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Vietnam positions itself on global sustainable aviation fuel map as green jet-fuel ecosystem takes shape

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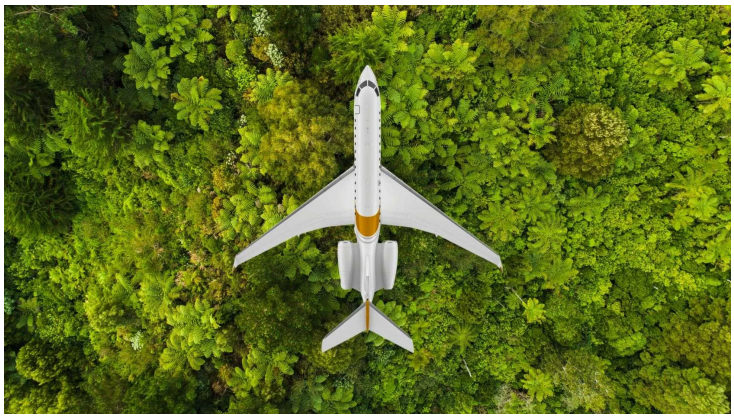
Da Nang forum signals early-stage integration into SAF value chain, as policymakers, airlines and energy majors converge on decarbonising aviation through bio-based fuel innovation



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In a development emblematic of the accelerating decarbonisation agenda in global aviation, Vietnam is beginning to carve out a strategic foothold in the emerging sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) economyâ??an industrial frontier increasingly regarded as indispensable to achieving net-zero emissions in the aviation sector by mid-century.

The momentum was visibly crystallised in Da Nang, where the 2026 Policy and Technology Innovation Forum on Sustainable Aviation Fuel in Vietnam (IPS Vietnam 2026) convened as the countryâ??s first international platform dedicated exclusively to SAF development. The forum brought together approximately 70 domestic and international stakeholders spanning airlines, fuel producers, clean-energy technology firms, and investment institutions, signalling a nascent but rapidly coalescing ecosystem around green aviation fuels.

Co-organised by the Asian Sustainable Aviation Fuel Association (ASAFA), the Da Nang Innovative Startup Support Center (DISSC), Star Consulting, and Veritas, the event underscored Vietnamâ??s ambition to transition from peripheral observer to active participant in the global SAF value chain. The presence of major industrial actorsâ??including Airbus, Axens, Binh Son Refining and Petrochemical Joint Stock Company (BSR), the US Grains & BioProducts Council, Aether Fuels, and Velocysâ??further highlighted the commercial gravity of the discussions.

At its core, sustainable aviation fuel represents one of the aviation industryâ??s most promising decarbonisation pathways, offering significant reductions in lifecycle carbon emissions without requiring fundamental modifications to existing aircraft engines or airport infrastructure. This compatibility with legacy systems has positioned SAF as a pragmatic bridge between

current aviation realities and long-term climate imperatives.

Vietnamâ??s engagement with SAF development is unfolding against the backdrop of intensifying global pressure on aviation to align with net-zero commitments by 2050. As traditional fossil-based jet fuels face mounting regulatory and reputational constraints, bio-based alternativesâ??derived from feedstocks such as used cooking oil, agricultural residues, and coconut oilâ??are increasingly being integrated into national energy transition strategies.

The Da Nang forum focused on a multi-dimensional policy and industrial agenda, encompassing regulatory frameworks for aviation energy transition, development of domestic SAF ecosystems, assessment of Vietnamâ??s feedstock potential, and mechanisms to attract international capital and technological expertise. The discussions also highlighted the intersection of energy policy, logistics infrastructure, and financial innovation required to scale SAF production beyond pilot stages.

Vietnam Airlinesâ?? earlier execution of its first SAF-powered flight in May 2024 served as a symbolic precursor to these developments, demonstrating operational feasibility while signalling institutional willingness within the countryâ??s aviation sector to experiment with low-carbon fuel pathways.

More broadly, Vietnamâ??s SAF ambition aligns with its evolving circular economy strategy and broader efforts to enhance international competitiveness through green industrial upgrading. By positioning itself within the SAF value chain, the country is seeking not only to decarbonise aviation-related emissions but also to capture new investment flows in renewable energy, advanced biofuels, and climate-aligned infrastructure.

Yet the transition remains at an early stage. Scaling SAF production will require significant coordination across agricultural supply chains, refinery capabilities, and international certification systemsâ??alongside sustained policy support to bridge the gap between experimental pilots and commercially viable production.

Nonetheless, the direction of travel is unmistakable. As global aviation confronts the hard arithmetic of decarbonisation, Vietnamâ??s tentative but deliberate entry into the SAF arena reflects a broader truth: the future of flight will not be powered by speed alone, but by the chemistry of transformation beneath it.