



F I R E

European Forum for Earth Observation

D5.6 FIRE Evangelist Activity Summary

WP5 – Impact Maximisation

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Date: 28.02.2023



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 869634.

Full Title	Forum for Innovation and Research in Earth observation		
Grant Agreement No	869634	Acronym	FIRE
Start date	01.12.2019	Duration	36 months
EU Project Officer	Mr Antonio Scarafino		
Project Coordinator	Ms. Natassa Antoniou (EARSC)		
Date of Delivery	Contractual	28.02.2023	Actual 28.02.2023
Nature	Report	Dissemination level	Public
Lead Beneficiary	EARSC		
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Reviewer	Ornella Torres Melkebeek (Verhaert)		
Keywords	Evangelists programme, activity summary		

Document Revision History				
Version	Issue date	Stage	Changes	Contributor
1.0	15.02.2023	Draft	First draft	Christopher Oligschläger
2.0	20.02.2023	Edited	Added different parts	Natassa Antoniou
3.0	24.02.2023	Edited	Adjusted document	Christopher Oligschläger
4.0	27.02.2023	Reviewed	Document reviewed and corrected	Ornella Torres Melkebeek, Natassa Antoniou
5.0	28.02.2023	finalized	Reviewed the new parts and finalised the document	Christopher Oligschläger
5.0	28.02.2023	Final version	Finalization of the document	Natassa Antoniou

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Executive Summary

The Horizon 2020 Coordination and Support Action aims to foster the development and implementation of a collaborative and integrated European research and innovation strategy for mass market applications based on space and non-space Earth observation. Europe's [Forum for Innovation and Research in Earth Observation \(FIRE\)](#) (funded under Grant Agreement number 869634) has built a strong community that has helped to capture the “now” and to shape the “tomorrow” of the European Earth Observation (EO) sector. To accomplish this, FIRE nurtured exchanges between different stakeholders towards designing a long-term Research and Innovation Strategy. More specifically, building a community of research and innovation actors with the mission to keep a finger on the pulse of six different sectors: Agriculture, Energy, Infrastructure, Marine, Raw Materials, and Urban that can benefit from EO services. As part of this, **FIRE brought forward the novel concept of [Earth Observation \(EO\) Evangelists](#), having seven professionals across the FIRE sectors to advocate the benefits of EO to their peers.**

This **FIRE Evangelist Activity Summary** is a summarising deliverable for FIRE's Evangelists Programme, the first of its kind for projects funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 Programme. Its purpose is to provide an overview of all the activities the [seven FIRE Evangelists](#) have been engaged in, tools and methods used as well as the experiences and lessons learnt over the last three years during FIRE that are relevant for future Evangelist programmes/schemes in Horizon Europe. This document builds upon the EO Evangelists Programme planning (D5.4) and the webinar (D5.5) in which some of the material deployed in the Evangelists Programme was presented to the greater community and is followed by the FIRE sustainability plan (D5.7), a scheme that will allow for the optimal exploitation of the FIRE results.

1 Introduction

This deliverable summarises the activities and lessons learnt from the FIRE EO Evangelist Programme which was launched and implemented as a novel approach towards EO market uptake throughout the project. The aim was to ensure that the most important outcomes and results of the striking outcomes of the [focus group discussions](#) were ‘exported’ to new target audiences such as sectorial conferences but also the FIRE FORA to support the cultivation of a “top-level presentation culture” among EO sector actors in order to convey key messages in the most attractive manner to select target markets.

Thus, a selection of the most influential presenters and speakers was conducted and seven “[EO FIRE Evangelists](#)” (see Figure 1) were contracted to use their knowledge and expertise for the promotion of the benefits and value of EO services and applications for the uptake in certain market sectors and in particular in areas where market uptake has been sluggish or low so far.

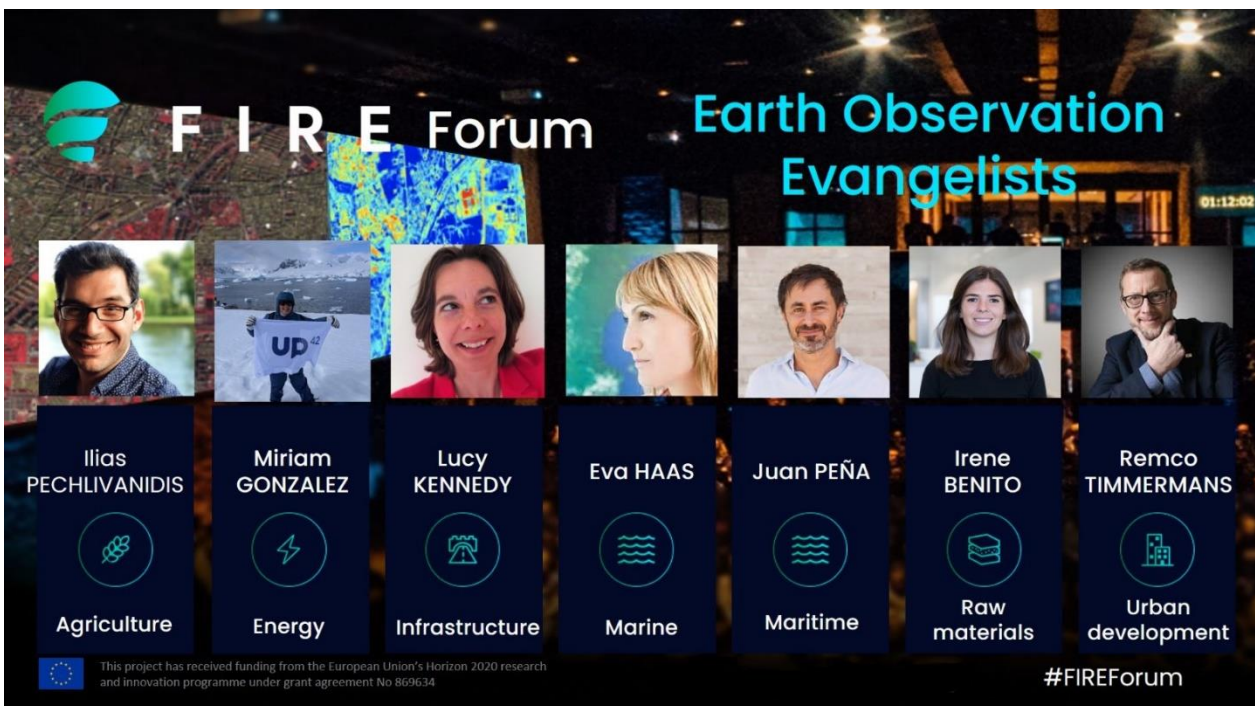


Figure 1: The 7 FIRE EO Evangelists

The FIRE Evangelists received different types of support during the three years e.g. in the form of training, easy access to information and knowledge as well as access to experts and a wide community network to facilitate their mission and support conveying compelling key messages and value propositions in a convincing manner, thus “evangelising” selected market audiences. The evangelists were further trained using the NABC-format:

Verhaert consultants from the FIRE consortium supported in a one-to-one format the “champions”, using the NABC-formula: what Need you tackle, what unique Approach you’d follow for that, the clear and undisputed Benefits of this approach and the way it compares against Competition.

The result of this support and training have been exceptional quality presentations (Figure 2 and an example of those presentations can be accessed [here](#)) which can work as examples for others in the sector to help spread the word and delivering key messages in a more effective manner, and highlight the EO sector as innovative and problem-solving, further facilitating the ideation of new concepts & applications and cross-sector expansion. The goal was not to push the uptake of exactly the same operational services, but rather to stimulate creative thinking

in ‘new’ sectors, leading to an ideation process involving EO data. Thus, these speakers were given the opportunity to speak at a number of events.

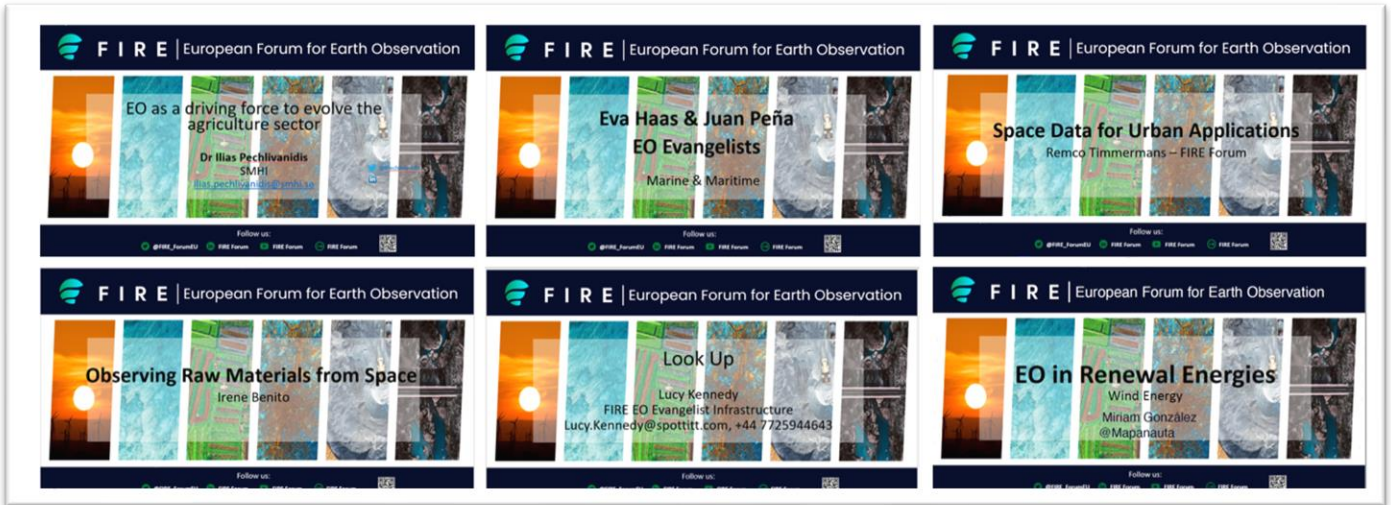


Figure 2: The 6 Presentations of the FIRE EO Evangelists

Some of the training material deployed in this process was offered to a greater community via a webinar to promote widespread awareness of the pains and gains associated with top-level presentations and offering a first step towards honing the skills of interested actors. This webinar is accessible [here](#).

This report is the concluding summary and reflection within the consortium about the FIRE Evangelist programme and the activities they were engaged in. It is particularly noteworthy that the project had foreseen 2 physical attendances by each of the FIRE Evangelists to the events mentioned above. The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated fundamental changes to the way FIRE was implemented and therefore also the FIRE Evangelist programme. Within a short period of time, most physical meetings had to be changed into digital, i.e. virtual meeting formats which required also slightly novel approaches by the Evangelists and made their job significantly more difficult.

This document is divided into three parts: (i) an introduction and short recap and purpose of the FIRE Evangelist Programme, (ii) an overview and summary of activities by the selected FIRE Evangelists and tools employed as well as (iii) a conclusion with a brief outlook.

1.1 Objectives

This is a short, concise summary of the objectives of the FIRE Evangelist Programme. As a relatively new concept within the EO sector, FIRE specifically invited professionals with both an EO background and experience in a particular target market to promote the benefits and value of EO in these six key market sectors:

- Agriculture
- (Wind) Energy
- Raw materials
- Infrastructure
- Marine/Maritime
- Urban development

As an evangelist, their role was to train and become a powerful, motivated storytellers, promoting the global benefits of EO in a way that resonates with their target audiences. As part of the FIRE Evangelist Programme, they

were guided to become an expert in the field and to promote the benefits and strengths of EO in business applications as an added value. Ultimately, the aim was to train them to be influencers.

The FIRE Evangelist Programme was one of the key novel aspects of the overall FIRE project, which sought to go further than any previous project in promoting the capabilities of the European EO sector to new potential users. Specifically, the FIRE Evangelist Programme served to promote the following objectives:

- To help promote the value of EO-based services and applications to six sectors, rather than being available only to a select few high-tech companies.
- To encourage different market sectors to adopt and engage with EO, driven by economic interest.
- Encourage individuals and companies to learn more about the potential of EO and related career and business opportunities.
- To promote European competence in a cross-sectoral high-tech landscape to the mass market and the general public.
- To increase the attractiveness of EO in the identified market sectors to exploit EO and respond to key socio-economic and environmental challenges with new ideas, services and solutions.

2 FIRE Evangelists Activities

2.1 Evangelists' Preparation & Support Tools

The selected FIRE Evangelists underwent a dedicated and tailor-made training programme to prepare them for their intended roles and presentations in order to best support the uptake of EO services in their respective areas. This programme included various types of training and support, ranging from audio/visual to storytelling skills. The support and benefits provided to the FIRE Evangelist Programme included:

- Programme support
- Training session/webinar on message-honing (the basics of good storytelling)
- Tips and tricks to improve your presentation skills (audio/visual)
- Access to other relevant training and presentation skills (e.g. crash course on how to use the Copernicus Open Access Hub, etc.)

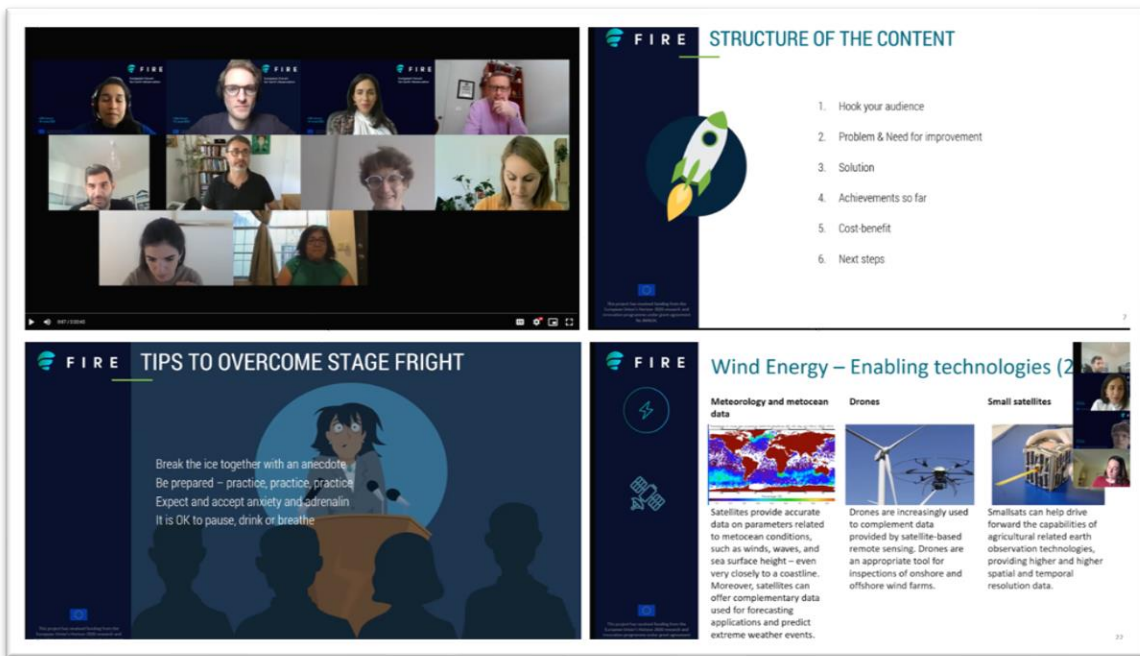


Figure 3: Screenshots of the training session/webinar on message-honing

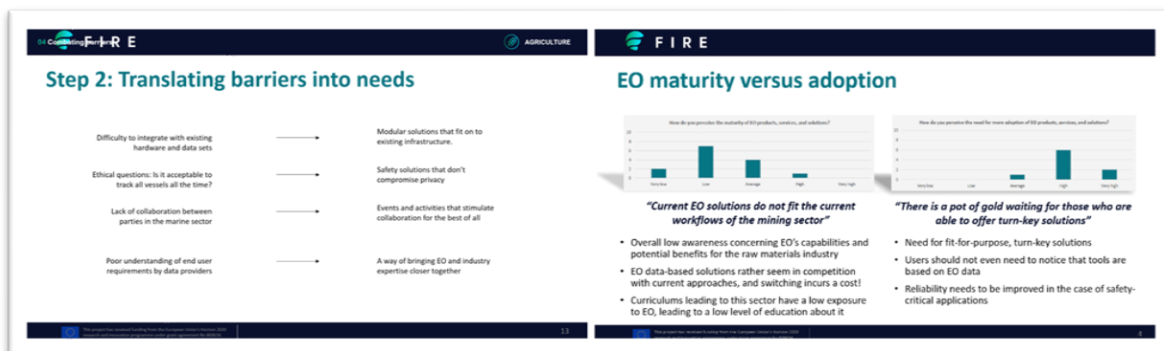


Figure 4: Slides from the content decks provided to EO Evangelists as a basis to talk about at the FIRE Fora, based on the insights gained at the FIRE Focus Group Events

In addition, the FIRE Evangelists were given access to various technical expertise and market analyses carried out in the course of FIRE, as well as to other sources of (market) analysis carried out by the consortium partners. Overall, the FIRE Evangelists had:

- Access to a wide network of (e.g. EARSC) experts in multidisciplinary fields
- Access to a knowledge base of relevant material
- Access to the Copernicus MOOC
- Access to FIRE sector maps and FIRE trends analyses
- Access to a wide range of appropriate market-specific success stories focusing on the use of EO services and value/economic benefit studies such as the Sentinel Benefits Studies (SEBS)

All those materials were accessible in a dedicated, tailor-made space for the FIRE Evangelists (see Figure 5) which was hosted on EARSC’s working space (confluence).

The FIRE Evangelists were encouraged to actively engage with their respective market sectors by attending and presenting at sector events and using a wide range of marketing and promotional support tools to increase their outreach. In this process, they were supported by all consortium partners to reach a wider community. These (mainly) digital tools included:

- Sectoral events
- FIRE focus group workshops
- FIRE fora
- Use of the FIRE website and partner websites
- Various social media channels

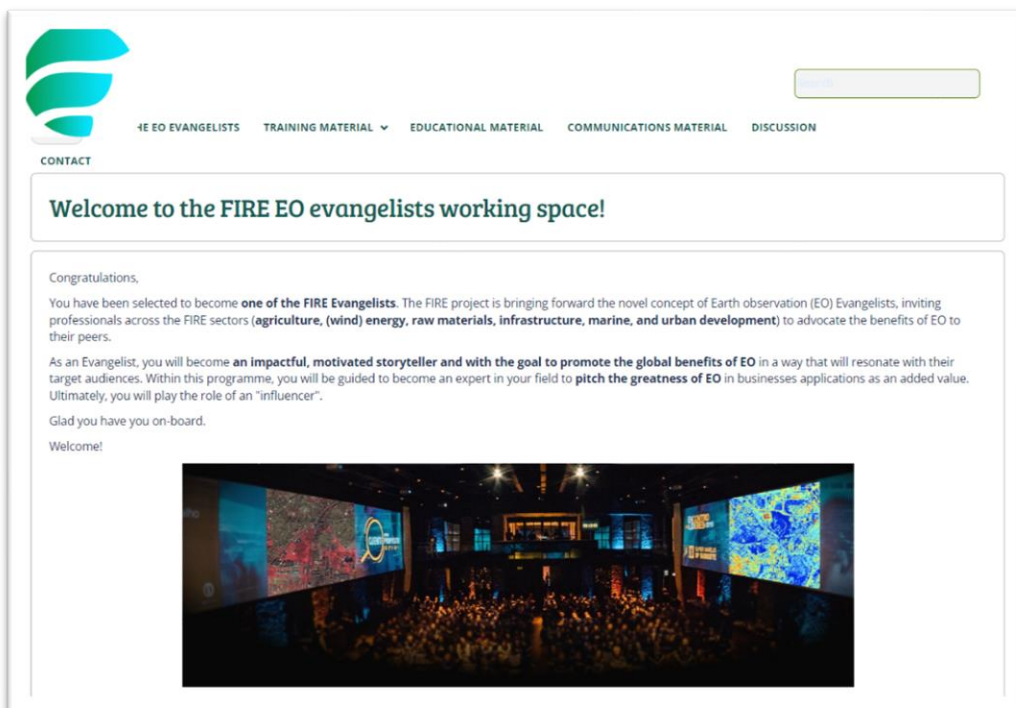


Figure 5: FIRE EO Evangelists Working Space

2.2 Attended Events

The mandate of the FIRE Evangelists was to deliver the FIRE message to their community at least two sectoral events between June 2021 and November 2022. Specifically, the FIRE Evangelists attended and presented at **12 events** (see Table 1 for details): 2 sectoral conferences in the marine sector, 3 in the agriculture sector, 4 in the mining and resources sector, and a further 3 conferences in the infrastructure sector. After each event, the EO Evangelists submitted an event report to the project coordinator. The template can be seen in Annex 1. In total, they promoted the FIRE results, the opportunities and benefits of EO services and applications to a total of **680 participants at these conferences**. It is particularly pleasing that these presentations and pitches took place at industry-leading and prestigious conferences such as the IWA World Water Congress and the [EIT RawMaterials Expert Forum 2022](#).

Name of the event	Date of the event	Link to the presentation (recording if available)	No of attendees	EO Evangelist
PrimeWater Project Multi-User Panel (MUP) Stakeholders Week	15-19 Nov 2021	Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=LpcKN8hnb2g Presentations: https://mcusercontent.com/76179afb12d8b9e75493fa5ed/files/a34ac6be-e681-ae7e-0d6f-b48d3a07e705/Day5_presentations.pdf	50	Marine
IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition CEST2021 – International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology	11-15 September 2022	The presentation is not available online but was submitted with this event report	46	Marine
EGU2022 – European Geosciences Union IFAT2022 – The World's Leading Trade Fair for Environmental Technologies	1-4 September 2021	https://cest.gnest.org/e/cest-2021/invited-lectures	30	Agriculture
EIT RawMaterials Expert Forum 2022	23-27 May 2022	https://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU22/session/44704	18	Agriculture
EXPLORE 21	30 May – 3 June 2022	Not available online	120	Agriculture
Inspiring Women in the Raw Materials Sector	27-29 June 2022	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1d7tD3l7Xsj2krUXPeYldMdayxtDN7EtWQwZErQsjceY/edit#slide=id.p1	54	Raw Materials
Raw Materials Week 2021	13 – 14 October 2021	https://live.explore21.planet.com/	110	Raw Materials
	22-November 2021	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1mdacMTy6rHB6DLASoH9d_va-f4BUqGg0gad7NgPdhP0/edit?usp=sharing	20	Raw Materials
	15 – 19 November 2021	Presentation: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wAYw1X5IF2lwUHY2bygAC-dPUFG3kQGjLVet75NfEf8/edit?usp=sharing Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntfrycm7tFw	84	Raw Materials

<p>HLCF Innovation Webinar on "Innovation in construction - New ways of collecting and using data for construction" – Earth Observation Session GeoBusiness 2021</p> <p>Indura members quarterly meeting</p>	20 October 2022	The presentation is not available online but was submitted with this event report	90	Infrastructure
	24-25 November 2021	The presentation is not available online but was submitted with this event report	35	Infrastructure
	04 March 2022	The presentation is not available online but was submitted with this event report	23	Infrastructure

Table 1: Overview of Sector Events attended by FIRE Evangelists



Figure 6: The Infrastructure EO Evangelist presenting in the HLCF Innovation Webinar on "Innovation in Construction"

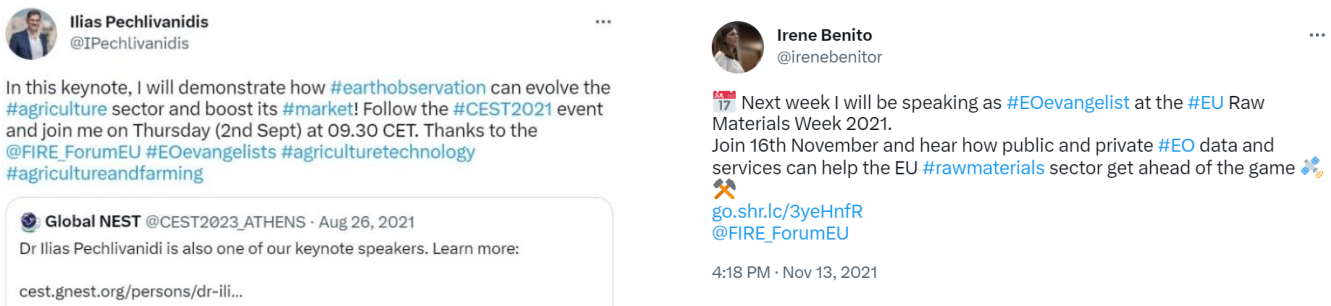


Figure 7: The Agriculture and Raw Materials EO Evangelists promoted their speaking slots on Twitter

All of them went the extra mile and participated actively in all FIRE-related events, even if this was not part of their contract. For example, they participated in the FIRE focus group workshops (in particular the 2nd series of focus group meetings) organised with a range of stakeholders from user markets. These workshops helped them to better understand the challenges, requirements and needs for spatial information in these markets. They supported the different phases of the workshops by giving presentations, supporting the brainstorming and ideation process and providing input on what is already possible with EO services and applications.

Secondly, the FIRE Evangelists participated in the 1st and 2nd cross-sectoral FIRE FORA, where they gathered further market needs and geo-information requirements of their respective target markets and contributed through presentations and moderation, providing input and ideas on the use of EO services and applications in these target markets. Last but not least, they also attend the last FIRE Forum where they contributed to the discussions.

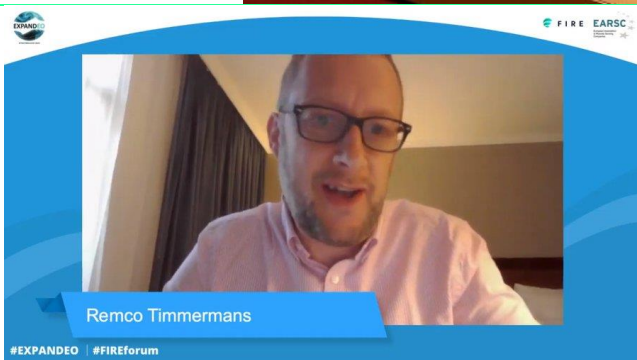


Figure 8: FIRE EO Evangelists presenting at FIRE events

While some of EO Evangelists overachieved in terms of the contract, some were **unable to present to their target audiences for a variety of reasons**. Often, it was not easy to find a relevant conference or event within the timeframe of the project. One of the main reasons was certainly "bad timing", as the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that certain conferences relevant to the target market had to be postponed or even cancelled at short notice. Other reasons were personal, such as parental leave or illness.

Other difficulties in securing a presentation at a relevant event were related to refusals from the organisers. In this case, the reasons for rejection varied. Some organisers allowed talks and presentations by invitation only. Others demanded an unreasonable amount of money for the opportunity to speak. In some cases, FIRE Evangelists were rejected because the conference was not open to H2020-type projects. Finally, some organisers rejected FIRE Evangelists simply because their agenda was already filled, they answered too late, or they did not consider the topic to be interesting/appropriate enough.

This situation has been quite frustrating and challenging as Evangelists have invested time and effort in being considered. **Nevertheless, all EO Evangelists, and especially those who were unable to present at the sector events, worked hard to raise awareness of FIRE and the benefits and value of EO services and applications through other means.** They have been attending more than 17 events where they have been promoting FIRE. They have been active on social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn, sharing relevant insights and information about FIRE events, and have also been involved in the creation of 'evangelising' videos (an example can be seen [here](#)) and articles (an example can be found [here](#)).

Overall, the **FIRE Evangelists have enjoyed their FIRE journey and its Evangelist Programme and are eager to continue their mission to evangelise potential user communities as well as raise awareness and communicate key messages to their target markets** (see some quotes at the end of this document). In particular, they are eager to proactively disseminate the [Strategic EO Sector Development Roadmap](#), one of the key outcomes of FIRE, which aims to provide evidence-based recommendations that can (i) inform future Horizon Europe work programmes and potentially other relevant instruments, (ii) stimulate collaboration between stakeholders in the various relevant value chains in each sector, (iii) provide solid reference points for drawing broader strategic pathways aimed at maximising the impact of EO activities - especially in relation to Copernicus and EuroGEO.

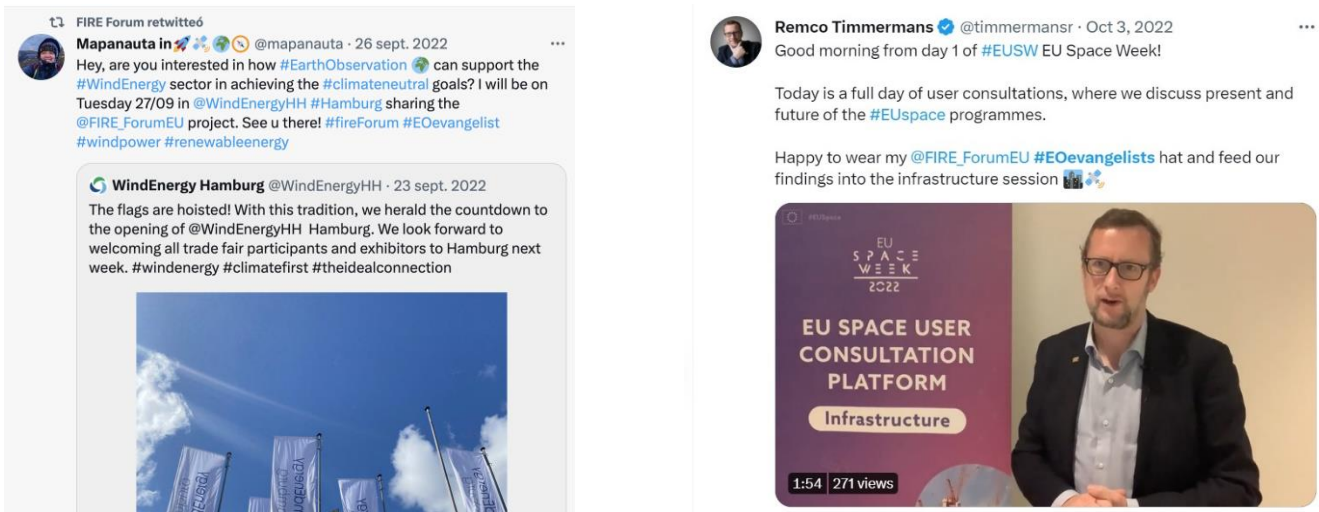


Figure 9: The Wind Energy and Urban Development EO Evangelists wearing the FIRE hat in different events apart from the two sectorials ones

3 Conclusion

As FIRE draws to a close, partners and key stakeholders are pleased with what has been achieved. FIRE has created a strong community and guidelines that have the potential to drive the uptake of EO-based solutions, and the FIRE Evangelist Programme has set a precedent that can serve as a blueprint or example for future (EO) evangelist programmes of innovation projects. The Evangelist Programme has been instrumental in taking the promotion and communication efforts to the next level and has greatly supported knowledge transfer and outreach activities.

This outcome demonstrates the value and benefits of the Evangelist Programme and has highlighted the various interactions between Evangelists and different stakeholders from user markets. FIRE has also created a strong and committed partnership between the consortium partners and the highly engaged EO Evangelists, which can be built upon in future market uptake activities. Similarly, the FIRE Evangelists have benefited from support and training, which in itself will undoubtedly support future market uptake.

3.1 Wrap-Up

Through a dedicated call and careful selection process, FIRE has secured the support of seven qualified spokespersons who are recognised by both the EO community and specific user markets. Maintaining their commitment and potentially expanding this evangelist programme would be worth exploring given the benefits. However, outreach to other sectors will be challenging as it will require active management and coordination as well as likely contributions to costs.

The FIRE Evangelists have actively contributed to FIRE's activities beyond their commitments. They have recognised the benefits of access to knowledge and expertise and networking communities, while being visible and recognised as experts in their fields.

3.2 Lessons Learnt & Perspectives for Upscaling

FIRE was the first H2020 project to develop and implement an evangelist programme. As such, there are important lessons to be learned from this first batch of FIRE Evangelists. However, it is important to remember that this programme was originally designed to be implemented through physical attendance at events. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, plans had to be cancelled, changed or adapted quite quickly, and the team (as well as most of its other activities) moved entirely into the digital world, including attending digital congresses and conferences. The support team behind the FIRE evangelists, and the evangelists themselves, showed great flexibility and adaptability in changing the training and nature of the support activities.

For EARSC and all consortium partners, the FIRE Evangelist Programme has been a useful and successful experience, which EARSC in particular - as the body representing the European Earth observation downstream sector - naturally wants to continue as part of its regular activities. A brainstorming session among partners and evangelists has already led to the conclusion that this initiative could be continued in the form of a School of EO Evangelists, which would reuse and further develop the approach implemented in FIRE, the trainings as well as the tools used. This could certainly contribute to the up-scaling of the FIRE Evangelist Programme beyond the lifetime of FIRE, bringing added value and benefits to the EO sector, but most importantly to the user markets addressed by FIRE.

“When I said that I am the first Earth observation evangelist for marine the interest was immediately there and people were curious what this is all about. Thus, being officially the first Marine Evangelist helped enormously to share my passion for Earth observation and leave a lasting impact. I learned that you must start with something special to ignite the flame in people to be on fire for Earth observation. The future for Earth observation solution uptake lies in telling tangible success stories to which the marine sector can relate. All this must be based on excellent technical solutions that are tailored to the sector’s needs, based on continuous exchange and in-depth discussions.”

[Dr Eva Haas, FIRE EO Evangelist for Marine](#)

“Being part of the FIRE Forum as the first EO evangelist for the Wind Energy sector was such an honour, but my journey as an EO evangelist doesn't end here, I will continue creating awareness about how Earth Observation Data and technologies can help achieve Europe climate neutral goal.”

[Miriam Gonzalez, FIRE EO Evangelist for Wind Energy](#)

“The FIRE Forum has been a unique experience both as a scientist and service developer, but also as the FIRE 1st EO Evangelist for Agriculture. Particularly I find unique that researchers, EO-data and service providers, stakeholders and users, practitioners and policy-makers have been gathered to share needs and challenges and exchange knowledge on solutions. FIRE managed to identify those, collected and report them, while also improve their transparency and accessibility to solutions.

Being an Evangelist was indeed great since the role is set as a knowledge bridge between the research and developers community and the user and practitioners community. The communication between these different groups is not always straightforward and as an Evangelist I had to effectively communicate the accumulated knowledge from FIRE.

The future of the EO sector is exciting, but this does not mean it will come without challenges and risks. However, we all need to deal with those already now in order for our knowledge and technical solutions to grow. This is exactly where the FIRE roadmap will act as a catalyst to ease the identification of opportunities.”

[Prof. Ilias Pechlivanidis, FIRE EO Evangelist for Agriculture](#)

Annex 1

“EO Evangelist Post-Event Report” template

Event information	
Name of the event:	
Date of the event:	
Short background:	
Link to the agenda of the event:	
Link to your presentation (recording if available):	

Expected impact	
Number of attendees:	
Number of contacts established:	
List of key contacts:	
Questions received (if any) & topic of interest (technology uptake, skills formation etc.)	
Social media channels used for promotion (put the links):	
Contact person of the event:	
Other comments & feedback:	



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Our partners



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 869634.