

AFIC →

FESTIVAL PLATFORM

Survey on the future of film events



with the support of

Direzione Generale
CINEMA e
AUDIOVISIVO



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The Covid-19 health crisis forced festivals the world over to reinvent their programmes during 2020. This obligatory transformation was especially felt, yet possibly also with greater innovation, by film festivals which, alongside the films, have always featured the makers, research and communication and interaction among audiences.

To ascertain the response recorded in Italy to this actual (albeit involuntary) revolution in cultural events and to draw up models and thoughts on the future of the system AFIC, through support from the **Cinema and Audio-Visual General Directorate of the Culture Ministry**, drew up an extensive questionnaire which in December 2020 was sent out to **142 Italian film festivals**, representing all events in Italy, from the larger, historic ones to smaller ones set up more recently.

// *The concept of film festivals dates back to 1932, the date of the first Venice Film Festival, and the changes seen in almost a century have emphasised the promotional role that the festivals represent for the entire cinema supply chain and for the development of cultural innovation. The Covid-19 crisis has without doubt turned everything upside down and forced everyone to think actively about the future. The aim of this initiative by AFIC is to take a snapshot of the current reality, potential and critical factors of events on a digital platform, offering a starting point for constructing adequate plans and prototypes for a future that must relate to the actual core of our events – direct and active experience of a film-going public who come to cinemas to share in an experience that is still unique and irreplaceable.*

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AFIC Steering Committee 2019/2021

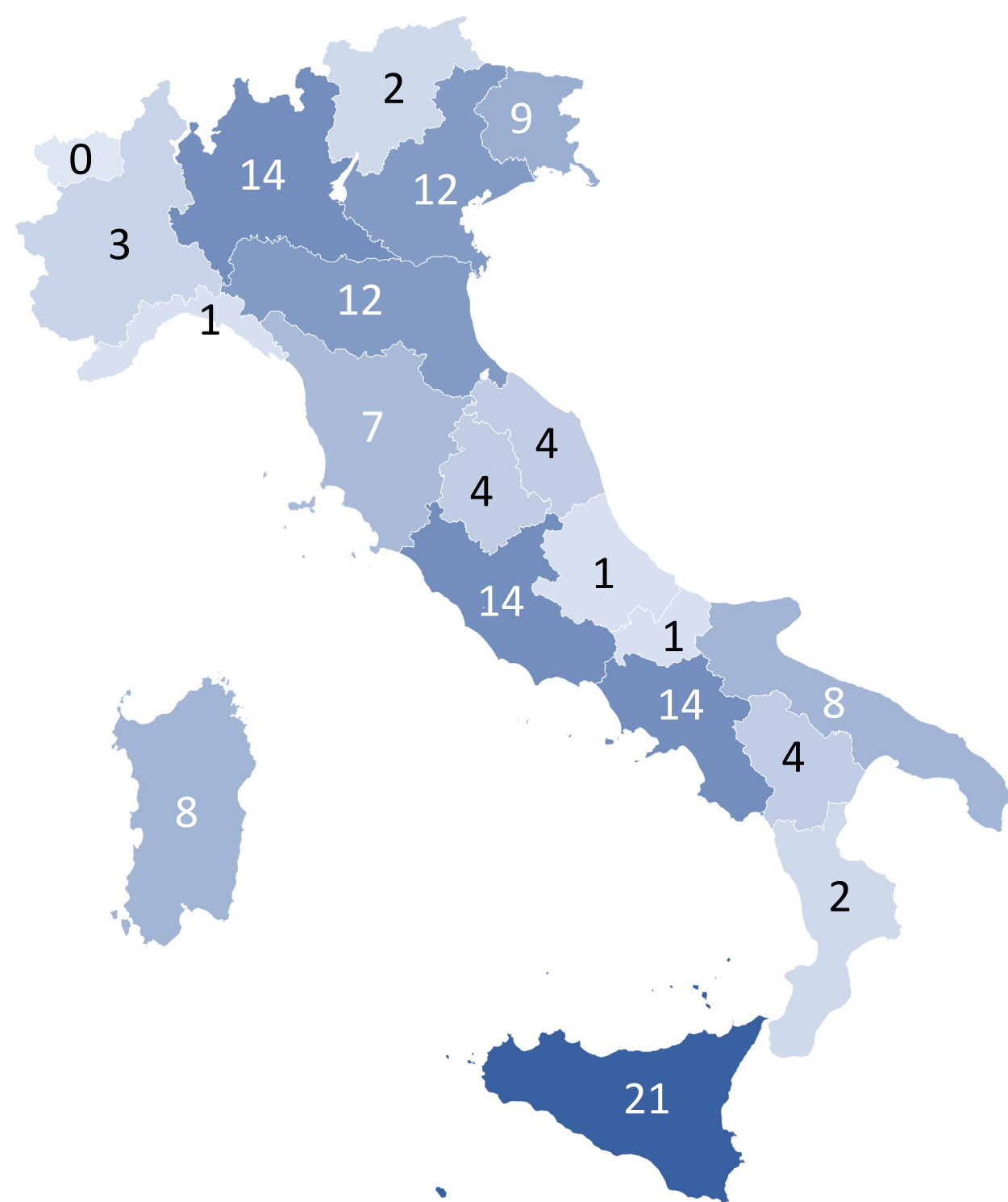
Set up in 2003, **AFIC – Associazione Festival Italiani di Cinema** is a centre for bringing together those Italian film events that recognise the importance and value of being part of an information network which is also the site of exchange and the development of projects. The Association was founded to promote and grow the initiatives whose aim is to improve the artistic quality and communication effectiveness of Italian film festivals. The goal of the AFIC is to showcase and define the role of the cultural and research work of its members that currently number 85 Italian film festivals.



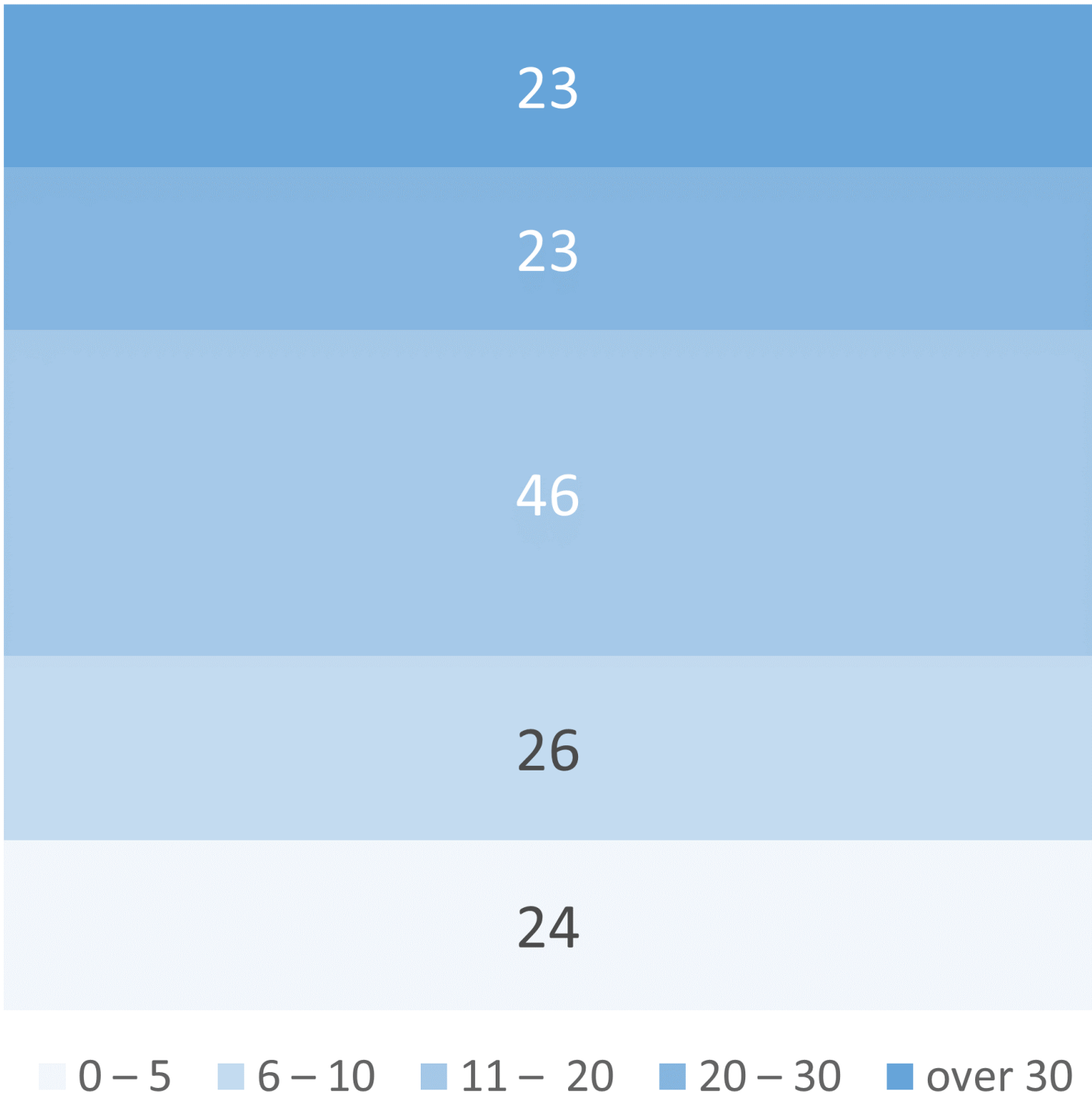
Distribution of AFIC festivals in Italy

142 Italian Festivals took part in the survey, of which **83 AFIC members**, mostly located in Northern Italy (**35%**), central regions and the islands (**19%** for both) and in the south (**18%**). **32%** of the sample have held more than 20 festivals in the past.

DISTRIBUTION IN ITALY

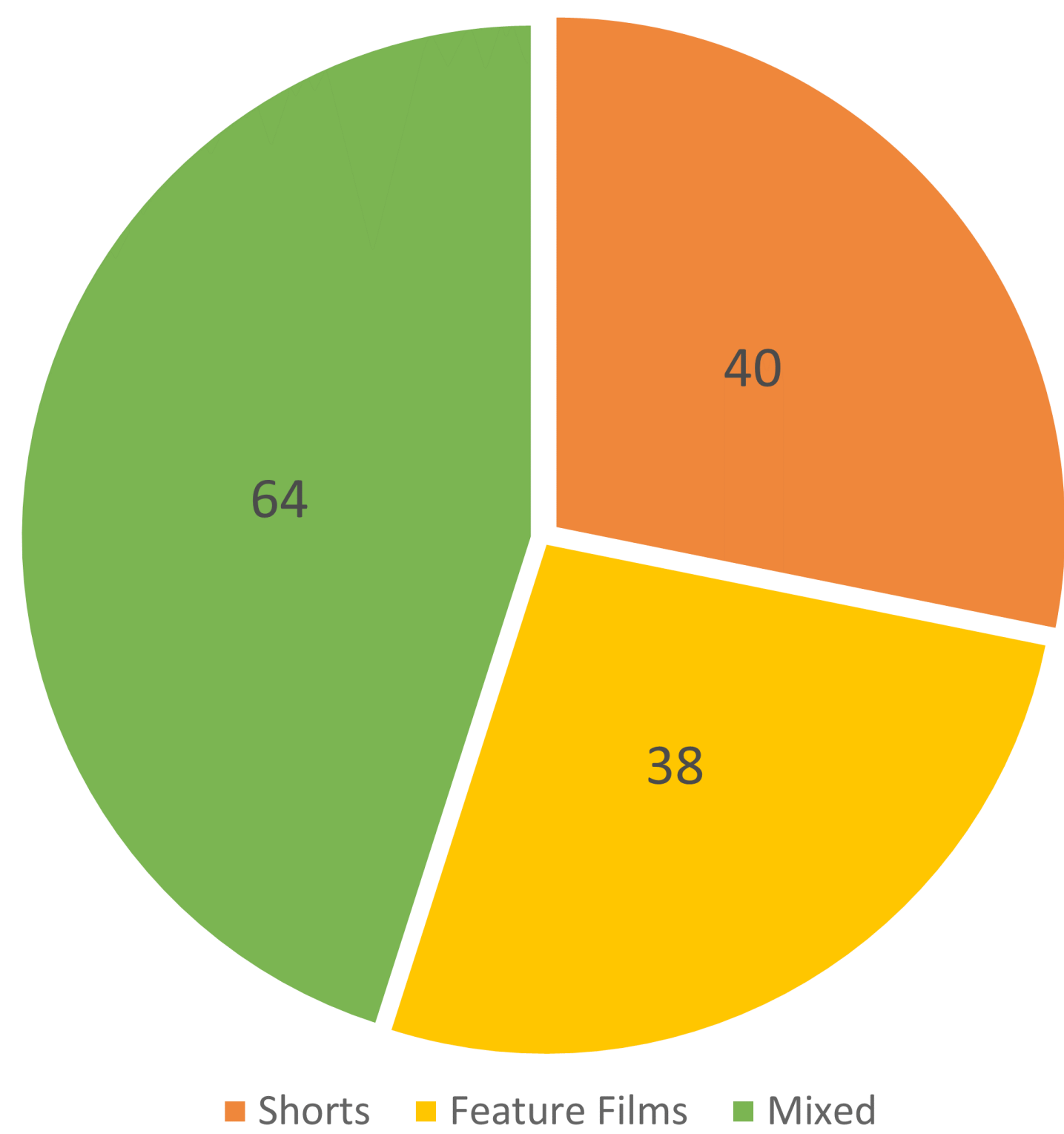


PAST FESTIVALS

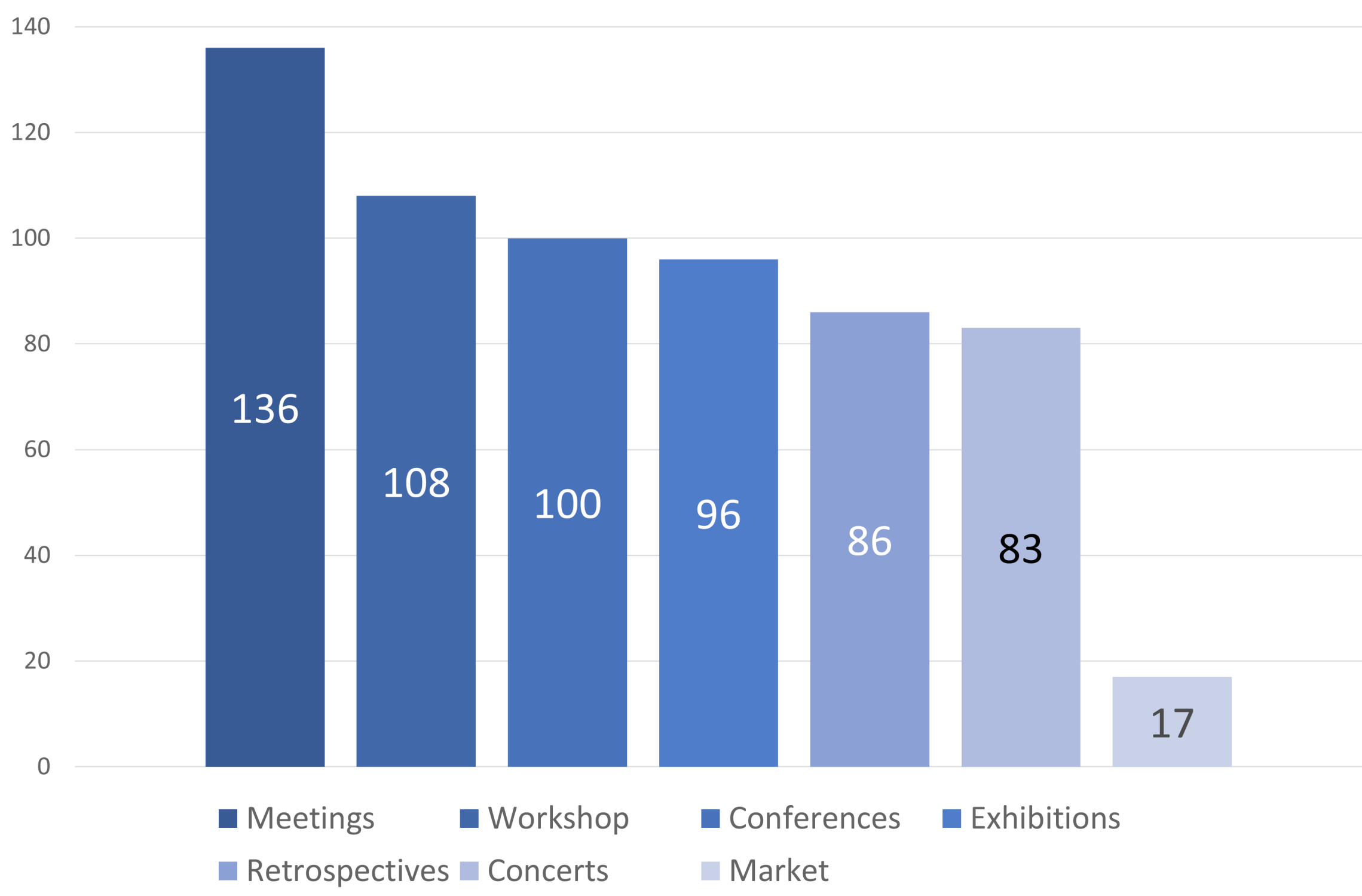


93.7% screen international feature films and shorts and **60.6%** a generalist programme focusing above all on art and culture, the environment, current events, reportages, rights, equal opportunities, music and LGBT+ issues. **45%** screen both shorts and full-length films while **96%** include talks with filmmakers.

FILM TYPE

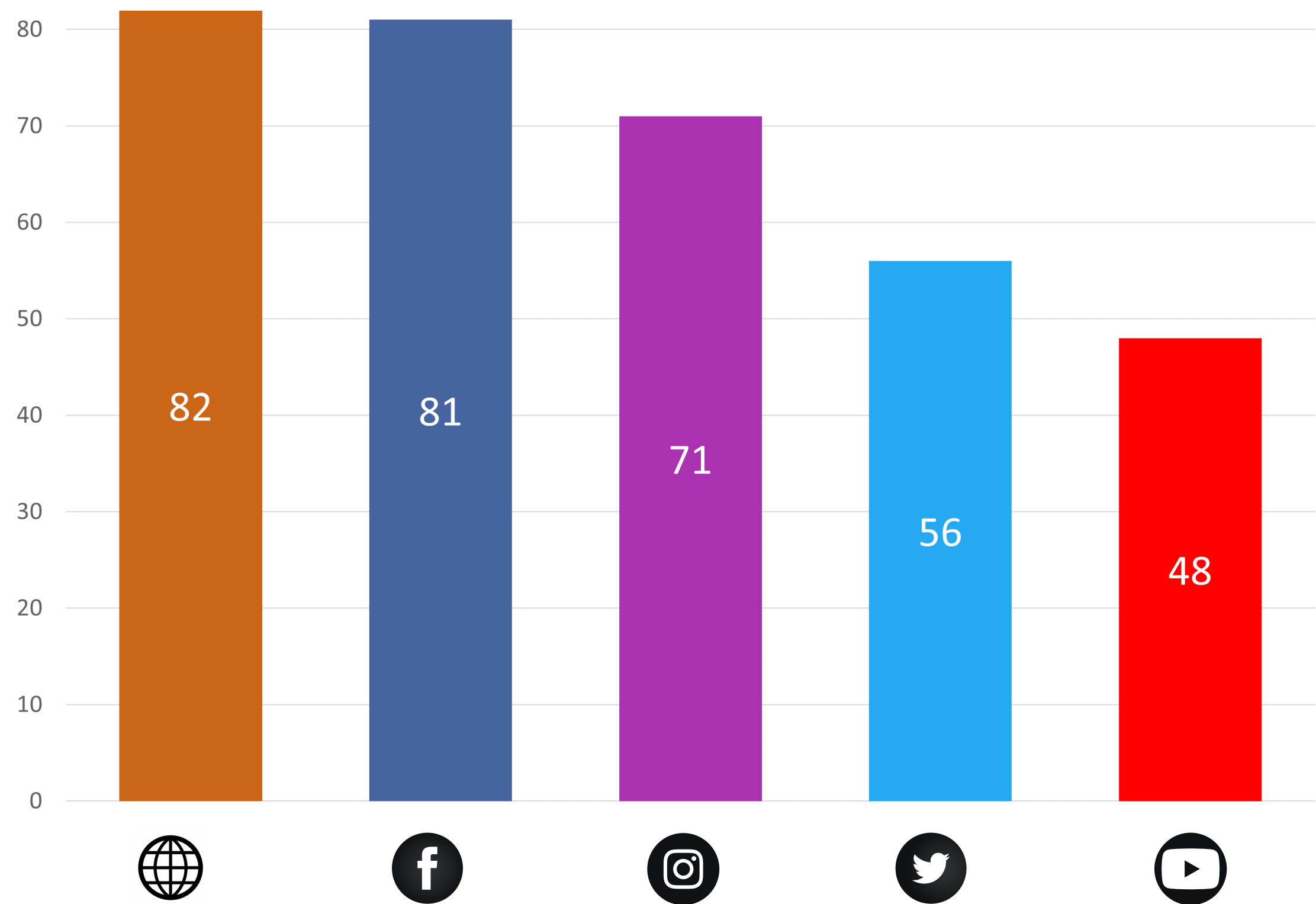


OTHER ACTIVITIES



Of the 85 AFIC festivals, taken as an indicative sample with surveys carried out in December 2020, **96%** have a specific website and a Facebook account, **85%** an Instagram account, **67%** a Twitter account and **57%** a YouTube channel. Most of them have between 3,000 and 10,000 contacts on Facebook (**44%**) and less than 3,000 followers on Instagram (**79%**), Twitter (**88%**) and YouTube (**96%**).

ONLINE PRESENCE

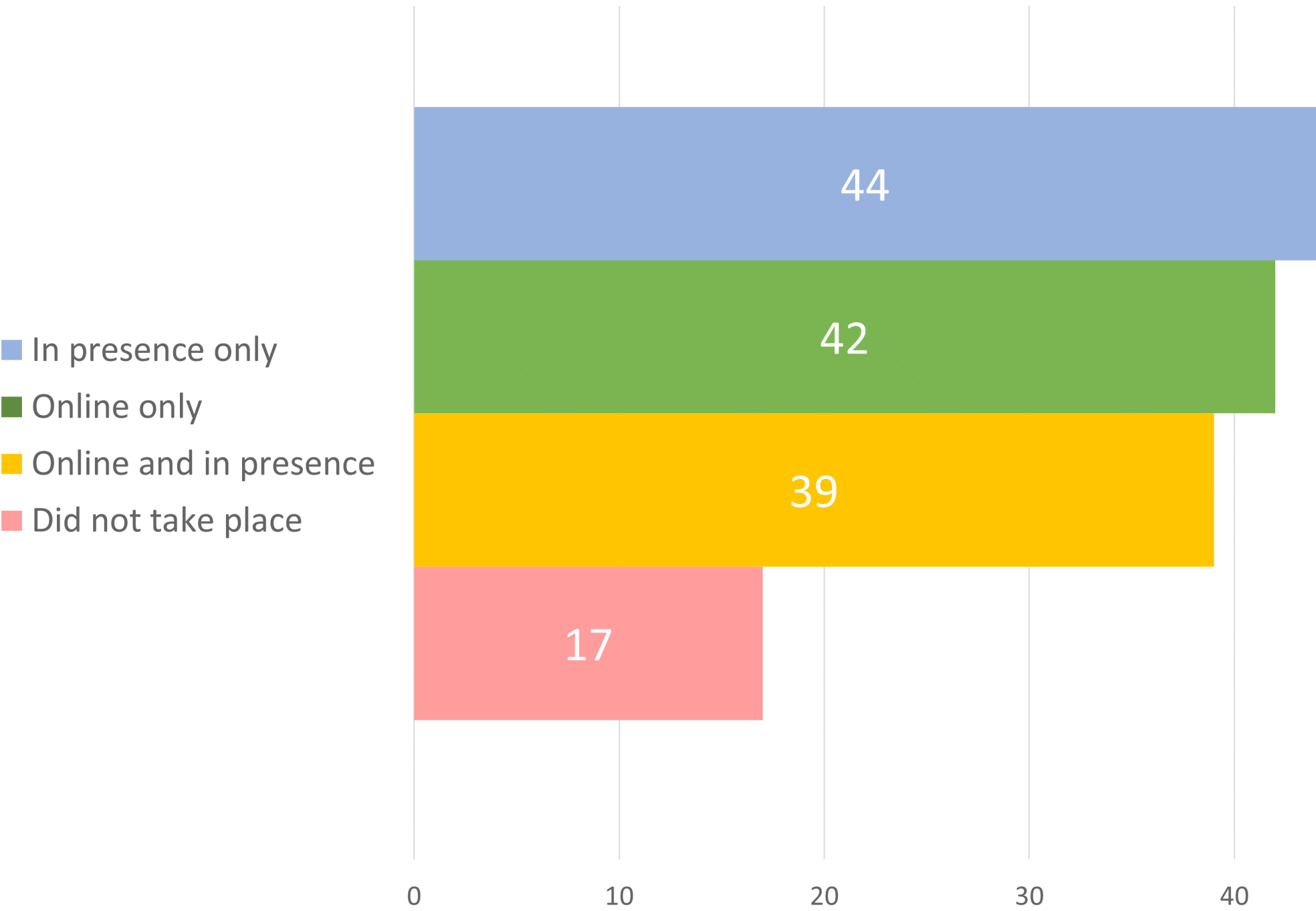


PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

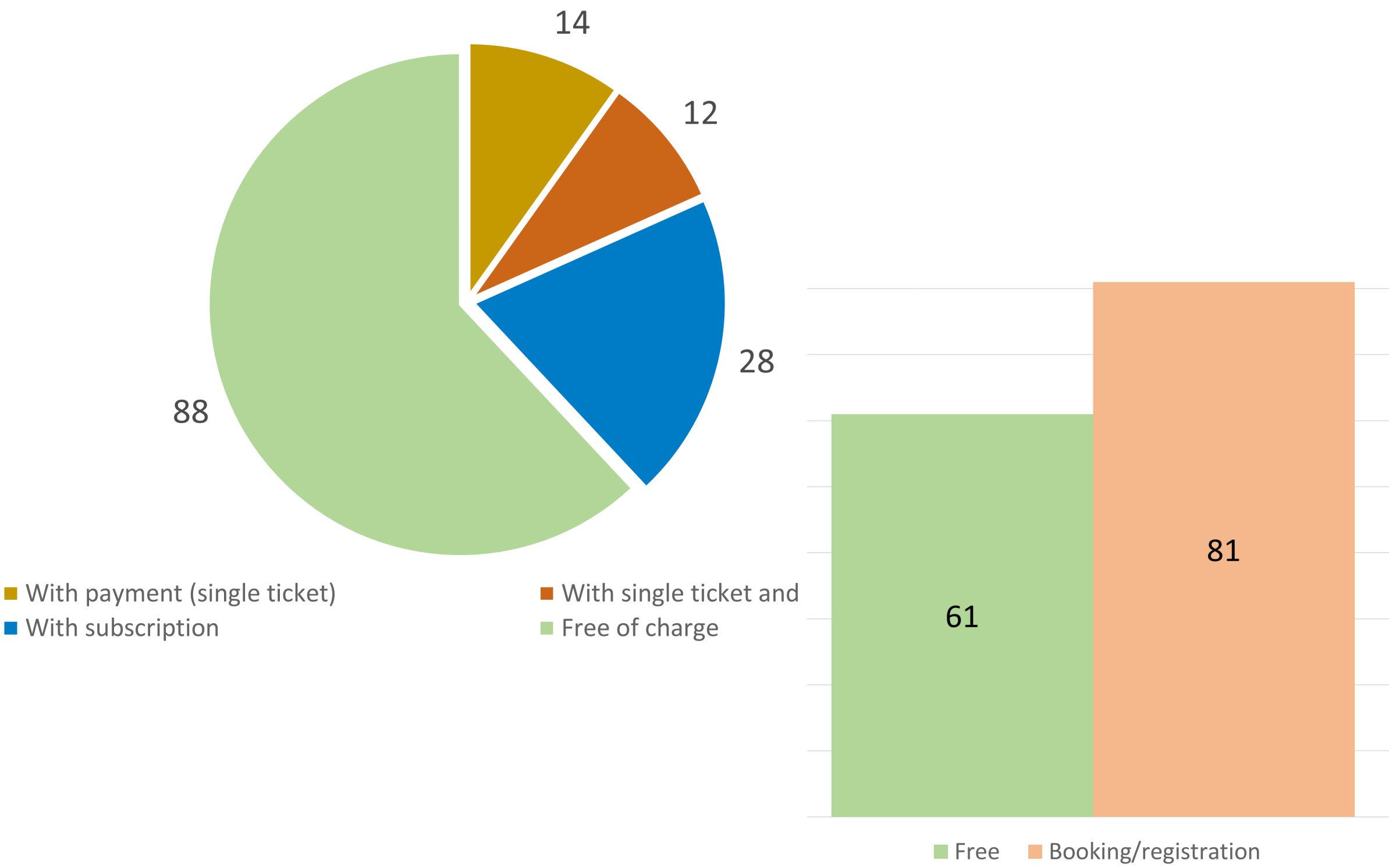


Last year **12%** of the 142 festivals involved in the survey were not held due to the Covid-19 pandemic, while those held only as in-presence (**31%**) were concentrated in the period between July and October. The online only (**30%**) and hybrid (**27%**) modes were adopted on a continuative basis between March and December. **62%** of the film festivals were held free of charge and in **57%** of cases involved a booking/registration access mode.

FESTIVAL ORGANISATION

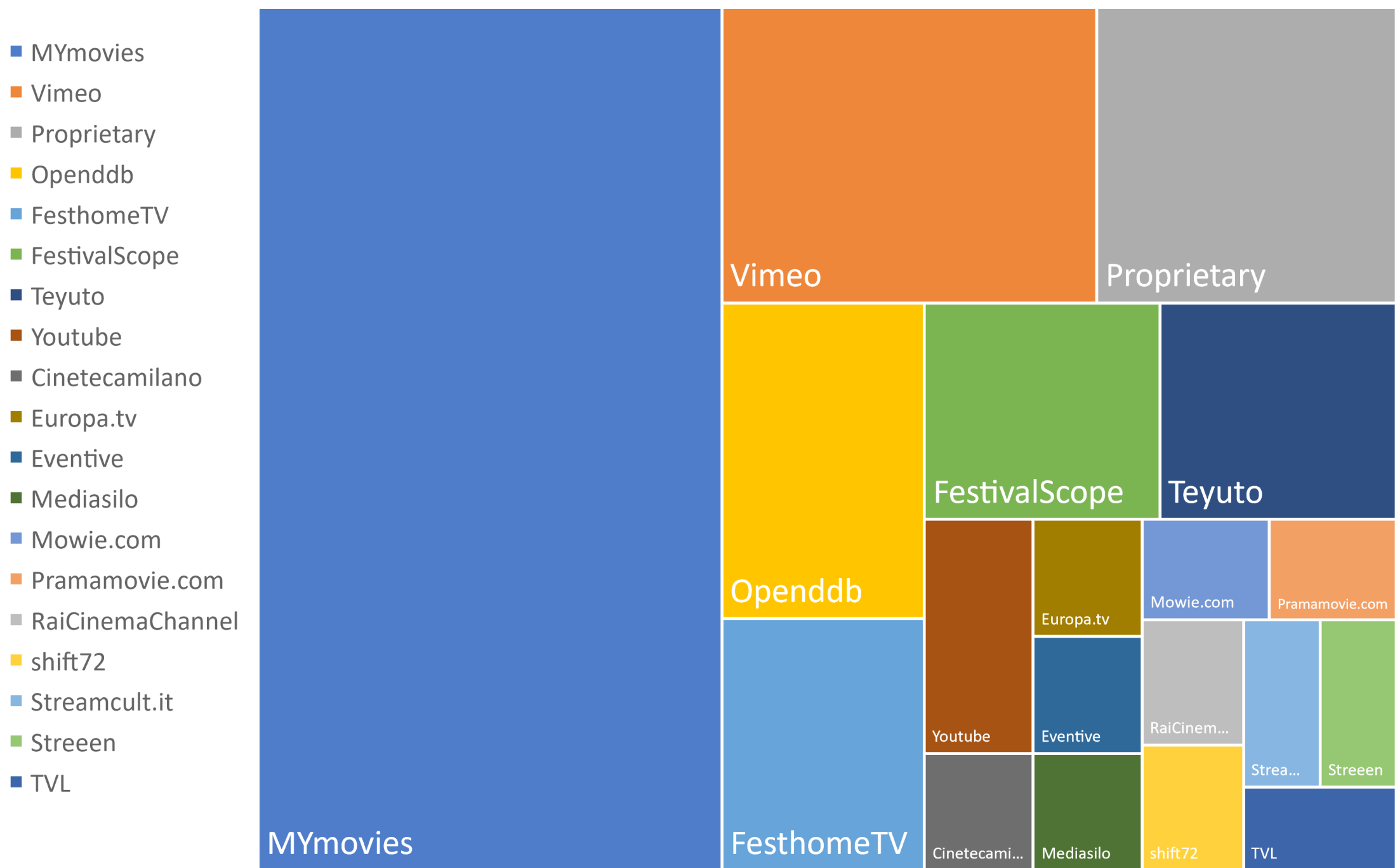


TYPE OF ORGANISATION

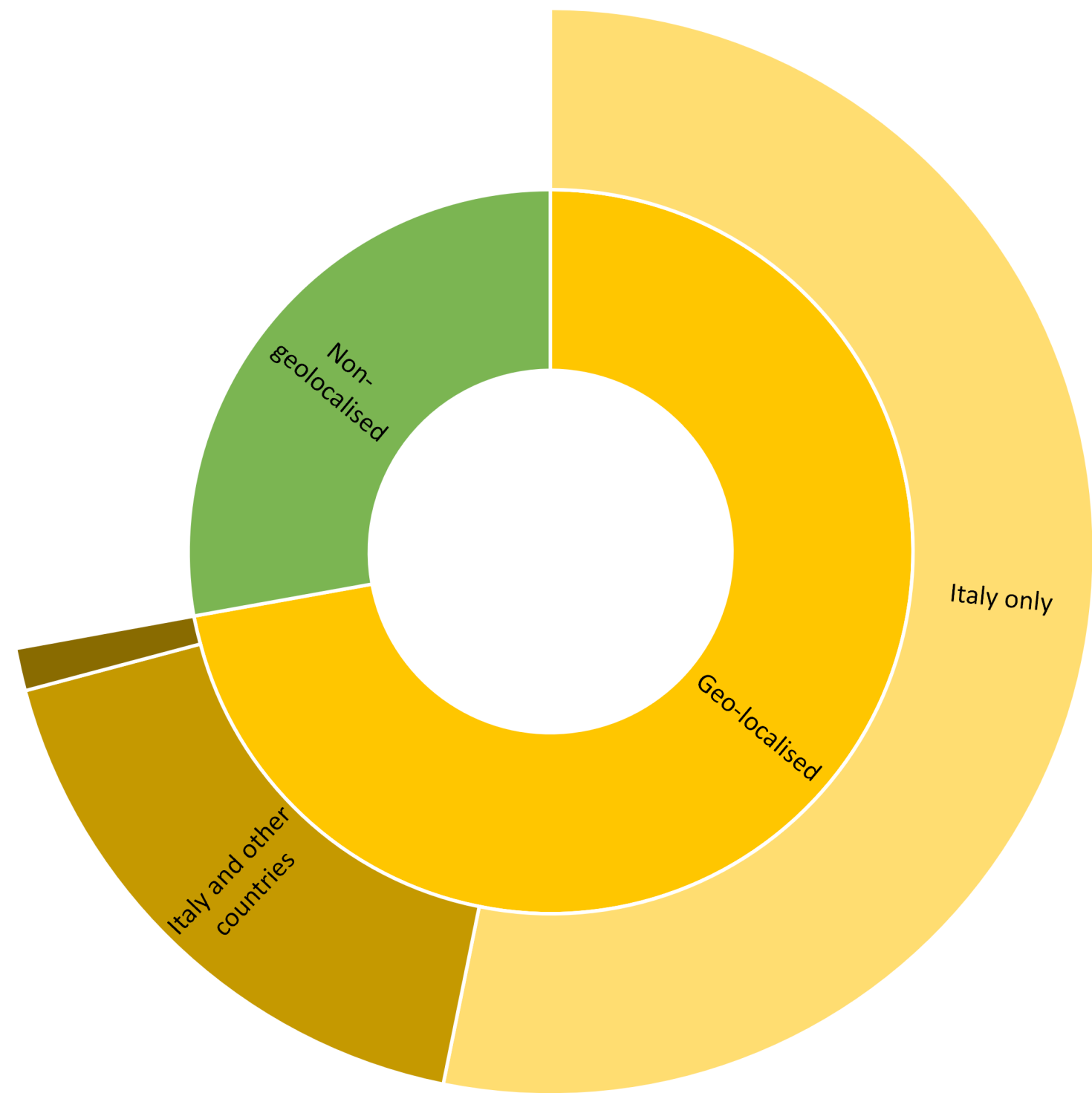


Out of a sample of **79** festivals held online with screenings of films, the main 5 platforms used were MYmovies (**41%**), Vimeo (**12%**), proprietary (**10%**), Openddb (**6%**) and FesthomeTV (**5%**) for a total of **4,526** titles uploaded and made available to the public. **72%** of the films were geo-localised and of these **74%** for Italy alone.

PLATFORMS USED FOR THE FILMS

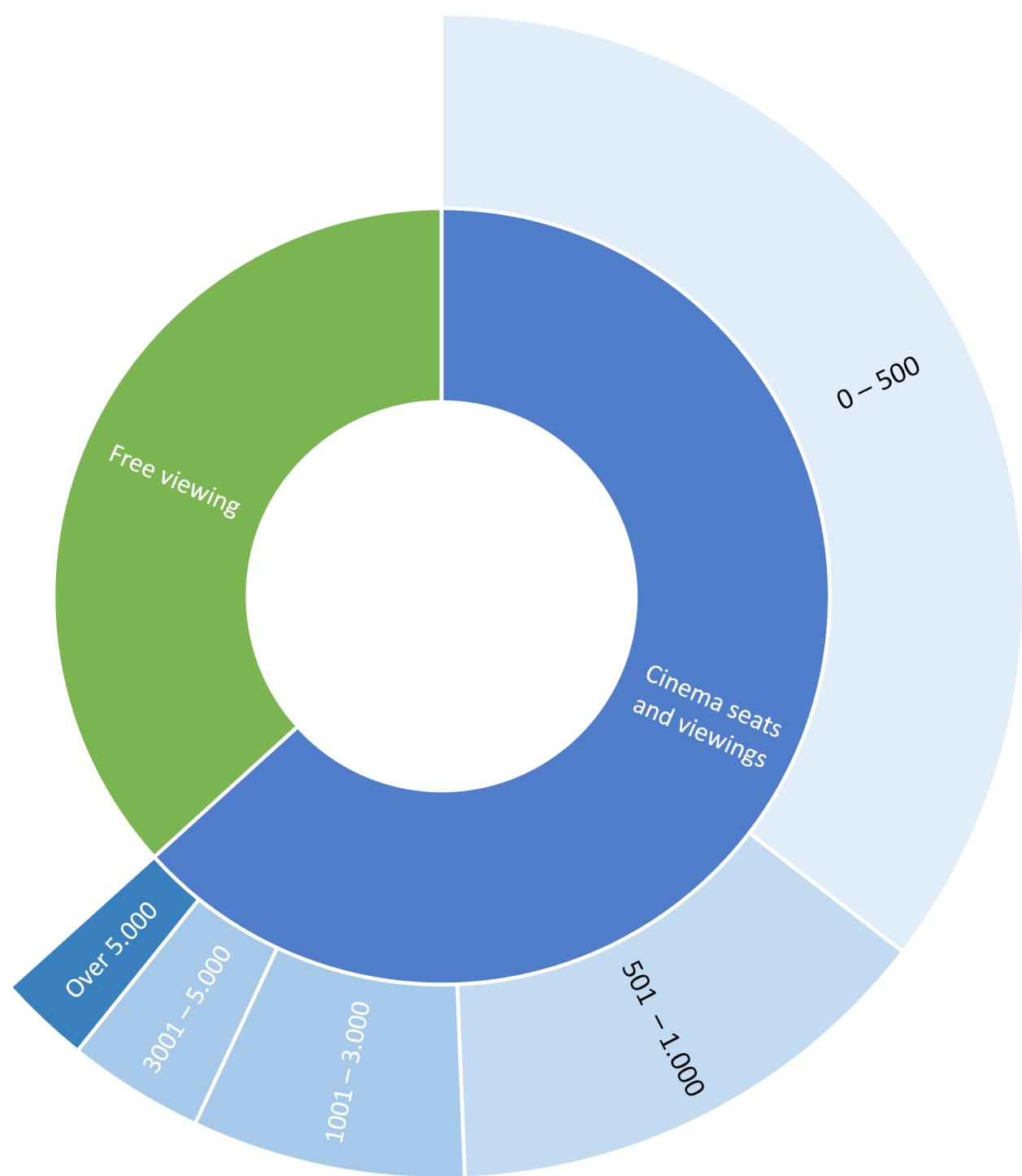


GEO-LOCALISATION

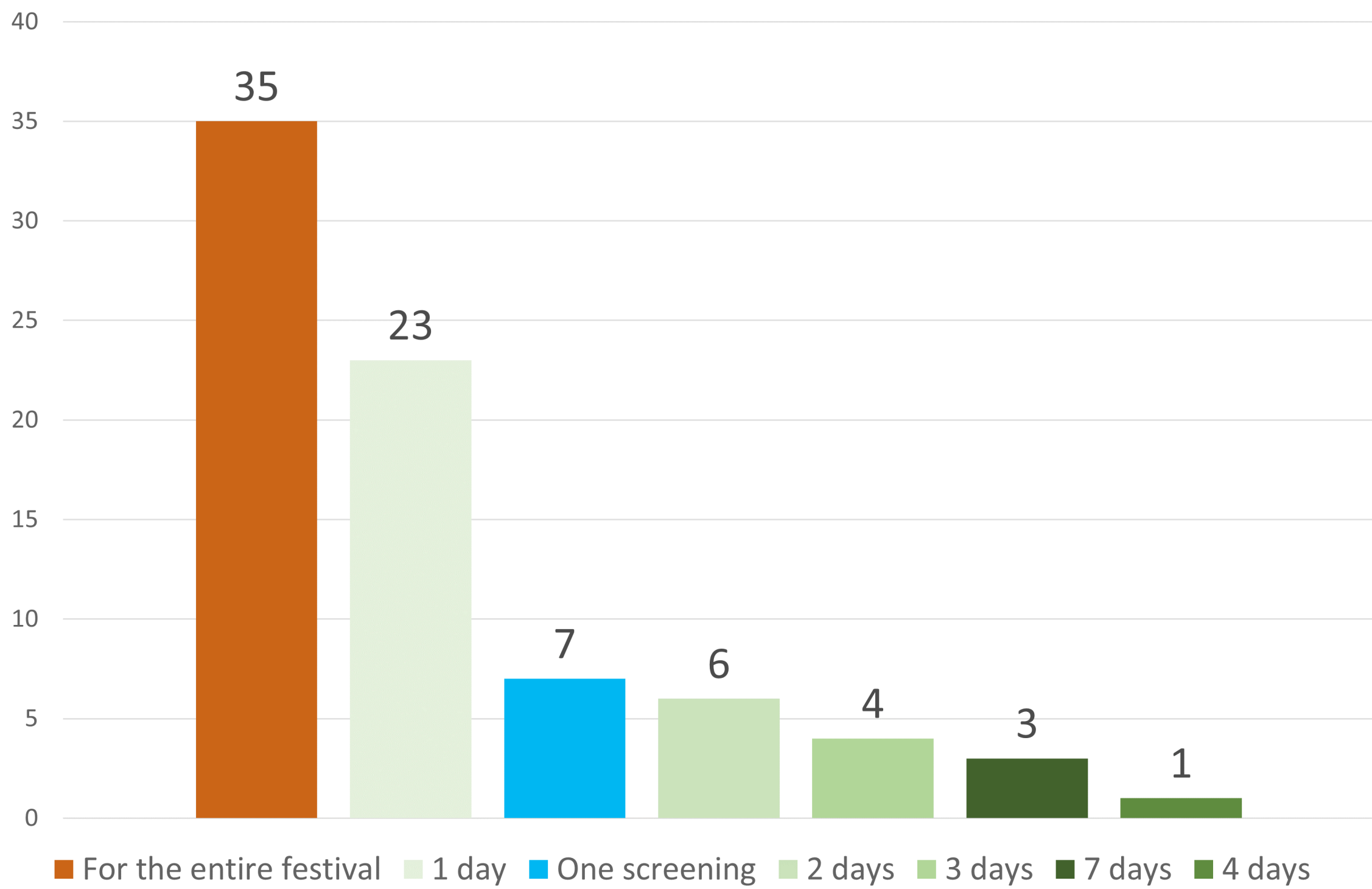


Viewing of the films made available online was regulated by the festivals mainly by number of (virtual) cinema seats/viewings (**63%**), in most cases limiting the audience to 500 units (**56%**). The period of availability of the titles generally covered the entire duration of the event (**44%**) or the 24 hours after the first click (**29%**).

PERMITTED AUDIENCE NUMBERS PER FILM

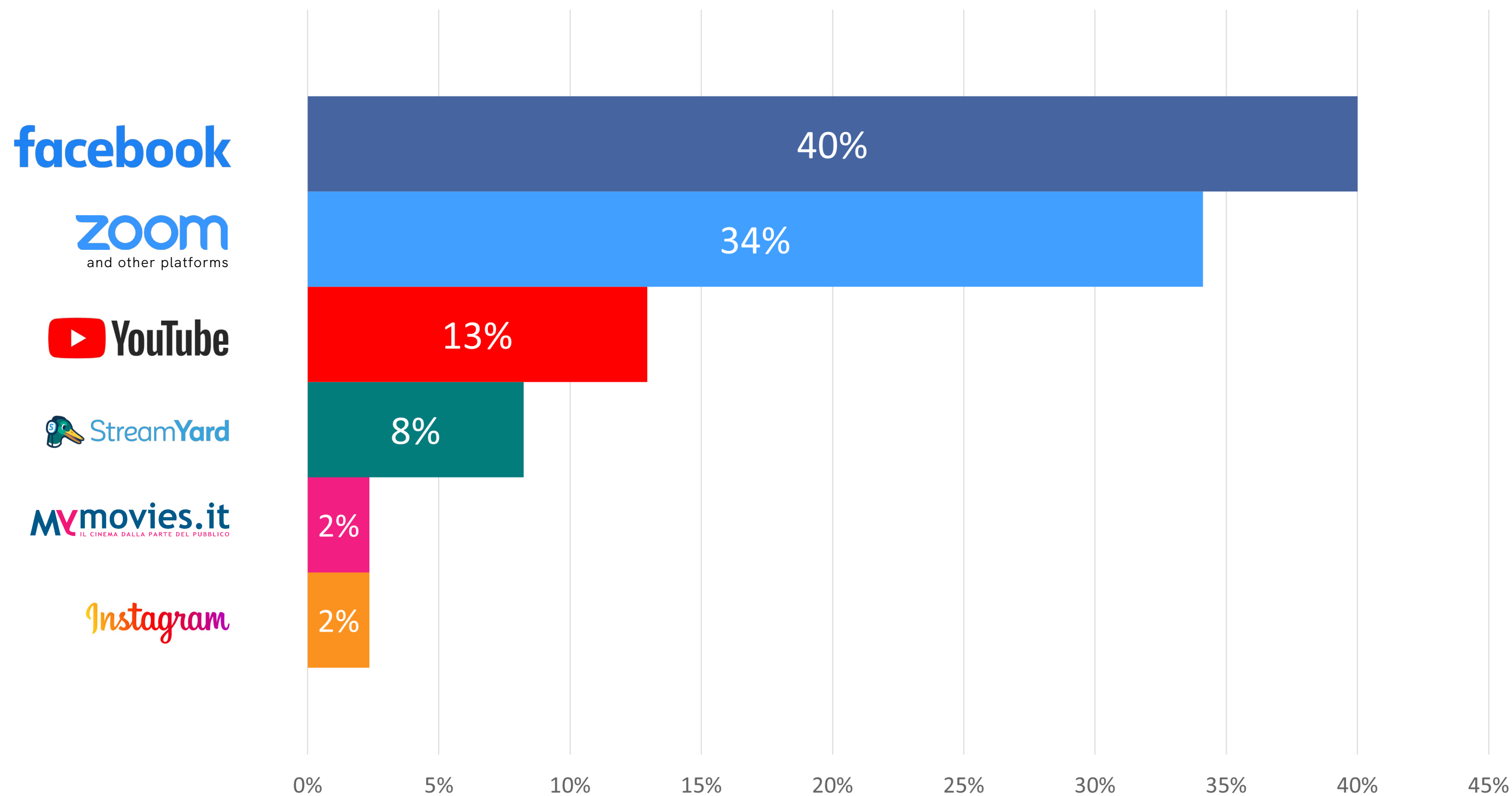


DURATION OF AVAILABILITY OF THE FILMS



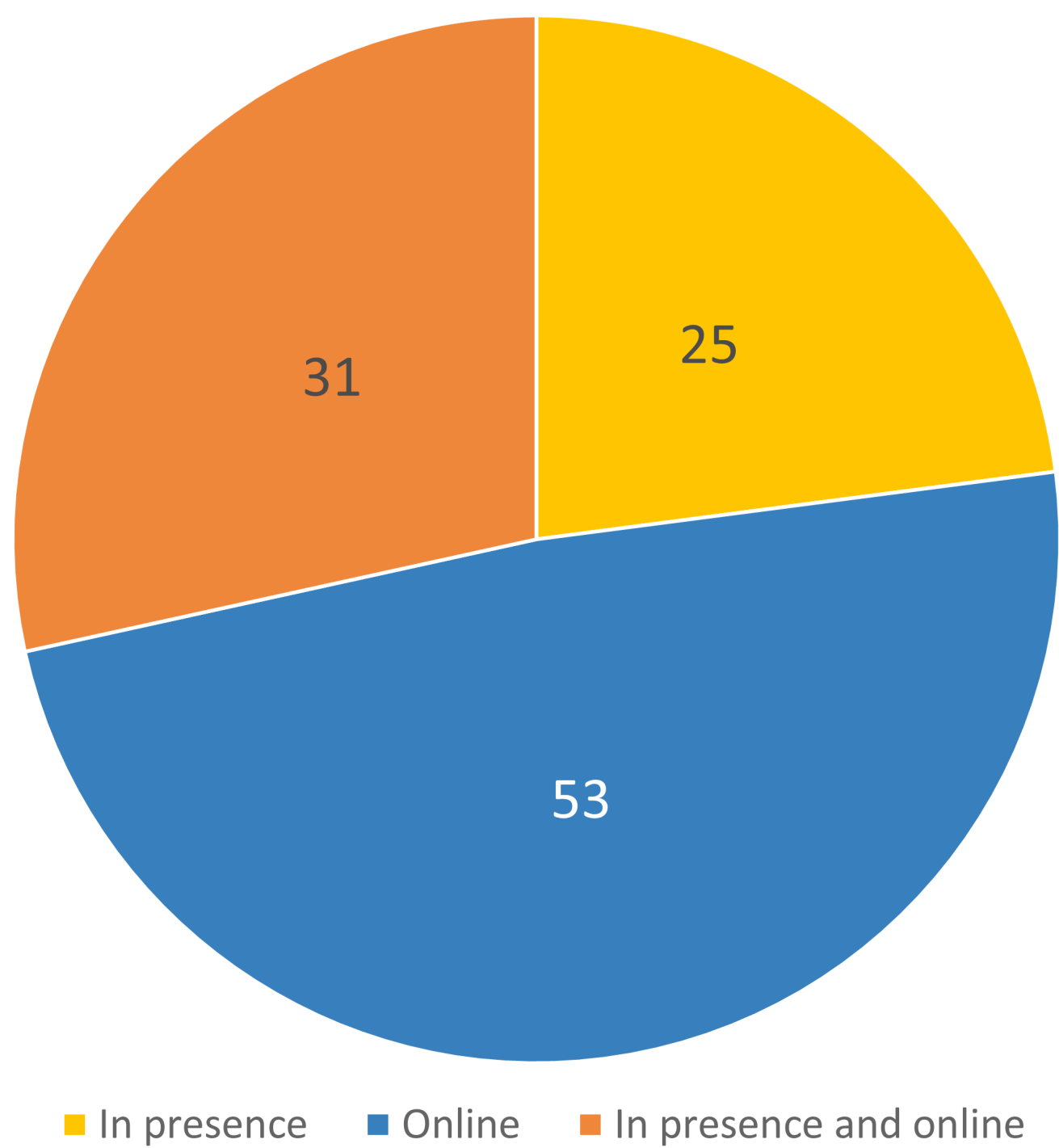
Of the 81 festivals held also online, **96%** organised talks with guests and filmmakers. They were broadcast for the most part on Facebook (**40%**) and YouTube (**30%**), using as preferred tools platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Meet and StreamYard.

MAIN CHANNELS USED FOR TALKS

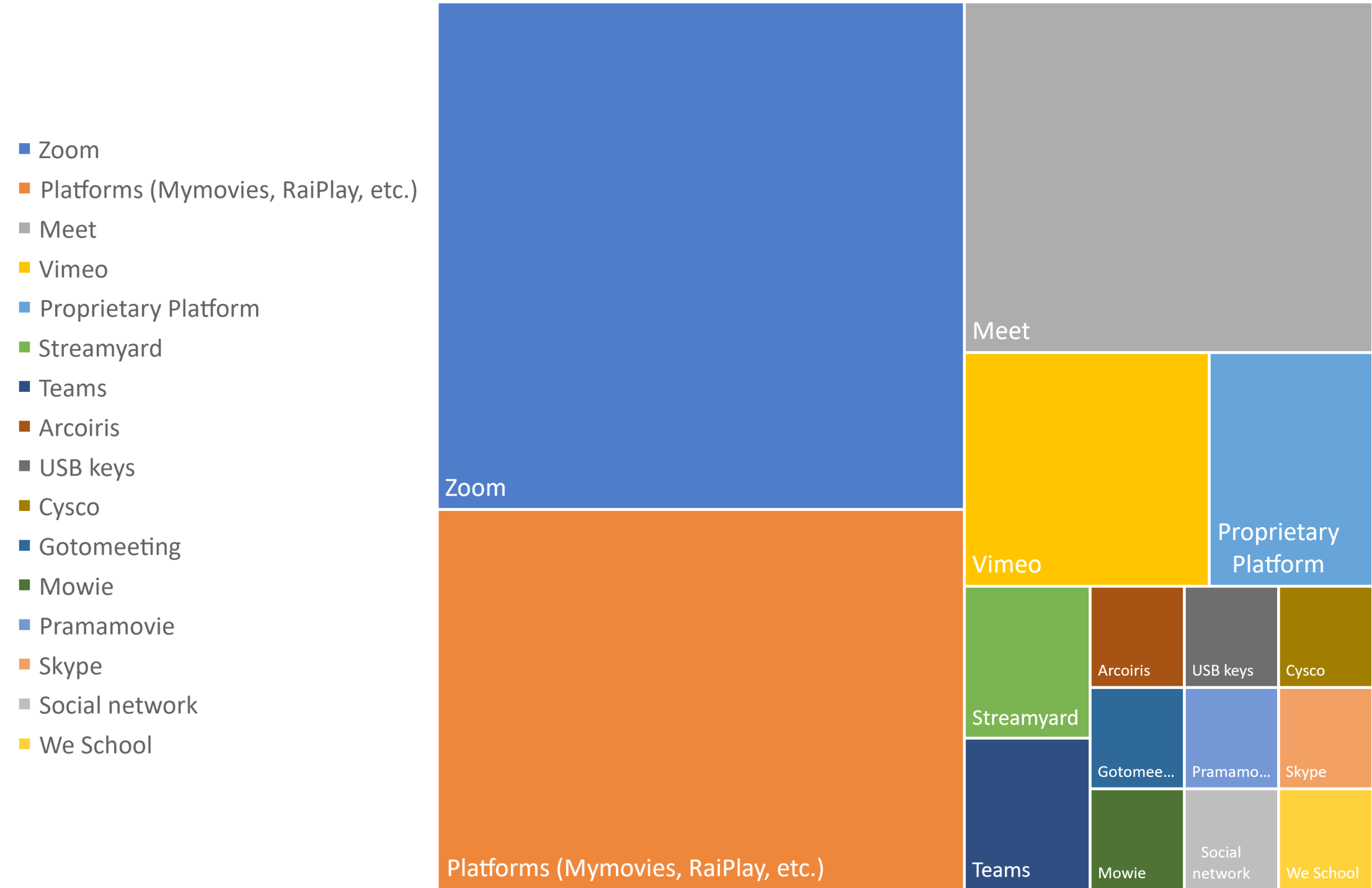


80% of the festivals involved in the survey work with schools. During 2020 **77%** of the sample performed activities online, using in particular Zoom (**32%**), streaming platforms (**24%**) and Google Meet (**17%**).

MODE OF ORGANISATION

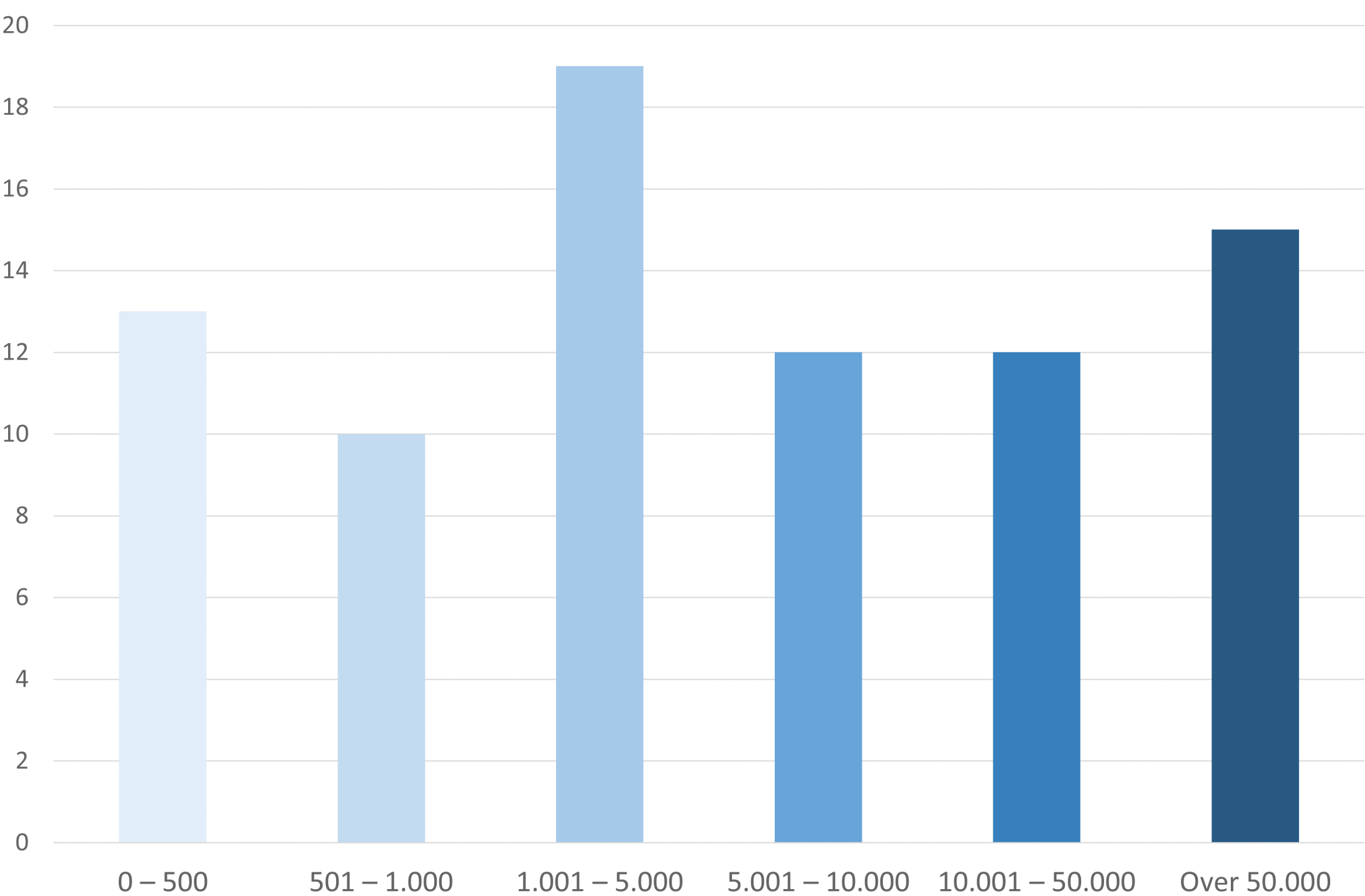


TYPE OF TOOL USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY

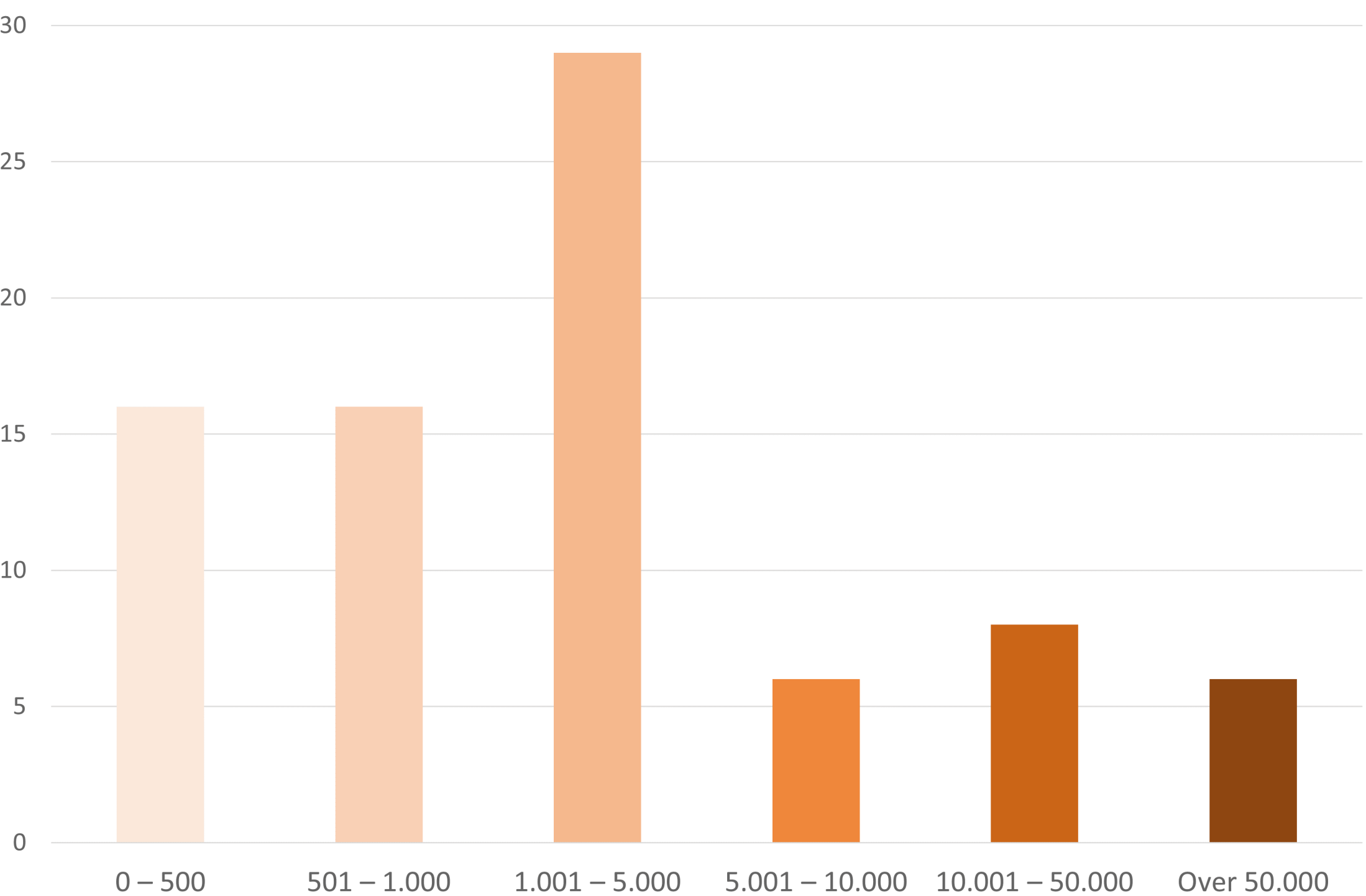


Online festivals were followed on average by an audience of between 1,000 and 5,000 people (**24%**) and higher than 50,000 (**19%**) in 15 cases. On platforms, however, most of the festivals (**36%**) were followed by an audience of between 1,000 and 5,000 viewers.

SINGLE USERS WHO FOLLOWED THE FESTIVALS ON AVERAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

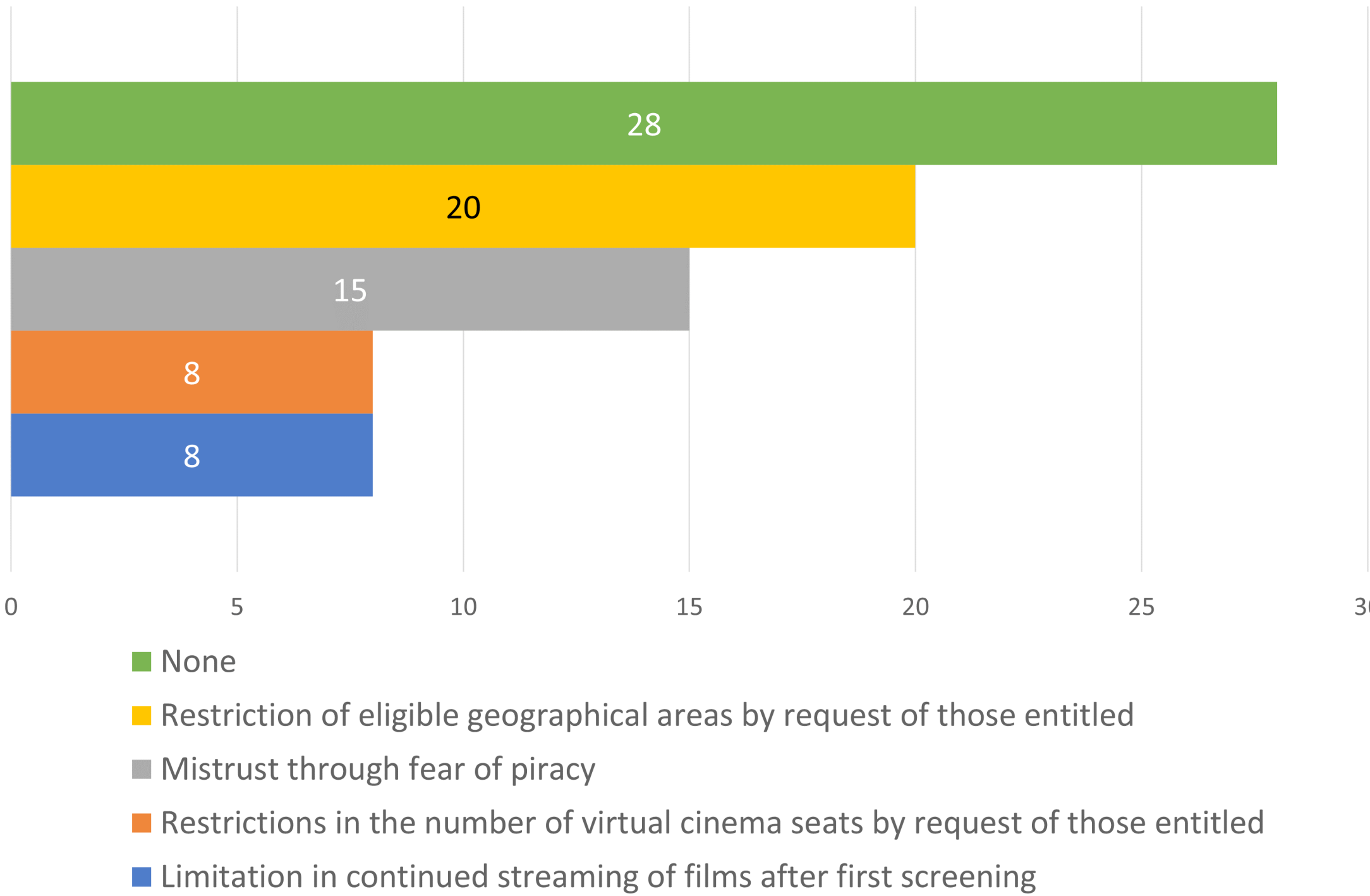


SINGLE USERS WHO FOLLOWED THE FESTIVALS ON AVERAGE ON PLATFORMS

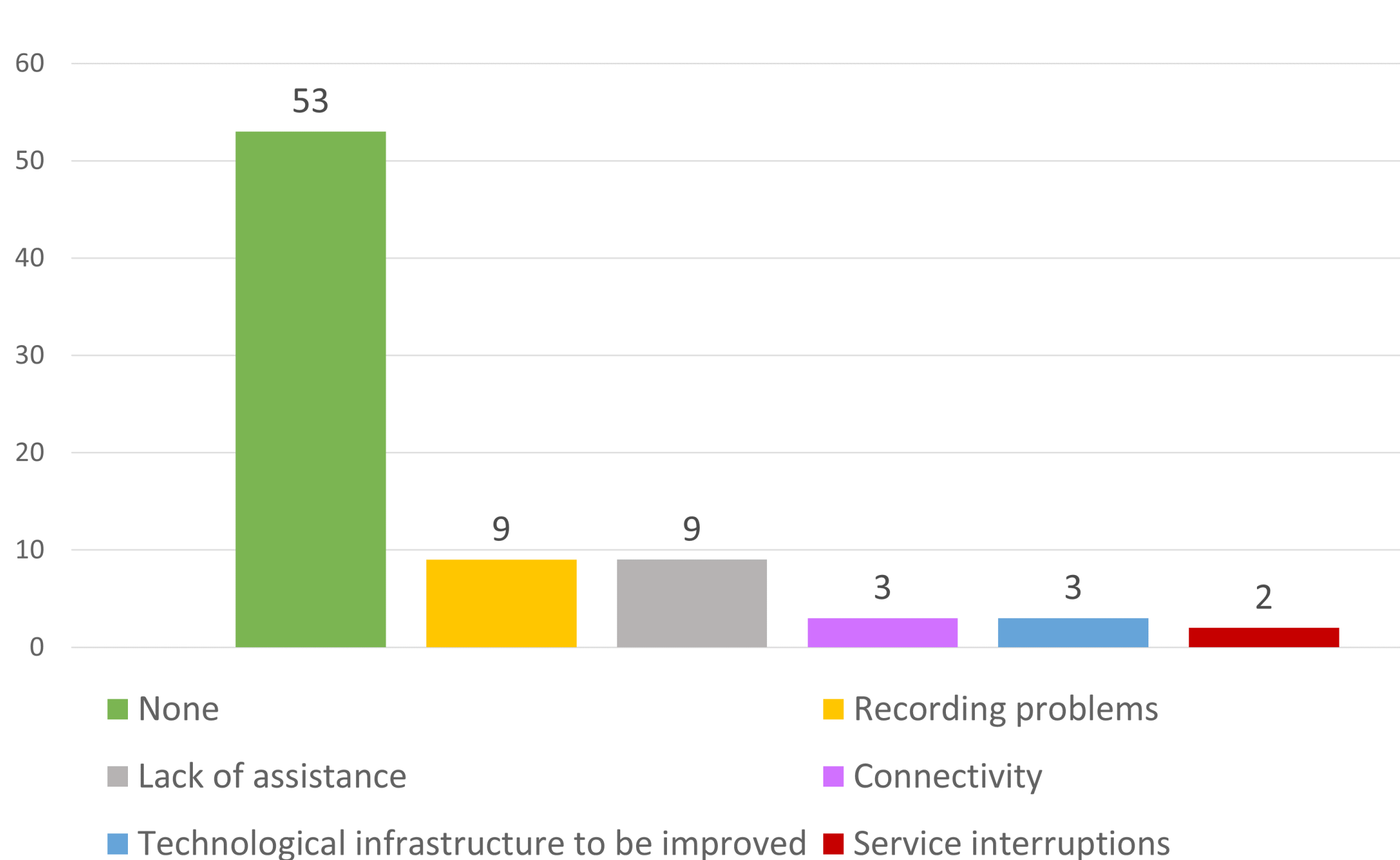


In **35%** and in **67%** of cases, the festivals did not encounter problems linked to the availability of the films planned or to the functioning of the platforms. The greatest critical factors were linked to the geo-blocking requested by those entitled (**25%**) and to the network connection (**14%**).

PROBLEMS LINKED TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FILMS

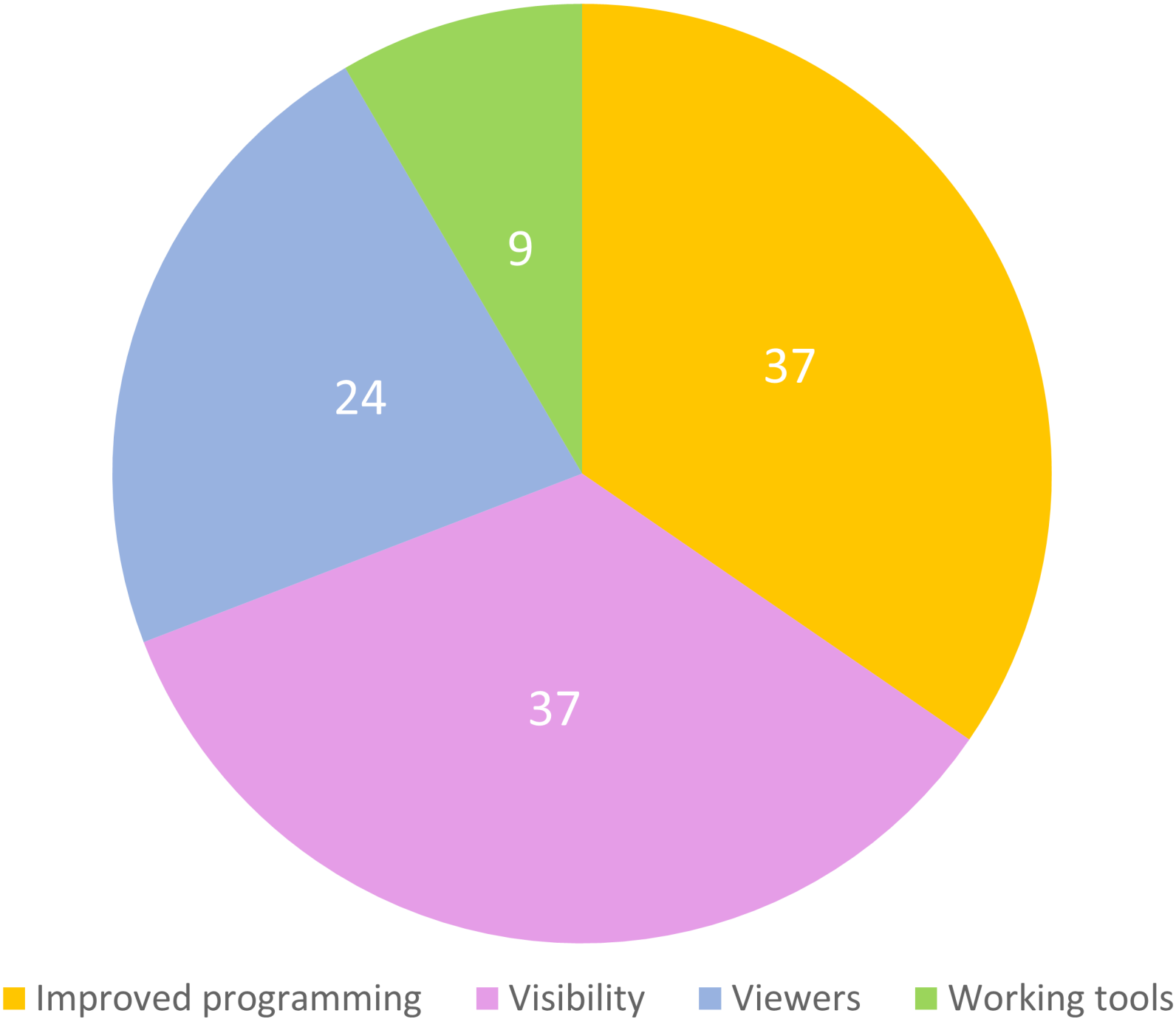


TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OCCURRING



More than one festival out of three considers that an online version meant improvements to the programming and/or increased invisibility for the event. As regards the platforms, there were various suggestions by those in the industry.

ADVANTAGES OF AN ONLINE FESTIVAL

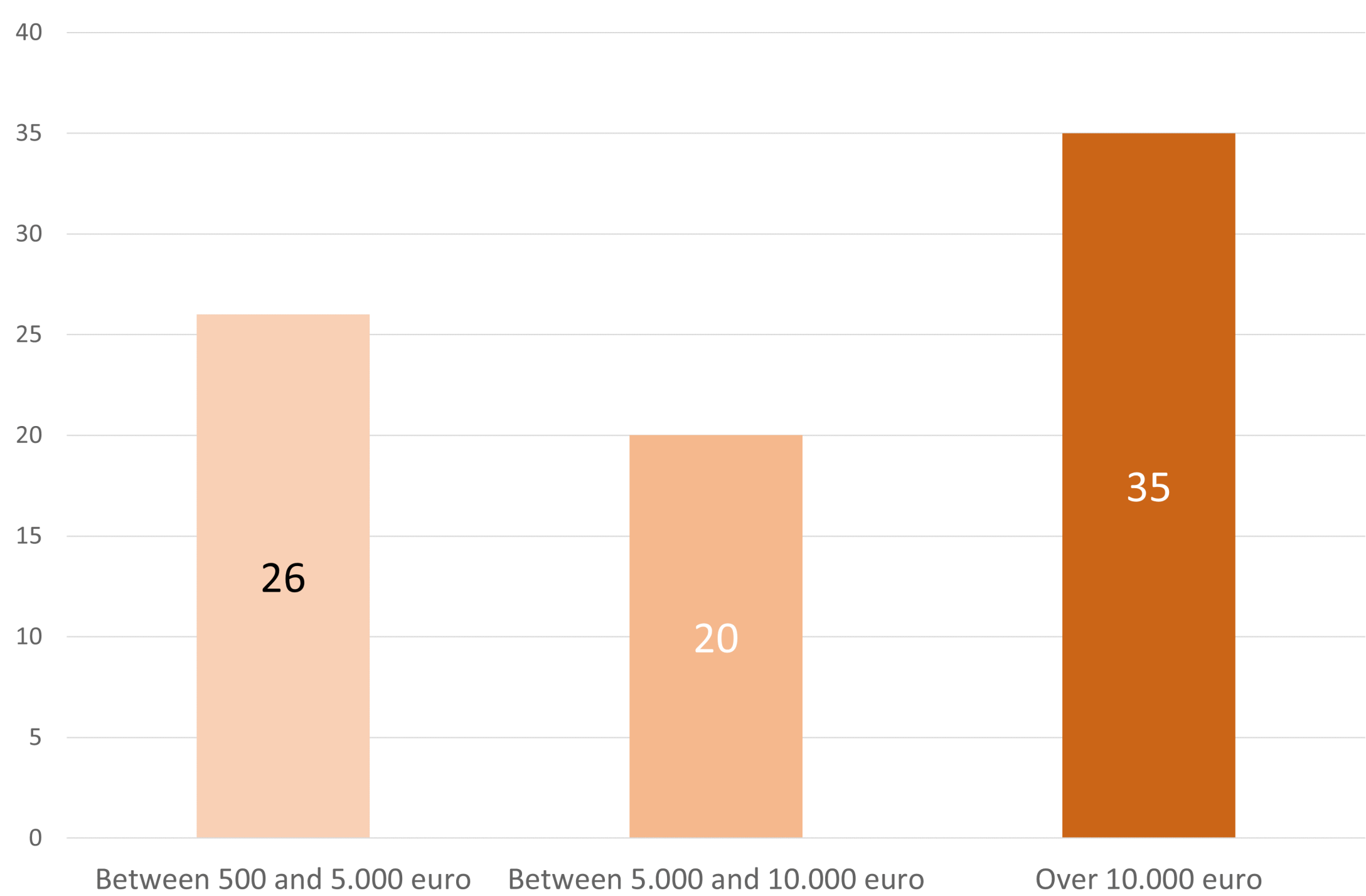


SUGGESTIONS BY FESTIVALS FOR THE PLATFORMS

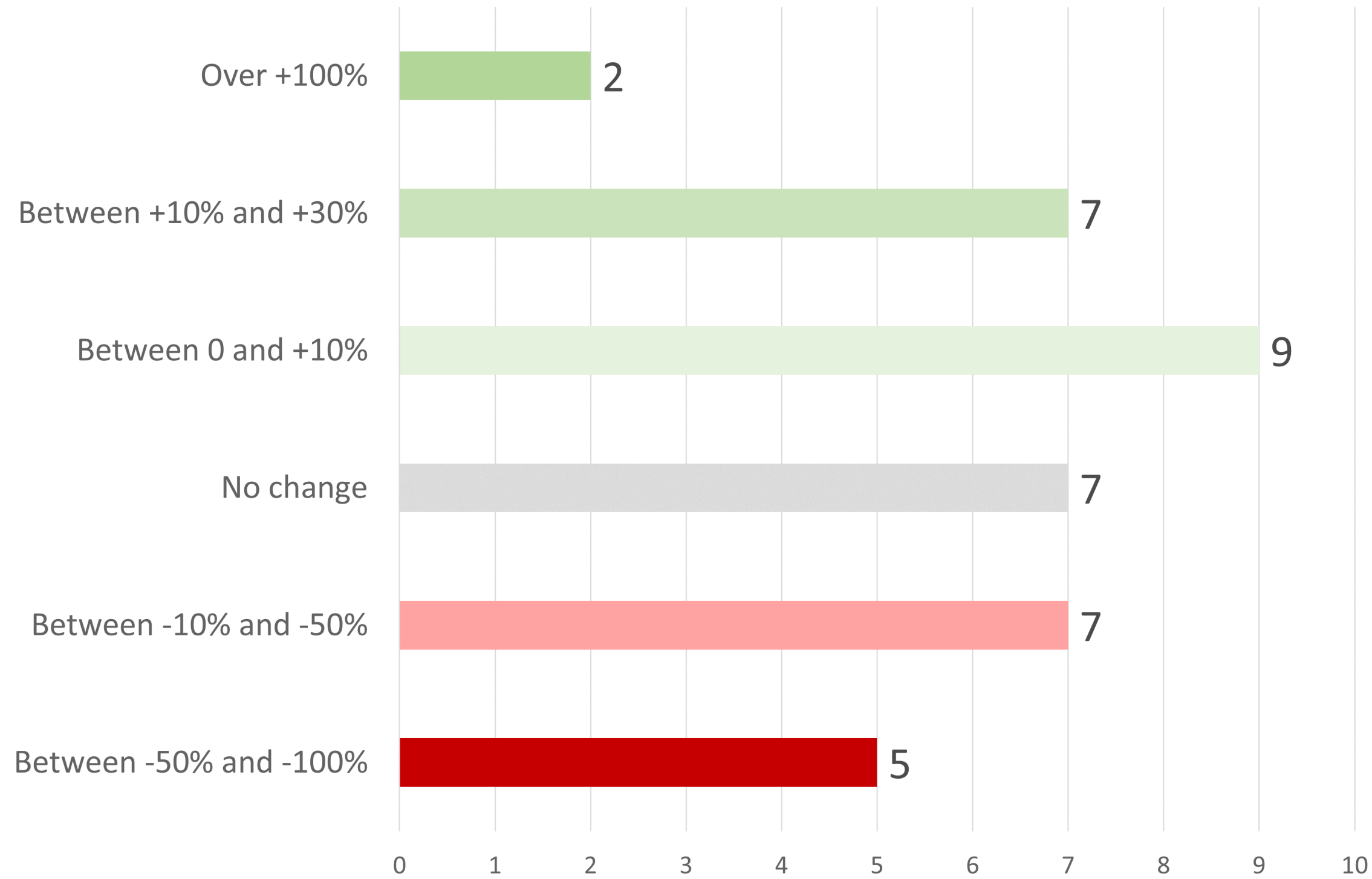
- Expansion of functions for live events
- Uploading of film data via CSV
- Direct control of accesses
- Customer service handled by the platform for technical problems
- Differentiation of users into categories with different privileges
- Differentiation of geo-localisation by categories of users
- Automatic generation of subtitles
- Integration with the website
- Integration of the various platforms used
- Greater autonomy in handling functions
- Greater compatibility with Smart TV systems
- Greater interaction with viewers and filmmakers
- Greater social interaction
- Greater personalisation of the platform
- Improved management of users by sections or accreditations
- Improvement in access to film data sheets
- Improvement in internal searches
- Single personalisation for each film
- More branding possibilities
- Possibility of managing industry events on the same platform for viewing films
- Possibility of receiving a free offer
- Reports in real time on accesses to single films and public profiling data
- System of control of the titles uploaded
- System of voting for films by users
- Security systems
- More efficient tools for interactive dialogue
- Translation of texts into different languages

Among the festivals of the sample analysed **43%** incurred costs that can be correlated to the online festival above 10,000 euros. Among the fee-charging festivals, **49%** recorded an increase in takings from the films compared to the previous year, **19%** did not record changes and **32%** suffered a loss.

EXTRA COSTS CORRELATED TO THE ONLINE FESTIVAL

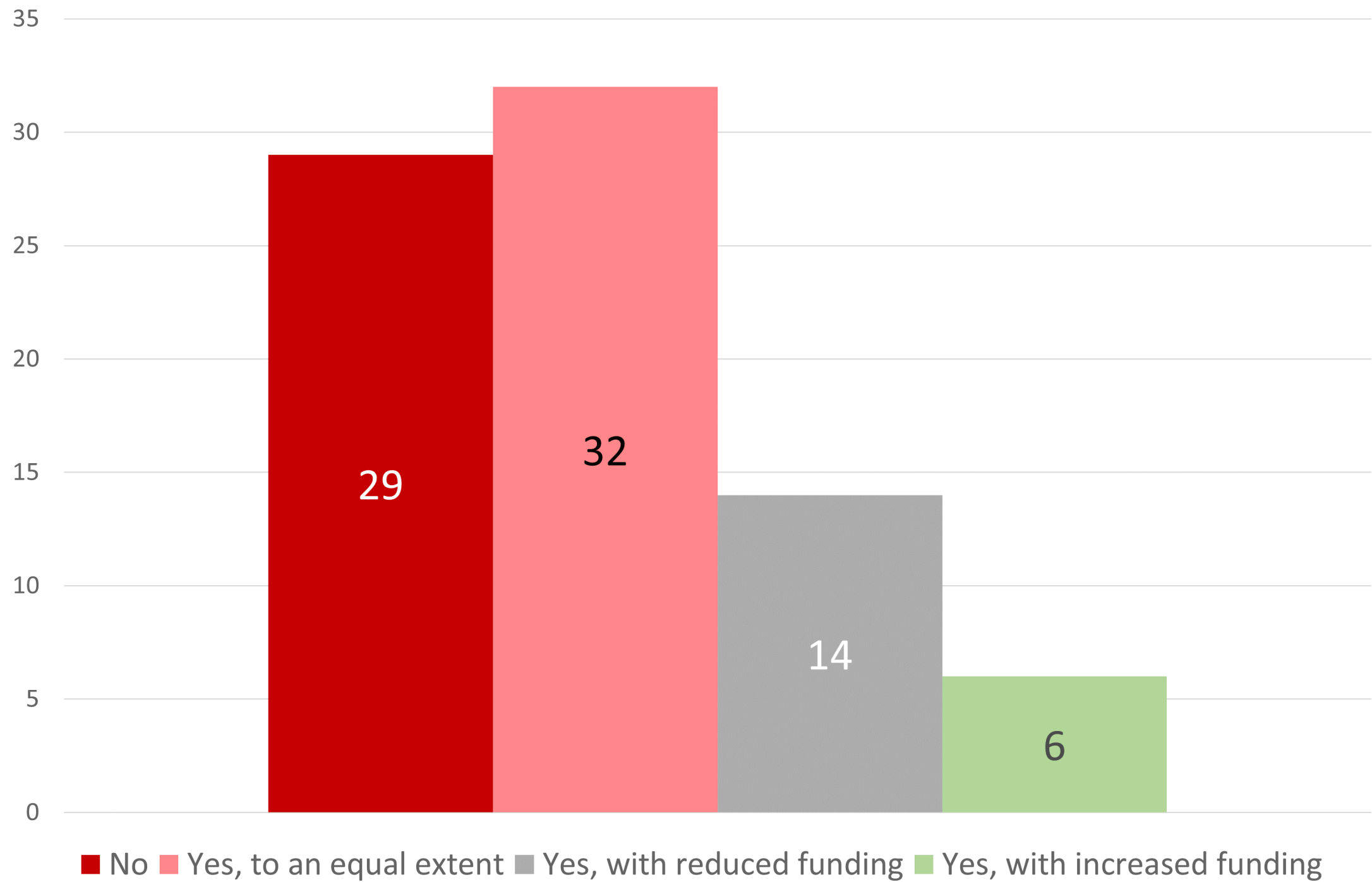


% CHANGE COMPARED TO 2019 IN REVENUE FROM FILM SCREENING

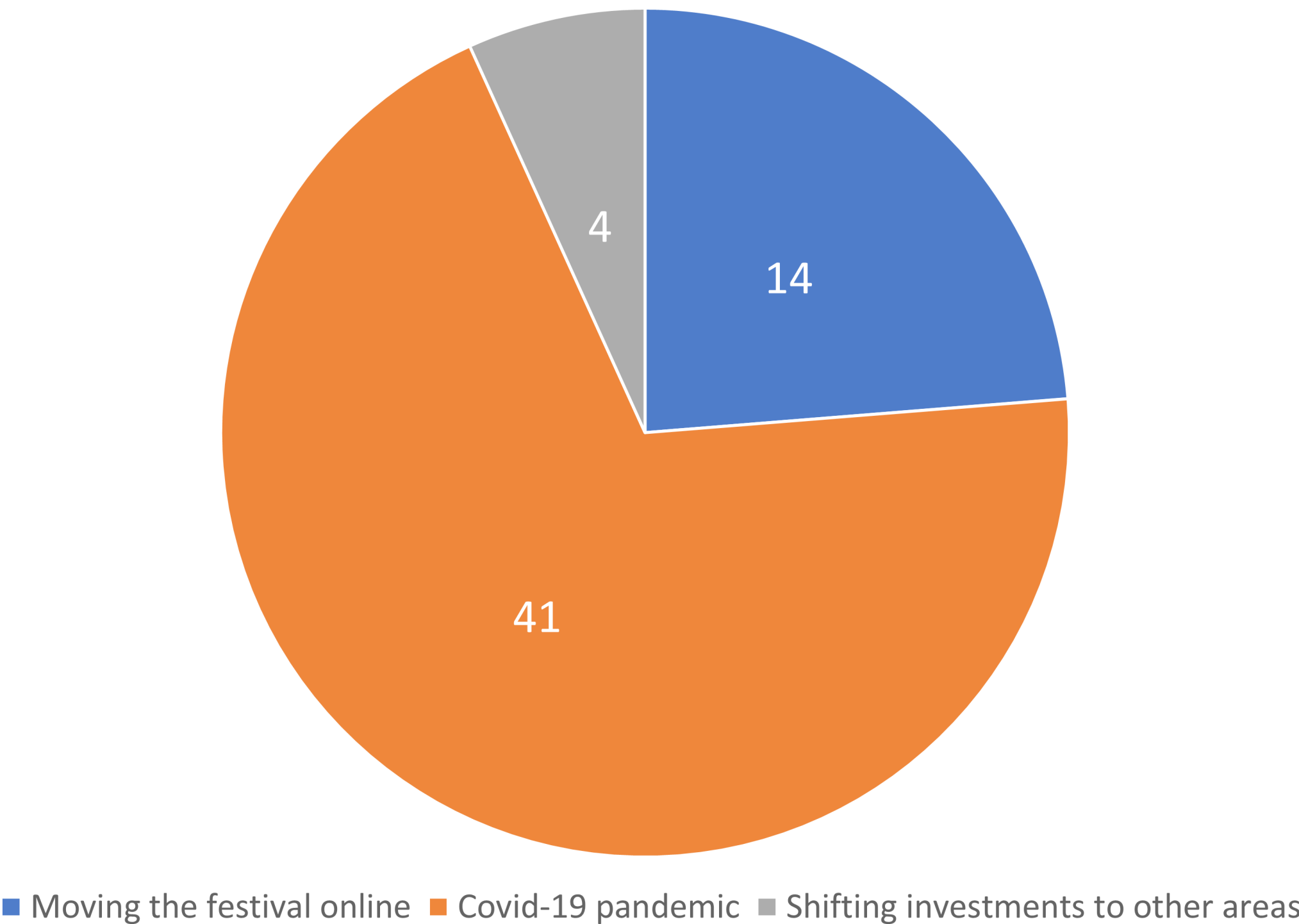


75% of festivals maintain that private funding has been cut off or cut back compared to the previous year. In most cases (**70%**) sponsors gave the pandemic as the reason for the cuts. **80%** of the festivals stated that the move to online screening did not boost attraction for new sponsors while **63%** of the festivals who received the same or higher funding did not receive from the sponsors requests for new advertising strategies or programme proposals.

DID PRIVATE SPONSORS MAINTAIN FUNDING?

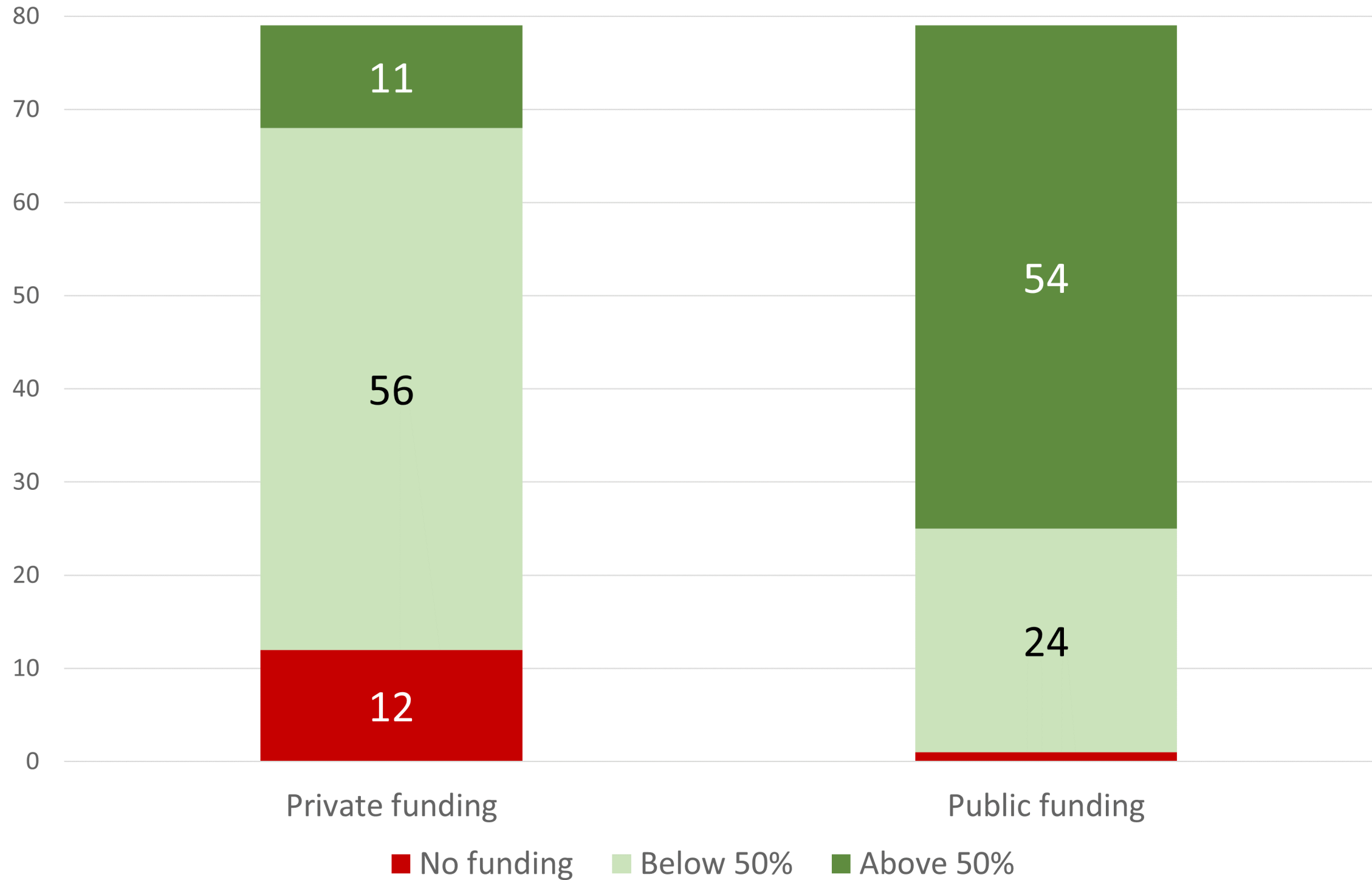


REASONS FOR FUNDING CUTBACK

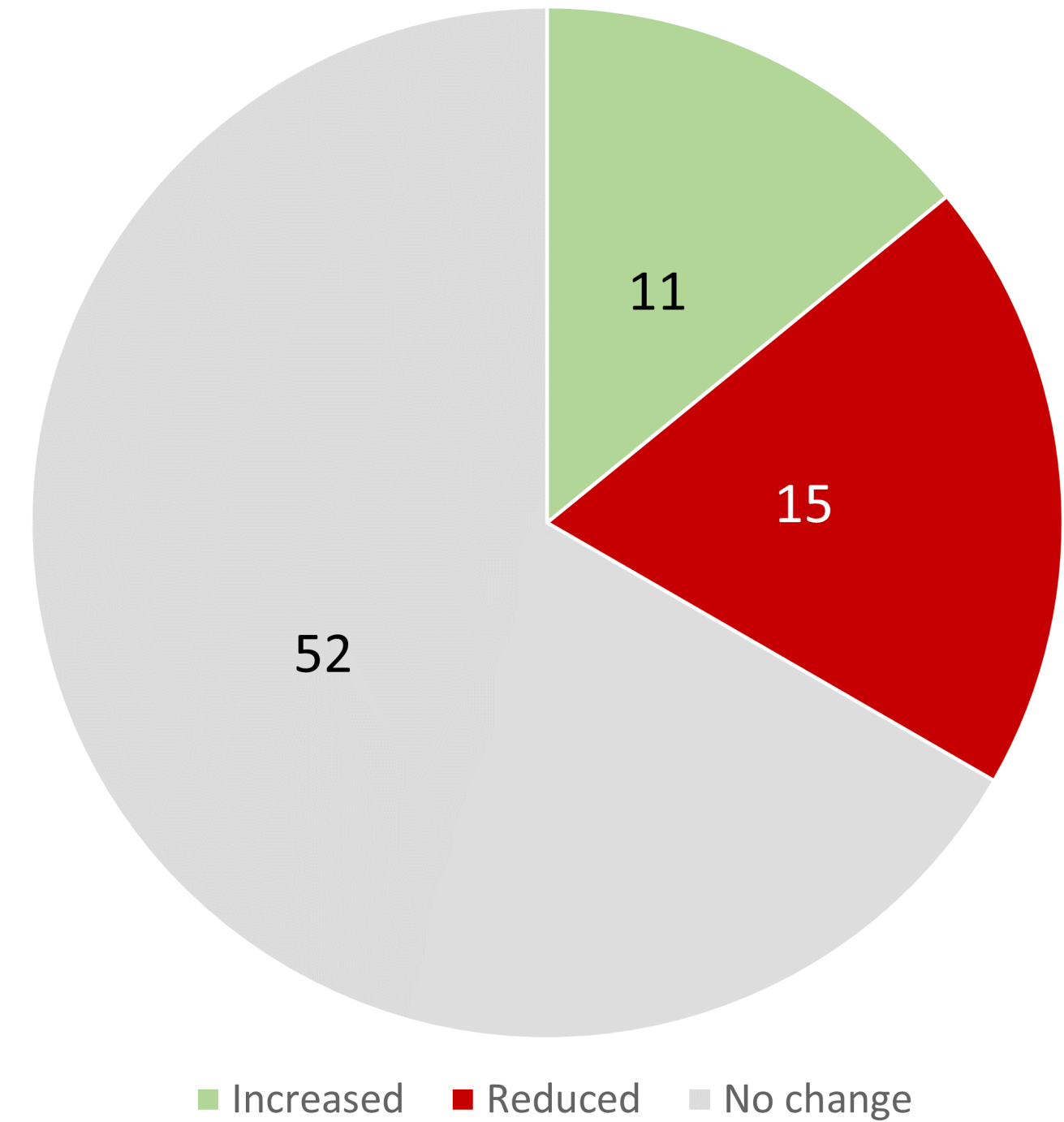


71% of the festivals held online received private funding below **50%** of the total budget while **68%** received public funding above **50%** of the total budget for the event. For the **67%** of the festivals who received public funding, the amount had not changed compared to 2019 while for others it increased (**14%**) or fell (**19%**).

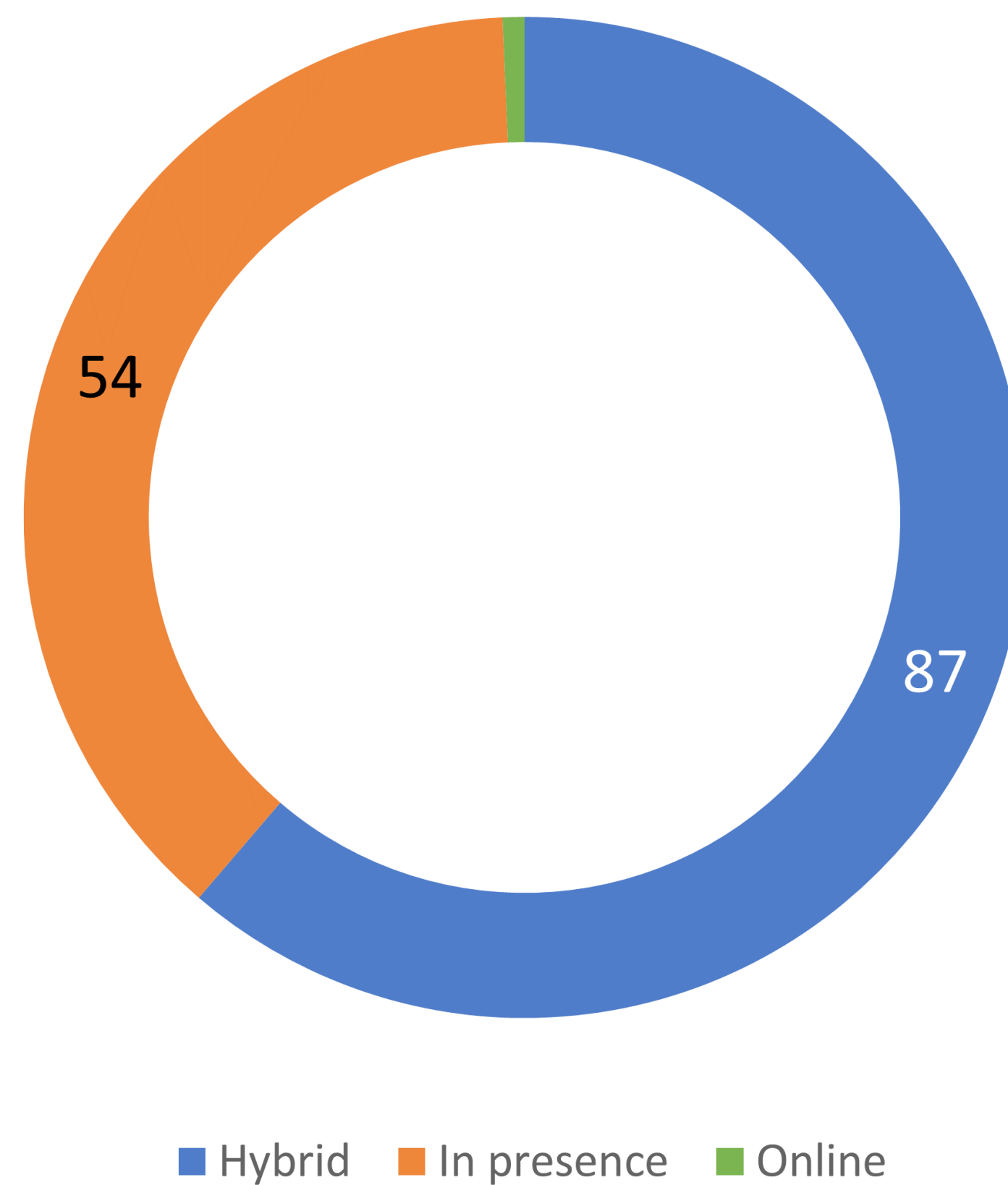
% WEIGHT OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE FUNDING IN RELATION TO BUDGET



PUBLIC FUNDING IN 2020 COMPARED TO 2019



We asked festival organisers how they envisage the next festival.... **61%** have no doubts about it!





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