

Left: Aero Norway has the skilled technicians to extract the best EGT margins
Below: Neil Russell, COO of Aero Norway



POWERING innovation

Aero Norway's chief operating officer
Neil Russell discusses the company's
 innovative approach to CFM56
 maintenance during the pandemic

Aero Norway has adapted well to survival in the CFM56 market due to its flexibility and ability to offer tailored solutions to customers. "Our specialist CFM56 repair services meet the specific requirements of each customer and we have also introduced virtual engine table inspections," Aero Norway's chief operating officer Neil Russell explains. "This gave us an advantage in the current market where airlines are looking for flexible support programmes, more bespoke repairs and customised workscopes."

Throughout the pandemic, Aero Norway has endeavoured to fulfil the ever-changing demands of its customers. In May the company invested in five CFM56-3 engines which it introduced into its refurbish and sell programme. "It became apparent that as a result of Covid, and with many passenger aircraft grounded, operators of the classic freighters flying with CFM56-3 engines were burning more hours than ever before to support the increased demand for air cargo.

"To this end, we predict engine maintenance requirements from freighter customers are set to continue to increase," Russell notes, continuing that although the CFM56-3 is a legacy product for Aero Norway, the company has the skilled technicians to extract the best EGT margins and thus generate greater efficiencies and economies for its freighter customers and has agreed to support -3 customers' requirements until 2026.



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Left: Team members have been able to work at intervals around engines to adhere to social distancing regulations
Below: The company upgraded their plasma machine, investing in the Oerlikon MultiCoat™ Pro advanced thermal spray system

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Responsive service

“Our aim has always been to be responsive and reactive,” Russell explains. “Early on, it became apparent that there was an increased demand for lighter and hospital workscopes, and we received an influx of requests from customers to fulfill it.”

“If we have a heavy maintenance job, we schedule that into our normal workflow but to give us more flexibility we added repair bays, as we call them, to do the lighter workscopes. This demand has surged, so we have had to adapt and modify our facility to accommodate it.”

The company has converted major module build space into four additional repair bays to satisfy the volume of lighter workscopes currently coming into the shop as well as investing in training, fixtures and tooling to support it. “We were fortunate, however, that we already had the infrastructure, including workforce and material handling trollies, in place.

“To accommodate this shift we have had to consider our team and their specialist skills. We have moved people from other sections who had the relevant competencies, as well as on the job training for others. We have found, however, that having engines for repair enables us to provide a socially distanced physical barrier for our team who are able to position themselves at intervals around the engine, and any collaborative work or checks have been carried out with social distancing in mind.”

Russell says that the safety and well-being of the company’s workforce has always been paramount and it has strictly adhered to the guidelines set out by the Norwegian Government around social distancing, foreign business travel and visitor admittance into the facility. “To further enhance our offering, we have also invested in an upgrade to our plasma machine (thermal spraying), a substantial investment that was initiated in 2019/2020 which was part of our strategy to grow our back shop and identify which parts needed to be brought in house.”

The Oerlikon MultiCoat™ Pro advanced thermal spray system platform offers increased efficiency as well as multiple thermal spray processes in one system including plasma spray and HVOF (High Velocity Oxygen Fuel). Introducing the new machine has allowed greater physical flexibility in the company’s machine park as it has a reduced footprint and enabled the company to offer HVOF-related repairs it didn’t have capability for before, in addition to the plasma repairs.

Digital tech

“In 2019, we invested in a high-speed grinder,” Russell reveals, explaining that currently the machine is used on every engine core performance workscope. The operation of the grinder is fully automatic and features all-digital technology to ensure the integrity of the system. The purchase of this specialist machine, the Danobat mBTG-800, will ensure stable and efficient turnaround times are maintained and that the services Aero Norway’s customers are offered remain at the forefront of engine MRO technology capabilities.

“We focus heavily on lean production while maintaining competitive turnaround times and best serving our customers, and the investment in this state-of-the-art equipment will enable us to achieve and maintain these standards. It is our intention to continue to innovate, react and adapt our processes; we believe this flexibility and investment will be our strength for the future.”

