# Enhancing Coordination of Federal, Regional, State and Local Innovation Activities

***Approved by the IEEE-USA***
***Board of Directors, 28 June 2013***

IEEE-USA proposes that the federal government take the lead in engaging all key-stakeholders in a concerted and urgent effort to coordinate federal, regional, state and local innovation programs, in order to synergize and leverage *existing* capabilities, facilities and resources in a way that stimulates and accelerates the launch of innovative businesses, products and services.

IEEE-USA envisions the creation of geographically dispersed innovation nodes (aka clusters or hubs), each typically including at least one college campus; one or more existing federal or state innovation center(s), with an on-going start-up company program; local technology start-ups, and other public and private-sector participants, including professional, technical, and business organizations, as well as the K-12 education community, science and technology museums.

Participants would be able to draw upon and share resources within their node such as office and conference facilities; laboratories and research instruments; legal, administrative and marketing support; expert consulting; management mentoring, links to potential investors; access to markets for innovations/products; advertising outlets and websites; training; competitions/awards; and numerous - enabling and accelerating services. In particular, start-ups would be able to leverage government technology, academic expertise, business services support, facilities and mentoring in a way that would allow them to share risks and rewards.

Participants in the innovation nodes would also be directly linked to the full array of federal programs and services, such as the Small Business Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technologies' manufacturing extension programs, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the U.S. Trade Representative (export assistance), the Federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, etc. Similar linkages to state-wide government support/services would also be encouraged.

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In developing these innovation nodes, special consideration should be given to addressing the major stumbling blocks that start-up companies face in accelerating their product-to-market plans, including such needs as*:*

- Practical assistance with the arduous process of dealing with intellectual property laws
- Simplified regulatory procedures and assistance in dealing with regulatory requirements (e.g. clearinghouse information portals and guidance)
- Practical guidance and support in executing technology transfer agreements and transactions
- Assistance in dealing with global business opportunities, challenges and hurdles
- Access to “Angel Investor” networks and participation

Wherever possible, the nodal approach should build upon existing state-run technology advancement programs, which often enlist in-state academic participation. The main factor driving the success of these programs is the fact that they supply what a start-up really needs. These needs include access to financial and tax accounting business services, access to low-cost facilities, office space and services, and access to business and technological mentoring (usually through universities). Projects that States encourage are often symbiotic with the economic environment, and derive a natural synergy from interaction with existing local enterprises. Many such projects tend to be closer to the “customer base,” satisfying real user needs.

This statement was developed by the IEEE-USA Research and Development Policy Committee (R&DPC), and represents the considered judgment of a group of U.S. IEEE members with expertise in the subject field. IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 205,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE. The positions taken by IEEE-USA do not necessarily reflect the views of IEEE, or its other organizational units.