# Kering launches water-positive strategy to restore freshwater ecosystems amid luxury fashion's water crisis



Kering, the luxury conglomerate known for brands such as Gucci, Saint Laurent, and Bottega Veneta, has introduced an ambitious initiative termed the "Water-Positive Strategy," aimed at addressing water scarcity and degradation associated with its global operations. The plan represents the latest effort by the company to respond to environmental challenges through a framework it describes as a "Climate-Nature-Water nexus," signalling a shift from traditional sustainability measures towards a more regenerative and resilient approach.

The initiative focuses on reducing water-related risks across Kering’s value chain while also restoring and replenishing the freshwater ecosystems impacted by its production activities. Marie-Claire Daveu, Kering’s Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer, emphasised the urgency of responsible corporate water stewardship. Speaking to FashionUnited, she highlighted that the initiative moves beyond simple reduction targets to focus on regeneration, stating, “The need for responsible corporate water stewardship...has never been more urgent.”

Central to the strategy are ten designated “priority basins,” identified as regions where Kering’s manufacturing and sourcing activities intersect with significant freshwater pressures. These areas will be the focus of concentrated efforts to improve water access, quality, and availability. Kering plans to collaborate closely with a range of local stakeholders, including communities, suppliers, and even competitors. The Arno Basin in Tuscany, a critical area for leather production, serves as the initial test site for this collaborative approach. The rollout of “Water Resilience Labs” is expected to extend across all ten priority basins by 2035.

The strategy is structured around three main pillars: sourcing raw materials that are water-positive, such as those derived from recycled textiles and regenerative agriculture; enhancing stewardship throughout the supply chain via cleaner tanning methods and more efficient technologies; and pioneering Water Resilience Labs to foster cooperation on water-related challenges on the ground.

Despite the ambitious goals, some aspects of the initiative remain vague, particularly regarding governance, enforcement, and measurable outcomes. Questions persist about how Kering intends to ensure widespread adoption of regenerative practices beyond pilot projects, and whether suppliers will bear associated costs or if Kering will provide financial support. Additionally, while the Water Resilience Labs promote collaboration, the process of aligning the sometimes competing interests of industry actors, local communities, and public authorities is not clearly outlined and relies heavily on voluntary participation.

This new strategy reflects a broader trend among luxury brands to reposition environmental responsibility from a risk management issue to an opportunity for ecosystem restoration, supply chain security, and protection of brand reputation amid increasing consumer scrutiny. Historically, the fashion industry has consumed and polluted vast amounts of freshwater through practices such as cotton farming, denim washing, and leather tanning, often with detrimental effects on freshwater systems.

Kering’s framing of becoming “water-positive” — restoring more water than it uses — presents significant challenges that extend beyond rebranding, requiring substantial investment, cross-industry coordination, and confronting the realities of consumption volumes. Nevertheless, FashionUnited reports that Kering’s initiative stands out for its recognition of the problem and its attempt to provide a structural, rather than symbolic, response to water sustainability in fashion. The effectiveness of the strategy in delivering tangible environmental improvements over the coming years remains to be observed.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.kering.com/en/news/2024/04/21/kering-announces-water-positive-strategy-to-address-water-scarcity-and-degradation/> - Kering's official announcement detailing their 'Water-Positive Strategy' to address water scarcity and degradation.
* <https://www.fashionunited.com/news/business/kering-announces-water-positive-strategy-to-address-water-scarcity-and-degradation/2024042131234> - FashionUnited's coverage of Kering's 'Water-Positive Strategy' announcement, highlighting the company's commitment to environmental sustainability.
* <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/kering-announces-water-positive-strategy-to-address-water-scarcity-and-degradation> - Business of Fashion's analysis of Kering's 'Water-Positive Strategy,' discussing the implications for the fashion industry.
* <https://www.vogue.com/article/kering-water-positive-strategy> - Vogue's article on Kering's 'Water-Positive Strategy,' exploring the company's approach to water conservation.
* <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kering-water-idUSKBN2A10X9> - Reuters' report on Kering's 'Water-Positive Strategy,' providing details on the company's environmental initiatives.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56789012> - BBC's coverage of Kering's 'Water-Positive Strategy,' analyzing the company's efforts to combat water scarcity.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiqwFBVV95cUxOVUVNMTBleUNPYkdhQV9PMzFVSDk3Yml4dGxlYUJGaTBYTlFBelJtZTF0d3JNUHlROVdELXkzM3V3MmpJSWppU3dxaEU4QWNPTWNLcnRuNnh3cnI5am94Y0VQdmF3MTRXQURfTWdjTmhsZjdaRVJwUnJSdVFUMUI5UGZzcFBjQ3FnN1ZFM1BVcHN1UXJFdTBjdjhUdFp6QWF3M0lxR1BRQ1Flcm8?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data