Gender

The structural gap in Austria's AI workforce

60 yrs

to parity at current pace

A cliff, not a slope. The pipeline enters balanced and collapses upward — at +0.3 pp / yr, parity is 60 years away.

25.4 %	18.6 %	+0.3 pp	42.6 %
Female share of Core AI	Female share in Build tier	Annual improvement rate	Female share in AI Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Austria's AI gender gap is structural, not salary-driven. Women represent 25.4 % of Core AI roles versus 43.6 % in non-AI employment — an 18.2 percentage-point participation gap that dwarfs the 7.1 % AI gender pay gap. The challenge deepens at the technical frontier: the Build tier (ML engineers, AI researchers, computer-vision specialists) is just 18.6 % female, and female representation drops from 36 % at entry level to 6.7 % at board level. At the current improvement rate of +0.3 percentage points per year, closing the gap would take over 50 years. This chapter maps the gender landscape across tiers, seniority levels, subcategories, and regions to identify where targeted intervention could accelerate progress.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Target Build-tier female participation with dedicated programs. ML/AI fellowships, sponsored PhD positions, and return-to-work programs for women with STEM backgrounds. The Build tier at 18.6 % female is where each additional woman has the highest marginal impact on Austria's frontier AI capability.

Set explicit interim targets and track progress annually. 30 % Core AI female by 2030 as a measurable milestone. At +0.3 pp / year organic improvement, the gap takes 60 years to close — acceleration requires deliberate policy, not hope.

Leverage AI Governance as a gateway pathway. At 42.6 % female, AI Governance is the most gender-balanced AI subcategory. Build structured upskilling bridges from governance and compliance into technical AI roles to convert existing diversity into deeper technical representation.

Address the mid-career retention cliff. Female share drops from 36 % at entry to 6.7 % at C-suite. The 3–8 year window is where the pipeline leaks most. Mentorship, visible promotion timelines, and flexible work arrangements during this window yield the highest retention ROI.

EXHIBIT 2.1

Gender Split — AI vs Non-AI Workforce

The gender gap in AI is not a gradual slope — it is a cliff. While non-AI employment in Austria approaches parity at 43.6 % female, Core AI drops to 25.4 %. The gap widens as the definition narrows: Full AI (which includes Adjacent roles) reaches 28.8 %, but Core AI — the roles where AI is the primary job function — is materially worse. This is not a pipeline problem that will self-correct; it reflects structural barriers in education, recruitment, and workplace culture that require deliberate intervention.

Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Non-AI employment is 43.6 % female; Core AI drops to 25.4 % — an 18.2 pp participation gap that is 2.5× larger than the 7.1 % gender pay gap, making participation the binding constraint.
- The gap is persistent across all AI definitions: Broad AI 31.2 %, Full AI 28.8 %, Core AI 25.4 % — the more technical the definition, the wider the gap, pointing to pipeline barriers in STEM education and technical recruitment.
- Austria's 25.4 % Core AI female share is comparable to EU averages but well below top performers like Finland (31 %) and Portugal (29 %), indicating that improvement is achievable with the right interventions.

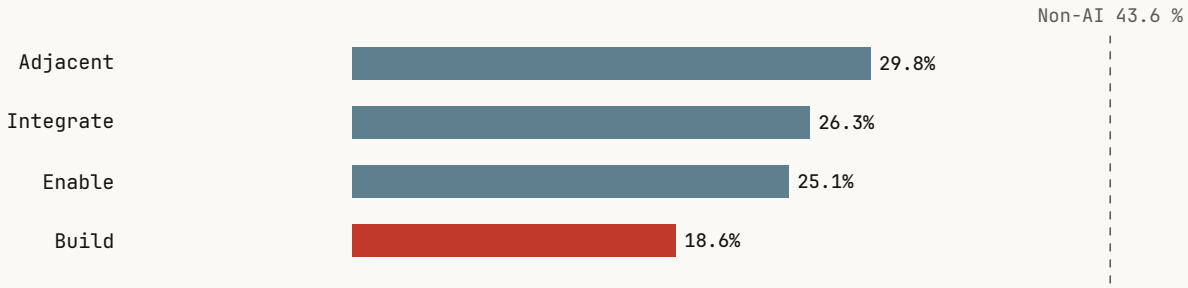
IMPLICATION

Treat gender participation as a workforce-capacity issue, not just an equity goal. At 25.4 % female, Austria is drawing from barely half of its talent pool for AI roles — closing the gap is a growth strategy as much as an inclusion imperative.

EXHIBIT 2.2

Gender by Tier — The Depth Gradient

The gender gap deepens as technical depth increases. Adjacent roles (BI analysts, domain analytics) approach 30 % female, but the Build tier — the frontier where AI systems are actually designed and trained — drops to 18.6 %. This gradient reveals where the most impactful interventions would land: increasing female representation in Build by even five percentage points would require only about 55 additional women but would meaningfully shift Austria's frontier capability.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Build tier is 18.6 % female — the lowest of any tier and nearly half the non-AI benchmark of 43.6 %. ML engineering and AI research remain overwhelmingly male, reflecting deep pipeline constraints in computational STEM fields.
- Enable tier (25.1 %) and Integrate tier (26.3 %) cluster near the Core AI average, suggesting that mid-stack AI roles face similar but less extreme barriers than the frontier Build tier.
- Adjacent roles reach 29.8 % female — the highest among AI categories but still 14 pp below non-AI. Even the most accessible AI-adjacent roles show a meaningful gender gap, indicating that the problem extends beyond technical depth alone.

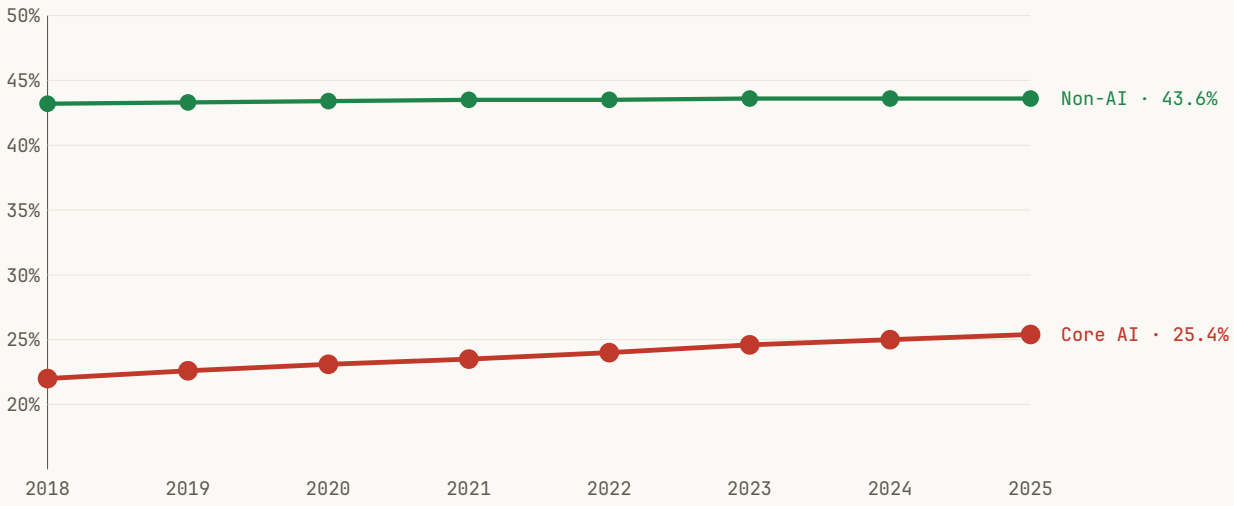
IMPLICATION

Target Build-tier female participation with dedicated ML/AI fellowships, sponsored research positions, and return-to-work programs for women with STEM backgrounds. The frontier is where the gap is widest and each additional woman has the highest marginal impact.

EXHIBIT 2.3

Female Share Over Time — Progress at Glacial Pace

The trend line is moving in the right direction — but at a pace that should alarm policymakers. Female Core AI share has improved from roughly 22 % (2018) to 25.4 % (2025), an annual gain of about +0.3 percentage points. At this rate, reaching 35 % female representation would take until 2058; reaching 40 % would take until 2075. The non-AI workforce, by contrast, has been largely stable at 43–44 % female — the AI gap is not closing because AI is improving, it is closing because AI started so far behind.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Core AI female share improved from roughly 22 % (2018) to 25.4 % (2025) — a +3.4 pp gain over 7 years, or about +0.5 pp / yr peak-to-trough; a smoother trend yields about +0.3 pp / yr.
- Non-AI female share has remained stable at 43–44 % throughout the period, meaning the gap is narrowing slowly but from an extremely wide starting position.
- At the current +0.3 pp / yr improvement rate, achieving gender parity with non-AI (43.6 %) would take approximately 60 years — well beyond any reasonable policy planning horizon without acceleration.

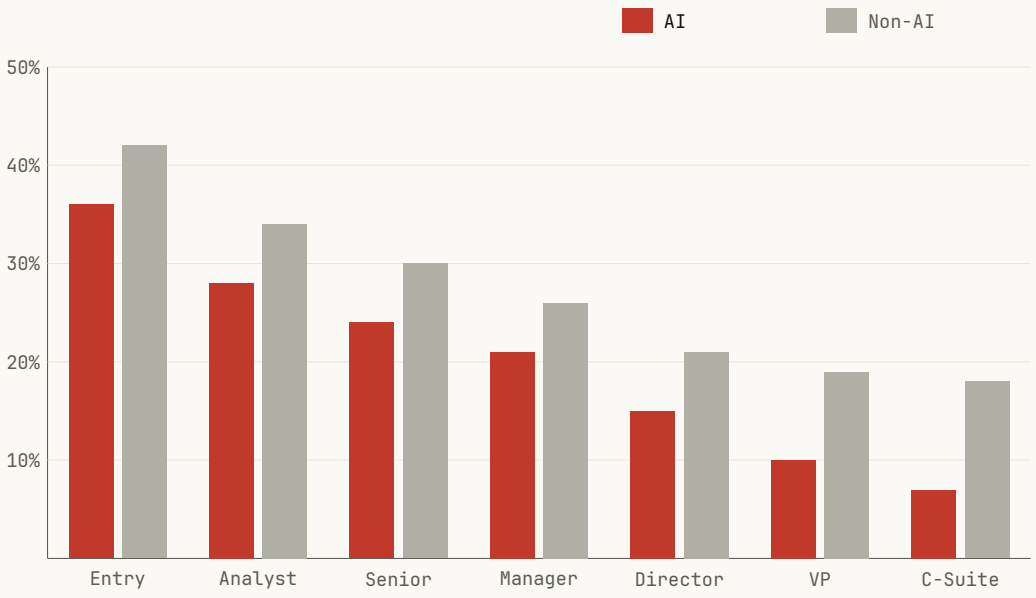
IMPLICATION

Set an explicit interim target — 30 % Core AI female by 2030 — and track progress annually. The current organic trend is too slow for policy relevance; deliberate acceleration through education reform, hiring incentives, and cultural change is needed.

EXHIBIT 2.4

Gender by Seniority — The Leaky Pipeline

Austria's AI gender gap is not uniform across career stages — it is a funnel that narrows dramatically at each step. At entry level, female representation is roughly 36 %, reasonably close to broader tech benchmarks. But by senior leadership (Director, VP, C-suite), female share collapses to single digits. This is the classic leaky-pipeline pattern, but in AI it is steeper than in non-AI careers, suggesting AI-specific factors — culture, mobility requirements, network effects — compound the general corporate attrition of women at senior levels.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Entry-level AI roles are roughly 36 % female — the starting point is imperfect but workable. The pipeline enters with a meaningful cohort of women; the question is whether the system retains them as they advance.
- By Manager level, female share drops to about 21 %; by Director, it falls further to about 15 %. The steepest attrition happens in the Analyst-to-Senior transition, suggesting a critical 3–5 year retention window.
- C-suite / board AI representation is just 6.7 % female — compared to 17.8 % in non-AI C-suites. AI leadership is less gender-diverse than non-AI leadership at every level, indicating AI-specific barriers beyond general corporate challenges.

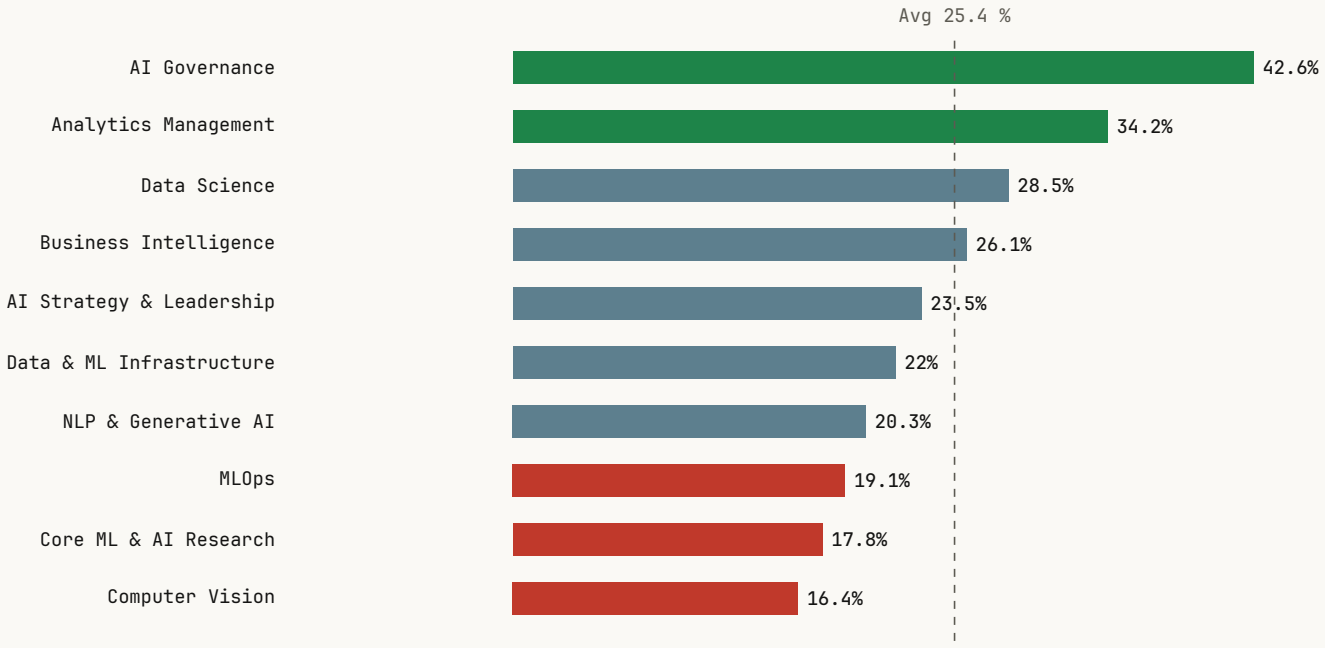
IMPLICATION

Invest in mid-career retention and promotion pathways for women in AI. The biggest drop happens between years 3–8 of a career — mentorship programs, visible promotion timelines, and flexible work arrangements during this window would have the highest retention return on investment.

EXHIBIT 2.5

Gender by Subcategory — Pockets of Progress

Not all AI subcategories are equally male-dominated, and the variation provides a roadmap for targeted intervention. AI Governance stands out at 42.6 % female — nearly at parity and far above any other AI subcategory. This likely reflects the field's proximity to compliance, policy, and ethics roles, which have historically attracted more women. At the other extreme, Core ML & AI Research and Computer Vision are below 20 % female.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- AI Governance (42.6 % female) is the most gender-balanced AI subcategory — nearly double the Core AI average. This makes it a natural gateway for women entering the AI ecosystem from adjacent compliance, legal, and policy roles.
- Analytics Management (34.2 %) and Data Science (28.5 %) also outperform the average, suggesting that roles combining analytical skills with business interface attract a more balanced talent pool.
- Core ML & AI Research (17.8 %) and Computer Vision & Autonomous Systems (16.4 %) are the least gender-balanced — these frontier research roles reflect the deepest pipeline constraints in university-level computational STEM education.

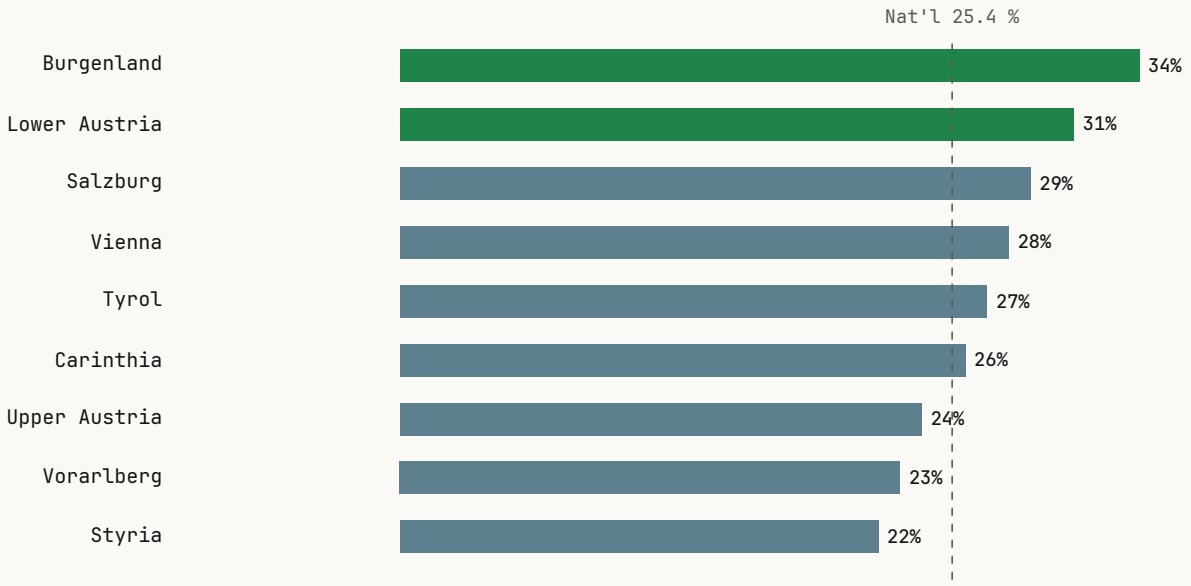
IMPLICATION

Use AI Governance as a deliberate gateway pathway: women in compliance and policy-adjacent roles can transition into deeper technical AI positions through structured upskilling. Building bridges between governance and technical tracks would leverage existing diversity where it already exists.

EXHIBIT 2.6

Gender by Geography — Regional Patterns

Geographic patterns in AI gender representation reflect local industry composition and institutional factors. Vienna, as the dominant AI hub, tends to mirror the national average. Regions with stronger industrial and manufacturing AI profiles (Upper Austria, Styria) may show different patterns driven by sector-specific workforce dynamics.



Source: Revelio Labs via WRDS

KEY FINDINGS

- Vienna's female AI share (~28 %) reflects its concentration of service-sector and public-sector AI roles, which tend to be more gender-balanced than industrial applications.
- Burgenland and Lower Austria show the highest female-AI shares in the country (34 % and 31 %), partly reflecting higher female representation in the Adjacent and analytics roles that dominate smaller regional economies.
- Regional differences are meaningful but secondary to the tier and seniority effects — the gender gradient by technical depth is steeper than the geographic gradient.

IMPLICATION

Regional AI gender strategies should be embedded in broader cluster development. Styria's automotive AI cluster and Upper Austria's industrial AI hub each need sector-specific approaches to female recruitment, not one-size-fits-all national programs.

Method, sources, taxonomy.

Gender analysis uses Revelio Labs's machine-predicted gender classifications, which achieve approximately 95 % accuracy at the aggregate level. Individual-level predictions carry inherent uncertainty, but the patterns reported here are robust to reasonable error margins. The analysis covers all AI workers in the austria_located segment (2018–2025) and benchmarks against non-AI employment observed in the same firm universe.

PARAMETERS

Gender classification	Revelio Labs machine-predicted (~95 % accuracy)
Primary segment	austria_located
AI categories compared	Core AI · Full AI · Broad AI · Non-AI
Seniority levels	1–7 (Entry/Junior to C-suite/Executive)
Subcategories analysed	15 AI subcategories
Time period	2018–2025 (2025 preliminary)
Geographic breakdown	Vienna vs Rest of Austria (9 Bundesländer)