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EIT Digital

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY

The EIT – Making Innovation Happen

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

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The EIT is a body of the European Union

Contents

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE	2
3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH	6
4 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	8
5 STATUS QUO ANALYSIS OF THE KIC	14

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This EIT Digital Action Plan 2022-2027 addresses participation of women in EIT Digital in the context of the Horizon Europe principles on gender balance. EIT Digital recognises the need to address female participation and gender balance in the ICT sector at large. EIT Digital is of the opinion that female participation in ICT is way too low and that the gender balance must be further improved. Concerted efforts are required by all actors in the ICT domain to boost the involvement of women, and EIT Digital wants to take a leading role.

In ICT and digital domains, the low labour force participation and underrepresentation of women can be observed across all levels, ranging from students, professionals and entrepreneurs to managers; the female participation rate rarely goes beyond 20% for the different levels in ICT as observed in this document. EIT Digital is generally ahead of the ICT sector in terms of female participation. There are more than 30% female students and graduates in EIT Digital's Master School compared to an ICT baseline of 19%. The organisation's activities have 38% female professionals, matched by an 16% ICT baseline.

We will take still further actions in areas where EIT Digital is already ahead and will accelerate measures to catch up and get ahead where the organisation has room for improvement. In order to drive this, EIT Digital has outlined five objectives to boost female participation in KIC Management and KIC Activities by 2027:

- 1) 40% female members of the Supervisory Board;
- 2) 40% female in leadership roles;
- 3) 40% students/graduates in the Master School;
- 4) 25% female professionals in Innovation Activities; and
- 5) 25% Scaleups with female founders/co-founders in the EIT Digital Accelerator.

2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union and is one of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs). Gender equality benefits research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of R&I, attracting and retaining more talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential. There has been demonstrable progress towards gender equality in the European Research Area (ERA), but data shows there is still significant work to be done. The [She Figures 2021](#) publication shows limited progress compared to the situation presented in [She Figures 2018](#). Both reports highlight the persistence of significant gender inequality across Europe in a range of key areas.

The European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in innovation and technology. This commitment is part of the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy

for 2020-2025¹ which sets out the Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies.

In addition, the EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding directives, which apply widely across the labour market including the innovation and technology sector. In Horizon Europe, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in innovation, technology and research. The legal base sets gender equality as a crosscutting priority and introduces strengthened provisions. In particular, integrating the gender dimension into innovation, technology and research content is a requirement. Gender action plans are also becoming part of the eligibility criteria for public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments applying to the programme.²

Specific funding is already and will in the future continue to be dedicated to gender and intersectional research, innovation and technology, developing inclusive gender equality policies in support of the new European Research Area, and empowering women innovators.³ The goal is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve the quality of innovation, technology and research as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

In addition, the European Commission launched a [campaign to challenge gender stereotypes](#), on 8 March 2023. This EU-wide campaign tackles gender stereotypes affecting both men and women in different spheres of life, including career choices, sharing care responsibilities and decision-making. It is a concrete deliverable of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

The EIT, as a body of the European Union and integral part of Horizon Europe, plays a vital role in supporting the EU's objectives of creating sustainable economic growth and jobs by enabling entrepreneurs and innovators to turn their best ideas into products and services for Europe. Consequently, the gender requirements in Horizon Europe are of significant importance for all EIT supported and funded activities, including the EIT Headquarter (HQ) as well as the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

In December 2022, the EIT HQ adopted the EIT Gender Equality Policy.⁴ The overarching objectives are a gender responsive portfolio (encompassing education, entrepreneurship and innovation activities) and a gender balanced representation in staff and decision-making positions. The EIT Gender Mainstreaming Policy and its overarching objectives are applicable to the HQ, the KICs as well as to EIT Alumni.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking⁵.

¹ European Commission (2020) [A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)

² European Commission (2021) [Gender equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe](#)

³ European Commission (2021) [Gender equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe](#)

⁴ EIT (2022) [EIT Gender Equality Policy](#)

⁵ Council of Europe (1998) [Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Presentation of Good Practices. Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming](#)

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is a complementary strategy and not a substitute for targeted, women-centred policies and programmes, gender equality legislation, institutional mechanisms for gender equality, and specific interventions that aim to close the gender gap.⁶

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

Gender equality

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, thereby recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.⁷

Gender balance

In a scenario of gender equality, women and men are expected to participate proportionally to their share of the population. In many areas, however, women participate less than what would be expected based on the sex distribution in the population (underrepresentation of women), while men participate more than expected (overrepresentation of men).⁸

Compliance with domestic and EU regulations

All KICs are bound to respect legal obligations related to discrimination and gender equality. Even if these may vary across countries, there is a cost for breaching existing regulations. This cost can consist in fines, legal prosecutions and liability, damaged reputation, loss of attractiveness or internal conflicts.

Complying with the rules requires resources and know-how, which are often more easily secured when a gender mainstreaming policy is in place. Investing in gender equality (for instance, by collecting sex-disaggregated data or establishing monitoring instruments) helps organisations to comply with legal provisions more comprehensively and proactively.

Creating better work environments

The EIT KICs are also work environments in which all staff should be able to freely develop their skills and fulfil their expectations. Since these work environments are made up of women and men, adopting a gender sensitive perspective in this regard is sensible.

⁶ EIGE (2021) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

⁷ EIGE (2022) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

⁸ EIGE (2022) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

Beyond compliance with existing rules, preventing verbal, psychological and physical genderbased offenses is a basic requirement for a safe, gender-friendly work environment. Enabling work-life balance in the organisation, distribution and planning of work, brings benefits for both sexes. These benefits are relevant both to the individuals, in terms of wellbeing and motivation, and to the organisation, in terms of effectiveness. Besides, better work environments contribute to retaining and attracting talents. They are part of a more sustainable management of human resources.

Attracting and retaining talents

Increasing Europe's ability to innovate relies on human capital. Finding and training qualified and creative people is costly, and bringing them up to their full potential takes time. As business, education and research organisations are involved in an intense competition for talent, it is necessary to address the full pool of talents, including women – even when those are under-represented.

It also requires retaining staff over time and giving them the opportunity to achieve their personal and professional objectives and potential. It has been shown that women encounter barriers that keep them in lower positions in the hierarchy and militate against women's access to top decision-making and managerial positions in an organization (so called "sticky floor" and "glass ceiling" phenomena). This can lead to a "leaky pipeline" where women are more likely to abandon their career in an organisation and has a considerable impact: a loss of knowledge, an organisational cost and a reduced and limited perspective in the organisation. Attracting and retaining female staff in a knowledge-based economy can only be reached if the full spectrum of gender bias and inequalities is addressed.

Economic benefits

The business case for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion is strong and growing stronger. Evidence points to companies being more successful if they are able to harness the innovation and creativity of women. As evidenced by multiple recent studies⁹, women's upwards advancement in the private sector brings benefits in terms of business economic results, as companies with higher gender diversity (composition of top management and boards) are more likely to have higher financial returns compared to national industry medians in their sector.

While social justice, legal compliance, or maintaining industry standard employee environment protocols is typically the initial impetus, many successful companies regard gender and diversity as a source of competitive advantage, and specifically as a key enabler of growth.¹⁰

Excellence and quality

The quest for excellence and quality has become a major issue for business, education and research organisations. It is driven by an intense competition for skills, funding and

⁹ McKinsey & Company (2018) [Delivering through Diversity](#); McKinsey & Company (2015) [Diversity Matters](#)

¹⁰ McKinsey & Company (2018) [Delivering through Diversity](#)

innovations. Bringing a gender dimension in innovation and technology improves the overall quality of design, protocols and outputs in an ample variety of fields.

As innovation and technology are increasingly framed as working for/with society, reflecting the diversity of final users from the early research stage has become an absolute must.

‘Gender blindness’ (understood as the lack of consideration for gender-related aspects) often goes with neglecting other relevant social or experiential parameters. Challenging this blindness, on the contrary, creates awareness for a broader set of variables than the sole sex and/or gender.

While ‘excellence’ is often cited as reason to resist gendering business, education and research organisations, in reality it is the other way round: taking into account the gender dimension is vital for the (societal) relevance and quality of innovation and technology. Integrating sex and gender-based analysis is a matter of producing excellent innovations and technology to the benefit of all European citizens.¹⁰

Effectiveness and efficiency

Building gender diverse teams helps to secure a broader set of viewpoints, contributing to enhanced creativity and innovation – and thus also enhance the quality of innovation and technology. Such teams promote inclusiveness, experiment more and share and create knowledge. In addition, teams with a balanced number of women and men tend to perform better and exhibit superior dynamics and productivity. Ensuring diversity in working teams (in terms of gender, race, nationalities, age, etc.) helps creating an inclusive organisation, which improves its reputation, and contributes to retaining and attracting (new) talents.

A leverage for organisational change

The changes needed to achieve gender equality also bring benefits in terms of transparency and accountability, decision-making, career management and evaluation procedures. These benefit all staff as well as the organisation as a whole. Last but not least, addressing gender (in)equality can be part of a broader strategic process aimed at enhancing the competitive edge and (inter)national profile.

3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

There are many benefits to promoting gender equality in innovation and technology which can help build the case for gender equality policies. It is widely acknowledged that promoting gender equality in organizations brings positive impact with respect to Key concepts mentioned above: well-being at work, compliance with domestic and EU regulations, attracting and retaining talents, economic benefits, excellence and quality, effectiveness and efficiency of innovations and technology and as a leverage for organisational change.

As observed, female participation is around 20% in ICT related sectors. EIT Digital is of the opinion that such participation rate is far too low. To address gender equality in ICT related

¹⁰ European Commission (2020) [Gendered Innovations 2: How Inclusive Analysis Contributes to Research and Innovation](#)

sectors, concerted efforts are required by all actors operating in the ICT field to improve access and encourage more women to enter the ICT workforce.

Overall, EIT Digital's understanding is that:

- A more diverse ecosystem leads to better products, services and solutions and improves the work environment as well as company and talent productivity;
- The empowerment of women entrepreneurs and the nurturing of women leaders in technology, innovation, digitalization and entrepreneurship are critical to address the ICT skills shortage.

Three core principles guide EIT Digital's vision on gender equality:

1. EIT Digital is of that opinion that female participation in ICT needs to be increased and there is a clear commitment to identify and take steps to encourage women participation in activities and management ;
2. Equal treatment in equal situations irrespective of gender; and
3. Action required when a lack of equal treatment is observed in equal situations.

As an equal opportunity employer, EIT Digital follows the principle of equal opportunity in terms of procedures for job hiring and promotion. This implies that the organisation cannot discriminate with regard to for example gender but is required to provide everyone with an equal chance. Action is required when unequal treatment is observed in equal situations.

A step-by-step approach is envisaged for improving gender equality in KIC Activities and KIC Management. In this regard, an incremental implementation and gradual integration of new objectives and actions offer a more realistic and manageable approach for promoting female participation. Any objectives and actions would need to be incorporated in synergy with EIT Digital's existing mission, objectives and strategies.

Specific strategic vision for KIC Management

In terms of recruitment at management level, EIT Digital needs the most qualified and best candidates for its positions. The key determiner for candidate selection is capability; the hired candidate is the one deemed to have the best capabilities for a given position. In case of comparable and equal capability, EIT Digital has a policy to favour the female candidate in order to promote the overall gender balance.

EIT Digital will make additional efforts and elaborate on its strategy to bring job advertisement to the attention of qualified women. The organisation also expects that women in managerial and decision-making roles assume role model behaviour to inspire success and achievement.

Specific strategic vision for KIC Activities

There is a commitment to improve female participation in KIC Activities, including in education, innovation and entrepreneurship segments. This applies in particular to areas where EIT Digital is below par vis-à-vis the factual baseline for female participation in ICT-related sectors, but also to selected areas where EIT Digital can be ahead of the factual baseline.

At the level of Education, EIT Digital aims to educate and train good female and male ICT entrepreneurs, leaders and professionals. EIT Digital perceives it as key to increase the supply of skilled ICT workers and to improve access for and attract more female students into the EIT Digital Academy, to address the skill shortage and large under-representation of women in ICT sectors. To improve female participation in KIC Activities, which by a large majority is carried out by partners, EIT Digital has the vision to stimulate gender equality awareness where needed within the ecosystem and with partners.

4 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There is an under-representation of women in Europe's ICT and technology sectors that can be observed at all levels, including in education, labour markets or in management and decisionmaking roles. Already from the early age, girls are less likely to choose carrier paths in fields such as ICT, engineering, mathematics or sciences.¹¹ In terms of career expectations, at the age of 15 years, boys are much likelier to foresee a future as engineers or scientists; only less than 0.5% of girls expect to work in the ICT sector compared to 5% of boys.¹² Male dominated fields as engineering, mathematics and statistics are among the least popular subject choices for female students, although a small increase can be observed from 2000 to 2015.¹³ While around 27% of engineering graduates were women, only around 20% women were graduates ICT related fields in the EU. According to the 2021 [She Figures](#) study, women represent only 24.9% of self-employed professionals in technical professions, such as science and engineering or ICT. The gap is particularly wide in the technology field. Only 1 in 3 STEM tertiary graduates is female, women represent only 20% of ICT graduates.¹⁴

¹¹ European Commission (2017) *2017 Report on equality between women and men in the EU*

¹² OECD (2017) *Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – Some Progress on Gender Equality but Much Left to Do and REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OECD GENDER RECOMMENDATIONS*
[https://one.oecd.org/document/C/MIN\(2022\)7/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/C/MIN(2022)7/en/pdf)

¹³ UNESCO, 2017, *Cracking the code, STEM Education for Girls*, UNESCO, Paris, forthcoming

¹⁴ European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, *2022 report on gender equality in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/94579>

Table 1: Distribution of EU tertiary graduates by field and gender (%)¹⁵

	Men	Women
ICT graduates	80%	20%
Engineering graduates	73%	27%

Looking at gender segregation in the labour market, it can be observed that computer programming, telecommunications, scientific research and corresponding occupations employ more men than women across all EU countries. Only around 15% tech-sectors jobs in the EU are carried out by women.¹⁶ To further exemplify, for app development only approx. 9% are female developers. A smoother transition to the labour market is also lacking for female ICT graduates, who are likelier than males to end up working in a different sector than ICT. The so called “leaky pipeline”, which refers to women abandoning the sector mid-career, is another challenge facing the supply of ICT employees. Such challenges may partly account for the decrease observed from the female participation rate for ICT graduates (20%) to the percentage of employed females in the ICT sector (24.9%).

The number of ICT specialists in the EU grew by 50.5 % from 2012 to 2021, almost 8 times as high as the increase (6.3 %) for total employment. In 2021, 80.9 % of men were employed as ICT specialists in the EU against **19.1 %** of women.

Table 2: Proportion of women in selected professions in EU (%)¹⁷

	Men	Women
ICT specialists	80,9%	19,1%
Engineering and scientist specialists	59%	41%

¹⁵ Eurostat: Tertiary education statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tertiary_education_statistics

¹⁶ <http://eit.europa.eu/women-entrepreneurship>

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT_specialists_in_employment#ICT_specialists_by_sex; <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230210-1#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20there%20were%206.9,employment%20in%20science%20and%20engineering.>

Turning to female entrepreneurship, the rates of women’s entrepreneurship in ICT are equally lower than for men. What is more, the fast-growing and more innovative sectors with higher entrepreneurial potential, such as technology, science, retail and engineering sectors, are largely dominated by male entrepreneurs. As outlined in Table 3, while women make up around 25% of the self-employed in the EU, only around 30% of start-up entrepreneurs and 19% of ICT entrepreneurs are women, while 93 % of capital invested in European companies went to all-male founding teams. Despite the low percentage of women in entrepreneurship, research shows that digital start-ups owned by women are more likely to be successful than those owned by men.

Table 3: Proportion of female entrepreneurs in EU (%)¹⁸

	Men	Women
ICT entrepreneurs	81%	19%
Startups created	70%	30%
Self-employed	66%	34%

Women are also under-represented in managerial positions; in the OECD on average, women make up less than one-third of managers, although with significant variation across countries.¹⁹ Also as a consequence of the segregation between male and female ICT graduates and specialists, the under-representation of women in management and decision-making positions is even more significant in the ICT sector. Women makes up just around 19% of ICT managers.²⁰

¹⁸ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)739380_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATA(2023)739380_EN.pdf)

¹⁹ OECD (2017) *Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – Some Progress on Gender Equality but Much Left to Do* [https://one.oecd.org/document/C/MIN\(2022\)7/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/C/MIN(2022)7/en/pdf)

²⁰ European Parliament (2023) Women in the Digital Sector:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)739380_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATA(2023)739380_EN.pdf)

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/women-in-tech-the-best-bet-to-solve-europes-talent-shortage>

Table 4: Proportion of female managers in the EU (%)²¹

	Men	Women
ICT managers	81%	19%
Managerial roles	68%	32%

As a concluding remark on the baseline for female participation in ICT-related sectors, it can be seen that the female participation rate never goes beyond 20% for the different levels, covering graduates, employees, entrepreneurs and managers in the ICT field. This is the landscape that EIT Digital operates in. EIT Digital is aware of the low participation rate of women in ICT related sectors and is willing to take steps to promote the involvement of women in the ICT profession.

EIT Digital specific objectives

EIT Digital aims to increase female participation at the different levels. For this reason, ambitious targets have been set, in 2017, for female participation. By 2022, the aim was to have at least 20% female members of the Supervisory Board, 25% female in leadership roles, 25% female professionals in Innovation Activities, 25% Scaleups with female entrepreneurs as founders/co-founders in the EIT Digital Accelerator and 35% female students and graduates in Master School.

Table 5: Targets for female participation by 2027 (%)

	Supervisory Board	Managerial roles	Professionals	Entrepreneurs	Students and graduates
Female participation	40%	40%	25%	25%	40%

Based on the significant progress made in 2020, described in the previous chapters, EIT Digital achieved and/or exceeded most of its targets initially set for 2022. The only exception is represented by the percentage of female students and graduates where the expectation is to

²¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-223_en.htm

achieve a 35% female participation by 2022. Therefore, EIT Digital set new, even more ambitious goals for 2027, as outlined above in Table 5.

As outlined previously, EIT Digital's female participation is significantly ahead of the ICT baseline in many aspects. This is for example the case for students and professionals.

EIT Digital is of the opinion that female participation is too low in the ICT field and must be promoted by all actors operating in ICT-related sectors, also with an eye to address ICT skills shortages. EIT Digital's aim is not only to boost female participation but also to be ahead in selected areas.

4.1 CAPACITY AND AWARENESS RAISING

EIT Digital is further building its internal capacity on gender equality and raising awareness among its staff.

Gender diversity is one of the main topics in the agenda of EIT Digital Innovation and Education Activity Leaders as well as in the agenda of the Management Committee priorities. General employee awareness is at the high level due to regular communication and reporting. The COO/CFO supported by the Operations team is appointed as a gender SPOC and gender mainstreaming coordinator. To drive the process forward, relevant objective and KPI is formally included as part of the performance evaluation process to the accountable HR representative.

EIT Digital strives to have a gender balanced workforce and leadership. To achieve gender balance, it is essential to set up an active human resources policy that supports this, including, among others, attracting and retaining qualified female staff, increasing their number in leadership positions either via promotion or new recruitments, establishing a fair and transparent recruitment policy, creating a flexible working environment to promote work-life balance, and potentially offering supporting services to staff coming back from maternity or paternity leave to help them re-integrate faster. EIT Digital effectively supports gender equality and works to enhance women entrepreneurship and leadership within its ecosystem.

Besides, EIT Digital aims at having at least one gender training completed for its staff. Some of the key principles considered when planning and implementing gender equality training will include:

- Engaging the whole organisation, different levels and roles across the organisation such as senior management and leadership, managers, human resources departments;
- Ensuring that gender equality training is based on an evidence-based assessment of the needs of EIT Digital;
- Creating ongoing and long-term process.

EIT Digital is building a culture of zero tolerance toward sexual harassment and gender-based violence. This includes communications activities but also measures to ensure that all members of the organisation are empowered to change attitudes, intervene where necessary and create an inclusive and safe culture for the whole organisation.

4.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Action Plan will address several issues at once – both at operational and technical level and rely upon a complex set of measures. Hence, from its earliest stage, it is crucial that monitoring and evaluation instruments are systematically embedded. Such instruments allow among others to assess the progress that is made towards targets, based on quantitative and/or qualitative indicators. It is important to specify the timing and responsible levels for monitoring. Top leadership should be structurally involved in monitoring and evaluation process.

The execution and delivery of the action plan will be embedded into EIT Digital's standard monitoring and evaluation processes which foresee regular interactions and touchpoints between the affected functions to support impact generation, achieve high reporting quality, identify issues and deviations compared to the initial plans on time, review KPI expectations, monitor budget consumption, improve quality and implement risk mitigation measures. Results are also embedded into dashboards and scorecards that are regularly presented to the EIT Digital management.

4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Cross-KIC level actions

Coordination of the different HR offices will lead to a reinforcement of gender equality across all KICs giving a boost to female participation in KIC Management and KIC Activities.

EIT-level actions

As indicated at cross-KIC level, actions that involve the coordination of the different HR offices should be extended also to the EIT-level in order to promote female participation and gender equality. RACI

R – Responsible (Assigned to complete the task or deliverable)

A – Accountable (Has final decision-making authority and accountability for completion. Only 1 per task)

C – Consulted (An advisor, stakeholder, or subject matter expert who is consulted before a decision or action)

I – Informed (Must be informed after a decision or action)

Actors	RACI	Main Responsibilities
Management Committee	A	- Implementation/Validation of the gender mainstreaming policy and action plan at EIT level
Board member	A	- Implementation/Validation of the gender mainstreaming policy and action plan at EIT Digital
Head of Operations / HR	RA	- Organizational awareness program
Managers	R	- Innovation - Entrepreneurship - Education
Gender mainstreaming referent	R	- Promote the policy and actions planned
Employees	IR	- Empowerment of policy and measures

5 STATUS QUO ANALYSIS OF THE KIC

5.1 LEAD ROLE OF THE KIC

In 2019, EIT Digital had 4 female representatives in its Supervisory Board; this was equal to 18% of the members (4/22 members). In 2020, the EIT Digital SB was streamlined and reduced in size, following the EIT GB Strategic Recommendations and, at the same time 4 new female independent members were appointed, leading to a 40% female representation in the EIT Digital Supervisory Board in 2022.



Figure 1: EIT Digital SB gender balance improvements 2022 vs 2019

A significant improvement from 2019 to 2020 has also been made when it comes to leadership roles. In this case, the female representation has grown from 13% to 36%, thanks to the appointment (hiring or promotion) of additional female managers in 2022.

The Management Committee of EIT Digital consists of a total of 7 members, out of which 3 members (42,8%) are females.

Gender Diversity in EIT Digital's Management Team

Increased from 23,3% in 2019 to 33,3% in 2022 and 42,8% in 2023.

The current Female Management Committee members are:

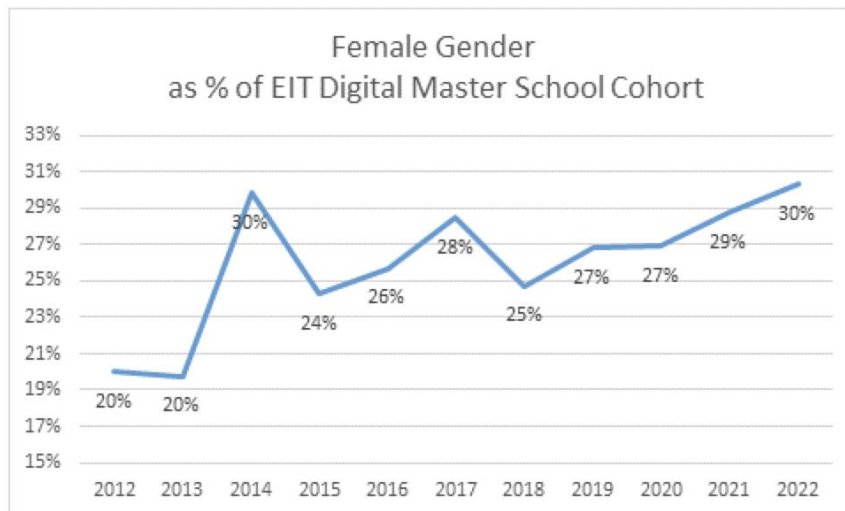
Diva Tommei – Chief Innovation, Education and Marketing Officer

Lea Myyryläinen – Regional Director North

Elena Contioso-Fleming – Interim Regional Director South

5.2 EDUCATION

The EIT Digital Academy provides courses and training through the Master School, Doctoral School, Professional School, Summer School and Online Education. In terms of the Master School, below table displays how the cohort has evolved over a 9-years' timeframe. There are currently more than 30% female students and graduates at the Master School. The objective, set out in our previously adopted version of the EIT Digital Gender Balance Action Plan, of reaching 30% female students and graduates for the cohort has therefore been met. Expectations are that the female % in 2023 cohort will slightly be higher than that of the 2022.



At the Doctoral School, there were a total of 23% female students by 2021 and 19% female students in 2022.

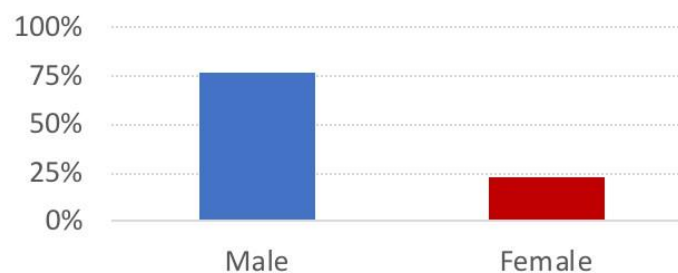


Figure 4: Female participation in the Doctoral School in 2021 and 2022 (%)

As regards to Online Education, EIT Digital’s Coursera courses had more than 300,000 enrolments. Female participation increase from 24% in 2022 to 40% in 2023.

5.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The EIT Digital Accelerator portfolio (including the alumni companies) includes more than 370 startups/scaleups. More than 60 Scaleups have female participation, referring to the involvement of women at board level, as an executive or as a founder in a startup/scaleup. It should be noted that the percentage representation of women may be higher, as gender information has not been reported consistently for all involved startup/scaleups.

The EIT Digital Challenge and the New European Bauhaus Scaleup Call promote digital entrepreneurship at the European level. Over the last editions of the Challenge, the female

participation, referring to companies with female founders/co-founders, has consistently increased. In the 2019 EIT Digital Challenge finals, 23% female founders/co-founders participated. This number has **grown to 47% in the 2022 editions**, achieving a record of **60% female founders/co-founders among the finalists**. One of the key actions, linked to this successful result, is the link created by the EIT Digital Challenge team, over the years, with a number of “women in technology” organizations to encourage companies with female founders/co-founders to apply. The organizers are actively reaching out to such organizations to promote the Challenge in their networks.

One of the actions, linked to this successful result, is the link created by the EIT Digital Challenge team, over the years, with a number of “women in technology” organisations to encourage companies with female founders/co-founders to apply. The organizers are actively reaching out to such organizations to promote the Challenge in their networks.

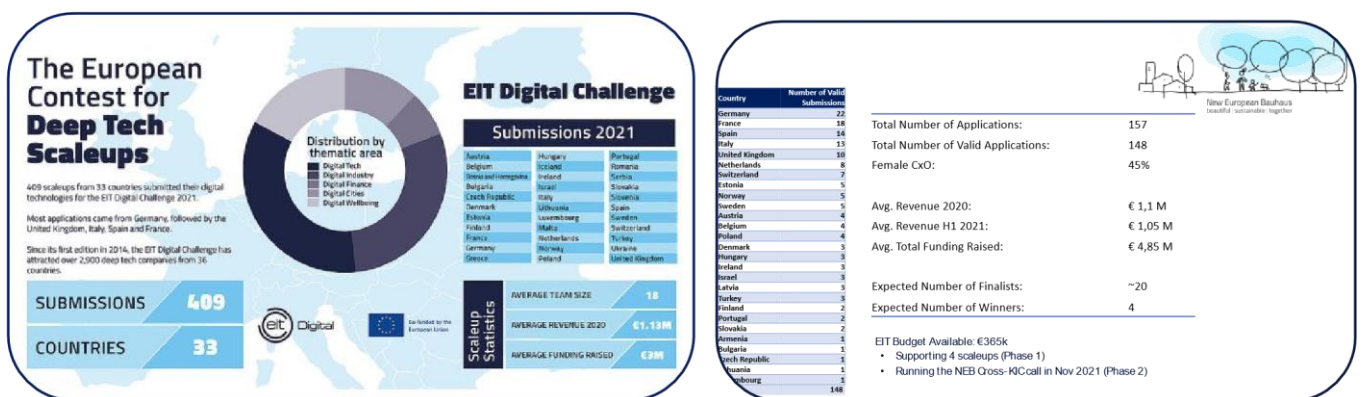


Figure 6: EIT Digital Challenge and New European Bauhaus 2021 stats

5.4 INNOVATION

The EIT Digital Innovation Activity portfolio count on average 50 Activities annually. At the submission time, the number of female Activity Leaders increased significantly from 19% in 2016 to 30% in 2022. Moreover, as part of the 2022 open Call, 24% of the external reviewers were women as opposed to the number of only 15% in the 2021 Call.

5.5 CO-LOCATION CENTRES

Next to managerial roles, already discussed in section 2.1, EIT Digital has a variety of people working at the Co-Location Centres. Figure 7 gives the gender distribution (45% females) at the level of the Co-Location Centres.

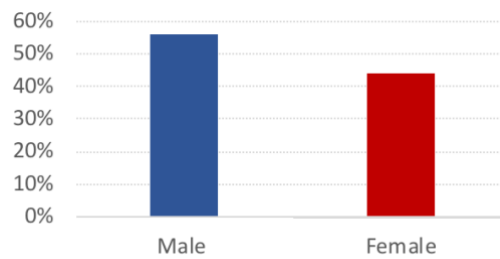


Figure 7: Female participation at EIT Digital’s Co-Location Centres in 2023 (%)

Events have also been organised at Node-level to attract more girls into ICT. This for example includes the “International Girls in ICT days”. Overall, the aim was to raise awareness of women’s possibilities in the field of ICT regarding education, research and industry. Successful women players were also invited to share their experiences and learning.

Delta between ICT baseline and EIT Digital for female participation

The following table displays the delta between the 1) factual baseline for women’s participation in ICT-related sectors and 2) women’s participation in EIT Digital at the different levels

Table 8: The delta between the ICT baseline and EIT Digital

	Female managers	Female students / graduates	Female ICT professionals	Female entrepreneurs
ICT/industry baseline	19%	19%	16%	19%
EIT Digital	36%	30%	38%	60%

The Table above clearly shows that EIT Digital is better than the baseline in all categories.

In terms of ICT students / graduates, EIT Digital performs significantly better than the ICT baseline. The 30% figure mentioned covers the Master School, which is considered as the best indication on female participation both due to the high relative intake (e.g. compared to the Doctoral School) and the extent to which students are engaged with EIT Digital (e.g. compared to Online Education courses). Additionally, while female participation in the Doctoral School

was slightly below the ICT baseline, the female participation rate was above for the Online Education courses.

EIT Digital also performs better than the ICT baseline in terms of female ICT professionals. EIT Digital's female participation rate of 38% refers to the proportion of female employees in EIT Digital. This has been achieved thanks to a recruitment strategy targeted at identifying top female professionals and at supporting the development of personnel during the whole employee lifecycle within EIT Digital.

Employees per Gender:

2019: 29,9% Female / 70,1% Male

2023: 44% Female / 56% Male

Recruitment per Gender:

2019: 39,5% Female / 60,5% Male

2023: 80% Female / 20% Male

Annex I

5-YEAR ACTION PLAN - EIT Digital is developing and executing a 5-year action plan.

The Gender Action Plan is consistent with EIT Digital's broader diversity initiative.

Some elements planned for the 5-year action plan:

- Set long term goals with intermediate milestones:
 - Achieve at least 40% representation of women in at all levels of the organization by the year 2027, with an intermediate milestone of 35% by 2025
 - Adopt a 40% target for women's representation as supervisory board members by 2027, with an intermediate milestone of 30% by 2025
 - Achieve a 40% target for women in leadership roles by 2027, with an intermediate milestone of 35% by 2025
 - Achieve a 40% target for students/graduates in the Master School by 2027, with an intermediate milestone of 35% by 2025
 - Achieve a 25% target for scaleups with female founders/co-founders in the EIT Digital Accelerator by 2027, with an intermediate milestone of 20% by 2025
 - Promote and facilitate the exchange of the benefits of diversity, best practices and knowledge-sharing where possible.
- Enact processes to support these and other goals:
 - HR is supporting hiring managers to enhance recruitment by creating standards requiring at least 40% female candidates on the long list and at least one female member of every interview panel,
 - HR is supporting hiring managers to increase reach to female candidates including using channels focused on women professionals.
 - Data collection is the responsibility of the relevant departments; for example, the HR department collects data on employees' demographics, as well as those of candidates for recruitments; the education department collects data on the demographics of the Masters and PhD students; the entrepreneurship and innovation participation by women is collected by those departments. Data is provided directly by them twice a year to HR who is providing consolidated reporting to the Management Committee of EIT Digital.