

The Moroccan low-cost airline Atlas-blue launches carbon offset contribution dynamically calculated for every itinerary.

Today, the Moroccan Low-Cost airline Atlas-blue subsidiary of Royal Air Maroc became the very first carrier in Africa and only the second serving the European continent, to offer carbon offsets as an integrated part of its booking platform.

At a time when assessing the environmental impact of air travel is increasingly important to consumers, Atlas-blue passengers reserving a flight on its website www.atlas-blue.com, will now have the option of cancelling out the harmful carbon emitted during their trip by contributing to carbon-neutralizing projects elsewhere around the globe.

The offset program, which is powered by Airsavings SA, a global supplier of back-end technology to low-cost carriers, calculates the emissions of a flight based on distance travelled and fuel consumed, along with load factor, capacity and radiation effect.

The program automatically computes a monetary contribution based on these factors sufficient to neutralize the tonnage of carbon emitted. The offset contributions [calculated in Euros] go directly to ActionCarbone, a joint nonprofit, European-sponsored organization that funds carbon-offsetting projects in the fields of forestry, agricultural forestry, energy-efficiency and renewable energies across the world.

ActionCarbone is backed by the ADEME, France's government agency for environment and energy issues, and is operated by GoodPlanet, an NGO established in 2005 to promote sustainability and ecological preservation.

The move by Atlas-blue comes just as the European Union's first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012) begins. Although air travel is not expressly covered by Kyoto, reducing the emissions generated during flight is seen as integral to meeting the obligations outlined by the protocol.

For Atlas-blue, however, making carbon offsets available to its passengers is also very good business sense. In just three years, the low-cost subsidiary of the Royal Air Maroc, has become the largest e-commerce airline in the southern Mediterranean region, serving many European cities including Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Nice, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Lille, Brussels, Madrid, Barcelona, Milano, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and London. The carrier operates a fleet of Airbus 321 and Boeing 737 aircraft, and in doing so, reflects a commitment of sustainable development by deploying the most energy-efficient planes.

"The demand for a way - any way- to effectively cancel out the climate-changing effects inherent to air travel is very high on our customers' list of priorities," says Raphael Bejar, CEO of Airsavings SA, the company that provides services platform for many of Europe's low-cost airlines including Atlas-blue. "Travelers are very concerned about their carbon footprint, and offering them a way to minimize the impact of their flight on the environment allows us to both meet their wishes and add value to the Atlas-blue offer." Adds Kamal Bennis, Marketing Manager of Atlas-blue The program presented on the low cost carrier's website is considered to be the first dynamically integrated offset initiative.

Whereas other airlines offer a flat-fee offset based on company-wide averages, Atlas-blue calculates the contribution amount based on real parameters of the itinerary. Passengers also have the option of electing not to contribute.

www.actioncarbone.org

