



2025 - 2028

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Gender Equality Plan 2025–2027

Impacto Centro Studi ETS



CENTRO STUDI E RICERCA IMPACTO ETS

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Chapter 1 – Context and Rationale

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union and a legal and ethical obligation for all organisations engaged in research, innovation, and social development. The European Commission recognises gender equality as a precondition for excellence, innovation, and social sustainability (*European Commission, 2020*).

Impacto Centro Studi ETS (hereafter *Impacto*) adopts its first Gender Equality Plan for the period 2025–2027 in alignment with the **EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025**, the **European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda**, and the **Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans** (*European Commission, 2021*).

Founded in 2025 as an **independent research and training centre**, Impacto operates at the intersection between research, education, and social innovation. Its mission is to promote sustainable and inclusive development through applied research, capacity building, and European cooperation. Impacto's core fields of action include:

- access to ethical and transparent EU funding;
- impact measurement and social innovation;
- empowerment of civil society, youth, and women entrepreneurs;
- inclusion and accessibility in education, work, and digital environments.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is not merely a compliance instrument but a structural commitment to mainstream gender equality into Impacto's organisational culture, research priorities, and partnerships. In line with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality)** (*United Nations, 2015*) and the **European Pillar of Social Rights** (*Council of the EU, 2017*), the GEP aims to ensure that equality, diversity, and care are integrated across all dimensions of Impacto's work.

Chapter 2 – Governance and Institutional Commitment

Gender equality at Impacto is embedded in the organisation's governance framework and ethical standards. The Board of Directors, chaired by the President and supported by the Vice-President, ensures that equality principles inform all strategic and operational decisions.

A **Gender Equality Officer** is appointed annually to coordinate the implementation of the plan, monitor progress, and report to the Board. The Officer collaborates with the Research and Training Units, the Communication Team, and external experts when needed.

Impacto's **Code of Ethics and Non-Discrimination Policy** defines gender equality as a transversal principle guiding recruitment, partnerships, research ethics, and communication. The organisation adheres to the values set by the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Articles 21 and 23)**, guaranteeing equality between women and men in all spheres of activity (*European Union, 2012*).

Institutional commitment is expressed through three main mechanisms:

1. **Integration** – embedding gender equality objectives into Impacto's strategic plans, EU proposals, and project governance.
2. **Participation** – ensuring balanced gender representation (40–60%) in leadership positions, working groups, and public events.
3. **Accountability** – systematic monitoring of results through gender-disaggregated data and transparent reporting in the annual Social Report (*EIGE, 2021*).

This governance model ensures that gender equality is not treated as a separate policy area but as an integral dimension of organisational excellence and quality assurance.

Chapter 3 – Data, Evidence and Analysis

In accordance with the **Horizon Europe eligibility criteria** (*European Commission, 2021*), Impacto maintains a structured system for collecting, analysing, and reporting gender-disaggregated data.

Data collection covers all staff categories, collaborators, and trainees, as well as external experts, board members, and project participants. The data are reviewed annually to monitor trends and identify inequalities. The following dimensions are systematically analysed:

- gender distribution in governance and management roles;
- composition of project teams and working groups;
- participation of women and men in training and mentoring activities;
- gender balance among trainers, consultants, and research partners;
- pay and career progression equity where applicable;
- gender representation in communication materials and public visibility.

Impacto integrates these findings into its **annual Gender & Inclusion Report**, which becomes part of the broader **Social Impact Report (Bilancio Sociale)** published in accordance with Italian Third Sector regulations.

This approach follows the methodological recommendations of the **EIGE Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit** (*EIGE, 2021*), ensuring that data serve as a foundation for policy design and decision-making. Evidence-based monitoring allows Impacto to move beyond declarative commitments and to adopt targeted actions addressing specific gaps and biases.

Chapter 4 – Implementation and Key Actions

Impacto's Gender Equality Plan is articulated around six thematic areas consistent with the European Institute for Gender Equality framework (*EIGE, 2021*) and the **Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans** (*European Commission, 2021*).

Each area translates the principles of equality, inclusion, and fairness into operational measures, combining internal development and external impact.

1. Work–Life Balance and Organisational Culture

Impacto promotes a working environment that values flexibility, trust, and well-being. Staff and collaborators can access hybrid working arrangements, flexible scheduling, and remote collaboration tools.

The organisation upholds a **“right to disconnect” policy** and fosters a culture of mutual respect. Inclusive language guidelines are applied across all communication materials, ensuring non-stereotypical and gender-neutral representation.

Workshops on inclusive leadership and psychological safety are delivered annually to all staff and project managers.

2. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Impacto ensures gender-balanced representation across all levels of governance and project coordination.

Selection and appointment procedures are transparent and based on merit while actively preventing unconscious bias.

The principle *“No Women, No Panel”* applies to public events, conferences, and expert groups, in line with the European Commission's internal policy (*European Commission, 2019*).

Regular monitoring ensures that at least 40% of leadership positions and public speakers are women or non-binary professionals.

3. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Professional Development

Recruitment processes follow equal-opportunity principles, with gender-neutral job descriptions, diverse selection panels, and standardised evaluation grids.

A **mentoring and coaching programme** supports young professionals, particularly women and early-career researchers, in developing leadership and project-management skills. Pay and contract equity are reviewed annually.

Impacto's internal training system also integrates modules on **unconscious bias** and **gender mainstreaming in project design**, consistent with the *European Parliament Resolution on Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Budget* (*European Parliament, 2022*).

4. Gender Dimension in Research, Training and EU Projects

As a research and training centre, Impacto ensures that the gender dimension is systematically considered in all stages of project development—from needs analysis and methodology to implementation and evaluation.

Each EU proposal coordinated or co-authored by Impacto includes a **gender analysis** and gender-disaggregated KPIs.

Training courses and learning materials reflect the diversity of perspectives and avoid reproducing gender stereotypes.

Impacto's research methodology aligns with the **Gendered Innovations 2 Policy Report** (*European Commission, 2020b*), promoting gender-sensitive research design and inclusive data collection.

Collaborations with European partners (e.g. Impact Hub Network, universities, and NGOs) strengthen transnational learning on gender equality, social inclusion, and innovation.

5. Prevention of Gender-Based Violence, Harassment and Discrimination

Impacto applies a **Zero Tolerance Policy** towards any form of discrimination, harassment, or gender-based violence.

A confidential reporting channel and an internal mediation mechanism guarantee the protection of victims and whistle-blowers.

All staff and collaborators are required to attend annual training on ethics and professional conduct.

Communication campaigns within Impacto's network promote awareness and the role of bystanders as allies in preventing violence and discrimination.

These measures follow the standards of the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (Istanbul Convention, 2011)** and the ethical principles of the **European Charter for Researchers** (*European Commission, 2005*).

6. Capacity Building and Networking

Impacto's European network of partners and members serves as a multiplier for gender equality practices.

Through the *Impacto Membership Programme*, organisations are encouraged to adopt gender equality principles in their own governance and project design.

The centre will launch a *Gender & Inclusion Hub* in 2026, offering resources, guidelines, and case studies to support network members.

This reflects Impacto's systemic vision of gender equality as both an internal responsibility and a shared European mission.

Chapter 5 – Monitoring, Learning and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring and accountability are key pillars of Impacto's GEP.

A cyclical process of evaluation, learning, and improvement ensures that actions remain relevant and measurable over time.

5.1 Monitoring Framework

- **Annual review** led by the Gender Equality Officer and presented to the Board of Directors each October.
- **Quantitative indicators:** gender ratios, participation rates, training completion, and event representation.
- **Qualitative indicators:** staff feedback, network surveys, and external evaluator assessments.

5.2 Reporting and Transparency

Results are summarised in the **Annual Gender Equality Report**, which is publicly available on Impacto's website and included in the Social Report.

Progress is also shared with European partners and donors to strengthen transparency and trust.

5.3 Continuous Improvement

Impacto views gender equality as a process of organisational learning.

Findings from monitoring are used to adjust policies, update training modules, and define new priorities.

The GEP will be revised in 2027 to align with future EU frameworks and with the next cycle of the **EU Gender Equality Strategy** (2026–2030).

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