Code of **Best Practices** for **Women** and **ICT**

women in ICT

Signatories of the
Code of Best Practices For Women in ICT

Alcatel·Lucent

APSCo

CISCO

e-skills uk
The Sector Skills Council for Business
and Information Technology

ECWT
European Centre for Women and Technology

equalitec
Information Technology
Electronics & Communications

Google

hp

imec
aspire invent achieve

Infineon

ITSynergy

UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Microsoft

MOTOROLA

orange

P31 CONSULTING LTD
Stepping out of your comfort zone

Panasonic
ideas for life

papirbredden
INNOVASJON

portia
promoting SET & women

PROMIS
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Republic of Lebanon
Telecommunications
Regulatory Authority

The Research Council
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SAP

SHARPE THINKING

[simula . research laboratory]

SONY

STEINBEIS-
EUROPA-
ZENTRUM

women in
technology

European Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT

European and International stakeholders in the Information and Telecommunications sector recognise that:

> The number of young people studying and choosing careers in ICT is decreasing; and is not keeping up with growing demand.
> An important skills gap is predicted in the sector and the shortage will affect all parts of the globe;
> A shortage of qualified staff in the ICT sector will seriously weaken the whole economy;
> Qualified ICT staff, whether working in the ICT sector or other sectors, often drift away from their areas of special expertise towards other activities.;
> Women are under-represented at all levels in the ICT sector;
> Women are especially under-represented in decision-making positions in the ICT sector;
> Successfully encouraging women to enter and stay in the sector could be a significant part of the solution for the skills gap;
> A Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT would be a useful start in the process of solving the skills gap problem.

Attracting more women into ICT jobs will not just help to address a problem that risks damaging the whole economy, but also contributes to realising equal opportunities goals and empowers women by enhancing their capacity to participate fully in the information society and shape its development.

Stakeholders in the Information Technology and Telecommunications sectors are developing national and corporate initiatives to ensure greater participation of women in all areas of the sector.

Signatory European and International stakeholders now propose together a *Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT* that reflects recent positive developments and seeks to be a rallying point for other stakeholders wishing to support and promote the greater participation of women in the sector. The Code aims not only to ensure that more women choose careers in the sector but also that they are encouraged and supported to remain and progress in their chosen area of work. This code will be subject to national and international practices.

The Code covers different areas of practices, namely**: Education, Recruitment, Career Development, and Return to work after leave**. The practices, based on input from the signatories are listed in the Annex.

Signatories pledge their support for the overall goals of this Code and undertake to ensure that their company's actions and practices are in line with the Code. The Code is intended as a guide to best practice. Not all signatories will pursue all the recommended practices. Indeed, many practices have similar or overlapping objectives. Also, in a few cases, best practice in one country may be illegal in another. All signatories will of course continue to act in full

conformity with the laws that apply to them. Nor does signature of the Code create any legal obligation or liability.

The current signatories hope that many others may quickly join them in this co-operative effort to help solve a problem that threatens the bright future of the ICT sector, on which so many hopes for future prosperity and well-being now rest.

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Education

The aim of the practices in this section is to break stereotypes and emphasise the attractiveness of the ICT sector, targeting both schools and universities and other tertiary education institutions.

Schools – mainly secondary, but not excluding primary education:

> ➢ Organise events which will show role models of women successfully working in ICT to young girls and break the "geek" stereotype. (Shadowing, Girls Lab and Information Days in secondary schools as well as seminars and career orientation days in co-operation with school authorities;
> ➢ Organise projects for teachers, trainers and parents in order to inform them what technology is about, possible job opportunities and in general to fight technophobia as well as encourage environments conducive to ICT careers both at home and school;
> ➢ Organise workshops/meetings/school visits to companies for female students in secondary education to make contacts and start mentoring processes with tertiary education students who have opted for ICT-related engineering studies or with young female engineers who have already qualified;
> ➢ Sponsor initiatives where senior female engineers, as ambassadors for science, will train female students from major scientific study courses to promote scientific careers in schools, for example in the ways described above;
> ➢ Organise sponsorship of school projects, summer technical camps and finance competitions, awards, technology projects, school film productions aiming to break stereotypes, promote role models and show different facets of ICT work.

University – tertiary education:

At this level, it is important to encourage young female university students who have opted for ICT-related studies to continue in their chosen field. The main aims here are to continue to militate against stereotypes and to present attractive career opportunities in the sector.

> ➢ Organise Information days presenting female role models acting as ambassadors for the sector. Show that it is possible for women to have a successful ICT sector career without abandoning their role as women or their private and family lives;
> ➢ Finance programmes targeting female graduates giving them the opportunity to pursue a PhD in ICT-related science and technology fields;
> ➢ Set up traineeships in ICT companies including brief training programmes such as internships in companies' laboratories and seminars in hard and soft ICT skills;
> ➢ Set up mentoring schemes with female engineers at all levels;

➢ Organise recruitment and information days for final year students, targeting in particular female engineers, to encourage them to take up ICT careers, including research work.

Recruitment

The aim of these practices is to ensure that young females who chose ICT related studies are in fact recruited into the sector or into specialised ICT posts in other sectors and then remain in the ICT sector or ICT-related work.

Recruiting from outside the organisation

➢ Ensure gender neutral or gender friendly vocabulary when advertising a post; advertise posts in such a way as to tempt women to apply;
➢ Transparency in recruitment processes;
➢ Ensure that those responsible for recruitment decisions understand the importance and value of selecting female candidates for positions and sectors where women are under-represented;
➢ Where candidates have equal competences, recruit a candidate of the under-represented sex) where appropriate and where permitted by the law;
➢ Create and use female expert databases where CVs of women with the skills and competencies are collected and can be tapped when recruiting where consistent with the applicant law;
➢ Use recruitment procedures that promote diversity and ensure that short lists include candidates of both sexes where possible
➢ Ensure that those responsible for recruitment give feedback where appropriate explaining why there is a shortage of women and establish an appropriate action plan taking account of this feedback;
➢ Analyse the gender statistics within the company and compare them with local and sector market data, using the results of the analysis to help managers design measures to fill the gap;
➢ Set targets designed to improve gender balance; such targets need not be numerical, but should aim to drive a year on year improvement at all levels.

Internal:

➢ Ensure that Equal Opportunities principles apply for appointments to all posts, not excluding high (management) posts in the company;
➢ Prepare female employees for management positions, including offering them appropriate training courses and monitor and encourage the participation of women in such courses;
➢ Foster visibility of competent women;
➢ Apply flexible working practices (e.g. part time or telework) at all levels, including for high management positions where and when possible;
➢ Identify and track global talent for critical positions, with a special focus given to the career development of promising women;

Career Development

The aim is to retain and promote women in the sector by persuading women that there are good career prospects and by enhancing their potential. :

- ➢ Offer Competence Development programmes which will provide women with the necessary hard and soft management skills, as well as short training programmes on professional challenges, leadership and networking;
- ➢ Set up long term training in different technical departments of the company to update technical competencies and promote/monitor the participation of female employees;
- ➢ Finance care expenses (e.g. childcare) when training outside usual working hours;
- ➢ Organise and encourage female employees to participate in courses and programmes encouraging assertiveness, promoting auto-evaluation with a view to strengthening weak points and improving self perception.
- ➢ Make career planning a responsibility both of the organisation and the individual and rigorously apply equal opportunities principles in exercising this responsibility.
- ➢ Set up focus groups led by senior management to present and analyse career possibilities and show different career paths.
- ➢ Organise individual discussions/assessments with top management as well as cross-mentoring schemes by creating mentoring tandems in different companies;
- ➢ Set up forums and events with other networks/organisations for women and arrange for mentors to communicate their professional contacts and networks;

Monitoring of female Career Development:

- ➢ Collect and analyse relevant statistics and the results of gender relevant research;
- ➢ Establish systems to collect information about needs and problems; set upprocesses to monitor any inconsistencies in company policies and procedures;
- ➢ Develop plans and encourage female employees to express their mid- to long-term career aspirations.
- ➢ Bring visibility to the performance and skills of women;
- ➢ Design seminars specifically for women, information sessions, for technical and soft skills;
- ➢ Introduce female mentoring programmes, coaching aiming to familiarise and encourage women to acquire leadership skills and develop plans and mid-term to long-term career aspirations;
- ➢ Use performance management to evaluate and promote women

Returning to work after leave and allowing for work/family balance

These practices aim to encourage women to return to the sector after leave or encourage women with previous experience in other sectors and having appropriate qualifications and potential to enter it.

- ➢ Promote a positive philosophy towards maternity/paternity leave;

- ➢ Promote gender neutral use of career/family integration by ensuring equal opportunities policies across the board (e.g. sick leave for children, parental leaves etc.).
- ➢ Produce guidelines for managers on how to manage employees on leave to ensure inclusion, career development and to maintain a lasting relationship and information flow during leave time.;
- ➢ Facilitate return to work by training or re-training;
- ➢ Set up mentoring mechanisms that apply during leave periods;
- ➢ Set up resource and competence monitoring as well as placement preparations during leave of absence and ensure self-assessment before, during and after leave to identify personal needs;
- ➢ Organise/provide child-care facilities for preschool, after school and holidays , creating where necessary in-house child-care service, where parents may also be "shareholders";
- ➢ Ensure flexible work arrangements for mothers and fathers and flexibility at the work place (office, mobile, at home);
- ➢ Promote women entrepreneurship for example in public tenders where consistent with the applicable law;

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