

VDM Metals puts plant for powder production into operation

Werdohl. VDM Metals will put a new powder atomization plant into operation at the Unna site in June. On the occasion of the Paris Air Show, the world's largest aerospace exhibition, the long-established company based in Werdohl, Germany, aims to present its concept for powder production for Additive Manufacturing methods. This investment will allow the company to extend its product spectrum.

The cornerstone for this expansion was laid back in November 2016. The development includes construction of a new hall for powder production as well as procurement of the required units. A vacuum inert gas atomization plant (VIGA) forms the core of the powder manufacturing facility, comprising a vacuum induction melting furnace and an atomization unit, in which the highly pure powder is also produced under vacuum conditions via vacuum induction melting and subsequent inert gas atomization. This involves a standardized production process. The plant is currently in the commissioning phase.

“Our aim is to consolidate our position as a world market leader in high-performance materials with this investment”, states Dr. Niclas Müller, Chief Executive Officer. “This means we can rise to the challenge of utilizing new technologies to thrive in tomorrow’s changing market environment. The new production plant will allow us to extend our product portfolio as a reliable supplier of powder materials.”

Generative production processes are on the verge of becoming indispensable – even in demanding industries such as aerospace, chemicals and medical technology. These methods are currently undergoing the transformation from rapid prototyping to series production, which means manufacturing processes and materials are confronted with new challenges. The area of Additive Manufacturing is highly complex as a whole, and is still in a development phase with a corresponding learning curve. As a result, the company is seeking cooperative ventures with interesting customers, industrial enterprises and universities. Together with its partner companies, VDM Metals is investigating this budding field in respect to the materials required for Additive Manufacturing. Our teams are not only working towards manufacturing proven materials as powder – they are also striving to

develop and qualify new powder alloys, so as to be able to cover a broad application spectrum.

“Experts agree that generative manufacturing is akin to a technical revolution set to create undreamt-of opportunities in production and industry as a whole”, continues Müller. “Along with our cooperation partners, we’re currently fathoming what developments and opportunities this sector promises to offer. We’re in a very exciting phase and want to share in the technical development here too, while shaping the market for metallic powder materials.”

Thanks to its long-standing experience with nickel and high alloyed materials, the VDM Metals Group can draw on extensive knowledge and corresponding expertise. At the same time, the company sees this as a tremendous opportunity to establish a name for itself in this exciting new market as a reliable manufacturer of powder materials in highly demanding applications.

Additional information

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About VDM Metals

The VDM Metals Group, based in Werdohl, develops and manufactures nickel, cobalt and zirconium alloys as well as high alloyed special stainless steels. For over 85 years, the company has been supplying sheet metal, strips, rods, wires and welding fillers to customers in the chemical industry, plant construction, energy generation, oil and gas, electrical and electronics, as well as automotive and aerospace industries. Worldwide, VDM Metals employs more than 1,900 people.

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