

Ampersand's e-mobility powers up conservation efforts in Akagera National Park

Electric transport energy company, Ampersand has announced a new partnership has unveiled a new collaboration with Akagera National Park in Rwanda. This partnership introduces the park's first two electric motorcycles, tailored for sustainable transportation. The initiative is expected to cut fuel and operational costs and enhance efficiency with quieter operations.



Source: Supplied

The company's e-motorcycles will be used to track rhinos and engage with communities around the Rwandan park.

The National Park, located in northeastern Rwanda, is the largest protected wetland in Central Africa. Home to diverse landscapes and wildlife, including elephants, lions, and rhinos, one of the major benefits of these electric vehicles is the reduction in operating costs leading to increased effectiveness in protecting these species.

The e-motorcycles produce very little noise and no exhaust fumes, which reduces disturbance to the animals and enhances the tracking teams' efficacy.

Accelerating Ampersand's mission

"Our partnership with Akagera National Park is a great example of how e-mobility can be a sustainable solution for everyone. The future of African mobility is electric not just in the cities but also in rural places and parks.

"The e-motorbikes provided to the park were carefully crafted with extensive research as the foundation of our design process: we built a prototype model for off-road tracking and an upgrade of our base model for the staff to conduct important liaison work with the local communities", says Josh Whale, CEO and founder of Ampersand. "We are proud to be part of this effort to reduce carbon emissions and protect the area for savannah-adapted species."

Akagera National Park is recognised for its wildlife resettlement efforts, with black rhinos re-introduced and white rhinos introduced to the park in recent years. The ability to track these animals to understand their movement, monitor their welfare and protect them from poaching with a minimum of disturbance is essential to this work.

"Poaching in Akagera National Park has significantly decreased thanks to the park's robust law enforcement and community engagement efforts. Daily patrols and vigilant tracking are crucial, particularly for high-value species such as rhinos.

"Unfortunately, according to most sources, Africa still loses at least one rhino every day. Without immediate action, we risk witnessing their gradual extinction, which is why tracking and monitoring these creatures is crucial to ensure their protection.

Reducing environmental impact

"The incorporation of Ampersand's electric motorcycles will improve the park's ability to track and monitor these endangered animals while also reducing operating costs and environmental impact," says Luke Davey, operations manager of Akagera National Park.

Nsengiyaremye Fidel, rhino monitoring unit of Akagera National Park, comments: "As someone who has been riding Ampersand's electric motorcycle for the past twelve months, I've experienced many of its advantages: First, it's automatic, so I don't stress about the gears; second, they are powerful electric motorcycles with the ability to climb steep roads; third, this e-moto aids us in approaching specific animals and leaving them undisturbed in their natural behaviour.

"Although inherently quiet, Ampersand has incorporated sound speakers on the bikes so that when initially approaching, the animal can be made aware of the motorcycle without being disturbed by it. The design is perfect for our needs."

Developing these two electric motorcycles for Akagera's challenging terrain allows Ampersand's Kigali-based R&D team to stress-test the company's vehicle design, components, and battery packs and advance vehicle development.

Using electric vehicles means Akagera 'walks the talk' on the critical linkage between climate change and conservation.

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