



EQUA Air Quality Index General FAQ

Q: Why do people need an independent rating system?

A: The official European tests are now out of date, and produce results that aren't realistic when compared to how cars are used in the real world. Recent revelations have also shown that it's possible to exploit the tests, making a car appear far cleaner than it really is. The official tests only produce a pass or fail result. The EQUA Air Quality Index provides results on a scale, so it's possible to see exactly how a car has fared in real world driving.

Q: Why should consumers care about NO_x?

A: Consumers are becoming more interested in NO_x in the same way that they became interested CO₂, as the subject was linked to environmental concerns and vehicle taxation. There is a growing body of research that points to the damaging effects of NO_x on human health. This research comes from leading bodies, including the World Health Organisation (<http://www.who.int/>) and the Royal College of Physicians (www.rcplondon.ac.uk/)^{*}. In addition, from 2020 London, and potentially other UK cities, are looking to penalise non-Euro-6 diesel vehicles by charging them to enter Clean Air Zones. As a result of these access restrictions, targeting vehicle NO_x emissions will start to have practical and financial effects for the consumer.

Q: Is the scheme backed by government or industry?

A: The EQUA Air Quality Index is independently financed and researched, and the ratings are freely available to use – including the stickers. This ensures complete transparency, giving consumers, companies and the wider automotive industry a level playing field.

Q: How does the EQUA Air Quality Index affect the automotive industry?

A: Vehicle manufactures appreciate the need to have a transparent and realistic test for emissions, and the EQUA Index will help compare cars from different manufactures. Recent headlines have also damaged the reputation of diesel vehicles per se, and many consumers now consider them 'dirty'. The EQUA Index will show that many diesel cars are capable of delivering good emissions results in the real world, and the programme may lead to car buyers' faith being restored.

Q. How can motorists find out their car's rating?

A. The EQUA Index website makes it quick and easy to find the NO_x rating, with just under 450 cars listed – including Euro 6 models as well as older Euro 5 cars. The website also includes a downloadable EQUA Index sticker for each car listed, which clearly displays its rating. New vehicles will be added shortly after they have been tested.

Q. Is the EQUA Index still going to be relevant when RDE comes into effect?

A. It's unclear how true to life the new RDE testing will be when it comes into effect in 2018, and even then it won't be mandatory for all cars on sale until September 2019. From launch, the EQUA Index will be the only truly independent rating programme, with all vehicles tested on the same cycle. RDE will also only provide a pass or fail result to consumers, not a scalable rating system, unlike the EQUA Index which allows different cars to be compared in more detail.

Q. What does EQUA mean for the future of Emissions Analytics?

A. With air quality an increasingly important topic, car buyers need to know more about the NO_x that vehicles emit. As a result, Emissions Analytics understands that the testing work it carries out now appeals to, and directly informs, a wider audience including: consumers, policy makers and vehicle manufacturers. Looking forward, the EQUA Index is part Emissions Analytics' plan to test more cars in a greater number of countries.

Q. Will there be an exclusive distribution channel for the EQUA Index?

A: No. The EQUA Index is not limited to a deal with one partner or distribution channel. Media are free to use and publish the data as they see fit, but no single publication will have exclusive access. The programme will remain free and open to all – important in ensuring that the EQUA Index is as widely available as possible.

Q. How does the EQUA Index publish new results?

A. New vehicles will be added to the EQUA Index website as soon as they are available for testing and the results calculated. Any media outlet can then include the rating when reviewing a new car.

Q. How can vehicle manufacturers get involved in the EQUA Index?

A. Emissions Analytics is open to working with all OEMs as part of the EQUA Air Quality Index, to ensure that the latest models are included in the ratings.

Q. How can vehicle manufacturers make use of the EQUA Index?

A. Vehicle manufacturers will be able to publish the EQUA Index ratings and stickers online, as well as using them in promotional materials and in franchised dealerships. This makes it a powerful tool in helping restore buyer confidence.

Q. What do vehicle manufacturers think of the EQUA Index?

A. Over half of vehicle manufacturers in the UK already subscribe to the Emissions Analytics database, which provides emissions data over 750 EU market vehicles.

Q. How much does it cost consumers to access the EQUA Index and its data?

A. Nothing, all of the EQUA Index data is completely free, including the stickers which can be downloaded from the website.

Q. How often will the EQUA Index be updated?

A. The programme's target is to publish a car's rating within days of collecting the emissions data, and the EQUA Index aims to post data for between 200-400 vehicles every year. Consumers can sign up for a monthly e-newsletter, which will provide a roundup of the latest results.

Q. If a car isn't featured in the EQUA Index, what can I do?

A. The programme will endeavour to test all new vehicles as soon as possible, and as requested. Requests can be sent to (EQUAAq@emissionsanalytics.com). Car buyers should raise the question of a car's NO_x emissions with franchised dealers.

Q. What share of the market does the EQUA Index hold data for?

A. The database currently holds information on the majority of the car market, by sales volume. The programme's aim is to provide close to total coverage as soon as possible.

Q. What effect does a car's NO_x emissions have on its fuel economy and CO₂ output?

A. The relationship between NO_x and CO₂ is not straightforward, but some NO_x reduction systems can increase CO₂ and so reduce MPG. This depends on the type of system used and the set up of the vehicle.

Q. Why are there no commercial vehicles included in EQUA Index?

A. Emissions Analytics is in the process of testing light commercial vehicles with a view to including them in the EQUA Index. Emissions Analytics already works with fleet operators to help inform on the selection and set-up of commercial vehicles, in order to help reduce fleet NO_x emissions. In addition, it's working with a number of local authorities to help guide when retrofitting emissions reduction technology to older vehicles.

Q. What does 'EQUA' stand for?

A. The name EQUA combines several ideas: the 'e' stands for emissions and environment, while 'qua' suggests high quality information.

*For more information:

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/en/