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Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon 2018 at the Swiss National Museum, photo: TomBo79, CC BY-SA 4.0

Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon 2018 Results of the Participants' Survey

Beat Estermann, 26 May 2019

Response Rates

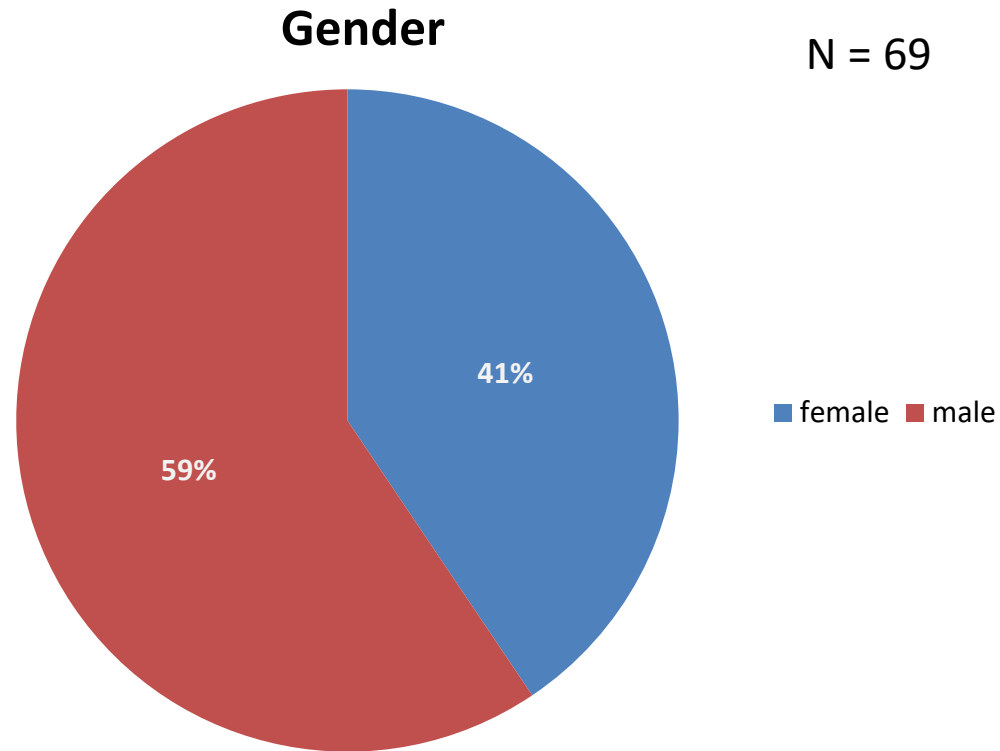
	Hackathon Participants	Survey Sample	Response Rate
N	69	29	42%
Gender			
male	41	21	51%
female	28	8	29%

Remarks

- The data was collected by means of an online survey between 23 April and 15 May 2019, i.e. approx. 6 months after the event; one invitation email and two reminders were sent out.
- The response rate of 42% is slightly lower than in the previous years (44-50%).

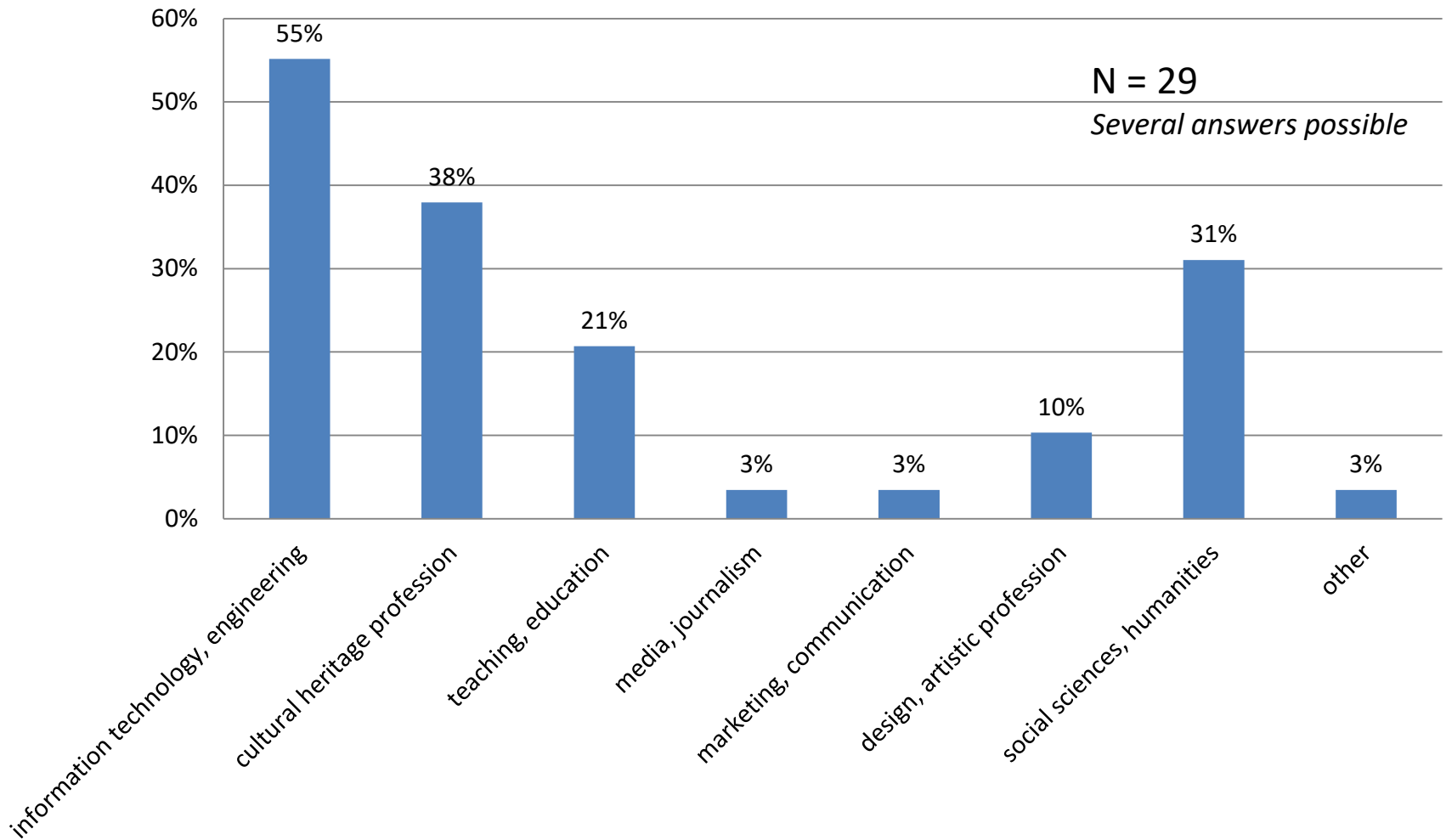
Composition of the Participants

Gender Distribution (based on registration data)



Participants' Professional Background

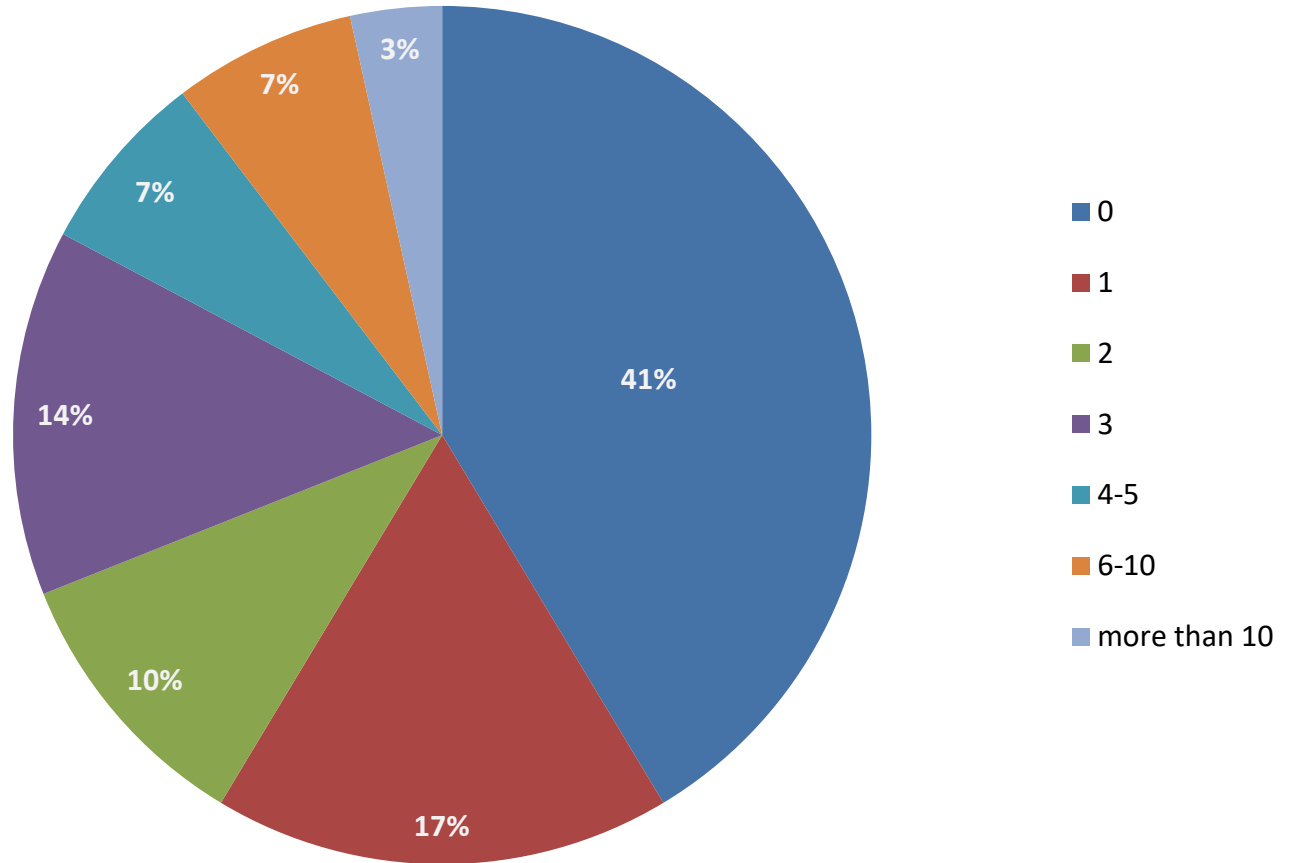
Professional Background



Participants' Previous Hackathon Experience

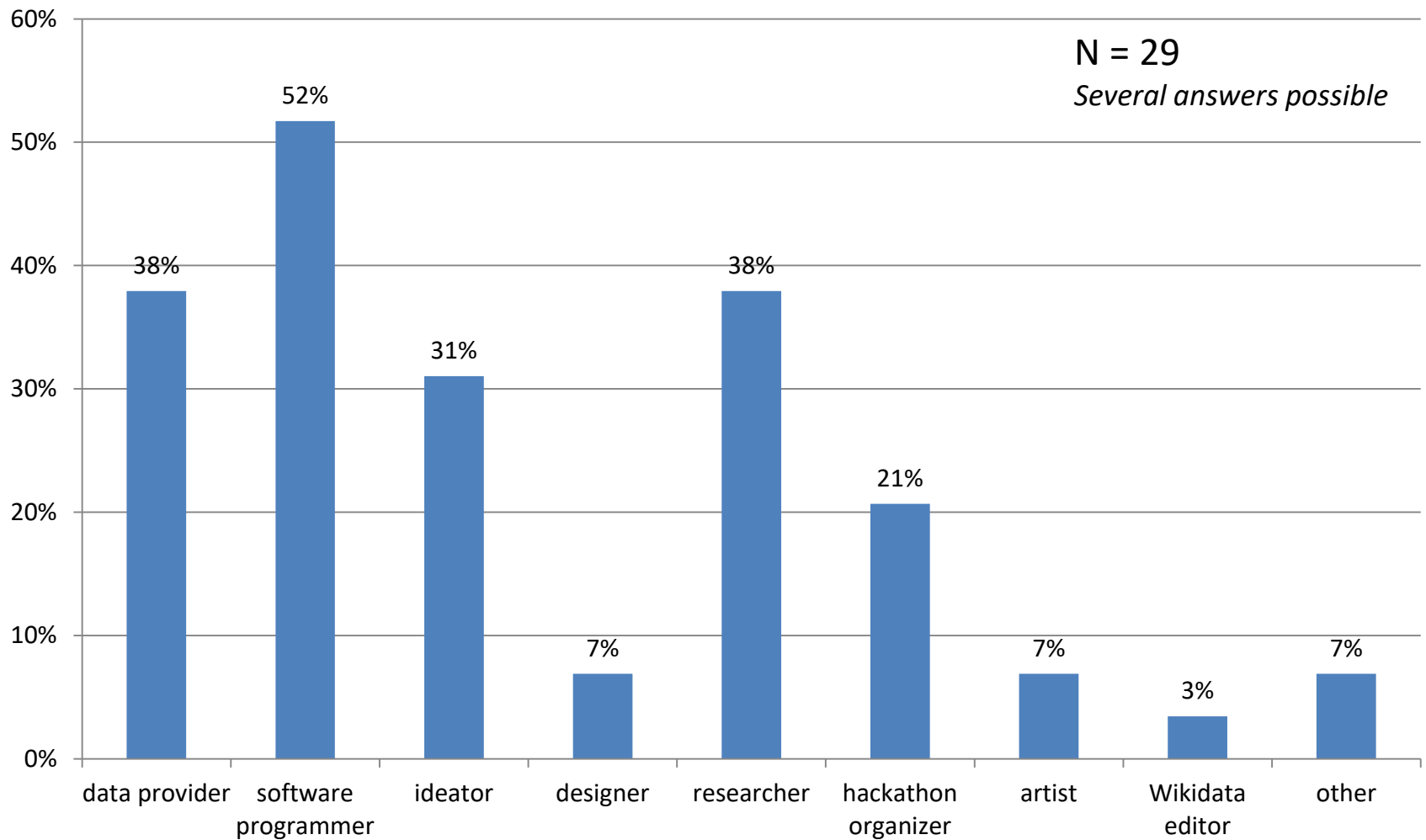
How many other hackathons had you attended before?

N = 29



Participants' Role(s) During the Hackathon

In which role did you participate in the hackathon?



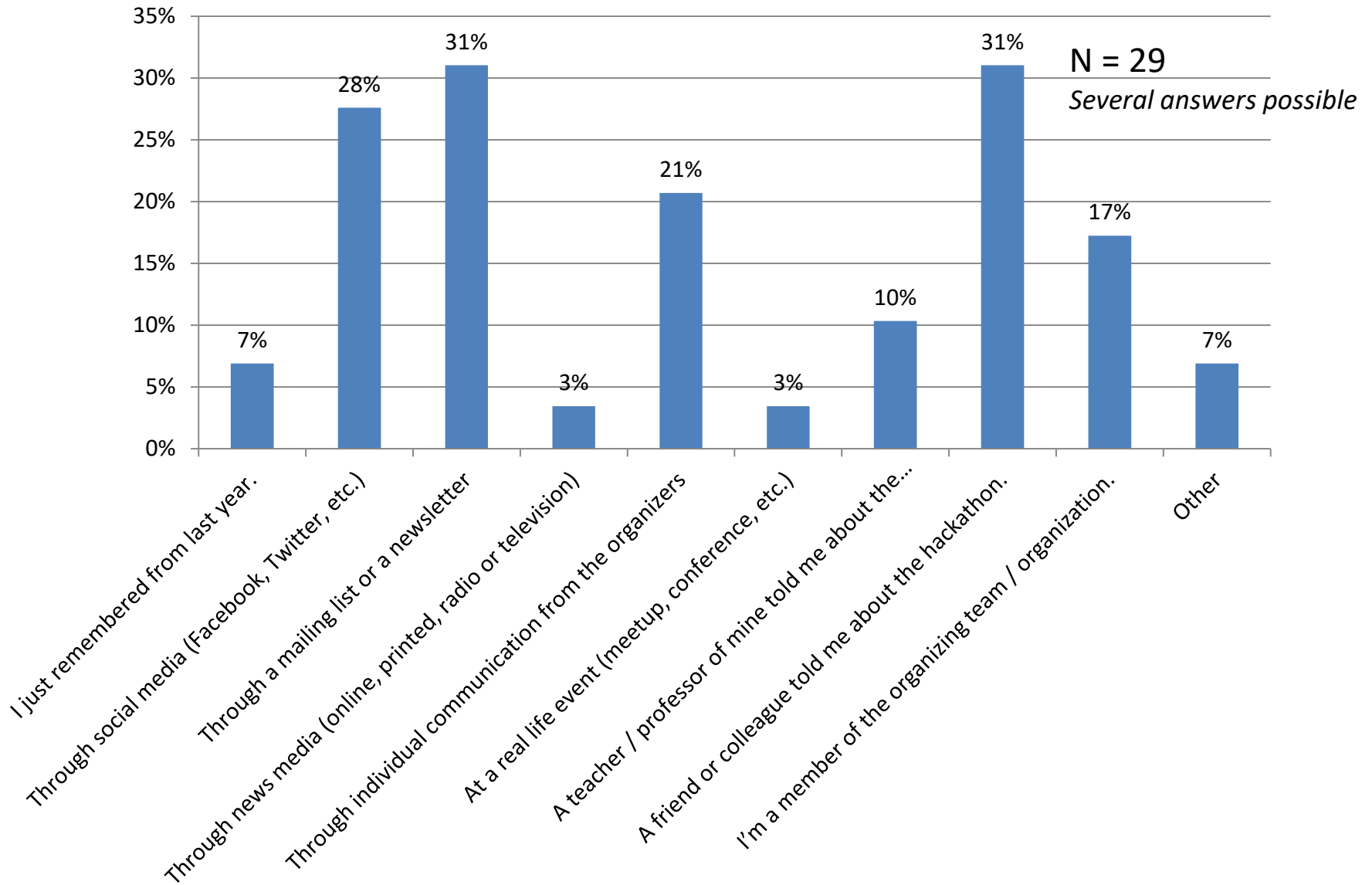
Remarks / Insights

- **Women were still under-represented** at the hackathon, but with 41% their ratio reached a new high (2015: 19%; 2016: 33%; 2017: 38%).
- The hackathon **attracted a substantial share of new hackathon-goers** (41%); this number is similar to the one of the previous year; before, it had been decreasing from year to year (2015: 61%; 2016: 53%; 2017: 37%).
- **Software programmers** (52%) made up the largest participants group, followed by **data providers** (38%), **researchers** (38%), and **ideators** (31%).
- More than half of the participants had an **IT or engineering background**. The other two professional groups that were most strongly represented were **cultural heritage professionals** (38%) and people with a **background in the social sciences or in the humanities** (31%).

Communication Channels

How Participants Learned About the Hackathon

How did you learn about the hackathon?



Remarks / Insights

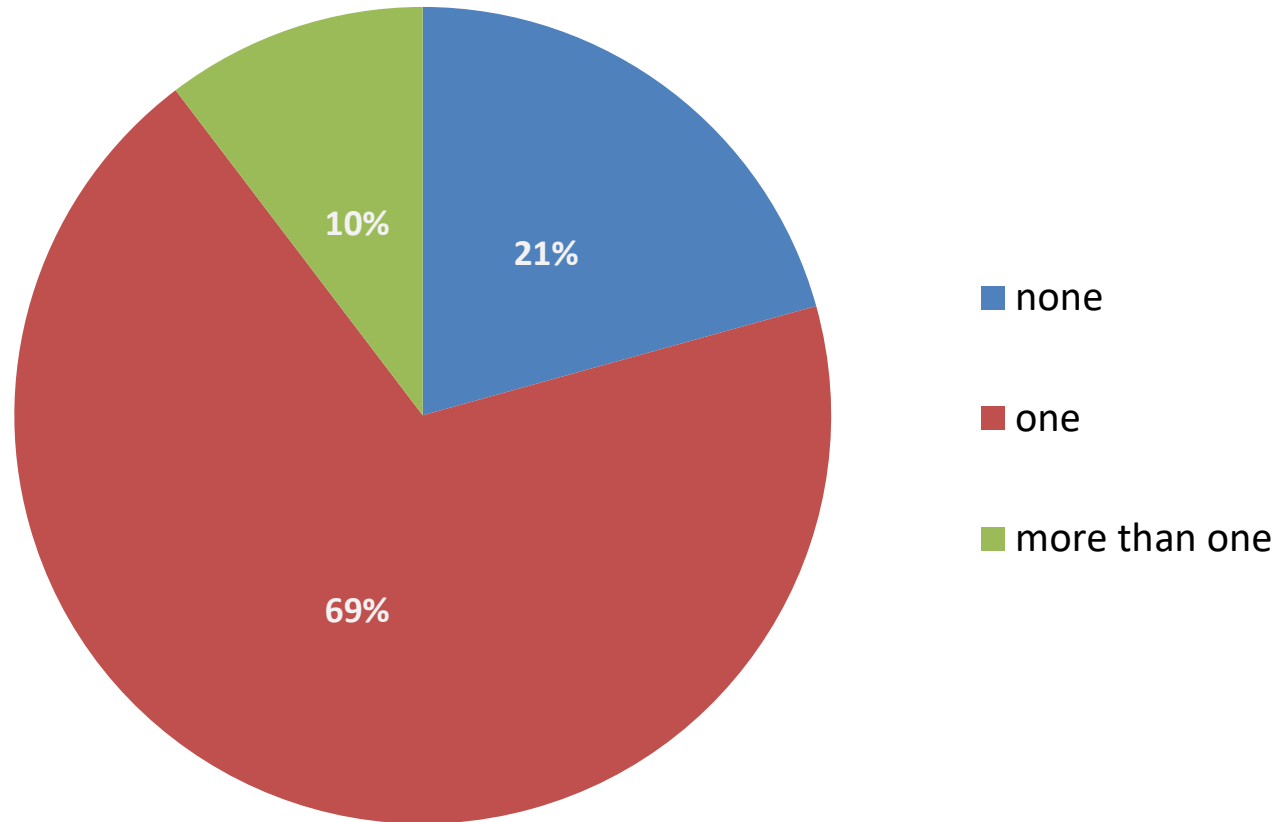
- The communication channels that worked best to attract participants were mailing lists or newsletters (31%), social media (29%) as well as word of mouth, either through friends or colleagues (31%) or directly from the members of the organizing team (21%).

Participants' Activity During and After the Hackathon

Involvement in Hackathon Projects

How many projects did you work on during the hackathon?

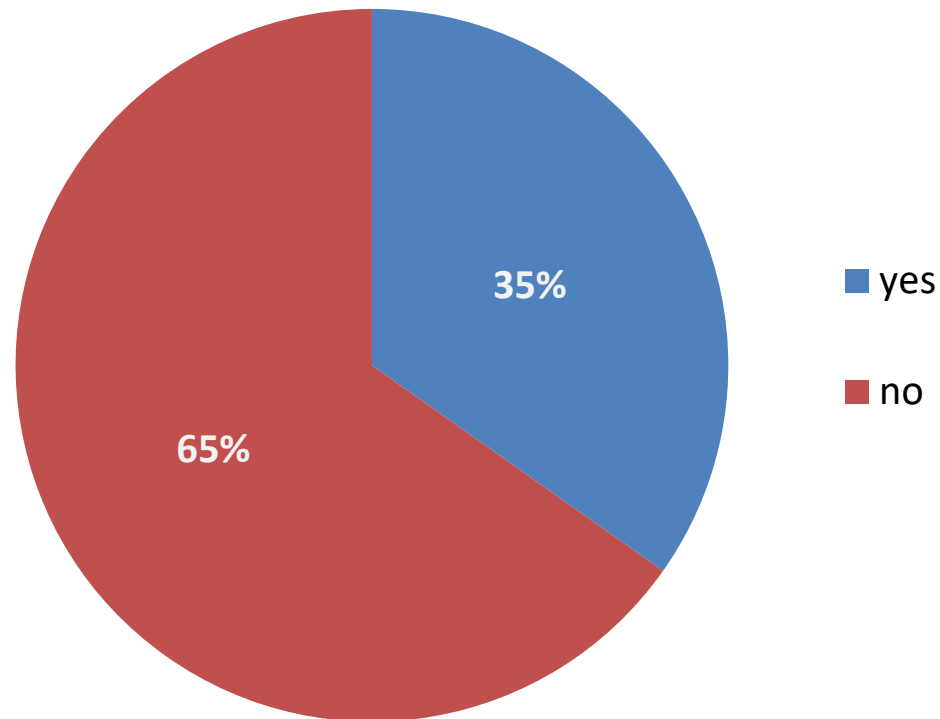
N = 29



Activity around Hackathon Projects after the Event

Have you further pursued the project(s) you worked on during the hackathon?

N = 23

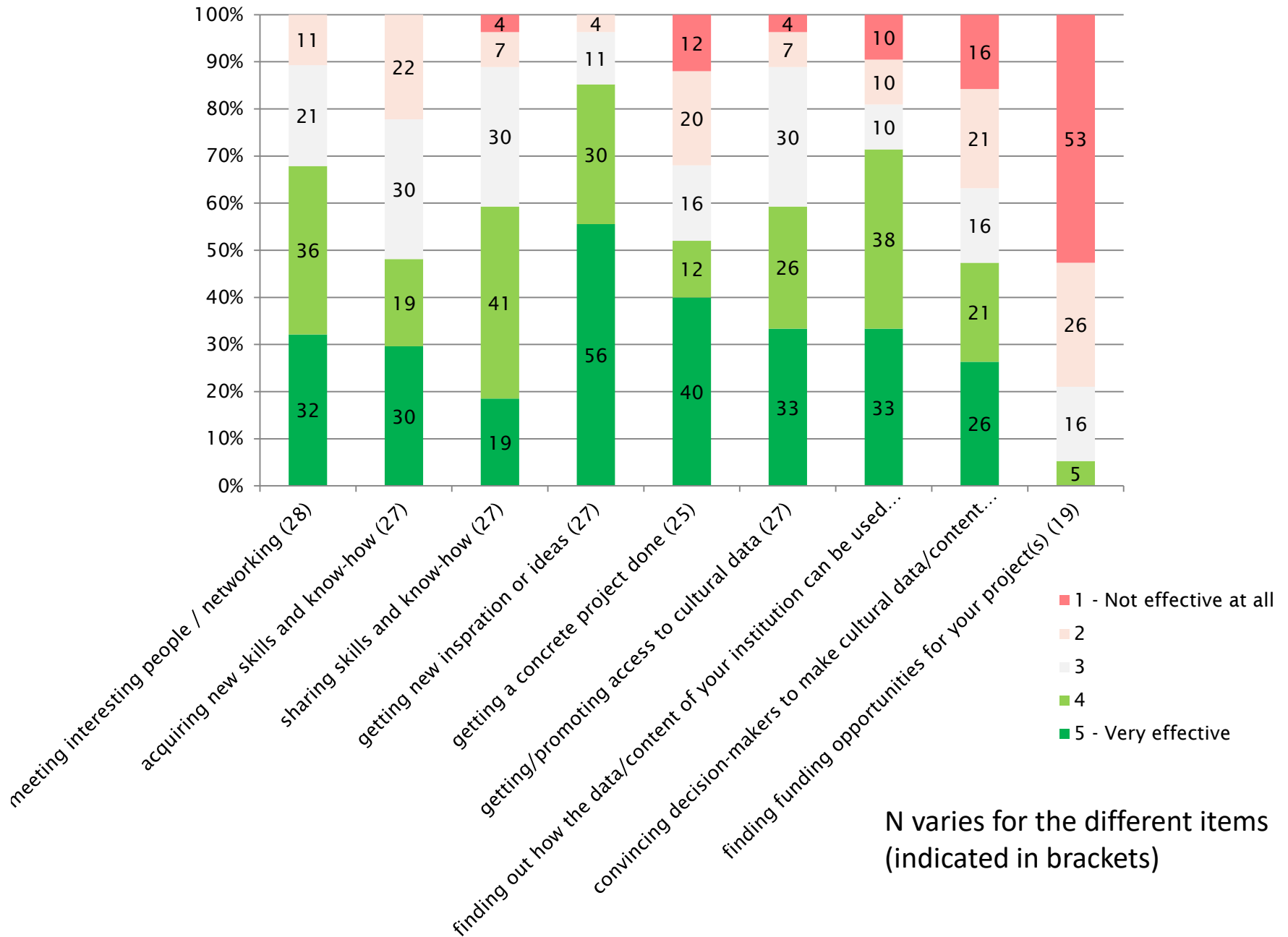


Remarks / Insights

- **79% of hackathon participants took an active part** in at least one of the 15 hackathon projects. Some of the remaining 21% acted as organizers or participated as “observers”, jury members and/or data providers.
- **35% of the participants** who had taken an active part in at least one of the hackathon projects **further pursued their project(s)** after the event. This number is a bit lower than in the previous year and similar to the one two years ago (2015: 50%; 2016: 40%; 2017: 50%). Note the varying time lag between the event and the survey (2015: 9 months; 2016: 5 months; 2017: 6 months; 2018: 6 months).
- About **a third** of those who have not further pursued their project(s) have not done so due to a **lack of time**. About **20%** indicated a lack of interest on behalf of the participants.

Effectiveness of the Hackathon

Effectiveness of the Hackathon



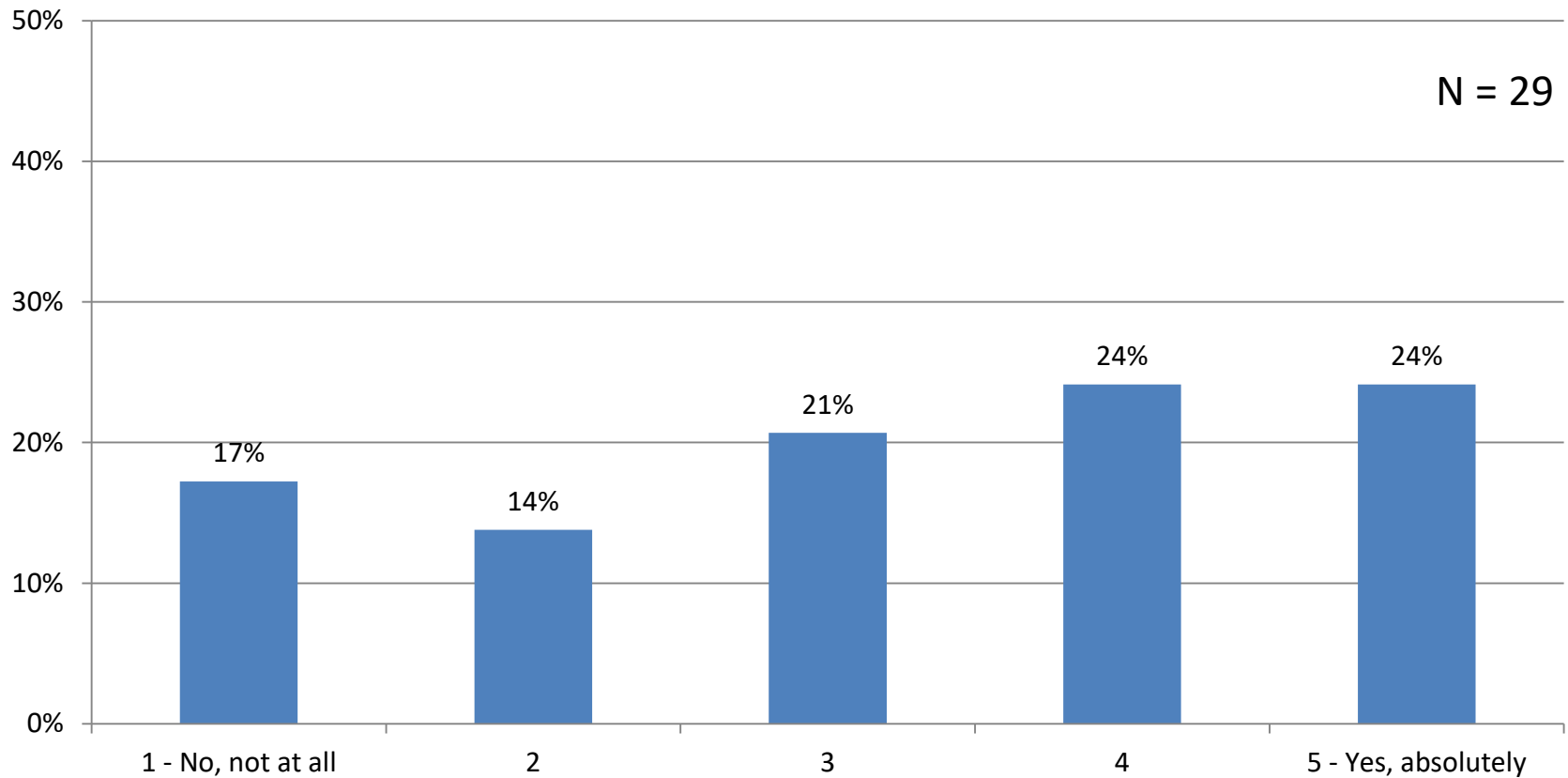
Remarks / Insights

- The hackathon has been **most effective** in terms of “getting new inspiration or ideas” (rated positively at 86%), of “finding out how data of one's institution can be used in new contexts” (71%), and of “meeting interesting people / networking” (68%), followed by “sharing skills and know-how” (60%), “getting/promoting access to cultural data” (59%), and “getting a concrete project done” (52%).
- The hackathon has been **somewhat effective** in acquiring new skills and know-how (49%) and in convincing decision-makers to make cultural data/content openly available for re-use (47%).
- The hackathon has been **rather ineffective** in terms of finding funding opportunities for hackathon projects (5%).

Perception of the New Elements

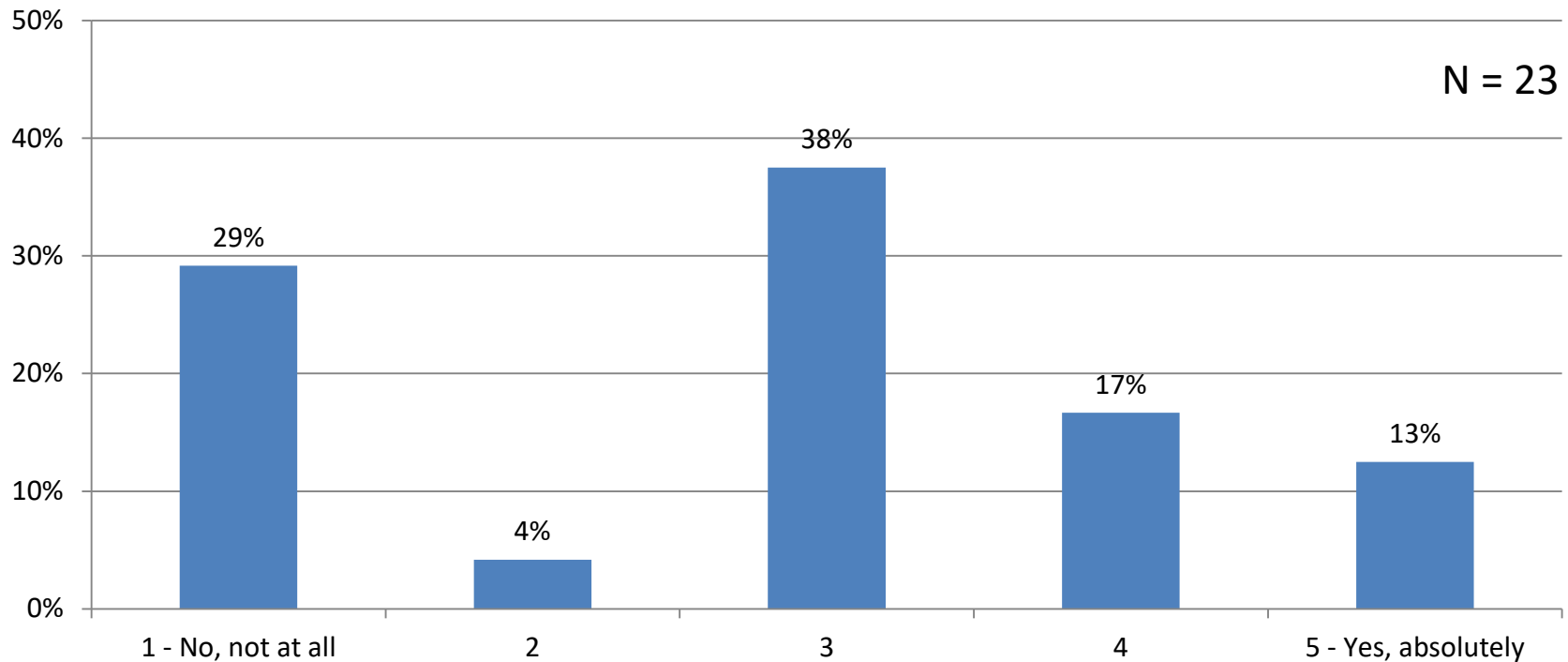
Appreciation of the Competitive Element

Do you think handing out awards for the best projects was a good idea?



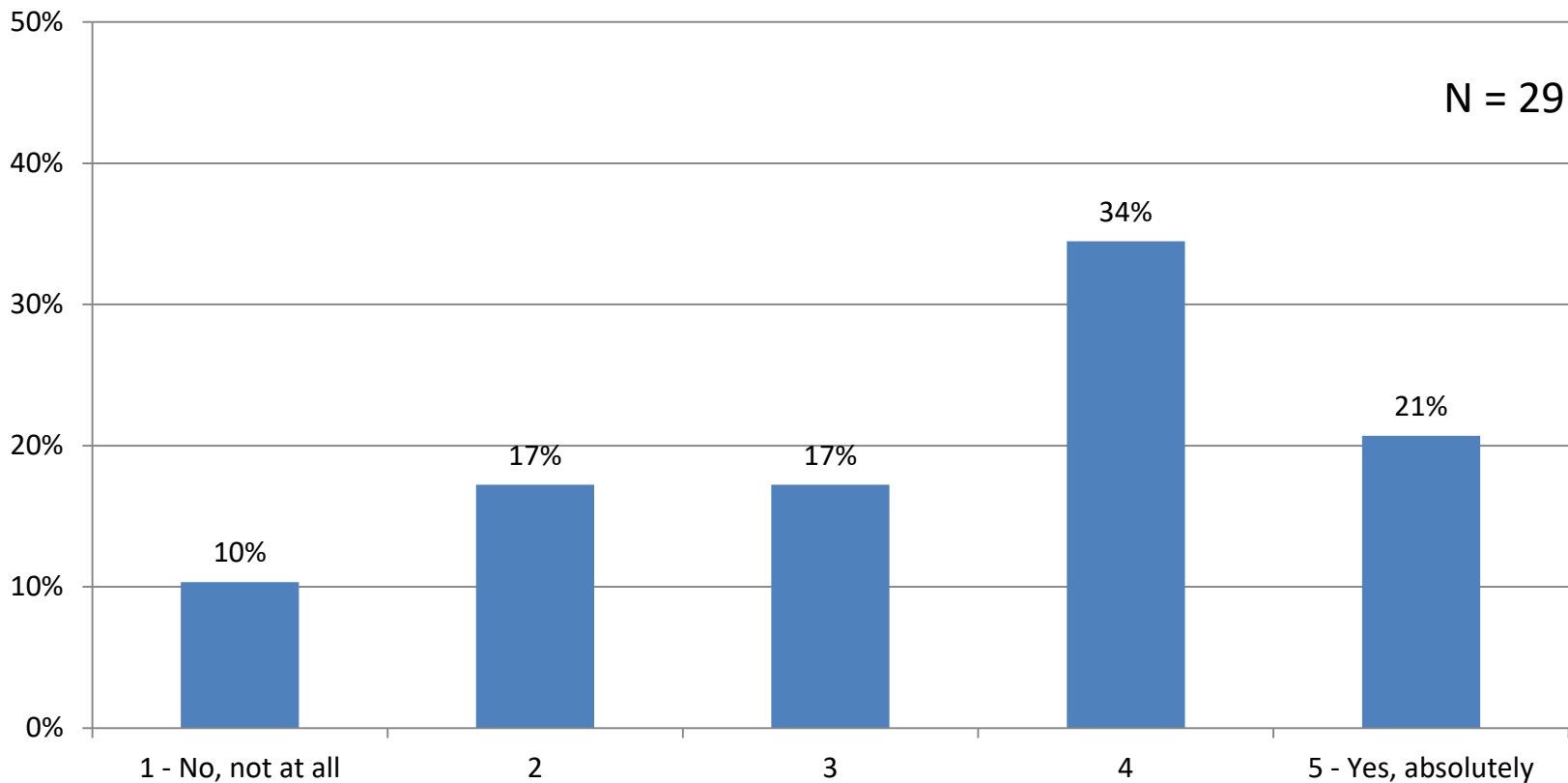
Impact of the Competitive Element on the Projects

Did the awards ceremony help you deliver a better project in the end?



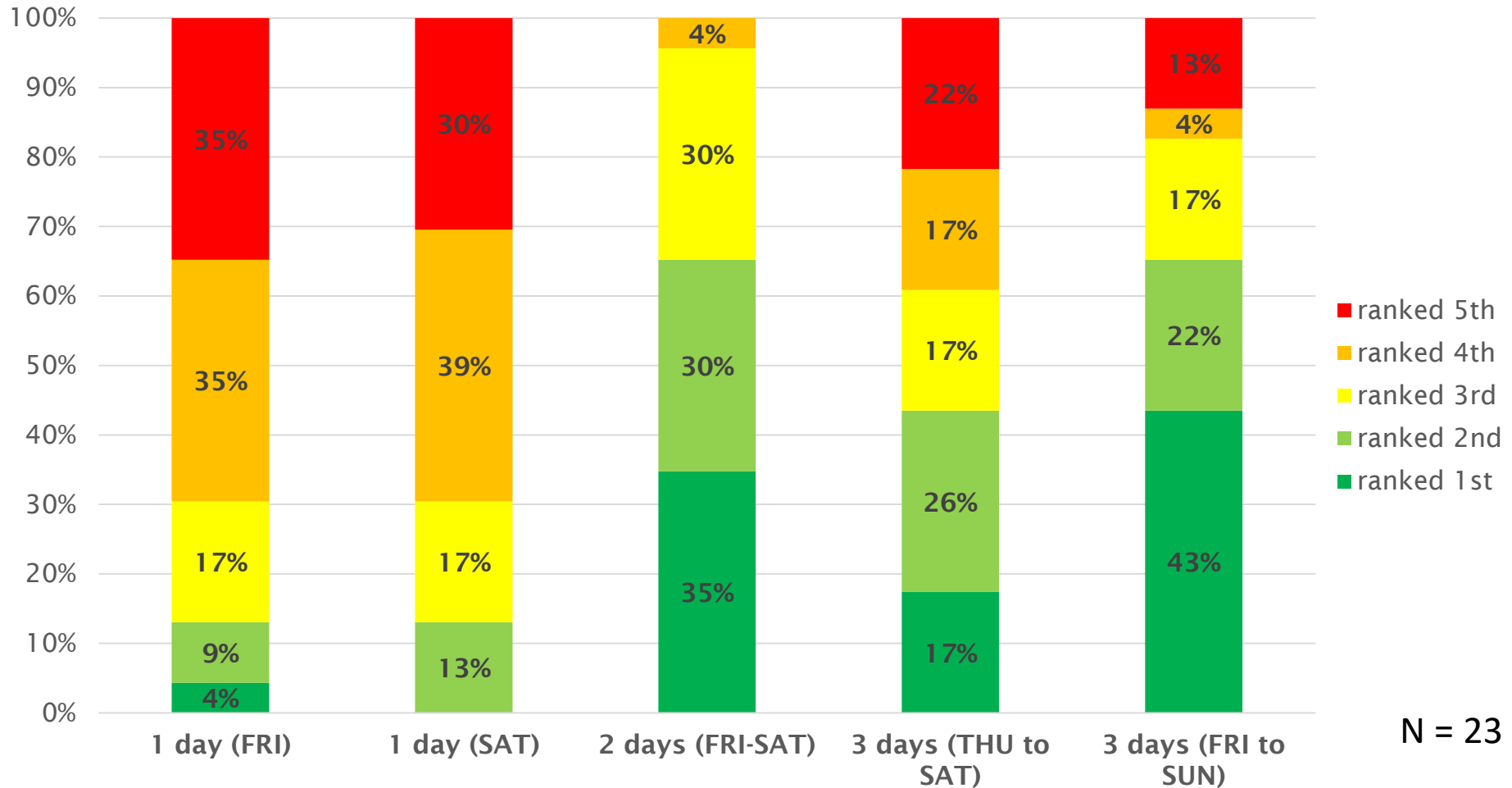
Impact of the Awards Ceremony on Public Perception

Do you think organizing an awards ceremony improves the reception of the hackathon among the general public?



Preferred Length / Days of the Hackathon

In your opinion, what is the best length and what are the best days for the hackathon?



N = 23

Remarks / Insights

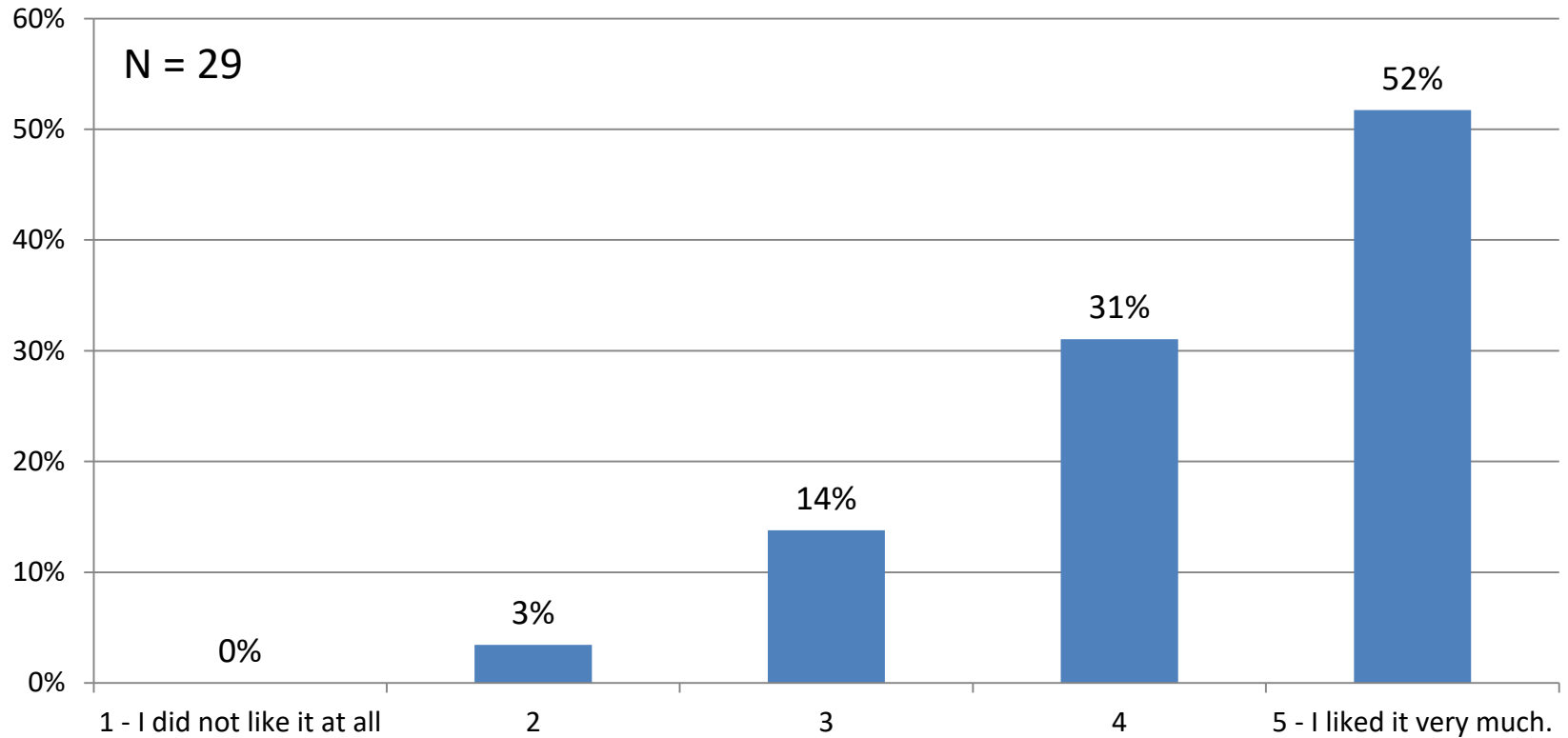
- The hackathon participants are divided as to the the competitive element: almost **half of them like the idea of awards** being attributed to the best projects, while roughly **one third dislikes the idea**.
- **Only 30%** think that the awards ceremony had a **rather positive effect on the quality of the projects**; 30% clearly deny this.
- At the same time, **a bit more than half** of the participants think that the awards ceremony has a **positive impact as regards the reception of the hackathon by the general public**.
- Regarding the length and the days of the hackathon, the preferred options are **2 days (Friday-Saturday)** or **3 days (Friday to Sunday)**. Several respondents indicated that they would have preferred a 2-day hackathon running over the **week-end (Saturday-Sunday)** – *an option that was not foreseen in the questionnaire and therefore cannot readily be compared to the other options*; yet **Friday was the day attended by the most and Sunday the one attended by the least respondents** (FRI was skipped by 1, SAT by 3, and SUN by 5 respondents).

Note that all these results potentially suffer from **self-selection bias**, as only people were asked to participate in the survey who had actually taken part in the 2018 hackathon, which happened to feature an award ceremony and took place from Friday to Sunday.

Participants' Satisfaction

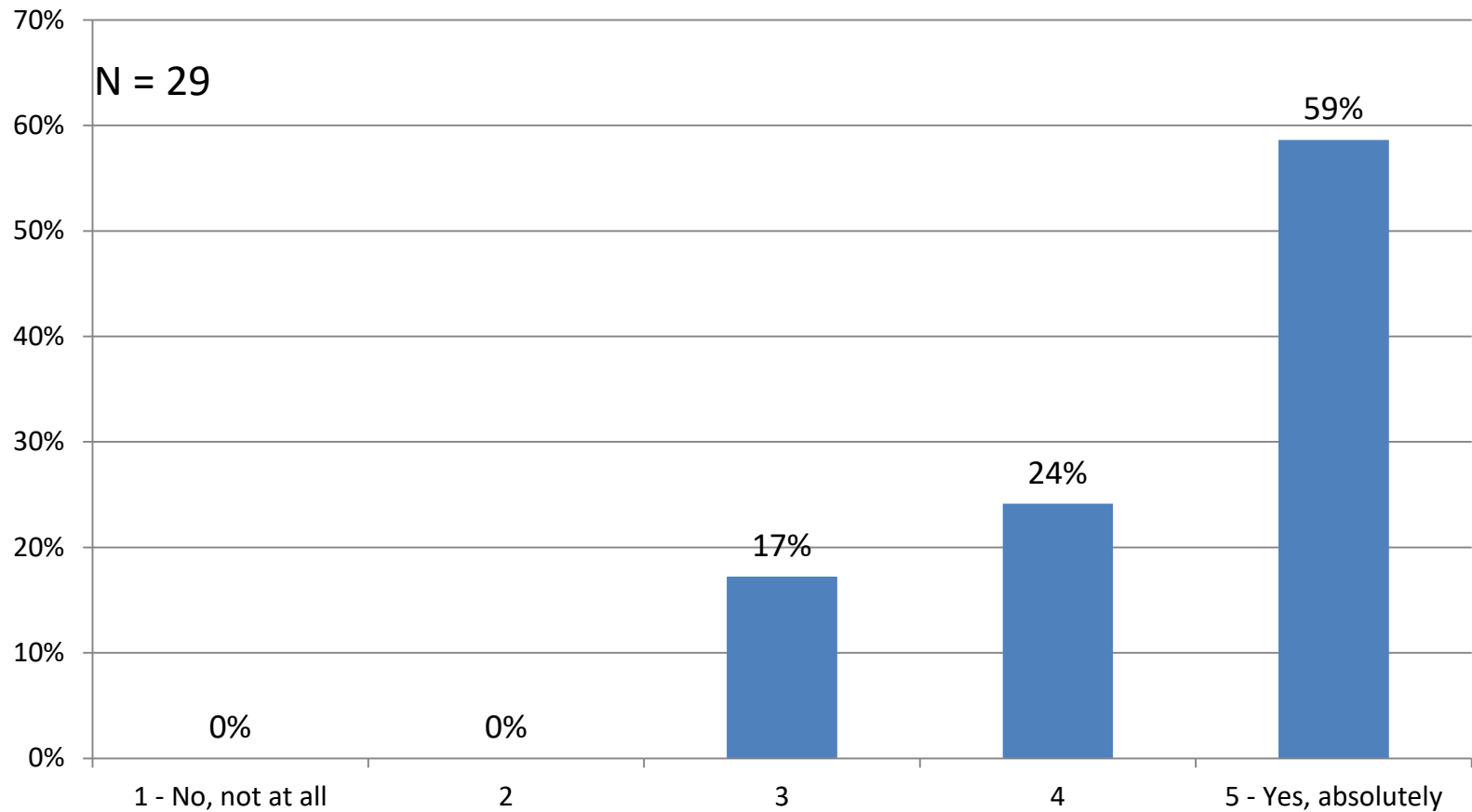
General Satisfaction

How did you like the hackathon in general?



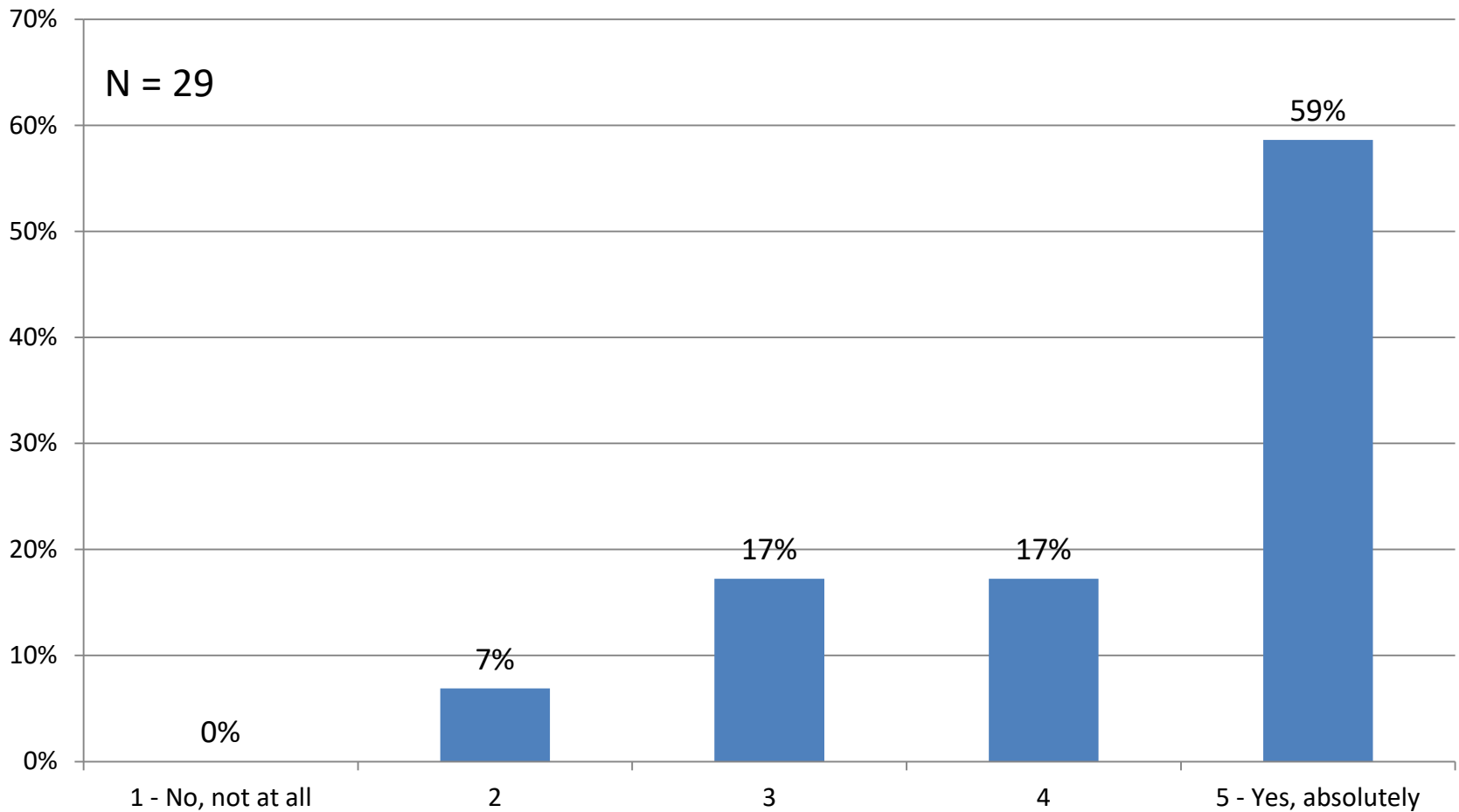
Readiness to Participate in Another Cultural Hackathon

Would you participate in a cultural data hackathon again?



Readiness to Recommend the Hackathon

Would you recommend a friend/peer to participate in the upcoming hackathon?



Conclusions

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- From a participants' perspective, **the hackathon has been a large success**, satisfaction rates range from 76% to 83% (2017: 80% to 83%).
- The hackathon has again **attracted many participants who hadn't been involved in hackathons before**.
- The hackathon has been most effective in terms of **spurring and exchanging ideas, networking, finding out how data can be used in new contexts, sharing skills and know how, promoting access to cultural data, and getting concrete projects done**.
- From a sustainability point of view, the survey results paint a mixed picture: **Only a third of the participants actively involved in at least one of the projects had further pursued their project(s) 6 months after the event**. As expected, the hackathon hardly improved the participants' chances to get funding for their projects.
- **The awards ceremony is most valuable for the communication with a larger public**; otherwise, it could also be dropped.
- **A two-day hackathon from Friday to Saturday or a three-day hackathon from Friday to Sunday** are the preferred options.