Gender Agenda of the Chilean Scientific Program

English version provided by the author

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Background

In 2019, the Chilean Antarctic Institute incorporated, for the first time, a gender agenda in its management, which is part of the Equal Rights and Gender Equity Agenda of the Magellan and Chilean Antarctic Region for 2018-2022. This Agenda has three areas of action:

* Applying a gender approach in the collection of information and databases of our different programs. This allows us to understand the dynamics between the scientific community and allow better decision-making in public policy.
* Gender mainstreaming of the strategic communications and products of INACH. Aware of the importance of communications and the role that gender stereotypes can have in people's development, we aim to avoid perpetuating them, mainly those who could discourage girls and young women from the scientific vocation. Thus, it also emphasizes the dissemination and visibility of women's participation in Antarctic science.
* Finally, in internal management, the agenda promotes an organizational culture based on equality and equity among people, training staff on gender issues and preventing abuse and sexual and sexual harassment.

Results

The number of projects of Chile's National Antarctic Science Program has quintupled over the past twenty years. For instance, in 2002, INACH funded seventeen initiatives, and since 2016, more than 90. Moreover, until 2012, only a third of Antarctic research projects were led by women, and this number reached 47% and 49% in the last two years.

Although the figures are promising, disaggregated data shows that women's participation occurs mostly early in the scientific career, including graduate, postdoctoral, and initiation projects.

In the competition fund for Postgraduate Antarctic Research, women, who have a higher award rate than their male peers at this stage, have led 57% of the applications and 67% of the funded projects. Female participation in Chilean postgraduate programs is 51% in master's studies and 41% in Ph.D. However, much of these enrolments are concentrated in health and education, while in science, it goes from 30% to 40%.

In the regular phase, the percentage of participation is comparable with the national and international level figures, around 35-40 %. However, so far, it has not been observed that women's participation in the early stages of the career positions women as project leaders in the regular phase. This gap persists and could grow due to social crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, according to the analysis of the applications to the National Antarctic Scientific and Technological Research Competition, from 2015 to 2019, there are significant differences in the composition of project teams depending on the sex of the person who applies. Thus, we evidenced that while women make up their work teams with an equal number of women and men, men only include, on average, one woman for every three men. Moreover, 36% of these projects did not have women in the group, and in projects submitted by women, only 7% did not include men in their team.

The applications for the Antarctic School Fair were also analyzed, which in its versions 2017-2019 received more than 700 projects. Of these projects, a female teacher accompanied 58% of the teams of secondary students. This figure is quite close to the percentage of female classroom teachers in middle school, which is in the order of 56%. Of about 1,500 applicant students, 60% were girls, ten more points above the middle school enrollment. This shows a scientific vocation among female students; however, they choose fewer STEM careers in higher education, where we have a significant gap as a country.

In 2020, we organized the First Seminar of Women and Antarctic Science, transmitted through the social networks of the Institute, which showed the experience of researchers, teachers, and students and their involvement with the white continent in various disciplines. The second version is scheduled for the X Chilean Congress of Antarctic Research.

The latest topic of the ILAIA journal was devoted to the social sciences and included articles on feminism and female participation in Antarctic science. The latter was also disseminated in the media and presented as an educational picture inserted in "La Prensa Austral", a regional circulation newspaper in the region.

In 2021, the first Guide to Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Language in INACH Communications was developed. The objective of the document is: guide the use of written, oral and graphic language without sexism and in an inclusive manner; make women's participation and contribution visible in science and Antarctica; value and represent the diversity of people in the community; and promote collaborative and education networks as engines of Chile's scientific and technological development.

In terms of internal management, we updated the procedure for preventing and sanctioning abuse, labor harassment, and sexual harassment. We included personal relations and prevention of abuse and harassment in the Antarctic induction program for those who participated in the last Antarctic Scientific Expedition. In the same sense, the Institute's staff has received training on this topic through the workshop on gender perspective in the intervention of INACH and the course "Chile chooses equity: Induction to gender pro-equity policies, both developed by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity.

Some of the measures that promote equity in INACH's action are forming gender-parity project evaluation panels; funding tickets and accommodation for teams to participate in the Antarctic School Fair in Punta Arenas; a more extended period of assessment in the scientific productivity of female applicants who have had children in the last five years; maternity and paternity leave, to promotes maternity and co-responsibility and the extension of the project duration to take care of children. Furthermore, for the graduate contest, an additional position is provided if the beneficiary is in a situation of disability and requires some special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, and language is gender-neutral.

**Conclusion**

We are sharing the first results of the Gender Agenda adopted at the Chilean Antarctic Institute to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring gender equality and parity in Chile's Antarctic work, particularly in women's participation in Antarctic science. In this line, the other Parties are invited to share their experiences and good practices regarding women's participation in Antarctic science and operations.