

Canadian Venture and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Summary Report

September 10, 2019



Venture Better

Unlocking unrealized potential in the Canadian Innovation Ecosystem

The galvanizing capacity of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is of significant import for government and policy makers and highlights where environmental and social justice communities are often already hard at work. In addition, they reflect changes underway that also create opportunities for ventures to improve and deliver new products and services that fit with and contribute to a better future. That is what led us to create Venture Better.

Venture Better provides much-needed impetus and visibility for ventures aligned with, and focused on the future, as well as rich capacity-building experience for current students and a future-fit workforce. Our pilot phase concluded in August 2019 with some compelling insights and motivation to keep growing.

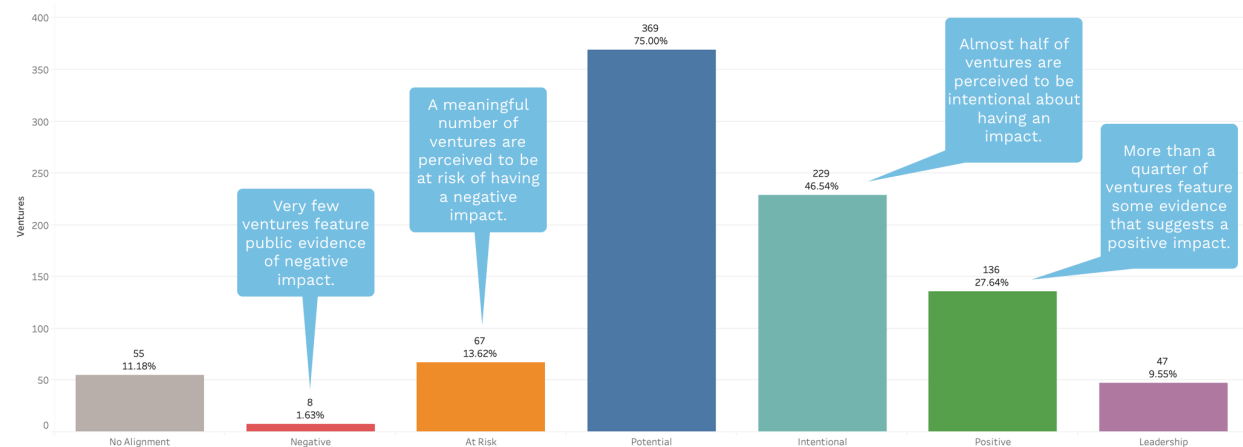
Key Insights

Of the 500 Canadian ventures screened:

- ◆ 76.6% show potential, unrealized alignment with the SDGs
- ◆ 46.2% reveal intentional alignment
- ◆ 28.80% show a net positive contribution
- ◆ 13.8% risk a negative impact

13 Canadian venture portfolios were selected to provide cross Canada representation.

Categorical Alignment



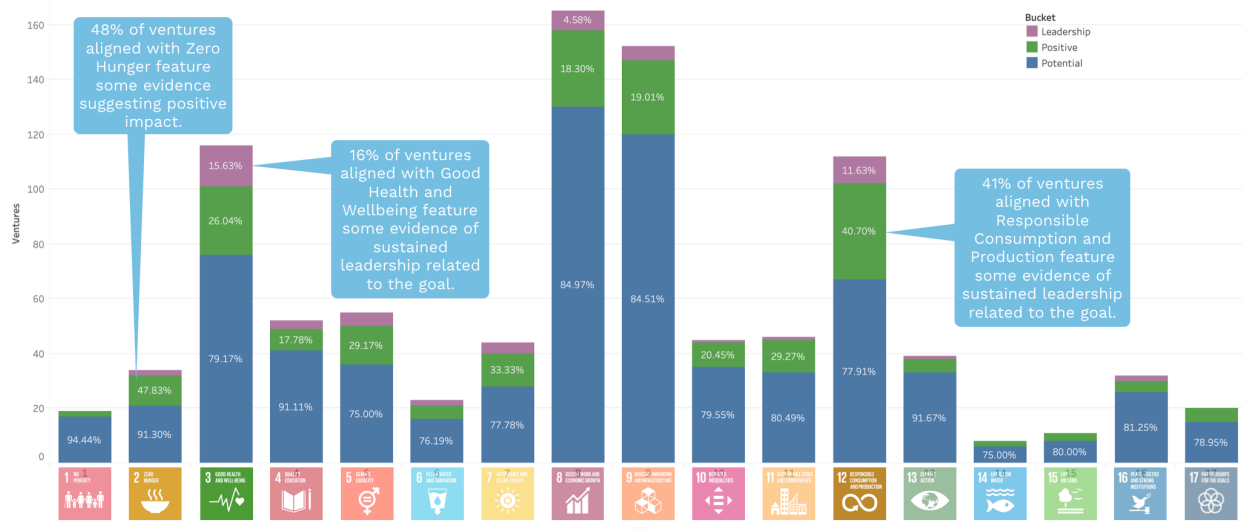
Context

Screening ventures for SDG alignment is a subjective endeavour, complicated by varying degrees of information available, multiple screeners with different experience, and limited time available. Venture Better designed a screening rubric to specifically accommodate these challenges and still provide valuable insights on an individual and aggregate basis.

Alignment Intensity

While roughly half of positively aligned ventures were perceived to have some active contribution, the remaining half appeared to have the potential for positive alignment but showed no signs of awareness to it. This 'potential' category of alignment represents a significant engagement opportunity helping ventures recognize their ability to make a positive contribution toward the SDGs.

Some form of evidence is most likely for Goals 2, 3 & 12.



SDG Representation

Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) are, not surprisingly, the top categories identified in the screens. Goal 8 also returned a higher proportion of “at risk” assessments due to the potential negative impacts of automation and technology on employment. That said, “at risk” still only represented 9.09% of the alignment identified in SDG 8.

Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) was the 3rd highest category with 27.4% of ventures having some alignment with a significant contribution from the Angés Quebec and Creative Destruction Lab portfolios. This Goal also featured a high degree of intentionality and leadership as most health ventures are clearly addressing a related area, particularly medicines and interventions for specific conditions and illnesses. These ventures are most often proactive in driving leadership in their respective fields.

Goals 5, 8, 10 and 12, also had a higher than average proportion of “at risk” alignment due to the potential for either increasing material consumption, or furthering discrimination.

Training and Delegate Program

The creation of a self directed and relevant training program was imperative to our success. People performing the alignment screens can pursue a professional development pathway that includes the opportunity to engage at increasing depth with the venture ecosystem. Participants who complete more than 100 screens achieve Delegate status and greater access to data and networks. We have produced a training workshop deliverable in person and online. As a standalone resource, our training guide can be used individually or in groups, and for site visitors and partners, self-directed learning is entirely feasible.

In addition to direct venture experience and insights, we have also identified multiple outcomes for the Delegate’s learning journey. Each of the following skills will support professional and personal growth and are deemed essential for the future of work:

- ◆ **Digital Literacy:** understand the technology adoption process, reflect on the subjectivity of information provided on digital mediums and decipher that information, recognize patterns in digital platforms and interpret the language used;
- ◆ **Capacity-Building:** mobilize and engage with an impact network and venture community, and understand the ripple effect;
- ◆ **Systems Analysis and Evaluation:** practice research and methodology development and practice feedback on technology and its processes;
- ◆ **Critical Thinking:** engage in varying levels of depth analysis; enhance your cognitive ability to gauge confidence and relationship metrics;
- ◆ **Leadership and Social Influence:** participate in the development of impact driven work and assert delegate values;
- ◆ **Active Learning:** engage with others on a collaborative platform through innovative methods.

Survey Says: 78% of survey respondents said the training definitely improved their understanding of the relationship between ventures and the SDGs.

Looking Ahead

The data from our Pilot phase clearly highlights the critical role the Innovation Economy plays in SDG attainment. We can see the venture ecosystem is positively aligned, but under-activated. There is a compelling opportunity to improve the capacity of the venture ecosystem to see, value, and act on their alignment to improve outcomes for Canadians and people around the world.

Thanks In part to this pilot project, we have a strong, scalable foundation for building that capacity. With our evolving training and screening resources, online platform and community we are continuing to engage directly with ventures, investors, and the innovation economy to help bring the venture ecosystem onboard to the SDGs. Together we have the opportunity to reach our collective goals sooner.

For our **Full Report and Data Insights** visit us at venturebetter.org and Say Hello!