

Ireland

Soil erosion & soil management

Location
County Westmeath

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P4 – Ecosystems management

Measure
M16 - Cooperation

Funding
Total budget 1 200 000 (EUR)*
EAFRD 600 000 (EUR)
National/Regional 600 000 (EUR)
*Competition component budget: 2 000 (EUR) or 0.16% of total budget

Project duration
2021 – 2023

Project promoter
FarmPEAT project

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Website
www.farmpeat.ie

An EIP AGRI Operational Group designed an arts competition to increase awareness among young people about the environmental impacts of intensively farming peat soils

Summary

FarmPEAT is a European Innovation Partnership Project that works with farmers to come up with innovative methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farmed peat soils. Community support is essential if a project like FarmPEAT is to have lasting positive effects. With this aim, the project organised an arts competition as a way to inform young people and their communities about the activities of the project and highlight to them how local actions have global significance.



Project Results

Over 1 000 schools were reached nationally, and the competition reach on social media was over 576 000. This was all achieved on a budget of under EUR 2 000.

The competition increased the visibility of the FarmPEAT Project, through a dramatic increase in followers on its Twitter and Facebook accounts (162% and 265% respectively over the period of the competition).

Lessons & Recommendations

- The key reason for the project’s success was the direct involvement of young school students in creating and promoting the arts competition. In the broader context, the commitment of young people and communities is essential for such land-based projects to have lasting positive effects.

Context

The FarmPEAT Project is an EIP AGRI Operational Group developing a locally led, innovative, results-based pilot programme for farmers who manage lands that surround some of Ireland's finest remaining raised bogs. Farmers are recompensed depending on the scores they achieve in delivering higher quality environmental practices on their farm. It is hoped that this programme will form a basis for future agri-environmental schemes in the area.

Farmer and community support is essential for such land-based projects to have lasting positive effects. If the Rural Pact is to be achieved by 2040, the youth of today need to be at the core of every action that is undertaken, because they are the future. Hence, the Art Competition (part of the FarmPEAT project) was conceived as a way to highlight how each individual's local actions have global significance; preparing young people for the decisions they will make in the future.

Objectives

Through the 'Love Your Wellies' Art Competition, the FarmPEAT Project aimed to increase awareness among young people, and their schools and communities, of the importance of the sustainable management of natural resources and to ignite an understanding of the link between mitigating climate change globally and individual actions and decisions at a local level.

Activities

In November 2021, the FarmPEAT team organised events with schools from across the midlands of Ireland. They worked, delivering workshops, fieldtrips, and presentations, teaching students about the importance of FarmPEAT's work; the facts and challenges surrounding carbon sequestration; and where the peat landscape fits into this global conversation. The participating teachers and schools were then asked to help develop ideas for a competition that would help to further FarmPEAT's work by involving other schools. The 'Love Your Wellies' Arts Competition was created.

FarmPEAT developed a digital information pack which was distributed to approximately 700 schools via email and 60 of these - those situated closest to the project area - received follow-up calls. The competition launch was then further advertised on social media and on the project's website.

Submissions came in from all over Ireland, either as solo entries or from groups of up to four. Along with their artwork, entrants needed to describe its meaning in a short 'inspiration write-up', which was an important part of the selection process. Out of 600 eligible submissions, 40 candidates were selected to go to the judging panel.

The six highest -scoring candidates then moved to the public vote where, over a 2-week period, they were 'exhibited' across a combined set of social media platforms. The volume of shares and retweets combined with the number of total votes ('likes') and comments demonstrated how entire communities got involved across the country. The winners were announced through a YouTube video which included a full project summary and a special guest announcer (the Minister of State for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine).

Main Results

Over 1 000 schools were reached nationally, and the competition reach on social media was over 576,000. This was all achieved on a budget of under EUR 2,000.

By collaborating with schools, community groups and local community champions, awareness was increased among these groups of the work that FarmPEAT is doing with farmers to work towards a sustainable green future.

The competition increased the visibility of the FarmPEAT Project, through a dramatic increase in followers on its Twitter and Facebook accounts (162% and 265% respectively over the period of the competition).

Since the competition ended, two other projects are actively liaising with the project team to use the same framework to develop their own community outreach programs.

Key lessons

The students who participated were key to the success of the competition. Their continued engagement and input guided the competition as it evolved, to the point that by the end the project the students were talking to the team about *their* competition.

"The 'Love Your Wellies' brand brought smiles and intrigue which acted as a gateway to a path of exploration for the students." – Paddy Malone, Public Liaison Officer, FarmPEAT.

Additional sources of information

@FarmPEAT

Twitter: @farmpeatproject

YouTube: /FarmPEATproject

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TrzrALAs00

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5Jg5tV4H6U&t=1s

www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3jM14bDvNc&t=272s



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