



P R E S S I N F O R M A T I O N

Backgrounder

Aerion Corporation

Getting there first: Aerion's path to a supersonic renaissance.

Aerion Corporation is an aeronautical engineering organization headquartered in Reno, Nevada. The company was established in 2002 to pursue the development of supersonic transport aircraft incorporating supersonic natural laminar flow (SNLF) technology.

The crucial work of developing and patenting SNLF technology began in the 1990s and was conducted by a predecessor company, ASSET Group (Affordable Supersonic Executive Transport), led by Dr. Richard R. Tracy, an expert in hypersonic and supersonic design.

In 1999 and 2000, ASSET performed supersonic test flights in collaboration with NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center (Formerly NASA Dryden) confirming predicted levels of supersonic natural laminar flow—the enabling technology for a new generation of efficient supersonic aircraft.

Recognizing the potential of the SNLF concept, an investor group led by Robert M. Bass formed Aerion in 2002 to acquire ASSET and its team with the aim of commercializing the company's supersonic technology.

Since that time, the company has amassed numerous patents and the world's largest knowledge base on SNLF-based supersonic transport technology. It has conducted several follow-on flight tests in conjunction with NASA, confirming and refining SNLF concepts.

Aerion has worked with the University of Washington Aeronautical Lab, the European Transonic Wind Tunnel, and other leading international research organizations to optimize the design of a supersonic jet.

In conjunction with a team of Stanford University aerodynamicists, Aerion developed and refined computer design tools for the analysis of transonic and supersonic airflows and the aerodynamic optimization of a supersonic jet. In 2012, it acquired Palo Alto-based Desktop Aeronautics to better integrate its operations with the Reno engineering office.

Aerion introduced its Aerion Supersonic Business Jet (SBJ) to the aviation community in 2004 and opened its order book for this twin-engine design in 2007, almost instantly acquiring 50 orders backed by refundable deposits.

The financial collapse and recession that began in 2008 slowed the company's discussions with potential manufacturing partners for this jet. However, a robust R&D effort continued during that time, resulting in the 2014 announcement of the Aerion AS2, a

larger, trijet aircraft employing SNLF technology. The AS2 evolved from the expressed wishes of potential customers for a larger, longer-range jet.

With the global economy healing and demand strong for long-range jets, Aerion remains committed to forming a strategic alliance to produce the AS2, as well as follow-on supersonic aircraft. The company announced in 2014 its intention to financially sponsor this effort. Aerion expects to begin delivering the AS2 within five or six years of the formation of an industrial partnership and a formal program launch.

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