

Engie, Senoko to offer electric vehicle charging plans in tie-up with Bolloré

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WITH an electric car-sharing scheme set to start in Singapore in the middle of this year, French energy company Engie and local utility Senoko Energy are planning to offer retail plans that bundle services for the charging of electric vehicles or corporate car sharing.

Both companies will also work with French electric car-sharing operator Bolloré Group, the firm that was awarded the government contract to start the electric car-sharing scheme, on research and development work relating to electricity infrastructure and power supply.

These are part of an agreement the three companies signed on Monday at The Innovation Forum at the Biopolis, during the visit by French President Francois Hollande.

Under the agreement, the trio plan to develop solutions in energy storage and electro-mobility, such as electric cars and electric buses, in Singapore and the Asia-Pacific.

They will also explore the feasibility of deploying an electric tram known as the Bolloré Bluetram – which uses supercapacitors allowing a vehicle to be flash-charged in 20 seconds – in the city-state and the region. The first Bluetram was launched on the Champs Elysées in Paris in December 2015 for the United Nations climate change talks.

Bolloré Group, through its local subsidiary BlueSG, was last year awarded a contract by the Land Transport Authority and Economic Development Board (EDB) to operate the electric car sharing scheme for 10 years. It will start with 125 cars and 200 charging points, and deploy 1,000 electric cars and install 2,000 charging points within the first four years.

Bolloré already runs electric car-sharing programmes in France, Italy and the US. In Paris, it runs the world's largest electric car-sharing programme; its Autolib scheme has a

fleet of 4,000 cars and 130,000 regular users.

Another area that Bolloré and Engie are eyeing is the provision of charging points for electric vehicles for baggage handling in the airport, tapping Bolloré's expertise in passenger processing solutions and Engie's strength in integrated facility management in airport buildings.

"There is growing demand from airports to have electric vehicles, in particular for baggage handling," Franck Vitté, head of Asia at Blue Solutions which is part of Bolloré, told *The Business Times* that the vehicles carry all the luggage usually moved by the ground handlers. "But the charging infrastructure has to be common, so we have the capability to provide this."

Engie is well positioned as it already provides integrated facilities management for Changi Airport, Mr Vitté noted.

At the event, Engie also formalised a partnership between Engie Lab, Schneider Electric and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) to develop micro-grid solutions. The two companies are developing one of four micro grids on the Renewable Energy Integration Demonstrator in Singapore (Reids) project on Pulau Semakau which is led by NTU.

Engie told BT last October during a media tour of the site that it hopes to offer a package of off-grid services including mobility, access to clean water and clean cooking facilities using biogas in two to three years.

Since then, it has worked closely with its partners, NTU and the Singapore government to finalise the micro-grid design and obtain the necessary permits. "The first equipment are planned to arrive this summer and we are looking at obtaining our first results by the end of 2017," said a spokesman.

The agreements follow the opening of Engie's first Asian research centre in Singapore last year as the firm shifts towards renewable energy in a three-year strategy. The Singapore lab is part of its global network of 12 research centres.