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Quantum Leap

You reported that Britain is well positioned to take a lead on quantum computing globally because of its strong research base and vibrant startup community (“[Quantum reap](#)”, November 22nd). Britain has also been pioneering a unique government-funded national laboratory, the National Quantum Computing Centre, which is nurturing seven firms developing quantum-computing testbeds across various hardware technologies.

Quantum computing is still perceived to be at a relatively nascent stage, so firms might be reluctant to invest in the technology because of the uncertain returns. Our pilot study ([Report](#)) of the NQCC testbeds showed that formulating a common vision of quantum computing and building a business ecosystem are essential for scaling up. The government, acting as a customer through the NQCC programme, offers a unique opportunity to de-risk the technology’s development. This programme could demonstrate how quantum computing can address grand challenges such as climate resilience and financial stability. This framing will facilitate co-ordination and align incentives among firms to develop quantum-computing applications.

Once the “proof of concept” is demonstrated, it will catalyse private-sector innovation. This will enable Britain to accelerate the benefits of quantum computing to enhance society and contribute to economic growth. The time for Britain to lead is now.

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