

Guiding Principles for ARS – Industry Partnerships

Successful collaborations support the mission of each partner; efforts in conflict with the mission of either partner will ultimately fail.

For ARS, this means:

- ARS' mission includes the development and the transfer of solutions – a partnership with industry may address either or both of these functions.
- ARS is a Federal agency funded with taxpayer dollars and bearing a public trust which must not be compromised. Accordingly, ARS must:
 - Avoid any activity that tarnishes its reputation for producing high-quality, independent research results;
 - Not allow industry collaborations to compromise the neutrality of ARS with respect to stakeholder input from that partner or its relationships with other stakeholders;
 - Consider any political and ethical implications before forming any partnerships; and
 - Ensure the value of resources provided by the partner sufficiently cover ARS' research and administrative costs.
- ARS constraints include:
 - Must perform research for public benefit;
 - Must operate within all federal rules and regulations and avoid conflicts of interest;
 - Must be consistent across all agreements; and
 - ARS' research agenda is shaped by Congressional, administration, and stakeholder priorities.

For industry partners, this means:

- The core objectives of a company in forming research collaborations with ARS are to:
 - Create value for owners by creating and delivering new or improved profitable products and services;
 - Expand the state of the art; and
 - Locate advancements made by others that solve/answer general and specific problems.
- Company constraints in forming research collaborations include:
 - Research investments must show returns;
 - Recognizes the importance of both basic and applied research, but their definition may differ from those of ARS scientists;
 - External research must support a company's competitive business plan and budget;
 - Agreements must be made in a timely manner;

- Agreements must ensure the ability to commercialize with appropriate returns;
- Research funded by companies usually require clear goals, milestones, and specific time frames for completion; and
- Intellectual property rights, including trade secrets, and must be protected.

Streamlining negotiations maximize the benefits of collaboration by ensuring timely conduct of the research and the development of the research findings.

- Maximizing value may require reducing the time spent in negotiating terms through compromise and cooperation so that the parties can devote more time and resources to the actual research.
- Local and personal relationships are important and are how good partnerships start. They depend on continual, sincere communication and mutual respect.
- Collaborations between multiple organizations facilitate trans-disciplinary research and/or technology transfer but also adds transactional and management burdens:
 - The benefits of adding additional collaborators should be evaluated against the additional effort that may be required; and
 - Sufficient human and other resources should be included in large, multi-collaborator agreements to facilitate project management and effectively manage conflict.
- Successful collaborations produce value that is measurable and valuable to all parties.
- Companies must recognize ARS' rights to publish research results; publication may only be delayed as necessary to preserve both United States of America and foreign patent rights.
- All partners must respect each other's intellectual property rights, as agreed upon in partnership and confidentiality agreements.

Focusing on long-term partnerships maximizes benefits.

- While short-term projects and long-term relationships are not mutually exclusive, the value of a long-term relationship can be greater than the sum of the individual projects.
- ARS' competitive strength is based in part on its national breadth and depth; effective, long-term partnerships require engagement and cooperation across a wide range of ARS geographic locations and National Programs.