

World's first taxis with easily swapped batteries hit Tokyo

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One of the fleet of the world's first switchable-battery electric taxis rolls through a battery switching station in Tokyo. The world's first switchable-battery electric taxis hit the streets of the Japanese capital in a government-funded pilot project to test the emission-free cars.

The world's first taxis with easily replaceable batteries hit the streets of the Japanese capital Monday in a government-funded experiment.

The purpose-built cars that can run on easily swapped batteries -- rather than wait to be recharged or switch to other fuels -- were launched in Tokyo by Japan's energy agency.

Three cars based on the Nissan Dualis will operate as normal taxis on the city's streets during the 90-day experiment, a joint project with Better Place, a US firm specialising in providing electric vehicle infrastructure.

"Tokyo can become the capital of [electric vehicles](#)," said Kiyotaka Fujii, president of the Japanese unit of Better Place.

Ordinary Tokyo taxis can clock up as many as 300 kilometres (186 miles) a day, the company says, and the city is by far the world's largest [taxi](#) market with 60,000 cabs -- more than New York, Paris and London combined.

While taxis represent only two percent of all passenger vehicles in Tokyo, they emit about 20 percent of all [carbon dioxide](#) (CO₂) from vehicles.

"By building a good business model, we believe this technology can have a significant impact on the economy and society," Japanese energy agency official Minoru Nakamura told a press conference.

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