

Nissan to test African demand for its e-power hybrid vehicle

Japanese carmaker Nissan Motor plans to introduce its e-power hybrid technology car in Tunisia, its Africa head said on Tuesday, 26 March, as part of plans to test demand in the African market for electric vehicles.



Nissan Motor's electric vehicle (EV) model Sakura being charged at a charging station in Yokohama, Japan, on 3 November 2023. *Reuters/Kim Kyung-Hoon/File Photo*

Africa is the world's last remaining automotive frontier due to the low level of vehicle ownership. According to Nissan, elsewhere in the world, the global motorisation average is 182 vehicles per 1,000 people versus 42 per 1,000 in Africa.

But, like in many countries globally, electric vehicles (EVs) are currently priced out of the reach of most domestic consumers, while some countries in Africa, including South Africa, struggle with power outages and logjams on railways and at ports, making it difficult for global executives to invest in EVs on the continent.

"Electrification might take some time in Africa but we have a plan on how to introduce electrification, especially with our technology e-Power in some of the markets that are ready for this technology in Africa," Sherief Eldesouky, Nissan Africa managing director told *Reuters*.

Nissan's e-power technology system includes a petrol engine with a power generator, inverter, battery and an electric motor. The electric motor delivers power directly to the wheels, using energy stored in the battery pack.

"We launched it in Morocco with the Qashqai (last year) and in Egypt in February with the X-Trail and we're going to go to Tunisia after that with the Qashqai," Eldesouky said on the sidelines of Nissan's Navara Africa expedition launch.

"We've been leveraging our technology because Africa is not ready in terms of infrastructure availability of electricity."

South Africa is making some inroads after it published an electric vehicle policy roadmap last year, outlining steps to support the transition to EVs, such as government incentives.

Japan's third-largest carmaker by sales wholly owns manufacturing plants in Egypt and South Africa and has been in Africa for more than 60 years.

This year Nissan will export the South African-built Navara pickup trucks to new markets of Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia and Egypt, Nissan Africa product marketing director Stefan Haasbroek said.

The automaker is also planning to introduce new grades like the mid-grade automatic transmission vehicle in Sub-Saharan Africa and an entry-level double cab in South Africa, he added.

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