FAQ: NASA's Technology Transfer Process
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Note: For more information, see the section of the companion Guideline document indicated at the end of each answer.

Q: How do I benefit from the technology transfer process?
A: By reporting your technology, you can benefit in a variety of ways including project/program benefits such as increased interactions with other organizations, recognition, financial awards from NASA (both automatic and applied), and royalties on patented technologies. [Section 1]

Q: Do I have to report my technology?
A: Yes. Reporting new technologies and innovations is required, for both civil servants and contractors (through their contracts). [Section 2, paragraph 1]

Q: How do I report my technology?
A: You must file a New Technology Report (NTR), which can be done online at http://entre.nasa.gov/. This is the electronic equivalent of filing NASA Form 1679. [Section 2, paragraph 3]

Q: What information do I need to file a New Technology Report (NTR)?
A: The type of information required includes the names of innovators, the motivation, a description of the innovation, unique/novel features, potential commercial applications, previous or contemplated disclosures/publications, and the development history of the innovation. Some additional information is needed for software. [Section 2, bullet list]

Q: What information do I need to provide about my software on the NTR?
A: Questions specifically about software address topics such as who beta-tested the software, if modifications will continue, is a copyright registered, has the latest version (or prior versions) been distributed outside of NASA or contractor, and does it contain code not owned by the U.S. Government or its contractors. [Section 2, bullet list]

Q: When should I file a NTR?
A: In general, you should file a report as soon as you recognize you have a new invention, and before any public disclosure or publication of the technology. [Section 2, paragraph 2]

Q: Do I need to file a new NTR when I update my technology?
A: Modifying software to work in your system or making small fixes to it typically does not require a new NTR. Major changes, whether made by the original developers or others, does require a new NTR. [Section 2, paragraph 5]

Q: What is my role in the technology transfer process?
A: The Innovative Partnerships Program (IPP) Office handles the majority of the process for you. Your involvement typically only includes submitting the NTR promptly, avoiding premature disclosure of the technology, maintaining appropriate documentation to support NASA's intellectual property position, reviewing text for Technology Opportunity Sheets (TOPS) and Web pages, presenting at conferences, participating in pre-negotiations teleconferences with

potential partners, and providing support as required by agreements. In some cases you may be consulted for additional information or interviewed by the IPP Office to verify information. [Section 3, paragraph 2 and bullet list]

Q: How is my technology protected?
A: Software is typically covered under one or more of open source, copyright, and patent. NASA prefers not to release software as open source since NASA loses rights in these cases, but it can and has been done. The NASA Open Source Agreement (NOSA) is the preferred license. Also, patents are preferred to copyrights, since royalties for patents go to NASA. These preferences are also designed to protect the innovators, their technologies, and Goddard's strategic position. [Section 4, paragraphs 1–2]

Q: Can my software include commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) or open source components?
A: No, because NASA cannot authorize the release of something it does not own. You may provide information about or links to where people can buy/download the necessary software. [Section 4, paragraph 5]

Q: Is software release the same as reporting the software?
A: No, reporting software through NTRs and releasing software are separate processes. Software is not automatically released when NTRs are filed; however an NTR is required to seek a software release. [Section 4, paragraph 6]

Q: How is my software released to others?
A: Reported technologies can be released in a number of ways including (from less to more restrictive): general public release, open source release, U.S. and foreign release, general U.S. release only, U.S. government purpose release. When you request release of software, you must complete an NTR, Export Control form, IT Security (Global Concerns) form, Software Release Preliminary Questionnaire, and submit these to the IPP Office. You will typically be involved in a few meetings relating to the export control process to defend why the technology will not be used against the U.S. Once the software has been cleared for export, your involvement in this stage is essentially done. [Section 4, paragraphs 3–4]

Q: How long does the technology transfer process take?
A: Assuming the NTR is already in place and that the software release process has taken place, SUAs can be completed in as little as one day. If the technology needs to go through the software release process for an immediate need, the process can be completed in approximately 2–3 weeks. The process will take longer if the technology has not been reported and there is no NTR on record. [Section 4, paragraph 7]

Q: Where can I find additional information on the technology transfer process?
A: Additional details about the software release process can be found in our companion document, "Guideline: NASA's Technology Transfer Process" and on the IPP Office's Web site at http://ipp.gsfc.nasa.gov/SRA/. [Section 4, paragraph 8]