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## Message from our Founder

**When we launched Nikwax in 1977, the environmental movement as we know it today was still in its infancy; the term 'global warming' had only just been coined, and it would be almost two decades before people started talking about their 'carbon footprint'.**

Against this background, for us to make environmental protection a specific business objective and stated brand value was positively radical, but those were the values upon which the company was founded. 45 years on, I'm proud to say that protecting our planet is still very much at the heart of Nikwax's goals. Our first sustainability report documents the journey we have been on and outlines our goals for the next three years.

We want to share our vision and give some insight into some of the 20 projects we have committed to, to help achieve our sustainability goals by 2025.

We've spent 45 years thinking radically, constantly innovating and striving to change the way the outdoor industry interacts with the wider world. An approach that has supported our people and our planet.

Long may it continue.

**Nick Brown**  
(Nikwax Founder)

# Introduction

## Nikwax is known and respected for its sustainable practices and environmentally friendly products.

### About Nikwax

**Nikwax is committed to maximising enjoyment of the great outdoors with minimal environmental impact.**

**Using clever fabric systems and clean chemistry, Nikwax safely improves the performance of clothing, footwear and equipment, and extends its life.**

Nikwax products are made with care for the environment in the UK and are sold in over 50 countries throughout the world. Nikwax is known and respected for its sustainable practices and environmentally friendly products.

From Nick Brown creating the first Nikwax product on his Primus stove in a flat in 1977, through to the global business we are today, our core values and principles remain the same:

- **Innovation**
- **Sustainability**
- **Ethical**
- **Authenticity**
- **Fairness**
- **Passion**

Nikwax takes real action in a broad range of areas. From internal policies to reducing direct impact on the environment,

to external funding of conservation and education, we strive to live by our principles and set an example to the rest of the industry.

Nikwax is part of the GearForm® Group alongside Páramo® Directional Clothing. We're an international business, with our headquarters in Sussex, England; with offices in Seattle, USA, Poland, The Netherlands, and Colombia.

### About This Report

**Nikwax has always had the planet and natural environment at the heart of its values, but we have not always shouted about all the things we do.**

We believe that businesses like ours have a fundamental responsibility to lead by example with regard to the preservation of the natural environment. Nikwax can play a crucial role in reshaping the outdoor industry and beyond, for future generations to come.

This report covers the calendar year of 2021. It is the start of the next phase of our evolution and outlines our strategy for the next three years. We want to share our

vision, the strategy, and the actions we are taking to reduce our impact on the natural world further still, while creating a more positive impact on people.

The development of our sustainability strategy started with our materiality assessment. We have looked at over 30 different sustainability aspects – both social and environmental - along each step of our value chain and supply chain. Based on this assessment, we have developed over 20 projects to fulfil our goals and have a tangible positive impact on people and planet.

In this report, we are trying to address two simple, yet important questions:

### Why is this topic important to us? What are we doing about it?

Furthermore, we want to share our goals and celebrate the achievements we have already made.

We understand that sustainability is a complex subject so we have included definitions of key terms at the right of each page.

### What does it mean?

**Materiality Assessment:** a tool used to identify and prioritise sustainability (social, ecological, economical) issues that are the most critical to an organisation. This involves looking at a variety of aspects through two particular lenses: potential impact on the organisation, and importance to stakeholders.

**Value Chain:** a different term for 'supply chain' which highlights the value that is created by the numerous suppliers of raw materials, components, packaging and logistical solutions we are dependent upon to create and distribute our products.



# Our Journey



## Our Vision

To be the **global leader** in combining **aftercare products** with materials systems and processes for **outdoor** and high **activity** clothing and equipment using **innovative, effective, clean and sustainable technology.**



Nikwax products are made with care for the environment in the UK and are sold in over 50 countries throughout the world. Nikwax is known and respected for its sustainable practices and environmentally friendly products.

# Our Vision

## What does being sustainable actually mean?

We have decided to use the [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) to help us define the projects that will improve Nikwax's future sustainability efforts. The SDGs serve as a current framework and are a global standard for sustainable development. These 17 goals define the most pressing issues of our time and what we can do as a global society to fulfil those goals.

**At Nikwax, we want to have a tangible, positive impact on people and the planet. The SDGs show us that true sustainable development focuses on both. Our sustainability strategy focuses on four fields of action within the 'planet' dimension and two fields of action within the 'people' dimension, each has a clear vision.**

## Planet:



### Clean Chemistry

Nikwax aftercare products are water-based, PFC and solvent-free and we have never used aerosols.



### Conservation

We partner with conservation organisations to help preserve the natural world we love. We are also active on a local level.



### Circularity

Nikwax aftercare products enhance the performance and extend the usable lifetime of outdoor clothing, footwear and gear.



### Climate Action

Our operational emissions have been offset since launch and we have developed a climate action plan to do more.



### Experts & Partners

We believe in sharing our knowledge and expertise, whilst learning from others because together we achieve more.

## People:



### Ethical & Fair

We are a values-oriented organisation and believe in treating the people we work with fairly and equally.

 - Clean Chemistry

*We do not want to harm people  
and the planet in the production  
and use of our products.*

## The Nikwax Chemical Management System



Encompasses all chemicals  
that enter and leave our site



We publish our ambitious  
MRSL via our website



Third party audited and verified  
through the Higg Index and  
our ISO 14001 environmental  
management system.



# - Clean Chemistry

**We do not want to harm people or the planet in the production and use of our products.**

## **Our Products: High Performance - Low Impact**

Nikwax products have always been made with care for the environment:

- **PFC-free**

Our products have always been free of PFCs.

- **Aerosol & solvent-free**

We have never used aerosols and our products do not contain solvents which are toxic and can harm wildlife and biodiversity, as well as people.

- **Water-based**

Because our products are water-based they degrade into harmless compounds.



## **The Nikwax Chemical Management System**

We have always been about sustainable chemistry and we have now taken it to a new level we have developed a Chemical Management System in line with guidelines provided by the ZDHC.

Our system encompasses all chemicals that enter and leave our site: from cleaning chemicals to raw chemicals that go into our product. Furthermore, we make our MRSL publicly via our website. The Nikwax MRSL covers the ZDHC MRSL and the US Environmental Protection Agency PFAS Master List.

We are proud of our work and we believe in transparency, which is why our chemical management system is third party audited, included in our annual Higg Index verification and integrated into our ISO 14001 environmental management system.

Last but not least, our chemical management system allows us to continuously innovate and investigate alternative chemistry, to develop even more sustainable products.

## **What does it mean?**

**PFC:** Per- and polyfluorinated compound. PFCs are a group of chemicals that are known for their water and oil repellent properties and have been identified as persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic. PFAS is a different name for PFC, and PFOA is one kind (of thousands) of PFC.

**ZDHC:** The Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Foundation. A non-governmental environmental organization, established to encourage the textiles and leather industries to achieve minimal discharge of hazardous chemicals into wastewater.

**MRSL:** Manufacturing Restricted



Substance List. It provides brands, retailers, suppliers and manufacturers with acceptable limits of restricted substances in chemical formulations, which are used in the raw material and product manufacturing processes.

**Higg Index:** The Higg Index is a suite of tools for the standardised measurement of value chain sustainability. It is comprised of a core set of five tools that together assess the social and environmental performance of the value chain and the environmental impacts of products.



 - Climate Action

*We believe that as a responsible business we have to take action to combat further climate change and its negative impact on the planet and people.*

**Our Goal**  
**30%**  
**reduction in emissions**



We will commit to science based targets and reduce our Scope 1 & 2 Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions by 30% by 2025. We will measure our Scope 3 emissions.

# - Climate Action

We need to take action to combat further climate change and its negative impact on the planet and people.

## Our Achievements:



Together with the World Land Trust we have **carbon balanced all operational emissions** at our headquarters in Wadhurst, East Sussex, since our foundation.



We have used **renewable energy** at our headquarters **since 2013**



In 2016, we started converting our **fleet** to **electric and hybrid** and installed the necessary charging infrastructure at our headquarters



In 2021, we implemented a new working methodology that allows all employees to work remotely, thus **reducing the emissions from employee commuting drastically**

## The Nikwax Climate Action Plan

### Step 1: Measurement

Create a corporate carbon footprint

### Step 2: Energy reduction

We will develop energy reduction measures across all offices and factories

### Step 3: Emissions offset

The remainder of the emissions will be offset with certified carbon credits

## What does it mean?

**GHGs:** Greenhouse Gases. They are gases in Earth's atmosphere that trap heat. They let sunlight pass through the atmosphere, but prevent the sun's heat from leaving. The main greenhouse gases are: water vapor, Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Ozone, Nitrous Oxide, and Chlorofluorocarbons.

**GHG Scope 1 emissions:** direct emissions from company-owned and controlled resources.

**GHG Scope 2 emissions:** Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions released in the atmosphere, from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam, heat and cooling.

**GHG Scope 3 emissions:** indirect emissions that are linked to the company's operations (business travel, employee commuting, waste generated, purchased goods and services, Transportation and distribution, end of life).

 - Conservation

*We depend on our planet and its ecosystems and, as an outdoor company, we want to help protect and preserve nature for future generations to enjoy.*

**Our Goal**

**1%**

**for people & planet**



We are committing to donating 1% of our turnover to ecological and social causes.

# - Conservation

We want to help protect and preserve nature for future generations to enjoy.

**As a responsible business, we want to have a tangible impact on people and the planet. Our products and partnerships speak for that and we are now about to start the next chapter in our journey.**

## Owned Local Projects

- In 2016, we bought the 10-acre woodland behind Langham Farm - our factory in East Sussex - to re-naturalise the area and increase local biodiversity. The area is home to foxes, badgers and deer.
- In 2019, staff planted 1,000 trees including, Common Oak, Hornbeam, Walnut, Field Maple and Hazel.
- We replanted some of the ancient hedgerows and are planning to plant an orchard.



## Partnerships for Conservation

Together we achieve more. This is why Nikwax has always teamed up with conservation-focused organisations which have a global and local impact.

- We are both a sustaining and founding member of the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA). In this capacity, since 2006, we have donated £11,000 per year.
- Since 2007, we have supported the World Land Trust (WLT) through their Carbon Balanced programme. These funds are used to regenerate damaged areas of habitat and prevent further deforestation by extending a range of reserves throughout Ecuador.
- As well as a donation to cover our carbon footprint, we make a matching donation for use in World Land Trust's most urgent appeals. The WLT Action Fund provides the means to make land purchases where ecosystems are under imminent threat.



**We've protected over 155 acres of Amazonian rainforest in Ecuador together with World Land Trust and EOCA**



 - Circularity

*To combat the global waste problem, we need to play our part and keep materials in the loop for as long as possible by buying good quality, ethically sourced and produced gear, with regular care applied to extend its life.*

**Achievement**

**80%**

**waste is recycled**



We are now waste-to-landfill free and ca. 80% of our waste is being recycled. We send the remainder to energy recovery via incineration.

# 🌐 - Circularity

*“The most sustainable gear is the gear you already own.”*

**Use Nikwax to extend the life of your clothing and gear.**

## Circularity at Nikwax

The transformation to a circular economy is a huge undertaking, but it is vital that we take action now. At Nikwax we are working towards circularity by focusing on three key areas: extending the life of gear, waste management on site, and our plastic strategy.



Nikwax aftercare products enhance the performance and extend the usable life of outdoor clothing, footwear and gear. By helping our customers gear to last longer, we are keeping things in the loop - reducing waste.



Nikwax Directional Textiles are designed to last longer and work harder than other outdoor fabrics, particularly when cared for with Nikwax.

## Waste Management at HQ

Waste management is a crucial aspect of circularity. Valuable materials, such as plastic, paper and glass, need to be kept in the loop for as long as possible. We have recently switched our waste carrier, making it possible for us to separate and recycle even more of our waste.



## Achievement

# 65%

**of all single-use plastic we use at Nikwax is made from post-consumer recycled plastic**

## What does it mean?

**Circularity:** “In a circular economy there is no waste, there are only materials.”

A circular economy distinguishes between technical and biological cycles.

Consumption happens only in biological cycles, where food and biologically based materials (such as cotton or wood) are designed to feed back into the system through processes like composting and anaerobic digestion. These cycles regenerate living systems, such as soil, which provide renewable resources for the economy.

Technical cycles recover and restore products, components, and materials through strategies like re-use, repair, remanufacture or (in the last resort) recycling.

 - Circularity

*“...you cannot say glass is better than plastic – the answer is: it depends!”*

**Achievement**

Nikwax bottles made from

**100%**

**post-consumer  
recycled plastic**



Our Goal: 90% of all single-use plastic we buy is made from recycled plastic by the end of 2023.



# Plastic – An Environmental Perspective

## Interview with Sustainability Director, Maïté Angleys

### Why is it so difficult to say one material is more sustainable than the other?

The environmental impact associated with all the stages of a product's life are assessed with a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). The problem is that you have to compare very specific scenarios in which a material is used (aka: is material x in this country, in this use case, in this disposal method, less impactful than material). This is why you cannot say glass is better than plastic – the answer is: it depends!

### How sustainable is plastic?

There is a widely spread misconception around plastic and that is “it is unsustainable and replacing it will solve all problems around it”. But that is not simply not true. The single-use Plastic Project by European Outdoor Group (EOG) has found (after a year-long review of studies) that you have to differentiate between A) the resource of plastic, B) its lifespan and, C) its end of life. The main problem with plastic is its end of life and our recycling structures are a huge part of the problem!

### But what about other materials like bio-plastic and glass?

During production, transportation and use, virgin plastic out-performs materials such as bio-based plastic, paper, cotton and glass. It is in the end of life where the problem starts. We have primarily a waste problem. There is one exception: recycled plastic and recycled aluminium. We have currently opted for recycled plastic but are actively researching recycled aluminium.

### So what is the solution?

To solve the problem of plastic pollution we need to keep plastic in the loop. This means: use recycled plastic and ensure

recyclability. We have developed a plastic strategy with a goal set to increase our intake of recycled plastic and ensure recyclability until 2023.

In addition to that, Nikwax has been an active member of the pan-European Single Use Plastic project right from the start. The project brings like-minded outdoor brands and retailers together to collaborate and create an industry-wide solution for the single use plastic in the outdoor industry.



### Nikwax Plastic Strategy

- **During production, transportation and use, virgin plastic out-performs materials such as:**
  - bio-based plastic
  - paper
  - cotton
  - glass
  - aluminium
- **The main problem with plastic is its end of life. We have developed a plastic strategy to minimise the use of virgin plastic and keep recycled plastic in the loop as long as possible.**
- **Nikwax bottles are already made from 100% recycled plastic**
- **Our goals regarding single use plastic are:**
  - 90% of all single use plastic we buy is made from recycled plastic by the end of 2023.
  - Ensure 99% of all single use plastic we buy is recyclable by the end of 2023.

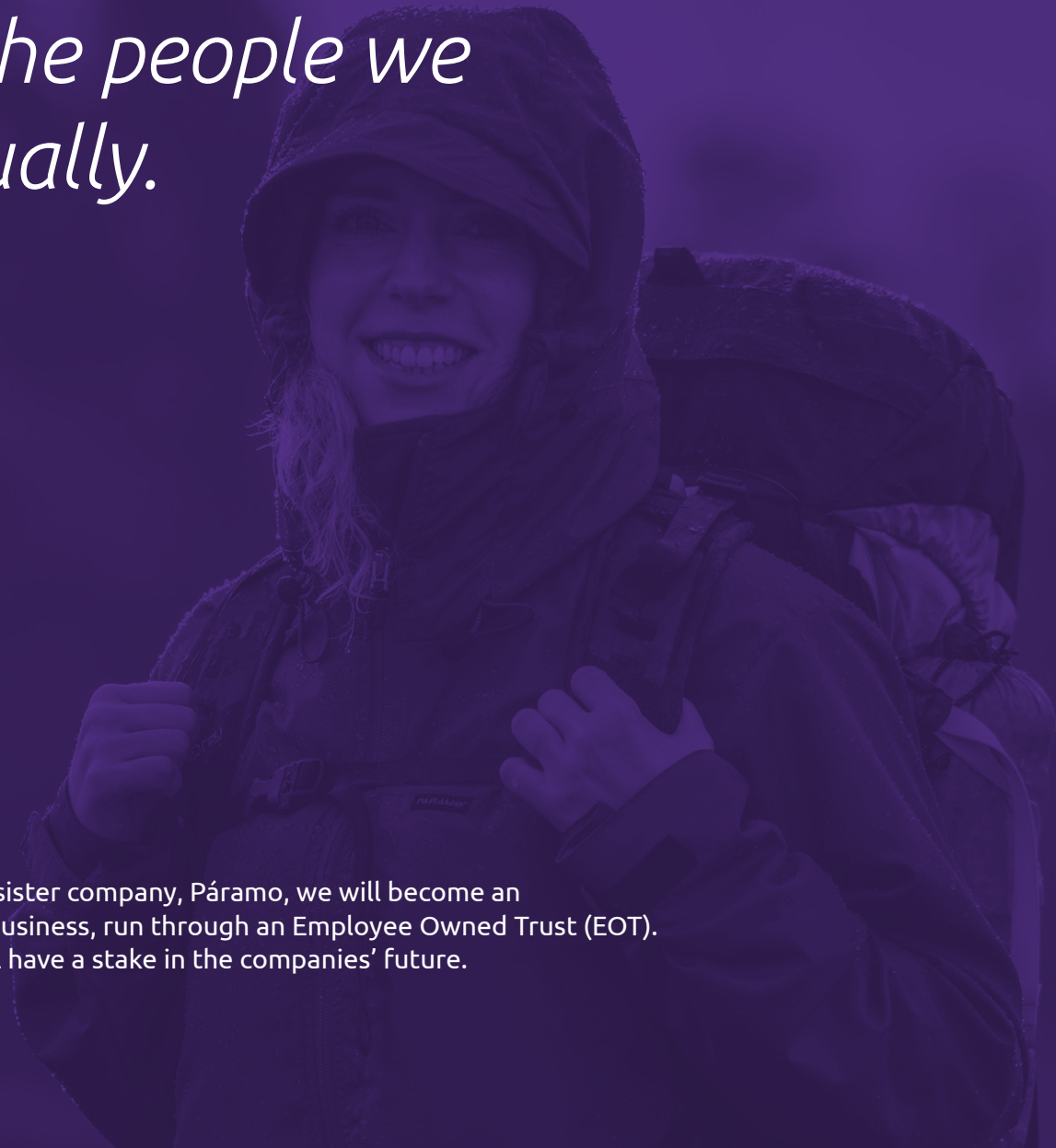
 - Ethical & Fair

*We are a values-oriented organisation and believe in treating the people we work with fairly and equally.*

**Our Goal**  
**To become an**  
**Employee Owned Trust in**  
**2022**



Together with our sister company, Páramo, we will become an employee-owned business, run through an Employee Owned Trust (EOT). Our employees will have a stake in the companies' future.



# - Ethical & Fair

We believe in treating the people we work with fairly and equally.

## Nikwax's Value Chain

We believe in fair working conditions throughout the value chain and have always been an exemplary ethical industry stakeholder. We treat our partners up and down the value chain with respect, and many of our suppliers have been with us for decades.

Going forward, we want to work even closer with them to increase the sustainability performance of our entire value chain. This is why we are creating a supplier sustainability scorecard. Together with our suppliers and partners, we will create performance levels - each with a set of criteria we would like a supplier ideally to fulfil.

**Our Goal**  
**2025**  
**all suppliers at**  
**premium sustainability**

## Nikwax People

In 2022, Nikwax will take another big step in its development. Together with our sister company, Páramo, we will become an employee-owned business, run through an Employee Owned Trust (EOT). This means that our employees get an equal stake in the companies' future, whilst ensuring that the social and ecological founding values are maintained.

Our headquarters are based in Wadhurst, East Sussex. Nikwax is able to provide local employment in a small, rural village. We offer flexible work arrangements across all levels of the business and are proud to have many of our members of staff work with us for many years.

We believe in transparency and want to share some key data about our business. We are continuously striving for more equality within the organisation, in 2022 and beyond. Becoming an EOT will help us to widen the support and opportunities we offer to our employees.

## Some Key Organisational Data

**25%**

of Directors\* identify as women

**47%**

of Senior Leaders\* identify as women

**22%**

workforce working part-time:

- 21% of Senior Leaders\*
- 25% of Directors\*
- 22% of Main Workforce

**8.6x**

The highest to lowest pay\*\*  
(amount the highest earner is paid  
against the lowest salary)

**£0.03**

The gender hourly pay gap. Women earn  
97p for every £1 that men earn\*

**92%**

Staff retention rate\*\*

**7.8 years**

Average length of service\*

**44 years**

Average age of workforce\*

## What does it mean?

**Value Chain:** the value created by working in collaboration with our suppliers, the raw materials and components, packaging and logistical solutions.

## Supplier Sustainability Scorecard:

A robust system of monitoring and measuring environmental and social aspects.



Reporting period 2021. \*GearForm group. \*\* UK  
(Nikwax Limited combined with Páramo Limited)

 - Experts & Partners

*We believe that together we achieve more; we work collaboratively within the outdoor industry, sharing our knowledge and expertise.*

**Our Goal**  
**EXTEND**  
**THE LIFE**  
of outdoor  
**products**



We actively work with outdoor brands to help extend the life of their products, supporting our partners with best-in-class aftercare and share our industry leading knowledge for the best outcomes for all.



## - Experts & Partners

By exchange of best practice and learning from others, we want to advance the outdoor industry as a whole.

1. We have a **history of innovation** in sustainability and continue to develop new practices and technology in the field, such as our Chemical Management System.

2. We are a firm believer in **pre-competitive collaboration** and seek to find the best solutions for the big challenges of our time, together with like-minded industry partners.

3. Our **science-based approach** ensures a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges we face. By taking a rational approach we make sure that our actions have a genuine environmental benefit.

4. We are excited to **support outdoor brands and athletes** and help extend the life of their products.



### What our partners say

 Rab®

*"Our customers expect our products to deliver superior performance for longer. That's why we choose Nikwax Hydrophobic Down treatment to dramatically reduce the negative effects that moisture can have on down insulation and ensure our jackets absorb less water, dry faster and retain their loft for longer, whatever the conditions."*



 THERM-A-REST®

*"With the Hydrophobic Down water resistant treatment in our sleeping bag range, Therm-a-Rest's customers know they are buying into long-lasting quality and performance. Our long-term partnership with Nikwax is vital to the brand, and what we stand for."*



*"Experiencing the great outdoors has never been about staying clean. It's about immersing yourself in nature – no matter the weather or terrain. Our packs are designed to follow you on these journeys, but it's with the help of technical partners like Nikwax, that ensures adventurers keep on adventuring. From waterproofing, to scrubbing away the trail after a long hike, Nikwax has always been our recommendation."*

 MERRELL M

*"At Merrell we choose to work with Nikwax, as the global #1 outdoor footwear brand wants to work with the number one in footwear aftercare. Caring for our shoes ensures they will continue to perform as well as they did fresh out the box. Plus, Nikwax's environmental approach, carbon offset and full recyclable packaging is something the whole industry can aspire to!"*

Nikwax is an active member of industry associations and charitable partnerships








## Get in touch

Any questions?  
Feel free to get in touch:

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**NIKWAX**  
OUTDOOR INNOVATION