July 21, 2025

# Comments from AUTM for the Request for Information on Key Technology Focus Areas

## National Science Foundation
## Document Citation 90 FR 26330

AUTM – the professional association representing those involved in the technology transfer business across the nation and worldwide – makes these general comments regarding the Request for Information on Key Technology Focus Areas for the NSF Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP) Directorate, issued by the National Science Foundation on June 20, 2025 (RFI).

Technology transfer is at the very heart of American innovation. By taking discoveries from the nation's universities and non-profit laboratories and moving them to the commercial marketplace, technology transfer provides a massive return on investment for the American taxpayer, whose federal support allows for that research to occur. According to our 2022 Economic Contributions Report, it is estimated that nearly $2 trillion in economic benefit has accrued to our nation as the result of technology transfer since 1996 (AUTM & BIO, 2022).

AUTM takes no particular position on the ranking of the various technologies listed in the Request for Information. AUTM Members work on each of these 10 Key Technology Focus Areas referenced in this RFI (and many more) and recognize the crucial contribution that they provide to America's global technological leadership, economic growth, and national security. Moreover, one could argue that each of the Technology Focus Areas are critically important based on the categories and considerations set forth in question 2 of the RFI, as many of the Technology Focus Areas are interrelated and rely on cross-disciplinary collaborations for their synergistic advancement.

For example, artificial intelligence (1) could be enhanced using quantum computing (3), and developments in both areas could be used for innovations in robotics (4), modeling for biotechnology (7), advanced energy technologies (9), and advanced materials (10). Similarly, artificial intelligence (1), advanced communication (6), and data storage (8) will benefit from advances in computing (2); and (5) natural and anthropogenic disaster prevention will require advances in all these technologies. These are but a few examples of how the Technology Focus Areas intersect and are mutually beneficial.

The nature of scientific discovery is unpredictable, and the exponential technological progress achieved over the last decade came from collaboration across scientific disciplines (e.g., digital health, drug development). Therefore, AUTM suggests NSF should continue to promote research across a variety of scientific areas. NSF grants have driven innovation forward through the expertise and creativity of the dedicated faculty and researchers. They transform NSF funding into the scientific discoveries that improve the lives and health of Americans all while training a highly skilled workforce for the next generation of "made in America" manufacturing.

The technology transfer efforts of AUTM Members will enhance the public benefits of the TIP Directorate. As our world faces new challenges and as emerging technologies create new lines of inquiry, we believe the TIP Directorate should continue to maximize its impact by retaining the flexibility to leverage developments across existing and emerging Technology Focus Areas and adjust priorities as needed.

We would be remiss not to mention the significant importance of TIP's support of the technology transfer process through carefully-tailored funding opportunities, such as the Accelerating Research Translation (ART) program. Such investments in improving the ability of technology transfer offices to carry out their mission will maximize the public benefits of federally funded research. NSF should continue to support the ART program and other programs that promote technology transfer regardless of the ultimate order of the Technology Focus Areas.

We greatly appreciate the outstanding work that NSF has done since its inception. NSF's stewardship of the research funds entrusted to it has led to a remarkable return on the government's investment. We hope Congress will continue to see the wisdom of providing strong research support for NSF as well as all the other federal research agencies.

We look forward to continuing our longstanding relationship with NSF and the TIP Directorate in translating the federally funded inventions of today into the products and services of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Susalka

Stephen J. Susalka
AUTM CEO

# References

AUTM & BIO. (2022). *Economic Contributions of University/Nonprofit Inventions in the United States: 1996–2020*. Retrieved from AUTM: https://autm.net/AUTM/media/About-Tech-Transfer/Documents/BIO-AUTM-Economic-Contributions-of-University-Nonprofit-Inventions_14JUN2022.pdf