



Report on the Survey of Registered Third Parties for the 43rd General Election: Wave 2 Final Report

Supplier name: Forum Research Inc.
Contract number: 05005-19-0543
Contract value: \$24,510.67 (incl. applicable sales tax)
Award date: November 14, 2019
Delivery date: January 8, 2021

Registration number: POR 050-19

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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Prepared by Forum Research



January 2021

Report on the Survey of Registered Third Parties for the 43rd General Election: Wave 2 Final Report

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This public opinion research report presents the results of research on the electoral experience of registered third parties conducted to help evaluate the October 21, 2019, federal election.

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Catalogue number:

SE3-119/2-2021E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN):

978-0-660-37822-0

Related publications:

Catalogue number: SE3-119/2-2021F-PDF (Final report, French)

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-37823-7

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Rapport sur le Sondage auprès des tiers enregistrés à la 43e élection générale : Vague 2

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Executive Summary

Purpose of Research

In 2018, Bill C-76 introduced new rules for third parties that expanded the types of activities that are regulated as well as the time frame during which they are regulated. As part of its post-mortems following the 2019 federal general election, Elections Canada sought to obtain reliable survey data for the following purposes:

- To understand registered third parties' experiences, opinions and attitudes about the third party political financing regime under the *Canada Elections Act*.
- To provide information to support the evaluation of Elections Canada's programs and services, and identify opportunities for improvement.
- To provide input into the agency's performance indicators, reports and recommendations to Parliament.

The *Survey of Registered Third Parties* was the first survey of third parties undertaken by Elections Canada. The survey was conducted in two waves; the first wave¹ addressed activities and products relevant to the pre-writ and writ periods, while the second wave addressed those relevant to the post-election time frame. This report presents the findings of the second wave, which covers various aspects of completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return* (also known herein as "the return"). It also revisits some key topics from the first wave, including the helpfulness of Elections Canada's products and services, which may have been used in preparing the returns and financial agents' views on regulated activities after filing their return.

Methodology

Forum Research administered a two-wave, quantitative survey² to the 2019 financial agents of registered third parties as these individuals were well situated to answer questions that relate to the third-party political financing regime.

This survey is the second of two waves to gauge the public opinion of the financial agents of registered third parties. The survey was available online in both official languages. Of the 55 financial agents who participated in the first wave, 54 agreed to be contacted for a follow-up. These 54 received an invitation to complete the survey, and 29 responses³ were received, equivalent to a 54% response rate.⁴

¹ The report for the first wave – *Report on the Survey of Registered Third Parties for the 43rd General Election: Wave 1* – can be found at

<https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/eval/pes2019/thipar&document=index&lang=e>

² A print version of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

³ Due to the small sample size, figures throughout the report are stated as frequencies and proportions, as opposed to percentages. Figures should be used with caution for those questions with a small number of respondents.

⁴ The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of responses to the survey (29) by the total population who could have participated (54).

Key Findings

Electoral Campaign Return

- Most financial agents found the *Electoral Campaign Return* easy to find and submit, but difficult to fill out.
- Despite perceiving some steps as easy, the majority of financial agents said that completing and submitting the return was a lot of work and also reported that the overall process was difficult.
- The majority of financial agents said that their third party did not request an extension to the return submission deadline. Those who did request an extension reported that it was easy to figure out when they needed to submit the request form, and they found it easy to complete and submit.
- Most financial agents found it easy to determine whether their third party was required to submit an auditor's report with their return, and most reported that their third party was required to file one. Of those who filed an auditor's report, the vast majority said that hiring an auditor was easy.

Elections Canada's Products and Services

- The findings for the use and the helpfulness of Elections Canada's products and services were similar to those in Wave 1. The two most commonly used tools were the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors* and the "New Requirements for Third Parties" document. They were also found to be the most helpful tools. The Political Financing videos were reported to be the least used tool.
- A handful of respondents reported using the Political Entities Support Network (1-800 number), and about half of those who used it found it helpful. Aside from using the 1-800 number, just under half of financial agents reported that they contacted Elections Canada in another way – either by phone or email. The vast majority of those who did said that they made contact by email and that they were satisfied with the help they received.
- When asked about other kinds of products or services that would have made the process easier, the most common response was a request for more clarity on compliance, rules and regulations.
- Most financial agents said they did not consult any other source aside from Elections Canada since the last survey, in contrast to Wave 1, when a majority did so. However, as in Wave 1, those who did consult another source most commonly reported consulting a lawyer.

Regulated Activities

- When financial agents were asked to state their level of agreement (or disagreement) with various statements related to regulated activities, over half disagreed with each of the following statements: "It was clear which of my third party's activities were regulated under the *Canada Elections Act*" and "Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category (e.g. partisan activity, election survey, election advertising) was easy." These results are consistent with Wave 1.

Statement of Political Neutrality

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Forum Research Inc. that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research.

Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Schatten".

William Schatten, Vice President of Research & Analytics
Forum Research Inc.

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Research Approach and Methodology

Research Methodology

Forum Research administered a two-wave, quantitative survey⁵ that was available to financial agents online. This survey was the second of two waves to gauge the public opinion of the financial agents of registered third parties. The questionnaire was created by Elections Canada and programmed and tested by Forum Research. It was fielded in both official languages, English and French.

Open-ended questions were analyzed through a process of manual review and coding. The quantitative questions were analyzed using traditional statistical, descriptive methods.⁶

Throughout the report, where applicable, some questions include a “Top 2” and a “Bottom 2” score. The Top 2 (TOP2) and Bottom 2 (BTM2) reference the collected top-two positive and bottom-two negative responses. For example, a TOP2 grouping referred to as “likely” may be the combined result of “very likely” and “somewhat likely,” whereas a BTM2 grouping of “unlikely” may be the combined result of “very unlikely” and “somewhat unlikely.”

Data Collection

The online survey was active from August 11, 2020, to September 18, 2020.

The target population was the 2019 financial agents of registered third parties who had previously responded to the first wave of the study and consented to receiving the second wave, a total of 54 possible respondents. Financial agents were responsible for administering third parties’ financial transactions related to regulated activities during the pre-election and election periods, and for reporting those transactions to Elections Canada, as required by the *Canada Elections Act*. Thus, these individuals were well situated to answer questions that related to the third party political financing regime.

All 54 financial agents who were eligible to participate in the online survey received an email⁷ inviting them to do so. While participants’ responses were anonymous, each survey contained a unique, personalized URL where each participant could complete the online survey. The purpose of this unique URL was to track whether participants had completed the survey. Six waves of reminder emails⁸ were sent to participants who had not yet completed the survey at the time of each reminder.

⁵ A print version of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

⁶ Due to the small sample size, only frequencies were conducted. Figures should be used with caution for those questions with a small number of respondents.

⁷ The email invitation can be found in Appendix B.

⁸ The reminder emails can be found in Appendix B.

Response Rate

A total of 29 responses were received, and the average completion time of the survey was eight minutes. These responses are equivalent to a 54% response rate.⁹ There were:

- 27 responses to the English version of the survey
- two responses to the French version of the survey

Please note that due to the small sample size of this study, figures throughout this report are stated as frequencies and proportions as opposed to percentages.

⁹ The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of responses to the survey (29) by the total population who could have participated (54).

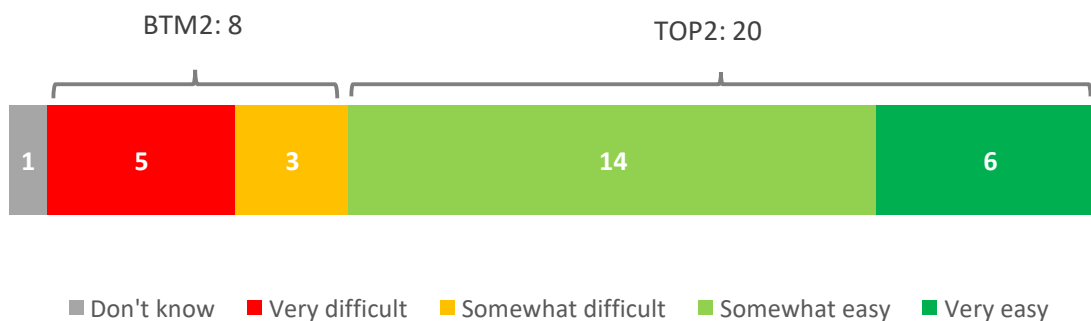
Results of the Study

Ease of Handling the *Electoral Campaign Return*

Ease of Finding the *Electoral Campaign Return*

All 29 financial agents reported that they were the person responsible for finding the *Electoral Campaign Return* on the Elections Canada website, and they were subsequently asked how easy it was to find. The majority (20 out of 29) said the form was easy to find, with two in ten (6 out of 29) saying it was very easy to find and about half (14 out of 29) saying it was somewhat easy. Only two in seven (8 out of 29) said it was difficult to find, and one person said they did not know (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ease of finding the *Electoral Campaign Return* on the Elections Canada website



Q2: How easy or difficult was it to find the *Electoral Campaign Return* form on the Elections Canada website?

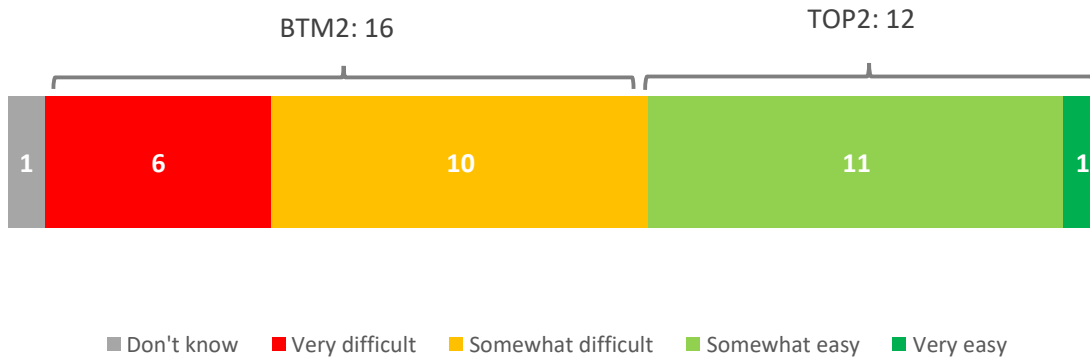
Base: Respondents who said that they were the person responsible for finding the *Electoral Campaign Return* form on the Elections Canada website (n=29)

Ease of Completing and Submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return*

The following series of questions asked about the ease of completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return*.

First, financial agents were asked whether it was easy or difficult to figure out how to fill out the *Electoral Campaign Return*. Four in ten (12 out of 29) said it was easy to figure out how to fill out the form, and about six in ten (16 out of 29) said it was difficult. Almost a third of financial agents (10 out of 29) found it somewhat difficult, and almost a fifth (6 out of 29) found it very difficult, to figure out how to fill out the form (see Figure 2).

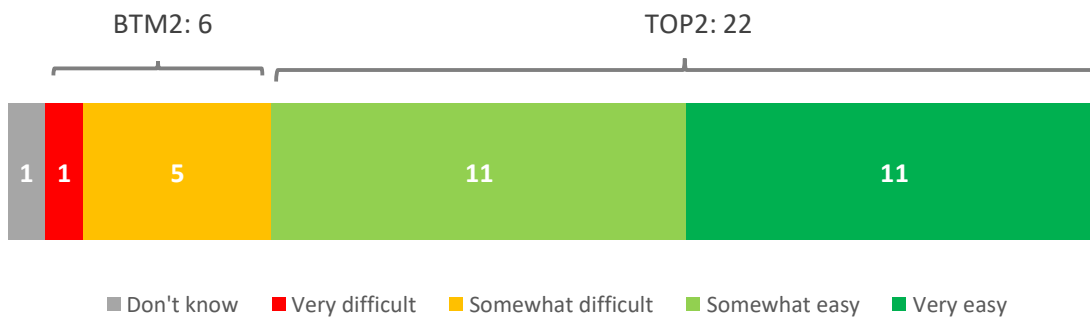
Figure 2: Ease of figuring out how to fill out the *Electoral Campaign Return*



Q3: How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to fill out the *Electoral Campaign Return form*? Base: All respondents (n=29)

The *Electoral Campaign Return* must typically be submitted within four months of election day. When asked how easy it was to figure out when the return was due at Elections Canada, three quarters of financial agents (22 out of 29) said it was easy, with almost four in ten (11 out of 29) saying it was very easy and another four in ten (11 out of 29) saying it was somewhat easy. Two in ten (6 out of 29) found it difficult to figure out the due date for submission (see Figure 3).

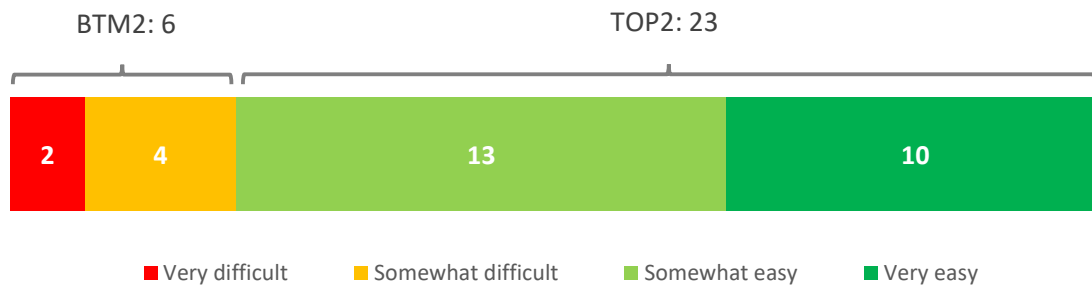
Figure 3: Ease of figuring out by what date the third party needed to submit the *Electoral Campaign Return* to Elections Canada



Q4: How easy or difficult was it to figure out by what date your third party needed to submit the *Electoral Campaign Return* to Elections Canada? Base: All respondents (n=29)

In terms of figuring out how to submit the *Electoral Campaign Return* to Elections Canada, almost eight in ten financial agents (23 out of 29) said it was easy. A third (10 out of 29) of respondents reported that it was very easy, and over four in ten (13 out of 29) reported that it was somewhat easy. A fifth of the financial agents (6 out of 29) said it was difficult to figure out how to submit the form (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ease of figuring out how to submit the *Electoral Campaign Return* to Elections Canada

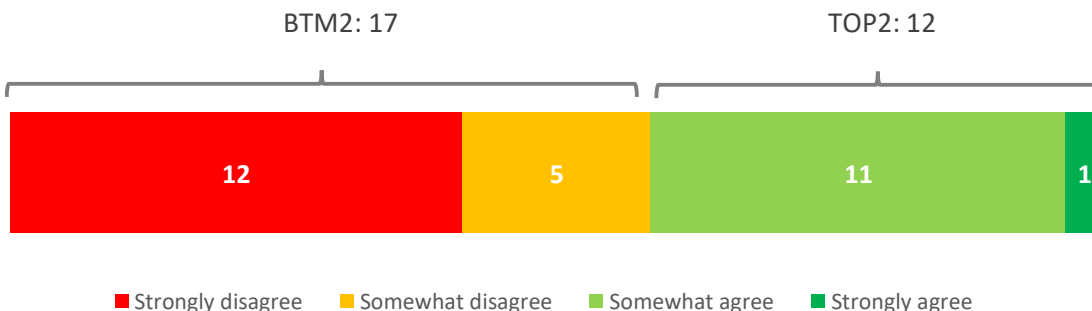


Q5: How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to submit the *Electoral Campaign Return* to Elections Canada?
 Base: All respondents (n=29)

Burden of Completing the *Electoral Campaign Return*

Most financial agents found the *Electoral Campaign Return* somewhat burdensome to complete and submit. Over half the financial agents (17 out of 29) disagreed with the statement, "Completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return* did not require very much work." Four in ten (12 out of 29) financial agents strongly disagreed with the statement, while one in six (5 out of 29) somewhat disagreed. About four in ten financial agents (12 out of 29) agreed that completing and submitting the return did not require very much work (see Figure 5).

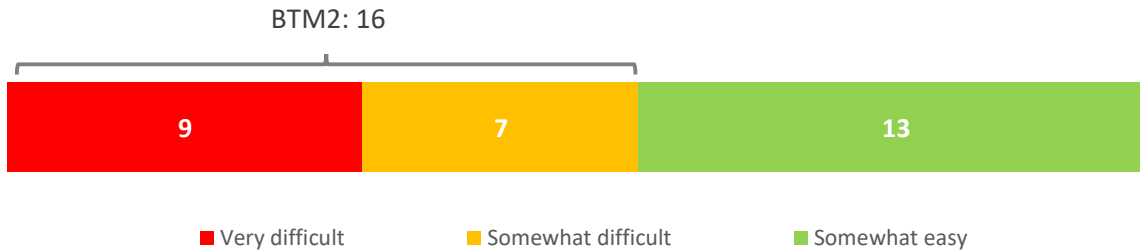
Figure 5: Level of agreement with "Completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return* did not require very much work"



Q6: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return* did not require very much work. Base: All respondents (n=29)

In addition to the amount of work required to complete and submit the *Electoral Campaign Return*, the majority of financial agents also found the overall return process challenging. Over half the financial agents (16 out of 29) said that the overall process of completing and submitting the return was difficult. Almost a third of the respondents (9 out of 29) found the process very difficult, and nearly a quarter (7 out of 29) said that the process was somewhat difficult. Over four in ten (13 out of 29) said it was a somewhat easy process. None of the financial agents reported that the process was very easy (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Overall ease of completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return*



Q7: Overall, would you say that the process of completing and submitting the Electoral Campaign Return was ...
 Base: All respondents (n=29)

Those who said that, overall, the process of completing and submitting the return was difficult were asked an open-ended follow-up question about what made it difficult.

Although 16 respondents were asked this question, there were 22 mentions in total as respondents were able to mention more than one type of difficulty in their response. The most common response was that the financial agents had to do manual calculations due to the PDF format of the return (6 out of 16) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Difficulties faced when completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return*

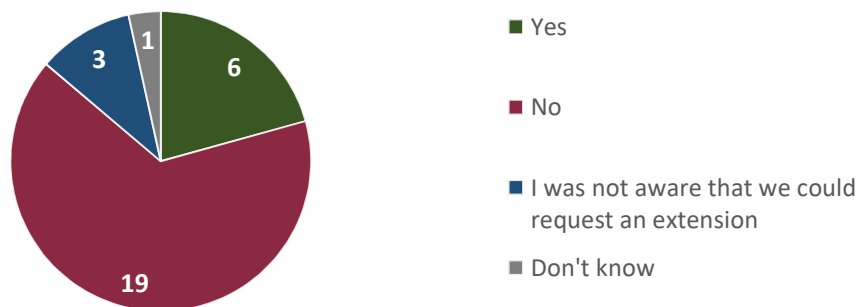


Q8: What was difficult about completing and submitting the Electoral Campaign Return? (Open-ended)
 Base: Respondents who said the overall process of completing and submitting the *Electoral Campaign Return* was “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” (n=16)

Ease of Extending the *Electoral Campaign Return* Filing Deadline

While the *Electoral Campaign Return* is due within four months of election day, third parties can request an extension. Financial agents were asked whether their third party submitted a request to extend the filing deadline for their return. Almost two thirds (19 out of 29) reported that they did not submit a request for the deadline extension. Only two in ten financial agents (6 out of 29) submitted a request, and one in ten (3 out of 29) said they were not aware that their third party could request an extension (see Figure 8).

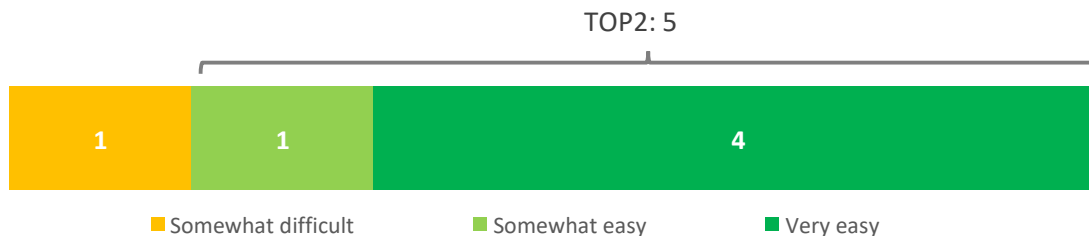
Figure 8: Submission of a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return*



Q9: Did your third party submit a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return*?
Base: All respondents (n=29)

Six financial agents who stated that their third party submitted a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return* were asked whether it was easy or difficult to find the extension request form on the Elections Canada website. The majority (5 out of 6) reported that it was easy, with two thirds (4 out of 6) saying it was very easy. One out of six financial agents found it somewhat easy, while one out of six found it somewhat difficult (see Figure 9).

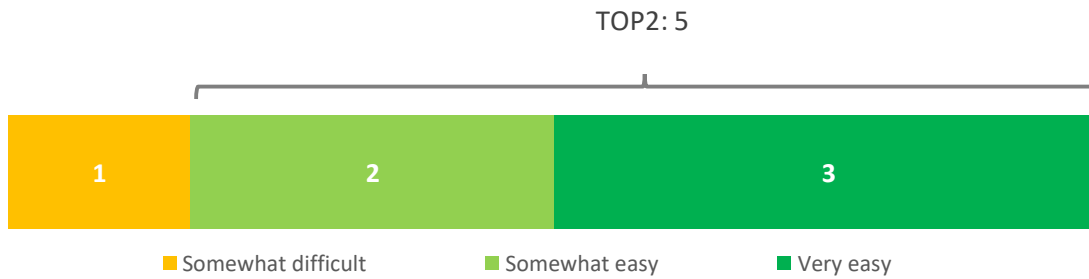
Figure 9: Ease of finding the extension request form on the Elections Canada website



Q10: How easy or difficult was it to find the extension request form on the Elections Canada website? Base: Respondents who said their third party submitted a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return* (n=6)

Those six financial agents were also asked how easy or difficult it was to figure out how to fill out the extension request form. Most of them (5 out of 6) reported that it was easy, with a third (2 out of 6) saying it was very easy and half (3 out of 6) saying it was somewhat easy. One respondent found it somewhat difficult (see Figure 10).

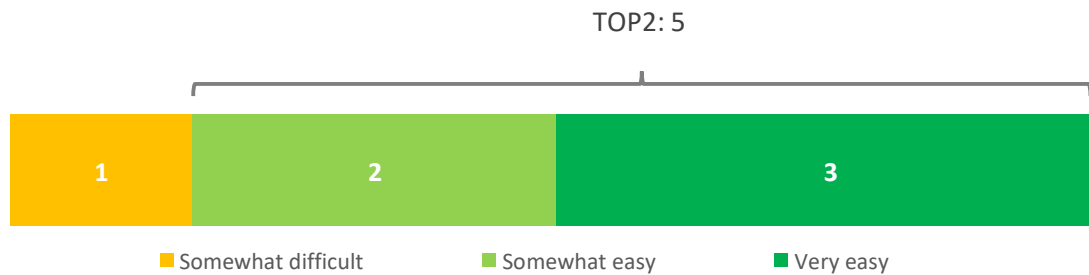
Figure 10: Ease of figuring out how to fill out the extension request form



Q11: How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to fill out the extension request form? Base: Respondents who said their third party submitted a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return* (n=6)

The same six financial agents were also asked how easy or difficult it was to figure out by what date they were required to submit the extension request. Again, most of them (5 out of 6) reported that it was easy, with half the financial agents (3 out of 6) saying it was very easy and a third (2 out of 6) saying it was somewhat easy. One respondent found it somewhat difficult (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Ease of figuring out by what date the third party had to submit the extension request



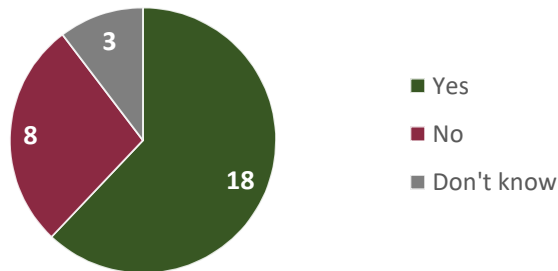
Q12: How easy or difficult was it to figure out by what date your third party had to submit the extension request? Base: Respondents who said their third party submitted a request to extend the filing deadline for the *Electoral Campaign Return* (n=6)

Ease of Filing an Auditor’s Report

If a third party spends \$10,000 or more on regulated activities, they must appoint an auditor. Financial agents were asked whether their third party was required to file an auditor’s report with the *Electoral Campaign Return*. Six in ten (18 out of 29) said that they were required to file an auditor’s report, while

nearly three in ten (8 out of 29) reported that an auditor’s report was not required for their third party. One in ten (3 out of 29) did not know whether an auditor’s report was required (see Figure 12).

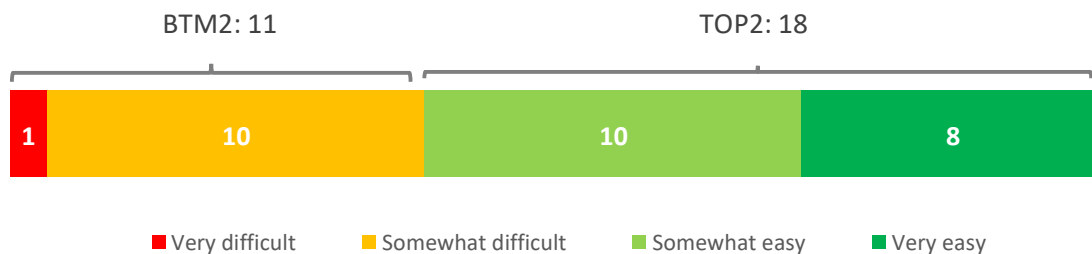
Figure 12: Requirement to file an auditor’s report with the *Electoral Campaign Return*



Q13: Was your third party required to file an auditor’s report with the Electoral Campaign Return? Base: All respondents (n=29)

Six in ten financial agents (18 out of 29) stated that it was easy to figure out whether an auditor’s report was required with their return, with a third (10 out of 29) finding it somewhat easy and over a fourth (8 out of 29) finding it very easy. Four in ten financial agents (11 out of 29) found it difficult to figure out whether an auditor’s report was required in their situation (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Ease of figuring out whether an auditor’s report was required with the *Electoral Campaign Return*

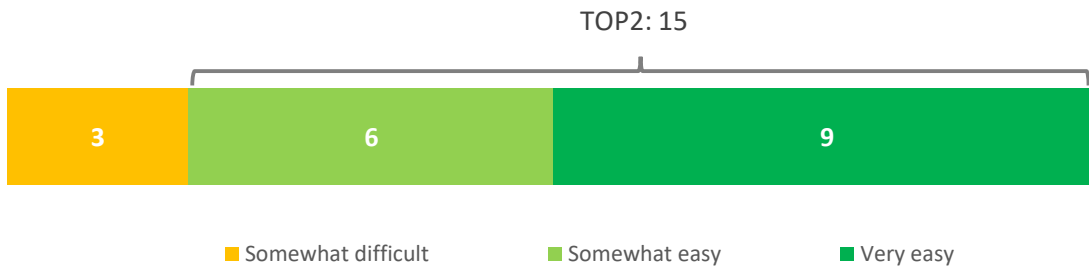


Q14: How easy or difficult was it to figure out whether an auditor’s report was required with the Electoral Campaign Return? Base: All respondents (n=29)

Ease of Hiring an Auditor

Most financial agents said their third party found it easy to hire an auditor. Those who said their third party was required to file an auditor’s report with their return were asked how easy or difficult it was to hire an auditor for this purpose. Eight in ten financial agents (15 out of 18) found it easy, with half of them (9 out of 18) saying it was very easy and a third (6 out of 18) saying it was somewhat easy. One in six (3 out of 18) said that hiring an auditor was somewhat difficult (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Ease of hiring an auditor



Q15: How easy or difficult was it for your third party to hire an auditor? Base: Respondents who said their third party was required to file an auditor’s report with the *Electoral Campaign Return* (n=18)

Three financial agents who said that hiring an auditor was somewhat difficult were asked an open-ended follow-up question about what made it difficult. There were four responses since financial agents had the option to mention more than one difficulty. Two financial agents stated that the auditors were not knowledgeable about third party audit requirements (e.g. in terms of auditing reports, unfamiliar with regulations, etc.). Another difficulty reported by one financial agent was conflict of interest (e.g. any auditors they tried to hire were also being used by Elections Canada), and another said the cost of hiring an auditor was prohibitive.

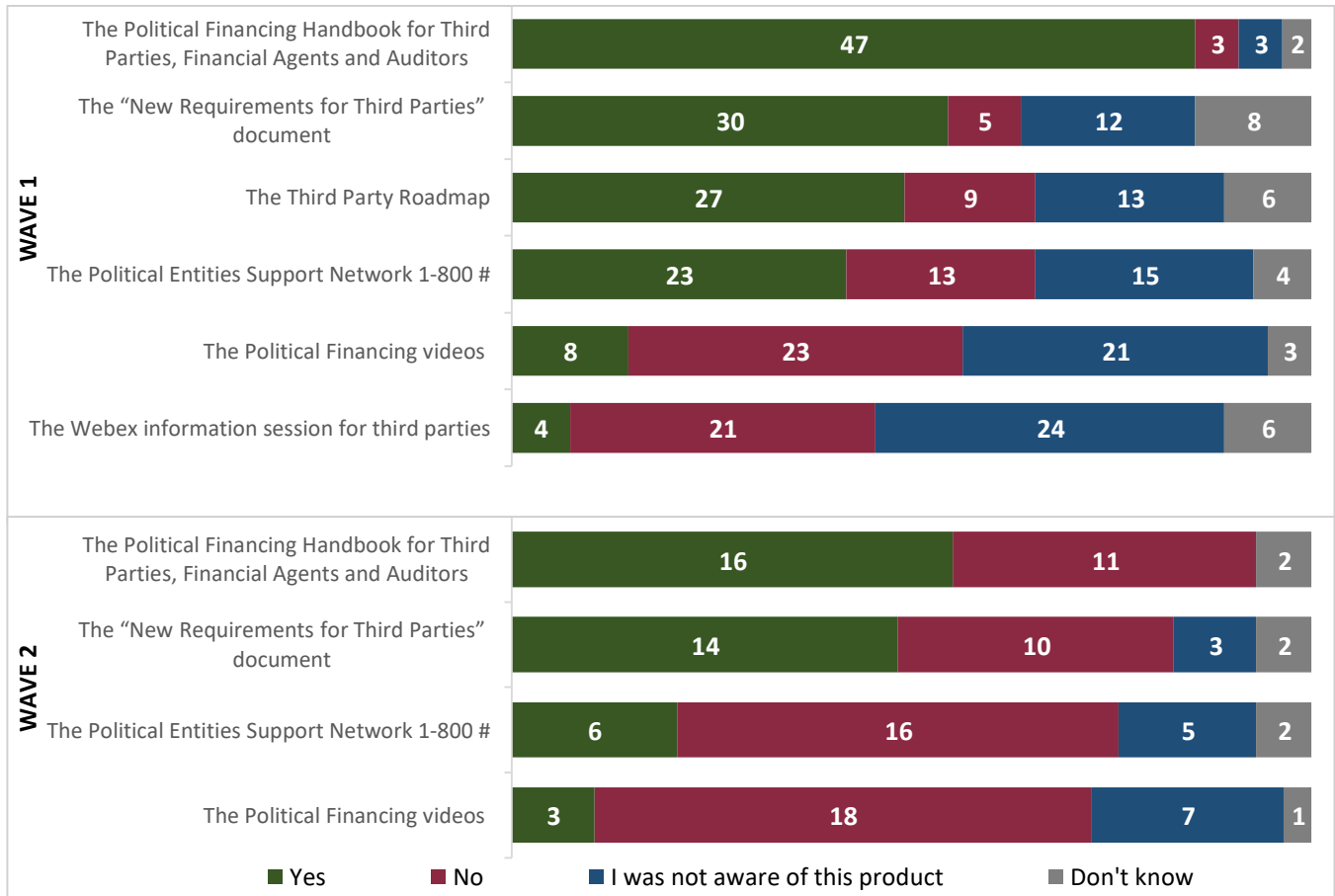
Elections Canada’s Products and Services

In Wave 1, financial agents had been asked whether they had used various products and services that Elections Canada provided for third parties. Here, they were asked again whether they had used four¹⁰ of these products and services in the time since they had responded to the last survey: the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors*, the “New Requirements for Third Parties” document, the Political Financing videos and the Political Entities Support Network 1-800 number.

As in Wave 1, the most commonly used product was the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors*, with over half the financial agents (16 out of 29) saying they used this product (see Figure 15). The least used product or service was the Political Financing videos (3 out of 29).

¹⁰ No Webex sessions were offered following Wave 1, and the Third Party Roadmap does not include information on the *Electoral Campaign Return*, so these items were not included in the Wave 2 questionnaire.

Figure 15: Elections Canada products and services used by third parties



WAVE 1/Q21A-F: Did you use any of the following Elections Canada products and services? Base: All respondents (n=55)

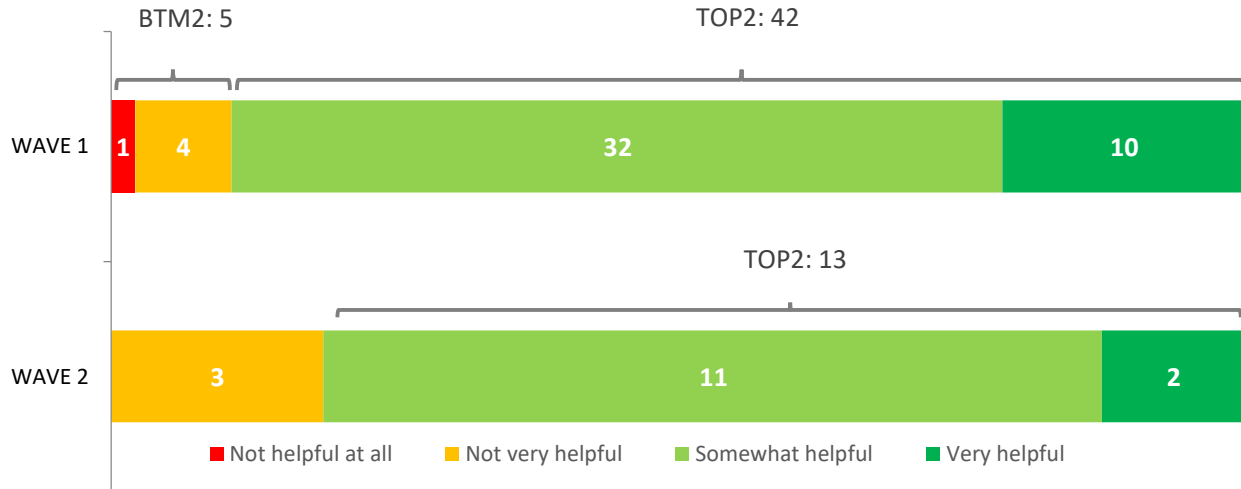
WAVE 2/Q17A-D: In the time since you responded to the last survey, did you use any of the following Elections Canada products and services? Base: All respondents (n=29)

Helpfulness of Elections Canada's Products and Services

Financial agents who stated that their third party had used a given product or service were then asked to rate its level of helpfulness.

Similar to Wave 1, the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors* was found helpful by most of the financial agents who used it, with eight in ten financial agents (13 out of 16) saying this product was helpful. One in ten financial agents (2 out of 16) said that it was very helpful, and nearly seven in ten (11 out of 16) said it was somewhat helpful. About two in ten (3 out of 16) said the handbook was not very helpful (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Helpfulness of the *Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors*

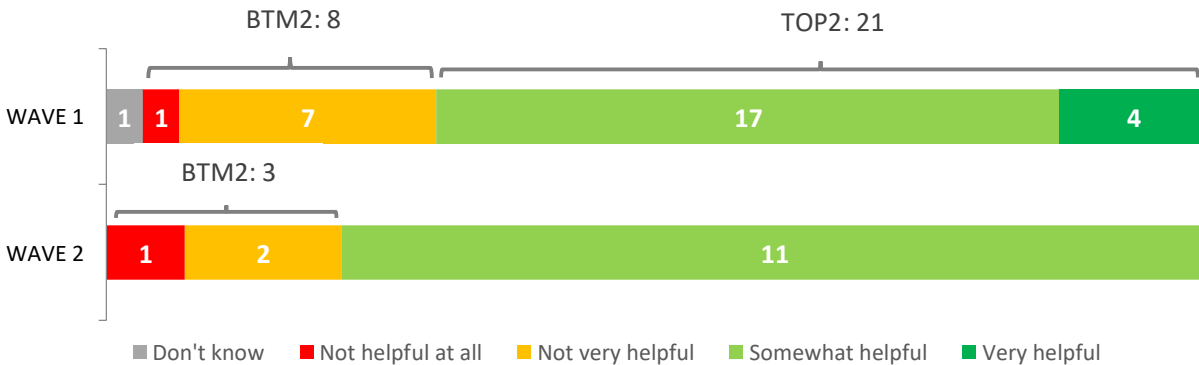


WAVE 1/Q22: Would you say that Elections Canada’s Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors was ... Base: Respondents who used this product (n=47)

WAVE 2/Q18: Since the last survey, would you say that Elections Canada’s Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors was ... Base: Respondents who used this product (n=16)

Like Wave 1, the “New Requirements for Third Parties” document was the second most widely used product. Almost eight in ten financial agents (11 out of 14) who used this product said they found it somewhat helpful. Two in ten financial agents (3 out of 14) said this document was not helpful (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Helpfulness of the "New Requirements for Third Parties" document

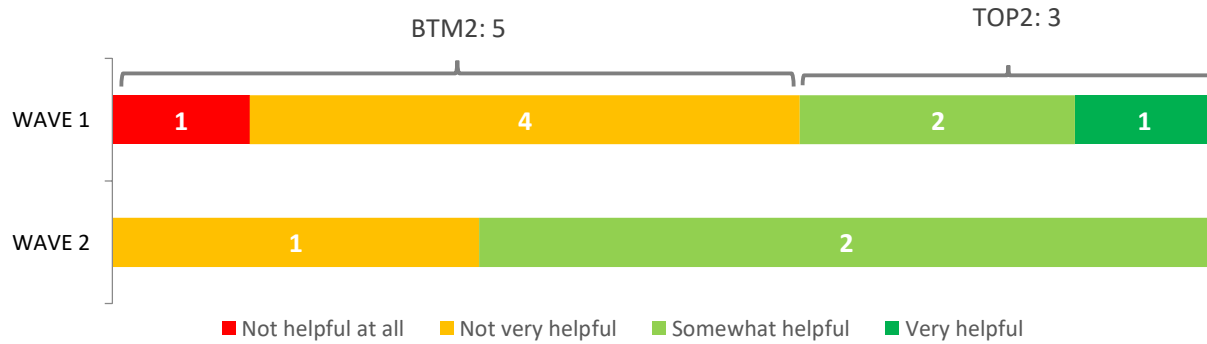


WAVE 1/Q24: Would you say that Elections Canada’s document, entitled “New Requirements for Third Parties,” was ... Base: Respondents who used this product (n=30)

WAVE 2/Q19: Since the last survey, would you say that Elections Canada’s document, entitled “New Requirements for Third Parties,” was ... Base: Respondents who used this product (n=14)

Only three financial agents reported they had used the Political Financing videos on the Elections Canada website. Two of them found this service somewhat helpful, while one of them said it was not very helpful. In Wave 1, almost four in ten financial agents (3 out of 8) had found the service helpful, whereas over half (5 out of 8) had said this service was not helpful (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Helpfulness of Political Financing videos



WAVE 1/Q25: Would you say that the Political Financing videos on Elections Canada’s website were ...

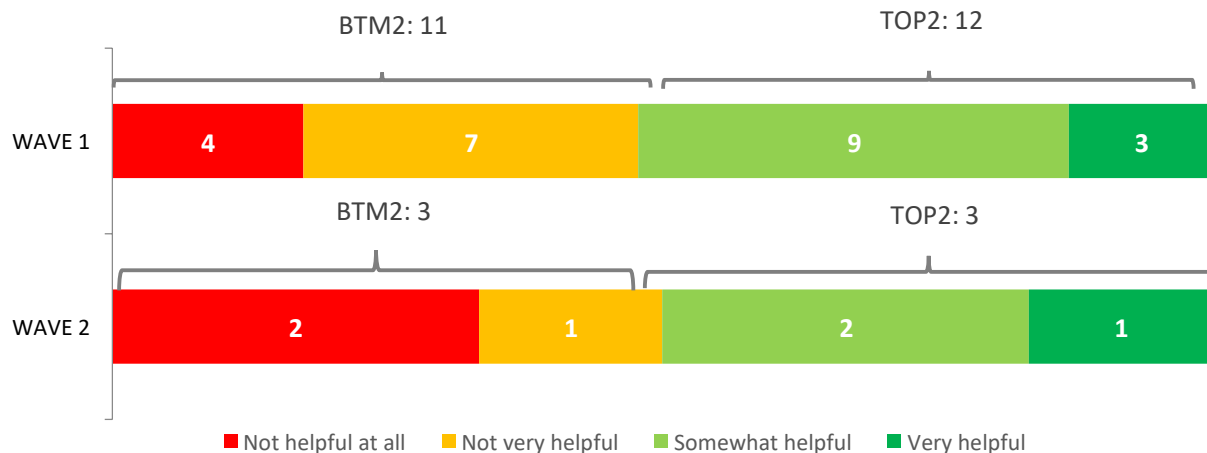
Base: Respondents who used this product (n=8)

WAVE 2/Q20: Since the last survey, would you say that the Political Financing videos on Elections Canada’s website were ...

Base: Respondents who used this product (n=3)

Two in ten financial agents (6 out of 29) contacted Elections Canada through the 1-800 number for political entities, and of those who did, half (3 out of 6) said it was helpful. This is similar to Wave 1, where a little over half (12 out of 23) had found it helpful (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Helpfulness of Political Entities Support Network (1-800 number)



WAVE 1/Q27: Would you say that contacting Elections Canada through the 1-800 number for political entities was ...

Base: Respondents who used this product (n=23)

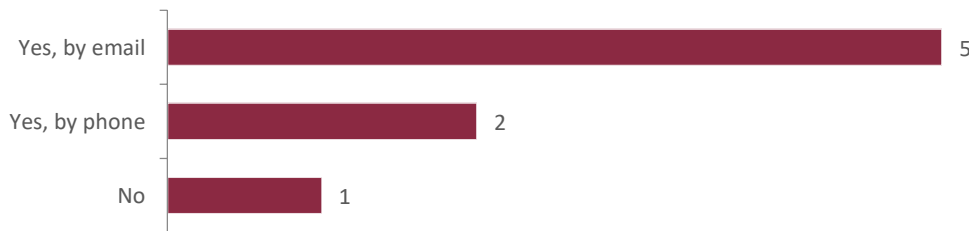
WAVE 2/Q21: Since the last survey, would you say that contacting Elections Canada through the 1-800 number for political entities was ... Base: Respondents who used this product (n=6)

Contacting Elections Canada

While the Political Entities Support Network is one way for financial agents to get in touch with Elections Canada, some also contacted the agency directly, by phone or email. Just under four in ten financial agents (11 out of 29) reported contacting Elections Canada in another way – either by phone or email.

Of the six financial agents who used the Political Entities Support Network 1-800 number, most (5 out of 6) also contacted Elections Canada directly in another way; only one of the six did not do so (see Figure 20). Among that group, all five opted to contact Elections Canada by email, and two of those five reported that they contacted the agency by phone as well as email.

Figure 20: Ways of contacting Elections Canada, aside from using the 1-800 number for political entities



Q22: Aside from using the 1-800 number for political entities, did you contact Elections Canada in any other ways? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY] Base: Respondents who used the 1-800 number for political entities (n=6)

Respondents who did not use the Political Entities Support Network 1-800 number were also asked whether they had contacted Elections Canada in another way since the last survey. One quarter (6 out of 23) reported that they contacted Elections Canada by email, but none reported phoning the agency. Almost seven in ten of those respondents (16 out of 23) reported that they had not tried to contact Elections Canada since the last survey (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Contacting Elections Canada for any reason since the last survey



Q23: Since the last survey, did you contact Elections Canada for any reason? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
 Base: Respondents who did not use the 1-800 number for political entities (n=23)

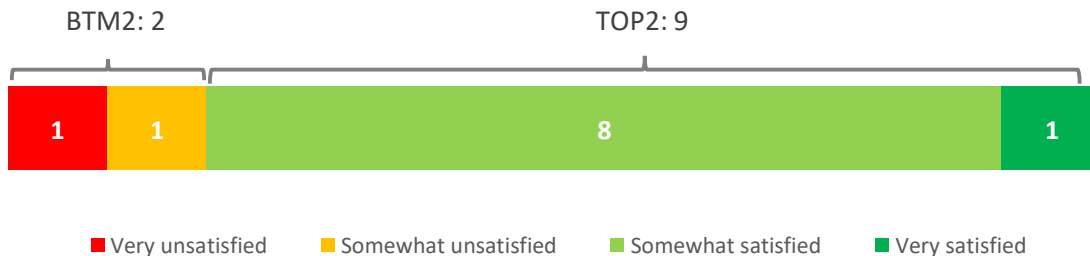
The two financial agents who said they had contacted Elections Canada directly by phone since the last survey were asked how satisfied they were with the help they received from the call. Both said that they were very unsatisfied with the help they received.

When asked why they were not satisfied, both respondents reported that the “representative could not answer the questions.” Other reasons reported were that they were “promised a call back and never received one” and that they “received different answers from different representatives.”

The 11 respondents who had contacted Elections Canada by email since the last survey were asked how satisfied they were with the help they received following the email. Four in five (9 out of 11) said they were satisfied with the help they received, with almost one in ten (1 out of 11) being very satisfied and over seven in ten (8 out of 11) being somewhat satisfied. One in five (2 out of 11) said they were unsatisfied (see Figure 22).

The two financial agents who were unsatisfied with the help they received by email were asked what caused them to be unsatisfied. “Not gaining knowledge based on questions asked” and “No follow-up email” were two reasons they gave.

Figure 22: Satisfaction with help received following contact by email



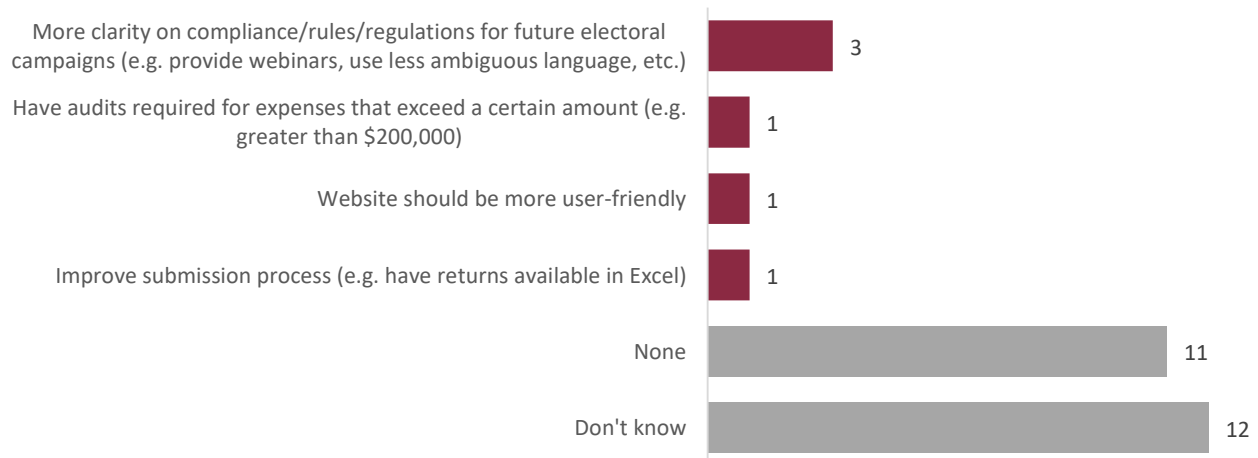
Q26: How satisfied were you with the help you received following that email?
 Base: Respondents who said they had contacted Elections Canada by email since the last survey (n=11)

Other Products, Services or Sources

In Wave 1, financial agents were asked whether there were any other kinds of products or services that would have made the *Electoral Campaign Return* process easier. Here, they were asked whether they had any new ideas to share about products or services since the last survey.¹¹

While there were 29 mentions, the majority of respondents said either that there were no other products or services that would have made the process easier or that they did not know (23 out of 29). Only a few products or services were mentioned, and the most common response provided was a request for more clarity about the rules and regulations for future electoral campaigns (see Figure 23). In Wave 1, a similar response about having clearer or unambiguous information was the second most common response.

Figure 23: Other products or services that would have made the process easier

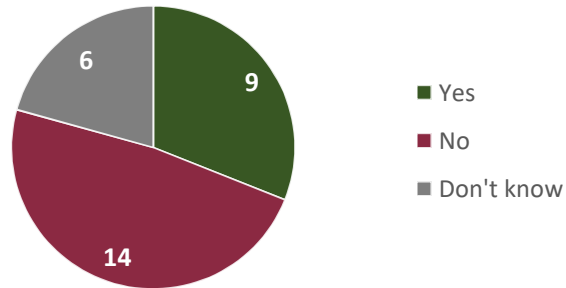


Q28: In the time since you responded to the last survey, is there any other kind of product or service that would have made the process easier for you? If so, what kind? (Open-ended) Base: All respondents (n=29)

All financial agents were asked whether they would be interested in providing feedback as Elections Canada developed new products and services for registered third parties. Three in ten financial agents (9 out of 29) said they would be interested, whereas about half (14 out of 29) said they would not be interested (see Figure 24). Two in ten (6 out of 29) stated that they did not know.

¹¹ Please refer to the Wave 1 report for more information about products and services reported in the last wave.

Figure 24: Interest in providing feedback as Elections Canada develops new products and services for registered third parties

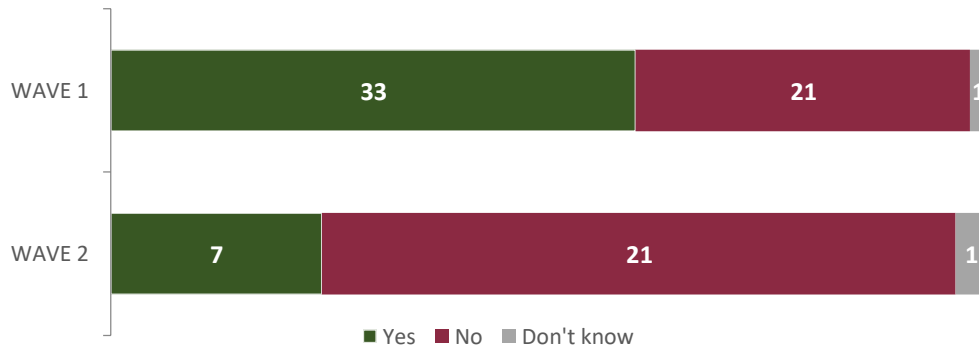


Q29: Would you be interested in providing feedback as Elections Canada develops new products and services for registered third parties? Base: All respondents (n=29)

In Wave 1, financial agents were asked whether they consulted other sources aside from Elections Canada to understand the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* as they related to third parties and how they applied to the financial agents' situation. Here, they were asked whether they had consulted another such source in the time since the last survey.

One quarter of the financial agents (7 out of 29) said that they had consulted other sources since the last survey, while seven in ten (21 out of 29) said they had not, and one said they did not know (see Figure 25). In Wave 1, six in ten (33 out of 55) financial agents said that they did consult other sources, nearly four in ten (21 out of 55) said they did not, and one said they did not know.

Figure 25: Consulting other sources aside from Elections Canada to understand the provisions of the Canada Elections Act



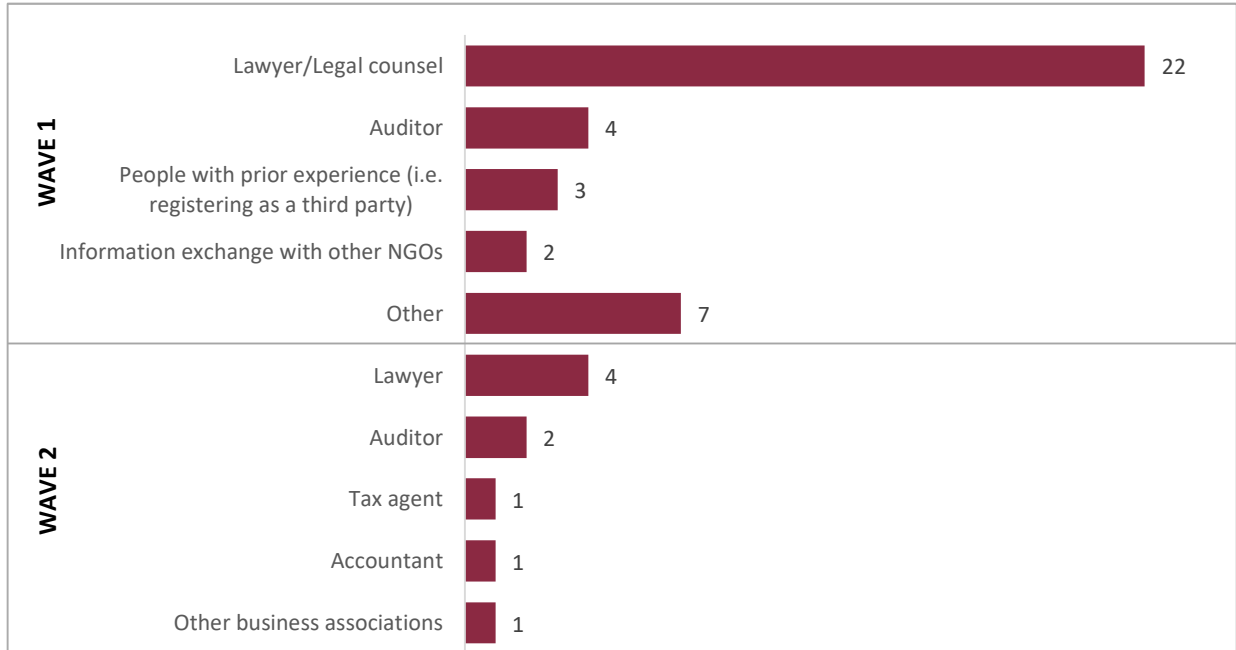
WAVE 1/Q38: Did you consult any other sources aside from Elections Canada to understand the provisions of the Canada Elections Act as they relate to third parties and how they applied in your situation? Base: All respondents (n=55)

WAVE 2/Q30: In the previous survey we asked you about consulting other sources aside from Elections Canada. Since the last survey, did you consult any other sources aside from Elections Canada to understand the provisions of the Canada Elections Act as they relate to third parties and how they applied in your situation? Base: All respondents (n=29)

The financial agents who said that they did consult other sources aside from Elections Canada were asked what sources they consulted.

In Wave 1, there were 38 mentions provided by the financial agents since they had the option to mention more than one source. Most financial agents (22 out of 33) mentioned that they consulted a lawyer or legal counsel. Here, there were nine mentions provided by seven financial agents. Similar to Wave 1, most financial agents (4 out of 7) mentioned that they consulted a lawyer (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Other sources financial agents consulted aside from Elections Canada



WAVE 1/Q39: *What sources did you consult?* Base: Respondents who said they consulted other sources to understand the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* (n=33)

WAVE 2/Q31: *What sources did you consult?* Base: Respondents who said they consulted other sources to understand the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* (n=7)

Reporting Regulated Activities

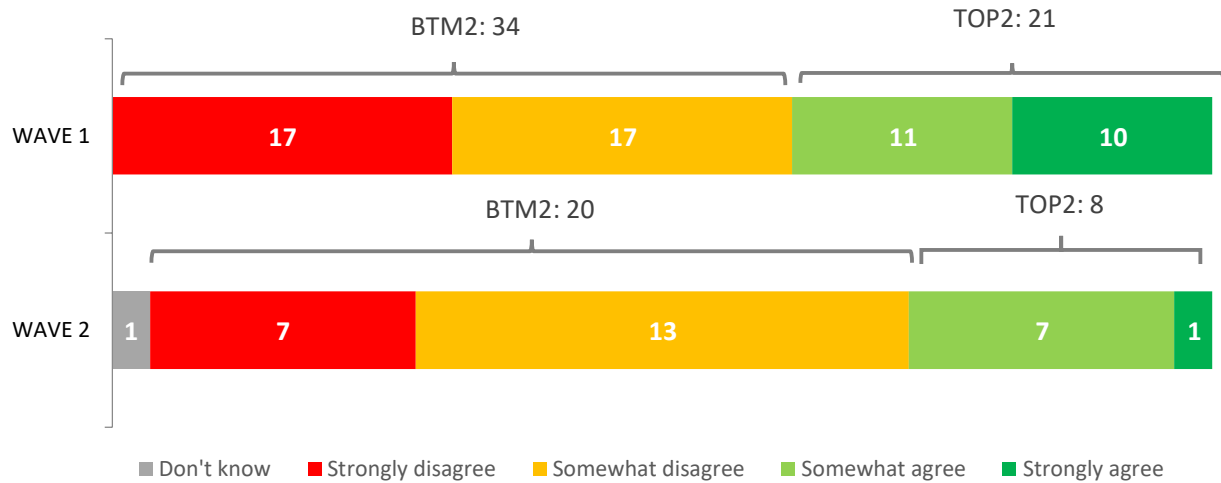
Ease of Determining Regulated Activities

As in Wave 1, financial agents were asked to state their level of agreement (or disagreement) with various statements related to regulated activities.

Almost seven in ten financial agents (20 out of 29) disagreed with the statement, “It was clear which of my third party’s activities were regulated under the *Canada Elections Act*,” with nearly five in ten (13 out of 29) saying they somewhat disagreed and over two in ten (7 out of 29) saying they strongly disagreed (see Figure 27). This was similar to Wave 1, when over six in ten (34 out of 55) had said they disagreed with the statement.

In contrast, almost three in ten (8 out of 29) said they agreed with the statement; one fourth (7 out of 29) said they somewhat agreed, and only one agent said they strongly agreed (see Figure 27). Again, this was similar to Wave 1, where almost four in ten (21 out of 55) had said they agreed with this statement.

Figure 27: Level of agreement with "It was clear which of my third party's activities were regulated under the *Canada Elections Act*"



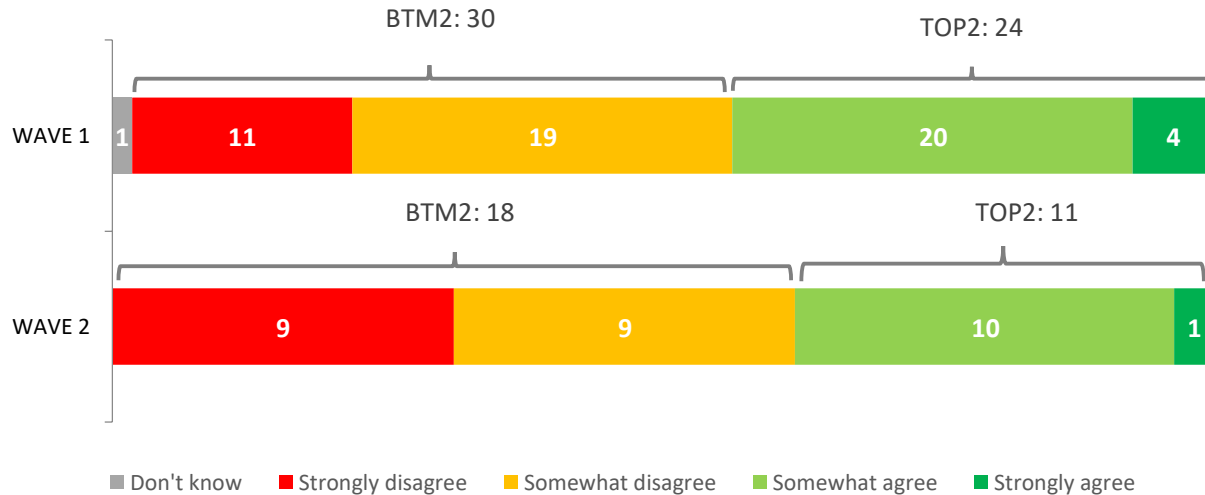
WAVE 1/Q40: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: It was clear which of my third party's activities were regulated under the Canada Elections Act. Base: All respondents (n=55)

WAVE 2/Q32: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: It was clear which of my third party's activities were regulated under the Canada Elections Act. Base: All respondents (n=29)

When asked about their level of agreement with the statement, "Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category (e.g. partisan activity, election survey, election advertising) was easy," six in ten financial agents (18 out of 29) said that they disagreed with the statement, with three in ten (9 out of 29) saying they somewhat disagreed and another three in ten (9 out of 29) saying they strongly disagreed. This is similar to Wave 1, where almost six in ten (30 out of 55) had said that they disagreed (see Figure 28).

The same was true for the inverse: just shy of four in ten financial agents (11 out of 29) said they agreed that it was easy to report their third party's regulated spending under the right category. This was about the same proportion as in Wave 1, where just over four in ten (24 out of 55) had agreed with the statement (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: Level of agreement with "Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category was easy"



WAVE 1/Q41: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category (e.g. partisan activity, election survey, election advertising) was easy.

Base: All respondents (n=55)

WAVE 2/Q33: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category (e.g. partisan activity, election survey, election advertising) was easy.

Base: All respondents (n=29)

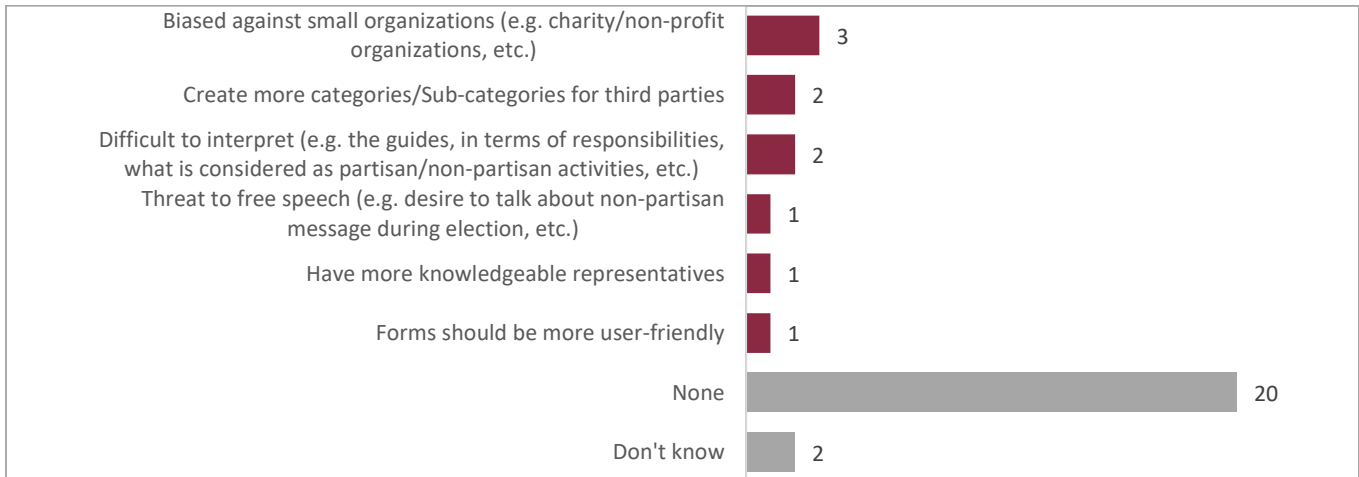
Other Comments

At the end of the survey, financial agents were again asked whether they would like to provide any other comments regarding their experience as a registered third party since the last survey. Most did not have any additional comments to add, but those who did could mention more than one item.

Among the seven financial agents who added a comment, the most common remarks were a perceived bias against small organizations (3 out of 29), the need to create more categories or sub-categories for third parties (2 out of 29) and difficulties interpreting the requirements of the *Canada Elections Act* (2 out of 29). Other comments included a perceived threat to free speech (1 out of 29), the need for more knowledgeable representatives (1 out of 29) and the need to make forms more user-friendly (1 out of 29) (see Figure 29). In Wave 1, the most common remark had been that the process was burdensome (16 out of 54).¹²

¹² Please refer to the Wave 1 report for more comments provided in the last wave.

Figure 29: Additional comments regarding third party experience



Q34: Thinking of the time since the last survey, is there anything else not covered here that you would like to share about your experience as a registered third party? (Open-ended) Base: All respondents (n=29)

Appendix A: Questionnaire

PROGRAMMING NOTES – VARIABLES AVAILABLE

Currently available

- Application date [DD-MMM-YY]
- Registration date [DD-MMM-YY]
- If financial agent is also applicant [Y/N]
- Province [...]
- Type of third party [Individual (1), Group without a governing body (2), Group with a governing body (3), Corporation (4)]
- Number of interim returns submitted [0 - 4]

Available in the electoral campaign returns

- Amount of contributions
- Amount of expenses by category

May be available in the future

- If registered in 2015 [Y/N]

INTRODUCTION

Hello! Thank you for participating in this follow-up survey of Financial Agents of Registered Third Parties. Your input is important and your continued participation in this research is much appreciated. This survey is being conducted by Forum Research on behalf of Elections Canada. The purpose of this survey is to understand registered third parties' experiences, opinions and attitudes about the third-party political financing regime. This survey should take about 5–10 minutes to complete. It is anonymous and voluntary, and your responses will not be used to identify you in any way.

To verify that this survey is run by Elections Canada, you can call their toll-free number at 1-800-463-6868. Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time).

Any personal information collected is subject to the federal *Privacy Act* and will be held in strict confidence. By taking part in this survey, you consent to the use of your answers for research and statistical purposes. The anonymous database of all responses may be shared with external researchers under the strict condition that no personal information is ever distributed or made public.

SCREENING

If you were the financial agent for more than one registered third party, please base your answers on the one that had the highest amount of expenses.

In this survey, we will ask you about a number of the tasks that registered third parties are required to undertake, the services that are offered to them, and your thoughts and opinions about the third party regime in general. Please answer to the best of your knowledge on behalf of your third party as a whole. If you have no knowledge of something that is touched upon, please feel free to respond that you don't know.

ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN

EASE OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN PROCESS

First, we would like to ask you about the electoral campaign return that your third party completed within four months of election day.

EASE OF FINDING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN FORM

1. Were you the person responsible for finding the electoral campaign return form on the Elections Canada website?
 1. Yes
 2. No [\[Terminate\]](#)
 3. Don't know [\[Terminate\]](#)

2. How easy or difficult was it to find the electoral campaign return form on the Elections Canada website?
 1. Very easy
 2. Somewhat easy
 3. Somewhat difficult
 4. Very difficult
 5. Don't know

EASE OF COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN FORM

3. How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to fill out the electoral campaign return form?
 1. Very easy
 2. Somewhat easy
 3. Somewhat difficult
 4. Very difficult
 5. Don't know

4. **How easy or difficult was it to figure out by what date your third party needed to submit the electoral campaign return to Elections Canada?**
 1. Very easy
 2. Somewhat easy
 3. Somewhat difficult
 4. Very difficult
 5. Don't know

5. **How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to submit the electoral campaign return to Elections Canada?**
 1. Very easy
 2. Somewhat easy
 3. Somewhat difficult
 4. Very difficult
 5. Don't know

BURDEN OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement:

6. **Completing and submitting the electoral campaign return did not require very much work.**
 1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
 5. Don't know

7. **Overall, would you say that the process of completing and submitting the electoral campaign return was...**
 1. Very easy
 2. Somewhat easy
 3. Somewhat difficult
 4. Very difficult
 5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q7 = 03 OR 04]

8. **What was difficult about completing and submitting the electoral campaign return? [OPEN-ENDED]**

EASE OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN RETURN EXTENSION

9. Did your third party submit a request to extend the filing deadline for the electoral campaign return?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I was not aware that we could request an extension
4. Don't know

[ASK IF Q9 = 01]

10. How easy or difficult was it to find the extension request form on the Elections Canada website?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q9 = 01]

11. How easy or difficult was it to figure out how to fill out the extension request form?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q9 = 01]

12. How easy or difficult was it to figure out by what date your third party had to submit the extension request?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Don't know

EASE OF AUDITOR'S REPORT

13. Was your third party required to file an auditor's report with the electoral campaign return?

1. Yes
2. No

3. Don't know

14. **How easy or difficult was it to figure out whether an auditor's report was required with the electoral campaign return?**

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Don't know

EASE OF FINDING AN AUDITOR

[ASK IF Q13 = 01]

15. **How easy or difficult was it for your third party to hire an auditor?**

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat difficult
4. Very difficult
5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q15 = 03 OR 04]

16. **What made it difficult to hire an auditor? [OPEN-ENDED]**

ELECTIONS CANADA'S PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

In the previous survey we asked you about some products and services that Elections Canada makes available for third parties.

17. **In the time since you responded to the last survey, did you use any of the following Elections Canada products and services?**

[GRID]

[ROWS]

- a) The Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors
- b) The "New Requirements for Third Parties" document
- c) The Political Financing videos

d) The Political Entities Support Network 1-800 #

[COLUMNS]

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. I was not aware of this product

HANDBOOK

[ASK IF Q17a = 01]

18. Since the last survey, would you say that Elections Canada's Political Financing Handbook for Third Parties, Financial Agents and Auditors was...

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not very helpful
4. Not helpful at all
5. Don't know

BACKGROUND

[ASK IF Q17b = 01]

19. Since the last survey, would you say that Elections Canada's document entitled, "New Requirements for Third Parties", was...

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not very helpful
4. Not helpful at all
5. Don't know

POLITICAL FINANCING VIDEOS

[ASK IF Q17c = 01]

20. Since the last survey, would you say that the Political Financing videos on Elections Canada's website were...

1. Very helpful
2. Somewhat helpful
3. Not very helpful
4. Not helpful at all
5. Don't know

POLITICAL ENTITIES SUPPORT NETWORK (1-800 NUMBER)

[ASK IF Q17d = 01]

21. Since the last survey, would you say that contacting Elections Canada through the 1-800 number for political entities was...
1. Very helpful
 2. Somewhat helpful
 3. Not very helpful
 4. Not helpful at all
 5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q17d = 01]

22. Aside from using the 1-800 number for political entities, did you contact Elections Canada in any other ways? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
1. Yes, by phone
 2. Yes, by email
 3. No
 4. Don't know

[ASK IF Q17d ≠ 01]

23. Since the last survey, did you contact Elections Canada for any reason? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
5. Yes, by phone
 6. Yes, by email
 7. No
 8. Don't know

[ASK IF Q22 OR Q23 = 01]

24. How satisfied were you with the help you received on that call?
1. Very satisfied
 2. Somewhat satisfied
 3. Somewhat unsatisfied
 4. Very unsatisfied
 5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q24 = 03 OR 04]

25. What caused you to be unsatisfied? [OPEN-ENDED]

[ASK IF Q22 OR Q23 = 02]

26. How satisfied were you with the help you received following that email?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Somewhat unsatisfied
4. Very unsatisfied
5. Don't know

[ASK IF Q26 = 03 OR 04]

27. What caused you to be unsatisfied? [OPEN-ENDED]

ANYTHING ELSE?

28. In the time since you responded to the last survey, is there any other kind of product or service that would have made the process easier for you? If so, what kind? [OPEN-ENDED]

29. Would you be interested in providing feedback as Elections Canada develops new products and services for registered third parties?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

OTHER SOURCES

30. In the previous survey we asked you about consulting other sources aside from Elections Canada. Since the last survey, did you consult any other sources aside from Elections Canada to understand the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* as they relate to third parties and how they applied in your situation?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

[ASK IF Q30 = 01]

31. What sources did you consult? [OPEN-ENDED]

REPORTING REGULATED ACTIVITIES

EASE OF DETERMINING REGULATED ACTIVITIES

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

32. **It was clear which of my third party's activities were regulated under the *Canada Elections Act*.**
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
 5. Don't know
33. **Reporting my third party's regulated spending under the right category (e.g. Partisan activity, election survey, election advertising) was easy.**
1. Strongly agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
 5. Don't know

OTHER COMMENTS

34. **Thinking of the time since the last survey, is there anything else not covered here that you would like to share about your experience as a registered third party? [OPEN-ENDED]**

Thank you very much for your thoughtful feedback. It is much appreciated. **[IF Q29 = 01 ADD]** Elections Canada will be contacting you at a later date for additional feedback on new products and services as they are developed.

If you have any reason to believe that your personal information is not being handled in accordance with the Privacy Act, you have a right to complain to the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Toll-free: 1-800-282-1376

TTY: (819) 994-6591

Web: Go to www.priv.gc.ca and click "Report a concern"

Appendix B: Email Invitation, Reminder and Final Reminder

Email Invitation

Subject line: Elections Canada—Survey of Third Parties | Élections Canada – Sondage auprès des tiers

Le français suit.

Dear «FIRST NAME »,

I am writing to you from Forum Research, a Canadian public opinion research firm. As you may know, we are conducting a follow-up survey on behalf of Elections Canada to hear about your experiences as the financial agent of a registered third party during the 2019 general election. Your continued participation in this research is much appreciated.

The information gathered in this survey will help Elections Canada to better understand the needs of third parties and to improve their services. We invite you to click on the following <link> and answer this brief survey online. It should take no more than 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Your responses are completely confidential and only aggregate data will be reported.

Your personal participation link is <LINK>.

Your voice is important and we hope you will take this opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions. The deadline for completing this survey is September 15, 2020.

Sincerely,

Winsome Stec
Survey Administrator
Forum Research
Email: wstec@forumresearch.com

If you have questions or would like to verify that this survey is run by Elections Canada, you can call their toll-free number at 1-800-463-6868. Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

Bonjour,

Je vous écris de la part de Forum Research, une entreprise canadienne de recherche sur l'opinion publique. Vous le savez sans doute, nous effectuons un sondage de suivi au nom d'Élections Canada afin de connaître votre expérience en tant qu'agent financier d'un tiers enregistré à l'élection générale de 2019. Nous vous remercions grandement pour votre participation continue à cette recherche.

Les renseignements recueillis aideront l'organisme à mieux comprendre les besoins des tiers et à améliorer leurs services. Nous vous invitons donc à répondre à un bref sondage en ligne à

<lien>. Cela ne devrait pas vous prendre plus de 5 à 10 minutes. Vos réponses sont entièrement confidentielles; seules les données globales seront communiquées.

Votre lien personnel pour participer au sondage est le suivant : <lien>.

Votre opinion est importante et nous espérons que vous profiterez de cette occasion pour nous en faire part. Vous avez jusqu'au 15 septembre pour répondre au sondage.

Cordialement,

Winsome Stec
Administrateur du sondage
Forum Research
Courriel : wstec@forumresearch.com

Si vous avez des questions ou voulez vous assurer que ce sondage est effectué par Élections Canada, vous pouvez téléphoner à l'organisme, au numéro sans frais 1-800-463-6868. Les heures d'ouverture sont de 9 h à 17 h (heure de l'Est), du lundi au vendredi.

Email Reminder

Subject line: REMINDER: Elections Canada – Survey of Third Parties | RAPPEL : Élections Canada – Sondage auprès des tiers

Le français suit.

Dear «FIRST NAME »,

This is a quick reminder from Forum Research about your invitation to participate in Elections Canada's survey of financial agents of registered third parties. If you have already submitted your responses, thank you for your valuable input. If not, we kindly ask you to please complete the survey and submit your responses **by September 15th**. You can access the survey at:

<LINK>

Your responses are confidential and only aggregate data will be reported. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help Elections Canada to improve their services.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Winsome Stec
Survey Administrator
Forum Research
Email: wstec@forumresearch.com

For any other questions, or if you would like to verify that this survey is run by Elections Canada, you can call their toll-free number at 1-800-463-6868. Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

Bonjour,

Je vous écris de la part de Forum Research pour vous rappeler que vous êtes invité à participer au sondage d'Élections Canada auprès des agents financiers des tiers enregistrés. Si vous avez déjà répondu au sondage, nous vous remercions de votre participation précieuse. Sinon, nous vous demandons de bien vouloir y répondre et nous faire parvenir vos réponses **avant le septembre 15**. Vous pouvez accéder au sondage à l'adresse suivante :

<LIEN>

Vos réponses sont confidentielles; seules les données globales seront communiquées. Nous vous sommes très reconnaissants de participer à ce sondage, qui aidera Élections Canada à améliorer ses services.

Pour toute question, veuillez communiquer avec :

Winsome Stec
Administrateur du sondage
Forum Research

Courriel : wstec@forumresearch.com

Si vous avez des questions ou voulez vous assurer que ce sondage est effectué par Élections Canada, vous pouvez également téléphoner à l'organisme, au numéro sans frais 1-800-463-6868. Les heures d'ouverture sont de 9 h à 17 h (heure de l'Est), du lundi au vendredi.

Final Email Reminder

Subject line: FINAL REMINDER: Elections Canada – Survey of Third Parties | DERNIER
RAPPEL : Élections Canada – Sondage auprès des tiers

Le français suit.

Dear «FIRST NAME »,

This is a final reminder from Forum Research to take a few moments to complete your Elections Canada survey. The survey takes 5–10 minutes to complete. Your participation is key to the success of this research and will help Elections Canada to improve the services they offer to financial agents like you!

Please submit your responses by **September 18th at 5pm** Eastern Time. After this time the survey will no longer be available.

You can access the survey at:

<LINK>

Your responses are confidential and only aggregate data will be reported. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Winsome Stec
Survey Administrator
Forum Research
Email: wstec@forumresearch.com

For any other questions, or if you would like to verify that this survey is run by Elections Canada, you can call their toll-free number at 1-800-463-6868. Their hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

Bonjour,

Je vous écris de la part de Forum Research pour vous inviter une dernière fois à répondre au sondage d'Élections Canada. Y répondre vous prendra de 5 à 10 minutes. Votre participation est essentielle au succès de cette recherche et aidera Élections Canada à améliorer les services offerts aux agents financiers tels que vous.

Veuillez nous faire parvenir vos réponses d'ici **le 18 septembre à 17 h**, heure de l'Est. Le sondage ne sera plus accessible après cette date.

Voici le lien pour remplir le sondage :

<LIEN>

Vos réponses sont confidentielles et seules les données regroupées seront divulguées. Nous vous remercions beaucoup de votre participation.

Pour toute question, veuillez communiquer avec :

Winsome Stec
Administrateur du sondage
Forum Research
Courriel : wstec@forumresearch.com

Pour toute autre question ou pour vérifier que ce sondage est mené par Élections Canada, veuillez appeler leur numéro sans frais 1-800-463-6868. Les heures d'ouverture sont de 9 h à 17 h (heure de l'Est), du lundi au vendredi.