

5 Aeronautics in Spain: Specialization & Beyond

5.1 Basic Data of the Sector and the Territories

The emergence and development of the Spanish aeronautical sector was military in nature, which is why today's industry is characterized as being dual, as occurs in other European countries. Not until after the Second World War, does commercial aviation begin to develop and expand. Its present day entrepreneurial structure relies on a small number of large and medium size firms (>250 workers), a few medium size firms and a large number of small firms. Thus, no more than 300 firms make up the aerospace¹ sector in Spain, of which a 90% are SMEs, who produce a 15% of total turnover. A 96% of the total turnover is manufactured by 32 firms of the Spanish aeronautics sector (ATECMA, 2005). This group is formed by six large companies (>1,000 employees), two with a workforce of between 250 and 1,000 workers, nine firms with an employment of between 100 and 250 workers, and finally, 15 small firms (<100 workers).

The large firms are basically devoted to development and manufacturing of aircraft and large structures for flying. With respect to medium size firms, these are devoted to aeronautical engineering and complete the segment of aeronautical systems and equipment. Thirdly, the smaller firms manufacture and develop compound materials, capital goods, various equipment, mechanization and surface treatments.

¹ The space sector is made up of a total of 15 companies and an equivalent number of industrial subcontractors.

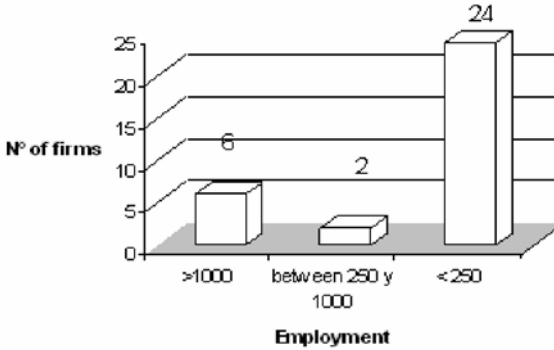


Fig. 5.1. Entrepreneurial structure (2003)

Source: ATECMA, 2005

The Spanish aeronautics industry has followed the path of growth that characterized it since the mid nineties, a time in which this industry followed a restructuring and consolidation process through mergers and the creation of new groups. The objective was to be able to count on leading firms with sufficient capacity and potential for competing in an ever more competitive global market. The result has been a growth process that has permitted that the importance of the sector in 2003 reach a 0.43% of the Spanish GDP and a 0.12% of the Spanish working population.

Table 5.1. Key sector data (2003)

Importance of the sector	0.43% of Spanish GDP 0.12% of the Spanish working population
Employment	23.256 persons
Turnover	3.188 thousand €
Expenditure in R+D	13,9 % of turnover
Exports	69,8 % of turnover
Purchase orders	199 % of turnover

Source: ATECMA, Statistical Report 2003

As can be observed in figure 5.2, the employment increased progressively during recent years from 18.343 jobs in 1997 to 23.256 jobs in 2003, which represents a 21% growth rate for the period. Specifically, between 2002 and 2003 employment grew a 2.3%, creating 532 new jobs.