

We are the
Leather
Working
Group

www.leatherworkinggroup.com



**LEATHER
WORKING GROUP**

Improving Environmental Stewardship

Who We Are

Founded in 2005, the Leather Working Group (LWG) is a multi-stakeholder organisation comprised of brands and retailers, leather manufacturers, suppliers, traders and technical experts working towards improving environmental stewardship within the leather manufacturing industry.

The objective of the group is to provide, maintain and develop environmental auditing protocols, which assess the compliance and environmental performance of leather manufacturers across the globe, whilst also promoting sustainable and appropriate environmental business practice.

LWG boasts over **600 members**, from leather manufacturers to suppliers, brands, and traders. The leather manufacturers audited under the LWG protocol represent approximately 20% of the world's production of footwear leather and approximately 17% of total leather volume (excluding pigskin).



Our Protocol



The **LWG** environmental audit protocol is the result of an effort between brands and leather manufacturers over several years. **The protocol** is a living document which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The protocol focuses on factors relating to the environmental performance of tannery operations, such as energy and water usage, waste management, and the management of restricted substances.

Each audit is conducted by an **LWG-approved** Auditor and is peer reviewed by a second **LWG-approved** auditor before results are confirmed.

Following successful completion of an audit, **LWG** issues a certificate to the audited leather manufacturer which entitles them to automatic membership of the group for as long as their certificate is valid.

The Auditing Process

Scoring

The scoring system for the original version of the **protocol** was based on benchmarking information gathered in early pilot studies conducted around the world.

Later versions of the **protocol** incorporated further data gathered during the auditing process and the scores are now determined by the **LWG Technical Sub-Group (TSG)**, composed of leather manufacturers, brands, and auditors.



Depending on the score achieved, tanneries can be awarded a **Gold**, **Silver**, **Bronze** or an **Audited rating**.

Traceability

Hide traceability is an important topic for brand members due to increasing pressure from consumers who want to make sure the products they purchase are made from appropriately sourced materials.

The **LWG** environmental audit assesses the ability of leather manufacturers to trace material back to the slaughterhouse. A separately recorded score is given to reflect the leather manufacturer's ability to trace material with either physical marking or through paperwork only.

Scope

The audit is site specific and does not assess farms, animal husbandry, transportation of animals or slaughtering practices.

Additional Audit Protocols

Chemical Management

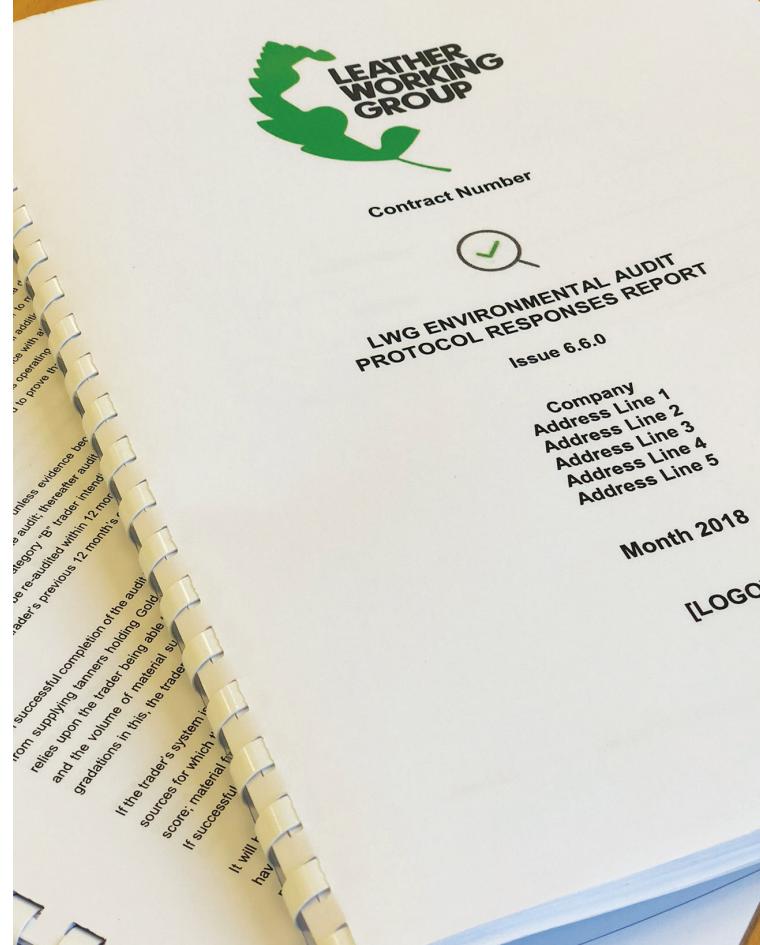
The Manufacturing Restricted Substance List (**MRSL**), originally published by the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (**ZDHC**) Foundation in 2015, has been a major influence on the leather industry. **LWG** contributed to the creation of the **MRSL** for leather and endorses compliance to the list for leather-related aspects.

The management of the **MRSL** forms part of the **LWG** Chemical Management Module (**CMM**), an extension of scope which addresses the management, handling, storage and health & safety of chemicals, including the prevention of Chromium-VI.

Trader Protocol

In 2016, LWG published its Assessment Protocol for Traders, allowing traders of part-processed material to become full members of LWG through an audit of their facilities and practices.

The assessment was developed over 2 years with the aim of tracking split material through the supply chain and enhancing visibility. Traders of raw hides & skins or finished material are termed "**Agent Traders**" and can engage with the LWG via a subscription route in the same way that brands and suppliers do.



Auditors

All **LWG** audits are conducted by independent **LWG-approved** auditors.

Auditors are selected following a thorough recruitment process based on their technical expertise and ability to conduct an audit against the environmental audit protocol and associated documents.

Visit the **LWG** website for further information on our auditors: www.leatherworkinggroup.com

Membership Benefits

Membership gives companies the ability to influence change and network with others to discuss common goals and challenges in a pre-competitive and collaborative way.

Meetings & Events



LWG hosts two Main Member Meetings annually, one in Spring to coincide with APLF in Hong Kong, and a second held in Autumn in a different region. **LWG** makes available all meeting presentations and notes to its members via the private Member Area of the **LWG** website.

In addition, the group conducts Regional Meetings as necessary, to allow as many members from around the world as possible to connect.

Communications



LWG regularly communicates with its membership through newsletters, bulletins, guidance notes, membership surveys, website updates and social media.

The group maintains fluid communication channels with all members throughout the year.

You can find us on Twitter (@LWGtld), Facebook (@LWGtld), and LinkedIn.

A Common Goal



As a multi-stakeholder group, **LWG** seeks to improve the leather manufacturing industry by creating alignment on environmental priorities, bringing visibility to best practices and providing suggested guidelines for continual improvement across the entirety of the leather supply chain.

Members of the group are internationally recognised for their awareness of and commitment to improving environmental practices and for promoting responsible and sustainable business decisions within the leather industry.

Our Results



Water

12.1 Billion Litres

- ⌚ Average water saved annually by **LWG-rated** leather manufacturers
- ⌚ 35% average water reduction by **Category C** leather manufacturers, over 4 audits
- ⌚ 30% average water reduction by **Category D** leather manufacturers, over 4 audits



Energy

775 Megawatts

- ⌚ Average energy saved annually by **LWG-rated** leather manufacturers
- ⌚ 48% average energy reduction by **Category C** leather manufacturers, over 4 audits
- ⌚ 33% average energy reduction by **Category D** leather manufacturers, over 4 audits



Traceability

1.9 Billion Ft²

- ⌚ Approx. volume of wet blue with **Grade A** traceability
- ⌚ Average of **450+** leather manufacturers





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