

# Sustainable Fibre Strategies



**Company: Peak Performance**  
**Project: ECAP**  
**Sector: Apparel and Textiles**  
**Market Share: 0.08%**

## Key Facts:

- In the first year, we achieved:
  - ✓ 70% Better Cotton (BCI) (from 0%)
  - ✓ 100% Responsible Down Standard (RDS) down (from 0%)
- We now include such standards and sustainable materials on hang tags to communicate our progress with consumers.

Key facts

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# Ambition

## What was your motivation to start sourcing more sustainable fibres and, as part of that, join ECAP?

Peak Performance have sourced better materials for a number of years, but we didn't have a strategy for our future sustainability actions. We were also in a position where our B2B partners, employees and consumers were demanding more from us in terms of sustainability. As a clothing company we know we have a big impact environmentally, and the ECAP programme which focused on fibre choice seemed like a sensible starting point to help us develop a more in-depth strategic approach.

## What impact are you aiming to achieve through your sustainable fibre strategy?

- Overall, to lower our impact as a business.
- Improve our knowledge of how we can reduce our impact and empower our internal teams to be on the journey with us.
- Although we had real engagement from the majority of our team at the outset of ECAP, it is difficult to have the whole business on board with our strategy. However, at the end of ECAP its clear we have really achieved this, and we have friendly competition between product category teams around how sustainable their items are.

"We set a bold target: **100% sustainable fibres by 2026**, to align with our 40th year of business".

Åsa Andersson  
Sustainability and Quality Manager

## What are your targets and priorities in relation to more sustainable fibres?

- Our focus on fibre groups was relatively simple as approximately 70-75% of our fibre mix is synthetic (polyester or polyamide); 20% cotton and the remainder mostly down, wool or viscose.
- In our first workshop with MADE-BY, we set a bold target: **100% sustainable fibres by 2026**, to align with our 40<sup>th</sup> year of business.
- We also set intermediate targets by 2020 of:
  - 100% sustainable cotton
  - 100% RDS down
  - 85% PFC-free durable water repellent (DWR) treatment
  - 50% Recycled or Biobased polyester and nylon
- In addition to the fibre targets, we wanted to build a healthy working relationship with our suppliers. This includes supporting them where we can. And we have also produced our own internal library of materials to guide our design and buying teams. We are also working on rationalising our supply base.

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# Achievements and Learnings

## Key achievements or breakthroughs celebrated so far on your journey to source fibres more sustainably?

- We have focused our efforts on high volume materials first to make the biggest impact and have made changes incredibly quickly:
  - Cotton 0 > 70% Better Cotton (BCI) in one year.
  - Down 0 > 100% RDS down in one year.

We are mindful that this rapid change might be a risk in terms of quality, so we are taking real steps to be sure quality is maintained, especially when looking into new materials.

- Included standards on our hang tags to communicate our choices with consumers.
- We communicate our progress internally and with sales teams so that these achievements are understood and celebrated.

"Our employees were engaged with the programme and were surprisingly easy to bring on board with our strategy".

Åsa Andersson  
Sustainability and Quality Manager

## Main challenges faced whilst trying to switch to more sustainable fibres?

- Our brand is based on high quality outdoor apparel products, so we needed to be certain that the more sustainable materials would meet our quality standards.
- Finding recycled materials that we could use with durable water repellents. For example, we had to delay our recycled material range by a season as a result of this challenge.
- Recycled materials are more expensive. Commercial demands to maintain margin and maintain our prices to consumers have forced us to be innovative in how we use recycled materials and to absorb any on costs.
- Keeping up with an evolving market – since being part of ECAP the options and market for sustainable fibres has rapidly evolved and continues to do so. We need to continue to invest in research, training and development of new products. This is especially pertinent for us as we have long lead times on materials and so design products one and half years ahead of launch.

## Key learnings as a result of being part of the ECAP programme?

We have found that our move to more sustainable fibres has had a lower impact on our environmental metrics (year on year) than we expected, which highlights the need to also look at processes and other impacts within the supply chain in a holistic way. When setting targets, we needed to think more broadly than just asking for a specific fibre. We needed to look at the sourcing location, who was producing it and the processes involved.

We also need to consider our overarching goal and what will in fact be considered sustainable by 2026, given the pace of change.

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# Impact and Reflections

**Were there any surprising outcomes that you were not expecting, for example, in your wider business operations, amongst customers or within your supply chain?**

How easy it would be internally to get everyone on board with our strategy for more sustainable fibres has been a surprise. Our employees have been very engaged with the topic and have really been pushing us to form a framework on sustainable fibre choice, so that has been a great and surprising outcome.

**If you were starting your sustainable fibre sourcing journey again, what would you do differently?**

We would have looked at processing from the outset, as we worked on sustainable fibres so that this was a more joined up approach. However, this demands more resource and expertise so is not always possible for every business to work on at the same time.



**For others not yet sourcing more sustainable fibres, have you any advice for them regarding how they can get started on the topic and what steps they can take in the early days of their journey to source more sustainable fibre?**

- When setting targets, think broadly about all impact areas.
- Fully understand your current position (baseline) before setting a strategy and targets, and regularly review your strategy as the market is always evolving.
- The ECAP programme provides a good framework for starting your journey into sustainable fibres:
  - ✓ Map your fibres
  - ✓ Understand your baseline
  - ✓ Make a strategy
  - ✓ Set clear goals
  - ✓ Measure progress

“Being part of the ECAP project has increased our understanding of our fibre footprint, and helped us set clear goals and start tracking against them. We have a much clearer picture about what we need to do to convert unsustainable materials into better options.”

Åsa Andersson  
Sustainability and Quality Manager

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## Impact and Reflections

### What barriers from your perspective exist today in order for the textile sector to move to a more circular fibre system?

Principally, over consumption and over production. As an industry and as consumers we need to have a totally different mindset about clothing. We need to consider buying second hand, repairing and not throwing away so much. As a clothing brand we can work on what happens to our products at end of life, but we can't solely stop over consumption.

Recycling infrastructure for clothes and textiles needs more development, although some governments (such as Sweden) are known to be reviewing this so hopefully this leads to some improvement.

There is also a need to scale up repair services for clothing, to encourage users to not buy and instead prolong the life of their clothes. We as a business have a responsibility to produce long lasting, durable clothing to support this.

The lead time for technical materials can be very long. The need for pre-booking of material, as well as the potential for unforeseen changes, can result in some excess material. To counter this where it arises, we have put in place a parallel process to make use of leftovers via special orders for key accounts and our outlet stores.

### What's next for you? What are you working on in 2019/20?

- We have a two new colleagues working on the deeper integration of sustainability into our business, and being sure to align our business model with our sustainable ambitions.
- Looking at our processing stages – we are now a Bluesign member and we are going through Bluesign assessment.
- We have signed the UN Fashion Charter on Climate Action and co-founded The Swedish Textile Initiative for Climate Action (STICA). With STICA, we are collaborating with 40 other organisations to understand how we can tackle Scope 3 emissions as a collective, as part of our aim to set Science Based Targets.

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ECAP is €3.6 million EU LIFE funded project which aims to reduce clothing waste across Europe and embed a circular economy approach.

## **ECAP mission**

Cutting the environmental impact of clothing across the supply chain. Generating value for business through collaboration, measuring and sharing best practice

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Case studies were generated as a result of pilots carried out for ECAP by WRAP and the named organisations from 2016 to 2019.

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