



Almatis' vision statement is a clear expression of our ambition: Innovate Alumina and Beyond for Tomorrow



At the centre of the evolving landscape of the global alumina industry stands Almatis — a long-established leader in specialty alumina with a reputation built on reliability, innovation, and a robust global footprint. Today, the company is not only reinforcing its legacy but also accelerating its shift toward next-generation technologies, greener production, and stronger supply chain resilience.

In an exclusive interaction with Iron & Steel Review magazine, Christian Ammermann, Chief Supply Chain Officer of Almatis, shares his views on the current state of the alumina market, the influence of geopolitics and energy dynamics, and the growing demand for high-value specialty products. He highlights Almatis' strategic investments, from its upcoming calcined alumina facility in China to its integrated operations in India, and explains how innovation, sustainability, and customer focus remain central to its long-term strategy. With clarity and vision, Christian Ammermann outlines how Almatis continues to shape the future of specialty alumina through responsible sourcing, advanced technologies, and a globally connected operational network.

How would you characterise the current state of the world's alumina industry? What key trends are you observing?

Following the price spike in 2024, spot alumina prices eased in 2025 as several large refining projects came online, particularly in Indonesia, Vietnam, and India. Combined with high inventory levels, this helped relieve the pressure on prices. As a result, we have seen a downward trend, and globally, we expect the market to remain soft through 2026.

That said, regional geopolitical factors still disrupt material flows and reduce availability and competitiveness, especially in the Atlantic region. A good example is the 50% U.S. tariff on Brazilian imports, where available sourcing is limited. With hydrate (ATH) from Brazil becoming significantly more expensive in the US, many consumers are now looking to source their needs from Europe and Asia. This shift could lead to some refineries, especially those acting opportunistically, temporarily losing interest in selling products in Europe to grab short-term gains in other regions.

All tariff decisions and resultant supply changes represent both opportunities and consequences. In the case of geopolitics and protectionist actions, the global trade market shifts according to the opportunities, but the business risk remains unclear. These shifts may be temporary, mid-term, or permanent, and the final outcome is yet to be determined.

What key factors, such as economic trends and supply chain dynamics, are currently influencing the alumina market? How does Almatis adapt to these changes?

The global alumina market is being reshaped by new refining capacity in Asia, ongoing pressure on energy prices, as well as an increase in carbon costs, especially in Europe.

Another point is the shifting trade dynamics driven by the US & China's policies and geopolitics, as I also mentioned above. Companies are finding it hard to take long-term decisions under the current circumstances. This "temporary" uncertainty has an impact on global markets...

My team and I are in close contact with our suppliers and market participants. The general sentiment is that companies are in an "on-hold" mode, waiting to see how things develop. Deep down, no one is happy with this. As a matter of fact, business needs stability to thrive. On the other hand, Almatis is the only specialty alumina provider with a truly global footprint. Our global operational network has always enabled us to navigate through challenging times, and thanks to it, we have continued servicing our customers with the same quality of material globally as well as locally. Being in all corners of the world also means strategic advantage in terms of supply of raw materials, which enables us to produce products for local supply in India, the US, Europe, Japan, and China.



Christian Ammermann
Chief Supply Chain Officer
Almaty

Sustainability is another factor shaping the overall industry and value chain. Demand for low-carbon and specialty aluminas is rising as industrial customers face stricter sustainability and supply-security requirements. Almatís has a long-lasting focus on high-value specialty products, investing in low-carbon production, and expanding strategic supply partnerships to reduce exposure to commodity price swings and strengthen long-term competitiveness. As the Supply Chain Team, we see ourselves as one of the key driving forces for more sustainable manufacturing at Almatís and attach special importance to continually improving our sustainable procurement practices, green energy purchases, and supplier selection.

Can you elaborate on how Almatís is investing in next-generation technologies to future-proof alumina production and enhance operational efficiency?

Almatís' vision statement is a clear expression of our ambition: Innovate Alumina and Beyond for Tomorrow. The industry is evolving fast, and we know that staying ahead means investing in next-generation technologies.

To start with, we are building a new calcined alumina facility in Qingdao, China, which will double our capacity in the region. It is designed with advanced calcination and grinding technologies to support high-tech markets like semiconductors and electric vehicles. We also expanded our Benton site in the U.S., boosting capacity and improving quality, especially for higher purity calcined aluminas, which are critical for ceramics and refractories. At the other side of the world, our Ludwigshafen plant is equipped with wet milling technology delivering powders that are finer, purer, and more versatile than ever before. By combining precision engineering with proven safety and compliance, we provide customers across industries with products that raise the bar in reliability and innovation to build their future together.

Sustainability is at the heart of our strategy. Through our Mission NeutrAL initiative, we are developing resource-saving products like ECO-TAB® and working to reduce our carbon footprint across all sites. In our growth regions such as China and India, we prioritize local raw materials locally to reduce on our scope 2 CO₂ emissions and improve supply chain resilience.

On the innovation side, we have a well-established Stage-Gate framework, which is the backbone of our R&D efforts. It helps us stay focused on projects that move the needle and ensures strong collaboration across teams. We are also pushing the boundaries of higher-purity aluminas, XLS & ULS products for power electronics, semiconductors, and other applications that are shaping our future.

And of course, we continue to invest in our global operational network, upgrading infrastructure in key locations like Rotterdam and Arkansas to improve flexibility, safety, and reliability. All of this is part of our commitment to staying ahead of market needs and delivering consistent value to our customers.

Almatís has been recognized for its commitment to sustainability. What recent measures has the company implemented to further reduce its carbon footprint?

At Almatís, we are proud of the progress we are making on sustainability.

Through our Mission NeutrAL program, we are actively reducing emissions, using more renewable energy, and improving efficiency across our sites. Since the launch of Mission NeutrAL, we have made considerable changes in the way we work.

To start with, we have placed sustainability at the heart of our guiding principles. One of the criteria of our innovation process, a determinant of whether an idea will be pursued at the practical level, is to have a sustainability advantage. Our innovation process prioritizes project proposals with sustainability advantages. From an operational point of view, our Rotterdam and Iwakuni plants operate to a considerable degree on renewable energy sources. Sustainability is not only about the environment for us. We have a holistic approach to the matter that takes into consideration people, planet, and global businesses. We have integrated sustainability principles into all our policies and procedures, from HR ethics to information technologies.

In addition to our internal efforts, as one of the leaders of our connected industries and a global player, we have shouldered the responsibility to help our customers and the entire value chain access products and services with reduced environmental impact. One highlight is our new Low Carbon Tabular and Calcined Aluminas, which cuts CO₂ emissions by around 13%. Our entire product line, produced in Europe, from Tabular and Calcined Aluminas to Calcium Aluminate Cements, has verified carbon-footprint-equivalent values that we are proud to share transparently with interested customers. These numbers show reductions of up to 20%, proving that our efforts are making a measurable difference.

On the sourcing side, we have made strong progress in improving the sustainability of the materials we purchase. We recently implemented new Procurement Policies, which include clear guidelines on sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Suppliers are expected to meet high standards in both areas.

Supplier Audits are also part of our established protocols, and I am proud to say that suppliers have embraced this effort as well.

Another key achievement is that around 80%* of the alumina we source is certified by the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI), a leading standard for responsible practices in the aluminum industry. This reflects our commitment to responsible sourcing and supports our broader sustainability goals.

How will the new calcined alumina production facility in China enhance Almatís' competitiveness and market share in Asia once it is operational?

Almatís started the construction of its new calcined alumina facility in China, which will be operational end of 2026.

This expansion will significantly strengthen Almatís' position in the Asian market by improving local supply capabilities and reducing lead times. It will also enhance responsiveness to customer needs, helping us grow market share in a strategically important region.



New calcine plant in Qingdao, China

Almatis has been servicing customers in China since 1998 with the highest-quality made-in-China products and local technical and customer support. The new calcined alumina plant will be our 4th investment in Huangdao, China, demonstrating our commitment to contribute to rapid economic growth in China and adjacent regions.

As a major player in the refractory minerals market, how do you see India's urban growth and the "Make in India" initiative influencing the demand for alumina? What position does Almatis hold in this growing market?

For many years now, we have seen India as a key growth Region for Almatis. This is also the reason we built a state-of-the-art, fully integrated Tabular Alumina plant in Falta, West Bengal.

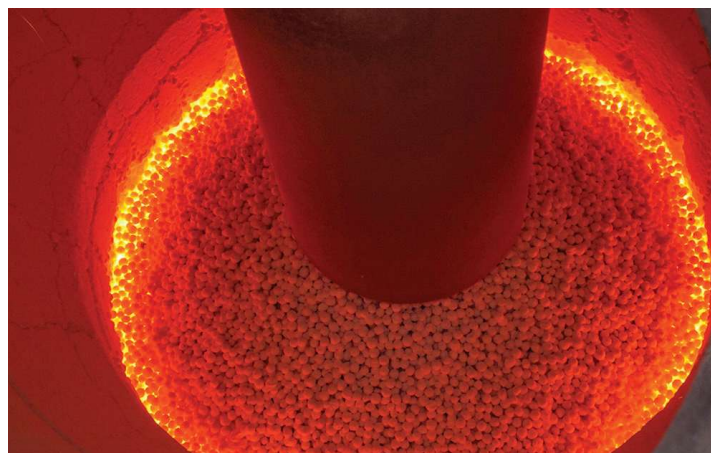
India's rapid urbanization and the "Make in India" initiative are driving strong demand for high-performance alumina, especially in infrastructure, automotive, and industrial sectors. Almatis is fully committed to the region, with a strong local presence, excellent technical capabilities, and a customer-focused approach. So far, the results have been excellent.

Having said that, regarding the Make in India approach, Almatis' position is clear and has been stated several times. We believe in the extremely high potential of India, with its knowledge base, technological advancements, and, most importantly, a highly skilled and young workforce. We want to be part of this magical transformation and are taking the necessary steps to contribute.

However, "Make in India" ambitions will always be partly achieved unless the entire value chain prioritizes local products. We call our industry members to action. Let us make in India together by prioritizing local supply to support this beautiful country.

What is the present status of the tabular alumina plant in Falta, West Bengal? How is it meeting the demands for refractory raw materials in India and other Asian markets?

India's industrial growth and infrastructure push are creating strong demand for high-performance alumina. To meet this, Almatis has taken a proactive approach by strengthening its



Made in India Tabular Alumina

regional supply chain. A key milestone is our tabular alumina plant in Falta, West Bengal, which is now fully operational and plays a central role in our Asia strategy.

The plant integrates production and sizing capabilities, allowing us to serve Indian and Asian markets more efficiently. It has significantly reduced lead times, improved supply reliability, and minimized import dependency, especially for critical sectors like steel, refractories, and ceramics. This investment not only supports current demand but also positions Almatris for long-term growth in one of the world's most dynamic regions.

The last two years have shown that our projections regarding the demand in India, for India, were well calculated. Our India plant has achieved record sales numbers year after year. We are grateful for the trust that our customers have placed in us, and we will continue to innovate to exceed their expectations.

Given the growing demand for refractories from the steel industry in India, are there any specific expansion programmes Almatris is considering to meet this market requirement?

To keep up with the growing demand for refractories in India's steel industry, we have already made a big move at Almatris. As mentioned above, in late 2022, we opened a fully integrated tabular alumina facility in Falta. It is actually the first of its kind in India, and it's built to serve the local market with high-quality specialty alumina—especially for steel and refractory applications.

By producing locally, we are not only cutting down on overseas dependencies but also making sure we can deliver quickly and reliably. This step reflects our commitment to being a trusted partner for the Indian market.



Tabular Alumina plant in Falta, West Bengal

Looking ahead, what is your vision for Almatris in the global alumina market, and how do you plan to navigate the challenges and opportunities in the years to come?

Looking ahead, I am genuinely excited about the future of Almatris in the global alumina market. The industry is evolving quickly, with growing demand from sectors like steel, ceramics, electronics, and renewables—bringing both challenges and opportunities.

Almatris is already making strong moves, such as our expansion in India, maintaining a solid global footprint, and our future calcined alumina plant in Huangdao, China. Our focus on customer needs, innovation, and sustainability will continue to be at the core of our strategy.

We are committed to strengthening supply chain resilience, investing in greener production technologies, exploring emerging applications, and growing in strategic regions like India. The future of Almatris is bright, and I am proud to be part of the journey.



Groundbreaking ceremony of new calcine plant in China