

Summary

From its modest beginning in the late 1940s, the publicly supported research enterprise has grown, matured, and evolved into a \$112-billion endeavor involving thousands of organizations and investigators representing every scientific discipline and field of knowledge. More than 20 agencies contribute to federal investments in research and development in the form of grants for basic and applied research, development, and supporting equipment and facilities.

This project examined the challenges facing the research enterprise with an eye toward uncovering an ideal future. The project report presents an agenda for achieving the ideal future and includes a set of action items for participants of the research enterprise.

With funding and cooperation from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, CTG conducted interviews, focus groups, and a national workshop with investigators, funding agencies, research administrators, and political leaders.

The project report, "Finding Our Future: A Research Agenda for the Research Enterprise," offers a vision of the ideal research enterprise and lays out a supporting research and action agenda to help achieve it. The report emphasizes the need to understand and manage complexity, risk, and diversity; to harness rapid technological change; and to respond to an ever-changing array of relationships and expectations.

Publications & Results

Reports and Working Papers (1)



Finding Our Future: A Research Agenda for the Research Enterprise

Mon, 01 Jul 2002

The research enterprise has grown into a \$112-billion endeavor involving thousands of organizations representing every scientific discipline and field of knowledge. This report discusses the challenges facing that research enterprise, offers a vision of the ideal research enterprise, and lays out a supporting research and action agenda to help achieve it.

For more than 50 years, the U.S. government has supported and encouraged scientific discovery through grants to researchers in laboratories and educational institutions around the nation. From its modest beginning in the late 1940s, the publicly supported research enterprise has grown, matured, and evolved into a \$112-billion endeavor involving thousands of organizations and investigators representing every scientific discipline and field of knowledge. The research enterprise is not only large, complex, and important in its own right, it is also embedded in a political, economic, and social environment that exerts strong influences on research topics and priorities, methods and principles, and opportunities for involvement. This report discusses these challenges, offers a vision of the ideal research enterprise, and lays out a supporting research and action agenda to help achieve it.

Press Releases & News Stories

Press Releases

The Future of Publicly-Funded Research in the US

Tue, 22 Oct 2002

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Original Scope of Work

The purpose of this project is to re-envision the government organizations that award research grants, and to explore ways to support their transformation into the future. The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will be co-lead government participants. The lead research partner will be the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany/SUNY. These three organizations will investigate the challenges facing the research enterprise in order to lay the groundwork for a subsequent workshop on this topic. The workshop will involve federal grants-making organizations and researchers from a variety of fields.

The plan of work includes 5 phases:

Preliminary interviews. Interviews will be conducted with a variety of individuals with varying relationships with granting organizations in order to understand the various perspectives that are part of the research enterprise.

An internal NSF workshop to define the characteristics of an ideal proposal and grants management process. We will then compare that ideal process to the current one and identify obvious points for process change, challenges for the organization, policy issues, and preliminary ideas about the use of new technology. The workshop should also serve to reveal the important differences among programs, divisions, and directorates, as well as the kind and amount of interaction and knowledge sharing that is desirable.

Best and current practice research will be carried out in parallel with the interviews and first workshop. CTG researchers will investigate the grants management processes used in other organizations. These will include other federal agencies, private sector organizations that support very large R&D operations, and nonprofit grant-making organizations.

An external workshop will include the NSF participants from the first workshop, plus an invited list of experts in the technologies, topics, and issues that emerged as important in the first workshop and the best practice review. This workshop will focus on discussion of the similarities and differences in experiences among agencies. We will identify ways in which emerging and advanced technologies, organizational practices, and policies can be applied to achieve the ideal process. This will include actions that can be taken now as well as topics that require new research.

The **final workshop report** will summarize the context, issues, and results of the project.

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