DOE grants are provided to most of these recommendees to pay for technical research, prototype development, testing, and a variety of other activities that help move the technologies one step closer to the market. In addition, ERIP conducts Commercialization Planning Workshops for inventors in the program. To find inventors and encourage innovation, ERIP holds several National Innovation Workshops each year in different regions of the country, jointly sponsored by local businesses, inventor organizations, and universities.

Since the Program's 1974 beginning, more than 31,000 inventions have been submitted to NIST for evaluation, and more than 625 of these have been recommended to DOE for support. Approximately 80% of these recommendees have received DOE grants averaging $77,000.

1.3 MEASURES OF PROGRAM SUCCESS

A program such as ERIP has an impact on diverse stakeholder groups (such as independent inventors, the business community, policy makers, and taxpayers), each of which evaluates the program's success in different ways. Inventors want to know the benefits of program participation in terms of technical assistance, commercialization planning, and help with the subsequent acquisition of funding. The business community might want to know about the relationship between the program and the creation of viable businesses, then would evaluate the technologies in terms of profit margins, sales levels, return-on-investment, or comparative advantage. Policy makers are concerned about whether the program meets its objectives of conserving or producing energy, the creation of new businesses and employment, and development of promising new energy technologies. Taxpayers are most concerned about the relationship between program costs and the extent to which these costs are counterbalanced by economic returns to the treasury. This evaluation attempts to address at least some of the concerns of all of these stakeholder groups.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This report begins by describing the evaluation design employed here, including the sampling strategy and collection of data (Chapter 2). Results are presented in the remaining chapters. Chapter 3 focuses on the market status of ERIP inventions and estimates of invention sales. Chapter 4 documents the commercial impact of the inventions and products that spin off from the technology, market, and business developments supported by the Program. Chapter 5 examines the employment and tax revenues generated by the program. Attention then turns to the funds raised by program participants (Chapter 6). The energy and environmental impacts of the Program are described in Chapter 7. The report ends with an analysis of participant ratings of Program assistance and a brief discussion of its findings (Chapter 8).

Along with presenting current statistics for the Program and its technologies, previous research is reviewed and findings compared with the results for ERIP. In addition, a special effort is