



POSITIVE BEAUTY GROWTH PLATFORM

Unilever's Positive Beauty Growth Platform: Biodegradables & Sustainable Cosmetic and Packaging Challenge

Unilever wants to meet the very best scaleups, startups and academic institutes operating in the world of cosmetic ingredients, formulations and packaging using revolutionary biodegradable and sustainable ingredients.

We are embracing a new era of beauty. One that's Inclusive. Equitable. Regenerative. Positive. So that people and the planet can thrive together. The Positive Beauty Growth Platform invites the very best scaleups, startups and entrepreneurs from around the world to collaborate on projects at the forefront of innovation and technology in the beauty industry.

Our Positive Beauty Growth Platform's next area of focus is on sustainable beauty solutions, especially biodegradable ingredients and packaging.

We recognise the huge importance of sustainable ingredients and packaging solutions for beauty and personal care products and are shifting our practices and capabilities across our business towards a People & Planet Positive future. As part of our vision, we've committed to do not just less harm, but more good for the natural world by:

- Ensuring a deforestation-free supply chain by 2023
- Making our product formulations biodegradable by 2030
- Protecting and regenerating 1.5 million hectares of land, forests, and oceans by 2030
- Cutting our use of virgin plastic by 50% by 2025, halving our GHG footprint by 2030 and net zero GHG by 2039

Through this Challenge, we are looking to partner with the very best scaleups, startups and academic research groups (associated to SMEs) operating in the world of biodegradable and sustainable cosmetics (ingredients and formulations), as well as future-fit packaging solutions.

Our Beauty & Personal Care business, worth over €20 billion, owns some of the world's most loved brands such as Dove, Axe, TRESemmé and Love Beauty & Planet. This challenge will be spearheaded by our Chief R&D Officer, Richard Slater and our Beauty & Personal Care leaders.



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What Do We Mean by Biodegradable & Sustainable Ingredients and Packaging?

Most of the ingredients we use (approximately 90% by volume) in our beauty and personal care products, already biodegrade quickly and completely. However, while proven to be safe for the environment, some can take longer to break down.

We're working with our scientific experts in collaboration with suppliers, partners and academia to explore solutions that can replace our existing non-biodegradable beauty ingredients, formulations and packaging to help move towards:

1. Sustainable Solutions:

a. Optimise the use of renewable resources while minimising the use of non-renewable ones, and in so doing, ensure GHG emissions are minimised and soil fertility, water quality, and biodiversity are protected and/ or improved. Enable local communities to protect and improve their wellbeing and environment.

b. Ensure we meet our packaging targets of less plastic, better plastic and no-plastic. Challenge existing designs, materials and business models, for example by considering reusable and refillable formats.

2. Biodegradable Solutions:

a. Make 100% of our ingredients & formulations biodegradable (break down quickly and completely leaving no trace on the environment).

b. Develop packaging with lower environmental impact using renewable and waste feedstocks and move towards compostable packaging materials.

We are searching for unique biodegradable and sustainable solutions across hair care, skin care, deodorants and skin cleansing. These might include (not exhaustive): planet-positive solutions across conditioning and sensorial agents, UV filters and boosters, colourants and dyes, preservative helpers and antioxidants. They may also include packaging solutions that are compostable or (bio)degradable, have a reduced carbon footprint, are from renewable feedstock or waste sources or are replacements for our typical plastic applications.



Our Assessment Criteria and How We'd Look to Partner

We are looking for startups, scaleups and academic research institutes (associated to SMEs) that are breaking new ground in the area of biodegradable and sustainable ingredients and packaging. We would love to hear from you on how you and your business could become a part of our journey.

We need support in finding solutions that respond to biodegradable and sustainable opportunities in the following areas:

1. Biodegradable Substitutes

or Ingredients: We are looking for biodegradable ingredients to either replace existing ingredients in our products or act as entirely new alternatives.

2. Sustainable Substitutes or

Ingredients: We are looking for sustainable ingredients to either replace existing ingredients in our products or act as entirely new alternatives.

3. Biodegradable and sustainable cosmetic products/ formulations:

We are open to submissions from brands with fully realised, consumer-ready products that are biodegradable and/or that use sustainable ingredients. We are committed to exploring different ways to collaborate and to drive greater consumer adoption.

4. Sustainable packaging solutions:

We are looking for sustainable packaging solutions to either replace existing packaging in our products or act as entirely new alternatives.

5. Biodegradable packaging solutions

with industrial or home compostability certification: We are looking for materials that are renewably sourced such as seaweed that can be used in flexible applications. For this challenge we are not looking for additives which aim to make commonly used plastics (PE/PP/PET) into biodegradable materials, biofossil-derived materials or oxo-degradable.

6. Future Unknowns, Disruptors

& Game Changers: The unknown-unknown. What insight do you have about this industry that is unique and that will drive towards a more sustainable future? How can we partner to increase positive impact? We welcome bold, brave new ideas. We want to hear from those challenging what biodegradable ingredients are today and could become in the future.



We're interested to hear about new technologies, practices, business models, product formats or innovations that could totally transform the way we source, create, and use biodegradable and sustainable beauty and personal care products. We don't know what's around the corner, but we want to meet those of you taking big bets on the future.

What we are looking for in our startup, scaleup and academic research collaborations:

- **Planet Positive***: We are looking for biodegradable and sustainable solutions. **Please note all submissions should have a cruelty free requirement - no animal testing*
- **Functionality**: There are certain benefits or characteristics that our consumers expect from great beauty and personal care products (e.g., conditioners that give you that 'silky smooth' feeling, moisturisation and protective benefits of skin moisturisers etc). However, some ingredients that deliver certain types of functionalities could be slow to biodegrade. So, the design challenge is about making sure we have products that meet the required consumer benefit and functionality but also meet a high level of biodegradability. For packaging solutions, we are looking for high barrier performance, seal strength, tear resistance, puncture resistance and printability.
- **Potential to scale**: we produce at scale globally, so we must either have a path to economically scale production of the ingredient or packaging or be able to work together to work this out.
- **Differentiated idea, ingredient, formulation, patent, product, or brand** (i.e., credible solution).
- **Evidence** (i.e., proof that you can do what you say you can do - either as an academic study, proof of functionality, proof of evidence of biodegradability, any patents, any production/ sales). For sustainable solutions, we want to see environmental impact, carbon footprint or any other indicators of the solution having a beneficial impact on nature & society.



What's next...

If you want an opportunity to start a conversation, meet our senior leadership and business operators and potentially enter partner discussions with us, the key steps are:

Submissions Open	9 March, Wed (midday GMT)
Unilever Open Forum (we present our ask and Q&A)	23 March, Wed (10:00 and 16:00 GMT)
Submissions Close	11 April, Mon (23:59 BST)
Shortlist Announced	12 May, Thurs
Virtual Live Presentation (for the six best aligned)	w/c 23 May (13:00 - 14:30 BST)
Commercial Discussions	Q2 and Q3-22

To apply please visit:
[Innovate with us | Unilever](#)

By submitting any information, you will be agreeing that the information is not confidential. Don't share anything with us that you feel is confidential.



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Appendix

Definitions: Getting into the detail, this is how we break the two areas of our focus for this Challenge:

1. Biodegradable:

Definition: Ingredients or products that break down into non-harmful compounds via microbial action and do not build up in the environment. Our position is to have 'ultimate biodegradation' (ready/ultimate or inherent/ultimate) which means something breaks down completely to its component parts – carbon dioxide, water, and mineral salts – which get returned to the earth's natural cycles. And it must be quick – within hours, days or at most weeks. (Final standard tested by Internationally adopted OECD / ISO test protocols such as OECD 301, 310 or 302).

2. Sustainable Ingredients:

Definition: Ingredients or products that optimise the use of renewable resources while minimising the use of non-renewable ones, and in so doing, ensure GHG emissions are minimised and soil fertility, water quality, and biodiversity are protected and / or improved. These ingredients & products protect and improve the wellbeing and environment of local communities.



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