

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 respondent debriefings on the spreadsheet design for the collection of the North American Classification system as part of the 2017 Economic Census. This classification system of approximately 8,000 goods and services is new to the Economic Census. For NAPCS collection, respondents will need to identify and select all of the goods and services they provide.

Two previous rounds of usability testing evaluated a preliminary instrument design. The first round of usability testing revealed that respondents prefer to see fewer goods and services on the screen. The second round of testing indicated that respondents at businesses that will be responding to the economic census using spreadsheets preferred to see the list of products presented in the rows of the spreadsheet and the locations in the columns. This orientation was different than how the rest of the data items are displayed in the spreadsheet, and there was concern that this orientation would be problematic for respondents and their systems for gathering data.

The current research is intended to shed more light on whether this different orientation will be problematic for respondent data systems. In particular, we will contact large companies to determine if the change in orientation for the presentation of the NAPCS products will affect their ability to respond to the economic census.

From May 2016 through June 2016, we plan to conduct up to twenty debriefing interviews with respondents from large companies that participated in the 2012 Economic Census. The evaluation will involve medium-fidelity prototypes for the spreadsheet. During these interviews, respondents will have access to the spreadsheet with proposed alternative orientation of the NAPCS products. We will ask respondents to evaluate the presentation and how it might affect their response process.

Researchers from the Data Collection and Methodology Research Branch will conduct these interviews over the phone. Staff from other areas in the Economic Directorate will help identify large companies to contact, assemble recruiting lists, and may participate in the interviews, as they are able. We will recruit large companies from various industries that responded to the 2012 Economic Census with the goal of evaluating the alternative spreadsheet designs across the different industries that are part of the economic census. We want to meet with participants who filled out the 2012 Economic Census and will be most likely to fill out the 2017 Economic Census. After we recruit them, we will give participants a follow-up reminder (phone, email, or fax) of their appointments.

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 45 minutes. We expect to make up to five recruiting calls for every interview scheduled, and each recruiting call will last an average of five

minutes. Thus, the total estimated burden for this set of interviews is approximately 24 hours ((20 companies X 45 minutes) + (100 companies X 5 minutes)).

Enclosed are conceptual mock-ups of the spreadsheets for the different presentation method of goods and services, the traditional spreadsheet, and a draft of the debriefing questions.

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

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Enclosures

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