

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. DESCRIBE THE POTENTIAL RESPONDENT UNIVERSE

NSF is to survey all eligible institutions. An eligible institution is any institution with a scientific collection that is supported by or used by persons supported by the National Science Foundation. There are 147 institutions that fall into one or both of these categories. The target response rate is 85% of the institutions surveyed (or 125 institutions).

2. PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

The IWGSC's goal is to distribute the survey to ALL organizations who meet the criteria of maintaining federally supported, object-based, scientific collection(s). The organizations were selected through IWGSC membership and consultation with the Committee on Science. As part of the IWGSC, the National Science Foundation will survey all organizations with a scientific collection that is supported by or used by persons supported by the National Science Foundation. As the NSF Survey will be distributed to all institutions that meet the above criteria, sampling of the potential respondent universe will not be conducted. NSF seeks an 85% response rate. The survey will be administered only one time to meet the OSTP-OMB request (Appendix 1) to focus on the current status of federally supported object based scientific collections.

3. METHODS TO MAXIMIZE RESPONSE RATE AND MINIMIZE NON-RESPONSE RATE

NSF will employ a number of methods to maximize the response rate and minimize the non-response rate of the survey recipients. NSF has followed suggestions from the focus group in order to express effectively the importance of participation in the survey in the cover letters to both the Institutional Administrators and the curators. To ensure that the letters are received and read, the survey letter will be personalized and sent by e-mail and by paper to each institution (Appendix 5). As the respondents are NSF grantees, contact information exists and has been verified in advance of the survey.

NSF is taking several steps to make the scientific community aware of the importance of the survey. During relevant NSF panel meetings, Program Officers have discussed the Scientific Collections Survey with curators participating on the panel. NSF Program Officers are also engaging in conversations about the survey with the scientific collections community at professional scientific meetings. At the Focus Group, a representative from the Office of Science and Technology Policy gave a presentation about the history of the Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections and the

importance of scientific collections to the federal government. Judy Skog, from NSF, linked the NSF Survey to the efforts of the IWGSC. Furthermore, NSF plans to hold a formal seminar at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Natural Science Collections Agency (14-15 May 2007, Washington, D.C.) to discuss the context for the NSF Scientific Collections Survey and importance of institutions to participate in the survey.

Finally, NSF will work with a contractor to distribute effectively the survey. Some suggestions that have been already incorporated from STPI and Abt Associates based on the focus group meeting are to conduct a staggered roll out of the survey and to send follow-up letters to non-respondents. Analysis of non-respondents may take place along the following dimensions: Institution (Program within institution, size of institution) and Collection type (size of collection, using the typology created by the NSTC/COS/IWGSC).

4. TESTS OF PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

A pilot survey was distributed to eight participants from eight diverse institutions. At the January 2007 focus group meeting, the eight participants discussed the NSF Scientific Collections Survey. Comments and concerns from these eight participants were recorded and corresponding improvements were made to the final version of the survey.

5. NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF CONSULTANTS

The data collection and analyses will be performed by the IDA Science and Technology Policy Institute: Pamela Flattau (pflattau@ida.org), 202-419-3735.