

Working With Mills

Patagonia travels the globe building relationships with the right suppliers—companies that make high-quality materials while reducing their environmental and social impact. Together, we then work to create the technical, environmental and aesthetic innovations that define Patagonia products.

Our search for the best materials starts with our supply-chain subject-matter experts and our material development team. It is their job to research, develop and approve materials and suppliers by evaluating performance in four key areas: quality, traceability, environmental responsibility and social responsibility.

Quality

Our definition of quality demands that every material we use be durable and functionally fit for its intended use. It requires that our materials resist degradation from wearing and washing, be easy to care for, and are grown or manufactured with care for people and the planet. It insists that every garment is beautiful.

Developers send potential material options to the Patagonia quality testing lab. The lab analyzes and evaluates the material against a set of minimum requirements relevant for its intended use. To ensure the highest quality, lab analysts rely on industry standards, as well as equipment and test methods that we spent years developing. Our fabric laboratory may test as many as 70 material options in order to approve one fabric that meets or exceeds our minimum performance requirements.

Traceability

Knowing about the origin of our materials is essential to maintaining quality and assessing environmental and social impacts, which is why we insist on transparency throughout the supply chain.

We require our suppliers to complete a sourcing questionnaire and to map their own supply chains. For every one of our fabrics, we require a profile sheet, a supply-chain tracking sheet and all relevant third-party certificates.

Supply Chain Environmental Responsibility Program

Material supply chains are significant contributors to Patagonia's footprint. Large amounts of water, energy and chemicals are needed to make materials for our products, so supplier operations must be managed in ways that safeguard the environment, factory workers and consumers.

The purpose of Patagonia's Supply Chain Environmental Responsibility Program is to measure, mitigate and eliminate the environmental impacts of manufacturing Patagonia products and materials. We implement our program at supplier facilities all over the world and cover a broad range of impact areas, including environmental management systems, chemicals, water use, water emissions, energy use, greenhouse gases (GHGs), other air emissions and waste.

This program utilizes industry-wide tools, such as the Higg Index, and recognizes third-party certification programs, such as the [bluesign® system](#), as ways that our suppliers can show how they are meeting Patagonia's expectations. Beyond the program's minimum requirements, suppliers are encouraged to demonstrate environmental excellence by implementing better and best practices, so we can recognize them as environmentally responsible supply-chain partners. See where we are and what's next for our [Supply Chain Environmental Responsibility Program](#).

Social Responsibility

Our Raw Materials Social Responsibility Program is one of the biggest and most important corporate responsibility initiatives we've launched since the mid-1990s. That was when we first began to monitor our garment factories for social compliance and helped form the Fair Labor Association (FLA), a nonprofit labor advocacy organization.

This program requires that we monitor the performance of our key material suppliers to our code of conduct, which includes social responsibility standards on wages and benefits, hiring practices, employee grievance mechanisms, workplace safety and other social and environmental benchmarks.

The steps for mills to comply with the program are similar to those for the [factories](#) that make our finished products.

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