

2013 NOAA COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CUSTOMER SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

A. SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS FOR DOC/NOAA CUSTOMER SURVEY CLEARANCE (OMB CONTROL NUMBER 0648-0342)

1. Explain who will be conducting this survey. What program office will be conducting the survey? What services does this program provide? Who are the customers? How are these services provided to the customer?

The survey and focus groups will be conducted by the NOAA Coastal Services Center (CSC). This office is currently undergoing integration with the NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). The discussion in this document will refer to the office as CSC, but beginning in FY2014, the combined office will be called the Office of Coastal Programs (pending approval). The 2013 Coastal Resource Management (CRM) Customer survey will be the sixth triennial effort to assess customer management issues, technical capabilities, and technical assistance needs at the national level. Previous CRM surveys were conducted in 1996, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2009. Following the survey, CSC expects to conduct up to two focus groups to expand on the survey results and to better understand customer needs.

The CRM survey will allow the CSC to determine specific services its customers want, understand the customers' level of technical expertise, and document priority issues most relevant to customer organizational missions. The information will be used by the Center to guide strategic planning, professional development, and informed delivery of future products and services for the Nation's coastal resource management community. The survey results will also enable the CSC to be more effective in the development of specific products and services that meet the needs and capabilities of the combined customers of the OCRM and CSC.

This survey will focus on the core customer group of the combined offices, which includes: state and local coastal managers and planners, other federal and state agency partners, as well as non-profit organizations and researchers. The CSC has historically provided services such as tools, products, and technical assistance in a variety of areas, including facilitation and social science services, assistance with geographic information systems (GIS) data and mapping, working with coastal-related data maintained by the CSC, and assistance with a variety of software and mapping tools developed and offered by the CSC. The approach to providing the services depends on the customer and the service needed, both offices make use of email, online resources, phone, web conferencing, in-person meetings, and conferences to deliver products and provide services to support those products and customer goals.

The focus groups, conducted via webinar with a skilled facilitator, will draw from the respondents to the customer survey and will focus on exploring selected findings to provide additional clarification, context, and insight into the needs and priorities of the coastal resource management community. Likely topics include emerging priority issues, key data or information gaps, training and information access preferences.

In summary, the CSC is seeking approval to collect information on the issue priorities and information and training needs of coastal resource managers through a web-based survey of customers followed by a set of up to two focus groups to discuss selected survey results. Draft versions of the survey instrument and focus group discussion guide appear in the attachment to this package.

2. Explain how this survey was developed. With whom did you consult during the development of this survey on content? statistics? What suggestions did you get about improving the survey?

The survey was developed by a team comprised of staff representing both the CSC and OCRM. The team worked together to identify items from the 2009 survey that provided information that was actively utilized by program staff to develop products and services over the past few years. Questions that did not meet this criterion of being acted upon were removed to reduce survey length. Additionally, the team reviewed the list of questions to incorporate emerging issues and priorities, as well as specific issues that face customers from each office to ensure adequate representation.

Additionally, the CSC consulted with Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) on the development of the survey instrument and the focus group discussion guide. ERG has significant experience assessing customer needs and satisfaction with products and services provided by Federal agencies through detailed interviews, focus groups, stakeholder engagement, and surveys that focus on customer satisfaction with services. ERG provided detailed feedback and recommendations on survey length and design – question format, order, and wording – and will be responsible for implementation of the survey.

3. Explain how the survey will be conducted. How will the customers be sampled (if fewer than all customers will be surveyed)? What percentage of customers asked to take the survey will respond? What actions are planned to increase the response rate? (Web-based surveys are not an acceptable method of sampling a broad population. Web-based surveys must be limited to services provided by Web.)

Survey of Coastal Resource Management Professionals

The CSC maintains a list of core customers and their contact information. The CSC has chosen to perform the survey using a web-based instrument for several reasons. First, the 2006 and 2009 surveys were both administered using web-based instruments so many of the customers are expecting to see the survey in this format. Second, many of the products and services that the survey is asking about are web-based and questions about these services may benefit from allowing the respondent to see a visual representation of it to prompt their memory (e.g., a question about the Digital Coast web site could be paired with a screenshot of the home page of the site). Finally, the CSC has significant interaction with stakeholders over the internet (e.g., via email, in web forums, previous surveys, etc.); therefore, a web-based survey represents a logical mode to implement this survey.

No statistical methods are being used in the participant selection or distribution of the survey; the entire list of customers will receive an invitation to complete the survey. Based on past efforts and lessons learned, a response rate of greater than 70 percent is expected for the 2013 survey. Despite the anticipation of a high response rate, the CSC and ERG will follow good survey practices, including:

- The CSC will send a pre-notification containing a personalized emailed cover letter signed by Margaret Davidson, Acting Director of the NOAA Office, cordially inviting participation and describing the purpose of the survey.
- ERG will send the email on behalf of NOAA with the survey link within 4 days of the pre-notification email.
- ERG will send 2 reminders to non-responders, one and two weeks following the initial email with the survey link.

Focus Groups

For the follow-up focus groups, the CSC will email a thank you note to all survey respondents to express gratitude for their participation and invite those that are interested to participate in follow-up discussions on the survey findings, noting that space for the discussions is limited. Those that respond to the email will be contacted by ERG to discuss logistics for participation in the focus group. ERG will schedule a time for up to two focus groups and conduct the meeting via webinar using a skilled facilitator. The output of the focus groups will be detailed notes.

4. Describe how the results of this survey will be analyzed and used. If the customer population is sampled, what statistical techniques will be used to generalize the results to the entire customer population? Is this survey intended to measure a GPRA performance measure? (If so, please include an excerpt from the appropriate document.)

The CSC has used the results of past CRM surveys to guide strategic planning, professional development, and informed delivery of products and services to the coastal resource management community. The results of the 2013 survey will be summarized by question and tabulated based on the demographics of respondents to identify trends in priorities and customer needs by region and organizational affiliation. The findings from the focus groups will be used to add context and clarification to the survey results. A summary of the results will be posted on the CSC website similar to past surveys (available at www.csc.noaa.gov/survey/).

No statistical methods will be used to select survey participants from the population; all customers will receive an initiation to participate in the survey and all respondents to the survey will receive an invitation to participate in the focus groups. This data collection is not intended to measure a GPRA performance measure.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.

Survey of Coastal Resource Management Professionals

The universe of respondents for this information collection comprises the NOAA CSC core customer base involved in coastal natural resource and hazard management. The universe of respondents will encompass the core customers for the CSC and OCRM. Table 1 summarizes the potential respondent universe by sector and anticipated number of responses.

Table 1. Potential respondent universe, expected response rate and number, by region.

Sector	Potential Respondent Universe [a]	Expected Response	
		Rate	Number
Federal government	50	70%	35
State/territorial government	270	70%	189
Tribal government	15		11
Local government	100	70%	70
Non-profit	50	70%	35
Private	15	70%	11
TOTAL	0	70%	0

[a] The values in this column were derived from customer contact information.

This collection has been conducted before; the response rates for the 1996, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2009 surveys were 54, 70, 74, 65, and 44 percent, respectively. Based on these past efforts and lessons learned (e.g., time release of survey before holidays or hold till after), a response rate of 70 percent is expected for the 2013 survey. Specifically, the survey invitation will be emailed from a NOAA email address to avoid being classified as spam, the survey will focus on the core customer audience, and the required response time has been reduced from 25 to 15 minutes per response.

Focus Groups

The potential respondent universe for the focus groups includes a maximum of 20 total participants self-selected from the pool of respondents to the survey, or a maximum of 10 participants per focus group. No statistical methods are being used in the selection of participants for the focus groups, the respondents to the survey will be invited to participate if they are interested in the topics being discussion. CSC will accept up to the first 20 individuals that respond. The CSC expects that approximately 10 to 20 individuals will express interest in participating in the focus group discussions and that each focus group will involve between 6 and 10 participants.

With the focus groups, adding up to 20 responses and 20 hours (1hour per person), the total responses and burden will be 371 and 108 hours.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Statistical Method for Stratification and Sample Selection

No statistical methodology has been applied to stratify the sample. The 2013 CRM survey will be sent to all existing customer offices responsible for coastal resource management. The invitation to participate in the focus groups will be sent to all respondents to the survey.

Estimation Procedures and Accuracy

The CSC does not need to extrapolate the results of the survey or the focus groups to the population and will therefore not need to estimate population parameters from the collected data. This also means that the accuracy of the estimates is not meaningful to calculate.

Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures

None are required.

Periodic Data Collection Cycles

The CRM survey is conducted on a triennial basis. Given the rapid progression and changes in resource management-related technology tools, less frequent collections would not have adequate utility for planning and product and service development.

The request to conduct the focus groups is for a one-time data collection.

- 3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

Survey of Coastal Resource Management Professionals

The CSC expects that a high response rate is achievable for the web-based survey, based on past experience and lessons learned, such as appropriate timing of the release of the survey. The survey length has also been reduced to minimize the burden on respondents. Additionally, the CSC and ERG will continue to follow good survey practices to ensure high participation, including the following:

- The CSC will send a pre-notification containing a personalized emailed cover letter signed by Margaret Davidson, Acting Director, cordially inviting participation and describing the purpose of the survey.

- ERG will send the email with the survey link within 4 days after the pre-notification email.
- ERG will send 2 reminders to non-responders, one and two weeks following the email with the survey link.

As discussed above, ERG, on the CSC's behalf, will administer the survey to the full population of stakeholders; no statistical methods will be used.

Focus Groups

The CSC will email a thank you note to all survey respondents to express gratitude for their participation and invite those that are interested to participate in follow-up discussions on the survey findings, noting that space for the discussions is limited. Those that respond to the email will be contacted by ERG to discuss logistics for participation in the focus group. ERG will schedule a time for up to two focus groups and conduct the meeting via webinar using a skilled facilitator. The CSC anticipates that 10 to 20 individuals will express interest in participating in the focus group and that 6 to 10 will attend the scheduled webinar.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.**

No tests will be conducted. However, the CSC consulted with ERG on the development of the survey instrument. ERG has significant experience assessing customer needs and satisfaction with products and services provided by Federal agencies through detailed interviews, focus groups, stakeholder engagement, and surveys that focus on customer satisfaction with services. They calculated average time to respond to the draft survey.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

The survey instrument was developed by NOAA by a team of individuals representing both the CSC and OCRM, the technical lead for this project is Chris Ellis (843-740-1195; chris.ellis@noaa.gov).

The CSC has contracted with Eastern Research Group, Inc (ERG) of Lexington, MA to provide survey development and focus group support and implement the data collections. ERG's task manager for this work is Amy Stillings (781-674-7277; amy.stillings@erg.com).