



# Partnership between Nexteam Group & Prodways Group focusing on new RAF technology for the 3D printing of titanium parts

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On the occasion of the APS Meetings convention to be held in Lyon, France, March 20 and 21, Nexteam Group and Prodways Group announce the installation of the first industrial machine based on Rapid Additive Forging technology (RAF) for large titanium parts at the Nexteam Group's facility in Toulouse.

## Installation of the first industrial machine at Nexteam Group

Backed by two years of R&D work, Prodways Group's process performance and proprietary machine expertise persuaded Nexteam Group, specializing in the manufacture of hard metal aeronautic parts and sub-assemblies, to invest in RAF technology. Nexteam Group will be the first aeronautics sub-contractor to be equipped with this new technology.

Raphaël Gorgé, President and Chief Executive Officer of Prodways Group explained that: *"Nexteam Group's investment is a major milestone in the development of Rapid Additive Forging technology. In partnering with Nexteam Group, which will input its own expertise in machining and finishing services, we are convinced we can ramp this new manufacturing process up to an industrial scale compatible with the technical requirements of major players in the aeronautics and space market."*

The investment will enable Nexteam Group to rapidly produce titanium parts for customers. According to Frédéric Gentilin, Vice-President of Nexteam Group: *"This project is strategic, a real competitive edge for*



*the Group. We are the first in France to get equipped with this technology. In real terms, we will be cutting our production cycles and extending our product range. The goals of economic gain and logistics performance that are key requirements of our industrial sector in no way diminish our focus on the high quality standards with which our Group is associated."* True enough, while RAF technology is characterized by speed of deployment, it will subsequently lead to the mass-produced manufacture of titanium blanks with very similar geometry compared with the final part. Thus making the process cost-effective, since finish-machining is all that will be needed to obtain the final part. *"We will also be saving on materials with this new machine. With this process, we add material, whereas with standard techniques we would cut out up to 95% of the material,"* emphasized Bruno Pierrel, Nexteam Group's R&D Director.

## Gradual roll-out

Delivery of the machine will be taken in April at Gentilin, the Group's facility in Launaguet (near Toulouse) to provide the aeronautics market with a full range of services from the manufacture of blanks to finish-machining. From 2018 to 2019, a qualification phase under real operating conditions will evidence process repeatability so as to enable the start of mass production from mid-2019 onward. "In under 18 months we will be able to provide our customers with titanium parts with higher mechanical strength than other 3D printing techniques, for new generation aircraft." - Frédéric Gentilin

The aeronautics and space market is a priority market for Prodways Group, where it is already well positioned with customers whose ranks include over ten major industrial players. This partnership will enable Prodways Group to offer a remarkable product range to customers to meet the standards of quality and productivity required by players in the aeronautics and space market and, as a result, achieve the group's very strong ambition in this sector.

## Innovative high-performance technology for large-scale titanium parts

Rapid Additive Forging technology (RAF) from Prodways Group, the reward of several years of R&D work, enables the 3D printing of large metal parts designed for production applications. The technology was developed in collaboration with Commercys Robotique, a subsidiary of Groupe Gorgé.

The technology implements a head depositing molten metal in an atmosphere of inert gas. Metal is thus deposited layer by layer and a large part is completed within the space of just a few hours. Metallurgic analyses conducted over the past 12 months have demonstrated complete mastery of the process with an absence of porosity, homogeneity of the part in all directions, and productivity that is significantly higher than usual 3D metal printing techniques using powder sintering with a laser or electron beams.

This machine is able to produce parts within a production bracket of 1200 x 800 x 500mm. The equipment is particularly well suited to the production of titanium parts owing to full control over the inert loop and the use of a printing system for which a patent is pending. It is intended for mass-produced parts, notably for aeronautics. Several aircraft and engine manufacturers have already ordered parts and validated the relevance of this technology.

A high-stakes move for the industry:

- a reduction of over 80% in waste material compared with machining techniques;



- no tooling needed and no related non-recurring costs (forms, molds, etc...) compared with forging techniques;
- and in every case, a reduction in manufacturing lead times.

Other application sectors have expressed an interest in RAF technology for coating parts or adding functions on steel, Inconel and technical aluminum alloys in particular. This first industrial machine based on innovative RAF technology is opening the way to a new range of products at Prodways Group.



## About NEXTEAM GROUP

A key player in the field of high-precision engineering, Nexteam Group was founded in 2015 from the merger of four family businesses: Asquini, Gentilin, Sofop and MP Sud. The Group, headquartered in Marmande (SW France), is a leading operator in the world of aeronautics and a tier 1 supplier to major customers. Business is focused on the design, manufacture and support of structural and flight equipment for aircraft and helicopters.

- Customer references: Airbus – Safran – Stelia, UTAS...
- 900 employees
- 2017 revenue: €150 million
- 8 sites in Europe: Bordeaux, Launaguet (Toulouse), Marignane (Marseille), Marmande, Oloron, Rodez, Lublin (Poland) and Bucarest (Romania)

For further information: [www.nexteam-group.com](http://www.nexteam-group.com)

## About Prodways Group

PRODWAYS GROUP is a specialist in industrial and professional 3D printing with a unique positioning as an integrated European player. The group has developed right across the 3D printing value chain (software, machines, materials, parts & services) with a high value added technological industrial solution. PRODWAYS GROUP offers a wide range of 3D printing systems and premium composite, hybrid and powder materials (SYSTEMS division). The company also



manufactures and markets parts on demand, prototypes and small production run 3D printed items in plastic and metal (PRODUCTS division). The Group targets a significant number of sectors, from aeronautics to healthcare.

In 2017, the company generated revenue of €34.8 million, including close to 40% outside of France. Building on revolutionary and proprietary technology, MOVINGLight®, PRODWAYS GROUP today has global visibility in the industrial 3D printing sector and with leading customers.

PRODWAYS GROUP is a Groupe Gorgé company.

For further information: [www.prodways-group.com](http://www.prodways-group.com)

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