



GARR Gender Equality Plan 2026-2028

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Consortium GARR

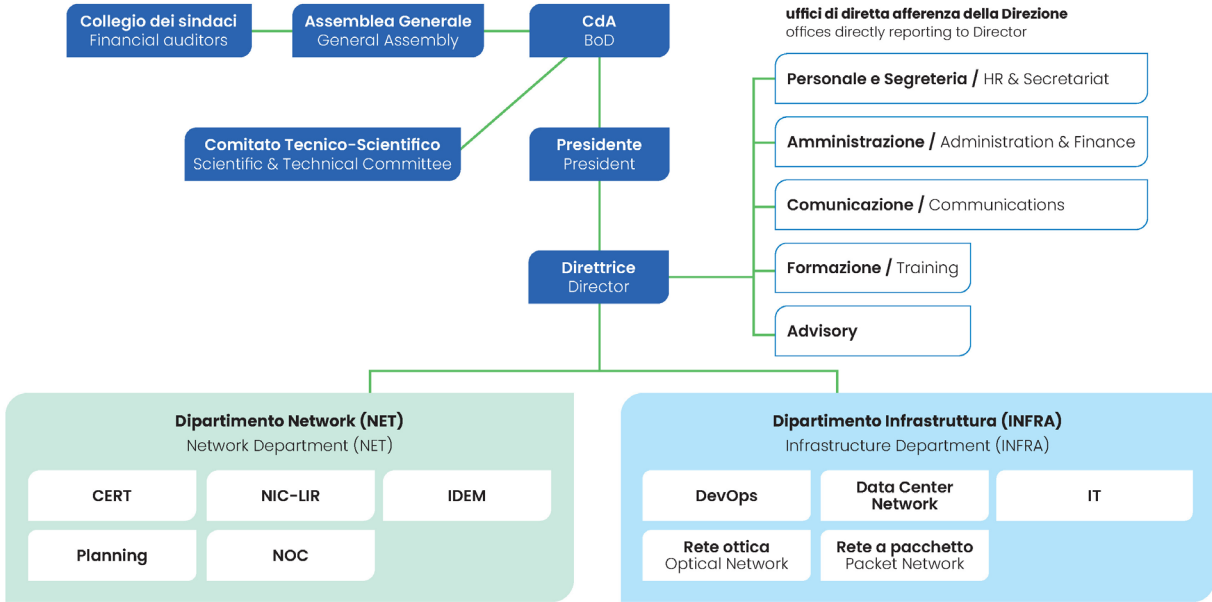
The Consortium GARR (hereinafter “GARR”) is a non-profit association that manages the GARR network, a fibre-optic infrastructure using state-of-the-art communication technologies. The network spans approximately 24,000 km, including backbone and access links, reaches around 3 million users, and connects more than 1,200 sites throughout Italy, including research organisations, universities, research hospitals, cultural institutions, libraries, museums and schools.

Its primary objective is to provide high-performance connectivity and to develop innovative services supporting the daily activities of lecturers, researchers and students, as well as international collaboration.

The GARR network is interconnected with the international system of research networks and the global Internet, enabling researchers to collaborate regardless of geographical location.

GARR has long been an integral part of GÉANT, the European research network, of which it is a founding member together with other European national research and education networks.

GARR’s organisational structure is based on the organisational chart in force since 24 October 2023:



As of 31 December 2024, GARR staff consists of 84 people, including permanent employees (74, of whom 5 are part-time), fixed-term employees (3), staff seconded from member organisations (6), and one external collaborator. The workforce is composed of 29% women and 71% men. While this represents an improvement, it remains far from gender balance when compared with EUROSTAT data, which in 2024 reported that the ICT sector workforce comprised 80.5% men and 19.5% women.

The average age of employees is 45 years: 34% are aged between 41 and 50, and 24% between 25 and 40. Forty-one per cent of employees have more than 15 years of service, while 24% have less than 5 years of service.

Gross annual remuneration varies according to professional profile and achieved results. In 2024, the average annual gross salary was €49,000. Salary analysis did not reveal any gender pay gap.

Analytical staff data, disaggregated by gender and analysed by cluster, did not show significant changes compared with the analysis carried out for the preparation of the GEP 2023–2025 and were therefore used to support the drafting of the GEP 2026–2028.

Gender Equality Plan 2026–2028

The GARR Gender Equality Plan (GEP) defines the Association’s strategy to promote and strengthen gender equality and equal opportunities within the organisation and across the academic and scientific community it directly represents.

Since its first adoption in 2023, the GEP has been embedded in GARR’s value system, which is founded on shared principles such as transparency, fairness and inclusiveness.

The importance of gender equality at the European level is reflected in the fact that, for all research organisations and higher education institutions, the adoption of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an essential requirement for access to funding under the Horizon Europe 2021–2027 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Similarly, access to funding under the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP-PNRR) is granted only to public and private entities that have adopted a Gender Equality Plan.

This document covers a three-year period and is structured around objectives and actions articulated across the five intervention areas recommended by the European Commission, namely:

1. work–life balance and organisational culture;
2. gender balance in leadership and decision-making bodies;
3. gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
4. integration of the gender dimension in research;
5. prevention of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

The document includes a summary of the results achieved under the previous GEP 2023–2025, which served as an important reference for the development of the GEP 2026–2028. With a view to consolidating and further developing the work already undertaken, the GEP 2026–2028 places gender equality within the broader context of respect for and enhancement of all forms of diversity.

The Plan was drafted by the GEP Team, a multidisciplinary working group chaired by the GARR Director, Claudia Battista, and periodically renewed to ensure the broadest possible representation of different perspectives.

The GEP Team currently consists of nine members of GARR staff, each bringing a unique set of experiences and skills. The balanced representation of women (56%) and men (44%) reflects the strong belief that genuine cultural change arises from the shared commitment of all individuals, beyond gender differences.

GEP Team GARR

Nome	Cognome	Afferenza
Elis	Bertazon	Communications Office
Nino	Ciurleo	Data Center Network
Andrea	Corleto	Training
Marcello	Fabiani	Administration
Simona	Lampis	Institutional Secretariat
Patrizia	Landi	Head of Human Resources Office, Technical and Institutional Secretariat
Eleonora	Napolitano	Training
Laura	Pirelli	Technical Secretariat
Carlo	Volpe	Head of Communications Office

The Gender Equality Plan 2026–2028 was submitted to the GARR Board of Directors and approved at the meeting held on 26 January 2026 by Resolution No. 1/2026.

The GEP Team conducts annual monitoring of results, on the basis of which objectives and actions for the following year are confirmed or redefined.

Summary of the GEP 2023–2025

During the 2023–2025 three-year period, GARR worked diligently to achieve the objectives of its first Gender Equality Plan, implementing concrete actions across multiple areas. The targets set by the GEP 2023–2025 were largely achieved and documented in annual monitoring reports, available in the dedicated section of the website. This section, updated in 2025, was enriched with new resources, including documentation, video interviews and images, to more effectively communicate the path undertaken and the results achieved.

Below is a summary of the actions implemented over the three-year period by area of intervention.

Area 1: Work–life balance, organisational culture and combating stereotypes

Within Area 1, GARR adopted a hybrid flexible working scheme available to all employees with at least six months' seniority. This choice aimed to foster a more harmonious balance between private and professional life and to support a more equitable sharing of family care responsibilities. This commitment was also reflected in the integration of the scheme into internal procedures, demonstrating a concrete and long-term approach.

In addition to the assessment of work-related stress risks, GARR also launched an organisational climate survey to collect feedback useful for improving organisational wellbeing.

In parallel, an inclusive organisational culture was promoted through a webinar dedicated to valuing diversity, overcoming stereotypes and age management. The training initiative was delivered in two editions and involved both internal staff and the academic and research communities, reinforcing the belief that cultural change is built collectively.

Area 2: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making bodies

Within Area 2, a key step was the mapping of gender-disaggregated data relating to leadership positions and decision-making bodies, with the aim of identifying and monitoring any imbalances. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of these data initiated a process of awareness-raising that continued throughout the three-year period and was addressed during meetings of GARR's governing bodies as an opportunity for shared discussion and growth.

Area 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

In Area 3, GARR paid particular attention to ensuring gender neutrality in both textual and visual language used in all recruitment communication campaigns and in documentation related to recruitment and hiring processes.

Special attention was also given to the needs of new parents through the integration of targeted tools into HR procedures. These included the development and distribution of an informational handbook on parental leave, designed to promote its use and highlight concrete measures supporting work–parenthood balance.

To better support returns from maternity leave or extended parental leave (at least three consecutive weeks), a dedicated mentoring programme was also introduced to facilitate the resumption of professional activities and address any information gaps. This represents a tangible sign of GARR's commitment to building an inclusive, attentive and people-centred working environment.

Area 4: Integration of the gender dimension in research

Within Area 4, GARR promoted and implemented a series of communication campaigns on its social

media channels. The aim was to stimulate reflection within the community on the scientific, social and economic value of gender representation, while also providing positive and successful role models for female students, early-career researchers and professionals working in STEM fields. This commitment seeks not only to raise awareness but also to inspire new generations to pursue paths of growth and leadership.

Area 5: Prevention of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Area 5 focused on objectives and actions aimed at promoting awareness of the different forms of digital violence and how to recognise and counter them. In this context, GARR supported the #NOICISIAMO project of the Association Di.Re – Donne in Rete contro la violenza through a donation. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2024, GARR also joined the UNITE campaign, publishing a series of posts on cyberviolence on its social media channels. To further strengthen this commitment, in collaboration with the social promotion association Assolei, GARR designed and delivered a webinar addressed both to GARR staff and the external community, with the aim of raising awareness and providing practical tools to recognise, prevent and combat different forms of cyberviolence.

GEP 2026–2028: Areas, objectives and actions

Area 1: Work–life balance, organisational culture and combating stereotypes

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote reconciliation and balance between working life and private life

Achieving the right balance between the time and energy devoted to professional activities and those reserved for private life remains a central and priority objective for GARR. Work–life balance is not a static goal, but rather an ongoing process requiring awareness and commitment, with a profound impact on individual wellbeing and productivity. This issue is particularly relevant for younger generations, who increasingly choose workplaces not only on the basis of salary or role, but also on an organisation’s ability to offer flexibility and promote genuinely sustainable working models.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 1

Action: Enhance GARR’s work–life balance policy

Specific objective: Develop an information handbook on the measures offered by GARR (flexible working arrangements, study leave, medical appointments, agile working with a focus on the right to disconnect)

Target group: Employees

KPI: Distribution of the handbook to 100% of employees

Timeline: 2026

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote an inclusive organisational culture

Promoting an inclusive culture is a fundamental pillar of organisational sustainability. For GARR, listening to the voices of its employees means gaining a deep understanding of how inclusion is perceived within the working environment. Only in this way is it possible to ensure an environment that genuinely respects diversity and to shape policies capable of responding to people’s needs at every stage of their professional lives.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 2

Action: Organisational climate survey integrated with the assessment of work-related stress risks, including a dedicated section on inclusion

Specific objective: Administration of questionnaires to all staff

Target group: Employees and seconded staff

Indicator: Evaluation of indicators compared with the 2022 survey

Timeline: 2026

Action: Training initiatives aimed at enhancing the integration of different ways of thinking and working approaches across generations within the organisation (age management)

Specific objective: 1 webinar

Target group: Employees

KPI: Participation of 50% of employees

Timeline: 2027

OBJECTIVE 3: Combat stereotypes

Gender inequalities often stem from conventions and stereotypes that do not relate solely to gender, but extend to broader aspects of personal status – from life paths to civil and social status, from age to nationality. These stereotypes represent invisible barriers that limit the growth and affirmation of identity, both for individuals and for groups, including professional groups. Overcoming them means paving the way for authentic and shared progress.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 3

Action: Engage employees in initiatives aimed at challenging some of the most widespread stereotypes

Specific objective: Organise 1 experiential training and team-building event

Target group: Employees

KPI: Participation of 70% of GARR employees

Timeline: 2026

Area 2: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making bodies

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote measures supporting gender balance in decision-making bodies

Pursuant to Article 20 of the GARR Statute, the Board of Directors is composed of seven members appointed by the General Assembly upon designation by the founding members: three appointed by the CRUI Foundation, one by CNR, one by ENEA, one by INFN, and one designated by the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR).

Pursuant to Article 25 of the GARR Statute, the Scientific and Technical Committee consists of no fewer than nine members and is appointed by the Board of Directors, which determines the number of members and appoints its Chair.

Following the awareness-raising activities on gender balance carried out during the previous three-year period, GARR intends to further strengthen its commitment to plurality of representation within its decision-making bodies. In light of the rules governing the appointment of the Board of Directors and the Scientific and Technical Committee—currently composed respectively of seven men (BoD) and seventeen men and one woman (STC)—the Association is paying close attention to upcoming mandate renewals (2027 for the Scientific and Technical Committee and 2028 for the Board of Directors), with the aim of promoting a more balanced and inclusive representation to enhance the breadth, quality and impact of decision-making.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 1

Action: Analyse gender representation within decision-making bodies across the GARR community

Specific objective: Mapping and comparative analysis of the gender composition of governing bodies of GARR member organisations

Target group: GARR Management

KPI: Presentation of analysis results

Timeline: 2026

Action: Introduce elements that may more effectively foster balanced gender representation in decision-making bodies, while respecting required competences

Specific objective: Drafting and dissemination of targeted briefing notes

Target group: Member Organisations and Board of Directors

KPI: 1 briefing note sent to the relevant target group three months prior to the appointment for the new mandate

Timeline: 2027 (appointment of the GARR STC) – 2028 (appointment of the GARR BoD)

Area 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote gender balance during recruitment processes

In Italy, the ICT sector remains heavily male-dominated, with female representation still below the European average. Gender stereotypes and the lack of female role models are among the main factors contributing to this gap. Bridging this divide requires a shared commitment from institutions, organisations and society as a whole: only by enhancing education and career opportunities will it be possible to open the way to broader participation of women in ICT, thereby enriching the sector with talent, perspectives and innovation.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 1

Action: Promote job opportunities and professional pathways offered by GARR in dedicated contexts

Specific objective and KPI: Participate in or organise 1 recruitment event dedicated to women in STEM

Target group: Female upper-secondary or undergraduate STEM students

Timeline: 2027

OBJECTIVE 2: Support work–parenthood balance in career progression

In the workplace, unconscious biases related to parenthood can influence decisions and behaviours, reducing career and professional development opportunities, particularly for mothers. For this reason, GARR considers it essential to raise awareness among both employees and decision-makers of these hidden biases and to provide targeted training to recognise and avoid them. Only in this way is it possible to build a fairer working environment capable of valuing every life and professional path.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 2

Action: Increase awareness of unconscious biases related to parenthood and their impact on professional careers

Specific objective: 1 webinar

Target group: Employees

KPI: Participation of 50% of employees

Timeline: 2027

Area 4: Integration of the gender dimension in research

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance the presence of women professionals in STEM from a gender equality perspective

Building on the path initiated under the previous GEP, GARR aims to enhance women's talent and skills and to promote a more balanced and plural vision of society. This commitment is also reflected in institutional and technical forums, where women's participation becomes a driver of innovation and enrichment for the entire academic and research community.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 1

Action: Collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on the composition of programme committees and speakers at GARR annual events

Specific objective: Produce statistics covering the past five years relating to the GARR Conference and GARR Workshop

Target group: GARR Management

KPI: Presentation of analysis results

Timeline: 2026

Action: Promote balanced gender representation within the programme committees of the GARR Conference and GARR Workshop, while respecting required competences

Specific objective: Definition of gender-related parameters for the composition of programme committees for each event

Target group: GARR Management

KPI: Adoption of one gender parameter in the regulations/practices for selecting members of each programme committee

Timeline: 2026

Action: Promote balanced gender representation in the selection of invited speakers for the GARR Conference and GARR Workshop, while respecting required competences

Specific objective: Awareness-raising activities on gender balance in speaker selection

Target group: Programme committees

Indicator: Percentage increase in female speaker representation over the three-year period

Timeline: 2026–2027–2028

Area 5: Prevention of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote a safe, inclusive and respectful working environment by preventing and addressing all forms of gender-based violence and harassment

Preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence, including within organisational contexts, is an essential step towards building inclusive and wellbeing-oriented workplaces. GARR is committed to raising awareness that every individual's psychological and physical boundaries are inviolable and to providing concrete tools to prevent and address gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 1

Action: Develop a training project in collaboration with anti-violence associations/centres on recognising and managing harassment in professional contexts

Target group: Employees

Specific objective: 1 webinar

KPI: Participation of 50% of employees

Timeline: 2026

Action: Establish a system for reporting and monitoring workplace harassment

Specific objective: Draft a procedure for reporting harassment, including annual monitoring of reports and outcomes

Target group: Employees

KPI: Distribution of the procedure to 100% of employees

Timeline: 2027

OBJECTIVE 2: Foster cultural change that recognises and rejects gender-based violence in all its forms

Combating gender-based violence is a shared responsibility: on the one hand, individuals are called upon to recognise and reject discriminatory attitudes; on the other, organisations and institutions have the duty to promote awareness-raising, training and protective measures. GARR plays an active role in disseminating a culture based on respect, equality and the overcoming of gender stereotypes, with the aim of contributing to the construction of an inclusive society free from all forms of violence.

Actions foreseen under the GEP 2026–2028 to achieve Objective 2

Action: Contribute to the dissemination of a culture opposing gender-based violence

Target group: Employees and the external community

Specific objective: Support for awareness-raising projects addressing gender-based violence

Indicator: At least 1 project within the reference period

Timeline: 2027

Action: Promote actions to counter the phenomenon of gender-based violence

Target group: Employees and the external community

Specific objective: Design and implementation of awareness-raising projects on gender-based violence

Indicator: 1 project within the reference period

Timeline: 2028



The Gender Equality Plan 2026–2028 was approved by
the GARR Board of Directors on 26 January 2026,
with Resolution No. 1/2026

