Leather Supply Chain Mapping & Traceability Guidelines

Introduction

The leather supply chain mapping component of the Leather Impact Accelerator (LIA) is driven by companies that wish to participate in the LIA Corporate Commitment. This commitment requires brands and retailers to engage in mapping in their leather production supply chains over an agreed timeframe in addition to confirming that each supplier is certified to a LIA-approved standard.

A guide to the Corporate Commitment is available here and also explained on the LIA website in the 'How to Participate' section for brands and retailers.

In addition to supply chain mapping, LIA encourages companies to engage in implementing leather traceability systems that track the flow of materials between the slaughterhouse and finished leather (and ideally beyond to finished goods). A key benefit of implementing supply chain mapping and traceability systems in the leather production supply chain is increased transparency; this can help to reduce environmental, social, and quality risks as well as enhance credible communication with stakeholders and consumers.

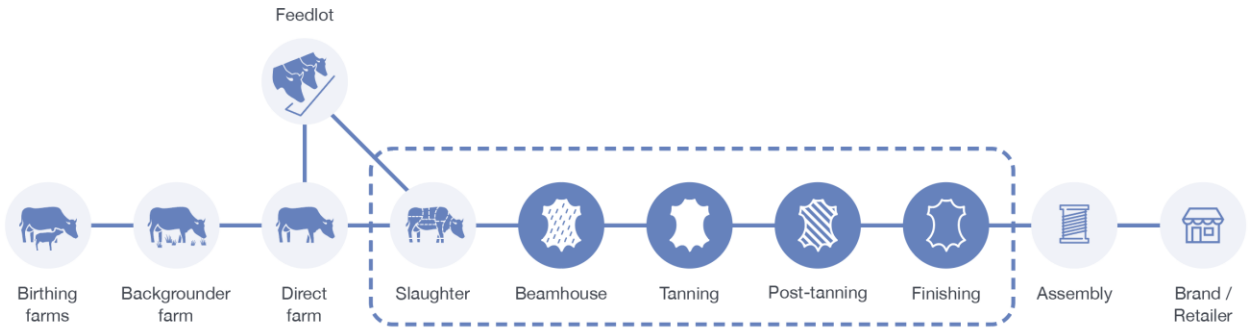
The ultimate goal of LIA is to build increased traceability into the entire beef and leather supply network. This will set up the conditions for brands to eventually have the ability to physically source from farms that meet their requirements for animal welfare, deforestation, and more, and thus meet their own targets as well as the expectations of their customers.

The following guidelines address the expectations LIA has set for supply chain mapping under the LIA Corporate Commitment and recommendations for the implementation of traceability systems in the leather production supply chain.

Leather Production Supply Chain Mapping Expectations

"Supply chain mapping is the process of engaging with direct suppliers to discover indirect suppliers, resulting in an understanding of the end-to-end supply chain for a material, a product, or a brand. Supply chain mapping is based on supplier disclosure." (SourceMap)

A brand or retailer that commits to the LIA Corporate Commitment is expected to map its supply chain from finished leather to slaughterhouse; finished goods manufacturers are not included as we expect that this tier is already known to brands.



The brand can choose a timeframe suitable to achieve supply chain mapping in its leather production supply chain for all cow[1] leather. We suggest five years, and the maximum is ten years.

A supplier* is considered to be mapped under the LIA Corporate Commitment if the following information is gathered at the minimum:

- Company name
- Address of head office and all production sites
- Contact person and contact details (email and/or telephone number)

**Sub-contractors shall also be identified in the brand's supply chain map.*

[1] Cow: refers to all bovine species and calves

The brand is under no obligation to use a specific system to map its supply chains. However, there are several well-known supply chain mapping systems that may be resourceful for an organization; some examples are listed below.

Established supply chain mapping solutions:

- SourceMap (https://www.sourcemap.com/)
- Common Objective (https://www.commonobjective.co)
- SupplyShift (https://www.supplyshift.net)
- ChainPoint (https://www.chainpoint.com/)
- Historic Futures (http://historicfutures.com/)
- BLC supply chain mapping services with ArcGis software (https://www.blcleathertech.com/what-we-do/sustainability-supply-chain-mapping/supply-chain-mapping)

If you have any suggestions to add to this list, please do not hesitate to reach out to LIA@textileexchange.org.

Leather Production Traceability Recommendations

"Supply chain traceability is the process of tracking every commercial transaction in the end-to-end supply chain to account for the time and place where every step occurred in the supply chain of a unit, batch or lot of finished good." (SourceMap)

The implementation of traceability systems in supply chains requires time and is an investment in the long-term. Ultimately, the industry will be best served by a concentration of reliable traceability systems.

LIA will provide recommendations on traceability that align with the work being carried out by the UNECE on enhancing transparency and traceability for sustainable value chains in the garment and footwear. This work is expected to be published in 2021.

More information about the UNECE project can be found here: https://unece.org/fr/node/652

In the meantime, LIA encourages the use of traceability systems that:

- Allow individual hide identification
- Enable traceability of individual or batches of hides
- Use an in- or on-product tracer
- Are linked to a robust data system that can identify the slaughterhouse of origin and all supplier transactions to finished leather

Traceability can be achieved by linking several traceability systems in the supply chain.

Examples of traceability systems are available in Annex 1.

Annex 1: Examples of Traceability Systems

In-Product Tracers

The identifier is embedded into the product at its location of origin. It is considered permanent and can typically only be disabled by physically destroying the product.

Due to the intensive processing of leather, only a limited number of in-product tracers will resist all the transformation stages.

Examples of In-Product Tracers already used in Leather Production:

In-Product Tracer Type	Example Brands
DNA molecule	Haelixa, AppliedDNA, Identigen

On-Product Tracers

The identifier is applied to the product at its location of origin and is physically attached to the product. It can, however, be physically or chemically removed.

In many cases, multiple on-product tracing systems may be used to ensure traceability from slaughterhouse to finished product.

Examples of On-Product Tracers already used in Leather Production:

On-Product Tracer Type	Example Brands
Barcodes	GS1
Physical Stamping	Gibson Stamp
Laser Marking	CTC CO^2 Laser System

