

Uber and Bolt competitor DiDi to expand across SA



By Johannes Masiteng

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Ride-hailing platform DiDi is planning to expand its services across South Africa in the coming months, Ken Liu, SA launch lead for DiDi, said at a recent media event held at the DiDi Driver Centre in Observatory, Cape Town.



SA launch lead for DiDi, Ken Liu, with Western Cape Premier Alan Winde at the DiDi media event in Observatory, Cape Town.

DiDi, which began recruiting driver-partners in Gauteng in June, will officially be available to riders in Johannesburg and Pretoria from 23 August, with plans to further expand to Durban, KwaZulu-Natal before the end of the year.

The e-hailing services app first launched in South Africa with a successful pilot run in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth), Eastern Cape in March this year, and in May, rolled out its services to Cape Town. Since then, the Chinese mobility platform has registered thousands of drivers, allowing local residents to get to where they need to be.

Driver and rider safety a priority for DiDi

DiDi focuses on providing safe and flexible entrepreneurship opportunities for drivers as well as safe and reliable mobility options for riders. During his address to the media, Liu focused on the e-hailing app's safety features. "Our value proposition for our operation in South Africa is safety. For the drivers' side it's safety and better earnings, and on the riders' side, it's safety and affordability," Lui said.

The app boasts several safety features for both drivers and passengers, including:

- Facial recognition
- Share trip with contacts
- SOS button linked to the police
- Smart geofencing for drivers to opt-out of servicing unsafe areas
- Unmatch from riders for drivers and unmatch from drivers for riders



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Western Cape premier Alan Winde, who was also present at the media event, also highlighted the platform's safety features during his address to the media: "In our province and South Africa at large, we are always focused on three fundamental factors, namely safety, job creation and dignity. And DiDi looks to contribute in all of those areas," Winde said.

Winde continued: "While I believe in a competitive environment, I also believe that one of the key areas the government needs to focus on in this region is safe and reliable public transport for all. We want to grow our economy, attract investment opportunities and create more jobs. And to do all this, we need proper and efficient mobility."

Founded in 2012, DiDi "has an estimated 600 million users and millions of drivers globally", and with the launch and expansion to South Africa, the rideshare services app now operates in 15 countries outside of China, including Australia, Russia, Japan, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

“ Check out the Premier of the Western Cape, [@alanwinde](#) , visiting our Cape Town DiDi Center. Many drivers in Cape Town and Gqeberha have already taken advantage of the extra income opportunity that DiDi provides and we want to encourage the people of Gauteng to do the same. [pic.twitter.com/4b01IUfSPd](#)— DiDi South Africa 💎💎 (@didi_south) [August 6, 2021](#) ”

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