



ASTP
A World of
Knowledge
Transfer

ASTP Executive Data Report

2025 Annual Survey
European Knowledge Transfer Landscape

Financial Year 2023

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About the Survey

Prepared by the ASTP Metrics & Impact Committee

A dedicated team of knowledge transfer professionals who oversee the development of the ASTP Annual Survey, support methodological improvements, and help ensure the quality, consistency and relevance of the data presented in this report.



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Introduction

2025 Annual Survey | Financial Year 2023

The ASTP Executive Data Report provides one of the most comprehensive snapshots of knowledge transfer activity across Europe. By collecting data from Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs) and national surveys coordinated by ASTP's partner National Associations, the survey offers valuable insights into how research organisations create, protect, commercialise and translate research into societal and economic impact.

This report presents findings for Financial Year 2023 (FY2023), based on data submitted between July and December 2025. The report draws on data from **489 Knowledge Transfer Offices across 19 European countries**, representing a diverse range of universities, public research organisations, and other research-performing institutions.

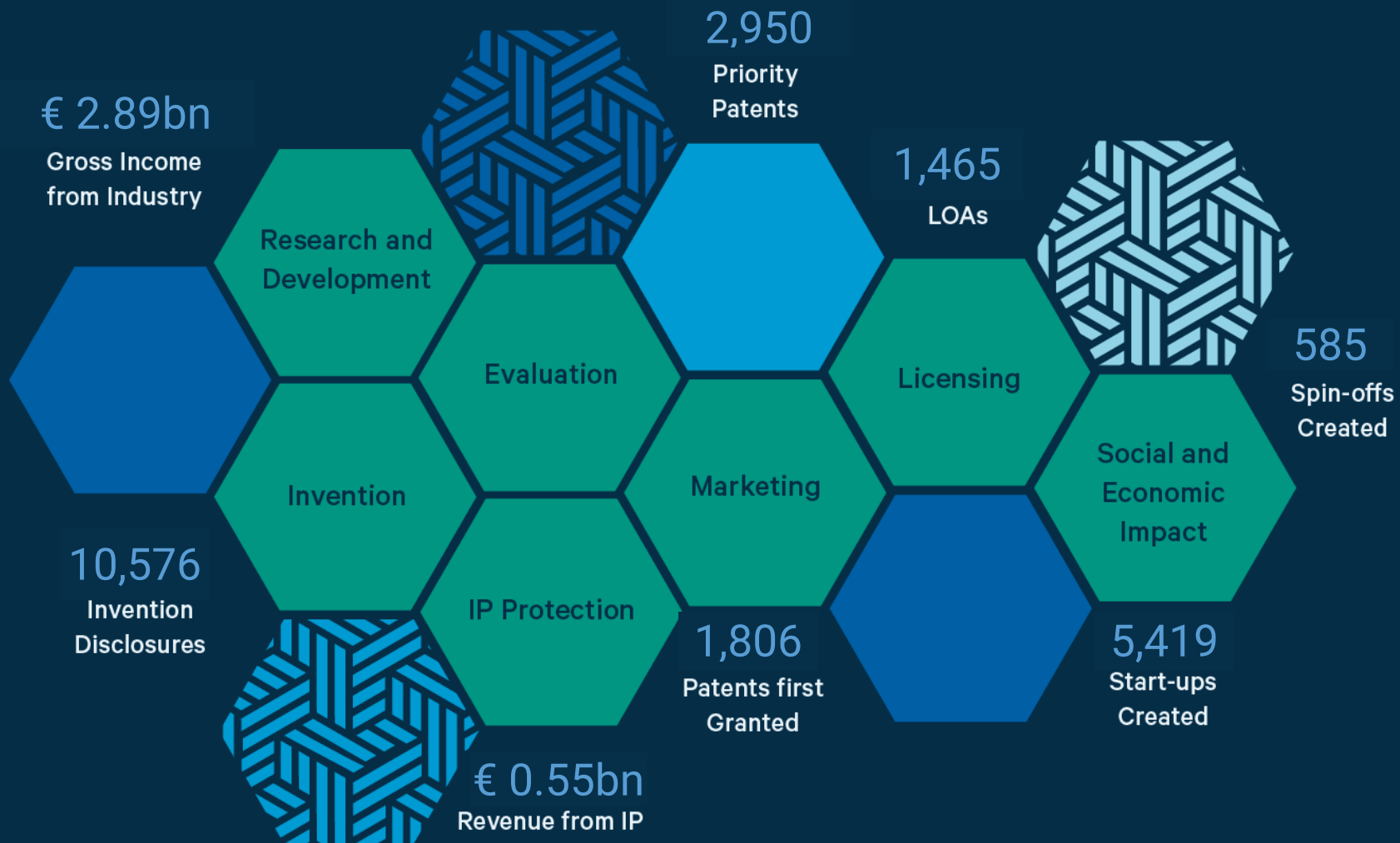
The dataset combines direct responses submitted through the ASTP survey with compatible national survey data obtained from Universities Denmark, Réseau SATT (France), swiTT (Switzerland), Knowledge Transfer Ireland, Netval (Italy), RedOTC (Spain) and Research England (UK).

The results demonstrate the continued importance of knowledge transfer as a driver of innovation, collaboration and impact. Across the responding organisations, KTOs reported intellectual property activities and the creation of more than **6,000 spin-offs and start-ups** while supporting the generation of almost **€3 billion** in industry-related income and concluding **1,465 licenses, options and assignment (LOA) agreements**.

The report highlights valuable insights into the scale, diversity and maturity of knowledge transfer activities across Europe, supporting informed decision-making by KTOs, research-performing organisations, National Associations and policymakers.



Financial Year 2023 Key Results



489 responding KTOs from 19 European countries

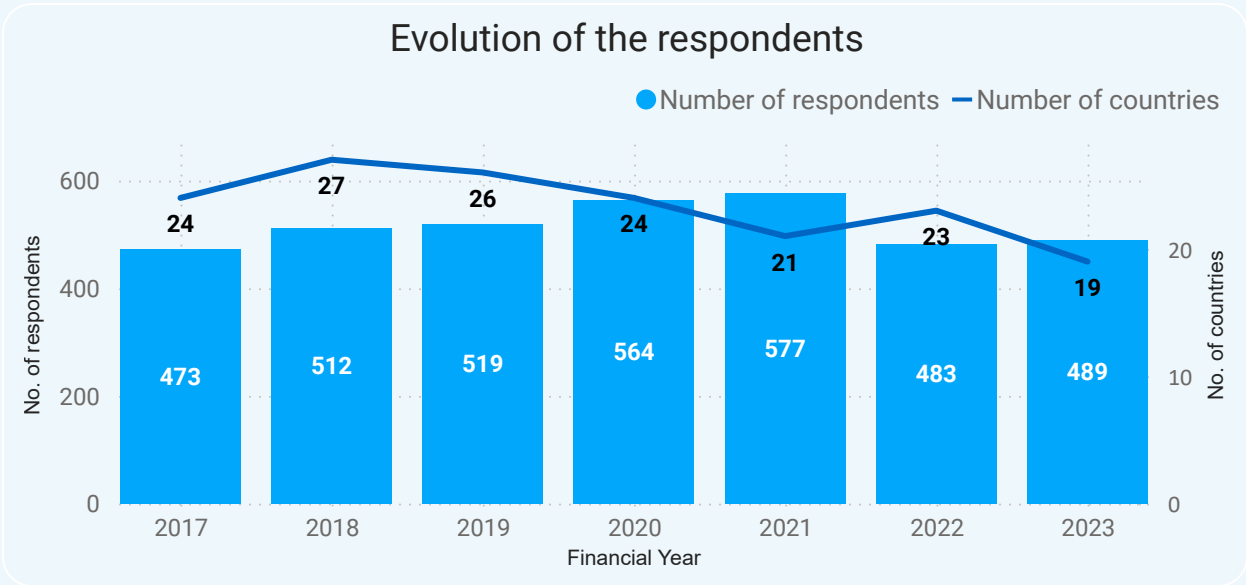


Responding KTOs

Survey Sample

The number of respondents and participating countries varies from year to year, reflecting both direct participation in the ASTP survey and the availability of national datasets obtained from collaborating National Associations. Variations in country representation are also influenced by participation levels among individual KTOs, particularly in countries with smaller knowledge transfer communities.

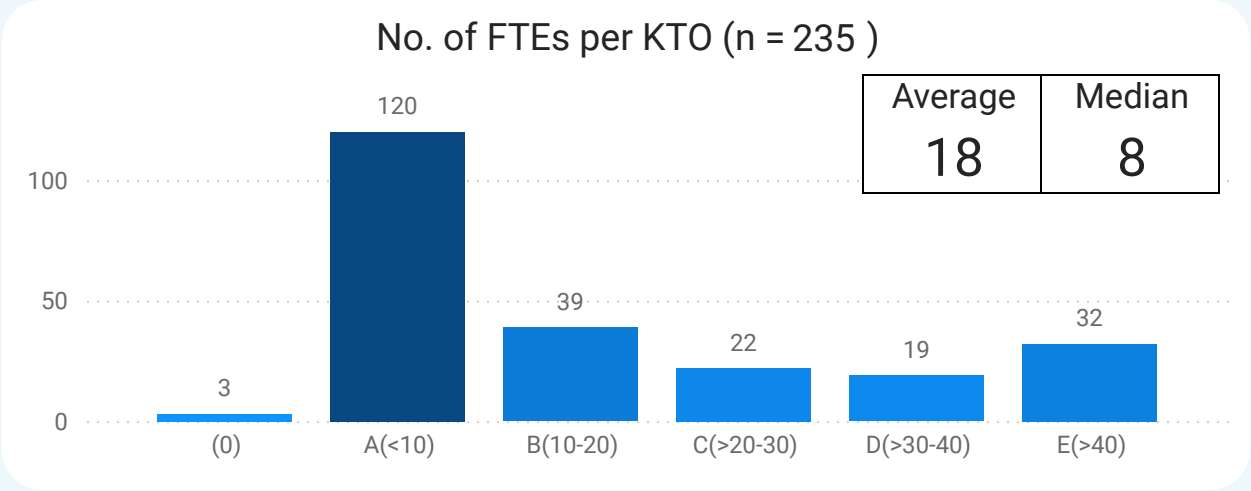
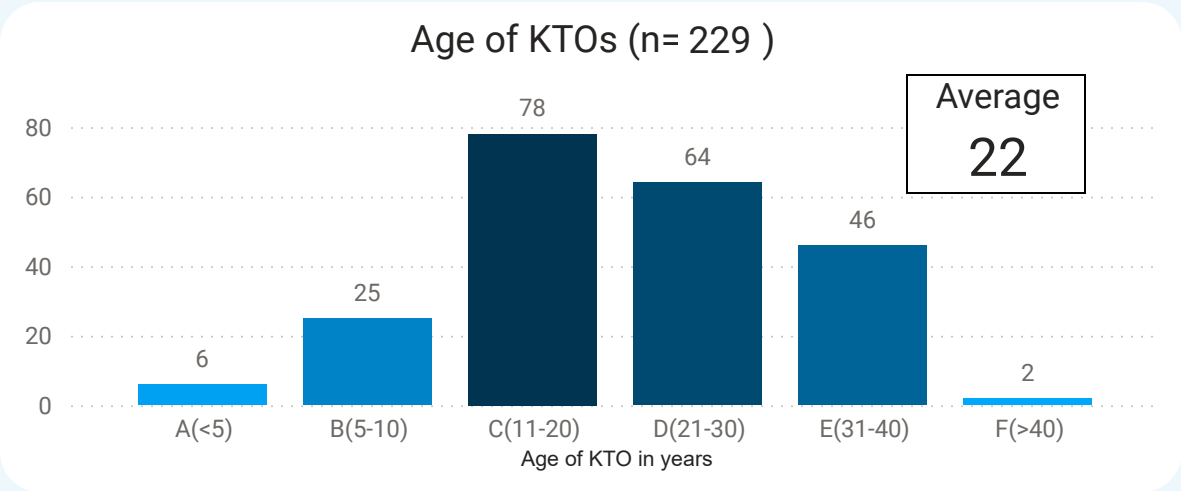
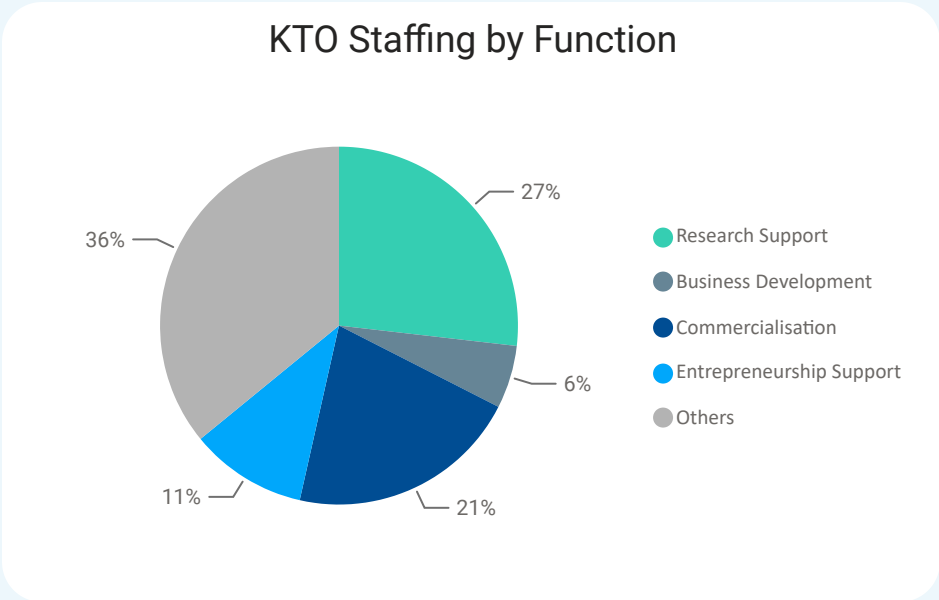
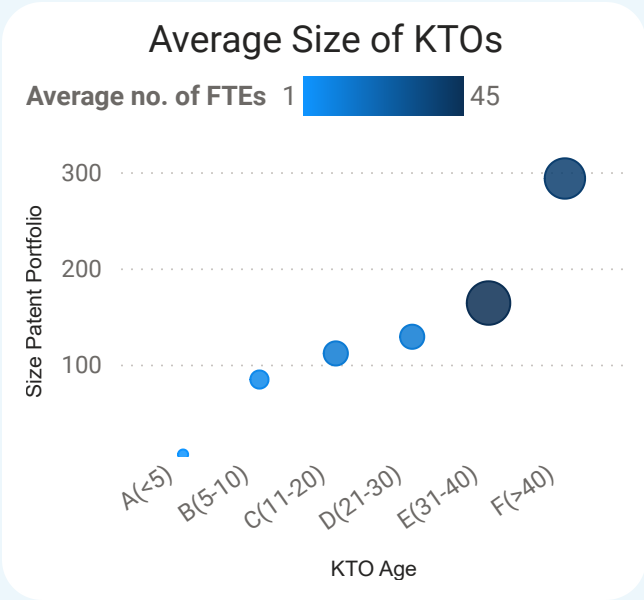
Data quality is a key priority for ASTP. All responses undergo a validation and cleaning process conducted by the ASTP Survey Committee, including follow-up with respondents where necessary to verify potential outliers. As with most large-scale surveys, some data may be unavailable due to confidentiality, reporting practices, or differences in data collection systems. Consequently, the number of responses (n) may vary between indicators and is shown for each chart throughout the report.



Profile of Responding KTOs

Responding KTOs had an average size of 18 FTEs, with the largest proportion having been established for 11–20 years. These offices have developed substantial intellectual property portfolios, while the oldest KTOs (over 40 years old) manage the largest portfolios overall.

KTO staffing is primarily concentrated in Research Support and Commercialisation activities, and less on Business Development and Entrepreneurship Support¹. A significant proportion of staff are also dedicated to other activities, highlighting the broad scope of services provided by KTOs.



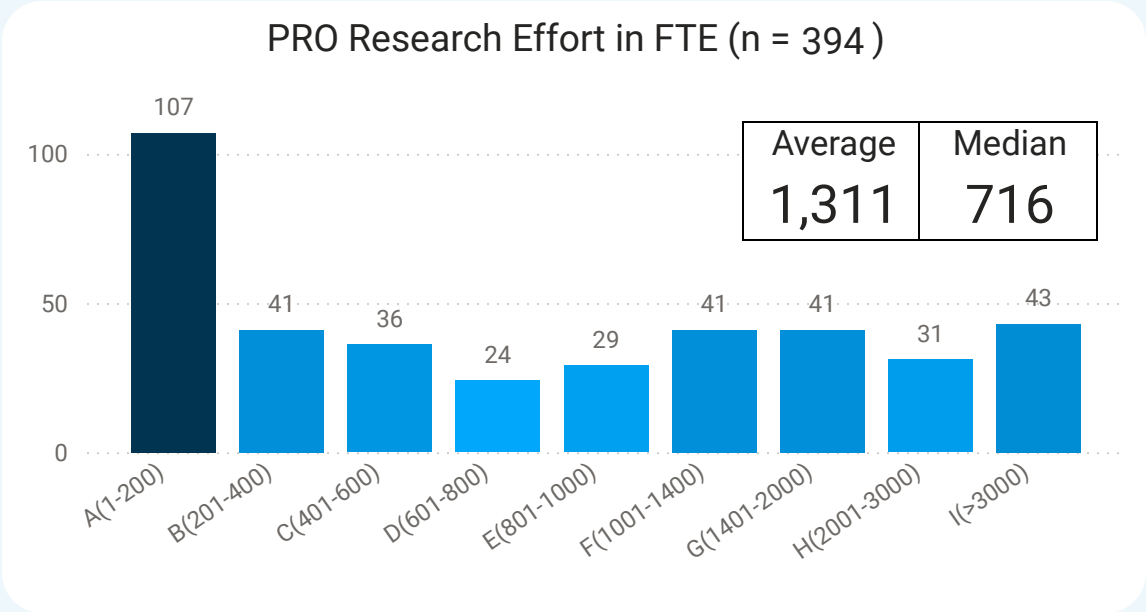
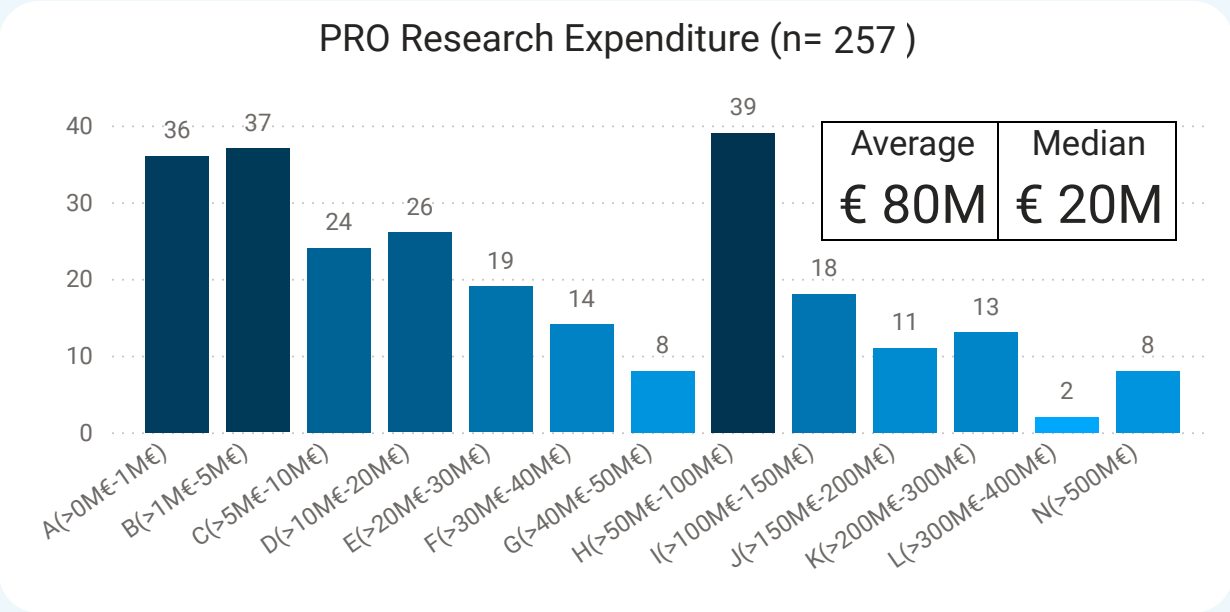
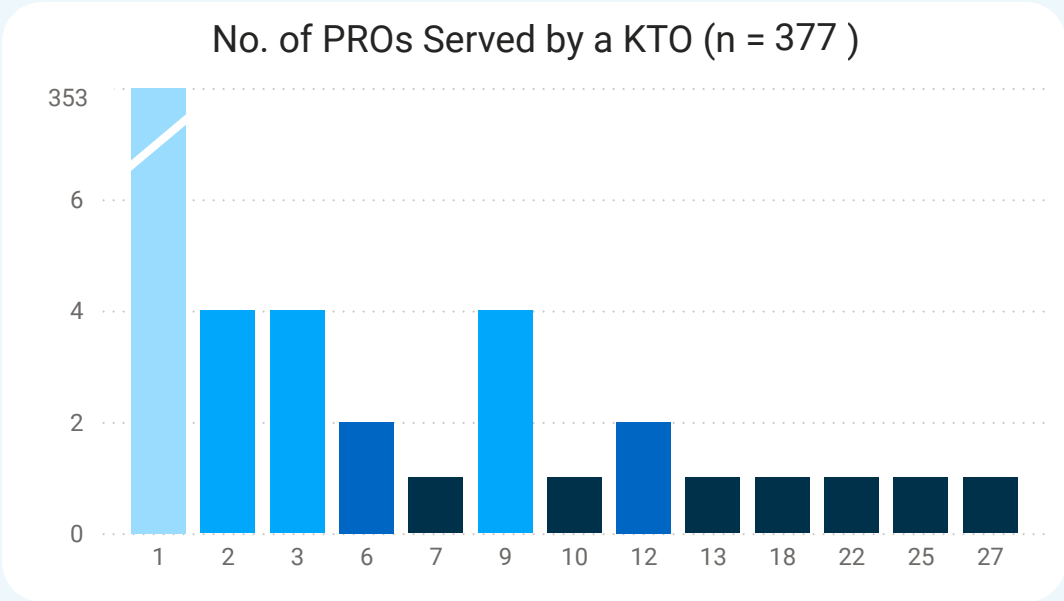
¹Definitions of KTO activity categories are provided in the Glossary.

PROs Served

Most responding KTOs (94%) serve a single Public Research Organisation (PRO), with only a small minority supporting multiple institutions.

To provide context for the scale of organisations served, respondents were asked to report the combined research expenditure and research effort (FTE) of the PROs they support.

The data shows considerable diversity in the size of research organisations represented in the survey. Among the responding organisations, the average PRO research expenditure was €80 million (median: €20 million), while the average research effort was 1,311 FTEs (median: 716 FTEs). The difference between the average and median reflects the distribution of the reported data.





Industry Collaborations

Number of Agreements and Income

Responding KTOs reported a combined total of more than 117,000 new industry agreements in FY2023, generating almost €2.9 billion in industry collaboration income. Consultancy agreements accounted for the largest share of new agreements, making them the most common form of engagement between research organisations and industry.

While consultancy agreements are the most frequently used collaboration mechanism, they contribute a relatively small share of total income. In contrast, collaborative research agreements represent a much smaller proportion of agreements in total for a similar amount of income.

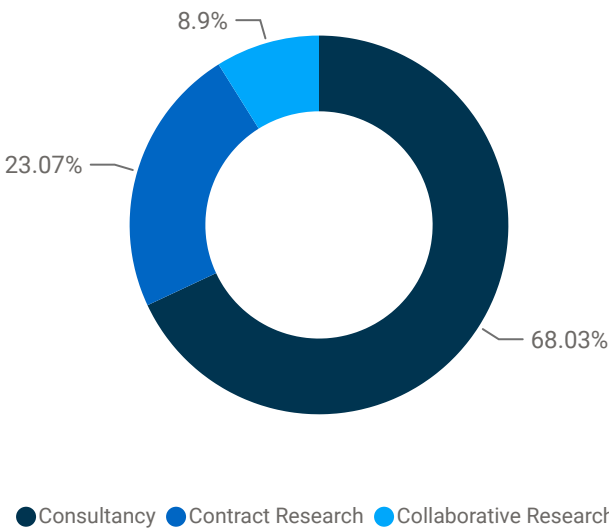
Among KTOs reporting activity across all three agreement types (n=82), collaborative research accounted for approximately 6.6% of agreements but nearly half (48%) of total industry collaboration income (data not shown).

These findings highlight the different roles played by industry engagement activities. Consultancy often serves as an accessible route for knowledge exchange and industry engagement, while collaborative and contract research agreements tend to deliver greater financial value and support longer-term strategic partnerships between research organisations and industry.

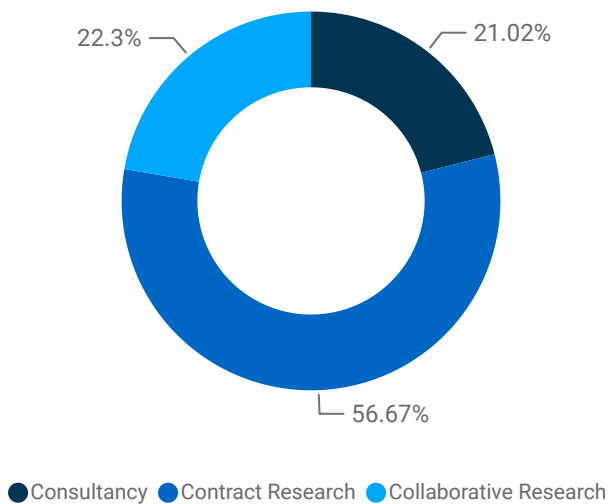
Year	No. of Collaborative Research Agreements (n=125)	No. of Contract Research Agreements (n=269)	No. of Consultancy Agreements (n=266)
2023	10,416	27,005	79,627

Year	Income from Collaborative Research Agreements (n=86)	Income from Contract Research Agreements (n=263)	Income from Consultancy Agreements (n=259)
2023	€ 643,524,577	€ 1,635,189,556	€ 606,627,576

No. of New Industry Agreements (n=91)



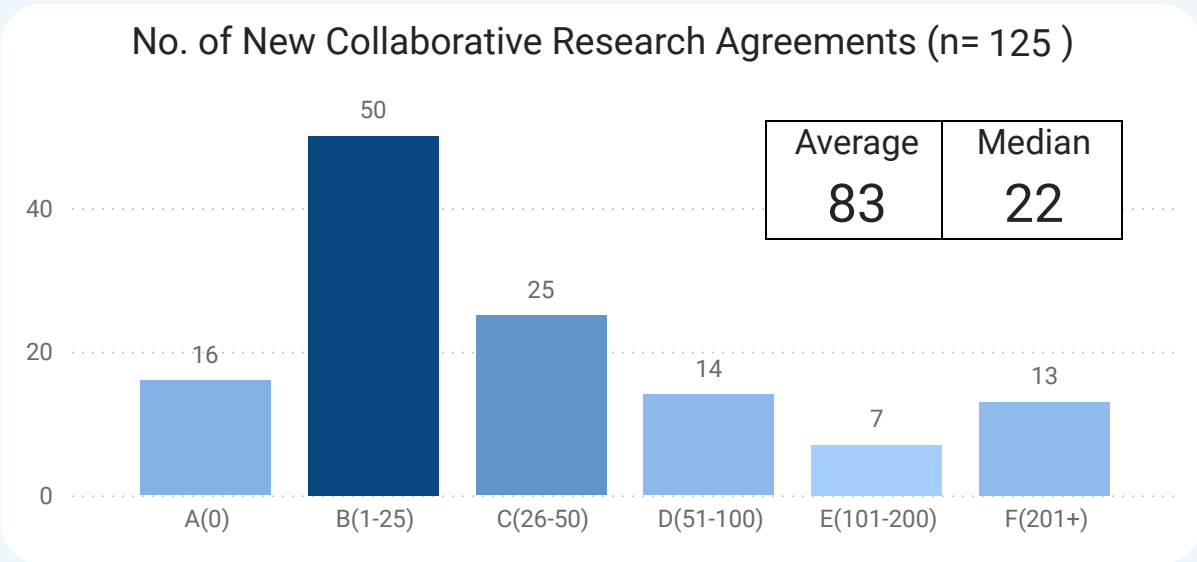
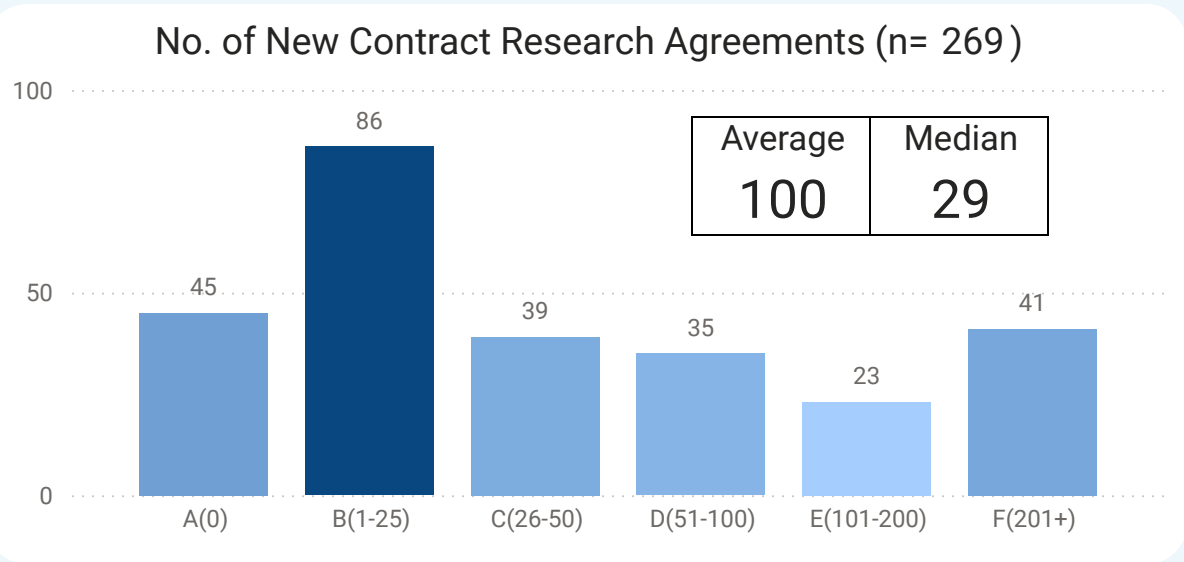
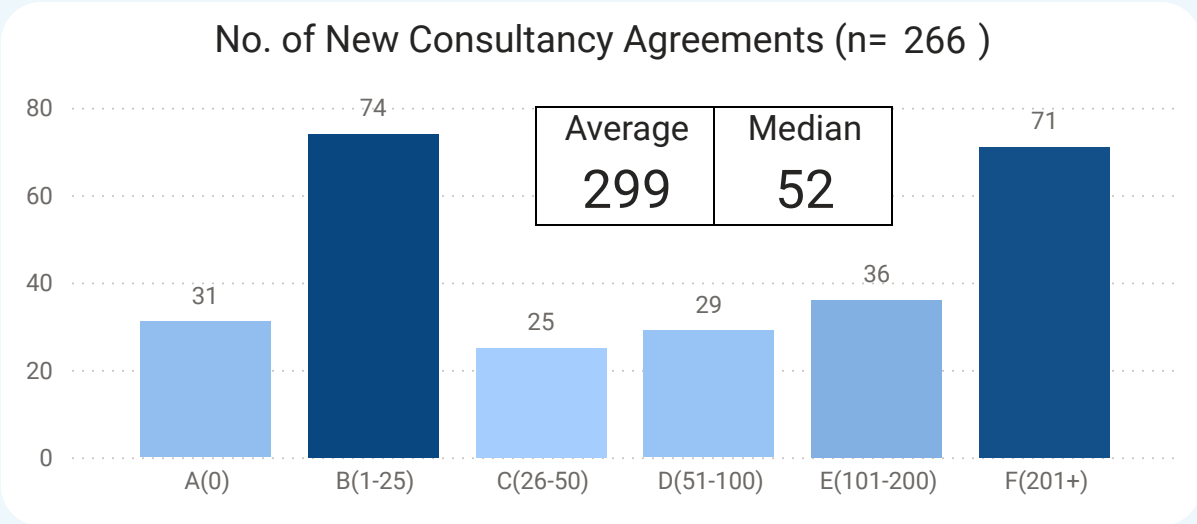
Income from Industry Agreements (n=84)



New Agreements by Type

The distribution of new agreements by type reveals strong heterogeneity across the three collaboration categories. Consultancy agreements show an average (299), driven upward by a small group of organisations that are highly active in the F bracket. Contract research and collaborative research agreements display a noticeably lower averages, 100 and 83 respectively.

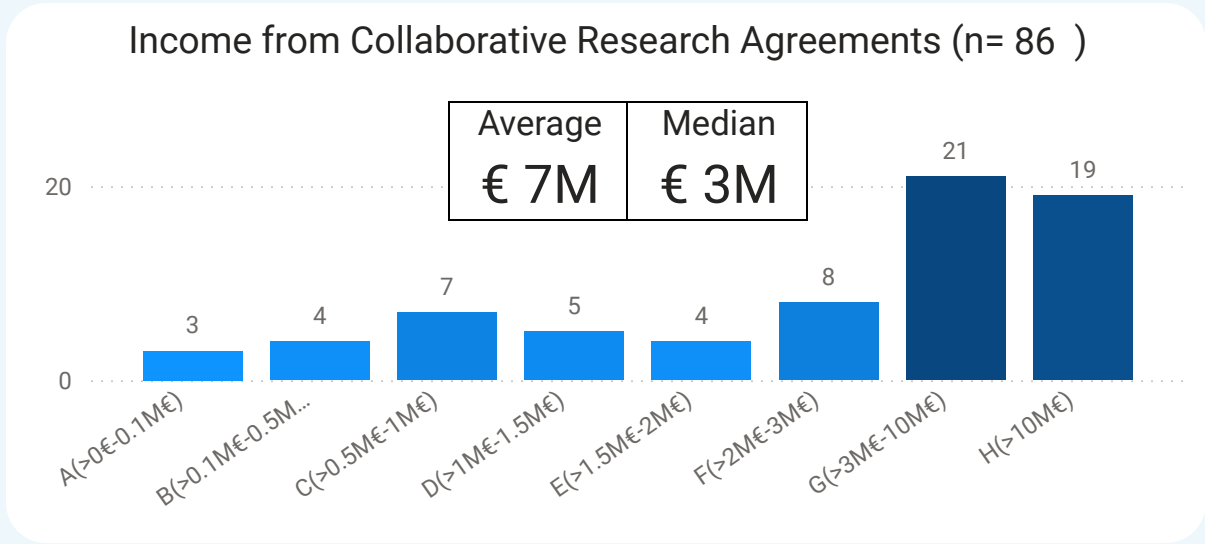
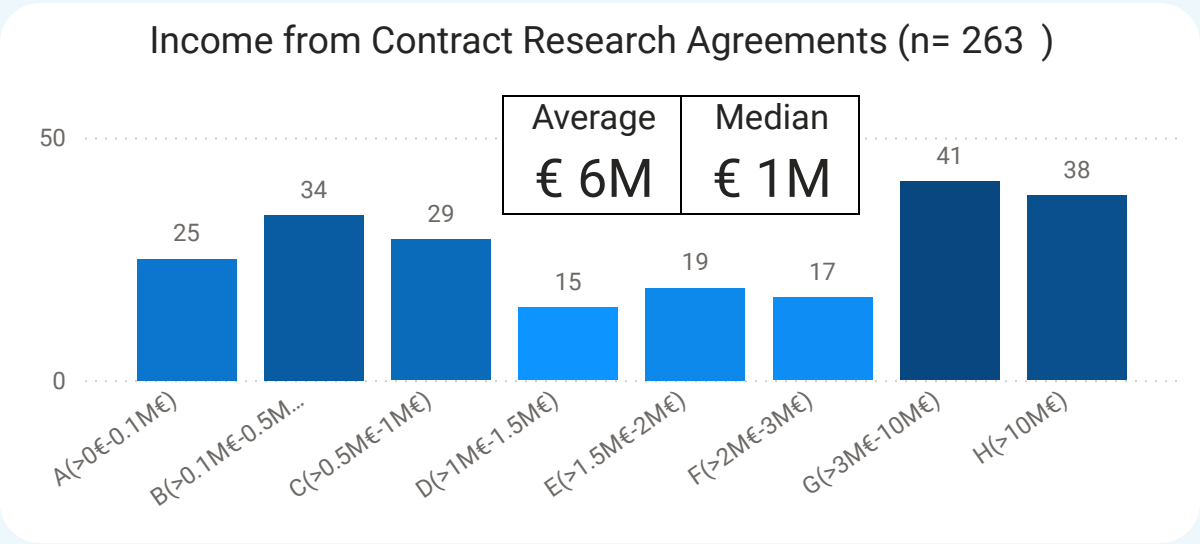
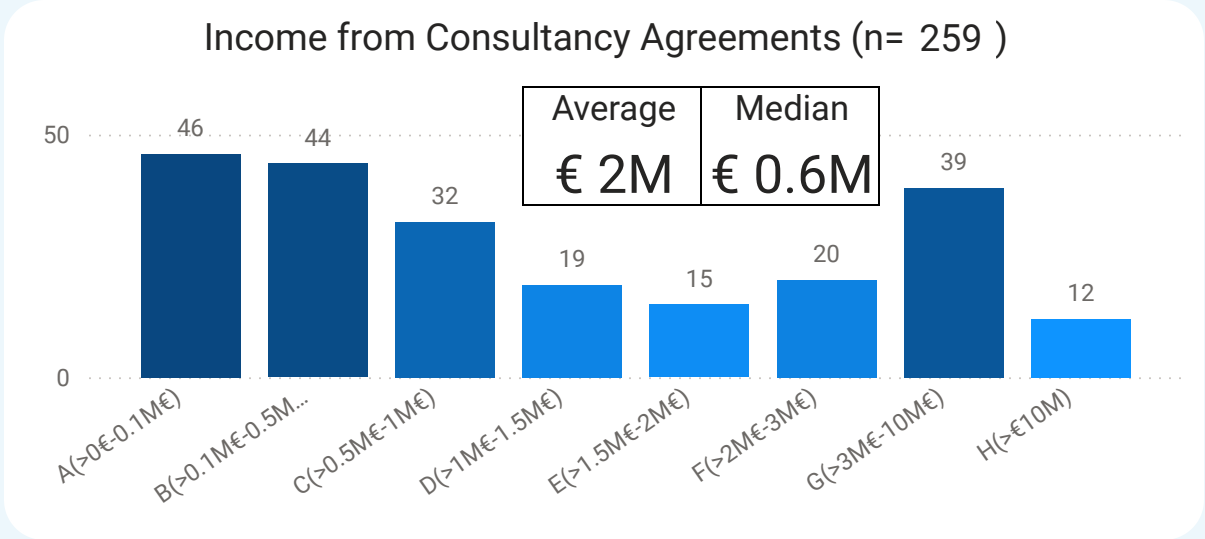
In all three cases, the distribution follows a similar pattern: the majority of KTOs fall into the B bracket, confirming a modest level of activity for most organisations. However, the consistent presence of a second peak in the F category reflects a marked asymmetry, where a handful of high-intensity actors account for the bulk of overall volume — explaining the significant gap between mean and median observed across all agreement types.



Income from Agreements by Type

This section illustrates the distribution of income generated from different types of industry agreements. It is worth noting that the number of respondents varies across agreement types, so conclusions drawn from these results should be interpreted with caution. Both collaborative and contract research agreements generate higher values compared to consultancy agreements, highlighting their importance as a strategic mechanism for additional funding.

Income from contract research and consultancy agreements are concentrated among a smaller number of organisations. Nearly half of the responding KTOs with collaborative research agreements reported revenues above €3 million, compared with around 30% for contract research agreements and around 20% for consultancy agreements.





IP Management and Commercialisation

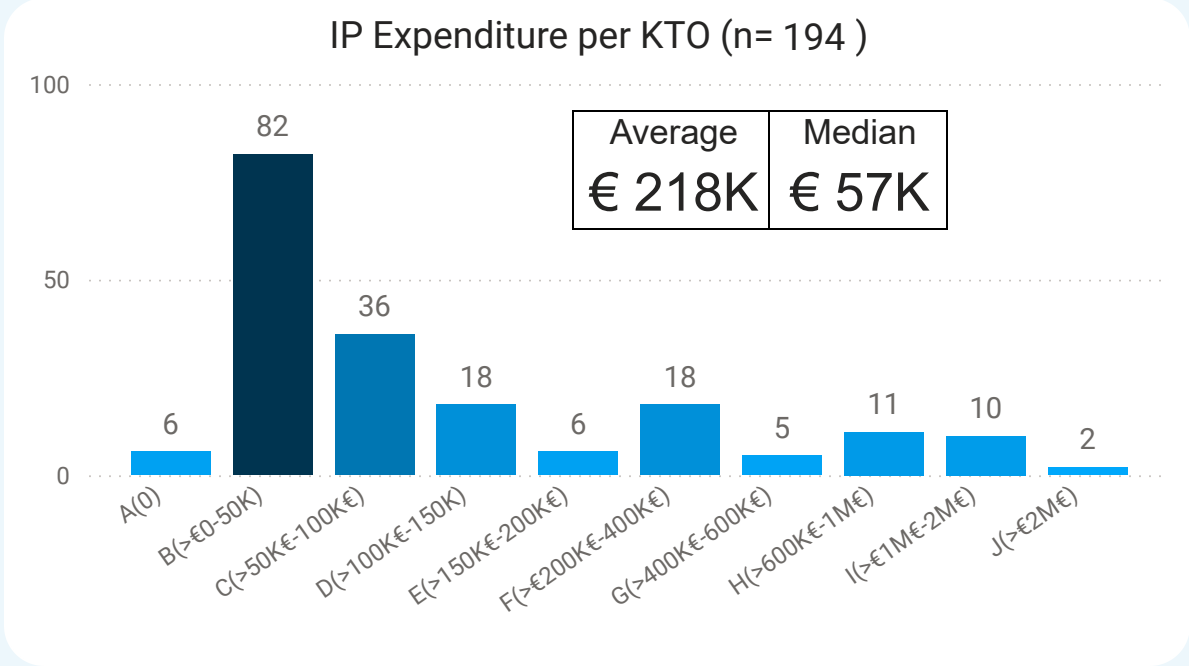
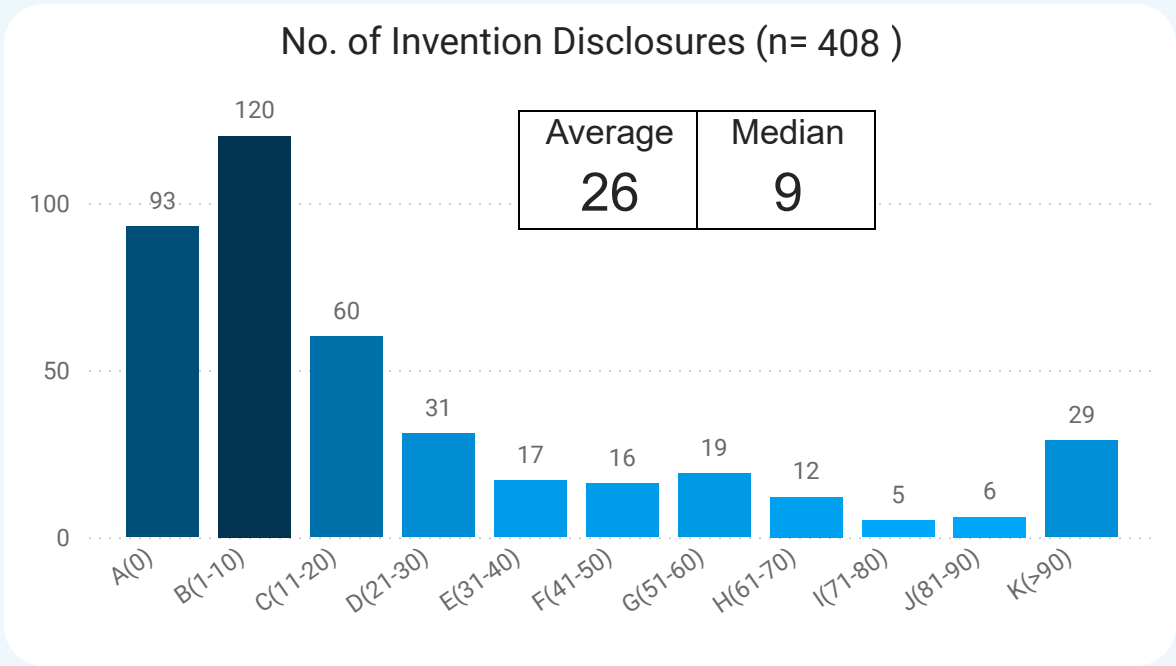
IP Resources

Intellectual property (IP) management is a core function of Knowledge Transfer Offices, providing the foundation for the protection and commercialisation of research results. Invention disclosures represent the starting point of this process, capturing potentially valuable research outcomes before they enter the IP and commercialisation pipeline.

Among responding KTOs reporting invention disclosures, the average number of disclosures was 26 per office.

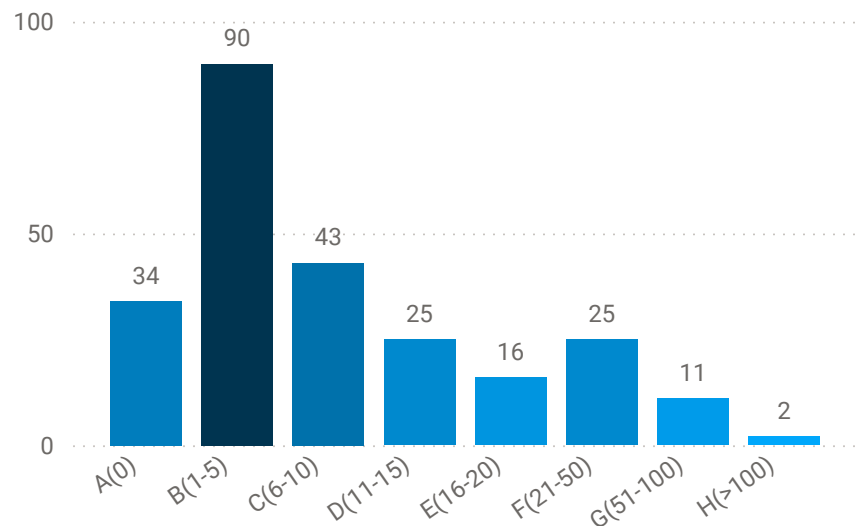
The data also highlights significant variation in investment levels, with more than half of responding KTOs reporting IP protection expenditure of over €50k.

Based on the reported values, there are on average 3 invention disclosures per KTO FTE.

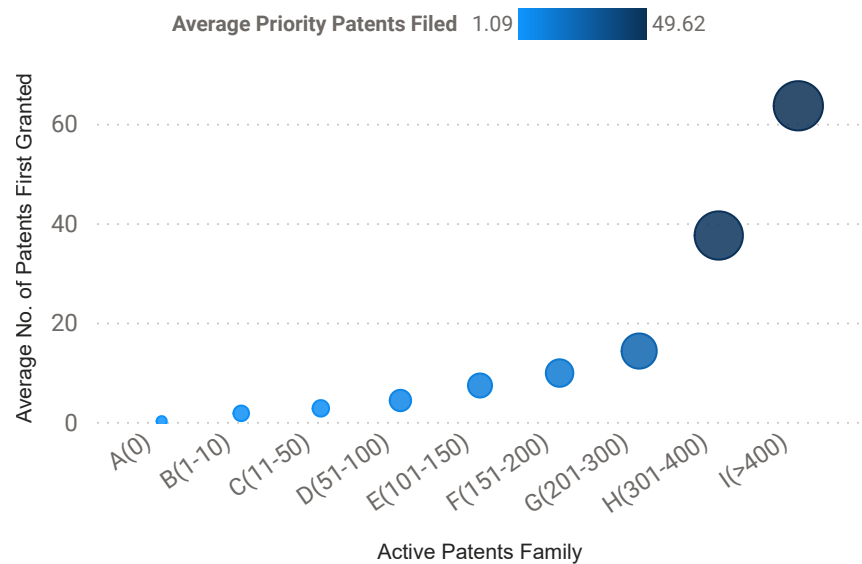


IP Portfolio

No. of Priority Patent Applications filed (n= 246)



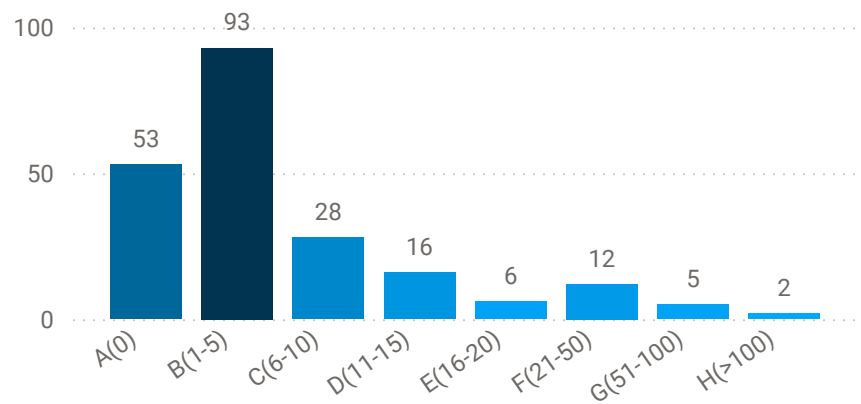
Patent Process Overview



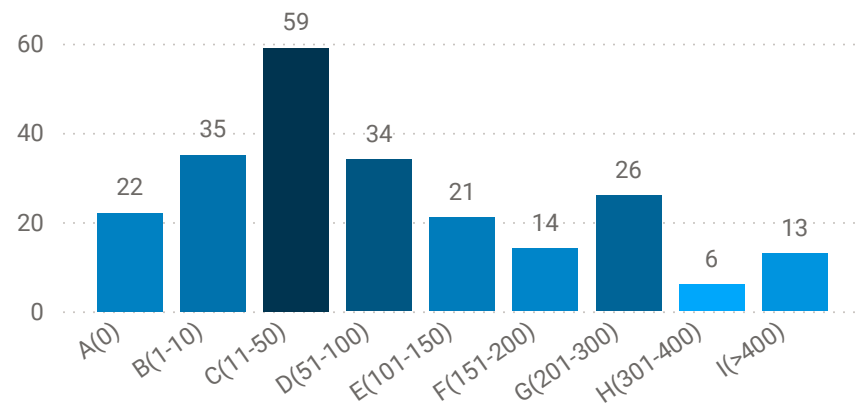
The strength and maturity of a KTO's intellectual property portfolio can be assessed through several indicators, including priority patent applications, patents granted and active patent families. Together, these metrics provide insight into both the creation of new intellectual property and the long-term management of patent assets.

The data shows that most responding KTOs reported between 1 and 5 new priority patent applications, between 1 and 5 patents first granted, and between 11 and 50 active patent families. This reflects a broad base of ongoing IP activity across European KTOs, with ~20% of the respondents managing substantially larger (above 200) patent families.

No. of Patents First Granted (n= 215)



No. of Active Patent Families (n= 230)



IP Commercialisation Agreements | LOA

Licenses accounted for the majority of License, Option and Assignment (LOA) agreements reported in FY2023, with 1,206 license agreements compared with 163 assignments and 96 options.

The reported license agreements covered a range of intellectual property, including patented technologies, software and research materials. Patent and software licenses were reported by a similar number of KTOs, while material licenses also represented an important part of licensing activity.

The cumulative licensing data shows that 37% (46/125) of responding KTOs had licensed or optioned up to 20% of their active patent families, while 63% (79/125) reported more than 20% of portfolio commercialisation.

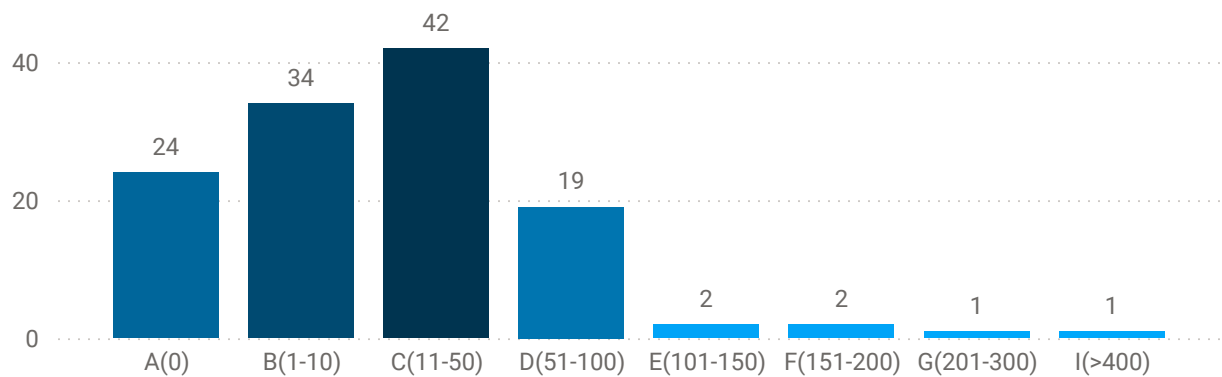
Type of Commercial Contracts

Year	Options (n=116)	Assignments (n=112)	Licenses (n=490)	Total of Contracts
2023	96	163	1,206	1,465

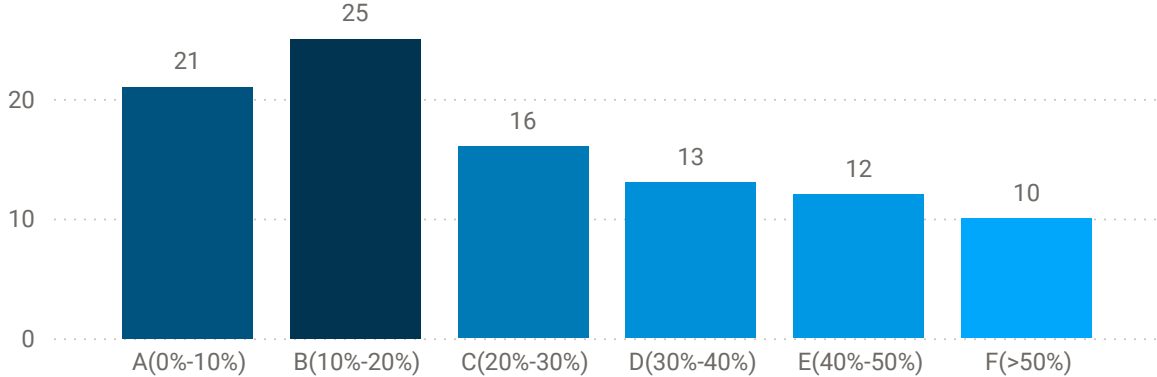
License Agreements

Year	Patent Licenses (n=143)	Material Licenses (n=103)	Software Licenses (n=141)	Other Licenses (n=103)	Total License Agreements
2023	449	261	383	113	1,206

Number of Active Patent Families Licensed or Optioned (n= 125)



% of Licensed or Optioned Active Families per KTO (n= 125)



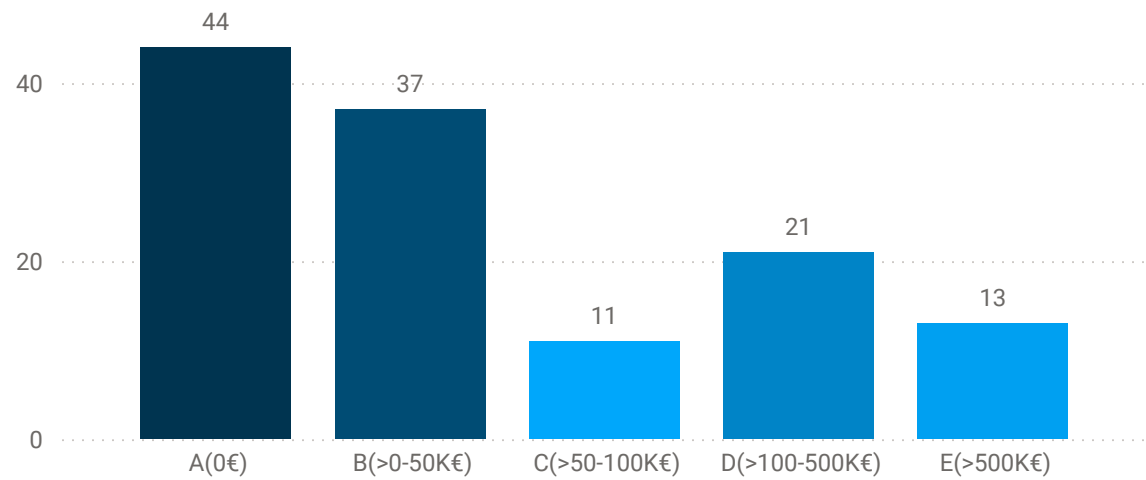
Commercial Revenues from IP

Responding KTOs reported a combined total of **€547 million** in commercial revenues from intellectual property in FY2023.

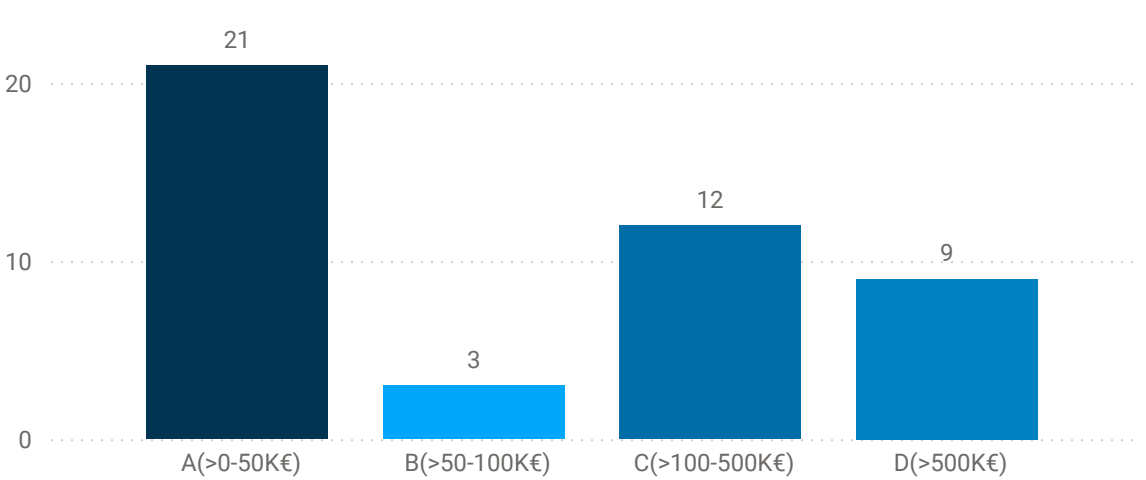
The distribution of revenues differs across responding organisations. Most KTOs reported little or no income from patent licensing or cashed-in equity, while a smaller number reported revenues above €500,000.

Year	Commercial Revenues from IP (n=360)	Gross Revenues from Patent Licenses (n=126)	Gross Revenues from Cashed-in Equity (n=279)
2023	€ 547,373,845	€ 33,023,277	€ 45,431,464

Revenues from Patent Licenses (n = 126)



Revenues from Cashed-in Equity (n = 279)





New Business Creation

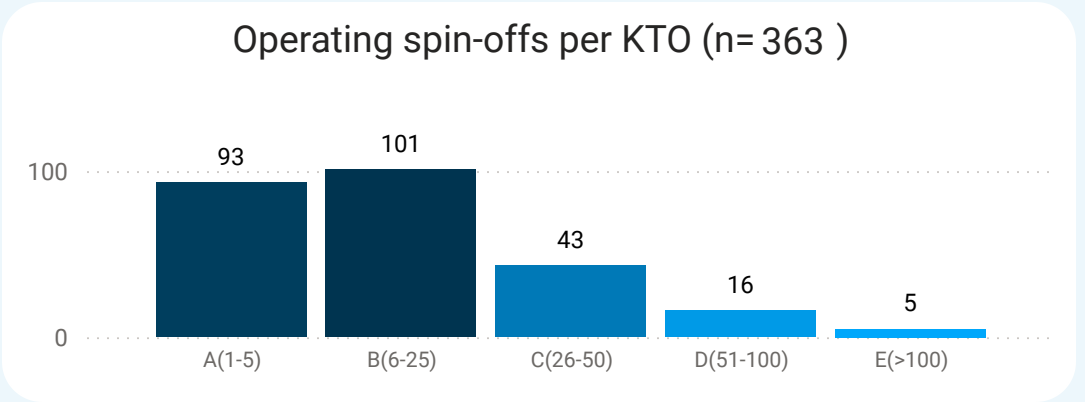
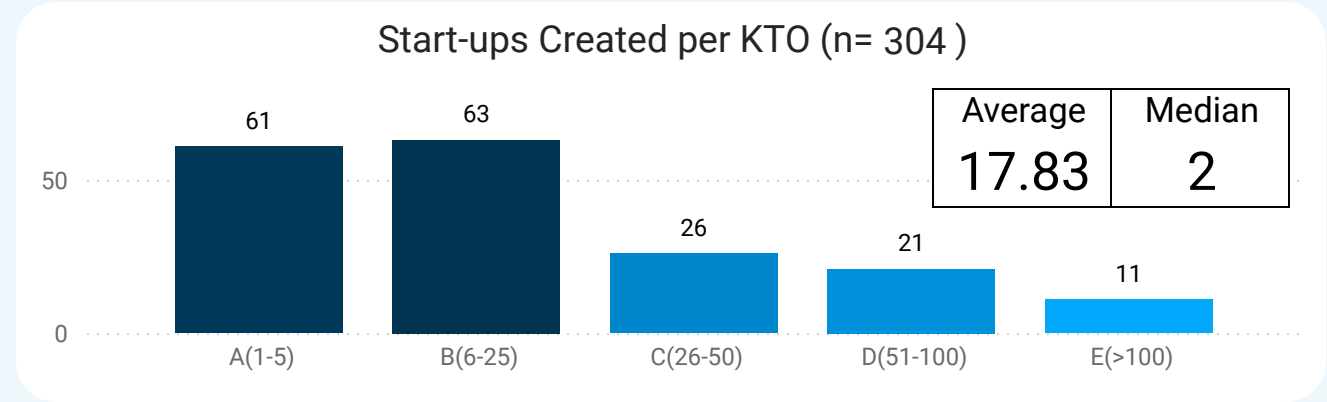
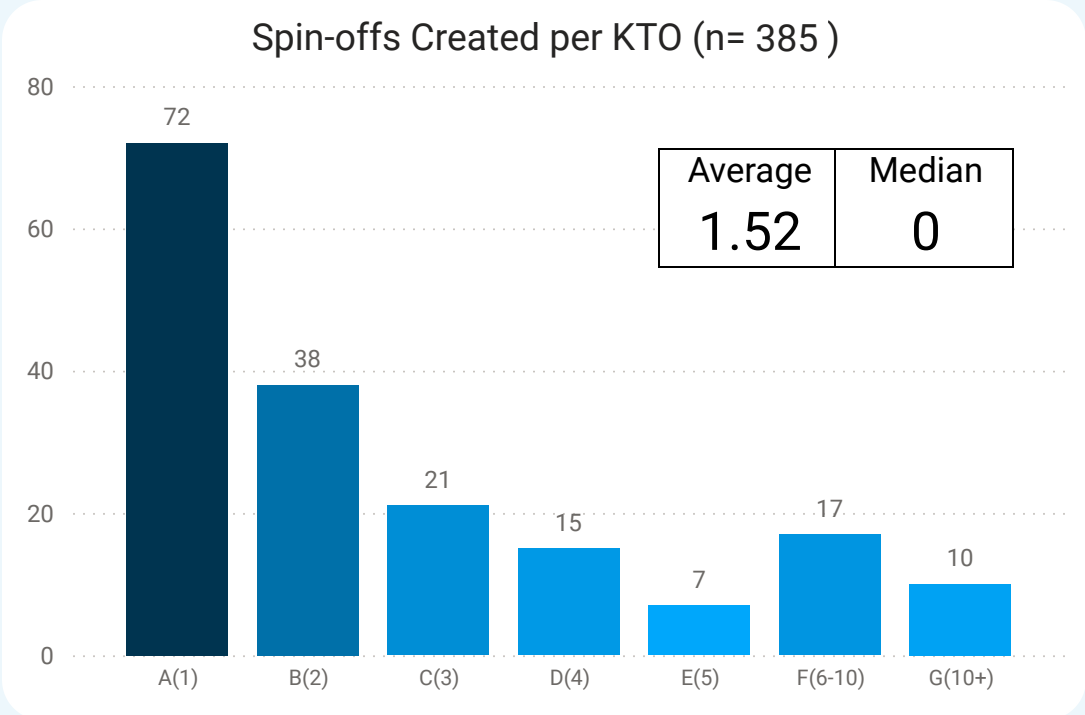
Spin-offs and Start-ups

Entrepreneurship remains an important pathway for translating research and innovation into economic and societal impact. In FY2023, responding KTOs supported the creation of **585 spin-offs** and **over 5,419 start-ups**. Nearly one third of the responding KTOs created one or two spin-offs, while start-up creation was considerably higher, with an average of **17.8 start-ups per KTO**.

Responding KTOs reported a total of 5,164 operating spin-offs. Among those reporting operating spin-offs, most had between 1 and 25 active companies.

The difference between the n-value (total number of responses) and the sum of the values shown above the bars represents KTOs reporting a value of zero.

Year	Spin-offs Created (n=385)	Operating Spin-offs (n=363)	Staff (FTE) in Operating Spin-offs (n=238)	Start-ups Created (n=304)
2023	585	5,164	68,322	5,419



Glossary

Contract Research: Research performed by a PRO at the request of and paid for by a non-academic organisation, using existing knowledge, know-how, materials, equipment and other resources available at the PRO. Under a Contract Research Agreement, the project is typically designed by the non-academic party and all results and IP are typically owned by the non-academic organisations and PROs may not be allowed to publish the results of the research. The incentive for the PRO to engage in such research is not academic output. For the purposes of this survey, technical services provided to non-academic parties (e.g. scientific measurements, testing, analysis) will qualify as contract research.

Collaborative Research: Research performed by at least one PRO and at least one non-academic party, where all parties contribute to the design of the research project, its implementation and share the project outputs. Include all collaboration agreements involving non-academic organisation, including those under which the non-academic party does not make any cash payment to the PRO directly (e.g. in case the project is fully subsidised). Under a Collaborative Research Agreement, the results and IP are typically owned by the party or parties that generated them (or are jointly owned). All parties share the data/results and academic parties have the right to publish the results of the research. The incentive for the PRO to engage in such research is primarily academically-driven (generation of new scientific knowledge).

Consultancy: The provision of expert advice in a specific field by academics working in a PRO for the benefit of an external, non-academic organisation. Exclude consultancy agreements concluded by individual staff members directly with third parties (i.e. not through the PRO) or those that relate to research or technical services, testing of equipment and the like. The services do not typically involve experimentation, measurements, use of specialised equipment or generating new data (such activities would normally qualify as 'contract research') but make use of the academic's specialist knowledge and skills of the field in which he/she works.

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent): A measure of staffing equivalent to one full-time employee. Because part-time staff contribute only a proportion of an FTE, the total FTE may differ from the actual number of employees. For example, two employees each working 30% of their time in a KTO together equal 0.6 FTE.

Invention Disclosure: Formal or informal descriptions of inventions or discoveries that are discussed with and/or evaluated by the KTO staff or other technology experts to assess their utility outside academia.

Glossary

KTO: Knowledge Transfer Office.

KTO Staffing by Function (pie chart on page 6):

- Research Support including Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), Confidential Disclosure Agreements (CDAs), Collaborative Research Agreements, etc.
- Commercialisation including IP protection, licensing, consultancy agreements.
- Entrepreneurship Support including training, business planning, incubation.
- Business Development including industry liaison.
- Others including project management and those not listed above.

LOA: Licenses, Options and Assignments.

Patent Family: A collection of patent applications and granted patents that claims the same priority date.

Priority Patent Application: The first patent application for a technically unique invention. If priority patent applications relating to the same technically unique invention are submitted simultaneously in multiple patent offices, or are submitted after the first priority patent application within the priority year, only a single priority application should be counted.

PRO: Public Research Organisation.

Spin-off: A company expressly established to develop or exploit IP created by a PRO and with a formal contractual relationship. Include, but do not limit to, spin-offs established by PRO staff. Exclude companies that have no formal agreement for commercially developing IP or know-how created by the institution.

Start-up: A newly registered company that is founded by PRO students or employees but that is not directly involved with the exploitation of intellectual property generated within that PRO.

Acknowledgements

ASTP would like to express its sincere gratitude to all participating Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs), National Associations, and partner organisations that contributed to the ASTP Annual Survey 2025. Their willingness to share data and insights helps create one of the most comprehensive overviews of knowledge transfer activity in Europe.

We are particularly grateful to Universities Denmark (Denmark), Réseau SATT (France), swiTT (Switzerland), Knowledge Transfer Ireland (Ireland), Netval (Italy), RedOTC (Spain), and Research England (United Kingdom) for providing national datasets that significantly enriched the survey results and strengthened the representativeness of the findings.

We also wish to acknowledge the valuable support of CRO LINK (Croatia), Réseau LIEU (Belgium), TTO Flanders (Belgium), Transfer Allianz (Germany), PerfeTTO (Italy), PACTT (Poland), SNITTS (Sweden), and other National Associations across Europe for promoting and distributing the survey within their respective networks.

The continued collaboration between ASTP, National Associations, and KTO professionals demonstrates the strength of the European knowledge transfer community and its shared commitment to improving the evidence base for knowledge transfer policy and practice.

We extend our sincere thanks to every KTO professional who took the time to complete the survey and contribute their data. Your participation helps provide valuable insights into the evolving knowledge transfer landscape and supports benchmarking, learning, and continuous improvement across the profession.



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ASTP Annual Survey 2025: Executive Data Report on Financial Year 2023

Useful Links



FY2024 Survey is Now Open

Share your data and contribute to the next ASTP KT Metrics report.

KT Metrics Reports FY2014 - FY2023

Access the complete collection of ASTP KT Metrics Reports and explore historical trends across Europe.



FY2023 Survey Questionnaire

View the questionnaire used to collect the data presented in this report.

Questions about the survey or data?

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