



The open innovation platform of
the World Economic Forum



Impact Report 2020-2021

In collaboration with Deloitte
SEPTEMBER 2021

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Foreword



When UpLink was launched at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in January 2020, the key ambition of the digital platform was to accelerate the 'Decade of Delivery' - to source and scale the innovative solutions that would make achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 a reality.

Since then, an even more challenging reality has emerged, diverting the world's attention towards the COVID-19 pandemic - a global health crisis with far-reaching geopolitical and societal repercussions.

Impact entrepreneurs, however, have maintained their laser-like focus on finding sustainable solutions to the world's most pressing problems. Sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing - and often operating in harsh business and environmental conditions - these entrepreneurs need our help now more than ever.

Inspired by this urgent need, the World Economic Forum - in close collaboration with partners Salesforce and Deloitte - has for two years been building an open innovation platform that is dedicated to advancing the sustainable development agenda.

UpLink aspires to nurture a world where anyone, anywhere, with impact-orientated solutions is empowered to address key environmental, societal, and economic challenges.

I am therefore proud to launch this report which tells the story of the UpLink journey so far, and how the platform is supporting and maximizing the impact of grassroots solutions around the globe.

Through its series of innovation challenges, UpLink has gone from strength to strength. It is now a thriving ecosystem of more than 30,000 entrepreneurs, investors, and experts, providing them with an online space to connect, collaborate and strengthen their solutions.

In this past year alone, UpLink has hosted 27 innovation challenges, surfacing more than 2,500 innovations from 38 different countries. Over 150 of these solutions have been recognized as 'Top UpLink Innovators', an accolade that brings with it further opportunities for investment, publicity and mentorship.

This report showcases how these Top Innovations have scaled since joining UpLink, and their subsequent impact on people, society, and the natural world. The collected data shows strong progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the restoration and protection of natural habitats, as well as job creation and raised living standards.

By joining UpLink, these Top Innovations were able to leverage the networks of the Forum and its partners, gaining the endorsements, funding, and visibility they needed at a crucial stage of their development. This report also offers a close look at the on-the-ground activities of a select group of these Top UpLink Innovators, demonstrating the power of the UpLink community in supporting and scaling their operations.

The world has changed immeasurably over the last two years, and the UpLink journey is just beginning. In the coming months and years, the UpLink model will evolve and adapt to ensure we can attract not just the innovations we need to realise the promise of the Global Goals, but crucially, also the experts, investors and mentors needed to advance these highly promising solutions.

I invite you to discover UpLink and play your part in its journey to becoming a truly global, inclusive, and transformative platform for sustainable development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Klaus Schwab'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

1 How does UpLink work?

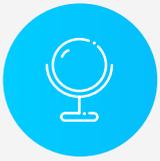
UpLink is a digital ecosystem of many stakeholders who are ready to collaborate around innovative solutions, to scale and maximize their impact.



UpLink has been designed around ‘innovation challenges’; a competition framework to source a wide range of solutions from all over the world, in order to identify the best submissions. Recognized winning solutions are known as ‘Top Innovations’

and invited to join the UpLink Innovation Network that provides programming to facilitate connections to investors, innovators and experts who can support and scale their activities.

Lifecycle of Innovation Challenges



Exploration

Salient SDG-related topic areas are identified (e.g. ocean conservation).



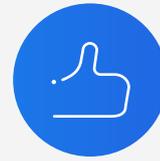
Design

Within a topic, specific issues are identified to create an innovation challenge (e.g. The Blue Food Challenge) and more in-depth focus areas are defined (e.g. Blue Food Processing). An innovation challenge is typically designed in collaboration with Funding and Supporting Partners (e.g. an ocean community which will consist of conservation groups, scientists, funds and investors) who seek to support and scale solutions specific to a certain challenge.



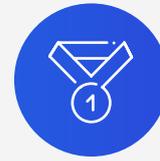
Sourcing of Solutions

Once the innovation challenge is designed, it is launched and promoted via digital engagement channels.



Review

Once the submissions are in, they are reviewed by experts to identify the ‘Top Innovations’ who will form the winning cohort. This group will gain the funding, mentoring and visibility opportunities through the Forum and its Partners, as well as access to events and workshops.

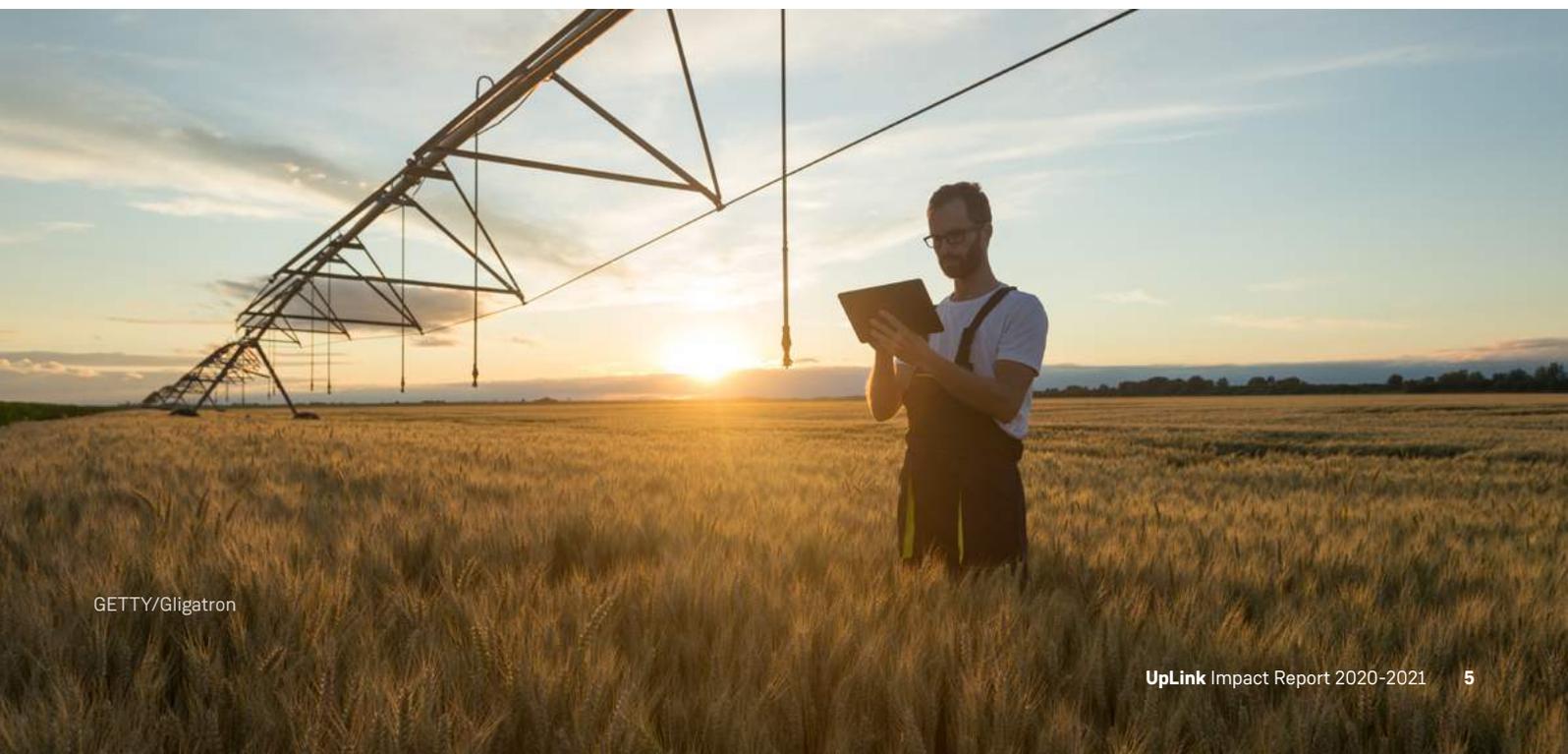


Cohort Announcement

The most promising solutions will be selected to a winning cohort and recognized as ‘Top Innovators’ and invited to join a programme which offers visibility, connections and capacity building

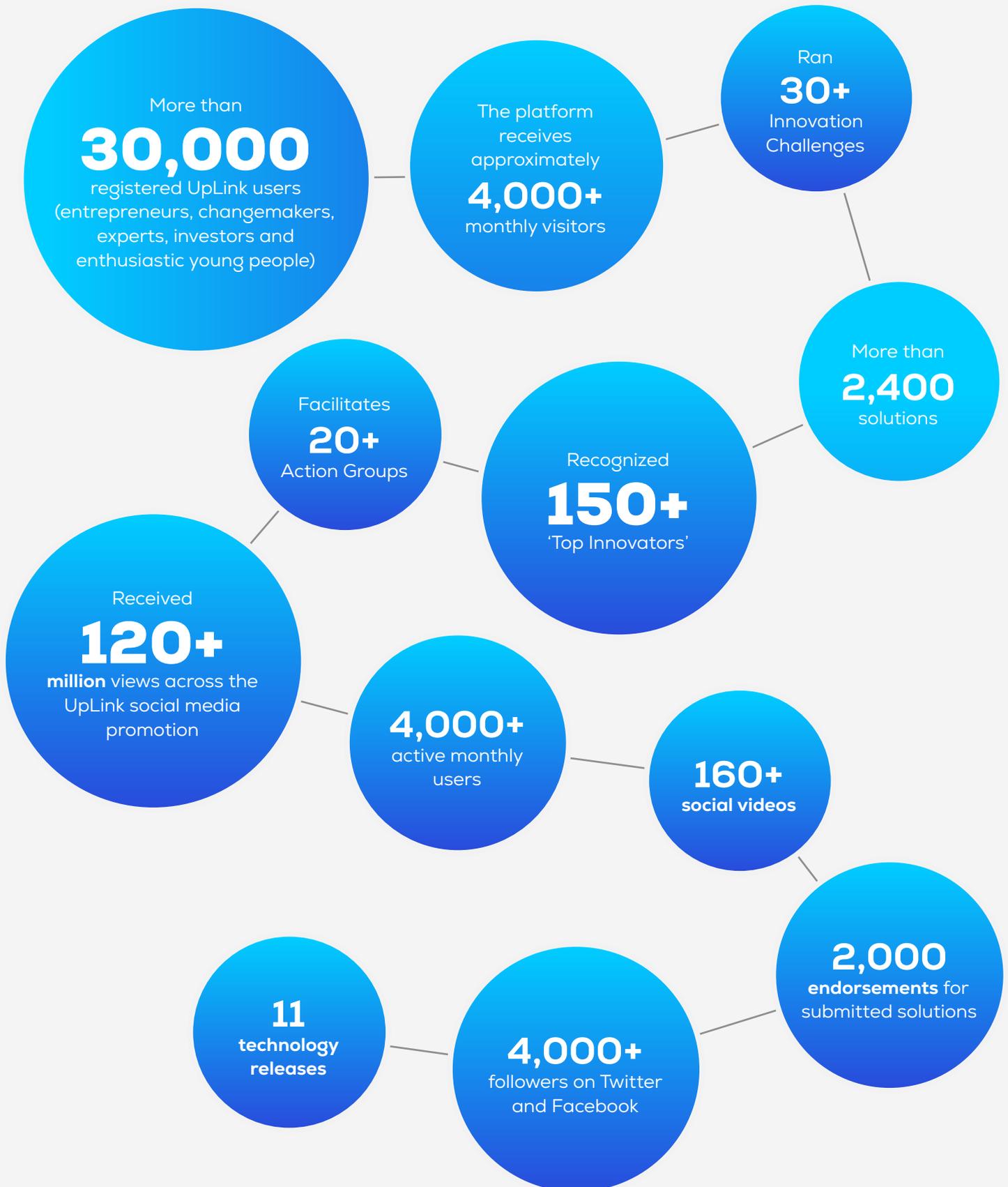
UpLink’s innovation challenges are supported by the global exposure of the World Economic Forum digital channels. Receiving 120 million+ views over social media in the past year, this exposure has

helped build a thriving digital ecosystem of innovators, corporate and philanthropic funders, knowledge experts, governments, investors, and others.



UpLink in its first year

UpLink has progressed from an aspiring concept to a vibrant digital platform and community. As this community builds out, the platform has also evolved from its pilot stage, to a technically advanced digital solution'.



2 Collective impact of Top Innovations

To assess UpLink’s impact on the selected Top Innovations over the past year, we have conducted a survey that has looked at three main dimensions: environment, society, and economy, as aligned to the SDGs defined by the UN.

Top Innovator impact across the SDGs

Environment

the planet, it’s habitats, and biodiversity

Society

individuals, communities, and institutions

Economy

work, income, and economic growth



This collected data is the self-declared impact figures of Top and Featured UpLink Innovators. The data shared has been reported as measured and/or verified.



Environment

Healthy ecosystems provide vital goods and services to humans and other organisms. As the climate crisis continues, with the global average temperature about 1.2°C above the 1850-1900 baseline, water supplies decrease, agricultural yields are reduced,

and wildfire, droughts and flooding happen more frequently. To create and enable healthy ecosystems, innovators have been trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to protect and restore natural habitats and biodiversity.



Greenhouse gas reduction

Collectively, the Top Innovations hosted on UpLink were able to capture **39 million+ tonnes of greenhouse gases**.

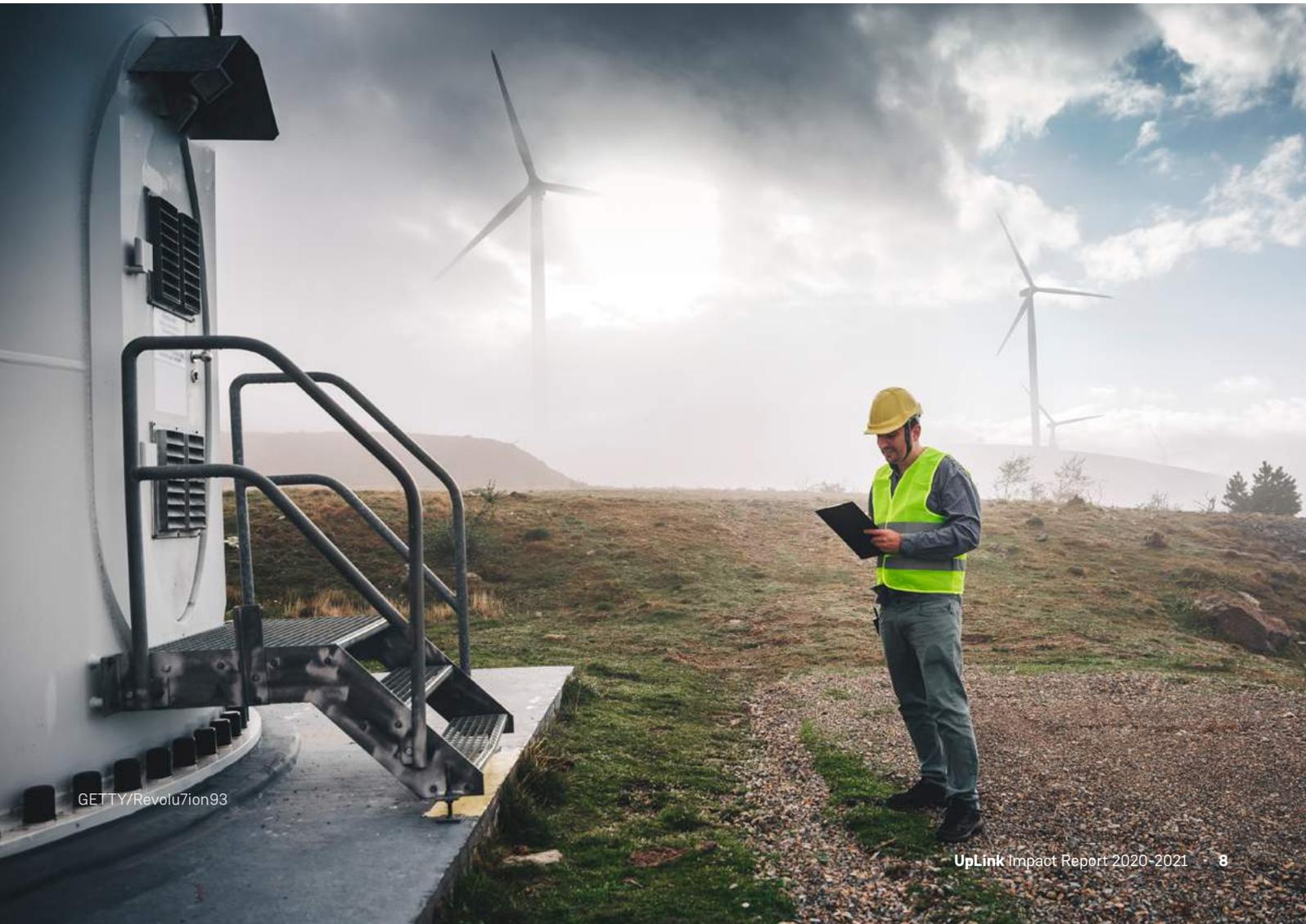
Habitat protection and restoration

608'000+ tonnes of waste were removed from terrestrial and aquatic habitats and over **2'356'000 square kilometres** of habitats were put under **active management and/or protection**.

Biodiversity protection and restoration

50'000+ species have been enabled to **return to their original habitat** or were **actively protected** by measures taken.

PHOTOS: GETTY/ALFSnaiper, Inside Creative House, Dies-irae



GETTY/Revolu7ion93

Society

Sustainability issues are generally expressed in scientific and environmental terms but sustainability is also a social challenge. Social sustainability encompasses 6 key areas: Access to WASH (water, sanitation & hygiene), food, provision

of healthcare, education and training, energy, social equity, and gender equality. In today's unequal world, which has only been intensified by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is increasingly important to find impactful solutions.



Access to drinking water and food

Top Innovations have been able to provide access to **safe drinking water** for more than **2.7 million people** and provide **access to sustainable food for over 2 million people**.



Access to Health care

Top Innovations have **improved the health** of more than **121 million people** through various cutting-edge approaches (e.g. telemedicine) as well as active support for COVID-19 (protection, testing and vaccination).



Access to education and training

190'000+ individuals were successfully **trained and/or educated** from dedicated initiatives and participation in the Top Innovation ventures.



Social equity and gender equality

Over **40'000 women** and members of minority groups were **supported and empowered** as a result of the Top Innovations.



Access to energy

Over **2'300 people** were given **access to electricity**, 1'800 of which were given access via solar power.

Economy

Employment generation, as well as inclusive economic growth, is a prerequisite for sustainable development. In assessing the impact of Top Innovations, we reviewed the number of jobs created and incomes improved. With the COVID-19

pandemic leading to the loss of the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs, including significantly increased youth unemployment, this dimension holds significant importance.



Jobs created

Top Innovations have created **133,000 jobs**, including **52,000 jobs for women**, and **2,400+ within minority communities**.

Incomes improved

The increase in jobs and improved working conditions have led to an **increase in wages** for more than **481'000 people**.

PHOTOS: GETTY/Skynesher, Inside Creative House

It has connected us to dozens of corporate partners that are interested in catalyzing the circular economy and provided us with support and advice to scale bigger, faster and stronger

José Manuel Moller

Founder and CEO, Algramo, Top Innovator



3 Power of the Platform

To assess the impact of the UpLink platform, we have evaluated it against the key needs expressed by the innovators, investors, and other members of the UpLink community:

1. build an effective digital ecosystem and promote the community,
2. accelerate the delivery of solutions
3. unlock new funds.



The platform powering SDG innovation...

Ecosystem creation

Building a network and promoting the community

Accelerated solution delivery

Building a platform for innovation to increase visibility and create meaningful connections

Unlocking Finance

Supporting the raising of new funds

The night our video got published, in the first 24 hours we generated almost 2000 leads. Our phones were ringing off the hook

Sheikh Ahsan Tariq

CEO of Cubex Global and Global Shaper, Rawalpindi Hub, Top Innovator



1 Ecosystem creation

As we have built out the UpLink community, we too have focussed on the partnerships which support this network. UpLink is designed and developed in collaboration with Founding Partners

Salesforce and Deloitte. Project Teams within the Forum have led many of the innovation challenges, and Funding and Supporting Partners have ensured they run effectively.

Founding Partners



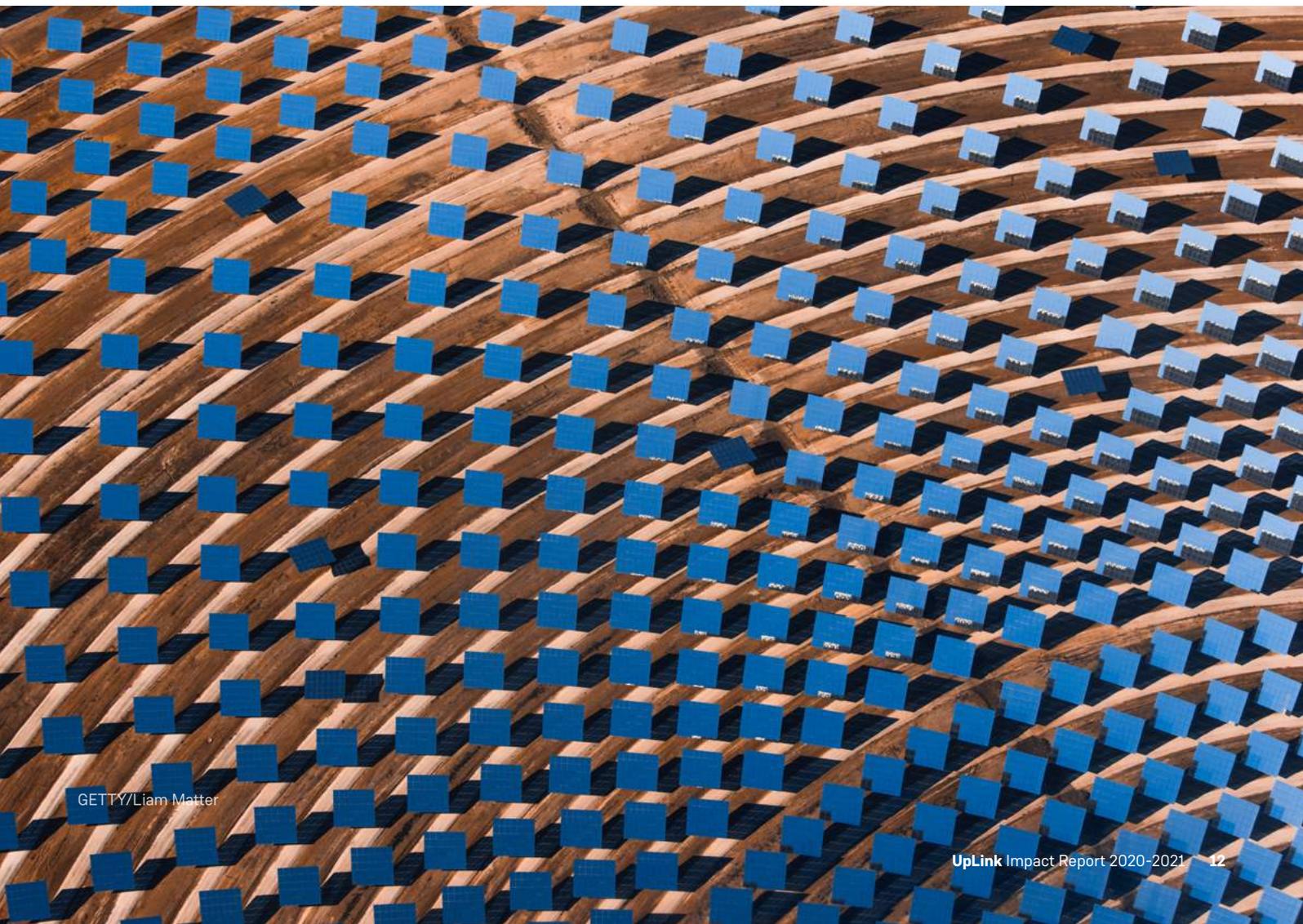
Deloitte.

Funding Partners

Salesforce, Deloitte, Accenture, Benioff Family Foundation, Friends of Ocean Action, 1t.org, Natural Climate Solutions, Friends of Ocean Action and Global Plastic Action Partnership, and IKEA Foundation

Supporting Partners

Indonesia National Plastic Action Partnership, The Incubation Network, The Circulate Initiative, Global Affairs Canada, Oceans Plastics Prevention Accelerator, UK DEFRA, 1t.org, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature, BNCF - Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility, SeyCCAT - Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust, TNC - The Nature Conservancy, ICRI - International Coral Reef Initiative, Hatch - aquaculture accelerator, AquaSpark, Blue Ocean Partners, 500 Start Ups, Goldman Sachs, tGELF, TopTier Impact, Village Capital, WHO, Minority Rights Group International, reach52, Fair Count, Shamseya, Mass., Safe Access, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Swasti, and Impactia



2 Accelerated solution delivery

The UpLink community has accelerated the delivery of more than 150 solutions, through facilitating long lasting connections within the ecosystem, and through increased digital exposure.

- **Across the digital ecosystem, UpLink has run more than 30 innovation challenges**, sourcing solutions from across the world, and selecting

and actively supporting 150+ Top Innovators from **38 different countries**.

- **700 lasting connections have been facilitated through UpLink**; connections with investors, experts, and other community members, which enabled further scaling.

3 Unlocking finance

UpLink has supported its innovators through attracting high-quality investors and facilitating introductions with innovators. Top and Featured Innovators have raised close USD 75 million since joining the platform:

- **23% of innovators managed to raise additional funding** since they joined UpLink; of the **Top Innovators, 34%** secured additional funds.

- In total, close to **USD 75 million of additional funding** was raised by innovators.

- **100% of the funding** was at least partially obtained thanks to the **increased visibility** through participation on UpLink.

It has been fantastic, the support that we've gotten, how easy it is just to reach out and have immediate access to such influential people that can help us solve the issues that we're having and overcome the barriers.

Caroline Hooft-Slootweg

Co-Founder, Kelp Blue, Top Innovator



4 Spotighting Top Innovators

In assessing the impact of UpLink, the key themes which emerged were UpLink's ability to leverage networks and events to facilitate connections to investors, experts and other innovators, as well as the support of global visibility through the digital promotion of the World Economic Forum.

As part of this impact assessment, we interviewed four Top Innovators to showcase the impact of their solutions, and how UpLink has supported them.

Top Innovator from the COVID Challenges 2020



Top Innovator of Trillion Trees Challenge 2020



Top Innovator of Ocean Solutions Sprint 2020



Top Innovator of Ocean Solutions Sprint 2 2020



The global exposure and interaction with the World Economic Forum helps us scale Eon and gave us the credibility and integrity to explore partnerships with multinational corporations.

Natasha Franck

Founder, Eon , Top Innovator



Trusted COVID-19 essential supplies repository



OriginTrail

OriginTrail was founded in 2011 by three co-founders with the vision to raise the transparency of modern supply chains, in their increasing complexity. Over the years, OriginTrail has evolved to an open platform technology that brings trusted data sharing solutions. Its use of blockchain enables the process to be more efficient, ultimately energy-saving, and reduce carbon emissions. During the COVID-19 crisis, OriginTrail recognized the potential for its solution: to play an important role in providing medical supplies with trusted sources. Through

its blockchain technology, OriginTrail is able to help healthcare workers fight the pandemic by ensuring they receive authentic and reliable equipment.

Since joining UpLink through the COVID Challenges of the summer 2020, UpLink has been able to **offer endorsement and visibility** for OriginTrail through social media promotion. This has in turn **strengthened investor confidence**, and enabled OriginTrail to raise an additional **USD 2 million in capital**.



Top Innovation from the COVID Challenges 2020

STAGE: **Series A**

LOCATION: **UK, Slovenia, Hong Kong, Serbia**

origintrail.io

Forest carbon credits

Pachama

Pachama was founded in Argentina in 2018 by two co-founders who were dedicated to restoring nature and helping mitigate climate change. Pachama is developing a modern market for forest carbon credits. It uses remote sensing (satellite images, LiDAR, drones) and machine learning to validate and monitor reforestation and avoidance of deforestation projects. Pachama then helps these projects connect to companies which are seeking to offset their carbon emissions through a data-driven online marketplace.

Pachama joined UpLink in July 2020 to take part in the Trillion Trees Challenge, a call for action to

conserve existing forests, restore forest ecosystems and reforest suitable lands; an innovation challenge which received more than 270 solutions. UpLink's recognition of Pachama gave the opportunity to speak at the Annual Meeting 2021 at the Davos Agenda, as well as global exposure through social media promotion. This **visibility** enabled Pachama to **secure an additional USD15 million in funding** and attract several new Fortune100 clients, as well **establish over 20 other connections** with AI and carbon reduction companies. Today, Pachama is a highly recognized company in the carbon reduction space, with **three times the headcount, revenue and capital** since joining UpLink.



Pachama

Top Innovation of Trillion Trees Challenge 2020

STAGE: **Series A**

LOCATION: **USA, Mexico, Brazil, Peru and Columbia**

pachama.com

Biopackaging, food and nutrition from seaweed

Oceanium

Oceanium was founded in 2018 after their British co-founders were introduced through their shared passion for seaweed and its ability to contribute to people and planet. They founded a biotech start-up which develops products from sustainably farmed seaweed, which mitigates climate change, provides green livelihoods in coastal areas, as well and provides food security. One notable product is their circular bio packaging solution, which can be disposed of alongside food waste, and ultimately be composted for soil health and anaerobic digestion for energy – an ideal product for closed-loop environments, such as sports events, and airlines.

Oceanium joined UpLink in April 2020 and participated in the live pitch competition of UpLink's inaugural innovation challenge: the Ocean Solutions Sprint. Here they won the **People's Choice Award** through an online poll, and, following this event, have received global exposure through the Forum's social media. UpLink's 3rd party validation helped **secure an additional GBP 2 million in funding** from their ongoing talks with investors. Since joining UpLink, Oceanium has **tripled its headcount and doubled its capital**.



Top Innovation of Ocean Solutions Sprint 1 (2020)

STAGE: **Seed**

LOCATION: **Scotland**

oceanium.world

Large scale tropical seaweed farming and biorefinery systems

Sea6 Energy

Sea6 Energy was founded on 2010 on the campus of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras in 2010 by a team of PhD students in engineering, agriculture, and biotechnology. The venture seeks to revolutionize the tropical seaweed farming industry through modern technology, to create a sustainable source of biomass, and produce a variety of useful products. Sea6 Energy also helps to clean up the anthropogenic nutrient runoff in the ocean from agriculture and aquaculture, as well as to capture carbon while the seaweed grows.

When Sea6 Energy joined UpLink in 2020, its priority was to raise additional funding to scale up its production capacity, marketing activities, and seaweed farms. UpLink offered 3rd party validation to the venture and offered extensive digital promotion, which in turn supported Sea6 Energy in its existing talking with investors. Ultimately, the recognition and credibility from UpLink was able to help Sea6 Energy **secure an additional USD 9 million in funding.**



Top Innovation of Ocean Solutions Sprint 2 (2020)

STAGE: **Series B**

LOCATION: **India**

www.sea6energy.com

GETTY/YANGSHUO

The Journey Ahead

As an open innovation platform, UpLink is shaped by the needs of its key stakeholders: grassroots innovators, funding and supporting partners, investors and experts. The platform is agile and constantly evolving, with enhancements made around user experience,

reimagining challenge engagement, and impact measurement. In the coming years, we aim to continue this agility, and consider a variety of options for scaling the platform, so we can best accelerate the impact of UpLink's innovators.



GETTY/Alvarez

Community of Top Innovations

Through its series of [innovation challenges](#), UpLink has gone from strength to strength, surfacing more than 2,500 innovations from 38 different countries. Nearly 150 of these

solutions have been recognized as ‘Top Innovations’, an accolade that brings with it further opportunities for investment, publicity and mentorship.

Bold = These organizations provided input to the 2021 UpLink Impact Report.

Organization	Country
ABALOBI ICT4Fisheries	South Africa
Adapta Group	Brazil
Agrosolidaria Florencia	Columbia
Air Protein	United States
Akofresh	Ghana
ALGAESYS	Portugal
Algramo	Chile
Align17	United States
Amazonia 4.0	Brazil
Amazonía Emprende	Colombia
Amman Immam	United States
ARC Marine	United Kingdom
ASAR Green Kabadi Pvt. Ltd	India
Atlantic Sea Farms	United States
Australian Seaweed Institute	Audtralia
BanQu	United States
Besloten Vennootschap	Netherlands
Biohm	United Kingdom
BioRefinería SAS	Colombia
Blacksheep	United States
Borneo Nature Foundation	Indonesia
Cábula Initiative	Spain
Carbon Health	United States
Cascadia Seaweed	Canada

Organization	Country
Ceriops Research Organization	Kenya
CHARM	Australia
Circularise	Netherlands
citiesRISE	USA
CoalitionWILD	USA
COAST 4C	Australia
Co-voucher	Turkey
Cubex Global	Pakistan
Dark Matter Labs	Netherlands
Deep Branch	United Kingdom
Dendra Systems	United Kingdom
Desolenator BV	United Kingdom
Duitin	Indonesia
Earthwatch NGO	United States
Ecological Food Caterpillars Company	Democratic Republic of Congo
Ecosphere+	United Kingdom
EcoTree	Denmark
Eja-Ice Limited	Nigeria
Elemeno Health Inc	United States
Empower	Norway
EON Group Holdings Inc	United States
EPAGRI Empresa de Pesquisa Agropecuária e Extensão Rural de Santa Catarina	Brazil
Excess Materials Exchange.com	Netherlands
FIDEC Tanzania	Tanzania
Fishbee	Philippines
Flare Emergency Response	Kenya
Forested Foods	Ethiopia
Fundación Alisos	Colombia
GasLowCost	Mali
Generation Green Association	Kenya

Organization	Country
Global Coralition	United States
Global Citizen Capital	China
GreenAid	Nigeria
GreenSea Solutions	UK
Greenstand	United States
Griya Luhu: Digital Waste Bank	Indonesia
Groupe de Réflexion et Développement Durable	Mail
Hello Better	Germany
Hello Tractor	Kenya
Global Shaper Community Navi Mumbai Hub	India
Inga Foundation	United Kingdom
Intelehealth	United States
JOWOMO	Germany
Justdiggig Foundation	Netherlands
Kelp Blue	Netherlands
Kijani Forestry	Uganda
Kiverdi	United States
Labousitari	Niger
Lava Products Limited	United Kingdom
Life Out Of Plastic - L.O.O.P.	Peru
Los Aliados	Ecuador
Madiba & Nature	Cameroon
MAEKO	Malaysia
MetroPolder Company	Netherlands
Millennium Kids	Australia
Mint Innovation	New Zealand
Mujeres WOW	Ecuador
Mvutu	Republic of Congo
Nativien	United States
Natural Fiber Welding	United States
NEPRA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PVT LTD	India

Organization	Country
Noora Health	United States
NPX	United States
Oceanium	United Kingdom
Oceans Alive	Kenya
Octopus.co.id	Indonesia
OLSPS	South Africa
Onisafra	Brazil
OriginTrail	Slovenia
P. I. B Global Services	Nigeria
Pachama	United States
Pacific Blue Foundation	United States
Parkman Eco Farm	Kenya
PEGASI	Chile
PhysioQ	United States
Pinovo	Norway
Plant a Million Corals	United States
Plastic Bank	Canada
Plastic LOOP	Malaysia
ProNat	Niger
Raino Tech4Impact Ltd	Kenya
RecyGlo	Myanmar
Recykal	India
Reforestum	United Kingdom
Rekosistem	Indonesia
Research and Education for Sustainable Actions	Zimbabwe
S4S Technologies	India
Sahara Sahel Foods	Niger
Saving the Amazon	Colombia
Sea6 Energy Pvt Limited	India
Seawater Solutions	United Kingdom
Second Life Gabon	Central African Republic

Organization	Country
Serious Shea SARL	Burkina Faso
Seven Clean Seas	Singapore
SharkSafe Barriers	South Africa
Shiwi	Peru
SoilWatch	Belgium
SokoFresh	Kenya
StanLab	Nigeria
StixFresh	Malaysia
SUGi Project	Switzerland
Supportive Cities	India
Tele-Bere VSL Association	Ghana
The Flipflop Project	Kenya
The Kilimanjaro Project	United States
The Urban Garden Initiative	United States
Therawee	Philippines
Trashcon	India
Treeconomy	United Kingdom
Trees for the Future	United States
Typha Alimentation Animale SARL	Mauritania
Unseenlabs	France
UPF Amazonas Originaria	Venezuela
V5 Initiative Inc	United States
Wasteless Ltd	Netherlands
Wear A Blacksheep	Costa Rica
Wildchain	Thailand
Wipsea	France
World Vision Australia	Australia
xpand Foundation	Australia
YHU.life Cia Ltda	Ecuador
Yorenka Tasorentsi	Brazil
Youth Climate Leaders	Brazil



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