Country profile 2026: Estonia

Introduction

Estonia is recognised as a global leader in digital public services with a strong digital economy. According to the Digital Decade 2025: Country reports, basic digital intensity among Estonian SMEs reached 71.2%, which is slightly below the EU average, but the country excels as a European frontrunner in cloud uptake at 52.6%. The ICT sector remains a cornerstone of the economy, contributing 5.9% to the GDP and employing one of the highest shares of business R&D personnel in the EU at 45.29%. Regarding human capital, 63.2% of Estonians possess at least basic digital skills, significantly surpassing the EU average, and the share of ICT specialists in total employment is high at 6.8%. According to the State of the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025, public sentiment remains overwhelmingly positive, with 83% of citizens stating that digitalisation simplifies their lives, although there is a strong demand for urgent government action on online child safety and cyberbullying.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching goals that shape policies for a better internet for kids.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Policy priority		X		
Integrated policy		X		
Influence of the BIK+ strategy			X	
Recognition of children's rights			X	

Table 1: Policy frameworks - Estonia

- ***This topic is an important and emerging policy priority*** *partially covered in national/regional laws, regulations and policies.*
- ***There are separate, dedicated policies which address the topic of children and the digital environment*** *(protection, empowerment, and participation).*
- ***The BIK+ strategy informs national policies but is not the main influence.***
- ***Children's rights in the digital environment*** *are implied rather than explicitly recognised in policies regarding children and the digital environment.*

Key developments and policy frameworks

- Estonia's Child Protection Act serves as the legal basis for many protection measures and services.
- The national curriculum for basic schools (and the Education Strategy 2021–2035) embeds digital competences and media/digital literacy in school education.
- Estonia's Digital Agenda 2030, currently being renewed, sets cross-sector priorities, including digital inclusion, digital skills for youth, and safe e-services – supporting structural empowerment, access, and safe participation.
- The Estonian Safer Internet Centre (Targalt Internetis), coordinated by the Estonian Union for Child Welfare and partners, runs Safer Internet Day activities, helpline/hotline, youth ambassador and participation programmes, lesson materials and awareness campaigns targeted at children, parents and schools.
- Estonia's Data Protection Inspectorate (AKI) enforces GDPR/PDPA rules and provides guidance and awareness-raising on personal data and privacy.
- The AI Leap initiative demonstrates active policy work to empower older pupils with AI/digital tools and to involve young people in policy discussions.

- In November 2024, Estonia hosted the first international conference on ending violence against children and participants. These included pledges to address online harms and ensure safe, enabling school environments.

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place to monitor and evaluate them.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection		X		
Data on risks, harms, well-being	X			
Information systems				X
National research fund		X		
Monitoring and evaluation			X	

Table 2: Policy design - Estonia

- ***Quantitative data on some aspects of children's digital activity*** *is collected regularly as part of broader surveys.*
- ***Regular (e.g., annual or bi-annual) surveys*** *include measures of children's experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being.*
- ***There is no system in place at the government level*** *to gather information on children and the digital environment.*
- ***Existing regular national research funding*** *is available for research on children and the digital environment, but this is not explicitly specified.*
- ***Monitoring and evaluation*** *are ad hoc, infrequent and not systematic.*

Key national research studies

- In 2024, Kantar Emor, commissioned by the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, conducted a study "Children's Internet Use and

Opportunities for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse" as part of the Homeland Security Fund project "Preventing Child Sexual Abuse on the Internet", co-funded by the European Union and the Ministry of the Interior.

- Estonia regularly (every 4 years) participates in the international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey, which also addresses children's use of and activities on the Internet, their relation to children's well-being, their experiences of online bullying, and their parents' knowledge of children's experiences online. The latest survey was conducted in 2022, and the results were published in 2023. The current study will be conducted in the period QIV2025-QI2026.
- In the framework of the Estonian SIC project Targalt internetis, a consortium partner, Tallinn University of Technology, has conducted annual online testing surveys among basic school, upper secondary school and vocational school students since 2019, which provide an overview of students' digital competence and risk behaviour.
- In 2024-2025, the University of Tartu research group participated in the third wave of the EU Kids Online survey. For the first time, the EU Kids Online survey also includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and related experiences, opinions and attitudes. The survey results were presented at the Estonian SIC conference on Safer Internet Day 2026.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery and coordination.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development		X		
National coordination body	X			
National action plan or strategy			X	

Table 3: Policy governance - Estonia

- ***Policy development sits across different ministries with leadership officially distributed according to the area of specialisation.***
- ***A clearly defined, formal coordination mechanism exists*** *(e.g., task force, steering committee) with a clear mandate. It systematically engages all relevant stakeholders and ensures coherent, cross-cutting policy development and implementation related to children and the digital environment.*
- ***Government policy has yet to be developed into an implementable action plan at this point,*** *but this is under development.*

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum	X			
Public consultation on BIK topics		X		
Youth involvement in policy			X	

Table 4: Stakeholder involvement - Estonia

- ***A formal, designated multi-stakeholder forum is in place*** *that consistently engages all relevant stakeholder groups (e.g., government, civil society, private sector, academia, children, and caregivers) and plays a meaningful role in policy discussion and development.*
- ***The public is consulted during the development of new BIK policies.*** *While engagement is structured and meaningful, it is event-driven and does not occur outside of major policy formulation efforts.*

- ***Children's interests are considered indirectly*** *(for example, through analysis of existing surveys or data collections)*

Stakeholder mechanisms

- The role of the cross-sectoral Prevention Council is to create a common understanding of cross-sectoral prevention and to agree on the content of prevention activities and the principles used to plan and implement them. The agreement on the principles of cross-sectoral prevention supports all training, especially the development, living environment, coping and well-being of children and young people. Cross-sectoral prevention is directed at the government level through the Cross-sectoral Prevention Council, and substantive cross-policy management is carried out by the deputy secretaries of the leading ministries. The leading ministries are the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- The Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs leads on the Violence Prevention Agreement 2021-2025. This covers 14 action lines, including violence prevention in the digital world. This includes activities that are also aimed at raising awareness of children and young people about the dangers of online communication, as well as developing young people's skills to prevent becoming a victim and committing digital violence. An implementation plan is in place to carry out the action lines outlined in the agreement.
- At the end of 2025, an impact analysis of the Violence Prevention Agreement 2021-2025 (VEKO) will be carried out at the request of the Ministry of Justice, with the aim of assessing the effectiveness, scope and sustainability of the implementation of the agreement and developing evidence-based policy recommendations for the new period.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Actions to promote a safe, age-appropriate digital environment that respects children's best interests.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Content rating systems for online/video games			X	
DSC measures protection of minors		X		
DSC-SIC working relationship		X		
Definition of harmful online content			X	
Complaints handling mechanism	X			
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification requirements	X			
Digital wallet for minors				X
EU harmonised age verification		X		
Laws on online marketing			X	
Protecting mental health and well-being	X			

Table 5: Safe digital experiences - Estonia

Implementing EU laws

- The Estonian Child Protection Act defines what content is prohibited from being shown to children (under 18) including

- § 25. Prohibition of the dissemination of objects with pornographic content and promoting violence
- (1) It is prohibited to manufacture, show and disseminate to children printed matter, films, audio and video recordings and objects that promote violence or cruelty.
- (2) It is prohibited to manufacture, show and disseminate to children objects, printed matter and films of pornographic content.

- The Media Services Act sets out requirements for the protection of minors:
  - It is prohibited to incite hatred based on gender, race, skin colour, social or ethnic origin, genetic characteristics, language, political beliefs, membership of a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation if this causes a threat to a person's life, health or property; to denigrate law-abiding behaviour or to incite to commit a crime.
  - It is prohibited to broadcast programmes that significantly impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors (in particular pornography and programmes that promote violence or cruelty). As an exception, this is permitted if a technical solution makes such content inaccessible to minors in normal circumstances.
- In Estonia, the DSC authority is the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority. Meetings have taken place between the DSC, the SIC coordinator, and the hotline team, during which relevant information has been exchanged, and a possible application for the Estonian hotline to receive trusted flagger status has been discussed.

Addressing online harms

- There are several definitions of harmful content, including content spread online. However, there is no single, all-encompassing term for harmful online content. For example, the Child Protection Act § 25 states: It is prohibited to manufacture, show and disseminate to children printed matter, films, audio and video recordings and objects that promote violence or cruelty.

- The Media Services Act § 19 states: The media service provider must not transmit programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular programmes that involve pornography or promote violence or cruelty. § 191 states: The video-sharing platform operator prescribes in the terms of use of the service that at the beginning of such programme, user-generated video and commercial communication that may impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, a warning must be presented in a manner understandable to the viewer stating that the subsequent program is unsuitable for minors, and a relevant symbol about the unsuitability of this programme to minors or some age groups of minors must be seen on the screen during the whole programme, video or commercial communication.

Age assurance

- The Estonian authorities have coordinated their activities with the eIDAS Regulation to provide an EU digital wallet. The development of the Estonian digital wallet solution is organised by the Information System Authority (RIA).

Supporting digital well-being

- The Estonian SIC project "Targalt internetis - Smartly on the Web" has developed together with Tartu University and Telia Eesti the 'Digimentorid' educational resource for schools, which also includes information about social engineering, commercial algorithms and how they influence users' behaviour
- The Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority has developed non-statutory guidelines for social media advertising.

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Teaching online safety	X			
Digital skills training	X			
Policies on digital use in schools	X			
Adequate teacher training	X			
Non-formal online safety education	X			
Critical media literacy	X			
Creative digital skills	X			
Supports for parents	X			

Table 6: Digital empowerment - Estonia

Digital empowerment in formal education

- The AI Leap program began in the fall of 2025. AI Leap is an education innovation program that aims to support meaningful learning and help the education system adapt to the age of AI. The programme has three areas of activity: Teacher and School Leader Program, Student Program and Technology Mediation, Development, and Support.
- AI Leap is not just about providing students with new technology. It is a collaboration of thousands of teachers who are rethinking education in the age of AI, raising AI literacy across society and advancing education through research-based development.
- The launch of AI Leap has been supported by President Alar Karis, the President's Digital Advisory Council, the Minister of Education and Research and representatives of the ministry, the ministry's AI Council, several universities and private sector partners.
- In autumn 2025, the guideline "Creating agreements on the use of personal smart devices at school" was published. Developed by the

Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Association of Educational Technologists, the guideline focuses on schools and offers ideas and examples for jointly agreeing on the most appropriate rules for the use of smart devices within the school family.

- The document, titled "Using smart devices: recommendations for educational institutions, parents and young people" (Nutiseadmete kasutamine: soovitused haridusasutustele, lapsevanematele ja noortele), was prepared by the Estonian Institute for Health Development (TAI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research (HTM). It was officially released in September 2025 to provide a health-based framework for schools as they implemented new internal rules regarding personal smart devices.
- It addresses the use of smart devices, offering recommendations based on research and international guidelines to support the health, development and well-being of children and young people. In addition to the recommendations, the document contains practical instructions for a more informed and intelligent use of digital devices.

Digital empowerment and lifelong learning

- Media Literacy Week continues annually. Every year, disinformation is a topic that is addressed and related information materials and tools are created for children and young people.
- The Social Insurance Board manages the Wise Parent (Tark Vanem) portal, which offers, among other topics, information and recommendations on how to develop and support a child's conscious use of digital devices and the internet.

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children's rights

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Promoting civic engagement	X			
Promoting children's rights	X			

Child-friendly policy documents	X
Addressing digital inequalities	X
Positive digital content	X

Table 7: Active participation, respecting rights - Estonia

Active participation

- The Estonian School Student Councils' Union (ESCU) - Eesti Õpilasliit – is a union of school students' councils that represents the Estonian pupils ESCU's objectives are: To represent the views of school students in Estonia towards the different educational institutions and platforms; To uphold and improve the quality and accessibility of education and educational democracy in Estonia; To provide assistance and support to school student unions and co-operate for the development of school student structures; To promote greater solidarity, cooperation and understanding among school students and to put an end to discrimination and injustice where they exist within the educational systems in Estonia.
- Many local governments also have youth councils, which mostly consist of young people aged 14-21. For example: Tallinn Youth Council; Lääne-Nigula valla (rural area) Youth Council; Keila Town Youth Council, etc.
- The Chancellor of Justice's Office has also initiated awareness-raising activities on this topic.

Addressing digital inequalities

- The production of positive digital content is often undertaken by private companies and by individual initiatives of teachers and educational technologists. For example, AlpaKids is an Estonian-born educational technology (EdTech) platform that creates culture-based, age-appropriate digital learning games for children aged 3 to 8.

Best practices

Example 1

Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech)

TalTech is a consortium partner of the Estonian SIC. As part of the Estonian SIC project "Smart on the Web", TalTech focuses on measuring students' digital competence and AI literacy. TalTech organises three national competitions every year: CyberPin (grades 1–6), CyberPeanut (grades 4–9) and CyberDrill (grades 7–12/vocational training). These assess practical skills (e.g., knowledge of digital safety and cybersecurity, online behaviour, etc.) and attitudes towards AI. In total, over 55,000 students have participated in these competitions during the period 2022–2025. The results of these extensive tests are used to identify students' strengths and development needs, supporting the creation of new teaching materials and the training of teachers and students.

Example 2

Digital Mentors Hackathon

The hackathon was organised in cooperation with the University of Tartu, Telia AS and the Estonian Child Protection Association for students in grades 7-12. At the hackathon, young people discussed digital security issues and identified the most pressing problems to develop practical solutions to educate their peers. The main challenge identified by young people was the excessive use of artificial intelligence and the distorted answers it produced. The inability to critically evaluate artificial intelligence's answers was highlighted.

The four teams working on this topic identified threats posed by large companies that collect people's data and gain access to the entire contents of their phones, as well as the fear of falling victim to data theft, which could result in financial loss. It was also noted that excessive reliance on artificial intelligence can lead to a decline in creativity and learning skills. The most effective ways to teach about the risks of artificial intelligence were training courses, games, videos, posters and social media awareness campaigns that instruct on checking information. Young people also highly value real stories that have happened because of believing misinformation to learn from them.

According to hackathon participants, the problem for many is that they do not dare to talk about their concerns or ask for help, so a podcast could be created where they could send their stories anonymously. The podcast host should be a problem-free content creator or a well-known person. Experienced specialists, such as a psychologist or an internet police officer, are selected as guests based on the topic. The show analyses listeners' experiences and offers advice. It is important that one episode lasts only 15–20 minutes. The podcast would help young people feel that they are not alone with their concerns. It is also important to share information about where to get help and advice.

The hackathon winning team proposed creating a company that popularises data protection and privacy policy issues. On the one hand, the task of such a company would be to organise public conferences and panel discussions with top specialists, but on the other hand, to develop an artificial intelligence-based program that automatically translates the terms of use of each application and website into a language understandable to the user, based on their age. The jury highlighted the winning entry for its feasibility and the ingenuity of young people in using artificial intelligence in a positive, resource-saving way.

BIK+ index 2026: Estonia

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Estonia compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

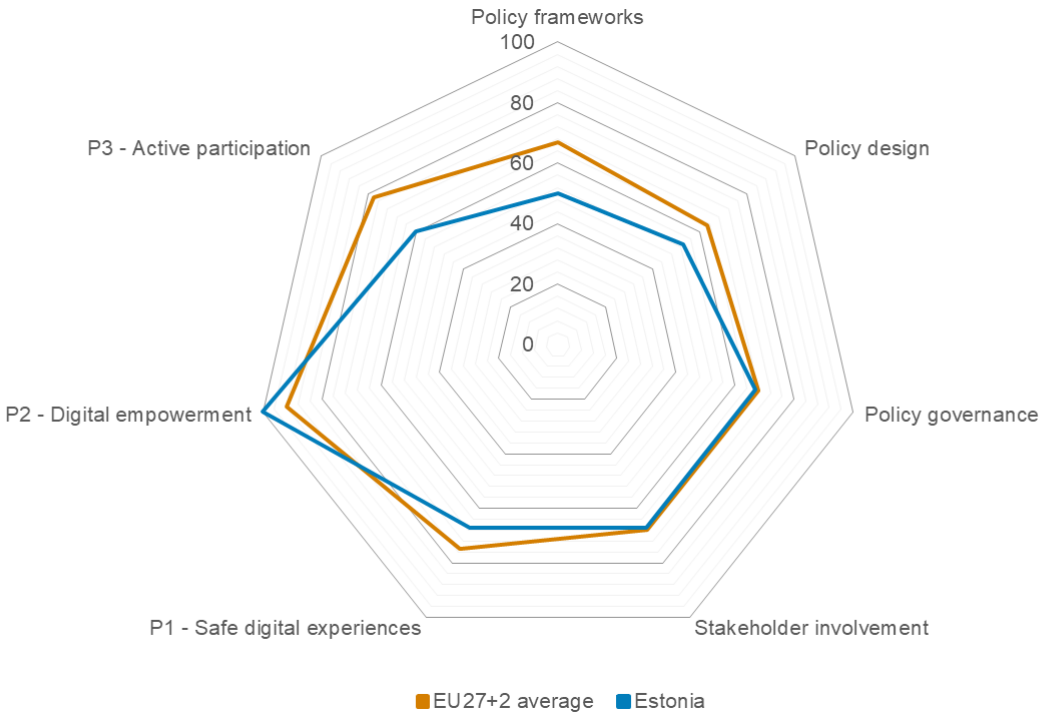

Figure 1: BIK+ index 2026: Estonia - EU27+2 average comparison