

# GREENPEACE

## #OWNYOURFOREST: WILL RUSSIA LEGALIZE PRIVATE TREE FARMING?

Agency: PR News Partners

Category: Strategy and Evaluation in a Campaign Award



PR News

# #OWNYOURFOREST: WILL RUSSIA LEGALIZE PRIVATE TREE FARMING?

## BACKGROUND

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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

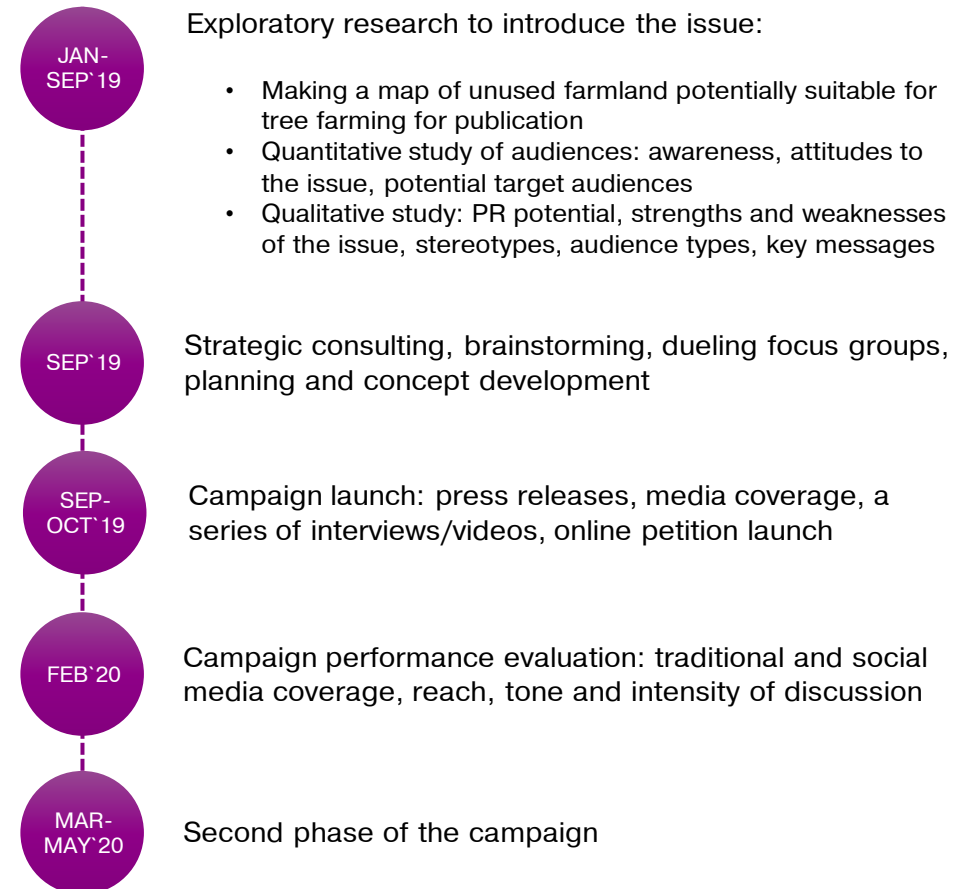
The goal of the campaign was to create a stir in order to start the process to change the forest law

**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

## STRATEGY

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Preparing the campaign, **Greenpeace** identified priorities in achieving its goal, considering the controversial nature of the issue



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## RESEARCH

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To introduce the issue, **Greenpeace** made a map of unused farmland potentially suitable for tree farming 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.

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 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.

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.

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.

## STUDY GOALS

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- Evaluation of the sentiment on the forest-on-farmland issue and solutions
- Response to key campaign messages (response scale, discussion);
- Identification of ideas and messages able to motivate action (e.g. sign the petition)

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.

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### RESULTS

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#### 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.

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 POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- 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

#### PR NEWS RECOMMENDATIONS

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- extend the campaign to better explain its goals and the issue in general;
- make the initiative part of a global issue 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);
- promote the initiative through local environmental protection communities

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.