

## Proposed Nationwide Manufacturing Innovation Network Draws Big Response

Nearly 1,000 companies, universities, individuals, and other manufacturing stakeholders have weighed in with ideas on the design of a new [National Network for Manufacturing Innovation](#) (NNMI), as [proposed by President Obama last March](#).

The tally of responses recorded by [Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office \(AMNPO\)](#), hosted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), includes inputs received at [four regional \*Designing for Impact\* workshops](#)—held in Troy, N. Y., Cleveland, Ohio; Irvine, Calif., and Boulder, Colo.—that were attended by nearly 900 people. In addition, the office received 78 responses, representing the viewpoints of 107 separate entities, to a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) published on May 4, 2012, in the *Federal Register*.

The deadline for responses to the RFI, which listed 21 questions concerning the technological focus, structure, operation, and governance of the nationwide network and its individual Institutes for Manufacturing Innovation (IMIs), was Oct. 25, 2012.

As conceived, the NNMI will consist of up to 15 regional IMIs, funded by a proposed one-time, \$1 billion federal investment, along with matching contributions for each institute from private-sector, state, and local sources. The President's proposal addresses a crucial challenge to U.S. competitiveness and a threat to future national prosperity: Closing the gap separating inventions and research discoveries from the development and scale-up of domestic manufacturing capabilities necessary to make products based on U.S. innovations.

The proposal implements key recommendations made by the steering committee of the [Advanced Manufacturing Partnership](#) and by a wide range of other experts and organizations. NNMI addresses the reality that, by itself, investing in basic research does not ensure that a new technology crosses the bridge from invention or discovery to product development and process prototyping to manufacturing at scale.

"Through our national outreach strategy, we have received many thoughtful, high-quality ideas that will help to guide our thinking as we draft our plan for the network and its institutes," says Mike Molnar, head of the AMNPO. "We are especially gratified by the strong interest shown by all sectors of the manufacturing community—industry, universities and community colleges, and economic development organizations. This really has been a collaborative undertaking."

Molnar and his interagency team are now evaluating all responses and relevant manufacturing-related reports produced by private and public organizations. They are also drawing on lessons learned during the recent funding competition that resulted, in August, with the establishment of the [National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute](#), headquartered in Youngstown, Ohio. Launched with existing agency funding that was more than matched by non-federal sources, the NAMII is intended to jump start the NNMI.

The AMNPO will issue a draft "white paper" detailing its proposed design of the NNMI, which also will undergo public review and comment.

Responses to the RFI and summaries of discussions and inputs received at the four *Designing for Impact* workshops are posted on manufacturing.gov at: [http://manufacturing.gov/rfi\\_responses.html](http://manufacturing.gov/rfi_responses.html).

The AMNPO is staffed by representatives from federal agencies with manufacturing-related missions as well as fellows from manufacturing companies and universities. Besides [NIST](#), agency partners include the Departments of [Defense](#), [Education](#) and [Energy](#), [NASA](#), and the [National Science Foundation](#).

Contact: Mark Bello (NIST), 301-975-3776; bello@nist.gov