

New £8 million national data sharing project to help transform the way we travel

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Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is leading a new £8 million consortium to open up vast amounts of travel data for vehicle makers, inventors, coders and entrepreneurs to develop new transport products and technology.

The public-private consortium will set up a National Data Exchange named ConVEx with £4 million of funding from the UK Government, matched by a further £4 million from the private sector.

The consortium also includes Jaguar Land Rover, Bosch, Warwick Manufacturing Group and three innovation partners: Valerann, Synaptiv, and Immense.

TfWM, the transport arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority, will use the National Data Exchange to accelerate the development of new mobility products and services in the UK. This includes connected and self-driving vehicles, fleet operations, intelligent infrastructure and new freight and passenger services.

The UK Government funding for the National Data Exchange comes from the Testbed UK Fund, which recognises that the success of our future mobility depends on the successful collection, aggregation, analysis and critically, the availability of data.

Data sharing is difficult, especially for organisations that do not have the necessary resource or capability.

The investment will enable the UK to capture the benefits of new transport technologies sooner, which includes improved safety, easier access to mobility, and more efficient transport.

It will also help the UK to grow its market share in research and development for new mobility products and services.

The facility will be developed over the course of 2020 with commercial data sharing operations commencing at the end of the year.

The facility is to be headquartered in the West Midlands at the Warwick Manufacturing Group campus at the University of Warwick. There will be a partner office at Bosch's Connectory facility in London.

The facility will aggregate data from a diverse range of sources that are either publicly available, available under licence, or can be purchased by the facility.

Services will include the curation of vast datasets within in a single 'shop window'; data cleansing and analysis; and enabling organisations to monetise their data resources that may previously have been left dormant.

Director of innovation, policy and strategy for TfWM Mike Waters, said: "Data has helped many global companies create and refine their products and services across many sectors.

"Here in the UK, we have worked alongside Government, Academia, Automotive OEMs, Technology Providers and SME's to define the solution that will allow the traditional transport sector and new mobility entrants to capitalize on the vast amounts of valuable business and operational insight that can be drawn from the data that the ConVEx platform will make available.

"The ConVEx is intended to signal the end of hard to reach data and overly complex relationships between data providers and consumers that ultimately stall our market growth and potential.

"It heavily complements the strategic investments the UK has already made in this sector, such as the West Midlands 5G Program, Midlands Future Mobility Public CAV Testbed, our pathfinder Future Mobility Zone, the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre and many more."

Business Minister Nadhim Zahawi said: "From adaptive cruise control to traffic sign recognition, the vehicles we drive are getting increasingly advanced as technologies develop rapidly.

"At the heart of this technology are vast amounts of data. This funding will help companies use and share that data securely and meaningfully – boosting the innovations that keep our vehicles safe and efficient."