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FARNBOROUGH 2008: Boeing moves into scrap business

By [Aimée Turner](#)

Boeing is moving into the next-generation scrap business, teaming with Italy's **Alenia Aeronautica** to help establish a composite waste recycling centre near the **787** partner's Puglia manufacturing base.

Together with UK partner **Milled Carbon**, Italy's national technology agency ENEA and Karborek, the builder and ultimate plant operator, the two primes will develop the expertise required to recycle both composite materials during manufacturing and - eventually - primary structural parts of the aircraft into reusable materials for non-critical structures such as interior lining, galley and seat parts and tools.

The southern Italy facility, due to be operational by the end of next year, will process an average 1,000t annually - or 9t a day - of composite scrap at capacity.

Boeing and Milled Carbon, the provider of the industrial plant blueprint, have together worked for several years on a pilot programme to process both cured and uncured composite parts on a continual feed that extracts high-quality carbonfibres.

Milled Carbon, the world's largest processor of recycled carbonfibre, established its factory in Birmingham, UK in 2003. It can process more than 500t of carbonfibre composites annually using a thermo/chemical process that can handle most woven and non-woven pre-preg rolls and parts up to 2m (6.5ft) wide.

John Davidson, managing director of Milled Carbon, believes global manufacturing capacity of carbonfibre stands at 35,000t a year and, with up to 40% of carbonfibre being wasted in the manufacturing process, the industry will soon need vastly increased composite recycling capacity. "Believe me, we are already running out of space at our UK facility," he says.

Davidson says the business, which produces carbonfibre that is processed by chopping, milling or shredding was originally approached by Boeing for the purpose of aircraft recycling. "When they saw what we could do they saw the potential of applying recycling techniques within the manufacturing process," he says.

"Through this agreement we are actively developing technologies and capabilities today that will allow us to responsibly recycle our precious resources and help meet rising demand for high-quality composite material," says Boeing's director of environmental strategy Billy Glover.

"Alenia Aeronautica is very aware of the importance of product sustainability, and as the use of composites grows, so does the importance of recycling these materials," says Alenia chief technology officer Nazario Cauceglia.

The new joint venture is expected to become a member of the **Aircraft Fleet Recycling Association**, where it will promote best practice in the area of composite recycling.

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