We’re not all cut from the same cloth. Sustainability looms large in our thinking. It’s our warp and weft - our very Moral Fibre.
Our second Queen’s Award for Sustainable Development marks five years of continuous environmental improvement and best in class performance.

We’ve been recognised for outstanding achievements in sustainable product design, supply chain initiatives, waste saving and recycling, people development and corporate social responsibility. As a way of celebrating, this Sustainability Snapshot showcases some of our stories as we weave our way to a more sustainable future. Sustainability is our warp and weft; it’s within the fibres of Camira and at the heart of our culture and ethos.
Nettle, hemp, flax and jute plants partner with nature’s most intelligent fibre, wool, to deliver Camira’s most sustainable product portfolio yet.

In a textile age where synthetics dominate, Camira have led the way in the development of innovative and sustainable fabric ranges. Environmental and ethical considerations are embedded in the materials we use and where we source them from.

Our hemp is grown at Huit Farm in Leicestershire and is rapidly renewable and entirely biodegradable. In fact 8 different product ranges now contain sustainable bast fibres. In 2014, 61% of the products manufactured at our main UK site were from natural or recycled raw materials – a figure that is rising every year!
Recycling, re-using, taking back and upcycling. Camira is pulling apart the traditional linear route of take, make and waste and instead adopting the circular economy model.

2014 and 2013 were landmark years because we achieved almost 0% waste to landfill at our main UK manufacturing facility in Meltham, Huddersfield. Yet it’s not just about recycling for Camira, it’s about being innovative with our suppliers to eliminate and re-utilise waste.

Just some of the ways we’ve managed and re-used our waste:

1. Our polyester selvedge waste is returned to the yarn supplier in order to be re-extruded back into new yarns. Our Gravity, X2, L2, Dimension and Halcyon product ranges contain up to 25% closed-loop content, which of course diverts the waste material away from landfill and saves virgin raw materials.

2. Camira have take back schemes with a number of UK customers who return their upholstery off-cut fabrics for recycling or use in new product development. The amount increased from 19 tonnes in 2012 to 44 tonnes in 2014.

3. We’ve reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill from 340 tonnes (in 2009) down to less than a tonne today, which is the result of major continuous improvement projects and lean thinking.

4. Not only are we recycling our own waste, our product range Century contains upcycled jute coffee sacks which we have reprocessed into raw fibre.
Improving our resource efficiency is top priority at Camira. We’ve reduced electricity consumption per metre of fabric at our UK manufacturing facility by 39% since 2009.

Total electricity consumption at our Meltham manufacturing facility has reduced by over 20% in 6 years, yet the amount of metres produced has increased from 5.9 million to 7.7 million in the same period. We’re showing that even with an increasing production capacity, you can still reduce your environmental impact through more efficient production processes and an environmental management system that utilises new efficient technologies, increased staff awareness and a culture of sustainable progress.
We’ve brought home our very own gold medal - a Gold Award for Occupational Health and Safety by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).

This accolade not only recognises our continuous improvement and commitment to health and safety but also the advances made from our previous Silver Awards in 2007 and 2013. We’ve been accredited to OHSAS 18001 since 2011 and have continued to prioritise health and safety training in our learning and development programme, including first aid, manual handling and risk assessments.
The Master and the Apprentice

We’re enticing new talent into textiles, developing a sustainable skills base by nurturing young individuals through our leading-edge apprenticeship excellence scheme.

Camira have worked closely with local schools to develop a tailored apprenticeship recruitment programme. We’ve been actively supporting a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme for 3 years, enlisting enthusiastic recruits who are mentored by training associations and industry experts. The scheme allows individuals to further their education whilst gaining valuable skills in the workplace resulting in industry approved qualifications.

How it works: 4 stage process

1. Promotion: Camira Apprenticeships are promoted directly to schools as well as at Careers’ Fairs to spark interest among students and parents.

2. Tour: Interested candidates are invited to tour our 230,000 square feet manufacturing plant to see what an international textile organisation looks like.

3. Work placement: Candidates can then apply for a week’s work placement experiencing half day sessions in up to 10 different departments.

4. Selection: We select the right candidate for the right role based on how they perform during work placement.

Modern Apprenticeships are currently taking place in Manufacturing, Maintenance, Supply Chain, Marketing and Quality. We even received a visit from the UK Prime Minister to talk about the scheme and meet our apprentices!
Our list of EU Ecolabel certified textiles is getting longer all the time. We’re committed to offering certified, sustainable textile solutions be it from wool, hemp, flax or recycled polyester.

The Ecolabel from the European Commission is awarded to products that have a reduced environmental impact throughout the entirety of their lifecycle. The robust criteria assess products based on the extraction of raw fibres, the individual stages of manufacturing and the fitness for use of the final product. Over 50% of the contract fabric metres that Camira manufacture are EU Ecolabel certified.

More accreditations and standards:

- We’ve been a member of the UK’s Furniture Industry Sustainability Programme since its inception in 2007 and are audited across a variety of environmental metrics and social requirements.

- Camira have the 24 highest ranked fabrics on the GIGA (Green Ideas, Green Actions) materials library which helps architects specify building and interior products for their environmental attributes.

- We have operated to ISO 9001 for quality management since 1993, ISO 14001 for environmental management since 1996 and OHSAS 18001 for health and safety since 2011.

- Many of our fabrics can also contribute to Green Building schemes like LEED, BREEAM and Ska and product transparency schemes such as ‘Health Product Declarations’.
Top
New accreditation for Main Line Flax

Left
EU Ecolabel certified Technical Knitted fabrics
From Mirfield to Ariogala

Where we work and weave is just as important as the products we create. Camira facilities have sustainability credentials of their own – healthy environments inspire creative fabrics.

Not familiar with the places where we design and manufacture? Then let us put them on the map. Mirfield is a small town in West Yorkshire in the North of England where our HQ is located in a former textile mill dating back to 1812, restored and refurbished in 2009. It is set in the beautiful Wheatley Park estate. Just 10 miles away is our largest manufacturing site in Meltham on the edge of the rolling Pennines near Huddersfield. And Ariogala is our base in Lithuania, an hour away from Kaunas, where we built a modern manufacturing plant around the shell of a former dairy factory. Each location has its own identity, yet always recognisably Camira. And not a dark satanic mill in sight.

Facts on our facilities:

- Our Mirfield headquarters benefits from multiple environmental building features: comfort cooling system using borehole water, low energy lighting with lux and proximity sensors, north facing light wells, and of course it’s furnished in the latest sustainable Camira textiles.

- In Meltham, our manufacturing site utilises voltage optimisation, natural lighting and a strategy of raising staff awareness – the use of GEMBA boards to share progress and ideas helps facilitate this and our culture of openness empowers employees to positively contribute to our environmental impact.

- Camira’s 8000m² Lithuanian facility also profits from efficient, energy saving insulation whilst left-over fabric from our sampling department is provided to local schools for use in art projects.
The Survivor Sofa escaped landfill unlike millions of other furniture items each year. Instead it was resurrected into a new, beautiful and circular product from waste material.

A team of designers from London’s Royal Society of Arts’ ‘Great Recovery’ project hauled a discarded sofa from a skip. Rather than being saved for resale, the sofa had been relegated to landfill because it was missing its fire label. The team proceeded to deconstruct the sofa to uncover its ingredients and the systems of consumption and waste that led to it being discarded. Collaborating with Camira, a brand new fabric was developed using waste wool textiles - reclaimed by-products of the furniture upholstery process. The sofa was revived during a live upholstery session outside our London showroom during Clerkenwell Design Week. What better materials to rebuild the sofa with than waste from the furniture industry itself?

Survivor Sofa specifics:

- The Great Recovery is a project that looks to build networks and explore opportunities and partnerships for the circular economy.

- Expert furniture up-cyclers ‘Urban Upholstery’ gave the sofa the makeover it deserved during Clerkenwell Design Week using the recycled fabric and fibre.

- Waste fabric off-cuts were regenerated into fibre and re-spun and woven by Camira into a new ‘closed-loop’ herringbone design textile.

- The project was showcased as part of an engaging and inspiring documentary film that follows the story of the sofa from skip to survivor.
The finished Survivor Sofa

Live ‘urban’ upholstery in Clerkenwell
Our continuous environmental improvements and resource efficiency measures speak for themselves, but there’s still much more we can do.

The adoption of our Sustainability Strategy and strengthened Environmental Policy has driven our measures to increase resource efficiency and reduce our energy consumption. We’ve made progress across all fronts. Our use of sustainable raw materials has increased and our recycling initiatives have ensured that virtually none of our waste goes to landfill. Energy usage is decreasing and the installation of a borehole at our finishing plant provides a more sustainable water supply.
Get in touch

We believe that collaboration is the key to sustainable interiors. Specifying environmentally sensitive textiles? Look no further than Camira.

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