

# PR News for Greenpeace

<b>Campaign Title</b>	#OwnYourForest: Will Russia Legalize Private Tree Farming?
<b>Client name</b>	<b>Greenpeace Russia</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Russia</b>
<b>Brief Description</b>	
<p>Forest protection is a key area of activity for Greenpeace Russia. In 2019, the organization launched an initiative to change the legal status of forests growing on unused farmland. To raise awareness of the issue, a campaign with the hashtag #OwnYourForest was launched. It was based on comprehensive research of the public sentiment on the issue to identify messages and ideas which would motivate people to support the cause. Thanks to the research and preparatory work, the campaign achieved the maximum effect of attracting wide attention to the initiative and bringing it to the government for consideration.</p>	
<b>Challenge</b>	
<p>Currently, Russian law forbids commercial use of trees growing on unused farmland, with owners required to either cut them or pay a fine. Greenpeace developed amendments to change the legal status of such forests and launched a campaign to attract the public's and government's attention. Preparing it, Greenpeace studied attitudes to the issue across audiences and researched tree farming. The most important part of that research was to identify the ideas and messages able to draw maximum attention to the problem and to gauge audiences' readiness to take action. Devastating seasonal wildfires in eastern Russia added urgency to the initiative. Audiences' strong feelings about saving forests from fires and recovering those lost also presented a challenge to both the campaign and research. The goal of the campaign was to create a stir in order to start the process to change the forest law. PR News was brought in to conduct qualitative research on target audiences and to analyze media coverage for the purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign.</p>	
<b>Strategy and Research</b>	
<p>Preparing the campaign, Greenpeace identified priorities in achieving its goal, taking into account the controversial nature of the issue.</p> <p>Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploratory research to introduce the issue (January-September 2019):             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Making a map of unused farmland potentially suitable for tree farming for publication;</li> <li>b. Quantitative study of audiences: awareness of and attitudes to the issue, potential target audiences;</li> <li>c. Qualitative study: PR potential, strengths and weaknesses of the issue, stereotypes, audience types, key messages.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Strategic consulting, brainstorming, dueling focus groups, campaign planning and concept development (September 2019);</li> <li>3. Campaign launch: press releases, media coverage, a series of interviews/reviews/videos, online petition launch, signature gathering (September-October 2019);</li> <li>4. Campaign performance evaluation: traditional and social media coverage, reach, tone and intensity of discussion (February 2020);</li> </ol> <p>PR News conducted a qualitative study of attitudes to the issue of forests on unused farmland (August-September 2019). Collecting as much data as possible was an important goal in order to offer recommendations on ways to expose as wide an audience as possible to the initiative.</p> <p>The campaign launched in October 2019, carried out by Greenpeace's in-house communication team, with a second phase scheduled for March-May 2020.</p>	
<b>Execution</b>	
<p>To introduce the issue, Greenpeace made a map of unused farmland potentially suitable for tree farming (May 2019) to distribute to the general public and activists and ran polls (taken by 10,900 people) on its social media pages to gauge the general sentiment on the issue and identify potential audiences and supporters.</p> <p>The next stage was a qualitative study to gather in-depth data and test the campaign concept. PR News conducted 10 focus groups in western Siberia and central Russia in August-September with 74 participants in two age groups, young (18-34) and middle-aged (35-44), selected based on their awareness of the issue and willingness to actively support the initiative.</p> <p>Study goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of the sentiment on the forest-on-farmland issue and solutions;</li> <li>• Response to key campaign messages (response scale, discussion);</li> <li>• Identification of ideas and messages able to motivate action (e.g. sign the petition).</li> </ul> <p>The public's lack of knowledge about the law banning use of private farmland for tree farming presented the greatest difficulty for the study. When preparing focus groups, PR News developed methods using projective and dueling focus group techniques to help participants overcome cognitive barriers when discussing a phenomenon previously unknown to them.</p>	

Content analysis and response modeling methods were used to process the collected data. The research was used to develop a strategy to promote the Greenpeace initiative. The #OwnYourForest campaign launched in October 2019. One of its goals was to gather signatures for a petition to amend the forest law. The campaign was based on key messages adapted for the general public based on insights and recommendations from the focus groups. Media coverage analysis and social listening were used to evaluate the Greenpeace PR team's performance and the effectiveness of the study's recommendations (see Supporting Materials 2, 3).

## Results

Qualitative study results (focus groups):

- The general public isn't ready for the Greenpeace initiative and potential for wide support is low because the issue only affects a narrow group (farmland owners) and is hard to sympathize with for a wider, primarily urban audience.
- Difference of response:
  - Central Russia participants are pragmatic and Siberia ones are more emotional, treating the issue as a personal one;
  - Penalties (fines, land seizure) outrage younger participants, whereas older ones are more concerned about higher matters such as freedoms, human rights, and the state's role.
- PR News recommendations:
  - extend the campaign to better explain its goals and the issue in general to people;
  - make the initiative part of a global issue or topical news story such as deforestation and wildfires;
  - create a story using images of tree farmers and emotional messages;
  - appeal to rights and freedoms (e.g. forest farming situation as a rights violation) to widen the audience;
  - plan communications based on the age and location of potential supporters;
  - promote the initiative through local environmental protection communities.

The results of PR News research were discussed in a strategic session with Greenpeace where key directions for the campaign were determined.

Traditional and social media coverage analysis confirmed the following positive outcomes of the campaign (see Supporting Materials 4):

- Regular engagement with the media nearly doubled coverage of the issue in 2019 compared to 2018;
- Stakeholder groups expanded, with regional authorities paying more attention;
- Discussion geography expanded;
- Reprints per original piece on the topic doubled; outlets covering it increased to 426 in 2019 from 220 in 2018; and popular national outlets with a wide reach started to pay more attention;
- Discussion on social media grew, averaging 700 posts and comments monthly;
- Average response per post on Greenpeace pages grew to 390; VK page alone netted 1 million views;
- During the campaign, average reach per post increased to 13,000 from 4,000.

Over 50,000 people have signed Greenpeace's petition so far. The initiative is gaining awareness and support at an average of 2,000-3,000 signatures weekly. As a result, Greenpeace's amendments were discussed by the Russian Human Rights Council in December 2019 and submitted to the cabinet in January 2020. Greenpeace plans efforts in the second quarter of 2020 to push for further results and to engage new audiences.