



Stahl and PUM working towards a more sustainable leather industry in developing countries

As of March 2016, chemical company Stahl and PUM are joining forces with the objective to contribute to the development of the leather industry in developing countries. Aimed at improving sustainable business results, promoting self-help capacity and increasing local employment, the ultimate goal is to combat poverty. Expert technicians working for Stahl will contribute their skills, knowledge and network in order to create a more sustainable leather segment in selected regions in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

PUM Netherlands senior experts (PUM) is a non-profit organization founded by Dutch employers' organization VNO-NCW in 1978. PUM supports small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries by deploying senior experts (all volunteers) for repetitive short-term advisory missions on the work floor. By sharing their knowledge over time these senior experts take the entrepreneurs to the next level, improving their business performance and creating paths for sustainable growth and job creation. PUM serves 2,000 SMEs per year in 70 countries and 80 industries, through hundreds of partners and within programs financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other donors. "PUM also advises SMEs in the leather sector, but since the leather sector has been disappearing from the Netherlands in recent years, we have had fewer senior experts with knowledge of the leather process at our disposal. By partnering up with Stahl this will be history," Thijs van Praag, CEO at PUM, explains.

Stahl believes that sustainability and transparency in the supply chain can be achieved through intense collaboration with its partners. The company employs leather experts from all around the world and is more than willing to deploy them for PUM projects. Joining forces with PUM offers Stahl a great opportunity to make a positive difference on a global scale", says Michael Costello, Director of Sustainability at Stahl. With its innovative power, expertise and range of technical solutions, Stahl is able to deliver best in class solutions and services. "By cooperating with such a strong organization and its partners we believe we can secure a better and more sustainable future for thousands of people", Costello continues.

Worldwide leather industry more sustainable

Projects involving Stahl and PUM are to be carried out in numerous countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Employees of Stahl work on a voluntary basis on specific missions that involve traveling to an appointed country. Once there, they will work with the tanneries in question on specific projects that require the technical skills and service they can offer. The missions are advisory in origin and the goal is improved business operations and CSR.

By partnering up with PUM, Stahl makes its knowledge internationally available with a view to promoting the sustainability of the leather sector and improving the quality of leather. Beyond this immediate goal, Stahl also believes that linking small and medium sized companies in developing countries to experienced professional experts can help combat poverty.