

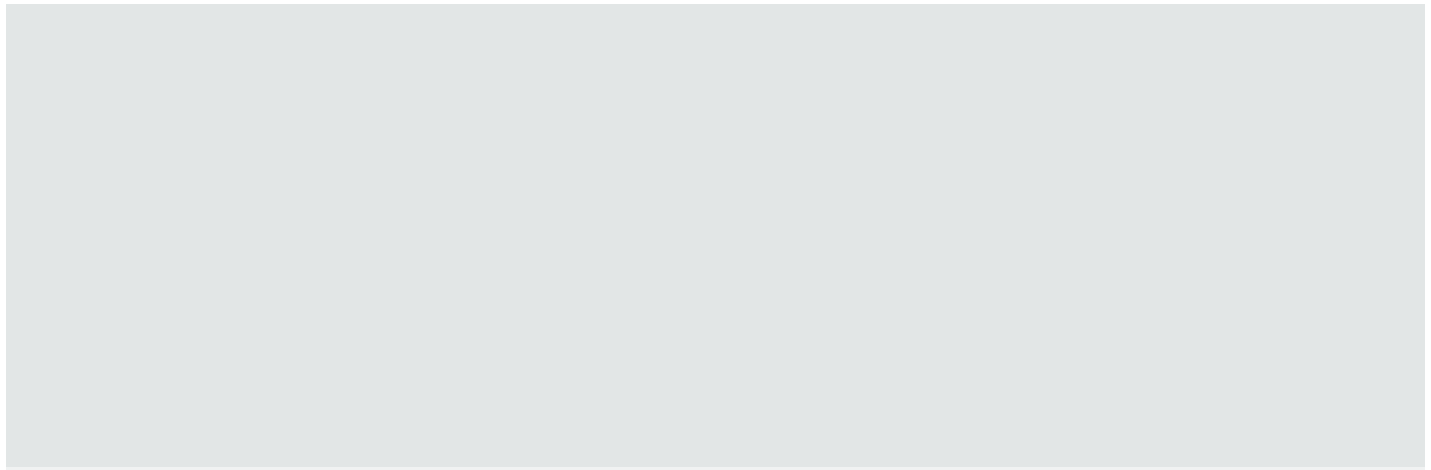
Singapore air show 2020

Boeing head of sales still discounts narrowbodies as mid-market answer

By [Jon Hemmerdinger](#)

Boeing's head of sales still insists narrowbody aircraft lack sufficient comfort for operating medium-haul "mid-market" flights – an assertion made amid speculation the airframer may shelve a widebody development project in favour of a single-aisle.

"I'm not sure about the concept" of a mid-market narrowbody, Boeing vice-president of commercial sales and marketing Ihssane Mounir said on 11 February at the Singapore air show.



A rendering of Boeing's proposed New Mid-market Airplane

Mounir's comments reiterate a position Boeing has taken since mid-2019 when Airbus launched its 200-passenger, 4,700nm (8,700km)-range A321XLR.

But Mounir says airlines would need to remove seats to make narrowbodies sufficiently comfortable for mid-market flights, generally viewed as being 4,000-5,000nm.

Boeing had for years planned to tackle the mid-market space with a 270-seat widebody dubbed the New Mid-market Airplane (NMA).

But the certainty of that plan was eroded several weeks ago when chief executive David Calhoun said he had ordered a complete NMA rethink.

Calhoun said Boeing was reevaluating market requirements and would "start with a clean sheet of paper, again".

Asked about the NMA's future, Mounir says: "It was a market space we probed. And notice we didn't launch."

Some aerospace analysts, including Teal Group's Richard Aboulafia, have suggested Boeing might scrap the NMA and instead develop a new single-aisle aircraft – a 737 replacement with a stretched variant to address the mid-market. Others, notably Addison Schonland of AirInsight Group, suggests Boeing might take a different tack altogether by developing a smaller 787.

The company already has such an aircraft in its files – the “787-3”, which it pitched to airlines in the early 2000s before cancelling the project. That aircraft would have carried 290-330 passengers and have 2,500-3,050nm range.

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