

The background is a deep blue, monochromatic abstract image. It features fluid, organic shapes that resemble liquid swirls or smoke, creating a sense of movement. Scattered throughout are numerous bubbles of varying sizes, some of which are in sharp focus, showing internal reflections. The overall texture is glossy and dynamic.

# ICONS

INNOVATION STRATEGIES

## GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

# Summary

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# Introduction

Putting people at the centre of and, therefore, being an equal opportunities employer is one of the guiding values of ICONS. Our organisation is committed to promote a sense of community, trust and mutual appreciation within our team.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has a twofold objective: on the one hand, the planning and design actions in this document intend to give continuity and coherence to policies already in place at ICONS while, on the other hand, exploring the implementation of further policies and actions. This will help us avoid any possible cause of gender inequalities and to ensure that diversity is not an obstacle to inclusion on our staff and it will not hamper operations.

The GEP will be enforced over the three coming years (2022-2025). During this period it will be adapted in its content to match societal changes.



# 1. Gender equality in recruitment, wages and work processes

ICONS is committed to an equal gender division within all employment categories. The split is reported in the graphics below which show a significant female presence in the whole team, with a larger presence among the management and director positions.

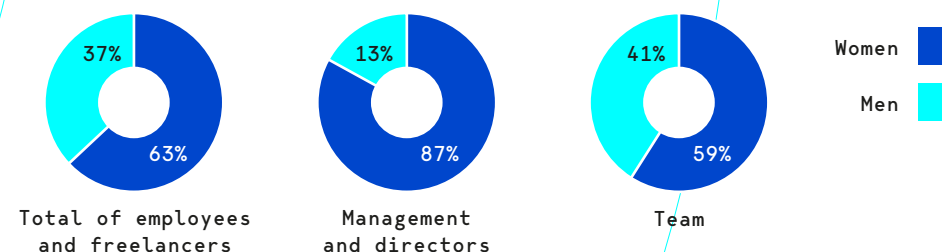
Even though our organisation monitors gender balance in all departments, the gender issue is not considered as a primary factor. People's performance is valued on experiences and abilities to meet the results expected by their role; this applies both during people's selection and their day-to-day job.

However, the organisation will closely monitor the gender balance within the team and to take gender gap into consideration during the recruitment phases. The gender equality in recruitment, wages and responsibilities also applies to senior management and decision-making positions.

In addition to striving for an equal gender representation in employing staff and setting wages, ICONS aim for equality when it comes to people's working practices. This includes, for instance, making sure new joiners are properly introduced to the organisations' departments and functions, and offering them equal training opportunities, to enable them to work efficiently and offer them fair career opportunities.

## GENDER BALANCE IN ICONS

The total of employees and freelancers working in ICONS as of January 2022 numbers 41 people. Women exceed men, with 26 women (63%) and 15 men (37%). The board of Management and Directors is mainly composed of women. In particular, the role of Directors is covered by women only. The team, intended as the sum of both employees and contractors, is well-balanced in terms of gender, although women are still the majority.



## ACTIONS ALREADY IN PLACE

- Formulate announcements of vacant positions in a way that does not give undue advantage to the overrepresented gender.
- When deciding on wages, the equality aspects are always taken consideration in order to avoid salary unbalance due to gender or any other discriminatory aspects.
- Ensure to new joiners receive all the needed coaching and on the job training opportunities throughout their career.

## ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

- When recruiting a new employee, always consider the gender equality plan; and follow up on such plan's implementation.
- Define strategic objectives per each member of the team, to allow them to improve their competencies and facilitate their career progress.

## GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

- To monitor the gender balance within the team in every department.
- To ensure that gender does not affect individuals' wages.
- To ensure that all staff have equal access to information regarding work.

## 2. Work-life balance, parenthood and organisational culture

Being people at the centre of ICONS, their work-life balance needs have always been considered as a key point. Recently, due to the pandemic emergency which started in early 2020, ad-hoc work-life balance policies have been implemented to meet the professional needs of our staff while ensuring people's safety. Remote working has been introduced in a ratio of 60% of the working hours. The organisation is committed to keep the remote work as a regular practice, although our company policy will be also dictated by nationals' labour law.

To improve the skills of the team and to facilitate the knowledge exchange, a map of skills has been filled in by the team members. All members of the staff and contractors have been asked to use such tool to indicate their skills and to express the working areas they would like to explore. This tool allows the organisation to ground its growth on the skills and the aspirations of the members of our team.

In 2018 ICONS issued a maternity and paternity policy in line with the national legislation and possibly even beyond.

Generally, the organisation claims a shared culture of equal opportunities as well as a strong value of inclusion in all members of its team.

### ACTIONS ALREADY IN PLACE

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- Since March 2020, due to the pandemic situation and at least until the emergency status is in place, employees have the possibility to work remotely for 60% of their worktime (generally, 3 days per week).
- Flexible working time is in place, with working hours between 8-10am and 5-7pm to ensure 8-hours on a standard working day.
- Maternity and paternity leave policy.
- Equal opportunities and inclusion as a fundamental value of the organisational culture.
- Map of competencies to collect working aptitudes and wishes of the team, in order to favour a smooth growth of the organisation.

### ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

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- Alignment of the parenthood policy in accordance with the national regulation.
- Possible extension of the paternity leave over the limit fixed by the national law.
- Possible introduction of further work-life facilitations for parents.
- Set meetings to begin after 9 AM and end before 5 PM. This will prevent individuals with child or elder care responsibilities from having to make special arrangements to participate.
- To avoid assumptions, roles and challenges will be discussed with employees, who will be supported in their choices, if reasonable.
- Training to strengthen the gender culture in the team.

### GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

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- To improve a strong culture of equal opportunities and inclusion among the whole team.
- To extend the work-life balance opportunities.
- To improve the protection of the parenthood.
- To prevent gender stereotypes, enhance diversity and support under-represented communities, if applicable.

# 3.

## Training activities to promote gender equality

Thanks to our natural inclination towards an inclusive and gender equal culture, ICONS does not suffer from inequalities and nobody among the team ever reported inappropriate behaviours. The respect for differences, religious, linguistic, cultural or sexual is an integral part of the organisational culture and this value has never been jeopardised.

However, since the organisation is expanding, and society is becoming more complex, ICONS will plan dedicated training initiatives to promote gender equality and raise awareness among employees about the topic of gender identity. Such training will be mandatory for the whole team and led by experts.

### ACTIONS ALREADY IN PLACE

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- The values of equality and inclusivity are included in the code of ethics of ICONS and shared with the whole team.

### ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

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- Training plan for meeting with experts to enhance the awareness within the team of gender equality and gender identity issues.
- Measure the level of interest, collect feedback and inputs to improve future activity and align it with the needs and the feelings of the team.

### GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

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- To organise training to present the GEP to the whole ICONS team, to promote gender equality and inform about gender diversity.
- 100% of the team involved in the training.
- To increase the sensitivity of the team towards such topics.

## 4. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, sexual harassment is “Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” (<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1376>). Violating or humiliating behaviour related to gender involves not only actions of a sexual nature, such as unwelcome physical contact or pressure to have sex, but also actions such as stalking, intimidating, or causing physical humiliation. It can also include hurtful comments about physical appearance or attempts to diminish others by dominating them. Furthermore, it can include ignoring, freezing out, or not cooperating with someone because of his or her sex. Any individual in the Department who feels that they are being exposed to sexual harassment or other violations/humiliations of the character described above can contact the CSR team at [csr@icons.it](mailto:csr@icons.it).

If the CSR team learns that an employee is being exposed to sexual harassment or other violations, they are responsible for investigating the circumstances, in compliance with individual privacy, and taking any required action to address such violations/humiliations and prevent them from occurring in the future.

Reports of such violations should be treated confidentially and urgently. The employee should be protected against any harassment related to having filed a complaint. Disciplinary measures can be taken against any employee or employer who is found guilty of such harassment.

### ACTIONS ALREADY IN PLACE

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- The code of ethics provides a contact to express any inappropriate behaviour which goes against the values included in the code, including the gender equality.

### ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

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- Define disciplinary measures against gender-based violations.
- Conduct annual performance reviews in which the psychosocial work environment and possible violations on the bases of gender are discussed.

### GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

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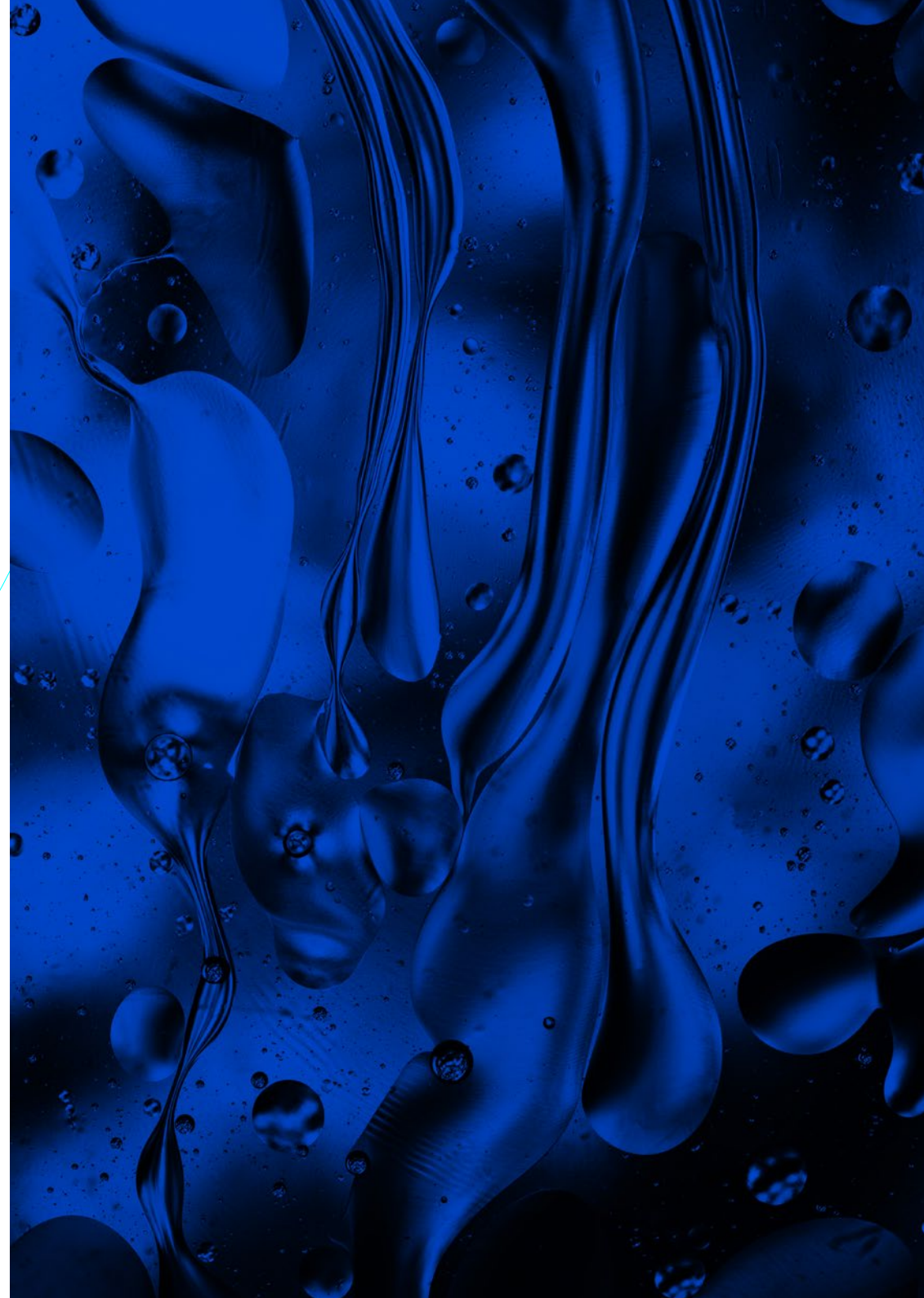
- To maintain a work and teaching environment free from sexual harassment.
- To take preventive action against sexual harassment.
- To maintain a work and teaching environment free from sexual harassment.

# Conclusions

The Gender Equality Plan is a priority at ICONS. Furthermore, our organisation considers the gender balance as an important indicator to be monitored while capabilities of individuals and their well-being come first.

ICONS is committed to offer equal opportunities to all its members, regardless of gender. The gender issue is kept in close consideration and ensures a good balance among the team.

Development and tracking of the measures contained on the plan will be performed through the points summarizing the actions and the goals to be achieved by 2050. The CSR team will monitor the progress and update the plan accordingly.







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