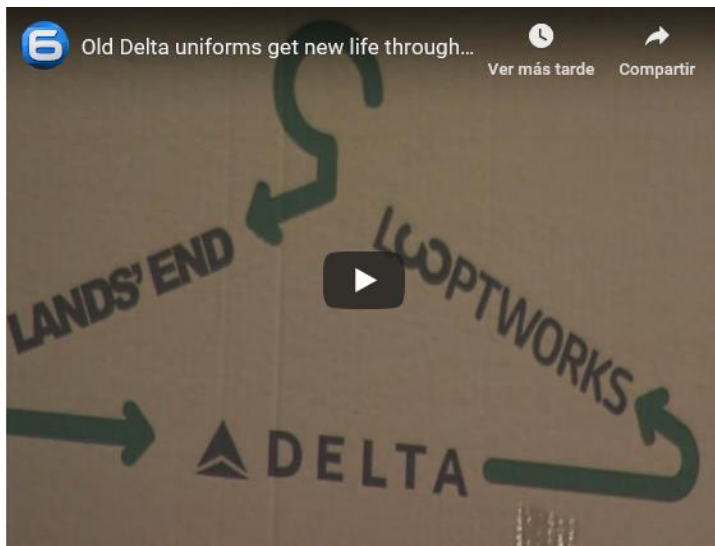


**Magazines, water bottles, food and even your airplane seat. What if it could all be reused, recycled or even made from once-used materials?...**

Airlines around the world are on-boarding sustainability to counter the huge problem of **cabin and terminal waste**. According to information provided by Spanish airline [Iberia](#), Airports Council International reported that 6.3 billion passengers create almost 9 billion kilograms of waste, with **almost none of it hitting the recycling bin**. As air travel grows, so too will the waste footprint if stringent sustainability and carbon-cutting measures aren't adopted. Passenger numbers reached record highs through the first two-thirds of 2018 according to [data released in September](#) by the [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#), which also reported that within the next 20 years, passenger numbers will almost double, closing in on **8 billion people** in 2036. An increase in flights and passenger travel will mean more crew personnel. With more personnel comes more airline uniforms and the potential for even more waste. According to Scott Hamlin, founder and CEO of [Looptworks](#), a company that **upcycles** primarily discarded uniforms and fashion-related materials, "There were certain items that were deemed safe from a security standpoint with no logos or branding: coats, jackets and pants that people need to keep warm or for a job interview. The first thing we do is **sort out the good stuff and donate it to non-profits**". Oregon-based [Looptworks](#) is in partnership with [Delta Air Lines](#), taking on airline waste by demonstrating a **more sustainable approach** to the airline's uniforms. "This particular program with Delta, we have diverted over 320,000 lbs. (of clothing waste). It is probably **one of the largest** sole textile diversion programs where nothing is going to incineration or landfill in North American history," said Hamlin. Uniforms suitable for reuse are donated; the rest are upcycled and transformed into new products such as bags and backpacks. For those items that are nearing the end of life, the company has found an **innovative approach** to repurposing: Looptworks downcycles the fabric, shredding it for use in everything from insulation for housing to stuffing for pet beds.



Old Delta uniforms get new life through 'Upcycle Project' ([koin.com](https://www.koin.com))

## The decade of change

Airports are also getting out of the gate with sustainability. Recently London's **Gatwick Airport** received a global nod for its **commitment** to cutting carbon emissions and eliminating waste. In 2010, Gatwick launched their "**Decade of Change**", which **set new standards** for sustainability. The airport became the first in the world to create an on-site **waste to energy facility**, using food waste and packaging materials to create energy to heat the North Terminal.

In June, Gatwick was also the first airport in the world to receive the **Zero Waste to Landfill** accreditation from the **Carbon Trust**, a third-party organization that helps companies and governments reach carbon neutrality. The airport recently made headlines again for launching a **car-pooling service** for airport staff to help further cut carbon emissions while providing **cost savings** and alternative **commuting options** for workers.

For the **Airports Council International (ACI)**, **boarding sustainability is all about reducing carbon emissions**. Through the **airport carbon accreditation program**, airports can map out and reduce their carbon emissions and receive one of four levels of certification. According to ACI, there are **237 airports** around the world that have received accreditation under the program with Bangkok, Kosovo, Edmonton and Helsinki being the most recent additions to their accreditation program.

"In the arena of combating climate change, ACI World can help measure the efforts of airports in reducing their emissions through the **ACI Airport Carbon Accreditation Programme**," said Anita Berthier, ACI World manager, external relations and special events.

## Airlines' free waste mission

Cutting waste from trash bins, incinerators and the atmosphere all go hand in hand to meeting the **UN 2030 Sustainable Development** agenda. Eliminating cabin waste all together is the goal of Spanish airline Iberia, using protocols established in their **LIFE + Zero Cabin Waste** program. **Their goal is to reach waste-free status** through sustainable waste management. Their plan is to replicate the program at other airports, starting with London's Heathrow.

To quantify the amount of resources used by the aviation sector, the **Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)** in 2006 reported on aluminum waste produced by the airline industry. The report found that the amount of aluminum used in the United States was **equivalent** to the materials required to build 58 Boeing 747s.

Reducing the strain on the world's aluminum supplies is part of what London-based design consultancy firm **PearsonLloyd** may be able to accomplish with their new vision for **the airline seat**. Recycled wool, plastic created from sunflower seeds and aluminum parts of recycled aircraft is being used to create the next generation of in-cabin seating.



*PearsonLloyd eco seat. "The planet is in trouble and they are asking and demanding that these things be addressed in the companies they work for". The airline industry will continue to tackle sustainability this*

"There are **economic benefits**. There is an opportunity to neutralize a lot of the costs that are involved in commercializing the products again. There is also an **engagement opportunity**," said Hamlin. "These generations of workers have been taught all through school that they need to be responsible citizens. The planet is in trouble and they are asking and demanding that these things be addressed in the companies they work for." The airline industry will continue to tackle sustainability this October at the **Global Sustainable Aviation Summit in Switzerland**. Meanwhile, the reimagined Delta products will be available on the Looptworks website starting October 12, 2018.