

Sustainability report

2017

Image Wear is Finland's leading workwear manufacturer and a significant player in the European market. The Group includes the parent company, Image Wear Oy, located in Tampere, Finland and Image Wear AS in Estonia. The family company was founded in 1959.

In 2017, we employed 153 people in Finland and 175 people in Estonia. The Group's turnover in 2017 stood at EUR 29.3 million.

Image Wear's guiding principles are:

- responsibility;
- professionalism; and
- development.

Mission

We help our customers by taking the hassle out of workwear procurement.

In line with our vision,

Image Wear is the market leader for workwear in Finland and Estonia. We are pioneers in customer service, and have the most sought-after products, multi-channel service network, and enthusiastic and dynamic staff.

Highlights 2017



We took part in the Fashion Revolution campaign that promotes transparency in the clothing industry.

We started a partnership with Globe Hope Oy, which manufactures clothes and accessories from recycled materials.

We were awarded ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certification in September 2017.



Our Finnish operations staff visited the plant in Narva.



We joined the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries.



Sustainability reporting at Image Wear

The purpose of sustainability reporting at Image Wear is to increase awareness among our customers, partners and other interested groups of Image Wear's work on sustainability, and to report on the progress and developments made during the reporting year.

We publish this report every year, and the 2017 report is the third one so far. We communicate about topical sustainability matters via our website, social media accounts and newsletters.

Accountability, results and targets related to sustainability

Image Wear's Finnish operations were awarded ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certification in September 2017. The ISO 9001 quality management system certificate verifies that we work in a customer-centred and systematic way in order to improve quality. The ISO 14001 certificate shows that we have a target-oriented system in order to manage environmental issues. The environmental standards help us to organise our environmental management and guide us in the continuous improvement of our environmental performance.

Our goal is to incorporate environmental and other sustainability aspects into our business development, product design and material choices and make environmental management part of our business management. Sustainability has now become part of our general management reviews and it is discussed in every Management Group meeting. As a result, we have removed the separate sustainable business section from our sustainability scheme.

Business models that follow the principles of circular economy have become prominent in the sustainability dialogue within the textile industry over the past two or three years. At Image Wear, we have looked into some of the circular economy practices that are most natural to us, and we have started to implement them together with our customers.

Last year, we entered into a partnership with Globe Hope and made our first products using recycled Image Wear products. We will continue to develop this partnership in 2018. We will also review other opportunities for using recycled materials in our production.

We are responsible for our own product development and quality control of materials. Around 60–80% of the products we sell are made at our plant in Narva, Estonia. The rest are acquired from subcontractors or purchased as finished products. We buy our fabrics from external suppliers in Europe. The fabrics are cut both in Tampere and Narva.

The biggest environmental impact of the manufacture of our products is created outside our processes. In order to ensure sustainable processes throughout our value chain, we only cooperate with operators that meet our sustainability criteria. Last year, we adjusted some of our targets related to sustainable procurement and environmental performance:

- In sustainable procurement, our focus will be redirected to reviewing the practices of material suppliers in high-risk countries.
- We will examine the supply chain of purchased products.
- We will begin to review more ecologically friendly fabric alternatives for our products, starting with the clothes in our own collection.
- We have joined the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries and created an energy efficiency plan.



Sustainable procurement

Long-term goals	Targets 2017	Results 2017	Targets 2018
We aim to limit our impact on the environment as far as possible.	We will examine the emission data provided by three of our most significant material suppliers.	Based on the examination, we found that our most significant material suppliers do operate sustainably and identify the environmental risks of their operations. We will redirect our sustainability focus to those material suppliers that operate in high-risk countries or that we consider risky.	We have identified 13 material and product suppliers and subcontractors in five different high-risk countries. The high-risk countries are: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, India, China and Poland. We aim to audit three of these suppliers in 2018.
			We will find the most ecologically friendly alternative for all of our fabric categories.
Eighty per cent of the material suppliers we use will be audited regularly.	Thirty of the most important material suppliers will commit to following the Image Wear Supplier Code of Conduct.	The target was nearly met, with 29 out of 30 signing.	In 2018, 20 of the most important suppliers will sign the Image Wear Supplier Code of Conduct.
	Two of the biggest material suppliers will be audited and their raw material sources will be reviewed.	Both audits have been conducted. One of the material suppliers has told us the countries from which they source their raw fabric. Based on our audit, the other supplier operates in a very sustainable way and has well-documented sustainability practices.	We will trace a product we manufacture for one of our customers (Finnish postal service Posti) from field to fashion in order to document the entire chain and describe the journey of the piece of clothing before it is worn by a Posti delivery person.
	We renewed our BSCI membership in 2017 and received audit reports from all of our suppliers in Asia.	The audit report of our Bangladeshi supplier can be found in the BSCI database but it is out of date. Data from four of our Indian suppliers cannot be found in the BSCI database.	We will look into which high-risk countries our purchased products come from. This includes products purchased from Finnish importers.

All manufacturing sites will be audited regularly (either by us, by an external auditor or BSCI).	We have eight subcontractor manufacturers in the Baltic countries. Three of these, or 37.5%, were audited in 2016. The target for 2017 is to audit the remaining five.	The audits showed that our subcontractors are mostly running their operations well. Further targets are to review environmental performance and occupational safety, and clarify practices.	We will determine points of improvement for the subcontractor sites and create a plan to meet these targets.
			We will organise further training for our auditors.
Our partners' terms of employment must at least meet the minimum requirements of national legislation and ILO agreements.			Terms of employment are reviewed during audits.

Based on the assessment, we found that our most important material suppliers do operate sustainably and identify the environmental and social risks of their operations. Therefore, we will redirect the focus of our sustainability dialogue to suppliers and subcontractors operating in high-risk countries as well as to the manufacturers of our purchased products.

So far, we have audited our material suppliers and subcontractor manufacturing sites ourselves. However, the lack of a common language, cultural differences and insufficient knowledge of local legislation made the audit of our Indian supplier very challenging. In future, we will carry out audits of suppliers operating in high-risk countries in cooperation with BSCI so that we use auditors familiar with the local conditions.

We acquire the majority of our purchased products through Finnish importers. During 2018, we aim to obtain more detailed information on the sustainability measures taken by the importers themselves. As far as possible, we will find out the manufacturers of our products in order to verify from BSCI if the manufacturers have been audited.

It is our view that we are best able to reduce the environmental impact of the products we manufacture by selecting materials that produce the smallest environmental load and by increasing the number of purchased products that are as harmless to the environment as possible. We will start by selecting more environmentally friendly materials for our own collection as it will be easier for us to define the materials we use in our own production rather than what our partners use.

We only cooperate with material suppliers and subcontractors that meet our sustainability criteria, and we want to build long-term partnerships. We require that all of our material and other suppliers commit to the Image Wear Supplier Code of Conduct. We send the Supplier Code of Conduct for the supplier to sign together with the partnership agreement.

We only acquire materials or products from a new partner if our existing partners cannot provide us with the material we need. This happens very rarely and usually the material is some technical or other highly specified fabric. In a situation like this, we have to acquire the material wherever it is available as there are not too many suppliers of specialist materials.

The purpose of the audits is to find out if our partners meet our requirements concerning environmental and social sustainability, i.e. the requirements the partner committed themselves to when signing the Supplier Code of Conduct. The sustainability scheme includes a requirement for our partners to ensure that their employees' terms of employment meet the minimum requirements of national legislation and ILO agreements. These are checked during audits, in addition to environmental aspects.

It is of the utmost importance to us that people can trust the safety of our products. Our goal is that, by the end of 2018, all of the standardised products we manufacture will include a QR code that allows customers to check with which product standards the product complies. Some of our CE marked products already have the code.



The environmental impact of our operations

Long-term goals	Targets 2017	Results 2017	Targets 2018
Minimising the environmental impact of our operations.	In 2016, we measured the quantity of waste produced by our production processes in order to set targets for reducing waste. In 2017, we worked towards minimising our mixed and energy waste.	<p>2016</p> <p>Image Wear Oy – entire Finland: Total amount of waste 89.3 tonnes of which 5% was mixed waste.</p> <p>Image Wear AS: Total amount of waste 63.9 tonnes of which 0.4% was mixed waste.</p> <p>2017</p> <p>Image Wear Oy – entire Finland: Total amount of waste 103.4 tonnes of which 3% was mixed waste.</p> <p>Image Wear AS: Total amount of waste 59.4 tonnes of which 0.5% was mixed waste.</p>	We aim to replace plastic packaging within our organisation. We will review options and gradually transition to using alternative packaging.

	We will create better recycling instructions and facilities. The same target for the Narva plant but instructions will be in Russian.	The recycling instructions used in Finland have been clarified.	We will find out if the coffee machine's disposable cups can be replaced by reusable mugs.
	We began working towards quality and environmental management system certifications in 2016, and we set ourselves the target of gaining the certifications in 2017.	We were granted the ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 quality and environmental management system certifications.	Target met.
We aim to make our operations as energy efficient as possible.	The target is to minimise transportation emissions by favouring transportation companies with low emission levels. Of the companies that we cooperate with, Posti compensates for its CO ₂ emissions.	We have three transportation partners. The total amount of transportation CO ₂ emissions was 146.1 tonnes of which 47.4 tonnes have been compensated.	We will reduce the need for transportation between the product and material warehouses.
	We will set targets for cutting down energy consumption and create a plan to meet these targets. We will look into the possibility of joining the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries 2017–2025.	We joined the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries 2017–2025.	We will create an energy efficiency plan and research ways to transition to green electricity.
We aim for material efficiency.	We will launch a partnership with Globe Hope. The purpose is to reuse our customers' recycled products for their new collections or to create customer or employee gifts. During 2017, we will train our sales staff to manage this new service.	We began a partnership with Globe Hope. Our first joint project involved Globe Hope producing laptop bags for our staff using old high-visibility jackets.	We will build a closer partnership with Globe Hope. The aim is to encourage internal recycling by our customers so that the customer's old workwear is turned into new workwear for the customer's staff.
		One training event organised for the sales staff on the new service.	A more advanced training package for all sales staff working with the major customers so that they will be able to inform the customers about the alternatives offered by Image Wear.
	A recycling trial at our Tampere shop. The aim is to develop practices that can be transferred to other shops.	We sold old high visibility jackets that are no longer fit for their original purpose but can be used in work environments that do not require Standard EN20471-compliant workwear.	Five new Image Wear shops join the recycling scheme.
		Our Tampere shop sold 45 recycled jackets.	The aim is to double this number.
	We researched the number of offcuts and will review ways to use them.	According to our research, offcuts are small pieces of fabric that do not currently have a resource-efficient way to be recycled within the textile industry in Finland. We send offcuts to energy production facilities.	Review completed. No new targets related to offcuts.
	We provide people who use our products with information on sustainable choices, recycling and reusing options for our products and the environmental impact of different materials		
			The environmental info package is available for download from our website.



In 2016, we launched a review of the requirements of Standard ISO 14001 environmental management system. Our environmental management system was granted the ISO 14001 certificate in 2017.

We aim to gradually replace plastic packaging within our organisation. Plastic packaging is used, for example, when materials are sent to subcontractors.

Our research found that the carbon footprint is not a suitable benchmark for measuring our climate emissions. Instead, we have joined the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries and will create an energy efficiency plan during 2018.

We will work towards reducing carbon emissions caused by the transportation of our products by organising transportation in an optimal way and choosing transportation companies that have emission levels that are as low as possible. In 2017, our operations and turnover grew. This meant that the absolute amount of transportation activity and emissions also grew.

Together with our major customers, we are working towards making the life cycle of their products longer. Company employees can return redundant workwear and accessories to us, and we will deliver them to another employee of the same company based on orders received.

We have an agreement with UFF according to which we can send them any used clothes, shoes or bags. UFF either sells them in Finland and donates the sales proceeds to development aid projects or sends products to Malawi as development aid.

Last year, we also donated three pallets of fabric to the Finnish Red Cross. The Finnish Red Cross further donated them to the Red Crescent in Kyrgyzstan which will deliver the fabrics to people in need across the country. The recipients are low-income families with many children, single-parent families, the unemployed, disabled or elderly and other people in need. These donated fabrics have been used in Kyrgyzstan, for example, in sewing courses that were organised for women facing difficulties in their lives. In these courses, the women sew clothes that are then donated to disadvantaged people.

According to our research, offcuts produced during our manufacturing process are small pieces of fabric that do not currently have a resource-efficient way to be recycled within the textile industry in Finland. We minimise the number of offcuts by using an optimising software to create cutting layouts and by avoiding pattern prints. There are usually more offcuts from patterned fabrics.



Well-being and skills of our staff

Long-term goals	Targets 2017	Results 2017	Targets 2018
<p>We provide a good working environment for our employees and we treat as equals.</p> 	<p>The Image Wear occupational well-being team reviewed cases of inequality experienced by our staff.</p>	<p>We arranged a year-long supervisor training programme for all supervisors at the Tampere site. We started holding monthly supervisor meetings where Image Wear practices are discussed.</p>	<p>We continue to hold supervisor meetings once a month. Topics discussed include holiday arrangements and collective agreements. There is a separate training programme for new supervisors.</p>
		<p>We continued department presentations with the aim of improving understanding between departments. Each department gave an hour-long presentation on what they do, every day for a whole week. The presentation events were open to all. The presentations were recorded and saved for later use.</p>	<p>The department presentations continue to be held.</p> <p>We will create a plan to address the points of improvement highlighted by the well-being survey. We will clarify the processes and try to remove any boundaries between different departments.</p>
		<p>The occupational well-being team received 41 initiatives of which 12 have been implemented and 18 are being processed/waiting for the final decision. The rest were not implemented or they were related to product development. Four initiatives were rewarded.</p>	<p>The aim is to inform and remind people of the possibility of submitting initiatives.</p>
	<p>Well-being survey each year, the overall result is used as a point of reference. The percentage figure shows the proportion of all replies that were 'good', 'moderate' or 'excellent'.</p>	<p>The results of our well-being survey: 2015: 74% 2016: 71% 2017: 63% The results for 2017 are not comparable to results from previous years because some of the survey content was different.</p>	<p>The target is to exceed the GPA for all surveyed companies. (In 2017, the average was 64%)</p>

	Time-tracking system and working hours bank introduced in our shops.	We first introduced our new time-tracking system at the Tampere site and in our shops. The Narva plant uses a time-tracking system.	The introduction and testing of the new time-tracking system at the Tampere site and in all the shops. Working hours bank for those who want to join.
Image Wear is a safe place to work.	Accidents Finland: 7 Estonia: 2 Near misses Finland: 5 Estonia: 0	Accidents Finland: 5 Estonia: 0 Near misses Finland: 2 Estonia: 0	Zero accidents and near misses.
Each employee knows their role in implementing our sustainability scheme.		All staff info meetings discuss topical sustainability matters.	We will arrange sustainability training for our procurement staff in particular. We will put together a sustainability information pack for our sales staff. Sustainability discussed at info meetings.

We want Image Wear employees to enjoy their work, do well and feel that their work is safe and meaningful. Our employees are very committed: the average length of employment was 7.8 years in Finland and 7.2 years in Estonia in 2017.

In the past two years, we have worked on organising our sustainability activities and founded a sustainability team to coordinate measures in line with our sustainability scheme. However, in order to integrate corporate social responsibility into everything we do, we need every single member of our Image Wear team to get involved. We are empowering our employees to take a more active role in our sustainability work and increase their awareness of sustainability issues. In 2018, we will arrange training for our procurement staff in particular and put together a sustainability information pack for our sales staff.

We carry out a well-being survey in Finland each year. The content of the survey in 2017 was slightly different from the previous ones, so the results are not comparable. The overall result of the 2017 survey, or the Quality of Working Life index, describes the performance of individuals. The indicator combines the experiences of work proficiency, safety, sense of belonging and incentives. Our result was 63%, which is good. You must reach 75% to receive an excellent rating. The percentage figure shows the combined proportion of all replies that were 'good', 'moderate' or 'excellent'.

In 2018, we will develop our occupational safety improvement guidelines and simplify the accidents and near misses reporting system.



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