

Solar plane takes off for 1st international flight

(AP)

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GENEVA — A Swiss solar-powered plane has taken off for its first international flight.

The Solar Impulse team behind the project plans to fly the experimental aircraft to Belgium and France.

The single-seater prototype took off from Payerne airfield in Switzerland at 8:40 a.m. (0640 GMT) Friday and is expected to reach Brussels airport by nightfall.

The plane with the wingspan of a Boeing 777 made its 2009 maiden flight in Switzerland and further tests have all taken place there.

The flight across France, Luxembourg and Belgium poses a fresh challenge as it requires navigation across international air traffic networks.