

CREATING A NATIONAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

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America's prosperity has originated in part from the ability to capitalize economically on groundbreaking discoveries from science and engineering research. Simultaneously, a knowledgeable, creative workforce has maintained the country's global leadership in critical areas of technology. These important discoveries and capable workforce resulted from substantial, sustained investment in science and engineering. A strong capacity for leveraging fundamental scientific discoveries into powerful engines of innovation is essential to maintain our competitive edge in the future.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is addressing this imperative through various activities and programs that prepare scientists and engineers to extend their focus beyond the laboratory and broaden the impact of basic-research projects.

While knowledge gained from basic academic research frequently advances a particular field of science or engineering, some results also show immediate potential for broader applicability and impact in the commercial world. Such results may be translated into technologies with near-term benefits for the economy and society.

This presentation will provide an overview of NSF's investments in the creation of a national innovation ecosystem that helps accelerate the process of translating an idea into reality. It will offer a strategy for creating a culture of innovation in academia, identify resources and opportunities for researchers to strengthen their translation efforts, provide a few examples of NSF activities that have produced early impact, and suggest scenarios for future initiatives and partnerships that expand our nation's entrepreneurial spirit.