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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.

Chander Velu
Professor of Innovation and Economics
Department of Engineering
University of Cambridge