

Portuguese project named as best climate solution in European competition

The European Commission's World You Like Challenge competition for the best solutions to climate change selected the Portuguese project Sown Biodiverse Pastures as the winner. The project not only increases the productivity of pastures but also helps to reduce CO₂ emissions, soil erosion and wildfire risk.

European Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard announced the winner at the Sustainia Award Ceremony in Copenhagen on 7 November 2013: "Congratulations to Sown Biodiverse Pastures! This project perfectly demonstrates that an innovative solution for climate action can save money and generate jobs. The number and quality of entries in the Challenge reinforced the positive message of the campaign by highlighting that there are already many effective and innovative solutions out there. Let's scale up these climate solutions to build a world we like, with a climate we like."

The Sown Biodiverse Pastures project involves more than 1,000 Portuguese farmers. Each farmer uses a specific mixture of up to 20 different seeds adapted to the local soil and climate conditions. So far, 50,000 hectares of these pastures have been sown this way, mainly in southern and central areas of Portugal that are under a high risk of desertification risk. Such pastures have already helped to store over one million tonnes of CO₂ in the ground. Sown Biodiverse Pastures are also more fertile and resistant to soil erosion than natural pastures.

The project is promoted by the Terraprima company. "Winning the World You Like Challenge means that we are gaining recognition for our work. We now have the opportunity to increase the project's exposure and get the incentives to expand it to more farms, larger areas and new countries, both in Europe and worldwide," said Professor Tiago Domingos, founder of Terraprima and Project Manager of Sown Biodiverse Pastures.

The Portuguese project will receive a professional video and support to promote the project across European media.

The winner of the Challenge was selected by the Sustainia Award Committee, consisting of Commissioner Connie Hedegaard, former governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and the Chair of the UN's climate panel, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri.

Background

The Challenge is part of the European Commission's European-wide public awareness campaign *A world you like. With a climate you like*, which aims at promoting the most creative, impactful and efficient climate solutions.

In addition to the overall winner of the Challenge, national winners were selected in each of the campaign's five target countries – Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal. Juries were set up in each country to choose the winner, which received a billboard campaign in its capital city. The EU-winner Sown Biodiverse Pastures was also the winner in Portugal.

Since its launch in October 2012, the campaign has reached millions of Europeans. It has attracted over 70,000 followers on social media, and received the support of over 320 partner organisations across the EU and several celebrities, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and award-winning actor Colin Firth.

For more information about the World You Like campaign and Challenge:

<http://ec.europa.eu/clima/aworldyoulike>

<http://www.facebook.com/EUClimateAction>

<http://www.twitter.com/EUClimateAction> #worldulike

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