FINDINGS FROM TAC GOVERNANCE SURVEY

SBF
Singapore Business Federation

Company's Growth
85%
85%

The TAC Governance Survey was conducted by Singapore Business Federation from 14 November to 3 December 2024. 51 TACs were invited to participate, of which, 30 responded (59% response rate). The survey findings and observations are as follows:

Size of Council vs Size of Membership

Typical size of Council

Membership Size	≤ 200	201 - 1000	1001 - 5000	> 5000
Size of Council (including Chairperon)	8 - 5	8 - 15	16 - 20	16 - 20

Observations:
Around 10% of respondents had a Council size of 21-30. There was no direct correlation found between the large Council size to the secretariat size or membership size. However, we observed that these TACs were from broader industry sectors.

Period for "a Term of Office" Council Members

Findings: For the majority (80%, 24 respondents), a "Term of Office" is 2 years.

Term limit for Council Members

Findings: For the majority (63%, 19 respondents), there is no term limit for Council Members.

Observations:
Most TACs do not impose a term limit which could be because it is generally difficult to find people to serve on the Council. We could look into introducing some form of recognition for those that serve in TACs to help alleviate challenges on this front.

TACs are encouraged to impose a term limit for Council Members to ensure steady renewal. A common term limit used would be a maximum of 3 consecutive terms of office, after which, the Council Member would not be eligible for re-appointments, until after a lapse of 2 years.

Term limit for Chairperson

Findings:

- Around 23% (7 respondents) said no term limit
- Around 30% (9 respondents) said a maximum of three terms with no re-appointment / eligible for reappointment after lapse of at least one term
- Around 40% (12 respondents) said maximum of 2 terms with no re-appointment / eligible for re-appointment after lapse of at least one term

Observations: TACs are encouraged to impose a term limit to avoid a "de facto dictatorship". A maximum of three terms with no re-appointment or re-appointment after lapse of at least one term of office would be a good middle ground.

Term limit for Honorary Treasurer

Findings:

- Around 31% (9 respondents) said a maximum of 2 terms with no re-appointment / eligible for re-appointment after a lapse of at least one term.
- Around 31% (9 respondents) said a maximum of 1 term with no re-appointment.
- 2 respondents said that there was no term limit.

Observations: TACs are encouraged to impose a term limit to uphold transparency and accountability. Either a maximum of 1 term or a maximum of 2 terms with no re-appointment or re-appointment after a lapse of at least one term would be encouraged.

TACs' understanding of the acts and regulations governing TACs

Findings: All TACs are familiar / somewhat familiar with the acts and regulations.

Operations manual(s) that TACs have

Findings: Constitution, Procurement, Financial and Employee Handbook are the most essential operations manuals.

Other operations manuals include:

- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Personal Data Protection Act Related (E.g. Membership data, human resource data)
- Code of Governance for Councils
- Event Management / Singapore Pavilion Standard Operating Procedures

Procurement Policy & Procedures document

Findings: What is included: Procurement methods, approval process, approval authorities and limits, term contractors.

How is it shared with staff: Polices and documents are available on shared drive and / or shared during orientation briefing.

Frequency of being updated: Need-to basis.

Observations: Majority of the respondents (83%, 25 respondents) has a set of procurement policy, which minimally outlines the approval process, approval authorities and limits.

Financial Policy & Procedures document

Findings:

What is included: Financial approval authorities and limits, authorised signatories for contracts, audit and compliance, claims guidelines, SOPs for payments, accounting records and reporting.

How is it shared with staff: Policies and documents are available on shared drive, shared during orientation briefing and/or shared with employees through emails or briefing sessions whenever there are revisions to policies.

Frequency of being updated: Need-to basis.

Observations: Majority of the respondents (80%, 24 respondents) has a financial policy, which minimally outlines the financial approval authorities and limits. A handful of respondents said that their procurement and financial polices are combined.

Employee Handbook

Findings:
What is included: Code of conduct, conditions of employment (notice period, various leave benefits, remuneration, medical etc), grievance handling policy, conflict of interest policy.

How is it shared with staff: Polices and documents are available on shared drive. Staff are also briefed as part of on-boarding.

Frequency of being updated: Need-to basis.

Observations: Majority of the respondents (90%, 27 respondents) has a Employee Handbook, which minimally outlines the conditions of employment, code of conduct, and grievance handling.

IT Policy document

Findings:
What is included: Systems access, cybersecurity requirements, ransomware attack, BCP, incident reporting, handing of data & IT assets, PDPA.

How is it shared with staff: Polices and documents are available on shared drive. Staff are also brief when there are revisions to policy.

Frequency of being updated: Need-to basis.

Observations: Majority of the respondents (72%, 21 respondents) do not have an IT policy. For the few respondents who have, it minimally covers PDPA policy, SOP on security and access on systems.

During the Annual General Meeting, can Council Members appoint proxies to attend and vote in their place?

Findings: Majority of the respondents (77%, 23 respondents) allow Council Members to appoint proxies and attend / vote in their place.

How do TACs find suitable Council candidates for succession planning?

Findings: Most TACs get recommendations from Council Members. Other methods include: Open call for nominations, self-nomination, recommendations from government agencies / industry partners.

Observations: To encourage and enable renewal and proper succession planning, TACs could consider tapping on services such as SID's Board Appointment Services to find suitable Council Members.

Do Council Members receive remuneration? What about Office Bearers?

Findings: All TACs said that their Council Members and Office Bearers do not receive remuneration.

Procurement approach(es) which TACs practice

Findings:

- Majority (80%, 24 respondents) use a combination of procurement approaches (Small Value Purchase "SVP", Three Quotes, Invitation to Quote "ITQ" and Invitation to Tender "ITT").
- Some (17%, 5 respondents) use only Three Quotes approach.

Observations: Majority of the respondents adopt a combination of procurement approaches: SVP, Three Quotes and / or ITQ. A handful of TACs practise the ITT appraoch.

Small Value Purchase "SVP"

Findings: Majority (70%, 21 respondents) see SVP as a procurement process where cost comparison is not required.

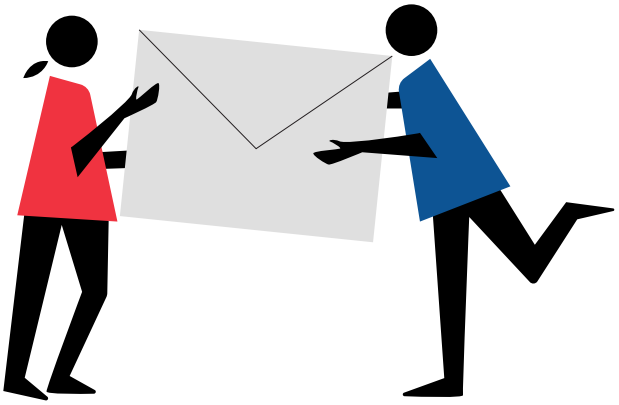
Observations: SVP is a procurement approach practised by most TACs. Generally, the approving authority is the Head of Secretariat with the purchase amount (excluding GST) up to $3,000.

Three Quotes

Findings: Majority (93%, 28 respondents) practice the "Three Quotes" approach. Majority (63%, 19 respondents) indicated that they do not have a maximum procurement value. Remaining (31%, 9 respondents) have a maximum procurement value which varies greatly from $3,000 to $500,000.

Observations: Majority of the TACs practise the Three Quotes approach and the approving authority ranges from HODs to Heads of Secretariat and Council depending on the purchase amount.

For TACs that frequently have purchases that are more than $100,000, it is recommended to implement and use the ITT approach for such purchases.



Invitation to Quote "ITQ"

Findings: Majority (53%, 16 respondents) practise the ITQ approach. Most indicated that there was no maximum procurement value for this procurement method to be utilised.

Observations: Through follow-up checks with the respondents, it was revealed that the ITQ approach is similar to the Three Quotes approach and often used for purchases that are higher in value.

TACs could adopt the Three Quotes approach and calibrate the approving authority and process based on the purchase amount.

Invitation to Tender "ITT"

Findings: Minority (30%, 9 respondents) practise the ITT approach.

Observations: Generally, TACs which practise ITT go through the procurement process of purchase request, rolling out a closed / open tender, conducting a tender interview, evaluation by the tender committee and award of tender. The Approving Authority of ITT includes Council, Executive Committee and Chairperson.

Challenges faced by TACs today in implementing good governance

Findings:

- Limited Manpower and difficulty to retain / attract talent to ensure good governance.
- Lack of deep knowledge on governance.
- Majority (90%, 27 respondents) would like to have tools to enhance governance capabilities of TACs.
- Lack of resources to ensure consistency and regularly update policies for compliance, e.g. operation manuals are not updated.
- Board leadership and succession.

Challenges faced by TACs relating to Governance Framework

Findings:

- Limited manpower to do the documentation and operationalise processes.
- Lack of knowledge to implement.

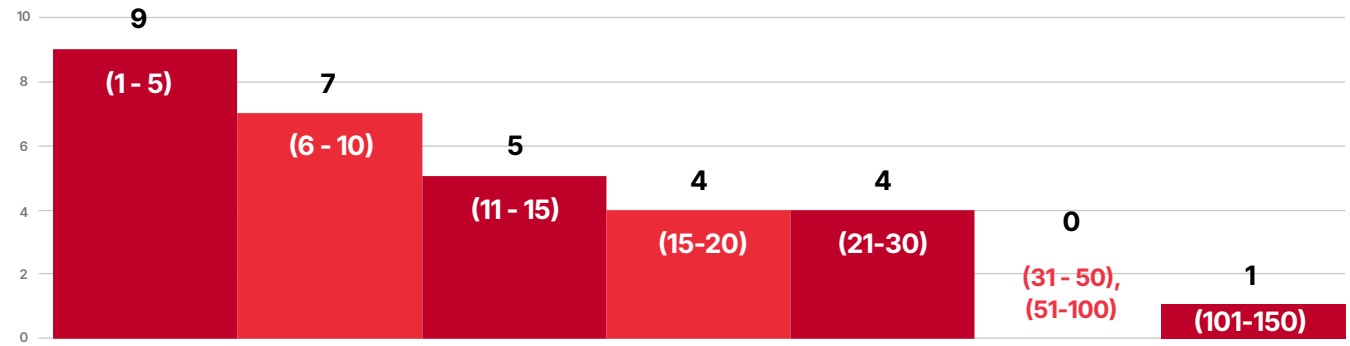
Topics that TACs would like for Governance Learning Circles (aim to enable TACs to share and learn internal / good practices from one another and from experts)

Findings:

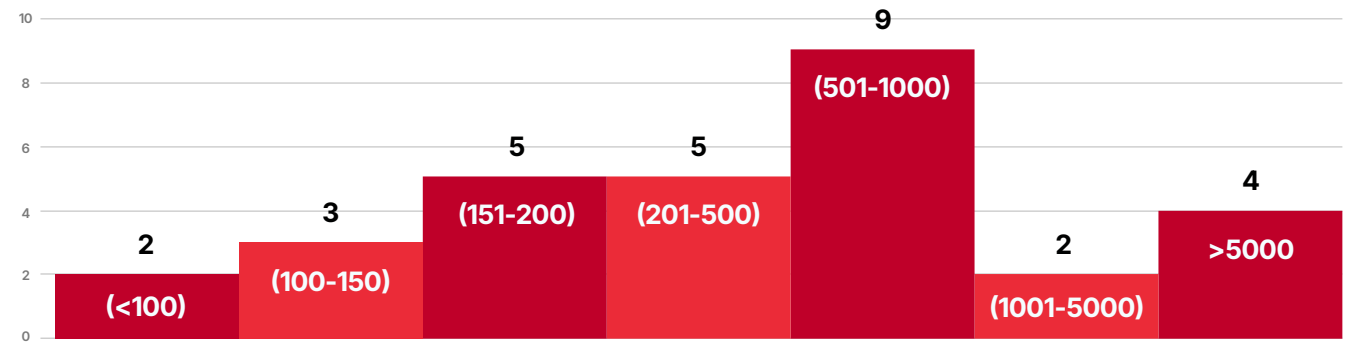
- IT related policies
- HR related policies
- TAC Governance Framework
- Finance related controls and policies
- Sustainability reporting
- Budgeting

Raw data from survey

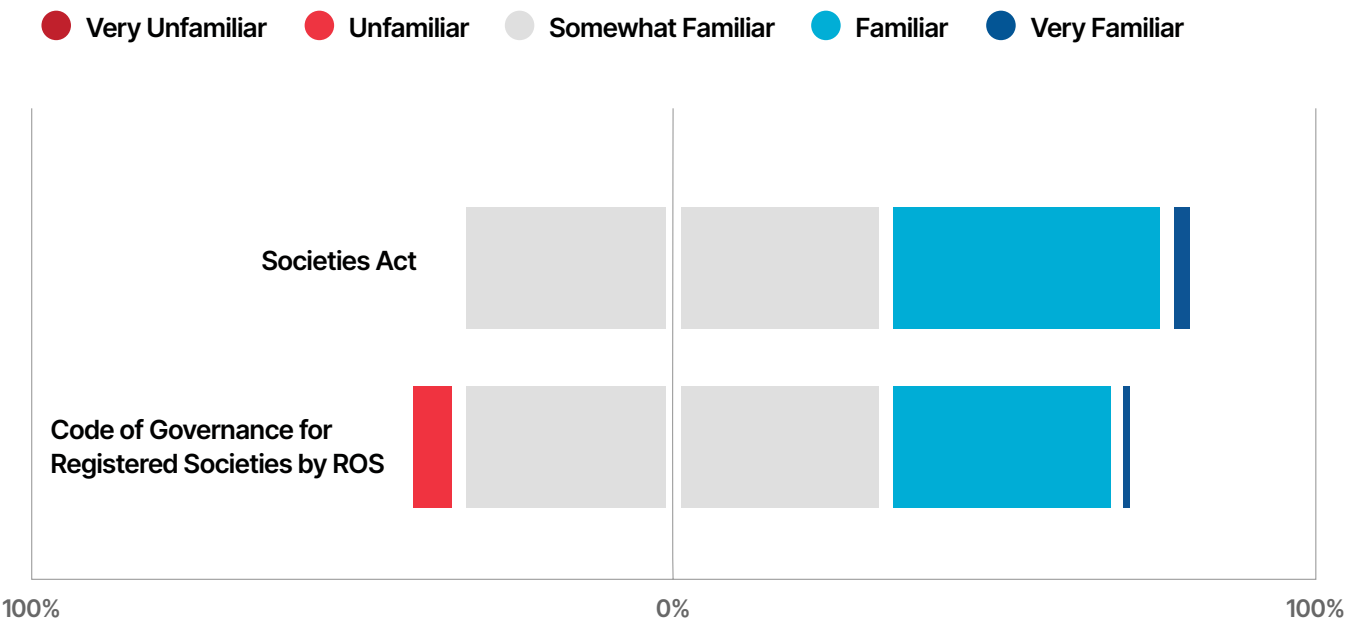
1. What is the size of your Secretariat?



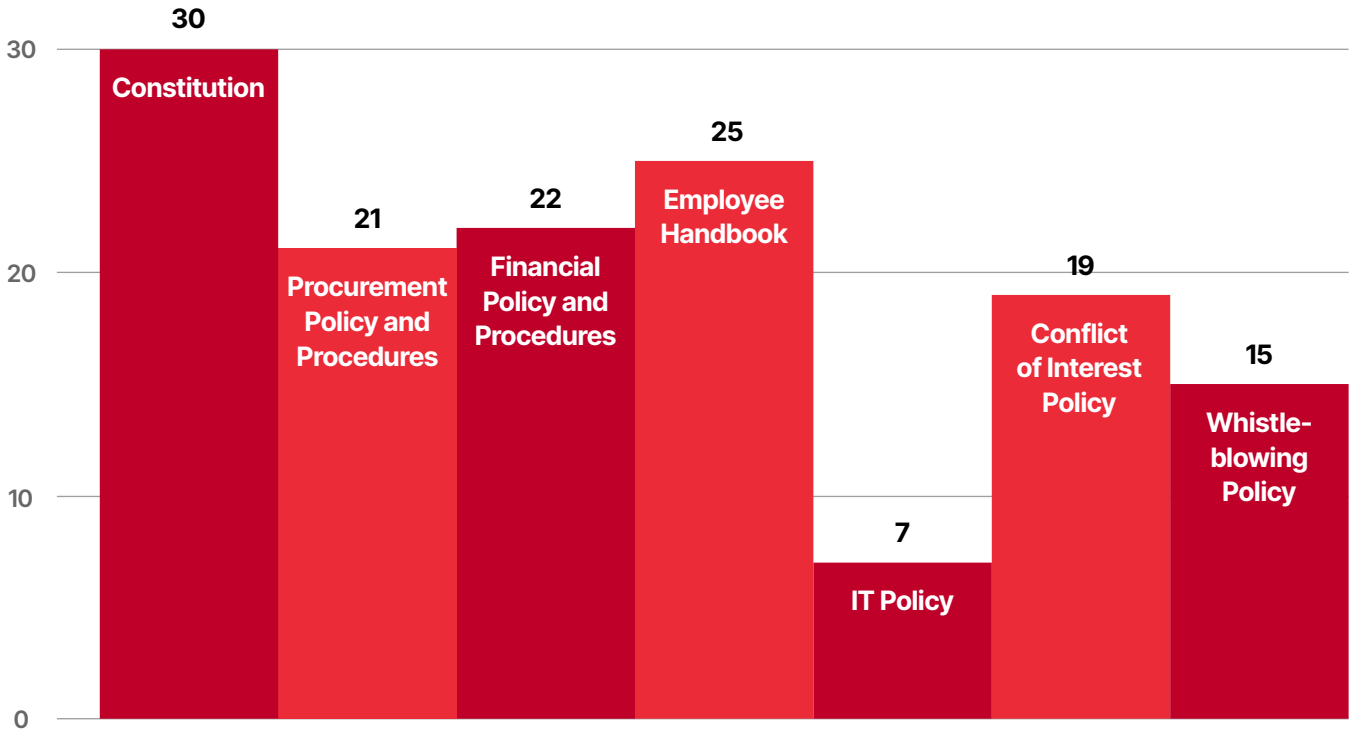
2. What is the size of your Membership?



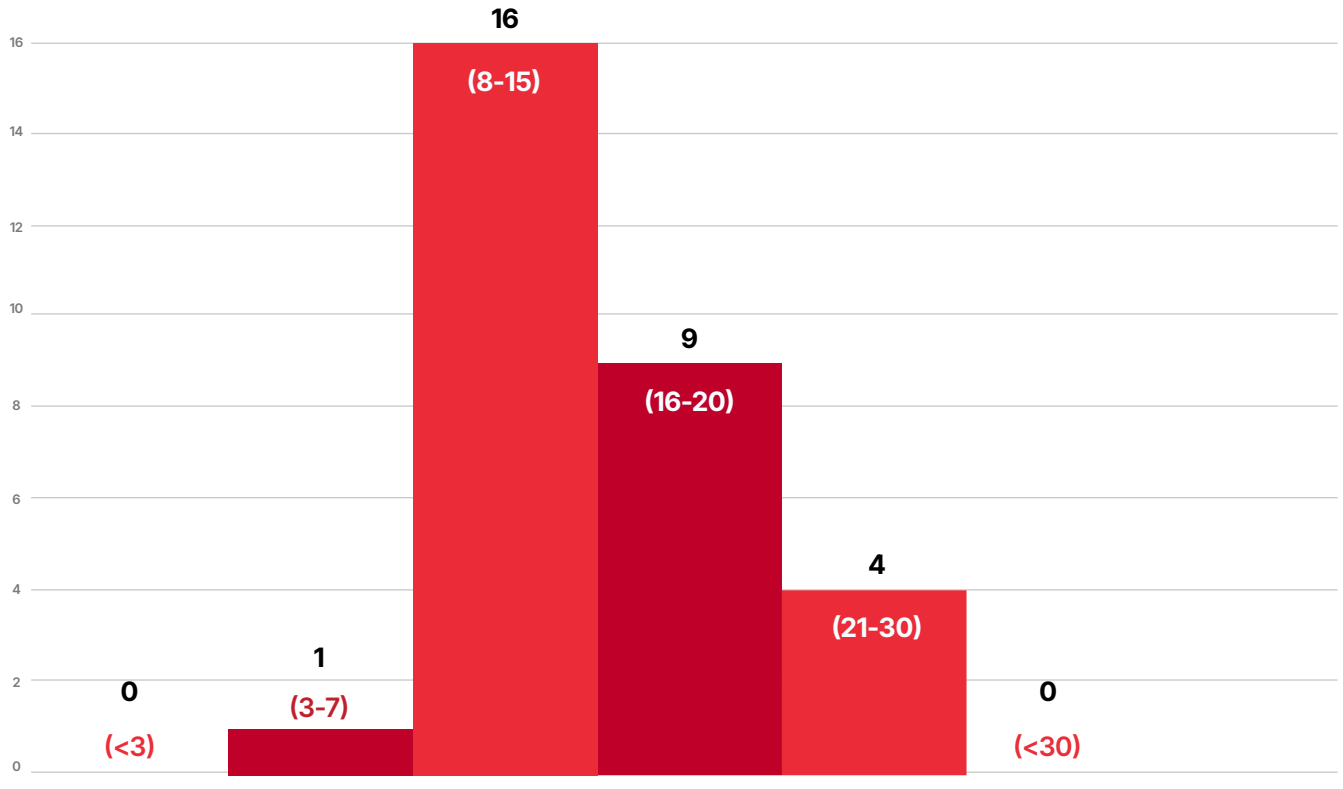
3. Please rate your level of understanding of the acts and regulations governing TACs



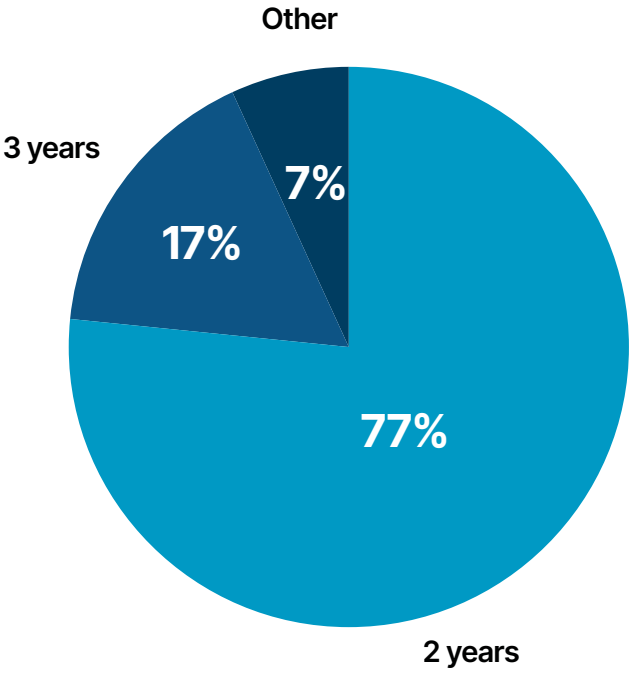
4. Please select the operations manual(s) that your TAC has.



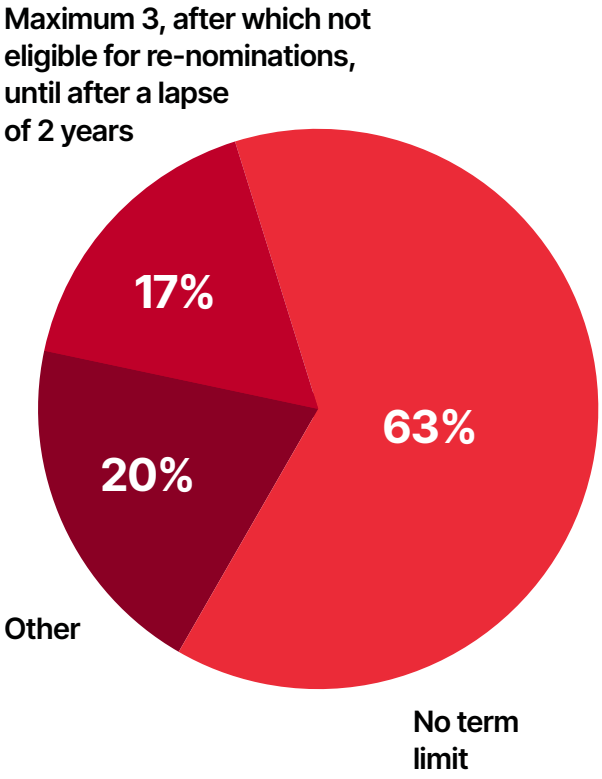
5. What is the size of your Council (including Chairperson)?



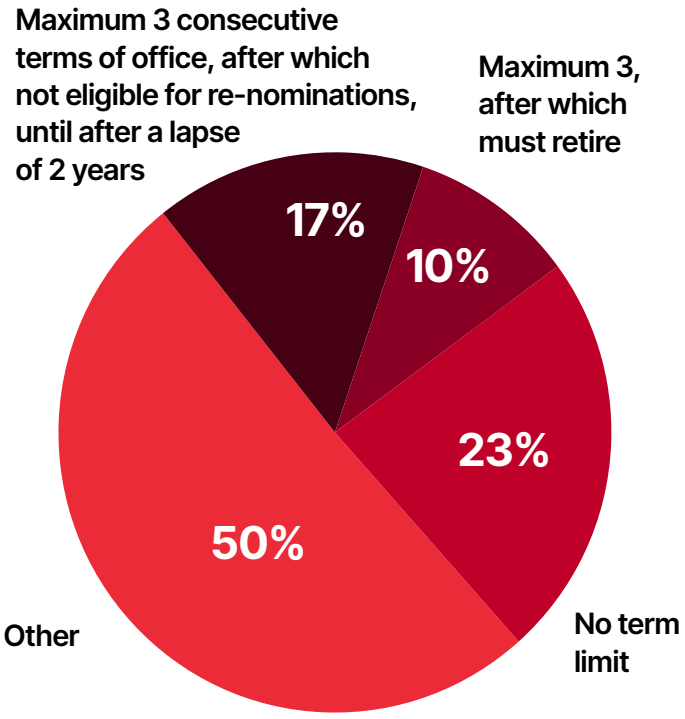
6. What is the period for "a Term of Office" for your Council Members?



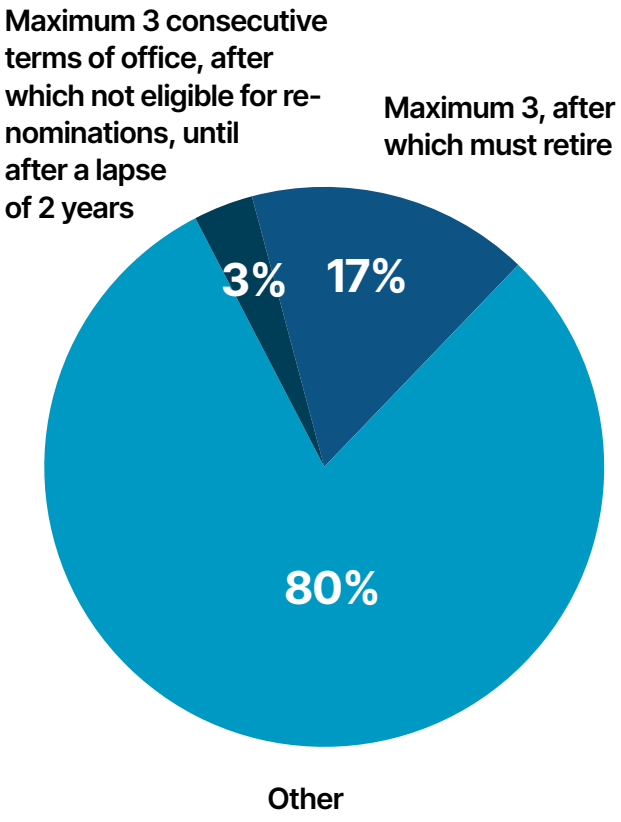
7. What is the term limit for your Council Members?



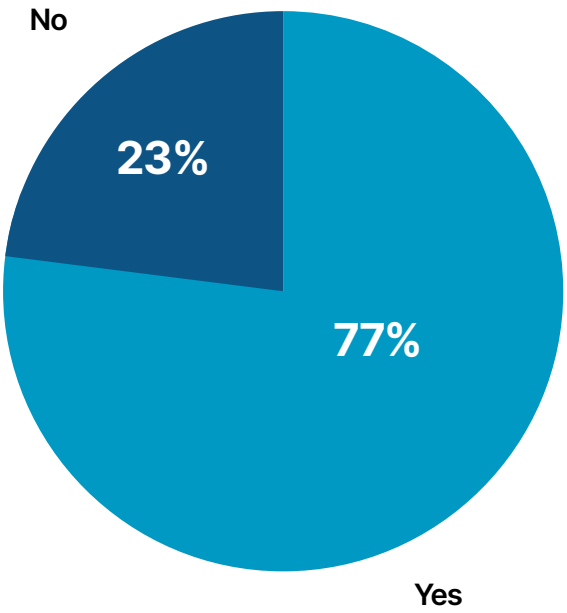
8. What is the term limit for your Chairperson?



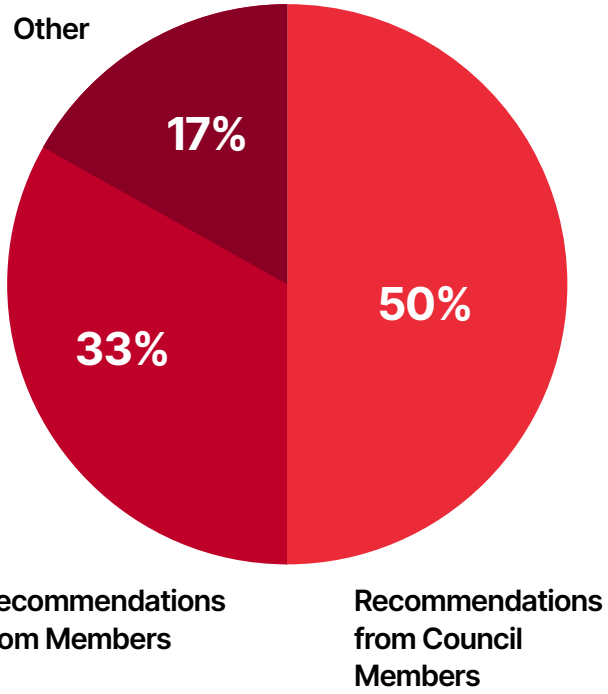
9. What is the term limit for your Honorary Treasurer?



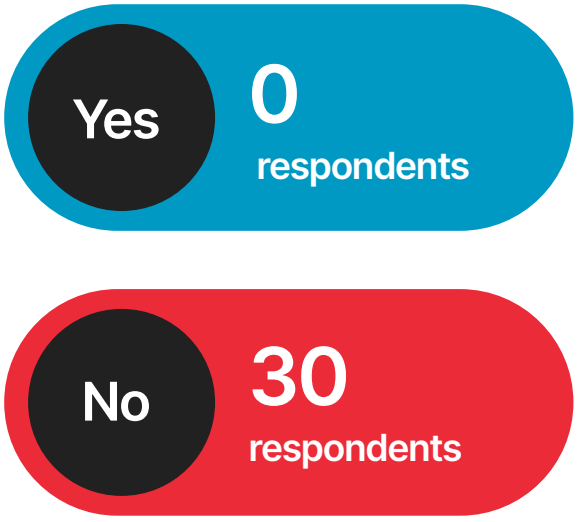
10. During Annual General Meeting, can Council Members appoint proxies to attend and vote in their place?



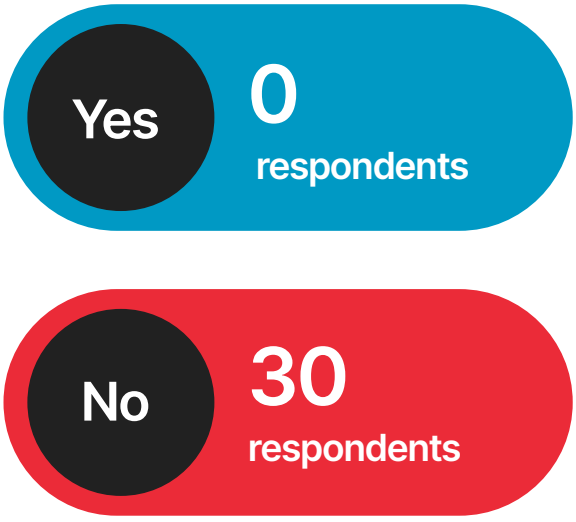
11. How does your organisation find suitable Council candidates for succession planning? Members appoint proxies to attend and vote in their place?



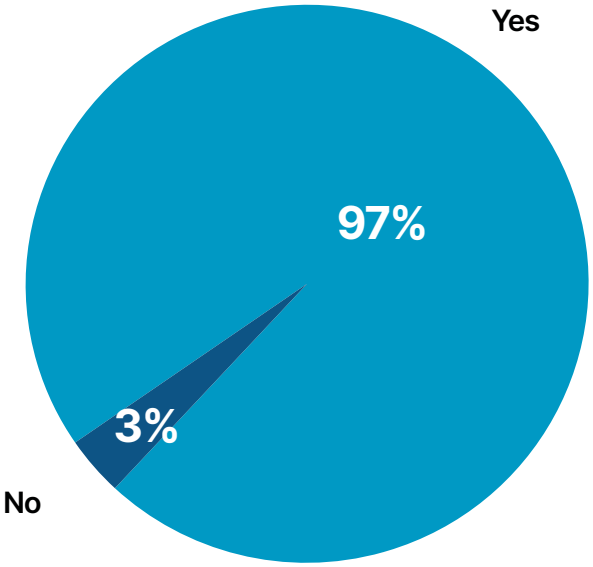
12. Do Council Members receive remuneration?



13. Do Office Bearers receive remuneration?



14. Does your TAC use a financial / accounting system to process and record financial transactions (e.g. processing invoices)?

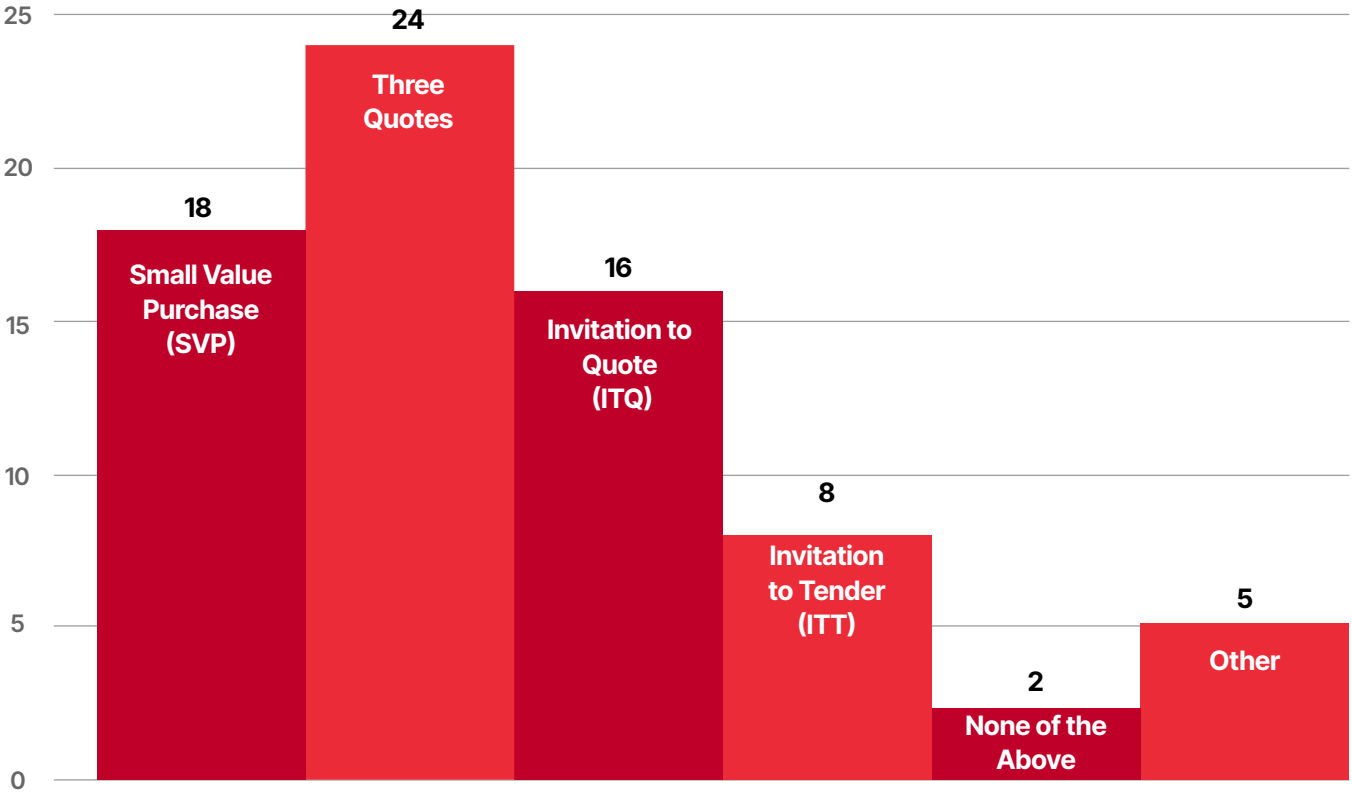


15. How are financial transactions processed and recorded?

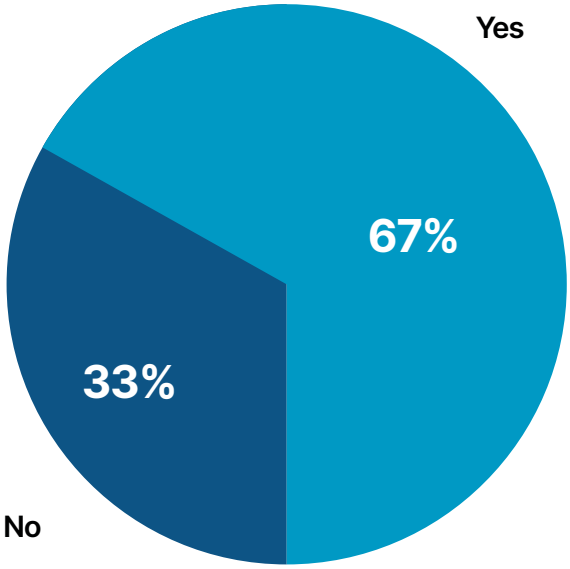
1
Response

Outsourced to Professional Accounting Firm

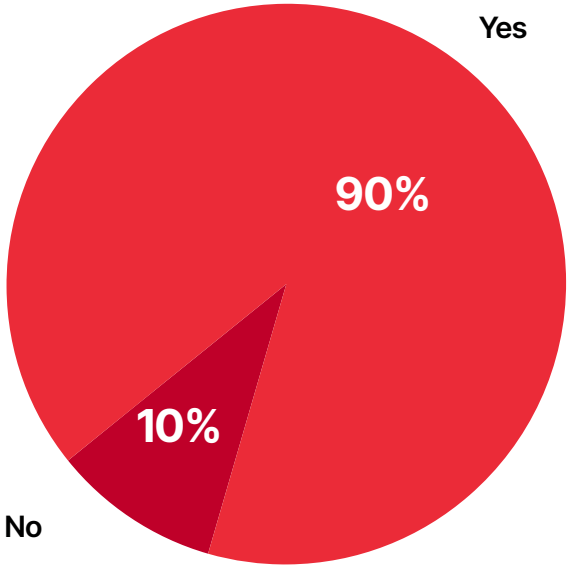
16. What procurement approach(es) does your TAC practice?



17. Is "SVP" one of the procurement approaches practiced by your TAC?



18. Is there a maximum procurement value for purchasing via "SVP"?

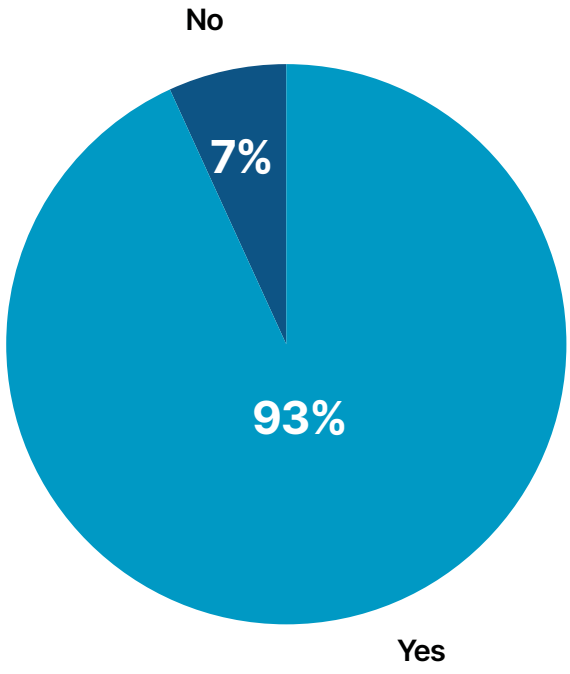


19. What is the maximum procurement value for purchasing via "SVP"?

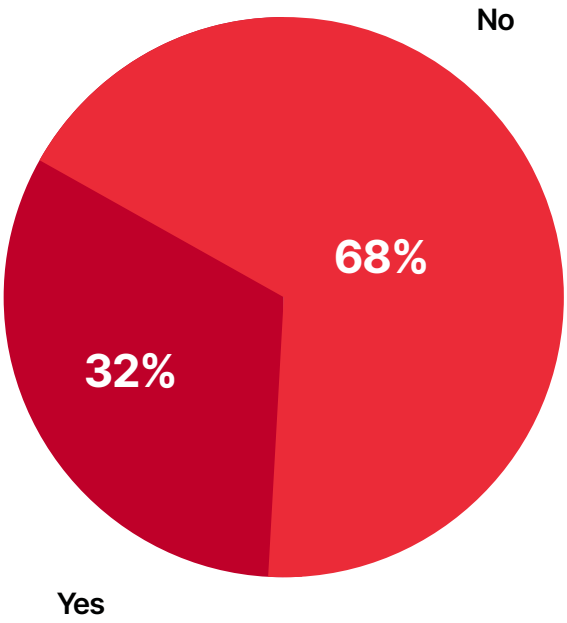
Range from

500 to 6,000

20. Is "Three Quotes" one of the procurement approaches practised by your TAC?



21. Is there a maximum procurement value for purchasing via "Three Quotes"?

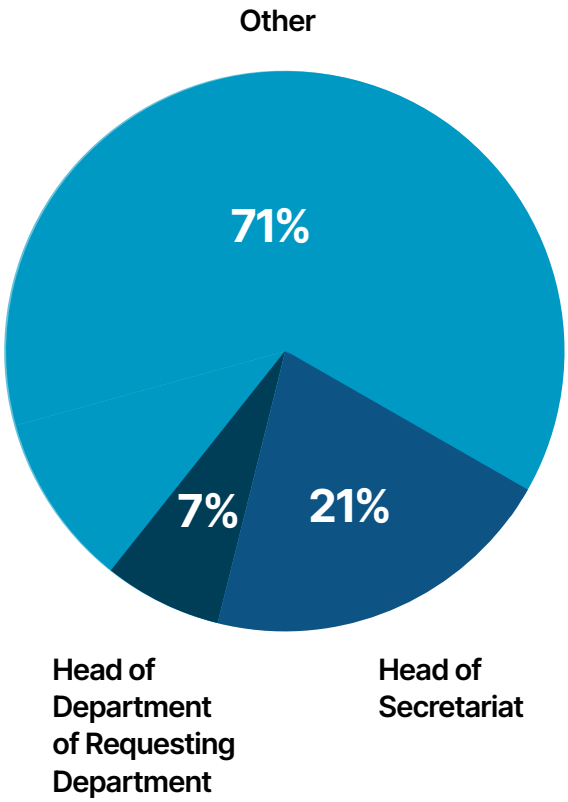


22. What is the maximum procurement value for purchasing via "Three Quotes"?

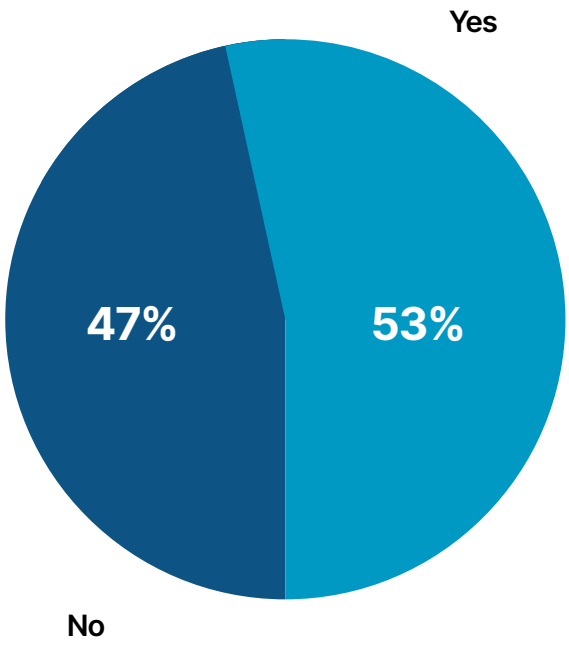
Range from

3,000 to 500,000

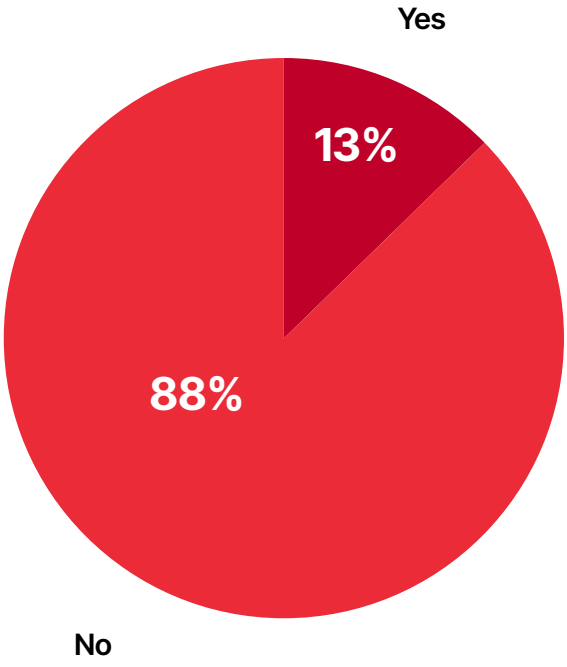
23. Who is the approving authority for purchases made via "Three Quotes"?



24. Is "ITQ" one of the procurement approaches practiced by your TAC?



25. Is there a maximum procurement value for purchasing via "ITQ"?

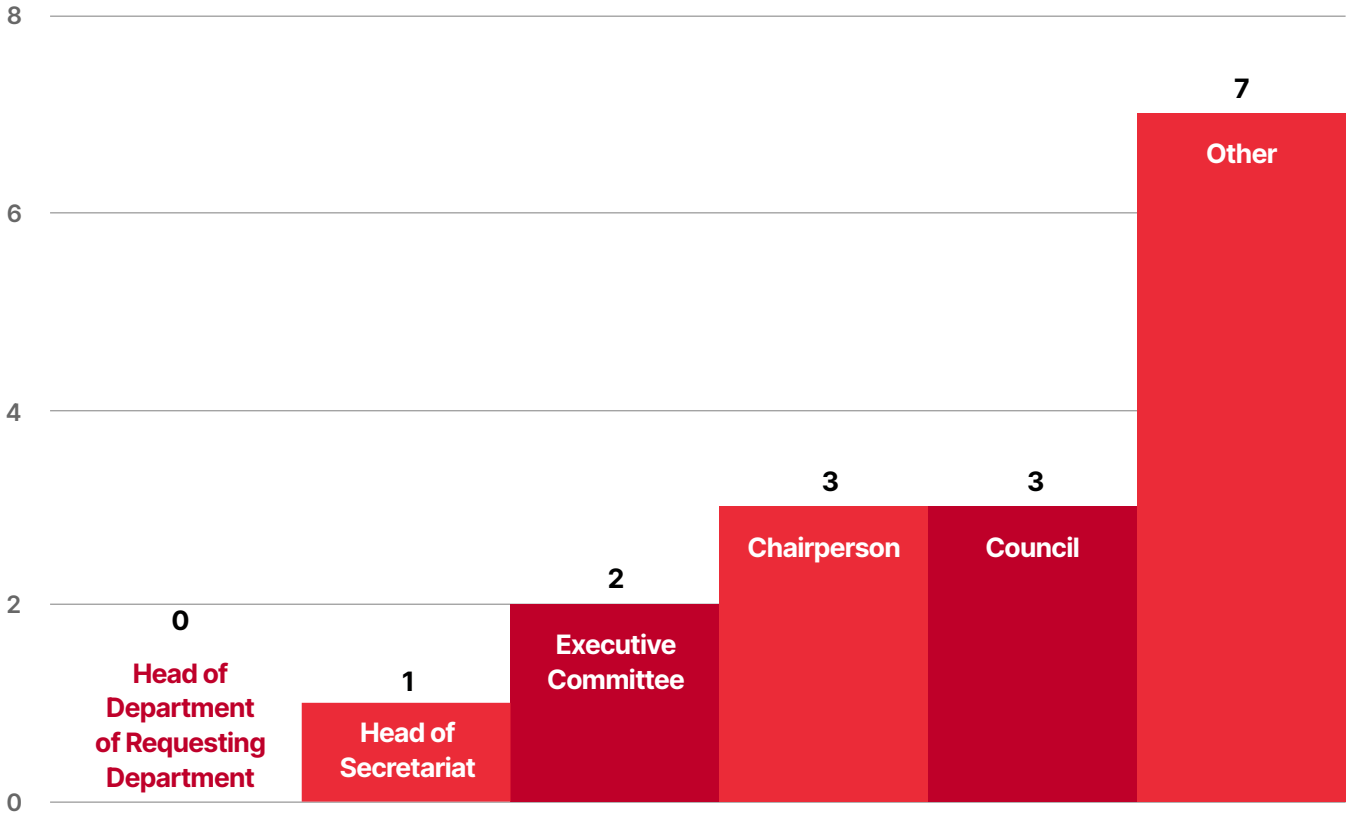


26. What is the maximum procurement value for purchasing via "ITQ"?

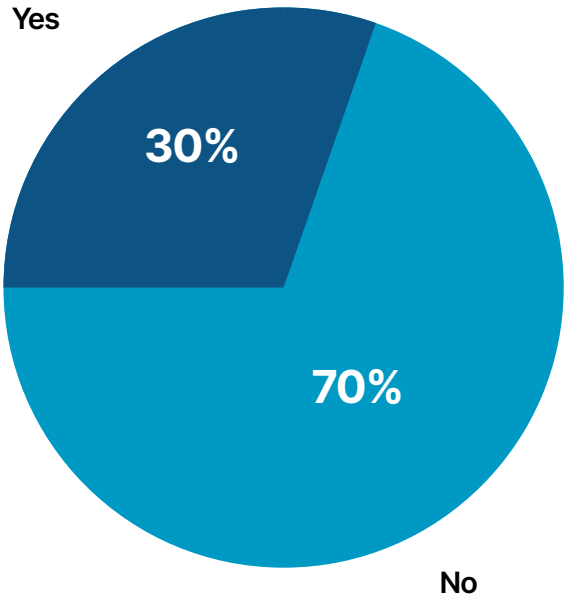
Range from

70,000 to 400,000

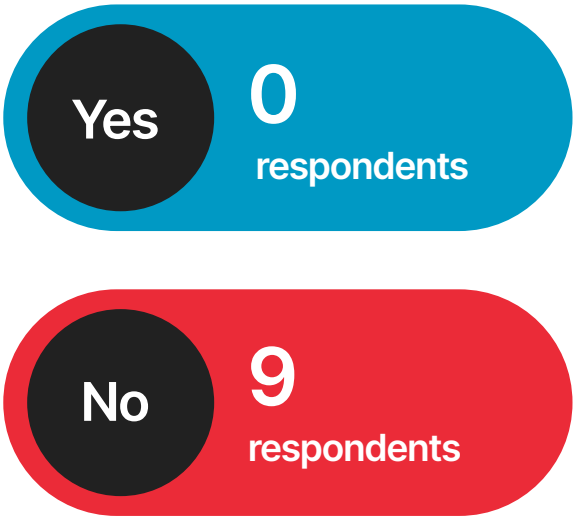
27. Who is the approving authority for purchases made via "ITQ"?



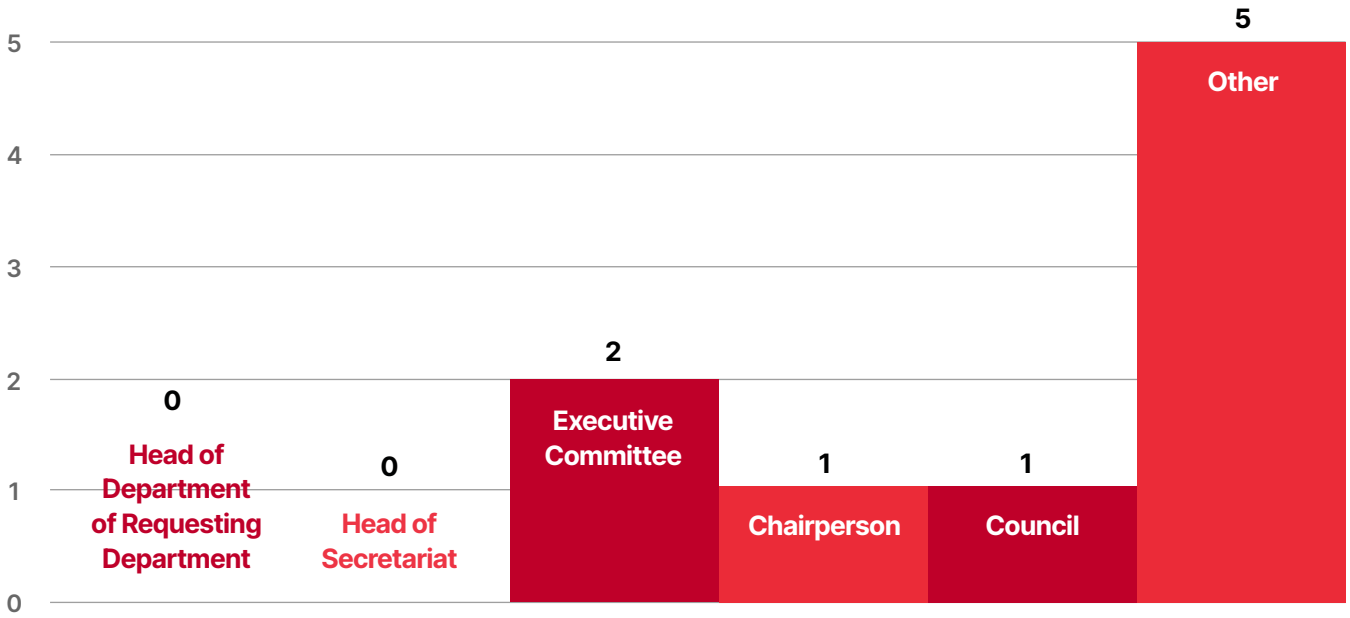
28. Is "ITT" one of the procurement approaches practised by your TAC?



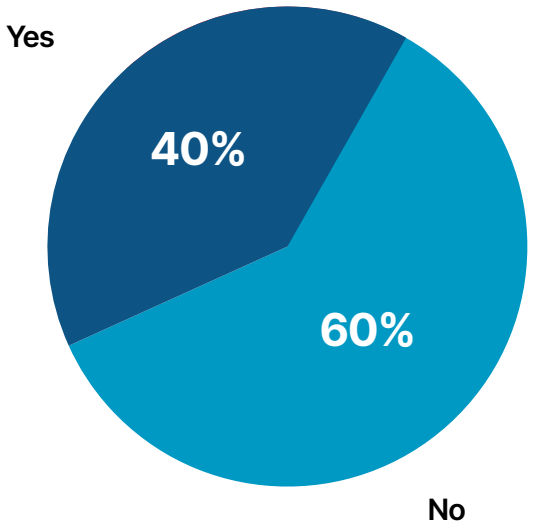
29. Is there a maximum procurement value for purchasing via "ITT"?



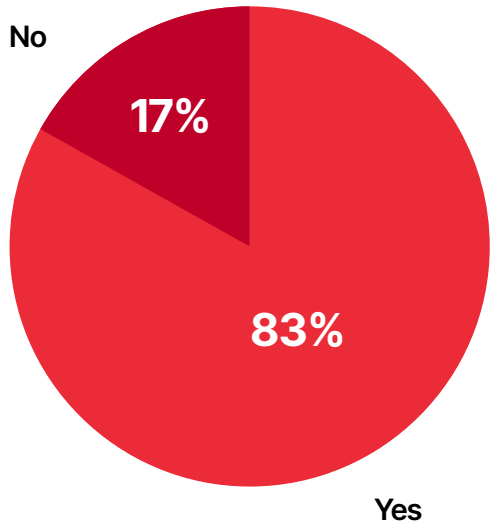
30. Who is the approving authority for purchases made via "ITT"?



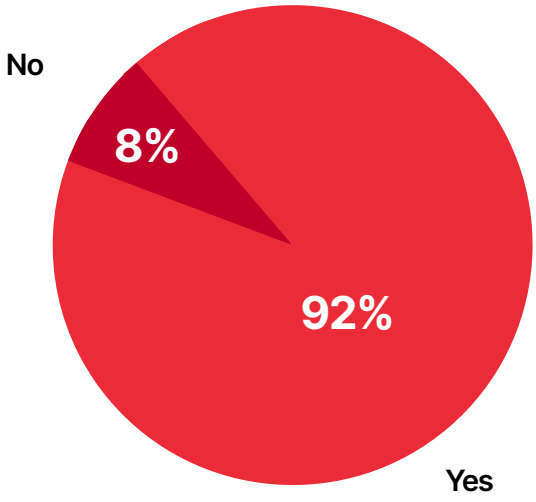
31. Does your TAC have at least one subsidiary?



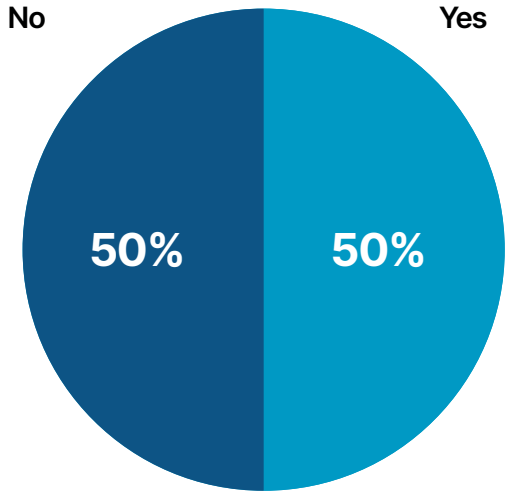
32. Is your subsidiary governed by its own Council?



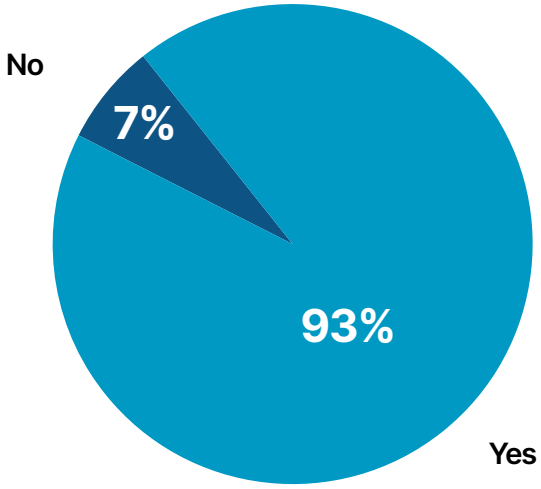
33. Is the Council of the Subsidiary chaired by a Council Member of the parent TAC?



34. Is the Association required to approve the Budget of the Association's subsidiaries?



35. Would you like to be updated on tools to enhance governance capabilities of TACs?



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