

## NEWS RELEASE

Please find here a news release issued today by Worldwide Flight Services (WFS)

Media contact: Jamie Roche, JRPR  
Date: 24 March 2023

T: + 44 (0) 1753 900902  
E: jamie@jamierochepr.co.uk

Worldwide Flight Services

# WFS AND AENA LAUNCH TRIAL OF AUTOMATED GUIDED VEHICLES FOR CARGO TRANSPORTATION AT JOSEP TARRADELLAS BARCELONA-EL PRAT AIRPORT

**A proof-of-concept trial for autonomous vehicles to move cargo between the warehouse and apron has commenced at Josep Tarradellas Barcelona - El Prat Airport as part of an innovation project between partners, Worldwide Flight Services (WFS) and Aena, the main airport operator, with 46 airports and 2 heliports in Spain.**

The project is aligned with the first automated ground vehicle (AGV) guidelines being developed by IATA's Ground Operations Automation and Digitization working group (GAD), which WFS has also been participating in.

WFS and Aena have been joined in the 10-week trial by other three key partners:

- **FASEREK** – with more than 38 years' experience in designing, manufacturing and selling ground support equipment, provides innovative and sustainable solutions to ground handling operations;
- **MOVVO** – has been providing intralogistics solutions for more than 15 years. They put together all the experience and technology to design and automate vehicles, like the AGV tractor that has been used for this PoC;
- **SIMAI** – Founded in 1950, they are specialist producers of reliable and robust towing tractors to support airport ramp operations and other logistic industries.



The use of AGV technologies offers significant advantages, including 24/7 operational capability and resource optimisation. The proof-of-concept trial in Barcelona will monitor the AGV's ability to provide smooth driving at a constant speed as well as safety, flexible routing, monitoring, and traceability of the service, also provided by the WFS telemetry and geolocation solution supplied by XOPS. Looking to the future, the use of AGVs will help airport service providers improve operations planning and favour efficient equipment pooling, leading to measurable sustainability benefits.

The first phase of the Barcelona trial involves cargo transport operations between the WFS cargo terminal and Terminal 1 using a ramp tractor equipped with AGV technology along a

planned, point-to-point route of 2,300m. Aircraft manoeuvring areas will not be entered, or aircraft interacted with at this stage of the project. Using AGV technology, the cargo towing tractor is able to recognise its environment, position itself accurately, detect obstacles at 4 and 10 metres, and act to allow traffic and avoid collisions.

WFS has prepared a specific risk assessment for the test, based on the first draft provided by IATA, and shared with Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat Airport.

"AGV technology is already well-established in other industries. One of our partners, MOVVO, already has different autonomous fleets running, mostly in the automotive industry in Barcelona.



*Worldwide Flight Services*

Through our test project, WFS will learn about the viability of automated vehicles in a busy airport tarmac environment to help us understand any limitations or challenges we will need to overcome before any future deployment of this technology at airports around the world.

“We have selected Barcelona for this trial because of the progressive approach of Aena to automation and sustainability, and because the perimetral tarmac road linking WFS’ premises and the Terminal 1 provides an ideal environment to conduct this assessment. Given that WFS handles

cargo onboard more than 25,000 import and export flights a year at Barcelona, and more than 42,000 flights in Madrid, the future benefits of AGV technology are obvious in terms of productivity gains, safety, and sustainability, and this can ultimately be replicated at airports across the globe,” said Jordi Campderrós, PMO Manager of WFS Spain. The trial will continue until mid-May 2023. Additionally, WFS will also be launching a pilot of AGV in its cargo warehouse in Barcelona.

-ends-

#### **ABOUT WFS**

Founded in 1984, WFS is the world’s largest air cargo logistics provider and one of the leading providers of ground handling and technical services with annual revenues of €1.8 billion. Its more than 30,000 employees serve over 300 customers at 164 major airports in 18 countries on five continents. For more information, please visit [www.wfs.aero](http://www.wfs.aero)