Telecommunications

Telecommunications sector most committed in Europe to Open Innovation

According to Sopra Steria Next's Open Innovation Report 2025, Telecommunication corporates are leading the way in successful Open Innovation practices.

Almost 9 out of 10 (89%) of surveyed corporates have collaborated with startups, the highest of any industry in the report. Moreover, 75% report success in their Open Innovation projects, with 88% of corporates considering Open Innovation to be crucial to their strategy, the highest response of any industry.

Telecommunication corporates also point to other essential elements for success in Open Innovation. 85% of corporates have a dedicated department for these initiatives, the highest of any industry.

Among those corporates who have run AI collaborations, 78% believe startups will be vital in executing their AI strategy, the highest of any industry. Overall, the Telecommunications sector is well positioned to capitalise on future growth and technological developments, with 86% of active Open Innovation collaborators aiming to continue and increase their focus on Open Innovation.
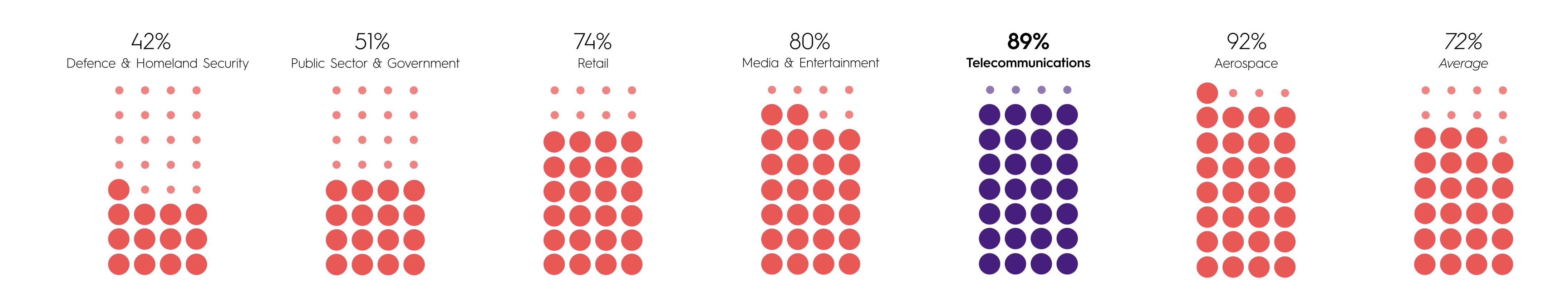
89%
of Telecommunication corporates have collaborated with a startup – the highest participation of any sector

88%
of corporates judge Open Innovation to be of strategic importance – the highest rating of any industry

75%
of Telecommunications corporates reach their objectives for collaborations always or most of the time – the most successful rate of startup collaborations

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01. Second highest number of corporates
to have collaborated with startups

Q: Has your organisation ever collaborated with a startup?
Companies selecting Yes, both Domestic and Foreign Startups, Yes, Domestic Startups and Yes, Foreign Startups

42% Defence & Homeland Security	51% Public Sector & Government	74% Retail	80% Media & Entertainment	**89% Telecommunications**	92% Aerospace	72% *Average*

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02. Highest level of corporates
who judge Open Innovation to be strategically important

86% RETAIL	58% LEGAL SERVICES	73% AEROSPACE	
60% DEFENCE & HOMELAND SECURITY	78% INSURANCE	80% *AVERAGE*	# 88% TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Q: How important is startup collaboration for your organisation's strategy?
Companies answering Very Important (Mission Critical) and Slightly Important, but not Mission Critical

03. Highest number
of successful collaborations

52% ENERGY & UTILITIES	73% AEROSPACE	60% TRANSPORT	
20% DEFENSE & HOMELAND SECURITY	68% HEALTH	65% *AVERAGE*	# 75% TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Q: Overall, how often in your collaborations with startups did you achieve your objectives?
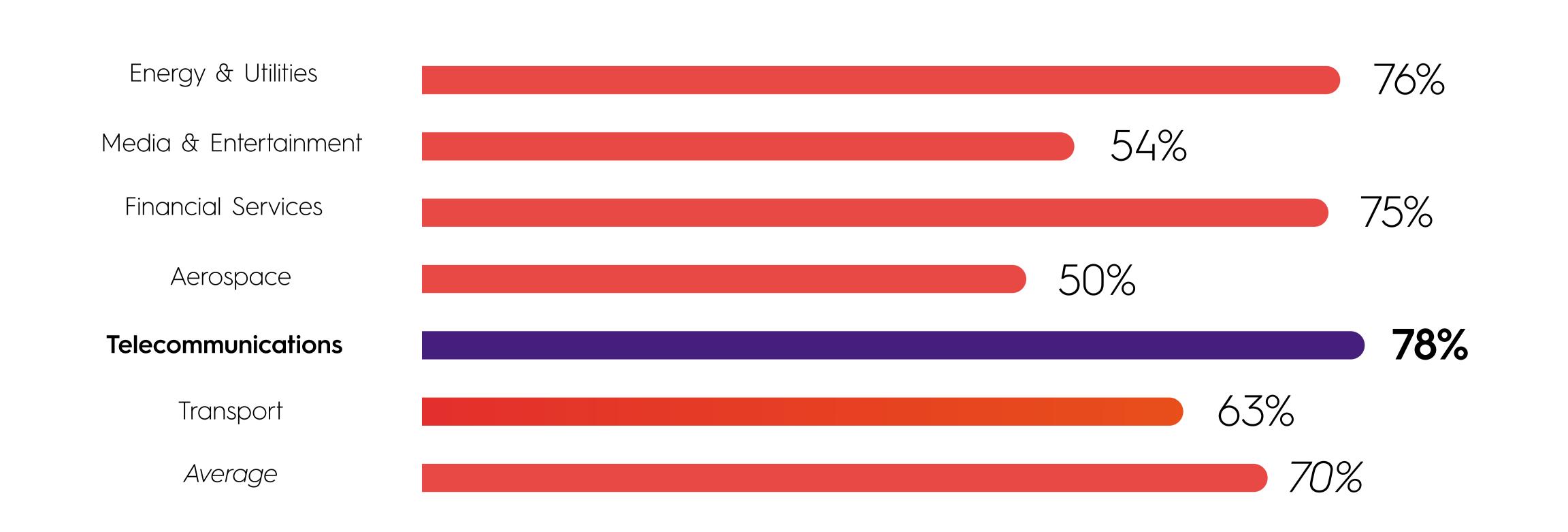Companies answering Always and Most of the Time

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04. Strongest level of conviction
that startups will be crucial in executing AI strategies

Q: What future role do you see for startups in the ongoing development and implementation of your organisation's AI strategy?
Companies answering As key partners in driving innovation and As integral to your AI development process

Energy & Utilities	76%
Media & Entertainment	54%
Financial Services	75%
Aerospace	50%
Telecommunications	**78%**
Transport	63%
Average	70%

05. Highest prevalence
of dedicated startup collaboration departments

Q: Does your organisation have a dedicated department or business unit that works with startups?
Companies answering Yes

Defence & Homeland Security	40%
Insurance	81%
Legal Services	50%
Aerospace	82%
Telecommunications	**85%**
Transport	60%
Average	69%

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This survey was conducted among 1,643 public and private organisations and startups in 12 European countries: United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

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