



EVENT REPORT

Social Impact Hackathon on Plastics in Egypt

Exploring entrepreneurial solutions to enhance alternatives to SUPBs and facilitate waste management

From 1 to 5 pm - Tuesday 25th February 2020,
KMT House, 73 15th street - Maadi Sarayat, Cairo, 11728, Egypt



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1. Project background

Bassita, Very Nile, Greenish and the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) of the UN Environment Programme/MAP invited members of the larger environmental community to KMT House for a half-day social impact workshop/hackathon as the #BagToTheFuture¹ award came to an end. The #BagToTheFuture challenge was launched in September 2019 and aimed at finding alternatives to single-use plastic bags while promoting responsible consumer and retailer behaviour and fostering business innovation.

The competition encouraged applicants to come up with an innovative idea that would have a positive impact on the environment by limiting, preventing or replacing the use of single-use plastic bags (SUPBs) in Egypt. The award was comprised of two complementary tracks: The Responsible Alternative Track and the Responsible Choices track. The winners of the Responsible Alternatives Track were the team Konoz from Luxor. They found a way to combine cultural heritage and a free, natural resource (palm-tree fiber) to create an alternative to single-use plastic bags. The winners of the Responsible Choices Track were Peradica, who had the idea of creating a mobile application to make it easier to recycle waste and plastic bags while incentivizing users to access eco-friendly products through a point-system.

The project was launched in Cairo in September with a multi-stakeholder's workshop on measures to limit single use plastic bags (SUPB) that was co-organized the Ministry of Environment of Egypt and the SCP/RAC and supported by YouThinkGreen, in the framework of the EU funded project Marine Litter Med.

2. Event's description

In initial discussions with event co-hosts SCP/RAC, Greenish and Very Nile, Bamyam Media explored opportunities and challenges to preventing, reducing, and innovating solutions regarding SUPs. What emerged was a desire to celebrate the two winning teams of the #BagToTheFuture challenge and support their launch into the wider community after a successful incubation period. It was also discussed how to best support the work of a range of diverse stakeholders with a more systemic approach; to use the event to improve new ways of collaborating, thinking and dialoguing with one another to problem solve, innovate and co-create solutions that reduce SUPs, especially bags.

It was determined that the best format for the event would be a platform for the teams to pitch their projects, as well as a social-impact hackathon workshop where participants could explore this central question: How can we tackle the issue of single-use plastics in Egypt—especially bags? Can we rethink the way we design, use and manage plastic waste?

To this end, the goal was to:

- Celebrate the entrepreneurial journey of two start-up teams who have innovative solutions; give them visibility, support them to enlarge their network and build valuable relationships.
- Share learning, research insights and successful actions, and identify key leverage points for prevention of the use of single use plastic bags and seek ways to incentivize behavioral change in consumption patterns.
- Illuminate the wealth of resources in the community— the collective intelligence, skills, perspectives and align around each person's needs to see what transformative solutions are possible.
- Discover new initiatives and possibilities for creating alternatives to single-use plastic bags
- Explore what projects could promote responsible consumer and retailer behavior
- Align around next steps and renew a sustained commitment to tackling the challenge.

The target groups of this workshop included stakeholders across the plastic bag value chain, as well as stakeholders that can support the reduction of SUPB and provide for alternatives. Over 100 participants from intergovernmental and civil society organisations, entrepreneurs such as the Switchers, media, think tanks, as well as representatives from the plastic industry and retail sector were invited to participate in the event, a total of 35 people attended the event.

¹ <http://verynile.org/new-page/award.html>

3. Event Agenda

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 13:00- 13:30 | Welcome & Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anna Elliot, Director of Bamyas Media: Welcome and explanation on the event format and overall objectives, how the hackathon works and what is expected of participants. |
| 13:30- 14:00 | Setting the scene <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kim de Miguel, SCP/RAC associated expert: Describe the greater picture, background to the SwitchersFund, scope of the #BagToTheFuture challenge.• Pedro Fernandez, Project manager SCP/RAC: The guidelines and SCP/RAC's work on related activities to SUPBs in Egypt• Claudia Panni, Project manager SCP/RAC: The Switchers Support Programme and promoting green entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region.• Salem Massalha, Director of Innovation, VeryNile: Background to Bassita/VeryNile• Mona Elkateb, Project manager at VeryNile/Bassita: Brief summary of the objectives and outcomes of the incubation process #BagToTheFuture.• Wessam El Beih, Drosos Foundation: Description of involvement in SUPBs movement and support of local projects and collaboration with VeryNile/KMT House.• Shady Khalil, Managing Partner, Greenish: Reflection on the role of Egypt and the findings of the WWF report "Stop the Flood of Plastic: How Mediterranean countries can save their sea" |
| 14:00- 14:20 | Celebrating #BagToTheFuture <p>Introduction to the challenge 'Responsible Choices'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pitch by Norhan Tarek, Peradica team leader <p>Promo video is screened followed by Q&A</p> |
| 14:20- 14:40 | <p>Introduction to the challenge 'Responsible Alternatives'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pitch by Sabrene Abdelmaksood, Konoz Team Leader <p>Promo video is screened followed by Q&A</p> |
| 14:40- 15:00 | Short networking break, drinks and snacks |
| 15:00- 17:00 | Hackathon <p>Deep dive into building the network and mapping of needs and resources on the topic of alternatives to SUPBs and facilitating waste management.</p> <p>Introduction: Round of introductions from all participants</p> <p>Small groups exercise: The audience is split into groups to choose one of the following components which they feel are most relevant to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plastic bags component: alternatives and consumers behaviour• Sorting at source, recycle/reuse <p>Large group discussion: Exchange of ideas and solutions discussed among the groups, summary of participants needs and resources.</p> |
| | Conclusions & Wrap up |

4. First Session

4.1. Opening of the workshop

- Ms Anna Elliot (Bamyam Media) welcomed guests and set the stage by explaining the agenda, event format and overall objectives. Anna briefly explained how the hackathon works and what was expected of participants. Ms Elliot introduced the hosts: Bassita/VeryNile, Greenish and SCP/RAC and thanked the support of KMT house for the support in providing the space for this workshop.

- A round of introductions took place clockwise, where everybody described their name, organisation and a word which came to mind in relation to the event.

4.2. The SwitchersFund, a flagship initiative by SCP/RAC

- Kim de Miguel, SCP/RAC associated expert explained how Egypt is witness to an overconsumption of single-use plastic bags and number of initiatives from the business community and non-for-profit organizations are currently emerging to counteract it. The situation we are facing also requires that we challenge ourselves to think of ways of changing our habits and lifestyle to prevent this issue from becoming even more dangerous. She explained how SCP/RAC have an official mandate to engage in international cooperation with Mediterranean countries on development and innovation in the business sector.

The Switchers Support Programme, is the flagship initiative of the centre, provides support to green entrepreneurs in North Africa and Middle East through tailored incubation, support in access to market and finance, among others. The #BagToTheFuture Award called for ideas and innovations for tackling single use plastic bags in Egypt and is part of this initiative and the result of the cooperation between UN Environment and SCP/RAC through the project “Protecting the marine environment from land-based pollution through strengthened coordination of global action”.



- Pedro Fernández, project manager at SCP/RAC briefly explained the process of elaboration of the guidelines to Guidelines to Phase out Single-Use Plastic Bags in the Mediterranean². The guidelines are based in two main pillars: a review of international cases and the technical assistance that SCP/RAC provided to a number of countries in the Mediterranean and were endorsed at the COP21 of the Barcelona Convention (December 2019) . Prior to this, they have followed a thorough revision process including through two regional marine litter dedicated meetings and the MAP governance system meetings. Hence, the Contracting Parties are committed to make best use of these guidelines.

Mr Fernández, described the recommendations for Egypt according to September’s event where there was a general consensus in welcoming the progressive roadmap suggested by the Ministry of Environment to phase out SUPB, which was presented to the Cabinet of Minister for endorsement.

² UNEP/MED WG.465/4.Rev.1 Guidelines to Phase out Single-Use Plastic Bags in the Mediterranean



- Claudia Panni, project manager at SCP/RAC briefly explained how green entrepreneurs benefit from the Switchers Support programme, since the experts at SCP/RAC have developed tools for green entrepreneurs around the Mediterranean providing them with technical assistance, mentoring and coaching through tailored incubation, support in access to markets and access to finance, and in business model development. Ms Panni explained the different challenges that entrepreneurs encounter and how they need to be supported each step of the way.



4.3. Drosos Foundation and Greenish’s involvement in SUPBs

- The representative of Drosos Foundation described their involvement in SUPBs movement and support of local projects such as the collaboration with VeryNile and KMT House. Mr El Beih explained how they have collaborated with initiatives working on upcycling glass and plastic bags and experimenting with other materials.

- Shady Khalil, Managing Partner, Greenish Background to Greenish and sharing learning, research and expertise from the front lines in Egypt. Mr Khalil presented some figures on plastic contamination around the Mediterranean from the report by Dalberg Advisors, WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative, 2019 “Stop the Flood of Plastic: How Mediterranean countries can save their sea”. He focused on the ‘Overview of the plastic lifecycle in the Med’ (Figure 1 - Annex II) and the ‘Summary of the plastic system driving marine pollution in the Med’ (Figure 2 - Annex II).



4.4. Bassita and their involvement in #Bagtothefuture

- Salem Massalha, Director of Innovation at Bassita/VeryNile explained how VeryNile is the first youth-led initiative to clean the Nile on an on-going basis. It quickly sparked a crucial conversation about the need and responsibility to protect our environment and the precious Nile. Due to excessive consumption of single-use plastics, and a lack of responsible culture for waste disposal, every year the Nile contributes a significant amount of garbage into the Mediterranean Sea. VeryNile have organized tens of clean-up events and removed 35 tons of garbage from the Nile with the help of more than 3,500 volunteers and their main objective is to raise awareness.
- Mona Elkateb, Project Manager at Bassita/VeryNile explained the that one of VeryNile's main projects is their campaign to limit, and eventually ban single-use plastic bags in Egypt. Earlier that month, they launched the campaign to ban single-use plastic bags from the neighborhood of Zamalek in the presence of her Excellency Dr. Yasmine Fouad. Implementing this will take a great deal of effort, but luckily their volunteer base is growing. The #BagToTheFuture award, launched in collaboration with SCP/RAC, aimed to encourage people of all ages to submit their ideas on how to limit the use of single-use plastic bags. The competition proved that there is plenty of room for innovation. Yesterday's solutions will not fix today's problems. There are plenty of environmentally conscious initiatives – and we will be much stronger when united together for the same cause. Ms Elkateb hoped that the hackathon would bring them closer to enhance alternatives to SUPBs and facilitate better waste management practices.



5. Second Session: Celebration of the awardees

- Salem Massalha explained how their aim with the #BagToTheFuture challenge was to encourage a dialogue on the problem of SUPBs in Egypt and to encourage individuals to submit their creative ideas. The challenge had two different tracks – the Responsible Choices Track and the Responsible Alternatives Track for which they received more than 30 applications with brilliant ideas on how to raise awareness by offering alternatives to plastic bags, and through encouraging the population to make more responsible choices that are environmentally conscious.

5.1. Presentation by winner of “Responsible Choices”: Peradica

The winners of the Responsible Choices Track were Peradica, a group of five young women studying Business Informatics at the German University in Cairo. They came up with the idea of an app that facilitates recycling by connecting users with recycling agencies. Mr Salem congratulated the winners and Ms Kimberley de Miguel handed them their certificate of completion of the incubation.



- Norhan Tarek Elnaghy, Sama Tarek Zidan, Farah Hossam Rashed, Hana Hicham Ali Morsy and Sarah Ahmed Seifeldin pitched their initiative explaining how they came up with the idea of creating the application. In order to encourage users to collect and recycle their plastic bags and other recyclables, they establish a reward system such as discounts on environmentally friendly products and services from a list of partner organizations. Peradica focuses on implementing new social practices, with the goal of promoting community building and strengthening of responsible behavior towards plastic bags.

Their promotional video was screened and Mr Salem lead a round of questions and answers by participants regarding their lessons learnt, business strategy and next steps.

5.2. Presentation by winner of “Responsible Alternatives”: Konoz

The Winners of the Responsible Alternatives Track were Konoz, a group from Luxor who created a project that has a double environmental and social impact. Their idea was to create sustainable bags that are practical to use everywhere using completely natural materials – discarded palm tree leaves. The leaves are 100% eco-friendly and biodegradable. I will let the team explain their idea themselves. Their project, once running, will surely provide a responsible alternative to SUPBs to plenty of people, starting with their governorate of Luxor. Mr Salem congratulated the winners and Mr Pedro Fernández handed them their certificate of completion of the incubation.



- Sabrene Abdelmaksood and Ruqaya Amer Ali, pitched their initiative explaining how they were united by a vision for a cleaner environment, and a society that understands and reflects this need. Our main aim is to limit the use of SUPBs by producing a natural, eco-friendly alternative. In doing so, they can create job opportunities for 25 young people to empower them economically and by teaching them a new skill. In this way they preserve the tradition of using palm tree leaves, which was common before the wide spread of SUPBs. Effectively, we can save thousands of plastic bags from being used and empower hundreds of young and female locals in Luxor.

Their promotional video was screened and Mr Salem lead a round of questions and answers by participants regarding their lessons learnt, business strategy and next steps.

- Coffee break: Participants networked in the outdoor area outside the workshop room, snacks and drinks were provided.





6. Third session: The Hackathon

The intention was to provide a space to explore this question further, connect to the local and international community, realize individual and collective potential, and learn from one another. In order to create alignment from the group, in the first part of the hackathon, we gathered the intentions, possibilities and 'markers of success' from each individual: Some synergistic patterns emerged and were mapped into four clusters or working groups.

The participants grouped themselves into small teams to tackle each cluster. They explored the sticky points/barriers/challenges, as well as the leverage-points, opportunities for collaboration, innovative solutions, potential projects, and their needs and resources, that would support in making some headway around each cluster.



6.1. Description of the working groups

A. Designing better alternatives to SUP bags that are affordable and user-friendly

This group exchanged on technical/materials for production as well as business models and market-based solutions to replace SUP-bags.

Resources

- 3000+ cotton/canvas bags ready to be distributed to consumers and shops (Very Nile)
- Expertise, consulting or mentoring in building Cooperatives and values-led social enterprise, especially with women and underprivileged populations (Kendaka + Kunuz)
- How to use natural resources to make bags including palm and banana palm fiber (Kunuz + SCP/RAC + deFildo)
- Opportunities for partnership and collaboration between Kunuz and DeFildo exchanging technical know-how and production innovations
- A large network of producers of alternatives (Very Nile)
- A factory and production space with tools and resources (Kendaka)
- Upcycling and production expertise: how to weave plastic and extend life-cycle of plastic, product specs, technical know-how (Kendaka)

Needs

- Access to values-aligned partners including distributors, manufacturers, recyclers etc (kendaka)
- Increased sharing and learning and technical know-how between producers of alternatives
- Collaborations with consumers/behavior-change campaigns to support with marketing and visibility, and increasing demand



B. Improving plastic waste management, recycling, sorting and collection

This group identified the gaps and opportunities for waste-management in Egypt and focused on how to build synergistic relationships and increase collaboration and impact on solutions across the various points of the waste-management system.

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| Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Access to Manufacturers of trash cans/sorting containers (Kendaka for Peradica)- Expertise and 'best practice'/strategic consultancy in tackling waste management, to prevent plastic waste at the source, especially for government (SCP/RAC)- Contacts to recycling agencies (Very Nile) |
| Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Building effective relationships with recycling agencies, and buyers of recycled and raw plastic (Peradica)- Funding for growing an App (Peradica)- App developers (Peradica)- Improved regulation for trash collection, sorting, and law-enforcement on eventual bans- Partnerships across the waste-management-system to improve efficiency- An entity or coalition that links the different recycling agencies and waste management organizations together for increased effectiveness- More 'upcycling' projects that can use recycled plastic in a significant way |



C. Shifting consumer and retailer behavior through a mass-media campaign and outreach

This group proposed collaborating on the design and implementation of a strategic mass-media campaign to shift consumer and retailer behavior, increase awareness, and promote prevention, solutions and resources through a multi-media platform + outreach events.

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| Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A behavior-change design process and "edutainment" methodology that maximizes content creation for strategic impact (Bamyam Media)- Creating and producing to drive millions of viewers to a multimedia platform that enables consumers and retailers to access resources (for example, where to buy cotton bags, a petition to a supermarket chain, a Nile clean-up event, links to recycling, sorting, pick-up apps, etc). (Bamyam Media)- Partnerships with organizations in the plastic pollution ecosystem who can provide access to networks, outreach events, university engagement etc, (Greenish and Very Nile) |
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- Internship program for youth to support in youth-messaging design for campaign (Very Nile)
- Access to the Nile via fisherman and boats and mass-action clean-ups
- A database of thousands of volunteers who are eager for engagement opportunities (Very Nile)
- Ability to promote alternatives and initiatives like Kunuz & Peradica through the campaign and platform (Bamyan)
- A large-scale event like the Live-Aid concert at the Pyramids in September, with visibility for plastic pollution awareness and tickets bought with “actions”
- Access to public schools and universities (Very Nile + Greenish + Peradica)
- Youth-engagement activities: Curriculum development, ecological/factory visits, workshops, awareness-building in universities, up-cycling trainings → opportunities to be linked to platform (Greenish, Very Nile, Kendaka etc)

Needs

- Research on strategy, leverage points for systems and behavior-change (for example geographic/demographic, effective prevention mechanisms, etc)
- Business development for campaign sponsorships and funding
- Awareness materials and content for shifting behavior (Rotary)



D. Engaging with the private-sector and government to increase collaboration and coordination

This group sought to improve actions with the government and private sector, informed by sound policy, research, and incentives, as well as explore the development of a process that could support systems-change and cooperation

Resources:

- Access to a network of relationships in the private-sector and government (Very Nile)
- Access to and consultancy on improved policy, research, regulation for government and incentives for private sector (Sherif El Nasr + EIPR)
- A proposal to form a formal coalition of environmental organizations to present a united front to government when making requests, proposing opportunities (Very Nile, Greenish)
- Technical support, knowledge, best-practices for creating alternatives, phasing out plastic-bags, and strategy for tackling SUPs at the source (SCP/RAC)
- Development of industrial standards for reusable bags (SCP/RAC)
- Co-creation and systems-change facilitation (Maabaad)
- Access to largest philanthropists in Egypt, for example Gemini and Sawiris (Maabad)
- Tech platform for large-scale collaboration (in development, launching in few months)

Needs

- Funding for an ongoing process that can enable consistent action and improved collaboration between stakeholders
- Relevant stakeholders engaged in professional manor, organizations ready and inspired, and committed towards shared goals, an agreement on the work that is going to be developed (SCP/RAC + Maabad)



6.2. Concluding remarks from the hackathon

- It's important to build stronger relationships with the government and private sector, and other leaders in the community who are actively engaged in this work and already making tangible progress. It is ineffective to embark on a systems-change process unless there is stronger trust between actors, and already agreed-upon willingness to work together, give time, and strategic alignment in tackling SUPB across sectors.
- This small group of participants will continue to meet and build upon the work of the hackathon in collaboration with another community initiative called the Plastic-Banning Coalition.
- Together, these groups are available to support the teams of Peradica and Konoz in growing their social enterprises. They are committed to moving forward on a number of the initiatives that emerged from the hackathon.
- The next steps for each working-group will entail coalescing around a clear strategy with impact metrics, raising funding, developing proposals and action/business-plans, and strengthening relationships and coordination across sectors.



Annexes

Annex I: List of participants

| | Name | Organization | Sector |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Mona Elkateb | Bassita | BSO |
| 2 | Mostafa Habib | Bassita | BSO |
| 3 | Salem Massalha | Bassita | BSO |
| 4 | Alban de Menonville | Bassita | BSO |
| 5 | Shady Abdallah | Greenish/VeryNile | BSO |
| 6 | Sabren Abdelmaksood Mohamed | Kounuz | Awardee |
| 7 | Mohamed Abdelal Sayed Ahmed Sadek | Kounuz | Awardee |
| 8 | Ruqaya Omar Ali | Kounuz | Awardee |
| 9 | Brigitte wolf | Peradica | Awardee |
| 10 | Hana Hicham Ali Morsy | Peradica | Awardee |
| 11 | Farah Hossam Rashed | Peradica | Awardee |
| 12 | Norhan Tarek Elnaghy | Peradica | Awardee |
| 13 | Sabine Mueller | Peradica | Awardee |
| 14 | Sama Tarek Zidan | Peradica | Awardee |
| 15 | Sarah Ahmed Seifeldin | Peradica | Awardee |
| 16 | Anna Elliot | Bamyan Media | Press- facilitator |
| 17 | Mona Helia Rabie | Maabad | Facilitator |
| 18 | Juan Carlos Kaitan | Maabad | Facilitator |
| 19 | Kimberley de Miguel | SCP/RAC | Intergovernmental |
| 20 | Claudia Pani | SCP/RAC | Intergovernmental |
| 21 | Pedro Fernandez | SCP/RAC | Intergovernmental |
| 22 | Wessam ElBeih | Drosos Foundation | Development Foundation |
| 23 | Mary | Drosos Foundation | Development Foundation |
| 24 | Yasmine | Drosos Foundation | Development Foundation |
| 25 | Catherine El Taweel Kost | Kendaka Egypt | NGO |
| 26 | Hana Dusuky | kendaka.upcycles | NGO |
| 27 | Juan Fuentes Fernandez | Laliga | Private Sector |
| 28 | Carlos Silva | Patriot Sustainability R&D | Researcher |
| 29 | Christine Ayad | Media-Arts for Development | NGO |
| 30 | Mariam Amin | Media-Arts for Development | NGO |
| 31 | Emad Aziz | Future Lights for Development Org | Incubator |
| 32 | Mohamed Younes | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights | Think Tank |
| 33 | Sherif Seif El Nasr | Independant | Researcher/Consultant |
| 34 | Laura Souli | Ashoka | NGO/Fellowship |
| 35 | Dalia El-Said | Ashoka | NGO/Fellowship |

Annex II. Presentations, employed material and press releases

Shady Khalil – Presentation on the report authored by Dalberg Advisors, WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative, 2019 “Stop the Flood of Plastic: How Mediterranean countries can save their sea”

