

Electric vehicle adoption gaborone

Botswana's e-Mobility program has reached a significant milestone, positioning the country among global automakers with the establishment of a new electric vehicle (EV) assembly plant in Gaborone.

The program, aimed at advancing the nation's sustainable transportation agenda, seeks to accelerate EV production through international partnerships to meet the rising demand for eco-friendly vehicles.

Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI) Chief Executive Officer, Shedden Masupe, explained that the e-Mobility program was designed to promote innovation and research that drive economic growth.

"The intent was to position this country as a regional leader in sustainable transportation. Establishing electric vehicle infrastructure will help reduce carbon emissions and promote eco-friendly transport systems in communities," said Masupe.

Phase 1 focused on capacity building, Phase 2 on retrofitting (designing and building EV technology, and testing its feasibility through prototypes), and Phase 3, the current phase, focuses on scaling up assembly operations with private sector involvement.

The program has trained 150 technicians in collaboration with Botswana College of Engineering and Technology (BCET), Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST), and the University of Botswana.

"The critical thing is competitiveness; we must produce the best, the fastest, the most competitive. Botswana is ready to start its motor industry. We want to enhance the aspects of our knowledge economy that complement our natural endowments," Masisi said. He emphasized that the EV program would drive economic growth, contribute to cleaner transportation, and position Botswana as a regional leader in sustainable mobility.

The program, which is an integral part of Botswana's e-mobility strategy, is expected to boost the country's economy while shaping its legacy towards cleaner, smarter, and more affordable vehicles.

"We are not trying to reinvent the wheel, but we want to be part of the global shift to e-mobility--not only for the economy and the environment but also to strengthen our knowledge economy," added Masisi.

Across Africa, a green mobility revolution is gaining momentum, driven by rising fuel costs, a demand for affordable transportation, and growing environmental concerns. However, the prohibitive cost of electric vehicles (EVs) and insufficient infrastructure raise critical questions about whether electric vehicle adoption in Africa can truly flourish on the continent.

Globally, efforts to decarbonize road transport, which contributes 15% of global emissions, are underway. Africa is no exception, with governments and private players striving to capture a share of the rapidly growing EV market, which is projected to reach USD 21.39 billion by 2027, up from USD 11.94 billion in 2021. This rapid growth brings both opportunities and challenges for electric vehicle adoption in Africa.

Several African nations are leading the charge in transitioning to electric vehicles. Rwanda, for example, has implemented a series of policy measures to attract investors, including rent-free land for charging stations, reduced electricity tariffs for EVs, and exemptions from VAT, import, and excise duties for electric cars and spare parts.

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