

## Introduction

Additive manufacturing (AM), also known as 3D printing, is used to describe the technique by which components or added features are built in layers direct from digital data, without the need for dedicated tooling and all the associated investment costs. The introduction of AM has brought a whole range of new opportunities to manufacture components with complex geometries. As with any manufacturing approach its application must be very carefully considered against cost, rate and product quality requirements.



## 08 ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING

*Applications in Aerospace*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This INSIGHT paper has been compiled to disseminate the findings of an aerospace sector consultation enabled through a partnership with Additive manufacturing UK. This INSIGHT paper looks at the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of additive manufacturing technologies and how the benefits can be recognised across the aerospace structures, systems and propulsion communities.

The paper gives an aerospace specific focus which builds on Additive manufacturing UK's 2017 multi-sectorial national strategy paper "Leading additive manufacturing in the UK". Recommendations are provided for the civil aerospace sector to develop and exploit opportunities for a highly disruptive technology that has the potential to transform future aircraft platforms.

Metal powder bed fusion has been up to now, the primary focus of the aerospace industry but other technologies such as direct energy deposition are gaining in their significance in the UK sector. This is reflected in this INSIGHT paper where six key topics have been addressed to accelerate additive manufacturing (AM) within the UK aerospace sector.

1. **Materials for AM:** Develop the quality and productivity of AM material processes including powder generation, control of material properties and re-use of effluent powder.
2. **AM end-to-end Process:** Develop the end-to-end AM process, including high value design for AM, digital manufacturing, post-processing and validation & verification.
3. **Certification and Standards:** Setting the standards for AM use in aerospace, including material use and achieving accurate and repeatable parts. Overcoming the certification obstacles associated with new AM processes.
4. **Cost:** Detailing and communicating the through-life cost implications of using AM in aerospace, including the identification of prohibitive costs and modelling of value added.
5. **Supply Chain:** Integrating the supply chain in AM and linking to academia. Ensuring that UK capability is realised to manufacture AM parts at a competitive price that address the sector requirements.
6. **AM and disruption:** Recognising the disruptive influence of additive manufacturing. Enabling the value of AM on current platforms and providing currently unrealised opportunities on next-gen platforms.

The ATI works alongside other national initiatives which have been set up to address AM in the aerospace sector including the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) and the Made Smarter review. In this, the ATI will contribute to the acceleration of additive manufacturing technology opportunities through helping the formation of suitable technology projects that address the key requirements identified in this INSIGHT.

Leading UK aerospace manufacturing organisations were consulted as part of this document's preparation, and all recognise AM as a fundamental part of their future manufacturing strategies.

### National Centre for Net Shape and Additive manufacturing - £14.2m

This project was funded jointly by the ATI and Innovate UK. It was undertaken by the MTC to establish the National Centre for Additive manufacturing. The aim of the centre is to develop production-ready additive manufacturing processes, to overcome barriers to wide-scale adoption, and to work on legislative and standardisation issues for this emerging activity.

The Centre has delivered over 100 projects for companies across the supply chain, including the manufacture of a flight-test front-bearing housing for the Trent XWB-97 engine. The project resulted in a 30% improvement in lead time and led to the largest aero engine structure to fly, incorporating AM components.



## WHAT IS ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING?

The term additive manufacturing (AM), also known as 3D printing, is used to describe the manufacturing process by which components are built by adding material layer by layer, controlled directly from digital data. AM has no need for dedicated tooling, with its associated investment costs, and hence is highly flexible, with a short lead time. Companies have been using this technique in the UK since the late 1980s in a prototype environment to aid product development. In the 1990s the UK became one of the leading countries in using AM within the product development arena. Until recently, due to limitations in material properties and deposition rate, it has been largely a prototyping technique.

Advances in materials and machine technology mean that AM is now a truly transformational cross-sector technology that is having a disruptive impact on design, manufacturing, location, supply chains and business models. It enables new and better designs to be realised at lower cost, enhanced productivity and greater sustainability. AM is particularly appropriate for high value application areas including:

- Aerospace (small volumes, weight constraints)
- Space (small volumes, extreme weight constraints)
- Oil & Gas (one-off's, in-field repairs)
- Motorsport & premium automotive (low volume, customised parts)
- Medical (personalised parts)
- Customised consumer products

There are a range of distinct AM processes, from laser powder bed to plastic material parts created through vat polymerisation, which have varying process details and equipment needs. Aerospace requirements mean that the most applicable processes are powder bed fusion and direct energy deposition. These are detailed below.

### Powder Bed Fusion

Powder bed additive manufacturing involves using a high energy heat source such as a laser or an electron beam to melt and fuse material powder particles together. The process involves spreading a uniform layer of powder material over a build platform. The heat source fuses the first cross section of the build from this layer, before the machine spreads another layer of powder on top and the process repeats for the next cross-section of the build. Un-fused powder remains in position but is removed during post processing. The materials used, and typical parts created by powder bed fusion are shown in Figure 2 and Table 1:

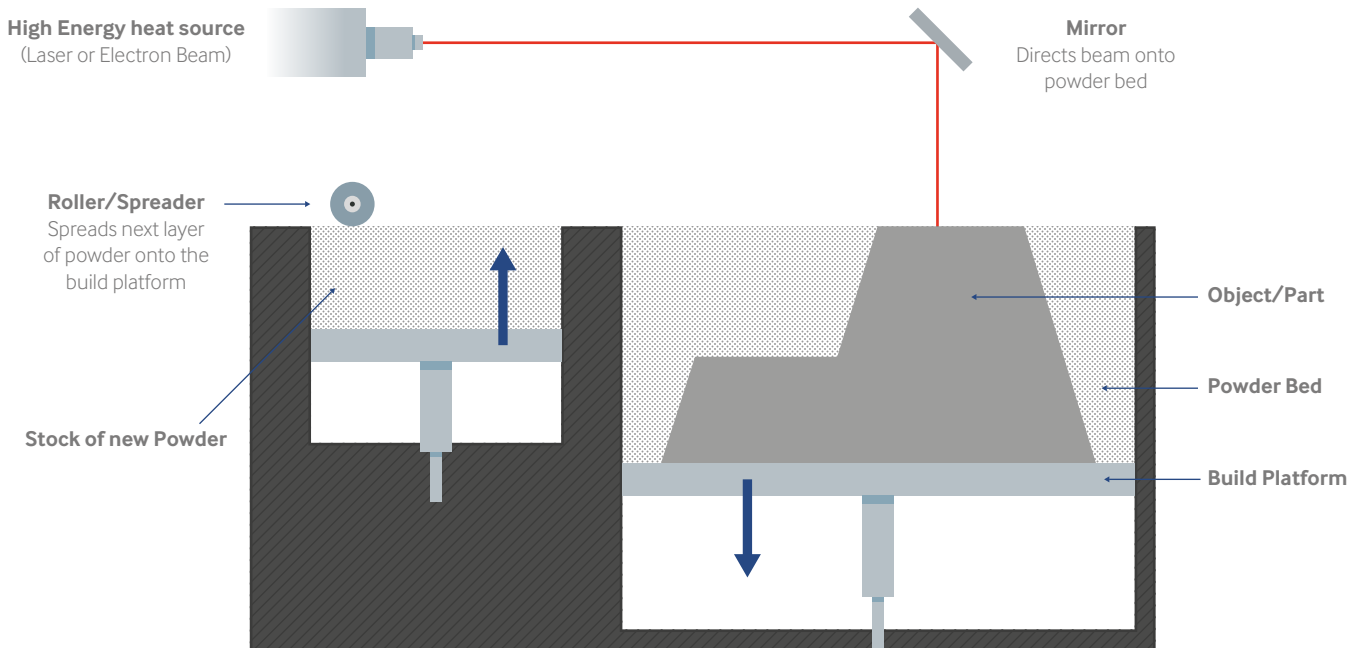


Figure 2: Typical Powder Bed Fusion machine layout

Classification	Material	Type	Typical Aerospace Component
Powder Bed Fusion	Metal	Structural	Borescope plug, Oiljet, Heat exchanger, Pipework, Ducting, Mounting brackets Vanes, Fuel Nozzle, Combustor head, Combustor tile
		System	Seat buckle, Hinge bracket
		Propulsion	Control valve, Hydraulic manifolds
	Polymer	Structural	Interior fittings
		Propulsion	Design prototypes
	Ceramic	Propulsion	Casting cores

Table 1: Typical aerospace components manufactured by powder bed fusion

Figure 1: UK based Renishaw's RenAM 500Q additive manufacturing solution



The ATI has funded several projects with Renishaw as partners including DRAMA, HORIZON and WINDY. These projects have enabled the UK to develop as a leader of AM solutions

## Direct Energy Deposition (DED)

Direct Energy Deposition is typically used for larger scale builds. The process generally has a metal-depositing nozzle combined with a high energy heat source such as a laser, mounted on a multi-axis arm. The nozzle deposits powdered metal or wire metal and the heat source melts the deposited material onto the build below it. The arm allows metal to be deposited from many positions. As with powder bed fusion, the object or part is built up in layers. The materials used, and typical parts created by direct energy deposition are shown in Figure 3 and Table 2.

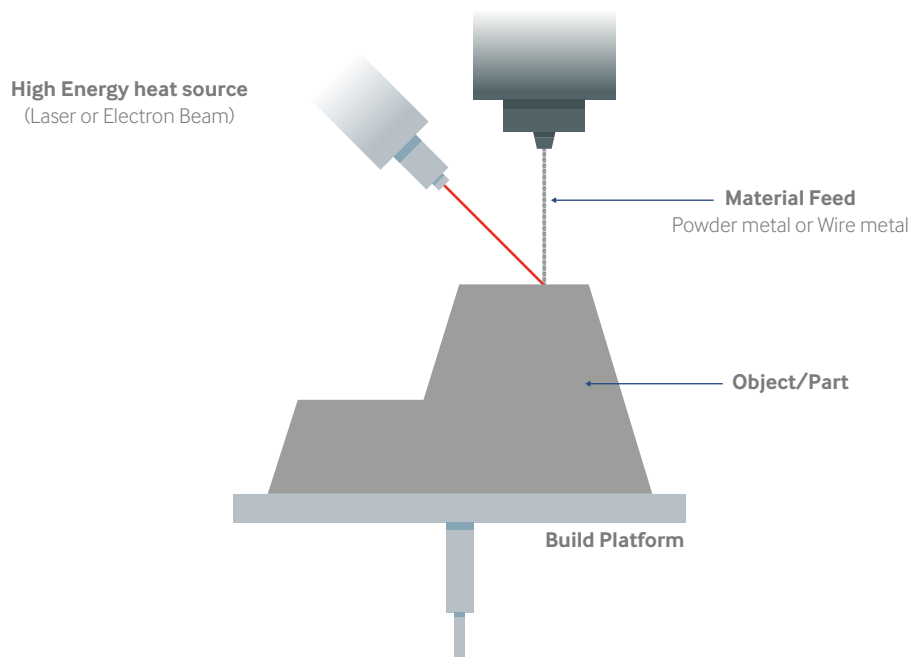


Figure 3: Typical Direct Energy Deposition machine layout

Classification	Material	Type	Typical Aerospace Component
Direct Energy Deposition	Metal (powder)	Structural	Premium seat frames
		Propulsion	Bearing Housing
	Metal (wire feed)	Structural	Spar Element, Rib elements, Seat Frame

Table 2: Typical aerospace components manufactured by Direct Energy Deposition

There are several other types of additive manufacturing techniques. Material Jetting and Binder Jetting work in similar ways to inkjet printers and use polymer ‘drops’ to build layers of an object. Vat polymerisation works by using an ultraviolet light to locally cure specific points to build a solid within a vat of a liquid photo-sensitive polymer resin.

## Digital Reconfigurable Additive Manufacturing Facilities for Aerospace (DRAMA) - £11.6m

The ATI supported the formation of DRAMA which is funded by the ISCF. This project will deliver a world-first, digitally twinned, reconfigurable AM capability which will be at the forefront of AM technology. The facility will be available for use by UK enterprises across the full supply chain and provide an effective validation platform for industry users of digital AM processes.



### The end-to-end powder bed AM process

Conventional manufacturing methods routinely centre on processes such as joining, fabrication, casting, forging and machining. Powder bed AM, however, requires a completely different material feedstock preparation and the equipment used is different to conventional processes. There are challenges which are unique to powder bed AM in achieving part compliance. (See Table 3, below)

Powder bed AM has a distinct set of steps within the production process (see Figure 4), each of which provide both benefits and challenges that must be considered holistically to generate the potential economic system level benefits. Within aerospace, powder bed AM has been the most widely adopted process so far with continual iterations and developments to powder bed platforms.

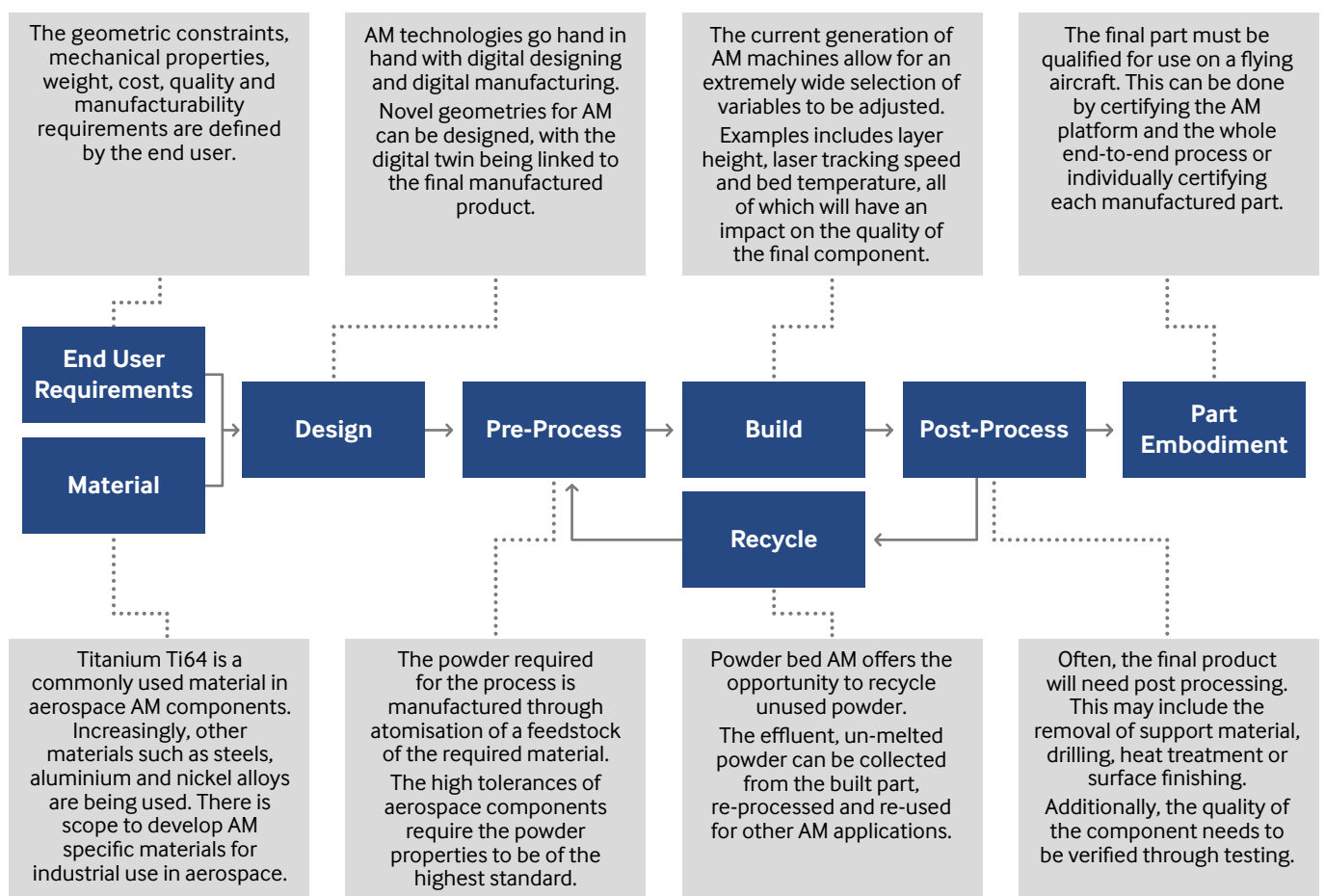


Figure 4: Flow diagram of the end-to-end additive manufacturing process

## The benefits of Additive manufacturing

Additive manufacturing can provide several benefits to the end user – these are shown in Figure 5. It is worth noting that all six benefits identified below ultimately lead to a reduction in processing costs to the end user.

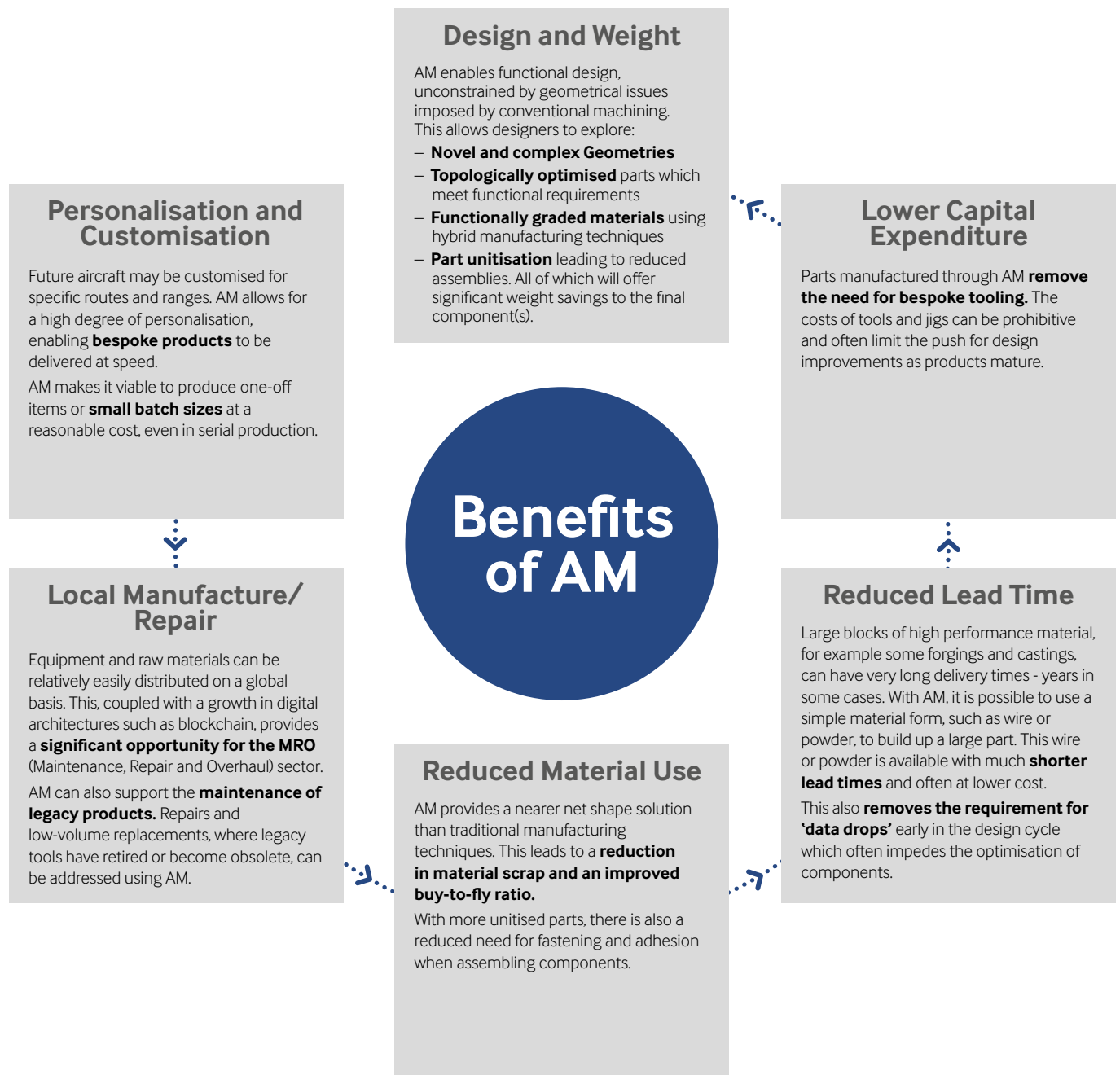


Figure 5: The benefits of additive manufacturing

The benefits of additive manufacturing can lead to a transformative shift in aerospace manufacturing.

These benefits can be even greater when combined with other manufacturing techniques and ideologies. Emerging manufacturing processes such as functionalised components and hybrid manufacturing unlock many new opportunities beyond those mentioned above. These are considered by the ATI to be the longer-term targets for AM processes.

The ability to combine AM with other operations such as laser surface finishing or embedded electrical circuitry will allow manufacturers to build more complex and intelligent aerospace components.

## Hybrid Manufacturing

Hybrid manufacturing is the process of combining two or more manufacturing techniques into one single platform.

These processes could include:

- Additive manufacturing
- Traditional subtractive machining such as milling
- Drilling
- Printing circuit boards & embedding systems
- Coating or cladding of components
- Surface finishing
- Laser treatments
- Multi-material processes (such as composite layup)



## The benefits of AM vs the required commitment

Additive manufacturing is still in its infancy for safety critical and primary aerospace components. As a result, only some of the benefits mentioned above are beginning to be realised. Figure 6 illustrates that the greatest benefits are achieved when the aerospace sector commits to manufacturing more components using AM<sup>5</sup>.

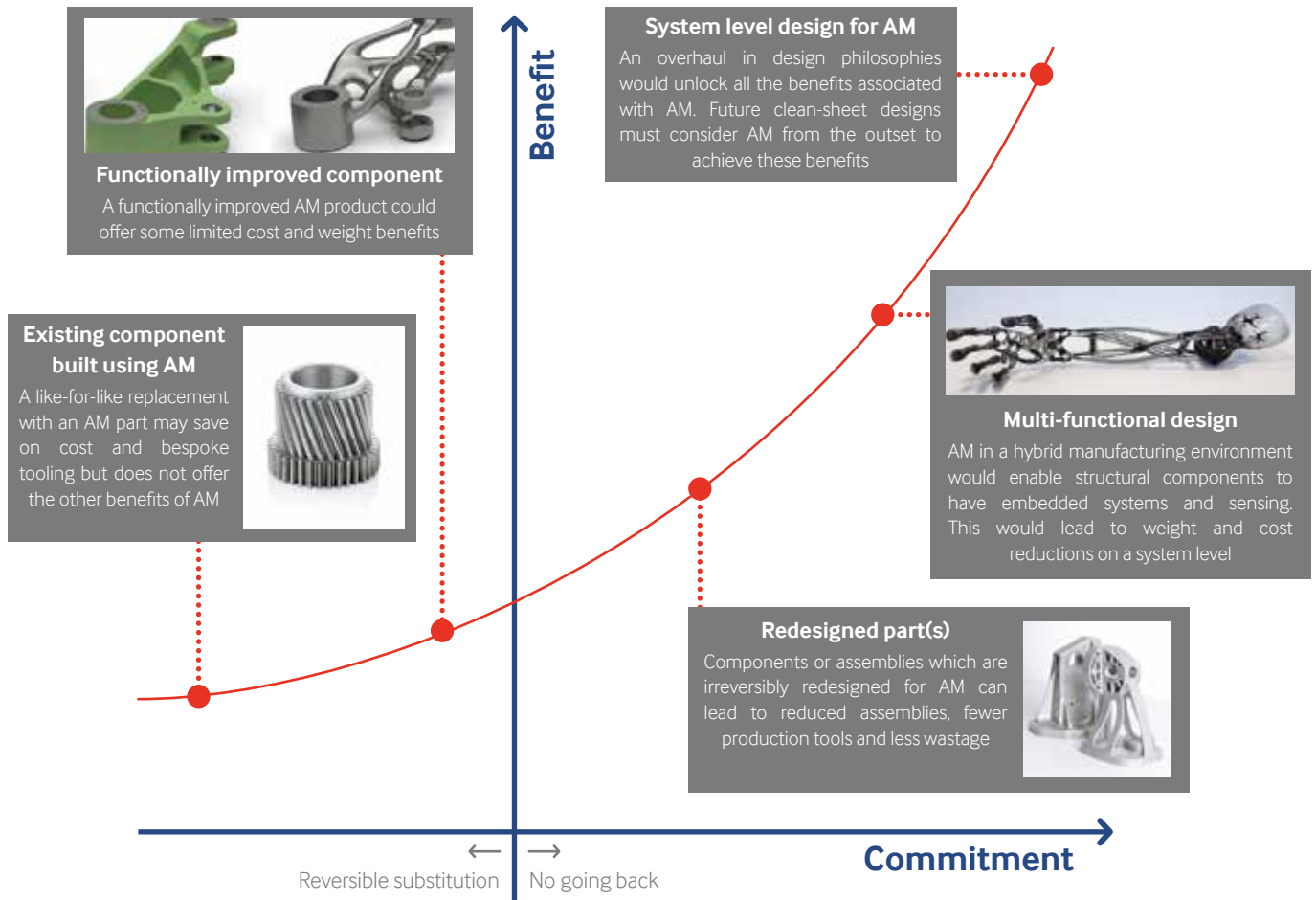


Figure 6: The benefits of AM vs the required commitment

## CHALLENGES

Along with the benefits of the end to-end additive manufacturing process, there also come challenges for the adoption of this technology in aerospace application. These are set out in Table 3:

	<p><b>Cost</b></p> <p>Although AM is recognised as being capable of reducing manufacturing costs in the long-term, there are still many short term prohibitive costs which have hindered its widespread adoption. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The high costs of high quality AM machines</li> <li>– The high level of investment required to certify and qualify AM parts</li> <li>– The cost associated with training engineers to design for AM</li> </ul> <p>A recent Ernst and Young global study on Additive Manufacturing<sup>3</sup> showed that 40% of businesses surveyed identified cost as a major hurdle when implementing AM.</p>
	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <p>In the AM process, the material and the component are created in the same instant. This means AM parts have unique mechanical properties. Materials developed specifically for AM are still in their infancy and more research in this area is necessary.</p>
	<p><b>Process</b></p> <p>Aerospace AM suppliers are still understanding the potential limitations throughout the entire end-to-end AM process. Factors include scalability, throughput, size restrictions and availability of AM machines. There is also a challenge to verify the final AM part - It is difficult to non-destructively test (NDT) complex AM parts and in-line process verification can add time and cost.</p>
	<p><b>Certification &amp; Standards</b></p> <p><b>The ATI's technical and specialist advisory groups identified certification as the biggest challenge to adopting additive manufacturing in aerospace.</b> Conventionally manufactured parts are often selected as they carry less risk for qualification.</p> <p>Additionally, there are limited data libraries, limited standards for tests or materials and relatively unproven methods for NDT (non-destructive testing). This puts further constraints on material development for AM, testing of AM components and qualification of AM parts.</p>
	<p><b>Supply Chain</b></p> <p>The UK is amongst the global leaders in knowledge generation and successful application of AM. However, there are deficiencies in the supply chain for manufacturing using AM. Long established business practices within the sector, such as supply chain relationship management and minimum risk procurement impede the opportunity presented within the supply chain.</p>
	<p><b>AM and Disruption</b></p> <p>Within AM, there are intrinsic risks of digital disaggregation which make it potentially easy for certain parts of the digital supply chain to be commoditised. There are also recognised risks of cyber security, knowhow and IP leakage leading to reduced ability to differentiate product offerings.</p>

Table 3: The challenges facing additive manufacturing in aerospace

Overcoming these challenges is paramount in accelerating the acceleration of additive manufacturing within the aerospace sector. The ATI will work with industry and across other support mechanisms to develop suitable technology projects which address the challenges described above.

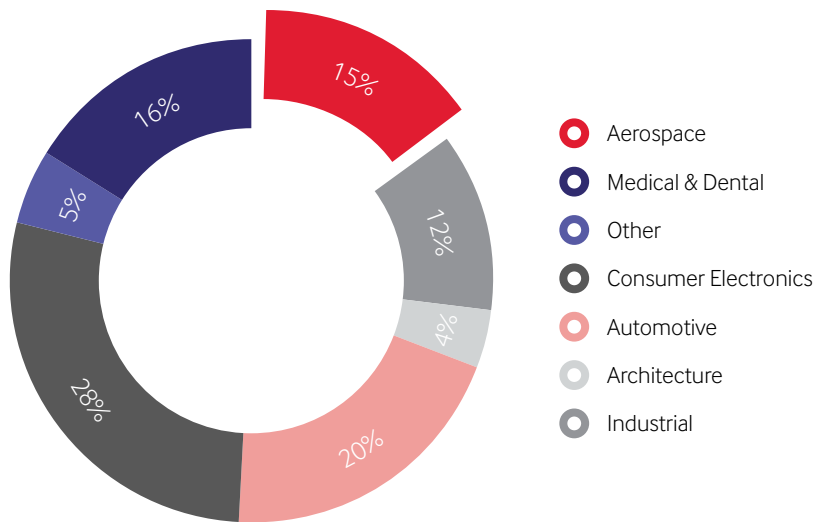


## FUTURE MARKET AND OPPORTUNITIES

Driven by strong economic growth in emerging markets, demand for air travel is on the rise. There are over 20,000 commercial aircraft and 15,000 business jets currently in operation globally, and this fleet is expected to double in size over the next 20 years.

The through-life-support opportunities associated with the growing number of aircraft are estimated at over US\$1.9 trillion between 2016 and 2035. This growing market and associated through-life support offers major opportunities for additive manufacturing.

Figure 7 shows the forecasted additive manufacturing market in 2025. \$3.2 billion is attributed to the aerospace AM sector (in both products and services). Additive manufacturing in the aerospace sector is poised to grow at a 26% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) until at least 2025.



### \$21.5 Billion

Forecasted global AM market in 2025

### \$3.2 Billion

Forecasted Aerospace AM market in 2025

Figure 7: A snapshot of the additive manufacturing Market in 2025

### HORIZON (AM) - £13.4m

The ATI funded HORIZON project was a collaboration between GKN, Renishaw, Autodesk, Delcam and the universities of Warwick and Sheffield.

The project developed AM techniques into viable production processes for aerospace parts and components over 3.5 years. Outputs of the project included developing wire EDM processes and a fully functional material analysis lab.

The project has helped enhance UK business competitiveness, create 12 highly skilled jobs, and ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of cutting-edge technology development in a rapidly developing field. The GKN site in Filton grew from 2 to 10 AM machines.



Emerging aerospace trends are offering 'clean sheet' projects with the prospect of radically re-thinking product architectures – This presents great opportunities to adopt AM. Figure 8 provides an indicative view of the aerospace market and highlights where AM can be an enabling technology on future platforms.

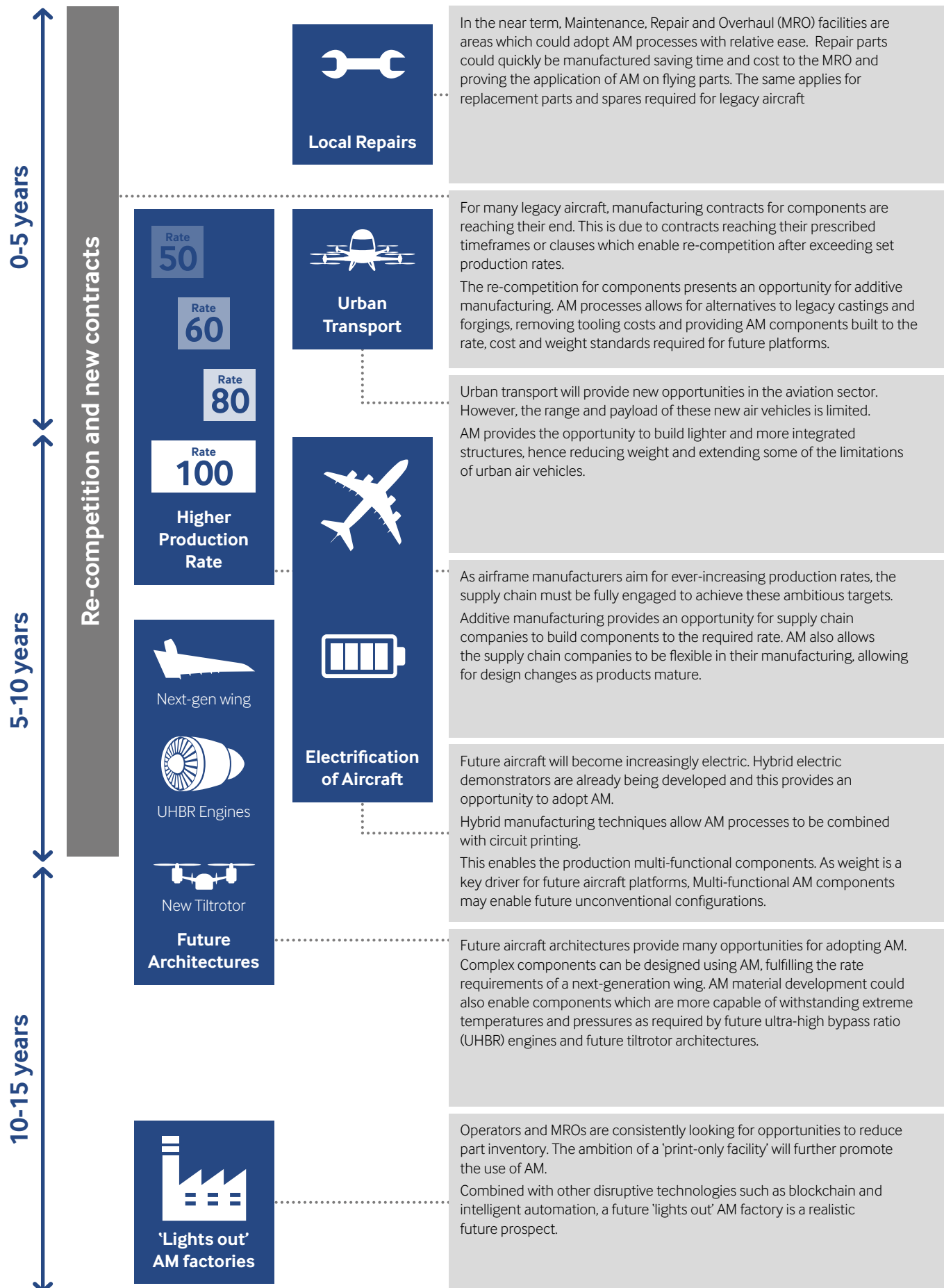


Figure 8: An illustration of the future aerospace market and opportunities for additive manufacturing

## TECHNOLOGY ROADMAPS

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The following technology roadmap for AM represents the ATI's view of core areas that will need to be developed and a possible timescale for this work. The roadmaps consider technologies, architectures and methods & tools for additive manufacturing over the next fifteen years and beyond.

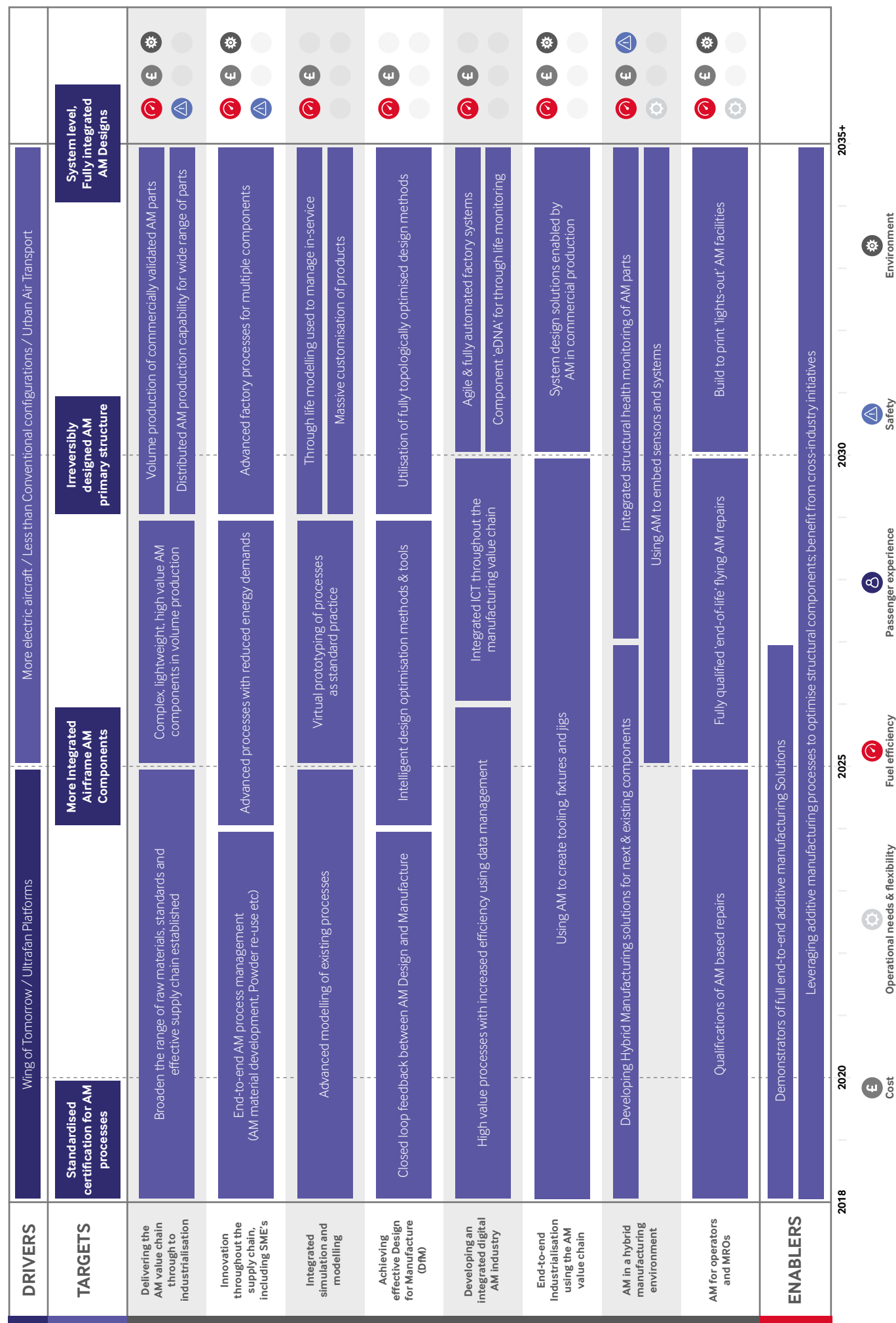
The main drivers reflect the market opportunities in the aerospace sector. The secure timeframe is centred around Airbus's 'Wing of Tomorrow' and Rolls Royce's 'Ultrafan' architectures. The exploit and position timeframes look ahead to more transformative opportunities such as electrification and disruptive ideas such as urban air mobility.

Targets for the development of additive manufacturing have been set and reflect these market drivers:

- **2020: Standardised certification for AM processes.**  
As one of the biggest barriers to adoption, certification and qualification of AM components must be addressed without delay in a collaborative and progressive manner.
- **2025: More integrated airframe AM components.**  
A short-term (2025) target is for AM components to be more integrated in to the airframe. This includes the successful demonstration of AM for repair and legacy products. This is in-line with targets from companies interviewed as part of this study.
- **2030: Irreversibly designed AM primary structure.**  
As illustrated in Figure 6, the benefits of AM are realised when components can no longer be replaced by conventional manufacturing. The medium-term (2030) goal is to realise this benefit for primary structures.
- **2035+: System level, fully integrated AM designs.**  
The long-term (2035+) target for AM is that new, clean-sheet aircraft platforms will consider a system-level design for AM from the outset. This would most likely consider hybrid manufacturing techniques and would lead to AM 'lights-out' facilities for spares and repairs.

A number of key topics to achieve these targets are listed in the roadmap below. Specific program areas are then itemised for each topic, with the implementation timescale, and the relationship of these to the ATI whole aircraft attributes indicated symbolically. Comment is invited on these Technology roadmaps as they will guide future investment decisions in this area.



Proposed projects will need to be supported with evidence of the barriers that they are addressing and the benefits they are realising within the UK's additive manufacturing landscape. Proposals with a collaborative exploitation will be favoured.



## NEXT STEPS FOR THE ATI

The ATI will work to identify suitable opportunities around the topic of additive manufacturing that generate technology impact and economic benefit for the sector. From the ATI's consultation, it is clear that different parts of the AM supply chain are at varying levels of development and adoption. The intention (by achieving the points below) is to bring the supply chain to a similar high standard of AM maturity.

The ATI will continue to work with other national initiatives such as the industrial strategy challenge fund (ISCF), DRAMA, Made Smarter, the National Centre for Additive Manufacturing (NCAM), and the All-party Parliamentary Manufacturing Group (APMG). The focus will be on the formation of suitable technology projects, coordination of activities and the dissemination of insights to people in organisations positioned to deliver these requirements.

	<p><b>Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Action to address key technological barriers, notably in the areas of final part acceptability, volume development and cost management</li> <li>– Identification of prohibitive costs in the AM value chain and means to reduce these</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Material databases, focussed initially on lower technology materials, to allow broader industry activity with potential for positive business return</li> <li>– Standardising tests and qualification processes for new materials</li> </ul>
	<p><b>AM end-to-end Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Platforms to enable 'design for AM' through links to High Value Design programmes</li> <li>– A focus on validation and verification of the AM process (In-process, post process, NDT see ATI Product Verification INSIGHT)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Certification &amp; Standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Defining certification and standards in AM through collaboration with manufacturers, standards organisations and regulatory bodies</li> <li>– Defining a route to certification for material development in AM, testing of AM components and qualification of AM parts</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Supply chain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased collaboration amongst initiatives regarding AM technology awareness and skills development</li> <li>– Understanding the digital supply chain required to enable a distributed manufacturing process. This includes research around cyber security and other digital platforms such as blockchain</li> <li>– Develop supply chain capability to move from away from billet machining to near net shape + post processes using AM</li> </ul>
	<p><b>AM as a disruptor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Harness the benefits of additive manufacturing for ATI 'position' projects</li> <li>– Use additive manufacturing as an enabling technology for next-generation platforms (Hybrid Electric, Urban Air, other unconventional aircraft)</li> <li>– Combining AM with other processes in a Hybrid Manufacturing environment</li> </ul>

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Additive Manufacturing UK - National Strategy 2018 – 25

<sup>2</sup>The 7 categories of Additive Manufacturing, Loughborough university

<sup>3</sup>Ernst & Young Global 3d printing report, 2016

<sup>4</sup>Future Manufacturing Processes research group, University of Leeds

<sup>5</sup>Risk based stepwise approach of design to maximise value from Additive Manufacturing, Neil Mantle, Rolls Royce

<sup>6</sup>Global Additive Manufacturing Market, Forecast to 2025, Frost & Sullivan

<sup>7</sup>All-party parliamentary manufacturing group

<sup>8</sup>3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing State of the Industry 2018, Wohlers Associates

<sup>9</sup>Digital Reconfigurable Additive Manufacturing facilities for Aerospace (DRAMA)

<sup>10</sup>National Centre for Additive Manufacturing (NCAM)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## GLOSSARY

<b>AM</b>	Additive Manufacture	<b>MRO</b>	Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul
<b>DRAMA</b>	Digital Reconfigurable Additive manufacturing facilities for Aerospace	<b>MTC</b>	Manufacturing Technology Centre
<b>ISCF</b>	Industrial Strategy challenge fund	<b>NDT</b>	Non-destructive Testing

## WHO WE ARE

The **Aerospace Technology Institute** (ATI) is the objective convenor and voice of the UK's aerospace technology community. The Institute defines the national aerospace technology strategy that is used to focus the delivery of a £3.9 billion joint government-industry funded aerospace technology programme.

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