The UK’s University of Warwick joined the shortlist as it has installed a unique £2.3 million (US$3.5 million) facility that is designed to help companies develop engines for hybrid vehicles.

The Vehicle Energy Facility (VEF) is the UK’s only purpose-built hybrid powertrain testing facility for the automotive sector that is not owned and operated by an individual automotive company, and offers access to state-of-the-art equipment and research support.

The facility uses two dynamometers with the advanced Texcel control system, plus a Robot Driver to allow the testing of various hybrid powertrain designs. The two dynamometers are installed in parallel and can test electric motors and gasoline, diesel, ethanol, and biofuel-based internal combustion engines. The VEF also includes a battery simulator and test station, and full exhaust emissions measurement capability. The VEF will test transmission and powertrain systems, while simulating the powertrain components that are not available for test. These tests provide strategies for evaluating the optimization of a powertrain and how it will operate in the real world.