



Ecosystem Building Forum

Executive Summary

The challenge

- Canada is distinguishing itself from most other post-industrial countries by its inability to adapt to a world whose wealth is increasingly driven by innovation (“Innovation Gap”). This is a serious and important national challenge that needs to be addressed.
- A key when addressing this challenge is to recognize that any vibrant tech innovation ecosystem requires a structured and continued form of collaboration among and between the following four main groups of stakeholders impacting all tech ecosystems, as shown in the diagram attached to this document as **Appendix 1**:
 - Group 1: Large corporations impacted by tech innovation;
 - Group 2: Public policy makers (governments);
 - Group 3: Leading universities and research centers;
 - Group 4: Leading investors: large scale, long-term capital (institutional investors) and “smart money” (specialized VC’s and business angels).
- Such collaboration is present in successful tech innovation ecosystems such as Silicon Valley, where a critical mass of start-ups, investors and global tech corporations are concentrated and where a culture of innovation within large corporations and a wide circulation of talent among all stakeholders already exist.
- Weak interaction in Canada among the leaders of the four groups of stakeholders impacting tech innovation both from the private and public sides, compounded by geographic constraints and a decentralized structure of government, make this type of collaboration very difficult in our country.
- As a result, Canada’s approach to the opportunities and challenges from tech innovation has been so far fragmented and predominantly regionally focussed, either by province or by metropolitan area.

Proposed solution: the Tech Innovation Platform (TIP)

- It is recognized that structured and continued interaction within and among the leaders of the four main groups of stakeholders of the tech innovation ecosystems Canada is needed but that, for the reasons noted above the path for a solution needs to be deliberately provoked through coordinated action and leadership.
- The solution is to provoke a structured interaction among the leaders of the four main groups of stakeholders of Canadian tech innovation ecosystems, both from the public and private sides, by creating a national platform (the “Platform”) to address the priority initiatives around tech innovation

that are essential to the development of the Canadian economy. This will create continuing and result-driven discussions, through a nationwide “ecosystem/cluster strategy”.

- An explanation of the need for a nationwide “ecosystem/cluster strategy” and how a Tech Innovation Platform can address this need is included in Deloitte’s white paper: "[Future of Canada - A blueprint for Growth](#)" (pp. 8-11).
- **The Tech Innovation Platform (TIP)** has for objective to meet this need. Its mission is foster collaboration on a continued basis among the leaders of the four groups of stakeholders of the Canadian tech innovation ecosystem (corporations impacted by tech innovation, leading universities, investors, policy designers and ecosystem builders) to address the most important opportunities and challenges of this ecosystem by way of structured, continued and result-driven discussions.
- The TIP has two components:
 - The [TIP Leadership Roundtable](#), a roundtable designed for senior decision-makers focusing on strategic issues;
 - Customized forums positioned at the operational level and focussing on tangible ways: (i) to enhance the effectiveness of organizations and initiatives that are the building blocks of tech innovation ecosystems, and (ii) to foster synergies among them. The first such forum is the **TIP Ecosystem Building Forum**.

The TIP Ecosystem Building Forum

The **Ecosystem Building Forum** is by-invitation only and brings together operators and stakeholders of leading regional tech ecosystems to exchange views on best practices and explore ways to collaborate in a mutually beneficial way. International best practices will also be invited when relevant for the topics that have been selected. Initiatives under consideration include:

- (i) helping start-ups to interface more efficiently with large corporations,
- (ii) helping all stakeholder groups to take advantage of organized tech hubs,
- (iii) initiatives to foster entrepreneurship within universities and accelerate tech transfers,
- (iv) helping tech start-ups understand better the financing chain and access more efficiently suitable sources of capital;
- (v) considering innovative models to address gaps in the regional or national tech ecosystems; and
- (vi) generally, exploring how these regional ecosystems may collaborate on tangible proposals to achieve these objectives.

The choice of themes and initiatives under consideration for any particular year will be informed by pre-meeting interviews conducted by the Secretariat. As the Leadership Roundtable develops, there will some convergence between topics debated at the Leadership roundtable and initiatives discussed at the Ecosystem Building Forum

2017 focus: Datascience/Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As over the last couple of years AI was becoming a hot topic, Canada discovered that it is home to some of the strongest research teams in this domain and series of initiatives were started across the country to build clusters around these research assets. Artificial intelligence is just one part of the broader field of Datascience where there are very strong research teams all across Canada.

The objective of this year’s forum will be to bring together the most significant of these initiatives, their promoters as well as the leading stakeholders (investors, companies, universities) that are involved with them, in order to share information, highlight their models, learn from their success and failures, and stimulate collaboration among them to build a stronger Canadian ecosystem. International best practices will also be brought in order to feed the debate.

Beyond learning from best practices and exchanges, one of the main objectives of the Forum will be to point out ways to foster a more efficient collaboration among initiatives and accelerate the development of buoyant Canadian clusters that can thrive and compete internationally.

APPENDIX 1:

The four main groups of stakeholders impacting any tech innovation ecosystem

