

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.

There are six respondent types participating in this assessment. They include: (1) current fellows, (2) past fellows, (3) current coastal zone management program mentors, (4) past coastal zone management program mentors, (5) Center partners affiliated with the program, and (6) Sea Grant directors (recommenders of fellow candidates). This data collection represents a census of current and past participants in the fellowship program since the program's initiation in 1996.

For current fellows and current mentors a response rate of 100% is expected. For past fellows, past mentors, and Sea Grant directors the expected response rate is 75%. This rate is based on the past performance of these three groups and their response rates to previous information collections. Table 1 below indicates the number of entities and expected response rate for each respondent type.

Table 1: Number of Entities and Expected Response Rate per Respondent Type

Respondent Type	Number of entities in universe	Expected response rate
Current Fellows	10	100
Past Fellows	52	75
Current State Coastal Zone Program Mentors	10	100
Past State Coastal Zone Program Mentors	52	75
Center Partners	4	100
Sea Grant Directors	33	75

2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

No sampling will be used; this information collection will comprise a complete census of all current and past fellowship program participants. For the six respondent types, data collection procedures are the same. These respondent types include current and past fellows, current and past mentors, Sea Grant directors and Center partners. The following presents the data collection procedures for these respondent types:

- a. Obtain OMB clearance
- b. Finalize the formatting of all data collection instruments based on OMB comments.

- c. Ten days following notification of OMB clearance approval, GEARS will conduct a conference call with the fellowship Project Manager to review the data collection instruction, methodology and other communications initiating from GEARS and the Center. Plans will also be finalized to obtain contact information for respondents, (email and mailing addresses).
- d. Two weeks following notification of OMB clearance, GEARS will receive email and mailing address information from the Center for respondent types.
- e. Three weeks following notification of OMB clearance NOAA will send an introductory email to survey respondents introducing the assessment. Three days after NOAA's introductory email, GEARS will send an email message to respondents that includes the appropriate survey instrument as an attachment.
- f. The data collection period will begin three weeks following notification of OMB clearance and will end approximately 100 days later. During the data collection period, GEARS will maintain a confidential log of the surveys' received from respondents, noting the respondent's name and the date his/her survey was submitted. Each respondent will receive an email (or if they used mail, a letter) thanking them for their participation and confirming the receipt of his/her survey. In addition, two weeks after data collection begins, an email (or letter) will be sent to all respondents reminding them to complete the survey if they want to participate in the assessment and thanking them if they have already completed the survey. Two weeks following this communication, a letter will be sent, via postal mail, to all email non-responders, that includes a paper version of the appropriate survey. This letter will remind potential participants of the goals of the survey and will ask them to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope (SASE), if they have not already done so. A third reminder notice will be sent, via email and postal mail, four weeks after data collection begins. A fourth and final reminder notice will be sent eight weeks after data collection begins.
- g. Surveys received via email will be downloaded to a GEARS password protected work space on a GEARS protected server that will be accessible only by GEARS staff particular to this project. A hard copy of the survey will also be made and kept in a locked cabinet at GEARS' Boston area office. Only GEARS staff particular to this project will have access to the data in this cabinet. Surveys received via postal mail and fax will also be kept in this locked cabinet. Although respondents will be instructed not to provide identifying information on the survey (names, social security numbers, dates of birth, etc.), any identifying information placed on surveys will be removed. This includes identifying information hand written on surveys, and those automatically printed by fax machines or email systems, such as headers or footers with an individual's name or phone number.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The following procedures and methods will be used to increase the response rate. These procedures provide the respondent with information about the data collection through publications, website, emails and postal mail. They also include a number of reminders for those respondents who may have forgotten to respond. The procedure to maximize response is as follows:

1. Two weeks after receiving OMB approval, the Center will announce the programmatic assessment in its publication, *Fellow News* and on its website.
2. Three weeks following notification of approval from OMB, an introductory email requesting respondents' participation in the survey will come from a NOAA staff member who is known to the respondent. The purpose of this email is to inform the respondent about the data collection and enlist respondent support for this activity.
3. Three days after the introductory email from a NOAA staff member, respondents will receive an introductory email from GEARS and an electronic version of the survey. This notice is sent within a short period of the introductory email in order to build upon the respondents' awareness and importance of the data collection.
4. Two weeks after the survey has been distributed, respondents will be sent an email to remind them about the survey and the importance of their response.
5. Four weeks after the survey is distributed a paper version of the survey and reminder letter will be sent, via postal mail, as a reminder to all individuals not responding to initial email communications. In addition a stamped envelope addressed to GEARS will be enclosed with the paper survey. These steps are being taken to ensure that all respondents have indeed been notified about the survey.
6. Six weeks after the data collection begins a third reminder will be sent to all non-responders via email and postal mail. Also, to the extent possible a search will be conducted to correct any email or postal mail addresses that are returned to GEARS.
7. A fourth and final email and postal mail (a post card) will be sent eight weeks after data collection begins. This reminder will briefly repeat the importance of the data collection and indicate the date by which all surveys need to be returned in order to be included in the data collection.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.

The instruments for this assessment were developed by the contractor responsible for data collection and data analysis. Following their development, these instruments underwent three revisions based on the feedback of the following Center staff members: the current Director of the fellowship, the past Director of the fellowship, and two individuals from the Center who were very familiar with the fellowship program and whose expertise were in survey development. Additionally, the instruments were administered to contractor staff to determine

length of time, identify redundancy, and ensure question relevance and necessity. The revisions of the instruments focused on question format, rating scales, and question content.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

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