Towards Electric Mobility in East Africa

Press Release

A new study by Agora Verkehrswende examines current trends in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Forward-looking governments are promoting domestic EV assembly with ambitious policy targets.

3 December 2025. Governments in East Africa are turning the region into a pioneer of electric mobility on the African continent. A new analysis by the Berlin-based think tank Agora Verkehrswende spotlights current trends in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, which are leading the continent in terms of EV sales and related policy action. All five countries have adopted or are in the process of developing ambitious national strategies for promoting the EV market. At the same time, local companies are already making increased investments in EV assembly, particularly for e-motorcycles and e-buses.

"Many African countries see the global momentum towards electric mobility as a tremendous opportunity for domestic economic growth," says Naville Geisireb, Project Manager for International Cooperation at Agora Verkehrswende. "By promoting electric mobility, they are not only building up domestic value chains and creating desirable jobs for their young and expanding populations, but also making themselves less dependent on expensive petroleum imports. Africa's commitment to fossil-free transport has not yet received the attention it deserves in Europe. Electric mobility offers an opportunity for strategic partnership between Europe and Africa, not just for climate protection, but also for sustainable economic development."

A dynamic regional market

EV sales have grown significantly in all five East African countries, driven in part by ambitious policy measures. In Ethiopia, for example, electric vehicles made up 60% of new vehicle registrations in 2024, predominantly because the government banned the import of combustion-engine vehicles that same year. Ethiopia's strategy for a "climate-resilient green economy" dates back to 2011. Kenya, for its part, has more than doubled the size of its electric vehicle fleet (which primarily consists of pedelecs and e-motorbikes) since 2023, thanks in part to significant growth in charging and battery-swapping infrastructure.

Uganda aims to achieve a 30% EV share in new registrations by 2030, and beginning in 2040, only the registration of zero-emission vehicles will be permitted. Uganda has introduced tax incentives along the entire EV value chain, and is now a regional supplier of electric buses. Rwanda has also adopted an e-mobility promotion strategy, banning the commercial use of gasoline-powered motorbikes in the capital of Kigali in 2025.

"Africa is ideally positioned to leapfrog past the age of the combustion engine, given anticipated growth in mobility demand and motorisation rates," says Johannes Oetjen, International Climate and Transport Policy Analyst at Agora Verkehrswende. "The continent has enormous potential to generate electricity from the sun and wind, and also possesses raw materials that are strategically important to EV supply chains. Tapping this potential in partnership with the European Union would generate considerable mutual benefits. By supporting African countries to strengthen domestic value creation, the European Union could accelerate its own transformation. Indeed, closer partnership with Africa could help to reduce the EU's dependency on China for critical raw

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materials needed in battery production."

Abundant domestic resources

Both Tanzania and Rwanda have significant deposits of lithium, cobalt, and graphite; Tanzania's graphite deposits are among the world's largest. While Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda are thought to have significant EV-relevant metal deposits and rare earths, exploration efforts are still at an early stage. Overall, the energy transition is well underway in the five considered East African countries: Renewables already account for more than half of power generation in Rwanda and Uganda; for nearly 90% of generation in Kenya; and for 100% of generation in Ethiopia (thanks to extensive hydropower).

Opportunities for policy action

The analysis also highlights prospective policies for advancing electric mobility in East African countries. Specifically, the report sees opportunities for action in: (1) expanding local mining production and downstream processing; (2) strengthening economic cooperation in the region, including local partnerships between vehicle manufacturers, parts suppliers, and other firms in the EV supply chain; (3) securing technical and financial assistance from abroad; (4) improving domestic energy and logistics infrastructure. Moving from local final assembly to full-scale manufacturing will depend in particular on the latter two points. In terms of demand-side measures, the analysis views financial incentives for the use or purchase of pedelec, e-motorbikes, and e-minibuses as particularly promising for accelerating market ramp-up.

The full version of the English-language analysis is available for download free of charge: Towards Electric Mobility in East Africa: Current Trends and Policy Approaches. The report was prepared by Agora Verkehrswende in collaboration with GIZ Kenya as part of the Rethinking Transport project jointly implemented by Agora Verkehrswende and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Two related factsheets with insightful infographics were released by Agora Verkehrswende last month: Fuel Cost Maps for Africa quantifies the petroleum-import savings of transitioning to e-mobility, while Africa's Raw Materials for Electric Mobility at a Glance explores the continent's enormous raw material potential.

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