

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Strategic User Satisfaction Surveys
OMB CONTROL NO. 0625-0262**

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a revision to a currently approved information collection.

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

The U.S. Commercial Service (CS) is mandated by Congress to help U.S. businesses, particularly small and medium-sized companies, export their products and services to global markets. Additionally, the CS plays a leading role in achieving the President's National Export Initiative and doubling exports within five years. To achieve its mission, the CS provides U.S. businesses with a range of export assistance services and resources including export counseling from one of our domestic Export Assistance Centers, educational webinars and seminars, an export-focused website (www.export.gov), a trade-related help line (1-800-USA-TRAD(E)), international industry research, international business partner match-making services and basic due diligence services on potential international partners.

The CS relies on client feedback to guide the development of services to meet client's needs and to improve the effectiveness of its export assistance services. The CS uses the two collection instruments ("U.S. Commercial Service Perception and Awareness Survey" and the "U.S. Commercial Service Customer Satisfaction Survey") within this package to: 1) assess our marketing and promotional activities and 2) measure clients' overall satisfaction with the full array of services and experiences they have had with the CS on an annual basis.

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 Commercial Service will conduct the "Perception and Awareness Survey" and the "Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey" annually and the information collected will be used internally for program improvement purposes.

The Perception and Awareness Survey results will assist us in improving our marketing effectiveness and raise U.S. firms' awareness of the Commercial Service and the export services we provide, with the ultimate goal of helping more U.S. firms to export. The data obtained through the Perception and Awareness Survey addresses how clients learned about the CS, where they most often hear about the CS and their perceptions of the CS and our export services.

The Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey specifically addresses: client service principles, export assistance services and business practices. The Survey results enable us to prioritize the allocation of time, budget and resources to improve the export assistance services provided to U.S. companies.

Without this information, the CS is unable to systematically determine the actual and relative levels of performance for attributes, identify the drivers or determinants of overall satisfaction, and determine the effectiveness of customer service initiatives by comparing current results with the previous year's results.

The Commercial Service would like to add new questions to the Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to ask clients whether the Commercial Service should provide new export assistance services, in addition to services currently provided. If a client answers "yes" we would like the client to briefly explain the new type of service that is needed. **These new questions are printed in red on the collection instrument (page 5).** This information is very important to help the Commercial Service evaluate whether clients may have export assistance needs that are not currently being met by the Commercial Service. This information is very important to help the Commercial Service evaluate whether clients may have export assistance needs that are not currently being met by the Commercial Service and whether the Commercial Service should consider initiating new export-related services and, if so, what types of new services should be provided to U.S. exporters.

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.

Both the "Perception and Awareness Survey" and the "Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey" use electronic technology. Survey participants receive an e-mail message containing an electronic link to access one of the web-based surveys.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The Commercial Service reviews its approved PRA collections to ensure that there is no duplication. CS also conducts secondary internet research to identify whether other parties have data on the export assistance needs of U.S. firms.

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

CS's focus is small and medium-sized businesses, and the use of electronic web-based surveys and by limiting the scope and number of questions minimize the burden on respondents. The surveys were tested with clients to ensure clarity and ease-of-use.

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

If the surveys are not conducted annually, the quality of the Commercial Service's export assistance services may suffer. It is crucial for us to monitor client's overall satisfaction with our services so that we can identify areas of dissatisfaction and take steps to improve the services that we provide to clients. Conducting the surveys on an annual basis also allows us to determine the potential impact of our program improvement initiatives. The Commercial Service is tasked by the President to double exports

over the next 5 years, and it is therefore extremely important that our export assistance services meet the needs of U.S. firms.

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

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

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.

The Federal Register Notice was published on Sept. 10, 2010, Volume 75, No. 175, page 55303. No comments were received.

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

The Commercial Service will not provide payments or gifts to respondents.

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

No assurance of confidentiality is provided. Survey results will be analyzed in aggregate. The Commercial Service does not plan to disseminate individual respondent's survey data.

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.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

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

The Commercial Service estimates that the total burden hours for the two collections are 775 as shown in the table below.

| | Annual # of respondents | Average # of minutes per response | Total Annual Burden Hours |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Perception and Awareness Survey | 1,500 | 15 minutes | 375 hours |
| Annual Customer | 1,500 | 16 minutes | 400 hours |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Satisfaction Survey | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|

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 Question 12 above).

There is no cost burden associated with the collections for respondents.

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

An electronic survey software system will be used to analyze aggregate survey results and create a management report. The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$2,000

| | Estimated time to prepare management report | Average hourly salary | Total cost |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------|
| Perception and Awareness Survey | 60 | \$25 | \$1,500 |
| Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey | 20 | \$25 | \$500 |

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

The additional questions to the Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to ask clients whether the Commercial Service should provide new export assistance services, in addition to services currently provided. If a client answers “yes” we would like the client to briefly explain the new type of service that is needed; maybe one to two sentences. It is estimated that the response time to the additional questions is 1 minute. This is a program change increase of 25 hours (from 750 to 775).

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

Survey results will only be used internally.

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.

Not Applicable.