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Transport Systems Catapult Media Release 18TH March 2015, PR07-15:

Response to UK Budget Announcement

For immediate use

Increased government investment in driverless cars to confirm UK's position as world-leading test bed

The Transport Systems Catapult has strongly welcomed Wednesday's Budget announcement in which Chancellor George Osborne unveiled a further £100 million government investment in the development of driverless vehicles.

The funds will be used to create a £200 million five-year Intelligent Mobility Programme (£100m from government and £100 million in matched funding from industry), which will focus on enhancing the development of driverless car technology and the systems required to implement and adopt the technology.

"We are going to back our brilliant automotive industry by investing £100m to stay ahead in the race to driverless technology," Mr Osborne told Parliament in a Budget speech which also included £7 billion of transport investment for the South West, a slower-than-planned increase in company car tax for low emission vehicles, and a £140 million investment in UK research into the infrastructure and cities of the future.

"We are delighted by the Chancellor's announcement, and welcome this opportunity for the UK to consolidate its position as the world-leading place to trial and demonstrate driverless technologies," said Transport Systems Catapult CEO Steve Yianni.

The Transport Systems Catapult is the UK's technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility, and is already overseeing the pioneering trial of the LUTZ Pathfinder driverless pods which are due to begin on pedestrianized areas of Milton Keynes later this year. The Catapult is also a partner in the £19.2 million two-city UK Autodrive Consortium which will trial on-road and on-pavement driverless technology in Milton Keynes and Coventry as part of the government's "Introducing driverless cars to UK roads" competition.

Mr Yianni added: "Today's welcome announcement comes barely a month after our successful launch in Greenwich of the first LUTZ Pathfinder pod prototype, and further demonstrates the UK's appetite to lead the world in the testing and development of this exciting new field of technology."

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For media enquiries and interview requests, please contact TSC Communications Manager Mark Ledsom (Mark.Ledsom@ts.catapult.org.uk, Tel: +44 7508 023 758).

The Transport Systems Catapult is the UK's technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility, harnessing emerging technologies to improve the movement of people and goods around the world. It is one of an elite network of not-for-profit technology and innovation centres established and overseen by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK. For more information see www.ts.catapult.org.uk