YOUTH4GOVERNANCE.ORG

FROM CRISIS MANAGEMENT TO PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

WE ARE THE STATE

PHASE I – RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC OPINION

YOUTH4GOVERNANCE

CENTRAL INSPECTION

USJ Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth

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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 first survey that targeted the public opinion.

YOUTH4GOVERNANCE University students from different disciplinary backgrounds → Residents' perception of the public administration → Data collection (1,065 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
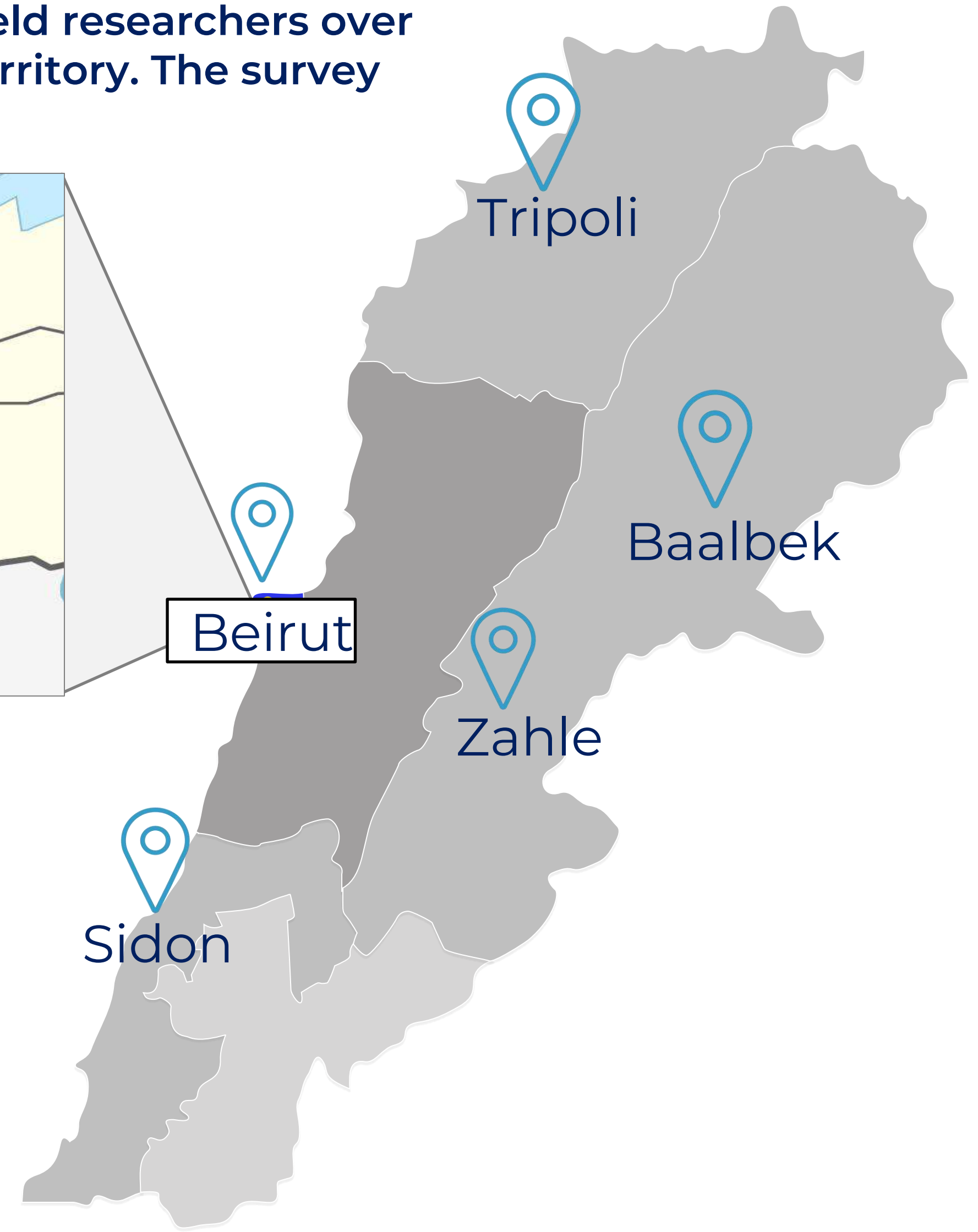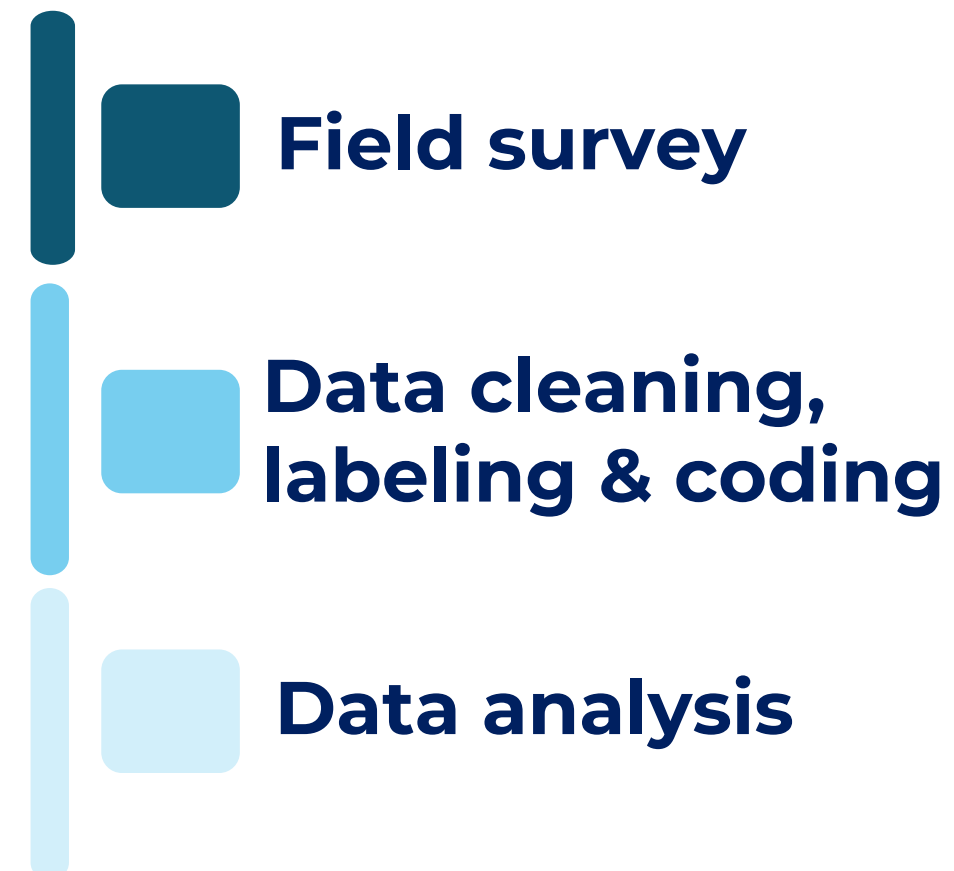
3

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 five days in July 2021, covering different areas in Beirut and across the territory. The survey covered 1,065 respondents in total.

1,065 respondents

5 days

2 teams

17 interns

Manara
Hamra
Achrafieh
Verdun
Haret Hreik
Forn El Chebbek

Tripoli
Baalbek
Beirut
Zahle
Sidon

■ Field survey

■ Data cleaning, labeling & coding

■ Data analysis

SURVEY SAMPLE: A DIVERSE SOCIAL FABRIC

The survey covered a random sample of respondents in cities and towns across Lebanon, targeting both Lebanese and non-Lebanese residents.

Respondents' nationality

- 8.6%
- 91.4%

■ Lebanese ■ Non-lebanese

Location of the survey

Tripoli	Zahle	Sidon	Forn El Chebbak	Achrafieh	Hamra	Manara	Verdun	Haret Hreik	Baalbek
12.7%	12.5%	11.5%	10.5%	9.7%	9.7%	9.2%	9.1%	9.0%	6.1%
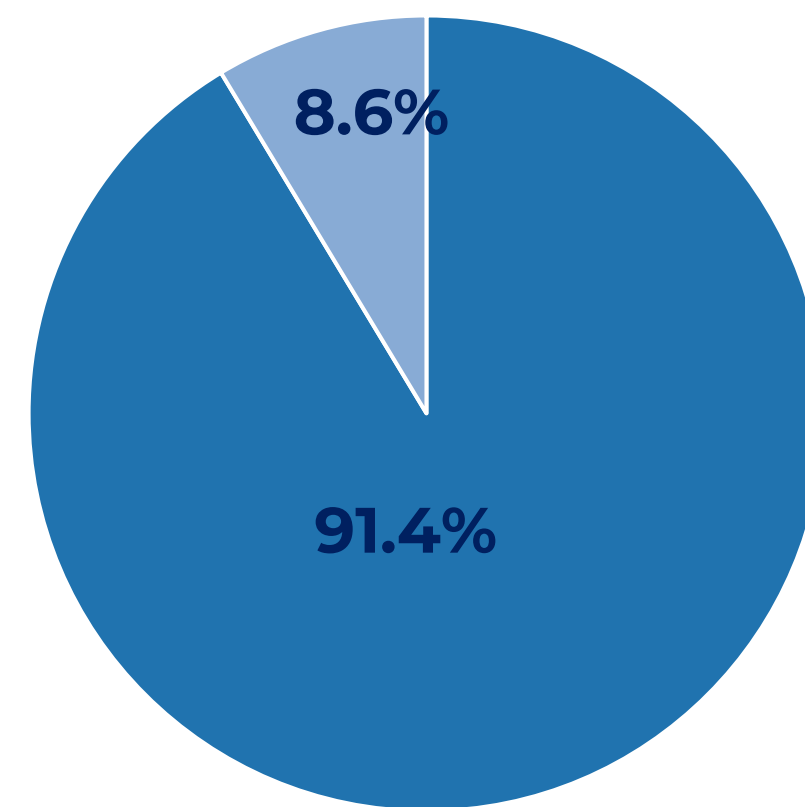
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (**91%**) were of Lebanese nationality.
- Some held dual nationality: either French-Lebanese or Syrian-Lebanese.
- One out of 12 respondents were non-Lebanese: usually either Syrian and Palestinian.
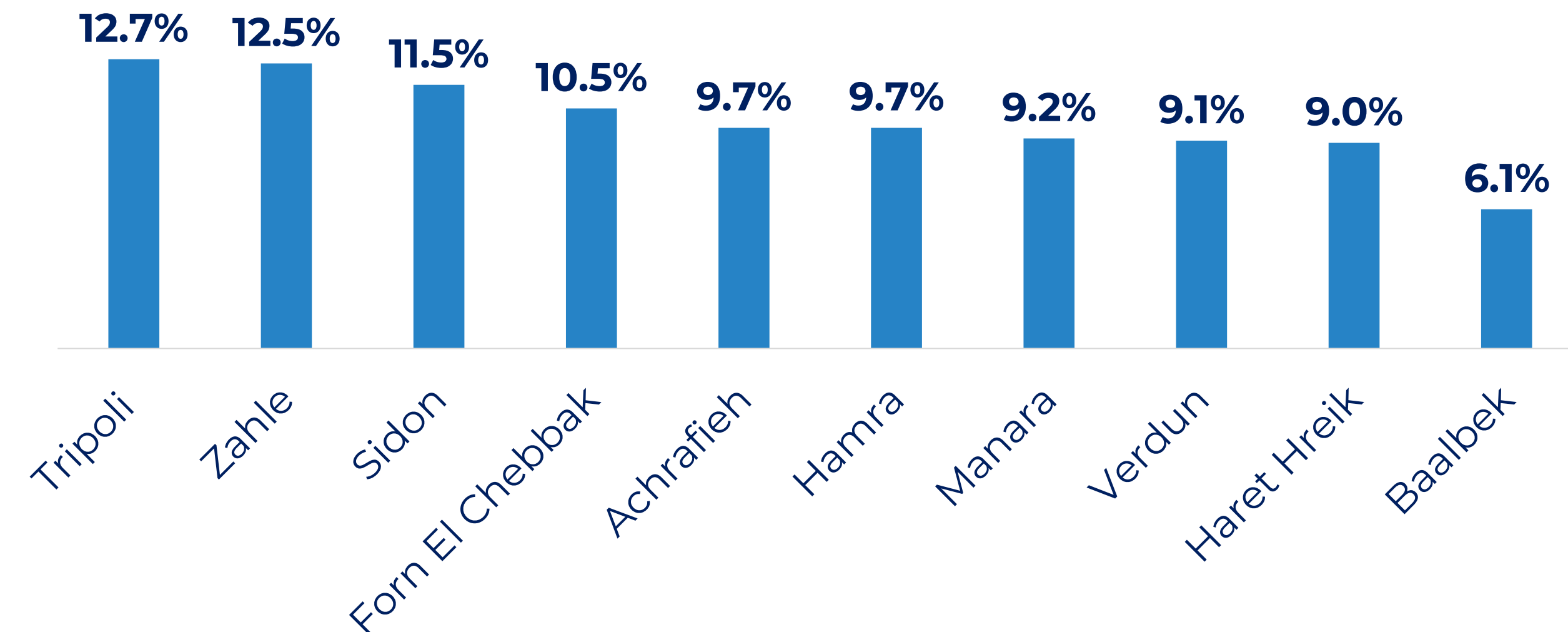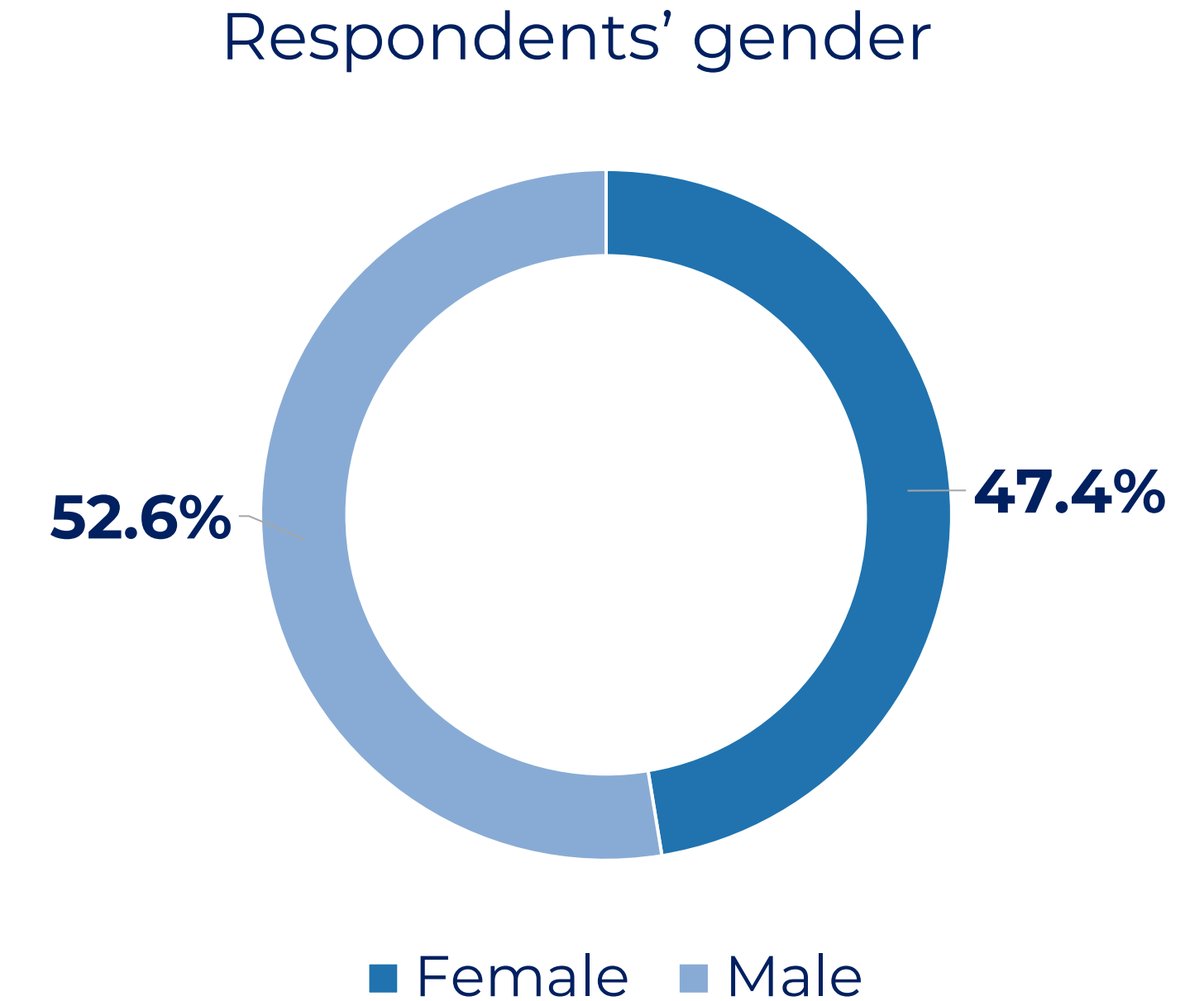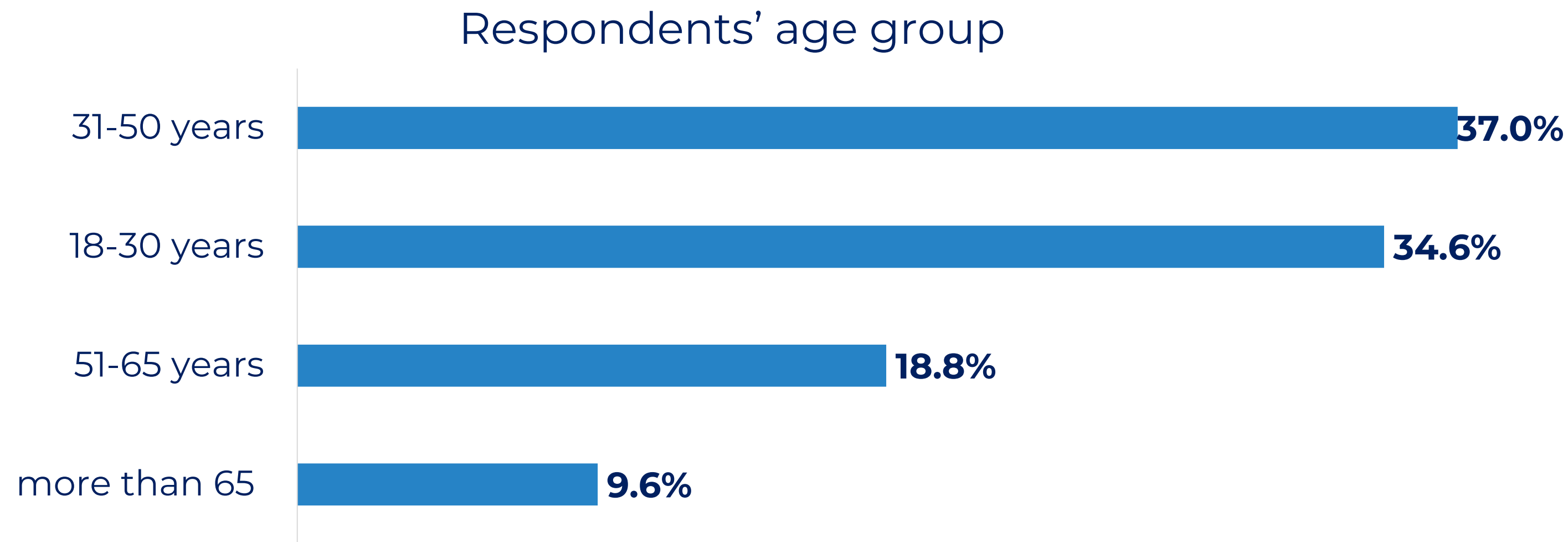
- The field survey in Beirut covered different areas, capturing the diversity of the capital.
- The North, the South, the Bekaa and the Baalbek-Hermel governorates were represented in the field survey as well.
- The numbers of respondents in Baalbek was lower than other areas, as the field survey coincided with the Eid Al-Adha holiday.

SURVEY SAMPLE: SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

The field researchers took gender and age dimensions into consideration in the survey, and attempted to equally cover men and women, and different age groups within Lebanese society.

Respondents' age group

Age group	Percentage
31-50 years	37.0%
18-30 years	34.6%
51-65 years	18.8%
more than 65	9.6%

Respondents' gender

52.6% 47.4%

■ Female ■ Male

- The overwhelming majority of respondents (**90%**) were of working age (18-65 years).

- Men were slightly more surveyed than women, making up **53%** of the sample.
- The field researchers reported that women were harder to survey than men, and were reluctant to answer the questionnaire, especially when accompanied by their spouses.

INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN LEBANON
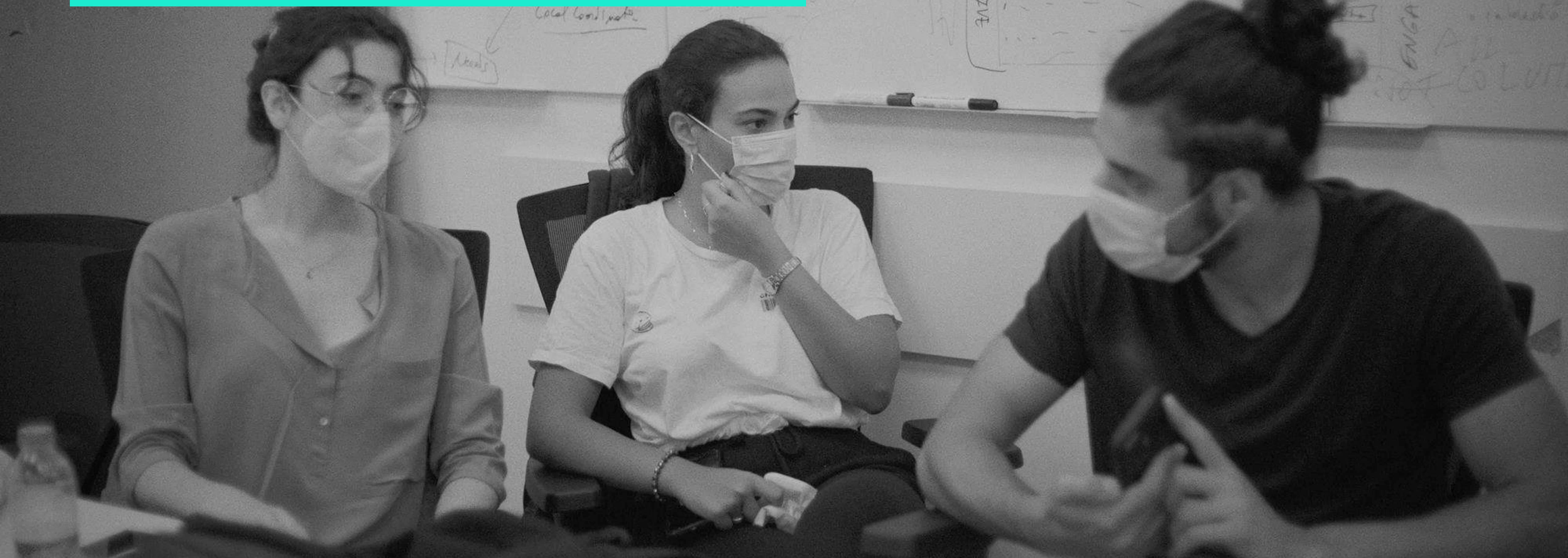
INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN LEBANON

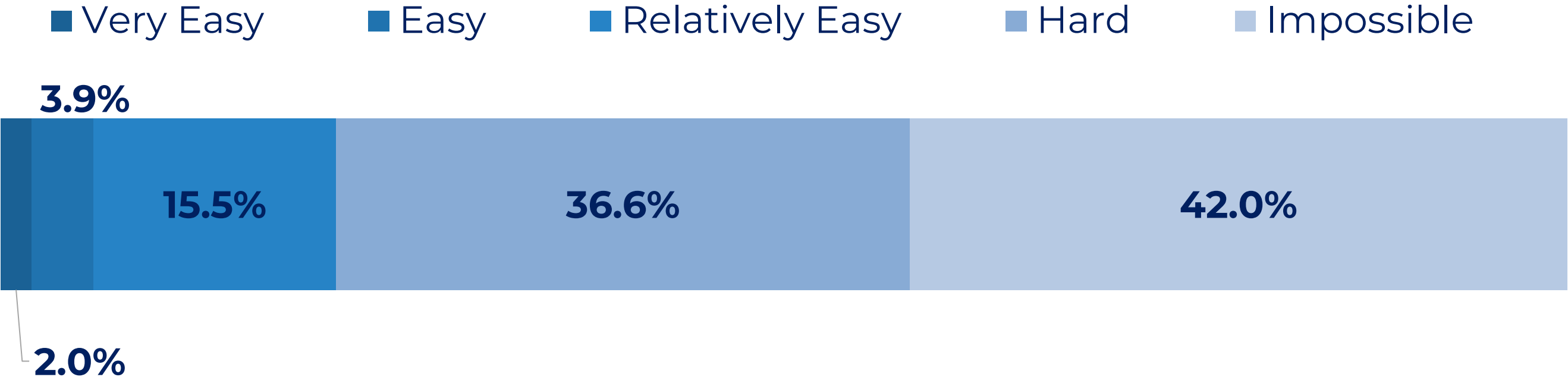Respondents were asked to describe their interaction with the Lebanese public administration (PA), as a first step to assessing their perception of and experience in dealing with the public sector.

How easy or difficult is it to deal with the public administration?

■ Very Easy   ■ Easy   ■ Relatively Easy   ■ Hard   ■ Impossible

3.9%

| 2.0% | 15.5% | 36.6% | 42.0% |

How would you describe your relationship with the public administration?

39.0%

61.0%

■ Bad Relationship
■ Good Relationship
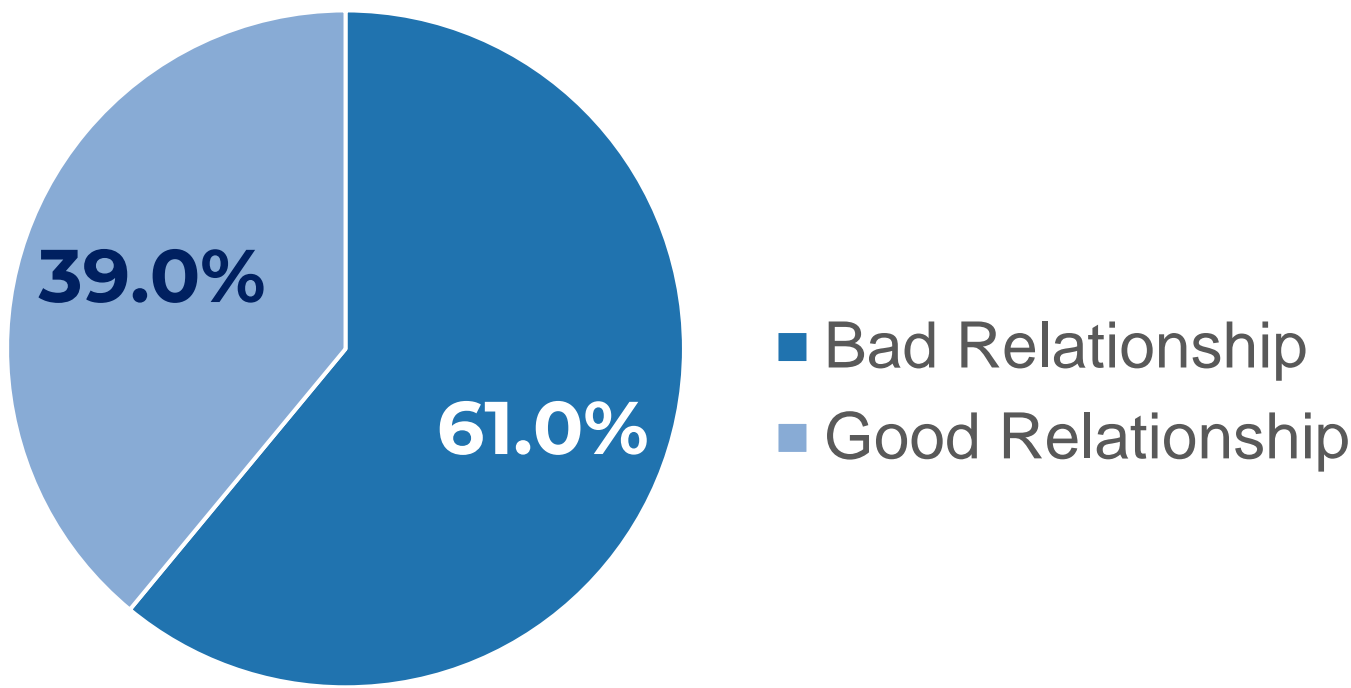
- A clear majority of respondents (**75%**) stated that dealing with the public administration is either hard or impossible.

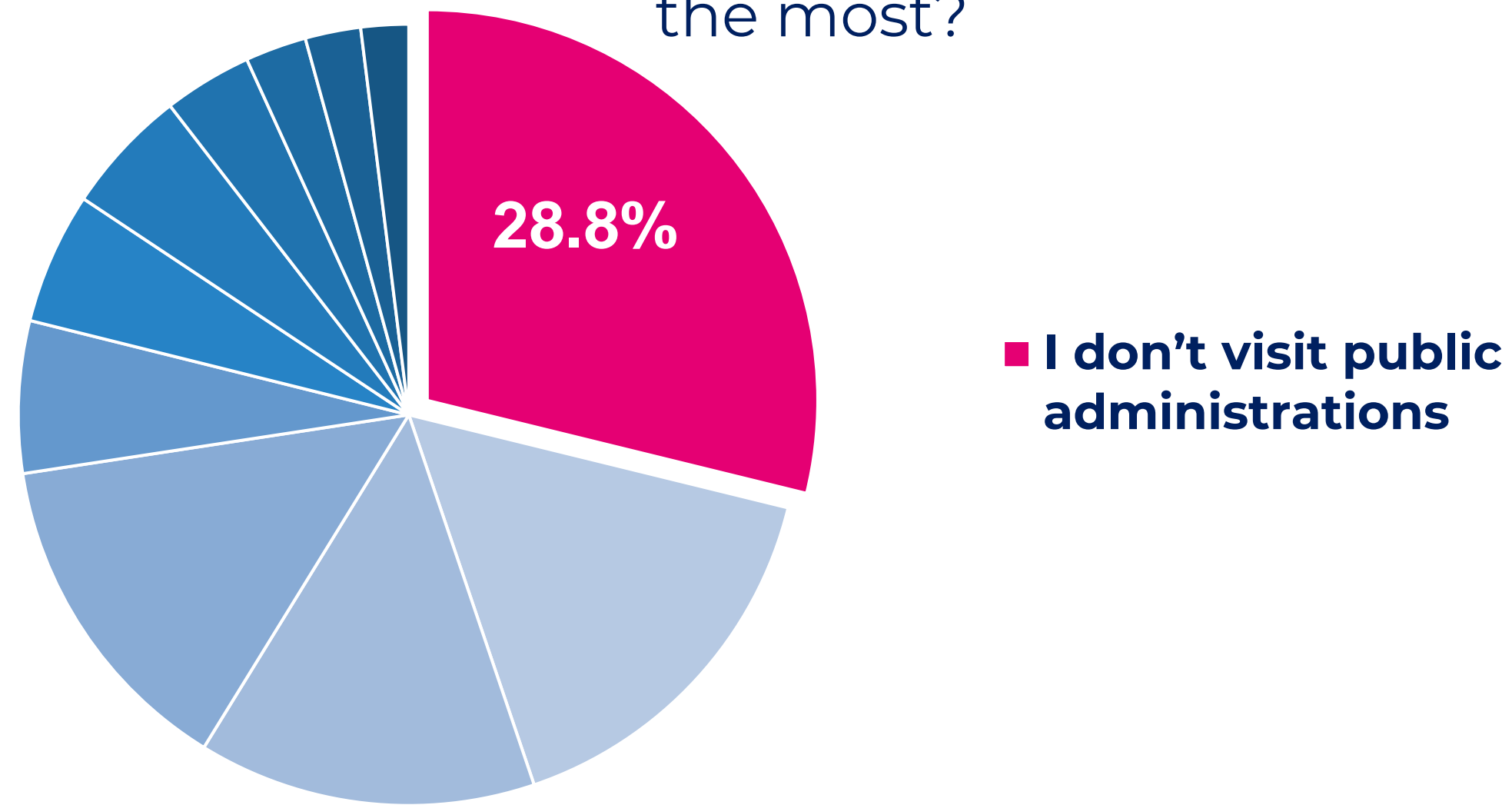- This perception did not vary when the data was broken down geographically, indicating that one's area of residence does not affect one's experience of interacting with the public administration.

- Most of the respondents (**61%**) reported having a bad relationship with the public administration.
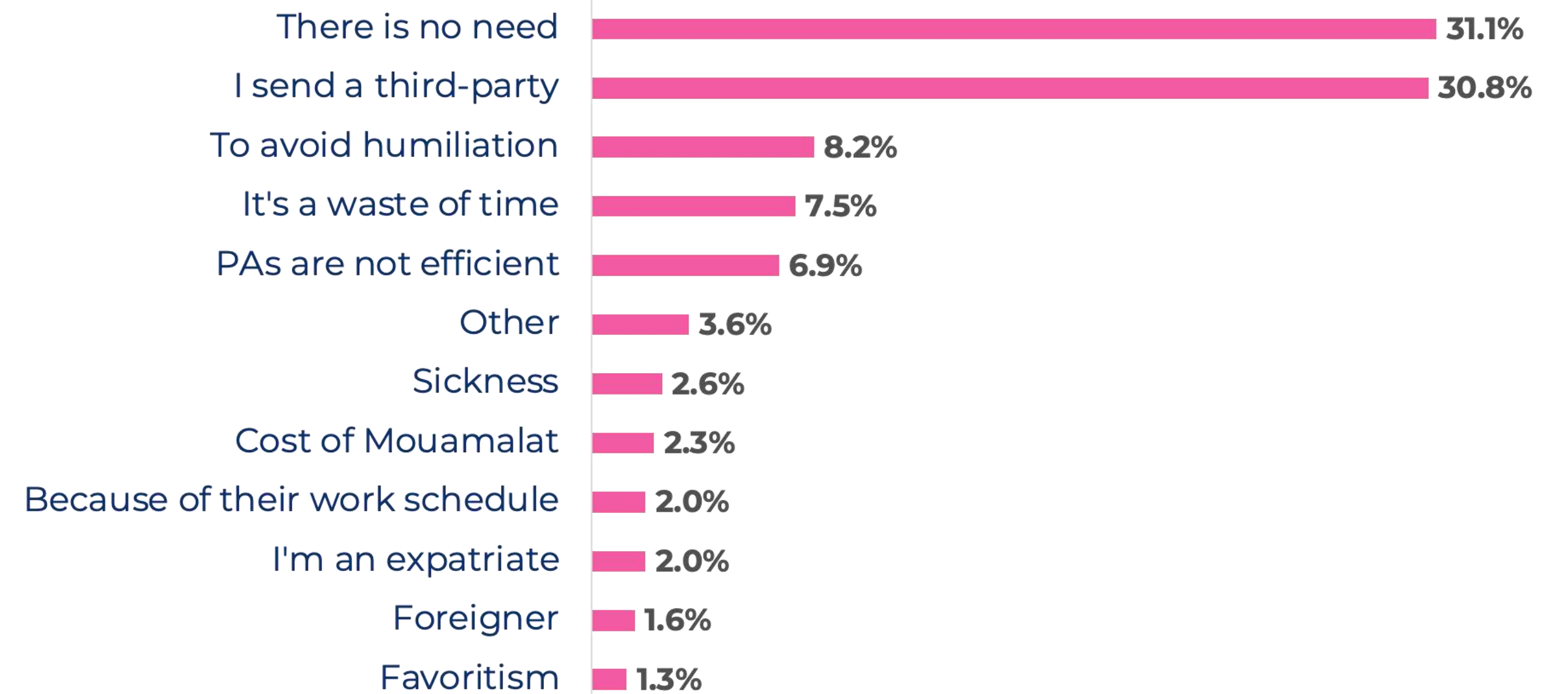
NEVER HAVE I EVER ... VISITED A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

More than a quarter of respondents (29%) stated that they do not ever interact with public administrations. The field researchers investigated the reasons.

Which public administration do you visit the most?

28.8%

■ I don't visit public administrations

Why don't you visit Public Administrations?

There is no need	31.1%
I send a third-party	30.8%
To avoid humiliation	8.2%
It's a waste of time	7.5%
PAs are not efficient	6.9%
Other	3.6%
Sickness	2.6%
Cost of Mouamalat	2.3%
Because of their work schedule	2.0%
I'm an expatriate	2.0%
Foreigner	1.6%
Favoritism	1.3%

The most frequently visited public administrations:

1. SOCIAL SECURITY
2. GENERAL SECURITY
3. PERSONAL STATUS
4. MINISTRY OF FINANCE
5. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
6. VEHICLE REGISTRATION
7. CADASTRE
8. MINISTRY OF HEALTH
9. ELECTRICITÉ DU LIBAN
10. JUSTICE PALACE
11. MUNICIPALITY

Residents do not visit PAs mainly because they do not find it necessary (**31%** of respondents), or because they send a third-party to handle their administrative procedures for them (**31%**). Around **14%** of respondents stated that their experience with PAs was a waste of time or inefficient, while **8%** of respondents avoid visiting PAs because they found it to be humiliating.

WHO TAKES CARE OF YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE?

Around 63% of respondents take care of their administrative procedures (or *mouamale*) personally, whereas 31% of respondents resort to alternative ways such as Liban Post or intermediaries. The remaining 6% did not do any procedures.

Who takes care of your procedure or *mouamale*?

I don't do any *mouamale*
6%

I take care of it personally
62.6%

I take care of it using alternative ways 31%

Citizens who manage their administrative procedure personally

39.6%

33.9%

17.2%

9.2%

18-30 years old   31-50 years old   51-65 years old   >65 years old

Interestingly, **34%** of the respondents who managed their own administrative procedures were aged between 18 and 30 years old. This young population would likely welcome the digital transformation of the public administration.

Why don't you do any administrative procedure ?

I send a third party	29.30%
Procedures are complicated and time-consuming	25.30%
For financial reasons	13.30%
Working hours in PA are limited	9.30%
There is no need	8%
For health reasons	4%
PAs are not efficient	4%
I'm an expatriate	2.70%
Others	2.70%
I avoid state-related matters	1.30%

AS COMPLEX AS IT CAN GET (1)

A McKinsey study[1] (2019) found that public customers of government agencies are nine times more likely to trust an agency if they are satisfied with its service. It reported that satisfaction is affected by personal treatment, the simplicity of the administrative procedure, the duration of the visit to a public administration, and the time needed to complete the procedure. The survey results on this front tend to confirm the correlation.
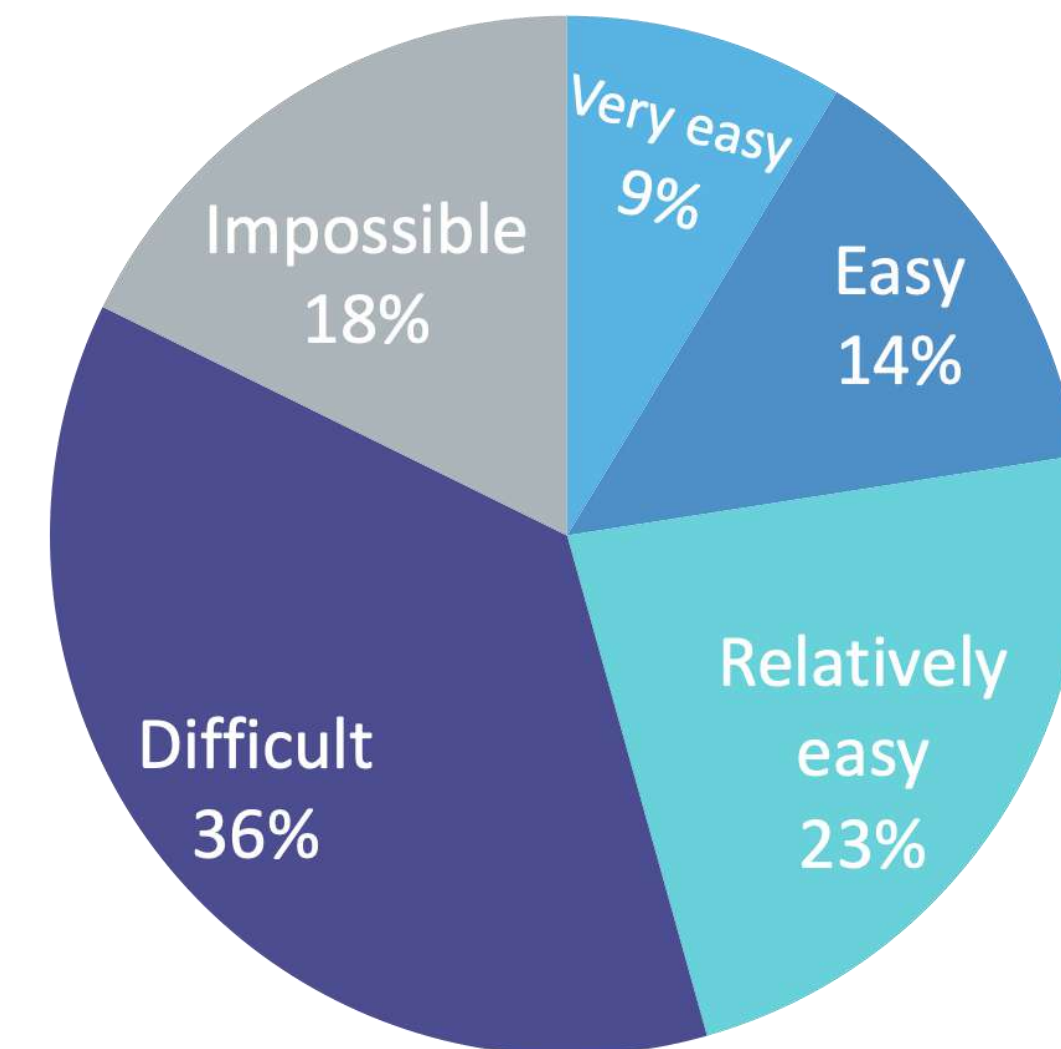
Have you ever faced an incident with a civil servant?

- Yes 31%
- No 68%
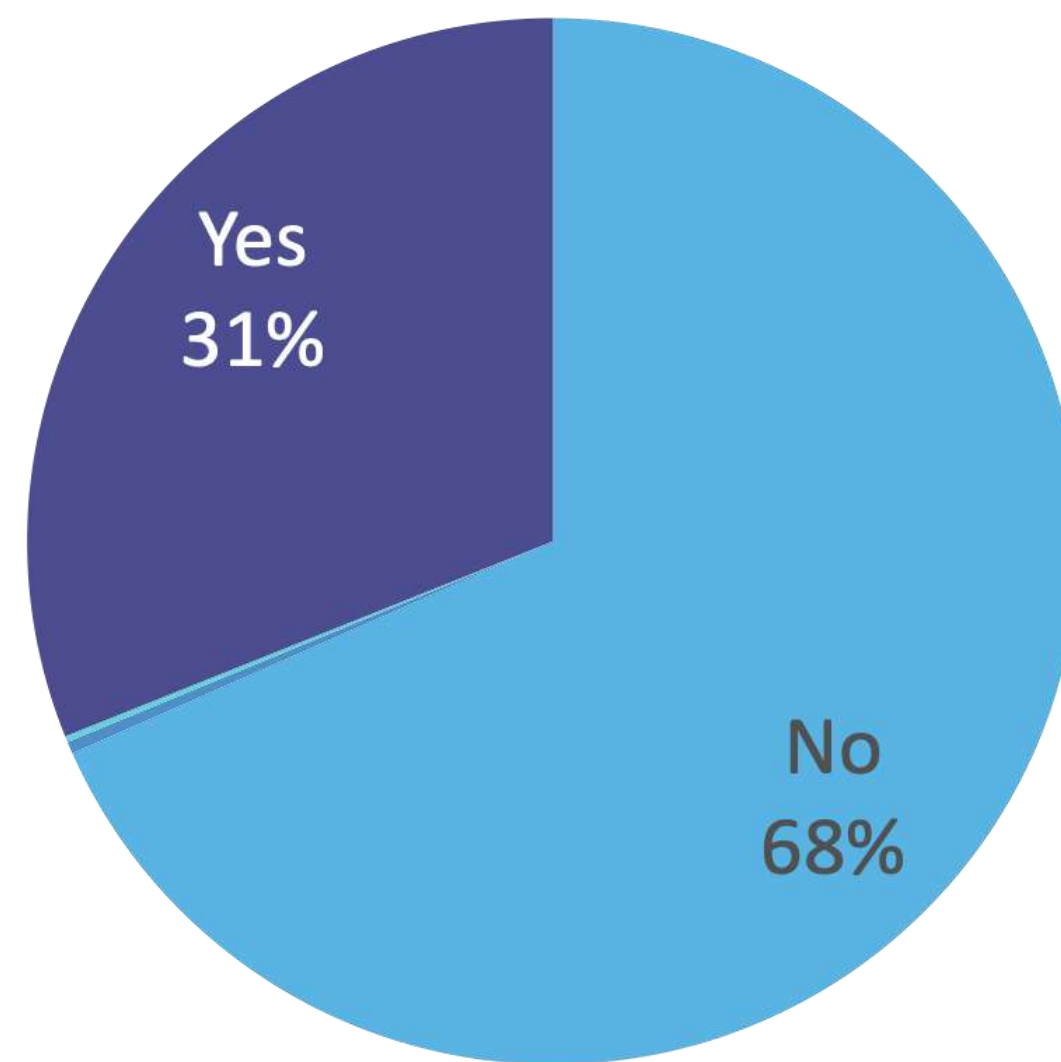
The three main causes mentioned of incidents with civil servants were, in order of frequency:

1. **Negligence**
2. **Corruption**
3. **Arrogance**

How difficult are the measures needed to complete an administrative procedure?

- Very easy 9%
- Easy 14%
- Relatively easy 23%
- Difficult 36%
- Impossible 18%

It is striking that **31%** of respondents reported having faced an incident involving a civil servant, mainly due to negligence or corruption. On another note, a majority (**54%**) of respondents reported that it was either difficult or impossible to complete an administrative procedure.

[1] McKinsey, 2019. "The public sector gets serious about customer experience," accessed online 20 Sept. 2021.

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The correlation established by McKinsey (2019) between people's satisfaction with the PA's service and their subsequent level of trust in it on one hand, and the treatment they receive in PAs, the complexity and duration of the procedures on the other hand, is clearly revealed when respondents were asked to describe the public administration in one or two words. Most terms used reflect an overall negative public opinion towards the public administration.

What kind of incident did you face during your visit to the PA?

How would you describe the Lebanese public administration?

TIME SPENT BY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION VISITORS

Most respondents reported that they must spend several hours at PAs to have their administrative procedures processed, and that it could take days, weeks, or even months to complete them.

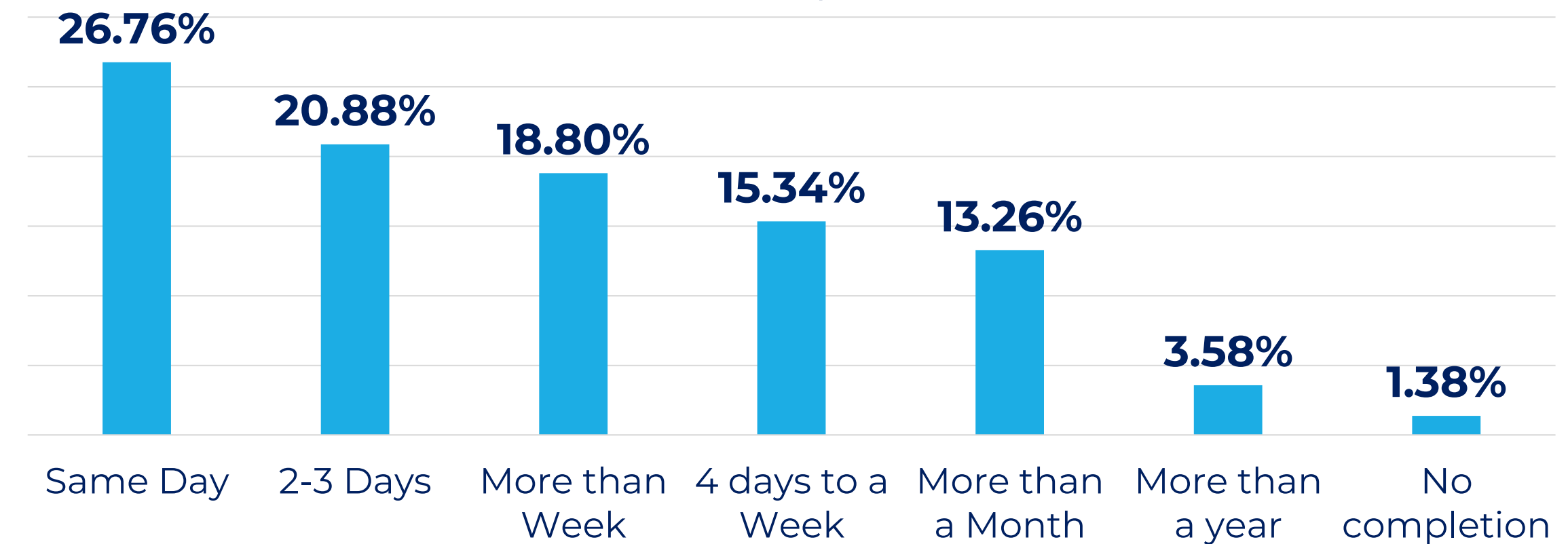**46%** — Spend one to two hours at public administrations

About half the respondents visiting PAs reported spending up to two hours to have their administrative procedures processed, whereas the rest reported spending more than two hours to do so. This could be considered reasonable if procedures were completed within the same day, but residents usually have to return to PAs.

How Many Hours do you Spend at PAs?

< 1 hr	1 - 2 hrs	2 - 3 hrs	> 3 hrs	I don't know
18%	24%	15%	13%	1%
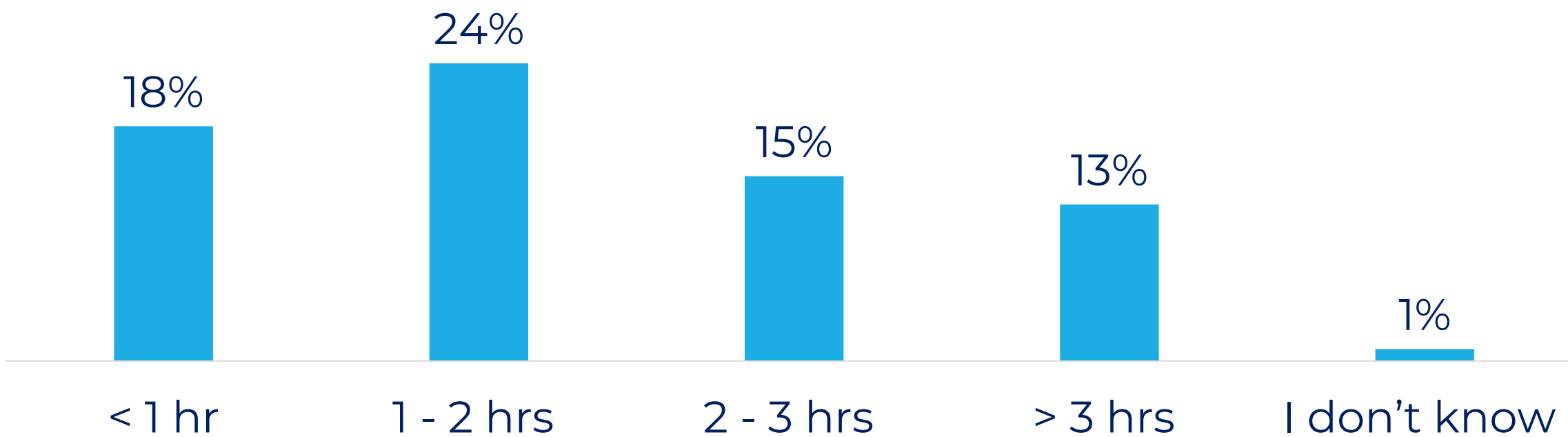
The remaining 29% doesn't visit PAs

How long does it take to fully complete your administrative procedure?

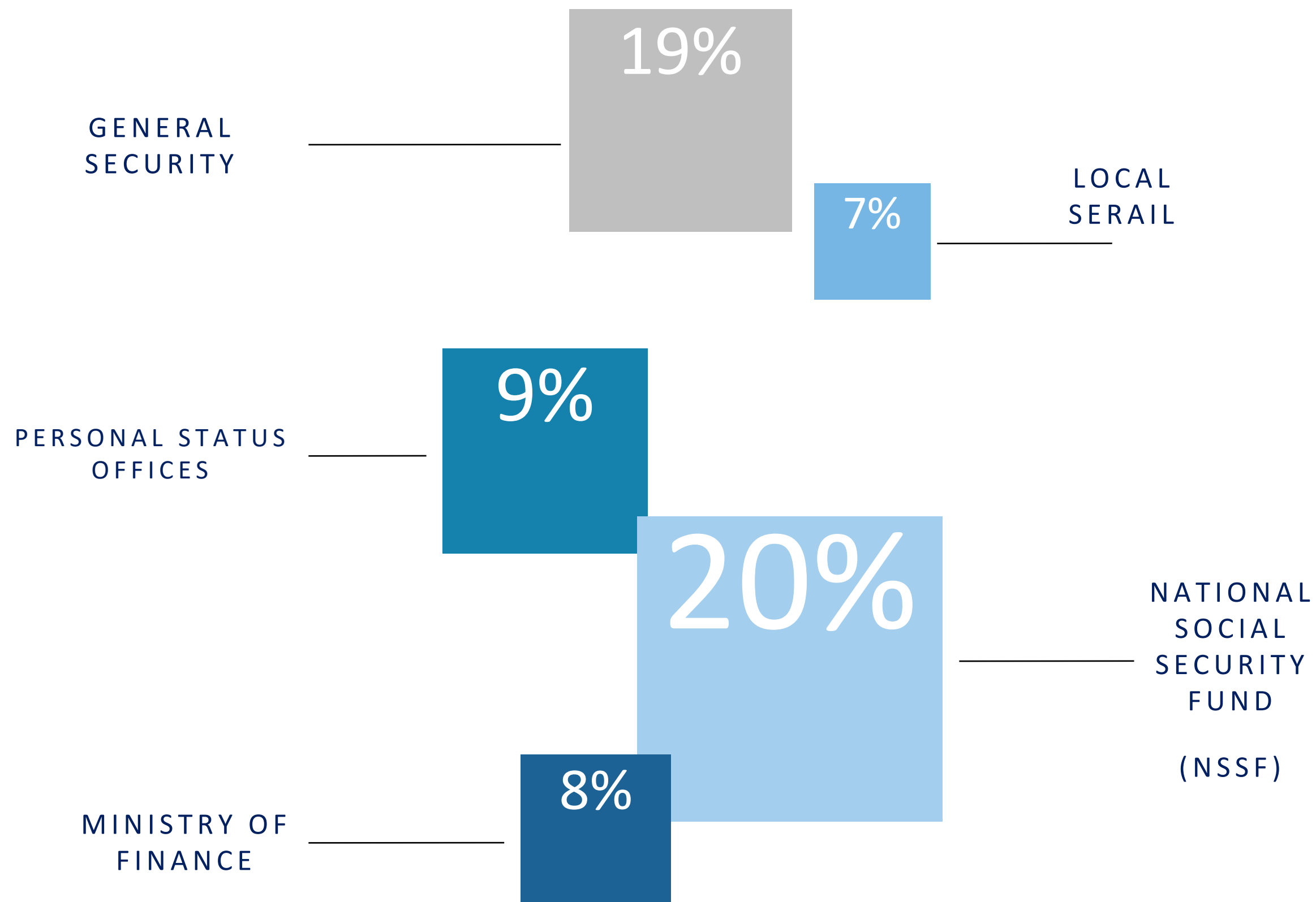| Same Day	2-3 Days	More than Week	4 days to a Week	More than a Month	More than a year	No completion
26.76%	20.88%	18.80%	15.34%	13.26%	3.58%	1.38%

27% — Take one day to complete their administrative procedure

Only around a quarter of the respondents claimed to be able to complete their administrative procedure within the same day. The others reported having to spend several days, weeks, or even months until completion. Clearly, the optimization and digitization of processes in the public administration will be crucial.
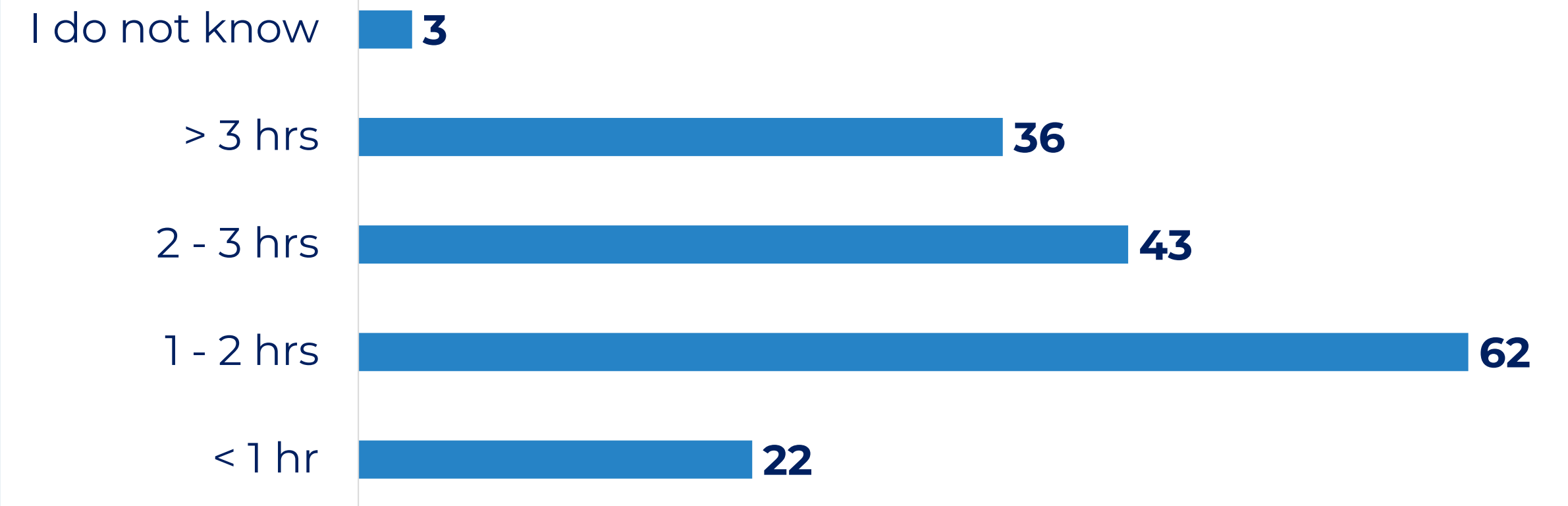
MOST VISITED PAs: TIME SPENT (1)

Looking at the five most frequented public administrations, the time that visitors spend to take care of their administrative procedures ranges between one and five hours.

TOP 5 MOST VISITED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

GENERAL SECURITY — **19%**

7% — LOCAL SERAIL

PERSONAL STATUS OFFICES — **9%**

20% — NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY FUND (NSSF)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE — **8%**

Hours spent at NSSF (by number of respondents)

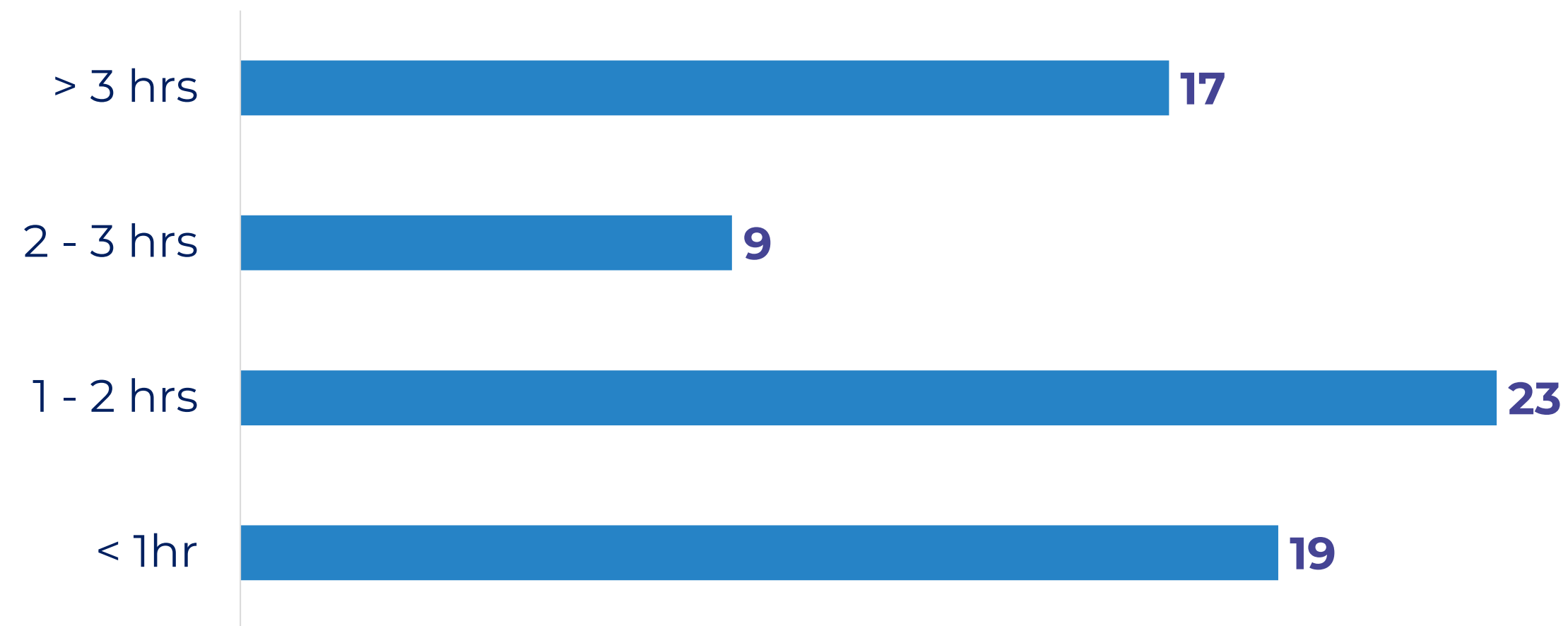|	
I do not know	**3**
> 3 hrs	**36**
2 - 3 hrs	**43**
1 - 2 hrs	**62**
< 1 hr	**22**

2:18

On average, respondents said they it takes **2 hours and 18 minutes** at National Social Security Fund offices to take care of their administrative procedures. This is the highest average among PAs.

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MOST VISITED PAs: TIME SPENT (2)

Looking at the five most frequented public administrations, the time that visitors spend to take care of their administrative procedures ranges between one and five hours.

Hours spent at Ministry of Finance (by number of respondents)

> 3 hrs	17
2 - 3 hrs	9
1 - 2 hrs	23
< 1hr	19

Hours spent at *local Serail* (by number of respondents)

> 3 hrs	9
2 - 3 hrs	17
1 - 2 hrs	19
< 1hr	18

2:00

On average, respondents said that it takes **2 hours** at the Ministry of Finance to take care of their administrative procedures.

1:51

On average, respondents said that it takes **1 hour and 51 minutes** at *local Serail* offices to take care of their administrative procedures.

MOST VISITED PAs: TIME SPENT (3)

Looking at the five most frequented public administrations, the time that visitors spend to take care of their administrative procedures ranges between one and five hours.
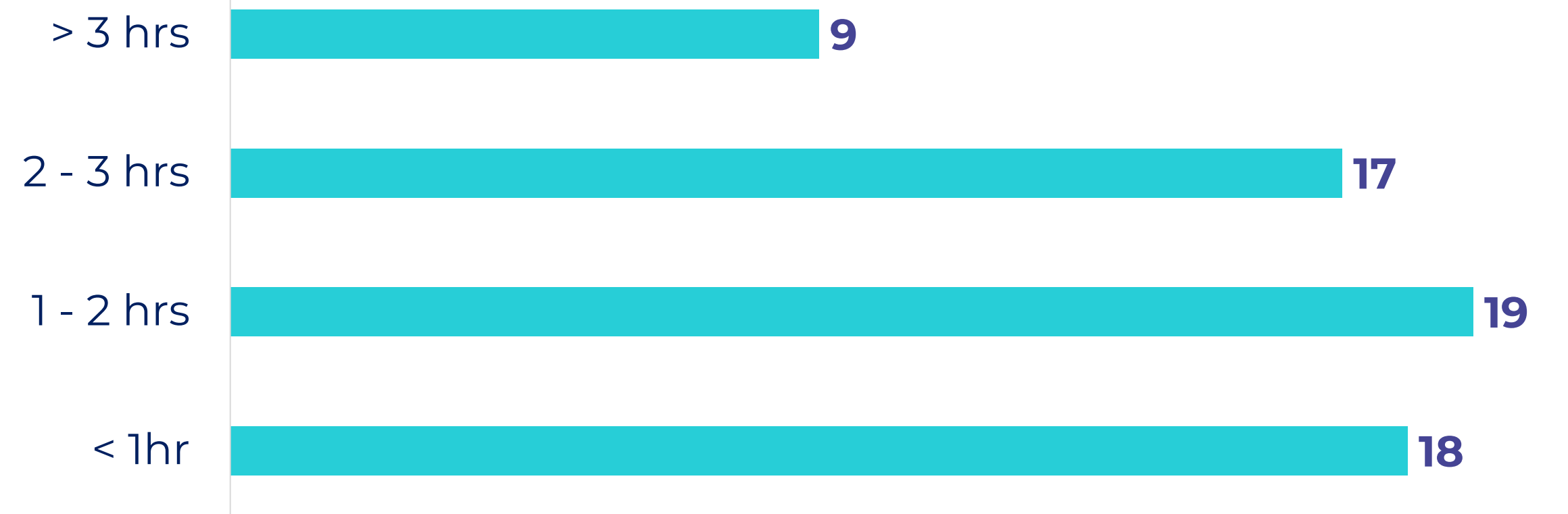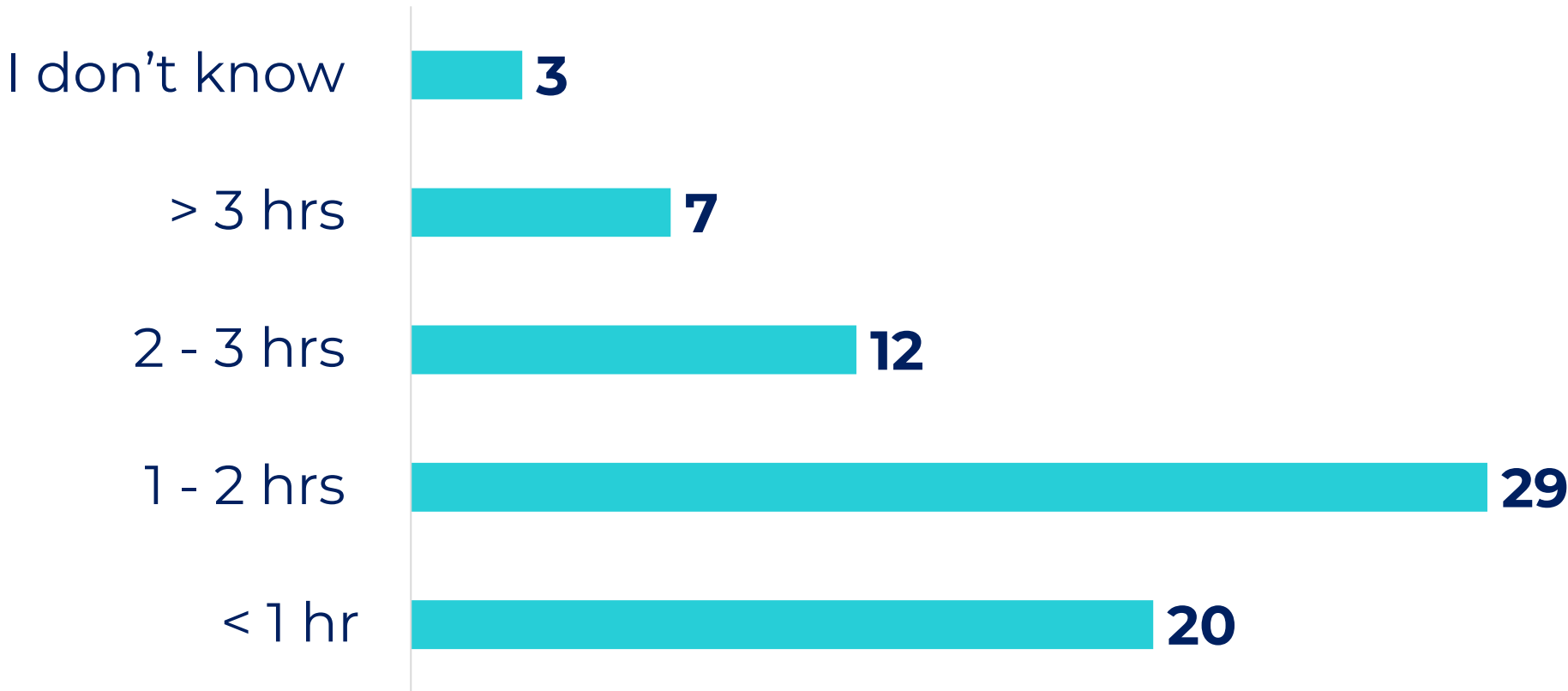
Hours spent at Personal Status (by number of respondents)

I don't know	3
> 3 hrs	7
2 - 3 hrs	12
1 - 2 hrs	29
< 1 hr	20

Hours spent at General Security (by number of respondents)

I do not know	3
> 3 hrs	19
2 - 3 hrs	26
1 - 2 hrs	59
< 1 hr	53

1:38 On average, respondents said that it takes **1 hour and 38 minutes** at Personal Status offices to take care of their administrative procedures.
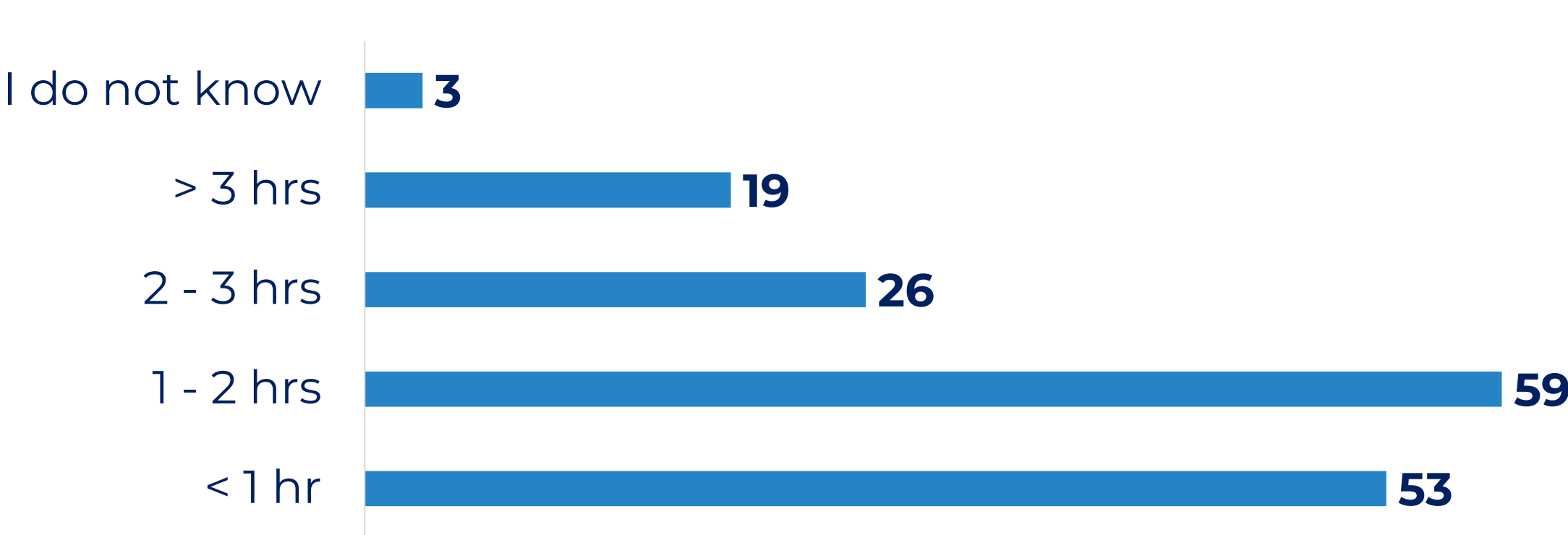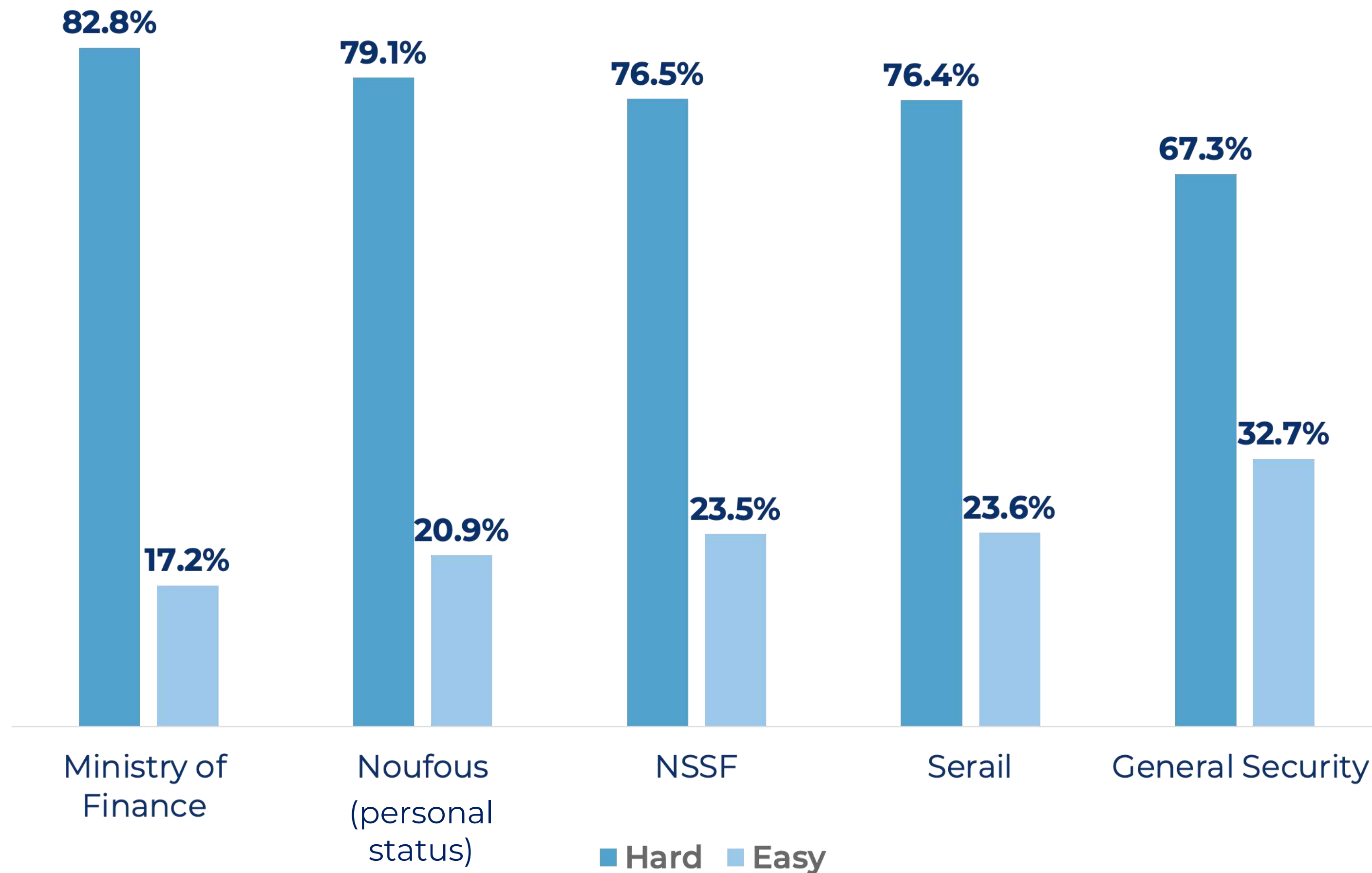
1:37 On average, respondents said that it takes **1 hour and 37 minutes** at General Security offices to take care of their administrative procedures.

MOST VISITED PAs: A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

Respondents reported that interacting with the five most visited PAs is "hard', but to different extents. The Ministry of Finance was deemed the hardest to deal with, whereas the General Security was deemed the easiest.

How would you describe dealing with the following PAs?

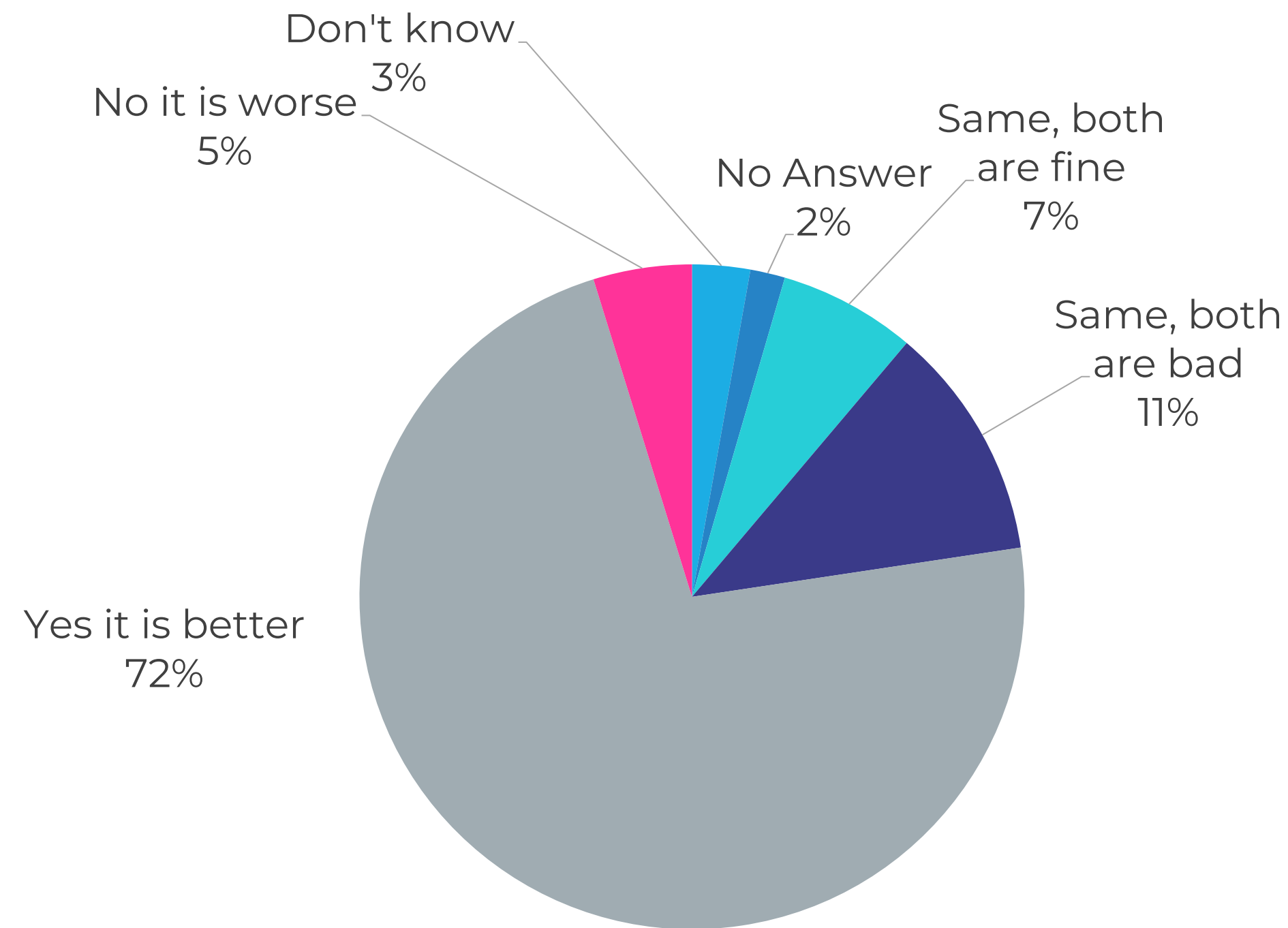| PA	Hard	Easy
Ministry of Finance	82.8%	17.2%
Noufous (personal status)	79.1%	20.9%
NSSF	76.5%	23.5%
Serail	76.4%	23.6%
General Security	67.3%	32.7%

■ Hard ■ Easy

- **Eighty three percent** of the respondents who had visited the Ministry of Finance described their experience there as hard or impossible.

- By comparison, only **68%** of the respondents described their experience in General Security offices as hard or impossible.

53% of respondents who found one PA to be more organized than the others mentioned General Security.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS TAKING THE LEAD

As the overall public opinion towards the public administration is negative, the general public resorts to local authorities. Respondents stated that they prefer local authorities to centralized ones, with almost three quarters of them putting this better relationship down to them having personal connections with the representatives of local authorities.

Is your relationship with local authorities better than your relationship with central administrations?

Don't know 3%
No it is worse 5%
No Answer 2%
Same, both are fine 7%
Same, both are bad 11%
Yes it is better 72%

Why is your relationship better with local authorities?

Others 11.1%
Faster Service 11.1%
Better Treatment 27.4%
Personal Acquaintance 50.4%

Seventy two percent of respondents declared having a better relationship with local authorities than central administrations.
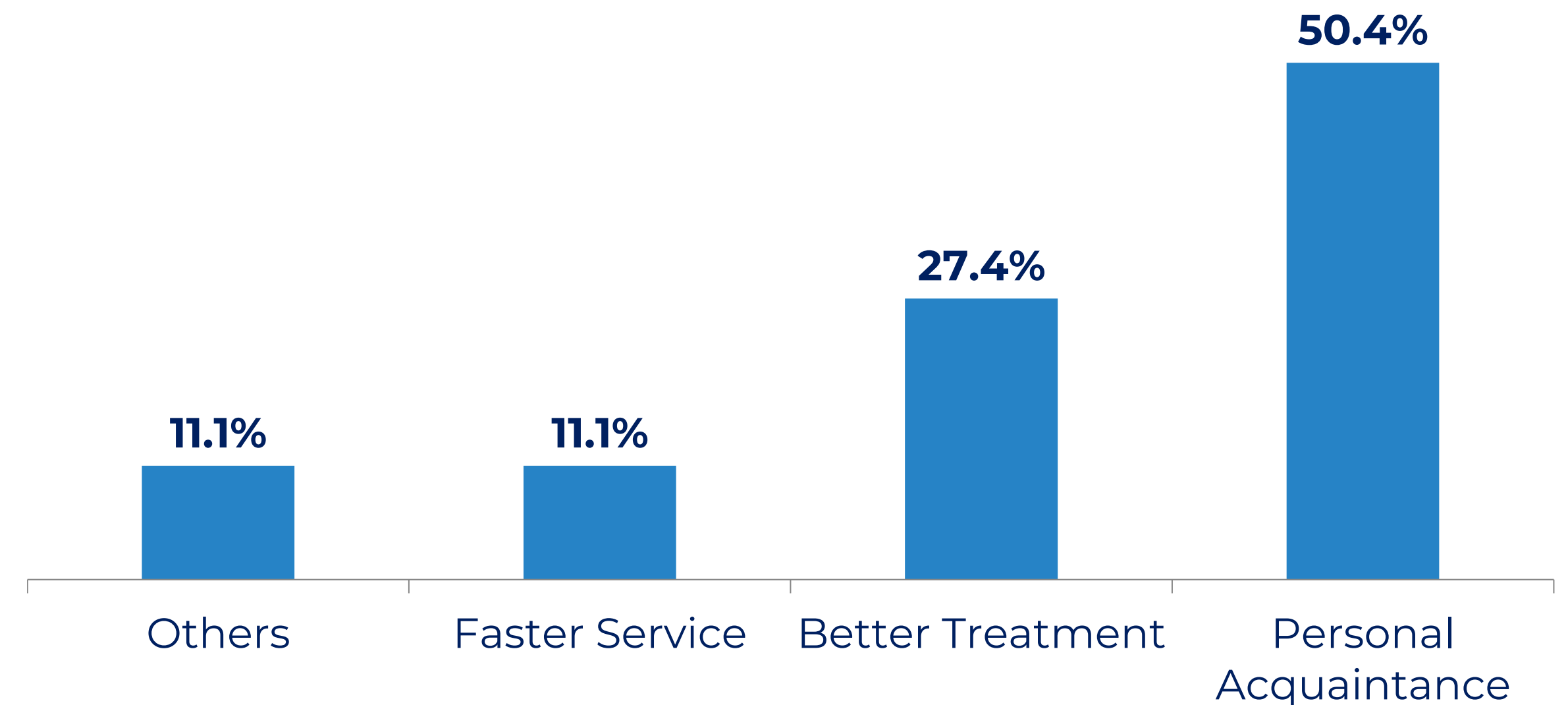
IMPACT: A PIONEER IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

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IMPACT: A PIONEER IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

As the first e-government platform in the country, the Inter-Ministerial and Municipal Platform for Assessment, Coordination and Tracking (IMPACT) allowed residents to digitally access some public services for the first time. In a short time, IMPACT was able to reach a large proportion of the general public.

Have you heard of IMPACT?

- 32.0%
- 68.0%

■ No ■ Yes
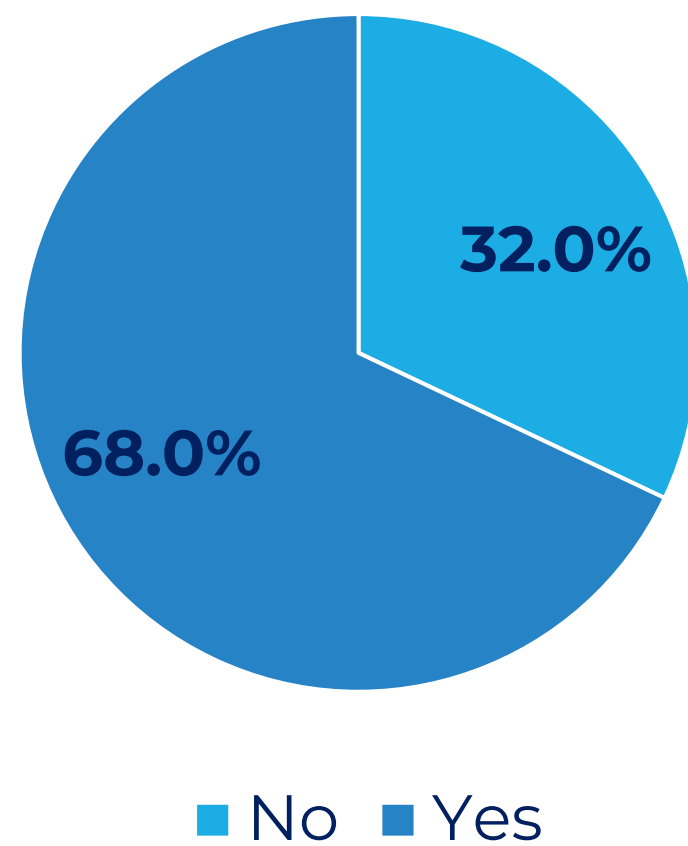
Have you ever used IMPACT?

- 24.4%
- 75.6%

■ No ■ Yes
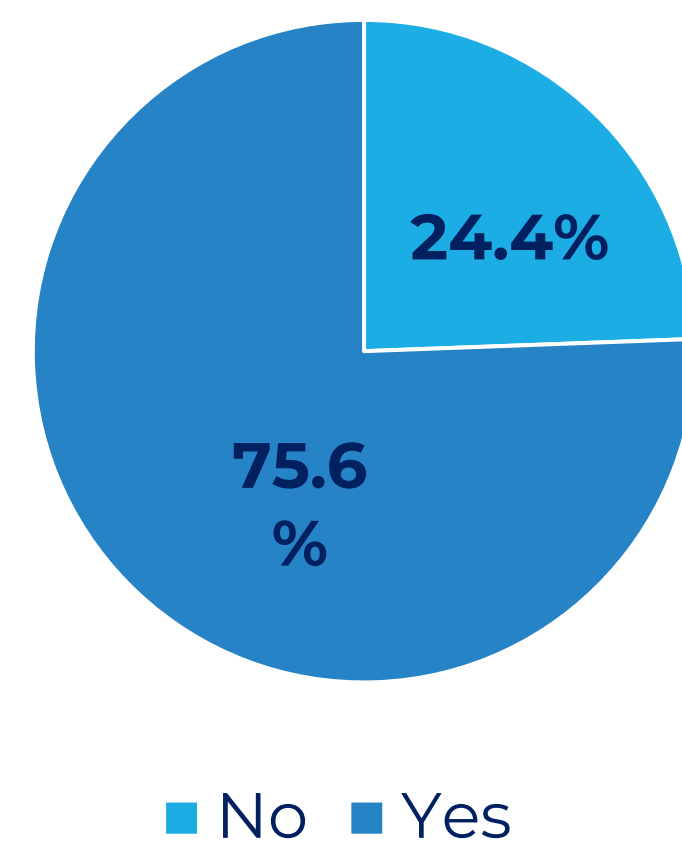
- **Sixty eight percent** of respondents said they had heard of IMPACT, and **76%** of those who had heard of the platform stated that they had used it.

- Respondents stated that they were introduced to IMPACT through SMS (**23%**) and TV (**29%**). The preeminence of traditional media can be understood in light of the average age of respondents (30+ years).

How do you know about IMPACT?

Source	Percentage
Radio	0.8%
Twitter	1.1%
Newspapers	1.8%
Instagram	6.1%
Website	12.7%
SMS	23.3%
Family/friend	25.0%
TV	29.2%
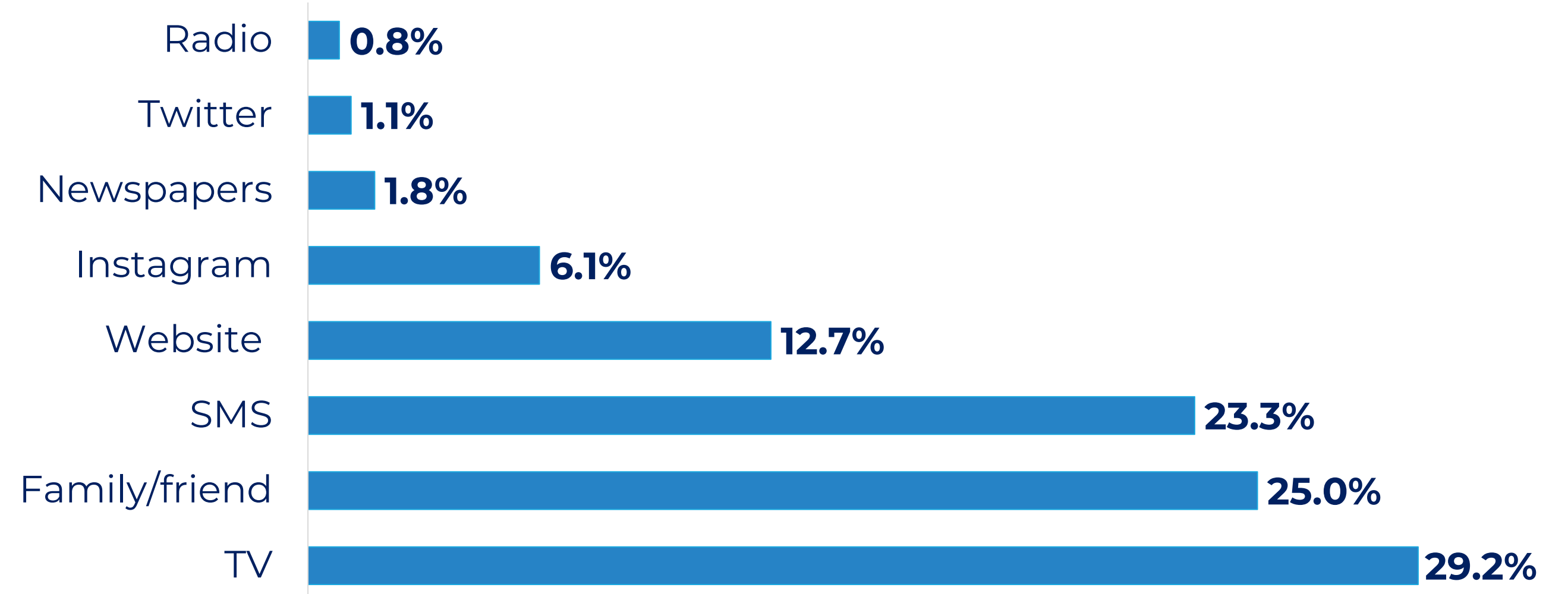
AWARENESS OF IMPACT BY LOCATION & NATIONALITY

Although public awareness of IMPACT is high, it varies based on the respondents' nationality and area of residence.

- The survey results revealed that IMPACT did not reach all regions equally.
- Awareness of IMPACT is almost twice as high in Beirut as it is in Baalbek, with **73%** of respondents in Beirut confirming they had heard of the platform, compared to only **42%** of respondents in Baalbek.
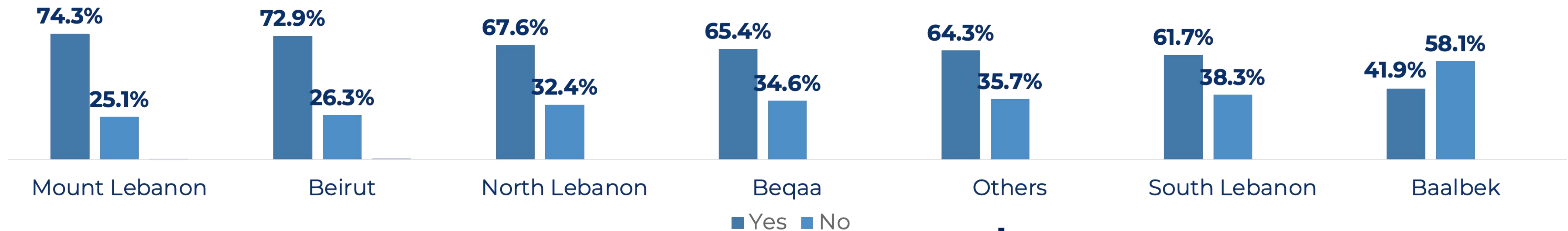
Respondents' area of residence vs awareness of IMPACT

	Mount Lebanon	Beirut	North Lebanon	Beqaa	Others	South Lebanon	Baalbek
Yes	74.3%	72.9%	67.6%	65.4%	64.3%	61.7%	58.1%
No	25.1%	26.3%	32.4%	34.6%	35.7%	38.3%	41.9%

■ Yes ■ No

> Others: refers to the respondents who didn't share their area of residence.

Respondents' nationality vs awareness of IMPACT

	No	Yes
Lebanese	30.1%	69.5%
Non Lebanese	51.1%	48.9%

■ No ■ Yes
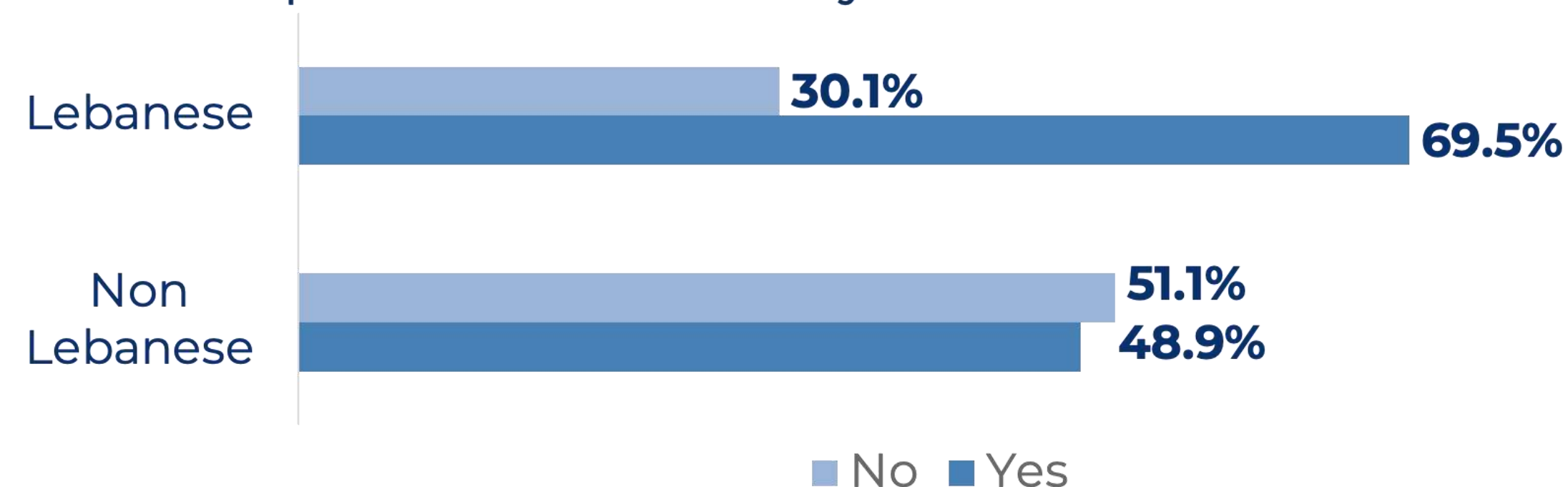
- **Fifty one percent** of non-Lebanese respondents stated that they had not heard about the platform, compared with only **30.1%** of Lebanese stating so.
- Most of the non-Lebanese respondents were daily workers.

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USAGE OF IMPACT BY LOCATION & NATIONALITY

Although the usage of the platform is generally high among those who have heard of IMPACT, it varies based on the respondents' nationality and area of residence. Usage of IMPACT falls as distance from urban areas increases.
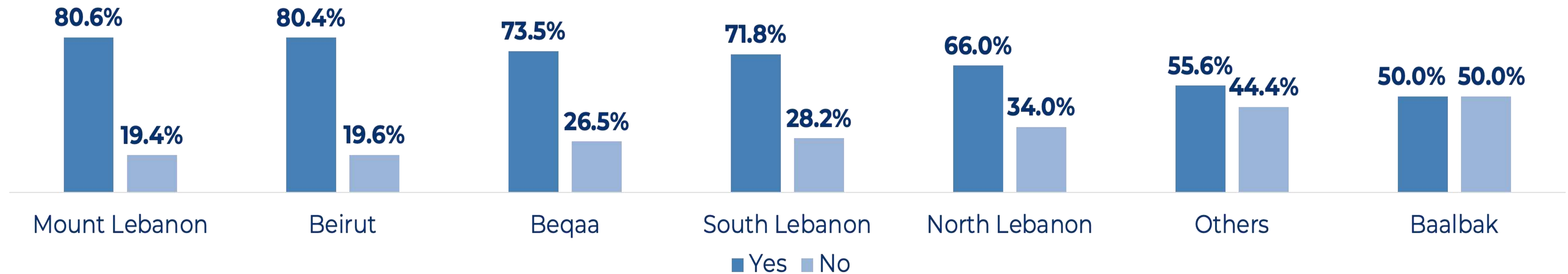
Respondents' area of residence vs usage of IMPACT

Area	Yes	No
Mount Lebanon	80.6%	19.4%
Beirut	80.4%	19.6%
Beqaa	73.5%	26.5%
South Lebanon	71.8%	28.2%
North Lebanon	66.0%	34.0%
Others	55.6%	44.4%
Baalbak	50.0%	50.0%

■ Yes   ■ No

Respondents' nationality of residence vs usage of IMPACT

Nationality	Yes	No
Lebanese	76.8%	23.2%
Non Lebanese	57.8%	42.2%

■ Yes   ■ No
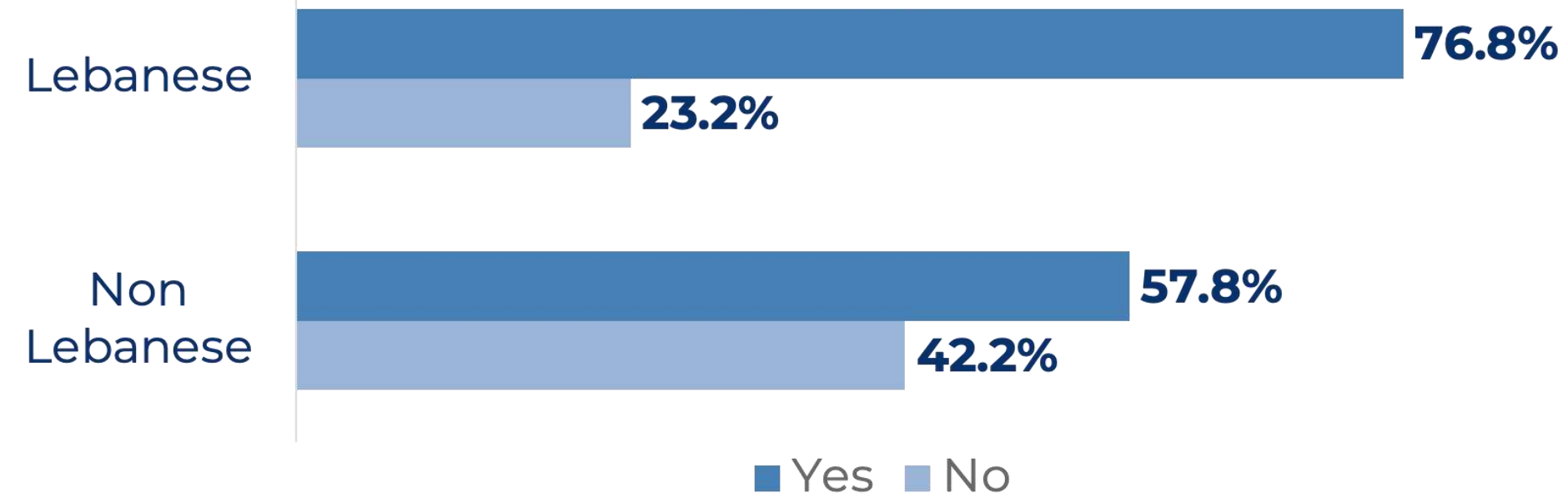
- **Forty two percent** of non-Lebanese respondents had never used the platform. This non-usage rate is almost the double of that of their Lebanese peers (**23%**).
- Most of the non-Lebanese respondents were daily workers.

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A WIDELY USED AND EFFICIENT PLATFORM

As IMPACT was launched as part of the COVID-19 crisis response, 76% of the respondents who had heard of the platform stated that they had used it for pandemic-related reasons.

68% OF RESPONDENTS HAD HEARD OF IMPACT

76% OF THOSE WHO HAD HEARD OF IMPACT REPORTED HAVING USED IT

73% OF THE LATTER DESCRIBED IMPACT AS USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL

These numbers reveal that the more residents use and get used to the digital platform, the more they discover and acknowledge how useful and efficient it is. But does this cause a risk of digital divide?

Furthermore, IMPACT has contributed to raise trust in institutions. For example, when asked about the most organized public administration, the Ministry of Public Health was frequently mentioned, and respondents cited as evidence IMPACT and the vaccine performance.

Perception of IMPACT's efficiency by its users

Category	Percentage
Slightly useful	4.7%
Not useful	10.7%
Somewhat useful	16.5%
Useful	22.3%
Very useful	45.8%
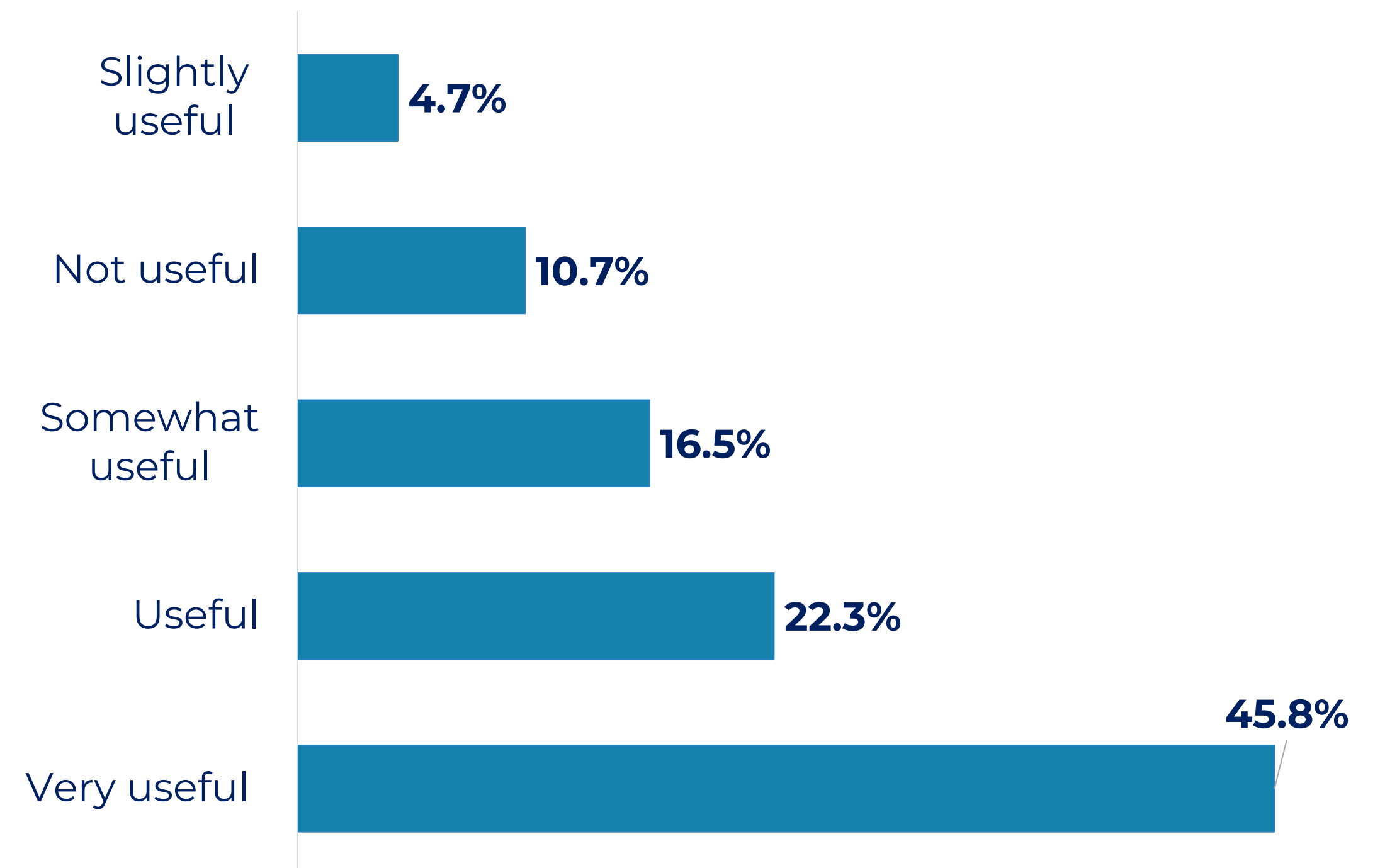
IMPACT IN A WORD

The public opinion towards IMPACT is positive overall. The term most frequently used by respondents to describe IMPACT is one word was "good."
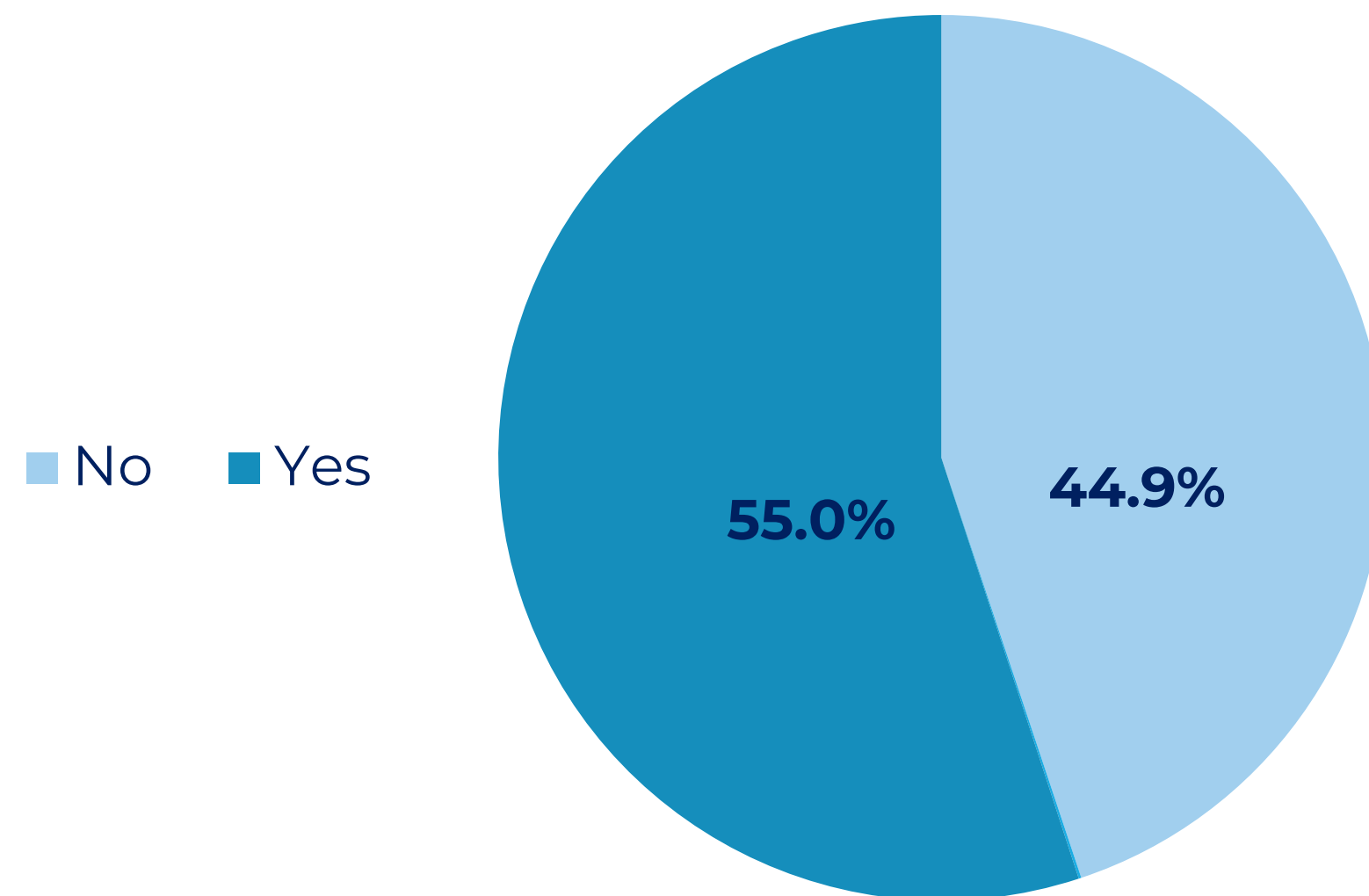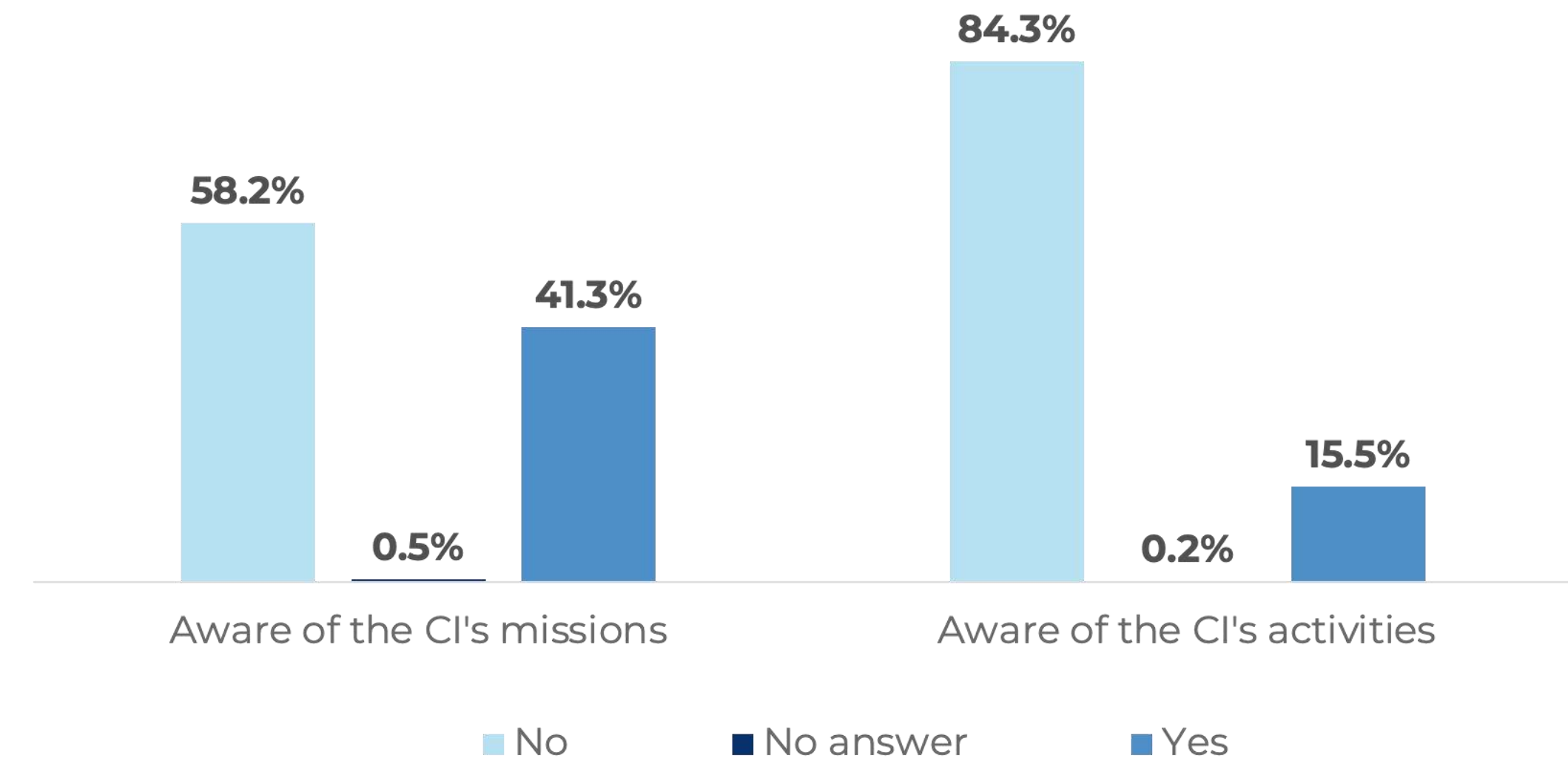
CENTRAL INSPECTION

THE GOLDEN COVER OF AN UNREAD BOOK (1)

The majority of respondents had heard of the Central Inspection (CI). However, awareness of CI does not necessarily imply knowledge of the oversight agency's mandate, missions and complaints system.

Have you heard of Central Inspection?

- No
- Yes

55.0%
44.9%

Respondents' knowledge of CI

84.3%
58.2%
41.3%
15.5%
0.5%
0.2%

Aware of the CI's missions   Aware of the CI's activities

- No
- No answer
- Yes

- Out of **1,065** respondents, **586** had heard of Central Inspection, which amounts to **55%** of respondents.
- Among the **586** respondents who had heard of CI, **84%** were unaware of its activities and **58%** were unaware of its missions.

- These figures clearly reveal a general lack of awareness of CI's missions and activities and imply a general indifference about the oversight agency. This also indicates a lack of knowledge of the existing complaint system at CI to process residents' complaints against public administrations and promote oversight.

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THE GOLDEN COVER OF AN UNREAD BOOK (2)

The majority of respondents considered Central inspection to be "not effective." This may be explained by the lack of knowledge of the oversight agency.

Central Inspection's effectiveness

- Very Effective 3.1%
- Effective 3.2%
- No Answer 2.9%
- Effective to a certain extent 10.6%
- Don't Know 17.2%
- Slightly effective 9.7%
- **Not Effective 53.2%**

• People had heard about CI mainly through informal channels. Among the respondents who had heard about CI, **57%** did so through a friend or family member, whereas only **7%** did so through CI's official website.

• Only **16%** of the respondents who had heard about CI were aware of its activities. This cohort of respondents had generally learnt about CI's work through informal channels:

How did you hear about Central Inspection ?

Channel	Percentage
A friend or a family member	**57.1%**
Television	**23.1%**
Press	**9.9%**
CI's official Website	**6.6%**
Radio	**1.1%**
Twitter	**1.1%**
Facebook	**1.1%**
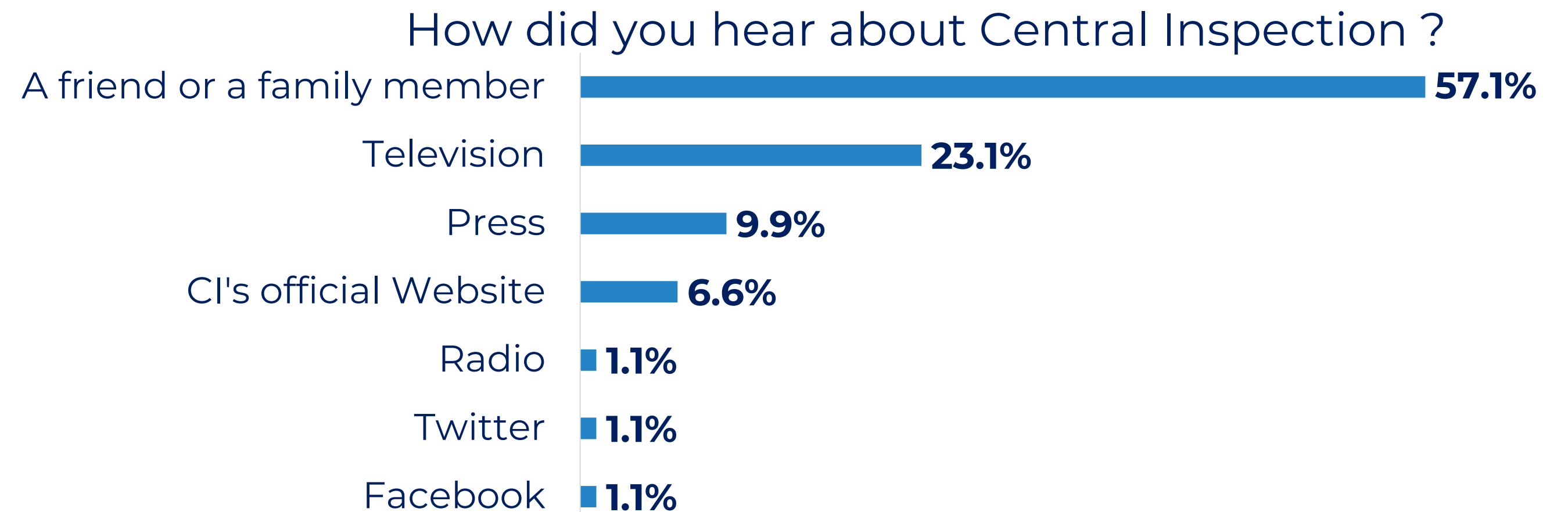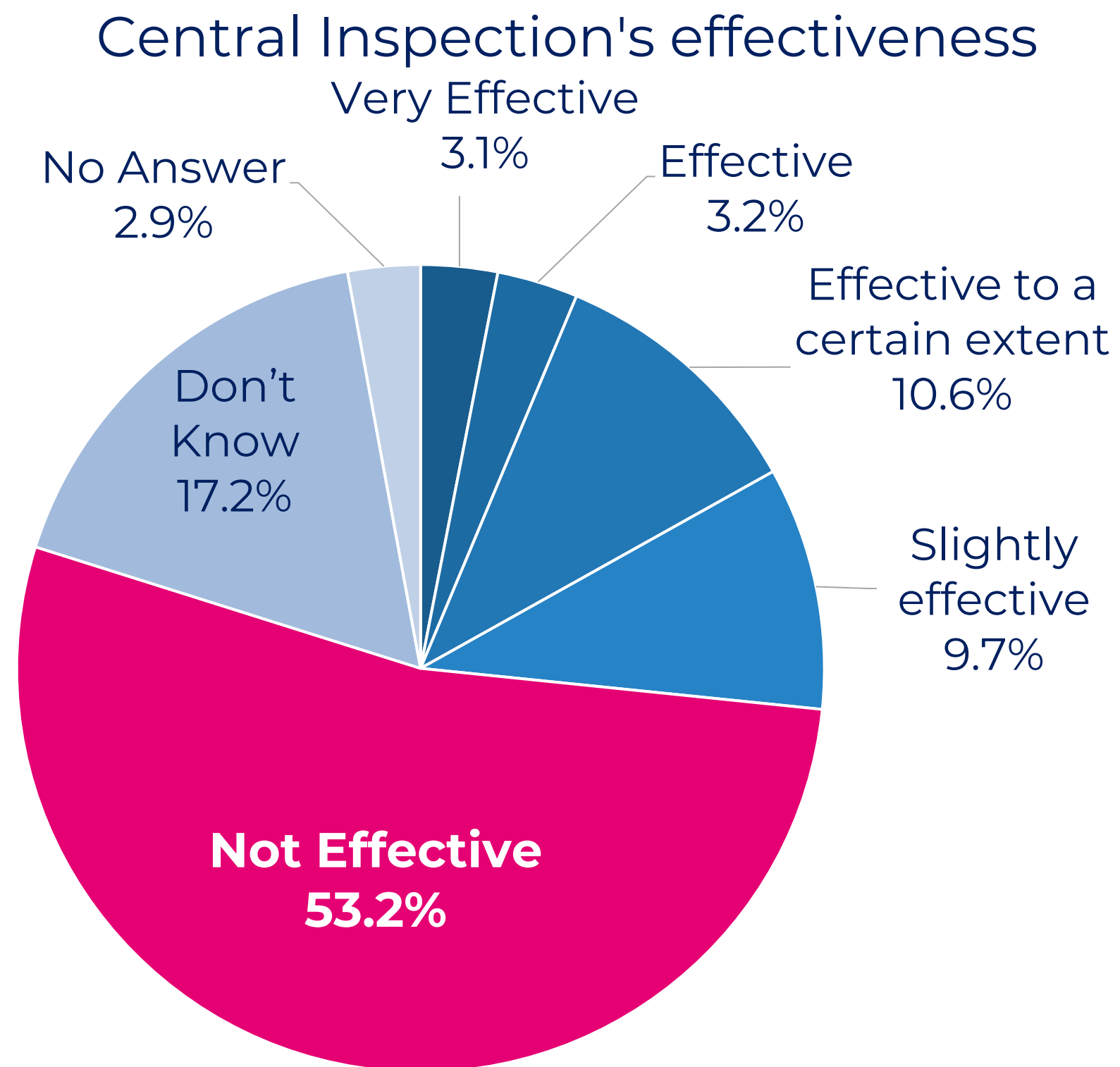
STOP COMPLAINING AND START COMPLAINING!

A large majority of respondents did not know how and when they could file a complaint before the Central Inspection. This lack of knowledge implies a lack of public involvement in the oversight of the public administration.

Do you know how to file a complaint with Central Inspection?

- No: 85.2%
- No answer: 2.2%
- Yes: 12.6%

Do you know in which cases you have the right to file a complaint?

- No: 70.7%
- No answer: 2.1%
- Yes: 27.2%
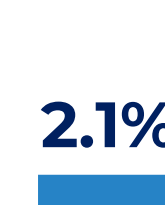
Lack of knowledge
=
Lack of involvement

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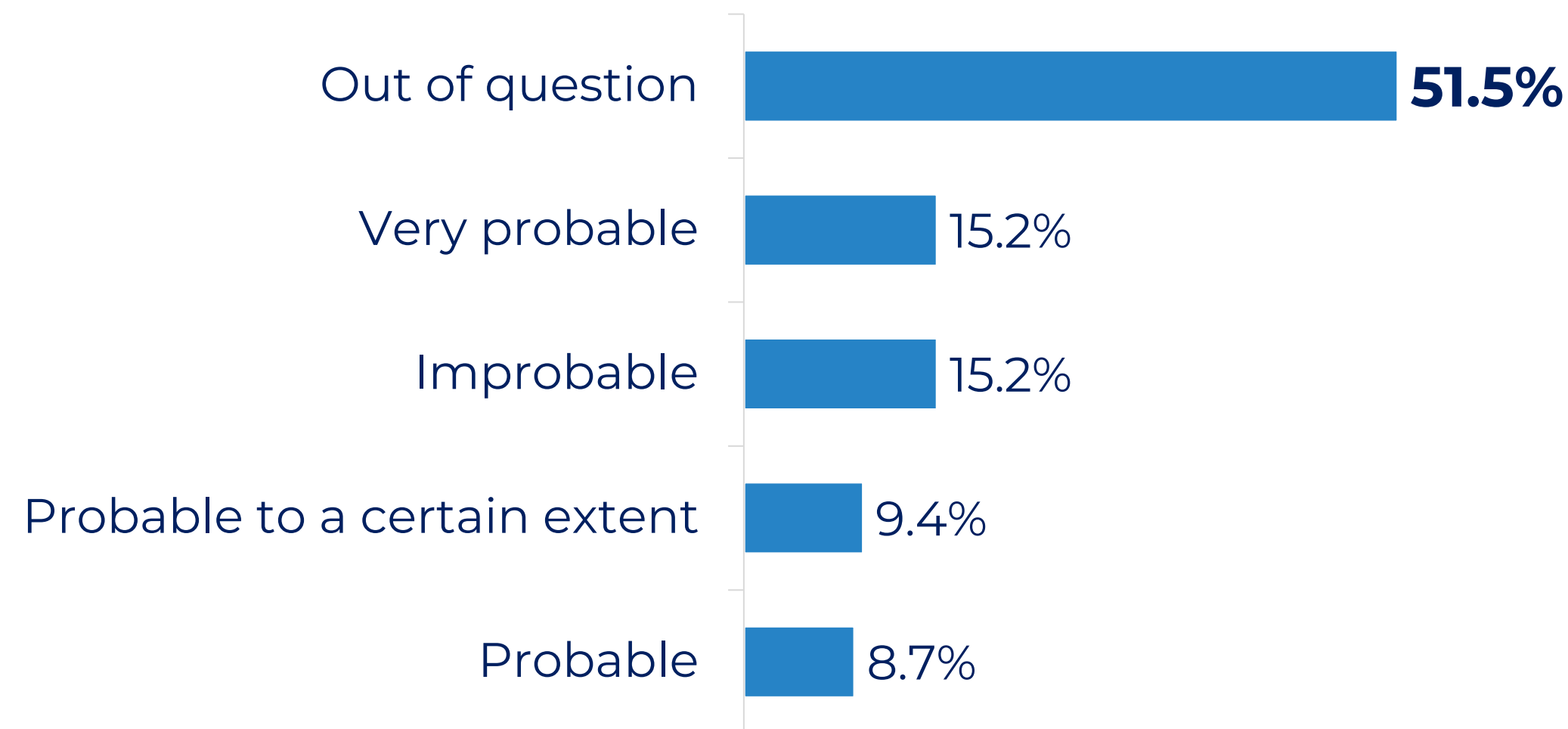
STOP COMPLAINING AND START COMPLAINING ! (2)

More than half of respondents were not willing to file a complaint before Central Inspection if applicable. The lack of public participation in oversight affects Central Inspection's effectiveness in performing its missions. Communication about whistleblowing and the existing complaint mechanisms will be critical to encourage residents to take action.

Probability of filing a complaint?

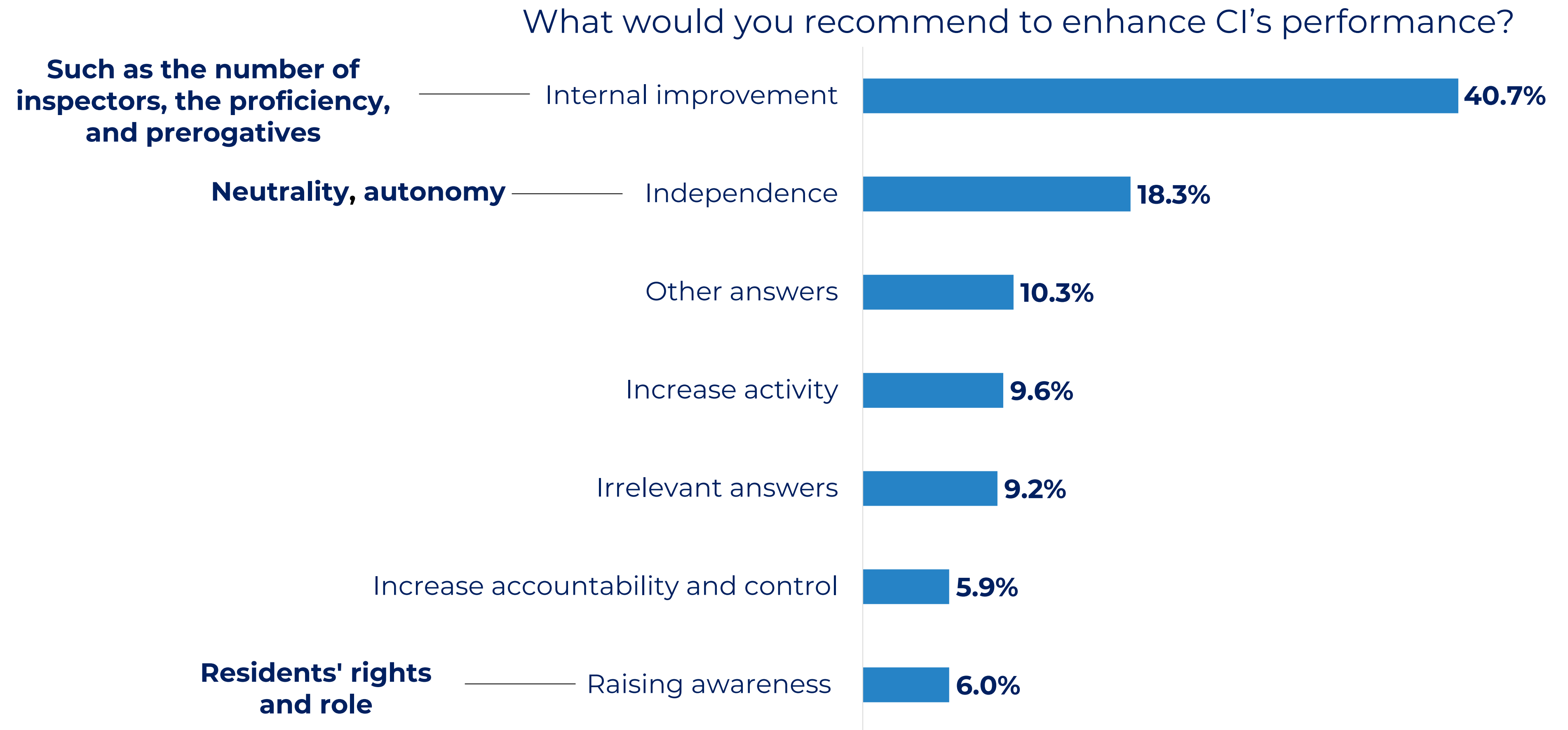| Category	Value
Out of question	**51.5%**
Very probable	15.2%
Improbable	15.2%
Probable to a certain extent	9.4%
Probable	8.7%

53% OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD HEARD ABOUT CI DID NOT FIND IT EFFECTIVE.

67% RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD BE OUT OF THE QUESTION OR VERY IMPROBABLE FOR THEM TO FILE A COMPLAINT BEFORE CI.

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THE UTOPIAN VERSION OF CENTRAL INSPECTION

Forty three percent of respondents suggested ways to enhance CI's performance. The most frequent suggestions included improving CIs internal structures and processes, and bolstering its independence. Few people suggested boosting the inclusion of the general public in oversight.

What would you recommend to enhance CI's performance?

Such as the number of inspectors, the proficiency, and prerogatives —— Internal improvement **40.7%**

Neutrality, autonomy —— Independence **18.3%**

Other answers **10.3%**

Increase activity **9.6%**

Irrelevant answers **9.2%**

Increase accountability and control **5.9%**

Residents' rights and role —— Raising awareness **6.0%**

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals the complexity of the Lebanese public administration, but also its sluggishness and the lack of a customer-orientated culture embedded within it.

The study also draws attention to the lack of information available to the general public about the existing oversight mechanisms in Lebanon, and their institutional processes, procedures and whistleblowing channels.

Public sector inefficiency is shown to be as important a concern as corruption for the general public. It is also an even higher priority for respondents who listed negligence as their top concern when dealing with the public administration.

Addressing these issues will be critical for regaining people's trust in the state, which according to the previously mentioned McKinsey report (2019), could be boosted nine times if administrative services were brought up to standard.

Replacing empty, populist polemic about fighting corruption with a discourse focused on technical measures to enhance the public administration's efficiency and efficacy will help facilitate this change.

Supporting the development of a civic culture that involves the general public in rebuilding and reshaping Lebanon's state institutions will equally catalyze change.

The October 2019 uprising is evidence of a culture in development that promotes and protects whistleblowing, that furiously rejects the payment of bribes, and that champions performance-based oversight and merit-based recruitment. Now is the time to further institutionalize that culture through tangible measures at the national, regional and local levels.

The following recommendations, if actioned, would be decisive steps to nourish that reformist spirit from within the state and within civil society.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Digitize bureaucratic processes and services**. This should start with social security delivery, which tops respondents' list of priorities.

2. **Proactively and clearly communicate** about what each administrative procedure involves, and facilitate people's access to information regarding the documents and steps required.

3. **Inform people on the roles, functions and services of Lebanon's oversight agencies** and the whistleblowing mechanisms available, and encourage citizens and residents to resort to them.

4. **Reinforce existing one-stop-shops like Liban Post and create new ones** that reduce the need for personal intermediaries by acting as citizens and residents' primary contact point for accessing information on multiple public services. Where possible, allow for procedure completion on the same day.

5. **Invest in digital infrastructure and in create a digital culture** in remote areas to ensure equal access to digital services.

6. **Decentralize services** as much as possible and involve local authorities in the provision of support to citizens and residents.

7. **Enable public oversight and Central Inspection's oversight on the public administration** by supporting them to develop key performance indicators, log them on IMPACT and report progress against them.

8. **Continue developing a Lebanon-specific approach to digital transformation** that integrates oversight agencies and reinforces their role to provide transparency and accountability in support of a better public service. Learning from the experience of other countries, such as Estonia, and from the IMPACT experience will be key here.

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."
John F. Kennedy

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THANK YOU

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