



CASE STUDY

Notpla

Company Name

Notpla

Category

Seaweed-based sustainable packaging / biomaterials

Location

United Kingdom

Website

<https://www.notpla.com>

Notpla is a UK sustainable packaging company that develops alternatives to single-use plastic using seaweed and plants. Its product range includes seaweed-coated takeaway packaging, flexible films, edible liquid packaging, and other biomaterial innovations designed to disappear naturally after use. Rather than relying on fossil-based materials for short-lived applications, Notpla's business model is built around the idea that packaging should be designed in line with natural cycles and should leave no trace of pollution.

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How does this case align with StartDSP?

Notpla aligns closely with the Start-DSP vision because it combines **scientific innovation, sustainability, and commercial growth** in a business that is both mission-driven and scalable. It demonstrates how entrepreneurship can address a major environmental challenge through a product and materials strategy that is rooted in circular and regenerative thinking.

Digital:

Although Notpla is primarily a biomaterials company, it also reflects the digital dimension of Start-DSP through its structured impact reporting, innovation processes, and communication of measurable environmental outcomes. Its theory of change, impact reports, and systematic tracking of plastic replacement show how data and reporting can support transparency, performance measurement, and stakeholder trust in sustainable ventures.

Sustainable:

Sustainability is the core of Notpla's value proposition. The company develops packaging from renewable materials such as seaweed and plants and states that its solutions can be eaten, composted, dissolved, or recycled depending on the application. It explicitly positions itself against the use of fossil-based single-use plastics for short-term convenience and frames its work as part of a wider transition toward regenerative packaging systems.

Profitable:

Notpla also demonstrates that high-impact environmental innovation can attract serious investor confidence. In September 2024, the company announced a **£20 million Series A+ funding round**, led by UB Forest Industry Green Growth Fund, with participation from impact-first investors. The company stated that this funding would accelerate expansion and support the replacement of more than **100 million single-use plastics per year** within two years.



Biomaterial innovation as a business model

How does Notpla create value through regenerative packaging innovation?

Notpla creates value by addressing one of the biggest problems in modern consumption systems: the mismatch between short-term packaging use and long-term material persistence. The company argues that packaging used for a matter of minutes should not be made from materials that take millions of years to form and hundreds of years to disappear. Its innovation therefore focuses on making packaging from renewable inputs such as seaweed and plants, with end-of-life pathways that are much more compatible with natural systems. This gives the company a clear environmental mission and a highly distinctive value proposition

Biomaterial innovation as a business model

A central feature of the Notpla case is that sustainability is not an add-on but the foundation of the business model itself. Notpla's material innovation creates a direct alternative to conventional plastic packaging in sectors such as food delivery, retail, and events. The company's impact narrative shows that it is not merely trying to reduce harm marginally; rather, it aims to replace harmful materials altogether with packaging that works with biological cycles. This makes the company highly relevant for learners exploring the relationship between product design, environmental impact, and business opportunity.



System change and partnerships

Notpla also creates value by working with major partners and visible public applications to normalise sustainable packaging. On its impact page, the company highlights collaborations with major sports events and delivery services, including millions of seaweed-coated takeaway containers used through Just Eat in Europe. This shows that system change in sustainability entrepreneurship often depends on partnerships, visibility, and market adoption — not only on technical invention. Learners can see from this that successful sustainable ventures must combine innovation with ecosystem engagement.

Scale, recognition, and funding

The case is also especially relevant for Modules 8 and 9 because it shows how impact-oriented innovation can become commercially credible and investable. Notpla's B Corp certification, Earthshot Prize recognition, and 2024 Series A+ funding round together demonstrate that environmental innovation can gain both legitimacy and capital when it combines measurable impact, clear product-market relevance, and scalability. This makes Notpla a strong example of how sustainability, storytelling, and strategic growth can reinforce one another in a purpose-led company.

We remain committed to our mission of creating a world free from plastic waste.

Notpla, Series A+ funding announcement, September 2024



Challenges

Scaling novel materials: Replacing plastic at scale requires not only innovation, but also industrial production capacity, supply chain stability, and cost competitiveness. This means that Notpla must continuously prove that its packaging can perform reliably while also being manufacturable at larger volumes.

Changing market habits: Even when better materials exist, adoption depends on whether businesses and consumers are willing to switch. This makes customer education, anti-greenwashing communication, and practical usability central to the company's long-term success.

Opportunities

Strong growth potential: The 2024 funding round gives Notpla the resources to expand internationally, especially in markets where demand for plastic-free alternatives is growing rapidly. This shows strong commercial opportunity alongside environmental relevance.

Policy and standards influence: Through initiatives such as the Natural Polymers Group and broader advocacy, Notpla is positioned not only to sell products but also to influence industry standards and policy developments. This strengthens its role as a systems-change company.

