ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE OMB CLEARANCE PACKAGE

SECTION B

for

GENERIC CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT ECONOMIC EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH FROM FY2015 THROUGH FY2016

(OMB Control No. 0536-0070)

Prepared by

The Economic Research Service

November 19, 2014

Supporting Statement – Part B

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

ERS envisions using a single research technique in two settings: (1) university students will be recruited to participate in experiments in a laboratory setting, primarily taking place in established experimental economics labs on the campuses of research universities; (2) other members of the public (non-students) will be recruited to participate in experiments in field settings, i.e. outside the laboratory. In all cases, participation will be voluntary and time commitments will be less than 90 minutes.

Generally, small purposive samples of respondents/participants will be recruited to volunteer in the projects. However, when a sampling plan is necessary, this plan will be described in the clearance request for each specific data collection.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information.

The techniques that ERS envisions using are widely accepted experimental economic methodologies, as described in Part A of this document. The particular technique (or techniques) chosen will depend on the objectives of the study under investigation.

ERS plans to use letters and emails to recruit subjects for its experiments. ERS may contract with commercial entities, such as Knowledge Networks, to assemble an appropriate sample. When conducting experiments on university campuses, ERS will rely on university recruitment procedures, which typically involve emails to a listserv. In some cases involving farmers, a partnership with a local agricultural experiment station or group with access to farmers may be used to recruit farmers. Often times an extension professor or local group leader (such as a soil and water conservation district worker) may have the ability to help ERS develop a subject pool. In all cases potential subjects will be made aware that participation is strictly voluntary.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

ERS will use convenience samples for the bulk of this research. The use of strata, cluster analysis or multistage sampling will be considered for field experiments; lab experiments will draw on a random sample of university students. Any deviation from this plan will be discussed in individual clearance packages. Participants will be made aware of the potential for earnings during the experiment, which can provide incentive to participate.

The experiments conducted by ERS under the proposed renewal are not meant to be used to directly influence policy, or to provide analysis of behavior that is nationally representative. ERS will use experiments to learn about behavior in markets, and to test economic hypotheses. Using convenience samples is consistent with experimental best practices. ERS will follow all experimental best-practices, including the use of control variables to account for the potential influence of known confounds on experimental results.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.

ERS anticipates using small-scale tests of an experimental instrument prior to full-scale experiments in some cases. Respondent debriefing after pilot experiments or interviews ensure that individuals understood the instrument, which in turn ensures that resulting data collections are effective. These techniques are meant to reduce the total public burden of the information collection by ensuring that the large-scale information collection is optimized.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

ERS anticipates partnering with several university professors to conduct the experiments and to analyze information. The name and telephone numbers of these individuals will be provided in the clearance request for each specific data collection.