

Transport Systems Catapult Media Release PRO8-14

FAO: NEWS, POLITICAL, BUSINESS & TRANSPORT EDITORS

PICTURES AVAILABLE

Transport Systems Catapult Press Release 3rd December 2014:

Catapult welcomes £40 million boost for driverless vehicles

The Transport Systems Catapult played a major part in securing a significant investment in driverless technology in December, culminating in a £40 million testing programme jointly funded by the UK government and private industry.

The "Introducing driverless cars to UK roads" competition was launched in July by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, as a result of the interest in pioneering projects such as the LUTZ Pathfinder driverless pods programme led by the Transport Systems Catapult, and involving three self-driving vehicles that will be trialled on footpaths in Milton Keynes next year.

Looking to take driverless technology beyond the footpaths and onto UK roads, the Innovate UK competition was originally due to receive a total of £10 million in funding. In December's Autumn Statement, however, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced that the government was injecting an additional £9 million into the competition. Combined with the private investments being made by the project partners in the three successful consortia, the UK is now set to invest around £40 million in developing this exciting new field of technology.

"The Transport Systems Catapult was created to champion Intelligent Mobility and to drive major investment in new technologies that can position the UK as global leaders in this field," Transport Systems Catapult CEO Steve Yianni said, following the 3rd December announcement.

"It is testament to our success in getting that message across, that we have now seen the planned investment in driverless vehicle technology quadrupling in just over four months since Innovate UK launched the competition.

As partners in the £19.2 million UK Autodrive consortium, the Transport Systems Catapult will now be actively involved in the test programme itself – partnering with an impressive line-up of vehicle manufacturers, universities, local authorities and legal/insurance experts to trial self-driving cars and pods in Coventry and Milton Keynes.

Led by design and engineering consultants Arup, the UK Autodrive programme will see research teams test public reaction to autonomous vehicles around Milton Keynes and Coventry, carry out real-world testing on public roads and footpaths, and develop new legal and insurance protocols to make driverless mobility safe and viable.

Mr Yianni added that the Catapult would also be keen to provide support and know-how to the other two consortia, who will be trialling vehicles in Greenwich and Bristol.

"We are here to help all parties who are interested in growing Intelligent Mobility for the UK," Mr Yianni said. "We already have strong links with TRL and Atkins, who are leading the other two consortia, and helped to support Atkins' bid for the Bristol trials. So although it is branded a 'competition', I am confident that the different consortia will not see themselves as strict rivals. Certainly at the Transport Systems Catapult, we see this as significant joint investment by government and private backers that should help realise the competition's original aim of establishing the UK as the global hub for the research, development and integration of driverless vehicles and associated technologies."

UK Autodrive will deliver a programme of feasibility studies and practical demonstrations in Milton Keynes and Coventry, where the city councils are taking the lead in developing the urban infrastructure technologies required to support driverless mobility.

The feasibility studies will consider the significant implications and challenges of introducing autonomous vehicles from a technical, social and economic perspective. The studies will provide insights for vehicle manufacturers, cities, commercial operators, legislators and insurers to develop the legal framework for the roll-out of autonomous mobility.

On-road testing will include the real-world evaluation of passenger cars with increasing levels of autonomy, as well as the development and evaluation of lightweight fully autonomous self-driving pods designed for pedestrianised spaces.

Speaking on the day of the Autumn Statement, Tim Armitage, UK Autodrive Project Director, Arup, said: "The UK Autodrive consortium brings together world-class expertise that will help the UK position itself as a leader in the development and adoption of autonomous driving technologies."

"As well as developing and testing the in-car, car-to-car and car-to-infrastructure technologies that will be required to drive cars autonomously on our roads in the future, the project will also place great emphasis on the role and perceptions of drivers, pedestrians and other road users."

"The Low-Speed Autonomous Transport System (L-SATS) will provide the first commercial scale demonstration of a solution for last-mile urban mobility which will have global significance."

"Our plan with the practical demonstration phases is to start testing with single vehicles on closed roads, and to build up to a point where all road users, as well as legislators, the police and insurance companies, are confident about how driverless pods and fully and partially autonomous cars can operate safely on UK roads."

The partners in the 'UK Autodrive' consortium are Arup, Milton Keynes Council, Coventry Council, Jaguar Land Rover, Ford Motor Company, Tata Motors European Technical Centre, RDM Group, MIRA, Thales (UK), Oxbotica, AXA, international law firm Wragge Lawrence Graham & Co, the Transport Systems Catapult, the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, and the Open University.

-- ends --

For further information or interviews contact:

David Reid

Head of Communications

Tel: 01908 359999

E-mail: david.reid@ts.catapult.org.uk

or

Transport Systems Catapult Press Office

Tel: 01908 359940

Notes to editors:

Pictures Available - call.

Images of the LUTZ Pathfinder pods showing their design and how they will look in Milton Keynes are available.

Transport Systems Catapult

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. We are here to support business growth, increase the UK's share of the global Intelligent Mobility market, and attract investment – creating jobs and generating long-term economic growth.

We will help sell UK capability on the global stage, while also promoting the UK as a superb test bed for the transportation industry. With a clear emphasis on collaboration, we are bringing together diverse organisations across different modes of transport, breaking down barriers and providing a unique platform for meeting the world's most pressing transport challenges.

The Transport Systems Catapult 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. All Catapults obtain their funds from a combination of core Innovate UK support and competitively won business and public sector funding. In addition, the Transport Systems Catapult is receiving substantial funding from the UK's Department for Transport.

For more information, please visit www.ts.catapult.org.uk

Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the new name for the Technology Strategy Board – the UK’s innovation agency. Taking a new idea to market is a challenge. Innovate UK funds, supports and connects innovative businesses through a unique mix of people and programmes to accelerate sustainable economic growth. For further information visit

www.innovateuk.org