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**Sustainable Leather Foundation  
Standard for Environmental Management System**

**Reference:** FSE2.1

**Authored by:** K Kutskill

**Peer Reviewed by:** XXX

**Accredited by:** XXX

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## **FSE2 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS) STANDARD AND BENCHMARK**

**Summary:** The SLF environmental management system (EMS) standard provides the context, definitions, and methodology around EMS in the leather industry. This document gives the facility under audit the principles and general expectations, but it is not exhaustive and recognises that there will be differences within regions for national and local laws.

Where there are matters of interpretation in relation to the standard, applicable laws or organisational norms, the auditor will assess in favour of the employees in that facility.



## 1. Scope

1.1 The *SLF Environmental Management System Standard and Benchmark* specifies the definitions and structure of an environmental programme document or manual establishing the policy, plan, and environmental performance goals for a particular facility. The key areas include aspects and impacts register, environmental objectives and targets, aspects screening, communication to employees, record keeping, risk analysis, continuous improvement, training, and internal management/audit review processes.

1.2 An Environmental Management System is an integral part of promoting a safe and resourceful environment for the employees and community while minimising negative impact on the surrounding natural resources.

1.3 The *SLF Environmental Management System Standard and Benchmark* is intended to ensure that SLF certified facilities are aware of the necessary systems required to build, implement, and manage environmental aspects and are actively working to improve the environmental impact of their operations.

## 2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are useful in the understanding of this document and are provided for further guidance. In the case of dispute these references form the core of the evidence in support of the Standard used here:

ISO 14001:2015 Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use<sup>1</sup>

## 3. Terms and definitions

**3.1 Environmental Management System:** A specific system within the greater management system used to manage the environmental aspects, fulfil compliance obligations, and address risks and opportunities.

**3.2 Environmental Aspects and Impacts Register:** A documented list of an organisation's activities, products or services that interacts or can interact with the environment and their actual or potential effect on the environment.

**3.3 Master Environmental Programme Document:** A document outlining the intentions and direction of an organisation related to its environmental performance, as formally expressed by its top management. (May also be referred to in ISO14001:2015 as Environmental Policy).

**3.4 Aspect Screening:** A process in which an organisation's activities, products, or services are reviewed and monitored to determine the status and outline actual or potential impacts (with reference to environmental for this Standard and Benchmark).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iso.org/standard/60857.html>



**3.5 Third-Party Auditor:** An independent contractor or service entity conducting a certified audit outside of SLF and the organisation involved.

**3.6 Continuous Improvement:** Recurring action to enhance performance (in this case, environmental), typically involving a feedback mechanism that outlines progress and provides solutions.

## 4. Principle

4.1 The principle of the *SLF Environmental Management System Standard and Benchmark* is based upon the need for responsible organisations to protect the environment in which they do business and respond to changing environmental conditions in balance with socio-economic needs. The establishment of an Environmental Management System is intended to provide a systematic approach to environmental management by:

- 4.1.1 Protecting the environmental by preventing or mitigating adverse environmental impacts
- 4.1.2 Mitigating the potential adverse effect of environmental conditions on the organisation
- 4.1.3 Assisting the organisation in the fulfilment of compliance obligations
- 4.1.4 Enhancing environmental performance
- 4.1.5 Controlling or influencing the organisation's products and services by using a life cycle perspective that can prevent unintentional environmental impacts
- 4.1.6 Achieving financial and operational benefits that strengthen the organisation's market position
- 4.1.7 Communication of environmental information to relevant interested parties

4.2 The Environmental Management System is based off the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model. The PDCA model is an iterative process aimed at achieving continual improvement. Each of the elements of an environmental management system can utilise the PDCA model to establish a consistent, systematic approach.

The PDCA model can be described as the following:

- 4.2.1 Plan: Establish environmental objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with the organisation's environmental policy
- 4.2.2 Do: Implement the process as planned
- 4.2.3 Check: Monitor and measure processes against the environmental policy, including its commitments, environmental objectives, and operating criteria, and report the results
- 4.2.4 Act: Take actions to continually improve

4.3 The Environmental Management System will be most effective with alignment directly related to the conformities, obligations, and requirements of the organisation's legal, regional and customer requirements for its facility, service, product, and operations. The *SLF Environmental Management System Standard and Benchmark* provides an outline for the method of creating a system, however it is up to the organisation to apply a risk-based approach, seeking confirmation of its environmental obligations and requirements prior to audit and certification.



## 5. Procedure

5.1 The facility will provide data and documentation that demonstrates an effective management system to meet the requirements of the *SLF Environmental Management System Standard and Benchmark* as follows:

- 5.1.1 Environmental aspects and impacts register and screening procedure
- 5.1.2 Master environmental programme document or similar manual containing environmental scope, policy, and plan (Reference SLF Explanatory Notes & Templates for further details)
- 5.1.3 EMS communication and training plan
- 5.1.4 Environmental report consisting of goals (objectives and targets) and actions
- 5.1.5 Accessible resource clearly displaying the structure of responsible personnel for environmental plans
- 5.1.6 Evidence of the execution of the environmental plan
- 5.1.7 Entry log documenting risk and internal audit frequency
- 5.1.8 Continuous improvement mechanism, feedback system, and evidence of implementation
- 5.1.9 Breakdown of measured total environmental performance
- 5.1.10 Management review process and engagement in EMS

5.2 The measurement of total environmental performance may differ throughout the leather industry based upon which part of the leather-making process the facility takes part in. Please reference the following SLF Standards and Benchmarks and Sections of the Explanatory Notes & Templates for specifics on environmental performance metrics and measurement methods. These documents are located in the “Technical Library” within the Partner Only Resources area of the website and are designed to support either in preparation for audit or for improvement measures: <https://sustainableleatherfoundation.com/partner-only-resources/technical-library>

- 5.2.1 FSE6.1 Energy Consumption
- 5.2.2 FSE7.1 Water Use
- 5.2.3 FSE8.1 Raw Materials and Chemicals
- 5.2.4 FSE9.1 Energy Efficiency and Equipment & Machinery
- 5.2.5 FSE10.1 Air Pollution
- 5.2.6 FSE11.1 Effluent and Water Quality
- 5.2.7 FSE12.1 Soil Contamination
- 5.2.8 FSE13.1 Solid Waste
- 5.2.9 Explanatory Notes and Templates
  - a. Template 1 – Legal Compliance Register
  - b. Template 2 – Environmental Aspects and Impacts Register
  - b. Template 5 – Best Available Technique Register
  - c. Template 6 – H<sub>2</sub>S Risk Assessment



# Sustainable Leather Foundation

Industry Led – Consumer Focused

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