



AIRBUS EVALUATES AN A320NEO MULTI-MISSION VERSION

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The best-selling jetliner is considered for a wide range of ISR and transport operations

Having made its mark in the commercial airline sector, the A320neo is now being considered by Airbus for new applications: as a highly-capable and cost-effective platform for ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) duties and as a military transport.

The variant – designated A320M3A – would be designed to fulfill a range of ISR roles, particularly maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare. It also can be outfitted with modular roll-on/roll-off payloads for airlift missions ranging from carrying passengers, troops and VIPs to medical evacuation (medevac) and transporting cargo.

Airbus' consideration of the A320M3A is in response to market demand, spurred by the growing use of more capable ISR systems – which require physically larger host platforms with increased electrical power and more efficient cooling systems than previously were the case for C4ISR aircraft.

A proven, low-risk solution

One of the biggest applications of the A320M3A is for maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare, with countries in Europe and elsewhere seeking replacements for ageing aircraft – many of which will be encouraged to develop fleet commonality driven by the intensive growth of joint operations with member nations of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

Advantages in offering the new engine option (NEO) version of Airbus' A320 commercial jetliner include an extensive capability for growth in a fuselage cross-section that is wider than its

competitor in the same size category, the long range and endurance, as well as the lowest operational and life-cycle costs in its class. Other pluses for the A320M3A are the aircraft's high reliability (proven in airline service), and the resources of an established worldwide supply chain and training network.

The A320M3A also benefits from being a low-risk solution: being based on Airbus' highly-mature A320 airliner family in high-rate production; and building on the company's proven capabilities in producing military derivatives of its commercial aircraft – such as the A330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), which is in use by military services around the globe.

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