

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting research to explore the response processes related to electronic reporting for the Economic Census in order to identify early requirements for replacing the current electronic data collection system for this survey.

The Economic Census has been collected electronically using the Surveyor software application for the past three censuses. We plan to replace this system with a Web-based reporting instrument for the 2017 Economic Census. This exploratory research will identify the requirements for a new system through a detailed task analysis along with debriefing questions about past experience using Surveyor as well as other web survey applications.

In January and February 2014, we plan to conduct up to eight exploratory interviews with respondents to the 2012 Economic Census. Researchers from the Response Improvement Research Staff (RIRS) will conduct these interviews at respondents' workplaces, as funding for travel permits, or otherwise by telephone. Staff from the Economic Planning and Coordination Division (EPCD) and the Applications Services Division will participate as observers in the interviews as they are able.

RIRS will recruit multi-location companies from various industries that reported electronically during the 2012 Economic Census. After we recruit them, we will give participants a follow-up reminder of their appointments by fax or telephone. All interviews may be audio-recorded, with the participants' permission, to facilitate accurate summarization of the results. We also will inform participants that their response is voluntary, the information they provide is confidential, and that only employees involved in the research project will see that information. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

The length of the interviews is expected to average 1.5 hours and may include multiple respondents. We want to meet with participants who are most familiar with filling out the form and with gathering the data. These participants may not be the same person within the company (1.5 hours X 2 respondents X 8 companies = 24 hours). We also expect to make up to five recruiting calls for every interview scheduled, and each recruiting call will last an average of five minutes (40 companies X 5 minutes = 3.33 hours). Thus, the total estimated burden for this set of exploratory interviews is approximately 28 hours (24 hours for interviews + 3.33 hours for recruiting).

Enclosed are an example of an Economic Census form and a draft of the interview protocol for the response process task analysis.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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