

EIA-3: Quarterly Survey of Non-Electric Sector Coal Data

Cognitive Interviews Protocol

(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 understand how respondents use pulverized coal injection (PCI);
- To understand how respondents are calculating their total cost and total delivered cost;
- And, to understand what information respondents track on coal receipts.

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 your company's coal consumption and receipts.
- We are attempting to clear up some data problems that we are having on the EIA-3, 'Quarterly Survey of Non-Electric Sector Coal data,' and we want to get feedback from people who complete the form before we finalize the survey.
- You were selected because you currently complete the EIA-3 form.
- 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 plant-level 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 later rely on my memory. This session is confidential, which means only persons directly related to this project can listen to your tapes, and the recordings are erased once our report is written. The report combines information from all of our interviews and contains no information that personally identifies you, the plant, or the company at which you work. Is it okay if I record this interview?
- Do you have any questions?

Part B – Background Information

Let's begin by talking about your plant(s):

- How long has this company been in business?
- What is the primary function of this company?
- What kinds of activities occur here?

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 in charge of government reporting?

Do you currently complete any government forms? Can you tell me more about the other forms for which you report?

- (If needed) Do you complete any regulatory forms, State and/or Federal?
- (If needed) Do you complete any other EIA forms?
- Do you generally have the data needed to report for these forms, or do you work with others to gather this data?
- How do you usually submit these other reports? (PDF, electronic web form)
- Do you fill out these other forms manually or automatically?
- How many EIA-3 forms do you complete?
- How much time does it take you to complete the EIA-3?
 - o Of the time spent completing the form, how much of that would you say you spend gathering the data necessary for the form?

Part C – EIA-3 form

In the interest of time, we are going to move past the introductory materials and the contact information in **Part 1** and **Part 2**. If we have time at the end of this meeting, we can come back to them.

Please look over **Question 1** in **Part 3 – Coal Consumption and Cost at this Site.**

- What does the term 'Ending Coal Stocks from Previous Quarter' mean to you?
- How do you calculate your 'Ending Coal Stocks'?
- What does 'Beginning Coal Stocks' mean to you?
- If we asked for your 'Beginning Coal Stocks' how would you calculate that number?
- Is there a term that you prefer to use?
- What reasons do you have for adjustments?
 - o Would you say those are an industry standard?
 - o What other reasons would a company have for making an adjustment?

Next please read **Question 2.**

- Would you ever have an adjustment in regards to total cost?
 - o *If needed*, what would those reasons for an adjustment?

Let's move on to **Question 3**

- Do you receive any coal from a broker or coal trader?
- *If needed*, how do you track broker/trader transactions in your records?
- How easy or difficult would it be to report the contact name and company of the broker that you use?
 - o *If needed*, this information would be protected and for internal use only.

Now let's look at **Part 4-Characteristics of Coal Receipts at this Site**

Looking at **Column A.**

- How do you track coal receipts in your records?
- What type of characteristics about the coal receipts do you keep in your records?
- Do you know which state the coal you received was mined in?
- How easy or difficult would it be for you to provide the origin state of the coal?

Looking at **Columns F/G/H/I**

- How do you calculate the different characteristics of coal?
- What about when the coal is from multiple shipments from the same mine, how do you calculate the characteristics?
 - *If needed*, do you use a weighted average?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to calculate the weighted average of the multiple shipments?
- Is there any way that we can make this clearer? Examples, webinar, etc.?
- How do you track the sulfur content in your records?
 - How frequently is that tested?
 - Is the testing lab located on sight?
 - Is the testing lab affiliated with your company?
- What about BTU? How do you track BTU in your records?
 - Do you test for BTU? How frequently?
- Do you use the same lab to test for BTU?
- How do you track mercury content in your records?
 - Again, how frequently is that tested?
- Compared to sulfur content tests and BTU content tests, are mercury tests more or less expensive?

Looking at **Columns J/K**

- What does the term “commodity cost” mean to you?
 - How do you track commodity cost in your records?
 - What do you include in your commodity cost?
- What about the term “delivered cost?”
 - How do you track delivered cost in your records?
 - What do you include in your delivered cost?
- How similar or different would you say those two terms are?
- How easy or difficult would it be for you to report your commodity cost separate from your delivered cost?

Looking at **Column L/M**

- Please look at Column L. Can you tell me in your own words what you think this column is asking for?
- What does “primary mode of transportation” mean to you?
 - Do you have any other word that you would use to describe the primary mode of transportation?
- If EIA were to ask for the “longest leg” of transportation, how would you answer that question?
- Would you consider the “primary mode of transportation” to be the “longest leg?”

- Is there another term that you would use to classify the “longest leg” of the shipment of coal?
- Can you tell me in your own words what “blended coal” means to you?
- Does your company receive any blended coal?
 - o *If yes*, how do you track blended coal in your records?
 - o What characteristics about the coal are included in the receipts?
 - o Do you know what mine the blended coal comes from?
 - o Would it ever be possible to receive blended coal that comes from two different mines?
 - o How easy or difficult would it be for you to report the mine location you receive the blended coal from?
 - o How about the coal characteristics of the components of the blend?
 - By MSHA id?
- Does your company use any Met coal?
 - o *If yes*, how does your company track Met coal receipts in your records?
 - What characteristics about the coal are included in your records?
 - o *If yes*, what does your company use Met coal for?
 - *If needed*, does your company use Met coal for purposes other than making coke?
 - How easy or difficult would it be to report volatility of Met coke by receipt?

Now let's look at **Part 5-Coke Plants**

Looking at **Question 1**

- Does your company operate a coke oven?
 - o *If yes*, how easy or difficult would it be to report receipts of coal used to make coke separately from coal received for purposes other than making coke?

Looking at **Question 2**

- Does your company typically report any adjustments on this survey?
 - o *If yes*, can you give me a few examples of adjustments that occur?
- Does your company export any coke produced?
 - o *If yes*, how easy or difficult would it be to report the tonnage of coke exported?
 - o *If needed*, how easy or difficult would it be for you to provide the percentage of coke exported?
- How easy or difficult would it be to report the quantity commercial export sales separate from domestic sales?
- How about revenue?

Now let's look at **Part 6-Gasification Plants**

- Does your company perform any coal gasification?
- Do you know of any coal gasification plants?

- Does your company perform any coal liquefaction?
- Do you know of any coal liquefaction plants?

Now let's look at **Part 8-Refining Plants**

Looking at **Question 2**

- Can you tell me in your own words what "refined coal" is?
- Does your company use any refined coal?
- Do you know of any coal plants that would consume the refined coal they produced?
- Do you export refined coal?
 - o How easy would it be to report domestic refined coal sales, and exported refined coal sales, separately?

Looking at **Questions 4/5/6**

- Other than BTU content, sulfur content and ash content what kinds of information is on a coal receipt?
 - o *If needed*, are there any other coal characteristics on coal receipts?

Wrap Up

- Overall, what do you think of this survey?
- Are you familiar with any of the coal data that EIA publishes on its website?
- If so, what data do you find useful for your business?
- Is there any information not being asked on this form that you would find useful?
- Based on some of the new data elements that we asked about, do you anticipate have any startup or software costs associated with these additional questions?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve this survey?

Thank you for your time today.