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26th February 2018. For immediate release.

HiLight Semiconductor announces new Innovate UK grant funding. £1m project for CMOS Laser Driver ICs

HiLight Semiconductor today announced it has been successful in applying for a 2nd Innovate UK grant. The £1m [Approx. US\$1.4m] project is intended to lead to the development of a new Directly-Modulated Laser Driver capable of modulation currents up to 80mA whilst supporting both 25Gbps NRZ and 50Gbps PAM4 data rates, in a standard CMOS process.

The use of standard CMOS will lower costs, and reduce power consumption, while permitting greater integration and more compact optical transceiver solutions.

Applications for this driver will be in Datacentres and in the infrastructure for 5G cellular networks.

Christian Rookes, VP Marketing at HiLight commented, “We are very pleased that once again Innovate UK has recognised HiLight Semiconductor as an industry leader in fiberoptics based communications. This new program builds upon a previous \$2m EU Horizon 2020 grant, where HiLight developed a 4x25Gb chipset for shorter, VCSEL based links inside Datacentres. This new project will allow us to address the other half of fibre links which require higher power Lasers. It will also allow us to extend our low power CMOS offering to the worldwide 5G network roll-outs”

Having successfully completed the feasibility study for 25Gbps and 50Gbps DML laser drivers HiLight are now in the process of converting CAD simulations into real silicon, capable of being economically mass-produced in the millions.

About HiLight Semiconductor Limited:

HiLight Semiconductor Ltd. is a Venture Capital backed, Fabless chip company, founded in 2012 by veterans of several previous start-ups. Specialising in deep sub-micron CMOS, the company designs and supplies the world's highest performance PMD and PHY ICs for high speed fiber-optics based communications and networking/Datacentre applications.

At the time of writing the company has already sold around 50 Million ICs into the fiber based PON, Datacentre and Networking markets.

HiLight is headquartered in Southampton, UK, with design offices in Bristol UK and sales and local technical support offices in China, Taiwan and Japan.

About Innovate UK:

Innovate UK is the operating name of the Technology Strategy Board, the UK's innovation agency. It is a UK non-departmental public body operating at arm's length from the Government reporting to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).