

Guy Maurice, founder B'Zeos

50 words: Oslo is becoming a hotspot for sustainable innovation, thanks to a “green mindset”. “You can see it in the city itself, with all its electric mobility, public transport and all that, but also in the general ecosystem of companies and research. Oslo has realised that the real opportunities lie in working solutions to sustainability issues. And there’s a lot of green accelerator programs that are really good,” says Guy Maurice, seaweed innovator and the Oslo-based founder of B'Zeos.

200 words: “The great thing about seaweed is that it sequesters carbon -- so when we grow and use seaweed, we actually remove CO2 from the system,” says Guy Maurice, founder and CEO of B'zeos, and one of the world’s biggest seaweed fans.

Seaweed -- a colloquial term for plants and algae that grow in rivers, lakes and the ocean -- will likely play a vital role in providing sustainable food for a growing world population. But Maurice and his colleagues at B'Zeos have found another use for this under-utilised resource: replacing plastic packaging with a fully compostable compound made from seaweed.

He claims the idea came to him while sitting in a New York bar, ruminating on the ubiquitousness of useless plastic straws. Upon returning to Oslo, where the Belgian native had been living for some years while working for Norwegian offshore company Equinor, he decided to dedicate his life to the eradication of plastic waste.

“In Oslo, it isn’t difficult to find people interested in helping to scale up a sustainable idea. We soon got institutions like Norwegian Research Council, SINTEF and Innovation Norway on board with the idea”.

B'Zeos has already developed the material itself. Now, the company is working on scaling the solution. One advantage with Oslo, in this respect, is what Maurice calls “a green mindset”.

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Startup hubs like MESH, ShareLab and StartupLab are teeming with companies that seek solutions to the world’s challenges. The city also benefits from housing world-leading expertise from Norway’s offshore, marine and maritime sectors -- expertise which is increasingly being leveraged to promote sustainability. (Look no further than Fornebu, just outside the city limits, where you’ll find sustainability powerhouses like DNV-GL, REV Ocean, and The Ocean Data Platform, all in a few square kilometers).

“And one of the good things about Oslo is short distances between people. The ecosystem here is compact, so it is easy to make connections that help us grow and develop sustainable solutions”, Maurice says.