

Press release

For Immediate Release



Waste in humanitarian Operations:
Reduction and Minimisation

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – October 8, 2024

Global Launch of Bio-Based Solutions Catalogue for Humanitarians to Take Place in Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City) on October 8th 2024

A groundbreaking initiative is set to **transform the landscape of sustainable solutions for the humanitarian and health sectors worldwide**. On October 8th, 2024, the international launch of the Biobased Solutions Catalogue will take place at RMIT University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, as part of the General Assembly of the Waste in Humanitarian Operations: Reduction and Minimization Project (in short: WORM). This Horizon Europe (funded by the European Union) project aims to reduce the environmental impact of humanitarian operations. The project is to launch a unique platform that will revolutionize how humanitarian and health actors' access and utilize bio-based products in critical response operations and health programs globally.

The Biobased Solutions Catalogue—powered by Dutch social enterprise Solvoz—offers an open-access, knowledge portal and catalogue within integrated comprehensive market assessment tool specifically designed to support humanitarian organisations, health workers, and sustainability experts. This initiative provides key stakeholders with a transparent, knowledge-driven marketplace for bio-based products and alternatives. On the portal, manufacturers and suppliers worldwide are invited to showcase their bio-based solutions and alternatives on this open-access platform (free of charge), expanding the sector's access to sustainable alternatives and innovations.

Catalogue items in scope during launch

The portal initially focuses on five high-priority product groups: 1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gowns, and boots, 2. Syringes and needles, 3. Sharps containers, 4. Body bags, and 5. Temporary water/sludge bladders. These product categories were prioritized after extensive consultations within the WORM consortium, a collaboration of 16 European and international actors coordinated by the HUMLOG Institute at Hanken School of Economics (Finland). As the platform evolves, additional product categories will be added, ensuring that the catalogue continues to meet the dynamic needs of the sector.

Globally, the humanitarian and health sectors use billions of single-use products like gloves, syringes, and protective gear, contributing to a significant waste burden, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). For example, an estimated 129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves were used in 2020 alone worldwide, adding to the plastic waste crisis. Shifting to more sustainable, circular or bio-based alternatives can dramatically reduce waste, extend product life, and lessen the environmental impact. However, these alternatives often remain outside the scope of traditional procurement processes, leaving decision-makers unaware of available sustainable solutions—this is the gap the Biobased Solutions Catalogue aims to bridge.

Invitation to the Private Sector, Manufacturers and Experts

The launch of the catalogue presents a unique opportunity for manufacturers, companies and other private sector entities to contribute their bio-based solutions to this growing repository. By submitting product details through the platform, they can directly **inform humanitarian procurement processes and play a critical role in the global push towards greener, more sustainable operations**. In addition, this catalogue

will be enriched with expertise (technical requirements and specifications) from researchers, and sustainability experts.

A Tool for Sustainability and Compliance

With its robust features, the Biobased Solutions Catalogue offers more than just a product directory—it is also a market assessment tool that supports organisations seeking sustainable procurement options. It enables users to conduct market assessments, request quotes (RFQs), and sourcing activities through an integrated e-sourcing platform that is fully compliant with international regulations. This ensures that humanitarian, health and social impact actors can meet sustainability goals while adhering to rigorous auditing and reporting standards required by donors and international frameworks.

Prof. Gyöngyi Kovács (Erkko Professor in Humanitarian Logistics, and the Dean of Research at the Hanken School of Economics), Principle Researcher and coordinator of the WORM Consortium, emphasized, *“This platform is a vital step towards addressing the environmental impacts of humanitarian operations. By bringing together humanitarian actors, suppliers, and sustainability experts, we are creating a space for innovation and cooperation in the effort to green the sector.”*

Claire Barnhoorn (CEO of Solvoz) adds: *“Open-access knowledge is crucial for driving innovation in the humanitarian and health sectors. There is a wealth of information and bio-based solutions available, but it’s often fragmented or inaccessible. By creating this platform, we’re not only providing transparency but also fostering public-private partnerships. We want the private sector to actively showcase their bio-based alternatives, enabling humanitarian and health actors to make informed decisions. By sharing product specifications and requirements, we can also strengthen local manufacturing capacities, helping build resilient supply chains and promote sustainable development at the local level.”*

About WORM Project

The Biobased Solutions Catalogue is part of the larger WORM project, funded under the Horizon Europe programme. WORM (Waste in Humanitarian Operations: Reduction and Minimization) tackles the pressing issue of waste management in humanitarian operations. By addressing waste challenges in field hospitals and livelihood programmes, the project aims to deliver circular economy solutions that reduce environmental impact while maximizing socio-economic benefits.

The consortium's multi-actor approach brings together medical and livelihood-focused humanitarian organisations with key stakeholders such as innovation clusters, procurement services, waste management experts, and academic partners. WORM is dedicated to advancing bio-based technological solutions that are environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially beneficial.

Join the Movement: Expand the Catalogue

Researchers, manufacturers, foundations, and sustainability experts are invited to contribute and expand the catalogue’s products and beyond the initial product groups. This open-access portal will continue to grow with the help of global collaboration, ensuring it remains a valuable tool for humanitarian and health professionals worldwide. To further engage the sector, webinars will follow later in October and November, providing stakeholders an opportunity to explore the platform’s capabilities.

Invitation to attend the launch

We cordially invite you to attend the launch in person on the 8th of October in Ho Chi Minh City, please reach out to Julia Pavlenko (julia@solvoz.com) for any inquiry in attending the event or for interviews.

Media Contacts:

Claire Barnhoorn
CEO Solvoz
WhatsApp: +31640792461
Email: claire@solvoz.com

Julia Pavlenko
Communication lead and
Support officer Solvoz
Email: julia@solvoz.com

Gyöngyi Kovács
Dean of Research, Hanken
School of Economics
Email: humlog@hanken.fi



Funded by
the European

Note: Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

worm