

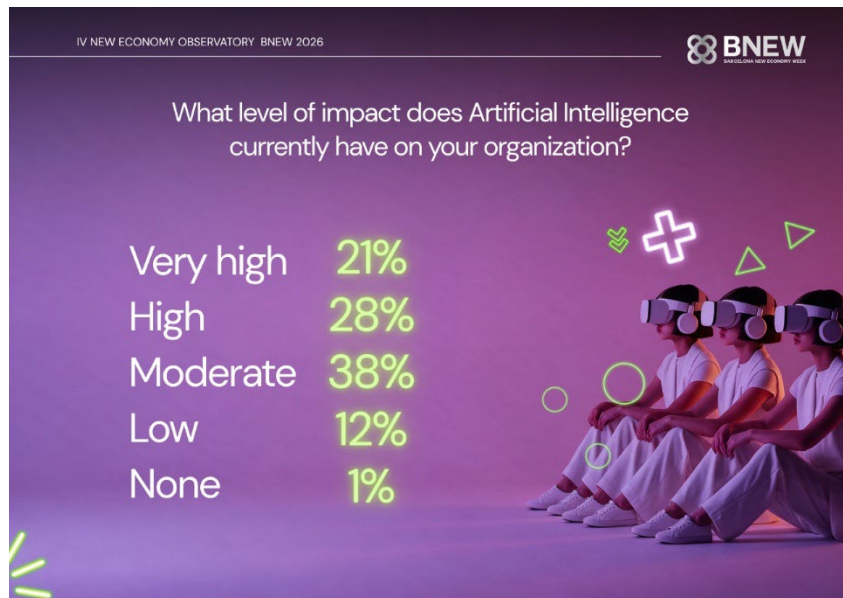
ACCORDING TO THE IV BNEW 2026 NEW ECONOMY
OBSERVATORY

Artificial Intelligence Is Directly Impacting 99% of Organizations

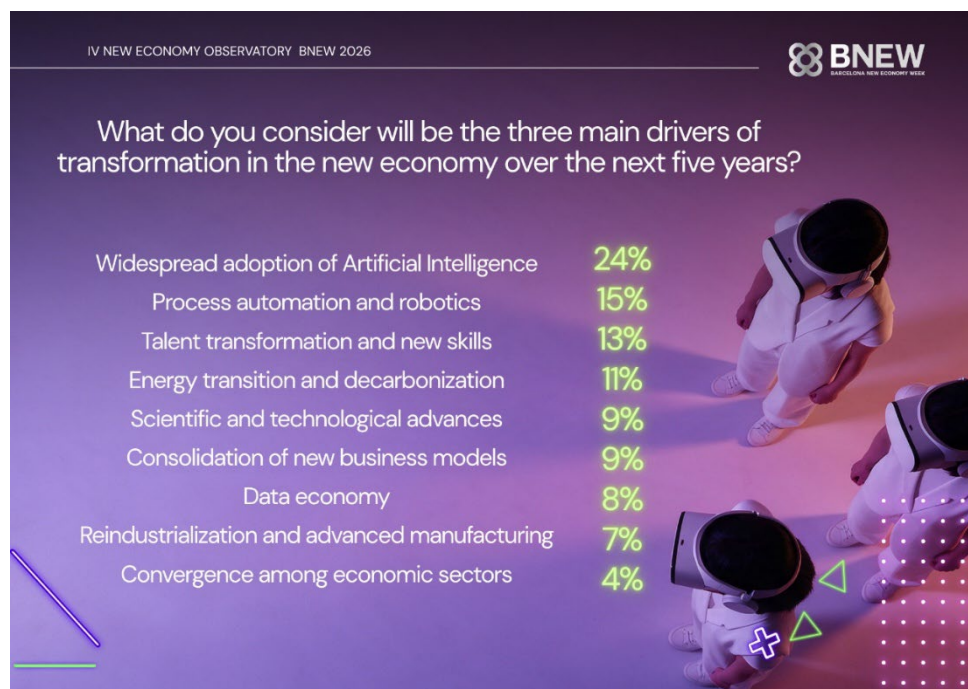
- Mass adoption of AI is positioned as one of the three main drivers that will transform the new economy, alongside automation, robotics, and talent transformation.
- 60% of respondents are optimistic about the opportunities that the new economy will offer in Europe over the next five years, compared to 31% who are indifferent and the remaining 9% who are pessimistic.
- 80% of companies show a clear willingness to continue investing in innovation, while 72% of startups plan to increase their workforce over the next year.

Barcelona, September 23, 2026 – As part of the seventh edition of **Barcelona New Economy Week (BNEW) 2026**, taking place from **October 5 to 7** at **DFactory Barcelona**, the **Barcelona Free Zone Consortium (CZFB)** has published the **IV New Economy Observatory**, with the participation of 1,792 professionals from the eight sectors represented at the event: **Aviation & Space, Agrofood, Gaming, Talent, Science, Health, AI, and Energy**. The study's findings reveal a new economy largely driven by artificial intelligence, featuring positive investment prospects and an optimistic, collaborative outlook for the future.

Artificial Intelligence is directly impacting 99% of the organizations participating in the survey. In **49% of cases, the impact is considered highly significant**, while 38% report a moderate impact and 12% a low impact.



Along the same lines, the widespread adoption of AI is positioned as one of the three main drivers that will transform the new economy, according to 24% of respondents, alongside automation and robotics (15%) and talent transformation (13%). Other key factors highlighted include the energy transition and decarbonization (11%), scientific and technological advances (9%), and the consolidation of new business models (9%).



Furthermore, **60%** of the professionals surveyed are convinced that **AI will be the new economy sector experiencing the greatest growth through 2030**, followed by Energy (14%) and Health (12%). Meanwhile, more moderate growth is expected in the Aviation, Science, and Talent sectors, each receiving 4% of responses.



AI and Talent: Going Hand in Hand

Despite its widespread adoption, AI is not perceived as an isolated future trend, but rather as a capability that is already present in many organizations and is expected to maintain a leading role in the years ahead. In fact, **the management and application of Artificial Intelligence will be the most in-demand professional skill in the coming years**, according to **17%** of the companies participating in the Observatory.

However, demand is not limited to technical profiles. Other skills are also emerging as essential complements to AI, including **critical thinking and problem-solving** and **leadership and change management**, both identified by **13%** of respondents. Data analysis and management were highlighted by 11%, while creativity and innovation were cited in 10% of cases.



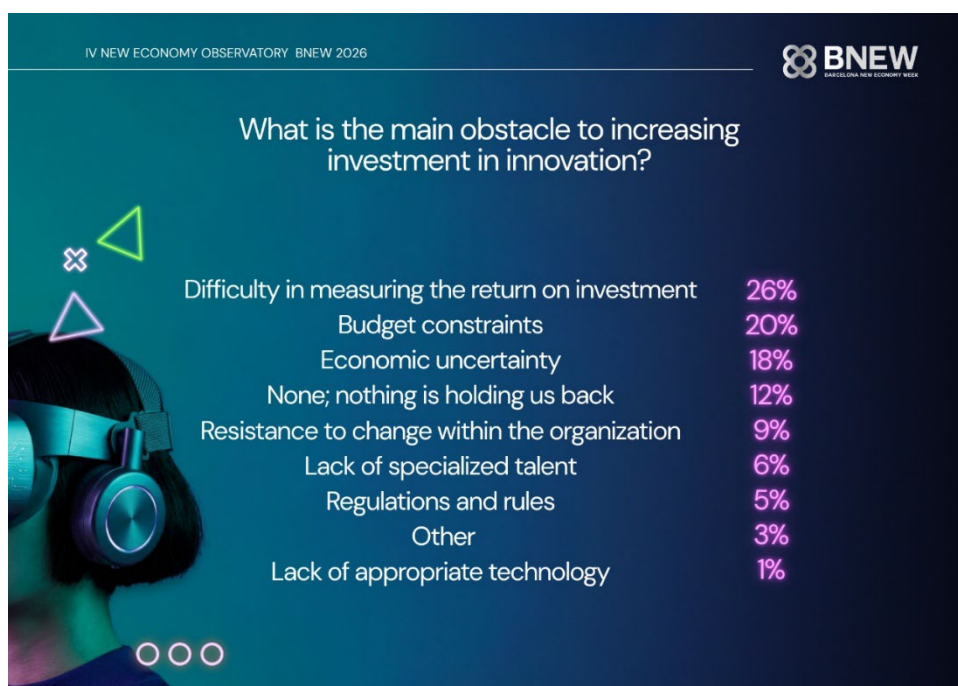
Investment Will Grow, but It Will Need to Deliver Results

In terms of investment, there is a clear commitment to continuing to invest in innovation, although stronger impact indicators and well-justified business cases will be required.

Forecasts indicate an increase in innovation investment in 80% of cases. This increase is expected to be **significant** for 19% of respondents, **substantial** for 32%, and **moderate** for 31%. Meanwhile, 17% of participants in the Observatory expect to maintain their current level of investment in innovation, while only 2% foresee a decrease in innovation investment within their organizations.



Regarding the main obstacles to increasing investment in innovation, respondents highlighted the **difficulty of measuring return on investment (ROI)** (26%), **budget constraints** (20%), and **economic uncertainty** (18%) as the most significant challenges.



Optimistic and Collaborative Future

Overall, **60% of respondents are optimistic about the opportunities that the new economy will offer in Europe over the next five years**, compared to 31% who hold a neutral view and 9% who express a pessimistic outlook.

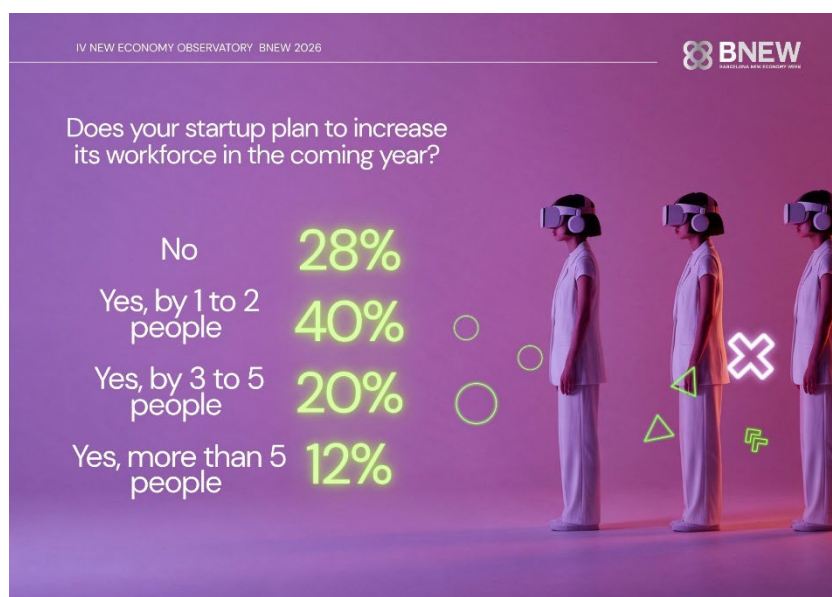


A large share of expectations is placed on collaboration, with 92% of companies open to forming partnerships with organizations from other sectors. More specifically, 66% consider such collaboration essential or very important, while 26% view it as an attractive opportunity. Only 8% do not contemplate it as part of their business plans.

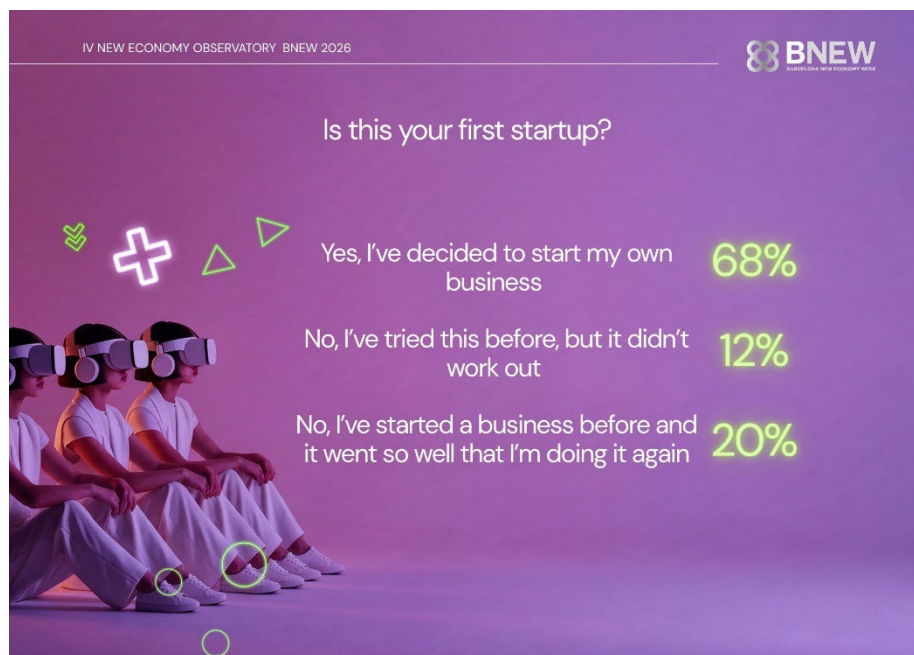


More Startups

The outlook is also optimistic for emerging companies. **72% of the startups participating in the New Economy Observatory plan to increase their workforce over the next year.** Of these, 40% consider it feasible to add one or two employees to their teams, 20% expect to hire between three and five people, and 12% anticipate expanding their workforce by more than five employees.



Finally, it is worth highlighting the continued interest in entrepreneurship. According to the survey, 68% of respondents are working on the first venture launched by their founders. Meanwhile, 20% are repeating the experience after achieving success with previous startups, while 12% are trying again despite the fact that their earlier ventures did not achieve the expected results.



50 Sessions and 270 Speakers

The seventh edition of **BNEW** will feature **three television studios**, **more than 50 debate sessions**, and **270 speakers**. The event will maintain its hybrid format, with all content streamed through its digital platform, while also enhancing in-person attendance through various networking spaces. In addition, the event will include a comprehensive program of **more than 40 experiential activities**, allowing visitors to enjoy a unique experience, discover the latest advancements in some of the industries leading the new economy, and explore part of the cultural, leisure, and design offerings of the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**.

All of this will once again take place at **DFactory Barcelona**, the internationally renowned **Industry 4.0 ecosystem** promoted by the **Barcelona Free Zone Consortium (CZFB)**. Registration to access the platform and attend the event in person is now open through the BNEW website: www.bnewbarcelona.com.

About the Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona

The Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona (CZFB) is a 100% self-financed public entity that acts as a driving force for economic, technological, and industrial development through innovation, reinvesting its resources in projects that contribute to Barcelona's progress and the well-being of its citizens. It supports companies in their transition to the digital era, with the strategic vision of leading industrial transformation and the development of the new economy. The CZFB is promoting the transformation of a traditional industrial estate into an urban industry district, integrated into the city and aligned with the economic, technological, and social challenges of the 21st century. Within this framework, it drives the DFactory Barcelona District, the leading Industry 4.0 ecosystem in Southern Europe, fostering collaboration between companies, talent, and technology.

The Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona promotes entrepreneurship and innovation through the 3D Incubator and the Logistics 4.0 Incubator, and organizes events of major economic interest for Barcelona, such as the International Logistics Exhibition (SIL), the leading international meeting point for smart logistics, as well as large-scale events with innovative formats such as Barcelona New Economy Week (BNEW) and Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWA). Its Plenary Council includes representatives from the Government of Spain, the Government of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council, and the city's leading economic institutions, creating a diverse platform for institutional and business collaboration where decisions are reached by consensus.

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