

United States Department of Energy
Supporting Statement
OMB Number 1910-NEW
“Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS)”

This supporting statement provides additional information regarding the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science request for processing of the proposed information collection, Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) Submissions for Letter of Intent (LOI), Pre-proposals, Interagency Proposals, and DOE National Laboratory Proposals; System Registration by External Users. The numbered questions correspond to the order shown on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Form 83-I, “Instructions for Completing OMB Form 83-I.”

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

Section 641 of the Department of Energy Organization Act, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 7251, authorizes the DOE to collect, use, and retain information that is mandatory for the financial awards process. Here, financial award refers to financial assistance awards, interagency contract awards, and DOE national laboratory contract work authorization research awards made by the DOE Office of Science.

The Office of Science mission is to deliver the scientific discoveries and major scientific tools that transform our understanding of nature and advance the energy, economic, and national security of the United States. The Office of Science is the lead Federal agency supporting fundamental scientific research for energy and the Nation’s largest Federal sponsor of basic research in the physical sciences. The Office of Science supports about 25,000 investigators at about 300 U.S. academic institutions and at all 17 of the DOE national laboratories. Financial awards are provided in the program areas of Advanced Scientific Computing Research (ASCR); Biological and Environmental Research (BER); Basic Energy Sciences (BES), Fusion Energy Sciences (FES); High Energy Physics (HEP), Nuclear Physics (NP); and Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists (WDTS).

The Office of Science makes all funding decisions based on peer review of proposals submitted to the government by universities, non-profit organizations, large and small businesses, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, individuals, and DOE national laboratories seeking Federal financial support for research projects, training, and related activities. The information collected through PAMS will be used for future funding decisions. The Office of Science executes peer review for at least 3,000 financial assistance and several hundred DOE national laboratory funding proposals each year. In some circumstances, letters of intent or pre-proposals are solicited prior to proposal submission to allow advance planning of the peer review and to help ensure the responsiveness of those proposals that are eventually submitted. While Grants.gov is used for collecting financial assistance proposals, a method is needed for collecting letters of intent, pre-proposals, and contract proposals (such as those for interagency or DOE

national laboratory awards) which is the intended use of PAMS .

The detailed records are shared by each Office of Science subprogram or program every three years with a Committee of Visitors (COV), a subcommittee of a Federal Advisory Committee comprised of external scientific experts charged by the Office of Science Director to assess (1) the efficacy and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, monitor, and document funding actions and (2) the quality of the resulting portfolio. The Office of Science uses COV input as an impetus to continually change and improve its business processes and to evaluate progress at regular intervals. Almost every COV report issued since COVs began in 2002 has recommended improvements to the Office of Science data management and tracking systems. All COV reports and the program responses to them are posted on the Office of Science website in a public archive. (<http://science.energy.gov/sc-2/committees-of-visitors/>)

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

This information will be used by DOE to select applicants and projects for financial awards. The receipt, review, and disposition of letter of intent, pre-proposal, lab proposal, and interagency proposal submissions will be monitored by DOE federal employees and authorized contractors. DOE employees may also use the database to identify peer reviewers. A record from this system may be disclosed as a routine use to peer reviewers selected by the DOE Office of Science for their expertise in specific research areas to evaluate the proposal in accordance with established evaluation criteria. A record also may be disclosed as a routine use to a Principal Investigator, Sponsored Programs Office, Business Office, or similar element for the purpose of checking the status of proposals that have been submitted to DOE for support.

Reports about people, institutions, awards, and proposals can be produced for internal DOE use, e.g., evaluating and selecting applicants, determining funding for projects, and tracking awards and proposals. Only DOE employees and contractors who have a need to know based on their job responsibilities have access to these reports. Persons who are provided information in PAMS are subject to the same statutory criteria applicable to DOE employees under the Privacy Act and other laws.

The Office of Science participates in and is coordinating with the STAR Metrics (Science and Technology for America's Reinvestment: Measuring the Effect of Research on Innovation, Competitiveness and Science) project and the Federal Researcher Profile (SciENCV) Workgroup. Having a modern information collection system will facilitate this participation.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The DOE Office of Science is leveraging Government, Off-the-Shelf (GOTS) software capabilities to implement a new consolidated system called Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS), which is based on the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Electronic Handbooks software.

The DOE Office of Science will collect information from the population of respondents targeted by this information collection via pre-proposals, letters of intent, and proposals submitted to DOE (e.g. Grants.gov, email, fax, or postal mail). Information is currently tracked through manual database entry, spreadsheets, and paper lists. Correspondence with the applicants is currently handled manually by paper mail or email. Metadata are tracked in several small databases, but there is no central database for letters of intent, pre-proposals, or proposals. Manual data tracking and correspondence issuance are time consuming and inefficient, and new methods are needed. Current databases are based on outdated computer technology that has reached the end of its useful life cycle.

The proposed PAMS information collection automates and streamlines the submission, tracking, and correspondence portions of financial award pre-review processes. Specifically, certain pre-award information will be collected through PAMS. External users once registered with PAMS, will be able to submit letters of intent and pre-proposals in response to solicitations, interagency contract proposals and DOE national laboratory contract work authorization proposals. Financial assistance applications will continue to be submitted via Grants.gov and then received by PAMS for processing as Grants.gov does not have the business logic for processing these proposals. All information in this collection comes from externally established user accounts and various submissions provided to the DOE by authorized external users (i.e., scientists and research administrators). PAMS will automate routine correspondence, make submitted documents available to the submitters for tracking, and allow the DOE Office of Science to automatically track submissions internally. By establishing user accounts, applicants will enter contact information and institution information once and not have to retype it each time they have a submission. Submitting institutions will also have access, for tracking purposes, in one central location to all documents submitted.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Existing contact and institution information data, to the extent possible, is being migrated into PAMS from retiring information systems. However, the Office of Science is transitioning from a system where DOE employees manually enter contact information into internal-facing databases to one where institutions and individuals outside DOE establish and maintain their own profiles. Self-maintenance of profiles will ensure information is current and accurate, will allow users to enter information only once instead of at the time of each submission, and will help minimize duplicate entries in the database. Requiring user registration prior to submission of documents allows the DOE Office of Science to electronically link related submissions.

Since each funding opportunity requires unique letters of intent, pre-proposals, interagency proposals, and/or lab proposals that are responsive to the scientific aims of the solicitation, fresh

submissions must be generated and entered for each solicitation. Discretionary financial assistance proposals continue to be collected using Grants.gov but are imported into PAMS for use by the program offices. Under the proposed information collection, an external interface will be implemented in PAMS to allow two other types of proposal submission: DOE National Laboratories will be able to submit proposals for technical work authorizations directly into PAMS, while other Federal Agencies will be able to submit proposals for interagency awards directly into PAMS. External users from all institution types will be able to submit letters of intent and pre-proposals directly into PAMS. All applicants, whether they submit proposals through Grants.gov or Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals or Lab proposals through PAMS, will be able to register with PAMS to view the proposals that were submitted. They will also be able to maintain a minimal amount of information in their user profile.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The Office of Science manages the Small Business Innovative Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Research (SBIR/STTR) program for the entire Department of Energy. Small businesses will thus register into PAMS and use it to submit letters of intent or pre-proposals and to view proposals they have previously submitted into Grants.gov that have been imported into PAMS.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Without this information, the DOE Office of Science will not be able to identify the best applicants and projects to select for financial awards. DOE Federal employees will not be able to monitor the receipt, review, and disposition of proposal submissions. A tracking system based on outdated technology will eventually stop working as it only performs a small percentage of the functions that PAMS will perform, and the Office of Science will not be able to achieve its mission because it will not be able to track the high volume of submissions.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines. (a) requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; (b) requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; (c) requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; (d) requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; (e) in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to product valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; (f) requiring the use of statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; (g) that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in stature of regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; (h) requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other

confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

The data collection is to be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines, so there are no special circumstances.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The Department published a 60-day Federal Register Notice and Request for Comments concerning this collection in the Federal Register on Tuesday, August 19 2014, volume 79, number 160, and page number 49075. The notice described the collection and invited interested parties to submit comments or recommendations regarding the collection. No comments were received.

The Department also published a 30-day Federal Register Notice and Request for Comments concerning this collection in the Federal Register on Tuesday, January 2015, volume 80, number 15, and page number 3578. The notice described the collection and invited interested parties to submit comments or recommendations regarding the collection. No comments were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift to respondents is being proposed under this information collection.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

PAMS contains personal information protected under the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974; Compilation of Privacy Act System of Records; Notice (Vol. 74 No. 6/ Friday, January 9, 2009). **DOE – 82 SYSTEM NAME:** Grant and Contract Records for Research Projects, Science Education, and Related Activities (pp. 1082-1083). .

The Privacy Act generally prohibits government agencies from revealing personal information by any means of communication to any person without the prior written consent of the individual

about whom the information pertains. DOE will maintain the confidentiality of the information, and will not further disseminate it except as needed for proposal and award administration or as authorized by 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(b) of the Privacy Act as is stated on the Acceptable Use Policy page on the PAMS website. In addition, once a user has logged onto the PAMS website, the user is prompted with a disclaimer that includes this information which must be agreed to in order to proceed.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

PAMS registrants will be asked to provide - on a voluntary basis – demographic data (gender, ethnicity, race, citizenship, disability, degree type and year). Collection will be made according to the OMB Standards for Data on Race and Ethnicity:

- Gender (Female, Male, Do Not Wish to Provide)
- Disability (select one or more) Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Mobility/Orthopedic Impairment, Other (Enter Description), None, Do Not Wish To Provide.
- Ethnicity (choose one) Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, Do Not Wish To Provide
- Race (select one or more) American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native American or Pacific Islander, White, Do Not Wish to Provide.
- Citizenship (choose one) U.S. Citizen, Permanent Resident, Other non-U.S. citizen, Do Not Wish to Provide.
- Degree Type and Year

Committees of Visitors have frequently suggested that the Office of Science collect demographic data to track the evolution of its portfolio. National Academies reports (National Research Council. Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007) and numerous reports from workshops on gender equity and racial and ethnic equity cosponsored by the DOE Office of Science, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health have articulated the need for such data.

The following explanation is provided to the community from whom the voluntary information is being collected: “Collection of demographic data allows the DOE Office of Science to gauge whether its programs and opportunities are fairly reaching and benefiting everyone regardless of demographic category. Knowledge of the demographic distributions within a portfolio, particularly those collected over many years, allows assessments of trends and demonstrates responses to actions taken on the part of agencies, e.g., establishment of programs for early-career researchers or for underrepresented populations. To gather the information needed, we ask that system users provide the requested demographic information about themselves. Submission of the requested information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.”

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

Estimating an average hourly rate of \$75.00 per respondent, the total annual cost burden to respondents and record-keepers resulting from the collection of this information is \$797,250.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government.

Number of Federal and support contractor FTEs: 356

Estimated amount of time per FTE for this collection: 3 hours

Total Hours: 1,068

Annualized costs to the Federal Government: \$80,100 (Estimating an average hourly rate of \$75.00)

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

This information collection is new; therefore program changes or adjustments have not been made.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The information collected is not intended to be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

DOE is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.