

The SUP Challenge

An innovation contest to prevent plastic waste

Period	12.2021 – 09.2022
Countries	India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam
Project partner	The Incubation Network

Reducing the climate impact of single-use plastics

As governments begin to prioritise the reduction of single-use plastic (SUP) in their policies and a growing number of consumers demand environmentally friendly alternatives, foodservice operators are under pressure to find reliable and affordable alternatives. Yet, they often struggle to navigate a market with early-stage businesses. At the same time, entrepreneurs and start-ups offering these solutions struggle to scale up due to lack of capital, underdeveloped value chains and complex policy and regulatory frameworks.

The project

In a collaborative approach, The SUP Challenge matched start-ups and foodservice operators to support market entry, acceleration, and adoption of upstream alternatives to SUPs. The SUP Challenge was a ten-month cohort-based programme which focused on reducing single-use plastic consumption and waste in the foodservice industry across five countries in South and Southeast Asia.

The programme selected 8 entrepreneur support organisations (ESOs), who worked with 76 startups. By matching the startups with foodservice operators, 91 pilot projects were implemented.

The startups received funding, support to establish partnerships with foodservice industry partners as well as cohort learning, technical assistance and

dedicated mentors. A part of the mentoring was provided by PREVENT members who are experienced behaviour change experts or are operating a reuse system themselves.



Pilot project examples

The SUP Challenge matched startups with foodservice operators, for example:

- Taj Resorts & Convention Centre (India) with Srishti, a refillable and reusable bottled water technology
- Coffee chain Coffee Bike (Vietnam) with Aya Cup, a reusable cup solution
- Health chain and online subscription business The Green Table (Philippines) piloting with Bambuhay's bamboo containers
- Burgreens, Indonesia's plant-based eatery chain of 15 outlets with Plepah's containers
- theCOMMONS, Thailand's food mall, piloting with DropRefill's refillable cleaning products

Impact

During the 30-day pilot phase, approx. 1,000 kg of plastics were avoided. It is estimated that a total of 6.24 mt of plastics can be avoided over a full year if all alternative solutions remain in use at the foodservice outlets where the pilots were conducted.

Based on the insights from the SUP Challenge, a technical playbook “Accelerating Circular Solutions to Single-Use Plastics” was developed. It serves as an end-to-end guide for market acceleration of circular products. Further, a holistic life cycle assessment (LCA) of four alternatives to single-use plastics in the foodservice industry was conducted. The LCA offers a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental impacts and costs of different solutions. Based on this, an LCA calculator was developed that helps users compare the life cycle environmental impacts of alternative solutions versus SUPs and understand how different parameters can affect the environmental performance of alternative solutions versus SUPs.

PREVENT Waste Alliance

The PREVENT Waste Alliance serves as an international think and do tank for circular economy practitioners. As a platform for knowledge exchange and international cooperation, it brings together organisations from the private sector, academia, civil society and public institutions. PREVENT's mission is to advance the circular economy in low- and middle-income countries by minimising waste, eliminating pollutants, and maximising the reuse of resources in the economy worldwide.

The PREVENT Waste Alliance was launched in 2019 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.



Imprint

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
GmbH
PREVENT Waste Alliance
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn
Germany

T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de
contact@prevent-waste.net | www.giz.de

June 2023

Credits: Picture in text © The Incubation Network

On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and
Development (BMZ)
Division 414 Urban Development, Mobility, Circular
Economy
Bonn, Germany

This project is funded by the PREVENT Waste Alliance, an
initiative of the German Federal Government.

More information: www.prevent-waste.net/