

A startup creating sustainable packaging options raises £10M to commercialise seaweed-based products

A sustainable packaging company has secured £10M in funding to create more sustainable packaging made from seaweed.

Notpla - named as a play on the term “not plastic” - was founded by two Imperial College London and Royal College of Art alumni, Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez and Pierre-Yves Paslier in 2014. The company aims to slash dependence on single-use plastic packaging around the world by creating more sustainable alternatives.

The Series A round will now help the company commercialise this vision by expanding its manufacturing capacity of products like transparent flexible film and seaweed paper.

Only 9% of all plastic waste ever produced has been recycled, while 12% has been incinerated and the remaining 79% has accumulated in landfills, dumps, or our environment, according to the UN Environment Programme.

The startup is now using natural materials which biodegrade in just 4-6 weeks. Their sustainable packaging solution made entirely of seaweed, Ooho, has so far replaced over 500,000 single-use plastic packaging materials at major international events including the London Marathon and London Cocktail Week.

The company also recently launched the first biodegradable seaweed coating for cardboard boxes in collaboration with Just Eat Takeaway.com. The recyclable boxes are set to expand to Just Eat's 26 countries.

Pierre-Yves Paslier, Co-CEO of Notpla, said: "We are delighted to accelerate the pace towards a zero single-use plastic future. This new round coupled with soon-to-be-announced commercial partnerships is the perfect opportunity to put seaweed on the map of packaging solutions."

New investment will help drive the industrialisation of Notpla's biodegradable films. The packaging can be used for cleaning products such as detergents, as well as pre-portioned foods such as pasta, coffee and drink flavourings. With few biodegradable packaging products on the market, Notpla's films are in high demand from brands that are struggling to remove plastic from their product ranges. The company hopes to scale-up its product offering alongside several commercial partners.

Wayne Cheng, Portfolio Curator at Horizon Ventures who led the investment round, said: "We are excited to join Notpla's journey to make packaging disappear. Conscious of the urgency to act on single-use plastic pollution, we've been impressed by the innovative solutions offered by this team of ambitious entrepreneurs. We believe Notpla is revolutionising the packaging industry with seaweed as a raw material."

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