

28.2.2019

## PRESS RELEASE

# Kotkamills wins in the NextGen Cup Challenge

## Changing the game one cup at a time

Kotkamills has been announced as one of the winners in the global innovation initiative NextGen Cup Challenge, launched by the NextGen Consortium that advances the introduction of food packaging alternatives. Kotkamills sees this recognition as a confirmation for its commitment to revolutionize paper cup production and recycling with its plastic-free next-generation barrier board solutions.

Worldwide people want to be less dependent of plastic and Kotkamills supports that development with alternative food service and packaging solutions to disposables that contain plastic. Its Game Changer Cup is one of the 12 awarded solutions that push the boundaries of sustainable design and material innovation. The challenge was joined by 480 teams from around the world.

The NextGen Consortium is a multi-year, multi-industry global consortium that aims to advance the design, commercialization and recovery of food packaging alternatives. The NextGen Cup Challenge is its first initiative, which calls on innovators, start-ups, suppliers and industry experts to join a global challenge to develop the next generation of recyclable, compostable, hot and cold, to-go, fiber cups. Both the Consortium and Challenge are managed by Closed Loop Partners, with Starbucks and McDonald's as Founding Partners, The World Wildlife Fund as an Advisory Partner, and The Coca-Cola Company, Yum! Brands, Nestlé and Wendy's as Supporting Partners.

Kotkamills is excited and honored by its success in this ground-breaking challenge. The recognition further fuels the company's passion and relentless drive for developing and offering plastic-free solutions for food service and packaging applications.

"Today consumers and companies actively seek solutions that make the world less dependent on plastic. We have created a plastic-free, easily recyclable and biodegradable raw material for disposable paper cups, and we are thrilled by this opportunity to work with global brands in order to make a difference one cup at a time. We are passionate about Changing the Game and it is inspiring to co-operate with partners who share that ambition," says Kotkamills CEO **Markku Hämäläinen**.

### **Less plastic. Better future. One cup at a time.**

Fifty years ago, plastic was hailed as the miracle material that would change packaging forever. Today, we are more aware than ever of how plastic – for all its advantages – poses a threat to our environment and well-being. Kotkamills is committed to offering materials for the next-generation of packaging and a future less dependent of plastic.

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A large part of delivering a more sustainable option is to make it fully recyclable as easily as possible. In the UK alone 99.75% of single-use cups end up in landfills, which amounts to more than 2.5 billion cups per year. Globally half a trillion disposable cups are manufactured each year. The vast majority of these cups contain polyethylene plastic that makes recycling difficult and composting virtually impossible.

Kotkamills tackles the global cup challenge head-on with its innovative water-based dispersion coating that creates an effective barrier layer for demanding food service and packaging board applications. Disposable cups made from Kotkamills' ISLA® Duo cupstock are 100 % plastic-free and can be easily recycled with normal paper or board waste, with no need for a separate collection system or complicated waste sorting. In addition, converters can also run ISLA® Duo on existing cup forming machines, requiring no costly investments in new equipment.

“Single-use plastic products will increasingly be replaced and for good reason. People demand and deserve options that can be effectively recycled and that they can feel good about using. Governments, companies and consumers are taking action to make the world less dependent of plastic, which also includes rethinking the role of packaging in our society. We can start to change the game by realizing that throwing disposable cups in the trash is never the solution,” says Hämäläinen.

Kotkamills has annual board production capacity up to 400,000 tons in Kotka, Finland. In addition to ISLA® food service boards, the mill offers AEGLE® Pro and AEGLE® White folding boxboard for packaging in the pharmaceutical, cosmetics and confectionery industries. The next gen AEGLE® barrier board range is also plastic-free and easily recyclable, and provides effective protection against grease, liquids or moisture from absorbing into the package.

“By making plastic-free products with water-based dispersion barriers, people will be able to physically hold the future of sustainable packaging in their hands. The rapid growth in demand for recyclable and sustainable packaging is a great opportunity especially for fiber-based packaging producers. Even though no one changes the world overnight, we can all start making a difference with our own behavior – one cup at a time,” Hämäläinen says.

Change the game with us!

For more information:

### **NextGen Cup Challenge**

<https://www.nextgenconsortium.com/>

### **Kotkamills**

**Mr. Markku Hämäläinen, CEO**

Kotkamills Oy

Tel. +358 40 721 0548

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[markku.hamalainen@kotkamills.com](mailto:markku.hamalainen@kotkamills.com)**Ms. Ulrika Kurtén**, Senior Vice President, Consumer Boards

Kotkamills Oy

Tel. +358 50 398 3002

[ulrika.kurten@kotkamills.com](mailto:ulrika.kurten@kotkamills.com)**Kotkamills in brief**

Kotkamills is a responsible partner that delivers renewable products and performance to its customers' processes via product innovations created from wood, a renewable raw material. Our product range includes fully recyclable consumer board products AEGLE® and ISLA®, and one of the key brands of the company is Absorbex®, an innovative laminating paper product for the laminate, plywood and construction industries. Moreover, Kotkamills offers ecological, technically sound and visually attractive wood products for demanding joinery and construction. [www.kotkamills.com](http://www.kotkamills.com)