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# Monitor Digital Decade 2030

Insights from our research into the implementation of new legislation and regulation in the era of digital transformation.

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# Digital transformation cannot succeed without law.

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Before you read the 'Monitor Digital Decade 2030', in which ICTRecht presents a current overview of how national, European and international organisations are preparing for the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation, the era we are currently navigating.

FOREWORD

We want everyone to fully benefit from the opportunities that the digital future brings, without innovation being hindered by the complexity of the legislation and regulation that accompanies it. Because digital transformation cannot exist without law. A solid legal foundation provides the trust needed to embrace change and innovation and to reap its benefits, as a business, as an individual and as a society.

To continue supporting organisations effectively, we conducted this research. It offers an initial insight into preparation for digital transformation. The results have shown us that this monitor should become a recurring publication, with more detailed analysis where relevant. We thank all 141 participants for their valuable input and trust that this report will contribute to better preparation for the digital future and the legislation and regulation that come with it.





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# 1. Introduction

The EU has set an ambitious objective: to transform Europe into a global leader in digital innovation, sustainability and security. The Digital Decade <sup>2030</sup> strategy elaborates further on this objective<sup>1</sup>.

## The Digital Decade transition

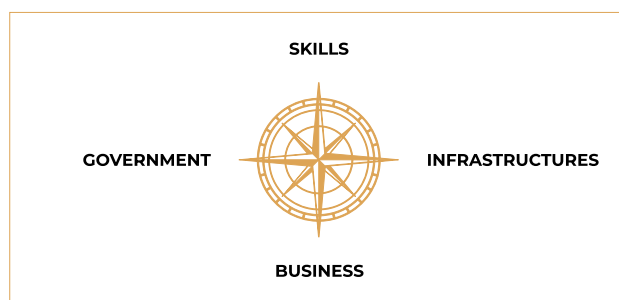
The Digital Decade transition requires a digital transformation of our society. Governments and organisations must deploy technology, digital tools and data-driven processes to fundamentally change how they operate, deliver value and compete. This is not only about technological innovation, but also about strategic, cultural and operational adjustments to ensure organisations remain future-proof in an increasingly digital world.

In its Digital Compass, the European Commission identified four key pillars<sup>2</sup>:

- **Digital Skills:** by 2030, at least 80% of the EU population should have basic digital skills, and 20 million ICT specialists should be employed, with balanced gender representation.
- **Digital infrastructures:** this includes ensuring connectivity for all (gigabit), doubling the EU's share in advanced semiconductor production, sustainable and secure infrastructures, and the first quantum-accelerated computer.
- **Digital transformation of businesses:** by 2030, at least 75% of EU businesses should use cloud, AI or big data, the number of EU unicorns should double, and over 90% of SMEs should achieve a basic level of digital intensity.

- **Digitalisation of public services:** all key public services fully online, 100% of citizens with online access to medical records, and 100% using a digital identity solution.

For each pillar, concrete targets have been set for 2030, linked to measurable indicators. This makes the transformation tangible and verifiable. Despite measurable targets, initial monitoring results raise concerns. Only 55.6% of the EU population currently has basic digital skills, while the goal is set at 80% by 2030.



The number of IT specialists is growing too slowly to achieve the objective of 20 million professionals. Digital infrastructure shows similar shortcomings: high-quality 5G coverage currently reaches only half of the EU territory, and crucial innovations such as edge nodes remain stuck in the testing phase. Digital progress among businesses is also stagnating, particularly in the SME sector. The adoption of cloud technology, artificial intelligence, and data analytics continues to lag far behind the targets.

<sup>1</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030\\_nl](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_nl).

<sup>2</sup> Progress on the Digital Decade initiatives by EU member states is monitored through the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). EU member states are required to develop national strategic plans and collaborate on multi-country projects to stimulate investment and innovation.

## New legislation in the Digital Decade

Innovation, digitalisation and transformation are not without risks and challenges, for example in relation to privacy of individuals and the security of the financial system. To ensure that the digital transformation can be realised in a sustainable and trustworthy way, a substantial wave of new legislation and regulation is being introduced. This is not only to mitigate risks, but also to promote harmonisation: fostering innovation and trade without requiring companies to comply with different rules in every Member State.

Legislation such as the AI Act, the Network and Information Security 2 (NIS2) Directive and the Data Act establishes common standards across the EU. This supports innovation and cross-border trade by preventing fragmented compliance requirements. Another driver behind the increase and reform of legislation is the desire to stimulate innovation and competition. The EU aims to create a level playing field in which both start-ups and established companies can compete fairly. For example, the Digital Markets Act seeks to prevent large tech companies from maintaining unfair market dominance. Additional motivations include strengthening geopolitical and economic independence and safeguarding European values.

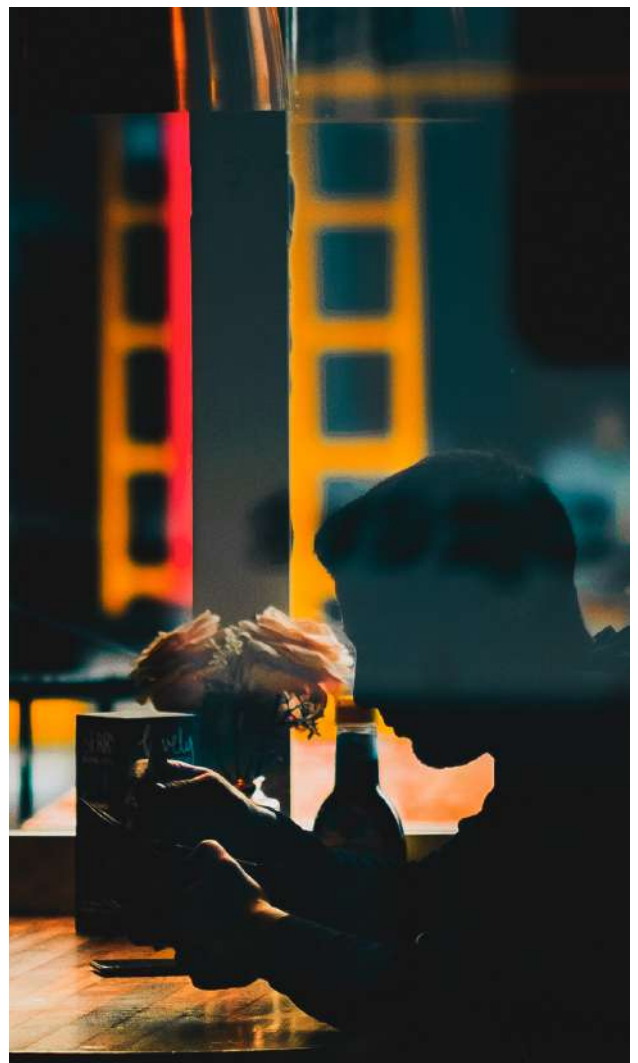
Navigating this legal landscape is complex. With over 100 regulations and directives, compliance requires more than identifying action points per individual law. There is overlap and interaction. Compliance tools often transcend single instruments.

We approach the Digital Decade thematically, using eight themes:

1. **Digital accessibility:** het borgen van inclusieve digitalisering waar iedereen aan kan deelnemen, met speciale aandacht voor kwetsbare groepen.
2. **Digital identity:** The development of reliable digital identification and authentication, from eIDAS to digital wallets.

3. **Data & Privacy:** balancing innovation and data protection in the data-driven economy.
4. **Content & Expression:** regulating online content and safeguarding freedom of information, including the related responsibilities.
5. **Infrastructure & Access:** the technical and legal foundation for a connected Europe.
6. **Digital Economy & Markets:** structuring digital markets and platforms to ensure fair competition
7. **Cybersecurity & Resilience:** protecting vital systems and services against digital threats.
8. **Digital Sovereignty:** Europe's ambition to achieve strategic autonomy in the digital domain.

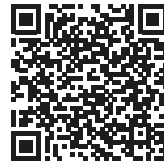
Based on these themes, priorities, relevant legislation, and compliance considerations can be structured and systematically derived.



To support organisations in their digital transformation and to provide insight into how organisations are performing on average, we examined how companies are preparing for the future. In this report, we discuss insights from our study of 141 organisations, ranging from

small businesses to multinationals, from regional entities to internationally operating organisations, and from the healthcare and social care sector to the education sector.

We take an in-depth look at the laws and regulations surrounding the Digital Decade in our latest book, *\*Wetwijs in het Digitale Decennium\**



# 2. Research design

- **Objective:**  
Gain insight into how organisations address digital transformation and related legislation.
- **Target Group:**  
Organisations across various sectors, ranging from IT and financial services to government authorities, of different sizes and operating in different geographical areas.
- **Methodology:**
  - **Online survey with 15 questions**, focused on maturity in digital transformation and legislation and regulation within the EU Digital Decade 2030.
  - **Number of respondents:** 141 participating organisations
  - **Data analysis:** qualitative and quantitative analysis of trends and challenges in digital transformation and the associated legislation and regulation.

We analyse three variables: sector, organisation size and geographical scope.

Other sectors included in the monitor have not or barely been included in the sectoral analysis in this report, as their representation was too low. The results per sector are based on a minimum of seven participants.

In this report we look more closely at three variables:

1. Sector	2. Organization size	3. Geographical scope
Financial sector	Small: 0-50 employees	Regional
Healthcare and social care	Medium: 51-250 employees	National
Education	Large: 251-1000 employees	European
IT service providers	Very large: >1000 employees	International
Consultancy and business services		
Public administration and government services		
Legal services		

# 3. Summary of key findings

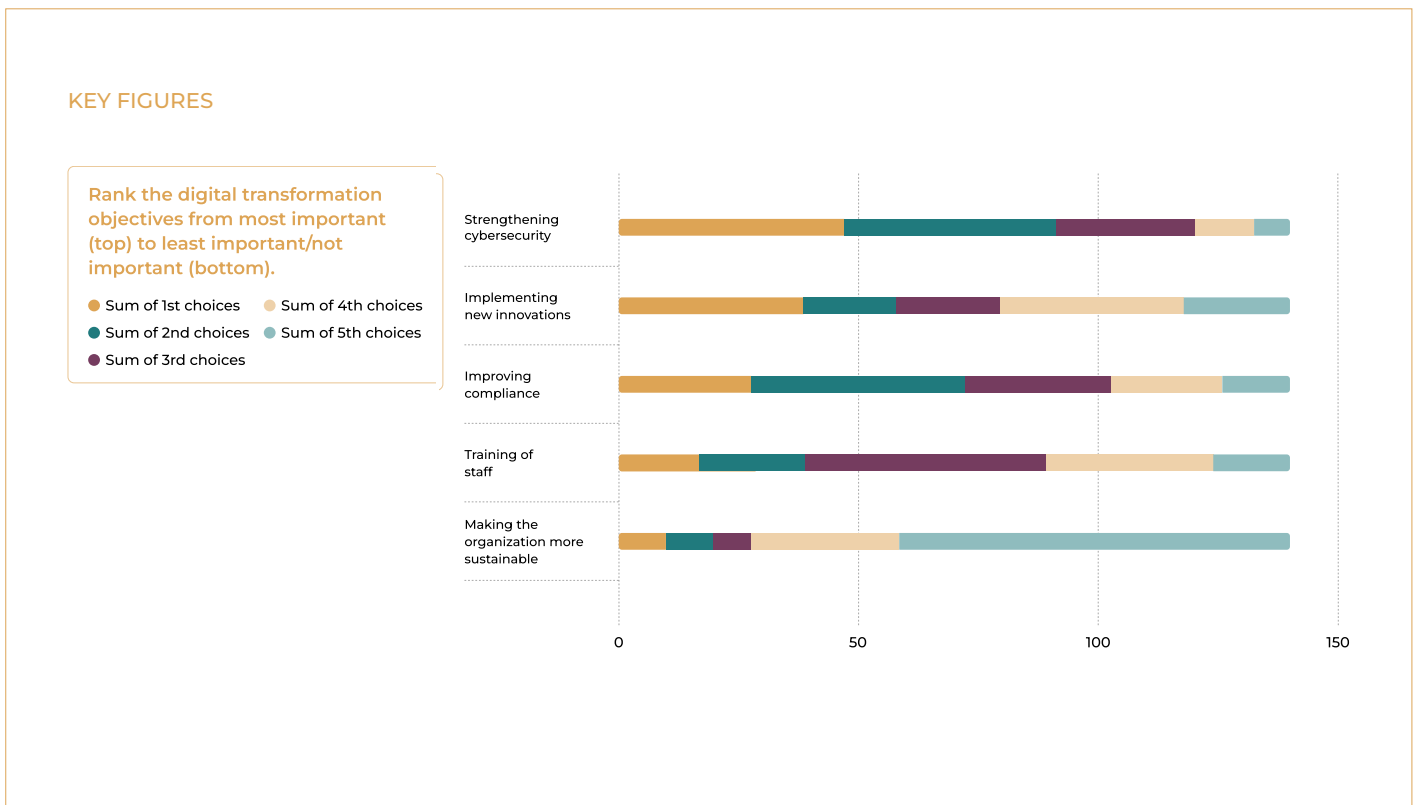
The results show that many organisations are aware of the impact of the EU Digital Decade 2030, but that there are significant differences in the level of preparedness for this transformation. The new legislation emerging from this programme is a major concern: only 22% of organisations have a concrete strategy for implementing new legislation and regulation such as the AI Act, NIS2 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and are already actively working on implementing the relevant legal requirements. A further 11% do have compliance plans but have not yet started the actual implementation of the new legislation and regulation.

Cybersecurity was most frequently identified as the most important topic under the Digital Decade 2030 (there were 6 topics: cybersecurity, AI, data governance,

digital infrastructure, privacy and data protection, and sustainability): 28% of all organisations selected it. Digital infrastructure and sustainability ranked lowest in terms of priority.

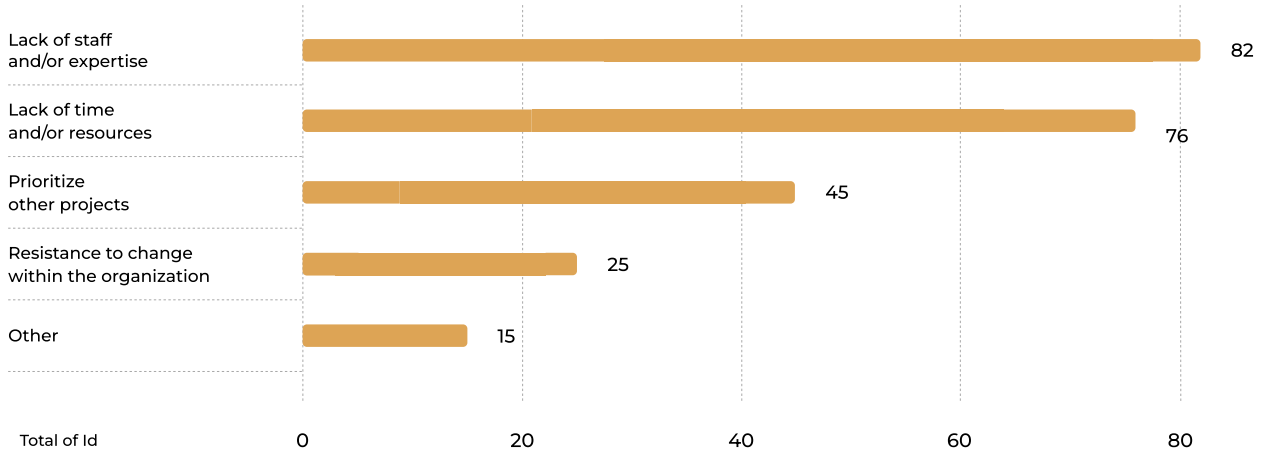
In addition, 40% of organisations cite lack of staff or expertise as the main bottleneck in the digital transformation, while 11% percent report competing project priorities as the main obstacle.

When it comes to the need for support, there appears to be a strong demand for overview and insight into (upcoming) legislation and regulation through compliance roadmaps (58% overall; 21% as first choice) and regular expert updates (51% overall; 16% as first choice).



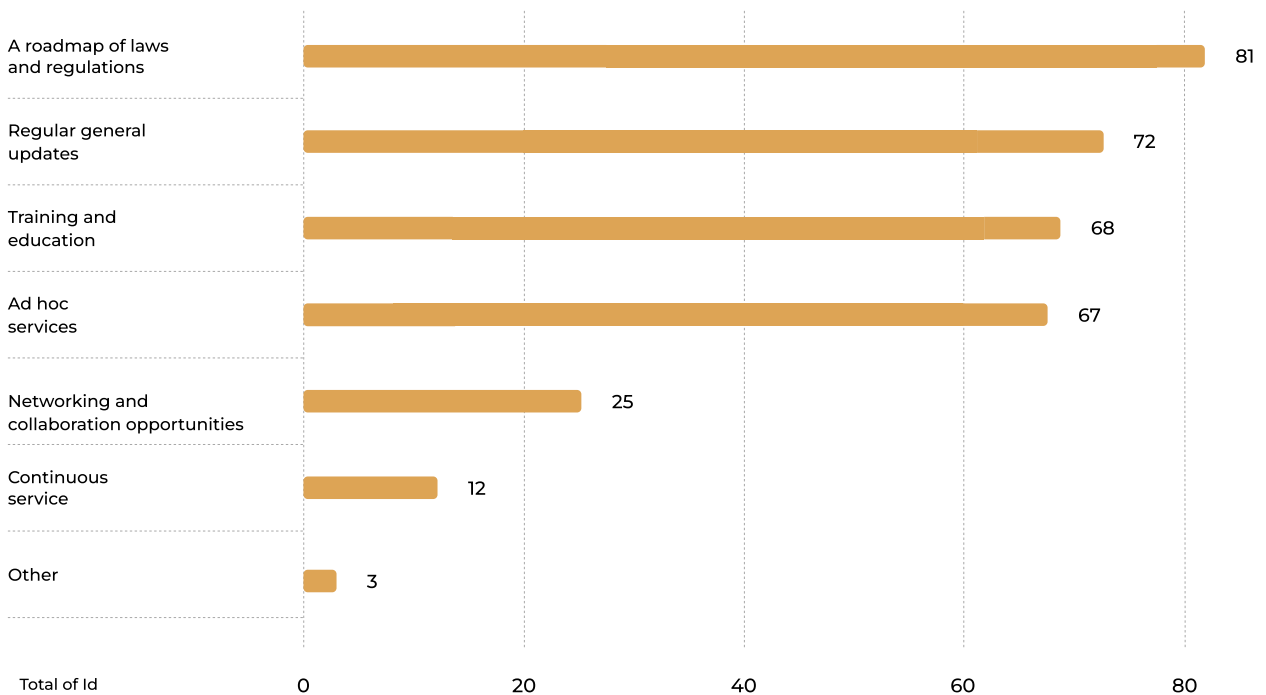
**What are the main bottlenecks in current processes or business operations that are slowing down the digital transformation?**

*Organizations could select up to 2 bottlenecks*



**How can ICTRecht best support your organization in its digital transformation and compliance with digital laws and regulations?**

*Organizations could select up to three types of support*





# 4. Results

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Across organisations, the most cited objectives are (in order of relevance for organisations):

- Strengthening cybersecurity  
Implementeren van nieuwe innovaties
- Implementing new innovations  
Trainen van personeel
- Improving compliance
- Training staff
- Making IT infrastructure more sustainable

These themes are identified as priorities by a large number of organisations, indicating that compliance and security are firmly embedded in the digital transformation agenda.

In addition to the objectives, the main bottlenecks have also been identified. These show that the greatest obstacles to digital transformation are (in order of relevance for organisations):

- **Lack of internal expertise and staff** (there are no people with the right knowledge to deliver or support the digital transformation).
- **Lack of time and/or resources** (for example financial constraints or insufficient time for implementation due to the volume of legislation and regulations they face).
- **Other projects take priority** (digital transformation is not regarded as urgent).
- **Resistance to change within the organisation** (a cultural challenge).

In addition, the priorities within the Digital Decade were examined. Organisations consider the following topics to be the most relevant to their operations:

1. **Cybersecurity**
2. **Privacy and Data Protection**
3. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
4. **Data Governance and Information Management**
5. **Digital Infrastructure**
6. **Sustainability**

These priorities show that organisations focus not only on technological progress, but also give significant weight to regulatory impact, security and sustainability.

The following chapters explore these priorities, positioning, bottlenecks, challenges and advisory needs in more detail, from three different perspectives: sector, organisation size and geographical scope of operations.

# 4.1 Sectoral analysis

## Summary

Digital transformation differs significantly by sector. While financial and IT service providers lead the way in the Digital Decade, the health and social care sector is still in the exploratory phase.

Most sectors indicate that strengthening cybersecurity is the top priority in their digital transformation agenda. However, knowledge of new legislation and regulations varies considerably. This leads to differing advisory needs. The education sector reports a particular need for strategic advice, whereas public authorities mainly require compliance roadmaps that provide insight into upcoming legislation and regulations. IT service providers seek support in identifying the specific legal requirements that apply to them.

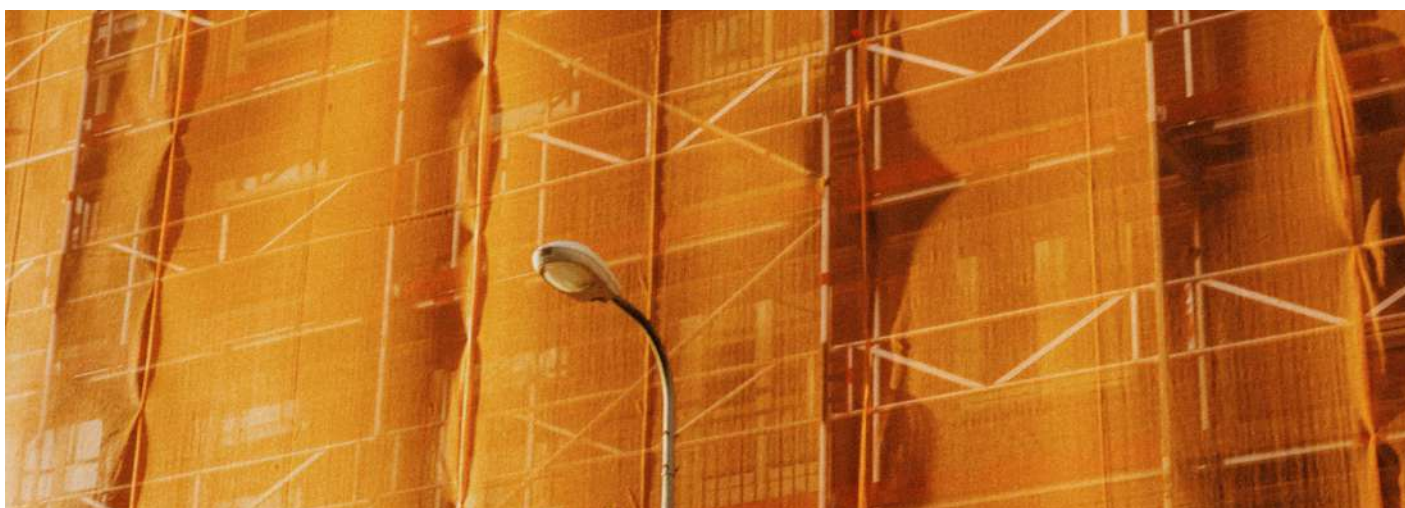
## Priorities within the Digital Decade

The priorities within the Digital Decade reveal clear differences between sectors. For example, 38% of organisations in the financial sector identify AI as their top priority, followed by cybersecurity (25% indicate this as their highest priority).

In the health and social care sector, privacy and data protection are the highest priority for 50% of organisations. AI, digital infrastructure, data governance and cybersecurity are also mentioned, but there is significant variation in how organisations within the care sector prioritise these topics.

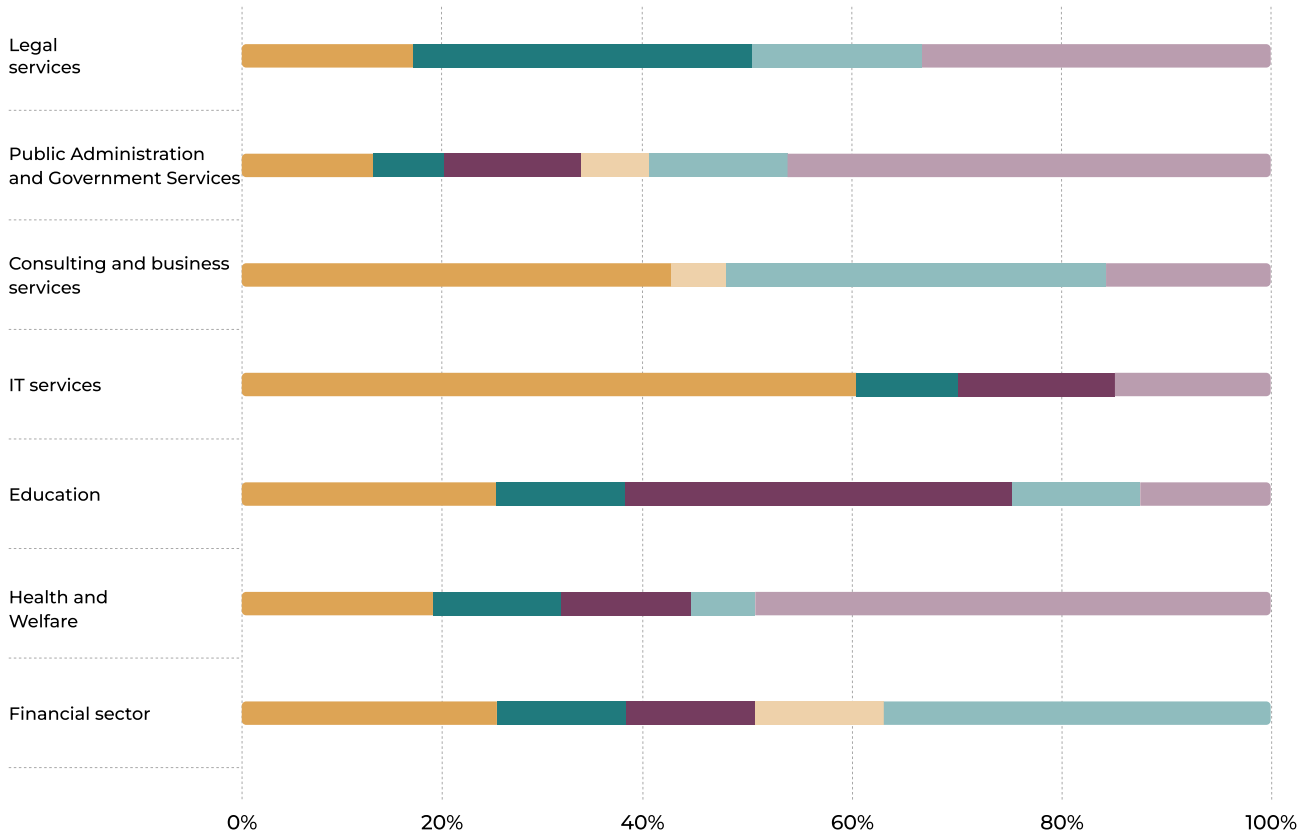
Among organisations in public administration and government services, there is considerable variation in the prioritisation of Digital Decade themes. Here too, privacy and data protection receive the greatest emphasis: 35% indicate that this is their top priority.

The remaining organisations in this sector are widely divided. AI, data governance and cybersecurity are each identified as the highest priority by 17% of organisations. Digital infrastructure and sustainability rank first for only a small number of organisations.



### Priorities under the Digital Decade

- Cybersecurity on 1   ● Data Governance / Information Management on 1   ● Digital infrastructure on 1
- Sustainability on 1   ● Artificial intelligence (AI) on 1   ● Privacy & Data Protection on 1



## Positioning in relation to the Digital Decade

The level of preparedness for the Digital Decade varies significantly by sector. In the IT services sector, 35% of organisations are actively engaged in implementation, while the remainder (60%) are still in the exploratory phase or have yet to begin orientating themselves.

Within public administration and government services, 39% of organisations are exploring the possibilities of digital transformation but do not yet have a concrete plan and have not started implementation. By contrast, 29% are already actively implementing the objectives of the Digital Decade.

In the health and social care sector, as many as 50% of organisations remain in the exploratory phase; concrete plans and their implementation still need to be developed and carried out. 25% of healthcare institutions have not yet drawn up a plan and have not taken any action.

## Bottlenecks

Although digitalisation is high on the agenda, sectors face various bottlenecks. A shortage of staff and expertise is the most significant challenge, cited by 58% of organisations, particularly in education (60% of the education sector identified this as a bottleneck) and

in public administration and government services (61% experience this as a bottleneck).

In addition, 54% of organisations identify a lack of time and/or resources as an obstacle to digital transformation, particularly in IT services (63%), financial services (66%) and advisory and professional services (50%).

## Challenges

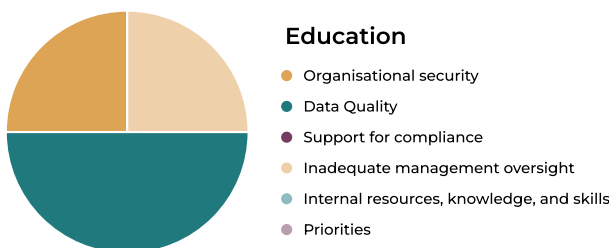
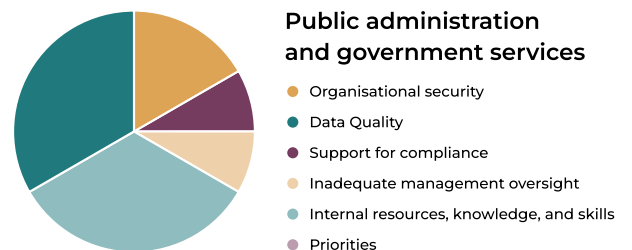
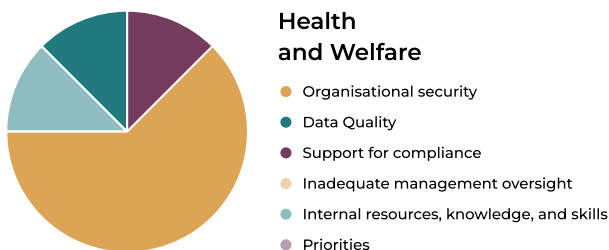
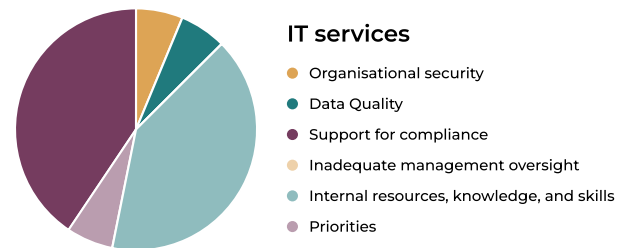
Each sector faces specific challenges that affect digital transformation. Notably, the main challenges vary significantly within each sector; there is no single common denominator across sectors. These challenges range from compliance with legislation and regulations, to organisational security and safety, to internal resources, knowledge and skills, and the organisation's technical infrastructure.

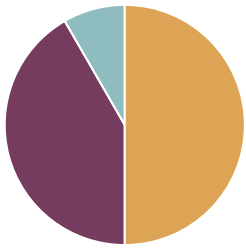
In the financial sector, 44% of organisations indicate that compliance with new legislation and regulations is the greatest challenge.

Within the legal services sector, 43% struggle with organisational security and safety in order to achieve digital transformation.

For 58% of health and social care institutions, internal resources, knowledge and skills represent the primary challenge.

The technical infrastructure required to enable digitalisation is identified as a challenge by 11% of all participating organisations, but not specifically by any one sector.





### Legal services

- Organisational security
- Data Quality
- Support for compliance
- Inadequate management oversight
- Internal resources, knowledge, and skills
- Priorities

Digital Decade (67%). ICTRecht could best support IT service providers by offering clear overviews and legislative roadmaps (54% indicate that this is their preferred form of support).

In the education sector, 50% state that the lack of available expertise is the main driver for engaging external support in digital transformation. The relevant areas are primarily cybersecurity, data governance and sustainability. The greatest training need concerns AI and the Digital Decade as a whole.

Public administration and government services have the strongest need for support with general compliance issues. There is also a clear demand for strategic advice to realise digital transformation. Organisations in this sector have the least need for networking and collaboration opportunities.

## Advisory needs

The need for support in digital transformation varies by sector. Organisations in the financial sector indicate a need for training in AI and data governance.

Within the health and social care sector, the majority seek support in complying with specific legal requirements. Most of these organisations are particularly interested in advice on AI and cybersecurity.

IT service providers indicate that they primarily require advice on specific legal requirements arising from the



# 4.2 Analysis by organisation size

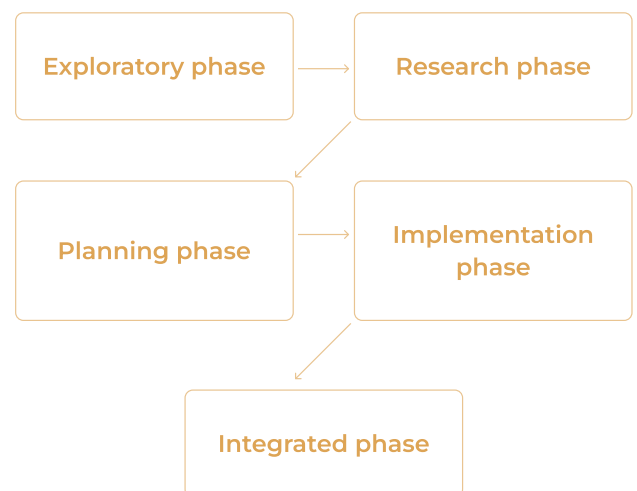
## In brief

The impact of digital transformation varies by organisation size, although there is one common denominator: across all organisations, a lack of internal resources, knowledge and skills is the greatest challenge. Small and medium-sized enterprises also face particular challenges due to increasing legislation and regulations, while large and very large organisations struggle mainly with organisational security.

Priorities within the Digital Decade differ slightly, but all organisations focus primarily on strengthening cybersecurity and implementing new innovations. Advisory needs do differ, however. Small and medium-sized enterprises seek legislative roadmaps, large organisations require training and education, and very large organisations prefer tailored advice and collaboration with experts.

## Positioning in relation to the Digital Decade

To assess the position of organisations in relation to the objectives of the EU Digital Decade 2030, we apply a five-stage model inspired by established digital maturity frameworks (such as Gartner's Digital Business Maturity Model and the Capability Maturity Model). This staged model provides a structured way to map levels of awareness, preparedness and action in relation to digital transformation. The five stages (orientation, exploration, planning, implementation and integration) describe organisations' progress from initial orientation to the full integration of Digital Decade objectives into strategy and operations. This classification enables clear and comparable analysis of differences between organisations of varying sizes.



## Priorities within the Digital Decade

Organisations of all sizes indicate that cybersecurity is their highest priority. Strengthening cybersecurity is therefore regarded as the primary objective. This is followed by the implementation of new innovations, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity, privacy and data protection, and AI. Digital infrastructure and sustainability rank lowest on the agenda for organisations of all sizes.

Small organisations are primarily in the orientation phase and have not yet taken concrete action in relation to the objectives and requirements of the EU Digital Decade 2030 (40%). A proportion are in the exploration phase, where opportunities are being assessed but no formal plans have yet been developed.

Medium-sized organisations lag slightly behind: 35% have not yet engaged in substantive analysis or developed plans, placing them in the orientation or early exploration phase. In this respect, small organisations appear to be somewhat more proactive.

Among large organisations, 44% are in the orientation phase, while 15% are already active in the implementation phase. The remainder are largely in the exploration or planning phase, where preparation and decision-making take place.

Very large organisations show the greatest spread across the phases. One third are in the exploration phase (33%), while 18% have developed a plan but have not yet started implementation, placing them in the planning phase. In addition, 31% are already actively executing their plans and are therefore in the implementation phase. Only a small proportion have firmly embedded the objectives in their strategy and processes, meaning they have reached the integration phase.

## Bottlenecks

Organisations of all sizes primarily experience bottlenecks in the areas of staffing, expertise, time and resources. For smaller organisations, a lack of time and/or resources (57%) is identified as the main bottleneck in current processes or operations that slows down digital

transformation, followed by a lack of staff and/or expertise (38%) and other projects taking priority (36%).

By contrast, medium-sized organisations primarily experience a lack of staff and/or expertise (62%), a lack of time and/or resources (46%) and internal resistance to change (23%) as limiting factors.

Among large organisations, 32% identify the prioritisation of other projects as a bottleneck. 8% of very large enterprises indicate that a lack of governance and management vision hinders digitalisation. Nevertheless, a lack of staff and/or expertise also ranks highest in this category, with no less than 67% identifying it as the main bottleneck.

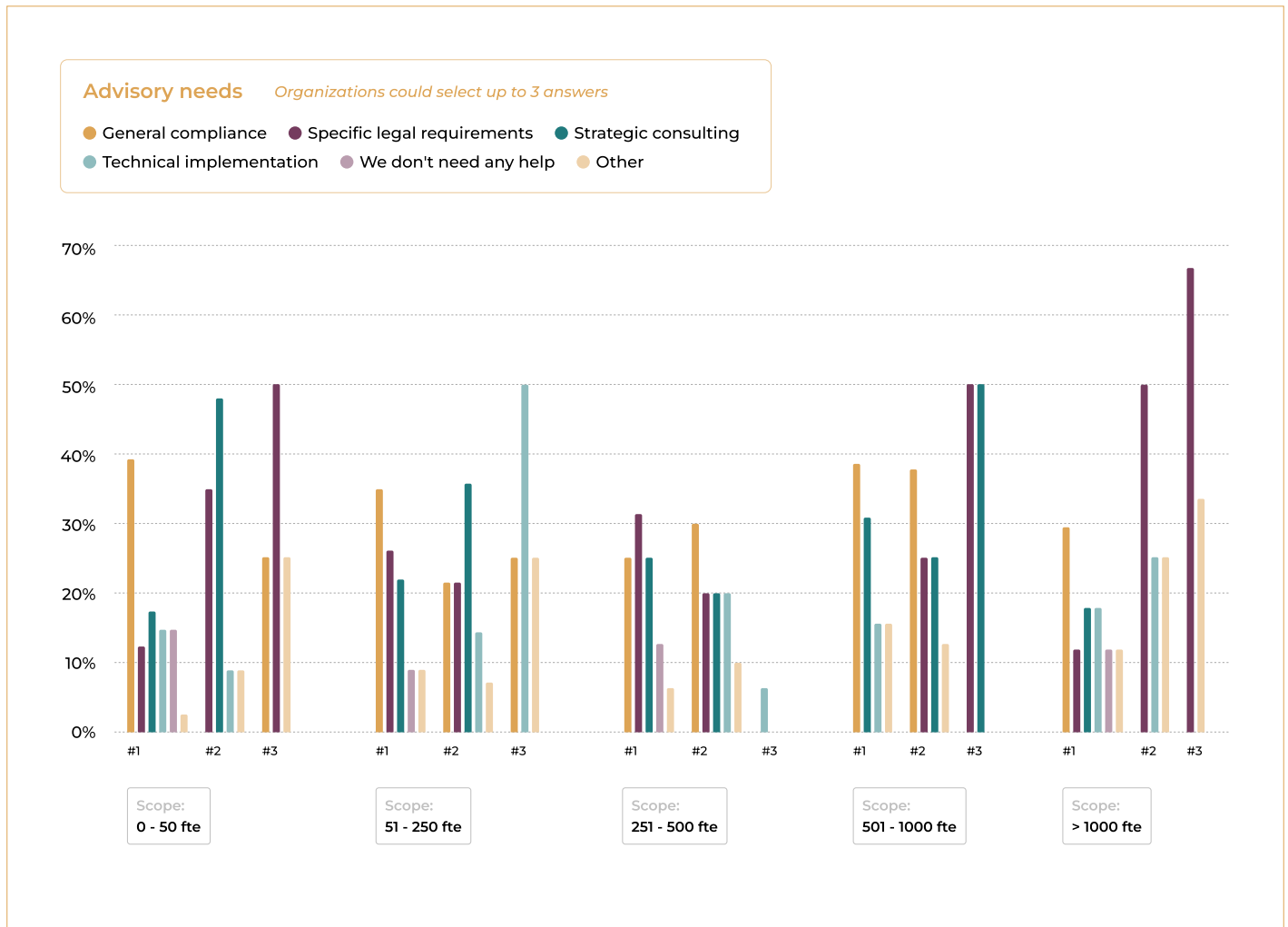
## Challenges

The results show that internal resources, knowledge and skills constitute the greatest challenge for all organisations: this applies to 52% of small organisations, 42% of medium-sized organisations, 50% of large organisations and 41% of very large organisations.

The second most significant challenge does vary. 21% of large organisations identify organisational security as a challenge, while medium-sized organisations experience increasing legislation and regulations as a key challenge (38%). The organisation's technical infrastructure is least frequently regarded as a challenge.



## Advisory needs



The need for external support varies significantly by organisation size. Small and medium-sized enterprises primarily require a roadmap and clear overview of forthcoming legislation and regulations under the EU Digital Decade 2030.

In terms of training and awareness, AI ranks highest among small organisations, while medium-sized

organisations are more focused on Digital Decade legislation as a whole.

Large organisations more frequently request training and education, whereas very large organisations prefer tailored advice and opportunities to collaborate with experts.

## 4.3 Analysis by geographical scope

### In brief

The focus of digital transformation does not differ significantly by geographical scope of operations. Regional, national, European and international organisations all primarily focus on strengthening cybersecurity and implementing new innovations. European and international organisations lead the way in preparing for the EU Digital Decade 2030 and aim to make a meaningful contribution to it, while regional and national organisations mainly concentrate on their own domestic projects. They have explored the opportunities presented by the EU Digital Decade 2030 but have not yet reached the implementation phase.

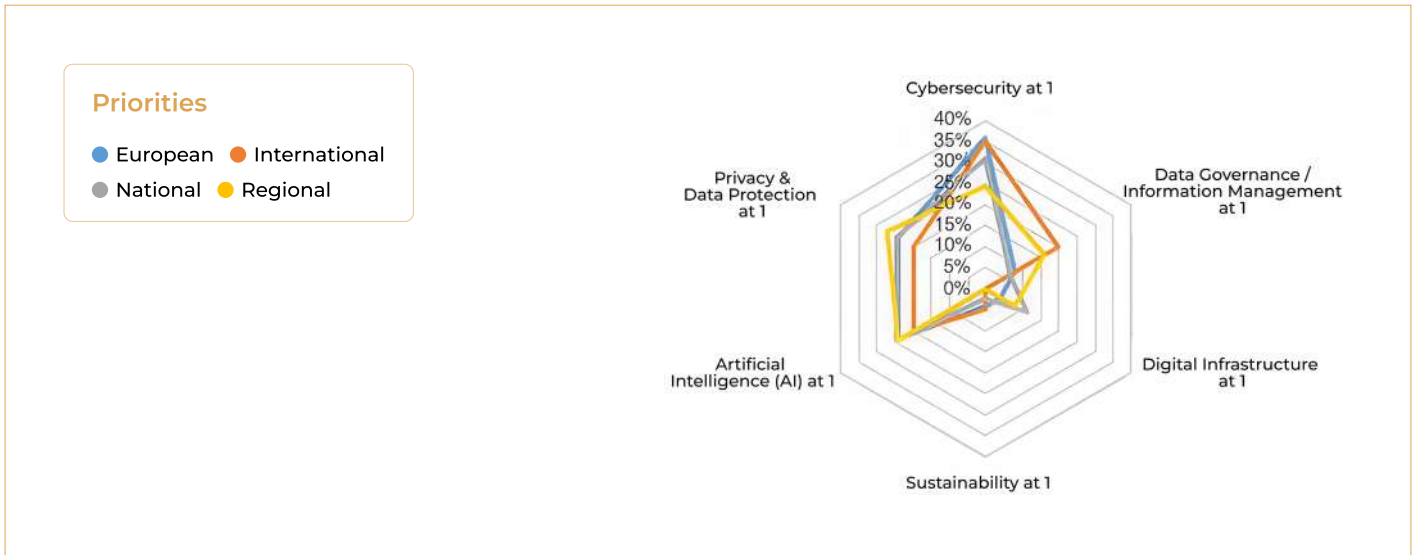
Bottlenecks show little variation. Across all geographical scopes, a lack of staff and/or expertise is the main obstacle, followed by a lack of time and/or resources, other projects taking priority and resistance to change. This is not fully reflected in advisory needs. National and regional organisations prefer roadmaps, general updates and ad hoc advice, whereas European and international organisations require more comprehensive roadmaps, as well as training and education.

### Priorities within the Digital Decade

Where the sectoral analysis and the analysis by organisation size revealed differences in the prioritisation of Digital Decade themes, organisations across all geographical scopes focus most strongly on cybersecurity, privacy and data protection, and AI. Sustainability ranks lowest among all organisations.

When it comes to prioritising digital transformation objectives, there are also few differences between geographical scopes. Strengthening cybersecurity ranks highest, followed by implementing new innovations, improving compliance, training staff and making the organisation more sustainable.

This is notable, as one might expect regional and national organisations to link digitalisation more closely to day-to-day operations, while larger and cross-border organisations (European and international) would use digitalisation more strategically to remain competitive in the long term, for example by prioritising the implementation of new innovations.



## Positioning in relation to the Digital Decade

When examining the extent to which organisations are preparing for the EU Digital Decade 2030, we see significant differences, particularly between international organisations and regional and national organisations. European and international organisations clearly lead the way: 31% and 30% respectively indicate that they are exploring digitalisation opportunities but have not yet taken concrete action. By contrast, 30% and 26% respectively are already actively engaged in implementation. Among national organisations, only 23% are actively implementing, while for regional organisations this figure is just 13%.

These figures show that the more internationally an organisation operates, the greater the sense of urgency and the level of preparation for European digitalisation objectives. This is logical, as international organisations are more likely to face international legislation and regulations, as well as broader digital threats.

## Bottlenecks

Although digitalisation offers opportunities, it also presents obstacles. The main bottleneck is the same across all geographical scopes: all organisations experience a lack of staff and expertise as the primary

obstacle, followed by a lack of time and/or resources, other projects taking priority and, finally, resistance to change within the organisation.

## Challenges

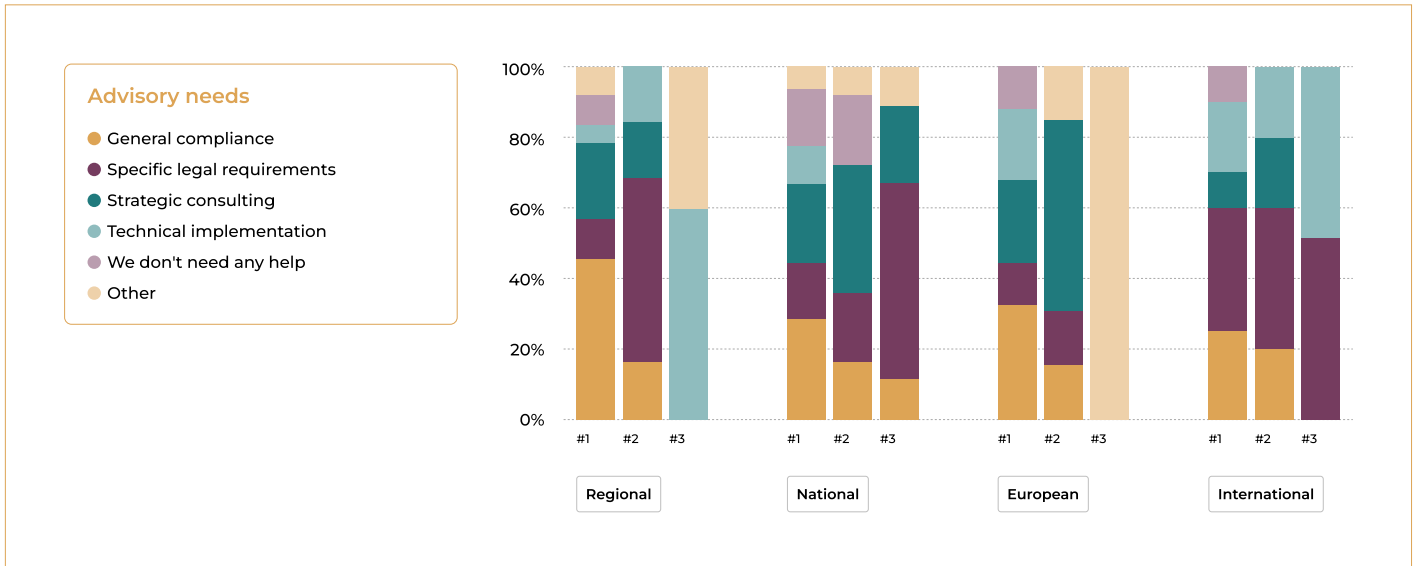
In addition to shared bottlenecks, there are no very pronounced differences in what organisations regard as their greatest challenge in digital transformation. Internal resources, knowledge and skills are identified as the main challenge by 38% of national organisations. Among European organisations this rises to 58%, and among international organisations to 43%. Legislation and regulations rank second, except for regional and international organisations. For international organisations, organisational security (22%) is considered more significant than legislation and regulations (13%). For regional organisations, security also ranks second (23%), followed by the organisation's technical infrastructure (15%). Legislation and regulations are regarded as the least significant challenge by regional organisations, with only 3% identifying this as their primary concern. This aligns with the previously noted differences in regulatory exposure: the broader the geographical scope, the greater the need to comply with international legislation.

Notably, national organisations do not necessarily struggle more with internal resources, knowledge and

skills, even though one might expect this to be less of a challenge for international organisations. After all, they generally have greater access to specialised

expertise within the organisation, which could accelerate digitalisation.

## Advisory needs



The way in which organisations wish to be supported in digital transformation does vary significantly by geographical scope.

Regional organisations indicate that they have the greatest need for support with general compliance requirements, in the form of a roadmap outlining forthcoming legislation and regulations, as well as regular general updates.

National organisations primarily require strategic advice and insight into specific legal requirements, delivered in a similar format to that preferred by regional organisations. European organisations share the need for strategic advice, but mainly in the form of training, education and ad hoc advice from experts. International organisations, by contrast, primarily seek support in identifying specific legal requirements and in the technical implementation of those requirements.

Notably, internationally operating organisations have a particular need for training in data governance,

followed by AI and cybersecurity. For regional and national organisations, AI is the main topic for which training and awareness are considered desirable, while for European organisations this concerns the Digital Decade as a whole.

Regional and national organisations mainly seek compliance roadmaps and AI awareness, which aligns with the orientation phase of digital transformation in which they find themselves (38%, the majority, indicate that they are in this phase).

European organisations require strategic advice and training on the Digital Decade, focused on broader policy impact.

International organisations request technical implementation support and sector-specific legal assistance, with data governance as their top priority.



# 5. Conclusions and recommendations

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The Digital Decade Monitor 2030 presents a clear picture: digital transformation is not a uniform challenge, but a dynamic process that depends heavily on sector and geographical scope. Based on the results of this study, organisation size appears to be somewhat less decisive in preparing for digital transformation.

How organisations address bottlenecks, set priorities and prepare for the Digital Decade is shaped by their position within these variables. This report provides insight into the key differences and similarities, which are essential for organisations seeking to further refine their digital strategy.

## The common denominator: strengthening cybersecurity to enable digital transformation

Regardless of sector or organisation size, digitalisation is clearly high on the agenda, although the way it is approached differs. Organisations frequently identify strengthening cybersecurity and driving technical innovation as key pillars of their digital strategy. At the same time, a lack of internal knowledge, resources, skills, time and funding are most often cited as obstacles.

Organisations with a broader geographical scope (national, European, international) appear to be further advanced in their digital transformation than regional organisations. This is not surprising and may be linked to compliance requirements and external pressures (such as reputational risk) that compel these organisations to act more swiftly.

Advisory needs range from guidance on specific legal requirements to regular updates on regulatory developments. Above all, organisations indicate that

they are looking for compliance roadmaps to identify forthcoming legislation and regulations and to take the necessary steps in a timely manner.

## Recommendations and action points: What's next?

The findings of this Digital Decade 2030 Monitor show that many organisations recognise the importance of digital transformation, but that the pace of preparation and implementation varies considerably. Although cybersecurity and innovation are prioritised, many organisations remain in the orientation or exploration phase.

It is therefore important not only to assess the current state of play, but also to provide concrete steps that enable organisations to further develop their digital maturity.

### 1. Accelerating digital maturity

Use the five-stage maturity model as a guide to determine where the organisation currently stands and what the next logical step should be. In practical terms:

- Organisations in the orientation or exploration phase: start with internal awareness, stakeholder mapping and risk assessments of new legislation.
- Organisations in the planning phase: develop a concrete implementation plan, including clear priorities and quick wins.
- Organisations in the implementation phase: ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and compliance tooling.

- Organisations in the integration phase: focus on knowledge sharing, strategic leadership and fostering innovation.

## 2. Strengthening compliance capacity

Given that a lack of time, resources and expertise are the most frequently cited bottlenecks, we recommend the following:

- Invest in internal or external compliance officers who can translate thematic legislative frameworks such as the AI Act, NIS2 and the Data Act into concrete action points.
- Develop or implement compliance roadmaps for each theme.
- Organise regular legislative updates and scenario workshops to build support and encourage readiness to act.

## 3. Targeted support by organisational profile

Depending on sector, size and geographical scope, different forms of support are effective:

- Small and medium-sized organisations: accessible compliance overviews, theme-based training (for example AI and data), and guidance on available funding schemes.
- Large and very large organisations: tailored advice, policy assessments and the integration of compliance into governance frameworks.
- Internationally operating organisations: sector-specific implementation plans, gap analyses and international benchmark information.

## 4. Supporting knowledge development and training

Develop a national or sector-based training offering focused on the Digital Decade. For example:

- Introductory training on the eight themes of the Digital Decade.
- Sector-specific in-depth sessions.

- On-demand e-learning for decentralised teams.

## 5. Making strategic use of collective initiatives

Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular can benefit from:

- Sector-wide knowledge platforms.
- Public-private partnerships.
- Legal and technical standardisation.

## 6. From compliance to competitive advantage

Emphasise the opportunities created by digitalisation and legislation:

- Use new obligations as a driver for innovation (for example by treating the AI Act or NIS2 as an opportunity for improvement).
- Position strong compliance as a differentiating factor for clients and partners.

## 7. Continuous monitoring and adjustment

Finally, we recommend continuously monitoring developments within the Digital Decade in order to:

- Track trends and bottlenecks.
- Assess the impact on the organisation.
- Make timely adjustments at both policy and operational level.

With these recommendations, we provide direction towards a future in which legal certainty, technological innovation and societal values go hand in hand. Digitalisation is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve sustainable, secure and inclusive growth for our society.

# The Digital Decade and ICTRecht's legal strength

The conclusions of this monitor reflect a broader truth about digital transformation: technology and law are inseparably linked.

This perspective is not new. For twenty years, we have seen how digital innovation and legal frameworks shape and reinforce one another. In 2004, our work focused largely on hosting and online shops. Today, we face challenges such as DORA in the financial sector, the European Accessibility Act for digital accessibility, and the European Digital Identity Framework, which lays the foundation for digital identities in Europe.

The Digital Decade introduces a fundamentally new dynamic into the legal landscape. Where we once looked to a single, specific law for a solution, we now see a complex web of interconnected legislation. A modern connected product often needs to comply with five or six different laws simultaneously, which complement and refer to one another.

This interconnection calls for a new approach to legal services. Not isolated advice per statute, but an integrated framework that encompasses all relevant legislation. Technical standards are becoming increasingly important as a practical compass, but they must always be placed within the broader legal context. The key is

to look beyond technological hype and focus on the underlying legal issues that remain relevant over time. In the case of the metaverse, the core issues ultimately concerned familiar themes such as digital identity, property rights and liability in online environments. That expertise remains valuable, even as the technology itself evolves.

Ultimately, one fundamental insight prevails: digital transformation cannot succeed without a solid legal foundation. A robust legal basis gives organisations the confidence to innovate and to realise the benefits of digitalisation. Whether deploying AI systems, developing connected products or digitalising services, the law forms the foundation for responsible innovation.

This conviction has guided us for two decades and is more relevant than ever in the Digital Decade. Only by balancing technology and law can we create a digital future that works for everyone.

Want to learn more? Ready to get started with the Digital Decade? Contact us at: [contact@ictrecht.nl](mailto:contact@ictrecht.nl).

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