"At Aequs, we always believe in increasing the in-country value"

ARAVIND MELLIGERI, Chairman & CEO, Aequs points out that the company will continue to position itself as a formidable player partnering with global OEMs looking to be a part of the 'Make in India' initiative.

How has Aequs grown over the last couple of years and what are the important achievements at the company?
Our specific strategy has been to focus on a few key customers that can transition large scale work and help position our business for profitable growth. The aerospace industry spends over $20 billion annually on machined parts. This has provided us with ample opportunity to expand our core machining business around the global demand for detailed parts and become an industry leader in this market segment. Over the last couple of years, to meet the demand in our target market, we have scaled up focusing heavily on new machines, equipment, and technology in India. Our dedicated facility for Airbus and the recent Flexible Manufacturing System (FMS) facility are few such examples of our recent growth. The acquisition of France-based aerospace manufacturing company, SiRA, in 2016 brought new capabilities in landing gear and engine components in-house while providing significant access to European client base.

While we bagged the largest contract of titanium machined parts from Airbus, we were also successful in signing our first contract with Boeing in 2017. Our ecosystem approach has brought with it accolades from customers; in October 2016, we were presented with the Airbus Innovation Award for our vertically integrated business approach. We are also the proud winner of Airbus Detailed Parts Partner (D2P) award for three consecutive years: 2016, 2017 and 2018.

What has been the progress at the company's upcoming facility in Goa and what will be produced here?
We are not in a position to make any comments on this at the moment.

Which are the domestic and foreign military programmes that Aequs is part of? Does the company undertake any work on the Rafale?
No comments at present. We are not associated with Rafale program.

Does Aequs aim for a greater share of the opportunities that will arise from greater in-country manufacture of defence equipment in India?
At Aequs, we always believe in increasing the in-country value. Our entire aerospace ecosystem is an endeavor to achieve this.

Presently, there is a huge demand for parts for commercial aircraft and the current backlog the OEMs are rushing to close is fueling this demand further. This has opened doors for Aequs as OEMs are interested in investing in India. However, given the right opportunity and the government's support, we would definitely consider manufacturing defence equipment too.

Is Aequs assisting foreign OEMs with their offset obligations in India?
No, we are not involved in fulfilling any offset obligations of foreign OEMs.

How has Aequs been able to help global OEMs to speed up time to market and reduce logistics costs?
Aequs is the first of its kind vertically integrated aerospace ecosystem in India. We have successfully integrated the entire manufacturing cycle of critical components and parts at our SEZ in Belagavi, Karnataka. Right from forgings of aluminium, steel and titanium parts, precision machining of components, actuation system parts, sub-assemblies, fabricated steel machine parts and assemblies, build to print aero structures to surface treatment, Aequs leverages its integrated ecosystem to reduce time to market by sourcing from a single location. Recently, we received a high volume order from Bombardier for window frames that are forged, machined and surface treated at our various plants located within Aequs SEZ. Needless to say, this helps reduce logistics costs considerably.

Please elaborate on the company's relationship with global aerospace OEMs?
Aequs' association with Airbus began way back in 2006 and it has been a fruitful journey for both. While we have remained steadfast in our commitment to deliver the best on time, Airbus has acknowledged this by honouring us with Airbus Innovation award in 2016 and Detailed Parts Partner (D2P) award for three consecutive years (2016-2018). Today, we have the advantage of being the first Indian supplier in line to be considered by Airbus. We share similar symbiotic relationships with Saab, Bombardier, Boeing, Dassault, Safran, GKN, Honeywell, Eaton and other OEMs.

Why has Aequs Aerospace chosen precision machining as its core focus?
Machining being a $20 billion industry worldwide, there lies a huge opportunity for scalability. Right now, we could be in the top 30 list of machining suppliers globally although we are just scratching the surface. This has fueled our strategic move towards defining our core in Machining.

We are the only Indian company with such a sophisticated machining facility that has over 1 million hours of machining capacity. Our aim is to increase this to 4 million machining hours by 2020. The new Flexible Manufacturing System (FMS) facility that is now operational at the SEZ will provide advanced and competitive machining solutions to customers, further improving our agility.

Please elaborate on how Aequs has assisted the Indian space programme?
Aequs is currently delivering nose cone assembly and skin sub-assemblies for ISRO's PSLV programme. We have recently been chosen to be a part of their GSLV programme and will be involved in supplying a few sub-assemblies.

What investments has the company made due to the 'Make in India' initiative?
We have been contributing to the 'Make in India' initiative since inception, investing $20-30 million per year in India. Until last year, we have invested $100 million as capital and we look forward to investing $200 million in the next five years.

We are one of the pioneers in skill development and attracting talent. With in-house AKC (Aerospace Knowledge Centre), the company envisions to educate freshers and employees in the skills that precision aerospace manufacturing needs. We are actively collaborating with the technical institutes in the region to induct graduates in Aerospace engineering and train young people.

Aequs will continue to position itself as a formidable player partnering with global OEMs looking to be a part of the 'Make in India' initiative. We have enhanced our capacity and capability by setting up a Flexible Manufacturing System (FMS) facility that will continue to grow with new orders we receive. Aequs' integrated ecosystem will always attract global players to manufacture in India and cater to this market.

IL-76MD-90A Military Transport Aircraft

Mission and main tasks
The IL-76MD-90A military transport aircraft is designed to airlift troops, cargo, military equipment and weapons, as well as conduct air dropping and air landing of personnel, cargo, military equipment and weapons.

The IL-76MD-90A is capable of effectively transporting personnel and cargo, including large-sized ones, and military equipment, air dropping personnel, cargo and military equipment, delivering ammunition, food, fuel, evacuating the wounded and sick people, as well as suppressing and isolating fires.

The aircraft takes off and lands on concrete and unpaved runways.

The IL-76MD-90A can be converted into ambulance or fire-fighting versions.

Airborne equipment
The IL-76MD-90A carries modern avionics, including a new generation integrated flight/sighting/navigation system. Its equipment enables the pilots to fly in any geographic and climatic conditions, day and night, and under normal and adverse weather conditions.

Troop-transport equipment
Troop-transport equipment of the aircraft includes a lowering cargo ramp, onboard pull winches, electric hoists, ramp extensions, light roller ways with a monorail, a cargo drop system providing single and serial air drops of cargo and equipment platforms, as well as side and removable center seats to carry people.

In addition, the cargo compartment can accommodate stretchers for transporting the wounded and sick people, as well as special medical modules for intensive care of critically wounded and spray tanks for fighting fires.

The main advantages
- Multifunction capability (military transport, ambulance and fire-fighting versions);
- Intercontinental flight range with payload;
- Operational suitability for use in any geographical and climatic conditions, day and night, and under normal and adverse weather conditions;
- High flight safety and maintainability;
- Unpaved airfield operating capability;
- Autonomous capability for basing and operation on unprepared airfields (including loading/unloading operations);
- Capability to transport heavy military equipment and oversized cargo;
- Compliance with applicable ICAO navigation, flight safety, noise and emission requirements.