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UK and India partner on net-zero transport systems

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The UK and India through the Energy Systems Catapult have partnered on net zero transport systems.

The deal, dubbed Innovating for Transport and Energy Systems (ITES), is a collaboration to develop greener, quicker and more affordable ways for people and goods to move around in India, the UK, and beyond.

Backed by government, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the initiative will bring together industry leaders, researchers, policymakers and investors from both countries to target the transport system's decarbonisation challenges, such as developing an electric vehicle-ready infrastructure.

ITES will also offer what the scheme calls a 'soft-landing' for UK businesses interested in the Indian market, and opportunities for Indian firms – helping innovators to safely develop, test and export solutions that help decarbonise transport through pilots with trusted partners.

Assessed across whole transport and energy system, pilots and research programmes in India and the UK will test technologies and explore pathways for sustainable and clean transport – such as electric and hydrogen solutions – that are reliable, affordable and acceptable to businesses and consumers, as well as ensuring an infrastructure and energy generation system that can meet demand.

ITES aims to attract public, private and third sector partners and sponsors to ensure activities are market-led and solve practical problems, such as zero-emission fleets and last-mile delivery, and innovative charging technologies. By combining resources, the programme will make it more cost effective for the UK and India to develop world-first pilot projects and net zero solutions, it is hoped.

Guy Newey, Chief Executive at Energy Systems Catapult, said: "Decarbonising transport is one of the greatest challenges we face. This is not a hurdle we can overcome alone. By linking innovators, researchers, and investors together in the UK and India we can unlock financial investments, accelerate the pace of decarbonisation, and flex our collective low-carbon muscle.

"The partnership underlines how innovation from SMEs will be at the heart of the Net Zero transition and affords them an opportunity to collaborate and trial their solutions in the world's fifth biggest economy – turbocharging decarbonisation efforts and unleashing economic potential."

Professor Ashish Verma, Convenor, IISc Sustainable Transportation (IST) Lab, said: "India is currently passing through an interesting phase of economic growth and infrastructure development in many sectors including transport, which provides a great opportunity for the country to leapfrog to a sustainable and Net Zero future.

"We are committed to exploring disruptive, cutting-edge and collaborative solutions. Complementing these efforts, ITES, which is anchored within the IST lab, will harness the UK and India's rich reputation for R&D and the strength of our business sectors to pioneer test beds that unlock better data, clearer decision-making and bolder collective action from industry and leaders in the transport and energy sector."

London-based business GreenEnco is among UK innovators that has expanded its offering in India after demonstrating its EV charging station solution, and gaining support to develop a mobile app as part of the project. The company is now applying its expertise to help deliver faster electric vehicle charging solutions in India, while also supporting local industry.

GreenEnco Chief Executive Officer Dr Jyotirmoy Roy, said: "Through international programmes such as IfCA, ESC and their partners have provided innovative businesses like ours with the safe springboard we need to develop overseas, opening doors in India to help us collaborate and commercialise across borders. We have now committed with our integrated green energy solution to help develop a fast EV charging infrastructure in India.

"We're delighted that our innovative solution will not only make an environmental impact to help decarbonise the transport sector, but – with our locally-procured system components – we are also supporting the development of a sustainable socio-economical ecosystem in India."

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