



BIBUS GROUP: a family of experts with global reach

BIBUS Group is a family-owned company with global reach and expertise.

Founded by the Bibus family in Switzerland over 75 years ago, BIBUS METALS Group is a specialised supplier combining the flexibility of a family-owned company with global reach and expertise. It's part of BIBUS HOLDING AG, which enjoys market share across Europe, China and Southeast Asia with over 50 companies encompassed within its Metals, Technology and Electronics Divisions. Stainless Steel World spoke to Managing Director Mr Klaus Bökels from BIBUS METALS Germany about how combining local representation with an international presence underpins the Groups enduring success.

By Joanne McIntyre

BIBUS METALS Group is one of the leading stockists and suppliers of bar, sheet, coils, plate, tube/pipe, wire and strip in high-performance materials. Its portfolio includes semi-finished, high-performance materials, including nickel, nickel alloys, titanium and titanium alloys and special stainless

steel for aerospace. The BIBUS METALS branches mainly focus on nickel and nickel-based alloys, with its subsidiary S+D METALS concentrating mainly on titanium and titanium alloys. Through SAUTER EDELSTAHL AG and SAUTER METALL GmbH, the Group also offers a wide range of stainless

steel and aluminium products. HARTMANN MATERIALS completes the Group with special titanium products mainly for medical applications. "Being a family-owned enterprise offers significant advantages to the BIBUS METALS Group, such as great flexibility and the ability to respond



Klaus Bökels: "We have a strong local presence, with international partnerships."

Tailored to each market

The German branch of the Group, BIBUS METALS GmbH, was founded in 1990 as the first subsidiary outside Switzerland. It acts as a centralised stockholder for the Group, with a significant store of nickel and nickel-based alloys in sheets, coils, bars and tubes. The other Bibus companies largely stock the particular materials their individual markets require. "However, if they require standard products, these can be quickly obtained from our centralised stock in Germany. Our large internal network is closely linked, and products can rapidly be sourced

from other companies in the Group, ensuring great flexibility and speed in sourcing a wide range of materials. We have a strong local presence, with international partnerships."

The Group operates with EN 9001, EN 9120 and EN 13485 certified quality management systems.

In addition to a wide range of special alloys, the BIBUS METALS Group offers its clients various added-value services. "For example, our German facility offers cut-to-length services for long products, while Group members in other subsidiaries offer services ranging from waterjet cutting and sawing to various other value-adding

rapidly to market developments," explains Mr Bökels. "Each company within the Group acts with a great deal of autonomy to tailor its portfolio and services to the markets it serves. At the same time, the larger Group structure allows us to offer an enormous range of products and services to our customers throughout Europe, Southeast Asia, and China." While BIBUS METALS Group has a strong reputation for supplying nickel and nickel-based alloys, it also specialises in high-performance grades and special stainless steels. The head office is located in Switzerland, with subsidiaries in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, the UK, Ukraine, China and Malaysia. The Group's central warehouses are located in Switzerland, Germany, Poland and China.



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activities. Close collaborations with various sub-contractors complement the range of services.”

Ready for hydrogen

The Bibus Metals team respond rapidly to market trends, including the emerging role of hydrogen in the energy transition. Mr Bökels continues: “Our strategy is to increase our stock of materials required for hydrogen applications, and we’re well-prepared to be a reliable partner in two different areas. The first is hydrogen production; as an electrochemical process, there will be increased demand for the required grades, which we store in various forms. Secondly, we anticipate opportunities for hydrogen applications, such as fuel cells, bipolar plates, etc. Our sister company S+D Metals specialises in titanium and is well-positioned to serve this market. We anticipate that titanium may replace stainless steel in bipolar plates in future as it is lighter and therefore offers advantages for aerospace and automobiles. As a Group, we closely observe the market to learn about opportunities as they develop.”

“Once the many hydrogen projects which have already been announced finally start to be constructed, fabricators will need the material at short notice, especially for prototypes and pilot projects. As stockholders,



BIBUS METALS Group’s central warehouses are located in Switzerland, Germany, Poland and China.

we operate between the end user and the mills and have increased our stock significantly in preparation.”

Other renewable energies are also developing rapidly, and the Bibus Metals teams expect more opportunities to arise for special alloys.

“For example, we anticipate an increase in the specification of grades offering superior resistance to seawater in offshore wind parks. While these parks currently utilise fairly standard grades of stainless steel,

there are higher alloyed grades which offer improved performance for assets exposed to wind and seawater.”

Technical expertise & certifications

While the Group is well-positioned to become a reliable partner for future applications such as green hydrogen and renewable energies, it historically has a strong focus on the most demanding sectors. These include aerospace, automotive, chemical industry, pharmaceutical, environmental, oil and gas, industrial furnaces, heat exchangers and numerous others. The experience gained in these highly demanding industries, and for which the company has obtained many certifications, is a valuable underpinning for its support of future energy transition applications.

“We have a great deal of technical knowledge in-house. Our motto of ‘Supporting Your Success’ means we join our clients in their development journeys,” Mr Bökels explains.

A great example of this is BIBUS METALS Sdn. Bhd. Malaysia, which opened in June 2022 and received aerospace certification EN 9120/AS9120 within two months. “The certification was essential to instill the Group’s spirit and ethos in this new branch. It means the Malaysian team operates with the same business culture and high quality standards as the rest of the Group. Regardless of where in the world our customers are, they will receive the same high



The Group supplies nickel and nickel-based alloys as well as high-performance grades and special stainless steels.

quality and service for which Bibus is renowned.”

The Malaysian office is the Group’s hub for Southeast Asia – separate subsidiaries based in Hong Kong and Shenzhen focus on the Chinese market. The offices primarily focus on aerospace, medical and other demanding applications such as oil & gas and petrochemical.

“The special alloys they stock can be quickly supplemented as required with more common grades from our global network,” explains Mr Bökels.

Guaranteed quality from order to delivery

A cornerstone of the BIBUS METALS philosophy is to source products from a limited number of material suppliers, explains Mr Bökels. “As we guarantee our clients a repeatable, high level of quality, it’s essential to have reliable and consistently high quality in stock. Working with just a few suppliers - typically just three per product form - allows us to give this guarantee. Consistency is vital in the demanding industries we service. Special alloys are inherently high-priced materials, but with BIBUS, they come with a level of service that more than justifies that cost. For example, all products are shipped in extremely robust packaging to prevent damage during transport and ensure they arrive in pristine condition. It’s all part of our quality guarantee: every step is taken care of from the moment an order is placed. Our clients know they will receive top-quality products delivered safely, exactly when needed, every single time. This level of quality is the same for all of our Group companies



The new ERP system gives instant quotes which show the availability and prices of products available in the Group’s German warehouses.

and is consistently repeatable. If you place an order again in two years, you will receive the same level of quality.”

Modern ERP system

The ambition of BIBUS METALS to be a reliable partner for its clients also extends into the digitalised world. Two years ago, the company installed a state-of-the-art ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system, which forms the foundation for the company’s ongoing digital development. Mr Bökels: “In mid-2022, this journey continued with the opening of a portal enabling in the first step clients of BIBUS METALS Germany worldwide to instantly acquire reliable quotes which show availability and prices in real-time of products available in our

German warehouses. It’s not a shop in the traditional sense, but rather enables clients to get a swift, automatically generated response 24 hours per day, seven days per week, without a human having to be involved in the process. It offers tremendous flexibility to our clients, who can instantly get this information in real time. Although it was launched just nine months ago, around 40% of our quotes in Germany are now generated by this platform. It’s a huge success, as clients enjoy the ease with which they can search the system, put the material they need in the basket, get a quote and then decide if they want to buy it immediately or later. Each quote issued is stored in the system, making it easy for clients to make repeat orders or get updated prices and conditions months or even years later.”

“Many clients are delighted to use it because it is fast, flexible, and repeatable. We believe the system combines the best of both the digital and analogue worlds. Once clients decide to place the order, they can surely speak to us in person to negotiate or pose any technical questions. Direct contact with clients remains important.”

The development shows how, as a global Group, BIBUS METALS greatly emphasises the importance of all its clients and the people they represent. “We welcome our clients into the BIBUS family, and strive to form long-term relationships based on trust and excellence.” ▲

Automotive industry

BIBUS METALS Germany supplies special materials to the high-performance automotive industry. “The exhaust systems on sports cars and motorbikes must withstand extremely high temperatures and mechanical stresses,” explains Mr Bökels. “For many years, we have supplied – directly or indirectly - many famous brands in the racing car and motorbike industries, both in the UK and Europe. It’s an interesting market requiring special, exotic materials.”

