

**Institute for Innovative Technologies**

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# **Gender Equality Plan**

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“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

— Kofi Annan

## 1. Preamble

Employees are the heart and the mind of any company, but this is especially the case in innovation-based organisations and start-ups such as IIT: only if all personnel feel welcome, accepted and appreciated, the company thrives. Therefore, IIT has dedicated itself to promote the physical and psychological health of its employees by implementing a system based on three pillars which complement each other like puzzle pieces:



The basis to the present Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is the Ethical Code – implemented in 2017 – which underlines in art. 2.4 IIT's commitment to Gender Equality in different sectors, be it during the recruitment process or in the work environment. The second pillar, Assessing the risk for work-related stress (an action promoted by Inail, the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work), is based on quantitative and qualitative data and focuses on both the physical and psychological health of the employees ignoring however the question of gender equality.

Therefore, the present Gender Equality Plan (GEP) needs also to be considered under this perspective, i.e., as a puzzle piece which complements IIT's existing strategy: the GEP makes a fundamental step towards supporting diverse competences coming from



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different skills and competences by creating awareness on all levels and across all departments.

## 2. IIT Gender Equality Plan

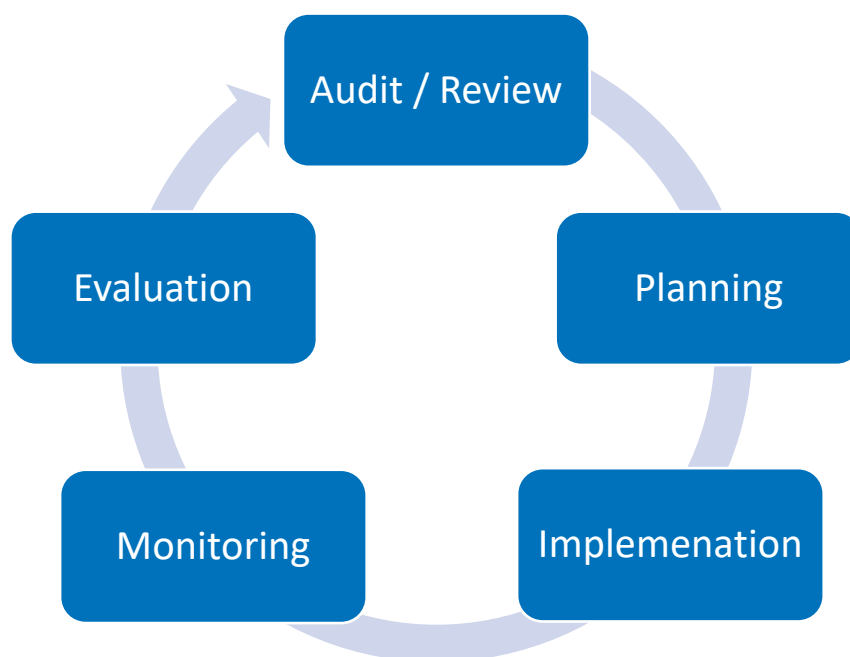
Due to IIT's manageable size, there is no specific gender representative; however, as a tribute to the GEP's importance two internal entities are focusing on it: first, IIT's top level management, i.e., the CEO, is responsible for the GEP in general, with a gender balanced team focusing on its realization and on improving gender equality in general. This team comprises:

- The Human Resources and Recruiting Manager
- Representative(s) from Marketing and Communications

This task force is perfectly aware of the fact that the implementing and monitoring of the GEP is a continuous work in progress, which demands constant attention and work.

Therefore, the following GEP cycle (based on: European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021,

<https://data.europe.eu/doi/10.2777/876509>) will continue to be relevant in the future:





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This process is based on:

- data collection, quantitative and qualitative analyses;
- actions being taken;
- participation from all levels of IIT;

and ensures that:

- gender equality becomes and remains a constant and fixed part of the corporate culture at IIT.
- the GEP is constantly monitored and adapted if necessary.
- the GEP and its results are communicated transparently to the organisation and its employees.

As the GEP process engages IIT on all levels, staff time to develop and implement the GEP (e.g., data analysis, review of issues, development of new policies and practices, participation in workshops) is foreseen as needed.

#### **a. Data collection and monitoring**

IIT's GEP is evidence based, i.e., data will be collected, analysed, and monitored. Among the data collected are the following indicators:

*Staff numbers by gender at all levels, by function and contractual relation to the organisation;*

As IIT is active in male dominated sectors (i.e., technology, energy, automotive), it aims at having a staff as gender balanced as possible due to it having positive effects on innovation and company culture.

- *Number of absence days taken by women and men according to absence motive;*

IIT is aware of the fact that absence days are often an indicator of employees feeling not only physical but also psychological unwell. Therefore, a higher absence rate in women might indicate that the female employees feel under-estimated and not as appreciated as their male colleagues.



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- *Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions (numbers of female and male candidates invited to the first and second round of job interviews);*

As mentioned above, IIT is aware of the fact that the sectors of its activities might appeal primarily to men. Therefore, the recruiting process is closely monitored as to guarantee as much of gender equality as possible.

The number of indicators may change in the future should the need arise to deepen some specific areas of interest of the GEP.

However, it is necessary to underline the fact, that the number of employees working at IIT is quite limited (about 10 persons resulting in ~ 9 full-time equivalents; data from November 2022) resulting therefore in few women working there. As a result, the collected data might actually not meet minimal statistical requirements to get valid conclusions; anyway, the system will be put in place and get enhanced once IIT will reach higher number of employees.

## **b. Objectives and desired outcomes**

The main objective of this GEP is to ensure that female employees find optimal working conditions, all the while feeling good and appreciated at IIT, as well as to increase the proportion of women in the company through recruiting and personnel development. At the same time, offering an adequate work-life balance allows all employees to tailor their working time according to their own needs, abandoning gender stereotypes.

Furthermore, IIT aims at supporting through the GEP an appreciative and welcoming organisational and communication culture throughout all levels and departments. Therefore, at the beginning of 2023 IIT will analyse the data regarding 2022 and derive some concrete objectives and measures for



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the year to come. An updated version of this GEP will take them into account and be published on the homepage.

### **c. Training**

IIT's GEP is working on raising awareness on gender equality and gender biases. As it is fundamental to spread this mindset across the whole organisation, everybody at IIT is enlisted to participate in workshops, surveys and training in general.

## **3. Measures already implemented and/or in development**

A corresponding organisational culture as well as creating work-life balance are key factors for a gender equal company which aims at going beyond gender stereotypes and biases.

### **a. Integrating the organisational culture**

Embedding gender equality in the organisational culture is the first step towards creating the right framework conditions in the company. The following measures have been and/or will be implemented:

- Gender equality, respect and empowerment are part of IIT's core values and are enshrined in our in-house Ethical Code.
- Clear rules for dealing with sexual harassment as well as bullying are part of our in-house Ethical Code.
- Both internal and external communications aim at using a gender-sensitive language.

### **b. Enhancing the work-life balance**

IIT believes that every employee has the right to tailor their working time according to their needs as this improves, among others, physical and mental health and lowers absenteeism.



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As this start-up phase is particularly demanding for everybody due to the high level of commitment, responsibility and flexibility required, the company reciprocates by guaranteeing its employees a high level of flexibility and therefore an acceptable work-life balance. The key to this work-life balance are adaptable working models which offer flexibility in terms of extent (customized part-time) and location (smart working).

In short: IIT supports choices/wishes of employees in working part-time instead of full-time and has already implemented company rules which allow smart working up to 8 or 10 working days per month (if requested). Those rules foresee more smart working days if employees have children or the distance between home and working place exceeds 25 km – all these measures ensure a better balance between family/home and working place. These measures will be kept and further developed/enlarged if useful.

### **c. Gender balance across IIT: from Recruiting to Working at IIT**

IIT promotes as a company equal opportunities, fairness and empowerment.

This approach starts during the recruitment process which is as balanced as possible (taking into consideration different aspects, such as qualification, experience and test results) and in which the assessment commission aims at finding the right candidate for an open position regardless of their gender; wherever reasonable, there will be a female member of the assessment commission representing IIT's focus on gender balance.

IIT aims at getting balanced numbers of female and male candidates passing the first threshold of the recruiting process (CV, qualification, and compliance check) who will be then invited to the first interview.





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IIT's employees have all access to educational measures irrespective of gender and level of employment and are encouraged to pursue further training according to their interests and capabilities.

#### **d. Training**

Gender equality is part of the mandatory training for all employees at IIT and focuses on the self-reflection with regards to one's own role and beliefs and dealing with "unconscious biases". The form of the training may vary from individual and autonomous IATs (Implicit Association Tests, e.g., Harvard's Gender – Career IAT) to in-person workshops carried out by specialists.

This training can be a part of other training programmes focusing on physical and mental health as IIT considers gender equality being a part of it.

Beyond continuing the measures which have already been implemented, IIT is going to create a list of resources dedicated to gender equality which will be available internally. Further training will be mandatory to all.