Energy & Utilities

Unlocking Open Innovation with AI startups

Sopra Steria Next's Open Innovation Report 2025 has found that 74% of surveyed Energy & Utilities organisations have engaged in startup collaborations over the past two years. Of these organisations, 80% consider Open Innovation as important to their strategy, in line with the average reported score across sectors. However, Energy & Utilities companies regularly fail to reach their original objectives for their startup collaboration, with only 52% of these projects succeeding.

Despite struggling for results in comparison to other sectors, the organisations who have successfully undertaken AI collaborations have enjoyed significant benefits. 76% of the organisations who have carried out AI collaborations say startups will be crucial for executing their AI strategy, the second highest score of any industry. The benefits of these partnerships have not gone unnoticed, as 74% of organisations that are yet to carry out Open Innovation collaborations are planning on experimenting with startups within the next two years. The Energy & Utilities sector must engage with start-ups quickly or risk falling behind other sectors that are already reaping the rewards from their Open Innovation collaborations.

74%
of Energy & Utilities organisations have collaborated with startups – just above average for all industries

80%
judge Open Innovation as important to strategy – the average for all industries

52%
of Energy & Utilities organisations reach their objectives always or most of the time – the second lowest of all industries
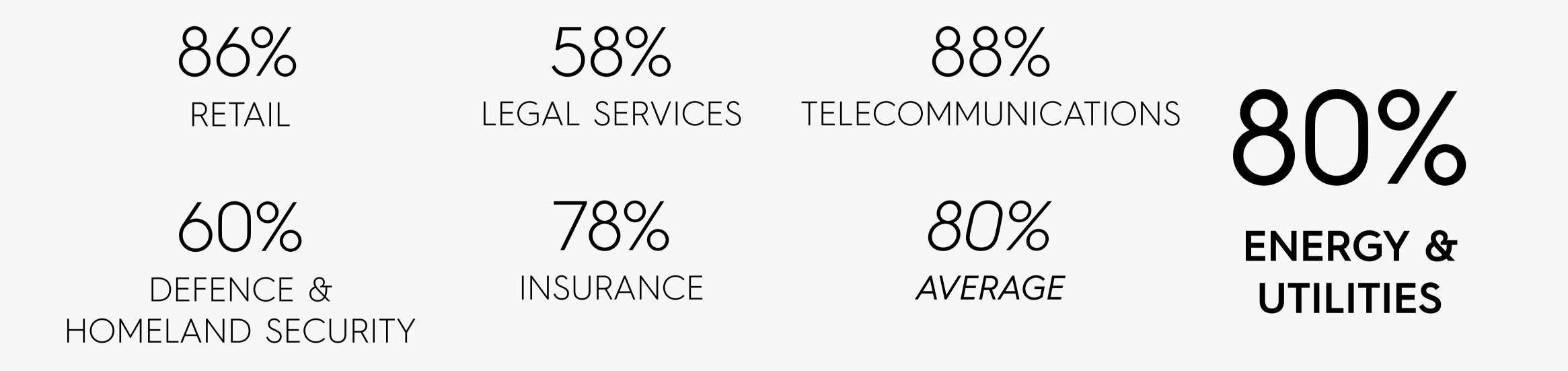

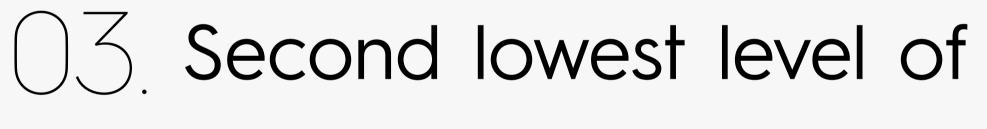## 01. Almost three quarters of organisations have collaborated with startups

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

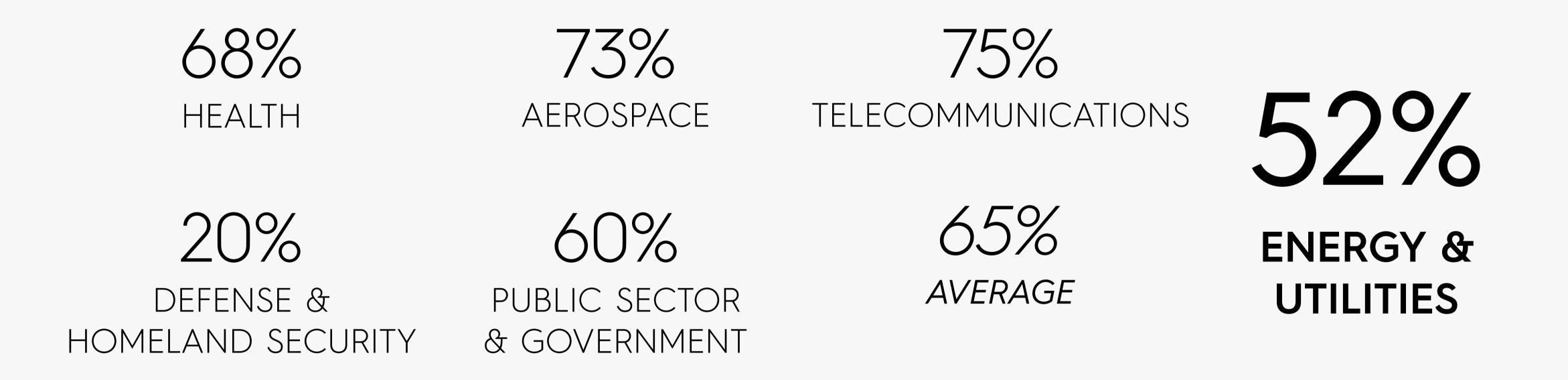| 42% Defence & Homeland Security	51% Public Sector & Government	68% Health	**74% Energy & Utilities**	89% Telecommunications	92% Aerospace	72% *Average*

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02. The overwhelming majority of organisations consider Open Innovation crucial to their strategy

86% RETAIL	58% LEGAL SERVICES	88% TELECOMMUNICATIONS	**80%**
60% DEFENCE & HOMELAND SECURITY	78% INSURANCE	80% *AVERAGE*	**ENERGY & UTILITIES**

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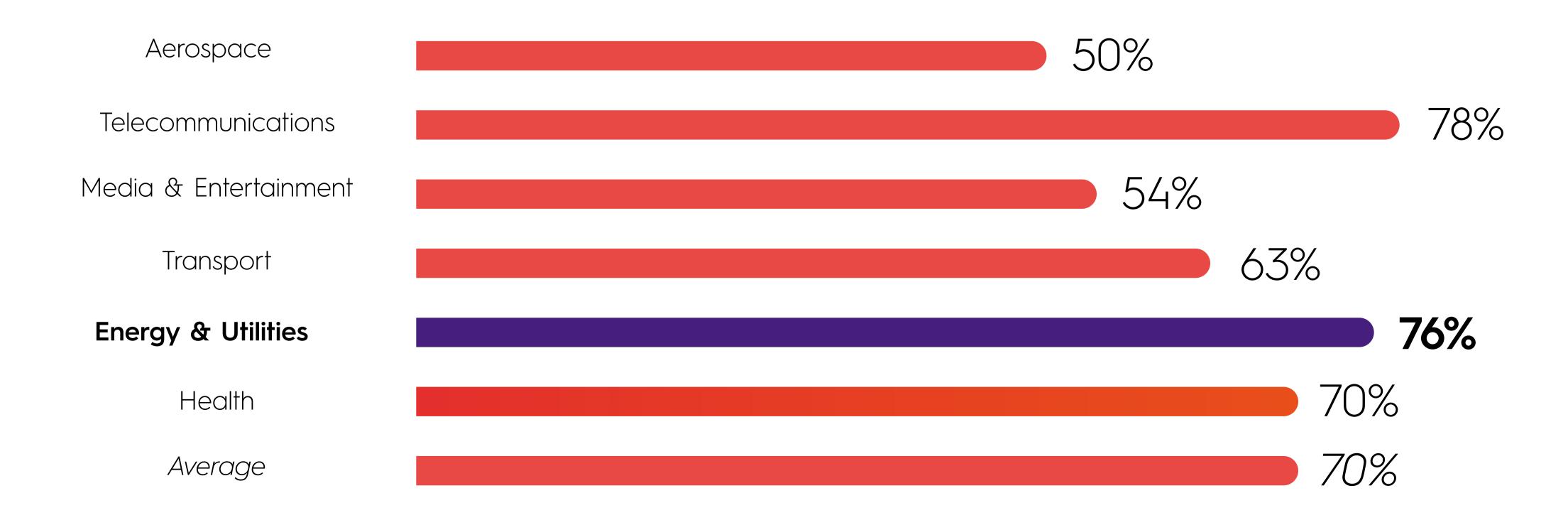Companies answering Very Important (Mission Critical) and Slightly Important, but not Mission Critical

03. Second lowest level of successful collaborations

68% HEALTH	73% AEROSPACE	75% TELECOMMUNICATIONS	**52%**
20% DEFENSE & HOMELAND SECURITY	60% PUBLIC SECTOR & GOVERNMENT	65% *AVERAGE*	**ENERGY & UTILITIES**

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

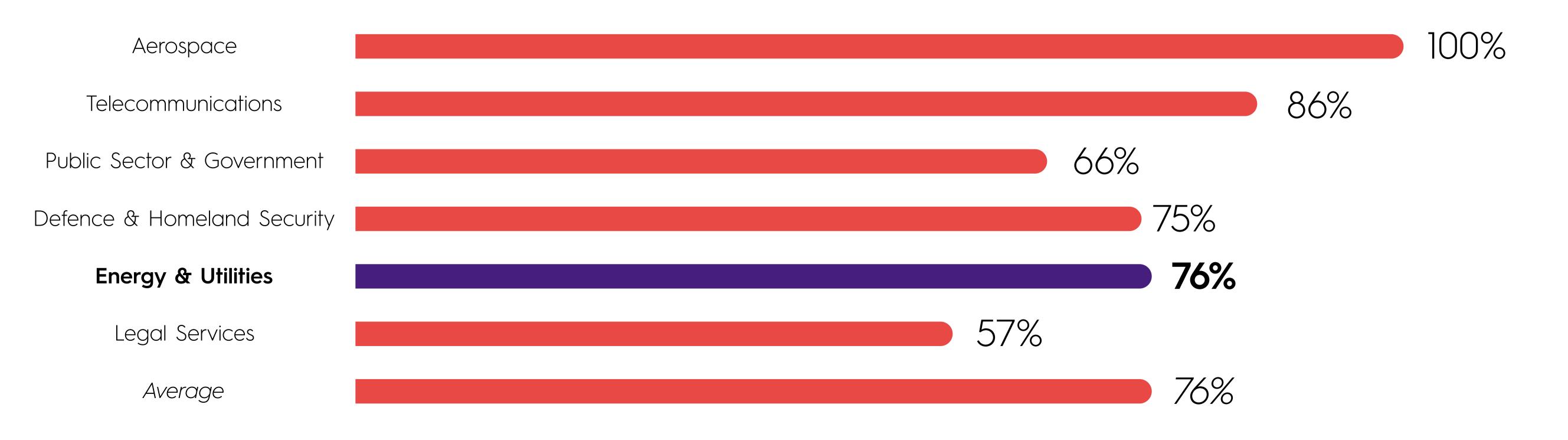
04. Second highest industry to see startups as important to executing their AI strategy

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

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

05. Majority of organisations are planning future collaborations with startups

Q: Are you interested in (or will you again) collaborate with startups within the next 24 months?
Companies answering Yes

Aerospace	100%
Telecommunications	86%
Public Sector & Government	66%
Defence & Homeland Security	75%
Energy & Utilities	**76%**
Legal Services	57%
Average	*76%*