Airbus generative AI pilot and AI upskilling

IMPLEMENTED 2023 ONWARDS · MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL · FRANCE · BAND D · CLAIMED ONLY
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Airbus built AI and data skills into its workforce planning over more than a decade and required training before staff could use generative AI tools. In a pilot of about 2,000 employees, it reported that the average user saved up to 4 hours a week when using an AI assistant effectively.

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NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI assistants for office work; the pilot tool is not named. Half the workforce was using Google's Gemini assistant in June 2025, per trade press..

Implemented: 2023 onwards. Grade: band D, Task support, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: Average user saved up to 4 hours a week in a generative AI pilot of about 2,000 employees, by Airbus's account in a GOV.UK case study

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Airbus. Aerospace and defence group working across commercial aircraft, defence, space and helicopters. 165,294 employees at the end of 2025, per its full-year results. The case study is part of a UK research programme on AI upskilling led by Dr Nisreen Ameen of Royal Holloway, University of London, with Skills England, published on GOV.UK. Canvas block: 5. People and skills. Also 4. Operations and process, 8. Governance and risk.

Business challenge

The challenge. By Airbus's account, AI had been built into its products for over a decade, but its use sat with a small number of specialist technical roles. Large datasets across supply chains, manufacturing, procurement and planning sat in legacy systems and needed people with deep

Who implemented it

In-house (In-house): Airbus Digital Academy: produces the annual digital and data competence strategy that guides AI skills development..
Google (Model or cloud provider): Supplies the Gemini assistant, used by half the workforce in June 2025 per Professional Engineering..
The GOV.UK case study does not name the tool used in the pilot or any external training provider.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T1 Chat assistants. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Google, Gemini.

Where it was built in: Used in office-based, non-production roles for routine tasks, analysis and administration; the GOV.UK case study does not say which tool the pilot used or how it was built in. Professional Engineering reported in June 2025 that half the workforce was using Google's Gemini assistant.

What changed

Before: AI use concentrated in specialist technical roles, by Airbus's account. After: AI competencies are part of job profiles and annual workforce planning, staff complete training before using generative AI tools, and some employees have moved into data and AI roles. In the pilot, time savings were mainly in office-based, non-production roles, on routine tasks, analysis and administration. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported for the pilot or the skills programme. An Airbus executive said in June 2025 that the company was investing $50m a year in AI, per Professional Engineering.

What it saved

By Airbus's account: in a pilot of about 2,000 employees, the average user saved up to 4 hours a week when using an AI assistant effectively. How the saving was measured, the share of users who reached it and any value in money: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

Training was mandatory before access to generative AI tools, and data governance set out what data may be shared with AI systems, by Airbus's account. In 2024 Airbus said its working group was developing policies and safeguards for responsible use. In June 2025 an executive said all potential AI projects are screened and ranked for risk. Named owner of the pilot: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
Airbus's executive vice-president for digital, Catherine Jestin, described the company-wide generative AI working group set up in 2023; a named owner for the pilot is not reported. [3]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Training was mandatory before employees could access generative AI tools, and data governance set out what could and could not be shared with AI systems, by Airbus's account. [1]

A2 · Human in the loop · Not reported
Not reported.

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
An Airbus executive said in June 2025 that all potential AI projects are screened and ranked for their risk levels; how pilot results were measured is not reported. [4]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
Not reported.

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
No agents described.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Claimed
Airbus said in 2024 that it must comply with the regulatory constraints of the aerospace industry and use generative AI safely and responsibly; no regulator action is reported. [3]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Time savings in office-based roles in the pilot, by Airbus's account.

– Sustained uptake of learning pathways, communities and mandatory training, with no drop-off reported, by Airbus's account.

– Internal mobility: employees moved into data and AI roles after training, by Airbus's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported for the pilot. In June 2025 an Airbus executive said some AI use cases had been "big failures", without naming them, per Professional Engineering.

UNPROVEN

– How the 4-hour figure was measured, and whether it held beyond the pilot.

– Whether time saved turned into lower costs or higher output.

– Which AI assistant the pilot used: the GOV.UK case study does not name it.

Timeline

2023 Airbus sets up a company-wide working group on generative AI [3]

May 2024 Airbus says 600 generative AI use cases have been identified in less than a year [3]

Jun 2025 Executive says 46,000 employees have taken an AI course that year and half the workforce uses Gemini [4]

Jun 2026 GOV.UK case study reports the pilot of about 2,000 employees and time saved of up to 4 hours a week [1]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: D, Task support. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Task support.

Task support (Level 1, band D). Individuals do the same work with an AI assistant; the skills programme changed workforce planning, but no process or structural change from the tools is reported.

Task support: individuals do the same office work with an AI assistant, and the reported gain is time per user in a pilot. The wider skills programme changed how Airbus plans and develops its workforce, but no change to processes, costs or structure from the AI tools is reported.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

Airbus treated AI as a workforce capability first: competencies in job profiles, an annual skills plan and mandatory training before access to generative AI. That sequence makes wider use safer. The reported pilot result is time per user, the usual first measure for an AI assistant. For a mid-sized or larger organisation, the next step is to show where the saved time goes and to measure it the same way across functions.

1. Require basic training and clear data rules before giving staff generative AI tools.
2. Build AI skills into job profiles and annual workforce plans.
3. Measure time saved with a stated method, then track where that time goes.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported: the pilot figure is Airbus's own account in a case study that GOV.UK says was not independently audited or verified. Trade press reports the scale of training and tool use from an Airbus executive's remarks.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: qualitative interviews validated with the organisation and published in a government research programme; no measurement method is given for the pilot.

Sources disagree. The GOV.UK case study says around 2,000 employees, about 3% of the workforce, completed the data and AI pathways; Airbus reported 165,294 employees at the end of 2025, and 157,000 were cited in June 2025, which would put 2,000 nearer 1%. The case study's summary table says pilot users reported saving up to 4 hours a week; its main text says Airbus found the average user saved up to 4 hours when using an AI assistant effectively.

Status. Ongoing: the GOV.UK case study, last updated in July 2026, places Airbus at the strategy stage of AI skills adoption, with emerging progress towards scaling.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/airbus-generative-ai-upskilling

[1] GOV.UK (Department for Work and Pensions and Skills England): Supporting case studies: What works for AI upskilling in the UK (June 2026, updated July 2026)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-ai-what-works-for-ai-upskilling-in-the-uk/supporting-case-studies-what-works-for-ai-upskilling-in-the-uk

[2] GOV.UK (Skills England): New tools will help employers maximise AI productivity gains (10 June 2026)
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-tools-will-help-employers-maximise-ai-productivity-gains

[3] Airbus: How Airbus uses generative artificial intelligence to reinvent itself (May 2024)
https://www.airbus.com/en/newsroom/stories/2024-05-how-airbus-uses-generative-artificial-intelligence-to-reinvent-itself

[4] Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Professional Engineering: 'AI won't take your job but someone who knows AI will,' Airbus boss warns Paris Air Show audience (June 2025)
https://www.imeche.org/news/news-article/ai-won-t-take-your-job-but-someone-who-knows-ai-will-airbus-boss-warns-paris-air-show-audience

[5] Airbus: Airbus reports Full-Year (FY) 2025 results (February 2026)
https://www.airbus.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-02-airbus-reports-full-year-fy-2025-results

Airbus website: https://www.airbus.com

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