



Everything you wanted to know, but never had the chance to ask.

What is SAERCO?

Servicios Aeronauticos Control y Navegación, or SAERCO for short, is a company created in 2010 with the intention of providing safe Air Traffic Services to private airports in Spain, at a cost they could afford.

Nearly ten years on, we still consider ourselves a young, vibrant and energetic group of Aeronautical Engineers, ATCOs and technicians looking to prove that high quality and reasonably priced air navigation services are perfectly possible.

Who is SAERCO?

SAERCO is made up of many different groups of people, with a broad range of skills and experience. Our ATC staff stretch from experienced military ATCOs, who have the background of controlling in both warzones and at large airbases open to civil traffic such as Valencia or Zaragoza, through to young ATCOs that have come up through our university graduate training programme, run in conjunction with the Polytechnic University of Madrid.

Our engineering staff provide CNS maintenance services at Castellon Airport, on the



Mediterranean coast and will do so at Ciudad Real airport to the south of Madrid. They have also been involved in the past in projects such as CNS calibration flights or the installation of new CNS equipment

Our AFISOs are the most experienced in Spain, including some of the first AFISOs ever to be accredited here. The service is provided at 5

airports across the country and this year we expect to move around 20,000 flights and 320,000 passengers at these units.

Most of our management staff hail from Spain's prestigious College of Aeronautical Engineering "*Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros Aeronáuticos*", including our President, Managing Director, several senior managers and many of the junior staff too. Senior ATCOs, and experts in other fields such as telecommunications, quality, health and safety complement these engineers.

Where is SAERCO?

Soon after our creation, Aena, the Spanish state owned airport manager decided to privatise 16 airports across the country, and SAERCO with the help and support of the Czech national ANSP, won three of those contracts: Fuerteventura, Lanzarote and La Palma; three beautiful places to work.

Since then we've worked at seven further airports, from the tiny airfield La Seu d'Urgell in the Pyrenees to Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas airport. And we plan on growing further.

What services does SAERCO provide?

Within the field of air navigation services, we provide all of the main services:

- ATC. We provide ADI services at four airports in the Canary Islands (Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, La Palma and during the week in El Hierro), and at Castellon, on the northeast coast of Spain. Last year we handled around 140,000 flights and 15 million passengers at these units.
- AFIS. We provide AFIS services at four airports, two in the Canary Islands (La Gomera and El Hierro at the weekend) as well as two on the mainland (Burgos and Huesca). We also expect to open a fifth airport with AFIS services soon, at Ciudad Real just south of Madrid.
- CNS. We provide maintenance services at Castellon airport, being responsible for VOR, DME, ILS and all communication systems at the unit. In the short term, we'll provide this service at Ciudad Real airport and provided it in the past at La Seu D'Urgell airfield.

We're also the Apron Management Service provider at Spain's biggest airport, Adolfo Suarez Madrid Barajas. This service is the equivalent of an ATC Ground Movement Control position, and last year managed well over 300,000 movements.

What is SAERCO's policy regarding transitions?

Minimum change. We make every effort to ensure that the transition from one provider to another be as simple as possible, and with the minimum impact on staff, procedures, clients and stakeholders. Sometimes a transition requires significant changes, sometimes hardly any, but whichever the case, we always endeavour to keep things simple, transparent and above all, safe.

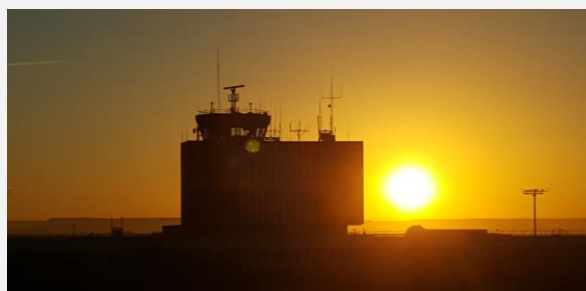
What sort of transitions have SAERCO managed?

As far as tower transitions are concerned, all of them. The first transitions we undertook back in 2010 involved the complete replacement of all ATCOs – a difficult process but one for which we have been congratulated for both by our client, Aena, and by the outgoing ANSP ENAIRE.

Since then we've opened brand new airfields, won contracts where all towers staff have joined our company, and on one occasion, after losing a contract to a competitor, participated in the release of that tower to the satisfaction of staff and client.

Which was the first transition SAERCO managed?

La Palma, in the Canary Islands. The tower was managed ENAIRE prior to the transition and staffed by their ATCOs, all of whom chose to leave the tower. ENAIRE provided training for a full tower crew of experienced SAERCO ATCOs over a number of months. The process, one of the first of its kind in Spain, proved to be challenging, but was successfully concluded on November 2012.



And the latest?

SAERCO recently won the contract for four towers managed by Ineco, a state owned engineering company that has been an ANSP since 2010. In this case, all of Ineco's staff have joined SAERCO,

continue working in their original towers and enjoy, to all intents and purposes, the same conditions as with their previous employer. Evidently, this process has been significantly less traumatic for all concerned and has gone largely unnoticed, proving that a change of ANSP can be straightforward process for all concerned.



Why does SAERCO want to work in Norway?

We are keen to work right across Europe and we're open to any opportunity that should present itself. The Norwegian government, together with several other European states has decided to open up ATS to a competitive market, offering an excellent opportunity for SAERCO to expand its horizons.

What has surprised us as the process has moved along, are the number of similarities between Kjevik and Vigra, and our situation in Spain, particularly the Canary Islands and the critical nature of regional airports. Norway shares some transport issues with the Spanish islands, in this case more because of geography than oceanography, but in both cases making regional airports a key method of transport for the local communities.

We think our experience will be quite relevant in Norway, although we clearly have plenty to learn for local experts.

I want to know what is to become of my job. When will I hear more from SAERCO?

We're just starting a yearlong project to transition from AFAS to SAERCO, and it's understandable that people are concerned for the future. This process started on the 21st of March when SAERCO signed the contract with Avinor and we aim to complete the change by the 1st March 2020. We hope our first proper contact with the ATCOs at the two towers will be during the last weeks of April, beginning of May when we'd like to sit down and talk to all of you in group and/or individually, to try to understand your specific needs and concerns.

What we've found over the past ten years is something that is quite obvious but none the less, very important: everyone has their own needs and plans for their future. Some tower ATCOs aspire to be en route controllers, some have always wanted to become instructors, some prioritise family and personal life above other considerations, and there are even those who have thought about moving in to management.

It's our job to try to fit those aspirations in to a transition plan that will work for everyone, whilst meeting our client's expectations and being economically viable. Obviously, this takes time, but we will try to be as open and straightforward as we can over the coming months.

What about my pay check? And my pension?

SAERCO intends that everyone now working at Vigra and Kjevik airports that joins our company will have the same conditions that they have at the moment with AFAS. This is our objective and this is what we are working towards.

That said it's important for you to know that our intention is to make the change as transparent as possible, and that pay and pension remain the same. Since this is a very sensitive subject we'll do our very best to keep you informed of any advances in this area.

How will shifts be organised with SAERCO?

The process for organising shifts in SAERCO is a three-stage process.

1. Central Services define the minimum staffing requirements and ensure this minimum is met at all times.
2. The Head of ATC at each unit prepare the monthly roster, taking in to account considerations such as annual leave, training requirements, secondments to our training centre or meetings, as well as personal preferences.
3. This roster is then review by Central Services to check for compliance with established rest periods and published.

Our experience over the last six years is that the flexibility this system offers, provides significant quality of life improvements, when compared to fixed, centralised rostering, and we would hope to implement a similar system here.

Can I work in Spain?

Saerco Training Centre is our ATC College in Madrid, where more than 30 instructors from various European countries are involved in theoretical and practical training of around 70 students each year. Since the majority of these activities are provided in English it will be perfectly feasible for our Norwegian ATCOs to get involved.

SAERCO aims to become a global organisation, and we fully expect opportunities to arise over the coming years for those who are interested and who possess the right linguistic skills. This may be working for extended periods as an operational ATCO or as part of a project team working to open a new unit or transition an existing one.

Why does SAERCO get such bad press?

We don't really place any great importance on what the press says about us, and concentrate on making sure our staff, our users and our clients are well informed and happy. It's not pleasant reading many of the twisted truths and rumours written about us, but we've always had a policy of not replying through the media, despite being quite hard at times.



I've got more questions. Whom can I contact for more information?

SAERCO have started the recruitment of local corporate staff to make sure you have access to as much information as possible regarding the process, provided by Norwegians who know Norwegian rules and regulations well. As we've said before, this will be a long process so we would ask everyone to be patient with us and rest assured, we'll be in contact as soon as we can and hopefully early in May.

Looking forward to meeting you!!

Jorge Avila Managing Director

Matthew Cornwall Transition Manager