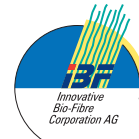


The Aluminium Drinks Can



Summary of the results of the EMPA sustainability study

The study looks at the degree to which the aluminium drinks can contributes to sustainable development (SD) in Switzerland. This is not merely an academic question, as sustainability is considered an essential factor for the long-term market success of the aluminium drinks can. After detailed discussions with independent experts (members of the «advisory board»), the authors of the study were able to convert the value-oriented Brundtland definition of sustainable development into an operationalised definition. To this end they defined a number of primary and secondary indicators embracing all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social). This framework then supplied answers, in the form of objective facts and figures, to eight key questions. With these answers it is possible to obtain concrete management information from what was formerly an abstract concept of sustainability. The data collected for the previous decade (1990–2000) is factual; the statements made for the present decade are forecasts based on projected trends.

The results of the study provide the aluminium drinks with a good reference. If we look at the reasons for this positive analysis, then the following becomes clear:

Recycling is the key factor. Actual consumer behaviour corresponds to a large degree to the recommendations that IGORA has been putting forward for many years. The success achieved by «recycling providers» with their information campaigns is reflected in the recycling rate of 91%, an exceptionally high figure.

The aluminium industry has recognised its environmental responsibility and as a result has invested huge sums in environmental protection over many years.

The packaging industry has significantly improved its products in ecological terms; as far as the drinks can is concerned, for example, it has reduced the aluminium requirement by more than 25 % (with no associated loss in packaging performance). The three aforementioned measures have led to a virtual four-fold reduction in environmental performance.

Viewed over the entire life cycle, there is balanced participation of all partners in the value-added process, which means that the value chain can be said to exhibit economic fairness.

Value added is also created in the social dimension; this can be seen most clearly in the remarkably high contribution to the maintenance of education institutions at all levels in Switzerland.

This contribution is rendered in the form of substantial fiscal revenues that on a pro-rata basis help to maintain society's learning capability.

Finally, the study also takes a look at the period 2000–2010. It does this with the aid of scenario-backed hypotheses with respect to economic, environmental and social development trends.

Special software, i.e. the S-E-E.ch® tool (developed by the Basle-based company Carbotech AG and IBF AG of St. Gallen), was employed during the study. The use of this systemic approach permitted the generation and processing of a wealth of new data as well as the transparent and comprehensible representation of the multifarious interactions and a scenario-based assessment.

The main conclusion drawn by IGORA, who commissioned the study, is that we must do everything in our power to ensure that the current recycling rate of 91 % is maintained.