WOMEN AT THE HEART OF THE ECONOMY

France as a pioneer for women’s leadership in a disrupted world

January 2020
Our world is facing a complex transformation: most practices and professions are being invented and reinvented each day. Everything is changing very quickly and if we are not attentive, the risk is to let men shape our world alone, as done in the past.

At the moment, mostly men are in charge and control the levers of change. Unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, based on innate cultural traditions and social pressures, women are not sufficiently represented where they can be a leading force and be impactful.

I would like to pay tribute to President Emmanuel Macron’s determination to make gender equality the great cause of his five-year mandate.

In this spirit, the French Presidency of the G7 in 2019 - committed to reducing inequalities, including gender discrimination - has been a key moment in raising global awareness.

For the Women’s Forum for the Economy & Society, whose overarching theme was Taking the lead for inclusion, the G7 has been an extraordinary opportunity to highlight the role that women can and must play in creating a more just and inclusive world. I am pleased that our work has been taken into account in this action.

It is urgent that women, who contribute up to only 34% of the worldwide wealth creation, have access to the jobs of the future, which are in reality the jobs of today. Nobody knows exactly how these jobs will evolve.

What we do know, however, is that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), and not just digital fields, are at the heart of this transformation.

Therefore, it is crucial that women have the same opportunities, assets, skills and expertise as men in order to design and fully benefit from these jobs of the future.

It is a question of justice and equity, but also of economic performance: 240 million jobs can be created by 2025 and 28 trillion dollars added to the world GDP if women and men are equally represented.

More female leadership in STEM fields means growth, innovation, creativity, wealth, attractiveness and competitiveness.

France, we don’t say it enough, is often exemplary in promoting gender equality, and is notably a world champion for the number of women on Boards of Directors. Furthermore, France must also be a pioneer in terms of number of women in STEM, in order to be at the cutting edge of innovation and to face the challenges of the future.
Imagine France, a country of male engineers, becoming also a country of women engineers!

A country where women are developing artificial intelligence, monitoring cyber security, inventing new ways of consuming, but also at the helm of strategic investments, at the heart of the design of cities - where 60% of the worldwide population lives - of the mobility of the future, on the front lines in the fight against climate change, experts in energy and infrastructure...

I am very pleased that the French Government has fully considered the stakes of women’s representation in STEM, by widely involving the economic world and civil society, notably through the #FemmesEco public consultation, in order to act together for equality between women and men in the economy.

Personally, and on behalf of the Women’s Forum, I would particularly like to thank Marlène Schiappa, Secretary of State for Equality between Women and Men and the Fight against Discrimination; Bruno Le Maire, Minister of the Economy and Finance; and Cédric O, Secretary of State in charge for Digital Affairs, for entrusting me with such an essential mission, to propose and pilot a national mobilisation plan in favour of STEM professions, and to empower women’s leadership in proactively engaging within the economy of the future.

To meet this challenge, I know I can count on the tremendous support from the members of the Women’s Forum Strategic Committee, to whom I would like to pay special tribute. I would also like to thank all our partners for their strong commitment in achieving this project.

Backed by the expertise of the Women’s Forum Daring Circles initiative and our international network, I could emphasize good practices, innovative solutions and pilot programmes.

Moreover, thanks to a wide consultation with the French public and private sectors, I could adapt our proposals to the specificities of France. I would like to thank all of them for their support within this project and their enthusiastic involvement in our work.

The challenge now is for these recommendations to go beyond our borders, and to have an international impact, particularly at the G7 Summit in the United States and the G20 Summit in Saudi Arabia, where the Women’s Forum can raise awareness around these ambitious initiatives.

Let's mobilise together to create a new order!

Chiara Corazza
Managing Director of the Women’s Forum
**Methodology**

*Bring together positive and innovative dynamics*

Created 15 years ago, the Women’s Forum is the leading platform of global influence capable of bringing together both the public and private sector, including NGOs and international and academic institutions, with the ambition of promoting the voices, the visions and the added value of women, not only on gender issues, but on topics that concern humanity as a whole.

It provides a unique place in which business and policy-makers work together to seek solutions to common problems related not only to the role of women but also to economic growth and well-being, share experiences and promote best practices for encouraging a shift to a perfectly gender-equal society.

Through its outputs, the Women’s Forum demonstrates not only the added value and high quality of its work, but also what a multi-stakeholder dialogue at an international level can achieve, the increasing role of women within the economy and society it can unlock, and the opportunities it can create.

The feminization of STEM is a priority for the Women’s Forum and its partners in every initiative and within the Daring Circles, cross-industry working groups which are designed to carry out concrete actions in favour of women’s empowerment in different fields, such as:

- **Women & Climate**, led by BNP Paribas and L’Oréal, which aims to enable women to lead actions against climate change and to address its disproportionate impact on women.
- **Women & Access to Health**, led by Axa, which focuses on reducing inequalities between women and men in this area and promoting women entrepreneurs in Health Tech.
- **Women & Business**, led by P&G, which raises awareness on the power of procurement for women’s economic empowerment and promotes women-owned businesses.
- **Women & STEM**, led by Google, which aims to increase the number of female talents in companies and to retain them, as well as to develop the leadership and impact of women with STEM skills.
- **Women & Artificial Intelligence**, led by Microsoft, which inspires organisations to apply a gender lens to their AI development and implementation and avoid gender biases.

The research and consultations of the members of these Daring Circles have highlighted international good practices. Alongside major companies, other institutional partners such as ESA, UNESCO, OECD and the IMF and academic partners such as HEC and Politecnico di Milano have enriched these reflections.

This analysis and these proposals have helped to raise the awareness of the French public authorities who, at the end of the 2019 G7 under French Presidency, decided to act to make the change happen. The mission entrusted to the Women’s Forum is part of this ambition.

In order to ensure that the recommendations are fully adapted to the French context, the Women’s Forum organised a broad consultation with the ministries concerned, the key players in the French ecosystem and representatives of the civil society.
The importance of STEM in today’s world

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines are at the heart of the jobs of the future. Indeed, they are increasingly present in our daily lives: in the professional environment as well as in personal life, the importance of investing in these fields is crucial.

The digital transition is making great strides: in 2020, among the 10 most sought-after professions in France, 8 jobs are directly linked to STEM: data protection officer, artificial intelligence engineer, community manager, site reliability engineer (SRE), cyber security specialist, DevOps engineer, data engineer and data scientist.¹

The jobs of the future are already today’s jobs and the preponderance of STEM is obvious. STEM skills give a head start in all professions because they are a source of innovation and creativity. They affect all dimensions of society such as education and training, consumption, health, mobility and more generally living conditions. It is therefore imperative to educate about STEM by using STEM.

Indeed, STEM fields are radically changing the labour market: 85% of the jobs of 2030 do not yet exist.² STEM account for 70% of the rapidly growing skills and the automation of jobs directly related to these fields will be largely responsible for the transformation of work in the future.³ Moreover, 50% of companies expect automation to significantly reduce their workforce by 2022: 5% of jobs could be fully automated and 60% will be partially automated.⁴ It is estimated that 9% of men and 11% of women are at risk of losing their jobs due to automation, representing 180 million jobs held by women.⁵

However, automation will be an opportunity to create new types of jobs that will require advanced STEM skills. In the United States, for example, 1.1 million jobs will be created in the IT sector by 2024.⁶ But we are facing a serious new issue: there is not enough skilled workforce in these fields. In Europe the urgency is real: a shortage of one million people with IT skills is predicted for 2020.⁷

STEM fields are areas of the future because they thrive and bring real added value and innovative solutions to the problems of today and tomorrow. This is evidenced by the fact that following the economic crisis in 2007, girls and boys have turned more to science as a professional option, seeing it as a flourishing career opportunity.

In the case of the Politecnico di Milano, the number of students enrolled in the engineering field has gradually increased, especially the proportion of women enrolled in Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. In 2003, 16% of women were enrolled in Bachelor’s degree courses in engineering, rising to 22.7% in 2017, while the share of women in Master’s degree courses rose from 18.8% to 27.8% in the same period.⁸
The imperative need to involve women in STEM

Today, the low representation of women in STEM professions creates a huge gap in terms of economic growth, innovation, diversity of content and creativity. Equality between women and men at all levels is a cornerstone of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda adopted in 2015.

This is illustrated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The same is true for equitable access to education (SDG 4) which will create millions of new jobs in the sustainable economy through STEM.9

The current situation shows that the lack of diversity leads to the acceleration of gender bias in society. This is particularly true in the design of algorithms in the field of Artificial Intelligence. For example, facial recognition is reliable for 99% of men but, due to the absence of women among professionals in this field, these algorithms lead to a 35% rate of error when it comes to recognising dark-skinned women.10

The risk is that 85% of the results derived from Artificial Intelligence will be biased by 2022 due to biases in the data collected, in the algorithms, and especially in the male-dominated teams designing them.11 It has been proven, however, that the use of neutral algorithms can lead to a 16% increase in diversity in recruitment.12

Thus, better integration of women in the field of technological innovation is not only beneficial for themselves, but also indispensable for the advancement of new technologies and economic growth. Inventions made by gender-balanced teams, or only by women, are found to have a wider technological impact and therefore lead to greater economic gains.13

For example, at European level, eliminating STEM disparities would increase GDP from 610 to 820 billion euros by 2050.14

Moreover, greater diversity within companies is fully in line with the transformation of the world currently underway, as 19% of companies with an above-average level of diversity consider themselves to be more innovative and creative, particularly in STEM fields.15

It is crucial to achieve a profound cultural change for women to fully participate in STEM fields because women's leadership brings real added value, both in terms of innovation and economic and social results, which are essential to this changing world.
Women are generally under-represented in STEM programmes. A better representation of women in the digital sector would increase the European Union’s GDP by 9 billion euros each year. This is a challenge that concerns most countries of the world unevenly.
In the Arab world, one in three start-ups is founded or managed by a woman. As the tech industry is still burgeoning, gender stereotypes traditionally associated with STEM fields are not prevalent. For example, in some of these countries, women represent up to 57% of graduates in STEM fields, with a record of 65% of women engineers in the United Arab Emirates. This is also the case in the countries of the former USSR, where girls benefit from the model of their mothers working as much as men in physics, chemistry and engineering.

In Malaysia, women account for half of all engineers, compared with 19% in Canada, Germany and the United States and 22% in Finland. The situation is similar in the field of scientific research, with women making up about half the researchers in this field in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam. Similarly, in Indonesia and Singapore, one in three researchers is a woman.

Facts & Figures
The situation is alarming: let’s create a new order!

Paradoxically, the most advanced countries in terms of gender equality are those with the lowest presence of women in STEM. Women account for 18% of students in the digital field in the United States, compared to 41% of STEM graduates in Algeria.
Facts & Figures

*The situation is alarming: let’s create a new order!*

A discriminating environment

Cultural attitudes in society strongly influence women’s choices, how they view STEM fields and their understanding of their role in STEM. Indeed, in an egalitarian environment free of gender stereotypes vis-à-vis scientific fields, women are more encouraged to be involved in STEM fields.37

These stereotypes are often deeply rooted in mentalities and are reflected in all dimensions of society. As a result, women are generally drawn into social, health and humanities roles, while men are more likely to move towards science, and by extension STEM.38

The leaky pipeline

The lack of women’s representation in STEM fields is not only a consequence of discrimination in the labour market; the source of the problem is much further upstream. The image of the leaky pipeline illustrates the journey of women in STEM fields as they face many obstacles at various points in their lives. Education at all levels, access to the labour market, career opportunities, setting up a business, financing and accessing positions of responsibility are all steps that take women further away from these fields.

Education

From an early age, there is a strong risk that girls will develop a biased view of STEM fields by associating them with male skills. Indeed, in primary school they grow up without female role models from the scientific world and do not receive adequate support from parents and teachers to develop an interest in STEM.

The problem affects all pupils, as only 24% of girls and 25% of boys envisage a scientific career in primary school. Yet, girls are more interested in the medical professions while boys are attracted to professions in science and technology, such as computer science and engineering.39 Furthermore, girls do not consider STEM skills to be essential for future occupations or sources of personal fulfilment. In Europe, 72% of girls want to have a positive social impact, but only 37% consider STEM to be useful for this purpose.40

However, such an environment does not prevent girls from acquiring the same level as boys in these fields. During their primary and secondary education, the majority of young girls turn to scientific fields, although disparities exist within the latter. The problem is that a minority of young girls orient themselves to the STEM fields, which are essential for the jobs of the future.
Facts & Figures

The situation is alarming: let’s create a new order!

STEM education is at the heart of issues in primary, middle and high school which are key moments in the learning and orientation of students. The low representation of girls in these streams is the cause of the current lack of female students in STEM streams at the time of higher education.

Higher education and training

The absence of women in STEM curricula is also evident at the university level.

In Europe, women accounted for 53.3% of graduates in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics in 2016, and only 27.7% of engineering and construction students. In France, when entering university, 42.5% of women go into scientific fields and 40.6% are enrolled in higher education scientific courses at all levels.

Women are also under-represented at the highest levels of higher education in the STEM fields with a clear lack of female professors, which consequently does not encourage female students to pursue such studies.

In France, disparities are visible in the field of continuing education. Women are greatly under-represented in engineering training "outside working hours", i.e. in evening and weekend courses. These disparities have an impact on women, for whom continuing training in STEM fields can be an opportunity to retrain for the jobs of the future throughout their careers.

Entrepreneurship

At the global level, inequalities between women and men undermine economic performance, leading to a loss of at least 15% of global GDP, 40% of which is due to disparities in entrepreneurship.

There are 224 million women entrepreneurs in the world, representing 35% of the enterprises in the global economy. However, only 1% of private or public funding is allocated to women-owned businesses internationally.

Similarly, less than 1% of the expenditure of major groups on their supply chain is for women-owned subcontractors. Yet, the economic case for involving more women-owned businesses has been demonstrated, with 34% of companies that have diversified their supply chain having seen a positive impact on their performance. As for start-ups, those co-founded by women produce 10% more turnover over a 5-year period than those co-founded by men. Moreover, they are more likely to set up companies with a social and environmental impact than men.
At European level, women account for 34.4% of entrepreneurs and 30% of founders of start-ups.\(^{49}\) The European Commission has made the promotion of women’s entrepreneurial potential one of its priorities in order to take advantage of this under-exploited source of economic growth. To this end, the Commission has notably launched the 2020 Entrepreneurship Action Plan, which aims to promote education and training for entrepreneurs and the creation of an environment favourable to the success of women entrepreneurs.\(^{50}\)

**Women’s careers**

Internationally, women account for only 24% of employees in the technology sector, and if we consider positions of responsibility, their presence drops to 11%.\(^{51}\) In the field of Artificial Intelligence, only 22% of women work in expert and design positions\(^{52}\) and they are not very present in the cybersecurity sector (11%).\(^{53}\)

Even more seriously, 53% of women who start careers in the tech sector then move on to other sectors, compared to 31% of men.\(^{54}\) This is mainly due to poor managerial support, lack of career opportunities, poor work-life balance and an environment that is sometimes perceived as “hostile”.\(^{55}\)

There is indeed an environment which discriminates against women in STEM fields: only 3% of professionals in the field consider that the presence of women in STEM can be a driving force for change.\(^{56}\) However, if we consider the digital field, a better representation of women would increase the European Union’s GDP by 9 billion euros each year.\(^{57}\)

In terms of career development opportunities, women remain underrepresented in senior positions, particularly on boards of directors. In Europe, women account for 7% of the Chairmen of the Boards of Directors of the STOXX Europe 600 groups, 33% sit on the Boards of Directors and only 4.7% hold positions as Chief Executive Officer.\(^{58}\)

The situation of women in professional careers, including STEM, is still hampered by gender stereotypes which must be overcome in order to ensure that they play a crucial role in a changing world.

The following 27 recommendations have been handled to Bruno Le Maire, French Minister of the Economy and Finance, Marlène Schiappa, French Secretary of State for Equality between Women and Men and the Fight against Discrimination, Frédérique Vidal, French Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Cédric O, French Secretary of State in charge for Digital Affairs, and Agnès Pannier-Runacher, French Secretary of State to the Minister of the Economy and Finance, on the 5th of February 2020.
Recommendations

*Education: everything is decided from an early age*

1. Emphasize that gender equality in STEM education is a priority and integrate it into the French Education Code

   This concept could be included in Book III (The organization of school education), Title 1 (The general organization of education), Chapter 2 (Specific provisions to certain subjects) of the French Education Code.

   Indeed, it is essential to build the scientific identity of young girls from primary school onwards, as it has been shown that it is at this age that the structure of the brain and the life-long aptitudes towards science are shaped.59

2. Develop an inter-ministerial Plan of Action to eliminate stereotypes at all levels of education

   In order to meet the challenge of gender equality in STEM at all levels of national education, the commitment of several ministries is essential. There is an urgent need to combat STEM stereotypes, ideological beliefs and unconscious distortions of judgement. An annual evaluation will make the progress possible to measure.

   This requires:

   - training new teachers;
   - continuous training of teachers (e.g. via the online platform M@gistere);
   - training educational staff, especially guidance counsellors and school heads;
   - using systematic regulations to promote gender parity, including the use of neutral and non-discriminatory language;
   - adapting school textbooks accordingly.

   It is essential to:

   - raise parents’ awareness of the importance of STEM for the jobs of the future and of employment and career opportunities;
   - design a national communication campaign based on an ad hoc toolkit for families, developed by the Women’s Forum (Daring Circle Women & STEM).
This plan should be extended to all stakeholders in society. It is necessary to:

- fully engage companies through initiatives that effectively combat gender stereotypes, such as the "Charter for a gender-balanced representation of toys", launched by Agnès Pannier-Runacher, Secretary of State to the French Minister of Economy and Finance, in September 2019;
- involve the actors of communication, i.e. the media, advertisers and publishers;
- create video games that spark girls’ interest in STEM;
- develop initiatives to promote STEM professions.

Digital Role-playing App

Women’s Forum Daring Circle Women & STEM

In order to introduce young people, especially girls, to the STEM professions, the Women’s Forum working group, Daring Circle Women & STEM, has launched a pilot version of a role-playing application.

The aim of this game is to «save the world» in a post-apocalyptic scenario, using skills related to different STEM fields. Such a dramatic situation highlights the usefulness of professions such as chemists, physicists, mathematicians, coders, cybersecurity experts. This application illustrates STEM jobs by representing girls and boys equally and explaining their positive impact.

Developed by Orange and ISART Digital, this application should help attract more girls to STEM professions.
**Women’s Mathematics Championship**

BeSmart-edu organizes in 2020 the first edition of the “Olympiades des Mathématiques” for girls from primary school to the first year of university. This championship aims to encourage the emergence of a scientific culture among young girls and to help them discover scientific, technical or digital-related jobs.

Through this Championship, the aim is to erase stereotypes and show that women have a place in the technological chessboard. To do this, the attitudes of young girls must be changed.

The event is supported by: Fondation L’Oréal, Arkéa groupe, 50 in Tech, Digital Ladies & Allies, WiMLDS de Paris and the Women’s Forum.

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**STEM training workshops for young girls**

In order to promote diversity in computing and digital technology, BECOMTECH introduces young girls to digital professions.

The JUMP IN TECH programme aims to reduce the gap between girls and boys in the IT sector by educating and inspiring girls aged 14 to 17 through summer training courses.

These girls learn how to code and create their own websites, pilot robots, film and edit videos. They meet inspiring women, create objects with 3D printers and visit tech companies.

After this training, the girls join the BECOMTECH community to become digital ambassadors.
Two key milestones in making STEM more attractive to girls

*Childhood (5-10 years old): building a STEM identity*

3. Establish mandatory STEM initiation activities, in addition to national education programmes

**It is imperative to:**

- give learning tools to girls from an early age to strengthen their STEM identity;
- use a playful pedagogy to learn the basics of computer science and coding while demystifying mathematics and science;
- develop workshops such as those of Magic Makers, aimed at girls;
- disseminate the learning of coding in the same way as foreign languages;
- invest in computer equipment and digital tools in primary schools to facilitate the initiation of pupils, especially girls, into STEM.

4. Launch the "Girls’ Week in STEM"

**It is recommended to:**

- develop discovery workshops on influential women in science and technology, including women forgotten in science, for girls and boys in primary schools;
- involve women of all ages who share their passion for STEM;
- organize competitions based on the «Kangaroo and Koala of Mathematics» model and extend them to other STEM subjects.
Adolescence (12-16 years): the turning point for young girls determining their career paths

5. Empower the designated Equality Representative in secondary schools

The Equality Representative* must have full access to all the appropriate tools to:

- ensure respect for equality at all levels: education, administration, guidance;
- fight against harassment, sexism and all forms of gender-based violence;
- take responsibility for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students;
- facilitate the integration of girls into male-dominated specialties;
- ensure that teachers encourage girls to take advantage of all career opportunities according to their abilities and without gender bias, for example by boosting them to participate in career fairs.

*Position created by Jean-Michel Blanquer, French Minister of National Education and Youth, on 8 March 2018.
Recommendations

*Education: everything is decided from an early age*

6. Establish a Council for Gender Equality in STEM within each academy of the French Ministry of Education

The aim of this Council is to:

- bring together and mobilize the equality officers within the academies, the equality representatives in the middle schools and high schools, as well as other STEM actors such as the digital referents in the middle schools and high schools, directly attached to the digital academic delegates;
- eventually involve local public and private actors, businesses and civil society;
- take into account the expectations of a STEM delegate set up at each level within the educational establishments.

7. Launch a major national campaign in France to foster the attractiveness of STEM fields for girls

This campaign should:

- involve successful women in these fields;
- use language and tools that are specific to girls;
- involve influencers on Youtube and Instagram, and other appropriate channels;
- produce ad hoc podcasts on Spotify;
- support existing initiatives that promote the role of women in STEM, such as "For Women in Science".

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**The For Women in Science Initiative**

The L’Oréal Foundation and UNESCO foster girls’ vocations from secondary school onwards, encourage women researchers and reward excellence in science, where women should be even more numerous, through their For Women in Science initiative. The L’Oréal For Girls in Science programme raises awareness so that young girls see science as a future horizon. In three years, more than 45,000 high school students have been made aware of scientific professions and careers in France. To this end, 100 ambassadors have gone out to meet these students, to break down preconceived ideas about science and women scientists.
8. Create a digital platform connecting girls and women active in STEM

This innovative tool aims to:

- transmit and share the experiences and the successes of women in STEM;
- highlight the positive impact that girls can have in society through STEM jobs, particularly in the fight against climate change, innovation and research, the design of the cities of the future, and the improvement of living conditions for all;
- make STEM attractive, humane and purposeful.

The STEMKEY project

Women’s Forum Daring Circle Women & STEM

The Women’s Forum intends to implement the STEMKEY project designed with its partners, including Google, Publicis Group, Microsoft, Accenture, BCG, BNP Paribas, L’Oréal, P&G, Shearman & Sterling, Orange, Lenovo, American Express, ESA and Ecole 42. Its objective is to develop and facilitate access to STEM skills for all girls between 12-16 years old, on a European scale.

The Women’s Forum intends to build in each European country a community of 200 STEMSisters, women committed to STEM, in order to reach 80% of girls in Europe.

The exchange with the STEMSisters aims to motivate young girls to become more interested in STEM. This will be done through a unique platform that will link girls and STEMSisters based on the results of a skills test.
Recommendations

*Education: everything is decided from an early age*

9. Establish a pilot project to engage young girls in STEM fields

This programme consists of:

- financing extracurricular STEM immersion courses through public funds, only if girls are in the majority;
- involving companies, universities and schools in STEM areas to bring their expertise to the construction of the programmes;
- strengthening existing efficient initiatives.

Italy: "During the summer we learn STEM"

The initiative "In estate si imparano le STEM" was conceived in Italy in 2017 by the Ministry of Equal Opportunities in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, with the aim of combating gender stereotypes related to STEM courses.

Public funding for primary and secondary schools that organise summer courses in science, mathematics, computer science and coding is allocated only if the participation of girls reaches the threshold of 60%.

This initiative has had an impact on 16,000 students and mobilized some 650 partners at the national level, such as representatives of civil society (associations of scientists, astronomers, mathematicians), as well as high schools and universities which contributed with their expertise to the organization of the courses.
10. Allocate a portion of French and European funding towards initiatives for the inclusion of girls in STEM

It is intended to:

- include projects that aim primarily at promoting STEM among girls in the allocation of the French «Future-oriented funding»;
- direct part of the European funds managed by France in this direction.

11. Centralize internship offers in STEM within an interactive platform involving all stakeholders

This tool should:

- guarantee high visibility and better access for students, especially girls, to companies in STEM fields;
- enhance the value of internship offers from companies to also make them attractive for girls;
- encourage young girls to do optional internships, in addition to mandatory internships, aimed at discovering their STEM skills.

The Teknisprånget internship programme

This Swedish initiative allows high school students to gain hands-on experience in the fields of technology and engineering through a 4-month immersion course.

Set up since 2012 by the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences at the request of the Swedish government, this programme aims to highlight career opportunities in these fields.

50% of the trainees are girls, which helps to promote the added value of women in these fields.
Recommendations

*University: strengthening the attractiveness of STEM*

The crucial age for career choices (17-18 years)

12. Implement a strategy to encourage girls to pursue STEM-related higher education by promoting the importance of STEM in their future careers

*It is essential to:*

- establish proactive communication to demonstrate the need for STEM skills in the changing world;
- showcase stories of women from STEM universities who have succeeded in these fields;
- promote initiatives such as the Irène Joliot-Curie prize to promote the place of women in research and technology in France;
- strengthen the presence of STEM institutions at exhibitions dedicated to student guidance.

13. Establish quantified objectives of 40% of girls in public and private STEM-related universities and schools by 2025 and make financial incentives conditional upon progress achieved

*It is crucial to:*

- target only scientific fields strictly related to the jobs of the future, i.e. new technologies, digital technology, computer science, engineering and basic sciences;
- make it mandatory to publish the data on gender diversity in all transparency in the activity reports.
- set up a national ranking of higher education institutions on the basis of gender equality criteria.
14. Include gender balance in STEM programmes as one of the criteria for competitive funding in higher education

It is important to:
- link public and private project funding to an increased presence of women in STEM, as they bring undeniable added value;
- take into account the criteria of gender balance in research teams when allocating project funding.

15. Ensure parity (50%) within selection boards and evaluation committees in public and private STEM-related universities and schools by 2025

The French Savaudet Law (2012) imposes a minimum proportion of 40% of each sex on selection committees.

It is primordial to:
- guarantee a fair framework in all stages of the competitions;
- ensure that selection in higher education is not biased by gender stereotypes;
- train selection board members in gender equality;
- establish a parity environment in the context of decision-making.
16. Reinforce STEM introductory courses in all higher education programmes through a "STEM Fund" financed by the French Government, the European Commission and the private sector.

It is crucial to:

- promote the transverse nature of STEM competences in all higher education courses;
- introduce all students to STEM as they are necessary skills in all the professions of the future.

17. Create corporate-funded merit scholarships to bring forth female talent in STEM linking them with jobs of the future.

It is necessary to:

- encourage and retain girls in STEM until they graduate and enter the labour market;
- ensure girls have equal opportunities to succeed in these fields.

18. Encourage companies to direct their apprenticeship tax* to schools with the highest percentage of women enrolled in STEM courses.

It is opportune to:

- highlight the most gender equal universities in STEM fields within list of institutions benefiting from the apprenticeship tax;
- enable companies to better identify these institutions and to allocate them their apprenticeship tax;
- reward companies which invest the most in STEM courses for women.

*French tax paid by corporates to develop technical education and apprenticeship.
19. Promote lifelong upskilling and reskilling of women in STEM jobs

*It is necessary to:*

- use the MyAccountTraining application launched in 2019 by Muriel Pénicaud, French Minister of Labour, to promote the jobs of the future;
- create a dedicated space to women undergoing retraining and looking for training to propose them offers in STEM fields.

20. Support patronage towards initiatives dedicated to women in STEM jobs

*It is recommended to:*

- encourage patronage donations that are specifically directed towards organisations for the training, integration and retraining of women in STEM jobs, in order to address automation and the digital transition and to limit its negative impacts;
- introduce an ad hoc tax exemption of 65% for this purpose.

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**Scale Women In IT Pledge**

In order to address the lack of female qualified profiles in STEM, the Simplon network and the Digital Ladies & Allies do-tank launched an ambitious initiative: the «Scale Women in IT Pledge» in December 2019.

The aim is to promote women’s access to digital careers by collecting «hiring intentions» from companies that are committed to increasing the number of women in their Tech workforces. The project also aims to train and offer women’s digital skills and talents to organizations by accelerating their hiring.

The companies commit to recruiting women on full or work-study contracts («Hiring Pledge»). The ambition is to mobilize 100 companies for 1000 women digital talents by 2020.

The Women’s Forum is fully committed to this initiative. Women’s Forum Partner companies have already signed such as BNP Paribas, Publicis, Microsoft, AXA, LinkedIn, L’Oréal and Orange.
21. Ensure women entrepreneurs have equal access to public and private financing

It is imperative to:

- promote a target of 25% of startups financed in 2025 founded or co-founded by women, 30% in 2030, 50% in 2050;
- set up gender balanced investment teams that are attentive to deconstructing stereotypes by taking objective decisions;
- ensure that all gender bias in the selection of projects competing for public or private funding are eliminated, in particular through specific training;
- develop a “Code of good behavior” for the financing of women entrepreneurs;
- create a ranking of the funds that best apply this “Code of good behavior”;
- remunerate the investment teams on the basis of the fund’s performance.

22. Encourage higher participation of women entrepreneurs in public and private calls for tenders

It is essential to:

- allow women entrepreneurs to have the same opportunities to participate in call for tenders;
- ensure a stronger presence of women-owned and women-led companies among suppliers, especially in STEM;
- ensure equal representation of women and men in the purchasing departments.

Daring Circles
Pledge to accelerate women’s economic empowerment through supply chains

Women’s Forum Daring Circle Women & Business
To address the lack of women in procurement and among the supply chain, the Daring Circle has launched a Pledge to commit companies to integrate and promote women-owned and women-led businesses in their supply chains.

The Daring Circle includes key players such as P&G, American Express, BNP Paribas, L’Oréal, Publicis Groupe, Accenture, Exxon Mobil, Johnson & Johnson, AT Kearney, Clifford Chance, WeConnect and UN Women.
23. Develop gender balance indicators at all levels in companies and among public institutions, requiring their publication in annual reports by 2025

This data transparency will take effect in 2025 for companies with more than 1000 employees and by 2030 for all other companies.

It is a priority to:

- carry out regular audits to certify the validity of the figures published;
- provide visibility to companies and public administrations with ambitious objectives and positive results in terms of gender balance;
- collect gender statistics at national level on gender balance in STEM areas.

24. Incorporate the French “gender equality index” into public institutions

Set up by Muriel Pénicaud, the French Minister of Labour, this index is a flagship measure that has proved its worth in promoting gender equality in the business world. The State also has a duty to set an example in terms of career equity.

It is imperative to:

- make available, in full transparency, figures on gender diversity in the civil service, as in companies;
- ensure equal pay and fair career opportunities;
- encourage gender diversity in research organizations by guaranteeing equitable access to positions of responsibility, following the example of Canada’s Science Vision Plan.
25. Create the environment enabling women to pursue careers in STEM within the public and private sectors

In order to attract and retain female talent in STEM, it is recommended to:

- provide the appropriate framework to reconcile professional career and personal life;
- ensure concrete measures to promote the inclusion of women, such as non-discriminatory HR processes (systematically include female candidates, ensure respect for equal pay and promotion);
- use language free of all gender stereotypes;
- increase flexibility at work: generalise remote work, adapt meeting times and business travel and provide childcare services (company nurseries).

The good practices implemented in this area by L’Oréal, BNP Paribas and Gecina among others should be scaled up.

26. Make paternity leave of 11 days mandatory in France, including 2 days prior to the birth of the child, and encourage its extension to 5 weeks during the first year of the child’s life

It is paramount to:

- give fathers the opportunity to fulfil their role in the family;
- encourage better sharing of the management of the household to relieve the mother of the concerns other than childbirth;
- ensure a smooth return to work after maternity leave through a more balanced sharing of family life;
- hence strengthen women’s professional careers.
27a. Introduce a 30% quota for women in STEM on Boards of Directors in France by 2025

A minimum 60/40 ratio of people of each gender having been introduced in Boards of Directors, this new quota is intended to make STEM attractive, particularly at the governance level.

To achieve this, it is necessary to:

- include STEM modules in the IFA (French Institute of Directors) training;
- set up mirror training courses (Management-Engineers).

The Women’s Forum plans to build up a pool of STEM women and propose their candidature to headhunters in France and abroad.

27b. Introduce a 30% quota for women in STEM in Executive Committees in France by 2030

This proposal for a STEM quota in the Executive Committees is a further step in the drive to increase the number of women in corporate governance*.

This quota aims to:

- encourage STEM careers for women, by guaranteeing them strategic positions in corporate governance;
- encourage companies to promote women’s talents throughout their careers, from the time of recruitment to the highest levels of the company.

Embracing Power & Purpose

These 27 recommendations are designed to enable women to be where they can have a positive and decisive social and economic impact in order to bring their added value to a rapidly changing world.

*The report of the French High Council for Gender Equality “Women’s Access to Responsibilities and the Leveraging Role of Public Funding” published in December 2019 under the direction of Ms Brigitte Grésy, proposes progressive quotas for the feminisation of Executive Committees and Management Committees.
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