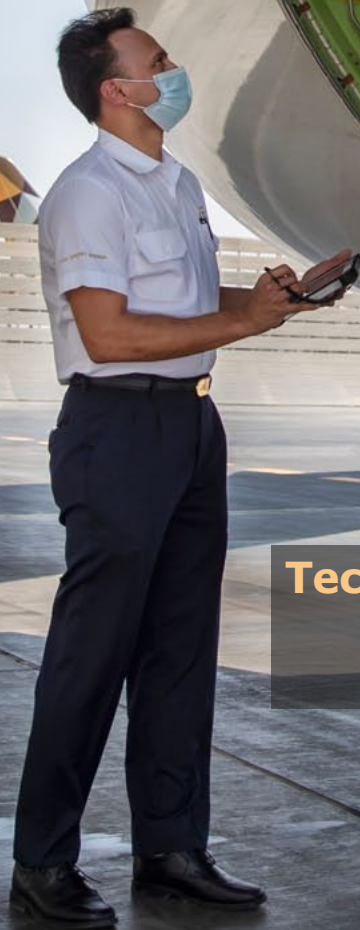


MRO

**Maintenance
software
support
gains pace**

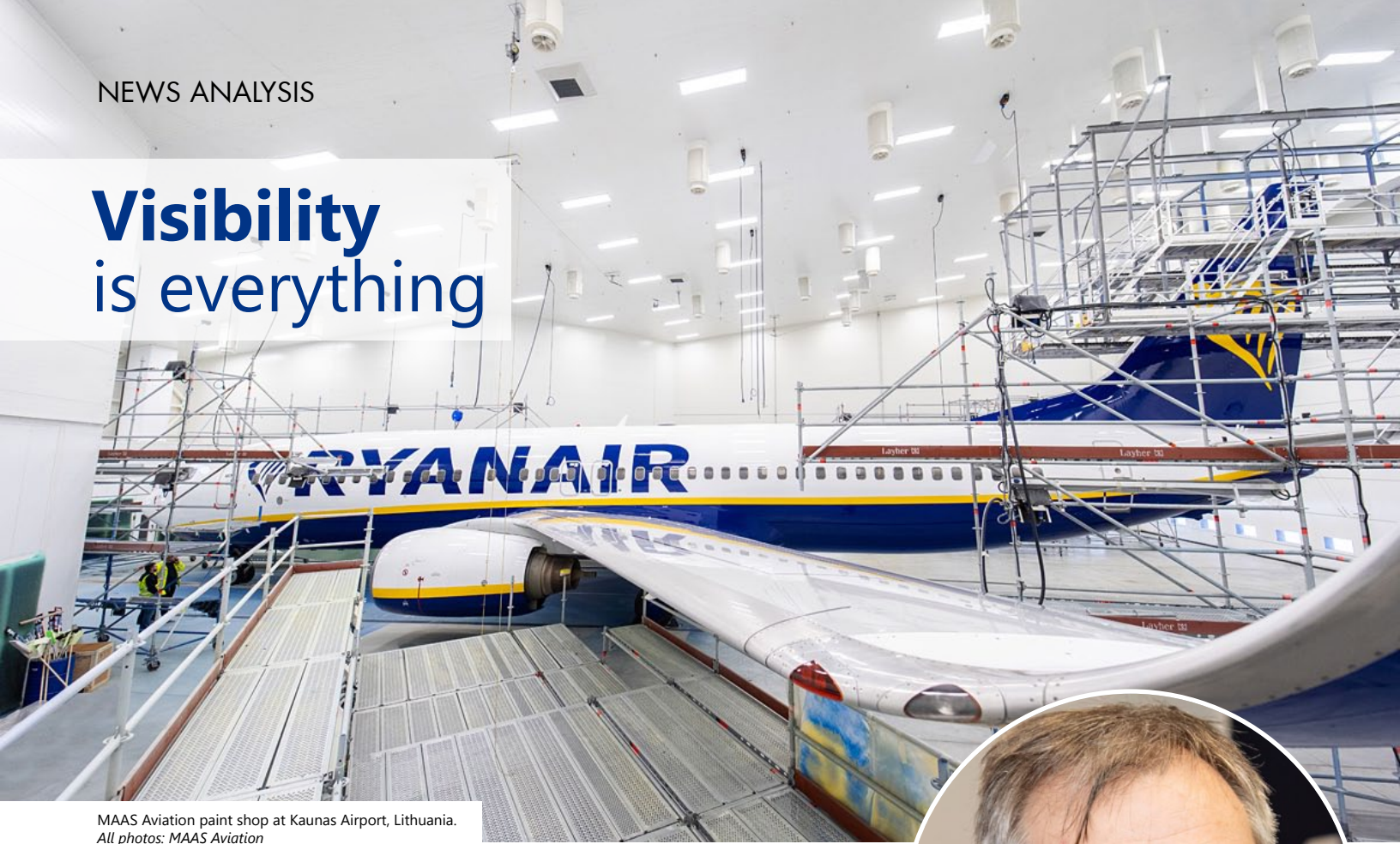


Technical Training
Pushing digital
capabilities

GA Telesis
Delivers for
freighter market

Paint & Coatings
MAAS positions
for greater visibility

Visibility is everything



MAAS Aviation paint shop at Kaunas Airport, Lithuania.
All photos: MAAS Aviation



Tim Macdougald, CEO, MAAS Aviation

MAAS Aviation is positioning for greater visibility in the aircraft paint and coatings market. Chief Executive Tim Macdougald talks to **Keith Mwanalushi** about the multi-year strategic plan for the company.

Despite the complications of a pandemic, aircraft paint and coatings specialist, MAAS Aviation opened a new paint and redelivery facility in Lithuania earlier this year. The new facility is based at Kaunas Airport adjacent to the FL Technics' MRO facilities.

While COVID had put the brakes on many aviation services around the world things were not as severely affected at MAAS as CEO Tim Macdougald tells *AviTrader MRO*. "MAAS benefits from multi-year customer contracts and our customers have maintained their commitments to have their aircraft painted. Some are utilising the enforced ground time of their parked fleets to both catch up and bring forward maintenance routines. To a small extent we have benefited from this."

MAAS Aviation's new Lithuanian facility is a twin-bay narrowbody paint shop capable of accommodating up to two A321 sized aircraft simultaneously and is the first of its kind in Lithuania. Macdougald says the MRO repainting sector is normally cyclical with winter peaks and for many years MAAS has juggled capacity constraints during these periods due to demand from its long-term contracted customers.

In the build up to establishing this new facility MAAS Aviation has experienced a dynamic growth trajectory surpassing 180%

over the past six years.

In 2015 the company had three paint shops in two locations and 130 aircraft were painted. In 2021, MAAS has eleven paint shops (three in Hamburg; two in Kaunas; two in Maastricht; one at Fokker Woensdrecht; and three in Mobile, Alabama) and the company forecasts painting over 300 aircraft.

Opening a new facility during a pandemic is no mean feat but Macdougald explains that the investment at Kaunas Airport represented a long-term strategy to position MAAS to benefit from increased capacity and market share during the COVID pandemic and, more importantly, once it is behind us. "Due to differing COVID regulations across the multi-jurisdictions in which we operate, the biggest challenges we faced were the restrictions placed on the movement of those teams of people necessary to support the construction, commissioning, and entry-into-service of the paint shops."

Macdougald also says recruitment of local painting operatives was another challenge. "It was difficult to coordinate interviews due to the restrictions. We overcame this by utilising local agencies and we are happy with the outcome. Ultimately,

the combined quality of the contractors we engaged, and the considerable effort and dedication of the specialist MAAS teams enabled the project to be delivered on time and on budget. We did not allow the pandemic to alter our plans.”

MAAS are now fully focused on customer delivery and Macdougald reports – “every slot at our Kaunas paint shop has been fully utilised since the facility opened in January. We’re now used to operating under pandemic rules, so we are well equipped for whatever lies ahead.”

According to MAAS Aviation, all their paint shops are operated to OEM standards of performance and from a lessor’s perspective, combining painting with the base maintenance capabilities offered by FL Technics is a clear advantage including the management and coordination of aircraft redeliveries which is expected to take on an increased relevance post pandemic due to the number of aircraft likely to change operator.

And looking ahead at the possibility of increased aircraft and asset transitions

that will support growth ambitions for paint services, Macdougald is cautiously optimistic saying as in all crises, there will be winners and losers and not all aircraft operators will survive. It is expected that many of the aircraft currently parked will either exit the market or will change hands.

“By locating an additional European paint shop facility at Kaunas airport to operate alongside FL Technics, MAAS is well positioned to contribute to the transition of aircraft assets as it is highly conceivable that many aircraft will require reconfiguration and changes of branding which will include paint.”

Macdougald stresses that despite the possibility to benefit from the post-COVID environment, this was not the reason MAAS invested in Lithuania. “We had identified Kaunas as a potential location for painting several years before the COVID crisis hit. Our investment in Lithuania represents just one component of MAAS’ multi-year strategic plan which is unaffected by COVID.”

MAAS are also working on other specific projects to deliver further growth and to broaden their reach and capabilities. “We are also looking to

connect with other MRO organisations operating in our sector to amalgamate our services with theirs to offer integrated aircraft transition excellence. We believe airlines and lessors will benefit from combined specialist services coordinated by multiple service providers at a single location, and we are targeting global partnerships as a mechanism to deliver these objectives.” Macdougald concludes.

The continued growth at MAAS Aviation is a good news story in incredibly challenging times for the industry.

“*We’re now used to operating under pandemic rules, so we are well equipped for whatever lies ahead.*”
MAAS Aviation Chief Executive,
Tim Macdougald



Every slot at the Kaunas paint shop has been fully utilised.