

Principal investigator of the Kiira EV Project takes the Ms Amelia Kyambadde Minister of Trade Industry in the production centre of the project's latest version, the Kiira EV Smack in Ntinda, looking on is Prof. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa, Principal Investigator of the project

Uganda waits for first car to come off assembly line

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THE PROMISE:

On December 7, 2015, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kiira Motors Corporation (KMC), Mr Paul Isaac Musasizi, announced that the company was set to begin producing cars this year. "Production starts in 2018 with 305 vehicles and production is expected to be at full capacity of 60,000 vehicles per year by 2039," said Mr Musasizi declared during the company's launch by the Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, at the

office of the Prime Minister, of the firm's 25-year blueprint.

One of the aims of the blueprint meant to help the firm establish capabilities for manufacturing vehicles in Uganda was said to enable Uganda achieve the Vision 2040 development goals.

Mr Musasizi told attendees that KMC would start with assembling cars before moving into manufacturing. The range of car products included sedans, picks-ups, buses and trucks.

Giving an insight into the pricing, Mr Musasizi revealed that a sedan was expected to cost \$25,000, a cross over

\$25,000 and a pick-up \$32,000.

According to Mr Musasizi, this was in line with a business plan developed by a US-based consultancy firm, RLE International. The plan put the cost of developing the required infrastructure at \$36 million.

The Chief Engineer of RLE International, Mr Chris Kattalo, was also at hand to give the project a clean bill of financial viability, saying it had a 21 per cent internal rate of returns and that it was expected to have started raking in at least \$2 million in profits per year by 2023.

The then Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology, Prof Sandy Stephen Tickodri-Togboa, was at hand to reveal that the idea to venture into car manufacturing dated back to 2007 when a group of Makerere University students and staff participated in a Vehicle sign Summit at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States.

He said the idea was subsequently elevated from merely being an extra-curricular activity under the faculty of Technology to the University's research and innovative programme.

Project takes shape

With funding from the Presidential Initiative for Science and Technology Innovation Programme, the concept was in 2009 moved to the design and assembly stage. That, according to Prof Tickodri-Togboa, resulted into the launch by

President Yoweri Museveni on November 24, 2011 of the KIIRA EV vehicle. According to the plans that were announced slightly more 25 months ago

MONITOR'S POSITION

The Chief Executive Officer of Kiira Motor's Corporation, Mr Paul Isaac Musasizi, neither picked his phone nor responded to text messages seeking information on how far the company has moved towards achieving what it promised Ugandans or what is impeding it from moving forward.

State Minister for Industry, Mr Michael Werikhe, was also reportedly away attending a cabinet meeting on Monday but his colleague, the State Minister in Charge of Cooperatives, Mr Fred Gume, said that government is vehicle manufacturing is expected to begin next financial year.

"We recently inspected the land on which is going to ensure that electricity is extended to the industrial park and the roads leading to the area are also worked on. Money has also been provided in the budget for next financial year. We have no doubt that work will commence sooner than later," Mr Gume told Daily Monitor on phone on Monday.