



Tannery of the Year: Africa

The fourth programme of Tannery of the Year has yielded a candidate list of six excellent tanneries for Africa.



All Tannery of the Year candidates have caught the attention of industry experts for their commitment to corporate social responsibility, including issues such as fair treatment of workers, respect for the environment, compliance with local and national laws, openness to innovation and to forming strong partnerships with suppliers and customers.

Brief profiles of each of the candidates, in alphabetical order, appear here.

Al Khaznah Tannery, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Vegetable tanning specialist Al Khaznah offers leather for automotive, footwear, aviation and upholstery from its facilities in Abu Dhabi and is owned by the government. Its main product is camel leather, collected raw as a by-product of the meat industry. It also offers cow hides and goat and sheepskins, sourced locally. It owns a leathergoods brand, Al Khaznah Boutique, which markets bags, briefcases and small leathergoods.

Alpharama, Nairobi, Kenya. A supplier of wet blue hides and goat skins, semi-finished, finished leather and shoe uppers, the Athi River-based company is working with industry stakeholders and farmers to ensure hides and skins are not damaged as part of a wider project to boost the industry in Kenya. Alpharama's managing director, Sambasiva Rao, who founded the company in 2006, was appointed to the government-led Leather Development Taskforce in July.

Athi River Tanneries, Nairobi, Kenya. Athi River Tanneries was founded by two brothers in 2006, taking over the site of a former tannery, modernising and adding a state-of-the-art effluent treatment plant. It has a strong focus on environmental sustainability, and has planted 15,000 trees in the vicinity to protect the soil. The company pays full or partial school fees for employees' children and aims to develop on-site clinics and a healthcare programme for local people as it grows. It produces wet blue hides, goatskins and sheepskins, focusing on the high end, and exports to Italy, China, India and Pakistan.

Bader, Ga-Rankuwa Industrial Township, South Africa.

German automotive leather group Bader runs a facility in South Africa to the north of the federal capital, Pretoria. The facility was established in 1990, offers wet white, wet blue and finished leather, and also offers part cutting for its automotive clients. The group was established in 1872 and now has 6,800 employees in seven countries. Together, they produce 55,000 square metres of leather every day.

Dire, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Dire Tannery was founded by Bedada Chali, now a prominent figure in the Ethiopian leather industry, in 1972. It processes locally sourced bovine hides and sheepskins to make finished leather for shoe uppers, shoe linings, gloves and garments. Dire Tannery has been a pioneer in Ethiopian tanning by taking its production all the way through to finished leather and by setting up primary and secondary effluent treatment on site. The tannery is now part of a wider industrial group that includes a second tannery, a footwear manufacturer and a farm that cultivates flowers.

Mossop Western Leather, Wellington, South Africa. Mossop Western Leathers claims to be the largest tannery in South Africa, supplying bovine leathers to the footwear and leathergoods industries. The company, established in 1846, is situated in the Western Cape and employs 230 people. A major supplier to local footwear manufacturers, MWL offers a full range of leathers including full grain semi-aniline, corrected grain, full grain and corrected grain printed, finished and pigmented split, suede and PU laminated split leathers. The company says it is one of the biggest manufacturers of school shoe leather in the country; it sells it under the Tek-Tan brand.

From this group of six candidates, one finalist has emerged. A detailed report on the finalist tannery appears in the following pages of *World Leather*. 🌐