# Virgin Atlantic SAF-Powered Aircraft Completes Transatlantic Flight, Leading the Way in Sustainable Aviation



An SAF-powered Virgin Atlantic aircraft successfully completed a transatlantic flight from London to New York last year. Sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) are gaining traction within the aviation sector as essential tools for achieving net-zero emission targets by 2050. The aviation industry, responsible for 2-3% of global CO₂ emissions, is under scrutiny from policymakers and environmental advocates.

Tim Alderslade, CEO of Airlines UK, emphasizes the industry's need to deliver on its emission reduction promises, warning of potential government interventions to downsize the industry if progress is insufficient. Leading aviation companies, including Airbus and Boeing, are investing in new technologies, such as hydrogen-powered aircraft and more efficient designs, while focusing on immediate measures like SAF. Virgin Atlantic's milestone SAF flight and the commitment of major manufacturers to SAF compatibility by 2030 underscore the sector’s direction.

Innovations like improved air traffic management are also contributing to emission reductions. The industry remains heavily reliant on SAF, despite challenges in supply and cost. SAF accounts for less than 0.1% of global jet fuel and is significantly more expensive than conventional fuels.

Icelandic startup IðunnH2, co-founded by Nanna Baldvinsdóttir, plans to operationalize a commercial-scale synthetic fuel facility by 2028. Yet, funding difficulties and short-term airline commitments hinder investment. Regulatory measures in the EU and potential government support schemes in the UK aim to bolster SAF adoption.

To ensure meaningful progress, stakeholders advocate for both mandates and financial incentives to attract investment and support the long-term scaling of SAF production.