

## Valletta electric vehicle infrastructure

Malta's drive to put around 7,200 electric vehicles (EV) on the road each year until 2030 is "very challenging but doable", as long as Government steps up with leadership and investment, says one of Malta leading EV importers, who highlights coordination, infrastructure, education and incentives as some of the key factors that will be crucial in determining whether the goal is achieved.

When the Ministry for the Environment published its Low Carbon Development Strategy for public consultation in June, one of the headline proposals was the plan to get 65,000 EVs (including Plug-In Hybrid EVs - PHEVs) on Maltese roads by 2030, which translates to an average of 7,200 every year.

The scale of the challenge becomes clear when considering that it has taken Malta over three and a half years, since the beginning of 2018, to register the same number of EVs and hybrids that it is now aiming to introduce every year. The total stock remains at only around 8,500.

BusinessNow.mt reached out to Ian Mizzi, a director on the board of Mizzi Organisation and managing director of Industrial Motors Ltd and Nissan Motors Ltd, representing Suzuki, Mitsubishi and Nissan on the local market, to see how Malta can achieve this ambitious target.

"Basically," he starts, "it is certainly achievable, but only if the right conditions are in place. There are a number of hurdles and challenges that have to be overcome to get there."

Echoing the views of both owners and other importers, Mr Mizzi identifies the key challenge as one of infrastructure.

"We are selling electric vehicles so we are on the front line," he says. "We have open communication with the potential customer here, and the potential customer tells us that they would like to buy an EV but they don't have where to charge. They tell us:

"We hear this all the time, and it is definitely the main hurdle we are facing at the moment.

He describes the consultation document launched last month on the liberalisation of the market in public charging infrastructure as well written, a positive step, and on the right track - but insists that as long as the number of EVs remains low, there is little incentive for private operators to provide the service - and put up the attendant large capital outlay.

"It is clear that initially investors will have to cover a period of losses, until the number of EVs reaching the critical mass required to make the income interesting."



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Mr Mizzi says that if the Government actually manages to get 65,000 EVs introduced over the next nine years, operators would indeed be very interested in getting into the charging market due to the rapid ramp up in clients.

However, for investors to be willing to take that risk, he says, they will first need to be convinced of the feasibility of achieving that target, and more importantly, of Government's commitment to doing what is necessary to reach it.

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