Kering makes commitment to biodiversity

By Dominique Muret - July 2, 2020

Kering is taking a significant step forward in its approach to corporate responsibility. The French luxury group has published its first ever dedicated biodiversity strategy, which establishes new targets through which the company aims to achieve a "net positive' impact on biodiversity by 2025. With this announcement, the group also revealed the launch of a 5 million-euro fund for the development of regenerative agriculture.

Biodiversity has therefore been separated from sustainable development in Kering's corporate strategy, in order to become a focus in its own right. The reasons for this change are twofold. The strategy aims to "minimize biodiversity loss across the group's global supply chains, but also support nature and create net positive conservation," explained the company in a release.

In order to accelerate the transition of the fashion sector towards regenerative agriculture, the group led by François-Henri Pinault has launched the "Kering for Nature Fund: 1 Million Hectares for the Planet" in partnership with Conservation International, an NGO specialised in the preservation of Earth's natural legacy.

Backed by 5 million euros, this fund will allow the group to "convert 1 million hectares of farms and rangelands in its supply chain landscapes into regenerative agriculture by 2025" and "protect an additional 1 million hectares of critical, 'irreplaceable' habitat outside of its supply chain." As pointed out by Kering, this will mean transforming "an area around six times the total land footprint of Kering's entire supply chain, all the way back to raw material production, within this timeframe".

The Kering for Nature Fund has above all been conceived to reduce the environmental impact of the production of the raw materials destined to be transformed into ready-to-wear pieces and leather goods by the company, which owns the Gucci, Balenciaga, Saint Laurent and Bottega Veneta brands, among others. The main materials targeted by the strategy are leather, cotton, cashmere and wool.

"Thriving biodiversity is intrinsically linked to the long-term viability of our industry, and society more broadly," said Kering's chief sustainability officer and head of international institutional affairs, Marie-Claire Daveau. "Integrating a dedicated biodiversity strategy – which is now part of our wider sustainability strategy – into Kering's day-to-day operations is pivotal for our contribution to bending the curve on biodiversity loss over the next years."

Thanks to the fund, Kering hopes to be able to step its sustainability efforts up a gear, having already carried out a number of other conservation-focused projects, such as its partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Mongolia in 2014, which saw the company team up with the NGO to improve the living conditions of cashmere goats, encouraging the reduction of herd sizes and the storage of cashmere in cotton, rather than plastic.
In line with these previous projects, Kering's new biodiversity strategy therefore seeks to “encourage the prevention of biodiversity degradation, the promotion of sustainable and regenerative farming practices favoring soil health, and the protection of global ecosystems and forests that are vital for carbon sequestration.”

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