



AXFOUNDATION

THE SWEDISH WOOL INITIATIVE

– Industrial-Scale Utilization
of Swedish Wool



FROM WASTE TO RESOURCE

More than half of Swedish wool is discarded¹. At the same time, Sweden imports over 1,700 tons of wool annually². This paradox sparked a movement.

In 2020, sheep farmers, textile companies, and innovators came together to form The Swedish Wool Initiative with a bold vision: *no Swedish wool should go to waste*.

In the years that followed, this collaboration transformed discarded wool into a sought-after raw material and demonstrated that Swedish wool can claim its place on the international market as a sustainable resource. This report tells the story of how Swedish wool went from a forgotten by-product to a driving force for circular innovation.

THE CHALLENGE: A WASTED HERITAGE AND A GROWING DEMAND

Globally, the textile industry is facing enormous challenges. The demand for textile fibers is expected to increase by 150% by 2050³, a trend driven by unsustainable business models built on overproduction and overconsumption. 60% of all textile fibers produced today are fossil-based⁴. Meanwhile, only 0.3% of all textile fibers are recycled into new textiles⁵. If we continue to use resources the way we do now, this growing demand can only be met with fibers derived from fossil raw materials.

The consequences are significant: the environmental impact is high, as most textile fibers consist of virgin

synthetic materials made from fossil oil, or cotton, which require vast amounts of water and chemicals. Another consequence is the mounting waste streams of textiles and synthetic fibers, which release large quantities of microplastics into nature⁶.

In search of better alternatives, Swedish brands are turning toward more sustainable materials that are locally produced, bio-based, recyclable, and have circular potential. Wool is one such promising material⁷. It is naturally antibacterial, dirt-repellent, and has flame-resistant properties that eliminate the need for added chemicals such as PFAS or biocides to achieve similar functions⁸.

Wool can also be recycled and is biodegradable. In short, it is well suited for highly appropriated for a circular economy. Yet Sweden is facing a paradoxical waste problem: of the approximately 1,000 tons of Swedish wool produced annually, more than half is lost as waste. Why? In part because functional systems for collecting and utilizing wool have long been missing.

There are too few collection points and no widely accepted standard for sorting and classifying wool. Without such infrastructure, it becomes difficult for Swedish producers to make use of the wool that exists. Instead, many companies have chosen to import wool – wool that often has a higher climate footprint and comes from sheep farming operations with lower animal welfare standards than those in Sweden⁹. The result has been a frustrating imbalance: a sustainable raw material is within reach, yet not fully utilized.



A SHARED VISION

From this challenge, The Swedish Wool Initiative was born. Coordinated by Axfoundation and supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders, the project launched in 2020 with the goal of changing the story of Swedish wool. In the project's first phase (2020–2023), important progress was made. Companies such as Filippa K, Tiger of Sweden, Fjällräven, Klippan Yllefabrik, and others gathered in order to get access to high-quality Swedish wool on an industrial scale at competitive prices.

Thanks to joint efforts, including improved wool sorting and collection, as well as new cross-industry collaborations, partner companies dramatically increased their use of Swedish wool. In just a few years, the amount of Swedish wool utilized grew thirteenfold, from 4.5 tons to over 60 tons¹⁰.

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This meant that wool previously considered waste was now given new life in products. Along the way, several innovative wool products were developed: everything from knitted sweaters and suits to wool blankets, backpacks, and jackets insulated with Swedish wool that otherwise would have been discarded. A particularly exciting breakthrough came when Klippan Yllefabrik succeeded in spinning a combed yarn from wasted wool, a type of wool normally rejected due to high organic matter. This innovative yarn proved that even low-grade wool can be refined and used.

Alongside product innovations, the value chain was strengthened. The role of wool brokers, linking sheep farmers and industry, was established and reinforced. Through centralized coordination of collection and quality assessment, the gap between wool producers and manufacturers began to close. Another key milestone came in 2022 with the launch of the Swedish Wool Standard, a national system for classifying wool¹¹.

With a joint standard, buying and selling Swedish wool with predictable quality became much simpler, opening an entirely new market of opportunities.

To help designers and engineers work sustainably with wool, a circular design guide was developed by Science Park Borås¹². At the same time, IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute conducted a sustainability analysis of Swedish wool, highlighting several advantages: Swedish wool has the potential to deliver a lower climate impact and contribute positively to biodiversity and carbon sequestration¹³.

All these results, new working methods and products, standards, collection systems, and knowledge demonstrated that the Swedish wool industry has a future. But to achieve the vision of no wool going to waste, the work needed to be scaled up even further.

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Fashion's future depends on bold new material stories – and Swedish wool holds incredible, untapped potential. Through the Swedish Wool Initiative, we're teaming up with designers across industries, from fashion to furniture, with one clear goal: ensuring no Swedish wool goes to waste.

– Johan Sidenmark,
Project Manager for The
Swedish Wool Initiative
and Future Materials at
Axfoundation





With her expertise, Kia Gabrielsson Beer has demonstrated how the Swedish Wool Standard can be put into practice. Photo: Axfoundation

INTERVIEW

KIA GABRIELSSON BEER

In the second up-scaling phase of The Swedish Wool Initiative, the Swedish Wool Standard was tested in practice – and one of the key contributors to this work was Kia Gabrielsson Beer.

By sorting and classifying wool according to the new standard, she has provided valuable insights into how the system works in practice. Her experience and expertise show how the standard can be applied effectively and strengthen the entire value chain, from sheep farmers to industry.

In what ways have you been involved in developing and implementing the classification system?

– I’ve highlighted the different wool types we have in Sweden and examined how they can be linked to specific types and classes so the wool can be used in the best possible way. I’ve looked at staple lengths, fiber types, and helped put the terminology in place. And I’ve tested the classification system in practice – it works!

What is the strength of the classification system?

– The Swedish Wool Standard’s classes are based on the quality of the wool and how it behaves – not on which breed it comes from. It reflects the various ways Swedish wool can be categorized based on end use. The Swedish Wool Standard has three types: Merino-type, Landrace-type, Crossbred, and a stuffing type. Under each type there are multiple classes. Swedish landrace wool, for example, is divided into several types, and

within the finewool type there are classes like F1, F2, and so on. A type is essentially a family of wool classes, such as the finewool type or the crossbred type. Several breeds can fall within one type, and the wool lands in different classes depending on what it is best suited for. For instance, spring wool from a landrace sheep can be finer than autumn wool, meaning the wool from the same animal may fall into different classes in spring and fall.

How does the Swedish Wool Standard make your work easier?

– When I use the classification system, I know exactly what type of wool I can offer when talking with buyers. It’s wonderful to finally have a shared language for wool, it means I can match the right wool to the right buyer!

What potential do you see in the classification system – for Sweden and internationally?

– That it’s actually possible! Things that previously couldn’t be done with Swedish wool are now completely feasible. I know what qualities I’m looking for – and now there’s Swedish wool that can meet those needs.

There’s also an opportunity for companies that have only relied on imported wool for many years to start exploring what they can create with Swedish wool. The old Swedish wool standard disappeared in the 1990s and was quite toothless, but now we’ve created a standard that works – and that can support the development of a Swedish wool industry.

With this system, Sweden can now do what Norway does and what no one else does: classify the sheep’s fleece as one type, and group belly and leg wool together. This means that belly and leg wool can be used in a ready-made spinning blend for the carpet industry – a quality that is actually usable. We’ve been missing that in Sweden for many years. And if Swedish carpet manufacturers aren’t interested, there may well be international buyers.

How do you see the role of the wool grader moving forward?

– It doesn’t take many weeks to grade all Swedish wool. It’s the work around it that takes time. That’s why the profession needs to be combined with other work – at least until we have many more sheep in Sweden. We need more wool graders in Sweden and more people with the necessary knowledge.

[Read more about the Swedish Wool Standard](#)



In November 2024, partners from The Swedish Wool Initiative gathered in Dalarna to classify two tons of wool as part of a project aimed at increasing the value of Swedish wool. Photo: Axfoundation



Together, The Swedish Wool Initiative classified the wool according to the Swedish Wool Standard. Photo: Axfoundation

FROM PILOT TO INDUSTRIAL SCALE

Building on the early successes, the initiative entered its second up-scaling phase of The Swedish Wool Initiative (2023–2025). This second phase represented a concerted effort to expand and spread the solutions tested during the pilot phase. Axfoundation continued to lead the work – now in partnership with Dalarna Science Park – and an even larger network of stakeholders from across the country joined.

The goal was to increase resource efficiency to the point where all Swedish wool can be utilized to its highest value. To achieve this, the project focused on several key areas:

- **Collection Infrastructure:** A regional wool collection hub was established in the region Dalarna, designed as a pilot to inspire similar hubs in other regions, such as Hälsingland. Logistics solutions and efficient workflows were tested for collecting wool from both small and large farms, with the aim of creating a cohesive nationwide system.
- **Quality Assurance and Standards:** The Swedish Wool Standard was revised and practically implemented in the collection chain in collaboration with Arena Svensk Ull. The number of classes was reduced and redesigned and successfully tested at the Swedish Championship of Wool and the European Championship of Wool in Finland. By applying the classification system directly during sorting and sales, it became easier for buyers to trust the quality of Swedish wool. Standardization laid the foundation for a transparent marketplace for wool.
- **Product Development and Circular Design:** The project collaborated with forward-looking companies in construction, furniture, fashion, outdoor gear, and home décor to develop new products based on Swedish wool. The ambition was to demonstrate wool's versatility as a material, from insulation and acoustic panels in construction to durable textiles and fashion items. All products were designed with circularity in mind, so they can either be recycled or composted at the end of their lifecycle.
- **Business Models and the Value Chain:** A key part of scaling up was developing circular business models for wool. This involved connecting sheep farmers, shearers, intermediaries, and manufacturers in a chain where the value is distributed to all parties. By demonstrating that wool can generate revenue, even if currently modest for farmers, an incentive was created to collect rather than discard it. At the same time, collaboration models were developed where costs and profits can be distributed more fairly along the chain, ensuring no link feels disadvantaged.
- **Sustainability Data and Impact Analysis:** To strengthen the case for Swedish wool, data from the processing stage was collected and analyzed. The previously mentioned sustainability study provided concrete figures on wool's climate impact, helping companies compare Swedish wool with other materials. This information is valuable for environmental product declarations (EPDs) and for identifying potential improvements in wool production.

In short, scaling up was about moving from successful pilot initiatives to building a robust system capable of operating on an industrial scale. Each focus area addressed a piece of the puzzle: collection, quality, product innovation, business, and sustainability. Together, they formed the roadmap toward a wool sector where no flow is left as waste.

“Through the Swedish Wool Initiative, we have proven that Swedish wool can be used industrially across multiple sectors. The combination of a standardized classification system for trading Swedish wool, a model for an efficient infrastructure, and cutting-edge product innovation means that we can now scale up – for real. This is the beginning of a new era for Swedish wool.”

– Lina Sofia Lundin,
project manager for the
Swedish Wool Initiative and
at Dalarna Science Park





At Norrby Farm, Tomas Olsson runs a modern sheep operation with a focus on animal welfare, sustainability, and a holistic approach. Photo: Røyk

INTERVIEW

NORRBY FARM

At Norrby Farm, Tomas Olsson runs a modern sheep farm with a strong focus on animal welfare, sustainability, and a holistic approach. By extending the grazing season and using natural pastures, the farm contributes to biodiversity and open landscapes. They work to make full use of the whole animal – both meat and wool – giving Swedish wool renewed value as a sustainable resource.

What role do you believe sheep play in sustainable agriculture?

– Sheep are, and historically have been, a very important part not only of agriculture but of society as a whole. Sheep can produce meat, wool, milk, and hides from land where we otherwise wouldn't be able to produce food. They also contribute to increased biodiversity.

People often talk about using the whole animal, both the meat and the wool. What does that mean for you in practice?

– For me, meat is the main part of my farming operation, but wool is something unique, and we haven't been good at making use of that resource, something that is incredibly important in the transition we're currently facing. To me, it's obvious that I should make the best possible use of the resources I have on

the farm.

What advantages do you see in utilizing wool, which is often discarded in Sweden?

– Beyond the sustainability aspect, it's important from a profitability standpoint. Making use of Swedish wool and being paid for the added Swedish value is crucial if we want to achieve true sustainability.

What has The Swedish Wool Initiative meant for you as a sheep farmer?

– It has given me knowledge across the entire value chain and helped us develop tools to improve profitability. Before the project started, I couldn't tell the difference between types of wool. I could distinguish white from black, but now I understand how fiber thickness varies and what each type can be used for. Fine fibers can be used for base layers, while coarser fibers are suitable for sweaters. The very coarsest wool can be used for things like rugs or insulation. It's about using the right wool for the right product – and this is knowledge we need to pass on.

You have 1,000 sheep – how much wool does that amount to in a year?

– We shear twice a year. Altogether, that comes to about two kilos of wool per ewe per year. A sweater requires about two kilos of wool, so the wool from my farm could produce roughly 1,000 sweaters.

How do you think Swedish wool can increase in value going forward?

– We need more efficient handling at every stage so that the right wool reaches the right customer. We also need to better communicate the added values of Swedish wool. Swedish wool is unique, with many different breeds and many different qualities. It's shaped by the beautiful and unique landscapes we have here in Sweden.

[Read more about Norrby Farm](#)



Norrby Farm is home to around 1,000 ewes. Photo: Ax foundation



Photo: Axfoundation

COLLABORATION AS A DRIVING FORCE

A common thread throughout the project has been collaboration. No single actor could solve the challenges facing Swedish wool alone- it required a holistic approach. The Swedish Wool Initiative therefore brought together stakeholders from across the entire value chain, from sheep farms to finished products. Under the leadership of Axfoundation, an unprecedented network was established: sheep farmers and shearers, wool processors, spinning mills, textile designers, fashion houses, outdoor companies, researchers, and industry organizations, all at the same table. Competitors became collaborators.

Normally, established brands might compete for market share and keep their innovations secret, but here companies like Filippa K, Tiger of Sweden, Wool Rebel, Wålstedts Ullspinneri, CTH Ericsson, Houdini, and others openly shared experiences to achieve the common goal. Arena Svensk Ull contributed by providing free training for sheep farmers¹⁴ and Axfoundation served as a platform for these actors to meet and exchange knowledge. Researchers from Dalarna University, Chalmers University, and IVL contributed analyses and expertise that complemented the practical knowledge of the businesses.

The working approach was inclusive and experimental. Through regular workshops and pilot projects, ideas were tested in real-world conditions. For example, several joint wool collection events were held, yielding lessons on everything from logistics chains to how wool should be stored to preserve its quality. In product development, designers were paired with material experts to push the boundaries of what could be made from Swedish wool. At every stage, open communication and shared problem-solving were encouraged.

– We bring together a wide range of actors who normally compete but are now collaborating to find shared, and smart, solutions that benefit everyone. This is an incredibly important step toward a sustainable and circular industry.

– Johan Sidenmark, Project Manager for The Swedish Wool Initiative and Future materials at Axfoundation

The trust and shared understanding built within the network became a crucial success factor. Barriers between sheep farmers and industry began to break down, and a new holistic perspective emerged, where everyone recognized their role in a circular wool value chain.



Together, Jenny Andersson and Hans Bulthuis run Ullkontoret on Gotland. Photo: Tiger of Sweden

INTERVIEW

ULLKONTORET

Ullkontoret on Gotland was one of the key experts involved in The Swedish Wool Initiative. They contributed their deep expertise to the development of the new wool classification system and serve on the board of Arena Svensk Ull.

What materials can you currently offer the market, and in what volumes?

– Ullkontoret is scouring about 75 tons of wool per year, which becomes just over 50 tons after scouring. From that wool, we partially produce needlefelt in various qualities according to customer specifications, or we sell washed wool in large bales of around 250 kg each. Since the autumn of 2024, we have also been spinning worsted yarn in our own spinning mill in Visby.

This means we have now reached the goal of being able to offer a Swedish yarn that is both scoured and spun in Sweden, delivered on cones so it can be placed directly next to a knitting or weaving machine for fabric production. Yarn volumes will increase as we gain more routine and orders continue to come in. The spinning mill has a theoretical capacity of 50 tons per year.

Today you operate with a fully local value chain that includes collection, scouring, and spinning. What lessons have you learned from getting the spinning mill up and running?

– We commissioned our wool scouring on Gotland in 2016, so for 10 years we have been purchasing wool from Swedish sheep farmers, scouring it, and pressing it into bales for large-scale processing. It takes time to build value chains, but now we have a large group of suppliers who know what the wool needs to look like

to be suitable for scouring and further processing into needlefelt or yarn.

Since we built the spinning mill with used machines, delivered to Gotland dismantled, we have learned how the machines operate by putting them together ourselves. The know-how required to spin Swedish wool in larger worsted spinning mills has been lacking in Sweden, so we have had to rely heavily on trial and error, but we have also received invaluable help from our knowledgeable machinery dealer in Germany.

What challenges have you experienced in the wool community in recent years?

– Profitability is always an issue, both for us and for our suppliers, the sheep farmers. We also need to constantly work on quality and ensure that what we deliver is as good, and as consistent as possible.

When it comes to Swedish wool, plant debris from straw, hay, and other matter that gets into the wool out on the pastures is often a challenge. Another issue is understanding which wool types blend well together, and which should be kept separate to avoid contaminating the final result.

We see that consumers have a strong desire to find more 100% Swedish wool products, but processors who make the finished products aren't entirely confident that customers are willing to pay what it costs.

What will Swedish wool processing look like in five years?

– Sweden would benefit from having two or three hubs for wool collection, as well as several wool scouring facilities. Right now, we operate the only wool scouring in Scandinavia, and Danish, Finnish, and Baltic customers are contacting us to ask whether they can have their wool scoured here. At the moment, the challenge is finding buyers more than finding suppliers. We're being offered more wool than we have the capacity to purchase.

[Read more about Ullkontoret](#)



Since the fall of 2024, Ullkontoret has been spinning worsted yarn in its own mill in Visby. Photo: Ullkontoret

The fabric GLINT was developed by Swedish Textile within the framework of The Swedish Wool Initiative and highlights the lustrous qualities of pelts wool. Photo: Swedish Textile

INTERVIEW

SWEDISH TEXTILE

Swedish Textile is a partner in The Swedish Wool Initiative and an innovative player in the Swedish textile industry, with a strong focus on sustainability and circular solutions. In Forsa, outside Hudiksvall, they collaborate with Holma Helsinglands AB to establish a production structure that encompasses the entire value chain for Swedish wool – from collection to product development.

Their facility is designed to serve as a hub for innovation and collaboration, with the goal of strengthening Sweden's self-sufficiency in textiles, reducing climate impact, and contributing to a more sustainable textile industry. Below, Rebecca Josefsson Ulvling shares her vision and the work carried out within the project so far.

In your first collection, "Tidens Textur," you developed fabrics such as Glint, Nordvad, and UllCanvas. What was the goal of the collection, and which characteristics of wool did you want to highlight?

– I wanted to create fabrics that could be produced locally in Sweden and have a wide range of applications. To succeed on a larger scale, we need to work with wool that exists in sufficient quantities, and to achieve the best results, product development must be guided by the wool's natural character. Swedish wool is particularly well-suited for slightly heavier woven fabrics- and that became our starting point.

In GLINT, I wanted to highlight the glossy characteristics of pelssau wool while creating a supple and lightweight fabric that can be used for suits and similar garments. To emphasize these traits in the weave, we used a classic twill structure, which provides beautiful drape, flexibility, and durability. The result is an elegant fabric suitable both as upholstery and for apparel.

The second fabric, NORDVAD, is a contemporary interpretation of Vadmal. Felted wool fabrics have something iconic about them- they combine functionality with timeless aesthetics. Here, too, we

Rebecca Josefsson Ulvling is a textile engineer and the founder of Swedish Textile.





As part of the project, Swedish Textile has developed a number of new fabrics for prototype development. This overshirt, designed by A Day's March, is made from the GLINT fabric. Photo: Axfoundation

blended different Swedish wool fibers, some of which come from heritage breeds in the V-class- many of them endangered. By giving their wool a value, we hope to draw attention to these unique and culturally significant breeds.

ULLCANVAS is still under development. The samples woven so far are inspired by thick cotton canvases, fabrics stiff enough to almost stand on their own- intended for use both as industrial workwear and as upholstery. Since it is a warp-faced fabric, where the warp provides nearly all of the strength, our ambition is to continue experimenting with the quality of the weft yarn. The long-term idea is for the weft to eventually be made from recycled yarn.

Swedish Textile, together with Holma Helsinglands, aims to build a domestic, circular, and resilient wool industry in Sweden. What does that mean in practice – and why is it important right now?

– In practice, this investment is about establishing a new node in Sweden's textile infrastructure- creating a hub in central Sweden for collecting, sorting, scouring, and processing Swedish wool that is not currently collected by existing facilities on the West Coast or at Ullkontoret. Within a few years, we also want to be able to purchase wool from these stations and from Finland

for further processing. By creating a complete value chain in Sweden, the wool can be utilized locally and used within both the textile and building industries. This is more relevant now than it has been in a long time, as resilience, self-sufficiency, and sustainable materials rank high on the agenda across many sectors.

What strengths do you see in Swedish wool as a material – and how can it contribute to new product development in fashion, interiors, and crafts?

– One of the major strengths of Swedish wool is the incredible diversity of fiber types, from soft to glossy and durable. This allows the wool to be used for a wide variety of products in fashion, interiors, and crafts. By combining different wool qualities, you can create materials with unique aesthetics and functional properties that enhance each other, both visually and technically.



At the classification gathering in Rättvik, Rebecca and Liselott Öhring sort wool in class E4P. Photo: Axfoundation

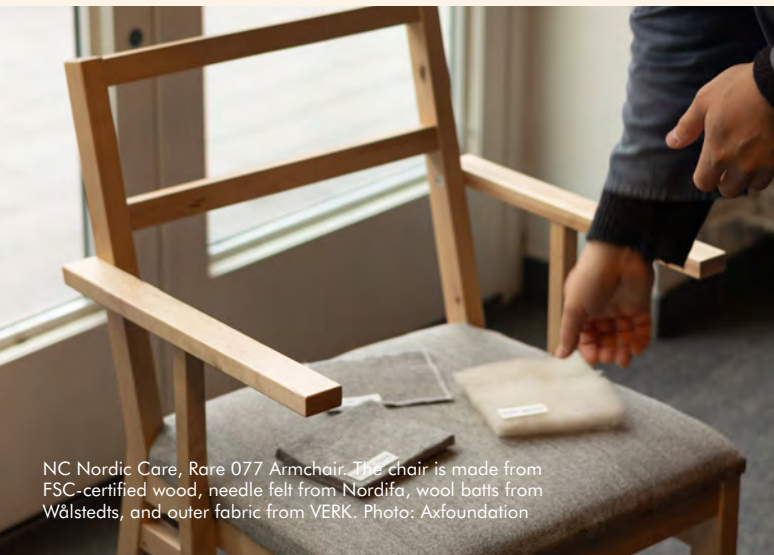
What are the next steps for Swedish Textile? What development do you hope to see in the next 2–3 years?

– Within three years, we hope to have established wool collection in Dalarna, Gävleborg, and Uppland, purchased and installed machinery, and begun supplying yarn to artisans and fabrics to fashion and furniture companies. In about two years, a documentary series following the development of the operation is expected to be released. Our hope is that this will not only strengthen the Swedish wool industry but also inspire more people to contribute to a sustainable transition.

[Read more about Swedish Textile](#)

RESULTS AND IMPACT

During the course of the project, much of the wool that was previously lost has instead found new applications in Swedish industry. Resource efficiency has increased significantly. Through the initiatives in Dalarna, wool collection has become more organized and efficient, meaning that a larger share of wool is now actually being utilized.



NC Nordic Care, Rare 077 Armchair. The chair is made from FSC-certified wood, needle felt from Nordifa, wool batts from Wälstedts, and outer fabric from VERK. Photo: Axfoundation

The model of regional collection centers acts as a hub where wool is gathered, coarsely sorted, and sent on for further processing at larger facilities. This pilot model has demonstrated how similar hubs could operate across the country, already generating interest in other regions.

Standardization through the Swedish Wool Standard has made wool trade smoother and more transparent. Yarn producers and textile manufacturers can now easily purchase Swedish wool of specified quality, rather than “buying the pig in a poke” so to say. This has opened new markets: wool qualities that were previously discarded now have value because buyers know what to expect. Several companies have begun sourcing Swedish wool as the farmers now can provide both consistent volumes and high quality.

Concrete innovations have reached the market. By the end of the project, more than 30 of products based on Swedish wool were on the market, or being close to market readiness.

Examples include fashion and outdoor apparel, interior products (such as chairs, rugs, and cushion covers made from Swedish wool to showcase its strength), and

even building insulation (pilot projects using wool as insulation in temporary shelters, leveraging its natural thermal properties).

These results illustrate the versatility of Swedish wool, from keeping people warm to insulating buildings. This diversity is thanks to the many sheep breeds in Sweden.

The project has also provided new insights into the sustainability benefits of using Swedish wool. Climate calculations clearly showed that Swedish wool often has a lower environmental footprint than comparable products¹⁵ or garments made from imported wool¹⁶.

Another sustainability advantage is that Swedish wool comes from sheep that often graze on natural pasture, contributing to increased biodiversity¹⁷.

Positive social effects are also evident. Sheep farmers who previously had to discard wool can now earn a small additional income, nurturing pride and motivation to properly manage wool. A developed wool industry leverages a domestic resource, strengthens rural development, enhances self-sufficiency, and supports national preparedness.

Thus, The Swedish Wool Initiative is not just an industrial project, it is a strategic resource for Sweden’s transition to a circular economy, civil preparedness, and the sustainable textile industry of the future. In short, The Swedish Wool Initiative has achieved tangible results, increased use of Swedish wool, innovative products, new processes, and a stronger value chain. Swedish wool has gone from being a forgotten resource to a key building block in sustainable products.



Tomas Olsson, Stina Randestad, Johanna Behrman, and Elin Dahl Sandren on the panel at STHLM Fashion Week, where STINARAND's work in Swedish wool was showcased. Photo: Axfoundation



Overshirt from TINI in the Swedish Textile fabric Nordvad. Photo: Axfoundation



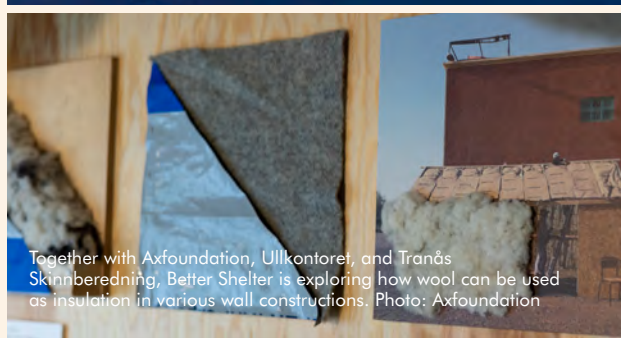
"The Swedish Wool Braided Sweater by Filippa K is made from undyed wool from the Dorset sheep breed, in collaboration with Klippan Yllefabrik and Väst kustens Ullinsamling. Photo: Filippa K



Kasthall, together with Wålstedts spinning mill, has developed a 100% Swedish rug yarn. Kasthall has continued to explore Swedish wool by producing both a woven and a tufted rug. Photo: Axfoundation



Leicester SWI by Woolrebel is made from Swedish wool and insulated with the groundbreaking FÄRTEX®. The insole is made from the glacier blanket. Photo: Axfoundation



Together with Axfoundation, Ullkontoret, and Tranås Skinnberedning, Better Shelter is exploring how wool can be used as insulation in various wall constructions. Photo: Axfoundation



Vest in Swedish wool from Houdini. Photo: Axfoundation



CTH Ericson 'Vegamössa' in Swedish wool. Photo: Axfoundation



Tiger of Sweden's Fall/Winter 2025 collection includes both coats and suits made from 100 percent Swedish wool. Pictured are the 'Camden' coat, the 'Jeen' blazer, and the 'Todne' trousers. Photo: Tiger of Sweden

INTERVIEW

TIGER OF SWEDEN

For the past five years, Tiger of Sweden has been working with Swedish wool in collaboration with The Swedish Wool Initiative. By using wool from Swedish sheep, the brand demonstrates how local, sustainable materials can be reintroduced into modern design. All production takes place within Europe, ensuring high quality, traceability, and animal welfare. The work with Swedish wool is part of Tiger of Sweden's commitment to creating long-lasting fashion with a reduced environmental impact.

How did your work with Swedish wool begin, and what sparked your interest in this raw material?

– Our journey with Swedish wool began about six years ago, when we learned that Swedish wool was largely being discarded. We reacted immediately – why had we not realized this earlier, especially since wool was one of the fibers we used most?

The journey wasn't straightforward. We wanted to work with woven fabric and assumed it would be simple, but many told us it wouldn't work because Swedish wool was considered too coarse and too thick. As we moved forward, we discovered just how many different types of wool actually exist, and how important it is to match the right grade with the right product. Hearing about Ullkontoret became the turning point.

What are the biggest challenges you've encountered in working to create fashion from Swedish wool, and how have you addressed them along the way?

– One of the early obstacles was the scouring process. To scour wool in Italy, we needed two tons of fiber, while Ullkontoret could offer 350 kilos of their scoured Gotland wool. When Italy finally said yes, we were able to move forward. Spinning wasn't easy either – the wool fibers swelled up like dough – but together with our Italian weaver, we realized that Gotland wool resembled mohair. We then adjusted the spinning technique, which allowed us to create a strong and beautiful material. From that, we made our first coat in its natural color. This also marked the beginning of our decision that every collection should include at least one product made from Swedish wool.

The big question in the beginning was: where do we start? We've now come a long way and have connections with several suppliers and key people in Sweden, but in the beginning everything was new. The processing steps also needed to exist in Sweden – both the expertise and the actual processes.

The initial costs were high and the lead times long, which meant we had to reverse the

Linda Kåhed is Head of Sustainability and Innovation at Tiger of Sweden.



design process and instead start from the material and the fibers, creating the product afterward.

How has the collaboration within the Swedish Wool Initiative contributed to your work and to the development of new products such as suits and outerwear?

– The collaboration has been absolutely essential. Through The Swedish Wool Initiative, we found additional partners and gained access to the knowledge shared among the participants. A clear example is our collaboration with Väst kustens ullinsamling, which, together with Klippans Yllefabrik, made it possible for us to produce the yarn needed to create our first suit – something we had long aspired to but had previously been unable to achieve because the available yarns were too coarse.

This year, we celebrated five years of working with Swedish wool and were now able to offer both women's and men's suits. In our Fall/Winter 2025 collection, we collaborated with two Swedish wool producers to develop unique and sustainable yarns. Unlike previous seasons, when the wool was sent to Italy for processing and weaving, this time we were directly involved in producing the finished spun yarns, working closely with Ullkontoret and Klippan. The wool still came exclusively from Swedish farms and was 100 percent Swedish, even though the scouring, combing, and spinning processes were carried out outside of Sweden.

Having insight into the yarn-spinning process already from the start feels like an important step in strengthening our knowledge and giving us the ability to influence the process. Over our five years of work, we have experimented with different types of yarns and fibers, but we have always aimed to refine our approach – something we've been able to achieve thanks to our heritage and our experience in developing suiting fabrics. Klippan, which had previously spun two-ply yarns, helped us develop a single-ply twisted yarn that we at Tiger of Sweden saw potential in for suiting fabrics – and it turned out to work perfectly. We see this as an example of innovation and are very proud of the result.

In what ways does Swedish wool differ from other wool you work with – in terms of feel, quality, and how you communicate it to customers?

– Swedish wool has a coarser feel than conventional wool, and it has been important to educate customers that this, too, is quality and part of the material's natural characteristics. At the same time, it is an amazing fiber – beautiful and with a strong identity.



The 'Hennri' coat in 100% Swedish wool. Photo: Tiger of Sweden

The transparency throughout the supply chain has also been a major strength. From fiber to finished product, we have been able to trace the raw material in detail, something we know our customers appreciate. With the new EU legislation coming into effect, this will become an even more significant advantage.

What potential do you see for Swedish wool in the fashion industry going forward, and what is needed for it to be used on a larger scale?

– Swedish wool has enormous potential. It is a fantastic fiber, we have a strong focus on animal welfare, and the transparency in the supply chain is perfectly aligned with upcoming regulations. Customers who discover these products truly appreciate them, and the storytelling around the materials makes the garments unique – they gain a soul. To scale up, Sweden needs accessible processing steps, more local expertise, and a continued effort within the industry to build strong relationships. The wool itself has everything required, but the systems around it must continue to evolve.

We feel that we have truly succeeded in our work and want to inspire change within the industry. By highlighting a resource that has long been overlooked, we are showing the remarkable potential Swedish wool has in sustainable fashion. The past five years have clearly demonstrated how Swedish wool, which was previously often disregarded, can become a valuable raw material for beautiful, high-quality garments.

[Read more about Tiger of Sweden's work with Swedish wool](#)

INTERVIEW

VERK

VERK is a Swedish furniture producer that manufactures its products, furniture and textiles using only Swedish materials, including Swedish wool.

How do you see Swedish wool contributing to furniture with high quality, long lifespan, and low climate impact?

– We’ve developed our own upholstery fabric made from Swedish wool – a fabric used both for sofa upholstery and seat cushions. Our thinking is that if wool is woven in the right way, you get a strong, durable textile that can last a very long time. The fabric we’ve created reaches over 70,000 Martindale, which shows that it has high abrasion resistance.

When it comes to stuffing, one major advantage is that wool can be replenished over time. If a sofa starts to feel worn down, you can simply add more wool. That’s not possible with sofas filled with plastic-based materials. We’ve already done such a refill – after about three years, the sofa felt brand new again.

What does your process look like when developing your wool upholstery fabric?

– Ullkontoret on Gotland collects, scoures, and also spins the yarn. The fabric is then woven in Bollnäs. After that, the finishing is done by Sjuhäradsbygdens Färgeri. So, the entire production chain is Swedish.

How has it worked to operate so locally?

– In the beginning, it was a huge challenge – especially locating materials and expertise that actually existed in Sweden. We were, for example, surprised to discover that there was no longer any Swedish textile production based on Swedish raw materials. Not even linen was being produced from Swedish-grown flax.

Finding the right subcontractors took time. But now that the chain is in place, the process is much smoother – both for us and for others who want to produce locally in Sweden.

What opportunities do you see for the furniture industry when working close to the raw material? Can this become large-scale?

– Absolutely. We actually thought more people would adopt this faster, especially given the EU’s increasing requirements around transparency, taxonomy, CSRD,

and digital product passports. But the recession, war, and other crises have pushed a lot of things into the future. Sustainability issues have been overshadowed.

For us, local production is about global thinking: using what’s available where you are. Where raw materials are missing, you naturally need to import them, but otherwise, much can be done locally.

Where do you see the greatest potential for growth in the next two to three years when it comes to Swedish wool and sustainable interior design?

– We hope that more people will recognize the benefits of using Swedish wool textiles. It’s actually absurd that we still burn or discarded large amounts of wool in Sweden simply because the value chain hasn’t been in place. It should be obvious to use a raw material we already have.

Now that a Swedish-made textile actually exists, it’s easier for more companies to take the step. The fabric isn’t cheaper than imported low-cost materials, but the price is comparable to exclusive upholstery fabrics from, for example, Kvadrat.

What would you say are the three greatest advantages of Swedish wool in textiles?

1. That the wool is taken care of instead of discarded – we’re using existing raw material that is often wasted today.
2. That there is now a functioning value chain and a high-quality Swedish fabric.
3. That local production creates transparency, reduces transport, and strengthens expertise in Sweden.

What significance has The Swedish Wool Initiative had for you?

– The project has been invaluable. We’ve received support in developing contacts, creating certifications, support for exhibitions, and help with LCA calculations. It has also been important for us to get to know the industry – we came in as complete newcomers. The Swedish Wool Initiative has opened doors and built relationships that we hope will continue to grow even after the project formally concludes.

[Read more about VERK](#)

Simon Anund is the co-founder and Creative Director at VERK.





POLICY

FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS

Swedish wool remains trapped in an unprofitable and underfunded supply system. After six years of The Swedish Wool Initiative, the value chain for Swedish wool is once again functioning — from sheep farmers to processors — but economic stability is still lacking. Without government policy instruments such as financial support for grading, infrastructure, and public procurement, the value chains that have been built risk collapsing. Here are five recommendations for policymakers:

1. Implement a Wool Classification Agreement Adapted to EU Rules

A wool classification agreement inspired by the Norwegian model could provide financial support for sorting and quality assurance. The support would cover activities such as sorting, certification, transportation, and traceable documentation. The funding ceiling would be set at 50,000 euro per recipient over a three-year period under EU agricultural regulations¹⁸. This measure would make wool handling more profitable at the farm level, reduce waste, and encourage more sheep farmers to deliver quality-assured wool.

2. Set a National Target for Circular and Bio-Based Fibers in Public Procurement

The goal should establish that, by 2027, the public sector must require circular or bio-based fibers in at least 20% of textile purchases, with a target of increasing this to at least 30% by 2030. This would create stable demand for Swedish wool, drive the market forward, and make investments in both infrastructure and innovation more profitable.

3. Introduce the “Wool Leap” Investment Support

Assign the Swedish Board of Agriculture to scale an investment support of 65% for machinery, sorting lines, storage, or transport equipment for wool. This would enable rapid expansion of necessary infrastructure even for smaller actors and eliminate bottlenecks in collection, sorting, and scouring. The support should also facilitate the development of regional collection hubs, strengthening capacity nationwide and making Swedish wool more competitive.

4. Implement an Eco-Modulated Textile Producer Fee (10 SEK per Garment)

Introduce a Swedish extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for textiles with a fee of 10 SEK per garment. The system should be eco-modulated, sustainable, repairable, and recyclable garments would incur a lower fee, while short-lived fast fashion items would be charged higher. According to calculations by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, this fee could generate approximately 1.5 billion SEK over five years (~SEK 300 million per year) to fund innovation, reuse, and public procurement of circular and Swedish materials such as wool¹⁹. The proposal aligns with the EU’s new producer responsibility framework and strengthens Swedish competitiveness by shifting focus from volume sales to sustainable design.

5. Introduce Innovation Support for New Wool Products, Including Applications for Preparedness

Assign Vinnova, FOI, and defense-related innovation programs to fund the development of new wool-based materials for various sectors, with a particular focus on defense – and crisis preparedness – e.g., flame-retardant textiles, insulation for field equipment, and wool composites.



Photo. Axfoundation

THE ROAD AHEAD

REBUILDING A SWEDISH WOOL INDUSTRY

The journey described in this report shows that systemic change is possible when many stakeholders pull in the same direction. But the work for Swedish wool does not stop here. The long-term vision – ensuring that no Swedish wool goes to waste – is within reach but requires continued commitment. The project has laid the groundwork by developing tools and pilot models. These now need to be maintained and scaled.

In the future, Sweden could ensure that all 1,000+ tons of wool produced annually find their way into valuable streams. Achieving this will require persistence and ongoing collaboration. Sheep farmers across the country can be inspired by the examples set in Dalarna and begin collecting wool instead of discarding it.

More companies can join in using Swedish wool in their collections and products. Policymakers can support this by facilitating local processing and potentially introducing requirements or incentives for sustainable

materials in public procurement, benefiting the wool industry.

A key insight is that all parts of the system are interconnected. To succeed nationally, logistics, standards, markets, and behaviors must work together. A clear path forward already exists: Arena Svensk Ull and other networks can continue to serve as meeting places where ideas are exchanged and collaborations formed.

The strength of the vision lies in its broad benefits: the sheep farming sector gains extra income and pride, the industry gains a locally produced premium material, consumers gain sustainable products, and the environment is spared unnecessary impact.

When we make products from Swedish wool, we let knowledge, quality and nature go hand in hand. Using the products is a way to protect both our traditions and the resources that make them possible. The Swedish Wool Initiative has shown the way. The next chapter will be written by all stakeholders who take the baton forward. With continued passion and practical action, the vision can become reality – a circular wool industry where Swedish wool is recognized as the treasure it truly is, and not a single tuft of wool goes to waste.



Wålstedts Wool Spinning Mill was founded in 1918. Today, they work to produce high-quality yarns and wool products made from Swedish wool. Photo: Henrik Hansson.

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