

USM AND FLEET LONGEVITY DRIVE STRONG COMPONENT AFTERMARKET DEMAND

Demand for component MRO remains strong in 2026, driven by high aircraft utilisation and longer fleet lifecycles. MROX has learnt that USM is also gaining traction as operators seek cost-effective and readily available alternatives to new parts. Rising new-part prices are making repair more attractive, particularly when components have good remaining greentime. Availability is another key factor, with repair often providing a faster solution when new parts are unavailable. PMA and DER solutions also have an established role in the aftermarket, particularly where cost and availability are priorities. However, customer acceptance varies, influenced by lease conditions, residual value considerations and internal policies. Here are the details



Ian Foster

How would you describe the current demand for component MRO in 2026?

Ian Foster, VP MRO & Technical, APOC Aviation

- From APOC's perspective, demand for component MRO has continued to grow throughout 2026. This has been driven primarily by our airframe teardowns, with harvested components feeding MRO work across both OEM and our trusted third-party facilities. This pipeline benefits MRO service providers and produces a steady stream of serviced parts, which in turn supports our customer requirements.

Valentina Pilshchikova, Director Asset Trading at Vallair

- Demand for component MRO remains very strong in 2026. Aircraft utilisation rates are at high levels and, with many aircraft staying in service longer, the need for maintenance and overhaul continues to grow. At the same time, USM continues to play a bigger role in the market as operators look for reliable and cost-effective solutions. When you combine strong aircraft utilisation with the increasing use of USM and the need for overhauled parts, you arrive at a very busy period for component MRO. Vallair sees strong demand across the market, and we expect this to remain the case for some time.

Dan Trigg, Director of Sales – Airframe, EirTrade

- Global component MRO demand is currently strong and I believe it will continue to increase in the coming years. The average fleet age is around 15 years, and with the older aircraft come more maintenance events and greater demand for component MRO.

Are parts shortages still affecting component repair turnaround times?

Ian Foster - With certain components, shortages can still cause delays, but these cases are now the minority and the majority are returned without delay. This is an area where APOC's airframe teardowns are advantageous, as they provide direct access to serviceable material and reduce reliance on constrained supply chains, allowing us to maintain consistent turnaround times for our customers.

Valentina Pilshchikova - In our experience, parts shortages are still having an impact on turnaround times, especially for high-tech components for assets such as engines and landing gear. It is also the same situation with electromechanical, electronic, and other components.

We are not yet back to the usual pre-Covid turnaround times. There are several reasons for this: the persistent issue of skilled labour shortages, scarcity of raw materials, and longer lead times

from suppliers. All of these things have an impact on how quickly we can complete a repair. The situation is improving, but the supply chain is still under pressure, and this is something we continue to manage every day in our repair activity.

How are rising new-part prices influencing the repair-versus-replace decision?

Ian Foster - Rather than defaulting to new parts, operators are increasingly comfortable using USM for repairs. Beyond the cost saving, USM changes the economics of the repair decision, keeping repair costs below the BER threshold and components in service for longer. As a trusted USM partner, APOC helps operators make that repair decision work, with the right material available when it is needed.

Valentina Pilshchikova - "Do you repair it or do you replace it?" At the end of the day, it is a simple decision; but it is governed by several calculations. First is cost. With the price of new parts going up, repair can often make more sense, especially if the component still has good greentime. Availability is also a big part of the decision. If a new part is not available when you need it, repairing an existing component can be the fastest solution.

Here at Vallair, the thought process is about being smart with what is readily available. We look at the cost, the remaining life of the component, the repair time, and



the availability of a replacement, and then make the right decision.

Dan Trigg - Every time a part replacement is required the operator is faced with the decision over whether to repair or replace with new. New part pricing is increasing which adds to costs, but then delays involved with repairing a unit can cause multiple issues which would outweigh the costs of a replacement component. A preferred option for a lot of airlines would be an exchange transaction, that way they can immediately receive a serviceable unit to solve the current demand and any delays to the repair cycle will not affect immediate operation. At EirTrade Aviation we strive to fill our stock with high demand serviceable units to support our large pool of airline customers in these situations.

Are airlines increasingly turning to USM to manage component costs and availability?

Ian Foster - With ongoing manufacturing delays and supply chain disruptions driving up both prices and lead times for new components, USM is increasingly positioned as a cost-effective, operationally efficient solution for maintaining fleet availability and controlling lifecycle costs. As industry confidence in USM quality, traceability and performance continues to grow, APOC is well equipped to meet this demand, holding a comprehensive inventory of components in AR and SV condition to deliver high-quality, cost-effective solutions across every major narrowbody and widebody platform.

Valentina Pilshchikova - Yes, absolutely. However, I would say that is because airlines do not always have much of a choice. With new parts becoming more expensive and, in some cases, difficult to get, USM is becoming a very important alternative.

We are also seeing new markets opening up for USM. Customers are looking at USM not only because of the cost advantage, but also because the

part is available when they need it. In today's market, availability can be just as important as price.

I think we will continue to see USM growing and becoming a more common solution for airlines and MROs.

Dan Trigg - Components that suffer from long OEM lead times on piece parts will see the strongest demand. Market prices on these units are volatile as the workshops struggle to procure the parts required to complete the repair/overhaul. We are unfortunately still seeing part shortages increase the repair turnaround time.

How is digitalisation helping improve component inventory and repair planning?

Valentina Pilshchikova - In repair planning, the equation is quite simple: optimise your inventory in real time and use the data to make better decisions. If you know when a component is likely to need replacement, you can plan for it before it fails. This helps avoid an AOG situation and can reduce both repair costs and turnaround time. Digitalisation and AI can help with this and they are already being used in some areas with good results. The more data we have, and the better we use it, the more we can move from reacting to a problem to planning ahead. For me, that is where the real value of digitalisation lies.

Dan Trigg - MRO's, Airlines and Part Suppliers will implement various methods of parts inventory management in order to streamline stock levels for the purpose of supporting their fleets and customers. In recent times, this process has become more efficient through use of inventory demand forecasting and predictive maintenance which gives you the data to ensure optimal stock levels of spare parts are held.

How important are PMA and approved alternative repairs in today's component aftermarket?

Ian Foster - PMA and DER both have a place



Valentina Pilshchikova

in the aftermarket, particularly where cost and availability are the priority. Acceptance, however, remains very customer specific. Some operators actively seek out the savings they offer, while others are deterred by lease conditions, residual value or internal policy.

Valentina Pilshchikova - There is PMA and PMA. For non-critical components, such as cabin parts, airlines are generally quite relaxed and open to using alternatives, especially when there is a clear cost benefit or better availability.

It is different for the bigger PMAs, particularly on engines. Airlines like to have the alternative available, but quite often they use it more as a way to put pressure on the OEMs and negotiate better prices rather than as the first solution.

DERs are different again. We have even seen DER repairs being incorporated into the OEM repair catalogue. That is a good sign that these alternative repair solutions are becoming more accepted in the market.



Dan Trigg - Airlines and operators will often welcome PMA or DER if it means the defect can be fixed quickly and the aircraft can fly again. They will often be in high-pressure AOG situations that require a quick solution. With PMA being much more readily available than OEM parts and DER repairs often saving parts that would historically be scrapped, these alternatives allow for a quicker and more plentiful form of parts supply. Airlines and operators would not see the acceptance of DER or PMA as a safety risk, they are both FAA-approved and absolutely fine to fit from a safety and legal point of view.

What will be the biggest opportunities and challenges for component MRO through 2030?

Valentina Pilshchikova - I see both opportunities and challenges through to 2030. One of the opportunities is the growing NEO fleet. As more NEOs enter service and the CEO fleet starts to leave the market, we should see more USM becoming available. This will give airlines and MROs like Vallair more options.

The other side is OEM licensing, which continues to limit what the independent aftermarket can do. This is

a real challenge for the industry, and the question is how we can find the right way forward.

We also have to remember that every new aircraft programme has some teething problems. The 777X is a good example. Delays and issues during the introduction of a new aircraft can have a direct impact on the aftermarket and on the MRO supply chain.

Looking ahead, Vallair identifies a lot of opportunity, but we should not underestimate the challenges. The market will continue to evolve, and flexibility will be very important.

Dan Trigg - The biggest opportunities and challenges both derive from the increase in component MRO demand. The component MRO sector is growing and MROs have the opportunity to capitalise on this through volume of work. It also gives PMA/DER providers and Digitalisation Platform suppliers a great opportunity as they can aid with the workflow by lowering lead times and optimising forecasting.

However, this increase in volume also presents many challenges such as the problems caused by OEM piece part supply chain delays and the ability to repair/



Dan Trigg

overhaul in an efficient timeframe. Also, with the rise of Next-Generation Aircraft comes the difficulty in supporting these, their new technology makes repairs more complex and expensive, with a lower amount of MROs who can support.

AFI KLM E&M APPOINTS SYLVAIN FAGOT AS SVP COMPONENTS



Air France Industries KLM Engineering & Maintenance announces the appointment of Sylvain Fagot as Senior Vice President Components at Air France Industries, effective October 1, 2026. He succeeds François Gueguen, who will leave AFI KLM E&M to take on the role of Executive Vice President Fleet, Engineering & Maintenance at Transavia France.

Sylvain Fagot brings extensive



experience in aircraft maintenance, engineering and airline operations. Most recently, he was in charge of Fleet, Engineering & Maintenance at Transavia France. Prior to this, he served as SVP Engineering & Maintenance at HOP! Air France, where he gained broad experience in technical and operational leadership. Earlier in his career, Sylvain spent more than 20 years at Air France Industries, holding several leadership positions across the organization.

Throughout his career, Sylvain has developed strong technical expertise and a comprehensive understanding of both airline and MRO operations. He will now bring this experience to Air France Industries, where he will further drive the development of the component capabilities of Air France Industries and the performance for customers.

Anne Brachet, Executive Vice President Air France-KLM Engineering &

Maintenance, commented: "We are very pleased to welcome Sylvain to Air France Industries. His extensive experience in engineering and maintenance, combined with his strong understanding of airline operations, will be a valuable asset to the organization. I would also like to thank François for his commitment and strong contribution to AFI KLM E&M, and wish him every success in his new role at Transavia France."

Vincent D'Andrea, Executive Vice President Air France Industries, highlighted: "Sylvain brings a strong combination of technical expertise and operational experience to Air France Industries. His background will be a great asset as we continue to develop our components activities and strengthen our offering to customers. I would also like to thank François for his dedication and results-driven approach, which have been greatly appreciated."