

Monthly Report of Natural Gas Purchases and Deliveries to Consumers (EIA-857)
Cognitive Testing Protocol
September 2013

(This protocol is a guide – the questions presented here won't 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.)

Research Goals:

- To better understand the availability of cost data, more specifically the costs of natural gas purchases, and the volume of natural gas associated with these purchases, in respondents' records;
- To confirm that respondents can report the total cost of purchased natural gas;
- To identify and define any other measures of cost, such as the weighted average cost of gas, that respondents may be able to provide;
- And, to understand the respondent's response process and what barriers exist to form completion including data availability and timing of survey request.

Part A – Introduction

- Introduce observers and their background

Purpose of visit:

Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today:

- We are asking you some questions about the total cost of the natural gas that you purchase and deliver to customers on a monthly basis, and the volumes associated with this total cost of purchased gas.
- Ultimately, we are interested in how you understand our questions, how the information we ask for is kept in your records, and the challenges you may face when reporting cost data to EIA.
- There are no right or wrong answers, and if something doesn't make sense to you or you have any questions, please ask. It is important for us to know both things that work and don't work so we can improve the form.

Before we get started, I'd like to audio record this interview so I don't have to rely on my memory later. This session is confidential, which means only persons directly related to this project can listen to your tapes, or review any notes taken during this interview. The recordings are erased, and any written notes are destroyed once our report is written. The report combines information from all of our interviews and contains no information that personally identifies you or the company at which you work. Is it okay if I record this interview?

Do you have any questions?

Part B — Background Information

- What is your role at this company?
- What is your title?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What are your responsibilities?
- Are you the person that fills out the form?
 - o (If yes): How long have you been responsible for completing the form?
 - o (If no): Who is responsible for completing this form at this company?
- (If needed) Do you complete any other EIA forms?

Part C: Part 3 Item 1.0: Purchased gas received in distribution service area (Citygate) – Cost and Volume

I want to focus on Item 1.0 in Part 3: can you tell me:

- What does the term 'citygate purchase' mean to you?

Now thinking specifically about the columns 'volume' and 'cost':

- What does the cost of purchased natural gas mean in the context of this question?
- What about the volume of natural gas associated with this cost of purchased natural gas?
- How you would calculate total cost of purchased natural gas last month?
 - o What costs you would include in this total?
 - o What costs you would exclude from the total?
 - o Tell me more about what each of these costs mean to you.
- How would you calculate the volume associated with the total cost of natural gas purchased last month?
 - o What associated volumes would you include?
 - o What associated volumes would you exclude?
 - o Tell me more about what each of these volumes means to you.
- Does your company track the total cost of natural gas and associated volume, purchased last month in company records?
 - o (If yes): Where in your company's records is the cost/volume tracked?
 - o (If yes): How is the cost/associated volume tracked? (Annual, monthly, etc.)
- Do you track each of the components of total cost of purchased natural gas you mentioned above in your records (list those mentioned above)?
 - o (If yes): Where in your records is this tracked?

- o (If yes): When does this data become available for you to report? (Beginning of month, middle of month, etc.)

If Respondent does NOT track total cost of purchased gas/volume purchased last month:

You mentioned above that you do not track the total cost of purchased gas and associated volume last month in your records.

- What could you provide on a monthly basis that is similar to the total cost of purchased gas, and its associated volume, but that we aren't asking for on the form? (For terms mentioned here):
 - o What does this term mean?
 - o Is this tracked in your records?
 - o Where in your records is this tracked?
 - o How is this tracked in your records? (Annual, monthly, etc.)

If the respondent does not mention WACOG:

- Does your company track the weighted average cost of gas purchased last month in its records?
 - o (If yes): How is the weighted average cost calculated?
 - o (If yes): Where in your records is this tracked?
 - o (If yes): How is this tracked? (Annual, monthly, etc.)

One last question:

- When reporting the total cost of purchased natural gas as it is currently requested on the form, do you typically report the actual total cost each month, or an estimated total?
 - o If actual: Why or why not?
 - o If estimated: Why or why not?
- When is the total cost of purchased natural gas and its associated volume available in your records for you to report?
- Does the timing of when the data are available impact whether you provide an estimate or an actual value?

Now that we've kind of talked in general about the concept of total cost of purchased natural gas, and the volume of natural gas associated with this cost, it would be helpful for us to learn more about the steps that you take to calculate that cost.

I've brought with me a copy of the last report that you provided to EIA. Can you walk me through the steps you took to get this number last month?

- Did you talk to anyone? If, so who?
- Can you tell me more about what you used to get the total cost of purchased natural gas?

- o (if needed): Is there some way that you keep this information in your records that is different from how we ask for it?
- Does your utility sometimes have a set of circumstances that make it harder to report the total cost of natural gas sold in a calendar month?
 - o If yes – what are these circumstances?
 - o If yes - How do you calculate the total cost of purchased natural gas given this difficulty?
- How do you report this value?

Part F: Wrap-up – Cognitive Interview portion

- Is there anything else that you would like to discuss?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Part H: EIA Subject Matter Expert Discussion

Now I would like to discuss with you how EIA uses your data and how what we use it for relates to GDP input, policy decisions etc. A key part of this discussion is what EIA is looking for in your data.

We want to see if there is anything else that we could ask or collect that would better match what we are looking for.

- EIA uses this information to show the domestic natural gas balance; the information on EIA-857 is our source of monthly natural gas demand data while EIA has other surveys that provide information on production, storage, and net imports.
- Both the revenue and volume data are collected so that we may show volumes delivered to each consuming sector and average prices paid for each state on a monthly basis.

Part I: Wrap-up

- Any final questions for us?
- Thank you