

Media Information
12 December 2012

BMW Group and Boeing to collaborate on carbon fiber recycling

Munich/Seattle. The BMW Group and Boeing signed a collaboration agreement to participate in joint research for carbon fiber recycling as well as share manufacturing knowledge and explore automation opportunities.

Both the BMW Group and Boeing are pioneering the use of carbon fiber in their products. With the release of the BMW i3 in late 2013, followed later by the BMW i8, the BMW Group will bring two vehicles with a carbon passenger cell onto the market for the first time and Boeing's 787 Dreamliner is made up of 50 percent carbon fiber material. Recycling composite material at point of use and at the end of the product life therefore is essential to both companies.

"Boeing for us is a suitable partner for a collaboration in the field of carbon fiber", said Herbert Diess, Member of the Board of BMW AG for Development. "Boeing has many years of extensive experience using carbon fiber in the field of aviation, while the BMW Group has earned a significant competitive advantage through its use of special manufacturing methods for series production of carbon fiber parts. Through this cooperation we can merge know-how between our industries in the field of sustainable production solutions."

"This collaboration agreement is a very important step forward in developing the use and end use of carbon fiber materials," said Larry Schneider, Boeing Commercial Airplanes vice president of Product Development, who represented Boeing at the signing in Seattle. "It is especially important that we plan for the end of life of products made from carbon fiber. We want to look at ways to reclaim and reuse those materials to make new products. Our work with the BMW Group will help us attain that goal."

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Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire was instrumental in securing the location for the BMW plant in Moses Lake and promoted the partnership between Boeing and the BMW Group.

“This exciting partnership between two global players and industry leaders is a win for our state,” said Gregoire. “This will help Washington further develop our capabilities and leadership position in the game-changing technology of carbon fiber. I’m pleased that BMW and Boeing have joined forces as this is a logical next step for the industry.”

As part of the collaboration agreement, Boeing and the BMW Group will share carbon fiber manufacturing process simulations and ideas for manufacturing automation. The collaboration agreement between the two companies is the first in the history of either company.

As part of its SGL Automotive Carbon Fibers LLC joint venture, the BMW Group has built a new, state-of-the-art carbon fibre plant in Moses Lake, Washington (USA), together with the SGL Group. The plant is an important component in both companies’ strategy to automate production of ultra-light carbon fibre reinforced plastics for use in future vehicle concepts. The carbon fibres produced in Moses Lake will be used exclusively for the BMW Group’s BMW i3 and BMW i8.

The facility in Wackersdorf makes the carbon fibres into fabrics, which are processed at the Landshut plant to make lightweight CFRP body components for the BMW i3, which will be assembled at the BMW Plant Leipzig.

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The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 29 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2011, the BMW Group sold about 1.67 million cars and more than 113,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2011 was euro 7.38 billion on revenues amounting to euro 68.82 billion. At 31 December 2011, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 100,000 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last eight years.

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