

D2.1- Stakeholder mapping report

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Abstract

Under T2.1, the aim of this report was to identify and profile key actors across academia, industry, and the public sector to ensure alignment with the project's goals of enhancing early-stage researcher development and creating cross-sectoral synergies. The methodology employed a quantitative survey to map stakeholders' expertise, networks, and influence within the European Research Area (ERA). This approach facilitated a detailed assessment of participant interests and capabilities, establishing a data-driven foundation for subsequent engagement, training, and mentorship activities. Results indicate a robust ecosystem base, characterized by a high concentration of participants from Higher Education (HEI) and Research Institutions. A significant strength of the mapping is the balanced representation of Leading Researchers and First-Stage Researchers, ensuring both strategic oversight and practical user feedback. Thematically, the ecosystem shows strong alignment with the Green Deal and digital transformation, particularly within the Education, Skills, and Digital/AI sectors. While stakeholder readiness for co-developing skills frameworks and cross-sectoral partnerships is high, the analysis identified a critical participation gap among HR professionals and investors. Accordingly, addressing this gap will be essential to better align research careers with industrial labour market requirements. Ultimately, these findings provide a clear mandate for the implementation of WP3 and WP4, ensuring that subsequent project phases are grounded in a well-defined and motivated stakeholder network.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
ERA	European Research Area
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
R&I	Research and Innovation
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
NGOs	Non-profit Organisations
GOV	Government
R1-R4	Research profile descriptors: first stage (R1), recognised (R2), established (R3), leading researcher (R4).

1 Executive Summary

This report, developed under T2.1 of INSIGHT project, identifies and profiles key stakeholders across academia, industry, and the public sector to support the project's objective of strengthening early-stage researcher development and fostering cross-sector collaboration. The study mapped participants' expertise, networks, and influence within the European Research Area (ERA), creating a robust, data-driven foundation for future engagement, training, and mentorship activities.

The findings reveal a well-established ecosystem, with strong representation from Higher Education Institutions and Research Organizations. Notably, the balanced participation of Leading Researchers and First-Stage Researchers provides both strategic direction and practical insight. The stakeholder landscape demonstrates clear thematic alignment with priorities such as the Green Deal and digital transformation, particularly in education, skills development, and AI-related domains.

While overall readiness for collaboration and co-creation of skills frameworks is high, a notable gap exists in the participation of HR professionals and investors. Addressing this shortfall will be critical to better align research career pathways with labour market demands.

These insights offer a clear direction for the implementation of subsequent work packages (WP3 and WP4), ensuring that future activities are anchored in a well-defined, engaged, and strategically aligned stakeholder network.

2 Introduction

The INSIGHT project aims to establish and operationalise a network of interconnected talent ecosystems that foster attractive, inclusive, and sustainable research careers for early-stage researchers across academia, industry, and the public sector by addressing systemic challenges and bridging the gap between academic skills and labour market requirements, particularly in Green Deal, digital transformation, and Human-centric transition. Bringing together a consortium of 11 European partners—including universities, research institutions, industry representatives, and public authorities—the project implements the new Charter for Researchers through sustainable organisational change, tailored training pathways, mentorship, and career support services. By piloting a talent ecosystem focused on human factors in technology acceptance within the automotive and manufacturing sectors, INSIGHT ensures researchers develop practical, market-relevant skills while providing actionable policy recommendations to promote diversity, inclusivity, and mobility. Ultimately, the project seeks to create a lasting impact on the European Research Area by fostering a dynamic environment where early-stage researchers have access to meaningful career opportunities.

In line with the project's primary aims, the objectives of WP2 are to identify, engage, and mobilise stakeholders from academia, industry, public sector, and research institutions to build the foundation for talent ecosystems that support early-stage researchers. This work package aims to create the connections necessary to establish a sustainable network of stakeholders who will contribute to the INSIGHT project and foster the development of talent ecosystems across Europe. WP2 will ensure the participation and engagement of relevant actors who have the potential to influence and sustain talent ecosystems, facilitating the alignment of activities across WPs 3-6. Through ongoing stakeholder engagement, WP2 will support the development of a comprehensive roadmap, ensuring that policy recommendations and best practices are integrated into the establishment and operation of talent ecosystems. Accordingly, under T2.1 we have proceeded to the identification and mapping of key stakeholders from academia, research institutions, industry, public sector entities, and non-academic organisations through a quantitative survey. The survey was open for completion between December 2025 – February 2026, and gathered responses from 9 countries, the majority of the responses being concentrated in the South-Eastern Europe.

The mapping focused on identifying stakeholders' areas of expertise, networks, and influence within the European Research Area, and facilitated the profiling of their interests and capabilities. By ensuring these actors align with the project's objectives, the resulting insights will serve as the foundation for subsequent engagement activities, targeting those who can actively contribute to early-stage researcher development and the creation of sustainable talent ecosystems.

The mapping results establish a robust foundation for the talent ecosystem, with a high concentration of participants from Higher Education and Research Institutions. A key strength lies in the balanced engagement between Leading Researchers and First-Stage Researchers, providing both strategic oversight and direct user feedback. Thematic alignment is strongest in Education, Skills, and Digital/AI sectors, directly supporting the project's focus on the Green Deal and digital transformation. However, a critical gap exists in HR and Investor participation, highlighting the need for targeted recruitment to better align research careers with industrial labour market requirements.

Stakeholder readiness is high, particularly for building cross-sector partnerships and co-developing skills frameworks, which provides a clear mandate for the training and mentorship activities in WP3 and WP4. Engagement preferences strongly favour participatory workshops and thematic groups over passive communication, setting a tactical roadmap for T2.2 and T2.3.

Moving forward, the project must translate this collaborative interest into structured mobility schemes to ensure the WP5 pilots in automotive and manufacturing successfully bridge the gap between academic expertise and high-influence industrial roles, ultimately feeding into the policy recommendations of WP6.

3 Survey objectives

As specified above, the survey was conducted in line with the objectives of Task 2.1 (T2.1) of the project, which focuses on mapping and structuring the foundations of the European Talent Ecosystem for Researchers. Specifically, the survey aimed to:

- identify and map key stakeholders (academia, industry, public sector, non-academic organisations);
- profile their expertise, networks, and potential contributions to the Talent Ecosystem;
- provide insights for stakeholder engagement and ecosystem development

4 Methodology

The analysis of the survey follows a quantitative approach, utilising descriptive statistics as the primary method to map and profile stakeholders that can contribute to the European Talent Ecosystem for Researchers.

Correspondingly, the survey was designed as a structured instrument to collect the information necessary for mapping and profiling stakeholders within the European Talent Ecosystem for Researchers. It collected information across several interrelated dimensions, as following:

4.1. Data on organisational identity and functional role within the research and innovation ecosystem

Respondents were asked to indicate their organisational affiliation and to describe their role, such as talent developer, HR professional, connector, investor, policy enabler, researcher, or other relevant function. For respondents identifying as researchers, the survey further captured their career stage according to the R1–R4 classification framework¹ allowing differentiation between first-stage researchers and leading researchers. This enabled a more granular understanding of how actors are positioned within the research career pipeline.

4.2. Data on thematic expertise to identify areas of sectoral concentration and specialisation within the ecosystem

Respondents had the option to select their thematic focus areas, such as climate and environment, health and pharma, digital/AI/data, automotive/mobility, manufacturing, creative and cultural industries, or education / research skills. This information supports the identification of thematic clusters and potential synergies across sectors.

4.3. Data on stakeholders' perceived level of influence within the research and innovation landscape

By inviting respondents to self-assess whether they operate at a high, medium, or low level of influence, the survey assessed the measure of their capacity to shape policy, funding, strategic direction, or implementation activities. Even though this is a perception-based, this part was essential for mapping influence dynamics and identifying potential ecosystem multipliers.

4.4. Data on stakeholders' potential contributions to the Talent Ecosystem

Respondents indicated the types of support they could provide to the Talent Ecosystem, including sharing HR practices, delivering training to early-career researchers, supporting cross-sector mobility, co-developing skills frameworks, building partnerships, contributing to thematic initiatives, or engaging in policy support and advocacy. This part allows for the identification of concrete capabilities within the ecosystem.

4.5. Data on preferred modes of engagement

Respondents indicated their preferences for workshops, thematic working groups, pilot testing, policy consultations, or regular updates, the survey provides insight into engagement readiness and co-creation potential. This dimension is important for designing a successful stakeholder engagement strategy under T2.1.

4.6. Data on organisation

While the first part of the survey asked information on the respondent's individual role and career stage within the research and innovation ecosystem, the last part of the survey focused on asking information on

¹ Based on the *European Framework for Research Careers*, R1 - First Stage Researcher, R2 - Recognised Researcher, R3 - Established Researcher, R4 - Leading Researcher are the recognised descriptors for researchers' profiles.

respondents' organisation, including name, webpage, country/region, type, and geographical scope. There was also a question on how the initiative could add value for their organisation, such as enhancing collaboration opportunities, improving access to trained research talent, increasing visibility in EU networks, or supporting policy alignment and capacity building.

The survey questions contribute to reaching the objectives named above as following:

Table 1: Objectives of the survey

Objective	Relevant Survey Questions	Type of Data Collected
1. Identify and map key stakeholders	10. Organisation Name 12. Country/Region 13. Organisation Type 14. Geographical Scope	Categorical (organisation type, region, name, scope)
2. Profile stakeholder expertise, networks, and contributions	4. Role in organisation 5. Researcher level 6. Thematic focus 8. Potential contributions	Categorical and hierarchical (role, career stage, thematic areas, contributions)
3. Provide insights for stakeholder engagement and ecosystem development	7. Level of influence 9. Preferred engagement modes 15. How could this initiative add value	Ordinal and multi-select categorical
4. Other / Additional Information	1. Contact First Name 2. Contact Last Name 3. E-mail 11. Organisation Webpage Any "Other" responses in multi-select questions (Q4, Q6, Q9, Q13, Q15)	Text

5. Survey analysis

5.1. Respondent profile

Roles within organisations (Q4)

Regarding stakeholders' roles within their organisations, the data reveals a significant structural imbalance, with Researchers dominating the sample at 61.43%. This high concentration suggests that any insights derived from this group will primarily reflect academic perspectives, potentially overshadowing the rest of the clusters. The lack of participation from HR (0%) and the minimal input from Investors (1.43%) and Policy Enablers (4.29%) create a "blind spot" regarding how research is funded, regulated, and staffed. Specifically, the absence of HR respondents likely stems from both structural silos and a perception gap. Often, research career development is managed by academic leaders or project teams rather than HR departments, leading to a disconnect in responsibilities. Furthermore, many HR professionals do not see themselves as direct contributors to the research ecosystem, resulting in lower engagement despite their critical role in talent acquisition and strategic development. While the presence of Connectors (11.43%) provides some cross-functional insight, the overall results should be viewed as a specialist's perspective rather than a holistic representation of the entire ecosystem (see [annex 2](#)).

Table 2: Researcher levels (Q5)

Role	Number of Respondents	% of Total
Researcher	43	61.43%
Other	11	15.71%
Connector	8	11.43%
Talent Developer	4	5.71%
Policy Enabler	3	4.29%
Investor	1	1.43%
HR	0	0.00%
Total	70	100%

The distribution of **researcher seniority** shows a "top-heavy" and "bottom-heavy" split, with a slight gap at the level of Established (R3) and Recognised (R2) researchers, which make up a smaller portion of the pool (15.71% and 14.29%, respectively). Leading Researchers (R4) represent the largest segment at 27.14%, followed closely by First Stage Researchers (R1) and Non-Researchers at 21.43% each. This suggests the survey captures high-level strategic visions and ground-level perspectives when it comes to research, but may lack sufficient perspective on the mid-tier specialized researchers that typically act as a bridge between entry-level work and senior leadership (see [annex 3](#)).

Table 3: Researchers' profile descriptions, according to the European Framework for Research Careers

Level	Description
R1 – First Stage Researcher	Researchers doing research under supervision up to the point of a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience.
R3 – Established Researcher	Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who have not yet established a significant level of independence in developing their own research, attracting funding, or leading a research group.

R2 – Recognised Researcher	Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are able to independently develop their own research, attract funding, and lead a research group.
R4 – Leading Researcher	Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are recognised as leading their research field by their peers.

Source: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/career-development/researchers>

Table 4: Researcher seniority

Level	Number of Respondents	% of Total
R4 – Leading Researcher	19	27.14%
R1 – First Stage Researcher	15	21.43%
Not a Researcher	15	21.43%
R3 – Established Researcher	11	15.71%
R2 – Recognised Researcher	10	14.29%
Total	70	100%

Related to the **thematic focus areas**, data indicates a robust foundation for the European Talent Ecosystem, with a primary concentration in Education and Research Skills (38.57%) and high-growth sectors like Digital/AI (32.86%) and Climate (27.14%), reflecting a strong alignment with EU strategic priorities. While there is a considerable high engagement in research-focused themes, the moderate to low representation in applied sectors like Health, Automotive, Creative Industries and Manufacturing suggests the need to diversify stakeholder profiling to ensure the ecosystem effectively bridges the gap between academic expertise and diverse industrial settings (see [annex 4](#)).

Table 5: Thematic focus areas

Thematic Area	Number of Respondents	% of Total (N=70)
Education / Research Skills	27	38.57%
Digital / AI / Data	23	32.86%
Climate & Environment	19	27.14%
Health & Pharma	12	17.14%
Automotive / Mobility	9	12.86%
Creative & Cultural Industries	8	11.43%
Manufacturing	6	8.57%
Other	13	18.57%

When addressing the **self-perceived influence within the R&I landscape**, with a combined 78.57% of respondents identifying as having a Medium (41.43%) or Low (37.14%) level of influence, the survey successfully captures the voices of the "grassroots" stakeholders—early-career researchers and individual practitioners—who are the primary targets of the European Talent Ecosystem's development. Conversely, the 21.43% in the high-influence category represents the strategic leadership and institutional "anchors" necessary for driving systemic change. For the objectives of Task 2.1, this balance is ideal; it provides a direct line of sight into the needs of the emerging talent pool while identifying a sufficient cohort of high-level stakeholders who can act as the architects and decision-makers for the ecosystem's structural foundations (see [annex 5](#)).

Table 6: Influence in R&I landscape (Q7)

Influence Level	Number of Respondents	% of Total
High	15	21.43%
Medium	29	41.43%
Low	26	37.14%
Total	70	100%

5.2. Stakeholder Mapping

By sector (Q13)

The survey data on **stakeholder sectors** shows a strong academic and research-driven foundation for the European Talent Ecosystem, with Higher Education Institutions (41.43%) and Research Institutes/Infrastructure (25.71%) making up over two-thirds of the respondent base. However, the moderately low presence of SMEs and Industry Partners (11.43%), alongside Public Authorities (7.14%) and Innovation Hubs (5.71%), highlights the need for a cross-sectoral "Quadruple Helix", essential for establishing a consistent talent ecosystem. While the current network is firmly anchored in the public research sector, these findings suggest that future stakeholder engagement efforts could specifically target increased participation from the private and non-profit sectors to further diversify the talent pathways being mapped (see [annex 6](#)).

Table 7: Stakeholder sectors

Organisation Type	Number of Respondents	% of Total
Higher Education Institution / University	29	41.43%
Research Institute / Infrastructure	18	25.71%
SME / Company / Industry Partner	8	11.43%
Public Authority / Government Agency	5	7.14%
Innovation Hub / Cluster / Association	4	5.71%
NGO / Civil Society / Cultural Organisation	3	4.29%
Other	3	4.29%
Total	70	100%

The cross-analysis of **stakeholder roles and influence levels** reveals that the ecosystem is, as specified above, primarily composed of Researchers (61.43%), who also represent the broadest spectrum of influence, with a significant concentration in the medium to low range. This suggests that while researchers are the core of the ecosystem, many do not yet perceive themselves as high-level decision-makers. Conversely, strategic roles such as Talent Developers and Policy Enablers, though smaller in number, demonstrate a high concentration of influence, with 100% of respondents in these categories identifying as having either a High or a Medium level of influence. This distribution is critical for Task 2.1, as it identifies the specific "leverage points"—the Policy Enablers and Talent Developers—who can be engaged to implement the structural changes required for the researchers who, according to the results, form the backbone of the ecosystem. Consequently, through proper career pathways and inter-sectoral mobility, the project can transform the researcher cluster from a passive group into high-impact architects of the R&I landscape (see [annex 7](#)).

Table 8: Role and influence (Q4 & Q 8)

Role / Influence	High	Medium	Low	Total
Researcher	7	20	16	43

Connector	0	4	4	8
Talent Developer	2	2	0	4
Policy Enabler	2	1	0	3
HR	0	0	0	0
Other (Non-specified above)	4	2	6	12
Influence Distribution	15	29	26	70

The analysis of **perceived value across the stakeholder network** shows that Enhanced Collaboration (58.57%) is the primary driver of engagement for all organisation types, particularly within Higher Education and Research Institutions. This strong consensus highlights the potential of the European Talent Ecosystem as a collaborative hub rather than just a recruitment platform. For researchers, this means that the project's focus on tailored training pathways, mentorship, and career support services is perfectly aligned with their desire for broader networking, as through such approach the researchers will have the opportunity to share experiences and to get in touch with a variety of relevant stakeholders. Accordingly, through these mechanisms, researchers can transition from isolated academic roles to high-level, cross-sectoral influencers. While values like 'Better Access to Talent' and 'Policy Alignment' are currently less prioritised, they represent strategic growth areas where the ecosystem can offer deeper institutional value as it matures. By focusing on these collaborative foundations, the project can create a clear pathway for researchers to elevate their influence and drive collective innovation across Europe. Concerning the other clusters of the ecosystem—the Connectors, Talent Developers, and Policy Enablers, these stakeholders hold the highest concentration of perceived strategic influence, and their perceived value is also more diverse. While researchers seek Enhanced Collaboration, Public Authorities and Other stakeholders are the only groups significantly prioritised by Policy Alignment and Capacity. This indicates that while researchers provide the "talent," these secondary stakeholders provide the "infrastructure" (see [annex 8](#)).

Table 9: By perceived value (Q13 & Q15)

Organisation Type	Enhanced Collaboration	Better Access to Talent	Visibility & Recognition	Policy Alignment & Capacity	Total
Higher Education / University	18	2	5	3	28
Research Institute / Infra.	11	4	3	0	18
SME / Company / Industry Partner	4	0	4	0	8
Public Authority / Government Agency	1	0	2	2	5
Innovation Hub / Cluster / Assoc.	4	0	0	0	4
NGO / Civil Society / Cultural Org.	2	0	1	0	3
Other (incl. non-compliant entries)	1	0	1	2	4
Total	41	6	16	7	70

5.3. Potential Contributions

Contribution type (Q8)

In terms of **potential contributions**, the analysis highlights a workforce eager to build the ecosystem's infrastructure, with 55.71% of respondents identifying "Building partnerships across sectors" as their primary contribution. This high level of readiness to collaborate, coupled with strong support for training early-career researchers (47.14%) and co-developing training frameworks (45.71%), demonstrates that stakeholders are prepared to move beyond passive participation. These findings indicate that the stakeholders' view is already aligned with the project's core missions: especially with providing tailored training pathways, mentorship, and career support services. While cross-sector mobility and secondments (20%) and policy advocacy (20%) show lower current engagement, they represent the next logical step in the project. By transforming the existing desire for "partnerships" into structured "mobility schemes", the project can directly empower researchers to transition from traditional roles into the high-level, influential positions required for a thriving European Talent Ecosystem (see [annex 9](#)).

Table 10: Contribution type

Contribution Type	Number of Respondents	% of Total (N=70)
Building partnerships across sectors	39	55.71%
Training early-career researchers	33	47.14%
Supporting thematic activities (climate, health, digital)	33	47.14%
Co-developing training / skills frameworks	32	45.71%
Supporting cross-sector mobility and secondments	14	20.00%
Policy support or advocacy	14	20.00%
Sharing good HR practices and data	11	15.71%
Other (Expertise, Tech Transfer, Innovation projects)	4	5.71%

The cross-tabulation of **potential contributions by organisation type** reveals a highly collaborative ecosystem where Universities and Research Institutes lead the way in training (26 combined mentions) and partnership building (20 combined mentions), providing the essential "supply side" of the talent pipeline. Crucially, the SME and Industry sector shows a strong readiness to contribute to partnership building (6 mentions) and thematic activities (6 mentions), indicating an interest that is vital for researcher mobility, for instance. This distribution perfectly supports the project's goal of elevating researchers to a higher level through capacity building; while academia provides the training infrastructure, the public and private sectors (Gov. Agencies and Industry) are ready to offer the policy and industrial frameworks for researchers to exercise real-world influence. This multi-sectoral synergy ensures that the mapping of the European Talent Ecosystem is not just a study of academic roles, but a blueprint for a dynamic, integrated career landscape (see [annex 10](#)).

Table 11: Potential contributions by organisation type (Q8 & Q13)

Potential Contribution	Univ.	Research Inst.	SME / Industry	Gov. Agency	NGO	Hub / Cluster	Other	Total
Building partnerships across sectors	13	7	6	3	3	4	3	39
Training early-career researchers	15	11	2	1	1	1	2	33
Supporting thematic activities	12	9	6	1	3	1	1	33
Co-developing training/skills frameworks	13	5	4	2	3	2	3	32

Policy support or advocacy	4	0	2	4	0	2	2	14
Supporting cross-sector mobility	5	3	1	1	0	1	3	14
Sharing good HR practices and data	3	3	3	1	1	0	0	11

5.4. Engagement preferences

Lastly, the analysis of stakeholder Engagement Preferences reveals a strong preference for active and participatory formats, with Online workshops and joint events (62.86%) and Thematic working groups (50.00%) being the most favoured modes. This clear leaning towards collaborative spaces is critical for the foundation and development of a solid network, as it indicates that the ecosystem's "foundations" should not be built in isolation but through dynamic, real-time interactions. For researchers, these preferences highlight a desire for capacity building that is social and peer-to-peer, rather than purely informational. Furthermore, the significant interest in Pilot testing and co-design activities (37.14%) shows the intention of the researchers to get involved in the development of sustainable organisational change, tailored training pathways, mentorship, and career support services. By prioritising these high-engagement formats, such approach can effectively support the transition of researchers to higher-influence roles by embedding them in the very networks and policy-shaping processes they seek to join (see [annex 11](#)) and this, ultimately, can have a positive impact on the European Research Area.

Table 12: Engagement preference

Engagement Mode	Number of Respondents	% of Total (N=70)
Online workshops / joint events	44	62.86%
Thematic working groups	35	50.00%
Regular updates / newsletters	29	41.43%
Pilot testing / co-design activities	26	37.14%
Policy consultation	12	17.14%
Other (Direct mentoring, F2F networking)	3	4.29%

6. Key Insights

6.1. Summary of sectoral strengths and gaps in expertise

The ecosystem has a powerhouse foundation in *academia* and *research*, ensuring a rich pool of talent. However, there is a critical representation gap in *HR* (0%) and *Investors* (1.43%). This absence creates a "blind spot" regarding the recruitment mechanisms and funding structures necessary for sustainable research careers.

6.2. Identification of high-potential collaborators and connectors

Connectors (11.43%) and *Talent Developers* (5.71%) are the strategic linchpins. Despite their small numbers, they report high influence and a strong readiness for "building partnerships" (55.71%). They will serve as the primary impact multipliers for future mentoring and mobility activities.

6.3. Thematic areas with strong vs weak representation

There is excellent alignment with EU priorities in *Education/Skills* (38.57%) and *Digital/AI* (32.86%). The weak points are applied sectors: *Manufacturing* (8.57%) and *Automotive* (12.86%). This under-representation necessitates targeted outreach to industry partners for the upcoming technology acceptance pilots.

6.4. Recommendations for targeted engagement strategies

As stakeholders reject passive communication, the strategy must focus on participatory formats: 62.86% prefer *online workshops* and 50% want *thematic working groups*. The high interest in *co-design* (37%) indicates a strong appetite for active involvement in shaping new skill frameworks.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Priority stakeholders to engage in the Talent Ecosystem

It is imperative to target industry leaders and HR managers within the Human-centric transition and Automotive related sectors to balance the current academic dominance. Additionally, R4-level researchers (27%) should be activated as mentors for the large influx of R1-level researchers (21%).

7.2. Suggested engagement channels and activities

According to the expressed preferences, prioritising *co-creation workshops* and *digital networking platforms* will strengthen the engagement. *Newsletters* should be used only as secondary support, while the primary focus must shift to "*Thematic Working Groups*" where researchers can interact directly with Policy Enablers.

7.3. Strategies for cross-sector collaboration and mobility

Transform the general desire for "*partnerships*" into structured mobility schemes may be relevant as the results indicate, for enhancing engagement within the stakeholders into project's activities. The use of *Innovation Hubs* as entry points to facilitate secondments, may directly address the currently low engagement in cross-sector mobility.

8. Conclusions

The mapping results highlighted that, with over two-thirds of the respondent base originating from Higher Education Institutions and Research Infrastructures, the ecosystem possesses a significant pool of talent. The balanced representation between Leading Researchers (R4) and First-Stage Researchers (R1) is a primary structural strength, ensuring that the project can integrate top-down strategic oversight with bottom-up user feedback. This demographic alignment provides a clear mandate for the training and mentorship frameworks planned for WP3 and WP4, as the R4 cohort is well-positioned to act as mentors for the emerging R1 talent pool.

Thematically, the ecosystem is highly synchronised with European Union strategic priorities, specifically the *Green Deal and digital transformation*. The good concentration in Education and Research Skills and Digital/AI suggests that the stakeholder base is technically equipped to address the human factors of technology acceptance. However, the relatively lower participation from the Automotive and Manufacturing sectors indicates a need for intensified outreach.

A significant finding of the analysis is the "blind spot" regarding HR professionals and Investors. While the ecosystem is rich in researchers, the absence of those who manage recruitment and funding poses a risk to the sustainability of research careers. Without active involvement from HR and industry-side talent managers, aligning academic skills with industrial labour market requirements remains a challenge. Consequently, the next phase of stakeholder engagement (T2.2 and T2.3) must prioritise targeted recruitment of these industrial "gatekeepers" to move beyond a purely academic network toward a functional Quadruple Helix model.

The survey also revealed a decisive preference for participatory engagement over passive information sharing. With the majority of stakeholders favouring online workshops and half of them seeking thematic working groups, there is a strong appetite for active co-creation. The considerable interest in pilot testing and co-design confirms that stakeholders are ready to move beyond "networking" and toward the "operationalization" of the ecosystem. This provides a tactical roadmap for the consortium: engagement activities should be designed as collaborative spaces where researchers can interact directly with Policy Enablers and Talent Developers, who currently represent the highest concentration of strategic influence.

Finally, the transition from general "partnership building" to structured cross-sector mobility is identified as the logical next step for the project. While current engagement in mobility schemes and secondments is moderate, the high readiness for partnership building (expressed among more than half of the respondents) suggests an untapped potential. By utilising Innovation Hubs as entry points for example, the project can facilitate the movement of researchers from traditional academic roles into high-influence industrial positions. This structured mobility will not only enhance the researchers' practical skills but will also provide the empirical evidence needed for the WP6 policy recommendations, ultimately fostering a more dynamic and inclusive European Research Area.

Annexes

Annex 1.: Full survey questionnaire

Building the EU Talent Ecosystem

Are you part of a university, research centre, business, public authority, or innovation organisation working to strengthen Europe's research and innovation landscape? If so, your experience and insights are essential to shaping the **Talent Ecosystem for Researchers**.

A Talent Ecosystem for Researchers is a **cohesive and interdependent network** that connects all actors involved in **managing, training, and developing research talent**, from universities and research institutions to businesses, public agencies, and civil society.

By joining the Talent Ecosystem, you will:

1. Contribute to the European dialogue on **improving research careers and working conditions** by participating in online and in-person workshops and filling out surveys.
2. Have your organisation be featured in the **Talent Ecosystem Mapping Report**, which will highlight organisations shaping Europe's innovation future.
3. Influence the creation of **training programs** meant for empowering researchers for careers in the industry.
4. Promote your organisation's initiatives that support research careers by encouraging **HR departments to adopt the Charter for Researchers** in their recruitment and retention practices.

How to Get Involved We invite you to complete our questionnaire, designed to identify key organisations and actors contributing to the creation of sustainable, inclusive, and connected talent ecosystems.

Take 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire and become part of the European Talent Ecosystem for Researchers! * *Obbligatoria*

Contact Details

1. Contact First Name *

2. Contact Last Name *

3. E-mail *

4. Which of the following best describes your role in your organisation? *

- ☐ *Talent Developer (if you provide training, mentoring, skills development)*
- ☐ *HR (both working in HR or offering trainings for HR employees)*
- ☐ *Connector (links academia, industry, and policy (e.g., EIT, chambers of commerce))*
- ☐ *Investor*
- ☐ *Policy Enabler*
- ☐ *Researcher*
- ☐ *Other*

5. *Please specify your researcher level **

- ☐ *R1 – First Stage Researcher: Researchers doing research under supervision up to the point of a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience*
- ☐ *R2 – Recognised Researcher: Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who have not yet established a significant level of independence in developing their own research, attracting funding, or leading a research group*
- ☐ *R3 – Established Researcher: Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are able to independently develop their own research, attract funding, and lead a research group*
- ☐ *R4 – Leading Researcher: Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are recognised as leading their research field by their peers*
- ☐ *I'm not a researcher*

6. *Your thematic focus * Climate & Environment*

- ☐ *Health & Pharma*
- ☐ *Digital / AI / Data*
- ☐ *Automotive / Mobility*
- ☐ *Creative & Cultural Industries*
- ☐ *Education / Research Skills*
- ☐ *Manufacturing*
- ☐ *Altro*

7. *Level of influence within the R&I landscape: **

- ☐ *High – can influence policy, funding, or strategic direction*
- ☐ *Medium – contributes to implementation or coordination*
- ☐ *Low – participates or supports indirectly*

8. *Potential contribution to the ecosystem: **

- ☐ *Sharing good HR practices and data*
- ☐ *Training early-career researchers*
- ☐ *Supporting cross-sector mobility and secondments*
- ☐ *Co-developing training / skills frameworks*
- ☐ *Building partnerships across sectors*
- ☐ *Supporting thematic activities (e.g. climate, health, digital)*
- ☐ *Policy support or advocacy*

Altro

9. Preferred mode of engagement within the ecosystem: *

- ☐ Online workshops/ joint event
- ☐ Thematic working groups
- ☐ Pilot testing / co-design activities
- ☐ Regular updates / newsletters
- ☐ Policy consultation
- ☐

Altro

Organisation

10. Organisation Name *

11. Organisation webpage *

12. Country/Region *

13. Organisation type *

- ☐ Higher Education Institution / University
- ☐ Research Institute / Infrastructure
- ☐ SME / Company / Industry Partner
- ☐ Public Authority / Government Agency
- ☐ NGO / Civil Society / Cultural Organisation
- ☐ Innovation Hub / Cluster / Association (support organisation)
- ☐

Altro

14. *Geographical scope* *

- ☐ *Local*
- ☐ *Regional*
- ☐ *National*
- ☐ *European Global*
- ☐

15. *How could this initiative add value for you organisation:* *

- ☐ *Enhanced collaboration opportunities*
- ☐ *Better access to trained research talent*
- ☐ *Visibility and recognition in EU networks*
- ☐ *Policy alignment and capacity*
- ☐
- Altro*

Data Privacy and Consent

By submitting the form, you consent 28DIGITAL to store and process your personal information in order to provide you with the content requested. For details about our Terms of Use and Privacy Policy, see our legal notice (<https://www.eitdigital.eu/legal-notice/>).

16. 28DIGITAL is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy, and we'll only use your personal information limited to what is necessary for the purpose of INSIGHT, for contacting stakeholders and involving them in the survey and potential workshops. From time to time, we would like to contact you about INSIGHT initiatives as well as other content that may be of interest to you. If you consent to us contacting you for this purpose, please tick below: *

☐ I agree to receive communications about the INSIGHT Project from 28DIGITAL.

17. In order to provide you the content requested, we need to store and process your personal data. If you consent to us storing your personal data for this purpose, please tick the checkbox below. *

☐ I agree to allow 28DIGITAL to store and process my personal data.

Questo contenuto non è stato creato né approvato da Microsoft. I dati che invii verranno recapitati al proprietario del modulo.

 Microsoft Forms

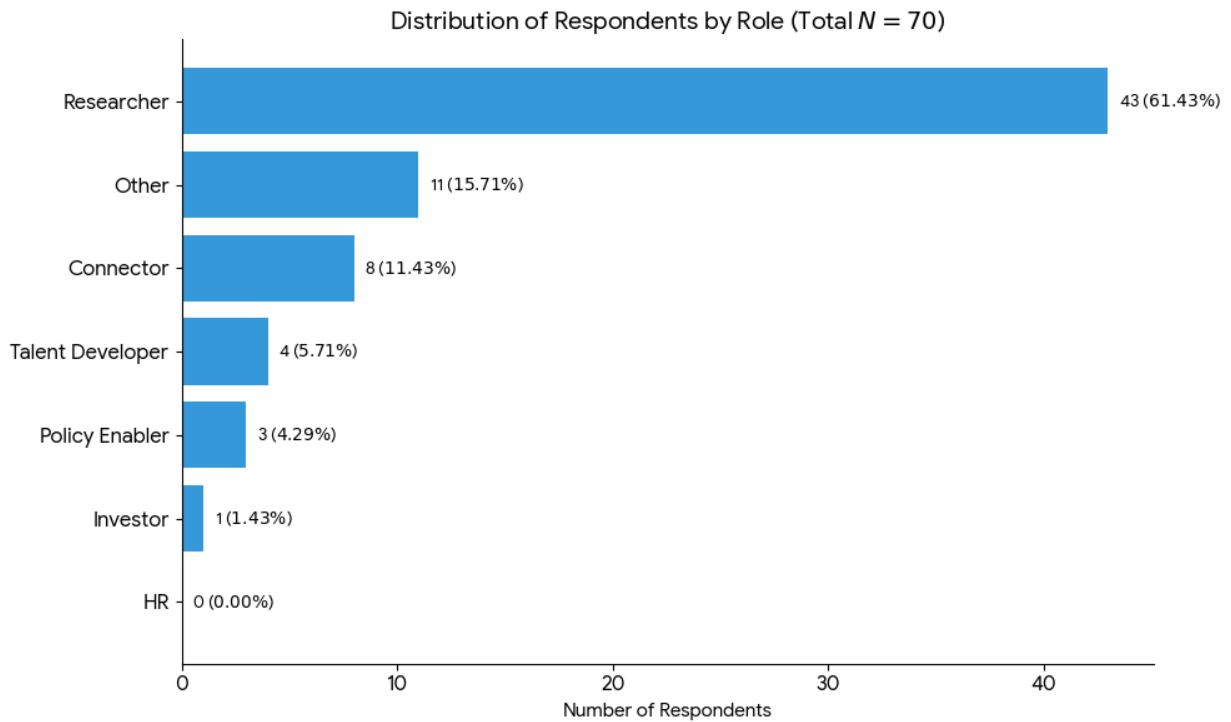
Annex 2: Distribution of respondents by role

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by role

Annex 3: Distribution by researcher level

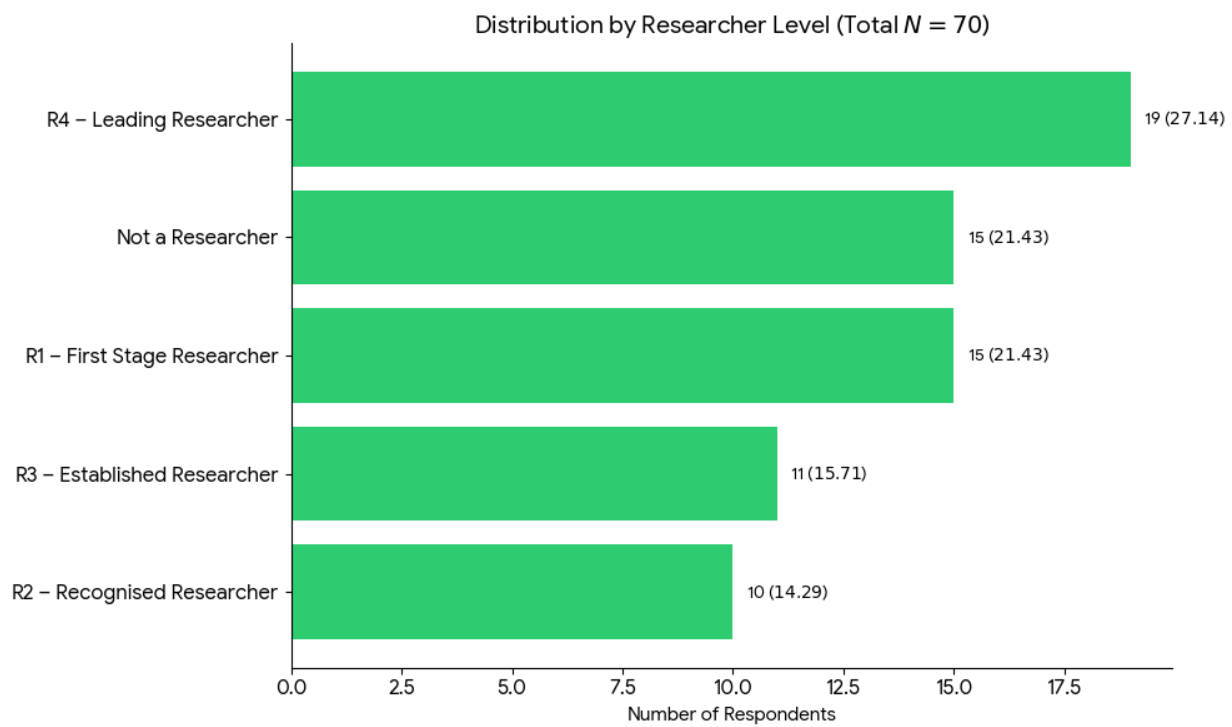


Figure 2: Distribution by researcher level

Annex 4: Distribution of the thematic areas of respondents in the European Talent Ecosystem

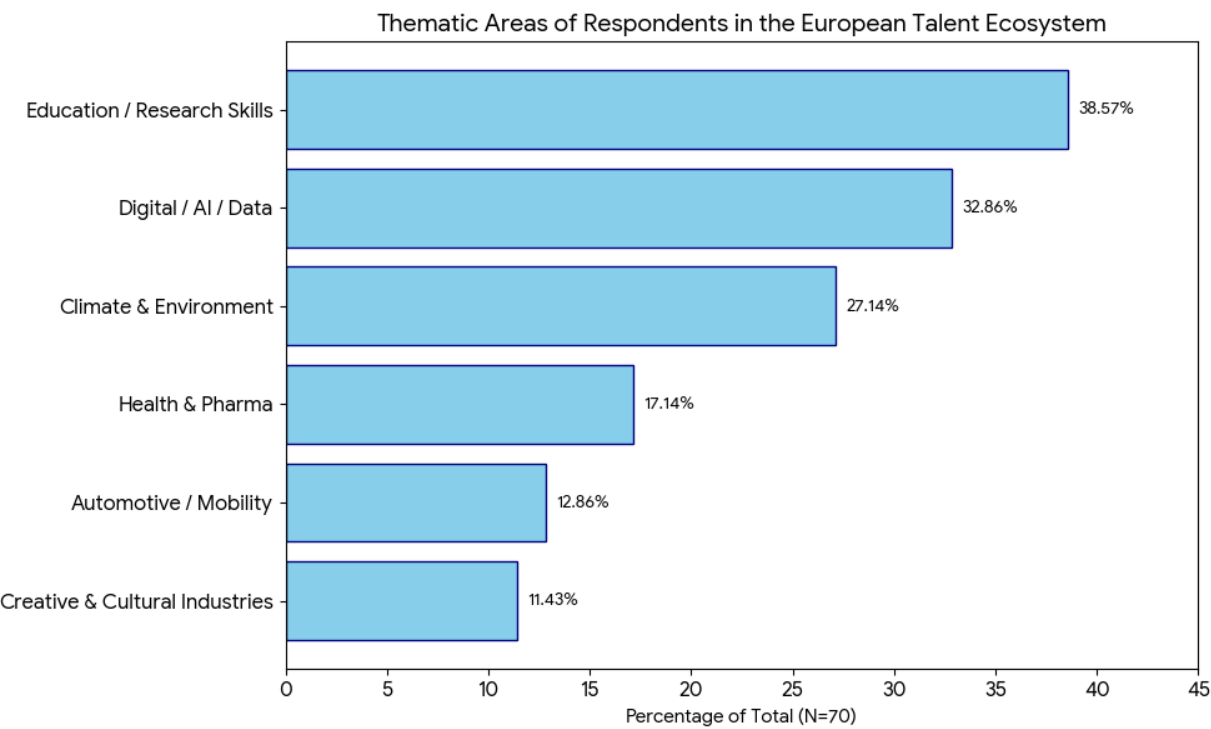


Figure 3: Distribution of the thematic areas of respondents in the European Talent Ecosystem

Annex 5: Self-perceived influence in the Research and Innovation landscape

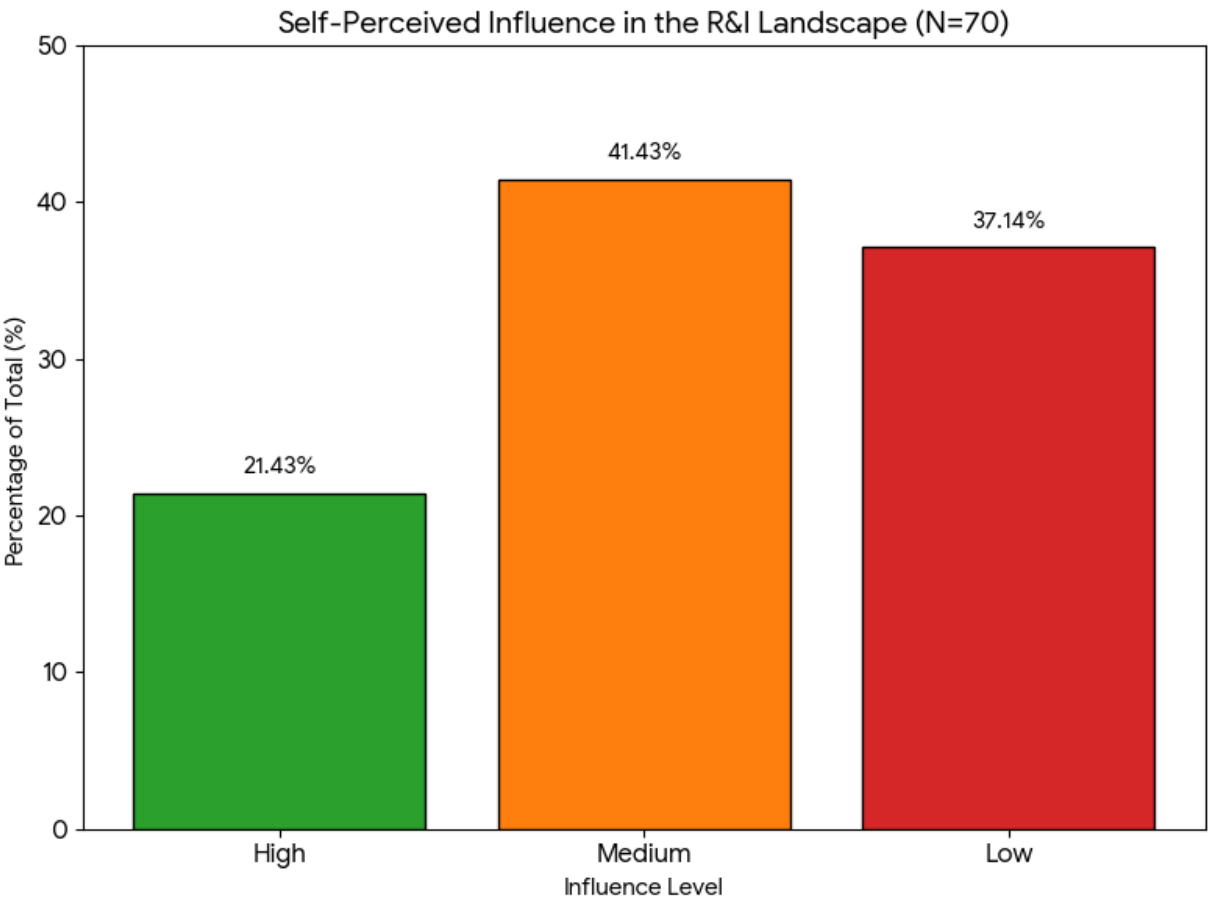


Figure 4: Self-perceived influence in the Research and Innovation landscape

Annex 6: Stakeholder distribution by organisation type

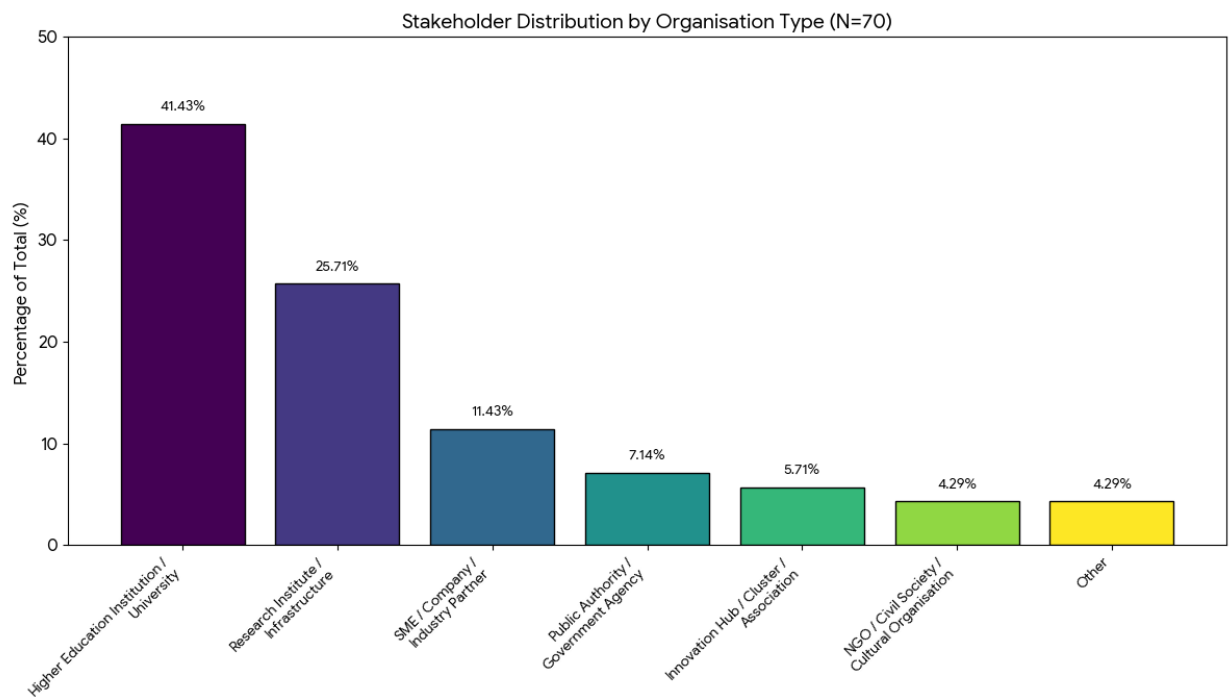


Figure 5: Stakeholder distribution by organisation type

Annex 7: Stakeholder roles and influence levels

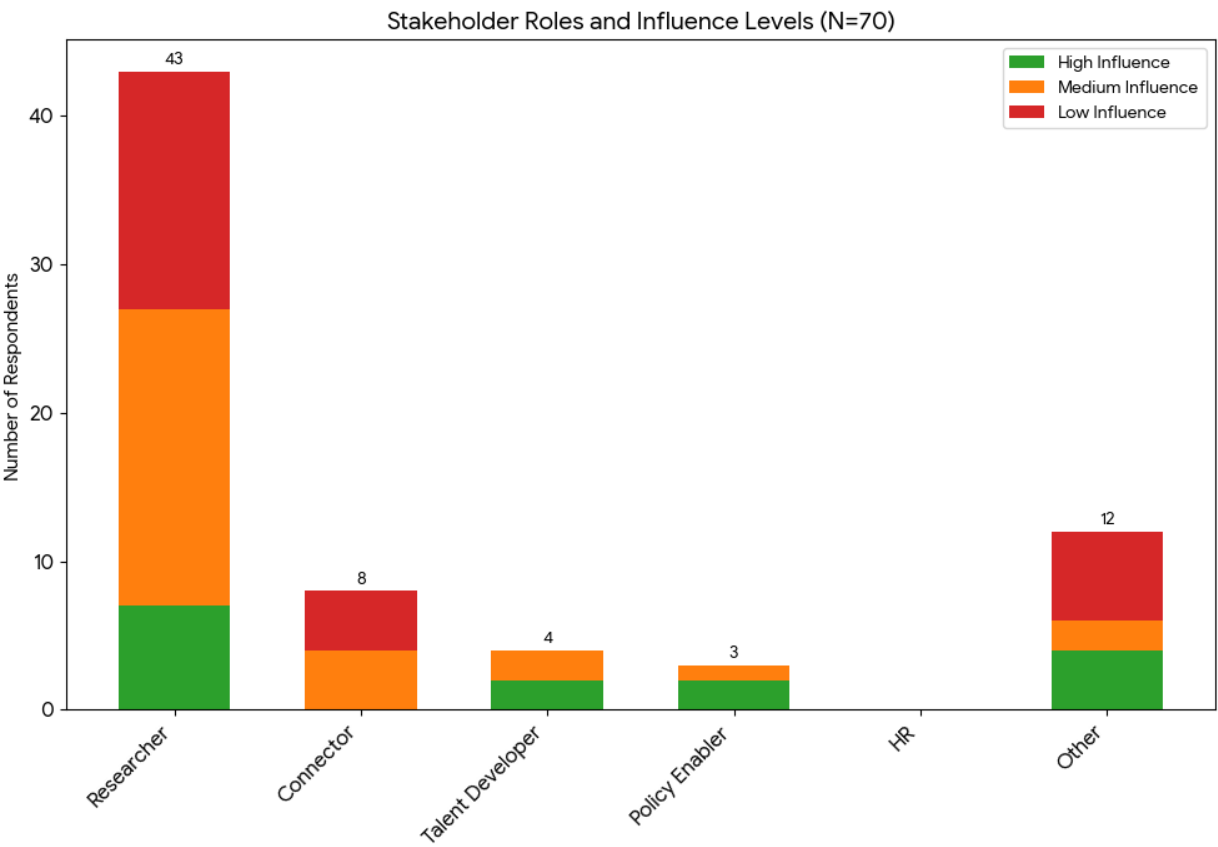


Figure 6: Stakeholder distribution by organisation type

Annex 8: Perceived value of the talent ecosystem by organisation type

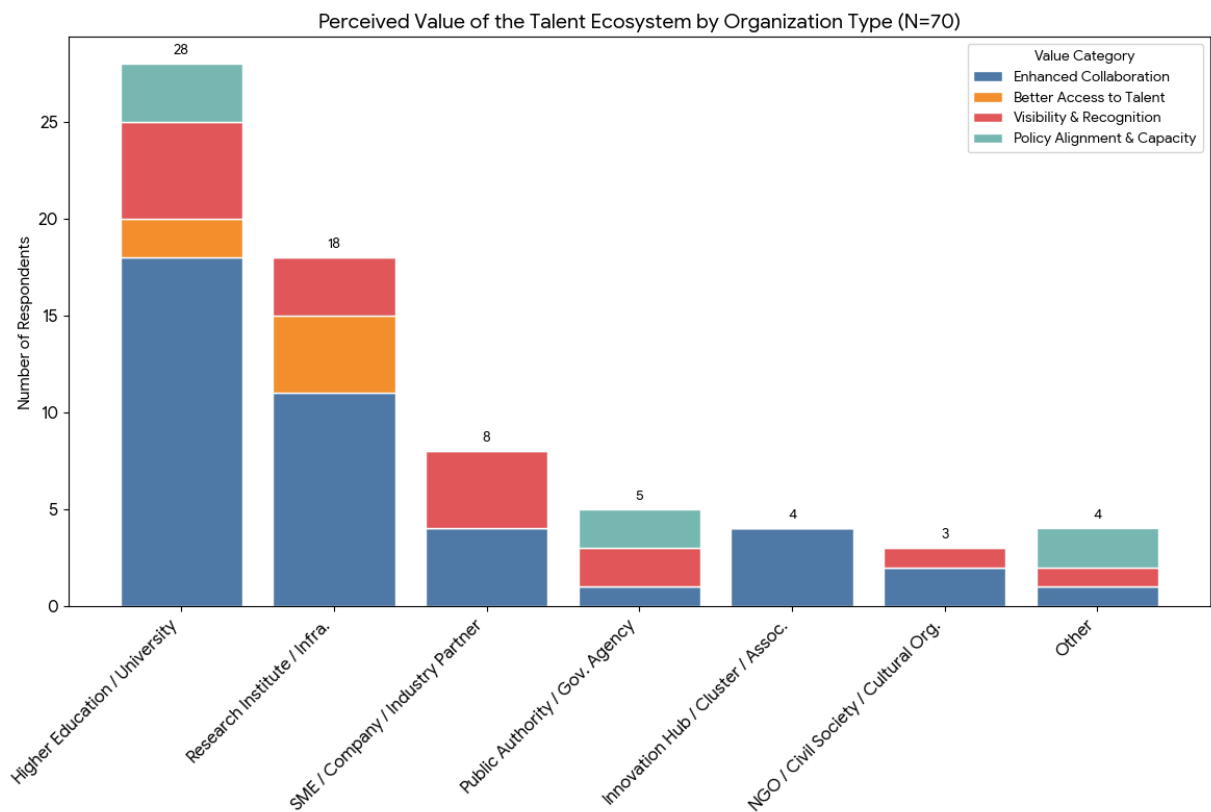


Figure 7: Stakeholder distribution by organisation type

Annex 9: Stakeholder potential contributions to the ecosystem

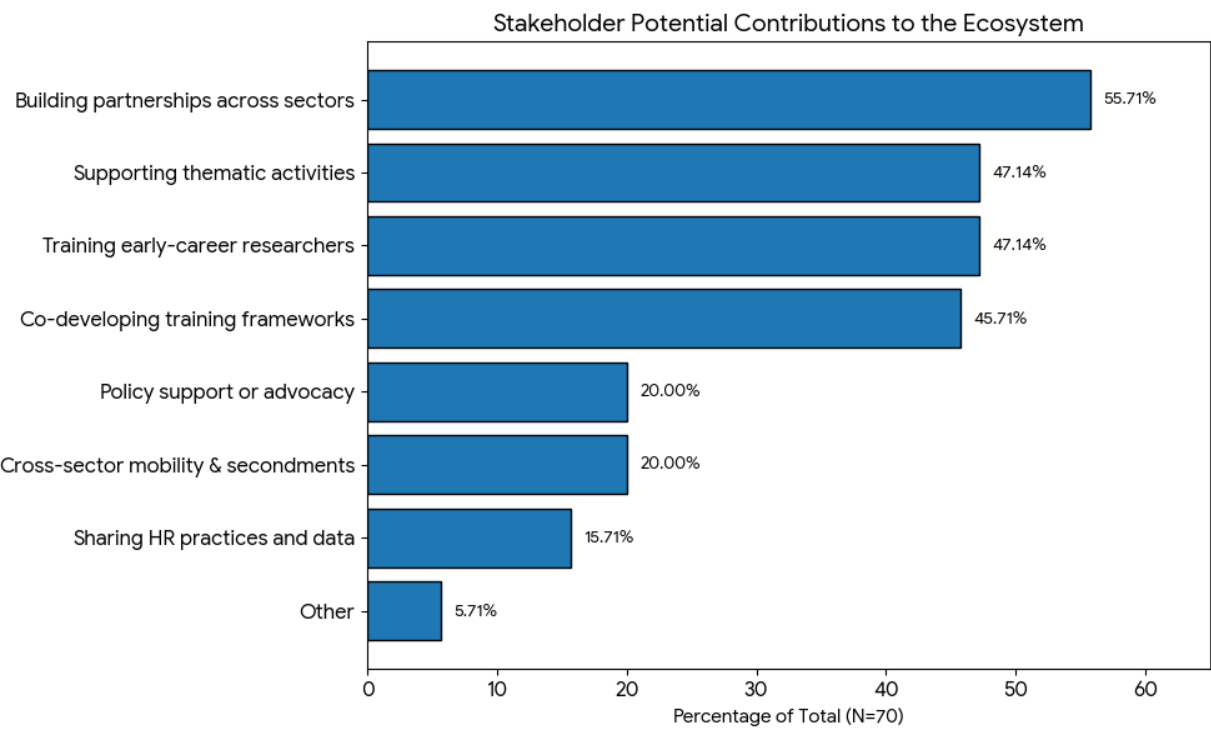


Figure 8: Stakeholder potential contributions to the ecosystem

Annex 10: Contribution potential across stakeholder types

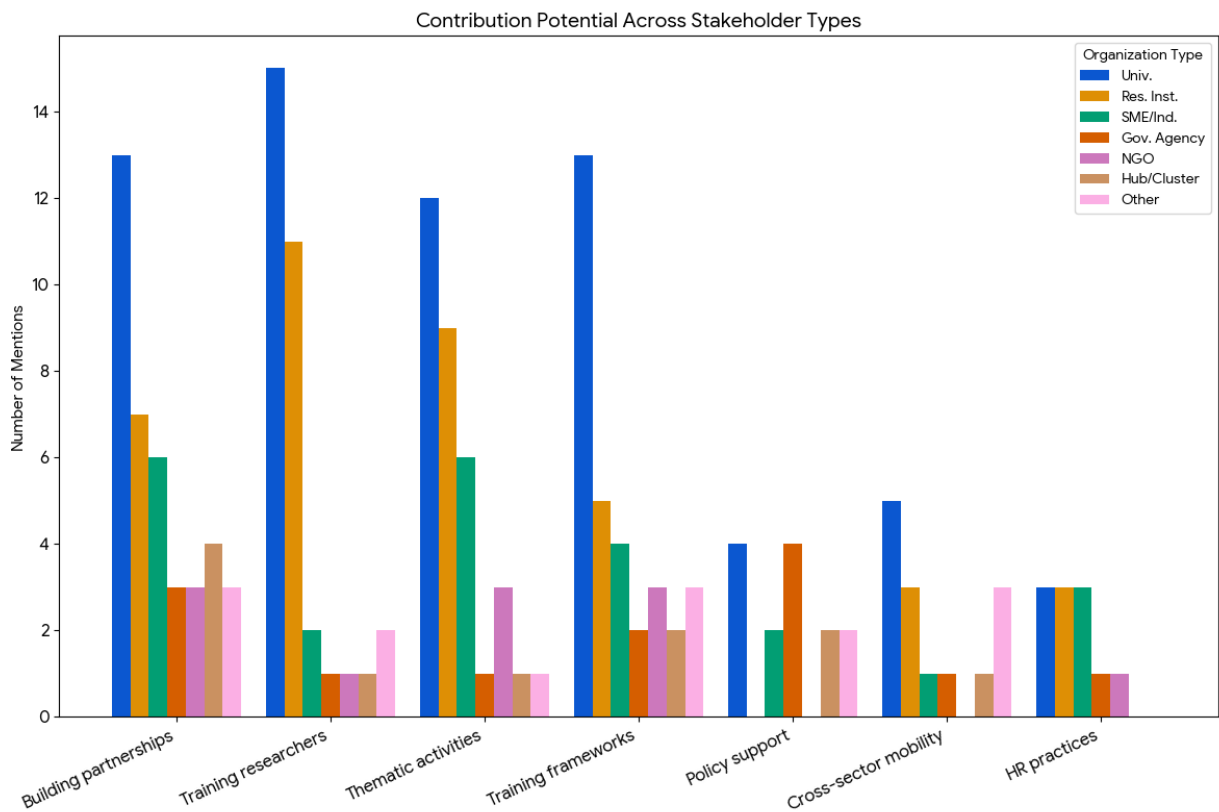


Figure 9: Contribution potential across stakeholder types

Annex 11: Distribution of stakeholder engagement preferences

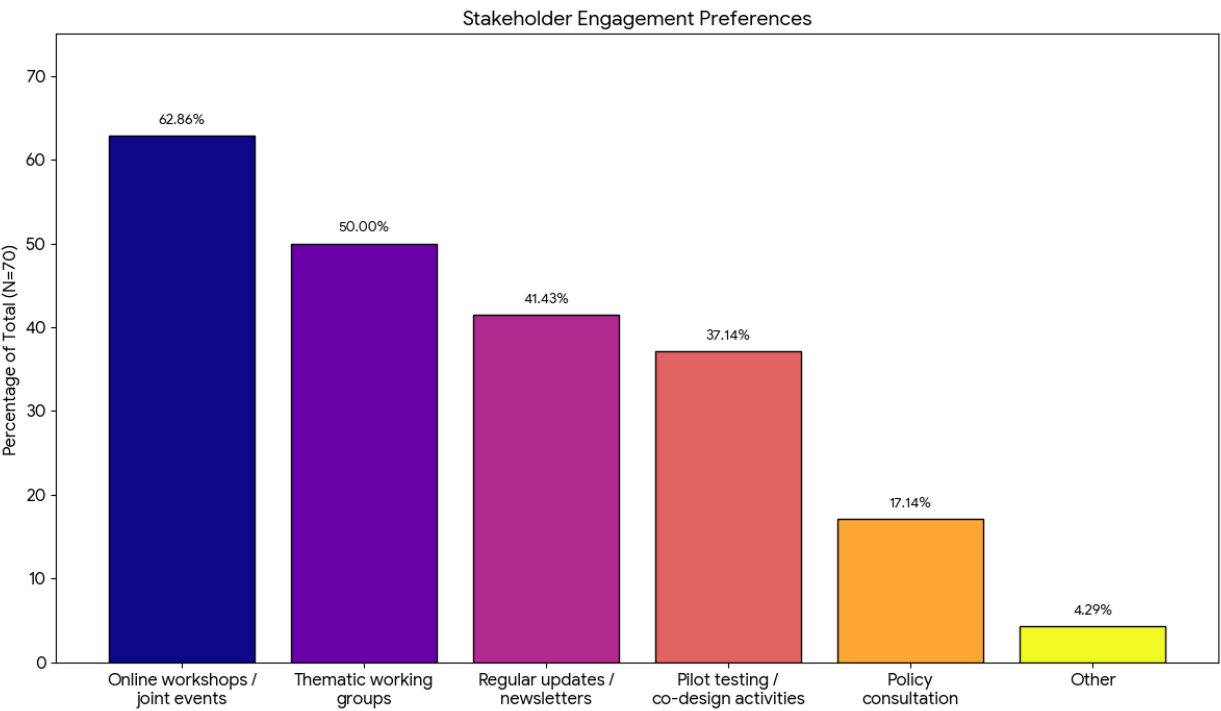


Figure 10: Distribution of stakeholder engagement preferences

Annex 12: Stakeholder Mapping - Persona

RESPONDENT PROFILE	CATEGORY	PROFILING
	Roles within organisations	43 out of 70 respondents were identified as Researchers.
	Researcher levels	- Leading Researchers (R4) -19 out of 70 responses - First Stage Researchers (R1) and non-researchers accounting for 15 responses each
	Thematic focus areas	- Education / Research Skills (27/70) - Digital / AI / Data (23/70) - Climate & Environment (19/70)
	Self-perceived Influence in R&I landscape	29 out of 70 participants (41.43%) cited a medium level of perceived influence 26 out of 70 (37.14%) cited a low level of perceived influence
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING	By sector	A strong academic and research-driven foundation for the European Talent Ecosystem, with Higher Education Institutions (41.43%) and Research Institutes/Infrastructure (25.71%) making up over two-thirds of the respondent base
	By role & influence	Researchers (61.43%), with a significant concentration in the medium (20/70) to low (16/70) level of perceived influence within the ecosystem
	By perceived value across the stakeholder network	Enhanced Collaboration (41/70) is the primary driver of engagement for all organization types, particularly within Higher Education (18/70) and Research Institutions (11/70).
POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS	Contribution type	- Building partnerships across sectors as primary contribution (39/70) - Training early-career researchers and Supporting thematic activities (climate, health, digital) (33/70 each) - Co-developing training / skills frameworks (32/70)
	Potential contributions by organization type	Universities and Research Institutes lead the way in Training early-career researchers (26/70 combined mentions) and Building partnerships across sectors (20/70 combined mentions)
ENGAGEMENT PREFERENCES		Online workshops/joint events (44/70) and Thematic working groups (35/70) were the most favoured preferences

Figure 11: Stakeholder Mapping - Persona

Presented during the Consortium Meeting in Vigo, 15 April 2026