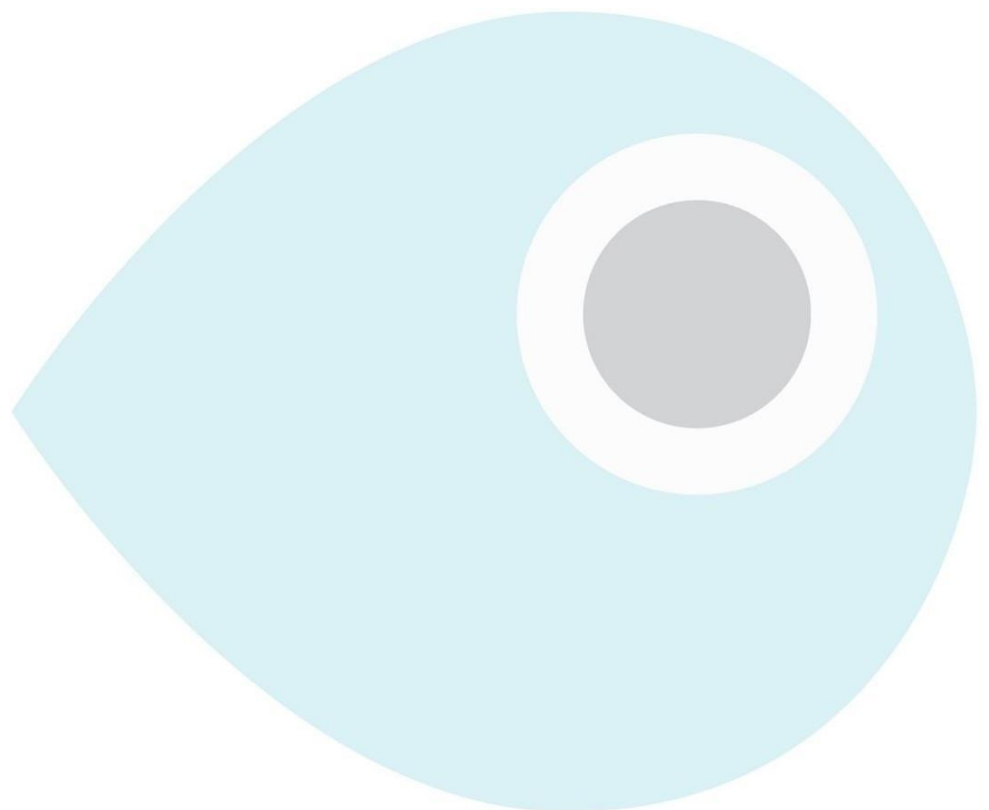


*Deep Blue*

# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

2024-2025





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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a powerful tool to have a compass pointing in the right direction: a fair gender equality and equity within our Organisation. This strategy is not mandatory, yet an important stance Deep Blue wants to take, not only for the internal well-being and fair gender shared prosperity, but also for its network and stakeholders.

To fully understand the utility of the document, it is necessary to jump in the perspective of gender mainstream and the proper definition of words.

The Gender Equality Plan has been introduced in the Horizon Europe Programme, when the European Commission made gender equality plans (GEPs) a basic requirement for participation in its research framework programme for Public Entities. The Horizon Europe Programme defines GEPs as “*a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through a process of structural change*”. This policy instrument strives to sustainably transform organisational processes, cultures and structures within the field of research and innovation (R&I) to combat and reduce gender imbalances and inequalities. Thus, a holistic approach is required as it engages with the whole organisation, all relevant stakeholders and tackles several gender equality issues. Therefore, it is not only a matter of equal career opportunities and equal access to resources, of any nature; rather, it is a matter of inclusivity with regards to both genders necessities and diversities. This can be pursued only by establishing priorities within the organisation and concrete objectives. The commitment of GEP is not only to better perform within the organisation, but to actively contribute to the structural mental and societal change.

Nouns and words are powerful, yet knowledge and mastery of meanings are even more. It is important to clarify, in this introduction, the meaning of crucial words referring to the gender, to avoid misleading.

With the word *gender*, we refer to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Actually, it has changed, and we hope it continues to change for the better. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. This is referred to as “*intersectionality*”. This document brings along an intersectional approach in its preliminary analysis and planning: indeed, it includes multiple complementary aspects in the general concepts of equity and equality.



By *sex*, we refer to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Gender interacts with sex, but it is different.

Besides, *gender* and *sex* are related to but different from *gender identity*. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth.

*Gender Mainstreaming* is an approach to policy-making that considers both women's and men's interests and concerns. In 1998, the Council of Europe defined gender mainstreaming as: “The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making”.

Therefore, the Gender Equality Plan aims at enhancing the full participation of people in organisational life by reducing gender inequality through a series of internally consistent actions pursued over the years 2024-2025. As this plan presents the punctual and temporally defined framework, the here stated strategy will be checked, evaluated, and updated on an annual basis. Thus, an appendix will be produced every year to briefly evaluate the results Deep Blue is building throughout the present strategy.

Then, at program conclusion in December 2025, the results and considerations will be publicly presented, and another strategy will be set up and implemented. This procedure will allow the GEP Committee to check on the measures taken thanks to a constant participation and frequent consultations of all parties within the Company. Participation and sharing will be key to this GEP approach.

The document has been written following the guidelines stated by EIGE – European Institution for Gender Equality, which have helped to adequately approach the thematic and adapt and adopt the most suitable tools. Thanks also to the internal expertise on gender inclusion management, the team has come to a scheme of approach, which will be presented in detail in Sec. 4.1.2.

The GEP works on *gender* redefinition, which means committing to deconstruct the social narrative about women and men, related to their role in societies shaped by social constructs. This is why the strategy only refers to women and men, and not to other gender identities. These terms are all related, but still remain on different semantic and conceptual levels. Nonetheless, it is worth stressing that when it comes to inclusivity, we commit ourselves in a holistic way, following the “none is left behind” principle.



## 2. DEEP BLUE

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### 2.1 The Organisation

Deep Blue (DBL) is a research and consulting Italian SME, specialised in human factor, safety, security, validation, and scientific dissemination. The company operates in critical infrastructure domains, such as Transport and in particular Aviation, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Energy.

DBL has a multidisciplinary team of specialists in human factor, cognitive science, psychology, interaction design, computer science, data analysis and engineering, dealing with the design, analysis, and evaluation of complex socio-technical systems.

In this activity DBL considers the interactions, integration, and the allocation of functions between all the components of the system, including human, procedures, and automated equipment. Most of the company's work is for European Agencies, on several specific topics including:

- Analysis, evaluation and validation of concepts and systems in safety- and security-critical domains
- Evaluation of dependability and resilience in socio-technical systems and risk assessment of innovative concepts and systems
- Dissemination and transfer of research results

Deep Blue operates in contexts with high security, safety, and resilience requirements adopting a multidisciplinary approach combining engineering, operational expertise, safety and security risk assessment, cognitive, behavioural, societal, ethical, and legal knowledge. With its integrated, multidisciplinary team, Deep Blue supports the design and validation of secure, dependable, trustworthy, and resilient solutions taking into account humans, their practices and procedures and the interaction with all the components of a complex working environment.

#### 2.1.1 Organisational Structure and Size

Deep Blue is a ltd company founded by Alberto Pasquini, Patrizia Marti and Carla Fresia.

Starting from 2023, it is owned by Simone Pozzi (24,5%), Alessandra Tedeschi (18,5%), Linda Napoletano (18,5%), Damiano Taurino (5,5%), Francesca Margiotta (5,5%), Luca Save (5,5%), Marco Ducci (5,5%), Michela Terenzi (5,5%), Micol Biscotto (5,5%) and Stefano Bonelli (5,5%).



In Deep Blue, all the research projects and consultancies are grouped into Areas and Functions. Areas define the industrial domains of application. Each Area has a Head of Area. Each employee is assigned to one or more specific areas.

**Innovative Human Factors** (Head: Stefano Bonelli): this area collects all exploratory research projects and consultancies focused on innovative technologies and concepts (e.g., AI, Single Pilot Operations). Our main role is user research, concept design, and validation.

**Environment & Energy** (Head: Carlo Abate): the Environment area works on projects related to greener transportation, sustainable energy, climate risk assessment, mitigation and adaptation for climate change, and climate change awareness and communication.

**Railways** (Head: Luca Save): this area deals with the integration of Human and Organisation Factors into the Safety Management Systems of railway companies and infrastructure managers. We help companies to understand the impact of human performance on the safety of their operations. We support them in activities such as Risk Assessment, Accident Analysis, Safety Monitoring, Safety Culture Assessment, Management of Changes with impact on Safety, etc.

**Applied Human Factors** (Head: Michela Terenzi): this area engages in a multidisciplinary effort to generate information about human capabilities and limitations, and then to apply it to equipment, systems, procedures, environments, training, and staffing, with the goals of enhancing productivity and safety, and supporting human performance and quality of life.

Projects in the R&D phase deal mainly with Aviation and ATM with the final goal of validating with the final users the innovative concepts and solutions in a pre-operational environment. In consultancy projects we apply the HF body of knowledge to deliver customised solutions for our clients in the Aviation and Maritime domain.

**Secure Societies** (Head: Alessia Golfetti): the area deals with the design, development, and validation of systems able to absorb natural and human made disasters (such as floods, earthquakes, acts of terrorism, pandemics), limiting damages and consequences on safety. Systems can be critical infrastructure (e.g., airports), organisations (e.g., working environments), or social systems (e.g., communities).

**Manufacturing** (Head: Linda Napoletano): this area deals with the introduction of innovative solutions in manufacturing environments towards a real implementation of the Industry 4.0 as a digital transformation of machines and processes. In consultancies and research projects we focus on users, by adopting methods and techniques to study the UX as one of the major enabling factors for an efficient transition. The main aspects we take into consideration are:



- The workspace, the general equipment and furniture, and the physical environment.
- Organisational management, people management, personal factors, change management.
- The evolution of skills following the introduction of innovations and the development of competences required to adequately perform at work.
- Actual/prescribed working methods, positions/functions in the organisation and expected task.
- How people work and communicate with each other on shared goals and tasks.
- HMI, actions, reactions, and interactions between humans and other system components.

**Drones & Advanced Air Mobility** (Head: Damiano Taurino): this area works on innovative projects and initiatives covering drones' integration in the aviation system, Urban Air Mobility (UAM), Electric Vertical Take-off and landing systems (eVTOL) and related enablers and infrastructures (vertiports, U-Space services, etc.). The area looks at these topics with a multi-disciplinary approach that includes regulatory aspects, safety and human performance, training aspects, passenger and public acceptance, and environmental aspects. The area has in place strong synergies and mutual exchange with the activities conducted by EuroUSC-Italia.

**Training** (Head: Simone Pozzi): our training courses span from teamwork, Human Factors, to safety assessment, cybersecurity, liability in automated systems, drone regulation, and drone safety. Our training courses are tailor-made and combine theoretical principles and lectures with experiential training and practical activities. Together with the traditional classroom courses, we provide innovative blended learning paths and e-learning solutions.

This structure is also improving its efficiency, due to the escalation of numbers in terms of employees, services offered to clients and European research projects. The consistent growth is playing a decisive role in the sedimentation of Deep Blue's organisational structure and culture, making an effort to build the best supportive structure not only for the efficient parameters' improvement, but especially for the wellbeing of the employees.

In fact, referring to the reporting period taken into consideration in this document, in 2021 the Company counted 53 employees. This data will be better analysed in Sec. 3.2, especially in Sec. 3.2.1.

Therefore, according to the Italian legal framework for enterprises, Deep Blue is categorised as an SME, which stands for Small and Medium Enterprise.

## 2.1.2 Organisational culture

Deep Blue is a company renowned for its attention toward the welfare of its employees and links its principles toward policies aimed to facilitate a Life-Work balance approach; intending work as part





of life that necessarily refers to the identity of a person. The purpose is to positively integrate all these aspects so that the employee could manage with flexibility his/her life so that work commitments do not become an obstacle to a healthy lifestyle but actually facilitates and encourages it.

Deep Blue aspires to be perceived and act as a Good People Company, an organisation which puts its people first, understanding its employees and their work-life needs and desires based on their personalities and expectations from work. Here are some workplace practices DBL adopts, or aspires to adopt shortly, to ensure supporting employees to get the balance right.

- 1. Acknowledge every employee is different:** DBL acknowledges that some employees may be desperate to achieve a better work life balance, while others may feel satisfied with the time they spend working. Some may be eager to work part time. Some may want to start working later, but be happy to finish later too. Others may not mind working extended hours, if it means they can switch off when they get home. DBL believes that every employee is different, and deserves experiences at work that can be personalised for everyone, as there won't be a one-size-fits all formula that really works.
- 2. Develop personalised career paths:** as the result of a continuous personal development system, supported with personalised training, off the shelf courses, and experience-based training.
- 3. Keep a young and motivated environment:** strong relationships with universities to offer interns opportunities that often become stable working relations.
- 4. Flexible and remote working:** DBL places importance and value on flexible working and promotes and sustains a culture of trust where people are autonomous in managing their work when, where and how works best for them. DBL knows that employees will still get the job done even when finishing earlier to get their boiler fixed or see a physician when needed. Flexible and personalised remote work is encouraged.
- 5. Focus on productivity, collaboration and cooperation:** rather than count the hours employees work, DBL encourages managers to focus on the completion of a particular task. Some days employees may need to put in long hours to complete a task, but this is offset by the days when they don't need to do a full 7-hour day. Low competitive and highly collaborative work environment, mutual support and horizontal exchanges are encouraged.
- 6. Encourage breaks to refresh minds and socialise:** DBL encourages employees to take breaks, take a walk or even work in an entirely different part of the office. Small, but fully equipped kitchen is available for workers to go to, break and socialise.
- 7. Regularly review workloads:** DBL constantly monitors and reviews the allocation of duties to ensure individuals have achievable workloads. DBL encourages and coaches Managers to familiarise with the processes of allocating work, talk to their teams regularly to know who is busy and stressed, and who has capacity. Individual People Managers are assigned to every employee to help setting career and growth objectives, and monitor the day-by-day work,



periodically asking to indicate to managers whether they are overworked, just right or have spare capacity.

- 8. Lead by example:** DBL strives to ensure that managers and the senior leadership team enjoy a healthy work-life balance too. Making sure they're leaving the office on time, taking breaks and not emailing workers out of office hours or expecting them to deliver work in unworkable time scales when it isn't urgent.
- 9. Value time to volunteer:** DBL encourages motivation by social action rather than simply just getting paid. Workers are allowed the freedom to give back to society and the local community while working. For example, since 2021, DBL promotes the collaboration with Binario95 association, where employees can spend some of their working time with the ONG and make their skills available to support activities for the social reintegration of the homeless.
- 10. Ask employees for views:** DBL wants to create a better working environment for all the employees, by periodically engaging them and asking them for feedback and suggestions.
- 11. Benefits and perks for employees:** Benefits and perks are the added resources DBL invests in to take care of the employees. DBL offers comprehensive welfare packages to make sure employees stay healthy (and are taken care of when things come up), and additional perks to help doing work.
  - Office Environment
    - Free healthy snacks in a fully furnished kitchen and coffee station
    - Free library
    - Ergonomics desks and accessories (like chairs and keyboards)
    - Company social events for employees
    - Casual dress code
  - Employee Development
    - Mentor/People Management program
    - Tuition reimbursement
    - Office library
    - Have lunch together and get to know and learn from each other (meeting rooms are available during lunch break to favour the interactions)
    - Stipends for certifications and employee development
    - Paid memberships to professional organisations
    - Sponsored travel to scientific and industry conferences



## 2.2 Deep Blue's Network of Stakeholders

Deep Blue has a strong international network. This contributes not only to the good reputation of the Organisation, but also to its great potential impact and responsibility of leading good practices with regards to social justice and inclusivity.

Stakeholders within this network are both from the private and public sectors, and Deep Blue works with and for them in research projects and consulting, training, and other services supply.

Being Horizon Europe one of the key EU funding programme for the Company, framework that offers important challenges in the social innovation actions for a real sustainable development, taking into account economy, environment, people, innovation, and gender equity and equality, Deep Blue *must* take this chance to make its part in this change of perspective and to make a clear and transparent pathway to reach the transformation needed, not forgetting to exploit the advantage of amplifying the impact of its choices within its network of stakeholders.



# PHASE ONE: ANALYSIS

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## 3. ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE-OF-PLAY

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### 3.1 Context Assessment

Before moving on with the strategy, a preliminary analysis and assessment of the state-of-play is mandatory when it comes to planning and implementing actions. In particular, the socio-economic context of the current years is too dynamic to not have an impactful resonance in our ecology: our work vision and rhythms, work-life balance, renewed sense of family and social life, our perception of economic trends and its impact on our choices (very often gender based, thus differing from one gender to another), our ambitions and priorities.

Covid-19 pandemic has changed us profoundly, from our political to our social networks' assets. As a consequence, also the workplaces and general management had to shape their commitment and workforce management, trying to fit new necessities from both the workers and the employer side.

A first consideration comes from the general perception of our lives: lockdowns and social distancing forced us in a sort of bubble in which we redesigned relationships, personal goals, society future, work-life balance, wellbeing, our conception and value of money, the concept of stability itself. All these feelings and emotions inevitably led to new standpoints and, consequently, actions.

The concept of work is renewed after lockdowns: the presence at workplaces is no more needed in favour of flexibility to earn personal spaces and moments dedicated to our body, mind, creativity, relationships and personal interests. This view gives a brand-new design to our decoding parameters: the workplace is now perceived as an opportunity to make ideas meet, to share feelings and perspectives with colleagues and to create rather than execute. As pure and mere execution is possible at home, alone, with several benefits for families and for the environment (avoiding traffic and individual transport means, thus reducing emissions and stress impacting mental health), offices are designed by workers and their new expectations and needs. There is way more comfort in asking for personal space and precise boundaries, and even more strength and willingness to keep them.

Moreover, two other big changes are noticeable due to the Pandemic. The disruption of the event has shaken global systems and international balances. Immediate consequences affected economic



stability and the management of risks by our governments at national and international levels. The direct impact of being direct spectators was the new vision of risks itself. Strong instability and quick job losses and companies' failures, huge assistance programs and welfare manoeuvres, have destabilised the concept of a lifelong security. This was something that previous crises, such as the sub-prime's one in 2008, already taught us, but the implication of the health factor and the priority of life safeguarding, has deepened the impact on societies. Of course, cultural and institutional backgrounds play a crucial role when it comes to reaction and management strategies. In Italy, in the very first moment this translated into a strong solidarity movement which led to a positivity wave in the markets, with the promising perspective of new investments supported by a new acquired knowledge and awareness of risks and related management instruments.

Nonetheless, at a social level we should focus on the final product of this global experience: the acquired skill of resilience. Especially in Italy, resilience became the mantra of this new era, and people tried to make it the cornerstone of their new projects in each field. As analysed in the next session, implications and consequences of Covid-19 hit differently men and women, and the gap and variance were worse depending on regions, work sectors and status of parents.

The context analysis is fundamental to put every evidence in the right perspective; furthermore, it helps to understand employees needs and define the proper and sustainable measures to meet the satisfaction while implementing impactful choices in both the company and the employees' perspective. Each of the mentioned aspects impacts gender equality achievements, playing the role of giving new opportunities and/or creating new obstacles. Again, the context building is crucial for interpretation and deduction.

### **3.1.1 Socio-economic, cultural, political, and historical framework: preliminary considerations on gender perspectives**

From a gender perspective, many variables contribute to impact and to shape the frame in which each sex dives in. Socio-economic, cultural, political, and historical variables, especially in our national context, have continuously built edges within which the narrative of gender has been produced and sedimented. Among these beliefs and cultural artefacts, the one playing a central role is related to the semantic and pragmatic construction of social roles intended for women and men. The intersectional analysis makes clear that these psycho-cultural mechanisms have a huge impact in all socialising institutions. Even today, data show a palpable difficulty in taking over the women's role of primary care with regards to their family, children, parents, and relatives. The easy equation that sees women as indisputably responsible for the "family nest" and domestic business (explaining it as a normal gender-based attitude, temperament, or natural characteristic, namely "maternal instinct") brings the result for women of being "expendable". Covid-19 in Italy has affirmed this weakness: due to external



events, such as economic crisis, closure of schools because of infections, companies' difficulties, and jobs instability, in 2020 77,4% of voluntary resignations came from women mothers<sup>1</sup>. In these cases, the major impactful reasons behind the choice of leaving the job position was represented by the difficulty in reconciling professional life with childcare needs, due to poor care services availability (38% of the total) and their high costs, organisational aspects related to professional context, absence of relatives support for childcare (27,1%)<sup>2</sup>. Quitting the job hides two implicit data related to women conditions: weaker contracts and lower salaries than their “breadwinner” partners, reinforcing the concept of “expendable role” and hardly settling a disparity among genders, again at economic, opportunity, accessibility, cultural and social levels. On the other side, we must debate that this vicious inequality affects men as well: their serenity of choosing to be home rather than working, or to be more present in the family businesses, or again to choose part-time jobs and care roles. Their marginal role obstacles a possible equality, even because the socialisation of models is learned and sedimented thanks to imitative processes of children, forcing the perpetuation of tricky and psychologically implicit social beliefs.

This is not the only problem that gender inequality faces but, on the job market, the cultural role of parents relates to a high socio-economic cost that we must address nationally and also at company level. Another issue that comes up within this context assessment is based on opportunities: they are somehow precluded, tailored, shaped, and bounded by cultural bias and introjected models without really noticing it. Choosing a career rather than another still represents for both genders today the result of stereotypes and patriarchal traps, which push male gender to hard sciences and female gender to humanistic paths. Many initiatives have partially stemmed this trend by boosting accessibility of bachelor's courses and masters, for both genders, trying to compensate for gender presence and limiting the proliferation of gendered work positions and professional roles. This goal is not just a prerogative of universities and education ministries, but it must be accomplished by industries and companies as well in their job requests, as they represent the main network reflecting the stereotypes and inequalities.

Deep Blue must take into account this preliminary context assessment in order to evaluate specific actions and strategies in its Gender Equality Plan, to properly intercept needs and points of weakness, crossing socio-economic, historical, cultural and political variables. The company is aware of its crucial role, even if limited and on a small scale, in the change of pathway, and will take its stand accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Ispettorato Nazionale del Lavoro, “Relazione annuale sulle convalide delle dimissioni e risoluzioni consensuali delle lavoratrici madri e dei lavoratori padri, ai sensi dell’art. 55 del Decreto Legislativo 26 marzo 2001, n. 151”, settembre 2021

<sup>2</sup> Save the Children, *Le Equilibriste – la maternità in Italia 2022*, report 2022, pag. 25



### 3.1.2 International and National Legislation framework

It is important to picture the International and National legal framework to understand the boundaries in which we are acting.

At the International level, the signature of the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention)*<sup>3</sup> represents a key moment for gender equality goals achievement, and a big step forward for the European Union. The decision, applied since 2017, is the most comprehensive international treaty on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence. It was presented and opened for signature in 2011. Its importance is related to the fact that it is the first binding international instrument for fighting and preventing gender-based violence.

Italy authorised the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by approving the law 27/06/2013 n.77<sup>4</sup>.

Its content has been then integrated in the *EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – striving for a Union of Equality*<sup>5</sup>. The EU Gender Equality Strategy delivers on the Von Der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. The Strategy presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 towards a gender-equal Europe. The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our European society.

The key objectives are:

- ending gender-based violence
- challenging gender stereotypes
- closing gender gaps in the labour market
- achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy
- addressing the gender pay and pension gaps
- closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions, and intersectionality is a horizontal principle for its implementation. While the Strategy focuses on actions within the EU, it is coherent with the EU's external policy on gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ref. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:4301302&from=EN>

<sup>4</sup> Ref. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/07/01/13G00122/sg>

<sup>5</sup> Ref. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

<sup>6</sup> Ref. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en)



As one of the first deliverables of the Strategy, the Commission proposed binding pay transparency measures<sup>7</sup> on 4 March 2021.

At National level, we have the following legal references:

- Art.3 of Constitution: *Principle of equality*, from a formal and substantial points of view
- Art. 37 of Constitution: *Rights of working women*
- Art. 51 of Constitution: *Equal access to public offices and electoral roles*
- Art. 117 of Constitution: *Regional laws to eliminate obstacles to gender equality*
- Code of equal opportunities between men and women, D.Lgs. 11 April 2006, n. 198<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ref. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/eu-action-equal-pay\\_en#pay-transparency](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/eu-action-equal-pay_en#pay-transparency)

<sup>8</sup> [Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 125 del 31 maggio 2006 - Supplemento Ordinario n. 133](#)





# PHASE TWO: PLANNING

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## 4. PLAN SETTING

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### 4.1 Introduction to the plan setting

#### 4.1.1 GEP definition process

A core team of 11 company staff members has been appointed to draft the Gender Equality Plan and define a smooth pathway towards setting up objectives, means and targets to reach the desired results.

The definition process started with the need of addressing another important challenge within Deep Blue: evaluating gender-based performance, assessing it also from a different qualitative perspective, taking in consideration new social variables and indicators.

Data collection represented a huge part of this work, involving the administration team, as well as a preliminary discussion about expectations with the management team and within the GEP Committee itself. The process also included an initial phase of study and deepening internal knowledge on gender matters through official guidelines by the EIGE institution.

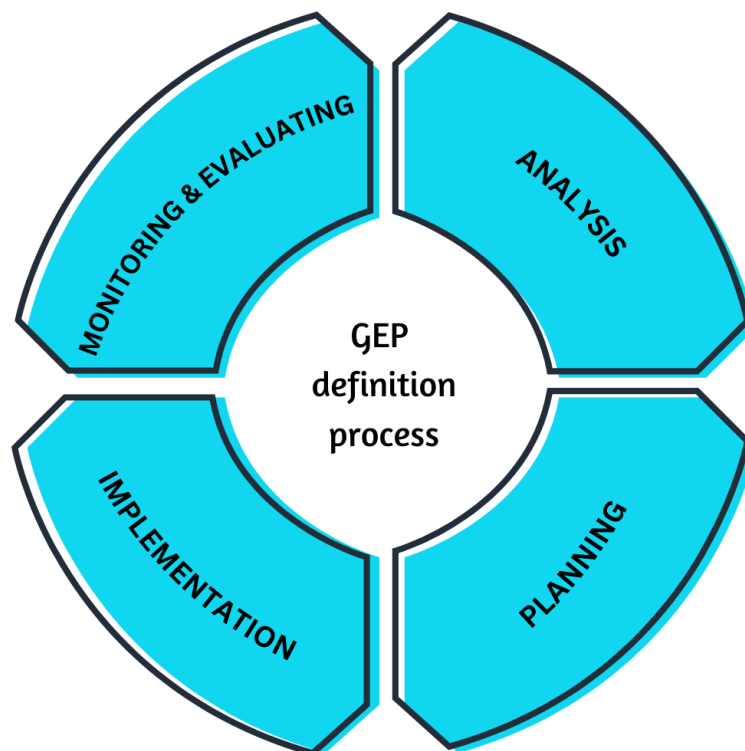
The Gender Equality Plan is at its first edition for Deep Blue, and it will represent a starting point to implement this kind of measures in the general company culture. An effective GEP should support an ongoing process for improving gender equality to the benefit of the entire Organisation. The definition project of this GEP has encouraged and will encourage self-reflection by staff and leadership through a continuous review of processes and practices.

To develop the GEP, the core team went through a standard planning process, as suggested by the GEAR tool. This process is implemented through four steps:

1. **Analysis phase**, including the collection of sex-disaggregated and/or gender-disaggregated data and the review of practices to identify gender inequalities and their causes.
2. **Planning phase**, setting the objectives and targets for the GEP alongside a roadmap of actions and measures. This phase also includes allocating resources and responsibilities for the delivery of the GEP and agreeing timelines for implementation.



3. **Implementation** phase, implementing the roadmap of activities, for example, setting up working groups to develop and implement new policies and procedures. This phase includes awareness raising activities and training efforts to achieve buy-in and build capacity and support for the GEP across the organisation, as well as give visibility internally and externally to the GEP.
4. **Monitoring and evaluation phase**, regularly assessing the delivery and progress of the plan against its aims and objectives. Ongoing review of findings and progress will also provide space for learning and feedback to enable adjustments and improvements to interventions.



#### 4.1.2 Approach

This document represents a strategy planned with a holistic and intersectional approach. It is intended to go beyond the work domain of the Company and to dig into people, modelling a fair and equal environment ready to be projected outside the Company and introjected by employees to stand for inclusivity and equality in their personal lives and within their personal networks.

To reach this result, Deep Blue identified different approaches:



- **Co-creation approach and active engagement:** to make the GEP effective, the strategy must engage the whole organisation, mainly because it requires the support and official commitment not only of the management team and the senior consultants, but an active engagement of employees at all levels, and involving both women and men. The co-creation approach gives the opportunity to engage the whole organisation throughout each phase of the GEP, with an escalation from the GEP Committee in the development of the document, to a full engagement of the team during the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases. As the strategy strives for the equality with regards to gender, the equal gender involvement serves to not exclude and leave behind necessities and voices of the other gender. Working closely for equality, with a common and shared vision, is the key to reach GEP goals and to implement the overall strategy within the company as well as outside of it.
- **Bidirectional approach (top-down, bottom-up):** this approach makes sure that the co-creation approach and active engagement will be effective and possible. Participative processes mean to activate initiatives planned considering the top-down approach – mainly meeting the management team’s willingness, needs and expectations defined by Company goals and strategies – and the bottom-up approach – collecting employees’ needs, expectations, and requests during the whole GEP duration. The bidirectionality is crucial when the full engagement of people is the key to successfully implement the strategy.
- **“Cascading effect” approach:** exploiting the potentialities of Deep Blue’s network, external measures will assure impact and engagement of stakeholders, enriching the significance of the plan.

This document has the double aim to define the gender equality strategy, and to give information and raise preliminary awareness of the topic and its framework, as well as providing useful materials, hints, external links, and sources. Therefore, as it will be made available to the public, Deep Blue’s GEP aims at being an in-depth general reflection on gender issues and social inclusion nowadays.

## 4.2 General Objectives

Deep Blue’s Gender Equality Plan sets the following general objectives, taking into consideration its organisational culture, strategic needs, and willingness:

- Create and build culture on inclusivity and diversity accommodation.
- Address any gender gap at all levels.
- Establish measures to increment gender balance and social inclusion for a better work-life balance and to accommodate diversity.
- Strive for social inclusivity and gender equality.



- Improve gender balance composition in areas and overall team.
- Raise awareness.
- Strengthen gender competences.
- Start a research path on gender topics.
- Encourage dialogue on gender issues.
- Create opportunities for exchange of feelings on inclusivity and equality as well as means to overcome stigmatisation and inequalities.
- Create the right environment for disability inclusion.
- Allocate the right amount of financial resources to implement the GEP.
- Enrich organisational culture with gender topics sensitivity and attention to social inclusion with special regard to disability, ethnicity, and sexual, political, and religious orientation.

## 4.3 Measures and Initiatives: pathway towards inclusivity and gender equality

Measures and initiatives are intended to be twofold, covering two different sets of objectives:

### 1. Internal measures:

These actions will be implemented within the Company for the wellbeing of employees and to ensure social justice and gender equity. They will involve each employee through the approaches described in the previous section.

### 2. External measures:

Due to the role of the Company and to the potential impact that Deep Blue may have among its network, external measures aim at communicating the GEP to the public, with all the actions and initiatives planned and implemented, but especially to lead a change and inspire other Italian and European SMEs.

### 4.3.1 Internal measures

#### Ex-ante needs analysis

Deep Blue will conduct a needs analysis with regards to gender topics and issues. This action aims to collect requests from people, to involve in the activity planning the personal interests and needs of



each employee. In fact, men, women, and other gender identifications have their personal stories and sensitivities to read the reality through.

The following activities will be implemented as an ex-ante needs analysis:

- Questionnaire to be shared within the Company investigating on:
  - a) Needs
  - b) Perceptions on the gender balance and inclusivity culture within the Company, before showing and presenting our data
  - c) Perception of gender equality in external contexts (Deep Blue's network, partners and clients, Consortia, etc)
  - d) Existing gaps on measures in place (e.g., parental leave)
  - e) Internal assessment of results
- Interviews with Heads of Areas to:
  - a) Collect needs and ideas within each specific Area
  - b) Share points of view on gender balance within the Area
- Focus Groups to assess perceptions and to share preliminary ideas and needs on gender issues.
- Research on Deep Blue's positioning compared to other Italian and European companies with regards to gender issues.

The use of different types of detection tools is useful to go deep into expectations, intercepting them through different kinds of interactions. Results will help to tailor each activity of the GEP to real expectations and necessities.

## **Salaries**

In 2022, Deep Blue built salary clusters based on roles and capacities. These clusters will be tested in 2024 to assure functionality and utility. Consequently, the organisation will make it publicly available and shared within the company.

This measure is meant to assure transparency and make salary independent from gender and any other bias. Therefore, data about salaries and any observed and detected pay gap will be communicated to employees, to faithfully apply to the principle of transparency.

## **Gender balance within the areas**

The overall numbers show an imbalance among genders inside the Company; thus, Areas' numbers reflect this trend perfectly. Even if the structure of Areas is not rigid, as people belong to more areas



simultaneously, Deep Blue will commit to create as much as possible the conditions for a fair shared distribution of gender percentages. This commitment has a double scope:

- a) To avoid gender bias in the hiring and allocation processes.
- b) To encourage the best integration of approaches and views.

Furthermore, this goal will be reached following a data collection and assessment done through interviews with People Managers and groups as well as general questionnaires.

The gender balance in areas often reflects a gender bias rooted in social structures and stereotypes that are out of Deep Blue's direct control. The Company is conscious of this and wants to be supportive in a broader sense. Therefore, DBL will put in place every available strategy to compensate this external variable by, among the others:

- Publishing and circulating the job alerts in specific women's networks.
- Present the Company to specific events dedicated to gender themes.

## **Equal hiring process**

The organisation has already in place a hiring process that proved to be effective and equal in the approach towards candidates. With the HR function, the purpose would be the integration and alignment of HR to determine how it could contribute to further enhance the process and create synergies with the Hiring Managers. One of the actions toward these goals is to create a more structured hiring process, including steps to follow and best practices.

All applications, from Internships to the higher levels of seniority, are carefully reviewed; the approach is open toward women as there is no stereotype in the organisation related for example to the gender of the applicants or their nationality. Equality cannot be always facilitated by examining the same number of CV for both genders, for example, as this depends very much on the market conditions in the time frame considered. The same goes for the gender aspects: for certain positions the uneven distribution of male/female applicants is quite large, but this shows the tendency of the job market in a certain society where some subjects (such as IT, for example) still have a large number of male applicants compared to females.

Another commitment will be on structuring an equal hiring process. Specifically, this goal will be reached through the following activities:

- Creation of a register/logbook of interviews carried out for new positions inside Deep Blue.
- Monitoring of the whole process of hiring, starting from the publication of job advertisements.
- Assess the data collected to detect and address any gap in the hiring process (from applications received, CV screening, interviews, to the final choice).



Gaps can be revealed in preselection schemes and cognitive bias due to gender and/or personal unconscious affinity approaches. This of course depends on individual characteristics of the selector and interviewer. By monitoring the whole process, it will be possible to evaluate if these unconscious behavioural patterns are present and to set mitigation measures accordingly, if needed.

Furthermore, the future hires should compensate for the gender imbalance detected in Sec. 3.2.1.

## **Parenting**

The cultural role of parents comes with the highest score of prejudices, stereotypes, and stigmatisation. The gender role in being parents precludes and obstacles carriers' paths. Deep Blue's commitment for an equal and fair parenting both for fathers and mothers – and caregivers in general – will be in:

- Ensuring flexibility for parents, agreeing on a tailored smart working plan.
- Encouraging the use of the right to maternity and paternity leave, by informing, supporting, and accompanying the choice and supporting the evaluation of alternatives.
- Assuring the same maternity leave treatment and rights of permanent contracts to co.co.co. contracts.
- Integrating 100% of salary to parents on leave.
- Assuring the possibility to negotiate for work flexibility conditions.
- Economic feasibility evaluation of supporting paternity leave with a complementing economic support in addition to what is foreseen by the Italian law.

In addition, Deep Blue will evaluate parental policy improvements in the coming years with the Human Resources department, to encourage paternity leaves and supporting parents' roles.

## **Disability**

Deep Blue wants to take precise actions also to be as inclusive as possible with regards to disability specific needs to ease the work and overall experience within the company. Therefore, Deep Blue will commit in different company life aspects:

### **Deep Blue's social events**



Include persons with disabilities during the organisation of company's social events to properly evaluate logistic aspects together and make everything as smooth as possible without any impediments.

### **Business trips**

Administration function will still be the consultation point of contact to help with the organisation of business trips, as this resulted to be a good and useful practice; Deep Blue will forecast a higher budget for proper travel and accommodation experiences.

### **Office accessibility**

Deep Blue, in case of working location changes, undertakes to include the workers in the evaluation of a new location, especially to evaluate feasibility, accessibility and usability aspects of the infrastructures.

### **Work management**

As an inclusive strategy, the Company will maintain the smart working option for workers to facilitate their working life. Additionally, great attention will be paid to the specific workstation equipment needs.

Any other improvement policies will be evaluated with the Human Resources function to support inclusivity and avoid inconveniences of any kind.

### **Thematic trainings and workshops**

A pivotal role to reach the majority of the GEP general objectives will be training. Throughout the duration of the GEP strategy, Deep Blue will organise different trainings and workshops with different aims, taking advantage of internal and external expertise.

#### **Gender equality 101 – raise awareness and build basic competences**

This training will aim at presenting gender studies in their main assets and showing statistics and instruments for gender equality at all levels, to raise awareness on gender inequalities and what each of us can do to reach equity. The training package will be built starting from the preliminary needs analysis (ref. ex-ante needs analysis) and will be dispensed cyclically to all the employees.

#### **Gender empowerment – raise awareness on rights and enhance empowerment**

With the help of experts, several workshops will have the goal of raising awareness on rights such as maternity and paternity leaves, how to defend themselves from discrimination on the job, and enhancing financial empowerment of women. These workshops will be open to both genders.





### **How to respond to public harassment – encourage action and create support networks**

Deep Blue will arrange a webinar with [Alice Onlus](#). The webinar will be focused on the [Stand Up](#) initiative, a free training project to fight sexual harassment in public places. The aim is to give employees basic self-defence techniques not only to defend themselves but also to intervene in a safe manner to harassment suffered by others.

### **Inclusive language – foster sensibility to new mainstream gender language**

This training will be organised for the whole Company to learn how to use a more inclusive language inside Deep Blue and outside, for internal and external communications, in projects and with clients and stakeholders.

### **Social initiatives**

Additional small initiatives will be implemented in Deep Blue, to foster awareness and give proper space to topics and sharing. These initiatives will be open to modifications and will include among the others:

- Thematic coffee breaks and space for comparison and open discussion.
- A dedicated corner in the office newsletter to share links, books, films, quotes, authors, documents and so on to be informed and to stimulate discussion and reflection.
- Creation of a glossary and small guideline for inclusive language and communications for internal and external use.
- Sharing and sponsorship of external training on female entrepreneurship offered.

### **Research projects**

An important role concerns research projects that will require several specific actions, such as:

- Implementation of a gender perspective in the research approach as well as in the contents of the EU funded proposals, whenever it will be possible.
- Implementation of gender perspective and studies in human centred design approaches applied in the research projects.
- Publication of articles on gender scientific research related to stakeholder's engagement within the ongoing projects.
- Implementation of gender inclusivity in Communication and Dissemination Plans for new EU funded proposals and projects.



- Monitoring and actions to improve inclusivity and gender balance in projects' bodies like Scientific Advisory Boards, Stakeholders Assemblies, Expert Groups and similar consultative bodies.

These actions aim to open a new road for Deep Blue to exploit new approaches, more social science and humanities- oriented, as requested by the European Commission in funding programmes. Therefore, this could also represent a competitive advantage for the Company in the long term.

### **Future collection of data to feed future gender and social inclusion analysis**

Being this document at its first edition, the commitment to implement and ease the future analysis is materialised in the collection of further data. Indeed, Deep Blue will plan to collect the following data in addition to the already existing ones through the competent areas:

- CV collected for each open position, clustered per gender.
- Interviews made for each open position, clustered per gender.
- Implementation of more data related to people who left the organisation.
- Improvement of data related to wage gap.
- Introduction of age clusters and perspective whenever useful to support a deeper analysis.

The identification of these improvements in data collection is a result of our internal analysis, started with this document and specifically within the section 3.2 Analysis of sex disaggregated data about staff.

### **No needs left behind**

In an inclusive optic, Deep Blue vision aims at addressing each present and possible future need inside the company's team. Specifically, every action will be put in place to smooth the work environment, may there be any special need at personal level and personal choice, and implemented in every single aspect of the company's life (day-to-day job, office life, social events, stakeholders' relationships, etc.).

### **4.3.2 External measures**

As already mentioned, Deep Blue commits to implement activities on gender equality also for stakeholders' benefit. Therefore, two main activities are planned in the GEP strategy:



## **Communication through Deep Blue official channels**

Deep Blue institutional communication will follow the inclusive language guidelines and launch a dedicated space on its online blog about gender studies within Deep Blue's domains of interest. This will create a well seen space for the first publications on the topic and start building visibility.

## **Gender equality and social inclusion guidelines for research projects**

Deep Blue will create a very simple Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Guideline for Communication and Dissemination to be shared within the project Consortia to invite partners to pay maximum attention to gender and social inclusivity in communication and dissemination aspects. These will be applied, for example, when organising an event, when choosing partners or keynote speakers, when selecting pictures to accompany the communication actions, when writing and communicating with the public and on the projects' channels. Hopefully, the guideline will slowly sensitise more and more stakeholders, contributing to build more equal, inclusive, and respectful environments and mindsets.

## **Dealing with harassment at work**

Work at Deep Blue has an international horizon; thus, this means to deal with external environments and people daily. Within this context, some unpleasant and regrettable episodes exposed the employees to harassment during external appointments such as meetings, conferences, and events. The GEP Committee deemed necessary to act and prevent any harassment. Therefore, in collaboration with the HR function, Deep Blue will establish a clear management procedure to deal with harassment at work, potentially occurring internally and externally. Specifically, the procedure should give precise information, indications and/or provide training and instruments on how to react immediately in case of suffered or witnessed harassment as well as introduce the right process to deal with harassment, involving workers, head of areas, Human Resource function and management in a proper manner.

## **Non-European workers**

Being an international company, Deep Blue wants to commit to inclusivity also with regards to welcoming procedures of non-European employees. A quick socio-political analysis reflects the barriers of bureaucracy when it comes to transfers, permissions, documentations and so on. Deep Blue will refer to a legal expert to help newcomers speed up the process while trying to mitigate any barrier.



## **External sponsorships and support**

To complement the actions of enhancing gender equality, Deep Blue will choose to sponsor one or more realities which are active in promoting gender equality topics and inclusion, as well as female networks in male predominant domains. Additionally, Deep Blue will explore possible partnerships and further opportunities with women expert networks.



# PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTING

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

This plan will be implemented starting from January 2024 to December 2025. Here will follow the first implementation schedule with details on responsibilities, direct and indirect targets, dedicated resources, indicators, and means of verification. A more detailed timeline will be produced and delivered by the GEP Committee for internal use and to best manage the activities planning and delivery. The GEP Committee will also plan regular meetings for this purpose.

### Area1: Ex-ante need analysis

**Objectives: Create and build culture on inclusivity and diversity accommodation; address any gender gap at all levels.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Interviews with Heads of Areas and Functions</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Research on Deep Blue’s positioning</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee
<b>Direct targets</b>	Employees, Heads of Areas and Functions
<b>Human resources</b>	105 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	2205 €
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	Number of questionnaires and interviews Questionnaires: 2; Answers collected: +50; Total interviews: 10; Focus Groups: 5
<b>Means of verification</b>	Analysis report

**Timing:**





## Area2: Salaries

**Objectives: Allocate the right amount of financial resources; strive for gender equality within the organisation.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build salary clusters based on roles and capacities</li><li>• Make them publicly available to assure transparency</li></ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	CDA
<b>Direct targets</b>	Employees
<b>Human resources</b>	12 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	538 €
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	Number of clusters built: 4
<b>Means of verification</b>	Communication and Publication of salary clusters

**Timing:**





### Area3: Gender Balance in areas

**Objective: Improvement of gender balance composition in areas and overall team.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and circulating the job alerts in specific women’s networks</li> <li>• Present the Company at specific events dedicated to gender themes</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	CDA; Heads of Areas; Human Resources
<b>Direct targets</b>	Future Deep Blue’s employees, students, workers
<b>Human resources</b>	12 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	406€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	2 presentations at specific gender events; publication of future job alerts in at least 1 specific women’s network for each open position
<b>Means of verification</b>	Events attendance; job alerts publicised on women’s networks

**Timing:**





## Area4: Equal hiring process

**Objective: Address any gender gap at all levels.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of a register/logbook of interviews carried out for new positions inside Deep Blue</li><li>• Monitoring of the whole process of hiring, from the publication of job advertisement</li><li>• Assess the data collected to detect and address any gap in the hiring process (from applications received, CV screening, interviews to final choice)</li></ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	Human Resources Function, GEP Committee
<b>Direct targets</b>	Employees
<b>Human resources</b>	8 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	178€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	1 job interviews logbook; 1 report on monitoring and assessing collected data
<b>Means of verification</b>	Logbook created and presented to CDA; report presented to CDA

### Timing:

2024	2025
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## Area5: Parenting

**Objective: Establishing measures to increment gender balance and social inclusion for a better work-life balance and to accommodate diversity**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring flexibility for parents, agreeing on a tailored smart working plan</li> <li>• Encouraging the use of the right to maternity and paternity leave, by informing, supporting and accompanying the choice and supporting the evaluation of alternatives</li> <li>• Assuring the same maternity leave treatment and rights of permanent contracts to co.co.co. contracts</li> <li>• Evaluating the possibility of integrating 100% of salary to parents on leave</li> <li>• Assuring the possibility to negotiate for work flexibility conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	Human Resources, CDA, Management
<b>Direct targets</b>	Parents in the Company
<b>Human resources</b>	16 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	480€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	1 information session about parental rights; 1 written statement on decisions about parental leave additional benefits
<b>Means of verification</b>	Information session delivered; written statement stored and presented

### Timing:





## Area6: Disability Inclusivity

**Objectives: Create and build culture on inclusivity and diversity accommodation; Strive for social inclusivity and gender equality; Create the right environment for disability inclusion.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include persons with disabilities during the organisation of company’s social events to properly evaluate logistic aspects together and make everything as smooth as possible without any impediments.</li> <li>• Administration staff will still be the consultation point of contact to help with the organisation of business trips, as this resulted to be a good and useful practice; Deep Blue will forecast a higher budget for proper travel and accommodation experiences.</li> <li>• Include workers in the evaluation of a new possible location, especially to evaluate feasibility, accessibility, and usability aspects of the infrastructures.</li> <li>• Maintain the smart working option for workers to facilitate their working life. Great attention will be paid to the specific workstation equipment needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	Human Resources Function, Administration
<b>Direct targets</b>	Workers with disabilities
<b>Human resources</b>	8 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	200€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	-
<b>Means of verification</b>	1:1 interview check

**Timing:**

2024	2025
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## Area7: Training

**Objectives: Raise awareness; Strengthen gender competences.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality 101 – raise awareness and build basic competences</li> <li>• Gender empowerment – raise awareness on rights and enhance empowerment</li> <li>• How to respond to public harassment – encourage action and create support networks</li> <li>• Inclusive language – foster sensibility to new mainstream gender language</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee
<b>Direct targets</b>	Deep Blue’s employees
<b>Human resources</b>	30 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	500€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	4 training released to the whole Company; >75% of satisfaction and declared usefulness of the trainings among participants
<b>Means of verification</b>	Trainings recorded and stored for future use; related materials shared; data collected through feedback questionnaires

### Timing:





## Area8: Social Initiatives

**Objectives: Encourage dialogue on gender issues; Create opportunities for exchange of feelings on inclusivity and equality as well as means to overcome stigmatisation and inequalities.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic coffee breaks and space for comparison and open discussion</li> <li>• A dedicated rubric in the office newsletter to share links, books, films, quotes, authors, documents and so on to be informed and to stimulate discussion and reflection on gender inclusivity</li> <li>• Creation of a glossary and small guideline for inclusive language and communications for internal and external use</li> <li>• Sharing and sponsorship of external trainings on female entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee
<b>Direct targets</b>	Deep Blue’s employees at all levels
<b>Human resources</b>	70 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	1120€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	>3 thematic coffee breaks; monthly newsletter with dedicated rubric to gender issues; 1 guideline for inclusive language;
<b>Means of verification</b>	Newsletters planning and publication; guideline shared among employees

### Timing:

2024	2025
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## Area9: Research Projects

**Objective: Start a research path on gender topics.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a gender perspective in the research approach as well as in the contents of the EU funded proposals, whenever it will be possible</li> <li>• Implementation of gender perspective and studies in human centred design approaches applied in the research projects</li> <li>• Publication of articles on gender scientific research related to stakeholder’s engagement within the ongoing projects</li> <li>• Implementation of gender inclusivity in Communication and Dissemination Plans for new EU funded proposals and projects</li> <li>• Monitoring and actions to improve inclusivity and gender balance in projects’ bodies like Scientific Advisory Boards, Stakeholders Assemblies, Expert Groups and similar consultative bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee; Grant Office; Dissemination Function
<b>Direct targets</b>	Grant Office, consultants in the Dissemination Function, researchers
<b>Human resources</b>	132 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	200€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	>4 projects proposals with gender topics integrated; >5 articles on gender scientific research; Gender dimension integrated in at least 2 C&D plans;
<b>Means of verification</b>	Project proposals documents; articles published on DBL website; C&D plans

**Timing:**





## Area10: Future collection of data to feed future gender and social inclusion analysis

**Objective: Address any gender gap at all levels.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● CV collected for each open position, clustered per gender</li><li>● Interviews made for each open position, clustered per gender</li><li>● Implementation of more data related to people who left the organisation</li><li>● Improvement of data related to wage gap</li><li>● Introduction of age clusters and perspective whenever useful to support a deeper analysis</li></ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee; Human Resources and Administrative Functions
<b>Direct targets</b>	GEP Committee; Management and CDA
<b>Human resources</b>	24 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	516€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	1 excel file to collect data; 1 clear plan to constantly feed it
<b>Means of verification</b>	Data collected, correctly registered, and used in the future analysis

### Timing:

2024	2025
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## Area11: External measures to support gender equality and social inclusion

**Objectives: Strive for social inclusivity and gender equality; Create and build culture on inclusivity and diversity accommodation.**

<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and share of Gender Inclusivity guidelines among research projects Consortia</li> <li>• Creation of a plan to manage harassment at work</li> <li>• Engagement of a legal expert to help non-European workers speed up bureaucratic processes</li> <li>• Sponsorship and support to external associations promoting gender equality</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	GEP Committee; Human Resources and Administrative Functions
<b>Direct targets</b>	Employees at all levels; research projects Consortia; External Associations
<b>Human resources</b>	36 working hours
<b>Financial resources</b>	Sponsorship: 2000€; legal expert: 2500€; 720€
<b>Indicators and KPIs</b>	1 Gender Inclusivity guideline; 1 clear plan to manage harassment at work; 1 collaboration established with a legal expert; >1 sponsored association per year
<b>Means of verification</b>	Gender Inclusivity guideline shared among Consortia; harassment management plan presented to Heads of Areas; collaboration contract with the legal expert; donation receipt.

**Timing:**





# PHASE FOUR: MONITORING AND EVALUATING

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## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

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Monitoring and evaluating is key to assure the foreseen actions to be efficient and tailored to each context and individuals.

Therefore, each action foreseen by the Gender Equality Plan will be monitored right after its implementation, following the declared indicators and KPIs and proper means of verification. Specifically:

- **Feedback questionnaires to evaluate initiatives:** each direct initiative involving employees such as training and social initiatives will be evaluated right after the derogation by collecting feedback via questionnaires.
- **Group interviews** every six months with key target groups within the organisation to monitor implemented actions and eventually tailor future ones.
- **Production of small reports** where appropriate.

The collection of data and materials throughout the duration of the plan will feed the evaluation process.

The evaluation phase will start after the conclusion of the validity period and will last 6 months. The evaluation report will be the basis for the future second edition of the GEP.

The evaluation strategy is as follow:

- **Step 1: Collection of documents and products produced during the implementation of actions.**
- **Step 2: Documents and products analysis.**
- **Step 3: Assessment of the actions and processes built during the years:**
  - Semi structured questionnaire for employees at all levels.
  - Qualitative one-to-one interviews with Management, Heads of Areas, and Heads of Functions.
  - Qualitative focus groups interview with CDA and Areas.
  - Discussion group with GEP Committee.
- **Step 4: Evaluation report.**
- **Step 5: Presentation of results** to the whole team.

The evaluation process is fundamental and must be concluded before planning new actions. As per the GEP overall approach, the evaluation phase will be active in engaging the whole organisation and will be bidirectional (bottom-up and top-down) to ensure the success of actions, and the long-term knowledge and awareness acquisition. The human resources dedicated to this activity is **60 working hours**.





The added value of this plan should be measured in terms of the value brought out into the society and social groups in which every worker lives, relates to and contributes. Deep Blue is fully committed to create value and flourish minds, capable of materialising a more equal, fair, and inclusive society.

### **GEP Committee**

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