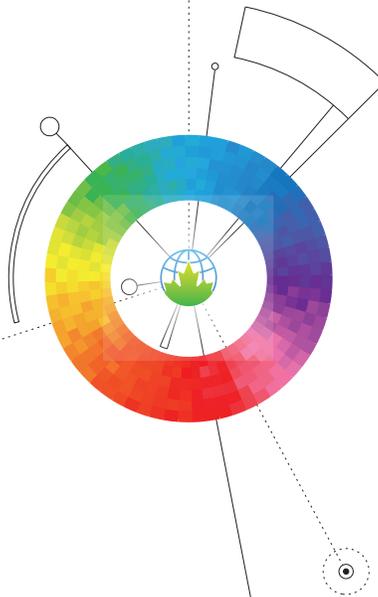


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Canada's Turn to Set the Pace for Energy Innovation?

Michael Delage

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The race to create a world powered by emissions-free energy sources is well underway, and Canada has positioned itself as a champion of efforts to tackle climate change. In signing the Paris Agreement at COP21, the country's representatives have embraced the scope of the challenge that attends the world's transition to a new era of energy generation.

Participation in the parallel Mission Innovation initiative, with its commitment to double investment in cleantech over five years, embodies Canada's drive to be a world leader in clean energy technology.

This is good news for the cleantech companies that call Canada home. The Global Cleantech 100 list for 2017, published this January, included eleven Canadian firms. With its technical expertise and progressive approach to energy, Canada is punching above its weight.

But beyond the accolades and the international agreements lie the real challenges of meeting these goals. This will require that cleantech firms are not only incubators of technology but nascent industries in their own right, with the ability to deploy and scale their projects to the size needed to make a significant impact.

It's now time to map and follow the pathways that these industries will take to maturity, while supporting the growth of Canada's economy and jobs in the process. These pathways will pair research with development at innovative companies. These firms must in turn be paired with the financial structures in both the government and especially in the private sector that can understand and support projects as they scale. It takes an ecosystem to provide the backbone for deployment and adoption at a magnitude that can achieve the results sought in our international agreements.

Development is possible in short timescales (depending on the technology), but in conservative industries such as energy, deployment is almost always lengthy. Success or failure will therefore be determined by a long-term commitment to identifying, developing, and deploying solutions to meet our economic and environmental goals. Canada has the expertise and commitment to set the pace and see these innovations through to the finish line.



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