

National Electric Vehicle Innovations Need Government Support

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The investment project for the development of the electric vehicle battery industry in Indonesia provides many benefits. Economically, it will encourage the entry of foreign capital that can absorb a lot of labor. The nation's prestige will also increase as Indonesia joins a group of countries that support future technology. However, the government has yet to provide a full amount of support to build a battery factory for the electric car manufacturer to develop national electric vehicles.

An Electrical Engineering and Information Technology Lecturer, Dr. Eka Firmansyah, stated so in response to the national electric cars progress amidst the investment plan for the electric vehicle battery industry in the country, Thursday (7/1).

As is known, the government and LG Group have signed a memorandum of understanding for the investment project for electric vehicle batteries worth US\$ 9.8 billion or Rp 142 trillion in mid-December. Through the agreement, Indonesia is to expect as the first country in the world to integrate the electric battery industry from mining to lithium batteries production.

According to Eka, there are levels within electric vehicle batteries. Each industry targets a specific



segment. Having the battery plant built does not mean its use available for all types of electric vehicle products. Highly possible that the plant solely provides batteries for their own products without purchases availability for other products. This kind of practice is natural. However, nationally, the existence of factories from large manufacturers in Indonesia is one that benefits the nation. "The direct correlation between the existence of a battery industry in Indonesia and the development of local electric vehicles still needs to define. It is all because the chain still takes a long process," he said.

Eka said the electric car innovation in the country is still being developed by many parties of higher education academics, start-ups, and industry. Each sector has its own challenges. In terms of innovation, said Eka, the more parties that develop electric vehicles, the better. "Hopefully, there will be more solutions offered. It's just that due to limited resources of experts, funds, and facilities, collaboration will be a better option," he said.

To be more efficient, electric car development in the country requires a synergy of cooperation between several universities, research institutes, start-ups, and industries supported by the government. It occurs because electric vehicles are a new solution that concerns many sectors. Moreover, the research direction should not only be about cars and how to make them. Social issues, such as public education on the potential of electric vehicles, government attitudes, regulation reviews, ministries coordination, are sectors that need the assistance of all parties to succeed in electric transportation. "For example, educating on electric vehicles, if you don't see the problem's root from a cultural, economic, technological perspective, the community will be resistant. Hence electric vehicle research on a large scale is indispensable," he said.

For electric vehicle development, the number of vehicle charging stations will correlate with the success or failure of transportation electrification. As there are not many electric vehicles today, the economic aspect will not emerge yet. "The government plays an important role. If electric transportation is the plan for the future, the government must provide electric vehicle charging stations, at least in a certain number and with a specific strategy," he explained.

Once a population that allows for economic value appears, the private sector will naturally join in. Although, possibly, the private sector will start investing from the beginning. In this case, the government needs to support by providing facilities related to licensing and standards.

Regarding opportunities in electric vehicle development, Indonesia is a potential major player in electric vehicle mass transportation. "For private transportation, we must as much as possible be able to penetrate international business networks and contribute to it to enable us to obtain benefits later. Don't let ourselves be alienated from the sector. Slowly, with the national capacities to form, we will also become players," he concluded.



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