

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Generic Clearance for Program Evaluation Data Collections
OMB CONTROL NO. 0693-0033

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The data collection methods and procedures will vary; however, the primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information. Previous collections under this clearance have not used 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.

The activities under this clearance may involve samples of self-selected customers, as well as convenience samples, and quota samples, with respondents selected either to cover a broad range of customers or to include specific characteristics related to certain products or services. Results will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, to produce statistical descriptions, or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample. The specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each collection request.

Qualitative surveys are tools used by managers to change or improve programs, products, or services. The accuracy, reliability, and applicability of the results of these surveys are adequate for their purpose.

The samples associated with this collection are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where estimates are published or otherwise released to the public.

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.

The data collection methods and procedures will vary and the specifics will be provided with each collection request. NIST expects to use a variety of methods for these collections. For example, NIST, or its contractors, may use commercial survey-specific software to automate its collection and analysis of feedback. In addition to hard copies, instruments may be electronically disseminated and/or posted on target pages of NIST's web site. Telephone scripts, personal interviews, and focus groups with professional guidance and moderation may also be used.

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.

Information collected under this generic clearance will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful customer input, but it does not yield data about customer opinions that can be generalized. NIST may use reminder emails and/or letters to increase response rates, when appropriate.

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.

Pretesting may be done with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products. If the number of pretest respondents exceeds nine members of the public, NIST will submit the pretest instruments for review under this generic clearance.

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.

Each program will obtain information from statisticians in the development, design, conduct, and analysis of program evaluation surveys, when appropriate. This statistical expertise will be available from agency statisticians or from contractors and NIST will include the names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted under this generic clearance.