

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines all aspects of domestic technology transfer in the United States. The introduction provides a perspective on meanings of technology transfer, its importance to the economic development of the Nation, and legislative initiatives concerning the process. The overview of Federal support for Research and Development (R&D) describes the prominent agencies and cross-cutting organizations principally involved in technology transfer and their programs and information systems. Most Federal R&D programs produce technical documentation and publications, some of which are also provided in printed form to the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). These same agencies are cooperating with the National Technology Transfer Center (NTTC) to consolidate the information systems resources in electronic format to make them readily accessible to business and industry.

Commercial technology transfer programs provide a wide range of services ranging from on-line access to more tailored hands-on approaches. Some of these commercial services add value to the technology transfer process via interaction with technical analysts (as does the NTTC). Commercial programs are more suited to large companies as the rates for their services are usually beyond the capability of many small businesses to afford them.

There is a significant amount of cooperation among the major Federal R&D Agencies, the Federal Laboratory Consortium, and the Federal Laboratories in providing resource information to the National Technology Transfer Center. The capabilities of the laboratories to follow through on requests, however, are hampered by insufficient funding and mission priorities.

Options for enhancing the technology transfer process lie not with the establishment of more programs, but rather with support for the effective ones that are in place. This includes continued support of the NTTC in its role of becoming a "one-stop-shop" to access the Nation's technology and in providing better support for the infrastructure elements such as extension programs and entrepreneur centers who can provide the expertise and linkages to support commercialization activities of small and medium sized business and industry,