More about the Solar Impulse adventure:

After 4 years of studies and 2 years’ construction work, the revolutionary prototype – registered HB-SIA – made its maiden flight on 3 December 2009. With the wingspan of an Airbus 340 and the weight of a small car, nothing could be taken for granted. In July 2010, with André at the controls, Solar Impulse made the first solar-powered flight through a day/night cycle – a historic success. The flight lasted 26 hours and gave credibility to Bertrand’s vision. Further flights followed all over Switzerland, and then across Europe. Solar Impulse, under the patronage of the European Commission and Parliament, landed first in Brussels and then flew on to Paris, where it gave demonstrations as guest of honor at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget.

In the spring of 2012, Bertrand and André took turns at the controls to make the first ever solar-powered intercontinental flight – 6,000 km for the return trip between Switzerland and Morocco, where King Mohamed VI had invited them to support the Moroccan solar energy program.

During the summer of 2013, when the building of the second airplane was well under way, Solar Impulse 1 took to the air again to cross a continent, from San Francisco to New York – 5,650 km in 6 stages. Here was an opportunity to promote clean technologies to a large number of influential people in political and economic circles, and to organise public events and educational sessions under the aircraft’s wings. In New York, the pilots presented their project to the UN, at the invitation of Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, and flanked by their team rang the bell to announce the opening of the NASDAQ stock exchange.
The achievement of this historic crossing – marked by 8 world records set en route - demonstrated the reliability of the technologies used as well as the determination of the entire team to ensure the success of the project.

In 2014, the first test flights with Solar Impulse 2, the plane that would fly around the world, were successfully accomplished. In January 2016, the plane was transported to Abu Dhabi, both the departure and arrival city for the Round-the-World tour.

On March 9th, André took off for the first leg of the Round-the-World tour.

The plane arrived triumphantly in Oman. The next step, Ahmedabad in India, marked Bertrand’s first records with Solar Impulse: he traveled 1,468 kilometers, a record in distance. For the first time, a solar-powered airplane landed in Asia!
The flights of the Round-the-World tour came one after the other; both pilots took turns at the commands of Solar Impulse 2 to successively cross India, Burma and China.

The preparation for the first attempt to cross an ocean using solar energy took place in Nanjing above the Pacific Ocean. On May 31st, 2015, André flew towards Hawaii. For Bertrand, it was the moment of truth: would the airplane reach perpetual endurance like he had dreamed when he initiated Solar Impulse 16 years ago? After 44 hours of flight, the weather forecast suddenly turned bad, obliging the Mission Control Center to make the decision to divert Solar Impulse 2 to Nagoya, Japan. The airplane remained grounded there for a month, at the mercy of unpredictable weather!

The takeoff to Hawaii took place on June 29th with the utmost caution. This attempt was successful on July 3rd when André triumphantly landed in Hawaii, confirming Bertrand's vision for perpetual flight.

Solar Impulse 2 has therefore completed eight flights, covering almost half of its journey around the world, but setbacks are a part of the challenges in a project that continues to push the boundaries of the possible. During the flight from Nagoya, the team combined a training flight with a mission flight which caused the batteries to overheat, pinning the plane to the ground when it landed. New batteries, now
equipped with a cooling system, took a few months to manufacture and ship to Hawaii. The airplane then had to wait for spring, when the days are long enough to fly.

It was on April 21st, 2016 that Bertrand resumed the adventure by attempting to complete the Pacific Crossing from Hawaii to San Francisco. His first multiple-day flight that ended with a magnificent view of the Golden Gate Bridge at sunset.

“Thousands of kilometers from the California coast, at night and at an altitude of 2,000 meters, I’ve never felt so good, so confident and so serene. I’m surprised not to feel the slightest tinge of anxiety. This is the world that I love, the world of exploration made up of heightened performance, intense concentration, present-moment awareness and respect for my surrounding … The memories of each day and each night take root deeply inside me. With my second consecutive non-stop night flight, I join the ranks of Dick Rutan, Jeana Yeager, Steve Fossett and André Borschberg. All the other aviators since 1903 had to land earlier to fill up their gas tanks.” Bertrand Piccard
After spending a few days in Silicon Valley to meet Google, Facebook, NASA..., the pilots began crossing the United States. Phoenix, Tulsa, Dayton - the town of the Wright Brothers - Lehigh Valley, and finally New York in only a month and a half. In New York, with André Borschberg at the controls, Si2 flew over the Statue of Liberty, an important symbol for an airplane that has the freedom to fly forever.

Then came the long awaited flight from Bertrand: crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Following the footsteps of Charles Lindbergh, whom Bertrand met during his childhood, he landed three days later in Seville. The first transatlantic solar flight was a success!

“The Atlantic – the ocean of all explorers – saw many sea and air navigators competing in the race to modernity. When Charles Lindbergh flew from New York to Paris, it was to promote commercial air transport. Then, he spent the rest of his life opening up airways and airports. For me, the symbol is the same, but the goal is different. I want to pave the way to a widespread use of modern clean technologies. This is what I have been dedicating my life to for 15 years and this mythical ocean may well allow me to do it.” Bertrand Piccard
Next destination: Cairo. It’s André Borschberg’s last flight, finishing it in style with a view over the pyramids. Finding a weather window to leave Egypt was tricky due to the high temperatures in the region. But thanks to the team’s hard work at the Mission Control Center in Monaco, Bertrand managed to take off on July 24th and land two days later in Abu Dhabi, where the journey begun a year and a half earlier. The Solar Impulse team was ecstatic after completing the first Round-the-World solar flight. 40,000 kilometers to prove the potential of clean technology and renewable energy. And this is only the beginning of another adventure...

“I wanted a credible demonstration that renewable energy can achieve the impossible. We have it now. Since André and I successfully returned to Abu Dhabi, nothing has stopped at the final landing. On the contrary, now, everything continues with even more strength and passion. The creation of the International Committee for Clean Technologies and the experience of the engineering team in developing electric aircrafts, manned or unmanned, allow us to go far “beyond Solar Impulse”... We have not shared a job, we have shared a life project, and our lives are not over yet.” Bertrand Piccard