The Power Hub for Women in Tech | CEE region | 13 countries | 5 200+ participants | 40 experts

WOMEN GO TECH

Building the future power hub for women in tech

How to facilitate women enablement in tech in the CEE region to make it the next power hub in Europe?

Intro

The objective of this research was to pinpoint the key gaps and obstacles that deter women from participating in the technology sector and to outline strategies for empowering women at various stages of tech labor market maturity.

Additionally, given the significance of artificial intelligence (AI) within the tech landscape, this study also explores women's interactions with AI technology, including their interest in engaging with it and the challenges they face.

A comprehensive quantitative survey was conducted across 13 countries, targeting women at different points in their tech careers: those with existing experience in the sector as well as those who are either at the outset of their tech careers or are contemplating entering the field.

13
COUNTRIES

5 400+
PARTICIPANTS

40
EXPERTS

PARTNERS

With support from

Google.org

OSCE

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY

Synthesis

Research demographics

5 475 participants

18-24	754	**14%**
25- 34	1 097	**20%**
35-44	1 203	**22%**
45-54	1 092	**20%**
55-64	848	**15%**
65+	481	**9%**

City	3 293	**60%**
Rural area	2 182	**40%**

Secondary school	1 458	**26,5%**
Bachelor's Degree	1 394	**25,5%**
Master's Degree	1 314	**24%**
Professional school	1 228	**22,4%**
Doctorate	81	**1,5%**

Student	450	**8%**
Employee	3445	**60%**
Business owner	221	**4%**
Freelancer	336	**6%**
Unemployed	579	**10%**
Retired	650	**11%**

*multiple choice was allow when answering occupation question, thus, the total number of answers is higher than total number of respondents

Experienced talents **27%**
Women who have worked in the tech sector for more than 2 years

Tech sector novice **12%**
Women who have worked in the tech sector for less than 2 years

Interested in tech careers **31%**
Women who are considering work in tech sector

Not Interested in tech careers **30%**
Women who do not work and do not consider work in tech sector

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A JOURNEY IN PROGRESS

From the first glance, the tech industry seems to have made a fair amount of progress in being welcoming and accessible to women talent, however, a closer look reveals some further obstacles to career progression as well as deeper attitudes and perceptions that might diminish talent chances of achieving their full potential in tech.

SELF-EVALUATION

There is a considerable gap between how women who have different relationships to the tech industry self-reflect on their tech-related skills. An alarming number of general female audience reports lack of confidence in their skills, and this percentage becomes twice smaller in the group of women who are interested in a tech career.

1/4 cross both experienced and fresh talent groups do not feel entirely comfortable regarding general technology usage.

MENTORSHIP IMPORTANCE

While many women engage in tech skills-related activities like online courses and coding schools, career advancement in the tech sector still has room for growth. Though development opportunities exist, there's a clear lack of mentorship programs tailored to women, and regular constructive feedback is often missing. Experts emphasize mentorship and sponsorship as key for career growth, yet these opportunities are rare for women, highlighting the need for stronger support from management and colleagues to promote inclusivity and advancement in the sector.

CHANGE OF PRIORITIES

Women have short-term plans to gain experience on how to build a tech business, but a reduced number of participants show long-term eagerness to build a product or create a business with experienced talent being more discouraged than fresh to pursue these goals.

HID

A JOURNEY IN PROGRESS

From the first glance, the tech industry seems to have made a fair amount of progress in being welcoming and accessible to women talent, however, a closer look reveals some further obstacles to career progression as well as deeper attitudes and perceptions that might diminish talent chances of achieving their full potential in tech.

HIDDEN ATTITUDES

There is evidence that even though the tech sector work environment is considered safe and welcoming, stereotypes in workplace might result in self-doubt and influence perceived chances of further career success.

The perceived difficulties in achieving work and life balance and succeeding as an older employee is related to perception that men have more career opportunities than women do. These two areas can be focused on in order to improve the attitudes and realities of women progressing in a tech company.

NEXT PRIORITIES

Career progression is an area that is generally evaluated positively, but it is also seen as one of the areas where additional focus and change would be welcome.

There is a generally positive sentiment regarding tech sector work environment, but there is a lack of measures that allow women to smoothly progress with their careers.

WHO SHOULD ACT?

There is a general consensus that governments should do a lot more to attract more women to the tech sector as the educational opportunities are already in place yet women still indicate there is not enough quality job opportunities and there is still a raising issue of unequal pay.

Report content:

Pages:

01

Talent Insights

In this section, we explore the career ambitions and challenges experienced by women in the tech industry. We highlight the varying engagement levels across age groups and regions, the confidence gap in tech-related skills, and the career aspirations of both novice and experienced talents. Additionally, we examine the growing interest in fields such as data science and cybersecurity, while noting the continued lack of appeal in coding-focused roles.

Previous experience

Online training courses are more popular among younger age groups. Their participation is overall larger in most initiatives, except for participation in Women in tech sector meet-ups, which increases with age.

Generally, there is a lower participation in rural areas, except for Online training courses, where the numbers almost catch up with those living in cities.

There is a significant difference in experienced women participation in workshops and conferences, with city residents participating twice as much as rural residents.

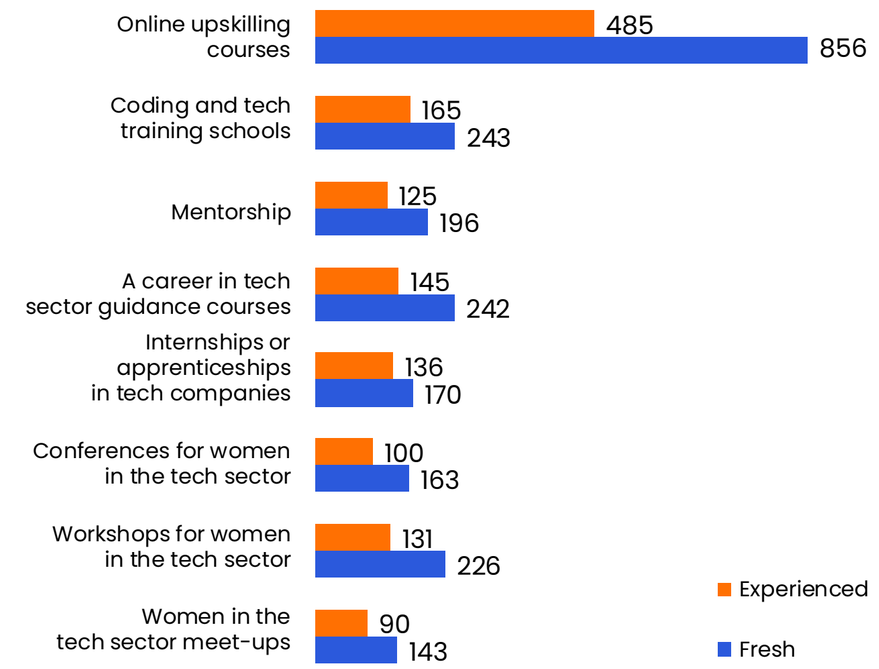
38%

Of all respondents haven't participated in any of tech skills related activities

62%

Of all respondents have tried more than one type of tech skills related activities

Total number of respondents per category



Top participation of fresh talents:

01: Online upskilling courses
02: Coding and tech training schools
03: A career in tech sector guidance
04: Workshops for women in tech sector
05: Mentorship

Top participation of experienced talents:

01: Online upskilling courses
02: Coding and tech training schools
03: Mentorship
04: A career in tech sector guidance
05: Internships or apprenticeships in tech companies

Initiative Participation by Group

Experienced

36%

Of all respondents **haven't participated** in any of tech skills related activities

43%

Of all respondents have participated **in 1** tech skills related activities

21%

Of all respondents have participated **more than 1** tech skills related activities

Fresh

38%

Of all respondents **haven't participated** in any of tech skills related activities

40%

Of all respondents have participated **in 1** tech skills related activities

22%

Of all respondents have participated **more than 1** tech skills related activities

COUNTRIES WITH BIGGEST PARTICIPATION

Poland (78%)
Romania (69%)
Bulgaria (68%)

AVERAGE PARTICIPATION

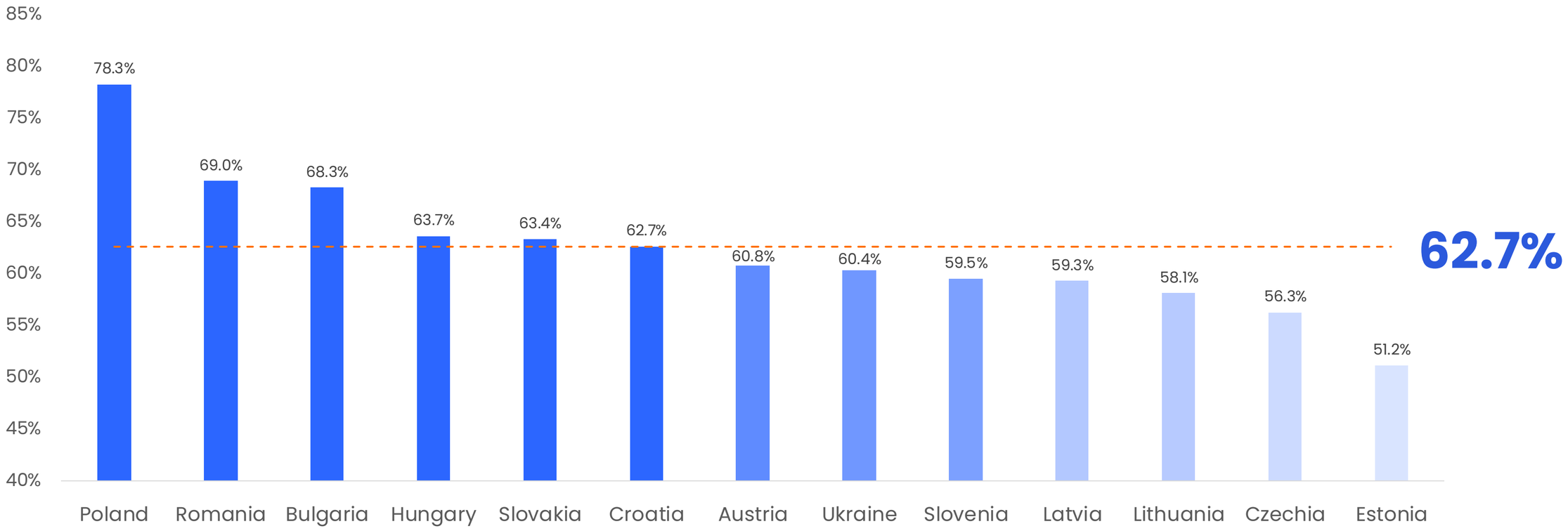
Hungary (64%)
Slovakia (63%)
Croatia (63%)

ROOM TO GROW

Austria (61%)
Ukraine (60%)
Slovenia (60%)
Latvia (59%)
Lithuania (58%)
Czechia (56%)
Estonia (51%)

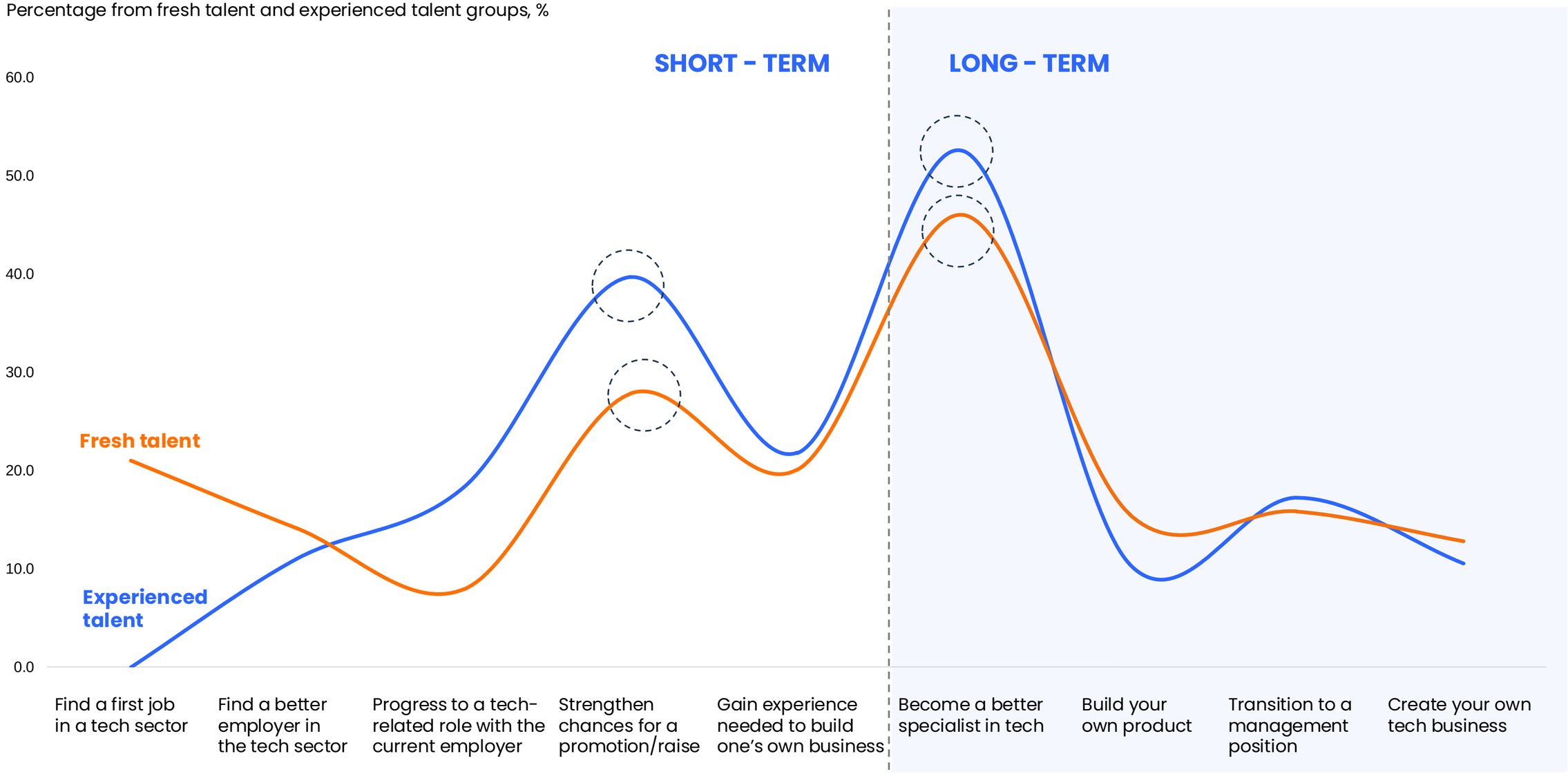
Initiative Participation by Country

Have you participated in any initiatives or programmes for women to enter or upskill for tech sector jobs? (Percentage from total respondents per country, %)



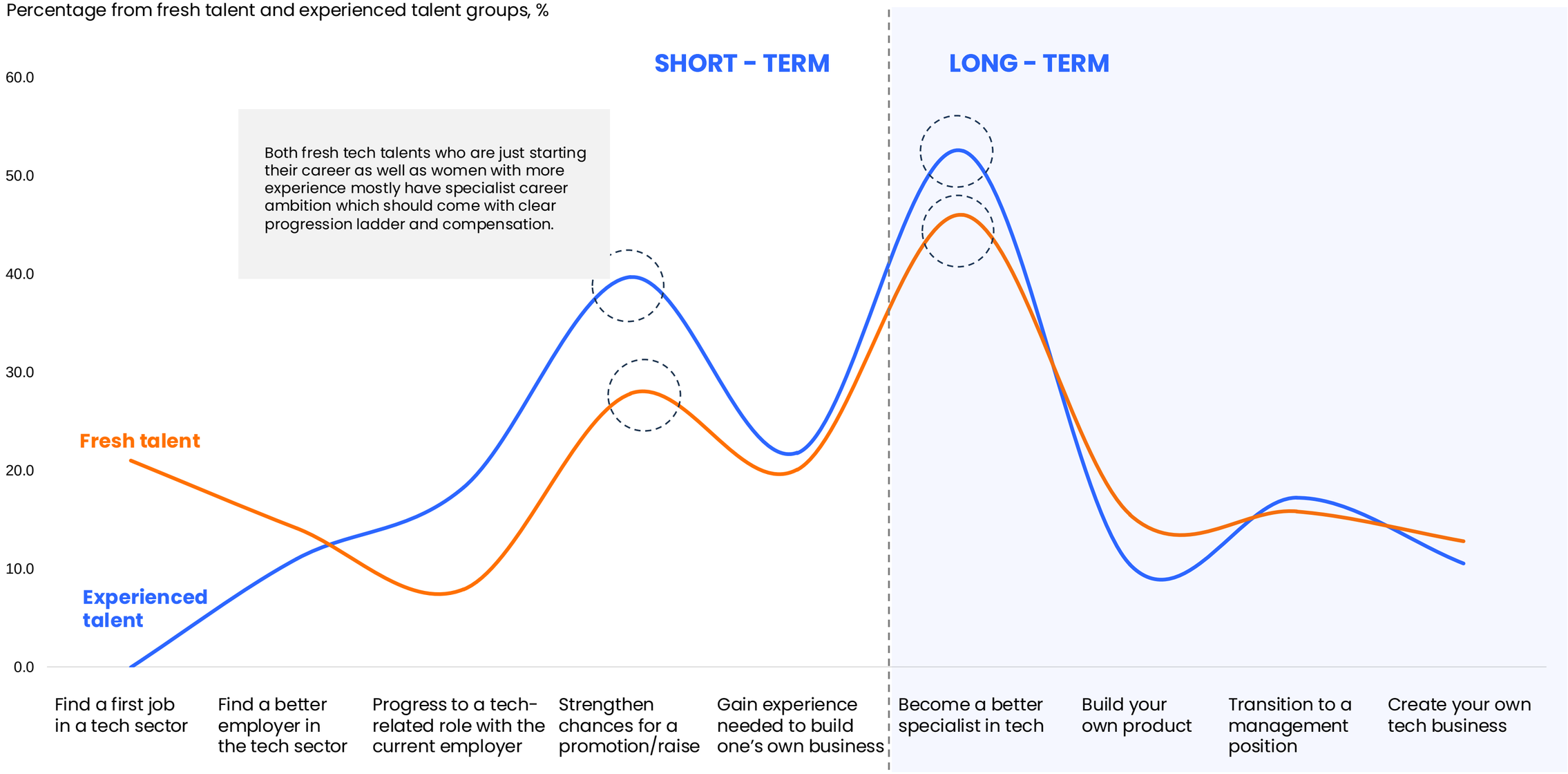
Talent goals

Percentage from fresh talent and experienced talent groups, %



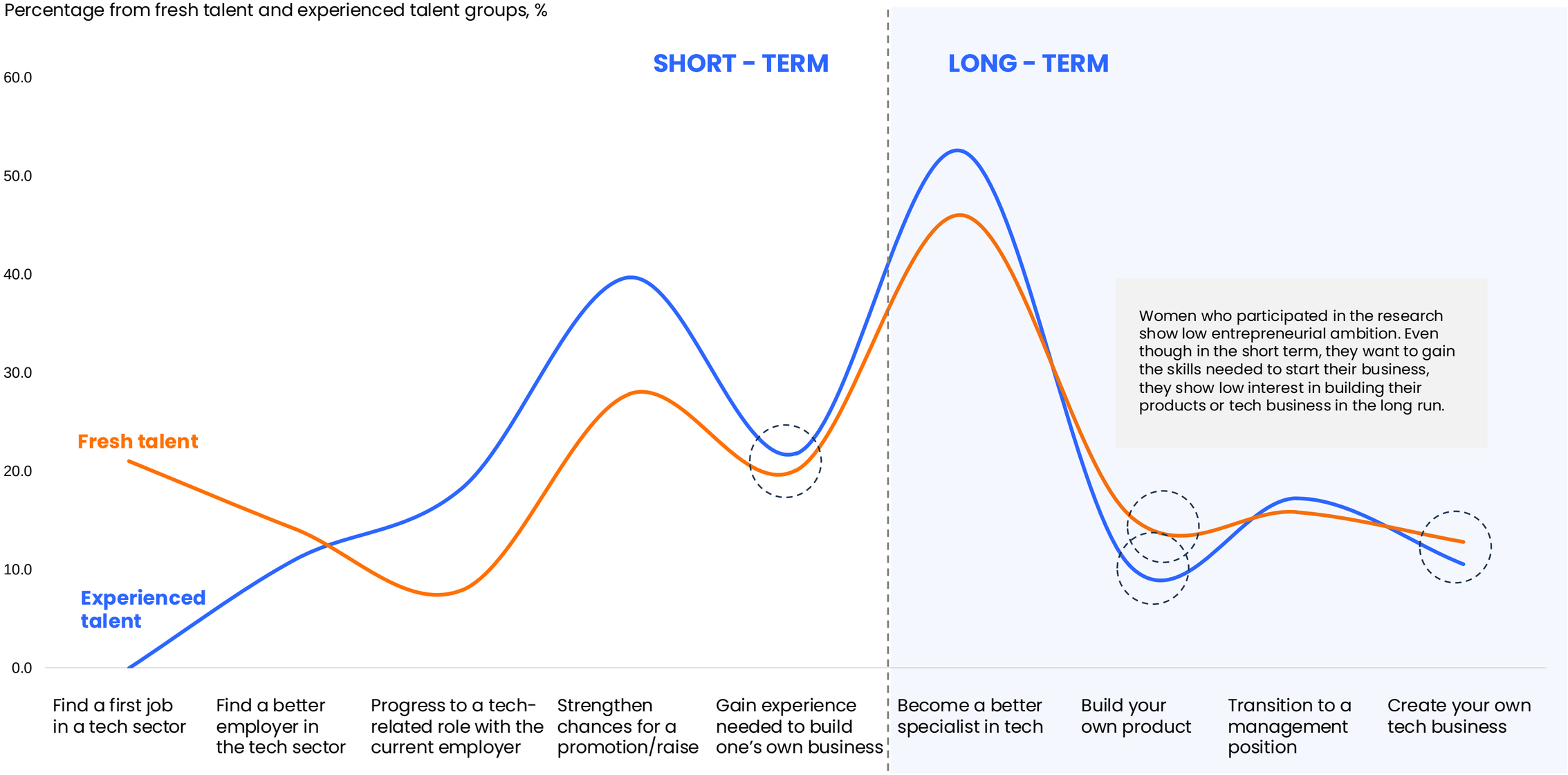
Talent goals

Percentage from fresh talent and experienced talent groups, %



Talent goals

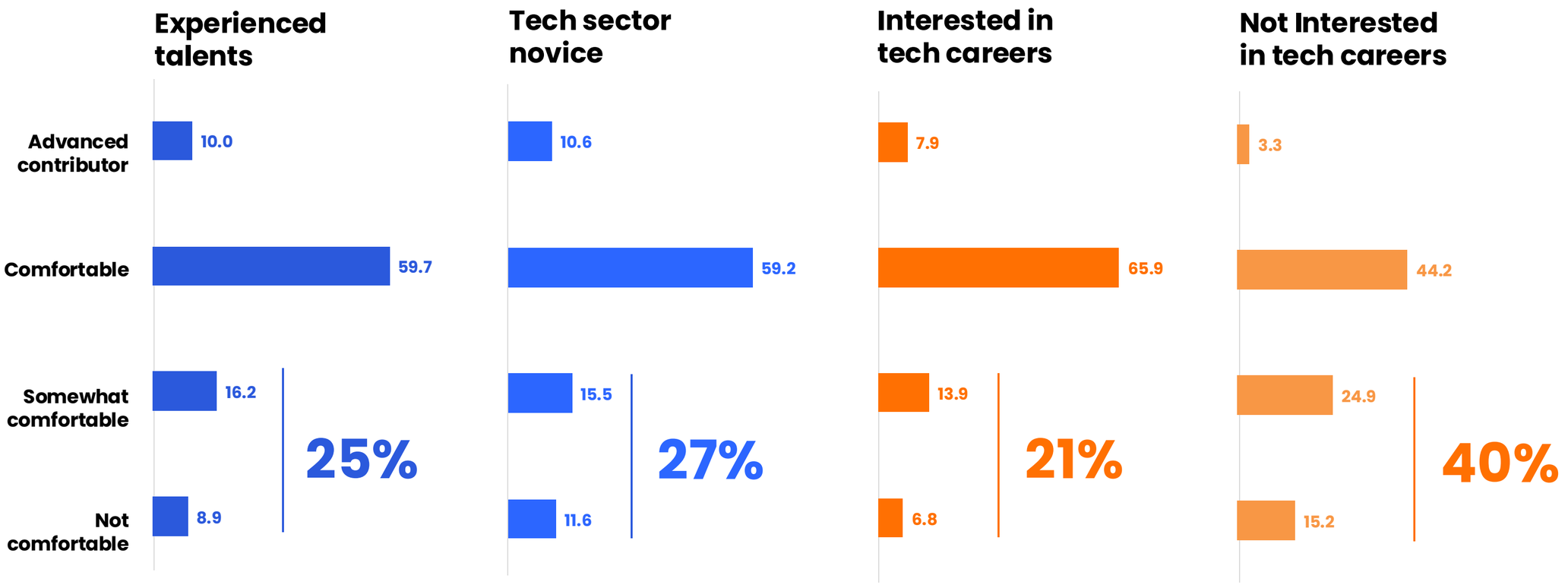
Percentage from fresh talent and experienced talent groups, %



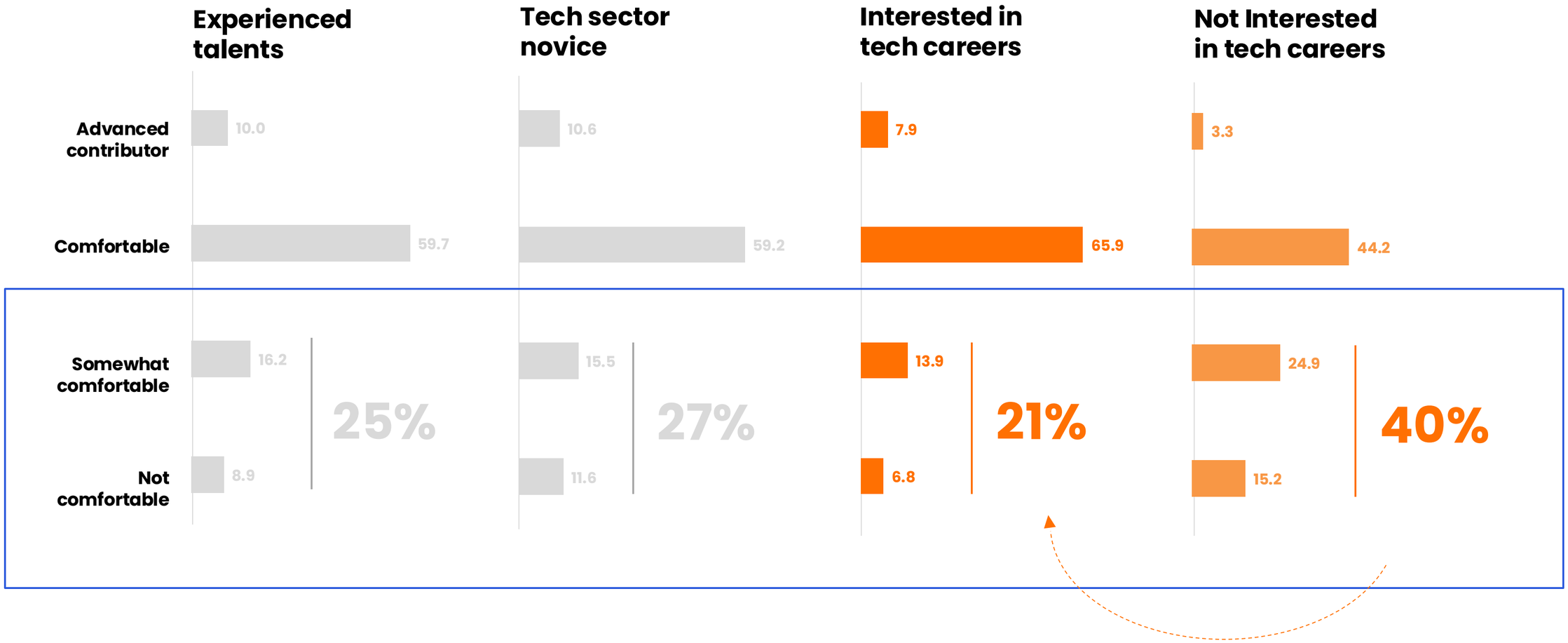
Women who participated in the research show low entrepreneurial ambition. Even though in the short term, they want to gain the skills needed to start their business, they show low interest in building their products or tech business in the long run.

Tech skills self-evaluation

How would you rate your level of comfort and skill with using digital technologies (such as computers, smartphones, and the Internet)?
(total percentages from different respondent groups, %)

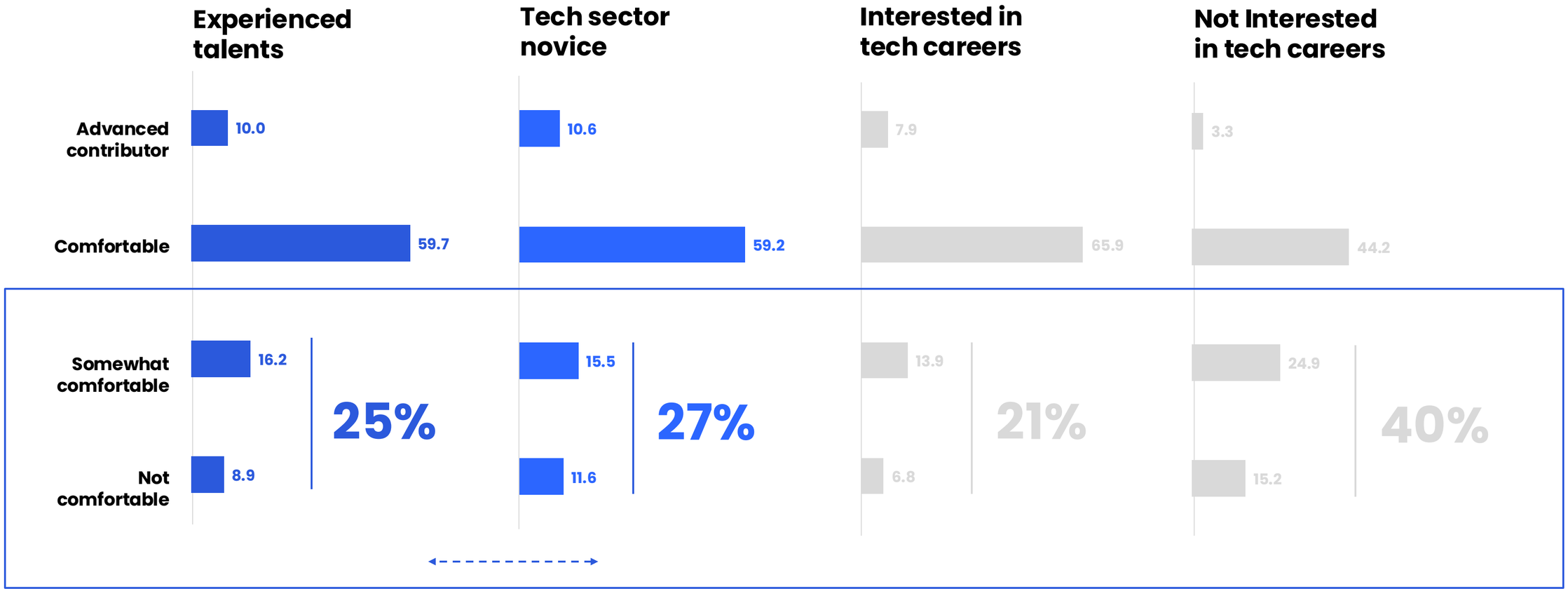


How would you rate your level of comfort and skill with using digital technologies (such as computers, smartphones, and the Internet)?
(total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



There is a considerable gap between how women who have different relation to the tech industry self-reflect on their tech-related skills. The alarming number of general women audience report lack of confidence in their skills and this percentage becomes twice smaller in a group of women who are interested in tech career.

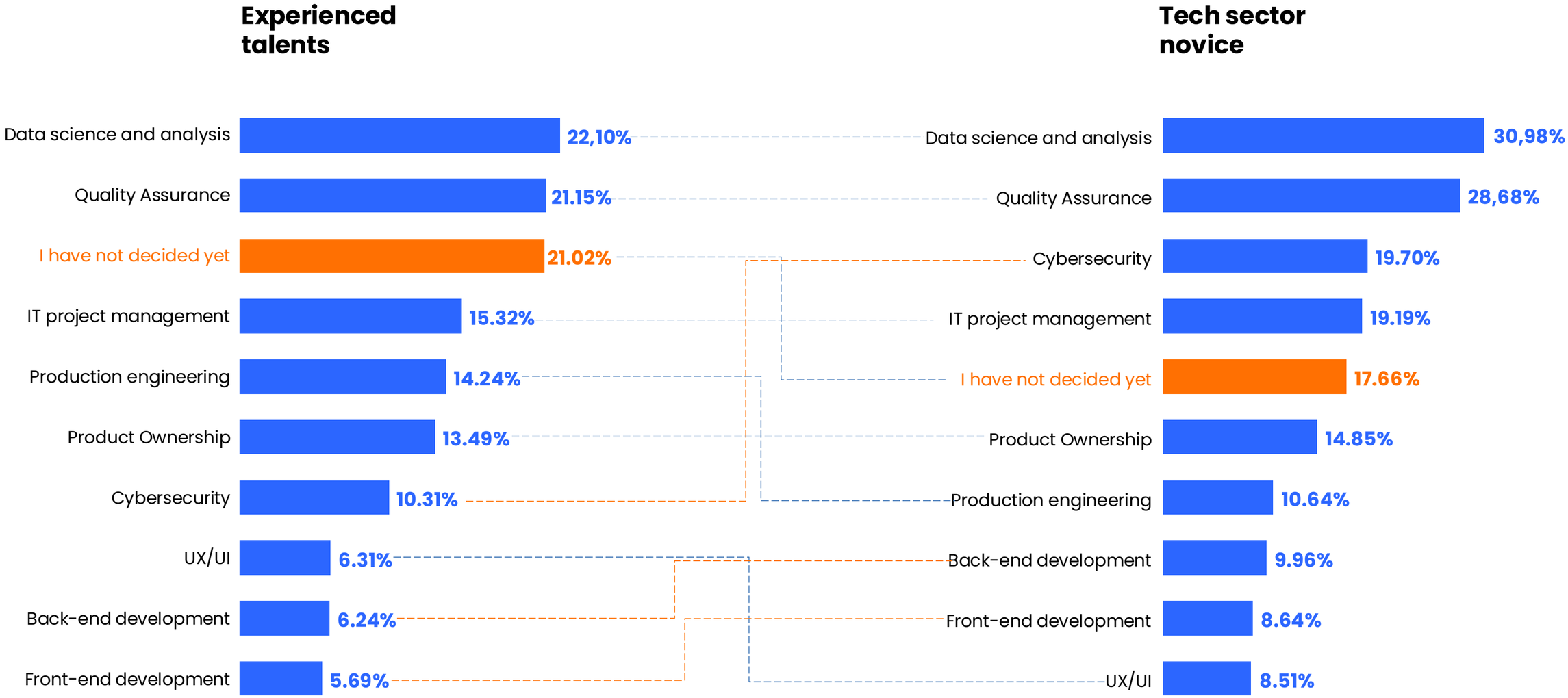
How would you rate your level of comfort and skill with using digital technologies (such as computers, smartphones, and the Internet)?
(total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



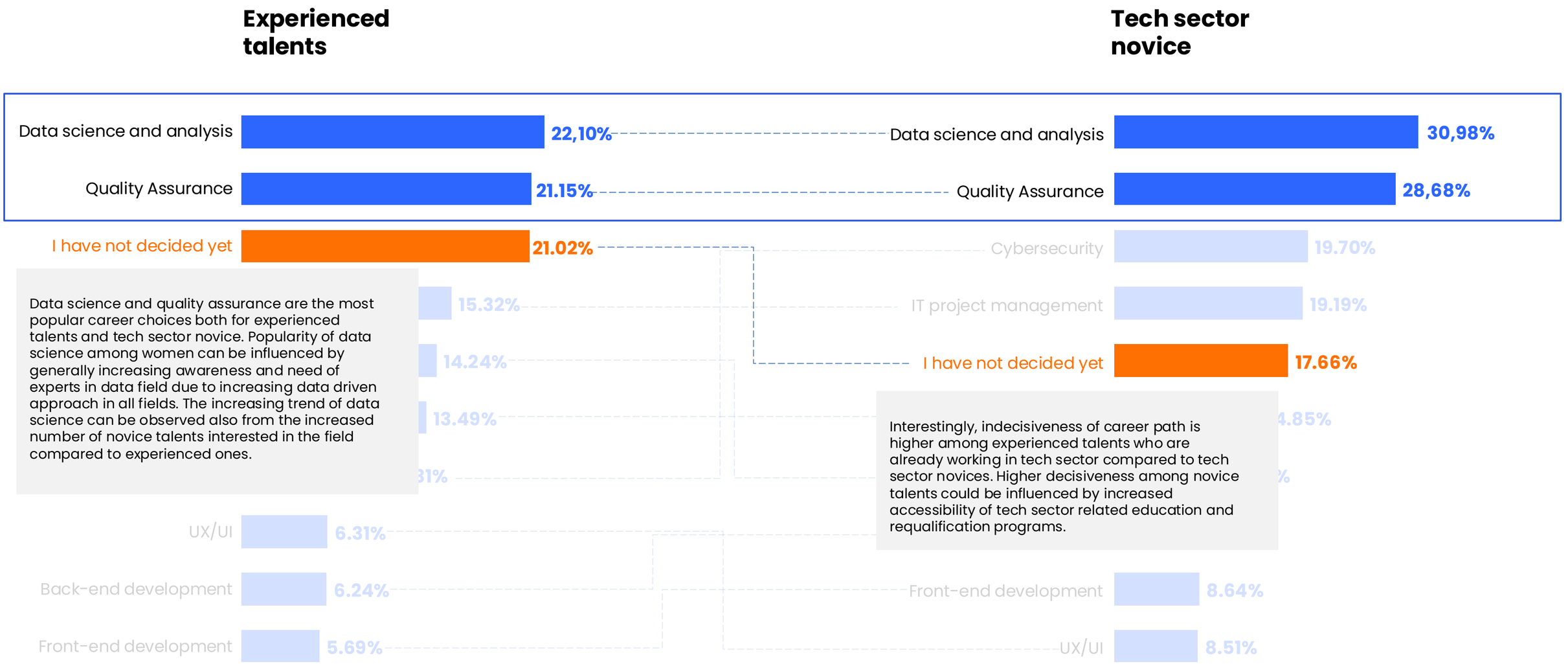
What is most surprising is that 1/4 do not feel entirely comfortable regarding general technology usage across both experienced and fresh talent groups.

It would be hard to believe that specialists would find their general tech skills lacking, so it is important to consider how factors like low confidence, lack of encouragement or access to education might also influence someone's interest.

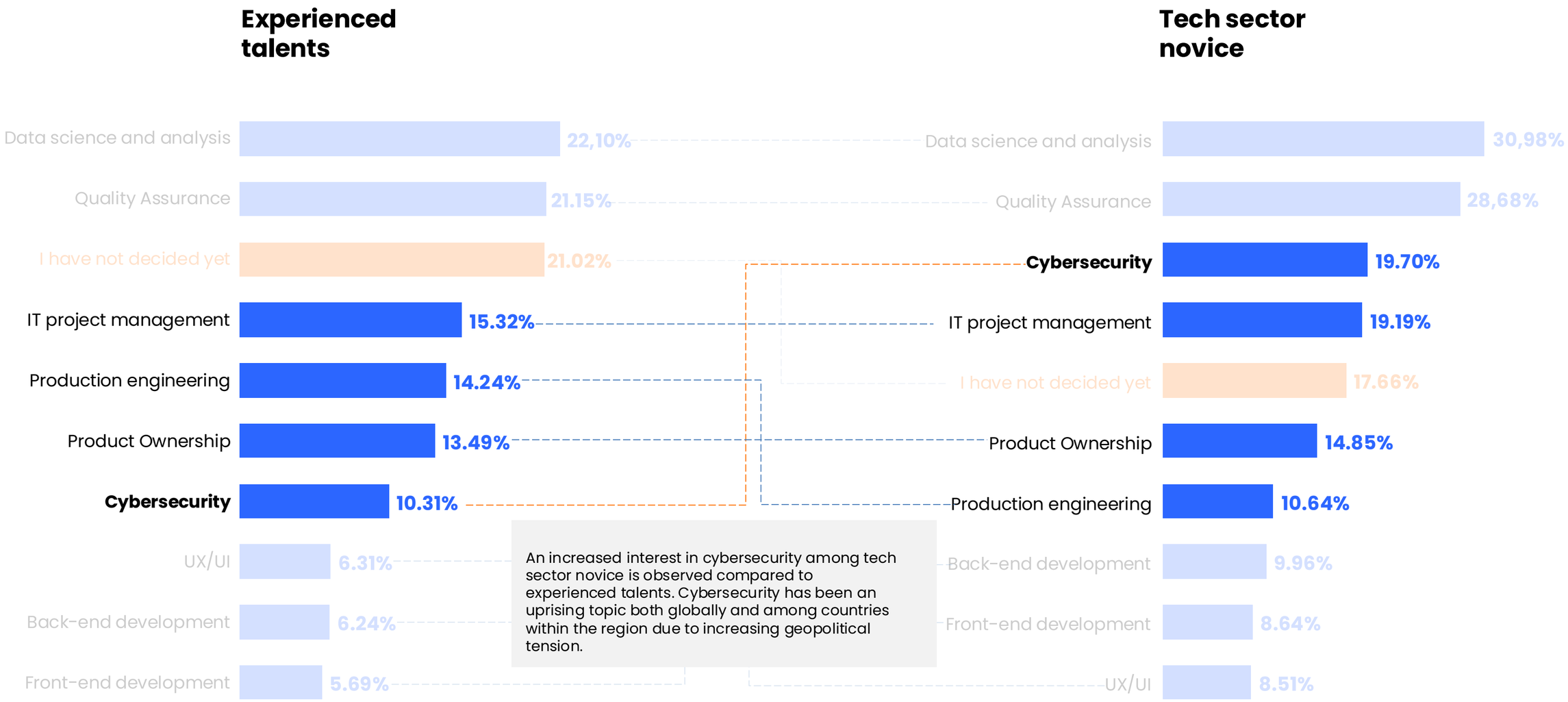
Which of the following tech sector jobs are you currently interested in? (total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



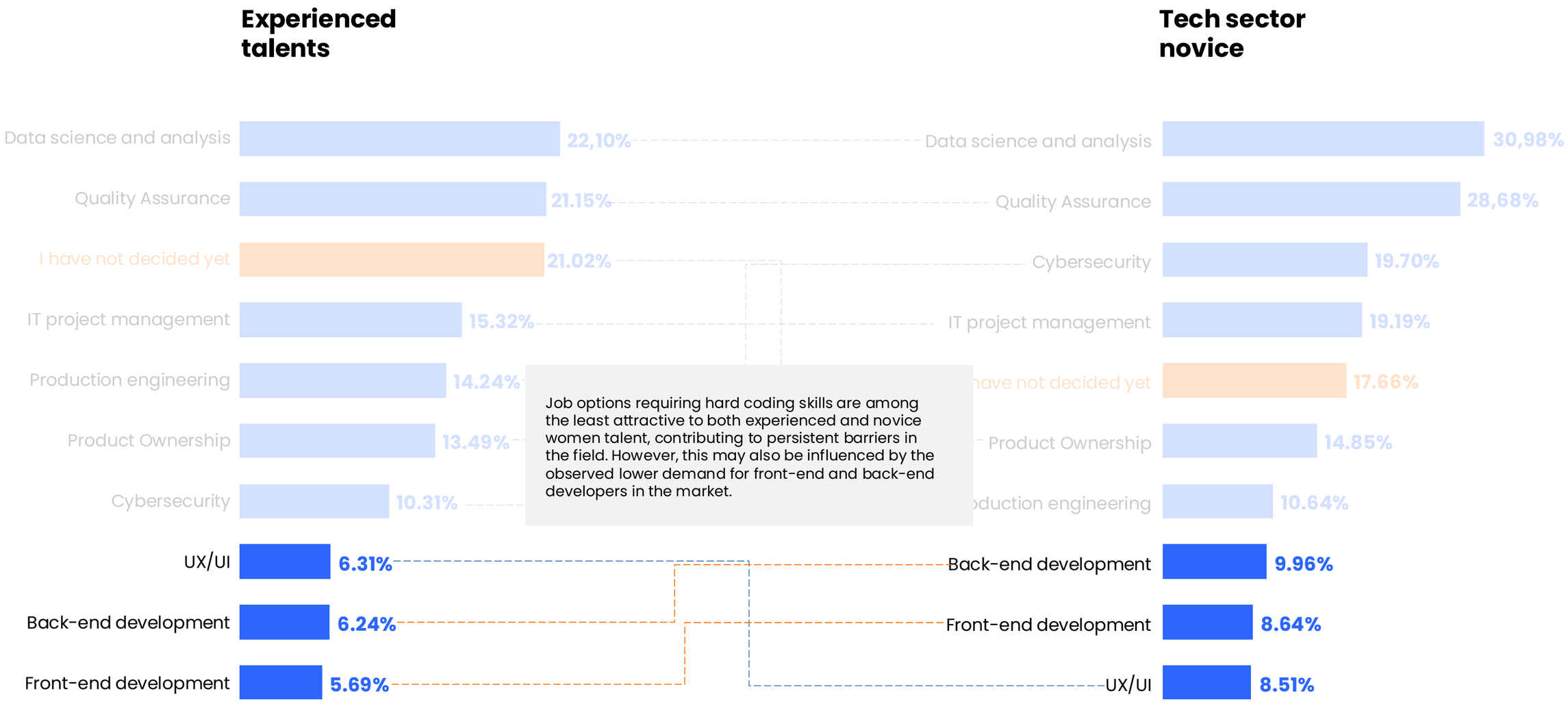
Which of the following tech sector jobs are you currently interested in? (total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



Which of the following tech sector jobs are you currently interested in? (total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



Which of the following tech sector jobs are you currently interested in? (total percentages from different respondent groups, %)



02

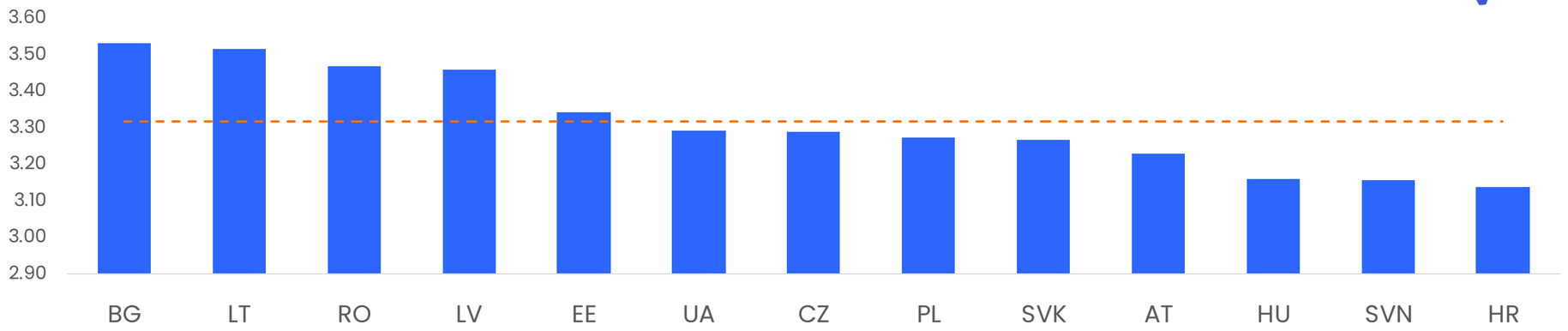
Focus Areas

This section explores the state of women in the tech industry, emphasizing key areas for improvement, such as the insufficient efforts by companies to make it welcoming to women and the lack of mentorship programs. It also examines women's views on tech education and the government’s role in this matter.

01

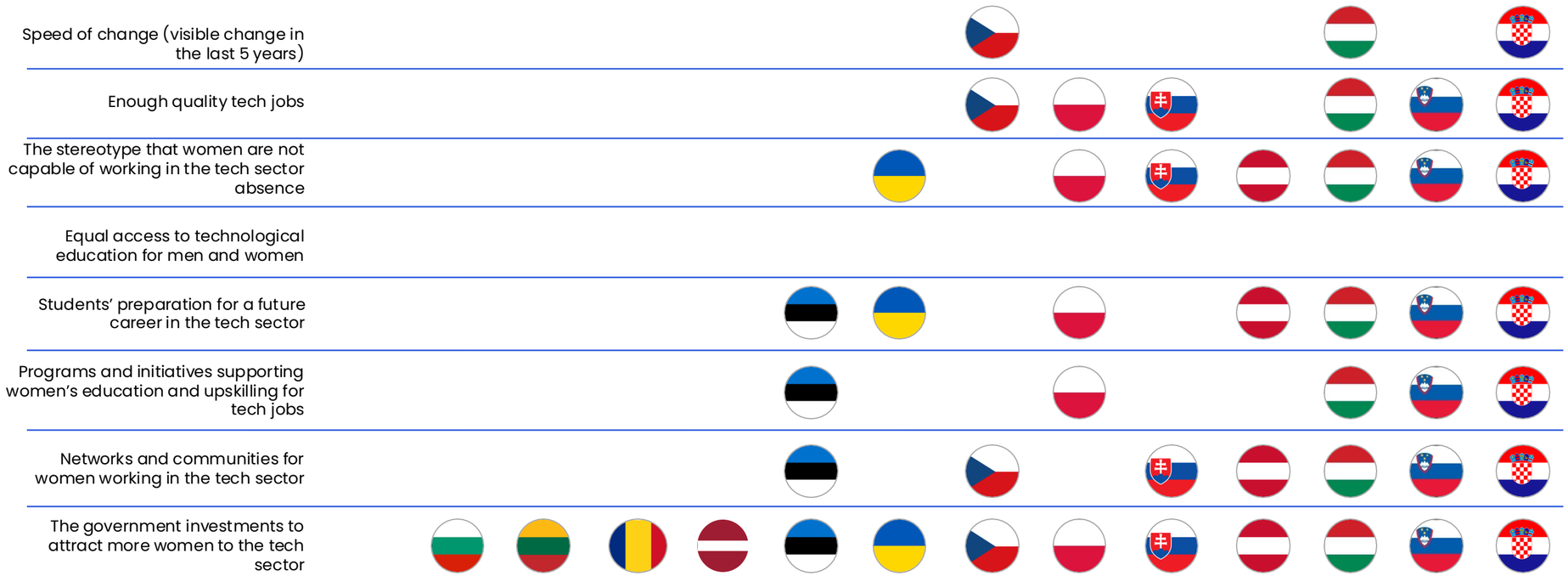
Country readiness to enable women in tech

Average per country, scale 1-5



02

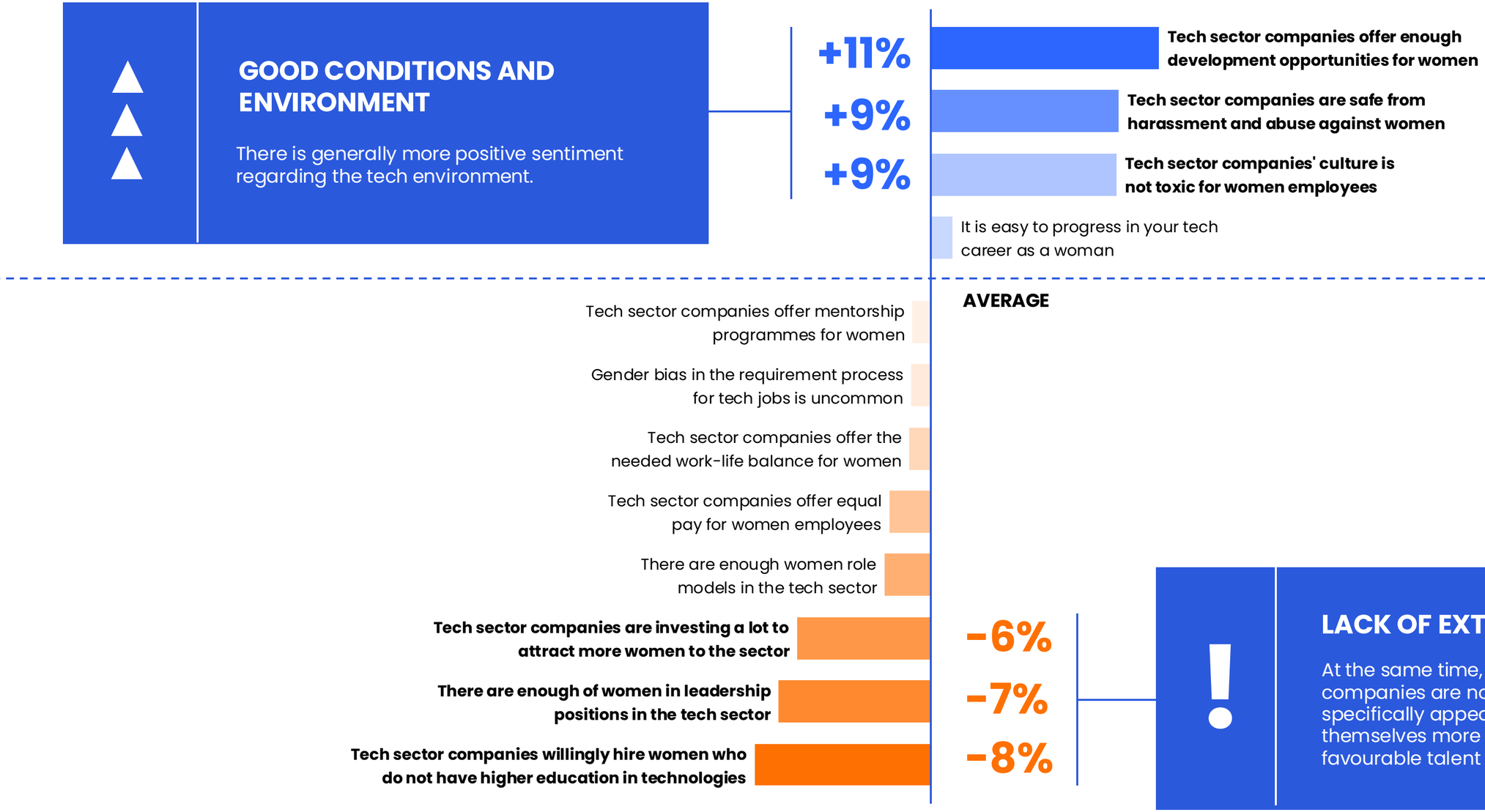
Areas for improvement



Thinking of the tech sector companies, please evaluate how strongly you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 (deviation from the mean, %)

GOOD CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

There is generally more positive sentiment regarding the tech environment.



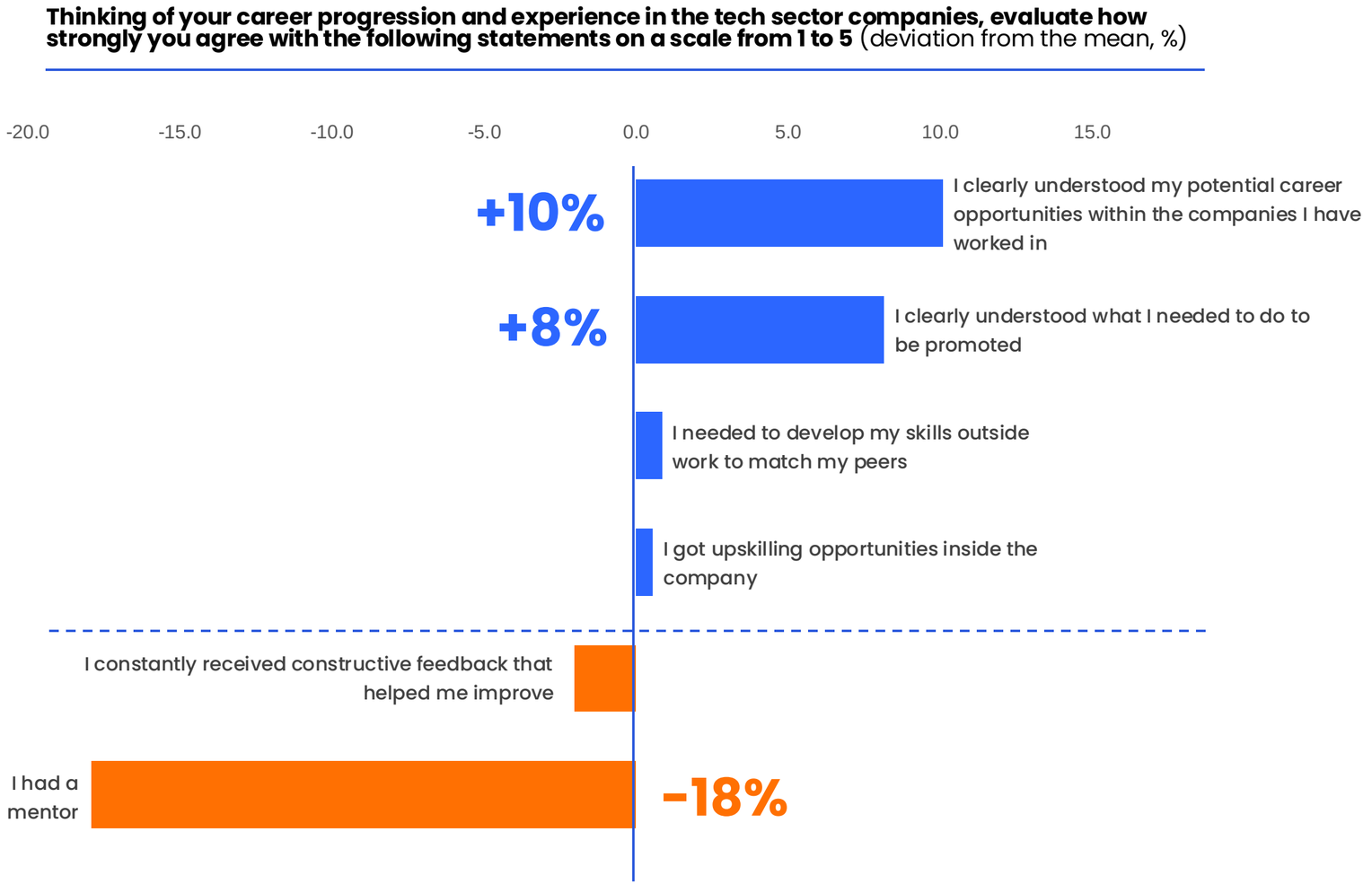
LACK OF EXTRA MILE

At the same time, it is believed that the companies are not going the extra mile to specifically appeal to women and make themselves more accessible and favourable talent destination.

Environment for growth evaluation

According to the research, many women indicate that they did not have a mentor while progressing through the tech sector.

However, according to the experts, mentors and mentorship programs are one of the most effective measures to progress inside the tech sector. Ensuring support and sponsorship for ideas that otherwise might be disregarded.

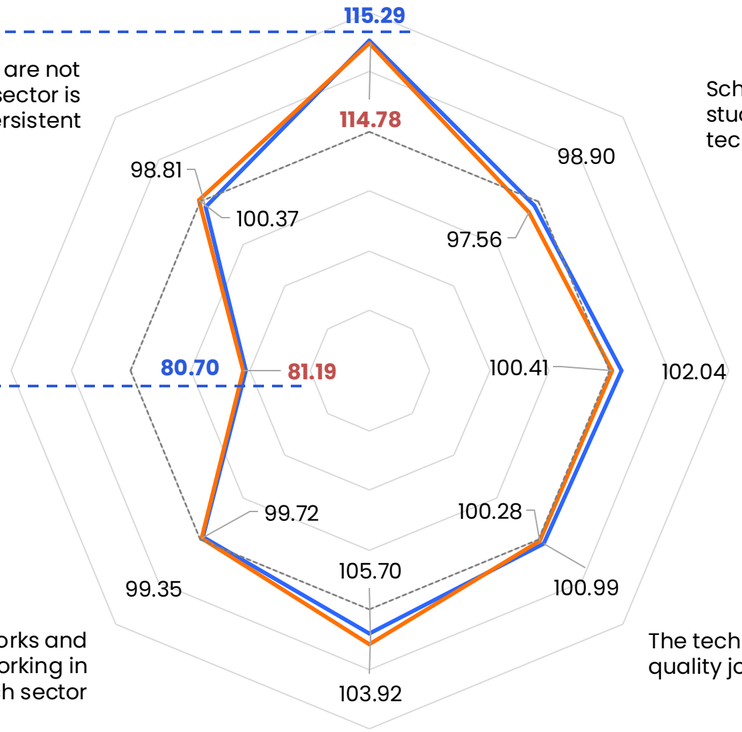


Thinking of the country you live in and its tech sector, please evaluate countries' readiness to enable women in tech (difference to the mean, %)

EXPERIENCED TALENT | FRESH TALENT | NORMALIZED SAMPLE MEAN

▲ **Women have the same access to technological education as men**

▼ **The country's government is investing a lot to attract more women to the tech sector**



The stereotype that women are not capable of working in the tech sector is no longer persistent

School education is preparing students for a future career in the tech sector

There are enough programs supporting women's education and upskilling for tech jobs

The tech sector offers enough quality jobs

There have been positive changes for women in the tech sector in the last 5 years

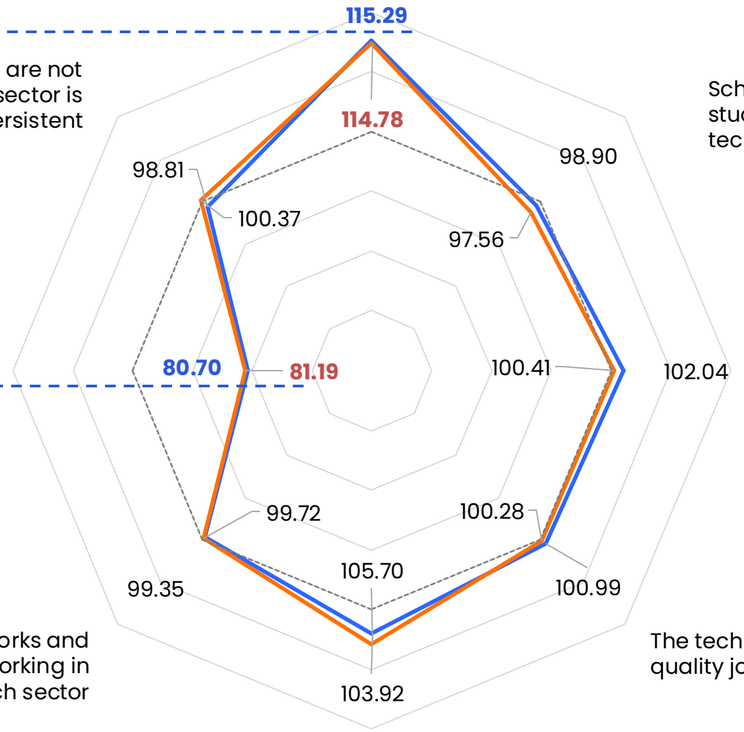
There are enough networks and communities for women working in the tech sector

Thinking of the country you live in and its tech sector, please evaluate countries' readiness to enable women in tech (difference to the mean, %)

EXPERIENCED TALENT | FRESH TALENT | NORMALIZED SAMPLE MEAN

▲ **Women have the same access to technological education as men**

▼ **The country's government is investing a lot to attract more women to the tech sector**



The stereotype that women are not capable of working in the tech sector is no longer persistent

School education is preparing students for a future career in the tech sector

There are enough programs supporting women's education and upskilling for tech jobs

The tech sector offers enough quality jobs

There have been positive changes for women in the tech sector in the last 5 years

There are enough networks and communities for women working in the tech sector

Both fresh and experienced women talents evaluate existing status quo similarly: 1) equal tech education for women being the most highly regarded aspect across the region and 2) governmental investment in women engagement in tech sector needing the most attention.

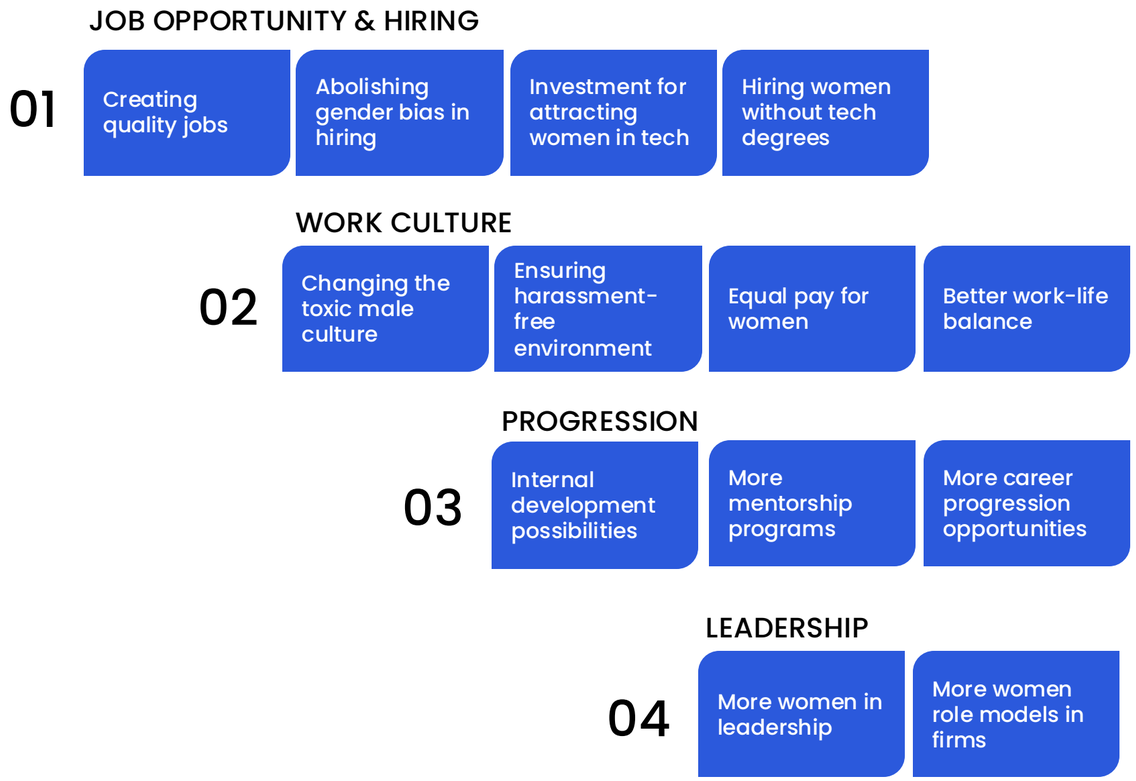
Government investment in women in tech is evaluated as the attribute that requires improvement the most across all countries, with lowest evaluation in Hungary and highest in Austria and Lithuania.

03

Career Journey

In this section, we cover the key areas for improvement throughout the talents' journey in the tech industry, particularly the challenges such as unequal pay, limited career opportunities, biased hiring practices, and difficulties in achieving work-life balance. It highlights the need for initiatives that promote mentorship, demolish stereotypes, and encourage supportive networks to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

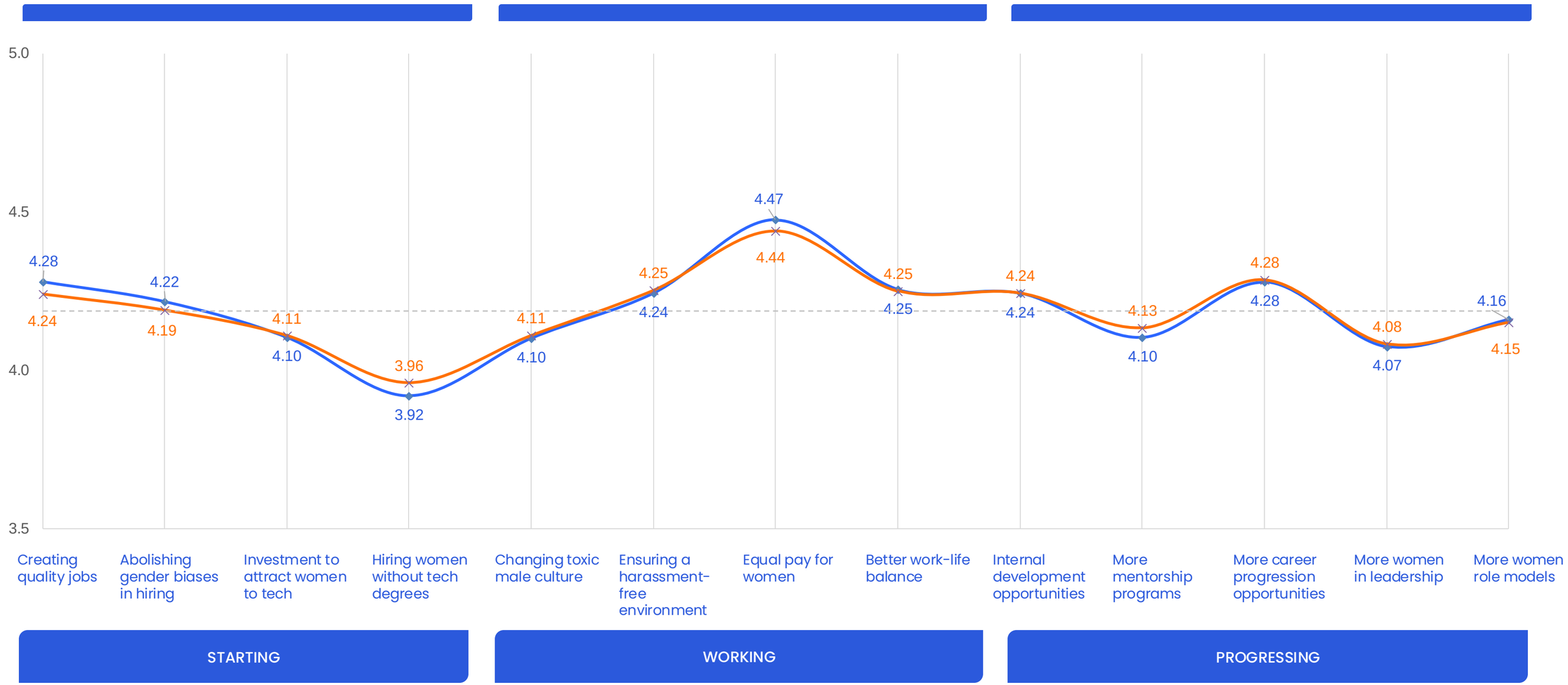
Needed change across the talent journey



In the survey, we asked women to identify where the biggest change is needed across the whole career journey on both sector and national level.

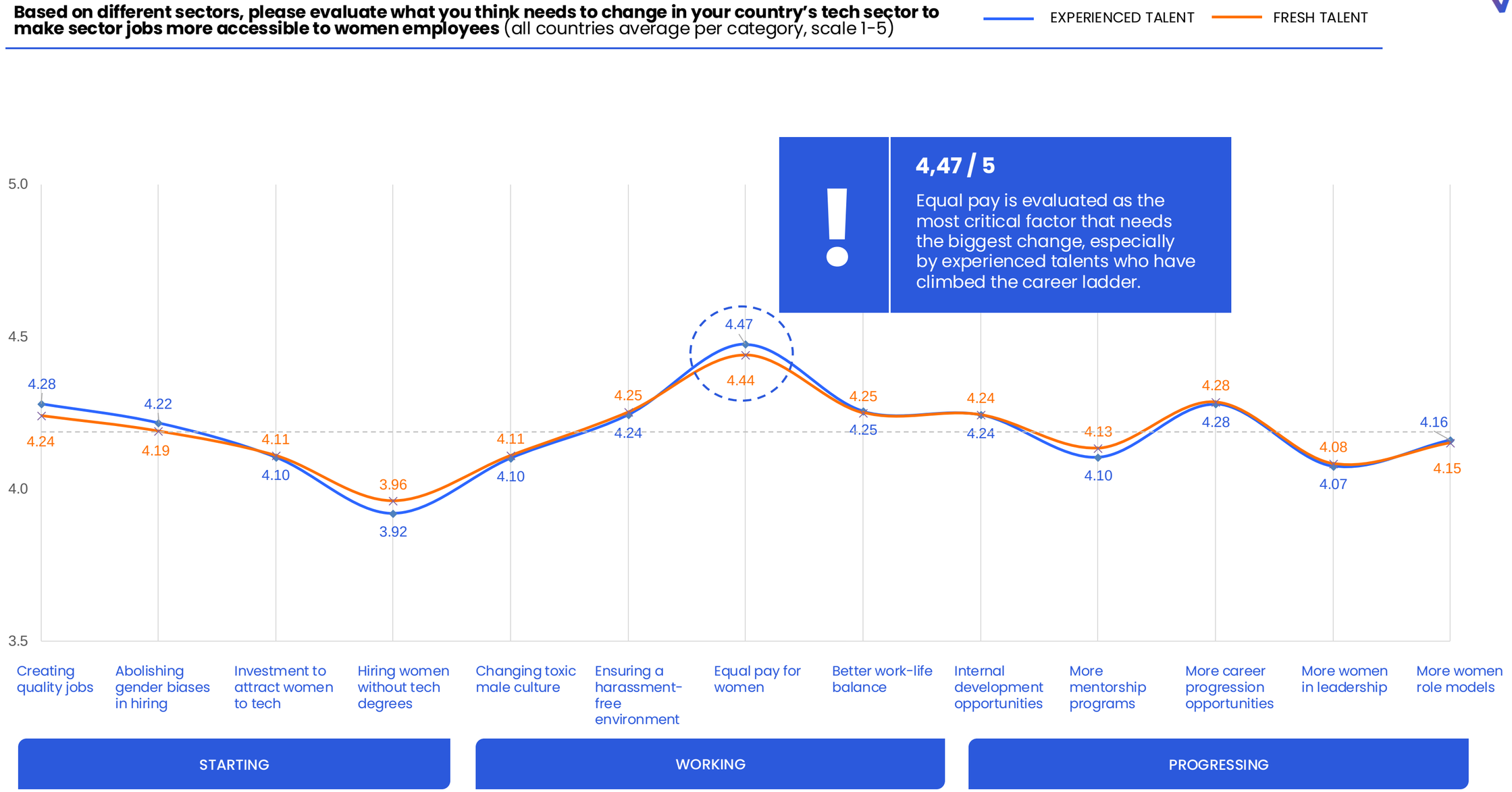
SECTOR LEVEL

Based on different sectors, please evaluate what you think needs to change in your country's tech sector to make sector jobs more accessible to women employees (all countries average per category, scale 1-5)



SECTOR LEVEL

Based on different sectors, please evaluate what you think needs to change in your country's tech sector to make sector jobs more accessible to women employees (all countries average per category, scale 1-5)

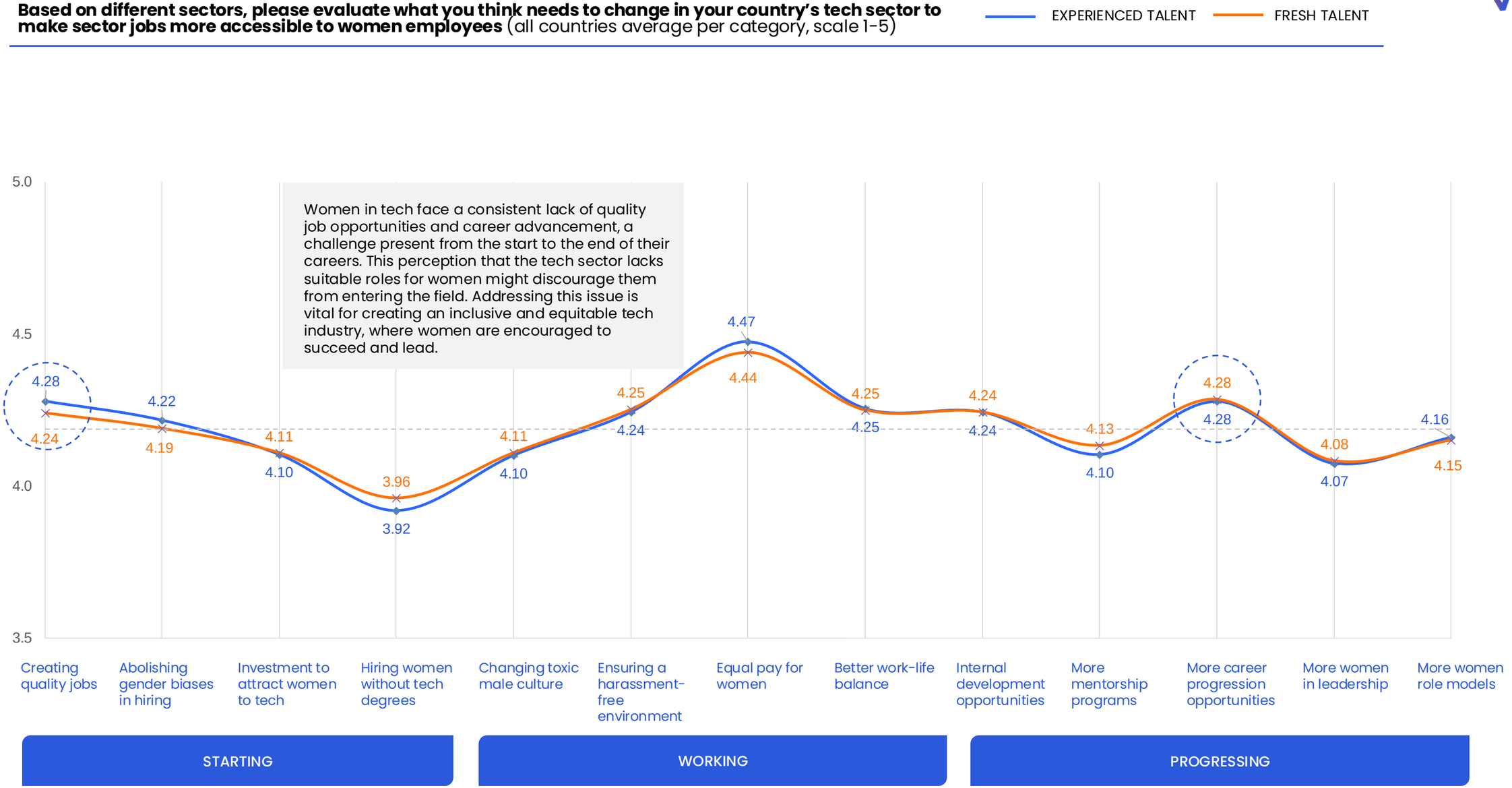


4,47 / 5

Equal pay is evaluated as the most critical factor that needs the biggest change, especially by experienced talents who have climbed the career ladder.

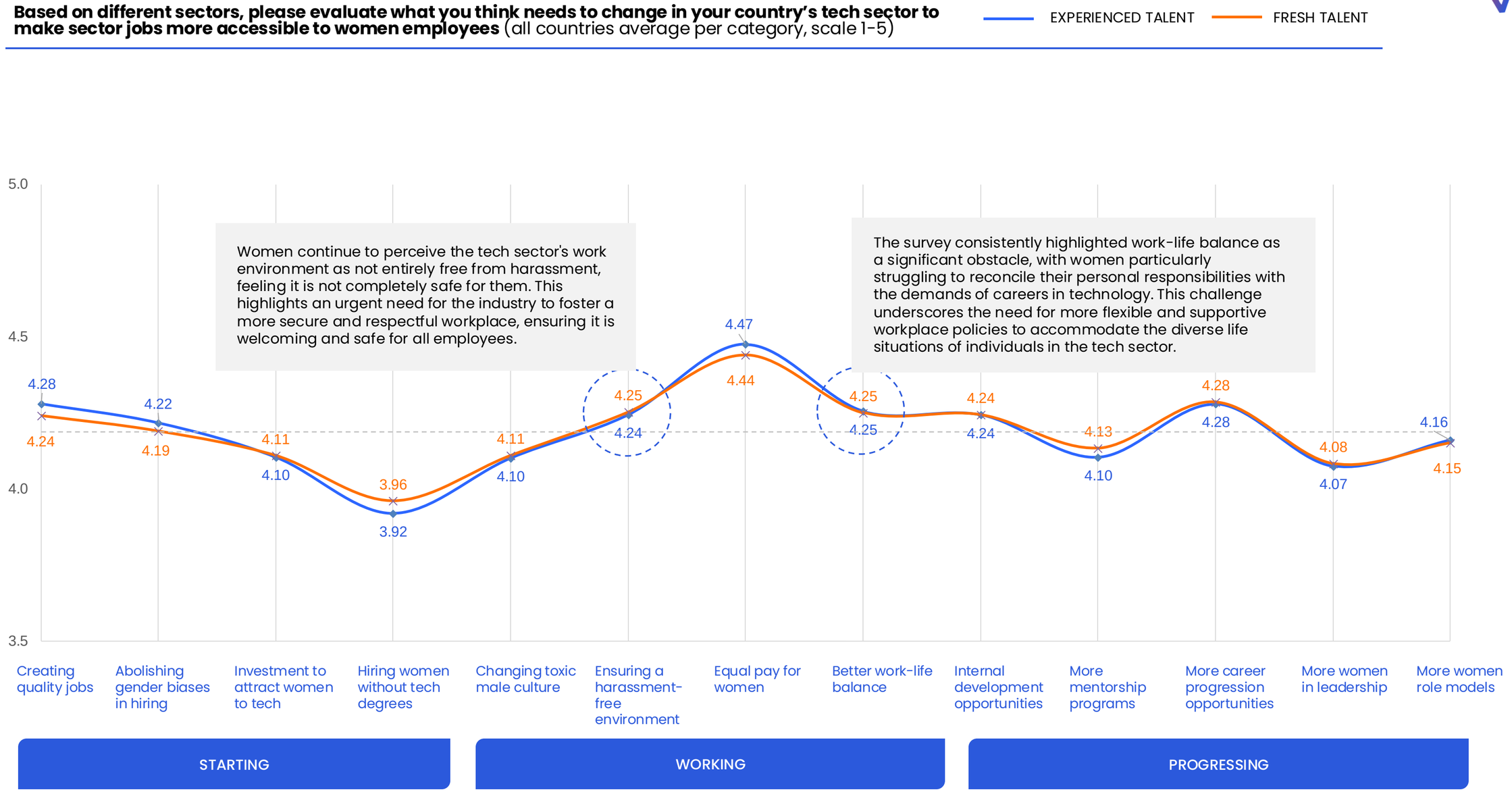
SECTOR LEVEL

Based on different sectors, please evaluate what you think needs to change in your country's tech sector to make sector jobs more accessible to women employees (all countries average per category, scale 1-5)



SECTOR LEVEL

Based on different sectors, please evaluate what you think needs to change in your country's tech sector to make sector jobs more accessible to women employees (all countries average per category, scale 1-5)



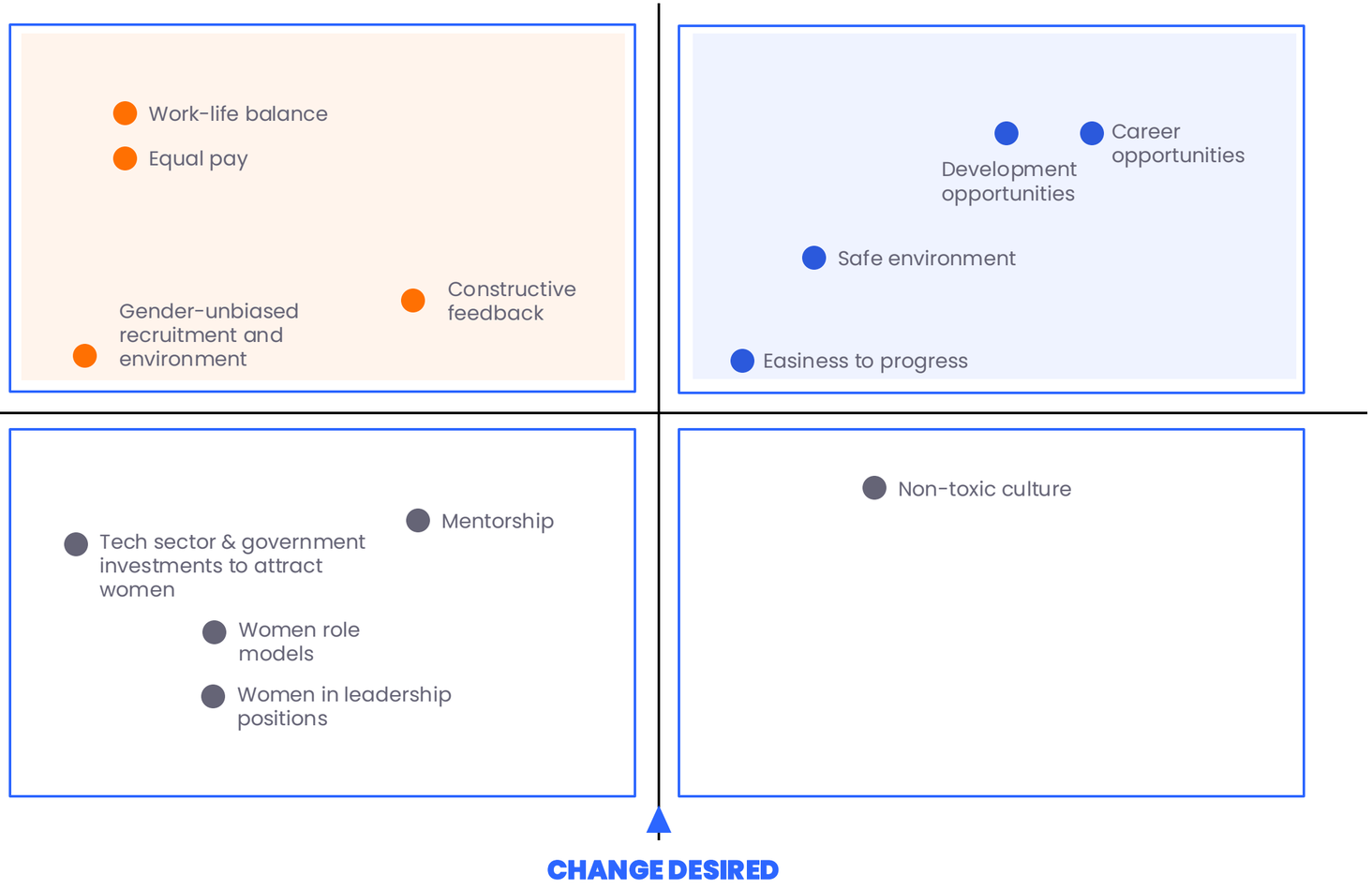
Factors performance and importance

PRIORITY

Factors that were evaluated as high performing but still evaluated as needing further change

Factors that were evaluated as low performing now but also a high priority for change

HIGHEST PRIORITY



Factors that influence women's experience entering or progressing in the tech sector performance and importance evaluation

Needed change across the talent journey

WOMEN GO TECH

01 JOB OPPORTUNITY & HIRING

- Creating quality jobs
- Abolishing gender bias in hiring
- Investment for attracting women in tech
- Hiring women without tech degrees

02 WORK CULTURE

- Changing the toxic male culture
- Ensuring harassment-free environment
- Equal pay for women
- Better work-life balance

03 PROGRESSION

- Internal development possibilities
- More mentorship programs
- More career progression opportunities

04 LEADERSHIP

- More women in leadership
- More women role models in firms

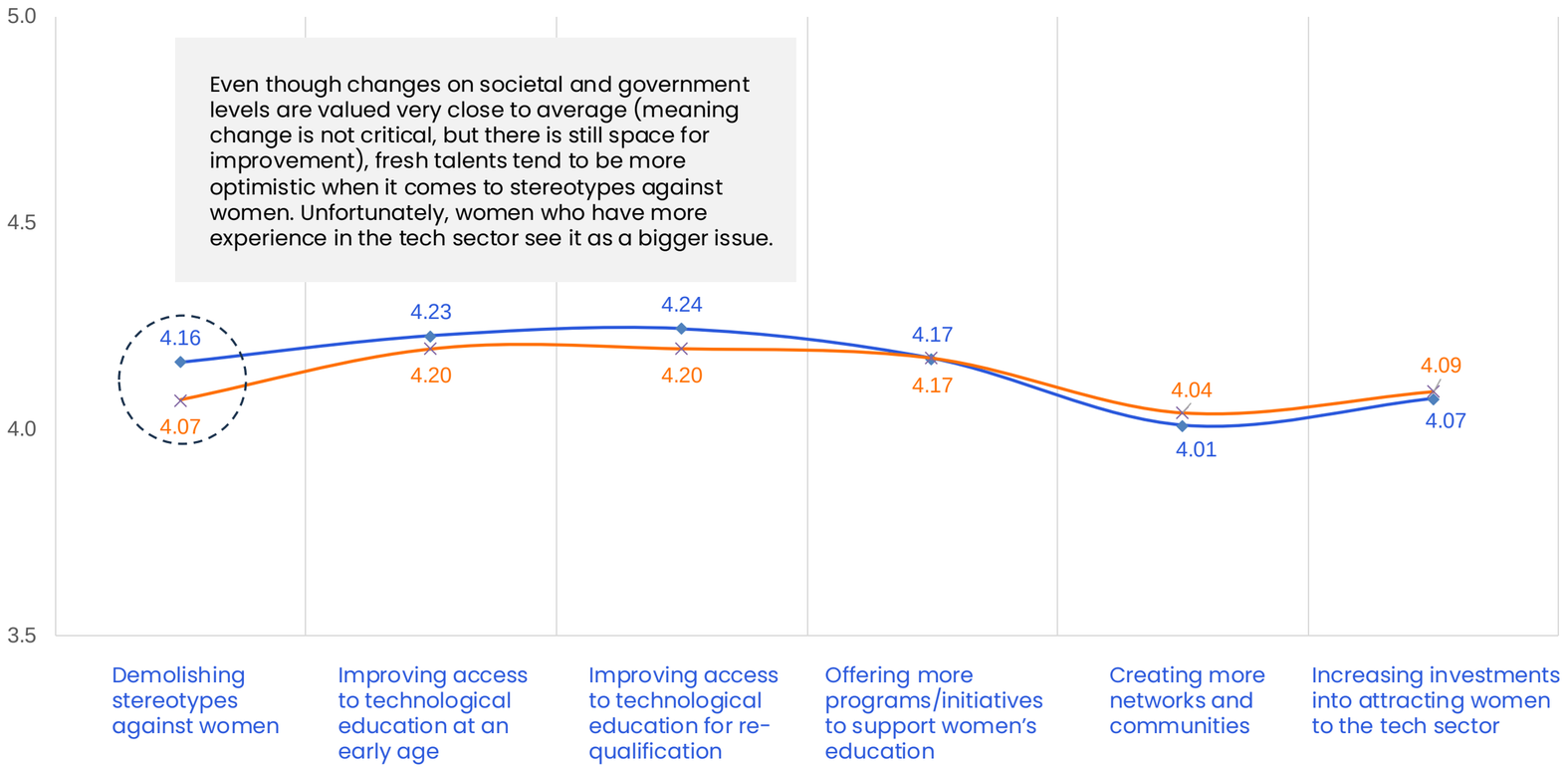
COUNTRY-LEVEL

- Demolishing gender stereotypes
- Improving access to technological education
- Improving access for requalification
- Offering more initiatives to support women's education
- Creating more networks and communities
- Increasing investments into attracting women to tech sector

In the survey, we asked women to identify where the biggest change is needed across the whole career journey on both sector and national level.

SOCIETAL LEVEL

Please evaluate what you think needs to change on the societal or governmental level to make tech sector jobs more accessible to women employees
(all countries average per category, scale 1-5)



EARLY ACCESS TO TECH

Improved access to technological education **at an early stage** is needed in:

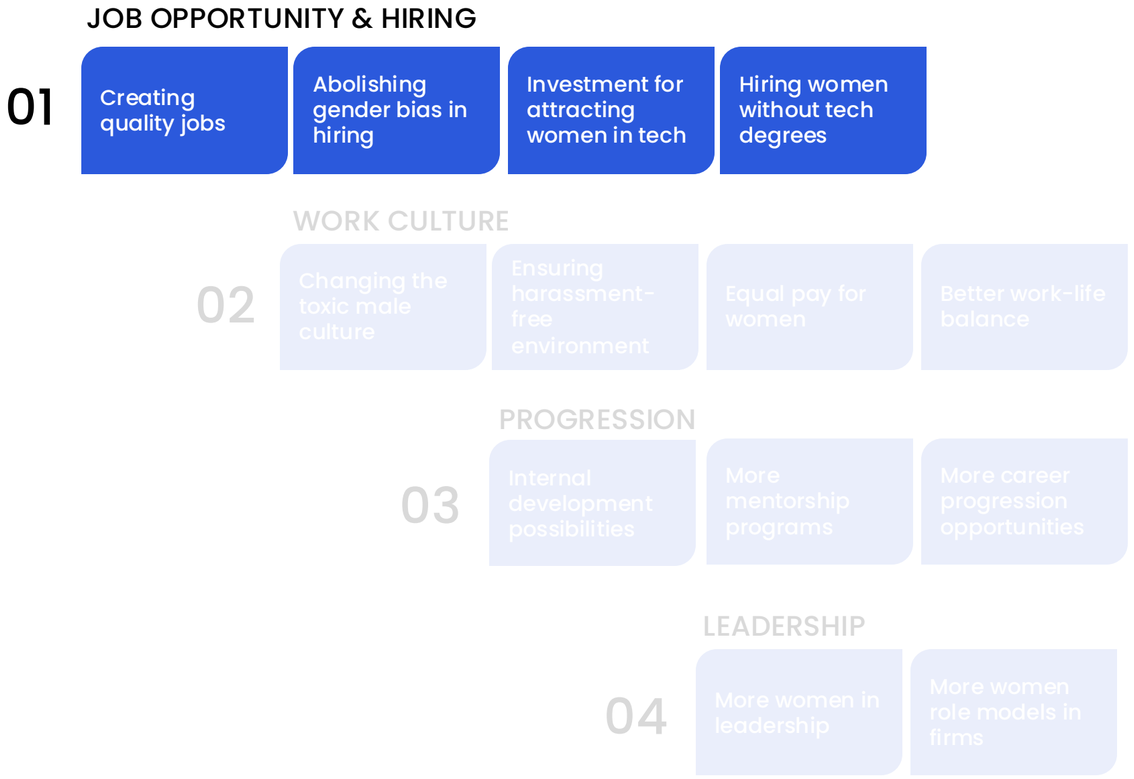
REQUALIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Improved access to technological education **for re-qualification** is needed in:

DEDICATED SUPPORT PROGRAMS

More programs/initiatives to support women's education are desired in:

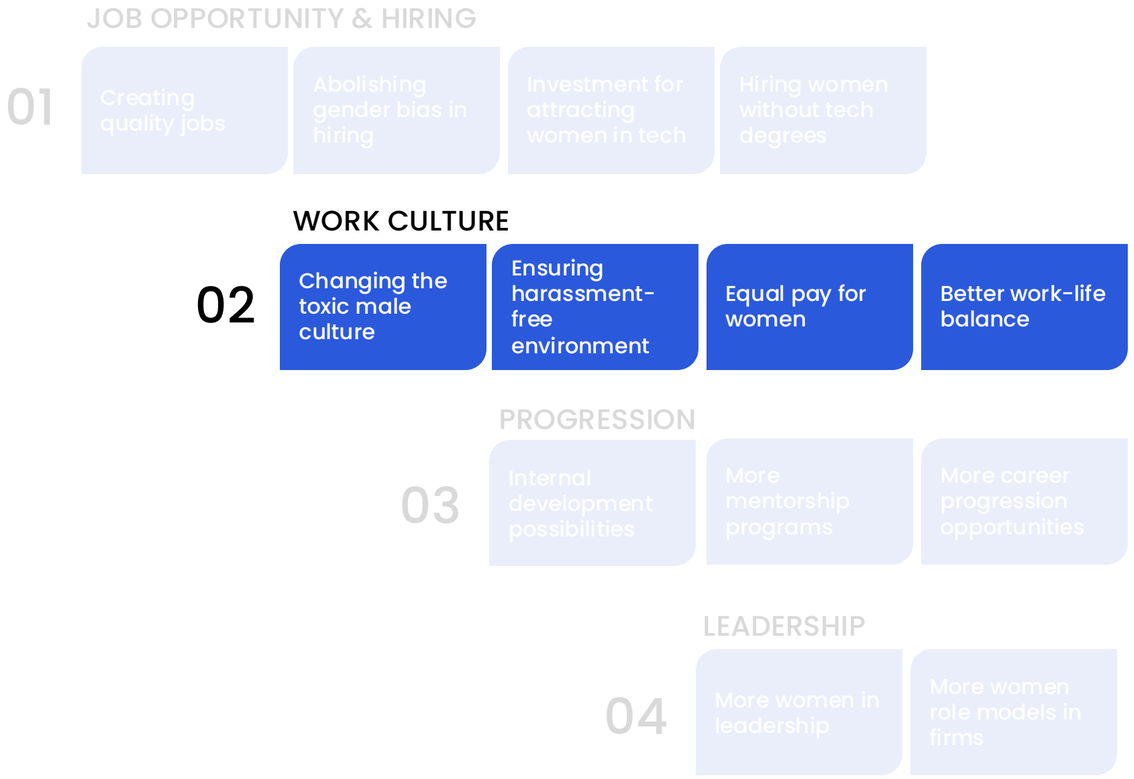
Expert insights



Experts agree on existing biases in hiring process and the importance of implementing practices that would eliminate a potentially biased selection, such as quotas (at least as a temporary, accelerating solution) or resumes having only candidate's initials on it.

However, while quotas can be a starting point, experts emphasize the need for a comprehensive strategy. Companies must also invest in attracting female candidates.

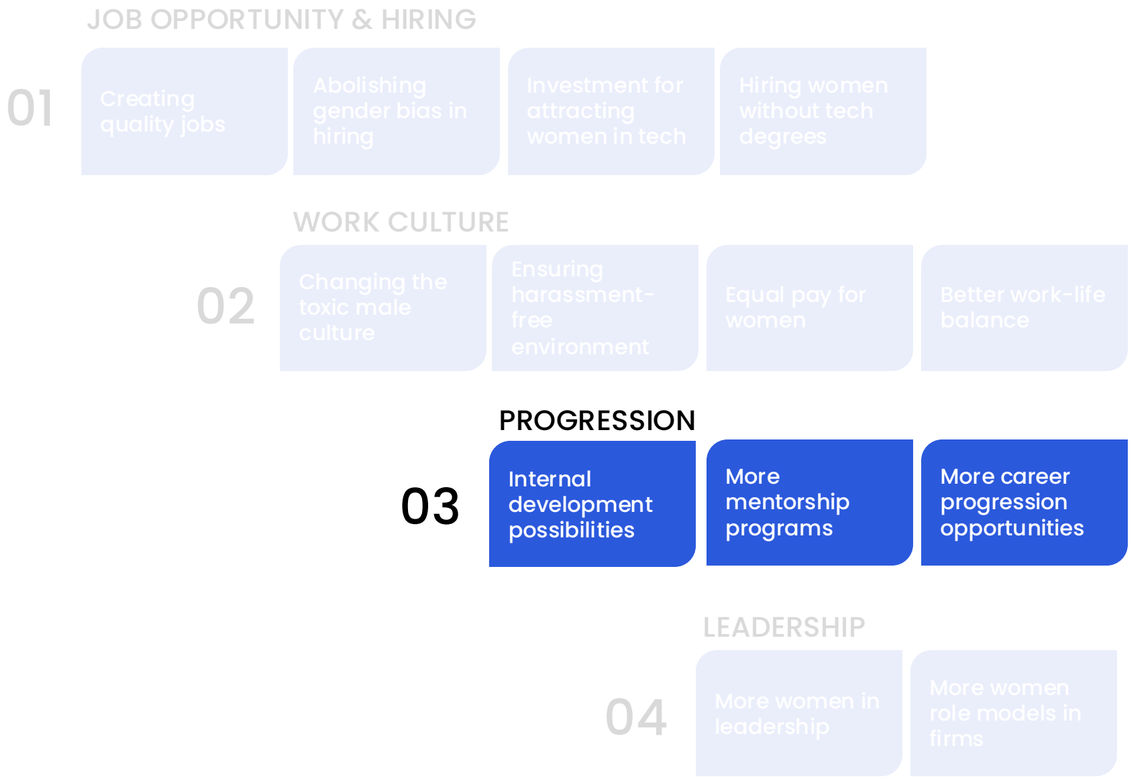
Expert insights



Many experts agree that issues related to a toxic culture or harassment may still exist. However, they often claim to have observed a positive improvement in this area in the past years.

The existing issues regarding work-life balance are due to, first and foremost, unequal roles within the family. The pandemic highlighted how work-from-home and flexible schedules could address the longstanding challenge of unequal family burdens, particularly for women. However, the recent shift back to traditional office environments creates significant stress and hinders women's ability to manage work and home responsibilities effectively.

Expert insights

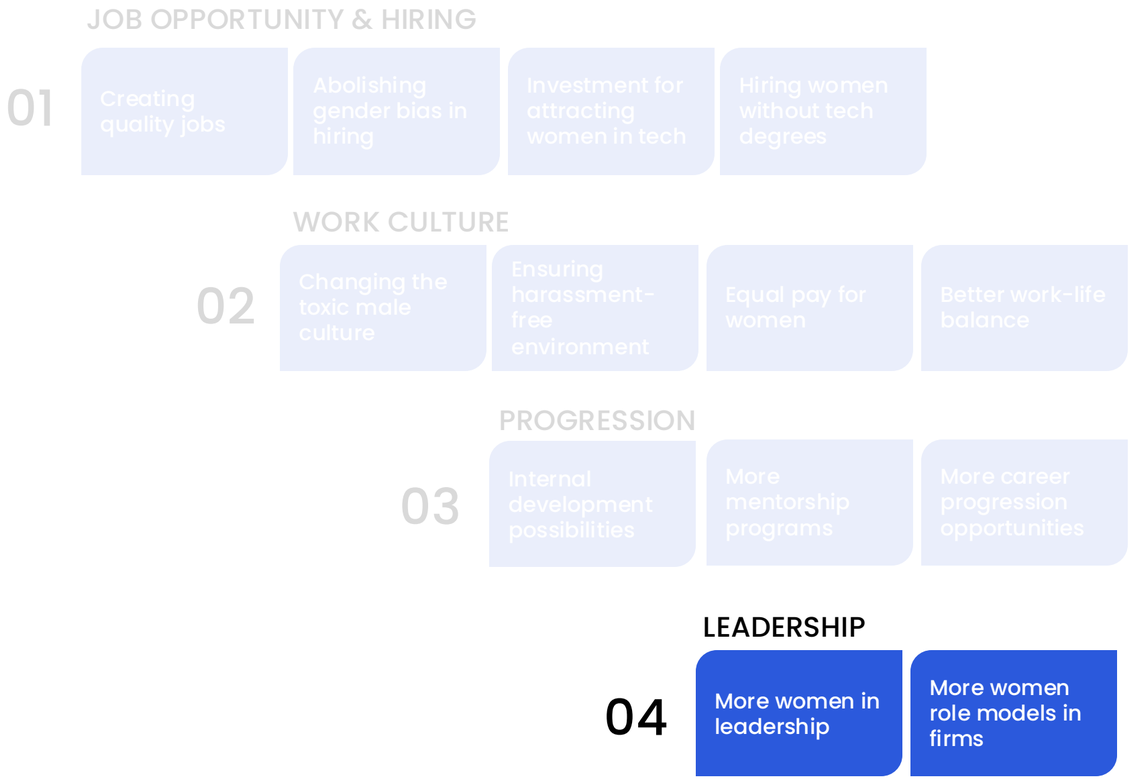


Experts indicate that one of the most important and effective means for career progression is mentorship and sponsorship received from the management. However, the cases of women being sponsored by either male or female colleagues are uncommon.

Another critical issue is the lack of support some successful women offer to other women. Interviews with experts revealed that sometimes women who have climbed the career ladder believe "if I did it, anyone can." This mentality disregards the ongoing challenges faced by women and often leads to a resistance for initiatives within the company specifically designed to support women, even when such decisions fall within their power.

Mentorship is portrayed as a key factor in helping women advance their careers, providing guidance, advice, and encouragement.

Expert insights



Many experts highlight the lack of women role models in the tech sector and indicate it as a factor of significant importance when trying to increase women involvement in the tech sector. It is essential to have relatable role models, who would be at different stages of their careers, coming from various backgrounds, and not solely those already in top managerial positions.

In addition, experts call attention to the importance of encouraging women who already work in tech to step forward, to be visible and to become the role models that other women could look up to. Therefore, initiatives directed towards identifying and supporting role models are very useful and beneficial both for role models and women who could be inspired by them.

Expert insights

COUNTRY-LEVEL

01 Demolishing gender stereotypes

02 Improving access to technological education

Improving access to requalification

Offering more initiatives to support women's education

03 Creating more networks and communities

04 Increasing investments into attracting women to tech sector

Experts highlight the issue of stereotypes starting from childhood, where societal expectations shape the perception that certain activities and, therefore, professions are not suitable for women. This early societal influence is pinpointed as a significant barrier to women's participation in tech, underscoring the need to challenge and change these ingrained stereotypes.

Experts stress the need to encourage women to enter the tech sector, and the importance of combating societal stereotypes that deter women from pursuing careers in STEM fields. They emphasize that changing these stereotypes is crucial for increasing female participation and engagement in tech.

Combatting stereotypes through visible success stories, role models, and broadening the perception of what roles in tech entail can help to shift societal and industry norms.

Expert insights

COUNTRY-LEVEL

01 Demolishing gender stereotypes

02 Improving access to technological education | Improving access to requalification | Offering more initiatives to support women’s education

03 Creating more networks and communities

04 Increasing investments into attracting women to tech sector

A skilled and diverse workforce is critical for driving innovation and economic growth. By upskilling women and facilitating their requalification into tech, societies can harness untapped potential, leading to more innovative solutions and a robust tech ecosystem.

According to the experts, requalification programs play a crucial role in enabling individuals from non-tech backgrounds to transition into the tech sector. This is particularly significant for women seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce in tech roles, providing them with a pathway to new career opportunities that match the digital economy's demands.

The necessity for flexible learning opportunities that accommodate women's varied schedules, especially those balancing family responsibilities, is highlighted. Offering online courses, part-time programs, and other flexible learning formats can make tech education more inclusive, enabling more women to pursue requalification and upskilling without sacrificing other commitments.

Expert insights

COUNTRY-LEVEL

01 Demolishing gender stereotypes

02 Improving access to technological education

Improving access to requalification

Offering more initiatives to support women's education

03 Creating more networks and communities

04 Increasing investments into attracting women to tech sector

Experts highlight professional networks and communities as necessary for fostering a supportive environment that can significantly enhance women's participation and success in tech industry.

Networks and professional gatherings provide vital support and empowerment for women in tech, since they offer platforms for sharing experiences, overcoming common challenges, and celebrating achievements. These communities frequently facilitate mentorship opportunities, where more experienced professionals can guide newcomers to the field.

Professional gatherings and networks help women stay updated on the latest technological advancements and industry trends as well as gain visibility in the tech community. This visibility is critical for challenging stereotypes and changing perceptions about the role of women in tech. It also provides role models for aspiring tech professionals.

Collectively, women in tech networks have the power to advocate for changes that make the tech industry more inclusive and equitable. This includes pushing for policies that support work-life balance, equal pay, and harassment-free workplaces.

Expert insights

COUNTRY-LEVEL

01 Demolishing gender stereotypes

02 Improving access to technological education

Improving access to requalification

Offering more initiatives to support women's education

03 Creating more networks and communities

04 Increasing investments into attracting women to tech sector

The role of government in facilitating access to requalification and upskilling is acknowledged, with suggestions for policy support, funding, and the establishment of national programs aimed at increasing women's participation in the tech workforce.

Collaborations between educational institutions, tech companies, and non-profit organizations can lead to more comprehensive and accessible requalification and upskilling programs. These partnerships can help align the training content with industry needs, ensuring that participants acquire relevant and in-demand skills.

04

Barriers and Motivators

In this section, we look at the concerns women have and the motivators driving them in the tech industry. While stereotypes and challenges persist, especially for older women and those requalifying, motivations such as better pay, career growth, and flexibility remain strong. Experts agree that mentorship and role models are of significant importance in helping women overcome these obstacles, offering support and inspiration as they navigate their tech careers.

Barriers

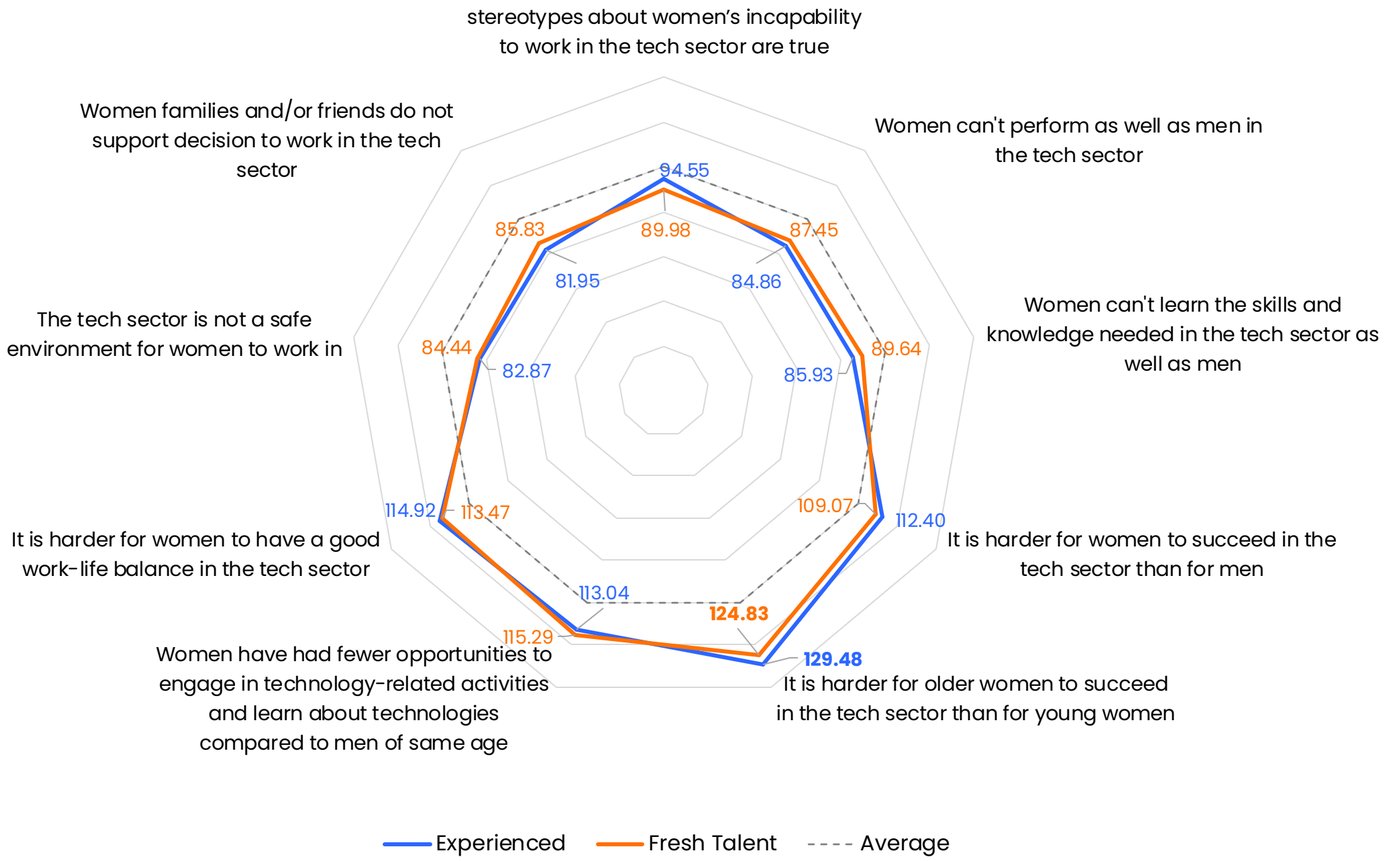
regional level

Even though, overall, women indicate that barriers are diminishing across tech sector and there is much less stereotypical attitude towards women and their capabilities, some barriers still find their way within the tech sector.

One of the most persisting barriers recognised across the region is hardship for older women to engage with tech sector, which can become a problem for women pursuing requalification.

Furthermore, women indicate that it might still be hard to have a good work-life balance in the tech sector. According to the experts, it can be associated with the diminishing work from home culture that ensured women, especially those having more responsibilities at home, flexibility and balance.

Please evaluate how relevant you find the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree) (difference to the mean, %)



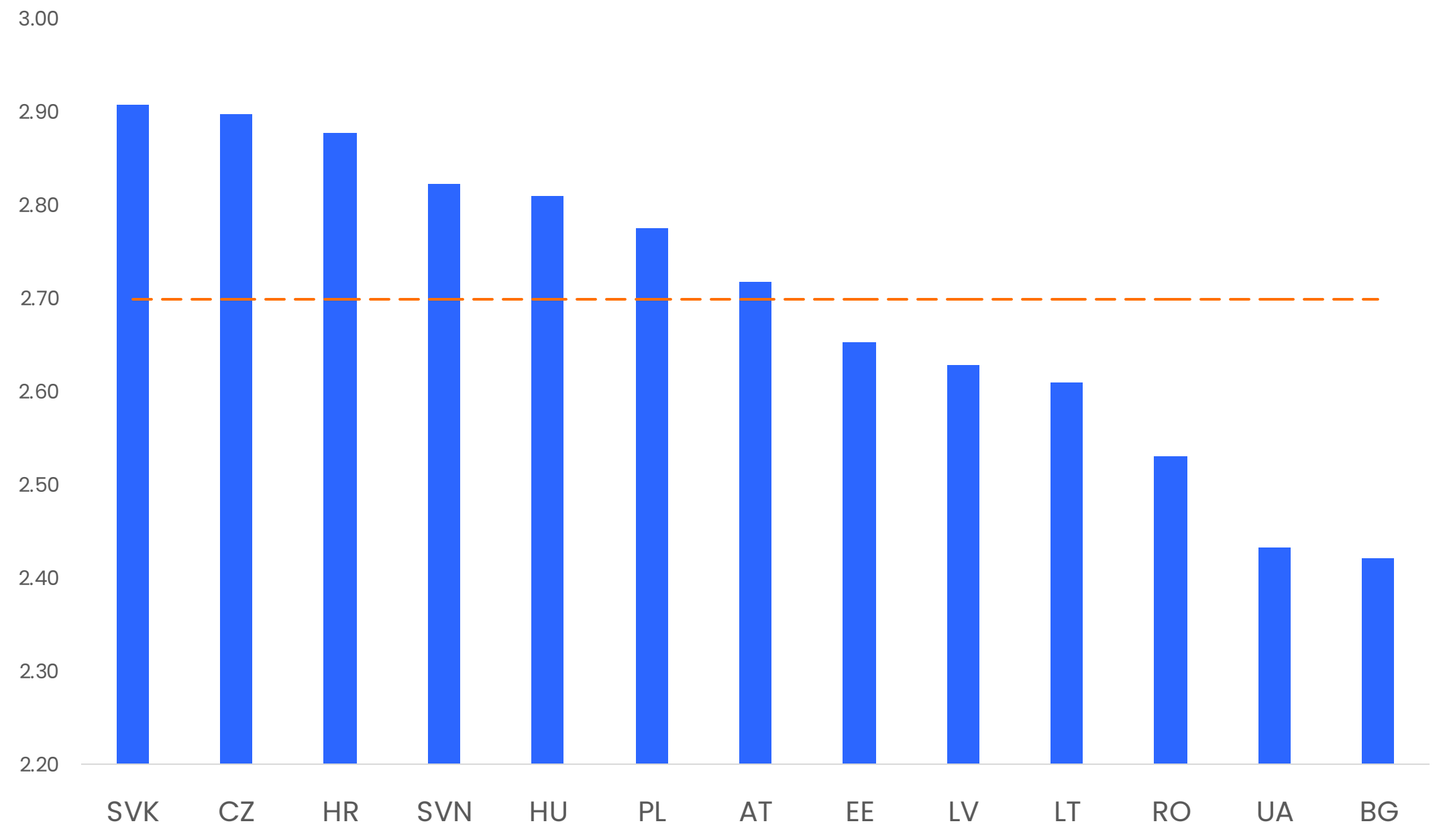
Barriers

regional level

Looking at separate countries, Bulgaria seems to be the most optimistic, with respondents mostly disagreeing with some of the common stereotypes. Meanwhile, respondents in Slovakia and Czechia tend to agree with them more.

Fresh talent from rural areas tend to perceive stereotypes as less problematic. Experienced talent from rural areas have less doubt than their city counterparts. However, they receive less support from their families.

Persistence of stereotypes and self doubt are more prevalent among the youngest age group. Regardless of age, respondents tend to agree that they had fewer opportunities and more hardship succeeding in tech than their male colleagues.

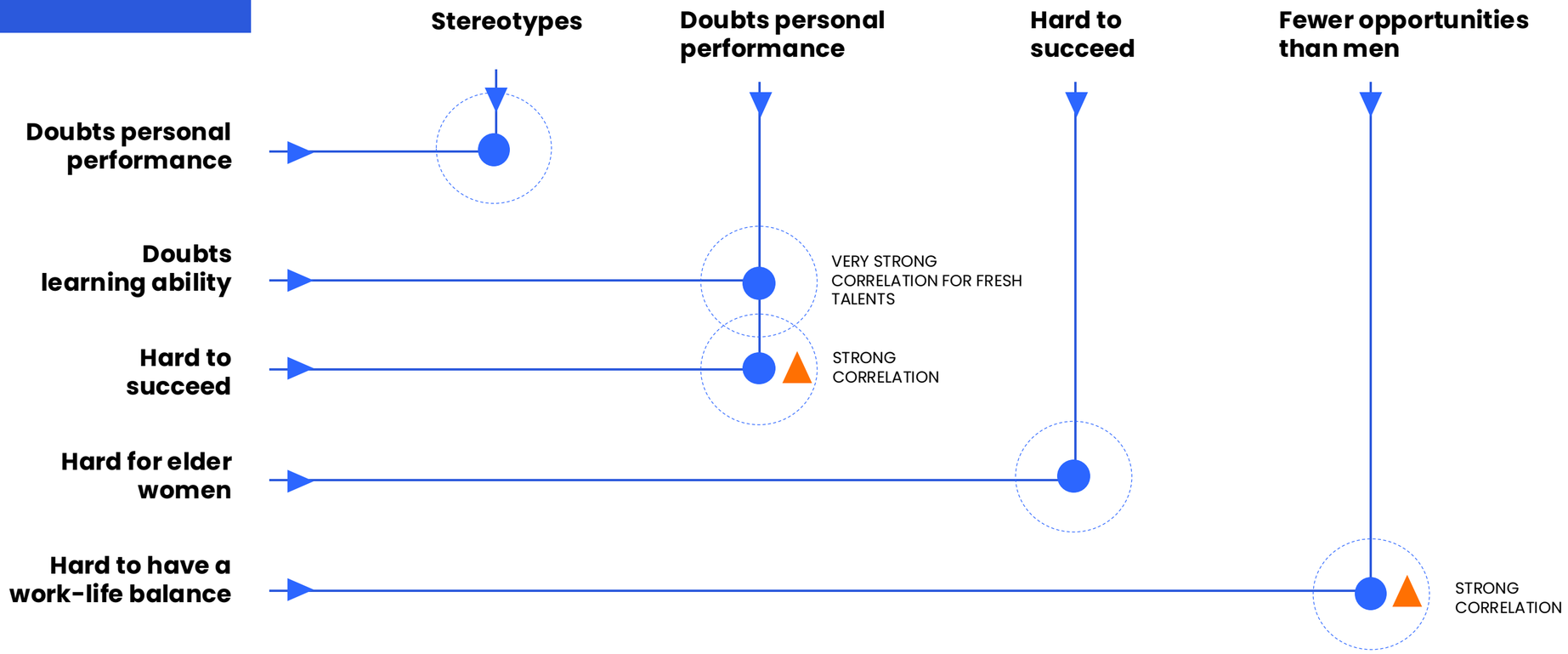


Barriers: related factors

A deeper look at how different factors correlate between themselves reveals a more nuanced picture regarding worldviews and perceptions

EXPERIENCED TALENTS

NOTE: specific factors that are related to each other and are likely to influence each other or be related to a single external cause

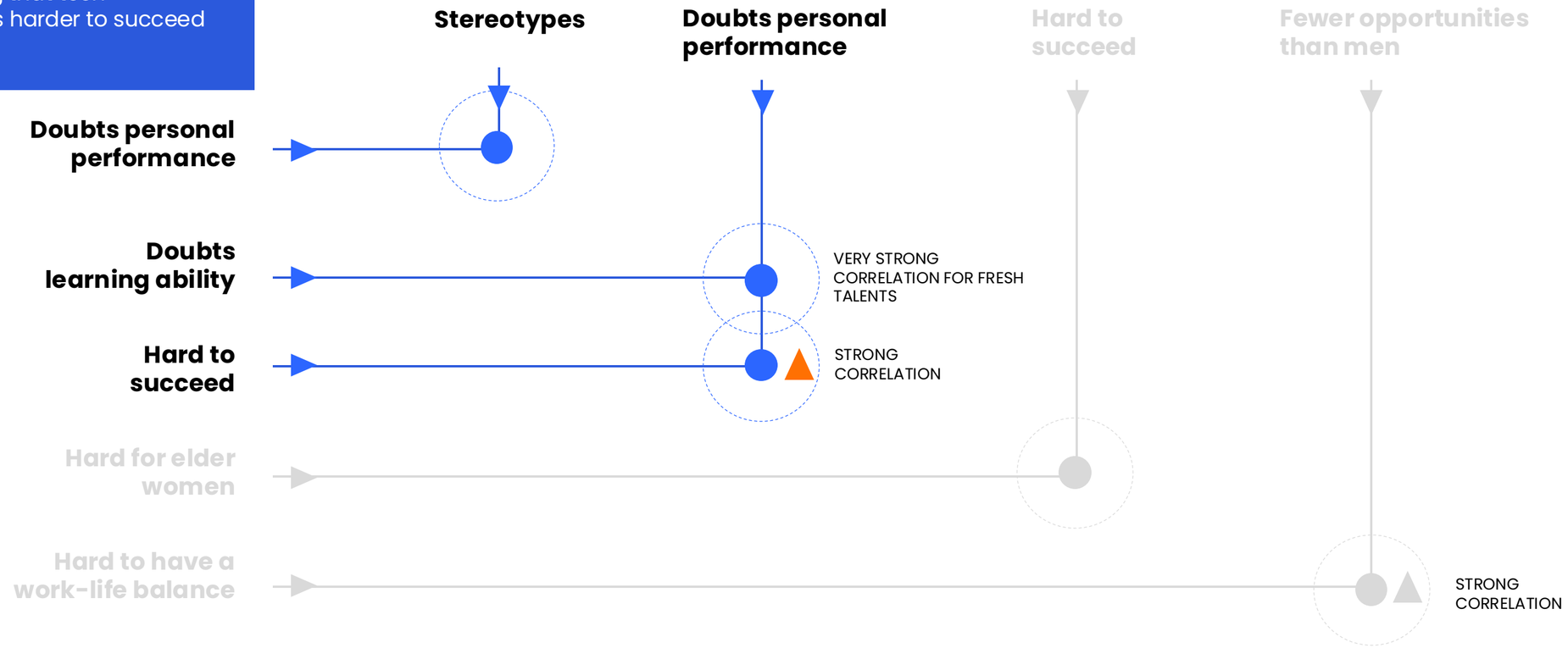


Barriers: related factors

Stereotypes relate to personal performance doubts while personal performance is tightly related to one's perceived ability to learn. These issues lead to understanding that tech environment is harder to succeed in.

EXPERIENCED TALENTS

NOTE: specific factors that are related to each other and are likely to influence each other or be related to a single external cause



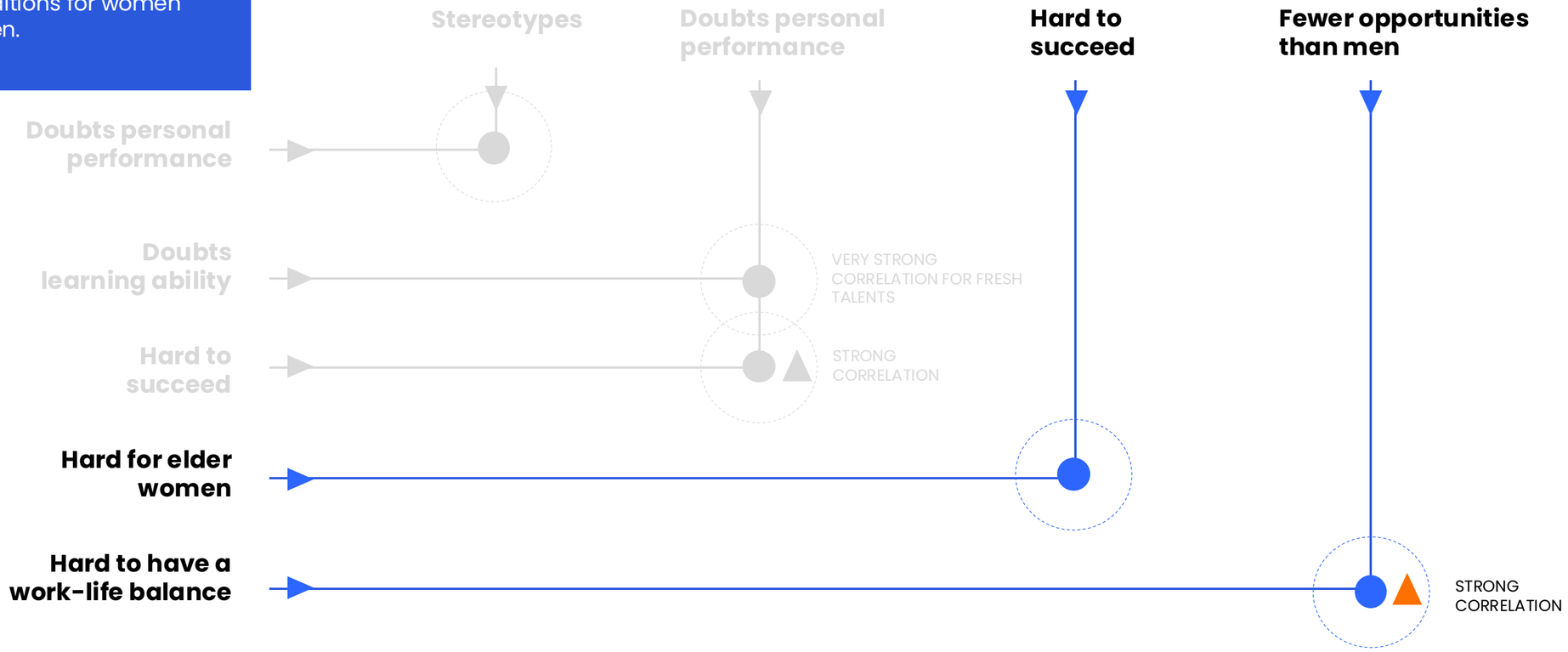
Barriers: related factors

!

At the same time, less obvious are connections that tech is a more challenging environment for older women and that lack of work-life balance might create less favorable conditions for women rather than men.

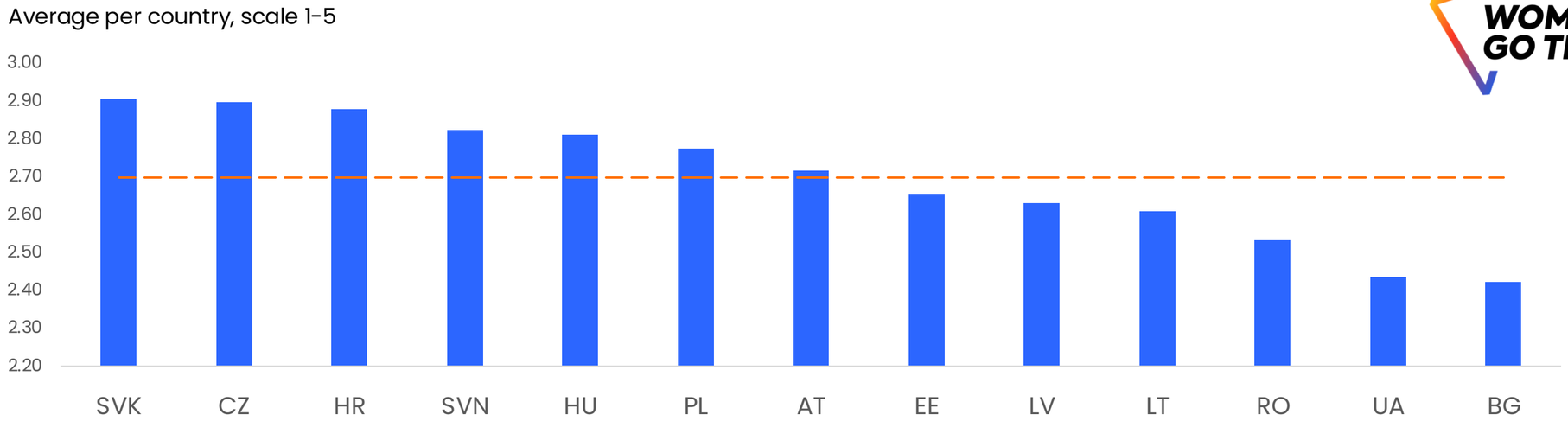
EXPERIENCED TALENTS

NOTE: specific factors that are related to each other and are likely to influence each other or be related to a single external cause



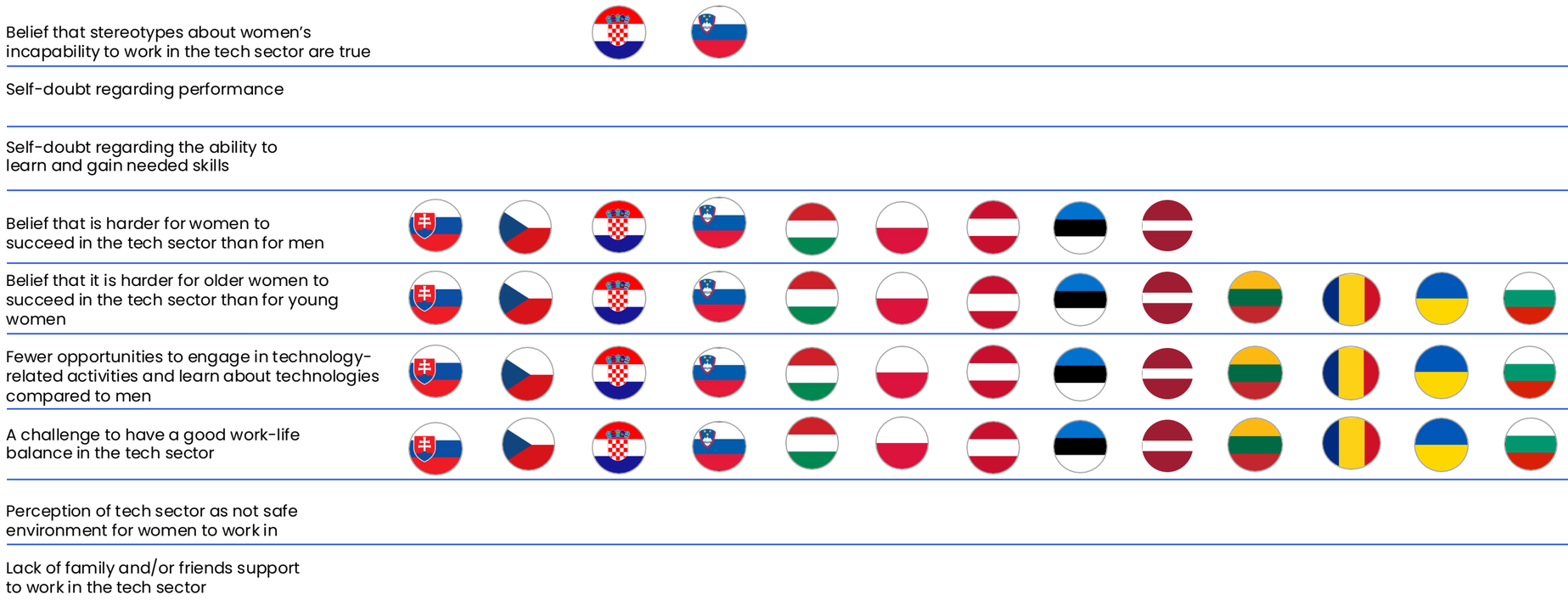
01

Barriers for women to enter and succeed in tech



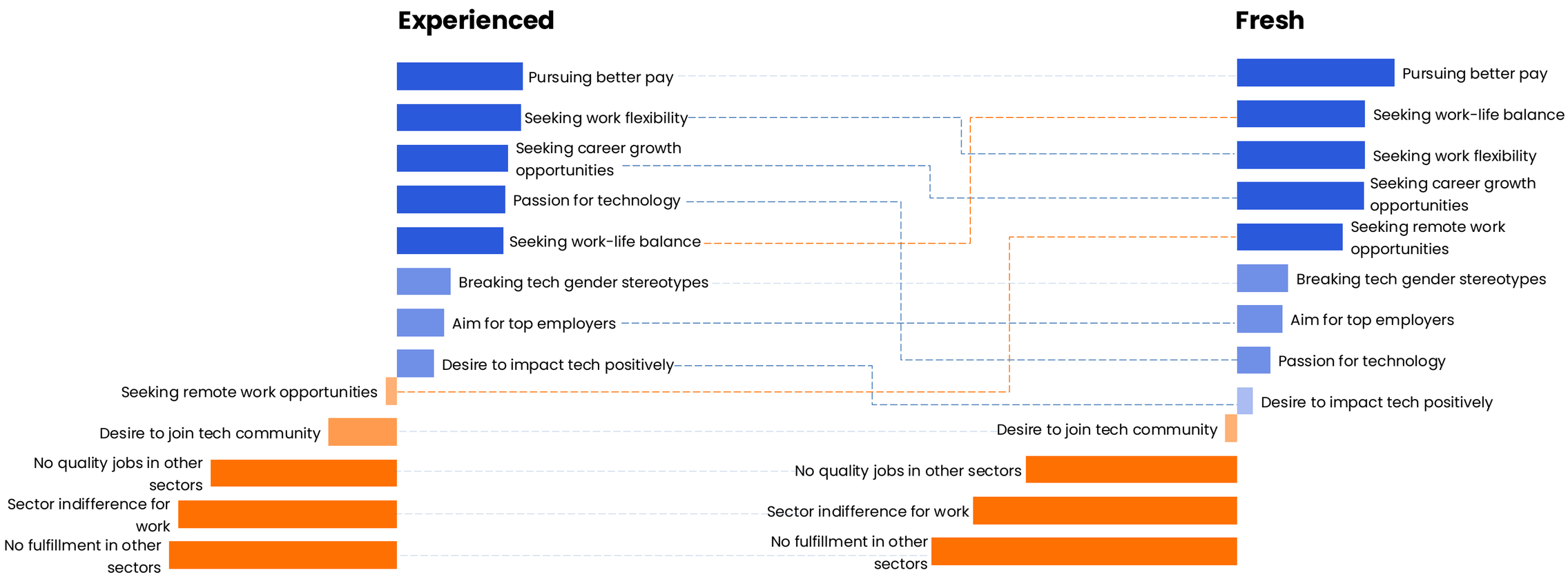
02

Biggest barriers per country



Motivations to join tech sector

Please evaluate how relevant the following motives were to you when considering a tech career (deviation from the mean, %)

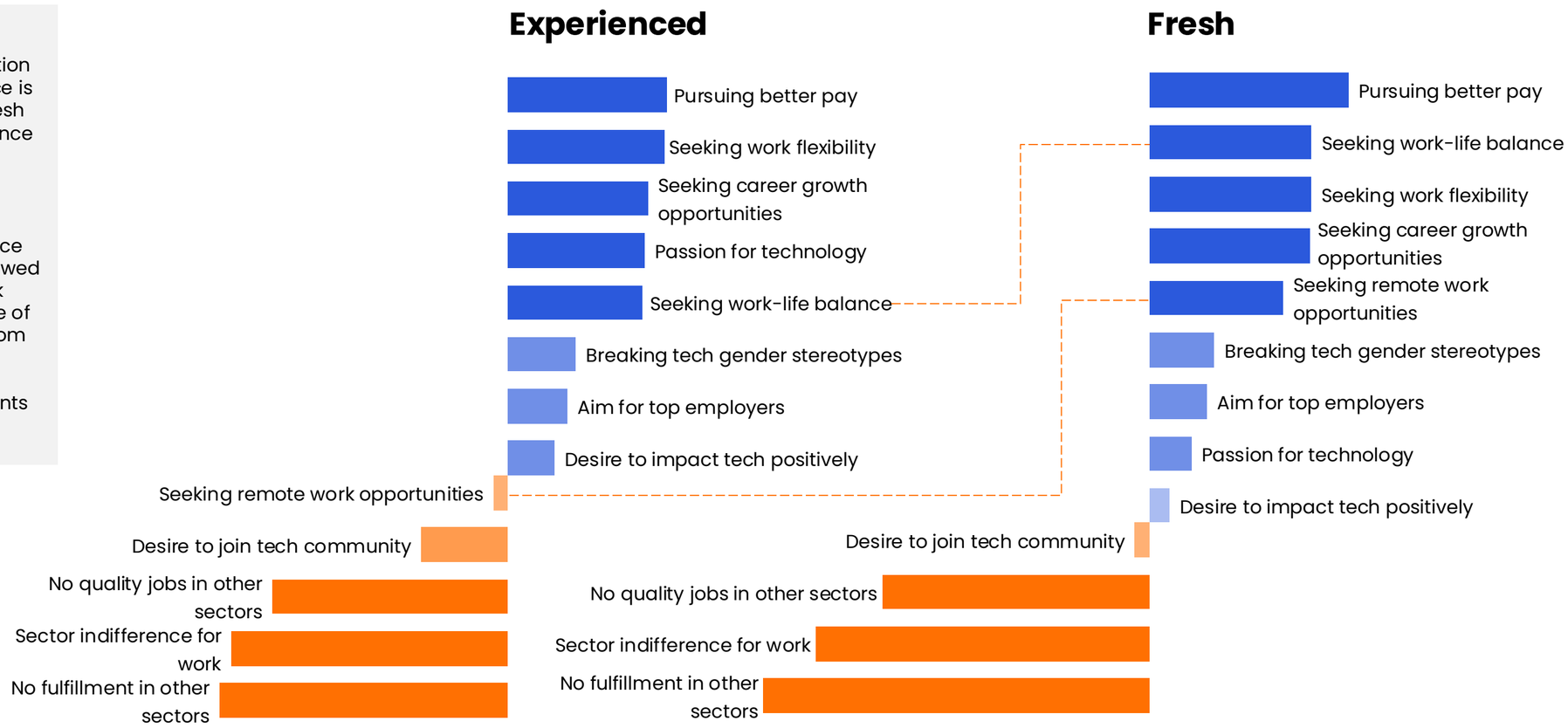


Motivations to join tech sector

Please evaluate how relevant the following motives were to you when considering a tech career (deviation from the mean, %)

Both experienced and fresh talents have indicated better pay as the main motivation for joining tech sector. However, difference is observed in later selection of motives. Fresh talents are more driven by work-life balance and work flexibility, whereas experienced talents were more motivated by career growth opportunities.

Rise of existing motive for work-life balance and flexibility among Fresh talents is followed by increase in motivation by remote work opportunities. This likely is a consequence of COVID-19 and extensive period of work from home culture. Which fresh talents have experienced first-hand in consideration stage. Whereas most of experienced talents were already in tech sector.

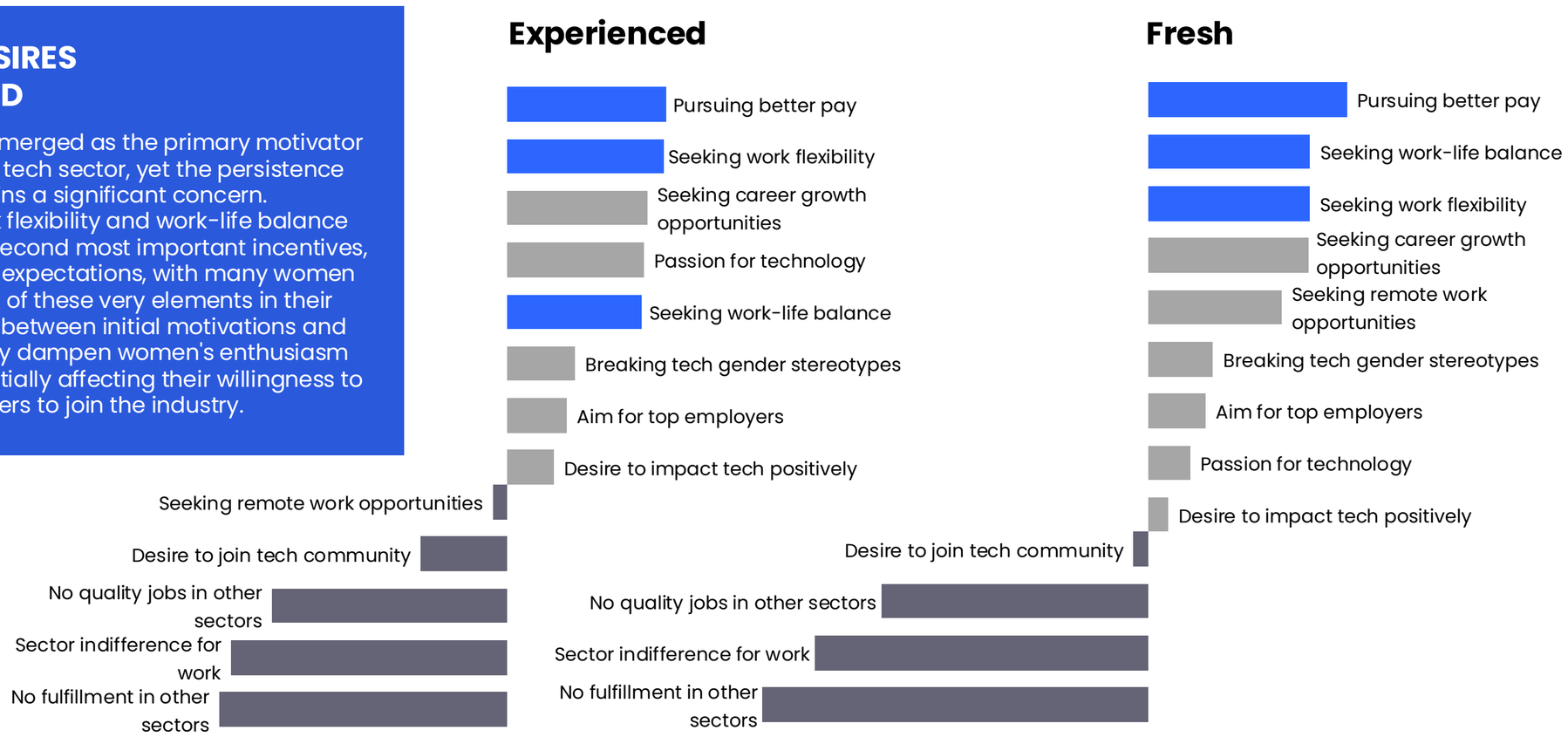


Motivations to join tech sector

Please evaluate how relevant the following motives were to you when considering a tech career (deviation from the mean, %)

THE HIGHEST DESIRES ARE NOT FULFILED

Better compensation emerged as the primary motivator for women to enter the tech sector, yet the persistence of pay inequality remains a significant concern. Additionally, while work flexibility and work-life balance were identified as the second most important incentives, the reality falls short of expectations, with many women in tech reporting a lack of these very elements in their roles. This discrepancy between initial motivations and actual experiences may dampen women's enthusiasm for the tech field, potentially affecting their willingness to mentor and inspire others to join the industry.



Requalification

Most experts agree that **coding and tech education schools** are one of the most effective measures to gain knowledge required for requalification to the tech sector.

However, in order to land a job and climb within the tech sector, experts highlight the importance of having a **mentor**. As this will give insights, guidance and most importantly support throughout the journey in tech.

Furheremore, **having positive women role models in close environmen**t would provide inspiration and motivation to reach further hights and even become a role model.

Based on your experience, which of the following resources do you find the most useful for women when trying to requalify for a job in the tech sector (average per category and respondents groups, scale 1-5)	Experienced	Fresh
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	**3,94**	**4,13**
Coding and tech education schools	4,1	4,24
Online upskilling courses	4	4,2
Women-only upskilling acceleration programmes	3,74	3,96
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	**4,04**	**4,19**
Internships or apprenticeships in tech companies	4,22	4,31
Career in tech sector guidance courses	4	4,16
Mentorship	3,9	4,09
COMMUNITY AND NETWORKING	**3,87**	**4,05**
Having positive women role models in close environment	3,97	4,07
Workshops for women in the tech sector	3,9	4,09
Women in the tech sector meet-ups	3,84	4,02
Conferences for women in the tech sector	3,76	4,01

Effective Measures Summary

Blind Recruitment Practice
Removing names and photos from CVs, leaving only the candidates' initials. This approach aims to prevent hiring bias, ensuring that the selection process focuses solely on the qualifications of the candidates without influence from their gender or appearance.

Active Sponsorship and Advocacy
Experts reinforce the idea that for women in tech to navigate and excel in a competitive and often male-dominated field, having the support of sponsors—individuals in positions of influence who can advocate for them, highlight their achievements, and push for their advancement—is invaluable.

Flexible Working Arrangements
Flexibility in work arrangements, such as remote work options, flexible hours, and the possibility for part-time work, are seen as essential measures to support work-life balance.

Childcare Support
Helping employees manage childcare responsibilities can significantly improve work-life balance and enable women to participate more fully in the workforce (e.g. certain companies have a child day-care spaces in the office, where employees can leave their children).

Presentation of Technology Studies and Professions
Emphasizing the creative aspects of Technology studies and professions as well as the diverse career paths within this field, can make them more appealing. Highlighting how technology can be used to solve a wide array of societal challenges can appeal to a broader range of interests, including those of young women who may not have previously considered a career in tech.

Visibility of the Role Models
The annual “Female Engineer of the Year” is an award for inspiring young girls to choose engineering careers in Slovenia. The award addresses the problem of the "invisibility" of female engineers in society. Its goal is to provide role models for young girls and highlight work achievements and contributions to the society of Slovenian female engineers.

Expansion of Networking and Mentorship platforms
Establishing mentorship programs that connect aspiring women in tech with experienced professionals. Creating and promoting networking events and platforms specifically for women in tech.

Provision of Scholarships and Financial Support
Implementing scholarship programs and financial aids to support women who wish to pursue education and training in tech but may be deterred by financial barriers.

Integration of Tech Education from an Early Age
Introducing children, especially girls, to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects early in their education to spark interest and combat stereotypes. This could involve partnerships with schools to provide workshops, coding camps, and other interactive learning experiences.

Collaboration with Tech Companies
Working with tech companies to create internships, apprenticeships, and requalification programs that offer practical experience and a pathway into the tech industry for women.

05

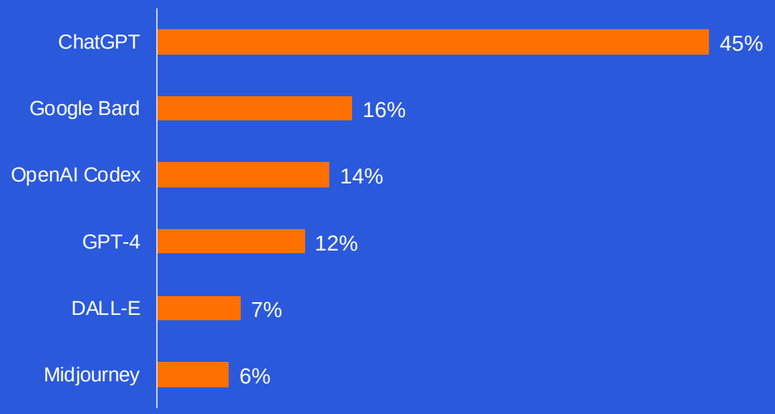
Insights Regarding AI

In this section, we analyse the varied influences on women's AI engagement across different demographics, focusing on education, peer impact, and barriers such as fears of reduced human interaction. We highlight the most popular AI use cases and uncover how factors like self-confidence and regulatory concerns affect the adoption of AI among women.

Overview

When asked about the usage of AI tools, respondents from Poland topped the chart with 87% reporting having used at least one AI tool. Slovakia and Austria showed the lowest rates of engagement with AI tools.

Awareness of different AI platforms
(percentage from respondents, %)



The Power Hub for Women in Tech

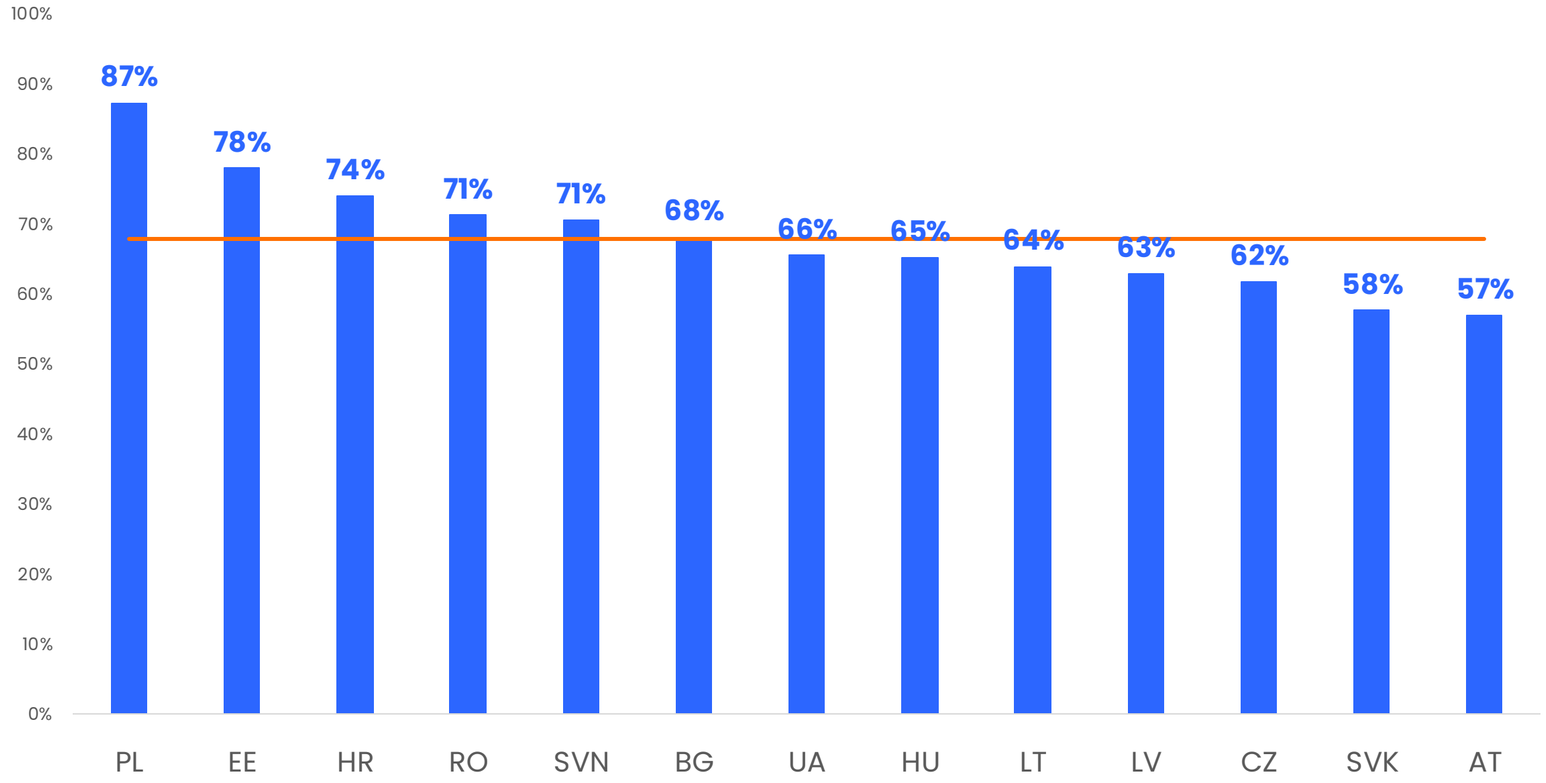
32%

Of all respondents **haven't used any AI tool**

68%

Of all respondents **have used at least one AI tool**

Use of AI tools / Has used at least one AI tool (percentage from respondents per country, %)

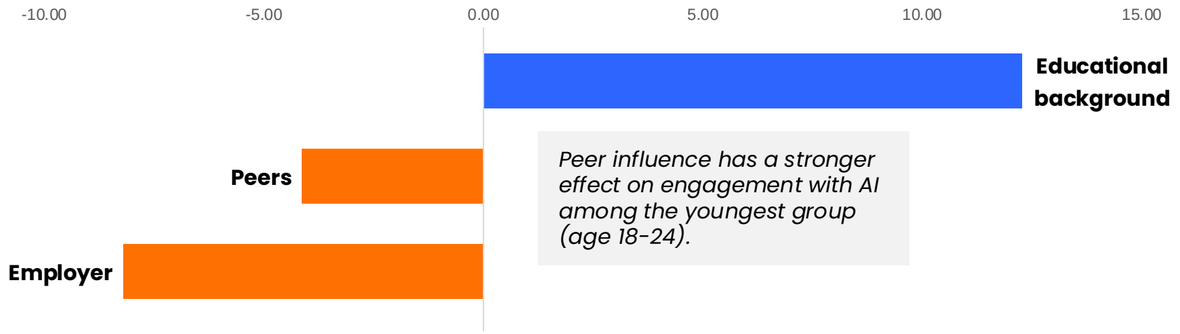


External Influence

Overall, across all countries, educational background was reported as the highest influence on interest and engagement with AI.

For the youngest group (age 18-24), the highest influences were education and peers, while employer had the least impact. The peer influence decreased among older groups.

Influence on engagement with AI: general (deviation from the mean, %)



Employer policy towards AI usage at work

30%

Of all respondents are not sure what is their employer's policy towards AI usage at work

14%

Of all respondents indicated that their employer does not allow any use of AI tools at work or for work purposes

26%

Of all respondents indicated that their employers do not have any policy regarding AI usage

16%

Of all respondents indicated that their employer policy allows AI usage

8%

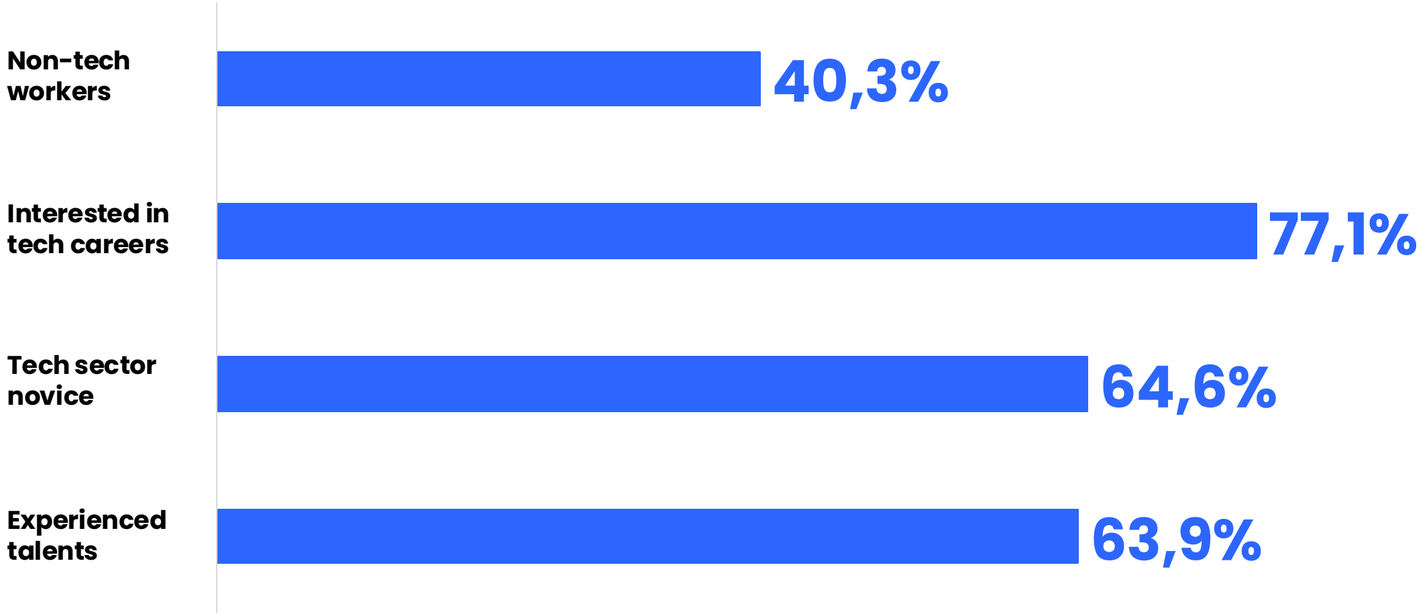
but **only 8% provide guidance how to use AI at work**

Interest

Those involved in the tech sector, and especially the ones considering joining it, showed a high interest in learning about AI development and tools.

40,3% of the respondents who were not considering joining the tech sector, were not curious to learn about the advancement of AI.

Interest in learning more about AI tool applications and use (percentage from respondents groups, %)



61%

Of respondents are interested in learning more about AI

12%

of them indicated that they don't have enough time to do so

12%

Of respondents indicated that they are not interested in learning more about AI

52%

Of those uninterested in AI say they do not have enough time to take interest in AI

Educational Content Seeking

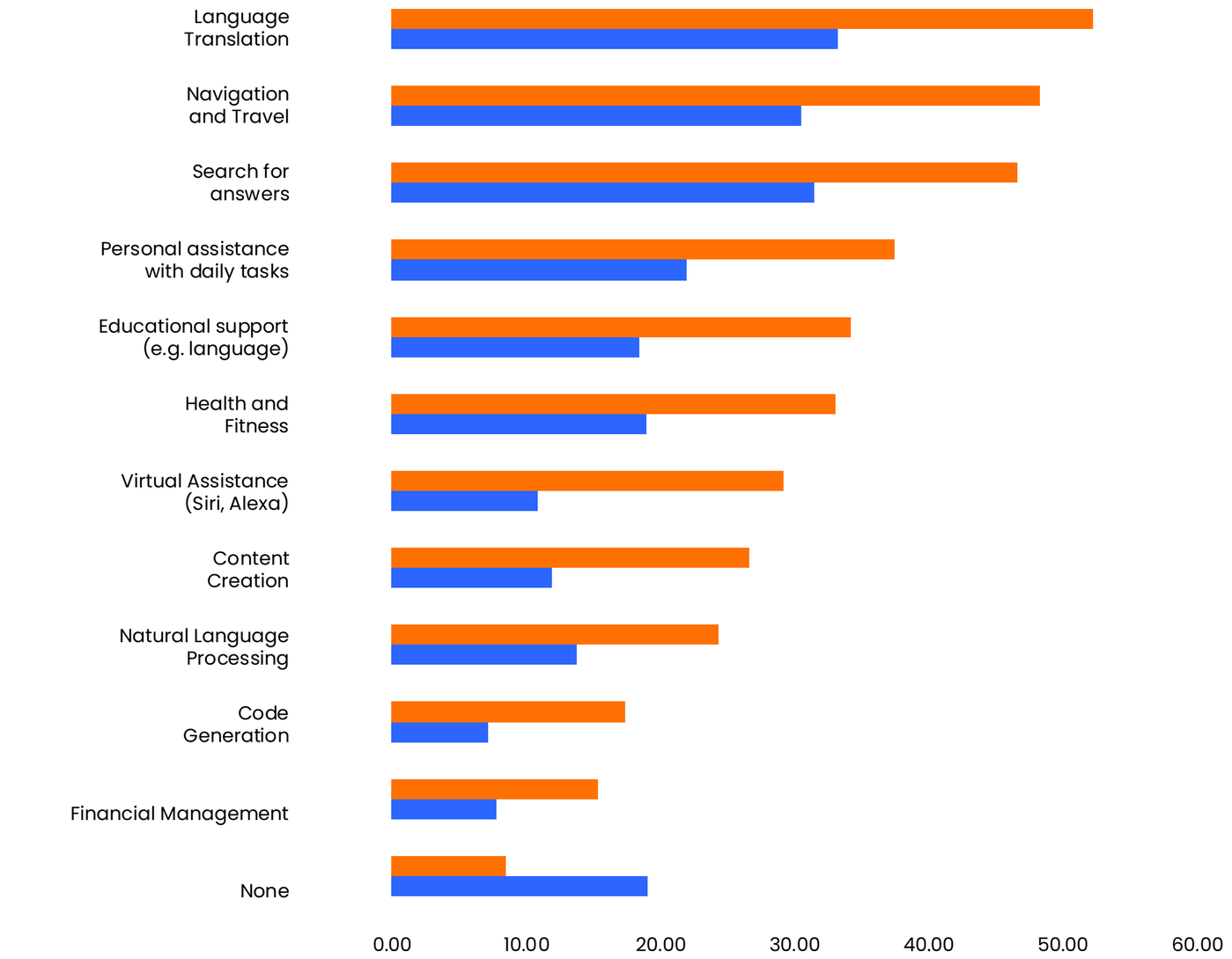
Have you sought out any education about AI and its usage in any of these channels? (percentage from respondents groups, %)

	Overall	Experienced talents	Tech sector novice	Interested in tech careers	Non-tech workers
Respondent who haven't sought any educational AI content:	**30%**	**28%**	**19%**	**18%**	**49%**
TOP 3 content sources:	**1. YouTube** (40%) 2. Blog Posts and Articles (24%) 3. Online Training Courses (22%)	**1. YouTube** (39%) 2. Online Training Courses (27%) 3. Blog Posts and Articles (26%)	**1. YouTube** (44%) 2. Online Training Courses **(32%)** 3. Blog Posts and Articles (26%)	**1. YouTube (52%)** 2. Blog Posts and Articles (31%) 3. Online Training Courses (27%)	**1. YouTube** (28%) 2. Blog Posts and Articles (12 %) 3. Online Training Courses (8%)

Use-cases

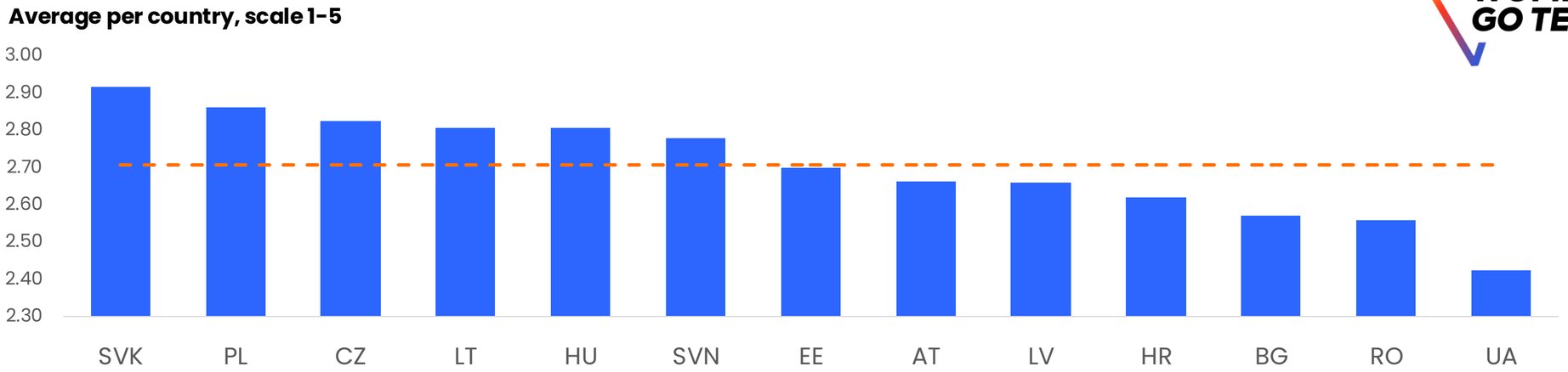
The most popular and well-known use-cases among all groups were language translation, navigation and travel and search for answers, while financial management and code generation were least known.

Fresh talent and Interested groups had the highest use-case awareness and usage rates. The Uninterested group was mostly familiar with only the top three use-cases.



01

Country Attitude towards AI



02

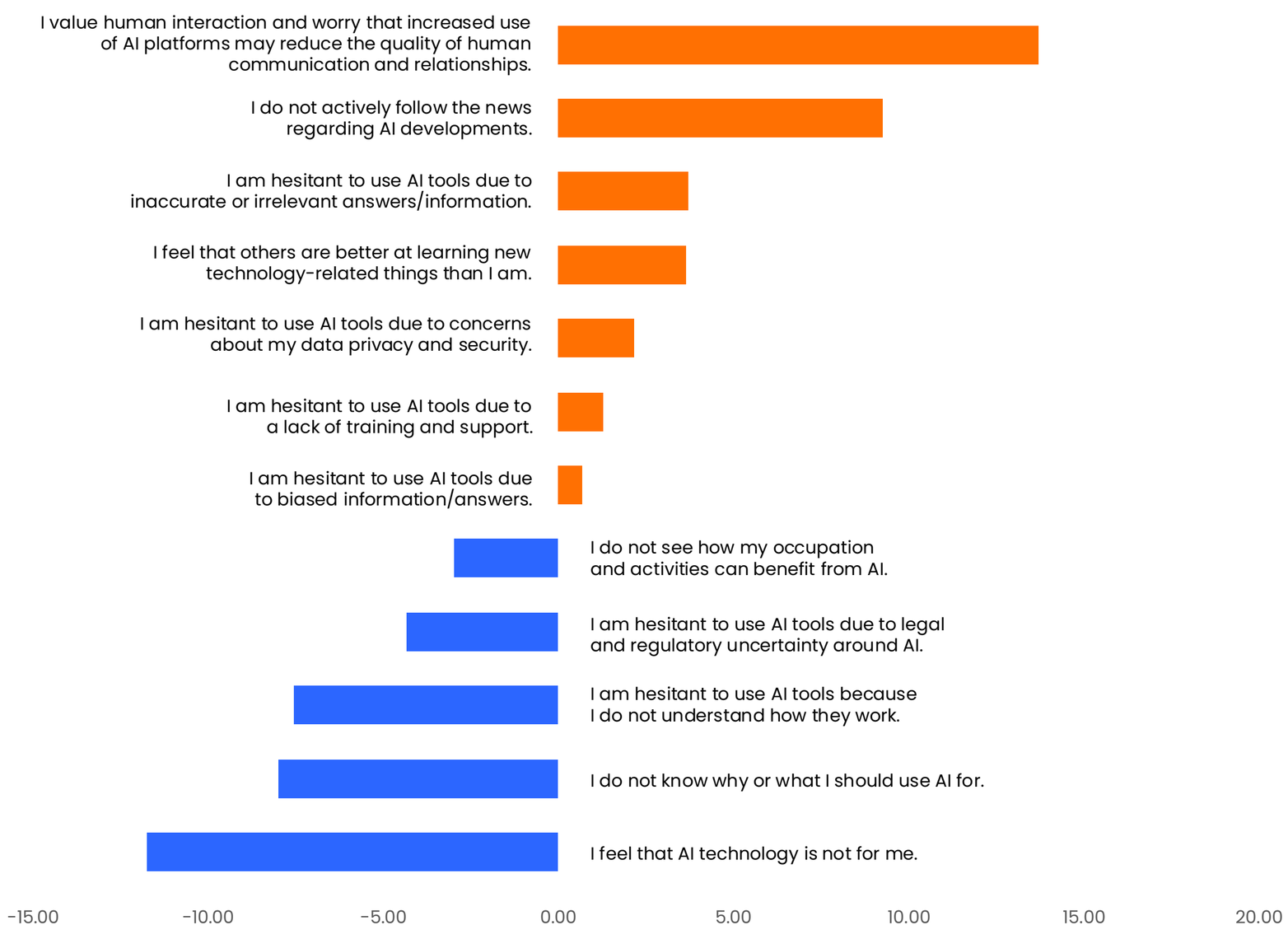
Areas for improvement

AI usage barriers

Valuing human interaction and worrying that increased AI platforms may reduce the quality of human communication and relationship is one of the highest expressed barriers across all age group. However, overall younger women (18-24) indicate experiencing less barriers than older women (55+).

Women living in urban areas indicate experiencing less barriers compared to ones living in rural areas. Amongst ones living in rural area fear of reduced quality of human communication and relationship is expressed the most.

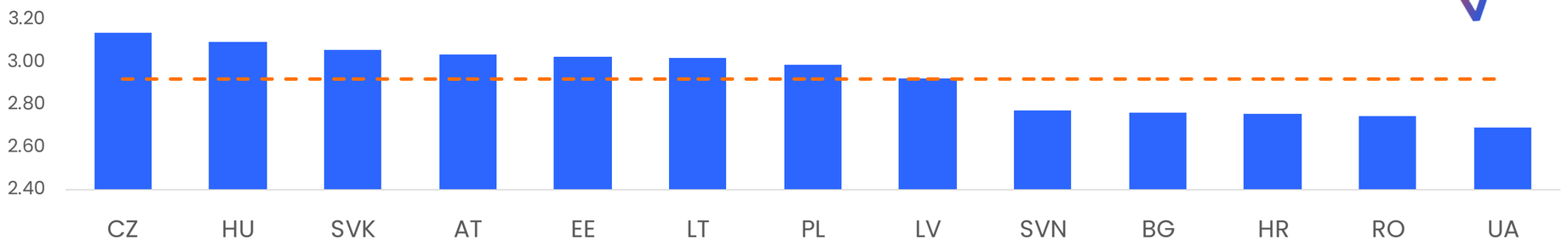
Please evaluate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree, 5 - strongly agree) (percentage from all respondents, %)



01

Country AI usage barriers

Average per country, scale 1-5



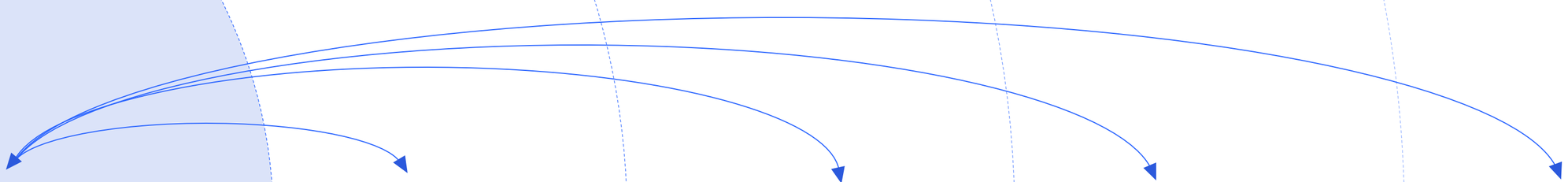
02

Barriers

Barriers influencing attitude

Confidence in ability to learn to use AI

A deeper look at how different barriers interact with attitude towards AI reveals a strong correlation between several barriers and confidence in ability to learn to use AI. Providing necessary insights into intertwined relation between barriers and attitude.



I feel that AI technology is not for me

I am hesitant to use AI tools because I do not understand how they work

I do not know why or what I should use AI for

I do not see how my occupation and activities can benefit from AI

Barriers influencing attitude

Confidence in ability to learn to use AI

I feel that AI technology is not for me

I am hesitant to use AI tools because I do not understand how they work

I do not know why or what I should use AI for

I do not see how my occupation and activities can benefit from AI

Even though, feeling that AI technology is not for me is one of the weaker expressed barriers, it has a strong influence on the confidence of women to use AI tools. Furthermore, the same barrier demonstrates a strong correlation with women lacking vision of how their occupation and activities can benefit from AI as well as hesitancy due to lack of legal and regulatory uncertainty.

Whereas hesitancy to us AI tools due to lack of understanding how they work, strongly correlates with training and education related barriers as well as data privacy and security concerns.

Measures to reduce barriers

Barriers

- Training at workplace
- Free community courses
- Clear work policy on AI tool usage
- Clearer explanations of AI functionalities and limitations
- User-friendly AI tutorials and resources
- More encouragement, education, and promotion to use AI from the authorities (public sector, employer, school)
- Women's group/community classes
- Women working with AI role models/public figures
- Increased diversity in AI development teams.
- Increased representation of women using AI

The most effective measures

Less effective measures

06

Country Profiles

This section digs deeper into the situation of women working in tech in 13 different countries, and analyses country-specific initiatives, motivating factors, barriers, and recommendations. In addition, we explore the conditions and experiences of female UA expats who have fled the war and relocated in another country, analysing their unique challenges and insights.

Country Profiles

Lithuania
Bulgaria
Czech Republic
Estonia
Croatia
Hungary
Latvia
Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Austria
Ukraine
Ukraine expats

Lithuania

Country Maturity Level evaluation

The situation in Lithuania concerning women in the tech sector is marked by both progress and ongoing challenges. Over the past five years, the country has seen a notable increase in women's participation in ICT, driven by significant changes at the business ownership level and increased diversity initiatives. Businesses are not just relying on HR but are involving C-level executives in pushing for gender diversity. There's an expectation that by 2025, women will make up around 27% of the ICT workforce in Lithuania, placing the country among the top in the European Union in terms of gender diversity in tech. Despite this, challenges remain, such as balancing the return to office work with flexible, hybrid models that support work-life balance, especially for women with families.

Rūta Pukenė
Head of Communications, Unicorns Lithuania

“It's when you see that others are succeeding, that others can do it, that you believe in the idea more. ”

Jarūnė Preikšaitė
CEO, Women Go Tech

”The barrier in many cases arises when women don’t have a community because then they think, ‘This is only my issue,' and are going through it alone.”

It's important to increase visibility by spotlighting women who are not only in high executive positions but also in specialized and entry-level tech roles. Such exposure helps to broaden the perception of who can succeed in tech, encouraging a wider array of women to aspire to these careers.

Tech companies are encouraged to enact policies that foster an inclusive culture, such as bias training for all employees, creating support networks for women in tech, and enforcing policies that promote gender diversity in hiring and leadership positions.

Adopting more flexible work arrangements that cater to the needs of diverse employees, including women balancing work-family commitments, is necessary. This could include options for telecommuting, part-time schedules, and providing amenities like on-site childcare, which are shown to significantly improve work-life balance and increase job satisfaction among women in tech.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

37%

Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

53%

Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

4%

Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

30%

Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

13%

Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Lithuania

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

67% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short-term 42% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion.

4% vs 8%

Interestingly, fresh talents are twice as interested as experienced talents in building their own product or businesses.

Motivations

- Better pay
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Growth opportunities
- Passion for technology

These were the factors identified as the key motives to join tech by both fresh and experienced talents.

- Remote work opportunities
- Positive impact on technology development

Fresh talents also indicated remote work opportunities as a motive, while more experienced ones where motivated by the possibility to have a positive impact on technology development.

Biggest barriers

- Higher age
- Fewer opportunities to learn
- Lack of work-life balance

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder to succeed in the tech sector for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Desired change

Positive change

Visible progress

- Equal access to education
- Enough quality jobs
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities

Talents in Lithuania positively evaluated the country's progress over the last 5 years. Respondents indicated that the tech sector offers enough quality jobs, and development opportunities, and agreed that women have the same access to technological education as men. Women also positively evaluated work culture and safety of the work environment and found it easy to progress.

Pay inequality

Lithuanian women indicated higher pay as the key motivator to join the tech sector, but they still feel that they are or will be paid less than men.

Lack of investments

Lithuanian women feel that governments and tech businesses should invest more to attract women to the tech sector and create more jobs and progression opportunities.

Gender biases

Some women still indicate that stereotypes about women's inability to perform in the tech sector as well as men still exist. It also results in gender biases during the recruitment process.

- Environment safety

Even through respondents defined the status quo as a safe work environment, some still feel that it has room for improvement.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Upskilling opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and knew what they needed to do to get a promotion. Talents also indicated that it was clear what they needed to do to get a promotion.

Lack of mentorship

Even though only fresh talents indicated that mentorship is an effective way to progress, the majority of all groups' respondents indicated that they did not have mentors in their careers.

Weak feedback culture

Lithuanian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

Desired formats

- Online upskilling courses
- Internships
- Coding and tech education schools
- Career in tech sector guidance

Even though Lithuanian experts identified mentors and role models as one of the most effective instruments, women respondents choose more practical approaches such as online courses or internships.

Bulgaria

Country Maturity Level evaluation

The situation in Bulgaria is relatively progressive compared to other regions, particularly in terms of women's participation in the tech sector. Bulgaria has one of the highest rates of women in technology and science in Europe, which can be partially attributed to the historical encouragement of women to engage in engineering and other technical fields under the previous political regime. This cultural and educational foundation has helped maintain a strong presence of women in these fields. Despite this positive aspect, the pace of change and movement towards gender equality in the tech sector is still considered slow. Changing the broader cultural perceptions about women in tech requires continuous effort. This includes public awareness campaigns, highlighting the achievements of women in tech through media and at industry events, and promoting stories of successful women innovators.

Paulina Chotrova
President, Women in Deep Tech

“We observe the difference in software development when males and females create solutions; their perspectives differ.”

Nikolay Gashev
Domain Agile Lead, Tide

"You see fewer elements of skewed, boyish dominance when you talk about roles like front-end development and UX/UI, whereas back-end roles are still seen as more male-dominated”

Providing targeted retraining and upskilling programs can help adult women transition into tech careers. These programs should include partnerships with tech companies to ensure that the training is relevant and that there are opportunities for immediate application of the skills learned in real-world settings.

To address the pay gap and the slower career progression, companies need to implement transparent pay scales and career progression paths that ensure equality. This also involves regularly reviewing compensation and advancement criteria to eliminate biases that might disadvantage women.

Ensuring that educational materials are free from gender biases can boost female enrolment in tech-related studies. This could include developing curricula that reflect the contributions of women in tech, using case studies of successful women, and providing learning environments that are supportive and free from bias.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

40%

Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

45%

Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

9%

Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

34%

Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

15%

Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Bulgaria

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

51% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 26% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion.

24% vs 16%

Interestingly, 24% of respondents indicated that they want to gain the experience needed to build their own business in the short term, but in the long run, this ambition decreased to only 16%.

Motivations

- Passion for technology
- Work for the best employers
- Better pay
- Better career opportunities
- Remote work opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility

Women indicated mainly two types of motives to join tech. One is their ambition to have a better career and interesting work, while the others are more practical and related to general quality of life such as higher pay and work-life balance.

- Positive impact on technology development

Experienced talents also indicated that one of the motives why they joined tech sector was to have a positive impact on technology development.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

- Lack of relatives and peer support

Fresh talents also indicated that there is not much support from family or friends to choose tech career.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Enough quality jobs
- Free from harassment environment

There have been positive changes for women in the tech sector in the last 5 years resulting in equal access to education and enough quality jobs for women. Women also positively evaluated the safety of the work environment; however, they also indicated that there could be some space for further change too.

It was also surprising that experienced talents evaluated pay equality more positively than fresh talents. However, both groups still recognize the need for change in this area.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)

Respondents indicated that there is a need for improved access to technological education, both at an early age and later with the purpose of requalification.

- Work-life balance
- Equal pay

The sector is failing to deliver on the key motivations that attracted women to technology in the first place. There is still a lack of work-life balance and pay inequality.

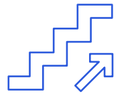
- More programs supporting tech education
- More internal progression and career opportunities

Even though when evaluating current tech sector's performance, and indicating that there are enough quality jobs, women still seem to be lacking internal progression opportunities, career opportunities, and programs and initiatives supporting such career move.

- Gender biases

Women also feel they are still experiencing gender-biases in the recruitment process.

Easiness to progress



- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and had upskilling opportunities inside their companies.

- Lack of mentorship

When progressing in their tech careers, respondents indicated that they did not have mentors. Meanwhile, Bulgarian talents also indicated that mentorship is one of the desired formats to help them progress in their tech careers. When evaluating tech sector's performance, respondents also indicated that there are not enough women in leadership positions.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Mentorship
- Career in tech sector guidance

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships as the most effective. But also indicated mentorship and career in tech sector guidance courses are valuable experiences that can help them to progress.

Czech Republic

Country Maturity Level evaluation

The tech environment in Czechia is defined by having lower participation rates for women as compared to some other European countries, with stereotypes and cultural norms often discouraging women from pursuing careers in tech. Women are perceived as less suitable for tech roles, but the efforts of organizations such as *Czechitas* have been significant in fostering a supportive community for women in tech through mentorship, networking, and training programs. The number of initiatives in Czechia is growing, however, the progress is uneven, with more significant advancements in urban areas like Prague and Brno, and less advancements in smaller towns and rural areas.

Eva Pavlíková
Co-Founder, Česko.Digital, Byro

“Be brave and believe in yourselves. It's up to us to shape the future of the IT sector. We need to make our voices heard and louder and encourage men to join us in promoting diversity and collaboration between genders in all roles.”

Senta Čermáková
CEO, Czechitas

”In some societies, it may be somewhat better, but it's definitely challenging in the Czech society, where women in IT, including myself, are often stereotyped as being less feminine for choosing this career path.”

It is important to reach out to women in smaller cities and rural areas where opportunities might be less visible or accessible. Online training programs that do not discriminate based on location can help women from all regions to participate equally. By extending resources and training beyond big cities, there can be a more equitable distribution of tech opportunities.

Experts highlight the need for educational reform that would encourage young women to pursue STEM fields. This could involve integrating more tech-related content into school curricula and ensuring that female students are as encouraged to engage with tech as male students.

Companies are encouraged to implement flexible work policies that accommodate women, especially caregivers, by providing remote work, flexible hours, and maternity leave policies that do not penalize women for taking breaks in their careers.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

45%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

45%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

6%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

22%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

17%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Czech Republic

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

51% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 30% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 22% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 17% - to find a better employer.

15% ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

Respondents out of which the majority is experienced talents defined their long-term goal as to build their own product.

Motivations

Better pay | Better career opportunities | Work-life balance | Flexibility | Passion for technology

Respondents selected better pay and wider career opportunities as their key motives for choosing tech careers. They were also motivated by the potential of a work-life balance and flexibility as well as a general interest in technology.

Remote work opportunities | Part of tech community

Fresh talents also defined remote work opportunities and the possibility of becoming a part of the tech sector community as their motives.

Biggest barriers

Harder for women to succeed in tech | Higher age | Lack of work-life balance | Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for me, representing an even a bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Positive change

Equal access to education | Schools are preparing for tech careers | Free from harassment environment | Enough development opportunities

Even though experienced talents do not agree that there has been a positive change for women in the tech sector in the last 5 years (fresh talents evaluated this just above the average), they all agree that some fundamentals are already in place such as access to education, schools' ability to prepare for tech careers, safe environment, and development opportunities.

Desired change

Access to tech education (young age/requalification)

Respondents indicated that there is a need for improved access to technological education, both at an early age and later with the purpose of requalification.

Stereotypes against women | Gender biases

Experienced talents also indicated that there is a need to demolish stereotypes against women. Some of them also signalled that recruitments are still gender biased.

Work-life balance | Equal pay

The sector is failing to deliver on the key motivations that attracted women to technology in the first place. especially in the eyes of experienced talents. There is still a lack of work-life balance and pay inequality.

Internal development opportunities

Women feel there could be more internal development opportunities offered in their workplace.

Easiness to progress

Clear career opportunities | Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get the promotion.

Lack of mentorship

When progressing in their tech careers, respondents indicated that they did not have mentors. Meanwhile, fresh talents also indicated that mentorship is one of the desired formats to help them progress in their tech careers. When evaluating the tech sector's performance, respondents also indicated that there are not enough women in leadership positions.

Weak feedback culture

Respondents also did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

Desired formats

Coding and tech education schools | Internships | Online upskilling courses

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools, online upskilling courses, and internships as the most effective.

Mentorship | Workshops for women in tech

Unlike experienced talents, fresh talents also expressed the need for mentorships and workshops for women in tech.

Estonia

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Estonia, the situation concerning women in the tech sector is marked by a significant gender wage gap, one of the highest in the EU. Cultural and educational barriers start early, with societal norms subtly steering girls away from science and technology fields through gender-biased messaging and expectations. The Estonian government and private sector have initiated several campaigns and targeted training programs aimed at increasing female participation in tech. These efforts are supported by the promotion of female role models and the implementation of mentorship programs to inspire and guide women. There is also a push towards creating more flexible work environments that accommodate work-life balance, necessary for attracting and retaining women in the tech industry.

Elle-Mari Pappel-Näks
Co-Director, kood/Jõhvi

"A lot comes from home and school. Those tiny, minor things that we say that we think nothing of, but they influence how women perceive what they should be doing in life."

Pirkko Saar
HR People Partner, Telia

"In our company, we offer reskilling opportunities in areas like UX and IT project management for employees from non-ICT departments, such as sales. This expands our expertise and helps staff transition into ICT roles."

Launching and supporting targeted educational programs that offer free or government-supported training for women to learn tech skills is seen as helpful. These programs can be designed to accommodate women at different life stages, including mid-career professionals seeking to transition into tech.

Experts highlight the importance of flexible learning opportunities that are not bound by location or financial constraints. This approach aims to make it easier for individuals from various backgrounds to engage with tech education and career opportunities, irrespective of their geographical location or economic condition.

It is important to integrate technology education early in school curriculums with a focus on inclusivity, ensuring that girls are equally encouraged to participate in STEM activities. This could involve teacher training to support girls in STEM subjects actively and counteract stereotypes that might discourage their participation.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

86%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

6%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

5%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

25%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

14%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Estonia

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

57% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 24% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 18% - find a better employer in the tech sector.

20% MANAGERIAL AMBITION

Respondents defined their long-term goal to transition to a management position. Less people (only 14%) chose building their own product as a goal even though 22% expressed the goal to gain experience needed to build their own business in the short-term.

Motivations

- Better pay
- Better career opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Remote work opportunities
- Work for the best employers

Respondents selected better pay, wider growth opportunities, and the possibility of working for the best employers as their motives for joining the tech sector. They also chose more practical aspects such as flexibility and work-life balance.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Positive change

Visible progress

- Enough quality jobs
- Equal access to education
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities

Talents in Estonia positively evaluated the country's progress over the last 5 years, stating that there are enough quality jobs and development opportunities, equal access to education, free from harassment and not toxic work environment.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)

Respondents indicated that there is a need for improved access to technological education both: at an early age and later with the purpose of requalification.

- Equal pay

Estonians also indicate that there is still issues with pay equality.

Fresh talents desire bigger change

In Estonia, fresh talents unlike experienced ones selected significantly more areas for improvement:

- More quality jobs
- Gender biases
- Environment safety
- Work-life balance
- Internal development opportunities
- Career progression opportunities

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements
- Upskilling opportunities within tech companies

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion as well as that they had upskilling opportunities inside their companies.

- Lack of mentorship

Even though only fresh talents indicated that mentorship is an effective way to progress, the majority of all groups' respondents indicated that they did not have mentors in their careers.

- Weak feedback culture

Estonian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

Desired formats

- Internships
- Coding and tech education schools

All groups' respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships to be the most effective.

- Mentorships
- Online upskilling courses
- Career in tech sector guidance
- Positive role models

Fresh talents found more types of formats useful: from online upskilling courses and career in tech sector guidance courses to positive role models and mentors.

Croatia

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Croatia, there are still significant cultural biases and stereotypes suggesting that IT and tech jobs are not suitable for women, which negatively impacts women's decisions to pursue careers in these fields. And while there are positive movements as more women are taking on founder roles in startups and actively promoting technology as a professional choice, much more needs to be done to truly open the tech sector to women. The need for comprehensive strategies, including governmental action and industry efforts, to promote inclusivity and support women in tech are needed. Croatia, like other EU countries, is influenced by EU directives that encourage parental leave policies that are not solely focused on mothers, aiming to shift cultural norms and employer practices to be more inclusive and supportive of women in the workforce.

Marijana Šarolić Robić
Vice President, CroStartUp

"The government itself still needs to walk the talk and incentivize more employers to pursue such strategies when employing both women and men."

It is necessary to implement inclusive workshops and comprehensive strategies at both the industry and governmental levels, which involve tracking progress year-over-year towards inclusive goals. It also involves engaging all stakeholders in unified efforts to foster an inclusive society where technology is designed for good.

Experts emphasize the significance of building self-confidence and promoting role models, while providing a safe environment for a gradual shift towards IT. This involves enhancing public/media presence, organizing boot camps, mentoring, coaching, and events aimed at promoting more women in IT—addressed and dedicated to both women and men. Change must occur at the personal level for both women and men and rely on a strategic approach with clear goals and annual metrics.

It is important to establish initiatives that showcase successful women in tech as role models. This includes hosting events, boot camps, and mentorship programs that not only focus on women but are accessible to the general public, to build confidence and visibility of women in tech roles. These efforts aim to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for women considering or already pursuing tech careers

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

89%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

4%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

5%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

28%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills-related activity

18%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Croatia

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

66% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 61% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion.

42% STRONG ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

Respondents defined their long-term goal to create their own business, while 30% chose ambition to build their own product. Also, in the short-term, similar ambitions were expressed, with 45% interested in gaining experience needed to build their own business.

Motivations

- To break stereotypes about women
- Flexibility
- Passion for technology
- Work-life balance
- Better pay
- Better career opportunities
- Positive impact on technology development

Respondents selected practical motives such as better pay, flexibility, and work-life balance. But they also wanted to break stereotypes that women cannot perform well in the tech sector, were generally passionate about technology, wanted to make positive impact on technology development and sought better career opportunities.

- Remote work opportunities
- Part of tech community

Fresh talents also indicated remote work opportunities and the possibility of becoming a part of the tech sector community as their motives.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Schools are preparing for tech careers
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities

Talents in Croatia quite positively evaluated the country's progress over the last 5 years, stating that there are enough development opportunities, equal access to education, free from harassment, and not toxic work environment.

Fresh talents evaluate country readiness more positively identifying the following factors as satisfactory:

- Gender biases are uncommon
- Enough mentorship programs
- Sufficient work-life balance
- Equal pay

Desired change

- Environment safety
- Work-life balance
- Equal pay

All talent groups indicated room for improvement and the need for change to assure safe environment, work-life balance, and equal pay.

Experienced talents see more room for improvement:

- Gender stereotypes
- Lack of investments
- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- More programs supporting tech education
- More quality jobs
- Gender biases
- Women in leadership positions
- More career progression opportunities

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship even though they evaluated mentorship as an effective format to progress.

- Weak feedback culture

Croatian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Mentorship
- Career in tech sector guidance

All groups' respondents identified internships and coding and tech education schools as an effective measures to progress. Mentorship and career guidance were also selected as the most helpful formats.

Interestingly, unlike in other countries Croatian women did not choose online courses as a desired measure.

Hungary

Country Maturity Level evaluation

According to experts, the tech industry in Hungary is not very welcoming to women, with significant cultural and structural barriers that discourage their participation. These barriers include a lack of flexible working arrangements which makes it difficult for women, especially those with families, to return to work. There is also a notable absence of part-time job opportunities in corporate settings, which are more commonly available in roles like customer service or call centres rather than in tech-focused positions. In addition, the cultural perception within the tech sector and broader societal norms often discourage women from pursuing careers in this field. Leadership and other employees may hold biases that prevent women from being hired or advancing, particularly in technical or high-level positions.

Hilda László
CIO, IT Director, Vodafone

“You need one person who believes in you and then you feel that you can conquer the world. So having the right mentor is very important at any stage of your life.”

Mária Tóth
Application Services Executive, DXC Technology

"IT is not just a profession. Software and devices are all around us. It can be exciting to become more familiar with this, not only as a user but as an expert who can understand how they work.”

Companies should actively offer and promote part-time positions and flexible working hours that accommodate the unique life situations of women, particularly those with family responsibilities. This change requires not just policy updates but also a cultural shift within organizations to value output over physical presence in the office.

Develop formal sponsorship and mentoring programs within companies that are designed to support women throughout their careers. Sponsorship is particularly important in helping women navigate career advancement opportunities, ensuring they are considered for high-profile projects and leadership roles.

Build supportive communities within the workplace that include men as allies. Creating mixed-gender mentorship and support networks can help women feel more included and less isolated in the tech environment.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

65%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

9%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

10%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

26%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

16%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Hungary

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

52% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 41% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 14% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 15% - to find a better employer.

18% ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

Respondents defined their long-term goal to create their own business. Even though, in the short term, 28% of respondents expressed the goal of gaining the experience needed to build their own business, the ambition decreases in the long run.

Motivations

- To break stereotypes about women
- Passion for technology
- Positive impact on technology development
- Better pay
- Work for the best employers
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better career opportunities

Hungarian respondents had numerous motives for joining the tech sector, ranging from practical ones such as work-life balance, flexibility, and better pay to broader career opportunities and the possibility of working for top employers. They were also driven by a general passion for technology, the desire to break existing stereotypes about women, and the opportunity to make a positive impact on technological developments.

Biggest barriers

- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for older women to succeed in the tech sector, in addition to the general sentiment that they had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector in Hungary.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities
- Work-life balance

Above are the factors that were evaluated positively by all respondent groups.

Even though fresh talents agree that there has been a positive change in the tech sector in the last 5 years, experienced talents evaluate the general change more conservatively. However, when it comes to evaluating specific factors, experienced talents tend to evaluate them more positively. They agree that school education is preparing students for future careers, and there are enough initiatives and networks supporting women's careers in tech. In addition, they do not see gender bias in recruitment.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- Gender biases
- Environment safety
- Equal pay
- More quality jobs

All respondent groups identified the need for change in access to tech education at early change and in case of requalification. According to them, there is a need to demolish gender biases in hiring, to ensure a safe from harassment work environment and equal pay. Even though the general situation regarding most of these factors was evaluated positively, talents also agree that there is still room for improvement.

- Work-life balance
- Gender stereotypes
- Women role models

Experienced talents also identified the need for better a work-life balance and more women role models. Also, according to them, in Hungary, there is still the need to demolish gender stereotypes.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship even though they evaluated mentorship as an effective format to progress.

- Weak feedback culture

Hungarian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers. They also noted that they needed to develop their skills outside of work to match their peers.

Desired formats

- Online upskilling courses
- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Mentorship
- Women role models

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools, online upskilling courses, and internships as effective formats to progress. Mentorships and having a positive women role models in close environment were also evaluated as effective measures.

Latvia

Country Maturity Level evaluation

Key challenges in Latvia include the perception of tech as a male-dominated field, with cultural stereotypes discouraging women from entering the sector. Despite growing opportunities, women's participation remains lower than men's, influenced by traditional views and a lack of visible female role models in tech leadership roles. To address these issues, experts suggest enhancing mentorship opportunities, increasing the visibility of successful female tech professionals, and implementing supportive workplace policies such as comprehensive parental leave. The experts also suggest that there is potential for the government to play a more active role in this matter.

Līga Lētiņa
Head of Design, Printify

“The culture and leadership are very masculine. You have to face sarcastic jokes—jokes on the edge of harassment. You need tough skin. Sometimes you can feel less heard than your male colleagues.”

Dr. Māra Jākobsone
Board member, Vice President, LIKTA

”One key factor is how you present the technical specialties. Women often want to choose a profession that is exciting and valuable. They want to feel that their job contributes to the community.”

Develop programs that help women re-integrate into the workforce after maternity leave. This could include refresher courses, updated training on new technologies, and gradual re-entry workloads. These programs are designed to update skills and knowledge, reducing the professional isolation that can occur during extended leave periods and helping women regain their professional footing more effectively.

Advocate for and implement government policies that support gender diversity in tech. This could include funding for women-specific tech training programs, incentives for companies to hire and promote women in tech, and research into gender disparities in the sector.

Launch public awareness campaigns that highlight the opportunities in the tech sector for women, dispel myths about tech being unsuitable for women, and promote stories of successful female tech professionals.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

37%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

48%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

7%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

29%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

15%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Latvia

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

82% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 59% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 18% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 20% - to find a better employer.

21% ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

Respondents defined their long-term goal to build their own product. In the short run, 25% of respondents expressed the goal of gained the needed experience to build their own business. In the long run, 21% expressed the ambition to build their own product, while 13% - to create their own business.

Motivations

- Better career opportunities
- Passion for technology
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay

Latvian respondents expressed practical aspects like work-life balance, flexibility, and better pay as their key motives to join the tech sector. They also chose this career path to access better career opportunities in addition to being driven by a general passion for technology.

- Remote work opportunities

Fresh talents also defined remote work opportunities as their motive to enter the tech sector.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Enough mentorship programs
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities

Talents in Latvia quite positively evaluated the country's progress over the last 5 years, stating that there are enough development opportunities, equal access to education, a free from harassment culture and enough mentorship programs.

- Work-life balance
- Enough women role models

Fresh talents also positively evaluated work-life balance, while experienced talents feel there are enough women role models in the country.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- More programs supporting tech education
- More quality jobs
- Equal pay
- Work-life balance
- More career progression opportunities
- More internal development opportunities
- Work-life balance
- More women role models

Even though respondents perceive a positive change in various topics, they still see space for improvements and the need for change in many areas listed above.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements
- Internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion in addition to having upskilling opportunities inside their companies.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship; yet, when evaluating initiatives that could help them progress, mentorship was evaluated close to average.

- Weak feedback culture

Latvian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Women role models
- Career in tech sector guidance

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships as effective formats to progress. Positive women role models in a close environment as well as career in tech sector guidance was marked as an effective measures too.

Poland

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Poland, the tech sector is progressively acknowledging and supporting women's participation, driven by a growing societal acceptance and concerted efforts from both government and corporations to enhance gender diversity. Although these developments are positive, the field is still primarily male-dominated, underscoring the need for ongoing initiatives to foster an inclusive workplace. There's anticipation for more comprehensive government-led strategies and incentives to robustly promote and sustain women's involvement in technology in the future.

Michal Kanownik
President, Digital Poland Association

"If you love Europe, you will think about the future of Europe. You think about climate change, you invest in climate change improvements. You should also think about the talent."

Joanna Pruszyńska-Witkowska
Co-Founder, Future Collars

"One of the barriers is male dominance. Women are concerned that they might face a lack of tolerance for their needs."

Companies are encouraged to lower their immediate expectations and invest in training programs that prepare women for high-demand roles, rather than expecting ready-made experts or looking abroad for talent. The short-term mindset is criticized as it overlooks the long-term benefits of investing in and retaining local talent by upskilling them, especially in strategic areas like AI and cybersecurity.

It is necessary to build awareness among women about the opportunities in the tech sector. This means educating women on the possibilities within tech, not just in hardcore programming but in various roles where tech is applied. Boosting their confidence to see tech as a viable and approachable career option is essential.

Some experts suggest that more robust regulatory measures may be needed if voluntary actions are insufficient. This could include quotas for women in tech positions or boardrooms, and policies that mandate equal pay and opportunities for advancement.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

57%

Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

5%

Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

7%

Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

16%

Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

17%

Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Poland

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

40% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 23% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 16% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 12% - to find a better employer.

28% MANAGERIAL AMBITION

Respondents defined their long-term goal to transition to a management role. In the short run, only 17% of respondents expressed a goal to gain the experience needed to build their own business. Similarly in a long-run only 15% of respondents expressed ambition to build their own business or product.

Motivations

- Better career opportunities
- Remote work opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay
- Work for the best employers

Polish respondents defined practical aspects such as work-life balance, flexibility, and remote-work opportunities as their motives to join the tech sector. Also, one of the key motives were wide career opportunities and the possibility to work for the best employers.

- Passion for technology
- To break stereotypes about women
- Positive impact on technology development

Experienced talents also chose a passion for technology as their key motive. In addition to breaking stereotypes that women cannot perform well in the tech sector as well as to have a positive impact on technology development.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Experienced women also highlighted that sometimes they still think that stereotypes about women's incapability to work in the tech sector are true. The number is just slightly below the average, but it is still worth considering.

Desired change

Positive change

Visible progress

- Equal access to education
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities
- Work-life balance

Talents in Poland agreed that there has been a positive change in the tech sector over the last 5 years resulting in equal access to education, a non-toxic culture, a free-from harassment environment, and enough development opportunities combined with work-life balance. Experienced women also stated that there are enough job opportunities, and it is overall easy to progress in the tech sector as a woman.

- Access to tech education (young age)
- Equal pay
- Gender biases
- Gender stereotypes
- More programs supporting tech education

Even though Polish women see significant progress in the tech sector, there is still room for improvement especially when it comes to pay equality, gender biases in the hiring process, and general stereotypes. In addition, access to tech education could be improved at an early age and there could be more programs supporting women's tech education.

Experienced talents also feel there is room for improvement in regard to ensuring a safe environment while fresh talents selected toxic male culture as an aspect to be improved. In addition, fresh talents also feel a lack of more opportunities – more quality jobs, more internal development, and general career progression opportunities.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship; yet, when evaluating initiatives that could help them progress, mentorship was evaluated slightly below average.

- Weak feedback culture

Polish women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve, although this was not evaluated as the major issue.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships as effective formats to progress.

- Online upskilling courses
- Workshops for women in the tech sector

Online upskilling courses and workshops for women in the tech sectors were positively evaluated only by fresh talents.

- Positive role models

Having positive women role models in one's close environment was evaluated as an effective measure only by experienced talents.

Romania

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Romania, there has been a noticeable increase in women participating in tech roles and entrepreneurship, indicating growing inclusivity. However, challenges persist with women still underrepresented in senior technical roles and the tech sector remaining male-dominated. The need for visible role models is enhanced, alongside more educational opportunities that encourage women to enter and thrive in the tech field.

Roxana Lupaşcu
Innovation & Business Development Expert, EISMEA

"In schools and universities, boys were encouraged to study maths and engineering, while girls stuck to social sciences."

Diana Enăchescu
Co-Founder, Tressori Space

"We have a growing community of angel investors that are women and are focused on start-ups founded by women, which is another good thing, again motivating the environment for women in tech."

Employers are encouraged to adopt hiring practices that are designed to attract a diverse workforce. This could mean inclusive language in job postings, outreach to women's groups in universities, and recruitment at events or through platforms that target women in tech.

Building a community around women in tech through mentorship programs, regular meetups, and online forums can provide ongoing support and networking opportunities. These communities can serve as platforms for sharing experiences, challenges, and strategies for success, which can be particularly empowering.

Acceleration of women's career in tech could be achieved by providing mentorship programs, opportunities for skill-building, and ensuring a fair promotion process. It is necessary to ensure equal pay by eliminating gender pay gaps and promoting pay transparency to guarantee equitable compensation for all employees.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

82%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

6%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

9%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

31%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

17%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Romania

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

56% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 34% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 20% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 16% - to find a better employer.

16% LOWER MANAGERIAL OR ENTREPRENEURAL AMBITION

Only 16% of respondents defined their long-term goal to transition to a management role or create their own business. The ambition cuts in half when it comes to building their own products. Even though 23% of respondents selected that they want to gain the needed experience to build their own products, the ambition weakens in the long run.

Motivations

- Better career opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay
- Passion for technology
- To break stereotypes about women
- Positive impact on technology development

Romanian respondents had lots of motives to join the tech sector. From practical ones like work-life balance, flexibility, and better pay to wider career opportunities. They were also driven by a general passion for technology and the ability to break existing stereotypes about women as well as to have a positive impact on technology developments.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Experienced women also highlighted that sometimes they still think that stereotypes about women's incapability to work in the tech sector are true. The number is just slightly below the average, but it is still worth considering.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (requalification)
- More programs supporting tech education
- More quality jobs
- Equal pay
- Gender biases
- Environment safety
- Work-life balance
- More career progression opportunities
- More internal development opportunities

Even though Romanian women see significant progress in the tech sector, there is still room for improvement especially when it comes to pay equality, gender biases in the hiring process, and the safety of the work environment. In addition, there could be more programs and investments supporting tech education, better access to tech education for requalification purposes, and more progression and internal development opportunities.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Schools are preparing for tech careers
- Enough mentorship programs
- Enough women in tech communities
- Non-toxic culture
- Enough development opportunities
- Enough women role models
- Enough women in leadership

Romanian women positively evaluate the current status of the tech sector stating that it offers enough opportunities, has a sufficient amount of role models and women in leadership, as well as a non-toxic culture.

Fresh talents also positively evaluated work-life and equal pay.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements
- Constructive feedback

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion. Women also positively evaluated their feedback culture which was rare among other countries.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship meanwhile only fresh talents evaluated mentorship as an effective means to progress.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Career in tech sector guidance

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships as effective formats to progress. Romanian women overall also positively evaluated careers in tech sector guidance.

Surprisingly, mentorship and women in the tech sector meet-ups were only selected by fresh talents.

Slovakia

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Slovakia, the tech sector presents both challenges and proactive initiatives aimed at increasing female participation. “Aj Ty v IT”, an organization established in 2012 has notably made strides by educating over 43,000 girls and women across the nation. Despite these efforts, societal norms and stereotypes persistently view women's roles as primarily domestic, which slows their entry into tech fields. Experts draw attention to the lack of representation and biased targeting such as job advertisements in the tech sector often using language and imagery that cater predominantly to men, with terms like "ambitious" and "fast-paced" as well as images of men, which can deter women from applying.

Lucia Katrinakova
Portfolio Manager, League for Digital Boost Lead

“These are the things that actually make women leave tech – it’s the environment. They don't have a sense of belonging. You know, they're the only one there.”

Olga Maximova
Director of Strategic Partnerships and Outreach, Respectful AI

“Mothers have an amazing influence on their daughters as role models. So, if mothers don't discuss technology, girls might never pick up that career path.”

There is a need for strong PR activities that highlight success stories and the potential for career changes into tech. By publicizing stories of women who have successfully transitioned into tech careers at various ages, these campaigns can help to break down stereotypes and inspire other women. It's important to demonstrate that it is possible to enter the tech field without a traditional background in technology

Implementing quotas or targeted recruitment strategies to increase the number of women in tech positions can be controversial but effective as a temporary measure to balance gender disparity in the sector. Ensuring that recruitment materials and job descriptions are gender-neutral and actively encourage applications from women can also help increase female participation.

The government can play a pivotal role by funding programs that encourage women to enter and remain in the tech sector. For instance, investing in tech education for women, providing incentives for companies to hire and promote women in tech roles, and supporting childcare infrastructure to help women return to work after maternity leave.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

33%

Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

50%

Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

10%

Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

48%

Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

9%

Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Slovakia

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

47% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 41% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 12% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 15% - to find a better employer.

19% MANAGERIAL AMBITION

Only 19% of respondents defined their long-term goal as transitioning to a management role. The entrepreneurial ambition to build their own product and business is even lower, reaching only 14%. Slovakian women did not show much interest in gaining the experience needed to build their own businesses in the short-term, too.

Motivations

- To break stereotypes about women
- Work for the best employers
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay

Slovakian respondents defined practical aspects such as work-life balance, flexibility, and better pay as their motives to join the tech sector. Also, other key motives were wider career opportunities and the possibility of working for the best employers in addition to the possibility to break stereotypes about women.

Experienced talents also defined a general passion for technology and the possibility of making a positive impact on technology development as their motives. Meanwhile, fresh talents sought remote work opportunities.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Schools are preparing for tech careers
- Enough mentorship programs
- Gender biases are uncommon
- Not toxic culture
- Enough development opportunities

Slovakian women positively evaluate the progress of the tech sector within the last 5 years stating that there is equal access to education, schools are well preparing women for tech careers, gender biases in hiring as well toxic-male culture is uncommon. Finally, they also mention that there are enough development opportunities and career-supporting programs.

Experienced talents also see their current status as safe from harassment and abuse, while fresh talents have enough work-life balance.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- Gender stereotypes
- Equal pay
- Work-life balance
- More quality jobs
- Environment safety
- More career progression opportunities

Slovakian women identified the need for requalification and for better access to education at a young age. Also, essential aspects such as equal pay, work-life balance, and environmental safety, as well as quality jobs and career progression opportunities need to be further improved.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents positively indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the easiness to progress in their careers, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship, while they evaluated mentorship as an effective format to progress.

- Weak feedback culture

Slovakian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers. They also noted that they needed to develop their skills outside of work to match their peers.

Desired formats

- Career in tech sector guidance
- Online upskilling courses
- Mentorship

Respondents positively evaluated careers in tech sector guidance, online upskilling courses, and mentorship as a means to progress.

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships

Experienced talents also perceived coding and tech education schools as well as internships as effective ways to progress.

Slovenia

Country Maturity Level evaluation

While there are initiatives and growing awareness about the need for gender diversity in tech in Slovenia, the representation of women remains low compared to some neighbouring countries. Cultural stereotypes and educational barriers are identified as significant obstacles from a young age, with career guidance often not supporting girls' entry into STEM fields due to prevailing societal views of tech as a male-dominated field. While Slovenia has implemented progressive policies to boost female participation in tech, more substantial changes are needed in educational systems, workplace cultures, and public perceptions.

Katja Mohar Bastar
Director, Director at Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia

“In Slovenia, the Female Engineer of the Year award exposes the most impactful women in engineering, including those who might be quietly working in areas like nuclear reactors, so they show to the public that they exist.

Dr. Aida Kamišalić Latifić
State Secretary, Ministry of Digital Transformation

”I would say that it's also on the side of the women engineers, women in tech. The part that when we have the opportunity, we should take it and put your face out there for the betterment of the community, for this exposure.”

Provide specific training for teachers at all educational levels to encourage and support girls in STEM subjects, focusing on debunking myths about gender and capabilities in tech and fostering an inclusive classroom environment. Train career advisors in schools to actively promote STEM careers to girls.

Make informatics and digital literacy compulsory subjects starting from the first grade in elementary schools. The aim is to familiarize students, especially girls, with technology early on, demystifying the field and encouraging interest. Develop and implement a comprehensive digital competencies catalogue to guide curriculum development and ensure that the skills taught align with current and future market needs.

Advocate for policy changes at the governmental level that aim to increase the representation of women in tech. This could mean lobbying for educational reforms, financial incentives for companies that promote gender diversity, and stronger anti-discrimination laws that protect women in the workplace.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

41%

Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

50%

Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

6%

Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

28%

Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

16%

Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Slovenia

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

37% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist, while in the short run, 35% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, 11% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer, and 14% - to find a better employer.

25% MANAGERIAL OR ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

25% of respondents indicated long-term ambition to build their products and transition to a management position. Similarly in the short run, 22% selected their goal to gain the needed experience to build a product. Positively, this ambition only strengthens in the long run.

Motivations

- Better career opportunities
- To break stereotypes about women
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay

These were the factors identified as the key motives to join tech by both fresh and experienced talents. The identified motivations were mostly practical and pertained to flexibility, work-life balance, wider opportunities or better pay. Respondents also mentioned that they wanted to break stereotypes about women in tech.

- Work for the best employers
- Remote work opportunities

Fresh talents, unlike experienced ones, chose access to remote work opportunities and the possibility to work for the best employers as their motives.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even bigger challenge for older women. Women had also fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Experienced women also highlighted that sometimes they still think that stereotypes about women's incapability to work in the tech sector are true. The number is just slightly above the average, but it is still worth considering.

Desired change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- More programs supporting tech education
- More quality jobs
- Equal pay
- Work-life balance

Slovenian women identified the need for greater access to education at a young age or for requalification (requalification was a more important factor for experienced talents). Also, essential aspects such as equal pay, work-life balance, and more quality jobs, as well as more programs supporting tech education were highlighted as needing improvement.

Fresh talents also expressed the need for a safer environment, more career progression, and internal development opportunities.

Positive change

- Equal access to education
- Schools are preparing for tech careers
- Sufficient amount of supporting programs
- Gender biases are uncommon
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities
- Work-life balance

Slovenian women quite positively evaluated the progress of the tech sector within the last 5 years, stating that there is equal access to education, schools are well preparing women for tech careers, and gender biases in hiring as well toxic-male culture are uncommon. Finally, they also mentioned that there are enough development opportunities and a good work-life balance.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and actions needed, changes to get the desired promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the ease of career progression, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship.

- Weak feedback culture

Slovenian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers. They also noted that they needed to develop their skills outside of work to match their peers.

Desired formats

- Career in tech sector guidance
- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships

Respondents positively evaluated careers in tech sector guidance, coding and tech education schools, and internships as a means to progress. Fresh talents also selected online upskilling courses and workshops for women in tech as effective ways to progress.

Austria

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

47% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run 36% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion.

26% MANAGEMENT AMBITION

Unlike the majority of the researched countries, Austrians showed a long-term ambition to transition to management positions.

Motivations

- Better pay
- Flexibility
- Better career opportunities
- Passion for technology
- To break stereotypes

These were the factors identified as key motives to join the tech sector by both fresh and experienced talents. The identified motivations were not only practical, pertaining to flexibility, wider opportunities or pay, but also reflected a general passion for technology and a desire to break stereotypes that women cannot perform well in the tech sector.

- Work-life balance
- Positive impact on technology development
- Remote work opportunities

Fresh talents, unlike experienced ones, also identified work-life balance and remote work opportunities as their motives to join the tech sector. In addition, they also want to have a positive impact on technology development.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Fewer opportunities to learn
- Lack of work-life balance

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even a bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Desired change

Positive change

Visible progress

Even though there is still room for improvement, our respondents indicated that there have been positive changes for women in the tech sector in the last 5 years.

- Equal access to education
- Sufficient amount of supporting programs
- Free from harassment environment
- Enough development opportunities

- Pay inequality

Austrian women indicated higher pay as the key motivator for joining the tech sector, but they still felt that they are or will be paid less than men.

- Gender biases

Some women also indicated that change is needed to demolish gender stereotypes in recruitment processes. When evaluating the country's current performance, experienced women also cited that stereotypes against women still exist.

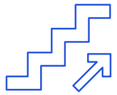
- Access to tech education (young age/ requalification)

Experienced women also indicated that there is a need for improved access to technological education both at early age and later with the purpose of requalification.

- Environment safety

Even through respondents defined the status quo as a safe work environment, some still feel that it has room for improvement.

Easiness to progress



- Upskilling opportunities
- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents indicated that they had upskilling opportunities inside their companies and that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities as well as what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

Even though only fresh talents indicated that mentorship is an effective way to progress, the majority of all groups' respondents indicated that they did not have mentors in their careers. In addition, when evaluating the current situation in Austria, respondents indicated that there are not enough women in leadership positions.

Desired formats

- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships
- Role models
- Workshops for women in tech

Respondents identified technical skills developing formats such as coding schools and internships. But also indicated that role models and workshops for women in tech are valuable experiences that can help to progress.

Ukraine

Country Maturity Level evaluation

In Ukraine, the onset of the war in 2014 led to significant changes, including the creation of initiatives like Beetroot Academy to help internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups find new careers in tech. The situation has intensified the need for remote work capabilities, which has become a significant aspect of the tech industry in Ukraine, benefiting many women by providing more flexible working conditions. The ongoing war has caused some instability in terms of job security and availability, affecting the number of available tech positions since international clients may hesitate to engage with Ukrainian companies due to the unstable situation. Despite these challenges, the tech sector remains a relatively safe and viable employment area compared to others more directly impacted by the war, such as manufacturing and heavy industries, which have seen significant downturns.

Anastasiia Petrova
Strategic Partnerships Manager, Beetroot Academy

“If you have a remote job, you are more secure in keeping it in case circumstances of life change.”

Tamara Kazarova
Managing Partner, Gravicon EU

”Even small steps to make small changes, it's already a huge difference.”

It's important to extend educational and training programs to rural and underserved communities where opportunities in tech might not be as visible or accessible. Mobile training units or partnerships with local community centres could be employed to reach these areas. Developing training materials and courses in the local language and contextualizing content to fit the cultural nuances can significantly increase participation rates among women in these regions.

Offer specifically designed requalification programs that help women transition from non-tech roles into tech-based careers. This could be short-term intensive courses that focus on the most in-demand skills in the tech industry. Also, create programs for women returning to the workforce after a career break, such as refresher courses, internships, and mentorship opportunities to help them update their skills and reintegrate into the tech workforce.

Encourage government bodies to provide subsidies or financial incentives for women enrolling in tech courses or for companies that actively work to hire and retain women in tech roles.

TECH SKILLS: SELF EVALUATION

43%
Of all respondents are comfortable using digital technologies.

47%
Of all respondents are not comfortable using digital technologies.

4%
Of all respondents are not only using digital technologies but also contributing to their development

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

36%
Of all respondents have participated in at least one tech skills related activity

11%
Of all respondents have participated in more than one tech skills-related activity

Ukraine

Key country performance indicators that are evaluated below the average are displayed on the lower part of the chart and the ones that perform above the average are displayed on the top half.

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

Goals

50% SPECIALIST AMBITION

Respondents defined their key long-term goal as becoming a better specialist while in the short run, 29% prioritized strengthening their chances for promotion, only 6% - to progress to a tech-related role with their current employer and to find a better employer.

19% ENTREPRENEURIAL AMBITION

19% of respondents indicated the long-term ambition to build their own product. In the short run, the ambition to gain knowledge needed to build it was 31%, however in the long run it slightly decreased. 17% of respondents also had a long-term ambition to create their own business, while 12% - to transition to a management position.

Motivations

- Work for the best employers
- Better career opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Better pay

These were the factors identified as key motives to join the tech sector by both fresh and experienced talents. The identified motivation was mostly practical, pertaining to flexibility, work-life balance, wider opportunities, and better pay.

Experienced talents also mentioned the aim to break stereotypes that women cannot perform well in the tech sector. While fresh talents sought convenience by aiming to be able to work remotely.

Biggest barriers

- Harder for women to succeed in tech
- Higher age
- Lack of work-life balance
- Fewer opportunities to learn

As a key barrier women indicated that it is harder for women to succeed in the tech sector than for men, representing an even a bigger challenge for older women. Women also had fewer opportunities to engage in technology-related activities and to learn as compared to men of the same age. Finally, a lack of work-life balance also keeps women from considering or entering the tech sector.

Desired change

- Equal access to education
- No more gender stereotypes
- Enough women in tech communities
- Free from harassment environment
- Not toxic culture
- Enough development opportunities
- Enough women in leadership

Positive change

- Access to tech education (young age/requalification)
- More quality jobs
- Equal pay
- More career progression opportunities
- More internal development opportunities

Ukrainian women quite positively evaluated the progress of the tech sector within the last 5 years, stating equal access to education, that gender stereotypes are no longer present in workplaces, and that the environment is free from harassment. There are also enough development opportunities, dedicated to women in tech communities and women in leadership positions.

Even though Ukrainian women quite positively evaluate the current situation of the tech sector, they still see some space for improvement when it comes to access to tech education at a young age or to requalification. There is also a need for more quality jobs and pay equality, more career progression opportunities and internal development opportunities which are desired by both experienced and fresh talents.

Fresh talents also would like to have more work-life balance, while experienced talents would like to see more women role models in tech companies.

Easiness to progress

- Clear career opportunities
- Clear promotion requirements

Respondents indicated that they clearly understood their potential career opportunities and what they needed to do to get a promotion.

- Lack of mentorship

When evaluating the ease of career progression, respondents mentioned a lack of mentorship. However, when selecting the most effective formats to progress, mentorship was evaluated below average by both fresh and experienced talents.

- Weak feedback culture

Ukrainian women did not feel that they received consistent and constructive feedback to help them improve.

- Lack of internal upskilling opportunities

Respondents also did not find enough upskilling opportunities in their companies during their careers. They also noted that they needed to develop their skills outside of work to match their peers.

Desired formats

- Career in tech sector guidance
- Coding and tech education schools
- Internships

Respondents positively evaluated careers in tech sector guidance, coding and tech education schools, and internships as a means to progress. Fresh talents also selected online upskilling courses as an effective and valuable format to progress.

Tech sector experience of the Ukrainian in exile

This section explores how Ukrainian women, amidst the challenges of war, are integrating into the value-added sector, focusing on opportunities for economic empowerment and overcoming barriers to participation.

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

UKRAINIAN EXPATS TECH JOURNEY ABROAD

The report presents the findings from interviews conducted with twelve Ukrainian female expats working in the tech sector, who relocated abroad following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These interviews provide valuable insights into the experiences of these women as they adapt to new professional environments in countries such as Lithuania, Germany, Poland, and Sweden.

The report covers three main areas: barriers to professional integration, comparisons of professional experiences, and the available support. It offers an overview of the opportunities and difficulties Ukrainian female expats face as they pursue jobs in tech industry overseas. The report also provides suggestions on how to make the integration process better.

KEY TOPICS:

Barriers to progressional integration

Differences in professional experiences

Support resources

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

Barriers to Professional Integration

The interviews with Ukrainian female expats revealed several significant obstacles in their efforts to establish themselves professionally in new job markets abroad. The main obstacles included language challenges, lengthy job requirements, adapting to a different style of communication in the workplace, and complex immigration process. These barriers often delayed the ability to secure employment and advance in careers.

LANGUAGE

Language usage at the workplace is one of the more frequent and critical barriers. In Sweden expats' ability to find a job can be strongly limited without Swedish language proficiency as good experience and credentials alone do not guarantee a successful application. Even when local language is not a prerequisite for applying, it can still remain a limiting factor even at later employee journey stages – it can be challenging to integrate into workplace and to feel a full-fledged member of the team when most co-workers prefer speaking in a local language.

WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

Workplace communication has more nuance than just language usage or preference in the workplace. Workplace communication in Ukraine is described as more direct and straightforward, with clear and immediate feedback, while, for example, in Poland communication was said to be more subtle and less direct. These differences tend to create misunderstandings and make it difficult for expats to gauge their performance or integrate smoothly into the team.

DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES

Extensive job requirements is an obstacle often encountered by expats in countries like Germany and Poland. Contrary to the common practice in Ukraine where skills and experience are prioritised, employers in Poland and Germany often require official diplomas and certificates even for roles where, in practice, having them was not necessary, complicating expats' professional integration.

IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

Managing the paperwork and navigating bureaucratic, complex processes of immigration is a challenge, especially burdening those with family responsibilities and full-time jobs. A case was shared when a job offer was reclaimed because of the expiration of the Ukrainian expat's work permit. The company's rationale for this decision was straightforward: "business cannot wait".

Barriers to Professional Integration

The topic of biases also emerged as a challenge for some expats during their professional integration. These biases, related to factors like nationality, gender, and age, affected experiences influencing salary offers and career opportunities. However, biases were noted to be less severe in their host countries compared to Ukraine, where these issues were more prevalent.

BIASES

"There are many Ukrainian migrants here in Warsaw, perhaps around five thousand from the IT sector. They often discuss salaries, and it seems like this is a common trend. For some reason, employers expect that since we are not native, we will be willing to work for lower salaries." – a Ukrainian expat in Poland

Biases related to nationality and gender remain one of the barriers, with observed occurrences when an expat employee is allegedly offered a lower salary due to their immigrant status, a suspicion supported by comparing offers with those of others in a local tech community. Despite such incidents, the biases faced by expats were deemed less severe in their host countries than in Ukraine, particularly within leadership and technical roles.

AGEISM

Ageism, whether faced directly or ingrained, is yet another barrier affecting expats' professional advancement and confidence. The tech industry in Ukraine seems to favour younger employees, particularly men, while older women are often perceived as less knowledgeable about new technologies and less in tune with client needs. The past experiences of facing ageism continue to follow Ukrainian female tech expats even when they move abroad, hindering their professional progress and active pursuit of potential job opportunities, regardless of whether they encounter it in the host country.

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

Comparison of Professional Experiences

The observed differences in professional experiences between Ukraine and the host countries include job postings and requirements, the general situation for women in tech, work-life balance, and the impact of the war on Ukraine's tech sector. Understanding these contrasts helps to highlight how expats adapt to new professional environments and the opportunities and challenges they encounter along the way.

JOB POSTINGS

In the past years, job postings in Sweden have become more inclusive, with fewer "must-have" requirements, and more skills listed as "nice-to-have". This approach contrasts with Ukraine, where job postings often include longer and more rigid lists of requirements. In Ukraine, the focus is more on detailed qualifications, which can make the job application process more demanding and discouraging compared to the more accessible and inclusive approach observed in Sweden.

WOMEN IN TECH

Women in Ukraine often face substantial gender biases, particularly in technical roles and leadership positions, where the industry favours younger male employees. The environment in Lithuania is seen as more inclusive, with women holding higher positions and opportunities being more merit-based.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Different approaches to work-life balance are observed, indicating Sweden as a good example, where meetings are typically scheduled between 9h00 and 16h00, allowing for more flexibility. This contrasts with the more intense work culture in Ukraine, where long hours and a faster work pace are more common, impacting personal time and well-being.

SITUATION IN UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine has profoundly affected the technology sector, as it is common for hiring managers to avoid hiring men due to a fear of conscription into military service, thereby making women seemingly more viable for hiring. Nevertheless, while the chance of being hired has increased, women continue to face barriers, such as being offered salaries that are lower than their male colleagues.

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

Comparison of Professional Experiences

The unwritten rules and expectations in the host country's job application process poses another problem for the Ukrainian expats. Insufficient knowledge of such an unwritten rule can enormously influence the job search of an expat. Lacking knowledge of local practices, expats can unknowingly send incomplete applications, further removing them from the selection process. This sometimes leads to frustration and delay in getting the first jobs in a new country.

THE UNWRITTEN RULES

"I was not realizing how important this reference is for the company I'm applying for. In fact, that's very important. And that's maybe even the first thing they're looking at." – a Ukrainian expat in Germany

REFERENCE LETTERS

Varying expectations for CV formats and application materials when abroad is a challenge for expats. For example, in Germany, providing a reference letter, especially from a German company, is deemed very important, even if this is not indicated in the job posting.

EUROPEAN GDPR REQUIREMENTS

Expats coming from non-EU countries are often unaware of the need to include a GDPR consent statement in their CV, an important requirement in the EU job application process. Without this statement, companies are often unable to process applications due to strict data protection regulations. As a result, their applications might be ignored, leaving them puzzled by the lack of responses.

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

Support Resources

The kinds of support discussed with expats include company assistance, professional networks, mentorship programs, and government aid. These types of help are important and makes it easier for Ukrainian female expats to cope with the challenges of becoming part of new communities in other countries.

COMPANY SUPPORT

Some expats were supported by their companies during the relocation process. For instance, a local Lithuanian company provided financial and accommodation assistance, as well as professional development opportunities. An American company with offices in Ukraine and Germany offered all Ukraine-based employees an opportunity to transfer to their German and American offices. The company also provided temporary accommodation and informational support ensuring a smoother integration into the new work environment.

NETWORK

Ukrainian expats often rely on professional networks to secure employment and build connections. In Poland, a large Ukrainian tech community on Telegram helps expats navigate job searches and connect with local recruiters.

MENTORS

Mentorship programs provides useful guidance for Ukrainian women expats. In Lithuania, the "Women Go Tech" program helps them navigate the tech industry and build confidence in their careers. Additionally, in Poland, mentorship from local Ukrainian communities and women-in-tech organizations supports them in preparing resumes and improving interview skills, helping them to enter a local job market.

GOVERNMENT

Many find the support provided by the government helpful. In Germany, Ukrainian refugees benefit from language courses, which improved their employability. In Lithuania, the government facilitates quick access to residence permits and ensures that important information is available in Ukrainian and Russian, helping relocated Ukrainians establish themselves more easily in the country.

Support Resources

While remote work has provided stability and flexibility during the transitions between countries for many Ukrainian women, they have often expressed a desire for on-site positions to foster a stronger sense of community and better integrate into their new environments.

REMOTE WORK VS. ON-SITE

"If you are building a life from zero, start with the communities." – a Ukrainian expat in Sweden

REMOTE WORK AS A BRIDGE

Remote work has served as a bridge, allowing many to move to another country, while keeping the jobs in their companies. This ensured a measure of continuity in a life broken by war. When some expats moved abroad, they continued working remotely for their employers who provided logistic and financial support during the transition. This arrangement gave them the chance to settle in their new country without the immediate pressure of searching for employment in the new location and time to acclimatize and find new opportunities.

THE DESIRE FOR ON-SITE WORK

Ukrainian expats who benefited from remote work also expressed a wish to shift to on-site positions to combat isolation and better integrate into the local community. While remote work offered practicality, it often resulted in feelings of loneliness and disconnection from the local culture. Expats viewed on-site work as a chance to enhance their language skills, interact more closely with colleagues, and build a stronger sense of community in their new surroundings.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EXPAT INTEGRATION

The following recommendations come from the reflection of relocated Ukrainian women, focusing on possible improvements in the integration process that would reduce the challenges in professional environments abroad.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Mentorship programs were highlighted as an important means of support. These programs could offer personalized guidance on resume building, interview preparation, and career development, helping expats integrate more effectively into the local job market. The "Women Go Tech" program in Lithuania was indicated as a successful model.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Providing comprehensive language courses and cultural orientation would ease the challenges of workplace communication caused by language barriers. Companies could offer more accessible language trainings to help expats better integrate into their new communities.

NETWORKS AND COMMUNITIES

Ukrainian expats advise their counterparts to actively engage in professional networks and local communities in order to build connections, find job opportunities, and receive support. Joining relevant groups and participating in local events can greatly facilitate the integration process. The ways of finding such communities include LinkedIn, Facebook groups, Telegram chats, *meetup.com* platform, in-person, industry specific meet-ups, Ukrainian expat communities.

UKRAINIANS IN EXILE

RECOMMENDATIONS: WOMEN IN TECH

These recommendations, gathered from interviews with Ukrainian female expats, aim to address the challenges and barriers women face in the tech industry, offering practical solutions to enhance inclusivity and career advancement.

INTRODUCTION TO TECH INDUSTRY

To help women better understand the various career paths in the tech industry, organizing tech company fairs and expos could be effective. These events would provide a platform for women to interact with professionals from different tech fields, learn about various roles, and gain insights into the skills and qualifications required for each profession.

PRACTICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

Strengthening the link between academic institutions and the tech industry is suggested for providing women with practical skills and knowledge that are directly applicable in the workplace. This means offering more internship opportunities, industry projects, and collaborative programs.

GENDER-BALANCING INITIATIVES

Implementing gender-balancing initiatives, similar to those in Sweden, can promote equality in the workplace. Simplifying job postings by reducing "must-have" requirements and categorizing more of them as "nice-to-have" helps attract more female candidates, who often tend to undervalue their qualification. Additionally, mandatory paternal leave policies in Sweden require both parents to take time off, preventing the career gap that often affects women due to maternity leave.

ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TECH INDUSTRY

It is important that educational institutions and social media present a balanced view, emphasizing that while tech offers great opportunities, it also requires hard work and continuous learning. Tech studies are often advertised with a focus on an easy lifestyle and guaranteed job placement, which does not reflect the reality of the demanding nature of tech careers. Accurate representation can help set appropriate expectations for those entering the field.

About Women Go Tech

The organization “Women Go Tech” is an NGO whose mission is to navigate women towards careers in tech. It is doing it by utilizing business professionals' mentoring sessions, providing tech content, events, and a multi-layer community. Started as the first mentorship program for women in Lithuania in 2016, now expanded activities in the CEE region with focus on Baltics, Poland, and Ukraine.

In 2024 Women Go Tech won the European Digital Skills award in the “Women in ICT” category. The awards are organized by the European Commission.

The organization is committed to educating 20,000 women on the use of AI tools and applications in Central and Eastern Europe by 2025.

LEARN MORE

WOMEN GO TECH

The Power Hub for Women in Tech

CEE region | 13 countries | 5 200+ participants | 40 experts