

Eco-friendly: future friendly

With sustainability integral to the future of construction, CAB is facilitating greater cooperation between different material sectors to reduce waste and improve the environmental credentials of its members, and the wider industry, writes CAB CEO Nigel Headford



Nigel Headford

As sustainability continues to climb higher up the list of priorities, the challenges are ramping up for manufacturers, installers and contractors, not just in the aluminium in building sector but throughout the entire construction industry.

In response, the Council for Aluminium in Building (CAB) is helping its members address these challenges, with a focus on industry collaboration and practical initiatives.

With optional participation in its closed-loop recycling scheme forming part of CAB's membership package, increased scrap value and a desire to reduce environmental impact are helping the initiative gain traction.

Closed-loop collaboration

We are getting a lot more members on board with our closed-loop recycling programme, which is fantastic. It is really starting to gain momentum right now.

By ensuring that construction materials, such as aluminium, are recovered, processed and reused, companies can significantly reduce waste and improve resource efficiency. This is something that we are keen to encourage in other sectors beyond aluminium, such as glass and PVC-U, as part of a more 'joined-up' sustainability solution.

Buildings comprise lots of different materials, so we are starting to talk to the glass and PVC-U guys to say, 'actually, let us look at this holistically'.

Recognising that sustainability extends beyond the factory floor or project site, CAB has also introduced additional recycling initiatives covering non-construction materials, including electronic waste such as laptops and mobiles.

We even have plans to introduce what would be the first closed-loop recycling scheme for medical devices, generating additional revenue for us to spend on our members.

Evidence, not greenwash

Alongside practical initiatives, CAB is also committed to improving how environmental performance is measured and communicated.

Reliable and accurate reporting and transparency will help members evidence the results of their sustainability initiatives, improving their environmental credentials and providing differentiation in a competitive market.

We are currently looking into providing annual

certification that clearly confirms how much material has been recycled – but we need to make sure we get it right, because we do not want to be greenwashing.

For CAB members, these initiatives offer practical support at a time when the construction sector is demanding greater sustainability measures – and greater accountability.

Environmental progress requires cooperation across the whole construction supply chain, from suppliers and manufacturers through to installers and contractors on site, working with every material.

By acting as a facilitator, CAB is working to bring the industry together, for a more effective approach to waste management and reuse – and a greater reward.

Sustainability is here to stay. It is something that affects each and every one of us, and as the pressure to deliver greener buildings continues to grow, that collaborative approach will be essential in driving long-term change across the aluminium in building sector, and the wider construction industry. □

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