Ford Initiates Open Innovation Approach to Finding Innovative Mobility Solutions; Launches Innovate Mobility Challenge Series

- Ford’s Innovate Mobility Challenge Series will expand its open innovation approach to eight regions around the world: Lisbon, Portugal; Mumbai, Delhi and the Chennai region in India; Los Angeles, United States; Johannesburg, South Africa; Shanghai, China; and, a countrywide challenge in Argentina.
- The eight challenges of the Innovate Mobility Series will charge developers and makers to propose solutions to specific locally-relevant issues – including the reduction of congestion, the delivery of healthcare solutions, and improving mobility during the monsoon season – in order to address the wide range of problems facing different cities around the world; full challenge details are available at fordsvl.com/innovatemobility.
- Using its globally accessible open-source platform OpenXC, Ford brings local context to developers worldwide through the integration of vehicle data with other locally-relevant data sources to better address the needs of specific cities or regions.

SHANGHAI/COLOGNE/DEARBORN, Mich., 15 July 2014 – Ford today announced the launch of its Innovate Mobility Challenge Series, inviting the developer and ‘maker’ communities to come together to find innovative mobility solutions in eight different locations around the world.

The worldwide challenges will kick off on July 15 in Lisbon, Portugal, Los Angeles, United States, and Mumbai, India, before moving on to Delhi and the Chennai region in India, Shanghai, China, Johannesburg, South Africa, and a countrywide challenge in Argentina.

“Reaching out to local stakeholders lets Ford more effectively address the diverse mobility challenges around the world,” said Paul Mascarenas, Ford’s chief technical officer and vice president, Research and Innovation. “Launching our Innovate Mobility Challenge Series in eight different regions will bring global and local players together in the pursuit of one goal, which is a smarter and more efficient transportation network for the future.”

For each competition, Ford will partner with local authorities and experts to address different issues in each location. The competitions will be judged by a panel of Ford executives involved in researching mobility solutions, as well as by local experts selected for each competition. For full details on all the challenges, visit the Innovate Mobility Challenge Series landing page, fordsvl.com/innovatemobility.

A global Blueprint for Mobility

Ford’s Blueprint for Mobility, which was originally announced by Executive Chairman Bill Ford, outlines what the company believes transportation will look like in 2025 and beyond, and the technologies, business models and partnerships needed to get there. With a growing population and a worldwide trend of urbanization, personal mobility as well as efficiency in the transportation sector will only become more important.

Using new technologies to address mobility challenges will be crucial for customers globally, which is why partner-based projects like the global challenge series will remain an integral part of Ford’s plan going forward. A smarter, more connected mobility landscape will encourage efficiency, increase safety, reduce traffic congestion and contribute to environmental improvements as well as shaping personal mobility in a more effective way.
Different cities, different needs
Each challenge was designed to address a specific issue facing the diverse needs of cities around the world. For full details on all of the challenges, visit the Innovate Mobility Challenge Series landing page, fordsvl.com/innovatemobility.

- Lisbon, Portugal: Different sized cities utilize different mobility infrastructure. Ford’s City Mobility Challenge in Lisbon encourages developers to optimize the delivery of goods and services in a sustainable way for cities, specifically targeting those with less than 600,000 people. The submission period will run from July 15 to October 14, with the winners announced in November.
- Mumbai, India: With a months-long monsoon season that can leave transportation infrastructure crippled – including flooded, impassable roads and the suspension of the city’s commuter rail system – the Monsoon App Downpour Challenge will focus on leveraging vehicles and information to improve mobility during inclement weather. Mumbai’s submission period will run from July 15 to October 14, with the winners announced in November.
- Los Angeles, United States: The Parking Lots 2.0 Challenge will take parking into the 21st century by rethinking and repurposing outdoor surface parking lots to increase their variety of uses, and aesthetic value, while still ensuring access to parking. The LA submission period will run from July 15 to October 14, with the winners announced in November.
- Delhi, India: The SUMURR Golden Hour Challenge will invite developers to create software applications leveraging information to decrease the time to get to care and increase information available for care to improve health outcomes within the critical “Golden Hour” after a traumatic incident. The submission period will run from July 30 to October 30.
- Chennai region, India: The SUMURR mHealth Challenge will focus on leveraging information to extend health services for remote rural regions accessible from Chennai. The submission period will run from July 30 to October 30.
- Shanghai, China: As the world becomes more urban and populated, finding traffic-busting solutions to increase traffic efficiency will only become more important. Fitting for one of China’s largest and most crowded cities, the Urban Commuter Challenge calls on developers to find ways to improve quality of life through apps that help improve mobility choices and overcome traffic congestion. The submission period will run from August 14 to November 14.
- Johannesburg, South Africa: The Johannesburg challenge focuses innovation on adding value to the vehicle through the creation of accessories for vehicles, especially commercial vehicles, in the largest city in South Africa. The submission period will begin on August 14, with more details to follow.
- Countrywide, Argentina: The Future of Mobility Contest will challenge college students and entrepreneurs to submit ideas for projects that will help mitigate traffic congestion and improve overall mobility in Argentina, particularly relating to aspects like urban planning, intelligent infrastructure and new models for public and private mobility. The contest will run from July 18 through August 29, with contest finalists evaluated and winners identified in November.

Worldwide call for developers
Ford’s OpenXC program is a non-production, open-source, software and hardware platform designed to encourage top developers to experiment with Do-It-Yourself projects using real-time vehicle data. Developers can use OpenXC data like any other data source in a smartphone, tablet or web app. The Innovate Mobility Challenge Series encourages developers to integrate this real-time vehicle information into apps that relate to sustainability and mobility issues, whether by incorporating the data into existing apps or creating new apps from scratch.

The OpenXC platform gives developers access to more than 15 types of vehicle data, including those related to vehicle speed, engine speed, fuel-level, and things like whether or not the windshield wipers are on or if a door is open,” said K. Venkatesh Prasad, senior technical leader, Open Innovation, Ford Motor Company. “With these challenges, we’re reaching out to the best minds in the developer community, because we know that no single company or individual holds the answer. Local problems need local solutions, and we want to encourage that.”
A good example of the potential of OpenXC comes from a Ford engineer, Zac Nelson, who used the open-source platform to design an app-cum-accessory concept – a manual transmission shift knob that gives haptic feedback to the driver. Using real-time engine data and a 3D-printed shift knob he designed with an embedded Xbox 360 actuator, he created an app that instructs the shift knob to pulsate at the optimum shift points. The app can be programmed for high performance driving, ride comfort or fuel efficiency depending on driving style.

Ford’s online OpenXC portal has all the information developers and accessory makers need to get started, including an OpenXC overview, tools for developing software without any vehicle related hardware, and information about how to get started building or buying OpenXC vehicle interface hardware. Find out more at openxcplatform.com.

Prize information and challenge requirements

The first three competitions of the Innovate Mobility Challenge Series – Mumbai, Lisbon and Los Angeles – will offer prizes totaling US$30,000 for each challenge, with a grand prize of US$15,000 for the winner of each. For the Argentina challenge, the winner will receive a scholarship for an Entrepreneur Postgraduate at an Argentine university and a trip to the United States to meet with Ford mobility engineers and attend the North American International Auto Show. The prizes for the remaining challenges will be announced at a later date.

A wide variety of accessories and software solutions will be eligible, including web or android apps. All accessories and apps that will be used while driving must conform to Ford’s In-Vehicle Usage Criteria for safety including non-distracting driving. No specific API, SDK, or data integration is required, however use of Ford’s OpenXC platform is encouraged.

Individuals and organizations of up to 50 employees are eligible for the cash prizes, while organizations with over 50 employees may compete for the non-cash Large Organization Recognition Award. The winning app, or accessory depending on challenge type, will be selected by a panel of experts comprised of Ford executives and local judges for each separate city.

The challenges build on the successful Traffic Tamer App Challenge in London, which concluded this spring. Ford announced in March that AppyParking, a comprehensive parking app that allows drivers to pay for parking, view parking maps and find electric vehicle charging stations, had won the grand prize of US$10,000.

More information about the Innovate Mobility Challenge Series can be found online, at fordsvl.com/innovatemobility. Information about resources for each challenge will be included at the challenge sites, and tools for getting started with OpenXC can be found at openxcplatform.com.

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