

Folding Car to go on sale in 2013

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Researchers have designed a new car that can fold up to fit itself into small spaces, making it much easier for the driver to find a parking space.

Developed by MIT's Changing Places group and the Spanish Basque region's development agency DENOKINN, the Hiriko Fold, is an ultra-compact electric car designed for city commuting.

The eco-friendly, two-seater vehicle can travel up to 75 miles between charges and is equipped with zero-turn radius wheels that allow it to move sideways.

"This corporate Project will transform the initial concept of the "Citycar" and turn it into an innovating industrial Project consisting of the development of the initial prototype and its industrialisation by means of an innovating production and distribution model," said Hiriko's makers.

"The HIRIKO Project is born with a clear vision of transforming and regenerating the industrial grid in both Alava and the Basque Country, and for this purpose it counts on the participation of companies from the automotive sector that are in charge of manufacturing and developing each one of the modules that compose the "Citycar" concept."

Hiriko Fold prototypes are already on trial in Europe and the vehicle is expected to go on sale in 2013 for around \$14,000.

President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso hailed the Hiriko project earlier this year, calling it the "solution" to Europe's economic crisis.

"Projects such as the electric car by HIRIKO play an important role in responding to the crisis, for it combines new business possibilities with the creation of employment and social innovation," he said.

"Hiriko is an example of how to resuscitate traditional industrial sectors and lead them to new challenges, such as urban mobility."