

# SAA in talks with Airbus to acquire long haul aircraft

By [Wendell Roelf](#)

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South African Airways (SAA) is in talks with Airbus to acquire a new wide-body long haul aircraft to replace its A340 which it wants to dispose of, its top official said on Friday.



A plane of South Africa's national airline, South African Airways (SAA), prepares to take at O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa, September 23, 2021. REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibeko

State-owned SAA has experienced longstanding financial woes that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing it to halt all operations in September 2020 when it ran out of funds. The company exited administration in April last year thanks to another massive government bailout.

The airline took to the skies again for the first time in September last year, launching domestic flights and a slimmed-down international service to five African capitals: Accra, Kinshasa, Harare, Lusaka and Maputo.



## Government determined to see SAA grow

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John Lamola, its interim chairman and chief executive officer, said the new aircraft will be used to fly one of its long-haul international routes, by the end of this year.

"We will be announcing in December one of the first international routes that we will be flying and we will be acquiring a special aircraft for that," Lamola told Reuters.

"No, not at all," he said when asked if the investment will require a cash injection from shareholders.

SAA will look to acquire the new aircraft by start of the next financial year in April, he said.

Lamola, who was speaking on the sidelines of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa's annual general assembly said the airline was yet to decide which long-haul aircraft to buy. "We don't know which one (aircraft) because our teams are working on it," he said.

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