

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). We will be conducting cognitive interviewing for National Science Foundation's (NSF) Business Research and Development Survey (BRDS). BRDS is the primary source of information on research and development performed or funded by businesses within the United States. The survey is conducted for the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics by the Census Bureau in accordance with an agreement between the two agencies. Results are used to assess trends in the performance and funding of business research and development (R&D). The annual survey examines a nationally representative sample of companies in manufacturing and nonmanufacturing industries.

Purpose: There is a desire for geographic information on purchased R&D services and payments to business partners R&D services paid for by the target company and R&D paid for by outside companies. Furthermore, there is a desire to know geographic detail for total company domestic and foreign employment, as well as domestic and foreign R&D employment of R&D active companies. Geographic detail will be collected at the state and country level for each of these questions. Respondents will be asked these questions and follow-up probes about how they track their geographic data, what records are available, potential burden, and best location for these questions within the form.

Additionally, there is a desire for information on detailed capital stock data for R&D active companies. The purpose of this added section would be to measure the stock of capital, both tangible and intangible, the company owns and uses in the course of its business and its investments. The purpose of this pretest is to investigate the suitability of the proposed new questions. Respondents will be asked these questions and follow-up probes about how they track their capital stock data, what records are available, potential burden, and best location for these questions within the form.

Population of Interest: The new questions are proposed to be included in BRDS beginning next survey cycle. Based on the subject matter of the questions, we intend to interview companies with a range of capital expenditures and total R&D (with an emphasis, but not an exclusive focus, on companies that have larger amounts of capital expenditures and larger amounts of total R&D expenditures).

Timeline: Testing will be conducted from April through May 2018.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: We plan to conduct one hour, in person cognitive interviews with respondents from up to four large metropolitan areas based on the availability of a sufficient amount of the population of interest once recruiting begins. Interviews will be conducted by researchers from the Data Collection Methodology and Research Branch. Additional observers from the BRDS collections operation staff may be present at the interviews.

Sample: We plan to conduct a total of 40 cognitive interviews, in two rounds of 20 interviews each. The sample size necessary for this test was determined by several factors: standards in cognitive interviewing practice about the number of interviews that can be used to draw conclusions; the need to meet with companies that cover varying industries, of varying sizes, and varying R&D capabilities and expenditures; and the constraints of timing and resources. We plan to conduct two rounds of interviews in order to allow for revisions after the first set of interviews. We plan to conduct interviews with respondents from the current BRDS sample.

Recruitment: Participants will be recruited from the current BRDS sample. Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary. The interviews will be audio recorded, to facilitate summarization.

Protocol: Participants will first review the new geography questions. Next, participants will be asked follow-up probes regarding how they track their geographic data, what records are available, potential burden, and best location for these questions within the form. Then, participants will review the new capital stock questions. Participants will then be asked follow-up probes regarding how they track their capital stock data, what records are available, potential burden, and best location for these questions within the form.

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

Length of interview: We expect that each interview will last no more than 60 minutes (40 cases x 60 minutes per case = 40 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 40 cases x 3 minute per case = 10 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 50 hours (40 hours for interviews + 10 hours for recruiting).

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

1. Draft Protocol
2. 2016 BRDS form (Current Version)
3. Additional Geography Questions Drafts
4. Additional Capital Stock Questions Drafts
5. Consent Form

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

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Enclosures

Cc:

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