

Shaping the future of sustainable aluminium

Derin Akersoy* outlines how Assan Alüminyum are leading through purpose when it comes to driving sustainability and delivering positive change within the industry.



Sustainability is no longer a distant goal – it's the foundation upon which forward-looking companies are building their futures around.

At Assan Alüminyum, a subsidiary of the Kibar Group, this principle is embedded into every layer of business. With roots in Türkiye and a growing influence that spans across Europe and North America, the company sees it as both its responsibility and opportunity to lead the aluminium industry toward a more sustainable future.

Embedding sustainability

As one of Europe's largest aluminium foil producers, Assan Alüminyum understands

the critical role its industry plays in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Aluminium is a key enabler of circularity: it's lightweight, infinitely recyclable, and vital across sectors like transport, packaging, and construction.

But producing aluminium sustainably requires more than just good intentions. It takes vision, investment, and a consistent strategy. In light of this, Assan Alüminyum has developed a comprehensive decarbonisation roadmap with clear goals: to reduce carbon intensity to 7 tCO₂e/t by 2030, to 3 tCO₂e/t by 2035, and then achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. These targets are not aspirational – they are

actionable, accountable, and backed by tangible steps.

The company's approach rests on three pillars:

- Integrating renewable energy sources
- Maximising the use of recycled aluminium
- Sourcing raw materials with lower carbon footprints.

Powering change

One of the cornerstones of Assan Alüminyum's decarbonisation strategy is its continuous investment in renewable energy. The company currently operates

*Marketing and Corporate Communications Manager, Assan Alüminyum,

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both a hydroelectric and a solar power plant, through which it generates and acquires International Renewable Energy Certificates (IRECs). With these certificates, the company ensures that its electricity use corresponds with a greener grid and fully offsets its Scope 2 emissions.

Assan Alüminyum's general manager Göksal Güngör, pictured above, states: "Investing in renewable energy is not just a moral imperative – it is a strategic decision that strengthens our long-term competitiveness. It allows us to serve environmentally conscious customers and to future-proof our operations in a world where regulatory and stakeholder expectations are constantly evolving."

Product innovation

Sustainability is also driving innovation at Assan Alüminyum. Its highly proficient R&D Centre is focused on developing advanced aluminium solutions that are not only high in performance but low in environmental impact. One example is the integration of higher secondary aluminium content into its product lines – a development that significantly reduces both energy consumption and resource use.

By adopting circular design principles, the company helps its customers meet their own environmental goals. Whether it's lightweighting in automotive applications or improving impermeability in packaging, the company sees its role as a partner in the sustainability journey of its external stakeholders as well.

Local sustainability

With a wide export network and a wholly owned subsidiary in the U.S., Kibar Americas, Assan Alüminyum supplies

products to over 70 countries worldwide. However, its responsibilities and its commitment to sustainability doesn't end at its factory gates. Through Assan Alüminyum's parent company Kibar Group's K-STAR Supplier Sustainability Program, it extends its commitment upstream and downstream. This initiative evaluates and supports the environmental and social performance of its supplier network – spanning nearly 7,000 suppliers across 59 sectors and 41 countries.

By encouraging and supporting better practices across the value chain, the company helps raise the overall standard of responsibility in the industries it touches. This collaborative approach is key to achieving system-wide change.

Recognition

The company's progress has been recognised by leading institutions. Most notably, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) granted it a \$90 million green loan, a strong endorsement of its strategy and operational credibility. This funding supports new investments in clean technologies and infrastructure, accelerating the company's transition to low-carbon production.

The company was also awarded the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) Performance Standard, recognising the fact that its practices align with global sustainability principles, while providing a constantly evolving and ambitious guide towards sustainability. Moreover, the company's latest CDP Climate Change score of "B" reflects its proactive approach in managing climate-related risks and opportunities.

Social responsibilities

Assan Alüminyum's commitment to sustainability extends into social and environmental impact through its distinctive Biodiversity Preservation Project, where it collaborates with Kocaeli University's Biology Department. Initially focusing on the propagation and reintroduction of the endangered Blue Star plant, the project later included other endangered species such as the Sea Daffodil, the Riva Mullein and the Kilyos Button. This helps boost the preservation of biodiversity, which is vital for a sustainable future.

Environmental values are also integrated into daily operations through afforestation efforts, having planted approximately 31,000 trees in six years. Assan Alüminyum have done this by replacing corporate gifts with tree planting certificates, donating saplings during events, and offsetting environmental impacts of wooden packaging materials.

Additionally, Assan Alüminyum supports culture and education through the Art at the Factory initiative, by purchasing and displaying works by fine arts students within its production facilities. This intends to bridge the gap between industry and creative expression. The initiative supports young artists and enriches the workplace environment.

People-driven

Behind every sustainability milestone stands a team of committed people. From its engineers and office professionals to operators on the production floor, there's a deep sense of ownership in the work they do. It's not uncommon to hear stories like that of Hüseyin, one of its long-time employees, who proudly tells his children that his work contributes to a healthier planet.

General manager Güngör adds, "That sense of purpose and value congruence is our most powerful asset. It unites us, motivates us, and drives us to raise the bar – day after day, year after year,".

Looking ahead

Real change can only come through collaboration. As the aluminium industry continues to evolve, so too must the relationships between producers, customers, regulators, and civil society. Assan Alüminyum is ready to lead by example, but it also invites business partners to walk this path together with it.

The company's core values – reliability, flexibility, innovation, and sustainability – are not just words on a wall. They are the compass by which it navigates challenges and seizes opportunities. And they are what will guide the company as it continues to shape a better, more responsible future for aluminium. ■