

Economics And National Strategy In The Information Age: Global Networks, Technology Policy, And Coop

DOES TECHNOLOGY POLICY MATTER?

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its name implies, the goals of mission-oriented R&D are centrally decided and clearly set out, generally in terms of complex systems meeting the needs of a particular government agency. Specifying these needs and supervising project implementation concentrates a considerable amount of discretionary power in the hands of the major funding agencies.

Concentration also extends to the range of technologies covered. Virtually by its nature, mission-oriented research focuses on a small number of technologies of particular strategic importance—primarily in aerospace, electronics, and nuclear energy. As a result, government R&D funding in these countries is heavily biased toward a few industries that are generally considered to be in the early stages of the technology life cycle (Table 2).

The scale of mission-oriented efforts also limits the number of projects and restricts the number of participants. At any particular time, only a small sham of each country's firms, likely among the larger ones, will have the technical and managerial resources required to participate in these programs. The concentration of government R&D subsidies on a small number of large firms is therefore also a feature of the countries in this group.

Overall, mission-oriented programs concentrate decision making, implementation, and evaluation. A few bets are placed on a small number of races; but together, these bets are large enough to account for a high sham of each country's total technology development program. This concentration raises two obvious questions: First, how successful are the bets in relation to their own objectives? And second, do they have any effect on the efficiency with which the many other races are run—that is, are

TABLE 2 Proportion of Total National Public R&D Funding by Type of Industry, 1980 Estimates

Country	Percentage of Total Public R&D Funding		
	High-Intensity	Medium-Intensity	Low-Intensity
United States	88	8	4
France	91	7	2
United Kingdom	95	3	2
Germany	67	23	10
Sweden	71	20	9
Japan	21	12	67

NOTE: High-, medium-, and low-intensity R&D industries are defined as firms whose ratios of R&D expenditures to sales are, respectively, more than twice, between twice and half, and less than half the manufacturing average.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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