

**Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of  
Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 3145-0215)**

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:**

Feedback Survey Regarding NSF EFRI Topic Selection Process  
Process

**PURPOSE:**

We are requesting voluntary feedback from NSF EFRI Topic submitters concerning their satisfaction with the EFRI topic submission process. Every two years, the Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation Office of the Directorate for Engineering (EFRI) invites the research community to submit suggestions for **Topic Ideas** to be considered for the subsequent Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation (EFRI) Program Solicitation.

Suggestions for EFRI Topic Ideas were solicited and vetted in Fy12. Selected Topics become the foci of EFRI-supported research. Solicitations are announced annually for research proposals that fall under the specified Topic areas.

The request to the broader research community is meant to generate potential topic areas of emerging transformational research and innovation. Topic submitters do so by submitting their candidate topic idea along with a one-page description. The process by which topics are selected has been openly disclosed and includes external panel expert opinions as well as internal program directors championship. The process was designed with the final goal of assuring that the selected topics have the potential to become emerging frontiers, and are transformative; attend to a national need or grand challenge; is interdisciplinary, and for which engineering as a discipline can take leadership.

However, we need to better evaluate these efforts to guide future strategy. Participants will be asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding their experience with potential topic submission. The questionnaire will be administered to submitters using [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:**

The respondents to this query will be people from the scientific community who have submitted potential topics to the NSF EFRI Program, specifically in the most recent submission window. There are approximately 200 submissions each year. The “submission cohort” of the respondents will be known, but the respondents will otherwise be anonymous.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** (Check one)

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                            |

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Suzanne Plimpton, NSF Reports Clearance Officer

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

**Personally Identifiable Information:**

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [ ] Yes [ x ] No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? [ ] Yes [ ] No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? [ ] Yes [ ] No

**Gifts or Payments:**

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [ ] Yes [ x ] No

**BURDEN HOURS** (for each proposal submission window)

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Private Sector	200 (every 2 years)	5 minutes	17 hours
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b> (2 years)	<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>17 hours</b>

**FEDERAL COST:** The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$0

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents**

Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?

[ x ] Yes [ ] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

The group of respondents will be known and will consist of the scientific community members that have submitted a potential EFRI topic for the EFRI program. We will attempt a census of all applicants. However, we acknowledge that it is likely that not all applicants will respond. There may be selection bias as with any customer satisfaction survey. Those with particularly negative experiences may be more likely to respond to the survey, for example. Another possibility is that we may see more participation from first-time applicants or return applicants. If we see <80% response rate, we will evaluate non-response. One measure will be to compare the reported percentage of the respondents with topics that were not invited further in the selection process (to present at NSF for example) to those of the entire population. We know the characteristics of the entire population because of administrative data that we have available at a high response rate via the topic submission. We could also explore any relationship between the time of response (e.g., immediately following email receipt versus a month later and/or after a 2<sup>nd</sup> follow-up email) and responses.

### **Administration of the Instrument**

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
  - Web-based or other forms of Social Media
  - Telephone
  - In-person
  - Mail
  - Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used?  Yes  No