

Solar plane lands in Spain on way back home

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The Swiss-made solar-powered plane, Solar Impulse piloted by Bertrand Piccard, takes off from Rabat airport on Friday. The plane has landed in Spain on its way back home after breaking a record with the first intercontinental flight by an aircraft run on the sun's energy, organisers say.

A solar-powered plane landed in Spain Saturday on its way back home after breaking a record with the first intercontinental flight by an aircraft run on the sun's energy, organisers said.

Swiss adventurer Bertrand Piccard, 54, piloted the experimental plane [Solar Impulse](#) on the 17-hour flight from Rabat in Morocco and landed at Madrid's main airport overnight early on Saturday, his team said in a

statement.

The Solar Impulse, which is made of [carbon fibre](#) and flies without fuel, is on its way back to Switzerland after last month flying from Spain to Morocco, the first time a solar-powered aircraft has crossed [continents](#).

The flights are a rehearsal for an attempted round-the-world trip in 2014 by an updated version of the plane.

The 900-kilometre (560-mile) Morocco to Spain leg was "a particularly tactically challenging flight" at an average of 60 kilometres an hour, with the plane hitting strong crosswinds, the team said in a statement.

"The aircraft's technology has once again proven its reliability and its energy-saving efficiency," Solar Impulse co-founder Andre Borschberg said in the statement.

"This flight has taught us even more about the aircraft, allowing us to fly through winds superior to the speed of the [airplane](#)."

The statement said the plane would stay in Spain for "a few days" of official and sponsorship events before heading for Switzerland.

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