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COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGIES LAB



1st Census

Game Incubation & Acceleration

How programs are configured, what they support, how they sustain themselves—and where the system remains fragile.

Dr. Pedro Santoro Zambon

igda SIG incubation

2026

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Foreword

With games being played by over 3.5 billion people, the economic, cultural, and social value of the game industry is increasingly growing worldwide. To create outstanding games, cultivating creative, digital, and global talent is essential. In this context, game incubation and acceleration programs play a crucial role by providing practical training in game development and business to individuals who have studied game development at educational institutions, those leaving major game companies to establish their own studios, and those entering the game industry from other sectors.

Particularly in the recent game industry, where structural layoffs by traditional major corporations are ongoing, game incubation programs that nurture new game startups are attracting worldwide attention as the cultivators of the next seeds of innovation. Our IGDA Incubation SIG, operating as a working group within the world's first international non-profit organization for the game industry, serves as an alliance of incubators, accelerators, and game developer community leaders aiming to establish incubators. Game incubation and acceleration programs exist in almost all EU countries. Furthermore, a large number of these programs also exist—and continue to increase—in regions such as the Middle East and Africa, Latin America, North America, Oceania, and Asia, which are important cooperative regions for Europe. However, while various attempts have been made to improve the quality of game incubation programs in each country and region, the global trends and conditions have remained unclear.

Dr. Pedro Santoro Zambon, who has elucidated the international realities and trends of game incubation and acceleration programs through this research, is undoubtedly the top expert in global game incubation research. We express our profound respect for his research and are proud that the IGDA Incubation SIG was able to cooperate in his study.

Sho Sato, the chair at IGDA Incubation SIG

佐藤 翔

Executive Summary

Game incubation and acceleration bridge the development of projects and studios with wider conditions to sustain game production. The first Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration depicts programs whose contribution centers on business capabilities, professional relationships and local talent development. The findings show that these programs helping game developers to build sustainable businesses are facing a funding challenge of their own: 76% of respondents to the management-challenges question identify securing program funding as a challenge. Meanwhile, the studios are facing a similar struggle, with 92% of managers identify project finance as a difficulty faced by participating teams. These findings highlight financial pressures on both game development teams and the organizations supporting them, resonating with the larger industry problem in sustaining their emerging companies.

Conducted through the IGDA Game Incubation Special Interest Group and coordinated at Utrecht University, the Census brings together 82 consolidated response profiles covering 45 countries in all continents. It documents an international support network that develops business skills, connects teams with industry and nurtures local talent, while facing questions about its own continuity and resources.

Funding is the most widely reported challenge for teams, but fewer than half of responding programs provide it directly.

Managers identify project finance in 57 of 62 answers (92%), followed by reaching an audience in 50 (81%). Yet direct funding or grants are available in only 26 of 65 responses (40%). Networking and mentoring are almost universal, reported in 94% and 92% of those answers, respectively.

Where financial support is available, it is often modest: 12 of the 14 comparable per team amounts are below USD 50,000. These contributions may help teams reach a prototype, vertical slice or another production milestone. Their adequacy depends on project scope and costs, which the Census did not measure. Within this sample, support is more commonly oriented towards business preparation and industry connections than direct finance. This suggests a role in helping teams prepare for subsequent financing opportunities, although the Census does not establish whether that support enables them to close their funding gaps.

Public support is central to a field where most responding programs take no financial return from participants.

Public grants feature in 46 of 66 funding-source responses (70%), while 40 of 66 (61%) report no financial counterpart taken from participants. Many initiatives therefore operate without relying on participant fees, equity or revenue sharing.

Their missions also extend beyond individual commercial outcomes. Helping teams develop and launch games is the most widely selected objective, while nurturing local talent and community receives the most first-place rankings as the most important program goal. This combination makes sustained institutional support crucial to both studio development and the wider game ecosystem. These findings highlight the importance of examining how sustained public and institutional support shapes access to game development opportunities.

Financial uncertainty and demanding operations put pressure on the organizations supporting game developers.

Among 57 active-program records, 17 (30%) describe their funding as insecure and another 16 (28%) as only moderately stable. Securing program funding is also the most widely reported management challenge, identified in 47 of 62 answers (76%). These findings suggest that maintaining support requires continuing efforts to secure resources, even while programs are already operating.

The demands extend beyond finance. Thirty-four of 62 records (55%) describe running a program as very or extremely challenging. Managers must combine mentoring and training with fundraising, team recruitment, events, industry relationships and results monitoring. Meanwhile, 34 of 57 active-program respondents (60%) seek greater government or industry-association support. This signals demand for stronger institutional backing, although it does not establish that existing support is absent or insecure.

Taken together, the findings raise a question about the continuity of the support available to emerging developers. Programs depend on people who maintain mentor networks, coordinate delivery and follow participants beyond a single cohort. For funders and industry partners, sustaining that organizational capacity deserves attention alongside the projects and teams it serves.

Game support at a glance

Facts and figures

An international survey of game support leaders and managers.

82 consolidated response profiles | The valid base varies by question.

CHALLENGES FACING TEAMS

92%

Identify project funding as a difficulty faced by participating teams.

57 of 62 valid responses | Q7.7

CHALLENGES FACING PROGRAMS

76%

Cite securing program funding as a management challenge.

47 of 62 valid responses | Q7.1

WHAT PROGRAMS OFFER

94% **Networking**

61 of 65 valid responses

40% **Direct funding / grants**

26 of 65 valid responses

Multiple selections allowed | Q4.2

SOURCES OF PROGRAM FUNDING

70%

Report government or public grants as a funding source.

46 of 66 valid responses | Q5.2

FINANCIAL TERMS FOR TEAMS

61%

Report no financial counterpart from participating teams.

40 of 66 reviewed responses | Q5.1

WHO PROGRAMS SUPPORT

75%

Include early-stage studios among their target audiences.

61 of 81 valid responses | Q3.1

CHALLENGES FACING TEAMS

81%

Identify marketing and audience reach as a difficulty faced by teams.

50 of 62 valid responses | Q7.7

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

75%

Aim to nurture local game development talent and community.

61 of 81 valid responses | Q3.3

Percentages refer to valid response profiles, which may overlap across programs.
Exploratory, non-probability sample. Team difficulties reflect managers' observations.
Figures are self-reported; multiple selections allowed where applicable; percentages rounded.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).

Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Combined reach & reported results

Exploratory indicators of combined impact among Census respondents

Illustrative, self-reported aggregates. No global projection or causal impact estimate.

VALID n = 51

667

Teams currently supported

Active initiatives, at the time of response

VALID n = 51

1,851

Past team participations

Reported alumni counts across programs

STUDIOS, GAMES & RECOGNITION

VALID n = 38

579

New studios / teams established

Reported as established post-program

VALID n = 44

1,156

Commercial game releases

Sum of reported launches

VALID n = 28

481

Award or recognition cases

Sum of reported numeric counts

INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS & AGREEMENTS

VALID n = 33

492

Investor / publisher participations

At demo, pitch or graduation events

VALID n = 30

216

Offers from investors or publishers

Sum of reported offers

VALID n = 33

133

Deals closed with investors or publishers

Sum of reported agreements

FINANCE & PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

VALID n = 20

USD 33.7m

Capital raised by alumni

Approximate total; currency note below

VALID n = 43

89.4%

Mean completion / graduation rate

Unweighted mean of reported rates

VALID n = 34

88.1%

Mean reported participant satisfaction

Unweighted mean of reported rates

READING THE FIGURES n = valid analytical records for each indicator. Counts are sums; rates are unweighted means. Figures may overlap across records and refer to different periods. Current and past team counts must not be added.

SCOPE & ASSUMPTIONS Current support includes active initiatives only. The wider current-team field totals 727 (n = 55), including 60 in an ended/on-hiatus initiative. USD was assumed in 13 capital entries (four zero); seven explicit-currency entries total USD 24.2m.

CONCENTRATION Two records account for 69.2% of game releases; one accounts for 62.4% of recognition cases.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026). Q6.4; active status: Q1.5.4.

Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

1.Introduction

From a marginal or alternative mode of production, small-team indie game production emerged in the mid-2010s as the typical organizational model within the video game industry. However, the indie game ecosystem is under pressure from innovation, driven by the need for survival, facing resource limitations, a lack of investment, uncertain revenue methods, and fragile business models. Supporting emerging creators, game incubation and acceleration initiatives addressed the growing need for support, while existing entrepreneurship and startup programs had limited capacity to nurture game development ecosystems. Yet, despite the growing visibility of these programs in industry practice, little systematic international research has examined how they are organized, what objectives they pursue, and which tensions shape their operation.

The 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration brings together the experiences of leaders and managers of these initiatives through an international survey conducted through the International Game Developers Association's Game Incubation & Acceleration Special Interest Group (IGDA Incubation SIG). Coordinated by Dr Pedro Santoro Zambon at Utrecht University, the research contributes to the SIG's knowledge base to support its network cooperation. Its purpose is to build a shared evidence base about the support available to game development teams and the conditions under which that support is organized. The Census adopts a broad scope. It includes initiatives described as incubators and accelerators, as well as other arrangements for supporting teams, studios and local ecosystems. These labels can encompass different objectives, institutional settings and ways of working. Throughout the report, 'program' is used as a convenient umbrella term; it does not imply that all initiatives follow the same model, serve the same stage of development or pursue the same definition of success.

The report examines who provides support, where and for whom programs operate, how they are funded, what they offer, how they select participants and how they understand their results. It also explores the challenges reported by managers and the lessons they wish to share. For practitioners, this creates opportunities to compare approaches and identify questions for their own programs. For policymakers and support organizations, it provides context for considering how different forms of assistance fit local needs and resources.

This first edition is an exploratory international mapping effort. Its consolidated base contains 82 analytical records, derived from 86 retained survey submissions. 'Census' expresses the project's ambition to document the field, with an open call for contributions, but it does not enumerate or map every initiative worldwide. The Methodology and How to Read the Results section explains the sample, consolidation decisions and limits of comparison. Read in that context, the findings offer a starting point for shared learning, further research and future rounds of data collection.

2.About the Game Incubation SIG

The International Game Developers Association's Game Incubation & Acceleration Special Interest Group (Incubation SIG) connects the people who lead programs supporting game developers and studios. Its members work across incubators, accelerators, hubs and other initiatives that develop game ecosystems. The group provides a setting for program leaders to exchange experience and build cooperation across countries and regions.

The Incubation SIG grew out of an informal network of incubation and acceleration leaders for knowledge, results and methodology exchange. Collaboration intensified in May 2023 during the 2nd Spcine Forum in São Paulo, Brazil, with a further gathering at Gamescom later that year, consolidating a network and helping to establish a shared direction. In February 2024, the network formally became an IGDA Special Interest Group, bringing together 80 members and leadership across all regions of the world.

SIG's agenda is centered on sharing expertise and strengthening the support available to game development teams. It includes shared resources for program managers, mentor exchanges and opportunities for joint participation in international events. Cooperation with public institutions, industry and academia is intended to improve access to funding and publishing opportunities, inform policy and advance research on game incubation and acceleration.



IGDA Incubation SIG at the Gamescom 2026 meetup

An international network in all continents

187 members from 142 initiatives across 63 countries

The network spans all continents, with active leadership and governance groups in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and Oceania. Its members bring experience from different institutional and regional contexts to an ongoing exchange about how to support game developers and build local ecosystems. The 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration contributes to this shared knowledge by documenting how support initiatives are organized, what they offer and the challenges they face. Developed through SIG, the research provides a basis for discussion among program managers, support organizations and policymakers.



Incubation SIG meetup at Gamescom 2024



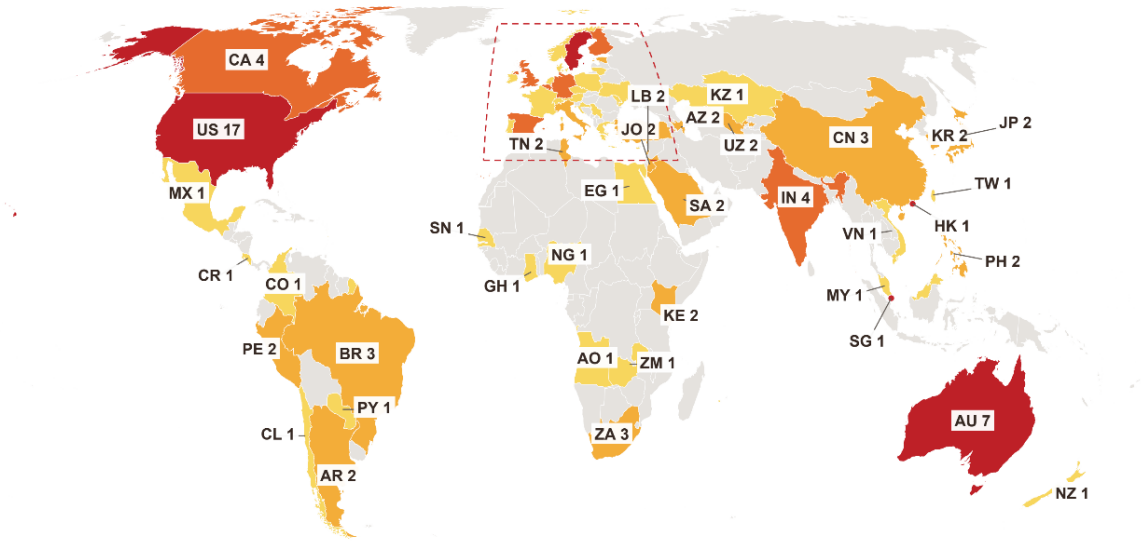
Inaugural Incubation SIG meetup during Gamescom 2023

A network spanning 63 countries and territories

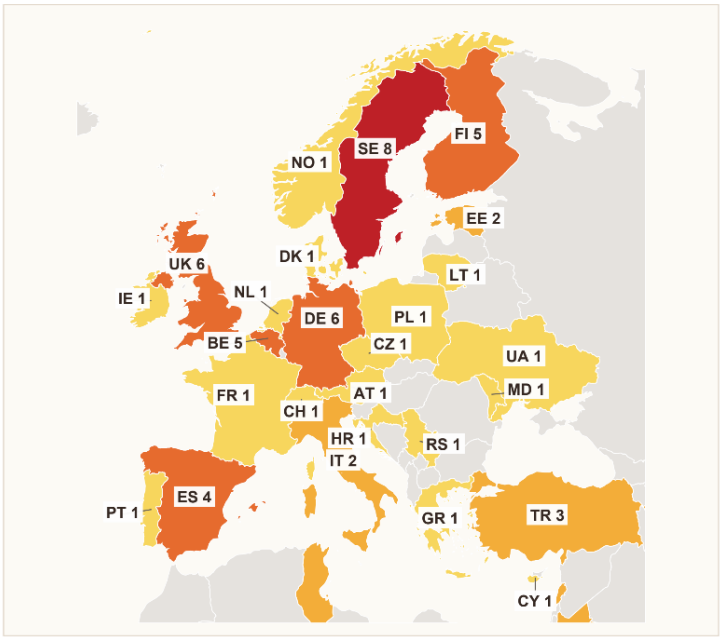
Organisations and initiatives represented through SIG members and observers

Affiliations per country 1 | 2–3 | 4–6 | 7 or more | No affiliation recorded

World view



Europe · enlarged view



Organisations and initiatives by country

Angola (AO)	1	Lithuania (LT)	1
Argentina (AR)	2	Malaysia (MY)	1
Australia (AU)	7	Mexico (MX)	1
Austria (AT)	1	Moldova (MD)	1
Azerbaijan (AZ)	2	Netherlands (NL)	1
Belgium (BE)	5	New Zealand (NZ)	1
Brazil (BR)	3	Nigeria (NG)	1
Canada (CA)	4	Norway (NO)	1
Chile (CL)	1	Paraguay (PY)	1
China (CN)	3	Peru (PE)	2
Colombia (CO)	1	Philippines (PH)	2
Costa Rica (CR)	1	Poland (PL)	1
Croatia (HR)	1	Portugal (PT)	1
Cyprus (CY)	1	Saudi Arabia (SA)	2
Czechia (CZ)	1	Senegal (SN)	1
Denmark (DK)	1	Serbia (RS)	1
Egypt (EG)	1	Singapore (SG)	1
Estonia (EE)	2	South Africa (ZA)	3
Finland (FI)	5	South Korea (KR)	2
France (FR)	1	Spain (ES)	4
Germany (DE)	6	Sweden (SE)	8
Ghana (GH)	1	Switzerland (CH)	1
Greece (GR)	1	Taiwan (TW)	1
Hong Kong (HK)	1	Tunisia (TN)	2
India (IN)	4	Türkiye (TR)	3
Ireland (IE)	1	Ukraine (UA)	1
Italy (IT)	2	United Kingdom (UK)	6
Japan (JP)	2	United States (US)	17
Jordan (JO)	2	Uzbekistan (UZ)	2
Kazakhstan (KZ)	1	Vietnam (VN)	1
Kenya (KE)	2	Zambia (ZM)	1
Lebanon (LB)	2		

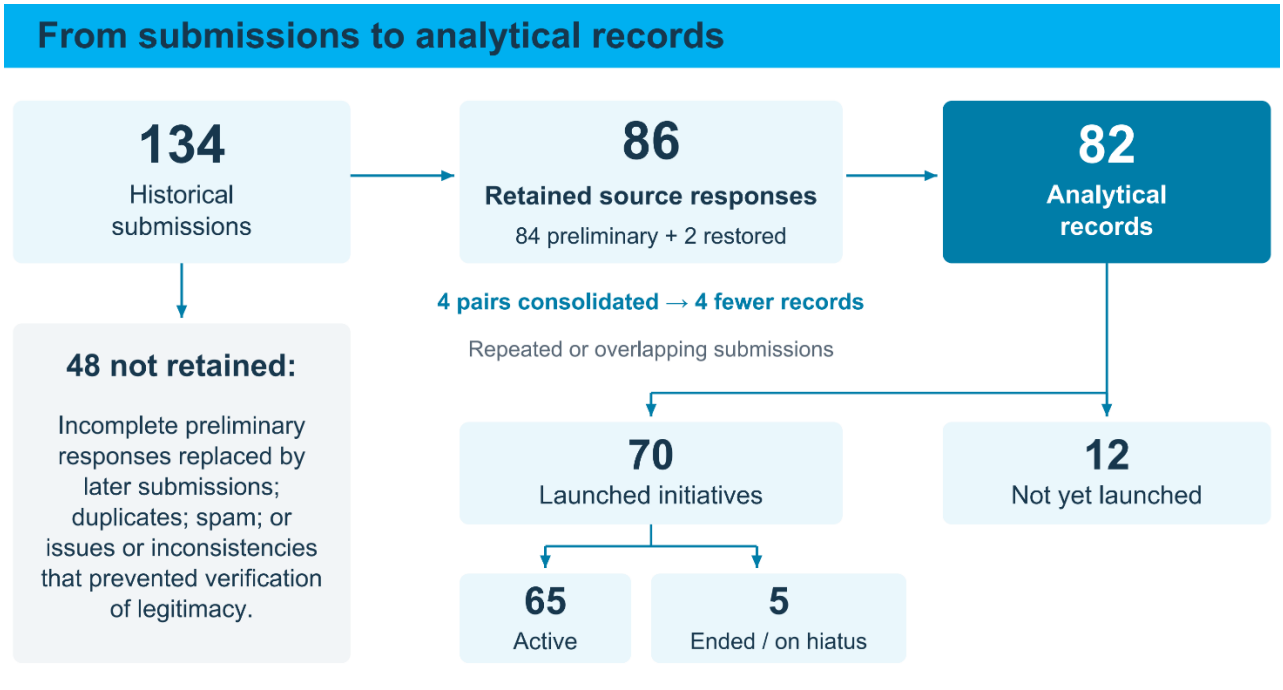
Numbers count distinct named affiliations within each country, including programmes and organisational units.
Repeated contacts are counted once. Multi-country affiliations are counted in each country represented.

3.Methodology and How to Read the Results

Study design and participation

The Census used an English-language online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics. It sought current and former leaders, managers and representatives of game incubation, acceleration and related ecosystem support initiatives, including people developing programs that had not yet launched. Participation was voluntary and did not require prior membership of the IGDA Incubation SIG. Recruitment was nonprobabilistic and used professional networks. Outreach included direct contacts, the SIG mailing list, LinkedIn, wider IGDA communications, and promotion during GDC and Gamescom in 2025. Participants were also invited to forward the questionnaire to other program leaders. The retained submissions were received between 17 March 2025 and 15 January 2026.

The questionnaire combined single- and multiple-choice questions, ordinal scales, rankings, numerical estimates and open responses (For the full list of questions, see Appendix A). It covered program characteristics, location and scope, funding, activities, selection, results, challenges and future directions. Routing varied by launch status and earlier answers. Questions on operations and outcomes therefore did not apply to every record.



Retained analytical records

Of the 134 submissions made to the form during the data collection period, 48 were excluded from the analysis corpus. In the first case, due to the longer data collection period, some program representatives made an additional submission with updated information, including programs that started operations after an initial submission while the program was still under development. Repeated and overlapping submissions were reviewed case by case. Where consolidation was appropriate, information was retained according to its scope, completeness and consistency, without automatically combining conflicting answers.

A legitimacy check of the responses was also carried out, including the exclusion of initiatives that are not game-oriented, submissions that were not made by program representatives, or records where the origin could not be verified.

Thus, 86 records with proven origin were retained. As more than one representative per program could respond to the form, the responses of 4 pairs were unified, consolidating a total of 82 analytical records. An analytical record represents a consolidated response profile, not necessarily a unique person, organization or program. Some overlap between initiatives remains. Most of the questions were not marked as mandatory. Therefore, missing answers, and non-applicability are distinguished. Figure notes identify the subgroup, valid-answer count, unit and treatment of ‘not sure’ or ‘not applicable’. Missing answers were not imputed. A record can contribute to one chart and be absent from another because the question did not apply, was unanswered or lacked a usable value.

Of the full 82-record base, 70 concern initiatives that had launched and 12 concern initiatives still being developed (Q1.5). Among the launched records, 65 describe active initiatives and five describe initiatives that had ended or were on hiatus (Q1.5.4). The operational findings in later sections generally draw on the launched group, including ended or paused initiatives where the question applied.

Reading counts and percentages

The label “n=” denotes the number of analytical records with a usable answer for the question or item, after relevant filters. Comparisons between active, ended and pre-launch initiatives use the appropriate subgroup and may have different valid-answer counts.

A percentage describes the share of that stated base, not the share of all programs worldwide. When using this report, avoid generalizations such as "75% of game accelerator and incubation programs state Y". Instead, use "Among the respondents, 75% stated Y".

Multiple-response questions allow several selections, so their percentages can add to more than 100%. Matrix questions may have a different “n” for each row. Small subgroups require particular care: a difference of a few records can produce a large percentage change, and an apparent contrast may reflect the composition of the sample.

Interpretation and limits

The research team estimates that approximately 200 potentially eligible leaders and managers were invited to participate in the survey, within a broader estimated landscape of around 250 eligible initiatives worldwide. These working estimates provide context for the study's reach but do not constitute a complete sampling frame. They also refer to different units: invited individuals, eligible initiatives and consolidated response profiles. Recruitment was non-probability-based, and consequently, these figures do not establish a verified participation rate, population coverage estimate or sampling margin of error.

Network recruitment and an English-language questionnaire may favor better-connected, more visible initiatives and those comfortable responding in English. Geographical and institutional contrasts therefore describe patterns within the participating sample and should not be interpreted as representative estimates of the worldwide distribution of game support programs.

Answers are self-reported and may be estimates and therefore reveal the perception of the leaders of these programs regarding the topics presented. They do not independently establish financial results, causal effects or comparative effectiveness. This bias should be considered when interpreting the data presented in this census. Differences may reflect program age, objectives, resources, participant profiles or local conditions.

Open responses contextualize quantitative findings through anonymized editorial syntheses. The highlighted themes are illustrative and have not been assigned prevalence estimates.

Consent and public reporting

The questionnaire required agreement to the study information. This report presents aggregate distributions and anonymized summaries, omitting respondent and program identities and avoiding attributed quotations.

4. The Landscape of Game Support Programs

The Census indicates that game incubation and acceleration form a heterogeneous and multifunctional field of support infrastructure, without a single, standardized model. The absence of a template is evident in the diversity of nomenclatures and types of organizations leading those initiatives. This variety matters when comparing programs: their institutional settings may shape their resources and responsibilities, but an organizational label or structure alone does not establish how a program operates or what it achieves.

Launching initiatives over time

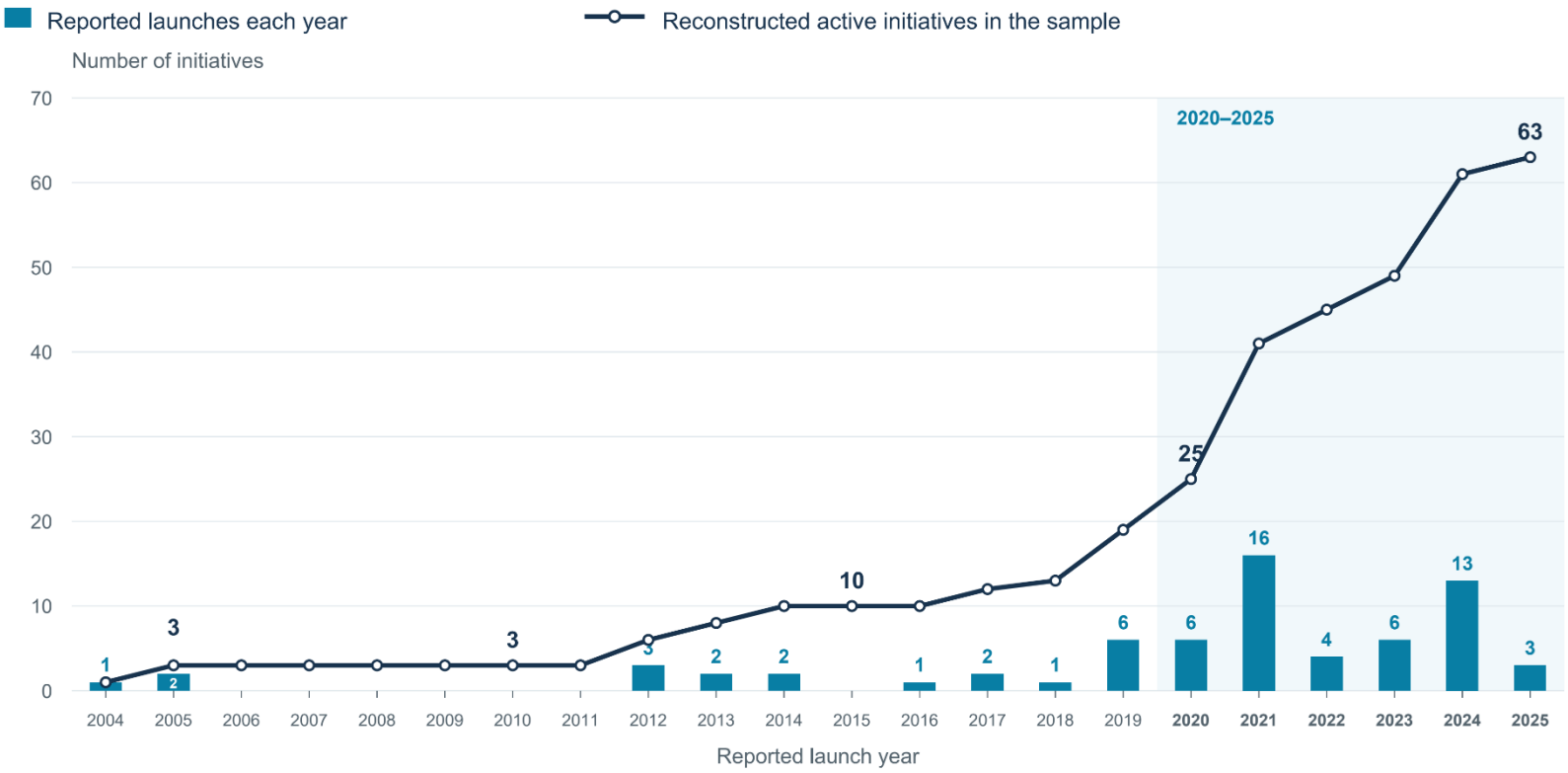
The sample includes a concentration of launches in recent years. The launch-year question has 69 usable answers; Figure 1 excludes one 2002 launch that predates the initiative's focus on games, leaving 68 records. Of these, 48 (70.6%) were launched in 2020–2025, compared with 10 in 2015–2019, seven in 2010–2014 and three in 2004–2009 (Q1.5.1). This pattern suggests increased activity among the initiatives represented in the sample. Because the Census is not a complete global enumeration, it does not establish a worldwide growth rate.

Figure 1. Launching initiatives over time.

PROGRAM LANDSCAPE Q1.5.1 / Q1.5.4 / Q1.5.5

Launching initiatives over time

68 records included; 48 (70.6%) were launched in 2020–2025.



Excludes one launch predating the initiative's focus on games and one active record without a launch year.

Active line = cumulative launches minus reported endings/pauses, deducted in their reported year.

Assumes continuous operation between those dates and carries active-at-response status through 2025.

The line ends at 63. The full Census base retains 82 records, including 65 reported active.

This sample-based reconstruction does not measure worldwide growth or capture all temporary interruptions.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).

Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Organizations providing support

Private for-profit organizations form the largest individual category, followed by private nonprofit organizations (Figure 2). Public grants are the most frequently reported funding source across the sample, highlighting the distinction between the institutional type of a provider and the sources used to finance its activities. There is no evidence that one institutional form is more effective than another.

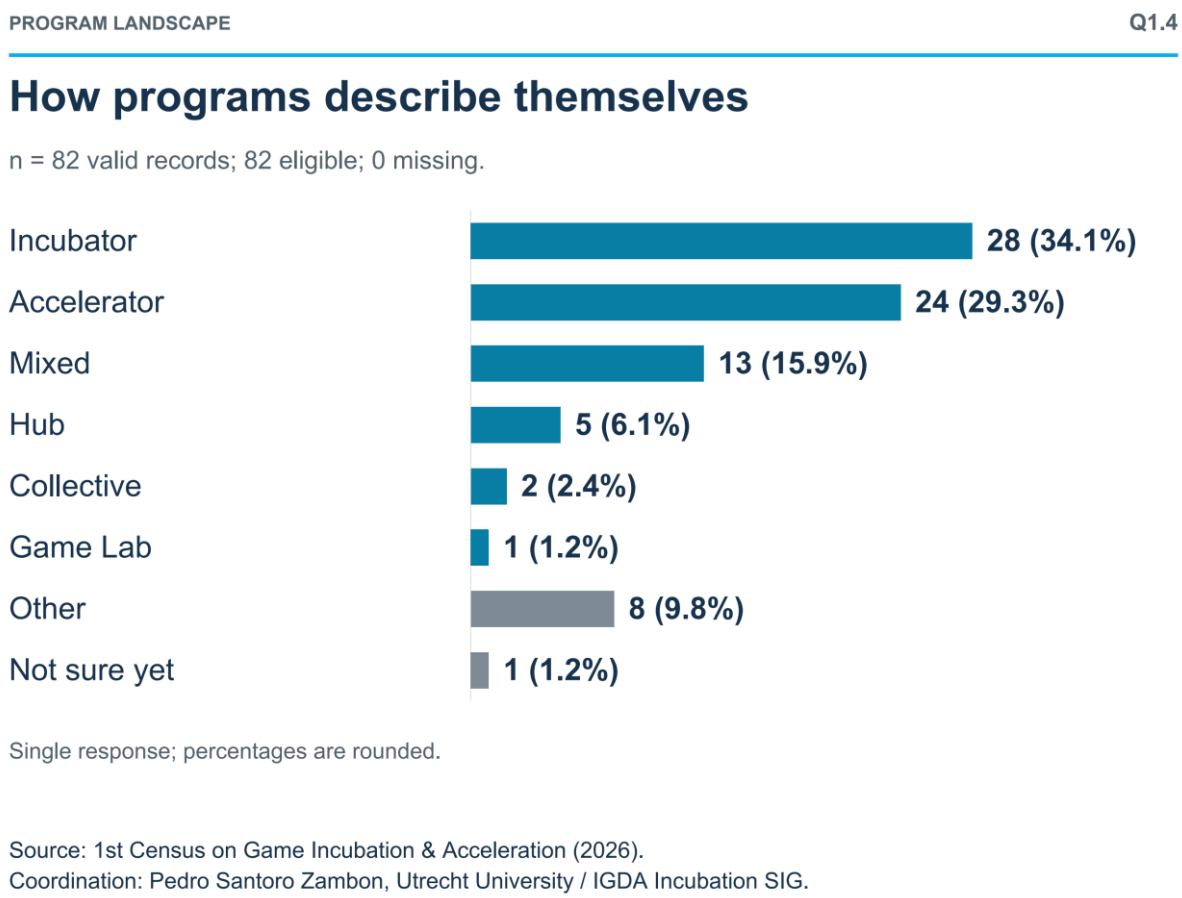
Figure 2. Organizations running the initiatives represented in the Census.



Program identities and stages of development

Incubator and accelerator are the two most common self-descriptions (Figure 3). The Census captures a broader range of support nomenclatures and indicates the absence of standardized models. These labels are defined by managers or their funding sources, and do not follow a classification based on a common set of deliveries, traits or requirements. A slight tendency was observed for programs labeled as accelerators to target a more mature audience, while incubators target earlier stages of a game developer's career. This pattern, however, is not universal. Nor is there a clear correlation between nomenclature and the availability of direct investment in the teams benefiting from the program, or the type of service offered.

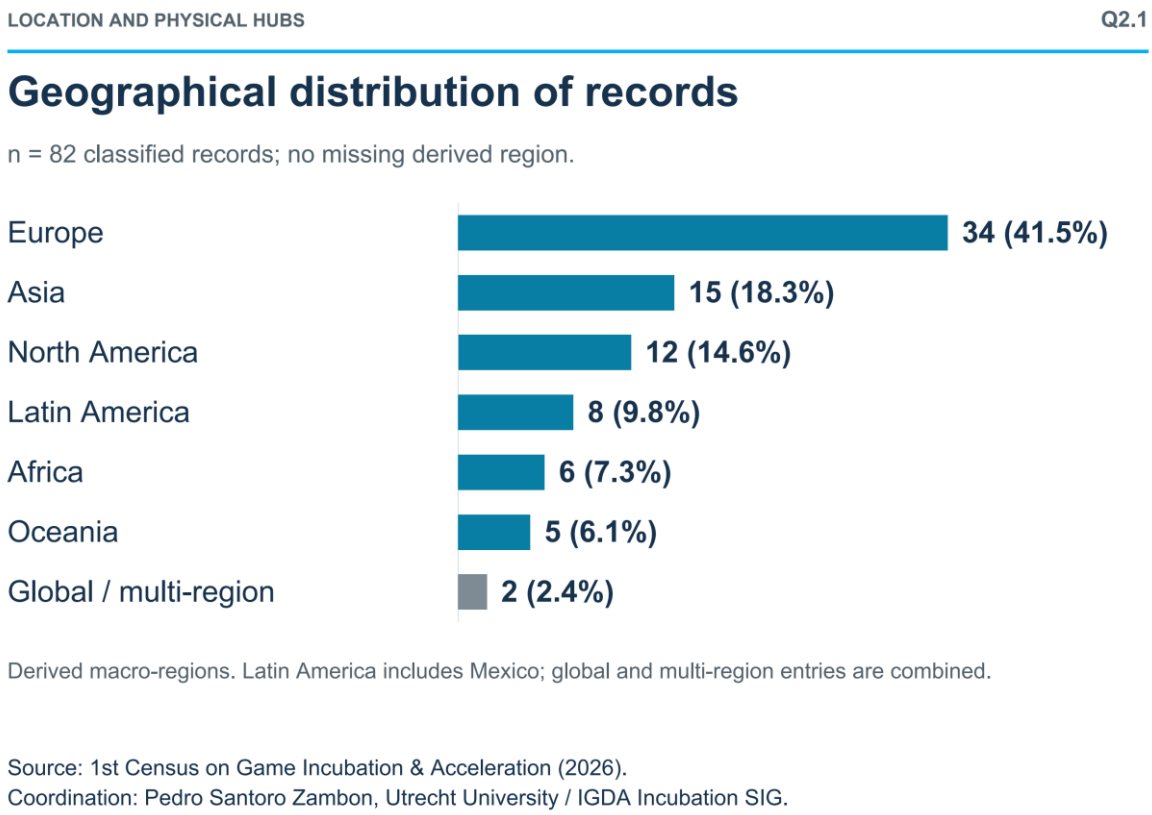
Figure 3. How respondents describe their programs.



Geographical reach of the sample

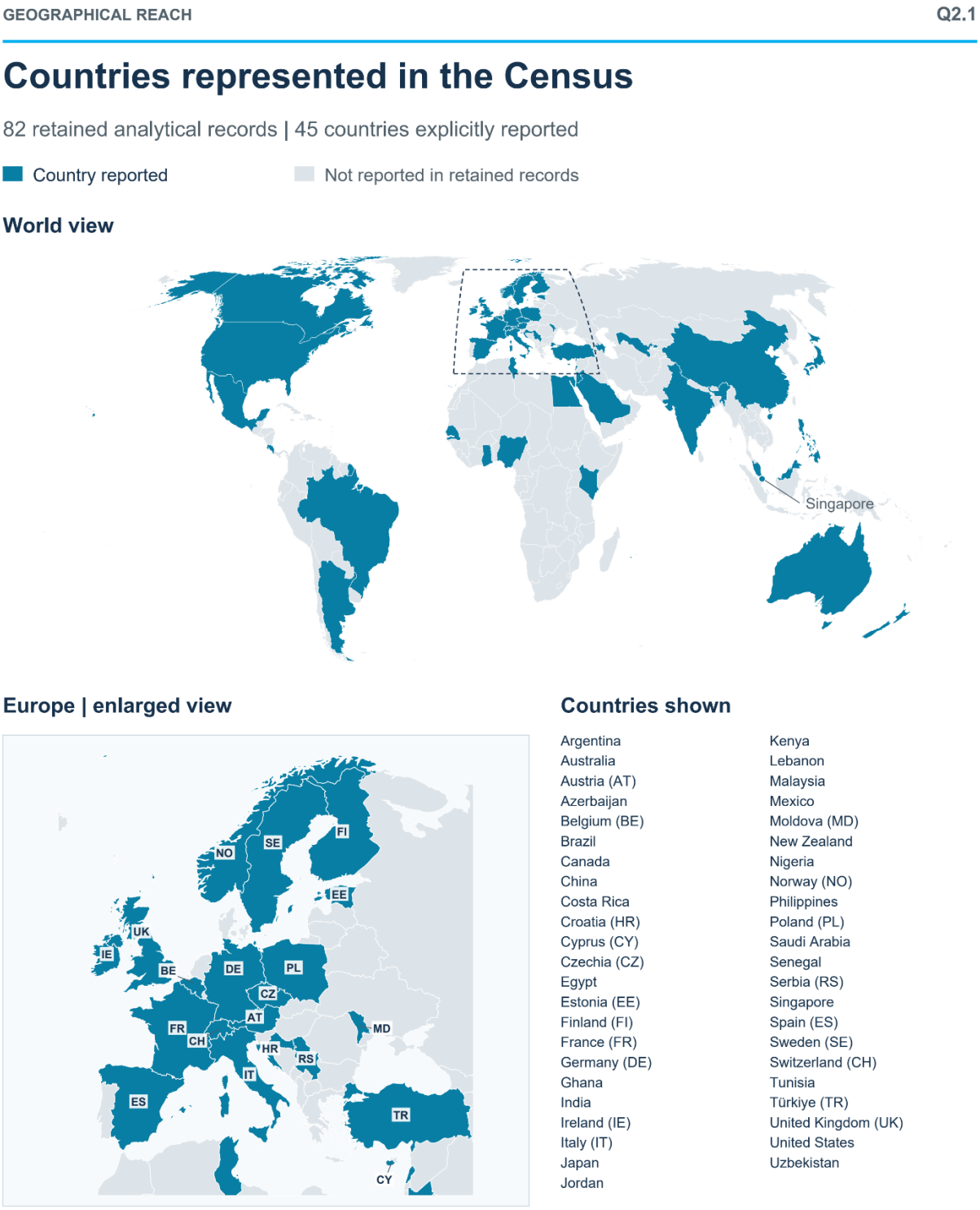
Europe accounts for the largest share of records, followed by Asia and North America. Two global or multiregional records are grouped separately (Figure 4). The derived regional classification places Mexico in Latin America and keeps cross-region responses from being assigned to a single country.

Figure 4. Macro-regions represented in the analytical base.



This distribution describes the research sample, demonstrating the global scope of this research, as shown in Figure 5. Therefore, this isolated evidence does not allow us to establish where game support is available worldwide. Still, the Census includes responses covering 45 of the 63 countries and territories represented in the SIG network, corresponding to 71.4% geographical overlap. This geographic reach may also reflect the recruitment method through professional networks, visibility, and willingness to participate in the Census.

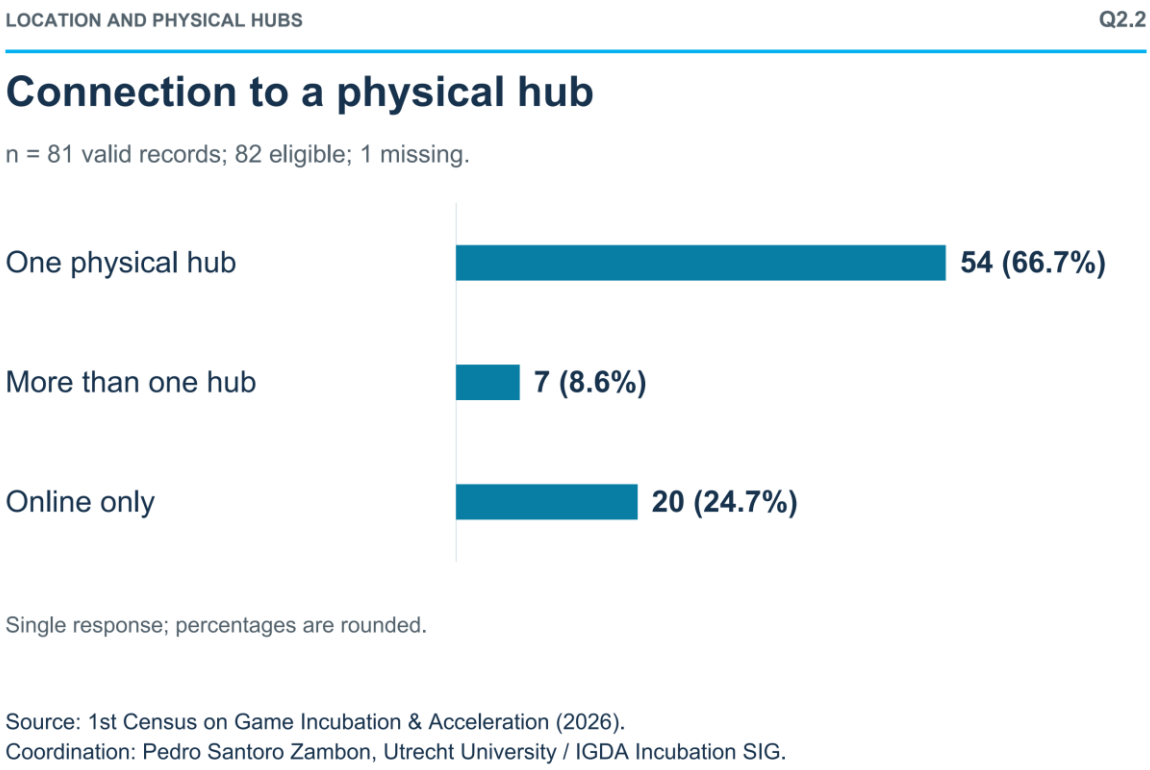
Figure 5. Countries represented in the Census.



Relation with physical hubs

Most records report on the connection between the program and an in-person location, with 75% connected to one or more physical hubs. (Figure 6). A connection to a hub does not, on its own, describe attendance requirements, ownership of premises or the balance between online and in-person activities.

Figure 6. Connections between programs and physical hubs.



Geographical scope

Recruitment is often organized around a defined territory (Figure 7). Read alongside the prevalence of physical hubs, this suggests that support is frequently embedded in local, regional or national settings. Public funding tied to those settings may help explain territorial recruitment priorities, although the Census does not test that relationship. One implication is that teams in places without dedicated support may have limited access to suitable programs elsewhere. Initiatives with unrestricted recruitment could help address that gap, but the survey does not measure unmet demand or establish the adequacy of provision in individual territories.

Figure 7. Geographical scope of recruitment.

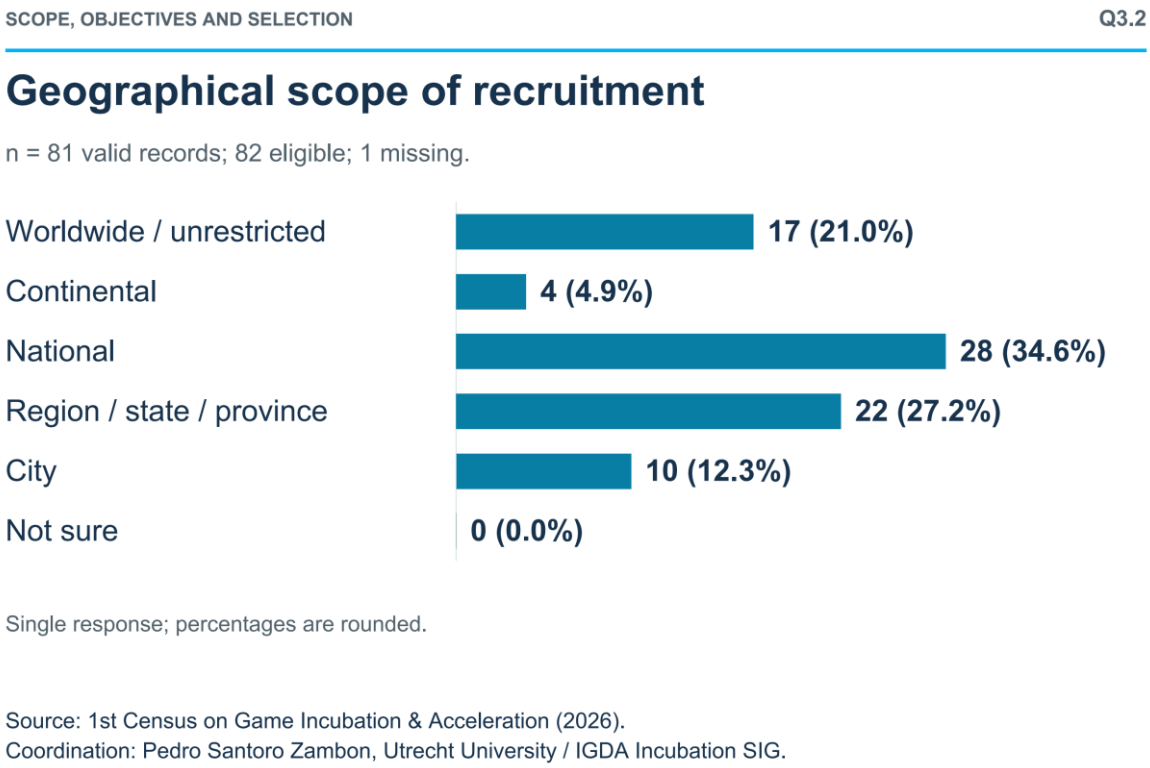
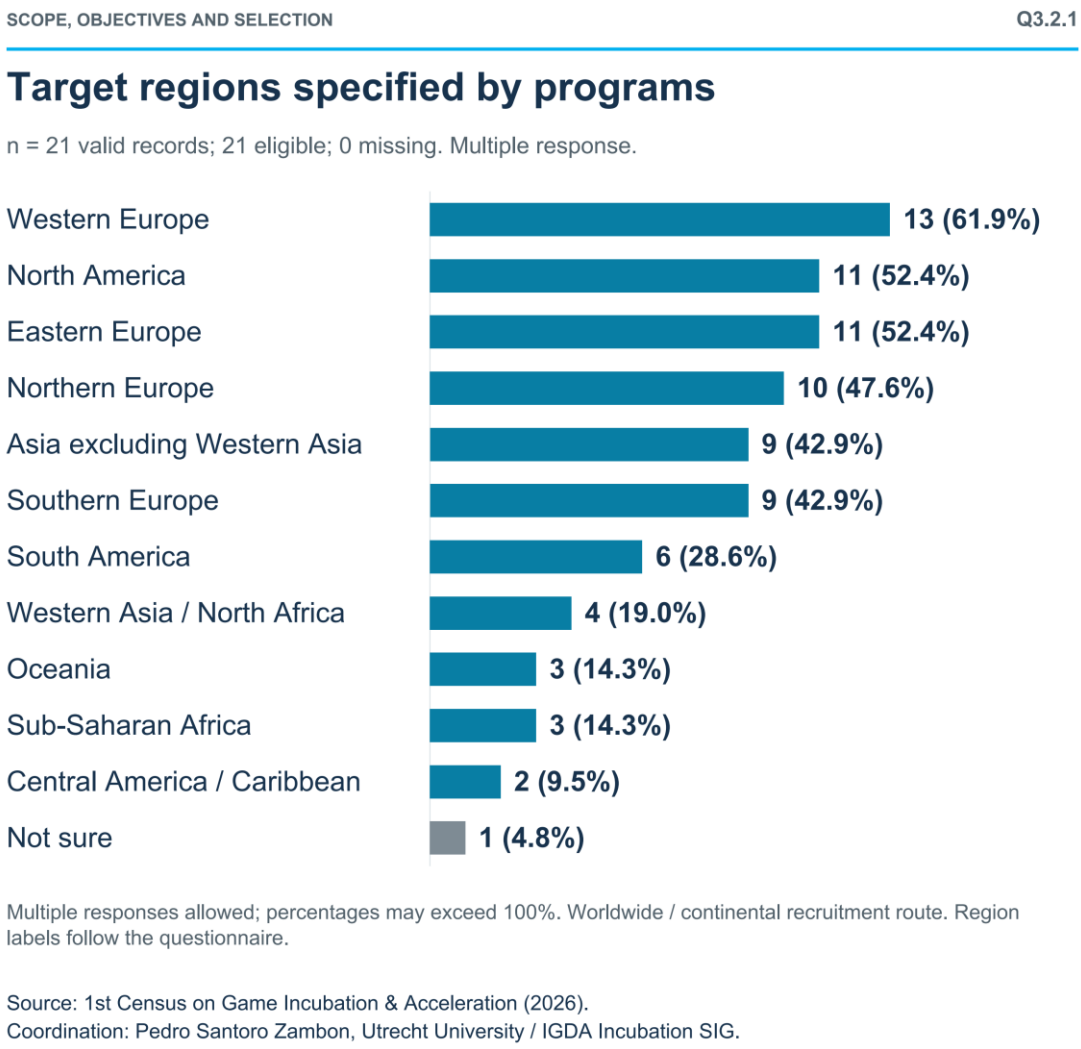


Figure 8. Target regions specified by programs (Q3.2.1).



5. Who Programs Support and What They Aim to Achieve

Programs address several stages of development, particularly early-stage studios. Their aims combine support for teams with talent and local economic development. These intended participants and purposes provide context for interpreting delivery choices and measures of success.

Target participants and maturity level

As shown in Figure 9, programs do not concentrate on a single target audience, but span a wide spectrum that includes junior talent (individuals at the entry point of their careers), professional talent (individuals working with games professionally), proto-companies (informal game production groups, and non-incorporated game studios), early-stage ventures (formal game studios about to launch their first commercial game), high-potential ventures (game companies with track record, on the path to economic sustainability), and even scalable companies (game companies with a stable economic situation seeking to expand and scale globally).

Early-stage studios are selected as the most common target audience for the programs, followed by junior talent and proto-companies. The minority support for more mature audiences is not evidence that these segments necessarily need less support, but rather that the currently available infrastructure has a greater capacity to support the earliest stages of a career than more advanced stages. For high-potential ventures and scalable companies, challenges become more complex, and the level of support required demands a greater level of technical depth and access to knowledge. However, it is during these stages of greater complexity and challenges that the availability of support proves to be most scarce.

Figure 9. Intended participants by stage of development.

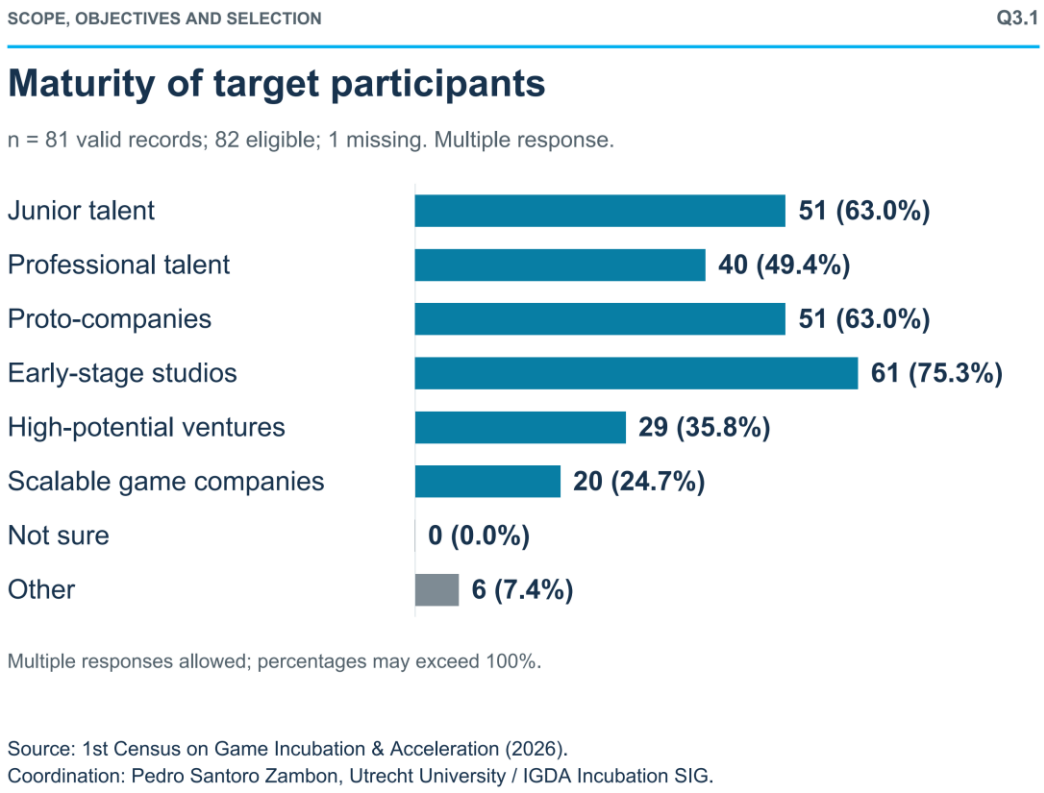
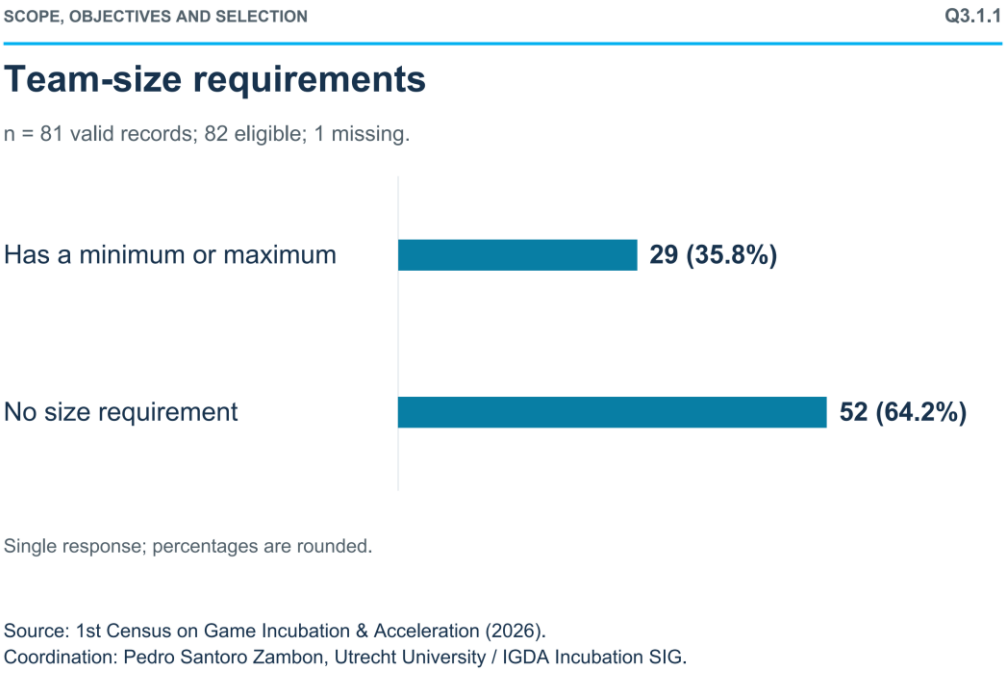


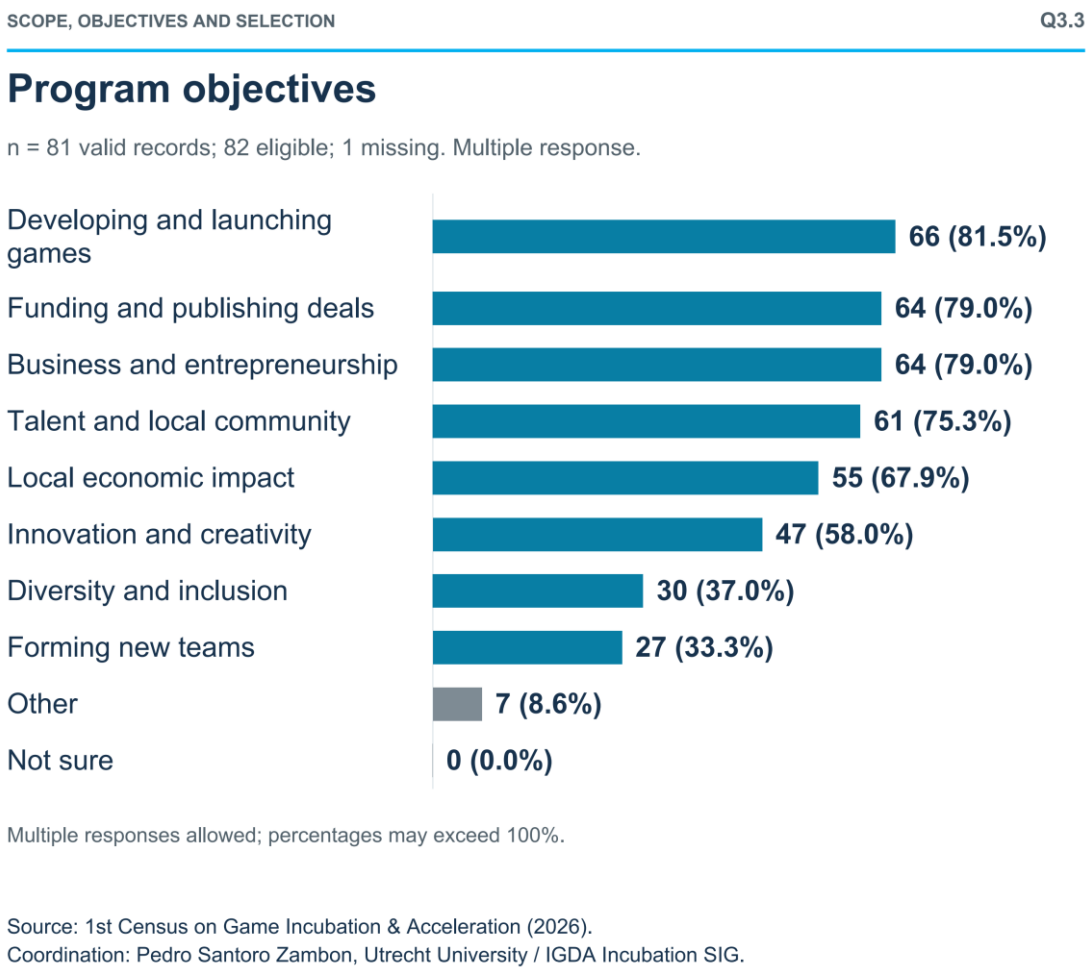
Figure 10. Team-size requirements (Q3.1.1).



Objectives and priorities

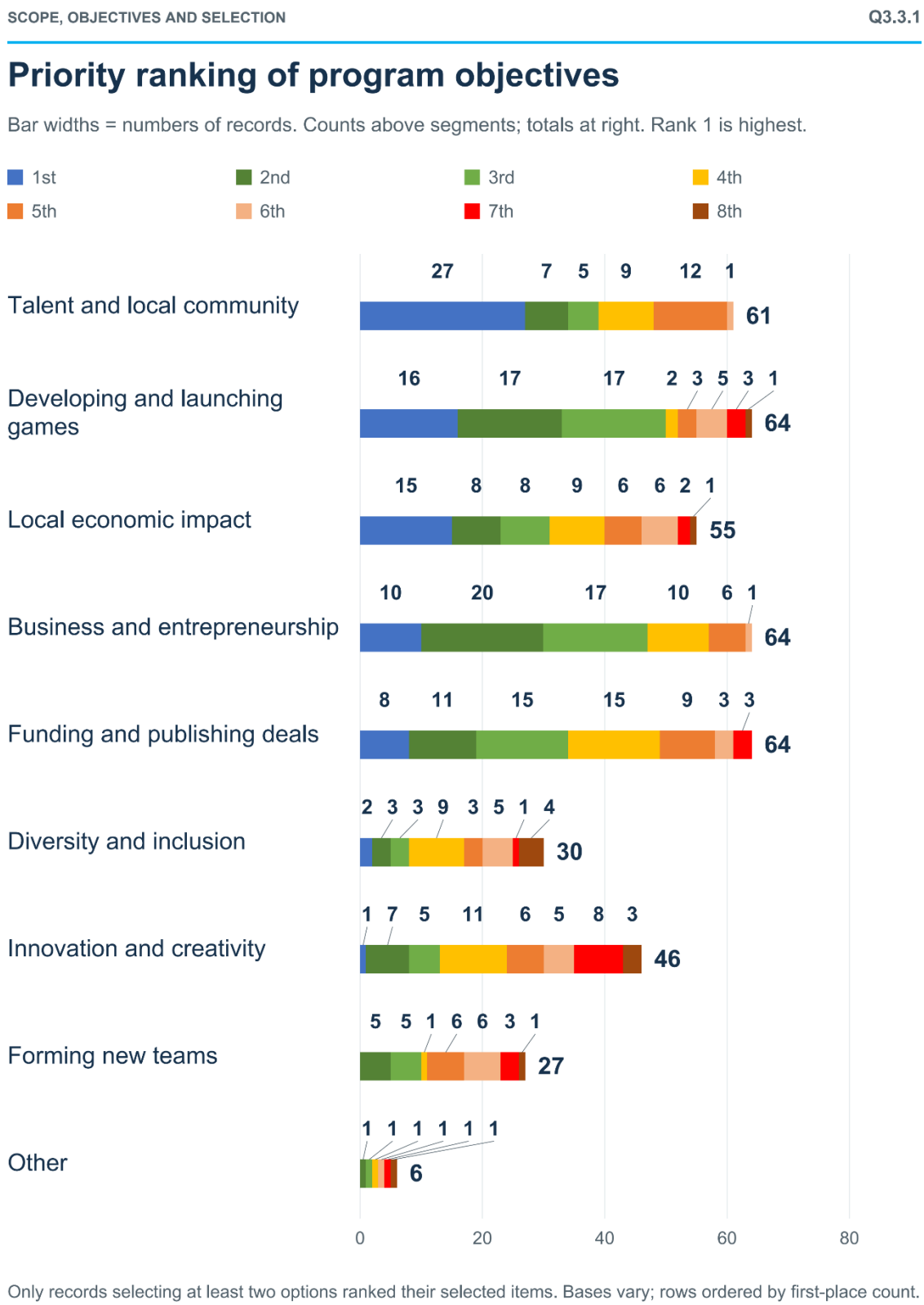
Helping teams develop and launch games is the most frequently selected objective, demonstrating that although many programs present themselves as initiatives to support entrepreneurship and business, in the vast majority of cases the product (game) is still central. (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Objectives pursued by programs.



The ranking adds a different view of these aims. (Figure 12). The largest number of first-place rankings goes to nurturing local talent and communities, suggesting that, beyond supporting game ventures in their quest for market success, an important objective is to serve, more broadly, as catalysts for local ecosystems. The minority proportion of programs working towards the formation of new teams, and with lower prioritization of this objective, highlights a potential gap, with most initiatives focusing on already formed teams, but few actions aimed at coordinating new partnerships. With the demand for interdisciplinary and complementary skills for making a good team, studios struggling to find talent with specific skills, whether in arts, programming, game design, or business, suggest that the potential of these programs to promote better matchmaking and pairing of potential partners is still underutilized.

Figure 12. Relative priority of selected objectives, shown as counts by rank.



Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Figure 13. Relative priority of selected objectives, shown as a 100% ranking view (Q3.3.1).



Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

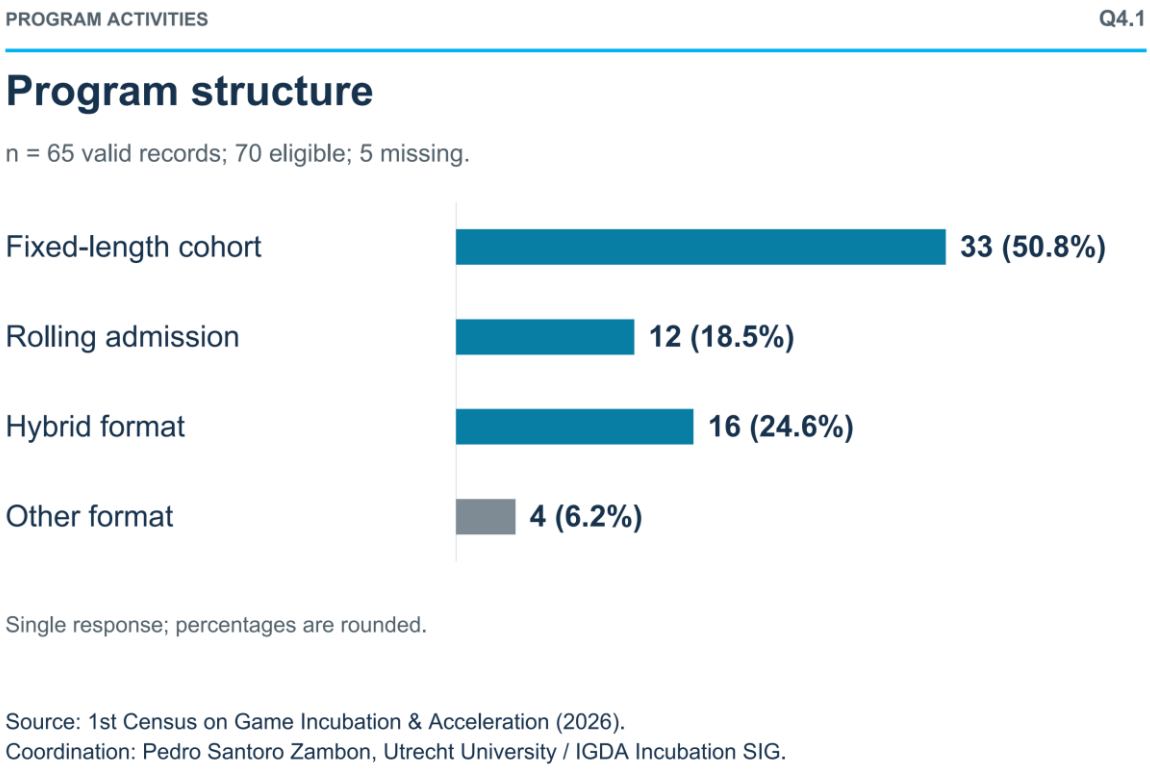
6.How Programs Operate

The operational findings describe a combination of structured cohorts, flexible admissions and varied support activities. Networking, mentoring and training are widely reported, while direct finance is available in a smaller share of records.

Program format and duration

The distribution indicates several ways of organizing participation (Figure 14). The duration question applies only to the 33 fixed-cohort records. Thirteen select six to 12 months, 10 three or less, eight three to six months and two more than 12 months (Q4.1.2). There is no clear correlation revealing which structure works best for a particular type of team. There is also no evident correlation between the target audience of the initiative, the type of organization, and the program's nomenclature (incubation, acceleration, etc.), and the format in which the program is carried out.

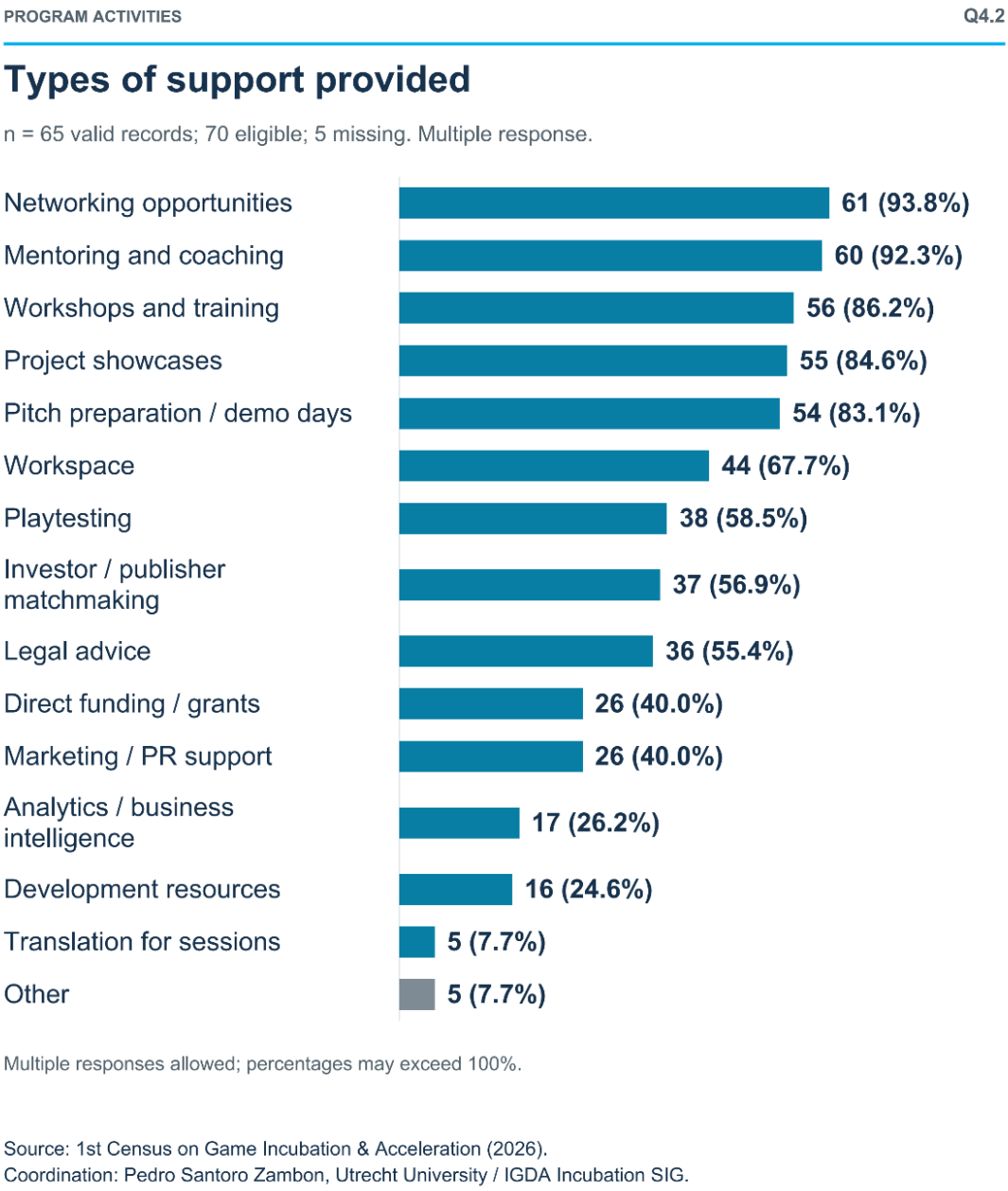
Figure 14. Structures used to organize participation.



Forms of support

The findings suggest that the main contribution of these initiatives lies in developing teams' capabilities and connecting them to the wider industry. Networking, mentoring and training are the most widely reported activities, indicating a shared emphasis on knowledge exchange, professional relationships and preparation for the market (Figure 15). Showcases and pitch preparation extend this support towards visibility and opportunities to engage with potential partners. However, preparation for market engagement with pitch preparation and demo days is more widespread than direct financial support and matchmaking with investors and publishers. This pattern suggests that many initiatives help teams become better prepared to pursue opportunities while leaving access to capital dependent on external actors. For managers, an important consideration is therefore how learning and visibility connect to subsequent opportunities for financing, publishing and commercial development. The survey documents the availability of these activities but does not establish whether those connections ultimately produce deals.

Figure 15. Activities and resources offered to participants.



Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Mentoring content and language

Mentoring provision suggests a strong emphasis on helping teams develop the capabilities needed to organise and sustain a game development venture. Business development, marketing, entrepreneurship and project management are more widely covered than programming, art, audio or narrative design (Figure 17). This pattern is consistent with a role in supporting the transition from making games to running a viable development business. Creative support nevertheless remains a substantial part of provision, with game design being covered in 64.1% of records. The distinction does not imply a separation between business and creative development, but a pedagogical emphasis. The findings suggest a combination of commercial preparation and selective support for development disciplines, although the survey does not measure how mentoring time or resources are distributed across these areas.

Language raises a further consideration about whom this support can reach. English is the main mentoring language in 37 of 64 records (57.8%), while 25 use the headquarters' local language and two another language (Q4.2.2). English may facilitate access to international mentors and industry networks, while also creating barriers for participants with limited proficiency. These possibilities can coexist: a program may expand international connections while remaining less accessible to some local teams. The language distribution raises this accessibility question but does not establish whether participants experienced exclusion or whether multilingual support was available.

Figure 16. Main language of mentoring (Q4.2.2).

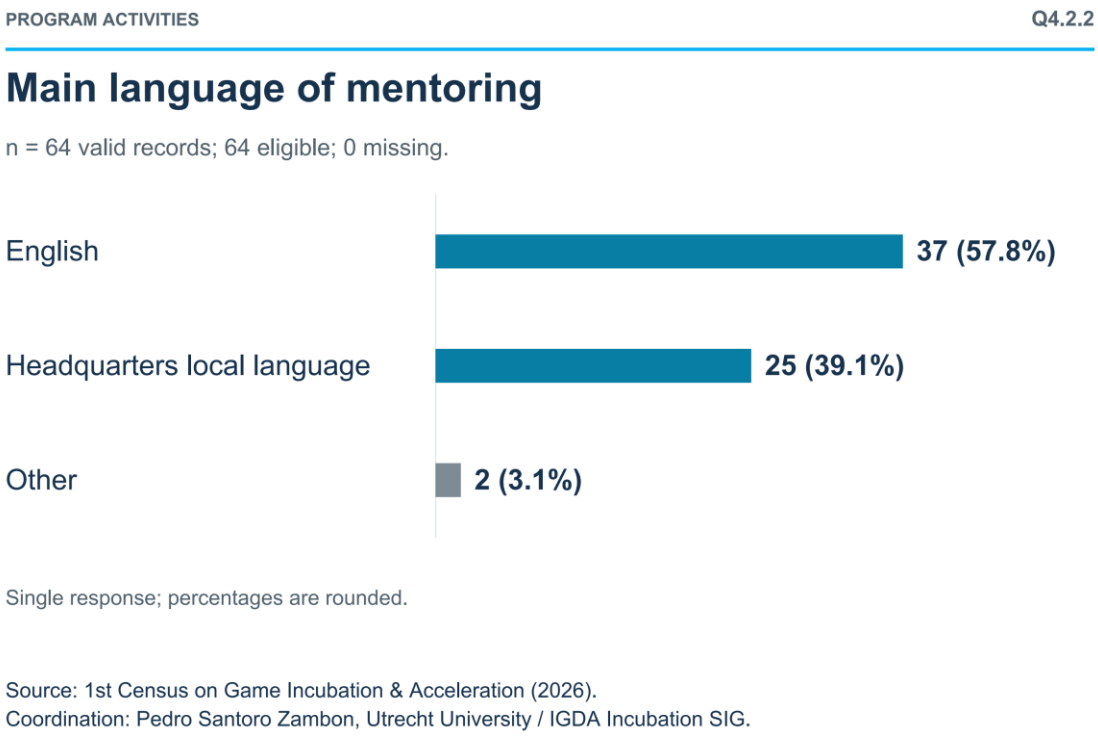
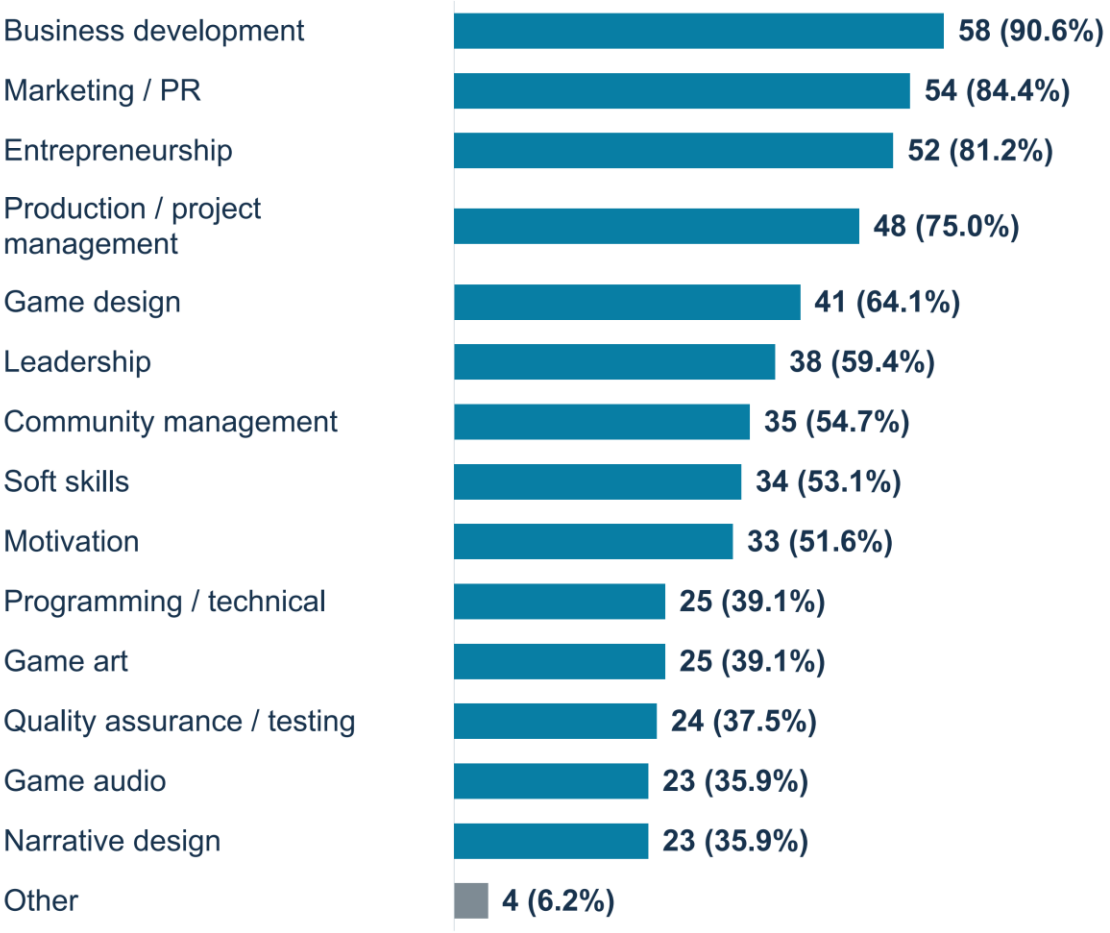


Figure 17. Topics addressed through mentoring and training.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES Q4.2.1

Mentoring and training topics

n = 64 valid records; 64 eligible; 0 missing. Multiple response.



Multiple responses allowed; percentages may exceed 100%.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

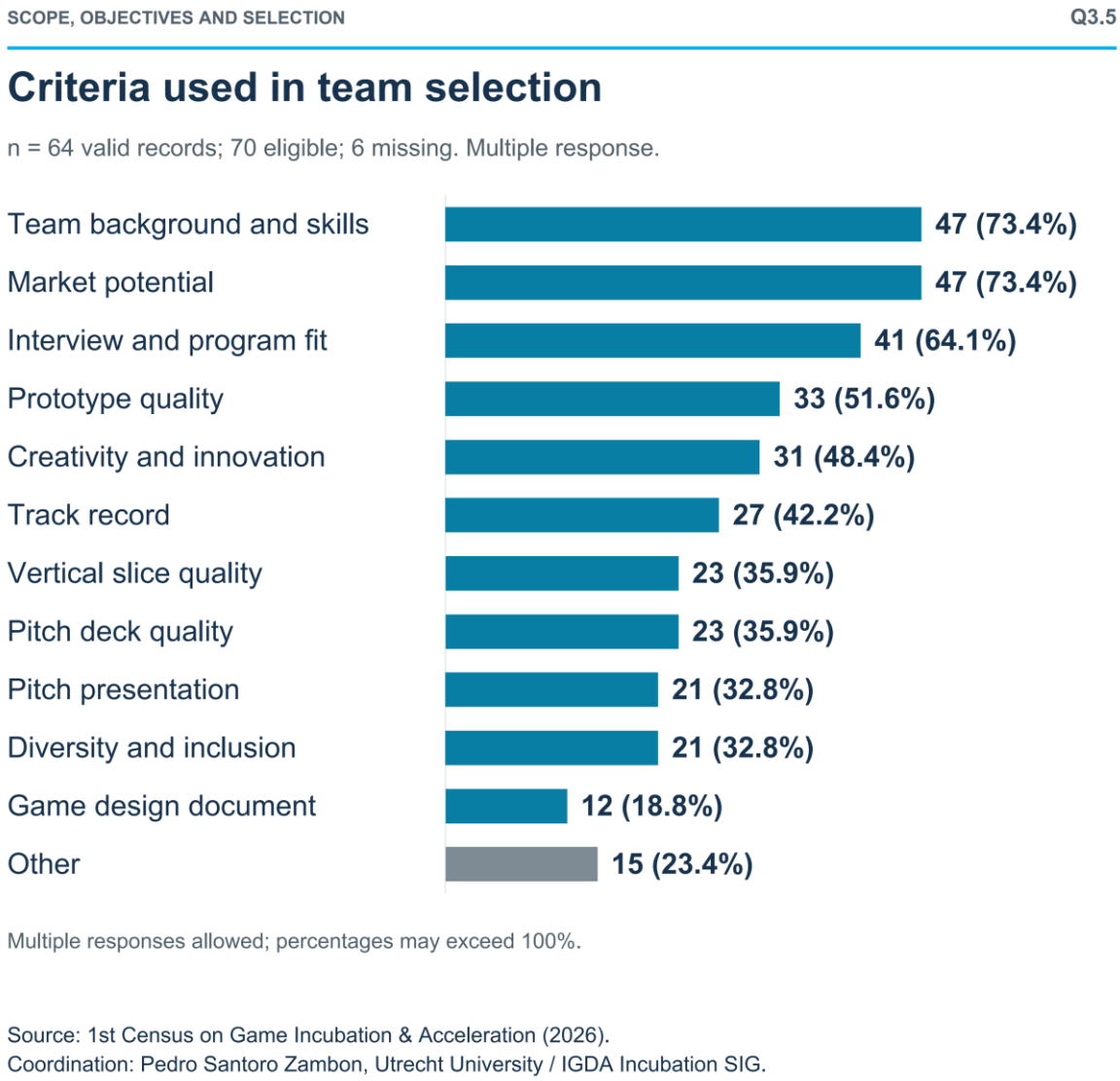
Selecting participants

Selection practices suggest that programs assess the viability of a potential participant through both the capabilities of the team and the commercial promise of its project (Figure 18). The widespread use of team background and skills alongside market potential supports this interpretation. The frequent inclusion of interviews and program fit adds a further dimension: suitability depends on the relationship between applicants and the support available. Several criteria can be used together. The frequencies do not describe their weight in a selection decision or the degree of formality of an assessment. For managers, this range suggests a useful distinction between evidence of a project's promise and evidence that a team can benefit from the available support. The Census does not establish which criteria are more effective or how well they predict success. The later section on team challenges examines the difficulties managers observe during selection and participation.

The distinction between team capabilities and previous achievements is particularly relevant. Background and skills are more commonly considered than an established track record, suggesting that demonstrated potential can provide an entry point for teams without previous commercial success. Similarly, prototype quality is more widely used than vertical slices, pitch materials or game design documents. This pattern is consistent with selection at different stages of development, although the aggregate results do not establish which requirements apply to particular participant groups.

These findings raise a central question for program design: how to balance selecting teams already equipped to progress with identifying teams whose development could benefit most from support. Requirements for experience, commercial clarity or polished project materials may be appropriate for some objectives, but managers should consider whether they also restrict access to the emerging talent their programs intend to develop. Diversity and inclusion, explicitly reported as a selection criterion in 32.8% of answers, adds another consideration to this balance. Its less frequent selection does not establish that other programs neglect inclusion; it indicates that inclusion is less commonly identified as an explicit component of admissions. Some programs determine specific quotas or criteria in favor of certain demographics, such as increasing gender balance favoring women-led studios or selecting teams led by socially marginalized ethnic groups. The survey captures the criteria used, without establishing their relative weight or ability to predict subsequent success.

Figure 18. Criteria used when selecting teams.

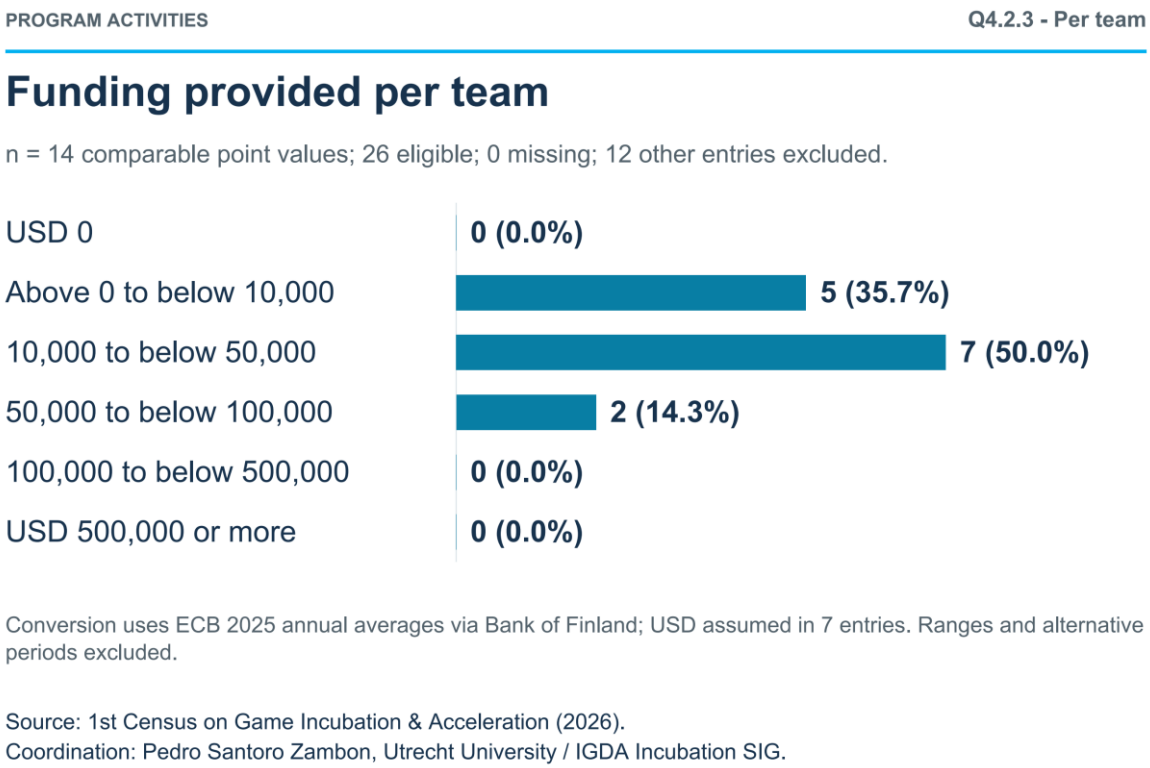


Direct finance and access to industry

Direct financial support is available through a minority of the initiatives surveyed: 26 of 65 records (40.0%) report providing funding or grants to participating teams. The reported amounts also suggest limits to the scale of that support. Among the 14 comparable per-team amounts, 12 (85.7%) are below USD 50,000, including five below USD 10,000. The remaining two are between USD 50,000 and below USD 100,000 (Figure 19).

This concentration is consistent with funding that contributes to stages of development, such as producing a prototype or vertical slice, or completing a project already approaching release. Such contributions can help teams reach a milestone that strengthens their position when seeking further support. However, the survey does not establish what proportion of a project's budget these amounts cover. Their adequacy depends on team size, location, production scope and the stage at which funding is received. The evidence collected is also limited, as data represents only 14 of the 26 eligible records.

Figure 19. Distribution of usable funding amounts per team.



The findings therefore suggest that access to program funding should not be equated with securing the resources needed for a complete production cycle. Where project costs exceed the contribution received, teams remain dependent on complementary resources, including publisher agreements, investment, additional grants or their own income. In this context, the relationship between direct finance and market access becomes particularly important: support can help teams progress towards their next financing opportunity while leaving the challenge of funding completion unresolved.

The reported participation in industry events, showcases and demo days can be understood within this broader financing pathway. These activities may connect development progress with opportunities to meet potential partners and funders. Their presence, however, does not establish that teams secure the additional resources required or that participation in events results in commercial agreements.

7. How Programs Sustain Their Operations

The financing findings suggest that sustaining game support involves securing commitments from institutions and partners while income generated through participation or program activities is reported less often. Public grants are widely reported as the most common source of funding, and most reviewed records describe no financial counterpart from participants. This places continuity of external and institutional support at the center of the discussion about program sustainability and directs the effort of the leaders of these initiatives toward securing and guaranteeing these external funding sources. In the open-ended responses about program challenges, some accounts stated that the energy and time dedicated by leadership to these efforts is equal to, or even greater than, the effort put into operating the program itself.

Therefore, operational findings suggest that delivering support depends on an organizational capacity that itself needs sustained attention. Managers must secure resources, attract suitable teams and coordinate relationships while meeting participants' needs. Requests for stronger institutional support and demands for practical operational tools imply a fragile and unstable position for organizations seeking to strengthen the support ecosystem.

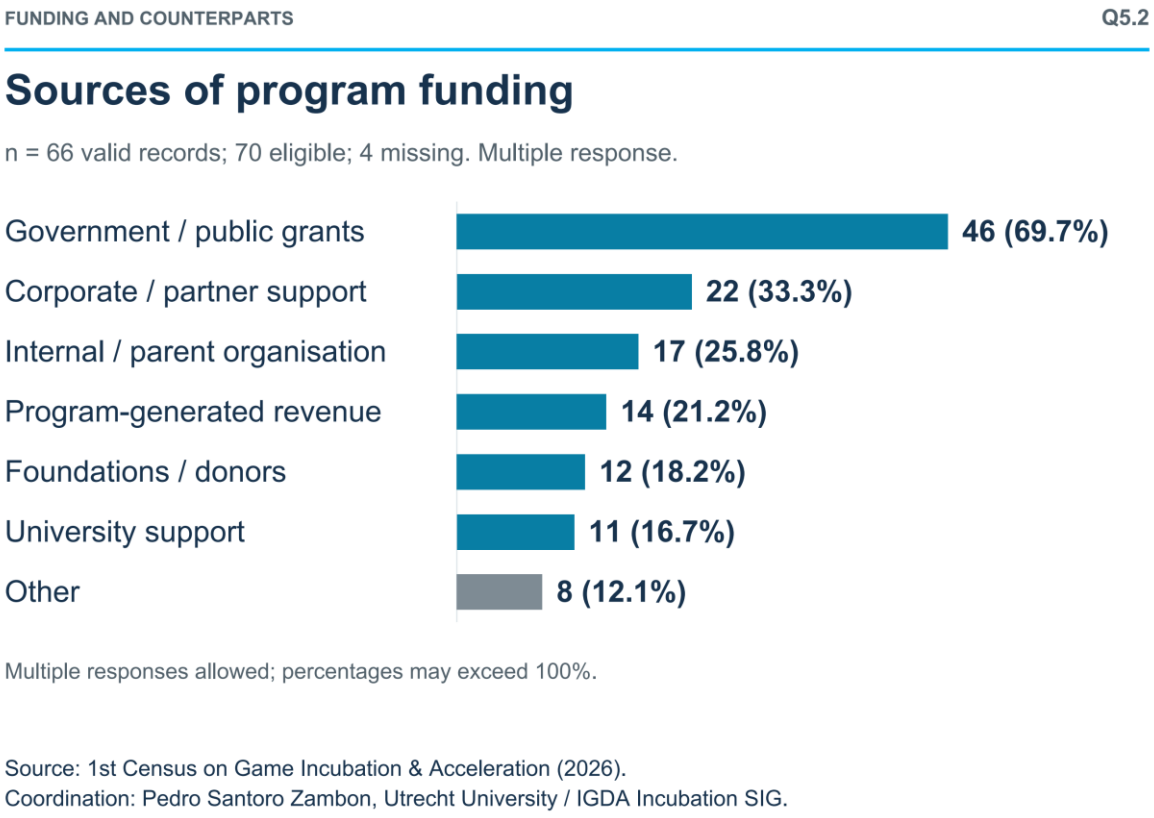
Sources of program funding

Public support occupies a prominent position in the financing of the initiatives surveyed. Government or public grants are reported in 46 of 66 answers (69.7%), substantially more often than corporate partnerships or program-generated revenue (Figure 20). Read alongside the report's findings on talent and community development, this pattern is consistent with support for benefits extending beyond the commercial returns of individual studios.

The focus of these programs on providing contributions to the broader development ecosystem may either explain the willingness to seek this type of public funding or even suggest that this focus may be influenced by the available source of funding. Similarly, the availability of public funding at the local, regional, and national levels may explain the geographical and territorial constraints in recruiting beneficiaries for these programs.

The relatively limited use of program-generated revenue raises a question about the scope for financing support through its own activities. This may relate to the focus on emerging creators, whose resources can already be constrained. Fees or other financial obligations could place additional pressure on participating teams. The Census does not establish whether such obligations cause financial difficulties or whether greater earned income would improve program sustainability; these possibilities require assessment against the program’s objectives and participant profile.

Figure 20. Sources used to finance program operations.



The priority ranking of funding sources adds evidence about the position of public funding within mixed arrangements. Public grants receive 20 first-place rankings among 28 usable rankings for that source, while corporate or partner support is more often placed second (Figure 21). This suggests that partnerships can play a complementary role in some financing arrangements. The ranking covers only records reporting multiple sources and cannot establish budget shares or the dependence of single-source programs.

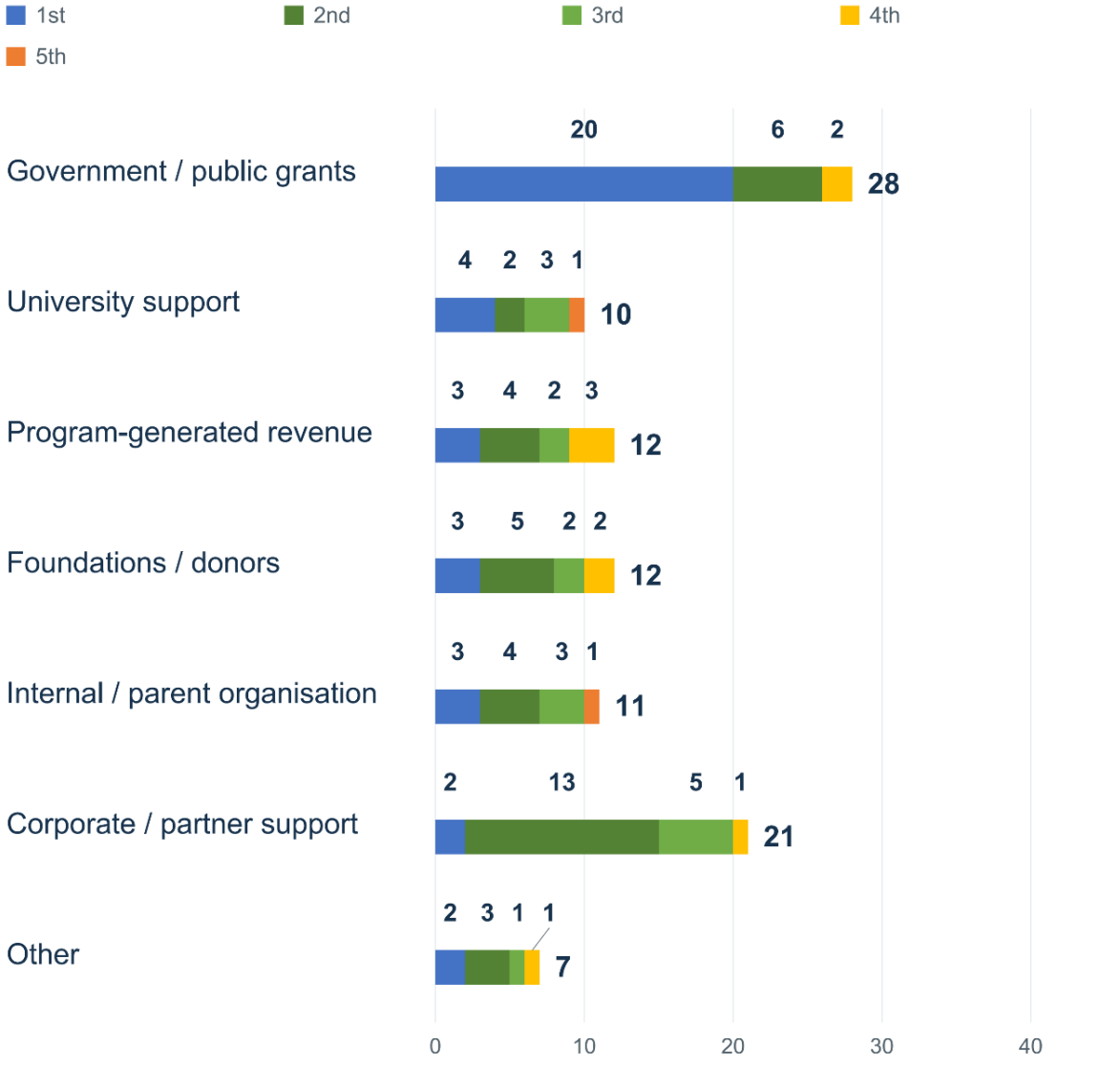
For managers and funders, the implication is to consider what each source enables and how reliably it supports delivery. Additional partners may broaden the funding base, but the survey does not show that more sources produce greater stability. Their value depends on whether commitments cover the work required, including coordination and continuity between program cycles.

Figure 21. Relative importance of selected funding sources, shown as counts by rank.

FUNDING AND COUNTERPARTS Q5.2.1

Priority ranking of funding sources

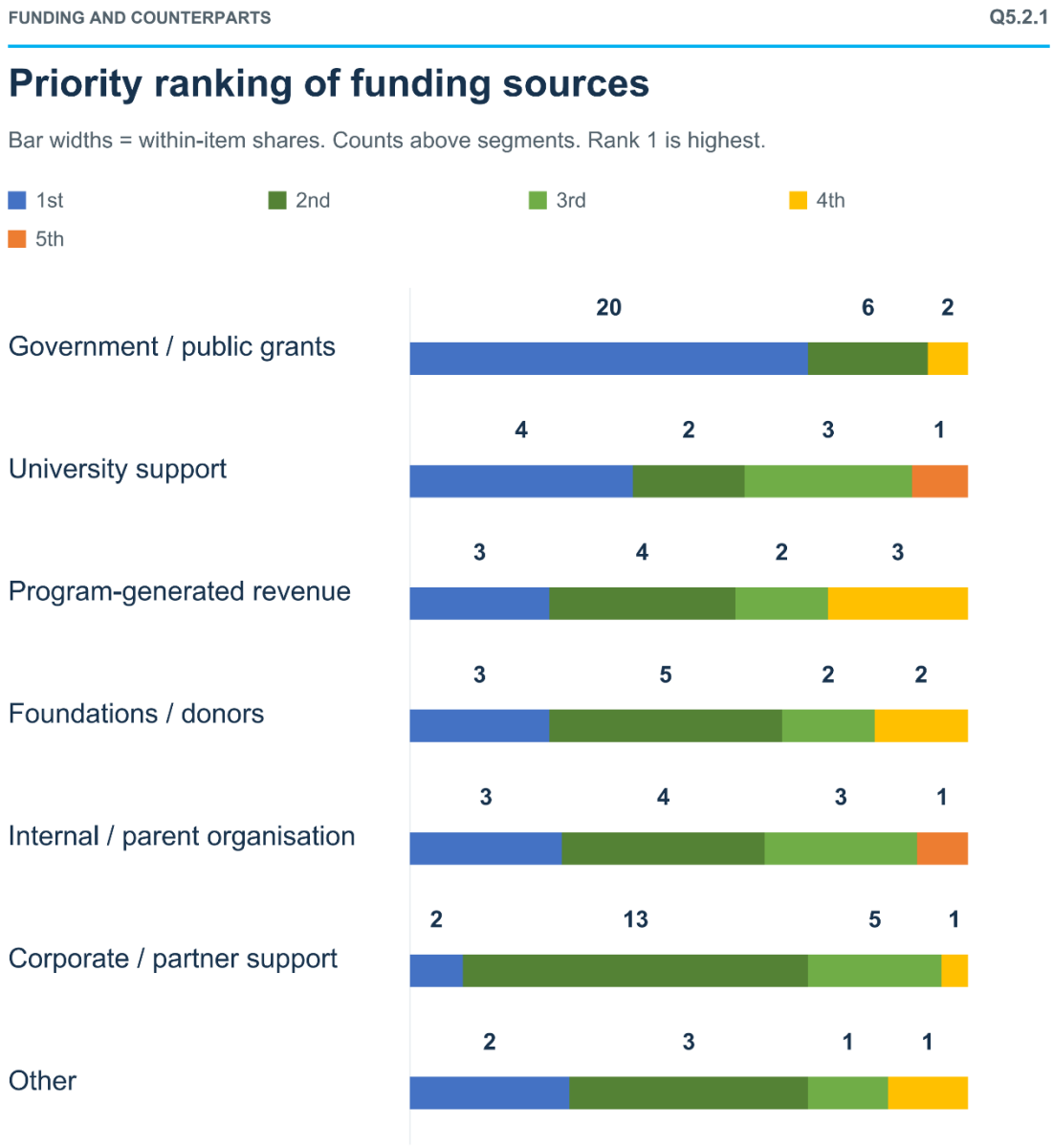
Bar widths = numbers of records. Counts above segments; totals at right. Rank 1 is highest.



Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Figure 22. Relative importance of selected funding sources, shown as a 100% ranking view (Q5.2.1).



Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

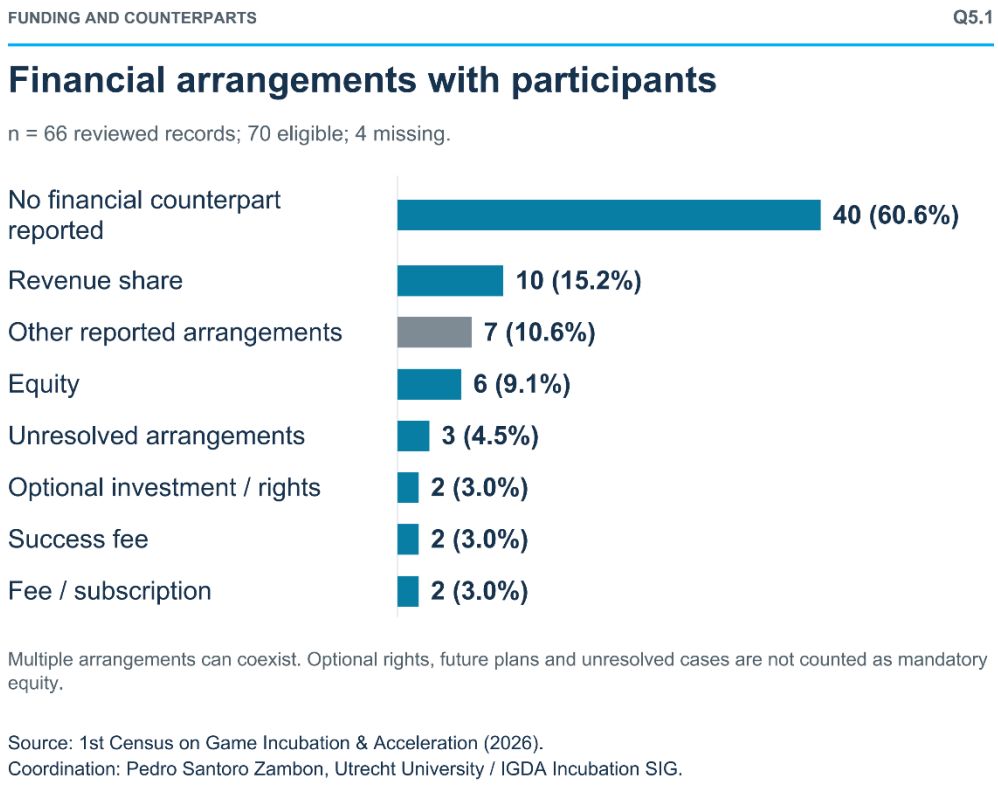
Financial arrangements with participants

The prevalence of support without a financial counterpart suggests that direct financial returns from participants are not a defining feature of many initiatives in the sample. Forty of 66 reviewed records (60.6%) report no such counterpart, while revenue sharing and equity appear in smaller subsets (Figure 23). This suggests that incubation and acceleration are not necessarily organized around recovering costs through successful ventures. The findings accommodate institutional, educational and ecosystem development purposes whose financing can be separated from the commercial returns of individual teams.

These arrangements also distribute financial obligations differently over time. A fee creates a payment obligation for participation, while revenue sharing and equity connect potential returns to later commercial performance. Their presence alone does not establish that they generate enough income to sustain a program. Equally, the absence of a counterpart does not establish that participation is accessible to everyone: teams may still face living costs and the costs of development.

The design issue is therefore how participant terms fit both the program's mission and its operating model. Clear distinctions between mandatory obligations, optional investment rights and future plans help applicants understand the commitment involved. The reviewed ambiguities make this transparency particularly relevant, without implying that one arrangement is financially superior to the others.

Figure 23. Reviewed financial arrangements between programs and participants.

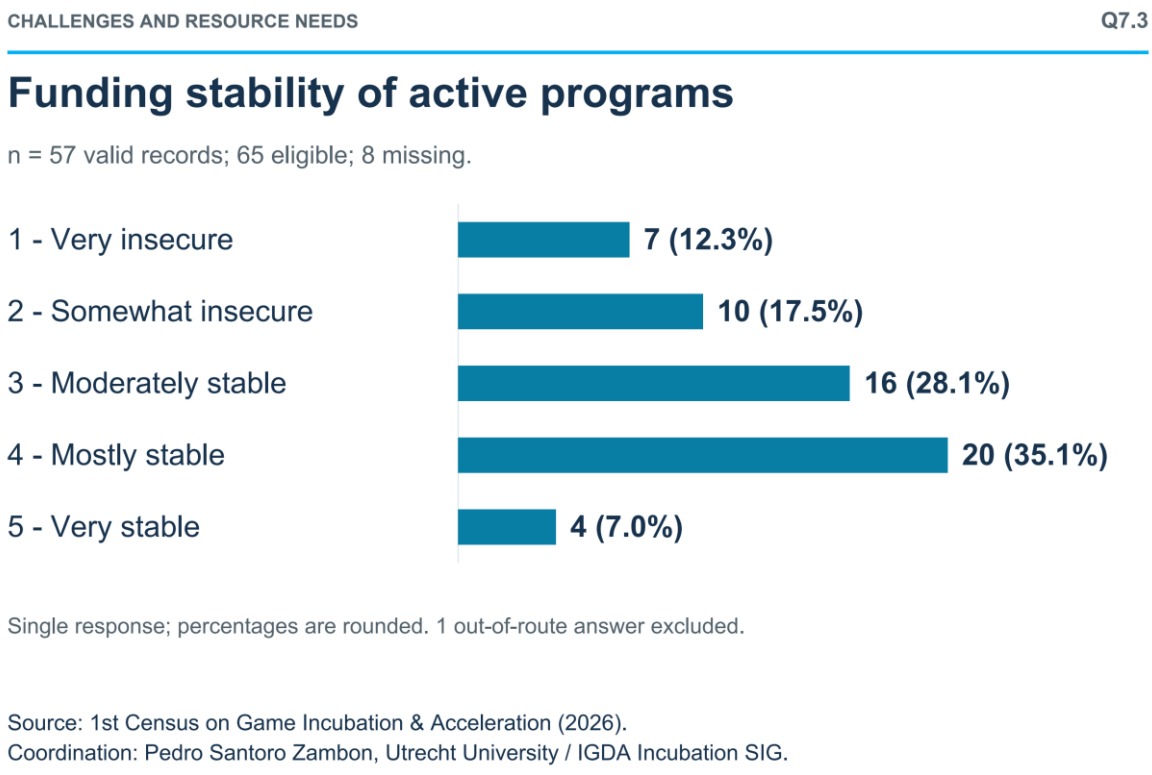


Funding stability and continuation

Among the 57 active-program records rating funding stability, 17 (29.8%) describe it as very or somewhat insecure, 16 (28.1%) as moderately stable, and 24 (42.1%) as mostly or very stable (Figure 24). Moderate stability should not be equated with financial distress. The distribution nevertheless raises a question about predictability: being operational does not necessarily mean having secure resources for future cycles. The survey does not establish the length of funding commitments or how confidently each program can plan beyond its current funding period.

This matters especially for activities whose value depends on continuity, such as mentor relationships, accumulated staff experience, and alumni follow-up and continued community. These demands require commitments that can extend beyond a single cohort, and uncertainty may make those commitments harder to plan. The Census data does not measure whether it has already reduced provision, and funding stability should therefore be considered alongside the duration of commitments, renewal conditions and the flexibility to cover core delivery costs. Additionally, the four retrospective answers from ended or paused initiatives are insufficient to explain why programs stopped or to compare their financial security reliably with active programs (Q7.3.1). The evidence supports a concern about predictability among current providers but does not establish a relationship between a particular funding model and closure.

Figure 24. Perceived funding stability among active programs.



Challenges in running programs

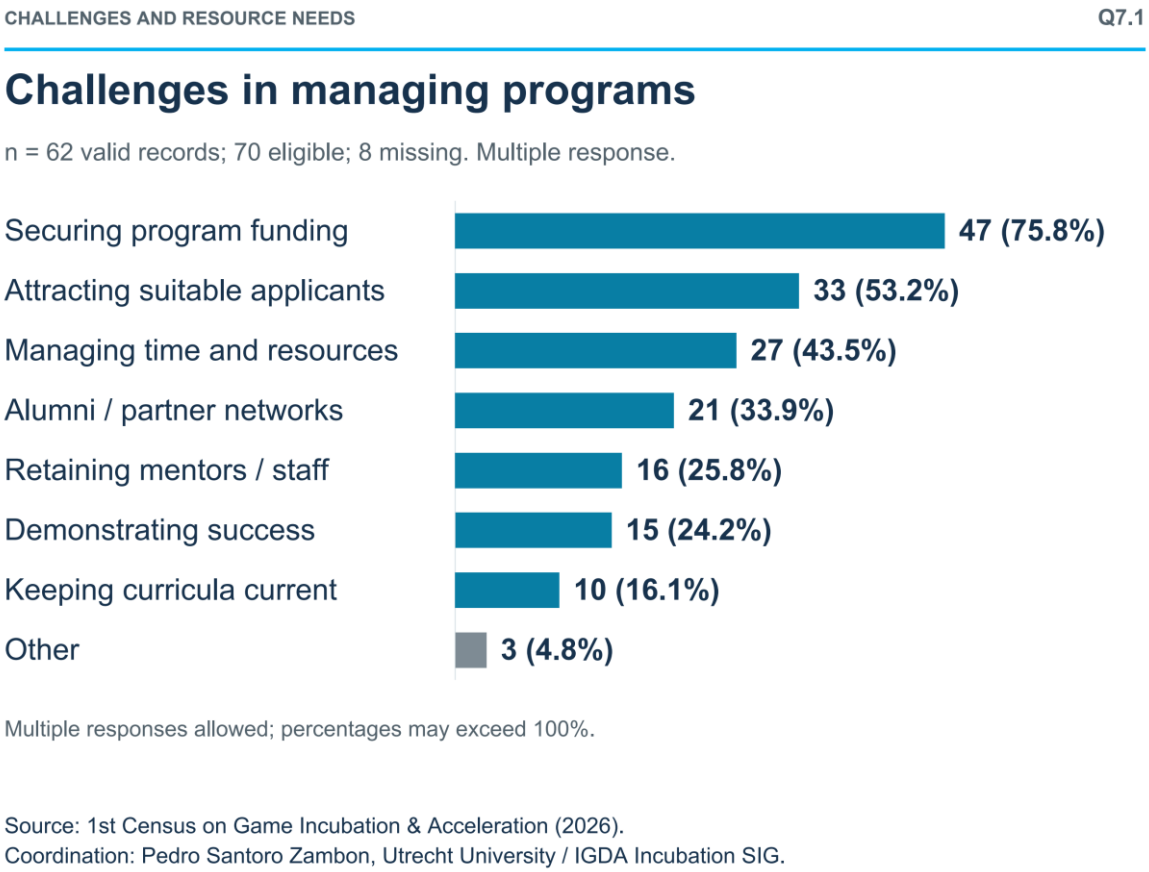
Going further with the analysis of the program's operations, the Census asks about the challenges the leaders faced. Securing program funding is the most frequently selected challenge, followed by recruitment of suitable cohorts and coordination concerns (Figure 25). It suggests that program management roles extend beyond delivering a curriculum and the support itself.

The challenges of recruiting suitable applicants are particularly relevant alongside the further evidence of substantial team needs, highlighting that the perceived demand for support does not automatically translate into a sufficient pool of applicants suited to a particular offer. For example, programs aimed at established companies in the process of launching commercial products may clash with a growing demand from recent graduates who have not yet found their first professional opportunity. Even though many may apply to the program, there could be a misalignment between the demand and the direction and objective of the initiative.

This raises questions about the relationship between recruitment, eligibility and the support available. Difficulties attracting applicants could reflect visibility, geographic reach, entry requirements or the maturity of the local ecosystem. The survey does not distinguish those explanations, so the result should not be treated as evidence of a particular shortage of talent. Examining where applicants fall outside the program's criteria could help clarify whether the issue concerns outreach or the design of the offer itself.

Time and resource management and the maintenance of alumni or partner networks add another dimension. These activities represent the coordination required to connect teams with opportunities and sustain relationships beyond scheduled sessions. The findings support making this work visible in operational planning, but do not establish a causal link between managers' resource constraints and the outcomes experienced by particular teams.

Figure 25. Challenges experienced in managing programs.

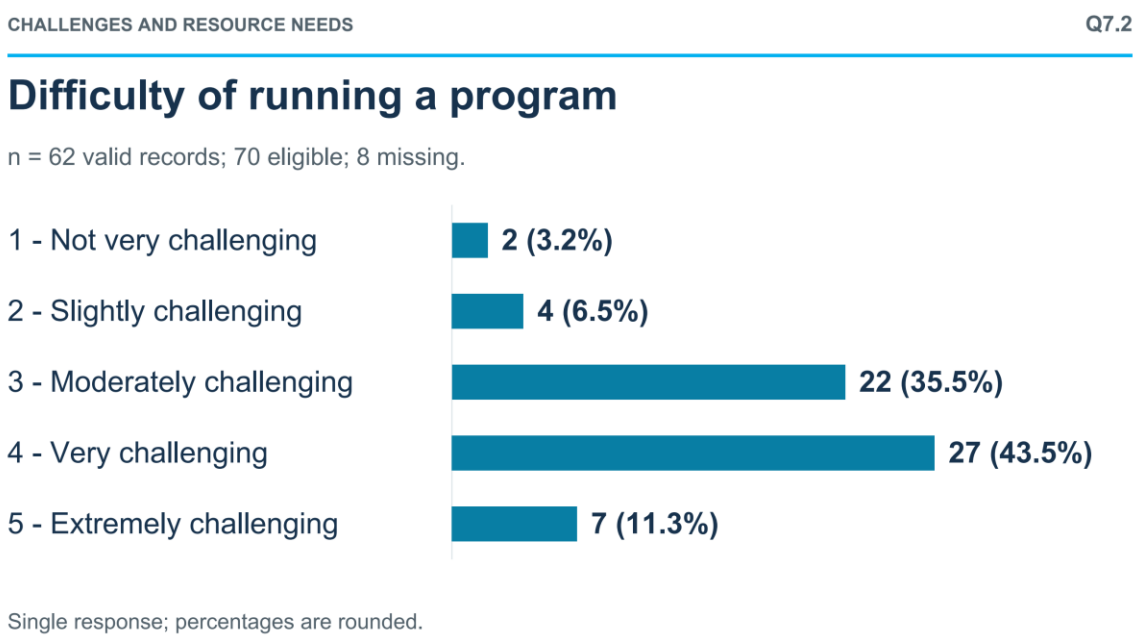


The perceived operational difficulty

Running a support program is perceived as demanding by a substantial share of respondents: 34 of 62 rate it very or extremely challenging (Figure 26). This assessment is consistent with the range of responsibilities described previously in this report, although the survey does not identify which responsibility drives each rating. The result does not provide a measure of staff workload or organizational efficiency, but points to a question about the capacity required to maintain delivery.

Here, the main reflection lies in the combination of skills necessary for managing these programs. Coupled with the evidence of financial instability and resource scarcity, a wide range of functions of varying dimensions end up accumulating where these responsibilities are concentrated in a small team or a single person. While this team/person must be able to handle the pedagogical aspects encompassing topics ranging from commercial and business challenges to technical and artistic implementation, running a game incubator or accelerator also requires expertise in event organization and production, public and private fundraising, stakeholder relations, internal and external communication, community management, as well as data collection and results monitoring.

Figure 26. Managers' assessment of the difficulty of running a program.



Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

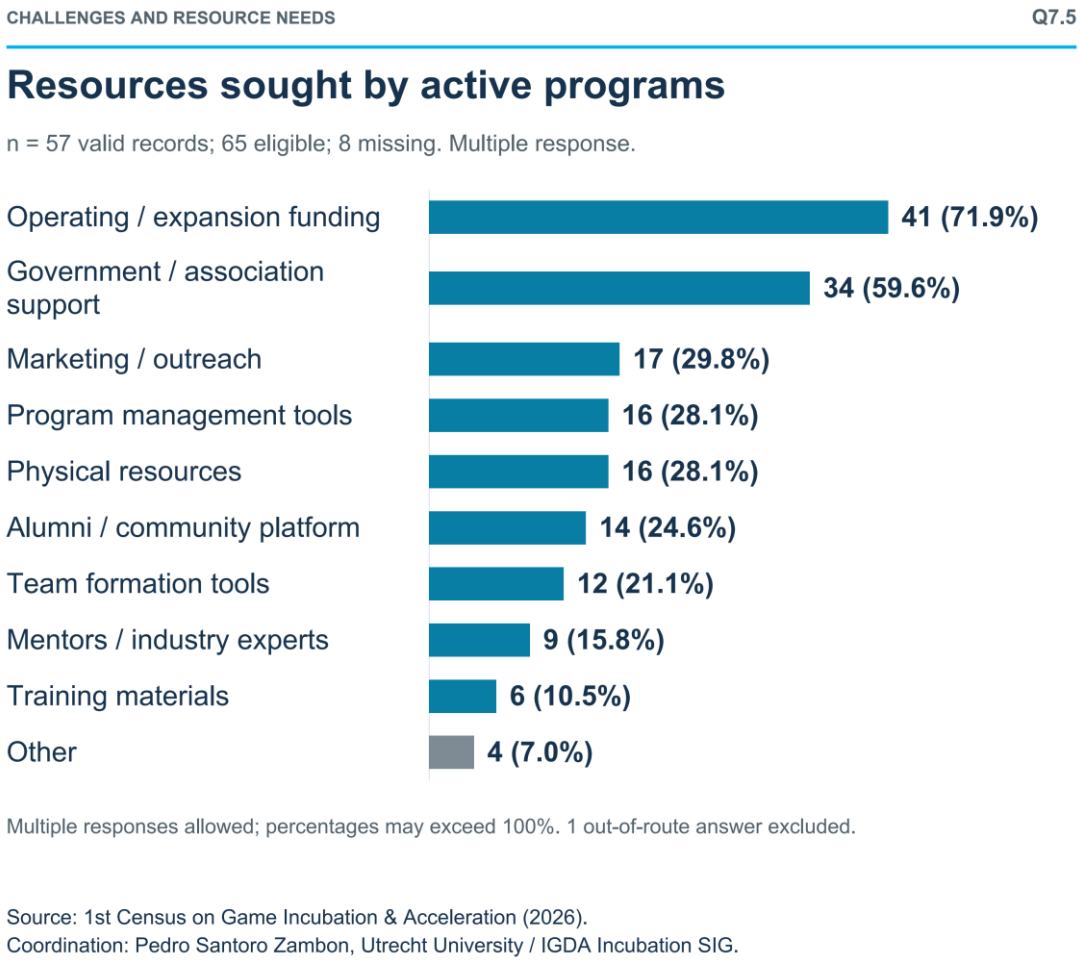
The open responses about additional resources provide context for this interpretation and help distinguish two possible kinds of constraints. Requests for reliable finance, staffing and experienced support concern the capacity to do the work; while requests for coordination and mentor-matching tools concern how that work is organized (Q7.6). These requests suggest potential uses for shared infrastructure, tools, guides and manuals that improve information flows and coordination. Their ability to reduce workload was not tested by the Census. Still, the capacity issues, such as shortages of people, funding or expertise, remain unresolved.

For organizations supporting program leaders, such as the Incubation SIG, an appropriate response therefore begins with identifying the constraint a proposed intervention addresses. Shared expertise, staff development or continuity of funding may be more relevant in some contexts than a new management platform or technical solutions. These are design implications drawn from the range of reported needs. The Census does not measure their relative effectiveness or determine whether demanding work is temporary, persistent or concentrated in particular operational models.

Resources demanded by active programs

The resources sought, described in Figure 27, suggest that many active initiatives are concerned with their capacity to maintain or extend provision, following the previous evidence on demand for operational or expansion funding (71.9% of the respondents). Matching responses of Q7.1 and Q7.3 shows that demand for funding extends beyond programs reporting financial insecurity. Among the 41 records requesting operating or expansion funding, 38 (92.7%) also identify securing program funding as a management challenge. However, 12 (29.3%) describe their funding as mostly or very stable, compared with 15 reporting insecurity and 14 moderate stability. Ten of those 12 stable records still identify fundraising as a challenge, indicating that perceived stability does not eliminate the need to secure further resources. This pattern is compatible with expansion, renewal or improvements to existing provision, but it is important to highlight that the survey cannot distinguish these purposes and therefore does not establish how many programs are seeking to expand an otherwise viable operation.

Figure 27. Resources active programs report needing.



The second most demanded resource is a related demand for greater support from government or industry associations (59.6% of the respondents). This prominence of institutional support is also significant, but its meaning extends beyond what the survey can specify, as respondents may be seeking finance, partnerships, access or other forms of assistance. In that sense, it should not be counted as an equivalent measure of funding shortage. Its presence alongside requests for outreach, management tools and physical resources suggests that strengthening provision may require attention to both institutional relationships and practical delivery conditions. For funders, in general, a useful distinction presented by this evidence is whether assistance is intended to preserve current services, improve their quality or expand their reach.

While mentors and training materials are less frequently selected as unmet needs in this question, it does not imply those resources are less important to program delivery. What it could indicate is that managers more often identify shortages elsewhere.

The four retrospective answers from ended or paused initiatives offer context but are too few to explain the causes of discontinuation.

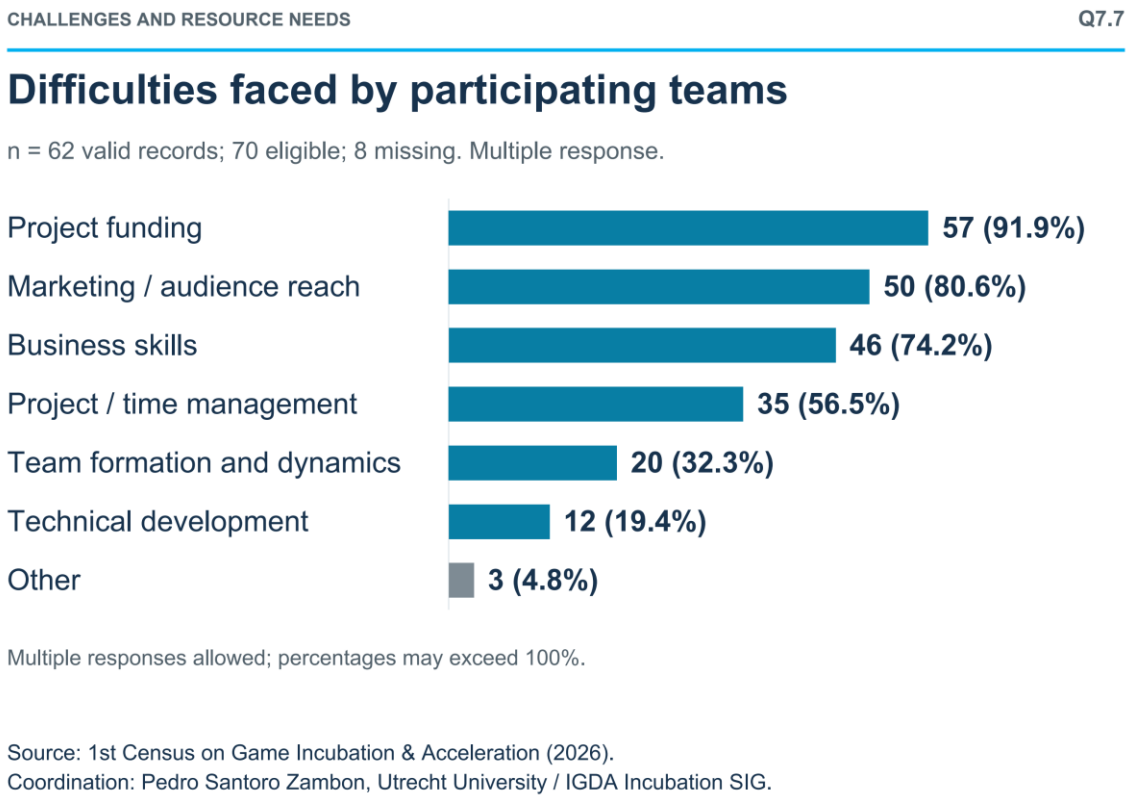
8. Team Challenges and Support Needs

Managers' accounts suggest that supporting game development involves helping teams organize viable work and connect it to financial and market opportunities. Business and production concerns appear at selection and during participation. These are observations from program leaders, rather than estimates of the proportion of individual developers affected or evidence following the same teams over time.

Difficulties during participation

The reported difficulties place the commercial conditions of game development at the center of support needs. Project finance, audience reach and business skills are the most widely identified concerns, with finance reported in 57 of 62 answers (91.9%) (Figure 28). Funding also receives the highest first-place rankings among the difficulties selected for ranking (Figure 29). Its prominence therefore reflects both how often managers identify it and the relative urgency assigned to it within that ranking subset.

Figure 28. Difficulties managers observe among participating teams.



Finance, marketing and business capability can interact in ways that make isolated interventions insufficient. A team may need resources to complete its project, while also needing a credible budget, realistic scope and evidence of an audience to pursue those resources. This is a plausible interpretation of the needs identified, rather than a causal relationship tested by the Census. It suggests a rationale for connecting commercial mentoring with opportunities to apply that learning through market engagement and funding discussions.

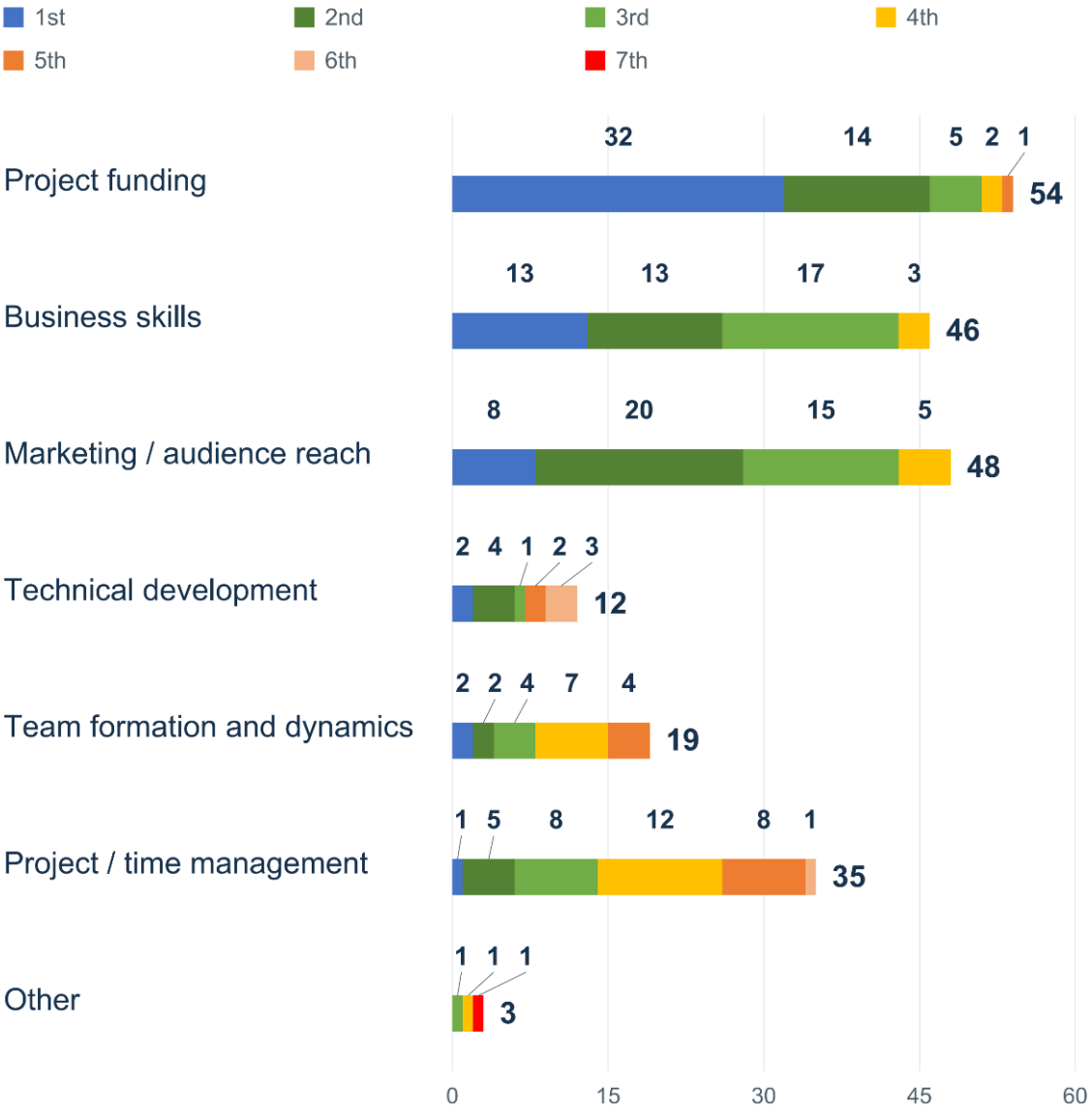
The contrast with types of support (Figure 15) and training subjects (Figure 17) is also relevant. Business mentoring and pitch preparation are widespread, while direct funding reaches a smaller share of programs. At the aggregate level, this raises the question of how preparation connects to external opportunities but does not demonstrate that teams receive inadequate support. Technical difficulties are less frequently reported, but this may reflect the teams admitted, the focus of the programs or managers' perspectives. It should not be read as evidence that technical development is generally straightforward.

Figure 29. Priority assigned to selected team difficulties, shown as counts by rank.

CHALLENGES AND RESOURCE NEEDS Q7.7.1

Priority ranking of team difficulties

Bar widths = numbers of records. Counts above segments; totals at right. Rank 1 is highest.



Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Figure 30. Priority assigned to selected team difficulties, shown as a 100% ranking view (Q7.7.1).



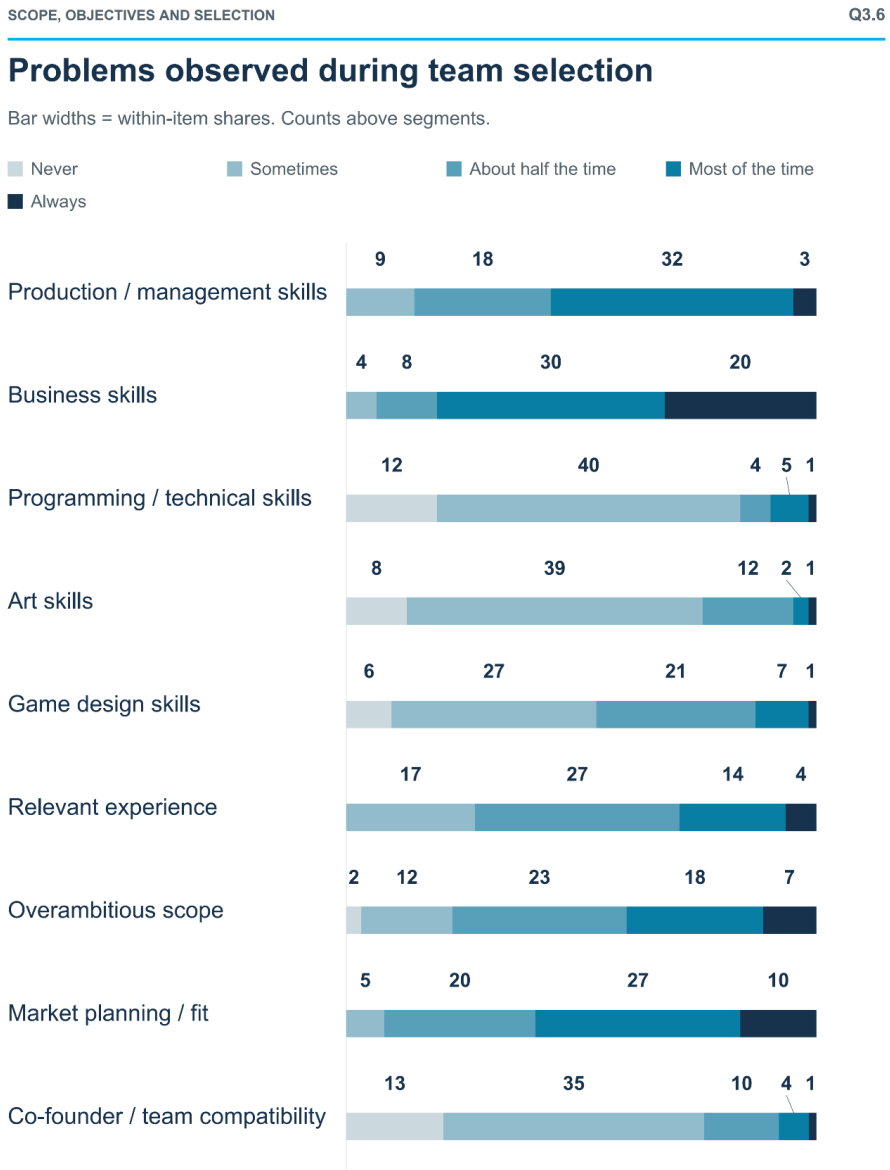
Only records selecting at least two options ranked their selected items. Bases vary; rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Team readiness at selection

The selection findings suggest that the capacity to organize a development venture is a recurring concern when assessing readiness. Business skills are described as problematic most of the time or always in 50 of 62 answers, and production or management skills in 35 of 62 (Figure 31). Technical and artistic skills are more often identified as occasional problems. Within the applicant groups managers encounter, this pattern points to a distinction between possessing development skills and being able to coordinate those skills into a sustainable project.

Figure 31. Frequency of problems observed when selecting teams.



Each row has its own valid base. Counts above segments; percentages use the row total. Custom "Other" items are summarised separately.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

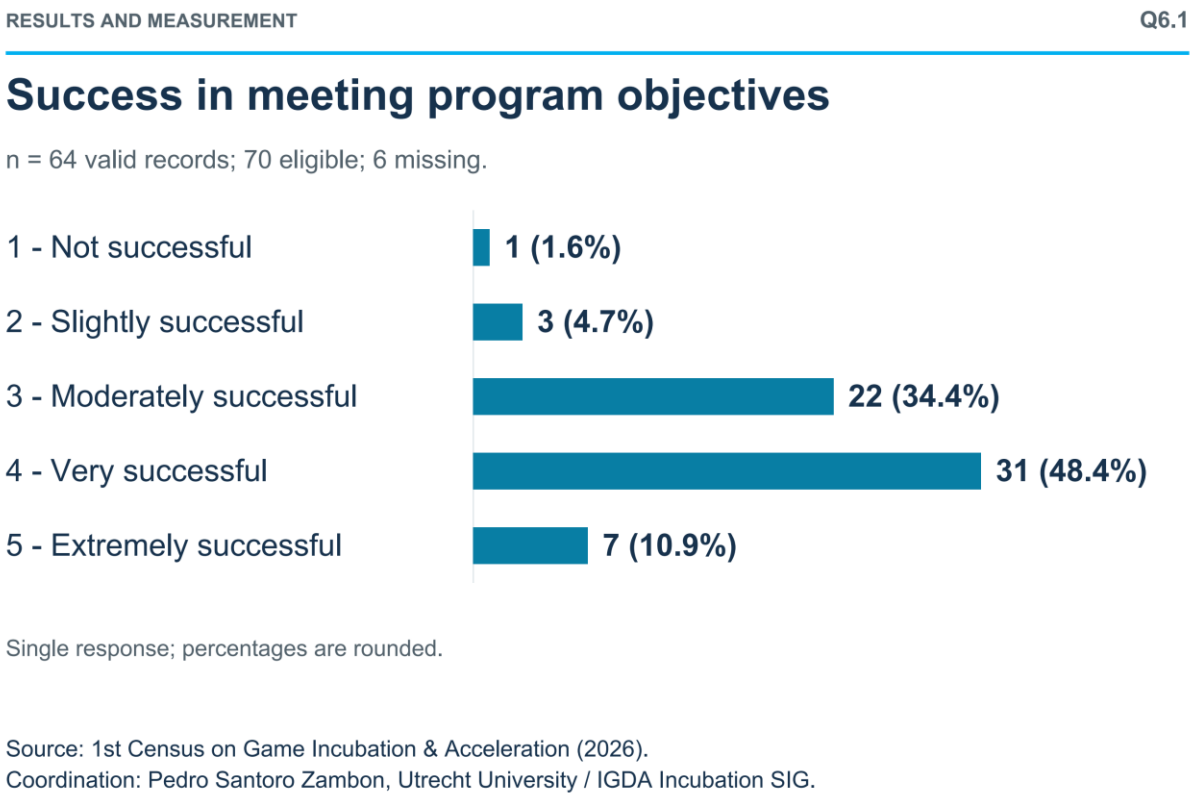
9. How Programs Understand and Measure Success

The findings distinguish three aspects of evaluation: managers' confidence in their programs, the outcomes they consider valuable, and the evidence they can report consistently. These aspects do not necessarily coincide. Understanding success therefore requires connecting each indicator to the intended change, the people or ventures concerned and the period over which progress is expected.

Perceived success

The generally positive assessments suggest that many managers see their programs as delivering value against their own objectives. Thirty-eight of 64 answers (59.4%) describe the program as very or extremely successful (Figure 32). Because those objectives can include learning, studio development, game releases or community building, similar ratings may represent different kinds of achievement. The result is best understood as confidence in mission fulfilment within the responding group.

Figure 32. Perceived success in meeting program objectives.



Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Positive assessments frequently coexist with substantial delivery pressures within the same response profiles. Of the 34 records describing program delivery as very or extremely challenging, 20 (58.8%) also rate their program as very or extremely successful in meeting its objectives. Across the 62 records with valid answers to both questions, however, perceived difficulty and perceived success show virtually no monotonic association (Spearman's $\rho = -0.006$). These findings suggest that leaders can judge a program favorably while recognizing the considerable effort required to deliver it. A positive assessment therefore should not be taken as evidence that delivery is easy or adequately resourced. The survey captures perceived success, and does not independently verify outcomes or establish how operating pressures affect them.

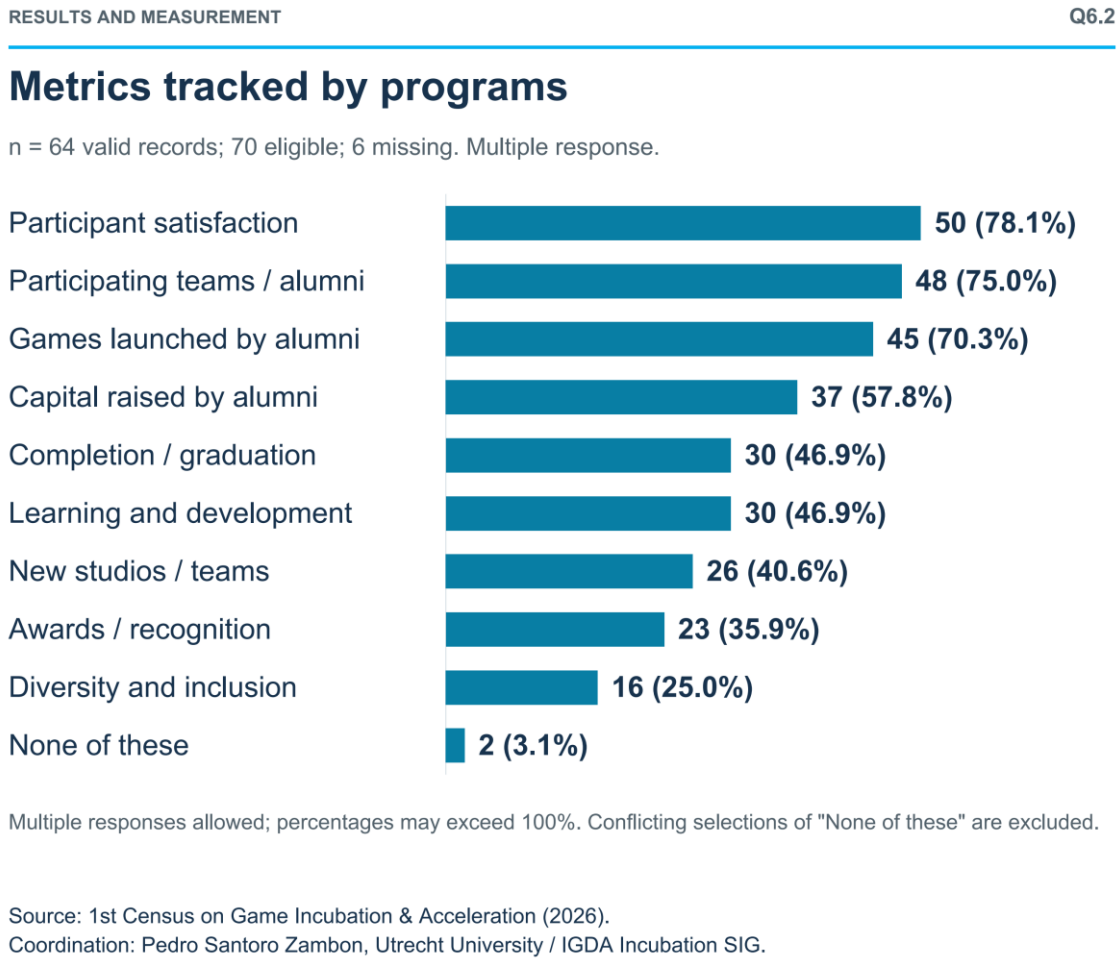
For evaluation, the important next step for further investigation is to explain what underpins the judgement and perception of success. A program serving emerging talent might demonstrate progress through learning and professional trajectories, while one supporting an established studio may place greater emphasis on commercial results. This Census reveals more about leaders' perceptions and satisfaction with the results of their own work than about a generalized metric of success. An overall success rating cannot provide a common performance score across different missions. Comparison requires additional evidence suited to each program's intended contribution.

What programs track

Monitoring practices combine evidence about participation and experience with evidence of subsequent commercial activity. Satisfaction is the most widely reported measure, followed by participating teams or alumni and games released (Figure 33). These indicators answer different questions: whether people take part, how they assess their experience and whether development reaches a visible market outcome. Their coexistence suggests a broad account of value, although collecting them does not establish that they are connected in a single evaluation framework.

See Appendix B for the reported results.

Figure 33. Indicators reported as part of program monitoring.



The priority ranking adds an important distinction between what is collected and what is considered consequential. Games launched receive the highest first-place rankings, while learning and maturity and the formation of studios or teams also receive substantial first-place support (Figure 34). Learning is explicitly tracked in 30 of 64 records, compared with 50 tracking satisfaction. This raises the possibility that some important developmental outcomes are less routinely documented than participants' immediate experience.

A game release is a visible development milestone, but release counts alone do not establish commercial sustainability or program impact. Assessing sustainability also requires evidence about the product's economic results and the resources needed to continue development.

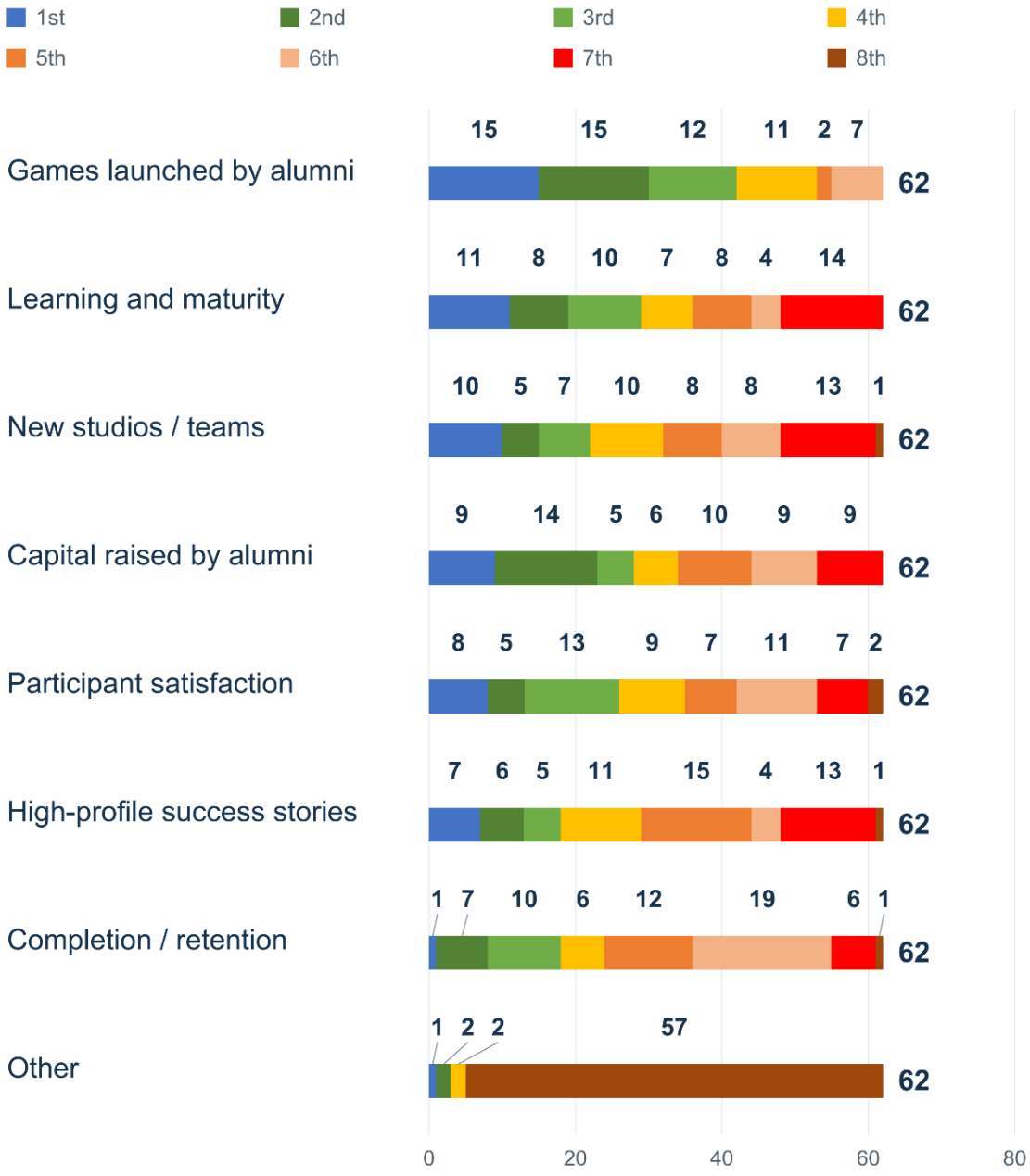
Open responses extend the evaluation agenda to employment, careers, business continuity and relationships (Q6.2.1). These themes suggest that a game's release or a financing deal may capture only part of a program's intended contribution. The analytical task is to connect the measures to those intentions and clarify whose progress they describe, without treating every possible outcome as a reporting requirement for every program.

Figure 34. Relative priority assigned to indicators of program success, shown as counts by rank.

RESULTS AND MEASUREMENT Q6.3

Priority ranking of success indicators

Bar widths = numbers of records. Counts above segments; totals at right. Rank 1 is highest.

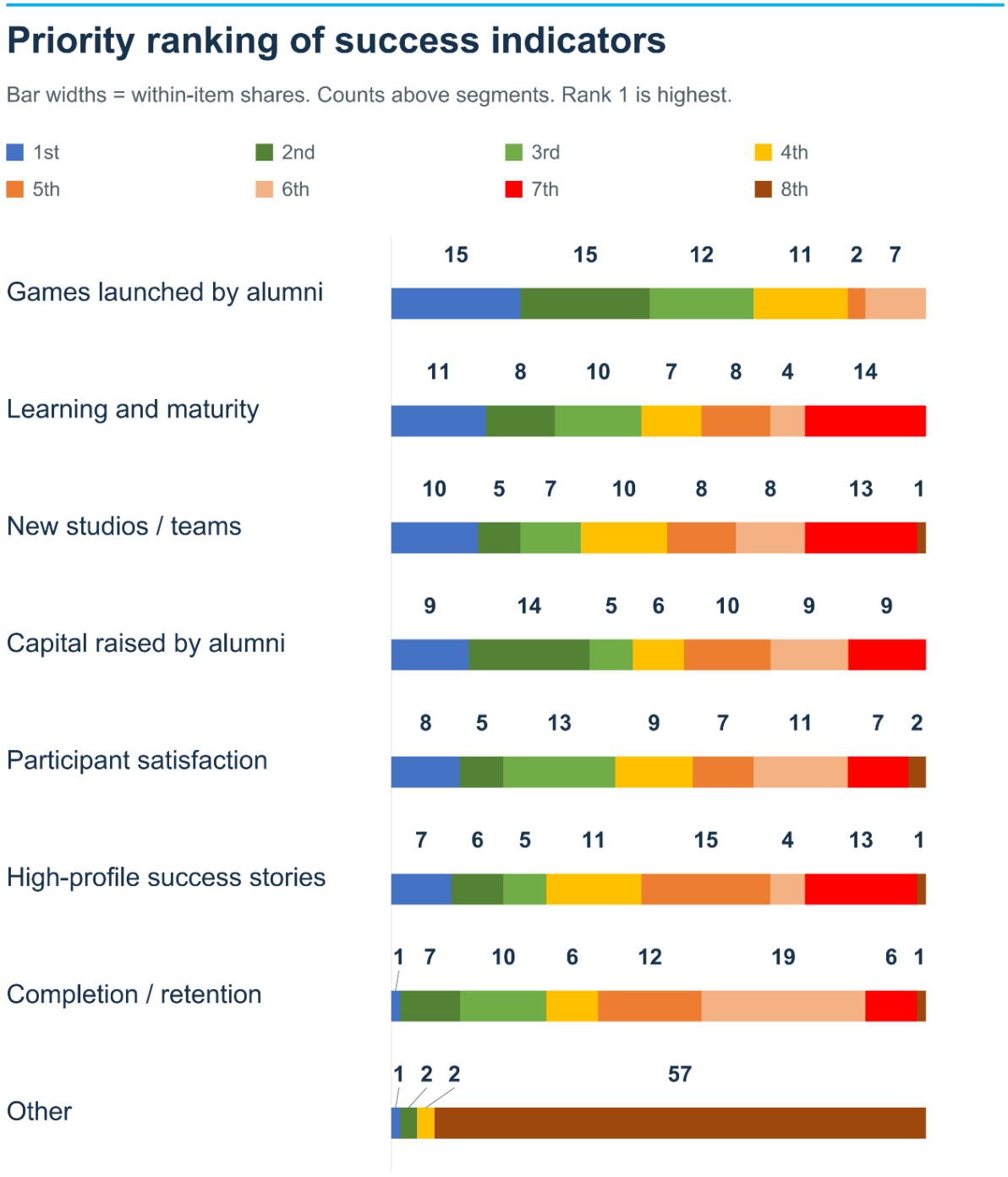


Success indicators use their own ranking question; not restricted to previously tracked metrics. Rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Figure 35. Relative priority assigned to indicators of program success, shown as a 100% ranking view (Q6.3).

RESULTS AND MEASUREMENT Q6.3



Success indicators use their own ranking question; not restricted to previously tracked metrics. Rows ordered by first-place count.

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

The numerical evidence on reported results

The numerical answers show uneven availability of comparable evidence across outcomes. Usable point values are more common for current team counts and released games than for capital raised by alumni (Table 1). This difference may reflect the accessibility of information, the maturity of the initiatives or the difficulty of expressing results within the requested units and periods. It cannot be interpreted as evidence that unreported outcomes did not occur.

The contrast between measures also illustrates why a single benchmark would be misleading. Zero releases is the most frequently reported category for commercial games, but accounts for only 12 of 44 usable answers. Its meaning depends on program age, project duration and objectives. A recently launched initiative focused on early development cannot be assessed on the same timetable as one with several completed cohorts. The table does not establish whether the records reporting zero releases are newer, so that explanation remains a possibility requiring further analysis.

Table 1. Usable numerical answers and the most frequent reported band in Q6.4.

Measure	Valid n	Missing	Other entries excluded	Most frequent band
Current teams	55	9	6	5-9 (25/55)
Teams that participated	51	9	10	10-19 (15/51)
Completion or graduation	43	11	16	90% to 100% (31/43)
Investors or publishers attending	33	12	25	20-49 (10/33)
Offers received	30	13	27	1-4 (16/30)
Deals closed	33	13	24	1-4 (23/33)
Capital raised by alumni	20	18	32	USD 100,000 to below 500,000 (5/20)
New studios established	38	15	17	1-4 (10/38)
Commercial game releases	44	12	14	0 (12/44)
Awards or recognitions	28	15	27	1-4 (8/28)
Participant satisfaction	34	17	19	90% to 100% (19/34)

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).

Studio survival estimates

The survival responses make the limits of long-term visibility particularly apparent. Substantive estimates fall from 43 records at six months to 24 at five years, while unsure or not-applicable answers increase from 14 to 30 (Table 2). This pattern is consistent with both limited follow-up and the absence of sufficiently old cohorts in some programs. Because the response category combines uncertainty with non-applicability, the Census cannot separate those explanations.

Table 2. Bases and selected responses for each survival horizon in Q6.4.

Horizon	Valid n	Unsure or not applicable	Missing	Above 90% survival
6 months	43	14	13	24 (55.8%)
1 year	41	14	15	14 (34.1%)
3 years	32	22	16	5 (15.6%)
5 years	24	30	16	4 (16.7%)

Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026). Bases are analytical records; percentages use the valid answer count.

Survival rate remains a relevant indicator where sustaining studios is an explicit objective, but its interpretation should be connected to other trajectories. A studio's closure does not reveal whether its members left game development, joined other teams or applied their experience to later projects. Those possibilities need evidence of their own. This indicator, considered by itself, does not gauge the success or failure of the initiative, especially when assessing knowledge transfer and the economic sustainability of game creators. For example, a participant's first studio may close while experience gained during the program contributes to later work. That trajectory is a possibility requiring follow-up evidence, rather than a result established by this survey. Therefore, the indiscriminate use of this metric by funders should be approached with caution, especially for policymakers who qualify medium and long-term impact strategies. A fuller assessment would follow ventures and participants separately, making changes in organizational continuity and professional development visible without automatically treating either closure or continued existence as proof of program performance.

Learning and the quality of measurement

The open responses on learning suggest that evaluation is often connected to the work teams produce and the decisions they make. The editorial synthesis draws on 43 records containing text and identifies the following approaches, without estimating their prevalence:

- **Survey-based assessment:** post-program surveys and evaluations to assess participation satisfaction and collect self-declared impact metrics;
- **Post-mortems:** mandatory and optional reflective self-assessment of the game project cycle by participant teams;
- **Observed progress:** reviewing pitches, prototypes, production milestones and business readiness metrics;

These approaches can make progression tangible, but an improved output alone does not distinguish prior capabilities, learning during participation and contributions from outside the program. The responses also describe absent tracking, informal follow-up and difficulties attributing outcomes. Shared approaches to documenting learning could support future collaboration between programs, but the Census does not establish the effectiveness of a particular assessment method.

10. Implications and Future Mapping

The Census provides a shared reference for a field in which programs operate under different names, institutional arrangements and definitions of success. By documenting these differences alongside recurring challenges, it helps managers, funders and policymakers identify where support is available, how it is organized and what may be needed to sustain it. The findings suggest that strengthening game development ecosystems requires attention to the organizations delivering support, as well as to the teams receiving it.

For program managers, this evidence creates opportunities to examine how their objectives, participant profiles, activities and resources fit together. Comparisons can inform discussions about selection, mentoring, funding arrangements and follow-up, without assuming that the most common approach is necessarily the most effective. The value of a shared evidence base lies in helping managers ask better questions about their own provision and identify peers whose experience may be relevant to similar challenges.

For policymakers and funding organizations, the findings draw attention to the continuity and capacity of the support infrastructure. Program delivery involves maintaining relationships, coordinating expertise, recruiting suitable participants and documenting progress. These functions require resources even when their contribution is not immediately visible in game releases, investment deals or new companies. Funding and evaluation frameworks should therefore consider whether programs have the capacity to deliver their intended support, while selecting outcome measures appropriate to their objectives and the maturity of the teams they serve.

For researchers, the Census offers an empirical starting point for investigating game incubation and acceleration as a distinct field of practice. It identifies questions about institutional arrangements, regional contexts, support models and the relationship between program activities and participant trajectories. Further comparative and longitudinal research could examine these relationships, combining managers' accounts with participant perspectives and independently documented outcomes. Clearer definitions and consistent measures would also help researchers build cumulative knowledge across studies.

For universities and educational institutions, the findings can inform the relationship between game education, entrepreneurship support and professional development. The prominence of business and management challenges raises questions about how students and graduates are prepared to organize development work, establish studios and navigate commercial opportunities. Universities can use this evidence to reflect on curricula, design support for graduates and develop partnerships with existing programs. Following graduates' careers alongside the survival of their first ventures could also provide a broader understanding of educational contributions.

For game creators and development teams, the report can help clarify what incubation and acceleration may offer and which questions to ask before participating. The variety of support arrangements makes it important to consider a program's intended audience, selection requirements, mentoring, industry connections and financial terms. Understanding these differences can support more informed choices about whether an opportunity matches a team's stage and needs. The findings also help set expectations: participation may provide useful capabilities and connections without securing the resources required for a complete production cycle. The Census does not rank individual programs or establish which will deliver the best results for a particular team.

The need for continuity

Periodic mapping is important because this infrastructure changes. Initiatives launch, adapt, pause or close; funding arrangements evolve; and the needs of developers shift. Regular updates could help identify changes in provision, emerging resource pressures and gaps requiring closer investigation. They could also establish whether concerns highlighted in this first edition persist over time. However, changes between survey editions should be interpreted alongside changes in participation: a different sample can produce different results even when underlying conditions have not changed.

Future editions would benefit from a stable core questionnaire, consistent definitions and reporting periods, and clearer distinctions between organizations, programs and individual respondents. Where consent and confidentiality arrangements permit, following the same initiatives over time would strengthen the ability to distinguish changes within programs from changes in the composition of the sample. Broader recruitment would also help include initiatives that are less visible within existing professional networks.

Mapping alone cannot establish which interventions improve outcomes. Its contribution is to identify patterns, guide more focused research and support practical learning. Combining future surveys with program records, participant perspectives and follow-up on professional and organizational trajectories could provide a stronger basis for assessing quality and longer-term contributions.

The IGDA Incubation SIG offers a setting in which this evidence can be discussed and translated into shared learning. A recurring mapping effort, developed with program leaders and informed by the questions facing policymakers, could support more relevant peer exchange, clearer evaluation practices and better-informed decisions about where and how to invest in game development support.

Appendices

Appendix A - Survey Instrument

This appendix reproduces the survey instrument, checked against the original Qualtrics questionnaire. It includes all 78 response items in the survey flow. Branching means that no respondent necessarily encountered every item.

Question wording and answer labels are retained, including the original spelling. Layout and whitespace have been adapted. Q5.2.1 restores the leading Q omitted from that prompt. Administrative questions remain unnumbered; repeated codes Q3.1.1 and Q4.2.3 are preserved. Q2.1 and Q6.4 are headings for fields without individual question numbers. Gaps in the original numbering are also retained.

How the survey was presented

The original sequence was introduction and consent, identification, program information, location and scope. Respondents whose program had launched then received funding, actions, selection, results, challenges, and best practices and outlook. This appendix groups questions in numerical order for reference. Q3.5–Q3.7 and all Q4–Q8 items belong to the launched-program branch; additional conditions are stated beneath the relevant prompts.

Part of the instrument	Codes
Consent, eligibility and identification	Unnumbered
Program information and lifecycle	Q1.1–Q1.6
Location and physical hubs	Q2.1–Q2.2.1
Participants, objectives and selection	Q3.1–Q3.7
Format and support offered	Q4.1–Q4.4
Counterpart arrangements and funding	Q5.1–Q5.2.1
Success and results	Q6.1–Q6.4 and report-link field
Challenges and resources	Q7.1–Q7.8
Best practices and outlook	Q8.1–Q8.2.1

Consent and eligibility

The opening information letter described a 15–25 minute survey of program leaders, coordinated through the IGDA Game Incubation SIG with research support from Utrecht University. It explained the intended research uses, secure storage, research-team access to datasets and aggregate reporting. The following consent and screening prompts were unnumbered.

Informed consent I confirm that I am over 18 years old, have read the information letter provided above, and agree to participate in this research.

Select one. Selecting No ends the survey. Consent is required to proceed.

Options: Yes, I consent to participate (required to proceed); No, I do not consent to participate and I wish to terminate the survey.

Do you (currently or in the past) lead, represent, or are part of the implementation effort of an incubation, acceleration, development ecosystem or support program targetting game creators/studios?

Select one. Selecting No ends the survey.

Options: Yes; No (if you're an incubee, we'll have a specific survey for you, keep following the IGDA Incubation SIG)

Respondent identification

These unnumbered questions document the information collected. No responses to identity or contact fields are reproduced in this report.

Name of the respondent

Open text.

Role in the incubator/accelerator/ecosystem development program

Open text.

Can we contact you further via email?

Select one.

Options: Yes, please contact me to send me the results of this survey, to share about activities related to this subject, and/or a inviting for follow-up interviews/focus groups on my experience.; No, I do not want to be contacted further.

Are you part of the IGDA's Game Incubation SIG Network?

Select one.

Options: Yes, and I will confirm my email adress for further contacts; No, but I interested in joining, please send me an email about it; No, and I don't want to join

Contact email:

Open text.

Q1 Program information and lifecycle

Q1.1 Name of the program

Open text.

Q1.2 Name of the instituition/company/group responsible for running the program

Open text.

Q1.3 Nature of the instituition/company/group responsible for the program

Select one.

Options: Private, for-profit; Private, not-for-profit; Association, third-sector; Public, state agencies, governmental bodies; Academic, university, schools; Community, non-incorporated/unregistred; Other [text field]

Q1.4 How do you name your program?

Select one.

Options: Incubator; Accelerator; Game Lab; Hub; Collective; Mixed [text field]; Not sure yet; Other [text field]

Q1.5 Has your program been launched yet?

Select one.

Options: No; Yes

Q1.5.1 When did the program started

Select one year from a dropdown. Shown when Q1.5 = Yes.

Options: Before 2000; every calendar year from 2000 through 2025.

Q1.5.2 When did you plan to launch the program?

Select one. Shown when Q1.5 = No.

Options: Next 3 months; Next 6 months; Next 12 months; More than 12 months; Not sure

Q1.5.3 The program already secured the demanded funds and resources for being launch?

Select one. Shown when Q1.5 = No.

Options: Definitely yes; Probably yes; Might or might not; Probably not; Definitely not

Q1.5.4 Is the program currently active?

Select one. Shown when Q1.5 = Yes.

Options: No (program has concluded or is on hiatus); Yes (currently operational)

Q1.5.5 At what point did your program stop running?

Select one year from a dropdown. Shown when Q1.5 = Yes and Q1.5.4 = No.

Options: Before 2000; every calendar year from 2000 through 2025.

Q1.6 Why did your program was concluded/is on hiatus?

Open text. Shown when Q1.5.4 = No.

Q2 Location and physical hubs

Q2.1 Headquarters location

Four separate open-text fields follow this heading. They have no individual question numbers.

Continent

Open text.

Country

Open text.

Region/State/Province

Open text.

City

Open text.

Q2.2 Despite on online activities, your incubation/acceleration program is (was) connected with a physical hub?

Select one.

Options: Yes, one; Yes, more than one; No, the program only runs online

Q2.2.1 Hub name and location(s)

Open text. Shown when Q2.2 = Yes, one or Yes, more than one.

Q3 Target participants

Q3.1 What's the maturity level of the targeted participants? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Junior Talent: students, recently graduated, enthusiats, game creators who are not yet professional
- Professional Talent: seasoned individual game creators in a search for co-founders/partners
- Proto-companies: game development groups, not yet incorporated, starting their first project
- Early-Stage: formalized game studios looking for their first sustainable commercial launch
- High-potential ventures: experienced game studios with proven potential seeking consolidation and growth
- Scalable game companies: commercially successful studios seeking expansion and scale
- Not sure
- Other [text field]

Q3 Team size and geographic scope

Q3.1.1 Do you have a minimum/maximum number of members for each team?

Select one.

Options: Yes; No

Q3.1.1 What's the minimum/maximum number of members for each team in your program?

Open text. Shown when the first Q3.1.1 prompt = Yes.

Q3.2 Geographic scope Is the program targeted at participants from a specific location?

Select one.

Options: Unrestricted, Worldwide; Continental; National; Region/State/Province; City; Not sure

Q3.2.1 Which region(s) is the program participants from?

Select all that apply. Shown when Q3.2 = Unrestricted, Worldwide or Continental.

- North America
- Central America & Caribeean
- South America
- Northern Europe
- Western Europe
- Southern Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Western Asia & Northern of Africa (MENA)
- Africa (Western, Eastern, Middle, Southern)
- Asia (Central, Southern, Eastern, Southeastern)
- Oceania
- Not sure

Q3.2.2 If the scope of Country, Region or City is different than the headquarters location, please name it

Open text. Shown when Q3.2 = National, Region/State/Province or City.

Q3 Objectives and motivation

Q3.3 What are the objectives of your program? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Nurture local game development talent and community
- Connect/matchmaking game developers to form new teams
- Help teams build and launch successful games to market
- Enable participants to secure funding or publishing deals
- Drive innovation and creativity in game development
- Provide entrepreneurship and business education for game developers
- Create economic impact (e.g., new game companies, jobs in the region)
- Promote diversity and inclusion (e.g., affirmative action for specifc demographics, ethnic, gender, disabilities, indigenous population, etc.)
- Other [text field]
- Not sure

Q3.3.1 If you were to prioritize this objectives, how would you rank them?

Rank the displayed options; rank 1 is the highest priority. Shown after two or more options are selected in Q3.3. Only previously selected options appear; Not sure is not a ranking option.

- Nurture local game development talent and community
- Connect/matchmaking game developers to form new teams
- Help teams build and launch successful games to market
- Enable participants to secure funding or publishing deals
- Drive innovation and creativity in game development
- Provide entrepreneurship and business education for game developers
- Create economic impact (e.g., new game companies, jobs in the region)
- Promote diversity and inclusion
- Other [text field]

Q3.4 Briefly describe the inspiration or motivation behind starting the program

Open text.

Q3 Selection and team capabilities

This block was shown only to respondents whose program had launched, after the funding and actions blocks.

Q3.5 What do you consider in the selection process to join the program?

Select all that apply.

- The quality of a Game Design Document
- The quality of a Prototype
- The quality of a Vertical Slice
- The team background and skillsets
- The quality of the Pitch Deck
- The quality of the Pitch presentation
- The creativity/innovation of the game project
- The market potential of the game project
- An interview with the team to evaluate the fit with the program objectives
- Track record and previous results achieved by the team
- Diversity and inclusion factors
- Other (please specify)

Q3.6 What are the main problems in the teams that you identify in the selection process?

One response per row.

Rows:

- Teams lack on producing and management skills
- Team lack on business skills
- Team lack on Programming/Tech skills
- Teams lack on Art skills
- Teams lack on Game Design skills
- Teams lack on experience for the intended project
- Overambitious project scope
- Lack of market planning/fit
- Incompatibilities between co-founders/team members
- Other 1 (please specify)
- Other 2 (please specify)

Scale: Never; Sometimes; About half the time; Most of the time; Always.

Q3.7 What makes a good game development team?

Open text.

Q4 Format and support offered

Shown only when Q1.5 = Yes. Follow-up conditions are specified below.

Q4.1 Considering its last edition, how is your program structured?

Select one.

Options: Fixed-length cohort with a structured program; Rolling admission with ongoing, flexible support; Hybrid model (mix of fixed-length cohorts and ongoing support); Other format [text field]

Q4.1.2 Considering its last edition, how long does each cohort last?

Select one. Shown only for Fixed-length cohort with a structured program in Q4.1.

Options: 3 months or less; From 3 to 6 months; From 6 to 12 months; More than 12 months (define); Variable (define)

Q4.2 What types of support does your program provide to participants? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Mentorship and/or coaching (industry mentors, expert advisors)
- Hired translator for mentoring and training sessions
- Direct funding or grants to teams
- Office space or co-working facilities
- Development resources (software, hardware, dev kits, etc.)
- Training workshops or educational sessions
- Networking opportunities or introductions to industry contacts
- Marketing/PR support
- Opportunities to showcase projects
- Analytics and Business Intelligence
- Publishing or investor pitch support (demo days, pitch prep)
- Direct matchmaking with investors and publishers
- Legal advice
- Playtesting
- Other (please specify)

Q4 Mentoring and further support

Q4.2.1 What areas of mentoring and/or training does the program offer?

Select all that apply. Shown when mentoring/coaching or training workshops are selected in Q4.2.

- Business Development
- Marketing/PR
- Community Management
- Entrepeneurship
- Game Design
- Producing/Project Management
- Programming/technical
- Game Art
- Game Audio
- Narrative Design
- QA/Test
- Leadership
- Motivational
- Soft Skills
- Other [text field]

Q4.2.2 What's the main language of the mentoring and training sessions

Select one. Shown when mentoring/coaching or training workshops are selected in Q4.2.

Options: Local headquarter's language [text field]; English; Other [text field]

Q4.2.3 How much funding/grant each team receives (if not fixed, in avarage or a range of investiment)

Open text. Shown when Direct funding or grants to teams is selected in Q4.2.

Q4.2.3 In total, how much funding/grant have been invested so far?

Open text. Shown when Direct funding or grants to teams is selected in Q4.2.

Q4.4 What industry events and conferences has the program officially participated in (mission, showcase, booth, activity, talk/panel, demo day)?

Open text.

Q5 Counterpart arrangements and funding

Shown only when Q1.5 = Yes. This block preceded Q4 in the online survey. Q5.1 and Q5.2 allowed multiple selections.

Q5.1 Does your program asks a counterpart for teams/companies it supports?

Select all that apply.

- Yes, we take a revenue share of the project
- Yes, we take equity from the company
- Yes, we take a sucess fee from the company and/or project
- Yes, they pay a fee/subscription to join the program
- No (no counterpart taken; support is provided without ownership stake or fee)
- Other (please specify)

Q5.2 What are the sources of funding for the program?

Select all that apply.

- Government or public grants
- Corporate sponsorships or partner contributions
- University or academic institution support
- Program-generated revenue (e.g., equity stakes, participant fees, events revenue)
- Non-profit foundation or donor funding
- Internal/parent organization funding (self-funded by the host company)
- Other (please specify)

Q5.2.1 Please, rank the importance of these sources of funding for the program

Rank the displayed options; rank 1 is the highest priority. Shown after two or more options are selected in Q5.2. Only previously selected sources appear.

- Government or public grants
- Corporate sponsorships or partner contributions
- University or academic institution support
- Program-generated revenue (e.g., equity stakes, participant fees, events revenue)
- Non-profit foundation or donor funding
- Internal/parent organization funding (self-funded by the host company)
- Other (please specify)

Q6 Success and indicators

Shown only when Q1.5 = Yes.

Q6.1 On a scale of 1–5, how successful has your program been in meeting its objectives so far?

Select one.

Options: 1 – Not successful (far below expectations); 2 – Slightly successful; 3 – Moderately successful; 4 – Very successful; 5 – Extremely successful (far above expectations)

Q6.2 Which metrics do you track for your program? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Number of studios/teams that have participated (program alumni count)
- Participant completion or graduation rate (percentage who finish the program)
- Number of games/projects launched to market by alumni
- Amount of funding or investment raised by alumni teams
- New companies or teams formed as a result of the program
- Awards or recognitions earned by alumni projects
- Satisfaction of program participants
- Evidence of the learning curve of program participants
- Diversity and inclusion metrics (gender balance, socioeconomic background, etc)
- None of these

Q6.2.1 There are any other metrics you consider important to track?

Open text.

Q6.3 What would be the priority ranking of the following results in qualifying the success of your program?

Rank the displayed options; rank 1 is the highest priority. This question has its own full option list; it is not restricted to metrics selected in Q6.2.

- Number of games successfully launched by alumni
- Total investment raised by alumni
- Participant graduation rate or retention through the program
- Number of new game studios/teams established post-program
- High-profile success stories (e.g. award-winning or “hit” games from alumni)
- Participants satisfaction rate
- Participants' learning and maturity growth
- Other [text field]

Q6.4 Program Metrics

Original instruction: “If you dont have a specific number, please share an estimate”. The following fields have no individual question numbers. Descriptive suffixes used in figure labels identify the fields; they are not additional survey question codes.

Number of studios/teams currently in the program

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of studios/teams that have participated (program alumni count)

Open field for a number or estimate.

Participant completion or graduation rate (percentage who finish the program)

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of publishers/investors participants at Demo Day/Pitch/Graduation Event

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of offers by publishers/investors

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of deals closed with publishers/investors

Open field for a number or estimate.

Total investment raised by alumni

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of new game studios/teams established post-program

Open field for a number or estimate.

Number of commercially released games developed in the program

Open field for a number or estimate.

Q6.4 Further metrics and survival estimates

Continuation of the unnumbered fields under Q6.4.

Cases of awards or recognitions earned by alumni projects

Open text.

Satisfaction rate of program participants

Open field for a number or estimate.

Evidence of the learning curve of program participants (such as test-in test-out to measure knowledge retention, obligatory post-mortem to evaluate their lernings, etc)

Open text.

Survival rate of studios (estimation)

One response per row.

Rows:

- After 6 months
- After 1 year
- After 3 years
- After 5 years

Scale: Not sure/don't apply; < 10%; 10%; 20%; 30%; 40%; 50%; 60%; 70%; 80%; 90%; > 90%.

Unnumbered report-link field

Do you have any avaiable report of the results? Please share the link with us:

Open text.

Q7 Operational challenges and resources

Shown only when Q1.5 = Yes. Current and retrospective questions use separate activity-status conditions. There is no Q7.4 in the supplied instrument.

Q7.1 What are the biggest challenges you face in managing your program? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Securing sufficient funding to run the program
- Attracting enough high-quality applicants/teams
- Finding and retaining great mentors or staff
- Managing time and resources (balancing program tasks)
- Keeping content/curriculum up-to-date with industry trends
- Demonstrating program success to stakeholders or sponsors
- Building and maintaining a strong alumni/partner network
- Other (please specify)

Q7.2 How challenging is it to run a game incubation/acceleration/support program, in your experience? (Likert scale, 1–5)

Select one.

Options: 1 – Not very challenging; 2 – Slightly challenging; 3 – Moderately challenging; 4 – Very challenging; 5 – Extremely challenging

Q7.3 How would you rate the stability and security of your program's funding and resource support for ongoing operations? (Likert scale, 1–5)

Select one. Shown when Q1.5.4 = Yes, currently operational.

Options: 1 – Very insecure and unstable; 2 – Somewhat insecure and unstable; 3 – Moderately stable, with occasional uncertainties; 4 – Mostly stable and secure; 5 – Very stable and secure

Q7.3.1 How would you rate the stability and security of your program's funding when it was operational? (Likert scale, 1–5)

Select one. Shown when Q1.5.4 = No, concluded or on hiatus.

Options: 1 – Very insecure and unstable; 2 – Somewhat insecure and unstable; 3 – Moderately stable, with occasional uncertainties; 4 – Mostly stable and secure; 5 – Very stable and secure

Q7 Resources and support needs

Q7.5 Which resources or support does your program currently lack or demand? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply. Shown when Q1.5.4 = Yes, currently operational.

- Sufficient funding for operations or expansion
- Access to a broader pool of mentors or industry experts
- Sources, references and materials for training and capacity building
- Better tools for program management (tracking progress, communication)
- Better tools for talent matchmaking and team formation (connecting people with different skills)
- Marketing or outreach support to attract applicants and sponsors
- Physical resources (larger facility, specialized equipment for teams)
- Community engagement platform (for alumni networking, knowledge sharing)
- Greater support from government or industry associations
- Other [text field]

Q7.5.1 When the program was active, which resources or support you missed and demanded? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply. Shown when Q1.5.4 = No, concluded or on hiatus.

- Sufficient funding for operations or expansion
- Access to a broader pool of mentors or industry experts
- Sources, references and materials for training and capacity building
- Better tools for program management (tracking progress, communication)
- Better tools for talent matchmaking and team formation (connecting people with different skills)
- Marketing or outreach support to attract applicants and sponsors
- Physical resources (larger facility, specialized equipment for teams)
- Community engagement platform (for alumni networking, knowledge sharing)
- Greater support from government or industry associations
- Other [text field]

Q7.6 If you could add a resource or tool to improve how you manage a program, what would it be and why?

Open text.

Q7 Team difficulties and management information

Q7.7 Based on your observations, what are the common difficulties faced by teams in your program? (Select all that apply)

Select all that apply.

- Securing funding or financial support for their project
- Technical game development challenges (e.g., coding, design, meeting milestones)
- Marketing and reaching an audience (e.g., building awareness, user acquisition)
- Team formation or dynamics (e.g., finding talent, co-founder communication issues, lack of crucial skills)
- Business and entrepreneurship skills (e.g., monetization, pitching, budgeting)
- Project management and time management (e.g., staying on schedule)
- Other [text field]

Q7.7.1 How would you rank the most critical issues faced by teams?

Rank the displayed options; rank 1 is the highest priority. Shown after two or more options are selected in Q7.7. Only previously selected difficulties appear.

- Securing funding or financial support for their project
- Technical game development challenges (e.g., coding, design, meeting milestones)
- Marketing and reaching an audience (e.g., building awareness, user acquisition)
- Team formation or dynamics (e.g., finding talent, co-founder communication issues, lack of crucial skills)
- Business and entrepreneurship skills (e.g., monetization, pitching, budgeting)
- Project management and time management (e.g., staying on schedule)
- Other [text field]

Q7.8 If you had a dashboard with all the data about your teams to help manage the training and mentoring process, what would you like to see in a more easily and organized way?

Open text.

Q8 Best practices and outlook

Shown only when Q1.5 = Yes; Q8.2 and Q8.2.1 distinguish active and concluded or paused programs.

Q8.1 What is one best practice or lesson learned you would share with fellow game incubator/accelerator managers?

Open text.

Q8.2 Briefly, how do you plan to improve or evolve your program in the next couple of years?

Open text. Shown when Q1.5.4 = Yes, currently operational.

Q8.2.1 What would you have done differently if you could start the program over again?

Open text. Shown when Q1.5.4 = No, concluded or on hiatus.

Appendix B - Reported Results and Monitoring Indicators

This appendix brings together the numerical results reported by program leaders, covering the scale of support, team progression and outcomes during and after participation. The indicators include current and past team participation, completion, engagement with publishers and investors, capital raised, studio formation, commercial releases, recognition, participant satisfaction and studio survival. The figures complement the analysis in the main chapters by presenting the distributions and response bases underlying these measures.

Results should be interpreted alongside each figure's valid-answer base, exclusions and methodological notes. Reporting periods, definitions and measurement practices vary across programs, and some answers are estimates. These self-reported measures provide evidence for understanding program activity and informing monitoring practices; they do not establish comparable performance benchmarks or outcomes attributable solely to program participation.

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- Figure B1. Teams currently in the program (Q6.4 - Current teams).
- Figure B2. Teams that have participated (Q6.4 - Alumni).
- Figure B3. Reported completion or graduation rate (Q6.4 - Graduation).
- Figure B4. Publisher and investor participation (Q6.4 - Demo day).
- Figure B5. Offers from publishers and investors (Q6.4 - Offers).
- Figure B6. Deals closed with publishers and investors (Q6.4 - Deals).
- Figure B7. Capital raised by alumni (Q6.4 - Alumni capital).
- Figure B8. New studios established after the program (Q6.4 - New studios).
- Figure B9. Commercially released games (Q6.4 - Games).
- Figure B10. Reported awards and recognitions (Q6.4 - Recognition counts).
- Figure B11. Reported participant satisfaction rate (Q6.4 - Satisfaction).
- Figure B12. Estimated studio survival after 6 months (Q6.4 - Survival 1).
- Figure B13. Estimated studio survival after 1 year (Q6.4 - Survival 2).
- Figure B14. Estimated studio survival after 3 years (Q6.4 - Survival 3).
- Figure B15. Estimated studio survival after 5 years (Q6.4 - Survival 4).

Figure B1. Teams currently in the program (Q6.4 - Current teams).

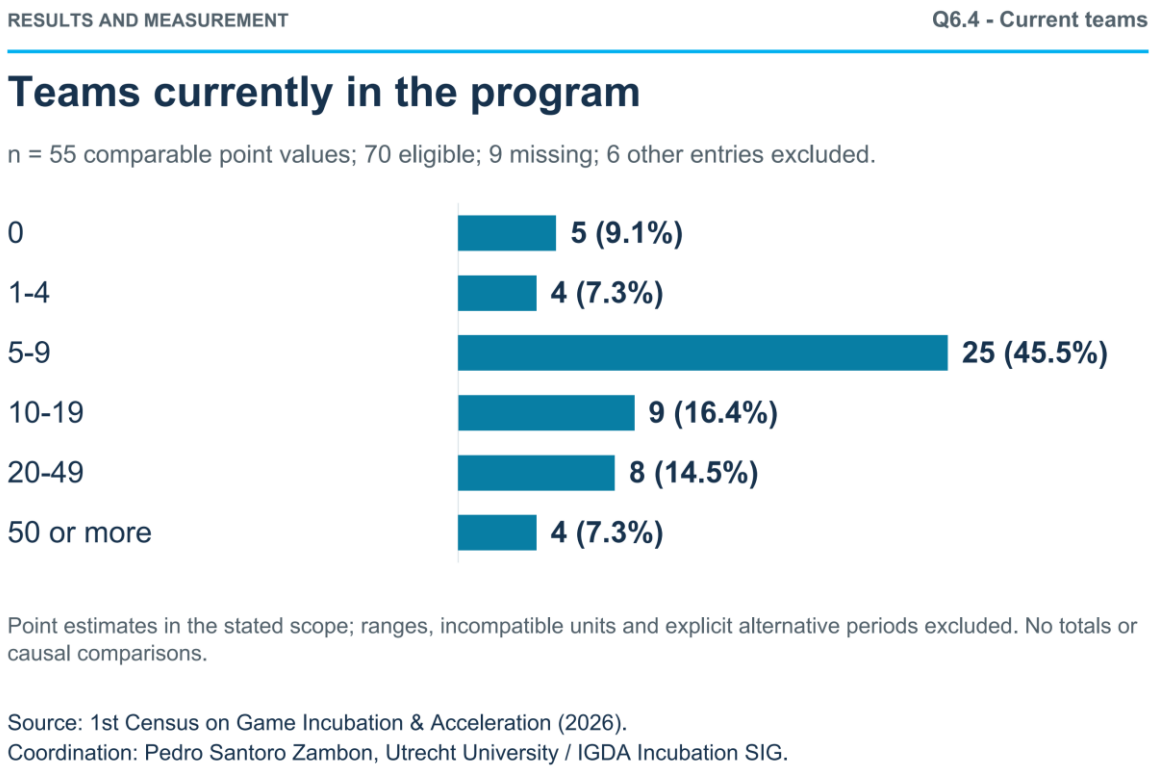


Figure B2. Teams that have participated (Q6.4 - Alumni).

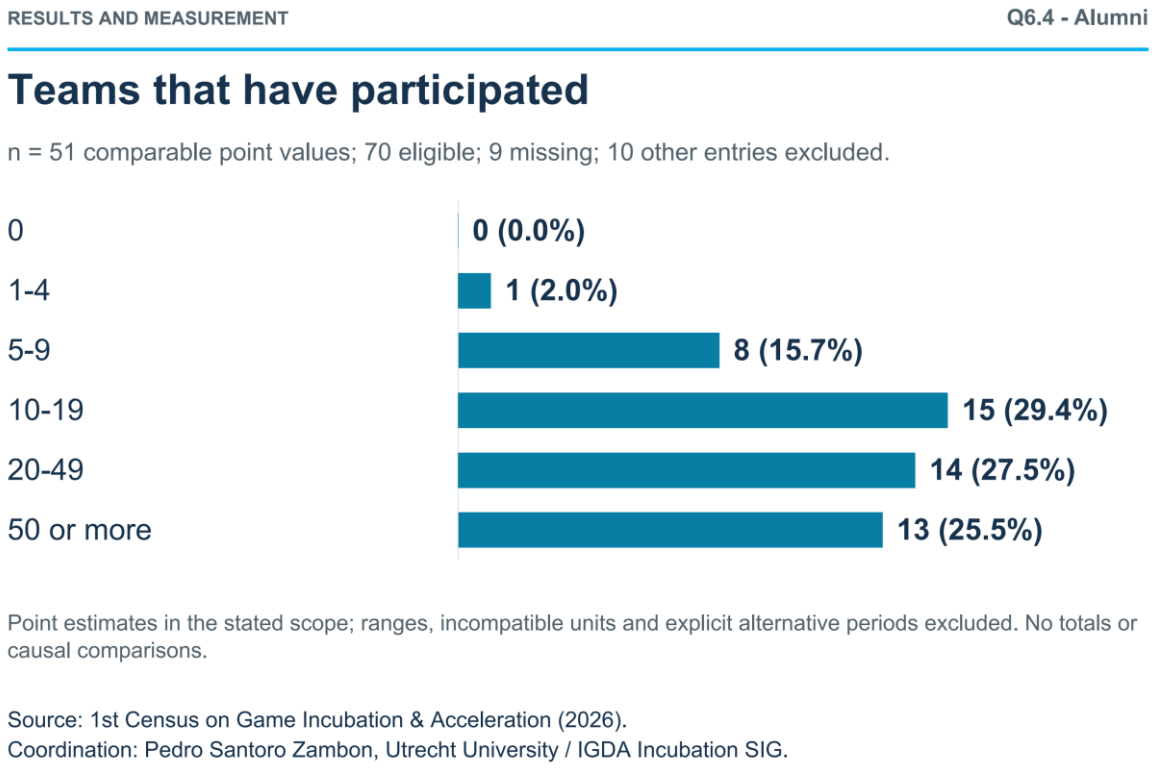


Figure B3. Reported completion or graduation rate (Q6.4 - Graduation).

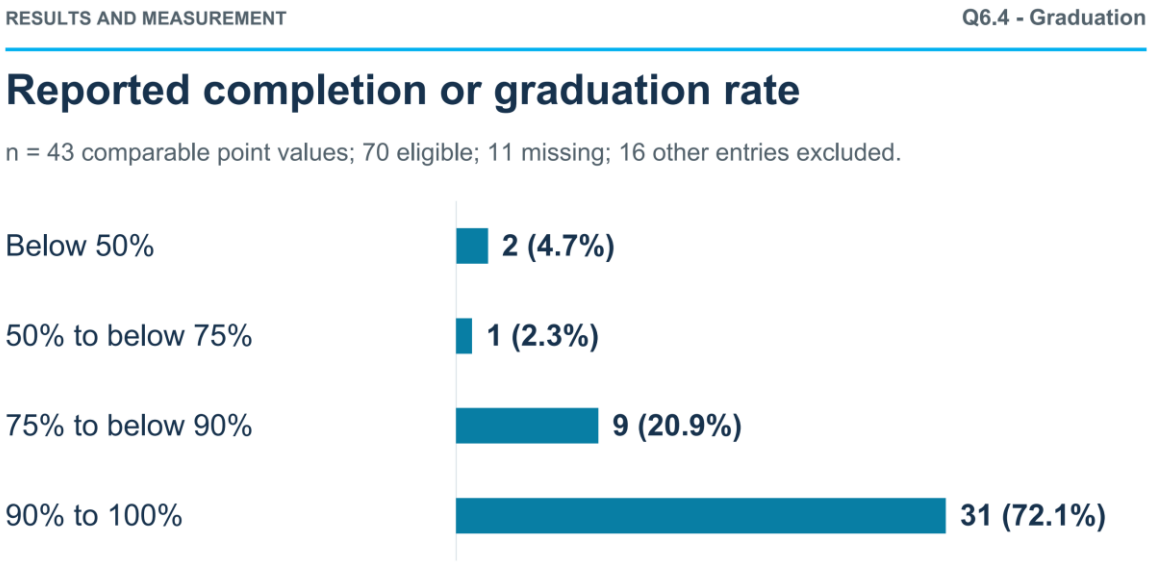


Figure B4. Publisher and investor participation (Q6.4 - Demo day).

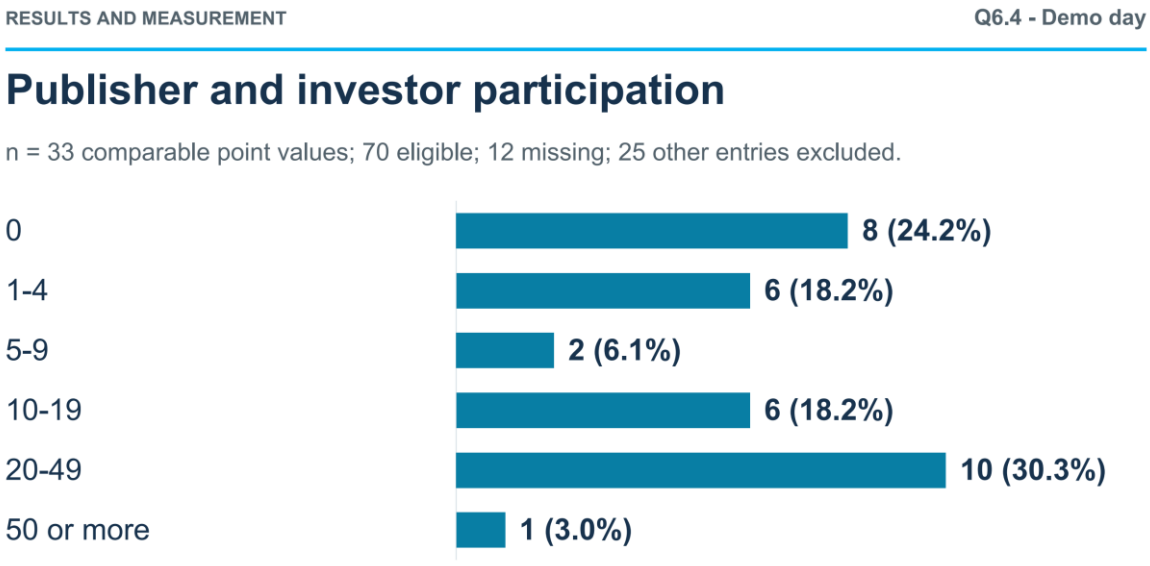


Figure B5. Offers from publishers and investors (Q6.4 - Offers).

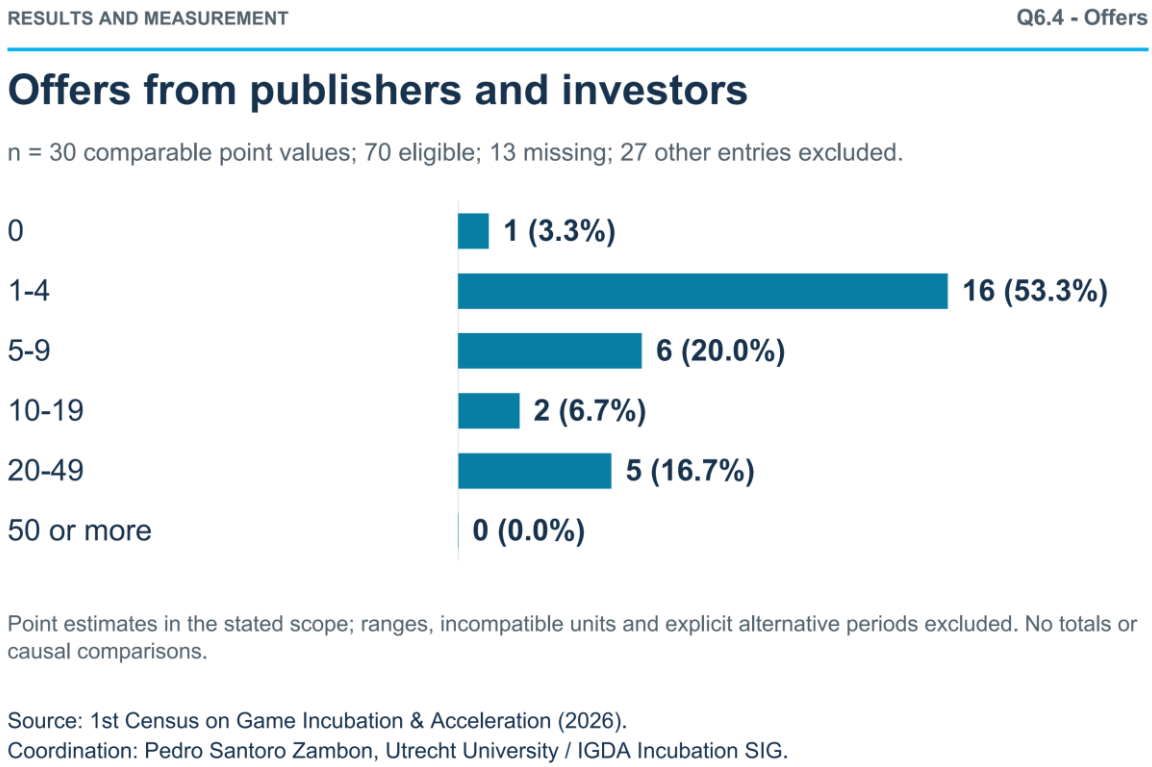


Figure B6. Deals closed with publishers and investors (Q6.4 - Deals).

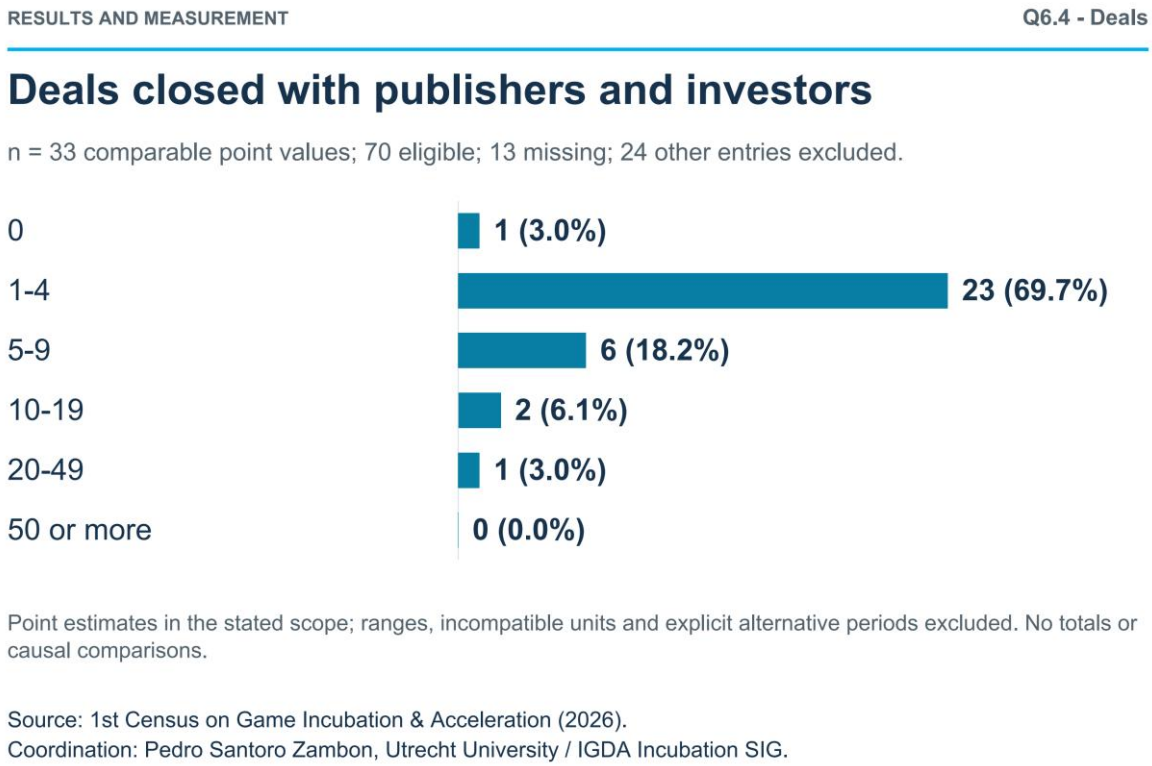


Figure B7. Capital raised by alumni (Q6.4 - Alumni capital).

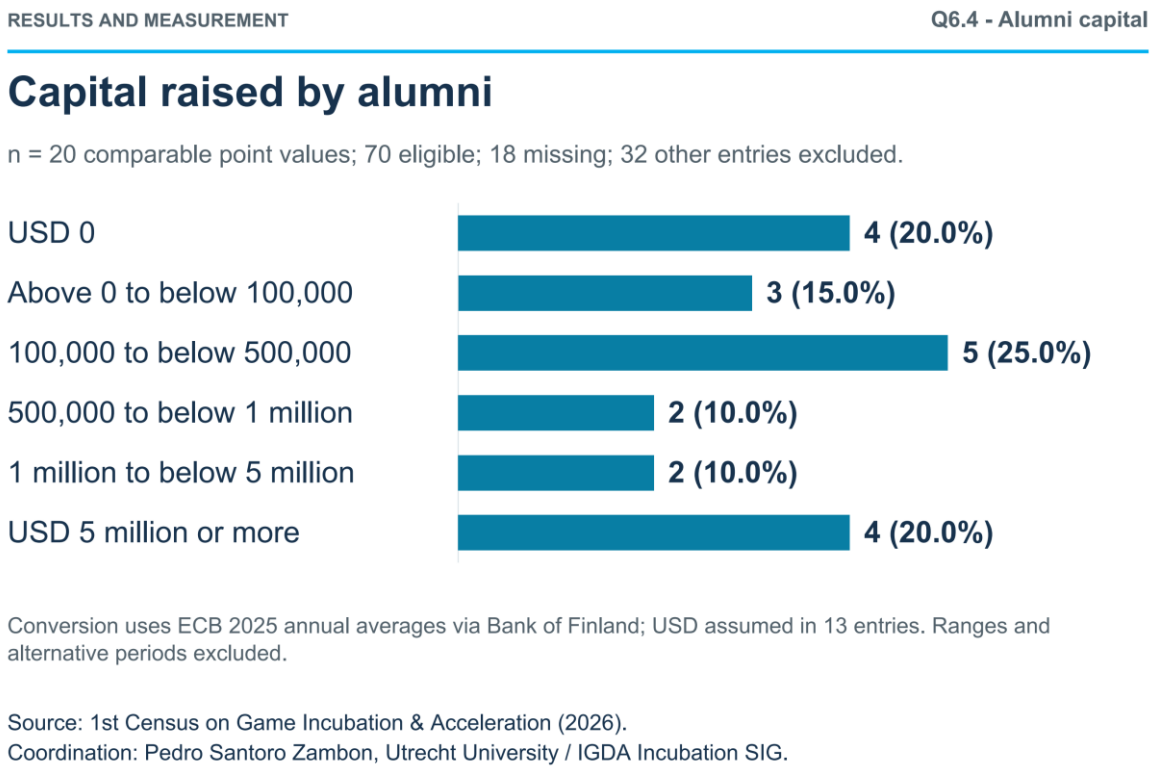


Figure B8. New studios established after the program (Q6.4 - New studios).

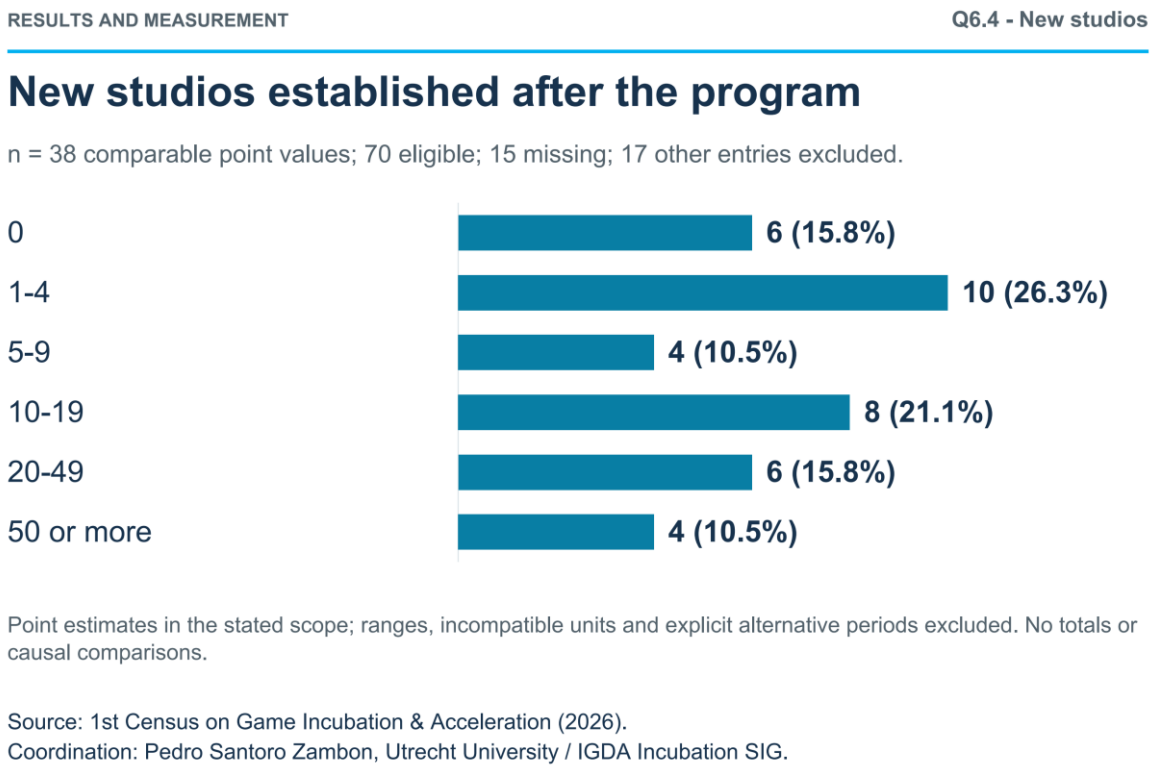


Figure B9. Commercially released games (Q6.4 - Games).

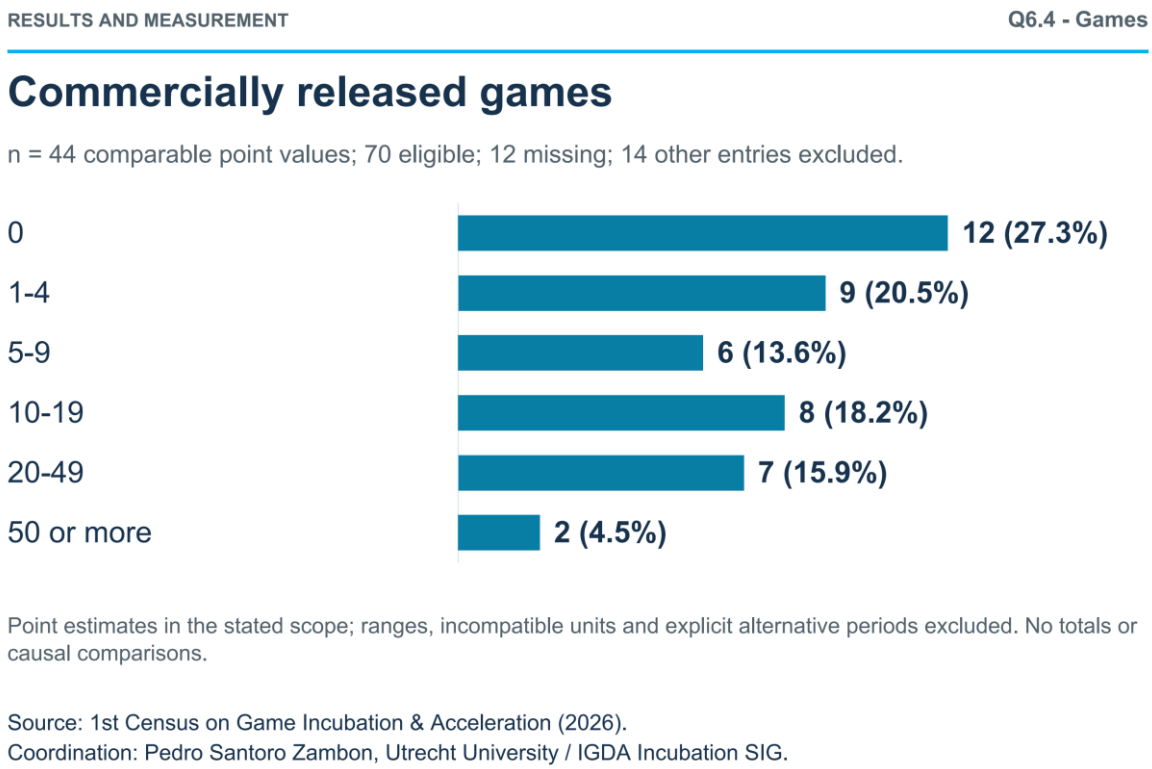


Figure B10. Reported awards and recognitions (Q6.4 - Recognition counts).

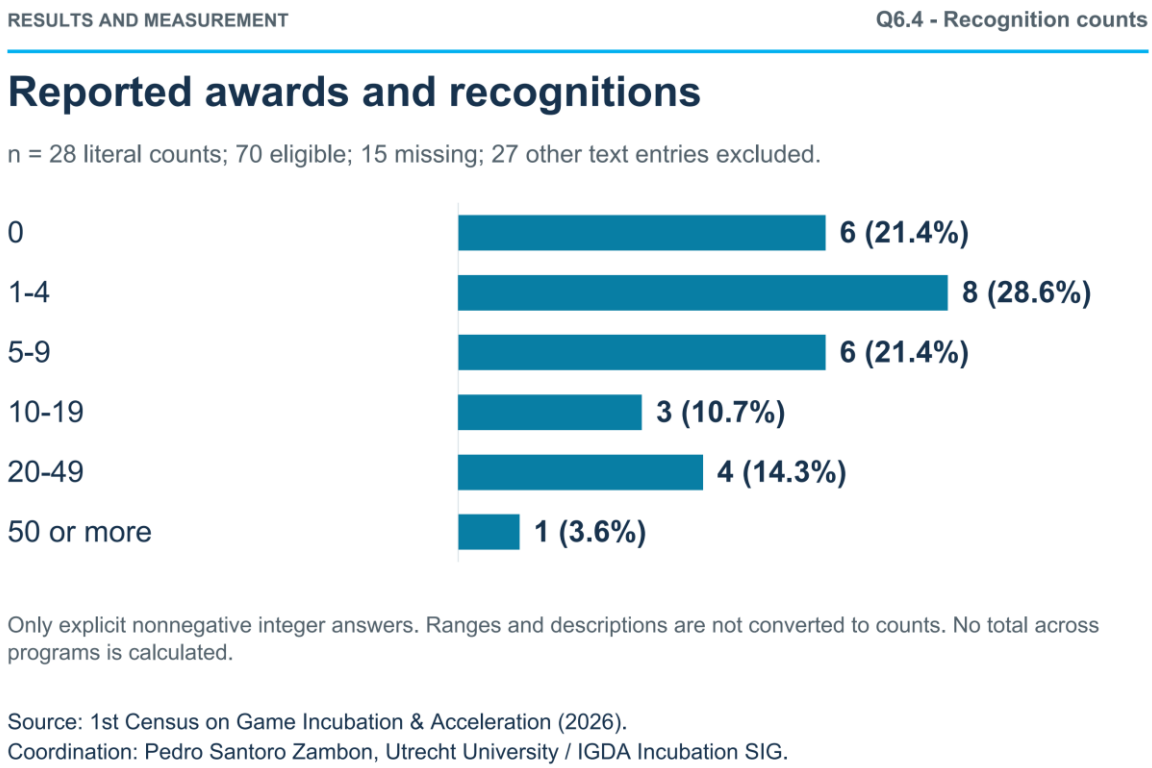


Figure B11. Reported participant satisfaction rate (Q6.4 - Satisfaction).

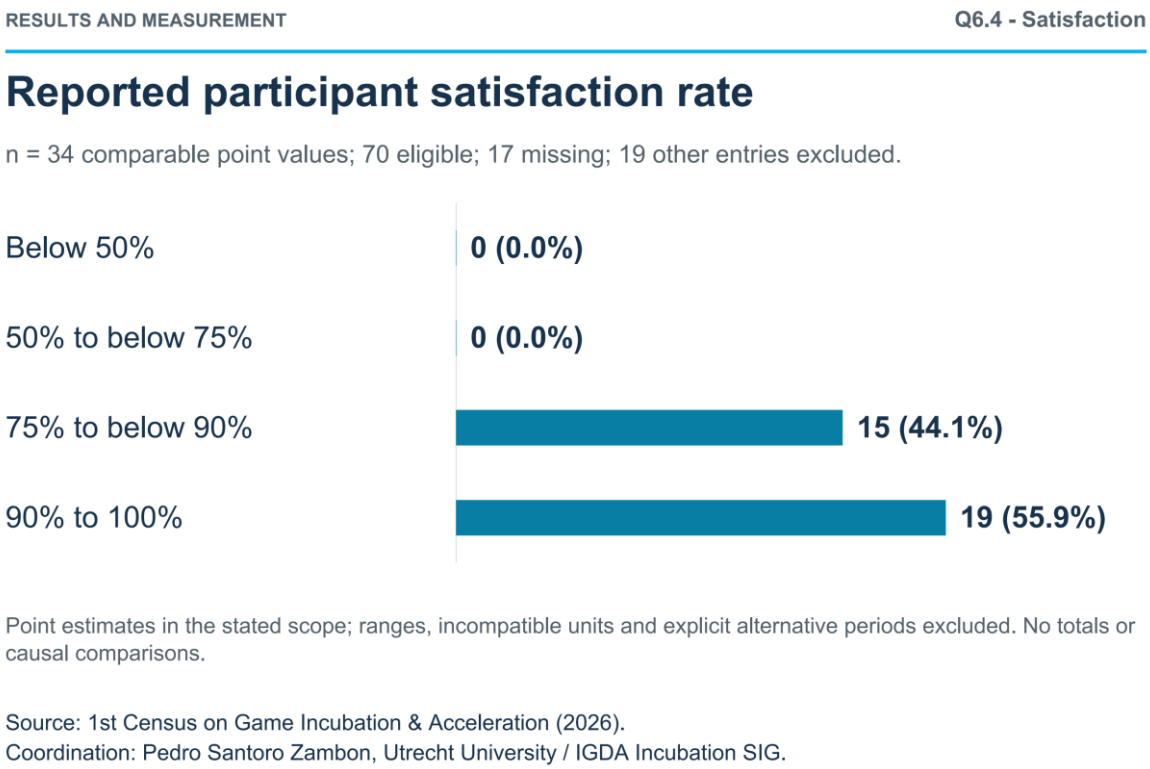


Figure B12. Estimated studio survival after 6 months (Q6.4 - Survival 1).

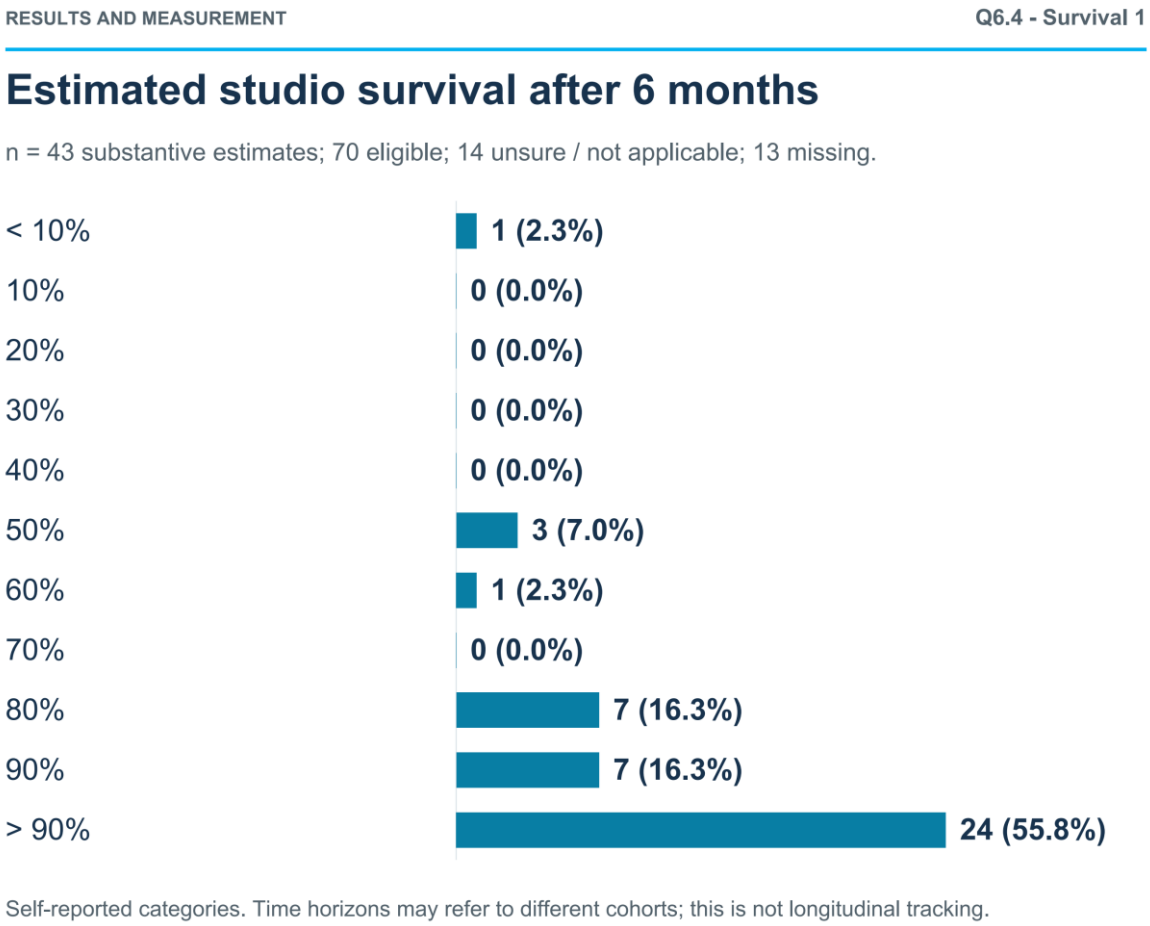
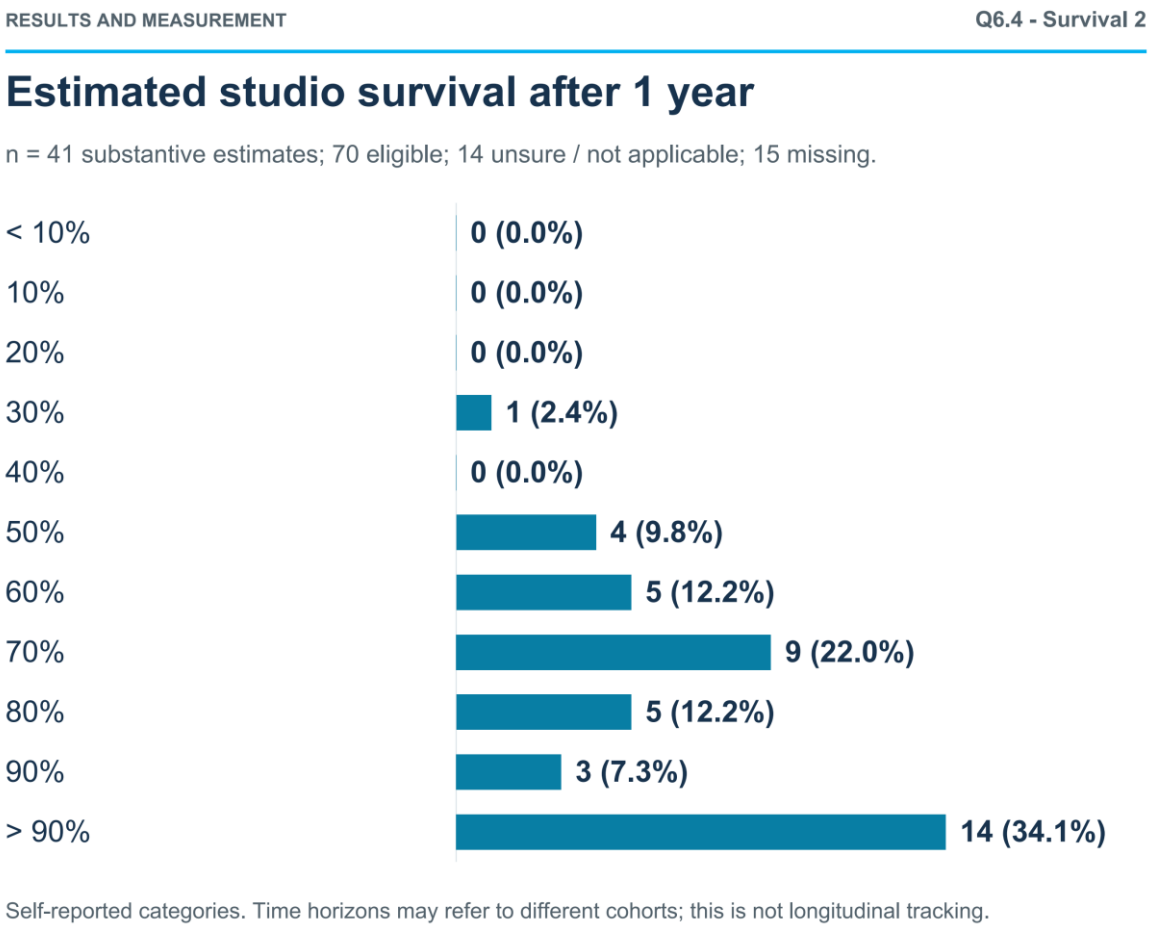


Figure B13. Estimated studio survival after 1 year (Q6.4 - Survival 2).



Source: 1st Census on Game Incubation & Acceleration (2026).
Coordination: Pedro Santoro Zambon, Utrecht University / IGDA Incubation SIG.

Figure B14. Estimated studio survival after 3 years (Q6.4 - Survival 3).

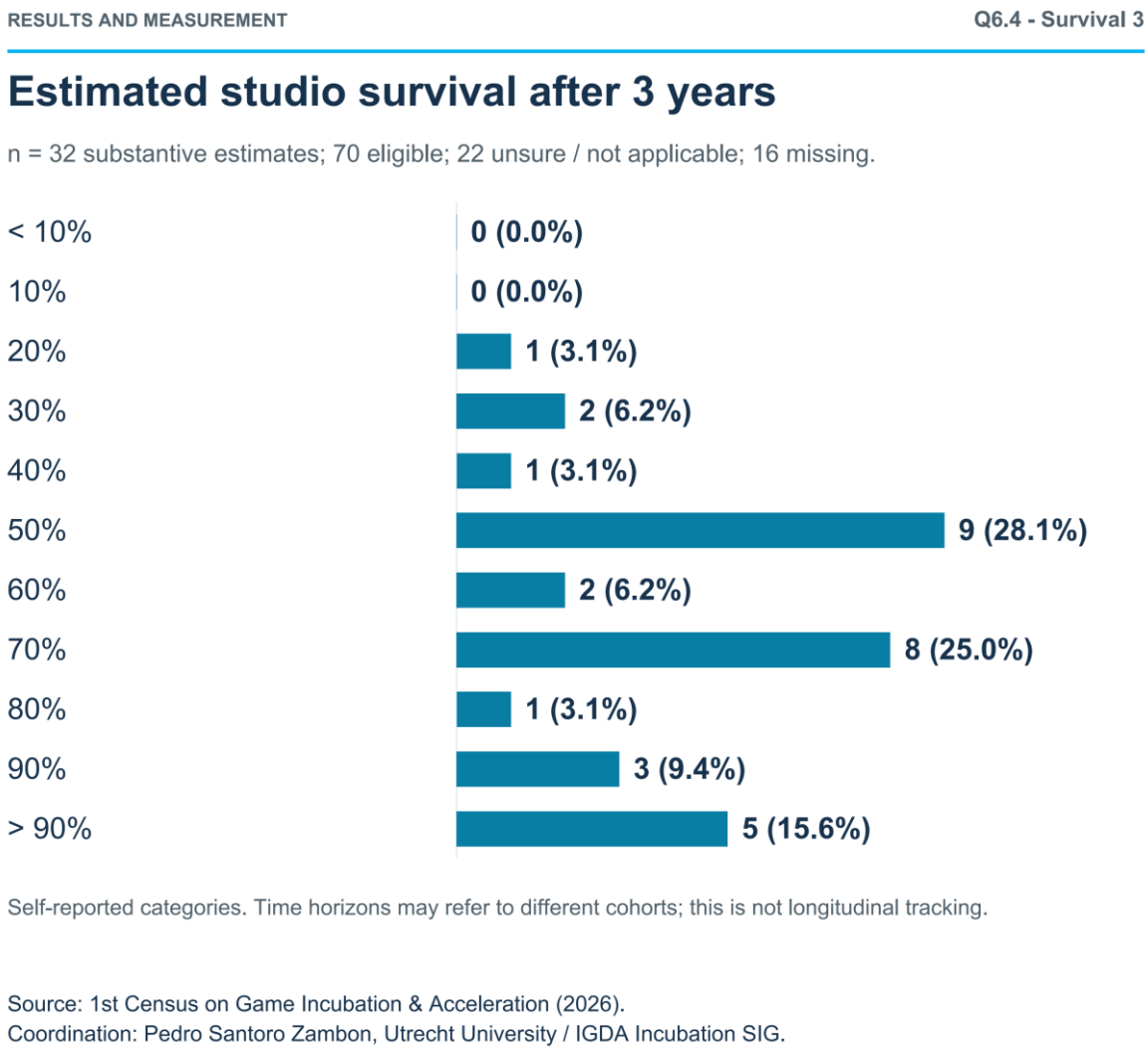


Figure B15. Estimated studio survival after 5 years (Q6.4 - Survival 4).

