

AMECaL looks to go global and hit £1m turnover

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AN EQUIPMENT repair and measuring specialist hopes to grow sales from £500,000 to around £4m over the next four years as it looks to secure work with two of the region's biggest engineering deals.

AMECaL, based on the banks of the Tyne near Wallsend, said it hoped to wrap up two deals early next year that would see it double its workforce to 16 over the next 18 months, and help it to break through the £1m turnover mark by next year.

The company said it was in talks with US company Clipper Windpower, which is looking to make prototypes of the world's biggest turbine blades at a plant on Walker Riverside, in Newcastle's East End.

AMECaL said that it was hoping to secure a deal which would see it work with Clipper and North East renewable energy body Narec to provide calibration services at the site.

It also said that it was confident of securing work with Offshore Group Newcastle, which is looking to bring more than 1,000 jobs to the region after winning a £150m contract from Texas oil giant Apache Corporation to build an offshore production platform at the Hadrian Yard construction site in Wallsend, North Tyneside.

AMECaL, which announced earlier this year it was investing £130,000 to bring its number of labs up from three to nine, 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 be able to grow quickly after arousing interest from a number of blue chip corporations.

The firm has put much of this down to the fact it was recently named as an approved supplier by power engineering company Siemens, which has seen it act as a consultant on a number of large-scale power plant developments. David Heppell, sales and marketing manager at AMECaL, said: "There has been a lot of hard work to get us into a position whereby we can go for growth.

"The scale of some of the work we're now going for is very exciting and should allow us to add to our workforce as we grow our sales."

The firm hopes to secure work overseas as a result of its recent growth, having dealt with companies in Spain, France, Switzerland and the US.

Mr Heppell said: "Much had been made of the North East's ability to pull itself out of the downturn with the help of these large-scale engineering contracts. I'm really pleased that great strides are being made in getting these projects up and running. Not only will they benefit AMECaL, but will hopefully have an enormous impact on the region in the years to come."