

## **Generic Information Collection Request**

**Request:** The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The Census Bureau plans to conduct cognitive pretest interviews on potential revisions to a series of questions for the Services Annual Survey (SAS), which is a mail out/electronic reporting survey conducted by the Census Bureau on an annual basis. SAS collects information on revenue, expenses, and e-commerce from businesses in 13 NAICS sectors. Data from the survey are used to support the intermediate-inputs and value-added estimates in BEA's annual input-output and GDP by industry accounts. This survey is collected under the authority of Title 13, United States Code (U.S.C.), Sections 131, 182, 224 and 225. Further information regarding SAS can be found at this website: <http://www.census.gov/services>.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this pretest is to investigate the suitability of proposed new questions about e-commerce. A comparative analysis of data collected from SAS, the U.S. Annual Survey of Manufactures, the Canadian Survey of Digital Technology and Internet Use, and the UK Survey of E-commerce and ICT Activity indicates that services e-commerce may be under-reported in the U.S. The questions to be tested in this study share characteristics with those used in these other data collections.

Respondents will be asked these questions and follow-up probes about how they track their e-commerce data, what records are available, burden, etc. The results will be recorded and tabulated and a report produced that outlines the findings of the pretest and discusses the possibility of replacing the current e-commerce questions starting with the 2017 Services Annual Survey.

**Population of Interest:** The new questions will be added to all SAS forms, for reference year 2017.

**Timeline:** Testing will be conducted from February through May 2017.

**Language:** Testing will be conducted in English only.

**Method:** We plan to conduct cognitive interviews with respondents from various types and sizes of service businesses in person (within a short travel distance from Washington, DC) as well as over the phone.

**Sample:** We plan to conduct a total of two rounds of testing, with up to 25 respondents in each round for a maximum of 50 cognitive interviews. The sample size necessary for this test was determined by experience. We plan to conduct interviews with a variety of sizes and types of service businesses.

**Recruitment:** Participants will be recruited using a list of potential businesses provided by the Services Sectors Area in the Economy-Wide Statistics Division. The Services Area will prioritize the sample by type of industry, size of business and whether the establishment has previously reported questionable responses to the current e-commerce questions. Respondents

will be informed that their participation is voluntary. The interviews will be audio recorded, to facilitate summarization.

**Protocol:** Participants will first review the current SAS questionnaire. Then participants will be asked to complete the new questions using a think-aloud protocol. After completing the questions, each participant will be asked debriefing questions.

**Use of Incentive:** Monetary incentives for participation will not be offered.

Below is a list of materials to be used in the current study:

1. Draft questions (Enclosure 1)
2. Protocol used for the study (Enclosure 2) including possible debriefing probes
3. Sample 2016 SAS form (Enclosure 3)

**Length of interview:** We expect that each interview will last no more than 60 minutes (50 cases x 60 minutes per case = 50 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average 3 minutes per call (5 attempted phone calls per completed case x 50 cases x 3 minute per case = 12.5 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 62.5 hours (50 hours for interviews + 2.5 hours for recruiting).

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

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