

Supporting Statement
U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of Economic Analysis
Annual Survey of Foreign Ocean Carriers'
Expenses in the United States (Form BE-29)
OMB Control Number: 0608-0012

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.

The potential respondent universe for the BE-29 survey is all U.S. agents of foreign ocean carriers operating in the United States. Reports are required from U.S. agents of foreign ocean carriers who handle 40 or more foreign ocean port calls in the reporting period, or report total covered expenses of \$250,00 or more in the reporting period for all foreign ocean vessels handled by the U.S. agent.

BEA intends to mail a notice to approximately 80 U.S. companies annually, notifying the companies of the requirement to file the survey and providing links to eFile, BEA's electronic filing system. BEA will estimate data for respondents that do not report their data in a timely manner and for U.S. persons that fall below the reporting threshold for the annual survey. Estimates will be based on prior reports and growth in the value of transactions from a matched sample of respondents. BEA will allocate the estimated data by country and by type of transaction based on the distribution of reported transactions for inclusion in the published totals. Thus, estimates will cover the entire universe of transactions.

Response rates to this annual survey in past years have been high, approximately 80 percent. BEA expects that these high response rates will continue for the survey, providing information of sufficient accuracy and reliability for its intended purposes.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

The BE-29 survey will be administered to U.S. agents of foreign ocean carriers who have expenses in the United States. BEA expects most of the potential respondents to file the survey on a timely basis. In the case that a survey is not filed, or is filed too late to be used for the current estimate, BEA will generate an estimate based on data previously reported or estimated

for the non-respondent using information from companies that did respond. No unusual problems have been identified that would require the use of specialized sampling procedures. BEA will collect data from a cutoff sample of firms meeting the reporting criteria.

The list of respondents will be derived from public and private sources, including business directories and establishment lists.

A high degree of accuracy is needed for the purposes stated in the justification. The proposed survey is an annual survey conducted once a year.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Any company contacted by BEA must respond by filing a completed form BE-29 or a valid exemption claim. Non-respondents will be contacted by BEA staff and, in the event of continued nonresponse, will be referred to the Office of General Counsel for further action, including possible referral to the Justice Department. BEA expects that at the time of the final revised estimates, reports will be received from nearly all companies required to report. To facilitate response, a notice will be sent to each company on an annual basis notifying the company of the requirement to file the survey and providing links to eFile, BEA's electronic filing system, and Excel and PDF versions of the survey.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.

No tests were conducted; however, the survey has been conducted in previous years. Additionally, BEA maintains a continuing dialogue with respondents and data users, including its own internal users through the Bureau's Source Data Improvement and Evaluation Program, to ensure, to the extent possible, that the required data serve their intended purposes, that the survey instructions are clear, and that unreasonable burdens are not imposed.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The survey is designed and conducted within BEA by the Balance of Payments Division. For further information, contact Christopher Stein via email at christopher.stein@bea.gov or by phone at 301-278-9189.