

Leather from industrial hemp: innovative and sustainable material for future car interiors



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Volkswagen brand cooperates with Revoltech GmbH start-up

- Aim: to develop an innovative and sustainable surface material for the automotive sector
- 100% bio-based leather alternative made from industrial hemp could initially be used in car interiors from 2028

Volkswagen has entered into a cooperation with the German start-up Revoltech GmbH from Darmstadt. The aim is to research and develop sustainable materials based on industrial hemp. These could be used as a sustainable surface material in Volkswagen models from 2028. The material made from 100% bio-based hemp uses residues of the regional hemp industry. It can be produced on existing industrial plants and recycled or composted at the end of its service life in an automobile. The first presentations of the innovative material have already received a very positive response and feedback from customers.

Kai Grünitz, Volkswagen Brand Board Member for Technical Development:

In our search for new materials, we are very open to new ideas from many different industries. At Technical Development, we place a strong focus on innovative, creative and sustainable solutions for holistic, resource-saving vehicle development.

Andreas Walingen, Head of Strategy at the Volkswagen brand:

The sustainable use of resources is a key pillar in our ACCELERATE strategy and is therefore firmly anchored in our mindset and our actions. Our clear goal is to fuse customer wishes, sustainability requirements and corporate interests.

He added that the cooperation between Revoltech and Volkswagen was a good example of the benefits for start-ups and established companies to be gained from the targeted combination of their respective strengths – with the goal of getting new features ready for use in automobiles as swiftly as possible.

Lucas Fuhrmann, CEO and co-founder Revoltech GmbH:

Our innovative surface material called LOVR™ that we are developing and testing for the automotive industry in cooperation with Volkswagen is scalable and groundbreaking for sustainability in the automotive sector.

100% bio-based leather alternative from industrial hemp

Together with the Revoltech GmbH start-up, the predevelopment team at the Volkswagen brand is working on a material innovation as a substitute for imitation leather. This material made from what is known as industrial hemp cultivated for the food industry is an all-natural, 100% biological single-layer surface material called LOVR™ (the letters stand for leather-free, oil-free, vegan and residue-based) that is being developed specifically with the automotive industry in mind. The hemp fibers and a fully bio-based adhesive are combined using a special technology and processed to become a surface material. This truly circular material is sourced from regional hemp fields and is fully recyclable or compostable once it has reached the end of its service life. It is produced from residues of the hemp industry that have no further use. In addition, it can be manufactured on existing industrial plants, thus enabling swift scalability – and is therefore also suitable for use in large-scale production.

Volkswagen's Materials Technology, Design, and Components Development departments, Volkswagen Group Innovation and the Revoltech GmbH start-up are bundling their know-how to include as many perspectives as possible in the development work. Potential applications are being identified in collaboration with Components Development. Possible use in vehicle projects from 2028 is envisaged. The material has received very positive feedback in customer surveys.

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1. dfgdfggd

fdfds

dfgdfgdfg@gmail.com

32443432

<p>fsdsdfsfd</p>

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Primary Email: kundenbetreuung@volkswagen.de

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