

Better day by day

An annual event dedicated to the EADS Improvement Programme (EIP), organised by the Corporate Quality Office, took place on 10 and 11 June at the EADS site in Manching. It was attended by more than 200 participants from all EADS Divisions. They took part in a two-day conference packed with the latest information and results concerning the EIP, Quality, Customer Review process (CRp), Lean Production and EADS Black Belt (EBB) programmes

In his opening speech, Chief Quality Officer Bill Black announced that “in the course of these two days, we will address all of the activities pertaining to the EADS Improvement Programme” – and the fully packed conference schedule clearly showed that he was not exaggerating.

The first half of day one was dedicated to the topic of quality. The speakers spent the morning summarising the most recent actions on quality improvement and standardisation, aligned with EADS’ Vision 2020. Special

presentations focused on Nadcap, a programme which drives improvement in special processes in the aviation industry, on the International Aerospace Quality Group, the club of Quality Heads from all Aerospace and Defence companies with Bill Black as President, and on a number of environmental issues. Bruno Costes, Head of Airbus’ environmental network, described ways of achieving added value in harmony with the environment. He also informed participants about REACH, an EU regulation introduced in 2007 concerning the

registration, assessment, approval and limitation of chemicals.

Continuously enhanced processes

After lunch, Bill Black welcomed everyone to the EIP event and began with a status report on the various parts of the programme. He reminded his audience of the Vision 2020 objectives and explained how this is supported by EIP and its individual components, which were to receive special attention the next day. The ‘host’, EADS Military Air Systems Manching,

then introduced themselves in a presentation, which was followed by a lecture on the Lean Six Sigma management system. At the same time, the most successful EBB projects from all EADS Divisions were on display in the conference building’s entrance hall, which acted as a kind of best practices marketplace.

Another highlight on the first day was the opportunity to visit the Eurofighter final assembly line. This was rounded off by an evening meal, which culminated in the EIP award ceremony. The winner of this year’s



In the entrance hall, the more than 200 participants had the opportunity to learn a lot of information about the different CQO projects as well as network within the marketplace area



Chief Quality Officer Bill Black – who had announced a packed programme over the two days – kept his promise. Among other things, he presented the Black Belt section

competition was the Defence & Security/Military Air Systems team led by Óscar Muñoz Fernández, which has developed a new electronic documentation process for aircraft deliveries.

One day, three events: Black Belt, CRp & Lean Day

On the second day, the participants were able to learn about the latest developments in the EADS Black Belt programme, the Customer Review process, Programme Management and the Lean Operations programme in a series of

parallel presentations, discussion groups and workshops.

The Black Belt section was introduced by Bill Black himself, who outlined the current status of the programme. He pointed out that every Black Belt project cuts costs by an average of €264,000 (compared to the envisaged €150,000), and that the number of staff with green, silver or black 'belts' was steadily growing. The next topic of focus was the EBB project on best practices in development, including a workshop on EBB sponsorship, after which Excellence Award

winner Óscar Muñoz Fernández presented his project.

The CRp event opened with an overview of defence-related CRps in EADS' core countries, followed by a guest lecture on the experience BAE Systems has had with the same process. The Lean Day special was kicked off by Chief Technical Officer Jean Botti, followed by Pilar Albiac Murillo, who outlined the progress made by Airbus in lean manufacturing. John Hobday then addressed the topic of lean development at the Division. Both events were supplemented by workshops aimed at examining the CRp and Lean programmes' plans of action and how to accelerate implementation.

The EADS Improvement Programme is in full swing, as was clearly demonstrated by the project presentations over the two days in Manching. A major step has been taken towards achieving the Vision 2020 goals, which are to deliver profitable top-quality products on time, and thereby regain customers' confidence, but we still have a very long way to go.

Tilman von Meyeren



Over to the attendees

Pilar Albiac Murillo (Airbus)

Our biggest challenge is to achieve a mindset change in the leadership across the business. 'Lean' management requires support leadership engagement to sustain the improvement, which is being implemented, and encourage a mentality of continuous improvement every day in everything we do.

Óscar Muñoz Fernández (DS) (describing his EBB project)

The biggest advantage has been for our customer, because now the customer knows what their aircraft's status is in Getafe. It was so difficult to know what the status was before, but now they can see what the scheduled and non-scheduled activities on their aircraft are.

Michael Robert Klose (EADS Astrium)

EBB is really a tool which helps us to overcome the problems and the issues in our daily business. In the meantime, we have 15 to 20 EBBs in our business who are fully certified and we have around another 25 who are in the process of qualifying – and all of the EBBs have contributed to our business, to our profit and to our customer satisfaction. And therefore I fully support it.

Antonio Pérez (Military Transport Aircraft Division)

Nadcap has the recognition of the whole aerospace industry for special process certification. So I fully support the CQO recommendations for the supply chain to use it as a very valid means for process qualification – thereby obtaining the benefits of reducing costs and avoiding duplication of efforts for the whole industry.

John Amer (UK Ministry of Defence)

I think the main issue that we have is ensuring that we communicate with a coherent, joined-up company. It was very important for us that this happened with EADS. We worked very hard on that. And I think also from the UK government perspective that we convey a coherent message to EADS as well. So we have had some challenges to join ourselves up as a government, but the major challenge is that we develop clear communication channels into EADS and that EADS responds and communicates to us in a joined-up and coherent fashion.