Polar Research Projects Contest for High School Students in Turkey

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Information Paper submitted by Turkey

Summary

This paper presents information on the polar research project contest organized in Turkey to direct the interest of the young generation towards polar sciences.

Background

Within the context of the National Polar Science Program (2018-2022), Turkey aims to increase the awareness of the young generation on polar sciences. Since the establishment, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), Marmara Research Center (MAM), Polar Research Institute (PRI) has been undertaking education and outreach activities throughout Turkey. Besides, for long years, TUBITAK has been organizing Science Olympics for middle and high-school students on various themes including physics, chemistry, biology, maths, and computer sciences.

The Project Contest

For the first time, TUBITAK MAM PRI and TUBITAK Science and Society Department opened a project called on polar sciences for high-school students between the dates of 19th January and 15th March 2021. Subfields of the contest include life sciences, geosciences, physical sciences and social sciences & humanities.

The submissions of students will be evaluated by a panel consisting of polar science experts in Turkey. The finalist projects will be exhibited and the winners will be announced in the TEKNOFEST 2021, which is the biggest technology festival of Turkey, to be held in September 2021. The winners will be awarded by cash-prize, as well as a chance for an internship at the TUBITAK MAM PRI.

As dissemination activities, advertisements were published and presentations were given to many schools and science & art centres in information days. A total of 6000 attendees including the students and teachers from 30 cities participated in these online training seminars.

763 applications were submitted from 65 different cities, and the distribution of the projects according to the themes was as follows:

* Life Sciences: 302 projects
* Geosciences: 37 projects
* Physical Sciences: 223 projects
* Social Sciences & Humanities: 201 projects

Conclusion

The intense participation from the students showed that this contest is a step in the right direction for fostering the young generation in polar sciences. Considering the organizational experience, interest and feedback of the contestants, the contest will be developed in the upcoming years.