



WWF

BRIEFING

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GANGES LEATHER BUYERS PLATFORM

Mitigating leather-related water risk through collective action

Background

There are approximately 400 tanneries in Kanpur alone and more along the rest of the Ganges River. Many of these tanneries don't use suitable water and pollution management practices to prevent harmful waste from reaching the river. Pollution is having a substantial impact on local communities and a vast number of freshwater species.

Leather from Ganges tanneries finds its way through various suppliers into the UK market. This creates a reputational risk to companies selling leather produced in the area. Due to the complex nature of supply chains, action on tannery pollution requires a sector-wide approach to mitigate this risk.

The Platform

The Ganges Leather Buyers Platform aims to reduce pollution from tanneries along the Ganges River to provide economic, social and environmental benefits for the tanneries themselves, as well as local communities and international markets. A number of UK headquartered companies are working with WWF through the Platform to achieve this. WWF India are working with tanneries to encourage and facilitate improved practices; the Platform is providing an avenue through which

Key water risks facing UK companies from Ganges leather

Physical

286 million litres of industrial effluent are discharged to the Ganges daily, creating water quality issues

Regulatory

Poor water quality has led to the Government shutting down tanneries for substantial periods of time and refusing re-opening unless they prove their practices have improved

Reputational

Increased consumer awareness of leather's environmental impact influences a brand's social license to operate. Increased media coverage is creating heightened awareness amongst UK consumers

companies can support this work. We believe that by acting collectively companies can leverage their joint supply chain influence to catalyse change. The Platform is supporting companies by:

1. Raising awareness of the impact of the tanneries.
2. Supporting businesses to take action to reduce water risk.
3. Enabling businesses to collectively influence local tannery practices and water governance.

Why should you join the Platform?

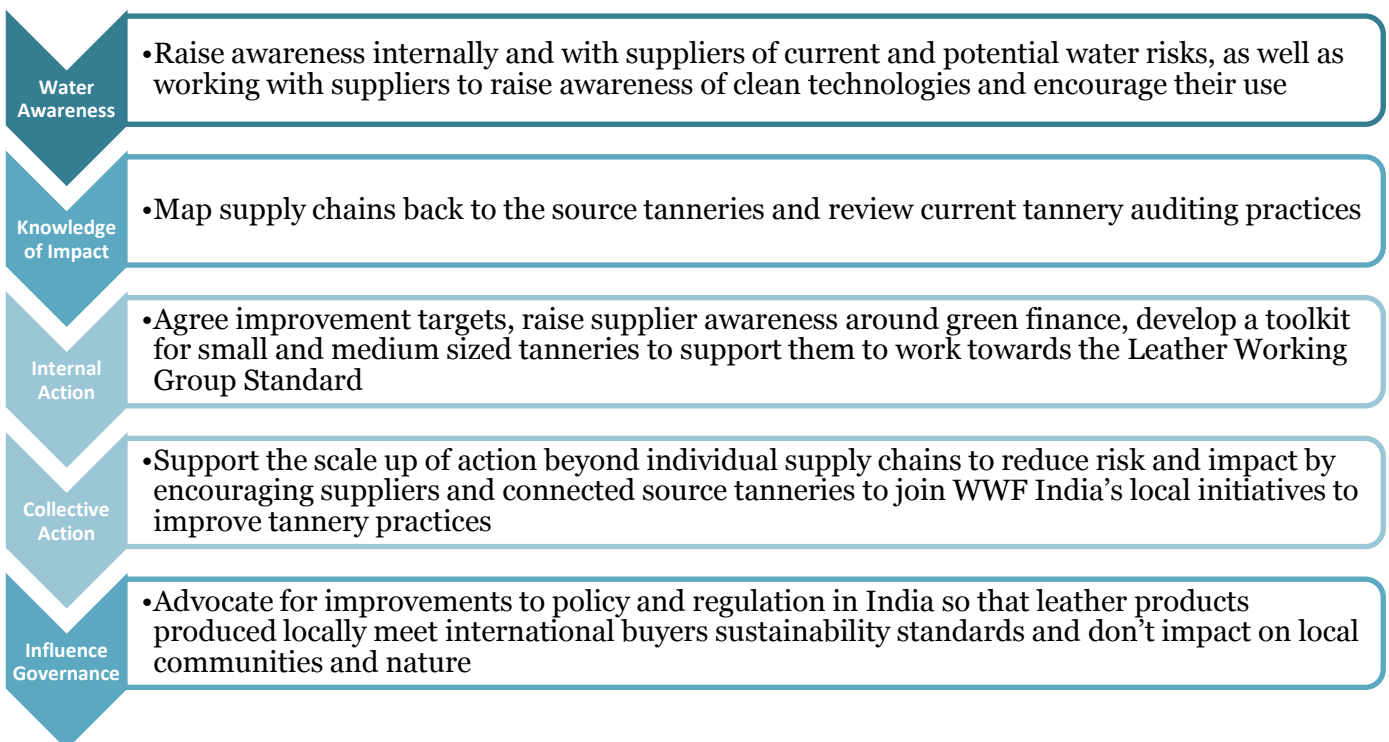
Joining provides a number of benefits for companies sourcing from the region including:

- Taking action on tannery pollution as a single company is difficult - leather supply chains are complex and regularly change;
- Collective action brings the benefit of combined leverage and additional resources;
- Reputational, regulatory and physical risks to companies sourcing leather from along the Ganges are high, but Platform membership can help mitigate the risks.

Actions we're taking...

The Platform meets twice a year, shares interim updates and operates task-based working groups. There are no fees to pay but members are expected to take meaningful action through the Platform and commit time commensurate with the size of their supply chains and associated water risks.

The Platform's approach is aligned with WWF's Water Stewardship Ladder. There are five steps on the ladder, and WWF can support companies to undertake action at each stage. The first three steps focus on internal company action, whilst steps four and five focus on collective action and influencing water governance. Actions taken so far by Platform members and those planned in the future are listed below organised alongside WWF's Five Water Stewardship Steps.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN THE PLATFORM

Please feel free to contact
WaterStewardship@wwf.org.uk



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
wwf.org.uk

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