



AESA Cortaillod provides cable measuring solutions, testing and quality-performance services to clients worldwide. Established some 40 years ago, the company soon developed its niche specialism to the highest level and gained international recognition. In the late 1990s AESA became a private company owned by investors as a result of a management buyout and changed ownership again in 2007 when new investors came on board, acquiring MEA GmbH in Germany at the same time.

"The company has been profitable since its inception, although 2011 and 2015 have been difficult years in terms of business," says the company's CEO, Dr Vincent Arbet-Engels, Ph.D., who himself came to the company in 2015, after holding various scientific and management positions at CERN, IBM and Abilis Systems both in the United States and Europe. The launching of Sales and R&D initiatives triggered positive changes with the return of solid financial performance in 2016. Today, with hardware specialists in Switzerland and software designers in Germany, AESA is a trusted technical partner in its sector for clients worldwide.

#### Four pillars

Mr Arbet-Engels explains that the company develops four business lines, all of which are equally important. In the energy sector, AESA provides quality testing of the electrical properties of cables. The testing may be done either on samples in the laboratory with high accuracy measurements or directly on the production line using the ResTest813X product family. "Companies can make significant savings in raw material quantities thanks to the unique direct-on-the-line measuring equipment – no

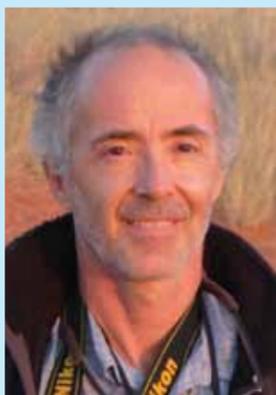
other instrument available on the market today can offer such advantages," Mr Arbet-Engels points out. "The ResTest 813X family, available in three versions, is used for conducting reliable measurements during manufacturing, ensuring optimum result accuracy."

The second product line is telecommunication and high frequency Automatic Test Equipment (ATE) for cable measurement, within which the company offers different products to suit different end applications. The fully automated solutions with a complete set of SW tools allows the user to measure up to 170 parameters within a few minutes only, according to international defined standards, and to generate complete numerical and graphical test reports.

The third area of business is a quality management software (named CIQ), aimed at improving quality, processes, and product efficiency. It networks all measuring and testing devices into one common system and stores the acquired data in a centralised database. With the looming of Industry 4.0, this area of business is expected to gain more prominence in line with the demand for machine software.

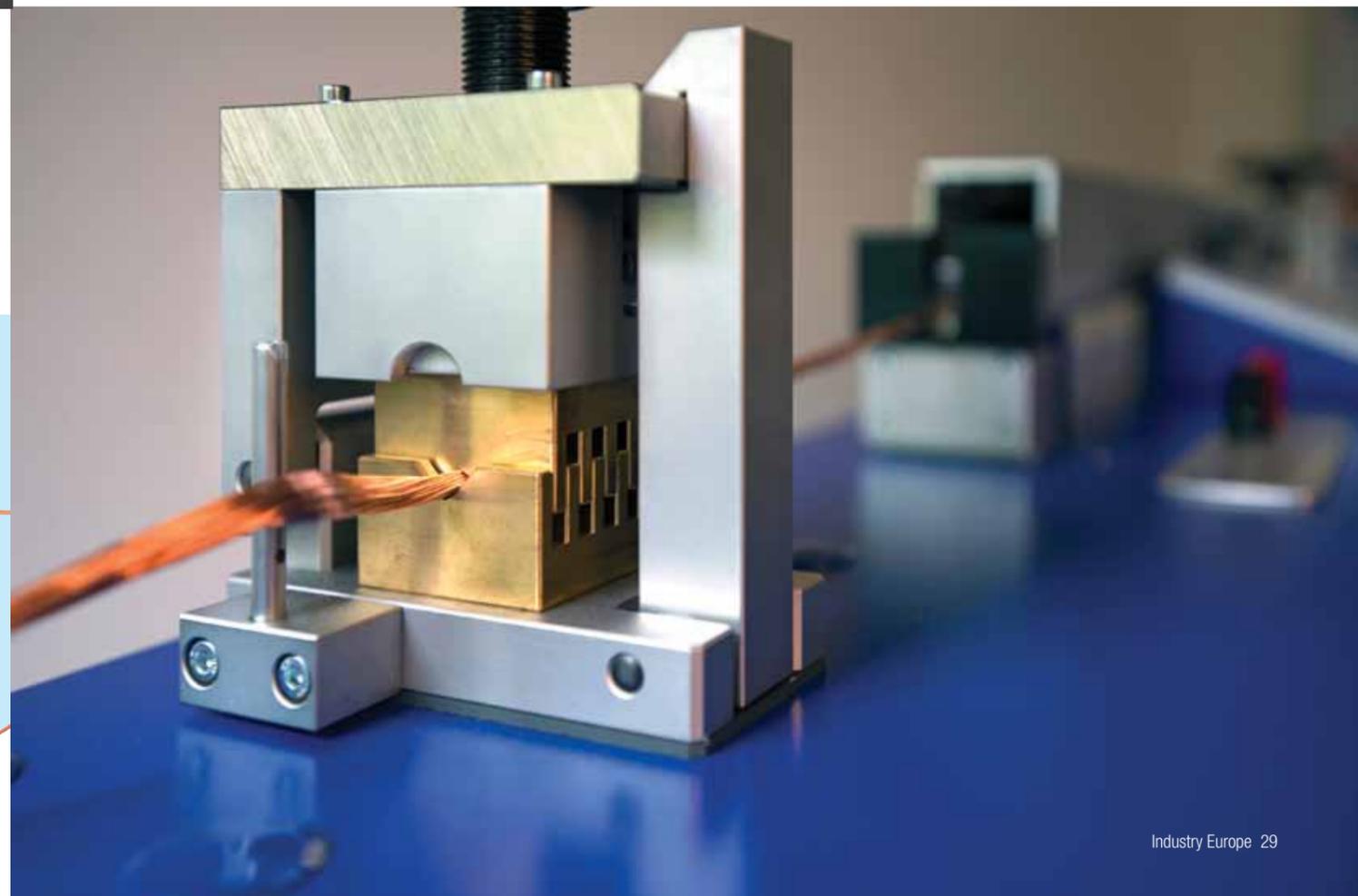
AESA is also proud of its ISO quality credentials – the fourth pillar. The company successfully gained accreditation for standard EN 45001 in 1994, and for ISO 17025, in 2002 – for its calibration laboratory. The laboratory is accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS), recognised by major international accreditation bodies (ILAC). "Our clients can therefore rest assured that all our testing instruments are calibrated to the most stringent standards," says the CEO. "In addition, we offer a calibration service to clients. Not only can we re-calibrate their instruments, we can also provide certified standards for clients wishing to check instruments themselves." ▷

# QUALITY TESTED



Vincent Arbet-Engels

AESA based in Colombier, Switzerland, is a market leader in the metrology of electrical cables and wires. The company designs, adapts and implements innovative solutions with a competitive edge to all customers in terms of quality, efficiency and handling improvements. Romana Moares spoke to CEO Vincent Arbet-Engels about the company's latest development and its plans for the future.





**Worldwide applications**

Mr Arbet-Engels stresses that as AESA operates in a niche market the focus on R&D is strong. "To survive and prosper, we need to introduce new things on an on-going basis," he points out, adding that the company has recently introduced a novel technique for conductivity measurement and new linear resistance equipment to address issues with aluminum large cross-section cables. Additionally, AESA is currently working on a research project supported by the Swiss government to address the testing challenges associated with the ever increasing data transmission rate of copper communication cables.

AESA specialises in the high-end quality products made to order and closely works with suppliers for manufacturing. "We have almost no inventory. Our Swiss headquarters houses the product development, assembly and testing. Manufacturing of some parts for our equipment is outsourced," explains the CEO. "We do not operate in the consumer market with high volume but concentrate on high end products with a focus on quality." He admits the company has competitors but in this highly specialised niche market they are not numerous.

Most of the output (~95 per cent) is sold to export markets worldwide. Europe constitutes a big part but AESA's products also end up in the Middle and Far East, the United States and other corners of the world. "As a market leader in our field we cannot ignore China, clearly the fastest growing market and number one for cables. We have been active there for some time with great success – in 2016 we multiplied our revenues in the Chinese market by eight times," says Mr Arbet-Engels.

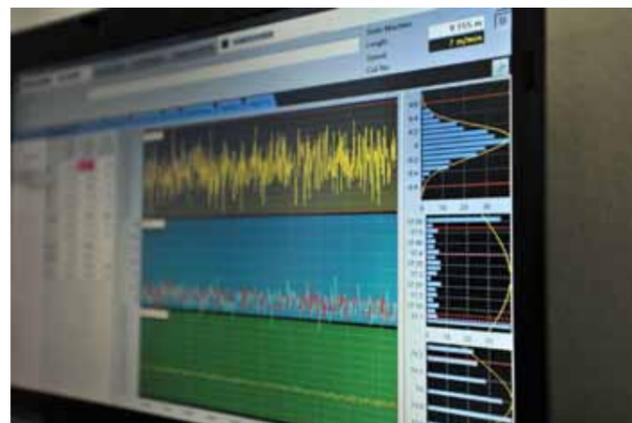


**New frontiers**

"At the moment, we are looking at strengthening our presence there to be closer to customers and to provide services with local resources. We have a very active agent in China but it is necessary to have a physical presence to develop the market." Other markets with rising potential for the company are India and Africa.

In the coming years, AESA intends to consolidate its leadership position worldwide and grow steadily in line with global economic development. "If we want to smooth out economic cycles we need to think of adding new products and increase the volumes without compromising the quality," says the CEO. He adds that the company is going to further capitalise on the good name that 'Made in Switzerland' has. "We do value this reputation. As I said before, we are not in the consumer market and our customers are prepared to invest on high quality, reliable products they can trust. We will never compromise on quality. It is one of our key USPs.

"The way forward is to further concentrate on our R&D activities in partnership with universities to attack new frontiers. Innovation is a must in our sector," Dr Arbet-Engels claims. He explains that unlike in the electronics sector, the cable market is not yet consolidated, with a large number of individual manufacturers, big and small. "When consolidation does take place, we want to be there. We want to be the preferred supplier to the biggest players in the cable manufacturing sector." □



# AESA CORTAILLOD

## BOOSTING YOUR YIELD IN THE CABLE INDUSTRY

Today, profitability is the driving force behind business operations. Cable manufacturers worldwide are striving to improve their productivity, and thus their profitability, in the face of increasingly complex challenges. To keep their competitive edge, manufacturers must consistently introduce improvement initiatives to boost yield while ensuring, and continuously enhancing, product quality. A key requirement in helping cable manufacturers assess improvement initiatives is accurate, reliable measurement data.

For decades, AESA has been providing state-of-the-art measuring systems, quality data management software, and services. We ensure that our clients are well-positioned to take informed production decisions based on sound data provided by our instrumentation and quality-performance services. As the recognized leader in our field, our unparalleled know-how and expertise in cable measuring systems, our foresight, mastery and focus on quality, combined with our unwavering commitment to customer service, make us your partner of choice for your cable measuring solutions, today and tomorrow.



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