

**ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED AGREEMENT CONTAINING CONSENT ORDER
TO AID PUBLIC COMMENT**
In the Matter of General Electric Company, File No. 131-0069

I. Introduction

The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”) has accepted, subject to final approval, an Agreement Containing Consent Order (“Consent Agreement”) with General Electric Company (“GE”), which is designed to remedy the anticompetitive effects of its proposed acquisition of the aviation business of Avio S.p.A. (“Avio”). Under the terms of the proposed Consent Agreement, GE would be required, among other things, to avoid interference with Avio’s design and development work on a critical engine component – the accessory gearbox (“AGB”) – on the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engine for the Airbus S.A.S. (“Airbus”) A320neo aircraft. GE and Pratt & Whitney are the only manufacturers of engines for the A320neo, and compete head-to-head for sales of engines to purchasers of that aircraft.

The proposed Consent Agreement has been placed on the public record for thirty days for receipt of comments by interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After thirty days, the Commission will again review the proposed Consent Agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the proposed Consent Agreement, modify it, or make final the accompanying Decision and Order (“Order”).

Pursuant to an Agreement dated December 21, 2012, GE proposes to acquire Avio’s aviation business for approximately \$4.3 billion. The Commission’s Complaint alleges that the proposed acquisition is in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, and that the acquisition, if consummated, would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, by lessening the competition in the worldwide market for engine sales on the A320neo aircraft. That is because the acquisition would provide GE with the ability and incentive to disrupt the design and certification of the AGB for the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engine, which in turn would provide GE with market power in the market for engines for the A320neo aircraft, allowing it to raise prices, reduce quality, or delay delivery of engines to A320neo customers. The proposed Consent Agreement will remedy the alleged violations by eliminating GE’s ability and incentive to engage in such anticompetitive conduct post-merger.

II. The Parties

GE, headquartered in Connecticut, is one of the world’s largest companies, with business segments serving a wide variety of industries throughout the globe. GE’s aviation segment, among other things, designs and manufactures jet engines for commercial and military aircraft. GE sells narrow-body commercial aircraft engines through its 50% stake in CFM International (“CFM”), a joint venture with the French engine manufacturer Snecma S.A.

Avio is headquartered in Torino, Italy, and is an important designer and manufacturer of component parts for civil and military aircraft engines. Avio provides, among other things, structural parts, gearboxes, and electrical systems for aircraft engines. Avio is currently the sole designer of the AGB on the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engine.

III. The Products and Structure of the Markets

AGBs use the mechanical power of the rotating turbine shaft in a jet engine to power various accessory systems needed by the engine and the aircraft, including oil and hydraulic pumps and electrical systems. Although AGBs on different aircraft engines perform similar functions, AGBs are designed for the specific engine in which it will be used to account for the shape of that engine, the position of the AGB in the engine, and the configuration and specifications of the various accessory systems the gearbox will power. Because AGBs require significant cost and time to develop, and because the aircraft engine – with its AGB – must be tested extensively and certified for flight by aviation authorities before it can be put into service, an engine manufacturer cannot quickly or easily replace an engine's AGB if it encounters difficulties with its component supplier.

Avio has the sole design responsibility for the AGB on the forthcoming Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engine, which will be one of two engines available on the Airbus A320neo aircraft. While Avio is in the advanced stages of designing this AGB, further development and testing must be completed before the AGB and the PW1100G engine will be certified for use by aviation authorities. Beyond that, further design work may be necessary even after the AGB and engine receive certification. Pratt & Whitney has no viable alternative to continuing to work with Avio to develop the AGB for the PW1100G, even after its rival engine manufacturer, GE, acquires Avio.

Aircraft engines provide the thrust necessary for flight and must be specifically engineered for the requirements and mission profile of the aircraft on which they are to be installed. When designing a new airplane, an aircraft manufacturer typically approaches engine manufacturers as potential suppliers and selects one or more to provide engines for the aircraft under development. These engines become customers' only options for that aircraft platform. Airbus chose to work with only Pratt & Whitney and CFM to develop engines for the A320neo platform. Aside from the PW1100G, the only other engine available for the Airbus A320neo is the CFM Leap 1-A engine, in which GE has a 50% interest. These two engines compete for sales on the A320neo aircraft platform, and because other engine manufacturers could not design, or attain certification for, an alternate A320neo engine within several years, purchasers of this aircraft do not have other viable substitutes for these engines.

The relevant geographic market in which to analyze the effects of the proposed transaction is the entire world. Engine component developers located around the world supply components to engine manufacturers who are also located worldwide. The aircraft manufacturers themselves are located across the globe, sell to customers worldwide, and do not significantly alter aircraft features for specific national markets.

IV. Entry

Entry into the relevant markets would not be timely, likely, or sufficient in magnitude to deter or counteract the anticompetitive effects likely to result from the proposed transaction. AGB design for large commercial aircraft like the A320neo requires significant experience and resources, and it would take several years for a third-party provider to complete the development process and begin supplying AGBs for the PW1100G. This delay would make such third-party entry insufficient to prevent any potential anticompetitive effects from the proposed transaction. Similarly, entry into the market for engines powering the A320neo is also unlikely to deter or counter the anticompetitive effects of the proposed transaction. The design and production of an aircraft engine, along with the necessary certification of that engine on the aircraft platform, takes many years and a large financial investment.

V. Effects of the Acquisition

The proposed transaction, if consummated, would provide GE with both the ability and the incentive to disrupt the design and certification of the Avio-supplied AGB for the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engine. A delay in the development of the PW1100G engine would substantially increase GE's market power for the sale of engines for the A320neo, as it manufactures the only other engine option for that aircraft. In response to such a delay, a significant number of Pratt & Whitney customers would likely switch to the CFM Leap 1-A, and GE would likely use its increased market power to raise price, reduce quality, or delay delivery of engines to customers of the A320neo aircraft.

VI. The Consent Agreement

The proposed Consent Agreement remedies the acquisition's likely anticompetitive effects by removing GE's ability and incentive to disrupt Avio's AGB work during the design, certification, and initial production ramp-up phase. The proposed Consent Agreement incorporates portions of a recent commercial agreement between GE, Avio, and Pratt & Whitney and Pratt & Whitney's original contract with Avio that relate to the design and development of the AGB and related parts for the PW1100G. A breach by GE of these aspects of these agreements therefore would constitute a violation of the Consent Agreement.

The Consent Agreement further requires GE not to interfere with Avio staffing decisions as they relate to work on the AGB for the PW1100G. It allows Pratt & Whitney to have a technical representative and a customer representative on-site at GE/Avio's facility to observe work on the PW1100G AGB. In addition, should Pratt & Whitney terminate its agreement with Avio, GE will be required to provide certain transition services, including licenses to intellectual property and access to specialized Avio tools, to help Pratt & Whitney or a third-party supplier produce AGBs and related parts for the PW1100G. The Consent Agreement also contains a firewall provision that limits GE's access, through Avio, to Pratt & Whitney's proprietary information relating to the AGB. Finally, the Consent Agreement allows for the appointment of an FTC-approved monitor to oversee GE's compliance with its obligations under the Consent Agreement.

The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate public comment on the proposed Consent Agreement, and it is not intended to constitute an official interpretation of the proposed Consent Agreement or to modify its terms in any way.