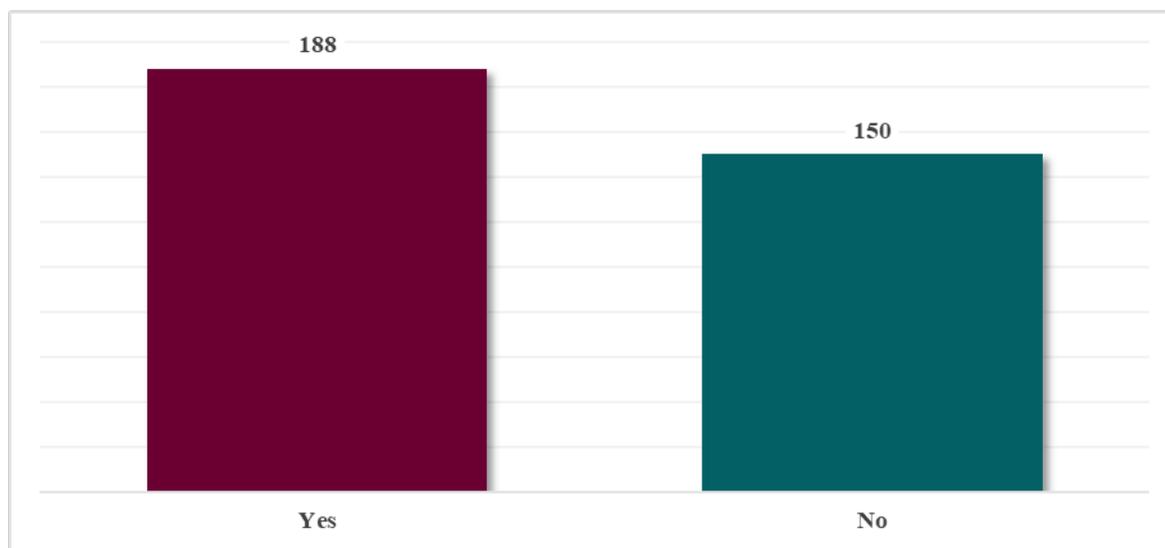
- In general, the recruitment of bilingual poll workers was successful. The vast majority of ROs reported that they were able to mobilize bilingual workers in each of their polling places.
- The tools put in place as part of the pilot project helped to target more bilingual applicants for the poll worker positions. In some EDs, ROs reported that the number of bilingual poll workers increased compared to the 43rd GE.

What could be improved

- It remains a challenge for some predominantly English-speaking EDs to hire competent, French-speaking poll workers. As a result, official language requirements are not always met nor realistic.
- Bring all recruitment tools together in one place to facilitate and speed up the recruitment process. This would make the search for bilingual applicants more efficient and lead to better results.
- Introduce a bilingual poll worker bonus to increase the incentive for bilingual citizens to apply.

Soliciting organizations representing minority official language communities

24. Did you solicit organizations representing minority official language communities during your recruitment of poll workers capable of providing services in both official languages (e.g., organizations identified in TOPR or in the Inventory of Official Languages Actions, Obligations and Resources for Returning Officers [EC 14003], or other minority official language organizations)?



188 ROs indicated that they had approached organizations representing official language minority communities during recruitment. On the other hand, 150 indicated that they had not done so.

What went well

- In general, organizations representing official language minority communities were willing to collaborate. In addition, they had positive input into the recruitment of bilingual poll workers.
- For some EDs, the RRC was an important player in the recruitment of bilingual poll workers.
- For predominantly English-speaking EDs, francophone associations and schools were excellent sources of bilingual applicants.

What could be improved

- Include consultation initiatives in the PEAs to establish relationships with organizations representing official language minority communities. These organizations could be informed of the qualities sought in a poll worker, and the search for bilingual poll workers could be initiated before the writ is issued.

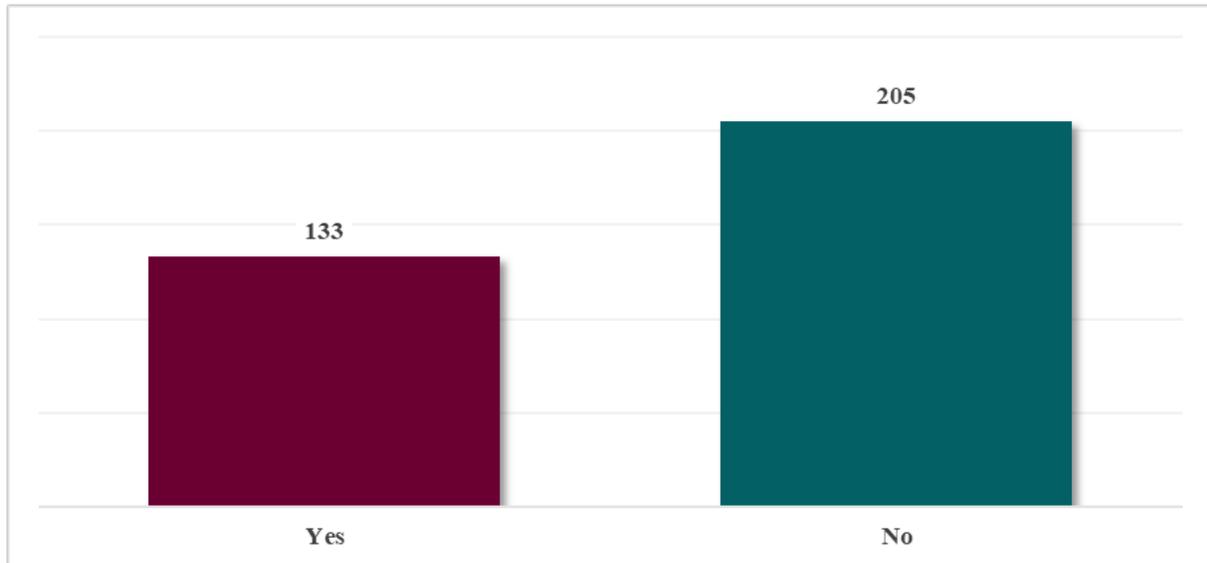
Other notable comments

- In some EDs, the proportion of the minority official language communities is surpassed by a language other than English and French.

Bilingual polling divisions

25. Did you have one or more PDs designated bilingual?

* A PD is designated bilingual where there is a significant demand ($\geq 5\%$) for service in either official language. Refer to GEOExplore for more information. *



133 ROs reported having one or more designated bilingual PDs, while 205 stated that they did not.

What went well

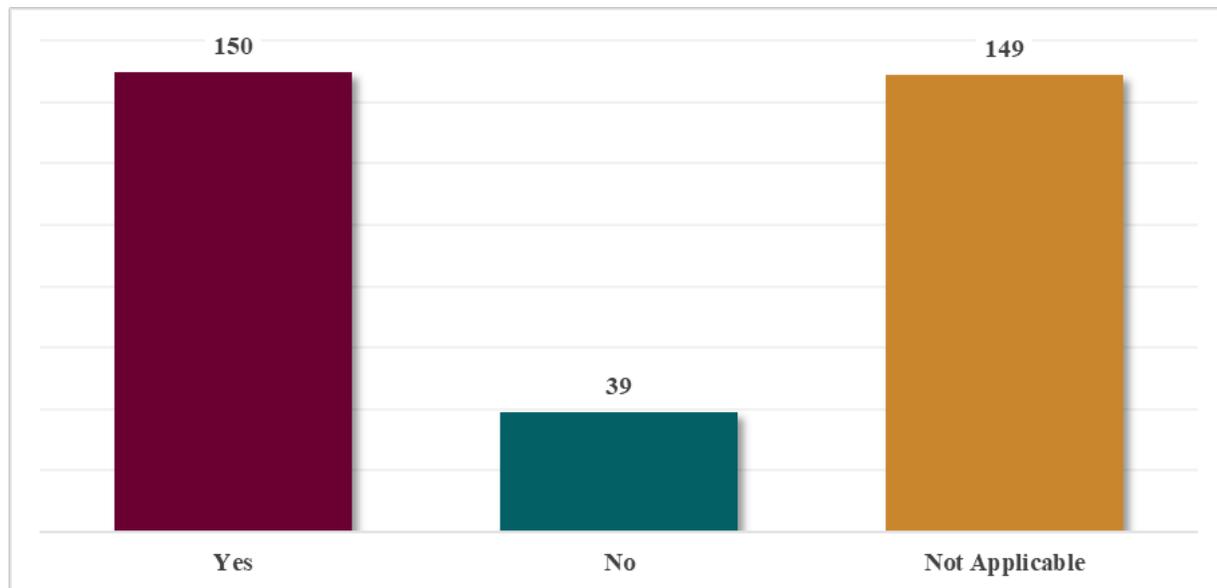
- In general, ROs were able to target their bilingual PDs through GEOExplore. This allowed recruitment to be tailored to meet bilingual staffing needs.

What could be improved

- Establish bilingual PDs at the outset of PEAs, so that staffing needs can be targeted before the issue of the writ, including the recruitment of bilingual applicants.
- Make the GEOExplore application more user-friendly.

Assignment of bilingual poll workers

26. Did you assign a bilingual poll worker to each PD designated bilingual (if any)?



150 ROs indicated that they had assigned bilingual poll workers to each PD, while 39 ROs indicated that they had not. It should be noted that 149 ROs responded “Not applicable” to this question.

What went well

- In the vast majority of cases, the PDs identified as bilingual included a bilingual poll worker.
- In most cases, where multiple polling stations were identified as bilingual in a polling place, there was at least one bilingual poll worker in the polling place.
- When a polling place of a bilingual PD did not have a bilingual poll worker, contact information for bilingual staff was made available, so they could be contacted for immediate support.
- In addition, the telephone number of CanTalk, an independent company that provides interpretation services to electors in languages other than English and French, was also shared with each polling place.

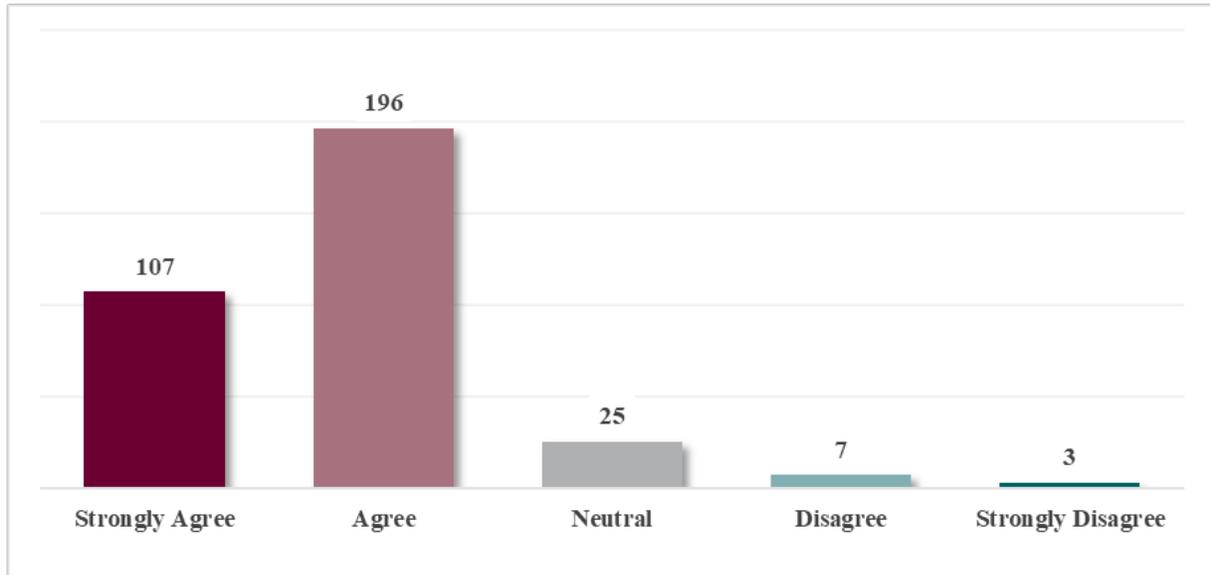
What could be improved

- Receive more support from ECHQ and the RRC in recruiting bilingual poll workers, particularly in predominantly English-speaking EDs with a low francophone population. It remains difficult to find French-speaking poll workers in some predominantly English-speaking EDs.

1.9 Special ballot voting

Special Voting Rules process

27. The special ballot voting process went well.



303 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 25 were neutral, while 10 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- Electors appreciated being able to use the online registration service to verify or update their registrations and register to vote. They also appreciated being able to apply to vote by mail using the secure online document submission feature.
- SAs enjoyed working with IDRS.
- In general, voting at the RO office, voting by mail and counting ballots went well, and the processes were properly followed.
- The training and tools allowed the SAs and SPS to have a good understanding of the SVR processes and to ensure proper execution.

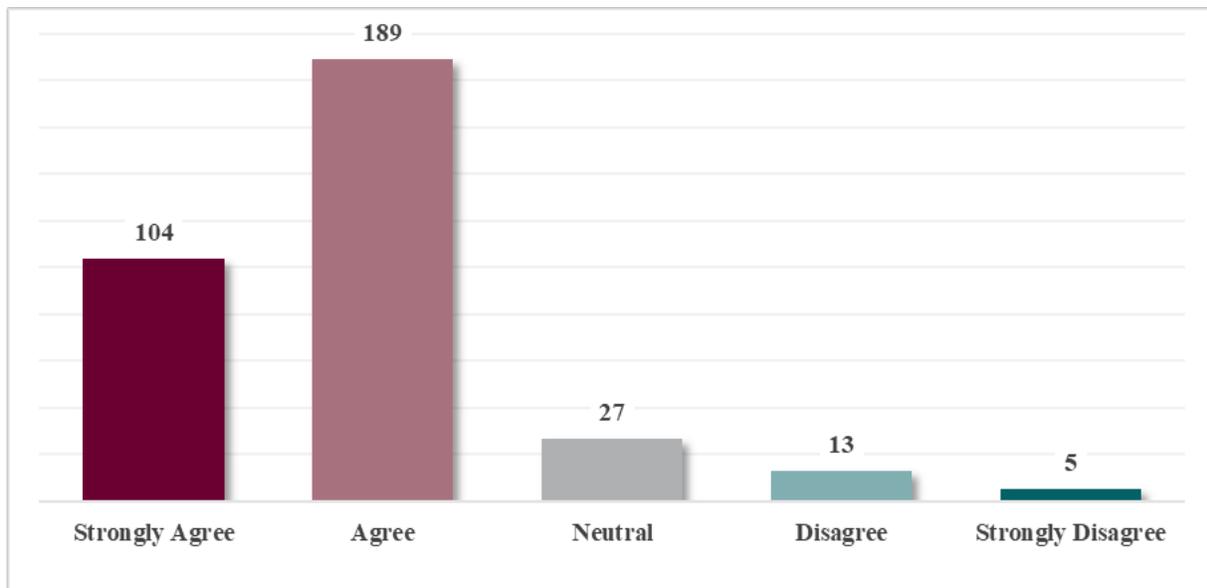
What could be improved

- Further promote special ballot voting and its requirements to electors so they are aware of the different ways to vote.
 - The late receipt of special ballots, particularly vote-by-mail ballots, caused major problems. In some cases, the special ballots arrived well after ordinary polling day.
 - It was difficult for some elderly electors to apply to vote by mail.

- It was difficult for some electors to match the information on their identification (ID) with their registration information in EC's online registration service. More precisely, issues arose for electors with only a PO Box number or rural address.
- Place the procedures for special ballots under the same manual or section on the Field Personnel Intranet.
- Add a section or marker that clearly identifies "pending" applications. This would improve the processing of SVR in IDRS and minimize the risk of a pending application not being identified.

Administering Special Voting Rules identification rules

28. There were no issues administering the special ballot voting identification rules.



293 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 27 were neutral, while 18 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- Overall, the SVR identification rules were clear, precise and easy to implement.
- The vast majority of electors complied with the identification rules under the SVR and submitted the correct documents in a timely manner.
- The SVR guides and guidelines enabled CPSs and SAs to effectively administer the identification rules.

What could be improved

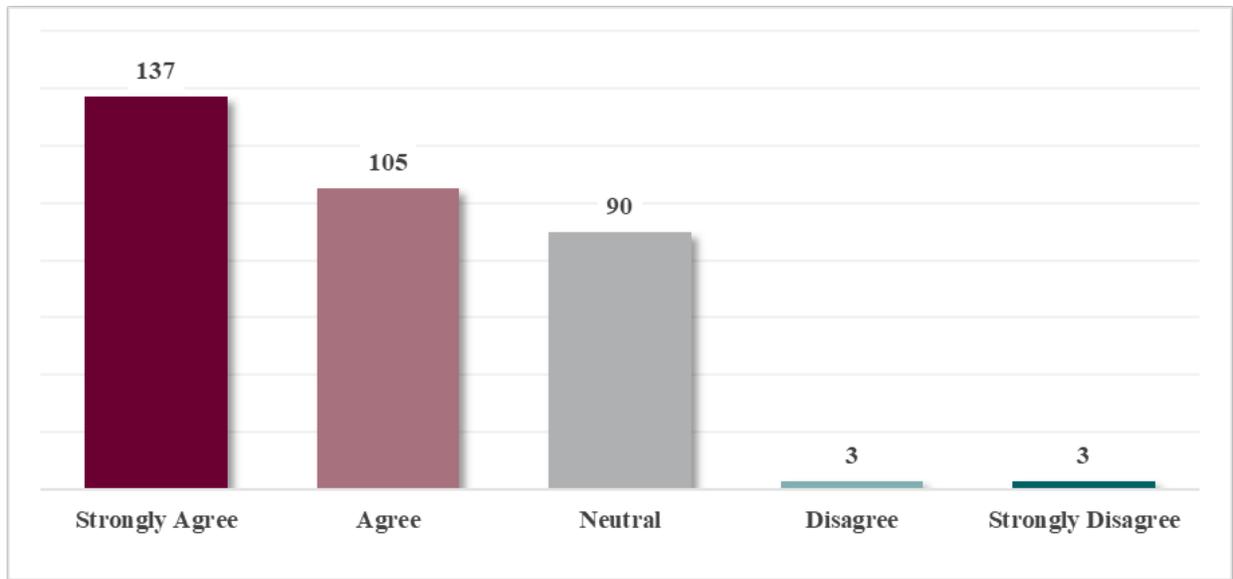
- Simplify the registration process for electors with a PO Box number or rural mailing address. These electors could not match their ID information with the required registration information, as their home address differed from their mailing address.

Other notable comments

- Several mailed-in special ballots were received after the deadline.
- Some of the special ballots received by mail were invalid, as they were incorrectly filled out.

Candidates' representatives observing Special Voting Rules

29. *There were no issues with the presence of candidates' representatives observing the special ballot registration and voting.*



242 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 90 were neutral, while 6 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- The vast majority of candidates' representatives followed the COVID-19 guidelines, in addition to being respectful to employees.
- Candidates' representatives appreciated and were satisfied with the thoroughness of the SAs towards the SVR.

What could be improved

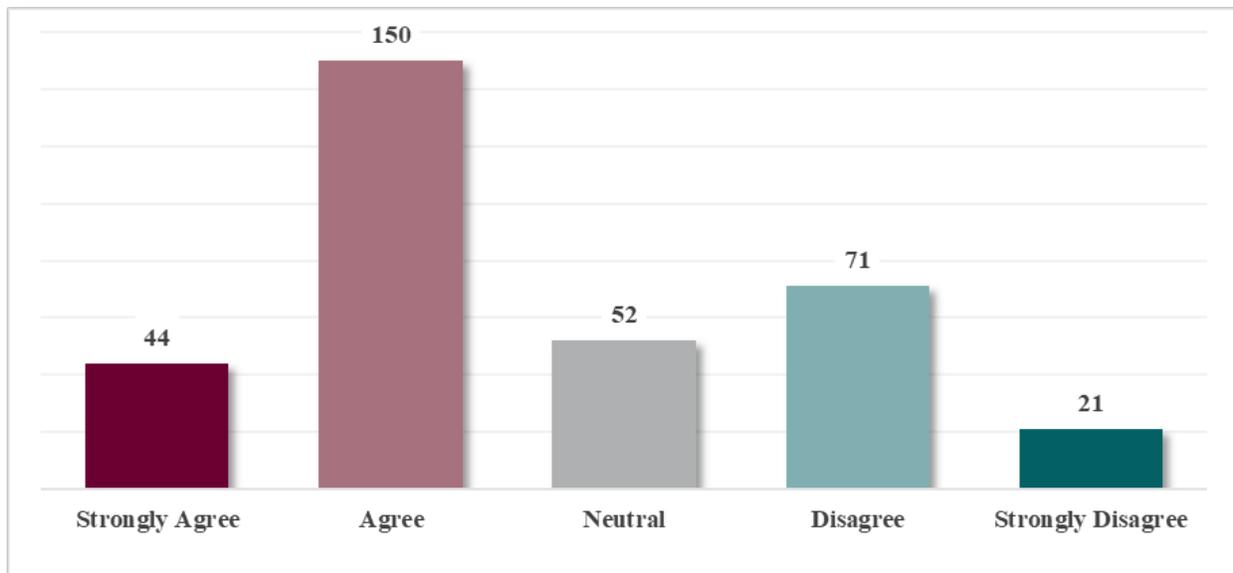
- During initial meetings with the political parties, provide them with the COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines to be followed in RO and AARO offices and at the polling places.

Other notable comments

- Several ROs mentioned not having observers during registration and voting under the SVR.

Administering vote-by-mail

30. There were no issues administering voting by mail.



194 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 52 were neutral, while 92 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In general, electors were able to complete their vote-by-mail applications in “E-Registration” (E-Reg), the Online Voter Registration Service.
- The administration of vote-by-mail applications in IDRS by the SAs went smoothly.
- Once the online applications were approved, the special ballot voting kits were promptly mailed to electors.
- Drop boxes in ordinary polling places allowed for the collection of several completed special ballot voting kits.
- The volume of vote-by-mail applications was easily managed in the majority of EDs.

What could be improved

- Establish an earlier application deadline for special ballot voting kits to allow more time for special ballots to be mailed and counted. Many of the special ballots associated with vote-by-mail were received after the deadline.
- Clearly indicate to electors that their special ballot must be received by a certain date to be counted.
- The late opening of RO offices resulted in a backlog of applications for many EDs.

- Review the current vote-by-mail process to align it with the realities of Northern Canada.
- Simplify the identification process in E-Reg. Some elderly electors had their initial special ballot applications rejected due to technical challenges.

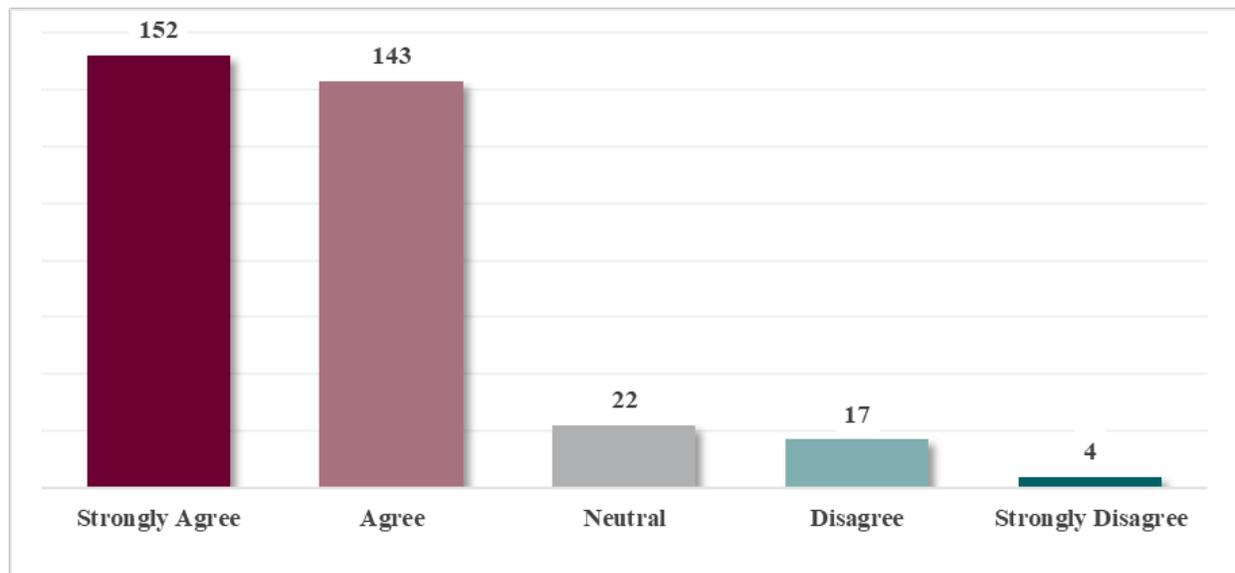
Other notable comments

- Delays with Canada Post in returning special ballots resulted in many ballots not being counted because they were received after the deadline.

1.10 Opening and closing of the polls

Efficiency of the opening and closing of the polls

31. The opening and closing of the polls were timely and efficient.



295 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 22 were neutral, while 21 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

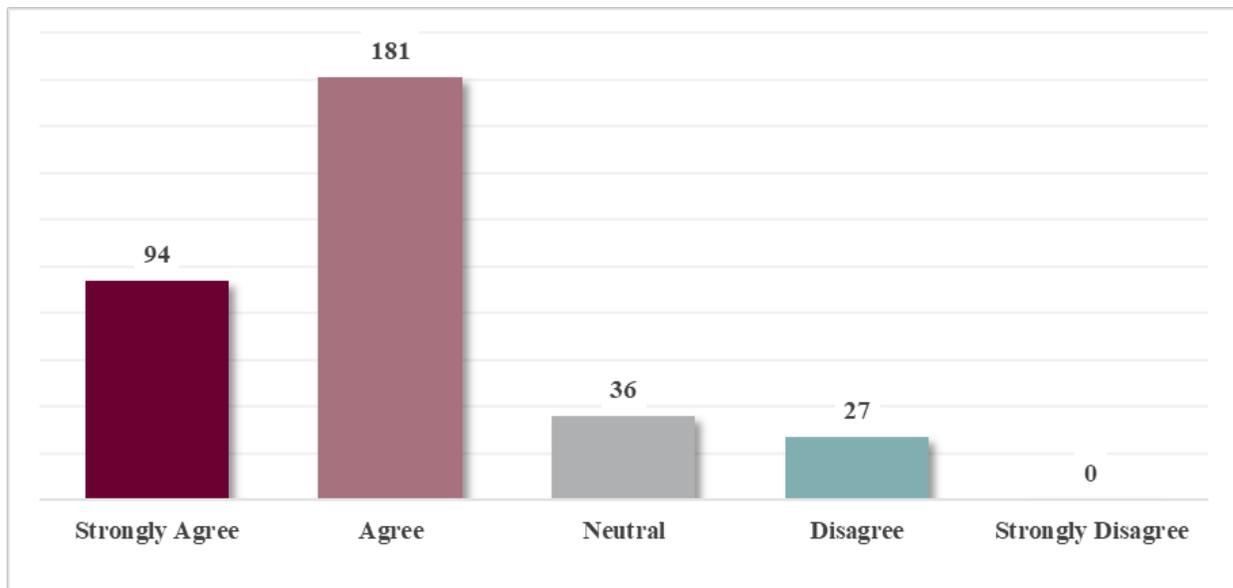
- In general, the procedures for the opening and closing of the polls were followed, resulting in compliance with established timelines.
- Replying to ECHQ's email was an efficient way to confirm that sufficient poll workers were present for the opening of polling places.

What could be improved

- Include more emphasis on closing procedures in poll worker training. Some poll workers had difficulty closing polling stations efficiently.
- Simplify and synthesize the closing procedures to ensure that poll workers are able to apply them efficiently, despite their long working hours.
- Send a single email to ROs to confirm both steps of opening polls (i.e., presence of poll workers and timely opening). While ROs appreciated receiving these two emails, it would have been simpler to send both messages in one.

Voting at advance and ordinary polling places

32. Voting at advance and ordinary polling places went smoothly.



275 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 36 were neutral, while 27 disagreed.

What went well

- In general, COVID-19 guidelines were followed by poll workers and electors.
- Electors enjoyed their voting experience at the advance and ordinary polling places.
- Splitting some advance polls to have two DROs provided better service to electors.

What could be improved

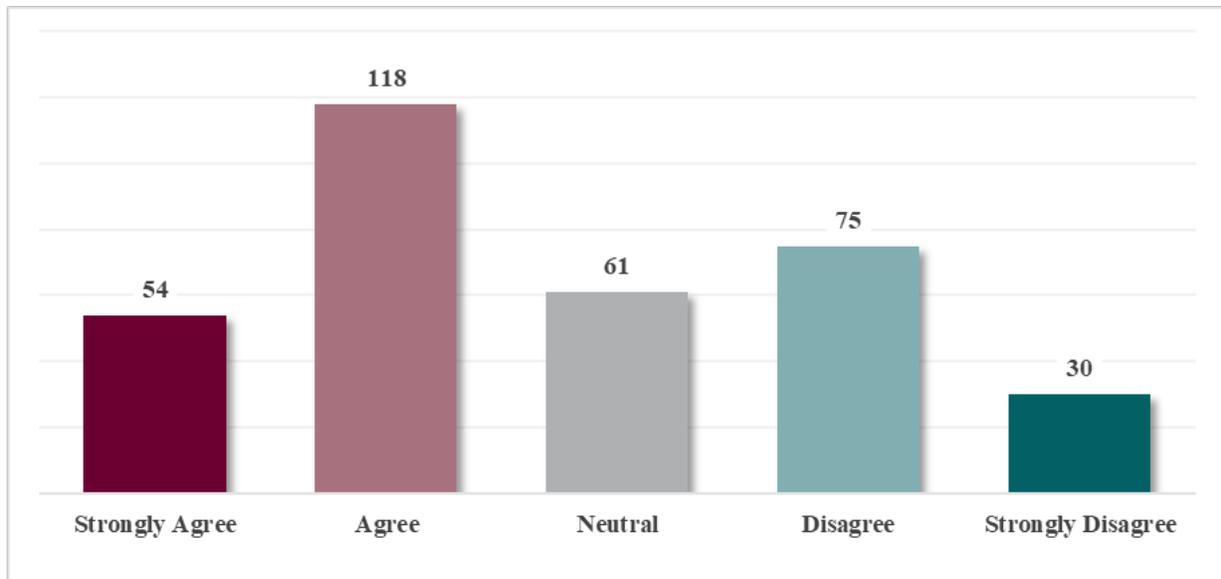
- Reinststate the poll clerk position.
 - The removal of the poll clerk position put a lot of pressure on the DROs who had to perform the duties of both positions, compared to the 43rd GE.
 - The turnaround time for each elector increased, resulting in long line-ups at some polling places.

Other notable comments

- The long shifts during advance polling days were taxing and exhausted many poll workers, occasionally leading to poor execution of tasks.

Lineups at the polls

33. *There were no issues due to abnormally long lineups and electors were able to vote promptly.*



172 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 61 were neutral, while 105 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- Overall, line-ups were managed efficiently, limiting the time that electors had to wait to vote.
- In general, electors enjoyed their experience at the polling places and had positive comments on the service provided by poll workers.

What could be improved

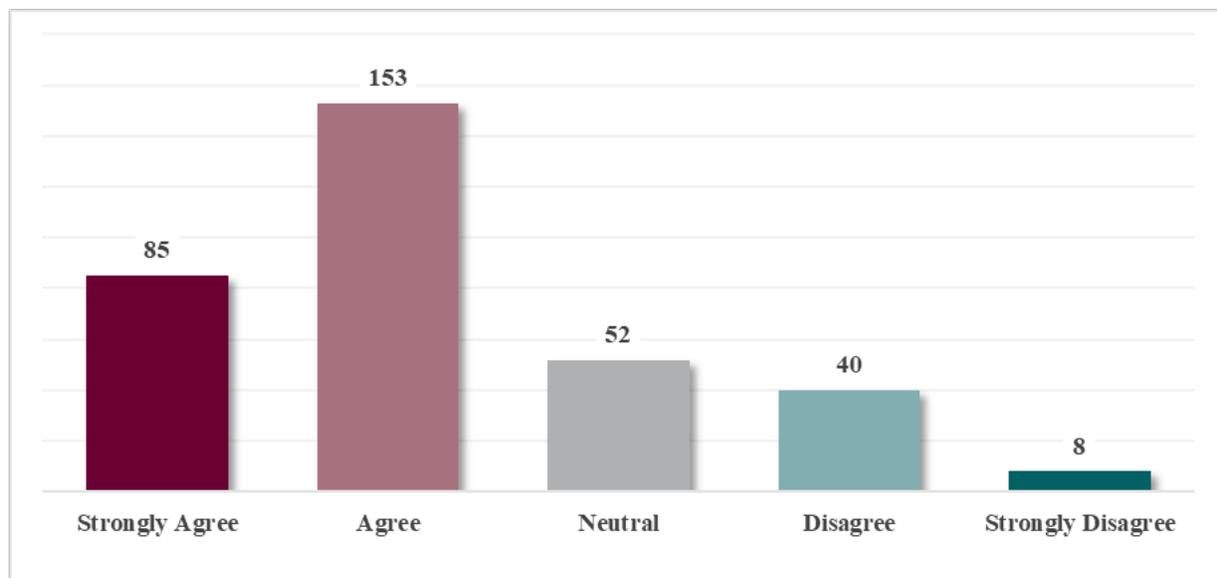
- Lease more advance polling places to more evenly distribute electors and reduce the potential for long line-ups.
- Reinstate the poll clerk position to expedite service to electors at advance and ordinary polling places to reduce long line-ups and simplify their management.
- Bring back external service points (ESPs) to reduce crowding at many advance and ordinary polling places.

Other notable comments

- Some ROs split some advance polls to be able to bring in additional DROs. This reduced long line-ups and allowed electors to be served more quickly.

Entering *Sequence Number Sheets* information

34. *There were no issues entering Sequence Number Sheets information in a timely manner.*



238 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 52 were neutral, while 48 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

What went well

- In general, the procedures for entering *Sequence Number Sheets* data into the Sequence Number Entry Tool were simple and efficient.
- The RO office staff performed these procedures efficiently, resulting in timely data entry.

What could be improved

- Further address the procedures related to the *Sequence Number Sheets* in poll worker training to avoid problematic situations (e.g., inserting incomplete sheets into the ballot box).
- The removal of the poll clerk position added pressure on the DROs who had to perform tasks previously distributed to both positions. As a result, the procedures related to the *Sequence Number Sheets* were not always well performed.
- Automate the procedures related to the *Sequence Number Sheets* to reduce the risk of human error. This would address the challenge of deciphering poll worker handwriting during data entry.

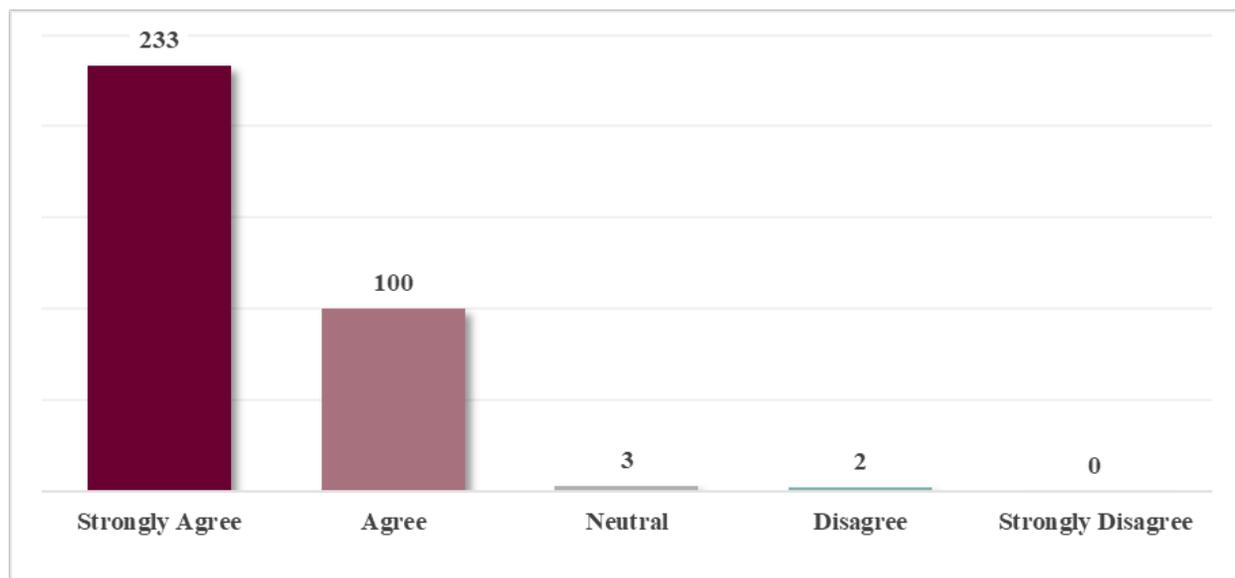
Other notable comments

- Several *Sequence Number Sheets* were kept in the ballot boxes and only noticed during the validation period.

1.11 Returning officer office closing activities

Compliance with instructions for the validation of results

35. The validation of results was completed as directed in the Returning Officer's Manual, Volume III, 2.6 Validation of the results.



333 ROs agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. On the other hand, 3 were neutral, while 2 disagreed.

What went well

- In general, the procedures and guidelines were clear, relevant and allowed for efficient and timely validation of results.
- In the vast majority of EDs, there were sufficient candidates and representatives present during the validation of results.

What could be improved

- Place more focus on procedures for handling the Statements of the Vote (SOVs) (EC 50100) during poll worker training to prevent SOVs from ending up in the ballot box.

Other notable comments

- The validation of results was made more complicated due to many polling places not returning election materials properly. For example, some ROs had to open ballot boxes or search through the transportation bag to retrieve the SOV and other important documents.

Advice on the closing procedures for the returning officer office

36. *What other procedures (or modifications to current procedures), if any, would be useful to you in supporting the closing activities for your office or the AARO office (if applicable)?*

Comments

- It would be beneficial to ROs and key staff to develop an RO office closing guide encompassing all activities, including checklists.
- Coordinating the return of materials while closing RO and AARO offices was an irritant, particularly the communication between ECHQ, Bell Canada, IBM and Canada Post. ROs would like to have a detailed schedule indicating when they can expect to be contacted and when the various materials will be picked up.
- The requirement to return various materials to ECHQ for shredding was also an irritant. It would be more efficient to shred the materials locally, thus reducing the amount of materials to be returned to ECHQ. In addition, this would reduce EC's carbon footprint.

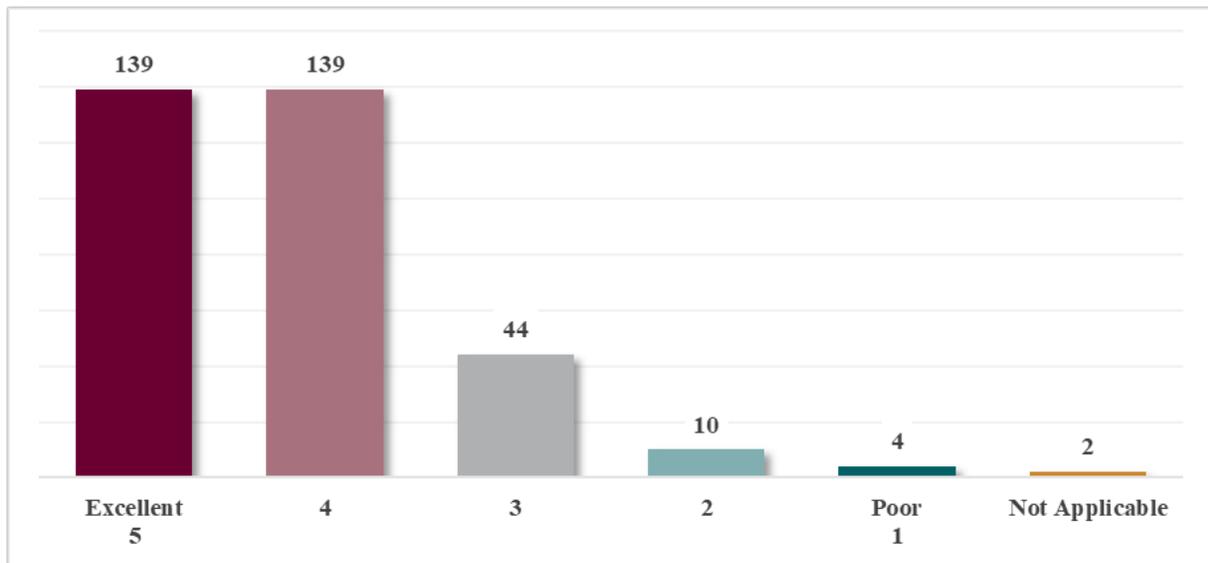
1.12 Overall

Assessment of Elections Canada's level of service during the event

37. Using the rating system below, assess EC's level of service for this GE.

* For the tables in question 37, column 5 represents an excellent level of service, while 1 represents a poor level of service. *

EC's communication with you during the pre-event period

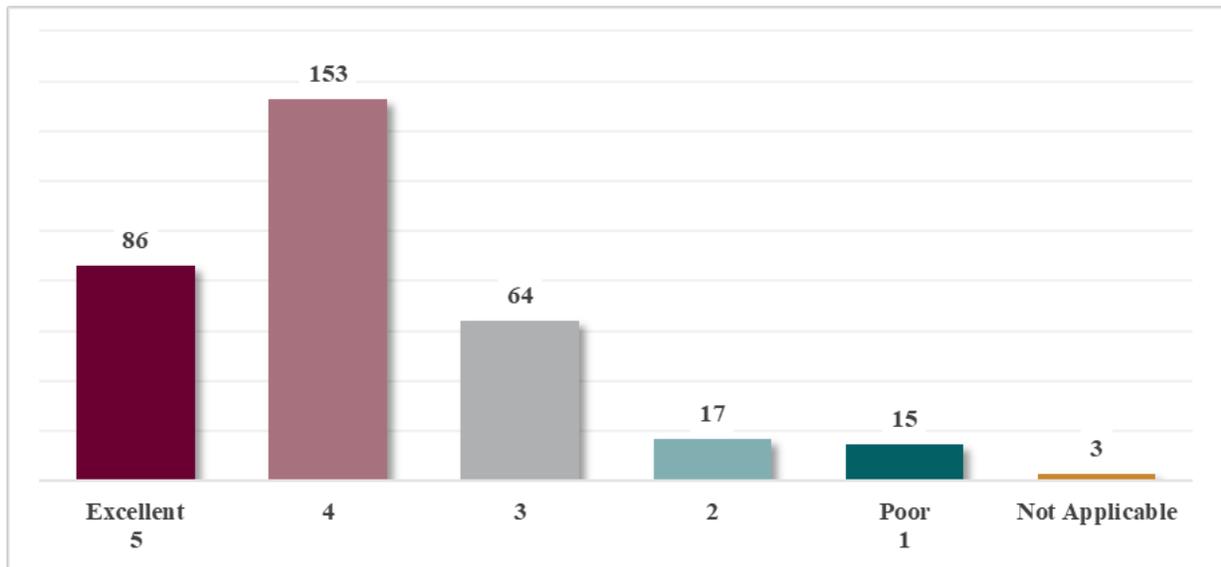


What went well

- EC's support offered to ROs on the various PEAs was excellent.
- Communications were well detailed and timely.

What could be improved

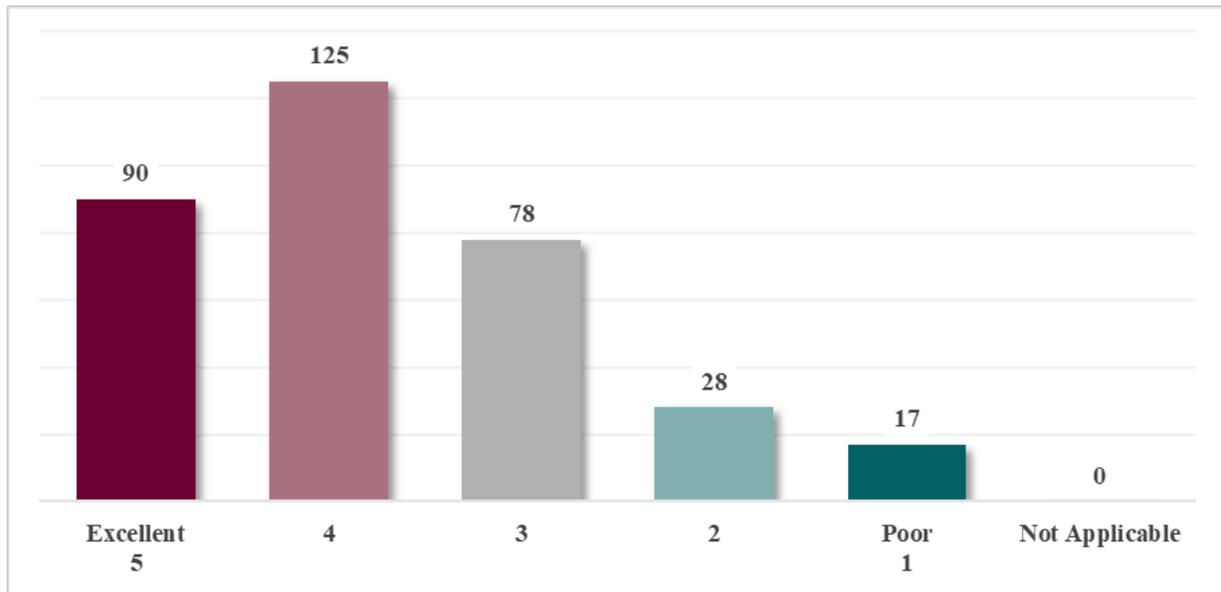
- Avoid redundant communications.

Overall level of readiness for the GE based on the completion of pre-event assignments***What went well***

- The PEAs helped achieve an excellent overall state of readiness for the 44th GE. They allowed for efficient opening of offices, staffing and leasing of polling places.

What could be improved

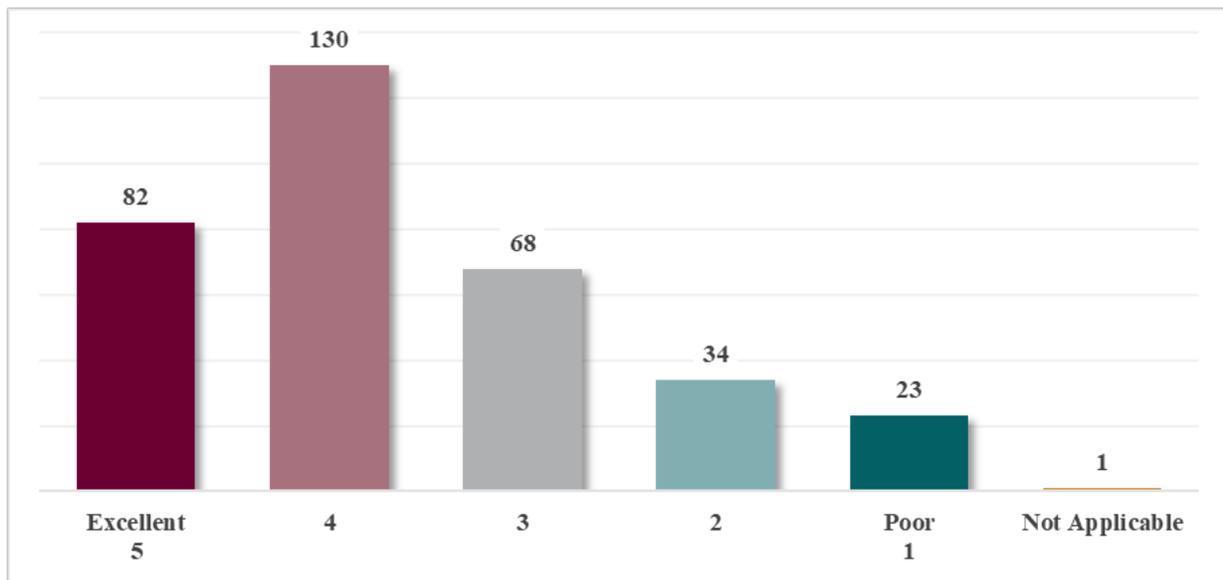
- Make online training modules on all systems available to ROs and AROs to achieve an optimal level of readiness. This would allow experienced ROs and AROs to get up to speed, and new ones to gain essential knowledge for delivering a GE.

EC's communication with you during the event period***What went well***

- The SMEs effectively communicated information and instructions to ROs on urgent situations or important topics.

What could be improved

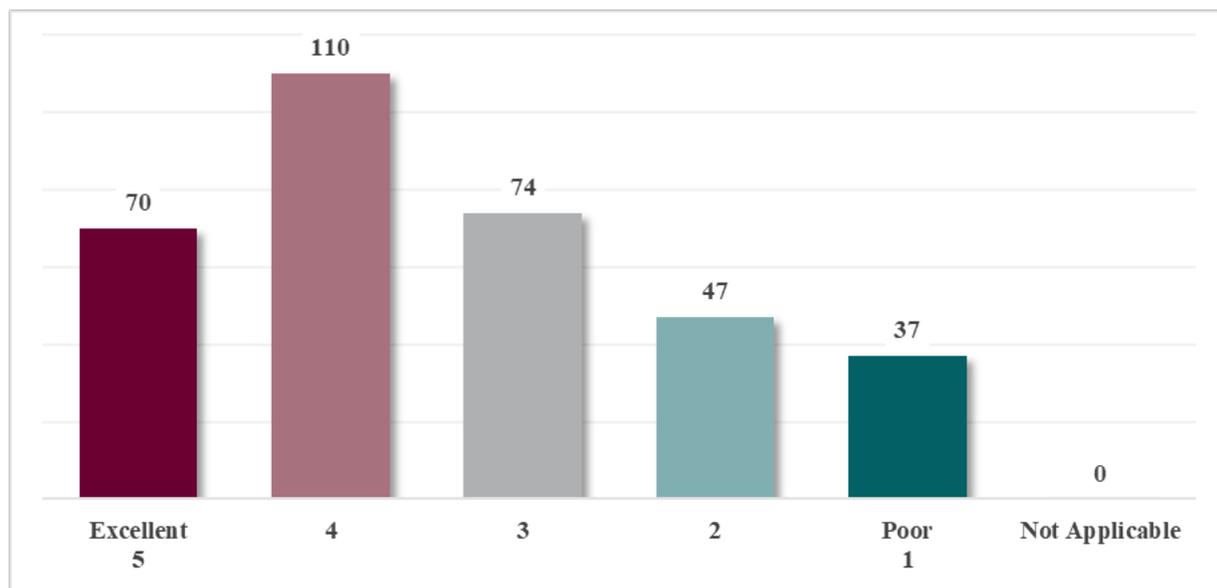
- Provide faster responses to ROs on important issues. On a few occasions, ROs had to wait a long time before receiving clarification from SMEs.

Overall support from EC throughout the conduct of the event period***What went well***

- Event+ was an excellent tool that allowed ECHQ to effectively communicate and provide reminders to ROs throughout the election.

What could be improved

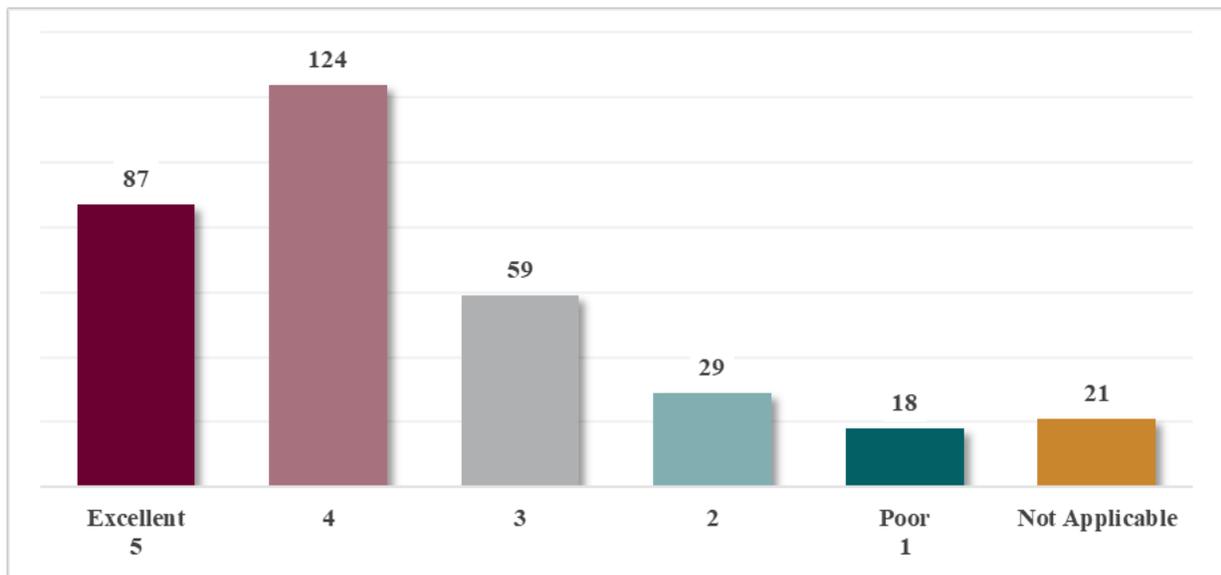
- Send pertinent communications earlier. Some communications were sent out too late or at the last minute, including those related to COVID-19 guidelines.
- Make policy and procedure changes earlier. Some updates and changes were made at the last minute, resulting in discrepancies between communications, manuals, etc.

Overall support from the Field Support Network (FSN)***What went well***

- In most cases, FSN was able to process election administrators' (EAs') requests quickly.
- The majority of FSN agents had a positive attitude and were eager to assist EAs, which made them feel heard and supported.

What could be improved

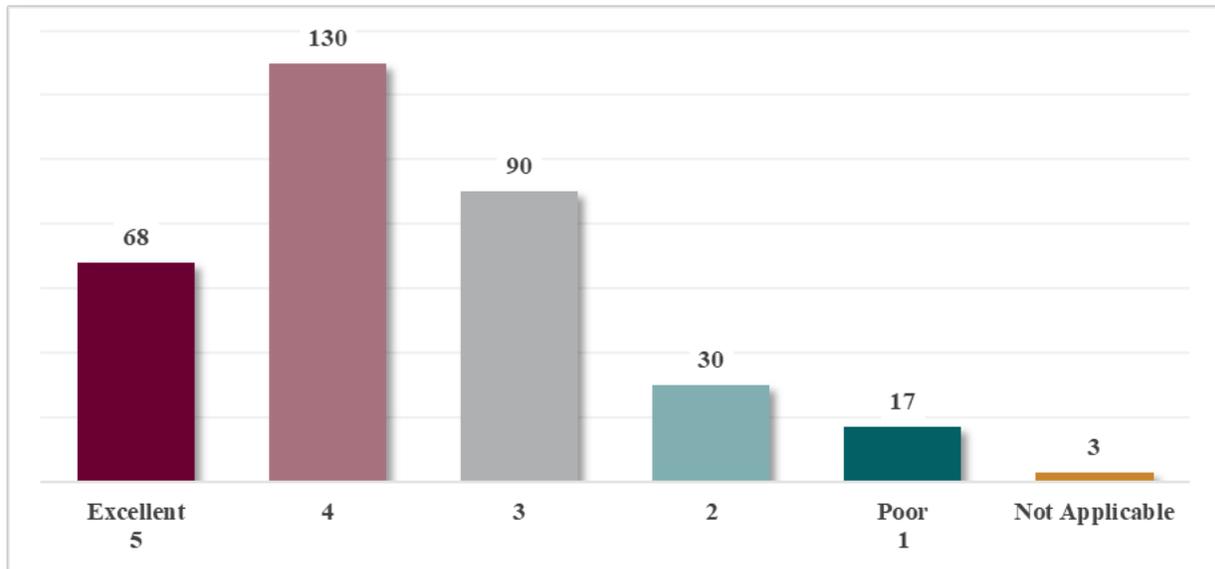
- Reduce the wait time to speak to an agent. During busy periods, EAs had to wait a long time.
- Improve the remote telephone system. On several occasions, ROs' calls with FSN were disconnected, as FSN agents were working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Ensure sufficient training for the FSN agents. A few ROs were dissatisfied with the quality of the responses they received from FSN. Some agents provided incorrect answers or did not understand the problem.
- Ensure the availability of bilingual FSN agents. Some FSN agents had difficulty serving ROs in either official language, which limited the quality and understanding of conversations.

Support on office or polling place leases***What went well***

- The team supporting ROs in signing office leases was very understanding and efficient.
- Pre-approval of leases by the Control of Authorizations (COAs) made for more efficient lease preparation.

What could be improved

- Simplify the lease signing process to ease the workload for ROs with multiple leases.
- Approve leases earlier. Some leases were approved late due to additional costs or requests for changes by landlords.

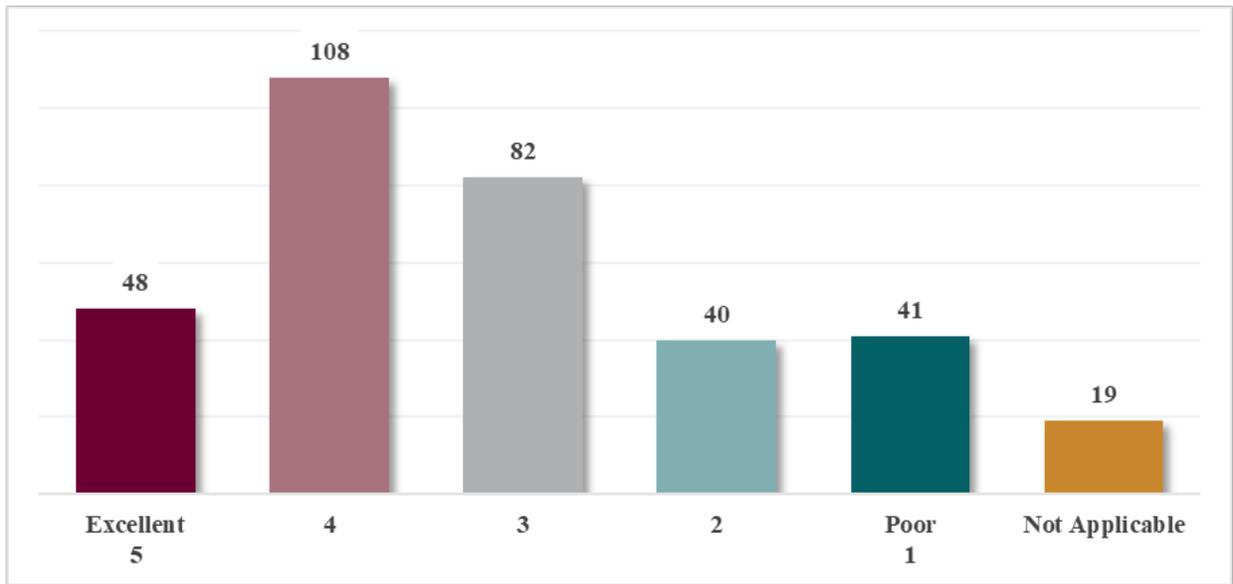
IT support***What went well***

- The IT support staff were very courteous and dedicated to customer service.
- In general, IT support was able to adequately follow up on requests.

What could be improved

- Improve printer reliability. The many printer problems were an irritating factor in the RO and AARO offices.

Support on telecom issues

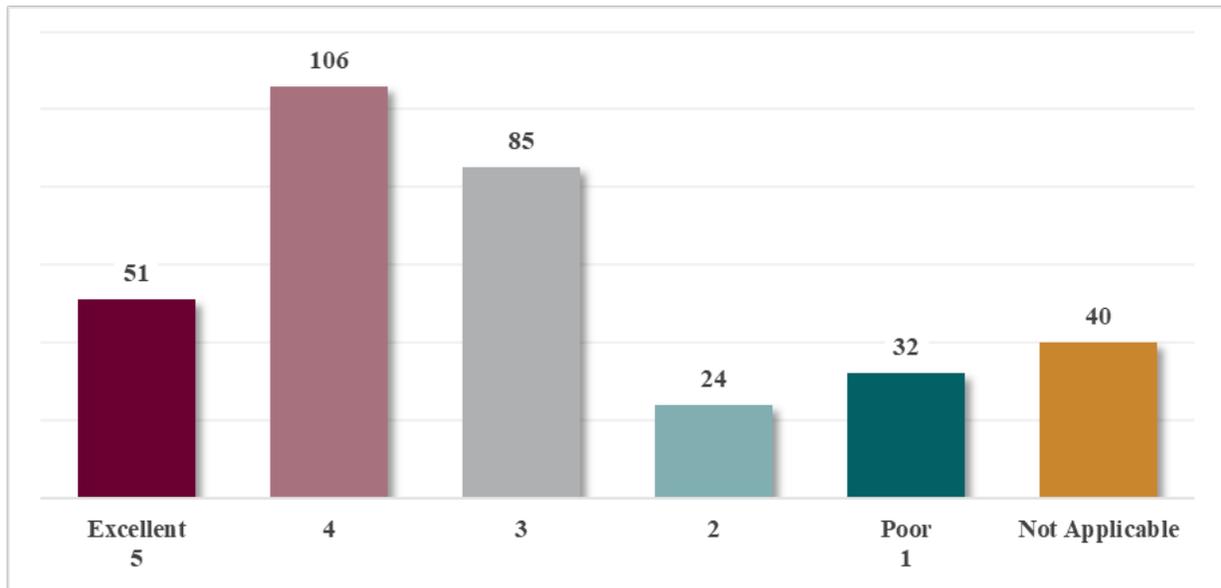


What went well

- The telecommunications team support staff was very courteous and dedicated to customer service.

What could be improved

- Provide more reliable equipment. Problems with BlackBerry devices, connectivity issues and difficulties using the devices were reported.

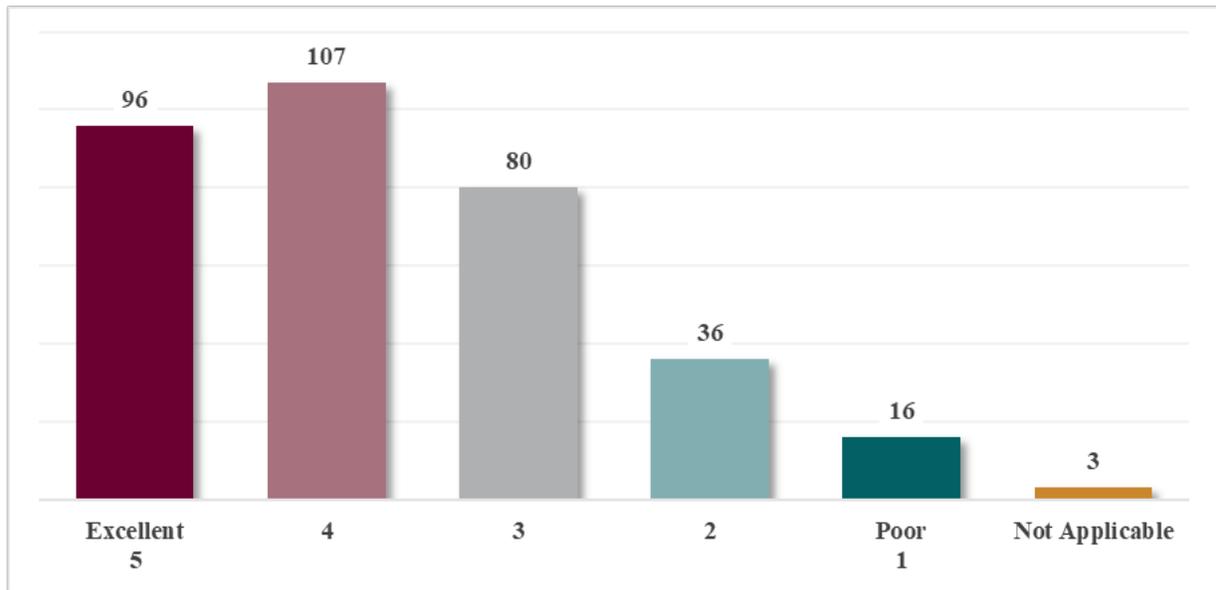
Support on poll worker recruitment***What went well***

- The vast majority of ROs appreciated the support they received in recruiting poll workers.
- The addition of the RRC position provided ROs with access to additional recruitment support.

What could be improved

- The removal of the poll clerk position meant that far fewer workers were interested in taking on the position of DRO. As a result, it was difficult to fill this position.
- Provide more details on the role of the RRC, as many ROs felt that they were not able to make the most of this resource.

Support on pay and financial issues



What went well

- In general, Finance staff provided efficient support, allowing many problems to be resolved quickly.

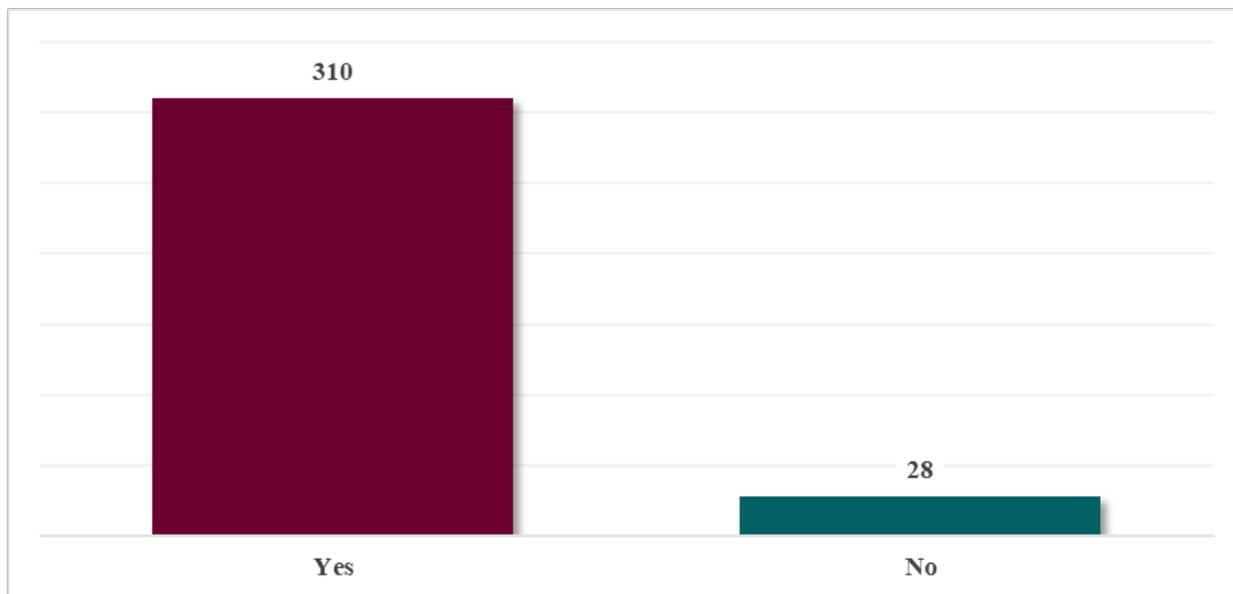
What could be improved

- Some Finance staff had difficulty communicating in either official language.

Section 2: Statutory Requirements to Report on Proceedings (Section 314 of the CEA)

2.1 Return of election documents

38. Did you return all election documents in your possession as per instructions?



310 ROs confirmed that they had returned all the election documents in their possession in accordance with the instructions. However, 28 of them indicated that they were not able to do so.

Comments

- The majority of ROs returned all election materials in their possession as instructed.
- Some white and yellow copies of the SOV were not returned correctly or were missing.
- Some *Sequence Number Sheets* and incident reports were not returned.
- Several ROs reported experiencing a delay in pick-up of documents by Canada Post.

State of election documents received from election workers

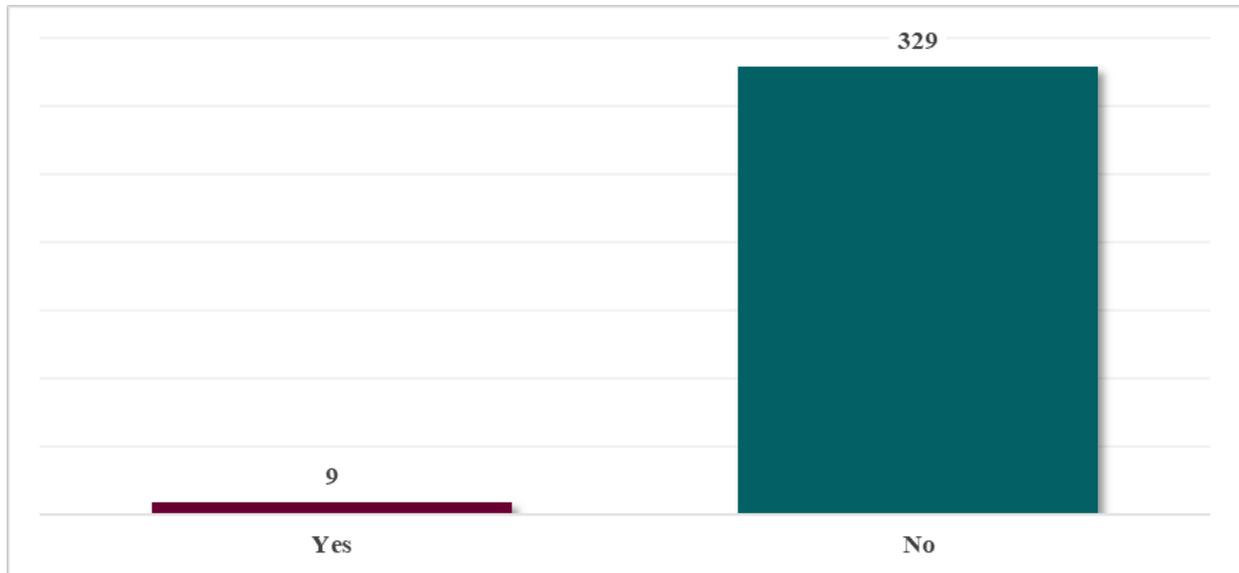
39. Do you have any comments on the state of election documents received from election workers (e.g., appropriate documents are in sealed envelopes, bags are not loose, everything is sealed properly, etc.)?

Comments

- 236 ROs stated that many of the election materials received from election workers did not meet requirements. In fact, in the majority of cases, the materials were poorly organized when returned.
- 32 ROs mentioned that election workers should receive more hands-on training on the return of materials. In addition, they recommended that simulated office closures be added to the training programs.
- 27 ROs indicated that it would be beneficial to simplify the closing process to increase efficiency.
- 17 ROs mentioned that the poor quality of returned election materials was directly related to the election workers' high level of fatigue due to long hours.

Ballot boxes missing

40. Were there any ballot boxes missing?



9 ROs confirmed having at least one missing ballot box, while 329 confirmed having no missing ballot boxes.

Comments

- 9 ROs reported lost ballot boxes. However, they were found in time for the validation of the results.
- 8 ROs reported receiving the ballot box contents in the sealed envelope without the ballot box itself.

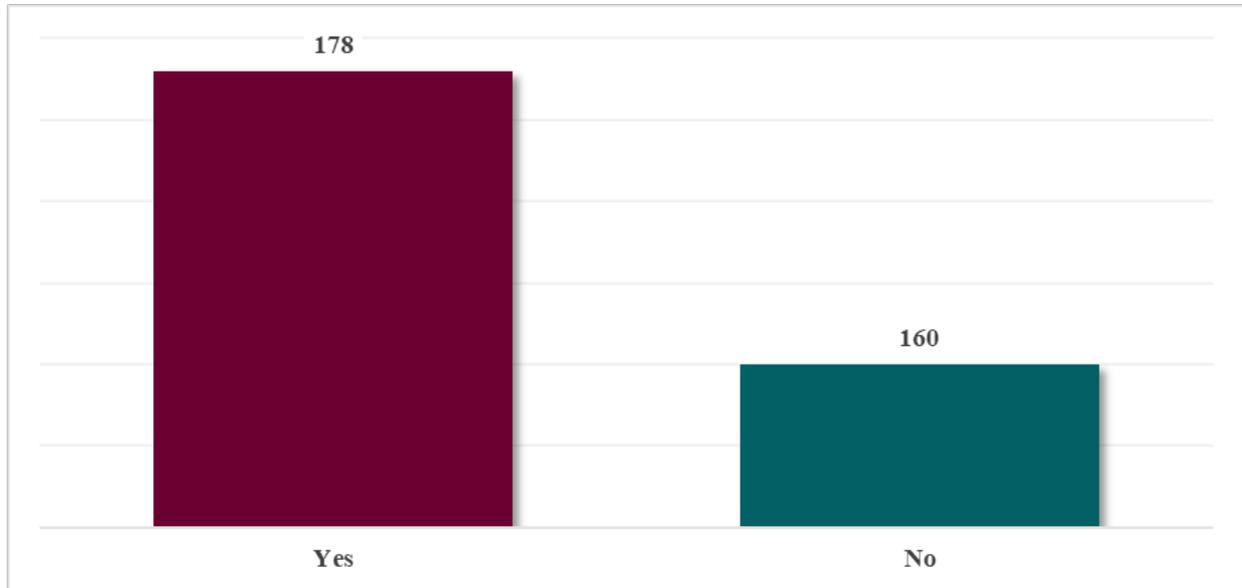
In the event that the ballot box and the SOV (EC 50100) were missing, how did you ascertain the number of votes cast for each candidate?

Comments

- 40 ROs reported using the pink copy of the SOV.
- 12 ROs reported using the copy of the results provided to the candidates' representatives on election night.
- 42 ROs reported using either the white or yellow copy of the SOV.

Statement of the Vote missing

41. Were there circumstances in which the ballot box was accounted for, but the original Statement of the Vote (EC 50100) was missing?



178 ROs confirmed circumstances in which the original SOV was missing even though the ballot box had been returned. However, 160 ROs confirmed they did not experience such circumstances.

If you answered "Yes", how did you confirm the number of votes cast for each candidate?

Comments

- 152 ROs reported opening the ballot box to retrieve the yellow copy of the SOV.
- 39 ROs reported opening the large plastic envelope to compile the results recorded on each of the candidates' envelopes.
- 35 ROs reported using the pink copy of the SOV received from the election officers.

Additional question: post-event meetings

42. Based on your experience with this GE, are there any specific topics you think should be added to the agenda for discussion during post-event meetings?

Comments

- 57 ROs would like to discuss the training of poll workers and key positions. The most requested topics were closing procedures, lack of hands-on training, and the pay related to the training.
- 53 ROs would like to discuss the POM and PAARO positions and would like to know whether these key positions will be retained for the 45th GE.
- 42 ROs would like to discuss recruitment, specifically, the RMS and ROPS/SITES systems, recruitment strategies and the RRC position.
- 30 ROs would like to discuss poll workers' pay, particularly the DRO's.
- 30 ROs would like to discuss the possibility of opening their offices before the issue of the writ. They would also like to discuss the planning and logistics of office opening.
- 27 ROs would like to discuss PEAs in general, and specifically the assignments related to lease preparation.
- 22 ROs would like to discuss the possibility of reinstating the poll clerk position to ease the pressure on the DROs.
- 21 ROs would like to discuss EC's plans and intentions regarding new technology at the polling places, specifically the possibility of electronic voting and new tools for DROs.
- 16 ROs would like to discuss the performance and service received from Canada Post and its subcontractors during the 44th GE, specifically timeframes and possible solutions.
- 13 ROs would like to discuss the pay structure for ROs and AAROs, including the possibility of claiming overtime.