

AMECaL has power to go global and hit £1m

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AN equipment calibration specialist plans to more than double its workforce this year as well as expand its services to overseas markets after investing in new laboratories and beginning talks with marine industry giant Shepherd Offshore.

AMECaL has invested over £130,000 to create six additional labs at its site on the banks of the Tyne near Wallsend, which it believes will help it to grow its client base and increase its turnover from £400,000 to £600,000 by the end of the year.

The firm, which already operates from three labs, provides technical calibration services for a number of industries, including aerospace, automotive, petrochemical and renewables, and also manufactures and sells its own range of specialist measuring equipment.

The company has been in the research and development stage for the bulk of the last decade, after being set up by former electrician Stephen Oxborough in 1998, but now expects to have its best year yet after beginning talks with a number of multinational companies including Newcastle-based Shepherd Offshore and defence giant BAE Systems.

It is hoping to supply its calibration services to Shepherd Offshore as part of the marine firm's plans to build a wind turbine factory at the nearby Neptune shipyard, with the 50,000 sq ft plant expected to create up to 6,000 jobs.

AMECaL is now hoping to add 10 new jobs to its eight-strong workforce within the next 12 months and is also hoping to be involved in the creation and day to day operations of a new calibration teaching facility in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, which is currently being built by BAE Systems.

The firm, which recently created two extra jobs, already has a major contract with power engineering company Siemens, which has seen it act as a consultant on a number of large scale power plant developments.

It now hopes to secure more work overseas as a result of its recent growth and is already in talks with companies in Spain, France and Switzerland, in addition to its existing work in the US.

Mr Oxborough said: "We very much see the renewables sector as one of the most exciting in terms of growth.

"As there are very few companies in Europe that can provide the skills we can, we believe we can become part of the many renewable energy projects that are beginning to take shape in the North East."

Mr Oxborough started his career as an electrical apprentice at the Neptune shipyard, in the calibration laboratory, thus sparking a lifelong interest in the field.

"We hope to hit the £1m turnover mark in the coming years, but this all depends on how fast certain sectors develop," he said. "Although we are a small team, we have the expertise to help get some of the world's largest engineering projects off the ground."

