

“Our Big Ideas Programme lets young people explore STEM subjects and sustainability through independent learning and their own creative thinking. The confidence they develop and the belief they have in their ideas is truly inspiring. It’s mainly down to their enthusiasm and commitment, plus the dedication and help from their teachers and mentors from our key business partners such as Tarmac.”

Jen Baughan, CEO of Solutions for the Planet (S4TP)

People

Communities

Solutions for the Planet 2023

For the ninth year running, Tarmac continued to help school children work up award-winning sustainable business plans in line with the Big Ideas Programme run by Solutions for the Planet (S4TP). S4TP is a social enterprise that aims to build partnerships between businesses and schools to promote sustainability, and science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) careers.

The programme is aimed at students aged 11 to 14 and is delivered in collaboration with Tarmac and other partners through employee volunteering. Throughout the year, Tarmac employees volunteer at local schools, helping students with their business plans to solve a sustainability issue. Tarmac mentors provide their industry expertise to help the students make their plans as comprehensive as possible.

Highlights from the 2023 programme include:

- Tarmac employees worked with over 2,200 students from 19 schools who got involved with the Big Ideas Programme
- Over 600 students created Big Ideas, 141 teams submitted to the Big Ideas Competition, and 79 were shortlisted for the regional finals
- 45 representatives from Tarmac were involved - 37 mentors, 3 shortlisting judges, 4 regional final judges and 1 national final judge
- Eight teams from Tarmac-assigned schools got through to the National Final
- A total of 866 mentoring and judging hours were completed by Tarmac employees as part of S4TP



Proposals from teams throughout the UK were submitted to the Big Ideas Competition at the end of March 2023, with 79 of them being shortlisted for the seven regional finals. From these regional finals, twelve teams then got through to the national final, held at the Palace of Westminster. Eight of these teams were from Tarmac-assigned schools.

Some of the Tarmac-supported finalists included: ‘Hydrobus’, a bus that uses hydroelectricity generated from mini power plants operated by the team and local communities; ‘Seed Squad’, a solar-powered robot planting seeds in woodland areas that have been destroyed by deforestation; and the 2023 winners, ‘Softsleeps’, a service creating sleeping bags made from recycled plastic waste to support the homeless.