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council  
of museums

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management

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## survey results

# executive summary

The regional analysis portrays museums as socially committed institutions balancing their educational mission with the demands of modern cultural engagement. Across Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and neighbouring countries, museums continue to uphold public trust and emphasize cultural preservation — yet they do so within expert-led and administratively structured frameworks. Community involvement is present, particularly through schools and formal partnerships. However, little change is documented and links with local stakeholders remains concentrated in familiar formats. Minority groups, vulnerable audiences, and foreign professionals are still underrepresented, indicating room for improvement, in particular by fostering inclusion and co-creation practices.

Tourism brings visibility and revenue, but without systematic visitor management, it also increases pressure on infrastructure, staff, and community relations. Still, museums across the region consistently prioritize accessibility and public service, showing a strong civic ethos even under financial constraints. Most institutions recognize communication, adaptability, and openness as future-facing competencies. However, structured professional development and strategic planning remain underdeveloped. Reputation and brand are widely valued but managed more intuitively than systematically. Mission statements are often complex and inconsistently recalled, with only a minority of museums maintaining clear and coordinated communication strategies.

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Jadran Antolović participates in the discussion at the project meeting in Venice.

To strengthen their long-term relevance, museums would benefit from creating impactful purpose driven mission statements, embedding storytelling and audience feedback into routine operations, and building stronger internal communication systems.

In parallel, greater participation in European networks such as UNESCO, ICOM, and regional partnerships—as well as sustained investment in staff development—could enhance credibility, innovation, and resilience. This would help position regional museums as open, collaborative, and future-ready cultural institutions.

# project research

In recent years, museums across our region have been operating amid profound social, economic, and tourism-related changes. To understand what “museum reputation” means in practice today—for communities, visitors, and professionals—we conducted research within the project Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool, in two phases: first during international museum forums with workshops in Zadar and Trebinje, and then through a supplementary online survey addressed to museum professionals in Albania, Montenegro, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The publication before you brings together the complete results of this process.

The research framework is built around seven interrelated thematic areas:

## **1** ASSESSING MUSEUM REPUTATION AND TRUST

Understanding how museums build trust with local communities, their transparency, and public involvement in decision-making.

## **2** EVALUATING COMMUNITY- CENTRED APPROACHES

Exploring the extent of community engagement, inclusion of minorities, and well-being programs.

### **3 ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF OVERTOURISM**

Identifying challenges and strategies linked with mass tourism and its effects on museum operations and communities.

### **4 UNDERSTANDING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Gaining insights into the integration of foreign or migrant workers and the support systems in place.

### **5 IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS AND FUTURE READINESS**

Gathering information on staff training, communication strategies, and preparedness for social or environmental uncertainties.

### **6 EXPLORING THE ROLE OF REPUTATION IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT**

Gauging how museums perceive and manage their public image as a strategic asset.

### **7 BRANDING AS MISSION-DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT**

Examining how museums align their brand and communication with internal values and societal missions.

These areas form the methodological “backbone” of the study and structure the chapters of the publication, from descriptive findings to practical recommendations for museum management and cultural policy.

The training programme was carried out in Zadar (June 2025) and Trebinje (September 2025), where participants completed questionnaires and engaged in joint discussions on case studies, dilemmas, and potential solutions. In doing so, combined quantitative insights with qualita-

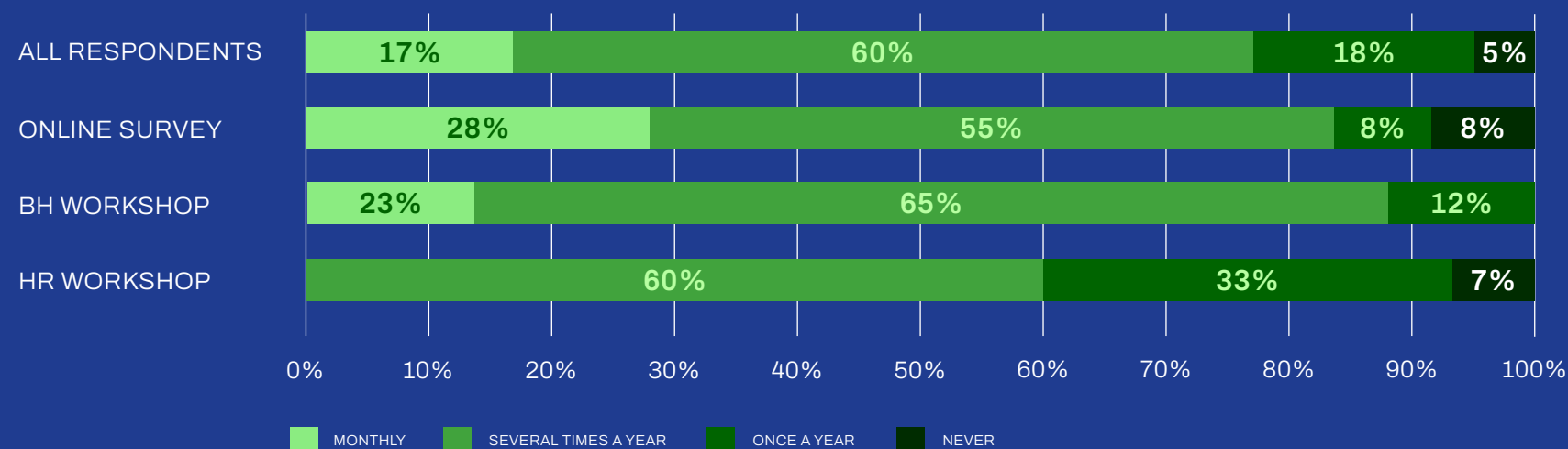
tive reflections were drawn from professional experience. The subsequent online survey broadened the geographical reach and enabled comparisons across different contexts of museum practice.

The publication provides: an overview of the methodology and research instrument; an analysis of results by theme (with emphasis on patterns of trust, models of community collaboration, the impacts of tourism, the state of workforce diversity, and areas for further training); and a set of recommendations—from quick, operational actions to strategic guidelines for managing museum reputation and branding. Special attention is given to transferable solutions that museums can apply regardless of size or founding authority, as well as to mechanisms for tracking progress through measurable goals.

The research was prepared by Jadran Antolović, Goranka Horjan, and James Heaton, with data processing and analysis by Jadran Antolović and Stella Antolović. All workshop and online survey participants are acknowledged for their time, trust, and openness—without their contribution, this publication would lack its most important element: the voice of the museum community. Special thanks for their contribution to the research scope and the discussion of results at the project’s Wrap-Up meeting in Venice go to Alenka Černelić Krošelj, President of the Regional Alliance ICOM South East Europe (ICOM SEE); Cristina Vannini, Secretary of INTERCOM (International committee for Museum Management); Mattia Agnetti and Pietroluigi Genovesi of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia; Adriano Rigoli, President of ICLCM (International Committee for Literary and Composers Museums); and to Matija Dronjić, ICOM Croatia for the graphic design.

These findings will serve as an incentive for reflection, dialogue, and concrete change—so that museums, as trustworthy custodians of heritage and active actors within their communities, can build their reputations transparently, inclusively, and responsibly.

# 1 HOW FREQUENTLY DOES YOUR MUSEUM INCLUDE LOCAL VOICES IN SHAPING EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMMING?



## KEY SIGNAL

Only 17% of all the respondents include local voices monthly, the ideal level for sustained collaboration. Most (60%) engage them several times a year, indicating that participation is still occasional and project-driven. Museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina (23%) and online respondents (28%) show some regular involvement, while Croatian museums (HR workshop) stand out for having no monthly engagement, relying instead on annual or event-based inclusion.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Against the benchmark of monthly collaboration, most museums in the region lag behind. While awareness of community participation is present, practices remain irregular and dependent on specific projects or exhibitions. Croatian institutions, although operating within relatively developed infrastructures, tend to approach community involvement through periodic consultation, while some BiH and online participants show emerging practices of more regular engagement. This points to a regional need to institutionalize participatory processes rather than rely on ad-hoc initiatives.

## practical recommendations

### PROMOTE MONTHLY ENGAGEMENT AS A GOAL

Museums could consider introducing internal objectives that encourage regular, ideally monthly, consultation with local communities through both formal and informal channels.

### EXPLORE SIMPLE PARTICIPATION TOOLS

Short online surveys, comment boxes, or digital polls could serve as accessible ways to maintain an ongoing dialogue with visitors and community members.

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

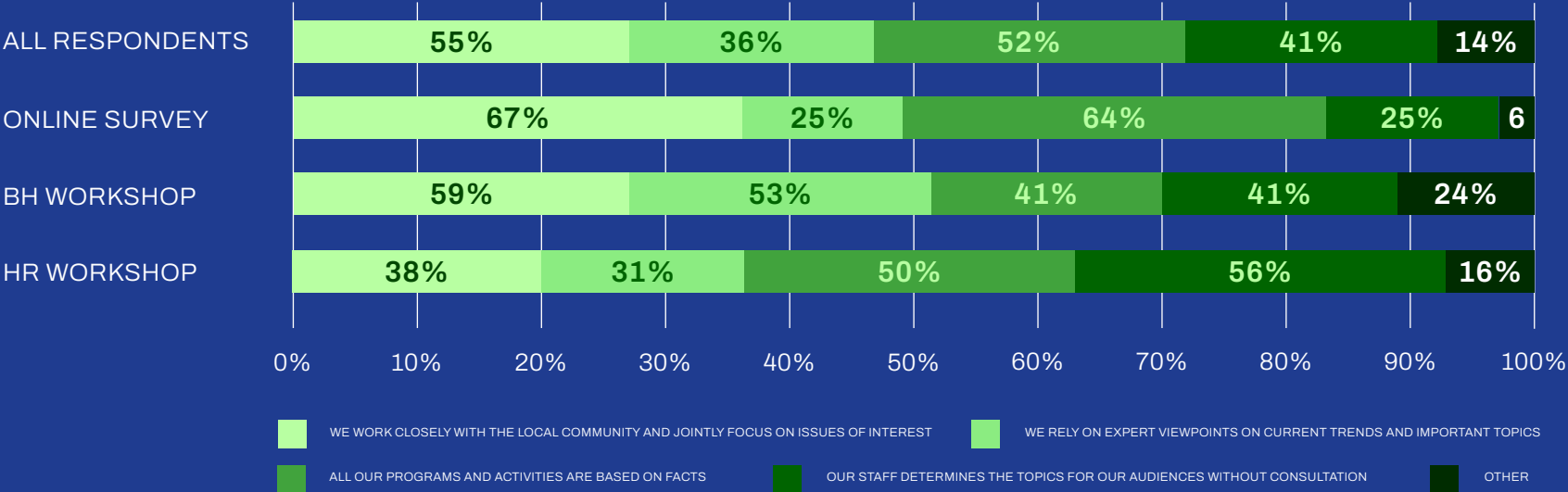
Integrating local input into regular planning processes may help ensure that programming remains relevant and reflective of community perspectives.

### FOSTER REGIONAL EXCHANGE

Facilitating knowledge sharing between regional institutions could support the gradual adoption of more sustainable participatory practices across the region.

2

WHAT STEPS HAS YOUR MUSEUM TAKEN TO BUILD OR MAINTAIN PUBLIC TRUST? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the most common trust-building measures include working closely with the local community (55%), relying on facts (52%), and consulting expert viewpoints (36%). Online participants show the highest level of collaboration with local communities (67%) and a strong reliance on fact-based programming (64%), reflecting an open and dialogic approach to trust-building. In contrast, Croatian museums more often select topics internally (56%), with less frequent collaboration (38%), indicating a more centralized and expert-driven model. BiH museums occupy a middle ground, balancing community cooperation (59%) and expert involvement (53%).

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The results highlight a continuing tension between expert authority and participatory co-creation. While scientific accuracy and professional standards remain key trust foundations, the process of defining museum topics is still largely internally controlled, especially in Croatian institutions. BiH museums show ongoing efforts to balance expert insight with community participation, while online respondents lean more strongly toward open, dialogue-based approaches. Across the region, museums appear to be transitioning from an expert-driven model toward more inclusive practices, yet the shift remains gradual and uneven.

practical recommendations

ENCOURAGE A BALANCE BETWEEN EXPERTISE AND PARTICIPATION

Museums could consider combining expert-led content with structured opportunities for public input, such as advisory groups or thematic workshops.

PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY IN TOPIC SELECTION

Sharing how themes are chosen—even when decisions remain internal—may strengthen visitors’ trust and sense of inclusion.

INTEGRATE PARTICIPATORY REVIEWS INTO PLANNING

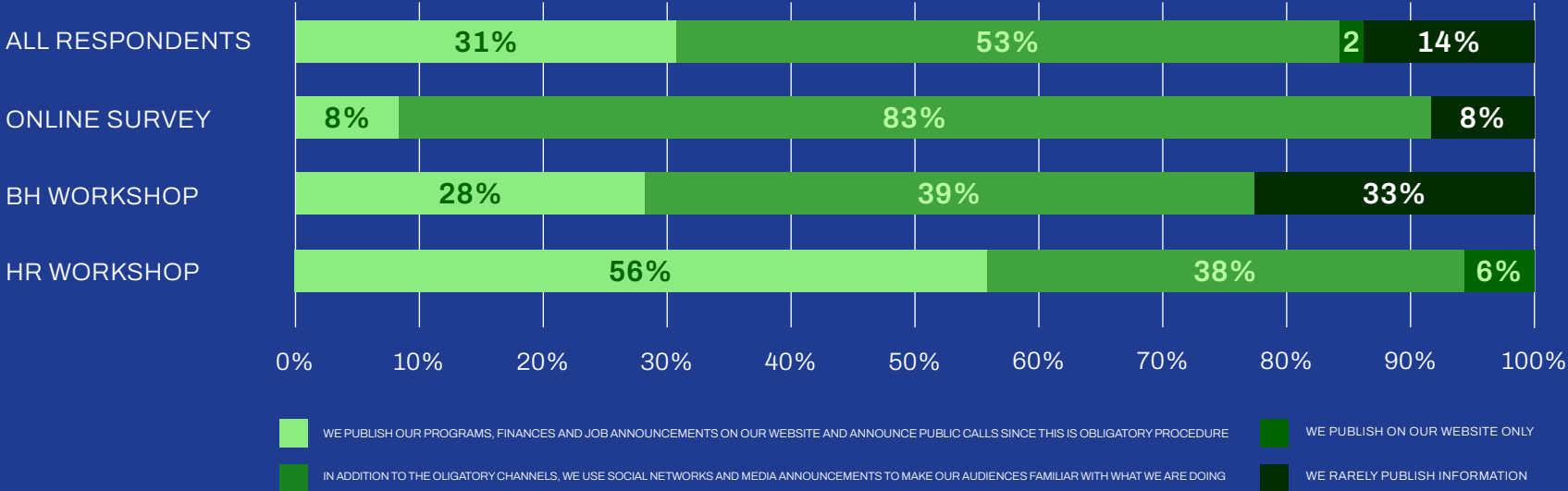
Organizing joint workshops or post-program discussions with the community before final decisions are made might help build shared ownership.

FOSTER REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Peer collaboration among regional museums could help spread participatory methods while maintaining scientific credibility.the region.

3

HOW TRANSPARENT IS YOUR MUSEUM ABOUT ITS DECISION-MAKING, FUNDING, OR STAFFING PRACTICES?



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, 53% use additional communication channels beyond obligatory ones, while 31% share only required information. Online participants show the highest level of proactive transparency (83%), actively communicating decisions and updates across multiple channels. Croatian museums, operating within the EU framework, show a more procedural approach, with 56% publishing obligatory information and 38% extending communication beyond basic requirements — a pattern likely shaped by EU-mandated transparency standards. BiH museums fall between these two models, with 39% adopting proactive communication and 33% rarely publishing information, reflecting inconsistent transparency practices.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Transparency across the region generally aligns with legal and procedural obligations, but proactive storytelling remains limited. In Croatia, where museums operate under EU regulations that define and enforce transparency standards, legal compliance is high — yet communication often remains formal and procedural. BiH museums show a greater variation, with some moving beyond obligatory reporting while others communicate infrequently. Online respondents show a more audience-oriented communication culture, suggesting that digital engagement supports more open and proactive transparency practices.

practical recommendations

PROMOTE PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Museums could consider using blogs, social media, or pop-up displays to explain decisions and financial management in a clear, relatable way.

DIVERSIFY COMMUNICATION FORMATS

Combining formal reports with accessible channels — such as newsletters or short videos — may help audiences better understand institutional processes.

SHIFT FROM COMPLIANCE TO ENGAGEMENT

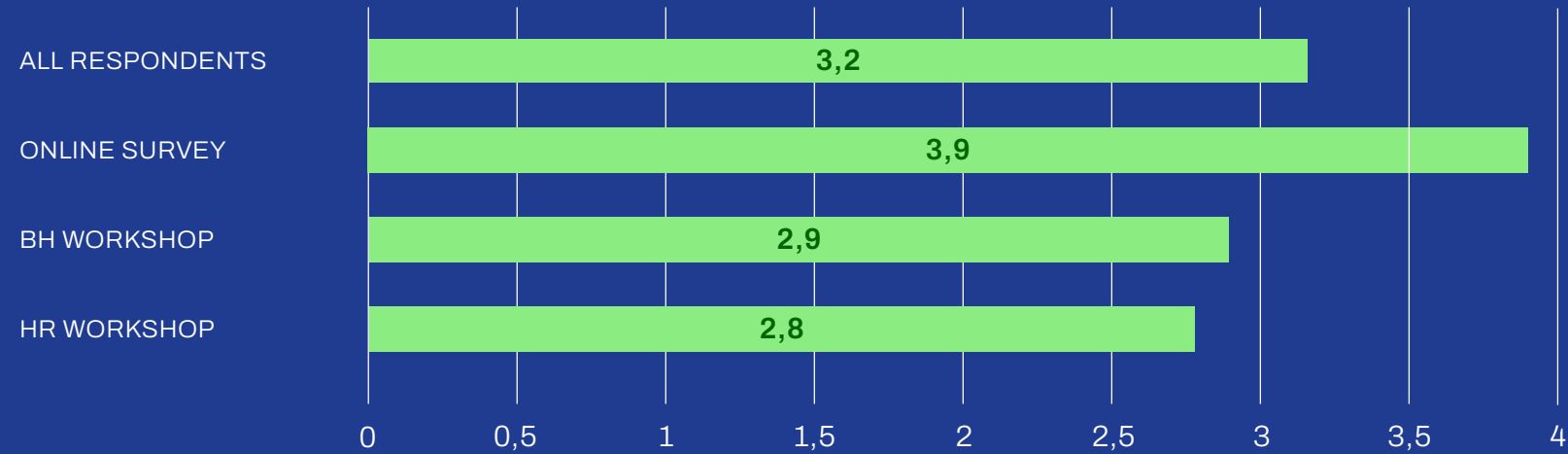
Presenting the reasoning and values behind decisions could enhance trust and make transparency a part of the museum's public identity.

ENCOURAGE REGIONAL EXCHANGE OF PRACTICES

Sharing approaches between more digitally active institutions and those relying on traditional channels could help raise transparency standards across the region.

# 4

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT: “OUR TRUST IN THE COMMUNITY IS BASED ON OPENNESS AND SHARED DECISION-MAKING.”



## KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the average level of agreement is 3.2, suggesting a moderate belief that trust is built on openness and shared decision-making. The strongest difference appears between online respondents (3.9) and Croatian museums (2.8). Online participants show a high level of confidence in participatory trust, while Croatian museums express a more neutral–positive stance, indicating that openness is valued but not yet systematically practiced. BiH museums (2.9) show a similar position, leaning slightly positive but still reflecting a partial rather than fully realized participatory culture.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The findings indicate that participatory trust is acknowledged but not fully integrated into institutional culture. Croatian and BiH museums generally accept the importance of openness but do not yet perceive it as a defining element of their operations. This moderate stance reflects ongoing but incomplete integration of participatory practices, where shared decision-making is more aspirational than systematic. Online respondents, on the other hand, show that greater digital connectivity and openness to collaboration may strengthen trust in community relationships.

## practical recommendations

### SET MEASURABLE PARTICIPATORY GOALS

Defining clear objectives for community inclusion in decision-making could help institutions track progress and identify concrete improvements.

### USE SURVEYS TO MONITOR CHANGE

Repeating this type of assessment after implementing participatory initiatives could provide valuable indicators of progress — for example, a score above 3.5 may signal meaningful advancement.

### ENCOURAGE PEER EXCHANGE

Institutions with stronger participatory practices could share methodologies and lessons learned with peers, supporting gradual regional alignment.

### INTEGRATE PARTICIPATION INTO EVALUATION PROCESSES

Embedding openness and shared decision-making as a part of internal reviews and planning cycles may help translate values into consistent practice.

# section 1 summary

## museum reputation and trust

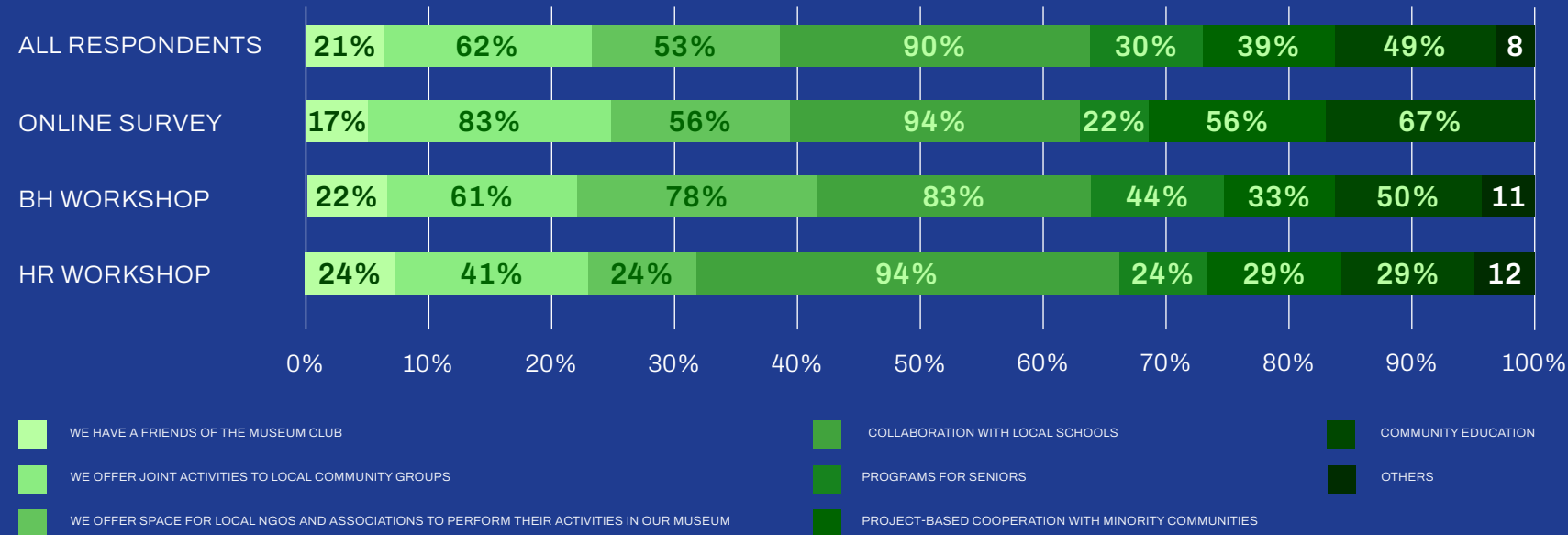
The first section explores how museums across the region perceive and build trust through openness, transparency, and collaboration. Respondents included professionals from the HR workshop in Zadar (primarily Croatian museums), the BiH workshop in Trebinje (museums from Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the online survey included regional professionals (participants from Albania, Montenegro, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria).

Overall, museums show a shared awareness of the importance of credibility, transparency, and engagement, but their approaches vary. Institutions in EU member states tend to show a strong compliance with formal transparency standards, while others show a greater flexibility and openness in using diverse communication channels and participatory practices. Most institutions still rely primarily on expert-driven and project-based decision-making, indicating that participatory culture is present but not yet systematic.

To strengthen trust and reputation, museums could further develop regular mechanisms for community input, communicate decision-making processes more openly, and frame transparency as a part of storytelling rather than administration. Encouraging regional exchange of good practices may also support a more consistent culture of openness and collaboration across the sector.

5

HOW DOES YOUR MUSEUM CURRENTLY ENGAGE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES BEYOND MUSEUM VISITS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, collaboration with local schools (90%) is the most common and stable form of community engagement, serving as a shared foundation across the region. Beyond this, Croatian museums most often cooperate with local community groups (41%), while BiH museums emphasize partnerships with NGOs and associations (78%) that use museum spaces for their activities. Online respondents display the widest range of engagement, combining school partnerships (94%) with NGO cooperation (56%), community education (67%), and initiatives involving minority and senior groups. The least represented forms of engagement across all groups include Friends of the Museum Clubs (21%) and project-based work with minority communities (30%), highlighting untapped potential for broader inclusion.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Educational collaboration remains the primary link between museums and local communities, offering a reliable but often limited channel for connection. In Croatia, this dependence on the school network reflects a structured yet traditional approach, where engagement beyond formal education remains occasional. In BiH, cooperation with NGOs and associations marks a step toward a more socially responsive model, although inclusion of minority and senior groups is still developing. Online respondents show a greater diversity and adaptability, suggesting that less formal institutional frameworks may allow for more dynamic and inclusive community interaction. Overall, museums across the region appear to be transitioning from education-centred outreach toward broader participatory practices, but the process is still uneven.

practical recommendations

EXPAND THE USE OF MUSEUM SPACES

Museums could consider systematically opening their halls or facilities to neighbourhood associations, local initiatives, or informal groups, fostering a stronger sense of shared ownership.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES

Introducing micro-grants or small project funds for collaborations outside the school system could encourage creativity and new partnerships.

DEVELOP INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMS

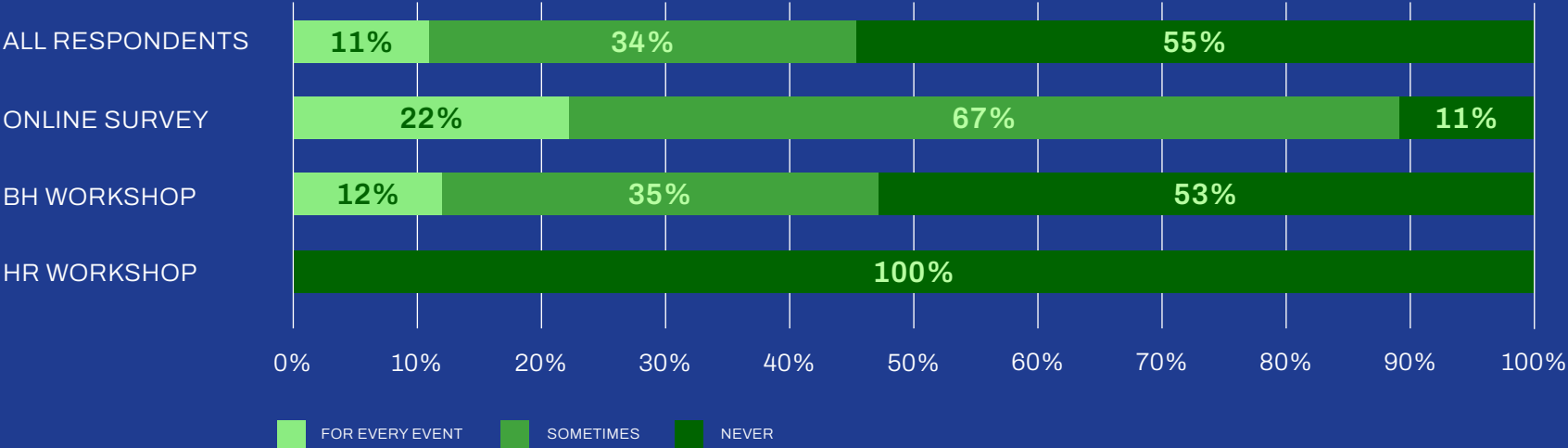
Creating initiatives such as a “Museum in the Neighbourhood” or targeted activities for senior and minority groups may enhance accessibility and social visibility.

ENCOURAGE REGIONAL PEER LEARNING

Exchanging practices among Croatian, BiH, and online participants could help identify scalable models for expanding engagement beyond educational frameworks.

6

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ENCOURAGE FOREIGN WORKERS AND MINORITIES TO JOIN MUSEUM ACTIVITIES?



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the inclusion of foreign workers and minority communities in museum activities remains very limited. Only 11% of museums encourage participation for every event, while 34% do so occasionally and 55% never. Differences between groups are notable: Croatian museums reported no inclusion (100% never), while BiH museums show a modest but higher engagement (12% for every event, 35% sometimes). Online respondents stand out for stronger inclusion efforts (22% for every event, 67% sometimes), reflecting broader international exposure and networks.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The findings indicate that inclusion of minorities and migrant communities is one of the least developed aspects of museum practice across the region. In Croatia, this could be partly due to the absence of significant ethnic diversity—multicultural interaction has not been a strong societal feature until very recently. As a result, museums have had limited structural or social impetus to address intercultural engagement, and the concept of the “local community” has remained closely linked with the majority population. In BiH, the context is different: the country’s multiethnic composition (Croats, Serbs, and Bosnians) and the workshop’s location in Trebinje, a city at the crossroads of these identities, strongly influenced responses. Here, inclusion is often understood as interethnic coexistence, rather than engagement with migrant or foreign groups. Online respondents, more linked with international frameworks, show a greater awareness of diversity and inclusion principles, pointing to the influence of global museum networks and digital exchange. Overall, while museums recognize inclusion as a value, systematic strategies and dedicated programs remain rare.

practical recommendations

MAP AND CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Museums could create a directory of minority and migrant associations to identify potential partners for collaboration.

INTRODUCE BILINGUAL AND INCLUSIVE OUTREACH

Publishing bilingual calls for participation or volunteer ambassador programs can help attract underrepresented audiences.

DEVELOP ANNUAL INCLUSIVE INITIATIVES

Co-creating one exhibition or educational program per year with minority or migrant communities could build lasting trust and visibility.

ADAPT INCLUSION STRATEGIES TO LOCAL REALITIES

In BiH, focus on interethnic dialogue; in Croatia and other less diverse settings, inclusion efforts could evolve alongside new demographic changes and growing migrant presence.

7

WHAT INITIATIVES DOES YOUR MUSEUM IMPLEMENT TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL OR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING? RANK THE INITIATIVES YOUR MUSEUM IMPLEMENTS THE MOST.

| HR WORKSHOP                         | BH WORKSHOP                         | ONLINE SURVEY                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY | 1 PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY | 1 PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY |
| 2 EDUCATION                         | 2 EDUCATION                         | 2 EDUCATION                         |
| 3 CREATIVE DEVELOPEMENT             | 3 CREATIVE DEVELOPEMENT             | 3 INCLUSION OF VUNERABLE GROUPS     |
| 4 INCLUSION OF VUNERABLE GROUPS     | 4 VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT              | 4 CREATIVE DEVELOPEMENT             |
| 5 SOCIAL DIALOGUE                   | 5 SOCIAL DIALOGUE                   | 5 VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT              |
| 6 VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT              | 6 INCLUSION OF VUNERABLE GROUPS     | 6 SOCIAL DIALOGUE                   |
| 7 MENTAL HEALTH                     | 7 MENTAL HEALTH                     | 7 MENTAL HEALTH                     |

KEY SIGNAL

All groups rank preservation of cultural identity and education as their top two well-being initiatives, affirming museums' traditional public role. Creative development consistently places third, showing a growing attention to engagement through cultural production. Inclusion of vulnerable groups ranks fourth in the online survey but only sixth in the BiH workshop, suggesting a disparity in perceived priority or program capacity. Social dialogue and volunteer engagement alternate between fifth and sixth positions, reflecting recognition without strategic anchoring. Mental health ranks last across all groups, underscoring that emotional well-being is acknowledged but not institutionally supported.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

While museums consistently emphasize heritage and education, the uniform bottom ranking of mental health reveals a strategic blind spot. This suggests that despite rising public discourse around well-being, museums are not yet positioning themselves as emotionally supportive or resilience-building spaces. The online group's relatively higher placement of inclusion of vulnerable groups may reflect broader institutional exposure or stronger rights-based frameworks outside the workshop countries. Meanwhile, the similar rankings of social dialogue in both HR and BiH groups points to a shared awareness of its value—but also the absence of systematic implementation. Ultimately, this ranking format reveals a conservative orientation: museums remain rooted in conventional roles while emerging priorities—mental health, inclusion, civic dialogue— still struggle to break into the top tier of strategic focus.

practical recommendations

INTEGRATE A “SOCIAL PACKAGE” INTO ANNUAL PLANNING

Museums could expand their programming to include mental health and emotional resilience workshops, a “Museum & Volunteers” program, and exhibitions connecting heritage with current social themes.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND INCLUSION

Introducing thematic events or participatory discussions could help museums position themselves as spaces for exchange, empathy, and understanding.

COMPLEMENT TRADITION WITH SOCIAL INNOVATION

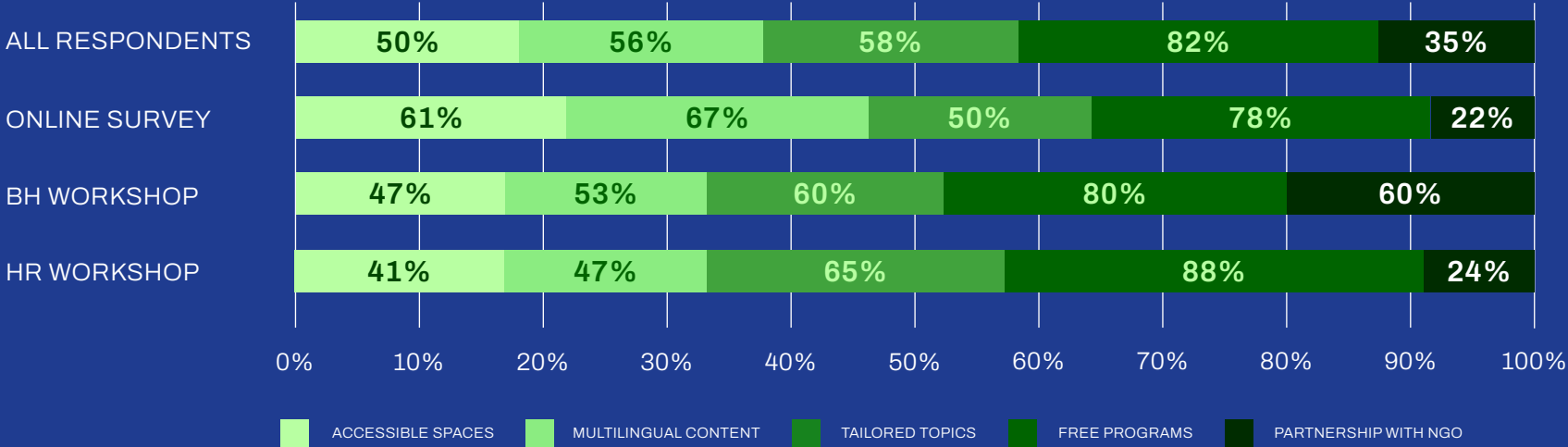
Maintaining a focus on cultural identity and education while incorporating well-being and social inclusion initiatives would increase both cultural and civic impact.

ENCOURAGE LONG-TERM VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Structured volunteer programs can help build community ownership and strengthen ties between institutions and their audiences.

8

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS DOES YOUR MUSEUM USE IN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the most common inclusion method is offering free programs (82%), confirming that museums primarily address accessibility through financial measures. Tailored topics (58%), multilingual content (56%), and accessible spaces (50%) follow, while partnerships with NGOs (35%) remain less frequent overall. In Croatia, inclusion relies mainly on free programs (88%) and adapted topics (65%), while physical accessibility (41%), multilingual content (47%), and NGO partnerships (24%) lag significantly behind. In BiH, inclusion efforts appear more balanced, with free programs (80%), adapted topics (60%), and NGO partnerships (60%), suggesting a more diverse approach to accessibility. Online respondents emphasize multilingualism (67%) and accessible spaces (61%), reflecting closer alignment with international accessibility standards.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The results confirm that financial accessibility remains the most developed form of inclusion, while spatial, linguistic, and collaborative aspects are still emerging. When compared with Question 5, a clear distinction emerges between community engagement and inclusion practices. Museums show a stronger and more institutionalized connection with local communities, primarily through partnerships with schools and formal organizations, while work with vulnerable groups remains less structured and less frequent. Community collaboration tends to rely on established, education-based networks, whereas inclusion efforts depend on individual initiatives or project funding, lacking long-term continuity. This indicates that while museums are rooted in their communities, their understanding of “community” often excludes vulnerable populations, and accessibility is still defined more as affordability than as participation. Overall, museums across the region are progressively expanding their social role, yet the shift from serving communities to actively including underrepresented voices is still at an early stage.

practical recommendations

BROADEN THE APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY

Museums could consider complementing free programs with additional measures such as universal design features, multilingual communication, and collaborative activities that involve vulnerable communities more directly.

ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSION STANDARDS

Introducing a shared set of accessibility principles—covering free entry for vulnerable groups, bilingual signage, and physical accessibility—may help ensure a more consistent and balanced approach across institutions.

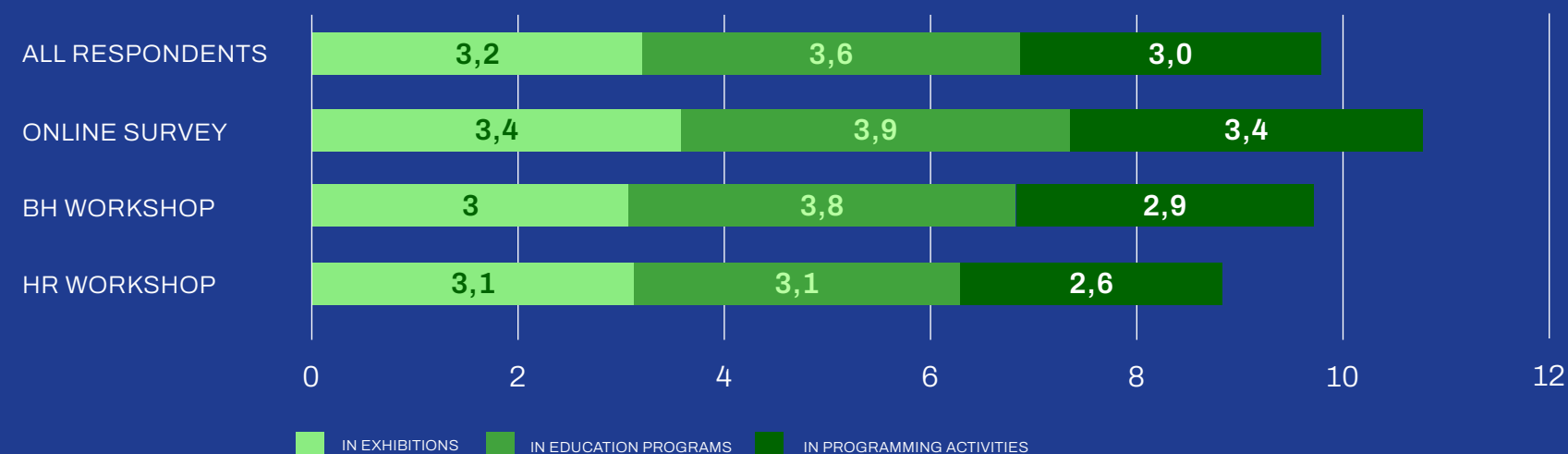
FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH NGOS

Closer and more sustained cooperation with organizations working with people with disabilities, minorities, or socially excluded groups could enhance both program quality and long-term social impact.

EMBED INCLUSION WITHIN EXISTING COMMUNITY WORK

Revisiting the definition of “community” to consciously include vulnerable and marginalized groups can help museums strengthen their social role and ensure these audiences are a part of regular, not separate, engagement efforts.

# 9 TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR MUSEUM CO-CREATE CONTENT, EXHIBITIONS, OR PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS?



## KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, community participation is most present in educational programs (3.6), followed by exhibitions (3.2) and programming activities (3.0). BiH museums and online participants report stronger engagement in education (3.8–3.9), while Croatian museums show a moderate involvement across all areas, with co-creation weakest in everyday programming (2.6). This pattern indicates that participation primarily occurs within structured educational contexts, while operational and exhibition-related collaboration remains limited.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Community engagement tends to be episodic and linked with educational projects, rather than an integrated institutional practice. Croatian museums generally maintain a moderate level of inclusion, with participation viewed as supportive input rather than shared authorship. In contrast, BiH museums display greater openness within educational contexts, though similar limits appear in exhibition-making and daily operations. Overall, the findings suggest that co-creation is valued but not yet embedded as a continuous process—a recurring trend seen in earlier questions (particularly Q1 and Q5).

## practical recommendations

### INSTITUTIONALIZE COMMUNITY INPUT

Museums may consider forming community councils or advisory groups (6–8 members from diverse backgrounds) to provide ongoing feedback on exhibitions, education, and programs.

### IMPLEMENT PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

Short post-event surveys or public feedback reports could help translate visitor insights into visible improvements, strengthening trust and accountability.

### BROADEN PARTICIPATION FORMATS

Encouraging co-creation workshops, open calls, or community-led micro-projects may help expand engagement beyond education and into exhibition and programming development.

### PROMOTE CROSS-REGIONAL LEARNING

Sharing experiences between regional museums could support the adoption of more sustainable participatory practices, balancing expert guidance with community voices.

# section 2 summary

## community-centred approach

Museums across the region show a clear commitment to social engagement, but participation remains concentrated in familiar and structured settings—most often through schools, associations, and educational programs.

These partnerships provide continuity but limit the scope of collaboration, as minority groups, seniors, and vulnerable audiences are still engaged only occasionally.

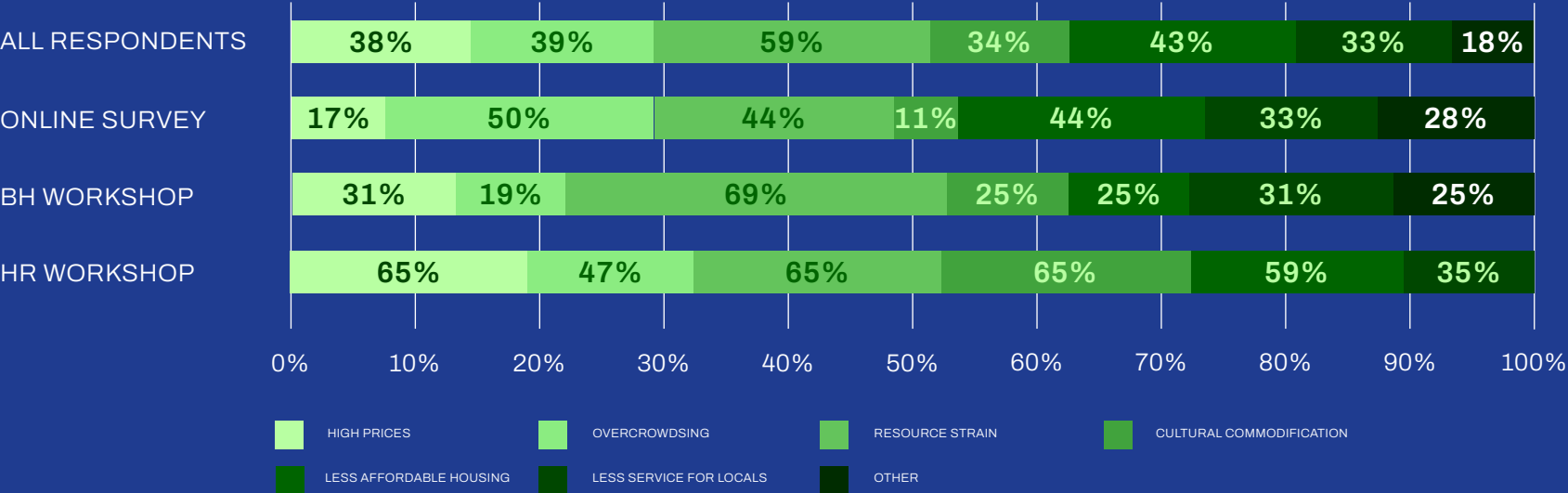
Engaging local communities, foreign workers, minorities, and vulnerable groups is not only a matter of inclusion but of relevance and sustainability.

By broadening participation beyond formal education settings, museums can strengthen their role as civic spaces where diverse experiences, languages, and perspectives shape collective understanding of heritage.

Co-creation—when communities actively contribute to exhibitions and programs—builds shared ownership and trust, transforming museums from institutions that speak to the public into platforms that speak with it.

Embedding these relationships into everyday practice would allow museums to act as dynamic agents of social connection, dialogue, and cultural resilience in an increasingly fragmented environment.

# 10 HAS YOUR MUSEUM EXPERIENCED CHALLENGES LINKED WITH OVERTOURISM (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?



### KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the most common challenges linked with overtourism are resource strain (59%), high prices (38%), and cultural commodification (34%), showing that the impact of tourism is felt beyond crowding. Croatian museums stand apart, reporting higher exposure across almost all categories: resource strain is 8% above average (67%), while high prices (65%) and cultural commodification (65%) are nearly double the overall rate. BiH museums identify resource strain (69%) as their primary issue but report substantially fewer challenges in other areas. Online respondents note overcrowding (50%) and resource strain (44%), reflecting moderate and operational forms of impact.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The results highlight clear differences in how overtourism affects museums across the region. Croatian institutions face the strongest and most multidimensional tourism pressures, particularly in coastal or high-traffic destinations where tourism shapes both economic conditions and community life. BiH museums experience tourism mainly as a resource and infrastructure issue, without the social saturation seen in Croatia. Online respondents show only occasional or localized challenges, confirming that overtourism is not yet a region-wide problem but rather concentrated in a few highly visited areas. Across all groups, museums recognize that tourism represents a challenge extending beyond visitor numbers, as they increasingly experience its indirect economic and social impacts—from rising prices and operational strain to shifts in local community dynamics.

# practical recommendations

### INTRODUCE INTERNAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS

Museums may benefit from establishing simple internal procedures to monitor visitor flow, assess seasonal impacts, and track how tourism affects local access and resources.

### ADVOCATE FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICIES

Beyond cooperation, museums can play a more active role in shaping public discourse by providing data, case studies, and heritage-based arguments for local tourism regulations.

### DIVERSIFY ENGAGEMENT BEYOND PROMOTION

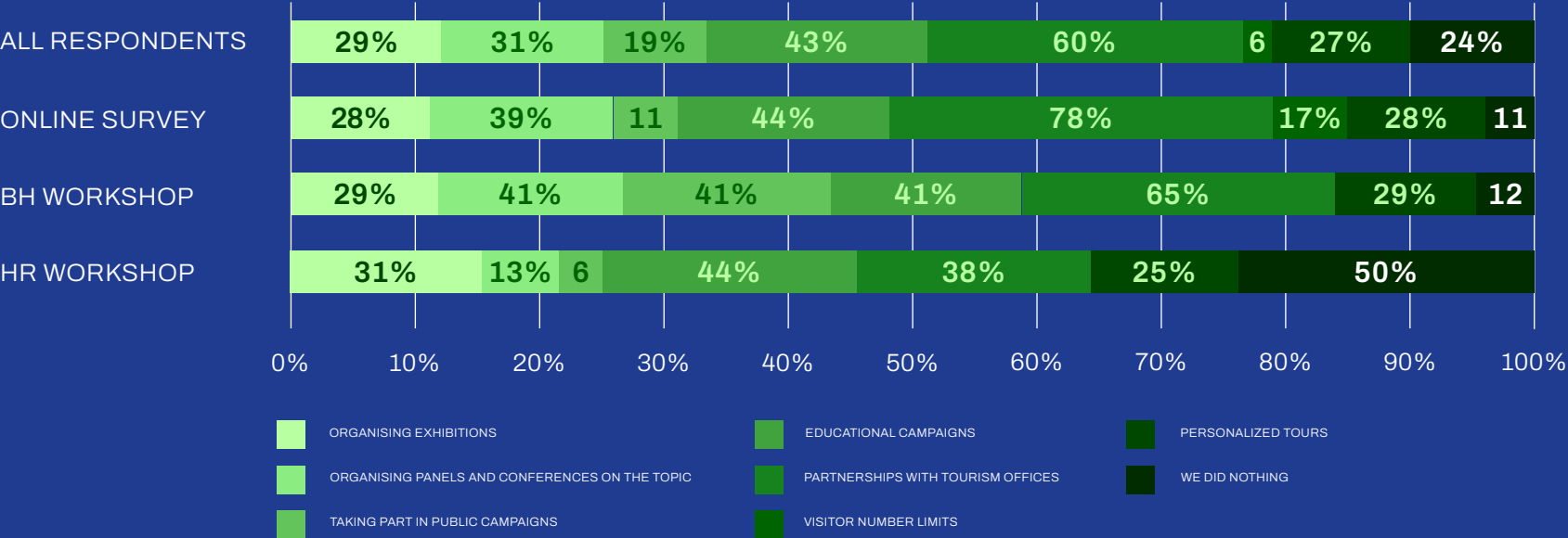
Move from purely promotional partnerships toward initiatives that raise public awareness about sustainable visitation, cultural preservation, and community balance.

### FOSTER INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND PEER LEARNING

Collaborating with museums from countries that have long dealt with overtourism—such as Spain, Italy, or Greece—could provide valuable insights into visitor flow management, community communication, and sustainable tourism models adaptable to local contexts.

11

WHAT STRATEGIES HAS YOUR MUSEUM IMPLEMENTED (OR CONSIDERED) TO MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the most common mitigation measures include partnerships with tourism offices (60%), educational campaigns (43%), and organising exhibitions (29%). However, 24% of institutions report taking no action, and only 6% have considered introducing visitor number limits. Among the groups, Croatian museums stand out with the highest level of inaction (50%), despite facing the strongest tourism pressure identified in Q10. In contrast, BiH museums are more proactive, with 65% partnering with tourism offices, 41% organising educational or awareness campaigns, and only 12% indicating no action. Online respondents mirror the BiH trend, with 78% collaborating with tourism offices and 44% developing educational initiatives, suggesting a growing awareness of tourism’s cultural and social impacts.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The data highlight a paradox between exposure and response: Croatian museums experience the highest levels of tourism pressure but remain the least active in introducing mitigation measures. This may reflect limited institutional autonomy or the perception that overtourism is an external problem rather than a museum management issue. It may also reflect the attitude of the tourist sector towards cultural institutions. As strongly positioned stakeholders, tourist organisations may be reluctant to jointly explore the issue with museums. Meanwhile, BiH and online participants, operating in environments with lower tourism intensity, show a greater initiative and adaptability, incorporating partnerships and awareness-raising activities into their operations. Across all groups, no museum has adopted visitor capacity limits or dynamic quotas, confirming that visitor management remains an underdeveloped area in museum practice. The overall pattern suggests that while the challenges of overtourism are widely recognized, structured, data-driven responses are still in their early stages.

practical recommendations

PILOT CONTROLLED VISITOR MANAGEMENT MODELS

Museums could consider testing dynamic quotas or time-slot entrances during peak seasons to assess their impact on visitor satisfaction, revenue, and operational efficiency.

PROMOTE SLOW TOURISM INITIATIVES

Developing slow tourism itineraries in collaboration with local communities and tourism offices could help redistribute visitor flows and enhance the overall quality of the visitor experience. Drafting actions and collaborative programmes with the tourism sector.

ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY MONITORING

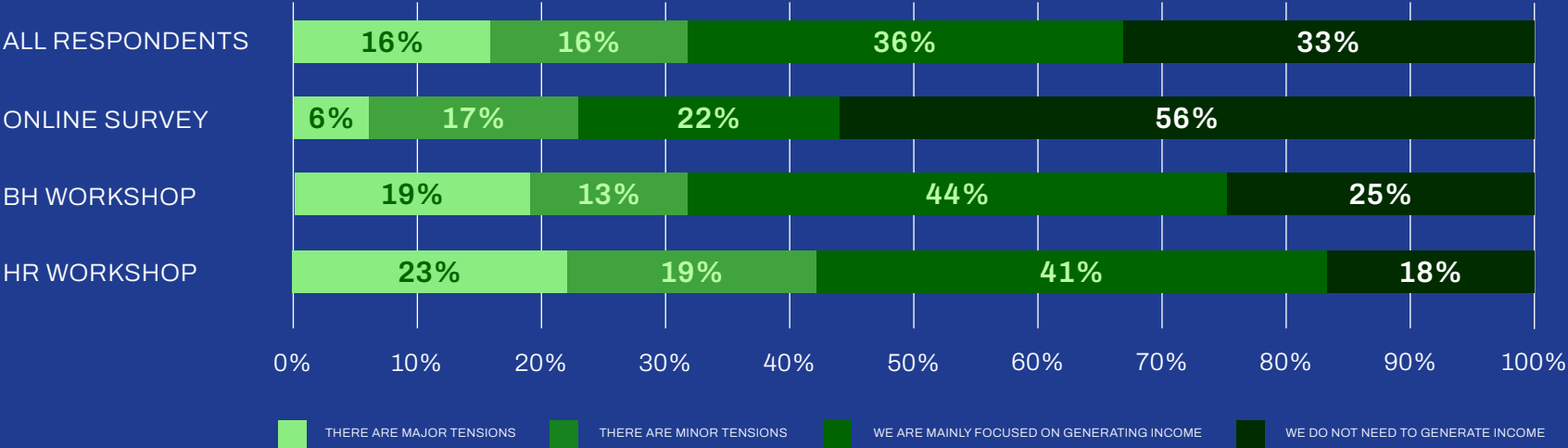
Introducing simple tracking tools — such as monthly visitor flow reports and post-visit surveys — can provide data for adjusting opening hours and programming to seasonal demand.

FOSTER INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND PEER LEARNING

Collaborating with museums in countries experienced in managing overtourism could offer valuable insights into visitor flow management and sustainable tourism planning.

12

WHAT TENSIONS DOES YOUR MUSEUM EXPERIENCE BETWEEN THE NEED TO GENERATE REVENUE AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE VULNERABLE OR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS?



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, museums are evenly split: 36% are primarily focused on generating income, 33% report no need to do so, and 32% experience tensions between financial and social responsibilities. Croatian museums report the highest perceived tensions (42%), suggesting stronger internal conflict. BiH museums show the highest share of income-driven institutions (44%) but less reported tension, indicating more acceptance of the balance. Online respondents differ significantly, with 56% reporting no need to generate income — pointing to more stable funding models and fewer mission-related trade-offs.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The results reveal distinct institutional profiles across the region. Croatian museums report the highest internal tensions, suggesting that commercial demands — particularly from tourism — are felt as competing with their public mission. BiH museums show a higher income dependence, but with fewer reported conflicts, indicating a more pragmatic or integrated approach to balancing economic and social goals. Online respondents stand apart, with most reporting no financial pressure, reflecting stronger public funding models or alternative governance structures that allow for greater programmatic autonomy. This contrast becomes even more apparent when viewed alongside Q11: Croatian museums, despite facing the highest tourism pressure, remain the least proactive in managing its effects — reinforcing their financial dependence. Meanwhile, BiH institutions, under less external pressure, show more socially responsive strategies, suggesting a more sustainable alignment between funding models and community values.

practical recommendations

DIVERSIFY REVENUE SOURCES

Develop local membership programs or “Friends of the Museum” initiatives that reduce dependency on tourist numbers. Introducing digital tours or virtual exhibitions can provide alternative income streams.

ADVOCATE FOR CULTURAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

Museums may engage local authorities to allocate a significant share of tourist tax revenue toward maintaining cultural infrastructure and community programming.

INTEGRATE INCLUSION INTO COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

Design bilingual workshops, accessible guided tours, or events co-created with underrepresented groups that both generate revenue and reinforce social inclusion.

LEARN FROM INTERNATIONAL MODELS OF SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Collaborate with institutions in countries where financial independence coexists with strong public missions (e.g., the Netherlands). Exchange practices that show how commercial activities can support rather than compete with inclusion and accessibility goals.

# section 3 summary

## dealing with overtourism

Tourism brings both visibility and vulnerability to museums. It creates opportunities for international recognition and local economic benefit, but without systematic visitor management, it can erode community relations, staff capacity, and the quality of the visitor experience.

Croatian museums face the strongest tourism pressure yet respond mainly through symbolic or communicative actions, with few operational mechanisms to regulate visitor flow or safeguard cultural assets.

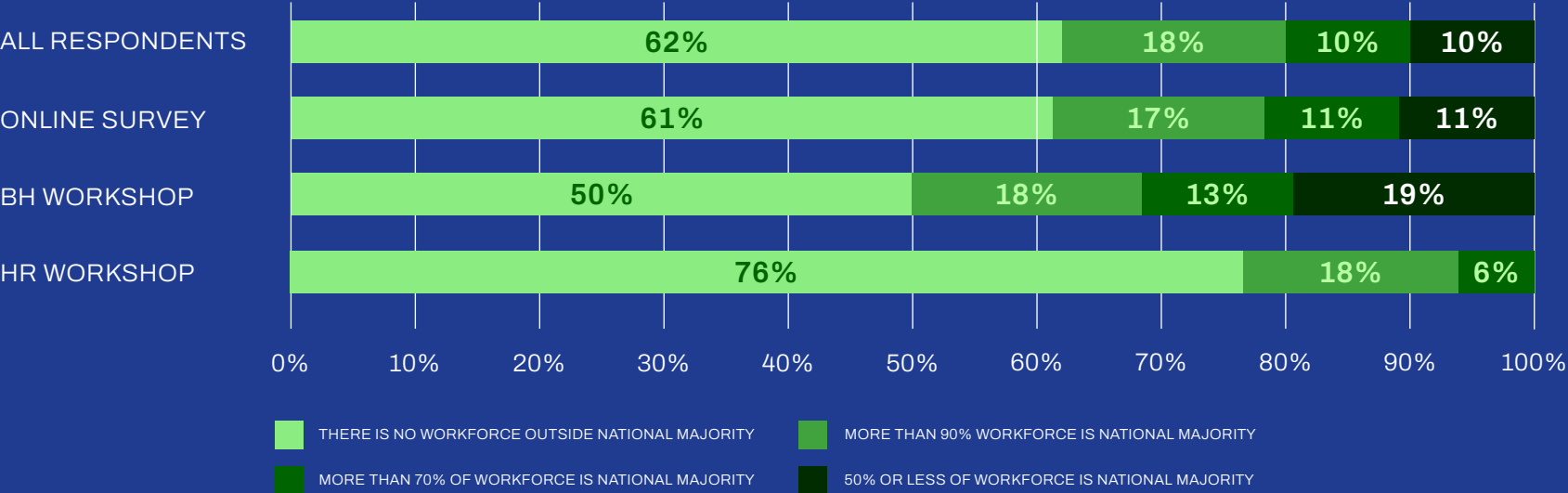
By contrast, BiH museums, though less exposed to mass tourism, show a greater initiative through cooperation with tourism offices and awareness-raising activities, reflecting a stronger orientation toward community well-being.

To transform tourism from a strain into a strategic asset, museums should implement structured visitor management systems (e.g., time-slot entry, capacity limits, or data-driven monitoring) and develop local partnerships that balance tourism growth with cultural and social sustainability.

Interestingly, when linked with Question 8, which showed that most museums offer free programs for vulnerable groups, the results reveal a clear institutional approach: even under significant financial and tourism-related pressures, museums continue to prioritize accessibility and inclusion.

This resilience underscores the persistence of a strong public mission, suggesting that with better tools and support, museums could align tourism benefits more effectively with their broader cultural and social responsibilities.

# 13 HOW DIVERSE IS YOUR MUSEUM’S WORKFORCE IN TERMS OF NATIONALITY, BACKGROUND, AND LANGUAGE SKILLS?



## KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, 62% of museums report no workforce outside the national majority, and 18% state that more than 90% of employees belong to the national majority. This indicates a predominantly homogeneous workforce, with only around 20% of institutions showing measurable diversity in nationality, background, or language skills. Croatian museums record the lowest diversity (76% report entirely national-majority staff), while BiH museums show the highest relative variation (31% include minority or foreign staff members), reflecting the country’s multiethnic structure rather than targeted recruitment.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

These results should be interpreted with caution. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the presence of three constituent peoples and several national minorities, as well as the fact that the survey took place in Trebinje, a border area, naturally contributes to somewhat greater internal diversity. However, both in BiH and Croatia, museums predominantly operate as public institutions, where employment is tightly regulated by state or municipal policies. Consequently, formal restrictions, administrative rules, political frameworks, and language requirements significantly limit the employment of foreign or migrant workers. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of museum-specific professional profiles among migrant populations, which reduces opportunities for diversification even where willingness exists. Therefore, the results reflect systemic and demographic constraints rather than a lack of openness or interest among museum professionals.

# practical recommendations

## CLARIFY INCLUSION PATHWAYS WITHIN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORKS

Collaborate with relevant ministries and cultural bodies to explore regulatory options that allow limited-term or project-based employment of foreign professionals.

## ENCOURAGE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES WITHOUT STRUCTURAL REFORM

Until hiring frameworks evolve, museums can focus on training existing staff in intercultural communication, foreign languages, and community collaboration with migrant or minority groups.

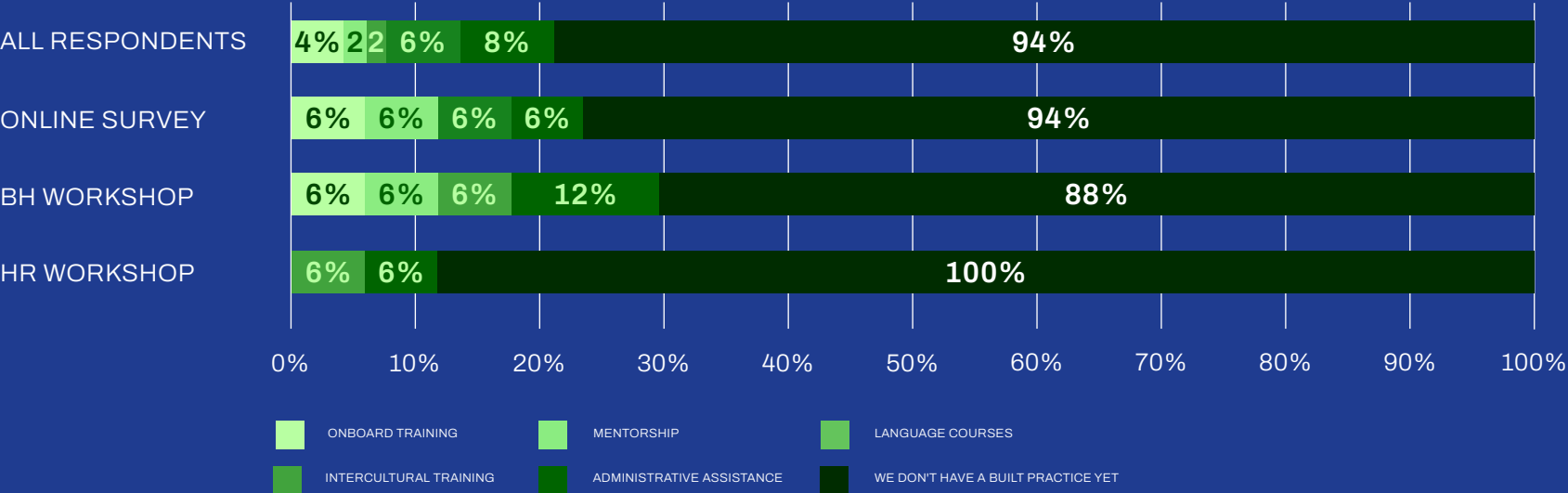
## LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DIVERSITY EXPOSURE

Participate in cross-border exchanges, residencies, or mentorship programs that temporarily integrate foreign experts, bringing international perspectives into local institutions. Participate in Erasmus exchanges and international programmes involving volunteers.

## DOCUMENT AND SHARE GOOD PRACTICES

Highlight examples of institutions that have successfully balanced public hiring regulations with diversity goals, fostering gradual systemic change.

# 14 WHICH PRACTICES DOES YOUR MUSEUM USE TO SUPPORT FOREIGN WORKER INTEGRATION? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



### KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, 94% report having no established practices to support foreign worker integration. Only a few institutions mention support measures, such as administrative assistance (8%), onboarding training (4%), or language and intercultural support (each under 6%). This pattern is visible across all groups: Croatian museums report 100% absence of structured practices, BiH institutions show slightly more initiative (12% offer administrative assistance), and online respondents also report 94% with no integration model in place. This confirms a widespread lack of operational support for foreign professionals, despite the growing importance of intercultural collaboration.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

These findings align with the results of Question 13, confirming that foreign or migrant employment in museums remains exceptional rather than systemic across the region. The near-universal absence of integration programs does not reflect institutional unwillingness, but rather structural constraints: public-sector hiring laws, political frameworks, and strict language requirements limit the flexibility to recruit and support foreign professionals. Because most museum employees are civil servants, institutions lack the autonomy to introduce practices like mentorship, onboarding, or intercultural learning. This is compounded by the rarity of migrant professionals in museum-related fields, which reduces both institutional demand and visibility of such needs. Taken together, the data suggest that museum inclusion practices are shaped less by internal strategy and more by national regulations, making this an issue of broader policy reform rather than HR planning alone.

## practical recommendations

### DEVELOP PREPARATORY INCLUSION FRAMEWORKS

Even if foreign employment is currently limited, museums could define simple onboarding and mentoring guidelines adaptable for future hires or international collaborations.

### PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERNALLY

Introduce short workshops on intercultural communication or multilingual service for staff, enhancing readiness for international cooperation and eventual workforce diversification.

### COLLABORATE WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Work with ministries or local administrations to identify ways to modernize public hiring rules and open pilot programs for cross-border or project-based cultural employment.

### CONNECT WITH INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Engage in staff exchanges, residencies, or EU-funded mobility programs to introduce diversity and knowledge transfer without requiring permanent foreign hires.

15 DESCRIBE IN THREE WORDS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO HIRING FOREIGN WORKERS IN YOUR MUSEUM

| HR WORKSHOP                                                            | BH WORKSHOP                                         | ONLINE SURVEY                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 LANGUAGE<br>2 POLITICS<br>3 ADMINISTRATION<br>4 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES | 1 LAWS<br>2 LANGUAGE<br>3 POLITICS<br>4 CITIZENSHIP | 1 INTOLERANCE<br>2 LANGUAGE<br>3 MISTRUST<br>4 TOO MANY EMPLOYEES |

KEY SIGNAL

Across all responses, the dominant barriers to hiring foreign workers are language, politics, and administration/laws, while cultural factors and institutional attitudes appear secondary. Croatian respondents most often cited language, politics, and administration as barriers, followed by cultural differences. BiH participants emphasized laws and citizenship alongside language and politics, reflecting the complexity of administrative and legal frameworks. Online respondents added a social dimension — intolerance and mistrust — suggesting that beyond structural issues, perceptual and interpersonal barriers also play a role.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The findings confirm and contextualize earlier results (Q13–Q14). Museums’ limited workforce diversity is not primarily a matter of unwillingness, but rather of systemic, linguistic, and political constraints. Since most museums operate as public institutions, their hiring practices are strictly regulated by national or municipal laws that limit foreign employment. In both countries, language emerges as a practical and symbolic obstacle, reflecting not only communication challenges but also the formal requirement for fluency in the official language for public service positions. The mention of politics and administration/laws highlights the bureaucratic rigidity that prevents more open recruitment, while intolerance and mistrust from the online survey indicate that social readiness for multicultural work environments also remains limited. Overall, these responses portray museums as institutions operating within nationally defined legal systems and cultural expectations, where inclusion of foreign professionals is constrained more by policy and structure than by organizational intent.

practical recommendations

ENGAGE POLICYMAKERS IN DIALOGUE

Museums, together with cultural associations, can initiate discussions with ministries and local governments on modernizing public-sector hiring to enable temporary or project-based employment of foreign experts.

DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE INCLUSION MECHANISMS

When direct employment is not feasible, institutions can include foreign professionals through short-term consultancies, research partnerships, or joint exhibitions.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL TRAINING

Encouraging staff to learn the neighbouring languages and intercultural competencies can improve readiness for cross-border cooperation and visitor diversity.

ADDRESS PERCEPTION BARRIERS

Through public programs or internal reflection sessions, museums can address unconscious bias and promote openness to diversity as a cultural value, not merely a legal adjustment.

# section 4 summary

## workforce migration and inclusion

All the participants in the survey — from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the online group — report that museum workforce remain predominantly nationally homogeneous, reflecting the structure of public-sector employment and the limitations imposed by administrative and language regulations.

While language, politics, and legal frameworks remain the primary barriers to hiring foreign professionals, this pattern also points to a deeper structural issue rather than a lack of institutional willingness.

The almost complete absence of onboarding, mentorship, or intercultural training practices indicates that the topic of workforce diversity has not yet entered operational planning. Yet, this represents an area of future opportunity rather than a deficit.

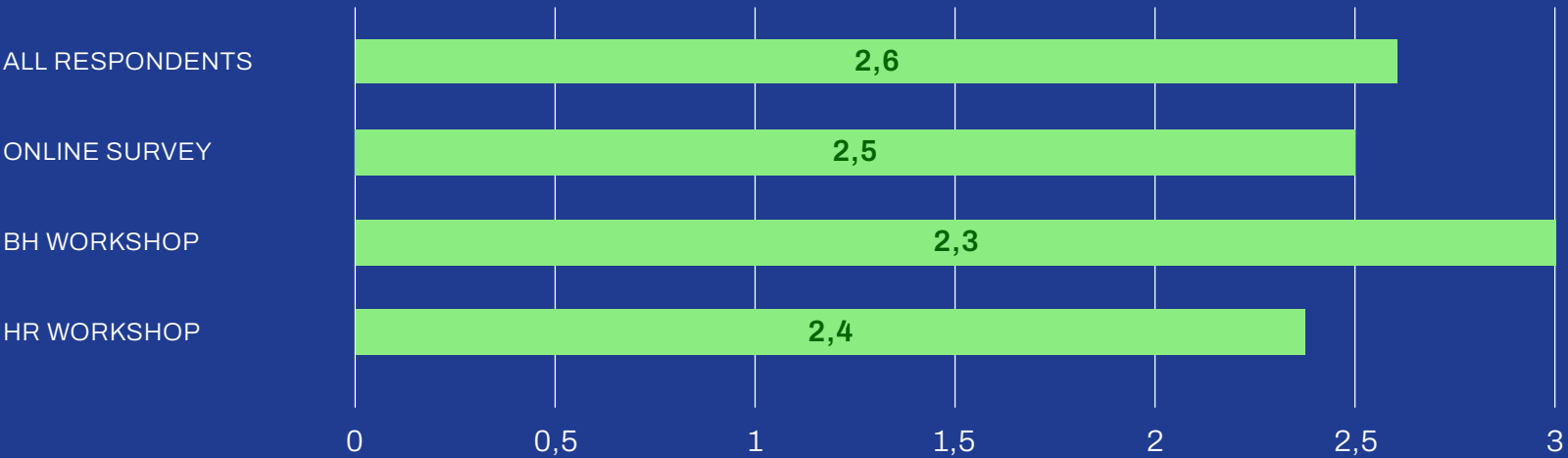
Foreign professionals can contribute new perspectives, languages, and international experience, enhancing museums' ability to communicate across cultures, attract broader audiences, and innovate in exhibition and education design.

In the long term, as seen in many European and global museum systems, diversity tends to increase with institutional development — driven by international cooperation, staff mobility, and globalized heritage networks.

Preparing early for such change — by introducing intercultural learning, participating in exchange programs, and advocating for flexible hiring frameworks — can help regional museums position themselves as a part of this broader evolution: open, connected, and future-oriented cultural institutions.

16

HOW MUCH TRAINING OR SUPPORT HAVE YOU GIVEN YOUR STAFF LINKED WITH PURPOSE-DRIVEN BRANDING OR COMMUNITY-CENTRED COMMUNICATION? (A LITTLE=1, A LOT=5)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the average level of training in community-centred communication is 2.6/5, reflecting limited and often ad-hoc investment in staff development. Compared with this baseline, BiH museums score higher (3.0)—a 0.4-point increase—indicating stronger institutional focus on communication and storytelling skills. In contrast, Croatian museums score lower (2.4), 0.2 points below the overall average, suggesting that communication training is less prioritized within their current professional development frameworks. Online participants (2.5) fall close to the overall mean, showing similar moderate engagement. This 0.6-point gap between BiH and Croatian museums highlights a regional imbalance: BiH museums show a more proactive approach to communication capacity-building, while Croatian institutions remain focused on operational rather than participatory competencies.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Museums across the region recognize the strategic value of purposeful, community-oriented communication, yet training investment lags behind institutional aspirations. Stronger results from BiH correspond with earlier findings (Q7–Q8), which showed a greater emphasis on social dialogue and local collaboration. In contrast, Croatian museums, operating in more tourism-driven and administratively complex environments, appear to prioritize operational continuity over communication up-skilling. Overall, these findings suggest that “openness” and “engagement” are perceived as institutional values but have not yet been translated into systematic professional development practices.

practical recommendations

INSTITUTIONALIZE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduce an annual quota for continuing professional development (e.g., four training days per employee) and allocate a fixed percentage of the labour budget—around 2%—for staff education.

LINK TRAINING WITH MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

After each training session, require participants to submit a brief implementation plan outlining how the acquired skills will be applied within three months.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING CAPACITIES

Design regular workshops focused on storytelling, public communication, and digital branding, delivered in collaboration with external experts or academic partners.

PROMOTE REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Encourage partnerships between museums to share effective communication practices and co-create regional learning programs that embed community engagement as a professional standard.

17

RANK WHAT TYPES OF TRAINING OR SUPPORT FOR MUSEUM EMPLOYEES WOULD HELP YOU BETTER ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF INCLUSION, TRUST, AND REPUTATION BUILDING?

| HR WORKSHOP                 | BH WORKSHOP                 | ONLINE SURVEY               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION      | 1 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION      | 1 INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY |
| 2 REPUTATION MANAGEMENT     | 2 REPUTATION MANAGEMENT     | 2 PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMING |
| 3 INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY | 3 CRISIS MANAGEMENT         | 3 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION      |
| 4 PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMING | 4 INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY | 4 REPUTATION MANAGEMENT     |
| 5 CRISIS MANAGEMENT         | 5 PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMING | 5 CRISIS MANAGEMENT         |

KEY SIGNAL

In both Croatia and BiH, public communication ranks first, followed by reputation management (2nd), reflecting a strong focus on improving visibility and credibility. By contrast, the online respondents prioritize inclusivity and diversity (1st) and participatory programming (2nd), while placing public communication only in third place — indicating a shift toward strengthening internal culture and openness rather than external image. Crisis management also ranks significantly higher in BiH (3rd) than in Croatia (5th) or the online group (5th), suggesting greater institutional vulnerability or awareness of social and operational risks.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Findings from this question — when viewed alongside Q16, which measured existing training efforts — show that museums recognize communication as both a strategic and ethical skill, yet still see a clear need for deeper and more systematic development in this area. Croatian and BiH workshops emphasize public-facing communication and reputation building, treating it as a professional competence necessary for stability and public trust. In contrast, the online group places greater emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, and participatory approaches, reflecting a more values-driven understanding of communication as dialogue rather than promotion. The higher ranking of crisis management in BiH highlights a pragmatic concern with institutional resilience, shaped by complex administrative and political environments. Overall, these results show a divergence in focus: workshops prioritize external reputation and preparedness, while online respondents advocate for internal openness and participatory ethics — both dimensions being essential for long-term institutional trust.

practical recommendations

INTEGRATE INCLUSIVITY INTO COMMUNICATION TRAINING

Develop programs combining storytelling, reputation management, and inclusion, emphasizing how diverse representation enhances credibility and community connection.

CREATE JOINT REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Encourage cross-border collaboration through training on media relations, participatory communication, and ethical storytelling, tailored to small and mid-size museums.

BUILD INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE THROUGH SCENARIO-BASED TRAINING

Include modules on crisis management and public trust recovery, particularly relevant for institutions in politically or economically fragile contexts.

ESTABLISH PEER LEARNING BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION MODELS

Facilitate exchanges between museums focused on internal inclusivity and those with advanced public communication practices to promote a balanced approach.

18

WHAT THREE KEY VALUES SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED WHEN BUILDING A MUSEUM NARRATIVE FOCUSED ON SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSION? WRITE THREE WORDS: VALUES.

| HR WORKSHOP  | BH WORKSHOP     | ONLINE SURVEY     |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 OPENNESS   | 1 OPENNESS      | 1 ACCESSIBILITY   |
| 2 CREATIVTIY | 2 TRADITION     | 2 RESPONSIBILITY  |
| 3 FUTURE     | 3 MODERNIZATION | 3 PROFESSIONALISM |
| 4 INCLUSION  | 4 ACCESSIBILITY | 4 ACCESSIBILITY   |

KEY SIGNAL

In Croatia, openness ranks the highest, followed by creativity and future orientation, highlighting a progressive outlook and a desire to innovate within the sector. In BiH, openness also leads, but it is followed by tradition and modernization, revealing an aspiration to balance heritage preservation with renewal. The online respondents, on the other hand, prioritize accessibility, responsibility, and professionalism, indicating a more operational and service-oriented interpretation of sustainability. This variation shows how museums interpret inclusion through different lenses — from creative innovation (Croatia) and cultural continuity (BiH) to institutional accountability (online).

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When viewed together with Q17, these results highlight that openness remains the central, unifying value across all groups, but there are differences in the way it is implemented. Croatian participants connect openness with innovation and creativity, reflecting a forward-looking mindset. BiH respondents link it with tradition and modernization, suggesting that inclusion and sustainability are understood within a framework of cultural continuity. Meanwhile, the online group emphasizes responsibility and professionalism, showing a more structured, institutional approach aligned with public accountability. This diversity indicates that while the concept of openness is widely accepted, the practical expression of inclusive values still depends heavily on local context and organizational maturity.

practical recommendations

EMBED VALUES INTO INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVES

Museums may benefit from translating abstract values such as openness and accessibility into clear internal guidelines, visual storytelling principles, and exhibition design choices.

BALANCE TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Institutions could explore ways to present modernization as an extension of cultural heritage rather than its disruption, fostering a sense of continuity in change.

DEVELOP A VALUES-BASED TRAINING FRAMEWORK

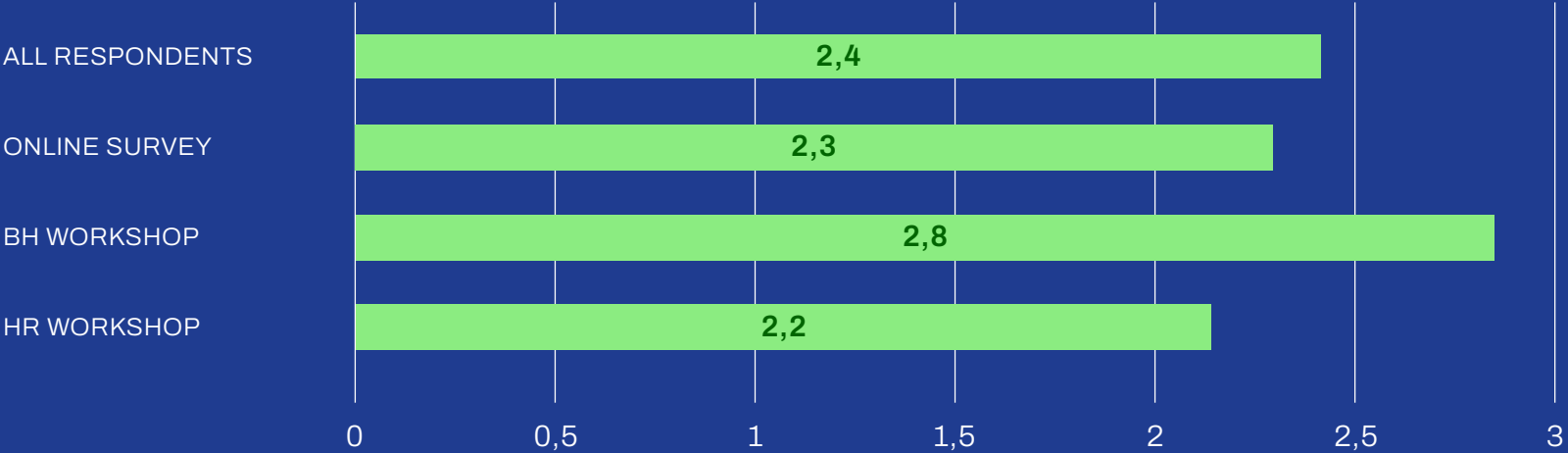
Integrate the identified values — openness, responsibility, creativity, and accessibility — into staff development programs to ensure consistent practice across departments.

PROMOTE CROSS-CONTEXT REFLECTION

Encourage regional and online participants to exchange perspectives on how inclusion and sustainability are enacted in practice, supporting mutual learning and adaptation.

19

HOW WELL PREPARED IS YOUR INSTITUTION TO RESPOND TO FUTURE SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTIES? (WE ARE NOT PREPARED=0, WE ARE PREPARED=5)



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the overall preparedness score is 2.4/5, indicating moderate but limited readiness for future social or environmental challenges. Museums in BiH report the highest level of preparedness (2.8), followed by online respondents (2.3) and Croatia (2.2). This 0.6-point gap between BiH and Croatia reflects a notable difference in confidence and adaptability — particularly significant given the stronger tourism pressures reported in Croatia (Q10).

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When considered in connection with Q10, museums most exposed to overtourism (especially in Croatia) paradoxically report the lowest sense of preparedness. This suggests that while they recognize external pressures, they may lack structured strategies or operational capacity to address them. At the same time, compared with Q16, which showed a limited training in purpose-driven communication (2.4 in HR vs. 3.0 in BiH), these results reinforce that institutions with stronger internal training and communication frameworks also feel more equipped to manage uncertainty. In essence, the findings highlight that preparedness is not only a matter of external conditions but of internal investment — in staff development, communication, and proactive planning. Overall, the regional picture points to a reactive rather than anticipatory institutional culture, where resilience planning is still emerging as a professional competence.

practical recommendations

DEVELOP SCENARIO-BASED RESILIENCE PLANS

Museums could simulate responses to crises such as sudden drops in tourism, energy shortages, or climate-related disruptions to strengthen operational flexibility.

INTEGRATE TRAINING WITH RISK MANAGEMENT

Link staff development (Q16) directly to preparedness goals by offering workshops on strategic communication, community crisis response, and sustainable resource use.

ESTABLISH CROSS-SECTOR ALLIANCES

Collaborate with municipal authorities, cultural networks, and emergency management offices to create joint preparedness frameworks tailored to museum environments.

SHIFT FROM REACTION TO ANTICIPATION

Introduce annual review sessions to assess institutional vulnerabilities and translate findings into actionable prevention measures rather than post-event responses.

# section 5 summary

## training needs and future outlook

Museums across all groups increasingly recognize communication, inclusion, and adaptability as core skills for long-term sustainability. However, training efforts remain modest, with most institutions still lacking structured, ongoing development programs.

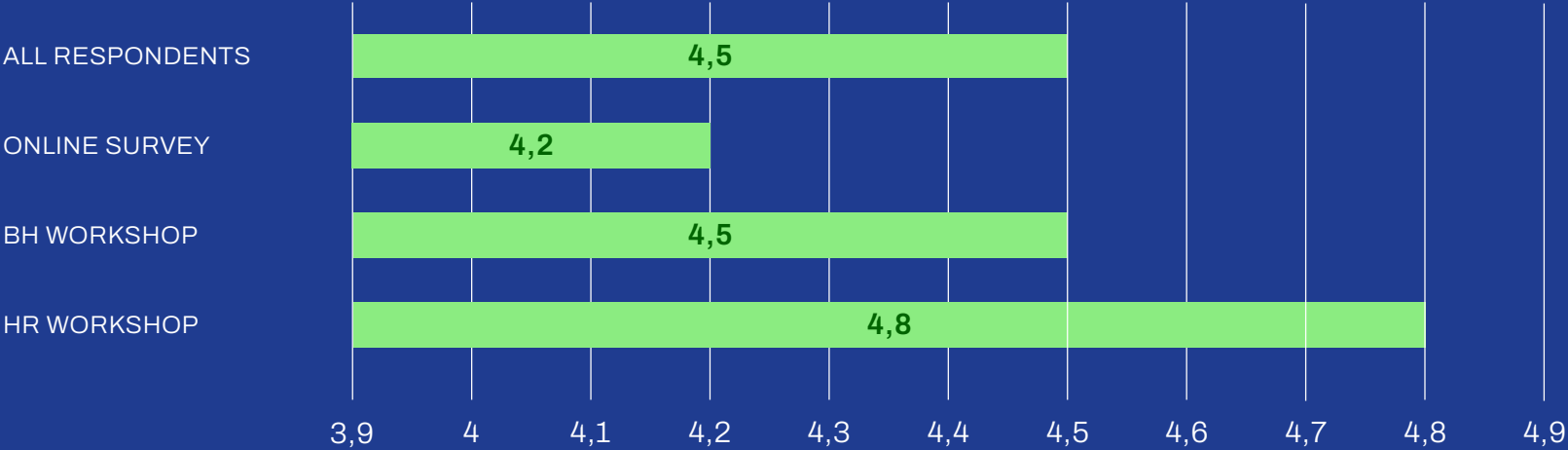
Public communication consistently ranks as a top priority, reflecting a growing understanding that the museum's voice is central to its social role. Yet, while values such as openness and accessibility are widely embraced, the mechanisms for translating them into daily practice are still evolving.

A clear contrast emerges between countries: Croatian museums, facing stronger tourism pressures, report lower preparedness for future challenges, while BiH museums show a greater confidence and adaptability. This suggests that readiness depends less on external conditions and more on internal capacity — particularly investment in people, communication, and planning.

Overall, the sector appears to be shifting from awareness to action, but sustainable progress will require systematic skill development and stronger integration between values, communication, and institutional strategy.

20

IN YOUR VIEW, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE REPUTATION OF A MUSEUM OPERATING IN TODAY'S SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE?



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the reputation of museums in the current social and environmental climate is rated very highly, averaging 4.5 out of 5. Croatian museums place the strongest emphasis on reputation (4.8), 0.3 points higher than BiH institutions (4.5) and 0.6 points higher than online respondents (4.2).

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

The consistently high ratings confirm that museums across the region view reputation as a key component of their institutional identity and long-term sustainability. The difference in intensity suggests that the importance of reputation grows with exposure to external scrutiny and community expectations, especially in environments where tourism and media attention are high. When compared with Q19 (preparedness for future challenges), the results reveal a clear imbalance: reputation is highly valued but not equally supported by organizational readiness (average 2.4). This points to a gap between recognition and action—reputation is seen as vital, yet few institutions have developed the mechanisms to safeguard it in moments of crisis or uncertainty.

practical recommendations

DEVELOP A REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Museums could introduce internal guidelines that define proactive communication, transparency standards, and crisis response steps to ensure consistency in protecting institutional credibility.

LINK TRAINING TO REPUTATION GOALS

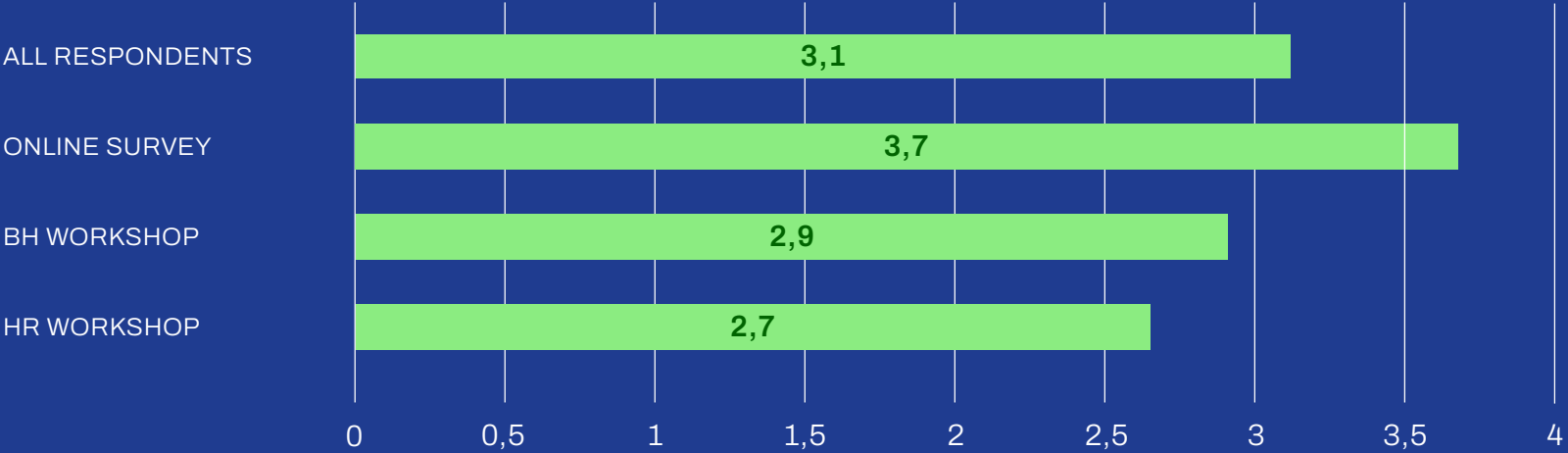
Incorporate modules on communication ethics, media relations, and narrative building into staff training to align internal culture with the museum's public reputation.

INTEGRATE REPUTATION INTO PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

Connect communication strategies with sustainability and crisis preparedness goals (Q19) to strengthen both resilience and trust among stakeholders.

21

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR MUSEUM SHOW THAT IT USES REPUTATION AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL TODAY?



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the use of reputation as a leadership tool averages 3.1, indicating a moderate level of practical application. Online participants report the highest engagement (3.7), a whole point higher than Croatian museums and 0.8 points higher than BiH institutions. This shows that while reputation is broadly acknowledged as a valuable concept, its consistent application in leadership roles varies significantly across groups.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

While reputation is widely acknowledged as important (as seen in Q20), its consistent integration into leadership remains uneven. Many museums appear to treat reputation as a static institutional trait rather than an active lever for guiding decisions, building internal culture, or strengthening external partnerships. This is particularly relevant in governance contexts where institutional autonomy is limited. Museums operating under more centralized public administration or rigid bureaucratic frameworks often face constraints in how reputation can be used dynamically by leaders. Conversely, online respondents—likely representing more flexible or internationally exposed institutions—show a stronger orientation toward using reputation as a strategic leadership tool. This highlights a potential direction for broader institutional development: enabling museum leaders to connect mission, values, and public trust through proactive and reputation-aware decision-making.

practical recommendations

EMBED REPUTATION IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Introduce targeted training for directors and senior managers on using reputation as a governance and communication asset, linking it with measurable institutional goals.

STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY CULTURE

Encourage leadership teams to integrate reputation considerations into planning and evaluation processes, ensuring that strategic choices align with public trust and long-term credibility.

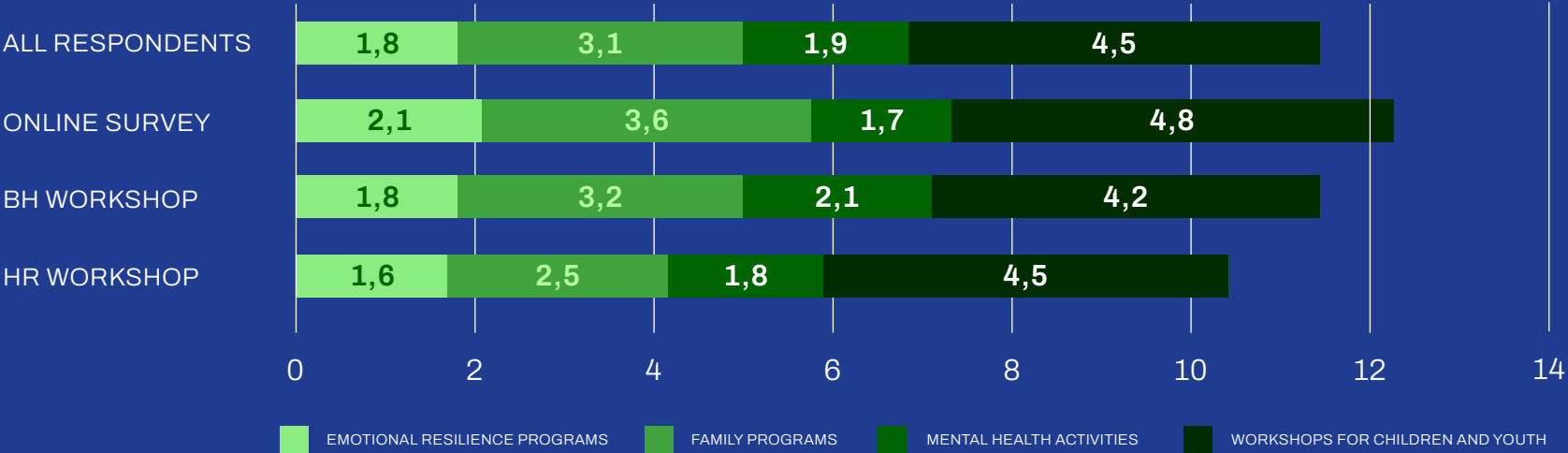
FOSTER PEER LEARNING AND MENTORING

Establish regional mentorship programs connecting leaders from more adaptive museum environments with those in traditional public institutions to exchange practical strategies and leadership insights.

CONNECT REPUTATION TO INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

Link reputation management with preparedness and sustainability planning (as reflected in Q19), ensuring that reputation is not only protected but also actively leveraged during social or environmental challenges.

## 22 DOES YOUR INSTITUTION SUPPORT THIS THROUGH ITS PROGRAMS?



### KEY SIGNAL

Workshops for children and youth (4.5) and family programs (3.1) continue to dominate as the main formats for building public trust. Emotional resilience programs (1.8) and mental health activities (1.9) remain less developed, suggesting that well-being-oriented programming is still at an early stage. Online participants report slightly higher engagement across all categories, particularly in family programs (+1.1 compared with HR) and workshops for children and youth (+0.3). BiH museums also show a stronger community involvement, scoring higher in family programs (+0.7) and mental health activities (+0.3) than Croatian institutions.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When connected with Q7 (audience engagement priorities) and Q5 (social impact), the results reinforce a pattern of traditional educational engagement, where museums mainly support families and children through familiar formats. While emotional resilience and mental health are recognized as important areas, they remain peripheral to museum programming, likely due to limited partnerships with the health and education sectors. This shows that museums continue to operate in safe, well-established domains rather than exploring cross-sectoral roles that position them as contributors to social and emotional well-being.

## practical recommendations

### BROADEN PROGRAM SCOPE

Maintain strong youth and family activities while gradually introducing initiatives linked with mental health and emotional resilience (e.g., mindfulness tours, intergenerational workshops, “Museum & Wellbeing” cycles).

### DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXPERTS

Collaborate with schools, NGOs, healthcare providers, and psychologists to co-create programs that strengthen emotional health and community trust.

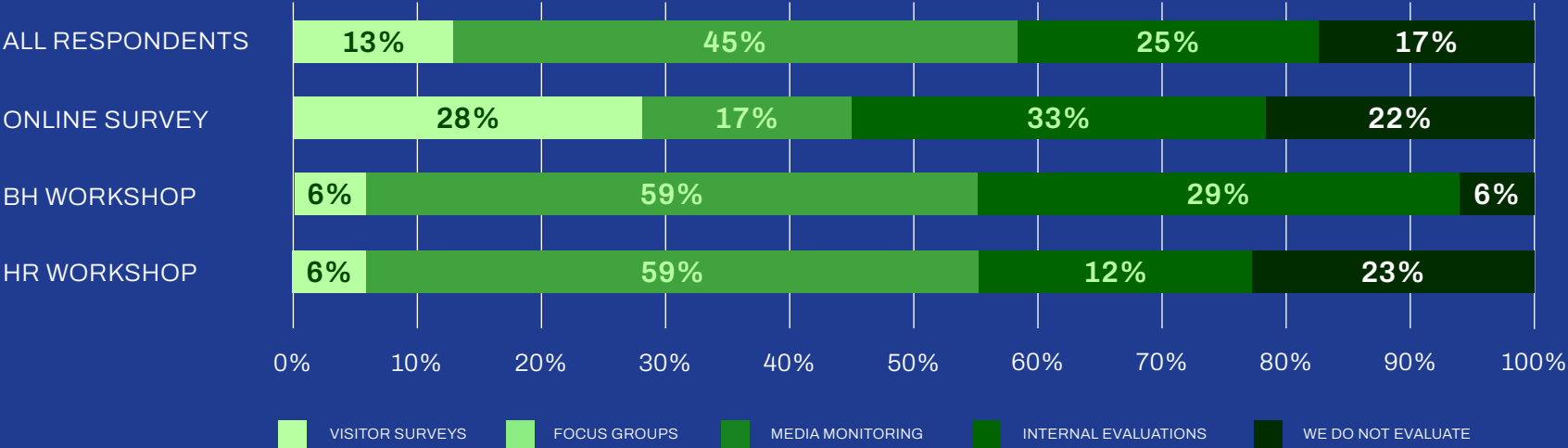
### EVALUATE SOCIAL IMPACT

Introduce simple evaluation tools (visitor feedback, reflection sessions) to track how these programs affect visitors’ sense of belonging and well-being.

### POSITION MUSEUMS AS SUPPORTIVE SPACES

Communicate museums as places that foster inclusion, empathy, and emotional resilience — essential for long-term community trust and relevance.

## 23 HOW DOES YOUR MUSEUM EVALUATE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OR REPUTATION?



### KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, focus groups (45%) and media monitoring (25%) are the most common tools for evaluating public perception. However, visitor surveys are used by only 13%, and 17% of institutions do not evaluate reputation at all. Online participants rely most on visitor surveys (+15% compared to HR and BiH), while BiH museums lead in using focus groups (59%, +14% above average) and have the lowest rate of non-evaluation (6%). In contrast, Croatian museums report the weakest formal evaluation structure, with 23% indicating that they do not measure reputation.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When cross-referenced with Q20, which showed that reputation is considered very important (average 4.5/5), these findings reveal a clear implementation gap. While museums acknowledge the importance of reputation, systematic assessment mechanisms remain underdeveloped, often replaced by occasional media monitoring or informal impressions. Relying primarily on external media coverage provides a fragmented picture and neglects the direct voice of the audience—posing a risk of delayed response to emerging issues. Introducing regular and structured evaluation processes could help transform reputation management from a reactive activity into a strategic institutional tool.

## practical recommendations

### ESTABLISH REGULAR FEEDBACK CHANNELS

Introduce short on-site visitor satisfaction surveys (e.g., via QR codes at exits) and an annual focus group with key stakeholders, publishing results transparently in the annual report.

### INTRODUCE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Collaborate with universities or independent cultural researchers to provide objective assessments and benchmark results against peer institutions.

### INTEGRATE DIGITAL ANALYTICS

Combine social media sentiment analysis and website engagement metrics with traditional tools to capture ongoing changes in public perception.

### TRANSLATE INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

Use collected feedback to inform institutional communication, programming priorities, and partnerships, ensuring that reputation management actively supports trust and long-term collaboration.

24 HOW MANY PROGRAMMES DID YOU RUN LAST YEAR WITH PARTNERS IN EUROPE FOR JOINT LEARNING AND REPUTATION BUILDING? ENTER A NUMBER



KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the number of European cooperation programmes remains very low. Most museums reported between zero and three joint initiatives in the past year, with online respondents showing a slightly higher engagement (up to four programmes) compared with Croatian (0–3) and BiH institutions (0–3). This indicates that regional museums are still underrepresented in European cultural and educational networks.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When cross-referenced with Q19 (institutional preparedness) and Q23 (evaluation practices), these results suggest that most museums remain locally focused, with limited external cooperation that could strengthen expertise, funding capacity, and visibility. Regional museums are aware of broader cultural and social shifts, yet administrative barriers and a lack of strategic outreach prevent active participation in European learning and networking frameworks. Limited international visibility restricts opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint campaigns, and reputational “spillover” from more established institutions — for example, through tourism partnerships. Utilizing joint branding can help expand reach and enhance credibility, while museums with a higher number of realized programs could act as mentors and role models for others. Systematically encouraging international collaborations would strengthen museum reputation, foster innovation, and enable deeper integration into the European cultural sector.

practical recommendations

STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPEAN CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Museums could explore opportunities offered through UNESCO, ICOM, and various European cultural foundations to enhance visibility, professional exchange, and access to development funding.

ENCOURAGE MENTORSHIP AND PEER LEARNING

Institutions with experience in international cooperation may consider sharing knowledge and good practices with others, contributing to a more balanced regional development and stronger collective presence in European networks.

PROMOTE JOINT VISIBILITY AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Partnerships can be positioned not only as learning initiatives but also as platforms for shared storytelling, cultural dialogue, and reputation building—particularly in connection with sustainable tourism and heritage promotion.

ENHANCE READINESS FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Museums may benefit from designating specific roles or small teams tasked with monitoring calls, initiating partnerships, and coordinating participation in joint projects, ensuring consistency and continuity in cross-border engagement.

# section 6 summary

## understanding reputation in today's context

Reputation stands out as one of the most valued aspects of museum work across all groups. While it is widely recognized as essential to institutional identity and sustainability, the capacity to actively manage or measure it remains limited. This points to a clear gap between awareness and implementation.

Museums tend to view reputation as a collective institutional quality rather than a leadership-driven process. Public-sector frameworks and limited managerial flexibility often prevent it from becoming part of strategic decision-making. Strengthening leadership and communication skills could help translate this awareness into consistent and transparent practice.

Evaluation of public perception remains fragmented, relying mainly on media coverage or informal impressions. Introducing regular feedback tools—such as short visitor surveys or annual focus groups—would provide a clearer understanding of public trust and help guide reputation management.

Low participation in international programmes further limits visibility and access to shared expertise. Greater engagement in European initiatives, such as those offered by UNESCO, ICOM, and cultural foundations, would foster learning, credibility, and innovation.

Overall, museums value reputation highly but still approach it intuitively. Building systematic communication, evaluation, and international cooperation practices would allow them to strengthen public trust and establish a more visible and resilient cultural presence.

# 25 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MUSEUM'S "BRAND" IN ONE TO THREE WORDS?

| HR WORKSHOP                                        | BH WORKSHOP                                         | ONLINE SURVEY                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 MUSEUM<br>2 UNIQUE<br>3 COMPLEX<br>4 INTERESTING | 1 OPENNESS<br>2 HERITAGE<br>3 UNIQUE<br>4 TRADITION | 1 AUTHENTIC<br>2 INSPIRING<br>3 COMMUNITY-ORIENTED<br>4 RESPONSIBILITY |

## KEY SIGNAL

When comparing the most frequently mentioned words — “museum” (HR), “openness” (BiH), and “authentic” (online) — a clear divide emerges between institutional and storytelling definitions of brand identity. Croatian respondents describe their institutions through organizational or structural terms, focusing on what the museum is. Bosnian participants begin shifting toward relational language, highlighting openness and heritage as connecting values. Online respondents go further, using storytelling-oriented expressions such as authentic, inspiring, and community-oriented, which reflect a modern, audience-centred understanding of brand.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

Compared with Q23 (on how museums evaluate reputation), this question reinforces the finding that branding across the region is still primarily internally defined. Almost no references were made to user emotions, social impact, or contemporary values, indicating that museums are still described through static terms (“what we have”) rather than dynamic experiences (“how the audience feels”). This gap between institutional self-definition and public perception highlights why museums struggle to measure and communicate their relevance effectively. A more audience-centred approach to branding—supported by storytelling and co-creation—could help align internal narratives with how the community actually experiences the museum.

# practical recommendations

## ESTABLISH CURRENT BRAND PERCEPTION

Conduct short visitor and community surveys to identify how the museum is perceived versus how it wishes to be perceived.

## ORGANIZE VALUE-BASED BRANDING WORKSHOPS

Facilitate internal sessions to consolidate existing and desired brand positions through key values such as “living heritage” or “unique experience.”

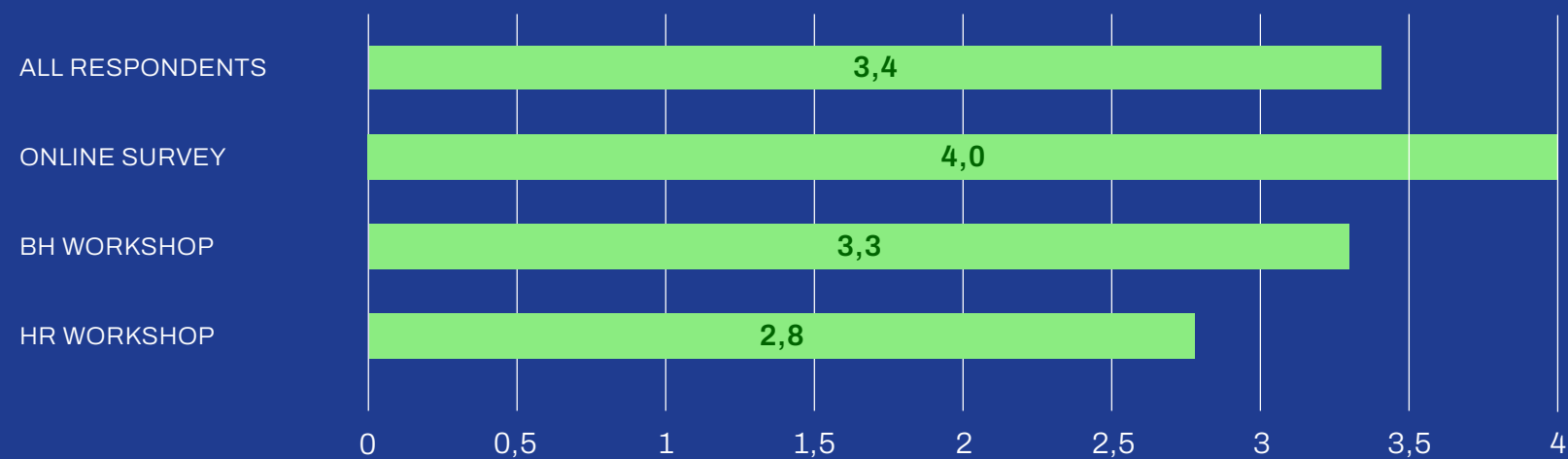
## INTEGRATE STORYTELLING INTO COMMUNICATION

Encourage staff to describe exhibitions and programs through human stories, emotions, and relevance rather than institutional descriptions.

## ALIGN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Combine internal definitions of identity with regular audience feedback to ensure that branding reflects both professional goals and public sentiment.

# 26 TO WHAT EXTENT IS YOUR MUSEUM'S BRAND ALIGNED WITH ITS MISSION?



## KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, the perceived alignment between brand and mission averages 3.4, suggesting moderate coherence. The online survey group reports the highest alignment (4.0), while Croatian workshop participants express the lowest (2.8). This gap of 1.2 points indicates differing levels of strategic integration — from institutions that actively link branding to purpose, to those where the brand remains primarily visual or descriptive.

## CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When compared to Q25, which showed that many institutions still define their brand through static or institutional terms, these results confirm that mission integration remains partial. Museums that use storytelling and value-based language (as seen in the online group) also perceive stronger alignment between their identity and mission. Conversely, those with descriptive or heritage-focused definitions report weaker alignment, suggesting that branding and mission often evolve separately rather than as a unified narrative. The overall trend reflects a transitional phase: museums are aware of the importance of aligning brand and mission, but still lack the tools or frameworks to operationalize it in communication, programming, and staff culture.

# practical recommendations

## CREATE A “MISSION AND BRAND MAP”

Consolidate the museum’s purpose, core values, communication tone, and visual identity in a single framework. This can serve as a practical tool for maintaining coherence across departments.

## CONDUCT REGULAR ALIGNMENT AUDITS

Introduce quarterly mini-reviews of communication materials and visitor feedback to ensure that external messaging remains true to the mission.

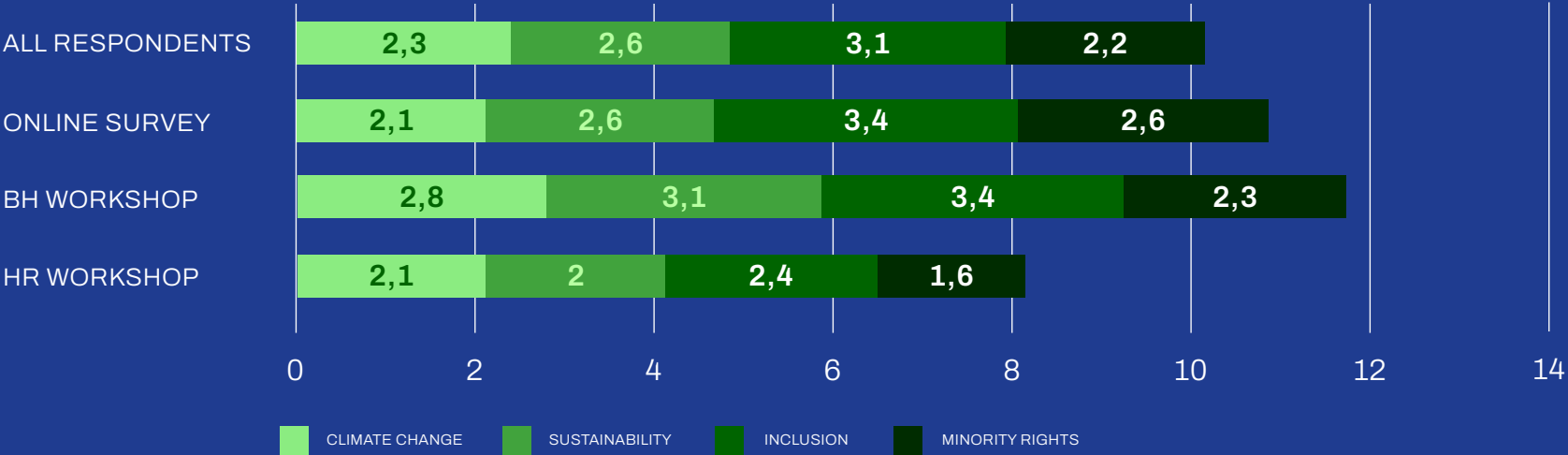
## ENGAGE STAFF AND COMMUNITY IN CO-DEFINITION

Involve employees, volunteers, and local stakeholders in refining mission-related communication to strengthen internal understanding and external credibility.

## INTEGRATE BRAND REFLECTION INTO PLANNING

Require each new exhibition or campaign to specify how it supports the museum’s mission and brand values, ensuring continuous connection between strategy and execution.

# 27 DOES YOUR MUSEUM TAKE A PUBLIC STANCE ON SOCIAL OR POLITICAL ISSUES, AND HOW OFTEN?



### KEY SIGNAL

Across all respondents, inclusion ranks as the most common area of engagement (3.1), followed by sustainability (2.6) and climate change (2.3), while minority rights (2.2) remain the least addressed. The BiH workshop shows the highest overall activity, particularly on sustainability (3.1) and inclusion (3.4), while Croatian museums report more reserved engagement, especially regarding minority rights (1.6). The online group reflects an intermediate position, maintaining similar scores across all themes but slightly stronger engagement in inclusion-oriented initiatives.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

This question builds upon Q26, which explored the connection between mission and brand alignment. Here, we see that while many museums articulate inclusive and socially responsible values, mission-driven engagement remains cautious and selective. Institutions tend to stay within a “safe zone”—aware of reputational risks, they often remain silent, even though taking a stance aligned with their mission could strengthen public trust and relevance. Topics such as inclusion and sustainability are perceived as non-confrontational and therefore dominate communication, while more contentious areas (e.g. minority rights or climate activism) are less visible. This pattern suggests that museums recognize their civic role but have yet to translate it into consistent public advocacy. The higher engagement seen in BiH museums may reflect their direct experience in navigating socially complex contexts, where community dialogue is more embedded in institutional practice.

## practical recommendations

### SELECT MISSION-RELEVANT THEMES FOR PUBLIC ADVOCACY

It is advised to identify one or two social topics that logically stem from each museum’s collection or expertise (e.g., climate change for a natural history museum) and plan at least four public appearances annually—through panel discussions, blogs, podcasts, or media commentary.

### ENCOURAGE MISSION-CONSISTENT ADVOCACY

Linking advocacy to institutional purpose can strengthen credibility and position museums as relevant and progressive social actors.

### DEVELOP COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR SENSITIVE ISSUES

Establish internal frameworks that enable staff to engage confidently with socially relevant themes while managing reputational risks responsibly.

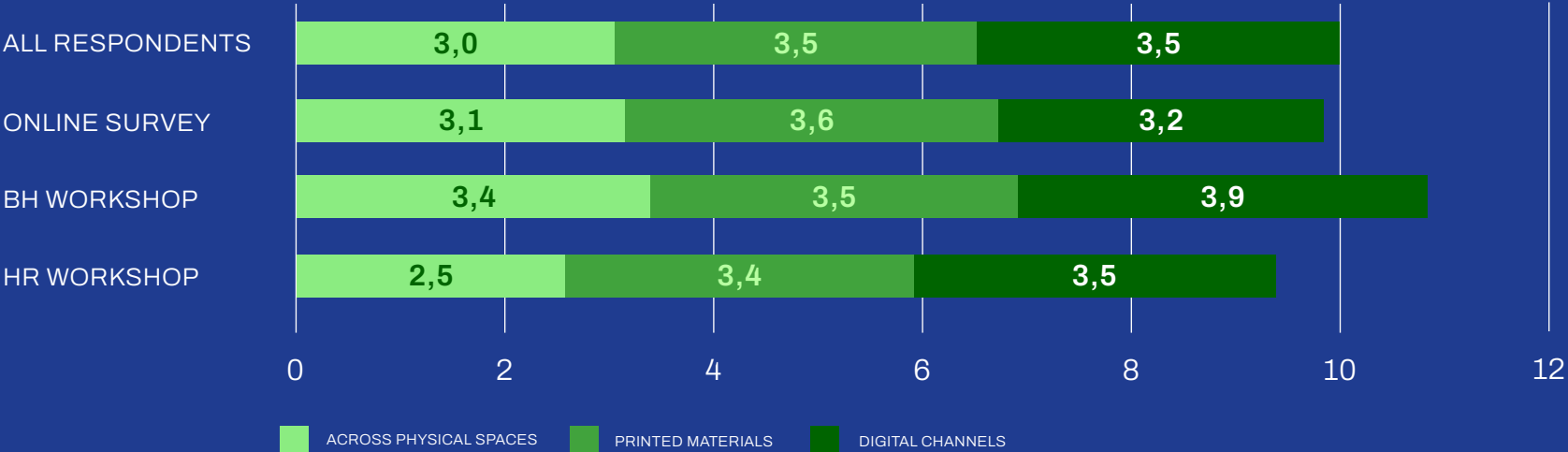
### FACILITATE REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Organize peer sessions between Croatian and BiH museums to share examples of socially engaged yet balanced communication strategies.

### INTEGRATE ADVOCACY INTO AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Connect public stances to participatory activities—such as debates, open days, or collaborative art projects—to translate values into authentic, lived experiences.

# 28 RATE HOW CONSISTENT YOUR MUSEUM'S MESSAGE IS: ACROSS PHYSICAL SPACES, PRINTED MATERIALS, AND DIGITAL CHANNELS?



### KEY SIGNAL

Overall message consistency averages 3.3, indicating moderate alignment across communication formats. Printed materials (3.5) and digital channels (3.5) score higher than physical spaces (3.0), suggesting that visual and written communication is more coherent than on-site experiences. The BiH workshop shows the highest level of overall consistency, with particularly strong results in digital communication (3.9), while the Croatian workshop reports the lowest score for physical spaces (2.5). The spread of 1.4 points between physical space (as low as 2.5) and digital channels (up to 3.9) illustrates how communication consistency varies widely depending on the format, highlighting the need to strengthen spatial storytelling in particular.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When viewed alongside Q26, which measured the alignment of brand and mission, the findings suggest that even when the mission is conceptually clear, its communication remains uneven across channels. Museums appear to achieve greater coherence in static or controlled media—such as printed and digital formats—than in physical and experiential environments, where visitor perception depends on curatorial, interpretive, and spatial design choices. This imbalance suggests that while brand–mission alignment (Q26) may exist at a conceptual level, it is not yet fully translated into consistent multisensory communication. In some cases, digital channels reflect modern and accessible messaging, while exhibitions or signage continue to convey more traditional narratives.

## practical recommendations

### DEVELOP A UNIFIED COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Integrate spatial, visual, and digital communication under a single brand and mission guideline to ensure consistency across all visitor touchpoints.

### CONDUCT REGULAR COHERENCE AUDITS

Every six months, evaluate message alignment between exhibitions, printed materials, and online platforms using short internal checklists or peer reviews.

### LINK CURATORIAL AND COMMUNICATION TEAMS

Encourage collaboration between curators, designers, and communication staff from the early planning phase to ensure exhibitions visually and conceptually reflect institutional values.

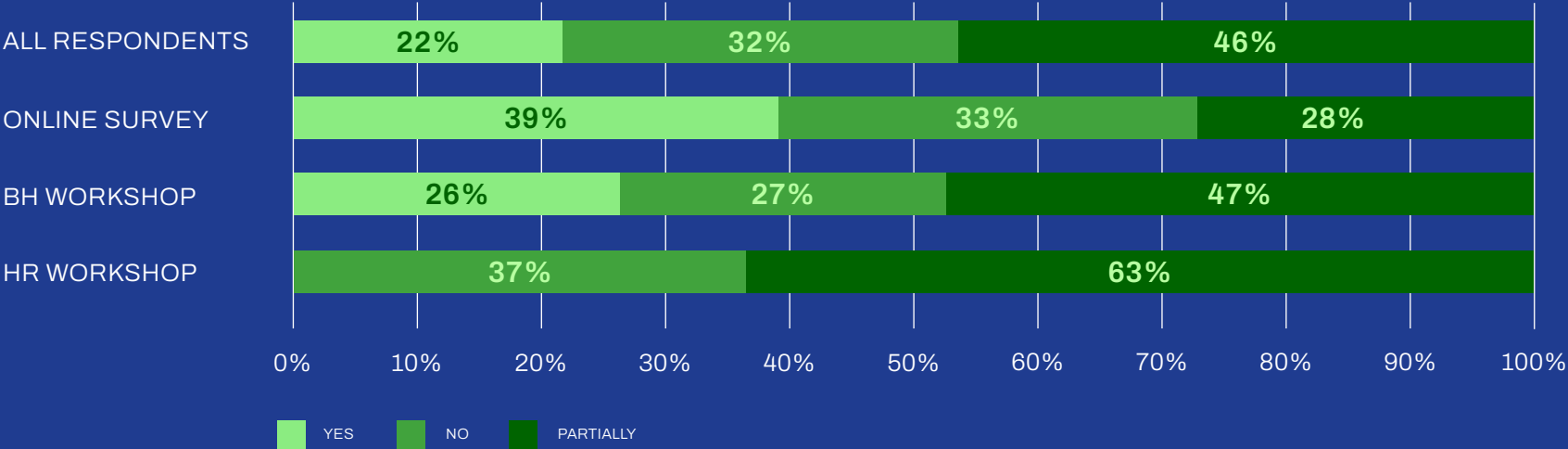
### ENHANCE SPATIAL STORYTELLING

Introduce visitor-centred elements—such as interpretive signage or immersive audio-visual materials—to better connect the on-site experience with digital and printed narratives.

### USE DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS TESTING GROUNDS

Pilot new communication tones or visual identities online before scaling them to exhibitions or printed materials, ensuring consistency through gradual adaptation.

# 29 DOES YOUR MUSEUM HAVE A CLEAR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY THAT CONNECTS INTERNAL ALIGNMENT WITH EXTERNAL OUTREACH?



### KEY SIGNAL

Less than one-quarter (22%) of all respondents report having a clear, integrated communication strategy. Nearly half (46%) say their institutions manage communication only partially, indicating a lack of structured processes linking internal coordination with public messaging. The Croatian workshop shows the weakest strategic foundation, with 63% of participants stating their museum lacks such a strategy entirely. In contrast, the online group (39%) and BiH workshop (26%) show comparatively better levels of strategic development, though fragmentation remains evident across all contexts.

### CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

When viewed in connection with Q25, which examined how museums describe their “brand,” this question reveals that while many institutions possess a sense of identity, few have formalized it into an actionable communication framework. In other words, museums often know what they stand for but lack a coherent way to express it consistently both internally (to staff) and externally (to audiences). The absence of structured communication planning may explain inconsistencies observed in Q28 (message coherence across media) and Q26 (brand–mission alignment). Without a defined communication strategy, brand values risk remaining abstract—manifesting more in internal discourse than in public experience. This structural gap limits museums’ ability to position themselves competitively, respond to social dynamics, or leverage their cultural capital through media and partnerships.

## practical recommendations

### DEVELOP A CONCISE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Outline the key messages, tone of voice, visual principles, and content priorities that link the museum’s mission and brand identity. A two-page “communication compass” can serve as a practical, easy-to-update internal tool.

### ENSURE INTERNAL ALIGNMENT BEFORE EXTERNAL CAMPAIGNS

Regularly brief all staff—curatorial, educational, and administrative—on communication goals to ensure unified representation of the institution across public touchpoints.

### INSTITUTIONALIZE COMMUNICATION ROLES

Where dedicated staff are unavailable, assign communication responsibilities across teams with clear coordination procedures and periodic review meetings.

### INTRODUCE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS

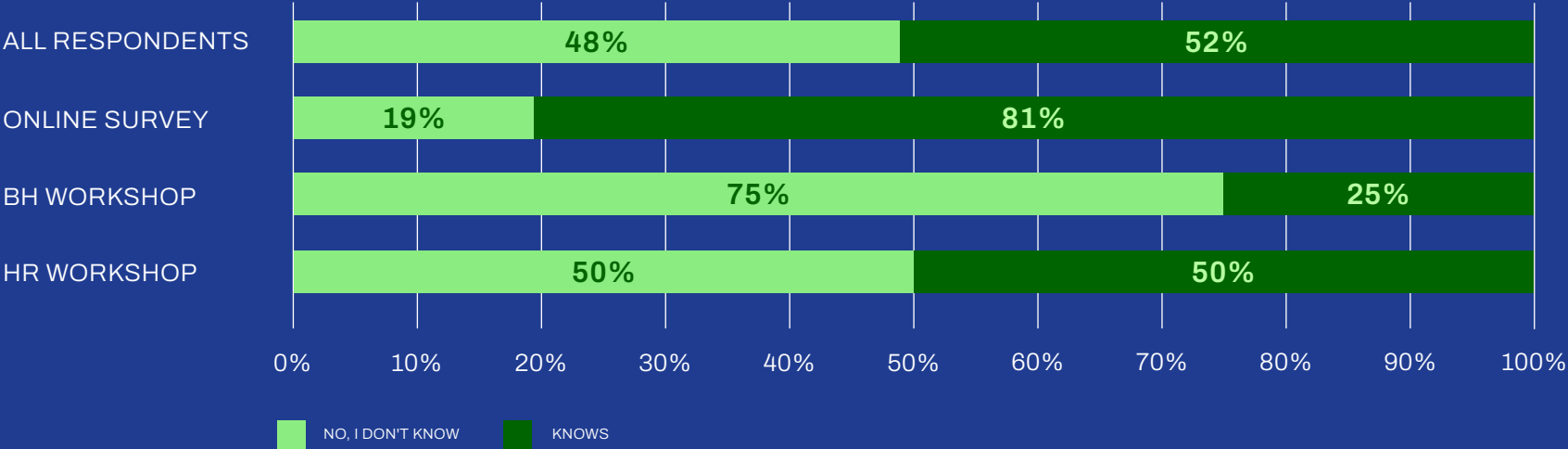
Build internal capacity by holding short, skills-oriented sessions on storytelling, brand coherence, and digital engagement, linking them directly to institutional goals.

### ENCOURAGE CROSS-DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

Communication should not remain the responsibility of one person or department; integrating multiple perspectives strengthens authenticity and organizational cohesion.

30

DO YOU KNOW THE MISSION OF YOUR MUSEUM? IF YES, PLEASE WRITE IT DOWN. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW IT BY HEART, PLEASE WRITE NO.



KEY SIGNAL

Just over half of all respondents (52%) report knowing their museum’s mission. The online survey group shows the highest awareness (81%), while only 25% of BiH workshop participants could recall their mission statement. The Croatian workshop sits at an even 50–50 split, highlighting significant variation across institutional and national contexts.

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

This question provides an important internal counterpart to Q29, which examined communication strategy and alignment. The findings indicate that mission awareness is not only a matter of internal culture but also of clarity and usability. Institutions with concise, well-formulated mission statements were more likely to have staff who could recall them by heart, as seen in the online survey group (81% awareness), which also scored highest in perceived brand–mission alignment (4.0 in Q26). Conversely, groups with lower alignment scores—such as the BiH (3.3) and HR workshops (2.8)—also reported the lowest ability to recall mission statements (25% and 50% respectively). This suggests that abstract, lengthy, or administratively worded mission statements hinder staff engagement and weaken internal coherence. Together, these results confirm that clear, emotionally resonant, and operationally relevant mission statements support both internal alignment and external brand communication.

practical recommendations

SIMPLIFY AND HUMANIZE MISSION STATEMENTS

Revisit the museum’s mission to ensure it is short, specific, and memorable. One sentence that clearly states why the museum exists and for whom is more effective than a long, formal paragraph.

INTEGRATE THE MISSION INTO DAILY COMMUNICATION

Display the mission statement in staff areas, internal newsletters, and onboarding materials to strengthen familiarity and ownership.

CONDUCT SHORT INTERNAL REFLECTION SESSIONS

Encourage teams to discuss how their individual roles contribute to the mission, fostering a stronger sense of purpose and alignment.

ALIGN MISSION LANGUAGE WITH BRAND TONE

Ensure the mission uses the same vocabulary and tone present in public communication, reinforcing coherence between internal and external identity.

EVALUATE MISSION RECALL ANNUALLY

Include a simple question in staff surveys or performance reviews — “Can you describe our mission in one sentence?” — to track institutional awareness over time.

# section 7 summary

## branding as mission-driven engagement

Museums across the region show an emerging awareness of branding as a part of their institutional identity, yet their approach remains largely descriptive rather than experiential.

Most define their brand through static concepts such as “heritage” or “uniqueness,” while emotional, community, or value-driven narratives are still rare.

Although many institutions claim alignment between their brand and mission, the findings reveal gaps in practical communication and consistency across platforms.

Digital and printed materials show a greater coherence than on-site visitor experiences, indicating that the brand is more effectively managed in controlled formats than in spatial or interpretive communication.

Only a minority of museums have established a clear communication strategy connecting internal coordination with external messaging, and nearly a half of the employees cannot recall their museum’s mission by heart.

These results suggest that while strategic awareness is growing, the operational translation of mission and values into everyday communication remains underdeveloped.

The section highlights the need for museums to simplify their missions, strengthen internal understanding, and cultivate consistent, mission-driven storytelling that engages audiences emotionally and socially.