

Government in the Driving Seat

Mobility 2030



South Africa's unemployment rate is high, with 38.2% of young people (aged 15–34) without jobs.¹ With the rise of Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things, there will be a shift in the job market. The common perspective is that robots will take jobs away. The other perspective, often not shared, is that, with the help of tech entrepreneurs, different jobs are being created – which will ultimately stimulate the economy. This is one reason why the South African government should continue embracing the future of mobility.

With the proposed legislative changes and partnerships with the private sector to create a favourable environment for mobility, it is evident that government is embracing e-mobility. Besides for boosting the economy and creating jobs, e-mobility will help government tackle a few issues. The Department of Transport is constantly grappling to find solutions for increasing traffic congestion, urbanisation, unregulated public transport and aging transportation infrastructure. These challenges have driven the Department of Transport to partner with other government departments and the private sector to invest in initiatives that support mobility technology.

Pioneering EV Research

An example would be the uYilo e-Mobility Technology Innovation Programme (EMTIP), hosted by Nelson Mandela University's engineering innovation hub, eNtsa. Translated from Xhosa, uYilo means 'to create'. The goal of the programme is to mobilise SA for e-Mobility by creating new business opportunities and generating the know-how to support the sector.²

uYilo has a pilot fleet of electric vehicles – provided by its partners within the automotive industry – and has set up its smart-grid infrastructure on campus, which is the largest dedicated EV-charging facility in SA. The initiative is supported by various government departments and other important stakeholders.

The Electric Vehicle Industry Association (EVIA), created in 2016, is a national platform comprised of government departments and agencies; electric vehicle OEMs; electricity infrastructure and suppliers; electric vehicle equipment suppliers and ICT/smart grid service providers.

The association's main objectives are to:

- Create a favourable environment to enable the use of clean mobility in South Africa
- Support the development of policy and regulatory framework
- Promote technologies for e-Mobility and sustainably integrate them into smart cities in SA
- Support the introduction of sustainable mobility into the urban transportation mix
- Create awareness of electric vehicles in South Africa
- Promote co-operation and trust amongst public-private sector

¹ <http://www.statssa.gov.za>

² <http://uyilo.org.za/>

Policy and Legislation

Through the Department of Transport, the South African government has initiated legislation to regulate ride-sharing or “e-hailing” services. Since this is an industry that is being shaped by technology, some areas of focus will be in supporting research and development – for example battery tech, fuel cells and so on. Another is in developing an industry that may best suit South Africa, such as combating unemployment. This would include designing an equivalent of the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) for e-mobility. By reducing manufacturing costs and allowing the production of more affordable electric cars, this could encourage job creation and retention, while promoting foreign investment.

Ignite the Conversation

Changes in policies and legislation takes time. That is why the conversation needs to happen now. The South African government knows that e-mobility will take over, in due course. They can prepare for impact by incentivising corporates to embrace the shift from traditional mobility to e-mobility. KPMG South Africa is ready to start the conversation and help our client prepare for the future of mobility. We need to understand that the introduction of technology will not necessarily only take jobs away from people. Jobs will change and new jobs will be introduced. The future of mobility is an opportunity for SA to rebuild.

Contact us 



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