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Overview of Aerospace Valley of France



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Background:

France's membership in the G-8, European Union, World Trade Organization and Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) demonstrates the country's strength as a leading economic player in the global economy. France is ranked as the world's 6th largest economy, which is characterized by a substantial agricultural sector, a large industrial base and a highly skilled workforce. The services sector accounts for an increasingly large share of economic activity and job creation. The US is France's 6th-ranked supplier and its 6th-ranked customer. Bilateral trade flows between the two nations are estimated at about \$1 billion/day.

The aerospace industry in France is dominated by the [European Aeronautic and Defense & Space \(EADS\)](#) Company, which was created in 2000 through the consolidation of Daimler-Chrysler Aerospace (Germany), Construcciones Aeronauticas (Spain) and Aerospatiale Matra (France) and is owned through a complex array of public and private interests including the governments of France and Spain. EADS employs 110,000 employees at 70 sites. Its space unit provides end-to-end capabilities through EADS Astrium Satellites, EADS Astrium Transportation, and EADS Astrium Services. Paris, France is the headquarters of the [European Space Agency \(ESA\)](#), an inter-governmental organization consisting of 18 member countries including France, Germany and the UK. ESA coordinates the financial and human capital resources of its members to design and implement Europe's space program.

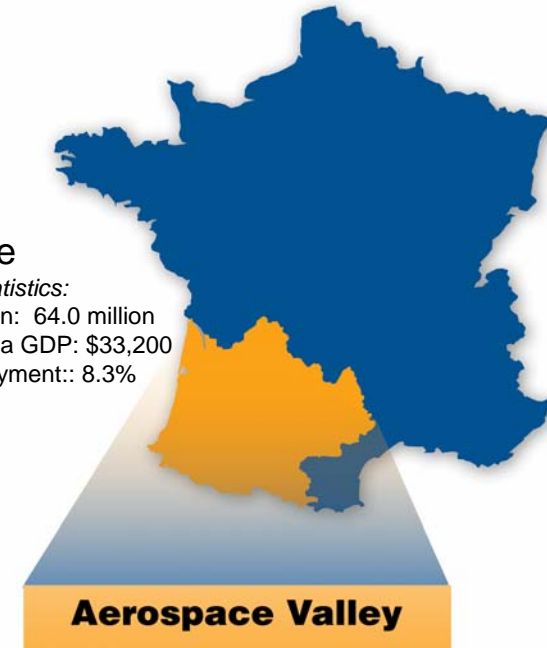
Aerospace Valley:

In 2005, the regions of Midi-Pyrénées and Aquitaine were designated as the [Aerospace Valley](#), a competitiveness cluster in aeronautics, space and embedded systems designed to spur innovation, economic growth and international development. The Aerospace Valley harnesses the efforts of over 1,200 small- to medium-sized enterprises, public and private research centers, universities, graduate schools of aerospace engineering, and regional government authorities representing 94,000 jobs to achieve the following goals: strengthen its position in civil aeronautics through the development of disruptive technologies, maintain its leadership in space from access to space and satellite design to the development of operational applications, translate the development of on-board systems to all industrial transportation sectors, expand and establish new partnership and collaboration opportunities, develop strong economic intelligence and monitoring activities to enable the cluster to anticipate market trends and developments. The strategy of Aerospace Valley involves 41 major technological research programs spanning 9 strategic activity areas and 12 cross-disciplinary projects, including Aerospace Campus in Toulouse. Financial support from the government is used to fund various R&D projects associated with the cluster. Recognizing the value of international collaboration, the Aerospace Valley has established partnerships with other European aerospace regions and clusters such as the Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (UK), AeroMontreal (Canada), and Hamburg, Germany.

France

Basic Statistics:

Population: 64.0 million
Per Capita GDP: \$33,200
Unemployment: 8.3%



Market Opportunities:

US companies face strong competition in the French aerospace market, which is dominated by EADS and its subsidiaries. Many firms are located around major production areas in order to service these clients. US companies can be successful in France as suppliers to the French OEMs and their partners. Participation in ESA procurements, however, is generally limited to firms from member states. US suppliers should ensure compliance with US export control regulations.

The French Embassy in Washington has recently recommended that the Aerospace Valley establish a cooperative relationship with the California Space Authority to address innovation and STEM related efforts important to both organizations.