



German corporates lead Europe in leveraging startups to create AI strategy

German corporates show the strongest appetite in Europe for working with startups to shape their AI strategy, according to Sopra Steria Next's Innovation Report 2025.

More than half – 51% – plan to collaborate with startups to shape their AI strategy, the highest proportion on the continent, reflecting a growing recognition of their agility, innovation, and specialised expertise.

German corporates which have already run AI collaborations also report the second highest level of enthusiasm in Europe for future AI startup collaborations, with 75% judging startups to be key or integral partners to future AI strategy development.

However, Germany reports the lowest level of Open Innovation activity in Europe, with 22% of companies having launched just one project in the past two years.



of German corporates achieved their objectives Always or Most of the Time – second highest in Europe

## 51%

of German corporates want to collaborate with Alstartups to shape their future Al-strategy – Highest in Europe

Broader Open Innovation efforts are also delivering results, with 74% achieving their objectives consistently. Yet structural gaps remain — only 64% have a dedicated Open Innovation department, the second lowest in Europe. Addressing these challenges will be critical to sustaining momentum.

Highest number of corporates aiming to collaborate with startups in order to shape their AI strategy Q: Why do you wish to collaborate with startups on artificial intelligence (AI)? Companies answering to Shape AI-strategy.



of German corporates see Al-startups as key or integral partners to developing their ongoing Al-strategy – Second highest in Europe

9% Luxembourg	22% Sweden	43% France	<b>48%</b> Spain	50% Belgium	51% Germany	40% Average



Second lowest number of corporates to have a dedicated Open Innovation department

<b>75%</b>	66%	<b>57%</b>	64%
denmark	Spain	switzerland	
76% italy	75% the netherlands	69% average	GERMANY

Q: Does your organisation have a dedicated department or business unit that works with startups? Companies answering yes. Second highest proportion of companies judging
Al startups as important to executing their strategy

71%	55%	63%	75%
france	Luxembourg	denmark	
47%	81%	70%	GERMANY
switzerland	UK	average	

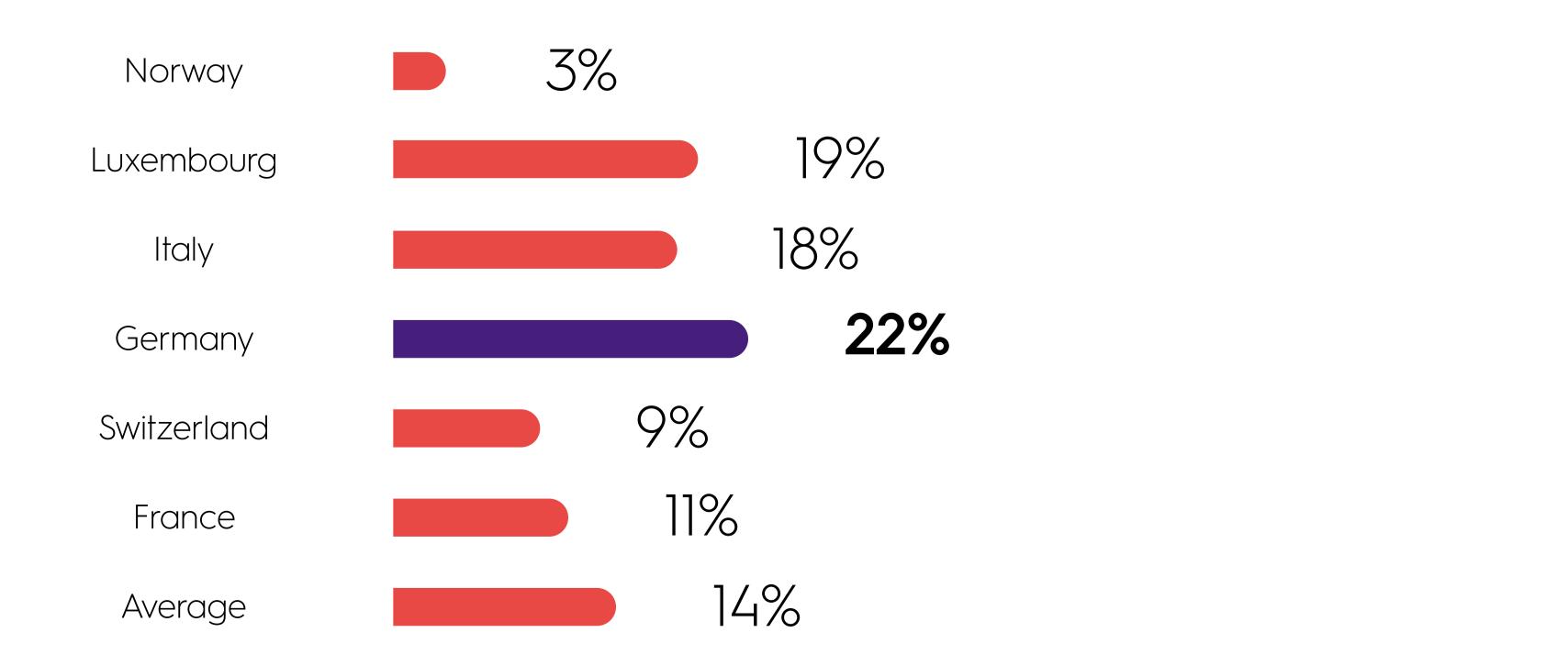
Q: What future role do you see for startups in the ongoing development and implementation of your organisation's AI strategy? Companies answering As key partners in driving innovation and As integral to your AI development process.





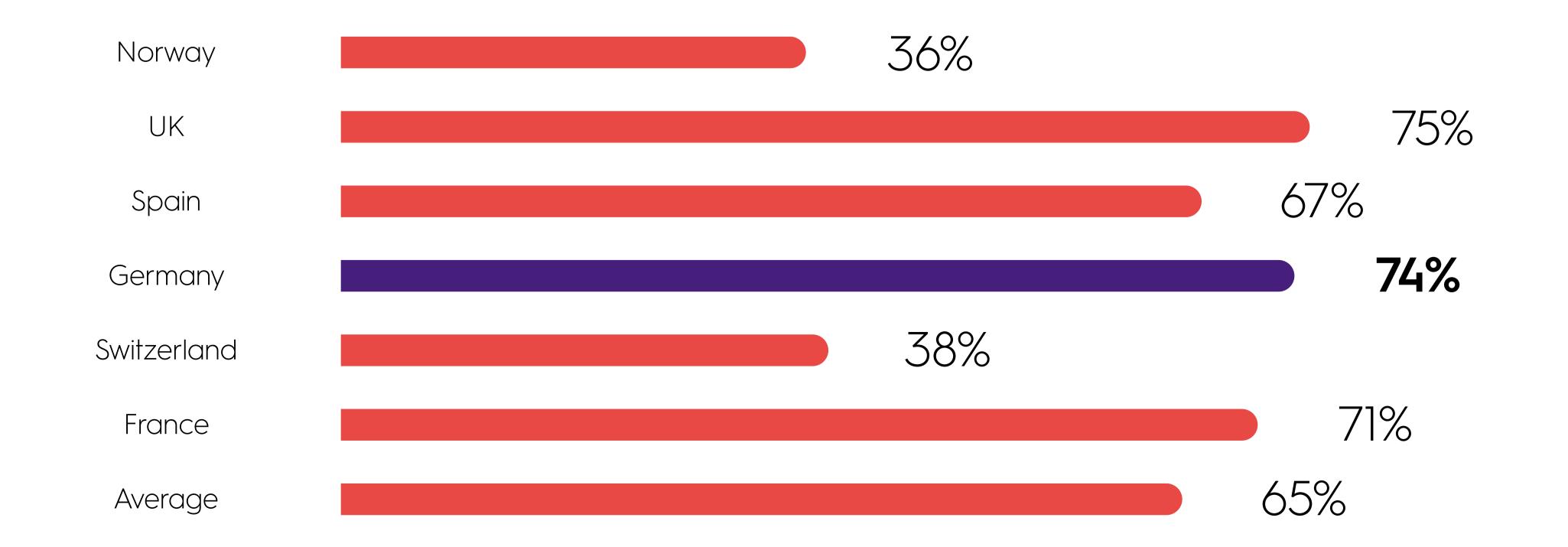
to have completed only one Open Innovation project in the past two years

Q: How many collaboration projects with startups have your organisation been involved in during the last 2 years? Companies answering 1.



reaching their objectives Always or Most of the Time

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





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