

Clothes designed to grow as children age could mean savings for parents while cutting waste

- Businesses developing pioneering products to fight plastic pollution and clean up our oceans to receive funding boost
- projects across the UK, from Bath to Edinburgh and London to Yorkshire, are being backed by the government / Sky Ocean Ventures partnership
- green economy already growing faster than other sectors with green jobs expected to grow up to 2 million by 2030

Innovative businesses creating green alternatives to plastic bottles, cosmetic beads and synthetic materials are being backed by new funding from the government and Sky.

10 projects have been given a funding boost from the government and Sky Ocean Ventures – Sky’s impact investment fund – to find fast and future-proof solutions to the ocean plastics crisis.

Bath-based company Naturbeads is developing a biodegradable alternative to microscopic plastic beads found in cosmetics including exfoliators and toothpastes. Their work with the University of Bath will tackle the 30,000 tonnes of micro plastics from consumer products that end up in our oceans and are ingested by sea creatures.

Meanwhile, London company Petit-Pli have created expanding clothes that grow with the wearer, inspired by satellite folding structures and origami. They hope to diversify from children’s’ clothes to maternity wear using the cash boost.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Trailblazing UK businesses are giving us all the choice to buy more sustainable clothing, packaging and cosmetics that are better for our environment.

Consumers have shown they are keen for green and we’re committed to championing those innovative companies that lead the way in this, protecting the planet while at the same time opening up huge opportunities for the UK economy.

Jeremy Darroch, Sky’s Group Chief Executive, said:

These 10 innovative investments can create meaningful change and help the world turn off the plastics tap. We look forward to supporting the businesses and their breakthrough ideas.

Backing for Naturbeads follows the government's success in banning microbeads from cosmetic products last year, and its plans to end the sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds from April 2020. Naturbeads joins a further 9 projects receiving funding to develop innovations to challenge single-use plastics and encourage the modern consumer to reuse and recycle products.

Successful projects to help reduce waste and pollution also include:

- flexible cardboard packaging for surfboards and bottles, created by Cornwall-based surfers Flexi Hex after noticing plastic waste on their local beaches
- a carbon neutral water bottle, made from 100% natural materials, that can biodegrade completely in a matter of months – from Edinburgh-based Choose Water
- West-Yorkshire based textile innovators HD Wool, who are replacing synthetic fleeces with the next generation of sustainable wool products

Professor Duncan Wingham, Executive Chair of NERC – the Natural Environment Research Council for UK Research and Innovation, said:

Plastic pollution is a global crisis that affects our oceans and our land.

This partnership with Sky Ocean Ventures, along with other programmes, will help establish the UK as a leading innovator in smart and sustainable plastic packaging solutions, delivering cleaner growth across the supply chain, with a dramatic reduction in plastic waste entering the environment by 2025.