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Sustainable Ocean Alliance Announces Inaugural Ecopreneur Network Startup Class

The Ecopreneur Network is the world's first lifelong support system designed to scale ocean startup founders' innovations globally and help restore the ocean in our lifetime.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – (September 20, 2023) Today, Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA), the world's largest network of young ocean leaders and home to the world's first Ocean Solutions Accelerator program, announced its inaugural Ecopreneur Network class. The Ecopreneur Network, launched after a competitive application process this summer, is an ecosystem providing long-term support and financial resources to startups (pre-seed or beyond) creating solutions to protect and restore the ocean in our lifetime – including unprecedented access to funding opportunities, mentorship, and capacity development.

The members of the inaugural Ecopreneur Network class are:

1. **FlexSea** (London, United Kingdom): FlexSea develops novel seaweed derived biomaterials to replace single use plastics in various verticals. Their home-compostable materials are derived from naturally occurring seaweed biopolymers from widely cultivated red seaweed strains.
2. **Ittinsect** (Rome, Italy): Ittinsect is a biotech startup producing sustainable, high-performance feed ingredients through the biotechnological treatment of novel raw ingredients including insects, microalgae, and agricultural by-products, in line with the principles of circular economics. A fish raised with Ittinsect-based feeds has healthier digestion and improved growth performance at no extra cost for the fish farmer.
3. **Photon Marine** (Portland, Oregon, United States): Photon Marine is developing the world's most powerful and intelligent electric outboard motor system and fleet management software, tailored to commercial boat fleets in tourism, transportation, and mariculture industries. Their solution is a drop-in electric outboard motor system that replaces traditional ICE motors on both new and existing vessels without compromising on performance or reliability.
4. **Reefgen** (San Francisco, California, United States): Reefgen has developed multiple robotic nearshore restoration platforms to plant coral and seagrasses, with the ability to develop the required 30x-75x productivity- rate enhancements over manual planting

necessary for humankind to meet the challenge of restoring coastal life support ecosystems.

5. **Stream Ocean** (Zurich, Switzerland): Stream Ocean's mission is to help anyone working in the ocean to monitor their impact on marine biodiversity.
6. **TONTOTON** (Sihanoukville, Cambodia): TONTOTON is an environmental impact program focused on collecting and treating mismanaged, hard-to-recycle plastic in highly polluted coastal villages of Cambodia. Our mission is to reduce plastic leakage through plastic action financing while promoting waste segregation in households and businesses and collecting mismanaged plastic on the ocean-bound
7. **Urchinomics** (Ijmuiden, Netherlands): Urchinomics helps restore kelp forests by paying divers to remove overgrazing sea urchins from urchin barrens, ranching the urchins in proprietary land-based aquaculture systems, and converting the urchins from an ecological nuisance into premium seafood that we sell to high end distributors and restaurants globally.
8. **uWare Robotics** (Brussels, Belgium): uWare utilizes the latest advancements in Robotics, AI, and IoUT to develop cost-effective, easy-to-use robotic platforms enabling autonomous intervention in underwater environments.
9. **Alora** (Kitchener, Ontario, Canada): Alora, formerly known as Agrisea, was built to solve world hunger by evolving sustainable food systems through ocean agriculture. They have developed a way to grow crops in high salt conditions such as salt soils or coastal ocean waters.
10. **Agriloops** (Rennes, France): Agriloops develops aquaponic systems to reinvent aquaculture to produce eco-responsible and healthy food products. The company develops innovative aquaponic production units in salt water to facilitate sustainable agricultural production, enabling the production of natural and fresh shrimps and vegetables.
11. **Bound4Blue** (Barcelona, Spain): Bound4Blue has developed a foldable and autonomous wingsail system to be integrated onto a wide range of vessels. The system has been conceived as a complementary propulsion system, which produces effective thrust from existing winds, reducing the main engine power required, thus delivering fuel consumption and pollutant emissions reductions of up to 40%.

The Ecopreneur Network builds on the success of SOA's Ocean Solutions Accelerator, the groundbreaking cohort-based program designed to help entrepreneurs gain the resources and skills they need to scale a for-profit ocean and climate solutions that contributes to a sustainable blue economy. After accelerating five cohorts and 45 alumni companies since the program's founding in 2018, SOA's Accelerator startups have raised over $308M in funding, empowering them to employ over 600 individuals and expand their impact across 77 countries.

The Ecopreneur Network Class of 2023 will join SOA's current network of ocean startups to receive life-long support in their efforts to secure funding opportunities, forge connections, and access critical resources to drive their ventures towards transformative impact for our ocean. A

select group of advanced startups have also received an investment from SOA, bringing Sustainable Ocean Alliance's investment portfolio to nearly $1.5M.

"The Class of 2023 has created cutting-edge solutions designed to catalyze transformative impact for our ocean and planet," **said Daniela Fernandez, founder and CEO of Sustainable Ocean Alliance.** "We are proud to welcome these 11 new startups to the Ecopreneur Network. This is a vital expansion of SOA's work to amplify our ocean impact on the global stage, and reimagine what it takes to truly drive systemic change through ocean innovation. Together, we will realize our mission of restoring the ocean in our lifetime – a mission that in turn demands life-long dedication."

Members of the Ecopreneur Network will receive tailored, curated programming that expands and grows alongside their startups. They will benefit from personalized mentorship, strategic guidance, and workshops facilitated by SOA's network of world-class founders, investors, mentors, and partners – each lending their expertise at every step of the startup journey. Members of the network who have attained a high level of advancement will also have the opportunity to receive a $100,000 investment from SOA, while also accessing a network of peers, exclusive investor events, media exposure, and thought leadership opportunities.

"We are delighted to be part of the world's most ambitious ocean companies," **said Jérémie Cognard, CEO and co-founder, Agriloops**. "The Ecopreneur Network will allow us to scale our model but also to amplify our efforts to achieve a transformative planetary impact."

"We're excited to join the Ecopreneur Network because it will accelerate our mission of making shipping greener by reintroducing innovative sails to ships," **said Cristina Aleixendri, COO, bound4blue.** "Moreover, it gives us the opportunity to connect with a community of like-minded entrepreneurs who, like us, deeply care about the planet and its preservation. After all, it's only together that we can harness the winds of change to drive sustainability forward."

The 11 startups in the inaugural Ecopreneur Network class focus on at least one of SOA's five impact areas – Blue Carbon: CO2e Removal or Avoidance; Ecosystems and Species Preservation & Restoration; Ocean Pollution: Waste Reduction, Circular Use, & Material Alternatives; Blue Foods: Sustainable Fisheries/Aquaculture and Seafood Alternatives; Ocean Data, Literacy and Research.

The application cycle for the Ecopreneur Network Class of 2024 will be announced in the new year.

About Sustainable Ocean Alliance

SOA is a global organization created for youth – by youth – dedicated to restoring the health of the ocean in our lifetime. We were founded in 2014 by Daniela Fernandez during her first year of college, after she attended a United Nations meeting on climate change – and was stunned to realize none of the experts had a plan to stop it. Since then, SOA has grown into the world's largest network of young ocean leaders, innovators, and policymakers, and we have

accelerated 222 solutions to the greatest threats facing our ocean. These solutions include for-profit startups and community-led nonprofit projects around the world.

Why focus on the ocean?

The ocean sustains almost all life on this planet – and is our greatest protection against climate change. It produces more than half our oxygen, and stores 50 times more carbon dioxide than our atmosphere. Mangroves, salt marshes, and seagrass meadows remove 10 times more CO2 than the rainforest and store 3 to 5 times more carbon Coral reefs reduce 97% of wave energy, while mangroves reduce 66% of wave height. Right now, the situation is critical. We must protect the ocean, so it can continue to protect us. Did you know: **93% of excess heat** from global warming is absorbed by the ocean; **1 in 3 marine animals face extinction** due to the rise of ocean temperatures; **250,000 people will die every year** from 2030-2050 as a direct result of climate change.