

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Internet Website Forms
OMB Control No. 0625-0237

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The International Trade Administration's (ITA) U.S. Commercial Service (CS) is mandated by Congress to broaden and deepen the U.S. exporter base. The CS accomplishes this by providing counseling, programs and services to help U.S. firms export and conduct business in overseas markets. This information collection package enables the CS to provide appropriate export services to U.S. exporters.

The dissemination of international market information and potential business opportunities for U.S. exporters are critical components of the Commercial Service's export assistance programs and services. U.S. companies conveniently access and indicate their interest in these services by completing the appropriate forms via ITA and CS U.S. Export Assistance Center websites.

The forms ask U.S. exporters standard questions regarding details about their company, export experience, information about the products or services they wish to export and exporting goals. A few questions are tailored to a specific program type and will vary slightly with each program. (More details about specific forms and uses are provided in Question 2.) CS staff use this information to gain an understanding of client's needs and objectives in order to provide appropriate and effective export assistance tailored to an exporter's particular requirements.

The CS therefore requests approval to continue this collection and add additional forms to the collection.

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.

U.S. companies that are interested in obtaining export assistance or participating in a CS export-related program will provide the CS with information about:

- The export-related programs and services that they wish to participate in;
- Company background such as product/service to be exported, industry, company size (fees, where applicable, are determined according to company size in accordance with

OMB cost recovery requirements) export experience, company contact information, client name and contact information;

- Exporting goals and objectives such as markets of interest, industries, and potential end-users; and
- CS relationships such as the U.S. Export Assistance Center(s) previously contacted and CS staff with whom the client may have previously worked.

The collected information will be used by CS staff in counseling and assisting clients and in fulfilling U.S. firms' requests for export assistance services and programs.

The collection is voluntary and the frequency will be on-going and will depend upon the demand U.S. companies have for CS services and programs.

The CS requests approval for nine information collection instruments, including six currently approved instruments and three new instruments as described below.

Preliminary Consultation (currently approved)

The Preliminary Consultation instrument is used by new clients at the initial stage of their relationship with the CS and requests information such as company contact information, company background, size, export experience, usual method of selling their product, industry, end users of the product or service, and exporting objectives. These details enable the CS to understand the client, the client's needs and export objectives, effectively prepare for a one-on-one meeting and thus provide the client with appropriate counseling and export services.

Local Event (currently approved)

A Local Event is organized by an U.S. Export Assistance Center to provide specialized advice/assistance/instruction to exporters on a variety of export-related topics. The events are often seminars and usually involve a presentation by a guest speaker who is an expert on a particular trade-related topic of interest to U.S. exporters. Companies that participate in these events often have the option of scheduling private meetings with the expert.

The CS has 117 U.S. Export Assistance Centers throughout the country and each Center organizes various local events based upon local needs and interests. Some Centers may hold events related to market potential in certain industries in a specific region such as the market potential for environmental technologies in Asia. For example, a recent North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) seminar which covered the NAFTA certificate of origin, provided advice on exporting under NAFTA guidelines and offered participants the option of discussing their NAFTA needs with the NAFTA expert following the seminar.

Clients indicate their interest in participating in a Local Event by completing and submitting a Local Event form. The form consists primarily of **standard** company information questions such as contact information, background, details about products/services, industry, end-users and exporting objectives. These company information questions are standard for all of the Local Event forms regardless of the event type. The form also includes **event-specific** questions that will vary with each event depending on the specific event circumstance. The event-specific questions are indicated in red for illustration purposes on the attached form. The event-specific questions in the example pertain to NAFTA, and allow the CS to gain a better understanding of client's questions and difficulties regarding NAFTA. If, for example, an Export Assistance Center planned a seminar on doing business in China, the specific event-related questions would be adjusted to pertain to Chinese business issues rather than NAFTA issues. The CS requests approval for the standard company questions and the ability to adapt the event-specific questions and/or response options for the specific event.

ShowTime (currently approved)

ShowTime is a trade promotion program that provides U.S. exporters with market briefings and counseling services at major trade shows. Exporters can meet with several CS market and industry specialists for technical assistance on identifying specific high-potential export markets.

The ShowTime form consists primarily of **standard** company information questions such as contact information, background, details about products/services, industry, end-users, participation at the trade show, trade show booth number, convenient meeting dates and times and exporting objectives. These company information questions are standard for all of the ShowTime forms regardless of the trade show. The form also includes **trade show-specific** questions that will vary with each trade show, such as the names of the CS industry experts that will participate and the countries represented by the CS experts. The event-specific questions are indicated in red for illustration purposes on the attached form. The CS requests approval for the standard company questions and the ability to adapt the event-specific questions and/or response options for each trade show.

Market Express Bulletin (currently approved)

The Market Express Bulletin provides U.S. exporters with monthly updates of new export-related resources such as market research, trade events and export compliance events that have been listed on ITA and CS export-related websites.

The Market Express form allows exporters to sign-up to receive the Market Express Bulletin e-mail messages notifying them when new resources become available in their industry and/or market of interest.

The Market Express form consists of **standard** company information questions such as contact information, background, details about products / services and industry. The form also includes **market research, trade event and export compliance options** that an exporter may select and

these options will vary with each Bulletin. These options are indicated in red on the attached form.

Export.gov Registration (currently approved and new versions)

ITA's Export.gov website is an important export and trade promotion resource for U.S. companies. Through the site, firms can learn about the basics of exporting, trade financing, international marketing, international logistics and other trade-and-export-related topics. Prior to obtaining access to certain services and data, firms must register on the website. The access to some information, such as market research reports and trade leads, is restricted to US firms. Therefore, firms that are interested in obtaining research reports and leads must complete the registration process.

Firms have the option of requesting to receive notification when new data is uploaded on the website. Firms must also register and provide an e-mail address to obtain this service.

The CS is requesting that approval be granted for documents associated with 1) the currently approved document associated with the current registration process; and 2) documents associated with a new and revised registration process. The CS requires concurrent approval of documents associated with both registration processes because the current registration and related document will be used while the computer programmers write the code for the new registration document after approval is granted. The CS requires approval of the revised registration document prior to commencing significant I.T. programming work to avoid the possibility of having to make revisions and re-do programming work due to potential OMB-required revisions. The current registration document will be used until the programming work on the revised registration process is completed. The CS will cease use of the currently approved registration document when the programming work on the new registration process has been completed. The CS will use only one registration document at any given time.

The revised registration document reflects client recommendations and offers several advantages over the current document. The new registration document captures client data that enables the website to be customized to each client's particular exporting needs, interests and experience. Currently a huge volume of information is housed on the Export.gov website but clients have said that it is confusing and hard to find what they need. The new registration document will allow clients to be 'fed' the type of information they are most interested in, such as potential trade leads for markets and industries where they have indicated a specific interest. Clients will also be provided with the appropriate level of export education, with new-to-export clients receiving links to exporting fundamentals whereas more experienced exporters will see links to more complex exporting issues.

The revised registration process consists of the following five steps:

1. Provide basic information such as name, organization and e-mail address
2. Create login ID and password

3. Client type: clients will see one of three possible pages in step 3 based on whether they have identified themselves in Step 1 as an U.S. firm, a non- U.S. organization or a student/researcher.
4. Confirmation: the information from the first three steps will be displayed for clients and they will be able to make corrections
5. Account activation instructions

Reporting International Success (currently approved)

The CS is required by OMB and Congress to annually measure and report on the number of firms that have exported as a result of CS assistance and the dollar value of those exports. The “Reporting International Success” form is used to capture this information. The form is electronically sent to CS clients who have worked with the CS during the past 12 months to identify whether the client has exported as a result of CS assistance. The form can be submitted to the CS via e-mail.

Industry Focused Program (new)

The Industry Focused Program helps U.S. exporters that have booths at domestic trade shows to meet with foreign firms that have traveled to the U.S. to attend the show. This form is necessary because it enables foreign buyers to meet with U.S. manufacturers and service providers and purchase U.S. goods and services. For each trade show a description of the U.S. exhibitors that are interested in meeting foreign buyers and/or partners is included on the Industry Focused Program form. The list of participating U.S. firms will vary with each trade show. The form is then publicized among foreign firms in a variety of markets who may have an interest in purchasing the goods and services offered by the U.S. participating firms. It also allows the foreign buyers to set appointments to meet with the U.S. companies that they are interested in.

Featured U.S. Exporter (new)

The Featured U.S. Exporter (FUSE) service provides opportunities for U.S. exporters to promote their products and services to international buyers, distributors and representatives by listing their company profile on the CS international office websites. These on-line listings offer U.S. exporters an effective and inexpensive way to gain international exposure and test international markets. The FUSE form is necessary so that interested clients can register for the service and provide the necessary company and product/service information to be listed on CS websites.

Business Service Providers (new)

The CS provides U.S. firms with an on-line directory of specialized export-related service providers located in various domestic regions. The Business Service Provider form allows export service providers (such as banks, freight forwarders, etc.) to indicate their interest in being included in the on-line directory and it is the vehicle by which the service providers can describe the various export services that they provide.

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.

Companies access these forms via ITA and CS websites and they may submit them via the Internet. The vast majority of CS clients complete the forms electronically, but hard copies of some forms may be used in limited circumstances, such as with clients who may not have Internet access.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

There is no duplication of information collection requirements. The information collected by the documents in this package represents unique client information that is required by the CS to efficiently and effectively provide services to U.S. exporters and to document the effectiveness of our services in creating export successes. The information collected on these documents is not available elsewhere in government.

The CS maintains a central Client Tracking System (CTS) that is accessible to domestic and internationally-based CS staff. Client information is stored in the CTS and CS staff can check to ensure the necessary information about a client's exporting needs and goals is present thereby eliminating duplication of information and ensuring that we do not ask clients to provide information that has been previously provided.

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

The majority of these forms have been in use by the Commercial Service for 3 years and during this time no negative feedback has been received from either clients or client-facing staff regarding the use of these forms.

CS has acted on client feedback in revising the Export.gov User Registration form and customizing it to meet the needs and requirements of specific types of clients. The registration process collects certain types of information to enable the CS to provide a customized website for users. The Export.gov User Registration form has been redesigned to streamline the registration process and increase ease-of-use for clients.

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

If approval is not granted for use of these documents, the CS ability to conduct its congressional mandate of broadening and deepening the export base will be severely hindered. These documents enable clients to request and obtain export-related services. These documents

provide the CS with details about clients' products/services to enable the CS to provide clients with the assistance they require to successfully export.

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

The collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide a copy 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 November 28, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 230) page 72447-72448. No comments were received.

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

Respondents will not receive payments or gifts.

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

Confidentiality is provided to the extent allowed by law.

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 asked.

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

Total estimated annual burden hours = 21,335

Document Type	Estimated annual # of respondents	Annual burden hours	Previous Annual # respondents	Previous burden hours per document
Preliminary consultation (currently approved)	1,167	195	1,167	195
Local event (currently approved)	1,167	195	1,167	195
ShowTime (currently approved)	1,167	195	1,167	195
Market Express Bulletin (currently approved)	1,167	195	1,167	195
Export.gov registration (currently approved/revised)	12,000	2,000	1,166	194
Reporting International Success (currently approved)	1,166	194	1,166	194
Industry focused program (new)	1,167	195	0	0
FUSE (new)	1,167	195	0	0
Business Service Providers (new)	1,167	195	0	0
TOTAL	21,335	3,559	7,000	1,167

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).

There is a fee-for-service associated with this collection. The total is estimated at **\$56,400**.

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

Government employees will spend approximately 10 minutes reviewing each completed document except for Export.gov registrations because these are received and acted on by a computer program.

Estimated annual government employee hours to review completed documents = 1,559 hrs.

(government employees are not required to review Export.gov registrations as a computer program automatically takes care of this.)

Annualized cost to the Federal Govt.: 1,559 hr. X \$25/hr. = **\$38,975.**

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

Program adjustments: The number of clients registering annually on the Export.gov website has increased from approximately 1,166 to 12,000, thus increasing burden hours by 1,807; increase of respondents/responses of 10,834. This increase is due to extensive ITA promotional efforts that successfully raised awareness of the services and export resources available on this website.

An increase adjustment to the cost burden is due to the fees paid by respondents not accounted for in the previous submission (\$45,000).

Program changes: Based upon client feedback, the CS is increasing the number of export-related services that it provides, therefore the CS is requesting approval of three new documents that are associated with these three new services. It is estimated that demand for each new service will equal that of the other services that continue to be offered. Therefore, increases of respondents/responses of 3,501, burden hours of 585, and an increase in cost burden (fees paid by respondents) of \$11,400.

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

The results will not be published.

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

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.