

Section B. Collection of Information

This data collection will be a census of the universe of projects that NSF currently funds and anticipates funding through the ISE program. Approximately 55 new awards are made each year. The average duration of most awards is 3.5 years, with an average duration of 1 year for Conference, EAGER, and RAPID awards. PIs will comprise the sole individuals responding on behalf of those awards.

B.1. Respondent Universe

The entire universe of ISE projects will be included in the data collection in each year, as shown in Exhibit 4. Since the full universe of projects will be included, no statistical sampling methods will be implemented.

Exhibit 4: Estimated Annual Size of Universe to be Sampled		
Population	Universe Size	Sample Size
Initial submission	55	55
Annual report	120	120
Closeout report	55	55
Principal Investigators	230	230

B.2. Statistical Methodology

Not applicable.

B.2.1 Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection

Not applicable.

B.2.2 Estimation Procedure

Not applicable.

B.2.3 Degree of Accuracy Needed for the Purpose Described in the Jurisdiction

Not applicable.

B.2.4 Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures

Not applicable.

B.2.5 Use of Periodic (Less Frequent Than Annual) Data Collection Cycles

Not applicable.

B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Issues of Nonresponse

Data collected for the project monitoring information system are considered part of NSF administrative requirements for awardees. Moreover, the ISE Program Solicitation (in Section VII, Award Administration Information, under Subsection C, Reporting Requirements), specifically states that PIs “may be requested to provide project data for ISE program analysis and evaluation.” Therefore, we anticipate a response rate of 100 percent for each survey cycle.

PIs are provided with several types of assistance to ensure that they understand the importance of the data collection effort, their responsibilities for providing the data, and the technical aspects of data submission. At the start of the data collection period, a primer is provided to each ISE project outlining the online system with instructions, definitions, and guidelines for its completion. The primer explains the purpose of the survey to the PIs, stresses the importance of the survey, and provides names and contact information of NSF and contractor staff to contact with questions and comments. In addition, follow-up letters or emails are used to remind each project of the data collection. The primer will be distributed to respondents before the collection opens.

Throughout the data collection cycle, Westat provides respondents with online and telephone support to help them navigate the web site and address specific content issues. As the due dates for data collection approach, Westat monitors the response patterns of individual projects to identify respondents that need additional prompting and/or assistance. Issues regarding item non-response are handled through the Web-based system, which requires that all mandatory items be completed as a condition of final submittal to NSF.

B.4. Tests of Procedures and Methods

Prior to being opened to respondents, the web instrument was tested by Westat programmers and beta-testers to ensure that the programming was properly implemented.

B.5. Names and Telephone Numbers of Individuals Consulted

Agency Unit

Al DeSena, NSF, (703) 292-5106

William Neufeld, NSF, (703) 292-5148

Contractor

Westat, a Maryland Survey Research Firm, will be responsible for data collection and analysis under the direction of Gary Silverstein, (301) 251-2244.