

Bolt, European Investment Bank sign €50m quasi-equity facility

Bolt and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have signed a venture debt facility to the value of EUR €50m. The funds will be used to boost R&D and develop new products. The financing is supported by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe, and will be used to improve and expand the platform's ride-hailing technology as well as personalised mobility services like food delivery.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The funding is intended to support Bolt's product development and research in areas where the use of technology can improve the safety, reliability and sustainability of its services while maintaining the high efficiency of the company's operations.

Bolt currently operates in seven African countries, including 34 South African towns and cities with plans to expand to 40 South African locations during 2020. It was the first ride-hailing service to launch in the Free State, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and North West, after firmly establishing itself in the major centres of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, along with other areas.

Service expansion

In addition to offering a platform that enables tens of thousands of drivers to be entrepreneurs that own their own transport businesses, Bolt employs over 150 permanent staff in South Africa, who provide a variety of support services to drivers and riders utilising the platform. This staff complement is set to increase in 2020, in support of the service's expansion strategy which will be made possible by this funding.

Bolt's co-founder, Martin Villig says: "Mobility is one of the areas where Europe will really benefit from a local champion who shares the values of European consumers and regulators. Therefore, we are thrilled to have the European Investment Bank join the ranks of Bolt's backers as this enables us to move faster towards serving many more people in Europe."

Gareth Taylor, country manager for Bolt in South Africa, adds: "Ride-hailing has become a significant part of transforming and building a competitive and consumer-focused transportation environment in South Africa, stimulating unprecedented innovation, growth and job creation in a new industry that is just seven years old in South Africa. This funding injection will add significant momentum to how ride-hailing enables progress."

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