

BACKGROUND KIGALI



Demonstration City

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Kigali - Rwanda

Overarching issues

The main form of public transportation throughout Rwanda and in Kigali is the minibus system, which runs both scheduled and unscheduled services according to a shared taxi system. Vehicle number is increasing in Rwanda; and by 2030, it is projected that the annual increase in vehicles will reach 16.5% from the current 12%, and light-duty vehicles will increase by 20%. Rwanda's CO2 emissions per capita is estimated at 0.074 metric tons in 2014; and in Kigali, the transport sector is said to contribute about 52% of CO2 emissions.

In response to the high cost of fuel and pollution, Kigali is promoting electric mobility by testing the use of electric motorbikes, known as e-moto. The aim is to provide a low cost and environmentally friendly mode of transport, mainly for motorcycle taxi riders. This initiative is being driven by private investors such as Ampersand which is an electric vehicle company with the mission to develop "mass-market shifts from petrol vehicles to direct, cheaper, better electric replacements". Also, the German car maker Volkswagen established an assembly plant in Rwanda in 2018, and has plans for the manufacturing of electric cars in the future (Krauß, 2018). The company is currently involved in Kigali in a pilot project on eGolf's and charging stations, together with Siemens. The presence of such an investor-friendly environment in Rwanda makes it favourable to develop electric mobility in the country.

E-mobility overview

Kigali has been implementing the "City Development Plan 2013-2018"; and as part of its goals, planned to become a city of green transport. The city is therefore making efforts to shift from small minibus services and private cars to buses; and in the long-term, provide only public transport services for city dwellers. As stipulated in its Development Plan, the city's transport priorities include improving road network, reducing traffic congestion and integrating the public transport system (City of Kigali, 2013). It is expected that such priorities will stimulate concerted synergies aimed at implementing innovative transport actions and policies for building a sustainable transport system.

Rwanda's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) identifies the transport sector as key to achieving climate change goals; as such, the country has set out to build an efficient and resilient transport system by promoting public transport, developing transport infrastructure and setting emission standards and regulations for vehicles within an integrated national transportation planning context. The country plans to construct a 17 km BRT with modern interchanges, install solar powered streetlights, enforce vehicle fleet renewal and scrappage, and adopt low carbon technologies for new vehicles. Rwanda also envisages introducing a subsidy to encourage the use of clean vehicles and piloting the Green Transport Fund to encourage the introduction of innovative transport technology among others (Republic of Rwanda, 2015). In this vein, Kigali plans to limit the use of private transport and increase patronage of public transport.

Current state and initiatives

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In recent times, the Government of Rwanda increasingly recognizes the importance of promoting sustainable transportation as such has been creating the enabling environment for private investments into the sector. This has seen the likes of the German car manufacturer VW entering the electric mobility sector in Rwanda with the establishment of environmentally compatible local vehicle production facilities and possibilities of training initiatives for the local population (Volkswagen, 2016).

Though there are no structured training programmes on e-mobility in Kigali, some forms of capacity building activities have been ongoing in the city including local training sessions organized by local start-ups such as those mentioned above; as well as workshop sessions held by local and national level authorities and organizations. An example of such workshops is the Electric Mobility Workshop in Kigali on the 25th February 2020. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the International Growth Centre (IGC). It was aimed to discuss, learn, and exchange with relevant stakeholders from the Government of Rwanda, private sector, development partners and NGOs about scaling up transport systems in an environmentally and financially sustainable way. The workshop discussed the introduction of electric mobility in Rwanda and its challenges, opportunities, environmental and economic impacts that the Government vision for scaling up electric mobility will encounter as it begins implementation in partnership with the private sector. The workshop also discussed the financial sustainability of local urban roads by exploring options that have worked in other countries and comparing these with the unique challenges faced in Rwanda.