

Part B. Collections of Information Using Statistical Methods

1. Description of Universe

The 2007 Economic Census of Island Areas is a complete enumeration of active establishments with payroll in 2007 in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

The universe of establishments is given by the U.S. Census Bureau's Business Register. To be included in the Island Areas census, an establishment will be required to satisfy the following conditions: (i) it must be classified in the industry structure; (ii) it must be an active establishment with payroll in 2007; and (iii) it must be located in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands or American Samoa.

Generally, nonemployer establishments are excluded from the Census of Island Areas. However, nonemployer establishments are included in the data collection in American Samoa due to the unique structure of the economy for this area as well as the lack of economic statistics.

We estimate that for 2007, the size of the universe of establishments for the Island Areas will be approximately 59,000. This estimate is based on the counts for 2002 and estimates of subsequent change. The 2002 Economic Census of Island Areas received responses from at least 75 percent of the establishments. We expect a similar response rate for the 2007 Economic Census.

2. Estimation Procedures

Census tabulations are simple summations of data from a complete enumeration of the establishment universe for the Island Areas. They do not entail estimates from a sample; hence, accuracy of statistics from the census is not affected by sampling error.

The accuracy of all census data is influenced by nonsampling errors, such as those affecting coverage, administrative records, questionnaire design, reporting, processing, and tabulation. Although we make no direct measurement of nonsampling errors, we take precautionary steps in all phases of planning, report form development, data collection, processing, and tabulation to minimize their influence.

The census uses periodic (5-year) data collection, as required by Title 13 U.S.C., Section 131.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

This information collection will maximize response through the following means:

(i) public awareness campaign to assist businesses and the public in understanding the importance of the 2007 Economic Census by providing news stories through trade and professional associations, chambers of commerce, and business and general media; (ii) assignment of account managers to large businesses to provide personalized assistance; (iii) redesigned census questionnaires and information sheets with standard formats and terminology that try to simplify reporting and minimize response burden; (iv) expansion of electronic reporting capabilities that will allow all businesses, including those located in Puerto Rico, who receive Spanish versions of the report form to report using CD-ROM-based forms or the Internet; (v) mailing materials that emphasize the mandatory and confidential nature of census reports, as provided by Title 13 U.S.C.; (vi) toll-free assistance and/or a web-based help desk for any business that has questions about completing its census report; and (vii) systematic mail follow-up for nonresponse, supplemented by telephone follow-up for selected firms. Through these and other response improvement strategies, we expect to maintain or improve the 75 percent response rate obtained by the 2002 Economic Census of Island Areas. This level of response will yield accuracy and reliability that are adequate for intended uses of economic census data.

4. Testing of Procedures

This information collection will use procedures that are based on a considerable body of experience with the economic census and surveys. Previous economic censuses also have been the subject of evaluation studies that have examined methodology, conceptual issues, and related statistical questions. Cognitive testing was conducted for the 2007 form intended for use in the Northern Mariana Islands. Approximately 30 companies were interviewed and the information gleaned from the test was carried to the form. Additionally, substantial testing of form content has been done by the stateside economic census. As a result, the procedures used by the 2007 Economic Census are very well tested.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

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Attachments

- A. Cover letter
- B. Consultations with Representatives of the Island Areas, Persons and Organizations Contacted
- C. Sample Report Form
- D. Information Sheet
- E. Matrix for Differences Between Forms