United Kingdom

UK leads Europe in Open Innovation and AI collaboration

The United Kingdom has emerged as Europe's leader in corporate–startup collaboration, particularly in artificial intelligence, according to Sopra Steria Next's Open Innovation Report 2025.

No other country in the region relies more on startups to drive AI strategy, with 81% of UK corporates that have engaged in AI projects ranking startups as essential partners —more than anywhere else in Europe.

This leadership extends beyond AI. UK corporates report the highest success rates in Open Innovation, achieving their objectives in 75% of projects.

The country also leads Europe in quantum computing collaborations over the past two years and ranks second in corporate interest in sustainability-driven innovation. Structural com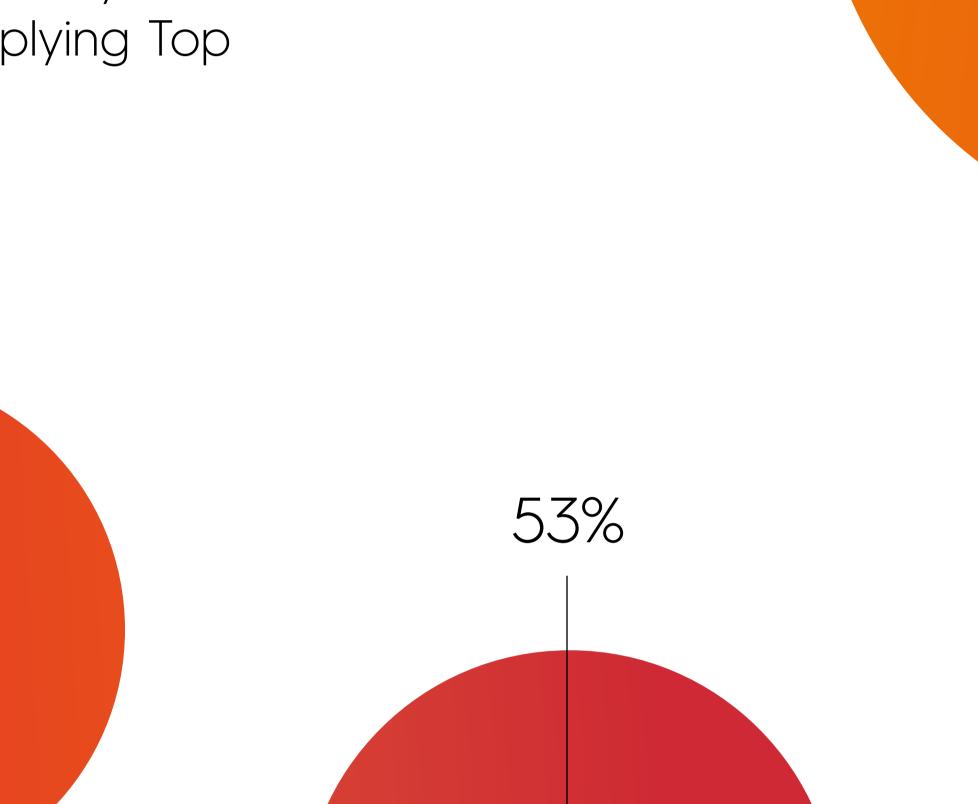mitment to innovation is also evident— 52% of UK firms have placed responsibility for open innovation at the highest levels of management, while 79% track startup partnerships through key performance indicators, among the strongest commitments in the region.

75%
of UK corporates that achieve their objectives all or most of the time – highest in Europe

52%
of UK corporates that assign Open Innovation responsibility with top management - second highest in Europe

81%
of UK corporates judge startups crucial in executing their AI strategy - highest in Europe

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01. Second highest level of corporates
who have placed responsibility for Open Innovation with top management

Q: Where in your organisation is the responsibility for the startup collaboration placed? Companies replying Top Management
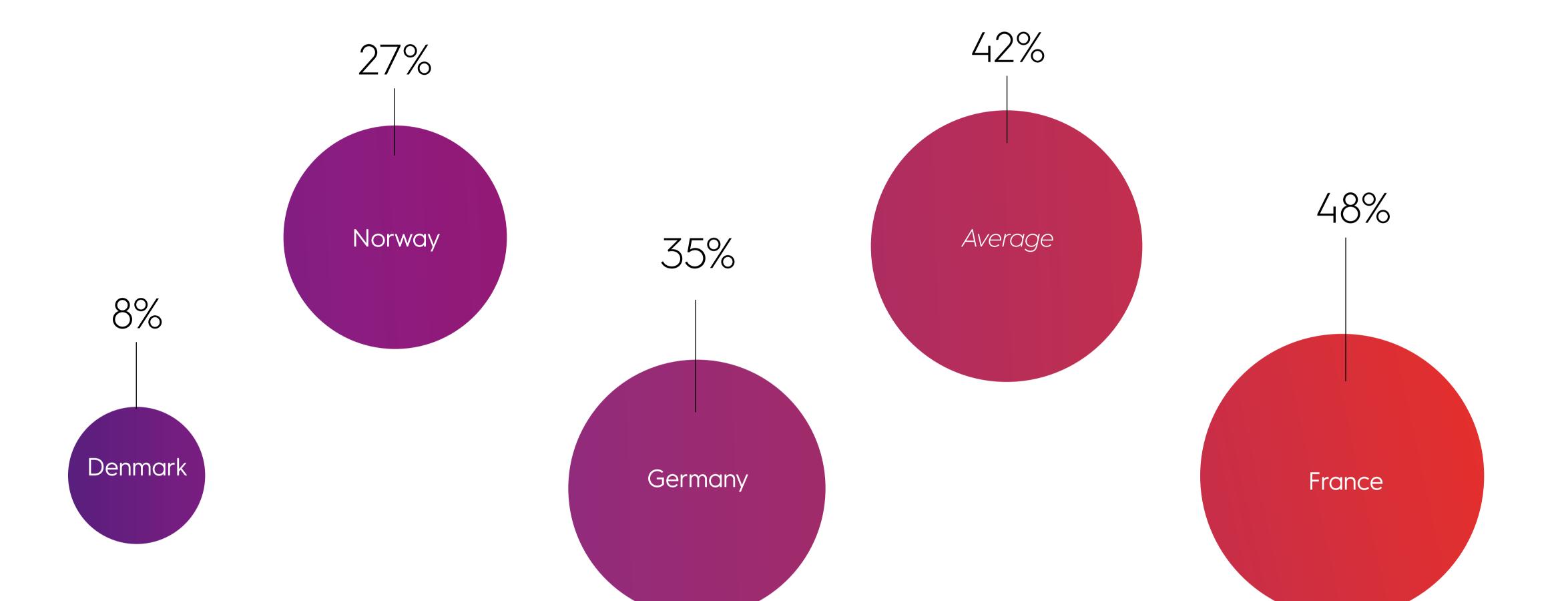
- 8% Denmark
- 27% Norway
- 35% Germany
- 42% Average
- 48% France
- **52% UK**
- 53% Luxembourg

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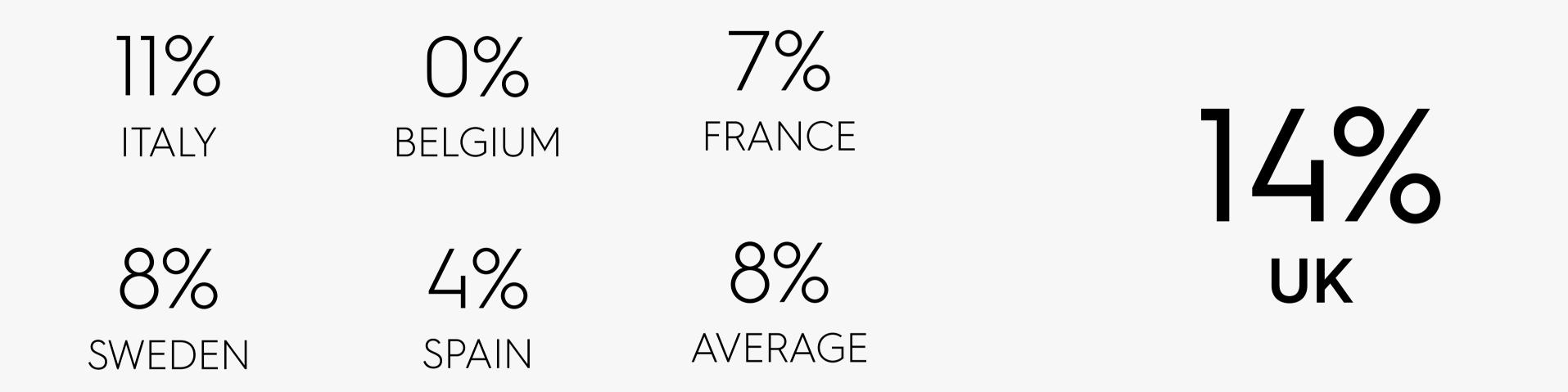
02. Highest level of
successful collaboration projects

74% GERMANY	36% NORWAY	38% SWITZERLAND
67% SPAIN	58% THE NETHERLANDS	65% AVERAGE

75%
UK

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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03. Highest volume of
quantum computing projects in the past two years

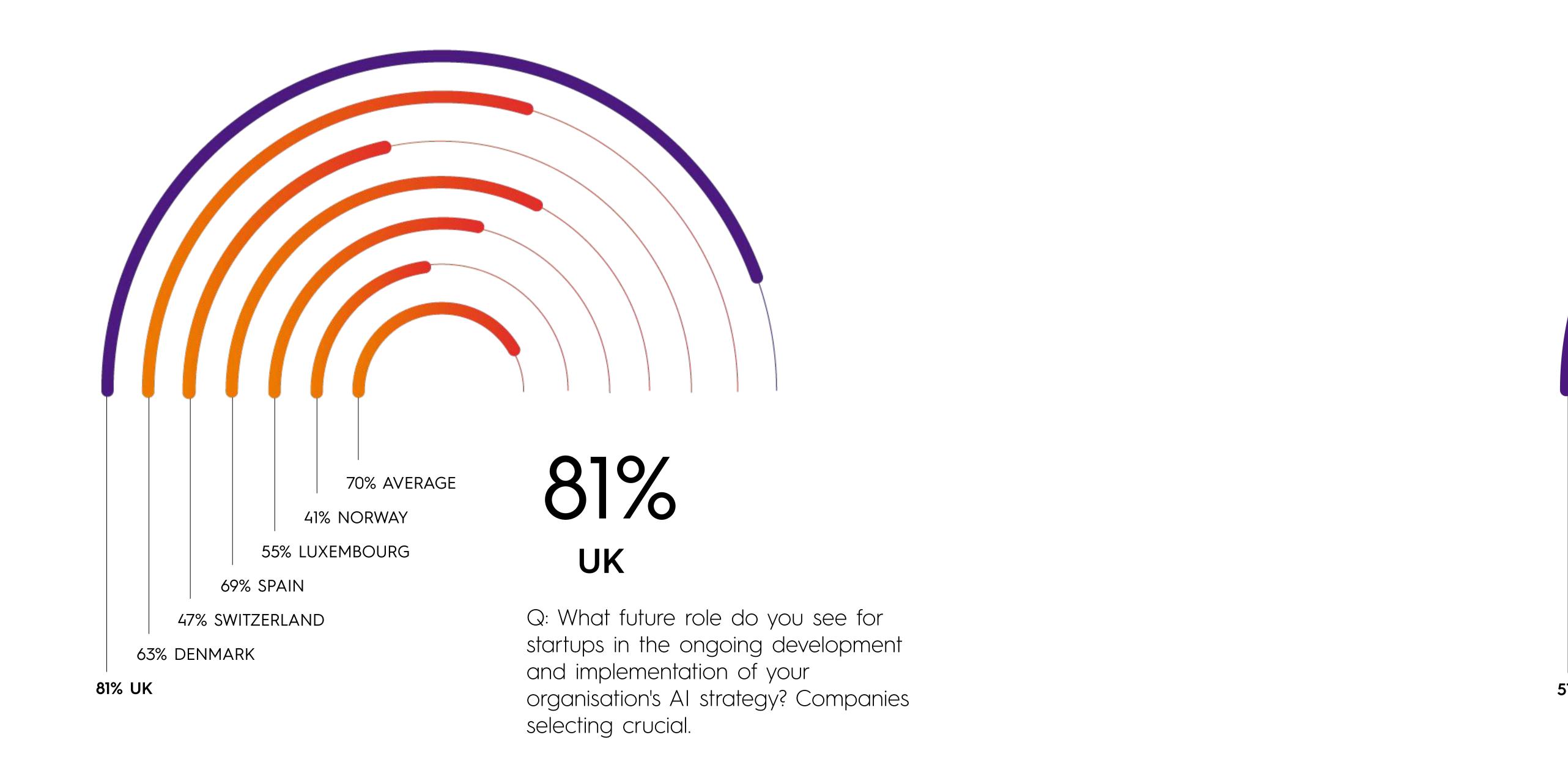|		
11% ITALY	0% BELGIUM	7% FRANCE
8% SWEDEN	4% SPAIN	8% AVERAGE

14%
UK

Q: In which area(s) have you collaborated with startups within the last 24 months? How important is startup collaboration for your organisation's strategy? Companies selecting Quantum Computing
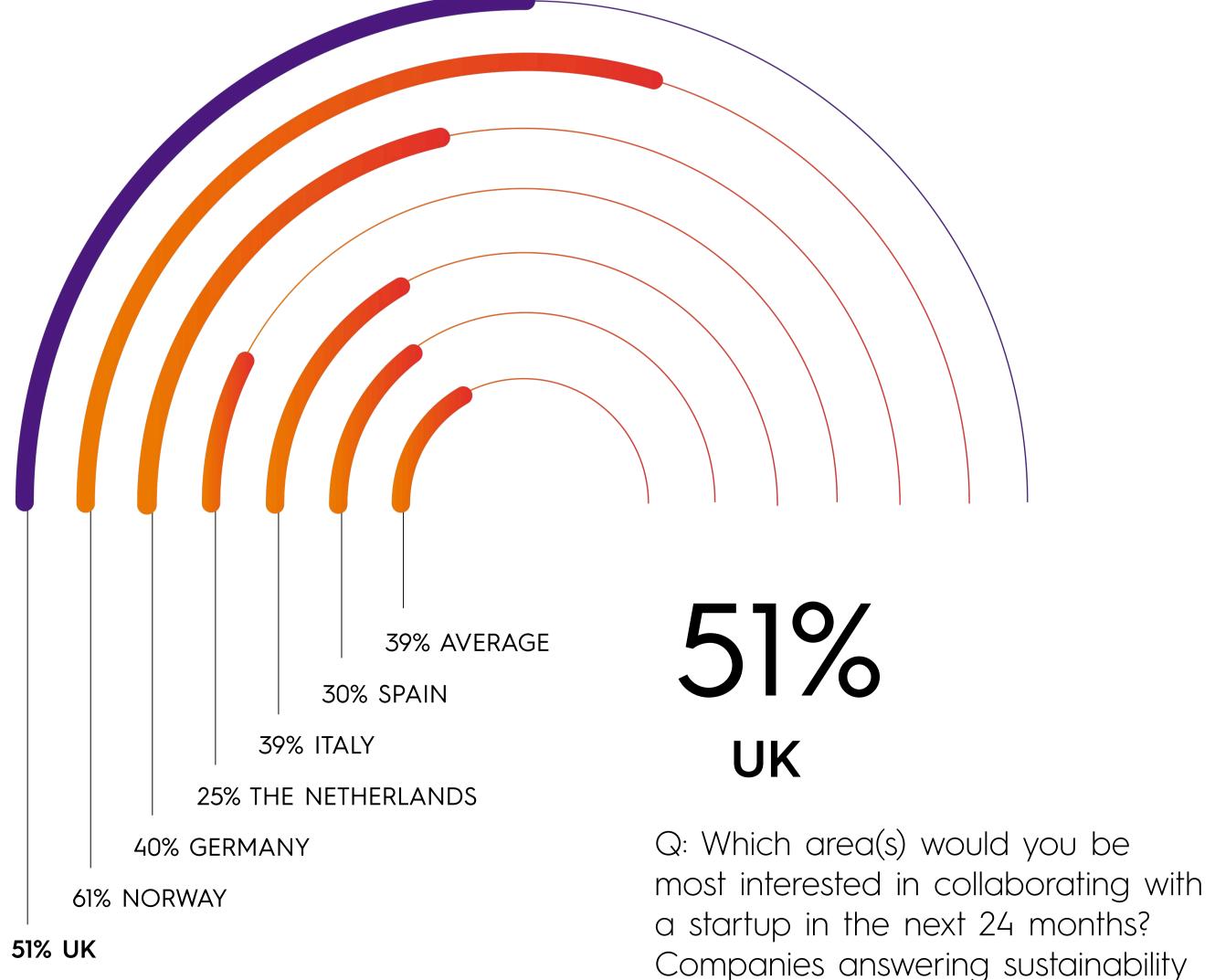
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04. Highest level of corporates
in Europe who judge startups to be crucial in executing their AI strategy

- 70% AVERAGE
- 41% NORWAY
- 55% LUXEMBOURG
- 69% SPAIN
- 47% SWITZERLAND
- 63% DENMARK
- 81% UK

81%
UK

Q: What future role do you see for startups in the ongoing development and implementation of your organisation's AI strategy? Companies selecting crucial.

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05. Second highest level of interest
in future sustainability Open Innovation projects

- 39% AVERAGE
- 30% SPAIN
- 39% ITALY
- 25% THE NETHERLANDS
- 40% GERMANY
- 6% NORWAY
- 51% UK

51%
UK

Q: Which area(s) would you be most interested in collaborating with a startup in the next 24 months? Companies answering sustainability

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This survey was conducted among 1,643 public and private sector organsations 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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