

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS PART A
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
DOC/NOAA Customer Surveys
Ecological Forecast Products
OMB Control No. 0648-0342

- 1. Explain who will be conducting this survey. What program office will be conducting the survey? What services does this program provide? Who are the customers? How are these services provided to the customer?**

In recent years, harmful algal blooms (HABs) and waterborne pathogens such as *Vibrio vulnificus* have caused major health, ecological, and economic concerns. HABs and other waterborne pathogens can lead to a number of impacts including impaired drinking water, reduced recreational opportunities, and human health impacts from either ingesting affected fish/water or contact with the bloom. To better serve the public and its stakeholders, NOAA's National Ocean Service, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) has developed forecasts of the extent and severity of HABs in the western Lake Erie, Gulf of Mexico, and waterborne pathogens in Chesapeake Bay. These forecast products are designed to provide stakeholders and the public with information that can be used to make better decisions that would mitigate the impacts of HABs and waterborne pathogens.

This request is for three related surveys to collect information on how stakeholders use NOAA's ecological forecast products in western Lake Erie, the Gulf of Mexico (the western shore of Florida and the Texas coastline), and Chesapeake Bay. In western Lake Erie and the Gulf of Mexico, NOAA distributes a HAB forecast (the forecast product) approximately twice each week during the bloom season (e.g., late Spring to early Fall). In the Chesapeake Bay area, NCCOS distributes an email to subscribers when the forecast for *Vibrio vulnificus* is updated on the website that NOAA uses to disseminate the forecast. Those who receive these emails have signed up to receive the forecast product, including a variety of people such as coastal managers, public health officials, businesspeople (e.g., coastal tourism businesses), researchers, the media, and the public among others.

These surveys will ask customers about how they use the information in the forecast products, the extent to which they find the information in the products useful, what they like and don't like about the products, and the ways in which the products can be improved. NOAA will use this information to improve the ways in which it communicates information in the forecast products and to potentially expand the types of information provided.

- 2. Explain how this survey was developed. With whom did you consult during the development of this survey on content? statistics? What suggestions did you get about improving the survey?**

These surveys were developed by Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) under contract to NOAA. ERG has significant experience in developing customer satisfaction surveys for NOAA and other

federal agencies. ERG had discussions with NOAA staff to better understand how the information was meant to be used. ERG also interviewed several individuals from different sectors – including drinking water facility managers, commercial fishing operators, resource managers, public health officials, and academia – to better understand how the information in the products is used and how the information is viewed.

In implementing the survey, ERG will not be using statistical sampling methods. The survey will be distributed to all individuals on the email lists. The data from the survey does not need to be extrapolated to the population. Rather, the data provided by those who respond can be used on its own to identify the extent to which survey respondents valued the information provided and to identify potential improvements to the forecast products.

3. Explain how the survey will be conducted. How will the customers be sampled (if fewer than all customers will be surveyed)? What percentage of customers asked to take the survey will respond? What actions are planned to increase the response rate?

NOAA will perform the survey using a web-based instrument. NOAA has chosen a web-based instrument for two reasons. First, the forecast products are distributed to the customers via email, and the web-based instrument can be distributed to the customers through the same set of email addresses. Second, the emails link to the NOAA website that contains additional details on the forecast. Thus, all stakeholders receive the Bulletin electronically and have access to the information on the forecast on a web site; thus, a web-based survey is appropriate for this data collection effort.

No statistical methods are being used in the survey; all individuals in NOAA’s distribution lists will receive a survey. NOAA and ERG expect a 20 percent response rate to this survey. Nevertheless, NOAA and ERG will continue to follow good survey practices to ensure high participation, including the following:

- NOAA will “advertise” the survey well in advance to ensure the potential respondents are aware a survey is coming. This will involve sending the distribution lists an announcement that the survey is coming. This email will constitute a “prenotification email” for the survey.
- ERG will send the email with the survey link 3-4 days after the NOAA pre-notification email.
- ERG will send 2-3 email reminders to non-responders over the next 2-3 weeks to increase response.

4. Describe how the results of this survey will be analyzed and used. If the customer population is sampled, what statistical techniques will be used to generalize the results to the entire customer population? Is this survey intended to measure a GPRA performance measure? (If so, please include an excerpt from the appropriate document.)

The data from the survey will be tabulated and cross-tabulated as needed. Key cross-tabulations will include tabulating usefulness and satisfaction scores¹ by:

- Sector (e.g., local government, state government)
- State
- Frequency of use

¹ The survey includes a number of usefulness questions, questions assessing the content of the Bulletin, and an overall satisfaction question.

The survey also includes open-ended options to allow respondents to identify how the products can be improved, and ERG will develop a summary of those responses.

The survey does not employ statistical methods, nor does it contribute to a GPRA measure.