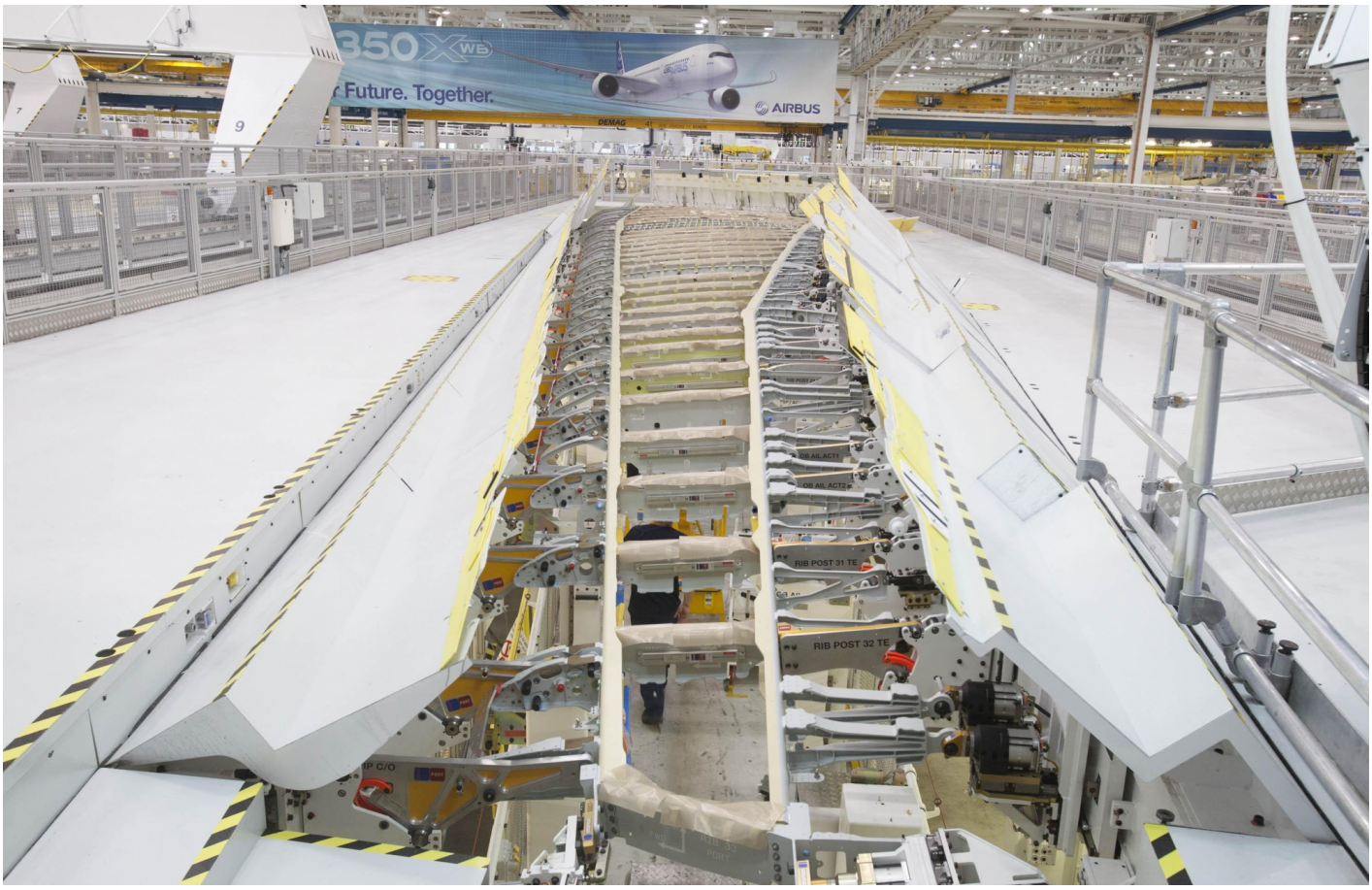
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: AIRBUS ANNOUNCES NEW UK WING DEVELOPMENT AND TEST CENTRE

News / Manufacturer



A newly-announced wing development and test centre will expand Airbus' "footprint" in the UK, while providing functional space for the company and its partners to develop new ideas for a broad range of applications.

This facility – which is to open its doors in 2017, located on Airbus' existing Filton site – will be an advanced development and testing centre for large structural parts, housing some 300 highly-skilled engineers. In addition, it will have an "open door" policy where external organisations can make use of the equipment and laboratory space – providing a benefit that extends across and beyond Airbus.

Facility General Manager and Human Resources Director Mark Stewart said the wing development and test centre has been "specifically designed to provide the most advanced working environment and tools for Airbus, our suppliers, our partners and academia to deliver the next generation of aircraft wing, landing gear system and fuel system designs."

Airbus' Filton site was chosen as the location for this facility because it already is home to some 2,000 engineers who specialise in wing design, as well as fuel and landing gear systems

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integration. The site also is home to Airbus Group Innovations' 3D printing plateau and digital manufacturing laboratory and the Airbus low-speed wind tunnel, and is close to other research facilities including the National Composites Centre.

George Osborne, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, joined Airbus Chief Operating Officer Tom Williams to announce a 44.8-million-euro joint investment in the wing integration centre on 28 January.

Osborne was given a tour of Filton's existing A400M wing manufacturing facility and met employees and apprentices before making the announcement to assembled press and media. "Not only will the new research centre play home to some of the most exciting innovations in aerospace, for years to come it will also protect hundreds of highly skilled jobs," said Osborne during his comments.

"It is crucial we take the lead in developing new technology and this facility will help to shape the future of air travel for decades to come," added Airbus' Williams. "This joint investment is a further boost to the Airbus site at Filton, which is the global leader in design and testing of wings, fuel systems and landing gear."

The new facility will house engineers working in early-stage research right through to in-service aircraft improvements, while a team from Airbus Group Innovations – the corporate-level research and technology network, which also will call the building home – is to focus on emerging technologies. They will have access to an innovative, highly-flexible and easily adaptable physical test environment that will form a proving ground for future technologies, new materials and manufacturing techniques, as well as novel and more efficient testing processes.

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