

Unique science competition launched by the City of Turku and Bayer for upper secondary level students

Media release.
Turun kaupunki

The Beyond 2030 Challenge is a competition that encourages upper secondary and vocational education students to dive into the world of science and technology. The ambitious aim of the competition, which is aimed at all upper secondary level students in Southwest Finland, is to find creative solutions to save the planet and humanity. The competition will also encourage young people to explore the countless career and study opportunities the technology sector and natural sciences have to offer, as well as increasing cooperation between different operators. This is the first science competition to be organised jointly between a public administration body and a private company in Finland.

The City of Turku plays a pivotal role nationally as a hub for technology and science, and this role is being strengthened all the time. Maintaining this position requires skilled workers both now and in the future. In Turku and throughout Southwest Finland there is a lack in particular of graduates with a master of science degree in technology, engineers, and other top professionals in the technology sector and in natural sciences.

A range of measures to combat this have been initiated, for example, this autumn the University of Turku is launching new technology-focused programmes on machine and materials technology. In total, 273 new students will be joining the University of Turku to study technology-related subjects, whilst Turku University of Applied Sciences has increased the numbers of pupils admitted to its technology-related programmes. Turku University of Applied Sciences offered 930 study places on courses in the technology sector in the joint application system last spring.

- Achieving peak position nationally when it comes to science and technology has required substantial cooperation with companies in the area. Cooperation is the foundation upon which all we do is based, not to mention a prerequisite for success, both now and in the future, says Mayor of Turku **Minna Arve**.

Turku is currently home to the construction of the world's biggest cruise liners, development of and research into foodstuffs, and activities producing world-class pharmaceutical developments and diagnostics services. Over the last 35 years, a total of 21 of the 22 medicines developed in Finland were created in Turku.

In order to encourage a constant flow of upper secondary level students into the science and technology sectors, the City of Turku and Bayer are organising a science competition in collaboration with educational institutions and companies in the area. STEAM Turku is responsible for the City's role in the implementation work. The overall budget for the competition is EUR 50,000.

- The science competition is a fantastic initiative to broaden cooperation between the business world, educational institutions and the City. I'd like to thank Bayer for the wonderful cooperation, and I believe that our work together will rapidly extend into new partnerships. The competition is a great opportunity for all involved – for the students seeking out future career paths, for educational institutions who need committed students, and for industry players that need the professionals of the future for the technology sectors, continues Mayor of Tuku Minna Arve.

In the competition the students will work on research projects they have chosen for themselves, to find creative solutions that will make Southwest Finland and the whole world a more sustainable place to live, now and in the future. The ideas can be to do with climate change, sustainable development, circular economy, or the social environment, or perhaps even wellbeing technology or reducing poverty

and illness. The competition will culminate in a decision event, where the very best entrants can present their projects and win top prizes.

- We took the initiative for a science competition because it combines two priorities that are particularly important to us: science and sustainable development. Science and technology can generate new innovations for a better future and experts have an important role to play in this. Ensuring a skilled and highly educated workforce is a critical success factor from the perspective of the region's economy. That is why it is significant that the science competition brings together the contribution of the City of Turku, universities, educational institutions and companies in addition to that of the younger generation, says CEO of Bayer Nordic **Miriam Holstein**.

- Due to the growing demand for experts in the technology sector, we've also seen a broadening of university-level technological training and education in Turku, and technology-related subjects can now be studied at four institutions in the city: the University of Turku, Åbo Akademi, Turku University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences. Applicant numbers for technology courses at educational institutions in spring 2020 were excellent, which demonstrates the growing appeal of technology-related training and education in Turku, states Chairman of the Steering Group of TechCampus Turku and Vice Rector of the University of Turku **Mika Hannula**, who is also serving as chair of the science competition jury.

More information on the science competition can be found at www.turku.fi/en/beyond2030. Applications must be submitted by 11 September. The 30 best ideas submitted will be selected for the project phase, which will run from the end of September to the end of November. The groups who progress to the project phase will be teamed with students from Turku's educational institutions, who will be serving as coaching partners. The jury will select the ten best projects in December, and the decision event will be held in January 2021. The three best teams will receive amazing prizes.

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