The Great Divergence: Two Futures for Jobs in an AI era

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

Netherlands Analysis

Key findings

AI is driving productivity, accelerating skills change and starting to create a redesign of entry level work

AI is strongly linked to significant productivity gains

Since 2022 when AI use soared, companies in the sectors most exposed to AI have tripled their lead in workforce productivity growth over the least AI-exposed companies.

Companies achieving the biggest productivity gains are boosting wages and headcount

Rather than replacing jobs at scale, leading organisations are using AI to amplify human performance and create value.

Harnessing AI is accelerating skills transformation

Skills required for the most AI exposed jobs are changing twice as fast as in least exposed roles - a 75% increase over last year's gap.

Redesigned entry level pathways

AI exposed junior roles are 7x more likely (than the least AI exposed junior roles) to demand traditionally senior skills like leadership and strategic thinking.

A two-track labour market

Jobs professionalised by AI – where AI does the basic work leaving more expert tasks for people (22% of advertised jobs) - are thriving while jobs democratised by AI – where AI takes on the complex work (52% of advertised jobs) - fall behind.

40%

Productivity growth is 40% higher at most vs least AI exposed companies.

52%

The most AI exposed companies see faster headcount growth than the least AI exposed (52% vs 36%) and higher wage growth (24% vs 17%).

2.5x

The most AI exposed jobs are adding tasks that rely on human-intensive skills like empathy, judgment and creativity 2.5x faster - than the least AI exposed roles.

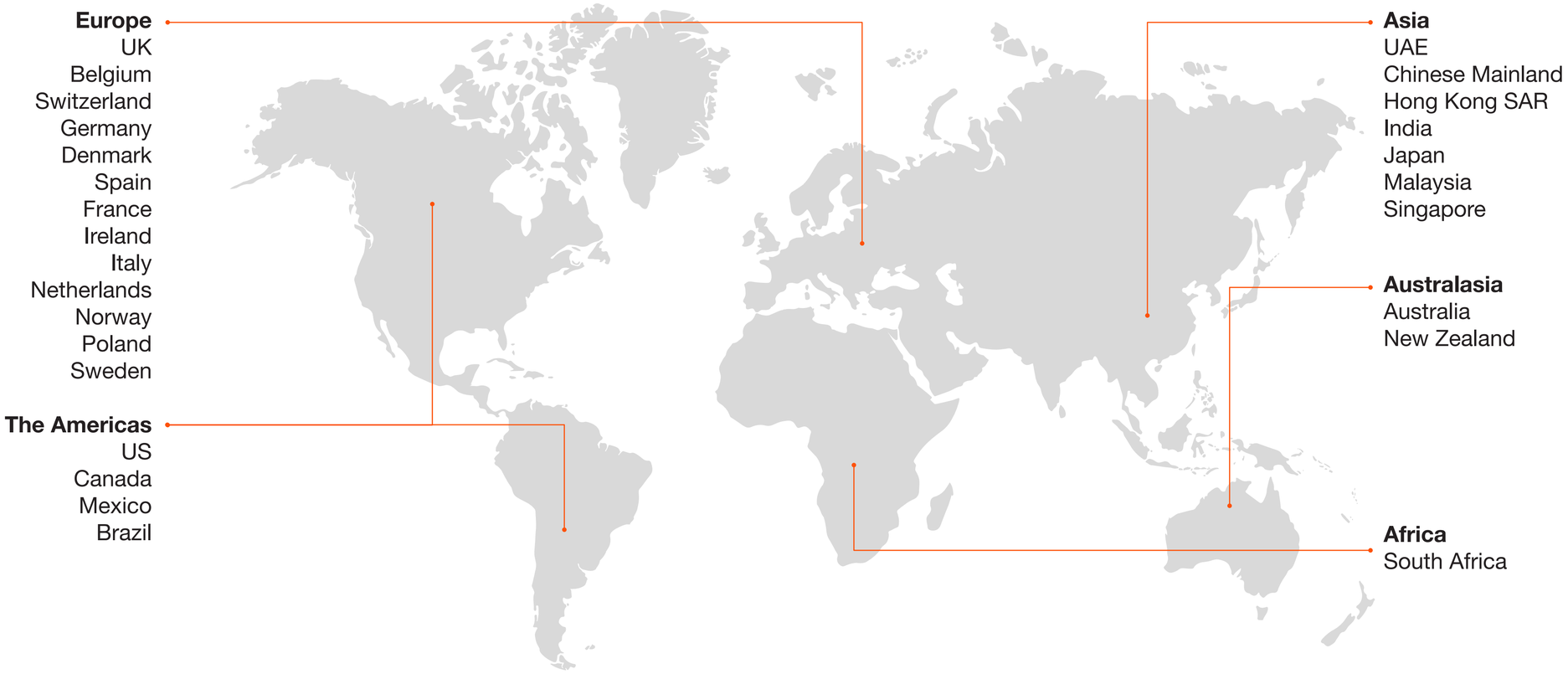
35%

AI-exposed 'seniorised' entry level roles are thriving with 35% growth since 2019 while other entry level roles decline in number.

42%

Professionalised jobs are growing twice as fast as Democratised jobs with 42% higher wage growth since 2021.

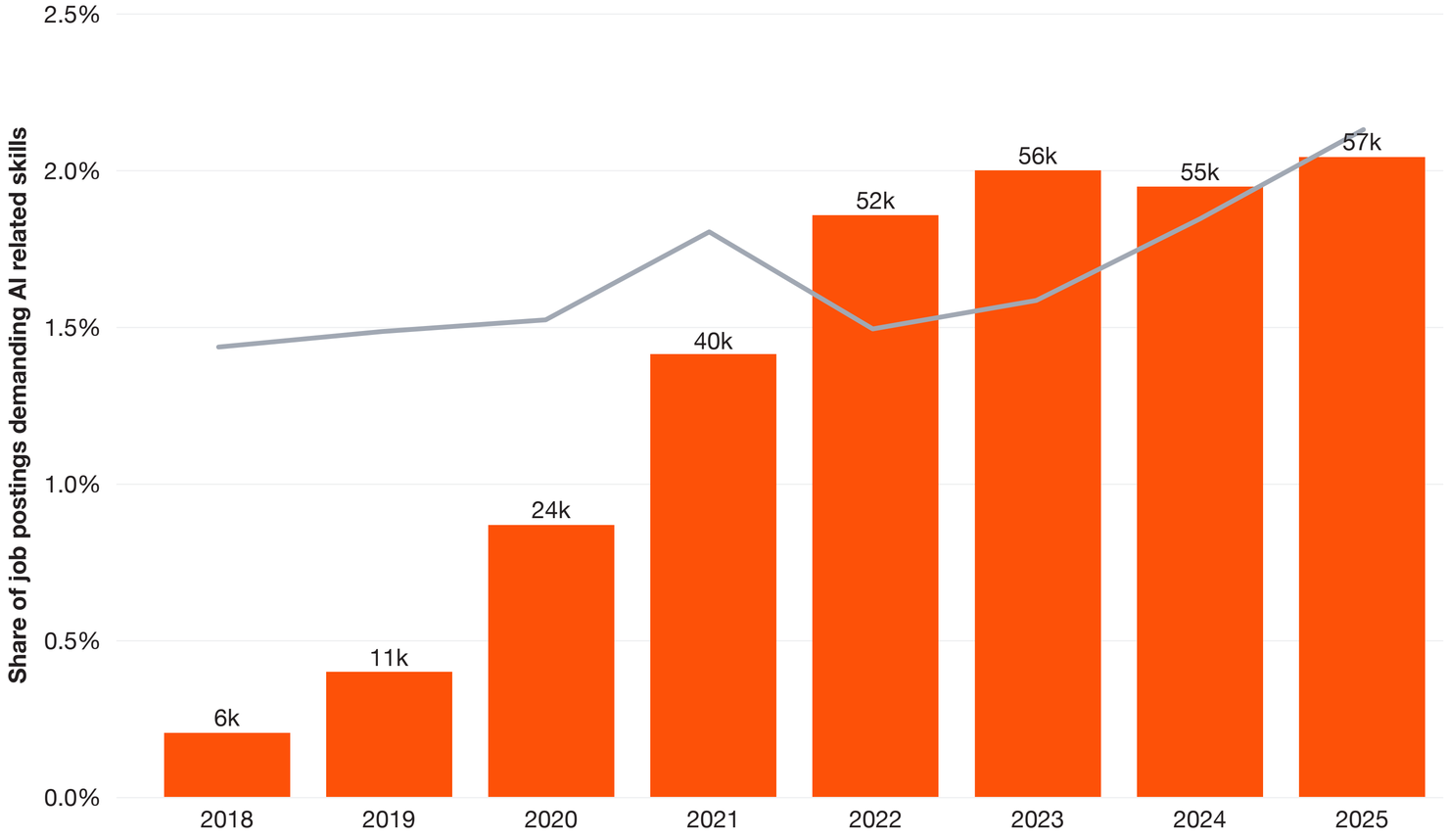
The 2026 AI Jobs Barometer examines over one billion job ads from 6 continents to reveal how AI is affecting jobs, skills, wages, and labour productivity



Netherlands Insights

The share of AI hiring in the Netherlands has seen modest growth despite more stagnant growth in the volume of job postings

Total number and share of job postings requiring AI related skills, Netherlands, 2018-2025



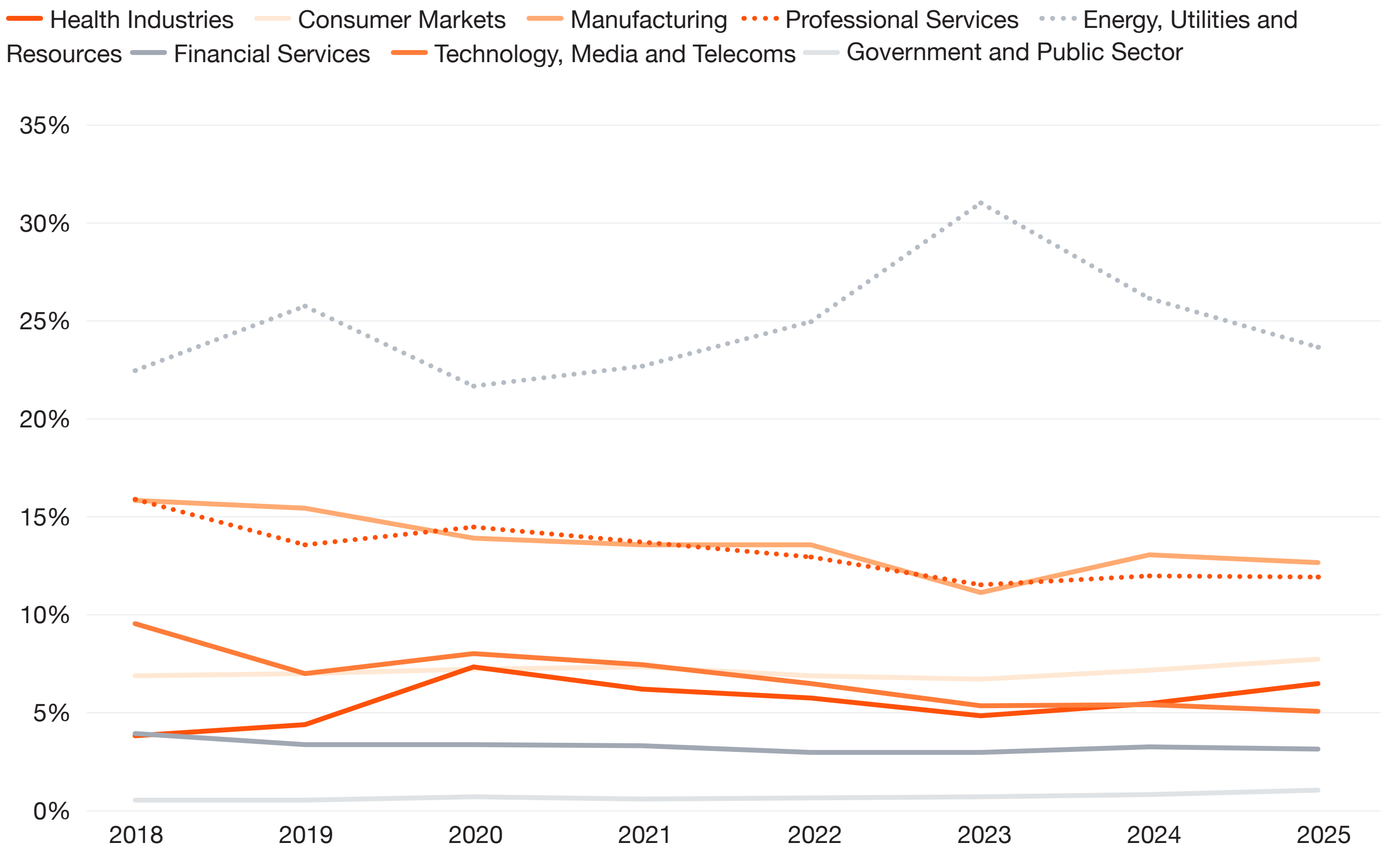
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The number of job postings in the Netherlands requiring AI skills has increased by only 5k from 2022 to 2025.
- However, the share of AI job postings has continued rising in recent years, increasing from 1.5% in 2022 to 2.1% in 2025.

Energy accounts for the largest share of hiring in the Netherlands labour market followed by Manufacturing and Professional Services

Share of all job postings by sector, Netherlands, 2018-2025



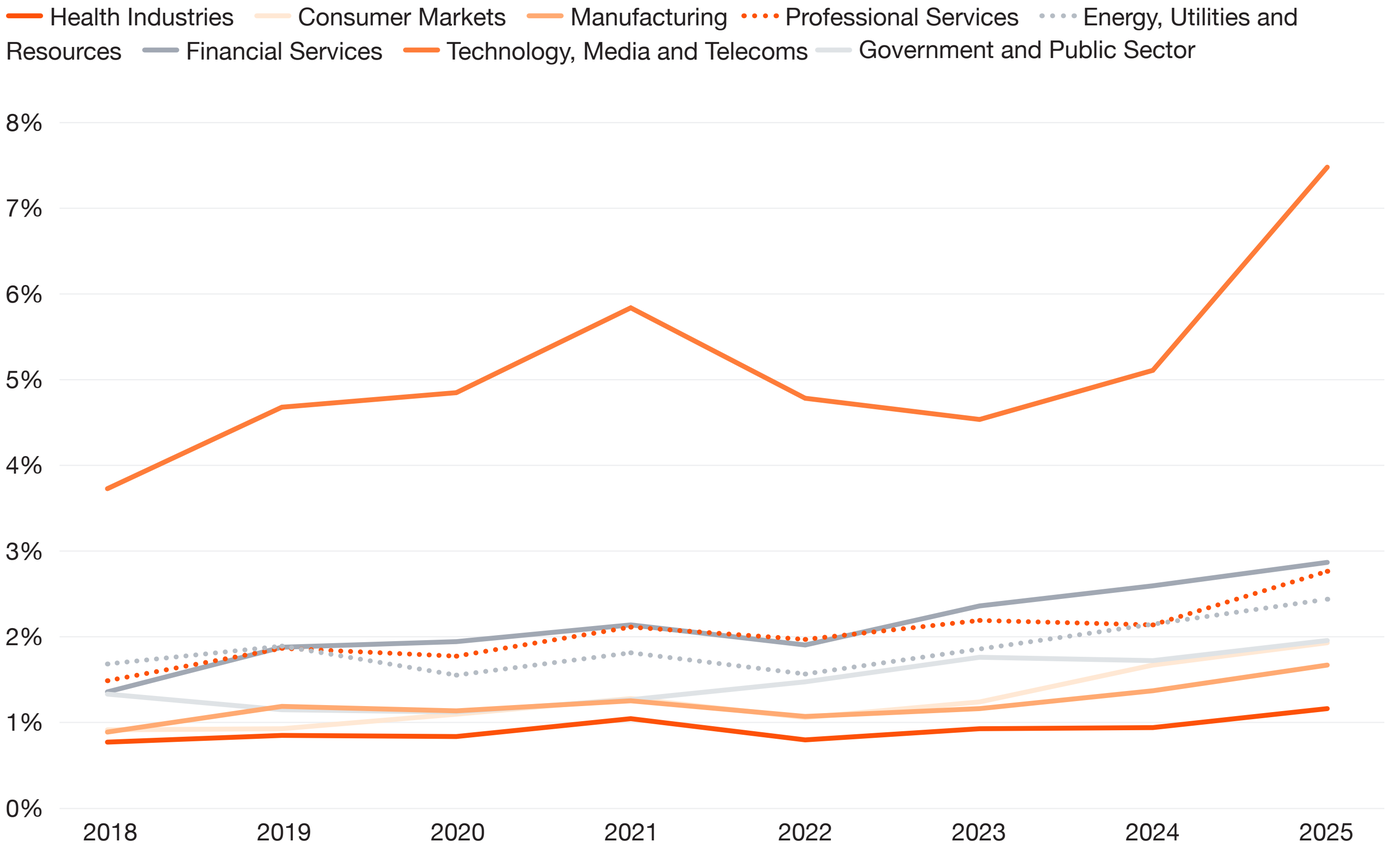
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- Energy stands out as the largest source of labour demand, accounting for 23.8% of total Netherlands job postings, with Manufacturing and Professional Services following at 12.7% and 12% respectively.
- This highlights the central role of these sectors in overall employment demand in the Netherlands.
- Financial Services and Government and Public Sector record the smallest shares, at 3.1% and 1% respectively, though they remain important components of the overall labour market.

AI hiring intensity is rising across all sectors in the Netherlands and is led by TMT

Share of AI job postings within each sector, Netherlands, 2018-2025



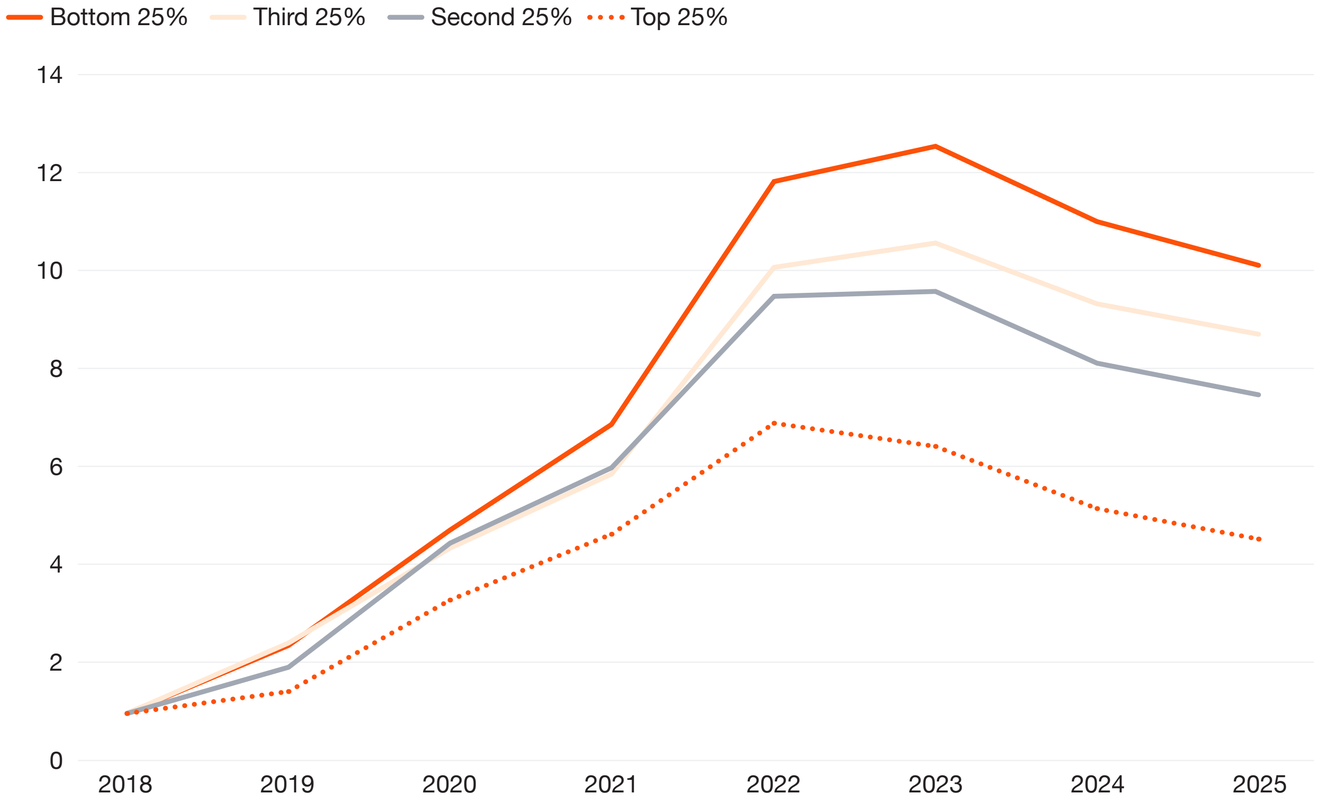
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT) records the highest share of AI job postings in the Netherlands, consistent with its role as the most digitally intensive sector.
- All sectors saw an increase in AI job share in 2025, pointing to broad-based growth in AI hiring.

In the Netherlands, job postings have grown faster in less AI-exposed occupations since 2018

Number of job postings relative to 2018 by AI exposure quartile, Netherlands, 2018-2025



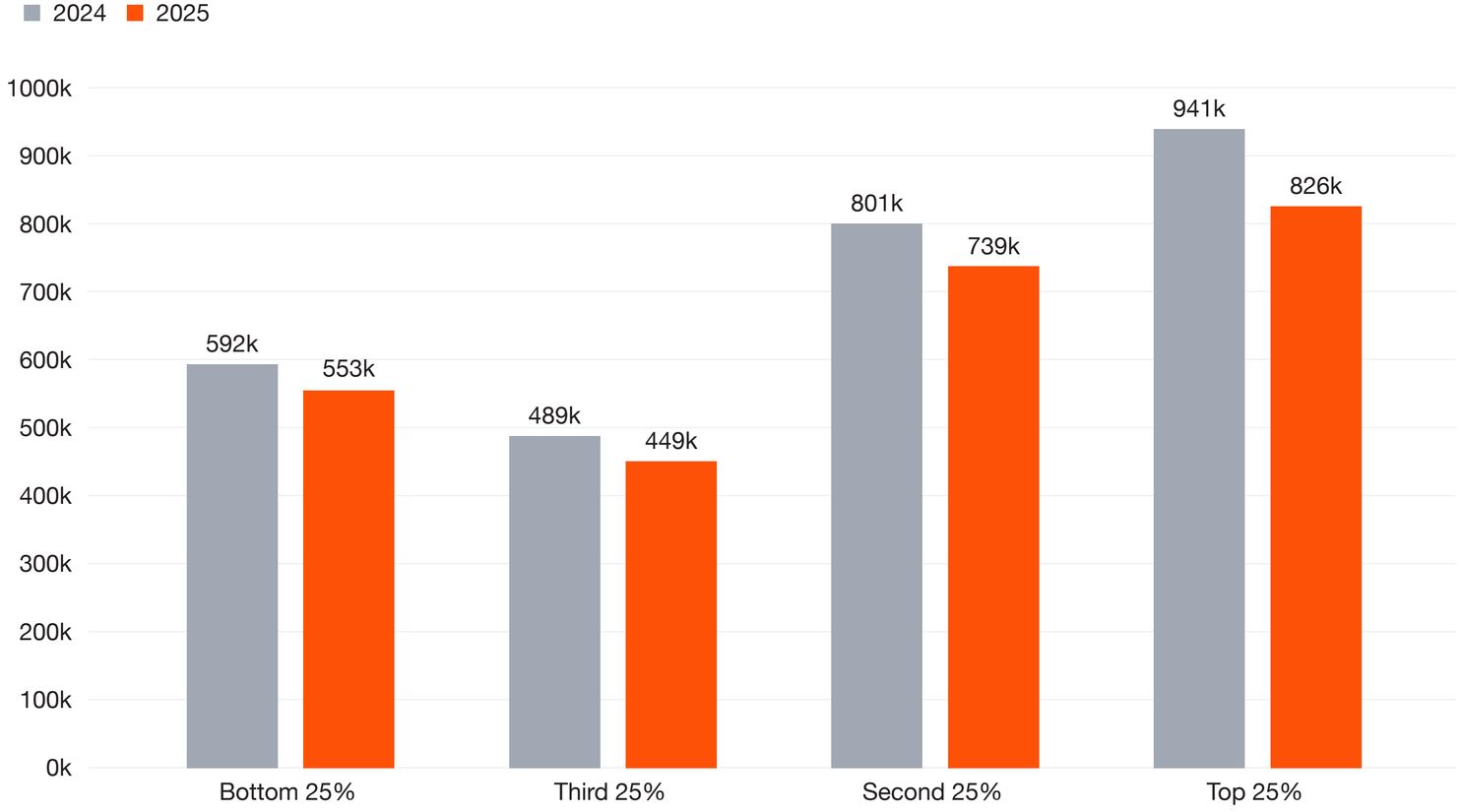
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- When grouped by AI exposure, less exposed occupations show stronger growth in job postings. By 2025, the third exposure quartile records the highest level at around 10.1 postings for every posting in 2018, compared to 4.5 in the highest exposure quartile.
- All quartiles experienced a dip around 2023, which has continued into recent years, though posting levels remain well above 2018.

However, the top quartile of AI exposed occupations still accounts for the largest number of job postings in the Netherlands

Total number of job postings by AI exposure quartile, Netherlands, 2024 and 2025



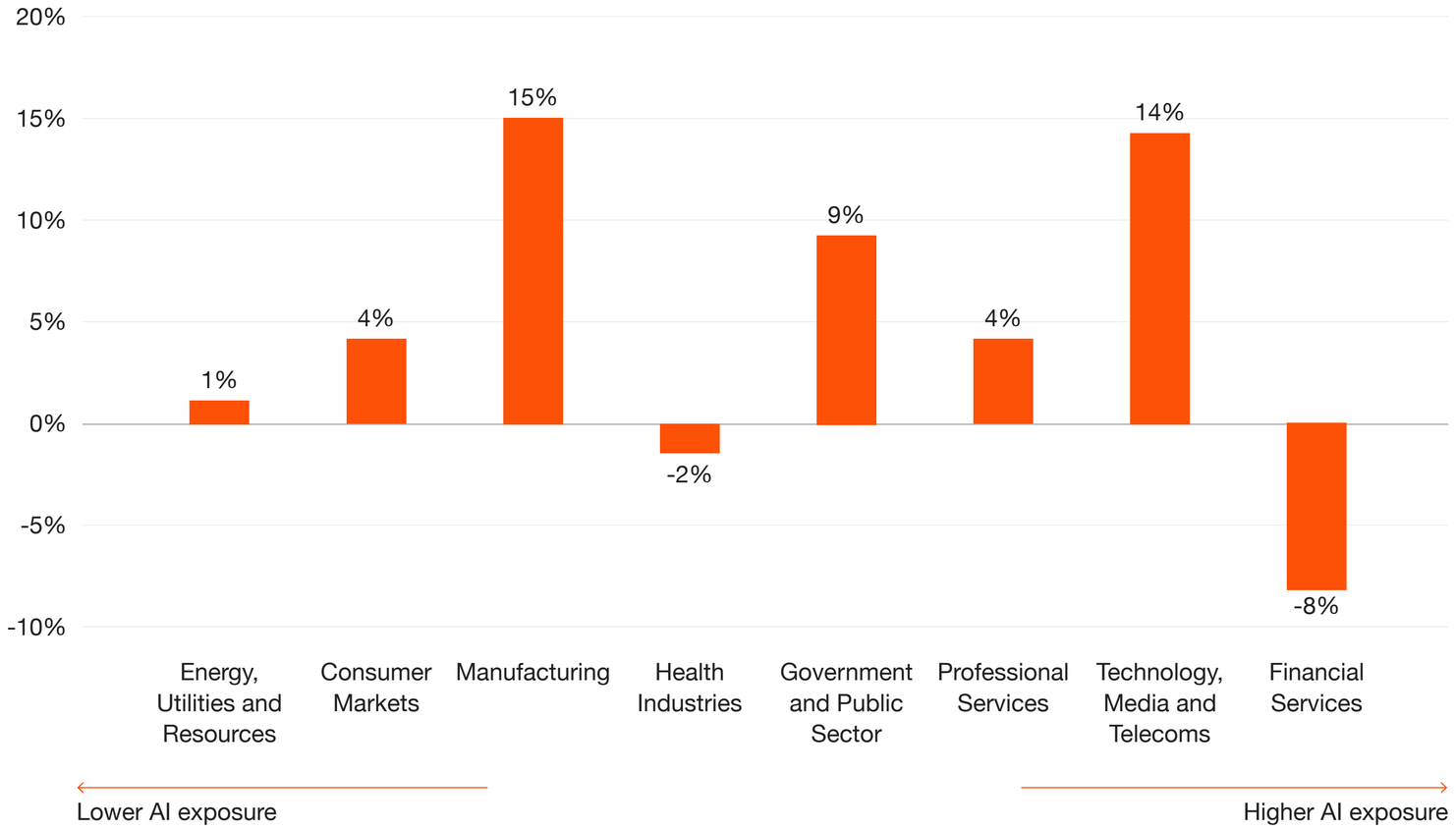
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- While job postings have grown faster in less AI-exposed occupations, higher exposure quartiles still account for more postings in absolute terms.
- In 2025, the most AI-exposed quartile recorded around 826,000 job postings, higher than lower exposure groups.
- All quartiles saw a decline in job postings between 2024 and 2025, indicating a broad-based contraction in hiring.

Wage premiums in the Netherlands vary across sectors and remain relatively low

Wage premium by sector, Netherlands, 2025



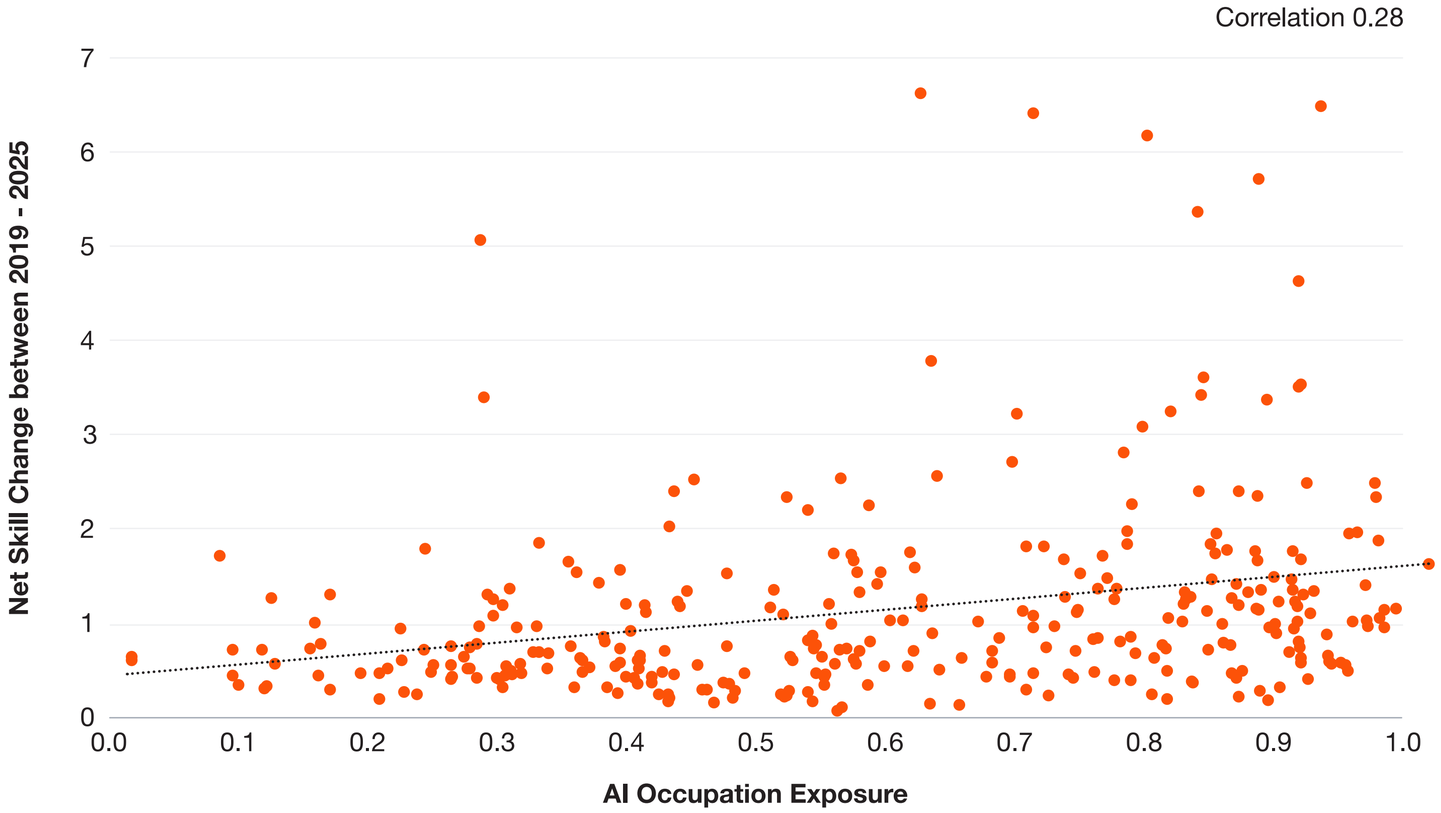
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- AI wage premiums vary significantly across sectors, with no consistent relationship to AI exposure.
- Manufacturing and Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT) record the highest premiums, indicating strong demand for AI skills in these sectors. In contrast, Government and Public Sector and Financial Services show negative premiums of around -2% and -8% respectively. Despite relatively higher exposure in Financial Services, this suggests weaker demand for AI skills and scope for further adoption.

In the Netherlands, more AI-exposed occupations tend to experience faster rates of skills transformation

Net skill change from 2019 to 2025 for 4-digit ISCO code occupations by AI occupation exposure, Netherlands



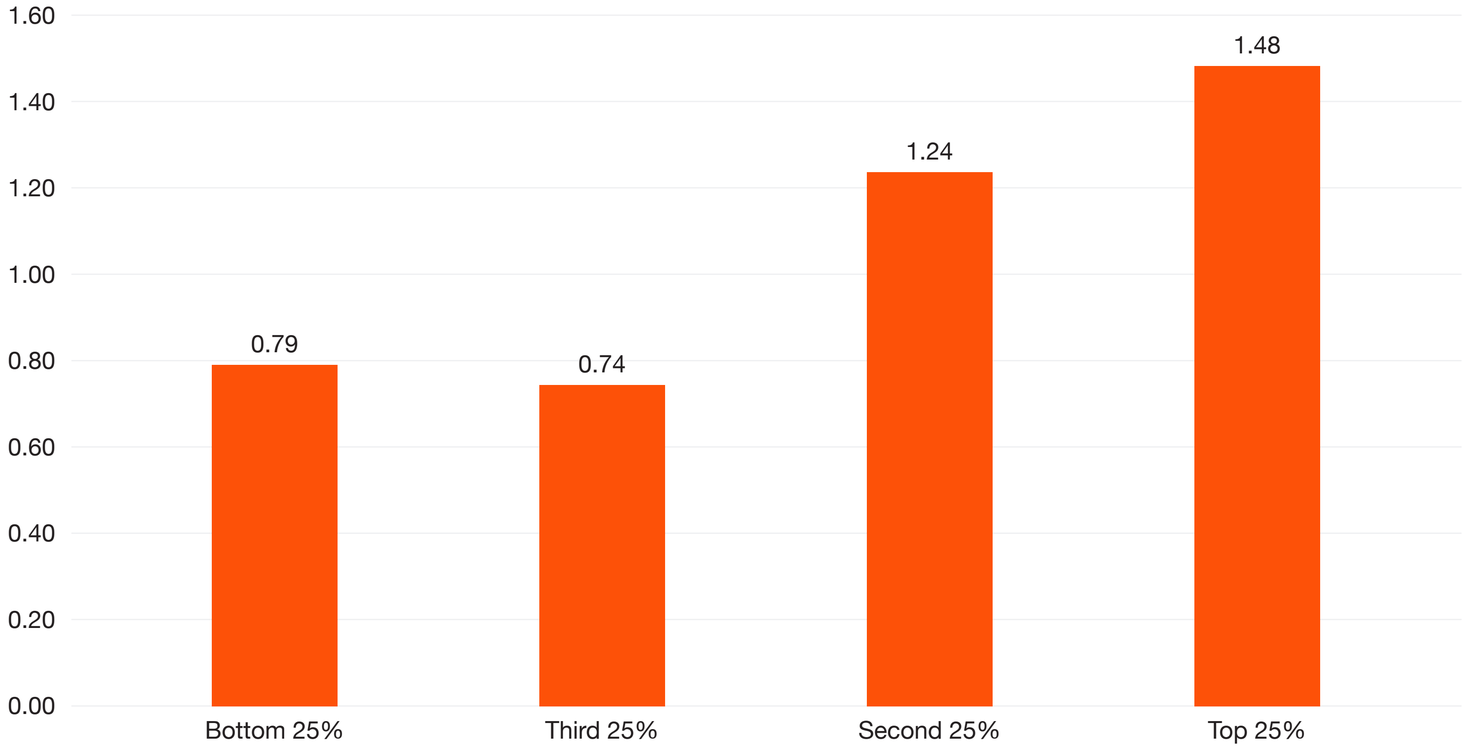
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- There is a positive correlation of 0.28 between AI exposure and net skills change between 2019 and 2025, indicating that more exposed occupations tend to see greater shifts in skill requirements. This is partly driven by high-exposure outliers including Application programmers, Chemists and Software developers.
- This suggests that AI-exposed roles in the Netherlands tend to adapt more rapidly, with evolving task demands reshaping the capabilities required.

The most AI-exposed quartiles of occupations sees the largest skill shifts, although the pattern across quartiles is mixed

Average net skill change from 2019 to 2025 for 4-digit ISCO code occupations by AI occupation exposure quartile, Netherlands



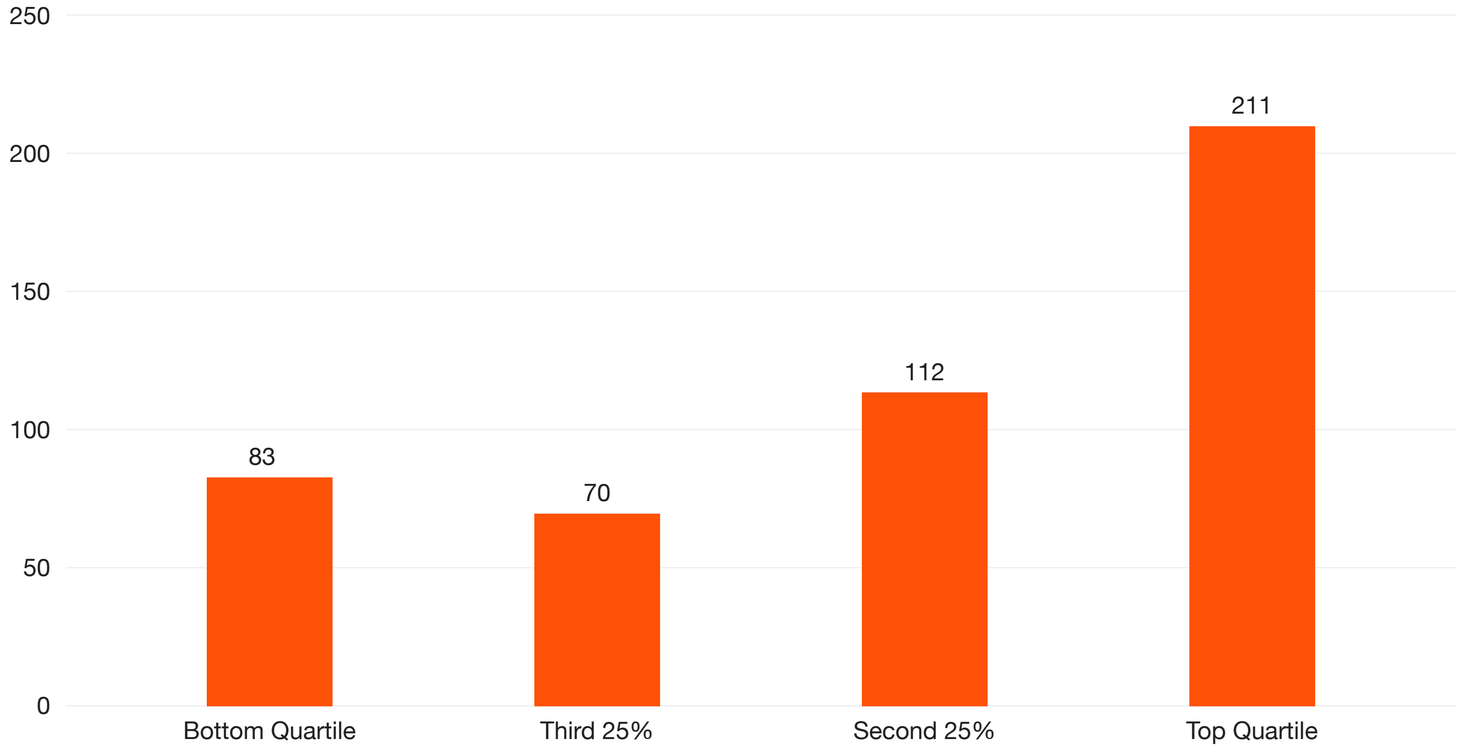
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The same pattern observed earlier is reflected across exposure quartiles: occupations in the highest AI exposure group show the fastest skills transformation between 2019 and 2025.
- While the pattern is not perfectly linear across all quartiles, the second and top quartiles both record higher average net skill change than the lower-exposure groups, with the top quartile clearly highest.
- This reinforces the earlier finding of a positive relationship between AI exposure and skills change in the Netherlands, where more exposed occupations tend to evolve faster as task requirements shift.

In line with this, the most AI-exposed occupations see greater expansion in the average number of new skills per occupation

Average number of “new” skills per occupation, by AI exposure quartile, Netherlands, 2025 relative to 2019



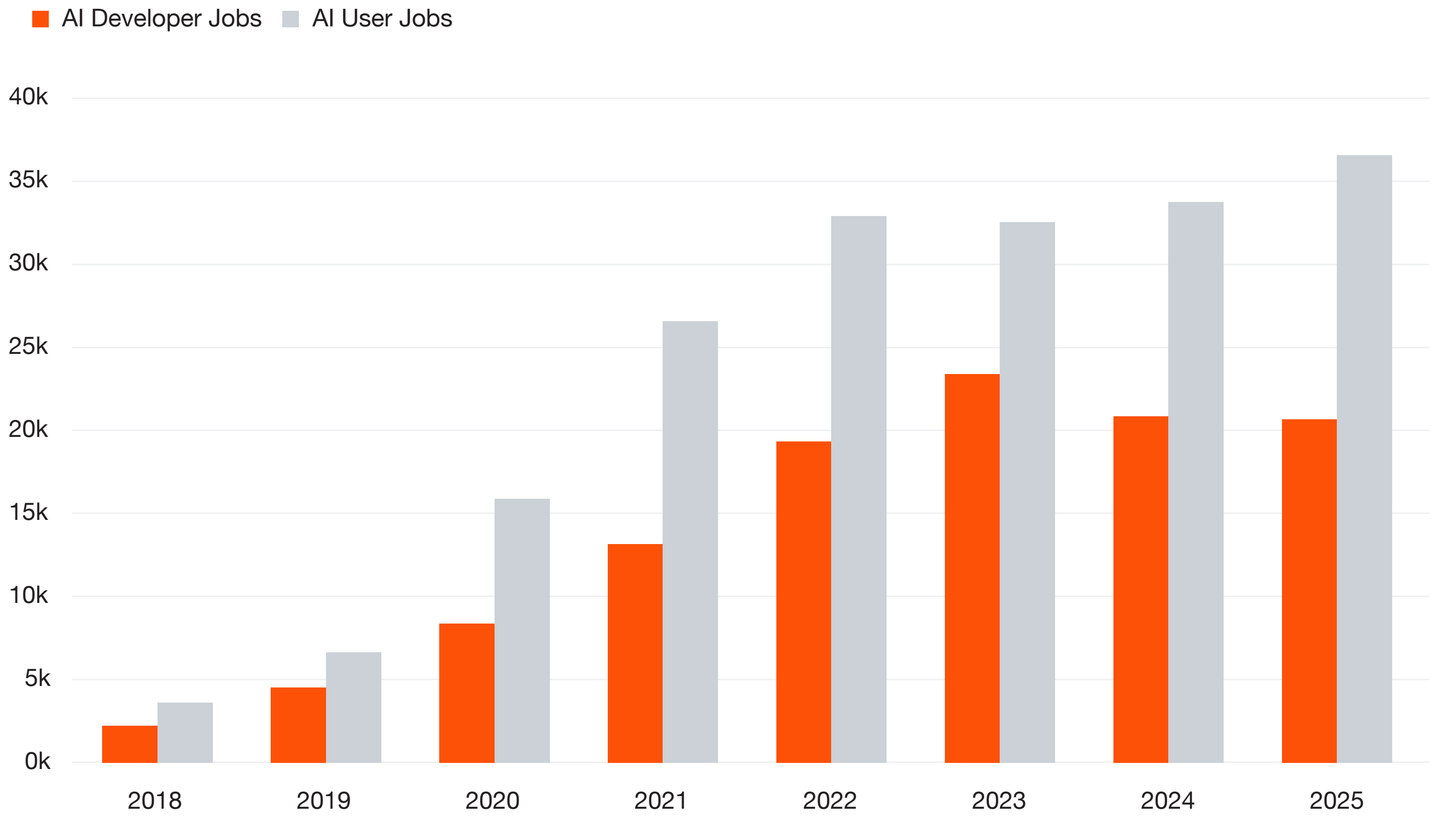
Source: PwC analysis, PwC AI Occupational Exposure Index, Lightcast data
Notes: We define a ‘new skill’ as any skill that has greater than 10 mentions in an occupation in 2025, but five or less mentions in that same occupation in 2019. Across all postings for an occupation in a given country, we count the number of ‘new skills’ required for that occupation.

Findings

- We find a positive relationship between AI exposure and the number of new skills required within occupations. Specifically, occupations in the highest AI exposure quartile exhibit the greatest average number of newly emerging skills between 2019 and 2025.
- Importantly, this metric reflects the average number of new skills per occupation within each exposure quartile, rather than the total number of new skills observed.
- Although the pattern is not fully linear across all quartiles, the increase becomes more pronounced at higher exposure levels, with the second and top quartiles both standing above the lower exposure groups, and the top quartile averaging 211 new skills per occupation.
- Some of this increase may reflect higher posting volumes in more exposed occupations, but it is also consistent with underlying job growth and evolution, as expanding roles require a broader and more diverse set of skills.

AI job demand in the Netherlands is led by user roles, with continued growth in user roles and a slight contraction in developer roles

Total number of AI user and AI developer job roles, Netherlands, 2018-2025



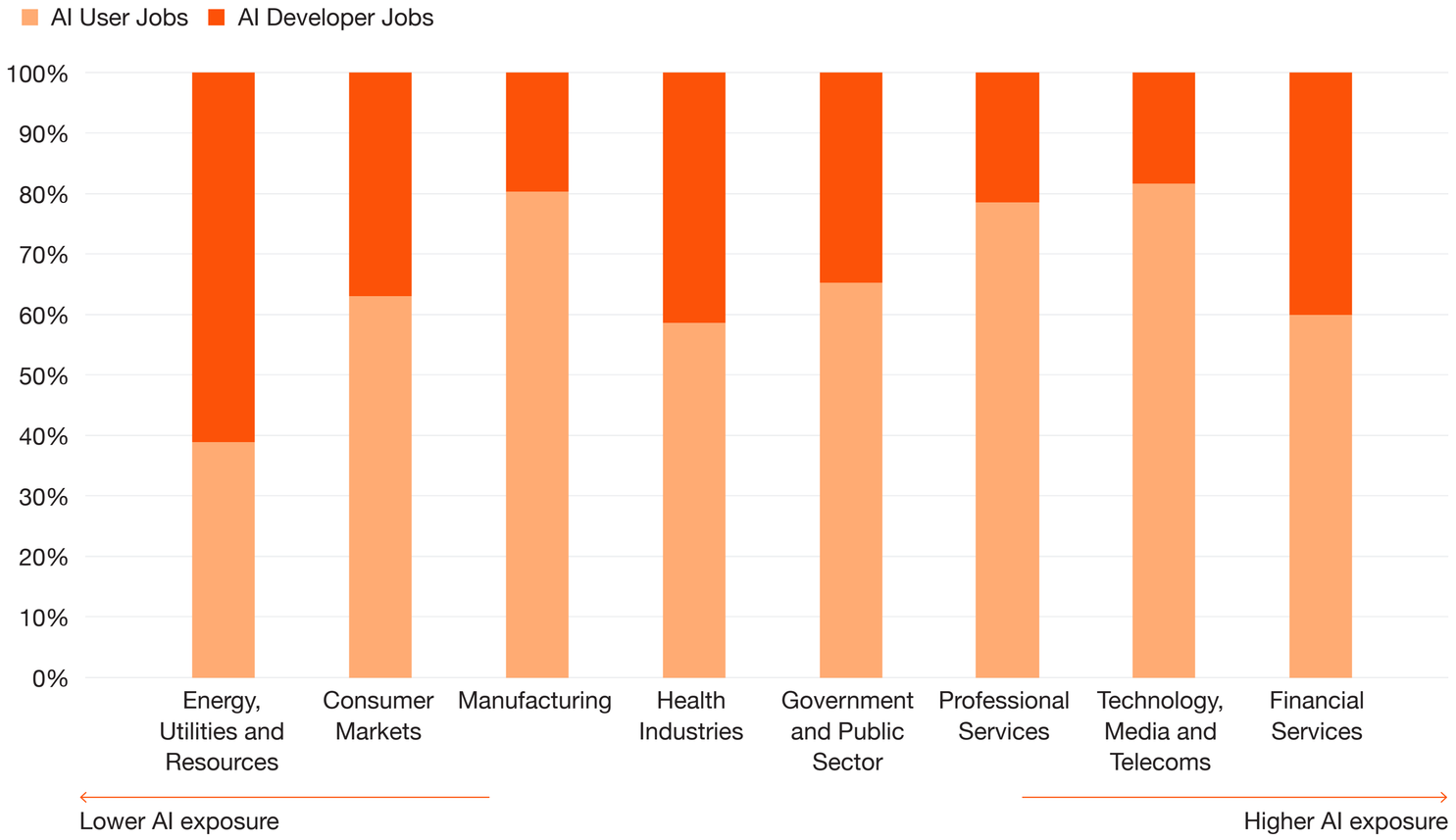
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data
Notes: AI user and AI developer job roles are determined as jobs requiring Tier 0 or 1 skills (AI literacy and applied AI skills) for AI user jobs and Tier 2 skills (advanced AI skills) for AI developer jobs. AI developer jobs are tagged as such if there are any skills in the job postings data requiring Tier 2 skills for a specific job role.

Findings

- AI user roles account for the majority of AI-related jobs and continue to drive overall demand, increasing by just under **~2.8k** roles in 2025, despite a dip in 2023.
- In contrast, AI developer roles remain lower and contracted by **192** roles in 2025.
- Growth has been modest for AI user roles which saw an increase of **8.4%** while AI developer roles contracted by **0.9%**.

Across sectors, AI job postings in the Netherlands remain primarily focused on AI user capabilities

Within sector shares of AI user and AI developer job roles of all AI related roles, Netherlands, 2025



Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data
Notes: AI user and AI developer job roles are determined as jobs requiring Tier 0 or 1 skills (AI literacy and applied AI skills) for AI user jobs and Tier 2 skills (advanced AI skills) for AI developer jobs. AI developer jobs are tagged as such if there are any skills in the job postings data requiring Tier 2 skills for a specific job role.

Findings

- AI user roles account for the largest share across most sectors, indicating a strong focus on deploying and integrating AI into existing workflows. However, sectors including Energy and Health see a strong share of AI developer roles, indicating a strong focus on innovative capabilities.
- **Energy, Utilities and Resources** shows the highest share of **AI developer** roles **(61.2%),** indicating greater focus in the development of sector specific advanced AI tools.
- **Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT)** records the highest share of **AI user** roles **(81.6%).** However, given their high share of AI related job postings, these likely translates into a relatively high volume of AI developer job roles.

Contacts

Elieke Vastenhouw
Partner, PwC Netherlands

Menno Braakenburg
Partner, PwC Netherlands

Bastiaan Starink
Workforce Leader,
Partner, PwC Netherlands

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

pwc.com/aijobsbarometer