# Startup Turns Invasive Species into Sustainable Leathers for Fashion Industry



In an innovative approach to tackle the invasive species problem and the fashion industry's environmental impact, a startup called Inversa is turning lionfish, Burmese pythons, and carp skins into sustainable leathers. Founded by a former McKinsey analyst and mechanical engineer, Aarav Chavda, Inversa aims to address both ecological and fashion issues by utilizing species that are harmful to local ecosystems in Atlantic and Caribbean regions.

These leathers have already been adopted by brands such as Piper and Skye and Rex Shoes for products ranging from wallets to footballs and flip-flops, signaling a promising start for the materials. This initiative not only helps in controlling the population of these invasive species but also offers an alternative to traditional leather materials, which are often criticized for their environmental footprint.

In addition, the fashion industry is witnessing a wider array of sustainable practices and innovations. For example, Uyen Tran, a designer based in the United States, founded TômTex, which produces biodegradable fabrics made from chitin derived from seafood waste and mushrooms. The company is now seeking significant investment to scale production for broader commercial use.

Other companies are also developing sustainable materials, such as Spinnova’s biodegradable fibers made from wood pulp cellulose, which are being utilized by brands like Marimekko and Adidas. These efforts showcase a growing trend towards reducing the fashion industry's environmental impact through innovative fabric alternatives.

However, challenges remain, such as the financial stability and scalability of these innovations. For instance, the fabric recycling company Renewcell went bankrupt despite securing significant partnerships and investments, highlighting the difficulties encountered in sustaining such initiatives.

Despite these setbacks, the push for sustainable fabrics continues, with industry experts and innovators advocating for greater investment and support to achieve longer-term environmental benefits.