



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH
WASHINGTON, DC 20460

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

JUL 14 2011

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Request for OMB ICR Approval of EPA's Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) Format

FROM: Christopher Zarba, Deputy Director
National Center for Environmental Research (8721P)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Zarba", is written over the "FROM:" field.

TO: Richard Westlund, ICR Team Leader
Office of Information Collection (2822T)
Office of Environmental Information

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to request the assistance of the Office of Environmental Information in obtaining Information Collection Rule (ICR) approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for EPA's Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) format.

BACKGROUND

The RPPR is an initiative of the Research Business Models (RBM) Subcommittee of the Committee on Science (CoS), a Committee of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). The objective of this initiative was to establish a uniform format for reporting performance on Federally-funded research projects in order to reduce burden on recipients. This proposed format addresses annual progress reports only, while final reports will be addressed once the annual report format has been implemented. The RPPR format consists of required cover page data elements, one mandatory category (Accomplishments), and four optional categories (Products, Participants, Impacts and Changes/Problems). Apart from minimally augmenting the RPPR instructions with agency-specific information, agencies cannot make any changes to the format.

To assist agencies in acquiring ICR approval, OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) has provided guidance (Attachment 1) to clarify the applicability of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). OMB will apply the PRA in four different ways, depending on the nature of the requested changes made by agencies. For agencies that currently collect the mandatory or optional information covered by the RPPR components and associated instructions, they may submit a "non-substantive change" request to OMB for review and approval under the PRA. Per OMB's guidance, this type of request may be submitted directly to OIRA for expedited review without prior public notice and comment.

EPA's current research progress reporting requirements conform to the requirements in 40 CFR Section 30.51 and 31.40 and therefore are covered in EPA's ICR # 0938 (OMB # 2030-0020), "General Administrative Requirements for Assistance Programs." The current reporting requirements do not have a specific form or form number. Because the new format will not significantly change the current burden estimate, EPA believes its draft RPPR qualifies for a "non-substantive change" request under OMB's options for applying the PRA.

REQUEST

ORD is requesting the assistance of OEI's Office of Information Collection in obtaining OMB approval for its RPPR format. Please find attached EPA's draft RPPR format (Attachment 2). Clarifying language for grantees which has been added to the instructions by ORD is highlighted in red type.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Jennifer Robbins of my staff at (703)-347-8038 or at robbins.jennifer@epa.gov.

Attachments

Cc: Alexandra Raver
Bronnda Harrison
Roberto Perez