

Press release: Government launches MERIDIAN to accelerate connected autonomous vehicle technology development in the UK

- Climate Change and Industry Minister Claire Perry has today announced the launch of MERIDIAN – a new co-ordination hub for connected autonomous vehicle (CAV) technologies testing.
- Government investment, matched by industry, will create the world's most effective CAV testing cluster in the UK's automotive and technology heartlands between Coventry and London.
- MERIDIAN will cement the UK's status as the go-to destination for development of CAV and new vehicle technologies.

Climate Change and Industry Minister Claire Perry has today (Thursday 7 September) launched MERIDIAN, a new government-backed and industry-led brand for the development of connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) technology in the UK.

MERIDIAN, funded jointly by the government's flagship £100m CAV investment programme and by industry, will create a cluster of excellence in driverless car testing, along the M40 corridor between Coventry and London, to accelerate the development of this technology, grow intellectual capital and attract overseas investment in the UK.

A key part of the Industrial Strategy commitment to develop world-class CAV testing facilities and infrastructure, the launch of the MERIDIAN brand follows a call for evidence by the Centre of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) in May 2016 into how the UK can integrate and strengthen its CAV testing facilities and to consider the case for a test bed to provide a focus for the industry.

Responses to the consultation were published in March, reflected broad industry support from the Automotive Council, among other sectors and companies, for coordinating the UK's existing testing facilities and for Government funding to support this work.

Climate Change and Industry Minister Claire Perry said:

At the heart of our Industrial Strategy is a commitment to delivering world class science, research and innovation. The MERIDIAN co-ordination hub embodies this ambition, creating a globally recognisable brand that will bring the automotive sector, academia and Government together behind a common set of strategic goals.

A report we are publishing today predicts that by 2035 the global

market for CAV technologies will be worth £907 billion, and through government investment and collaboration with industry in this area we will ensure that the UK becomes one of the global 'go to' destinations for the development of this technology.

With bases at the Coventry and Stratford branches of the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), MERIDIAN will bring together the UK's existing CAV testing centres to create a concentrated cluster of testing facilities that covers all testing requirements for CAV technology. Analysis has identified that through the hub, the UK has a unique opportunity to focus on four strategically important areas:

- advanced CAV testing and development;
- connected environments;
- data and cyber security; and
- new mobility services

Ford Director of Global Vehicle Evaluation and Verification and Chair of the Auto Council Technology Group, Graham Hoare said:

These technologies are coming and will profoundly change our understanding of mobility. The UK has long-standing capabilities across many of the sectors supporting new vehicle technologies and an approach that is more open and collaborative than other markets.

We recognise that these exciting new technologies are broader than the automotive sector and we welcome the different ideas and perspectives that this brings. We look forward to working with MERIDIAN to develop, articulate, and amplify our national offer.

The government has also today published its Centre for Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) [Global Market Value report](#) which predicts the global market for CAV technology could be worth £907bn in 2035. The report sets out a number of interesting findings and future predictions for the industry:

- By establishing a leadership position for the UK in CAV technologies could see the UK market reach £52bn by 2035
- By 2035 the UK will have over 27,000 jobs involved in the production of CAV technology, including thousands of new highly skilled jobs in the auto sector
- 70% of the jobs related to CAV technology production are estimated to be highly-skilled professional and technical roles in software-related industries