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Kia Aims To Make World's Most Fuel-Efficient Cars

As part of its bid to become the producer of the world's most fuel-efficient and greenest vehicles Kia Motors is soon to introduce an all-electric city car, along with a range of other technologies to make its cars go further on various fuel sources.

Full technical details on Kia's new EV (Electric Vehicle) have yet to be revealed, other than to confirm it will be a 'box-style' small vehicle in the light CUV segment and it is expected to use an advanced LiPoly (Lithium-ion Polymer) battery to power the electric motor. Officials says it will be able to travel an impressive 160 kilometres on a single charge and deliver a maximum speed of 130km/h.

The Korean carmaker initially plans to produce 2,000 of its small EV cars in 2012 for use in its domestic market over the next year. Automotive commentators say the Kia Naimo concept, revealed at the Seoul Motor Show earlier this year, could offer a hint for the new EV's styling. Kia has also confirmed it will introduce a second EV in 2014 in the form of a Soul-sized small car.

In addition to hybrids and all-electric vehicles, Kia Motors has been introducing other fuel-saving technology under its green Eco-Dynamics brand.

New Zealand has already seen elements of this technology in the recently launched Kia Picanto mini car, which features fuel-saving technology called Idle Stop & Go (ISG), which stops the engine when the car is idling at traffic lights and automatically re-starts when the clutch is depressed. Combined with its highly efficient 1.25-litre engine, the Picanto ISG is New Zealand's greenest and most economical petrol dedicated car with a 4.3L/100km (66mpg) combined economy rating.

The same ISG technology will also feature on the manual petrol version of the all-new Kia Rio super-mini that is due to arrive in New Zealand by the end of the year, joining the auto model, which has just gone on sale here. A new, frugal diesel engine will also appear in the Rio in early 2012.

Additionally, Kia is pressing on with the introduction of down-sized turbo petrol engines across its range. The existing 2.0-litre engine is expected to be replaced by a 213bhp 1.6-litre turbo and the current 1.6-litre will become a 128bhp, 1.2-litre turbo in the future. Both engines will bring considerable improvement to economy and emissions, especially when used in conjunction with Kia's first double-clutch, semi-auto transmission that is currently in development.

And by 2015, Kia Motors will also unveil its first production Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle, using next-generation hydrogen fuel cell technology to power electric motors. The Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle is expected to provide a range of more than 560 kilometres and its only emissions will be water vapour.

Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand, says our market will start see a number of these new fuel-saving and environmental technologies as they become available.

"We already have ISG available on the Picanto and Rio and it's only a matter of time before some of those other technologies will be available in New Zealand," says Mr McDonald.

"As these models become available, it means that not only will Kia owners be saving more money on their running costs, they will also be helping to protect the environment, yet while still enjoying the same standard of driving."

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Photo caption: Kia's first all-electric production car could be based on the Naimo concept.

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