



Figure 1. Assan Alüminyum supplies aluminum foil, coil, and sheet to more than 70 countries around the world.

Assan Alüminyum's Sustainability Strategy Targets All Aspects of Business

Core Values of Reliability, Flexibility, Innovation, and Sustainability

Assan Alüminyum, the flagship company of Kibar Group, is a major flat rolled aluminum producer based in Turkey. Founded by Asim Kibar in 1988, Assan Alüminyum is still a private, family owned company that has become one of the fastest growing flat rolled aluminum producers in Europe and is one of the two largest aluminum foil producers in Europe.

The company operates two production plants and an integrated recycling facility in Tuzla and Dilovası, Turkey and a renewable energy power plant in Manavgat, Turkey, as well as sales and distribution centers in Switzerland and the U.S. With a current production capacity of up to 800 million lbs per year, the company produces aluminum coil, sheet, foil, and painted products (Figure 1). The company exports its products to 70 countries around the world, serving a variety of industries, including automotive, packaging, construction, consumer durables, and HVAC. The company also has a dedicated risk management team and is certified to the ISO 31000 Risk Management and ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management standards.

The heart of Assan Alüminyum's business is focused on four core values—reliability, flexibility, innovation, and sustainability—which the company believes are key to its success. In recent years, the value of sustainability has moved to the forefront, with the company investing in new technologies and know-how aimed at reducing emissions, supporting the environment, and providing safety and social benefits for both its employees and local communities.

"As climate change becomes one of the most significant factors that will impact the world and our future, many industries are forced to act and become more sustainable," noted Göksal Güngör (Figure 2), managing director of Assan Alüminyum and president of the Global Aluminum

Foil Roller Initiative (GLAFRI). "The aluminum industry is at the forefront of the transition to a circular economy in Europe, offering many extraordinary advantages, such as infinite and 100% recyclability, lightness, impermeability, and highly efficient conductivity. This is why sustainability is strategically significant in the company's future plans, as it aims to contribute to a better world for future generations."



Figure 2. Göksal Güngör.

Sustainability Initiatives

Assan Alüminyum's 2025 sustainability strategy is highly detailed, listing a number of targets for all aspects of its business—from combating climate change and supporting circular economy initiatives to investing in research and development, occupational health and safety, employee engagement, gender equity, business ethics, and beyond. Targets focused on developing a circular economy include measures such as minimizing waste (through reduction, recycling, and reuse), reducing energy consumption during production, investing further on renewable energy, etc. Meanwhile, research and development initiatives focus on aspects such as increasing resource efficiency, applying clean and environmentally friendly technologies and processes, completing work on infrastructure and digitalization of its production processes, and so on.

"We prioritize our core value of sustainability in all of our future plans," said Güngör. "We develop our plans based on the 2025 Sustainability Strategy of our mother

company and on the circular economy framework, in line with the European Green Deal. Assan Alüminyum aims to create a sustainable ecosystem together with its business partners, by using its expertise and aluminum's environment-friendly advantages."

In March 2022, Assan Alüminyum became the first Turkish flat-rolled aluminum producer to achieve the Aluminum Stewardship Initiative (ASI) Performance Standard, which recognized the sustainability improvements that the company has made at both its remelting and rolling operations. "While this is a great achievement for us, it also marks an important milestone in our journey towards a sustainable future," said Güngör. "We will use ASI as a valuable guideline for continuous improvement in this journey. We approach sustainability on all three dimensions: environmental, social, and economic."

Recycling: In line with its focus on innovation, as well as sustainability, Assan Alüminyum has developed and introduced its new 3423 recycling-friendly alloy, which uses 95% recycled aluminum as a raw material. This enables the alloy to achieve a 50% lower carbon footprint compared to equivalent primary aluminum products. The 3423 alloy was designed at the company's R&D center as part of its goal of developing aluminum products that both fit customer needs and positively contribute to sustainability. This is supported by the company's own integrated recycling and casting operation (Figure 3), which ensures stable supply of non-primary aluminum to its rolling plants.



Figure 3. Assan operates an integrated recycling and casting facility in Dilovasi that enables increased use of recycled aluminum.

Energy: Over the last seven years, the company has implemented new energy efficiency projects, aiming to reduce its GHG Protocol Scope 1 and 2 emissions. The projects completed during this period have reduced CO₂ emissions equivalent to the planting of more than 2.5 million trees.

At its own hydropower power plant, Assan Alüminyum produces renewable energy at a rate equivalent to its annual electrical energy consumption needs. Through hydropower production, the company is able to reduce its Scope 2 emissions, as well as offsetting emissions through the International Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs) that it generates and buys.

Biodiversity: Assan Alüminyum is also actively engaged in both reforestation and biodiversity projects. The reforestation projects are performed annually and are aimed at balancing the impacts of the company's activities, such as the use of wooden pallets during packaging and the carbon footprint associated with the organization of customer events.

The company has also partnered with Kocaeli University on its Biodiversity Preservation Project, which aims to save endemic plants in Turkey from extinction.

"Through this project, we have managed to save the Blue Star plant from extinction," noted Güngör. "This year, the Sea Daffodil plant project has just been completed, through which the plant has been reintroduced into nature. We aim to continue our collaboration with Kocaeli University, to make further contributions to the preservation of biodiversity."

Social Responsibility: Another recent project from Assan Alüminyum is the Women's Empowerment Project, which was carried out in Manavgat. Through the project, the company is backing the Women's Empowerment Cooperative, which supports local women in the area in forming an industrial kitchen, so that they can gain financial independence and contribute to the local economy. "This project is significant especially through a gender equality perspective, as it allows women to have their financial independence," explained Güngör. "The project also complements the WE Are Equal project we have started recently throughout our group, Kibar Holding. This project began by promoting the use of a gender-equal language in our daily lives and ultimately aims to establish gender equality by analyzing and working on all areas of our business and daily lives."

Investing in Future Growth

An important factor in Assan Alüminyum being able to achieve its environmental and social goals is being able to simultaneously maintain its economic sustainability. Therefore, during the ALUMINIUM 2022 exhibition in Germany, the company announced plans to invest US\$100 million in its operations. This is in addition to US\$60 million in investments that have already been made over the last two years.

The current investments will cover a wide range of projects, most of which will be implemented at the company's Dilovasi facility. The investments include the installation of a modern and highly energy-efficient thin strip rolling mill and five new continuous casting lines—which will be supplied by Achenbach Buschhütten and Novelis PAE. This will bring the total number of continuous casting machines operated by the company to 24. According to Assan, the company is expected to have the largest continuous casting capacity in all of Europe and America, once these new lines are completed.

In addition, the company will perform modernizations on its existing lines and will install a new recycling facility, new mill drive system with regenerative abilities for improved energy efficiency, and new filtration systems for the continuous casting lines. The company will also increase thin-gauge aluminum foil production capacity and implement digitalization projects to advance casting capabilities. Once the first phase of these investments is completed in early 2023, the company will reach an annual production capacity of 360,000 tons.

In the meantime, the company is continuing to expand into the North American market. In 2018, the company established its wholly-owned subsidiary, Kibar Americas, a sales and distribution center based in Chicago, IL. While Europe is currently the main export market for Assan Alüminyum, the company is exploring new opportunities for investments and growth in the U.S., which will enable them to create more value for its North American customers.

"We will continue to invest in aluminum, as we believe in its bright future," said Güngör. "As aluminum is sustainable by nature, our industry plays a key role in the transition to a circular economy. This is and will continue to be our main focus at Assan Alüminyum, where we always seek new opportunities to become more and more sustainable in all of our processes." ■