



A matter of... skin

Strategies for Enhancing Sustainability in the Tanning Industry



Italy stands as a prominent leader in the leather tanning industry, accounting for over 60% of European production and 17% of global output. Within this sector, several Life projects funded by the European Union have been initiated, aimed at substituting toxic substances in the supply chain with natural or even naturalized alternatives (such as agro-industrial waste or lactose), from which degreasing or coloring agents are synthesized. The Faenza research center of ENEA currently spearheads the Lifetan project, which encapsulates previous community initiatives in the field and has two primary objectives. Firstly, it seeks to explore how the entire tanning supply chain can be rendered more environmentally sustainable; secondly, it aims to achieve "chromium-free" tanning by identifying substitutes for chromium, which is typically integral to the tanning process and is notably toxic. "We are hoping—



"We consistently begin with waste, and currently, our efforts are focused solely on the design aspect; however, our"

The objective is to generate market demand to facilitate industrial-level production, thereby enhancing employment not only in the tanning phase but also in the manufacturing of new sustainable products, in accordance with the principles of the circular economy.