

Factoryless Goods Production (FGP) 2017 Economic Census Cognitive Interview (Single Units) DRAFT PROTOCOL

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This protocol is a guide – the questions presented here will not necessarily be asked exactly as worded in the protocol or in this order. It is important to note that not all questions will be asked in every interview.

Note: As much information about interview participants and enterprise/establishments should be obtained prior to the interview as possible. Conduct background research on each enterprise/establishment prior to each interview. In some cases probing may need to be adjusted based on the background research that was conducted.

Part A - Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Introduce observers and their background

2. Purpose of visit:

Thank you very much for your time. Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today. We have been reaching out to some respondents who completed the Economic Census for us in the past. This survey is completed every five years/annually and collects information from businesses throughout the United States. We are in the process of redesigning portions of this form in order to better meet our data users' needs. We would like to get your input on the revised questions, in order to make them as clear and easy to complete as possible.

I apologize in advance, but as we proceed, I may have to interrupt you and move on to another question, in order to make the best use of our limited time together. Please also be aware that some questions may sound repetitive or similar. I also want to encourage you to think aloud during our conversation and share your immediate thoughts and/or reactions. It is ok if you are not sure or do not know about some of the things we discuss. If this is the case just let me know.

3. Permission to audio record discussion? Have R sign consent form.

Before we get started, I would like to audio record this interview so I don't have to rely on my memory later. This session is confidential. Only persons connected with this project will have access to your recording. If that is all right with you, please sign this consent form. It also tells you about the confidentiality of this session.

Part B – Background Information (10 minutes)

1. Respondent Background

Before we start with more specific questions, I would like to ask you a few questions about this company and your role in it. For today, we will be focusing on this location -- (NAME).

1. (For each person in the room) What is your formal job title?
 - a. Could you tell me a little about your role and responsibilities?

2. Company Background

1. What would you consider to be the main activity of this company?
2. Does this company have any other locations?
 - a. Where are they located?
 - b. Are any in the US?
 - c. How are they organized? (e.g., by business group, product line, function, other?)

Part C – Testing of Draft FGP Questions (30-40 minutes)

At this time, I will be sharing the current draft of the relevant questions with you. This is a draft and will eventually be part of an electronic version of the Economic Census. As I mentioned when we spoke, it may be helpful to have your records available if they are accessible at this time. I will have you go through and answer each question as best you can and I will stop and ask questions as we go along. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Please let me know if you have questions at any time and we will do our best to answer them for you.

Note: If a respondent answers “I don't know” to any of these questions, follow up with these probes:

- Who in your company would know about that?
- What is their title?
- Do they work at this location?
- (If no) Where are they located?

- o Continue to probe on any answers that seem to contrast previously reported answers, or knowledge of FGP activity.

1. In 2017, did your establishment manufacture or produce any products or goods at this location?

- Could you tell me what this question is asking for in your own words?
- What does “your establishment” mean to you?
- What does “manufacture or produce any products or goods” mean to you?
- What does “at this location” mean to you?
- What types of products or goods are you thinking of?
- Would you consult any records or anyone else in your company in order to answer this question?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this question?

2. In 2017, did your establishment outsource, either domestically or internationally, the manufacturing or production of any products or goods?

- Could you tell me what this question is asking for in your own words?
- What does the term “outsource” mean to you?
- Is the term “outsource” sensitive to you in any way?
- How did you come up with your answer to this question?
- What specific products or goods were you thinking of?
- Would you consult any records or anyone else in your company in order to answer this question?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this question?

3. For the products or goods that were outsourced, did your establishment determine the design or specifications?

- Could you tell me what this question is asking for in your own words?
- What does “design” mean to you?
- What does “specifications” mean to you?
- Are they the same or different?
- What does “determine the design or specifications” mean to you?
- Were you thinking of the products or goods you reported in Question 2 here?
- Would you consult any records or anyone else in your company in order to answer this question?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this question?

4. What was your establishment’s 2017 revenue from the sale of the products or goods that were outsourced?

- Could you tell me what this question is asking for in your own words?
- How did/would you come up with your answer to this question?

- What are you including in “2017 revenue from the sale of products or goods that were outsourced”?
- How is that different from this establishment’s total 2017 revenue?
- Would you consult any records or anyone else in your company in order to answer this question?
- How easy or difficult would you say this question is to answer?
- Would it be easier or harder to report the percentage of total revenue that was from the sale of products or goods outsourced?
- What about reporting whether the percentage that was from the sale of products or goods outsourced being less than or greater than 5% of total revenue? Would that be easier or harder than reporting a dollar amount?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this question?

5. In 2017, was your establishment responsible for the design and manufacture of any products or goods that were manufactured or produced at a different location?

- Could you tell me what this question is asking for in your own words?
- What does “responsible for the design and manufacture” mean to you?
- “What does “manufactured or produced at a different location” mean to you?
- What are your reactions to this question?
- Would you consult any records or anyone else in your company in order to answer this question?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this question?

*Note if R follows skip instructions.

Part D – Terminology Flash Card (skip depending on time) (10 minutes)

Thank you for your help so far! I’d like to show you a sheet with a few terms, which you may or may not be familiar with. This will help us figure out how best to word the questions on our survey. *Note: Only probe on items that were not covered previously.*

(Probe as necessary for each item):

1. Have you heard of _____ before?
2. What does _____ mean to you?
3. Does _____ relate to your company?
 - a. (If yes) How?

List of Terms

- a) Contract manufacturing?
- b) Contract manufacturing services?
- c) Products for ‘resale’?
- d) Non-proprietary?
- e) After-market products?

- f) Subsidiaries vs. affiliates?
- g) Control the IP?
- h) Control the design?
- i) Arrange for the production of?
- j) Outsourcing?
- k) Offshoring?
- l) Intellectual property?
- m) Material inputs?

Part E – Big Data / Data Transfer Questions (5 minutes)

These questions will be added to the end of any qualitative research protocol that is used during visits with large or medium-sized companies (designated with an L, M, or N in the Business Register).

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. Have you ever provided financial or other data to another party outside of your organization in the form of a file transfer?
?
 - a. IF YES: Can you briefly tell us about your experiences with file transfers?
 - i. Probe if needed: what type of organization did you transfer the data to?
 - ii. Probe if needed: what type of data did you send?
 - b. IF NO:
 - i. Are you familiar with the concept of a file transfer?
 - ii. 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?

Part F – Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Thank you for your help. We are almost done. As you may have gathered from my questions, we are trying to understand the relationship that manufacturing companies may have with contractors. Specifically, there are some types of companies who are responsible for the manufacturing of products – they control the design and all the materials used to make them – but they do not physically make all of the products or components themselves. This is a phenomenon that the US government does not currently measure, but would like to, as it could be very informative about the US economy. *Note: Follow up on any content that was not resolved earlier.*

1. How would you describe this in your own words?
 - a. How do you talk about this concept?
 - b. What terms might you use to describe this activity?
2. Do you think your location falls into this group?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. What about your company?
 - c. In part or in whole?
3. Overall, how could we write a question (or questions) about this topic to make it easy for a respondent like yourself to understand what we are asking?
4. Do you have any other thoughts about this concept?
5. Overall, what do you think of the questions we discussed today?
6. Do you have any other comments, questions or suggestions for us?

Thank you for your help today!