UPLIFT, A PROJECT TO BOOST CIRCULAR PLASTIC PACKAGING IN THE FOOD & DRINK SECTOR, KICKS OFF

- **SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS AND AIMPLAS ARE THE TWO SPANISH PARTNERS OF UPLIFT, A PROJECT FINANCED UNDER THE HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME.**
- **UPLIFT WILL DEVELOP TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS THAT WILL TACKLE THE PLASTIC PACKAGING MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING PRACTICES OF THE FOOD AND DRINKS SECTOR.**

Madrid, March 23, 2021 - SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS and AIMPLAS - Technological Institute of Plastics- are the two Spanish partners involved in the execution of UPLIFT, a new project funded under the European Union's Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020, that seeks to enhance the circularity in the food and drinks packaging sector. The overall concept of UPLIFT is to biologically depolymerise both bio- and fossil-based plastic packaging waste and convert it into more sustainable and easily upcyclable polymers, following a biorefinery approach.

UPLIFT will address the full plastic packaging value chain, from monomer production and packaging material manufacturing, to end of life solutions such as reusing and recycling, including socio-economic, healthy, quality, regulatory and standardization issues around current practices. Within this context, the project seeks to boost the development and validation of novel enzymatic and microbial processes for the sustainable use of plastics in food and drinks packaging applications. This will be tested and evaluated from a technical, environmental, and socio-economical point of view.

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS and AIMPLAS are part of a consortium formed by a total of fifteen partners coming from eight different European countries. All of them will work together for 48 months, contributing to the development of a more circular European plastic packaging industry.

In addition, UPLIFT will lay the scientific foundation and initial piloting to reach industrial demonstration-scale between 2025 and 2030. This will substantially increase future recycling rates as plastic packaging will become a source of valuable chemicals.

In this project, SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS leads the exploitation and market research strategies, the development of e-learning materials and training programs, as well as the elaboration and implementation of a communication and dissemination plan.

"We are glad to be part of a project that will improve the circularity and sustainability of the European Plastics-packaging Industry, bringing it to the forefront worldwide", states Jesús Serrano, Deputy General Manager of SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS. "The circularity and recycling of plastics is one of our main areas of expertise, thanks to our work in other projects such as PLAST2bCLEANED and REMADYL, which are seeking to improve the recycling processes for different types of plastics and polymers. In REMADYL, we also have the pleasure to closely work with AIMPLAS, so we are very happy to count with their experience on this new project."

For their part, AIMPLAS is responsible for the new development of supply chains within recycling, the chemical sector, and related sectors as well as providing key enabling tools for boosting the replicability and transferability of new business models and processes. AIMPLAS will also participate in the selection of microorganisms for

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biodegradation and will lead the scaling up of the production of novel more sustainable polymers, among other aspects.

"AIMPLAS is proud to participate in projects such as UPLIFT within the framework of the circular economy to improve our daily life and our Society in general, providing innovative solutions in the plastics sector", says Belén Monje, Head of the Chemical Technology group and Principal Investigator of the project at AIMPLAS.

High technical substitution potential for the plastic packaging in the food and drinks sector

Plastics used in Food and Drink packaging applications are made from a range of polymers and are highly combined with specific additives to meet each manufacturer's functional and design requirements. This diversity can complicate the recycling process, make it more costly, and affect the quality and value of recycled plastic. Given this, there is a need to develop technological improvements in the sense of better manufacturing and processing practices for these plastic materials to facilitate proper waste management.

About UPLIFT

Led by Aalborg University, UPLIFT is formed by AIMPLAS, Acib GmbH, Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant, Bio-Mi d.o.o, Forschungszentrum BIOPLASTECH, Jülich GmbH, Lund University, Sustainable Innovations, TECNARO GmbH, the Leibniz Institute for Natural Product Research and Infection Biology – Hans Knöll Institute, the RWTH Aachen University, the Technical University of Denmark, University College of Dublin and Vestforbrænding.

The project has received nearly 7,5 million euros funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 953073. For their part, the Spanish partners have received 800,000 euros.

About SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS is a Spanish consultancy company that provides innovative services to a wide range of sectors throughout Europe: biobased industry, renewable energy, or advanced materials, among others. The capabilities that SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS offers are structured around three main pillars that serve as a bridge between the conception of innovative ideas and the market: Innovation management, Market Uptake and Capacity Building. Our main asset is the highly qualified team of engineers, environmentalists, communication experts and business strategists who work with us.

About AIMPLAS

AIMPLAS helps companies to apply circular economy criteria to their business models and turn the legislative changes that affect the plastics industry into opportunities to improve company efficiency, reduce environmental impact and increase profitability. AIMPLAS also researches in areas such as recycling, biodegradable materials and products, and the use of biomass and CO_2 to develop innovative solutions that help solve current environmental challenges.

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