

Earth Club

■ **Introduction**

Between 8 to 12 million tons of plastic reach the Ocean yearly. My Project's focus mitigates the pressing threat of marine debris, especially plastic which does not biodegrade.

■ **The Project is based on**

Innovation, technology, storytelling and education to overturn prejudicial human trends by changing negative behavior rewarding positive actions and inactions to reduce quantity of single-use plastic products, plastic post use products last for centuries and are used only for a couple of minutes, discarded almost immediately polluting the environment reaching the Ocean.

■ **Objective**

The Project's objective is to involve responsible consumers and responsible producers certifying an exchange of actions and inactions for goods and services through a free members club technological application called "the Earth Club". Individuals and corporations can exchange actions and inactions (returning empty plastic bottles, not using straws, bring your own mug and utilize reusable water bottles, etc....) for goods and services (cell minutes, airline miles, public transportation cards, parking meter minutes, etc...) through a cashless currency of plastic credits and debits creating a circular economy called the "Single Use Plastic Economy".

■ **Clearing House / Plastic Banks**

Used single-use plastic products will be returned accounted units to Clearing Houses everywhere (supermarkets, pharmacies, local groceries, etc..) and "reverse" vending machines located wherever there are vending machines with plastic bottles, allowing returning them to be exchanged for plastic credits (OCR bar codes) and redeemed through the app for goods and services available by sponsors through a technological platform.

■ **Rewards Program**

Rewarding users through plastic credits will educate users of the value of single-use plastic products incentivizing consumers not to discard single-use plastic products never reaching the garbage bin, avoiding land fill hence not reaching the Ocean. "The Earth Club" app will have gamification crosscutting social media ownership and recognition, for others to see and share, including prizes and promotions for consumers and enhancing producer's institutional and marketing benefits in social media for their sponsorship.

■ **Education and Storytelling**

Celebrities, actors, sports stars, scientists, will be invited to be part of the educational storytelling image to inspire citizens of all ages and consolidate the brand of how "We have the Power to Change", how our actions impact the environment around us and how we can make a difference individually and collectively. This storytelling "Environmental Stars" will be compensated through NGO's discounted 501c3 tax exemption certifications for their time and contributions.

■ **Players**

Post use Single-use plastics can be paid for and picked up by recycling companies, plastic industry and other interested parties that can turn this valuable raw material into usable products, i.e.: recycling, plastic-wood for housing, school desks, and other such product conversion.

This project involves several actors: primarily responsible consumers, responsible producers (need to reach a viable alternative), retail, sellers, recycling companies, soft drink and water bottle companies, and other companies interested in social media recognition and corporate social responsibility programs keeping environmental standards.

■ **Solutions**

This innovative digital application is a viable and pragmatic way to stop plastic from reaching waterways, creating a solution to reduce significantly plastic debris in the oceans, thus protecting our oceans, marine biodiversity and human beings in a sustainable way insuring clean oceans for future generations to come.

■ **Project Summary**

Project Summary should answer: What is the issue? What are your goals? What are your anticipated results? Please keep your summary under 250 words. Avoid jargon; clearly define specialized terminology.

■ **Issue**

The problem of marine debris, specifically the 8 to 12 million tons a year of single-use plastic that end up in our oceans, which does not biodegrade; instead it breaks down into smaller pieces of micro plastic.

Plastic is highly transportable and threatens ecosystems and marine biodiversity, who either eat it or get tangled up in debris. Recent U.N estimates predict that by 2050, the ocean will contain more plastic than fish by weight and awareness of the need to reduce plastic pollution has grown.

■ Goals

Change behavior and prejudicial trends by rewarding people for their positive actions and inactions. Reduce marine debris involving responsible consumers and responsible producers to become the self sustained solution. The Earth Club is a scalable Rewards Program, linked to social media as a gamified platform, is a cashless technological application based on "Single-Use Plastic Economy" designed to credit positive actions and inactions exchanging post use single use plastic returns for goods and services through a network of sponsors, reverse vending machines and clearing houses. Focused campaign of Social Media exposure micro documentaries with the participation of celebrities and scientists educating citizens how to change behavior.

■ Results

1. Increase local awareness and engagement to change consumer behavior and reduce the quantity of plastic that is used and discarded.
2. Stop plastic from reaching waterways.
3. Engage new audiences in seeking solutions to the plastic problem.
4. Educate about alternatives to single use plastic.

■ Background

Ambassador of Fiji Peter Tompson (now special U.N Oceans Envoy), President of the U.N 71 General Assembly stated in the Ocean's High-level conference in June 2017: "The Ocean is the lifeblood" and lungs of our planet. "It covers 75% of the Earth's surface, contains 97% of the Earth's water, and provides more than 50% of the oxygen we breathe." Our Ocean "drives global weather patterns, absorbs around 30 percent of human-produced carbon dioxide, and serves as a critical filter to the ever-worsening impacts of global warming" and Climate Change.

Statistics in the U.N Secretary-General report on the Oceans in 2016, debated in the Intergovernmental Consultative Process on Marine Debris, Plastics and Microplastics stated that oceans and seas and their resources support human life on earth, marine debris has not only increased exponentially, but also become characterized by the growing presence - and now prevalence - of non-organic and non-biodegradable components, in particular plastics. Increased attention from the scientific community has brought the real scale of their environmental, social, and economic impacts. An estimated minimum of 5.25 trillion plastic particles weighing 268,940 tons are currently floating in the world's oceans. It was also mentioned in the report that the origins of marine debris, including plastic litter, are diverse and include a variety of land-and sea-based sources. It has been determined that about 80% of marine debris enters the oceans from land, with an estimated input of 4.8 million to 12.7 million metric tons per year, which underlines the need for increased efforts to reduce impacts on the marine environment from land-based activities.

Solution

The Earth Club® Rewards Program App will bring a viable pragmatic solution to the problem, rewarding individuals and corporations for favorable positive actions and inactions changing prejudicial behavioral patterns of single-use plastics post use products.

This project represents an opportunity to create innovative ways for a New Economy, bending a linear economic theory - which has proven to be non-sustainable, into a Circular/Ocean Blue Economic practice; this will bring the real change.

Through "The Earth Club" there is a chance to develop new economic principles to motivate change in our individual habits and patterns, and those corporate prejudicial Habits.

Responsible consumption and production are the steps to a healthier life cycle of a new market economy.

■ Other Notes

- Interactive Micro Documentaries attached to the Project will educate new audiences of the current status-quo and the Plastic economy as the solution.
- Social media gamified connectivity will create ownership and recognition, increasing users of the Earth Club App with greater results.
- Less than 8% of plastic production is recycled worldwide this Project will enhance the return of single use plastics contributing to stop plastic pollution thus protecting our oceans, marine biodiversity and human life for future generations.
- National Geographic is a world wide renown environmental and science based brand.
- To be associated with Natgeo will bring ownership to any positive contribution, adding millions of participants in a scaling technological application such as The Earth Club Rewards Program Project.
- To create a new Plastic Currency, recognition and credibility is very important and Natgeo can achieve that through its social media and brand. To speak about Natgeo immediately brings credibility to the project's association though the grant due to Natgeo's long standing trustworthiness.
- The Earth CLub is a stand alone platform, to achieve global scale it needs a global brand to support it.
- The project is based on responsible consumers and producers (sponsors), the later need a standard to measure their contribution and Natgeo is the highest standard of science base reporting protecting the environment. This project will bring a Green Banner certification to corporations as long as they follow certain standard considerations regarding production and use - regarding their "plastic footprint", once certified a corporation or establishment can become a clearinghouse, a Plastic Bank or a Sponsor.
- Natgeo will ease participation of sponsor's corporate responsibility programs through The Earth Club Rewards app.
- Natgeo has excellent print, network programs and social media exposure that can contribute to attract "Environmental Stars" to become part of the educational program through Interactive Micro Documentaries.
- The project and Natgeo are natural symbiotic allies in the fight against marine debris, plastics and microplastics, bringing viable pragmatic solutions to single use plastics to all ages through any digital technology including digital cards.
- This Project will develop a free cashless technological application for cellular phones and electronic cards of a rewards program for single-use plastic units creating a Plastic Credit Currency exchangeable for goods and services provided by sponsors.

- The first pilot venue is Florida International University, home of 60,000 students, with multiple outlets of single-use plastics such as straws, shakers, water and soft drinks bottles, etc... that will become the clearinghouses/Plastic Bank locations.

- The Project will place 10 reverse vending machines with flat screens advertising how to use the application and where to redeem the plastic credit units, also recognizing sponsors and participants and educating users of the single-use plastic impact in our oceans, marine biodiversity and human beings.

- The Earth Club plans to link different social media through a gamified software, adding recognition and ownership rewarding individual's favorable environmental choices enhancing credits for every "share" and "like" of their interactive transaction and participation in promotions.

- This Project plans to accomplish behavioural change of individuals and corporations to their prejudicial trends regarding single-use plastic consumption and discarding traditional customary actions by rewarding people for their positive actions and inactions, significantly reducing marine debris protecting our oceans, marine biodiversity, and human kind creating responsible consumers and responsible producers to become the self sustained solution.

- Focused campaign Social Media exposure through the production of interactive micro documentaries with the participation of celebrities and scientists educating citizens about the current status-quo and how their actions and inactions are the solution to the problem.

- The Project's overall objective is to increase local awareness and engagement to change consumer behavior and reduce the quantity of single-use plastic that is used and discarded.

- Will create engaging new audiences contributing to new solutions to the single-use plastic problem.

- The Earth Club Rewards Program Project will integrate sponsors and clearinghouse/Plastic Banks in a cashless application (already signed MOU with Aerpass), a gamifying social media platform (signed MOU with Arcade Distillery) and a GPS base software.

- Everytime a Player/User deposits a plastic bottle either in a reverse vending machine or in a clearinghouse/plastic Bank location, preagreed value will be awarded to their pre-established personal account linked to their I.D card.

- Sponsors register their promotions to pre-agreed values exchangeable for Plastic Currency Units, certified with a QRC scan awarded by clearinghouse/Plastic Bank locations to be exchanged by Sponsor or its desinated outlets.

- Plastic returns will be purchased by recycling plants, plastic industry and third party plastic converters at market price, redeeming income to the Earth Club to repay for reverse vending machines lease, and fixed costs of operation.

- 10 reverse vending machines with flatscreen TV will be located where most foot traffic occurs around Florida International University.
- At least 20 clearinghouse/plastic Bank locations will be certified with the "Green Banner Certification" to be able to receive Post Single-Use Plastic units for Plastic Currency Credits, and exchange for Player/User Rewards, reducing the Player's Plastic Currency Credit Units from their personal account.
- Micro Documentaries will be produced inhouse to educate audiences about the present status-quo of marine debris particularly plastic and microplastics and its impact on our oceans, marine biodiversity and human beings consuming contaminated fish, and how to overturn the prejudicial trends regarding single-use plastic products.
- This messages will be projected in the flat screen TVs of the reverse vending machines, social media, google, youtube and network programs.
- The project aims at a target of 60,000 students, with a reach of 6,000 and at least 600 to 1,000 members in 3 to 6 months, scalable nationwide. Logistics of Environmental Rewards Program.
- A plastic driven economy to exchange plastic products for goods and services, cellular minutes, movies, food tickets, promos, etc... where there are Clearing Houses/Plastic Banks that can receive plastic credits, creating a new plastic currency!

App Logistics

- The app will be downloaded for free through appstore or Samsung App, also available by electronic card.
- Simple registration requires international recognizable Identification such as driver's license, passport, student card, etc...
- Every person is allowed 1 personal account.
- Sponsor's promotions and "Environmental Stars" participation will be considered through the tax exemption of NGO 501c3.
- Authenticating customers identity and facilitating exchange or "payment" of "Plastic Currency" for goods and services stored in the data base with a preagreed exchange value, through a proprietary patent-pending Multiparty Authentication (MPA) Technology to secure and store transactions.
- User scans (QRC) sent codified message through the Transaction Processor to the Token Vault, complete the transaction (EGM) Link System exchanging Player Credit for Player Reward.

■ Potential cafes that could take part in the program in the Harvard Area***Small Business:***

- Flour Bakery
- Cafe Pamplona
- Petsi
- Crema Cafe
- David's Tea
- Cafe Goto Rojo

Larger Business:

- Starbucks
- Peets
- Tatte

■ Other potential companies for environmental rewards program

The following companies already have a vision focusing on environmental sustainability and thus is easier to align values and ideas with such brands:

- Patagonia
 - IKEA
 - Lush cosmetics
 - Wipro Ecoenergy
 - SAB
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- This would target businesses and corporations rather than individuals.
 - They do offline data analysis to understand the energy infrastructure, controls and policies of company.
 - Then identify economically viable, feasible & sustainable energy saving strategies.
 - Integrate data into Energy Management Platform.
 - Energy Operations Center continuously performs energy modeling, monitoring, reporting and implementing saving strategies.

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