

kiwa

The background of the image is a blurred photograph of a group of people in a meeting or conference room. They are seated around a table, and the scene is out of focus, with soft blue and grey tones. The word 'kiwa' is centered over this background.

kiwa



Testing

kiwa



Inspection



Certification

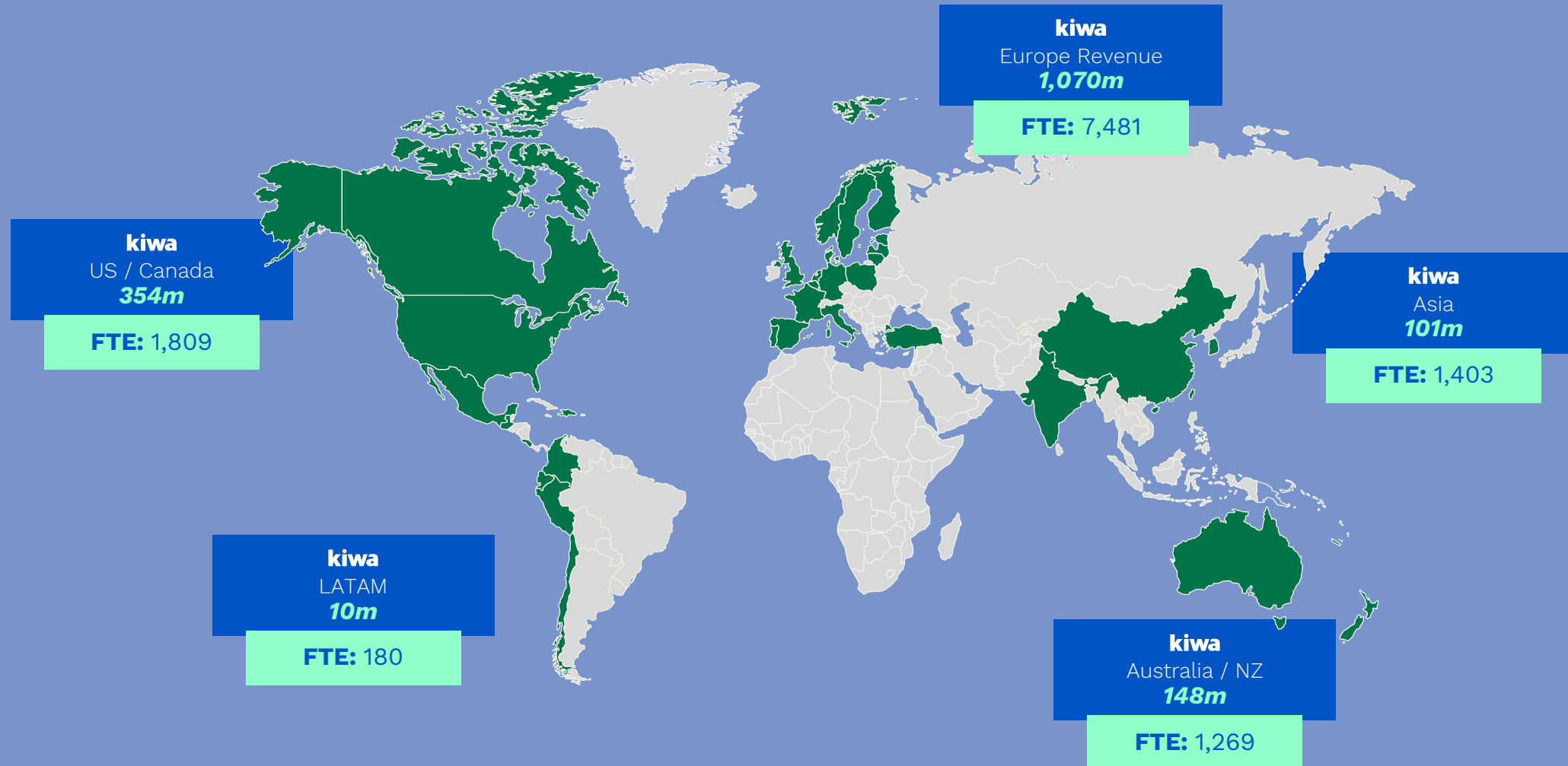


Strengthened by **training,**
consultancy and **data services.**

kiwa

Geographical presence

~12,300 employees and ~ 7.000 contractors in 42 countries





Building trusted operations

Prof. Dr. Jonas Van hove

Hobéon
SKO
a **kiwa** company

Quick show of hands

How does your organisation today verify that an AUS operator is actually competent, not just licensed on paper?

A

We rely on the pilot's own license / declaration

B

We require proof from the supplier's internal training

C

We require independent third-party certification

D

Honestly, we don't have a consistent answer yet



Setting the context



Autonomous systems are moving into complex environments, **fast!**

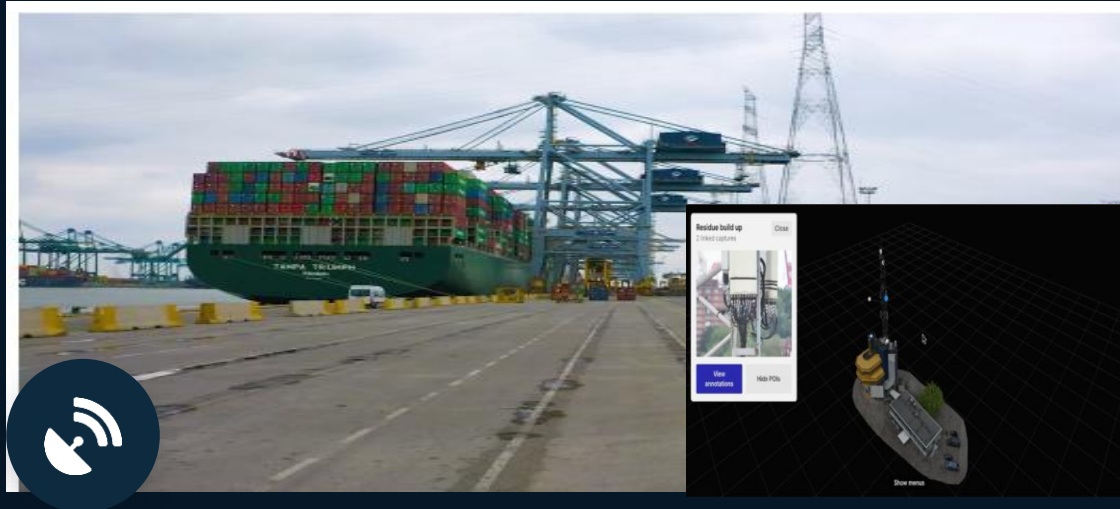


How to get access in a safe manner to

- Heights
- Confined spaces
- ATEX
- Radiation & nuclear zones
- Underwater
- Underground
- Remote places (e.g. offshore)
- Inaccessible by ground

Making it tangible

- Two real hazards a generic licence won't teach you to handle



RF interference

Cranes, transmission masts and port radar emit dense RF traffic. Fly the wrong approach path and you can lose link, GNSS lock, or telemetry, right above an active quay.



Flare stacks & fugitive emissions

Scanning tanks and flares for gas leaks means flying close to heat, pressure-relief events and explosive atmospheres, and reading the sensor data correctly enough to act on it.

The challenge?

- Technology is scaling faster than our ability to assure the people operating it.



Role proliferation

Remote pilot, mission planner, payload operator, maintenance officer, each needs distinct, defined competence.



System complexity

As autonomy, sensors, data links, and multi-domain operations grow, the knowledge needed keeps expanding.



Regulatory pace

Frameworks evolve while operations are already live.

Where today's standards stop

Focus	Example certification	What it proves
Quality	ISO 9001	Process control & reliability
Safety (HSE)	VCA	Safe execution on industrial sites
Aviation ops	STS / SORA	Flight legality & risk compliance
Aviation maturity	LUC	Ability to self-authorise complex operations

➔ How to assure operational competence for a specific, high consequence task?

Industry expectations

- Inspection expertise and quality data
- Track record and experience
- Certified pilots
- Safety record & insurance

The ecosystem is calling for more than compliance

- Public sector, federations, clients and many other entities are saying this e.g.



SPRINT Robotics

130+ asset owners, operators & service providers

Industry-led, not-for-profit collaborative accelerating robotics adoption for inspection & maintenance of capital-intensive infrastructure. They are currently developing a position paper on the standards and qualifications a drone pilot should hold to fly safely in these environments.

Their question, in short: what does a pilot actually need to know to avoid incidents — not just to hold a license?



Joint European Drone Association

Unite Europe's national drone associations

Advocates standardising and raising training quality EU-wide, arguing that holding a basic EASA licence is insufficient for complex operations. Calls for real competence, not just compliance — new certificate frameworks, exam standards, and training-organisation criteria.

Industry surveys point to the same gap: inconsistent exams and limited advanced training across Europe.

Near critical infrastructure “good enough” isn’t good enough

A hobby skill



A safety-critical operational competence

One pilot, one drone



Fleets, payloads, data chains, multiple roles

Self-declared experience



Independently verified, auditable competence

A one-time license



Continuous, demonstrable readiness

That gap between what systems can now do and what we can prove people are qualified to do → is exactly where certification has to do its work.

Our approach

- Three pillars of trusted operations

01



Certification

Of people — proving individual competence, role by role

02



Verification

Of organisations — auditing systems, procedures, control

03



Readiness

Over time — surveillance, renewal, continuous proof

What about this

When an autonomous system fails near critical infrastructure, who do you expect to have already asked the hard questions?

A

The operator, in the moment

B

The company that deployed it

C

The certification body, long before deployment

D

The regulator, after the fact

Thank you!

Let's build trusted operations together.



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