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AAAS and ISETAP

The AAAS Intergovernmental Research and Development Project has been under way since mid-1978. Coordinated by the Office of Public Sector Pro-

grams, the work has been in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President.

The Intergovernmental Science, Engineering, and Technology Advisory Panel (ISETAP) was established by the National Science and Technology Policy Act of 1976. Its creation was intended to provide a policy focus for applying R & D to the solution of problems at the state and local levels and to expand the involvement of state and local governments in federal research and development activities.

Early in 1978, ISETAP began a program identification and consolidation process to identify and set priorities on state and local government problems which might be resolved or aided by science and technology. Following the consolidation of the problems into functional areas, the AAAS conducted for ISETAP and NSF a series of nine workshops to determine the science and technology components and implications of certain high priority state and local issues.

The task of the workshops was to prepare reports that analyzed the stated problem areas and their relationship to science and technology, characterized the state of research, noted the areas where available research seemed to be adequate but dissemination or transfer mechanisms were inadequate or absent, and identified areas for further research. These efforts were based on the idea that the incorporation of state and local perspectives in federal R & D planning and the exposure of their problems to the scientific and engineering communities would enhance the likelihood of useful R & D results being produced.

At the conclusion of the workshop series, ISETAP and NSF requested that the AAAS prepare analyses of the results and impact of three selected workshops and to perform a separate study on the use of science and technology by state and local governments. Preliminary results of the studies, conducted during the spring and summer of 1980, pointed to the need for wider discussion and review of a number of activities related to the utilization of science and technology by state and local governments.

At the same time that the AAAS was conducting its three workshop evaluations, the NSF and ISETAP were conducting assessments of their own. The purpose of these efforts has been to determine how effective principal programs have been and what improvements or changes might be made.

Also during the past 18 months, ISE-

TAP has assessed the present state of federal intergovernmental science and technology activities and recommended improvements.

In summary, the work of ISETAP, NSF, and AAAS was to identify problems, establish priorities, translate priority problems into R & D needs, transmit R & D recommendations to federal agencies, and, finally, to evaluate the results. A preliminary review of the accumulated experiences of the 1970's was held by the AAAS at an Intergovernmental Science and Technology Conference in Fredericksburg, Virginia, 19-21 November 1980.

This conference brought together more than 100 scientists, engineers, and policy-level officials from federal, state, and local governments, universities, and the private sector. Their tasks were to review and analyze the experience and lessons learned in the 1970's on influencing federal R & D planning and performance, and on the utilization of science and technology by state and local governments. From the conference discussions, it was intended that goals and strategies for the 1980's be identified. A final report of that conference and the AAAS Intergovernmental R & D Project will be available in the spring of 1981.

The basic premise for AAAS involvement in the intergovernmental research and development activities is the belief that significant benefits will result to society as a whole, and the scientific and engineering communities in particular, from strengthening ties between the mainstream scientific and engineering communities and those concerned in various ways with intergovernmental programs and activities. Included as an important part are the federal, state, and local officials who must solve the many social problems besetting their governments.

There is also the long-term potential for developing capabilities within the scientific and engineering societies for more direct application of these capabilities to state and local problems. The AAAS role has been that of a convener and coordinator, bringing to bear the fundamental capabilities and expertise which lie in the various scientific and engineering disciplines and their related institutions.

For more information about the activities and publications described in "AAAS News," write to the appropriate office, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, unless otherwise indicated.
