

OMB Control #0693-0033
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NIST Generic Clearance for Program Evaluation Data Collections

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Small Business Innovation Research
(SBIR) Program Awardee Survey

FOUR STANDARD SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate to survey.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology is seeking clearance of program evaluation surveys focused on the Small Business Innovation Research Program. The surveys will be administered to 231 companies who received NIST SBIR awards between 2000 and 2016. The objective of the survey is to determine how successful NIST's SBIR awardees have been in terms of meeting the objectives of the SBIR program. NIST developed the surveys to assess 1) the extent to which NIST's SBIR awards have met their mandated objectives, and 2) ways in which NIST's SBIR program could be improved. The results of this study will be used to provide NIST management with valuable insights into the operations and accomplishments of the SBIR program.

2. Explain how the survey was developed including consultation with interested parties, pre-testing, and responses to suggestions for improvement.

A 2009 NIH survey of SBIR awardees provided the background for the proposed NIST survey. (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir_2008surveyreport.pdf) Questions were adapted from this survey to meet the objective of the NIST study. A copy of the survey has been uploaded in ROCIS under the supplementary tab.

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

NIST's SBIR awards are issued in two phases. Under Phase I, small businesses can receive up to \$100,000 (\$90,000 prior to FY15) to establish merit, feasibility and commercial potential of the proposed research and development. Phase I awardees can then vie for up to \$300,000 of Phase II funding that enables more extensive research and development of the project's scientific and technical merit and the feasibility of research ideas.

Two survey forms have been developed and they will be mailed (using the U.S. Postal Service) to companies that have received a SBIR award(s). Each survey is focused on the SBIR award(s) rather than the awardees (i.e., companies).

One survey form addresses a "Phase I only" award which means there was no follow-up

Phase II award. The other survey form addresses a combined “Phase I and Phase II” award.

Companies can receive more than one “Phase I only” award and so we will mail a “Phase I only” survey for each “Phase I only” award a company received. For example, they are 183 “Phase I only” awards and therefore 183 surveys will be mailed out. Of these,

- 141 companies will each receive 1 “Phase I only” survey form;
- 12 companies will each receive 2 “Phase I only” survey forms;
- 3 companies will each receive 3 “Phase I only” survey forms;
- 1 company will receive 4 “Phase I only” survey forms; and
- 1 company will receive 5 “Phase I only” survey forms.

The projected combined total of “Phase I only” surveys sent is 183 with a response time of 30 minutes per survey. Questions in the “Phase I only” survey focus on the results of the Phase I award and the reasons why no Phase II proposal was submitted.

The second survey will focus on those awardees who receive a Phase I award that was followed-up with a Phase II award. In this case, a company will receive a “Phase I and Phase II” survey form for each combined Phase I and Phase II award they received. Again, this survey focuses on the combined results of these two awards.

Companies can receive more than one combined Phase I and Phase II awards for different projects. We will therefore mail (using the U.S. Postal Service) a “Phase I and Phase II” survey for each combined Phase I and Phase II award a company received. For example, they are 110 combined “Phase I and Phase II” awards and therefore 110 surveys only will be mailed out. Of these,

- 89 companies will receive 1 “Phase I and Phase II” survey form;
- 6 companies will receive 2 “Phase I and Phase II” survey forms; and
- 3 companies will receive 3 “Phase I and Phase II” survey forms.

The projected combined total of “Phase I and Phase II” surveys sent is 110 with a response time of 30 minutes per survey. Questions in “Phase I and Phase II” survey focus on the combined results of the Phase I award and Phase II award.

Companies who do not respond, who partially respond, or who’s responses are vague or inconsistent, will be sent a reminder notice using the U.S. Postal Service. An example of the reminder notice is attached.

This will be NIST’s first attempt at conducting an evaluation study of the SBIR program, therefore it is difficult to project the response rate. However, it should be noted that other agencies have conducted similar surveys and have had notable success. In 2008 the National Institute of Health’s SBIR program surveyed 918 eligible awardee small businesses that received

a Phase II award in FYs 2002-2006. The response rate to this survey was 78%. It is hoped NIST will have similar results.

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

Summary statistics will be generated from survey responses. Statistics will be based on the number of awardees responding and not extrapolated to describe the entire population.

Responses will be used to identify individual success stories as well as anomalies in the award selection process that would suggest changes in NIST's management of the program.