



POSITION STATEMENT

Leveraging Local Innovation Activities with Enhanced Regional Coordination

*Adopted by the IEEE-USA
Board of Directors (22 June 2018)*

IEEE-USA supports state and local initiatives to create geographically dispersed innovation nodes (aka, clusters or hubs), each typically including: at least one research university; one or more existing state or federal innovation center(s) with active entrepreneurial programs; local technology startups; and other public and private-sector participants. Such participants would include professional, technical and business organizations, as well as the K-12 education community, community colleges, and science and technology museums.

Participants would be able to draw upon and share resources within their nodes (e.g., office and conference facilities, laboratories and research instruments, legal, administrative and marketing support, technology commercialization, 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, startups 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.

Innovation node participants could also more easily take advantage of the full array of federal programs and services. Such services would include: 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); and the Federal Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs, among others. Similar linkages to statewide government support/services would also be encouraged and facilitated by nodes.

In developing these innovation nodes, participants should focus on addressing the major obstacles that startup companies face in accelerating their product-to-market plans. Wherever possible, the nodes should build upon existing state-run technology advancement programs that often enlist in-state academic participation. These programs tend to focus on meeting the local needs of startups, including: access to financial and tax accounting services; low-cost facilities, office space and services; and business and technological mentoring (usually offered through local universities and startup incubators and accelerators). These programs are often symbiotic with the local economic environment, deriving a natural synergy from interacting with existing local enterprises, and are close to the customer base, thus satisfying real user needs.

The IEEE-USA Research and Development Policy Committee developed this statement, and it 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 the more than 180,000 engineering, computing and allied professionals, who are U.S. members of the IEEE. The positions taken by IEEE-USA do not necessarily reflect the views of IEEE or its other organizational units.