

## Boeing welcomes competition from China's C919 aircraft

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**Singapore: Boeing said Wednesday it was preparing to compete with China's first domestically produced passenger plane, which was showcased for the first time to international buyers at Asia's biggest airshow.**

The single-aisle C919 aircraft made its international debut this week at the Singapore Airshow, featuring in both flying and on-the-ground displays in a bid to woo international buyers.

The state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), is seeking to position the C919 as a potential competitor to the market-leading A320, made by Europe's Airbus, and the 737 MAX from US-based Boeing.

Dave Schulte, Boeing's commercial marketing managing director for the

Asia-Pacific, said the C919 is similar to what Boeing and Airbus produce in the narrow-body segment and it could be something that airlines in the region may consider.

"It is an airplane that will continue to compete, that... we will start to compete against," he told reporters at the airshow.

But "it will be up to each of the manufacturers to prove the value to the airlines, prove the products, the strength of the product," he said.

"I think they (COMAC) will also have some of the growing challenges... that they will have to overcome in order to continue to compete in the market across the region."

Schulte said Boeing projects that Southeast Asia will need 4,225 new planes by 2042, with the US manufacturer preparing to compete against COMAC for buyers.

He predicted that demand will be driven by the needs of low-cost carriers, which have gained wide popularity in the region of more than 650 million people.

The C919 has been making commercial flights in China since May and was displayed for the first time outside mainland China in Hong Kong in December.

COMAC has said it sold 40 of its C919s to China's Tibet Airlines - but it has yet to attract buyers outside the country.

Boeing announced that Royal Brunei Airlines had ordered four of the 787 aircraft, while Thai Airways ordered 45 Dreamliners.

Although the airshow is a good opportunity for Beijing to showcase the C919, finding a big-name international buyer will be hard, aviation analyst Shukor Yusof of Singapore-based consultancy Endau Analytics.

"There's still a stigma with the 'made-in-China' brand in the aviation industry, even if China now leads the world in the electric vehicle market," he told AFP.

"It will take time for the C919 to land an order from a major carrier," he said, even though it's "a matter of when, not if, a top-tier airline buys a Chinese-made commercial jet".

