



PRESS RELEASE

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ENEL PROMOTES CROWDFUNDING FOR AVANCHAIR, THE HIGH-TECH WHEELCHAIR

- *Enel joins the crowdfunding campaign launched by Avanchair to begin production of the high-tech wheelchair by 2022 with a donation of up to 50,000 euros*

Rome, May 4th, 2021 - Enel is contributing to fund raising for the development of Avanchair, the latest generation wheelchair operated by automatic movement systems, with a donation of up to 50,000 euros. The crowdfunding campaign, launched on the Eppela platform, has a duration of around 40 days with the aim of reaching the 130,000 euros required to build the ready-to-market prototype.

“We are happy to support the development of an innovative project which can improve the lives of millions of people living with wheelchairs,” said **Ernesto Ciorra**, Enel’s Chief Innovability® Officer. *“Avanchair’s history demonstrates that now more than ever, there is a need for new technology and solutions to support and guide change. Enel is constantly searching for innovation that promotes sustainable development, including startups, independent innovators, universities and research centers, potential partner companies, NGOs and associations.”*

“This is an important milestone for me, having founded Avanchair just a few years ago and now moving on to thinking about a prototype by asking a “crowd” of investors to contribute to the project. The 130,000 euro target is considerable but I am confident it can be achieved,” said **Andrea Depalo**, founder and CIO of Avanchair. *“Enel has supported the Avanchair team for some time now, and Ernesto Ciorra, who saw the innovation in my project, backed it and today, has again renewed that commitment. Together with Emilio Rigolio, my current business partner and friend from the early days, we have created something new and long needed in the world of motor disability. Until now disabled people have been imprisoned in gilded cages, because wheelchairs are designed to keep them seated and not to help them to get out. We are fighting to give people with disabilities more independence.”*

The difference between the Avanchair project and current electronic wheelchairs on the mass market, is that it has new features which focus on supporting users during activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL). The real advantages of Avanchair is the revolutionary way it has simplified user transfer between the wheelchair and the platforms they need to get to a daily basis, also enabling monitoring of the user's health through the IoT. By using IoT sensors, the chair is not only able to monitor a person's vital signs, but it can also provide support in remote assistance operations and can integrate with e-health platforms.

Finally, thanks to Enel X's JuiceAbility device, the Avanchair wheelchair can be charged through electric car charging infrastructures. JuiceAbility uses an intelligent cable and app to recognize wheelchair batteries and connect them to the charging station system for electric cars.