

**Request:** The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting respondent debriefings for the revised BE-125, Quarterly Survey of Transactions in Selected Services and Intellectual Property with Foreign Persons.

**Purpose:** The BE-125 survey, which is currently being fielded by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), collects information about products and intellectual property that are sold to or purchased from foreign persons and entities. Respondents are asked to report whether they had such transactions that fall into an array of service or transaction types with a foreign entity, and if they do and if said transactions reach a certain threshold, they are also asked to report the dollar amount by specific country.

The data collected on the survey are used in compiling U.S. internal transactions accounts and national income and product accounts. The data are also used to help formulate U.S. policy on such international transactions, and to analyze the impact of that policy and the policies of foreign countries. For additional information regarding the BE-125, visit [https://www.bea.gov/surveys/respondent\\_be125.htm](https://www.bea.gov/surveys/respondent_be125.htm).

Staff from the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch within the Economic Directorate of the Census Bureau will be working with staff from BEA to conduct respondent debriefings on recently submitted BE-125 forms. For this testing, we will interview up to 15 respondents via telephone. BEA will provide DCMRB staff with a list of businesses and respondent contact information, from which we will recruit. The frame of respondents will be businesses who responded to the BE-125 for the third quarter of 2016.

The purpose of these respondent debriefings is to understand potential measurement errors that occurred when respondents responded to the BE-125. The respondent debriefings will focus on respondents' reactions to the layout of the survey forms, their interpretations of terminology throughout the forms, and overall comprehension of the questions. Part of the debriefings will focus on the impact of recent changes to the BE-125 form, most importantly changes to the way the survey collects information regarding intellectual property. Findings from these interviews may be used to correct data that were reported by the respondents, and improve data quality in future iterations of the BE-125.

**Method:**

Respondent debriefing interviews will take place over the phone. The interviews will follow a pre-written interview protocol (attached). The interview questions will be based on the responses to the BE-125 fielded in the third quarter of 2016, touching on the data that they provided in response to certain items, as well as their understanding and perception of what those items are asking for.

Subject area specialists from BEA will participate in most, if not all, of the respondent debriefings. They will assist in cases where additional clarification of the subject matter is required, and provide information on the purpose and uses of the survey. Respondent debriefings may be audio recorded with the participants' permission, to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations.

*Survey Population:*

Respondents to these debriefing interviews will be chosen from a pool of respondents to the third quarter 2016 BE-125 survey. The survey population consist of any U.S. person or entity that had sales to foreign persons that exceeded \$6 million or purchases from foreign persons that exceeded \$4 million in any of the intellectual property or services categories listed in Tables 1–4 on pages 3 through 6 of this survey during the U.S. Reporter’s prior fiscal year, or for which sales or purchases are expected to exceed those amounts during the current fiscal year. Also included in this population is any person or entity that was contacted by BEA to complete the survey; respondents who have been contacted that do not meet the previous criteria must file a claim for exemption form.

*Sample selection:*

We will contact respondents to the BE-125 via phone, explain the nature of our research, and ask them to participate in our study. The sample of participants will be those who are able to be contacted and who agree to participate in the study. Efforts will be made to sample respondents who are individuals or organizations, with larger or smaller filings, and geographically representative, although we will ultimately be dependent on who chooses to participate in the research.

Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau employees and BEA employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study. Once interviews are scheduled, researchers will send respondents a confirmation via email, and may conduct reminder calls a few days before the meetings.

**Timeline:**

Recruiting for these interviews will begin in February 2017, lasting through March 2017.

We anticipate that each interview will include one or two participants, for an average of 1.5. We estimate that, on average, the interviews will take one hour. Thus, the total estimated burden for completed interviews is 22.5 hours (15 interviews X 1.5 company participants X 1 hour).

In order to schedule up to 15 interviews, we may contact approximately 75 companies, with each call lasting up to five minutes. We estimate the maximum associated recruiting burden to be approximately 6.25 hours (75 X 5 minutes = 6.25 hours). Thus, the estimated total public reporting burden for this research is approximately 28.75 hours.

Enclosed are the BE-125 form and a sample protocol that we will be using for the respondent debriefings.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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