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**PARTNERS**ALBANIA  
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**NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE**  
FOR **CIVIL SOCIETY** IN **ALBANIA**

# CAPACITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN ALBANIA

## Assessment Report



# CAPACITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN ALBANIA

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Partners Albania for Change and Development and National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania would like to extend its appreciation to all civil society organisations part of this assessment for their collaboration.

## INTRODUCTION

This assessment was conducted by the National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania, a platform for civil society at the national and local level, in support of strengthening its capacities, promoting and facilitating dialogue in policy-making, and advocacy efforts for an enabling environment.

The Centre is an initiative of Partners Albania for Change and Development, launched in 2019, implemented in partnership with the Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD) and the European Movement in Albania (EMA), with the support of the European Union.

The assessment aims to identify the current needs of organisations for capacity building in the areas of organisational management, financial sustainability, participation in policy-making, and the European integration process, transparency, cooperation with the media and private sector. The identified needs will serve as a basis for the development of future capacity-building programs by the National Resource Centre in service of the civil society sector. The findings of the assessment can also be used by organisations, donors and other institutions working in support of civil society organisations and further development of the sector in the country.

For the preparation of this report, the National Resource Centre conducted an online survey through a semi-structured questionnaire, distributed and completed by civil society organisations (CSO) December 2023- January 2024. Organised into 6 main sections, the survey aimed to identify training and assistance needs regarding key developmental aspects of civil society organisations and their activities, such as: (1) organisational governance, development, and management, (2) participation in policy-making and the involvement of organisations in advocacy initiatives, (3) the participation of organisations in European integration processes, and (4) CSOs transparency with the public (5) communication and collaboration between CSOs and the media and (6) collaboration with the private sector. 113 organisations from all twelve regions of the country participated in this survey by completing the online questionnaire and expressing their opinions.

### *Limitations of the assessment*

During the development of the report, both in data collection and report writing, the main limitations were: (1) the number of organisations that responded, which, although relatively low compared to the number of registered organisations (2000+ registered CSOs with the General Directorate of Taxes), is a representative sample as it includes the majority of active organisations in the country; (2) self-reported data from CSOs. The capacity assessment was based on information gathered through an online survey of CSO representatives and their self-declaration on all issues. In these circumstances, self-reported data are limited as they can be subjective and cannot be independently verified.

# ABBREVIATIONS

- EU** European Union
- CSO** Civil Society Organisation
- NPO** Non For-Profit Organisation
- PA** Partners Albania for Change and Development
- VAT** Value Added Tax

# GENERAL DATA ON CSOs PARTICIPANT IN THE ASSESSMENT

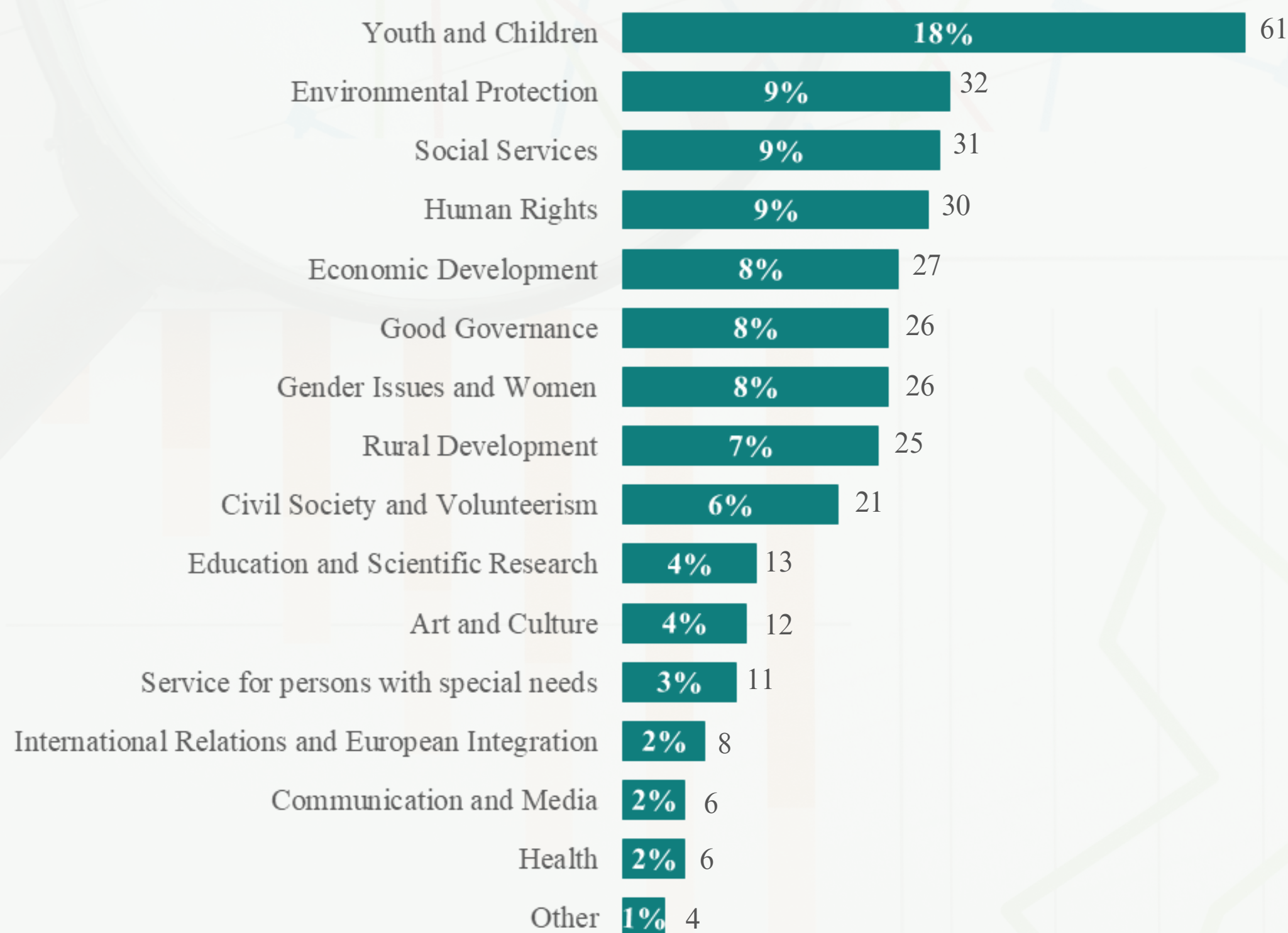
**113**

civil society organisations (CSO), networks and NPOs informal groups were part of this assessment by completing the online questionnaire, from cities of Berati, Elbasani, Bulqiza, Durrësi, Fieri, Fushë Arrëzi, Fushë Kruja, Gjirokastra, Korça, Laçi, Kurbini, Lezha, Maliqi, Orikumi, Përmeti, Peshkopia, Pogradeci, Puka, Shkodra, Tirana, Tropoja, Vau i Dejës and Vlora.

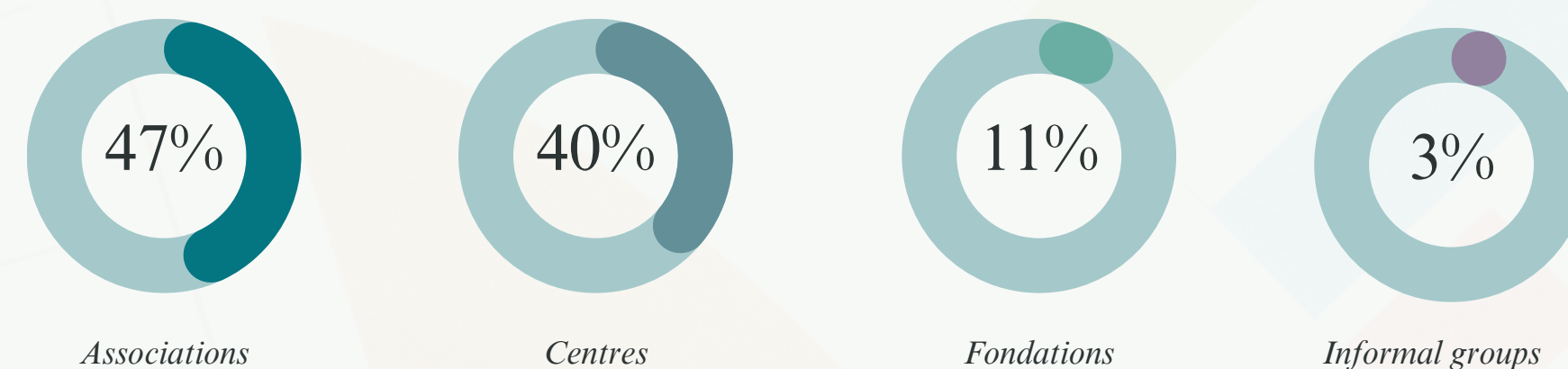
Despite this coverage, approximately **53%** of the responding CSOs are placed in Tirana, where the density of non-profit organisations is also the highest, in the country.

## CSO's fields of activity\*

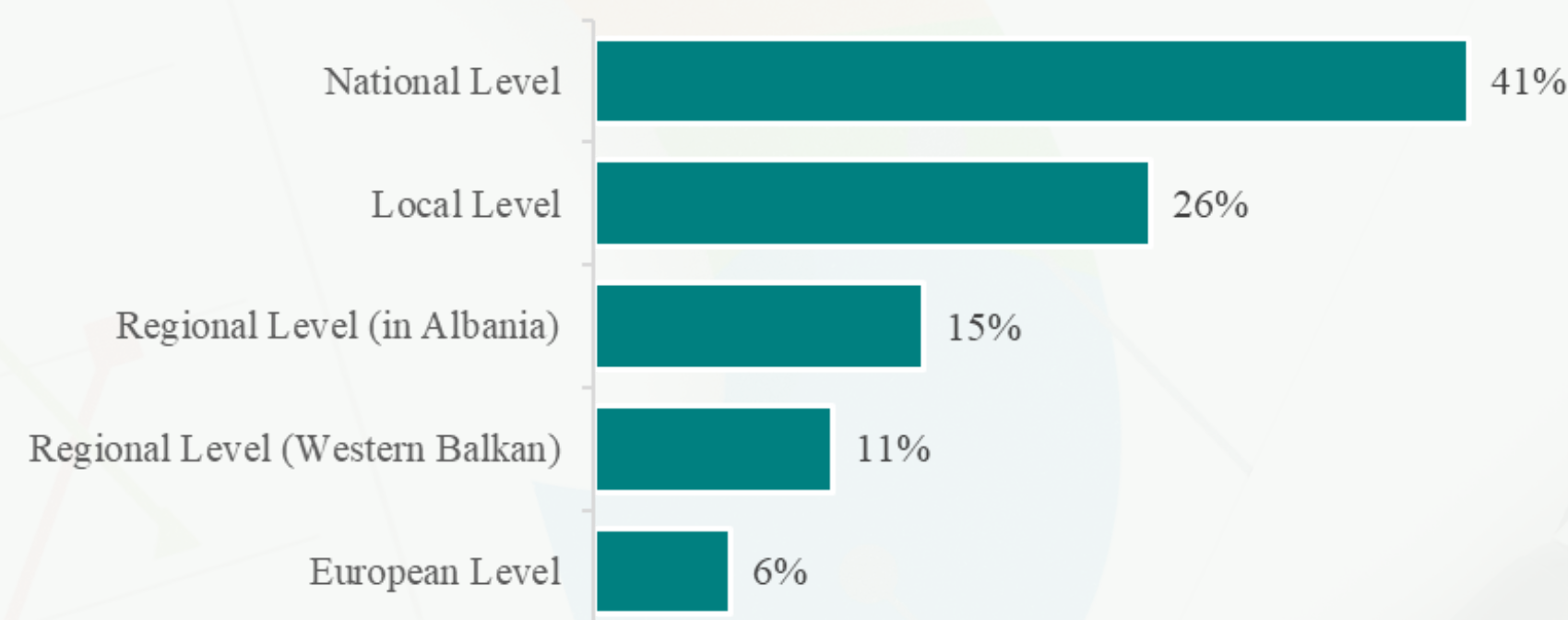
The fields of activity of the responding CSOs are diverse, with involvement and contribution in more than one sector simultaneously. As in the previous year, the field of activity of youth and children dominates the most, followed by the fields of environmental protection and social protection / social services, which have an increase in representation compared to last year's report.



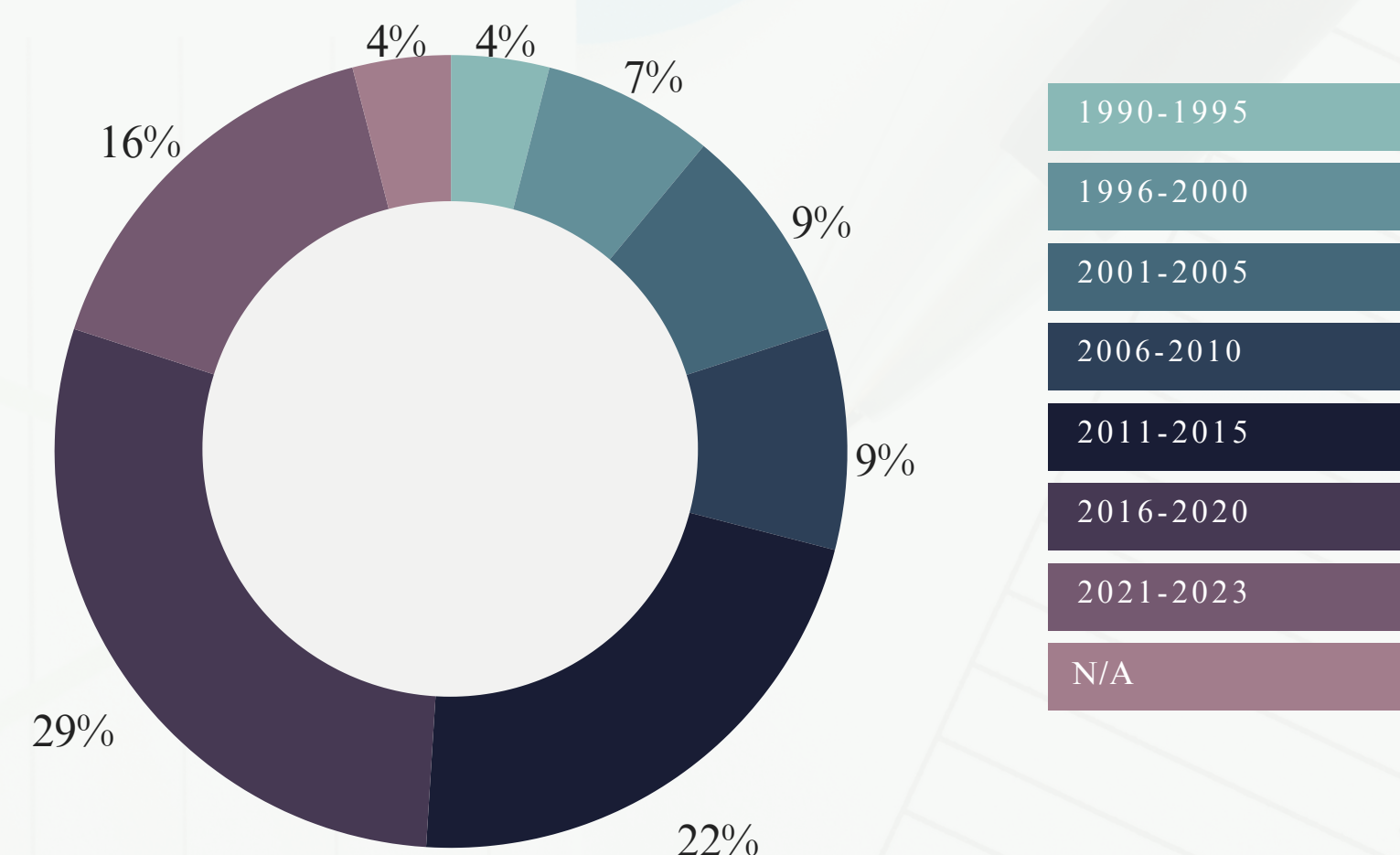
## Form of organisation of participating CSOs



## Geographical area of CSO activity\*



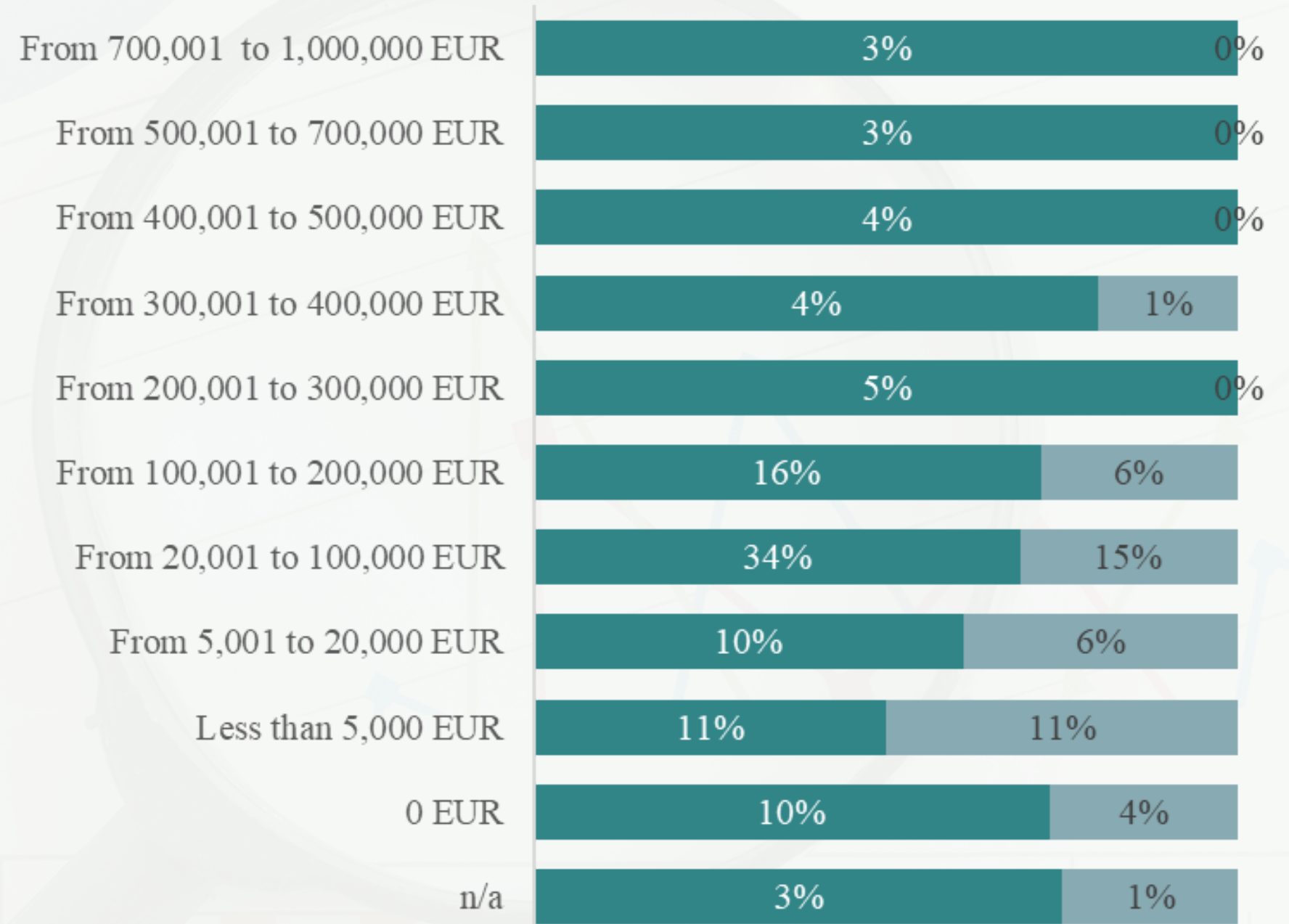
## Distribution of CSOs by year of establishment



# GENERAL DATA ON CSOs PARTICIPANT IN THE ASSESSMENT

## CSOs' budget

From the data collected, results that the annual budget of CSOs ranges from 0 EUR to 1,000,000 EUR, from which the majority of CSOs participating in the assessment (34%) work with budgets from 20,001 to 100,000 EUR. Only 9% of them, report budgets above 400,001 EUR-1,000,000 EUR. None of these CSOs, are placed outside the capital.

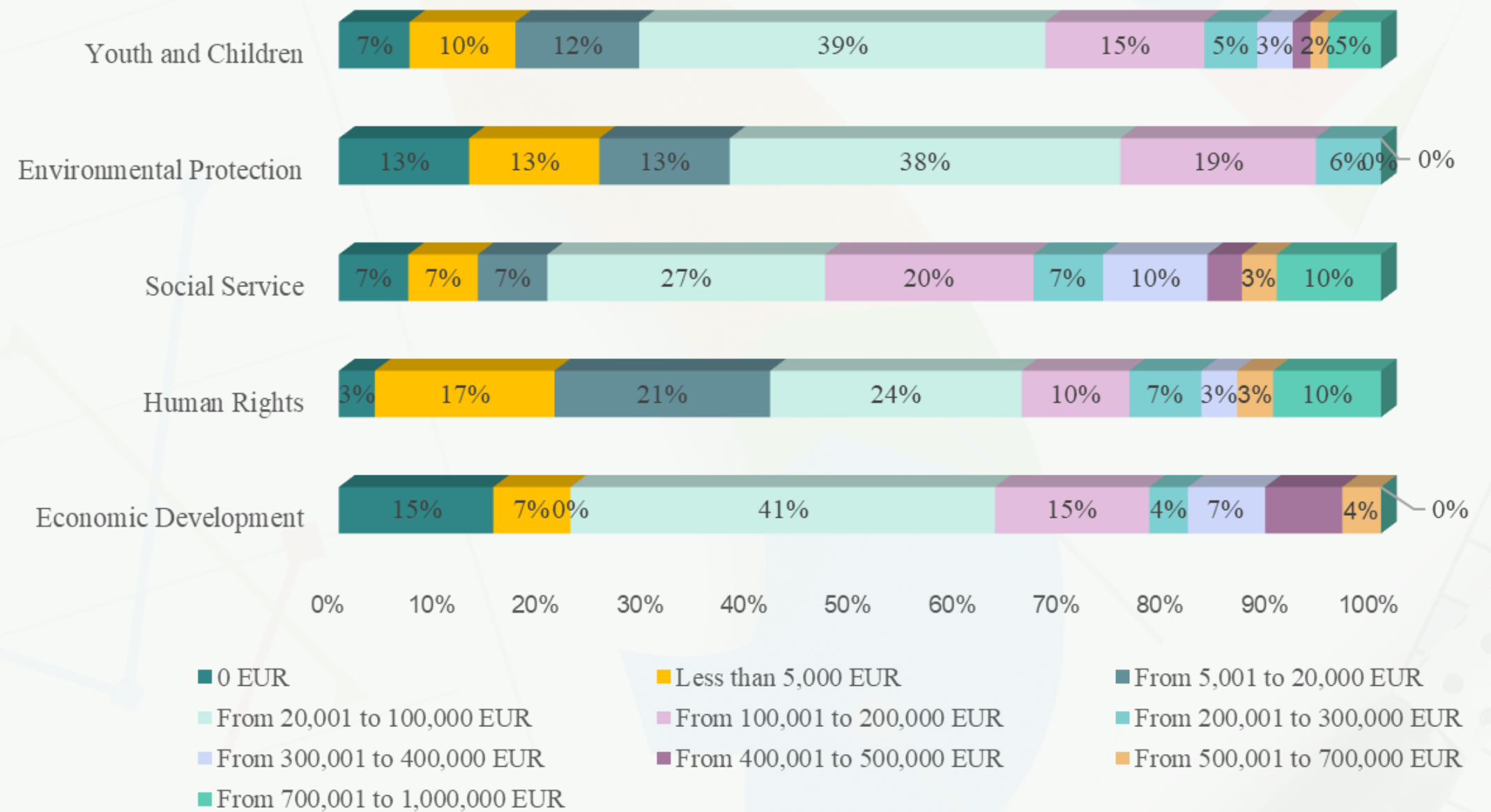


■ Total budget of the organizations for 2023 ■ CSOs outside the capital

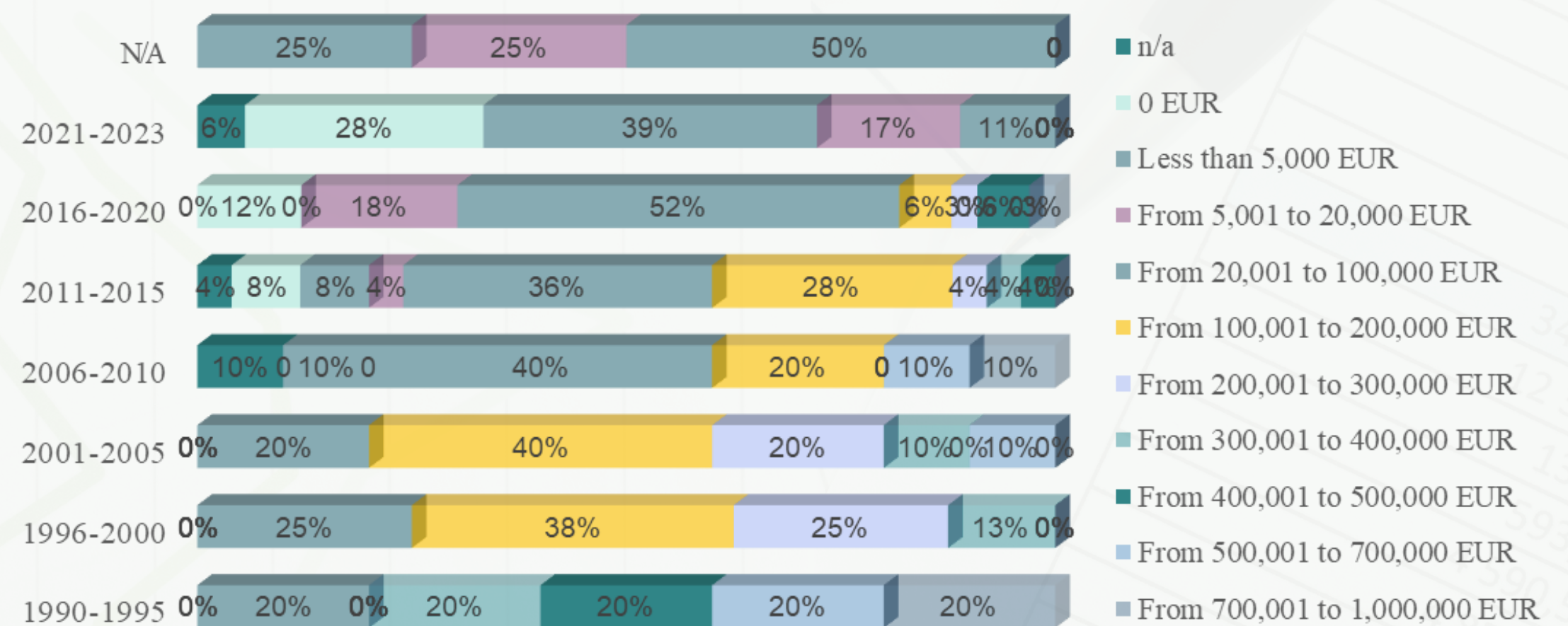
If we compare the level of budgets of CSOs according to their year of establishment, it turns out that organisations with more experience, founded mainly during 1995-2010, tend to have budgets above 100,001 EUR and only 1 of them declares a budget level of less than 5,000 EUR. On the other hand, although in fewer cases, CSOs with less than 10 years of experience report budget levels above 400,001 EUR.

## based on fields of activity for the 5 most selected fields\*

Meanwhile, if we analyse the budget level for each field of activity, CSOs working in the field of environmental protection, although one of the areas with the highest representation in the assessment, do not report cases of CSOs with a budget level above EUR 300,001, compared to other areas of activity with high participation.



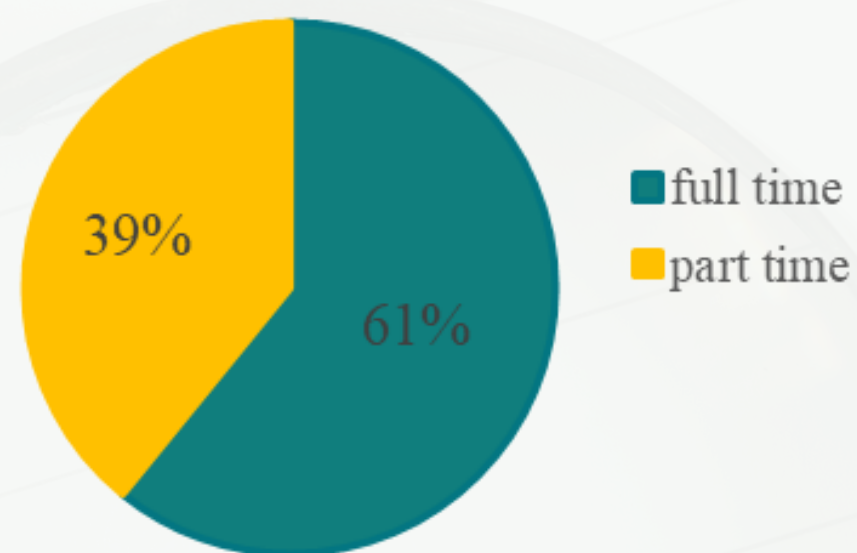
## based on the year of establishment



# GENERAL DATA ON CSOs PARTICIPANT IN THE ASSESSMENT

The findings show that CSOs continue to have diversity in the human resources engaged in the organisations. Thus, in addition to full-time and part-time employees, 70% of CSOs declare that they have contracted external experts for the implementation of their programs. Volunteers continue to be a supporting force in the activities of the organisations. 57% of CSOs, mainly those working in areas such as women's empowerment and gender issues, civil society development and volunteerism, health and healthcare, youth and children and services to persons with special needs, declare that they have had volunteers engaged during 2023.

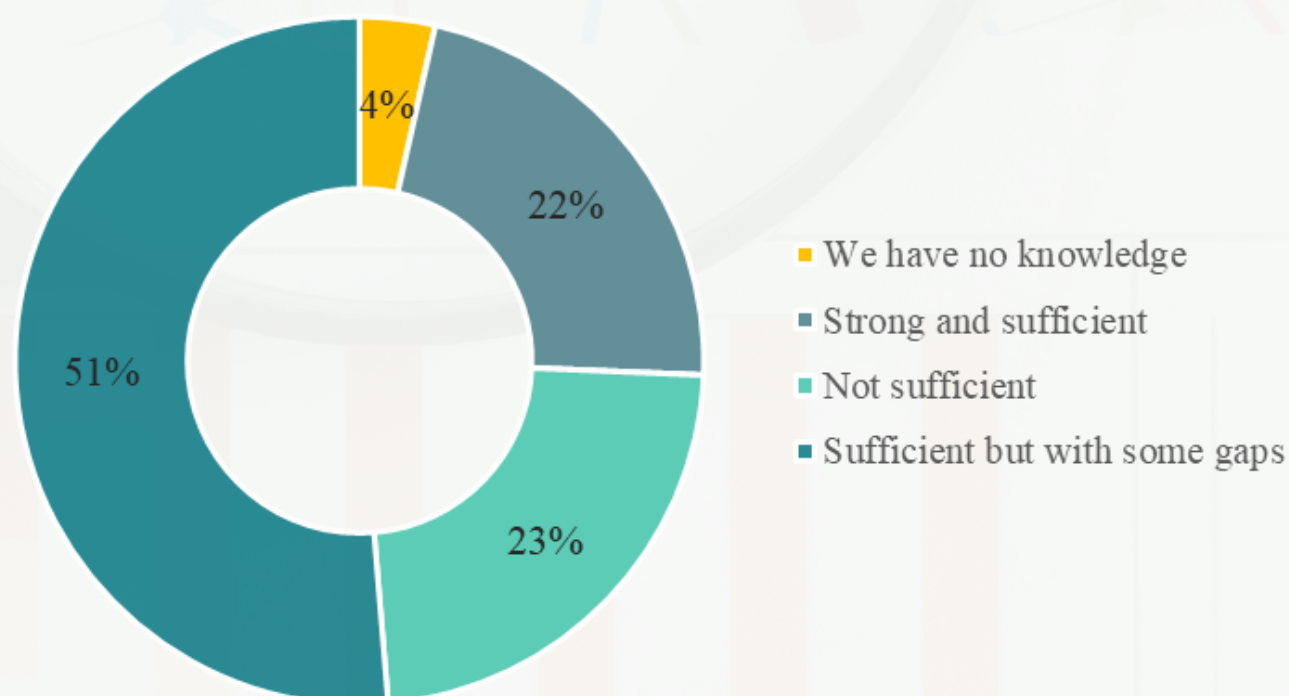
## Employment in the sector during 2023



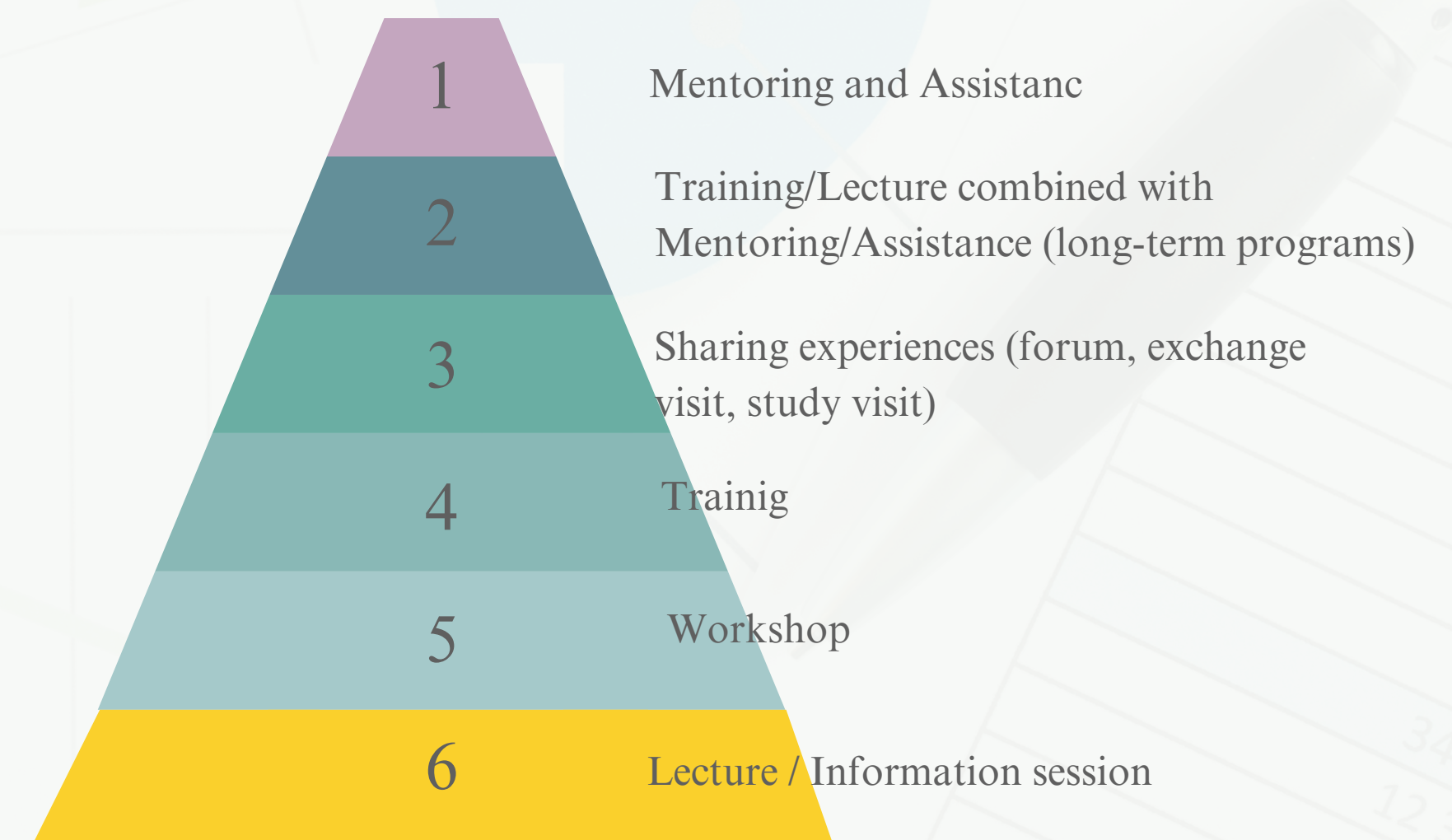
## Gender representation of CSO employees



## Assessment of CSO staff capacities



## Assessment of the most productive forms of activities on capacity building and knowledge development\*

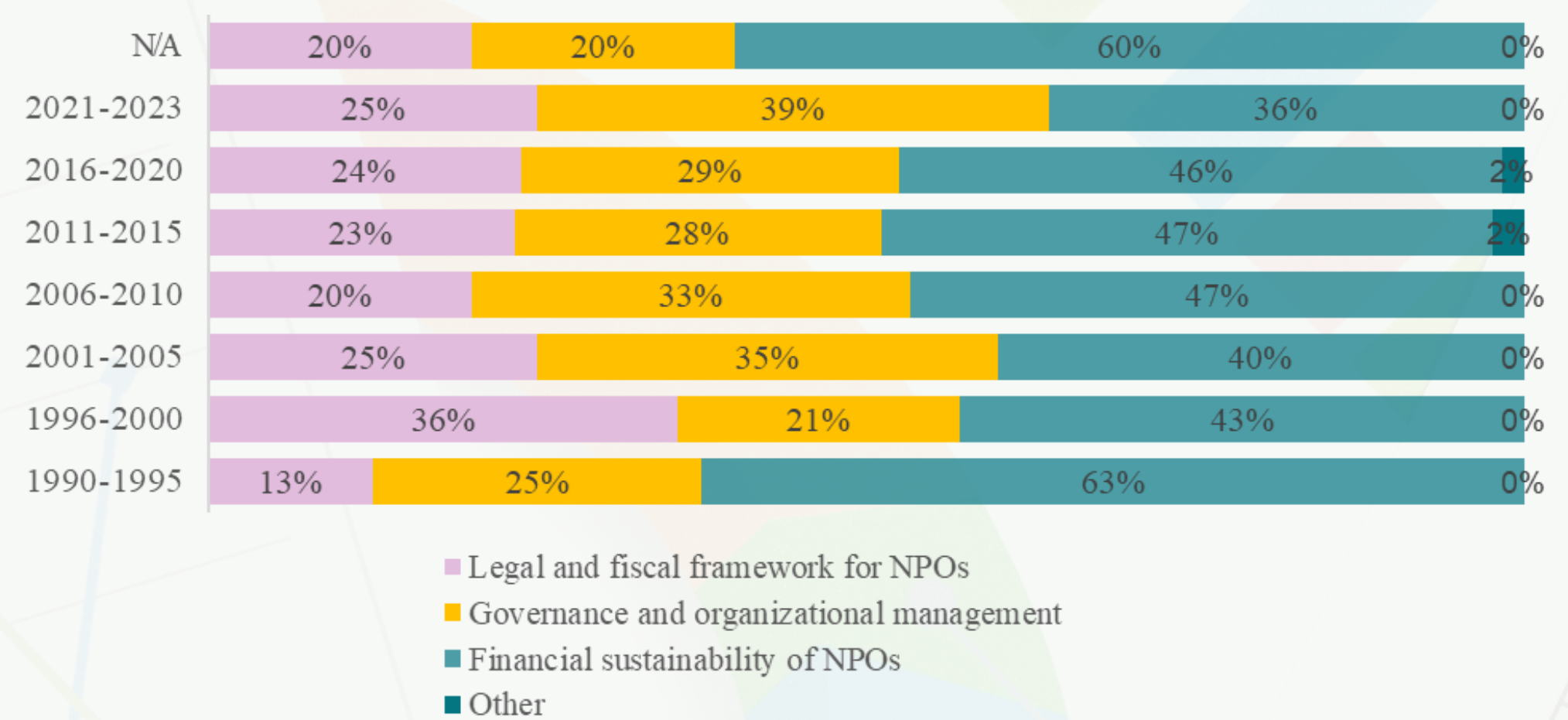
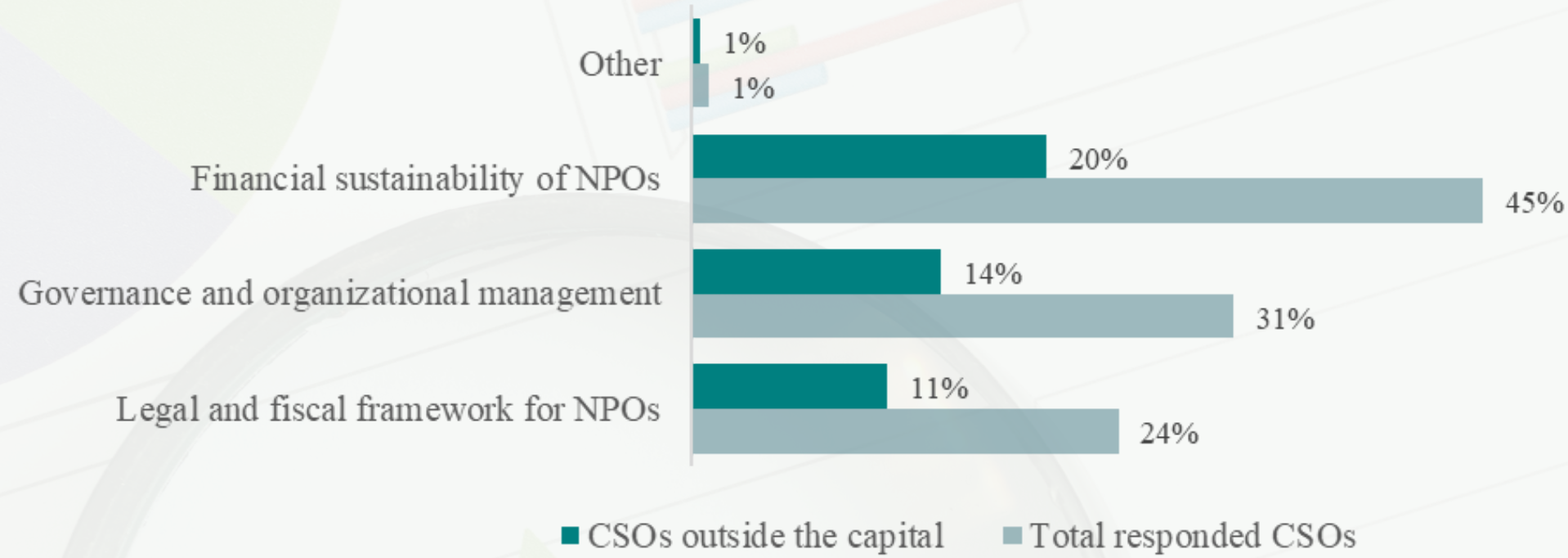


Only 22% of CSOs state that they currently have strong and sufficient staff capacities to work towards achieving the organisation's mission and objectives. The majority of them estimates that there is a need to increase the capacities of the staff.

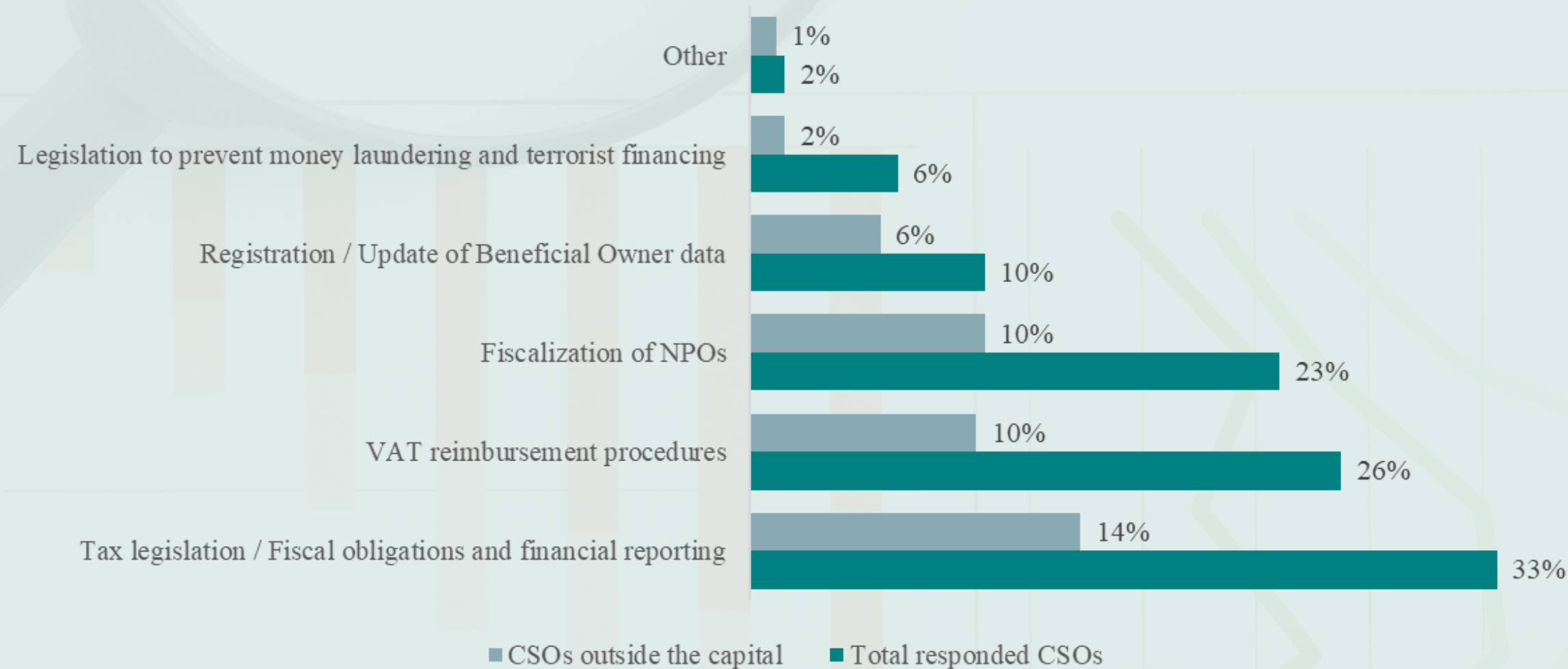
In contrast to the previous report, mentoring and assistance is ranked as the most productive form of capacity-building and knowledge-enhancing activities, followed by long-term training/lecture programs combined with mentoring/assistance and experience sharing, which were previously ranked as the most productive.

## Issues of interest for CSOs organisational capacity building\*

Financial sustainability continues to be the most significant issue of interest for CSOs in term of capacity building, regardless of their location or year of establishment.



## Legal and fiscal framework issues of interest for capacity building\*

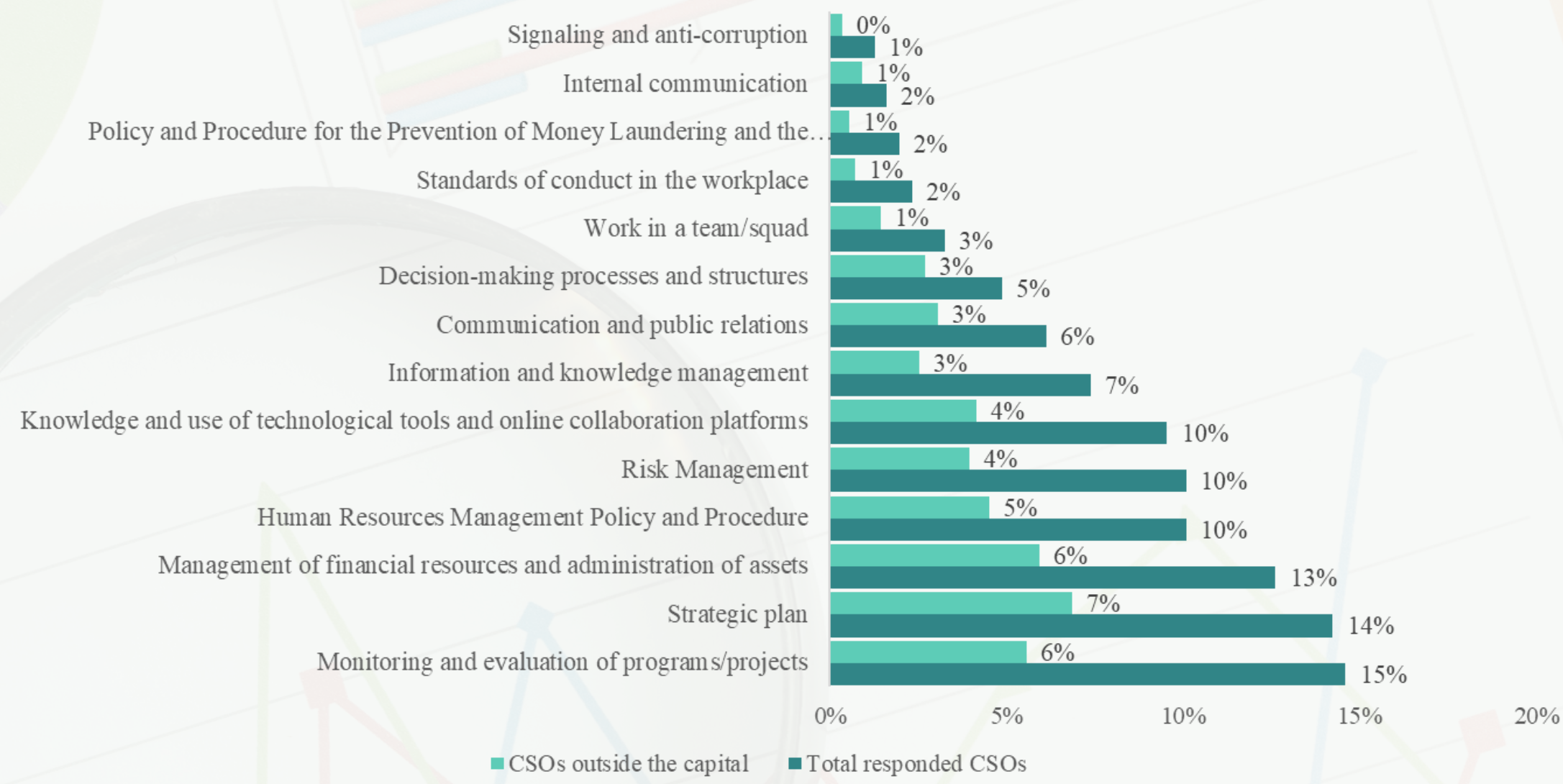


Tax legislation, fiscal obligations and financial reporting, as well as VAT reimbursement procedures, continue to be the issues of highest interest for capacity building programs on the legal and fiscal framework, regardless of the organisation's location.



# ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT, AND MANAGEMENT

## Organisational management issues with interest for capacity building\*

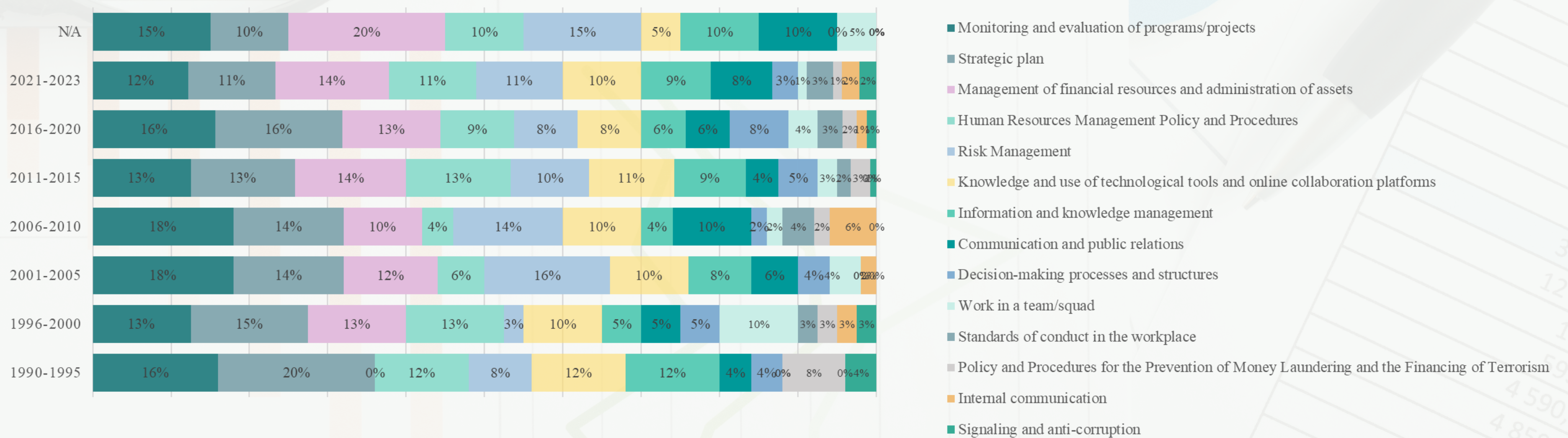


In terms of capacity building issues of organisational management, the monitoring and evaluation of programs/projects results as the issue of the highest interest for CSOs to increase their capacities, followed by the drafting of strategic plans and the management of financial resources.

Policy and procedure for the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing, internal communication (respectively with 2%) and whistleblowing and anti-corruption (1%), are the issues of least interest for capacity building.

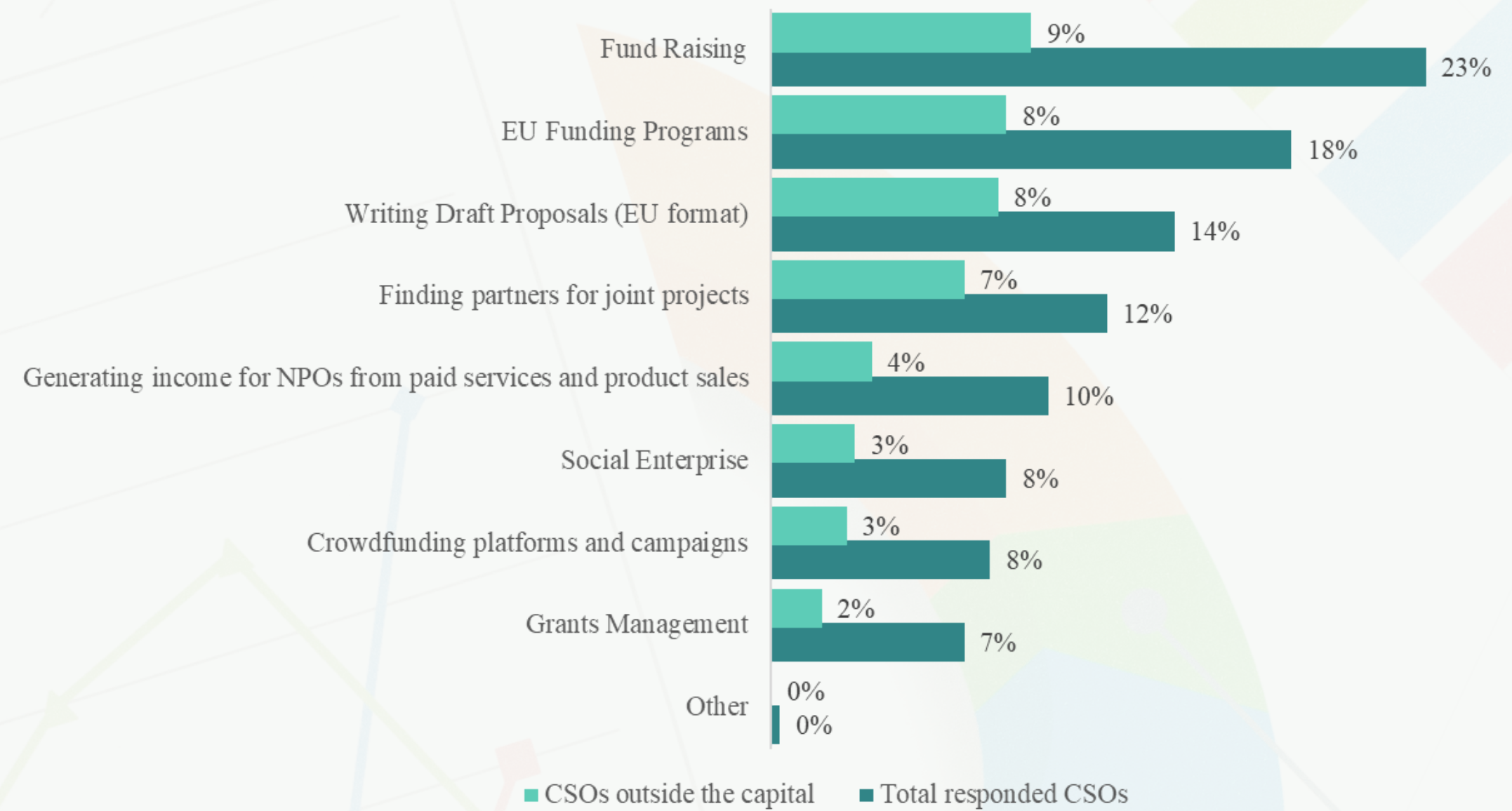
The ranking and this trend of interest does not change even if the data are compared according to the year of establishment of the organisations.

## based on the year of establishment\*



## Issues of interest for capacity building on CSOs financial sustainability\*

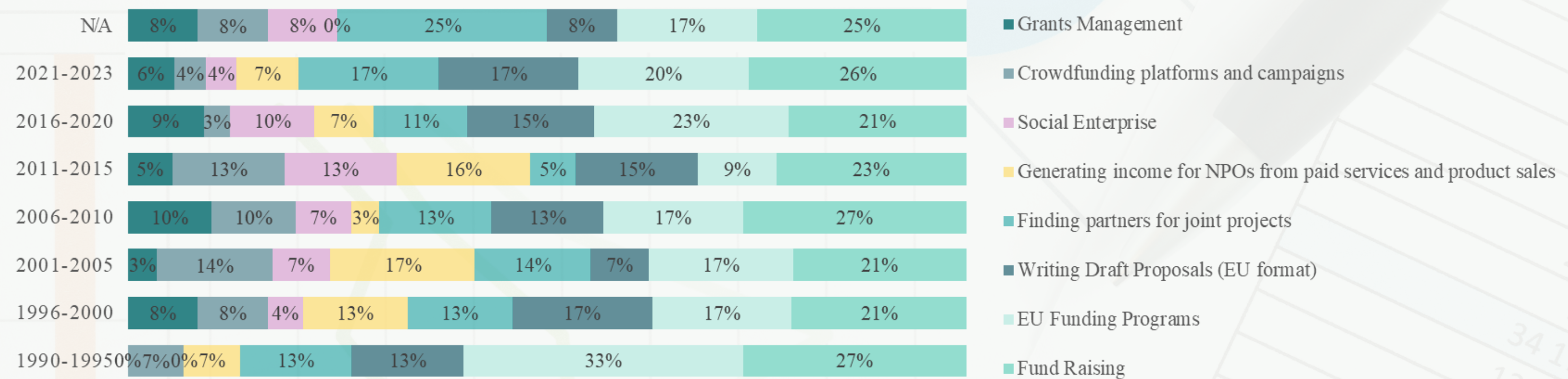
Fundraising and funding sources for CSOs and EU funding programs, result as the two most interesting topics for capacity building in terms of the financial sustainability of CSOs, whether these CSOs are based in the capital or outside it.



## based on the year of establishment\*

The same situation results even if we compare the needs of CSOs in relation to their field of activity and year of establishment.

What is noticed in the analysis of the need-year of establishment ratio, is that organisations with experience in the sector continue to have a higher interest in EU funding and fundraising programs.

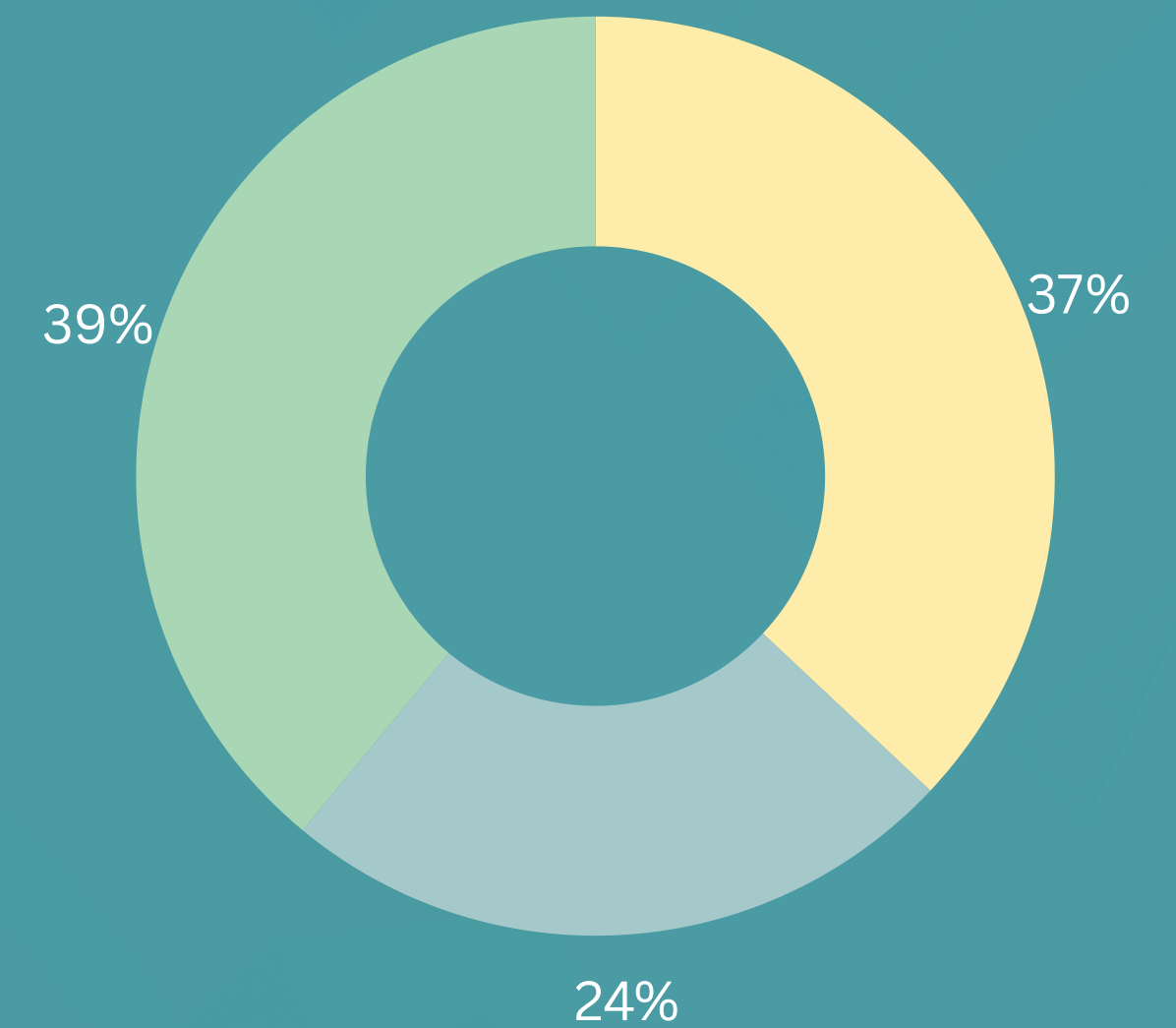
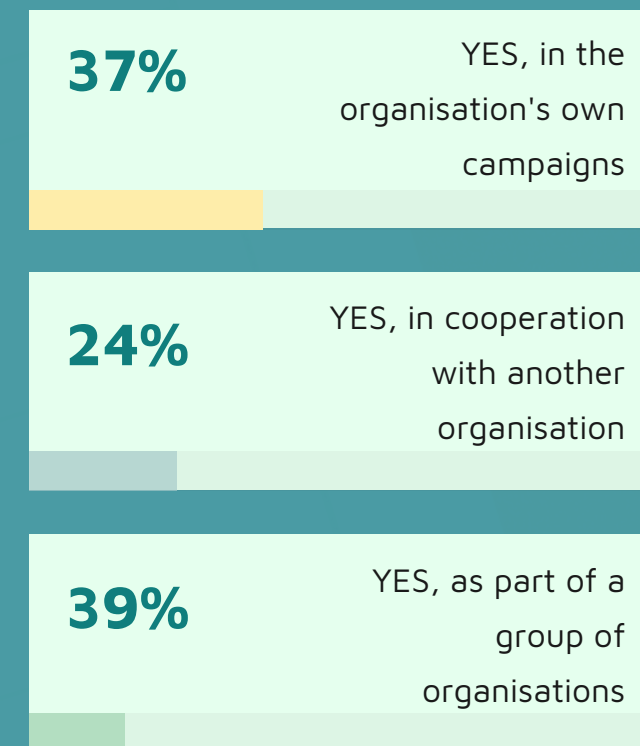


# CSOs PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND NETWORKING

## CSOs engagement in advocacy campaigns in 2023

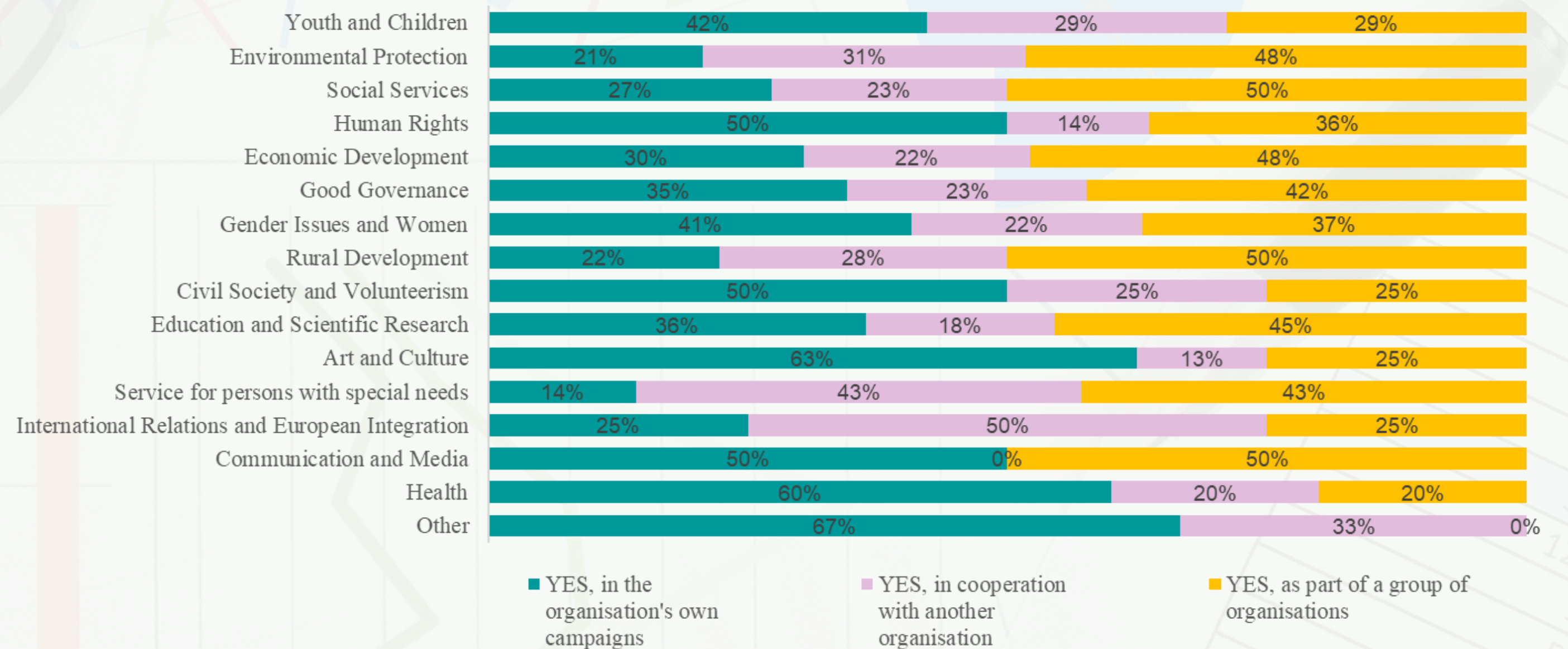
68% of the surveyed CSOs state that they have been involved in advocacy campaigns during 2023.

Mainly, the involvement of CSOs has been as part of a group of organisations, in 39% of cases, marking a significant increase compared to the situation the previous year, where the involvement of CSOs in advocacy through campaigns developed by the organisation itself prevailed. According to the assessment data, there is no difference in the engagement of CSOs in advocacy campaigns based on their geographical location.



## CSOs engagement in advocacy campaigns in 2023 according to their fields of activity\*

If analysing the CSOs engagement based on their fields of activity and forms of engagement, is noticed that CSOs that work mainly in the fields of social services, environment protection, economic development, rural development, and education, are more engaged in advocacy campaigns organised by a group of CSOs, while organisations working in the field of culture, art, and health are more involved in campaigns undertaken by themselves. Media organisations have the same involvement in both cases.



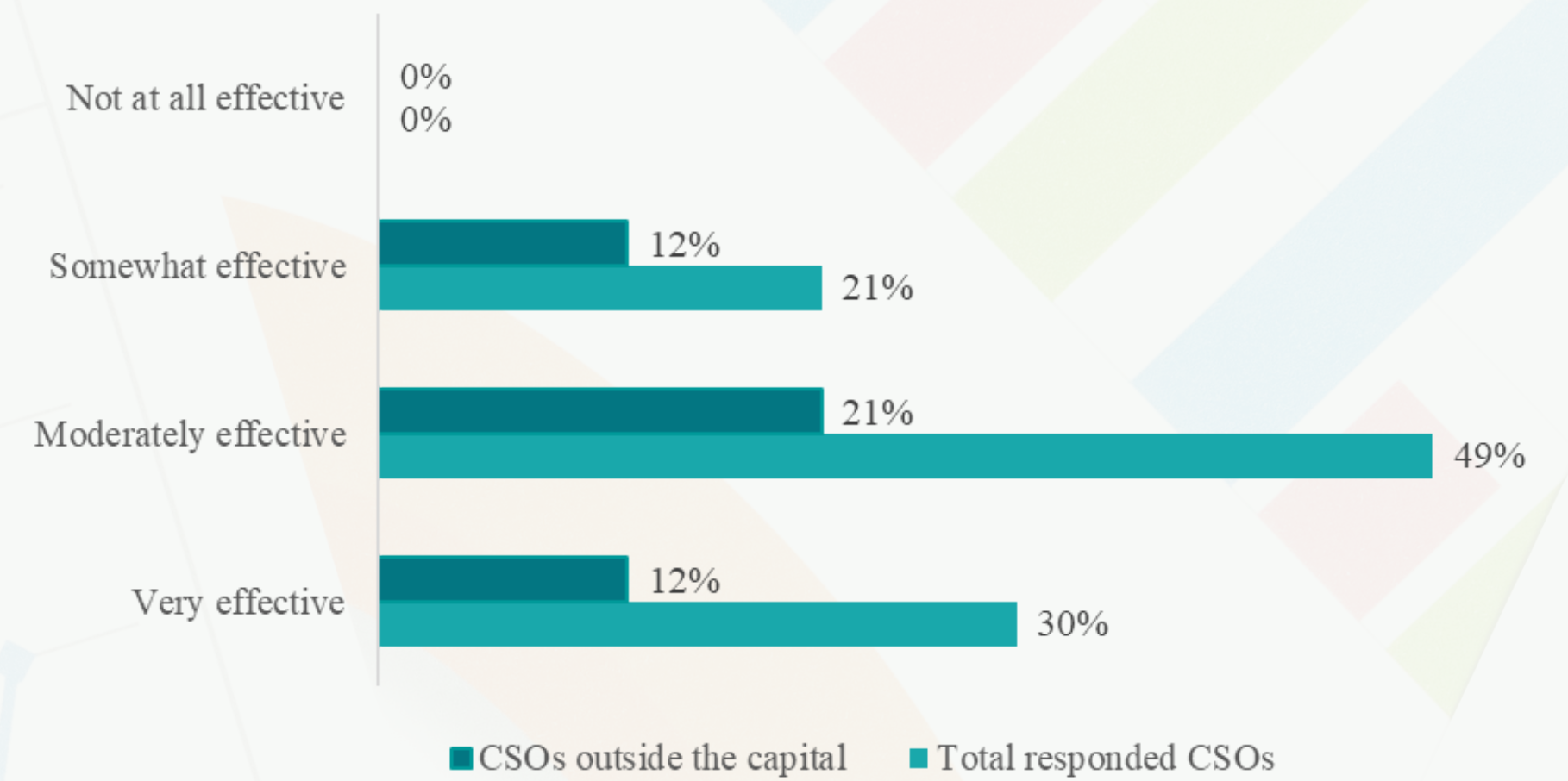
# CSOs PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND NETWORKING

## Assessment of advocacy campaigns effectiveness

The effectiveness of the advocacy campaigns where the surveyed CSOs were part, regardless of the form of engagement, are mostly assessed as *moderately effective* and *very effective*. This assessment changes if we compare the responses of CSOs according to their location, where CSOs outside the capital tend to evaluate the campaigns as *somewhat effective* in most cases.

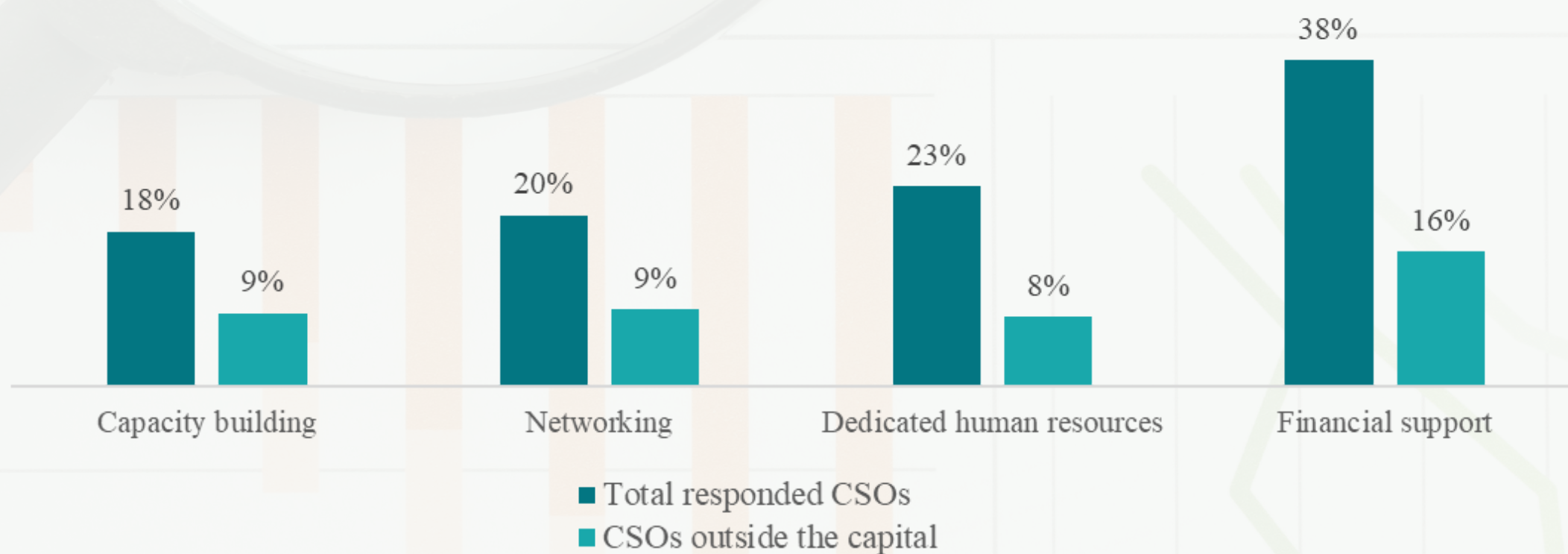
While, the assessment of advocacy campaigns' effectiveness analysed regarding the CSOs fields of activity, does not change from the general assessment.

The assessment of the advocacy campaigns effectiveness remains the same, regardless of the form of involvement in the campaigns: as part of a group, in cooperation with another organisation, or individually.



Meanwhile, for 32% of the CSOs part of the assessment that have not been involved in advocacy campaigns, one of the main reasons for their non-involvement is the difficulty in networking with other organisations, in 34% of cases, followed by the lack of financial capacity in 24% of cases and lack of human resources in 22% of cases. Receiving funds from the government is listed as another reason, although for a small number of cases (3%). While for 9% of CSOs, advocacy is not the focus of their work.

Other reasons for not being involved in advocacy, listed by 9% of CSOs, are: being a new organisation and lack of such opportunity during this period.



## CSOs needs for effective advocacy \*

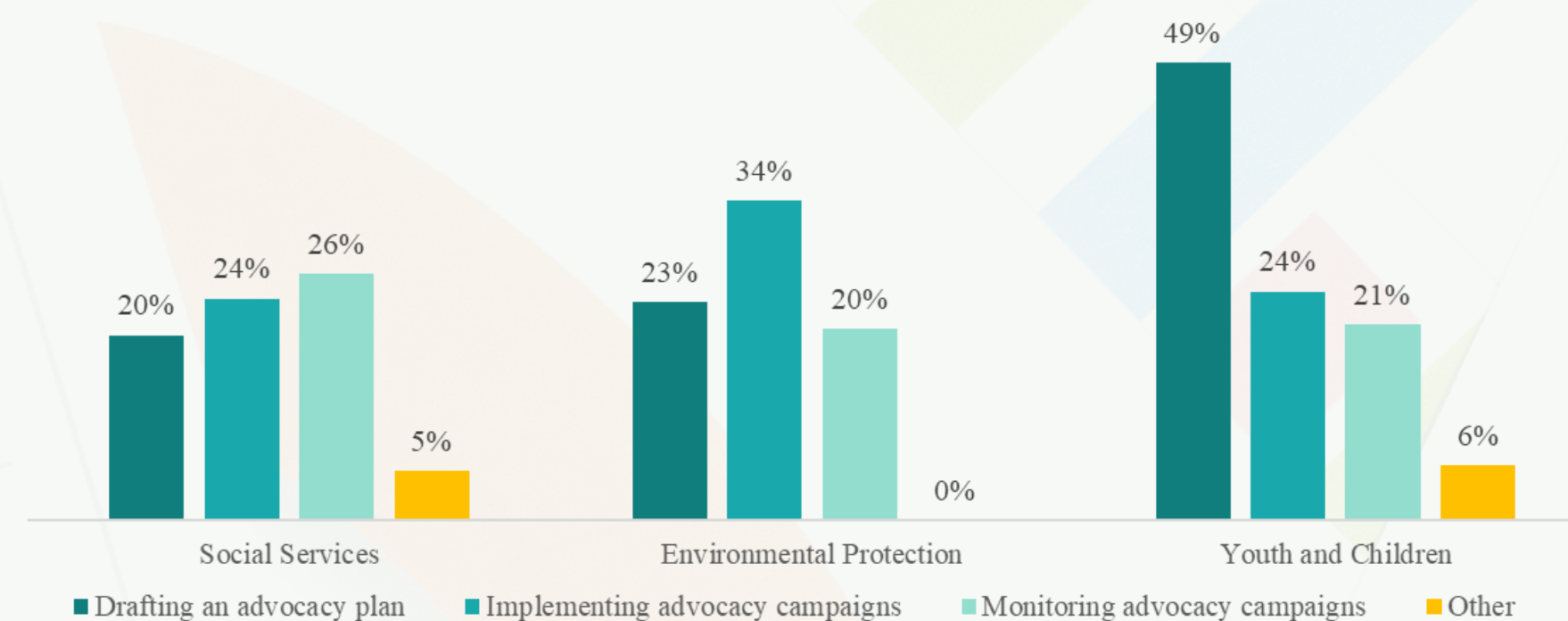
Financial support is reported to be the CSOs main need for effective advocacy campaigns, regardless of their location, followed by the need for dedicated human resources.

## Needs for capacity building in advocacy

CSOs need for capacity building in advocacy remains the same compared to previous assessment reports, where the development of advocacy plans is the highest need in 44% of the answered cases, followed by the need for capacity building in advocacy campaigns implementation in 28% of cases, and monitoring of advocacy campaigns in 23% of cases. 6% of CSOs state that they have other needs related to this issue, mostly in financial and human resources as well as in building partnerships.

The ranking slightly changes when compared to the fields of activity of the organisations. Thus, for CSOs working in the field of environmental protection, the successful implementation of advocacy campaigns turns out to be the highest need, while CSOs in the field of protection and social services list the monitoring of campaigns as a primary need for capacity building in advocacy.

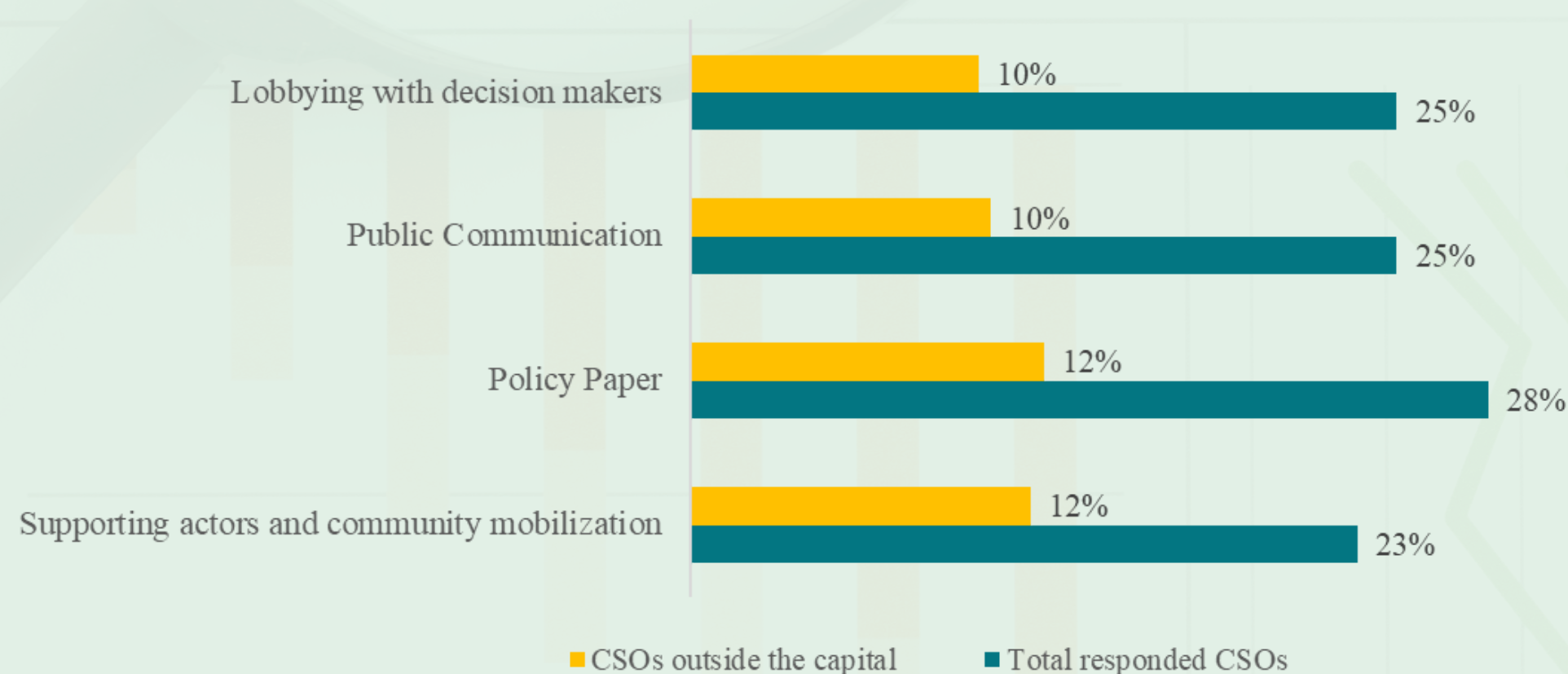
### based on fields of activity\*



## Advocacy campaign implementation issues of most interest in capacity building\*

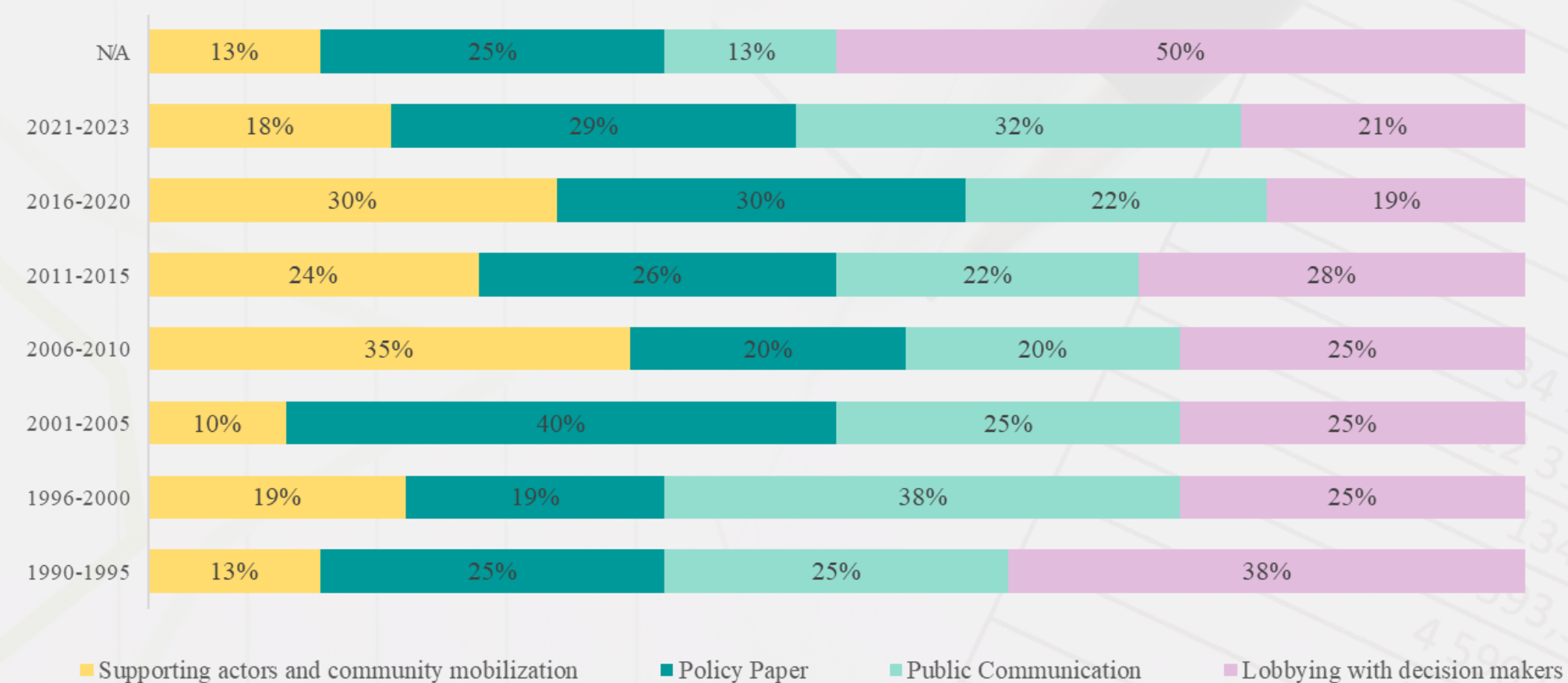
### based on CSOs location

Development and writing a policy document (policy paper) continues to remain the highest need of CSOs, in terms of implementing advocacy campaigns. Meanwhile, CSOs outside the capital also assess as equally important, the need for capacity building in the mobilisation of stakeholders and the community.



### based on the year of establishment

If we analyse the data, in relation to the year of establishment of CSOs, the previous ranking changes again slightly. Thus, for CSOs established during 1996-2000, the highest need results in the development of skills in communication, preparation, and presentation of the message with stakeholders, the media, and the public, while for CSOs established during 2006-2010, the mobilization of supporting actors and the community results as the main need for capacity building. For CSOs with more experience 1990-1995, lobbying with decision-makers is the highest need.



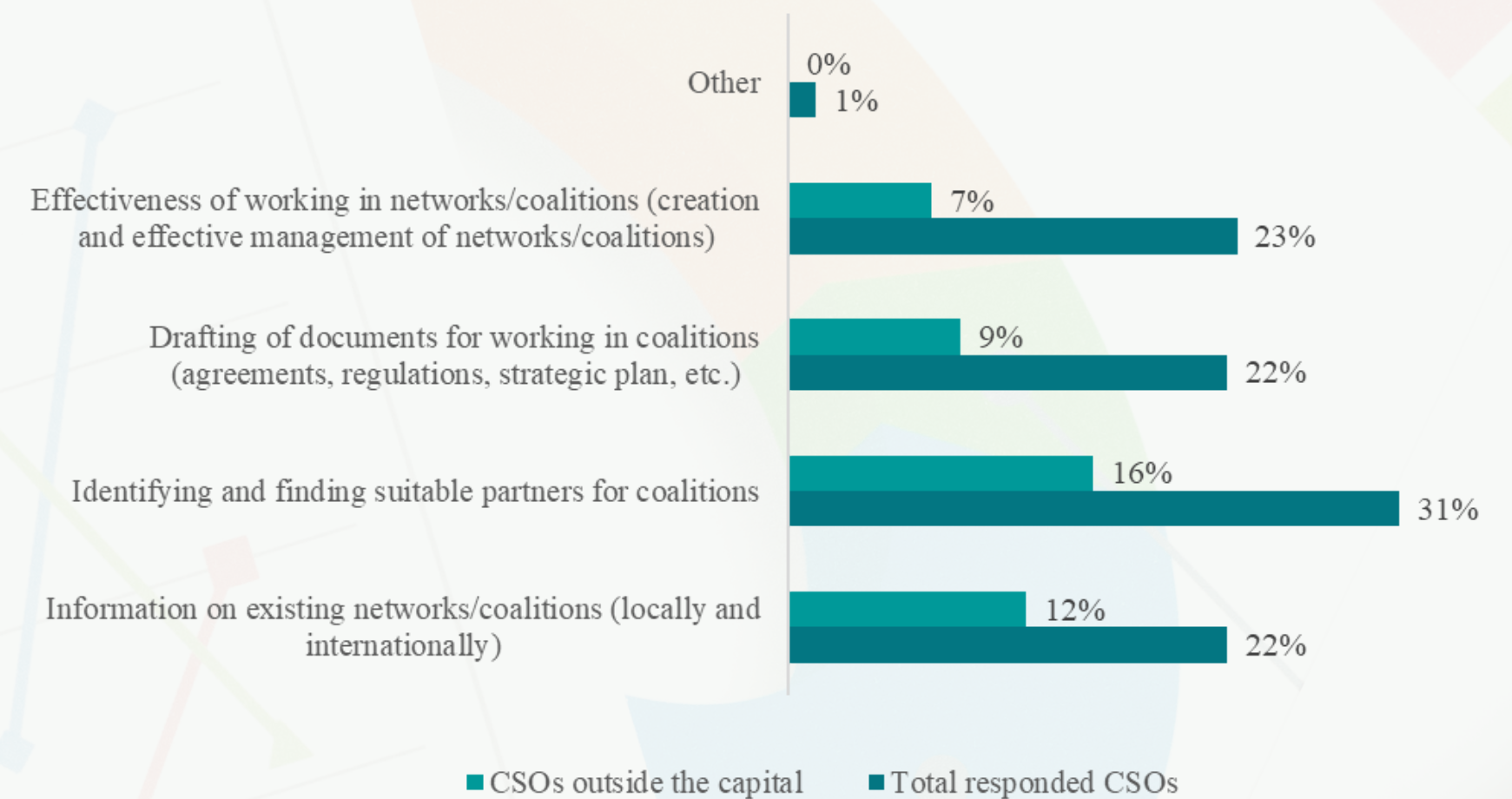
## CSOs participation in Networks/ Coalitions

The participation of CSOs in formal and informal networks/coalitions or groups continues to be significant, regardless of their location (78% of CSOs).

Participation according to the level of network/coalition geographical coverage also continues to remain the same over the years, with networks/coalitions operating at the **national level** resulting in **higher participation** for 38% of cases and networks/coalitions at the **local level with lower participation** only 13% of cases. Participation in networks/coalitions at the European level and beyond results in 25% of cases and that in networks/coalitions in the Western Balkans region in 21% of cases.

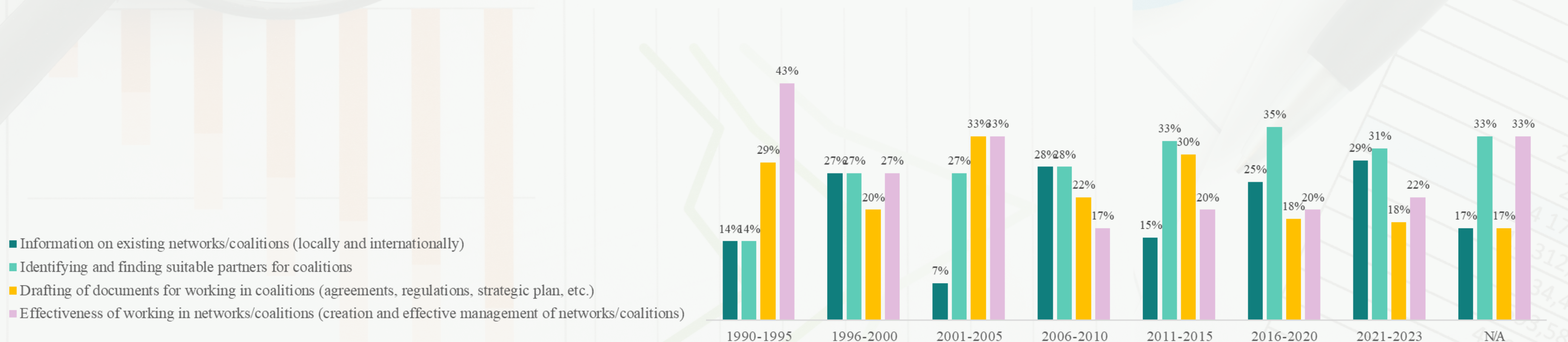
## CSOs needs in increasing the effectiveness of the work of networks/coalitions\*

Despite the majority of CSOs being engaged in networks/coalitions, the identification and finding of suitable partners for networking, as in previews assessment, remains the highest need for increasing the effectiveness of networks/ coalitions work. This need was reported by 31% of CSOs as part of the evaluation.



## based on the year of establishment\*

If comparing the above ranking needs in relation to the CSOs year of establishment, the issue of effectiveness of working in networks/coalitions (the creation and effective management of networks/coalitions) appears as a higher challenge for CSOs established earlier (1990 -2005).

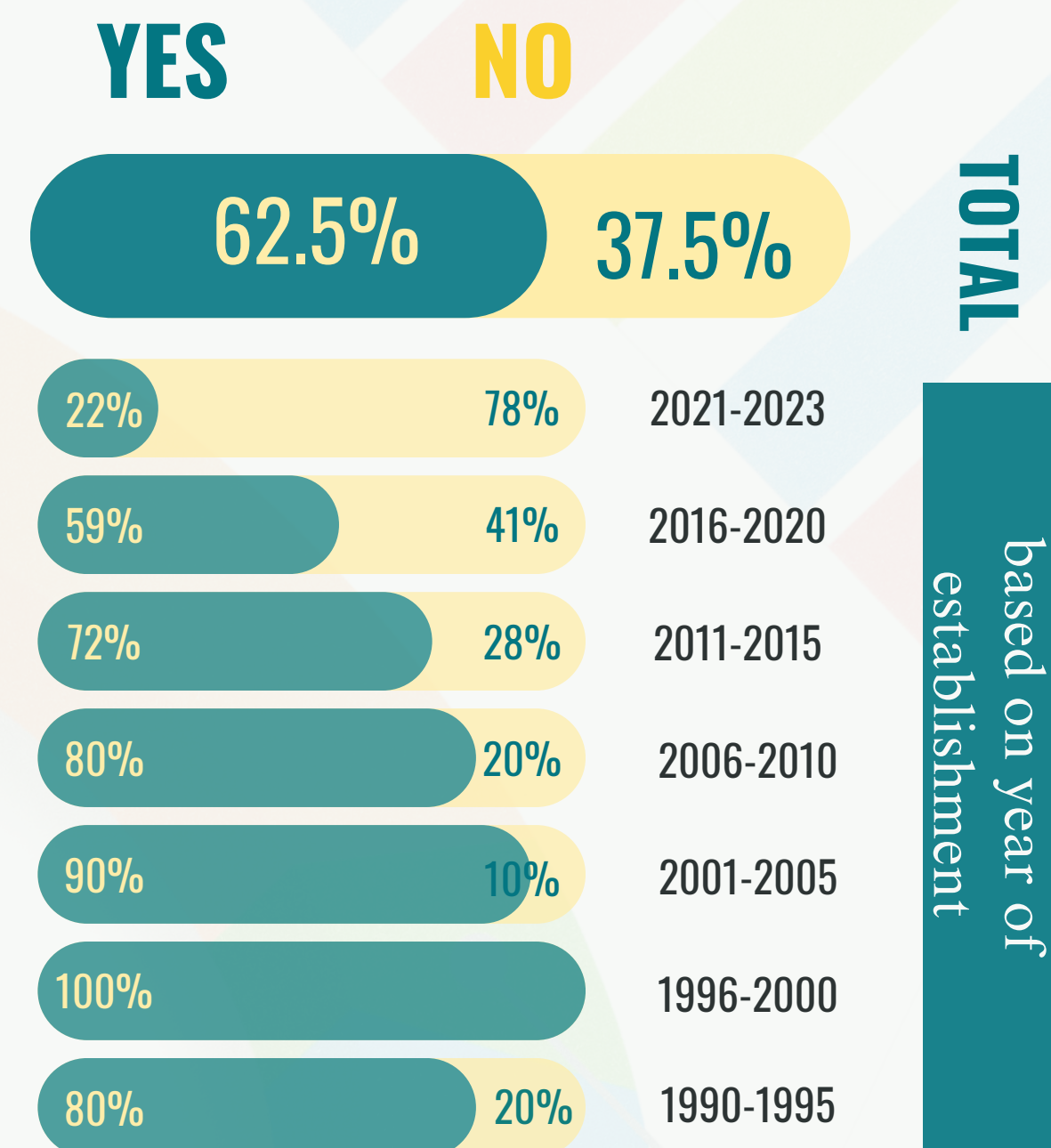


## CSOs participation in consultation processes on policies and draft laws during 2022-2023\*

This year too, the assessment data shows that the majority of CSOs have been involved in consultation processes on policies and draft laws throughout 2022-2023. Meanwhile, the need for greater involvement of CSOs outside the capital in such processes continues to be present, as 57% of CSOs state that they have NOT been part of consultative processes.

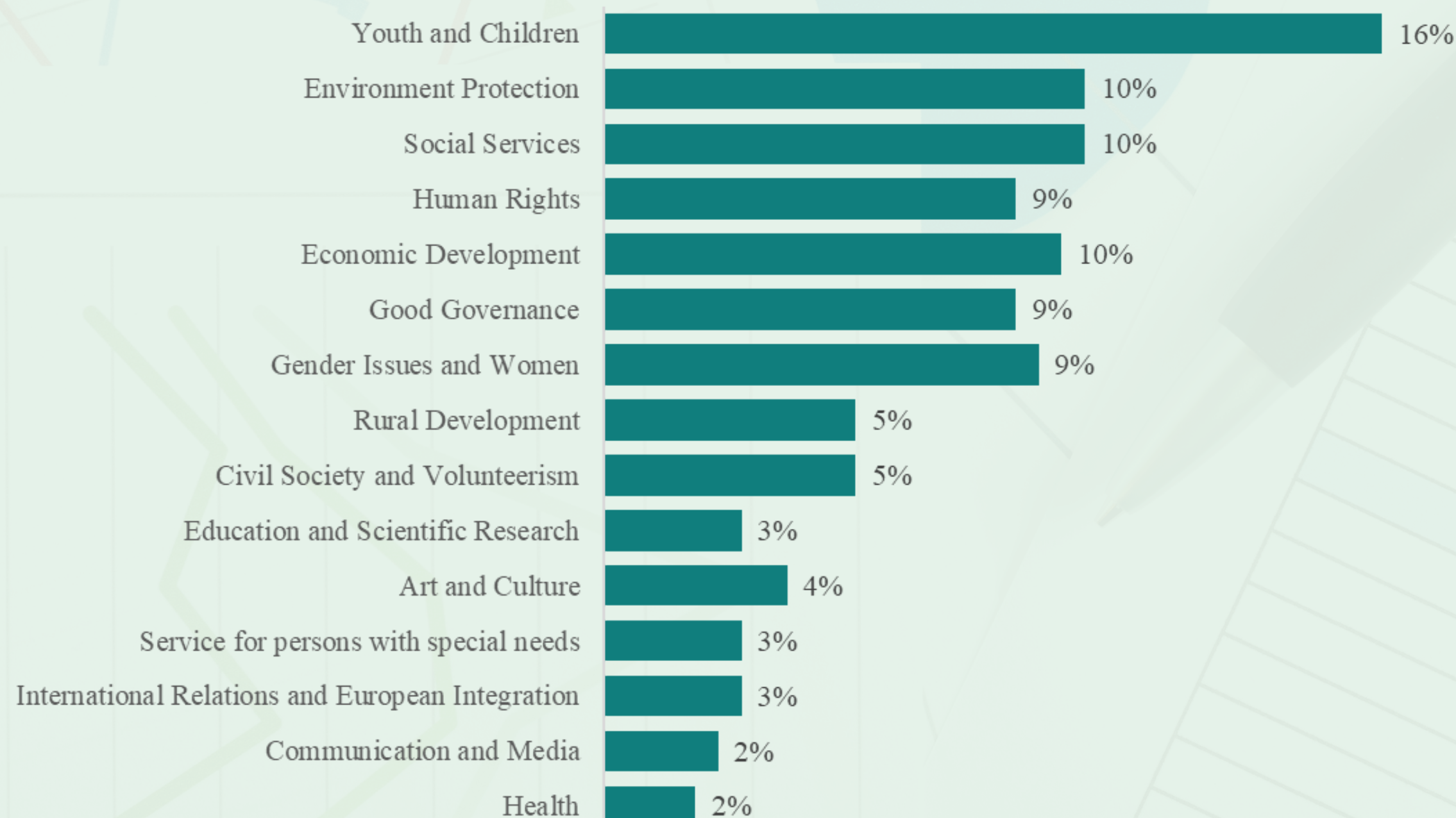
The main reasons for not being involved in consultation processes, as listed by CSOs, are lack of human and financial capacities and resources. This statement is also supported from the assessment findings, where a noticeable difference is observed in the average of CSO employees engaged in consultation processes and those who are not participating in such processes, respectively from an average of 7 employees to 1. Other reasons for non-engagement include lack of information on such processes, being a newly established organisation, or the passive status of the organisation.

As illustrated in the graph, the need for engagement and capacity development in this regard continues to remain high for CSOs created in the last three years.



### based on fields of activity\*

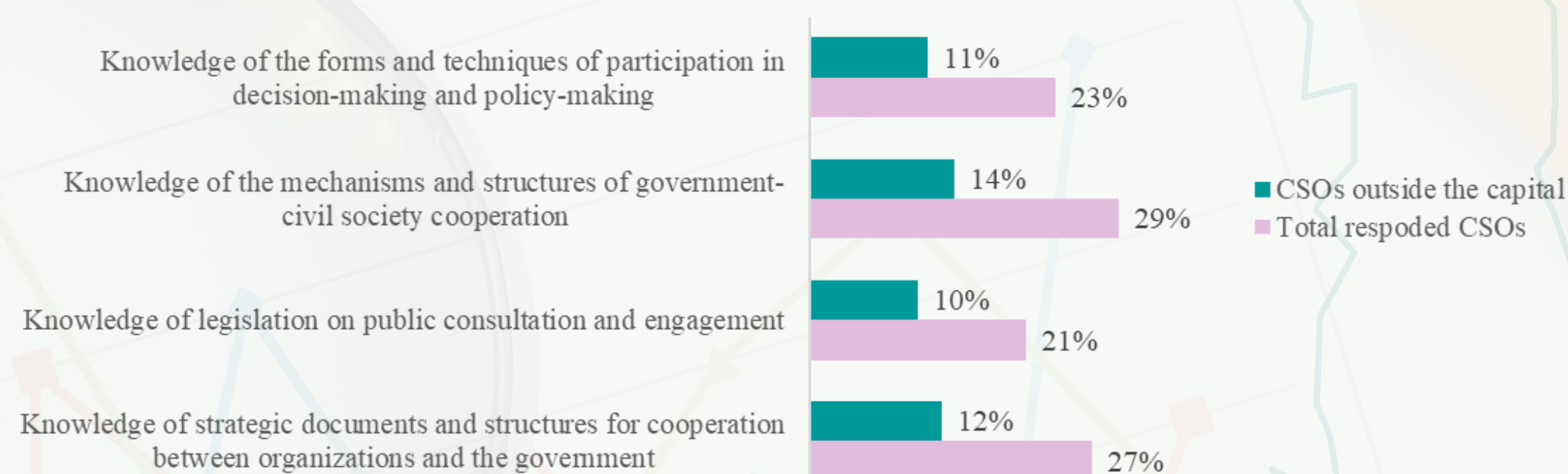
Participation of CSOs in consultation processes is extended to all fields of CSO activity, part of the assessment, with the highest participation of organisations that work with youth and children, organisations focused on the protection of the environment, as well as those who work in the field of social protection / social services.



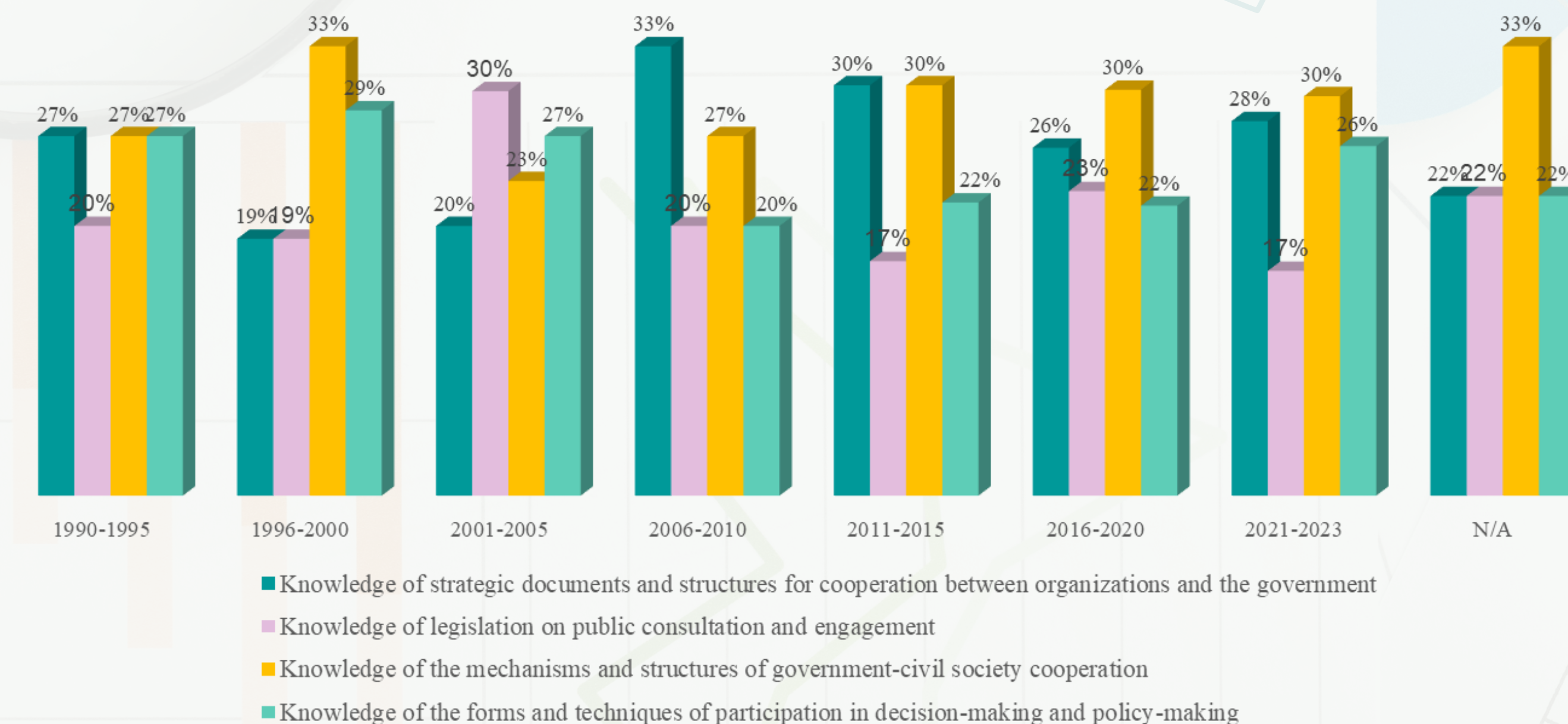
## Capacity building needs in regard to participation in consultative and policy-making processes\*

Acquittance with the mechanisms and structures of government-civil society cooperation results as the most reported need by CSOs for capacity building in relation to participation in policy-making processes, followed by the need for acquittance with strategic documents and structures for collaboration between organisations and the government.

Meanwhile, if we analyse the data collected in relation to the location, awareness of forms and techniques of participation in decision-making and policy-making processes, as well as awareness of strategic documents and structures for collaboration between organisations and the government, turns out to be the greatest needs.



### based on the year of establishment\*





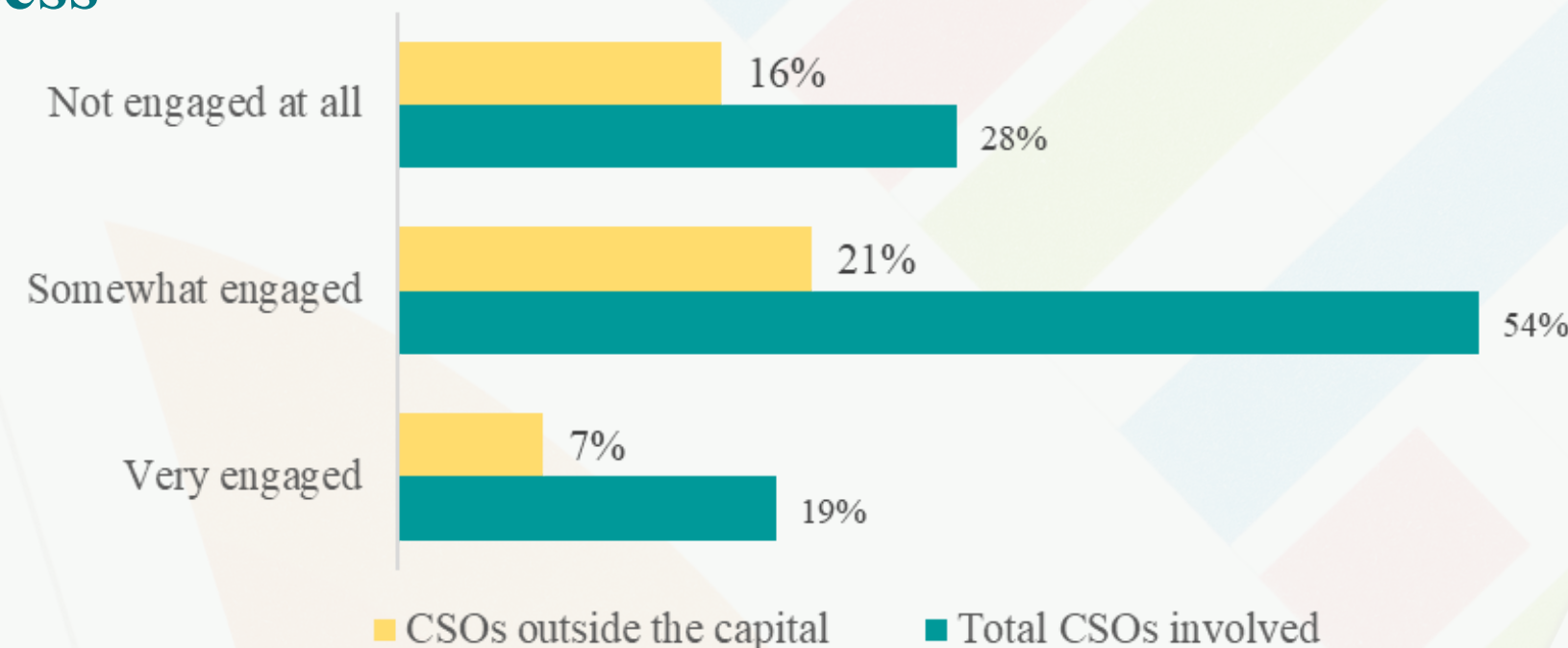
# PARTICIPATION OF CSOs IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

## Involvement and engagement of CSOs in the EU integration process

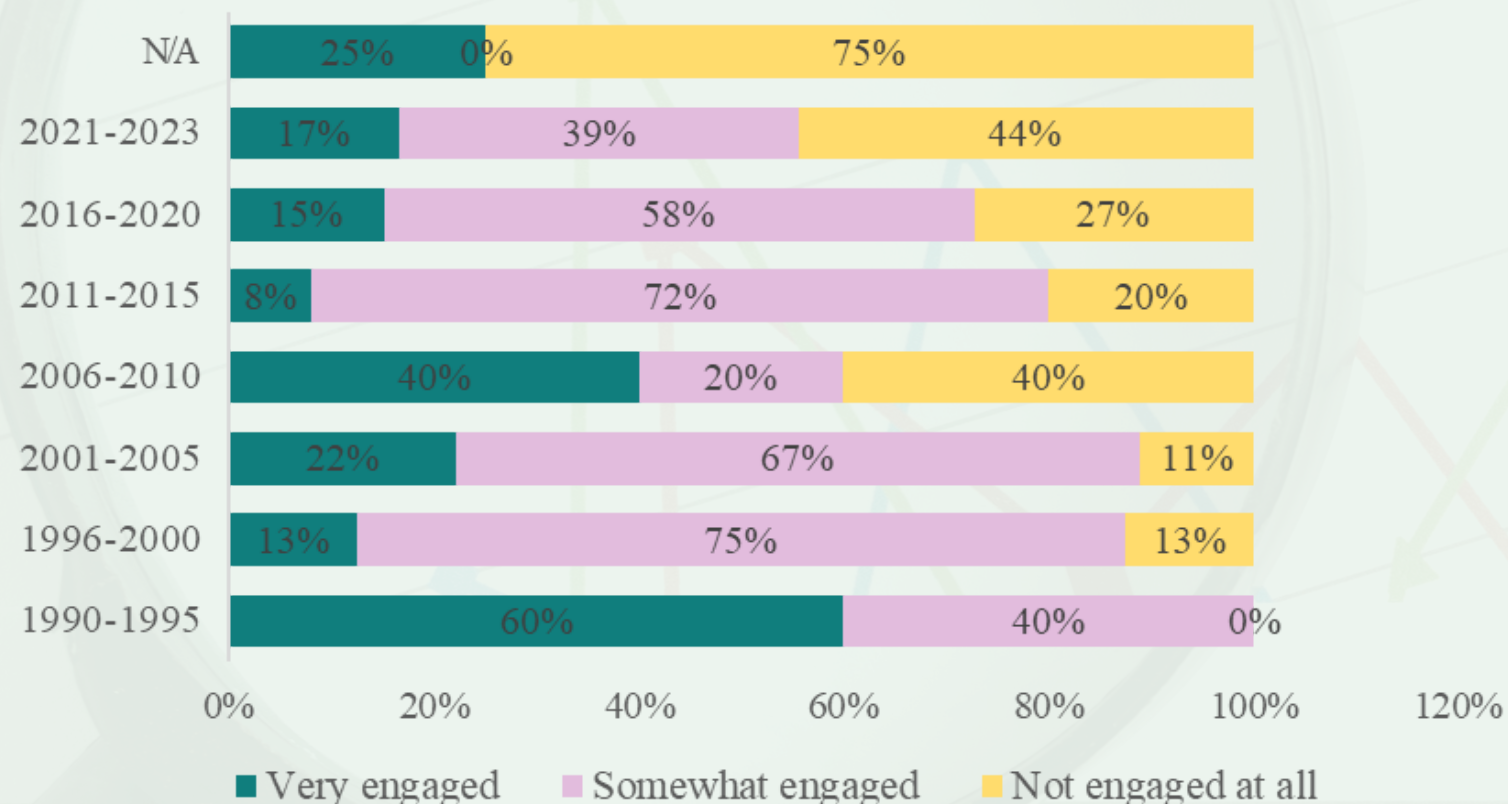
About 72% of the CSOs surveyed state that they have been involved in the process of the country's integration into the EU.

Regardless of involvement, the assessment of CSO engagement, on a comparative scale from very engaged to not at all engaged, is mostly classified as *somewhat engaged*.

The engagement of CSOs outside the capital results in being lower compared to CSOs in the capital, especially in the classification as highly engaged.



## based on the year of establishment

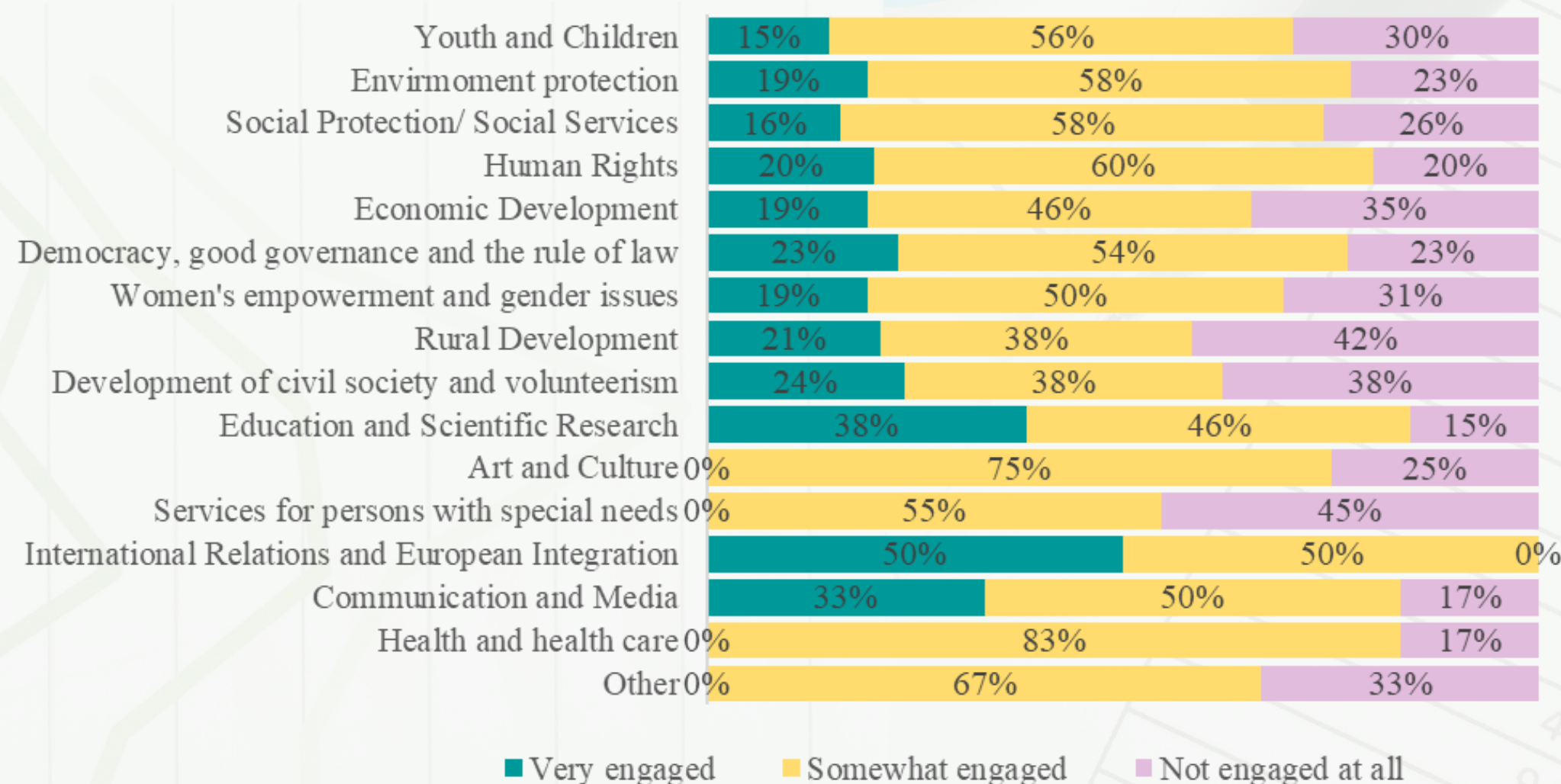


The findings show that CSOs established during 1990-1995 mostly rate themselves as *very engaged* in these processes, compared to other CSOs established afterward.

The majority of CSOs that have not engaged at all in the EU integration process are CSOs created in the last three years.

## based on fields of activity\*

Involvement and engagement in the country's integration process into the EU seems to be extended to all fields of activity of the CSOs participating in the survey. According to findings, CSOs working in the field of services for persons with special needs and in the field of rural development have the lowest involvement and engagement in this process.

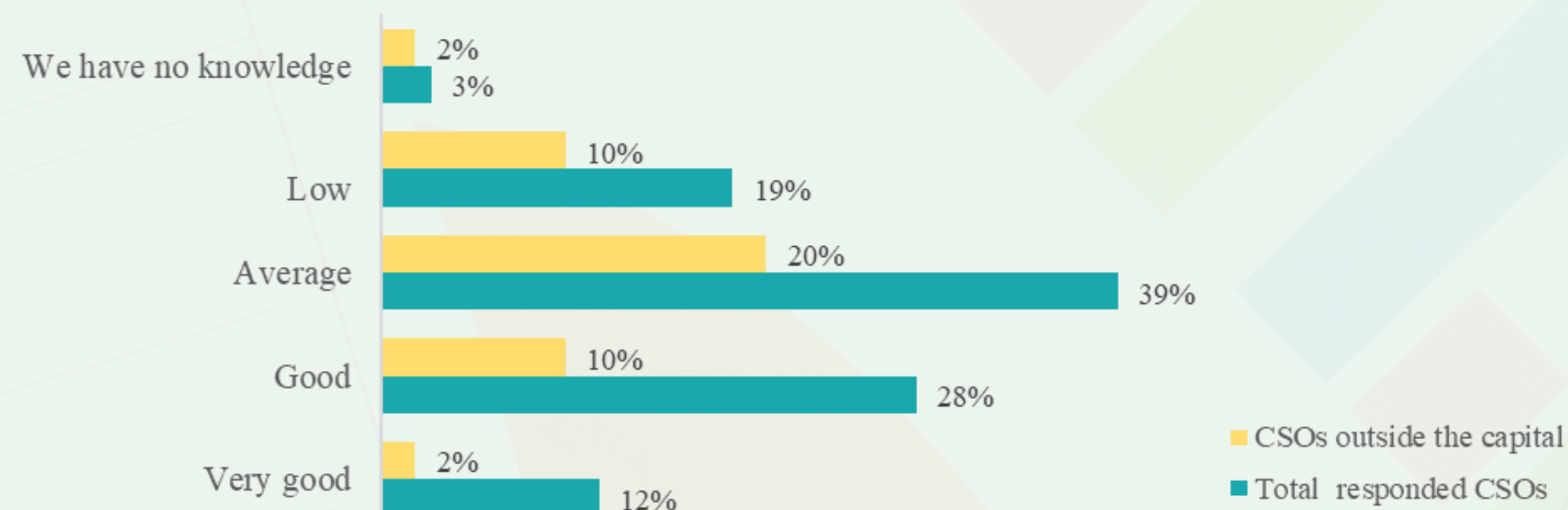


# PARTICIPATION OF CSOs IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

## Assessment of the level of knowledge of CSOs on the EU integration process

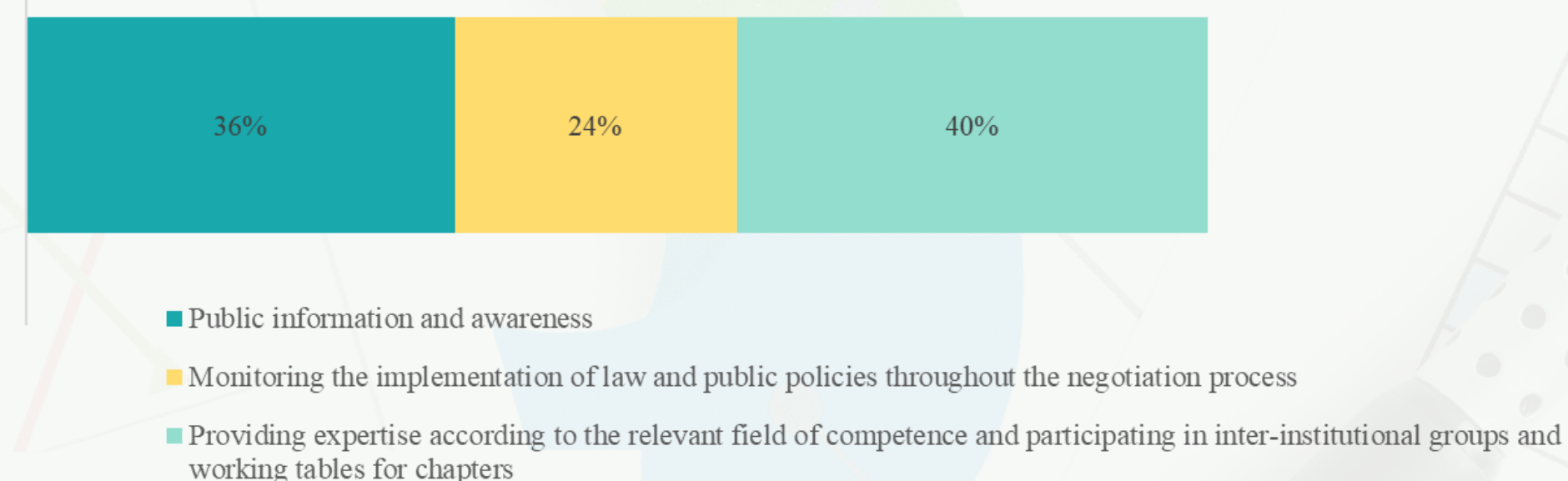
The data show that CSOs, regardless of their location, mostly estimate that their level of knowledge about the country's EU integration process, on a comparative scale from no knowledge to very good knowledge, is mainly *average*.

Compared to previous report, there is a decrease in the number of CSOs reporting that they have very good and good knowledge of the integration process. This may be the result of the increased awareness of CSOs on their capacities to respond to the integration process, in the context of the developments in this framework with the opening of negotiations for the country's membership in the EU and the involvement of CSOs in the process.



## Civil society role in the integration process according to CSOs\*

This year, CSOs, regardless of their field of activity, see the role of civil society in the process of European integration, mostly in providing expertise according to their respective areas of competence, as well as in participating in inter-institutional groups and working table for chapters, thus changing compared to previous years where CSOs saw more of their role in informing and raising public awareness of the integration process.



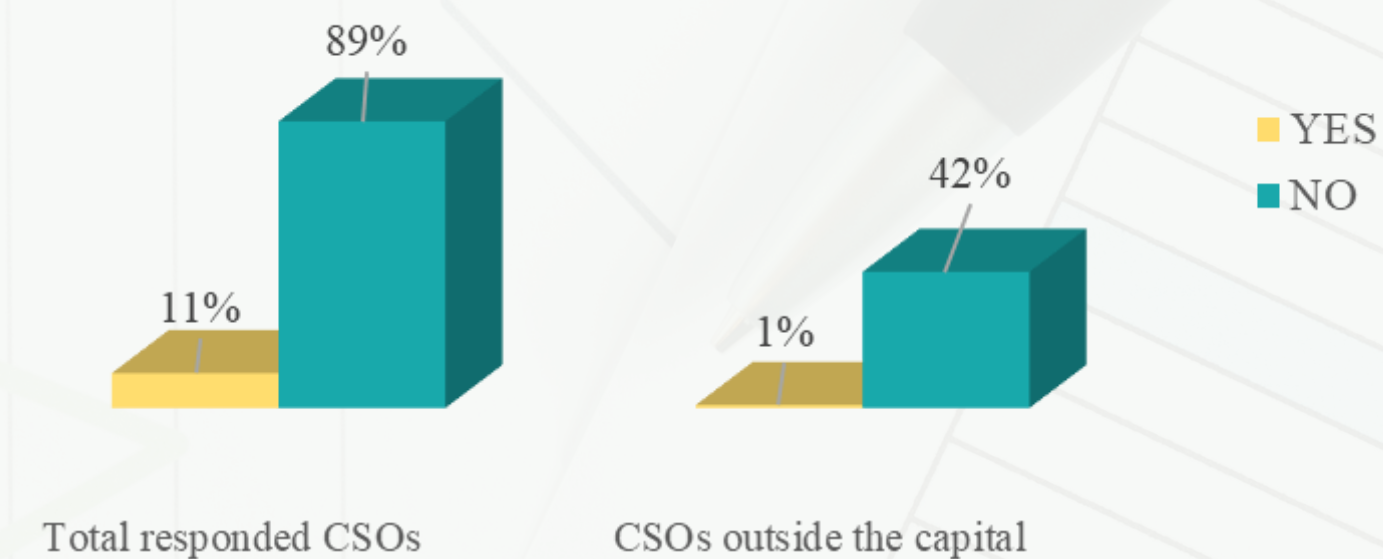
## CSOs participation in platforms/structures of the integration process

The knowledge and information of CSOs on the platforms and structures of the integration process continue to remain at the same levels, regardless of their location, with 47% of CSOs reporting that they have no information and 53% of them that have information.

Despite the information, the participation of CSOs in the platforms or structures of the European integration process appears to be **very low**, with only 11% of CSOs reporting that they are part of them, of which 1% are organizations outside the capital.

Participation in structures results to be higher for organisations working in areas such as democracy, good governance and rule of law, international relations and European integration, youth and children, as well as women's empowerment and gender issues.

The main platforms/structures where CSOs report that they participate and contribute are Partnership Platform for European Integration, with involvement in the tables for chapters no. 5, 6, 11, 12, 18, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, as well as the National Council of European Integration.

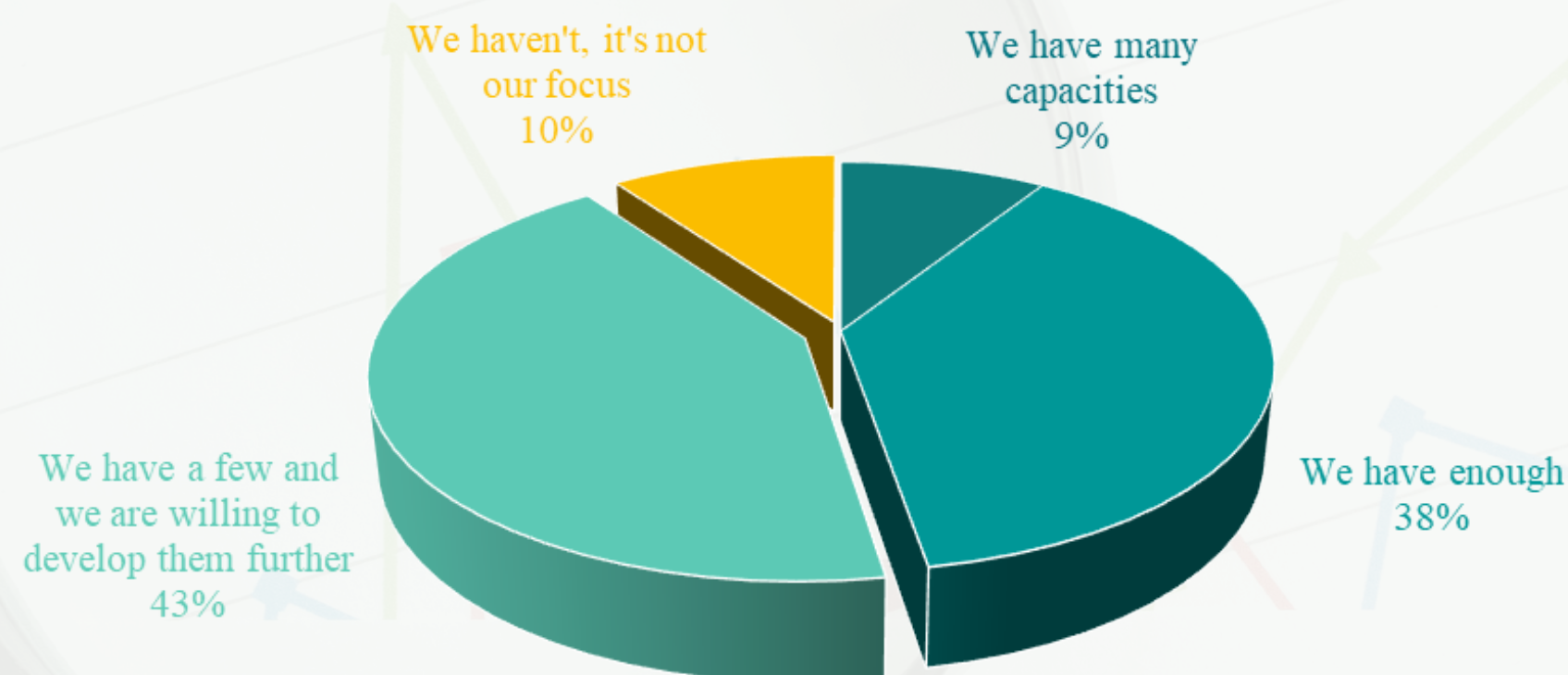


# PARTICIPATION OF CSOs IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

## Assessment of capacities to engage in tables/groups with government representatives and groups of interest during the negotiation process for EU integration

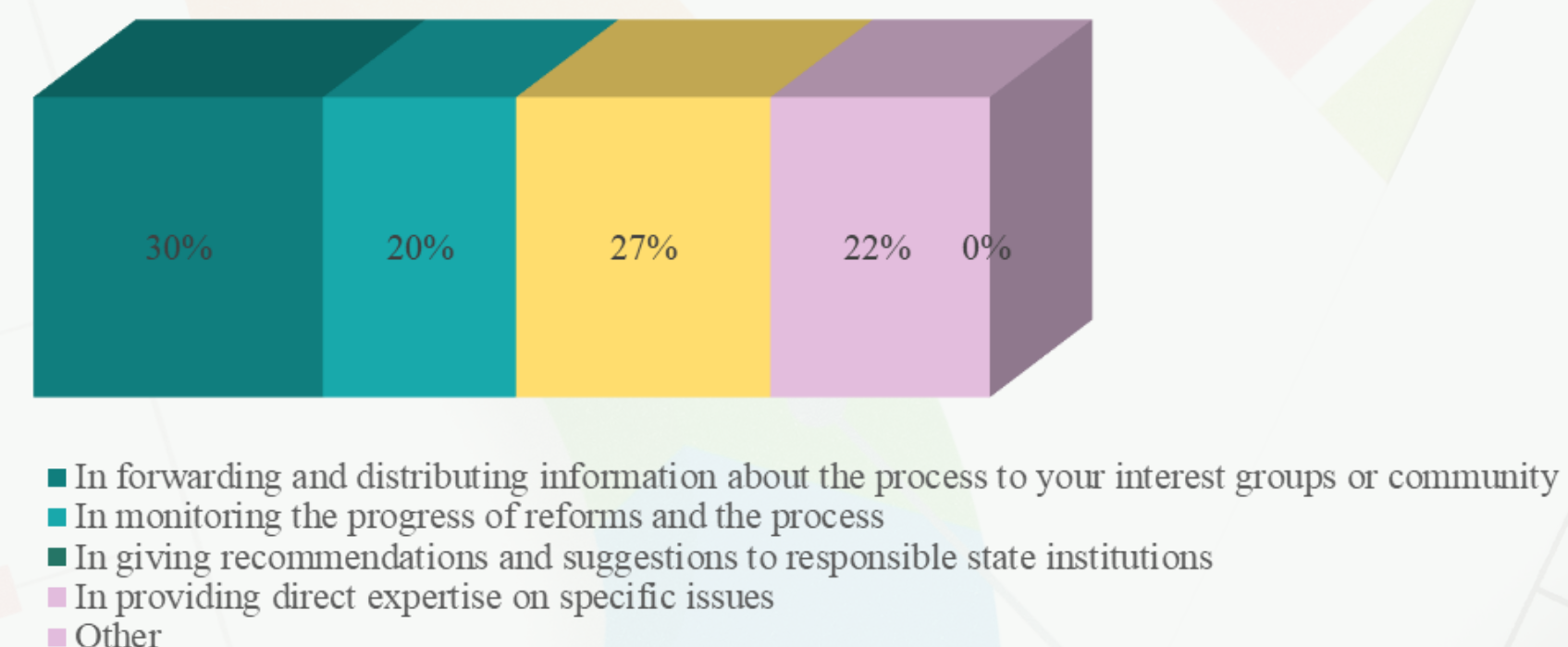
The capacities of CSOs to engage in tables/working groups with government representatives and groups of interest during the negotiation process for EU integration, continue to remain at the same levels compared to previous reports, where most CSOs, regardless of their location, report that they have *few capacities and are willing to further develop them*. Meanwhile, only 9% of them state that they have many of capacities in this direction.

The assessment of capacities does not change even when compared to the CSOs field of activity.



## How would CSOs like to engage in the structures of the integration process\*

Sharing of information about the process to the groups of interest or community, as well as giving recommendations and suggestions to responsible state institutions, are the two main ways preferred by CSOs to engage in the above-mentioned structures.



## Knowledge and skills necessary for the engagement of CSOs in the process of the country's integration into the EU

Among the most necessary knowledge and skills for CSOs to engage and be actively involved in the process of the country's integration into the European Union, are as following:

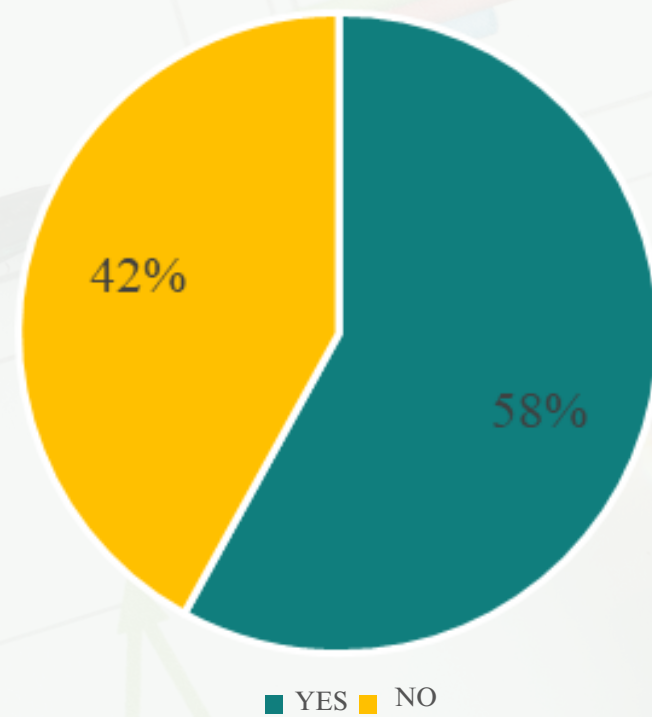
- Knowledge of the legal framework, structures and mechanisms of participation, mainly according to the fields of activity of CSOs, in the context of developments in the EU membership process.
- Development of analytical and research skills for monitoring the progress of reforms and the development of quality reports and recommendations to responsible state institutions.
- Ability to adapt and implement EU practices in the local context.
- Networking with domestic and foreign organisations working in the same field, exchange of experiences and mutual learning within such processes.
- Capacity building in the development of information and awareness campaigns with the target groups with which CSOs work.
- Increasing capacities for lobbying and advocacy to accelerate EU integration and to have a stronger influence on decision-makers throughout the process

# TRANSPARENCY WITH THE PUBLIC

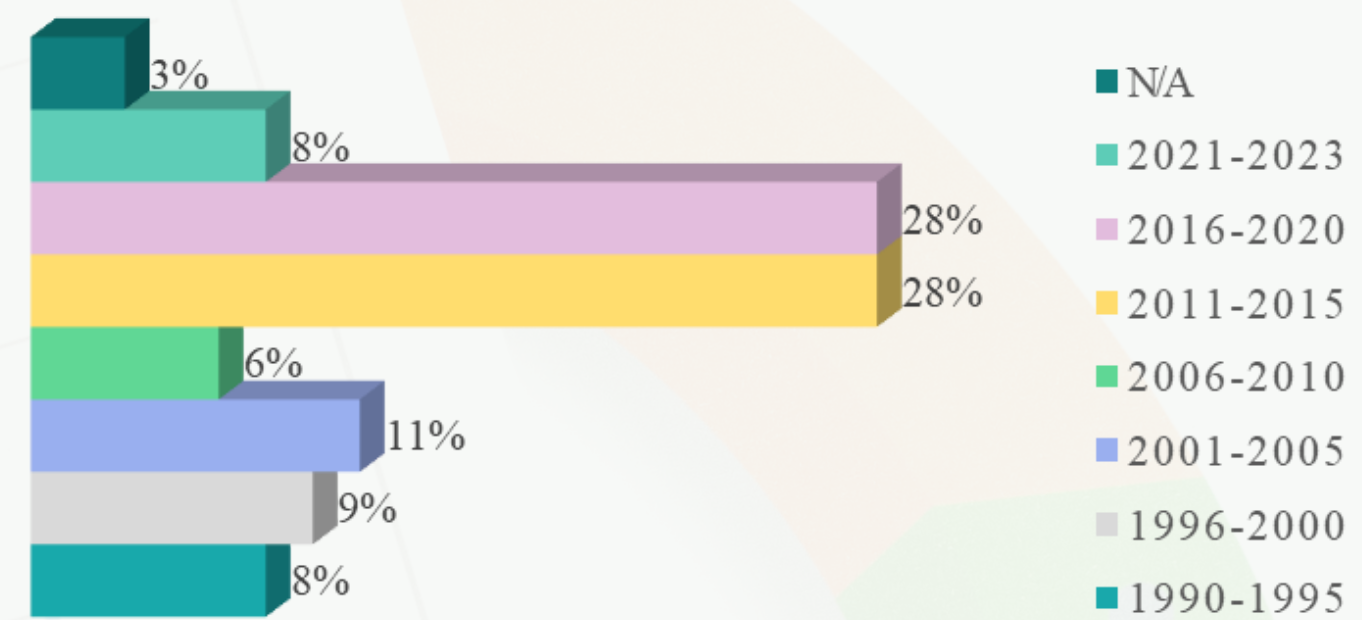
58% of CSOs state that they share and publish the annual report of the organisation's activities. This practice turns out to be lower among CSOs outside the capital, which constitute only 38% of CSOs that share and publish the annual report.

This level of sharing and publication appears to be the same as the one in the assessment report of four years ago.

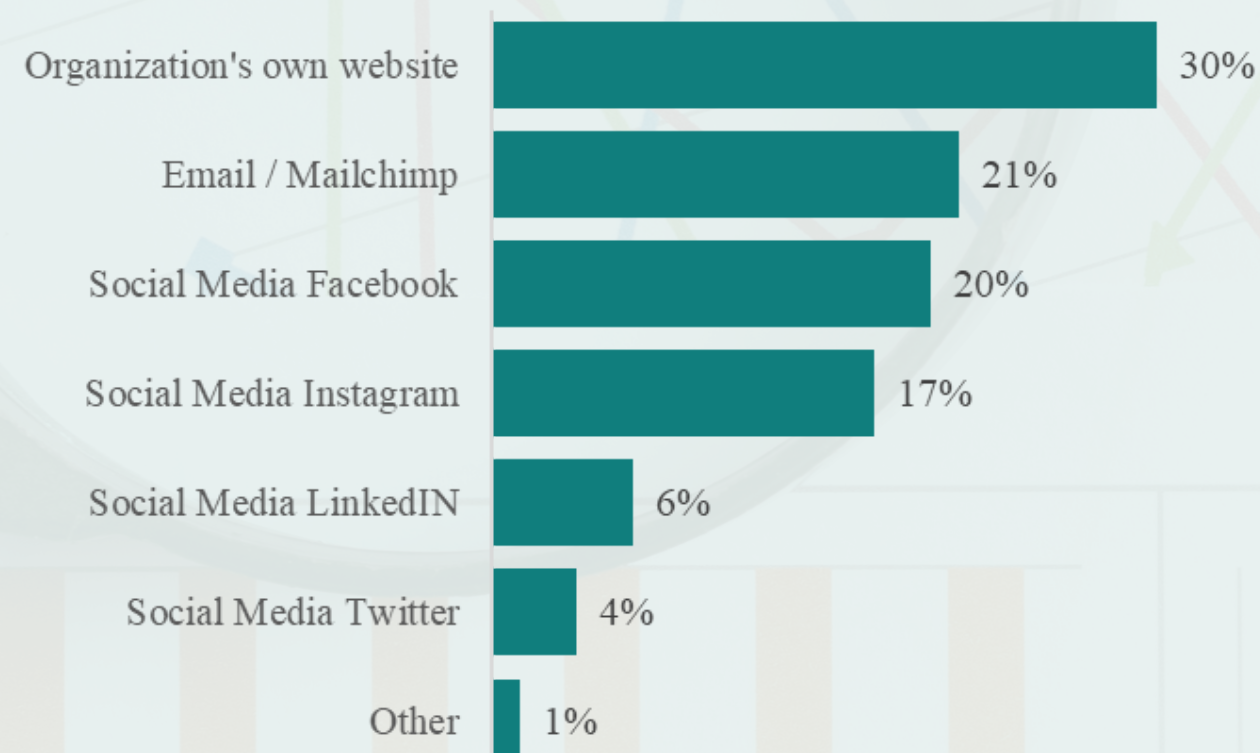
## Annual Report publication from CSOs



## Annual Report publication based on the year of establishment



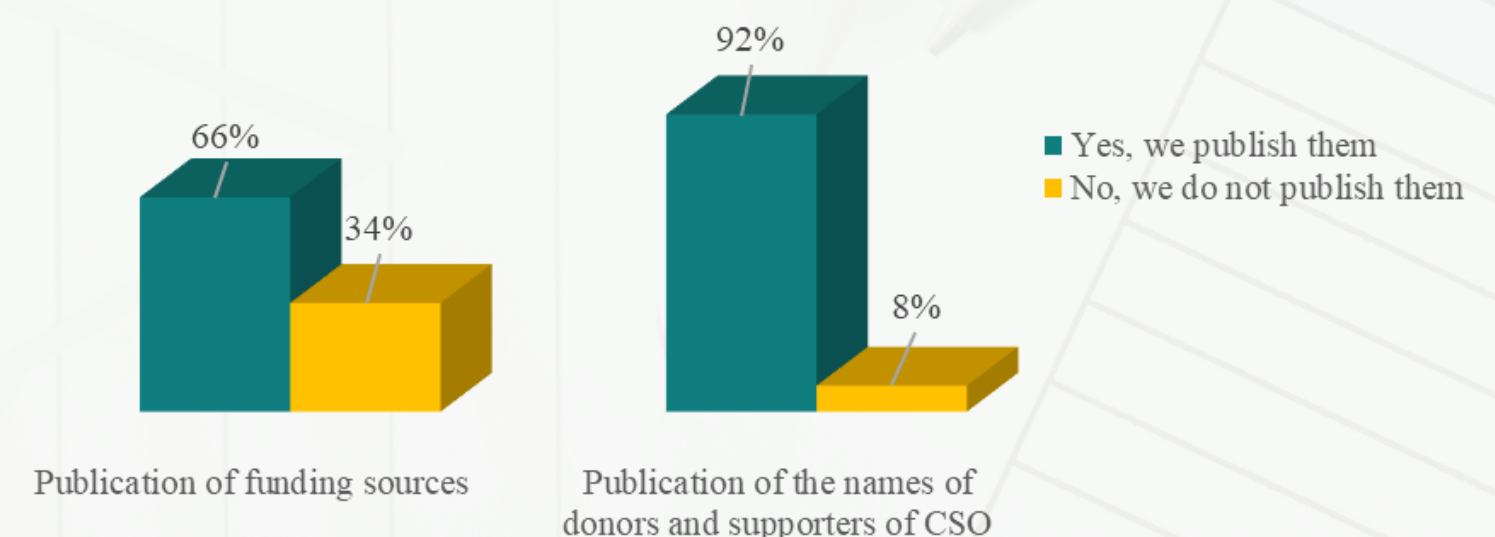
## Communication channels where the annual report is shared\*



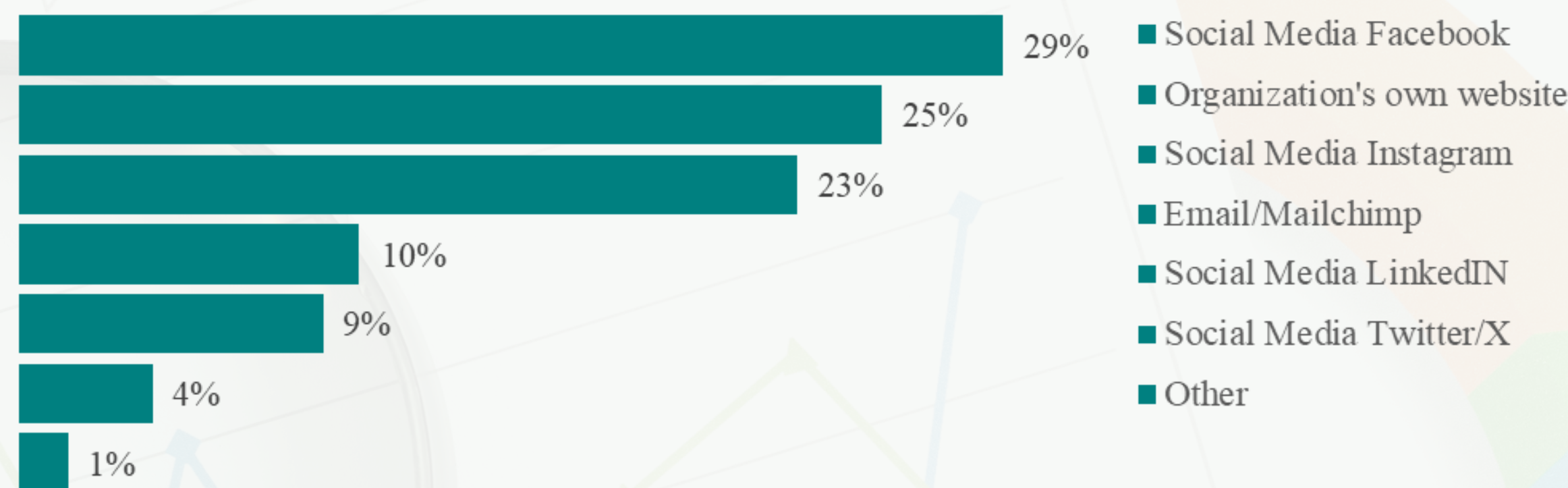
The organisation's own website, emails/Mailchimp platform and social media Facebook are the three most used channels for sharing and publishing the annual report according to CSOs participating in the survey.

## Publication of donors and funding sources of CSOs

Assessment data show that CSOs have a more transparent approach to publishing the names of their donors and supporters, compared to publishing their funding sources.



In this case, social media such as Facebook, continues to remain the main channel for publishing the names of donors and supporters of CSOs, followed by the organization's own website.



## CSOs needs for capacity building for a more transparent and open organisation

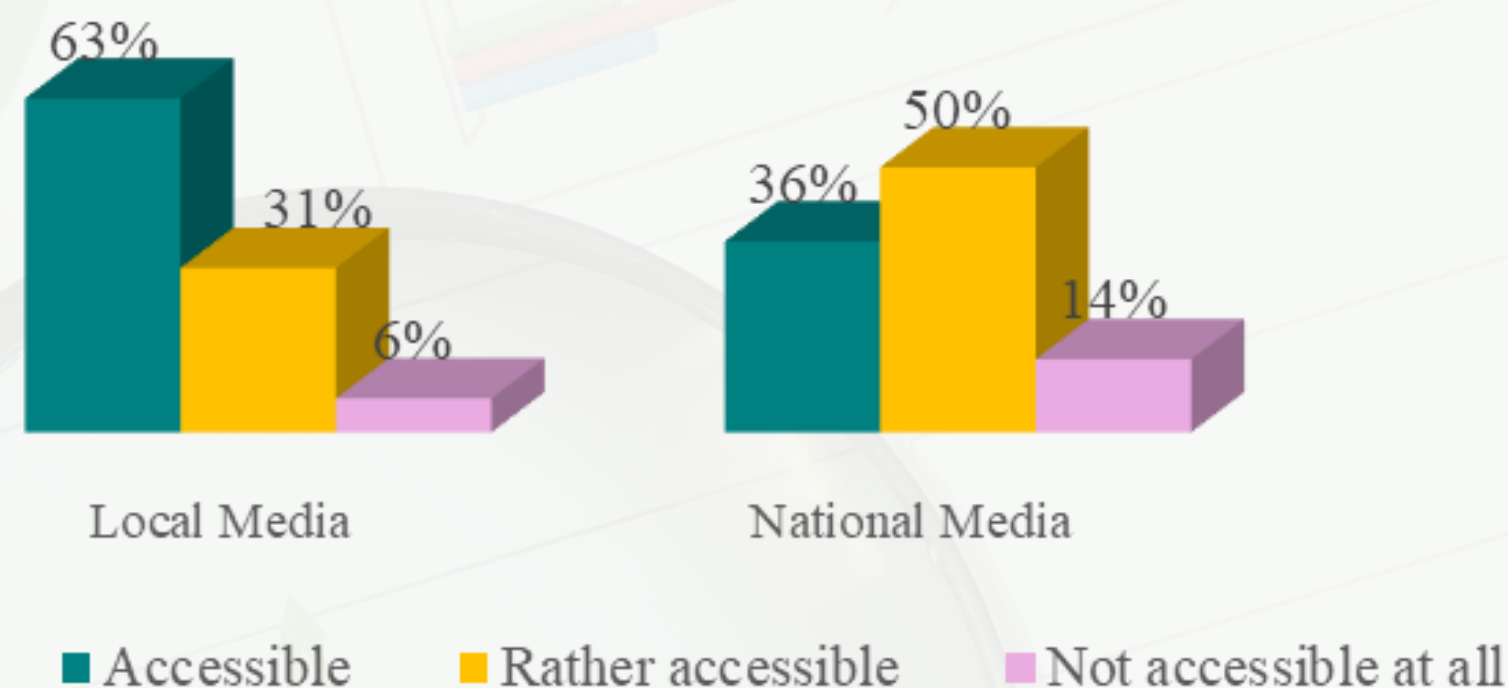
Asked what would be some of their main capacity building needs to be a more transparent and open organisation, CSOs list:

- capacity building on good governance, accountability and fostering an open culture of communication and dialogue with groups of interests.
- in drafting annual reports;
- in the use of technology and open platforms for publication and public involvement and increased transparency;
- in reviewing internal policies/procedures to ensure transparency;
- in the development of information security and social media management for real-time communication;
- in networking and creating partnerships with CSOs for sharing good practices in this regard, etc.

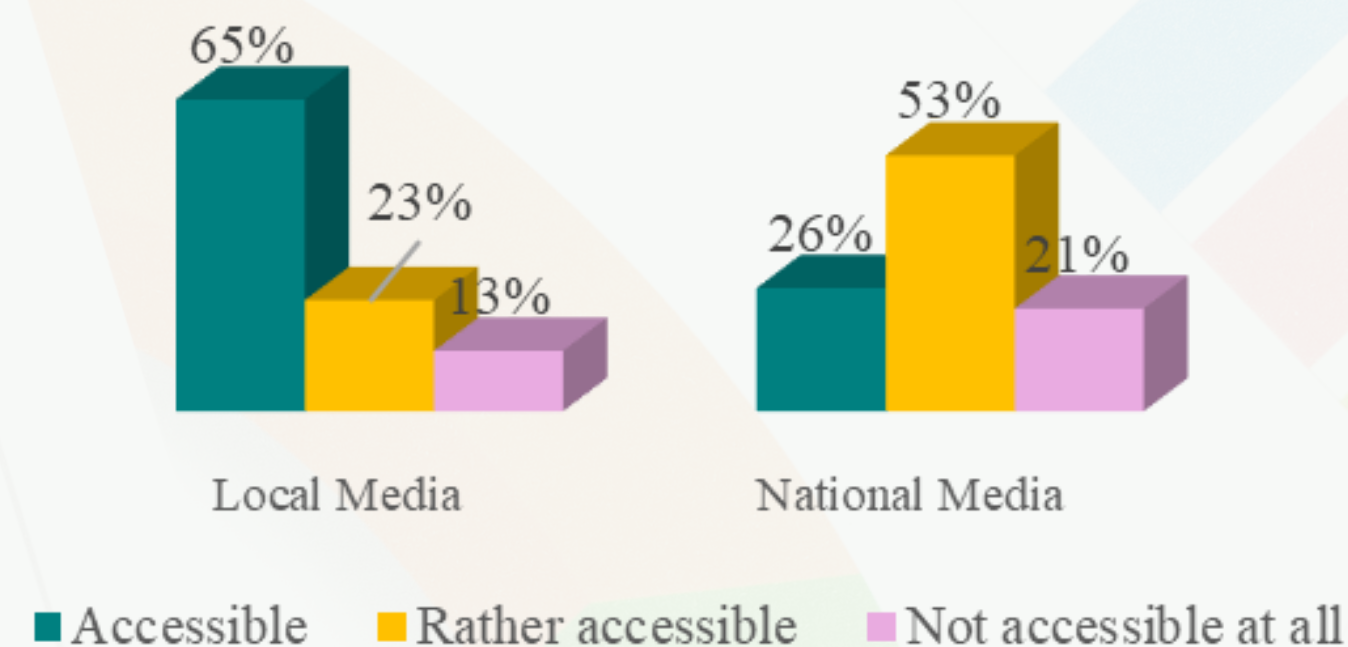
Analysing the gathered data, it results that CSOs that share and publish annual reports, as one of the transparency mechanisms, have a higher average number of employees, about 4 people, compared to the average of 1.5 people employed per CSOs that do not prepare annual reports. The financial support, another identified need, mainly consists of investment in information technology for the purpose of transparency, such as a website or other communication and publication platforms.

Local media continues to be more accessible to CSOs compared to national media, regardless of CSO location.

## CSOs access to the media

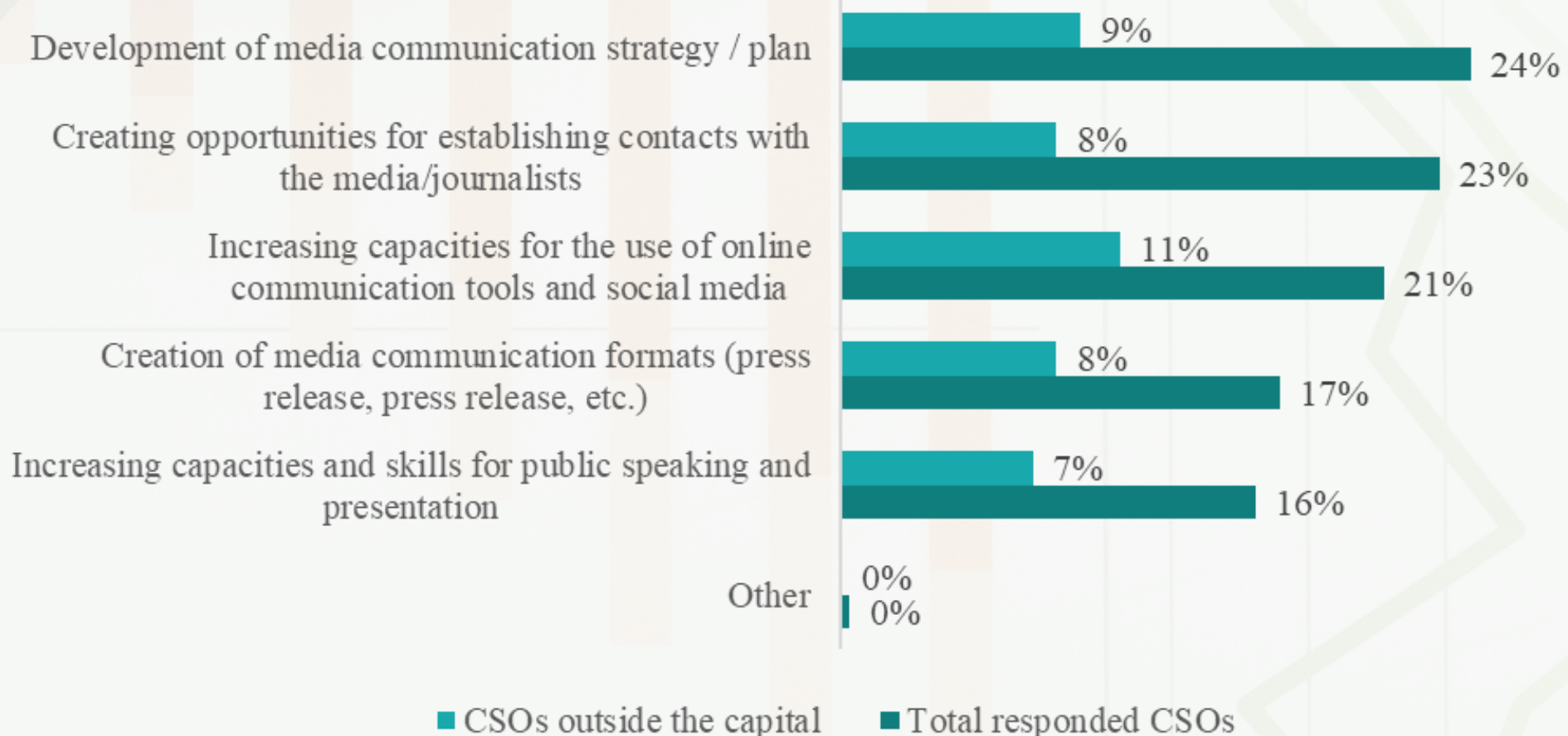


## Access of CSOs outside the capital to media

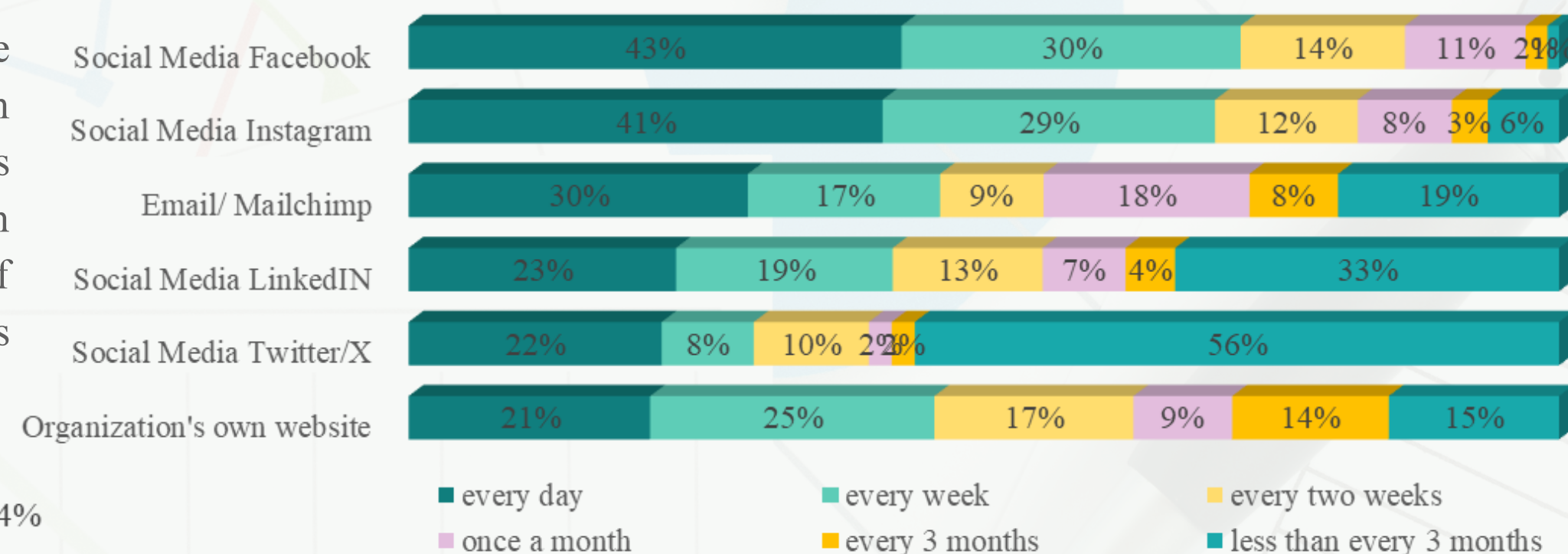


## CSOs needs for more effective cooperation with the media in general and by location\*

The development of the media communication strategy/plan continues to be the most reported need by CSOs for a more effective cooperation with the media, with 24% of cases, followed by the need to create opportunities for establishing contacts with the media/ journalists. This ranking of identified needs differs somewhat in relation to the location of CSOs, where the increase in capacities for the use of online communication tools and social media is listed as the highest need for CSOs outside the capital.



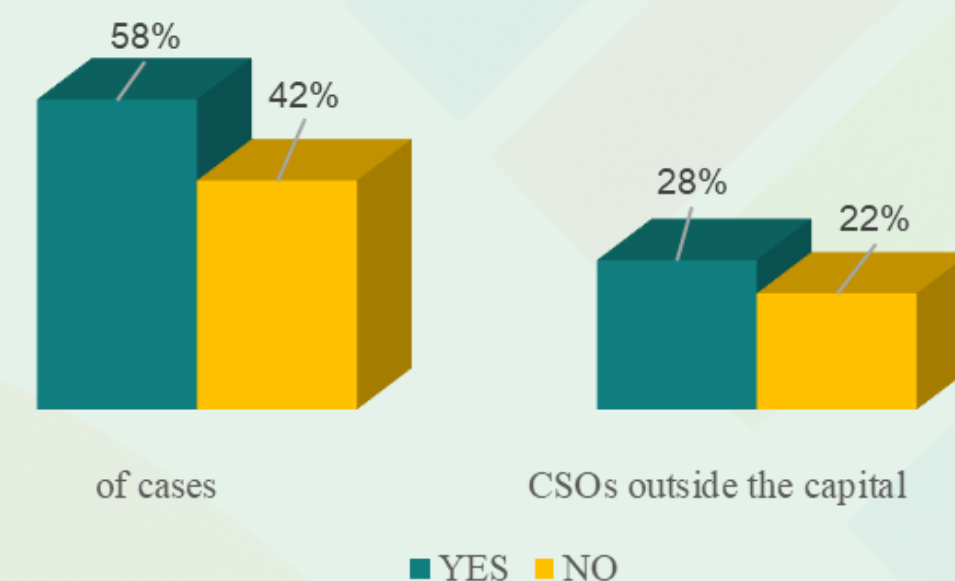
## The most used communication channels and update\*



Social media continues to remain among the most used communication channels and with the most frequent update frequency by CSOs even throughout 2023, where Facebook is again the most used channel. Compared to the findings of past reports, the use of the Mailchimp platform and LinkedIn, the latter as one of the social media with a professional profile, have undergone significant growth, being ranked among the most used communication channels by CSOs during 2023- it.

## CSOs cooperation with the private sector

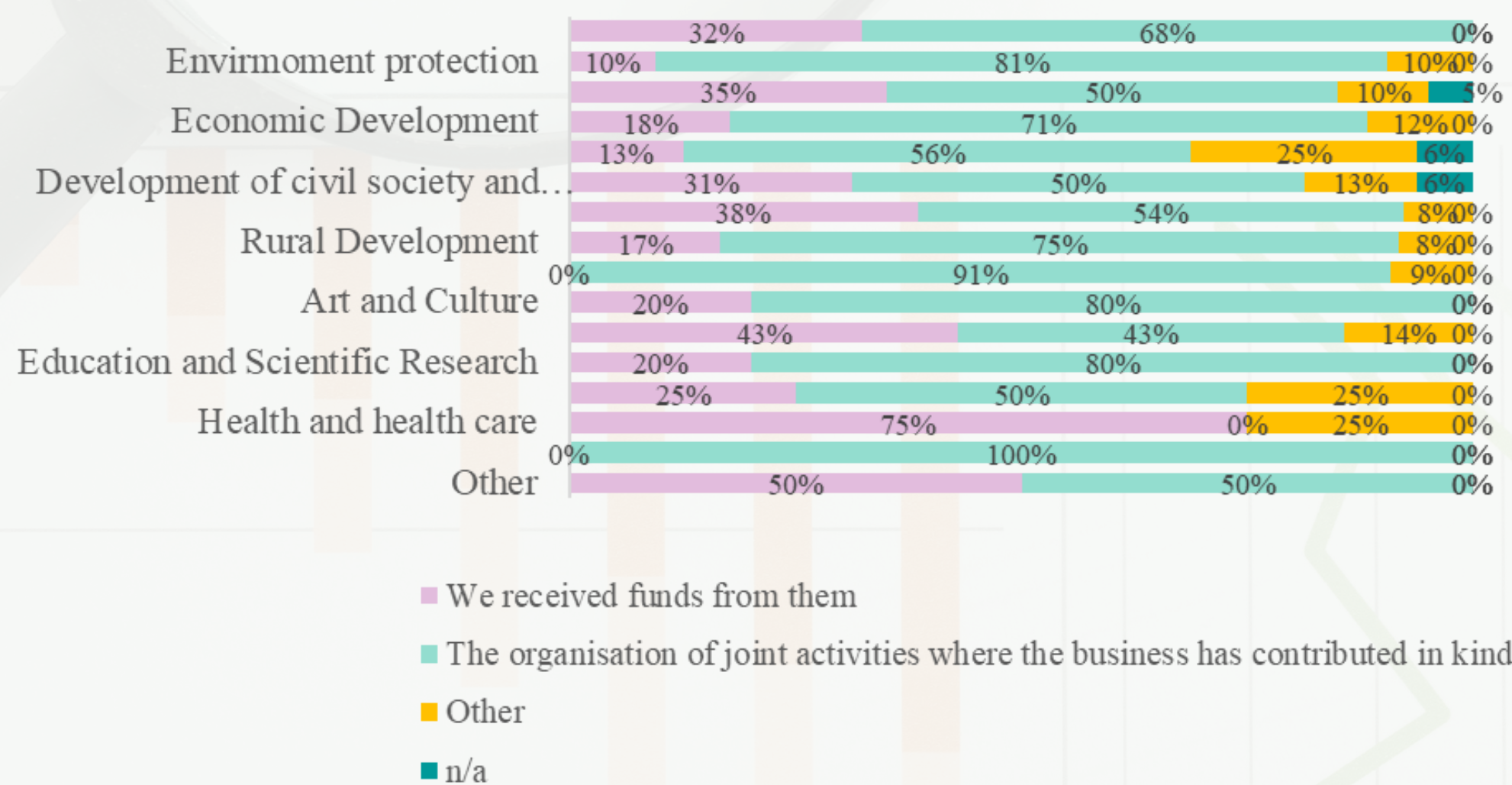
There is a significant increase of CSO-Business collaboration compared to previous reports, with 58% of CSOs stating to have had collaborations with the private sector. However, this cooperation is lower for the CSOs placed outside the capital with 28% of cooperation cases. The cooperation is geographically widespread, including big cities such as Tirana, Shkodra, Vlora, Durrësi, Elbasani, Korça, etc. and smaller ones such as Fushë-Arrëzi, Vau i Dejës, Bulqiza, Fushë Kruja, Përmeti, Puka, Pogradeci, Lezha, Orikumi.



## based on fields of activity\*

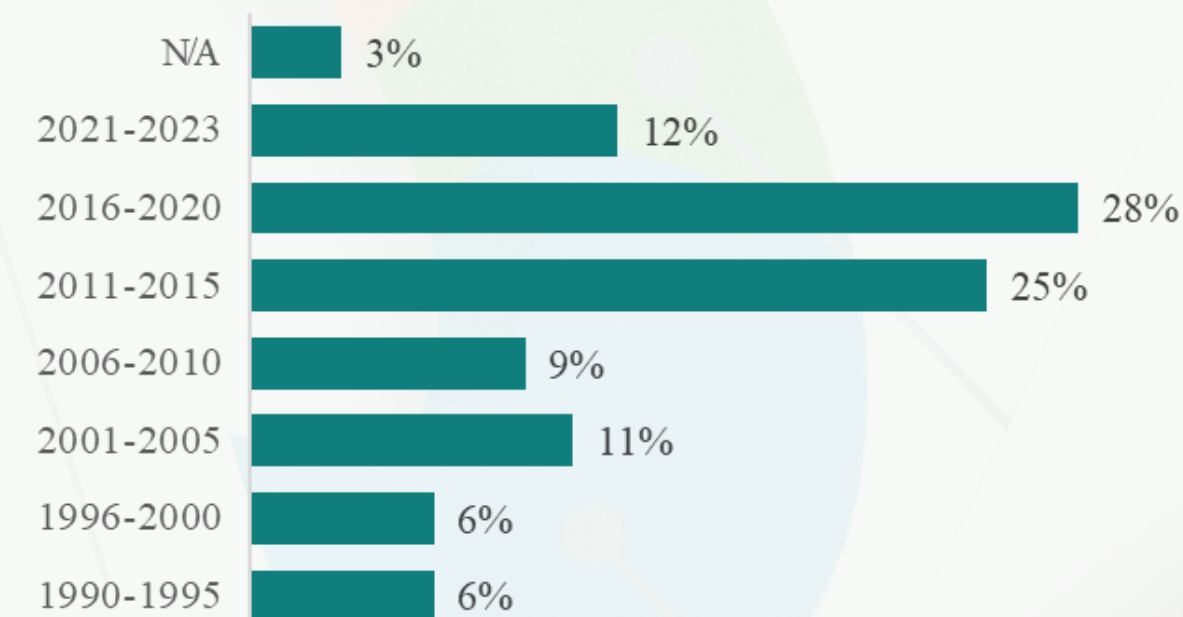
Cooperation with the private sector has mainly consisted in the organisation of joint activities, where business has contributed in kind in 66% of cases, while 25% of CSOs have reported support with funds from businesses. 9% of CSOs list other forms of cooperation, including employment of the target groups they work with, exchange of cross-sectoral experience, etc.

CSOs-Business cooperation extends to all fields of the sector's activity. CSOs working in the field of health and health care, turn out to have a higher level of cooperation through support with funds, while CSOs working in the field of democracy, good governance, rule of law, and environmental protection, turn out to have the highest cooperation, in the organisation of joint activities where the business has contributed in kind.



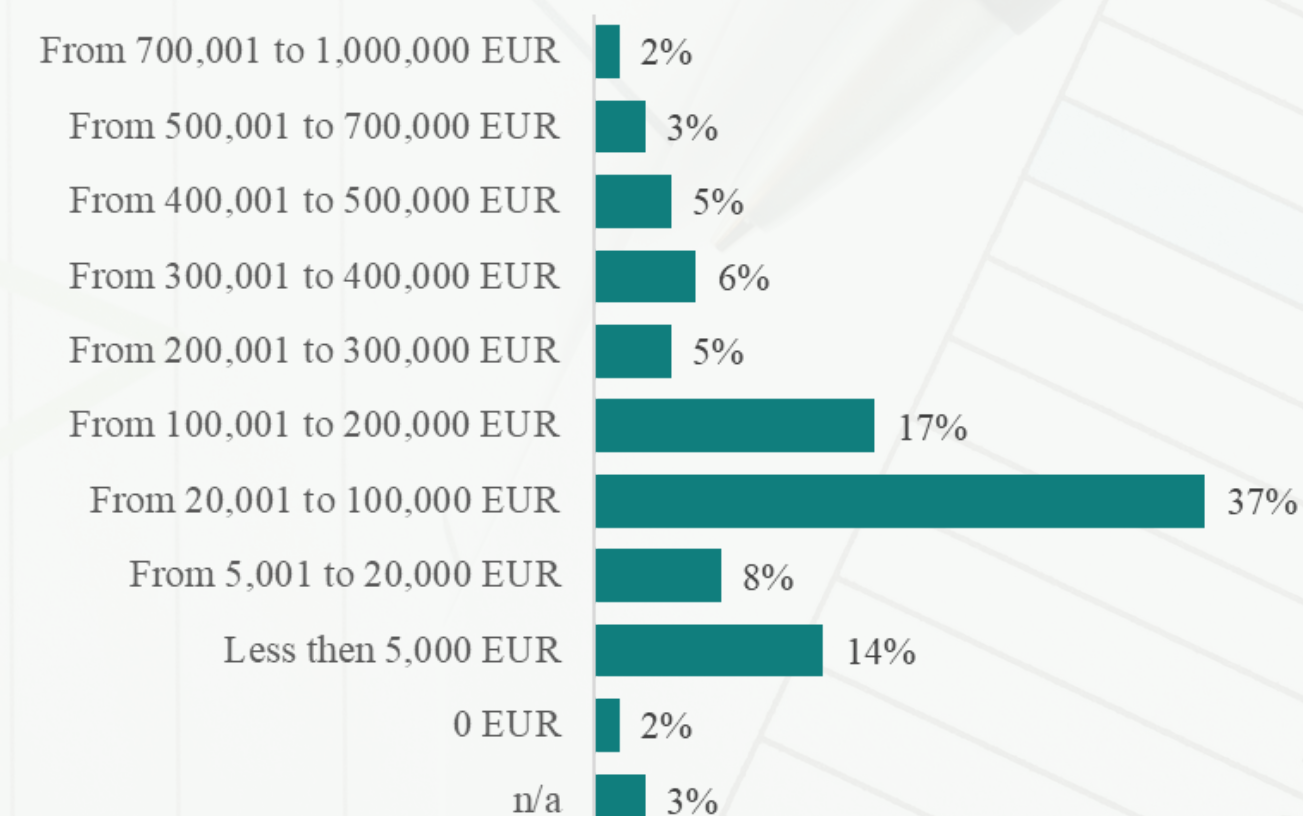
## based on the year of establishment\*

If we analyse the cooperation according to the year of establishment of CSOs, it extends to all time establishment periods, but the highest approach of cooperation seems to be in CSOs established in the last decade.



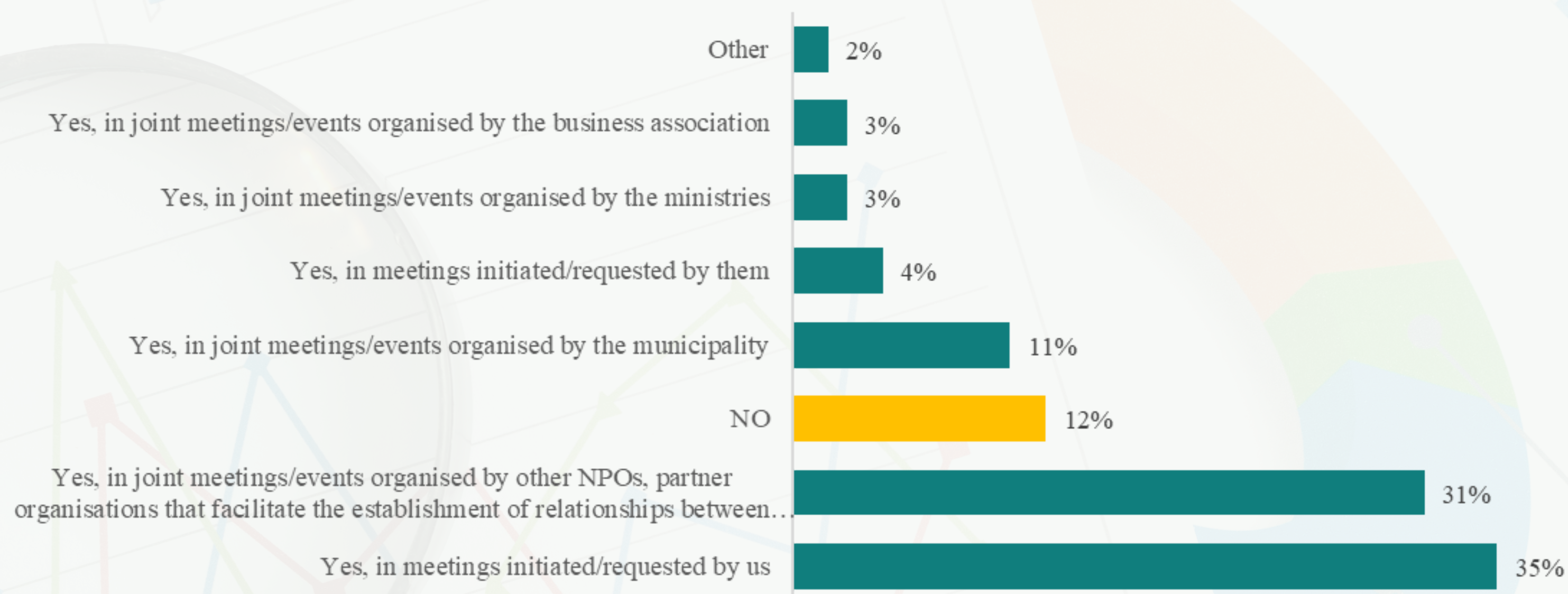
## based on CSOs budget\*

Meanwhile, cooperation according to the budget of CSOs is higher among those with budgets from 5,000 Eur to 100,000 Eur, which constitute over 60% of CSOs.



## Business acquaintance with CSOs and their activity\*

88% of CSOs state that businesses in their city/region are aware of the organizations' activities. Acknowledgement has primarily arisen through the initiatives of CSOs, from meetings initiated/requested by them, and from joint meetings/events organised by other NPOs or partner organisations that facilitate the establishment of relations between sectors. Private sector efforts to cooperate with CSOs remain low and in the same level compared to the findings of previous reports, with only 3% of cases of cooperation established in meetings organised by the businesses.



Asked what would be the main needs for capacity building in order to improve CSOs-Business cooperation, CSOs list:

- designing effective advocacy strategies within the private sector for more fundraising and support;
- skills and strategies for a more effective approach and communication with the private sector;
- effective techniques of presenting their project ideas (pitching);
- skills and expertise in developing sustainable models of cooperation;
- identifying common interests and negotiating agreements;
- adoption of CSOs' services with the specific needs of the private sector;
- increasing knowledge and understanding of social marketing strategies;
- basic knowledge about the private sector, where and how it operates;
- ability to create effective partnerships;
- adaptability to technological developments and innovation, etc.

Most of all, what is identified and constantly emphasised in the suggestions of CSOs for increasing cooperation, is the creation of more opportunities for networking through cross-sectoral activities, increasing the visibility and exposure of work and contribution of CSOs' to the private sector, as well as the need for identification and mapping of the private sector, its needs and the opportunities it has or can create for more cooperation with the non-profit sector.



# CONCLUSIONS

## Organisational governance, development, and management:

- Financial sustainability remains the most pressing issue for CSOs in terms of capacity building, regardless of their field of activity, location, or year of establishment. EU funding programs and the generation of funding and financial resources for CSOs are reported as the top two areas of interest for capacity building in regard to financial sustainability, for both CSOs located in the capital or outside of it.
- Tax legislation, fiscal obligations and financial reporting, as well as VAT reimbursement procedures, remain the issues with the highest priority for capacity building programs on the legal and fiscal framework, regardless of the organisation's location.
- In terms of capacity building in matters of organisational management, the monitoring and evaluation of programs/projects, results as the issue of the highest interest for CSOs for capacity building, followed by the drafting of strategic plans and the management of financial resources.

## CSOs participation in policy-making:

- The majority of CSOs state that they have been involved in advocacy campaigns throughout the year 2023. Mainly the involvement of CSOs results in the framework of initiatives jointly undertaken by a group of organisations, marking a significant increase compared to the situation in the past year, where the involvement of CSOs in advocacy through campaigns developed by the organisation itself, prevailed. Despite the participation, the effectiveness of the campaigns in which CSOs have participated is rated as *moderately effective*.
- The difficulty in networking with other organisations continues to be one of the main reasons for non-involvement by CSOs in advocacy campaigns, followed by the lack of financial capacity and human resources. These last two are also reported as the two main needs of CSOs for a more effective advocacy.
- Development of advocacy plans remains the main need for capacity building of CSOs in advocacy, where as the main issue in their implementation, still remains the need to increase capacity in the drafting and writing of a policy document (policy paper).
- 78% of CSOs state to be part of a networks/coalitions. Participation is mostly in networks working in national level, followed by European and regional ones, while the participation in local networks remains low. Despite high engagement of CSOs in networks/coalitions, the identification and finding of suitable partners for networking, remains the highest need for increasing the effectiveness of networks/ coalitions work.
- Even this year, the data shows that most CSOs were involved in consultation processes on policies and draft laws during 2022-2023. However, the need for a greater involvement of CSOs outside the capital, continues to be present, as 57% of them state that they have NOT been part of the consultation processes. As the main reason for not being involved in consultation processes, CSOs list the lack of human and financial resources, followed by the lack of information on such processes.

- Knowledge on the mechanisms and structures of government-civil society cooperation and of strategic documents and structures for collaboration between organisations and the government, remains as the most reported need for increasing of capacities, regardless of CSOs location.

## **Participation of CSOs in the European integration process:**

- About 72% of the CSOs participating in the assessment state that they have been involved in the process of the country's integration into the EU. Despite the involvement, the assessment of CSOs engagement is mostly classified as somewhat engaged. For CSOs outside the capital, engagement in such processes turns out to be lower compared to CSOs in the capital.
- The level of knowledge of CSOs on the country's EU integration process, regardless of their location, turns out to be average, indicating a decrease compared to last year.
- CSOs, regardless of their field of activity, see the role of civil society in the process of European integration, mostly in providing expertise according to their respective areas of competence, as well as in participating in inter-institutional groups and working tables chapters, thus changing compared to previous years, where CSOs saw more of their role in informing and raising public awareness on the integration process.
- Despite the information, the participation of CSOs in the platforms or structures of the European integration process appears very low, with only 11% of CSOs reporting that they are part of them, out of which 1% are CSOs outside the capital.
- Even this year report, the capacities of CSOs to participate in tables/working groups with representatives of the government and groups of interest during the negotiation process for EU integration, are reported by CSOs as low, with the willingness to further develop them.
- Among the most necessary knowledge and skills for CSOs to engage and be actively involved in the process of the country's integration into the EU, are listed: knowledge of the legal framework, structures and mechanisms of participation in this process; developing skills in monitoring the progress of reforms and developing of quality reports and recommendations to responsible state institutions; networking with local and foreign organisations working in the same field; exchange of experiences within such processes; increased capacities in the development of information and awareness campaigns with the target groups with which CSOs work and increased capacities for lobbying and advocacy to accelerate EU integration and a stronger influence on decision makers throughout the process.

## **Transparency with the public:**

- 58% of CSOs share and publish the annual report of the organisation's activities. This level of publication results to be the same as four years ago. This practice turns out to be lower among CSOs outside the capital.
- The organisation's own website, the use of email/Mailchimp and social media Facebook are the three most used channels for sharing and publishing the annual report.

- The assessment data show that CSOs have a more transparent approach to publishing the names of their donors and supporters, compared to publishing the funding sources.
- Increase of capacities in drafting and writing annual reports; use of technology and open platforms for publication and public participation and increased transparency, as well as the review of internal policies/procedures to ensure transparency, are some of the main needs of CSOs for improving the transparency towards the public. Another need highlighted by almost all CSOs part of the survey is the increase of human and financial resources in order to improve transparency. Financial support, an other identified need, mainly consists of investment in information technology such as website or other communication and publication platforms.

## **CSOs - Media cooperation**

- Local media continues to be more accessible to CSOs compared to national media, regardless of CSO location.
- Social media remains among the most used and frequently update communication channels even throughout 2023, with Facebook again as the most used channel. Compared to the findings of past reports, the use of the Mailchimp platform and LinkedIN have increased, being ranked among the most used communication channels by CSOs.
- The development of the media communication strategy/plan continues to be the most reported need by CSOs for a more effective cooperation with the media, followed by the need to create opportunities for establishing contacts with the media/journalists

## **CSOs - Privat Sector cooperation:**

- There is a significant increase of CSOs-Business collaboration compared to previous reports, with 58% of CSOs stating to have had collaborations with the private sector. However, this cooperation results lower for the CSOs placed outside the capital with 28% of cooperation cases.
- Cooperation has mainly consisted in the organisation of joint activities where business has contributed in kind in 66% of cases and supported with funds in 25% of cases. 9% of CSOs list other forms of cooperation, including employment of the target groups they work with, exchange of cross-sectoral experience, etc.
- CSOs-Business cooperation extends to all fields of the sector's activity and their period of establishment time, but the highest approach of cooperation results in the CSOs established in the last 10 years.
- The majority of CSOs state that businesses in their city/region are aware of the organisations' activities. Acknowledgement has primarily arisen through the initiatives of CSOs, from meetings initiated/requested by them and from joint meetings/events organised by other NPOs or partner organisations that facilitate the establishment of relations between sectors. Private sector efforts to cooperate with CSOs remain low and in the same level compared to the findings of previous reports.
- Despite the acknowledgment, CSOs think that there is still a need for more networking through cross-sectoral activities, increased visibility and exposure of the work and contribution of CSOs` to private sector, as well as a need for identification and mapping of the private sector, its needs and the opportunities it has or can create for more cooperation with the non-profit sector.

