



## EVALUATING INEC'S CVR PROCESS

# A SPOTLIGHT ON ACTUAL PVC COLLECTION

**JULY 2022**

# Disclaimer

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as of Monday, 4 July 2022. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed methods such as one-on-one interviews, desk research and polling to collate the available data. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy edit the information gathered.

Our publicly released reports are formatted for easy and quick reading, and may not necessarily contain all the data that SB Morgen gathered during a given survey. Complete datasets can be made available on request.

All forecasts were built using data from a variety of sources. A baseline of accurate and comprehensive historic data is collected from respondents and publicly-available information, including from regulators, trade associations, research partners, newspapers and government agencies.

## Executive Summary

As the 2023 general elections approach, the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has taken centre stage with multiple campaigns to encourage Nigerians to register to get the Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) and vote. While the focus has been on voter registration, no voter can vote without holding a PVC.

In this report, we have chosen to look at the CVR process beyond just voter registration and track its performance all the way to PVC collection. We polled 4,001 Nigerians in eight states across the country.

Our findings are as follows:

- 64% of our respondents had commenced the CVR process.
- Only 41% of those who have started the CVR process have been able to collect their PVCs.
- Only 23% of those who have collected their PVCs were able to do so on their first visit. The rest had to make at least two visits and 20% went at least four times before getting their PVCs.
- Most Nigerians do not trust the reasons INEC has stated for their PVCs not being ready.
- 29% of those who commenced the CVR process encountered violence in the process.
- Young people below 35 dropped out of the CVR process at a greater proportion than those older than 35.
- INEC's failure of being transparent in communicating with prospective voters on the status of the CVR process is one of the key reasons for this drop-off.





## Key Recommendations:

- INEC should include publishing of PVC production, actual PVC collection numbers versus registration numbers in its public communications on a monthly basis to keep it accountable.
- INEC should include notifications of readiness of PVCs via SMS in its process in order to bridge the gap between printed PVCs and actual attempts to collect the PVCs.
- INEC should include a tracking process in its online portal to transparently communicate to the voter where each CVR process is. INEC should modify its incentives to its staff to ensure that they prioritise PVC distribution, especially as elections approach.
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), activists and funders should modify their campaigns from merely encouraging Voter Registration to mobilising for PVC collection.
- CSOs and activists should engage INEC closer on PVC collection status and information to demand transparency and accountability on this important point.

From 28 June 2021, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) commenced the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise<sup>1</sup> geared towards enabling eligible Nigerians to either register afresh for the collection of Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) or transfer their existing PVCs<sup>2</sup> to their preferred polling unit if they have moved since the last elections.

One year after the exercise was announced, as of 28 June, INEC announced that 10,487,972 Nigerians representing 5% of the country's estimated population had registered for PVCs in the CVR process with 60% of this number being youths. This was achieved within the atmosphere of increased attacks on INEC facilities across the country since 2019.

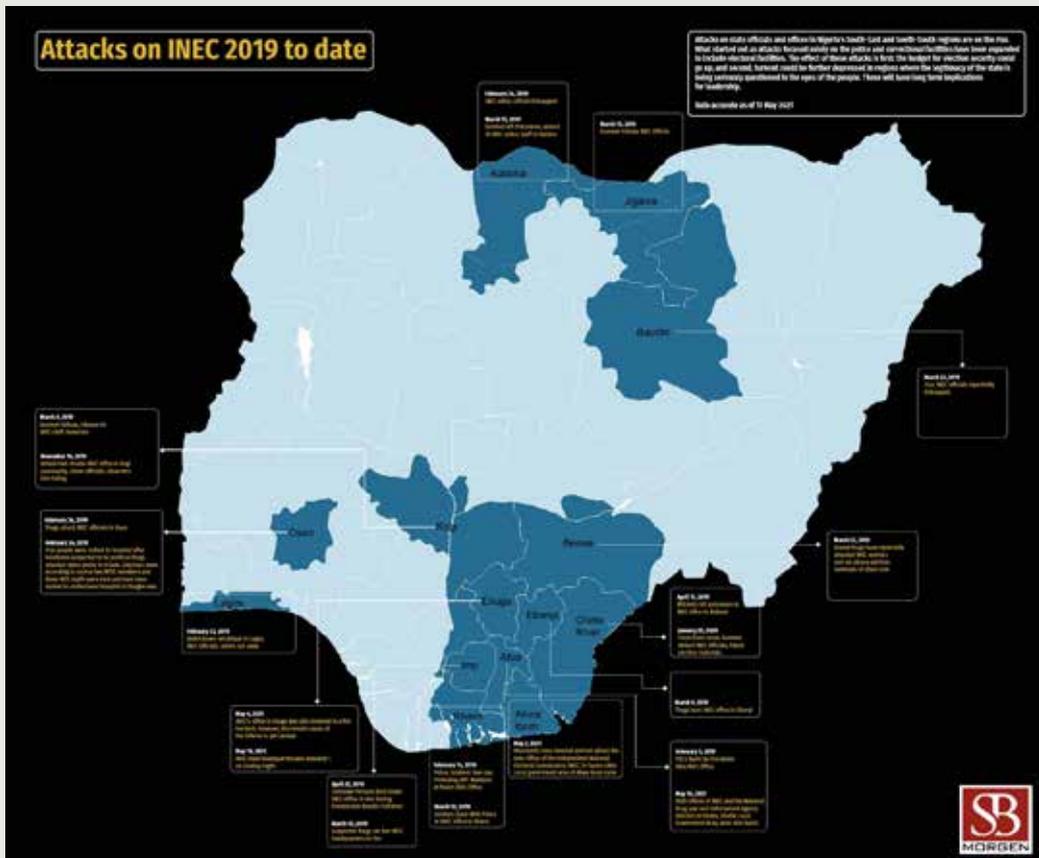


Chart: Attacks on INEC<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://inecnigeria.org/end-of-the-first-quarter-of-continuous-voters-registration-cvr/>

<sup>2</sup><https://guardian.ng/news/cvr-fresh-pvc-registrations-hit-10-4-million/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.sbmintel.com/2021/05/chart-of-the-week-attacks-on-inec/>



However, the registration is only the beginning of the process, which must culminate in an eligible voter picking up a physical PVC. Without the PVC, the voter is unable to vote in the elections, and therefore will be disenfranchised. While much of the focus, both from INEC communications as well as advocacy efforts by civil society advocates, has been on encouraging Nigerians to go and register, there has been little concerted reporting by INEC on actual PVC collections or advocacy to hold INEC accountable for this final crucial leg of enfranchising the Nigerian voter.

It is for this reason that SBM Intelligence has carried out this survey in eight states spread across the country to provide an indicative assessment of the process end to end, from the perspective of the voters. The aim is to bring

stakeholder focus to that final leg of ensuring that all those who have registered to vote receive their PVCs before the 2023 general elections.

### Sample Size and Geographic Spread

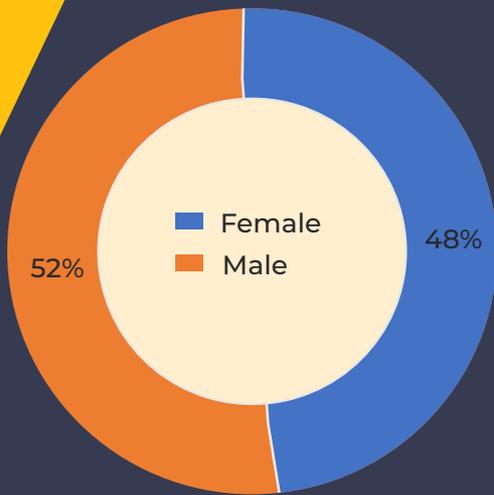
Our researchers interviewed a total of 4,001 Nigerians in eight states of the country distributed as shown below. These states were selected for population, geopolitical spread and diversity of political parties.

States	Total Responses
Abuja	518
Anambra	357
Bauchi	521
Cross River	577
Kano	595
Lagos	362
Oyo	559
Rivers	512
Grand Total	4,001

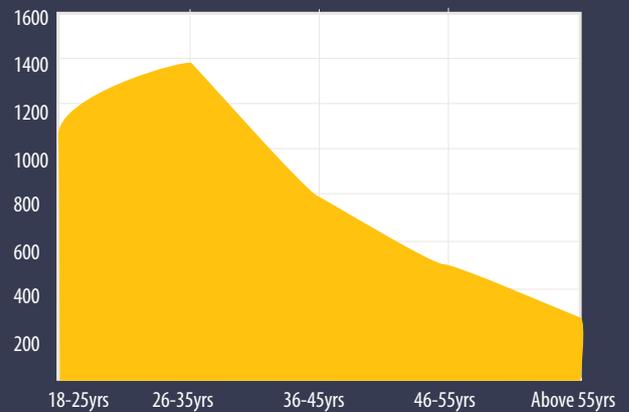
# Demographics of Respondents

The respondents were selected via random sampling and were interviewed physically. Our selection process ensured that the respondents reflected age, gender and employment status balance and diversity.

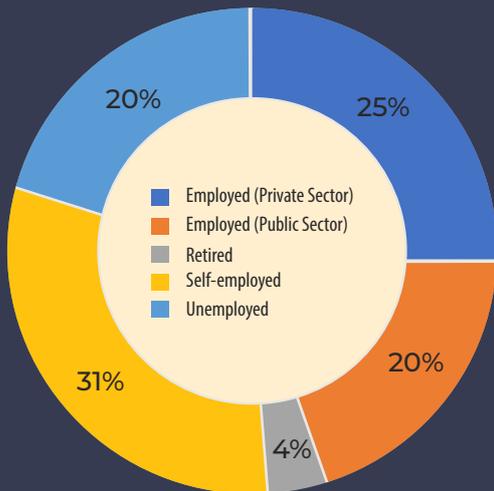
**Gender of Respondents**



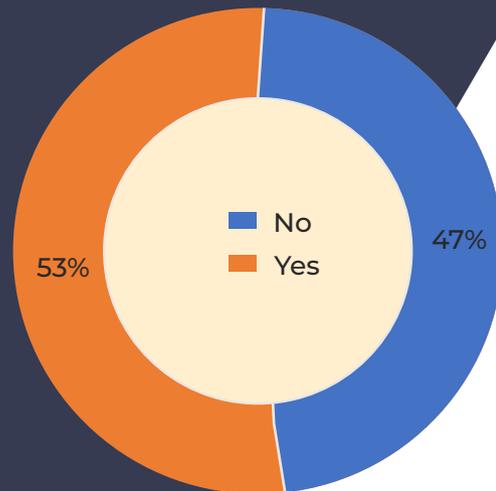
**Age Distribution of Respondents**



**Employment Status**



**Have you voted before?**



We also captured respondents who have voted before and those who would be voting for the first time if they decided to vote in 2023.

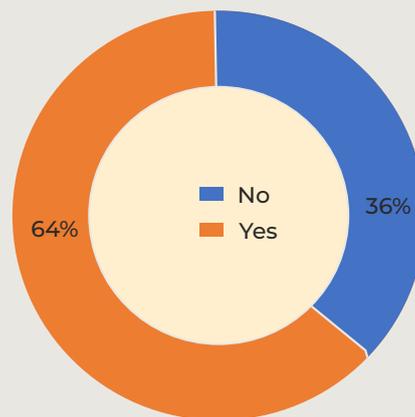
# Engaging The CVR Process: Nigerians Want To Vote

Our first question was to determine those who had started the CVR process and those who had not. The majority of the respondents have registered online on the INEC portal, indicating a high engagement in the CVR process.



As the purpose of this report is to assess the completion of the CVR process in delivering PVCs to the voter, the subsequent analysis in this report will focus on the 64% who have started the process.

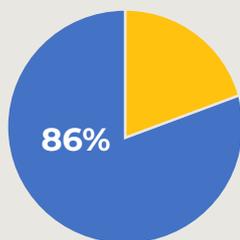
Did you register online in the ongoing CVR exercise?



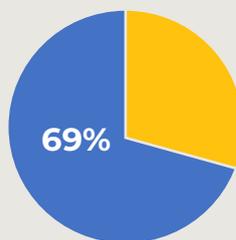
## Comparing CVR Process to PVC Collection



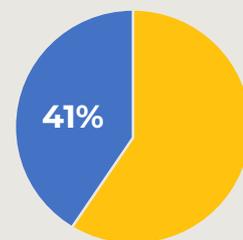
Registered Online



Physical Capture Done



Attempted PVC Pickup



Successful PVC Pickup

Only 41% of the respondents who have commenced the CVR process have been able to pick up the PVCs from the designated INEC offices.

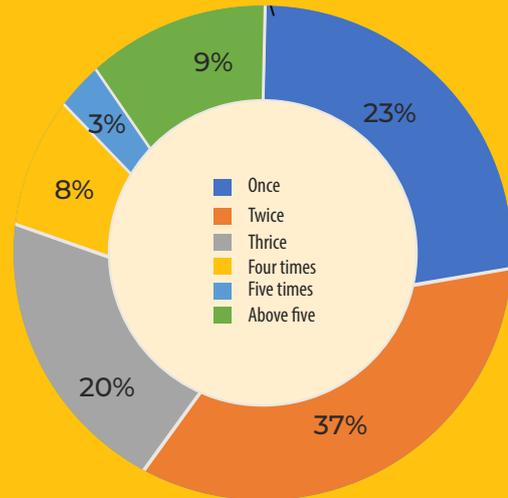


The big drops come after the voter has completed his part by going to the INEC offices for the physical data capture.

Voters complained about the paucity of information on whether their cards are ready or not, having been told at the point of capture that they would be informed by SMS when the cards were ready. This may explain the drop-offs between Physical Data Capture and attempted PVC pickup.

The biggest drop comes between attempts to pick up the PVC and actually getting the physical card. We asked those who had received the cards how many times they visited the designated INEC offices before being able to

Number of Tries before successful PVC Pickup



get their PVCs. Crucially, only 23% of the respondents who had successfully picked up their PVCs did so on the first attempt. It is a crucial failure point that INEC's inability to communicate the cards' readiness to prospective voters made most people to visit INEC offices more than once in order to get their PVCs, not minding the fact that many have to take time off their work, businesses or studies to do this. By INEC's submission, 60% of the new CVRs were done by youths. It, therefore, follows that disaggregating the pattern by age may provide insight into this. In addition, as voters are only able to vote where they are located, disaggregation by location is also important. The top two reasons people were unable to pick up their cards were simply that:

- They were told the PVCs were not ready and the INEC staff did not know if or when they would be ready.

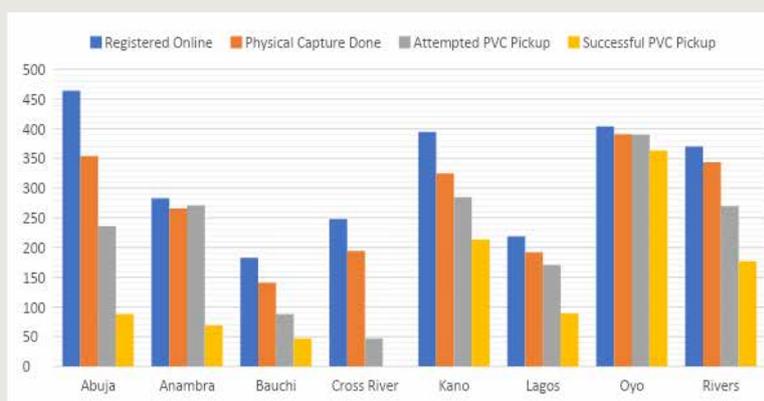


- There were huge crowds at the INEC offices with very few INEC staff focused on registering new people in the CVR process instead of giving PVCs to those who had come to collect.

From these reports, it appears that the incentive for the INEC staff is to register as many people as they can in spite of the

difficulties they face on the field, in order to report bigger numbers for the total number of those who have registered in the CVR process. Therefore, there needs to be a realignment of the incentives such that CVR registration remains important, but production, disbursement and distribution of PVCs begin to carry bigger weight, especially as the elections grow closer.

**CVR Registration Versus PVC Pickup by Location**



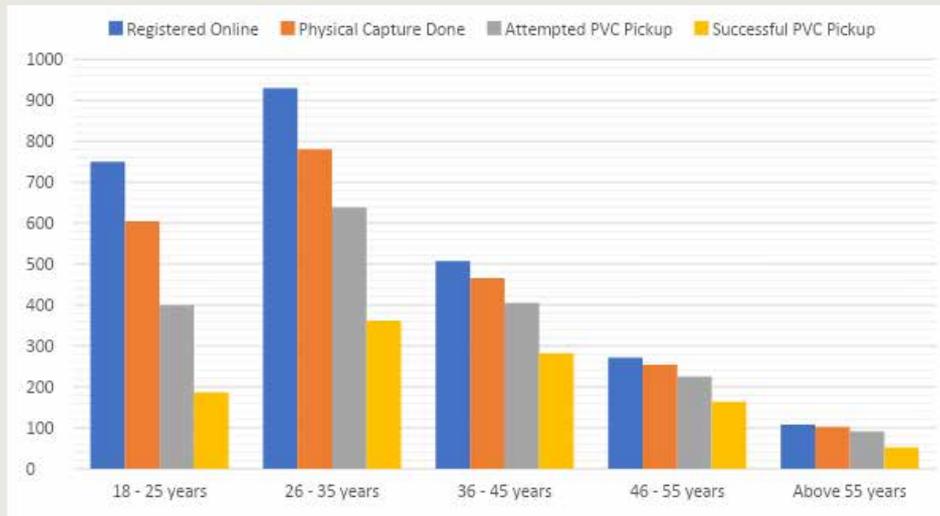
We observe that while most of the Southern states show (Cross River being the exception) that most of those who register online go on to the INEC offices for physical capture, there is a marked gap between these two processes for the Northern states

covered. A similar pattern is repeated between the physical capture and attempts to pick up the PVC phases, with Cross River still being the Southern state with a deviation from the pattern again. This may be indicative of a freshly energised voter population

in the South who are attempting to exercise their franchise for the first time.

However, this pattern breaks down in the actual PVC collection phase. Oyo is an outlier here, with over 90% of those who attempted to collect their PVCs being successful. For all other states, there is a marked drop in this phase, with Kano having it better than the others. None of the Cross River respondents were able to collect their PVCs successfully.

### CVR Registration Versus PVC Pickup by Age



While more young people are starting the process by registering online, a smaller percentage, relative to older people, continue the process. For example, over 95% of those between 36 – 45 years and over 98% of those above 46 years went from registering online to doing the physical capture exercise. However, only 85% of those below 35 years moved from registering online to physical capture. The pattern continues in the subsequent stages and accelerates at the collection phase.

Considering that the under-35 group makes up 60% of INEC’s new CVR data, it is important to mobilise this base to follow through with the process. It is also necessary to impress on INEC the need to communicate better to this base and organise the PVC pickup more effectively, as they are less likely to return

multiple times to pick up their PVCs if they are unable to do so the first time they visit.

#### Violence and Trust

After the 2019 elections, SBM Intelligence conducted a survey of the electorate and asked those who did not vote about the reasons they abstained. The biggest reason stated was the disruption of voting due to the occurrence of violence during the elections. The third biggest reason was a change in location without being able to move their PVCs to the new location. It is for this reason that the CVR process needs to be conducted in an atmosphere devoid of violence. Also for those who are moving their PVCs who constitute a large portion of those who are engaging the process, the CVR process must culminate in the collection of the PVCs.



### Why did you not vote in 2019?

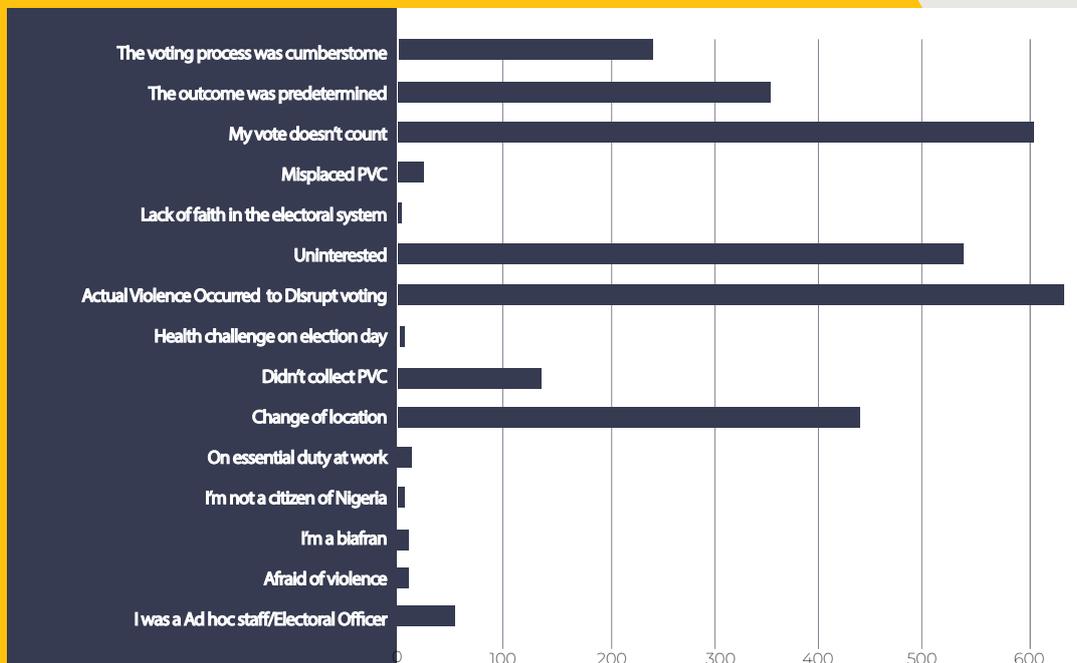


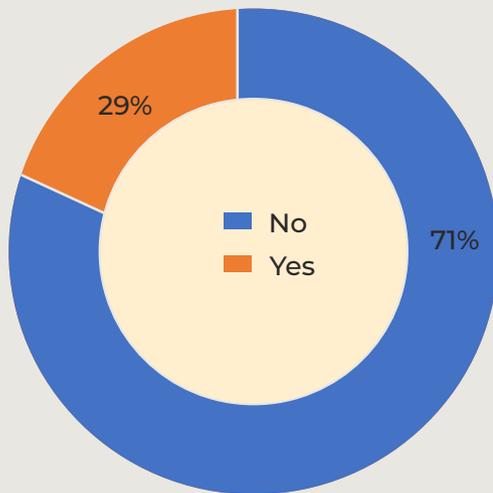
Chart: Responses to the question of lack of voting in 2019<sup>4</sup>

To this end, we asked the respondents if they had encountered any violence in the process of trying to get their PVCs. 29% replied in the affirmative. INEC, in conjunction with the security institutions, must work together to eliminate violence and/or the threat of violence from the CVR process.

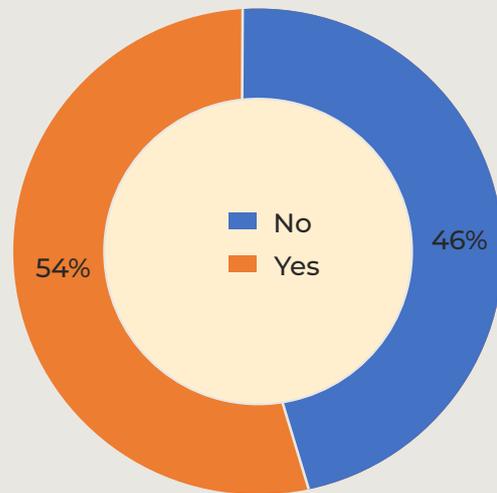
<sup>4</sup><https://www.sbmintel.com/2019/06/the-2019-elections-a-recap/>



**Have you encountered any violence when trying to get your voter's card?**



**Do you believe INEC's reason for the availability of the voters card?**



Our final question centred on the respondents' trust for the reasons the INEC officials, and by extension INEC as an institution told them to explain why their PVCs were unavailable when they attempted to pick them up after completing the physical data capture phase of the CVR process.

More than half of the respondents did not trust the official reasons stated. This again reiterates the need for INEC's communications all through the process to be more transparent and proactive, in order to engender trust.



## Conclusion and Recommendations

While the current CVR process has recorded significant success in registering voters, there is a big gap between this phase and the collection of PVCs by voters who have registered. This, therefore, represents a real threat of disenfranchisement to the millions who have registered if the necessary interventions to bridge this gap are not carried out immediately. Our recommendations are as follows:

- INEC should include publishing of PVC production, actual PVC collection numbers versus registration numbers in its public communications on a monthly basis to keep it accountable.
- INEC should include notifications of readiness of PVCs via SMS in its process.
- INEC should include a tracking process in its online portal to transparently communicate to the voter where each CVR process is.
- INEC should modify its incentives to its staff to ensure that they prioritise PVC distribution, especially as elections approach.
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## ABOUT SBM

SBM Intelligence is an Africa-focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm focused on addressing the critical need for political, social, economic and market data, and big data analytics. We employ various methods of data collection. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients both within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and carry out research leading to improvements in survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, South Africa, the UK, France and the United States.

