

Birmingham, 31 October 2013 - Delcam to lead additive manufacturing project for the UK jewellery industry

The UK's jewellery sector is set to benefit from a major £471,000 research and development project called Precious that began earlier this month with a kick-off meeting at Delcam's Birmingham headquarters. The project, to be managed by Delcam, will make a definitive step change to the current use of additive manufacture for precious metal jewellery through an empirical set of trials, benchmarks and demonstrators, making it easier for the whole UK supply chain of design, manufacture and retail to adopt the technology.

The Precious project is being undertaken by a consortium of five organisations that, in addition to Delcam, includes Cookson Precious Metals, Lionel T Dean/Future Factories, the Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre and Finishing Techniques.

The project is receiving £212,000 of support from the UK's innovation agency, the Technology Strategy Board. It is aimed at rapidly bringing to full commercial maturity the process of additive manufacturing of precious metal jewellery items that is currently at varying stages of partial readiness at a small number of UK companies.



Collaborators Precious project and Helen Lucas, TSB Monitoring Officer

Project Manager Jan Willem Gunnink from Delcam, stated, "The UK is an internationally recognised and important supplier of quality jewellery to the world's markets but is constantly threatened by cheap imports from low labour cost economies. The Precious project is intended to offer a viable alternative manufacturing option to those who supply jewellery at the middle to higher end of the bespoke and personalised jewellery market. New online business models that exploit additive manufacturing are expected to be created and should add innovative design driven impetus to the more traditional high street retailing sectors".

To achieve this goal, a number of important research and development elements will be required:

- An assessment of the current "State of the Art" including design software currently available
- Identifying the supply chain requirements for the introduction of additive manufacturing
- Developing business models for jewellery companies wishing to use additive manufacturing
- Improving the efficiency of additive manufacturing of jewellery (minimizing support structures, post processing and finishing)
- Creation of demonstrator projects to promote the technology to jewellery companies

Acknowledgements

This project is co-funded by The Technology Strategy Board, the UK's innovation agency. Its goal is to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. Sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Technology Strategy Board brings together business, research and the public sector, supporting and accelerating the development of innovative products and services to meet market needs, tackle major societal challenges and help build the future economy. For more information please visit www.innovateuk.org

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