

Summary of Assessment Research for FIR

December 16, 2013

This memo provides an overview of two pieces of research that represent the first stage in a market research investigation to help the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service's Financial Information Repository (FIR) initiative design its capabilities:

1. To ensure FIR public functionality is tailored to address public user transparency needs and expectations
2. To ensure FIR design properly meets public user web interface needs

Background on FIR. The FIR is designed to provide public and private functionality. The public functionality will provide web-based public access to FIR report data, including a tool that will enable the public to analyze the data presented. The FIR report data will include integrated information on collections, disbursements and accounting data across Treasury's Fiscal Service business lines, a functionality that does not exist today. The public functionality will not include disclosure of PII or SBU.

Purpose. The purpose of this pair of projects is to determine some of the most likely public user audiences for FIR.

Approach. This research will be conducted through a combination of a broad-gauge screening process and a targeted query among professional audiences.

- a. We will conduct an online study to identify potential user groups. Our ingoing hypothesis is that FIR will appeal to specific types of individuals such as academics, researchers, public policy students, certain associations, watchdog groups, etc.
 - The survey will be five minutes in length for the majority of respondents; 10 minutes for the subset, which we initially estimate at up to 10% of the total, who indicate some potential interest/use of the data.
 - We will complete 5,000 interviews.
- b. Simultaneously we will conduct a targeted set of interviews with people representing potential user groups (non-profits, researchers academics, etc.).
 - The sample is being built through background research on government data user communities.
 - About 40 individuals will be contacted by telephone with two primary purposes: a) gauge which of them are most likely to be users of the kinds of data that will be available through FIR; and b) gain some general understanding of their current patterns of use.
 - A number of these interviews will be short, to the extent we determine that the person contacted does not fit within the potential user group.

Question focus. This round of research is meant to gauge current use of government payments/collections/financial data (the content and focus of FIR) and potential interest in expanded access to such data. Some questions about types of data, uses and

purposes will be posed to the subset expressing interest/use (estimated as 10% of total sample). For details, see the questionnaires which accompany this document.

Analysis. Analysis will focus on characterizing the potential user groups. The research team will interpret and present the results to the full Research Workgroup, and will discuss recommendations and implications.

Timing.

December 2013 – OMB Review

January 2014 – Implement and analyze surveys

February 2014 – Report