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Unlocking innovation potential with testing and trialling facilities

New resources designed to boost a shared understanding of testing and trialling for the GB railway industry are now available.

The rail industry relies on testing and trialling to prove that new technology is ready, and to realise the potential of innovation. However, suppliers and innovators have often pointed to a general lack of awareness of the availability and accessibility of facilities, as well as the absence of any shared consensus on what good testing 'looks like' for the rail industry.

Enabling innovation is a fundamental theme supported by the cross-industry Technical Strategy Leadership Group (TSLG). It's one of the key things that will help realise industry's 30-year vision, to double capacity and maximise customer satisfaction of rail while halving cost and carbon at the same time.

In response, TSLG set up a group, involving the Railway Industry Association (RIA), Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies, RSSB and the Department for Transport, to identify and present combined industry knowledge on testing and trialling.

The resources are now 'live' on a dedicated Testing and Trialling section of the TSLG website, www.futurerailway.org and offers free and open access to:

- A database of capabilities and contacts for testing and trialling facilities
- A good practice guide on testing and trialling
- Other supporting information including a PowerPoint presentation

They are designed to help boost awareness of available facilities, and an approach to testing that brings together the facility provider with the end customer, and improves mutual understanding of each other's needs.

The guide has been developed to share good practice on testing and trialling, in order to promote more efficient introduction of new technology. It is aimed at anyone who has an interest in testing and trialling, whether they have considerable experience in the rail sector or are new to it.

The resources were launched at a joint Technology Strategy Board-RSSB briefing on the *Accelerating Innovation in Rail* funding competition, in November, and are now being promoted throughout the industry.

Helping promote the new testing and trialling resources, RIA's Deputy Technical Director, Jim Lupton said: 'Testing is a vital component in the development of new technology, taking it from a concept to something fully operational. We hope that innovators and suppliers will benefit from having more clarity on what's involved and the facilities that are available, and we hope that rail industry customers in train operating companies and the infrastructure manager will benefit from having their needs better understood. I encourage anyone involved in this area to take a look at the guidance and database on the Future Railway website – www.futurerailway.org and to make further contributions to keep it current.'

Go to www.futurerailway.org and click on 'Testing and Trialling Facilities' for more information.

For media enquiries, please contact:

RSSB press office

Tel 020 3142 5332 / 5331 or email pressoffice@rssb.co.uk or visit www.rssb.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

1. The resources are now 'live' on a dedicated Testing and Trialling section of the TSLG website – the direct link is: <http://www.futurerailway.org/Pages/TestingandTriallingFacilities.aspx>
2. RSSB manages the rail industry's research and development programme, which covers 'systems' issues across the railway, engineering interfaces within the railway, and interfaces with other parts of the community and society. RSSB is also instrumental in supporting the development of a future vision for the railways through its Technical Strategy Leadership Group, and assessing how that vision can best be delivered. For further info: www.rssb.co.uk.
3. The Technical Strategy Leadership Group (TSLG), is an RSSB-facilitated cross-industry expert body made up of senior executive staff, charged with developing and championing implementation of the Rail Technology Strategy, supporting communication, managing strategic research, identifying opportunities, barriers and actions. TSLG has a remit to address future opportunities over a 30-year horizon. For more information please visit: www.futurerailway.org.
4. As part of a 2010 consultation on industry's Rail Technical Strategy, the need to enable innovation emerged as one of the key issues. This led the rail industry to identify a need to pool and present its combined knowledge on testing and trialling. In turn, the cross-industry Technical Strategy Leadership Group (TSLG) asked RSSB – through the Testing Facilities Steering Group - to develop resources as part of a research project: T965 *Facilitating testing and trialling to assist technology development*.
5. The Railway Industry Association (RIA) represents UK-based suppliers to the railway industry. Its 160+ member companies include manufacturers, maintainers, contractors, consultants, leasing companies and providers of specialist services. RIA is a member of both TSLG and the Testing Facilities Steering Group, and provided expert input to the development of the resources. For further information please visit: www.riagb.org.uk.