



Co-funded by
the European Union

CAREvolution Gender Equality Plan (GEP) Toolkit



© CAREvolution Project, 2025

Developed by:

- Diversity Charter Slovenia
- Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development (HR PSOR)
- Fundatia Forum for International Communications (FIC)
- Institute for Gender Equality Studies (IPES)

Published by:

- University of Maribor

Design and layout: Diversity Charter Slovenia

Publication date: October 2025

Project: 101191233 – CAREvolution – CERV-2024-GE

Deliverable: D2.4: CAREvolution online education manual for GEPs preparation and implementation

Programme: Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

Co-funded by the European Union

Views and opinions expressed are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Acknowledgements |
| 5 | Welcome Message |
| 6 | A Step-By-Step Guide |
| 7 | The CAREvolution Project |
| 7 | CAREvolution Digital Tool |
| 8 | CAREvolution Partners |
| 9 | Why Gender Equality Matters – A Strategic Business Imperative |
| 10 | Explore Gender Equality Across Europe |
| 11 | What is a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)? |
| 13 | The GEP Journey – 9 Steps |
| 14 | STEP 1: LINKING GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLANS WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY |
| 18 | STEP 2: SET UP YOUR GEP TEAM |
| 21 | STEP 3: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING FOR YOUR GEP TEAM |
| 27 | STEP 4: ASSESS YOUR CURRENT SITUATION – BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE |
| 38 | STEP 5: ANALYZE, IDENTIFY GAPS & SET PRIORITIES |
| 41 | STEP 6: DESIGN YOUR ACTIONS |
| 44 | STEP 7: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS & SECURE LEADERSHIP APPROVAL |
| 45 | STEP 8: LAUNCH & COMMUNICATE |
| 46 | STEP 9: MONITOR & ADJUST |
| 49 | Congratulations & Thank You |



Acknowledgements

This toolkit was jointly developed by the Diversity Charters of Slovenia, Croatia, and Romania, in collaboration with the Institute for Gender Equality Studies (IPES) and the University of Maribor.

The Diversity Charters, part of the European Platform of Diversity Charters, unite organizations across Europe committed to promoting equality, inclusion, and diversity in the workplace. Their mission is to support employers in creating fair, respectful, and innovative work environments where everyone can thrive.

We warmly thank all employers, employees, and social partners who contributed through 34 individual consultations, 13 focus groups, and a survey of 652 participants across Slovenia, Croatia, and Romania. Their insights and experiences shaped the tools and recommendations in this guide.

Our gratitude also goes to the international expert group that monitored the project, ensuring methodological consistency, ethical integrity, and comparability of results, as well as to the European Union for co-funding the CAREvolution project under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme.



Welcome Message

This toolkit builds on extensive research, practical experience, and collaborative work across Slovenia, Croatia, and Romania. To keep the text clear and avoid repetition, all references are gathered collectively in the **CAREvolution Knowledge Hub** at the end of this toolkit. There you will find a curated list of studies, reports, and background materials that informed the development of this guide.

The **CAREvolution Pro Tips** and examples draw on qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered through individual consultations with 34 participants, followed by 13 focus groups (82 participants) and a survey involving 652 respondents across the three countries. These included employees, employers, and social partners, whose insights and experiences helped shape the practical recommendations and tools featured in this guide.

The CAREvolution project is monitored and guided by an **international group of experts**, ensuring methodological consistency, ethical integrity, and the comparability of results across Slovenia, Croatia, and Romania.



How to Use This Toolkit

- Follow the 9 steps in order — each step includes templates, checklists, worksheets, and CAREvolution Pro Tips. 💡
- Use the templates to reflect, collect data, define priorities, set goals, and track progress.
- Bring your plan to training sessions, where selected steps will be explored in more detail.
- By the end, you will have a ready-to-implement Gender Equality Plan (GEP).
- Access additional resources through the 📖 CAREvolution Knowledge Hub, where you can find templates, articles, checklists, and good practice examples anytime.
- Remember: This toolkit is more than a document — it is a hybrid resource, combining print and digital formats to help you learn, practice, and apply insights in the way that works best for your organization.



A Step-By-Step Guide

This step-by-step toolkit for employers is built on the CAREvolution GEP implementation model – a practical and adaptable framework for developing and implementing Gender Equality Plans. The model helps organizations create plans that are flexible, results-oriented, and tailored to their specific context, while addressing the gender care gap and promoting work-life balance as strategic drivers of productivity, innovation, and talent retention. Designed for organizations of all sizes and sectors, it applies a participatory and intersectional approach, ensuring that measures respond to the diverse needs of employees. By focusing on scalability, accountability, and care as a shared responsibility, the model enables organizations to move beyond compliance and achieve sustainable, long-term transformation.

Why This CAREvolution Toolkit?

- To guide employers with a practical, step-by-step roadmap for advancing gender equality.
- To highlight the business case for care, inclusion, and equality, showing why these topics are strategic, not optional.
- To help organizations design and implement a strong Gender Equality Plan (GEP) that delivers real impact.
- To demonstrate the tangible benefits and outcomes that come with a well-prepared GEP – from improved workplace culture to stronger organizational performance.



The CAREvolution Project

CAREvolution is a transnational initiative implemented in Slovenia, Croatia, and Romania that addresses persistent gender inequalities in caregiving and work–life balance. Across all three countries, women continue to shoulder most unpaid care work, while men are often excluded from caregiving roles due to social stereotypes. These imbalances reinforce inequality both at home and at work, limiting well-being and professional opportunities.

The project promotes a dual strategy: easing the caregiving burden on women and supporting men to take a more active role in care. By engaging employees, employers, and social partners, CAREvolution fosters cultural and organizational change toward shared responsibility and more equitable workplaces.

CAREvolution Digital Tool

One of the project’s key results is the CAREvolution Digital Tool, an online hub designed to help organizations advance gender equality, shared caregiving, and work–life balance in practice. It brings together three interconnected modules:

CAREGenerator – helps employers design tailor-made measures and policies to reduce gender and care-related inequalities. It offers templates, data-driven recommendations, and simulations to turn equality goals into practical actions.

CARExchange – serves as a collaborative platform for sharing and discovering good practices, case studies, and lessons learned on gender equality and caregiving. It enables peer learning and exchange across sectors and countries.

CAREquality Dashboard – an interactive monitoring tool that visualizes key equality and care indicators through the CAREvolution Index, allowing organizations to assess progress, identify gaps, and make evidence-based decisions for more inclusive workplaces.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

[Explore the tool](#)



CAREvolution Partners

1

UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

This university is committed to education, research, and innovation across multiple disciplines. Its strength lies in applied research and interdisciplinary projects, fostering knowledge transfer, collaboration, and development of practical solutions with societal impact.

<https://www.um.si>

2

IPES

This non-governmental organization focuses on researching and advancing gender equality. Its strength lies in research, analyzing legal and policy aspects of equality, and contributing to evidence-based policy development and awareness-raising initiatives.

<https://ipes-si.org>

3

DIVERSITY CHARTER SLOVENIA

This initiative brings together organizations promoting diversity and inclusion, excelling in awareness-raising and knowledge sharing. Through guidance, best practices, and training, it fosters inclusive workplace cultures, equal opportunities, and sustainable diversity in Slovenia.

<https://www.raznolikost.eu>

4

DIVERSITY CHARTER CROATIA

This organization unites companies committed to sustainability and responsible impact management. As carrier of Diversity Charter Croatia it emphasizes D&I as key elements of sustainable business, promoting equal opportunities, inclusive and fair workplaces.

<https://hrpsor.hr>

5

DIVERSITY CHARTER ROMANIA

This initiative unites organizations promoting diversity and inclusion, excelling in corporate and HR fields. Through tools, training, and awareness campaigns, it fosters equal opportunities, inclusive workplace cultures, and sustainable diversity practices in Romania.

<https://www.cartadiversitatii.ro>



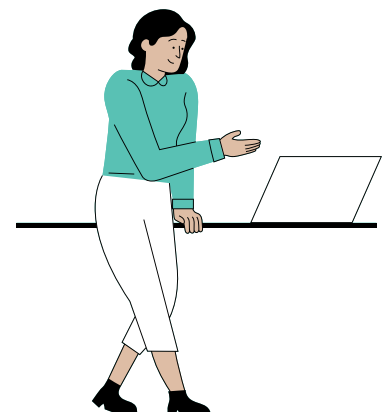
Why Gender Equality Matters — A Strategic Business Imperative

The 21st century is increasingly defined not only by technology, but by the growing role and influence of women. Women make up 51% of the global population and are a powerful force in shaping economies and societies. They represent the majority of university graduates in Europe, launch one in three new businesses, and influence 70–80% of all consumer purchasing decisions worldwide, amounting to more than \$20 trillion in annual spending power (Forbes; Inc.).

Despite this impact, women remain significantly under-represented in positions of leadership and decision-making. In Europe’s largest listed companies (STOXX Europe 600), women account for just 8% of CEOs, 11% of board chairs, and 27% of executive management roles. Recognizing this gap, the European Union has introduced a 40% quota for women on corporate boards by 2026.

This imbalance is more than a question of fairness — it is a matter of unlocking untapped potential. Research shows that companies with greater gender diversity in leadership achieve better governance, stronger decision-making, and improved financial performance. A global study by the Boston Consulting Group, covering 1,700 companies across eight countries, found that firms with diverse leadership teams generated 45% higher revenues from innovation and enjoyed a 19% higher EBIT margin.

In today’s competitive and fast-changing environment, innovation and adaptability are the keys to long-term success. Organizations that harness the full spectrum of talent — across gender, culture, age, and background — are more creative, resilient, and better positioned to meet the needs of diverse customers and markets.





Global research shows that organizations that prioritize gender balance at all levels enjoy measurable strategic benefits:

- +25% higher profitability for companies with gender-diverse executive teams.
- +45% greater innovation revenue and +19% stronger financial performance in diverse companies.
- Higher team collaboration, better decision-making, and stronger talent retention in inclusive environments.



Therefore, as leaders, your commitment is critical. A clear, visible focus on gender equality:

- Enhances organizational reputation and market competitiveness,
- Strengthens employee trust, engagement, and well-being,
- Drives cultural transformation, resilience, and adaptability.

.....

In short: Gender equality is not a “nice-to-have” — it is a leadership priority, a driver of innovation, and a cornerstone of sustainable business success.

.....

Explore Gender Equality Across Europe

The Gender Equality Index, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), offers a clear picture of how countries are progressing on gender equality. By exploring country scores, you can see strengths, gaps, and trends across key areas such as work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health. This tool helps organizations understand the wider context in which they operate and draw inspiration from national progress and challenges.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

[Explore your country's score here](#)

For employers, knowing your country's standing provides valuable insights to shape your Gender Equality Plan and align company efforts with broader societal needs.



What is a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)?

A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) should be understood as an integral part of the broader Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy. Addressing gender gaps is particularly strategic, as women represent the largest homogeneous group in most organizations and make up at least 51% of society – and therefore, of customers. Taking gender into account is not only a matter of fairness, but also of business intelligence and market relevance.

✓ A Gender Equality Plan is your organization’s roadmap for advancing gender equality. It is a written, time-bound plan with concrete actions to:

- Identify and reduce gender gaps (e.g., in pay, promotions, leadership representation).
- Improve work-life balance for everyone.
- Build an inclusive and respectful workplace culture.
- Meet EU or national compliance requirements (e.g., Horizon Europe funding eligibility, EU Pay Transparency Directive 2023/970).
- Anticipate demographic changes and respond to the realities of the global market and evolving world of work.

Each GEP must outline specific measures to address inequalities in key operational areas. These actions are not isolated efforts but part of an integrated, cross-cutting strategy to mainstream gender throughout the institution’s structures and culture.

To this end, GEPs typically focus on several key thematic areas:



By implementing a GEP, organizations not only ensure compliance but also strengthen their competitiveness, resilience, and long-term sustainability. It's not just a statement of intent — it's a structured, evidence-based plan for change.

Organizational change

The journey toward gender equality is a process of organizational change. It requires leadership commitment, time, persistence, and resources. Each organization's journey will look different, because culture, systems, and people differ. Yet the destination is shared: more equitable, innovative, and resilient workplaces.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

Get Inspired: GEPs from Across Europe

For inspiration, we invite you to browse through a selection of Gender Equality Plans developed within various EU projects — practical examples that show how organizations across Europe are turning commitments into concrete action.



Gender Equality Action Plan (GEP) Template

GEP Template is a practical Word document designed to help employers develop, implement, and monitor their own gender equality strategies. Built on the CAREvolution GEP model, it guides users through each step — from assessing gender gaps and defining priorities to setting actions, indicators, and timelines. The template provides a clear structure, sample texts, and editable sections where organizations can insert their own logo, data, and goals. It supports employers of all sizes in aligning equality objectives with EU and national frameworks while promoting inclusion, work–life balance, and shared caregiving responsibility.



The GEP Journey – 9 Steps

- 1 *Align GEP with business strategy*
- 2 *Set up your GEP team*
- 3 *Unconscious bias training for your GEP team*
- 4 *Assess your current situation*
- 5 *Analyze, identify gaps & set priorities*
- 6 *Design your actions*
- 7 *Engage stakeholders & secure leadership approval*
- 8 *Launch & communicate*
- 9 *Monitor & adjust*



STEP 1: LINKING GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLANS WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

GEP cannot exist in isolation—it must be directly connected to an organization’s business reflection and strategic objectives. Only when GEP goals are aligned with business goals can companies unlock the full value of diversity as a driver of performance, innovation, and competitiveness.

THREE STEPS FOR CONNECTING YOUR GEP WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

Identify organizational needs.

Begin by reflecting on where diversity and inclusion matter most to your business: workforce engagement, productivity, entry into new markets, customer satisfaction, or innovation.

Define a clear vision and outcomes.

Specify what the organization aims to achieve with its GEP. Desired results may include reducing turnover, improving employee engagement, increasing representation in leadership, or expanding customer reach.

Develop a concrete action plan.

Translate the vision into specific measures: set a timeline, assign responsibilities, and allocate resources. Every action should have a clear link to both GEP outcomes and business impact.

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT IS KEY

- Management must take responsibility for driving change, provide resources, and monitor progress.
- Leaders should communicate the value of inclusion both formally and informally.
- By role-modeling inclusive behavior, leaders reinforce that GEP is not a compliance exercise, but a business priority.

.....

An effective GEP is not just a list of good intentions—it is a strategic business tool. When designed with business reflection at its core, it strengthens employee trust, enhances organizational reputation, and creates measurable returns in innovation, customer reach, and profitability.

.....



REFLECTION TEMPLATE: LINKING GEP WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

| Guiding Question | Your Reflections / Notes |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>1. What are the company's key priorities for the next 3 years? <i>(e.g., market expansion, brand promotion, digital transformation...)</i></p> | |
| <p>2. Does your current workforce have the skills and capacity to support this growth?</p> | |
| <p>3. What are the main opportunities and challenges your organization faces? <i>(e.g., deeper understanding of consumer markets, retaining and engaging employees, increasing productivity, team cohesion, recruiting the right talent...)</i></p> | |
| <p>4. How can promoting gender equality and leading gender-balanced teams contribute to better company performance?</p> | |
| <p>5. What could be the consequences of taking no action?</p> | |



REFLECTION TEMPLATE: BUILDING THE BUSINESS MODEL - ACTION PLAN

| Step | Your Reflections / Notes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Key Business Needs (Summarize the main needs of your organization based on the analysis above.)</p> | |
| <p>Vision (What do you want to achieve through promoting gender equality and implementing a GEP?)</p> | |



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIPS

- **Make care and well-being strategic.**

Position work–life balance and mental health as productivity drivers, not perks.

- **Combine culture and policy.**

Employees want personalized flexibility, employers need structure. Write clear policies, but allow room for individual adaptation.

- **Acknowledge informal care.**

Childcare, eldercare, and other hidden care duties directly impact performance. Integrate this reality into workforce planning.

- **Challenge stereotypes.**

Gendered expectations still slow women’s careers and exclude men from caregiving. A GEP must openly address these norms.

- **Invest in human-centered leadership.**

Train leaders to recognize stress, support healthy boundaries, and normalize flexibility for all employees.

- **Frame equality as risk management.**

Burnout, absenteeism, and talent loss are business risks. A strong GEP reduces them while boosting innovation and retention.

- **Start with dialogue.**

Create safe spaces for employees to talk about care needs and boundaries without fear of stigma or punishment.

- **Measure business impact.**

Link GEP goals to business KPIs: turnover, sick leave, employee engagement, and innovation revenue.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

REFLECTION TEMPLATE:

1. *Linking GEP with Business Strategy*
2. *Building the Business Model – Action Plan*



STEP 2: SET UP YOUR GEP TEAM

The second step is to appoint an internal working group that will lead the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). This group acts as the central coordination body, ensuring that the plan is both strategically aligned and operationally feasible.

The working group should be:

- Diverse and representative, bringing together different genders, seniority levels, and departments;
- Strategically positioned, with members from HR, finance, legal, and senior management who have the authority and access to organizational data and decision-making;
- Endorsed by leadership, with clear support from top management to secure resources, legitimacy, and company-wide buy-in;
- Supported by CAREvolution facilitators or other experts who provide expertise, training, tools, and ongoing guidance.

This group drives the process from organizational assessment to plan development, coordinating data collection, internal communication, and stakeholder engagement. It ensures that recommendations are realistic, aligned with business objectives, and foster trust and ownership across the organization.





WORKSHEET: OUR GEP TEAM

| Name | Role / Function | Responsibilities |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Senior Management Representative | Provides leadership endorsement, secures resources, ensures alignment with business strategy |
| | Human Resources (HR) | Central to workforce data, recruitment, promotion, training, and policy implementation |
| | Finance / Controlling | Provides insights on pay structures, budgets for initiatives, and cost-benefit considerations |
| | Legal / Compliance | Ensures GEP measures align with labor law, equality legislation, and company policies |
| | Line Managers / Department Heads | Bring operational perspective, ensure measures are practical across business units |
| | Employee Representatives (e.g. works council, union, staff association) | Ensure buy-in from employees, represent diverse voices |
| | Diversity & Inclusion Champion / Expert (internal or external) | Provides technical knowledge on gender equality, diversity, and intersectionality |
| | Optional: External Facilitator / CAREvolution Support | Offers training, tools, and guidance throughout development and implementation |



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

WORKSHEET:

[Our GEP team](#)



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Keep it diverse — and representative.** Include men and women, different ages, departments, and especially employees with caregiving responsibilities. Diversity builds trust and credibility.
- **Balance efficiency with inclusiveness.** Keep the group small enough to be effective (6–10 people) but broad enough to represent real experiences across the company.
- **Choose respected “bridge people”.** Appoint team members who are trusted by both leadership and employees. They can close the gap between policies on paper and realities on the ground.
- **Give the team authority and data.** Provide access to workforce data, budgets, and decision-making channels so the team can address root causes, not just symptoms.
- **Integrate mental health and care expertise.** Bring in someone with knowledge of well-being, equality, or diversity. External facilitators, as CAREvolution experts, can help guide sensitive topics and add credibility.
- **Clarify roles from day one.** Define who does what — HR for data, Finance for costs, Legal for compliance, Managers for feasibility, Employees for lived experience.
- **Secure visible leadership.** Have senior management actively participate — not just endorse. Employees take equality seriously when leaders model it.
- **Build safe communication channels.** Position the GEP team as a safe space. Employees should feel they can raise issues about care, balance, or well-being without stigma.
- **Think long-term.** Change is a marathon, not a sprint. Equip your team with time, resources, and an ongoing mandate to drive lasting transformation.

STEP 3: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING FOR YOUR GEP TEAM

Unconscious bias refers to automatic, implicit associations we hold about groups of people. These mental shortcuts are shaped by cultural stereotypes and lived experiences, influencing how we evaluate others without realizing it. In the workplace, unconscious bias affects hiring, promotions, leadership assessments, and daily interactions — often disadvantaging women.

Recognizing and addressing these biases is critical for fair processes and effective Gender Equality Plans (GEPs).

WHY IT MATTERS FOR BUSINESS

Unconscious bias isn't only a social issue — it's a business issue. When bias influences who gets hired, promoted, or supported, organizations risk losing top talent, stifling innovation, and damaging their reputation with employees, customers, and stakeholders. Even subtle, hidden biases can have major consequences, such as:

- Missed opportunities to recruit the most qualified candidates.
- Lower engagement and retention, especially among women and underrepresented groups.
- Barriers to innovation, as diverse perspectives are undervalued or ignored.

Two well-known studies illustrate just how powerful these effects can be:

- “Think Manager – Think Male” (Schein, 1973): This landmark study revealed that leadership qualities are overwhelmingly associated with men — a stereotype that continues to shape promotion decisions today.
 - “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?” (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004): A field experiment showing that identical CVs received 50% more callbacks when they carried White-sounding names, exposing how bias distorts hiring outcomes.
-

For employers, understanding this evidence is not an academic exercise — it’s a call to action. Embedding these insights into your Gender Equality Plan strengthens credibility, transparency, and trust, while ensuring decisions are based on facts rather than assumptions.

The bottom line: Companies that actively confront unconscious bias don’t just create fairer workplaces — they gain an edge by unlocking performance, attracting top talent, and driving innovation.

Gender Equality and Bias in the Workplace

Even in modern workplaces, unconscious gender bias continues to shape how talent is evaluated, promoted, and rewarded. These biases are not always intentional, but they have very real consequences: they limit opportunities for women, reinforce stereotypes, and prevent organizations from reaching their full potential.

Gender bias can influence recruitment, performance reviews, promotions, and everyday interactions. Men are often judged on potential, while women are judged on proven results. Mothers are assumed to be less committed, while assertive women are unfairly labeled as “too pushy”. Such patterns are subtle but powerful — and they accumulate over time.

For employers, recognizing these biases is the first step toward building a fair and inclusive workplace. By learning to spot them, organizations can take practical steps to reduce their impact, ensure equal opportunities, and unlock the full range of skills and leadership that diverse teams bring.

Understanding Gender Bias in the Workplace

Catalyst, a global nonprofit organisation, has shown that gender bias in the workplace is often unconscious but highly influential. Their research demonstrates how these biases affect hiring, promotions, and leadership opportunities, limiting women’s potential and holding organizations back. Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward building fairer and more inclusive workplaces.

Why this matters for GEP teams?

- Biases create systemic barriers in pay, promotions, leadership, and work-life balance.
- Addressing them builds credibility, fairness, and trust in organizational processes.
- Unconscious bias training helps GEP teams recognize patterns, design inclusive policies, and ensure decisions are based on facts, not assumptions.

GENERAL WORKPLACE BIASES

These are common cognitive shortcuts that influence how we judge people in everyday work situations. They are not always intentional, but they can distort decision-making, limit opportunities, and reinforce exclusion.

| Type of Bias | Description | Example |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Affinity Bias | Favoring people who are similar to us in background, interests, or appearance. | “Tom is likely to be great for the role; he went to the same university I did.” |
| Comparison Bias | Exaggerating differences when people seem unlike us, often leading to avoidance. | “I try to avoid Mary, who is a wheelchair user; I think I’ll say or do something wrong!” |
| Confirmation Bias | Seeking only information that supports our existing beliefs, ignoring evidence to the contrary. | “It is difficult for older people to acquire new computer skills.” |
| Attribution Bias | Giving preferential treatment to those we see as part of “our group” and undervaluing others. | “I’ll give this promising new project to my friend Betty — she reminds me of myself.” |
| Recency Bias | Overemphasizing recent performance while ignoring long-term results. | “Johanna missed deadlines in her last project; I don’t think I’ll trust her again.” |
| Halo Effect | Letting one positive trait create an overall favorable impression. | “This doctor saves lives — he must also be a great father.” |
| Horns Effect | Letting one negative trait shape an overall unfavorable impression. | “She made a mistake in one report — she must be incompetent in everything she does.” |

GENDER BIASES IN A WORKPLACE

These biases specifically affect women and reinforce gender inequalities in the workplace. They often combine with other stereotypes, making it harder for women to access fair evaluations, career progression, and leadership opportunities.

| Type of Bias | Description (1 sentence) | Example |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Performance Bias | Assuming men have more leadership potential, while women must prove themselves repeatedly. | Identical CVs rated more competent and hireable when carrying a male name. |
| Likeability Bias | Men are rewarded for assertiveness, while assertive women are judged as “pushy” or unlikable. | “He’s decisive and confident” vs. “She’s too aggressive.” |
| Motherhood Bias | Assuming mothers are less committed and competent, while fathers are seen as more stable. | A woman’s résumé was 79% less likely to lead to a callback if she was assumed to have kids. |
| Productivity Bias | Overestimating men’s abilities and underestimating women’s productivity. | A CV with a male name increased hiring chances by 60% compared to the same CV with a female name. |
| Double Discrimination | Facing compounded disadvantages when gender bias intersects with race, disability, or other identities. | A woman of color may experience both gender and racial bias in hiring and promotion. |



REFLECTION TEMPLATE: EXPLORING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

1. Have you ever experienced that you felt different from those around you? (size, appearance, family status, newcomer to the community, etc.).

How has this feeling influenced your decisions or the paths you have chosen in your life?

2. Think how different biases can impact your work? What will the impact be and how can they be addressed?

3. Choose one bias and answer below questions

Example Situation in Your Workplace

(Describe a real or potential situation where this bias could appear. E.g., recruitment, promotions, team meetings, evaluations...)

Impact of the Bias

(What effect could this bias have on individuals, the team, or the company? E.g., unfair promotion decisions, lower employee engagement, talent loss...)

How to Manage or Reduce the Bias

(What actions, processes, or personal behaviors could help reduce the influence of this bias?)

4. Personal Action Plan

(What will you do personally to be more aware of this bias in your work?)

I will...

I will...



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

Explore the Research: Landmark Studies on Unconscious Bias

Explore the key studies behind this evidence base and see how bias plays out in leadership, hiring, STEM careers, and everyday decision-making.



The most common biases women face at work- explained with evidence and practical examples



REFLECTION TEMPLATE: **Exploring unconscious Bias**



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Ground it in evidence.**

Show how unconscious bias affects promotions, hiring, and leave decisions. Use real studies and your workplace data.

- **Make it practical.**

Use real-life scenarios: recruitment, parental leave, workload distribution. Employees learn best when they see themselves in the examples.

- **Tackle gender + care stereotypes.**

Challenge the norm that women “must” care and men “shouldn’t.” Normalize male caregiving and women in leadership.

- **Create safe space.**

Encourage reflection without blame. Training should invite honesty, not fear.

- **Engage managers.**

Managers shape culture. Train them to recognize bias in reviews, workload planning, and daily interactions.

- **Mix methods.**

Combine evidence, interactive exercises, and storytelling to reach both hearts and minds.

- **Don’t stop at one session.**

Bias training must continue: refreshers, HR processes, leadership messages.

STEP 4: ASSESS YOUR CURRENT SITUATION – BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

A Gender Equality Plan must be grounded in facts, not assumptions. The assessment phase ensures that leadership decisions are based on reliable data and real employee experiences. This creates a credible foundation for action, builds transparency, and helps organizations target resources where they will have the greatest impact.

The assessment process should combine **quantitative and qualitative** data. Both numbers and employee voices matter.

A. QUANTITATIVE, SEX-DISAGGREGATED ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

Where possible, data should also be broken down by age, parental status, contract type, and other diversity categories. Key metrics include:

- Number of employees by gender and employment type (full-time/part-time, permanent/temporary).
- Pay and grade levels by gender (gender pay gap analysis).
- Recruitment, promotion, and turnover rates by gender.
- Uptake of parental leave, care leave, and family-friendly policies.
- Distribution of women and men in leadership and decision-making roles.
- Use of flexible work arrangements.





CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Start with what you already track.**

Use HR and payroll data (contracts, pay, promotions, turnover, parental leave). Don't reinvent the wheel.

- **Always disaggregate.**

Break numbers down by gender, age, caregiving status, contract type, and seniority. Hidden gaps appear only when data is detailed.

- **Look at trends, not snapshots.**

Collect at least two years of data to see whether gaps are closing, stagnating, or widening.

- **Check pay and progression.**

Analyze salaries, but also promotions, training access, and leadership representation. A small pay gap can hide big career barriers.

- **Track uptake of flexibility and leave.**

It's not enough to have policies — measure who actually uses flexible work and parental leave, especially men.

- **Include absenteeism and turnover.**

Burnout, care pressures, and hidden inequalities often show up in sick leave and staff exits.

- **Examine contract types.**

Women are often concentrated in part-time or temporary contracts. Break down data by contract to reveal structural inequality.

- **Validate together.**

Have HR, finance, and employee representatives review the numbers to build trust and credibility.

- **Visualize for impact.**

Charts and infographics make gaps clear for leaders who don't read detailed tables.

B. GENDER-SENSITIVE REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Assess whether formal documents are inclusive, non-discriminatory, and responsive to employee needs.

Review:

- Recruitment and promotion policies.
- Performance evaluation and appraisal systems.
- Harassment prevention and grievance mechanisms.
- Work-life balance provisions (parental leave, hybrid work, flexible scheduling).
- Diversity and inclusion statements or codes of conduct.



TEMPLATE: GENDER-SENSITIVE REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

| Area | Question | Score (1–5) | Reflections / Notes | Next Action |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Recruitment & Promotion | Are job descriptions written in inclusive, gender-neutral language? | | | |
| | Are recruitment and promotion criteria transparent and consistently applied? | | | |
| | Do we collect and analyze recruitment/promotion data by gender and diversity factors? | | | |
| Performance Evaluation | Are evaluation criteria based on measurable outcomes, not subjective impressions? | | | |
| | Do managers receive training on recognizing and reducing bias in evaluations? | | | |
| | Are mentoring, training, and high-visibility projects equally accessible to all employees? | | | |

| Area | Question | Score (1–5) | Reflections / Notes | Next Action |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Harassment & Grievance | Do we have clear policies prohibiting harassment, bullying, and discrimination? | | | |
| | Are reporting channels safe, confidential, and trusted by staff? | | | |
| | Are protections in place to prevent retaliation against those who report issues? | | | |
| Work–Life Balance | Are flexible arrangements (remote work, flexible hours, part-time) available to all genders? | | | |
| | Are parental leave policies equally available and encouraged for both mothers and fathers? | | | |
| | Do employees feel supported when balancing caregiving and career progression? | | | |
| D&I Commitments | Does our D&I statement include concrete actions, not just symbolic commitments? | | | |
| | Are employees regularly trained on our D&I principles and expectations? | | | |
| | Do we review and update our D&I policies to reflect changing employee needs? | | | |



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Check what's written and what's lived.**

A policy on paper is not enough — ask if employees feel safe and able to use it.

- **Use a structured checklist.**

Review recruitment, promotion, performance reviews, harassment procedures, and work–life balance policies through a gender lens.

- **Look for vague criteria.**

Unclear promotion or evaluation rules are breeding grounds for bias. Push for transparent, measurable standards.

- **Test for inclusiveness.**

Ensure parental leave, flexible work, and training are available to all genders and contract types — and actively encouraged.

- **Scan for hidden barriers.**

Focus groups revealed adoptive parents, men requesting parental leave, and caregivers often face stigma. Policies should explicitly cover these groups.

- **Check grievance channels.**

Employees won't report harassment or discrimination if reporting is unsafe. Review confidentiality, anti-retaliation protections, and trust levels.

- **Align with law and EU standards.**

Confirm compliance with labor law, equality legislation, and the EU Pay Transparency Directive.

- **Compare policy with practice.**

Survey results showed managers often believe supports exist, while employees don't experience them. Identify these perception gaps.

- **Engage staff in review.**

Invite employee reps, unions, or diversity champions to validate findings and add lived experience.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

REFLECTION TEMPLATE:

Gender sensitive review of policies and procedures



C. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS AND LIVED EXPERIENCES

Numbers tell one part of the story—employee voices reveal the rest. Use a mix of **surveys, focus groups**, and interviews to explore how staff experience the culture, policies, and leadership commitment.

- **Workplace climate survey:** covering fairness, transparency, inclusion/exclusion, use of policies, obstacles to career progression, leadership commitment, and work-life balance.
- **Focus groups/interviews:** 4–6 per organization (depending on size), targeting groups such as early-career employees, caregivers, and managers. These capture nuance that surveys cannot.

How to Measure with Employee Surveys

In practice, most organizations measure general workplace experiences (e.g., fairness, transparency, inclusion, leadership commitment, work-life balance) and then analyze the results by gender and other characteristics such as age, seniority, or caregiving status. This approach makes the survey relevant to all employees while still providing gender-sensitive insights once data is disaggregated.

Employee surveys should therefore combine standardized scales (e.g., 1–5 ratings) with open questions that capture suggestions for improvement. Quantitative data shows broad patterns, while qualitative comments reveal the lived experiences behind those patterns.

Two well-established frameworks can guide survey design:

- **Deloitte’s Inclusion Model**, which highlights how employees experience authenticity, belonging, fairness, and meaningful work.
- **EIGE’s Gender Equality Index**, which measures structural dimensions such as work, time, power, and health.

“ **Together, these approaches ensure that surveys capture both individual perceptions of inclusion and systemic gender inequalities, creating a strong evidence base for the Gender Equality Plan (GEP).** ”

Sample Survey Questions

1. I feel respected and valued at work. (1–Strongly Disagree → 5–Strongly Agree)
 2. Promotions and pay decisions in this organization are made fairly and transparently. (1–5 scale)
 3. I am satisfied with my ability to balance work and personal responsibilities. (1–5 scale)
 4. What one change would most improve gender equality or inclusion in our workplace? (Open question)
-



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

TEMPLATE:

Employee Survey Inclusion & Gender Equality

A proposed employee survey, combines Deloitte's Inclusion Model and EIGE's Gender Equality Index and helps you capture actionable insights on inclusion and gender equality.



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Select diverse groups.**

Include different career stages, genders, and caregiving roles to uncover varied perspectives.

- **Create safe spaces.**

Use skilled facilitators, assure confidentiality, and separate groups where power dynamics may silence voices (e.g., managers and staff should not be in the same group).

- **Go beyond the survey.**

Ask “why” and “how” questions to understand root causes behind survey findings.

- **Limit group size.**

6–8 participants per focus group is ideal to balance diversity with depth of discussion.

- **Turn insights into action.**

Document key themes and link them directly to recommendations in your Gender Equality Plan.



TEMPLATE: CAREVOLUTION GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUPS

Main Objective

The purpose of the focus group is to understand employees' experiences with work–life balance, their perceptions of gender inequality, and the impact of workplace culture on wellbeing. Ensure a diverse mix of participants in terms of gender, job roles, sectors, and caregiving responsibilities. Collect narratives around the following themes and questions (adapt or add as needed).

1. Work–Life Balance

- Current state of balance between work and personal life.

How do you currently perceive your work–life balance? Which workplace policies or practices help — or hinder — your ability to balance work and caregiving responsibilities (e.g., flexible work arrangements, parental leave)?

- Effectiveness of work–life balance policies.
- Challenges and barriers (e.g., caregiving duties, workplace policies).
- What changes would you suggest to improve work–life balance in your organization?

2. Informal Care Responsibilities

- Experiences with informal caregiving obligations (e.g., childcare, eldercare).

How supportive is your workplace culture when it comes to discussing caregiving responsibilities with managers or colleagues? How do caregiving responsibilities affect your work–life balance?

3. Perceptions of Gender Inequality

- Differences in opportunities for men and women in the workplace.
- Do you think there are gender differences in how employees are supported in balancing work and personal life? If yes, how? How could greater involvement of men in caregiving benefit workplace dynamics?
- Impact of caregiving roles on career progression.

4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Stress or burnout related to poor work–life balance

How does managing personal and professional responsibilities affect your mental wellbeing? What support would help improve wellbeing in your workplace?

5. Future Needs, Training

- Areas where employers need support or training.
- Suggestions to improve workplace fairness and gender equality

6. Closing the Session

- Thank participants for sharing their experiences and insights.
- Summarize key findings: “You told us that ...”
- End on a positive and encouraging note.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

[European Institute for Gender Equality. \(n.d.\).
Gender audit \[Method/Tool\]](#)



TEMPLATE:

[CAREvolution guidelines for employee focus
groups](#)



D. TURNING DATA INTO INSIGHT

The collected information must be systematically analyzed to generate actionable insights:

1. Quantitative data: Use statistical analysis and cross-tabulation (e.g., gender by contract type, caregiving status by role) to identify disparities.

2. Survey data: Aggregate, anonymize, and disaggregate by gender and other categories. Look at average scores, distribution, and correlations (e.g., care responsibilities vs. perceived promotion opportunities).

3. Qualitative data: Code and group responses to identify themes—such as perceptions of bias, hidden barriers, or cultural norms.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

The final product of this step is a concise internal report that becomes the analytical foundation of the Gender Equality Plan. It should include:

- Data sources and methodology.
- Key findings from metrics, policies, surveys, and interviews.
- Identified strengths, challenges, and structural inequalities.
- Initial recommendations and priority themes for the GEP.

Good practice: Share the report internally with leadership and relevant stakeholders. A summary may also be shared with employees to build trust, show transparency, and signal early commitment to change.



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Look for patterns.**

Connect statistics with employee voices — e.g., fewer promotions + reports of vague criteria show a structural issue.

- **Spot contradictions.**

Employers may think supports exist while employees say they don't work. Highlight these gaps as opportunities.

- **Prioritize pain points.**

Focus on issues that are systemic and high-impact, such as opaque promotion rules or stigma around parental leave.

- **Apply an intersectional lens.**

Check where inequalities overlap: women on temporary contracts, men requesting leave, caregivers with disabilities.

- **Frame as business risks.**

Translate gaps into outcomes leaders care about: turnover, burnout, absenteeism, lost innovation.

- **Make results accessible.**

Use visuals and plain language summaries. Employees trust the process when they see their input reflected.

- **Share, don't shelve.**

Present results to leadership and share a summary with staff.

Transparency builds ownership and reduces resistance.

STEP 5 – ANALYZE, IDENTIFY GAPS & SET PRIORITIES

Collecting data is only the beginning – the real value comes from systematically analyzing it to uncover hidden inequalities and then translating these insights into clear organisational priorities. This combined step ensures that your Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is firmly grounded in evidence while remaining strategic and actionable.

Under the CAREvolution model, priorities should be defined systematically across all key thematic areas (e.g., recruitment and promotion, work–life balance, leadership, harassment prevention). Each thematic area should include at least one clear organisational priority. The aim is not to solve every issue at once but to select a manageable number of focus areas that can realistically be addressed within the GEP timeframe.

At this stage, companies should:

- Combine quantitative data (e.g., representation, pay, promotions), survey results, and qualitative insights (e.g., focus groups, interviews) to build a holistic picture.
- Highlight strengths, challenges, and structural gaps that emerge across thematic areas such as recruitment, work–life balance, leadership, and harassment prevention.
- Define a manageable set of priorities in each thematic area that address the most urgent and systemic inequalities. These priorities will later serve as the foundation for concrete measures, indicators, and monitoring.





TEMPLATE: WORKSHEET ASSESSMENT & PRIORITIES

Use this worksheet to summarize findings from your organizational assessment and define clear priorities for the GEP. Keep it concise – it is a working tool, not a final report.

1. Data Sources Reviewed

- Workforce statistics (representation, pay, promotions, contract types)
- Employee survey results
- Focus groups / interviews
- Policy and procedure review
- Other: _____

2. Key Strengths Identified

(What is already working well?)

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Key Gaps / Challenges

(Where do inequalities, barriers, or risks appear?)

Recruitment & Promotion: _____

Work–Life Balance: _____

Leadership: _____

Harassment Prevention: _____

Research and Innovation (if applicable): _____

4. Organisational Priorities

(Define one clear priority per each thematic area, outcome-oriented, e.g.: “Improve transparency in promotion decisions by introducing formal evaluation criteria.”)

Recruitment & Promotion: _____

Work–Life Balance: _____

Leadership: _____

Harassment Prevention: _____

Research and Innovation (if applicable): _____

5. Why This Priority Matters

- Aligns with organizational strategy
- Responds to legal obligations or compliance needs
- Addresses systemic or high-risk inequality
- Supports employee wellbeing and retention
- Links to EU/national equality objectives

(Explain briefly) _____

6. Intersectionality Check

(How does this priority intersect with caregiving status, contract type, age, disability, or other factors?)

7. Stakeholder Validation

(Which groups have been consulted to confirm this priority?)

- Leadership
- HR
- Employee representatives
- Other: _____

8. Next Step

(This priority will later be developed into a concrete measure with indicators and monitoring.)



CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Connect data to voices.**

Numbers reveal patterns, employee stories explain why they happen. Use both before setting priorities.

- **Focus, don't overload.**

Select 3–5 systemic gaps you can realistically address. Depth beats breadth.

- **Find leverage points.**

Target issues that create ripple effects, like opaque promotion rules that widen pay gaps and discourage caregivers.

- **Align with business goals.**

Frame priorities as enablers of retention, innovation, and reduced absenteeism.

- **Apply intersectionality.**

Consider overlapping risks — midlife caregivers, men taking leave, women on temporary contracts.

- **Validate with stakeholders.**

Test draft priorities with employees and leaders to ensure ownership and feasibility.

- **Balance quick wins and long-term goals.**

Show progress early (e.g., communication campaign on parental leave) while laying the groundwork for deeper culture change.

- **Explain why it matters.**

For each priority, link to business impact, culture, and compliance (e.g., EU Pay Transparency Directive).

- **State priorities clearly.**

Write them as outcome-oriented goals: “Increase transparency in promotions,” not vague intentions.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

TEMPLATE:

Worksheet assessment & priorities



STEP 6 – DESIGN YOUR ACTIONS

Once priorities have been set, the next step is to translate them into concrete actions. Each company will design its own measures, tailored to its size, sector, and culture. The goal is to move from commitment to practice, ensuring that actions are specific, measurable, and realistic within the GEP timeframe.

To support this process, the CAREvolution knowledge hub (see QR codes at the end of this step) includes a list of sample measures with indicators, covering multiple thematic areas – from work–life balance and organizational culture to leadership diversity, recruitment and career progression, harassment prevention, and integrating gender in research and innovation.

These resources can serve as:

- a menu of starter actions for organizations just beginning,
- a source of inspiration for those ready to innovate, and
- a benchmark for linking measures to clear indicators, timelines, and accountability mechanisms.

Principles for Designing Measures

Under the CAREvolution framework, each measure should be:

- **Evidence-based** – directly responding to issues identified in your organizational assessment.
- **Context-sensitive** – tailored to your specific structures, culture, and resources.
- **Gender-transformative** – not only correcting imbalances, but reshaping the norms and conditions that sustain them.
- **Care-aware** – explicitly integrating work–life balance and recognition of unpaid labour.

Each previously defined priority should be matched with at least one concrete measure that addresses identified barriers, reflects your organization’s readiness for change, and builds toward longer-term cultural transformation.

The GEP should be time-bound (typically 1–2 years), with measures distributed across all thematic areas. Indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) should be realistic, achievable, and ensure comprehensive coverage.

Checklist for Action Design

- Define 1–3 actions for each priority.
- Assign a responsible person or department.
- Set clear deadlines and milestones.
- Decide how success will be measured (KPIs[MOU1]).
- Balance quick wins with long-term changes.



WORKSHEET: ACTION PLAN TABLE

| Priority | Action | Responsible | Deadline | Indicator/ KPI | Status |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|-------------|----------|-------------------|--------|
| Work–Life Balance & Organizational Culture | | | | | |
| Leadership & Decision-Making | | | | | |
| Recruitment & Career Progression | | | | | |
| Harassment Prevention & Safe Workplace | | | | | |



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

[Full list: Action Plan with GEP Indicators](#)



WORKSHEET

[Action plan table](#)



CAREvolution Pro Tip

- **Keep actions realistic.**

Fewer, well-resourced actions work better than long lists with no follow-through.

- **Link to evidence.**

Every action should respond to gaps found in Step 3 and priorities set in Step 5.

- **Balance quick wins and deep change.**

Quick wins build momentum (e.g., inclusive job ads). Structural actions (e.g., transparent promotion criteria) deliver long-term impact.

- **Assign responsibility.**

Name a person or department for each action. Avoid “everyone is responsible.”

- **Set timelines.**

Time-bound actions with milestones prevent drift and keep energy high.

- **Measure success.**

Use both numbers (% of men taking parental leave) and perceptions (employee survey scores on fairness).

- **Include care & well-being.**

Actions should address flexibility, parental leave, and mental health — top needs from focus groups.

- **Apply inclusivity.**

Check the impact on parents, non-parents, part-time staff, and employees with disabilities.

- **Budget it.**

Secure resources for training, communication, and external support.

- **Communicate progress.**

Make actions visible to employees. Transparency builds trust and credibility.

STEP 7: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS & SECURE LEADERSHIP APPROVAL

A GEP is far more likely to succeed when it combines broad-based stakeholder engagement with formal leadership approval. Stakeholder involvement ensures that the plan reflects diverse perspectives, is realistic in implementation, and builds trust across the organization. Leadership approval, in turn, secures resources, accountability, and visibility. Together, they create the shared ownership needed for gender-transformative change.

Stakeholder Engagement

In the CAREvolution model, engagement is not a one-off consultation, but an ongoing and structured process that:

1. Ensures priorities and actions are relevant and responsive to actual needs.
2. Makes policies more realistic and feasible.
3. Increases investment from employees and leadership.
4. Reduces resistance through transparency, trust, and dialogue.

When to involve stakeholders:

- Organizational assessment → provide input through surveys, focus groups, or interviews.
- Priority-setting → validate findings and co-identify focus areas.
- Design of measures → assess feasibility and flag risks or unintended consequences.
- Adoption and rollout → foster commitment, communication, and accountability.

Methods of engagement:

- Co-creation workshops and trainings.
- Department or team-level meetings to review draft measures.
- Anonymous feedback channels (online surveys, suggestion forms).

Securing Leadership Approval

To be effective, a GEP must also be formally endorsed by top management. Approval by senior leaders anchors the plan in institutional strategy, ensures resources are allocated, and signals accountability across the organization.

STEP 8: LAUNCH & COMMUNICATE

Designing a strong Gender Equality Plan is only half the journey — making sure people know about it, understand it, and feel part of it is what turns a plan into change. Communication is not a “nice-to-have” add-on at the end, but a strategic driver of success.

Employees, managers, and stakeholders will only support and use the GEP if they see that:

- **Leadership is visibly committed.** Staff must see the plan endorsed by top management, not hidden in HR files.
- **The plan is relevant to them.** Clear, accessible communication shows how actions improve fairness, wellbeing, and opportunities in daily work.
- **Progress is transparent.** Sharing updates and results — even small ones — builds trust and demonstrates accountability.
- **Their voice matters.** Inviting feedback, ideas, and dialogue ensures the GEP is not a top-down exercise, but a shared organizational effort.

In many organizations, the failure to communicate well leads to skepticism: “This is just a paper exercise.” A strong launch and ongoing communication overcome this by making the GEP visible, human, and connected to the company’s identity and strategy.



Think of communication as the “engine” that powers the GEP. It engages hearts and minds, shows that equality is not hidden policy but a living value, and ensures that actions are understood, supported, and sustained.



STEP 9 – MONITOR & ADJUST

Adopting a GEP signals institutional commitment – but it is through continuous monitoring and evaluation that this commitment turns into measurable progress. Monitoring ensures accountability, helps track effectiveness, and creates space for learning and improvement. A GEP should be treated as a living document: measures may be refined, delayed, or expanded as the organization grows and learns.

What to Monitor

Monitoring focuses on the GEP action plan, which sets out the concrete measures, timelines, responsibilities, and indicators. Over time, this plan may evolve to stay relevant and realistic. Adjustments should always be evidence-based and strategically guided, not ad hoc.

KEY ELEMENTS OF MONITORING

Indicators

Define clear indicators for each measure:

- **Quantitative metrics** → % of men taking parental leave, % of leadership roles held by women.
- **Qualitative insights** → employee feedback on inclusion via surveys or focus groups.
- **Process metrics** → number of trainings delivered, policies reviewed.

Baseline and Targets

Set baselines during the initial assessment, and refine targets during action design. Targets should be ambitious yet realistic, guided by benchmarks or sector norms.

Data Collection

Schedule monitoring at regular intervals (e.g., annually). Collect data through HR systems, anonymous surveys, structured interviews, and document reviews. Always disaggregate by gender, contract type, and caregiving status to capture intersectional impacts.

Roles and Responsibilities

The GEP working group should coordinate monitoring, while responsible departments provide updates on measures in their domain.

Internal Reporting

Produce short, accessible progress reports that highlight:

- Achievements and milestones.
- Delays or barriers.
- Emerging risks or gaps.
- Recommendations for course correction or scale-up.

Evaluation

At the end of the cycle, conduct a formal evaluation with stakeholders to assess:

- Overall effectiveness of the GEP.
- Impact of specific measures.
- Organizational learning and capacity development.
- Alignment between priorities and actual change achieved.

Depending on maturity, the GEP itself may remain stable while the action plan evolves — or both may be revised together for the next cycle.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

WGEA DATA EXPLORER: Good Practice in Australia
In Australia, under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, all private-sector employers with 100+ staff must submit annual gender equality reports to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). These reports are made publicly available through the WGEA Data Explorer, where anyone can access company-level information on workforce composition, pay gaps, and policies.





CAREVOLUTION PRO TIP

- **Think of monitoring as a steering wheel, not a rearview mirror.**

It's about guiding change in real time, not just looking back.

- **Measure what matters.**

Track both numbers (pay gaps, promotions, leave uptake) and perceptions (surveys on fairness, culture, well-being).

- **Set clear indicators.**

Every action needs KPIs, deadlines, and a responsible person. Without them, progress is invisible.

- **Keep it short and visual.**

Dashboards, scorecards, and infographics communicate progress better than long reports.

- **Review regularly.**

Quarterly or bi-annual reviews prevent surprises and keep energy alive.

- **Use both data and dialogue.**

Numbers show trends; employee voices explain lived experience. Combine both.

- **Celebrate milestones publicly.**

Recognize achievements to maintain momentum and build trust with staff.

- **Address barriers openly.**

If actions stall, name the challenge and adjust instead of hiding it.

- **Engage leadership.**

Regular updates to top management ensure accountability and resources.

- **Close the feedback loop.**

Report back to employees: "You told us, we acted, here's the result."

- **Learn and evolve.**

Use monitoring to refine the plan and strengthen the next GEP cycle.

Congratulations & Thank You

Congratulations on taking the important steps to design and implement your Gender Equality Plan. This is not only the right thing to do — it is also a wise business decision. By embedding equality and inclusion into your strategy, you are building a work place that is fairer, more resilient, and better prepared for the future.

Your actions contribute to:

- Sustainable growth through innovation and diverse perspectives.
- Stronger employee engagement and retention.
- Enhanced reputation and trust with stakeholders and society.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment. With every step you take, you are proving that advancing equality is both a path to business excellence and a contribution to a more sustainable and inclusive society.



CAREVOLUTION KNOWLEDGE HUB

Library: Research & Reports Behind This Toolkit

We've gathered the key studies, reports, and insights that shaped this toolkit — explore them here for deeper learning and inspiration.





CAREVOLUTION



**Remember:
Equality: the right choice, the smart strategy**



[Explore CAREvolution Digital Tool](#)

