

09 June 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

First electric minibus taxi coming to South Africa - project team aims to accelerate green mobility adoption

As the fuel price hits historic highs, commuters are starting to feel the pinch in increasing transport fares. The typical South African commuter already spends up to 40% of their income on transport and the minibus taxi sector is still struggling from the impact of the last two years on their operations. However, relief could be possible from an unlikely source – electric minibus taxis. Privately-owned minibus taxis are ubiquitous in sub-Saharan Africa and carry more than 70% of daily commuters.

A project team of companies and research institutions today announced a research partnership to investigate and advance the feasibility of an electric minibus taxi in South African conditions by testing production vehicles in South Africa in 2023.

For the last five years GoMetro, a global mobility management technology company with its head office in Cape Town, has collected data on taxi operations across South Africa. In order to advance e-mobility development locally, GoMetro has convened a project team of innovative companies and researchers to launch a demonstrator project to test the first minibus in South African conditions by January 2023.

The project team, consisting of GoMetro, MiX Telematics, HSW, ACDC Dynamics, and various entities within Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Engineering, will conduct rigorous and extensive testing in and around the town of Stellenbosch, as well as putting the electrification of the minibus taxi sector firmly on the national agenda by means of an educational roadshow in all nine provinces in the course of 2023.

A number of viable electric minibus taxi models from various markets have been identified, the first of which will be on South African shores by the end of the year. The acceptance and practicality of the model will be extensively tested with taxi owners and drivers, in order to identify the use-cases and conditions where an electric taxi would make the most sense.

“Taxi drivers and owners are very interested and intrigued by the idea of an electric minibus taxi, and are constantly asking us when the first electric minibus taxi will arrive on our shores”, says Justin Coetzee, GoMetro CEO. “We have built valuable relationships with a large number of taxi associations, and the ever-increasing fuel price is a massive concern among owners, drivers and riders alike, as there does not seem to be any relief in sight. The industry has long acknowledged

that business as usual will not suffice - and that change is required, especially after the effects of COVID-19”.

The aim of testing different models over the coming months, is to establish which vehicle will be best suited to the South African public transport industry, and what spectrum of operations are conducive to the range capabilities of the vehicles. In addition to testing the vehicle itself, the project team wants to engage with the automotive sector and policy makers to encourage proactive discussions with the government around the reduction of duties and the promotion of the adoption of electric vehicles in the transport sector.

“Since MiX Telematics is at the forefront of innovation and leveraging new technologies to improve fleet operations and efficiency, we are very excited to be part of this pioneering initiative. We have seen the adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles increasing exponentially in Europe, and so look forward to learning how we can support these solutions in the South African context,” says Catherine Lewis, Executive VP of Technology at MiX Telematics.

Professor Thinus Booysen, Research Chair in the Internet of Things at Stellenbosch University, will lead the team of testing experts. “The informal taxi sector must transform to EVs, but little is known about their energy requirements. This unknown is overshadowed by our energy scarcity and coal dependence on the electricity supply side. This collaborative project will ensure we are prepared for and carefully manage this exciting transition,” says Booysen. The electric minibus taxi will be showcased at the Stellenbosch University campus.

According to Dr Bernard Bekker, Associate Director of Stellenbosch University’s Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies (CRSES), the future electrification of the transport section in South Africa raises significant technical and regulatory challenges related to integrating electric transport into our existing grid infrastructure. These challenges are in many ways unique to South Africa, where minibus taxis will potentially represent a much larger proportion of the future electrical fleet than for example Europe or the USA. “The availability of a real-life electric minibus taxi to inform our research activities will provide very valuable inputs into addressing these challenges.”

“The minibus taxi is ubiquitous in the South African landscape moving millions of people over the years, contributing to getting South Africa to work - unfortunately in an environmentally unsustainable manner. ACDC Dynamics is proud to be part of the change that will be brought to this industry as it adopts electric/ battery powered taxi’s through our capabilities to supply battery charging networks across the country,” says Mario Maio, Founder and Managing Director of ACDC Dynamics.

“HSW is passionate about bringing manufacturing local. The Western Cape has all the technical skills and resources to set up manufacturing facilities in support of such an initiative. There are already existing Electronic Manufacturers who have world class capabilities in the Manufacturing

of electronic products such as Barracuda Holdings who is one of HSW's key customers as evidence that this type of hi-tech manufacturing technology is already available locally," says Ryan Webb, Managing Member HSW.

Electric vehicles (EVs) are heralded as a silver bullet to globally decarbonise the transport sector. The development of low-carbon transport in cities is part of the global agenda to delay climate change and relates to many of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. While EV sales have increased substantially in the Global North and many global vehicle manufacturers plan to stop production of combustion engines as early as 2030, in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the transition to EVs continues to be painstakingly slow. This research project aims to accelerate this transition to cleaner and greener mobility.

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About GoMetro

GoMetro's end-to-end public transport technology and planning solutions help governments, transport authorities, county councils, transport operators and transport consultants. Our mission is to improve the way people move through our Mobility Management Super Platform that includes world-class technology solutions, a team of passionate industry experts and clients who understand the importance of sustainable and profitable mobility.

About MiX Telematics

MiX Telematics is a leading global provider of fleet and mobile asset management solutions delivered as SaaS to 815,200 global subscribers spanning more than 120 countries. The company's products and services provide enterprise fleets, small fleets and consumers with solutions for efficiency, safety, compliance and security. MiX Telematics was founded in 1996 and has offices in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uganda, Brazil, Mexico, Australia and the United Arab Emirates as well as a network of more than 130 fleet partners worldwide. MiX Telematics shares are publicly traded on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE: MIX) and on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: MIXT). For more information, visit www.mixtelematics.com.

About HSW

HSW prides itself in entering the electronic manufacturing space and prides itself in empowering the electronic manufacturing industry in its support offerings of manufacturing equipment as well the supply of electronic components.

About ACDC Dynamics

ACDC Dynamics electrical; green energy and power storage solutions have built South African industries over the last 30 years, and we look forward to building the charging network for the industry that has moved the South African nation.

About the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies

The Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies (CRSES) at Stellenbosch University enables a sustainable future for Africa through world-class renewable and sustainable energy research, advisory services, awareness campaigns and training programmes. It was established in 2007 to facilitate and stimulate activities in renewable energy studies and research at the world-class Stellenbosch University. We work in partnership with other universities and research entities within the National System of Innovation in South Africa.

About the Faculty of Engineering - Stellenbosch University

The Faculty of Engineering is one of Stellenbosch University's flagship faculties and is one of South Africa's major producers of top quality engineers who contribute to the economic development of the country and improves citizens' quality of life. Their outstanding research and consulting services add value to industry, and substantially supplement funding streams. There are approximately 4,000 engineering students, of whom approximately 3 000 are undergraduate and 1 000 postgraduate. The Faculty was established in 1944 and is housed in a large complex of buildings with modern facilities.

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