



Deliverable D8.3: A gender equality plan and social impact analysis (SIA) - 1



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Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation / Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
HE	Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027)
CFS	Certificate of the Financial Statement
VAT	Value Added Tax (a sales tax)
TBC	To be confirmed
GA	Grant Agreement
DMP	Data Management Plan

Project coordinator		
1	PROP	Proplast - Consorzio per la Promozione della Cultura Plastica
Project beneficiaries		
2	POLM	Politecnico di Milano
3	ZOREN	Zorlu Enerji Elektrik Uretim as
4	IRES	IRES - Innovation in Research and Engineering Solutions
5	NORV	Norvento Tecnologia, s.l.
5.1	NNF	Norvento NED Factory, s.l.u. (<i>affiliate partner to Norv</i>)
6	TEK	Fundacion Tekniker
7	EuCIA	Association Europeenne de l'industrie des Composites
8	AEP	AEP Polymers srl
Project associated partners		
9	BUL	Brunel University London
10	ENT	Entelea Ltd

1 Executive Summary

This document outlines the preliminary plan for D8.3, which focuses on developing a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and conducting a Social Impact Analysis (SIA) for the project. The deliverable is scheduled for completion in M24 (D8.5), with this preliminary version setting out the proposed procedures, protocols, and methodologies to guide the implementation of both components and the results obtained. This plan aligns with the project's commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion while maximizing the project's positive socio-economic impact.

2 Introduction

The project is committed to embedding principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion across its implementation and outcomes. This commitment reflects the values and policies of all partner organizations, which uphold equal opportunities in management and delivery. Recognizing the societal and innovation benefits of inclusivity, the project sets measurable targets to ensure balanced representation and meaningful participation from underrepresented groups.

Women-led SMEs and those with a majority female senior management team represent a key focus for engagement. National statistics suggest that such businesses comprise a modest proportion of SMEs, particularly in sectors such as education, health, and services. The project aims to actively engage a representative percentage of these businesses, ensuring their visibility and involvement throughout the project.

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Similarly, minority ethnic group-led SMEs face unique challenges in certain regions. This project aligns its outreach and participation metrics with regional data to enhance the inclusion of these groups. Through targeted engagement strategies, the project will expand its reach beyond traditional sectors, actively inviting diverse businesses and stakeholders into its activities.

To achieve these goals, the project will adopt inclusive recruitment practices, host workshops promoting diversity, and create platforms for underrepresented groups. Progress will be monitored through regular reviews, with biannual reports capturing successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Any underperformance will prompt specific corrective actions to ensure targets remain on track.

This preliminary plan outlines the procedures, methodologies, and milestones that will guide the establishment of a comprehensive Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and Social Impact Analysis (SIA), culminating in a final deliverable in M24.

3 Objectives

3.1 Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

The Gender Equality Plan aims to ensure a balanced representation and active participation of all genders in the project by addressing structural barriers and implementing inclusive strategies. A significant body of literature, such as the European Institute for Gender Equality's reports, underscores that diverse and equitable teams lead to enhanced innovation and decision-making outcomes. Achieving gender balance in recruitment, participation, and leadership roles is therefore both a social and strategic imperative for the project.

To address these challenges, the project will implement targeted outreach strategies focusing on engaging female and minority-led organizations. For example, initiatives similar to those recommended by "Gender Equality in Science, Technology and Innovation" (UNESCO, 2021) will be adopted to broaden the reach and attract talent from underrepresented groups. Dedicated workshops and awareness campaigns will address unconscious biases and promote a culture of inclusivity. Additionally, policies such as flexible work arrangements and mentorship programs will be introduced to support equitable participation.

Comprehensive monitoring frameworks will be established, leveraging gender-disaggregated data and specific KPIs to measure progress. For instance, metrics like the percentage increase in female representation in leadership roles and participation rates across events will be tracked. Regular reviews and feedback loops will ensure continuous improvement in achieving the GEP's goals.

3.2 Social Impact Analysis (SIA)

The Social Impact Analysis evaluates the project's contribution to societal well-being, focusing on environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social equity. Research from the "Global Impact Investing Network" highlights the importance of quantifiable metrics in assessing social impact, and this project integrates such evidence-based approaches.

Key areas of focus will include job creation and fostering equitable economic opportunities. For example, the project will prioritize the inclusion of SMEs led by underrepresented groups, ensuring that at least 20% of participating organizations reflect diversity in ownership or management. Engagement activities, such as stakeholder interviews and focus groups, will gather insights into perceived project benefits and address any gaps.

In terms of environmental impact, the project will incorporate Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) to measure sustainability outcomes, drawing on methodologies outlined in the "International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment" (2020). These analyses will quantify the reduction in carbon footprint and resource use compared to traditional approaches. By aligning economic and environmental goals, the project ensures a holistic contribution to societal advancement.

Through iterative feedback and stakeholder engagement, the SIA will remain a dynamic tool to refine and adapt project strategies, ensuring alignment with its overarching goals of diversity, sustainability, and equity.

4 Methodologies and Protocols

4.1 Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Step 1: Establish Baseline Data

The project will commence with a comprehensive baseline survey to systematically collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data on all project participants, ensuring an inclusive and data-driven approach to program implementation and impact assessment.

According to the EU recommendations, this dataset will encompass a wide range of key areas, including but not limited to the following aspects:

- Work-life balance and organisational culture;
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

This questionnaire will be designed to gather valuable insights into various dimensions of gender equality within the organizations. The survey will use a rating scale ranging from 1 (very poor – not inclusive) to 5 (excellent – very inclusive), as well as yes/no response options, allowing participants to express their personal experiences and perceptions. This approach will enable us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, offering a comprehensive view of the current state of gender inclusivity within the organization.

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The feedback from this survey will provide critical insights into how gender equality is currently being addressed across different areas such as recruitment, professional development, and organizational culture. By analyzing the responses, we will be able to identify both strengths and gaps in the existing practices, ensuring that we capture a complete picture of the organizational climate in terms of gender inclusivity.

Furthermore, the results will play a pivotal role in shaping policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunities in recruitment processes, mitigating gender bias in decision-making, and fostering an environment that promotes diversity and inclusion. These insights will inform the development of actionable recommendations, helping the organization implement targeted strategies to reduce gender-based disparities, enhance workplace equity, and create a more inclusive and diverse organizational culture.

This data-driven approach will not only provide a clear understanding of the current gender dynamics but also guide the creation of initiatives that align with international best practices and recommendations, driving continuous improvement towards gender equality in the workplace.

We could define the following key steps:

1. Survey duration: 4 weeks -> 01/04/2025 – 30/04/2025
2. Target audience: EOLIAN partners
3. Distribution method: Google form
4. Reminder schedule: one reminder per week
5. Data collection & analysis: data will be compiled and provided to BUL for analysis

BUL will analyse the data to identify existing gaps, focusing particularly on technical and leadership roles where gender disparities are more pronounced. These insights will inform targeted strategies to address underrepresentation.

Step 2: Develop Gender-Sensitive Policies

The development of gender-sensitive policies will be jointly led in September 2025 by the EUCIA and POLM. EUCIA will oversee the alignment of these policies with broader European diversity frameworks, while POLM will contribute insights from academia and industry collaborations. The policies developed based on the results of the survey will not only focus on promoting gender equality but also introduce a range of supportive measures designed to foster a more inclusive environment. These policies will include flexible work arrangements and mentorship programs aimed at encouraging the active participation of women and minority groups in the project. The goal is to create a work environment that accommodates diverse needs and supports the career progression of underrepresented groups, helping to break down barriers that may hinder their full engagement and contribution to the project.

In addition to these initiatives, the policies will place a strong emphasis on inclusive recruitment practices. This will involve actively advertising job roles on platforms and networks that are frequented by diverse candidates, ensuring that the organization attracts a broad pool of talent from various backgrounds. Furthermore, the policies will mandate the use of gender-neutral language in all job descriptions, advertisements, and organizational communications, ensuring that all messaging is welcoming and does not inadvertently exclude or discourage certain groups.

To assist the EOLIAN partner organizations in their recruitment efforts for roles within the EOLIAN project, a Gender Bias Decoder tool could be implemented. This innovative tool will allow HR teams and hiring managers to quickly assess whether job advertisements contain subtle linguistic cues that may unconsciously reflect gender bias, potentially deterring qualified candidates. By identifying and rectifying such issues, this tool will help ensure that job ads are more inclusive and neutral, creating an equitable environment for all potential applicants. The use of this tool will be a crucial step towards eliminating unintentional gender bias in recruitment practices, thereby fostering greater diversity within the project.

Overall, the development of these policies, along with the practical tools and strategies outlined, will help create a more inclusive and supportive working environment for all participants, encouraging equal opportunities and ensuring that the recruitment and participation processes are free from gender bias and discrimination.

Step 3: Training and Awareness

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training sessions will be organized by EUCIA in collaboration with POLIM and BUL, aiming to foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment across the partner organizations. These sessions will address crucial topics such as unconscious bias, the value of diverse teams, and practical strategies for creating an inclusive work culture. The training will provide participants with a deeper understanding of the importance of EDI in both the workplace and beyond, helping them recognize how individual actions contribute to shaping the organization's culture.

To ensure maximum engagement and effectiveness, the sessions will be designed with a combination of theoretical knowledge and interactive elements. These elements will include real-life case studies that highlight both the challenges and successes organizations face when promoting EDI. Participants will analyze these case studies, allowing them to reflect on the outcomes and consider how similar strategies could be applied in their own work environments. Role-playing exercises will also be a central component of the training, where participants can step into different roles and experience situations from various perspectives. This hands-on approach will help build empathy, develop problem-solving skills, and foster a better understanding of how to navigate challenging scenarios related to gender.

Step 4: Monitoring and Reporting

EUCIA will establish a comprehensive and robust monitoring framework with clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that the goals related to gender equality are met throughout the project. These KPIs will be carefully designed based on the data collected from the survey, which will provide valuable insights into the current gender dynamics within the organization and the project. Key metrics will include, but will not be limited to, the percentage of women in technical and leadership roles, the proportion of women participating in project activities.

Biannual reviews will be conducted during the project review meetings, where project teams will assess the progress made toward meeting these KPIs. These reviews will provide an opportunity to analyze the data collected, identify any trends or gaps, and determine if any corrective actions or adjustments are necessary to improve the inclusivity of the project. In addition to assessing the results, the reviews will foster discussions on how to overcome challenges, share best practices, and refine strategies to ensure that the project's EDI objectives are successfully met.

The findings from these biannual reviews will be documented and shared with all project partners in order to maintain transparency, foster collaboration, and ensure accountability. By sharing the results regularly, EUCIA will encourage all partners to reflect on their own practices and make necessary adjustments. Additionally, these findings will be used to engage with stakeholders, ensuring that there is a collective effort towards achieving the shared goal of gender equality within the project.

4.2 Social Impact Analysis (SIA)

Step 1: Define Impact Metrics

BUL will lead the definition of key societal impact metrics, leveraging its expertise in sustainability and industrial research. BUL will collaborate with all partners to establish quantifiable metrics, including environmental sustainability indicators such as reductions in carbon emissions and material waste, economic development measures like job creation, and community engagement metrics. These metrics will be tailored to the project's specific goals and benchmarked against European Union sustainability standards, ensuring that the analysis is both rigorous and actionable.

Step 2: Stakeholder Engagement

EUCIA will organize stakeholder engagement activities, including focus groups and interviews with community members and SMEs. These sessions will gather qualitative insights into the project's benefits and challenges. Surveys will be designed to collect quantitative data on perceived outcomes, ensuring comprehensive stakeholder input.

Step 3: Environmental and Economic Assessment

LCA results from WP7 from IRES will be used to evaluate the project's environmental impact. Economic opportunities, such as job creation and SME inclusion, will be assessed using models developed by POLM.

Step 4: Reporting and Feedback

Draft reports summarizing the findings from stakeholder engagement activities and assessments will be developed by EUCIA to provide a clear and detailed overview of the insights gathered throughout the project. Once the draft reports are completed, they will be shared with all project partners for review and feedback. This collaborative approach will allow for a thorough examination of the findings, enabling the identification of any areas that require clarification or further refinement. Based on the feedback received, iterative improvements will be made to the reports, ensuring that they accurately reflect the evolving project dynamics and the expectations of stakeholders. This process of continuous revision and enhancement will help ensure that the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) remains a dynamic and responsive tool, providing meaningful, up-to-date insights that inform decision-making and guide the project towards achieving its goals. The ultimate aim is to create a comprehensive, actionable report that can be used to measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate the project's positive impact on the community and stakeholders.

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5 Implementation Plan

Milestone	Activity	Timeline (Months)	Deliverable
M9	Develop preliminary plan	M1 – M9	D8.3 submission
M12	Baseline data collection	M9 – M12	Gender and social impact baseline report
M18	Mid-term review and stakeholder engagement	M12 – M18	Progress report and stakeholder feedback
M24	Finalize Gender Equality Plan and SIA	M18 – M24	Comprehensive D8.5 submission

6 Conclusion

This preliminary plan lays the critical groundwork for achieving the project's overarching goals related to gender equality, social impact, and overall inclusivity. By carefully implementing the methodologies outlined in this plan and engaging relevant stakeholders throughout the project, we will ensure that the project's outcomes align with its core values of fairness and equal opportunity. These efforts will not only contribute to fostering a more inclusive environment within the project but will also maximize the broader societal benefits by creating lasting, positive change. As the project progresses, this plan will be continuously refined and adapted to incorporate feedback, address emerging challenges, and align with evolving goals. The final deliverable at M24 will provide a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the progress made, showcasing the project's significant achievements and measurable impact in the areas of gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion.

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