

“Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery”
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Office of the Chief Information Officer
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B. STATISTICAL METHODS

Data collection methods and procedures will vary; however, the primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The activities under this clearance involves samples of self-selected customers gathered under the particular forms of customer comment/complaint forms, small discussion groups, focus groups, cognitive laboratory studies, customer satisfaction surveys and in-person observation testing. Respondents will be selected either to cover a broad range of customers or to include specific characteristics related to certain products or services. Results will not be used to make statements representative of the universe of study, to produce statistical descriptions (careful, repeatable measurements), or to generalize the data beyond the scope of the sample. The specific sample planned for each individual collection and the method for soliciting participation will be described fully in each collection request.

The respondent universe for these surveys will be public individuals or groups who participate in Agency programs. The intent is to collect information on the effectiveness of the programs. The Agency gathers information from participants in its programs. As a result, the potential respondent universe for a given assessment, performance measurement, satisfaction study, or evaluation is highly dependent upon the nature and purpose of the specific Agency program.

The size of the respondent universe in past Generic Clearance information collections, performance measurement studies have averaged about 27,900 participants for a one-year period. As the USPTO conducts these surveys, the agency will investigate the relationship between the size of the respondent universe/population surveyed and response rates.

Qualitative surveys are tools used by program managers to change or improve programs, products, or services. The accuracy, reliability, and applicability of the results of these surveys are adequate for their purpose.

The samples associated with this collection are not subjected to the same scrutiny as scientifically drawn samples where estimates are published or otherwise released to the public.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Data collection methods and procedures will vary and the specifics of these will be provided with each collection request. The Agency expects to use a variety of methodologies for these collections. For example, the Agency or its contractors may use commercial survey-specific software to

automate its collection and analysis of feedback. In addition to physical copies, information collection instruments may be electronically disseminated and/or posted on target pages of the Agency's web site. Telephone scripts, personal interviews, and focus groups with professional guidance and moderation may also be used.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Information collected under this generic clearance will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful customer input, but it does not yield data about customer opinions that can be generalized.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting may be done with internal staff, a limited number of external colleagues, and/or customers who are familiar with the programs and products. If the number of respondents exceeds nine members of the public, the Agency will submit the instruments for review under this generic clearance.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

Each program will obtain information from statisticians in the development, design, conduct, and analysis of customer/partner service surveys, when appropriate. This statistical expertise will be available from agency statisticians or from contractors and the Agency will include the names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted under this generic clearance.