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SAFRAN NACELLES: THE 5,000TH A320NEO NACELLE CROWNS A FRENCH INDUSTRIAL CHAMPION

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Safran Nacelles has reached the symbolic milestone of **5,000 nacelles** delivered for the **Airbus A320neo family**, an industrial achievement reached on June 30, 2026, at the Colomiers site, located near the final assembly line in Toulouse. Behind this significant figure lies the validation of the entire French aerospace sector's ability to support the production ramp-up of Airbus's best-selling aircraft, as the manufacturer still aims for **75 single-aisle aircraft per month** by 2027.

A symbolic milestone for Safran and for the A320neo

On June 30, 2026, [Safran Nacelles](#) celebrated the delivery of its 5,000th nacelle for the Airbus A320neo program at its Colomiers site, in the presence of representatives from Airbus, Middle River Aerostructure Systems (MRAS), and the Occitanie region. Located just minutes from the A320 final assembly line in Toulouse, the Toulouse site exemplifies the "local integration" sought by Airbus for the last major sub-assemblies installed just before delivery.

In its press release, the equipment manufacturer refers to "a major milestone" which "confirms Safran Nacelles' central role at the heart of the A320neo program." "We are preparing to produce up to 1,000 nacelles per year," stated Vincent Caro, President of Safran Nacelles, a sign of a ramp-up that will almost double the current rate to support the accelerated Airbus deliveries.

A320neo: a market driven by pace

The A320neo is at the heart of Airbus's single-aisle strategy, with more than 11,600 orders for the aircraft family recorded by the end of February 2026 and 4,412 aircraft already delivered. The entire A320 family has delivered 10,000 aircraft since the program's launch, making it the world's best-selling aircraft family.

The European aircraft manufacturer confirms its target of producing 75 A320 family aircraft per month by 2027, leveraging its four final assembly lines in Toulouse, Hamburg, Tianjin, and Mobile. For Tier 1 suppliers like Safran, this trajectory necessitates a profound reorganization of their industrial operations.

What a LEAP-1A nacelle looks like

In aeronautics, the nacelle is much more than a simple fairing: it is a complete aerodynamic and acoustic subsystem that surrounds the turbojet engine. The air intake channels the flow towards the fan at local speeds that can exceed 250 meters per second at the stagnation point, while the engine cowl provides external protection and must be able to be opened in a few minutes for maintenance operations.

The thrust reverser, another key sub-assembly, diverts some of the airflow forward during landing and generates the characteristic "decompression" noise upon touchdown, while the exhaust cone modulates the exhaust stream. Inside, sound-absorbing materials reduce engine noise perceived on the ground, a crucial factor in major European airports subject to increasingly stringent noise regulations. For the LEAP-1A engine, a complete nacelle weighs approximately 1.5 tons, is over 4 meters long, and represents 10 to 15% of the cost of an installed engine, according to industry estimates.

LEAP-1A vs GTF: a match turned in favor of Safran

When the A320neo was launched in 2010, Airbus offered two engine options: the LEAP-1A from CFM International (a 50/50 joint venture between Safran and GE Aerospace) and the PW1100G-JM, a geared turbofan engine from Pratt & Whitney. Safran Nacelles handled the engine nacelles for the LEAP-1A, while Collins Aerospace, a subsidiary of RTX, supplied the Pratt & Whitney version.

Fifteen years later, the advantage clearly lies with CFM. According to an analysis by Bloomberg Intelligence cited by the specialist website [Fleet Wire](#), the LEAP-1A powers approximately 63% of the A320neo fleet in service and the same proportion of the order book, with the GTF sharing the remaining 37%. AirInsight even suggests that 75% of A320neo orders will favor the LEAP by the end of 2025, driven by better time-on-wing performance and real-world availability, despite the initial teething problems of the LEAP family.

Conversely, the Pratt & Whitney GTF remains affected by turbine disk durability issues and a widespread inspection campaign, which has led to the grounding of hundreds of A320neos worldwide and a forced reallocation of capacity for several European and Asian airlines. The GTF's ongoing challenges have accelerated a shift in market share toward the LEAP-1A. For Safran Nacelles, this dominance translates directly into an increased volume of nacelles to be supplied for the best-selling commercial program of all time.

Colomiers, an industrial showcase and logistics hub

The Safran Nacelles site in Colomiers, already expanded in 2022 to reach approximately 35,000 m², serves as the final assembly and just-in-time delivery platform for the A320 final assembly line in Toulouse. The nacelle is one of the last major sub-assemblies installed on the aircraft, requiring precise synchronization between the production rates of the engine manufacturer, Safran Nacelles, and Airbus.

Safran claims a 100% "On Time Delivery" (OTD) rate for the A320neo nacelles, a remarkable figure in a context where many Airbus suppliers – engines, seats, landing gear, avionics – have experienced significant disruptions and delays since the Covid-19 crisis. *"This perfect OTD on such a tight production schedule is a real industrial achievement,"* emphasizes an executive from the regional ecosystem quoted by Safran.

A transatlantic chain thanks to MRAS

The celebration in Colomiers also highlighted Middle River Aerostructure Systems (MRAS), Safran Nacelles' American subsidiary based in Maryland. Acquired from ST Engineering in 2023, MRAS supplies a significant portion of the components for LEAP-1A nacelles and helps secure the supply chain in the event of trade or customs tensions between the European Union and the United States.

This transatlantic network also allows Safran to better serve the vast American maintenance and conversion market, particularly for low-cost carriers and lessors based in North America that operate the A321neo extensively. It is part of a broader strategy of geographically diversifying capabilities, with complementary sites in France (notably in Le Havre and Brittany) for certain parts and sub-assemblies.

Doubling the pace: an industrial challenge

To meet Airbus's target of 75 single-aisle aircraft per month, or approximately 900 A320neo family aircraft per year, Safran Nacelles must prepare to potentially deliver more than 1,100 LEAP-1A nacelles per year if the engine's market share remains around 60–70%. *"We are preparing to produce up to 1,000 nacelles per year,"* Vincent Caro emphasized in Colomiers, noting that this trajectory will require automation, robotization, and an expansion of the subcontractor base.

The group has already invested in the robotization of several assembly stages and the digitalization of logistics flows, in order to smooth the production ramp-up and reduce cycle times. These efforts are part of a broader movement across Airbus's entire supply chain, with the aircraft manufacturer explaining that *"increased production will benefit the entire global industrial value chain,"* while also warning that each aviation player must adapt its capacity and recruitment.



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