

voestalpine expands its 3D metal printing activities to Asia and North America— Additive manufacturing as field of the future: total investment of EUR 50 million

After the successful start of the voestalpine Additive Manufacturing Center in Düsseldorf, Germany, this past year, the voestalpine Group's High Performance Metals Division consistently continues its international expansion of this pioneering technology. In April 2017, a new research center for 3D printing of highly complex metal components started up operations in Singapore. Two more production plants will open up in Taiwan and Canada in August and the fall. At the same time, voestalpine is investing some EUR 20 million in expanding metal powder production for additive manufacturing at its subsidiaries Böhler Edelstahl GmbH & Co KG, Austria, and Uddeholms AB, Sweden. In total, the implementation of the additive manufacturing strategy runs to around EUR 50 million.

Metal additive manufacturing—also known as 3D printing—has revolutionized metal processing like no other process. Digital design data is used to add material layer by layer in order to create highly complex parts with completely new forms and functionalities without any material loss. The base material is different types of processed metal powder. Despite the technical challenges, metal-based additive manufacturing offers a lot of future potential, especially in sectors such as the aerospace, automotive, toolmaking, and medical industries that require very sophisticated custom products. “voestalpine, with its comprehensive knowledge in manufacturing metal powder and in the design, development, and production of ready-to-install components, is a global pioneer in 3D printing. We want to consistently push ahead with our activities in this area by setting up new research and development centers in non-European growth markets,” says Wolfgang Eder, CEO of voestalpine AG.

Regional and technological expansion

In September 2016, voestalpine opened the Group competence center for metal additive manufacturing in Düsseldorf that today has 14 employees who are primarily involved in development. Just about four months ago, the first expansion step took place in Asia: The setup of the voestalpine Additive Manufacturing Center Singapore Pte. Ltd signifies a technological expansion of European activities and opens up access to this growing market in the Southeast Asia region. While the team in Düsseldorf is known for producing finely structured, lightweight small parts and tools, the Singapore team specializes in manufacturing and repairing objects weighing up to 600 kilograms. “In line with our global service strategy, we are successively establishing metal additive manufacturing services close to our customers. The focus is on applying different additive manufacturing processes to best meet their individual requirements,” states Franz Rotter, Member of the voestalpine AG Management Board and Head of the High Performance Metals Division.

Next: Taiwan and Toronto

The voestalpine Technology Institute Asia that will open in August 2017 in Taiwan is the Group's third research center for metal additive manufacturing. The center will have its own technology that supplements the other research centers' technologies. At the same time, capacity for high-tech printing for both research and commercial purposes is being built up in Toronto, the first voestalpine site for this manufacturing process in the NAFTA region.

Million euro investments in metal powder production

To keep up with the increasing demand for high-quality metal powders (e.g. based on stainless steels, tool steels, nickel-based alloys, and titanium) for 3D printing, voestalpine is increasingly investing and expanding capacity at the Group companies Böhler Edelstahl GmbH & Co KG, Austria, and Uddeholms AB, Sweden. Following the setup of state-of-the-art atomization lines for powder production at the two sites in 2016, a total of EUR 20 million is currently being invested in similar systems. Working in close cooperation with the new research centers, innovative powder types that are even more corrosion-resistant and stronger will be developed for increasingly sophisticated applications. Both voestalpine production companies benefit from long-standing experience in manufacturing powder steels. In total, the voestalpine Group is currently investing around EUR 50 million in building up leading expertise in the area of metal additive manufacturing.

High Performance Metals Division

The voestalpine AG's High Performance Metals Division is focused on producing and processing high-performance materials and customer-specific services including heat treatment, high-tech surface treatments, and additive manufacturing processes. Due to its unique sales and service network at about 160 sites around the world the division offers its customers material availability and processing as well as local points of contact. The division is the global market leader for tool steel and a leading provider of high-speed steel, valve steel, and other products made of special steels, as well as powder materials, nickel-based alloys, and titanium. The most important customer segments are the automotive, oil and natural gas exploration, and mechanical engineering industries as well as the consumer goods and aerospace industries. In the business year 2016/17, the division reported revenue of around EUR 2.7 billion, of which about 50% was generated outside Europe, and an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 395 million; it has around 13,700 employees worldwide.

The voestalpine Group

In its business segments, voestalpine is a globally leading technology and capital goods group with a unique combination of material and processing expertise. voestalpine, which operates globally, has around 500 Group companies and locations in more than 50 countries on all five continents. It has been listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1995. With its top-quality products and system solutions using steel and other metals, it is one of the leading partners to the automotive and consumer goods industries in Europe as well as to the aerospace and oil & gas industries worldwide. The voestalpine Group is also the world market leader in turnout technology, special rails, tool steel, and special sections. In the business year 2016/17, the Group generated revenue of EUR 11.3 billion, with an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 1.54 billion; it has around 50,000 employees worldwide.

Please direct your inquiries to

voestalpine AG
Peter Felsbach
Head of Group Communications | Spokesman
voestalpine-Strasse 1
4020 Linz, Austria
Phone: +43/50304/15-2090
peter.felsbach@voestalpine.com
www.voestalpine.com