

US auto giant General Motors will continue to consider offers for its Swedish brand Saab beyond a December 31 deadline even as it moves to shut the carmaker down.

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"The 31st of December deadline is not valid any more because GM announced that it will start the wind-down but at the same time that the bids that are coming in they will also evaluate," spokesman Eric Geers told AFP.

General Motors is currently in negotiations to sell Saab to Spyker, a Dutch sportscar maker. Spyker's chief executive Victor Muller said earlier that he expects an answer from GM this week on his company's offer.

Asked about reports that a new deadline for the deal of January 7 had been set, Geers declined to comment but added that Saab would resume production on January 11 after a four-week shutdown as part of plans to close the plant.

"We will build all the customer orders," he said.

Saab, which has barely turned a profit in two decades under GM management, employs about 3,400 people in Sweden. Media reports suggest a Saab closure could lead to more than 8,000 job losses, including subcontractors.