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Sector strategy needs muscle and money

'Government sees light" headlines might greet the launch of the *UK Lighting Sector Strategy* but we do need to see more muscle and money applied over the next decade.

The support of Michael Fallon, energy and business minister, through the strategy document's introduction and the video interview with *Lux*, is welcome but to us lacks the drive needed to make a real difference.

Clearly, government sees benefits from promoting the industry's great export potential, while pushing the central role of the public sector in achieving energy savings in the UK through efficient lighting deployment.

As Fallon says, every public sector manager should be engaging with the lighting sector. So what's stopping the wholehearted national adoption of energy-efficient lighting in the sector? Certainly, from our discussions, there is an urgent need for more education about LED lighting. Many people just don't know where to start with any lighting project.

It may not help that financial support for efficiency initiatives is marginal at this moment. The Green Deal is neither explicit nor effective, while the tax credits system does not help greatly.

In contrast, the Irish government grabbed the headlines with its first National Energy Efficiency Fund deal – a €2 million (£1.6 million) LED lighting retrofit programme for seven Tesco stores initially and up to 40 stores nationwide in the longer term.

The €70 million (£57 million) fund could leverage up to €300 million (£243 million) over three years, says investment adviser Sustainable Development Capital.

SDC advises that there is pent up demand in the market for investment in energy-efficiency projects but this has been inhibited by a lack of funding from conventional sources.

That sounds familiar. Let's pray that more enticing financial incentives can be launched this year in the UK to match the keen strategy insights and vision of government and the LIA.

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