

FRANCE

# ALTEO Now Member of the United Mining Supply (UMS) Group

Following the decision of the commercial court announced on 7 January 2021, ALTEO is out of the court-supervised legal redress and has joined the United Mining Supply (UMS) Group. UMS announced that it is aiming to open a new era for ALTEO to consolidate its leading position over the long term. Shortly after the takeover, Gildas Fontaine (GF), Business Development, Marketing and Communication Director at ALTEO, informed us what the UMS plans mean for ALTEO's development.

## About the UMS Group

Founded in 2002, the United Mining Supply Group UMS – chaired by Fadi Wazny – is the leader in integrated logistics in Guinea and West Africa. It specialises in supporting mining and industrial companies by providing complete end-to-end services, as part of a custom approach tailored to the specific needs of each client. The UMS Group has 4000 employees today. Equipped with a fleet of more than 600 trucks, ranging from tipper to tank carrier, and its two-plane fleet, the UMS Group supports the transport and logistics of a wide range of products: mining, hydrocarbons, miscellaneous goods (cement, agricultural products, etc.), heavy packages and exceptional convoys, dangerous products, etc.

UMS's clients include several industrial companies as well as international and governmental organisations. Furthermore, in 2015 UMS went into the bauxite extraction business. UMS became part of the SMB WINNING Consortium, and fully manages the road transport of bauxite from mines to ports. Today, the Consortium covers an annual export capacity of 50 Mt of Guinea's bauxite.



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Fig. 1  
ALTEO's plant in Gardanne, France



Fig. 2  
R&D activity

**CA:** Will ALTEO's customers face any changes with regard to products for the production of refractories, standard ceramics and Technical Ceramics in the near future?

**GF:** UMS recognises the alumina expertise of ALTEO staff and will capitalize on it to extend further. UMS plans to invest massively in ALTEO, especially to increase our production capacity and develop high-value products.

**CA:** HIG, the previous owner, pledged to put money into investments in ALTEO's, especially on environmental issues. Will UMS step in?

**GF:** Since 2012, major investments have been made all areas: social, environmental and economic. A new era is dawning with UMS, which will give a boost. Besides, ALTEO already made strong improvements in terms of sustainability. Thanks to its capacity for innovation, ALTEO Gardanne has become a world benchmark in the management of bauxite residues, and has implemented the best available technologies.

**CA:** In the announcement, UMS stated that its plans are to increase production capacity. Is it already known in which processes the first investment will be made?

**GF:** This will be mainly in downstream processes (e.g. grinding capacities), as we are aiming to provide more added-value products. Another target is to upgrade existing equipment in-house. The good point is that we are now under industrial ownership. This will bring a strong focus on long-term strategies.

**CA:** Will logistic solutions provided up to now by ALTEO be modified in future?

**GF:** Logistics is the core business of our new owner. I am sure we can learn an awful lot and come up with new offers.

**CA:** A stronger focus on R&D is also one of the targets set. Does this mean more R&D in-house or more through external cooperation?

**GF:** Initially, this target has been set for our in-house teams in the R&D Laboratories in France (Gardanne) and China (Qingdao), where we have a strong focus on refractories. Depending on the projects, of course, certain external partnerships can be set up.

**CA:** What specific know-how will ALTEO bring to UMS and the other way around?

**GF:** Bauxite is our common base. We are in the speciality business and are continuously studying new applications for our products (e.g. thermal management, batteries). UMS is the logistics specialist and has involvement in the extraction of bauxite. This is a complete chain from the mine to the user of customised alumina products.

**CA:** Thank you for talking to us.

KS



Fig. 3  
High-qualitative aluminas manufactured by ALTEO