

## WHAT ARE THE ECO-DENS?

The ECO-Dens are regional “Dragons’ Den” style semi-final judging events (taking place at key regional hubs within each province) where YEA groups are given the opportunity of pitching their environmental action project to a panel of expert judges. Young people are empowered by presenting their project to the panel, responding to judges’ questions and receiving valuable feedback from the experts. By taking part, young people also further their presentation skills, confidence and public speaking skills among others. The aim of the ECO-Dens is to ensure a robust and inclusive judging process. From these ECO-Dens, the best projects are chosen and invited to the prestigious **Showcase and Awards Ceremony in the Convention Centre Dublin on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020.**

## WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?

1. Groups register upon their arrival.
2. Groups are informed about the day’s proceedings and their prep & pitch times are confirmed.
3. Each group goes to the preparation room to practice their pitch 20 mins prior to their judging time.
4. Each group (**max. 6 young people**) will then head into the judging room to pitch their project – For more information please see ‘YOUR PITCH’ and other information below.
5. Following the judging room, the group will have an interview and a photograph taken.
6. The group will then be invited to fill out the evaluation form before heading back to school or home.

## YOUR PITCH

Your pitch should be **5 minutes long** and should explain what your environmental action project is about, what actions you have taken and what the benefits of your project are, using the YEA 6 Steps to Success framework. Then 3-4 judges will ask you some questions and provide you with feedback.

**\*We advise YEA Project Mentors to help each group practice their presentation to prepare the young people prior to the ECO-Den\***

## WHAT TO BRING?

You can use whatever props that help with your pitch e.g. photos, storyboards, and PowerPoint presentation. If you are using PowerPoint, **bring your presentation on a USB stick and make sure that it works on other computers.**

## WHO MAKES THE PITCH?

**Up to 6 members of your group will pitch your project to the judging panel.** No project mentors will be permitted into the room with the judges. Groups will have the opportunity to practice their pitch with a staff member beforehand to make sure they feel fully prepared.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS: WHAT MIGHT THE JUDGES ASK YOU?

**Consider the following when preparing your ECO-Den presentation:**

How did group members come together?

How did the group come up with the idea for the project?

What information did you collect? Where did you get it from?

Does your project have any global impact or link local and global issues/the Sustainable Development Goals?

Did you encounter any problems and how did you overcome the problems?

Have you planned for the project to continue in the future?

Did your action achieve what you set out to achieve? Did the action meet the project aims and objectives?

How did your project have a positive effect on the environment?

How did you promote your project?

Who did you contact and how did they respond?

What have you learnt from carrying out the project?

What have you gained from the project at a personal level?

## HINTS & TIPS FROM PAST PARTICIPANTS & JUDGES

**The judges want to know WHAT you did, WHY you did it, HOW you did it and the IMPACT it had.**

### DO

- PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE – Decide who is going to do and say what and practise! You're your teacher, friends, parents, drama teacher or anyone who'll listen and have them critique your presentation.
- Decide on a group dress code
- Introduce yourselves properly (surprisingly easy to forget!) and say good morning/afternoon to the judges. They are people too!
- Start by being really clear about what the project is and what ACTIONS you took. It's important that you research and know about the issue, but this competition is about ACTION PROJECTS so make sure you explain your actions.
- Make sure that you show how you raised awareness in your school/group or community not just about your project itself but about the ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE you focused on. Don't be shy! Think about all the people your project might have impacted and how they might have changed because of it

- Play to your strengths. If some people prefer public speaking, allocate them with more of the actual presenting tasks but the judges want to see that you worked well as a team – how can you demonstrate that in your presentation?

### **DON'T**

- **DON'T read a lot of text from a project board or PowerPoint!!**
- Hide behind each other or props. Don't turn your back to the judges to read from a Powerpoint or project board. Learn what you have to say or make prompt cards
- Forget to introduce yourselves
- Speak too quietly
- DON'T WORRY – the judges are very nice and you've done a great project – all you need to do now is show it off!

### **FOOD AND DRINK**

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide food and drink during the ECO-DENS. Depending on the venue there may be a café on the premises or nearby. If you bring your own refreshments, please conform to the spirit of the event and ensure your packaging is as sustainable as possible.

### **ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?**

Please contact [susie.spratt@ecounesco.ie](mailto:susie.spratt@ecounesco.ie)