Switzerland as a business location – time to make a difference!

Results of the 2025 study

It's time to keep moving

Marc Steinkat

CEO Switzerland of Commerzbank AG Switzerland

Economic policy debates are often characterized by challenges. A look at our current business perspective study shows that there is a spirit of optimism in Switzerland.

Three quarters of the companies surveyed see Switzerland as a business location in a positive light – a value that sets international standards. This assessment not only shows stability, but also entrepreneurial confidence and a sense of responsibility. Swiss companies are actively shaping their future – through innovative strength, international perspective and a clear attitude.

Where others are still hesitant, Swiss companies are already investing in artificial intelligence, process optimization and the qualification of their employees. The readiness for transformation is not only present here – it is being lived. The liberal regulatory framework in Switzerland supports this progress without restricting entrepreneurial freedom. This creates a fertile ground for courageous decisions and new ideas.

But precisely because the foundations are strong, we must not let up. The future demands dynamism, not complacency. Digitization, AI and internationalization –
their potential is waiting to be unleashed.

Many companies are already recognizing that new markets, new products, and new alliances will be the drivers of future growth.

As Commerzbank, we are your strategic partner.

The present study provides valuable impetus – not only to understand the current state of affairs, but also to take next steps together. It shows what Swiss companies think, how they act and how they see the future.

Now is the time for responsibility, innovation and bold decisions. It's time to make a difference!

Yours
Marc Steinkat
CEO of Commerzbank Switzerland

Objectives

- Sample size: 109 companies
- Company size:
  - From CHF 15 million annual turnover
    (representativeness for companies of this size class or larger)
- Participants:
  - First-level managers
- Format:
  - Telephone interviews
- Survey period:
  - 02/10/2025 to 02/28/2025
- Implementation:
  - Forsa, Society for Social Research and Statistical Analyses mbH

Overall study

Industry Distribution (Weighted)

1. Industry **31**
2. Trade **31**
3. Service **38**

Companies surveyed by annual turnover (quoted)

- Under CHF 100 million — 84 companies
- CHF 100 million and more — 25 companies

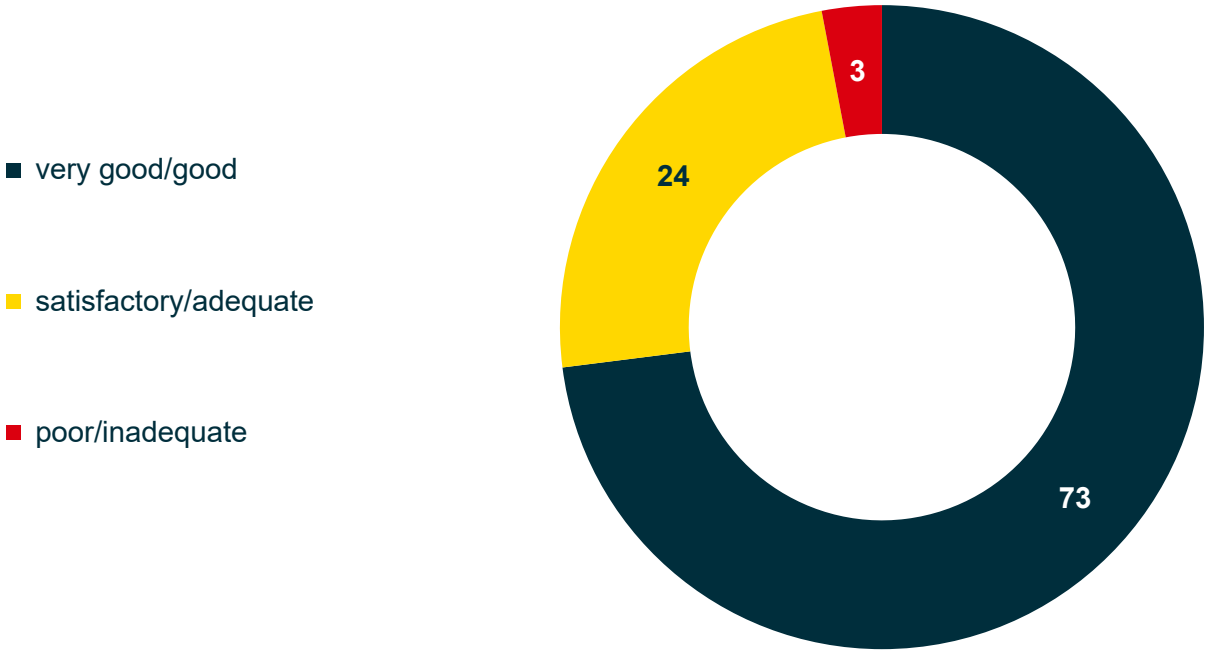
The size classes can also be evaluated individually. For statements on the overall sample, they were weighted representatively to the VAT statistics.

Chapter 1

How to judge Swiss companies Your business location?

Assessment of Switzerland as a business location

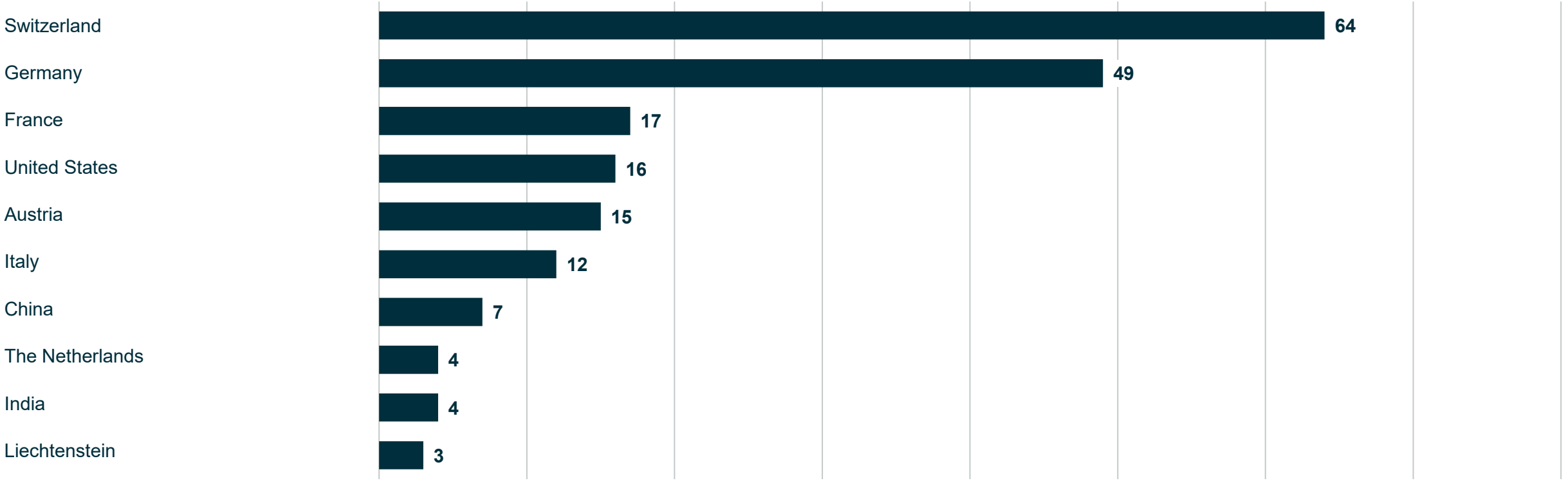
Nearly three quarters of Swiss companies make a positive assessment of the prospects of Switzerland as a business location. Few see cause for criticism.



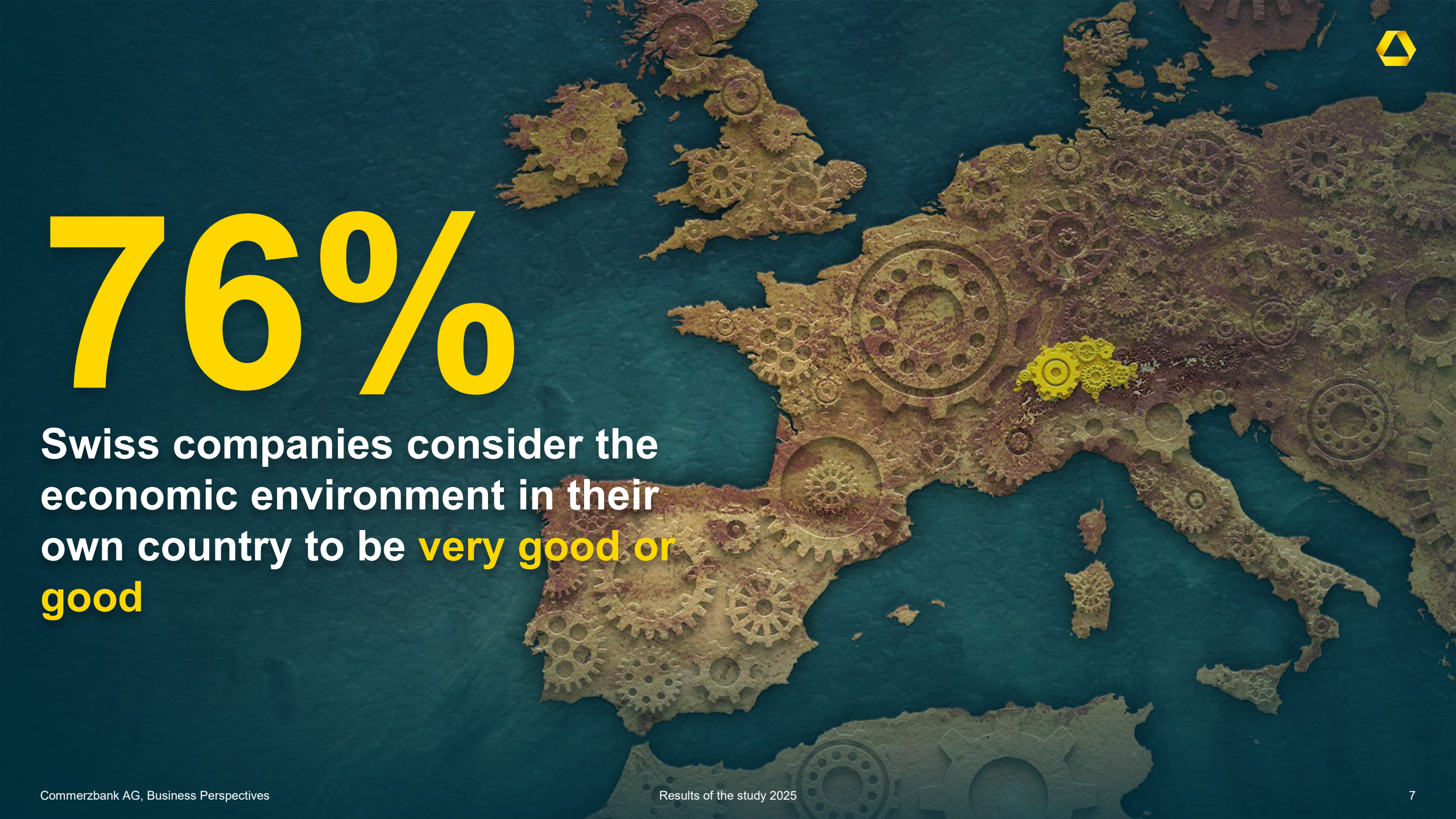
Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "How do you assess the current outlook for Switzerland as a business location?"

What are the most important sales markets?
These countries are in the focus of Switzerland

Swiss entrepreneurs name the internal market as the most important sales market. Just under half consider Germany to be the most important sales market. The remaining countries are below the 20 percent mark.



Figures in percentage | Nominations from 3 percent, multiple nominations possible | Basis: Interviewed in companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover
Question: "What are the three most important sales markets for your company? Please mention up to three countries."

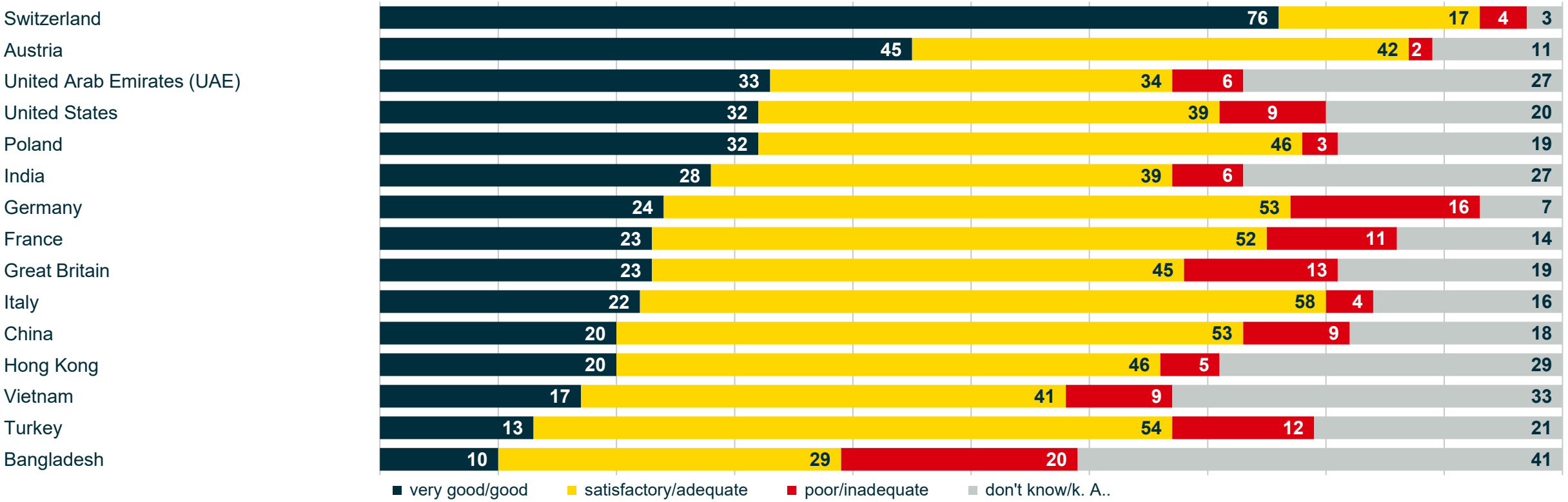


76%

Swiss companies consider the economic environment in their own country to be very good or good

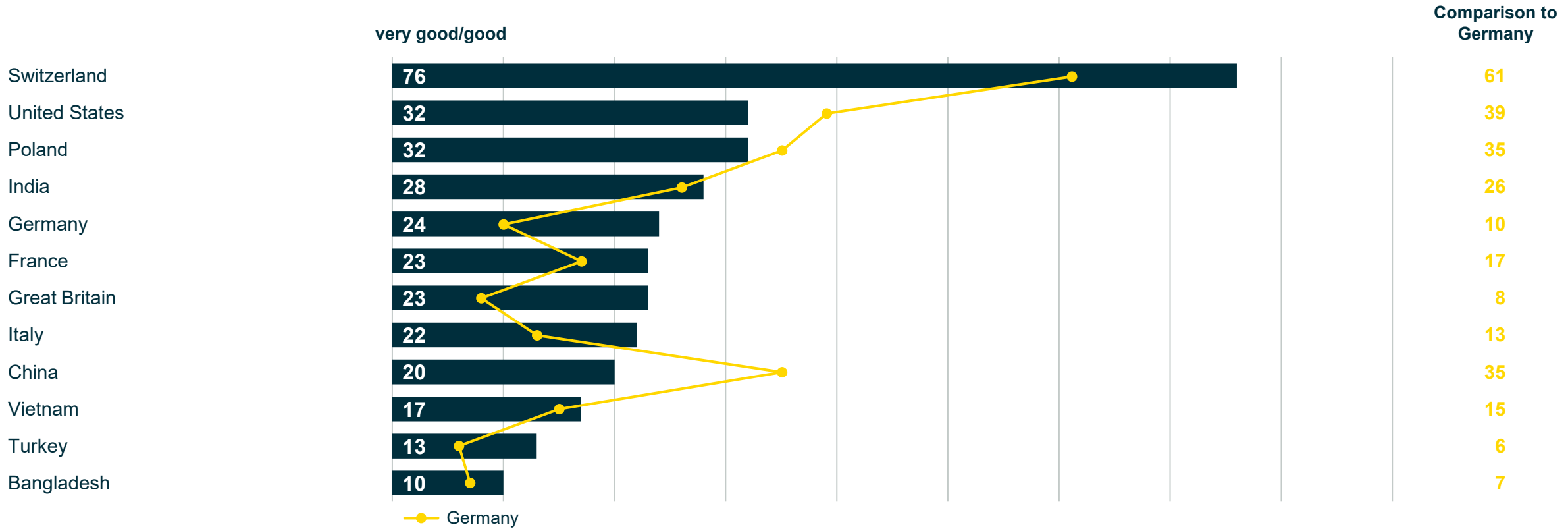
International comparison of Switzerland
Evaluation of the current economic policy framework

In the country ranking of the economic policy framework, Swiss companies place their own country at number 1 by far: A three-quarters majority gives top marks here. Germany takes 7th place.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "From the point of view of your company, how do you assess the current economic policy conditions in the following countries or regions? Please use the scale from 1 to 6."

Survey analysis reveals that Swiss companies view Germany's general conditions more positively than German companies do



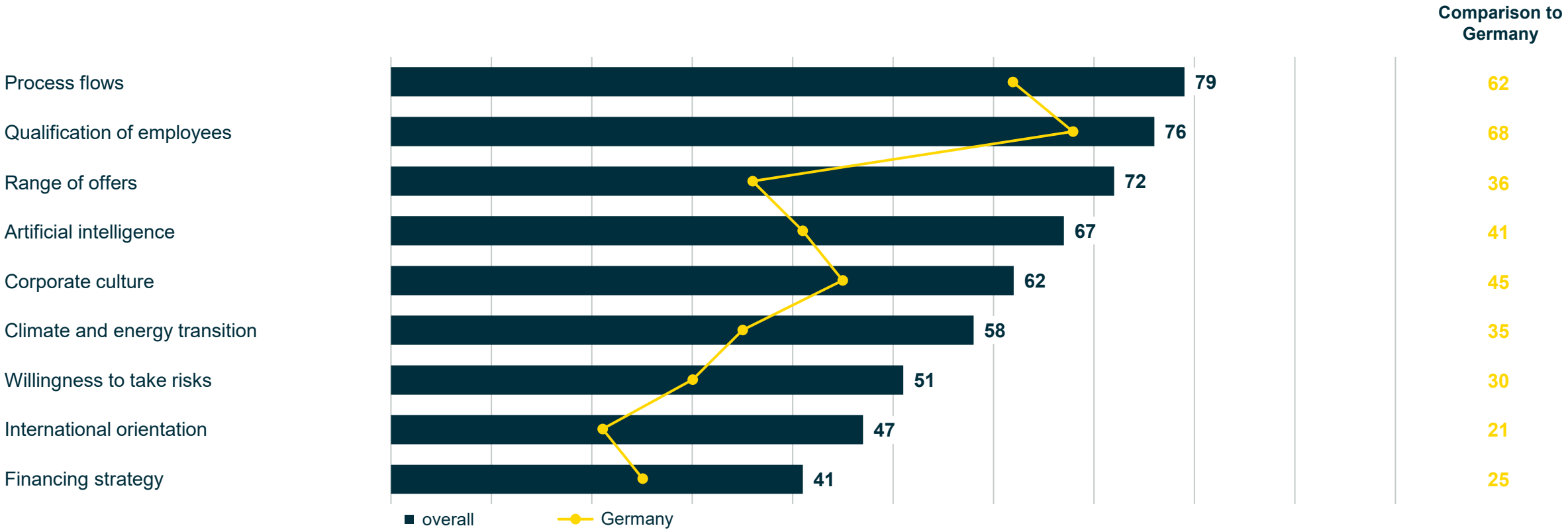
Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "From the point of view of your company, how do you assess the current economic policy conditions in the following countries or regions? Please use the scale from 1 to 6."

Chapter 2

Time to move!
What do Swiss companies do?

How do companies ensure success independently?

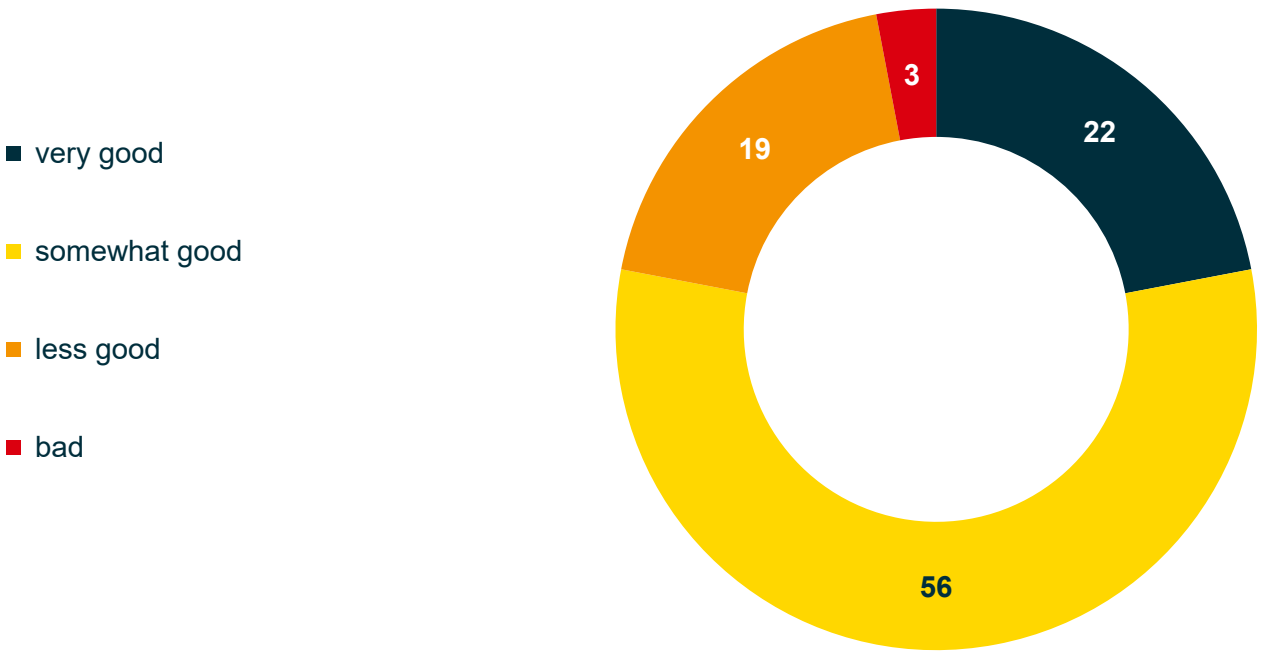
Swiss companies view process flows, employee qualifications and the range of services offered as a levers to maintain success. They place a higher emphasis on their own responsibility compared to German companies.



Data in percentage | Multiple entries possible, open question | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "Apart from the political framework conditions, companies can also assume responsibility for economic growth themselves. In which areas does your company need to focus on in order for you to continue to succeed tomorrow?"

Your own innovation management – top or flop?

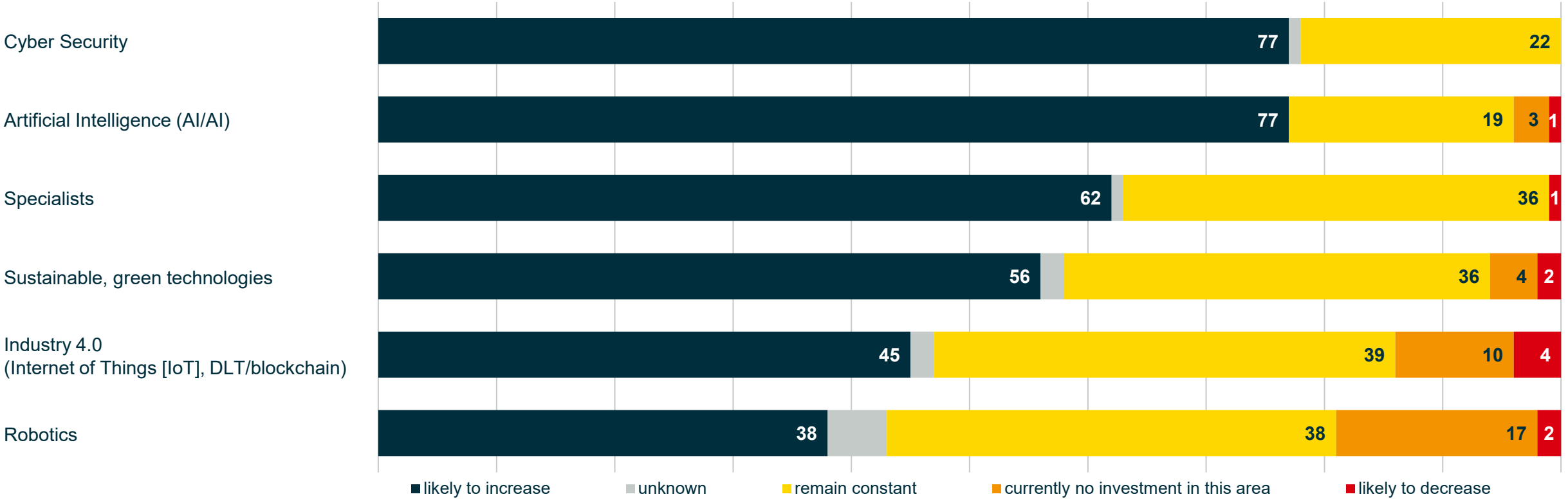
The majority of companies are (very) well positioned in terms of managing innovation. However, one-fifth of the respondents still identify shortcomings within their own organisations on this issue.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "Now on innovation and technology: How do you see your company positioned in terms of innovation management?"

In which areas will investment increase?

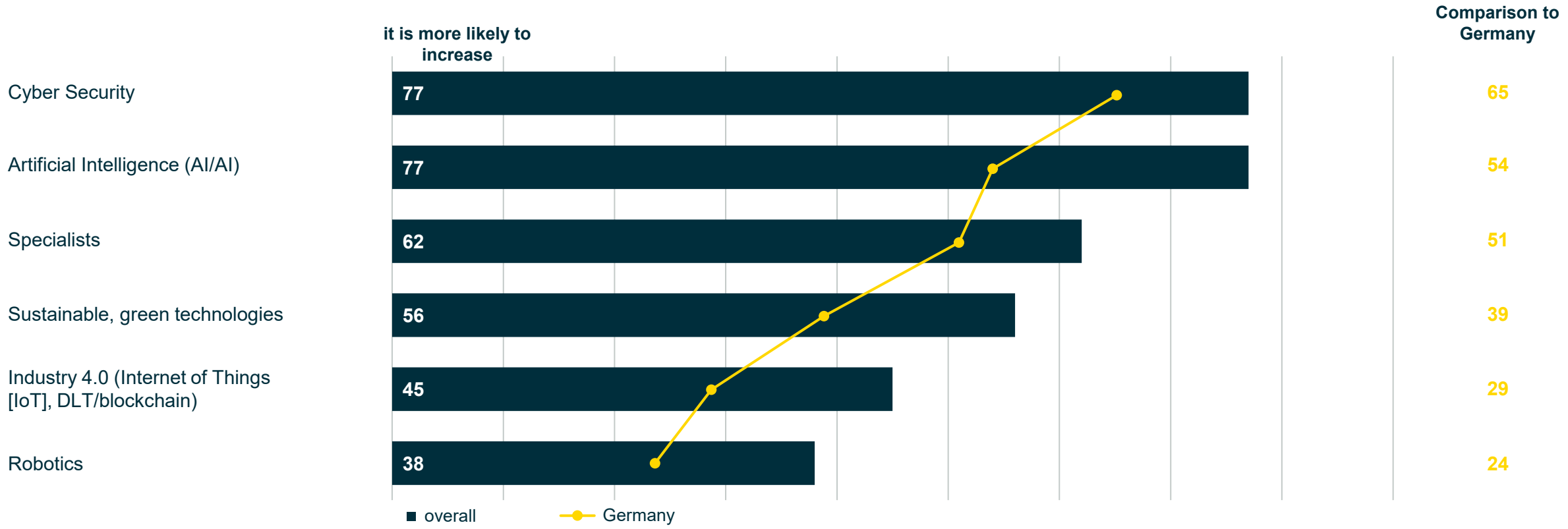
Cyber security, AI and specialists are the top areas where more investment will be made in the future.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "How will your investments develop in the areas?"

How will investments develop in comparison to Germany?

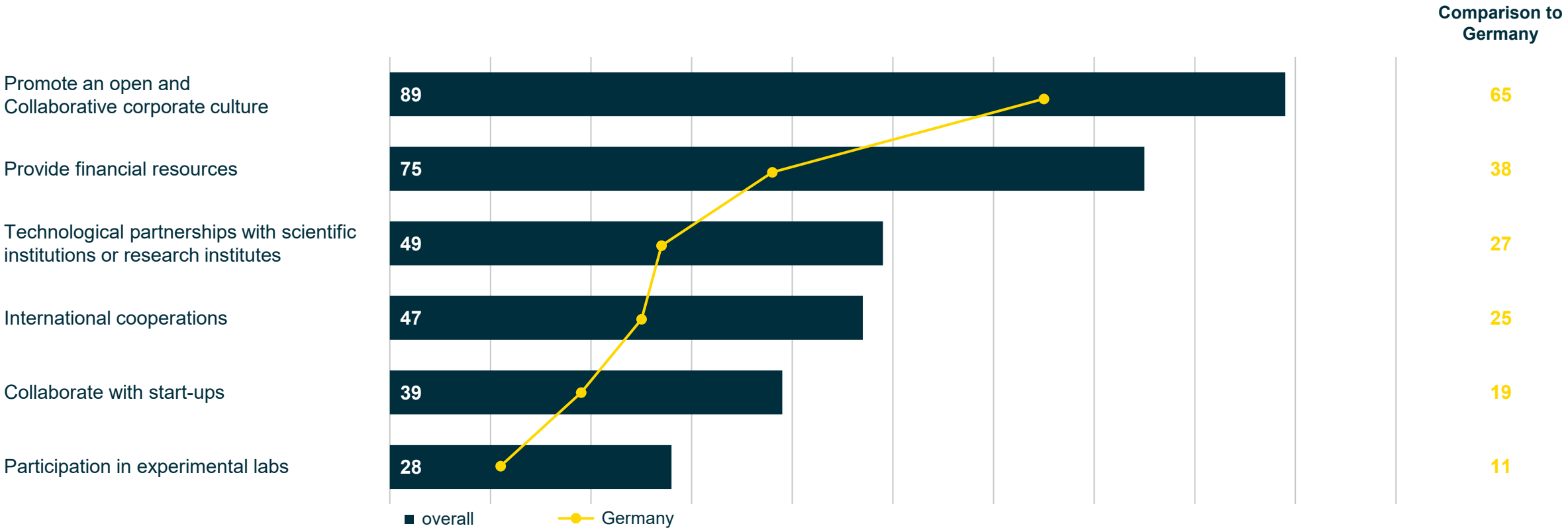
Swiss companies are allocating more funds than their German counterparts, with planned investment increases being higher across all areas, particularly in AI.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "How will your investments develop in the areas?"

How are innovations promoted today?

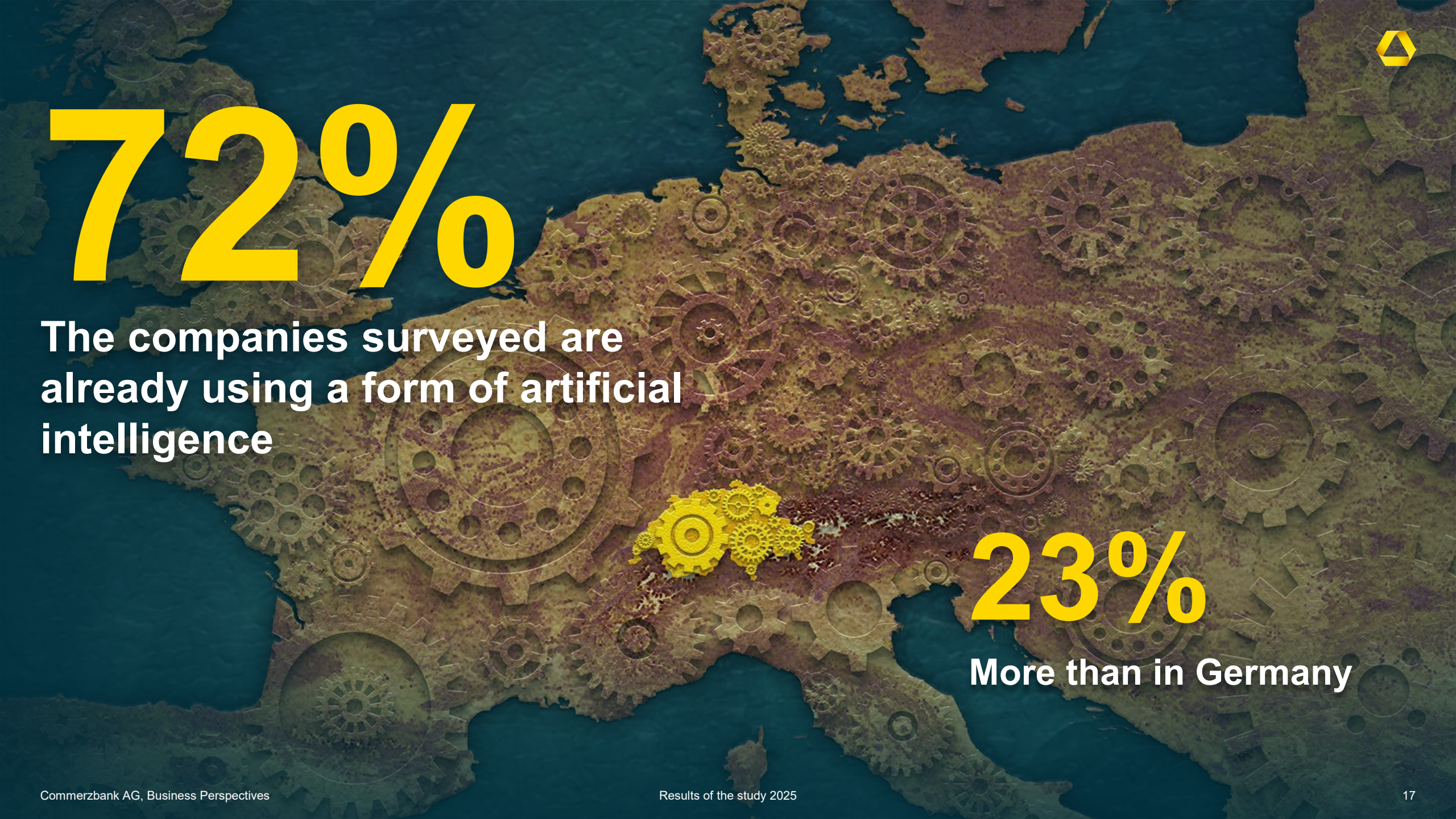
Companies foster innovation primarily through an open, collaborative corporate culture and by allocating financial resources - at a significantly greater extent than their German counterparts



Data in percentage | Multiple entries possible, open question | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "Once again about your company: What is your company already doing to encourage innovation?"

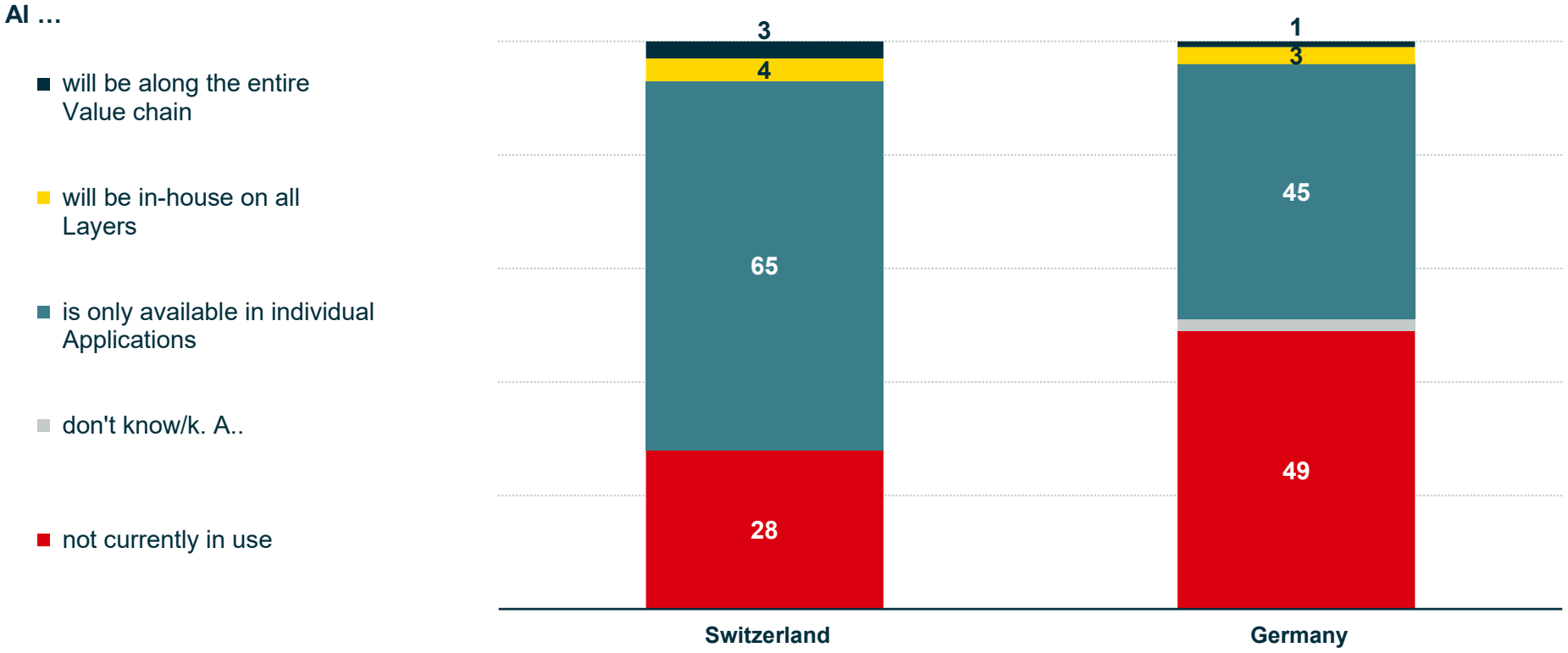
Chapter 3

Will AI become the new gear in the Swiss clockwork?


72%
The companies surveyed are already using a form of artificial intelligence
23%
More than in Germany

The use of artificial intelligence – from everywhere to not at all

The majority of Swiss companies surveyed already use AI – primarily, in specific application areas. This indicates that AI is used much more frequently than in German companies.



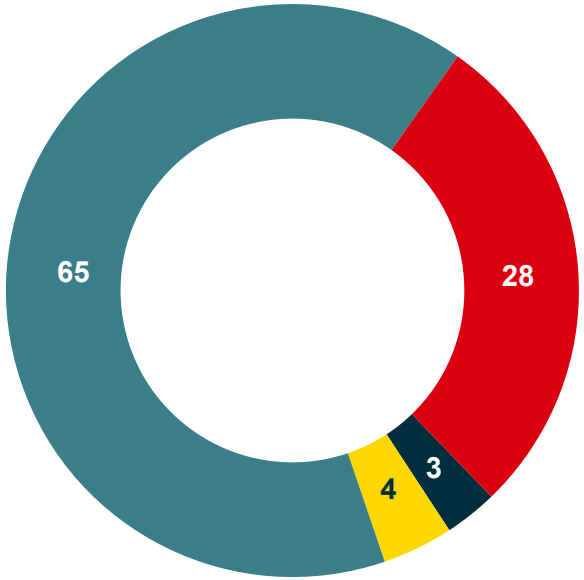
Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "Now specifically on artificial intelligence, how would you describe your company with regard to the use of AI?"

AI in Swiss companies – what are the plans?

Almost half of the companies that have not yet adopted AI plan to use it in the short to medium term. However, over a quarter do not anticipate using AI in the long term.

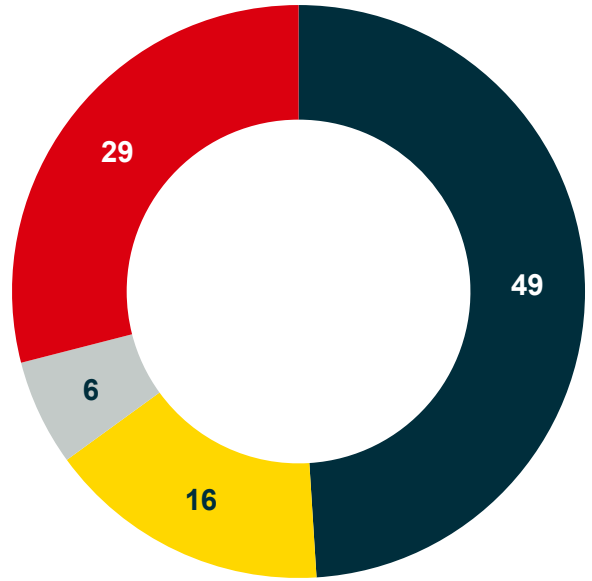
AI …

- used along the entire value chain
- used internally on all levels
- used only in specific areas
- currently not used



Are you planning to use AI */?**

- yes, short term or medium term, within the next 1 to 3 years
- yes, long term, within the next 4 to 5 years
- unknown/n.a.
- currently not planned

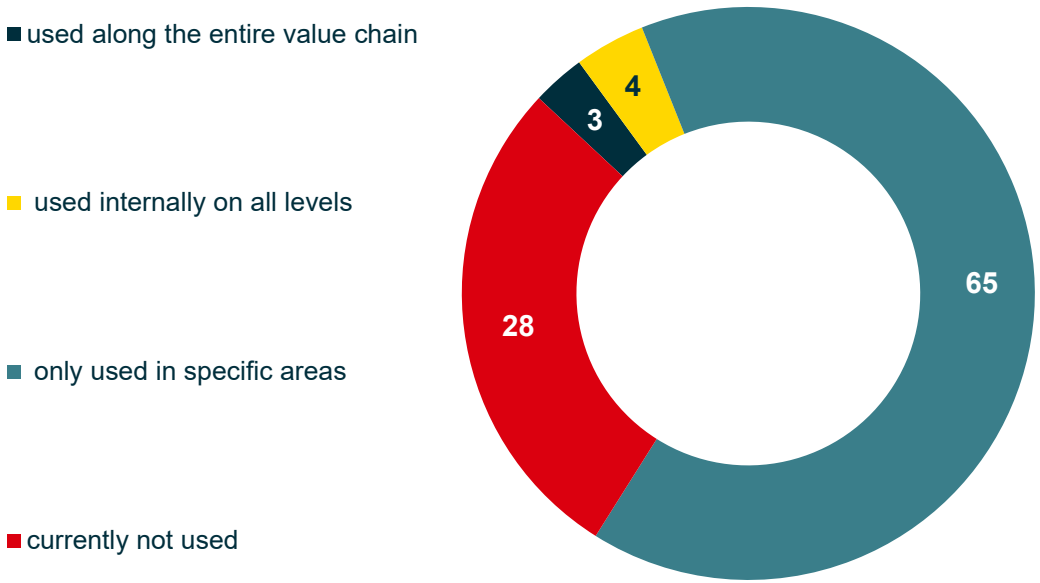


Figures in percentage | Basis: Surveyed in companies from CHF 15 million Annual turnover I * Basis: Surveyed companies that do not currently use AI I ** Low basis
Question: "Now specifically on artificial intelligence, how would you describe your company with regard to the use of AI?"
Question: "Are you planning to use AI?"

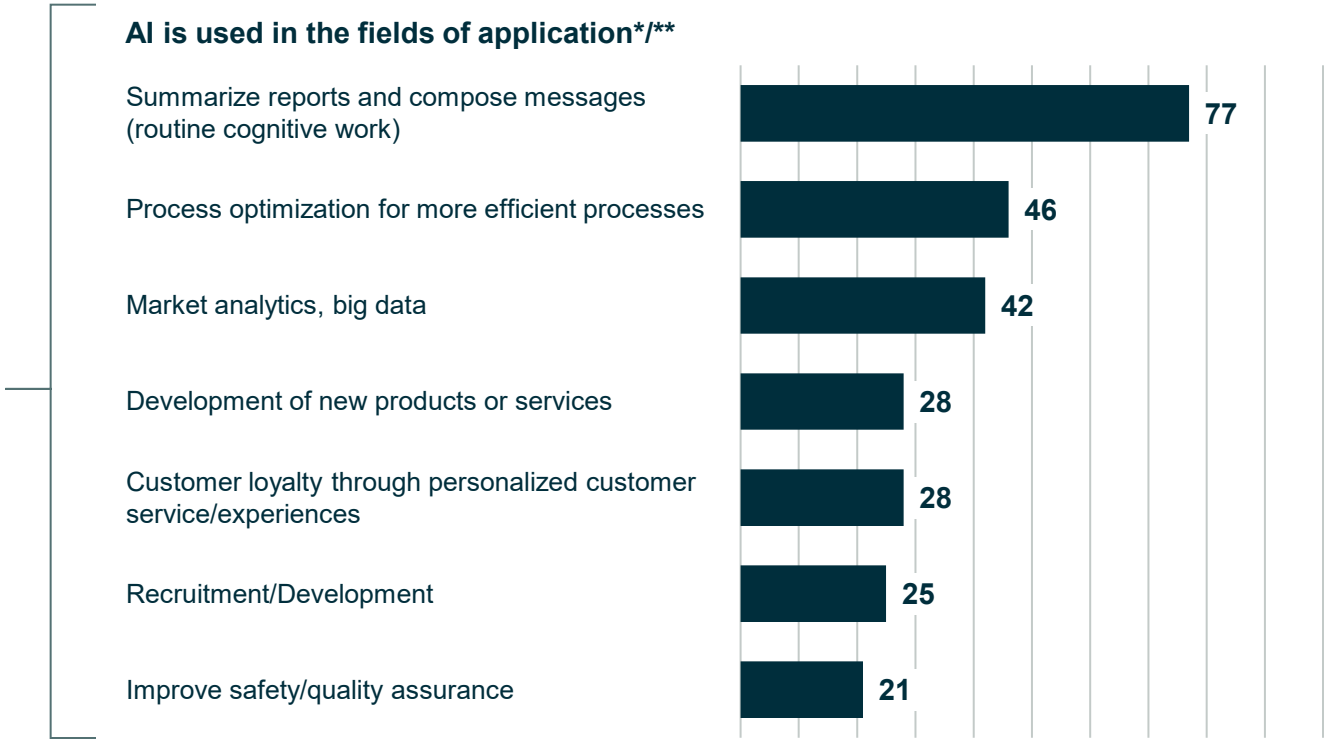
Where is AI used?

Companies that already use AI primarily leverage it for routine cognitive tasks and – most notably– for process optimization. Addtionally, 42 percent already use AI for market analysis.

AI …



AI is used in the fields of application*/**



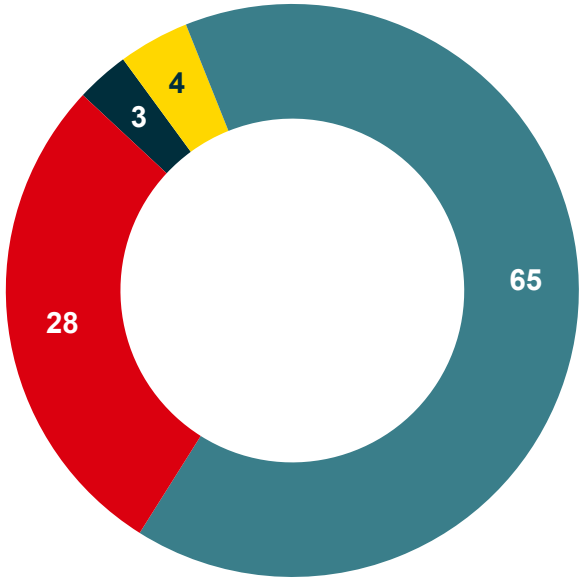
Figures in percentage | Basis: Surveyed in companies from CHF 15 million Annual turnover I * Basis: Surveyed companies that currently use AI I ** Low basis
Question: "Now specifically on artificial intelligence, how would you describe your company with regard to the use of AI?"
Question: "The use of AI can be of varying importance in different areas of the company. In which application areas is AI already used in your company? What about investing in...?"

Where is AI used?

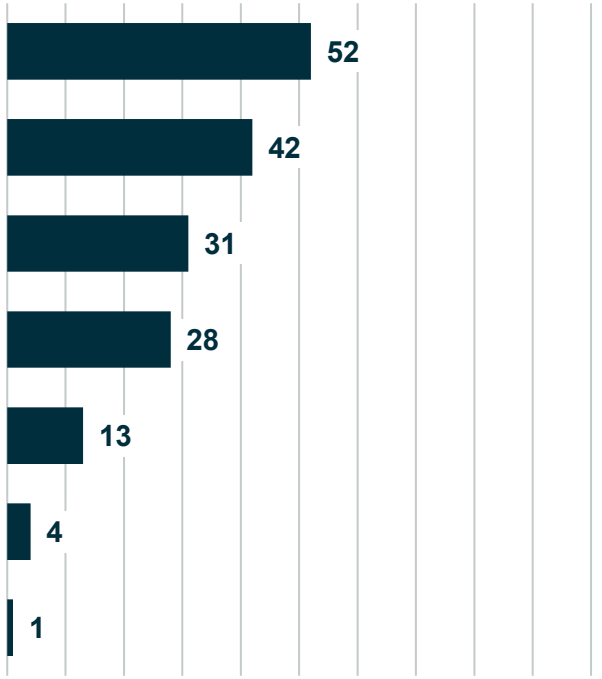
Companies that already utilize AI, say that the new technology brings cost savings and productivity gains.

AI ...

- used along the entire value chain
- used internally on all levels
- used only in specific areas
- currently not used



AI was helpful for ...*/**



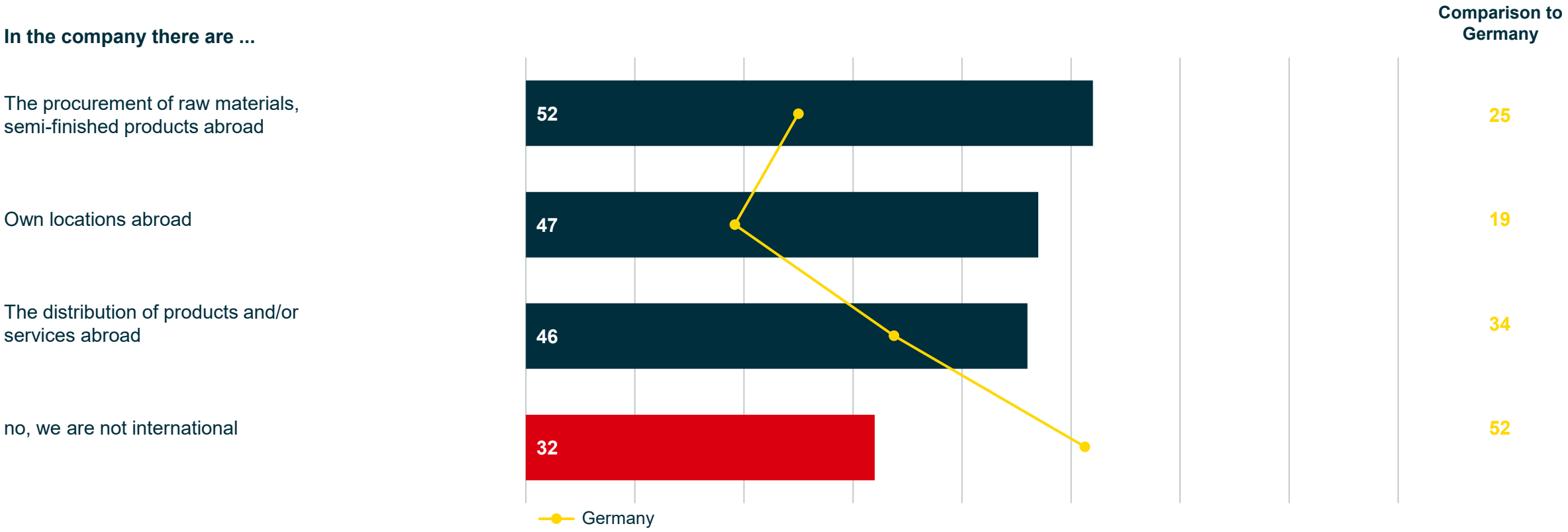
Figures in percentage | Basis: Surveyed in companies from CHF 15 million Annual turnover I * Basis: Surveyed companies that currently use AI I ** Low basis
Question: "Now specifically on artificial intelligence, how would you describe your company with regard to the use of AI?"
Question: "How or in what form has AI been helpful to your business? Was it helpful for ...?"

Chapter 4

Is internationality the key to success?

How international are Swiss companies?

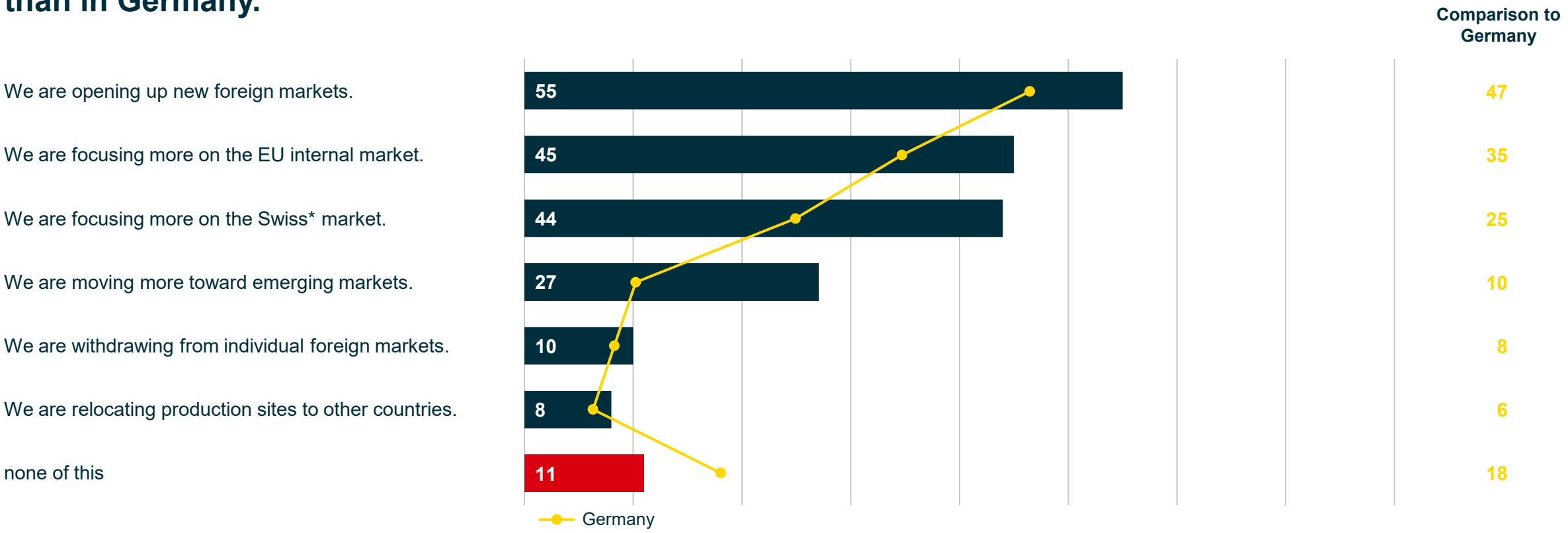
Two thirds of Swiss companies have an international presence – significantly more than their German counterparts. Half source raw materials or semi-finished products from abroad, and nearly as many have a location there or sell products or services.



Data in percentage | Multiple entries possible, open question | Basis: Interviewed in Swiss companies from 15 million CHF annual turnover, in German companies from 2 million € annual turnover
Question: "Is your company internationally positioned? What applies to your company? Is there …?"

How are the foreign activities to be classified?

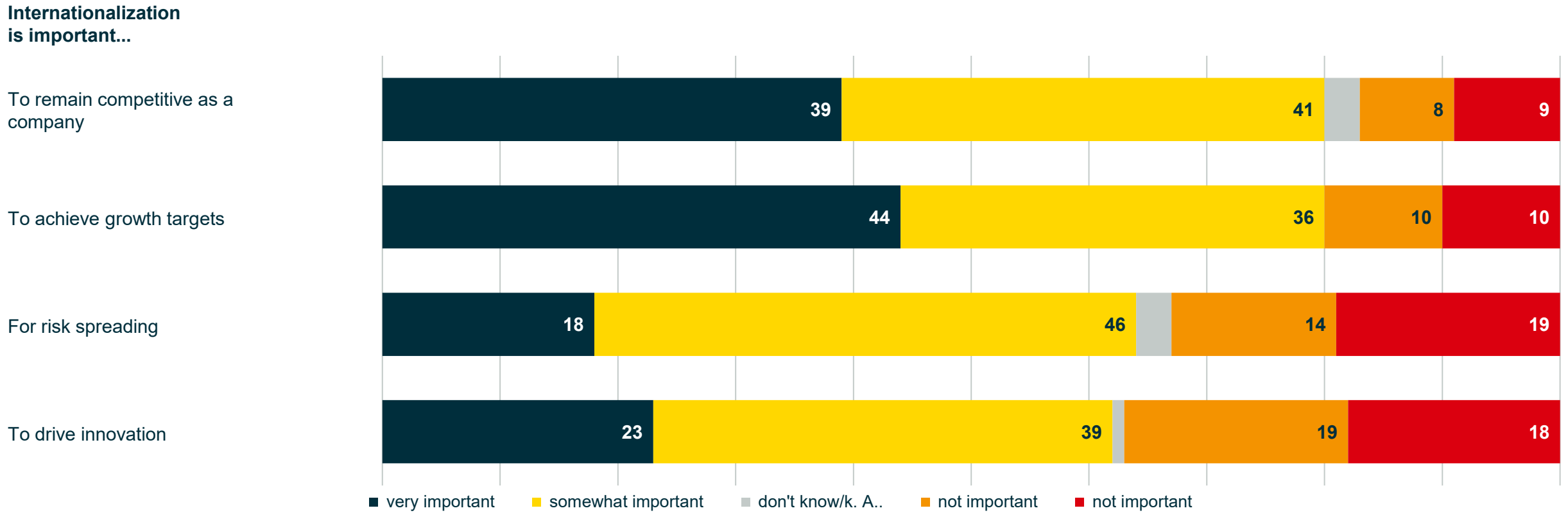
Currently, Swiss companies with an international presence are opening up new sales markets. A slightly smaller share currently focuses more on the EU internal market or the Swiss market. Overall, the interest in activities abroad is consistently greater than in Germany.



* Query in Germany: We are focusing more on the German market.
Data in percentage | Multiple entries possible, open question | Basis: In each case, respondents in internationalized companies from CHF 15 million in Switzerland or from €2 million in annual turnover in Germany
Question: "What is currently the case with your international activities?"

Therefore, foreign activities are considered important*

For a clear majority of internationalized companies, activities abroad are particularly important in order to remain competitive and achieve growth targets.



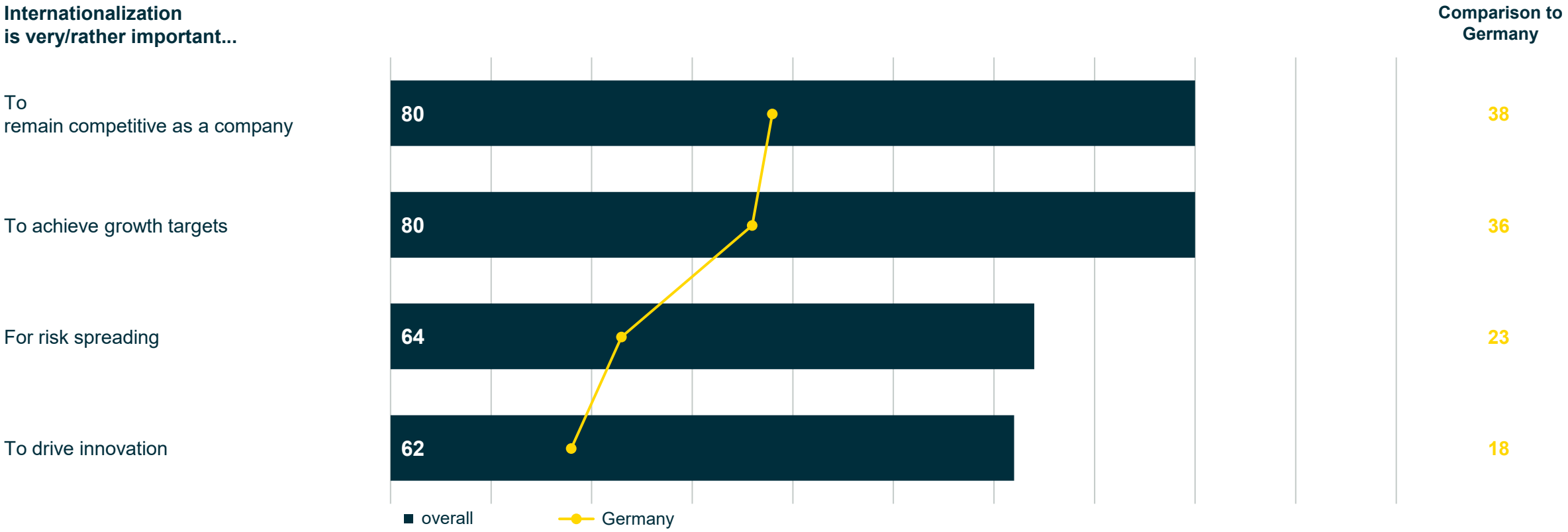
*Low base
Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "How important is internationalization for your company?"

80%

Swiss companies consider internationalization to be very/rather important in order to remain competitive as a company

International activities are so important compared to Germany*

Internationalization is more important for Swiss companies than for German companies. Competitiveness and growth targets are crucial.



Figures in percentage | Basis: In each case interviewed in internationalized companies from CHF 15 million in Switzerland or from € 2 million annual turnover in Germany I *low basis
Question: "How important is internationalization for your company?"

Chapter 5

How do companies assess the Swiss banking landscape? And do the products still meet the expectations of entrepreneurs?

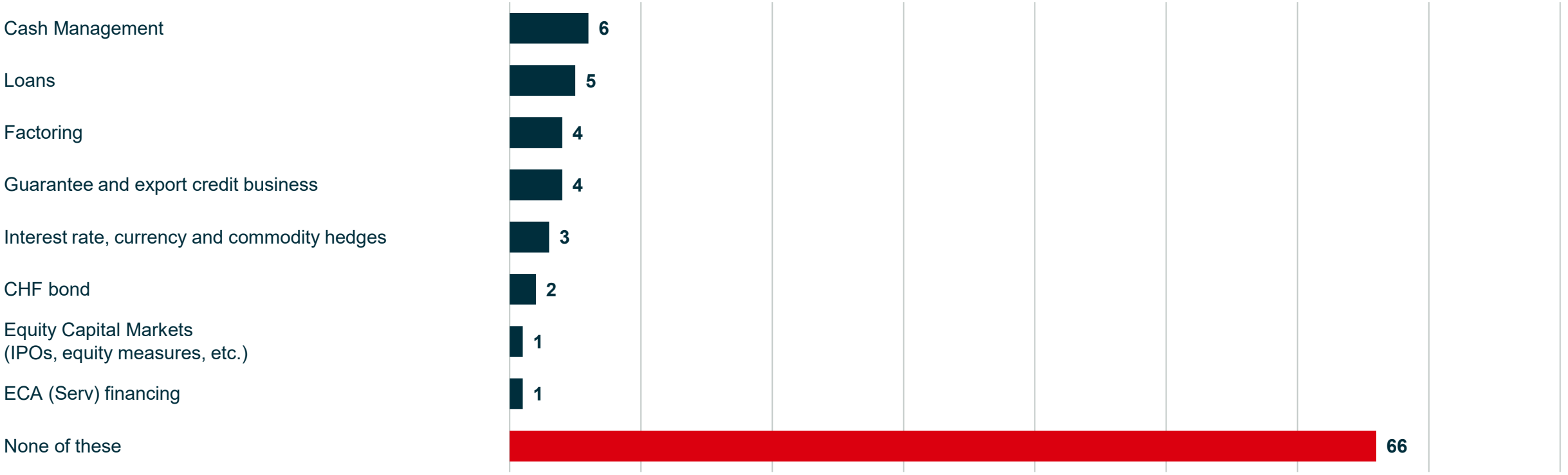
What impact does the discontinuation of Credit Suisse have?

The majority of Swiss companies are of the opinion that banking conditions have not changed due to the closure of Credit Suisse. Only a small proportion see improvements or worsening of conditions.

Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "What influence does the discontinuation of Credit Suisse have on the terms and conditions offered by the banks of your company? The conditions have changed ..."

Does the discontinuation of Credit Suisse affect product offerings?

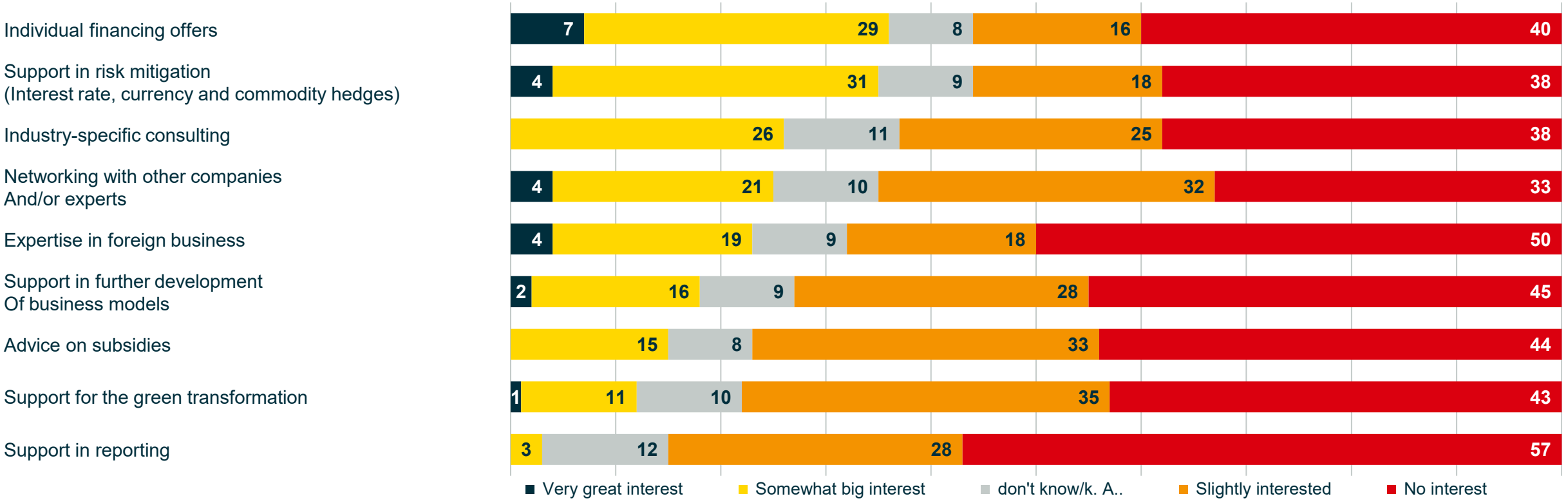
In fact, a two-thirds majority of Swiss companies do not feel any impact on any of the specified product offerings.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "Do you feel that the discontinuation of Credit Suisse has an impact on the following products?"

What services/offers are companies interested in?

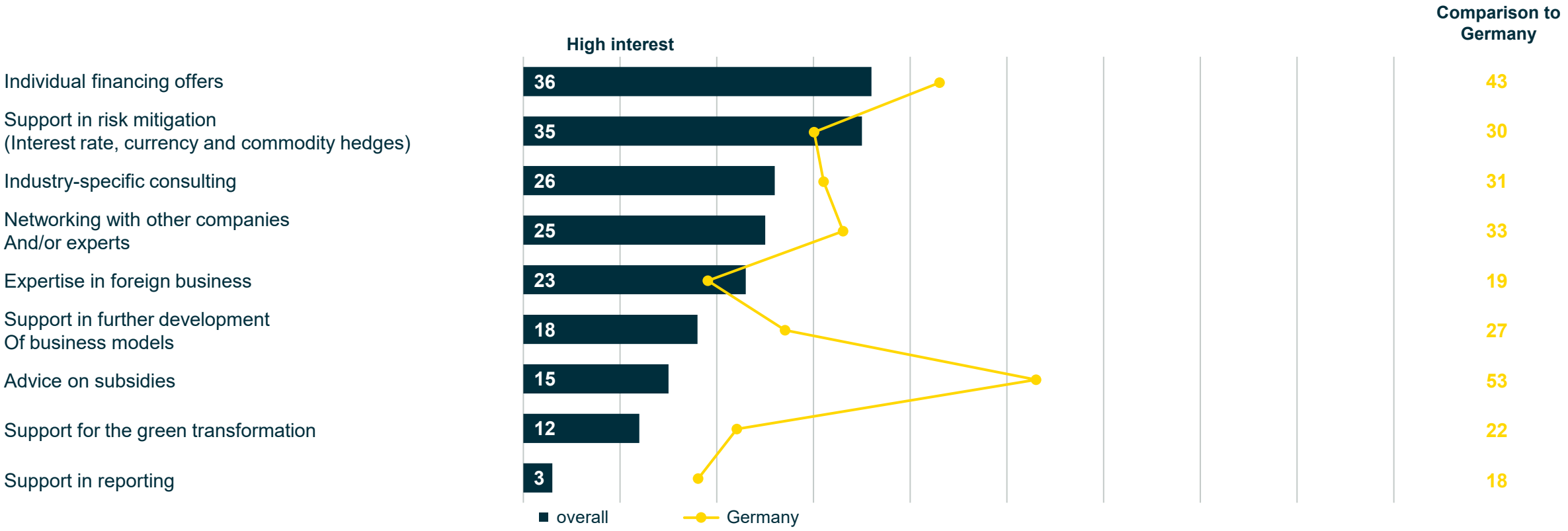
One third of the companies express significant interest in tailored financing and support options to minimise risks. Additionally, a quarter of them seek industry-specific guidance, networking opportunities, and expertise in conducting international business.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "What is your interest in the following services or offers of a bank?"

How do interest in bank's offering compare to Germany?

Swiss companies show significantly less interest in offering advice on subsidies compared to German companies. However, they demonstrate a comparatively higher interest in expertise for international business and support for minimising risk.



Figures in percentage | Basis: Interviewed in companies with annual turnover of CHF 15 million or more
Question: "What is your interest in the following services or offers of a bank?"

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