

How Aero Launch Is Solving Europe's Aircraft Engineering Shortage

Industry Position Paper (with Policy-Oriented Elements)



This paper has been produced by Aero Launch PVT LTD.

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About Aero Launch

Aero Launch is an aviation consultancy focused on addressing workforce challenges across aircraft maintenance and airworthiness environments.

The organisation supports the aviation sector by sourcing, validating, and developing engineering personnel aligned with regulatory frameworks such as EASA Part-66 and Part-145. Working across recruitment, training, and education, Aero Launch bridges the gap between available talent and industry requirements, particularly in international and third-country markets.

Through its structured approach, Aero Launch contributes to improving workforce quality, reducing hiring risk, and supporting the long-term sustainability of the aviation engineering pipeline.

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Context and the Aero Launch Response

A structural workforce gap is emerging in European aviation, one that is largely unaddressed. Data from the UK Civil Aviation Authority¹ shows that nearly half of licensed aircraft maintenance engineers are aged over 50, while significantly fewer are entering the profession in their 30s. At the same time, demand continues to rise: Boeing² forecasts that the Eurasia region, including Europe, will require approximately 165,000 new maintenance technicians by 2044. However, the pipeline remains weak. According to the OECD³ and ICAO⁴, younger generations are increasingly prioritising careers in professional, digital, and flexible sectors, with technical maintenance roles receiving limited interest.

The result is a widening gap between retiring expertise and incoming talent one that poses a long-term risk to the sustainability of the aviation maintenance sector.

Europe's aviation maintenance sector is currently facing a structural workforce crisis, and there are no immediate indications that the gap is narrowing. Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) organisations across the region are experiencing persistent difficulty in sourcing sufficient numbers of qualified technicians and Part-66 licensed engineers. Senior personnel are departing the industry through retirement at a rate that new entrants are failing to match, creating a compounding deficit in operational capacity.



The consequences of this shortfall extend well beyond routine staffing inconvenience. When maintenance organisations operate below adequate personnel levels, the resulting pressure on existing engineers generates tangible airworthiness risks including excessive workload, fatigue-related human factors exposure, and potential compromises to the standards required under EASA regulatory frameworks. In response to these pressures, organisations have increasingly been compelled to seek qualified personnel from markets outside Europe.

It is within this operational environment that Aero Launch was established.

The Mission and the Problem of Trust

Aero Launch began its work in partnership with a major European MRO, and it became clear from the outset that the core challenge was not a straightforward shortage of candidates. The underlying issue was institutional trust. Organisations consistently found themselves unable to answer one fundamental question with confidence: does this candidate genuinely meet EASA competence standards, or do they merely present well on paper?

¹ <https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-analysis/approved-persons-and-organisations/personnel-licensing-statistics/engineer-licence-holders-by-age/>

² Pilot and Technician Outlook 2025-2044: [2025-pt-o-download.pdf](#)

³ [The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation \(EN\)](#)

⁴ [Final NGAP strategy with design \(1\).pdf](#)

Recruiting licensed engineers from third-country markets offers a viable route in theory, but the practical challenge of verifying whether a candidate's background genuinely satisfies the requirements of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1321/2014 proves to be a significant barrier in practice.

Competence Verification and Pre-Deployment Training

Aero Launch did not approach this challenge as a conventional recruitment consultancy. From inception, the methodology was built around a structured competence verification framework, grounded in Part-66 Subpart A.20(b) and Part-145 Appendix IV, ensuring that every candidate assessed could withstand regulatory scrutiny, not merely pass an initial screening.

The most significant risk inherent in international recruitment is the assumption of competence that has never been properly substantiated. The Aero Launch verification process is deliberately multi-layered, designed to withstand regulatory scrutiny at every stage.

Each candidate undergoes a structured technical interview encompassing EASA regulatory knowledge, core engineering fundamentals, and aircraft type-specific operational experience. The objective is not procedural compliance, it is a genuine assessment of whether the individual is capable of performing maintenance tasks to the standard required within an EASA Part-145 operating environment.

A critical and frequently underestimated element of the process is the examination of the candidate's experience logbook. In standard recruitment practice, this document is typically collected and forwarded without substantive review. Aero Launch takes a materially different approach.

Under EASA regulations, an experience logbook is not merely a personal record, it constitutes evidence of competency and experience. Accordingly, each logbook is subjected to thorough validation, including cross-referencing against originating MRO authorised signatures and quality department attestations. By the point a candidate is presented to a client organisation, the logbook represents substantiated, verifiable proof of experience, not a self-reported document that has simply been accepted at face value.

Pre-Deployment Regulatory Training

Prior to deployment, each selected cohort receives structured training providing a comprehensive overview of the applicable EASA regulatory framework. This covers the Part-66 Subpart A.30 basic experience requirements alongside the full scope of Part-145 maintenance organisation obligations, including: organisational approval and exposition requirements; facility and tooling standards; personnel qualification and authorisation; maintenance process controls; safety and quality management systems; organisational privileges and limitations; change management procedures; continued oversight mechanisms; findings and non-compliance management; and the role of competent authorities in the approval and ongoing surveillance of approved maintenance organisations (Figure 1).

This structured preparation ensures that candidates arrive with not only verified technical experience, but a working understanding of the regulatory environment in which they will operate from day one.

This is where a lot of third-country ICAO trained engineers and technicians fall short, In many cases, they are demonstrably proficient in their discipline have had no structured exposure to the EASA compliance framework, not because of any deficiency in their engineering ability, but because the regulatory context in which they trained and operated simply did not require it.

This is the gap Aero Launch is specifically designed to address.

The objective extends well beyond successful placement. The measure of a successful outcome is not that a candidate secures a position, it is that they are equipped to contribute meaningfully to the organisation's continuing airworthiness objectives, progress within the approved maintenance environment, and sustain that contribution over the long term.

Recruitment without adequate preparation serves neither the engineer nor the organisation. What Aero Launch delivers is structured readiness ensuring that by the time an engineer enters a client's approved maintenance environment, the transition from ICAO to EASA is not a barrier they are expected to navigate alone, but one that has already been methodically worked through before they arrive.

Aero Launch Recruitment Process

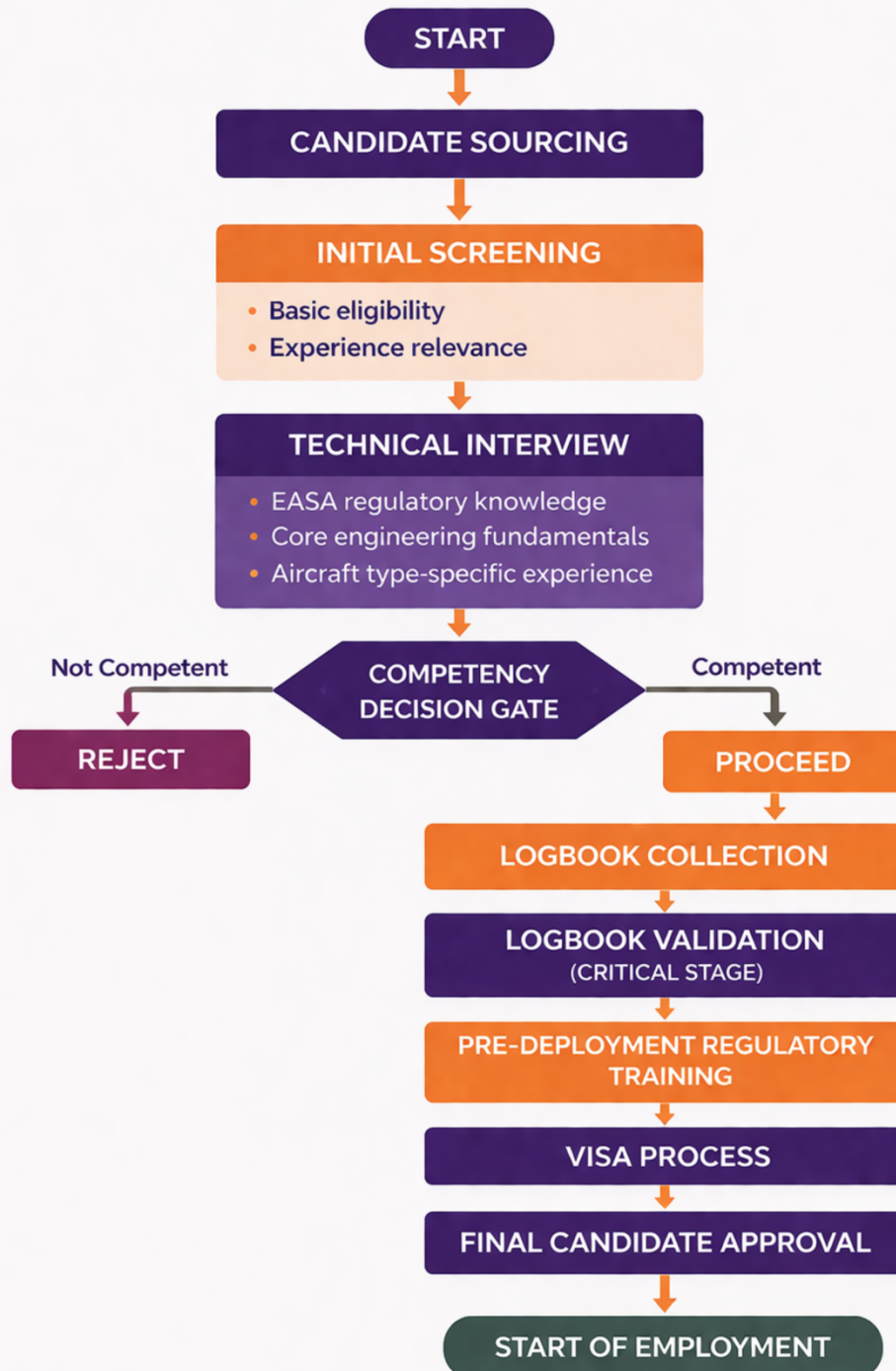


Figure 1, Recruitment Process

Regulatory Literacy in Human Resource Planning

An issue repeatedly observed by Aero Launch is the inability of Human Resource Planning teams to correctly identify high-potential engineering candidates. In multiple cases, organisations have lost viable future engineers to regulatory misinterpretation at the initial screening stage.

A common example involves candidates who have completed EASA Part-147 basic training programmes in their home countries. HR teams have in several instances incorrectly assumed that training conducted outside the EU is automatically non-compliant with EASA requirements, resulting in premature rejection. In reality, many of these individuals had they been placed into structured experience pathways would have been eligible to progress to Part-66 licensed engineer status within approximately two years, in full accordance with regulatory provisions.

To address this, Aero Launch has developed targeted regulatory training for HR and recruitment teams. The aim is not to produce compliance specialists, but to equip recruitment personnel with sufficient working knowledge of Part-66 and Part-147 licensing pathways to recognise genuine candidate potential and to distinguish clearly between those who are genuinely unsuitable and those who simply require structured progression.

Solving Europe's engineering shortage requires more than manpower supply. It requires strengthening client capability to identify, develop, and retain future engineers before they are lost from the pipeline entirely.

A Systemic Response

To date, Aero Launch has placed 30 maintenance personnel into a European operation comprising B1.1 and B2 trade technicians, structures technicians, and licensed engineers. The service is end-to-end: sourcing, technical assessment, documentation, and visa coordination. For the client, this translates to reduced internal workload, accelerated deployment timelines, and genuine confidence in the calibre of incoming personnel. The downstream effect of stable headcount is equally significant: workload distribution improves, fatigue risk decreases, and the integrity of the maintenance release process becomes considerably easier to protect.

Aero Launch's Long-Term Approach to Europe's Engineering Shortage

However, placements alone do not resolve the problem. Europe's engineering shortage extends beyond a recruitment gap; there are simply not enough new entrants coming into the industry. For this reason, Aero Launch also operates as an education consultancy and an awareness platform. Through consultancy and targeted content, Aero Launch actively directs students toward aviation careers and provides clear, practical guidance on what it takes to progress to Part-66 licensed engineer status across Categories A, B1, B2, and C. The objective is a sustainable, long-term pipeline not a succession of one-off interventions.

What we're building is a system that solves the short-term problem, reduces hiring risk through proper validation, prepares candidates to meet regulatory expectations, and develops the next generation in parallel. Europe needs all of that working together. That's what Aero Launch was designed to deliver.

The Wings of Opportunity Fund

Aero Launch's commitment extends beyond commercial operations. The Aero Technician Wings of Opportunity Fund exists to ensure that financial circumstance does not determine who enters the aviation profession.

The Fund is dedicated to supporting underprivileged students by covering the cost of their aviation training in full. It is sustained by a contribution of 10% of The Aero Technician's social media content revenue and 2% of Aero Launch's annual revenue a deliberate, structured commitment rather than an afterthought.

The Aero Technician Wings of Opportunity

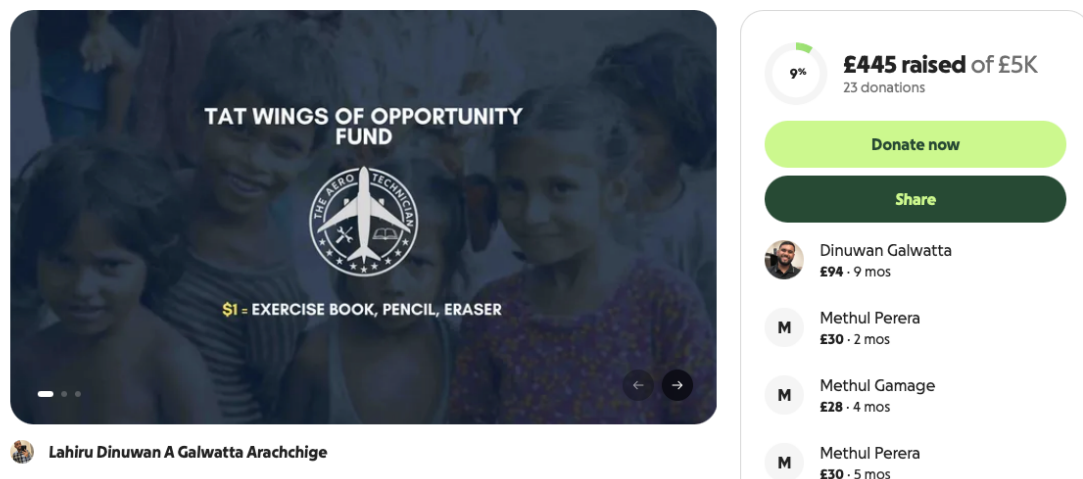


Figure 2, Fund

For many aspiring engineers, the barrier is not ability or ambition. It is access. The Wings of Opportunity Fund exists to remove that barrier.

Why Aero Launch

Aero Launch is not the largest player in the market. That is precisely the point. Built from within the problem rather than around it, the organisation brings a depth of operational and regulatory understanding that a generalist recruitment firm cannot replicate.

The impact is already measurable. Placements are operational. The methodology is deliberately aligned with the intent of EASA's regulatory framework not merely its administrative requirements.

Aero Launch challenges outdated assumptions, closes regulatory knowledge gaps, and turns overlooked candidates into compliant, contributing engineers. The work is not about filling roles. It is about protecting airworthiness, restoring institutional

confidence, and building genuine long-term capability within the European maintenance sector.

The organisations that choose to partner with Aero Launch make a clear statement: that they value sustainable solutions over short-term fixes, regulatory rigour over assumption, and investment in the engineers who will carry European aviation forward.

That decision, made today, is what will define who is best positioned to lead tomorrow.

