



YOUTH4GOVERNANCE.ORG

# FROM CRISIS MANAGEMENT TO PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

## WE ARE THE STATE

PHASE III – CENTRAL INSPECTION STAFF'S PERCEPTION OF  
THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

CENTRAL INSPECTION



*This document was prepared by Youth4Governance  
"Youth4Governance.org", a project jointly launched by Saint-  
Joseph University, the Central Inspection, and Siren Associates.*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. YOUTH4GOVERNANCE JOURNEY
2. METHODOLOGY
3. SAMPLE PROFILE
4. A CLOSER LOOK AT CI: PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM
5. IMPACT: A PIONEER IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE
6. RECOMMENDATIONS



# YOUTH4GOVERNANCE JOURNEY

## LET'S RE-CAPTURE THE STATE: OUR STATE!

From July to September 2021, as part of their internship program, the Youth4Governance university students conducted a three-part perception study on the Lebanese public administration. The study surveyed opinions among the general public, civil servants and Central Inspection staff. This report covers the third survey that targeted the Central Inspection staff.

**YOUTH4GOVERNANCE**  
University students from  
different disciplinary  
backgrounds

Central  
Inspection staff's  
perception of the  
public  
administration

Data Collection  
(37 surveys)

Data Cleaning

Data Analysis

Report writing and  
recommendations

1

### PHASE 1

Survey of residents' perception of the  
public administration

2

### PHASE 2

Survey of civil servants' perception of  
the public administration

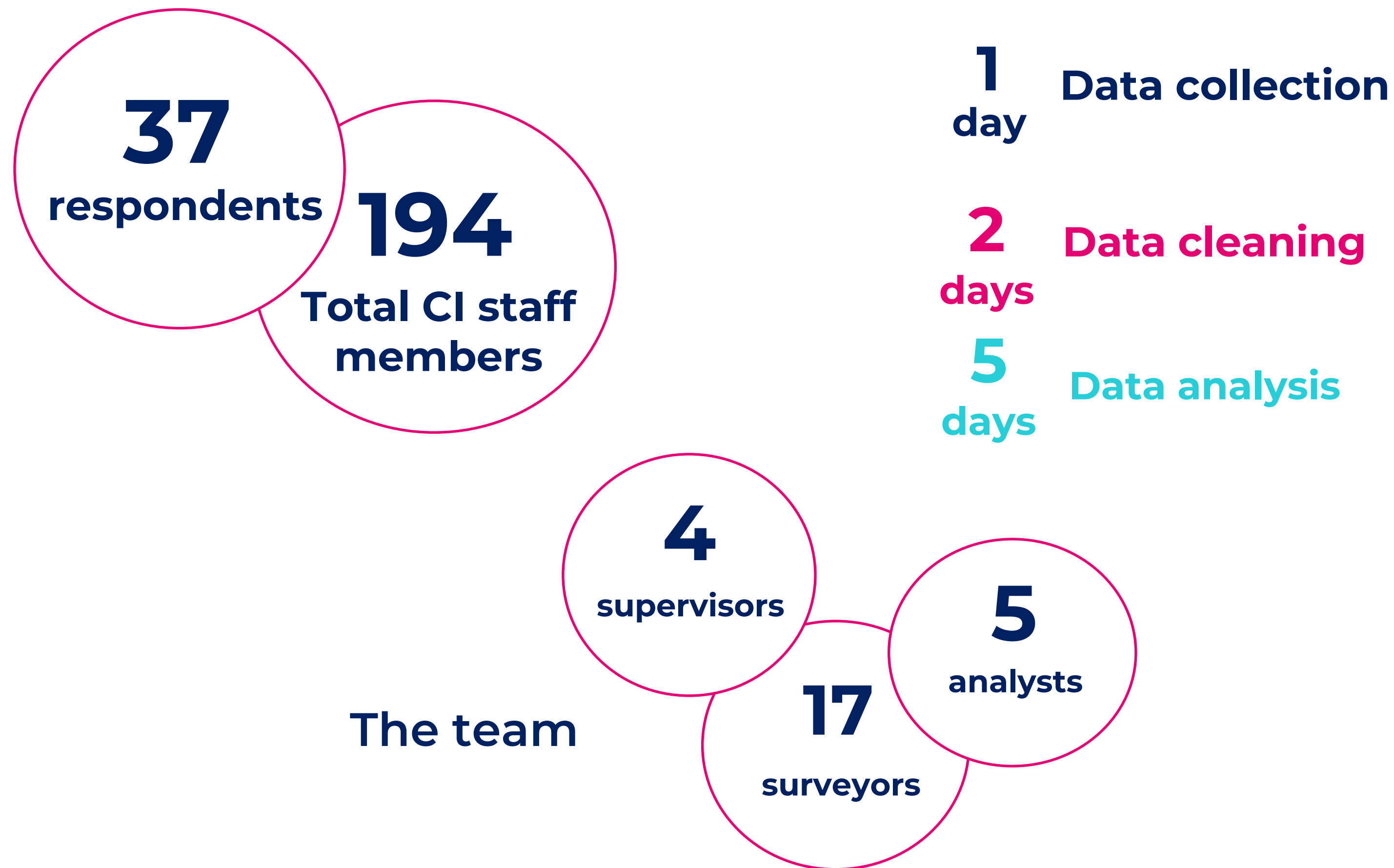
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### PHASE 3

Survey of Central Inspection  
staff's perception of the public  
administration

# METHODOLOGY

A team of 17 Youth4Governance university students were deployed as field researchers over one day in August 2021 at the Central Inspection (CI) headquarters. As the number of civil servants who were present at the offices for the survey was limited, the survey only covered 37 CI civil servants in total, out of 194.



## Limitations

### Sampling

- No random sampling was conducted. The civil servants who were present at CI offices were surveyed.

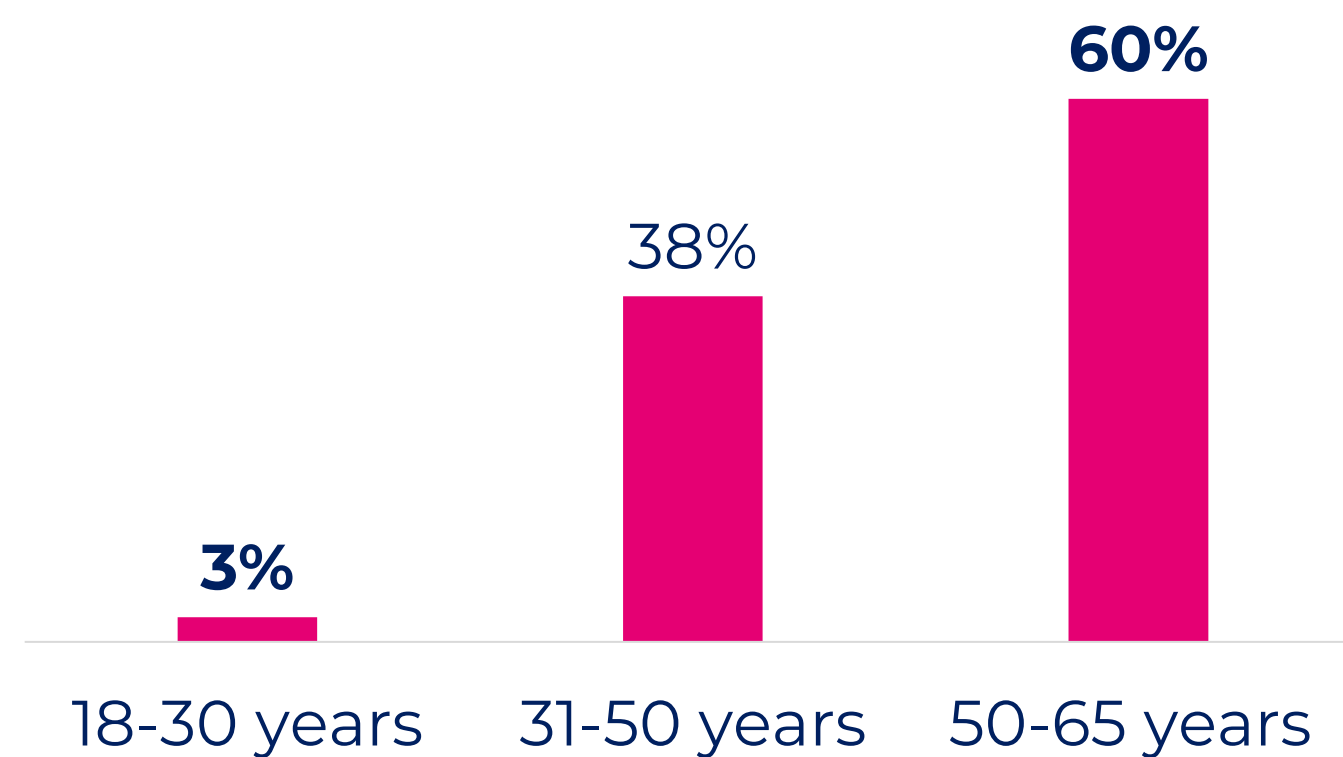
### Exceptional conditions

- The number of civil servants at CI offices was limited due to the fuel crisis and the rotation policy over COVID-19. Some of the civil servants were also working remotely due to the power cuts at the office.

# SAMPLE PROFILE

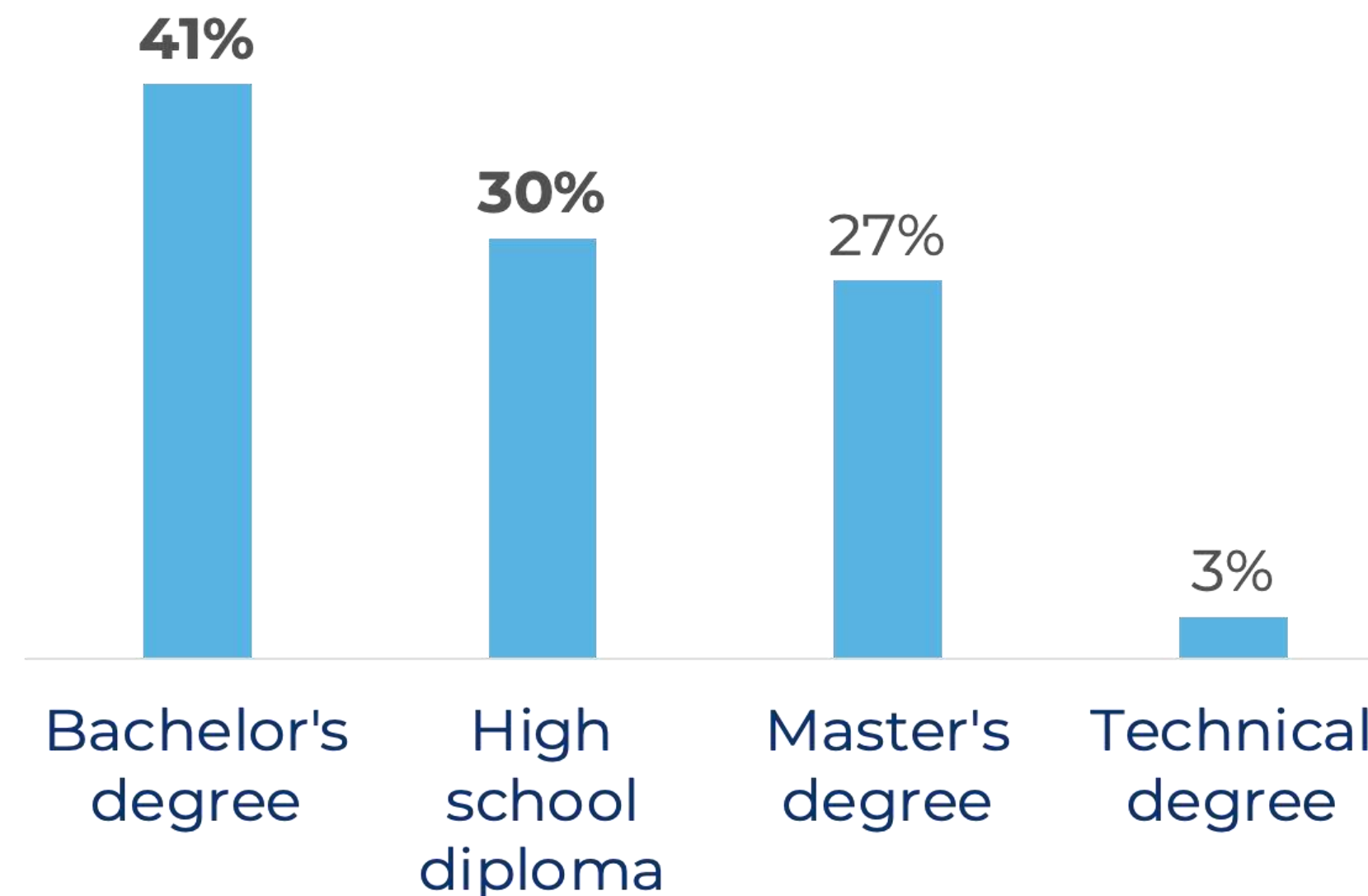
The sample consisted mainly of civil servants aged between 50 and 65 years, with limited presence of civil servants between 18 and 30 years, which reflects an aging oversight agency. The overwhelming majority of civil servants surveyed hold university degrees. The sample at CI included both inspectors and administrative staff, to capture CI's diversity.

Age group



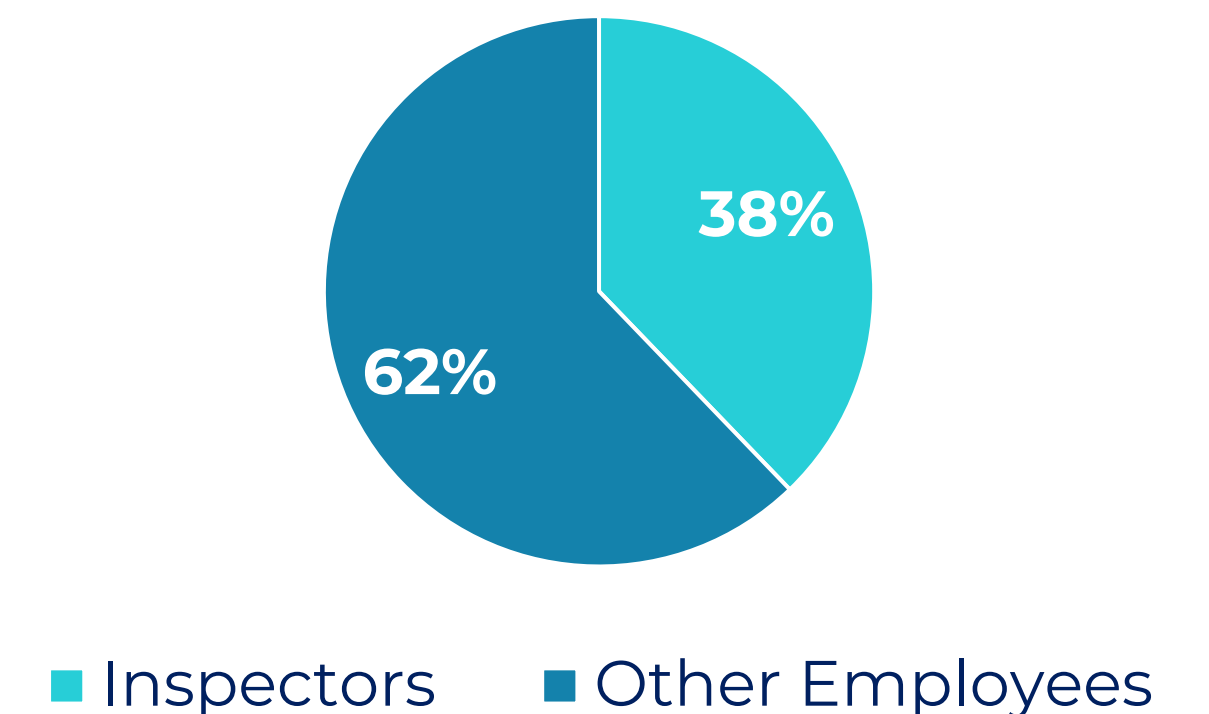
- Whereas **60%** of the respondents were aged between 50 and 65 years, only **3%** were aged between 18-30 years.
- These figures reveal an aging oversight agency, and the lack of recruitment at CI.

Educational level



- Whereas **41%** of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, **27%** of them hold a Master's degree.
- Another **30%** hold a high school diploma.

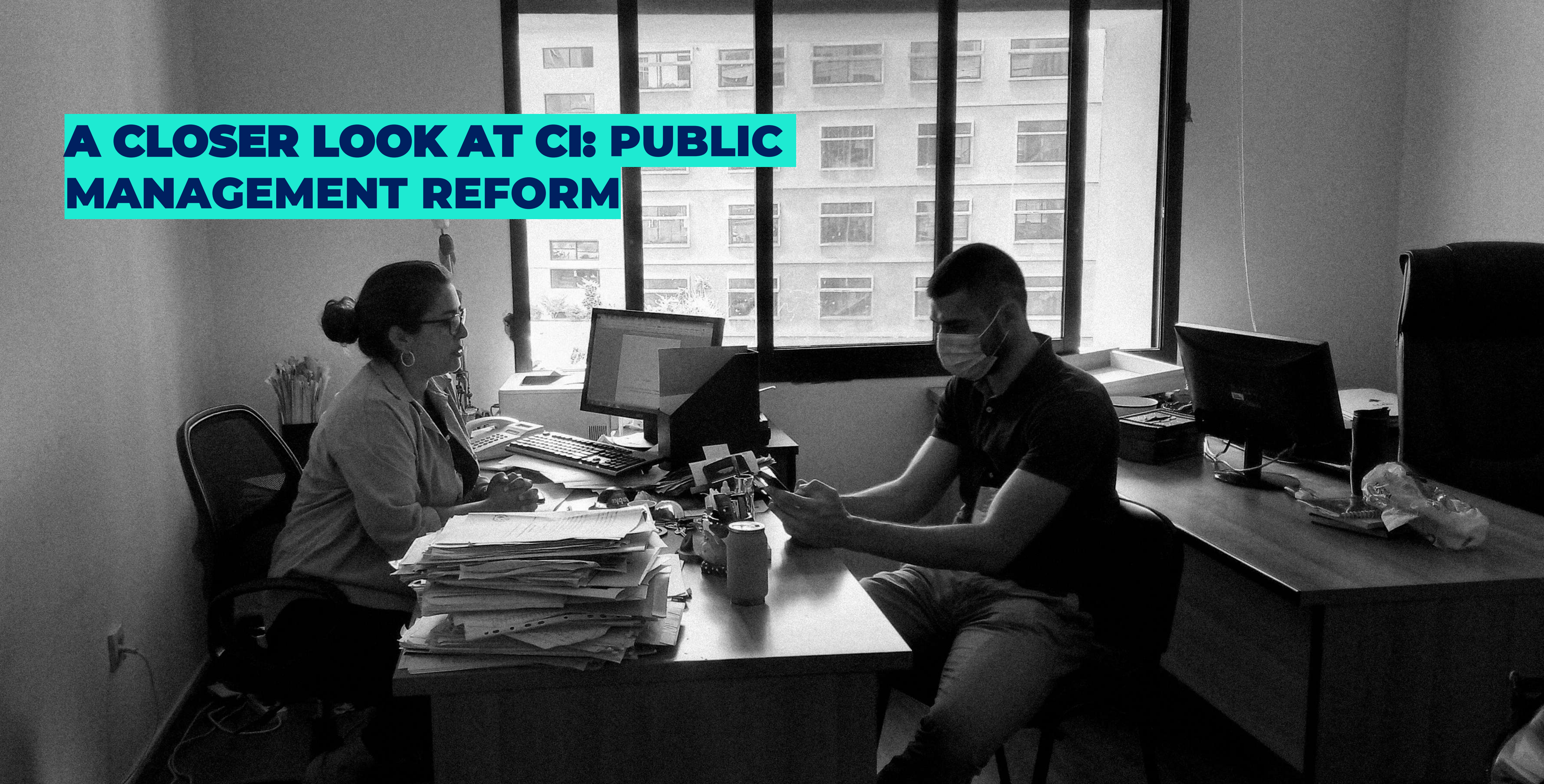
Position



- Whereas **62%** of respondents were administrative and clerical civil servants, **38%** of them were inspectors.



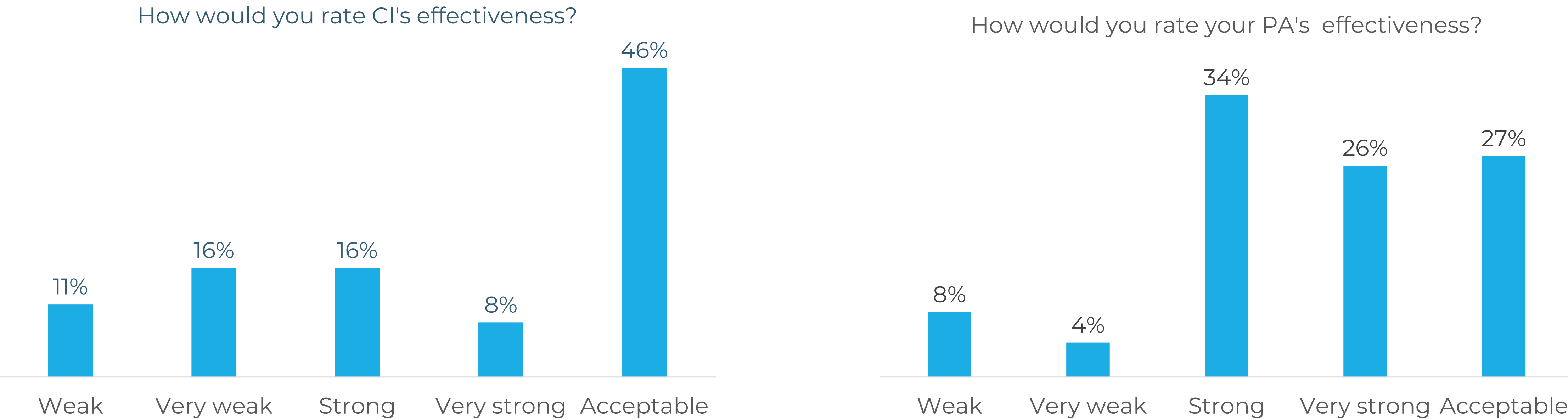
# A CLOSER LOOK AT CI: PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM





# INTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PAs AND CI

Civil servants at CI have different opinions on CI's effectiveness. The perception of a strong effectiveness of one's respective PA is higher among civil servants at PAs than at CI.

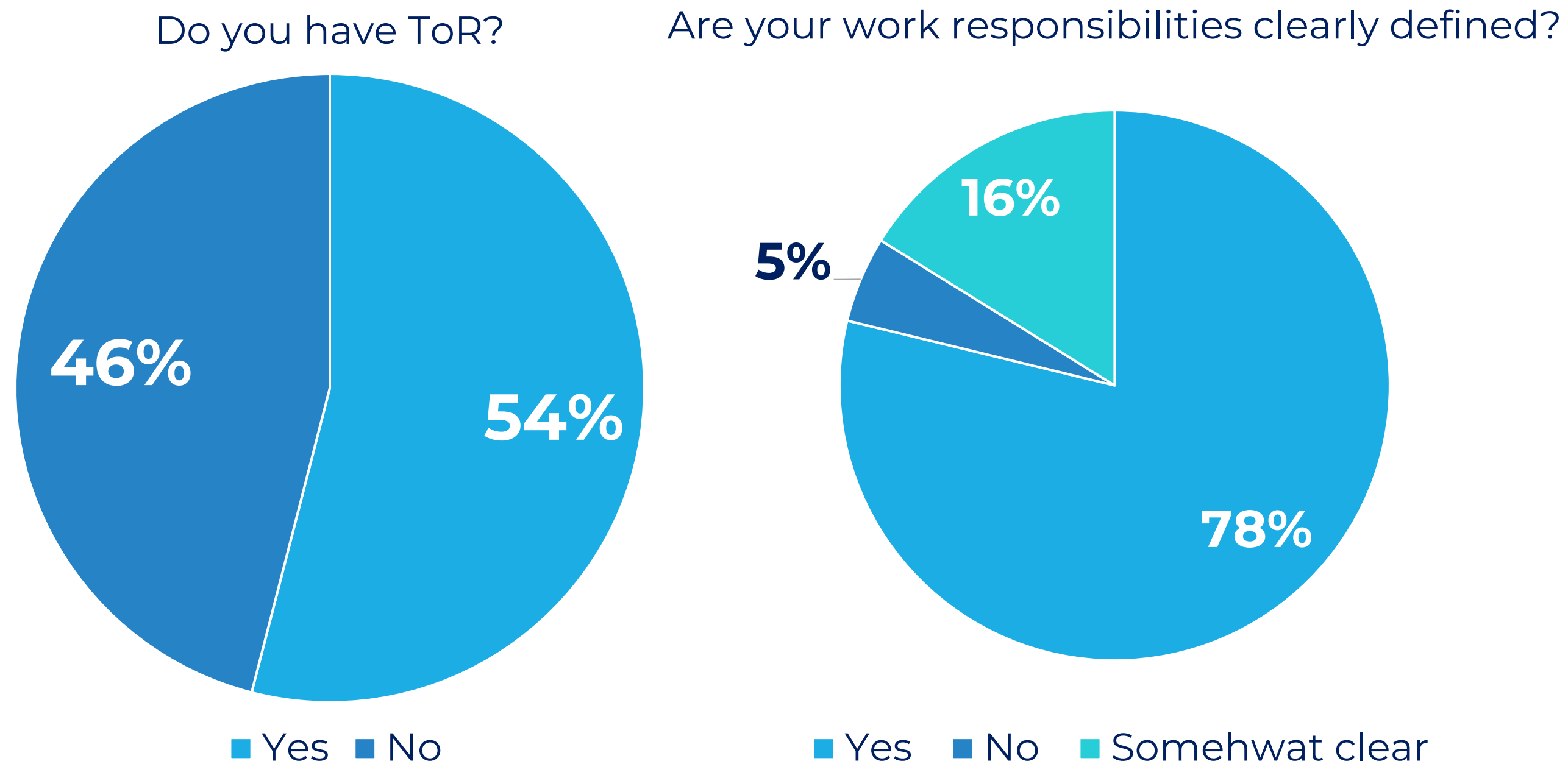


- Almost half of the respondents at the oversight agency (**46%**) described CI's effectiveness as acceptable. Around a quarter of respondents describe it as weak (**27%**), whereas another quarter of respondents described it as strong (**24%**). This indicates that there is still room to improve CI's performance.
- A comparison of these results with the responses given by civil servants in PAs shows that the latter are more likely to rate the effectiveness of their administration higher. **Sixty percent** of the respondents among civil servants in PAs considered their respective PA's effectiveness to be either strong or very strong, compared to only **24%** of the respondents among civil servants in CI who stated the same regarding CI.

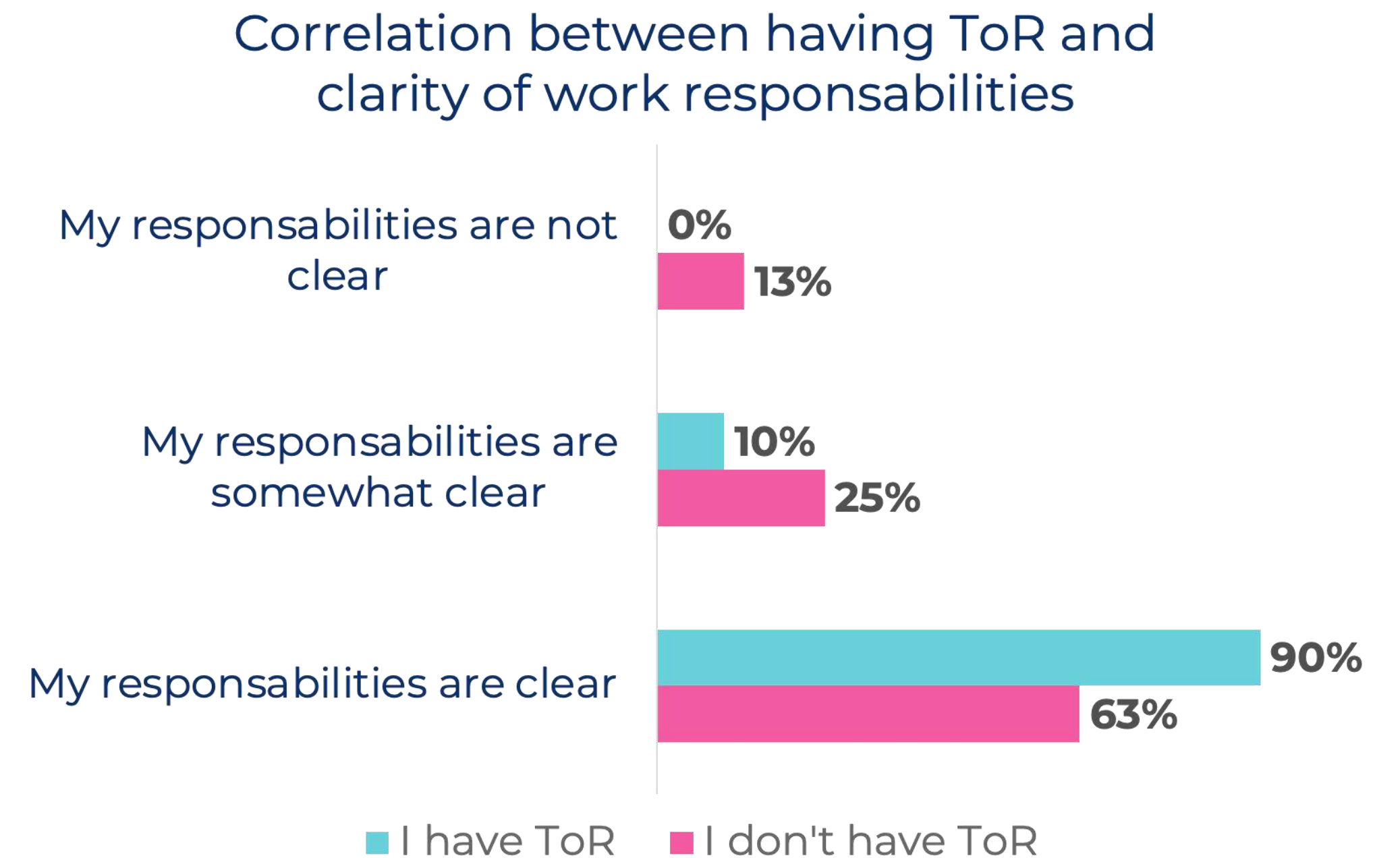


# RESPONSIBILITIES: A LACK OF ToR AND CLARITY

Although only around half of the surveyed CI civil servants stated that they have job descriptions, the overwhelming majority of them considered their responsibilities to be clearly defined.



- More than half of the respondents at CI (**54%**) declared having Terms of Reference for their jobs.
- Almost **94%** of them considered their work responsibilities to be (somewhat) clearly defined.



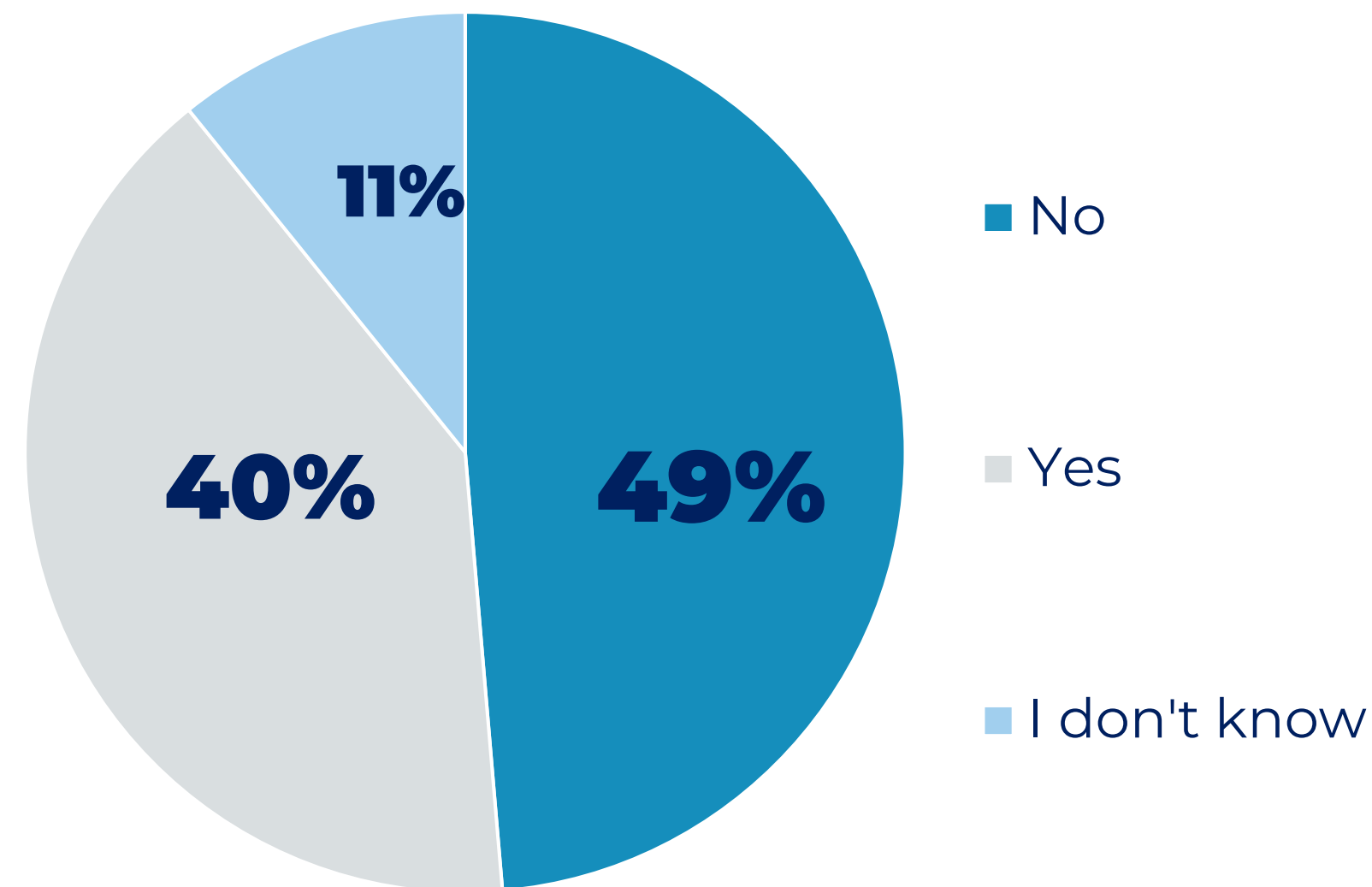
- **Ninety percent** of respondents who declared having ToR considered their work responsibilities to be clear, compared to only **63%** of respondents who declared not having any. Moreover, **13%** of respondents with no ToR considered their responsibilities to be unclear, compared to none of the respondents with ToR. Therefore, having ToR does have an impact on the clarity of responsibilities for the civil servant.



# CODE OF CONDUCT: A NEED FOR CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Despite its oversight function, CI does not have a code of conduct according to more than half of the surveyed CI civil servants. Given the importance of codes of conduct as essential guidelines for staff of public administrations, developing a code for CI is a key milestone for the oversight agency.

Does CI has a code of conduct/employee handbook?

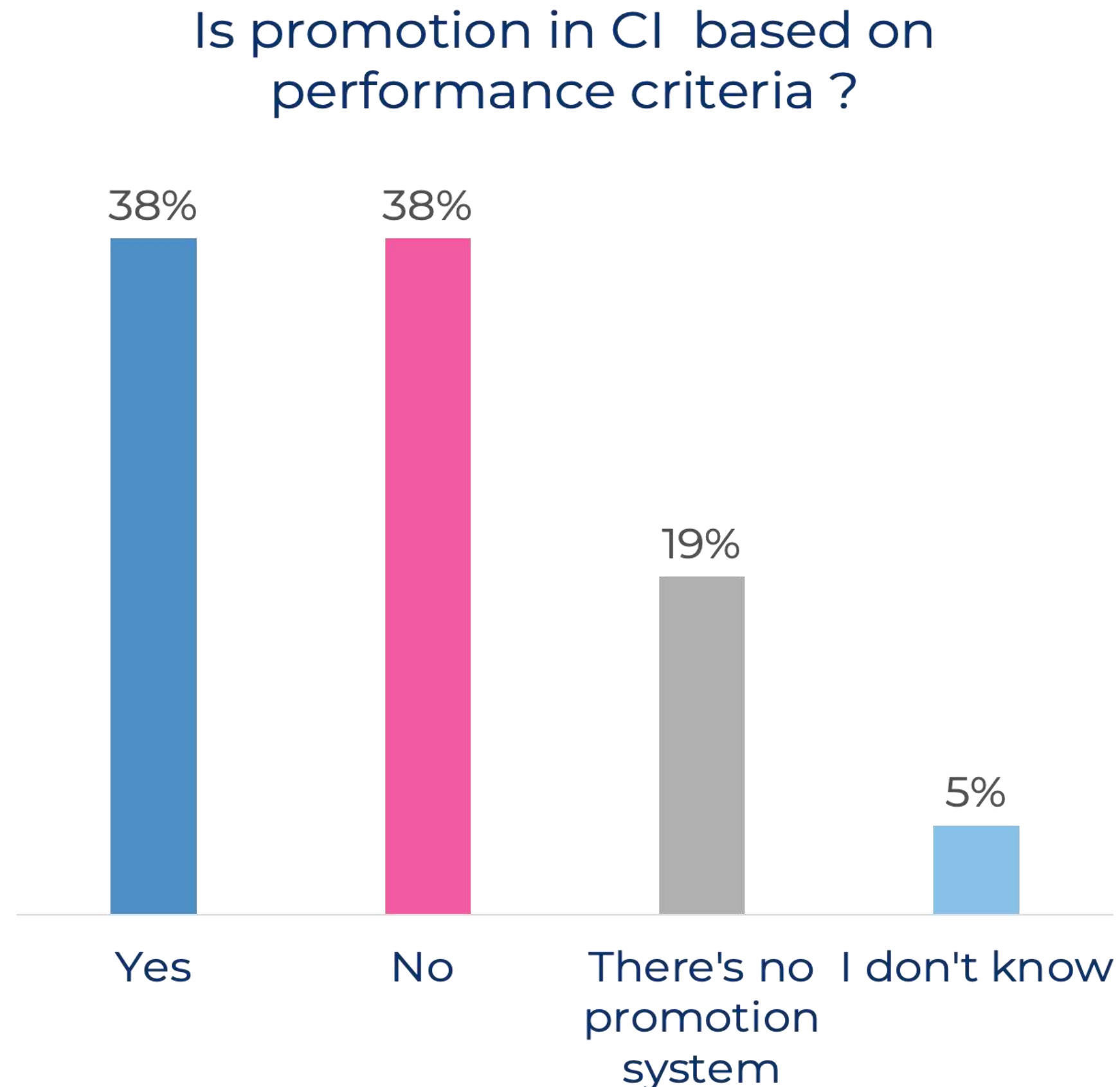


- When asked if they have a code of conduct or an employee handbook, CI's inspectors and administrative staff were divided: around **60%** of them declared that CI does not have or that they do not know if CI has a code of conduct, while **40%** declared having one. It was later revealed that CI is currently drafting a code of conduct, with the support of an international organization. Such an initiative is crucial to improve the performance of the oversight institution.
- Out of the respondents who declared not having or not knowing if CI has a code of conducted, **77%** (i.e., 17 respondents) were permanent civil servants. Once completed, the code of conduct must be widely communicated and disseminated across CI, to embed the culture it carries within the oversight agency.



# THE LACK OF CLARITY ECHOES A FEELING OF INJUSTICE

The promotion system in Central Inspection seems to be unclear according to the surveyed CI civil servants



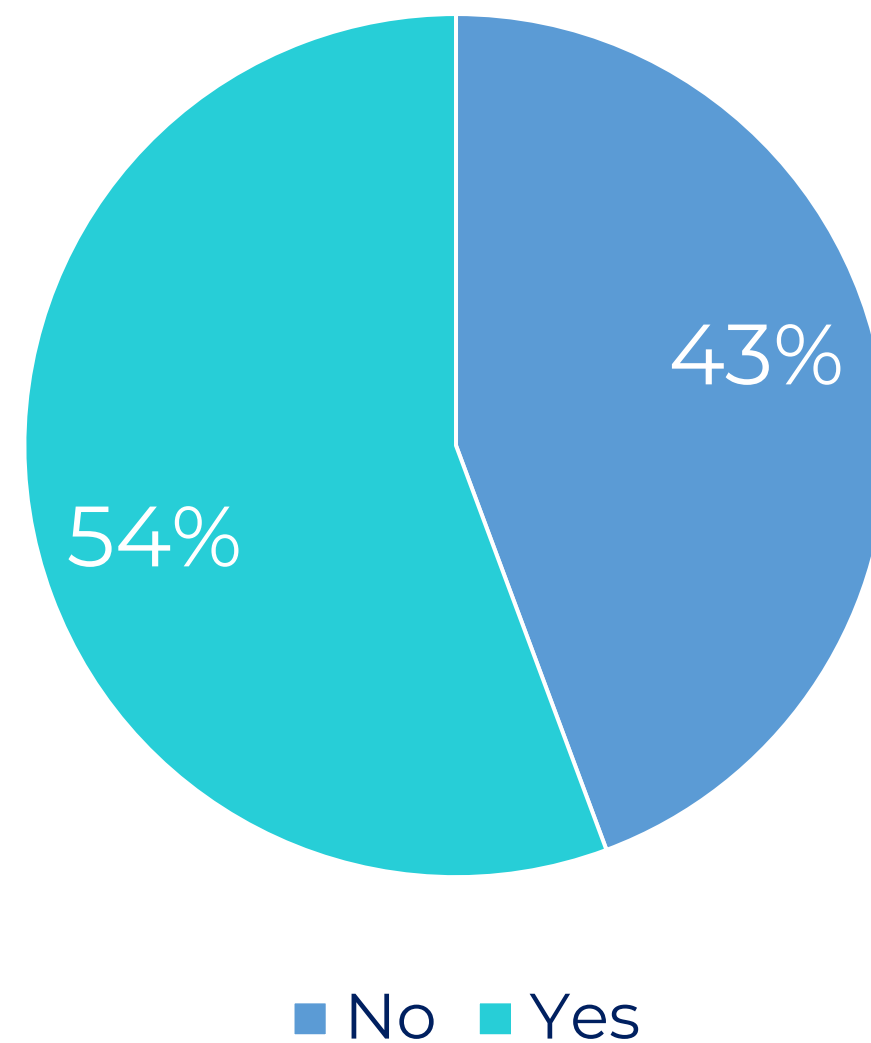
- Respondents at CI were equally divided on the criteria of promotion within CI: **38%** of them declared that promotion is based on performance criteria, whereas **38%** of them denied this.
- Furthermore, when asked about the criteria that promotion is based upon, the respondents who stated that promotion was not performance-based, added that it was based on nepotism (*wasta*) or on arbitrary decisions.
- However, when asked about the basis of the non-performance-based promotion, **42%** of CI respondents declared that the promotion followed a formal procedure that went through the Civil Service Board and took ranking/seniority into consideration.



# CAPACITY ENFORCEMENT: A WISH FOR DIGITAL TRAINING

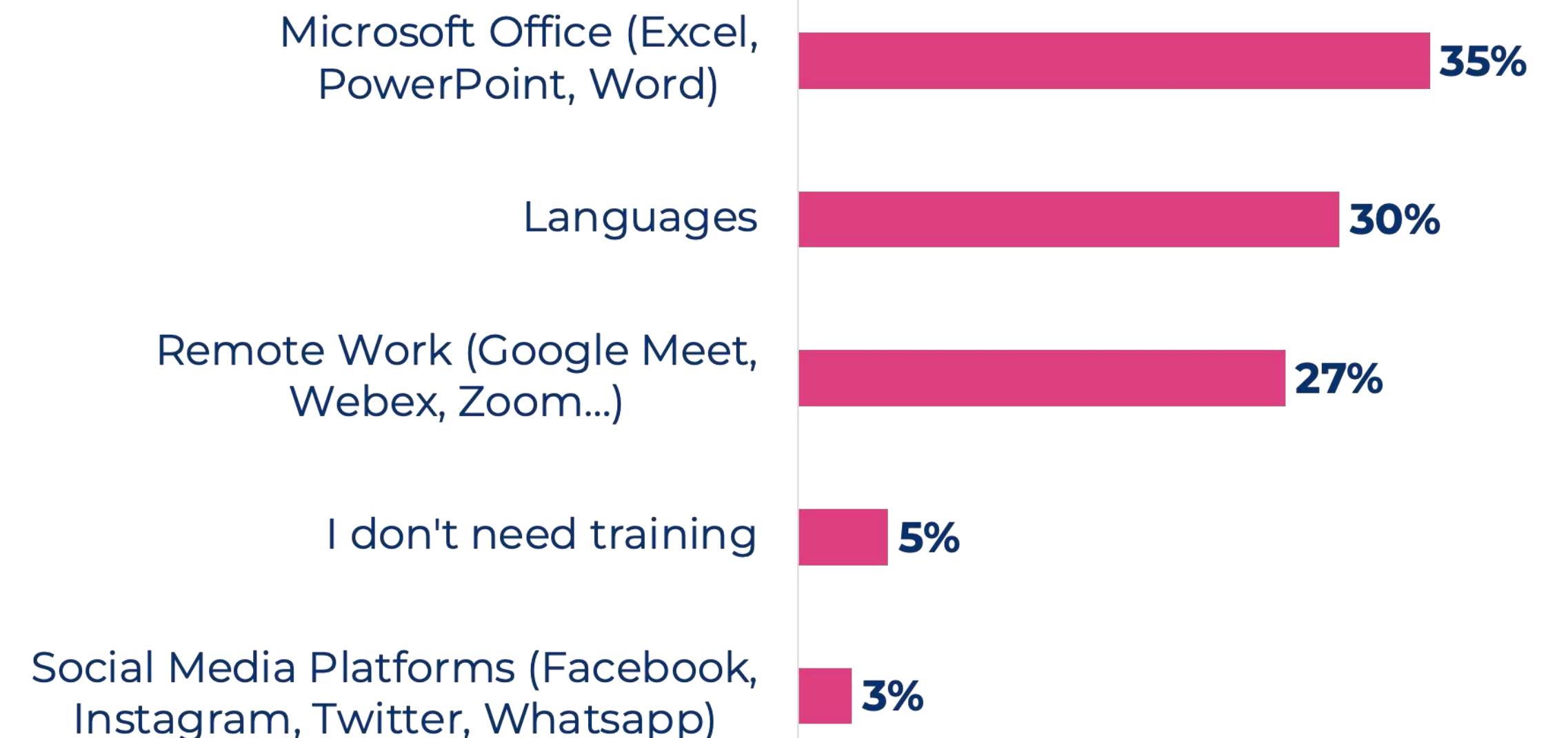
Although more than half of the surveyed CI civil servants received training, respondents declared being interested in multiple training programs, most of which included topics related to digital tools.

Have you received enough training?



- Over half of the respondents at CI (**54%**) declared having received enough training at CI, which is not seconded by the remaining **43%**. This shows a lack of consistency and inclusiveness in the training programs, which could be explained by differences in position, experience and educational level.

On what topics do you need training?



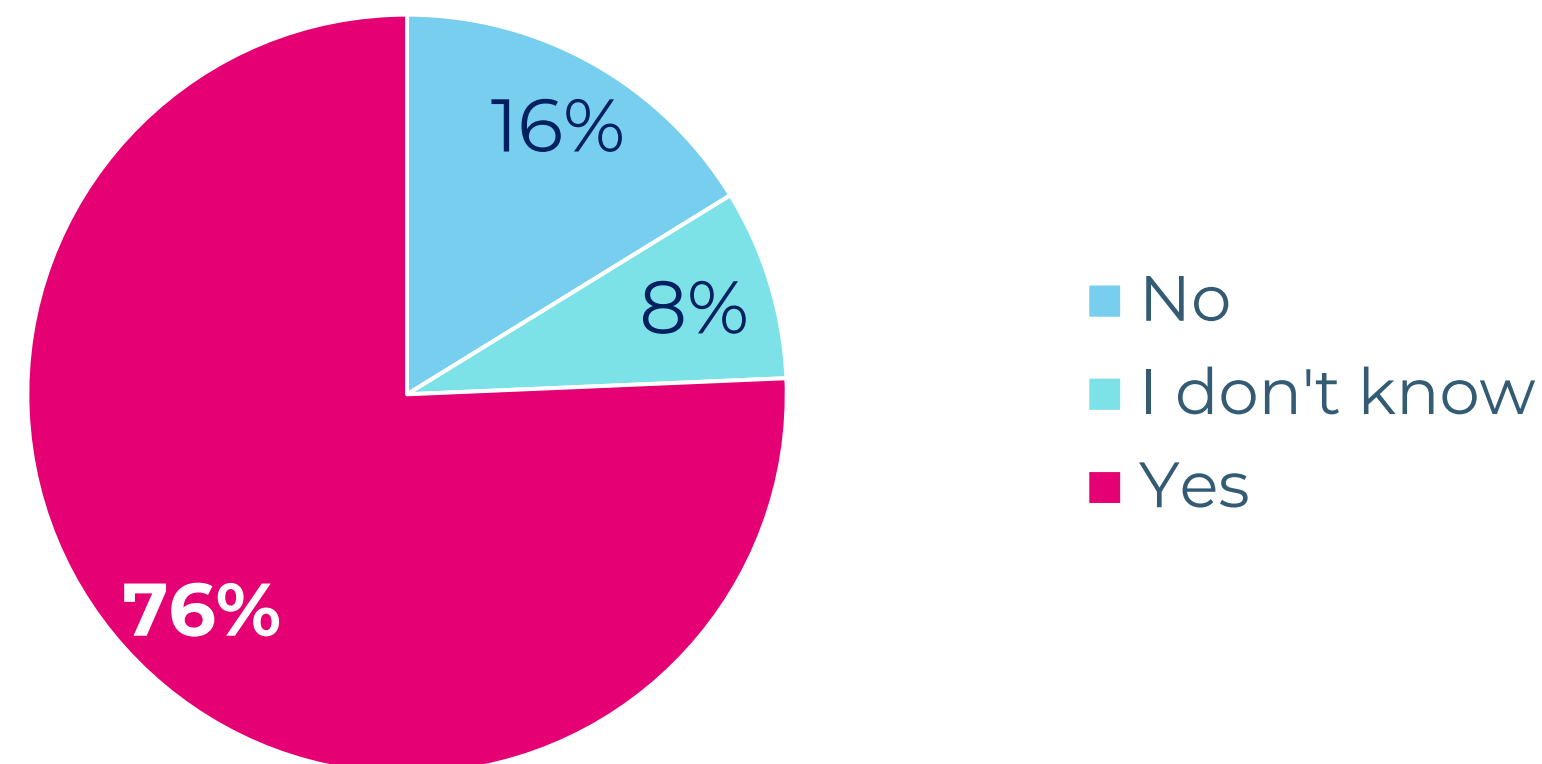
- The topics on which training programs at CI should focus include Microsoft Office suite for **35%** of the respondents, and remote working tools for **27%** of them. Therefore, the majority of surveyed CI civil servants were keen on learning more about digital tools, even though **60%** of them were between 50 and 65 years old. Other interests in training program concern languages for **30%** of respondents.



# CENTRAL INSPECTION: THE STRATEGY HUB

A look at CI civil servants' awareness and knowledge of the oversight agency's strategic plans shows that CI stands on solid ground and relies on a shared perception among its civil servants towards its strategic planning.

Does CI have clear strategic goals?

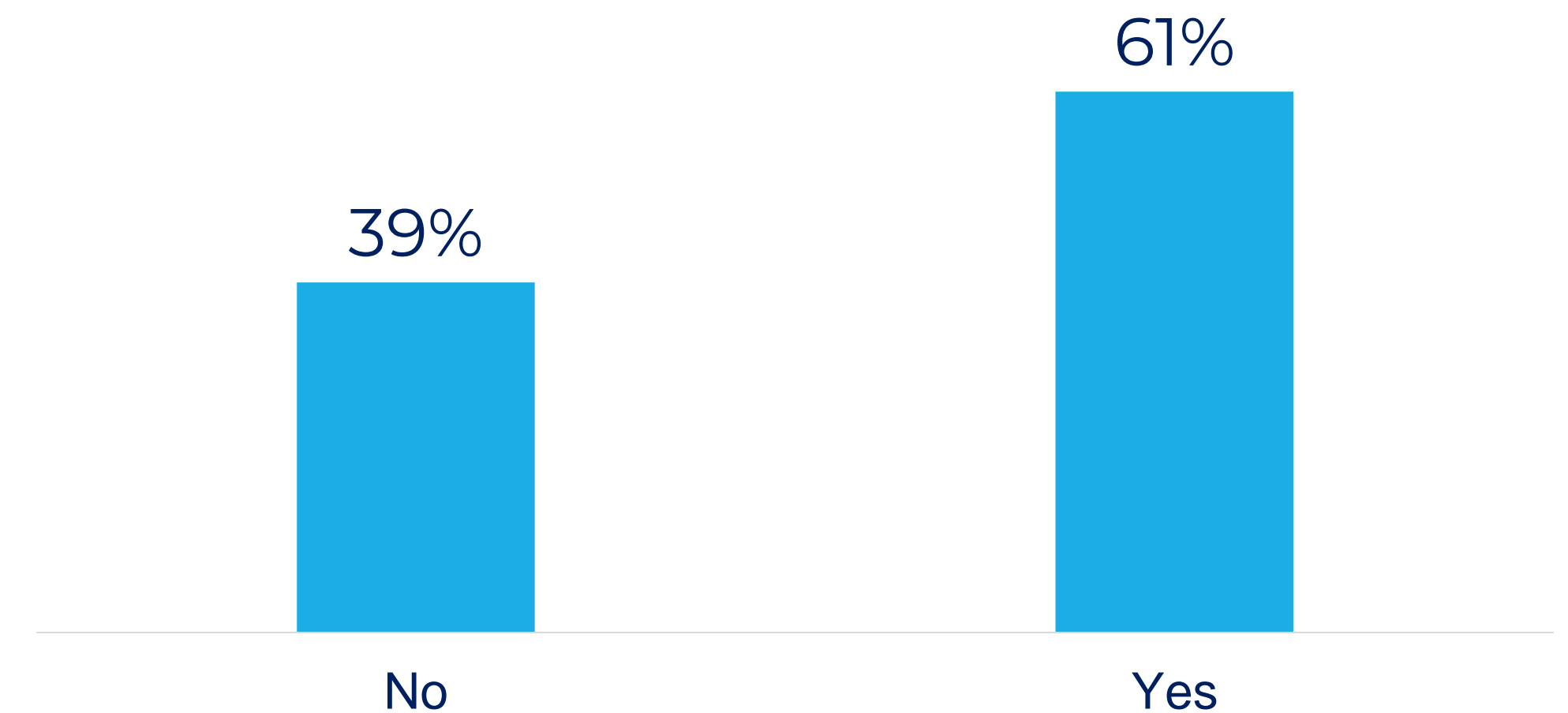


- **Seventy six percent** of the surveyed CI surveyed civil servants stated that CI has strategic goals.
- A huge majority of respondents (**93%**) agreed that CI works according to a strategic plan.
- This demonstrates a shared perception within CI towards the oversight agency's strategic vision.
- In addition to that, not only were the surveyed CI civil servants satisfied with the strategic goals, but also believed in them and stood by them, as illustrated in the quote below:



“If CI didn't have strategic plans, you wouldn't be here” – *Central Inspection, August 10, 2021*  
(Inspector to surveyor)

Do you know about CI's five-year strategy?

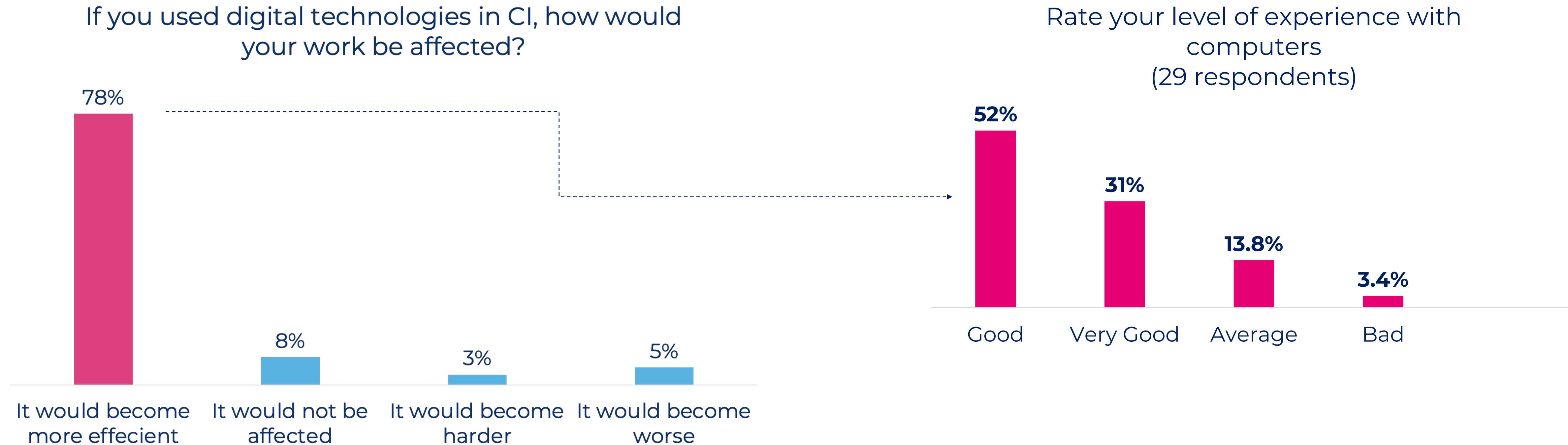


- **Sixty one percent** of respondents knew about CI's five-year strategic plan that is currently being developed.
- This shows that CI civil servants are included in the CI's strategic planning process, which facilitates their engagement in implementing the strategic plan.



# A STEP CLOSER TO A DIGITAL FUTURE

The overwhelming majority of surveyed CI civil servants agreed to the impact of using digital technologies in CI in enhancing efficiency. Most of these declared being well prepared to adapt to such technologies.



- **Seventy eight percent** of respondents believed that using digital technologies would make their work more efficient. Of those, **83%** reported that they had a good to very good level of experience with computers.
- These numbers imply that technology could be easily adopted more widely and would be welcomed positively within CI.





# IMPACT: A PIONEER IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE



# A WELL-KNOWN PLATFORM

Launched and owned by CI, the Inter-Ministerial and Municipal Platform for Assessment, Coordination and Tracking (IMPACT) is widely known among all surveyed CI civil servants, especially that a third of these declared participating in developing and operating the platform.

100%

of the surveyed CI civil servants have heard of IMPACT

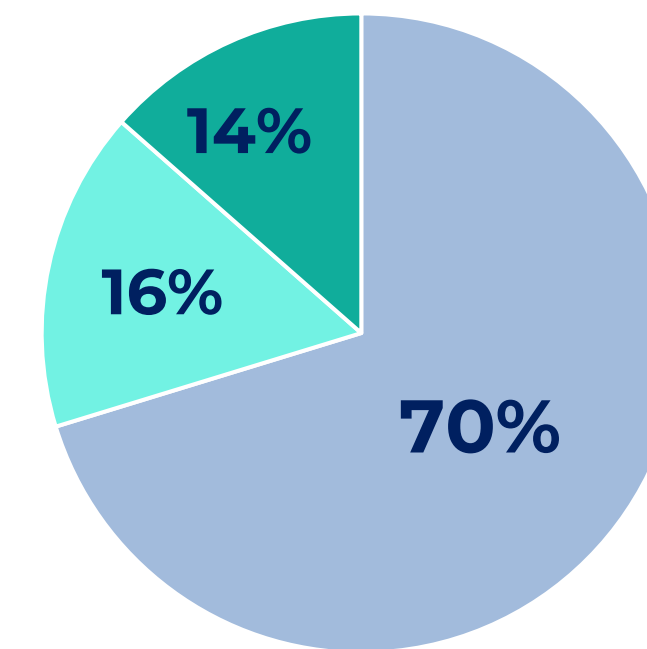
92%

of the latter declared using it before

81%

of the latter found it useful

As a CI employee, did you work on the platform?



■ I didn't participate    ■ I actively participated    ■ I somewhat participated

- While a large majority of the surveyed CI civil servants were familiar with IMPACT, **30%** of respondents declaring being involved in the platform.
- The other **70%** that did not participate in developing or operating the platform still felt positive about it and expressed their support to their colleagues who were working on IMPACT.



# IMPACT: A PIONEER IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

IMPACT is an e-government platform owned by Central Inspection. CI coordinate with numerous PAs in order to allow citizens to access public services digitally, which explains why civil servants are more aware of the platform than the general public.

Residents' survey <i>(1,065 residents)</i>	PA survey <i>(470 civil servants at PAs)</i>	CI survey <i>(37 civil servants at CI)</i>
<b>67.7%</b> OF SURVEYED RESIDENTS HAVE HEARD OF IMPACT	<b>90.0%</b> OF CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE HEARD OF IMPACT	<b>100%</b> OF CI CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE HEARD OF IMPACT
<b>75.6%</b> OF THOSE SAID THEY HAVE USED IT OR ARE USING IT	<b>87.3%</b> OF THOSE SAID THEY HAVE USED IT OR ARE USING IT	<b>91.9%</b> OF THOSE SAID THEY HAVE USED IT OR ARE USING IT
<b>73.4%</b> OF THE LATTER DESCRIBED THE PLATFORM AS USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL	<b>79.6%</b> OF THE LATTER DESCRIBED THE PLATFORM AS USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL	<b>81.1%</b> OF THE LATTER DESCRIBED THE PLATFORM AS USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL

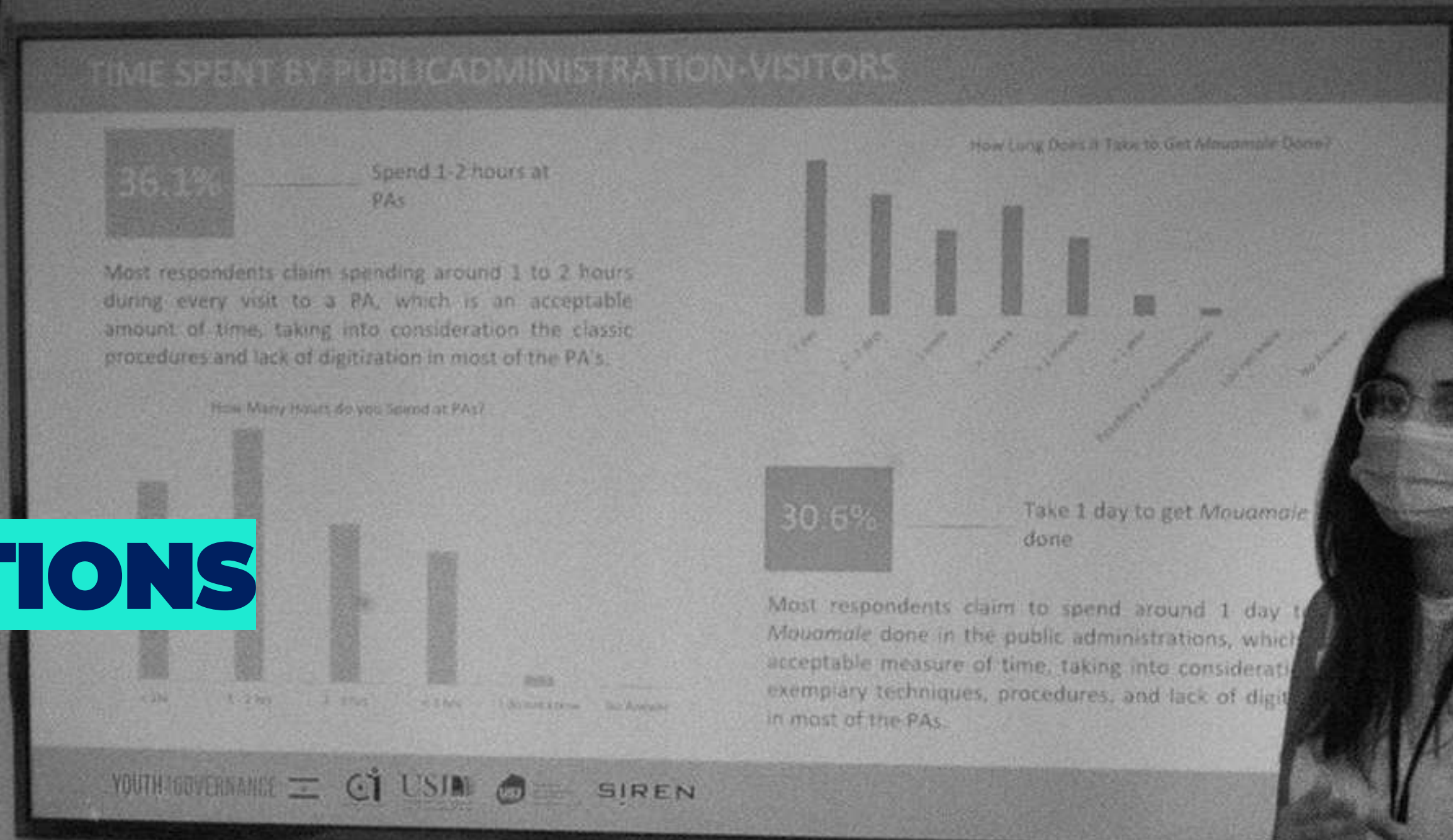
- As we get closer to IMPACT's source, the numbers become more positive:
- IMPACT reached a groundbreaking number of **residents** by virtual means, and the more they use it, the more they realize how useful it is.
  - **Civil servants at PAs** are more exposed to IMPACT, as the platform is used by various PAs, to enhance inter-institutional coordination and collaboration.
  - Since IMPACT is owned by the **CI**, its **civil servants** are the most familiar with it.







# CI RECOMMENDATIONS





# IN THEORY BUT NOT IN PRACTICE

When asked about the nationwide strike organized by the Cooperative of Civil Servants between July 28 and August 6, 2021, the surveyed CI civil servants expressed their solidarity with the movement but little willingness to participate, in contrast with civil servants at PAs.

59%

Of the surveyed CI staffers agreed with the strike

5%

Yet, only **5%** of those actually participated in the strike

38%

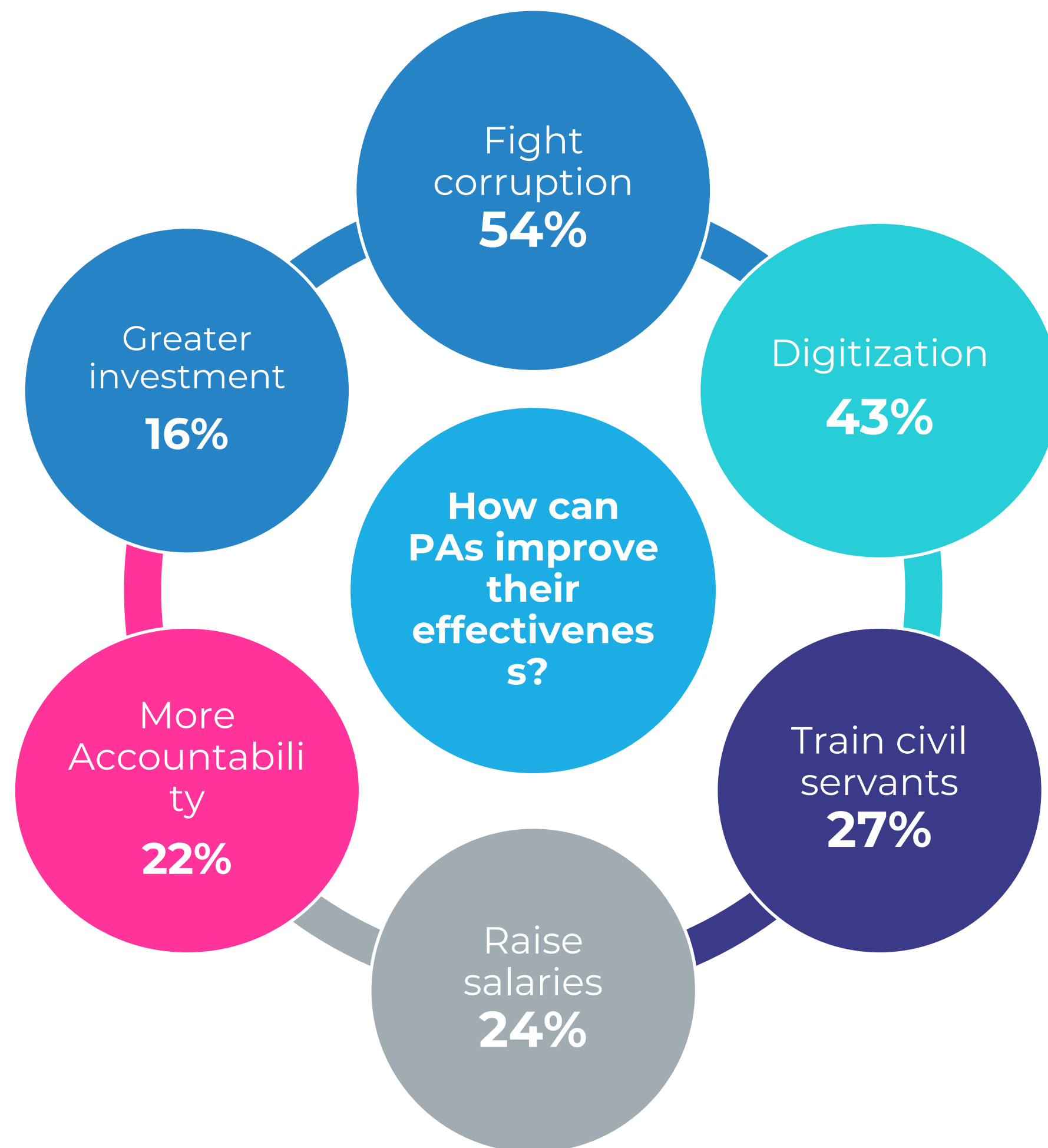
Of the surveyed civil servants in PAs (from phase II) participated in the strike

- **Twenty percent** of the surveyed CI civil servants stated that they did not participate in the strike, in order to ensure continuity in public service delivery.
- **Thirty four percent** of surveyed CI civil servants did not participate in the strike due to the nature of their work (given the important role of oversight). This helps explain the difference in participation levels between CI civil servants and other civil servants across PAs who were more inclined to join the strike.



# TO EVERY PROBLEM, PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS?

The surveyed CI civil servants were asked to propose solutions for increasing the effectiveness of PAs.



- A majority of respondents (**54%**) highlighted the need to fight corruption, which is included in CI's mission to monitor and control public administrations and institutions and municipalities.
- Others mentioned solutions that require additional resources, such as digitization, training of civil servants, raising salaries, greater investment, etc.
- Accountability is a new element that was not raised by civil servants at CI, despite CI's main role of oversight..

The first two points are similar to those offered by respondents in PAs, showing some degree of alignment among civil servants on reform priorities in the public sector.

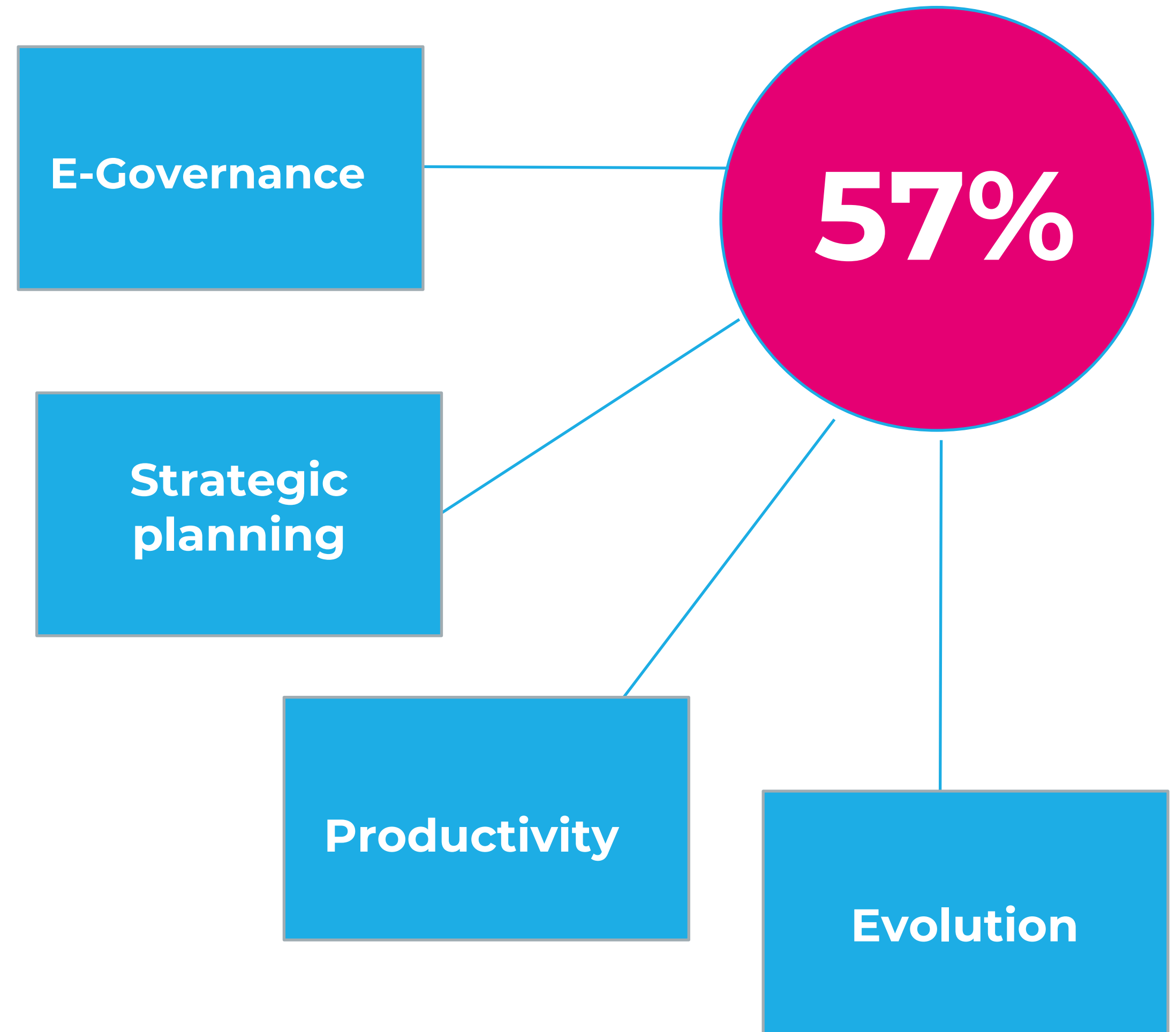
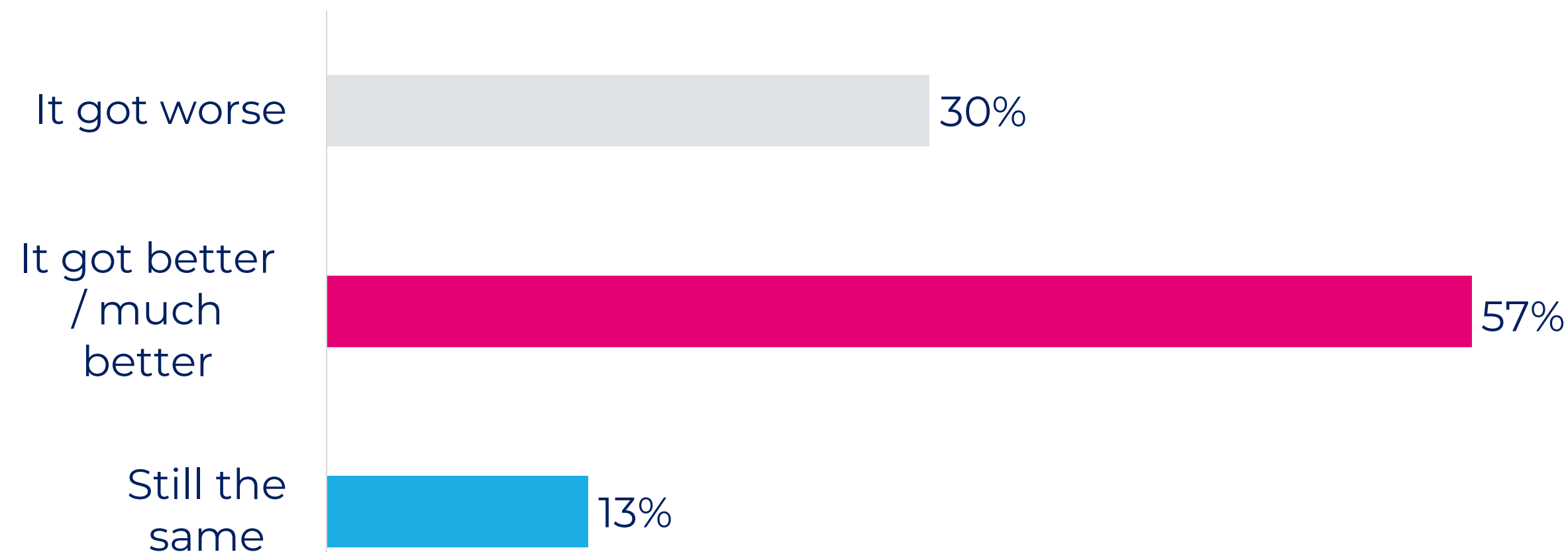


# CI ON THE RISE

Several factors led the surveyed CI civil servants to feel that the institution played a preeminent role over the past two years. By introducing elements of digital transformation and e-governance, CI is leading by example in the public sector.

- **Fifty seven percent** said that CI's role in the last two years became preeminent. But what does that mean?
- Despite the circumstances, CI witnessed a positive evolution. In informal discussions, surveyed CI civil servants said that strategic planning and the introduction of e-governance solutions allowed them to raise their productivity and have more confidence in their work and in the oversight agency to which they belong.

## CI's role in the last two years





# CONCLUSIONS

Central Inspection is an oversight agency that is not well-known by the public and that has stayed out of the spotlight.

The first part of this three-part perception study on Lebanese public administration reflects this clearly, with **45%** of surveyed residents declaring that they have never heard of CI. Of those who reported knowing about CI, **67%** said they would (probably) never file a complaint before it. When it comes to civil servants at PAs, the second part of this study found that **55%** of the surveyed civil servants would not file a complaint before CI.

Due to its role in oversight and control, CI probably has the least direct contact with the general public out of the public administrations in Lebanon. This may explain the high degree of public reluctance to file complaints before CI. There is little reason for civil servants to feel the same way though.

Work must therefore be done to communicate, especially within PAs, about CI's formal complaints mechanisms and their advantages, over traditional and clientelist complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms.

When CI was established in 1959, there were around **3,000** civil servants. Today, there are more than **135,000** civil servants, excluding the security institutions, and the public administration is in crisis. Yet, despite this 4,500% increase in the number of civil servants that CI is responsible for overseeing, its workforce remains of the same size as it was at upon its creation.

More resources are needed for CI to play its role effectively, and it must actively lobby for them. Institutional memory is critical, as is experience, so it is vital for oversight in Lebanon that CI retains its staff while the country awaits recovery from the ongoing crises. An injection of new and young staff with modern tools and expertise would also help create a potent blend of experience and talent that could help fuel Lebanon's upcoming reform.



# CONCLUSIONS

The strategic planning journey CI has embarked on over the past two years is clearly already having positive knock-on effects, with the survey revealing a high degree of awareness of and support for CI's goals and plans among its civil servants. CI's ongoing development of a code of conduct is another positive step that should bear fruit quickly, if internal communication is effective.

These initiatives have triggered positive energy among CI staff, and are scalable in other public administrations. This too will help produce the impulse needed for state reform, but this energy must be channeled quickly towards tangible activities and outputs.

With a new government only formed in September 2021 after 13 months of political paralysis, and parliamentary elections on the near horizon, time is of the essence to harness and invest in CI's great institutional memory to produce state audit reports that can drive the agendas of the post-election executive and legislative authorities.

To optimize the minimal resources it currently has, given Lebanon's ongoing financial, economic and currency crisis, CI should urgently work on its staff competencies framework, terms of reference for staff and organizational structure.

Finally, the IMPACT journey is externally and internally appreciated, but CI can further expand it across the organization, leveraging the power of digital innovation to serve its objectives and make up for scarce resources.





# THANK YOU

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