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Bear ambition: Russia gears up LNG expansion

Russia has long aspired to become one of the world's biggest LNG producers. Until recently, progress had been slow, with only the 9.6 mtpa Sakhalin Energy plant in operation, but that changed with the commissioning of the first train of the Novatek-led Yamal LNG project in December.

Yamal LNG's start-up – “on time and on budget” – has not only raised Russia's LNG exporting capacity, but has also boosted the credibility of its LNG ambitions and of Novatek's role in realising them. Novatek's intention “to create a major LNG production centre in the Russian Arctic zone that will rival Qatar, Australia and the United States” should be taken seriously – but the challenges must not be underestimated.

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