

Responsible Leather Assessment (RLA) International Working Group (IWG)

Meeting #1

June 12, 2018

Agenda

1. IWG Structure
2. Sector Representation
3. Steering Committee
4. RLRT Charter
5. Task Groups
6. Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. IWG Structure – the International Working Group (IWG) is comprised of:

- **Steering Committee** – need people to sign up from each sector!
 - Must attend minimum 50% of RLA IWG meetings; smaller group of RLRT/IWG members; balanced sector representation; guide direction of RLA development; strives for consensus.
- **Advisory Group**
 - No minimum participation; open to all RLRT members; welcome to join Task Groups
- **Task Groups:** Current/upcoming TGs: Animal Welfare, Land Use Change, Tool Design

2. Sector Representation – our goal is to have balanced representation throughout the process.

- **Dark blue highlights** indicate where we have solid representation.
- **Light blue and white highlights** are where we need to fill in gaps!
Please let us know if you would like to join the Steering Committee.

Sector	IWG	Steering Committee
Brand/Retailer: Fashion - Footwear	2	0
Brand/Retailer: Fashion - Apparel	4	1
Brand/Retailer: Fashion - Accessories	3	0
Brand/Retailer: Automotive	0	0
Brand/Retailer: Furnishings - Home	2	0
Civil Society: Animal Welfare	2	1
Civil Society: Environmental	0	0
Civil Society: Social	0	0
Civil Society: Other	1	0
Producer: Farmers/Ranchers	0	0
Producer: Feedlot Owner	0	0
Supply Chain: Tannery	1	0
Supply Chain: Meatpacker	0	0
Supply Chain: Chemical	1	0
Professional Services: CB	1	0
Professional Services: Consultancy	0	1

3. RLRT Charter – All RLA IWG members MUST sign and return the Charter

Download here: <https://responsibleleather.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RLRT-Charter-Fillable.pdf>

Textile Exchange/RLRT Communications Opt-In – please do so if you have not already

Opt-in here: <http://textileexchange.org/confirm-subscription-to-textile-exchange/>

4. Task Groups – TGs are work streams that fall under RLRT or the RLA IWG

How to decide on scopes?

- Risk levels – what is the urgency of some of these issues?
- Leveraging existing tools and expertise will help have impact and create momentum for the future of the tool
- Measuring impacts (environmental and animal welfare) – BBFAW, CERES (investor groups pushing companies to address deforestation)
- Some issues will be very clear and easy – early suggest, buy-in, build momentum, give us time to dig deep into complex issues for later on
- Beyond verification – can also be a powerful way to influence past that. Baseline set of expectations for the industry – sending out a message to other groups
- Timing – this will evolve over time
 - Assessment Tool v1, v2, v3
 - Benchmarking and data collection
 - Round Table work

5. Terms of Reference – See [RLA ToR Draft document](#) to give input on entire document

Guiding principles describing what we are doing so that everyone is align and working towards a common vision

Goals of the RLA

Need input on point #3 (below) Choose A or B:

- A. Provide companies with a means to know what is in their products, to make accurate claims, and to send clear signals to their supply chains.
- B. Provide companies with a means to link their sourcing to more responsible practices and make accurate claims about how they source.

Scopes

Social Impacts

- farming is left out for now (largest impact is pay, which we don't have a mechanism for)
- Suggestion to include safety and health (working conditions)
 - Any specific reference point for all of this – look through chemical management module from LWG – focusing on safety and health (will be available in 2019, as part of the auditing for the LWG). Furthermore, ILO conventions (checked this with the tannery of the future tool).
- Agree that tanning does have more social risks

- **Slaughter** – must look at social aspects in addition to animal welfare (have heard there are horrible working conditions in slaughterhouses – this is a very important field with a lot of issues, including safety and health). Look for best practice guidelines from large slaughterhouses.
- If a company is meeting good animal welfare guidelines, they should be meeting good social guidelines...
- Referencing existing standards, are there animal welfare standards that address social at the same time? Otherwise we may be layering on two audits on one site.
- **Manufacturing (of products)** – often covered by a retailer’s own audit, so may not need to be covered under RLA. We can say the manufacturing must be covered by brand-led compliance programs, WRAP, or other systems. We don’t want have to create compliance, but reference it and have it ticked as a box.

Environmental

- There are so many directions we can go:
- At farm level, land use change (mostly deforestation, but also conversion of natural habitats of grasslands, etc.) is the issue.
- Beef industry is always being linked to deforestation and greenhouse gases.
- Program called REDD+ by UN – giving carbon credits (Trading program) that allows companies to buy credits
 - May have some controversy; not that straight-forward

Addressing farming practices (environmental)

- Agree that we should try to limit the focus, but on the other hand if we look to the future of leather, there is a lot of pressure coming from emissions/environmental directions.
- To address the whole problem with emissions is extremely important for this industry.
- Attacks on leather are coming from people who are saying we should not eat beef/meat. Effects on leather are directly related to this (particularly with emissions).
- **What is already being done to address emissions by the beef industry, and the work with that... We must connect with the beef industry.**
 - See what is already known and then decide to use it or not.
- IWG member comment- agree with the group that we need to focus, but that also somehow, we could look to highlight best practices on the challenges leather face in terms of emissions and climate change. I know we are listing our priorities but also, I imagine if we are looking to adopt or ensure equivalence to existing standards that might cover this area-should we look to do this first? Then we would know the extent of what’s feasible. I appreciate that many of these standards may be specific or they may not even exist. I however do agree that we need to as a group identify what we want to achieve.

Tanning – environmental

- What is meant by chemical use? – a broad term to address the chemicals that are used MRSL and how they are used.
 - This is already connected through the LWG chemical management module
 - Hopefully will be fairly straight-forward and need to figure out what they are and how to work them in.
 - Changed Chemical Use to **Chemical Management**

Traceability

- Looking at certificate trading for farming
- Chain of custody to slaughter
- Will dig into a couple of models in the Animal Welfare Task Group tomorrow
 - Came up with some preliminary models that we can share during the next IWG meeting