
Hamburg Aviation paves the runway for innovation and partnership

By **Maryann Simson** on April, 19 2013 | Inflight Entertainment



Ranked only after Toulouse and Seattle, the Hamburg metropolitan area is home to one of the world's largest and most advanced concentrations of firms contributing to the global aviation industry.

Approximately 300 companies exist within a 50 kilometer radius of the city's centre, which provide goods and services to this growing sector.

Northern Germany is a globally recognized leader in aviation development, as evidenced by the Hamburg Messe und Congress' continued selection as platform for the annual Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX). Since being launched in 2002 in Hamburg, the fair has grown steadily. The AIX now takes up 18,000 square metres.

"Hamburg was predestined to be the host location for the Aircraft Interiors Expo. The city is in the premier division when it comes to aircraft interior fittings," said Bernhard Conrad, President of Hamburg Aviation and Head of Development Operations and Innovation at Lufthansa Technik in a release. "Airbus and Lufthansa Technik work very closely with suppliers to develop modern cabin concepts for all aircraft types."

Though many of the region's aviation companies and the Hamburg-area economy can benefit greatly from closer working partnerships between businesses, a competitive landscape is bound to foster a desire to keep knowledge and information locked up tight within individual organizations. Many smaller companies fear that larger entities will draw away talented workers or feign partnerships to obtain knowledge of skills. This is natural and happens in every industry.

In January 2011, corporate and academic forces and state government came together to officially found the Aviation Cluster Hamburg Metropolitan Region Association (Luftfahrtcluster Metropolregion Hamburg e.V.). The association is a genuine public-private partnership, with the objective to make better use of the positive outlook for the aviation industry in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region, more ₁

effectively exploiting the associated growth potential.



The group's three core companies are the area's largest: Airbus, Lufthansa Technik and Hamburg Airport. Beginning with just 15 members in 2011, the cluster today has 70 and aspires to represent each of the region's aviation businesses. The goal is simple: unite aviation companies, scientific organisations and research institutes in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region to jointly train their gaze on the future. The result of this joint effort (besides mutual prosperity), says Hamburg

Aviation, will be more economical, more ecological, more comfortable, more reliable and more flexible solutions for air travel.

Anyone who has recently attended an AIX Hamburg event will know about the Crystal Cabin Awards, a contest created by Hamburg Aviation to promote the continuous improvement of passenger comfort and to inspire new economic and environmentally friendly solutions. In addition to this award, which is perhaps the most internationally visible initiative of the group, a number of complimentary programs have been spearheaded by Hamburg Aviation to promote local aviation growth.

Hamburg Aviation is part of the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP), with the aim of fostering mutual exchange and initiating international cooperative ventures. The continually growing EACP was founded in May 2009 with 24 aerospace clusters from eleven countries, including several partner organisations in Germany. Among these are the two Hamburg-based ventures Hanse-Aerospace and HECAS, as well as the French networks Aerospace Valley and Pôle Pégase, and the Italian aviation group Campania Aerospace.



Numerous research projects revolving around product and process innovation has and will continue to drive future innovations. A pivotal component in the realization of these projects is the Center of Applied Aeronautical Research (ZAL) founded in mid-2009. It offers testing facilities in which players from industry and the world of research can network their capabilities.

Hamburg Aviation and its far-reaching partners also play an active role in helping member companies to market themselves together on a global scale. Visitors to the AIX event in Hamburg April 9-11 were sure to have noticed the Hanse Pavilion in Hall B6. The 1,230-square-metre joint stand of Hanse Aerospace was shared by 67 exhibitors, one of which was Hamburg Aviation.

Hamburg Aviation is concentrated on four product worlds: development and construction of aircraft and aircraft systems, development and construction of cabins and their systems, optimisation of aviation services, and increasing the efficiency of air transport systems. On the basis of these four product areas, the aviation cluster developed its strategy, "A new kind of aviation", for which it was honoured by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research as a Leading-Edge Cluster.