

Leeds Bradford Airport and Surgical Innovations (SI) - a designer and manufacturer of creative solutions for minimally invasive surgery ('MIS') - welcomed an influential Japanese businessman to the region this week.

The President and Chief Executive of AMCO, Akihito Koshikawa, flew to Leeds Bradford from Tokyo with British Airways to visit Surgical Innovations headquarters in Leeds.

The visit highlights the importance of Leeds Bradford Airport's British Airways service to facilitate inbound investment opportunities and develop international business growth for the region.

Akihiro Koshikawa spent two days at Surgical Innovations with co-founder Professor Mike McMahon and CEO Graham Bowland, where he participated in a tour of their design and manufacturing facilities. He also met key members of SI's team, including designers, to discuss current and future product developments.

Headquartered in Tokyo and with six regional offices across Japan, AMCO is a private company established in 1951 employing 180 people. The company sell a range of medical devices including SI's pioneering range of Resposable® laparoscopic instruments, which combines reusable and single use elements, to offer high quality, cost effective solutions.

Akihiro Koshikawa, President of AMCO, said: "Good connectivity with British Airways from Tokyo to Leeds makes business trips like this much easier and helps build stronger relationships between our two countries. I now look forward to welcoming the Surgical Innovations to Japan later this month to discuss further joint business activity.

He added: " Surgical Innovations has transformed in size since my last visit to the Leeds city region so it was important to see the huge amounts of investment the company has made in terms of design and manufacturing and also meet the people behind the products".

Impressed with the facilities and the new procedures such as Lean Manufacturing being introduced at Surgical Innovations Mr Koshikawa spoke about how a culture changes among Japanese surgeons is leading to an increased demand for Surgical Innovations products.

He added: "Many key Japanese clinical opinion leaders' are now ready to look at the economic aspect of surgical instruments and more inclined to use instruments that can save their hospital money. Surgical Innovations products are cost effective but they don't compromise on quality, safety or performance which is the reason why there is now a higher demand for their products across Japan."

Graham Bowland, CEO of Surgical Innovations, said: "As an export focused company looking to expand their global presence, it is important that there is a strong international airport here in Leeds. We regularly have global partners visiting our head office in order to strengthen business relationships, and they are always impressed by what the Region has to offer. The ability to fly into Leeds makes this so much easier to facilitate."

Tony Hallwood, Leeds Bradford Airport's Marketing Director, said: "The British Airways' service from Leeds Bradford Airport, via Heathrow's Terminal 5, opens up a worldwide market for businesses in the region. Research shows that both inbound investment and export opportunities require swift and easy air links to international markets and we are delighted that we are able to support progressive businesses like surgical innovations to facilitate further business growth and we welcome AMCO to the region."