

Vietjet retains large 737 Max order, for now

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Vietjet has yet to decide on its previous order for 200 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, the low-cost carrier's head of finance and director of financial planning and analysis, Rohit Tomar, has told *Airfinance Journal*.

"We have not yet canceled the orders, however the decision to continue is still being discussed at the board level," Tomar says.

"The 737 Max plans are not imminent. We still need to see where we are going to deploy it. Whether the aircraft will fly domestic routes in Vietnam or fly regionally still needs to be decided," Tomar says.

He points out that the Max may not fly for mainline Vietjet at all, but rather be deployed with subsidiary airlines, including its existing Thai Vietjet offshoot, which Tomar says has performed "very well".

Tomar also notes that Vietjet has considered adding additional airline subsidiaries to the group to cater for the fast-growing ASEAN market.

Thai Vietjet launched operations in March 2015. The Suvarnabhumi-based carrier now operates 11 Airbus aircraft.

Earlier this week, *Airfinance Journal* reported that Vietjet had agreed lease restructurings with the "vast majority" of its aircraft lessors, although "about 20%" remain in limbo.

The airline began approaching the leasing community in April to seek financial relief through rejigged deals, which include repayment extensions but also often come tied to lease term extensions.

In addition to the 200 737 Max units, Vietjet has more than 120 additional A320neo-family aircraft on order. Mainline Vietjet's current fleet comprises 76 A320-family units, including 15 Neos.

Vietjet placed the Max aircraft order in 2016 when former US president Obama visited Vietnam. At the time it was announced that deliveries would commence in 2019.

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