

## MEMORANDUM

Date: May 19, 2015

To: Shelly Wilkie Martinez, Desk Officer  
Office of Management and Budget

From: John Gawalt, Director  
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer  
National Science Foundation (NSF)

Subject: Notification of data collection under generic clearance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of NCSES's plan to conduct on-line data collection to validate examples of basic research, applied research, and experimental development, primarily in the social sciences and humanities, under the generic clearance for survey improvement projects (OMB #3145-0174).

### **Background**

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) surveys on research & development cover a broad set of fields, including the social sciences and the humanities. For each of its sector specific R&D surveys (e.g., HERD, BRDIS) NCSES distinguishes among three kinds of R&D-related activity ("character of work"): basic research, applied research, and experimental development. NCSES has evidence from previous cognitive interviews and reviews from the Committee on National Statistics that these "character of work" distinctions can be difficult for survey respondents to apply. These R&D distinctions are especially difficult to apply in the social sciences and humanities fields.

Survey respondents and expert panels have stated that they would be able to better apply the character of work distinctions more accurately and consistently if they had field-specific examples of R&D activities in each category, particularly in the social sciences. Over the past 6 months, NCSES interviewed many experts across 32 fields of research, and collected field-specific examples of R&D by character of work, see Attachment A for listing of the fields and gathered examples.

### **Project Description**

NCSES plans to conduct a small on-line survey of experts in the same scientific, social sciences, and humanities fields to validate the field-specific examples collected previously. NCSES plans to invite 150 experts to participate in this voluntary validation exercise (see attachment B for the draft instruments and recruitment scripts), identified through recommendations by other experts or through analyst research.

NCSES will draw from an existing list of 200 experts. The sampling method for the interviews is non-probabilistic, purposive, and heterogeneous. Experts from each field will be selected to be broadly representative of the field and to have comprehensive knowledge of the field, as represented by the following selection criteria:

- Years (10+) in the field  
*and*
- Recent or present membership of an editorial board of a relevant peer-reviewed journal  
*or*
- Recent or present leadership position in a relevant professional organization.

We plan to recruit participants through targeted email and telephone messages without any regard to geography. Data collection will take place in the spring and summer of 2015. Non-response follow-up will be conducted by telephone.

No personal or sensitive information will be collected; therefore, anonymity will not be assured. However, none of the respondents' names or statements will be used in any public documents.

Each expert will be provided with at least three and at most nine examples of research projects in their selected field of expertise, although most respondents will be presented with six examples. The examples presented will be based on respondents answer to the first question (Which of the following fields would you identify yourself with most closely?).

Respondents will be asked to classify each example as basic research, applied research, or experimental development. Examples will be presented in randomized order. Respondents from social service organizations will not be asked to classify themselves in a field of expertise and will only receive a set of examples relevant to the work done in social service organizations or similar non-profit organizations. Attachment B contains both contact scripts and a copy of the on-line survey; please note that although some of the examples and radio buttons appear to be pre-filled there are no default settings, these were necessary to allow us to and move to the next page in order to provide a review copy.

### **Burden Information**

We expect to invite 150 experts with the goal of obtaining survey responses from at least three experts per field. We expect the recruiting process to take an average of five minutes per expert, resulting in approximately 12.5 hours of burden (150 experts x 5 minutes = 12.5 hours). The estimated time for completion for the survey is 15 minutes. If every invitee responds, the total burden for the survey activity would be 37.5 hours (150 responses x 15 minutes = 37.5 hours). Thus, we estimate a total burden of 50 hours for this research.

## **Incentive Payments**

There are no incentive payments.

## **Contact Information**

The contact person for questions regarding this data collection is:

Christopher Pece  
Senior Analyst  
National Science Foundation  
(703) 292-7788  
[cpece@nsf.gov](mailto:cpece@nsf.gov)

## Attachments

- A – List of fields and examples
- B – Draft contact scripts and instrument

cc: Jeri Mulrow  
John Jankowski  
Christopher Pece  
Rebecca Morrison