

ECON Hub Business Unit Harmonization Team:

Phase II: Company Visits – Meeting Agenda and Interview Protocol

Prepared by Mike Flaherty, Economic Management Division

Goals

- Primary goals
 - Present Company Profiles and solicit Rs feedback, especially pertaining to potential reasons for discrepancies among reported data to different surveys and especially reasons related to the business unit requested by the survey;
 - Solicit feedback from Rs about issues or barriers to reporting timely and accurately to surveys due to the varying business units for which surveys request data;
 - Discuss company's internal and external business units and how they relate to the business units on which Census surveys attempt to collect data;
 - Solicit feedback from Rs about their ability to report at enterprise-level and break out geographically.
- Secondary goal
 - Solicit feedback from Rs' on data transfer concept.

Interview Topics and Questions

Warm-up (5 Minutes)

- Introductions.
- Inform Rs their participation is voluntary (thank them) and all responses are confidential and will only be used internally to assist in decision-making related to survey design.
- Ask permission to record / sign consent form.

Company Profiles (30 Minutes)

Introduction: Company Profile includes 2012 reported and edited data from several Census Bureau surveys (including Economic Census, Service Annual Survey, Annual Wholesale Trade Survey, Annual Retail Trade Survey, Business Research, Development and Innovation Survey, and the Annual Capital Expenditures Survey), administrative data, and company SEC filings (if available).

- *Present Company Profile. Explain different sections of profile. Provide NAICS recode list for reference.*
- *(for significant data discrepancies in profile) What do you think primary reason(s) are for data discrepancies among reported data received by the surveys?*

Differing business-unit structures employed by Census surveys (10 Minutes)

Introduction: Describe three primary business-unit structures used in Census economic surveys – establishment-based, company-based, and 'pseudo-company-based'.

- *(present portion of forms instructing respondents on which part of company to report) In your own words, describe how you interpret these instructions.*
 - *Talk about the level of burden required to obtain data at each of the business-unit levels.*
 - *Tell us about the quality of data you are able to obtain at each of the business-unit levels. Does your company not have the data at a particular level or are estimations made or any type of modeling used on your end before submitting the data, for example?*

Company perspective – business-unit structures (10 Minutes)

- Please tell us about the units your company uses (internal and external) to describe its organization. (list them and brief description if possible)
 - How are these units related (if at all) to:
 - o EINs?
 - o 10-K/20-F operating segments?
 - o Geographic locations?

Geographic data (10 Minutes)

- Talk about your ability to report at enterprise-level and break out geographically.
 - (present BRDIS form – company-based survey collecting R&D expenses by state) How does (or how would if not in BRDIS) your company go about reporting this data?
 - Describe your ability to report, at enterprise-level, data below the state level.

File transfers (10 Minutes)

- Finally, I want to briefly change topics and discuss with you the idea of transferring files between businesses. Have you heard of the term file transfers before today? (Yes/No) Is this a term that is used within your organization? (Yes/No) If no, what term is used?

1. Are you familiar with the concept of a data transfer or file transfer?

(IF YES) Can you briefly tell us about your experiences with file transfers?

1. Have you ever provided financial or other data to another party outside of your organization in the form of a file transfer [note: need correct term]?
2. Probe if needed: What type of organization did you transfer the data to?
3. Probe if needed: What type of data did you send?

(IF NO) Do you know of anyone in your company who is involved with file transfers?

2. *On scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very unwilling and 5 being very willing, how willing would your company be to provide data to the Census Bureau in this manner, in lieu of completing a survey?*
3. *What software does your company use for your accounting and payroll needs?*
4. *Would you be willing to talk about file transfers with us in more detail at a later time?*

Wrap-up (5 Minutes)

- May we contact you in the future if we have further questions after today's meeting?