

China-based startup aims to monitor pollution

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A China-based startup firm launched a campaign Monday to fund a project which would allow people to monitor air pollution locally, and to crowd-source data on the problem in many countries around the world.

Airvisual.com, based in Beijing, has designed a personal [pollution](#) measuring device that can feed air quality data into a worldwide network, providing up-to-the-minute information on local conditions as well as three-day forecasts.

The [company](#) launched a campaign Monday on crowdfunding web site indiegogo.com to try to fund production of the device called the "Node", which can track levels of CO₂ and PM_{2.5}, harmful microscopic particles that penetrate deep into the lungs.

Users outside China can opt to send information from the device to the company, from which it can develop its pollution modelling and forecasting capabilities.

But the feature will not be available for Chinese users, the website said, due to government regulations preventing individuals from sharing outdoor air quality information "publicly".

Air quality information is published on an hourly basis in many parts of China, but there are currently few options for people to monitor conditions in their home or workplace.

Although the company is based in China, its devices will be available for sale around the world.

The company describes itself as a "social enterprise". Its goal is not profit but to let people "help protect themselves and thrive in a polluted environment", said company co-founder Yann Boquillod.

Air pollution is a pressing concern for people in many countries, particularly in the developing world, where [air quality](#) controls are often incomplete or ineffective.

In parts of India and China, for example, PM2.5 is regularly well over the World Health Organisation's recommended maximum average exposure of 25 micrograms per cubic metre in a 24-hour period.

In December Beijing experienced several waves of pollution that left the city choking on smog that clocked in at levels well over 300 and drove a shopping frenzy for air purifiers and masks.

The crowdfunding campaign was "going well", Boquillod said, and had already achieved 33 percent of its goal of \$10,000 by Monday evening.

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