

Four years to local car production

U G A N D A



► The Executive Director of Uganda Investment Authority, Eng Dr Frank Ssebowa has, on behalf of the Government, handed over 100 acres of land to Makerere University's Centre For Research in Transportation Technologies (CRTT)

By Technology correspondent

Uganda will start commercial production of cars of the Kiira EV SMACK, an improved version of the Kiira EV car, first unveiled by President Yoweri Museveni in November, 2011, in four years' time, according to Prof. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa, the Project principal investigator. And the locally pruced cars will be a hybrid blend of the conventional internal combustion engine and the electric vehicle, which means they can run on fuel and/or electric energy. "We shall start the production in 2018, with 300 pieces a month," Tickodri-Togboa said. The project to be trading as Kiira Motors Corporation (KMC) has already been given 100 acres of land at the Jinja

Industrial and Business Park. This will be the first ever automotive original equipment manufacturer in Uganda and in the East African region. Paul Isaac Musasizi, the project's chief engineer, said they need about US\$350m to set up the whole plant and start the actual manufacturing of cars. "We need to develop at least 19 model vehicles between now and 2018 before we can finally release our first car, entirely built in Uganda," Musasizi said. "All these cars will be crashed in the engineering validation. We make a model, we crash it. We make another; we crash it, from all sides, until we make that one which meets the internationally accepted standards," Musasizi explained. He said they are hiring a reputable car maker consortium to partner with them make internationally acceptable cars.

"This is more like a dream come true. We shall soon be building our own cars," Jonathan Kasumba, an industrial designer and part of the 21-member team who designed the Kiira EV SMACK, said. "We started with the Kiira EV from scratch. We would charge it and go for about 80 kilo-meters. We are building on this technology to make hybrid cars," Kasumba added. Fred Ogene, the Ag. Chief Executive Officer Uganda Development Cooperation (UDC), said the registration of KMC was only a beginning. "2018 is realistic. If you don't dream, you will never do anything." Uganda's trade and industry minister Amelia Kyambadde said Uganda manufacturing cars was in line with the country's national development plan of wealth creation, adding value to its

human resources potential capabilities and self-sustainability.

"The commercialization of the project will motivate more youths to pursue science subjects. The project will also create jobs in the country" the minister observed.

Regarding the funding, she promised to lobby the government so they can have funding directly going to the Kiira Motors Corporation.

"Now that we have KMC as a registered government corporation and UDC, funding will be easy," Kyambadde said. The trade minister, however, asked the Corporation to attract other investors into the project to grow it and it becomes big.

Away from building cars, the plant will also have an innovations centre for calibrating relevant technology in alternative fuels. It will also have vehicle testing tracks for speed, braking, climbing, handling and durability, and an administration block.

Asked about what particular car parts the Ugandans were manufacturing, Tickodri-Togboa said: "We do the designing, the shape, and the body. Other parts, we are still importing them. But there is no automotive maker in the whole world, even in the US, who manufactures all car parts. What they do is have the designs and ask other industries to make for them those designs."

"As long as you design, produce and validate the car, you are the manufacturer," Musasizi explained.

Tickodri-Togboa said Kiira Motors

Corporation will provide a great opportunity for other entrepreneurs and investors to set up plants for the local manufacturer of car parts such as tires, lights, shock absorbers, brake pads and the like.

Government will provide funding to the initial production and setting up of a

factory for the Kiira EV car project. The project released an electric car prototype in 2011.

"We are going to work out the budget requirements and discuss with the ministry of Finance to be able to allocate funds to the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) for the project,"



Ms Kyambadde said.

"Government may not be able to handle all, but will link the project to partners for more funding," she said. Prof Tickodri-Togboa, the project principal investigator, said the organisation will be able to produce internationally acceptable vehicles like Kiira EV Smack which was displayed as the flagship product for the plant.

In 2011, under Makerere University, the team launched their first car. The two-seater Kiira EV weighs 1,000kg. While the ordinary car has a fuel combustion engine, Kiira EV is run by electric motors and supported by batteries. It's built to cruise at a speed of more than 100km per hour. The battery can last for a distance of 80km (50 miles) before recharging for 3-4 hours with electric power. 🇺🇬



» The KIIRA EV SMACK team