

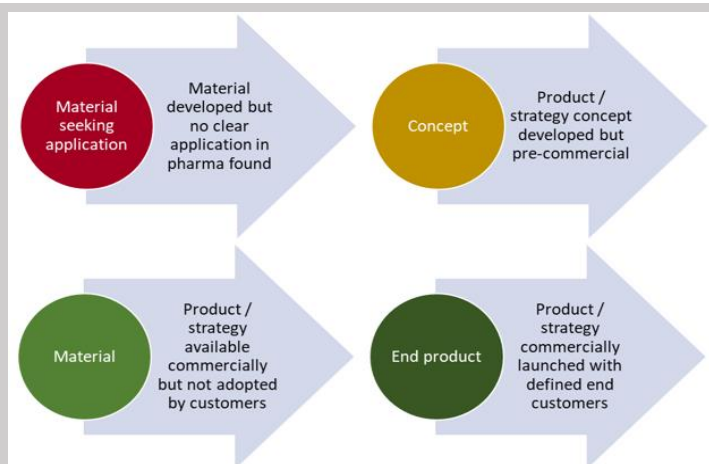
Background

The pharmaceutical sector is a major polluter, generating a huge amount of single use plastic (SUP) in the form of bottles, blister packs, injector pens and plastic bags, often ending up in landfill. Recent regulation brought into effect across the EU and UK ban the use of some SUP items such as plastic straws, but at present the regulations do not apply to pharmaceutical plastic packaging. There is however a drive within pharmaceutical organisations to reduce environmental impact and adopt more sustainable packaging options before they are regulated to do so. Strategic Allies Ltd (SAL) conducted a rapid landscape into single use plastic within the pharmaceutical sector. Key questions to be addressed included: (1) what technologies and solutions exist to reduce pharmaceutical SUP?; (2) who the major players (developing and/or adopting new technologies / strategies to reduce SUP)?; (3) are there any consortiums or action groups addressing pharmaceutical SUP reduction?



The search

SAL initiated a 4 week rapid landscape (via secondary research) to identify technologies and strategies for SUP reduction in the pharmaceutical industry. SAL categorised findings into one of the following: 1) initiatives to reduce plastic through product (re)design; 2) initiatives to replace plastic with alternative materials; 3) strategies to improve plastic recycling and; 4) use of more sustainable bio-derived plastics. Identified solutions were presented in the form of case studies which detailed the approach, the type of packaging it impacted (e.g. blister packs, bottles etc.), stage of development, scale, companies involved and SAL's views on likely impact. To contextualise the findings, an overview of the pharmaceutical packaging market and relevant regulations was included in the report. SAL noted that whilst packaging companies are dedicating effort to developing more sustainable materials and products, and there are many examples at varying stages of development (see below), commercial uptake remains limited.



Outcome

- SAL provided a snapshot of technologies / strategies with the potential to reduce pharmaceutical SUP usage
- The findings may highlight solutions relevant to a client's packaging portfolio and provide relevant suppliers
- Action groups and consortia were also summarised for consideration and review