

Paris launches world-first electric car-share scheme

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A Bluecar is pictured in Paris, on the first day of a test session of the Autolib electric car pick-up service. Self-service electric cars appeared on the streets of Paris Sunday, as a French group launched a public car-hire scheme modelled on the capital's popular bicycle-sharing system and designed to become the world's largest of its kind.

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The Autolib' venture set up by Vincent Bolloré, a prominent businessman with ties to President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#), kicked off a two-month testing phase with around 60 vehicles scattered over 10 stations.

The programme is expected to be scaled up to 250 vehicles on December 5 and could include 2,000 of the small four-seaters over 46 municipalities around the French capital by the end of June 2012.

"This service will complement public transport and taxis. Our aim to widen the range of available transport," deputy Paris mayor Annick Lepetit said at the launch.

The Bollore group predicts it will need 80,000 users to make a profit and hopes to attract customers with a low fee of 12 euros a month for an annual subscription.

Car-sharing systems exist in New York and cities in the Netherlands but the Autolib' project in Paris is a novelty in that all vehicles are electric.

Their Lithium Metal Polymer batteries, developed by the Bollore Group, can store more power than any other on the market and can take the Paris "Bluecars" 250 kilometres (155 miles) on a single charge.

The small bubble-shaped Bluecars were designed by legendary Italian coachbuilder Pininfarina, whose workshops have designed generations of Ferraris and Maseratis.

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