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Ricardo and China's Weifang Shengrui celebrate 'first spin' of advanced transmission

The partners in this collaborative project to develop a next-generation 8-speed automatic transmission system for Chinese and international markets, formally commenced testing today of the first prototype unit at Ricardo's UK Midlands Technical Centre – only 7 months after starting the design work

The new front wheel drive 8AT transmission offers key advantages including a relatively simple arrangement utilising standard component design and manufacturing techniques, the potential for very good shift quality, a highly compact design package competitive with less well specified products, and flexibility for further adaptation for four-wheel drive or integration with hybrid powertrain systems. It uses a combination of epicyclic and parallel axis gearing in which three simple planetary gears are used together with a single brake and four clutch units. Ricardo and Weifang Shengrui signed a contract in June 2009 under which Ricardo became the development partner for this 'industry-first' product. The production version of the 8AT transmission is planned for manufacture in late 2011. The formal 'first spin' ceremony for the initial prototypes took place at the Ricardo Midlands Technical Centre at Leamington Spa, UK, in the presence of members of the senior management teams of both Ricardo and Weifang Shengrui, as well as representatives of the Weifang regional government.

Commenting on the achievement of this key project milestone, Mark Garrett, Ricardo plc executive director, said:

"We are extremely pleased to be able to welcome the senior management team of Weifang Shengrui together with regional government officials of Weifang province to Ricardo, to see the first spin of this advanced 8-speed transmission prototype. This milestone, achieved in a remarkably short time of only 7 months, has been the result of a very successful collaboration between Ricardo and Weifang Shengrui engineers that I am confident will result in a globally competitive product comprising the very latest in automotive technology, engineered in a highly robust manner for mass production."



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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Ricardo plc: With technical centres and offices in the UK, USA, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, India and Korea, Ricardo is a leading independent technology provider and strategic consultant to the world's transportation sector and clean energy industries. The company's engineering expertise ranges from vehicle systems integration, controls, electronics and software development, to the latest driveline and transmission systems and gasoline, diesel, hybrid and fuel cell powertrain technologies, as well as wind energy and tidal power systems. Ricardo is committed to excellence and industry leadership in people, technology and knowledge; approximately 70 per cent of its employees are highly qualified multi-disciplined professional engineers and technicians. A public company, Ricardo plc posted sales of £178.8 million in financial year 2009 and is a constituent of the FTSE techMark 100 index – a group of innovative technology companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. For more information, visit www.ricardo.com.

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