



Fondazione LINKS

Gender Equality Action Plan 2025 - 2027

Ver sion	Date	Comments	Approved by
V_0	31/01/2022	First	S.Buscaglia – Managing Director
V_1	31/01/2023	Update	S.Buscaglia – Managing Director
V_2	15/07/2025	New plan 2025-27, update of indicators and related data	S.Buscaglia – Managing Director

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1 Introduction

Fondazione LINKS takes into consideration the principles of **gender equality and respect for diversity** in every working activity and promotes **equal opportunities** in research programs and projects for men and women.

In line with the current national and EU guidelines (*Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, European Commission*), **LINKS prepared a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in 2022** as a first step in a general equality and inclusion strategy.

The following document, elaborated in 2025, is an update of the original plan and it is related to the **period 2025 – 2027**.

In this document, some indicators are modified, and some new indicators added in order to better describe the actions that concern the equality and inclusion strategy. In particular, data are related to the year **2024**. Data update with reference to 2025 will be presented in 2026.

The **objectives of GEP Plan** by LINKS are the following:

1. Promotion of gender equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.
2. Description of the current situation in LINKS and identification of possible improvements.
3. Identification and implementation of innovative practices and concrete actions.
4. Continuous review of the strategy through a participatory approach.
5. Monitoring of indicators and evaluation of the objectives achieved.

The GEP takes into consideration the LINKS Statute, the directions of the Founding Members and all other instruments for wellbeing and equality, such as the activities of the ***Sustainability and Future Committee***.

The Committee was launched in March 2023 and made up of some researchers representing the different Research Domains and Organizational Unit. It is a “working table” to spread the culture of sustainability and to develop actions promoting the gender equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

The dedicated GEP working team is composed of the Managing Director, the HR Manager and some members of the *Sustainability and Future Committee*. The team and the responsibilities assigned to each member during the implementation phase of the Gender Equality Plan may change to ensure an inclusive approach. In 2024 six meetings of the Committee were organized to discuss the Gender Equality Strategy and related actions.

2 LINKS profile and values

Fondazione LINKS is a non-profit research organization founded by *Compagnia di San Paolo* and *Politecnico di Torino* and it is an institution that operates in applied research, innovation and technology transfer and whose mission is to be a bridge between research and market.

Thanks to the cooperation of about **190 researchers (2024)** Fondazione LINKS, that has been working



for more than 20 years at a national and international level, oversees technical-scientific disciplines in digital technology and regional development such as: artificial intelligence, connected systems and IoT, cybersecurity, advanced calculation systems, satellite systems. All this is then applied to make innovative projects in many application fields: industry 4.0, Intelligent Mobility, Agritech, Space Economy, Smart infrastructures, Cultural Heritage.

LINKS aims to promote, lead and bolster the innovation processes and it is a facilitator of the local innovative ecosystem, boosting many collaborations with national and international Academies and Research Centers, a strong planning skill in European research as well as close contacts within the entrepreneurial world.

The Foundation value is in the people working inside: young, highly specialized, with deep know-how and passion for their job, highly motivated in achieving results by balancing teamwork and high level of autonomy.

LINKS is closely connected to Politecnico di Torino: besides being hosted on campus by the University, most of its researchers hold a degree in engineering or architecture, and many of them graduated at Politecnico di Torino.

At the end of 2024, **the employees of LINKS were 193, 121 men and 72 women** (equal to 63% and 37% of the total).

The company values that inspire everyday actions in LINKS are the following.

Change culture: passion for hastening the tomorrow.

Continuous improvement: there is always a better way.

Sustainability: we work for the future of our Foundation and society.

Care for people: people are the true wealth of LINKS.

Trust: I'm ok if you're ok.

Belonging: from ME to US.

Sharing: united we are stronger.

Proactivity: we are resourceful, and we put our name on it.

Moreover, in 2024 LINKS has officially joined the **Disability Agenda**, consolidating its commitment to an inclusive and accessible future (<https://agendadelladisabilita.it/>)

For further information <https://linksfoundation.com/en/get-to-know-us/our-values/>



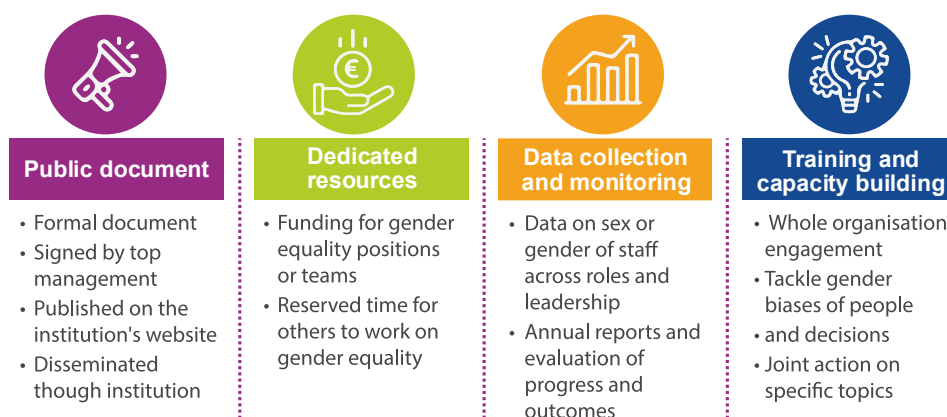
3 Description of the Plan

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for LINKS Foundation was approved in 2021 and it is part of a continuous, constantly revised and updated process.

The present document is elaborated in 2025 and the data are related to 2024. The preparation of this updated version of the document follows the same process as in previous years, but some indicators have been modified to better represent all the initiatives and actions implemented.

The GEP process requirements by Horizon Europe are represented in the figure below; the strategy of LINKS is inspired by these indications.

Mandatory GEP process requirements



Source <https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/gender-equality-era>

The GEP design phase in 2021 was followed by the concrete implementation of the actions and the monitoring of the results achieved.

During the year 2024, many actions have been undertaken within the framework of promoting gender equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing with satisfactory results and a high level of participation and involvement.

In particular, the areas of intervention are the following:

1. Work and personal life integration.
2. Gender equality in research programs and activities.
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression.
4. Gender Equality in government bodies and decision makers.

The following sections include a focus on each of the selected areas, listing the objectives that LINKS identified with priority, actions to be implemented and indicators related to the results achieved.



4 Key Areas and Objectives selected for LINKS GEP

4.1 Key Area 1: Work and Personal Life Integration

4.1.1 List of Objectives

In line with its nature of Research Centre - focused on innovation and strongly connected with the university environment – LINKS carries out research, prototyping and technology transfer activities.

Research is, by nature, a type of job allowing some part of flexibility and can be partly carried out independently and/or remotely.

The list of objectives identified by LINKS for this Key Area is presented in Table 1.

Obj ID	Objective Name
1.1	Develop a working culture oriented to wellbeing and inclusion
1.2	Define actions and tools for working and personal life integration
1.3	Enable individuals on parental leave to have an easy return to work

Table 1. LINKS GEP Objectives for Key Area 1

4.1.2 Actions planned to reach the objectives

Action 1 – flexible organization of work

LINKS has implemented a flexible organization of working time through:

- flexible working hours (8.00 a.m – 20.00 p.m.)
- 10 days of smart working every month
- part-time contracts
- evaluation of the objectives achieved through concrete results

Smart working was first tested in mid-2019 offering employees the opportunity to work out of LINKS facilities for about 20% of the total working time per month. Employees were provided with a laptop and a modem.

The pandemic started in 2020 forced LINKS (and most organizations) to speed up the process, introducing smart working for a significant portion of the time (up to 100% during lockdown). In the Spring of 2020, a survey was proposed to all LINKS employees, to check whether the abrupt increment in smart working cause issues in the organization of work and personal life. Another survey was proposed in February 2021, in the framework of the LINKS project WE WIN TOGETHER¹. Those surveys

¹ The project, co-funded by the Piedmont Government through the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund, has been implemented by LINKS. The project promoted and implemented training actions and



represented the basis for the design of new rules and a new organization of work. Furthermore, the Together WE STAND - Welfare for SusTAiNability and Development – project as follow-up of the previous WE WIN TOGETHER², implemented by the LINKS Foundation and Collegio Carlo Alberto and co-financed by the Piedmont Region, was launched in May 2023 and lasted 18 months. The objective of the project was to encourage the development and implementation of a shared corporate and territorial welfare plan, optimizing services aimed at improving the levels of work-life balance.

Action 2 – work-life balance

The Italian law allows “shore leaves” (*permessi*) on top of the holiday days. Shore leaves are specifically designed to manage work and private life balance. Parental leave is equally available for men and women.

Most activities carried out in LINKS are organized in projects, divided into work packages and tasks. This makes it easy to allocate the amount of work to researchers considering leaves and other days off.

The HR team works to make sure parental leave does not have an impact on individuals when they get back to work, moreover, it performs checks and activities aimed at ensuring that employees in LINKS can benefit from a good work-life balance.

The adoption of the plan **LINKS Mobility Plan** in 2023 contributed to the wellbeing of employees.

4.1.3 Indicators

Action	Indicator	Value 2024
1	Smart work: Number of Days / Head Count (monthly average). 10 days/monthly permitted	TOT = 6,5 day/monthly M = 6,3; F = 6,8
	Smart work: satisfaction	High satisfaction (survey 2021). 10 days/monthly permitted A new survey is planned for 2025 - 2026
2	Shore leaves (average number of hours per employee per year)	TOT= 50 M= 50,5; F = 49,5
2	Number of employees who have children under 8 years old (and as % of the corresponding population)	TOT=26 (13%) M = 16 (8%); F =10 (5%)
2	Number of employees with part-time contracts (and as % of the corresponding population)	TOT = 12 (8%) M = 3 (2%); F = 9 (5%)

information activities aiming at sensitizing workers and management to activate wellbeing measures and to adopt healthy and sustainable lifestyles.



2	Number of employees beneficiaries of the incentives / initiatives within LINKS “Mobility plan”	In 2024 LINKS invested in policies to support sustainable mobility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 bike incentive • 42 local public transport incentive M) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 bike incentive • 22 local public transport incentive F) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 bike incentive • 20 local public transport incentive
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Table 2 – LINKS GEP Indicators for Key Area 1

4.2 Key area 2: Gender equality in research programs and activities

4.2.1 List of Objectives

The list of objectives identified by LINKS for this key area is included Table 3.

Obj ID	Objective Name
2.1	Promote gender equality in research activities, working organization and teaching
2.2	Advance towards gender inclusive research activities
2.3	Raise awareness and train researchers on gender equality

Table 3 - LINKS GEP Objectives for Key Area 2

4.2.2 Actions planned to reach the objectives

Research is the main focus of LINKS Foundation, and research projects cover most of the activities carried out at LINKS offices and labs.

Action 3 – promotion of gender equality in research activities, working organization and teaching

The goal of having gender equality in research management is related to the goal of gender equality in recruitment and career progression.

The checks and improvement activities are carried out by the HR team.

4.2.3 Indicators

Action	Indicator	Value 2024
3	Number of projects on gender equality and well-being dimensions presented or executed during the year Key words: gender, women, diversity, inclusion	11 projects 2 completed, 9 running
3	Number of publications by gender	Publications (tot)= 97 Publications (male author) = 97 Publications (female author) = 17



3	Number of foreign employees by gender (and as % of the corresponding population)	TOT =8 (4%) M = 4 (2%); F = 4 (2%)
3	Number of employees participating to training courses during the year by gender	TOT = 136 M= 82; F=54
3	Employees participating to training courses during the year by gender (as % of the corresponding population)	TOT=70% M= 42%; F=28%
3	LINKS employees participating to training courses: average duration (number of hours)	TOT 1680 hours /year 12 hours/participant/year M) 931 hours /year 11 hours/participant/year F) 749 hours /year 14 hours/participant/year

Table 4 - LINKS GEP Indicators for Key Area 2

4.3 Key Area 3: Recruitment and Career Progression

4.3.1 List of Objectives

The list of objectives identified by LINKS for this key area is included in Table 5

Obj ID	Objective Name
3.1	Ensure that every person involved in the recruitment process is aware of gender issues
3.2	Promote gender inclusive and bias-free recruitment, career progression, retention and evaluation policy
3.3	Ensure all individuals in the institution are empowered regardless of their gender
3.4	Ensure that the internal evaluation system is not gender-biased

Table 5 - LINKS GEP Objectives for Key Area 3

4.3.2 Actions planned to reach the objectives

Action 4 – inclusion of the gender dimension in recruiting processes

Recruitment and people / career management is a key topic for a research center oriented to hi-tech disciplines. The recruitment process is divided between LINKS and PRISMA, the company in charge of recruitment for the whole Compagnia di San Paolo group.

This plan introduces specific indicators and checks to make sure that all the colleagues involved in recruitment are aware of gender issues.

Some of the topics on which LINKS carries out its studies and research are more popular among men compared to women, and this is something that cannot be easily changed. A certain bias in the number of male and female employees in favor of males needs therefore to be considered normal for LINKS.

To support young researchers to enrich their work experience in LINKS, in 2022 the LINKS Academy Program was launched. The initiative is offered to all new and junior hired employees and consists of



the following activities: onboarding; association of a mentor, listening of needs and expectations, mid-term reviews, analysis of the results achieved through the “Report of the experience and skills acquired during the career path in LINKS Foundation” (a living document that is evolving together with the Mentee’s growth path) and assignment of digital badges. In this process the collaboration between LINKS Academy participants and mentors is fundamental. A mentor, in fact, is a researcher with a consolidated experience in LINKS Foundation, whose role is to support, at a technical but above all “human” level, the researcher in his career path within the Foundation.

Action 5 – inclusion of the gender dimension in carrier progression strategies

As far as career progression goes, LINKS has appointed throughout the years some women in management positions (research management, team leader, members of the board, etc.).

This plan introduces specific monitoring of the recruitment and career evolution of individuals with focus on gender balance, also by including periodic evaluations.

LINKS Management and General Manager are active in foster diversity at all levels (gender, nationality, language).

The HR team ensures that employment, hiring and career progression are managed fairly for all types of diversity and carries out periodic checks.

4.3.3 Indicators

Action	Indicator	2024
4	Number of people interviewed during recruiting process by gender	TOT = 183 M = 108; F = 75 256 interviews M = 160 F = 96
4	Number of LINKS employees enrolled during the year by gender	TOT = 45 M = 26 (58%); F = 19 (42%)
5	Number of employees with research management responsibilities (program managers (PM) and head (H) of research domains / organizational units) [and as % of the corresponding population]	TOT = 23 (15 PM+8H) (12%) M = 17 (11 PM+6H) (9%) F = 6 (4 PM+2H) (3%)
5	Percentage change in salary (F as compared to M)	Third level -2% Second level -1% First level +0,6% Manager <i>Quadro</i> +2%
4	Number of employees involved in the LINKS Academy, as participant (and as % of the corresponding population)	TOT = 76 (40%) M = 48 (63% of LINKS Academy participants); F = 28 (37% of LINKS Academy participants)
4 - 5	Number of employees involved in the LINKS Academy, as mentor (and as % of the corresponding population)	TOT = 31 (8%) M = 19 (61% of mentors); F = 12 (39% of mentors)



Table 6 - LINKS GEP Objectives for Key Area 3

4.4 Key Area 4: Gender Equality in Governance Bodies and Decision Makers

4.4.1 List of Objectives

The list of objectives identified by LINKS for this key area is included in Table 7.

Obj ID	Objective Name
4.1	Direct the decision-makers on gender equality
4.2	Create structures and offer tools to support and promote gender equality
4.3	Promote a horizontal, gender-aware and egalitarian leadership
4.4	Prevent and combat sexual and gender-based harassment
4.5	Ensure all stakeholders are aware and have easy access to the information about the gender equality policy and GEP implementation

Table 7 - LINKS GEP Objectives for Key Area 4

4.4.2 Actions planned to reach the objectives

Action 6 – Involvement of LINKS decision makers in GEP implementation

The GEP design phase has involved most of the decision-makers of LINKS, including the General Manager, the HR Manager and the research and operational groups leaders, in order to keep them informed and to collect data.

Action 7 – Communication tools and GEP initiatives

The LINKS GEP is available on the Foundation website and Intranet. Employees have access to these documents, in order to know all the actions taken or planned in the process towards gender equality.

Moreover, regular updates about gender initiatives are promoted on the LINKS intranet, using the tag #gep.

4.4.3 Indicators

Action	Indicator	2024
6	Number of meetings with LINKS decision makers for assessing GEP implementation	6 meeting/year 4 meetings of Sustainability Committee 2 meetings of Management Committee
7	Number of news about initiatives addressed to promote gender equality and well-being communicated during the year through LINKS intranet	38 news- LinkedIn (215 TOT) 24 news - Intranet news and events (131 TOT) 4 news related to projects and workshops
7	Communication initiatives related to women: <i>Le storie delle nostre ricercatrici e dei nostri ricercatori raccontate da Corriere Torino</i> . Number of colleagues interviewed	5 F (10 interview in total)



7	Number of initiatives to promote gender equality, well-being and social impact organized during the year by LINKS	<p>22 TOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 initiatives by LINKS• 12 initiatives by Together We Stand Project <p>Initiatives by LINKS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women- Contest “let’s dress in red”)2. Women and STEM. The floor to our researchers: 12 colleagues interviewed3. Participation in the race <i>Just the Woman I Am</i>, organized by <i>Centro Universitario sportivo, Torino</i>. 57 participants, of which: 28 M; 29 F4. Donations to charities on March 8th Day5. Solidarity market at Christmas party in LINKS, Christmas presents to employees and buffet by solidarity bodies6. Workshop “Plans for Gender Equity in Research and Innovation: Challenges and Potential”7. Seminar on the use of inclusive language8. <i>LINKS su 2 ruote</i>: exhibition and aperitif to promote the use of the bicycle9. Collaboration with <i>Mercato Itinerante</i> for second-hand objects collection and exchange10. Contributions to employees for sustainable mobility <p>Initiatives by Together We Stand Project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agreement with summer centers for children2. Care management3. Company delivery boy4. Parenting journey5. Meetings with psychologist6. Workshop on the use of inclusive language7. Training on sport and health8. Mindfulness9. Choral activity and singing10. Workshop on sustainability issues11. Contest for sustainability actions in LINKS, entitled: <i>CALL TO ACTION. Il futuro è già domani: idee, emozioni e azioni per promuovere la sostenibilità, a partire dal posto di lavoro</i>.12. Workshop on sustainable cooking
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7	Number of employees participating in GEP-related initiatives organized by LINKS	95 participants in initiatives by Together We Stand Project M= 45 F= 50 193 participants in initiatives by LINKS M=121 F=72
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Table 8 - LINKS GEP Indicators for Key Area 4



Women and STEM



International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women- Contest "let's dress in red" (2024)







5 Conclusions and next steps

A Gender Equality Plan is more than just a document: it is a concrete **declaration of intent**, a set of guiding principles aimed at fostering both personal and social progress. Gender equality and respect for diversity are not only matters of justice, but are also powerful **drivers of innovation and economic growth**. When people of different genders, nationalities, and ages work together, ideas are enriched and solutions become more creative and effective. This collaborative and inclusive approach is essential for scientific advancement, connecting knowledge to real progress.

The LINKS Gender Equality Plan is designed to set out **clear objectives and concrete actions** to build a more inclusive and welcoming environment, where all employees can work serenely and feel valued.

The keywords that define the 2025–2027 Plan are:

-  Gender Equality
-  Respect for diversity
-  Inclusion
-  Wellbeing and Sustainability

In 2024 and 2025, several initiatives have already been implemented to pursue these objectives, as demonstrated by the relevant indicators. Looking ahead, LINKS is committed to the ongoing integration of these principles into every aspect of working life and to systematic data collection through continuous monitoring, ensuring that progress is measured and maintained over time.

Starting from 2025, the Gender Equality Plan will become a **framework for initiatives** that go beyond gender equality, embracing broader themes such as **sustainability, diversity, and inclusion**. This evolution reflects the commitment of LINKS to create a truly comprehensive and forward-looking environment.

Among the goals set by LINKS for the next three years there is a rethinking of the GEP itself, in order to expand its scope towards sustainability, diversity and inclusion. The aim is to ensure that the Plan is a living document that grows and adapts to new challenges and opportunities.

Another key objective is to reduce the number of indicators used to measure actions and progress, set specific targets for each indicator, and introduce year-over-year data comparison. This approach will enable more effective monitoring and a clearer assessment of the impact of each initiative.

LINKS is also committed to continuing some of the initiatives launched in recent years, especially those that have seen the highest levels of participation and engagement among staff.

Additionally, the Plan will be further promoted internally, with the intention of making it not only a management tool but also a vehicle for communication and awareness across the organization.



Finally, a new survey will be launched to assess staff satisfaction regarding smart working, flexible working hours, and other work-life balance measures. This feedback will be crucial for shaping future actions and ensuring that the needs and aspirations of all employees are met.

Torino, 14 July 2025	<div data-bbox="981 526 1252 593"><i>Managing Director</i> Ing. Stefano Buscaglia</div> <div data-bbox="917 593 1252 672"></div> <div data-bbox="798 660 1404 672"><hr/></div>
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