MAINTENANCE AND MODIFICATIONS

AIN Product Support Survey 2025 - Aircraft

Bombardier remains on top among bizjet OEMs in annual survey

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After its rise from the bottom of the business jet manufacturer ratings to the top spot last year in AIN's annual Product Support Survey, Bombardier retained that position for a second year in a row, despite changes to the AIN survey methodology that weighted more toward independent reviews. The Canadian OEM scored the highest in three of the 10 survey categories (cost per hour programs, parts availability, and AOG response) to receive an overall average score of 8.14 from respondents.

That total narrowly edged out Gulfstream—which led in factory owned service centers and technical representatives—and Embraer, which was tops in cost of parts, technical manuals, warranty fulfillment, and overall aircraft reliability. In the business jet ratings, they were followed by Dassault and Textron Aviation, the latter earned the top score in the authorized service center category.

On the turboprop side, Daher—a newcomer to the AIN Product Support Survey's reported ratings—took over the top spot this year, not just for turboprops, but for all OEMs with an overall average score of 8.78.

In the rotorcraft segment, only Leonardo tallied enough responses to have its scores validated in this year's survey.

As for the issues faced by the OEMs, labor in their service networks is a major one.

"The helicopter maintenance industry continues to grapple with an aging workforce and a lack of young technicians entering the field," said Francesco Bellardi, v-p of Leonardo Helicopters customer support and services Italy. "However, there's a strong focus on improving recruitment pipelines, offering accredited continuous training at our academies, mentorship programs, and enhancing employer reputation to both attract and retain key talents, also considering that new skills are requested, for example in data analytics."

Bombardier has hired more than 100 maintenance apprentices as it works to develop its future workforce. The manufacturer is recruiting hundreds of technicians across its global network and is also establishing an incubator training center at its Wichita location.

For years, Daher has partnered with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association on an internship program, which brings students from North America and France to its production and final assembly sites, with the finale taking them to work with the company's team at the annual Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture show.

Dassault reported it has been especially successful in its efforts to staff its new service location in Melbourne, Florida.

BUSINESS JETS

Bombardier

Retaining its position at the top of this year's AIN Product Support Survey among business jet makers, Bombardier earned its highest score in the technical representative category with an 8.82. "We've been focused for the last couple of years on making sure that we leveraged our relationship of a family-owned business with our customers," said Anthony Cox, Bombardier's v-p of customer support. "That really comes down to giving the customers confidence, and that confidence is borne from us committing to certain regions."

To service its fleet of nearly 5,300 in-service private jets, the Montreal-based airframer has concentrated on augmenting its company-owned facilities around the world, from starting construction of a 120,000-sq-ft maintenance center in Abu Dhabi, UAE, slated to be operational in late 2026; to establishing line service stations in Sydney and Perth, Australia; to expanding its location at Paris–Le Bourget Airport; to adding a two-bay paint facility in Singapore.

In the U.S., the airframer has enhanced its AOG maintenance infrastructure with 11 new technicians at Teterboro alone and 32 mobile repair trucks across the country. It added Atlanta to its network and expanded its presence in Columbus, Ohio. The company now has a dedicated engine mobile response team of technicians, allowing it to service customer aircraft engines directly, rather than relying on third-party maintenance providers. That investment has paid off, with the Canadian firm leading the AOG response among the major jet manufacturers with an 8.41 score.

To build capacity, the company has added more than 500 technicians to its maintenance staff worldwide over the past year, according to Cox, including 20 at its U.S. flagship location in Wichita. “Typically, we have well in excess of 300 aircraft in the network under work every day,” he told AIN, adding that a new peak of 322 was set earlier this year.

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In Wichita, the OEM is expanding its component repair and overhaul capabilities to meet increasing demand and reduce turn times. Bombardier's recently expanded tire and wheel shop serviced 4,200 tires last year. That capacity has now increased to 20,000 annually.

Bombardier has sharpened its focus on service in several areas, including AOG support. The company's target for AOG return to service is 24 hours or less, and to accomplish this, Bombardier has parts stockpiled in various regions, giving it a 92% "off the shelf" shipping rate.

Over the past year, as part of growth in aftermarket services and support, it shipped nearly 200,000 line-item parts through its hubs in Chicago, Frankfurt, and Singapore, and in smaller depots, fueling a 40% year-over-year increase in parts requirements every week. The airframer has invested $100 million in additional inventory, and as a result, "We're seeing the customer satisfaction tied to parts transactions has been improving year on year," said Cox. While parts availability was a low point in most of the business jet OEM ratings this year, Bombardier led the category with a 7.61 score.

Another initiative is the OEM's Smart Link Plus aircraft health monitoring system, which was initially developed for the Global 7500 to collect digital data. A subscription service, Bombardier has expanded it through retrofit to cover the Global 5500 and 6500, as well as the Challenger 3500 and 650. It now has nearly 400 aircraft enrolled. The platform measures up to 20,000 parameters per millisecond, and a beta test is underway to use that data to drive predictive maintenance via artificial intelligence.

For face-to-face interaction, the manufacturer conducts two customer advisory conferences a year for the Global, Challenger, and Learjet platforms. For Challengers, it recently held its 101st such event, while for the Globals and Learjets, it has surpassed 50 and 66, respectively, over the past year.

Gulfstream

Gulfstream continues to expand its customer support network to meet the needs of its growing fleet and subsequent demand. It recently established a new executive position, promoting Derek Zimmerman from president of its customer support operation division to oversee the OEM's entire enterprise supply chain operations, including procurement, logistics, inventory, repair and overhaul, distribution, and spare parts.

Its factory-owned service centers earned the highest score among business jet manufacturers this year with an 8.08. At its Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (KSAV) headquarters, the company last year improved its service capabilities with the opening of an additional 137,000-sq-ft maintenance facility: Savannah Service Center East. The $150 million structure complements the company's main service center at KSAV by adding more hangar space, offices, and back shops. This additional capacity brings its total service footprint at the airport to 1.1 million sq ft and allows Gulf-stream to simultaneously accommodate up to 85 aircraft there, 26 more than it previously could handle.

In January, the airframer officially opened its $130 million service center expansion at Arizona's Mesa Gateway Airport (KIWA). Its existing facility—known as the Mesa West campus—can accommodate up to 10 large and midsize aircraft, while the newly-opened service center on the other side of the field builds on that capacity to handle up to 13 more large-cabin jets simultaneously with the ability to support maintenance and avionics services, inspections, and drop-in work.

© Gulfstream

"We also grew our footprint of authorized warranty facilities [AWF], by adding more locations to our network," said Lor Izzard, the General Dynamics subsidiary's senior v-p for

customer support. “We have aircraft based around the world, and these AWFs offer convenient access to warranty service, maintenance, and parts for our customers.”

The new AWF partners were selected based on customer feedback and fleet needs. In addition to the authorized service centers from sister company Jet Aviation, Gulfstream now has 27 AWFs around the world, which earned a score of 8.65 in the authorized service center category from AIN’s readers in this year’s survey.

With all of the expansion, Gulfstream has increased its service staff to more than 5,500 members, equating to more than 25% of the company’s workforce worldwide. The OEM shone in this area, with its technical representatives earning an 8.96—the highest score among business jet manufacturers in this year’s survey. Over the past year, Gulfstream has expanded its Field and Airborne Support Teams by 40% in response to customer feedback. That group received an 8.40 in the AOG response category.

Extensive training of its service staff preceded the entry-into-service of the G700 last year and more recently its G800, which received approval in April.

In terms of parts, to ensure the right items and quantities are available, the airframer has invested more than $2 billion in inventory across its global network. It now has 12 spares distribution locations globally. However, in the minds of this year’s survey respondents, it was the cost of those parts that gave the airframer the lowest score in the category (6.06) among the major private jet manufacturers.

Embraer

With its fleet claiming the top spot in the aircraft reliability category with a score of 8.98 in this year’s survey, Embraer Executive Jets is continuing to expand its MRO footprint.

Last year, the OEM doubled its maintenance network in the U.S. to six facilities with the opening of three new factory-owned service centers—at Dallas Love Field (KDAL), Orlando Sanford (Florida) International Airport (KSFB), and Cleveland-Hopkins (Ohio) International Airport (KCLE).

In June, Embraer—which earned top honors this year among business jet manufacturers with an 8.79 in the warranty fulfillment category—added a new four-bay, 18,000-sq-ft hangar at its facility in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (KFLL), which will eventually account for 50,000 maintenance hours a year. Meanwhile, at its locations in Melbourne, Florida (KMLB), and Mesa, Arizona (KIWA), it has added maintenance shifts.

To improve its AOG response, the manufacturer has increased the number of mobile repair trucks in the U.S. to 40. In its home country, it recently doubled the facilities at its Sorocaba service center.

The Brazil-based airframer's service network now includes eight Embraer-owned service centers and 44 authorized third-party service centers across the Americas. It has 74 repair centers worldwide, with the latest additions being Gama Aviation in the UK; Jet Access in Gallatin, Tennessee; Jet Center in Naples, Florida; and ExecuJet MRO Services Australia's facility in Perth.

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Overall, it has worked to improve its customer interactions. "We've streamlined key touchpoints such as parts ordering, maintenance quoting, and MRO capabilities," said Marsha Woelber, v-p of worldwide customer support and sales, "while optimizing inventory and availability to ensure faster, safer returns to service with better communication and quality." As part of that commitment, the OEM's technical manuals received the highest score (8.74) among the major business jet airframers in this year's survey.

Woelber noted that Executive Care, Embraer's airframe maintenance program, continues to evolve with its components regularly reviewed to ensure that the program remains aligned with its customers' operations and support needs. With a score of 7.61, it placed firmly in the middle of the cost-per-hour programs category.

In terms of the supply chain, the company noted the situation is improving "day by day," but it is still encountering some challenges as indicated by this year's survey. In the parts availability category, it received the lowest score this year among the major business jet manufacturers, with a 6.67. Yet conversely, for those available parts, it was ranked most favorably among all manufacturers for cost of parts with a 7.27. Like most OEMs, it is working with its suppliers to mitigate risks, in some cases even embedding employees in supplier facilities to help anticipate and navigate any possible delays.

Dassault

"Dassault is constantly broadening and strengthening its global MRO footprint," explained Jean Kayanakis, senior v-p of the airframer's customer service and service center network. "It continues to invest in new and modernized facilities with well-qualified teams."

In this year's AIN product support survey, the French OEM received a 7.95 overall average score, just off the pace set by the leaders, while its Falcon aircraft earned an 8.43 reliability score.

Last year, it opened a nearly 40,000-sq-ft (3,600-sq-m) service center in Brazil at São Paulo Catarina International Executive Airport (SBJH). The facility can accommodate up to five Falcons simultaneously and is spacious enough to handle the 10X, which will be the largest business aircraft in Dassault's lineup when it enters service in 2027.

In late 2023, the French airframer broke ground on a $100 million, 175,000-sq-ft Falcon service center at Florida's Melbourne Orlando International Airport (KMLB), which it expects will open "imminently." The facility will simultaneously accommodate up to 18 Falcons and will include a 54,000-sq-ft paint shop, as well as serve as a regional Falcon parts distribution hub.

© *Dassault*

Last year, Dassault's large-cabin, long-range 6X entered service, and with deliveries of it to North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and India, 20 service centers in its network have been authorized to support them. The fleet thus far has racked up several thousand hours of operations, and those first aircraft are undergoing their initial 12-month inspections. "The FalconScan diagnostic system is proving its worth in maintenance monitoring and troubleshooting," Kayanakis told AIN.

The OEM is leveraging new technology in other ways, including 3D illustrated parts catalogs, improvements to its online services (such as its parts marketplace), and a customer service portal.

Dassault's technical representatives earned its highest category score this year with an 8.84, and according to Kayanakis, the focus this year has been on expanding AOG support. In the U.S., it has mobile repair teams stationed at strategic locations around the country—at the biggest business aviation hubs of Teterboro Airport in New Jersey and Los Angeles-area Van Nuys Airport—as well as Stuart, Florida, and Denver, with 20 technicians dedicated solely to AOG response. "Elsewhere in the world, we assemble teams from MROs, and this system is working well, reducing time to return aircraft to service," said Kayanakis.

Over the past year, Dassault's Falcon spare parts inventory topped $1 billion for the first time.

Textron

Textron Aviation's business jet fleet, which includes the Cessna, Hawker, and Beechcraft lines, scored 7.70 overall in this year's AIN Product Support Survey. Excluding the King Air family (*support of which is addressed in the turboprop section*), the company's aircraft received an 8.69 overall reliability rating.

To better serve its global customer base, Textron has focused on enhancing its spare parts availability, which received a score of 6.89 in this latest survey. Last year, it celebrated the grand opening of the expanded North American parts distribution center at its Wichita, Kansas headquarters. The airframer added 180,000 sq ft of space, with that larger footprint allowing for increased parts inventory investment, supporting both new and existing aircraft models.

Following its recent increase in parts inventory in Alaska, the company relocated its stockroom from Fairbanks to Anchorage to improve the distribution of parts there for all Cessna and Beechcraft operators.

For all of its spare parts, Textron has doubled its warranty period from six to twelve months, and last year enhanced its e-commerce website to make it easier for users to obtain them. A "shop-by-model" search feature was introduced to speed browsing for specific parts. For large parts, customers will now receive a notification at checkout when their selected shipping method requires oversized options.

The OEM also highlighted its service improvements in Australia. It rebranded Premiair Aviation Services—the Australian MRO chain it acquired in 2020—to Textron Aviation Australia to fully integrate its locations in Perth, Melbourne, and the Gold Coast into its global service network.

© *Textron*

At Essendon Fields Airport in Melbourne, the OEM began construction in March on a larger, modern facility that is slated to open early next year. It also expanded its parts storage facility there by 5,000 sq ft, quadrupling its spares inventory in the region. Textron Aviation further added a new customer support and warranty center in Melbourne to support all Cessna, Beechcraft, and Hawker parts needs for the more than 1,400 of its aircraft operating in the region.

In Perth, it relocated its Jandakot Airport operation to a larger facility on the field, providing increased space for servicing aircraft and improving scheduling to lessen customer aircraft downtime.

In Germany, the Wichita-based manufacturer renovated its service center at Düsseldorf Airport with a new customer lounge, larger briefing room, and LED lighting throughout.

While the company's factory-owned service centers received a score of 7.82 from AIN's readers this year, Textron's authorized service network led all manufacturers with an 8.82 rating.

To tap the potential of digital information, Textron worked with Microsoft to introduce its proprietary Textron Aviation Maintenance Intelligence, an artificial intelligence assistant for

aircraft technicians. Covering 60,000 pages of aircraft maintenance documentation, it provides Textron's 1,600 service technicians at its 20 global service centers with immediate access to information and tools to minimize the time its aircraft spend under maintenance.

The service network also developed the Data Optimized Task Sequencing (DOTS) process, which leverages data gathered from decades of maintenance. According to the company, DOTS helps identify potential discrepancies earlier in inspections and provides its technicians with a step-by-step sequence for inspecting Citations and King Airs based on thousands of previous inspections, driving faster maintenance velocity.

Honda Aircraft

Honda Aircraft had insufficient responses to post a valid sample of scores.

A focus for Honda Aircraft's product support efforts has been increasing the availability of its customers' aircraft. The manufacturer's revision of the HondaJet airworthiness limitation and inspection manual has reduced downtime during the 600-hour inspection. Revision J, according to the company, "supports greater aircraft availability for customers and improves the overall HondaJet operator experience."

Maintenance processes are more efficient with a major update to the HondaJet illustrated parts catalog, which is now published as a 3D interactive manual. This enables technicians to view "digital models of parts and aircraft assemblies that facilitate HondaJet maintenance and help reduce maintenance manhours," according to Honda Aircraft.

To enhance cabin comfort, HondaJet owners have some new optional service bulletins that add swivel seats and custom carpet choices.

Supply-chain issues remain problematic, and Honda Aircraft specialists are working with suppliers to ensure a steady flow of materials needed for HondaJet manufacturing. "Without getting into specifics," the company said, "complex supply chains in advanced manufacturing can be impacted by difficulties at sub-tier suppliers, which ultimately then affect the availability of the parts we purchase for final assembly of the aircraft."

Like many aircraft manufacturers, Honda Aircraft has partnered with local educational institutions to ensure a steady flow of workers. "Honda Aircraft has found a community receptive to its recruiting efforts in North Carolina and across the country. North Carolina is home to a strong network of educational institutions with which Honda Aircraft has partnered to help cultivate the next generation of aviation talent. Honda makes a good

effort to treat its employees well, and we see that reciprocated in strong employee retention."

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TURBOPROPS

Daher

Having tallied enough responses to be listed in the AIN Product Support Survey, Daher debuted at the top of all airframers this year with an overall score of 8.78. Its mark of 9.65 in aircraft reliability was the highest score in any of this year's survey categories, and it led the turboprop segment in parts availability (8.06), cost of parts (6.80), AOG response (9.05), technical manuals (9.28), and technical representatives (9.55).

Over the past year, the France-based airframer has greatly expanded the cloud-based applications for its aircraft owners/operators. Initially launched in 2018, the company released the seventh iteration of its Me & My TBM app last October at NBAA-BACE. It is used by more than 400 active users each month, recording data from an average of 80 flights a day.

One of its latest enhancements is its merger with the OEM's My TBM Docs app, which incorporates publications such as pilot information manuals and maintenance manuals, enabling streamlined, real-time document management and enhanced usability via mobile devices.

© Daher

At EAA AirVenture, Daher introduced the Me and My Kodiak app, which features the same automatic flight data collection functions for its rugged utility airplane. Users can check the status of their aircraft anytime from anywhere, and can connect to their Garmin account to update the database status and locate the aircraft's position.

Both systems leverage Daher's big data expertise to collect and process millions of data points a day for use in detecting anomalies, analyzing root causes, and generating diagnostics, resulting in faster repairs, less downtime, and safer flights.

To provide its customers with the knowledge and tools to maintain and operate their aircraft at the highest levels of safety, Daher has introduced the Safe Horizons program, which focuses the resources it provides to the TBM and Kodiak users, including its E-Learning program and the above-mentioned apps. It also leverages the company's long-standing

collaboration with the TBM Owners and Pilots Association, reinforcing their joint focus on operational safety as the priority.

The airframer has four company-owned service centers: Pompano Beach, Florida; Sandpoint, Idaho (home of the Kodiak production facility); and in France at Tarbes (home of the TBM assembly line); and the Paris-area Toussus-le-Noble Airport. They are supported by a network of 68 authorized service centers worldwide, some of which are approved for both of Daher's product lines, while others focus on TBMs or, in the case of the latest—Silver Sky Aviation in Alaska—just Kodiaks. The airframer is introducing strict guidelines in the form of an authorized service center contract and authorized service policy manual to detail areas such as service facility policies, logistics, service engineering, and warranty and maintenance program guidelines.

Pilatus

Swiss airframer Pilatus is known for its popular turboprop single PC-12 as well as a growing fleet of PC-24 light jets. The company received an 8.08 overall score from the AIN Product Support Survey respondents this year.

Having delivered more than 2,700 PC-12s, along with nearly 300 PC-24s (which did not receive enough operator ratings to have scores included in this year's survey), Pilatus' aircraft fleet has tallied more than 12 million flight hours. It expects to begin deliveries of its recently-certified PC-12 PRO by the end of the year.

The PC-12 was recently identified as the most frequently flown business aircraft in the U.S., with 316,328 takeoffs between August 2023 and July 2024, and in the overall aircraft reliability category, it earned a 9.21 from AIN's readers.

At Pilatus' headquarters in Stans, Switzerland, a warehouse expansion will nearly double the building's parts storage. The company also acquired a new warehouse facility, dedicated to customer support, 5 kilometers away.

© *Pilatus*

In 2022, the company bought U.S. aircraft maintenance provider and dealer Skytech, which it continues to operate as an independent company with responsibility for servicing and sales of PC-12s and PC-24s on the East Coast, in addition to aircraft types from other manufacturers. Pilatus recently acquired Aero Center Epps' Pilatus sales and maintenance operations at Atlanta DeKalb–Peachtree Airport to give it three locations under the Skytech brand.

It also named three new authorized service centers in the Americas: Pro Star in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Banyan Air Service in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and Indaer-Hessa in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

To keep in touch with its customer base, the OEM held five operator conferences around the world last year and launched a new and refreshed website, which enables customers to quickly find the right service center. It also offers clearer support options and streamlined contact features, helping operators get assistance faster.

"We've made significant strides in strengthening our global support network and enhancing the ownership experience for our customers," Piotr Wolak, the Swiss airframer's v-p of customer service, told AIN. "From expanding service coverage in key regions and appointing new service centers, to launching our refreshed website and further investment in parts

infrastructure in Stans—every step reflects our unwavering commitment to providing responsive, reliable, world-class support. These milestones, alongside the successful launch of the PC-12 PRO and continued delivery of our aircraft, underscore Pilatus' dedication to customer satisfaction at every stage of the journey."

Textron

Textron's turboprop division (covering the Beechcraft King Air family) earned its highest score (8.91) in aircraft reliability in this year's survey. The turboprop unit's overall score was dragged by it receiving the lowest score in the survey for cost of parts, with a 5.96. Textron's authorized service centers were rated at 8.68 by **AIN**'s readers, half a point higher than the 8.18 score given to the company's factory-owned service centers.

TURBOPROPS (out-of-production)

Mitsubishi

While Mitsubishi hasn't built an MU-2 twin turboprop for nearly four decades, there are still more than 220 of them in operation around the world, supported by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America (MHIA) in Dallas, along with Intercontinental Jet Service—a company-owned factory service center in Tulsa, Oklahoma—and four authorized service centers. The level of support for the long-out-of-production aircraft has not abated over the ensuing decades, with the company earning an impressive 8.63 overall score from AIN's readers.

Its factory-owned service centers received a 9.27, the highest in the category among manufacturers in this year's survey, while the MU-2 authorized service centers scored a 9.03, again the highest among the OEMs. In terms of dependability, the veteran turboprop-twin continues to soar, receiving a 9.38 in the aircraft reliability category.

The MU-2 product support program offers genuine OEM spare parts and customer support through engineering, field support, and safety seminars, as well as access to technical publications such as flight manuals, checklists, and maintenance information.

In August, the company relocated its MU-2 product support team to a new office in Coppell, Texas, near Dallas Fort Worth International Airport.

For the first time since before the pandemic, the airframer will this year again be hosting its Pilot's Review of Proficiency (PROP), a free flight safety seminar for MU-2 pilots. It will

cover flight training requirements, best practices, and knowledge-based learning opportunities while highlighting some of the onboard safety enhancement systems specific to the aircraft.

MHIA has renewed its 20-year-plus relationship with flight simulator training provider Simcom in Orlando, Florida. Simcom is in the process of upgrading one of the flight training devices to modernized computers and associated hardware to ensure availability.

ROTORCRAFT

Leonardo

Among the rotorcraft manufacturers, only Leonardo Helicopters received enough ratings for its scores to be calculated in this year's product support survey. The Italy-based manufacturer achieved an overall score of 7.71, led by the quality of its technical representatives, which received a 9.29. In terms of aircraft reliability, AIN's readers gave it an 8.69.

"Over the past year, Leonardo has implemented several key initiatives to enhance product support for rotorcraft owners and operators," said Francesco Bellardi, v-p of Leonardo Helicopters' customer support and services in Italy, adding that it has invested in expanding its support network to ensure closer proximity and better service to customers worldwide.

As an example, it has added new authorized service centers or expanded the capabilities of existing network locations, efforts which garnered a score of 7.94 for the category in this year's survey. Leonardo's customer support services and training team comprises more than 2,400 people out of more than 13,000 employees companywide. support through digital innovation, global network expansion, and robust logistics solutions.

© *Leonardo*

Leonardo has also accelerated its digital transformation to provide a more integrated and data-driven customer experience, improving service software/apps and leveraging the benefits of its Diagnostic Service Tower, which, through data monitoring, can provide specific customer use analysis.

“The complexity of helicopter maintenance requires a holistic approach that combines operational experience, advanced technology, and data-driven insights,” Bellardi told AIN. “At Leonardo, we are developing a digital ecosystem to support every stage of the maintenance process—helping operators to anticipate issues, optimize interventions, and enhance operational continuity.”

Leonardo’s customers gave one of its lowest scores this year in the parts availability category (6.68). “Recognizing challenges in global supply chains, Leonardo has taken proactive measures to further improve the availability of materials and spare parts in addition to what had already been achieved in previous years,” Bellardi noted. “The most significant impacts are related to a limited number of components where lead times require further improvements. We’re actively working with suppliers to mitigate delays and exploring alternative sourcing strategies to ensure continuity and minimize [downtime].”

Collectively, these improvements reflect Leonardo’s commitment to enhancing customer

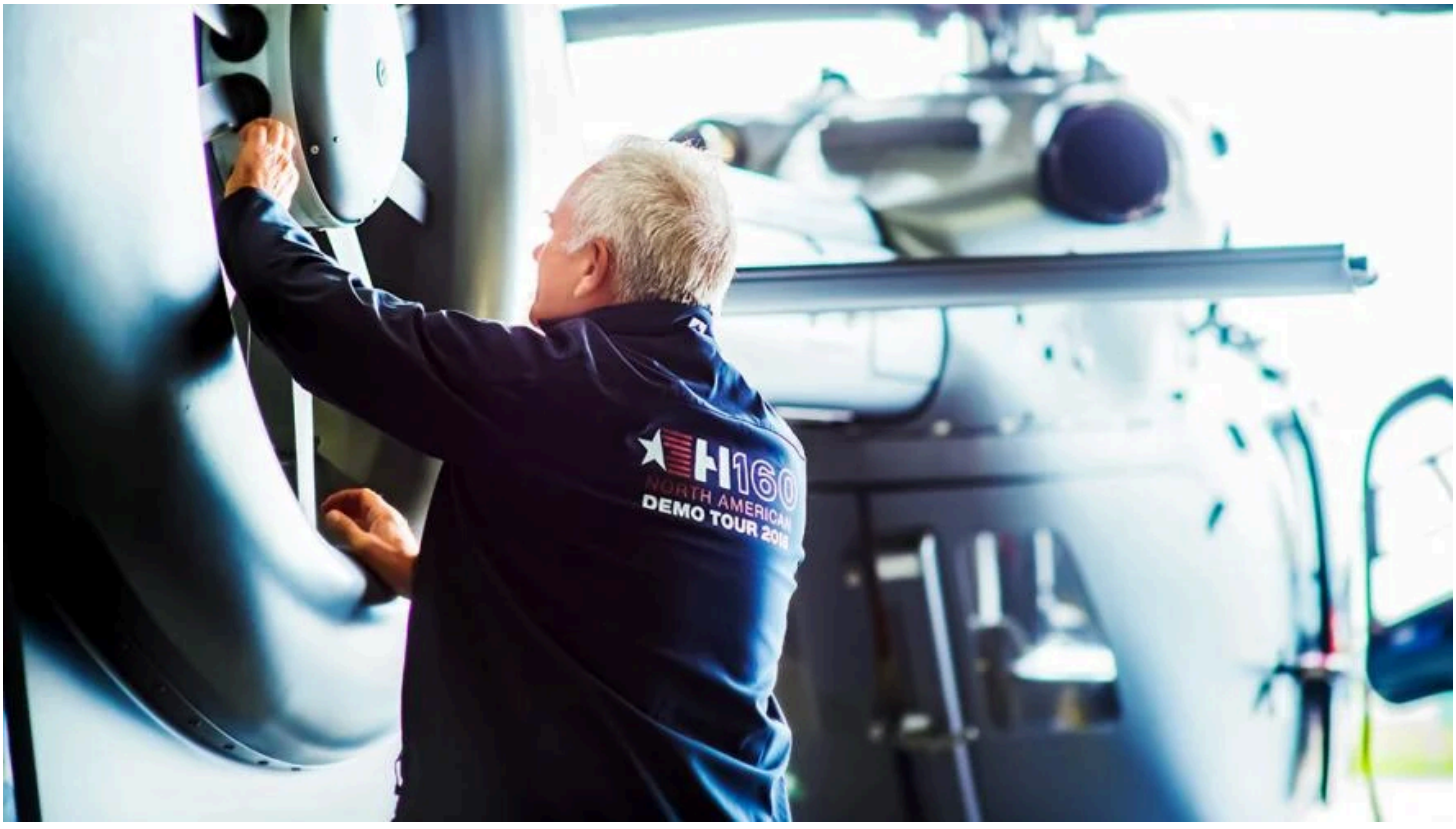
Airbus Helicopters

Airbus Helicopters did not draw enough responses to post a valid sample of scores.

While Airbus Helicopters did not receive enough responses this year for its scores to be included in the survey, the company has focused on improving parts availability across its fleet. “This is an ongoing effort that builds on foundational successes, such as our targeted initiative for critical-part identification, which focuses our efforts on improving their availability,” said Romain Trapp, executive v-p for customer support & services, adding that it, like most OEMs, is still navigating a complex and fragile supply chain environment.

The company said securing its supply chain is its number one priority in terms of industrial actions, and in situations where suppliers are struggling, it will propose mergers or acquisitions to bring that production in-house.

Over the past few months, it has increased its production of dynamic parts internally by more than 11%, while parts from its external supply chain rose by nearly 30% over the past year. For new mechanical parts, back orders at its main production facility in Marignane, France, had almost fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels by last year.



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Overall, it has invested nearly $470 million (€400 million) in parts, which has helped drive its maintenance operation to record levels. “Looking at repairs, we have achieved a 25% reduction in turnaround times for large components and a 45% improvement for smaller components, and we are continuing to refine our processes to further accelerate parts repairs,” Trapp told AIN.

At its U.S. headquarters in Grand Prairie, Texas, Airbus recently certified a new multi-purpose test bench, which has reduced turnaround times for large components.

Lastly, the OEM has introduced HCare Real-Time Data Management, a satellite-based service that allows operators to monitor helicopter parameters in flight. For its light helicopters, it launched a partnership with GPMS to offer a health and usage monitoring system (HUMS) FlyScan retrofit that enables predictive maintenance and reduces unplanned downtime. For those aircraft already HUMS-equipped, Airbus now offers FlyScan Sentinel, a free proactive monitoring service that can track equipment health trends and receive alerts before maintenance issues arise.

Bell

Bell did not draw enough responses to post a valid sample of scores.

While Bell did not receive enough ratings to be included in this year’s AIN Product Support Survey, the Textron subsidiary has been working to ensure that its operators have quicker and more convenient access to maintenance, repairs, and parts. It expanded its global customer network by opening new service centers and increased the number of authorized service facilities, thus reducing aircraft downtime and improving overall service efficiency.

The manufacturer has also introduced advanced digital tools and platforms such as the Bell Customer Portal and mobile applications to provide its customers with real-time access to customer support, maintenance tracking, and parts ordering. “These tools enhance communication, streamline processes, and provide customers with valuable insights into their aircraft’s performance and maintenance needs,” said Chris Schaefer, Bell’s v-p of global customer solutions.

Along those lines, the Textron subsidiary has implemented proactive maintenance programs to help customers identify potential issues before they become critical. Last year, it entered into an expanded collaboration and distribution agreement with GPMS International for

Foresight MX, a health and usage monitoring system (HUMS). The system automatically transfers data post-flight and allows operators to view the health of their fleet from anywhere in the world on any browser-enabled device. Operators can also easily share data with the airframer to improve remote support and gain maintenance guidance.

Approved for use on the Bell 407 in 2018, it has now been added to the 429, 212, and 412 series aircraft as well. With this agreement, Foresight MX is a Bell-supported HUMS solution for these aircraft and is available for purchase directly through GPMS or Bell.

“HUMS is a key element in our support strategy and expands on our goal of a smart connected fleet,” said Van Wilson, Bell’s director of customer support.

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