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Information Paper submitted by Türkiye

Summary

This paper presents information on 2022-2025 Gender Equality Action Plan of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) and highlights the gender equality practices to be applied by TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center (MAM) Polar Research Institute (PRI) during the national Antarctic expeditions.

Gender Equality Action Plan

Article 10 of the Constitution of Türkiye is a concrete policy that exists enshrining the will of the country on gender equality into all areas of social, cultural, and economic life. Furthermore, the 11th Development Plan of Türkiye clearly emphasizes equality of opportunity, ease of accessibility, and citizen orientation through clear and predictable public policies.

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) is the leading agency in charge of managing, funding, conducting, and coordinating scientific and technological research in Türkiye. It is also important to emphasize that TÜBİTAK not only supports innovation, academic and industrial R&D but also, in line with national priorities, develops scientific and technological policies and manages R&D institutes, which carry out research, technological advancement, and developmental studies.

In this regard, TÜBİTAK pays special attention to establishing equality of opportunity in all institutions, organizations, and researchers benefiting from these activities while ensuring scientific excellence. To achieve equal opportunity, especially gender equality, one needs to challenge power inequalities and unequal gender dynamics, and promote equitable access to resources and opportunities. Gender Equality Plans (GEP) are important policy and planning instruments that consider both the current challenges and the commitments to promoting gender equality in an organization. In light of this statement, TÜBİTAK’s GEP has been established to ensure equal opportunities for all employees of the TÜBİTAK as well as for all researchers and students that receive TÜBİTAK grants and scholarships. For TÜBİTAK funds to be as beneficial to society as possible, all researchers regardless of gender, nationality, and age need to participate in conducting research, and gender factors need to be integrated into research and innovation content. TÜBİTAK hereby commits itself to comply with the principles of gender equality in all its activities without compromising on quality and proficiency.

There is a gender imbalance across academic positions, decision-making bodies, grant and patent applications, and awarding. Within its capacity, TÜBİTAK published The Policy Principles for Increasing the Participation of Women Researchers in its processes in 2019 to promote gender equality in the research ecosystem of Türkiye. This GEP will pave the way to establish a framework for promoting gender equality in employment, research, innovation funding, and all social interactions of TÜBİTAK. The GEP Committee members will monitor the implementation of these GEP actions, review and improve as needed. The GEP is based on eight main objectives:

1. Establishing an institutional structure for systematic gender disaggregated data collection, monitoring and evaluation

2. Improving gender balance among the employees (including the leadership), the members of the panels, the committees, and the external reviewers

3. Improving gender balance among the applicants and recipients of research grants, scholarships, and awards

4. Raising awareness on gender aspects among the employees and the members of the panels and committees and among the external reviewers

5. Enacting formal mechanisms for the integration of gender perspective in respective research disciplines

6. Implementing a gender-sensitive communication strategy

7. Establishing a work-life balance strategy that can be applied in all units

8. Improving existing mechanisms for the prevention of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and discrimination

Gender Equality Practices

In order to establish the legal infrastructure, the articles on the protection of gender equality added to the expeditioner’s letter of commitments prepared for the expedition participants published by TÜBİTAK MAM PRI form the basis for protection and awareness.

In these documents; Participation in pre-expedition trainings covering each of the topics of gender-based violence, sexual harassment and assault is mandatory. Any action related to gender-based violence and sexual harassment and/or assault by any participant, including the Expedition Team, Expedition Leader and Expedition Coordinator, during the Expedition anywhere and anytime will be reported to the responsible person, one of the gender equality team members. In order to apply penal sanctions and all kinds of administrative and judicial sanctions, a document in the form of evidence will be created.

It does not make restrictive assessments of Expedition Participants' clothing, hairstyles or other appearances based on gender or gender stereotypes. Except for the appropriate attire required by the harsh environment and working conditions, no conditions or expectations regarding the appearance of the expedition participants are applied based on any discrimination such as gender and ethnicity.

The Polar Research Institute warns people that those participating in the expedition will not be exposed to undesirable verbal or physical behavior based on age, national origin, sexual orientation and protected genetic information, including harassment or assault based on race, color, religion, gender, and to raise awareness on these issues. It reminds the parties of the penal and legal conditions in case of any problems in these matters.

During the expedition, necessary information is provided to keep the participants' own level of consciousness at the highest level, by ensuring safety and equality anywhere and anytime.

Thanks to the gender equality team determined by the Expedition Coordinator, the expedition participants will feel safe. The leader of this team will be the chief complaint officer; by working in coordination with the Expedition Leader during the expedition, they will ensure confidence in the easy transmission of complaints. The gender equality team will keep records of any possible sexist or racist behavior during the expedition and will notify the gender equality team upon return.