



EQUINOX LAUNCHES CLEAN SKY INDEX OF TOP GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE OPERATORS

News / Business aviation



Equinox has launched the Clean Sky Index, an initiative that empowers clients to control how their travel impacts the environment. The effort allows travel buyers choice to favour private and commercial aircraft operators when it comes to booking, thus taking concise action towards reducing their travels environmental impact.

The Clean Sky Index

Equinox, through its private charter Equinox Charter and full-service travel management Equinox Travel units, will demonstrate to clients how prospective operators perform within two specific criteria:

- 1) Net zero initiatives towards emission mitigation (from Sustainable Aviation Fuel use to offsetting efforts and future tech investment);
- 2) Flight Operations toward emissions *minimization*, including flight procedures, in-flight performance, and efforts to reduction of non-CO2 emissions;

Elliot Bottomley, Managing Director of Equinox Charter, commented: “Beyond carbon offsetting, some of our clients, the end users, are unsure how they can support sustainable flying. The Clean Sky Index provides our clients current and continually updated information to support their choices. By choosing sustainable operators, those that are making real and accountable efforts, our clients are empowered to make an immediate impact on greener travel. Empowering client choice is paramount, not all operators are the same and simple differences between them, including how the aircraft is operated, can make a major difference. Every kilo counts!”

Thanks to a combination of publically available information and active discussions with operators, led by Equinox’s Sustainability Consultant Douglas Corbett, Equinox found that there are substantial and reliable results for commercial operators. Airline operators including easyJet and Air New Zealand top the commercial assessment, demonstrating strength in a clear mission objective, use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels, future technology investment and flight ops procedures / initiatives. Business Aviation assessments demonstrated in general, some ground to cover. Yet, the work of companies like VistaJet and Air Charter Scotland in this segment is encouraging and are beginning to set the standards for others to follow. The Clean Sky Index forms part of a number of sustainable travel assessments useful to travellers and buyers of travel, under Equinox’s Enhanced Sustainability Initiative (EESI).

The Clean Mission Report

EESI includes another industry-first, providing clients mission-specific, trip-by-trip sustainability reports. Simply named the ‘Clean Mission Report’ looks at a number of factors including ground operations, loading specifics, route planning, contrail avoidance and more. It starts with a technical pre-flight agreement with an operator that serves to assure a client that there will be the most sustainable flight operations efforts made possible before and during flight.

The ‘Clean Mission Report’ is aimed at assisting the issue of accountability, especially for sensitive charters or for publicly accountable passengers, that Equinox themselves largely serve.

Public’s expectations are driving change

Music artists, Equinox key client base, continue to look at ways to tour more sustainably. For example, Coldplay’s specific efforts are cutting CO2 in their tour emissions by 50% while supporting green technologies and developing sustainable, low carbon touring methods. As the post pandemic recovery for the industry continues into 2023, these initiatives are only expected to increase.

“The public’s expectations towards the travel and the environment have changed. They want to see concrete and escalating actions instead of empty promises. At Equinox, we understand that every tour is different, that every artist has their perspective on sustainability and that accountability is a constant for public figures. Our approach to this is to listen, research, advise, and be flexible with solutions”, said Ian Patterson, CEO at Equinox.

4Air

Partnering with 4AIR, an Air Charter Association-approved organisation, Equinox has furthered the sustainability solutions they offer their clients, allowing a range of offsetting measures designed specifically for aviation. The 4AIR framework gives Equinox clients access to comprehensive turnkey programs that can be applied to each individual's environmental commitment.

The 4-tiered rating programs range from carbon neutral via verified carbon credits to climate champion, where contributions are made directly to the Aviation Climate Fund, which funds research and development of new technologies needed to make aviation more sustainable.

4AIRs programs utilize science-based goals, independently verified results, and progressively greater impacts on sustainability that make it easy for aviation users to pursue sustainability through access to carbon markets, use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel, support for new technologies, and other strategies.

Kennedy Ricci, 4AIR's president, said: "4AIR not only offers turnkey sustainability solutions but, as the only rating system for private aviation emissions reduction, will evaluate and independently verify Equinox clients' sustainability program. We also are proud to have the opportunity to work with Equinox and their clients so they can do their part to fight climate change."

Elliot Bottomley, Managing Director of Equinox Charter, added: "While we believe operators have improved their sustainability efforts during the past years, we think that more direct action must be taken to minimize and mitigate the impact of aviation on the environment. While operators will serve as the catalyst towards change, we envision Equinox undertaking a facilitating role to reveal to customers the full spectrum of options in the industry while empowering them to choose a combined effort to meet their environmental goals"

Equinox's solutions can be applied to any travel project in alignment to each customer's sustainability policy or even the sector in which they operate, while strengthening vertical and horizontal industry collaboration from global airlines and private aircraft operators, to ground transportation and hotels – Equinox, as 360-degree travel service providers, are in a unique central position between clients and suppliers to offer such solutions.

Equinox is confident that the industry's current efforts regarding the electrification of aviation and urban air mobility in general as well as the extended SAF use in commercial and private aviation are key contributing factors, yet these simply can't be seen as a short-term solution.

We believe that the best solutions are split into net reductions such as use of SAF and offsetting, and real time reductions such as diligent flight operations and ultimately empowering operator choice based on those two sets of efforts combined. Allowing the end user to have an immediate impact and be part of the solution is at the centre of the Clean Sky Index's mission.

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