

## **SME4SPACE Gender Equality Plan**

*(September 2022)*

### Introduction

SME4SPACE is a not for profit organisation that has also a limited activity as a small private research centre as laid down in its statute and for this reason a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is needed and recommended.

SME4SPACE does not have any employees, at the moment, while it hires different consultants on a project level basis.

For this reason, it is worth having a GEP addressing the gender balanced representation for what concerns the consultants hired for the implementation of the different projects and initiatives.

Moreover, a good gender balance is recognised to be needed also at the Board level.

To this purpose, the following GEP is designed and it is implemented by SME4SPACE.

SME4SPACE is highly committed to reach a gender equality. Throughout the plan and the relative reviews of it, objectives and desired outcomes of the GEP will be identified with relevant baseline data and targets in addition to details of the actions that were, are or will be taken by SME4SPACE, including the allocation of dedicated resources.

### SME4SPACE Gender Equality Overview

At the moment, SME4SPACE has 4 consultants in force, even though not all of them full time. Indeed, there are 2 consultants who are committed with SME4SPACE projects/initiative for 4 days a week and 2 consultants who are committed 1 day a week.

In terms of gender, SME4SPACE has 1 woman working for 4 days a week and 3 men respectively 1 man working 4 days a week and the other 2 men working 1 day a week.

Therefore, the current situation sees SME4SPACE hiring consultants who are 60% men and 40% women in full time equivalent.

In any case, it is worth to mention, that, apart of course the strategic and policy indications of the Board of Directors, SME4SPACE is quite a horizontal organisation, where everybody collaborates and contributes to the success of the Association, being able to bring his/her expertise, knowledge, experience and ideas.

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Regarding the Board of Directors, SME4SPACE has a Chairman and other 4 Directors. All the Directors are men. Therefore, it is clear that a more balanced representation is needed.

The Directors are nominated by the SME4SPACE General Assembly mainly from proposals coming from the SME4SPACE Working Members, meaning Associations/Clusters, that usually propose their Presidents, Chairs or Directors. Thus, the SME4SPACE unbalanced representation in its board of directors mainly reflects the unbalanced representation of its Working Members.

Another relevant point, that is recognised by SME4SPACE as a value added is the diversity in general, not only in terms of sex/gender, but also for what concerns background, experiences, Country of origins. With this regards, especially because SME4SPACE is a European organisation, this aspect is well covered both at staff and Board level. Indeed, regarding the staff, the 4 consultants are from 3 Countries (namely: Belgium, Greece and Italy). For what concerns the Board of Directors, they are all from 5 different Countries (namely: Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, United Kingdom).

### Gender Equality Strategy

In order to develop an effective GEP, SME4SPACE intends to support an ongoing process for improving gender equality to the benefit of the entire organisation. Indeed, the SME4SPACE GEP encourages self-reflection by staff and leadership and an ongoing review of processes and practices. To this purpose, SME4SPACE selected the GEAR tool as developing tool for the GEP.

The four GEAR steps in the lifecycle of the SME4SPACE GEP include:

- **An audit phase.** Elements of this phase should include the collection of sex-disaggregated and/or gender-disaggregated data and a review of practices to identify gender inequalities and their causes. The audit stage should also include review of relevant national and regional laws, regulations, or funding requirements.
- **A planning phase:** During this phase, an organisation will set the objectives and targets for the GEP alongside a roadmap of actions and measures. This phase also includes allocating resources and responsibilities for the delivery of the GEP and agreeing timelines for implementation.
- **An implementation phase,** in which the roadmap of activities is implemented, including, for example, setting up working groups to develop and implement new policies and procedures. This phase should include awareness raising and training efforts to achieve buy-in and build capacity and support for the GEP across the organisation, as well as give visibility internally and externally to the GEP.
- **A monitoring and evaluation phase,** in which the delivery of the plan and progress against its aims and objectives are regularly assessed. Ongoing review of findings and progress will

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also provide space for learning and feedback to enable adjustments and improvements to interventions.

### Gender Equality Plan implementation

#### *Publication and official endorsement of the GEP*

Following the above described steps, the SME4SPACE GEP will be published on its public website and reviewed every 3 years, with status reports published every year.

#### *Dedicated resources*

As mentioned above, SME4SPACE is a small private research organisation and for this reason, even though it is agreed and shared that a team approach would be preferable, only one responsible can be dedicated to this task. The responsibility of the GEP implementation is on the Chair of the Association.

#### *Data collection and monitoring*

The data collection is of utmost importance in order to verify the correct implementation of the GEP.

As reported above in the SME4SPACE Gender Equality Overview, the current situation is quite unbalanced at Board level, even though SME4SPACE recognises the importance and the need of mitigating this situation.

Being a small private research organisation, the data collected will only focus on:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by function and by contractual relation to the organisation;
- Average numbers of years needed for women and men to make career advancements (per grade);
- Wage gaps by sex/gender and job;
- Numbers of women and men in decision-making positions;
- Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions;
- Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in past years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organisation;
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave;
- Number of absence days taken by women and men and according to absence motive;
- Number of training hours/credits attended by women and men.

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### *Training*

SME4SPACE is actively following and participating in the activities of Women in Aerospace – Europe (wia-europe.org), a not for profit organisation dedicated to the empowerment of women in the Aerospace sector, that also published 4 white papers on:

- STEM Education in Europe (2021)
- Women in the C-Suite (2021)
- Smart Working (2022)
- Visibility of Female Experts in Media and Public Debate (2022)

Moreover, SME4SPACE staff participated in the webinars on unconscious bias organised by WIA Europe.

Nevertheless, SME4SPACE attention will be dedicated to understand and to act in order to reduce any gap and to identify the eventual training needs of its staff and representatives.

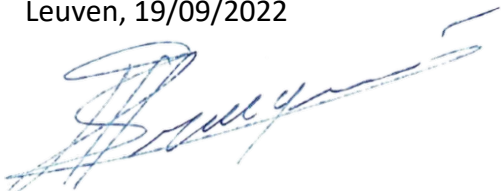
### [SME4SPACE Gender Equality Objectives for 2022-2025](#)

The SME4SPACE GEP will be reviewed every 3 years, but a yearly report will be published on its public website.

For the period 2022-2025, SME4SPACE aims at the following objectives defined following the SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Traceable) approach:

- better sex/gender staff representation trying to bring it around the 50% (current situation is 60% men and 40% women);
- increase the number of the women representation in the Board of directors at least of 2 Directors by the end of 2025 (current situation is 5 Board Members 100% men).

Leuven, 19/09/2022



Hans Bracquené  
Chairman of the SME4SPACE  
Board of Directors

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