

Press release

Aero Excellence™: a single standard driving the aerospace, space and defence industries towards industrial maturity

Aero Excellence™ is a universal standard for operational excellence designed for suppliers of the aerospace, space and defence industries, which currently face a significant increase in production demand. Its purpose: to accelerate industrial maturity. Launched at the end of January 2024, it involves more than 60 companies in over 80 facilities across regional France. The ***Aero Excellence™*** programme aims to enhance supply chain resilience and industrial competitiveness.

Open to all industry stakeholders, ***Aero Excellence™*** is part of an innovative and global approach towards continuous improvement of industrial performance. Presented by the French aerospace industry association (GIFAS) at the 2023 Paris Air Show, and operational in France since 29 January 2024, the programme was expanded to three European federations last July.

This is **the first time a common standard is put into place in a specific industry in France**. GIFAS spent two years designing and developing the programme. They relied on SPACE Aero, an association that provides supply chain support and which runs ***Aero Excellence™***, on prominent OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) and on certain “pilot” suppliers. *“The standard is a robust solution to address the need to strengthen the French supply chain, declared Frédéric Parisot, GIFAS General Delegate. Participating in the programme gives businesses a competitive edge for future markets.”*

The pragmatic four-step approach includes: engagement, self-assessment, assessment and certification ranked from bronze to gold. Companies set their own pace in terms of gaining industrial maturity. Two companies have already been awarded bronze.

A global approach aiming for universality

As an industrial maturity standard, *Aero Excellence™* is a comprehensive assessment of industrial performance, which includes criteria such as efficiency of production systems, supply chain management, quality and safety. The programme also takes into account more recent concerns such as the environment and cybersecurity.

It is open to all stakeholders of the French aerospace, space and defence supply chain, regardless of their size or business activity. To enrol, companies must register on the platform at www.aeroexcellence.com, and complete the various levels through certified assessment evaluators and support tools.

On 24 July 2024, at the Farnborough International Airshow, [ADS](#) (the UK trade association), [BDLI](#) (the German Aerospace Industries Association) and [GIFAS](#) jointly announced *Aero Excellence™* International, clearly heralding global ambition. Pilot programmes have been rolled out in Europe; others are planned for the United States and Asia.



Kevin Craven
(ADS CEO)

Guillaume Faury
(GIFAS President)

Jörg Schuler
(BDLI Vice
President)

According to Frédéric Parisot, “*Aero Excellence™ International is a unique opportunity for France to get a head start in global supply chains.*”

Simplified and streamlined assessments

Aero Excellence™ was initially designed to help industry suppliers streamline and minimise the number of supply chain assessments, which remain rather divergent, and to ensure everyone speaks the same language. It gave suppliers more time to focus concretely on action plans and steady improvement.

The programme, however, was not intended to replace the industry’s traditional quality audits such as EN9100, or regulatory surveillance audits (PART21). It is an additional tool that strives to help companies better organise and meet operational requirements during such audits.

In the long term, *Aero Excellence™* will replace assessments overseen by GIFAS Industrial Bureau, which includes Dassault Aviation and Thales. The convergence process will be finalised by 1 January 2025 for the Airbus Group, totally replacing its current tool to assess industrial maturity: IPCA + (Industrial Process Control Assessment Plus).

Talking about *Aero Excellence*™

Pierre Perdoux, SVP Procurement Operations Airbus. SPACE Aero President



"I am extremely honoured to have been chosen by the industry to drive and roll out a new way forward towards industrial excellence. The goal is to get all French industry stakeholders on board, and to harness the enthusiasm of associations and international players who see the strategic need to enhance resilience, performance and productivity. We are eager to embark aerospace industry stakeholders on a modern and collaborative approach meant for universality. I need everyone to come together in order for this grand joint adventure to be a success!"

Marjolaine Grange EVP, Industrial, Purchasing and Performance, SAFRAN



"Safran took part in the Aero Excellence™ programme straight away by bringing to the table ONE SAFRAN, its standard of operational excellence, as well as its experts who helped set standards and conduct initial assessments. The Aero Excellence™ programme presents an unprecedented opportunity for our industry to rapidly increase maturity regarding industrial processes and supply chains. It is something we need to do as we look to tackle our increasing production demands collectively. Assessment sharing is a major driver; more than 50% of our assessments will be pooled starting in 2024. Our sites worldwide are also committed given that we supply Airbus, Dassault... The teams who oversee assessments are highly motivated to add another feather to their cap. It will help them become more skilled at their jobs."

Stanislas Frein, Operations Manager, ARESIA



"We embraced Aero Excellence™ with a mixture of pride and apprehension: we were delighted to participate in the project and yet anxious about our capacity to meet expectations. If you consider central, transversal and local functions, no less than 21 people were met with during the assessment. And this did not include operators. But everything went very smoothly, almost naturally. In retrospect, I think the success of the pilot assessment was due to three main factors: a thoroughly prepared agenda, the hard work of those involved, and, of course, highly qualified assessors and their clear instruction. The results helped us establish a recommendation-based action plan for the Salbris site and for ARESIA as a whole. We have our sights set on bronze, for now."

Anthony Bourdon, Manager of Industrial Affairs, GIFAS



"Aero Excellence™ is a unique opportunity for the simplification of the French aerospace, space and defence industries. The unified response of OEMs is proof of the programme's robustness. Its main goals are to support the competitiveness of the French industry, to address current issues such as the environment and cybersecurity, and to enhance continuous improvement as we strive towards operational excellence. For the past several months, GIFAS has supported the programme, which is open to all companies. They are convinced of the soundness of setting up an operating system for our industry."

Christophe Delqué, General Manager, SPACE Aero



"Since 2022, SPACE Aero has worked in close collaboration with GIFAS to develop the programme using a hands-on approach well suited to production departments. We have involved dozens of companies, from small business to large groups, to test every idea and concept, and to set forth a common language for industrial maturity. The Aero Excellence™ programme is perfectly aligned with SPACE Aero missions. It strives to enhance collective efficiency with a thoroughly revamped standard based on best industrial practices as well as current and future concerns such as cybersecurity and the environment. We are currently rolling out the programme in France, and initial feedback is encouraging. It is time to join the adventure!"

About GIFAS

The French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) is an industry-focused body that brings together 482 companies ranging from main prime contractors and system suppliers to SMEs and startups. They form a cohesive, hard-driving high-technology sector specializing in the design, development, construction, marketing and maintenance of all aeronautical and space programmes and equipment, civilian and military planes, and defence and security systems.

GIFAS represents an industry which totalled €70.2bn sales in 2023: 83% of its consolidated sales accounted for exports. It directly employs 210,000 people.

Every two years, GIFAS organizes the Paris-Le Bourget International Air Show, the world's top event of its kind. The 55th Paris-Le Bourget Air Show will run from 16 to 22 June 2025.

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About SPACE Aero

SPACE Aero strives to enhance industrial performance and competitiveness of supply chain stakeholders in the aerospace, space and defence industries. The association is governed and funded by prominent aircraft and equipment manufacturers who pool their resources and expertise to help SPACE Aero achieve the following objectives:

- bolster and support continuous improvement regarding industrial maturity at every company level, and more specifically for SMEs;
- enhance skills through training and sharing of best industrial practices within the industry.

Founded in 2007, the association currently includes 16 executive members, and, on average, supports over 200 industry stakeholders and projects in France every year.

Selected by the GIFAS Industrial Bureau to run *Aero Excellence* in France, SPACE Aero implements industrial support programmes throughout the country in collaboration with regional aerospace poles and clusters.

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