



## PRESS RELEASE

# What Design Can Do launches the No Waste Challenge, a global design competition calling for radical solutions to reduce waste

Amsterdam, 12 January 2021 – **Our planet is drowning in waste. Every year we dump a massive 2.12 billion tonnes of it worldwide. If we continue like this, our global annual waste production is expected to increase by a stunning 70 percent before 2050, accelerating massive social and environmental problems. That is why What Design Can Do (WDCD) is launching the No Waste Challenge, its third Climate Action Challenge in partnership with the IKEA Foundation. This global design competition calls on all creatives and innovators to address the enormous impact of waste and consumerism on climate change. Winning ideas are made into a reality with €10.000 in funding and a global development programme co-created with Impact Hub.**

**So, how do we encourage more mindful consumption; how can we produce in a way that considers the needs of the planet; and how can we handle waste more responsibly?**

### WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Our wasteful economies are driving us towards a global climate crisis, so we need to act fast. While we focus on redesigning the entire system over the long term, we can also make an immediate impact by buying less stuff, making more sustainable products, and reusing or recycling materials. For this reason, the No Waste Challenge is looking for design-driven solutions at various scales. Proposals should be exciting, feasible, potentially scalable, and respond to at least one of three global design briefs as presented by WDCD. Applicants can submit their proposals online via the No Waste Challenge platform from **12 January until 1 April 2021**.

### DESIGNERS STEP UP

Historically, designers have encouraged over-production, over-extraction, and a never-ending quest for novelty. But design also has the power to shift perspectives and facilitate alternative visions of the future. The COVID-19 crisis has provided us with an unprecedented opportunity to do so, and to open doors to radical new ideas, products, services and systems.

*“Designers are in a unique position to change how things are made, and what they are made of. A growing number of creatives have already taken an active role in the transition to a circular economy, by experimenting with materials and processes, raising awareness, and inspiring vital new narratives around waste as a resource. But there is a lot more potential. Now more than ever, the design community must step up, own up and lead,”* says Richard van der Laken, creative director of WDCD.



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Liz McKeon, Head of Climate Action portfolio at the IKEA Foundation, says: *“Waste is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. As consumers, we have the power to change this through our purchasing decisions. And as a society, we have a tremendous opportunity to bring about positive changes for the planet by rethinking how we produce, package, consume, reuse and regenerate the things we buy. But we need solutions fast. The IKEA Foundation is supporting What Design Can Do and the No Waste Challenge to bring the creative power of design to solving problems like waste and addressing the most urgent issue of our time.”*

### GLOBAL ISSUES, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Although waste is a global problem, the best solutions are often rooted in local contexts. To reflect this, the No Waste Challenge offers one global track alongside six tracks in major cities around the world: Nairobi (with partner Kenya Climate Innovation Center), Tokyo (with partner Shibaura House), São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (with partner Mandacaru Design), Delhi (with partner Quicksand), Mexico City, and Amsterdam.

In May, a jury of leading experts in design, social impact and climate action will select a minimum of 10 winners. Next to a prize fund of €10.000 each, the centrepiece of the award package is a global development programme which includes online training, mentoring sessions and a bootcamp. Co-created by Impact Hub, this programme will support the winning teams in further strengthening their projects, and propelling them into 2022.

**For more information, visit the No Waste Challenge platform:**

[www.nowaste.whatdesigncando.com](http://www.nowaste.whatdesigncando.com)

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### FOR THE EDITORS

The No Waste Challenge joins a powerful movement of no-waste innovators. For photos, graphics, and additional materials on the global issue of waste, view our [press kit](#). More information about past challenges and What Design Can Do is available at our [press webpage](#).

### ABOUT WHAT DESIGN CAN DO

What Design Can Do (WDCD) is an international platform that advocates for design as a tool for social change. Since 2011, we have undertaken numerous activities to promote the role of designers in addressing the world’s most pressing societal and environmental issues. To date, WDCD has hosted 13 successful conferences in Amsterdam, São Paulo, and México City. In 2016 WDCD launched an ambitious design challenge programme that engages the creative community with urgent societal issues such as the wellbeing of refugees and climate change. For more information, visit [www.whatdesigncando.com](http://www.whatdesigncando.com)

### ABOUT THE IKEA FOUNDATION

The IKEA Foundation works to create a better everyday life for people. To achieve that, they support innovative approaches to solving the root causes of inequality: poverty, the consequences of climate change, and lack of resources such as clean air, energy and fertile land. The IKEA Foundation is funded by INGKA Foundation, owner of the Ingka Group of companies. The IKEA Foundation is independent from the retail business with a sole focus on creating brighter lives on a liveable planet through philanthropy and grantmaking. For more information, visit [www.ikeafoundation.org](http://www.ikeafoundation.org)



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