

**“Towards a More Innovative Workplace”**  
**Project Reference №: 2014-1-BG01-KA202-001634**

**SMEs**  
**Combined Countries Report**  
*Summary*

### 1. Survey objectives and methodology

This survey among SMEs was conducted in six partner countries of the InnoWork project: Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The purpose of research was to assess the situation and map attitudes towards workplace innovation and learning in order to develop suitable learning materials and approaches for the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their trainers.

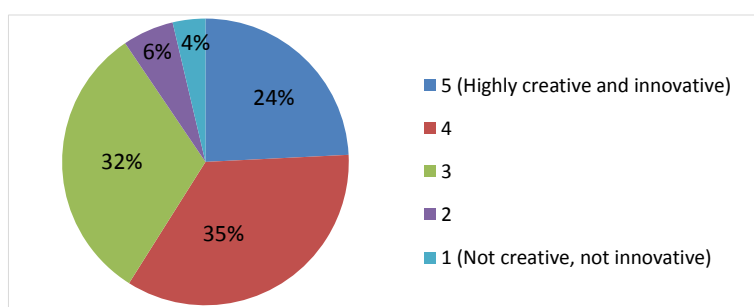
### 2. Scope of the survey

*Number of participant SMEs per country:*

Austria	Bulgaria	Finland	Lithuania	Portugal	United Kingdom	Total
32	62	36	31	17	20	198

### 3. Survey results

#### 3.1. Perceptions of level of workplace innovation and creativity in SMEs



**Austria:** Moderate to high satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, low incidence of negative evaluation.

**Bulgaria:** Moderate to high satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, relatively high (compared to project average) incidence of negative evaluation.

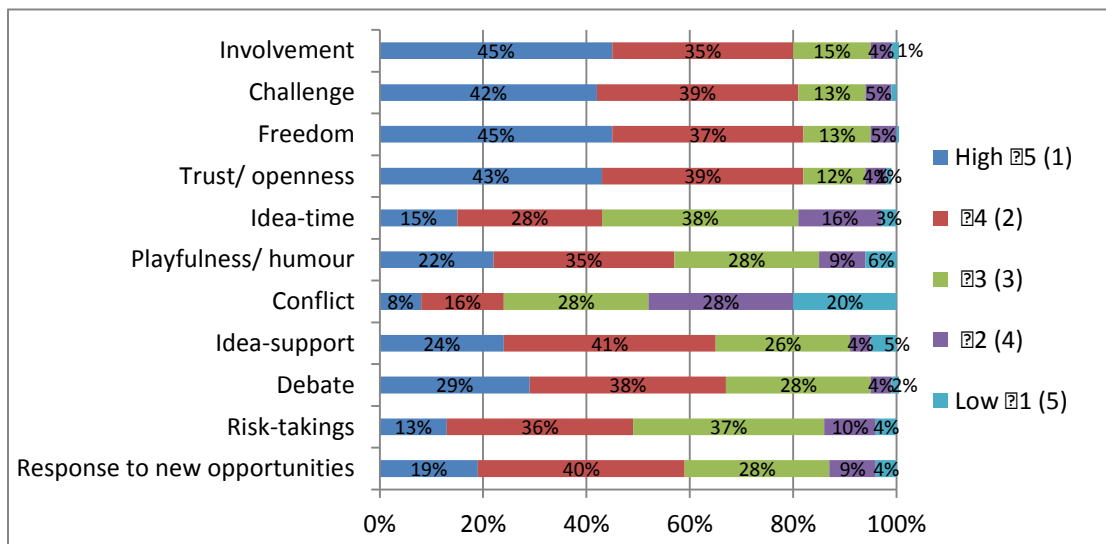
**Finland:** Moderate satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, relatively high (compared to project average) incidence of negative evaluation.

**Lithuania:** High satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, moderate (compared to project average) prevalence of negative evaluation.

**Portugal:** Moderate satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, relatively high (compared to project average) incidence of negative evaluation.

**United Kingdom:** High satisfaction with workplace creativity and innovation, average incidence of negative evaluation.

### 3.2. Perceptions of attitudes in the work place



All in all, respondents describe their workplace attitudes rather positively. Against this background, the overall evaluation of available time for generating new ideas and of tolerance for uncertainty, failure and ambiguity stands out as not particularly high.

**Austria** and **Bulgaria:** The weakest areas of workplace innovation environment are: available time for generating new ideas; tolerance for uncertainty, failure and ambiguity; workplace spontaneity, playfulness and relaxation.

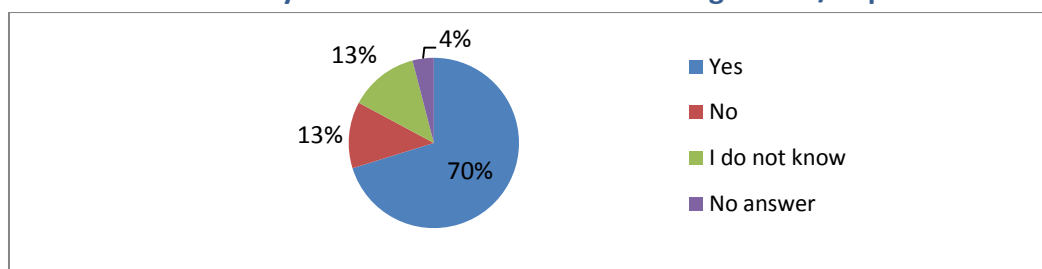
**Finland:** The weakest areas of workplace innovation environment are: available time for generating new ideas; tolerance for uncertainty, failure and ambiguity and workplace spontaneity; speed of response to new opportunities. The Finish SMEs' workplace is perceived as relatively free of serious conflicts and tensions and relatively tolerant to diversity and debate as compared to the project average.

**Lithuania:** Available time for generating new ideas appears to be the weakest area of workplace innovation environment. Lithuanian SMEs' perceptions of workplace attitudes overall are rather positive compared to the project average.

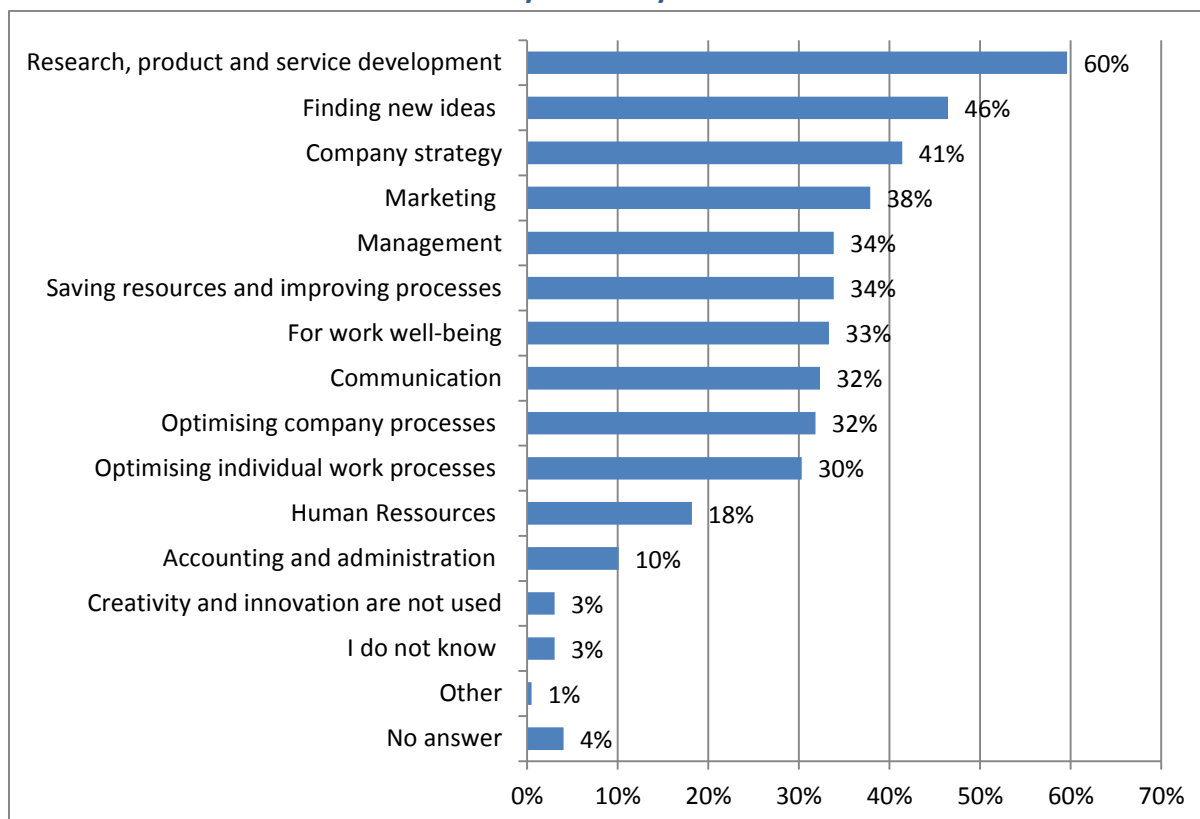
**Portugal:** Portuguese SMEs' perceptions of workplace attitudes overall are rather negative compared to the project average. Almost all areas pertinent to workplace innovation environment, including emotional involvement and commitment to work, goals and visions and perceptions about how challenging the work is, appear to be in need of improvement.

**United Kingdom:** UK SMEs' perceptions of workplace attitudes overall are rather positive compared to the project average. Tolerance for uncertainty, failure and ambiguity, as well as time for generating new ideas appear to be the weakest areas of workplace innovation environment.

## Presence of creativity and innovation in SMEs' strategies and/or processes



## Areas of SME business most affected by creativity and innovation



**Austria:** Creativity and innovation are perceived as mostly applied to research, product and service development, new ideas and company strategy.

**Bulgaria:** Work well-being, as well as research, product and service development, are seen as the main areas where creativity and innovation are practiced.

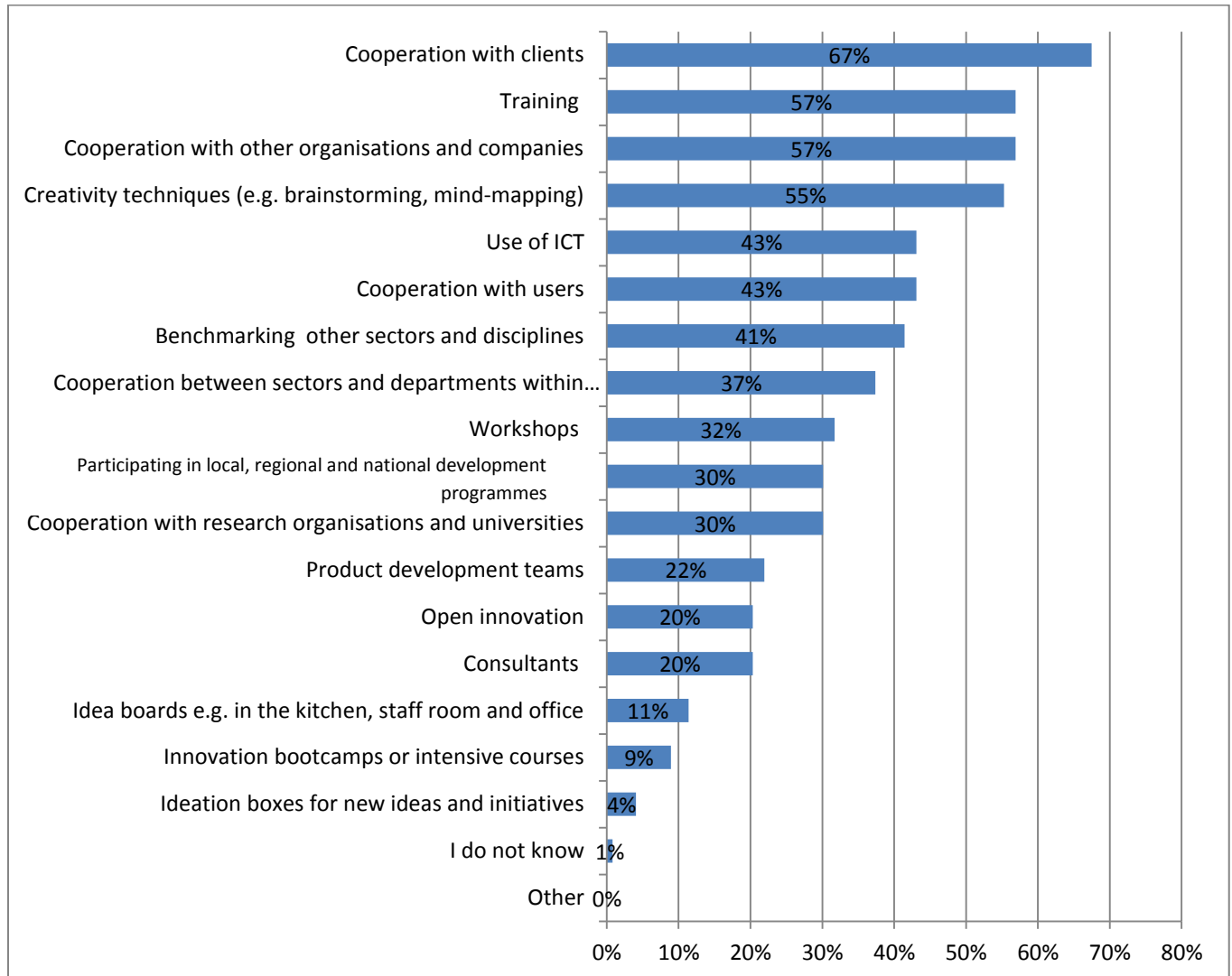
**Finland:** Creativity and innovation are most often applied in research, product and service development, company strategy, management and optimising company processes.

**Lithuania:** Creativity and innovation mostly affect research, product and service development, the search for new ideas and the area of marketing.

**Portugal:** Creativity and innovation are most often used for research, product and service development and for saving resources and improving processes.

**United Kingdom:** Creativity and innovation are most often used for research, product and service development, the search for new ideas, communication, company strategy and marketing.

## Approaches, tools and methods of innovation utilized in SMEs



**Austria:** The potential of cooperation between sectors and departments within organisations, the use of ICT and the use of idea boards appear underutilized. On the other hand, cooperation with research organisations and universities, open innovation, product development teams, participation in local, regional and national development programmes, and training and workshops are relatively well developed innovation approaches.

**Bulgaria:** Open innovation, cooperation with research organisations and universities, innovation bootcamps or intensive courses, ideation boxes, and creativity techniques (e.g. brainstorming, mind-mapping) are underutilized as approaches and methods for supporting innovation.

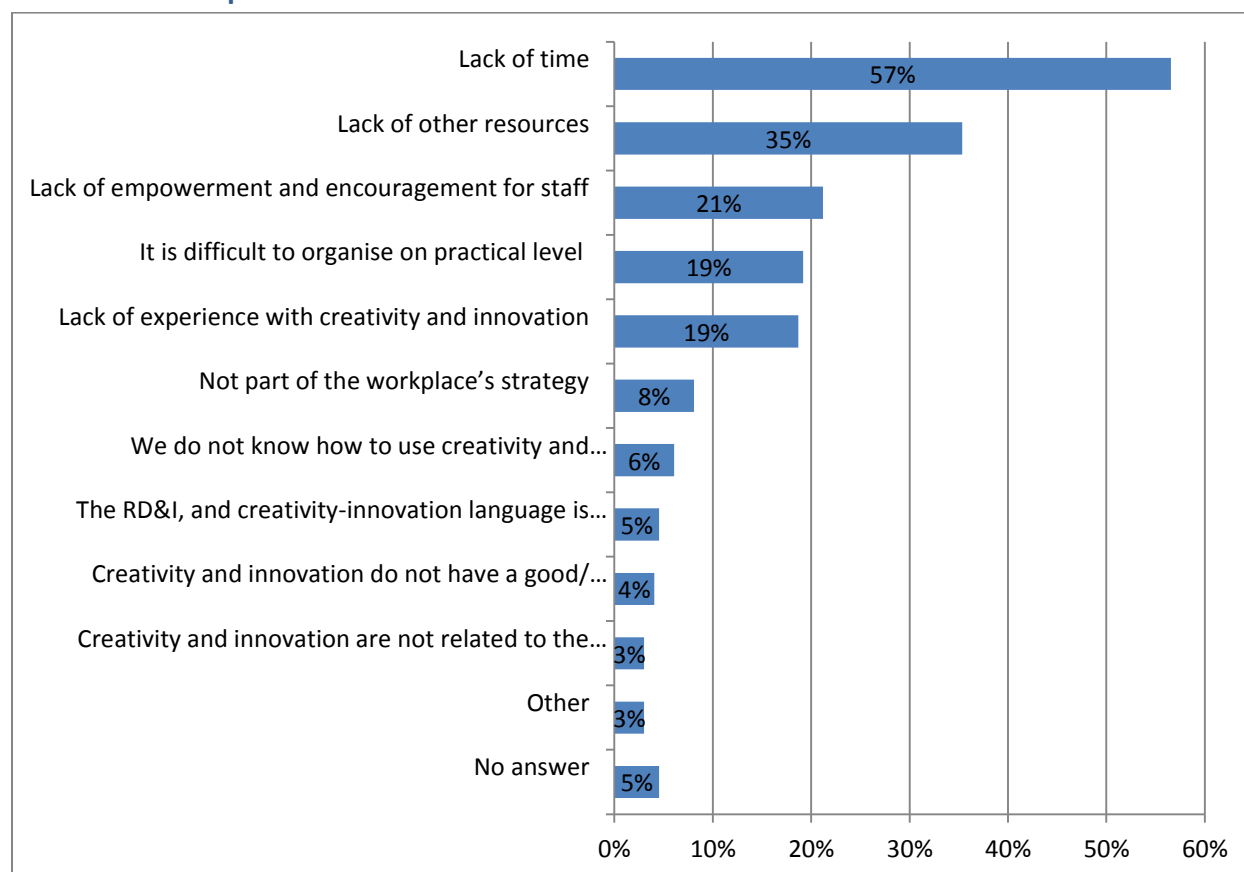
**Finland:** Ideation boxes, workshops, product development teams, and ICTs are not used to their full potential for promoting innovation. In contrast, benchmarking other sectors and disciplines, cooperation between sectors and departments within organisations, and innovation bootcamps or intensive courses are reported as common and well developed.

**Lithuania:** Cooperation between sectors and departments within organization, cooperation with other organisations and companies, creativity techniques, participation in local, regional and national development programmes, and training are not used to their full potential as approaches to enhancing innovation.

**Portugal:** The potential of consultants, cooperation with clients, cooperation with other organisations and companies, cooperation with users, idea boards, ideation boxes, innovation bootcamps or intensive courses, open innovation, training, and workshops is not utilized fully in support of innovation and creativity. The use of creativity techniques, however, appears to be relatively widespread.

**United Kingdom:** SMEs appear to utilize well the potential of cooperation with actors from their external environment. Cooperation with research organisations and universities, cooperation with clients, cooperation with other organisations and companies, cooperation with users and open innovation approaches are well developed (above the project average). The use of creativity techniques appears to be almost a routine. The application of tools and methods such as idea boards, ideation boxes, and innovation bootcamps is relatively common.

## Barriers to workplace innovation in SMEs



There is general convergence on these points among SMEs from the different project countries. Lack of time is emphasized in Austria and the UK but appears somewhat less important in Bulgaria and Portugal. Lack of other resources was perceived as an important barrier in the UK and Lithuania but was seen as less of a hurdle in Finland. Lithuanian and Portuguese SMEs were more likely to state that they did not know how to use creativity and innovation, while Bulgarian and Lithuanian SMEs were more likely to consider themselves to be inexperienced in this area. Lack of empowerment and encouragement of staff was more often registered as a hurdle to innovation in Lithuania and

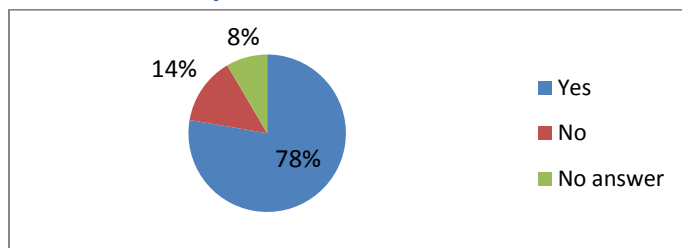
Portugal, while it appeared to be much less of a problem in the UK. Bulgarian SMEs were most likely to find the RD&I and creativity-innovation language confusing.

## Sources of creative and innovation inputs and ideas in SMEs

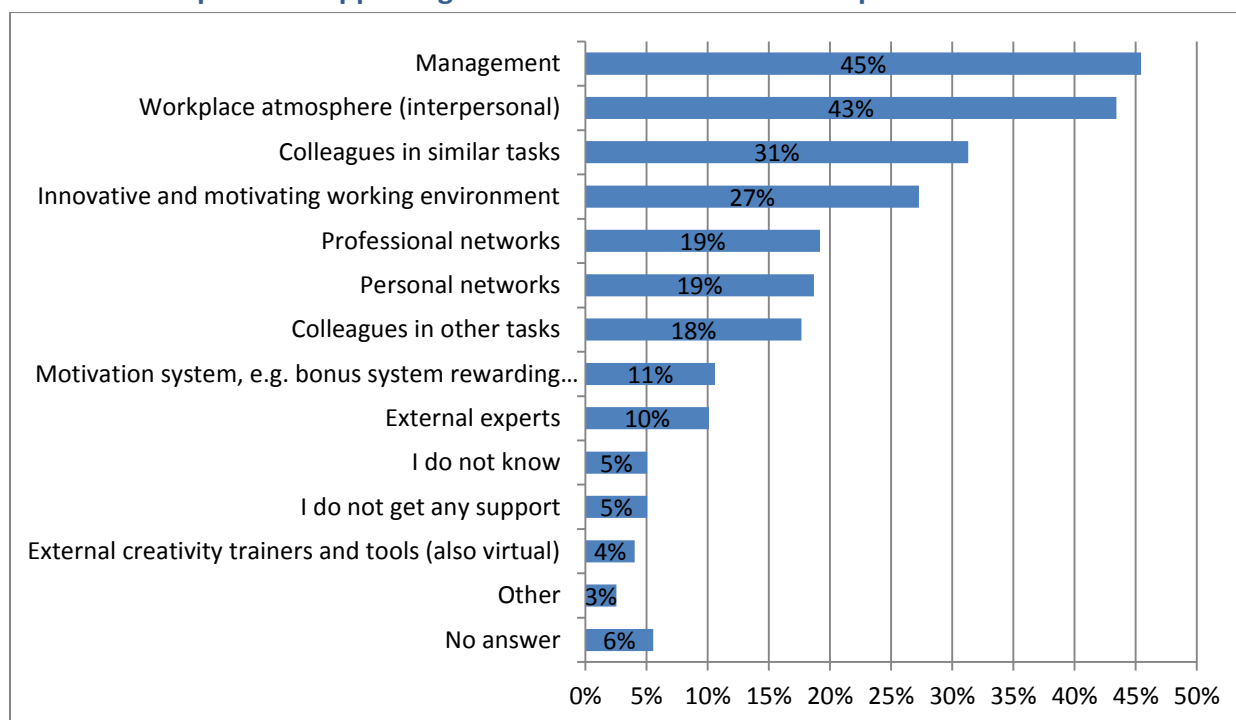


On the point of sources of creativity and innovation within organizations, there is general among SMEs in the project countries. Managers are perceived as relatively less important for innovation in Finland and Portugal. Employees in direct contact with the customers are considered an important source in all countries except Finland. UK and Lithuania tend to regard employees involved in production and other internal processes as more important sources of innovation than SMEs in the other countries. The marketing team is perceived as important in Portugal and the UK, and to a lesser degree in Bulgaria. Product and innovation development teams appear as relatively more important in the UK and Portugal, and to a lesser extent in Austria and Lithuania.

## Use of creativity and innovation in OWN work tasks



## Elements and persons supporting OWN creative and innovative process



**Austria:** An innovative and motivating working environment and the interpersonal workplace atmosphere are perceived as the most important elements supporting personal creative and innovation processes, followed by professional networks, personal networks, colleagues in similar tasks and management.

**Bulgaria:** Personal creative and innovation processes are seen as supported primarily by management and the right interpersonal workplace atmosphere, followed by an innovative and motivating working environment, colleagues in other tasks and colleagues in similar tasks.

**Finland:** Personal creative and innovation processes are motivated above all by management and auspicious interpersonal workplace atmosphere, while colleagues in similar tasks are an additional relevant contributing factor.

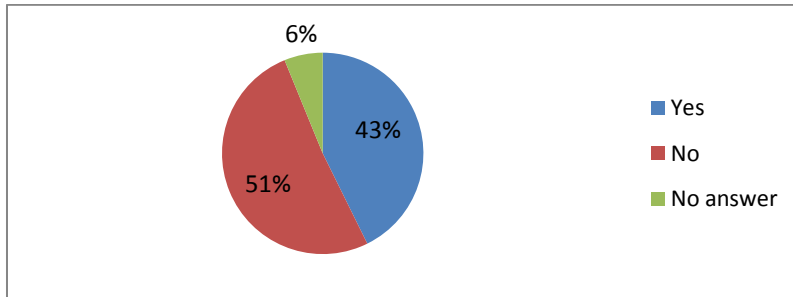
**Lithuania:** Management, a supportive interpersonal workplace atmosphere and colleagues in similar tasks are the key elements influencing individual creative and innovation processes, with an innovative and motivating working environment being an additional contributing factor.

**Portugal:** Colleagues in similar tasks and management most often tend to motivate employees to be creative and innovative. The interpersonal workplace atmosphere is also an important factor.

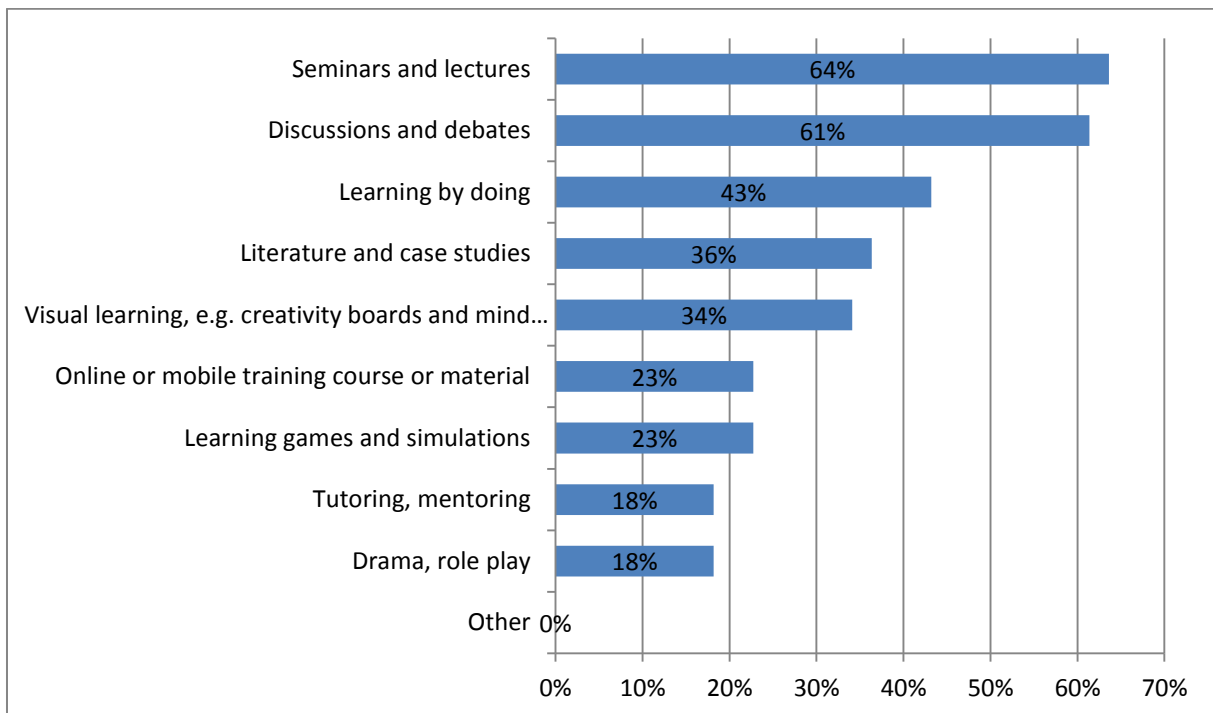
**United Kingdom:** Colleagues in similar tasks, management and the right interpersonal workplace atmosphere are the key elements promoting innovation and creativity among employees, with personal networks being an additional contributing factor.

## Creativity and innovation training received at OWN workplace – incidence, form, topics and user preferences

### Incidence

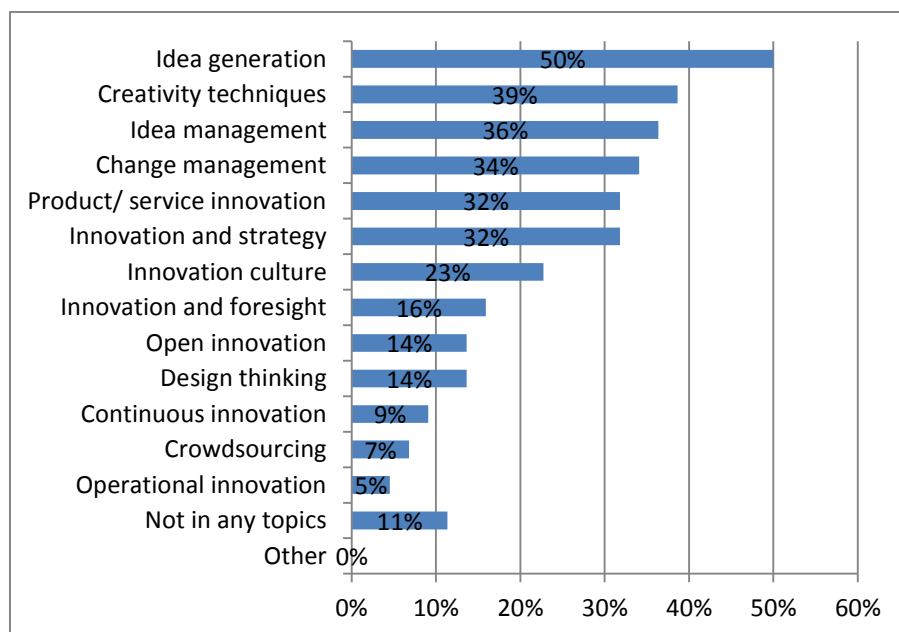


### Form

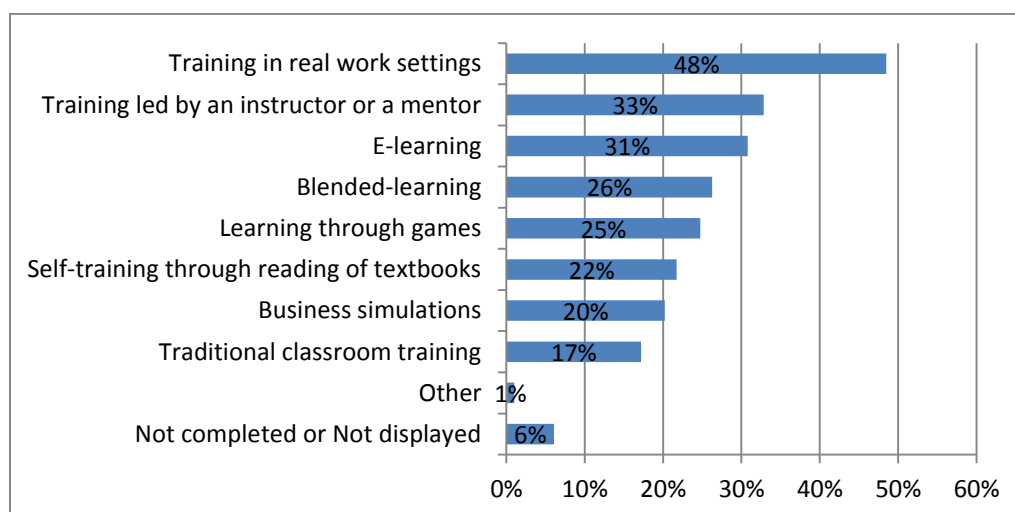




## Topics



## User preferences (perceived usefulness of forms and approaches)

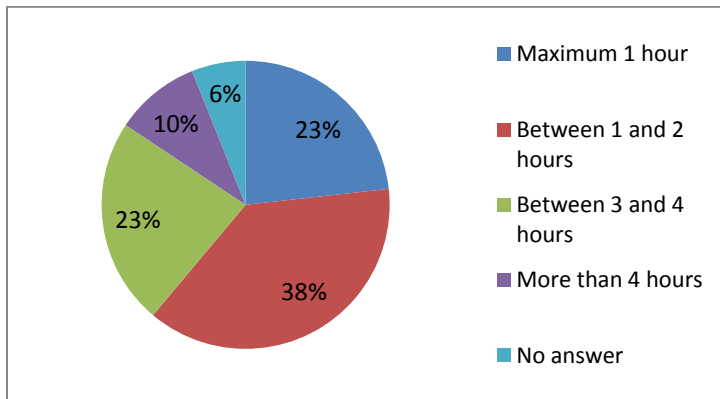


In the different project countries, the preferred approaches to creativity and innovation training are as follows:

- Austria: training in real work settings, training led by an instructor or a mentor, learning through games
- Bulgaria: training in real work settings, e-learning, training led by an instructor or a mentor, business simulations
- Finland: blended-learning, training in real work settings
- Lithuania: training in real work settings, blended-learning, e-learning
- Portugal: training in real work settings, traditional classroom training, e-learning

- United Kingdom: Training in real work settings, training led by an instructor or a mentor, e-learning, learning through games, self-training, blended-learning.

### User preferences (perceived optimal time frame)



### Motivational factors for creativity and innovation training



## Preferred topics on creativity and innovation training at workplace

