



Kainar-AKB

BUILDING ON 50 YEARS OF INDUSTRIAL EXPERTISE

By Frank Coldwell

Kazakhstan entered the second half of 2026 with one of Central Asia's strongest growth stories still intact. The International Monetary Fund said in June that "economic growth remains robust," supported by domestic demand, investment and high oil prices and projects real GDP growth of about 4.6 percent for the year. Manufacturing has also been a bright spot, with official data showing industrial activity continuing to expand as the country looks beyond hydrocarbons and builds a broader production base.

Kazakhstan's automotive industry is also expanding rapidly, providing a strong domestic market for battery and component manufacturers. In January–July 2026, the country produced 111,115 vehicles and other automotive equipment, up 33.3 percent from the same period a year earlier, according to the Kazakhstan Automobile Union, citing the Bureau of National Statistics. Automotive manufacturing now accounts for 40.5 percent of Kazakhstan's mechanical-engineering sector. With new vehicle plants, greater localization and a growing requirement for locally made components, the environment is creating new opportunities for established industrial suppliers.

Few companies reflect Kazakhstan's industrial evolution as clearly as Kainar-AKB, one of Central Asia's leading automotive battery manufacturers. The Taldykorgan-based battery producer traces its history to 1976, when the plant began production and Chief Executive Officer Yerbol Azhmagambetov's father joined the newly launched operation as a young process engineer. He later became director and ran one of the country's most successful privatization processes. From output of roughly 300,000 batteries a year in 2001, Kainar-AKB has grown to an installed annual capacity of around four million batteries, with current production of about three million depending on demand. In the early 2000s, the 22-hectare industrial business was valued at only about \$300,000; by 2008, it had secured roughly \$35 million in financing.

Kainar-AKB's business model perfectly reflects its role as a full-cycle manufacturer: the company produces starter batteries for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and agricultural machinery, manufactures its own plastic battery cases and operates a recycling business that recovers lead and plastic from used batteries while neutralizing electrolyte. Its plastics operation alone can produce between 4.5 million and five million cases annually. Recovered lead can return to battery production, while recycled plastic can be reused internally or supplied elsewhere, giving Kainar-AKB greater control over inputs while turning used products back into industrial raw material.

Much of the company's scaling took place as it invested heavily in modernization. The CEO sees those years as the period that defined what the company Kainar-AKB is today. "We effectively transformed a Soviet-era plant into a modern industrial facility operating according to international standards. We used that period to lay the foundations for the company we have today," says Azhmagambetov. That combination of long industrial experience and modernized production remains one of the company's defining strengths.

The next phase of growth is increasingly industrial. Kainar-AKB already supplies batteries for railway and telecommunications applications and is expanding toward backup-power solutions for banks, data centers, oil and gas companies, metallurgical groups and other infrastructure users across Central Asia. It is here that the CEO sees smart partnership opportunities. "A Western company could bring technology and experience to Kazakhstan, while we could contribute our manufacturing capabilities, knowledge of the regional market and local industrial expertise. Each side would have something meaningful to offer the other," Azhmagambetov says. The company is also studying lithium-ion and sodium-ion technologies as it



considers future opportunities in electric mobility and energy storage.

For Azhmagambetov, the wider case for cooperation begins with the country itself. "Kazakhstan can give new momentum to an investor. A project here may not always generate enormous profits immediately, but it can offer knowledge, experience and a different perspective, all of which can culminate in significant long term gains. Our country has many success stories and interesting business cases from which international investors can learn."

Exports are already central to Kainar-AKB's business, accounting for roughly 60 to 70 percent of revenue. Its principal markets remain in the post-Soviet region, but the company has also explored opportunities in Europe and the Middle East, including Dubai. Traditional routes into markets such as Poland, Germany and Italy have become more complicated, increasing the importance of alternative corridors and regional hubs. Geography can make logistics difficult for a landlocked exporter, yet it also places Kazakhstan between China, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia and the Middle East. Expanding that reach will depend on new routes, commercial relationships and partners able to open additional markets.

As Kainar-AKB marks its 50th anniversary, the company is looking beyond its traditional automotive base toward industrial batteries, energy storage, new export markets and international technology partnerships. Its five decades of manufacturing experience provide a strong foundation for that next stage, while its position in Kazakhstan gives potential partners access to local production capabilities and knowledge of the wider Central Asian market. "We are willing to help international leaders and major companies bring their values, achievements and technologies to Kazakhstan and, through cooperation, to other markets as well," says Azhmagambetov. For Kainar-AKB, the opportunity ahead is not simply to sell more batteries but to become a stronger industrial partner connecting international expertise with Kazakhstan's growing manufacturing base.



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