CARBON NEUTRAL AIR TRAVEL: AIRGO PROVIDES FIRST SAF BOOK & CLAIM SCHEME FOR BUSINESS AVIATION

News / Business aviation

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‘Instant offsetting schemes are the way forward’ says boutique private airline AirGO - as it continues to disrupt the sector and lead the industry in the fight against carbon emissions. AirGO, which specialises in the sales, management and charter of mono fleets, reduces the CO2 emissions of its flights by offering a SAF Book and Claim system for its flights. This system allows passengers to purchase the Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) required for the flight. Whilst AirGO does refuel its aircraft with SAF whenever possible, limited availability at airports on its routes means this is not always feasible. AirGO instead buys the fuel at the cost difference between fossil fuel and SAF through CO2 offsetting specialistCompensaid – an innovative initiative powered by Lufthansa. The equivalent amount of SAF is then distributed among the Lufthansa fleet. This option is available to all who use AirGO to operate their aircraft, with award-winning charter broker, Victor, having already committed to the programme.

AirGO is the only private airline to offer this solution. Daniela Flierl, managing director at AirGO, says that while many aviation brokers and operators use reforestation schemes in place of SAF compensation, these schemes can take more than a decade to be implemented. By contrast, AirGO’s instant offsetting Book and Claim system guarantees a quick and simple solution, immediately providing an 80% reduction in CO2.

The concept behind the Book and Claim model means that it does not matter where the SAF is filled, only that the CO2 emissions are balanced out. The model therefore makes SAF immediately accessible to all AirGO customers, and the hope is that the increasing demand for sustainable fuel causes a chain reaction which would lead to the supply being expanded to a broader range of airports.

SAF compensation is significantly more expensive than reforestation, however, and passengers can be reluctant to make the investment – despite the positive impact it has on the production of CO2 emissions.

Flierl continues; “When a travel agent offers a reforestation scheme to a customer for a minor price elevation, the customer understandably thinks they are ‘doing the right thing’. It needs to be explained that whilst this concept is worthy of praise, any positive impact is not seen for a long period of time and there is a better way to make immediate CO2 reductions.

“Typically, offsetting costs on an 80% climate neutral flight within Europe on a smaller jet will amount to a similar price as a meal for two in a high-end restaurant, which obviously your average private jet customer can afford.

“In addition to this, with the price of fossil fuels being on an upwards trajectory recently, the cost difference between SAF and fossil fuel flights will likely decrease, allowing SAF flights to become much more accessible to customers.

“Reforestation schemes are viable to an extent, but the simple fact is that the effects take a very long time to have any benefit. AirGO is the first private jet airline to offer a SAF compensation scheme. On one hand this feels like an achievement, but on the other is the unfortunate reality that no other players in the market are yet following our lead.

“As we know, the pressure on providing a travel solution which produces the fewest CO2 emissions possible is increasing, and it is inevitable that a solution will need to be found. Whilst we can spend our time thinking of grandiose world-saving solutions, we feel it is extremely important that we resort to the solutions already in place sooner rather than later, particularly those of us that

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have a clientele who is prepared to do so.”

On top of its instant offsetting programme, the AirGO mono fleet is exclusively comprised of Avanti EVO, the most fuel-efficient aircraft used in the private jet sector. According to the B&CA 2020 Purchasing Planning Handbook, similar sized aircraft produce up to 100% more carbon emissions per flight than the Avanti EVO. The use of Avanti EVO stands as further evidence of AirGO’s strong dedication to sustainability.

Ewan Kirk, philanthropist, Avanti EVO owner and AirGO client, said: “Ensuring my flights are carbon neutral seems like an unequivocally good thing to do. There is a cost, of course, but it’s a small percentage of the cost of the flight. There are many theories on how to offset flight emissions and a lot of them are not very good. However, after researching the approach that AirGO proposed I was really impressed with the work that they have been doing. Their offsetting and SAF programme is the best in the field.”

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