

Canada's Moonshot

Read Report

SOLVING GRAND CHALLENGES THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL INNOVATION

THOMAS GOLDSMITH

What is Moonshot Innovation Policy?

Moonshot innovation policy means initiatives that use clear, time-limited objectives - like halving energy use in buildings by 2030, or finding a COVID-19 vaccine - to catalyze innovation that cuts across different sectors, technologies and approaches to develop a portfolio of potential solutions.

Design Principles

Canada's Moonshot puts forward five design principles to ensure the innovation continuum is supported end-to-end, from invention to commercialization:

- Select “grand challenges” that have clear, bold, measurable, and time-limited goals that are sector-, discipline-, and technology-agnostic + align with top government priorities.
- Seek a lean, agile, and independent governance structure.
- Using policy instruments, coordinate end-to-end support to help scale the most promising ideas and help them reach their intended markets.
- Create meaningful engagement with willing stakeholders, including existing innovation ecosystem actors, leading industry and research experts, communities, and the wider public.
- Use a portfolio approach to managing risk, a high tolerance for failure, and an evaluation framework focused on learning and adaptation.

Policy Recommendations:

The following five recommendations address some of the key governance, operational, and design frameworks that will need to be considered when seeking to select and deploy moonshot innovation policies in Canada:

- Define a clear grand challenge anchored in unaddressed real-world needs, through an open and inclusive consultation process.
- Facilitate policy innovation through providing delivery agencies with lean, agile, and independent governance structures.
- Develop a portfolio of moonshot projects that are cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral, embrace a range of different risk levels and types, and are inclusive of different types of individuals, organizations, industries, and regions.
- Support the full innovation continuum, and the full value chain, from invention through manufacturing, commercialization, and deployment, using the full policy toolkit of supply- and demand-side levers.
- Focus on the metrics that matter for the success of the grand challenge.

