

# THE GENDER GAP IN THE ITS SECTOR

## What?

The ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) sector, where tech meets transport, has long been a domain dominated by men. Little attention or research has been done on the issue of gender equality in the sector. A mere 32.8% of employees in the EU's high-tech sectors were women as of 2022 (Eurostat, 2023), and the transport sector is also male dominated. Recognising this disparity, the Women in Nordic ITS (WIN-ITS) project was born. This initiative seeks to forge lasting partnerships to foster gender equality and sustainability within the transport systems of the Nordic and Baltic regions.

## How?

Run by EIT Urban Mobility and Trivector Traffic and co-funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, WIN-ITS employed a multifaceted approach, encompassing a survey, workshops, and expert discussions. In the project, we brought together experts from ITS organisations in the Nordics and Baltics as well as other organisations. Together, we discussed in workshops, and developed a survey that was sent to ITS organisations in the Baltic and Nordic regions. The results were presented and reflected upon in a webinar and a workshop. The results from the project are based on the discussions from the workshops, input from the survey, previous research and other expert input.

## IMPORTANT FACTS:

WIN  
ITS



### Norms are important

What is normal in the transport sector is to focus on rationality, cost-saving and numbers. If you focus on making the transport system more efficient for the highest earners, you are leaving behind the rest. This is what happens today, with a solid focus on commuting travel and highway projects that mostly benefit (male) high earners. We need to challenge the norms to have a transport system for all.



### Representation does not ensure equality

Today, the main focus is on equal representation (equal numbers of men and women). However, the transport sector research shows that a focus on only representation (i.e. number of women) does not ensure gender equality since both women and men are educated in gendered norms and ways of working.



### The leaky pipeline

From high school, to university, to first job, management position and through to retirement, women "leak" from the career pipeline in the tech and transport sector. Moments when they "leak" out can be e.g. due to maternity or missed leadership positions. Being present with support at critical points in the career pipeline could help to increase the gender balance.



### Collect and analyse data to address the gender gap

There is a need to collect and interpret the data about women and men to understand where the gender inequalities appear. In this way initiatives can be more targeted in decreasing the gender gap.



### Biggest challenges today

According to the survey:

- Not enough women applying for available jobs
- Not enough qualified/interested women
- The number of female candidates is usually low
- IT field is more popular among men still, so that might make it difficult to recruit women.



### Innovation is still male dominated

A Finnish study from 2023 (Kovaleva et al., 2023) shows that one of the most common reasons women are not striving to become an entrepreneur in the tech sector is a lack of social acceptance, discrimination and lack of role models. This indicates that women are not feeling welcome in these environments and that norms and representation affect career choices.



### New thoughts about modelling

Traffic models and cost-benefit analyses, which are widely used in the transport sector, use outdated logics. These logics focus on numbers and maintaining a vehicle-centred approach to transport. Incorporating aspects such as health into these models could support the transition to a fairer transport system.