

Swiss solar plane confirmed as multiple record-breaker

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Solar-powered aircraft Solar Impulse HB-SIA prototype airplane during a flight over Payerne on April 7, 2010. Aeronautical authorities have confirmed world records for the aircraft that flew around the clock in July, including those for the longest and highest flight by such an aircraft.

Aeronautical authorities on Friday confirmed world records for a Swiss solar-powered aircraft that flew around the clock in July, including those for the longest and highest flight by such an aircraft.

Solar Impulse was credited with the longest [flight](#) in the category of solar powered aeroplanes, by staying aloft for 26 hours, 10 minutes and 19 seconds, the International Aeronautical Federation (FAI) said.

It also set an altitude record by flying at 9,235 metres (30,298 feet), and a record for the biggest height gain (8,744 metres) during the pioneering flight.

"The FAI congratulates (pilot) André Borschberg and the whole team involved in Solar Impulse on these splendid achievements."

The experimental single-seater with solar panels cast across a wingspan matching that of a large airliner flew in 14 hours of sunshine to power, also allowing it to charge up its batteries and fly on through darkness.

FAI official Marcel Meyer told AFP that it was also the first time in the four-year history of the solar-powered category that such feats had officially been endorsed.

"There have not been any previous records," he said, adding that records had been claimed for solar flight before but without sufficient proof.

The [Solar Impulse](#) team is planning to fly even further, including possible manned transatlantic and round-the-world flights in 2013-2014.

The pioneering flight in Switzerland was monitored by observers from the Swiss Aero Club, an FAI member.

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