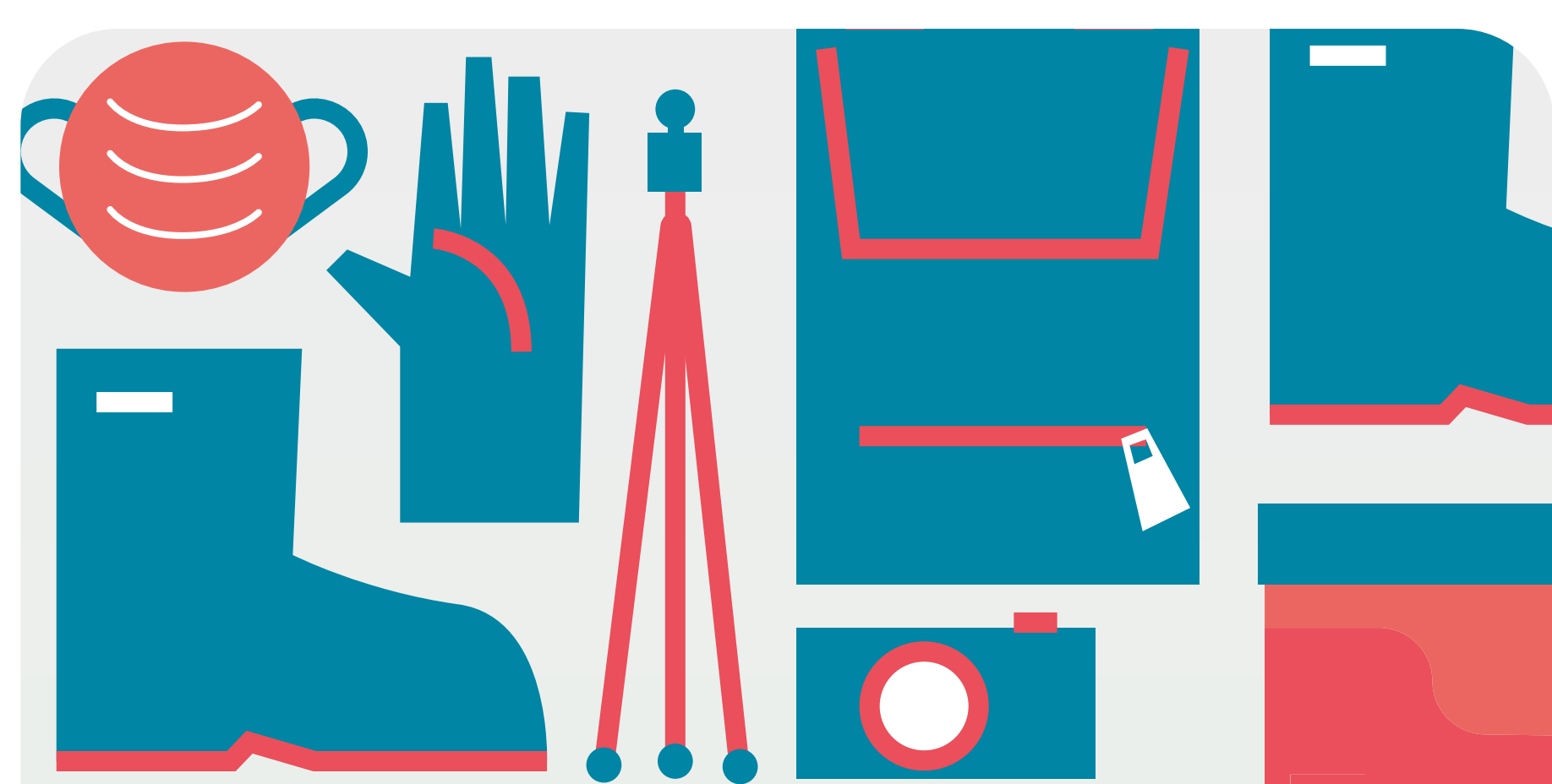


Covid 19 protocol in Punta Arenas as a gateway city



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From the beginning of the pandemic, one of the main concerns of our program was the need to coordinate all actors involved in the national Antarctic activity to prevent the entry of the SARS-CoV 2 to the continent. In early March 2020, preventive measures were taken to isolate the national bases and cancelled scientific activities in advance. In early March 2020, preventive measures were taken to isolate the national bases and cancelled scientific activities in advance. As a result of these efforts, in June 2020 the "Covid-19 Protocol for the control and monitoring of passenger and cargo transit between Punta Arenas and the Antarctic Peninsula" was implemented



COVID 19 scenary

The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic in Antarctica will have effects that are difficult to measure in the mid-term. At the onset of the pandemic, several Antarctic programs suspended their activities and after almost two years, field work was resumed by INACH. Countries and National Antarctic Programs (NAPs) had to take extreme preventive measures to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.



Preventive measures

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Specific goals to protocol apply during the first step of the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Antarctic territory,
- Prevent entry of the virus from other countries to the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica Region.
- To safeguard the medical care capacity in Antarctica and the regional health system.



Control and Monitoring

In June 2020 the "Covid-19 Protocol for the control and monitoring of passenger and cargo transit between Punta Arenas and the Antarctic Peninsula" was presented, which allowed us regulating the Antarctic activity to be developed through Chile. This protocol was the first of its kind among the countries considered as Gateway to Antarctica, setting a benchmark for the efforts to be developed by other states.

COVID 19 scenary

This protocol was applied to researchers, logistic personnel and cargo of the NAPs and to all Chilean Antarctic operators using Punta Arenas as a gateway to Antarctica.

All scientific and logistical personnel must undergo the Chilean disease detection and monitoring system by registering prior to travel and undergo a quarantine period.

Quarantine during the Austral summer :

2020-2021: 14 days
2022-2022: 7 days
2022-2023: 0 days



In addition to undergoing mandatory testing prior to arrival in Chile and at the border, they must present a vaccination schedule and certificate documenting a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result prior to departure from Punta Arenas to Antarctica.

As the vaccination process progressed in the different countries, the protocols changed. In the case of Chile, preventive isolation and PCR or antigen tests are currently recommended before traveling to Antarctica.

Conclusion

The efforts made have proven to be successful, since several NAPs have developed their activities normally. Thanks to these efforts, beyond the contingency, an important part of them have confirmed the continuity of their Antarctic operations from Punta Arenas, in spite of the restrictions and controls requested.