SUBJECT: Response to RFI on the Government Effectiveness Advanced Research Center

To Whom It May Concern:

The American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Council – better known as ACT-IAC – is pleased to provide these comments in response to the Request for Information (RFI) issued on the proposal to create a Government Effectiveness Advance Research (GEAR) Center. The GEAR Center is described as "*"…a public-private partnership to help the Government respond to innovative technologies, business practices, and research findings that present opportunities to improve mission delivery, services to citizens, and stewardship of public resources."*

ACT-IAC heartily applauds the proposal to establish a public-private partnership that brings together the best ideas and minds from inside and outside government for the purpose of creating a more effective and innovative government.

ACT-IAC is in a unique position to help with this initiative. Since 1989, ACT-IAC has been a public-private partnership working to create a more effective, efficient and innovative government. ACT-IAC is the only organization where government and industry executives are sitting at the table working as true partners. Today, ACT-IAC is considered to be the premiere public-private partnership in the government technology arena and has been described as "*an example of how government and industry can work together*." (A more detailed description of ACT-IAC is provided later in this document.)

During its existence ACT-IAC has addressed many of the issues highlighted in the RFI – organizational structure; governance; incentives; financing; and level of government engagement. Drawing upon our experiences in meeting these challenges, our comments herein address the following issues:

- Forging a marketplace of great ideas
- Competition or Collaboration: Research Application vs. Research Creation
- Governmental public-private partnerships - current policies, guidance and examples
- Non-governmental public-private partnerships – alternative models
- ACT-IAC – a model from which to learn
- Thinking out of the box – the In-Q-Tel model
- Conclusions and recommendations

ACT-IAC would be delighted to provide additional information on this subject and is available to offer such additional advice and assistance as may be needed and of value as the Administration moves forward on this important proposal.

Forging a marketplace of great ideas

The proposal to create the Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center emerged as part of the Administration's comprehensive strategy for reforming and transforming the Federal government. The new Center is described as:

> *"…a non-governmental public-private partnership that would engage researchers, academics, non-profits, and private industry from disciplines ranging from behavioral economics, to computer science, to design thinking to us creative, data-driven, and interdisciplinary approaches to re-imagine and realize new possibilities in how citizens and Government interact."*[1]

The Request for Information[2] issued relative to the GEAR Center posits two assumptions that underscore the need for such a center. The first assumption is that government is behind the times and inefficient:

> "*Today's Government is outdated and proven to adapt more slowly than the private sector and has fallen behind the curve, with reported decreases in trust and lower customer satisfaction. The inability to adapt has likely contributed to the Federal government's failures to meet expectations and resulted in less than optimal use of resources. Moreover, the Government's reliance on outdated technology has led to a workforce insufficiently equipped to transition to more modern ways of doing business.*"

ACT-IAC fully concurs with the above statement. There is no question that government trails the private sector in its quality of service delivery and customer expectations. It is also clear that legacy systems and outmoded technology are barriers to creating a workforce able to implement new business processes. The public deserves better from its government.

The second assumption is that there is a lack of research applicable to the unique government environment.

> "*…there is little work directed toward providing a forward-looking view on how Executive Branch agencies should evolve management practices for the 21st century. Moreover, existing research often has very little connection to the practical operating considerations of how new ideas or methods could be delivered and executed. In short, almost no applied research or true technology research and development address the practical realm of government operations.*"

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[1] Office of Management and Budget, *"Delivering Government Solutions for the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations"*, 2018, p. 112

[2] Office of Management and Budget, "*Request for Information (RFI): Establishing a Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center*", August 2018

While ACT-IAC agrees with the need to improve an outdated government and the value of public-private collaboration, we respectfully disagree with the idea that the problems cited in the RFI are caused by a lack of research that takes into consideration the "*practical realm of government operations*." To the contrary, it appears to us that there is a great deal of exceptional research and literature addressing some of the fundamental challenges facing government. Over the years, there has actually been much research produced by individuals and organizations who have studied government operations or actually participated in those operations as government employees. This research runs from best practices that could be adopted by government to detailed recommendations regarding management improvements, policy changes and even legislative action. As evidence, we need look no further than some of the research and recommendations that ACT-IAC has produced over the years.

While there may be areas where additional research would be of value, ACT-IAC believes that there is already a substantial body of research to use in transforming government. In our opinion, the major barrier to taking advantage of existing research has been the failure of government to apply the research and recommendations available. All too often, viable and innovative recommendations are not introduced into government – in either a test, pilot project or full implementation mode.   Much research with excellent recommendations ends up on agency doorsteps or on a shelf gathering dust. This is not a new issue and there are undoubtedly many reasons for this outcome, including unclear accountability and responsibility, lack of resources and insufficient management commitment.

The creation of the "enterprise-wide capability" at the heart of the GEAR Center may be the best way to break through the logjam of barriers. As stated in the RFI:

> [The GEAR Center will create an] "….*enterprise-wide capability to work with researchers, academics, non-profits, private industry and State and local governments to assess the long-term strategic needs of the Government and to 'test and learn' how to apply innovative approaches to meeting the mission, service, and stewardship of the 21st century. This capability is needed to effectively apply theory and research to Federal practice in a low-risk environment and, based on findings, create "on-ramps" to scale effective practices and initiatives across government*."

ACT-IAC fully concurs with the statement that there is no "*enterprise-wide activity*" that provides the capability described above and that such an activity would be of great value. We would go further to note that this is not just an enterprise-wide issue; even at the program and agency level there is a limited capability to collaborate with outside parties. In the absence of specific legislative authority to do so, many agencies are unable to collaborate with external parties due to legislative barriers, overly restrictive interpretations of policy and ethics rules, and a general aversion to risk.

Irrespective of whether sufficient research currently exists or must be created, ACT-IAC fully concurs with - and heartily supports - the idea of creating an enterprise-wide capability where government and outside parties (industry, academia, etc.) can work together to address the operational and strategic issues that are impeding the government's ability to move into the 21st century. No single sector has a

monopoly on good ideas and our experience demonstrates that collaboration among diverse perspectives does produce more effective and innovative solutions and strategies.

An enterprise-wide capability to collaborate would also be of value to promoting greater internal collaboration among government departments and agencies. While there are many cross-agency committees (perhaps too many), it is extremely difficult for government to bridge the organizational and functional chasms that are natural to a large bureaucracy in a manner that fosters true collaboration. These chasms must be bridged if transformational change is to take place.

An initiative that brings together the best ideas and the best research – and has the capability to test and implement those that have most value – would be a significant contribution to government and the public. Creating this marketplace of ideas to which all can contribute and all can draw upon would be a significant step towards a better future government.

Competition or Collaboration: Research application vs. research creation

The preceding section discusses the issue of applying existing research versus creating new research. Finding research and creating research are not mutually exclusive choices, and both may be intended functions of the GEAR Center. However, each poses different opportunities and issues.

The initial GEAR proposal seems to suggest that the emphasis will be on the creation of research through a collaborative activity that brings together *"…experts from disciplines ranging from behavioral economics, to computer science, to design thinking, in order to take a creative data-driven, and interdisciplinary approach to imaging and realizing new possibilities in how citizens and government interact.*" This implies that the stimulation and conduct of new research is a high priority of the Center.

The RFI, on the other hand, seems to focus more on an "*adopt and adapt*" approach that assumes there is existing research of value that can be drawn upon. (We note, for example, that the two issues included in the RFI (workforce reskilling and data management) appear to assume that the private sector has developed effective solutions that may be appropriate to government.)

The distinction is important because it will affect the objectives and operation of the GEAR Center. If the government is seeking to acquire and take advantage of existing research and solutions, there are a variety of mechanisms already available for the government to acquire research through a competitive process that is open to all interested parties. Government identifies a need, respondents provide their ideas and government selects those that offer the greatest value. The available mechanisms include grants, contracts (especially the increasing use of Other Transaction Authorities (OTA)[3]), Cooperative

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[3] OT authority originated with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) when the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 was enacted. Subsequently, seven other specific agencies have been given OT authority: the Department of Defense (DOD), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration, Department of Health

Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), and challenges such as those sponsored pursuant to the America COMPETES Act. Each of these options would engage a diversity of external parties and produce a variety of different solutions to the government's challenge.

On the other hand, if there is a desire to develop new research the issue transcends acquisition related solutions. This, in turn, will require the creation of a collaborative process – or the use of existing collaborative processes. This is a more complex strategy that will not be met through existing processes and will require a different path for the GEAR Center.

It is important to note that whichever of the above paths is pursued, the objectives set forth for the GEAR Center will only be achieved if the needs are clearly defined and the government has committed to engaging in the process and testing the outcomes. This will be addressed in more detail later. [4]

Governmental public-private partnerships - current policies, guidance and examples

At the heart of the GEAR Center proposal is the creation of a "*public-private partnership*." ACT-IAC is a major proponent of such relationships.

While the term "public-private partnership" is used frequently by both government and industry executives, there is no common definition as to what constitutes such a partnership. Moreover, there are no policies to guide Federal agencies in the creation and operation of public-private partnerships – or regarding agency engagement in non-governmental partnerships. And, ironically, this is one area where there is little research available.

An internet search for information about Federal government public-private partnerships produced only two significant reports - one by the Government Accountability Office[5] and one by the Congressional Budget Office[6]. Both of these reports dealt with infrastructure related public-private partnerships. This is not surprising as public-private partnerships are most often found in the arena of infrastructure development (e.g. buildings, transportation, etc.) These partnerships are used in projects associated with the development and operation of major infrastructure activities (e.g. buildings, highways, etc.)

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a public-private partnership is defined as follows:

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and Human Services, and Department of Energy. Other federal agencies may use OT authority under certain circumstances and if authorized by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

[4] It is not clear from the information provided as to the type of solutions the GEAR Center is to acquire. Are they processes? Policies? Strategies? Or perhaps actual products and services that could be used by government? The type of outcomes sought could affect the shape and activities of the Center.
[5] U.S. General Accounting Office, *"Public-Private Partnerships: Key Elements of Federal Buildings and Facility Partnerships"*, GAO/GGD-99-23, February 1999
[6] Congressional Budget Office, "Using Public-Private Partnerships to Carry Out Highway Projects", January 2012

"Generally, federal partnerships entail contractual arrangements between a federal agency and one or more private sector partners. Under these arrangements, the agency may retain ownership of the public facility or system, but the private party generally invests its own capital to design and develop the properties."

CBO takes a somewhat broader definition than GAO, defining a public-private partnership as:

"…any contractual arrangement that transfers more risk from the public sector to the private sector than is the case under the traditional (design-bid-build) approach. That definition allows consideration of potential increases in efficiency from the private sector's involvement in ways that do not involve private financing."

In the absence of a common definition, a number of agencies use their own definition of public-private partnership. A Department of Transportation publication defines a "public-private partnership" as:

'…functional arrangements formed between public and private sector partners. These arrangements include a government agency contracting with a private sector to provide a public service."[7]

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines a public-private partnership as:

"relationships between CDC and the private sector that are not legally binding where skills and assets are shared to improve the public's health and each partner shares in the risks and rewards that result from the partnership."[8]

According to the U.S. Department of State, a public-private partnership is:

"[A] collaborative working relationship with external, non-USG partners in which the goals, structure and governance, as well as roles and responsibilities, are mutually determined and decision-making is shared. PPPs are distinct from traditional contractual arrangements – such as grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts – in that they are rooted in co-creation, co-design, and co-resource mobilization towards a shared and mutually beneficial objective….Successful partnerships entail: complementary equities; transparency; mutual benefit; shared risks and rewards; and accountability." [9]

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[7] Department of Transportation, Committee on the Marine Transportation System, "*Ten Years of Partnering for the Marine Transportation System: 2005 – 2015*", p. 1, September 2015

[8] Office of the Associate Director for Policy, "*CDC's Guiding Principles for Public-Private Partnerships: A Tool to support Engagement to Achieve Public Health Goals*", 2014, www.cdc.gov/about/pdf/business/partnershipguidance-4-16-14.pdf

[9] U.S. Department of State, "*State of Global Partnerships Report 5*", 2016, www.state.gov/documents/organization/254358.pdf

The Department of Homeland Security has pursued a number of public-private partnerships as part of its mission to protect the homeland. DHS employs several different models for its partnerships.

The most prominent public-private partnerships in DHS are the Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISAC) established to provide a collaborative system for continuous incident tracking and response. Emerging from Presidential Decision Directive 63[10], the original intent was to have one ISAC. This later evolved into the creation of a number of different ISACs – each focused on a different economic sector. While many public-private partnerships are characterized by a contractual relationship of some sort between the government and the public entity, the ISACs employ a different model. Each ISAC is a non-governmental, non-profit organization and each has its own unique organizational and funding model.

Today there are 24 ISACs that coordinate their activities through the National Council of ISACs (NCI). Throughout this community government and industry are communicating and collaborating closely. More information about NCI and ISACs is available from the NCI web site (www.nationalisacs.org).

The Department of Homeland Security also defines several of its other programs as "public-private partnerships"[11]. For example, the System Efficacy through Commercialization, Utilization, Relevance and Evaluation (SECURE) program was created to leverage private sector expertise and assets to meet governmental needs. To provide DHS users with products that meet their specific requirements, DHS will (through a competitive process) select products that may meet such needs. Those selected will be provided detailed operational requirements and must invest their own resources to produce a fully field deployable product. If DHS is able to verify the test results, DHS will advise interested government users that the product meets government specifications. The product may also be eligible for liability protection under the DHS SAFETY Act. There is a similar program (FutureTECH) that focuses on areas where new technologies need to be developed.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that a number of agencies are pursuing public-private partnerships and that a diversity of definitions and models are being used. Unfortunately, there is not (to the best of our knowledge) any comprehensive list of Federal government public-private partnerships. The most comprehensive exploration of Federal public-private partnerships was found in a draft report from 2016 prepared by the Administrative Conference of the United States. According to this report[12]:

> *Most executive and independent agencies and departments engage in four basic types of partnerships that can be monetary or non-monetary: (1) aligned investments. Aligned investments describe when a government agency coordinates its funding, usually a grant, with a*

[10] The White House, "Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-63: Critical Infrastructure", May 22, 1998.
[11] Department of Homeland Security, "*Innovative Public-Private Partnerships: Pathway to Effectively Solving Problems*", p. 16, July 2010.
[12] Administrative Conference of the United States; *"Public-Private Partnerships: A legal Primer",* (Draft report), p.14, November 30, 2016.

private partner or provides a grant in the expectation the grantee will in turn receive private funding to further leverage resources. Aligned investments sometimes appear as demonstration program. Demonstration programs are experimental, smaller scale programs authorized by statute or annual appropriations acts. (2) Co-sponsored events, such as symposia or conferences like the Department of State's Partnership Practitioners Forum jointly organized with Concordia, a private organization….(3) private gifts to agencies in order to fund agency projects, either to fund preexisting program or to establish new programs, exemplified by David Rubenstein's 2016 donation of $18.5 million to the National Park Service to restore the Lincoln Memorial. (4) another partnership model is cooperative agreement authority, commonly provided in annual appropriation acts and government statute. A cooperative agreement is a legal vehicle governing the relationship between a federal agency and a partner, be it a state, local or tribal governmental entity or a nonprofit organization and is used to transfer funds when the envisaged activity entails cooperation between the parties and substantial agency involvement.

The report also notes that the America COMPETES Act can be considered a partnership model because it permits agencies to "partner" with a private, nonprofit to administer the competition and to permit financial support to come from the private sector in addition to appropriated funds.

In addition to public-private partnerships created and operated by the Federal government, there are a number of non-governmental partnerships as described in the next section.

Non-governmental public-private partnerships – alternative models

Like the government, the private sector does not have a uniform definition of a public-private partnership. Perhaps the closest attempt to develop such a definition belongs to the National Council for Public-Private Partnership (NPPP), a non-profit organization whose members are private sector companies interested in public-private partnerships. According to this organization, a public-private partnership is:

> *"…a contractual agreement between a public agency (federal, state, or local) and a private sector entity. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public."*[13]

NPPP focuses primarily upon the creation and operation of public-private partnerships related to infrastructure development projects at the Federal, state and local levels of government.

More relevant to objective of improving government, there are several non-governmental models worth exploring. The first such model is exemplified by the Partnership for Public Service.

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[13] National Council for Public-Private Partnerships, www.ncppp.org

The Partnership for Public Service (PPS) is a non-profit (501(c) 3) organization that defines itself as *"…a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that strives for a more effective government for the American People.*"[14]   PPS provides a variety of programs, many of which are focused on promoting and developing the Federal workforce. PPS also undertakes periodic studies on key issues affecting government management. PPS is not a membership organization and the governance process does not include current government executives. Funding for PPS includes contributions, sponsorships and government contracts. PPS is a public-private partnership in that it seeks to engage government employees in its educational programs and studies.

A second model is exemplified by the Partnership for Public Warning (PPW)[15] – a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that was created in 2001 to improve the Nation's emergency alert and notification systems. The plans to create PPW were underway prior to September 2001 but took on more urgency with the events of September 11.   PPW was created as a public-private partnership in which membership was open to both government and non-governmental organizations. Funding came from corporate dues, membership fees and government contracts. Government and industry executives were equally engaged in every activity, from governance to research.   Although it was a relatively small organization with only one professional staff, it made several major contributions. One such contribution was a major assessment of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and recommendations for its improvement. More significantly, PPW played the lead role in the creation of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) which is now the international standard for emergency alerting and notification. The best practices promulgated by PPW were also of value to the emergency management community in England and elsewhere. PPW ceased operations in 2005.

The third model is that of ACT-IAC.

ACT-IAC – a model from which to learn

ACT-IAC[16] is perhaps the best example of a true public-private partnership. The ACT-IAC definition of a public-private partnership is "*an objective and trusted forum where government and industry executives are communicating and collaborating as equal partners towards a shared vision of a more effective, efficient and innovative government*."

ACT-IAC was created in 1979 as a non-profit, 501(c)3 forum where government executives responsible for information technology acquisition, management and use could communicate, collaborate and learn. OMB and GSA were major proponents of its creation. Originally called the Federation of Government Information Processing Councils (FGIPC), it was a government only organization for the first 10 years. Participants included government employees from across the country and all levels of government – Federal, state and local. There was senior management support for the organization that spanned Administrations. OMB encouraged all Federal agencies to participate in FGIPC while GSA provided the

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[14] Partnership for Public Service, www.ourpublicservice.org
[15] Kenneth Allen, "*Warning and Informing the Public*", National Hazards Observer, July 2005
[16] American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Council, www.actiac.org

organization's staff and administrative support. (The name was later changed to the American Council for Technology (ACT).)   By 1989, growing restrictions on government-industry communications were making it difficult for government to talk to industry regarding major issues. ACT addressed this issue by bringing industry to the table through creation of the Industry Advisory Council (IAC) .

The mission of ACT-IAC is to "*advance U.S. government mission performance through the use of technology by enabling and leveraging government and industry collaboration*." ACT-IAC is unique in a number of ways:

- It is the only organization where government and industry executives are sitting at the table as full partners.
- Full membership is available to government, industry and academia.
- Government executives establish the agenda for the organization and ensure that its activities contribute to a more effective government
- There is a bright line between ACT and IAC

  - Government and academics (professors and students) engage in the organization as members of ACT. They do not pay a membership fee to belong to ACT.
  - ACT has a board composed of government executives who establish the organization's strategic agenda.
  - Industry and other non-governmental parties engage in the organization as members of IAC. It is a corporate membership and dues are based upon total government revenues.
  - IAC has a board composed of industry executives who advise the ACT board and implement programs.
  - The ACT board and ACT members do not have any management or fiduciary responsibilities for the organization – those are all vested in IAC.
  - Every activity has government and industry leadership and engagement
  - There is a professional staff that supports both organizations

- ACT-IAC does not accept government funding to underwrite its programs and is not a government contractor. Funding is from corporate dues and events.

- All ACT-IAC activities must be objective, ethical and vendor neutral.

- The organization does not lobby or promote business development activities by IAC member companies.

ACT-IAC offers a diversity of programs designed to promote better communication between government and industry, to educate the community and develop leaders. The heart of what ACT-IAC does, however, is to provide a collaborative forum where government and industry executives can collaborate on significant issues, find new solutions and craft innovative strategies.

It is important to understand that ACT-IAC does not address policy issues regarding "*what*" government should do. The ACT-IAC focus is on addressing issues regarding "*how*" government operates. The ACT-IAC objective is to contribute to a more effective and innovative government. This is done through projects that focus on high priority operational issues and produce actionable outcomes and recommendations that can be implemented by agencies. Projects are brought to ACT-IAC through several channels, ranging from the strategic agenda developed by the ACT board to requests from individual agencies. A project requires a clearly identified government sponsor who will define the issue, support the initiative and agree to consider any findings or recommendations that may be produced. Once approved a working group of government and industry members is assembled. Group members are expected to remove their organizational hats while engaged in the project. This group is responsible for producing the content and outputs. It is entirely up to the government sponsor as to what, if anything, will be done with recommendations produced by ACT-IAC.[17]

ACT-IAC has successfully used this process to provide relevant and valuable research and recommendations that contribute to better government. Recent products include the FITARA maturity model, as well as playbooks on blockchain implementation and improving the customer experience. Current work is underway on issues ranging from zero trust networks to acquisition innovation.

Over the course of its history, ACT-IAC has encountered (and continues to encounter) a number of issues that could affect a public-private partnership created as a result of the GEAR proposal. These include:

- Restrictions on engagement by government employees. Every agency (and often individual bureaus within an agency) establishes its own rules regarding employee engagement in outside organizations such as ACT-IAC. Some agencies determine that participation in an organization such as ACT-IAC contributes to agency performance and the individual may participate in a professional capacity. Some agencies permit participation only in a personal capacity – e.g. the individual must use personal time and resources to engage. Some agencies prohibit participation entirely. It is often impossible to know why an agency makes a particular determination, as most agencies will not share their rationale with outside parties such as ACT-IAC.

- Restrictions on engagement by government organizations. ACT-IAC does not charge agencies to address their issues. However, some agencies have been reluctant to seek ACT-IAC's assistance on specific issues because of a concern that such a request may run afoul of acquisition rules or that it will result in an augmentation of funds situation prohibited by statute.

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[17] It is important to note that a priority is placed on projects that have applicability across agencies. ACT-IAC only undertakes projects where it can contribute value based on a process that engages a diversity of perspectives – both government and industry.   ACT-IAC does not undertake projects that can be performed more effectively by a single entity such as a contractor.

- Inability of senior government executives to express public support. Industry engagement in the ACT-IAC partnership is driven by the extent to which government executives see value and engage in the organization. Since current rules require government executives to treat all external organizations equally, government executives are unable to offer any type of public support regarding the value of ACT-IAC. Some expression of support by government executives would increase participation by non-governmental entities in ACT-IAC.

- Lack of government-wide commitment to collaboration. ACT-IAC was created and thrives as a result of exceptional leaders (especially in government) who understand the value of collaboration and how a partnership such as that provided by ACT-IAC can contribute to mission performance. These are individual contributions – not motivated or driven by any policies from higher up. During the first 10 to 15 years of the organization's existence there was government-wide support from the most senior levels of government encouraging agencies to participate in organizations such as ACT-IAC. Unfortunately, as the government community became more risk averse, there was less encouragement from upper management regarding the value of engaging in external groups such as ACT-IAC. In the absence of a clear signal from management that engagement in collaborative activities has value, government employees became increasingly reluctant to step outside the comfort zone of their office. With the exception of the Mythbusters initiative developed by OFPP, there is little government-wide policy or guidance encouraging greater communication and collaboration between government and industry.

These issues are not unique to ACT-IAC – they affect other organizations. They may, depending upon the structure, also affect the GEAR Center. A more detailed discussion of these and other barriers can be found in the draft report issued by the Administrative Conference[18].

Despite the challenges, ACT-IAC is today a community of over 12,000 individuals from government and industry (and over 400 companies) who are working together on ways to improve government. There is much to learn from this model.

Thinking out of the box – the In-Q-Tel model

Before turning to the conclusions and recommendations, there is one more model we wish to highlight - the In-Q-Tel model.

In-Q-Tel was created in 1999 by the CIA to "*foster the development of new and emerging information technologies and pursue research and development (R&D) that produce solutions to some of the most difficult IT problems facing the CIA.*" [19] In-Q-Tel was established as a non-profit corporation with a board

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[18] Administrative Conference of the United States; *"Public-Private Partnerships: A legal Primer",* (Draft report), p.8, November 30, 2016, p. 27-44
[19] Defense Intelligence Journal (republished on Central Intelligence Agency web site), "*In-Q-Tel: A New Partnership Between the CIA and the Private Sector*", https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/intelligence-history/in-q-tel, updated 2017

of trustees. While the government continues to provide funding to the organization, much of the revenue comes from successful investments that In-Q-Tel is able to make.

Due to its placement in the intelligence community, details regarding the structure and operation of In-Q-Tel are not available publicly. However, it is a model that may be worth exploring. In-Q-Tel provides the government with a flexibility and the ability to explore innovative research and solutions that would not be possible through more traditional acquisition methodologies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of the GEAR Center is to create a public-private partnership that can contribute to a more up-to-date and innovative government. In these comments we have sought to provide insights into the many different models of public-private partnerships while pointing out some of the opportunities and challenges. We do not pretend that the above discussion is a comprehensive analysis of all the various models that do or could exist. We are aware of consortia and coalitions in both industry and academia that may be of value.

The point we wish to emphasize is that there are a diversity of models to consider as you pursue the GEAR Center. Moreover, we are not sure that a single model will achieve all of the Center's objectives. It may be useful to be flexible enough to employ a number of different approaches and processes.

Regardless of the model, there are some common themes that run through all successful public-private partnerships. These were outlined in 2016 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in a report[20] it issued on the public-private partnerships in the homeland security area. Their analysis concluded that five key elements of success for a public-private partnership are:

1. Senior leadership support for the partnership
2. Exercising leadership in the partnership
3. Institutional design
4. Incentives and creating value
5. Timing, urgency and value

We agree with the above list with two comments. "Exercising leadership" means that the government must stay fully engaged in the partnership. It won't be as effective if the government establishes the Center and then steps aside to await its recommendations. We would also add a 6th element -- "sharing of risks and rewards"

If the Administration is serious about creating a public-private partnership to implement the GEAR concept, we believe the government must be willing to do the following:

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[20] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Public-Private Partnerships for Critical Infrastructure Protection," 2016, Washington, DC. P. 16

- Ensure that there is senior level commitment to the program
- Commit to being a full and continuing partner in the relationship
- Provide the leadership and establish priorities based on government's needs
- Be willing to share the risks and rewards of the partnership
- Commit to a mutually acceptable resourcing model
- Commit to implementing the outcomes from the research and develop a process for doing so
- Engage the agencies
- Develop and issue guidance that encourages and permits government engagement in the partnership

There are clearly many different paths to the creation of the GEAR Center. ACT-IAC offers the following recommendations for moving to the next step.
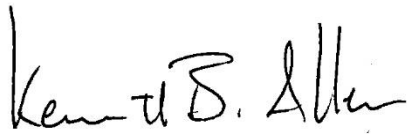
The first, and most important recommendation is based on the idea that collaboration has value. If you truly agree with that, then we recommend that OMB create an inclusive and collaborative process of interested stakeholders to shape the strategy for implementing the GEAR Center. Our experience shows that you will get better ideas and a faster response through face to face collaboration, than is possible through the traditional and more formal "draft a proposal and request written comments." Accordingly, we suggest that you:

1. Establish a public-private working group to develop a proposed strategy for moving forward.

2. Task the group to recommend the following:
    a. A governance structure
    b. An organizational structure
    c. A process for engaging government and other key constituencies in the partnership
    d. A process for setting priorities
    e. A process for evaluating ideas and, if successful, translating them into enterprise wide solutions
    f. An incentive system to encourage agencies and other constituencies in tests/pilot projects of innovative proposals
    g. A financing model
    h. Policies or guidance that should be issued to facilitate the success of the partnership

3. Direct the task force to develop strategies for addressing the two issues raised in the RFI (e.g. reskilling the Federal workforce and data commercialization). These may be different types of strategies.

4. Require the working group to complete its work in 90 to 120 days.

Especially important is recommendation 3 above. Take advantage of existing research, test the ideas in the government arena and do so in a rapid and agile manner. New research can take a long time to evolve and mature. The issues you seek to address cannot wait that long. Develop solutions based on what already exists. Test them. Modify as necessary. The two issues you identify would be great test subjects.

ACT-IAC hopes that these comments are useful in understanding some of the issues, options and challenges associated with the creation of something like the GEAR Center. As indicated, ACT-IAC supports the concept of the GEAR Center and we are prepared to assist in any way we can.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of ACT-IAC.

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