Aequs to strengthen defence manufacturing in India

For Aravind Melligeri, Chairman & CEO of Aequs, creating long-term value through innovative startegies is a relentless, lifelong pursuit. In the aerospace industry, he hopes to create an intergrated hub to facilitate the industry.

Aravind Melligeri

In 2009, Aravind set up the first-of-its-kind, integrated ecosystem for aerospace component manufacturing in India. The Aequs ecosystem, spread over 250 acres in Belagavi, India, is home to world class precision machining, surface treatment, forging, and aerospace assembly facilities. Aravind believes that modern manufacturing is driven by two forces: continuous innovation and uninhibited collaboration. From inception, these two factors have been central to the growth and success of the Aequs ecosystem.

Aravind also strongly believes that growing Aerospace manufacturing in India requires greater collaboration across Indian industry to fully develop and maximise the effectiveness of India's indigenous resources.

Aequs' global ecosystem is able to bring scale and efficiency through organic growth as well as acquisitions. Aequs' global reach extends beyond its facilities in Belagavi, India to nine sites in North America and Europe. These sites are strategically located in cost-competitive regions in close proximity to its strategic customer base. This operating model optimises the value stteam for customers by reducing lead times and simplifying logistics. In addition to global holdings, Aequs' portfolio includes joint venture partnerships with world-class companies: Magellan Aerospace of Canada, Aubert & Duval of France, and Saab AB of Sweden.

Under Aravind's leadership, Aequs has achieved a number of firsts. In 2009, Aequs became the first Indian private sector player to secure major orders from Airbus Industries. In 2015, Aequs was the first Indian aerospace company to acquire manufacturing operations in the U.S with the purchase of T&K Machine in Texas. In January 2016, Aequs completed the purchase of France-based SiRA Group to further extend its aerospace ecosystem into Europe. With these acquisitions, Aequs employment has grown to over 1500 people worldwide.

Aravind also serves on the board of QuEST Global, a company he co-founded in 1997, which is globally recognised provider of outsourced engineering services with over 7500 employees in nine countries based at over 15 delivery locations.

The global market for aerospace products and services has grown rapidly to become a billion dollar industry. India has slowly, yet steadily built its expertise in the aerospace services, and is home to several companies in the industry that has put the country in the maps of the global aerospace industry giants.

Several leaders have emerged, that cut across the private and public sector, and they have made strategic global alliances that helped provide the technological expertise.

Aequs, initially called Quest Global SEZ took off in 2009, and is among India's fastest growing precision engineering companies specializing in precision machining, sheet metal fabrication, aerostructure assemblies, closed die forging, and special processing for the aerospace, automotive and oil & gas industries.

Aequs Aerospace is headquartered within the Aequs Special Economic Zone, Belgaum. From raw materials to equipment and processes, Aequs maintains the highest standards that is recognized globally. Having partners and offices across the world has also provided access to expert opinions, insights and a strong leadership team. The SEZ hosts separate facilities for Fabrication, Machining, Treatment, Assemblies, Warehousing, etc, that supports the entire manufacturing process, thereby reduces time-to-market on projects. Aequs adds about 120-150 sq ft per year to the shop floor and atleast 2-3 machines a month to the machining capacity.

Aequs operates several manufacturing facilities in India, US and France. Their SEZ in Belagavi, India, is a full-fledged aerospace ecosystem that efficiently meets the wide ranging demands of the customers around the world. Apart from expanding the SEZ, they also expand the ecosystem through partnerships. In 2015, Aequs expanded into North America following the acquisition of T&K Machines. This facility caters to the local – global needs of Boeing and UTAS amongst many others. Acquiring France based SiRA Group in 2016 strengthened their ability to deliver to European customers like Dassault, the manufacturer of Rafale fighter jet. The company's customers include global industry leaders including Airbus, Bosch, Spirit AeroSystems, UTAS, Triumph, Dassault, Honeywell, HAL, SAAB, SAFRAN, and United Technologies Aircraft Systems to name a few.

On October 5th, 2016 during the Supplier Awards ceremony in Hamburg, Airbus recognized the achievements of Aequs by presenting the Innovation Award to them, for their valuable services and efficient, manufacturing ecosystem.

Aravind Melligeri, Chairman and CEO of Aequs, said "Globally, aerospace manufacturing is worth about US$ 100 billion, but India's share has been only about US$ 250 million per year" He believes that with a fully equipped manufacturing facility, innovation and quality consciousness, India could be a force to reckon with by 2020. That is exactly what he set out to do with Aequs.

Aequs along with industry players have achieved in leaps and bounds over the past few years in a fast pacing industry. In a country that didn't have the infrastructure to build detailed parts, Aequs is building machinery nearly 2 times of other countries' capacity. These achievements in turn have pushed the industry to gain momentum, which has brought the Indian aerospace industry to the light. With proper policy framework and the right incentives offered by the government, Indian aerospace companies and even startups should expect to see a massive demand of products and services. ■

Rockwell Collins introduces higher bandwidth aircraft messaging service for A350 XWB operators

To help airlines effectively manage larger data transmissions from the new Airbus A350 XWB aircraft to ground systems, Rockwell Collins has introduced a new, higher bandwidth, cost-efficient messaging service. The offering - ARINC GLOBALink A350 Media Independent Aircraft Messaging (MIAM) service – will launch on Asiana Airlines this month. The service enables airlines to efficiently send large Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System (ACARS) and Internet Protocol (IP) MIAM messages over all available A350 communications paths.

"Next-generation aircraft like the Airbus A350 are transmitting significantly more data to the ground," said Michael DiGeorge, vice president, Commercial Aviation and Network Services at Rockwell Collins. "This new data, including electronic flight bag, maintenance and aircraft health information, is providing tremendous operational benefits. Our service allows airlines to cost-effectively take advantage of this new protocol, allowing avionics systems to more efficiently exchange larger messages than has been possible in the past."

"This service allows us to continue relying on ACARS, while taking advantage of higher bandwidth IP communications on our A350 fleet," said Seok Nam Goh, CIO at Asiana Airlines. "As the industry continues to move toward smart aircraft, this service enables us to cost-effectively manage this transition."

The Rockwell Collins GLOBALink A350 MIAM service is said to seamlessly convert ACARS MIAM messages to any protocol, allowing interoperability with airline, aircraft and engine manufacturers' ACARS host and end-systems without requiring any modifications. Using the service, airlines can send IP MIAM data over the cellular, Wi-Fi and broadband SATCOM providers of their choice and reach their intended destination. The GLOBALink service converts A350 IP data to any ground protocol or message format, allowing interoperability with any existing host and end system thereby saving airlines potentially significant investments in new additional ground systems.

"Our position as a major contributor of communications and information management systems on the A350 aircraft, combined with our highly advanced global aviation network serving thousands of users, enables Rockwell Collins to uniquely address each communication domain including aircraft, air-to-ground and ground-to-ground," continued DiGeorge. "As new IP enabled aircraft are entered into service, this new capability will ensure communications interoperability across an airline's entire fleet."

Rockwell Collins is leading the transition to a fully connected aviation ecosystem. The company's avionics, secure routers, traditional and IP based connectivity links and a global private aviation network securely and reliably connect aircraft to the airline back office, air traffic control, airports, ground handlers and more. These products and services provide enhanced information enabling data analytics for improved decision making, operational efficiency and cost savings. ■