

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
BEES (Building for Environmental and Economic Sustainability) Please
OMB CONTROL NO. 0693-0036

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has developed and automated a program for measuring the life cycle of environmental and economic performance of building products. The program is known as BEES (**B**uilding for **E**nvironmental and **E**conomic Sustainability). The tool follows internationally standardized guidance (ISO 14040:1997(E), International Organization of Standardization (ISO), Environmental management, Life cycle assessment. Principles and framework; and ISO 14044:2006, Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Requirements and guidelines). This guidance reduce complex, science-based technical content (e.g., up to 400 material and energy flows from raw material extraction through product disposal) to decision-enabling results and delivers them in a visually intuitive graphical format. BEES Please is a voluntary program to collect data from product manufacturers so that the environmental performance of their products may be evaluated scientifically using the BEES Program.

The questionnaire used to collection the information asks a manufacturer about its product production processes, such as material inputs and process energy use and emissions, in order to compile a standardized inventory of material and energy flows into and out of the product system. Based on their completed questionnaire, NIST compiles a draft life-cycle inventory for confidential review by the firm. With manufacturer’s subsequent permission, the final life-cycle inventory for their product is included in the BEES software, which conducts a life-cycle impact assessment to estimate the impacts of their product’s inventory flows.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The BEES software will be made available to the public through a formal NIST Interagency Report with accompanying software that reports, with manufacturer’s approval, an aggregated version of the data collected from them. An updated release of the BEES software is typically published every 3 years. The information in BEES is used by decision makers evaluating the environmental and economic performance of products.

This information collection and dissemination will comply with the NIST CIO Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The data collection is fully automated via an Excel questionnaire. The questionnaire is available at http://www.bfrl.nist.gov/oa/software/bees/please/bees_please.html.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The format for the data collection is a streamlined version of the common SPOLD data exchange format developed by database and software developers for information of this nature. This facilitates data exchange between BEES and similar tools. It also increases the likelihood that the data developed for BEES will also meet the needs of future data requests from their suppliers and customers who are increasingly requesting environmental data on their manufacturing operations.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

NIST and NIST's BEES Please data contractor, Four Elements, are always available to assist manufacturers in completion of the questionnaire. To reduce the data collection burden, only the essential information for a life-cycle impact assessment of a product's inventory flows is collected.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

Without this data collection, it would be impossible to publish in BEES the environmental and economic performance results that are increasingly sought by decision makers.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

None.

8. Provide information of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on October 31, 2007 (Volume 72, Number 210, page 61623). No comments were received.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Not Applicable.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The respondents are assured that the detailed data they provide on their manufacturing operations will not be shared with the public. The data confidentiality is assured via legal clauses in our BEES Please data contract with Four Elements that reference restrictions against disclosure.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

No questions of a sensitive nature are requested.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

30 responses X 62.5 hours per response = 1,875 hours.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).

None.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

None. NIST is reimbursed by the product manufacturers.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-I.

No changes or adjustments are reported.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The data are stored in data files that are part of the BEES software program and are required to run it. The BEES software program is published in a formal NIST Interagency Report with accompanying software. The data files report an aggregated version of the data collected from manufacturers that protects data confidentiality, subject to manufacturer's review and approval. An updated release of the BEES software is typically published every 3 years.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

Not applicable.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

No statistical methods are employed.