



AFRICA LEATHER AND LEATHER PRODUCTS INSTITUTE

Sustainable leather for health, wealth, and luxury!



18TH

AFRICA LEATHER VALUE CHAIN ANNUAL FORUM

CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAM

2025

Unleashing Africa's Leather Potential: Sustainable, Inclusive, and Competitive

Lusaka, Zambia

Mulungushi International Conference Centre

26th – 28th November 2025



AFRICA LEATHER AND LEATHER PRODUCTS INSTITUTE

Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI)

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



CONCEPT NOTE

CONTEXT: Global Leather Sector and Africa's Opportunity

The global leather-footwear economy remains large, resilient, and design-driven, anchored by demand from fashion, automotive, furniture, and speciality goods. In recent years, global footwear output has hovered around 24 billion pairs, with Asia producing close to 90%, underscoring the scope for regional diversification and near-shoring. At the same time, the industry is being reshaped by sustainability requirements, due diligence regulations, traceability expectations, and consumer shifts toward quality, durability, and reparability. These forces are creating space for new production locations that can meet standards, respond quickly to market signals, and integrate digitally with buyers.

Africa is poised for significant growth, starting from a position of inherent strength and under-realised potential. The continent's large livestock base concentrated in East and Southern Africa provides a strong raw-material platform, while a young workforce and urbanising consumer markets promise growing domestic demand. Yet much value still leaks out through weak collection and curing systems, quality losses, and the export of low-value stages (raw or wet-blue) instead of finished leather and branded goods. Per-capita footwear consumption remains low compared to other regions, pointing to substantial headroom for local production, formal retail, and regional brands that retain value and create jobs at home.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers the missing market architecture to change this trajectory. A single market

of 1.3 billion people and over US\$3.4 trillion in GDP can enable regional value chains, harmonised standards, and investment scale precisely where leather excels. Cross-border processing and trade corridors can link hides and skins, tanning, finishing, components, and assembly across countries; interoperable payments and trade-facilitation measures can reduce friction; and green-finance and compliance initiatives can help firms meet global ESG and traceability benchmarks. Together, these levers can shift Africa from a raw-material supplier to a producer of competitive, sustainable leather products for intra-African and international markets.

Against this backdrop, the Africa Leather Value Chain Annual Forum convenes public and private leaders to turn potential into implementable action. The programme focuses on four enablers: (i) standards, sustainability, and traceability to unlock market access; (ii) financing instruments and risk-sharing to crowd in investment; (iii) distribution, retail, and digital channels to reach consumers; and (iv) stronger private-sector associations and skills systems to deliver at scale. The Forum is designed to generate consensus resolutions, a practical 2026 implementation roadmap, and an investable pipeline laying the groundwork for value addition, quality jobs (especially for youth and women), and expanding intra-African trade under AfCFTA.

Beyond the conference deliberations, the Africa Leather and Leather Products Forum will feature a vibrant exhibition of over 40 enterprises from more than 15 African countries, showcasing a rich variety of leather products, footwear, garments, and accessories that reflect Africa's craftsmanship, innovation, and sustainable design. The Forum will also host a dynamic Deal-Making Platform that enables Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Finance (B2F) engagements among SMEs, investors, and financial





institutions, facilitating trade, investment, and partnership opportunities across the continent.

A major attraction will be the Real Leather. Stay Different. Africa Award Showcase, featuring 15 outstanding finalists selected from 149 designers across Africa, who will present their creations in a fashion experience that celebrates African creativity, sustainability, and contemporary design excellence.

Adding a unique dimension to the event, an Open Bazaar will be organised to allow staff from over 21 embassies based in Lusaka, the COMESA Secretariat, and Forum participants to purchase the showcased products directly from exhibiting enterprises. This bazaar, a novel feature of the event, will create an immediate market linkage between producers and buyers, translating the Forum's vision into real trade opportunities and tangible economic impact for African leather entrepreneurs.

Specific Objectives of the Forum

- » Develop the Business Ecosystem of Stakeholders to support the Growth and Performance of the Leather Value Chain in Africa in the Context of the AfCFTA.
- » Structure Partnerships to Improve Access to Finance,

Product Design and Development, Distributorship and Sustainability, fostering a sense of unity and shared goals.

- » Enhance intra-REC collaboration in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area, recognising the crucial role of each participant in the collective success.
- » Facilitate B2F and B2B Meetings, with a Focus on the Role of Financial Institutions, to Strengthen the Leather Value Chain in Africa.

Expected Outputs

- » A **Continental Leather Business Ecosystem Framework** is developed and endorsed, providing a structured roadmap for strengthening stakeholder linkages, policy coordination, and market integration across Africa's leather value chain under the AfCFTA. Defining the roles of governments, the private sector, and support institutions will drive industrialisation, competitiveness, and trade facilitation, thereby creating a more robust and sustainable leather sector in Africa.
- » A **Strategic Partnership and Financing Framework** was established between ALLPI, financial institutions, and private sector actors, promoting access to finance for SMEs and clusters, advancing product design and

innovation, and embedding sustainability principles (including traceability, circular economy, and EUDR compliance) into Africa's leather sector.

- » The non-binding **Inter-REC Collaboration Mechanism, agreed upon** and operationalised, is a significant step towards harmonising standards, facilitating cross-border trade, and promoting coordinated industrial development among COMESA, EAC, SADC, and other RECs. This positions the African leather sector as a unified, competitive bloc under the AfCFTA, providing reassurance about its future. The B2B and B2F Engagement Platform, successfully hosted during the Forum, has the potential to significantly impact the African leather sector. It enabled direct matchmaking between financial institutions and SMEs, as well as between tanners and leather product manufacturers. The session yielded preliminary financing commitments, partnership leads, and trade linkages, offering hope for the sector's future.

Scope of the Forum

The 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Annual Forum 2025 is focused on enhancing the Africa Leather Value Chain. The program covers the following key topics:

- » Unlocking the African Leather Value Chain under AfCFTA
- » Intra-regional collaboration
- » Access to finance and enhance the use of Africa's payment systems
- » Compliance with International Standards to enhance Market Access
- » Lessons from Africa and beyond
- » Strengthening BSO and Leather Sector Associations Governance and Performance

- » B2B and B2F
- » Launch of ALLPI's New Brand and its 5-Year Institutional Strategy

Target Audience

- » Policy Makers
- » Private Sector
- » Development Partners
- » Finance Institutions
- » Distributors
- » Designers
- » Academia
- » Media

Overall, Forum Deliverables

- » **Africa Leather Forum 2025 Communiqué** summarising validated frameworks, partnership commitments, and policy recommendations.
- » **Action and Partnership Matrix** with designated responsibilities, timelines, and follow-up mechanisms.
- » **Documentation of B2B and B2F Outcomes**, including investment leads, partnership MOUs, and SME-financier match records.
- » **Policy Briefs and Knowledge Products** capturing insights for integration into regional and continental strategies.



DAY 1

PROGRAM: 26TH NOVEMBER 2025

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING, STRATEGIC VISIONING AND SUSTAINABILITY

08:00 – 09:00	REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Coffee/tea served, SME stands open. » Program Introduction – Master of Ceremony: CBIT
09:00 – 09:30	WELCOME REMARKS AND CLIMATE SETTING
	Nicholas Mudungwe – Executive Director ALLPI
09:30 – 09:50	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
	Dr. Dev Haman , Assistant Secretary General COMESA
09:50 – 10:10	OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Honourable Minister Mr. Chipoka Mulenga, MP, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Zambia » Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Stanbic bank Zambia and brief remarks by it's CEO » Launch of ALLPI Institutional Strategy (2026–2030) and unveiling of new ALLPI Brand » Group Photo
10:10 – 11:00	VIP Tour of Leather producers' Stands and Live Media Interviews
11:00 – 12:00	TEA BREAK AND NETWORKING
12:00 – 12:30	HIGH LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION 1
	Strategic Framework for the Sustainable Transformation and Competitiveness of Africa's Leather Sector (2025–2035) – Continental Collaborative Approach
	MODERATOR: John Oppong-Otoo: Coordinator, Economics, Trade and Marketing Unit - AU-IBAR
	PANELLISTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » African Union Commission – Mr. William Simwanza, Senior Expert » AfCFTA Secretariat – Mr. Prosper Komla Bissi, Senior Advisor and Agriculture Lead » UNECA – Zodwa Mabuza, Chief Sub Regional Initiatives » COMESA – Providence Mavubi – Director Industry and Agriculture » SADC – Mr. Calicious Tutalefu - Senior Programmer Officer –Value Chains » EAC - Mr. Dismas Mwikila, Environment and Natural Resources Specialist » ECOWAS - Dr. Abdullahi Mahmud Saulawa » IGAD
12:30 – 13:45	LUNCH BREAK
13:45 – 15:00	PANEL DISCUSSION 2
	ALLPI's Programme Progress and Impact 2025
	MODERATOR: Jimmy Odhiambo – Ag. CEO, Kenya Leather Development Council (KLDC).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Birkinesh Gonfa, Program Manager, Trade, Markets, and Investment, ALLPI » Dr. Michael Kiraye, Program Manager, Business Ecosystems and Clusters » Harrison Ndungu, Program Manager, Applied Innovation and Technology » Preston Viswamo, Program Manager, Entrepreneurship, Product Design and Development ALLPI » Dr. Abdel Rahim, Program Manager, Standards, Quality and Compliance ALLPI » Awlachev Sintie, Program Manager, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

15:00 – 16:30	PANEL DISCUSSION 3
	Enhancing Sustainability and Application of Standards in the LVC – Experiences from Beneficiary Tanneries (Sustainable Leather Foundation) and Ethiopia LWG Certification
	MODERATOR: Prof. Tamirat Tesfaye, Bar Dar University, Ethiopia
	PANELLISTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Bassem Lotfy, Managing Director, Lofty Industries Egypt » Dr. Palanivel Saravanan, Chief Scientist, CSIR Central Leather Research Institute, India (virtual) » Prof. Bahri Basaran – Ege University, Turkey » Akram Belhaj, President of the National Federation of Leather and Footwear –Tunisia » Massimo Cipolloni – International Relations Manager – Academia Dela Moda
17:45	WRAP-UP AND CLOSE OF DAY 1

DAY 2

27TH NOVEMBER 2025

FINANCE, DISTRIBUTION, BSOs, STRATEGY, POLICIES, AND INTERVENTIONS IMPACT

08:30 – 08:45	RECAP OF DAY 1 AND SETTING THE TONE FOR DAY 2
08:45 – 10:45	PANEL DISCUSSION 4
	Financing the Leather Ecosystem and Inter Africa Payment Systems – DFIs, Cooperatives, Guarantees, Green Finance
	MODERATOR – Mr. Kamwanga Masankisi, Director General, Ministry of Industry and SMEs, DRC
	PANELLISTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dr. Lufeyo Banda - Africa Development Bank » Afreximbank (TBA) » Lebo Mokgabudi: Board Member - Pan- African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) » Jededa Ndebele, CEO, COMESA Clearing House » Prof. Oliver Saasa, Vice Chairperson of the BoD of Trade and Development Fund, TDB » Lillian S. Simfukwe – Head Trade and Africa China Banking - Stanbic – Zambia » David Mparutsa, Head Enterprise and Suppliers Development ABSA –Ex South Africa » Prof. Erastus Gatebe: Industrialization Secretary State Department for Industry
10:45 – 11:15	TEA BREAK



11:15 – 12:15	PANEL DISCUSSION 5
	Bridging the Gap – Manufacturers and Consumers (Distribution, Digital Channels, and Retailers)
	MODERATOR: Mochere Beatrice Kemunton– CBIT
	<p>PANELLISTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Richard Franklin, General Manager, Zamleather Ltd. – Zambia » Yoram Attuhamize, Jora Shoes Chair, Pamoja Leather Association, Uganda » Yolanda Odida – Pure Purple, Kenya » Zelalem Merawi – Owner and Director Ker-Ezhi Enterprises, Ethiopia » Nabusulwa Merab, Director, Arise Kollektions, Uganda » Bassem Lotfy, Managing Director, Lofty Industries Egypt » Phumelele Körber – South Africa Circular Faison Community
12:15 – 13:15	LUNCH BREAK
13:15 – 14:45	PANEL DISCUSSION 6
	Strengthening Private Sector Associations and Clusters
	MODERATOR: Prof. Tesfaye Haile – SMAP Training and Consultancy - Eritrea
	<p>PANELLISTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Andrea Santoni, Institutions and Ecosystems Expert, ITC (virtual) » Winicate Muthini, Program Manager, Pan Africa Chamber of Commerce » Nerisha Jairaji – South Africa Footwear and Leather Export Council » Teddy Y. Soobramanien, CEO COMESA Business Council » Adrian R. Njau, Ag. Executive Director, East African Business Council (EABC) » Chikakula Miti, CEO - COMFWB » Klaus Heinze - GIZ - SADC Project
14:45 – 15:45	SUPPLIER PRESENTATION
	<p>SUPPLIER PRODUCT LINE AND SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Mr. Antonio Antoniazzi, EQUITAN » Mr. Ivan Peleso, ALPE Group » Mr. Kevin Khai, ZGroup » Plenary Chair: MC
15:45 – 16:45	PANEL DISCUSSION 7
	The Leather Sector Development Approach – Industrialisation Experiences from Elsewhere
	MODERATOR: Ms. Clementine Mukamana, Project Coordinator, Textiles and Leather Sector, ARSO
	<p>PANELLISTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dr. Kerry Senior, Secretary, International Council of Tanners » Deborah Taylor, Managing Director, Sustainability Leather Foundation – UK » Yassin Awale, Former Chief Technical Advisor UNIDO, Ethiopia » Bede Bedetse, Managing Director, Afritan– Burundi » Elias Tegegnetwork, D/General Manager (Shoes and Leather Articles), ELICO, Ethiopia » Robert Njoka, Managing Director, Reddamac Leather Centre, Kenya » Muhan Suresh, Director and Owner, Trogon Trading Private Limited, Malawi » Solomon Getu, Factory Manager, Kawumu Leather Industries, Uganda » Wilson Mutale, Director and Owner, Topsoil General Dealers, Zambia

16:45 – 17:45	PANEL DISCUSSION 8
	Reflections and Voices of the Beneficiaries
	MODERATOR: Elikana Epiche, Director, Pan African Chamber Business School, Kenya
	PANELLISTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tariro Mutamiri, Managing Director – Harare Cluster » Edward Mulunga – Bantu Leather - Malawi » Stephen Alibaruho, Big Leather, Uganda » Genet Abegaz – Leather Goods Manufacturer, Ethiopia » Lydia Million – Leather Goods Manufacturer, Ethiopia » Tatenda Katai – Prestige Tannery, Zimbabwe » Aggrey Dzama, Leader of Lilongwe Leather and Leather Products Cooperatives » Diana Munema – Zambia Cluster Coordinator » Mastewal Alemu - International Designer, Ethiopia » TAF Experiences » Mr. Cornelio M. Sunduza, Leather Institute of Zimbabwe
17:45	WRAP-UP AND CLOSE OF DAY 2

DAY 3

28TH NOVEMBER 2025

CELEBRATING AFRICA'S LEATHER IDENTITY

09:30 – 12:00	OPEN BAZAAR
	SPECIAL FEATURES THROUGHOUT THE FORUM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Leather SME Market Village: All 3 days; showcasing 40 + SMEs from across Africa – Open to Public and Forum Participants » Deal Room Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B2B Meetings – Tanneries and Producers of Leather Products • B2B Meetings – Designers and boutiques • B2F Meeting – SMEs and Banks
12:00 – 13:00	LUNCH
13:00 – 13:15	ARRIVAL OF VIP
13:15 – 13:30	WELCOME REMARKS AND FORUM RESOLUTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ALLPI BoD Chair - ALLPI Chairperson, ALLPI Board of Directors » ALLPI Executive Director, Nicholas Mudungwe – Forum Resolutions



14:00 – 14:45	RECOGNITION OF PARTNERS AND SPONSORS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » EU Delegation Lusaka – In recognition of funding the Leather Value Chain Development, under the RECAMP » Afreximbank - Sponsorship of the 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Forum » Trade and Development Bank – Sponsorship of the 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Forum » Leather and Hides Council of America – Funding for the Real Leather Stay Different Project » BADEA – Funding ALLPI Capitalisation of SMEs and sponsoring 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Forum » Konkola Copper Mine – For Capitalisation of Cluster and Production Centres in the Copperbelt. » Coppertone University – Sponsorship of the 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Forum » COMFWB– Partnership in supporting Women and Youths working in the Leather Sector » ITC – Partnership in project implementation in East Africa and Eswatini » AUC – Partnership in the implementation of the Agenda 2063 » UNECA – Continental Collaboration on developing the Leather Value Chain » ARSO – Continental Collaboration in the development and implementation of Standards » AU-IBAR – Partnership in Continental Policy Development » PACCI – Partnership in strengthening Business Support Ecosystems » Academia Dela Moda - Partnership in Building Products Design and Development » Solidaridad – Partnership in the Leather Value Chain Capacity Building, Market Access, and Policy Advice
14:45 – 15:05	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
	Secretary General, COMESA Secretariat H.E Chileshe M. Kapwepwe
15:05 – 15:30	OFFICIAL CLOSING REMARKS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Zambia: Mr. Crusivia Hichikumba » Group Photo
15:30 – 16:30	VVIP TOUR OF LEATHER PRODUCERS' STANDS AND LIVE MEDIA INTERVIEWS
	» Open Bazaar for COMESA and Embassy Staff to Purchase Leather Products
16:30 – 18:00	FREE AFTERNOON – PARTICIPANTS PREPARE FOR EVENING SHOWCASE
18:30 – 23:00	AFRICA LEATHER DINNER, REAL LEATHER STAY DIFFERENT AWARDS



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