

2025 Scale-up Confidence Survey

For its sixth edition, the Scale-up Confidence survey has been expanded to encompass 7 regions. For the extensive research please see the full report. The findings presented in the report are crucial for understanding the dynamics of the European scale-up market and for devising effective strategies to support the growth and success of scale-ups in the region.

In this placemat we will highlight some of the findings, focusing on The Netherlands in particular.



Most prominent trends within the Ecosystem 2025

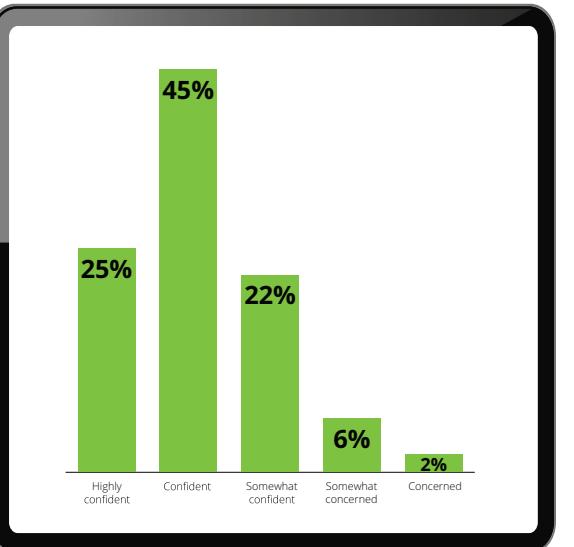
 <p>Scale-ups continue to cite lower/delayed new business and customer signings as their main challenge in reaching growth ambitions.</p>	<p>Across nearly all regions, scale-ups faced a primary hurdle: reduced or delayed new business and customer acquisitions.</p>
 <p>The United States remains the top destination for international expansion for scale-ups.</p>	<p>When scale-ups were asked about international expansion, the US was the most frequent response.</p>
 <p>Most scale-ups do not have an exit strategy. Those that do prefer to exit via an acquisition rather than an IPO².</p>	<p>Surprisingly, the majority of scale-ups do not have an exit strategy.</p>
 <p>Despite country-specific differences in focus, acquiring new customers and entering new markets emerged as shared priorities among scaleups.</p>	<p>Going forward, the primary focus for scale-ups is to acquire new customers, with at least 73% of scale-ups across all geographies reporting this as their priority.</p>

 Optimism around growth remains high, with most start-ups seeking additional funding and a larger workforce in the coming years.

Conclusion: Scale-Ups Confidence

The 2025 Scale-up Confidence Survey highlights a resilient yet evolving landscape across Europe and the Middle East. Dutch start-ups continue to benefit from strong domestic foundations but increasingly recognise the need for international expansion. Despite economic headwinds, most start-ups are seeking growth through new market entry and product development, with most looking to grow their workforce.

How confident are you that your business can continue or even accelerate its growth trajectory?

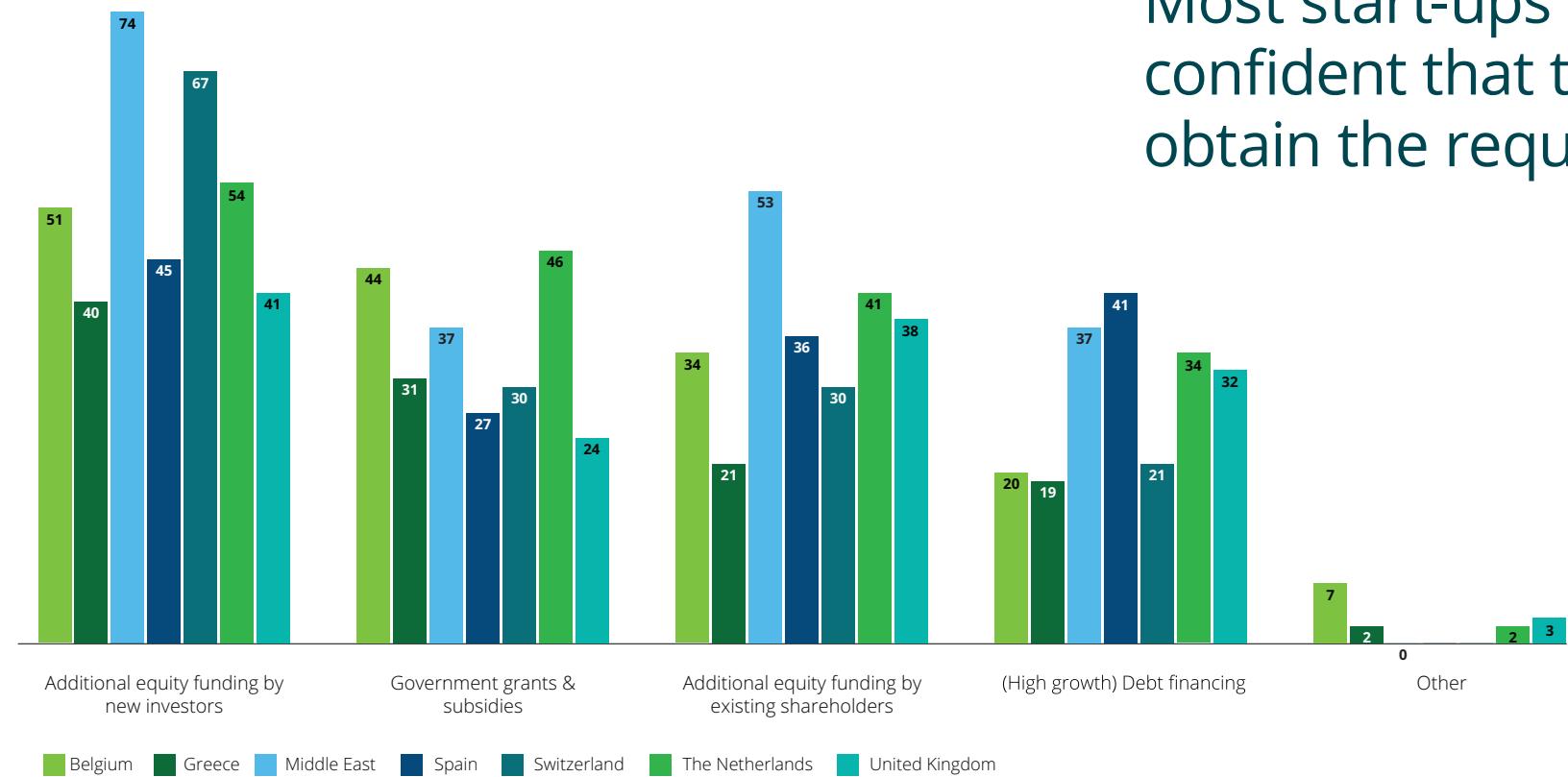


2024 confidence scores per geography

Belgium	8,1/10
Greece	8,3/10
Middle East	8,9/10
Spain	9,1/10
Switzerland	8,2/10
The Netherlands	8,3/10
United Kingdom	7,7/10

What types of funding do you consider to fuel your growth trajectory?

When looking for funding to fuel growth, most start-ups prefer additional equity funding from new investors. Government grants and subsidies are common sources of growth funding among start-ups in the Netherlands (46% of respondents). We have well-established regional grant funding regimes, which may drive start-ups towards our government sources.



Which types of new investors are you considering?

Among those surveyed, venture capital is the most commonly considered investor. Government funds are highly sought after in the Netherlands (32% of respondents) compared to the other nations surveyed.

Most start-ups are overall confident that they can obtain the required funding.

Setting the Scene: Respondent Details

In total, 59 scale-ups based in the Netherlands responded to the 2025 Scale-Ups Confidence Survey. 65% of the respondents held the position of CEO or co-founder in their respective organizations. Scale-ups from multiple segments participated in the survey, with the enterprise software best represented (like last year's survey).



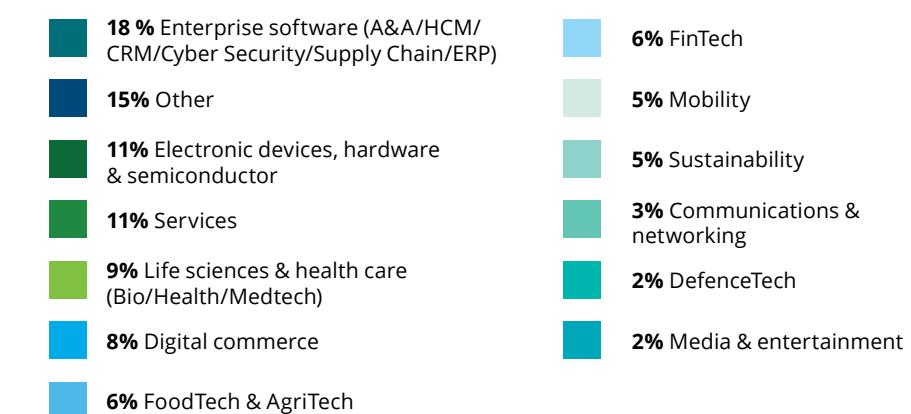
The Netherlands has built a strong base for scale-ups, but there are clear areas where the environment could improve.

There is scope for Dutch institutions to play a larger role in providing funding for later-stage ventures and companies working in areas such as AI and deeptech.

Bringing together founders and providing access to knowledge early in the journey is helping more first-time entrepreneurs find support.



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