



Outstanding project

Executive Secretariat for Integral Development

March 2012

FEMCIDI: Finding Innovative Ways to Reuse and Reduce Waste within the Leather Tanning Industry

In many Latin American countries including Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, El Salvador and Nicaragua, leather-tanning and other similar industries are viable parts of local economies. However, the hazardous byproducts and large quantities of waste produced in the process degrade the environments in which these industries are located. The development of sustainable practices in the leather-tanning industry to reduce and reuse waste not only benefits the environment but also increases productivity and improves the quality of products created.

The OAS Partnership for Development Fund (FEMCIDI) has financed the Project “Developing the Technological Resources to Aid in the Reuse and Recovery of Waste within the Leather-Tanning Industry” which has not only successfully decreased the sheer amount of waste created in the tanning process, but has found ways to reuse the byproducts that cannot be avoided. Through the use of various technologies, what was until recently only considered waste, has been transformed into valuable components of fertilizers and assets in the production of energy. Both the reduction and reuse of waste has contributed to better environmental conditions in Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, Paraguay, Ecuador and Nicaragua.



The handling of waste before the project in Peru

The following are some of the project’s most notable results:



Reuse of waste during the execution of project in Peru

- Awareness of workers in the leather-tanning industry about the environmental effects and chemical processes involved in their work
- The creation of a new fertilizer produced by the protein found in tanning byproducts, whose success was assessed by an Ecuadorian team in the cultivation of roses
- Plan to combat water contamination in participating countries through workshops headed by the project
- Ongoing tests for reuse of waste in energy production, and reuse of solid waste
- Awareness campaigns of project’s effect on environment and people in the communities