




greenLIFE

July 2014

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17/07/2014

### Arzignano wins EU funding for 'Green Leather Industry' pilot



Two of the biggest tanners in the Arzignano cluster in northern Italy have formally launched a pilot project for making leather production more environmentally friendly. The tanners, Gruppo Dani and Gruppo Mastrotto, are working on the pilot project with three technical partners: chemical supplier Ikem, biotechnology firm Ilsa and the cluster's wastewater treatment service provider, Acque del Chiampo.

Called 'Green Leather Industry for the Environment', the pilot project is being co-financed by the European

Commission as part of a wider initiative called LIFE, which is a funding programme for the environment and climate action.

The main aims of the Arzignano pilot are to find ways for tanners to reduce their consumption of natural resources, to find ways to create more value from the industry's waste and by-products (particularly with applications in agriculture and energy) and to calculate all the benefits and costs accurately with a view to scaling up emerging technologies for wider use across the Arzignano cluster.

Leather industry leaders in Arzignano have expressed their delight that the 'Green Leather Industry for the Environment' pilot won funding. Across all industrial sectors in Italy, 421 projects applied for funding under the most recent round of LIFE initiatives, with only 47 proving successful. As well as technical merit, successful applications had to show high levels of support from the industries concerned and a high level of ambition to bring world-leading environmental standards to Italian production.

The pilot will run for three years and will mean a total investment of €2.3 million, with 50% of this money coming from the European Commission and the other 50% from the five project partners.

Project leaders said after the formal launch that priority research areas will include metal-free tanning and innovation in unhairing.

To help keep other Arzignano tanners up to date with progress, a new website dedicated to the pilot project will launch in the coming months. The project leaders have stressed that they view the 'Green Leather Industry for the Environment' pilot as complementary to other initiatives taking place in Arzignano at the moment.

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