

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Generic Clearance for Program Evaluation Data Collections
OMB CONTROL NO. 0693-0033

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a request is to reinstate, with changes, this expired information collection.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

In accordance with OMB's regulations at 5 CFR 1320 - implementing the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, and its' mission "to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life" the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a non-regulatory agency of the Department of Commerce (DOC), proposes to conduct a number of data collections under this Generic Clearance for Program Evaluation Data. The individual information collections will be designed to evaluate current programs from a customer's perspective that will provide customers with the opportunity to express their views on NIST programs. By collecting this type of information, NIST will be able to evaluate its performances as well as help determine the future direction of research to be conducted.

These types of data collection efforts will include but are not limited to questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, electronic methodologies, empirical studies, and video and audio data collections.

NIST will limit its inquiries to data collections that solicit strictly voluntary opinions and information, and will not—under this PRA clearance request—collect information that is required (mandatory) or regulated.

For each proposed request using the generic clearance; NIST will submit the actual collection instrument and related documents (letters, emails to respondents, scripts, ect.) to OMB along with responses to the following questions (to be considered an abbreviated supporting statement):

- 1. Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate to survey.**
- 2. Explain how the survey was developed including consultation with interested parties, pre-testing, and responses to suggestions for improvement.**

3. Explain how the survey will be conducted, how customers will be sampled of fewer than all customers will be surveyed, expected response rate, and actions your agency plans to take to improve the response rate.

4. Describe how the results will be analyzed and used to generalize the results to the entire customer population.

The following collections were previously approved and administered under this generic umbrella in the past. Below is a summary of lessons learned from some of the individual ICRs that NIST is seeking to reinstate:

- **Material Measurement Laboratory Employee and Guest Researcher Engagement Survey**

Action plans were developed for each division based on their specific reports with identified high-impact opportunities. A town hall meeting was held on August 28, 2013 wherein each Division Chief reported on the top items and action plans that were designed to address the identified issues.

For example, the top issues in Division 640 were to improve clarity on performance-based advancement and promotion, training and career advancement, the ORM decision-making process, and the implementation of telework. The action plans included three division-wide meetings followed by small group discussions with the Division Director on each topic. An HR specialist facilitated the discussion on telework. The 640 management team subsequently instituted changes to telework policy and re-examined all levels of each career path in the Division.

Each of the divisions addressed their issues in a manner that seemed suited to their particular situation. There were a number of overarching issues that were of MML-wide concern and the Laboratory developed and implemented plans to address these. Most of these opportunities were related to improving communications. A response rate of 58% was representative of this information collected.

- **NIST Clinical Quality Assurance Program Impact and Needs Assessment Questionnaire**

The information previously collected was extremely valuable to the Chemical Sciences Division (CSD) within Material Measurement Laboratory (MML). The collection instrument provided insight on the existing quality assurance programs, particularly regarding which programs were viewed as critical to keep. Perhaps most importantly, our stakeholders and survey customers identified clinical measurement areas in which supports the community needs with our expertise and guidance. Having this Information Collection Request (ICR) reinstated, will provide CSD with the information that will aide their decision making regarding the direction of future clinical research to be conducted over the next 5-10 year time period. A response rate of 60% was representative of this information collected under this collection in the past.

- **Outcome Survey for NIST Summer Institute for Middle School Science Teachers Collection**

This NIST Program benefited from information collected in the past, which providing them with important data that showed significant increases in the frequency in with which participants discussed general ideas on how to teach specific science concepts as well as classroom observations by other science teachers. These increases were reflected by the large number of NIST-provided activities and materials that teachers shared with colleagues during the most recent school year. Previous participant, responses received, prepared the NIST Program the ability to link STEM concepts to real-world applications increased in the following subjects: metrology, physics, forensics, and space science. Having this information collection request reinstated, would allow NIST to continue to determine future topics that would allow participants of the Summer Institute to continue to provide participants' with an improved sense of knowledge and expertise in these area.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

In general, the data collected will be used by NIST to aid and determine the planning and direction of future research for a variety of activities as well as to improve program management. The information collected will not be disseminated to the public but may be used to support research published in journals and conferences. All information collected will be stored anonymously and there will be no attribution to individuals in the analyzed data.

This information collection and dissemination will comply with the NIST Chief Information Officer (CIO) Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

Wherever possible, improved information technology will be used to reduce burden on NIST's customers. In addition to traditional data collection methods, NIST will, whenever possible, offer electronic response via the NIST Internet web site and by fax.

The planned use of transactional and electronic web site surveys will substantially contribute to the number of projected responses and associated burden hours.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

NIST has an internal review process that will examine each survey or data collection effort to be conducted under this generic clearance, to prevent internal duplication of effort and to ensure that appropriate data collection instruments are being developed. By examining the three-year, NIST-wide requirements and combining those requirements into a generic clearance request,

NIST is, to the greatest extent possible, centralizing the administration of its program evaluation data collections. This will provide for a more consistent and comprehensive approach. While there may be other surveys or data collections that become the subject of separate clearance requests, NIST is confident that the procedures in place ensure that there will be no duplication of the information to be collected. Due to the nature of NIST's unique mission and programs to further the mission, no similar data exists.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Some small businesses and other small entities may be involved in these efforts. NIST will keep the burden to them, as well as on any other business, organization, or individual at a minimum by asking for only the minimum information needed to evaluate the NIST program(s) on a strictly voluntary basis.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If responses to these surveys and other data collections are not collected, NIST would be unable to gauge some of the programs for present and future use. If the collections are not conducted, then: (1) the results from these data collections may lead to further investigations that could result in changes to, or enhancements of, the administration of programs, as well as identifying high-priority items for improvement; (2) the collection of economic data may shed light on the productivity of NIST programs and their role in achieving NIST's mission, would not be possible. There is no technical or legal obstacle to reducing this burden.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The data collection conducted under this generic clearance will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. Provide a copy of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the 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.

A notice soliciting public comments was published in the Federal Register on October 19, 2015 (Vol. 80, Number 201, pages 63199-63200). No comments were received.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

NIST will not provide payment or gifts to respondents for any written, telephone, comment card, or responses to other such survey. In the case of focus groups, if respondents must leave their home or place of business to travel to a specific location, NIST will, on a case-by-case basis, consider a modest remuneration for the participant's time and travel. In such cases, the remuneration may range from \$50-\$100 per individual, dependent on the data collection and the level and length of participation required. Remuneration for focus group participation is a recognized and standard industry practice, without which it would be difficult to achieve appropriate and adequate participation and response and to obtain reliable information.

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

No assurances of confidentiality will be given. All collections to be administered and, therefore, information provided by respondents will be completely voluntary.

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.

No sensitive data will be collected.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The estimated totals for the three-year period of this collection is 36,000 Respondents and 15,000 burden hours.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

There are no costs to the respondents.

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

NIST estimates that the Program Analyst responsible for this collection will devote a total of 40 hours per year. The cost involved would be \$1,850.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

NIST is seeking to increase the previous annual burden hours per year from 3,022 to 5,000 under this reinstatement request. This increase of 1,978 additional hours would be needed to administer additional information collections to be conducted under this Generic Clearance.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The results from these data collection activities are not intended for general publication, but may be disseminated to NIST staff, key policy and management officials, and stakeholders.

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

All written and electronic material will display the OMB Control # and expiration date of the OMB approval for the information collection. All written and electronic surveys instruments (with the exception of transactional surveys in the form of business reply cards where space will not permit) will also display the following notification:

OMB Control #0693-0033
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

This collection of information contains Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to be _____ minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Attn: XXAdd-Individual-Point-of-Contact_InformationXX.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

NIST does not require any exceptions.