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> A worker at Pragmatic Semiconductor's existing NETPark facility

Investors chip in to give Pragmatic a fund boost

TOM KEIGHLEY

Business writer
tom.keighley@reachplc.com

INNOVATIVE chip maker Pragmatic Semiconductor has landed £28.2m in funding from a range of institutional investors.

The manufacturer has plans to build a multimillion-pound factory on the site of the former Wavin Pipe-works in County Durham, bringing 125 jobs to the area.

This latest investment has broken its Series C funding round target by more than half, totalling £100.8m (\$125m).

Pragmatic, which already operates a Sedgefield NETPark facility and has expanded its Cambridge base, says the money will be used to accelerate the plans which involve the redevelopment of the site to include a 175,000 sq ft factory where it will make its flexible integrated circuits intended to replace mainstream silicon chips.

The company has previously talked of cultivating a cluster of innovative firms at the 15 acre site, where it will launch its second production line, known as a "fab".

The move will increase Pragmat-



> Scott White, CEO of Pragmatic Semiconductor

ic's production capacity by more than five times.

Investors involved in this latest injection include British Patient Capital, a subsidiary of the British Business Bank plc, In-Q-Tel, which invests in firms to advance technology capabilities for the US intelligence community and allies, Prosperity7 Ventures and the North East Devel-

opment Capital Fund and the Finance Durham Fund, both managed by Maven Capital Partners.

Catherine Lewis La Torre, CEO of British Patient Capital, said: "Pragmatic is another great example of a UK company which has developed and commercialised world-leading technology from a UK base.

"We are delighted to be investing

in the further growth of this home-grown semiconductor manufacturing business via Future Fund: Breakthrough, our dedicated deeptech fund which is investing in some of the country's most innovative and dynamic businesses."

Scott White, CEO of Pragmatic said: "This oversubscribed investment round, in spite of the challenging macroeconomic conditions, is a huge vote of confidence in Pragmatic's unique technology and business traction.

"Our signature ultra-low-cost, flexible form factor, fast-production cycle time and minimal carbon footprint address key challenges across the industry, allowing rapid time-to-market for novel electronics applications as well as enabling localisation of semiconductor manufacturing and driving towards net-zero product lifecycles."

Erik Langaker, chairman of Pragmatic, added: "We continue to see growing investor and customer interest in affordable solutions for the digitisation and control of supply chains, reinforced by government initiatives such as the recent EU legislation regarding digital product passports."

PFF Group invest £1m installing thermoform system

NORTH East food packaging specialist PFF Group has invested a further £1m into one of its sites in the region.

The thermoforming system installed at the company's plant at Sedgefield, County Durham brings the total invested there in recent years to £5m.

It will allow PFF to increase production capacity of thermoformed products while reducing its carbon footprint, as well as allowing food companies to source more of their produce locally.

John Conway, general manager for PFF at Sedgefield, said: "Our strategy to continually invest in advanced technology demonstrates our commitment to the circular economy."

"At a time of higher haulage charges, spiralling energy costs and the continuing knock-on effect of Brexit on imported goods, we have seen increased demand for punnets for soft fruit being grown and packed here in the UK."

The new KMD 78.2 system is three times faster than our previous process enabling us to manufacture our products more sustainably using less energy."

PFF is one of the UK's largest independent food packaging manufacturers, producing its own sheet plastic from high-quality recycled polymers.

It converts more than 8,000 tonnes of post-consumer waste PET bottles and trays back into food packaging annually.

The company also has sites at Washington and Keighley, West Yorkshire, and acquired the Sedgefield site in 2021 from Sirap UK.



> John Conway, general manager for PFF