

# *Dutch D&I in Digital benchmark*

Report | June 2023



Partners:

diversitYhero



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Ministry of Economic Affairs  
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# Foreword

I am proud to share with you the 2023 edition of the Dutch D&I in Digital benchmark report. In an era where technology plays an ever-expanding role in our lives, it is imperative that we examine the composition of the workforce behind these innovations and ensure that it reflects the diversity of the world we live in.

The lack of data and overall inconsistency in measuring D&I data, brought me to start this initiative. As known, data provides an objective and evidence based foundation for understanding the current state of diversity and inclusion within organizations. Collecting and analyzing this data allows us to identify disparities, gaps, and areas of improvement, enabling us to make better informed decisions and take targeted actions. Alongside the lack of data, Diversity Hero also started to address a missed opportunity in the tech industry of the Netherlands of cohesion and collaboration, in which companies could benefit from working jointly while learning from each other.

The perception of the Netherlands falling behind in measuring diversity and inclusion may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the country's historical context, which emphasized a homogeneous cultural identity and equality, may have hindered the recognition of the importance of addressing these issues. Moreover, the legal framework in the Netherlands has mainly concentrated on preventing discrimination rather than actively measuring and promoting diversity and inclusion. Lastly, a traditionally valued privacy and individuality of the Dutch society might also have contributed to this perception.

I believe in the power of data, opening up possibilities for companies to measure progress, tracking the impact of their initiatives over time. Without it, it becomes challenging to assess the effectiveness of their strategies, and to actually move forward. Therefore, the purpose of this initiative is to shed light on the current state of diversity and inclusion within the Dutch tech industry, by providing a benchmark for organizations to assess their own efforts and progress. The following report presents the findings of a qualitative survey, conducted among various companies, spanning different industry sectors and company types. Data and insights to gender and cultural diversity, generational gaps and the strategies and policies organizations have in place will be provided.

“Let’s start combining commitment with what tech companies do best: follow the data. We have to dig deeper, learn from each other, find patterns and be courageous. It’s time to make changes that actually work.”

Despite efforts to engage companies and expand our scope, as well as introducing two new optional sections on inclusion and the sense of belonging of employees, we noticed a lack of significant progress in companies’ efforts since last year. The Netherlands lags behind compared other European countries, where policies and legislation being put in place are showing greater impact. The latter is primarily due to the struggle of gaining commitment from companies to measure and benchmark D&I data. Showing that companies remain unaware of the crucial significance of measuring diversity and inclusion.

The release of the 2023 edition of the Dutch D&I in Digital benchmark report highlights the pressing need for collective action and greater awareness within the Dutch tech industry. Only through collective efforts can we create a more inclusive and equitable future for the upcoming generations. Together, we must make a greater effort to raise awareness and propel the Netherlands forward. I would like to thank our partners: Techleap.nl, Taskforce D&I by NLdigital, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate and Booking.com. A special thanks to all companies that participated in this year’s benchmark, your efforts towards accelerating DEI through data is important and makes you a role model within the Dutch tech industry.

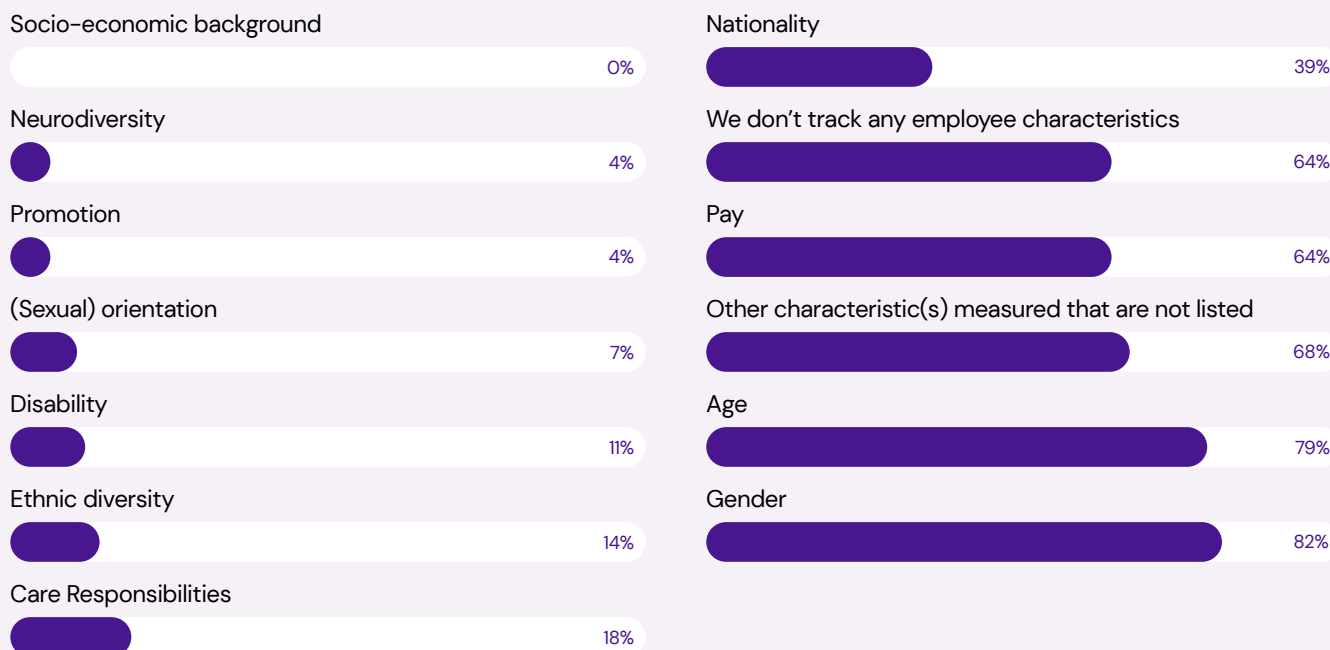
Achieving a significant and lasting change cannot be accomplished solely by a few. It necessitates the active participation and ownership of everyone involved. Let’s start combining commitment with what tech companies do best: follow the data. We have to dig deeper, learn from each other, find patterns and be courageous. It’s time to make changes that actually work.



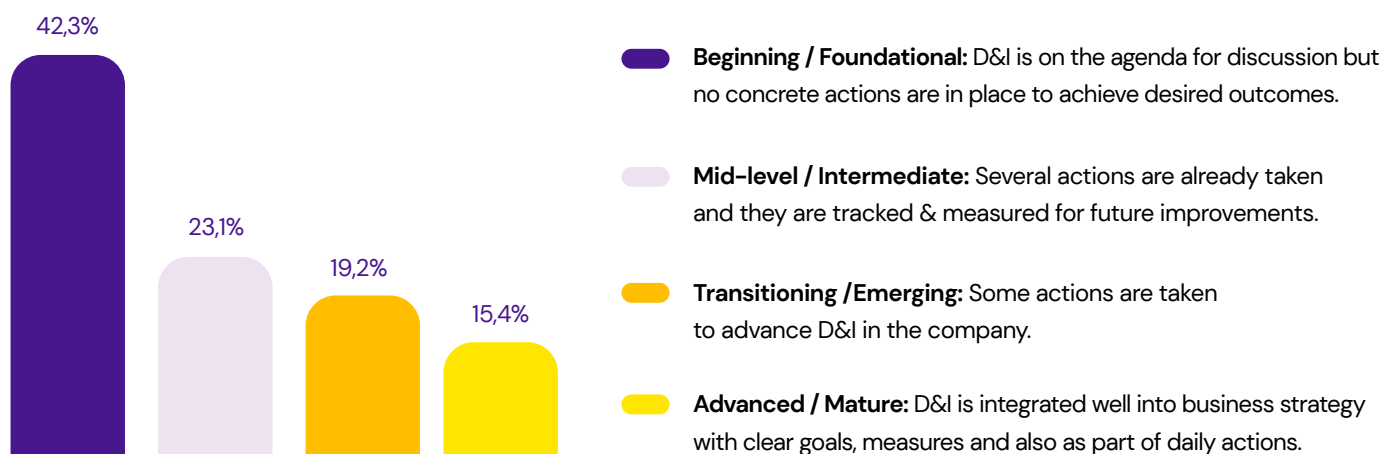
**Gillian Tans – founder of Diversity Hero**  
former CEO of Booking.com

# Key findings

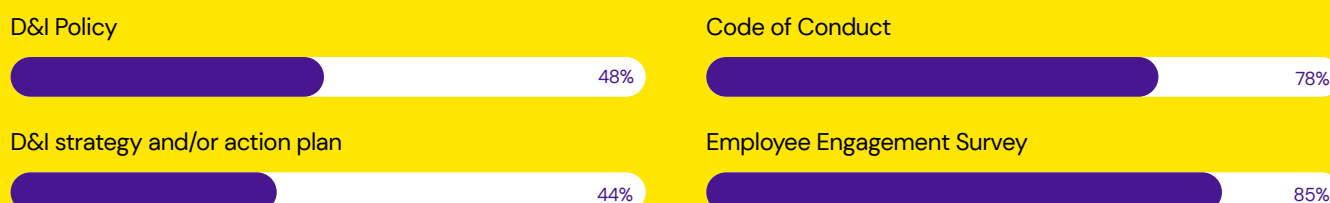
## What do companies track?



## Which of the following categories best describes where companies think they stand on D&I?

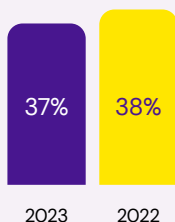


## D&I Policies and processes: what D&I practices do companies have in place?

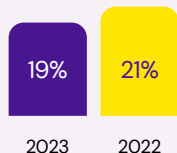


## Women in Dutch tech

### Women in total



### Women in tech roles



### Women in c-suite



### Women in tech roles

	2023	2022	
Senior Tech roles	13%	22%	↓
Data roles	26%	35%	↓
IT operations roles	13%	13%	—
Product and Delivery roles	35%	30%	↑
Q&A Testing roles	39%	42%	↓
UX and Design roles	47%	39%	↑
Developer roles	17%	16%	↑



### Do leaders/managers have D&I objectives/KPIs in their performance measures?



**54%**

The representation of non-Dutch individuals in tech jobs is 54%



**85%** of the companies send out Employee Engagement Surveys, but **72%** leave out questions on Inclusion.

### Do companies use a self-identification tool to gather D&I data?

Don't, but planning to implement this

✓ Do 21,5%

× Don't 71,5%

+ 7%



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# Methodology

The benchmark is held amongst companies within the Dutch tech ecosystem, consisting of a diverse range of companies operating within different fields of tech.

It's important to take into account that companies participating in the survey showed a higher awareness in D&I topics. Although 42,3% said to be at the beginning stage, we verified a higher sense of acknowledgement which might have affected the data.

## Approach

Based on the provided information, the data collection approach shifted from a macro perspective to a more micro perspective, focusing on the industry and company type participating. The focus narrowed down to the employees and their feelings of belonging. The benchmark questions were divided into mandatory and optional sections, covering various subareas and optional sections, covering various sub-areas.

The mandatory sections included questions about the following sub-areas:

- **General:** this section includes questions that provide an overall understanding of the organization and its employees.
- **DEI strategy, efforts, and activities of the organization:** this section focuses on understanding the organization's diversity and inclusion initiatives, including their strategies, efforts, and specific activities.
- **Gender diversity:** this section explores the organization's approach to gender diversity, including policies, representation, and inclusion.
- **Age:** this section investigates the organization's perspective on age diversity and inclusion.
- **Nationality:** this section looks into the organization's approach to nationality diversity, including representation and inclusion.

Additionally, there were optional sections that covered the following sub-areas:

- **Ethnic diversity:** this section delves into the organization's efforts and initiatives related to ethnic diversity, including representation and inclusion.
- **Inclusion and Belonging culture:** this section focuses on understanding the organization's culture of inclusion and belonging, aiming to gauge employees' experiences and perceptions.

## Categorise

To facilitate answering certain questions, definitions related to diversity and inclusion practices were provided to the participating companies. Additionally, a list of technical roles was given to ensure accurate categorization of the data. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed and grouped into four main areas:

- **General:** this category includes findings that provide a general overview of the organization and its diversity and inclusion landscape.
- **D&I Strategy, policies and processes:** this category encompasses the findings related to the organization's overall diversity and inclusion strategies, initiatives, and specific activities.
- **Gender Diversity:** this category focuses on the findings related to gender diversity within the organization, including representation, policies, and inclusion.
- **Nationality and Ethnic Diversity:** this category covers the findings related to nationality and ethnic diversity within the organization, including representation, inclusion, and any specific initiatives or challenges related to these aspects.
- **Generations:** this category reflects on findings about sensitivity to D&I in relation to different generations.

# General

This benchmark was held amongst companies within the Dutch tech industry. Participating companies were given four months, spanning between February and May 2023, to submit their data within an online benchmarking platform. This year's benchmark represents a total number of **15.485 employees**.

## Top three industry types:

① Enterprise Software

② IT Consultancy

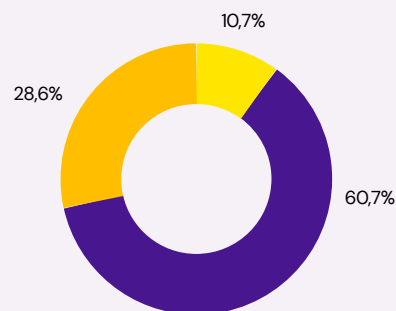
③ Marketing

## Type of businesses

● B2C

● B2B

● Mix



## Type of companies:

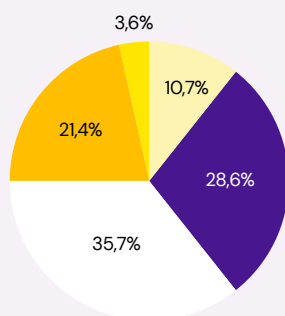
● Start up

● Scale up

● SME  
(Small Medium Enterprise)

● Corporate

● Other



## Company size by n° of Employees

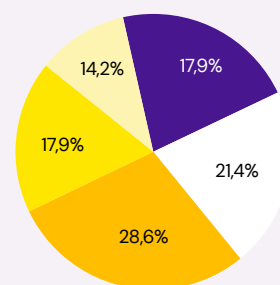
● 0-24

● 25-49

● 50-249

● 250-749

● 750+



# D&I strategy, policies and processes

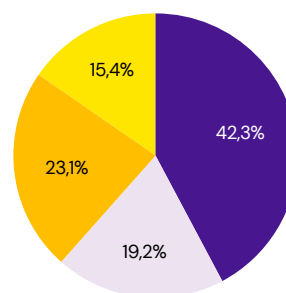
## ► D&I strategy:

The way in which an organization plans its actions over a period of time, to improve its position and achieve what it wants in D&I. .

## Companies' stance on Diversity and Inclusion

Understanding where companies stand towards provides valuable insights into their level of commitment and progress. By identifying their current position, companies can develop targeted strategies and initiatives to further enhance their D&I efforts and move towards higher levels of maturity. For this reason, the assessment of companies' stance on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) was categorized into four distinct levels:

- **Beginning / Foundational:** D&I is on the agenda for discussion but no concrete actions are in place to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Transitioning / Emerging:** Some actions are taken to advance D&I in the company.
- **Mid-level / Intermediate:** Several actions are already taken and they are tracked & measured for future improvements.
- **Advanced / Mature:** D&I is integrated well into business strategy with clear goals, measures and also as part of daily actions.



## Characteristics tracked by companies

### Socio-economic background

0%

### Neurodiversity

4%

### Promotion

4%

### (Sexual) orientation

7%

### Disability

11%

### Ethnic diversity

14%

### Care Responsibilities

18%

### Nationality

39%

### Pay

64%

### We don't track any employee characteristics

64%

### Other characteristic(s) measured that are not listed above

68%

### Age

79%

### Gender

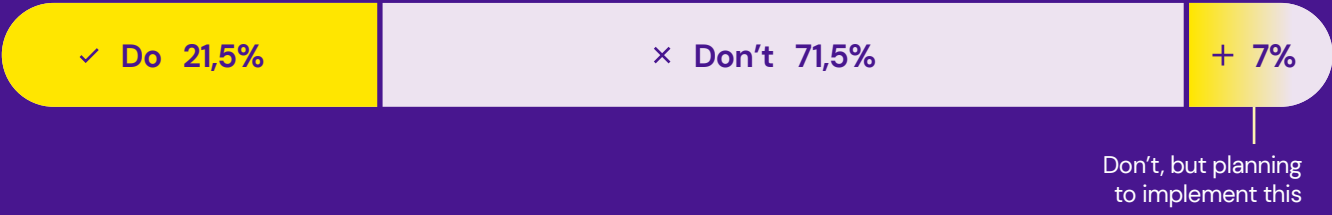
82%

64%

It is promising to see that 64% of the companies that took part in this benchmark are tracking pay, especially ahead of the EU Pay Transparency Directive. The current average Gender Pay Gap according to the EU is 13%, showing that there is still work to be done.



Companies who use a self-identification tool:

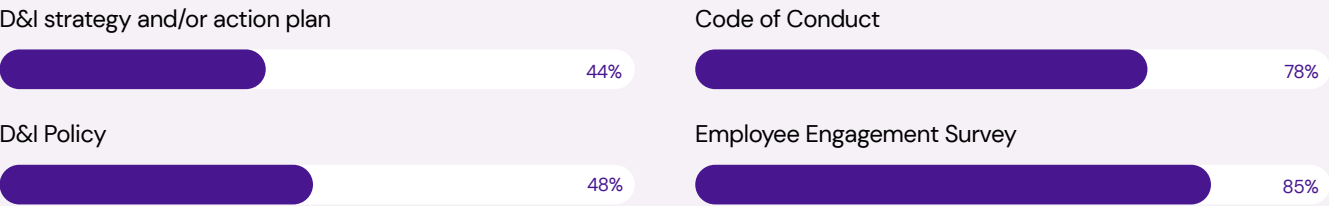


“Demographic data gives us valuable insights into the diversity of our community, helping us to identify areas for improvement, create targeted programs, and measure their effectiveness over time.

By knowing who our employees are, we are able to continuously improve our practices, create the best environment for colleagues with all backgrounds to thrive and have an amazing career at Booking.com.

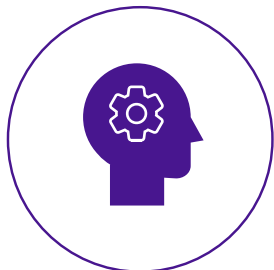
– Booking.com

Actions implemented in the workplace



## Skills and training interventions

Organizations offer these skills and training interventions to improve inclusion and diversity in tech roles:



Tech training/retraining for existing employees	50%
Graduate schemes in tech or with tech rotations	25%
Coaching for those in or seeking tech roles	36%
Mentoring for those in or seeking tech roles	32%
Something else that is not on this list	21%
Gender-specific initiatives	29%
Tech training/retraining for external hires	14%
Traineeships in tech	36%
We don't have any skills or training interventions designed to improve Inclusion and diversity in tech roles	39%
Tech returner programmes (for those who have had a break from a tech career)	11%

How do companies plan to increase their offering of interventions in 2023?  
A few examples..



Set 30% women  
quota



Set new DEI  
goals and  
increase  
initiatives



Offer inclusive  
leadership  
training and  
other training to  
employees



Increase  
dedicated D&I  
budget

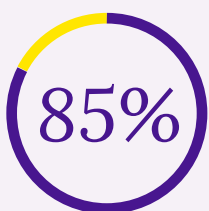


## Assessing diversity and inclusion practices in organizational policies and processes:



### Inclusion: does everyone belong?

Within the scope of this D&I report, the following section was presented as optional to participants. Consequently, the response rate for this section may have been impacted, resulting in insufficient data to draw comprehensive conclusions. Furthermore, the majority of participants in this benchmark primarily focused on diversity-related aspects, such as gender and cultural diversity, placing less emphasis on evaluations related to inclusion and the sense of belonging of their employees. This oversight highlights a missed opportunity to comprehensively assess and address D&I from a more holistic approach.



85% of companies send out Employee Engagement Surveys



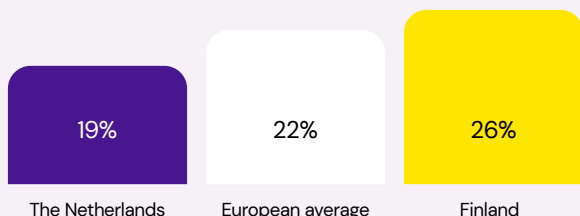
Only 28% include dedicated questions on Inclusion and Belonging in Employee Engagement Surveys

# Gender Diversity

- Gender is inclusive of all, including cisgender individuals, transgender individuals, and non-binary individuals. Although some organizations are beginning to track the broader spectrum of gender identity in their workforces, most still exclusively track employee gender as women and men.



## Women in tech roles



The assessment of diversity within the participating organizations primarily focused on gender as the primary dimension of evaluation. However, despite being one of the most tracked dimensions, gender representation remains significantly underrepresented, showing no improvement compared to last year's data (21%). A notable concern is the lack of progress in leadership and C-suite positions, as they still exhibit significant disparities in terms of gender representation, far from achieving equal distribution.

## Beyond the binary

It is worth noting that the majority of the gender diversity tracked in the benchmark pertained to women and men, with very few reports of other gender minorities. This indicates a prevailing tendency to overlook or not measure/track beyond the binary gender categories. Posing a challenge in improving gender diversity within the tech industry, as it cannot be solely resolved by increasing the hiring of women. Unfortunately, many organizations still focus solely on this aspect in their efforts.

Furthermore, the benchmark results reveal that the Netherlands falls behind the European average in terms of gender diversity in tech roles, with only 19% women in such positions compared to the European\* average of 22%. To provide context, the UK\* reports 28% of tech employees as gender minorities, while Finland reports 26% women working in tech roles. These comparisons highlight the need for greater efforts to achieve higher levels of gender diversity within the Dutch tech industry.

## Best practice

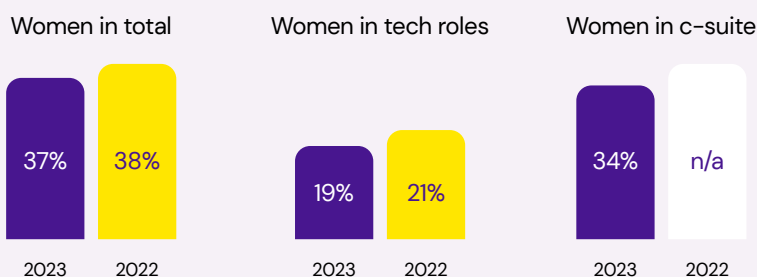
The quota in supervisory boards introduced in Germany in 2015 has resulted in a 34.9% share of women in DAX40 companies (as of March 1, 2022). And the quota on management boards introduced in 2021 is also having an impact: on March 1 of this year, the proportion of women on DAX management boards was 14.3%, higher than ever before\*.



\* sources: [Allbright Foundation](#), [McKinsey](#), [Tech Talent Charter UK](#)

## Women in Dutch tech

This reflects the percentage of women compared to the total number in these roles.



Connecting the data on women in leadership and C-suite positions, it is noteworthy to mention the recent policy\* introduced by both the European Commission and the Dutch government. These policies aim to establish target ratios for improving gender diversity on boards and among senior management. Examining the current gender disparities in leadership roles further emphasizes the significance of these policy initiatives and the urgent need to address gender imbalances at different levels.

### ► Definition of tech roles



*In the context of our benchmark any reference to “technical”/”tech” roles refers to those which require digital technology skills. Although a person might be referred to as a technical specialist in their field due to their specialized knowledge of that area, if the use of “technical” in that context does not relate to digital and technology focused skills, it is not included in this category.*

Within tech, we noticed that different occupations have different levels of gender diversity. Roles associated with “hard skills” are more gender-skewed than areas like user-centred design and software testing.

In this year’s findings, UX Design and QA testing roles have the highest proportion of women, accounting for 47% and 39% respectively. In order to meaningfully address the tech gender gap, D&I tech skills initiatives must engage women with the tech skills required for the most in-demand and highly-paid tech occupations.

It is concerning that only 13% of senior tech roles are given to women, considering that these roles will have the highest demand and impact in the upcoming years. Furthermore, it is important to note also that data-related roles obtained a lower representation, accounting for only 26% in comparison to 35% in 2022.

Considering the recent advancements and the increasing reliance on e.g. AI technologies, these positions play a crucial role in driving diverse innovation within the tech industry. As the development and use of AI

continue to shape various sectors, the presence of diverse perspectives and experiences in data-related roles becomes even more significant. These roles are instrumental in leveraging AI technologies effectively and ensuring that they are developed and deployed in an inclusive and unbiased manner.

### Women in tech roles

	2023	2022
Senior Tech roles	13%	22% ↓
Data roles	26%	35% ↓
IT operations roles	13%	13% —
Product and Delivery roles	35%	30% ↑
Q&A Testing roles	39%	42% ↓
UX and Design roles	47%	39% ↑
Developer roles	17%	16% ↑

# Generations

Demographic shifts are a highly significant yet often misunderstood challenge that organizations face today. As a matter of addressing these shifts, this survey employed a demographic analysis that considers generational groups rather than age groups. This approach recognizes that each generation grows up in a unique context, leading to different work expectations and sensitivities to diversity and inclusion (D&I) topics.

The younger generations, referred to as Gen Z and millennials in particular, exhibit greater awareness and exposure to sensitive issues related to gender and ethnic diversity. A study\* revealed that 83% of Gen Z individuals consider an employer's commitment to D&I significant when deciding where to work. Similarly, another poll found that 75% of Gen Z respondents would reconsider applying to a company if they were dissatisfied with its diversity and inclusion efforts, emphasizing the importance of these factors in attracting and retaining talent.

- *Generation: all the people who were born at about the same time.*



We will refer to the following generational groups:



Silent Generation:  
1928-1945



Baby Boomers:  
1946-1964



Generation X:  
1965 - 1980



Millennials (Generation Y):  
1981 - 1996



Generation Z:  
1997-2021



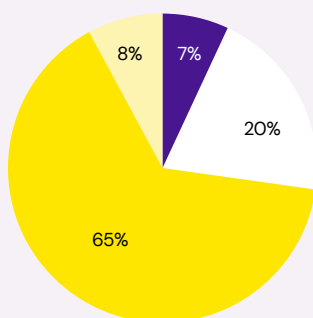
\* source: [Monster](#)



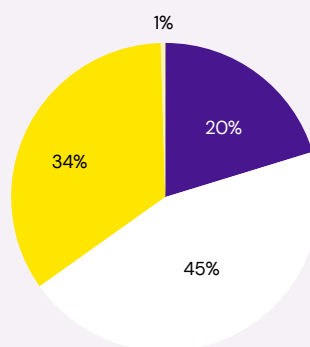


By understanding the unique perspectives and expectations of different generations, organizations can develop more targeted and effective D&I strategies. Acknowledging the evolving landscape of demographics and fostering an inclusive environment that appeals to diverse generations can not only enhance operational effectiveness and competitiveness but also contribute to long-term growth and success.

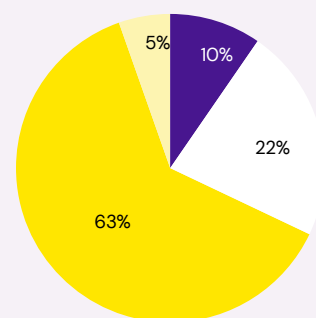
**Distribution of all jobs per generation:**



**Distribution of jobs in leadership roles per generation:**



**Distribution of jobs in tech roles per generation:**



- The baby boomers (1946–1962)
- Millenials / Generation Y (1981–1996)
- Generation X (1965–1980)
- Generation Z (1997–2012)

# Nationality and ethnic diversity

In addition to gender diversity, assessing overall workforce diversity data is an important aspect of promoting ethnic inclusion within companies. Companies were specifically asked about the nationality and ethnic diversity of their employees. To categorize ethnic diversity, we relied on broader ethnic groups based on definitions provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). It is important to recognize that ethnic groups may not be the most precise classifications that every individual feels comfortable with. Indeed, the CBS\* itself regularly updates its diversity definitions, highlighting the complex nature of these topics.

For the purpose of this benchmark, we primarily categorized the workforce into three main groups: native Dutch, individuals who are children of migrants, and individuals who are migrants themselves. Furthermore, the migrant group was further divided into those originating from Europe, North America, or Oceania, and those from Mid-South America, Africa, Asia (including Turkey).

This categorization allows for a broad assessment of ethnic diversity within organizations participating in the benchmark. However, it is important to note that this approach may not capture the full range of diversity and individual experiences. The intention behind these categories is to provide a starting point for understanding and addressing ethnic diversity within the context of this benchmark.

While a majority of companies completed questions about nationality and demonstrated some level of tracking in this area, the same cannot be said for ethnic diversity. Surprisingly, only 36% of companies responded to the ethnic diversity section, and a mere 14% declared actively tracking ethnic diversity.

## ► Nationality

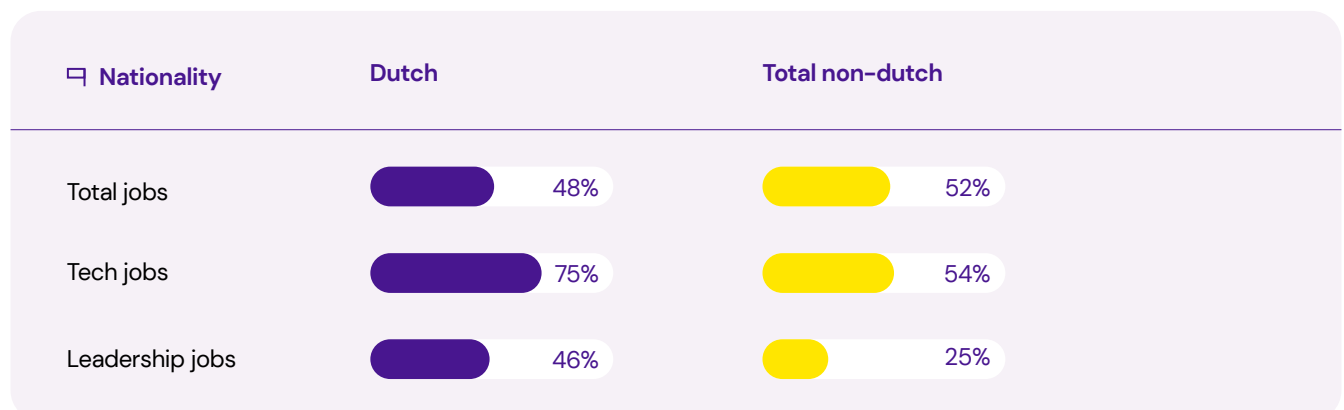


*Being the legal subject of a particular nation (citizenship)*

## ► Ethnic group



*An ethnic group is a social group, sharing common and distinctive culture, religion, language. For this benchmark we used: Native Dutch: A person whose parents were born in the Netherlands  
Child of migrants: residents born in the Netherlands with one or two parents born abroad  
Migrant: A person who is not born in the Netherlands. Western migrant: an individual who has migrated to the Netherlands from another European country (excluding Turkey), North America or Oceania  
Non-Western migrant: an individual who has migrated to the Netherlands from Mid- or South America, Africa, Asia or Turkey.*



\* source: [CBS](#)





The findings from the survey indicate that a significant majority, 75%, of leadership are occupied by native Dutch. This suggests that retaining tech talent may be more challenging for individuals from a non-dutch background. Although the overall representation of non-Dutch individuals in tech jobs is around 54%, the data highlights that non-dutch face barriers in terms of career progression once they enter the tech industry.

A similar trend has been observed also for the percentage of senior tech roles analyzed through the lens of gender diversity. To address these disparities, it is crucial to establish fair and equitable promotion processes and foster a company culture that supports the advancement of gender and cultural diversity.



# Conclusion

The Netherlands has been one of the leading European innovation hubs for long. To stay relevant and retain our top position, we need to accelerate our D&I efforts on both an organisational and ecosystem level. The attraction and retention of diverse (tech) talent will boost economic growth and equal opportunities for all. It will also help to align and comply with national and European legislation around e.g. (gender) quota and pay transparency.

Looking at this year's benchmark outcomes, we can see the following areas of improvement for the Dutch ecosystem to focus on:

We need to build trust and a solid infrastructure, using self-ID tools, to track and gather more data beyond gender and age, such as ethnicity and disability. This will allow us to acknowledge and improve our efforts towards a truly diverse workforce.

Many organisations still identify themselves being in a beginning stage of D&I, meaning that D&I is on the agenda for discussion, but no concrete actions are in place to achieve desired outcomes. This shows the importance of setting dedicated goals and creating an overall D&I strategy.

Many organisations already send out Employee Engagement Survey, but it is of vital importance to use these to gather more insights into the Inclusion and Belonging Culture.

By collecting, sharing and discussing our insights and learnings, we better understand what actually works and how we can work towards dedicated goals together. The only way we can collectively progress is if organisations (re) commit to collaborative effort and action.





## About the partners

### diversityhero

Diversity Hero has been founded by Gillian Tans, who is the ex-CEO and former chairwoman of Booking.com. Her company works on accelerating diversity & inclusion in technology, through data. Diversity Hero brings together the ecosystem by gathering data and comparing, sharing and learning from peers in the tech industry.

[Visit website](#)

### techleap.nl

Techleap.nl, is a non-profit, publicly funded organisation helping to quantify and accelerate the tech ecosystem of the Netherlands. Empowering all founders and their tech companies to scale with programs and initiatives for improving access to capital, international markets and talent.

[Visit website](#)



Taskforce Diversiteit & Inclusie by NLdigital, is a public-private initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate to promote (gender) equality in the Dutch digital industry.

[Visit website](#)

The initiative is supported by:

**Booking.com**



Ministry of Economic Affairs  
and Climate Policy

The data for this benchmark has been collected by using the benchmarking platform of Blue Field Agency. Their ISO 27001 & 20252 certified research department only has access to process the raw data for general anonymised and aggregated reporting purposes.

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*The Netherlands has been one of the leading European innovation hubs for long. To retain our top position and to stay relevant we need to accelerate our D&I efforts on an organisational and ecosystem level as a whole.*

*Become part of a community of D&I frontrunners, visit our website.*

[www.diversityhero.com](https://www.diversityhero.com)



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