**Compostable Packaging Coalition established backed by £1.2m UKRI funding**

* ***Compostable Coalition UK will establish the role compostable packaging can play in transitioning to a new plastics economy and supporting UK Plastics Pact.***
* ***Coalition examines effective means of collecting and treating compostable packaging via existing bio-waste infrastructure, to advance the necessary systemic changes in the UK.***
* ***Riverford Organic Farmers customers to participate in online take-back programme along with residents of Milton Keynes participating in a collection programme via their existing food waste bins.***
* ***First of its kind project backed by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) flagship £60 million Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge.***
* ***Project responds to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ (DEFRA) call for further evidence to support the case for wide inclusion of compostable packaging in UK’s bio-waste treatment streams.***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*COMPOSTABLE Coalition UK:* *Closing the loop for compostable packaging* launches with £1.2m in funding from UKRI’s Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge.

The 10-partner coalition of industry, academia and infrastructure associations will examine the practicality of collecting, sorting and treating compostable packaging via existing bio-waste collection and treatment routes.

It will inform necessary government policy interventions to transit away from the current, almost absolute reliance, on single use plastic, of which nearly 50% cannot be or is not recycled[[1]](#footnote-2).

Customers of online retailer Riverford Organic Farmers will participate in a take-back programme, while local residents of Milton Keynes along with shoppers across multiple cafeterias in London will be diverting compostable packaging with their food waste into proper food waste bins.

Packing producers TIPA, Futamura, Vegware and Biome will work to support the urgent removal of hard-to-recycle plastics from the market.

Hubbub and the University of Sheffield will lead the research on consumer behaviour.

EnVar, the largest composting facility in the UK and Paper Round/Recorra, an expert commercial recycling company will support the project, along with the trade associations REA and RECOUP.

It is the first project of its kind to examine the role of compostable packaging in transitioning away from single use plastics to meet key goals of the UK Plastic Pact: “100% reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging” with “70% effectively recycled or composted”.

Bio-waste partners will investigate whether compostable plastic can be sorted and processed to create high quality compost that can be applied to support soil fertility.

Results from the 24-month study will identify policy and legislative interventions to enable compostable packaging to address the global plastics challenge.

***Kate Stansfield, Business Development and Commercial Director at EnVar said:***

*“EnVar processes around 350,000 tonnes of organic waste each year to make PAS100 accredited compost. For a number of years now we have been successfully processing compostable packaging alongside our existing food and garden waste streams. EnVar welcomes its involvement in this project and looks forward to helping produce new data sets to evidence the benefits of this process, to secure the continued support for compostable materials from our industry and Government partners.”*

***David Proctor, Waste Services Client Manager, Milton Keynes said:***

*“Milton Keynes Council have been collecting food waste successfully from residents for many years and are looking forward to working with this project by exploring how local residents can support the inclusion of compostable plastic in food waste bins.”*

***Nick Cliffe, Deputy Director, Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge said:***

*“We are delighted to offer funding to the Capturing and Processing Compostable Packaging project led by TIPA.*

*The research and innovation will further our understanding of how the best outcome for compostable packaging can be delivered in the UK and where these products fit within the sustainable packaging system which the SSPP Challenge seeks to support.”*

***Julia Schifter, VP Strategy Analysis at TIPA said:***

*“We are confident the project’s findings can successfully signpost the policy and behavioural interventions that will reduce our dependence on hard-to-recycle plastic packaging and achieve the UK Plastics Pact goals.*

*All members of the consortium would like to thank UKRI for its generous funding and support of this project.”*

**For more information and to contact the Compostable Coalition please visit our website** [**https://compostableuk.info/**](https://compostableuk.info/)

**-ENDS-**

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**Notes to Editor**

**About TIPA**

* TIPA® is a fast growing, international start up, on a mission to tackle a global consumer flexible plastic packaging market which produces 30 million tonnes of packaging annually, of which less than 4% is recycled, by developing and manufacturing fully compostable packaging.
* With its head office based in Israel, TIPA is also a UK registered company, and continues to invest and grow within this important market.
* TIPA’s solutions are currently implemented by leading UK brands such as Waitrose, Riverford Organic Farmers and Abel & Cole.

**About UKRI**

* Launched in April 2018, UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
* The organisation brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK’s innovation agency, Innovate UK.

**About the Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging (SSPP) Challenge**

* UK Research and Innovation’s Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging (SSPP) challenge is working to make plastic packaging fit for a sustainable future. It is the largest and most ambitious UK Government investment to date in sustainable plastics research and innovation
* As a £60 million five-year programme, it is the largest and most ambitious UK government investment to date in sustainable plastics research and innovation. It reflects the urgent need for action to reduce the environmental footprint of plastics and eradicate plastic pollution.
* The challenge brings together academia and industry and is underpinned by the delivery of the 2025 UK Plastics Pact targets. SSPP’s ambition is to establish the UK as a leading innovator in smart and sustainable plastic packaging for consumer products. This will drive cleaner growth across the supply chain and deliver a dramatic reduction in plastic waste entering the environment by 2025.

**Full List of Compostable Coalition partners**

The consortium consists of organisations with an interest in the use or composting of compostable plastic packaging and other compostable plastic items, spanning the entire compostable plastic value chain. These include:

* TIPA Corp UK Ltd (compostable packaging manufacturer)
* Vegware Ltd (developer of foodservice packaging made from plants)
* The University of Sheffield (who will lead dedicated workstreams on behavioural insights and life cycle assessment)
* Biome Technologies PLC (manufacturer of bioplastic polymers)
* Futamura Chemical UK Ltd (manufacturer of cellulose films)
* The Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (REA, the UK’s largest trade association for renewable energy and clean technology companies, including AD operators and compost producers)
* Paper Round/Recorra (waste management company)
* Recycling of Used Plastics Ltd (RECOUP) (A leading authority on plastic recycling & resource management)
* Hubbub Foundation UK (environmental charity)
* Envar Composting Ltd (compost producer)

***Compostables can support the UK to meet its Plastics Pact goals***

*Compostable plastics are designed first and foremost to address hard-to-recycle plastics. This novel re-design of packaging considers the full cycle of the package - from being - made from partially or wholly renewable material sources, protecting the shelf life of food goods, to being discarded in the same food waste collection and treatment stream as the food they have been designed to protect. From both a consumer and waste management perspective, such packages allow the ease of use for consumers to simply discard their left- over food with the left- over package. Such food contaminated packages enable more food waste to be carried into bio-waste treatment streams. However, consumers, of course, need to be both educated as to how to properly discard such packages as well as have the relevant access to return such packages to the relevant waste bin. Similarly, the biowaste industry also requires reassurance that compostables can be effectively sorted and recycled within their systems, to make valuable compost which is vital for protecting soil fertility. The project will examine all these elements to support new data and new findings on compostables which currently is missing.*

***The potential of compostables to tackle hard to recycle plastic packaging***

*The project will focus on three key applications where little to no quality recycling exists today: flexible packaging (such as fresh produce and snack food packaging) which pack about 40% of consumer goods and generate ~25% of plastic waste, of which less than* [*6%*](https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/creating-circular-economy-flexible-plastic-packaging) *is being recycled; small formats: such as the* [*1 billion*](https://fabnews.live/coffee-capsule-consumption-leading-uk-towards-environmental-crisis/) *coffee pods sold annually in the UK, and the over* [*60 billion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/uk-tea-football-pitch-poll-b1785356.html) *tea bags consumed per year locally along with single use plastic service-ware as used in food courts and canteens with little to no recycling venues.*

*The complexities post-usage to recycle these zero-circular value waste items have also led them to becoming the primary source of ocean pollution, generating a disproportionate 70% (about 7 million tonnes) of all plastic waste discarded each year to the sea (Source:* [*SYSTEMIQ*](https://www.systemiq.earth/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/BreakingThePlasticWave_MainReport.pdf)*).*

1. <https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/The%20UK%20Plastics%20Pact%20Annual%20Report%202020-21.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)