ALARKO
Value Redefined

The News

Special Feature
Access to Healthy Food: A Foundation of Sustainable Modern Living

Issue:
128

Interview
The Inspiring Stories of Alarko's Pioneers of Entrepreneurship



Interview
Özgür Aktaş
Hillside Beach Club
Cluster Executive Chef



The News

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As Alarko Holding, we are also on social media, which is an important part of communication during the fast-moving digitalization process. You can keep up-to-date with the latest announcements on our social media platforms.

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Chairman's Message

The rapid transformation the world is undergoing continues to reshape the priorities of the business world. Areas such as energy transition, digitalization, artificial intelligence applications, carbon management, sustainable supply chains, food security, and inclusive growth now shape not only our perspective on the future, but also today's competitive environment. The long-term success of organizations is measured not only by financial performance, but also by their ability to manage their environmental and social impacts, navigate technological change, and create value for their stakeholders.

At Alarko Group of Companies, we combine more than seventy years of experience with an approach to transformation that takes the needs of the future into account. As we pursue our investments across different sectors with a sustainable growth perspective, we place technology, innovation, and a people-centered approach at the core of all our activities.



At Alarko Holding, we place great importance on creating social benefit through our central projects and programs and expanding this impact together with our Group companies. As an organization with entrepreneurship in its DNA, in the third year of our Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, through which we support women's entrepreneurship, we provided training support to thousands of women and grant support to dozens of ventures, while also receiving valuable awards from respected platforms.

Following the strong performance delivered by our Group in 2025, we continue to move forward with determination in 2026 in line with our goal of creating long-term value. As we further strengthen our vision of becoming an international portfolio company, we prioritize building a resilient and impact-driven foundation for growth in every sector in which we operate.

As part of our recent restructuring in the energy sector, we have fully incorporated the electricity distribution and retail operations carried out by MEDAŞ and MEPAŞ in the Meram region, while transferring our shares in the CENAL Thermal Power Plant operating in Karabiga. MEPAŞ and MEDAŞ will continue to be among the leading players driving transformation in the sector through their work in infrastructure, digitalization, customer experience, sustainability, and equal opportunity.

In the period ahead, alongside our growth targets in renewable energy, we aim to make an active contribution to our country's clean energy transition through our collaboration plans in energy storage technologies. In this process, we regard the integrated energy storage systems supply agreement between Alarko Gotion Green Energy and Rönesans Enerji as an important milestone.

Our Industry and Trade Group continues to achieve significant results in customer experience, sustainability, and high value-added production. Having published its second sustainability report in compliance with the Türkiye Sustainability Reporting Standards (TSRS), our company continues to move forward with determination in line with its 2050 Net Zero roadmap.

Our Contracting Group is entering a new period in which its expertise is coming increasingly to the forefront as it adapts to changing conditions.

Having become a strategic function that supports our growth vision in project management and technical consultancy, our company is evaluating consultancy opportunities in major infrastructure projects while also actively contributing to the implementation of investments across our Group's different lines of business.

Our Agriculture Group continues to create strategic value for our country in the areas of food security and sustainable production. Our smart production model based on "Good Agricultural Practices" is gaining strong recognition in international markets. Alsera receiving an export award for the third time is an important indication of this success. At the same time, through our "Women's Power in Agriculture" initiative, we continue to support women producers and entrepreneurs. We will continue to regard food security and climate-resilient agricultural practices as priority areas in the period ahead.

At Alarko Holding, we place great importance on creating social benefit through our central projects and programs and expanding this impact together with our Group companies. As an organization with entrepreneurship in its DNA, in the third year of our Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, through which we support women's entrepreneurship, we provided training support to thousands of women and grant support to dozens of ventures, while also receiving valuable awards from respected platforms. This year, together with our Agriculture Group, we also provided additional support to entrepreneurs in this sector.

While continuing our scholarship programs to promote equal opportunity in education, we also continued to bring children and young people together with culture and the arts.

We were also honored to see the Alarko Holding Sustainability Report, one of the most important outcomes of our shared impact and responsible communication approach in sustainability, recognized with international awards.

We know that the pace of change will accelerate further in the period ahead. AI-powered business models, energy technologies, climate-friendly investments, sustainable cities, the transformation of food systems, and human-centered innovation will continue to be among the key areas shaping the future of the business world. At Alarko Holding, through our responsible investments, we will continue to be among the organizations driving this transformation.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our colleagues, executives, and business partners whose efforts have contributed to these achievements, and wish all our stakeholders health, happiness, prosperous days, and success.

İzzet Garih

Chairman of the Board of Directors,
Alarko Holding



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INSIDE ALARKO



Alarko MBA and Yenibirlider Programs Celebrate New Graduates

Alarko believes that a highly skilled workforce is essential to making an effective contribution to a sustainable economy and ensuring long-term corporate continuity. Reflecting this belief, the company launched the Alarko MBA Program in 2010 and has run it in partnership with Bahçeşehir University since 2013. The program has now celebrated its sixth graduating class. Young professionals who successfully completed the Yenibirlider Development Program also received their certificates at the graduation ceremony.

Alarko MBA Program, Türkiye's first corporate MBA program, held its graduation ceremony, with 25 employees graduating this year. The program reflects Alarko's corporate culture, which prioritizes investment in qualified talent and supports employee development. At the same ceremony, 7 employees who completed the Yenibirlider Development Program received their certificates.

The ceremony also highlighted the role of both programs in carrying Alarko's culture of learning, development and leadership forward to new generations. It was attended by İzzet Garih, Chairman of the Board of Alarko Holding; Vedat Alaton, Vice Chairman of the Board; Niv Garih, Board Member; Ümit N. Yıldız, CEO of the Alarko Group of Companies; Prof. Dr. Yücel Batu Salman, Director of the Bahçeşehir University Graduate School; and Özge Aslan, General Manager of the Yenibirlider Association.

Launched in 2010, the Alarko MBA Program was designed to develop future leaders from within the organization who can carry its corporate culture and values forward. A total of 186 employees have graduated from the program to date. Run

in partnership with Bahçeşehir University, it offers a comprehensive curriculum spanning strategic management, leadership, finance, marketing, innovation, digital transformation and sustainability, while also strengthening participants' managerial capabilities. One of the program's most valuable outcomes is its alumni network, which has grown stronger over the years. By fostering the exchange of experience and collaboration among graduates from different cohorts, the network also contributes to a culture of continuous learning.

Yenibirlider Development Program, meanwhile, is designed to develop Alarko's young talent into the leaders of the future. It offers participants a comprehensive development journey focused on leadership in the age of artificial intelligence, technology, innovation and strategic transformation. To date, 78 Alarko employees have successfully completed the program. Combining in-person and online learning, it prepares young professionals for the demands of both today's and tomorrow's business world.

"AT ALARKO, WE PUT YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE VERY HEART OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION"

Commenting on the graduation ceremony, Ümit N. Yıldız, CEO of the Alarko Group of Companies, said: "At Alarko, we put young people at the very heart of organizational transformation. As we share our knowledge and experience with them, we view the development of their capabilities and leadership skills as a long-term, systematic responsibility. We see the Alarko Education and Culture Foundation, which we established in 1986; our long-standing scholarship programs; Alarko Future's Club, which aims to develop the managers of tomorrow; and our training programs, which raise employee development to international standards, as integral parts of the same vision. Alarko MBA Program is also a highly valuable component of this investment. Designed to develop tomorrow's managers today, we see it as a leadership ecosystem where learning, experience and development come together. Over the 16 years



since the program began in 2010, 186 of our young colleagues have graduated, and our partnership with Bahçeşehir University since 2013 has made it even stronger. Our collaboration with the Yenibirlider Association is equally valuable to us. This year, 7 of our colleagues successfully completed the 26th cohort of the Yenibirlider Development Program. Run in partnership with Boğaziçi University, the program is based on a view of leadership centered on creating a lasting and meaningful impact on organizations, teams and society."

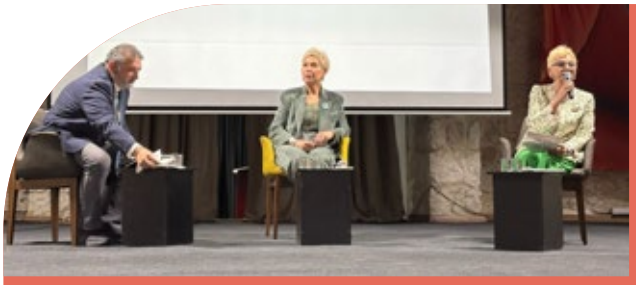
Yıldız thanked Bahçeşehir University, the Yenibirlider Association, Boğaziçi University and all colleagues who contributed to this meaningful collaboration, and concluded: "We see the diplomas and certificates our young people received today as a strong foundation for successful careers. Generational differences have always been less pronounced at Alarko. This is because every manager at Alarko listens to their colleagues, values their contributions, and passes on knowledge and experience effectively. This democratic culture was passed down to us by our founders. As the colleagues whose graduation we are celebrating today take on greater responsibility and authority, I encourage them to make supporting the next generation one of their most important priorities. I wholeheartedly congratulate all of our young leaders."

İzzet Garih Moderates Leadership Discussion at Good People's 5th Anniversary Panel

İzzet Garih, Chairman of the Board of Alarko Holding, moderated a leadership panel held to mark the fifth anniversary of Good People Executive Search. As the panel explored the evolving dynamics of leadership, Garih guided the discussion from a holistic and strategic perspective, bringing together a range of viewpoints.



Panelists Yeşim Özlale Önen and Hande Yaşargil shared their views on self-awareness in leadership, ego maturity, the balance between power and humility, and evolving global expectations of leaders. Good People Executive Search founder Gözde Tutaç also took part in the event and brought the session to a close with a brief meditation. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the panel offered an inspiring exchange of ideas on clarity in leadership, a people-centered approach, and the evolution of decision-making processes.





Leyla Alaton Meets Women Entrepreneurs in Adana

Alarko Holding Board Member Leyla Alaton met with business community representatives and women entrepreneurs at a talk titled "Women's Entrepreneurship and International Women's Day," organized by the Business Women's Association in Adana on 25 March 2026 as part of International Women's Day activities.

During the event, Alaton shared her views on leadership, entrepreneurship and the role of women in business. She emphasized that leadership is not simply about setting direction, but also about inspiring others and driving transformation. Noting that stronger representation of women in business is critical to sustainable development, she encouraged young women to have the courage to shape their own stories. Alaton also said that leadership is forged especially in times of uncertainty, risk and change, highlighting the decisive role of courage, determination and self-awareness on the path to success. Drawing on examples from her own career, she stressed the importance of young people taking on responsibility early, not being afraid to make mistakes and forging their own paths.

The well-attended event gave students and young entrepreneurs the opportunity to draw on Alaton's experience through a lively question-and-answer session. The program concluded with the opening of painter Haydar Ekinek's exhibition, "Women of Peace."



A Productive Visit to Meram: Leyla Alaton Meets with Employees

Alarko Holding Board Member Leyla Alaton reviewed Meram's operations and digital transformation initiatives and shared insights from her professional experience with employees.

During her visit to Konya, Alarko Holding Board Member Leyla Alaton met with Meram employees and managers. Over the course of the day, she met with both field and office teams and was briefed on the company's operations, investments and priorities for the period ahead. The visit began with breakfast and an evaluation meeting with MEDAŞ and MEPAŞ operations managers. Alaton also spent time with employees, sharing experiences from her career and answering their questions. The discussion covered corporate culture, leadership, employee development and teamwork, with the role of women in the workplace and equal opportunities among the key topics.

Later in the program, Alaton visited the SCADA Center, where she was briefed on the remote monitoring and control of the electricity distribution network. She also inspected ongoing facility work on site, observed underground grid investments and horizontal drilling applications that support grid modernization, and exchanged views with the teams. At the MEDAŞ Call Center, where 99.7% of the 1,129,000 calls received in 2025 were successfully handled, Alaton reviewed customer service processes and learned more about call management operations. During her visit to the Maintenance Workshop, she also examined maintenance, repair and recycling practices in detail.

> Women account for 30% of Meram's total workforce, with 395 women actively working in the energy sector. This level of female employment stands out in the electricity distribution sector, while the growing representation of women in management is also regarded as an important indicator of an inclusive workplace culture.

Meetings attended by deputy general managers and directors focused on the company's financial structure, investment plans, digital transformation initiatives, customer-focused practices and sustainability projects. Throughout the program, Alaton met with employees from different functions, listened to their views and suggestions, and gained a comprehensive overview of Meram's current activities and future vision.

Niv Garih Meets with Meram Employees in Nevşehir

During a visit to Nevşehir, Alarko Holding Board Member Niv Garih met with Meram's field and office teams, reviewed infrastructure investments in the region, and emphasized the importance of occupational safety and team spirit.







Alarko Holding Board Member Niv Garih met with Meram employees during a two-day visit to Nevşehir. Garih met with field and office teams and was briefed on operations, investments and ongoing projects across the region.

On the first day of the program, Garih visited MEDAŞ and MEPAŞ operations in Nevşehir to review field activities and investment processes on site. He was also briefed by officials on ongoing infrastructure and excavation works in the city. Later in the day, he met with operations managers responsible for Nevşehir, Niğde, Aksaray and Kırşehir to discuss operational processes.

In his meetings with employees, Garih stressed that occupational safety is a top priority and noted that field operations require considerable dedication. He said strong communication and team spirit are central to the corporate culture and play a key role in Meram's success.

On the second day of the visit, Garih met with fault response and maintenance teams over breakfast, inspected field activities on site and thanked employees for their efforts. Noting the high level of responsibility involved in field work in the energy sector, he highlighted employees' contribution to service quality. The visit also covered regional investments, modernization efforts, the strengthening of grid infrastructure, digitalization initiatives and customer satisfaction-focused processes. The program concluded with discussions and an exchange of views.

Leyla Alaton Highlights the Growing Role of Women in Business

Alarko Holding Board Member Leyla Alaton attended the “Business Life and Women” talk organized by the Izmir Chamber of Commerce as part of International Women’s Day, where she highlighted the importance of stronger representation of women in business and in decision-making.

Speaking at the event moderated by journalist Banu Şen, Alaton noted that although women play important roles in business, their representation in senior management remains below the desired level. She emphasized that greater participation in decision-making is essential for sustainable progress and said women need to make their knowledge, experience and capabilities more visible. Drawing on examples from her own career, she underlined the importance of self-confidence and a goal-oriented approach, and expressed her belief that women’s representation in business will continue to strengthen with new generations. Alaton also noted that women are taking increasingly active roles in both business and the entrepreneurship ecosystem, creating significant value for economic and social development. Pointing to the many successful women entrepreneurs and professionals in Izmir, she stressed the importance of stronger solidarity and collaboration among women. She also discussed the professionalization of family businesses, partnership structures and sustainable management, emphasizing the importance of sound governance mechanisms and open communication for long-term success. The event concluded with the opening of painter Haydar Ekinek’s exhibition, “Women of Peace.”

As part of International Women’s Day, Leyla Alaton also visited the Alarko Carrier Izmir Office, where she met with employees, shared her experiences and had a heartfelt conversation with the team.



Rönesans Enerji Selects Alarko for Energy Storage Solution

Alarko Gotion Green Energy, established to manufacture energy storage systems, has signed a major turnkey sales agreement with Rönesans Enerji to supply integrated energy storage solutions for the Sibel Wind Power Plant, which has an installed capacity of 88 MW. Under the agreement, the company will provide batteries, power conversion systems, advanced energy management systems and transformer equipment as a one-stop solutiion, with the aim of making a long-term contribution to Türkiye’s clean energy ecosystem. Hakan Aytekin, General Manager of Altek Alarko, said the strategic venture represents a strong entry into the energy storage sector and emphasized that this first supply agreement with Rönesans Holding marks an important milestone for security of supply, price stability and reducing dependence on imported energy.





Ümit N. Yıldız Speaks at the International Economy Summit

At the Leaders' Vision for the Future panel held as part of the International Economy Summit, Alarko Group of Companies CEO Ümit N. Yıldız discussed the shifting priorities of the business world and the strategic steps Alarko has taken in response. Noting that in the post-2020 period, shaped by successive crises, liquidity, sustainability and resilience have become priorities for all stakeholders alongside growth and profitability, Yıldız stressed that companies must now focus not only on financial performance, but also on human capital, sustainability-driven approaches and long-term value creation.

Yıldız said: "At Alarko, we are acting from this perspective. As we diversify our areas of activity, we are focusing on the needs of the future. In agriculture, we are developing AI-powered solutions in response to food supply security and the need to adapt to the effects of climate change; to support energy supply security, we are accelerating our investments in energy storage. As logistics needs evolve, we are also expanding our value chain through circular projects we have launched in aviation." Yıldız also stressed that R&D investments should not be viewed as an expense, emphasizing that in a rapidly changing world, maintaining competitiveness and shaping the future depend on developing innovative solutions. Referring to the Alarko Capital activity group, he said the Group is moving forward by investing in companies it considers sustainable and profitable. "Through both direct investments and our support for the entrepreneurship ecosystem, we aim to strengthen sustainable growth. Today, capital is seeking not only growth and profitability, but also sustainability, responsible production and a future built on reputation. We believe that organizations that understand this transformation and move forward accordingly will make a difference in a changing world," he said.

Hillside Beach Club Featured by Travel + Leisure for Its Exceptional Guest Loyalty



Hillside Beach Club, renowned for its remarkably high guest loyalty rates and recognized as the subject of a dedicated case study at Harvard Business School, has been spotlighted by Travel + Leisure, one of the world's most influential travel and lifestyle publications. The feature positions Hillside Beach Club as a destination that travelers return to year after year, describing it as a place that appeals to those seeking authentic, understated luxury and an experience worth revisiting every season. The resort's stunning bay, surrounded by pine forests, is portrayed not only as a natural wonder but also as a setting where modern luxury and tranquility come together in perfect harmony. The article highlights the property's unique ability to cater simultaneously to guests looking for active holidays and adventure, as well as those seeking relaxation and peaceful retreat. It also praises the family-friendly environment that allows children to move freely and independently while enjoying a wide range of dedicated experiences. The article further highlights the resort's culinary and wellness offerings as key elements of the guest experience. Travel + Leisure draws attention to the Main Restaurant's gourmet open buffet featuring fresh local flavors, as well as the Baby Chef concept, which provides nutritious meals tailored for younger guests. For adults seeking a quieter atmosphere, serene beach alternatives such as Serenity Beach and Silent Beach are featured as distinctive highlights. The resort's wellness experience is also prominently recognized, with Sanda Nature Spa, offering Balinese-inspired therapies, and Sanda Day Spa, home to a traditional Turkish bath and sauna, presented as destinations for holistic relaxation and renewal.

Canan Coşkun Takes Part in Circular Economy Week Panel

Canan Coşkun, Corporate Communications and Sustainability Director of the Alarko Group of Companies, took part as a panelist in an event held as part of the fifth Türkiye Circular Economy Week, organized in cooperation with BCSD Türkiye, DCube Circular Economy and Sustainability, and the Business for Goals Platform (B4G). Speaking at the session titled “The Circular



Future of Agriculture and Food and Türkiye” in Bursa, Coşkun shared information on Alarko’s sustainable agriculture practices.

BAKAD Project Wins International Digital Transformation Award

The BAKAD Project, undertaken by Alarko Contracting Group together with its solution partner EGIS, received first prize for its “AI-Based Incident Detection Platform” in the “Digital & AI: Smarter, Faster” category at the EGIS Operator’s Club event held in Paris on 25 March 2026. The event focused on digitalization, efficiency and sustainability in infrastructure operations. Developed by leveraging the existing ANPR infrastructure, the solution reduces the need for additional investment while enabling more effective use of existing systems, contributing to operational efficiency and sustainability goals.



Hillside Beach Club Ranked Among Europe’s Best Resorts

Hillside Beach Club has been named among Europe’s Best Resorts in the Condé Nast Traveller Readers’ Choice Awards 2026, one of the world’s leading travel accolades. Selected through votes cast by travelers from around the globe, Hillside Beach Club’s inclusion on this prestigious list once again highlights its strong international reputation, driven by its distinctive holiday experience and the “Feel Good” philosophy that shapes every aspect of the guest journey.

Recognized as one of the travel industry’s most respected reader-voted awards programs, the Condé Nast Traveller Readers’ Choice Awards bring together outstanding hotels and resorts from across the world based on feedback from travelers. Hillside Beach Club’s ranking among Europe’s finest resorts in 2026 reflects the international recognition of the brand’s longstanding commitment to exceptional guest experiences and service excellence. Through its unique blend of nature, hospitality, well-being and personalized experiences, Hillside Beach Club continues to set itself apart as a leading destination for travelers seeking meaningful and memorable stays. Its latest achievement further reinforces the resort’s position among Europe’s most admired holiday destinations.

Club Market Returns to Hillside Etiler on 17-18 October

A date to mark on the calendar for a weekend filled with shopping, flavor and energy: Club Market, Hillside City Club's signature event, returns to Hillside Etiler on 17-18 October for its second gathering of the season. Bringing together curated brands, gastronomic experiences, sports and music under one roof, Club Market is set to add a refined sense of movement and discovery to the autumn season.



Following the success of its first event of the year in May, which featured distinctive brands including Vakkorama Cafe, Petra Roasting Co., Gusina, Melez Tea, Minoa Bookstore and Sayés, Club Market returns to the city with another vibrant program. Throughout the two-day event, visitors will be able to enjoy continuous DJ performances, live music sessions, creative workshops and specially designed sports activities, all contributing to the signature high-energy atmosphere that has become synonymous with Club Market.

Complemented by exclusive HYROX sessions, the event brings together shopping and well-being in a dynamic social setting. With its carefully curated mix of experiences, Club Market offers an unmissable autumn weekend for those looking to combine lifestyle, movement and discovery in the heart of the city.

Alsera Wins Third Export Award in Three Years



In only its third year, Alarko Agriculture Group has once again been recognized with an export award for its success in fresh fruit and vegetable production. Alsera, the subsidiary responsible for Alarko Agriculture's modern greenhouse operations, was honored at an awards ceremony organized by the Istanbul Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Exporters' Association based on 2025 export data, in recognition of its performance in export volume and market diversification. The recognition marks Alsera's third consecutive export award. The award was accepted by Murat Yılmaz, Deputy General Manager of Trade at Alarko Agriculture Group.

Sustainable Production at the Gebze Facility

The electrical automation system introduced at Alarko Carrier's Gebze Facility saved 177,000 kWh of energy in a single year. Meanwhile, the rooftop solar power plant commissioned at the Eskişehir Factory generated 700 MWh of renewable electricity, allowing all electricity used in production to be supplied by solar power. Part of the electricity generated was also fed into the grid, supporting the supply of renewable energy and, in line with circular economy principles, helping to increase the share of renewables in the national grid.





MEPAŞ Energy Attends the Electricity Customer Experience Summit

MEPAŞ took part in the Electricity Customer Experience Summit, where the latest developments in customer experience and digital transformation in the energy sector were discussed. The event explored AI-powered digital solutions, practices designed to improve customer and employee experience, and innovative approaches across the sector. Exchanges with other participants also provided an opportunity to keep up with emerging industry trends and practices.

MEDAŞ Supports Students on Their Career Journey

MEDAŞ took part in KTO Karatay University's Career Fair '26, held on 13-14 May. Over the course of the two-day fair, MEDAŞ met with students and shared information about the company, career opportunities, internships and areas of work. The MEDAŞ stand attracted strong interest from students, who had the chance to ask questions about the energy sector and speak one-on-one with team members about career paths. During the "First Step in Your Career" session held as part of the fair, MEDAŞ employees also answered students' questions.





MEPAŞ Supports Future Engineers on Their Career Journeys

MEPAŞ met with university students through its NextGen Candidate Engineer Program, created to connect young talent with the energy sector and support aspiring engineers on their career journeys. The program included visits to Konya Technical University, KTO Karatay University and Necmettin Erbakan University. During the events, students learned about MEPAŞ's areas of activity, the transformation underway in the energy sector, career opportunities and industry insights. MEPAŞ also listened to the expectations and views of aspiring engineers, creating an interactive two-way exchange.

Alarko Contracting Receives Overseas Contracting Services Award



Alarko Contracting Group was recognized for its achievements in international projects at the Overseas Contracting Services Awards Ceremony organized by the Turkish Contractors Association. At the ceremony, held in Ankara on 27 January 2026, the award was presented to Ümit Boran, General Manager of Alarko Contracting, by the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Senior EBRD Executive Visits BAKAD

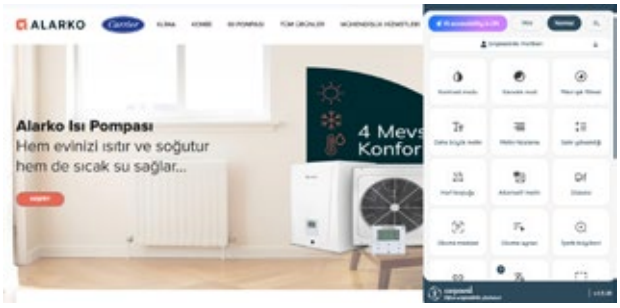


Greg Guyett, First Vice President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), visited the Operations and Maintenance Station of the Great Almaty Ring Road (BAKAD) on 17 March. During the visit, information was shared on the project's operational processes, while the Traffic Control Center was introduced through a comprehensive presentation on the highway's real-time monitoring and management system. The discussions also covered cooperation with the EBRD and the project's contribution to Kazakhstan's transport infrastructure, reaffirming a shared commitment to developing sustainable and resilient transport solutions.

Alarko Carrier Website Is Now More Accessible

Alarko Carrier has updated its website in line with accessibility standards to create a more inclusive user experience across its digital touchpoints. New features include color and contrast settings, options for text size and line spacing, keyboard navigation, and preferences to reduce motion and animations. An accessibility panel that opens when users enter the site is designed to make information easier to access for people with dyslexia, epilepsy, low vision, vision loss, Parkinson's disease and different cognitive needs.

The updated site is designed around equal and secure access to information for everyone. Built around a feedback-driven approach, it will continue to be improved through regular monitoring and measurement. Preferences selected in the accessibility panel and usage data will also be used to support consistency and continuity across the site.





Kyrgyz Delegation Visits BAKAD

A delegation from the Kyrgyz Republic, led by Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications Baktyluu Mombekov, visited the Operations and Maintenance Station of the Great Almaty Ring Road (BAKAD) on 10 April. During the visit, information was shared on BAKAD's implementation model, financing structure, operations and maintenance processes, and the technical and digital solutions used in the project. The program also included field inspections of the operations facilities and along the highway route.

Bucharest M6 Metro Line Reaches 66.12% Physical Completion





The M6 Metro Project, currently under construction in Bucharest, Romania, by the Alarko Contracting and Makyol joint venture, has reached an important milestone. As of the end of April, physical progress on the project stood at 66.12%. Excavation, reinforced concrete and piling works are continuing in line with the planned schedule, with Aeroport Băneasa and Gara Băneasa among the stations recording the highest levels of progress. Work on station structures and infrastructure connections is also continuing simultaneously.



Global Success for BAKAD

BAKAD represented Kazakhstan alongside Investment and Operation LLP, Astana Tazalyk LLP and QAJService LLP at the 5th World Snowplough Championship, held in Chambéry, France, from 10 to 12 March 2026. The competition, organized as part of the 17th World Winter Road Maintenance, Resilience and Decarbonisation Congress, assessed participants on criteria including the use of specialist equipment, precision manoeuvring and navigating obstacles on challenging courses. Following the qualifying rounds, Tofik Azizov, an employee of BAKAD Investment and Operation LLP, delivered a strong performance and advanced to the final as one of the competition's top 12 finalists.



MEPAŞ's Sustainable Energy Consumption Certified

The entire amount of electricity consumed at MEPAŞ's General Directorate building has been certified through I-REC renewable energy certificates. The certification provides a tangible demonstration of the company's approach to sustainable energy use.

Access to Healthy Food: A Foundation of Sustainable, Modern Living

Climate change, population growth, increasing pressure on natural resources, and transformations in global supply chains are making access to healthy and reliable food one of today's most important agenda items. In this context, approaches developed in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a broad range of solutions and areas for improvement, extending from sustainable agricultural practices and traceability to resource efficiency and food safety. This transformation in the agriculture and food sector aims to contribute to the development of more resilient and sustainable food systems for the future.

Special Feature



Throughout human history, nutrition has been far more than a biological necessity; it has been a key factor shaping the existence and development of civilizations. Whether hunter-gatherer or agricultural, societies built their lives around meeting basic needs, while difficulties in accessing those needs led to significant changes and, at times, profound disruptions. Advances in science and technology may have made food production more accessible than ever before, but rising levels of awareness have also turned this basic necessity into one of history's most complex paradoxes. Today, this fundamental need we define as nutrition goes far beyond the simple instinct of satisfying hunger.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of health clearly reflects this evolution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Achieving this requires direct access to clean, nutritious food whose biological integrity has been preserved. In other words, it requires access to healthy food in line with WHO standards. To make this possible, all food-related issues must be addressed through a multidimensional framework that incorporates global risks, social justice and sustainability.

What Is Clean and Reliable Food?

In its simplest form, clean and reliable food refers to products that are produced in compliance with food safety standards throughout the journey from production to consumption, whose quality is preserved, and that can be delivered to consumers with confidence. Today, population growth, changing climate conditions and evolving production models make it necessary to manage food systems more carefully. For this reason, access to healthy food is not merely a matter of individual dietary preferences; it is also important in terms of public health, sustainable production and food security. Consistent access to safe and nutritious food supports individuals' quality of life while contributing to stronger social welfare.

GLOBAL CRISES AND THE ACCESSIBILITY DILEMMA

Today, access to healthy food is a challenge that affects the entire world simultaneously. Major issues such as the climate crisis, water scarcity, extreme weather events and desertification are not only reducing already limited arable land but also significantly lowering productivity in these areas.



700 million: Approximate number of people facing hunger.

2.3 billion: Approximate number of people worldwide experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity.

14%: Share of children worldwide affected by stunting.

5.5%: Share of children worldwide who are overweight.

12.1%: Obesity rate among adults worldwide.

Source

When pandemics, macroeconomic fluctuations and supply chain disruptions triggered by geopolitical tensions are added to these challenges, it becomes clear that access to food is under considerable strain. The issue is therefore not limited to production alone. Ensuring that food reaches the end consumer while preserving its nutritional value and remaining available through fair pricing models, in other words making it "accessible", represents another critical area of challenge.

Addressing a challenge of this magnitude requires an equally significant response. Indeed, improving access to healthy food is one of the key focus areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is reflected directly in SDG 2, Zero Hunger, and SDG 3, Good Health and Well-Being. Together, these goals highlight the direct relationship between food security, accessibility and social justice.

This is where the global food crisis also comes into view. Going beyond access to healthy food alone and emphasizing access to food itself, overcoming this crisis depends not only on increasing production volumes but also on reducing socioeconomic disparities in access to food and aligning production processes with the planet's ecological boundaries. Rebuilding the food ecosystem in the modern world therefore requires the development of local models that are resilient, flexible and sustainable in the face of global crises. At the same time, ensuring that food is healthy remains a fundamental prerequisite.

THE PATH TO RELIABLE FOOD: GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

The agricultural sector is expected not only to meet growing food demand but also to respond to increasing expectations regarding the protection of natural resources. As a result, production approaches that simultaneously address productivity, environmental impact and food

Good Agricultural Practices

A set of planned and auditable processes designed to ensure that agricultural production does not harm the environment or human and animal health, while protecting natural resources and supporting traceability, sustainability and food safety in agriculture.





Stages of Farm-to-Fork Traceability

- Seed and Input Procurement
- Smart Production and Cultivation (IoT Sensor Monitoring)
- Harvesting and Laboratory Analyses (Residue Testing)
- Sorting, Packaging and Digital Labeling (QR-Code Integration)
- Cold Chain and Logistics Monitoring
- Distribution Centers and Warehouse Management
- Shelf Management and Consumer Verification (Table)

safety have gained greater importance in recent years. Good Agricultural Practices have emerged as one of the key tools of this approach, aiming to balance the economic, environmental and social dimensions of production.

These practices focus on issues such as protecting soil health, using water resources efficiently, strengthening traceability and conducting production processes within established standards. They also encourage the conscious and controlled use of crop protection products and other agricultural inputs, with the objective of supporting both production efficiency and product reliability.

One of the core objectives of healthy and reliable food production is to manage production processes in line with scientific evidence and recognized standards of good practice. While pest and disease management remains a natural part of agricultural production, alternative approaches such as integrated pest management, biological controls and biotechnical methods are increasingly being adopted. These approaches help producers maintain product quality while reducing environmental impacts and making more efficient use of resources.

THE NEW LANGUAGE OF TRUST: FARM-TO-FORK TRACEABILITY

In the past, as in many other sectors, traceability in agriculture often remained little more than a statement of good intentions on paper. Today, however, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data make farm-to-fork traceability possible. One of the defining characteristics of the modern consumer is the desire to understand the story behind the food they consume, including its origin and production process. In other words, conscious consumers no longer limit themselves to checking expiration dates. They also seek answers to questions such as: Where was this product grown? What analyses were conducted? What environmental impact did its production create? Naturally, this has elevated the importance of traceability significantly.

As a result, companies are expected to meet these requirements not only out of a sense of responsibility but also because doing so has become essential for maintaining consumer trust and market competitiveness. Traceability means that every component of the food production process is recorded digitally and transparently.

Traceability extends far beyond the information displayed on product packaging. It encompasses the entire production chain, from seed planting and harvesting to storage, logistics and the product's arrival in the hands of consumers. This allows production-related information to be documented, facilitates the identification and management of potential risks, and supports food safety practices.

Today, through digital platforms and QR-code applications, consumers can more easily access information regarding a product's origin, production process and, where available, relevant analyses and certifications. This enables consumers to make more informed food choices while contributing to greater transparency throughout production processes.

GLOBAL STANDARDS AND "FARM-TO-FORK" REGULATIONS

Access to healthy and reliable food is not a matter shaped solely by the individual choices of producers or consumers. It falls within the shared responsibility of multiple stakeholders due to its implications for public health, the protection of natural resources and the future of food systems. As a result, issues related to food production and consumption have gained increasing prominence in international policy and regulatory frameworks in recent years.

Initiatives such as the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy developed within its framework establish objectives aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of agricultural production, promoting more efficient resource use and supporting sustainable food systems. In this context, issues such as carbon footprint reduction, biodiversity, food safety and the efficient use of agricultural inputs are becoming increasingly important.

For many countries and producers, including those in Türkiye, these developments bring with them the need to adapt to evolving expectations and standards. Looking ahead, sustainability, traceability and efficient resource management are expected to remain among the primary agenda items shaping the future of the agriculture and food sector.

DEMOCRATIZING ACCESS TO FOOD AND EXPANDING HEALTHY NUTRITION

Access to healthy and reliable food today is no longer solely a matter of individual choice; it is also a shared responsibility of producers, public institutions, the retail sector and consumers. Therefore, ensuring that food systems are both reliable and accessible is becoming increasingly important.

Today, some consumers may experience varying levels of access to products produced under specific standards due to factors such as pricing, geographical location or product availability. This situation has brought greater attention to efforts aimed at strengthening the entire value chain, from production to distribution, in order to support the wider adoption of healthy eating habits across society.

At this point, one of the primary objectives is to support the accessibility of safe and high-quality food for the broadest possible consumer base. Technological innovations, efficient production methods, effective logistics systems and sustainable agricultural practices are among the key tools that can contribute to achieving this goal.

Within an ecosystem where producers and agricultural models operating at different scales complement one another, maintaining a balance between productivity, food safety and sustainability is critical for both the advancement of the sector and the fulfillment of society's long-term needs.





FROM VISION TO INVESTMENT: ALARKO AGRICULTURE GROUP

This is precisely where Alarko Agriculture Group moves beyond proposing solutions and brings its technology-enabled sustainable production approach to life through large-scale investments. Established in 2023, Alarko Agriculture Group is redefining the food ecosystem through a fully integrated, 360-degree approach and a holistic vision. Since its establishment, the Group has made agriculture a strategic focus through investments exceeding USD 450 million. Under the Alsera umbrella, it operates 19 modern greenhouses covering more than 1,200 decares in Afyonkarahisar, Eskişehir and Denizli, while its investments in Kazakhstan are targeted to reach 5,000 decares by 2028, demonstrating a concrete commitment to making healthy food accessible at scale.

Two of the most important requirements of healthy food, namely reliable production and farm-to-fork traceability, are supported through an AI- and IoT-enabled Smart Greenhouse Management System. Biological control methods implemented within the framework of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) help minimize the use of chemicals in crop protection processes while ensuring the delivery of reliable, high-quality food products to consumers. Climate control, irrigation and plant nutrition processes are monitored by sensors 24/7, minimizing human error and providing an additional layer of support for food safety.

Alongside healthy food production, sustainability remains one of the company's top priorities. The principle of "modern and safe production through efficient resource use" is reflected in Alarko's technology- and renewable energy-focused greenhouse operations. By making effective use of geothermal resources, the Group minimizes its carbon footprint. Through closed-loop, cocopeat-based systems implemented in soilless agriculture, it is transforming water management and reducing water consumption to as little as one-fiftieth of that used in conventional farming through filtration and recycling techniques. Composting plant waste and repurposing end-of-life materials in the landscaping sector support the circular economy, while 4,000-ton rainwater storage facilities currently being introduced across its greenhouse operations help return every available drop of water to production.

“Healthy Options Should Be Bold Flavors That People Choose Because They Want to”

We spoke with Hillside Beach Club Cluster Executive Chef Özgür Aktaş about healthy food and the evolving world of gastronomy around it. Aktaş believes a chef’s responsibility goes far beyond placing a few salads or sugar-free products in front of guests. Healthy options, he says, should not be obligatory alternatives relegated to the edge of the menu; they should be bold flavors that people choose because they want to.



Özgür Aktaş
Hillside Beach Club Cluster Executive Chef



What are the most significant changes you have observed in attitudes toward healthy eating in recent years? How are guests' food preferences evolving?

In the past, healthy eating was often associated with restrictions, low-calorie dishes and compromising on flavor. Today, we see a much more mature understanding. Guests no longer ask only, "How many calories are in this dish?" They also care about where the ingredients come from, how they were produced, which cooking techniques were used and how the food will make them feel afterwards.

The biggest change we see is this: healthy eating is no longer viewed as a temporary diet, but as a more conscious way of life. Even on holiday, people do not want to abandon their routines completely, but neither do they want to feel deprived. They are moving toward lighter, more balanced and natural dishes made with quality ingredients, without lowering their expectations when it comes to flavor. Today's guest is looking for more than food on the plate; they are looking for transparency, naturalness and a sense of well-being.

What does "access to healthy food" mean today? How do you interpret the concept as a chef?

Access to healthy food is not simply about healthy products being physically available. It also means having access to accurate information, reliable producers and alternatives that suit individual needs. As a chef, I believe our responsibility goes far beyond offering guests a few salads or sugar-free products. Healthy options should not be obligatory alternatives relegated to the edge of the menu; they should be bold flavors that people choose because they want to.

True accessibility means healthy food should not feel unattainable, complicated or exclusive. Good food should be understandable, accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

What kind of balance do kitchen teams need to strike between healthy eating and guests' expectations of flavor?

This balance is one of the most exciting creative spaces in the kitchen. Preparing healthy food does not mean reducing flavor; it means building flavor from different sources and using more thoughtful methods.

With a good ingredient, the right cooking technique, balanced acidity, fresh herbs, spices, natural fermentation methods and the right textures, it is possible to create remarkably powerful dishes. Sometimes a dish does not need more ingredients to be impressive; it simply needs the right ones.

This is the approach we always take with our teams: guests should not choose a dish simply because it is healthy. They should want it first because it tastes good, and the fact that it is healthy should make them feel even better about the choice.

How would you describe Hillside Beach Club's approach to gastronomy and its culinary philosophy?

Hillside Beach Club's approach to gastronomy can be summed up in three words: variety, naturalness and emotional connection.

For us, gastronomy is not simply a service that meets a guest's need to eat; it is one of the defining parts of a holiday experience that stays in the memory. The aroma of a dish, its presentation or even the table around which it was shared can bring that holiday back to mind years later.

That is why our culinary approach offers a wide variety of choices for different expectations while placing great importance on preserving the natural character and essence of each ingredient. Rather than creating overly complicated plates for the sake of showmanship, we aim to prepare flavors that interpret ingredients well, connect with the



geography around us and evoke emotion in our guests.

For us, good gastronomy does not need to shout in order to make itself heard.

What role do local ingredients, seasonality and sustainability play when you create your menus?

For us, local sourcing and seasonality are not trends; they are the natural way a kitchen should work. An ingredient reaches its fullest flavor when it is in season, grown in the right geography and handled by the right producer. The chef's job is not to alter it unnecessarily, but to bring out the character it already has.

When creating our menus, we make as much room as possible for what each season offers, value our relationships with local producers and pay close attention to using ingredients efficiently in the kitchen. Sustainability is not limited to ingredient selection either; correct portioning, inventory management, waste reduction and raising awareness within the team are all important parts of the process.

For us, a sustainable kitchen is one that not only satisfies today's guest, but also respects tomorrow's resources.

Which healthy or innovative flavors have been most popular with your guests recently?

We are seeing particularly strong interest in fresh, light yet satisfying options. Dishes that put plant-based ingredients at the forefront, balanced protein alternatives, grains, fresh vegetables, fermented products and drinks made with natural ingredients are increasingly popular. But there is an important distinction: people no longer want to see only a "plant-based" or "gluten-free" label. They also expect these products to have a distinctive flavor profile and strong presentation.

There is especially strong interest in dishes that bring together different textures, interpret Mediterranean ingredients through contemporary techniques and create a sense of sharing. Healthy eating may be a personal choice, but the experience of eating remains deeply social and emotional.

How do you integrate gastronomy, such an important part of the holiday experience, into guests' overall wellness journey at Hillside?

We do not define well-being simply as exercising or avoiding certain foods. Well-being means the body, mind and emotions feeling good at the same time. Gastronomy sits at the heart of that whole.

Our guests may have different needs at different moments of the day. They may want to start the morning with something lighter and





more energizing, choose a refreshing meal at lunchtime, and then sit down to a longer, more relaxed dinner with the people they love. We try to shape the gastronomic experience around this natural rhythm.

During a holiday, well-being should not mean feeling controlled with every choice. It should mean feeling good after making a choice. Our aim is to give guests that freedom.

How do you assess the role of the kitchen and service teams in the high level of guest satisfaction Hillside Beach Club has maintained over the years?

Kitchen and service teams are the unseen architects of the guest experience. A plate may reach the table in a matter of minutes, but behind it are planning, purchasing, preparation, hygiene, technical knowledge, timing and strong team coordination.

Sustaining high satisfaction does not come from a single impressive performance. It comes from showing the same level of care every day. Guests may not see the preparation taking place in the kitchen, but they will always feel the consistency on the plate, the attention in the service and the genuine care shown to them.

One of the most accurate definitions of luxury today is personalized attention. Remembering a guest's preference, noticing a need before it is expressed, or responding sincerely to a small request can leave a more lasting impression than the most elaborate presentation.

How does guest feedback influence new menus or your approach to service?

We see guest feedback not simply as a way to measure satisfaction, but as highly valuable data that helps guide improvement. Chefs and teams sometimes look at a product from inside the kitchen, while guests show us how the experience appears from the outside.

Positive feedback tells us what we are doing well. Criticism, meanwhile, can often become the starting point for a new idea, a new product or a better way of delivering service.

Listening to guests does not mean adding every request directly to the menu. What matters is understanding the real need behind the feedback. Sometimes what is being asked for is not a new dish at all, but more choice, greater transparency, faster service or a more personal experience.

A good kitchen speaks; a great kitchen listens first.

How do you expect the world of gastronomy in tourism to evolve over the coming years?

Gastronomy is expected to become more personalized, more transparent and more

experience-driven. Guests increasingly want to know not only what they are eating, but also the story behind it, where it comes from and its environmental impact.

Technology will make important contributions to kitchens in areas such as personalized nutrition, allergen management, production planning and reducing food waste. Even so, people will always remain at the heart of gastronomy. Technology can create a flawless plan, but it cannot replicate the emotional connection built by a team member who truly knows the guest.

It also seems inevitable that hotel kitchens will move beyond simply complementing the accommodation experience and become gastronomic destinations that create a reason to travel in their own right. People are no longer traveling only to stay somewhere; they are also traveling to experience its cuisine.

If you had to define the cuisine of the future in a single word, what would it be, and why?

Balance.

Because the cuisine of the future will have to find the right balance between flavor and health, creativity and simplicity, technology and the human touch, and global trends and local values. Being delicious alone will not be enough.

Nor will being healthy, sustainable or innovative be enough on its own. The successful cuisine of the future will be the one that brings all these elements together in a single experience that feels effortless and natural to the guest.

That is where true mastery begins: taking a complex system and presenting it to the guest as an experience that feels remarkably simple and remains unforgettable.





News from
the Group

Alarko Holding Holds Its 51st General Meeting of Shareholders

Alarko Holding held its 51st General Meeting of Shareholders on Monday, 13 April 2026, at the Holding's headquarters in Ortaköy. The Alarko Holding 2025 Annual Report was shared with participants at the General Meeting of Shareholders

In his Chairman's Message in the Annual Report, Alarko Holding Chairman İzzet Garih described 2025 as a pivotal year for the Alarko Group of Companies in which its long-term transformation vision became clearly visible and its international portfolio company model evolved into a tangible value creation platform. He emphasized that all investment decisions were made with the aim of creating meaningful impact across technology-based business models, global expansion, and environmental and social value. Garih added: "Even during a period of intensive strategic investments, particularly in energy, agriculture, aviation, and tourism, we further strengthened our cash generation capacity compared to the previous year, reinforcing the strength of our balance sheet and financial position."

In his message in the Annual Report, Ümit N. Yıldız, CEO of the Alarko Group of Companies, said that as a company that entered the 2020s with a new growth vision, Alarko was beginning to see tangible outcomes from its investments in responsible, sustainable, and climate-resilient businesses, while further strengthening its position as an international portfolio company. Yıldız said Alarko's primary priorities during this period were to make its operations more resilient to short-term volatility and to allocate capital with discipline toward areas capable of generating long-term value. He said: "We maintained our real growth targets, particularly in businesses that directly engage with consumers, and continued to maintain a strong appetite for investments. Our credibility and environmentally responsible operations enabled us to access favorable financing conditions and sustain our growth. However, we do not define success solely by scale. What matters most to us is the strength of our cash generation and our financial resilience. In our new investments, we have remained focused on building long-term, sustainable, and responsible revenue streams. Positioning ourselves in sustainable and climate-focused sectors, and becoming an early-stage solution partner in a rapidly transforming world, continued to be a key source of motivation for us."

At the Ordinary General Meeting of Shareholders, the proposal to elect Efe Eros Günyeli and Cem Garih as Board Members and Nergis Ayvaz Bumediyan as an Independent Board Member was approved.



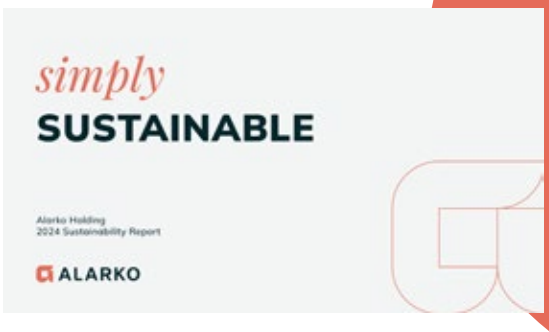
Alarko Holding's Sustainability Report Recognized with International Awards

Alarko Holding's 2024 GRI-compliant Sustainability Report, published under the "Simply Sustainability" motto and guided by low-carbon design principles, has received two awards from LACP

By positioning global sustainability principles as a holistic value creation model that guides both its business operations and new investments, Alarko Holding continues to gain international recognition for its distinctive approach to responsible communications. With its 2024 GRI-Compliant Sustainability Report, published in line with low-carbon design principles, Alarko Holding received the "Platinum Award" from LACP (League of American Communications Professionals), one of the world's most respected communications evaluation platforms. The report also was ranked among the "Top 100 Communications Materials" list, marking a remarkable achievement on an international scale; it had previously received an award in the Sustainability Report Design category at the Istanbul Marketing Awards (IMA) and won a Bronze Stevie at the International Business Awards.

"SIMPLY SUSTAINABILITY"

Prepared under Alarko Holding's "Simply Sustainability" motto, the report deliberately distances itself from the established conventions of sustainability communications. Unlike sustainability reports characterized by dense imagery, high-contrast nature visuals, and a flamboyant design language, it places simplicity at its center as a strategic choice. In the report, which uses no photographs or supporting visual elements, the narrative is carried solely by a functional icon system and fine line work. The minimalist approach adopted in the use of color and the structuring of content also contributes to reducing the report's digital footprint. Sustainability thus emerges as a fundamental principle shaping not only the report's content but also its design and production process.



This approach has also resonated with international juries. The International Business Awards jury described Alarko Holding's sustainability communications as "conceptually strong, intellectually coherent, and capable of going beyond superficial green aesthetics." The jury characterized the positioning of the sustainability report itself as an act of sustainability aligning its form, language, and production choices with an environmental approach as "a clear and disciplined idea." The jury also emphasized that, through its "Simply Sustainability" approach, Alarko Holding has established a rarely seen unity between message and medium in ESG reporting.

Creating value across diverse sectors with a deep-rooted history spanning more than seventy years, Alarko Holding approaches sustainability as a way of doing business today, driven by the goal of shaping the future. Supported by responsible communications. this vision has been recognized by international platforms such as LACP, the Stevie Awards, and IMA, reflecting the company's holistic integration of sustainability across all areas, from corporate strategy to communication practices.

Leyla Alaton Speaks at Swedish Chamber of Commerce Event for International Women's Day

Alarko Holding Board Member Leyla Alaton took part as a speaker at "Championing Diversity: The Role of Women in the Modern Work Environment," organized jointly by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce and Reed Recruitment Türkiye as part of International Women's Day.

During the event, Alaton shared her views on leadership, diversity, inclusion and the role of women in business. She discussed the values that shaped her approach to leadership, the work culture rooted in her family legacy, and the importance of women taking on more visible and active roles in professional life. Emphasizing that diversity and inclusion are not only matters of social responsibility, but also fundamental drivers of an organization's capacity for innovation, competitiveness and sustainable growth, Alaton said organizations with stronger equality of opportunity and greater representation of women in decision-making are better prepared for the future.



At the panel moderated by Asiye Özçelik Yıldırım, General Manager of Reed Recruitment Türkiye, senior executives from different sectors shared their leadership experiences and views on corporate transformation. The discussion covered the impact of diversity on business outcomes, inclusive corporate culture and the contribution of different perspectives to decision-making. The well-attended event provided a valuable forum for exchanging ideas on diversity, inclusion and leadership in the business world.

Alarko Carrier Achieves a First in Domestic Manufacturing

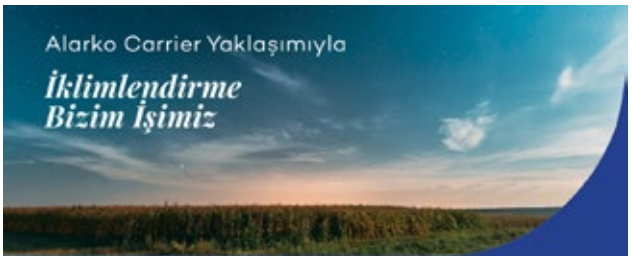
Alarko Carrier has achieved a first in Türkiye by manufacturing IECEx-certified DX air handling units, which are large-scale climate control systems that regulate air quality and temperature in facilities and can be produced by only a limited number of manufacturers worldwide. The project was delivered as part of a mega-scale energy investment involving international stakeholders with strategic goals focused on expanding LNG infrastructure capacity and exports.

Designed by Alarko Carrier to operate safely in areas with a risk of explosive atmospheres, all units were tested against international safety requirements at every stage, from production through commissioning. The units were certified by ExCB, an independent Ex certification body, and brought within the scope of globally valid IECEx certification. All 52 Carrier 39HQ DX air handling units planned for the project were manufactured at Alarko Carrier's Gebze factory. The special grounding solutions designed to prevent static electricity were also verified during the IECEx certification process.



Commenting on the project, Alarko Carrier General Manager Cem Akan said: "We have held a strong position in exports for many years. This project once again demonstrates our ambition to be a preferred solution partner in global infrastructure investments where safety requirements are exceptionally high."

Alarko Carrier Focuses on Measurable Outcomes in Its Sustainability Journey



Continuing its sustainability efforts across a broad range of areas, from energy and water efficiency to low-carbon technologies, operational improvements and social impact projects, Alarko Carrier has published its second sustainability report, fully compliant with the Türkiye Sustainability Reporting Standards (TSRS).

Raporun tamamı:

As it advances its sustainability management through a long-term value creation approach, Alarko Carrier has designated 2024 as its base year and established a measurable roadmap toward its 2050 Net Zero target. In line with this vision, the company has implemented initiatives aimed at reducing energy consumption, conserving water resources and improving operational efficiency.

The rooftop solar power plant at the Eskişehir factory generated 639,000 kWh of electricity in 2025, with 50 percent of the electricity produced sold to the distribution grid, creating additional economic value. Meanwhile, the electrical automation system commissioned at the Gebze facility in 2024 has delivered total energy savings of 350,000 kWh over two years. During the same period, xeriscaping practices implemented across the green areas of the Gebze Production Facility contributed to a 12 percent reduction in overall water consumption.

Alarko Carrier continues to accelerate its R&D activities in support of its sustainability and digital transformation goals. Improvements in heat pump manufacturing processes have been complemented by the addition of smart boilers and Wi-Fi-enabled products that allow remote monitoring of energy consumption. At the same time, production support and digitalization projects have integrated systems onto a single platform, enabling real-time data flows and enhancing operational efficiency and resource management. These operational improvements are further supported by initiatives focused on facility safety and social benefit. In 2025, insulation upgrades, new infrastructure investments and advanced fire detection systems were introduced at the Gebze and Eskişehir facilities to strengthen protection against potential fire risks. On the social responsibility front, the “Bringing a Fresh Air to Schools” project entered its fourth year, providing next-generation climate control and filtration systems to village schools and helping create healthier learning environments for children.

Alarko Carrier General Manager Cem Akan stated that the company regards sustainability as an approach that continuously improves the way it conducts business while preparing for the future. Akan said: “In line with our 2050 Net Zero target, for which we have designated 2024 as our base year, we are taking concrete steps across multiple areas, including energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, low-carbon technologies and digital transformation. Our solar energy investment in Eskişehir, our initiatives to reduce energy and water consumption at our Gebze facility, and the development of energy-efficient solutions within our product portfolio are among the tangible reflections of this approach. At the same time, we recognize that sustainability extends beyond production and operations, and we continue to support initiatives that contribute to healthier and safer living environments.
For us, sustainability means fulfilling today’s responsibilities while designing the future. We will continue to move forward with this perspective in the years ahead.





Alarko and Gotion's Young Professionals Meet in Istanbul

Alarko Holding welcomed young professionals visiting Istanbul as part of Gotion Group's Young Talents Program to its Head Office. Gotion Group is one of the world's leading companies in energy storage and battery technologies. Attended by Alarko Board Members and senior executives, the gathering provided an opportunity for teams from both companies to exchange knowledge and experience, while offering participants a closer look at Alarko's operations and approach to sustainability.

Continuing its investments with the vision of becoming a key player in Türkiye's green transformation, Alarko Holding recently entered into a strategic partnership with Gotion Group, one of the world's leading technology and battery manufacturers, establishing Alarko Gotion Green Energy. Created with the aim of developing and manufacturing energy storage and battery technologies in Türkiye, the partnership also provides a platform for the mutual exchange and development of knowledge, experience and capabilities between the two companies.

As the global energy transition accelerates, the need is growing not only for innovative and sustainable technologies, but also for qualified talent capable of developing these technologies and carrying them into the future. With this perspective, Alarko Holding welcomed young professionals visiting Istanbul as part of Gotion Group's Young Talents Program to its Head Office. Bringing together emerging young leaders from Gotion and Alarko, the event provided a platform to exchange views on the future of energy storage and battery technologies, as well as the capabilities required to drive transformation in this field.

The event opened with remarks by Alarko Group of Companies CEO Ümit N. Yıldız. As part of the program, Altek Alarko General Manager Hakan Aytekin and Alarko Gotion Green Energy General Manager Nihat Aksüt provided insights into Alarko's activities in the energy sector and the objectives of the joint venture. Gotion Türkiye General Manager Haolin Li shared insights into Gotion Group's global operations, technology approach and vision for the future of energy. The event also introduced the work of the Alarko Future's Club, which has been active within the company since 1985 with the aim of supporting the

professional and personal development of Alarko's young employees, highlighting the key role young people play in shaping the future of organizations.

In the second part of the program, Chairman of the Board İzzet Garih and Board Member Leyla Alaton met with the young professionals for an insightful discussion on leadership, corporate culture, the vision for the future and the role of the new generation in the business world, followed by a Q&A session. Throughout the program, the young professionals had the opportunity to share their experiences and get to know one another better, while building new connections that will further strengthen the ties between the two organizations.

Ümit N. Yıldız: "It is gratifying to see that the relationship between our two companies is fostering a culture of mutual learning that extends beyond technology transfer"

Alarko Group of Companies CEO Ümit N. Yıldız, who delivered the opening remarks at the event, said: "Through the Alarko-Gotion partnership, we are preparing to make a significant contribution to building the energy ecosystem of the future. As our work on investment plans continues, it is gratifying to see that the relationship between our two companies is fostering a culture of mutual learning that extends beyond technology transfer. We believe that this collaboration can create lasting value only when supported by a strong talent base. For this reason, we regard the development of young talent, with a focus on knowledge, technical expertise and vision, as a strategic priority.

Alarko Publishes Its 2025 GRI Report in a Sustainability Glossary Format

Alarko Holding has published its 2025 GRI-compliant Sustainability Report, transparently presenting its economic, environmental and social performance across different sectors. As with its TSRS-compliant Sustainability Report published in August, the report was prepared in line with a responsible design approach aimed at minimizing its environmental footprint and provides a holistic overview of the sustainability performance of the Alarko Group of Companies.



The report provides a comprehensive overview of metrics reflecting Alarko's Joint Impact approach, which brings the company's sustainability vision to life across Group companies through shared goals and a shared sense of responsibility. Examples of good practices were also expanded to reflect this holistic approach. As in the previous year, the corresponding GRI disclosures for data assured under TSRS were supported by an assurance statement, further strengthening the reliability and transparency of the reporting. During the 2025 reporting period, Alarko Holding conducted its first Double Materiality Assessment in alignment with the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), evaluating its environmental, social and financial impacts through a holistic approach. To establish a common conceptual framework, Holding presented its GRI-compliant report in a comprehensive glossary format. Continuing its award-winning low-carbon reporting approach based on responsible design, Alarko adopted simple typography, a limited color palette, optimized graphics and a photo-free design to reduce digital resource consumption by decreasing file size and reading time.

Hillside Beach Club Extends the Feel Good Season into September and October



At Hillside Beach Club, a destination renowned for those with discerning tastes, the summer season has brought together experiences ranging from seaside relaxation and wellness to sports, gastronomy, music and art. Set within a secluded bay surrounded by the natural beauty of Fethiye, the season shaped around Hillside's signature "Feel Good" philosophy continues through September and October with a series of special events. A music gathering in collaboration with London Jazz on 22 September will be followed by the season's second Feel Good Week, taking place from 4 to 11 October.

Following a summer filled with memorable events that combined Hillside's natural setting with music, including the seaside Salda Concerts and collaborations with İKSV Yaz & Caz, the resort's music program continues with a special event presented in partnership with London Jazz on 22 September. Set against the backdrop of Hillside Beach Club's unique coastal landscape, the event will offer guests another opportunity to experience music in an exceptional atmosphere.

Taking place between 4 and 11 October, Feel Good Week will bring together Hillside Beach Club's wellness philosophy through a specially curated program. Throughout the week, guests will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of practices led by expert local and international instructors, ranging from yoga and meditation to breathwork, sound therapy, face yoga and ice bath rituals. Focused on both physical and mental well-being, the program is designed to provide guests with dedicated time for themselves while exploring different approaches to holistic wellness and self-care.

Through its carefully curated events, Hillside Beach Club continues to enrich the guest experience beyond the summer months, offering inspiring opportunities to relax, reconnect and embrace the Feel Good lifestyle in one of the Mediterranean's most distinctive settings.

Alarko Carrier Takes Top Spot in Customer Experience

At the A.C.E. Awards, determined according to the results of the Customer Experience Index developed by Şikayetvar based on more than 1.5 million survey responses, 98 brands across 60 sectors received Diamond, Gold and Silver awards. Alarko Carrier received the Diamond award in the combi-boiler category, once again demonstrating its performance in customer satisfaction, speed of complaint resolution and brand loyalty.

Based on more than 1.5 million surveys conducted annually with real consumers, the Customer Experience Index takes a holistic approach to evaluating brands' complaint performance relative to market share, customer satisfaction following resolution processes, and customers' willingness to choose or recommend the brand again. Sector leaders are then determined according to the results of the index.

Şirin Oktay, Customer Experience Manager at



Alarko Carrier, said the company was proud to receive the award. "At Alarko Carrier, we view customer experience as an end-to-end process, from pre-sales through after-sales. We treat every piece of feedback as an opportunity to improve and take a fast, transparent and solution-oriented approach. Receiving the Diamond award in the combi-boiler category at the Şikayetvar A.C.E. Awards is a tangible reflection of our customer-focused culture. We will continue to improve our processes and make customer satisfaction sustainable over the long term," she said.



MEPAŞ Wins Sustainability Award at CX Awards Turkey 2026

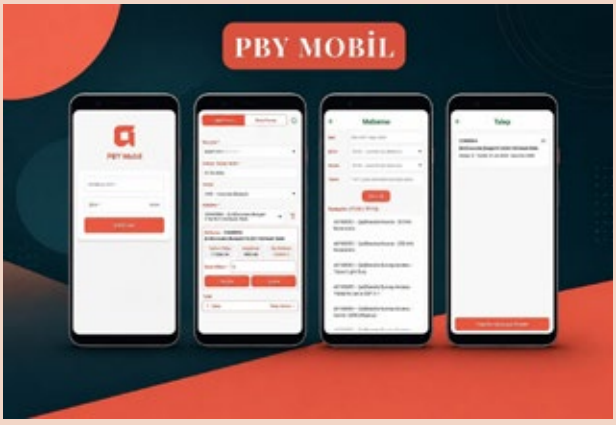
MEPAŞ, which prioritizes digitalization and sustainability-driven transformation in the energy sector, achieved significant recognition at the 9th CX Awards Turkey 2026, held in the field of customer experience, receiving the Sustainability Category - Green Steps Award. The achievement was driven by initiatives that support energy efficiency, environmentally friendly service models delivered through digital customer channels, and innovative approaches aimed at reducing environmental impact across operational processes. The award reinforces MEPAŞ Energy's commitment to developing digital and sustainable solutions across the sector, while also providing important motivation for its future goals. MEPAŞ Energy aims to continue creating value for its customers and all stakeholders through projects focused on its environmental, social and technological responsibilities.



MEDAŞ Employee Recognized for Thoughtful Approach

A MEDAŞ employee working as a meter reader earned the appreciation of both customers and company management for the thoughtful way they checked in on subscribers, particularly older people and those living alone, while carrying out their duties. The warm relationship built with elderly subscribers and the care shown toward their needs reached a wide audience through a video shared on social media, and the employee's exemplary conduct was also recognized by the company. Following the incident, MEDAŞ management welcomed the employee at the company and presented them with a plaque of appreciation.

Alarko Contracting Group Accelerates Development of the Project Information System Mobile Application



As of 2026, development work has begun within the Project Information System on a mobile application that will enable construction site teams to work from their mobile phones in the field, both online and offline. The application is intended to support the digitalization of field operations and more efficient process management. In line with the planned schedule, development is expected to be completed in the second half of the year, after which the application will move into the testing phase.



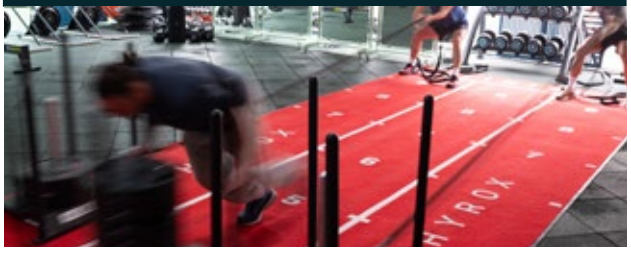
Hillside Academy Makes a Strong Start to the New Season

Hillside Academy has entered the new season with renewed energy, guided by the belief that people are the single most important factor in making a difference in tourism. For years, the Academy has contributed to the development of Hillside culture, guiding employees in their professional journeys while helping ensure that corporate values are embraced through a shared understanding. Built around the belief that "the best people work at Hillside," Hillside Academy continues to support employee development through a broad range of training programs covering technical expertise, service quality, aesthetic awareness and guest experience. Training delivered before and throughout the season strengthens teams' knowledge and capabilities while serving as one of the key drivers of Hillside's high service standards in day-to-day operations.

The Academy contributes not only to the development of existing teams, but also to bringing new talent into the sector. Through university collaborations and career days held in different cities across Türkiye, Hillside Academy connects with young talent and stands out as a strong reflection of Hillside's human resources vision. This accumulated know-how also provides an important foundation for new projects. As one of the key structures responsible for carrying Hillside's service philosophy, professional experience and corporate culture into new regions, the Academy is also helping lay strong groundwork for the Bodrum project. With the contribution of Hillside Academy, the new season begins with teams that are better equipped, more motivated and united around shared values, with the aim of making this development journey a successful and inspiring season for all employees.

Hillside City Club Experience Expands with HYROX, Outdoor Running Sessions and the Renewed Sanda Spa

Hillside City Club Etiler continues to lead the active urban lifestyle experience by bringing together emerging fitness and wellness trends from around the world. With the introduction of HYROX and the reopening of the renewed Sanda Spa, the club is adding a new dimension of energy and well-being to city life. Bringing one of the fastest-growing training formats in the global fitness industry to its members, Hillside City Club offers a performance- and endurance-focused workout experience through regular HYROX group classes and HYROX simulation sessions. Complementing this experience, outdoor running sessions held twice a week along the coast extend training beyond the club environment, reinforcing the energy of exercising together and the motivation that comes from a strong community. Reopened following a comprehensive renovation, Sanda Spa introduces the latest wellness practices into the rhythm of urban living. The refreshed offering includes facial treatments featuring Phytomer products, renowned for their marine-based ingredients, alongside next-generation experiences such as an infrared sauna. These innovations are further enhanced through personalized therapies and tailored care programs designed to support individual well-being. With these new additions, Sanda Spa reinterprets Hillside's signature "one-hour escape" philosophy through a contemporary and holistic wellness approach. From HYROX training and outdoor running sessions to infrared sauna experiences and Phytomer facial treatments, Hillside City Club continues to make fitness, well-being and the culture of moving together a natural part of everyday city life.



The Inspiring Stories of Alarko's Pioneers of Entrepreneurship

Sometimes it is a microalga sprouting in a laboratory, sometimes a habit from a father's breakfast table, or an ancient craft held in childhood memory...

The women who came together in the third year of Alarko Holding and Habitat Association's Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program did not merely generate business ideas; they reshaped science, technology and the land through their own passions. Every value created both added value to society and strengthened sustainability.

These pages are filled with the voices of 25 courageous women who turned theory into practice and transformed their dreams into added value. In these inspiring interviews, they share, in their own words, the turning points of their journeys, the challenges they faced, and the excitement of their first days leaving a powerful mark that inspires from today into the future.




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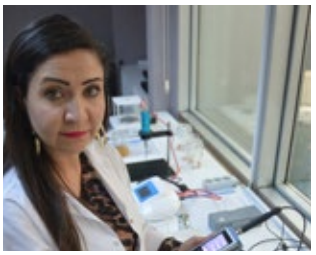
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Alev Akarsu / Tufetto

How did the founding story of the Tufetto brand begin?

Tufetto was born in 2018 as a family venture founded with the goal of bringing the power of design together with nature. The architecture and furniture design experience of our co-founder Ezgi Akarsu combined with my background in international sales and marketing to form a shared vision. Our goal was not only to be a brand that designs products, but to build a global brand with a world-class design approach that places sustainability at its core. To this end, we use sustainable materials such as FSC-certified birch plywood, make use of digital fabrication methods, and manufacture using joinery systems that require no screws, nails or adhesives. Today, Tufetto continues to grow as a brand that develops functional and sustainable designs addressing needs ranging from living and working spaces to retail solutions.

What were the fundamental needs that guided you in the product development process?

The starting point of our product development process has always been user needs. By tracking economic and social changes, we focus on producing functional, aesthetic and sustainable solutions to the problems people encounter in daily life. The Rappu Laptop Stand, which we developed in response to the growing need for working from home during the pandemic, offers an ergonomic working solution in small living spaces, while the Mahi Mahi Laptop and Book Stand arose from the needs of users who work for long hours. These products show that design is not only about aesthetics, but a tool that makes life easier and improves the user experience. At Tufetto, sustainability is not a choice but the foundation of our design philosophy.

As an entrepreneur, how do you define success?

We do not measure success solely in financial terms. For us, real success means that the ideas we put forward create value, touch people's lives, and can evolve into a sustainable structure. Translating our sustainable design philosophy into tangible products, taking our place in international markets as a brand originating from Turkey, and resonating across different cultures are among our most important indicators of success. Our long-term goal is to build a sustainable global brand that represents Turkey's manufacturing and design strength on the international stage.

What was the most important value the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program added to your journey?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program offered a significant development opportunity that allowed us to evaluate our entrepreneurial journey from different perspectives. The connections we made, the experiences we shared, and the viewpoints we gained from different sectors within the program contributed to developing our strategy and evaluating new opportunities. One of our most important gains was seeing, at closer range, the value of a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem and of shared experience. The program brought us not only new knowledge but also the opportunity to view our growth journey from a broader perspective.



Alev Ertem / Studio Potato

How did Studio Potato's creative journey begin?

Studio Potato was founded five years ago by two sisters with the goal of bringing a contemporary, design-oriented perspective to traditional weaving craftsmanship. My sister Cansu's training in carpet and kilim design combined naturally with my experience in entrepreneurship and business development. Since the day we founded the company, our aim has not been simply to produce products, but to create original and timeless designs that carry Anatolia's deep-rooted weaving tradition into today's living spaces. By working together with women weavers and workshops across different regions of Turkey, we aim both to contribute to the continuity of this craft and to promote modern Turkish weaving design internationally.

What sources of inspiration feed into your design processes?

We draw our inspiration from nature, light, architecture, and the color sensibilities of different cultures. Rather than reproducing traditional Anatolian weaves exactly, we prefer to interpret their spirit through a contemporary design language. Traveling and experiencing different cities and places is also an important part of our design process. A detail in nature, the texture of a historic structure, or the relationship between light and space can become the starting point for a new collection. For us, designing means more than aesthetics it means creating meaningful products that give character to the space they occupy and that can be used for many years.

In a production model where every product is hand-woven, how do you preserve quality standards and authenticity together?

A significant portion of our products are hand-woven. Our kilim collection also includes machine-woven products made from recycled yarns, alongside hand-woven pieces. By the nature of hand weaving, every product carries its own unique character, and we regard this as one of its most valuable qualities. To maintain quality, all designs are prepared in our studio; we carefully plan the entire production process, from yarn selection to color palette and from dimensions to weaving technique, and we remain in continuous communication with the workshops we work with. In this way, each product retains the authenticity of manual craftsmanship while Studio Potato's design language and quality standard are also sustained.

What doors did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program open for you?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program gave us not only mentorship and financial support, but also the opportunity to become part of a strong entrepreneurial network. Through the program, we were able to evaluate our business model more strategically, develop our growth plans, and increase our brand's visibility. The networking environments in which we came together with the senior management of Habitat Association and Alarko Holding also provided us with important gains. This process helped us to more powerfully express the social impact of our brand one that supports women's employment and brings traditional craftsmanship together with contemporary design and confirmed for us that we were on the right path.



Asuman Tunca / Eceköy

How did the idea for Eceköy come about?

Eceköy emerged when we noticed that the traditional cheeses produced for years in the villages of Çanakkale were gradually being forgotten. For about three years, we traveled from village to village researching the recipes, production methods and culture of our elders. Our aim was not simply to produce cheese, but to bring these fading flavors back to light and to build a sustainable production model based on women's labor. Today, Eceköy continues on its path as a women-led venture that creates value for the future using knowledge passed down from the past.

How does your approach to naturalness and sustainability translate into your business model?

For us, naturalness is not a marketing message but the fundamental principle of our production. We produce our cheeses without additives, using rennet and traditional methods. We prioritize quality at every stage, from milk selection to packaging. At the same time, by sourcing milk from local producers, we support the regional economy, and by increasing women's employment, we also contribute to social sustainability. We act with a sense of responsibility toward nature, producers and consumers alike.

In your view, what is the most important stage one the consumer never sees—that determines the taste and quality of Eceköy cheese?

I believe the most important stage is the milk analysis and selection of quality milk carried out even before cheese production begins. Every batch of milk that arrives at our facility is analyzed for antibiotics, fat, protein and other quality criteria. We never accept milk that does not meet our standards into production, because the foundation of good cheese is quality milk. Even though the consumer does not see it, this rigorous control is the most important process behind the flavor, reliability and consistency of our product.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contribute to the development of your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program did not only provide us with training; it also taught us to approach our business from a different perspective. We received valuable training in brand management, entrepreneurship, and growing our business. The labeling machine we received at the end of the program made our production process more professional and efficient. Support of this kind is truly valuable for empowering small producers and for the growth of women entrepreneurs. This program made a significant contribution to Eceköy's development journey.



Ayşegül Bolat / Karpaz Lavender Gardens

How did the idea for Karpaz Lavender come about?

The idea for Karpaz Lavender Gardens was born from my desire to produce in Karpaz, where I was born and raised, and to make the most of my region's potential. The fact that agriculture is one of the strongest sources of livelihood in the region, and that lavender—suited to the local climate can be transformed into high-value-added products, was the starting point of this journey. After completing my training as an anesthesia technician, I returned to my region and began lavender production about five years ago. Over time, this venture grew beyond being purely an agricultural production business; it evolved into a living space that brings together women's entrepreneurship, rural development and ecotourism. Today, at Karpaz Lavender Gardens, visitors connect with nature, experience local products, and have the opportunity to get to know Karpaz's cultural richness up close.

What do local production and sustainability mean to you?

With its low water requirement and drought-resistant nature, lavender is an important alternative for sustainable agriculture. At Karpaz Lavender Gardens, we make use of every part of the lavender plant to produce lavender oil, hydrosol, soap, cream, vinegar and dried products, minimizing waste while adding value to the local economy. For me, sustainability is not just about protecting the environment; it is about supporting local production and carrying the values of the region we live in into the future. With this understanding, we carry out our production processes with an approach that respects nature, and by collaborating with producers across the island, we contribute both to local development and to a sustainable production model.

What is your vision for the future of your venture?

My future goal is to make Karpaz Lavender one of the exemplary ventures in sustainable agriculture and rural tourism in Northern Cyprus to expand lavender production and product diversity while creating an ecotourism center that visitors can experience throughout the year. I also aim to strengthen women's entrepreneurship and our collaborations with local producers in order to contribute further to regional development. Promoting Karpaz's natural and cultural values on national and international platforms is also among my greatest dreams.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program add value to your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program made significant contributions to my venture in terms of both knowledge and vision. My greatest gain was learning to see my work not merely as a business, but as a structure that creates social value. Through the program, I evaluated my business model from a more strategic perspective and had the opportunity to develop myself in the areas of sustainable growth, brand management and entrepreneurship. The connections I built with entrepreneurs from different sectors also helped me shape Karpaz Lavender's future in a more planned and robust way.



Bervan Eskici / Müstesna Dükkân

How did the story of Müstesna Dükkân begin?

Müstesna was born from a dream of bringing Trabzon's deep-rooted copper craftsmanship back into today's life. After studying chemistry, I worked for many years as an occupational safety specialist. Over time, however, I realized that I wanted to build a business that produces and carries its own story, not merely one that manages production. The copper items I knew from my childhood, my grandfather's mess tin, and the memory carried by this craft drew me back to this field. Müstesna continues on its path as a brand that preserves the traces of the past while reinterpreting them through a contemporary lens, growing through local artisans, women's labor, and a sustainable production philosophy.

In the process of transforming copper craftsmanship into modern lifestyle products at Müstesna Dükkân, how do you strike a balance between tradition and contemporary design?

For us, tradition is not a heritage to be replicated exactly, but a powerful memory to draw inspiration from. In the design process, we preserve the production techniques our artisans have applied for years, while reinterpreting forms and uses to suit contemporary life. We take care to leave the hammer marks of copper, the character of handmade production, and its natural texture visible, because we value not perfection, but the traces left by labor and time. This results in products that both honor the past and feel at home in life today.

What kind of impression do you want your brand to leave with your customers?

We want our customers to leave Müstesna not only with a product, but with a story and a feeling. It matters to us that they can sense, behind every piece they use, the labor of an artisan, the trace of a culture, and a production philosophy that unfolds over time. We also envision Müstesna as a brand that reminds people to slow down, to form bonds with long-lasting products, and to rediscover the value of local production. For us, the most valuable mark we can leave is a product that continues to be used even years later and accompanies new memories.

How would you summarize the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program's contribution to your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program gave me courage and a strong network of solidarity. Coming together with entrepreneurs like myself who are striving to produce, grow, and build their own path was truly valuable. Through the program, I had the opportunity to evaluate my business from a different perspective, develop new collaborations, and see my brand's potential more clearly. In addition, the support provided by Alarko Holding and Habitat Association helped us develop Müstesna's production capacity and move forward with firmer steps. Most importantly, I saw that my work was resonating. This process was a meaningful experience that confirmed I was on the right path and strengthened my motivation to keep producing.



Beyza Aydın / Natural Kapıdağ

What is the story behind the emergence of Natural Kapıdağ?

The story behind Natural Kapıdağ actually began when I found myself with nothing zero lira. We had a family business that was doing well, but following my parents' separation, all of our assets were seized by my father's side of the family. While I had been dreaming of pursuing a master's degree in Canada, I was left with nothing at all, stranded in the village of Karşıyaka in Erdek. But I always had an entrepreneurial fire burning inside me. While browsing social media, I saw people earning money by sharing village life, opening businesses by producing goods in their villages. I was living that same life I was in the villageand I decided I should not hesitate to share it. I took the first step: I created a brand name, opened my page, tried making small videos, filmed recipes, and gradually combined this idea with the management knowledge I had gained from my degree in Econometrics to move forward.

What kind of system have you established to sustainably ensure quality standards while working with local producers?

I am currently in the process of building the system; I have not established it yet. We carry out production ourselves. I work with local producers on raw material production. At present, we have farmer friends who help with the production of our vegetables and fruits. We produce together with them, drawing on the experience I have gained over many years. Irrigation, maintenance and the harvest calendar are planned before the year even begins. I would actually like to have my jarred products manufactured as well, but we have not yet found an agriculture and food-approved facility near where I live. Some people want to produce at home, but I explain to them that this is not permitted under the law, and that everything must operate within a proper standard. I encourage them to become entrepreneurs, but unfortunately no one has taken that step yet. I am planning to expand by increasing production and opening branches, which is why our R&D work for manufacturing in nearby regions is ongoing.

What has been the development that has made you proudest so far?

Three years ago, I was very surprised when TRT called me. They said they wanted to feature me on their program 'Hayallerinin Peşinde' (Following Your Dreams). This was the biggest step I could take for my life. We ended the filming with my closing remarks on the shore, and I will never forget that as I gave that speech, my mind kept saying, 'Yes, Beyza, from now on much better days will come.' Watching myself on television, I felt proud of my dreams.

How do you assess the contributions the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program has made to your venture?

First of all, the training provided within the program was extremely valuable; it conveyed all the essential knowledge a business needs. After that, each of our individual projects was addressed one by one, and ideas for development were provided. Of course, the most important part was meeting face to face with Alarko Holding and Habitat Association and building a network. Ms. Leyla Alaton and all the representatives saying, 'It is now our responsibility to open doors for you,' and providing that support, was priceless. In my view, this project is not something simply completed and closed, but a living habitat. Even though we have finished the project, we still continue to stay in touch with one another and to collaborate.



Büşra Özer / Microhobist

What was the starting point for Microhobist?

At its core, Microhobist means 'to love microbes.' During the Covid period, we were all afraid of the small microorganisms that include viruses and bacteria. Yet these organisms also include types we call beneficial and useful. As the Microhobist team, we were drawn to the task of bringing this fact to light. In addition, I had come across news that the Konya Plain would become 70 percent desertified by 2050 a truly alarming piece of news. At a time when we felt something had to be done, we began working with bacteria isolated entirely from Turkish soil. We supported the soil microbiome with what we call secondary metabolites the products of bacteria we isolated from our own soil and we continue to support it, achieving increased yields in agricultural products.

How have you observed consumer expectations changing in the natural products sector?

In the process of developing our venture, without doubt the most useful feedback came from the customers who actually tried our products themselves. Sometimes this took the form of questions about how to apply the product, and sometimes customers sent us photos saying, 'Yes, the product worked, my crops became more productive.' These are positive kinds of feedback. But we also received negative feedback regarding our shelf life. This, too, helped us improve the product. We asked ourselves how we could stabilize the shelf life, and we overcame this by improving our formulation. All of this feedback was valuable in its own way. That is somewhat what entrepreneurship is like you are constantly on the road, and your product keeps evolving and changing.

As a venture serving the plant-based products sector, what areas are you focusing on in order to respond to the consumer expectations of the future?

As an entrepreneur, I can say that I am in the 'kitchen' side of the business. The R&D part of the product is where I am most motivated. Discovering something new, turning it into a product, and seeing that people buy it makes me both happy and motivated. So I can say that working with wet chemistry and living bacteria in my kitche that is, in the laboratory is my art. Using science this way to obtain products that can benefit humanity is really the whole point of what we do!

How would you summarize the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program's contribution to your journey?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program allowed me to receive excellent training and meet new people in a short period of time. In this respect, both Alarko Holding and Habitat Association accomplished something wonderful. As Microhobist, we had the chance to purchase the equipment we needed to grow our business. More orders mean more production, and what we needed was to keep pace with production. Thanks to the program, our production volume grew. I would like to thank the valuable program team once again.



Canan Tiryaki / Vegg Foods

How did the idea of founding Vegg Foods come about?

While studying food engineering, my father's and my greatest dream was to establish our own production facility and produce food. However, I chose to first gain experience in the sector. During this period, my father's diagnosis with stomach cancer strengthened my motivation to develop foods that are healthy, sustainable, and beneficial to human life. In the same period, I carried out my doctoral research on plant-based products. Later, I took part in the establishment of the R&D and Product Development Center founded in partnership with Mersin University and the Mersin Commodity Exchange. Bringing this project to life despite challenging economic conditions gave me the confidence to establish my own company. The foundations of Vegg Foods were laid during this process. Today, we develop sustainable, plant-based innovative food solutions focused on the circular economy, aiming to convert food waste into value-added products and to contribute to both human health and the environment.

In order to simultaneously meet consumer expectations for taste, texture and nutritional value in plant-based products, what do you focus on during the product development process?

I believe that in plant-based products, taste is the most important factor determining a consumer's decision to purchase again. That is why, in our product development processes, we address taste, texture and nutritional value together. What sets me apart is that, alongside my food engineering background, I have also received culinary training. This allows me to approach products from both a scientific and a gastronomic perspective, and to take an active role at every stage of formulation. When developing a product, I bring together the perspectives of an engineer, an entrepreneur and a chef, focusing on aroma, texture and the consumer experience alongside technical requirements. Our goal is to develop plant-based products that consumers will genuinely enjoy, not just choose because they are healthy.

What has been the most significant change you have observed in consumer habits?

To date, I have conducted more than 1,500 customer interviews and taken part in hundreds of product development processes. This experience has shown that consumers now scrutinize product ingredients much more closely and are gravitating toward healthier options. Nevertheless, taste still remains the primary factor determining the decision to repurchase. While consumers show interest in sustainable and plant-based products, they are not willing to compromise on taste. That is why, when developing products at Vegg Foods, we continuously gather consumer feedback alongside technical data, focusing on pairing healthy and sustainable products with a strong flavor experience.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contribute to the growth of your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program provided significant support in Vegg Foods' growth journey. We used the grant support received under the program to strengthen our production infrastructure and develop our sales and marketing activities. Through investments in critical production equipment, we increased our operational capacity. We also strengthened our brand visibility, reached new customers and business partners, and expanded our international network. As a result of these efforts, we were selected for EIT Food's prestigious EWA Advanced Programme. For us, the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program was not only grant support; it was an important lever that strengthened our production capacity, market access, and position within the international ecosystem.



Cansu Yeğin / Koolseed

What future vision guided you when founding Koolseed?

Our starting point when founding Koolseed was quite simple: to develop food products with simple ingredients that people could genuinely understand, and that were trustworthy. Today's consumers are more conscious, yet at the same time they face an overwhelming amount of information, claims and complex ingredients. Amid this complexity, we wanted to offer an alternative that was simpler, more understandable, and more reassuring one that people could easily integrate into their daily lives. In the long term, we aim to position Koolseed not merely as a protein brand, but as a global wellness brand developing innovative products in the functional foods space. While developing products that support people's needs for energy, focus and well-being at different moments of daily life, we aim to preserve our commitment to simple ingredients, transparency, and genuine benefit.

What opportunities do you see most today within the entrepreneurial ecosystem?

I believe one of the greatest opportunities today lies at the intersection of health, sustainability and technology. Consumers are no longer purchasing products alone; they also care about the story behind the product, how it is produced, and the genuine benefit it provides them. This creates significant space, particularly in the food sector, for ventures developing more transparent, functional and sustainable products. On the other hand, thanks to artificial intelligence and digital technologies, small teams can now create a far greater impact than in the past. This enables entrepreneurs to develop products faster, understand consumers better, and reach global markets more easily.

What approach does Koolseed take toward transforming local agricultural products into value-added food products?

At the core of Koolseed lies pumpkin seed, an agricultural product. Although Turkey has strong potential in pumpkin seed production, this product has largely remained confined to traditional uses. Our approach is to transform local agricultural products into higher value-added products through scientific and advanced production technologies, rather than treating them merely as raw materials. Through the CO_2 supercritical extraction technology we use in our production process, we obtain a purer and more concentrated protein without using high heat or chemical solvents. This method helps preserve the product's nutritional value while offering an environmentally friendly production approach. Our aim is not only to produce Turkey's agricultural wealth, but to combine it with innovation and transform it into world-class, innovative, functional food products.



Dilek Kelleci / Patilabs

How did the idea of founding Patilabs come about?

Patilabs is a foodtech venture developing biotechnology and scientific R&D-focused solutions in the field of pet nutrition. We operate with the vision of moving beyond products that merely meet basic nutritional needs, and developing functional solutions that support pets' health and quality of life. What began as a personal need gradually evolved into a vision of addressing a significant gap in the pet food sector. To this end, we established a multidisciplinary team of veterinarians, food engineers and academics. Our goal is not only to develop a new product, but to bring together biotechnology, scientific R&D and sustainability in order to create the functional food-topper category in Turkey. Hubixos was developed as the first product of this vision.

What kind of contribution do you aim to make to the lives of animal companions?

We provide the greatest contribution to the lives of our animal companions through scientifically grounded functional nutrition solutions. We believe that nutrition is not merely about satisfying hunger, but is an important factor that directly affects quality of life, the immune system, digestive health and overall well-being. With this understanding, we aim, through the products we develop, to support pets' daily nutrition and contribute to a healthier and better quality of life for them.

As you grow your business, what development has excited you the most?

It is actually difficult to name a single development. Every stage has been a new confirmation that Patilabs is on the right path. The successful results we achieved during our R&D process, the enthusiastic reception Hubixos received from pets, the support we received from national and international programs, the confidence shown by our investors and business partners in our product each of these excited us in its own way. Yet the most valuable moment was seeing that the solution we developed was not merely a good idea, but genuinely addressed a real need and had the potential to create a new category in the pet food sector. And the wagging tails of the pets who experienced Hubixos were the most beautiful reward for all of this effort, belief and excitement.

What impact has the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program had on your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program was an important turning point in Patilabs' development journey. As an entrepreneur, even when you know you are on the right path, it is deeply valuable to see that confirmed through the support of a strong ecosystem. The knowledge we gained, the connections we made, and the support we received throughout the program allowed us to move forward toward our growth goals with firmer steps. It also made a significant contribution to shaping our strategic decisions from a stronger perspective and building our growth roadmap on more solid foundations.



Duygu Yılmaz / Biolive

Could you share with us the story behind the emergence of Biolive?

Biolive's story began with my father swallowing olive pits at the breakfast table. He believed it was good for his stomach, while I, as an engineer, wondered whether this habit had any scientific basis. My research showed that olive pits carried significant potential that could be utilized across different sectors. During this process, we discovered that olive pits could be compatible with polymer structures, and we focused on developing a bio-based plastic raw material. As a result of the R&D work we carried out with my partners, we transformed olive-pit waste into bioplastic granules. We then secured investment and founded Biolive.

How does your goal of creating environmental impact sit at the center of your venture?

When founding Biolive, our goal was not only to develop a new material, but to offer solutions to environmental problems by transforming agricultural waste such as olive pits into high value-added bio-based raw materials. In doing so, we support the circular economy and contribute to reducing dependence on fossil-based raw materials and carbon footprint. Sustainability is the very reason for our company's existence and forms the foundation of all our work. To date, the technology we have developed has received numerous national and international awards; the global award we received in the field of the circular economy under the G20 Summit was one of the most important milestones of this journey. For me, however, the greatest achievement is not the awards themselves, but the fact that a technology developed in Turkey has resonated globally, created environmental impact, and been able to inspire young entrepreneurs.

What has been the most meaningful achievement you have attained to date?

Throughout my entrepreneurial journey, I have received numerous awards at both national and international levels. For me, however, the most meaningful achievement is that an idea which began at laboratory scale has today become a technology that attracts interest and investment in different countries around the world and is converted into real industrial applications. The international successes we achieved with Biolive gave us the opportunity to represent our country in many places, from Silicon Valley to Europe, from the Middle East to various global platforms. But what makes me happiest is that an agricultural waste once considered worthless has today been transformed into a technology that creates economic, environmental and social value. Because I see true success not merely in the awards won, but in the impact created.



Fatmanur Poyraz Ekinci / Beetech

How did the idea of founding Beetech come about?

I am a co-founder of Beetech Biotechnology and the daughter of a beekeeping family. My childhood was spent among bees, and I witnessed firsthand how much labor and dedication beekeeping requires. During my master's studies, I decided to work on bee products, and with the support of TÜBİTAK BİGG, we founded Beetech with the aim of developing innovative bee products for people. However, during our work, we focused on the Varroa mite, one of the most significant problems in beekeeping. Varroa is a mite that negatively affects the development of honeybees, weakening or even collapsing colonies, and plays a major role in the loss of hundreds of thousands of hives worldwide. Chemical control methods, over time, can lead to the development of resistance, negatively affect bee health, and leave residues in bee products. For this reason, under the TÜBİTAK 1507 Support Program, we developed VarrovEx, a naturally sourced product. While VarrovEx aims to combat Varroa without leaving residues in bee products, it also contributes to preventing the development of resistance in the parasite and supporting the immunity of honeybees.

How do you measure the contribution of Beetech's products to the productivity of bee colonies and to sustainable agriculture?

We evaluate the effectiveness of VarrovEx through laboratory and field studies, regularly monitoring key parameters such as changes in Varroa load, colony population, brood development, hygienic behavior, overwintering success and honey yield. We approach the contribution to sustainable agriculture within a broader framework. One in every three bites of food we consume depends on the pollination services provided by bees. For this reason, healthy and strong colonies are critical not only for beekeeping, but also for the continuity of agricultural production. Every colony that is protected contributes to the pollination of millions of flowers, supporting the productivity of fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products. With our approach, which leaves no chemical residue and supports the bee microbiota, we aim to protect bee health while also contributing to environmentally friendly and sustainable agricultural practices. For this reason, we evaluate the success of our products not only through bee health indicators, but also through the impact of the protected colonies on agricultural production and the ecosystem.

What is the most important goal you aim to achieve in the coming period?

Our most important goal is to increase VarrovEx's production capacity in order to reach more beekeepers and to strengthen VarrovEx's presence in the domestic market. In addition, we aim to expand into international markets, develop collaborations particularly in countries with a strong beekeeping sector, and scale our sustainable bee health solutions globally.



Hazal Ünsal Coruk / Gaia Cappadocia

What inspired you to establish Gaia Cappadocia?

I did not start out with a grand vision. I studied sculpture at a faculty of fine arts and later relocated to Cappadocia following a decision to change cities. The fact that Avanos, where I live, is renowned for its ceramic-making tradition was one of the most important factors that drew me to this field. I initially began producing ceramics in a room in my home. Throughout the production process, I sought to combine the contemporary art perspective I had developed during my education with ceramics and to create alternative interpretations of traditional production methods. Over time, this approach evolved into tableware products that are both functional for everyday use and carry design value. Gaia Cappadocia emerged as a natural outcome of this production journey.

How do you integrate the concept of sustainable tourism into your business model?

For me, sustainability is primarily about the way products are made. When I began production, I chose to use more durable materials and long-lasting techniques instead of the red clay commonly preferred in Avanos workshops, which is more prone to deformation. At Gaia, I focus on producing according to actual needs rather than mass production, and I design each product to be used for many years. In doing so, we help prevent unnecessary consumption while encouraging users to build a stronger connection with the products. The most tangible indicator of sustainability for me is seeing products we created years ago still being used today with the same functionality as when they were first made. That is why I view sustainability not only as an environmental responsibility but also through the lens of quality production, appropriate material selection and long-lasting design.

What kind of impact do you aim to create in terms of regional development?

One of the key drivers of regional development is the strengthening of local gastronomy culture. At Gaia, we aim to contribute to Cappadocia's gastronomic experience through high-quality, durable products. In 2025, the inclusion of Cappadocia in the Michelin Guide's review process marked an important milestone for the region. Today, many of the restaurants featured in the guide choose to use our products, which is one of the clearest indicators of the contribution we make to the gastronomic culture of the region. We regard this not only as a commercial achievement but also as a contribution that supports Cappadocia's international gastronomic identity.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program support you throughout this journey?

The program primarily offered me the opportunity to become closely acquainted with different industries and business models. Coming from an artistic background, the knowledge and mentorship I gained in business administration and management processes helped me develop Gaia from a stronger and more informed perspective. Another important benefit of the program was the powerful network it created. I believe the connections we established across different disciplines will evolve into long-term collaborations that will support Gaia's growth journey.



Iraz Aktay / Cherry Mic

How did the story of Cherry Mic begin?

The story of Cherry Mic began in my childhood as the daughter of a farming family. I witnessed firsthand the challenges my family faced while working the land, the effects of changing climate conditions, and how agricultural production was becoming increasingly difficult. Even then, I dreamed of creating solutions that would benefit agriculture. After studying biotechnology, I turned that dream into reality. Today, at Cherry Mic, we develop microbial fertilizers based on native microorganisms that strengthen the natural balance of soil, increase productivity and reduce dependence on chemical inputs. By bringing the power of science together with agriculture, we work toward healthier soils and a more sustainable future.

As a producer of microbial fertilizers, what is your greatest goal for the future?

Our greatest goal is to become one of the leading companies bringing biotechnology and agriculture together and to introduce the microbial technologies we develop to global markets. We believe the future of agriculture is not only about producing more, but about producing while preserving the natural balance of the soil. In line with this vision, we aim to provide biological solutions not only for agricultural fields but also for landscaping applications, urban green spaces and household plants.

If you were starting over today, would you do anything differently?

Every entrepreneurial journey provides valuable lessons. Looking back, I believe that the challenges I experienced shaped me into the entrepreneur I am today. For that reason, I would not choose a dramatically different path. However, if I were starting over today, I would place greater emphasis on cash flow and financial management from the very beginning, and I would learn earlier the importance of building strong partnerships and seeking support from the right people. I believe entrepreneurship is not only about developing a good idea but also about creating a sustainable structure and a strong ecosystem.

What does the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program mean to you?

The growth of a venture depends not only on financial support, but also on proper guidance, industry expertise and a strong ecosystem. The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program provided Cherry Mic with an experience that brought all three of these elements together, helping us move forward with greater confidence. In particular, the opportunity to connect with the Alarko Agriculture team and benefit from their industry expertise was extremely valuable in helping us evaluate the agricultural applications of our products and explore new collaborations.



İlayda Gül Vardar / Rhodark

Could you tell us about the founding story of Rhodark and the problem it aims to solve?

For many years, we developed projects in R&D centers and technoparks. During that process, we observed that access to healthy and reliable food was becoming increasingly difficult, while the sustainability of existing production systems was being challenged by factors such as climate change, drought and rapid urbanization. Rather than simply observing this problem, we decided to develop solutions and founded Rhodark.

Through its IoT-based soilless agriculture technologies, Rhodark enables people to grow fresh, nutrient-rich produce without pesticides throughout the year in homes, restaurants and a variety of living spaces. Our goal is not merely to develop a product, but to create a new way of living that makes sustainable food production a natural part of everyday life.

In which aspects of your business model does sustainability stand out most?

For us, sustainability is not just a feature of the product; it is the foundation of our entire business model. Compared with conventional agriculture, the systems we develop can reduce water consumption by up to 95%, significantly decreasing the use of natural resources. Their fully controlled production environment eliminates the need for pesticides while enabling clean and reliable production year-round.

We design our products to be integrated into residential developments, hotels, restaurants and corporate environments, reducing the distance between where food is produced and where it is consumed. This approach contributes to reducing logistics-related carbon emissions while promoting a culture of local production. Through this integrated model, we create a system that reduces resource consumption, decentralizes production and enables sustainable food production within urban environments.

What has been the most significant turning point you have encountered so far?

We have experienced many important milestones throughout our entrepreneurial journey, but one of the most significant was realizing that our technology had value not only from a technical perspective but also from a commercial standpoint. After completing our R&D process with the support of TÜBİTAK, KOSGEB and European Union programs, securing our first investment and bringing our products to market marked the true beginning of Rhodark's scaling journey.

Being accepted into national and international accelerator programs, receiving a design award from the Italy-based A' Design Award, and gaining opportunities to engage with investors and business partners from different countries were also important milestones that broadened our vision. Today, our greatest source of motivation is seeing that the technology we have developed has the potential to create impact not only in Türkiye but on a global scale.



İmran Gündüz / Podkids

Could you share the story behind the creation of Podkids?

I began my career as an industrial engineer, working as a project manager for NGOs operating in the field of children. I met my partners at Podkids during these field studies. Over the course of more than 12,000 hours of field experience, we observed that children were not using the internet in a safe and conscious manner.

To better understand the reasons behind this issue, we established a focus group of 50 participants and conducted research together with our social impact specialist. The findings revealed that the problem was not limited to screen time alone; children were using the digital world as a means of belonging, validation and emotional regulation. Children who feel undervalued or are exposed to bullying in real life tend to gravitate toward the instant rewards offered by the digital world. The fact that digital platforms are built around infinite scrolling and a constant flow of content further reinforces this cycle.

On the parental side, inconsistent screen-use rules constitute another significant challenge. Children are often left to manage their screen use on their own without adequate knowledge of digital privacy and cyberbullying. In addition, the fear of being excluded from their peer groups transforms screen use from a choice into a necessity.

Podkids was founded precisely to break this cycle and provide children with a conscious digital environment where they can create safely and confidently.

How does the content creation model developed by Podkids transform children's competencies in research and communication?

At Podkids, our goal is to help children become active creators rather than passive consumers in the digital world. Through our platform, we offer 21st-century skills such as digital safety, media literacy, critical thinking and entrepreneurship through a gamified learning model. In addition, the AI mentor we developed in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Family and Social Services provides children with age-appropriate feedback. Children create podcasts, conduct research and generate ideas through discussion platforms. In this way, screen time evolves into a more meaningful and productive experience.

What was the user story that affected you the most?

As part of a one-year project carried out at the Üsküdar Science Center, children received training during the first 12 weeks and then went on to develop their own podcast programs. At the end of the process, they conducted street interviews and took on presenter roles at municipal events.

The project was also selected as a finalist in the Collaboration Category of this year's İbrahim Bodur Social Entrepreneurship Awards. The example that affected us most, however, was that of a nine-year-old child who was behind his peers in reading and writing skills. By the end of the project, he was able to independently prepare podcast episodes on dinosaurs, each lasting approximately six minutes.



Mediha Karaoğlu İşgören / İnovmak Makina

Could you tell us the founding story of İnovmak Makine?

The story of İnovmak Makine began with a family rooted in agriculture and a desire to address the challenges encountered in the field through a professional and solution-oriented approach. By closely observing the needs of farmers, we set out with the goal of producing durable and efficient machinery that would make their work easier. Although we operated with limited resources in our early years, we grew steadily by prioritizing customer satisfaction and quality production. Today, through the agricultural machinery we develop under our KaraKız brand, we serve many regions across Türkiye while also preparing to expand into international markets in line with our export goals.

As a venture operating in the fields of manufacturing and technology, what need do you address?

In the agricultural sector, particularly for large-scale operations, efficiency and time management are among the most critical needs. Through the high-capacity field and orchard sprayers we develop, we enable farmers to cover larger areas in less time. In particular, our modular tank technology and high-capacity spraying systems reduce filling times while lowering labor and fuel costs. By placing feedback from the field at the center of our product development processes, we continue to create solutions that address real-world needs.

What has being a woman entrepreneur in the industrial sector taught you?

Being a woman entrepreneur in the industrial sector has taught me, above all, the importance of determination and continuous learning. Working in a sector that has traditionally been viewed as male-dominated has at times meant facing certain prejudices. However, I have seen that when you focus on knowledge, hard work and production, those perceptions gradually disappear. I also believe that women bring a different perspective and a strong sense of empathy to leadership roles. Today, one of my greatest motivations is to serve as an example and contribute to making women more visible in manufacturing and technology.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contribute to the development of your venture?

Beyond financial support, the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program made significant contributions to our development in areas such as strategic thinking, sustainable growth and institutionalization. Through the training sessions, mentorship support and interactions we established with fellow entrepreneurs, we gained the opportunity to evaluate our business processes more systematically and to build our growth objectives and export vision on stronger foundations. For this reason, we consider the program an important milestone in our development journey. We believe that the support provided by Alarko Holding and Habitat Association creates significant value, particularly for manufacturing- and technology-focused ventures, and we are proud to have been part of this program.



Merve Canpolat / Mapla Biotech

Could you tell us the founding story of Mapla Biotech?

For me, the story of Mapla Biotech began not with academic curiosity, but with a deeply personal realization. When my son was born with kidney damage, and there was no known genetic condition within our family, I felt compelled to investigate the possible causes. During this process, I reviewed academic studies examining the potential effects of certain chemicals found in petrochemical-based materials used in plastics and packaging on child development. The research suggested that these substances could pose significant long-term risks to organ development and children's health.

As a food engineer and researcher, I began asking myself a question: *"How can we make use of food and agricultural waste to develop alternatives to petrochemical-based materials?"* This question led us to Türkiye's agricultural potential and to the apricot, the symbol of Malatya. We recognized apricot kernel shells, which are typically treated as waste each year, as a valuable raw material. This realization laid the foundations for **EcoShell™**, our technology that transforms apricot kernel shells into biocomposite raw materials.

What challenge are you focusing on as you develop solutions in the field of biotechnology?

At Mapla, we focus on two fundamental challenges: the environmental and human health impacts of petrochemical-based plastics, and the underutilization of agricultural waste in high-value applications. As industries transition toward sustainable materials, they must also maintain a balance between performance, manufacturability and cost. With this in mind, we develop biocomposite raw materials that are compatible with existing manufacturing infrastructure by combining locally sourced bio-based materials, such as apricot kernel shells, with polymer systems. Through EcoShell™, our goal is to produce scalable, traceable and performance-driven sustainable materials that industry can use directly. In doing so, we help transform agricultural waste into economic value while also contributing to the reduction of the carbon footprint associated with plastics.

What has been your biggest lesson in the process of commercializing scientific research?

My most important lesson has been realizing that a successful result in the laboratory does not automatically become a successful product in the marketplace. Beyond scientific validation, factors such as production capacity, customer needs, regulations, cost structures, supply chains and the right business model are all critical determinants of success. The true value of a product is defined less by its technical specifications than by the problem it solves for the customer and the conditions under which it delivers that solution. For this reason, we continuously develop our work in close collaboration with industry stakeholders and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the market.



Sabiha Ezgi Davulcu / Mundi Herbal

What was the starting point for Mundi Herbal?

After graduating from the Department of Geomatics Engineering at Istanbul Technical University, I worked in the software industry in Istanbul for a period of time. However, my dream of engaging in agricultural production and developing high-value-added products from aromatic oils eventually led me back to my hometown of Adana. After completing my education in Medicinal and Aromatic Plants at Çukurova University, we began production in Çatalpınar Village. Through the distillation facility we established, we aim to create an alternative and sustainable source of income alongside citrus production in the region while contributing to rural development by bringing underutilized land into production with medicinal plants.

How have you observed consumer expectations changing in the natural products sector?

Consumers are now far more informed and conscious. Labels such as “natural” or “plant-based” are no longer considered sufficient on their own; consumers increasingly expect scientific evidence, laboratory analyses, certifications and transparent production processes. In addition, not only the benefits of a product but also the impact of its production process on nature and society have become important considerations. As a result, environmentally responsible, trustworthy brands that support local development are increasingly preferred.

As a venture operating in the botanical products sector, what areas are you focusing on to meet future consumer expectations?

We regularly verify our production processes through soil, pesticide and final product analyses conducted in university laboratories, while documenting environmentally responsible and clean agricultural practices. By prioritizing methods that reduce external dependency in our agricultural operations, we are able to keep costs under control and make our products more accessible to consumers. At the same time, by working closely with young people and women in rural communities, we are fostering a shared culture of production within our village while also contributing to regional development.

How would you summarize the contribution of the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program to your journey?

For Mundi Herbal, the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program provided an important development opportunity beyond financial support. The training we received through the program strengthened our business model and helped transform our venture into a more professional and scalable enterprise. Thanks to the business development grant provided, we were able to invest in machinery and equipment that accelerated our production processes, increasing our capacity while reducing unit costs. In addition, the support of two respected institutions, Alarko Holding and Habitat Association, brought valuable credibility and visibility to our venture. One of the program’s most valuable contributions was the opportunity to connect with other women entrepreneurs, exchange experiences and become part of an inspiring and supportive community.



Sebla Kut / Komet Cultural and Arts Projects

What is the story behind the creation of Komet Cultural and Arts Projects?

Komet Cultural and Arts Projects emerged from a need we identified while working in museums and educational institutions. We observed that children needed support in connecting cultural heritage with their daily lives, while teachers needed effective and age-appropriate methods to communicate these subjects interactively. In response to this need, we founded Komet to make cultural heritage more accessible, understandable and experience-oriented for children, young people and diverse target audiences. Today, through educational programs, museum kits, gamified content and digital learning solutions, we aim to transform cultural heritage from a body of historical knowledge into a learning experience that inspires curiosity and encourages meaningful connections.

What role do experience design and gamification play in passing cultural heritage on to future generations?

To ensure cultural heritage can be passed on to future generations, it is not enough simply to transfer information; it must also be experienced. When a child follows clues, solves a story or completes a task rather than merely viewing an artifact or reading information about it, learning becomes significantly more meaningful and memorable. This is where experience design comes into play. When children discover through play, learning evolves from passive information transfer into an interactive process that encourages curiosity, questioning, connection-building and problem-solving. As a result, cultural heritage becomes not something memorized, but something valued, embraced and personally connected to. We put this approach into practice through our Museum Kit Project and the *Cultural Explorers: Cultural and Natural Heritage Education Program*. For us, gamification is far more than an entertaining activity; it is a pedagogical tool that helps children observe, think, interpret and build lasting relationships with cultural heritage.

Which project or collaboration has influenced you the most so far?

We have had the opportunity to participate in many valuable collaborations. Among them, the implementation of the Museum Kit Project in partnership with the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as its integration into the EBA platform, marked an important milestone in expanding access to cultural heritage education.

Today, however, the project that excites us the most is *Cultural Explorers: Cultural and Natural Heritage Education Program*. Through this initiative, designed for preschool and primary school students, we aim to help children discover the history, natural environment and cultural heritage of the places where they live from an early age. Through collaborations with UNDP, UNESCO Site Management Authorities and local civil society organizations, we are working to bring the program to even more children. We see Cultural Explorers not simply as an educational program, but as a long-term social impact model that helps children connect with their surroundings while encouraging future generations to value and protect cultural and natural heritage.



Selen Şenal / Algbio

How did the idea for Algbio emerge, and what need led you to this field?

I was conducting research on microalgae in academia, but I did not want that work to remain confined to the laboratory. During that period, I was constantly looking for areas where we could integrate our research into real-world applications, which led me to approach a municipal subsidiary regarding wastewater treatment. At the same time, I discovered TÜSİAD's entrepreneurship program and, together with my industry mentor, developed our first MVP using different wastewater sources within the municipal subsidiary. Following this experience, I received entrepreneurship training and established a TÜBİTAK-supported company. The need that drove me toward this field was the heavy dependence of fuels on petroleum and my desire to contribute to addressing this challenge through sustainable algae-based fuels.

In which sectors do you think microalgae-based solutions will gain greater prominence in the future?

Because carbon emissions represent one of the most significant challenges across all production-based industries, and because microalgae function as biological carbon sinks, I believe their use in carbon capture and storage applications will continue to grow. We integrate with open-pond systems to carry out biological carbon capture and convert emissions into carbon credits. We are confident that microalgae will play an increasingly important role in the future of carbon trading markets.

What development has made you most proud of your venture's progress so far?

Overall, the support we have received from industrial organizations and public institutions across both Europe and Türkiye since our establishment has been a source of great pride. We were able to address some of their most pressing regulatory and production-related challenges, and in doing so, they helped guide us in validating our solutions. Building on this foundation, we intend to expand our activities into a wider range of industrial sectors, including emerging industries such as digital manufacturing.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contribute to your growth journey?

For us, the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program opened the door to a new network within the manufacturing industry. In addition, the grant support provided valuable assistance for the equipment and infrastructure required for our algae production R&D activities.



Seral Tan / Sodd Design

Could you share the founding story of Sodd Design with us?

Sodd Design was founded in 2020 based on my belief that design is not only about creating products or spaces, but also about designing emotions, stories and experiences. My education in industrial product design, combined with nearly fifteen years of experience in furniture, interior design, manufacturing and brand development, inspired me to express my own design language more freely.

The brand's name emerged from this philosophy. Sodd, formed by combining the letter "S" with the word "odd," represents a distinctive design approach with its own character. My goal was to create a design universe inspired by color, organic forms, playful details and the combination of craftsmanship with contemporary production techniques. Today, Sodd Design continues its work in furniture, lighting, decorative objects and spatial consultancy, bringing together local manufacturing expertise with a design-driven perspective.

What approach do you take to balancing design and functionality in furniture production?

At Sodd Design, I believe every product begins with a story. However, for that story to resonate in real life, it must be supported by functionality, ergonomics, material selection and production details. For that reason, we do not separate form from function.

In addition to visual appeal, it is equally important to us how a product serves its user, how it functions within a space and whether it can remain relevant and usable for many years. We collaborate with local workshops and craftsmen, combining materials such as wood, metal, glass, fiberglass and acrylic through a variety of production techniques. Our aim is to preserve the original character of a design while creating products that are durable, manufacturable and sustainable. To me, good design is not merely something that looks beautiful; it is something that builds a connection with its user and adds character to a living space.

Which project has excited you the most so far?

One of the projects that excited me most was the award objects we designed for the Singulart Awards. Through this project, we had the opportunity to express Sodd Design's design language on an international platform through an object carrying its own unique story.

Developed around the theme of "Play," the design aimed to bring both joy and meaning to the award object through colorful forms and a sense of playfulness. Seeing the design reach Paris and become part of an international organization was especially meaningful for me. In addition, products such as the *Face to Face* mirrors, the *Jellyfish* collection, *Little Lollies* table lamps and the *Yellow Mellow* pouf are among the works that best represent our approach to color, form and function. More recently, one of our most exciting goals has been expanding beyond product design into spatial and concept design projects for cafés, restaurants, retail spaces and living environments.



Şeyma Yılmaz Yıldız / Interrupt Biyomedikal

What was the motivation behind the founding of Interrupt Biomedical?

We founded Interrupt Biomedical based on our belief that technology can have a direct impact on people's everyday lives. As we observed the mobility limitations and the struggle for independent living experienced by individuals with neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, we wanted to develop solutions that do more than simply monitor the condition. Our goal was to create technologies that actively support patients in real time. Through AI-powered wearable health technologies, we aim to help people lead safer, more independent and higher-quality lives.

In your opinion, what is the most important responsibility when developing solutions in the field of health technologies?

The greatest responsibility in health technology is ensuring that the solution genuinely addresses a real need while always prioritizing user safety. A health technology cannot rely solely on being innovative; it must also be clinically validated, reliable and capable of improving users' daily lives. For this reason, we place great importance on maintaining close collaboration with patients, physicians and healthcare professionals throughout the product development process.

What features do you focus on to ensure that a health technology developed in Türkiye can compete in global markets?

Competing in global markets requires more than simply developing advanced technology. It also demands solutions that comply with international standards, are user-centered and can be scaled effectively. As we develop our product, we focus on areas such as AI-powered analysis, ease of use, clinical validation, data security and compliance with international regulations. At the same time, we aim to ensure that our product maintains the flexibility needed to adapt easily to different healthcare systems and user requirements.

How did the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contribute to achieving these goals?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program contributed far more than financial support. It helped us strengthen our strategic perspective as a company. Through the program, we had the opportunity to work with experienced mentors, become part of a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem and connect with a wide range of stakeholders. As a result, we gained valuable insights that enabled us to take more confident steps toward commercializing our product and expanding into international markets.



Şükrüye Özbilen / Egglin Food

How did the idea behind Egglin Food emerge?

Egglin was founded on the idea of transforming the large volumes of eggshell waste generated by the food industry into valuable biomaterials. Drawing on my experience in the healthcare sector, we sought to unlock the value of the natural calcium, collagen and bioactive compounds found in eggshells and eggshell membranes through advanced technologies. Today, we develop sustainable, high-value-added raw materials based on a zero-waste approach.

Which needs do you prioritize while developing solutions for the food industry?

Our top priority is producing natural, reliable and sustainable raw materials. Today's consumers are influenced not only by product quality but also by environmentally responsible production processes. For this reason, we approach traceability, food safety and sustainability as interconnected priorities at every stage of our operations. At the same time, we focus on developing innovative solutions that reduce dependency on imports, support domestic production and contribute to the circular economy.

What critical steps do you apply in your production process to obtain a standardized and reliable product from sensitive raw materials such as eggshells and eggshell membranes?

The foundation of our production process is built on rapid processing, hygiene and quality control. Once raw materials arrive at our facility, they are processed immediately without being stored. They undergo controlled washing, separation, low-temperature drying and precision milling processes. To maintain product consistency, we perform physical, chemical and microbiological quality checks on every batch. By operating in accordance with ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 quality management systems, we are able to provide our customers with reliable and fully traceable products.

What was the most tangible contribution of the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program to your venture?

The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program provided me with more than education; it gave me new perspectives. Its greatest contribution was helping me learn how to manage my company more strategically and become part of a strong entrepreneurial network. Having the opportunity to connect with experienced mentors, exchange experiences with entrepreneurs from different sectors and broaden my vision was extremely valuable. I can still see the impact of the program in many of the strategic decisions we make today. The ecosystem created by Alarko Holding and Habitat Association serves as an important support mechanism for entrepreneurs throughout their growth journeys.

We Celebrated April 23 Together







April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day was celebrated this year for the first time with the joint participation of Group companies through a special program bringing together art, entertainment and social responsibility.

One of the highlights of the day was the Cat House Painting Workshop, created with a focus on social benefit. Children learned that the cat houses they painted with their own hands would become shelters for stray animals, giving them the opportunity to experience the value of sharing and creating. The activity gained additional meaning by combining creativity with a lasting social benefit.

At the Painting with Picasso Workshop, children drew inspiration from works of art as they explored color and imagination. Face painting, a conversation with the children, refreshments and activities led by an entertainer added to the festive spirit throughout the day. Bringing together employees from across Group companies, the event became a meaningful celebration in which children experienced the joy of the holiday through art, creativity and social responsibility.

Alarko Contracting Concludes 2026 Bowling Tournament

The 2026 Alarko Contracting Group Bowling Tournament concluded with employee participation. Held over two rounds, the tournament ranked the finalists according to the points they scored. The tournament offered employees an enjoyable experience in a spirit of friendly competition, while the finalists will go on to represent Alarko Contracting at the Bowling Championship to be held within the Holding.



A Meaningful International Women's Day Event at Alarko Contracting

Alarko Contracting Group marked International Women's Day on March 8 with a series of activities celebrating women employees whose work creates value across every area of life. The program also highlighted solidarity by supporting social enterprises that promote women's labor. Gifts presented to women employees featured products from Nahıl Shop of the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work, the Defne Women's Cooperative, which continues production in the earthquake-affected region, and the Kadınların Elinden platform, which supports women producers. A bracelet-making workshop led by an internal trainer was also organized for both women and men employees.

Women Entrepreneurs' Work Adds Meaning to Mother's Day

Alarko considers making women's work more visible and supporting women's entrepreneurship an important part of its corporate culture. Reflecting this approach, the Mother's Day gift sets delivered to women employees across Group companies were selected from products made by women entrepreneurs. Designing the selection process around an approach that supports women's labor and contributes to women entrepreneurs' production processes added further value to the initiative. Prepared specially for Alarko, the sets offered women employees an enjoyable moment for themselves while also contributing to women entrepreneurs' production activities, economic independence and the sustainability of their workshops.



A Meaningful International Women's Day Celebration

As part of International Women's Day on March 8, Alarko Holding presented its women employees with special gift sets made with products prepared by women entrepreneurs. Featuring a teapot, tea cup and carefully selected teas, the sets offered an invitation to take a short break from the pace of the day and reflect on the value of sharing.

In the message shared with employees for March 8, Alarko Holding emphasized that women's presence in the workplace is defined not only by numbers, but by the ideas they generate, the impact they create and their contributions to strengthening solidarity. The message also underlined Alarko Holding's continued appreciation for the work, contribution and value created by its women employees.





An Inspiring Awards Ceremony for Alarko's Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program

Women entrepreneurs who qualified for grant support in 2025 received their awards as part of the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, which has been running for three years to support women's participation in economic life and promote local development.

The awards ceremony for the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, carried out since 2023 in collaboration between Alarko Holding and Habitat Association and contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals across multiple dimensions, was held at the Alarko Holding Conference Hall. Members of the Alarko Holding Board of Directors, senior executives and project stakeholders had the opportunity to meet 25 women entrepreneurs, while entrepreneurs who had received grants in previous years also attended and shared their experiences.

Following an evaluation by a jury of professionals from the business and NGO communities, 25 innovative ventures stood out in the grant stage of the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program. Their solutions span fields including microbial fertilizers, algae-based waste technologies, digital beekeeping, next-generation agriculture, aromatic



cosmetics, functional foods, contemporary crafts, bioplastics made from food waste, local products, science-based food for companion animals, wearable biomedical devices, child development, ecotourism, agricultural machinery and sustainable furniture. Alarko Holding provided grant support to 20 ventures, while Alarko Agriculture Group supported five business models creating a difference in innovative agriculture.

"WE CREATE A MULTIPLIER EFFECT THAT SCALES THE VALUE GENERATED"

Commenting on the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, Ümit N. Yıldız, CEO of the Alarko Group of Companies, said: "We know that countries where women are more visible in decision-making mechanisms and leadership roles achieve stronger development performance. Equal participation by women in education, the workforce and entrepreneurship makes economies more sustainable and more resilient to risk. Women entrepreneurs fuel innovation, accelerate the transformation of societies, and make social justice and inclusive growth possible. At Alarko, we create a multiplier effect that scales the value generated by women entrepreneurs."

Yıldız noted that Alarko, founded 72 years ago on the dream of two young entrepreneurs, has always worked with the aim of leaving a mark on the future, adding that gender equality is one of the core pillars of Alarko's impact strategy. He said: "Under the leadership of our valued partner Habitat Association, we have supported more than 4,000 women through our training programs and provided grant support to 40 ventures to date. Beyond financial support, the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program offers women entrepreneurs a holistic support model enriched by mentorship, visibility and high-quality collaborations. Through opportunities for shared learning, collaboration and visibility within this ecosystem, we contribute to women entrepreneurs' branding and growth journeys. This year, Alarko Agriculture Group also joined our grant program as part of the 'Women's Power in Agriculture' initiative. We will continue to expand the synergy we have created with our Agriculture Group to other companies across our Group in the years ahead."



“PIONEERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLEARLY SHOWS THAT WOMEN ARE POWERFUL PLAYERS”

Speaking at the ceremony, Bora Caldu, Chairman of the Executive Board of Habitat Association, said: “The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program is a holistic transformation journey designed to help women entrepreneurs become stronger in the digital world, gain visibility and write their own economic stories. Women’s participation in the workforce and representation in the entrepreneurship ecosystem become sustainable through the right training, the right financing and strong partnerships. The Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program we run with Alarko clearly shows that women are powerful and transformative players not only in traditional production, but also in technology, software, artificial intelligence, sustainability and social innovation.”

The program stands out for high participant satisfaction, measurable competency gains and a high rate of venture creation. This year’s training content, designed in parallel with business trends, focused on AI-Powered Digital Marketing, Design Thinking, Brand Identity Development, E-Export and Financial Management. Evaluations based on multidimensional criteria such as participants’ income growth, job creation capacity, acquisition of digital skills and positioning within the entrepreneurship ecosystem showed that every unit invested in the project generated 3.53 units of social value.

Women entrepreneurs who qualify for grants through the program gain access to a broad value ecosystem offered by Alarko and Habitat Association. Branding support is provided through visibility on Alarko Holding’s social media channels, in its corporate magazine and across media outlets where it serves as publishing sponsor. “From Dream to Success” sessions held in different cities create opportunities for peer learning and collaboration. Women entrepreneurs also have the opportunity to join the Alarko Group of Companies’ extensive supplier network.



Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program Receives the “Company Supporting Equal Opportunity” Award

Alarko Holding received the “Company Supporting Equal Opportunity” award for its Pioneers of Entrepreneurship project at Türkiye’s Leading Women Panel and Awards Ceremony organized by Nasıl Bir Ekonomi newspaper. The award was accepted by Canan Coşkun, Corporate Communications and Sustainability Director.

MEPAŞ Supports a Sustainable Future

MEPAŞ continues to contribute to greater awareness of sustainable living through its support for the “My Climate” project launched by Konya Metropolitan Municipality. Supported in line with the goals of energy saving, environmental awareness and a sustainable future, the project aims to draw attention to the environmental impact of individual consumption habits. MEPAŞ representatives noted that the responsibility assumed by organizations in combating climate change is becoming increasingly important, emphasizing that energy efficiency is not only an economic issue, but also a social and environmental responsibility. Through its support for the “My Climate” project, MEPAŞ aims to encourage citizens to make more conscious choices in energy consumption, strengthen saving habits and promote a culture of sustainable living.



Strategic Move by Alarko Contracting Group in Project Management and Consultancy



Alarko Contracting Group has taken an important step in line with its sustainable growth vision by expanding its scope of activity in project management and technical consultancy. The company submitted expressions of interest for consultancy tenders covering two strategic Istanbul-based projects to be financed by the World Bank. The Istanbul Northern Rail Crossing Project (INRAIL) aims to create an alternative rail crossing over the Bosphorus, provide an uninterrupted intercontinental railway connection via the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, and integrate Istanbul’s two airports into the rail network. The approximately 127-kilometer line is planned to strengthen both urban and intercity transport.

The Istanbul Resilience Project, meanwhile, aims to improve the disaster resilience of public buildings and strengthen Istanbul’s emergency response capacity. The project covers the restructuring of schools, dormitories, elderly care facilities and critical public buildings to improve their resilience to seismic and climate risks. Through these two projects, Alarko Contracting Group aims to strengthen its expertise in project management and technical consultancy and expand its active role in internationally financed infrastructure projects.



First Step to Art Program Enters Its Second Year

Alarko Holding's First Step to Art program, which brings children and young people together with art in collaboration with the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV), will continue to offer creative experiences this year through special workshops held as part of four different festivals.

Alarko Holding, which stands out with social responsibility projects centered on equal opportunity, is continuing its support this year for the First Step to Art program implemented in collaboration with İKSV. Designed around the goal of making culture and the arts accessible to everyone, the program offers a lasting model that introduces children and young people to art at an early age. Participants have the opportunity to meet artists, develop creative expression skills and build strong connections with culture and the arts through İKSV festivals.

The program's theoretical framework is based on the report "Growing Up with Art: From Early Childhood to Youth," published as part of İKSV Cultural Policy Studies. Developed in light of research by Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı, the model focuses on the positive effects of early exposure to art on self-regulation, problem-solving, leadership and social skills. The workshops designed by İKSV Alt Kat represent a social investment that puts this academic evidence into practice.

Throughout 2026, the First Step to Art program will meet participants through special events at four different festivals:



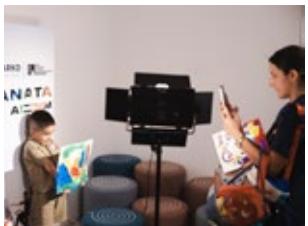












A New YouTube Video Series: First Step to Art

The First Step to Art YouTube project will bring a new dimension to the program in 2026. In this special series prepared with the support of Alarko Holding, leading figures from the worlds of film, music, jazz and theatre will take part in candid conversations with young people about their artistic journeys and sources of inspiration. The series will encourage children not only to watch art, but also to think about it and ask questions.

45th Istanbul Film Festival | Creative Editing Workshop: Under the guidance of editor Fırat Terzioğlu, young participants will reinterpret their own stories through the language of cinema around the theme “Make, Break: Editing a Memory,” developing skills in editing, narrative and visual storytelling.

54th Istanbul Music Festival | The Music of Nature: At a workshop in Atatürk Urban Forest, children will take part in a nature walk combined with a musical experience. Accompanied by the Roots & Shoots Türkiye team and flutist Beste Yalı, they will explore the sounds of nature and experience the relationship between rhythm and the natural world.

33rd Istanbul Jazz Festival | From Music to Painting: In a workshop exploring the interaction between music and visual arts, participants will take part in a creative process that translates rhythm, melody and emotion into color. Guided by musician Selen Beytekin and art educator Uğur Kaya, they will experience a journey from music to painting.

30th Istanbul Theatre Festival | Puppet Workshops: In workshops specially designed for different age groups, children will explore puppet and object animation techniques while developing improvisation and creative expression skills. Guided by Anna Karayorgi and the Kumbaracı50 team, participants will take part in an experience centered on stagecraft and storytelling.

MEDAŞ Runs for a Good Cause at the 5th International Konya Half Marathon



In line with its approach to social responsibility, MEDAŞ took part in the 5th International Konya Half Marathon this year, running for a good cause. The event once again drew broad participation, turning the unifying power of sport into social benefit while supporting meaningful initiatives. All proceeds from registrations for the marathon were donated to the SOBE Foundation, known for its important work in the field of autism; DOSD Meram, which stands out for its activities supporting individuals with Down syndrome; and the Karatay Alzheimer Day Care Center, which aims to improve the quality of life of elderly individuals.

MEPAŞ Promotes Energy Efficiency Awareness Among Future Generations

As part of Energy Efficiency Week, held from January 5 to 11, MEPAŞ Energy once again visited middle school students through its “Save Your Energy for the Future” project, continuing its energy-efficiency awareness activities with the same enthusiasm. During the event, students received information on the role of energy in daily life, the efficient use of energy resources and the importance of energy efficiency for sustainability. The project emphasized that building energy awareness at an early age contributes to greater social awareness over the long term. Aiming to broaden energy-efficiency awareness across society, MEPAŞ Energy plans to continue its efforts to instill this awareness in future generations.



A Meaningful Collaboration Between MEPAŞ and LÖSEV



As part of its social responsibility initiatives focused on social benefit, MEPAŞ joined children fighting leukemia in bringing their dreams to life through the “Collect a Wish for Me” project implemented in collaboration with LÖSEV. Ahead of the new year, the wishes of children with leukemia were placed on a wish tree. With the support of employees, each wish written by the children was taken up and turned into reality. Reflecting the hope and solidarity of the new year, the project brought smiles to the children’s faces while also contributing to greater social awareness.

Alarko Carrier and MEPAŞ Become Signatories of WEPs

Alarko Carrier and MEPAŞ have taken their commitment to gender equality and an inclusive corporate culture to a global level by joining the Alarko Holding companies that are signatories to the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Established jointly by the UN Global Compact and UN Women, WEPs aims to advance women's empowerment in the business world through seven core principles ranging from leadership to equal opportunity. By further strengthening their sustainability strategies and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) performance through this step, the companies have joined the international community of organizations supporting women's active participation in economic and social life.

More information about WEPs:

Alarko Agriculture Launches "Women's Power in Agriculture" Initiative in the International Year of the Woman Farmer

In its third year, Alarko Agriculture Group is launching the "Women's Power in Agriculture" initiative. Having joined the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, carried out in collaboration between Alarko Holding and Habitat Association since 2023, Alarko Agriculture will support women entrepreneurs creating innovation in the sector with a focus on sustainability and good agricultural practices. Ventures to be supported under the "Women's Power in Agriculture" category include companies founded by women entrepreneurs developing microbial fertilizers, next-generation agricultural solutions, aromatic cosmetics, local products and plant growth regulators.

Noting that women play a critical role in agriculture, as they do in every field, Ümit Boran, Acting General Manager of Alarko Agriculture Group, said: "We attach great importance to the United Nations declaring 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer. Women account for approximately 75% of employment provided by Alarko Agriculture Group. To draw attention to the value women create in our sector and support social development, we signed the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in 2024, becoming the first agricultural company in Türkiye to become a WEPs signatory. This year, we are taking that commitment a step further by launching the 'Women's Power in Agriculture' initiative. As part of this effort, we are pleased to join the Pioneers of Entrepreneurship Program, which Alarko Holding has successfully run for three years, and support five women-led ventures that are bringing innovative solutions to the agriculture sector."





The Technology Paradox: Next-Generation Nutrition

Technology is transforming our eating habits faster than ever before. On one hand, AI-powered agricultural applications, vertical farming systems and sustainable production technologies are shaping the food system of the future. On the other, ultra-processed foods and industrial production models are generating new debates around healthy eating. The same technological transformation can become part of both the solution and the problem.

Technology now affects, and in many ways determines, almost every aspect of our lives. When it comes to food, however, it presents us with a complex nutritional paradox, almost like a two-way mirror. The paradox of technology-driven nutrition is striking: on one side are benefits we may never want to give up; on the other are developments that threaten our health. While scientists and engineers are building powerful safeguards against future food shortages, the door is also opening to an artificial food illusion that is increasingly detached from nature and heavily manipulated. Ultimately, defining next-generation nutrition requires us to look not only at what we eat, but at the intent with which we direct the immense power of technology.

A CONSTRUCTIVE FUTURE

First, let us look at the brighter side of the equation: the constructive role of technology in protecting humanity from future crises and safeguarding continuity. One clear example is the ability to make production on shrinking agricultural land more efficient through advances such as smart sensors, data-driven precision irrigation systems and geothermal energy integration. Large agricultural areas and vast greenhouses enhanced by these technologies are becoming high-tech production hubs capable of delivering high yields year-round with minimal resources, without exhausting soil or water. Vertical farming offers another example.

Developed as an alternative to agricultural land increasingly constrained by the climate crisis, these systems can provide uninterrupted year-round production even in the heart of cities, using minimal water and zero pesticides. And the advances do not stop there. Smart logistics networks and innovative, biodegradable packaging technologies that extend shelf life without compromising food quality help ensure that crops reach the table without losing their nutritional value.

Nutrition is also moving beyond mass templates toward an entirely individual dimension. Thanks to advanced scientific fields such as nutrigenomics, we increasingly encounter the prospect that personalized nutrition plans may one day help improve individual health. This new, data-driven nutritional architecture, tailored to a person's genetic code, blood values and metabolic rate, opens the door to a more rational future in which chronic diseases can potentially be prevented before they emerge.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL ILLUSION

Alongside all these exciting developments lies the other side of the coin: a darker picture shaped by industrial ambition in the laboratory. Ultra-processed food technologies designed to extend shelf life and create addictive flavors that drive greater consumption, without regard for nutritional quality, carry serious risks for human health. Production models built around artificial sweeteners, genetically modified organisms and industrial chemicals can distance food from its natural state while contributing to serious health problems such as obesity and heart disease. The further technology removes food from its essence, the more people risk becoming disconnected from their own biological integrity.

The greatest risk we face is not technology itself, but allowing it to become an uncontrolled, purely profit-driven tool of manipulation that disconnects people from the ecosystem.

Risks in the Shadow of Innovation

- Addiction Creating Algorithms (Bliss Point)
- Shelf-Life Engineering Without Nutritional Value
- Synthetic and Ultra-Processed Illusions
- Misuse of Biometric Data
- Chemical Optimization That Depletes the Soil
- Seed Monopolies and Technological Biopiracy
- Algorithmic Food Fraud and Digital Adulteration
- Opaque Cellular Agriculture and Synthetic Food Speculation
- Digital Greenwashing That Masks the Carbon Footprint

THE KEY TO BALANCE: PEOPLE

Today, access to healthy and sustainable food is not equal for everyone. While some people can devote more time and resources to obtaining clean, reliable food, millions of others are primarily focused on meeting their basic nutritional needs because of economic conditions. This makes access to healthy food not only a matter of individual choice, but also a significant issue of social inequality.

Against this backdrop, it would be wrong to hold technology alone responsible. Technology is a tool shaped by the values of the people who develop and use it. Guided by ethical principles and the public interest, the same technology can enable more efficient production, lower resource consumption and more reliable food systems. Used solely for commercial gain, however, it can create new problems for health, the environment and social justice.

For this reason, the defining factor in the food system of the future will not be technology itself, but the purpose for which we use it and the sense of responsibility that guides us. Effective oversight mechanisms, transparent production processes, scientific guidance and policies that place human health at the center will be among the strongest tools for turning technology's potential into social benefit. In the end, the future of nutrition will be shaped not only by technological progress, but by the human judgment, ethical approach and shared sense of responsibility that direct that progress.

A Manifesto Against Fast Consumption: Slow Food

Our
Gusto





For years, speed has been presented as one of modern life's greatest promises: work faster, consume faster, live faster. This mindset has also transformed our tables, spreading fast food culture on a global scale. Yet in today's age of speed, the opposite approach is attracting growing interest. The Slow Food movement places local production, seasonal ingredients, biodiversity and the cultural value of food at its core, bringing not only flavor to the table, but also sustainability and conscious consumption.

Food culture has never been limited to what happens at the table. The economic structure of societies, political choices, patterns of urbanization and everyday habits have always shaped what people consume, how they consume it and under what conditions. Understanding major changes in eating habits therefore also requires looking at the social and economic dynamics of the period.

The global realignment that followed the Second World War transformed not only political and economic systems, but also the practices of everyday life. As countries positioned themselves within different blocs of the emerging world order, a distinct American influence began to be felt in the cultural sphere. The "American Dream," which became a symbol of economic prosperity, redefined not only patterns of consumption, but also the pace of life.

As urbanization accelerated and working life intensified, time became a more valuable resource than ever. The idea that "time is money" also reshaped eating habits, gradually reducing the time devoted to preparing and consuming food. This gave rise to fast food culture. The system can be seen as an adaptation of Henry Ford's revolutionary assembly-line model in the

automotive industry to the kitchen, transforming food from a cultural experience into a form of "fuel" produced and consumed at speed.

For many years, fast food culture met the needs of modern life through its speed and convenience. Over time, however, the individual and social costs of this production and consumption model became increasingly visible. The spread of high-calorie, ultra-processed foods rich in additives played an important role in the rise of chronic health problems such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The impact of this transformation was not limited to health. Food culture itself also became increasingly standardized across the world. Similar menus, production methods and flavor profiles spread across different geographies, while the distinctiveness of local cuisines and traditional recipes passed down through generations began to lose visibility. As tables became places used simply to meet nutritional needs, cultural practices such as preparing food, cooking together and sharing meals also lost some of their former importance. Thousands of years of gastronomic heritage and local production knowledge were gradually pushed into the background under the pressure of the industrial food system.

A RESISTANCE BORN AT THE SPANISH STEPS

In 1986, a symbolic event took place in Rome. The opening of a fast food restaurant near the historic Spanish Steps was seen not simply as the arrival of a new business, but as a turning point for local culinary culture and gastronomic heritage. Led by journalist and food writer Carlo Petrini, a group gathered to protest by handing out pasta, a symbol of traditional Italian cuisine. The protest is widely regarded as the first step in what would soon become the international Slow Food movement.

Over the nearly four decades since, Slow Food has grown beyond being an alternative to fast food culture into a global movement that defends sustainable agriculture, local producers, biodiversity and gastronomic heritage. Today, the issue is no longer only what we eat, but also how food is produced, which natural resources it uses, how it affects producers and what kind of world it leaves to future generations.

MUCH MORE THAN A TREND

As this story of development shows, the Slow Food approach goes far beyond a food trend. It is a powerful cultural manifesto that pushes back against capitalism's factory-style eating habits and seeks to restore a more human rhythm to life. The climate crisis, dwindling natural resources, biodiversity loss and the rise of lifestyle-related chronic diseases are forcing us to reconsider the way we eat. For this reason, Slow Food's principle of "good, clean and fair food" stands out today not simply as a gastronomic philosophy, but as a holistic way of life that brings together human health, environmental sustainability and local cultures.

The benefits of the Slow Food movement cannot be understood solely through eating habits. By rebuilding the deeper connections modern lifestyles have weakened, it promises broader well-being for both body and mind. From protecting local seeds to supporting biodiversity, the movement creates meaningful global value and, through its far-reaching impact, presents itself as a powerful response to global crises. In short, Slow Food encourages conscious, nature-respecting consumption that honors every ingredient on the plate while rebuilding food's traditional connections, many of which are now at risk of disappearing.

Ultimately, the Slow Food movement promises not only better and healthier eating, but also the return of an aesthetic of living lost amid the tyranny of speed in modern life. After all, what may make the future more livable is not the mechanical pace of factory production lines, but a deep respect for the ancient wisdom of the soil and the unifying power of the table.

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