

# Gender Equality Plan | Romagna Tech

---

**Period of validity:** November 2025 – December 2027

**Revision:** 000

**Prepared by:** GEP Working Group (Alessandra Folli, coordinator; Alessandro Golfarelli; Stefano Torelli)

**Approval:** Romagna Tech Board of Directors on 28/11/2025

## Summary

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Context .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Romagna Tech: mission, areas of intervention, structure .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. General objectives of Romagna Tech's GEP .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. Romagna Tech's GEP strategy .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Thematic areas and actions of Romagna Tech's GEP .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. Monitoring and evaluation .....</b>	<b>16</b>

## 1. Introduction

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)<sup>1</sup>, the Treaty on European Union (Articles 2 and 3) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Articles 21 and 23)<sup>2</sup>. It is an essential pillar of a fair, inclusive and sustainable society. However, despite the regulatory and cultural progress made in recent decades, gender inequalities persist in many areas of social, economic and professional life, including research and innovation.

In response to these challenges, the European Commission has adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, a strategic framework that aims to build a European Union in which women and men, in all their diversity, can have equal opportunities to participate in and lead society. Key objectives of the strategy include combating gender-based violence, eliminating stereotypes, closing the pay and employment gap, and strengthening women's participation in decision-making roles.

Under Horizon Europe, the main European program for research and innovation (2021–2027), the Commission has established that all public bodies, universities and research organizations (whether public or private) must have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as an eligibility requirement for accessing funding. The GEP is a strategic and operational tool that defines a set of commitments and concrete actions aimed at promoting gender equality through structural changes in organizations.

At the same time, Italy has developed its first National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2026<sup>4</sup>, adopted by the Council of Ministers in July 2021. The Italian strategy is inspired by European principles and identifies five priority areas for action: work, income, skills, time and power. It represents the national reference framework for public policies on equal opportunities, including in relation to the measures set out in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), which recognizes gender equality as one of the fundamental cross-cutting priorities, providing for specific measures to promote women's participation in the labor market.

A further significant step was taken with Law No. 162 of 5 November 2021<sup>5</sup>, which amended the Code for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women (Legislative Decree No. 198/2006), providing for

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_it.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_it.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025)

<sup>4</sup><https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/it/politiche-e-attivita/parita-di-genere-ed-empowerment-femminile/strategia-nazionale-per-la-parita-di-genere-2021-2026/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2021/11/18/21G00175/sg>

incentives and rewards for companies that adopt inclusion policies and certify their commitment to the issue through UNI/PdR 125:2022 gender equality certification<sup>6</sup>. This certification concretely recognizes the commitment of organizations that promote a fair, inclusive and respectful professional environment. This certification is based on six macro-areas: culture and strategy, governance, HR processes, growth opportunities, pay equity and work-life balance. It is a competitive factor for companies, which can benefit from tax relief, additional points in public tenders and greater attractiveness in the labor market.

Romagna Tech, as a research and technology transfer organization pursuant to EC Regulation 651/2014, fully recognizes these principles and intends to make gender equality a cornerstone of its development strategy. The approach adopted is systemic, sustainable and participatory, with a constant commitment to:

- inclusion and respect for differences;
- the enhancement of talent in all its diversity;
- the promotion of balanced, welcoming and safe working environments;
- the integration of gender perspectives into research, innovation and governance activities. This

Gender Equality Plan represents Romagna Tech's first structured step towards a fairer, more competitive and responsible organization, in the knowledge that the potential of innovation can only be fully realized in contexts where each person can express their best.

## 2. Context

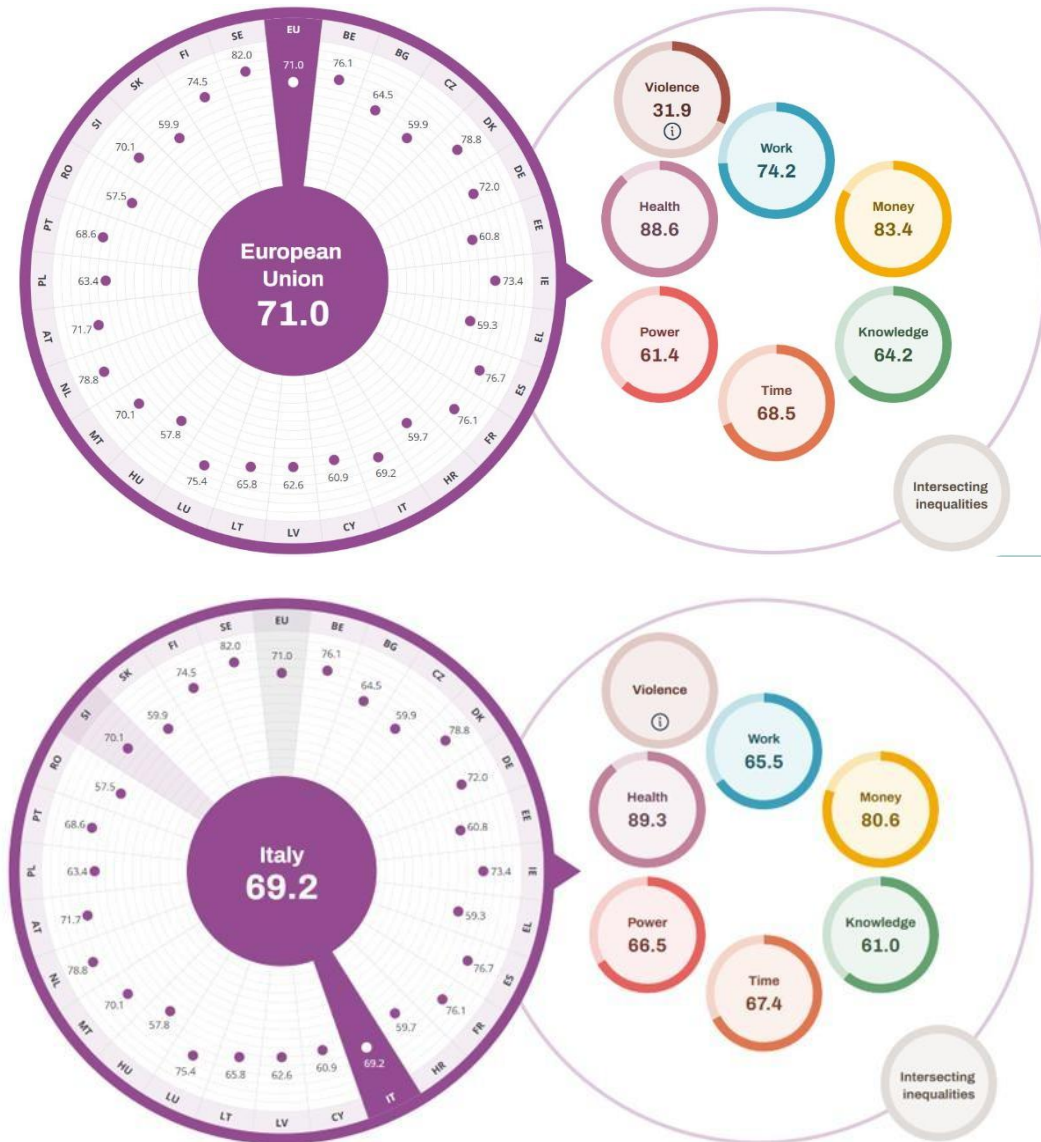
The issue of gender equality is now a priority at global, European and national level, both for reasons of social equity and for its recognized positive impact on the efficiency of organizations and the competitiveness of economic and scientific systems. However, gender inequalities continue to manifest themselves in a structural and widespread form, with a particular incidence in the fields of research, technology and innovation.

According to the latest Gender Equality Index 2024<sup>7</sup> published by the EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality, Italy scored an overall score of 69.2 – lower than the European Union average of 71 out of 100.

---

<sup>6</sup><https://store.uni.com/uni-pdr-125-2022>

<sup>7</sup><https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2024>



Source: Gender Equality Index, 2024.

Italy ranks 14th among the 27 EU Member States, with a slight improvement compared to 2023, while continuing to suffer from structural delays, especially in the following areas:

Employment → Italy: 65.5 points vs EU average: 73.8 points. Italy remains among the countries with the largest gap in female participation in the labor market, penalized by low employment rates and a high incidence of involuntary part-time work.

Time → Italy: 67.4 points vs EU average: 73.0 points. The time women devote to unpaid domestic and care work remains significantly higher than that of men, highlighting a structural imbalance in work-life balance.

Knowledge → Italy: 61.0 points vs EU average: 65.9 points. Disparities persist in STEM education and in the presence of women at the highest academic levels, despite women's higher average tertiary education.

In the field of research and innovation (R&I), the disparities are even more pronounced. The She Figures 2024 report<sup>8</sup> - published by the European Commission - analyses gender equality in the field of research and innovation (R&I) in the European Union through six dimensions: 'graduate talent pool', 'participation in S&T occupations', 'research labor market', 'working conditions', 'career advancement and decision-making', and 'research and innovation outcomes'. At EU level:

- Women account for around 48% of doctorates (ISCED 8).
- Only around 34% of researchers in EU countries are women.
- In information and communication technologies (ICT), female doctoral degrees reach around 21–22%.
- Women hold less than 30% of grade A academic positions (full professors) and only about 26% of directors of research institutions.
- The share of patents with female inventors is just over 9%.

For Italy, the country report indicates that the overall score of the pilot 'She Figures Index' is around 73.4 – slightly below the EU average of 74 points out of 100.

Although Italy performs well in some indicators, there are still clear imbalances in women's career progression, representation in STEM sectors and in academic and research leadership positions.

In this context, research and technology transfer organizations such as Romagna Tech also face systemic imbalances that can hinder women's access to and retention in key sectors for innovation, industry and sustainable growth.

In this complex and constantly evolving scenario, Romagna Tech recognizes the need to adopt a structured and measurable approach to promote gender equality, prevent discrimination and contribute to the modernization of the economic, productive and scientific fabric of the Emilia-Romagna region.

---

<sup>8</sup><https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/interactive-reports/she-figures-2024>

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has been developed in line with the main European guidelines and technical tools provided by the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). In particular, the plan is based on two key references:

**1. Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plan<sup>9</sup>:** this is the official document published in 2021 by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, which defines the minimum mandatory requirements for GEPs in order to make organizations eligible for Horizon Europe program funding (2021–2027).

According to this guidance, each GEP must include the following essential elements:

1. it must be a public and formally approved document, made accessible on the organisation's website;
2. it must have dedicated human and financial resources for the design, implementation and monitoring of the plan;
3. it must include activities for the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data relating to personnel, positions, remuneration, promotions, workloads and training;
4. must plan training and awareness-raising activities for all staff on issues related to gender equality;
5. must take action in at least five priority areas:
  - work-life balance and organisational culture;
  - gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
  - equality in selection and career processes;
  - integration of gender issues into research and teaching content;
  - prevention and combating of violence and harassment.

The guide recommends a structured and cyclical approach, with phases of diagnosis, planning, implementation and monitoring, according to the principles of management by objectives and results.

---

<sup>9</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/87650G>

## 2. GEAR Tool – Gender Equality in Academia and Research<sup>10</sup>

The GEAR (Gender Equality in Academia and Research) tool is an interactive toolkit developed by the EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality, designed to provide step-by-step guidance to research institutions, universities and scientific bodies in defining and implementing an effective GEP.

GEAR is divided into six operational phases:

1. Launching the process and analyzing the context (involvement of internal stakeholders, data collection, assessment of the status quo);
2. GEP planning (definition of objectives, choice of priorities and actions);
3. Formal adoption of the GEP by the organization's management;
4. Implementation of actions (allocation of resources, awareness raising, internal communication);
5. Monitoring and evaluation (definition of indicators, data collection, periodic reporting);
6. Reflection and adjustment of the plan for subsequent cycles.

GEAR also provides practical models, examples of good practice, checklists and self-assessment tools to customize each organization's path, based on its size, sector of activity and national context.

The integration of these two methodological sources has enabled Romagna Tech to design a robust GEP, consistent with European standards, adapted to its organizational context and geared towards measurable impact in the medium to long term. They also form the basis for the possible subsequent path towards UNI/PdR 125:2022 gender equality certification.

## 3. Romagna Tech: mission, areas of intervention, structure

Romagna Tech is a public-private consortium that promotes innovation and technology transfer, particularly in the fields of mechatronics, ICT, health, agrifood and sustainability. Its activities include industrial research, support for innovative start-ups, digitalization and European design.

---

<sup>10</sup><https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>

Current staff (October 2025):

- 20 employees
- 50% women, 50% men
- 80% with a bachelor's, master's or higher degree

The following table shows the distribution of staff by function.

	Women	Men
Chair		1
Board of directors	3	7
Technical Management	1	2
Coordinators	1	1
Administration	1	1
Senior Researchers		5
Junior Researchers	1	1
Fundraising area	2	
Communication and marketing area	2	
Secretariat	2	

The technical area is predominantly staffed by men, while the marketing, subsidized finance, administration and secretarial areas are predominantly staffed by women. The Board of Directors and the Board of Statutory Auditors, while maintaining a male majority, have recently shown a willingness to achieve gender balance by appointing two female directors and one female auditor.

A more detailed examination of the data broken down by gender shows that 20% of the total (4/20) are on fixed-term contracts and 45% (9/20) are part-time. Almost all of the employees in these categories are women (only one employee in the technical department is both on a fixed-term contract and part-time, and one is part-time).

Salaries are based on the National Collective Labor Agreement for Commerce and Services applied by Romagna Tech and vary according to the level of skills and seniority of the staff, without any distinction based on gender.

## 4. General objectives of Romagna Tech's GEP

Romagna Tech's *Gender Equality Plan* is based on an integrated vision of gender equality as an enabler of innovation, organizational well-being and scientific and technological competitiveness. The general objectives of the plan are consistent with the strategic priorities outlined by the European Commission, the National Strategy for Gender Equality and UNI/PdR 125:2022.

In particular, the GEP aims to:

### 1. Ensure equal career opportunities and access to resources

The aim is to ensure that all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal access to professional development opportunities, career advancement, training, participation in projects and positions of responsibility. This involves reviewing assessment, selection and internal progression criteria in order to remove any implicit biases or systemic barriers and promote a meritocratic and transparent system.

### 2. Eliminating stereotypes and prejudices in organizational processes

Gender stereotypes can negatively influence decision-making processes, interpersonal dynamics and resource allocation. This objective aims to promote profound cultural change through awareness-raising, training and communication initiatives that promote gender balance and combat all forms of prejudice or discrimination, especially in highly technical and scientific contexts.

### 3. Strengthening an inclusive organizational culture

An inclusive organization is capable of recognizing and valuing diversity, creating welcoming and stimulating environments, and facilitating the full development of human potential. The goal is to build a corporate culture based on respect, fairness and active listening, where everyone can feel an integral part of the institutional mission, regardless of gender, age, background or personal circumstances. This requires the active involvement of management and the integration of the principle of equality into corporate values.

### 4. Promoting work-life balance

Reconciling work and personal life is essential to ensuring equal opportunities and organizational well-being. The GEP promotes the introduction and strengthening of structural measures for flexible working hours, agile working, parenting support and family care, aimed at all staff. These measures not only respond to individual needs but also contribute to increasing productivity and collective motivation.

## 5. Preventing and combating harassment and discrimination

A safe and respectful working environment is the basis for any effective inclusion policy. Romagna Tech is committed to adopting clear policies and procedures for the prevention and management of inappropriate behavior, harassment, bullying or discriminatory acts. This objective includes the activation of confidential listening channels, the definition of codes of ethics and behavioral guidelines, as well as the provision of specific training for all staff, with particular attention to roles of responsibility.

## 5. Romagna Tech's GEP strategy

Romagna Tech's *Gender Equality Plan* has been developed in line with the minimum mandatory requirements established by the European Commission for access to Horizon Europe programme funding, and following the operational guidelines provided by the GEAR (Gender Equality in Academia and Research) tool developed by the EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality.

In particular, the GEP is based on five structural pillars, which represent the fundamental prerequisites for its formal validity and effective application:

### 1. Public, formal and accessible document

The GEP is an official document, approved by the Management and the Board of Directors, published on the Romagna Tech institutional website. This requirement, indicated as a mandatory building block by both the Horizon Europe Guidance and the GEAR tool, guarantees transparency, accountability and the organization's effective willingness to integrate gender equality into its organizational strategy.

REF. *Horizon Europe Guidance on GEP – Requirement no. 1: Public document approved by top management.*

### 2. Formal and political commitment by management

Full accountability on the part of senior management is essential to the success of the plan. The European Commission emphasizes that an effective GEP requires the active involvement of top management through statements of commitment, the appointment of contact persons, participation in monitoring and the integration of the GEP into strategic governance.

REF. *GEAR Step 2.2: Secure commitment from top-level management.*

### 3. Dedicated human and financial resources

To ensure the concrete implementation of the plan, Romagna Tech has allocated specific resources, including a Gender Equality Coordinator and a multidisciplinary working group

tasked with planning, implementing, monitoring and updating the GEP. In addition, financial resources have been allocated for training activities.

REF. *GEAR Step 2.4: Establish a Gender Equality Plan team and allocate resources.*

#### **4. Collection of gender-disaggregated data**

The systematic and continuous collection of gender-disaggregated data is essential for carrying out a realistic context analysis (diagnosis), identifying critical areas and measuring the effectiveness of the actions taken. The GEP provides for the collection and monitoring of indicators relating to: staff by qualification and area, promotions, remuneration, participation in projects, training, flexible working hours and turnover.

REF. *Horizon Europe – Mandatory criterion no. 3: Dedicated data collection and monitoring; GEAR Step 3.1: Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data.*

#### **5. Internal training and awareness-raising activities**

The GEP includes the organization of training courses and awareness-raising initiatives for all staff, with the aim of increasing awareness of gender equality issues, promoting an inclusive organizational culture and combating unconscious stereotypes and biases. Specific modules are also planned for roles of responsibility and for selection and evaluation committees.

REF. *Horizon Europe – Mandatory criterion no. 4: Training and awareness raising; GEAR Step 4.3: Raise awareness and build capacity across the organization.*

These pillars form the structural basis of the plan and are complemented by a cyclical approach based on diagnosis, planning, implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement, as recommended by GEAR:

1. **Diagnosis:** an initial analysis of the current state of gender equality within the organization was carried out. Quantitative and qualitative data on employment, careers, remuneration, representation and organizational culture were collected to identify any existing inequalities.
2. **Planning:** the Gender Equality Coordinator (Alessandra Folli) and the members of the Working Group (Stefano Torelli, Alessandro Golfarelli) have been identified. The strategic objectives and priorities for action have also been defined, with measurable indicators, timelines and responsibilities. The Gender Equality Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the GEP and involving all staff. The Working Group has an advisory and operational support role, collaborating with all areas of work.

3. Implementation: this phase involves putting the planned actions into practice (e.g. training, review of HR processes, promotion of work-life balance, inclusive communication), involving all staff and management.

4. Monitoring: periodic data collection and verification of results against defined indicators defined, to assess the effectiveness of the measures adopted (see chapter 7).

5. Continuous improvement: the GEP will be subject to periodic review based on monitoring results, updating objectives and actions to ensure steady progress towards full gender equality.

This approach ensures sustainability, operational effectiveness and adaptability of the GEP over time.

## 6. Thematic areas and actions of Romagna Tech's GEP

To promote effective and sustainable organizational transformation in terms of gender equality, Romagna Tech's Gender Equality Plan provides for targeted actions in five strategic areas of intervention, in line with European recommendations (Horizon Europe, GEAR tool) and UNI/PdR 125:2022 practice. These areas cover the main areas where action is needed to reduce structural and cultural inequalities in the workplace and in science.

### **Area 1: Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture**

This area aims to promote a work environment that is attentive to people's well-being, supporting a balance between professional and private life. The actions concern the introduction and enhancement of organizational flexibility tools (flexible working hours, smart working, leave), as well as the dissemination of a culture oriented towards care, sustainability and shared responsibility. Particular attention will also be paid to career transitions and returning to work after periods of absence related to parenting or family care.

### **Area 2: Leadership and decision-making processes**

This area focuses on increasing the presence and involvement of women in decision-making roles, with a view to gender rebalancing and talent development. The actions envisaged concern the promotion of empowerment and inclusive leadership pathways. The aim is to reduce the so-called 'glass ceiling' and contribute to more representative and pluralistic governance.

### **Area 3: Recruitment and career development**

In this area, action is taken on selection, assessment and career progression practices to ensure fairness in processes and the elimination of implicit bias. Actions include the introduction of

codes of conduct for recruitment, the diversification of evaluation committees, and the monitoring of career indicators broken down by gender. The aim is to ensure equal opportunities for access, retention and advancement for all people, particularly in science and technology (STEM) areas and in highly skilled profiles.

**Area 4: Gender-sensitive research and innovation**

This area promotes the systematic integration of gender into research and innovation content, in line with the *gender-sensitive science* approach. Actions include methodological training, support for writing projects that consider gender variables, and incentives for scientific production that adopts an intersectional perspective. The aim is to improve the quality and relevance of scientific results, as well as to contribute to the social responsibility of research.

**Area 5: Combating harassment and discrimination**

This area focuses on the prevention and management of inappropriate behavior, discriminatory acts or harassment of any kind (verbal, psychological, physical or digital), in order to protect the dignity and integrity of individuals. The actions envisaged include the adoption of a code of ethics, the definition of secure and confidential reporting procedures, and the implementation of awareness-raising and training courses on diversity, respect and inclusion. It is essential to create an organizational climate based on mutual respect and zero tolerance towards all forms of abuse.

The tables below detail the actions to be taken, according to the objectives set and defining the KPIs to be achieved within a specific time frame.

Area 1	Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture
Objective	Improve well-being at work through flexible measures
Actions	Adoption of flexible working hours and remote working policies Periodic survey on the corporate climate Support for returning from maternity/paternity leave
Contact	Chair, Technical Management
Team	Gender Equality Working Group
Beneficiaries	Employees
KPI	Internal satisfaction level Number of employees using flexibility measures
Target	Improvement in internal satisfaction by 2027
Timeframe	2025–2027

Area 2	Leadership and decision-making processes
Objective	Promote the presence of women in senior/management roles
Actions	Gender balance criteria in senior/management roles Training on inclusive leadership?
Contact persons	Chair, Technical Management
Team	Working group
Beneficiaries	Employees
KPI	Number of women in senior/management positions Number of inclusive leadership courses launched
Target	At least two projects per year with female PM One workshop by December 2027
Timeframe	2025–2027

Area	Recruitment and career development
Objective	Ensure fair and transparent selection processes
Actions	Code of conduct for recruitment Gender balance in selection committees
Contact	Chair, Technical Management
Team	Working group
Beneficiaries	New employees
KPIs	Female representation on shortlists Number of women hired in new positions
Target	At least one woman among any new hires/consolidations by 2027
Timeframe	2025–2027

Area	Gender-sensitive research and innovation
Objective	Include the gender dimension in R&I projects
Actions	Training on gender-sensitive research Integration of gender criteria into project proposals Balanced gender participation in initiatives promoted and organised by Romagna Tech
Contact	Technical management, coordinators, technical area, communication
Team	Researchers
Beneficiaries	Employees
KPIs	Number of projects with a gender focus Number of events with a gender-based approach
Target	At least 1 project and 1 initiative with a gender focus by 2027
Timeframe	2025–2027

Area 5	Combating harassment and discrimination
Objective	Prevent and address inappropriate behavior
Actions	Code of ethics and reporting channel Workshops on diversity, language and inclusion
Contact persons	Chair, Technical Management
Team	Working group
Beneficiaries	Employees
KPI	Number of reports handled Number of annual training initiatives
Target	100% of staff trained by 2027
Timeframe	2025–2027

## 7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring the implementation of the GEP is entrusted to the Gender Equality Working Group, appointed by the Management and composed of internal figures with expertise in organization, HR, planning and research.

The group is responsible for ensuring simple, continuous and sustainable monitoring, carrying out the following activities:

- the annual collection of gender-disaggregated data on staff, positions, training, participation in projects and flexibility tools adopted;
- the preparation of concise reports based on a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) already included in the plan tables, useful for assessing the progress of actions and making results visible;
- the proposal of corrective actions in the event of deviations from the defined targets or new organizational needs that emerge during implementation.

The group will update a summary sheet (GEP dashboard) annually, to be shared with management and made available internally as a transparent tool for self-assessment and a stimulus for continuous improvement.