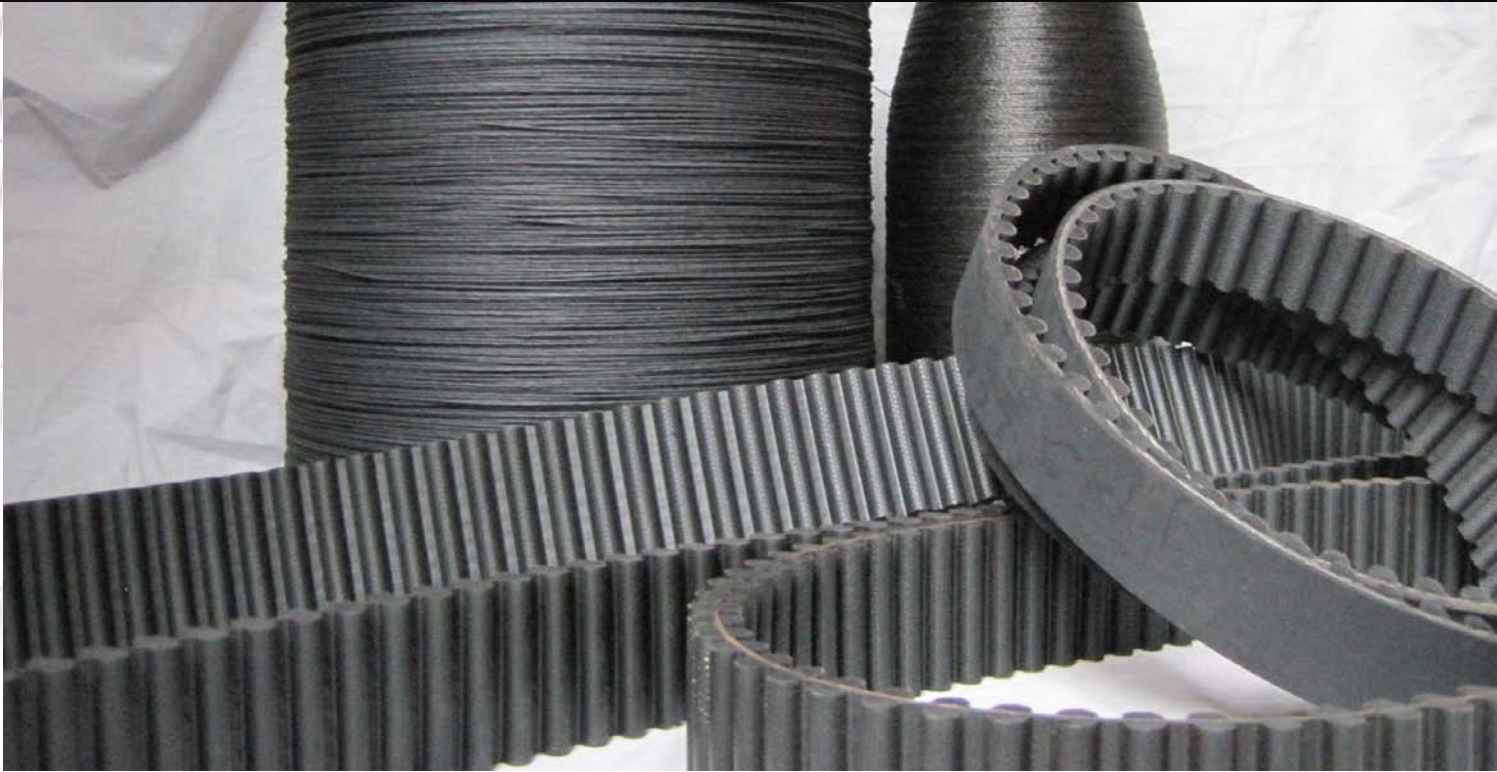


## BUSINESS EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME: CASE STUDY



# £4 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR NEW GLASS FIBRE CORD MANUFACTURING FACILITY AT NGF EUROPE

**NGF EUROPE Ltd gains investment to build a high tensile strength fibre-forming plant in the North West, the only such facility outside Japan**

### PROJECT

To add a high tensile strength (HTS) fibre-forming facility at NGF EUROPE's existing plant in the North West. Fibre-forming is an important primary process in glass fibre cord manufacture, which is used in products such as vehicle cam belts.

### BACKGROUND

NGF EUROPE Ltd, part of the NSG Group, is a Merseyside-

based glass fibre cord manufacturer. The company's main customers include automotive suppliers manufacturing original equipment, such as timing/cam belts, other toothed belts and tyres. Belt drives have been an option for engine manufacturers for many years along with chain drives. Historically, the durability of belt drives was limited, which meant that they needed to be changed at relatively low mileage intervals and they lacked the ability to run in oil. NGF EUROPE is extremely innovative and has increased the durability of belt drives, with some belts now specified to last the lifetime of the engine. The company also developed a new rubber formulation and treatment to enable the belt drives to run in oil.

# THE BID RESULTED IN A £500,000 GRANT

As a result of such developments, there is a preference from European OEMs, including Volkswagen and Ford, towards high performance belt drives, so creating more demand for NGF EUROPE's high tensile strength glass fibre products. However, as there is no manufacturing facility in Europe for the glass fibre cord for such products, NGF EUROPE investigated the possibility of securing funding to support the construction of such a facility in the UK. This also fits in with the current trend of growing an automotive supplier base in the UK, to support increased vehicle production volumes.

## PROJECT AIM

To be successful in securing a bid for funding to construct a new high tensile strength fibre-forming facility in the North West.

## NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

HTS glass fibre cord is in demand for items such as vehicle cam belts, however currently there is no manufacturing facility for this product outside of Japan. It was decided to apply for funding support to assist with the development of the new facility, however the application for such support was complex, and therefore external help was required to assist with the bid.

## APPROACH

NGF EUROPE identified possible funding available through the Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative (AMSCI) Stream 2, part of the UK Government Regional Growth Fund, for the Liverpool City Region

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Such funding would assist NGF EUROPE to construct a new facility and create new jobs. It was decided that specialist assistance was required with writing the bid from the consultancy Mickledore. Financial support was provided by the Northwest Automotive Alliance Business Excellence programme for the writing of the bid, as well as for due diligence and project start-up support.

## OUTCOMES

The bid was successful and it resulted in a £500,000 AMSCI grant. This allowed a £4 million project to progress, along with the creation of 24 new jobs. Construction of the new facility in St Helens in Merseyside has now started and the plant is due to be commissioned in June 2013. The site will become the first fully-integrated high tensile strength glass cord manufacturing factory in Europe and the only such facility outside Japan. The new facility will shorten production times with the site reducing its dependency on filament delivery from NSG in Japan, and reduce transport costs and environmental impact, in line with NSG Group's Sustainability agenda.

Alistair Poole, Managing Director, NGF EUROPE Limited, says: *"The support from the NAA's Business Excellence Programme resulted in a successful bid for AMSCI funding, and the outcome will be the creation of the world's leading glass cord manufacturing facility here in the North West. The support from the NAA allowed us to put in a high quality bid which meant that we stood a greater chance of success."*

## TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NAA'S BUSINESS EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME, CONTACT:

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