



University of Wales Trinity Saint David

International Business Report

Morocco's Aerospace Manufacturing Industry and a Critical Evaluation of Safran Morocco

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1. Introduction

The aerospace manufacturing sector in Morocco offers excellent example in terms of international business analysis as it is a synthesis of export-led industrialisation, multinational production chains and state-supported capability modernization in the industry with high entry barriers. It is no longer a peripheral subcontracting base in the country. It currently accommodates an ecosystem comprising aerostructures, wiring systems, composites, precision machining, MRO and more activities that are engine-related, and export revenue increased to less than MAD1 billion in 2004 to MAD29 billion in 2025 (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026a; Reuters, 2026a). This report contends that competitiveness of Morocco is based on the interplay of proximity to Europe, industrial policy, free-zone infrastructure, labour-force development and accumulated supplier embeddedness but not the labour cost itself. The reason is that Safran Morocco has a footprint of ten sites and approximately 5,000 employees and is now expanding into engine assembly, MRO and landing systems (Safran, 2026a; Safran, 2026b).

2. Industry and country overview

The aerospace sector of Morocco is at the crossroad of manufacturing, logistics, engineering and trade policy. Practically the sector encompasses the production of aerostructures, cabin and ducting fittings, electrical wiring and interconnection, composites, metallic sub-parts, avionics-related subassemblies, precision machining and an increasing base of MRO. Simple assembly is not national value proposition though. It is becoming rooted in the capacity of the country to bring organised ecosystems that interlink foreign lead companies, expert suppliers, industrial parks, facilitation of customs and specific training. Moroccan Ministry of Industry and Trade defines these ecosystems as the heart of the industrial strategy, which will help to reduce fragmentation and offer local suppliers to their anchor companies (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b).

The industry is economically significant in size. According to official ministry data, the exports of aerospace have grown since 2004, when it was less than MAD1 billion, to more than MAD26 billion in 2024 and more than MAD29 billion in 2025 (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026a; Reuters, 2026a). Another indicator of the industrial survey conducted by the ministry reveals the fact that the aerospace industry brought about MAD26.381 billion in turnover and MAD5.709 billion in value added in 2022, which means that the aerospace industry is among the significant high-value industrial branches in Morocco and not a symbolic diversification project (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2023). Such numbers are important since aerospace brings in foreign-exchange revenues, skilled jobs and industrial training to an economy that has actively attempted to leave behind the activities of lower value. The trend of the sector also indicates that Morocco has had the opportunity of joining a highly regulated global value chain that compliance, traceability and process control is not a choice, but a necessity.

The breadth of the industry is observable through the existence and diversity of firms in the ecosystem. Both Reuters and the Moroccan ministry cite an industry of approximately 150 companies, with Reuters direct employment of approximately 25,000 in 2025 (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026a; Reuters, 2026a). The list of members of the GIMAS member directory also indicates the density of the cluster, including companies that deal with MRO, composites, cabling, machining, aerostructure assembly, surface treatment, testing and engineering services, as well as domestic companies like TDM Aerospace, Aviarail and Atlantic Air Industries Maroc and subsidiaries of large international groups such as Safran, Airbus Atlantic, Spirit AeroSystems,

Hexcel, Eaton, Howmet, Daher and Thales (GIMAS, 2022). This density has competitive importance because it reduces the coordination costs, is able to support quality consistency and make the country more resilient than a single-plant model would be.

The sector is still very multinational. In contrast to industries where the domestic champions operate directly with the foreign entrants, the organisation of the aerospace base in Morocco is structured primarily in terms of foreign lead companies and tiered suppliers within global programmes. This does not mean that Morocco should be passive. It implies that the competitiveness has to be comprehended based on the ability of the country to attract and retain internationally networked subsidiaries, supplier platforms and process know-how. The most significant actors in this regard are the firms whose activities in Morocco are vital not due to domestic sales but because they are Airbus, Boeing, CFM and other global clients. Competitive positioning hence is about network role, depth capability and mandate quality and not necessarily local market share.

The current position of Safran puts it on the highest status of foreign aerospace manufacturers in Morocco. The group has 26 years of presence in Morocco, over 4,800 employees working in ten locations and claims to be the leader in the aeronautics industry of the country (Safran, 2026a). Its presence is strategically wide, covering engine parts, systems, equipment and now a deepening of such presence, into LEAP engine assembly, engine MRO and landing-gear production. This expanse renders Safran more than another supplier in the ecosystem. It is a system level actor whose actions affect the development of skills, supplier development and the location of Morocco within the aerospace value chain.

The second key pillar is Airbus and Spirit AeroSystems. In late 2025, Morocco World News reported that Airbus was directly employing about 1,100 individuals in Moroccan factories and the acquired Spirit site in Casablanca employed approximately 800 workers producing A220 and A321 parts with procurement in Morocco reaching hundreds of millions of euros a year (Faouzi, 2025). This is despite the fact that caution should be taken when it comes to secondary reporting, but this is still indicative of the increasingly relevant nature of the country to the production of aerostructures associated with Airbus. Airbus and Spirit are of strategic importance since they enhance the relationship of Morocco with large volume commercial aeroplane programmes and underscore the argument that the nation is transitioning to more structurally important work packages.

Another level of upgrading is Pratt & Whitney Maroc. The project was reported to have been built to produce the parts of the machine, both static and structural, of many models of engines, the launch of which was planned in 2025 (Toutate, 2023). That is important since the machining of engine parts needs a higher degree of tighter tolerances and discipline in the process than lower-complexity subcontracting. Morocco has also tried to extend ecosystem in and around key suppliers. In 2025, new deals were clearly structured to assist Collins Aerospace supply chain and more localization (Toutate, 2025). Instead of having a single anchor investor, the country is thus expanding the industrial web of a few lead firms.

Relative positioning within the industry can be outlined under three groups. The first are the system-level foreign executives like Safran and Airbus-related operations that stabilise the most valuable mandates. Second is specialised foreign suppliers including Hexcel, Eaton, Howmet and Thales which provide process sophistication, materials capability and supply-chain depth. Third are local or domestic based firms that are in niche manufacturing, engineering or MRO. The former is more massive and has the strategic might, the second one is more deeply entrenched in the ecosystem, and the third is more localisation-capable. The significance of this distribution is that the problem facing Morocco is not just in the attraction of more foreign capital. This is to transform multinational existence into fatter domestic capacity and more local value capture over time, which is also aligned with the literature of GVC that differentiates between participation and upgrading (Lall, 1992; Coe and Yeung, 2015).

Table 1. Relative positioning of selected aerospace firms in Morocco

Firm	Core Moroccan role	Strategic significance	Positioning judgement
Safran	Engine systems, equipment, LEAP assembly, LEAP MRO, landing systems	Deepest foreign footprint and strongest upgrading trajectory	Cluster anchor and capability leader
Airbus / Airbus Atlantic / ex-Spirit site	Aerostructures, wing and fuselage-related components	Ties Morocco closely to Airbus commercial programmes	High strategic relevance, especially in aerostructures

Pratt & Whitney Maroc	Engine-part machining	Signals movement into higher-precision propulsion work	Important upgrading entrant
Domestic and niche firms such as TDM Aerospace, Aviarail and Atlantic Air Industries Maroc	Ducting, engineering tools, MRO, specialist components	Support localisation and ecosystem resilience but remain smaller scale	Useful complements rather than lead-system actors

Source: author synthesis based on Safran (2026a; 2026b), Faouzi (2025), Toutate (2023; 2025) and GIMAS (2022).

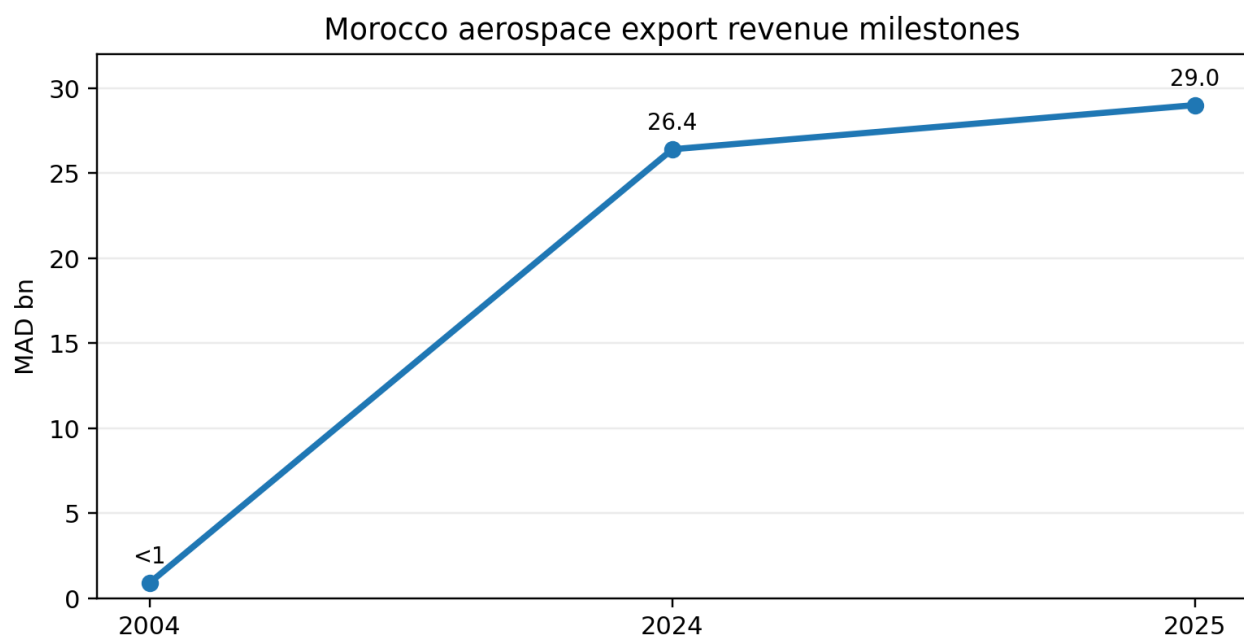


Figure 1. Morocco aerospace export revenue milestones. 2004 value shown as an approximate visual representation of the official statement “less than MAD1 billion”. Source: Ministère de l’Industrie et du Commerce (2026a) and Reuters (2026a).

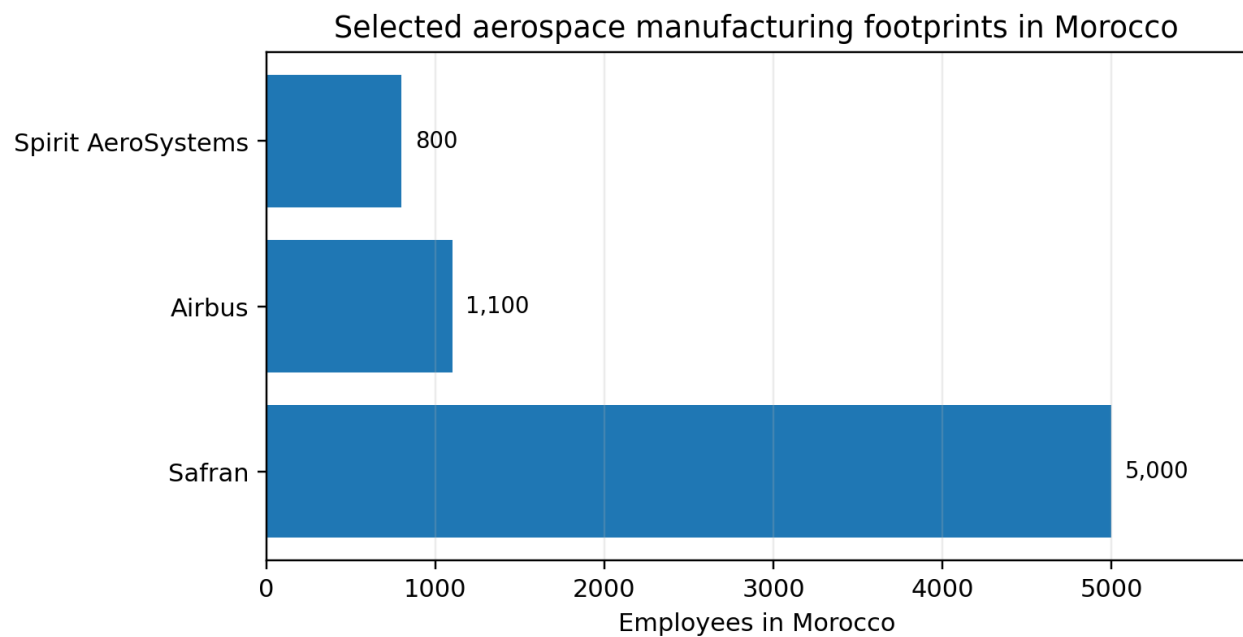


Figure 2. Selected aerospace manufacturing footprints in Morocco. Source: Safran (2026a) and Faouzi (2025).

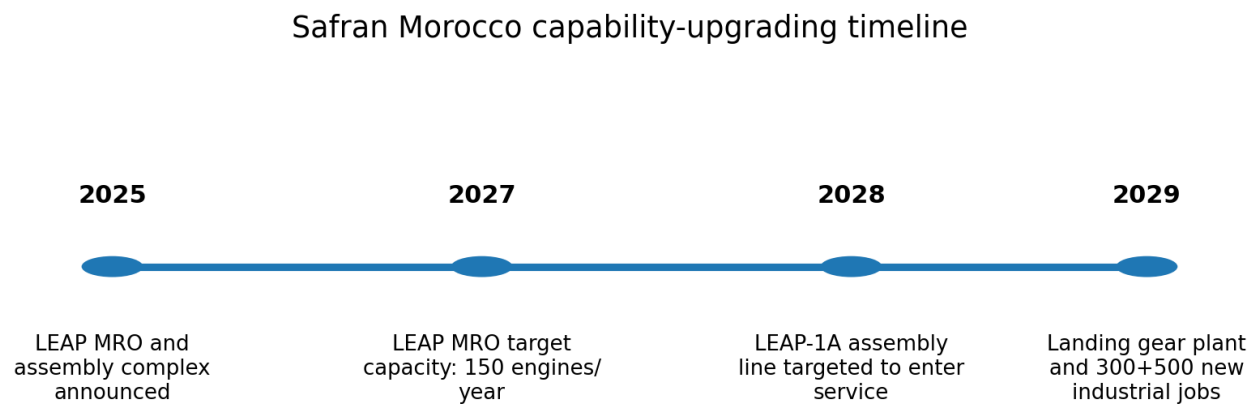


Figure 3. Safran Morocco capability-upgrading timeline. Source: author synthesis based on Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce (2026a), Safran (2026b) and Reuters (2026a).

3. Porter's Diamond analysis of Morocco's aerospace competitiveness

The Diamond created by Porter is still applicable in the analysis of why some places enable internationally competitive industries, yet the case of Morocco also demonstrates that the model needs to be tempered in terms of international business. Porter (1990) highlights factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries as well as firm strategy, structure and rivalry. Rugman and Verbeke (1993) maintain that the single diamond however, underestimates the role of foreign subsidiaries and cross-border integration in smaller economies. The so-called criticism is very pertinent in this case since the success of aerospace in Morocco cannot be discussed out of the context of multinational production networks, European demand and global certification systems. Competition in the country is not based on the country being an aerospace nation but an enabled node in wider value chains.

The Moroccan diamond has the strongest factor conditions. The geography is important as Morocco is a good place to access short lead times to Europe besides providing firms with an African and Atlantic location. However, it is not geography that describes the emergence of the sector. What is more significant is that some of the created factors in Morocco include free-zone infrastructure, industrial parks specific to a particular sector, facilitation of customs, vocational pipelines and specialised institutes. According to the aeronautics page of the ministry, the Moroccan Aerospace Institute is planned to increase places to one thousand two hundred trainees per year and that the companies can obtain a direct training subsidy of up to MAD60,000 per person (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b). They are not God granted gifts. These are capabilities created by policy, and the difference is important since it implies that the advantage of Morocco can be at least partially reproduced by other states in case they invest with the same level of discipline.

Another limitation is also indicated by the same factor conditions. The labour offer of Morocco is competitive due to the fact that the wages are still lower than those of Western Europe, and the upgrading of the sector is increasingly based on higher-order engineering, materials science, digital manufacturing and certification skills. This implies that cost arbitrage will not be enough to support the next phase of competitiveness of the country. It needs further transfer to more sophisticated skills and more local problem-solving ability. Here, Lall (1992) comes in handy since he draws a line between passive insertion into production and acquisition of technological capability. By that

measure Morocco has already developed, but it has not eradicated the threat of staying focussed in externally controlled mandates.

The situation of demand is more complicated than the one that Porter presupposes. The domestic aerospace demand in Morocco is small and this on a narrow sense should undermine the diamond. The large home market like the United States, France or China does not exist to subject firms to a strong local pressure of customers. However, the industry continues to perform well due to the fact that the pertinent demand is transnational to some extent. Airbus, Boeing, CFM and key suppliers put high quality, delivery and certification demands on Morocco which are external to the economy and those demands act like mechanisms of discipline like complex home demand. This is where this national lens of Porter ought to be adjusted. The external buyers are the most significant in the case of Morocco aerospace, however, they influence the local upgrading. It is thus the imported demand sophistication and not the traditional domestic demand advantage which benefits the country.

Another strength is related and supporting industries. The ecosystem strategy advocated by the Moroccan state specifically aims to curb fragmentation and involve local SMEs around major businesses, whereas the GIMAS directory shows that the supplier base is now comprised of composites, machining, cabling, MRO, testing, metrology, chemicals, tooling, design and calibration services (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b; GIMAS, 2022). This density enhances responsiveness and lessening of transaction cost. It also promotes learning by repeated interaction that is important in aerospace since capability is cumulative and failures in quality are costly. Coe and Yeung (2015) emphasise that the strategic links between the assets within the region and the global lead firms are at the core of the industrial development; the deepening of the suppliers in Morocco should be viewed through that prism. The flipside is that a large part of the ecosystem remains reliant on foreign lead companies and imported expertise, and thus the ecosystem has a stronger base in implementation than in technological innovation.

The industry is also strong in firm strategy, structure and rivalry though in a modified manner. Competition in Morocco is not predominantly among the Moroccan national champions. It is rivalry between foreign subsidiaries, supplier networks and other host destinations of global aerospace manufacturing. Safran, Airbus-related locations, Pratt & Whitney and other manufacturers are constantly pitting Morocco with France, Eastern Europe, Mexico and Tunisia and other manufacturing hubs. This provides the local industry with some competitive pressure that has the ability to drive

upgrading but also implies that requirements can be rebalanced in case the performance of the country suffers. The cluster is thus competitive though conditional. Its success is pegged on its ability to remain productive, reliable and strategically relevant within the multinational network decisions.

In the Moroccan case, government is very crucial and perhaps more central than in the original formulation by Porter. Authority assistance programmes are Investment Promotion Fund, which partially covers the cost of land, infrastructure, and training and Hassan II Fund, which in the case of aeronautics can assist with professional buildings and new capital equipment and major projects may also receive tax exemptions and custom relief (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b; 2026c). Such policies mitigate the risks in investments and make the industrial platform more transparent to foreign companies. Concurrently, Rodriguez-Pose et al. (2023) warn that the special economic zones and the targeted industrial policies do not necessarily create effective local spillovers. They are effective based on the quality of governance, institutional coordination and capability to link enclave activity to the rest of the domestic economy. The case of aerospace in Morocco indicates a partial success, although not a complete shift to deep national anchoring.

Competitiveness is also determined by chance factors and exogenous conditions. Aerospace is cyclical and exposed to programme delays, supply-chain shocks, safety crisis and geopolitical disruption. The air travel recovery post-pandemic has boosted demand as well as investment, however, the same sector is vulnerable to OEM bottlenecks and reliance on select few major programmes. The appeal of Morocco is thus advantaged by a favourable aviation cycle which might turn against it in case the aircraft manufacturing rates are low or engine limitations are heightened. The model described by Porter assists in understanding the principles of competitiveness, but it is less useful in explaining the volatility produced by lead firms that are concentrated globally and macro shocks.

The most convincing conclusion is that Morocco has created a viable aerospace cluster, but it is better perceived as a strategically linked and MNC-mediated diamond. Its factor conditions, policy consistency and depth of ecosystem are true assets. Its domestic demand is poor in the conventional Porterian sense, but the weakness is offset to some extent by external lead-firm demand. It has a deeper supplier base than a mere low-cost platform would suggest, but has not fully been capturing local value. It does not mean that Morocco is competitive due to its ability to learn to integrate into challenging transnational structures, but rather it is competitive because it has already become an

independent aerospace power. That is still a good accomplishment, but analytically distinct to a completely home-grown national advantage.

Table 2. Summary application of Porter’s Diamond to Morocco’s aerospace industry

Diamond determinant	Evidence from Morocco	Critical judgement
Factor conditions	IMA training pipeline, free zones, Europe-facing location, growing engineering and manufacturing experience	Strongest pillar, but future competitiveness depends on higher-order skills rather than cost alone
Demand conditions	Limited home market, but sophisticated external demand from Airbus, Boeing and tiered suppliers	Weak in classic national terms, partly offset by imported demand discipline
Related and supporting industries	150-firm ecosystem, GIMAS supplier depth, industrial parks, logistics and services	Meaningful cluster effects exist, though high-value knowledge remains partly imported
Firm strategy, structure and rivalry	Competing foreign affiliates and supplier ecosystems benchmark Morocco against alternative host locations	Competitive pressure is strong, but mandate retention remains conditional
Government and chance	Investment support, training aid, customs relief, programme volatility and aviation cycles	Government is more central than Porter assumes; exogenous shocks remain significant

A combination of PESTLE logic, CAGE and OLI paradigm should be applied to Safran Morocco. PESTLE classifies the host-country environment, CAGE explains the distances that were relevant between Morocco and the European decision centres of Safran and OLI suggests that we should remember that the success depends on the interaction between the location-specific advantages of Morocco and ownership and internalisation advantages of Safran (Dunning, 2000; Ghemawat, 2001). Such a combination is analytically better than a mere opportunity-risk checklist since the Moroccan

operations of Safran are subsidiaries within a sizable aerospace network whose strategic position requires mandate coverage, reliability of execution and local learning.

4. Critical evaluation of Safran Morocco

A combination of PESTLE logic, CAGE and OLI paradigm should be used to evaluate Safran Morocco. PESTLE assists in the organisation of the host-country environment, CAGE assists in the clarification of distances between the Morocco and the European decision centres of Safran and OLI teaches us that the success should be determined by the interplay of the location-specific advantages of Morocco and the ownership and internalisation advantages of Safran and not only by the host-country conditions (Dunning, 2000; Ghemawat, 2001). This mix is analytically better than a mere opportunity-risk checklist since the Moroccan operations of Safran are not autonomous profit centres, disconnected off the group. They are incorporated subsidiaries within a big aerospace network whose strategic worth is determined by the scope of mandates, consistency of execution and local learning.

Politically and administratively, Morocco is appealing to Safran since the continuity of policy is observed to be abnormally high in an emerging-economy manufacturing platform. The magnitude of state sponsorship can be observed in the form of financial benefits and training allowances, as well as in the symbolic and practical significance which is ascribed to aerospace at the pinnacle. The 2026 ministry statement regarding the opening of a new aircraft-engine complex by Safran clearly positioned the project within the context of the emergence of Morocco as an aerospace hub and outlined the state-supported intention to advance to the world-levels in terms of engine-assembly and maintenance services (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026a). To Safran, such a state commitment lowers the uncertainty concerning infrastructure, coordination of administration and policy follow-through. It is also an indication that the company is in a politically prioritised industry and not a fringe enclave.

Administrative distance is also not very high. Safran is a French organisation and the business environment in Morocco has institutional, linguistic and commercial connexions with France and Europe. This does not eliminate all the friction, but reduces them in comparison with more distant host locations. The fact that administrative distance and geographic distance are not equal (Ghemawat, 2001) is applicable here: Morocco is not necessarily proximate to Europe in kilometres, it is also easier in business communication, logistics and familiarity with institutions compared to many other potential production sites. That is one reason why the expansion of Safran in Morocco

has become more profound over the years as opposed to just being confined to the lower complexities of the tasks.

Nevertheless, the attractiveness of politics should not be romanticised. The aerospace growth of Morocco is partially reliant on a set of foreign lead companies with a specific focus and this leads to an unequal bargaining power. The state support is favourable to Safran, although the Moroccan state seeks Safran to go further with local integration, establish skilled employment and follow-on suppliers. It is a cooperative relationship but still strategic. Should domestic spillovers fail or the public incentives are perceived to be giving inadequate upgrading, the political tone might become tighter with time. The more prosperous the sector will be, the greater the host state may demand more local capacity and more developmental payoffs. To Safran this translates to the fact that political backing is an asset, but not a cause of laxity.

On the economic front, Morocco truly presents Safran with an attractive package of cheaper operations, closeness to European consumers and safeguarding advantages to the larger group. According to Reuters, the economic stability of the country, the availability of skills and the decision to strengthen the resilience of its supply chain were reasons why Safran decided to set up a new LEAP-1A assembly line in Morocco in 2025, and the line will produce approximately 350 engines each year (Reuters, 2025; Reuters, 2025b). This is a crucial point. It is not merely the cost reduction logic. It is the capacity diversification and network resilience. Another plausible production node can be of great value to the group in aerospace where delays in the aircraft delivery chain can be caused by a bottleneck in engines and maintenance, repair, and operation (MRO).

Tangible investment economics is also present in Morocco. The framework of support of the ministry partially covers the costs of land, infrastructure, and training, and the aeronautics investors are entitled to receive grants on buildings and capital equipment and customs and tax exemptions under certain conditions (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b; 2026c). Such incentives enhance economics of a project and reduce payback periods. Such cost sharing is important to a capital-intensive manufacturer like Safran, particularly when doing new-engine and landing-systems work. Nevertheless, Dunning (2000) OLI logic speculates that these location advantages merely generate value in the sense that Safran already has the ownership advantages needed to utilise the latter, that is, proprietary technology, certification know-how, customer relationships and inside governance

systems. The activity can be hosted in Morocco, but the firm-specific assets of the company provide the activity with a commercial value of Safran.

There are still a number of risks facing the economic case. The aerospace market is now being boosted by strong world traffic recovery and giant aircraft backlog yet the market is cyclical and is vulnerable to programme delays. The 2025 results of Safran himself indicate a business with the positive demand of civil-engine and services, the group revenue will increase to EUR31.329 billion in 2025 (Safran, 2026c). The financial strength is useful in enabling the company to invest in Morocco, but it also implies that the operations in Morocco are compared to other deployment alternatives within a global portfolio. In case group priorities shift due to a downturn or quality problem, then Morocco should still have to explain why it deserves its place. This is the reason why embeddedness is an important issue. As Andersson, Forsgren and Holm (2002) demonstrate, the performance and the development of competence can be promoted by the subsidiaries that have greater external and technical embeddedness. In the case of Safran Morocco, long-term security is not only founded upon being cheaper than France, but being operationally indispensable.

Morocco is also appealing in terms of the legislation and regulation, as it has developed an investment regime designed specifically to suit the industry like aeronautics. The official guidance emphasises the fact that buildings, equipment, land, external infrastructure and training, import-duty and VAT exemptions can be provided to large projects (Ministere de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026b; 2026c). These actions reduce entry barriers, and the administrative structure of the free-zone platforms like Midparc assists in reducing friction in the customs and logistics. In a business that deals with a highly regulated company, it is valued when the border and project implementation is simplified.

Legal attractiveness, however, must be considered on various levels. Safran is not simply regulated by the Moroccan laws. It also has strict OEM, aviation safety, export-control, sanctions and customer-compliance provisions. Morocco is entering engine assembly and landing systems, which means that its operations have become more complex legally. The issue of regulatory challenge is thus not whether Morocco is attractive on the abstract on the investment code. The question is whether the Moroccan sites are able to support the documentation, traceability, quality assurance and auditability that are needed by the global aerospace governance. To date, the fact that Safran is willing to

entrench itself implies that it is confident in that environment, though the legal burden will not decrease but increase with the increase in technological level.

The case concerning the host country is reinforced with environmental and energy considerations in a more modern manner. In its new landing-gear plant announcement of February 2026, it was mentioned that, according to the deal with the Moroccan government, the new location would be fully powered by decarbonised electricity (Safran, 2026b). This is a strategically significant move as aerospace customers are more and more insisting on reducing the emission not only in the operation of the aircrafts but also in the industrial supply chains. The renewable-energy course of Morocco thus contributes to the investment attraction value of the country. Simultaneously, the relocation also demonstrates a possible point of tension: when sustainability is introduced into the process of supplier qualification, investors require more than cheap prices and favourable location. They require believable green industrial infrastructure and that sets a standard that is higher than what the country needs to have.

On the one hand, Morocco has benefits and warnings, on the other hand, it has culture. It also enjoys the multilingual business flexibility, knowledge of the French and European business standards and a long experience of dealing with foreign manufacturers. This makes coordination less frictional in the context of Safran as compared to several other more distant contexts. However, it would be analytically feeble to consider culture as a national characteristic that is fixed. The comments made by McSweeney (2002) on the incompatibility of national-cultural essentialism are especially applicable in international manufacturing since the performance in the workplace is determined not only by the general societal norms but also by the training regimes, organisational systems, labour relations and daily routine of production. The more practical cultural aspect in the case of Safran Morocco is not that Morocco has a stable national profile which ensures success, but the subsidiary has had time to build institutional familiarity, local managerial capacity and working relationship with training centres, suppliers and public bodies. Such an enacted culture is a more plausible source of performance, as compared to stereotypes.

Another cultural and organisational indicator is gender composition. It has 70 per cent of women employees in Morocco, according to Safran (Safran, 2026a). This is interesting in two aspects. First, it implies that it is the company that has adjusted its labour strategy to the reality of the local labour force instead of bringing in a strict template. Second, it can reinforce the legitimacy of the group in

the Moroccan industrial policy and ESG discourse. It should not be stressed too much, but it suggests that the local embeddedness of the subsidiary is not entirely technical in nature, but also includes a social aspect that is capable of contributing to the stability of the workforce and reputational capital. The last problem is strategic fit within the broader network of Safran. The company is not positioning generic activity in Morocco. It is intensifying its involvement in the country in propulsion and landing systems, which are core and not peripheral aerospace business. According to the ministry statement of the LEAP complex, a second global production location of the LEAP-1A engine would be Morocco, and a landing-gear factory would be added to the area (near Casablanca) with a cost of EUR280 million (Ministerie de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 2026a; Reuters, 2026a). This is important because it demonstrates that Safran considers Morocco as a capability node as opposed to a cost location. This kind of transition is congruent with subsidiary-evolution thinking: when a host location has proven itself to be reliable and capable of learning, it will be able to be transferred to more strategically consequential mandates of the parent group.

Altogether, Morocco is a very desirable place to Safran, but not because of the simplistic reasons. It is not on cheap labour in isolation, or incentives in isolation that it appeals. It is based upon the play of political support, manageable administrative distance, Europe-oriented logistics, enhanced industrial depth, training systems, potential of renewable energy and accumulated embeddedness of the subsidiary. The dangers are also quite tangible: reliance on the external OEM cycles, the necessity of the constant upgrade of capabilities and maintenance, the threat of the local expectations becoming more localised in the sense of spillovers, and the growing regulatory and quality pressure accompanying the work of higher order of technological advancements. The most compelling conclusion, therefore, is that Safran can thrive in Morocco not because it is easy, but because it provides a disciplined platform that enables Safran to grow resilient, higher value and more sustainable aerospace productions should it proceed to invest in local capability instead of viewing the subsidiary as a fixed low-cost base.

5. Conclusion

The aerospace manufacturing sector of Morocco has grown to be a reputable global production hub; however, its competitiveness is better perceived as the result of state alignment, multinational implantation and constant competency modernization as opposed to a mere low-cost achievement narrative. The industry overview revealed that the sector has ceased to be a small export base to a clustered ecosystem with significant scale, specialised suppliers and increased links to the global aerospace programmes. Porters Diamond was useful in explaining this trajectory particularly by the factor conditions, supportive industries and government action although the analysis revealed that Morocco does not follow a domestic variant of the model. The foreign companies, cross-border systems of production and the strategically coordinated entry into value chains in Europe and the world, mediate its advantage.

This conclusion was supported by the assessment of Safran Morocco. The reasons why Safran is attracted to Morocco are that it has the right administrative distance, its logistics is close to Europe, its policies are conducive, and the supplier depth and renewable energy potential are increasing. Meanwhile, the place is not safe. Its future appeal will be determined by the ability of Morocco to maintain skills development, infrastructure stability, regulatory competency and technological modernization as the aerospace sector continues to get more challenging. The most generalised judgement, then, is to the effect that Morocco has passed past the peripheral assembly and presently provides Safran with an industrial platform that is strategically valuable, though of the future strength is determined by strengthening the local capabilities, as opposed to leveraging cost advantages alone.

6. Reflective account using Gibbs' reflective cycle

My mood was ambivalent at the stage when I was conducting the research. The issue grew more appealing as the aerospace industry in Morocco is a good example of the industrial modernization beyond the traditional cases of advanced economies. Meanwhile, a lot of the most recent content on investments and industry development was via ministry releases, company releases and Reuters whereas the scholarly literature was focused on less specific matters like the boundaries of the Porters model, subsidiary embeddedness and strategic coupling. I thus needed to apply theory in questioning the evidence and not merely parroting it.

The process had three major strands in the description part of the Gibbs cycle. To begin with, I collected evidence on the country and sector, both official and corporate, such as the material of the Moroccan ministry, Safran revelation, and reporting by Reuters. Second, I plotted the competitive environment with the identification of other large operators and the supplier ecosystem. Third, I chose scholarly models that would describe the national competitiveness as well as subsidiary success. This implied that the report was developed in a nonlinear manner. I started the Diamond of Porter as the main organising structure but the evidence soon revealed that the aerospace sector of Morocco could not be described using solely the organising concept of the international business theory, in particular, the influence of multinational networks and global value chains.

The weaknesses and tensions in my process were outlined in the analysis stage. Reliability gradient between sources was one of the problems. Current facts were helpful in official and corporate sources, albeit in a biased manner, as they are naturally focused on the industry in a positive light. The academic sources provided a greater degree of scepticism, although they usually did not address the latest developments in Morocco. It implied that I needed to be particularly cautious with triangulating and take note of where I was drawing a conclusion instead of stating a proven fact. The report was not made promotional due to that discipline.

The other good aspect was the application of comparative positioning within the industry overview. Initially I thought it might be best to list the major firms in a descriptive manner but that would not have been all that the brief asked me to do of assessing relative positioning. The construction of positioning table made me differentiate between cluster anchors, specialised foreign suppliers and domestic or locally rooted firms. This rendered the overview section to be more analytic as well as explained why Safran might be selected as the most appropriate company to be evaluated more in

depth. I also got to know that comparative tables are not only presentation tools. In the right hands, they enhance the process of reasoning since they render vague impressions verifiable and systematic. The second weakness that I had in my process was a temptation to overstate culture. The international business writing tends to veer off very easily into the explanation of culture, particularly in the case of assessing foreign subsidiaries. Nevertheless, reading the critique by McSweeney made me more sceptical of applying the concept of national culture as a pre-made explanatory variable. In its place, I put my attention on organisational adaptation, multilingual business practise and long-term familiarity with institutions. It is on this reflection that I understood that cultural analysis of international business is more robust when it is associated with actual practise, like training systems, management localisation or labour-force composition, as opposed to abstract national stereotyping. It is one of the lessons that I will bring to future assignments.

The primary lesson of this assignment in the conclusion phase of the Gibbs cycle is more methodological than substantive. An effective global business report should have more than up-to-date information and more than textbook models. It demands a discussion between the two. Theories like Porters Diamond or OLI are best utilised because they are applied as an interpretative instrument and then are compared to the institutional and industrial facts of the case. I also got to know the significance of source hierarchy. Authoritative information, business content, journalism and reliable news coverage all respond to different types of questions, and the more one understands which type of source is best applied to which statement, the better.

My future job strategy is evident. To start with, I would start much earlier with a source map that isolates descriptive evidence, critical evidence and theoretical evidence so that the ultimate balance of the report could be handled more intentionally. Second, I would continue polishing my approach to creating comparative judgements, especially using matrices and visual summaries that would compel more rigid differentiation between firms and strategic functions. Third, I would enhance my involvement with methodological critique, particularly in the way in which the competitiveness frameworks move across the various forms of economies. On the whole, this task enhanced my skills in conducting research in an industry that I was not familiar with, synthesising disparate information and building an evidence-based and theoretically informed argument. It is better than the end product as it has altered the manner in which I currently comprehend and conduct the analysis of international business.

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