

Protocol: Debriefing interviews for the evaluation of the 2017 Commodity Flow Survey

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Introduction

Thank you for your time today. My name is XX and I work with the United States Census Bureau. My research team evaluates how easy or difficult Census surveys are to complete. What works well, we keep. When potential users, such as you, have difficulty with something, we have an opportunity to fix it.

Before we start, there is a form I would like you to read and sign. It explains the purpose of today's session and your rights as a participant. It also informs you that we would like to record the session to get an accurate record of your feedback. Only those of us connected with the project will review the recording and it will be used solely for research purposes. Your name will not be associated with the recording or any of the other data collected during the session.

[Hand consent form; give time for participant to read and sign; sign own name and date, start recording.]

Thank you.

I am going to give you a little background about what we will be working on today. Today you will be helping us to evaluate the Commodity Flow Survey.

To do this, we will go through the survey section by section. I will ask you a series of questions about your past experience and I would like to get your thoughts on ways that we may be able to improve the response process for any of the sections of the survey. There are no right or wrong answers; we are mainly interested in your impressions both good and bad. I did not create the survey so please feel free to share both positive and negative reactions. The information you provide will be useful in making sure that the survey works well for everyone.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Ok let's get started. First, I would like to provide you with a copy of the CFS survey that we will be reviewing.

Debriefing Questions by Topic

***High priority topic/section**

Topic/Section	Probe/Question
*General Introductory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your overall impressions of the survey? • Do you typically complete the survey online or via paper form? Why? • Were any of the sections difficult or time consuming to complete? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, tell me about that. Any ideas on how we can make completing this portion of the survey easier?
<p><i>Item A-Verification of Name and Shipping Address</i></p> <p><i>Item B-Verification of Name and Mailing Address</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any issues completing any portions? • Is it clear how one should make a correction if the address shown is incorrect?
<i>Item C- Operating Status</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your own words, what is this question asking? • Was it easy or difficult to report to this item? How so?
<i>Item D: Total Number and Value of Outbound Shipments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How easy or difficult was it for you to report the number of shipments for your establishment?</i> • <i>How easy or difficult was it for you to report the total value of shipments for your establishment? If difficult, why?</i>
*Item E- Sampling Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Hypothetical scenario if establishment reported <40 shipments</u>: For an establishment with more than 40 shipments, the respondent would proceed to Item E, where they are instructed to identify a sample of shipments. Please read the instructions on this page and let me know your initial thoughts. Anything confusing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How should someone with 300 shipments report?</i> ○ <i>How easy or difficult do you think this process is for an establishment with 45 shipments? 6000?</i> • <u>If establishment reported >40 shipments</u>: <i>How easy or difficult was it to identify a sample of shipments using this method?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o How easy or difficult do you think this process is for an establishment with 45 shipments? 6000?</i> <i>o Would it be easier to provide data via an export from your existing records or electronically in another format?</i>
<p>*Item F- Shipment characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Do you believe that the information requested in this section presents an accurate representation of the commodities that leave your business? Tell me more.</i> <i>• Are there any data fields in the table for which your establishment does not maintain the records?</i> <i>• If respondent used the spreadsheet: Tell me about your experience using the spreadsheet option to upload your data into the survey. How easy or difficult was this?</i> <i>• Hypothetical scenario: Identify the product code for the following shipment:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o Provide example of shipment for respondent to look up</i> <i>o How would you describe this shipment?</i> <i>• How easy or difficult was it for you to identify the commodity descriptions for each of the shipments you identified when reporting to this section of the survey? Tell me more about that.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o What about the mode of transportation?</i> <i>• What address do you typically provide for the domestic destination of shipments-physical destination of shipment or billing invoice?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o Which is maintained in your records?</i> <i>o If requested, are you able to differentiate the two?</i>
<p><i>Item G- Verification of Primary Industry Activity</i> <i>Item H-Time to Complete Survey</i> <i>Item I- Contact information Regarding this survey?</i> <i>Item J- Remarks</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Any comments on reporting for this item?</i>
<p>*Records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• How does your establishment maintain the information requested in the survey? (e.g., shipments)</i> <i>• Do you have access to the information</i>

	<p>requested (e.g., shipment details)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have to work with other personnel/departments to get the data requested? Please describe. • Do you use a particular software or third party source to obtain any of the information requested? If so, which one(s)?
<p>*Privacy/Confidentiality concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In lieu of providing your shipment information in the survey (Item F), would you or your company's leadership be willing to provide the U.S. Census Bureau with access to these data for the time period requested? Why or why not? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Any potential concerns or challenges with this approach? o Who would be the one to make this decision? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there any guarantees or assurances that would make this decision easier to make? o Would reporting in this format be more burdensome or less burdensome than the current format? How so? • Are there some data you consider more sensitive than others or that you would not wish to provide access to? If so, which? • After reviewing all sections of the survey → Which section of the survey took you the most time to complete? Tell me more about that. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Any ideas on how the Census Bureau may be able to make reporting easier? • Would you be willing to export/transfer data from your records to the U.S. Census Bureau? Why or why not?
<p>*Data collection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be willing to provide data more frequently than every five years? Why or why not? • Would you be willing to fill out more than one week of data at a time? Why or why not? • Does your company prefer that individual locations report to Census? Why or why not? How is this determined? <p style="text-align: center;">o</p>

Wrap Up

Would your company be open to further discussions with the Census Bureau regarding developing new methods outside of traditional surveys of meeting reporting requirements?

Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't talked about?

This concludes our session. Thank you for your time and valuable feedback.