



ASSOCIATION POUR L'ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
DES FABRICANTS DE BRACELETS CUIR

June 2024

AQC

The Association for Quality Assurance of Leather Bracelets Manufacturers is a Swiss-based international association. Officially established in 2014 by five leather bracelet manufacturers: **Brasport, Camille Fournet, Interstrap, Hirsch and Multicuir**s. AQC members represents approximately 80% of the worldwide leather bracelet production for luxury watches.

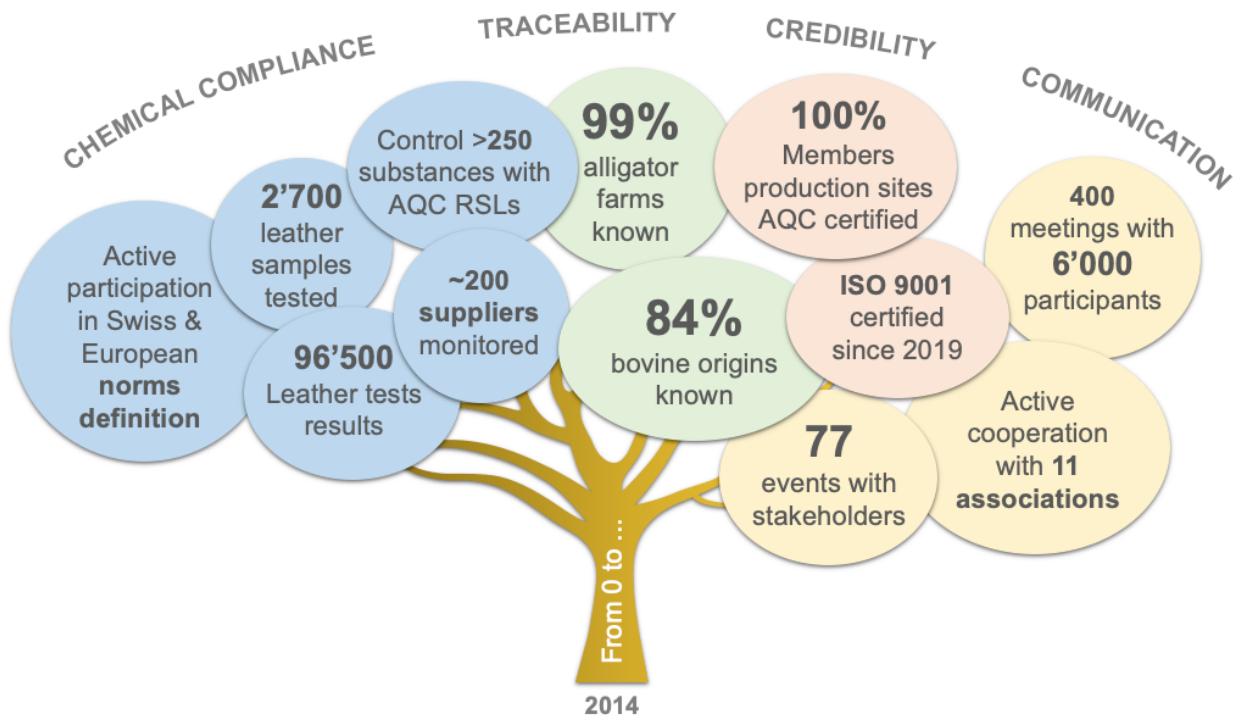
The AQC is committed to working towards sustainable development within the frame of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. AQC's website ([link to dedicated page](#)) highlights the actions undertaken by AQC to achieve the SDGs.



The association key values are **expertise, safety, confidentiality, mutualisation, in cooperation with all stakeholders**.

Benefiting from **10 years of expertise and know how**, AQC **offers services** to all players in the value chain, like members, watch brands, leather suppliers and associations. Its strategy lies on 4 pillars: chemical compliance & physical tests harmonisation, traceability, credibility and communication.

AQC'S 10 YEARS:





ASSOCIATION POUR L'ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
DES FABRICANTS DE BRACELETS CUIR

June 2024

CHEMICAL COMPLIANCE

AQC is committed to facilitate its members leather bracelets compliance with **existing and upcoming chemical regulations**, such as REACH. A regular **testing scheme** has been developed, and in 10 years approximately 100'000 tests results have been obtained. This approach includes the monitoring over 200 suppliers for leather bracelet components.

The [AQC technical working group](#) work continuously on **AQC RSLs** (Regulated Substances Lists) transparently published on AQC website ([link to page](#)).

Each year an interlaboratory study improves quality controls and test results **comparability**. This study is carried out by laboratories referenced by AQC according to normalised analytical methods. All laboratories are welcome to participate.

TRACEABILITY – 2023 AQC SUPPLY CHAIN MAPPING

Cooperation and transparency have made it possible to **better trace** leather supply. This enhances **risk assessment** and measures that the leather used by AQC members originates from bovine mainly raised in **Europe**. Alligator leather is exclusively sourced from **certified farms** in the USA.

Procedure

AQC collects data annually with the aim of covering at least 95% of all members' bovine leather supply and 99% of alligator leather supply. Each mapping analyses the previous year's leather receptions.

Exotic Leather

Of all exotic material used by AQC members, 97% is American alligator leather. It comes from farms in Louisiana, Florida, Georgia and Texas. Stringent animal conservation laws, associated with CITES¹ (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and the AQC supply chain mapping, allow to **identity 99% of farms**. All are either **ICFA** (International Crocodilian Farmers Association) or **SRCP** (Standard for Responsible Crocodilian Production, LVMH standard) certified, for their good operating practices, covering animal welfare, environmental and social issues.

The alligator skin tanners and traders are mainly located in Europe: 7 tanneries in Italy, 1 in France, 1 in Germany, 1 in Malaysia and 1 in Singapore. 98% of the leather is produced in **LWG** (Leather Working Group) certified tanneries for their environmental and good manufacturing practises.

¹ Back in 1979, CITES enlisted the [Alligator mississippiensis on its Appendix II](#), permitting its global trade under stringent regulations. American alligators are still listed on Appendix II due to similarity of appearance to other crocodilian species which are endangered or threatened.



ASSOCIATION POUR L'ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
DES FABRICANTS DE BRACELETS CUIR

June 2024

Bovine Leather

Thanks to the AQC supply chain mapping, **84%** of bovine slaughtering countries and **64%** of farming countries are now identified. They are located primarily in Europe.

Because bovine leather is a **by-product of the food industry** efforts are underway with the stakeholders of the industry to increase traceability. AQC is pushing leather suppliers to reach **full bovine leather traceability for bracelet manufacturers**.

CREDIBILITY

AQC leather suppliers rating

Originally AQC directly certified leather manufacturers, because of the lack of existing certification. Today certification schemes around tanneries have tremendously evolved. To streamline processes and to avoid duplication, AQC now recognises several certifications. A transparent rating system has been launched by AQC and the criteria are available on AQC's website ([link to page](#)).



AQC bracelet manufacturers certification

AQC certifies 100% of its members production sites every 2 years after an audit performed by an independent third party: the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS). The 13 production sites of the 5 AQC Membres are located in 8 different countries.



Certificates are available on the AQC website ([link to page](#)). The specifications cover:

1. General Requirements

- Respect for Human Rights
- Respect for Labor rights and working conditions
- Compliance with national laws and regulations
- Guarantee of responsible business practices

2. Traceability and management of the sourcing risks

- Reliability of the supply chain
- Documented procedures
- Guarantee of a quality control policy
- Management of non-conformities

3. Health, Safety and Environment policy

- Measurement and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by one year after certification
- Responsible practices for Health, Safety and Environment
- Protection of wild animal species and preservation of the species in their natural environment
- Compliance with international regulations and norms on dangerous substances



ASSOCIATION POUR L'ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
DES FABRICANTS DE BRACELETS CUIR

June 2024

AQC label

The AQC Label is a collective mark that can only be awarded to leather watch bracelet produced at AQC certified manufactures.

It bears witness to a process aimed at achieving the highest possible level of chemical, social and environmental safety.



COMMUNICATION & NETWORKING

Partnerships to promote sustainability and communication to share expertise are important values of AQC. Over the past 10 years, AQC has organised 77 events involving all stakeholders in the leather bracelet value chain: Multistakeholders Meetings, Watch Brands Working Groups, Tanners Working Groups, Laboratory Working Groups, LCA+ Working Groups....

In addition to regular events, AQC also offers customised training sessions.

As a platform designed to accelerate and facilitate improvements in cooperation with all participants of in the leather bracelet value chain, many projects have been launched by AQC: LCA+ harmonisation; physical testing method harmonisation, normalisation with the federation of the Swiss Watch Industry FH and European Committee for Standardisation (CEN).

To support cooperation and communication AQC closely works with 11 relevant organisations:





ASSOCIATION POUR L'ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
DES FABRICANTS DE BRACELETS CUIR

June 2024

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

AQC continues to support cooperation and transparency within the whole leather bracelet value chain. In an increasingly complex and challenging environment, it is of utmost importance to:

- Cooperate transparently between all participants
- Communicate with science-based facts to defend real leather
- Harmonise evaluation criteria methodologies
- Find applicable solutions together

AQC stays an open association and further develops participation opportunities for all concerned parties.

